INTERSECTIONAL AGENCY

A theoretical exploration of agency at the junction of social categories and power, based on conversations with racially privileged feminist activists from São Paulo, Brazil

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Abstract

This thesis concerns a conceptual exploration of intersectional agency, and particularly the interplay of social categories and power, mobilised by racially privileged feminist activists from São Paulo, Brazil. Theoretically, my work is grounded in, first, intersectional thought, through which an understanding is employed of intersectionality as an epistemological lens and a theory of the dialogical, multidimensional and contextual interrelatedness of social categorical differences and positions in power relations. Second, this thesis is grounded in theories of agency. I begin with a provisional anti-conflationary approach to agency and, therein, with a working definition of agency as 'the capacity to (not) act', resulting in the argument that agency can generate both agentic action and agentic inaction, but requires certain conditions (i.e. choice, consciousness, reflexivity and orientatedness) to be met. Empirically, the thesis consists of an analysis of three case studies – of Eduarda, Luciane and Sandra – wherein agency is mobilised. The cases result from 'phenomenological conversations' about experiences with social categories and power, such as race privilege and gender disadvantage. Each case is selected because of thematic, theoretical and methodological particularities. Grounded in the causal logic of 'action-caused-by-agency', the analysis of the case studies relies on a 'tracing back logic' to intersectionally explore agency by tracing back from the action and/or inaction it generated. This analysis is mostly performed through a 'nano-analysis' and complemented by a bird's-eye view. Two research questions are central to the thesis. The first question is: How do racially privileged feminist activists intersectionally mobilise agency? This is discussed in the empirical chapters and forms the foundation for the second question: How can 'intersectional agency' be conceptualised? In response to the last question, the thesis' concluding chapter offers a conceptualisation of intersectional agency – on the one hand consolidating the aforementioned anti-conflationary approach to agency, on the other hand expanding this approach to propose the understanding of intersectional agency as a mechanism. This mechanism, orientated outwardly and/or inwardly, consists of the interplay of various components – namely, agential elements (i.e. cognitive, moral as well as emotive elements), social categories and power – and is dynamic, multidimensional, pluriform, and contextually multilayered (over sociality, time and space). Responding to the lack of an existing conceptual framework in intersectionality studies and agency studies, this thesis contributes to both areas of studies an empirically grounded conceptualisation of intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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This doctoral journey has taken quite some unexpected turns. It has been long, profound, and excitingly challenging. Upon arrival I fell in love with theory (and inventing words and writing long sentences). It has also been sad, scary, and full of almost insurmountable obstacles. Equally, it has been rich in opportunities, development, and curvilinear distractions and surprises. I would not have arrived here, however, without the generosity that I received – from those who have supported me, invited me into their homes, got on a plane/boat/car/train/phone to be there for me when I needed them, responded to my questions, were patient, kind, made me laugh, had video calls with me, who rooted for me, and who again and again and again believed in me and told me so – sometimes in very explicit ways, sometimes in very subtle ways, sometimes annoyingly so, sometimes without any intention, sometimes with open arms, sometimes through patience and just being there. It is this irreplaceable generosity that I received which enabled me to return to this journey – and to find the 'generosity within' to seek to approach this thesis with openness and curiosity. I have been waiting a long time for the opportunity to express my gratitude. I cannot name everyone, but here are some thank-yous…

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About the author

Dieuwertje Huijg – hereafter Dyi – obtained her doctoraal diploma (a combined bachelor’s and master's degree) in Languages and Cultures of Latin America from Leiden University in 2007, with a BSc minor in International Relations from the University of Amsterdam. During a study year abroad, Dyi entered the Brazilian women's movement and returned to Brazil various times to participate in and research (young) feminist activism. Her master's dissertation is concerned with an analysis of the role of whiteness in a Brazilian white second wave feminist's reflection on race in the women's movement.

Dyi was involved in various Dutch feminist initiatives and groups. All these experiences were constructive, including the ones that taught her about other white feminists' and her own perspectival and partial intersectional commitment to social justice (e.g. see Botman, 2003). Initially particularly concerned with partiality in the realm of generational and race relations in feminism and, therewith, the re/production of seniority and whiteness, it took a decade, and conscientisation about her own disabled experiences and involvement in disabled women's organising in London, for the light bulb on the ableist character of feminist organising and thinking to light up. Unfortunately, disability and ableism are only marginally addressed in the current study.

These perspectival and partial experiences, observations, and studies led to this PhD thesis on intersectional agency and the interplay of social categories and power, which has been funded by a departmental Teaching Bursary (Sociology, University of Manchester). She won the 2010 Essay Prize of the Feminist and Women Studies Association for her analysis of tension in intersectional agency (Huijg, 2012). She has published an article on whiteness and racial identification in white young female activists' construction of feminist ideology and identity (2011), an intervention about ableism in academic feminist organising (2015), and a book chapter on Brexit, gender, disability, health and migration (2019). She has been teaching seminars and lectures at various universities. Dyi is currently in the beginning stages of a project on intersectionality, agency, resistance, and ableism and neuronormativity (e.g. Huijg, forthcoming).
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Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

1.1 As an activist in the women's movement in the Netherlands and to some extent in Brazil, concerned particularly with gender, generational, race and sexuality relations and inequalities, I experienced and observed over and over again how young white and light women – including myself – disproportionately take up organisational and discursive space, energy, time, and material and immaterial resources. At the same time, they formulate their ideological commitment to feminism in terms of anti-racism and a commitment to racial equality. This study, then, starts with 'curiosity and an intense interest' (cf. Moustakas, 1994, pp.104-105) grounded in personal and vicarious experiences and observations (alluding to Essed, 1989, p.43). Identifying as 'good activists' fighting the 'unjust bad system' (see also Huijg, 2011), I noticed, white feminists located the 'bad system' and 'the bad in the system' outside the (collective) self; from an intersectional perspective, consequently, they simultaneously contributed to its reproduction. On the one hand, their 'good activism' focussed on the struggle against sexism and misogyny that disadvantaged them. On the other hand, this activism rarely considered how, first, this 'bad system' advantaged them in terms of racial power – as well as class, geopolitical, and generational power and power of activist seniority; and consequently, second, how the 'bad system' needed to be fought in that light. While they discursively supported anti-racism and opposed racial inequality, a race critical understanding of 'the bad system', of their activism and of their activist white self was not necessarily part of their feminist praxis. Passively or actively, their activism operated as a racially exclusionary practice – not even

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1 Because of access needs, in this thesis I will use paragraph numbering (cf. e.g. Sociological Research Online and Borderlands).
2 I got involved in the women's movement in 2001, but already had activist experience elsewhere.
3 At the time I was still 'young' – i.e. in accordance to the Brazilian and Dutch young feminist movements' age range, where 'young' referred to women between 18-30 years.
4 This is not, obviously, restricted to white feminists.
5 I was oblivious to their and to my own (internalised) ableism.
(necessarily) through discriminatory attitudes, but through the performance of, what L. Cardoso (2010, 2014) calls, 'acritical whiteness' (i.e. non-critical whiteness) in 'everyday inaction' (cf. 'the everyday', as discussed by Essed, 1989).

1.2 Considering these performative discrepancies (cf. Ahmed, 2004) – between what was said and done, and what was not done and not said – I kept on wondering: What is the intersectional process that leads to this race critical void in terms of feminist activist engagement? In particular, young white, feminist leaders had ample access to increase their knowledge and awareness about, first, the black and brown women's movements, their race critical feminist commitment and their points of struggle and, second, about the legacy of white feminists' selective commitment to anti-racism (see Chapter 2). Additionally, as young white feminist activists, they struggled for women's rights and against generational issues and inequality in the women's movement; while conscious of 'seniority privilege' and adultocentrismo, they did not substantially consider their own racialised privileged position in their activism. Whether named intersectional or not, the young white feminist leaders that I knew in both countries had access to intersectional thinking and organising, in terms of various social categories and positions in power relations, but apparently did not (sufficiently) engage with it. Why did the reliance on and reproduction of structural privilege persevere? Why did these young white women – often feminist leaders – not seek to learn from the generations of black, migrant and refugee feminists (in the Netherlands) and Afro-Brazilian feminists in São Paulo – and some white feminists – that had come before us (see Chapter 2)? Why did they question others' (generational and gender) privilege, but did not question their own whiteness, if at all, in such a way that it implied practical changes? In particular this latter question started to point to the question of

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6 This study initially aimed to research intersectional agency of young white feminists (cf. par.1.1n3, see Appendix 3). In the second phase of the project, though, the age and generational aspect of the study was decentred (see Appendix 4).
7 With seniority I refer particularly to years of experience in feminist activism and the status and privilege that come with that.
8 Adultocentrismo ('adultcentrism') refers to the tendency of 'older' (and generally more 'senior') feminists to take their experiences as the norm in feminist organising and politics and marginalise young women and young women's issues (e.g. see El-Sherif, 2010; Jones, 2008).
9 Indigenous feminism is prominent in certain parts of Brazil, but not in São Paulo at the time.
*inaction* – i.e. the void or absence of action (see Chapter 4) – in light of ideological and ethical persuasions.

1.3 White women are situated at the intersection of gender and race – they are, Collins (1990, p.226) highlights, "penalized by their gender but privileged by their race. Depending on the context, an individual may be an oppressor, a member of an oppressed group, or simultaneously oppressor and oppressed." Moving beyond my initial 'curiosity and intense interest' (cf. Moustakas, 1994, pp.104-105), the project's focus shifted during the analysis from an exploration of the interrelatedness of specific social categories, namely race and gender, to an exploration of the intersectional interplay of agency and 'opposite positions in the realm of power' – or, if you will, of agency mobilised by women who, simultaneously, are oppressed and, *in potentia*, oppress. While mutually influential, as organising forces at this junction, these simultaneous positions in power are not necessarily orientated harmoniously or coherently (see also Huijg, 2012). I discussed this 'tensional junction' to the participants in this study as follows:

Previous research, and my own background as a white feminist activist concerned with both gender and racial issues, demonstrated that this double position in relation to discrimination, oppression and social dis/advantage, and specifically the ideological opposition to the 'oppressive system', can generate complex and even contradictory thoughts, images and feelings about one's social position, one's identity and one's activist praxis and ideology. (Appendix 4)

To answer the aforementioned explanatory 'why questions', then, the question of how that junction – of social categories and power – actually functions, required a response first: What was (*not*) happening at that intersectional junction? How could the internal process of activists' agency be intersectionally understood as *simultaneously* generating commitment and non-commitment to social justice, change and non-change, and action and inaction.

1.4 In this thesis, then, I seek to respond to the following two research questions:

- How do racially privileged feminist activists intersectionally mobilise agency?
- How can 'intersectional agency' be conceptualised?
The first, empirical, question is explored in three case studies in Chapters 5-7. While each chapter revolves around, among other things, the interplay of opposite positions in the realm of power, various social categories are centred: race advantage and gender disadvantage in Chapter 5, race advantage and sexuality and gender disadvantage in Chapter 6, and class advantage and gender disadvantage in Chapter 7. The function of this empirical engagement is not to seek a response as such; rather, it seeks to enable the exploration of the second question. In response to the second question, grounded in the aforementioned exploration as well as the theoretical framework offered in Chapters 2-4, I provide in Chapter 8 a conceptualisation of 'intersectional agency'. Before moving to the theoretical framework and the empirical analyses in the following chapters, I situate in the current chapter the research in its theoretical context. Considering the absence of a separate methodology chapter, I will then proceed with a discussion of the participants, the fieldwork, and my methodological approach and methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of thesis, including an introduction of the three case studies and their participants.

Research context

1.5 While employed in passing as a term in scholarly literature, there is no existing conceptualisation or theoretical framework for the study of 'intersectional agency' (cf. Huijg, 2012). While the current study of 'intersectional agency' fits into and contributes to two theoretical realms, namely studies of agency and the field of intersectionality studies, neither realm offers a sufficiently comprehensive theoretical framework. The field of intersectionality studies (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) regularly touches on agency, but does not tend to engage with detailed intersectional empirical analyses and theorisations of agency. While intersectional theory always already addressed all sides of power – i.e. the experience of oppression and the power and resources to oppress – the junction of structural advantage and structural disadvantage, and specifically agency therein, is underexplored. This study particularly responds, then, to Nash's (2008, p.11) call for the field to offer "a theory of agency [that grapples] with the amount of leeway variously situated
subjects have to deploy particular components of their identities in certain contexts."

1.6 Second, this study is grounded in theorisations of agency and, therewith, responds to the agency-structure debate and questions around freedom and determinism, but is not grounded in a particular approach. Rather than relying on expansive and often incompatible definitions of agency, I develop an anti-conflationary approach to agency – in response to the conceptual confusion that Alexander (1992, pp.7-8) raises (specifically between 'agency', 'agent' and 'actor'), rather than to Archer's work on upward and downward conflation (e.g. see Brock, Carrigan & Scambler, 2016, p.xv). A conflationary understanding of agency and action suggests that agency conceptually constitutes action and, therefore, that both agency and action are 'external' to the individual. Rejecting that understanding, in the anti-conflationary approach explored in this thesis, I employ a narrow working definition of agency as 'the capacity to act' (later expanded to 'the capacity to act or not act'). Herein, I argue that action\textsuperscript{10} might be external – and later in the thesis I complicate this by also discussing 'internal action' – but agency is \emph{per definition} a capacity 'internal' to the individual; consequently, agency and action are conceptually separate. The internal-external distinction of the individual is methodologically relevant, as I discuss shortly, because 'the internal' and consequently agency cannot be observed. This 'individual' is understood as the 'smallest human unit' of sociological research (cf. Plummer, 2016, p.23). To emphasise, neither the individual nor 'the internal' are considered in this thesis, though, as 'non-social, monolithic or atomic'. Three exemplary cases (perhaps both 'empirical units' and, in a way, 'theoretical constructs' cf. Ragin in Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p.601) have been selected – referring to particular events from the lives of three different participants – to intersectionally explore agency. Rather than seeking generalisations, this detailed analysis of three case studies – approached through a 'tracing back logic', and an up-and-close 'nano-lens' analysis and some 'bird's-eye view' interventions (see below) – enables a theoretical exploration of 'intersectional agency'.

\textsuperscript{10} Note that when I talk about 'action' in this thesis I actually refer to \emph{external} action; however, when I refer to action internal to the individual, I specify this as 'internal action'.

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1.7 In Chapter 4, then, I present this anti-conflationary approach to agency, which I will consolidate and further develop in Chapter 8. Herein, I argue that agency can generate action and/or inaction – but, to reiterate, it cannot be conflated with either. While agency is presented at times as a 'split second', I discuss (particularly in Chapter 8) that it is better to think about the mobilisation of agency as a process, which, however, can consist of various agential\textsuperscript{11} instances. From the analysis of this mobilisation, it becomes apparent that agency operates as a mechanism which consists of various components; i.e. agential elements – e.g. cognitive, moral and emotive elements – as well as social categories and power. Agency and its components can be orientated outwardly as well as inwardly. Neither intersectionality studies nor agency studies could offer a theoretical framework sufficient to study intersectionality agency. Not only, then, does this study contribute to both areas of studies; it offers a conceptual framework for an in-depth intersectional understanding of how agency operates and, as such, a conceptualisation of intersectional agency.

**Research approach**

1.8 A large quantity of data was collected during fieldwork in São Paulo, Brazil. The first phase consisted of 17 semi-structured interviews. The second phase, the principal source for this thesis, consisted of around 70 hours of recorded multiple conversations with seven participants (selected from the group who participated in the first phase). Ethnographic material (e.g. observation notes, activist material) was also collected, but not used. With the project moving from an ethnographic approach to a conceptual exploration, much of the initial methodology (e.g. entering the field, etc.), while still important for the project as a whole, decreased in relevance for the particular analyses in this thesis. More importantly, the study moved away from established methods

\textsuperscript{11} In this thesis I use the adjectives 'agential' as well as 'agentic'. 'Agential' refers to elements or processes that are constitutive components of (the mechanism of) agency. In turn, 'agentic' refers to elements or processes that are generated by or employed as tools of (the mechanism of) agency. To exemplify, social categories, power, feelings and thoughts can be mobilised *agentially* – i.e. as components of (the mechanism of) agency – and they can be mobilised *agentically* – i.e. as tools of (the mechanism of) agency. I will use this distinction throughout the thesis, and return to this in Chapter 8.
into the experimental realm. In this section, then, I first introduce the fieldwork, the participants and their selection criteria. Second, I introduce the method of data collection – what I have called 'phenomenological conversations' – and the method of data analysis – what I have called the 'tracing back logic' – and its relation to particular empirical and theoretical 'facets' (cf. Mason, 2011) of each of the cases. The thematic, theoretical and methodological reasons for selecting these particular three cases are discussed in the thesis outline.

Fieldwork

1.9 When starting my PhD, the plan was to return to my activist roots for a comparative ethnography of intersectional agency in (racially privileged) young feminism in São Paulo and the Netherlands. However, while young feminists certainly were still active, the young women's movement had collapsed in both countries. Limiting the study to São Paulo, where I had done research before (Huijg, 2011), I used my activist friendships, gatekeepers, prior participation in feminist groups with active young women, and other contacts in the paulistano12,13 women's movement to, first, contact activists to partake in the research project and, second, observe race, class, generational and other social categorical relations (see Chapter 4, but particularly Chapter 5). I certainly observed many young feminists act and interact (and not act and not interact), but there was no 'young feminist movement' proper anymore in São Paulo. However, the most important reason why I moved away from ethnographic fieldwork was that, once having started observation, I realised that there was a discrepancy between method (i.e. participant observation) and theory (i.e. regarding action and agency). My understanding of what 'intersectional agency' is or can be had changed. The theoretical question concerning the intersectional mobilisation of agency, as set before fieldwork (Huijg, 2012), could not be methodologically explored through observation; while actions are observable, agency is a capacity (to act or not act) internal to

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12 In the thesis I use various words and expressions that are either emic concepts or do not have an English translation that adequately captures their specific meaning in the context of the thesis. I have left these in (Brazilian) Portuguese in the text with an interpretative translation of their usage. Portuguese words are italicised, unless used in in-text quotes of the participants, which are already italicised.

13 The City of São Paulo is the capital of the São Paulo State; the inhabitants of the first (city) are called paulistanos; the inhabitants of the latter (state) are called paulistas.
the individual and, consequently, unobservable. Aiming to explore 'intersectional agency' conceptually, but based on empirical data, I sought inspiration from methodologies that centred on the research participant's experience and perception and moved to, what I posteriorly called, 'phenomenological conversations' (see below).

**Participants**

1.10 Since I intended to rely on ethnography, I had already started to reinsert myself into activities of the women's and related movements in São Paulo – which I attended on and off since 2002. This enabled me to get an experiential feel for where (young) feminism was at now, to position myself as a researcher of feminist activism, and indeed to 'demonstrate' that I was a feminist activist with a pre-existing grassroots 'history', experience, networks and contacts. As a relative 'insider' in terms of, for instance, race, gender, ideological orientation and activist experience (for a discussion on the insider/outside debate, see e.g. Best, 2003; Kenny, 2000; Knibbe & Versteeg, 2008; Naples, 2003; Twine, 2000), I hoped this would get across that I had earned my feminist activist 'street creds' over the years and, as such, give me access to participants. And, indeed, I met, was introduced by contacts to, and was approached by, potential participants for the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, attending feminist events offered a context as a point of reference for the conversations I had with the participants in the second phase (I return to this).

1.11 The first phase of the project, however, consisted of semi-structured interviews. At the start, the participants filled in a questionnaire with some basic demographic and related information (Appendix 2). The topic list for the interview concerned the participants' involvement in feminist activism and specific groups, their feminist identity, ideology and objectives, and generational relations in feminism (Appendix 3). Considering this would be a baseline interview, I avoided questions emphasising, first, social categories (e.g. race, class) other than gender and age/generation and, second, privilege and agency. This offered an opportunity to see what would spontaneously emerge as relevant to the participants. It was particularly the interview, rather than the questionnaire, that enabled me to select and approach participants for the
second phase of the project. I selected participants on various criteria. Obvious selection criteria were gender (self-identified as female) and activist identity (feminist). While initially I sought ‘young’ activists (i.e. between 18 and 30 years\(^{14}\)), this became less important and pragmatically the range expanded (i.e. between 18 and 36 years).

1.12 All participants in the second phase of the study recounted experiences with race privilege, and responded to enquiries about (their) whiteness, but their racial self-identification was more complex (see below) – perhaps the same can be said about some of the participants’ class identity and experiences. The most important ‘demographic’ selection criterion, however, was whether the participant was (spontaneously) identifying experiences they personally had with race privilege (even though class privilege ended up taking up a more prominent role in Chapter 7). While an attributed racial identification (i.e. by others) as white or light is arguably a prerequisite for ‘benefitting’ from racial inequality, this is not necessarily consistent with someone’s individual, familial and, for instance, political racial self-identification; as I discussed before (see Huijg, 2011), in other words, there can be a discrepancy between race privilege and racial identity. For instance, on the questionnaire, Sandra (Chapter 7) filled in *mestiça*\(^{15}\) as her racial identity, because, she explained later, her mother has indigenous heritage. At the same time, she positioned herself as white – until I realised the discrepancy in our seventh conversation and enquired further. Luciane’s (Chapter 6) father was Japanese, but she self-identified as white. Both of these complexities should also be situated in the construction of our conversations – where I, as a feminist activist and white researcher (from the Global North), asked them about race privilege – through which whiteness was negotiated (e.g. see Best, 2003, pp.897-898). Luciane was attending university, but came from a working class background. Eduarda (Chapter 5) had not attended university, but was economically self-sufficient.

\(^{14}\) See par.1.1n3.

\(^{15}\) The Brazilian term *mestiça* cannot be translated similarly to the Latin American and Chicano term *mestiza* (e.g. T.A. Martinez, 2002). While some use it to refer to mixed Indigenous and European heritage in Brazil (e.g. Sandra does in a way in Chapter 7), or mixed Indigenous, African and European heritage, this requires caution due to its conceptual relation to the biologically based (ideological) concept *mestiçagem* (i.e. miscegenation), referring to the problematic national idea and ideal of Brazil as a ‘racial democracy’ (e.g. see Guimarães, 2005; Nascimento, 2004; Twine, 1998).
I also had non-demographic selection criteria for the second phase of the study. First, all the(se) participants were relatively self-aware and, arguably, skilled at 'looking inwards'. Second, they were, in principle at least, ideologically and ethically committed to justice in terms of both societal and reflexive social change beyond feminist ideals and experiences of disadvantage – even while not all their actual actions and inactions were aligned with that commitment (as this study evidences). Third, they needed to want to dedicate time and energy towards this project; after all, we would meet several times and I would ask them to reflect in between conversations, so it would potentially be quite demanding. Last, an important 'natural' selection criterion, I realised only afterwards, was a willingness to be vulnerable and open to reflect on and talk about, among others, whiteness and race privilege. And they certainly were willing and did open up – quite admirably so. Some participants in the first phase seemed to be unwilling or unable to reflect on their position of privilege. To exemplify, there was a feminist leader whom I repeatedly invited for the second phase, because of her crucial position in the women's movement, her level of feminist awareness, and her emphatic avoidance of talking about privilege in the (first) interview. While she was always discursively welcoming, after the first interview she stalled my attempts to get in touch. The study does not cover, then, intersectional agency of individuals – e.g. such as the leader – refusing to talk about or ignoring their role in, for instance, the re/production of racism and classism (I return to this at the end of the thesis when I point to limitations of the study).

At the stage of data analysis, particular everyday events, rather than participants, were selected as case studies. Each case revolves around a different participant; in turn, each case constitutes an empirical chapter (Chapters 5-7). In Chapter 5, the case "Spraying Feminist Slogans When The Police Come" is discussed. Herein, Eduarda is the research participant, although perhaps not a protagonist; at the time, she was 29 years old, worked in a corporate job, studied part-time at night, lived alone, and was an experienced animal rights, LGBT and feminist grassroots and underground activist. In Chapter 6, the case "A Racist Thought On The Bus To University" is discussed. Herein, Luciane is the protagonist; she was 18 years old at the time.
and living at home, studying a course in the Humanities, and slowly becoming more active in the field of animal rights and feminist activism. Last, in Chapter 7 the case "Sexual Harassment While Walking In The Park" is discussed. Sandra is herein the protagonist; at the time, she was 33 years old, going through a career change, living in a house share, and certainly the most experienced, radical and educated activist, and involved in a variety of social movements.

Data collection

1.15 The second phase of this project started with a theoretical recognition that intersectional agency as a phenomenon might exist 'in reality' (cf. Huijg, 2012), but without an empirical or conceptual understanding in terms of the "experience of an essence" (Maso, 2007, p.170) – i.e. of the 'idea' of intersectional agency. In that sense, seeking to understand the 'phenomenon of intersectional agency', the project had turned into 'conceptual fieldwork' without a methodological template. Without a specific method or technique, then, I invited the participants to, what I now call, 'phenomenological conversations' – perhaps as an 'epistemological methodology'. With this I refer to a phenomenological approach which seeks to listen to and look at the phenomenon as it appears and is experienced (Finlay, 2009, p.9; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p.6).

1.16 To centre their experience, I tried to stay close to the phenomenological principle of 'perspectival incompleteness', which offers a location of indeterminacy, ambiguity and doubt as well as curiosity (Wetz, 2005, p.175 in Ferguson, 2006, pp.8-9; Finlay, 2009, p.6; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p.8). Second, I tried to follow the process of epoché (bracketing). By this I mean that I invested in embracing "disciplined naïveté" (Finlay, 2009, p.12) by temporarily leaving my "extraneous concerns" aside (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p.6), and by refraining from expectations, assumptions, and "any statement on truth or reality" and "good and evil" (Knibbe & Versteeg, 2008, pp.49,51). Seeking to

16 Note that this developed from how it was initially presented to the participants in the participant information sheet (Appendix 3).
17 The phenomenological approach and epoché raise questions about the role of whiteness and other manifestations of hegemony in the researcher-participant relationship, and
accompany the participants during the conversation, I tried to align myself with – but not in line or agreement with – the (metaphorical) 'here' of the participants, 'experiencing the inhabiting of the world as a white (or otherwise privileged) body', orientated towards the 'there' of the event (cf. Ahmed, 2007, pp.150-151).

1.17 Without a topic list or particular thematic objective, the phenomenological conversations centred on what each individual participant would bring. To facilitate this, I had given the participants a small diary. I invited them to scribble something down (of any length) about an 'everyday' event (cf. Essed, 1989) where they experienced, first, power and, second, race, gender and/or other social categories. Some entries were elaborate and covered various pages, while others consisted of only a few key words. These entries were used as a point of reference for the conversations. While not pre-structured, looking back, the conversations did follow the aforementioned 'tracing back logic' – i.e. agency was explored by tracing back from actions and inactions in a particular event (cf. the anti-conflationary approach to agency, discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 4). At the start of the conversation, I would ask the participant to read aloud what they had written. If they had not written anything, I would simply start the conversation with: "So ....?" Since the research was on their mind, a recent experience would always emerge. If there was more than one event, I asked them to select one to discuss. With 'event' I refer to the whole of the experience of social categories and power, which can consist of a single action or inaction, or various actions and/or inactions. Throughout the conversations, participants discussed various events. Each case study, though, concerns only one event: Eduarda goes to town to spray slogans and the black member of the group is stopped by the police (Chapter 5); Luciane has a racist thought on the bus that she does not verbalise (Chapter 6); and Sandra crosses the park and receives a manual rape threat (Chapter 7). After they read out what they had written, I would ask them to walk me again, chronologically now, through the event, and to clarify what happened first and what later, who was standing where, who else was present, how others responded to them, and, in turn, how they reacted to others' responses). Taking it from there, I would try to guide them, 'on the go', to explore elements of social categories and power, as generally in the process of data collection. I try to touch on some, but an in-depth analysis – e.g. of the relationship's intersectional dynamics – falls outside the remit of this thesis.
well as thoughts, memories, speculations, fantasies, emotions, opinions, embodied feelings\(^{18}\), and anything else that could constitute agency and be hypothetically relevant to the analysis later. There was no particular 'end' to each conversation; sometimes the participant had another appointment and left, sometimes they were simply tired of the conversation, and often the conversation reached a natural closing point\(^{19}\).

1.18 Throughout the various conversations I had with each of the eight participants (I had between three and eight conversations per participant), I would circle back and forth (cf. the action research approach, e.g. see Zuber-Skerrit, 1991, p.2 in Masters, 1997): between the parts and the whole (perhaps cf. Gadamer's 'hermeneutic circle', as explained by Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.28); between previously discussed events and current insights; between social categories and positions in power; between the other and the self; and, perhaps exploring the participants' Lewinian field (see Chapter 4); between their past(-as-remembered) and future(-as-anticipated) experiences; and between their external and their internal world (cf. Lewin, 1952, p.54 in Parlett, 1991, p.5; I return to this in Chapter 4). All the time, then, I was approaching and unpacking the 'phenomenon' in that particular event from a different angle. I sought to respond to their agency and, as such, stay as close as possible to their experience – in the 'remembered-as-now' and in the 'actual now' (for a discussion of phenomenology, experience through memory, time and the interpretative quality of remembering, see e.g. Spinelli, 2005, pp.96-102). The advantage of this approach was that it enabled me to be immediately immersed in and, as such, explore the participant's experience – or, at least, their perception thereof – of the event.

1.19 Looking to understand the participants' experiences from their perspective, I tried to do so with curiosity – and by holding the (Lewinian) 'field' and giving space to all parts of the complexity of the experience – rather than with judgment. By this I do not mean that I did not judge, or that I ignored or remained oblivious to my experiential, observational and academic knowledge

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\(^{18}\) Embodied feelings emerge very little in the conversations, although this might have been because of my focus on 'the internal' and my lack of experience with this angle.

\(^{19}\) Note that the collaborative character of the data collection, as I explicated to the participants, would end once the data analysis would start.
of, for instance, whiteness, power (relations), activism and agency. To exemplify, in my conversations with Eduarda I was aware of my internal judgmental reaction to the way that the white, middle class and experienced activists, and particularly the leader, failed to engage with the intersectional differences in the action group, and how they failed to acknowledge how this impacted the black member (see Chapter 5). Rather, I took note of my emotive and moral assessments, accepted that I did not always understand (then and there) the complexity of their experiences, and sometimes 'shelved' or even postponed engagement therewith until after a particular conversation or even until after I returned from the field and initiated data analysis. Perhaps this could be called 'strategic compartmentalisation'; a more friendly way of making sense of this is that I sought to give space to my own internal complexity, but opted for only engaging with those parts useful for the conversations. Giorgi (1978: 76 cf. Maso, 2001, p.140) brings attention to the need to bracket one's knowledge about the phenomenon (which suggests more external knowledge), but not of the phenomenon (which suggests more intimate or even experiential knowledge) as manifested in one's recognition of the phenomenon. Employing a dual stream of consciousness, I then 'consulted' my knowledge of, for instance, whiteness in order to ask probing or follow-up questions or to identify gaps in the narrative when I recognised this as necessary. For example, I used the aforementioned judgmental reaction to Eduarda as information – about the way that whiteness can operate in feminist activism – to probe further about intra-group dynamics. However, my attempts to refrain from judgments were not always successful, or perhaps I was insufficiently aware of my biases during the conversations. To exemplify, retrospectively realising I recognised myself in Sandra in terms of shared classed whiteness and activist experiences (see Chapter 3), while admiring her feminist 'guiltless anger' (see Chapter 7), I not only aligned myself with, but also positioned myself in line with the anger that she talked about during the conversations – I can still hear myself laughing about it on the recording.

Data analysis

1.20 Returning from 'conceptual fieldwork', I now faced the difficulty of finding an adequate method for data analysis that still would stay close to the
participants’ experience while, indeed, offering a critical analysis and therewith inserting and situating myself therein. The main challenge for me here was that this method required thoroughness, while I was at the same time seeking to continue the phenomenological approach.

1.21 Responding to these requirements, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) offered the idea of incremental steps in the coding of data (Smith et al., 2009, pp.82-107). For instance, I started with 'free coding' in writing on the printed transcript in order to, first, 'bracket' my initial thoughts and presuppositions and, second, and here in contrast to IPA, precisely to capture my initial critical interpretation. Returning to *epoché* (bracketing), I then moved, in line with IPA, to descriptive coding, then to linguistic coding, etc. While informed by IPA, the steps thereafter sought a methodological redirection, and epistemologically were open to move *against* the participants’ "personal perception or account of an object or event" (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p.53). I left aside the aforementioned 'disciplined naïveté' and *epoché* (cf. Finlay, 2009, p.12; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p.6; Knibbe & Versteeg, 2008, pp.49,51) and, as the analysis demonstrates, purposively and critically engaged with concerns and ideas around truth, reality and social in/justice. Now I precisely sought to employ my academic, personal and activist experiential knowledge of not only social categories and power, but of whiteness, privilege and (and in) feminist activism and leadership particularly. Having said that, another downside of the phenomenological approach, and specifically the *epoché*, was that after fieldwork it took time and effort to distance myself from the participants, their experience of the case, and my own experience thereof. Returning to Sandra and the aforementioned 'recognition', I initially mistranslated a significant action, as I could not imagine that she would act so aggressively – aggression that I did not associate with middle class female whiteness (I return to this in Chapter 3); because of this I (initially) misinterpreted the role that (racialised) class played in the mobilisation of her anger (see Chapter 7).

1.22 The reduction of the data – i.e. the analytical choices in "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp.10-11) – was grounded in thematic, methodological and theoretical heterogeneity. As raised, in and of itself there was no selection or
exclusion of particular participants. And rather than excluding specific social categories, themes or events, I found that interesting and relevant events emerged as case studies with the research focus and the methods of coding becoming increasingly narrow, detailed and specific. In the end, although each case revolves around one participant, I selected three cases based on, for instance, the type of event (e.g. everyday versus direct action), the number of protagonists, the un/observability of the event, and particularly the complexity of the interplay of power and social categories therein. The participants discussed various events throughout the conversations. The cases discussed in this thesis, then, are particular; as such, they are neither representative of the participants nor of their accounts (i.e. the total of conversations I had with each participant). I return to the selection of the cases at the end of this chapter.

1.23 As each case was particular, each case also required its own methodological engagement in terms of data processing. For instance, in the coding of Eduarda's case (Chapter 5) I employed a thematic lens by looking at power and social structure. The case of Luciane (Chapter 6) had two clear points to trace back from and to; on the one hand, the thought; on the other hand, the 'non-verbalisation' of the thought. Here I focussed on uncovering the sequence of her agential mobilisation and explore at each point of the mechanism of intersectional agency which elements were 'interrelating' (I borrow this term from Anthias, 2013b, p.4; see also Chapter 3). While still informed by IPA's incremental steps, I approached Sandra's case (Chapter 7) quite differently; I coded her case various times from different angles to uncover different facets (cf. Mason, 2011). Using a complex (and somewhat confusing) schema of fonts, highlighting, underlining and italicising, I identified which parts of the event were a feeling or emotion; an internal action (but not an emotion); an intention or purpose, etc.; an external action; an action by a third party; and, last, a third party intention, etc. Having, again, two clear points to start and end with, I then returned to the approach used in Luciane's analysis and focussed on the sequence of the 'unwinding' of the mobilisation of agency and, therein, identified three turning points. From this, I returned to Luciane's analysis to identify the turning point therein.
1.24 The methodological approach to data processing, then, did not follow a pre-existing format. Rather, the coding techniques were developed 'on the go', were specific to each case and served the purpose of coming closer to an understanding of the phenomenon by making sense of different expressions as manifested in each case. Not dissimilar from the process of data collection, I would circle back and forth: between different angles; between the individual's internal and the external world; between social categories and power; between thoughts and emotions (and later, I realised, moral feelings) – as well as between the participants' and my own (academic and activist) perspective and interpretation. This sense of 'movement' as I experienced it during coding and doing data analysis, while informed by the 'hermeneutic circle', could not have emerged in a rigid procedure, such as offered by IPA (Smith et al., 2009) or grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1998).

1.25 However, the phase of data analysis did follow, more consciously now, this 'tracing back logic'. Counter intuitively, perhaps, this was partially informed by the 'process tracing' method – a method particular to case study methodology (Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p.603). Process tracing, Collier (2011, p.824) highlights, "focuses on the unfolding of events or situations over time […] by adequately describ[ing] an event or situation at one point in time" – i.e. by "taking good snapshots at a series of specific moments," rather than centring change (Collier, 2011, p.824). Arguably the method of process tracing has little thematic or theoretical – or even methodological – resemblance with this project; nonetheless, I recognised in this method a 'tracing back logic', which was useful.

1.26 The 'tracing back logic', as I employed it, functioned as an underlying approach in this project. It is grounded in a linear understanding of causality prevalent in theorisations of agency (see Chapter 4) and refers to, first, the idea that agency causes actions (and inactions) and, second, that actions (and inactions) are caused by an individual's mobilised agency or mobilisation of agency. The method used is based, then, on the idea that there are observable actions – and unobservable inactions – in the external world from which one can trace back to identify 'the agency' that caused the named actions. I started with the fact that, first, there was a particular action or inaction and, second, that
it was clear that this was a manifestation of agency. The object of research here was not, in itself, to understand actions or inactions, but that which led thereto – i.e. agency. As appears in the empirical chapters, after forming a chronological timeline of the event, I tried to first describe what actually happened in an event. After this I sought to situate an event in its context, and then interpret it. In the next section, I will introduce each of the chapters. When introducing the empirical chapters and the cases, I will also discuss the selection criteria for each of the cases and their thematic, theoretical and methodological specifics.

**Thesis structure**

1.27 This thesis is organised around eight chapters and divided into three parts. Part I is the theoretical framework, which discusses theories of intersectionality and agency in Chapters 2-4. Part II provides an analysis of the case studies in Chapters 5-7. Part III, consisting of Chapter 8, brings together intersectionality studies and agency studies; herein, an argument is built up with reference to the empirical analyses for the conceptualisation of intersectional agency.

1.28 Chapters 2 and 3 concern a discussion of theorisations of intersectionality. Chapter 2 situates the development of intersectional organising and thinking in a genealogy of 'intersectionality avant la lettre' – broadening its origins beyond the United States (where Crenshaw coined the term in 1989, 1991). Intersectionality is discussed as a challenge to 'monocategorical' thinking and the distinction between multicategorical and intersectional analysis is introduced. Discussing intersectionality as a 'field of study', it is suggested that the field is increasingly concerned with its conceptual boundaries. In anticipation of the following chapter, I suggest that not all 'multicategorical' analyses are necessarily intersectional. Last, the (problematic) role of whiteness in intersectionality studies as well as the intersectional study of white women is introduced.

1.29 Chapter 3 focusses on the conceptualisation and conceptual boundaries of intersectionality. In alignment with other scholars, I raise three orientating features of intersectionality, namely its dialogical, its epistemological and its
social justice character. I furthermore suggest that some characterising features are particular to social categories rather than to intersectionality itself. Arguing that social categories are the building blocks of intersectionality, I distinguish, in turn, between (multicategorical) 'non-social categorical differences' and (intersectional) 'social categorical differences'. Arguably, social categorical differences mark classificatory boundaries of power and social inequality in terms of social categories. Last, anticipating the empirical analysis in Chapters 5-7, I suggest that social categories are not limited to one social dimension only (e.g. identity or social structure); rather, social categories and power always operate multidimensionally.

1.30 Chapter 4 discusses theorisations of agency and offers an anti-conflationary approach to agency. For the purpose of empirical analysis, there is no particular theory of agency that suffices. Arguing against conflationary understandings of agency (e.g. 'action consists of agency'), and conceptually stripping down agency from its moral baggage (e.g. 'agency is always good') and its theoretical baggage (e.g. 'passivity means a lack of agency', 'agency is external to the individual', 'the internal of the individual is not social'), a narrow and anti-conflationary working definition of agency is proposed as the capacity to act. The mobilisation of agency – under conditions of e.g. choice, consciousness, reflexivity and orientatedness – can generate action and/or inaction (i.e. an absence of action). This narrow working definition will enable an empirical exploration (Chapters 5-7) of intersectional agency and, therein, the interrelatedness of agential elements (i.e. cognitive, emotive and moral elements), social categories, and power. In turn, this enables the conceptualisation of intersectional agency in Chapter 8.

1.31 Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 each consist of an empirical exploration of a case study, in which I seek to respond to the first research question: How do racially privileged feminist activists intersectionally mobilise agency? The cases in Chapters 5-7 were selected with empirical, theoretical and methodological reasons in mind. Empirically, the objective was to find cases that were sufficiently unique and different in ‘type’ to provide heterogeneity. Theoretically, the objective was to find cases that highlighted or addressed different claims or sides of theorisations of agency. Methodologically,
the objective was to find cases that would enable different approaches to the data analysis. The overall objective, then, was to find heterogeneity – within the (quite homogenous) parameters of the project – to enable the exploration of different conceptual 'facets' of intersectional agency. The analysis is mostly approached through a nano-lens – an up-and-close analysis of the intersectional workings of agency – at times supplemented by a bird's-eye view, taking a step back and looking at agency situated in the case or even the participants' accounts (i.e. all conversations together) as a whole. While I provide an analysis in Chapters 5-7, a proper theoretical discussion is integrated in the conceptualisation of intersectional agency in Chapter 8.

1.32 In Chapter 5 – "Spraying Feminist Slogans When The Police Come" – Eduarda talks about an event where she and three other lesbian feminist activists go downtown in the middle of the night to spray feminist slogans against a TV personality's sexist comments. Apis – i.e. the youngest, only black, most masculine and most inexperienced activist of the four – is stopped by the police who put a gun to her head. Carola – i.e. the older, white, middle class and informal leader of the group – who was on the look-out while Apis was spraying, and walked off once she saw the police approaching, returns and 'saves' Apis from the hands of the police. The activist action perhaps lasted a couple of hours; however, the event starts when the activists prepare the action and is, in a way, still happening when Eduarda tells me about it.

1.33 Eduarda's case was selected because, thematically, it concerns an actual activist (direct) action – and it is led by (radical) middle class, white feminists in perhaps quite predictable ways – where a group and subsequent interactions are involved. Herein, Eduarda plays a (vicariously) observational role in terms of the problematic dynamic between Apis and Carola. As I only had conversations with Eduarda – who did not witness the principal part of the event – this was a theoretically and methodologically interesting case as it responds to and challenges the idea, as discussed in Chapter 4, that it is possible to understand the complexities of agency merely through personal or vicarious observations and interpretations of others’ actions (and inactions).
1.34 In Chapter 6 – "A Racist Thought On The Bus To University" – Luciane tells me about an event where, while sitting on the bus on her way to a university exam, already irritated, she has a racist thought about the woman sitting next to her talking loudly on her phone in a nordestino accent (i.e. an accent from Brazil's 'Northeast' region). Although she has this thought, which is accompanied by moral and emotive feelings, she does not verbalise this thought or, as far as we now, otherwise externalise this into an observable non-verbal action. The chapter analyses the process through which agency is mobilised, but which results in agentic inaction. In total, the event lasts less than an hour.

1.35 Thematically, Luciane's case was selected as it was perhaps the clearest empirical example demonstrating 'agentic inaction', precisely in the manner I had theoretically argued before (Huijg, 2012). It was also the case with an event that revolves around the protagonist's prejudicial thought and feelings. In contrast to Chapter 5, methodologically and theoretically this case was interesting, because, first, Luciane, as the participant in the study, is also the protagonist, while the other 'participant' only plays a role as the (objectified) 'object' of the thought; and, second, Luciane does share, in detail, her internal process of agency with me. In addition, theoretically, this case demonstrates that the external manifestation and the internal experience of agency differ.

1.36 In Chapter 7 – "Sexual Harassment While Walking In The Park" – Sandra tells me of her experience crossing a park on her way to a meeting. Walking there, she is approached by a random man making leching sounds and he threatens to manually rape her. The chapter analyses, what she called, the 'mini-second' in which she decides to respond and mobilises her agency in a series of actions, reactions, as well as inactions, involving the man, security guards, and anonymous bystanders. Less than an hour later the event ends when the mobilisation of her agential capacities takes a turn and she decides to walk away.

1.37 The selection of Sandra's case was grounded in its thematic, methodological and theoretical complexity. It builds on both Chapter 5's and Chapter 6's analyses. Similar to Chapter 5, there are multiple participants and
different types of interactions, and both actions and inactions; similar to Chapter 6, however, under the assumption that all access to others' as well as our own internal world is always incomplete, perspectival and partial – "we sometimes get things wrong about our own experience," Gallagher and Zahavi (2008, p.17) highlight, for instance, "some of the beliefs that we have about our own conscious states are provably false" – this time I do have (vicarious) access to the protagonist's (i.e. Sandra's) account of their own experience of agency. There are two significant differences from the other cases. First, this case consists of a complex interplay of various social categorical differences and positions in power relations (cf. Chapter 3), which are orientated outwardly and inwardly (cf. Chapter 4). Second, there is a 'turn of events' at various points in response to a change in the course of Sandra's mobilisation of agency. Additionally, in this case Sandra is, at first at least, the object of prejudice; however, this changes with the course of the event.

1.38 In the discussion of the case studies I respond to the first research question in order to enable a response, in Chapter 8 (the concluding chapter), to the second research question: How can 'intersectional agency' be conceptualised? Grounded in the empirical analyses (Chapters 5-7) and the theoretical framework (Chapters 2-4), I will build up a conceptual argument for intersectional agency in the concluding chapter (Chapter 8). For this, I first seek to consolidate and expand the anti-conflationary approach laid out initially in Chapter 4. Proposing agency as a mechanism that must be mobilised, second, I then move on to focus on the intricacies of the interrelatedness of agency, social categories and power. In doing so, I come to a conceptualisation of intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism – i.e. as agentially and agentically orientated outwardly and inwardly; as multidimensional and pluriform; and as contextual and multilayered. This thesis then pushes forward both theories of intersectionality and agency by offering a conceptual framework of intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism.
PART I

THEORISING INTERSECTIONALITY AND AGENCY
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Chapter 2. A Genealogy of Intersectionality

Introduction

2.1 In her research on the everyday racism that black women in the Netherlands and California experience, Essed (1989) develops a theoretical-methodological approach that is equally an experiential approach. Relating personal knowledge to general knowledge, she argues dialogically that the participants' own theoretical and ideological knowledge framework can form the – one might say, intersectional – foundation against which the participants understand their everyday experiences with (gendered) racism, and in which the understanding of these experiences can be understood by the researcher (e.g. see p.42). Even before I started this study, this approach offered a lens through which I made sense of racially privileged women's (including my own) sense making, and the lack thereof, in terms of, if you will, 'everyday race privilege' or 'everyday whiteness'. The participants in this study – all racially privileged women, although in Chapter 7 class privilege rather than race privilege is centred – are situated in an activist and social-political context in which they have been able to acquire an intersectional general and personal framework for understanding sexism, racism as well as classism, homophobia, and speciesism. In this, they, selectively and agentially, understand their own and others' experiences in terms of social categories and power (I return in Chapter 3 to this dialogical process and will also discuss white intersectionality scholars' selectivity as a manifestation of intersectional agency) – i.e. experiences with both, and simultaneously so, structural disadvantage and structural advantage. As is characteristic for whiteness and other forms of hegemony, the dialogical character of this framework and the participants' self-

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20 Some ideas in Chapters 2-4, presented in modified form, are grounded in two other publications, namely "Eu não preciso falar que eu sou branca, cara, eu sou Latina! Ou a complexidade da identificação racial na ideologia de ativistas jovens (não-)brancas" (Huijg, 2011) and "Tension in intersectional agency: A theoretical discussion of the interior conflict of white, feminist activists' intersectional location" (Huijg, 2012). Citations are referenced as usual.

21 The theoretical framework of 'intersectionality', as presented in this thesis, is only recently introduced in Brazil and was not available to the participants. I refer here then to intersectional thinking 'avant la lettre', as presented in this chapter.
understanding therein and thereof points to both change in and reproduction of hegemony. This study, however, is not specifically concerned, thematically, with (everyday) whiteness or racially privileged women; rather, it focusses on how these social categories and positions in the realm of power (disadvantage and advantage) are mobilised agentially and agentically, such as through the intersectional understanding and assessment of other and self. For this, however, intersectionality needs to be understood, including the role of power, privilege, and white women and whiteness therein.

2.2 It is common for white women to study white women in feminist or women’s studies; however, it is uncommon for white women, whiteness and hegemony to be the problematised object of study by a white researcher. This thesis, then, is firmly grounded in intersectional thinking and organising; it is important to emphasise that intersectional thinking in terms of thinking about whiteness and privilege does not, however, originate from white and racially privileged women. Rather than positioning this in hegemonic feminist studies, then, this can be traced back to an intersectional genealogy of decades, if not centuries, of intellectual and activist work by black feminists and feminists of colour in various countries. In this chapter I provide an overview of this development of intersectional thinking (avant la lettre) and, specifically, the problematisation of whiteness, white women and race privilege therein. Raising that privilege and hegemony have always been problematised in intersectional thinking, I explore how the singularity of the category of ‘woman’ and the idea of ‘difference’ was deconstructed, how the idea of intersectionality developed, what the metaphor of the intersection and what ‘intersectionality’ refer to, and how intersectionality is different from ‘accumulative’ approaches to social categories – e.g. race and gender and racism and sexism – and why that is important. I offer this in preparation of a discussion of intersectionality as a theory of (the interrelatedness of) social categories and power in Chapter 3. This, in turn, is central to the conceptualisation of intersectional agency developed in Chapter 8. First, now, I turn to the genealogy of intersectional thinking.
2.3 The term intersectionality was coined in 1989 by Crenshaw, a black feminist legal scholar in the United States (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). This gave rise to the development of a (critical and acritical\(^22\)) interdisciplinary 'field of intersectionality studies' and 'intersectional feminist infrastructures' (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Collins, 2015; Lewis, 2009, 2013; May, 2015; Nash, 2015; Pattynama & Phoenix, 2006). Intersectional analysis, I agree with others (e.g. Collins, 2000 [1990]; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2012), is both a political and an epistemological endeavour. Intersectionality's conceptual development is, in stricto sensu, grounded in a particular history of U.S. black feminist thinking and organising. However, as I will touch on, the development of intersectional thinking and organising should be situated globally and its 'cross-fertilisation' precedes 1989\(^23\) (e.g. see Captain & Ghorashi, 2001; Gonzalez, 1984, 1984 [1980]). There has also been criticism towards its — often selective and erasing — expansion (as discussed by Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Bilge, 2014; Lewis, 2013), and towards its Western character and, as such, its usefulness for "African-bred cultural perspectives" in Brazil (Werneck, 2007 [2005], p.108). The potential of intersectional analysis has been extended to other time periods (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Guy-Sheftall, 2009; Zerai, 2000); to other linguistic and geo-political regions, such as Brazil and the Netherlands (Botman, Jouwe & Wekker, 2001; C.P. Cardoso, 2012, 2016; Carneiro, Santos & Oliveira Costa, 1985; Essed, 1982; A.C. Pereira, 2016; Sterk, 2010); to other multiply oppressed groups, such as disabled people of colour (Erevelles, 2011; Erevelles & Minear, 2010); and, as I explore in this thesis, also to intersections consisting of both social advantage and hegemonic positions, such as in the case of white women or black men (Carbado, 2013; Huijg, 2011, 2012; Nash, 2008). In other words, the coining of the term, as I explore in this chapter, points more to continuity than to a rupture in intersectional thinking and organising.

\(^22\) I am alluding here also to tendencies in the field of intersectionality studies, as will be discussed, to engage with or reproduce 'acritical whiteness' (see par.1.1, L. Cardoso, 2010; L. Cardoso, 2014) in the employment and discussion of intersectionality.

\(^23\) For instance, Audre Lorde visited the Netherlands in 1984 and 1986 (Captain & Ghorashi, 2001, p.171) and Lélia Gonzalez incorporated reflections on her visits to the United States and other Latin American countries in her work on the position and experiences of black women in Brazil, including proposing an "afrolatinamerican feminism" (C.P. Cardoso, 2014; Gonzalez, 1984, 1984 [1980], 1988).
around, as Essed (1994a, p.99) calls it, the "holy trinity" of gender, race, class and, to some extent, sexuality (see also Collins, 2011, p.91n5).

2.4 A (retrospective) attribution of intersectionality or the inclusion of historic work into, what could be called, 'the intersectional canon' – employing intersectionality as a "historiographic tool" (May, 2012, p.19), "knowledge project" and "genealogical approach" (Collins, 2011, p.89) – is not necessarily an appropriating move, nor is it particular to this study24. Many others have engaged in a critical intersectional historiography of black and other feminists of colour's work going back to the 1800s. Feminists of colour and migrant feminists, being protagonists in the development of intersectional thinking, have also (re)interpreted their own earlier work into the realm of intersectional theory and the field of intersectionality studies. For instance, Yuval-Davis (2011, p.157) moved, albeit with reservations, from using 'social divisions' to the use of 'intersectionality' as "it evokes an intuitive understanding of the subject matter". Around the same time that 'intersectionality' was coined, Collins proposed the framework of the 'matrix of domination' in her ground-breaking work Black Feminist Thought (1990). This has been a foundational work in the field of intersectionality studies (see C.P. Cardoso, 2012; Ferber, Herrera & Samuels, 2007; Hancock, 2016; Sherwood, 2010). In turn, Collins seamlessly integrated 'intersectionality' into Black Feminist Thought's revised edition (2000 [1990]), as a framework in support of the 'matrix of domination' and, likewise, incorporated and developed intersectionality in later work (Collins, 2011, 2015; Collins & Bilge, 2016).

2.5 Arguably, much of the pre-1989 production of thinking and organising around multiple social categories by black, chicana and other women of colour25, and some white women, can be characterised retrospectively as intersectional26. A rich and widely referenced tradition developed in the United

24 Discussing various white European feminist scholars' work, Carbin and Edenheim (2013, p.236) criticise, one could say, the whitening of 'intersectional thinking avant la lettre' by problematising the "prolongation of intersectionality into a white feminist past as an attempt to clear this same feminism from a compromising history."
25 At the time the term 'third world women' was also used.
26 Arguably not all those studies can be retrospectively made sense of as intersectional – as for instance, Carbin and Edenheim (2013, p.243) argue; however, that is an analysis

2.6 The genealogy of 'intersectionality avant la lettre' is not particular to the English-speaking world. When I consider my own background, for instance, I look first at Brazil – i.e. the country where I entered the feminist movement in 2001 and which hosted the fieldwork for this study. Second, I look at the Netherlands – where I was raised and further developed my activist and academic intersectional awareness. To start with the latter, separate black, migrant, Muslim and refugee feminist organisations emerged – e.g. the Turkish women's association HTKB (1974) – and a canon of intersectional thinking – or 'kruispuntdenken' – developed in the Netherlands during the 1970-80s (see Aerts & Saharso, 2005 [1994]; Captain & Ghorashi, 2001; Carrilho, 1981; Carrilho, 1982; Deekman & Hermans, 2001; Essed, 1982, 1984, 1994b; M. Hermans, Ophem, Wekker et al., 2003; Jouwe & Botman, 2001; Leeman & Saharso, 1985; Loewenthal, 1984; Meulenbelt, 1985; Sterk, 2010; Wekker & Braidotti, 1996). In Brazil, intersectional thought developed in grassroots, institutional and academic environments, first inside black organisations – e.g. the Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU) – and later in separate black women's organisations – e.g. Aqualtune (1978) in Rio de Janeiro and Coletivo de Mulheres Negras (1983) in São Paulo. While not necessarily recognised by white intersectionality scholars in Brazil (to exemplify, see e.g. Piscitelli, 2004; 2008, I return to this), a prominent and rich canon of black feminist thought has emerged since the 1970s-80s. And many protagonists therein continue to this day as leaders in black feminist organising and thinking (see Bairros, 1995; Bento, 1995; Borges, 2005; Caldwell, 2007, 2016; C.P. Cardoso, 2012, 2014; that falls beyond the scope of this study. Additionally, not all scholars that I include here might necessarily self-identify as 'intersectional thinkers'.

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2.7 Historiographic expansion of the intersectional canon is also increasingly traced to the 19th century, such as through (re)readings of the works of Anna Julia Cooper, Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells27, who were protagonists in emancipatory and anti-discriminatory struggles and the literary tradition (Davis 1982 in Amos & Parmar, 1984; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Crenshaw, 1989; Guy-Sheftall, 2009; May, 2007, 2012; Oliveira Lemos, 2016; Wekker, 2003; Zerai, 2000). And in Brazil, for instance, a critical and intersectional historiography is being recuperated from the 1800s and before through the exploration of black and indigenous feminist leaders – such as Dandara dos Palmares, Tereza de Benguela and Luiza Mahin (17th-19th centuries) – in abolitionist, quilombola28, religious, suffragist and other resistance movements (see Arraes, s.d.; Carvalho, 2015; Domingues, 2007; Godinho, 2006; Lima, 2011; Schumacher & Brazil, 2000; Xavier, Farias & Gomes, 2012).

2.8 There have been arguments for the restriction of intersectionality as a framework to the experiences, needs and rights (etc.) of multiply oppressed people and groups. However, research on multiple disadvantages has always also concerned – their interaction with and in – hegemony, privilege and (multiply) advantaged access to power, and social structure. For instance, reflecting on the first National Meeting of Black Women in Valença in Brazil (1988), Ribeiro addresses how silence around race and power inside (and outside) gender narratives affects black and white women very differently: "in a society where the racial question is still a taboo," Ribeiro (1995, pp.448-450)

27 In the chapter "Du Bois and the Sociology of Gender", Rabaka (2010, pp.175-221) also makes the case for a rereading of, for instance, the work of W.E.B. du Bois – as a 'male-feminist' – through an intersectional (sociological) lens (see also Zerai, 2000).
28 Quilombola is the adjective of quilombo; quilombos, in Brazil, "are typically rural communities made up of descendants of slaves, or maroon communities, though distinctive territories inhabited by Black people and passed on across multiple generations also form part of this essentially political category, whose right to ancestral lands was established in the 1988 constitution" (editor's note in C.P. Cardoso, 2016, p.26n2).
explains, "achievements of the feminist movement can end up privileging white women to the detriment of black women." To exemplify different gender narratives, Braidotti (1993, p.315), who is a migrant and white feminist scholar, emphasises the "strong investment within Dutch feminism in the struggle against racism and the development of non-ethnocentric Women's Studies programmes." On the other hand, feminist and other scholars of colour in the Netherlands provide a different reading, precisely raising the whiteness of Dutch women's studies and its non-commitment to anti-racism and to the problematisation of race (Essed, 1994b; Essed & Nimako, 2006; Loewenthal, 1984; Nimako, 2012; Wekker, 2016). Also, white intersectionality scholars' practices of whitening, race marginalisation and erasure have been challenged in intersectional engagements and infrastructures (Lewis, 2013; Salem, 2016; Solanke, 2016; Tomlinson, 2013). Through a non-commitment to anti-racism, arguably then, intersectionality becomes 'non-performative' (cf. Ahmed, 2004; 2012, pp.113-140). To exemplify, the most referenced Brazilian article in Brazil on intersectionality (i.e. Piscitelli, 2008), as touched on, is written by a (migrant and) white feminist scholar, and completely ignores the decades long as well as current production of black feminist and intersectional thinking in Brazil – including where intersectionality as a theoretical framework has already been employed (i.e. by Bairros, 1995, 2002; Oliveira & Sant'Anna, 2002; Werneck, 2005; 2007, I return to this in the next chapter).

2.9 Even when a particular social group, a combination of particular positions in power relations, or the interplay of social categories are the focus of study, intersectionality always concerns all sides of power, oppression and inequalities. As I further explore in the next chapter, intersectionality offers an epistemological, political or social justice, and a dialogical framework to make different kinds of sense of the interplay of social dimensions, such as social categorical dynamics, processes, structures, and relations. In turn, (retrospectively) naming these social categorical 'interplays' is also doing politics as it foregrounds the role that, for instance, race privilege plays in or through gender. Similarly, the not naming, by white feminists in (what are called) intersectional analyses, of the privileging character of systems of inequalities and oppression and, inter alia, their own whiteness is in and of itself
a political (and, as such, agentic) 'doing' – although hardly an expression of social justice.

**Developing intersectionality**

2.10 'Intersectionality *avant la lettre*' frameworks challenge the idea of 'woman', which alludes to an idea of gender as a singular category that assumes a shared and unifying experience of 'racially neutral gendered sameness' (hooks, 1997, pp.167-169) and, as such, of 'global sisterhood' (cf. Morgan, 1984 in Mohanty, 1995, p.73). Instead, feminists of colour point out that the idea of 'woman' suggests "an ahistorical notion of the sameness of [women's] oppression" (Mohanty, 1995, p.74) that proposes a 'monist feminism' (cf. King, 1988). Challenging a homogenising ('feminist') conceptualisation of gender void of a race critical perspective, they reject this approach as a "single-axis framework" (Nash, 2008, pp.2-3).

2.11 In terms of feminism, the consequence of a single-axis framework (of 'woman') is that experiences with gender discrimination are presented as singular, unifying and homogenous – as norm and as normative. 'Intersectionality *avant la lettre*' draws attention to how this approach provides a hegemonic white understanding of the idea and reality of 'woman' that is supposedly representing (all) women. As such, middle class and heterosexual (and able bodied) white women's experiences are taken as the standard for gender discrimination and inequality and black men's experiences are taken as the standard for race discrimination and inequality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). This also implies, consequently, that white women's and black men's experiences are presented as neutral in terms of, respectively, race and gender. This way, white women's race privilege and black men's gender privilege are unaccounted for and, as such, remain structurally invisible – 'unmarked' and

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29 Although partially referring to the past in the discussion of the development of intersectionality and intersectionality studies, I continue, now, to write in the present tense to emphasise continuity instead of rupture.

30 Unfortunately, (critical approaches to) disability and ableism sparsely appear in 'intersectionality *avant la lettre*', although recently there has been an increase in intersectional analyses of disability.
'unnamed' (e.g. Frankenberg, 2004, p.213; Phoenix, 2006, p.22) – while operating by means of and, as such, reinforcing their respective normativities.

2.12 In the current study of intersectional agency, the social categorical engagements and non-engagements by white and other hegemonic feminist activists are problematised. An intersectional reading thereof, I argue in this thesis, foregrounds how power and (as such) structural disadvantage and advantage operate in agency simultaneously, although ‘polythetically’ (see Chapter 8), via different social categories. Such a reading can uncover, then, how disadvantageous experiences in the light of one or more social categories take shape at their junction with power and privilege. This is often expressed through their simultaneous invisibilisation and centralisation of the 'absent-but-hegemonically-present category', such as in the lives of white women (Huijg, 2012).

2.13 Understanding women as multiple offers a non-unified, pluriform and differentiated social category; at least in theory, the understanding of gender and race as existing in isolation are rejected. Also rejected, although still employed (including in intersectionality studies), have been parallel as well as additive or accumulative approaches to thinking about social categories, power relations and oppression. In 'multicategorical' parallel quantitative approaches, (survey) boxes of social categories might be ticked (cf. Bowleg, 2008), but race and gender are regarded to operate independently. In these approaches, the lives of women of colour are located at "mutually exclusive terrains" (Crenshaw, 1991, pp.1240-1241). Often Black women, Crenshaw raises, experience double-discrimination – the combined effects of practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes, they experience discrimination as Black women – not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as Black women. (Crenshaw, 1989, p.149)

In multicategorical additive or accumulative approaches, then, the lives of women of colour are analysed as the 'sum' of separate and separable race and gender experiences31, even though these approaches are often named as intersectional.

31 These are often visualised as mathematical equations, such as Nash’s (2008) “race + gender + sexuality + class = complex identity” and Bowleg’s (2008) “Black + Lesbian +
Intersectional thinking, then, renounces the aforementioned 'single-axis framework' – including parallel and accumulative approaches. Addressing the simultaneity of race and racism, gender and sexism and, sometimes, class and classism (and sexuality, but rarely disability), the intention is to "subvert race/gender binaries" (cf. Nash, 2008, pp.2-3, emphasis added). This way, attention is drawn to the specific realities of "intersectional marginalization" (Strolovitch, 2006) that black and ethnic minority women live. This rejects compartmentalising approaches by considering (marginalised) experiences as intertwined, possibly even synergistically, as a junction where axes are mutually influential – or even mutually inclusive – and create a 'new' location where the lives of black women and other women of colour can be comprehended, in Lorde's (1984a, pp.120-121) words, as a 'meaningful whole'. As I discuss further in the thesis, this is rather different for white women and other social groups whose 'location' consists of social categorical differences that are marked, to simplify this in binary terms, by positions at opposite ends of the spectrum of power (relations). For example, Juliana, a participant from a previous project on young, white feminist activism (see Huijg, 2011, 2012), reflects on her location that, at its intersectional junction, simultaneously represents the oppressor in the 'racial question' and the oppressed in the 'woman's question':

> you being white, you are the *ser oppressed* of racism. [...] It is as the *ser homem* in the woman's question. The more feminist he might be, he is a man, he carries the phallic power and the whole stigma of the *ser homem*. As an institution, man represents the oppressor and women the oppressed. In the racial question the same thing; white represents the oppressor and black the oppressed. (Juliana in Huijg, 2011, p.90)

Although this location is 'new', it is certainly not a harmonious one but, instead, points to a tensional relationship (i.e. relations 'in tension') between social categorical differences and positions of power (see also Huijg, 2012).

32 There is little awareness of disability in intersectional analyses. Studies that analyse disability, in turn, also very rarely address gender and race, and when they do they unfortunately seem to operate more in critical disability studies than (also) in the field of intersectionality studies (e.g. Ben-Moshe & Magaña, 2014; Erevelles, 2011; Erevelles & Minear, 2010). Though I engage in this thesis to some extent with 'intersectional disability literature' (cf. Huijg, 2017), a proper analysis falls beyond the scope of this study.
33 *Ser oppressed* refers to an abstract notion of ‘oppressive being’.
34 *Ser homem* refers to an abstract notion of ‘male being’.
35 Indented *verbatim* quotes of participants use a different font.
2.15 When coined, intersectionality was employed as "a simple analogy" to see and name a problem and to 'fix' the problem (Crenshaw, 2016). It was developed from a critique of the legal system, which did not allow for experiences involving multiple social positions to be brought to court, but also addressed, for instance, policy; as such, it was never intended to be restricted to a particular domain of the social (legal, economic, etc.) world. Describing unsuccessful discrimination cases that black women filed against General Motors, Hughes Helicopter and Travenol, Crenshaw (1989) problematised the single-axis framework. It was found in these cases that black women could not be considered a "special class to be protected from discrimination"; in the General Motors case the court stated, for instance, that "a cause of action for race discrimination" could be examined, one could be examined for "sex discrimination, or alternatively either, but not a combination of both" (p.141). Black women could not prove discrimination in the firms on grounds of either race or of gender, because the discrimination they experienced was neither experienced by white women nor by black men, and neither was it exclusive to gender nor to race. Rather, it was the "combined effects" of both – i.e. 
intersectional discrimination – where it cannot always be identified which parts are gendered and which are raced (p.149). However, Crenshaw identified, this did not only concern the 
advantaging of black women, but also "the privileging of whiteness or maleness," which is "implicit and […] generally not perceived at all." White women's experiences served as the norm for gender discrimination and "the model of race discrimination tends to be based on the experiences of the most privileged Blacks." (Crenshaw, 1989, p.151).

2.16 From the start, then, intersectionality problematised power and privilege. Therein, Crenshaw's metaphor represented the junction of intersecting lanes (represented rigidly by the term 'axes') where traffic of analyses of racism is coming from one lane and, simultaneously from the other lane, traffic with analyses of sexism is approaching. The argument was not that gender and racial discrimination are interchangeable or, alternatively, that they are inseparable. The point was that in its analytical intersectional complexity (to allude to a 'collision of traffic', cf. Crenshaw, 1989, p.149), the aforementioned junction was not recognised in the legal and policy system (etc.) as a 'new'
location that was irreducible to either 'lane'. Intersectionality as a metaphor, Crenshaw comments, intended to describe:

the way all these systems of oppression overlap. But more importantly, how in the process of that structural convergence rhetorical politics and identity politics—based on the idea that systems of subordination do not overlap—would abandon issues and causes and people who actually were affected by overlapping systems of subordination. I've always been interested in both the structural convergence and the political marginality. (Crenshaw in Berger & Guidroz, 2010, p.65)

From the start, then, intersectionality was not a neutral metaphor; intersectionality pointed to more than an observation and analysis of the 'empirical reality' of the new locations in which multiple categories were operating simultaneously. Arguably, Crenshaw addressed the discrepancy between, for instance, structural and institutional practices and legal and policy frameworks, specific experiences of social groups, and social categorical systemic inequalities. This, in turn, draws attention to multidimensionality and dimensional tensions (see Chapter 3) and, particularly, the discrepancy between the relatively slow-changing and inflexible way that legal and policy frameworks and infrastructures operate and the more flexible and rapidly changing way that social relations operate.

**Intersectionality as a field of study**

2.17 While 'intersectionality' was initially coined as a legal or policy metaphor, over the years it has been interpreted in a variety of ways; including as a heuristic term or device (Anthias, 2013b; Cho et al., 2013; Lewis, 2013), a methodological tool (Bowleg, 2008; McCall, 2005), a theory (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Lewis, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2006), a research paradigm or paradigmatic shift (Hancock, 2007, 2016), an ontological foundation or framework (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Phoenix, 2006), and as a field of studies (Cho et al., 2013). Prominently, intersectionality has also been understood as an epistemological lens and a knowledge project (Collins, 2011, 2015; Yuval-

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36 As well as a catch-all phrase and buzzword (K. Davis, 2008; Pattynama & Phoenix, 2006), an “originalism” (Nash, 2015), and an idea and ideograph (Alexander-Floyd, 2012); as a “signifier for ‘good research’”, an “organizing category for feminist inquiry” (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013, p.234; Lewis, 2013, p.869), a ‘component of the feminist toolkit’ (Tomlinson, 2018), and even “a series of concrete socio-political problems and situations” (rather than a theory, cf. Clegg, 2016),
and has been linked to the political, to politicisation and to politics (Brah, 1996; Cho et al., 2013, p.800; Crenshaw, 1991) – I turn to this in the next chapter. In addition, in activist circles ‘intersectional feminism’ is increasingly used as a political praxis, orientation and/or ideological identity (Anunciada, 2015; Bilge, 2013; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Dzodan, 2011; Evans, 2016; Feminist Fightback, 2015; Gordon, 2016; Intersectional Feminism for Beginners, s.d.; Mattos & Xavier, 2016; Souza, 2016; Uwujaren & Utt, 2015; Vidal, 2014).

2.18 Thirty years on from when Crenshaw (1989, 1991) coined the term intersectionality, the ‘field of intersectionality studies’ has expanded exponentially and, unsurprisingly, now seems to have landed in a reflective phase. Part of this phase involves the exploration of the boundaries and directions of intersectionality (e.g. see Cho et al., 2013; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2016). The ‘field of intersectionality studies’ could be understood as the studies that self-define as intersectional and/or engage with intersectionality studies. However, as discussed, scholars and activists not employing the term ‘intersectionality’ might still do intersectional analysis and thinking. On the other hand, as has been problematised (e.g. see Hancock, 2007), even when self-identified as intersectional, arguably not all studies pertaining to this field are actually doing intersectional analysis – and they may even reproduce (its) whiteness and contribute to the whitening and depoliticisation of ‘the field’ (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Bilge, 2014; Lewis, 2013; May, 2015; Salem, 2016; Wekker, 2016). In turn, some studies are ‘monocategorical’ in that they actually centre gender (only). Other studies, flirting with McCall’s (2005) terminology, employ a multicategorical analysis when they engage with two or more social categories, but foundational features of intersectionality are missing.

2.19 My intention in this thesis, however, is not to dismiss analyses as non-intersectional by redefining them as multicategorical; neither do I intend to discuss intersectionality, as Cho et al. (2013, p.789) also problematise, as a “full-fledged grand theory or a standardized methodology." Rather, I seek to

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37 Unfortunately, a proper discussion of ‘intersectional feminism’ as an activist identity or ideology, as has been developed in recent years, falls beyond the scope of this thesis. The concept of ‘intersectional feminism’ did not emerge in the conversations I had during fieldwork, nor, as far as I am aware, in written activist material (e.g. blogs, e-mail lists, etc.)
highlight discussions regarding the travelling of "theoretical and methodological debates" in the field of intersectionality studies (Ibid). The discussion in this chapter enables me to critically explore the deconstruction of the homogenisation and hegemonisation of the idea of 'woman' and of white women, to introduce the idea of selective mobilisation of agency, as well as to initiate the thinking of the interrelatedness of social categories and social categorical differences, further discussed in the following chapter. In the next chapter, then, I discuss some aspects that characterise intersectional analysis. First, I argue for the analytical distinction between social categorical and non-social categorical differences to highlight the centrality of power and categorisation in social categories and, as such, the hierarchisation of social categorical differences. This, in turn, points to the argument that power, social categorical differences and social dimensions (e.g. ideology, social relations, identity, social structure) are foundational building blocks for the conceptualisation of intersectionality, and that intersectional theory has offered a discussion of their simultaneous relatedness and irreducibility. As is being emphasised in the field, I highlight that intersectionality should be seen as a social justice, an epistemological and a dialogical project, which, in turn, points to the necessity to explore the role of privilege and hegemony in intersectional agency. Particularly relevant in Chapter 3, as mentioned, is the discussion of the interrelatedness of social categories and power, which forms the foundation of the empirical analysis (Chapters 5-7) and the theoretical discussion of intersectional agency and its poly lithic character (Chapter 8).
Chapter 3. Theorising Intersectionality

Introduction

3.1 The field of intersectionality studies, as I touched on in the previous chapter, has increasingly been exploring its boundaries. Cho et al. (2013, p.785) identify three tendencies of engagement: first, applications of an intersectional framework or (empirical) investigations of intersectional dynamics; second, discursive debates about the scope and content of intersectionality as a theory and methodology; and, third, political interventions that employ an intersectional lens. Collins (2015, p.4) differentiates intersectionality as a field of study, as an analytical strategy and as critical praxis. Collins and Bilge (2016, p.194) distinguish "six characteristic themes: relatioanality, social context, power, inequality, social justice, and complexity." Some of these are arguably not specific to intersectionality, but are foundational, as I will discuss, to an understanding of social categories, and hence to their interaction.

3.2 With that in mind, in this chapter I discuss, non-exhaustively, some characteristics that are foundational for the theorisation of intersectionality. I will do this in four sections. First, I will address three orientating features that emerge in theoretical reflections in the literature, in which intersectionality can be understood as a dialogical, as an epistemological, and as a social justice project. Additionally, I argue in this chapter that it is not only important to consider social categories as foundational to intersectional thinking, but to consider how social categories are foundational. The reason for this is that the exploration of intersectional agency requires more than thinking about intersectionality and 'social categorical interplay'; while mutually influential, the analysis in this thesis demonstrates that the interplay of social categories is not necessarily 'intertwined'. Because of this, an exploration of intersectional agency requires a more complex understanding of social categories themselves. With social categories as the conceptual building blocks of intersectionality, I agree with the argument against the conflation of 'difference' with 'social categories' and argue, second, that perhaps 'non-social categorical'
differences can be situated outside the realm of social inequalities and power (although I will even question this), but that social categorical differences are *per definition* always marked by social inequality and power and, as such, cannot be neutral. Third, against the reduction of social categories to either identity or social structure, I will argue that social categories are multidimensional and, as such, that they are always dynamic and relational. Grounded in the argument offered by Anthias (2013b, p.4) that "intersectionality posits that social divisions interrelate in terms of the production of social relations and in terms of people’s lives," anticipating the exploration of intersectional agency through an understanding of intersectionality as a theory of the interplay of social categories (and therewith power), last, I discuss intersectionality in terms of social categorical interrelatedness. These arguments form the foundation for the intersectional analysis of agency in Chapters 5-7 and, subsequently, the conceptualisation of intersectional agency.

Orientating features of intersectionality

*Intersectional analysis as epistemological orientation* 

3.3 It has been emphasised that intersectional analysis is an epistemological endeavour or an analytical sensibility, disposition or strategy (e.g. C.P. Cardoso, 2012; Cho *et al.*, 2013; Collins, 2015; Lewis, 2013; May, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2012), and that it can include discussions of ontology, theory, methodology, empirical analysis and so forth. As an epistemological orientation, an "intersectional way of thinking," Cho *et al.* (2013, p.795) emphasise, is a particular way of thinking. Central to this are social categories, I argue; intersectionality concerns the question of how social categories, and all they imply, interact. However, an analysis of social categories and their interaction – i.e. intersectional analysis – is not the same as neutrally thinking about "the problem of sameness and difference" (p.795), but rather concerns a critical exploration of how "sameness and difference" and, as I discuss in this chapter, how social categories "are always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of

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38 I return to the idea of ‘orientation’ as a condition for agency in Chapter 4.
power" (Ibid). In this study, for instance, the epistemological quality does not only emerge in intersectional analysis as a lens through which to understand agency, but also in an exploration of the employment of an intersectional lens by the 'agents' in the case studies (Chapters 5-7) in the mobilisation of (their) agency. Intersectionality, as Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays et al. (2013, pp.304-305) highlight, is characterised by its inherent incompleteness, specificity, provisionality and situatedness. This enables a phenomenological approach through, for instance, epistemological openness and curiosity (discussed in more detail in Chapter 1). In line with this, a study of 'intersectional agency' does not in and of itself concern the study of a(n ontologically) particular social group as a collective. Rather, it is a particular epistemological engagement with agency in the sense that it situates and explores agency in the multiplicity of dynamics of power and workings of social categories. It is important to recognise, however, that hegemonic strands in the thinking about and organising around intersectionality have been challenged for their selective engagement with social categories, inequalities and positions in dynamics of power (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Bilge, 2014; Carbado, 2013; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 2011; Erel, Haritaworn, Rodríguez et al., 2010; Jordan-Zachery, 2013; Lewis, 2013; Salem, 2016; Tomlinson, 2013; Werneck, 2005). These critiques touch, for instance, on how whiteness is employed as an epistemic void – as erasure, ignorance or, in the words of May (2014, p.95), as "epistemic distortion." This way, whiteness can intersectionally operate through an agentially inactive engagement with the racial (white) self and power39 – I return to this in the current and following chapters.

*Intersectional analysis orientated towards social justice*

3.4 Grounded in the need to organise intersectionally against the way that systems of social inequality, groups of people and oppression interact, intersectional analysis, as has been raised repetitively and emphatically, is complexly political and comes out of and is connected to struggles for social justice, particularly of and by black women and other women of colour (Crenshaw in Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Berger & Guidroz, 2010; Bilge, 2013; Cho

39 Inclusively, see C.P. Cardoso’s (2012, p.243) critique of my Master’s Dissertation (Huijg, 2007).
et al., 2013; Chun, Lipsitz & Shin, 2013; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989; Lewis, 2013; Werneck, 2014). Initially, "the concept of intersectionality emerged," Chun et al. (2013, p.922) maintain, "as a mechanism for revealing that power works in uneven and differentiated ways." It is employed as such in this thesis, to explore how power works agentially and agentically through various social categories and agential elements. One way that the unequal distribution of power occurs is through, what Crenshaw calls, 'political intersectionality': that is, the need to split one’s "political energies" between the different subordinated groups one belongs to and, consequently, between conflicting or even opposing political agendas (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1252). Contesting claims that intersectionality only concerns the experience of oppression – which Crenshaw always challenged (e.g. see p.1242) – Cho et al. (2013, p.806) emphasise that intersectional analysis can refer to both the "understanding and [the] intervening against the social reproduction of power". Intersectionality is not limited to the understanding of a collective experience or a particular conceptualisation of identity. The political character of intersectional analysis is characterised, rather, by its objective to reveal and make sense of unequal distributions of resources and allocations of value, social inequalities, power (relations), and so forth; intersectionality, argues Solanke (2016, p.112), can particularly "disrupt dominant discourses, especially those that make certain forms of discrimination invisible."

3.5 As the cases in this thesis demonstrate, social justice discourse does not necessarily imply a socially just praxis. Reflecting on the 'pre-intersectionality' era, Spivak (1989, p.128-129 in Martin, 1994, p.630), for instance, expresses her suspicion of "how anti-essentialism [...] is allowing women to call names and to congratulate themselves." Perhaps this also rings true for parts of the field of intersectionality, considering how it is "celebrated by feminist scholars across the globe, receiving special praise and appreciation" (Bilge, 2013, p.410). The risk, Salem (2016, p.4) emphasises, is that intersectionality follows the work that 'diversity' has done before, namely by moving away from "its radical potential" and dislocating intersectionality from power relations and domination. Wekker (2016, p.71) raises "how debates about race in the [Dutch] feminist movement" were discontinued as intersectionality provided a politics of social categorical optionality. Perhaps this depoliticisation 'undoes' intersectionality (cf. Bilge,
for instance, the employment of intersectionality as a neutral and apolitical framework that can be applied to an \( n \)-number of combinations of social categories and differences can effectively whiten intersectionality and remarginalise black women (cf. e.g. Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Bilge, 2013, 2014; Salem, 2016; Solanke, 2016). Not only does this ignore the social-political history of intersectional thinking and organising, but, as Bilge (2013, p.410) highlights, it also sidelines the question of whether subordinated groups are empowered or disempowered by intersectionality as an analytical and political tool. The neutralisation and depoliticisation of intersectionality, then, arguably refers to, first, a rejection (in practice) of the conceptual foundation for intersectional theorising and, second, a partial engagement with differences, social categories and power.

3.6 Paying lip service to intersectionality as a social justice project does not only neutralise intersectionality and risk the remarginalisation of women of colour, it also pushes the intersectional lens away from the visibilisation and problematisation of power as privilege (e.g. whiteness, middle-classness). And many scholars emphasise the need to intersectionally problematise – inclusively, but certainly not exclusively – hegemony, dominance and structurally advantageous access to power and resources (e.g. Bilge, 2014; Byrne, 2006a; Cabrera, 2016; Coston & Kimmel, 2012; Crisp, 2014; Essed, 1994a; Frankenberg, 1993; Huijg, 2011, 2012; Hurtado, 1996; Jonsson, 2014; Levine-Rasky, 2011; Marcinik & Mattos, 2017; Nash, 2008; Pheterson, 1986; Phoenix, 2006).

3.7 On the basis of, first, a dialogical logic of social categories and power (see below) and, second, an orientation towards social justice, intersectional analysis concerns all sites and complex interactions of power. A partial commitment to social justice through selective engagement with social categorical differences and positions in power relations – as employed, particularly, by both white feminist scholars and by the participants in this study – implies a(n epistemological) focus on disadvantageous experiences without (dialogically) addressing structural advantage and hegemony. Contributing, to reiterate, to the depoliticisation of intersectionality studies and the reification of oppression and marginalisation, arguably this goes against the intention of intersectionality.
For the purpose of theoretical delineation, perhaps this can be classified as multica
tegorical rather than intersectional analysis. This study precisely intends to employ an intersectional lens to explore non-engagement, selective mobilisation and prioritisation in the hegemonic movement of agentic inaction, such as in the realm of class and race.

**Intersectional analysis as dialogical**

**3.8** The arrival of intersectionality, Lewis recalls,

helped to erode the epistemological boundaries between those who 'know' and those who 'experience' [...]. As an approach to both feminist advocacy and academic inquiry, intersectionality welcomed the margins to the table of theory making by reconciling the split between theory and experience—or, more precisely, by suggesting that experience could be the ground of theory making. (Lewis, 2013, p.873)

Also Collins (1990, 2000 [1990]) and Essed (1989, 1991), among many others, draw attention to the necessity of grounding knowledge about oppressions and inequalities, such as in the lives of black women, in individual and collective lived experiences and consciousness thereof. In light of the matrix of domination and (black feminist) standpoint theory, for example, Collins addresses this as the dialogical character of intersectional knowledge production:

On both the individual and the group level, a dialogical relationship suggests that changes in thinking may be accompanied by changed actions and that altered experiences may in turn stimulate a changed consciousness. For U.S. Black women as a collectivity, the struggle for a self-defined Black feminism occurs through an ongoing dialogue whereby action and thought inform one another. (Collins, 2000 [1990], p.30)

Collins (2015, p.5) identifies intersectionality as a critical praxis in which scholarship is recursively linked to practice and to social justice projects. While intersectional theory might be abstract, intersectionality is indeed grounded in praxis. "This praxis orientation," emphasise Cho et al. (2013, p.800), "demands that the realm of practice always already inform[s] the work of theorists." In this (intersectional) dialogical praxis, as Lewis emphasises, black women are both object and subject of knowledge, both 'experiencer' and 'knower', both 'researched' and 'researcher'.

**3.9** In the current study, both 'researcher' and 'researched' are white or, at least, have experiences marked by whiteness, and knowledge is constructed
from a structural place of hegemony. This requires reflection on the praxis orientation and dialogical character of intersectionality. I briefly touched on the dialogical character of 'understanding' in the cases of the participants in this study (see par.2.1); while I explore here the participants' experiences to 'make theory', the situatedness of the participants – and, for that matter, of me, the researcher – in a place of hegemony and privilege complicates this dialogical approach. While individual lived experiences are central in the cases under investigation, at the same time consciousness about them is questioned. "[C]ritical whiteness studies" bring to this the understanding that "whiteness [is] both object, subject and obstacle for the white critic," as Probyn (2004, par.7, emphasis added) argues, which "creates problems for the project of critical whiteness from the perspective of whiteness." Challenging the idea that 'insiderness' necessarily offers accurate and comprehensive access to knowledge (see par.1.10) – and that one's knowledge of 'one's inside' (or, for that matter, someone else's 'inside') can ever be comprehensive and accurate (see par.1.37) – perhaps the intersectional study of whiteness by white researchers is dialogically marked by 'blind spots' that are, precisely, characteristic of whiteness. Arguably these 'blind spots' are not particular to whiteness, but extend to other hegemonic positions. For instance, I recurrently mistranslated the Portuguese of the transcript of Sandra's case (Chapter 7), and only realised much later that Sandra actually physically grabbed the man who threatened her with manual rape. The 'intersectional blind spot' of this misreading was not linguistic in itself. Rather, it was blurred by my reading of Sandra, which was grounded in my attribution of recognition in terms of our relative shared gendered race and class position and of our activist background, and in my interpretative framework formed against ideas and ideals in which white, middle class women – such as Sandra and myself – ultimately are (or should be) non-violent and unthreatening, rather than often (physically) aggressive and harmful. The dialogical character here, then, does not refer necessarily to the fact that "changes in thinking may be accompanied by changed actions and that altered experiences may in turn stimulate a changed consciousness" (Collins, 2000 [1990], p.30) in terms of the participants' experiences; rather, the dialogical quality here can precisely point to the lack of change in both action and consciousness or, differently, to change in consciousness, but not in action. In the first chapter (see par.1.18) I referred to
the circling back and forth between the parts and the whole as a method to consider different facets of experiencing, understanding and self-understanding, between other and self, and between different 'sides' of social categories and power – i.e. both structural advantage and disadvantage, including across social categories. Intersectional blind spots can dialogically constitute this double process of understanding – e.g. my blind spot that resulted in the delayed understanding of Sandra's blind spot with regards to her self-understanding, where both blind spots revolve around the social categorical interrelatedness of privilege and disadvantage. The dialogical approach supported me with the circling back and forth between these parallel intersectional processes of me as the researcher, of the research participant and her self-understanding, and of my understanding of the participant's self-understanding (alluding to Essed, 1989; see par.2.1). Initially, to return to the example, I did not identify how class was intersectionally mobilised in harmful ways by Sandra. Ironically, then, it is precisely this dialogical engagement, where my own experiences and perspectival understanding in the research process are also objects of study, albeit not discussed at length in this thesis, which informed my understanding of the study and reinterpretation of Sandra's grabbing.

3.10 The aforementioned dialogical quality, then, includes different positions in the realm of power – e.g. margin and centre, structural disadvantage and advantage – which affect the dialogue with 'the margins' at 'the table'; this, however, cannot simply be transported to research by and on racially privileged women. The diversion from the centrality of power and oppression (etc.) in intersectional analysis, then, is expressed through selective engagement with the interaction of social categories and power relations. Whiteness in research on 'the multiply oppressed' by white researchers often operates through a non-dialogical engagement with the hegemonic (e.g. racial) side of one's own multiple positions in power\(^{40}\); by making sense of intersectionality as a theory of only social categories – rather than social categories and (therein) also power – research by white women researchers that centres on gender ends up relying on the circling back and forth between the researcher's own and the research

\(^{40}\) For example, Wekker (2016, p.76) draws attention to the disjuncture in this respect between Dutch white feminist scholars' 'intersectional teaching' and their research.
participants' position as 'the oppressed'. Consequently, this can result in the non-identification of the participants' (and the researchers' own) role in the reproduction of privilege and social inequality. This selective engagement, to emphasise, is enabled by the employment of a researcher's non-dialogical approach with regards to their own analysis in terms of both content and epistemological method. Selective engagement with the multiplicity of oppressions and positions in the realm of power produces partial knowledge and, as such, reproduces hegemonic perspectives – whether in the realm of race or otherwise. Depoliticising and hegemonising practices in intersectionality studies demonstrate, as discussed, that, although depoliticisation and hegemonisation do inform theory building, the experience and awareness thereof, on the other hand, do not necessarily do so. The current study exemplifies a reflective process with regards to the split between theory and experience (cf. Lewis, 2013) where it comes to the participants' partial or non-engagement with their own and others' race, class and other privileged and hegemonic positions.

3.11 Collins' reference to the interaction of action and thinking as dialogical (see also Yuval-Davis, 2012) might not comprehensively reflect the selective and non-empowering (agential) engagement and non-engagement with social categories and power where it comes to both structural disadvantage and advantage. ‘Dialogicality’ in the light of this thesis, then, includes the interplay of, for instance, race and class privilege with disadvantage in the realm of gender and sexuality. As a condition for intersectional analysis, then, the orientatedness of intersectional analysis requires a critical engagement with (or towards) all complexities and positions of power to explore "the ways in which privilege and oppression intersect, informing each subject's experiences" (Nash, 2008, p.12). In turn, this concerns both agential engagement and agential non-engagement (I return to 'non-engagement' in Chapter 5).

Social categories as building blocks of intersectionality

3.12 Race, gender and class have been employed as the 'foundational trilogy' of intersectional thinking (e.g. Collins, 2000 [1990]; Essed, 1994a; Gonzalez,
1984 [1980]; Winker & Degele, 2011); however, sexuality, citizenship, nation, geopolitics, faith and, less often, dis/ability are also increasingly incorporated in intersectional analyses (Aydemir, 2012; Bilge, 2010; Byrne, 2015; Erevelles, 2011; Erevelles & Minear, 2010; Lorde, 1982, 1984a; Taylor, Hines & Casey, 2010; Wekker, 2014). These are often called social categories, but also other terms are used to talk about intersections and intersectionality, such as axes or categories of difference, of signification, of social divisions, of inequality, of power and so on (Anthias, 2013b; Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Brah, 1996; K. Davis, 2008; May, 2015; Nash, 2008; Phoenix, 2006; Wekker, 2016; Winker & Degele, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2016). In Brazil 'social markers' and 'social markers of difference' are also employed (C.P. Cardoso, 2012; Moutinho, 2014; Piscitelli, 2008). These terms, however, cannot be used interchangeably as they can point to other political and epistemological orientations towards social categories and intersectionality – Salem (2016, p.4) even speaks of “conflicting approaches [that] use intersectionality.” For instance, in this section I touch on how Piscitelli (2008) proposes a problematic view on the relation between ‘difference’ and social inequality. Arguing that social categories are the conceptual building blocks of intersectionality, I suggest that this conflict revolves, among other issues, around the distinction between social categories and ‘difference’ and the role power plays therein. To explore the conceptual building blocks, it is necessary, first, to make the case for conceptually employing social categories over ‘difference’.

Differences, social categories and power

3.13 Intersectionality does not only come out of a critique of the hegemonisation and homogenisation of the singular idea of 'woman', such as in non-intersectional gender studies, but also a critique of the neutralisation of difference and its – selective – disconnection from power. In other words, the idea that social categorical differences can be investigated neutrally and descriptively – i.e. as unaffected by or outside the realm of power and social inequality – is also employed in intersectionality studies. To exemplify this, I want to briefly touch upon Piscitelli's perspective on differences, social categories, power and agency.
3.14 Piscitelli is a white feminist scholar in Brazil who wrote the article "Intersectionalities, categories of articulation and experiences of Brazilian [female] migrants"\(^{41}\) (2008), which is the most referenced\(^{42}\) article on intersectionality in Brazil (e.g. see Araújo, 2016; Facchini, França & Braz, 2014; França, 2010; Henning, 2015; López, 2011; Mello & Gonçalves, 2012; Moutinho, 2014; Padilla & Gomes, 2016; A.C. Pereira, 2016; Pocahy, 2014; Silveira, 2013). In this article\(^{43}\), Piscitelli ignores, first, black feminist 'knowers' and 'experiences' in Brazil and, second, the introduction of intersectionality as a concept and theoretical framework in Brazil since 1995 by Brazilian black feminists (see Bairros, 1995, 2002; Oliveira & Sant'Anna, 2002; Werneck, 2005, 2007).\(^{44}\) Ignoring Crenshaw's foundational role in intersectionality studies, Piscitelli furthermore challenges Crenshaw's contribution on the basis that she "merge[s] the idea of difference with that of inequality"\(^{45}\) and that the systemic approach – of which Crenshaw apparently functions here as the protagonist – "merge[s] race and racism" and consists of a "static vision of the meaning of race and racism […] as a single system" (Piscitelli, 2008, p.268). In the constructionist approach\(^{46}\), Piscitelli argues, one can "trace distinctions between categories of differentiation and systems of discrimination, between difference and inequality" (Ibid). It is difficult to understand how Crenshaw, who does adopt a multidimensional approach (to which I return), could be said to operate in a structuralist or systemic reductionist framework in the first place. It is not that Crenshaw, in the words of Piscitelli (2008, p.268), "merge[s] the idea of difference with that of inequality." Contrary to Piscitelli's (mis)interpretation of

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\(^{41}\) Original: "Interseccionalidades, categorias de articulação e experiências de migrantes brasileiras."

\(^{42}\) Since I have been exploring the introduction of intersectionality in Brazil, Piscitelli's article has come up first in Google Scholar searches using the keywords 'interseccionalidade' and 'interseccionalidades' (i.e. the terms used in Brazil; last accessed 24/07/19).

\(^{43}\) The black feminist genealogy of intersectional thinking in Brazil is now increasingly explored (e.g. see C.P. Cardoso, 2012, 2016; Costa, 2013; López, 2011; Mattos & Xavier, 2016; A.C. Pereira, 2016; E.M. Pereira & Fonseca, 2016; Rodrigues, 2019; Taquette, 2010; Werneck, 2014).

\(^{44}\) These publications were accompanied by two translated publications on intersectionality (i.e. Blackwell & Naber, 2002; Crenshaw, 2002 [2000]) in a special issue, of Estudos Feministas (2002, Vol.1, No.1), on the III UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001.

\(^{45}\) All translations into English from Portuguese and Dutch – both academic literature and interview transcripts – are provided by the author and all errors are the author's responsibility.

\(^{46}\) I do not subscribe to the constructionist–systemic division and do not see it adopted in the field; however, Piscitelli (and, in turn, Henning, 2015), with reference to Prins (2006), does propagate this.
Crenshaw, Crenshaw precisely challenges the neutrality of social categorical difference(s) in light of power and inequality. In light of the topic of this thesis (i.e. intersectional agency), it is important to note that Piscitelli’s approach does not merely formulate an anti-structuralist or anti-systemic perspective (of intersectionality) and argue for the separation of power and inequality from social categorical differences. Since Piscitelli does centre power, oppression and – structural and/or systemic – inequality in the realm of, for instance, gender differences in her analyses (e.g. Piscitelli, 2004), her critique of ‘systemic/structuralist approaches of intersectionality’ – personified by Crenshaw – actually suggests a call to separate power and inequality from race and racism specifically by neutralising (racial) social categorical differences. Independent of Piscitelli’s perspective, the distinction between difference, social categories, and social inequality and the central role of power therein, as raised already by Crenshaw (1991), does require clarification.

3.15 Reflecting on the development of intersectionality studies, Cho et al. (2013, p.789) highlight the ‘superficial preoccupation with difference’ over the central role of power. Salem (2016, p.4) addresses how neoliberalism has led to scholars using the concept of intersectionality “to speak of ‘diversity’ or even inequality instead of power relations or domination.” This concern with the decentring of power and oppression and the centring of difference is not only emerging in the current reflective phase, but has been the focus of critical attention since intersectionality and, before that, multiracial feminism and race critical feminist critiques took off. Zinn and Dill (1996, pp.322-323) caution against approaches that centre difference and marginalise the relevance of (in)equality, because they "ignore the inequalities that cause some characteristics to be seen as 'normal' while others are seen as 'different' and thus, deviant." When the (intersectional) difference that differences make is not made explicit, Phoenix (1998, p.865) challenges, “notions that some differences are [seen as] more valuable or more 'normal' than others” are reinforced. It is not that the aforementioned scholars suggest a conflationary approach to difference and (systems of) inequality, but, instead, that power and inequality are central to social categorical difference(s). In contrast, Piscitelli and others who provide similar criticisms seem to conflate social categories with social
identity and, in doing so, reduce social categories to a particular social
dimensional manifestation (I return to social dimensions shortly).

3.16 Another way to bring attention to the issue at hand is to foreground this
distinction between '(non-social categorical) differences' and 'social categorical
differences' and address the role therein of classification and hierarchy – as
markers of the way that social categories operate (see e.g. Anthias, 2013b;
Meekosha, 2006). To exemplify this distinction, I briefly discuss Eduarda – the
protagonist of Chapter 5 – who is an amateur guitar-player (alongside her
activism). Adoring her guitar, she might be 'different from' those who prefer to
play the trumpet or hate music altogether, but (her) love for the guitar does not
function as a classificatory differentiating qualifier; an absence or presence of
love for the guitar does not risk in and of itself structural allocation of less value
and, as such, disadvantage and oppression. 'Guitarism' in itself does not, then,
function as a structuring force or organising principle of society, hence there are
no implications in the terrain of power and social inequalities on the basis of
one's preference for the guitar alone and there is no classificatory system that
hierarchically organises the 'guitar-lovers' and o/Others. Musical preferences
and opportunities can certainly be attached to or operate through social
categories – e.g. class, culture, religion and race (compare, for instance, opera,
samba and wassailing) – and, as such, play a role in social inequality. However,
'guitar-lovers' are perhaps not a social categorical group. Guitar-love is not itself
a difference that makes a difference, and, precisely because of that, music does
not, in itself, operate as a social category. For the sake of the argument,
Eduarda's love for the guitar might mark a difference, but not a difference that in
itself marks "inequality, oppression, exploitation" (cf. Piscitelli, 2008, p.269).
While the guitar-lovers' group's boundaries are not in themselves markers of
social classification and hierarchisation – perhaps superficially guitar-lovers,
drummers and music-haters could be considered 'different and equal' – it is
simultaneously difficult to actually think of an example where differences are
unrelated to social categories.

3.17 Contextualising 'intersectional discourses of difference' in black feminist
thinking in Brazil, where the participants are situated, the "focus on
subordinated subjects" is conceptualised in Brazil as the study of 'specificity'
Reflecting on the feminist and the black movement during the dictatorship in Brazil in the 1970s, Ribeiro (1995) argues, relying on an idea of "supposed equality between women," how "in both movements black women appear as implicit subjects" – an idea of equality grounded in the premise "different but not unequal" (p.446). Here, however, the comparison between difference and equality is a false (and racially problematic) ideological construct incomparable to the guitar-example. The political struggle of black women, Ribeiro (p.446) highlights, consists of visibility and particularly of "unmasking situations of conflict and exclusion." Cautioning against the creation of hierarchies between general and specific struggles, specificity, Ribeiro (p.447n4) explains, refers, first, to the relation between differences and oppression and, second, to "organisational processes [such as] the specific organisation of black women" – not unrelated to Crenshaw's (1991, p.1252) concept of political intersectionality. Pointing to the differentiated historical experiences and to the differences in oppression that black women experience in contrast to white women, Carneiro (1993 [1989], pp.10-12) similarly challenges "the classic discourse about the oppression of women." Even when employed descriptively, specificity is not reducible to a neutral location where "specific differences" (cf. Piscitelli, 2008, p.265) – e.g. "between white and black women or between black men and black women" (Ribeiro, 1995, p.447n4) – intersect; hence, specificity and specific differences cannot be studied 'neutrally'.

3.18 Shifting to non-Brazilian literature, Cho et al. (2013, p.798) bring this issue to the fore from a different angle. They criticise, first, "the 'what about white men?' question" that is posed to intersectionality scholars and, second, the defence of "the absence of intersectionality in, for example, whiteness studies as a logical extension of intersectionality's exclusive focus on subordinated subjects." They address the premise that identity is understood as the playing field of intersectionality and difference as its perpetual dynamic. As Tomlinson [2013b, p.1012] notes, however, "If critics think intersectionality is a matter of identity rather than power, they cannot see which differences make a difference. Yet it is exactly our analyses of power that reveal which differences carry significance." (Cho et al., 2013, p.798)

Social categories and the study of the (intersectional) interplay thereof, first, cannot be reduced to identity (see below), but, second, to reiterate, social
categories can also not be reduced to a neutral difference and, as such, disconnected from power.

3.19 While there is the risk that centring power "can treat difference simplistically," Phoenix cautions, the contrary can "treat difference as free floating and abstracted from power relations" (Phoenix, 1998, p.860), which can result in the expression of racism as an apparently innocent difference (p.862). Distinguishing difference from social categories, all social "categories are associated with power relations," Phoenix (2006, p.22) explicates, "and so cannot be neutral". It is precisely the link to power and social inequalities that differentiates social categories from difference, hence conceptually qualifies social categories. In other words, 'social categorical differences' cannot be conflated with 'differences'; social categories insist "on articulating the differences that [make] a difference" (Crenshaw, 2011, p.226, emphasis added). Power, to emphasise, is central to intersectional thinking (see also, e.g., C.P. Cardoso, 2012, p.57; Chun et al., 2013; Collins, 2011, p.88; Collins & Bilge, 2016, pp.200-202; Meekosha, 2006).

3.20 On one level or another, then, social categories produce, reflect and are a product of structural or systemic inequality and social hierarchy; social categories (e.g. race) and systemic inequality (e.g. racism), then, cannot be conflated or merged47. At the same time, an intersectional epistemology also contradicts the disconnection of race from racism; while difference and inequality cannot be conflated or merged (cf. Piscitelli, 2008, p.267), social categorical differences do imply inequality. "[I]ntersectionality's raison d'etre," Collins (2015, p.3) summarises, precisely "lies in its attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities."

3.21 Foundational characteristics of intersectionality, then, concern the recognition, first, that social categories refer to social categorical differences and not to 'differences that do not make a difference' (i.e. non-social categorical differences); and, second, that social categorisation refers to the classification of people in patterned ways. Zinn and Dill (1996, pp.322-323) argue that "[r]ace

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47 According to Piscitelli (2008, p.268), for instance, Crenshaw would have argued that they can be merged (see also par.3.14).
and class differences” – hence social categorical differences – “are crucial […] insofar as they are primary organizing principles of a society which locates and positions groups within that society's opportunity structures." Because of their inherent classificatory quality, social categories are co-constructed by and co-construct the patterning of society. This recognises that social categories imply social structure as a patterned organising principle of society. However, that is not the same as saying that patterns or social structure 'determine' agency, society, or its social dimensions. Categorisation, Crenshaw (1991, p.1297) raises, "is itself an exercise of power," but it is not unilateral; in turn, inequality in terms of power does not exclude subversion, resistance and agency.

Social categories as multidimensional, contextual and dynamic

3.22 Social categories are a type of analytical category, rather than, what I call, a social dimension (e.g. identity) – to which I return. To explore social categories in light of intersectionality, it is helpful to point out that social categories operate on two levels, namely on the abstract or analytical level and on the concrete or practice level (Anthias, 2013b, p.7; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.4). Having this in mind, it is important to consider that social categories are, simultaneously, analytically separate while concretely inseparable. In a way, intersectional analysis attempts to grapple with this discrepancy by employing separate analytical categories to address (among others) the inseparability in practice of social categories. Social categories, then, provide a tool to make sense of and refer to patterns, continuity and discontinuity (etc.), while they also always, as analytical tools, contribute to the shaping of 'reality' on this concrete or practice level – and therein produce and are products of patterns. This is not a theoretical incongruence; rather, it refers to the tension between and co-existence of patterns and change, and points to the intrinsic discrepancy between social categories (as categories of analysis) and the “unstable and heterogeneous social reality” (McCall, 2005, p.1777). To exemplify, on the one hand, race refers to the process of classification of individuals into social groups through which social inequality takes particular raced forms; on the other hand, race is the analytical category that helps to make sense of how, practically or concretely, race operates that way. Per definition these do not collapse; there is at least a minimum level of discrepancy
(if not tension), on a practical and on an analytical level, between the 'realness' and the meaning of social categories.

**3.23** There are two influential misinterpretations of intersectionality, presented as criticism, originating from within the field of intersectionality studies and mostly orientated towards its foundational work and legacy. They come together in, but are certainly not particular to, Piscitelli’s aforementioned claim that foundational intersectional thought, explicitly referring to Crenshaw, "merge[s] race and racism" and consist of a "static vision of the meaning of race and racism […] as a single system" (Piscitelli, 2008, p.268).

**3.24** The first misinterpretation revolves around reductionist readings, which suggest that foundational intersectional scholars conceptualise or employ social categories as either identity (or representation), or as system of inequality and oppression (or social structure) (e.g. see Boogaard & Roggeband, 2010, p.54; Clegg, 2016, p.495; Piscitelli, 2008; Powers & Duffy, 2016; Prins, 2006, pp.279-280). I call these different dimensions of social life – e.g. identity, representation, system of inequality, social structure, but also ideology, symbols, institutions, social groups, practices, and so forth – social dimensions48 (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p.76, also consider the economic, cultural and political). Many scholars have challenged this interpretation (e.g. Anthias, 2013b, p.5; Yuval-Davis in Berger & Guidroz, 2010, p.70; May, 2015, p.8; Winker & Degele, 2011, p.53; Yuval-Davis, 2012, p.51); foundational work has always consisted of an engagement with social categories, difference and their interrelatedness through multiple social dimensions (e.g. see Brah, 1996; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Essed, 1989; Gonzalez, 1984 [1980], 1988; Zinn & Dill, 1996). Nonetheless, this concern does highlight the problem of reducing the interrelatedness of social categories to one social dimension only – I refer to this as the 'monodimensional' understanding of social categories and intersectionality. In contrast, as I discuss in this thesis,

48 Note that the term ‘multidimensionality’ is used in a variety of ways. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.963), for instance, use ‘dimensions’ very differently to refer to components of agency.
intersectionality arguably concerns a multidimensional understanding of social categories and their interrelatedness.

3.25 The second misinterpretation is that foundational intersectionality work interprets social categories, their differences, and social dimensions, as static – or, for that matter, as atomic, autonomous, constant, decontextual, fixed, monolithic, stable, unified, uniform and/or universal (e.g. A.C. Pereira, 2015, p.2330; Piscitelli, 2008; Villa, 2011, p.183). This critique seems to relate to a particularly (pun intended) static and linear interpretation of Crenshaw’s (1989, 1991) foundational work and her metaphor of the intersection – specifically of its spatiality, its roads and traffic. It is interesting how here the metaphor is decontextualised from the reality of the legal and policy field in which these texts were written; the metaphor of the intersection precisely responded to and served to challenge, but also had to relate to, the field’s static, linear and atomic character. The attribution of monodimensional boundaries in this critique to the metaphor and the projection of responsibility onto Crenshaw’s work – i.e. that the metaphor would restrict scholars’ freedom to dynamically and multidimensionally interpret ‘the intersection’ and therewith social categories and their differences – ironically exemplifies selective interpretation as a manifestation of agency. Social categories and social categorical differences, then, are not static, homogenous, fixed or universal (etc.); to the contrary, they are per definition unstable, dynamic, relational, contextual, fluid, and always changing. This approach to social categories has been employed, multidimensionally, by many intersectional thinkers (e.g. Brah, 1996; Byrne, 2006a; Carbado, 2013; Carbado et al., 2013; Collins, 1990, 2000 [1990], 2015; Essed, 1994a; Garry, 2011; A.C. Pereira, 2016; Phoenix, 1998; Verloo, 2009; Werneck, 2014; Zinn & Dill, 1996).

3.26 Anthias (2013b, p.7) comments that social categories construct “particular criteria by which people are ordered into the categories but the categorising of people should not be elided with particular population categories/groupings as they relate to social life.” Although all social categories, in and of themselves, construct particular criteria (etc.), the particularities of those criteria are different.

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49 For discussions on multidimensionality, see, for instance, Garry (2011), May (2012) and Winker and Degele (2011).
and, as touched on, dynamic and contextual; social categories and social
categorical differences, then, function differently. On the concrete level, social
categories and their differences are always incomplete, perspectival and
changing. It might seem that 'white', for instance, only exists in relation to
'browm' and 'black' – after all, social categorical differences are interdependent;
however, they are neither mutually exclusive nor is their boundary fixed.
"'W'hite' is often a matter of contestation," Frankenberg (2004, p.113) argues,
"and in different times and places, some kinds of whiteness are boundary-
markers of the category itself." Inclusively, 'white' – or any social categorical
difference – is itself contextual and situational. Anthias (2013b, p.7) refers to the
example of someone who might identify as British while belonging to an ethnic
minority group.

3.27 Social categories indeed refer to patterns, relations and hierarchies in
society, but they do not determine how individuals experience themselves and
the world they live in – including their positions and identities in the realm of
(intersecting) social categories – and how they operate therein (I return to
structure and determinism in Chapter 4). Emphasising the contextual as well as
the relational, Phoenix (2006, p.23) draws attention, for example, to how the
boundaries of blackness are regulated by means of power in intergroup as well
as intragroup relations, affecting the possibilities for self-identity. The dynamic
and contextual character of social categorical differences is particularly
apparent when considered multidimensionally. To exemplify, I had identified
Dandara – a participant in a previous study (Huijg, 2011) – as white, on the
basis of which I had invited her to take part in the study, and she responded
accordingly to questions in the interview. However, her racial self-identifcation
(i.e. black) was aligned with the racial identity of her family (i.e. black) and her
ideological identity (i.e. as a young black feminist), but did not correspond with
how she was identified by others outside her inner and activist circle (i.e. white),
with her racial familial experiences (i.e. she and her mother were often thought
by others to be unrelated), and with her position in terms of structural inequality
(i.e. race privilege). In this study, Luciane (see Chapter 6) identifies as white
and recognises her position in terms of social structure accordingly due to her experiences of race privilege; however, her father is of Japanese descent.\footnote{Note that the Japanese population in São Paulo tends to have racially advantageous experiences.}

\textbf{3.28} Race and gender relations (etc.), and the study thereof, then, should always be situated in their context. Social categories, Anthias discusses, are primary units of social representation and social organisation. However, they exist within spatial and temporal contexts and are emergent rather than given and unchangeable, located in the operations of power. Such a view refuses the idea of categories as fixed elements of the social landscape but not categories themselves. (Anthias, 2013b, p.8)

Although the abstract principle or idea of difference is constant, the concrete forms that 'difference' takes and the concrete implications of subsequent differences depend per definition on their social categorical, multidimensional and contextual interaction. The intersection of differences takes shape, operates and changes in a given context depending on time, place, and context in terms of the systemic organisation of society (e.g. see the discussion of the matrix of domination by Collins, 2000 [1990]). Against the reification and 'essentialisation' of social categorical differences (i.e. the suggestion that differences are fixed and perhaps 'essential' social categorical qualities), this study also suggests, however, that their interpersonal relation depends on the way that they are employed through agency (see Chapter 5 onwards). While having materially and discursively real effects (cf. Frankenberg, 2004, p.113), to reiterate, 'white', or any other social categorical difference (hence social category), is not autonomous, stable or uniform.

\textbf{3.29} To summarise, an intersectional epistemology requires, first, a multidimensional approach to social categories and, second, the recognition that social categories and subsequently intersectionality are inherently always changing, dynamic, relational, and so on. Although research can focus on a 'still shot' of a specific social group, set of social relations, or particular outcomes (cf. Anthias, 2013b, p.12) – and in the case of this thesis social categories in their interplay with particular dynamics of power – it is concretely impossible to give a 'fully' comprehensive intersectional account of the multidimensional (etc.) character of social categories. This study, then, does not aim to offer a
comprehensive empirical description, but, rather, is a microcosmic opportunity
to intersectionally explore the idea of agency; some social dimensions and
some social categories, then, will be explored more than others will.

Reflections on the relation between social categories and power in intersectionality

3.30 To recap, I have discussed some foundational aspects of intersectionality. 
Therein, I suggest that social categories operate as the (conceptual) building 
blocks of intersectionality. However, I also suggest that they are building blocks 
only under certain conditions; the differences that constitute social categories 
are social categorical differences and, as such, are ‘differences that make a 
difference’. In other words, social categorical differences – distinct from 
differences outside the realm of social categories – mark classificatory 
boundaries in terms of power and social inequality. In that sense, social 
categories are primary organising principles of society and co-construct and are 
co-constructed by social structure – i.e. as the patterned way that social 
categories are organised and organise. Although always multidimensional, 
dynamic, contextual, etc., power and inequality are central to social categories 
and (social categorical) differences; in other words, social categories as well as 
power and inequality are building blocks of intersectionality.

3.31 This raises the theoretical question of how intersectionality relates to 
social categories. On a concrete level, in terms of how they operate, social 
categories are (often) not neatly separable (see also Anthias, 2013b, p.8). 
Earlier in this chapter I suggested, nevertheless, that perhaps the intersection of 
social categories is also not necessarily synergetic. Intersectionality does 
concern the analysis of the multiplicity of social categories, but social categories 
cannot – and should not (as I discuss shortly) – be conflated. Analytically, social 
categories are thought of and employed separately. In order to analyse social 
categories and their intersections, it is necessary to employ them analytically as 
separate on the abstract level in order to enable the interpretative process of 
the analysis of their interplay on the concrete level. This, though, introduces an 
important point concerning the idea of the intersection; if social categories
cannot be conflated and do not, or do not necessarily or not always, overlap or synergise, then it is necessary to explore how social categories, and social categorical differences specifically, do relate at their intersection.

3.32 In the field of intersectionality studies, the relation between social categories as 'parallel' and 'accumulative' or 'additive' has been widely criticised (as touched on in Chapter 2); arguably, intersectionality has been a response thereto. Earlier, I described this as follows:

intersectionality is "the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality" (Nash, 2008, p. 2), through "interlinking grids of differential positionings" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199) [...] Not only are race and gender, racism and sexism intrinsically intertwined, they are also intrinsically different. They have different outcomes, separately and in their junction (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140; King, 1988, p. 45; Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). (Huijg, 2012, p.7)

Considering the agency of white or racially privileged women, I discussed (Huijg, 2012) how, at their intersectional junction, both social categories and power intersect. Agency at that junction is not, however, mobilised at the intersection of race and gender in an undifferentiated sense; rather, this intersection is social categorically marked by whiteness and by female experiences. Consequently, it is also marked in the realm of power, respectively, by structural advantage and structural disadvantage. This junction, then, is intrinsically characterised by tension as race and gender are operating as opposing forces in terms of power. Consider, for instance, the role of power in the way that whiteness interacts with disability and gender in terms of its impact on white women's "internalised [ableism], particularly when they are struggling to adjust to acquired disability with concomitant loss of privilege" (Banks, 2015, p.224). To understand the location of agential mobilisation, then, as 'whole' – meaningful or not (see below) – it is necessary to make sense of its wholeness by making sense of that social categorical relation as tensional. To explore this tension – to which I return in Chapter 8 – I will first engage with reflections in intersectionality studies on the relation between social categories and power.

51 For a discussion of the legal distinction between additive and accumulative discrimination, see Solanke (2016).
3.33 In the development of (thinking about) intersectional analysis, there is, more or less, agreement that social categories affect patterned experiences and manifestations of discrimination, inequality and oppression. This agreement is, to reiterate, twofold: first, these experiences and manifestations become a particular experience or manifestation in and of itself, which cannot be understood by reference to one social category alone; and, hence second, social categories do not operate and cannot be made sense of as "mutually exclusive terrains" (cf. Crenshaw, 1991, pp.1240-1241). Trying to make sense of this as a "synergetic junction where [social categories] are mutually influential and create a new location where black women('s lives) can be comprehended, in Lorde's (1984a, pp.120-121) words, as a 'meaningful whole'" (Huijg, 2012, p.7), I wrote:

Even though people, and certainly not black or even white women, are not necessarily approached or even understood as 'meaningful wholes', in the material sense anyone is a 'whole' – after all can we imagine one leg to be raced, the other gendered[,] as if they were 'mutually exclusive terrains'? Meaningful and unified or not, at the end, empirically one cannot be split into parts, categories, be it axes; the separation of axes, that is dissociating 'what happens in/as race' from 'what happens in/as gender', is, again, an analytical exercise. (Huijg, 2012, pp.12-13, emphasis in original).

The gendered-and-raced-leg example is too simple to explain the complexity of intersectionality; after all, it does not enable an exploration of the mutually influential character of gender and race – and here femaleness and blackness particularly – at this new location. At the same time, as the analysis of the cases suggest, social categories do not necessarily operate synergistically.

3.34 Scholars have raised questions around the concrete and analytical in/distinguishability of and relation between social categories, which arguably point to an important critique of intersectionality studies. Phoenix (2006, p.24) foregrounds that "[i]ntersectionality is sometimes criticised for ignoring the different organizing logics of social divisions and treating them as if they are interchangeable." Anthias challenges assumptions that all social categories are equally salient all of the time (this is a position taken by Hancock [2007] for example). But the degrees of importance of one or the other and their types of intersection will vary within different societal arenas such as different institutions or different discourses, as well as in terms of given social forces at different times and spaces (Anthias, 2002). (Anthias, 2013a, p.129)
While “all social divisions share some features and are concretely constructed by/intermeshed with each other,” Yuval-Davis (2006, p.200) adds, “they are not reducible to each other.” For instance, the way that sexual orientation is organised, highlights Phoenix (2006, p.24), is, while related, different from how gender is organised. The quality of irreducibility, however, is not restricted to social categories, but extends to positions in the realm of power. “We are not talking here only about a unidimensional differentiation between the powerful and the powerless,” Yuval-Davis (p.200) emphasises, “nor are some differentiations just a reflection of more profound others. To be Black or a woman is not another way of being working class, or even a particular type of working-class person.” An intersectional experience of identity, for instance, might phenomenologically feel ‘whole’, which can contribute, on the concrete level, to the experience of social categories as interchangeable, reducible and indistinguishable.

3.35 While race and gender and racism and sexism are – or, perhaps, can be – interlocking, they are, however, also intrinsically different. As mentioned, they have different outcomes, separately and in their junction (Collins, 2000 [1990]; Crenshaw, 1989, p.140; King, 1988, p.45; Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.199). In other words, different social categories and systems of oppressions are neither interchangeable nor comparable. While power and resources centre globally around white people, the boundaries of inclusion to whiteness are contextually and historically specific and are not, additionally, constant (e.g. see Huijg, 2011). As a point of comparison, hegemony and privilege also centre globally around (white and middle class) men, but the boundaries of who is or is not included in masculinity is not similarly fluid and contextual.

3.36 While “[i]ntersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type”, Collins (2000 [1990], p.18) emphasises, there is continuity and persistency in terms of how multidimensional “domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression.” It is precisely the organisational quality of oppression, Collins continues, that brings attention to the need to not only investigate how these respective ‘monocategorical’ principles are organised and organise, but also how their relation is organised. Attention to relationality – which, to reiterate, consists of the intersection of
social categories as well as power – enables the exploration of the tension between different points of knowledge. First, it highlights "the notion [foregrounded in intersectionality] that no social category operates in isolation from other social categories" (Phoenix, 2006, p.23). Second, it enables the study of the multidimensional irreducibility of social categories. Third, it addresses the notion that social categories and systems of oppression 'have different outcomes, separately and in their junction'. And, last, it foregrounds the analytical need to separate social categories and power in order to, for instance, distinguish, first, between 'what happens in/as race' from 'what happens in/as gender' and, second, between 'what happens in/as advantage' from 'what happens in/as disadvantage'. In turn, to make sense of agency at the multidimensional junction of social categories and power, then, requires an investigation of their interrelatedness, that is, of the way that social categories, social dimensions and power are organised and organise separately and in their junction.

_Intersectional interrelationality_

3.37 "[I]ntersectionality," Anthias (2013b, p.4) argues, "posits that social divisions interrelate in terms of the production of social relations and in terms of people’s lives"; in turn, 'interrelationality' forms the foundation for the empirical analysis and thinking about intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism (see Chapter 8). The different ways that social categories operate interrelatedly, but irreducibly, can be exemplified by the work of intersectional disability scholars Kafer (2011) and Meekosha (2006). Highlighting social categorical similarities and differences, Meekosha (2006, pp.169-170) draws attention to how "[r]ace and disability both speak to physical and cultural reproduction; they both speak to individual identity and social participation in a gendered world." Turning the lens to gender, "[d]isabled women," she exemplifies gender specificity, "have their sexuality and their reproductive rights interrogated and their fitness to reproduce questioned (Dowse & Frohmader 2001)." While "[d]isabled people [of any gender] have often been represented as without gender," Meekosha (p.170) distinguishes, "the image of disability may be intensified by gender – for women a sense of intensified passivity and helplessness, for men a corrupted masculinity generated by enforced
dependence." Focussing on reproduction and choice, Kafer (2011, pp.227-230) analyses the public and institutional response(s) to, first, two deaf lesbians in the United States purposefully seeking a deaf sperm donor and, second, a blind lesbian black single mother seeking assisted insemination. In relation to the first case, she says, "[i]t is these women's queerness that has led them to use assisted insemination, but it is their deafness, and their belief that deafness is desirable, that has made them the targets of criticism." Also in the latter case, it is the black single mother’s blindness that is the focus of objections over her reproductive desires, but in the hearing over the case race starts to play a role in the way that she is "portrayed in almost animalistic terms" (p.230). In both cases, disability dominates the public's and institutional judgment around their reproductive desires and choices: in the first case sexuality led to a situation where disability critique could work, however, in the latter case, disability led to a situation where race was employed precisely to express disability critique. While disability and ableism are central to both studies, although not to this thesis, the studies illustrate how they, as exemplary social categories, operate differently depending on their specific relation to particular other social categorical positions in the realm of power.

3.38 The way that social categories, social categorical differences and power interrelate is complex, and often their interrelationality differs on different social dimensional levels. To explore intersectional agency, it is not only necessary to recognise that social categories are multidimensionally different and have different outcomes separately and in their junction, but it is also necessary to explore how social categories operate multidimensionally as intersectional organising principles (e.g. see Collins, 2000 [1990], pp.228-229). To consider that question in light of this thesis, one way that social categories operate as organising principles in the field of intersectionality studies itself is through selective engagement by scholars with particular social categories and social dimensions. I touched on this earlier in the chapter in the discussion of Piscitelli’s (2008) differential engagement or interpretation of, first, race and gender and, second, identity and systemic inequality. These and other acts of selective engagement or hierarchisation are arguably themselves (perhaps non-dialogical) manifestations of intersectional agency. In the anticipation of an empirical exploration of intersectional agency (Chapters 5-7), I briefly want to
look at the idea of ‘Oppression Olympics’, which is used in both academia and activism as a metaphor for intersectionality, to theoretically think through how, first, social categories and power can interact concretely and, second, how, as a manifestation of agency, these are mobilised hierarchically.

‘Oppression Olympics’: hierarchisation in intersectionality

3.39 A very particular manifestation of hierarchisation in intersectionality studies, then, can be found in the way that ‘Oppression Olympics’ is employed as a metaphor for intersectionality – i.e. as a defence, challenge or accusation (see e.g. Hancock, 2007, 2011; 2016, p.97; E. Martinez, 1993; Yuval-Davis, 2012). This metaphor expresses the idea that scholars and activists compete around, first, the qualitative and quantitative weight in terms of unequal impact that social categorical differences have and, second, the idea that "categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, physical condition, etc., contend for the title of 'most oppressed'" (E. Martinez, 1993, p.1). This "hierarchy of competing oppressions" (i.e. 'Oppression Olympics') moves away from resistance and a struggle for social justice, but, rather, employs "divide-and-conquer strategies" (p.1).

3.40 Another way that the Oppression Olympics operate – and which is significant for the way that whiteness works – is through the deflection of attention away from the junction of structural advantage and disadvantage by focussing on the hierarchisation of the 'most oppressing'. To exemplify, Walby, Armstrong and Strid (2012, p.230) address a "curious tendency to neglect analysis of the power of the actions of the dominant group within the 'category'" and, "a focus on the actions of white women rather than white men in the context of an intersectional issue facing black women." More emphasis on the "role of the more powerful groups in these divisions," they (p.230) offer, "might shift the focus from the inactions of white feminists to the actions of white racists." They draw attention to the role of power, privilege and hegemony in social categorical classification – seemingly understood in terms of a pyramidal hierarchy with white men at the top as the most powerful and oppressive (perhaps as a 'race to the top', cf. Carbado, 2013, p.814) – and the need for the intersectional study thereof. However, simultaneously, the attribution of racism
and actions to the top and the attribution of apparently non-racist inactions to white feminists perhaps more to the middle are accompanied by the proposition to exempt white feminists from scrutiny over the(ir) – (agentially) inactive – production and reproduction of racism and their position therein. It reminds me of Probyn’s (2004, par.35) reflection that white women, in their writing about, campaigning against and celebration of white men, also need to identify with them in order to own their (female) whiteness; “‘owning' whiteness,” she argues, “also necessitates owning cultures of masculinity that situate [oneself] as [a] white feminist.” While this critique of the Oppression Olympics and the hierarchisation of social categories is relevant, it is equally important to recognise that social inequalities are not homogenous. Consequently, their interactional impact, in itself contextual, can result in quantitatively and qualitatively different types and severity of concrete intersectional inequality for some specific social groups in relation to others. Taking intersectionality studies as both a concrete and an abstract example of, if you will, ‘intersectional infrastructure’ (cf. Lewis, 2013), the asking of ‘the other question’ (cf. Matsuda, 1991) demands a reflection on, first, which social categories, dimensions, manifestations of power and social inequalities are not considered, marginalised or excluded in the hierarchisation of oppression and, second, on the interpretation of which and how social categories interact impact some more than others.

3.41 I have ended this chapter with a discussion of ‘Oppression Olympics’ as an example in the field of intersectionality studies which operates as a metaphor as well as a practice of hierarchisation and prioritisation of and selective engagement with social categories and power and, as such, as an epistemic and, arguably, agential tool. In turn, without knowing what this agency – in terms of its inner workings (e.g. as a mechanism, see Chapter 8) – actually consists of, arguably there is agency at work. As I offered before, while intersectional theories point to the mobilisation of agency, including at multicategorical junctions of structural disadvantage and advantage, these theories do not offer sufficient analytical tools to make sense of the mobilisation of agency itself. In the next chapter, then, I turn to theorisations of agency – and to action, inaction, causality, choice and conditions for agency – to offer an initial anti-conflationary approach to agency, as the basis for the empirical
analysis in Chapters 5-7 and the conceptualisation of intersectional agency in Chapter 8. The current chapter, however, has offered a particular lens to this approach. The idea of social categorical differences and power as constitutive of social categories raises the point that agency (can) consist of various agential elements. The idea of interrelationality relates to the idea of the interplay of social categories and power – in their multidimensional interrelatedness with agential elements (see Chapter 8) – as part of the way that agency functions. The idea of intersectionality as an epistemological orientation offers a particular perspective on agency as, perhaps intersectional, orientatedness. The idea of intersectionality as a dialogical and social justice project, in which the other question regarding the other side of power is considered, highlights the need to challenge the idea of agency as progressive and, rather, to consider agency in the social structural context of hegemony (e.g. whiteness) – particularly where its manifestations are inactive. In this thesis, then, I rely on an understanding of intersectionality as an epistemological lens and a theory of the dialogical, multidimensional and contextual interrelatedness of social categorical differences and positions in power relations.
Chapter 4. Theorising Agency

Introduction

4.1 Intersectionality studies, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, form the framework and, perhaps, thematic point of reference for the empirical analysis presented in this thesis. Social categories, which I explored in the previous chapter, link intersectionality studies to agency studies through the role of social structure in both. At the same time, intersectional theory offers insufficient 'theoretical tools' for the detailed intersectional analysis of agency that I seek in this thesis. After all, this thesis is not concerned with the interplay of social categories and power; rather, it seeks an in-depth understanding of how this interplay functions in the way that agency operates. Previously I raised that, first, the interplay of social categories and power, specifically gender disadvantage and race privilege, can generate tension in the way that agency functions; second, I raised that agency, action and inaction are different empirical phenomena that require, if you will, conceptual separation (Huijg, 2012). These two empirical and theoretical observations form the groundwork for the anti-conflationary approach further developed in this chapter.

4.2 With the objective of carving out a theoretical place to develop an anti-conflationary approach, I start in the current chapter, then, with situating agency in the agency-structure and freedom-determinism debates, and in arguments of agency regarding activity, passivity and incapability. Second, I offer my anti-conflationary approach to agency, action and inaction, the individual, capacity and choice – and along the way I will position this approach against some conceptual discussions in agency studies (e.g. with regards to 'social action' and ideas around 'behaviour'). This anti-conflationary approach offers the theoretical tools or perhaps conceptual language, which point to aspects of the workings of agency. The anti-conflationary approach simultaneously emerges from and enables the empirical analysis of the case studies in the following

52 This idea of (anti-) conflation responds to Alexander, but not to Archer (see par.1.6).
three chapters (Chapters 5-7). Grounded in the literature, last, I discuss that three of the conditions for agency – i.e. consciousness, reflexivity and orientatedness – are requirements for agency to be able to be mobilised. In the discussions of these conditions I seek to offer a secondary theoretical toolkit for the empirical analysis and theorisation of intersectional agency, such as by exploring 'reflexive agency', the Lewinian field and understanding of time (e.g. the "the-past-as-remembered-now"), the internal and external environment of the individual, Freirean conscientisation, and the relation between orientatedness and Ahmedian lines. This chapter, but particularly the anti-conflationary approach, furthermore forms the theoretical basis for the conceptualisation of intersectional agency, as laid out in Chapter 8. Before turning to my anti-conflationary approach, I first provide arguments contra a conflationary approach to agency and, therein, situate my take on agency against, perhaps, conventional approaches to agency.

Contra a conflationary approach to agency

4.3 'Intersectional agency' has been used as a term merely a handful of times in passing in the field of intersectionality studies (e.g. Bilge, 2010, p.25n13; Henning, 2015, p.117; Kohlman, 2016, p.27; Mann, 1994, p.160; Sobré-Denton & Bardhan, 2013, p.69), though perhaps somewhat differently from how I conceptualise it (Huijg, 2012, and this thesis). Nevertheless, questions around agency emerge regularly in the field (for foundational engagements, see e.g. Collins, 2000 [1990], pp.131,140,162; Crenshaw, 1991, p.1297; Zinn & Dill, 1996, p.328). But where intersectionality evokes "an intuitive understanding of the subject matter" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p.157, see also Chapter 2), agency requires more scrutiny. In the same sentence, to exemplify, Boogaard and Roggeband (2010, p.57) make sense of agency as, first, 'thinking and acting', while also, second, as 'producing and reproducing or challenging and changing structures of inequality'. The first approach to agency comes close to the narrow and anti-conflationary definition of agency that I employ in this thesis as the capacity to act (I will develop this further in Chapter 8) – a working definition that shares a common denominator among theories of agency but is stripped down

53 This is not to suggest that these are the only conditions.
to its conceptual bare minimum (e.g. see Ahearn, 2001, p.112 in Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p.7; Campbell, 2009, p.408; Goddard, 2000, p.2; Sibeon, 1999, p.139). I return to the importance of an anti-conflationary approach at the end of this section. On the other hand, the second approach to agency, which I refer to as the conflationary approach, not only conceptually includes social structure, but also conceptually conflates agency with action and, in turn, action with the (possible) consequences of action – e.g. the production, reproduction or modification of inequality. This is no surprise; after all, approaches to agency often centre social structure, social reproduction, social stability and/or social transformation (e.g. see Alexander, 1992; Dugan & Reger, 2006, pp.469-470; Sztompka, 1993, pp.37-40, 200).

4.4 This conflationary approach is not particular to Boogaard and Roggeband or, for that matter, intersectionality studies – to the contrary. Giddens, possibly the most (in)famous conflationary proponent, argues, with his theory of structuration – which refers to the "fundamentally recursive character of social life" (Giddens, 1979, p.69, original italicised) – that structure is "both medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices" (p.5) and, at the same time, is always involved in the production of action (p.70). Alexander (1993, pp.501-502) criticises how depersonalising and objectifying accounts – naming here particularly Giddens and Bourdieu – propose society as "a self-reproducing, 'user unfriendly' system," wherein practically no actors or agents partake. These approaches do, however, seek to engage with both agency and social structure. Barnes and Loyal synthesise the conceptual dispersion of agency in terms of social structure as follows:

"[a]gency" stands for the freedom of the contingently acting subject over and against the constraints that are thought to derive from enduring social structures. To the extent that human beings have agency, they may act independently of and in opposition to structural constraints, and/or may (re)constitute social structures through their freely chosen actions. To the extent that they lack agency, human beings are conceived of as automata, following the dictates of social structures and exercising no choice in what they do.

(Barnes & Loyal, 2001, p.507)

A discussion of agency and structure, then, is related to questions of freedom and determinism. And this study on intersectional agency is certainly in conversation with the agency-structure debate and, therewith, the freedom–determinism debate (cf. Barnes, 2000; Barnes & Loyal, 2001; Bilge, 2010; Campbell, 2009; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Hays, 1994; Mouzelis, 2008;
Sibeon, 1999; Sztompka, 1993; Wharton, 1991) – even though this debate is, unsurprisingly, rarely concerned with intersectional questions. Unfortunately, however, I have not found an existing theoretical framework with sufficient and adequate conceptual tools for the analysis as employed in this thesis. In this chapter, then, I bring together various approaches to this conversation in order to offer an anti-conflationary approach to agency. The objective is to provide analytical tools for an empirical exploration of intersectional agency, but one that does not follow a conflationary understanding of agency and structure – as well as of agency and in/action, and of in/action and its consequences – and one that does not fall back on either a 'freedom' or a 'determinism' perspective. Rather, these tools should enable a complex exploration of the role of social categories and power – including social structure – in agency.

4.5 Intersectional theory, Nash (2008) argues,

has yet to contend with whether its theory explains or describes the processes and mechanisms by which subjects mobilize (or choose not to mobilize) particular aspects of their identities in particular circumstances.

It needs, she continues,

to craft a theory of agency and to grapple with the amount of leeway variously situated subjects have to deploy particular components of their identities in certain contexts. (Nash, 2008, p.11)

Phoenix (2006, p.24) draws attention to the centrality of both "complex commonalities and differences as well as the agency of the women" in an intersectional approach, including how women mobilise agency in terms of their relation to a particular social category. Particularly unexplored, Nash (2008, p.11) emphasises, "is the way in which privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level," such as the "ways in which subjects might be both victimized by patriarchy and privileged by race" (p.12). In previous work on white feminist activists in São Paulo (Huijg, 2011, 2012), on which the current study builds, I raised how "race as advantage and gender as disadvantage can operate as opposite structuring forces in power relations," creating a junction marked by tension in the intersectional complexity of inequalities (2012, p.3). This 'tensional location' is marked by social categories and power, by various social dimensional qualities – including identity, social

54 For a discussion on the complexities of racial self-identity and attributed identity in light of whiteness, see Huijg (2011).
structure, culture, discourse and ideology (cf. Chapter 3) – as well as by outwardly and inwardly directed orientation (later in this chapter I discuss 'orientatedness' as a conceptual condition for agency). On the subjective level this raises the question 'what else happens' at this location in terms of agency marked by these intersectionally opposite – if not opposing – structuring forces.

4.6 Informed by the aforementioned approaches that formulate agency in (conflationary) terms of action, the idea at the start of the current study was to return to São Paulo and, through conducting an ethnography, observe how racially privileged feminist activists do and do not 'act intersectionally'. The objective was to make sense of how agency operates 'in' or 'at' this 'tensional location' by seeing social categories and power at work. After all, in a framework where agency is conceptually constitutive of action, both action and agency would be external and, hence, observable. To this end, I re-entered the paulistano feminist movement and reconnected with my personal, activist and institutional contacts; I took part in various events, marched through the streets, attended seminars and tried to broaden my network again. And indeed, I observed social categories and power, such as in the feminist reading group that I attended. There, I noticed how race, generational and class privilege were manifested in the constant 'feminist teachings' – some might call them 'dogmatic speeches' – of the group's white and senior activist leader, and how, through her verbal actions, she was (re)producing hegemonic dynamics and discourse in the meetings.

4.7 Without a doubt, this leader's agency – in which the teachings and speeches were grounded – was also marked by whiteness, class privilege and seniority. However, this is a deductive claim grounded in the observation of her actions and general knowledge of race, gender and age/generation, rather than any specific situational knowledge (cf. Essed, 1989) of 'what was behind' these teachings and speeches. Hence, I did not develop an understanding of the inner workings of her agency, which, consequently, remained (informed) guess work and only opened up more questions. For instance, to paraphrase Nash (2008, p.11), how did she 'deploy that particular component of her gender' in conjunction with the aforementioned components of privilege in terms of race and age/generation? And were these structuring forces, indeed, in opposition?
This, in turn, led to a methodological change towards the exploration of intersectional agency via 'phenomenological conversations' (as discussed in Chapter 1).

**4.8** This conceptual and, therewith, methodological realisation reinforced the earlier initial exploration of an anti-conflationary approach to agency (cf. Huijg, 2012) that was further developed in the analysis of the (phenomenological) conversations. Conceptual conflation risks imprecision. Perhaps more problematically, however, it offers insufficient tools to make sense of agency as an *empirical* phenomenon. Following a 'tracing back logic' as perhaps a 'contra-causal' approach – i.e. tracing back the actions in each case study to the agency that 'caused' said actions (see Chapter 1) – the breaking down of agency into single, *but not singular or atomic*, components has proven to be insightful. It enabled the intersectional exploration of agency as a 'polylithic *mechanism*', consisting of social categories, power as well as, what I call, 'agential elements' – used in this thesis as cognitive, emotive and moral elements that play a role in the mechanism of agency (I will discuss these points in Chapter 8). And, indeed, this anti-conflationary approach enables the exploration of agency as impacted by, as interacting with, and also as employing social structure. Last, this analytical separation of agency (e.g. of agency from action and social structure) and the recognition that agency operates as a mechanism – and as a process rather than a moment – will enable an empirical exploration in the next three chapters (Chapters 5-7) that can further reveal complex inconsistencies and incoherencies in the mobilisation of agency in Chapter 8. I will now turn to understandings of agency in terms of the agency-structure debate, social transformation and the idea of agency as either passive or active.

**Agency and social inequality; passivity versus activity**

*Agency, social transformation, and 'having power'*

**4.9** Seeking the middle ground in the structure-agency debate, feminist and other studies take the focus on social structure and transformation into an even
more specific direction by conceptualising agency as a "transformative and transcending capacity" (Eduards, 1994, p.181), associated with, particularly, social change and progress, such as in the concept of 'change agents' and the proposition of political or feminist agency (e.g. see Benson, 1990; Clegg, 2006; Eduards, 1994, p.185; Hale, 2018, p.3; Takhar, 2013). While this tends to be orientated outwards (I will address the idea of orientatedness at the end of this chapter), as "an internal or psychological quality" this can also be directed inwards (Pollack, 2000, p.82). This certainly makes sense when one thinks of the association of agency with self-esteem, empowerment, resilience, resistance to and liberation from oppression and inequality, and, as such, pushing back power – the majority of which requires both orientations (e.g. see Baez, 2000; Bernold & Gehmacher, 1999; Bracke, 2016; C.P. Cardoso, 2012; Eduards, 1994; Mohanty, 2002 [1991]; Pollack, 2000; Zinn & Dill, 1996). In this understanding, the conceptualisation of agency should "offer hope and the possibility for engaging with and challenging structural, determined inequalities" (London Feminist Salon Collective 2004, p.30 in Kennelly, 2009, p.259). It makes sense, then, to understand feminism as "a theory of women's agency and women's collective action" (Eduards, 1994, p.182). As I have argued in previous work, "feminism aims at social transformation in the field of gender relations, gender discrimination and inequality and, on a more systemic level, sexism and patriarchy." After all, "taking action by changing yourself and/or your environment" – inwards and outwards orientated actions – "forms the basis of feminist activism; without action there will be no social transformation." (Huijg, 2012, p.14).

4.10 Surely, social justice movements centre on political action and protest, activist mobilisation, and social, collective as well as individual change. All these do require agency, and one where an active understanding of agency and social transformation are closely linked. However, there is confusion here, first, between the understanding of agency as socially transformative and, second, between the understanding of 'lacking agency' – or 'passivity' (to which I return) – as disempowerment and non-resistance to oppression. In turn, this alludes to the conflation of agency with 'having' or 'exercising power' on the freedom side of the spectrum, and, on the determinism side of the spectrum, the 'not having or exercising power' with a lack of agency. If indeed agency would mean not
"acting for oneself under conditions of oppression," but, rather, "being without oppression, either having ended oppression or never having experienced it at all" (cf. Mahoney 1994, p.64 in Pollack, 2000, p.82), then perhaps only white, heterosexual, middle class and abled bodied men would 'act for themselves' and, as such, 'have' or 'exercise agency'.

Passivity, incapability and lacking agency

4.11 This problematic understanding of agency in light of structural oppression is particularly relevant when social inequality is situated in the history of biologically determinist thinking about the capacity to act. "[B]est suited for a passively domestic role," Madhok, Phillips and Wilson (2013, p.1) emphasise, women – or replace this with: racially othered, queer, disabled and poor people – required "guidance and protection of their betters" (e.g. men, the judiciary and/or the state), because they were seen "as less capable of rationality, reflection, and responsible action than men." In this essentialist framework, women were considered incapable of acting – not because of oppression, but because of their 'biology'. Not dissimilarly, and not unrelatedly, social structure can be considered so forceful that it would not only impinge on, constrain and confine, but even deny or erase agency. Creek and Dunn (2011, p.319) raise, for instance, how "battered women" were stripped of (their) agency through their victimisation by anti-violence advocates who were seeking to protect them.

4.12 To draw attention to the injustice of structural inequality and oppression – violent or otherwise – individuals are presented as vulnerable, infantile, charitable and as helpless victims, and, therewith, as passive. Considered to be lacking agential qualities, passivity is conflated with the absence of agency or the capacity to act. Again, also in this structurally deterministic thinking, women – and other marginalised groups – are considered to be incapable of acting agentially – i.e. rationally, responsibly and reflexively. (See e.g. Butler, Gambetti & Sabsay, 2016; Creek & Dunn, 2011; Takhar, 2013; K. Wilson, 2013). Alternatively it is emphasised, in response to their victimisation, how they resist, cope and survive; how they are assertive and persistent; and how they are, then, capable, responsible agents (e.g. see Gondolf and Fisher, 1988, p.11,18; Hoff, 1990, p.65; Kelly, 1988 in Creek & Dunn, 2011, p.313).
Rightly so, Butler et al. (2016, pp.3-4) ask whether we have to resort to either paternalism or victimisation, where the alternatives are "vulnerability as passive (in need of active protection) and agency as active (based on a disavowal of the human creature as 'affected')." And the attribution of agency and/or vulnerability, as well as the lack thereof, is in and of itself a manifestation of structure, power and agency. It is precisely an analysis that accounts for active and inactive manifestations of agency, as well as an understanding of 'capacity' (to act) that is not caught up with social inequality, which enables an exploration of complex intersectional dynamics of power – particularly where it concerns the exercise of power, privilege and oppression, such as by the participants in this study. At the same time, as becomes apparent in the next chapter (Chapter 5), a particular set of circumstances or a context of coercion or force can void agency; nonetheless, this assessment does not need to imply that an individual is active or passive, that she lack capability for agentic action or inaction, or that she failed to mobilise this capacity. Before turning to these questions, I offer in the next section a provisional anti-conflationary approach to agency – discussing agency, action and inaction, capacity, choice, etc. – which forms the foundation for the empirical analysis (Chapters 5-7), and which will be consolidated in the conceptualisation of intersectional agency in Chapter 8.

An anti-conflationary approach to agency

Capacity and choice

A working definition of agency as the capacity to act is aligned with a dictionary understanding of capacity as "the ability or power to do or understand something" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016b) – it is noteworthy that this something can be both external (i.e. 'doing something') and internal (i.e. 'understanding something'). An ability, in turn, is "the possession of the means or skill to do something" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a). A possession of a means or skill enables the doing of something, but possessing this means or skill itself is not that 'doing something'. There is then, a discrepancy between the capacity or ability, the means or skill, and the doing of something. This discrepancy should
be made sense of, first, in terms of time; the capacity and the means to act precede the acting. Referring to the idea of 'causality', this also forms the foundation of the 'tracing back logic' (cf. Chapter 1). Action, second, cannot consist of agency, precisely because they are two distinct empirical phenomena; if they are empirically different, then they also should be differentiated conceptually. Third, this discrepancy, then, is conceptual; another way of saying this is that possessing the capacity to act is not the same as mobilising this capacity; it merely enables the possibility for acting. Contra conflationary and conceptually inclusive approaches, what needs to be concluded now is that agency – i.e. the capacity to act – is not the same as action – i.e. the something that is done. This line of reasoning is the conceptual groundwork for the anti-conflationary approach developed in this chapter, and the basis on which intersectional agency is explored in this thesis.

4.15 Mohanty (2002 [1991], p.207) observes that women are "agents who make choices" when they act as subjects. Someone's capacity to do something is only significant when there is choice and, hence, there are options. At the same time, intersectional scholars have contested the neutral character of 'choice' and the feasibility of available options. Nevertheless, arguably there is consensus that, in one sense or another, 'choice' – be that the availability of options, the possibility to make choices, or simply the making of choices – is a central (albeit not the only) requirement for agency (Barnes, 2000, pp.4-6; Barnes & Loyal, 2001, pp.507-509; Campbell, 2009, p.414; Hays, 1994, p.62; Pollack, 2000, p.82). There are only options in the capacity to act, in other words, if that capacity can also result in the alternative, namely the not doing of that something which one is capable of doing. The relation between choice and agency, then, revolves around the question of whether an individual 'could have acted otherwise' (as emphasised by, e.g., Alexander, 1992, p.8; Barnes, 2000, p.9; Campbell, 2009, p.414; Ginet, 1997, p.85; Hays, 1994, p.64).

Agentic action

4.16 To consider the relation between agency and action, it is important to look at the role of choice. I explored before (Huijg, 2012) the implications of choice
as a requirement for agency through a hypothetical example of a white, young, feminist activist attending a workshop:

In a [feminist] workshop on collective racial dynamics, it can be expected that, at some moment, the racial agency\(^{55}\) of the white members will be problematised. This could include critique on (racial) dynamics in the group that lead to the marginalisation of black and ethnic minority activists and, generally, of racial issues as feminist. This critique might also address the dominant and privileged position of white, young feminist activists in the group and, generally, in the feminist movement which leads to the maintenance of the normativity of whiteness – for example [...] via silence or invisibility (i.e. via inaction). The white, young, feminist activist can internally consider these racial issues and is evoked to consider herself on the axis of race and in the racial dynamic of the group. In consequence, it would not be uncommon if white young, feminist activists feel the need to defend themselves 'against' these claims. Even though the 'progressive or transformative' character of their racial agency could be questioned, in their defence they do act agentically. (Huijg, 2012, p.15)

Agency is directly linked to causality; one can be considered an agent, that is, having exercised one's agency via action (or inaction – to which I return), if one can be considered to have caused that action. In short, the white, feminist activist in this group has the choice to speak – i.e. act – or to not speak – i.e. to not act. In this situation, the activist makes the choice to act in one way (i.e. vocalising her position in relation to said claims) and not in another way (i.e. not vocalising this). In other words, mobilising her agency, she causes her own acting. I named this 'agentic action' (Huijg, 2012, p.14).

4.17 Knowing that agency is at work does not explain that particular mobilisation of agency. For instance, from a feminist activist perspective speaking up tends to be associated with agency grounded in, for instance, empowerment. Indeed, speaking is certainly active, and feminist activism requires actions, but it is not, as the above hypothetical example illustrates, intrinsically progressive or even aimed at social transformation. The speaking of the white feminist is, in stricto sensu, an observable action; after all, she does speak. However, (this) observation does not clarify what motivated this white feminist to speak (then, there, that way, etc.) instead of being – or even staying – silent. Mele (1997, p.233) highlights that "the same action may be intentional under one description and unintentional (or nonintentional) under another, and an action is intentional only under a description." Recognising that perhaps an 'item A' as well as an 'item B' (cf. Mele) can play a role in a particular

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\(^{55}\) I refer here to agency (also) marked by race, rather than a kind of agency that would be particularly racial.
mobilisation of agency, here manifested as speaking, enables us to consider that item A and item B might be operating in different realms of, first, social categories and, second, power. In other words, agency therein needs to be considered in terms of gender disadvantage as well as race privilege. In itself this does not clarify a particular ideological or ethical conviction or commitment; for instance, the causing of action could, in principle, be marked by the reproduction as well as the transformation of white hegemony.

4.18 Certainly, observation of an activist speaking might, in and of itself, give some clues about the intention, motivation, reason and, perhaps, meaning – particularly in this hypothetical example (after all, that is how I set it up). Since the hypothetical white feminist is defensive, it is safe to assume – with or without white women's tears (cf. Accapadi, 2006; Srivastava, 2006) – that her speech will be characterised by certain intonations, emotions, facial expressions, etc. that provide additional information about agency. Obviously, we – i.e. the participants and I (for the argument I imagine this workshop as part of the abandoned ethnography) – are not deductively clueless in the observational department. At the end of the day, however, we are not able to comprehensively and complexly know what precisely was behind her speaking (and arguably nor will she, as I discuss later in this chapter). The non-conflation of agency and action is not merely a conceptual endeavour, then; it offers empirical curiosity. In turn, nor will we know, as I discuss shortly, what the agency behind the other white feminist participants' not speaking consists of. In other words, while the presence of an actual choice – and it is fair to say that there are options here (but arguably this is not always the case, as the gun against Apis's head in Chapter 6 suggests) – confirms that the speaking was agentic, we need to know more to assess agency, rather than just action. In this section, then, I have argued that, first, agency and action are not the same empirical phenomenon; second, that the element of choice is crucial in identifying them; and, third, that agency and action need to be separated conceptually in order to describe their respective empirical specifics. I further argued, fourth, that observation of action does not imply knowledge about the specificity of agency – even if can be established that the action is caused by agency. I stay with 'action' in the next section; herein I will offer a definition of
action and discuss this against debates about, on the one hand, 'behaviour' and, on the other hand, 'social action'.

**Behaviour, action, social action**

4.19 I mentioned already that conflationary approaches tend to consider agency as constitutive of action. Contra this problematic approach, I offered a narrow working definition of agency as the capacity to act. Then I briefly touched on some of the aspects of agency that support an anti-conflationary perspective. I will now turn to the conceptualisation of action.

4.20 In sociological conversations about agency, the (Weberian) 'trichotomy' of behaviour, action and social action is employed (Campbell, 1996, p.25). While these terms take up a foundational and specific role in theorisations of agency, often denoting 'schools of thought', arguably their conceptual distinction is disputable – indeed, they are often used synonymously (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p.18). However, to some, the distinction between behaviour and action is marked by choice, or the absence thereof. According to many scholars, however, behaviour refers to 'involuntary, automatic or reflex responses' (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, pp.19,25), not to be confused with 'physiological happenings' such as the beating of the heart (Martin, 1972, pp.59-60, I return to this below). However, while it is possible to talk about a reflex or a single involuntary response, linguistically it is not possible to talk about a single behaviour. These academic conceptualisations of behaviour (and conduct) are in stark contrast with the lay conceptualisations of conduct and behaviour – which I find more useful and, as such, employ in this study – that refer to a 'way of doing' or even a 'doing something in a particular way' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019; Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). In contrast, action is often conceptualised as voluntary, intentional, purposeful, conscious, and subjectively meaningful (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p.19; Campbell, 1996, p.25); in these understandings, action conceptually includes agency. There is no conceptual terminology, then, to refer to people's acting without conceptually including what type of acting this is. On the same note, it is problematic, as I discuss below, to not be able to talk about agency without referring to acting.
4.21 Conceptual discordance regarding the behaviour–action spectrum does not only revolve around the absence/presence of choice, but also around the understanding of action as social or not. The area of philosophy of action, particularly, tends to conceptualise action devoid of social qualities – or perhaps it is more accurate to say that 'the social' (including social categories and power) is vastly ignored. To exemplify, Martin (1972, pp.59-60) argues (and criticises) that, according to the 'standard view of action', the raising of an eyebrow, to name something random, would be a 'basic action' – i.e. "an exercise of a 'primitive ability'." While perhaps not substantially challenging the meaning of 'basic actions', sociologists might name this an 'involuntary reactive response', hence behaviour – or, to contrast, they might precisely emphasise different and socially significant ways that eyebrows can be raised. Consider, for instance, discussions of eyebrow raising as relational and consisting of complex social meanings in the realm of, for instance, gender and power (e.g. see Bickmore & Cassell, 2005, p.4; Hall, LeBeau, Reinoso et al., 2001, pp.683,686). Even a physiological happening such as a beating heart, though, can easily be made sense of in social and sociological terms – think of interpretations, in the realm of gender, class, race and dis/ability, of (being in) love or, quite differently, high blood pressure. While the separation of action and social action is analytically fruitful, it is questionable whether there are actions or behaviour that are beyond 'social interpretation' – i.e. where social categories and power never play a role.

4.22 Next to the confusing trichotomy and the spectrum of choice, sociology also offers conceptual confusion between 'action' and 'social action'. To some, 'social actions' are considered sub-types of actions (Campbell, 1996, p.25). According to others, (all) actions are per definition social when they refer to "human behaviour [that has] social meaning attached to it" (p.30). Actions are 'social actions', to name some more examples that Campbell offers, when they are "intentionally directed toward the other self" and include awareness and interpretation of the meaning of another's behaviour (p.33); when they intend to influence others or are influenced by others; or when "certain sets of experiences and, possibly, certain values, beliefs and symbols" are shared with

56 A discussion and critique of the 'standard view or story of action' falls beyond the scope of this thesis.
others (pp.140-141). All of these have certainly been useful suggestions in terms of what to look out for in the dissection of 'the social' in agency. However, how useful is the conceptual inclusion of social in action, the suggestion that only particular actions are social, or the idea that 'social' is limited to specific interpretations (or even the public realm, i.e. the external of the individual)? The idea that action is social when it 'embodies social meaning' or 'occurs in a social context or situation' (pp.140-141) is awkward. To reiterate, which situations or contexts are never social and which actions do not embody any social meaning? I agree with Campbell (1996, p.6), then, that social action as a 'basic concept' is redundant. As such, against the conflation of action and the social, 'social' is employed in this thesis as an adjectival or adverbial qualifier, such as of action, but it is certainly not its only qualifier.

4.23 When I talk about action in this thesis – and I do so perhaps in a way more similar to, for instance, Giddens's 'doings' (1979, p.88) and 'acts' (1984, pp.3-5) than to his 'actions' – I take as a starting point Alexander's (1992, p.8) narrow conceptualisation of action as "the movement of a person through time and space." The person here can also be a 'part of a person' (e.g. one's hand, mouth, eye, leg). This could refer to actions, such as walking and talking, which are external, hence observable. While actions can be external (e.g. walking, talking), arguably they can also be internal (e.g. thinking, reflecting); in other words, perhaps there are external actions as well as internal actions – I return to the idea of actions as internal later (and develop this further in Chapter 8). I now turn to the conceptual boundaries of agency.

Non-agentic action

4.24 "[C]ontra the conflation of agency with action," I discussed, even when there is action, this action might not always be agentic; when there is no agentic moment that caused the individual to perform this action. Think for example of a feminist individual who lets a pie fall on the tie of an antiabortion politician not because she intended or desired so, without having made the choice to do so (even when intended in the past), but because someone else

57 Note that Alexander does not necessarily subscribe to an anti-conflationary perspective, as he seems to conceptually include agency in his understanding of action (Alexander, 1992, p.9).
58 Note, however, that in this thesis 'external actions' are named 'actions', whereas 'internal actions' are always called 'internal actions' (see also par.1.6n10).
pushed her. There was no agentic moment, no agency that caused her action, but there was action; this could be considered non-agentic action. (Huijg, 2012, p.14)

'Non-agentic action', then, is where there are no options and there is no choice; consequently, even though one is acting, one would not be considered the causer of their action. Looking at action, then, an action cannot be considered one's own action in the case that one did not act agenetically; that is, one can be considered an actor, but not an agent. The feminist who dropped the pie on the politician's tie is an actor – even though, to refer to Alexander's definition of action, there is perhaps little movement involved in letting a pie fall – but, without alternative options and, as such, choice available, she did not cause her action. In other words, the hypothetical pie reached the politician's tie due, I assume, to a combination of gravity and external force, preventing the holder of the pie's 'exercise of will'. In that moment, then, the feminist is not an agent.

4.25 The idea of an individual acting without the capacity to act being mobilised – to distinguish between, in my terms, agentic and non-agentic action – is not original. For instance, Barnes explains that

[i]t may be that externalities like social constraints or natural impediments prevent the exercise of will. But factors internal to the individual, yet distinct from her will, may also be operative, like drugs, or paralysing emotions, or uncontrollable urges, or excesses or deficiencies of hormones or enzymes. Both external and internal causes may be said to have predictable effects upon what people do, and to preclude free choice in what is done. (Barnes, 2000, p.4)

Alluding to the aforementioned 'physical happenings', Mele (1997, p.231) talks about "ordinary, involuntary breathing, belching, and sneezing" as 'nonactions' (contrasted with 'intentional actions'). Stout (2005, p.5) maintains that the tics of people with Tourettes are not "intentional actions" as they would not have a choice to not tic – "in that sense they did not really do it," he continues, "it was just something that happened, like blinking." These explorations of the boundaries of agency are not restricted to just physical acts.

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59 The idea of 'will' or 'free will' has not emerged in the analysis of the data and a theoretical discussion thereof, consequently, falls outside the remit of this thesis.

60 Tourettes refers to, what is diagnostically called, Gilles de la Tourette's Syndrome.
4.26 Continuing the identification of the outer boundaries of agency in the realm of neurodiversity, this argument swiftly moves into very problematic waters (for a discussion, see Huijg, forthcoming). Consider, to exemplify, the ableist exclusion criteria that Wiley (2010, p.25) offers for the conceptualisation of agency: "ADHD children (Barkley, 1997, pp. 278–82) [and] most autistics (Whitehouse, 2006)," he argues, "have little or no ability to engage in inner speech [and] seem to have little foresight into the consequences of their actions." Wiley seems to allude here to reflexivity (inner speech) and orientatedness (foresight) as conditions for agency (I discuss these shortly), that ADHDers and autistic folk would 'lack'; lacking these, they supposedly would have a "weakened power of agency" (Wiley, 2010, p.25). This line of reasoning, grounded in an ableist, essentialist understanding of agency, resonates with the discussion earlier on the 'agential incapability' of women and other marginalised groups. This brings attention to the role that social categories and power play in the assessment by hegemonic knowers (e.g. scholars of agency) of the capacity, or lack thereof, of non-hegemonic others (e.g. neurodivergent people) to mobilise agency. Ironically, arguably this dynamic itself is, again, a manifestation or perhaps tool of intersectional agency – one which is also employed, albeit in quite different form, in one of the case studies (Sandra, Chapter 7).

Agentic inaction

4.27 I already challenged the idea that what might be observed as 'passivity' could be conflated with a lack of agency or capacity to act. "Since agency cannot be equated with action," I argued before, "we can assume that not each manifestation of agency is action. I argue that we have to consider the possibility that some manifestations of agency are not action" (Huijg, 2012, p.14). Silence can precisely point to "an inactive manifestation of agency" (Ibid). In other words, there is a capacity to act, which is also mobilised, but this is orientated towards not doing – or 'refraining from doing' (cf. Giddens, 1979, p.235).

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61 Neurodiversity is a term coined by the autistic activist Singer in 1998 (see Singer, 2016, p.9), which she intended as a political and social category similar to that of gender and race. Neurodiversity consists of minority and majority 'neurotypes', namely 'neurodivergent' people – e.g. ADHDers, autistics, dyslexics – vis-à-vis 'neurotypical' people (Graby, 2015, p.235).
This is what I name inaction; "a void in action – where action is absent, but where this absent action is a manifestation of agency, what I call agentic inaction" (Huijg, 2012, p.14).

4.28 Agentic inaction can be marked by social categories and power in particular ways. To return to the activist in the aforementioned feminist workshop on racial dynamics, I raised that she "has a choice to respond. She can respond via action or via inaction; she can withdraw her participation and not speak out, be silent" (Huijg, 2012, p.15). Bento highlights how white people's silence about their own and others' privileged racial position and place in race relations – when the not speaking up perhaps can better be understood as omission or distortion – is in itself a manifestation of racialised power when it perpetuates their 'bonus of (the legacy of) racism' and puts the 'onus of racism' on black people (Bento, 2003a, 2003b). Similarly, in her discussion of 'colour blindness', 'colour evasion' and, related, 'power evasion', Frankenberg (1993, p.145) challenges the innocent character of 'not seeing race'. In this light, the 'de-racialisation of self-narrative' in the construction of (one's) white subjectivity, as Byrne (2006b, pp.42-71) discusses, could be made sense of as agentic inaction in terms of the attribution of limited agency to the white self (p.52).

4.29 The absences raised in these examples, then, do not point to white women being devoid of agency. To the contrary, they point to the presence of options, of actual choice, of being able to act one way or act otherwise; they point to the mobilisation of the capacity to act. Agentic inaction, then, refers to the individual who does not act, but, grounded in choice, does so agentically; hence, she does cause her not acting – i.e. her agentic inaction. The anti-conflationary approach precisely enables the exploration of the interrelatedness of, for example, social categories and power. In turn, this anti-conflationary approach enables the investigation in this thesis that reveals how the internal proceedings of agency – i.e. the mechanism of agency (see Chapter 8) – and the externalised manifestations of agency – i.e. actions and inactions – can contrast. This points to a type of tension in intersectional agency (cf. Huijg, 2012) that goes beyond the aforementioned tension between opposite (and opposing) structuring forces.
Conditions for agency

4.30 In this thesis, agency – as 'the capacity to act' – is explored in the individual sense. It is this individual that 'has' and that does the mobilising of the capacity. In line with a narrow and anti-conflationary conceptual engagement, the individual here is merely understood as the 'smallest human unit' of sociological research (cf. Plummer, 2016, p.23). In order to be agential (i.e. mobilise the capacity to act), to reiterate, this individual must not be, or perhaps even cannot be, atomic – i.e. one who chooses, calculates and determines their actions voluntarily, freely, and on the basis of individual will, and who, in that sense, makes her decisions rationally, morally and autonomously (cf. Archer, 2016 [2003], pp.138-139; Barnes & Loyal, 2001, p.508; Bilge, 2010, p.12; Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p.3; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, pp.964-965; B.S. Turner, 2009, p.13). In other words, agency cannot be thought of as "individuals' capacities to act independently of structural constraints, or against them" (Bilge, 2010, p.12), or even, contra the conflation of actions with actions' consequences, as individuals shaping their own circumstances (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.965). At the same time, agency cannot be considered in terms of individuals devoid of individuality, who only exist as 'cultural artefacts', as robots or automata – as structural determinism offers (Harré, 1983, p.20 in Archer, 2016 [2003], p.139; Barnes & Loyal, 2001, p.509; cf. Hays, 1994, p.61; Sibeon, 1999, p.139).

4.31 Agency, however, is conditional. Against the understanding of agency as constitutive of action, in this thesis agency is understood as internal to the aforementioned individual. Perhaps 'the internal', to contrast 'the external', can be thought of as the 'subcutaneous' domain of the individual (Archer, 2016 [2011], p.273). Contesting claims of "monadic individualism," Archer (2010, _______

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62 Note that there are also studies concerned with, for instance, shared agency and collective agency.
63 Peculiarly, 'the individual' remains vastly un(der)conceptualised – even in sociological dictionaries or introductions (e.g. see Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 2006; Bruce & Yearley, 2006; Outhwaite, 2003; Plummer, 2016; B.S. Turner, 2006).
64 For a discussion of the conceptual history of 'the individual', see Williams (1983, pp.161-164).
65 For a discussion of the difference between individualism and individuality, see Wheeler (2000).
p.274) comments that "realism has never placed sociality entirely outside agency." In this thesis, though, the individual and, therewith agency, is *thoroughly* 'social'. Although I do not agree with Alexander's (1992, p.9) understanding of action as "the exercise of agency by persons" – as outlined, people can also act without exercising agency – I *do* agree with him that the exercising of agency does require a *person* (or perhaps individuality or uniqueness). However, questions regarding, first, the role of *personality* in agency that Alexander (1992, p.9) raises and, second, the role of 'personal properties' – distinct from "structural or cultural properties" – in agency that Archer (2016 [2007], p.176) raises, remain untouched.66

4.32 Although this study is not concerned with an exhaustive discussion of (the diversity in) conceptualisations of agency, I offer in the rest of this chapter a critical discussion of three additional conditions for agency – i.e. consciousness, reflexivity and orientatedness – that are particularly relevant for the intersectional exploration in this thesis.

**Consciousness**

4.33 Damasio (2012) provides a useful understanding of consciousness, which, in turn, enables an understanding of consciousness as a requirement for agency as well as of (its relation to) social or political consciousness – and the lack thereof. To be conscious, as he (2012, p.161) explicates consciousness' properties, it is minimally required for one "(1) to be awake; (2) to have an operational mind; and (3) to have, within that mind, an automatic, unprompted, undeduced sense of self as protagonist of the experience, no matter how subtle the self sense may be." This resonates with approaches to agency that emphasise that "[a]ttending to what one is doing is a necessary condition for that doing's being an action" (Martin, 1972, p.63). Consciousness, Damasio conceptualises,

> is a state of mind in which there is knowledge of one's own existence and of the existence of surroundings. Consciousness is a state of mind—if there is no mind there is no consciousness. (Damasio, 2012, p.157, emphasis in original)

66 Note that Archer (2016 [2007]) distinguishes 'social properties' from 'personal properties'.

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This state of mind is first-person and not observable by others; as such, one's knowledge of oneself is both personal and private – although neither comprehensive nor necessarily accurate. To reiterate, also our access to our own mind and state of mind and, as such, knowledge of ourselves is partial, perspectival and often incomplete (see par.1.16,37). To return to the argument, if there is no consciousness, in turn, arguably there cannot be agency. And he continues,

consciousness is a particular state of mind, enriched by a sense of the particular organism in which a mind is operating; and the state of mind includes knowledge to the effect that the said existence is situated, that there are objects and events surrounding it. Consciousness is a state of mind with a self process added to it. (Damasio, 2012, p.157, emphasis in original)

Conscious states of mind are always, then, 'about' something – including the "self-as-object" – and, thus, always 'have content'. Perhaps, Damasio (p.160) suggests, consciousness can be understood as a "self-oriented mind."

4.34 'Conscious states of mind' are not available, then, under all conditions. Damasio (2012, p.164) refers, for example, to the "nonconscious autopilot" of someone who walks home, but without a conscious focus on the route – in the sociological literature the limits of consciousness also emerge in discussions of 'habit' as a form of action (I return to habituality in Chapter 8). Exploring 'conscious deliberation' and its boundaries, Sie (2009, p.520) raises that "we do not always know if, when, and for what reason we act and move our body the way we do when we act." Inclusively, we may have misperceptions about our reasons – i.e. "what we perceive, how we perceive it, and how we process what we perceive" (Ibid., emphasis in original). Perhaps, as discussed earlier in relation to whiteness, the latter falls in the realm of misattribution of agency to the self. Consciousness, and therewith perhaps agency, should not be understood, then, in binary terms; rather it can better be understood as fluid, dynamic and, as touched on earlier, as a spectrum of intensity, the scope of which "constantly shifts up or down a scale as if it moved on a gliding cursor" – such as when dozing off while bored in a lecture – fluctuating with the situation (Damasio, 2012, p.169). This has implications for agency and the qualification of an action as agentic (see below). Without consciousness, then, one cannot

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67 Sie focusses on moral agency, but her comments here arguably touch on agency in general terms.
attend to one's internal experience and/or external experience and, as such, mobilise one's capacity to act. While consciousness is a requirement for agency, it is an insufficient condition; in the next two sections I will discuss reflexivity and orientatedness as two other conditions for agency.

Reflexivity

4.35 While arguably Giddens did not find much space for agency in the reproduction of practices (1979, p.5) and of action (p.70), reflexive monitoring by 'knowledgeable actors' in fleeting moments of attention (Giddens, 1984, pp.3-4, 9, 17, 281-282) would enable the individual to exercise agency without (necessarily) reproducing society. Reflexivity, Archer argues, is "the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa" (2016 [2007], p.167, original in italic). Therewith, reflexivity is considered a condition for, or even characteristic of, agency. The connection between the social in the external and the internal domain, and the transgression of the social between these domains, appears particularly in the idea that individuals talk to themselves – called internal conversation or dialogue, self-talk, inner speech, and so on – and, doing so, 'deliberate reflexively' (e.g. see Archer, 2003; Chalari, 2009; Wiley, 2010).

4.36 Arguably, however, reflexivity – or, for that matter, internal conversation – goes a step further than Damasio's consciousness due to its 'mediatory' quality. Because of the mediatory role of reflexivity, according to Archer (as argued by Brock et al., 2016, p.xvii), "we deliberate about ourselves in relation to the social situations that we confront, certainly fallibly, certainly incompletely and necessarily under our own descriptions, because that is the only way we can know anything." Sharrock and Tsilipakos highlight that, in Archer's work,

"the full mediatory mechanism has been held to depend upon human reflexivity; namely, our power to deliberate internally upon what to do in situations that were not of our making" (Archer, 2003, p.342). "Without attending to this mediatory mechanism, which is the internal dialogue, it is impossible to grasp how the individual can be an active subject in shaping his or her own life." (p.116) (in Sharrock & Tsilipakos, 2013, p.211n4)

68 Neuronormative and ableist implications will be discussed elsewhere (see Huijg, forthcoming).
In response, they critically unpack Archer's claims: first, that the internal conversation would be the more prevalent form of 'inner doings'; second, that this would take the form of a(n unconceptualised) question-and-answer format (p.201); third, that this "'internal conversation' [would be] the form par excellence suited to reflexive conduct" (particularly "since it is exempt from 'external' constraint") (p.200); fourth, that internal conversation, and therewith the question-and-answer format, would produce self-knowledge; and even if this would be the case, last, that this would generate accurate 'answers' and knowledge (Sharrock & Tsilipakos, 2013, pp.200-208). At least in the case studies under investigation, their critique is valid; 'internal conversations' and the 'Q&A-format' are not prevalent in the intersectional mechanism of agency and, as such, have not been employed as an analytical tool.

4.37 While perhaps not restricted to this, it is noteworthy to add that reflexive deliberation is considered to be crucial to the mediation of structure and agency, while also being central to agency (Colapietro, 2010, p.48). "[R]eflexive agency," Colapietro elaborates, is defined largely in terms of the transformative possibilities generated by internal conversation. This conversation allows the self to distance itself from both itself and the structures indispensable for the emergence of this self. It also allows for the self to distance itself from those structures crucial for the ongoing social interactions of this reflexive agent. Whether or not such distance ought to be expressed in terms of separation (the capacity of the self to separate itself from its present form and also social structures) is not nearly as important as whether or not the self has the capacity to withdraw within itself, to make use of originally public media (or signs) in a private manner and for truly private purposes. (Colapietro, 2010, p.41)

The agent here is not merely considered analytically distinct from social structure, but also empirically separate. There is ample evidence that the individual is impacted by the social and, particularly, social structure and, as such, the idea that the individual can only 'be agential' by distancing herself from structure is arguably empirically inaccurate.

4.38 Discussing Bakhtin's work and his idea of dialogical imagination, Hermans and Gieser's (2011) idea of the 'dialogical self' differs quite substantially from the idea of internal conversation. "[T]he dialogical self," they explain, can be conceived of as a dynamic multiplicity of I-positions. In this view, the I emerges from its intrinsic contact with the (social) environment and is bound to particular positions in time and space. As such, the embodied I is able to move from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time.
In this process of positioning, repositioning and counterpositioning, the I fluctuates among different and even opposed positions (both within the self and between self and perceived or imagined others), and these positions are involved in relationships of relative dominance and social power. (H.J.M. Hermans & Gieser, 2011, pp.2-3, emphasis in original).

Not separate from but, rather, part of society, "the self," they argue, "becomes a 'mini-society' or, to borrow a term from Minsky (1985 in H.J.M. Hermans & Gieser, 2011, p.2), a 'society of mind'." Herein, society is not external to the self, but "the self is in society and functions as an intrinsic part of it" (H.J.M. Hermans & Gieser, 2011, p.2).

4.39 To reiterate, while I have emphasised 'the internal' and 'the external' of the individual as conceptually separate – after all, the latter is observable but the former is not and, in that sense, they are different empirical 'domains' – I do certainly not suggest that 'the individual' and 'the social' are separate. To the contrary, as has been discussed, the individual and, hence, agency are thoroughly social, albeit not only social. Embracing the interconnectedness of the two domains, it is important to consider how they are related and, as such, how agency operates therein. Perhaps this can be taken a step further when considering this dialogical self from a (Lewinian) field perspective. Explaining Lewin's theory of the 'field', Parlett (1997, p.16) describes a unified field as a "web of interconnection between person and situation, self and others, organism and environment, the individual and the communal". Lewin "attempted to show", Parlett (p.18) continues,

how someone's desire or want for something might be countered by 'obstacles' that existed either in the 'person's environment' or in the person's 'beliefs and attitudes' and the behaviour – what the person actually did – was a function of all of these sets of 'forces' relative to one another, and all interacting together. So 'inner' and 'outer' reality are both contained within the field, as are other distinctions – such as 'person' and 'situation'.

It is helpful to think about agency in terms of this idea of a 'field'; both the "'inner' and 'outer' reality" of agency – the 'person's environment', the person's 'beliefs and attitudes', the person's behaviour and actual doing – should, then, be taken into account. Perhaps the 'inner reality' of agency refers to 'the agential' (i.e. components of agency) and the outer reality of agency to 'the agentic' (i.e. tools of agency), rather than to 'the internal' and 'the external' of the individual. In her critique of the standard story of action, Hornsby (2004, par.1) argues that "an

69 This is unrelated to the Bourdieusian field.
agent [should not be sought] amidst the workings of the mind," but, rather, the "agent's place [should be considered] in the world she inhabits." Perhaps the agent is not only placed in a world that she inhabits, but the world that she inhabits as an environment – or even 'field' – is both external and internal to "the workings of the mind." In that light, to loosely quote Alexander (1993, p.503), there is then arguably not only an "external environment of [agency]," but also an "internal environment of [agency]" – which are both, arguably, social. The place in the world that the individual inhabits and the internal environment of the individual might be considered a "kind of place, a point of view in some literal or figurative sense, maybe that domain we refer to when we talk about where somebody is 'coming from?'" (Wheeler, 2000, p.29, emphasis in original). In this place, one can understand the individual\(^70\) – and therewith agency, as I discuss in Chapter 8 – as a possible process, a thing, a feeling, something we have, something we do, something we are, perhaps a noun, or a verb (Ibid).

4.40 The 'I', of which the different 'voices' interact, is explored as multiple to account for sameness, "differentiation, diversity and even oppositions of a multivoiced, dialogical self with its relatively autonomous parts characterized by alterity" and otherness (H.J.M. Hermans & Gieser, 2011, pp.8-9). This idea has been particularly useful in the empirical analysis as it enabled, first, the exploration of the way that different components of the individual – e.g. social categories, power, 'agential elements' – interrelate and influence each other. Second, it offered an understanding of this 'multiplex' individual as situated in the (aforementioned) field and society and, in turn, society 'in' the (multiplex) individual. Since empirically the internal and external domains cannot be strictly separated, also agency, then, is situated in the interrelatedness of these components in terms of their internal and external multiplicity. The mobilisation of agency, though, relates to the field as a whole – i.e. to both the internal and the external environment. As I discuss in the next section, this relation of agency to its environments, or field, is marked by orientatedness.

\(^{70}\) Wheeler actually suggests this with regards to 'the self'. Since I do not distinguish between the individual and the self – perhaps problematically so – I have taken the liberty of considering the individual in these terms.
**Orientatedness**

4.41 Many definitions of agency consist of the qualifiers purposiveness and/or intentionality. Porpora (1989, p.210n2) for instance, defines agency as "human purposiveness and all that that entails such as wants, beliefs, desires, emotions, etc." Intentionality is particularly common in philosophical literature on agency and action (e.g. see Bratman, 1984; Schlosser, 2015). Also understood as 'mental causation', the standard theory or standard causal story of action (e.g. see Hornsby, 2004, p.2) considers the relation between, on the one hand, the – rational or cognitive – workings of the mind of the individual and, on the other hand, her acting in the world. The question is whether an individual's mind or her mental activity – e.g. desiring, deliberating, deciding, willing, believing, purposing something – causes this individual's actions. John Stuart Mill, Mele (1997, p.232) explains, argues that an action consists of two components; first, "[t]he volition or intention to produce the effect" and, second, "the effect produced in consequence of the intention." In this chapter I have challenged the idea that this first component – whether or not formulated in terms of volition or intention – conceptually constitutes action; rather, I have called the second component – i.e. the effect or consequence produced – action. Leaving that discussion aside for now, there is another point I want to raise here. Agency is per definition orientated towards the future; in other words, the action – or, as I argue, the inaction – that is caused by the mobilisation of 'agency' happens, chronologically, after the mobilisation of agency. While 'causality' is perhaps employed deterministically in theorisations of action and elsewhere, I take the liberty to employ it here in the chronological sense mentioned above. This is particularly relevant for two reasons: first, because I will conceptualise agency in this thesis as a process, which contradicts this deterministic approach and, second, because it highlights how agency's orientatedness is not limited to this 'caused future'.

4.42 Arguably, then, orientatedness is a condition for agency – though this is not restricted to matters of causality in terms of the mobilisation of agency and the subsequent generation of action and inaction. The empirical analysis (Chapters 5-7) illustrates that agency can be orientated towards the external environment as well as towards the internal environment of the individual, and
that it can be orientated in terms of time, place, but, arguably, also sociality (I turn to this in Chapter 8). "[D]ifferent simultaneous agentic orientations," Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.964) address, for instance, are not only "embedded within many such temporalities," but are also "oriented toward the past, the future, and the present." Attractive here are the temporal directions agential orientatedness can take (something which I will address extensively) but also their simultaneity – challenging the idea that agency is monolithic. In a Lewinian field theoretical approach the concept of 'contemporaneity' is used; according to this idea, "the-past-as-remembered-now" as well as "the-future-as-anticipated-now," then, can simultaneously constitute the "person's experiential" field in the now or present (Lewin, 1952, p.54 in Parlett, 1991, p.5). Against the idea that (planned or fantasised) events in the past or future would have 'special status', Lewin argues that the "psychological past and the psychological future are simultaneous parts of the psychological field at a given time" (Ibid). Moving away from ontological temporal claims, the past and future are phenomenologically experienced in the present and, in that way, play a role in agency. The possibility of multiple temporal positions – or positions in terms of spatiality and sociality – are not only I-positions fluctuating in "this process of positioning, repositioning and counterpositioning" within "the self and between self and perceived or imagined others" (cf. H.J.M. Hermans & Gieser, 2011, p.2), but they are arguably also temporal positions of the "self-as-object" towards which the 'conscious states of mind' (cf. Damasio, 2012, p.160) can be reflexively orientated in the mobilisation of agency.

4.43 It is helpful to remember how intersectional theory, as an epistemological lens, is always orientated towards social justice and, as discussed in Chapter 3, its orientatedness concerns a critical engagement with (or towards) all complexities and positions of power – including privilege and hegemonic action and thinking (see par.3.11). Considering this project about agency, then, at the intersectional junction of social categories and power – e.g. structural advantage and structural disadvantage in the realm of race and gender, or class and sexuality – another way to look at orientatedness is through Ahmed's (2006) 'lines'. Perhaps the idea of 'lines' is closely linked to the (sociological) idea of 'structure' and, as such, the orientatedness of social categories and power. In Chapter 3, I suggested that intersectionality recognises that social
categorisation refers to the patterned classification of people (par.3.21). In turn, (social) structure, Sewell (1992, p.3) describes, refers to "the tendency of patterns of relations to be reproduced, even when actors engaging in the relations are unaware of the patterns or do not desire their reproduction." Also the (Ahmedian) lines we follow are orientations; they are temporal and spatial "effects of what we tend toward" (Ahmed, 2006, p.20). Lines, then, are also related to the (philosophical) idea of intentionality. Orientations are not unlimited as we cannot follow any line; we can and take some lines, and not others. Our direction depends on "lines that we have already taken: our 'life courses' follow a certain sequence [...] life gets directed in some ways rather than others, through the very requirement that we follow what is already given to us" (p.21).

4.44 The body's orientation towards the world, implies a certain familiarity with (or 'feeling at home' in) the world, which presumes experiences (by 'finding our way') that generate this familiarity (Ahmed, 2006, p.7). The mobilisation of agency is grounded in familiarity; however, also unfamiliarity and "not knowing about certain things" can be 'an effect of lines already taken', of disadvantage, but also often of lines of privilege (p.183n188). Habits are "dispositions, and tendencies, acquired by the frequent repetition of an act" – perhaps lacking consciousness proper; whiteness, Ahmed (pp.129-130) suggests, can even be made sense of as a 'bad habit'; "a series of actions that are repeated, forgotten, and that allow some bodies to take up space by restricting the mobility of others."

4.45 Ahmed (2006, p.7) draws attention to the historical, patterned and social character of the orientatedness of individuals; how people orientate in and are orientated towards the world, through which they see, perceive and experience. The way we mobilise our agency, as such, is grounded in perspectival seeing, perceiving and experiencing – including, as raised, of ourselves. Herein, consciousness is not neutral or 'outside the social'. "What comes into view or what is within our horizon," Ahmed argues,

is not a matter of what we find here or there, or even where we find ourselves, as we move here, or there. What is reachable is determined precisely by orientations we have already taken. Or we could say that orientations are about the directions we take that put some things and not others in our reach. (Ahmed, 2007, p.152)
While consciousness might be a condition for agency, our orientatedness towards our self, towards the world and towards our situatedness in the world – hence that what we can be conscious about – is marked by lines already followed and knowledge already acquired and available to us. This can also imply, for instance, ‘false consciousness’, where one experiences one's thoughts (constitutive of consciousness and, therewith, agency) as one's own, but which arguably are not one's own (cf. Engels, 1968 [1893]), such as when clouded by the 'ailment of sexism' (Lieberman & Bond, 1976, p.372) or 'the internalisation of Western culture and internal colonisation' (Anzaldúa, 1990a, pp.142-148). Inclusively, this can refer to 'conscientisation' – i.e. Paulo Freire's concept of 'conscientização' that refers to the process in which one learns, first, "to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions"; second, to position oneself therein; and, third, "to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (cf. translator's note in Freire, 1996 [1970], p.17n11). Also consciousness, and therewith conscientisation, is marked by what (lines) are or are not available to us.

4.46 The options that are available, towards which agency can be orientated, are lines that are or are not available and can or cannot be taken. Orientation involves aligning body and space," Ahmed (2006, p.7) explains: "we only know which way to turn once we know which way we are facing." Finding our way, being orientated, requires knowledge of what we are orientated towards. Even if we are in unfamiliar space, Ahmed explains, we might know where to turn through the familiarity of turning: "we might find our way, given our familiarity with social form" (p.7). Another way to think about whiteness, she offers, is in terms of "the ease with which the white body extends itself in the world through how it is orientated toward objects and others" (p.138). Inhabitancy of space becomes the negotiation, one could say, between what is familiar and unfamiliar via "actions that reach out toward objects that are already within reach" (p.7). Later in this thesis I will discuss the social categorical aspect of 'agentic reach' – i.e. of what is or what is not agentically within reach or can be expected to be in reach and towards which one can be orientated, while the consequences of one's (in)actions might intended but cannot be caused (for a discussion of e.g. unintended consequences, see Campbell, 2011) – as a manifestation and as a tool of structural power.
Final considerations

4.47 In this chapter I explored agency by situating it, first, in the field of intersectionality studies and, second, in the freedom-determinism and agency-structure debates. Some particular engagements in the first field offer insightful analyses with regards to the interrelatedness and multidimensionality of social categories – as discussed in Chapter 3. In the following chapters, I explore how these insights contribute to thinking about social categories impacting on or operating through agency as well as the agential and agentic mobilisation of social categories – i.e. social categories respectively as components of or as tools in the mobilisation of agency. These ideas about social categories provide a framework to think about agency in relation to social structure, power and, more generally, 'the social' (I return to 'the social' in Chapter 8), while rejecting the reduction of agency to social structure as well as the empirical separation of the two. Particularly useful are studies that might not necessarily focus on intersectionality or on agency (or, for that matter, structure) – e.g. studies on false consciousness, and on orientatedness and lines – but which, either way, provide insight into (the relation between) internal and external limitations to agency.

4.48 None of these engagements, however, offered sufficient analytical tools to make sense of the polylithic complexity characterising the mobilisation of agency that emerges in my analyses of the case studies in Chapters 5-7. Part of the problem is that both fields (i.e. of the study of intersectionality and agency) are characterised by a lack of specificity and complexity with regards to the(ir) theorisations of agency, which means neither is able to contribute sufficiently to a complex intersectional empirical exploration of agency. It is unsurprising, then, that agency (or theories thereof) have also been referred to as a 'black box' (Campbell, 2009).

4.49 The current study is not focussed on the reproduction or change of society (or social structure), however the majority of sociological studies ultimately are. This is not a matter of preference or relevance; it is merely a matter of focus. The aim of this study, then, is to contribute to the theorisation of agency at the aforementioned junction of social categories and power and, specifically, of
structural advantage and disadvantage. While all the participants in the study (of whom only three make an appearance in the present thesis) are racially privileged feminists engaged in activities that indeed are aimed at changing inequality and oppression and, as such, social structure and society, it is not the reproductive or transformative quality of society that has been centred in the analysis. Activism certainly emerged – when the participants brought it up and when I enquired. However, even then, the focus in the conversations centred everyday (cf. Essed, 1989, 1991) – although not necessarily mundane – actions and inactions. Tracing back from these actions and inactions – what I have been calling the ‘tracing back logic’ – the participants and I explored in detail, then, the agency that was mobilised to generate or cause said actions and inactions.

4.50 To reiterate, in this thesis I rely on an anti-conflationary approach to agency, action, as well as inaction. Among others, herein I challenge two ideas: first, the idea that agency can be conflated with action (or inaction); and, second, the idea that action (or inaction) can be conflated with its (intended or unintended) consequences – whether or not these refer to structural impact, societal change or not (I return to this in Chapter 8). The first idea follows from an initial anti-conflationary exploration (i.e. Huijg, 2012) that was not grounded in empirical analysis, but, instead, relied on the abstract intersectional exploration of agency at the junction of various social categorical positions and opposite positions in the realm of power. This initial anti-conflationary exploration proved to be very useful in the empirical analyses, as demonstrated in Chapters 5-7. The second anti-conflationary idea, in turn, emerges from these empirical analyses and will be further explored in Chapter 8.

4.51 The analytical separation of agency, action, inaction, as well as their impact, enables the empirical exploration in the following three chapters (5-7) of the role of other elements in and through agency and the conceptualisation of agency as a mechanism. This is particularly relevant when considering an intersectional lens. Social categories (see Chapter 3) do not only operate externally, such as through social structure, but also internally; as such, they impact agency externally by restricting the reach of agency, but they also impact agency internally in its constitution (i.e. 'agentically'). However, as I
touched on in this chapter and will discuss shortly, agency is also mobilised through the *employment* of social categories – not as constraints, but arguably as tools (i.e. 'agentially'). To explore the different elements, processes, etc. that play a role in the mobilisation of agency and production of action and inaction, it is, to emphasise, necessary to separate them conceptually. In turn, to explore their *interrelatedness* in their complexity, it is also necessary to rely on narrow definitions of both agency and action, precisely to make sense of and discuss how social categories, power and, as touched on, 'agential elements' interact and are mobilised. Before continuing with a theoretical elaboration of the (polylithic) mechanism of intersectional agency (Chapter 8), I now turn first to an empirical discussion of the three case studies of Luciane (Chapter 5), Eduarda (Chapter 6), and Sandra (Chapter 7).
PART II

CASE STUDIES
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Chapter 5. Eduarda: Spraying Feminist Slogans When The Police Come

Introduction

5.1 It is a Tuesday night; it is very late, dark, the street is practically deserted, and Apis faces the wall with a police gun to her head. She has just been caught by the police spraying feminist slogans in protest against sexist statements made by a television personality. She is part of a radical – i.e. anarchist, autonomous, vegan, direct action, etc. – lesbian feminist group, which I call here the ‘group’. Of this group, a small sub-group, which I call here the ‘action group’, has gone to the streets that night to spray. They are at the heart of the city centre of São Paulo, close to the Praça República (i.e. one of São Paulo’s most famous squares), which will be crowded with people once the sun rises so that everyone can see their sprayed protests on their way to work. The idea was, however, that no one would see them spraying to avoid anyone ‘catching them in the act’.

5.2 In this chapter I discuss this event – the only activist case study in this thesis – in two ways. First, I present the event as a manifestation particularly in line with conceptualisations of agency in terms of ‘actions’. However, second, I observe both actions and inactions in Eduarda’s retelling of the event and, particularly, in how the white feminist activists (i.e. Carola, Eduarda and Manu) of the action group interpret, respond to, and (do not) engage with Apis – or, at least, how Eduarda recounts them. Last, I situate this specific event in its context and, doing so, I point to continuity in the way that the white feminists distance themselves from racial responsibility by attributing agency and responsibility to Apis for the police gun to her head. Before I analyse this, I will briefly discuss the group and the action group for the purpose of contextualisation.
5.3 After a meeting that I attend of the group, Eduarda and I take the same bus home. Since Eduarda was not at the first meeting I had attended, I noticed her immediately. In terms of the way she presents herself she stands out from the other members of the group: no tattoos or piercings, longer and neatly cut hair, and wearing formal clothes. She does not only look different from the other women in the meeting, but she also comes across as critical, reflective, and simultaneously observant and vocal. Members of the group offer resistance and scepticism when Eduarda stands up for the inclusion of transwomen in the group – else she "would feel uncomfortable, [...] hypocritical to participate in an environment that.. that does not accept this type of.. of identity" [E:3.207] – and, doing so, she challenges the group’s discrepancy between speech and practice. Differently, this discrepancy returns with respect to Eduarda’s own mobilisation of race awareness.

5.4 Like the majority of the group members, Eduarda is white and in her late twenties. In contrast to the other participants, she is not a university graduate, although she currently studies at night and, during the day, works in a managerial role in the corporate world and, therein, has moved up the social ladder. The cultural-ideological activist capital that most of the other group members organically acquired growing up Eduarda had to learn through self-education. Whereas they came to activism during their studies, Eduarda already

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71 I only participated in two meetings before my methodology changed; I left, however, because of ethical objections I felt regarding one of the group’s other direct actions.

72 These are my guidelines for verbatim quotes. Square brackets: (1a) square brackets with dots (i.e. […]): deleted text; (1b) square brackets with text (i.e. [that day]): altered or inserted text for the clarification of meaning. Dots: (2a) a word with two dots, without a space: a turn in the speech, repetition, unfinished words and sentences; (2b) three dots separate from the text: short pause; (2c) six dots: long pause. Italicisation: (3a) italicised words in quotes: 'untranslated' words; (3b) in-text italicised words in quotation marks: participants' quotes. Formatting participants' quotes: (4a) in-text quotes are italicised; (4b) indented quotes use a specific font; (4c) use of specific referencing system (see footnote below). In-text verbatim quotes of the participants are italicised. All translations are provided by the author and all errors are the author’s responsibility. In-text references of participants’ quotes are in square brackets. The letter stands for the participant’s conversation the quote belongs to (e.g. E for Eduarda). The first number refers to the number of the conversation. The second number points to the position of the quote in the transcribed conversation.
started with direct action in her adolescence, liberating\textsuperscript{73} animals from the slaughterhouse.

5.5 Eduarda's activist scope is broad, however, and the group only takes up a very small part of her social justice activism; she also participates in grassroots LGBT groups, but her underground involvement in the field of domestic violence – which the group is oblivious to – takes up most of her time and energy. Not unlike Apis, many of the women she supports live in the periferia\textsuperscript{74}, often in precarious and dangerous situations of violence that surrounds tráfico (i.e. drugs related organised crime here). Much of this hands-on work consists of supportive phone calls, giving practical advice, conversations about feminism and the injustice of domestic violence while picking up the children, sometimes a visit to the police – and when 'revenge violence' is a risk (e.g. because of tráfico involvement) this can include anonymous blackmailing or public shaming of the aggressor. Only in the third conversation she tells me how psychologically taxing the work is, and the ideological and practical distance this work has from the group's activism, awareness and concerns. Presumably this is the reason that she shares the event with me.

5.6 When we chat on the bus, I explain the research and invite her for the initial semi-structured interview, which, to recap, constitutes the first (exploratory) phase of fieldwork (see Chapter 1). Eduarda agrees to participate and we meet soon. After that it seems difficult to meet her again; she keeps on rescheduling the second conversation (i.e. the first of the second phase). We finally meet again two months later. In that conversation Eduarda tells me about the direct action discussed in this chapter. The third and fourth times we meet, twice in the space of 1.5 weeks as I am now about to return to London, are again a month later.

\textsuperscript{73} Eduarda uses both 'liberar' and 'libertar' in the conversations. The first is translated with to free and to release; the latter with to liberate.

\textsuperscript{74} In Brazil, the periferia – literally the 'periphery' – is a spatial and urban concept referring to the whole of areas with specific types of neighbourhoods, including, but not limited to, favelas (translated as slums or shantytowns). Favelas are the poorest neighbourhoods; they are often without little formal infrastructure (e.g. accessible roads, transport, electricity, services), job opportunities and government support, but with a prominent presence of both organised crime and police violence. In São Paulo favelas are often on the outskirts of the city. The periferia is also a source of social, cultural and political mobilisation.
The group

5.7 Over the years, I have met many feminist groups in São Paulo; this group, though, is particularly homogenous where it comes to, first, race (white), age (mid-twenties), class (university educated, financially supported by parents or sufficiently paying job), as well to ideological orientation (anarchist, autonomous, vegan, feminist, student) and, second, its ideological and practical boundaries. At the end of our third conversation, Eduarda suddenly looks at me: "You are nothing like a feminist...," she tells me. "Me?", I ask, surprised and off guard. "... [N]or dyke," she continues: "look at the size of your nails! It is forbidden..." – I laugh hard, recognising both her criticism and our shared dubious feminist credibility in the judging eyes of the group (after all, the group strongly resisted my presence) – "I will... where is your [feminist club] card? Give it to me, I will tear it apart." [E:3.1109-1113]. The group’s feminist membership, she jokingly just told me, consists of various steps: first, stop shaving your armpits; second, feel disgusted by men; and, third, do not be an employee of a corporate company, be (politically) autonomous and liberal, and have an open relationship. Revolving around ideology, social categories and power, the group hierarchises women. "If you don't follow the steps, you lose your card of the [feminist] club." [E:3.323-327]. Eduarda’s girlfriend – with shaven legs and make up – was frowned upon at one of the meetings; the meeting thereafter, a black woman – "you could see that she straightened her hair once in a while" [E:3.281] – was singled out by one of the white group members for not wearing natural hair. Eduarda's comment on 'feminist membership', then, constitutes an ideological and ethical critique of the discrepancy between the group's preaching and its praxis and, in terms of this thesis, points to (intersectional) tensions in agency and action.

5.8 In contrast to her activism in the periferia, Eduarda reflects, the group focusses mostly on drawing attention to (only some) issues. In the periferia, she contrasts, a feminist activist group would have "a lot more to do and many more things to think about, because they cannot [just] do anything

75 In 2001-2002 I did an internship in two feminist organisations and returned various times after that.
76 ‘Dyke’ is the original term used by Eduarda.
[they would like to do]! [...] They cannot even show they are angry! [...] because it is dangerous [for them].” None of the group’s white participants live in the *periferia*, Eduarda explains, and they neither live nor face the additional reality of *tráfico*. The group “talks a lot [about the bourgeoisie],” she [3.785-789] criticises, “[t]hey fight the bourgeoisie, they really do fight [it]. But it is very easy for you to fight when you are already there in that [place of] comfort.” Their attitude seems to disconnect them:

> it seems that, at times, they do not live [...] in the real world, [...] [t]hey live in a separate world, you know? "I live here, these are my friends, they know who I am", like, "and I am their friend because to me they have a degree of feminism X, so I can accept them."” [E:3.115]

They do not participate in the world "*where women have few chances, few opportunities*" or change the world from the inside, talk to people with other ideas and experiences, or help them with their struggles and actions. All these types of activism are valid, Eduarda emphasises. Turned inwards, the group members, on the other hand, either are involved in direct action "*or ignore it.*” [E:3.115].

*The action group*

5.9 Including Eduarda, the group’s action group consists of four women. Carola and Manu fit the aforementioned privileged profile. In her early thirties, Carola is one of the oldest members of the group and a very experienced and articulate activist. Already familiar with Carola through prior familiarity with the feminist movement in São Paulo and access to various activist circles, I identify her as powerful and, in the realm of power relations, also as someone with a position of authority in the group. I know, then, that she is one of the leaders and gatekeepers of the group in terms of, for instance, organisation, decision-making, ideology, and ethics – including disciplining practices around body hair, such as when she asks the group members about their ‘degree of feminism’:

> “Ay, let’s go, let me see your leg here to see if it’s got hair” [E:3.38]. Considering Carola’s anarchist ideology, in which she rejects all (hierarchical) power structures, at least discursively, it would not surprise me if she would take offence at my description.

77 Indented *verbatim* quotes of participants use a distinct font.
5.10 Criticising Carola's "more elitist environment" and the structurally advantageous conditions and permissions this provides her, Eduarda [3.895-899] challenges the "it is chic to not be chic" character of Carola's "badly dressed" appearance. In contrast, "in the neighbourhood of Apis" – who is the fourth member – it "is [neither] hip […] nor revolutionary" to be 'badly dressed'. Having grown up in a (sufficiently) protective and financially privileged environment, for Carola it is easy to be an anarchist; Apis's way of dressing, as Eduarda makes sense of their class differences, is constrained by limited economic resources [E:3.801]. While the reach of her agency might be financially restricted, Apis's dress choice is certainly an intersectional agentic expression of, for instance, female masculinity in an environment – "the meninas, in mini-shorts and top, on their way to a baile funk" [E:3.855] – where this is non-normative and, evoking resistance, a political act.

5.11 Although twenty years old, Apis looks very young; a "masculine, very small, very thin" woman, Eduarda [2.195] observes. I doubt that Apis remembers me as we never exchanged a word, but I remember her vividly and for two reasons. First, Apis "is gay, she is black, she is poor, she lives in the periferia" on the outer edges of Zona Leste (i.e. the East Zone); she lives prejudice every day. She diverges from the rest of the group in terms of how she looks and lives. "[E]veryone is white [in the group], no one knows what prejudice is," Eduarda [3.765-769] explains to me, "everyone [in the group] is studying, everyone in a public [university]. No one is working either. Only Apis and I." However, where Eduarda works in the corporate sector, Apis works in precarious underemployment. "What else?" Eduarda continues her description: "[e]verything; she is [a] dyke" [E:3.761]. While Eduarda and Apis "lived practically in the same place very close [to each other]" when growing up, their lives (could have) never crossed, their experiences incomparable. Eduarda

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78 Here Eduarda refers to both 'hip' and 'chic'.
79 Menina literally means '(adolescent) girl'. Here, as is common in feminist environments, Eduarda refers to female (colleague) activists and friends.
80 A baile funk is a party, generally held in the favela, where they play 'funk carioca'. Eduarda here alludes to bailes as charged heteronormative sexual and gendered spaces.
81 The public universities in Brazil are free and of very good quality, but difficult to be accepted into. On the other hand, private universities are very expensive; while some are good, many are not.
grew up without economic challenges, whereas Apis's "reality [was] much harder than" hers. "I walk quietly on the street," Eduarda reflects on their social categorical differences, "[s]he doesn't, because eyes will always turn to her in a negative way." [E:3.387-399]. For Eduarda [3.295], then, it is very easy to be a ‘dyke': "I have everything, I do not have any stereotype that can.. that can bring me grave psychological traumas." That is different for Apis: "[g]o to Apis's home, as we saw just now what happens. Go to her street, to her work, the way she goes about [in the world]. That is difficult." Comparing Apis with both her and me, but also intersectionally imagining Apis's internalised context, Eduarda continues: "I am sure that she will suffer some type of psychological violence every day. And she will not even notice anymore some of those [instances of violence].., her unconscious will already find [them] normal." [E:3.395-3.407]. However, when Eduarda imagines Apis's experiences, she simultaneously projects her own experience of Apis – and therewith ideas of class, race, sexuality and gender – onto Apis’s unconscious.

5.12 The second reason why I remember Apis in particular is because of the dreamy and introverted way that she comes across in the meetings, as if she lives somewhat 'in her own world'. "Everyone who knows Apis," Eduarda [3.359] describes her distinctively, "perceives she is slower [...]. She already walks like that.. You ask her something, she thinks a bit before she speaks. She is a more tranquil person." While I would certainly not describe Apis as 'slow' (a descriptor that has an intersectionally ableist feel to it), I imagine Apis’s pace to be more suitable for a reflective philosophical exchange than for direct action. Taking into account social categorical differences between the members in the realm of power and activist experience, after this conversation I kept on asking myself how Apis, before any gun was aimed, could have ended up in that situation in the first place. With that in mind, I wondered what the leadership's perception of responsibility, care, protection and safety was. Alas, for the sake of Eduarda's anonymity, I contacted neither Carola nor Apis. Consequently, much of the analysis in this chapter is an analysis of Eduarda’s observations and

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82 Eduarda refers here, first, to an email that Apis had just sent to the group’s list in which she talks about the violence she experiences at home from her father and, second, to conversations they had related to class differences.
interpretation thereof – pointing to the limitations of observation as an adequate tool for making sense of agency.

The event

5.13 A television personality's sexist comments spur the group to form the aforementioned action group to spray feminist protest slogans in public so that those going to work in the morning will see them. They make various stencils to get the slogans neatly on the walls. Nearing midnight that Tuesday, they leave Manu’s house to go to a deserted street around the corner of Praça República. The decision for the division of the group is left to the flipping of a coin; Eduarda and Manu take a left, Carola and Apis walk in the opposite direction. As agreed, each group follows its route. The division of labour consists of one woman spraying while the other holds the stencil and is also the one on the look-out; when the sprayer is almost done, she takes over the stencil to finish the spraying job. Manu and Apis are the sprayers, Eduarda and Carola the ones on the look-out.

5.14 This is how Eduarda [2.263] describes her responsibility that night:

> We had this job, which is smaller, we were responsible to watch. […] I was looking to both sides. Anything that was different I warned her. That was what I did with Manu. So, when I saw the police car [with dimmed lights], I warned her. She understood, and she stopped what she was doing immediately.

The police car does not stop, but they do stop spraying. Eduarda calls Carola to warn her and Apis. Then they "hid, embraced each other" – as if they were a couple – "and [they] walked off," throwing away their materials in a bin.

5.15 The police car continues and approaches the other group. Carola, Eduarda [2.267,351] recounts what Carola had told her, sees the car coming and she warns Apis: "Police, busted" – their action is done. Carola walks away normally, as if nothing had happened and nothing was happening, and throws the spray paint in a corner. Apis does not hear Carola, nor does she notice that she is walking away; Apis, then, does not walk away with Carola. In turn, Carola does not check in with Apis whether she heard her, and she does not turn around to check whether Apis is following her or is otherwise safe. Not having
been warned and not knowing that her context has changed, Apis does not actually 'have' options. Apis's 'not walking away', then, is *not* an agentic inaction; not because she 'fails' to mobilise agency or is passive, but because that particular situation lacks the potential for agency due to unmet conditions for agency (e.g. of choice and consciousness, cf. Chapter 4). In other words, the contextual lack of agency here is independent of Apis’s individual capacity for agency.

*Apis's risk of police violence*

5.16 The next moment "the police saw Apis [and] were immediately on top of her. They told her to put her hands on her head, pointed their gun, and told her to stand by the wall" [E:2.211]. Apis now facing the wall with a police gun to her head, one of the police officers screams at her:

    Police officer: Is this yours? Is this yours? Whose is it?

And Apis responds:

    Apis: No, sir! It isn't mine, sir! This is not mine, sir!

5.17 Again, Apis does not walk away. However, Apis's 'standing by the wall' is substantially different from the first 'not walking away'. If Apis had been made aware of her options in the first situation, presumably she would have walked away. Now, with a police gun to her head, Apis's options, hence choice for actions and inactions, are limited. This time Apis is very aware of her environment and of the *hypothetical* possibility of walking away – ignoring the context, presumably walking away was desirable. Technically, Apis could initiate physical movement with the purpose of walking away (i.e. action); however, when gun violence (including death) or imprisonment is the alternative, that particular walking away – i.e. when facing a gun – is not a *realistic* choice and certainly not a choice in the agential sense. The power of the police here – understood in Dahl's sense that "A has power over B to the extent to which A can get B to do something which B would not otherwise do" (Haugaard, 2002, p.6) – is manifested as 'traditional power'; that is, power as domination, force, control, coercion. Townsend (1999, p.23) refers to this as 'power-over'. Apis is not only stopped, however, by the force of the gun and interpersonal domination – that is, the blatancy of the violence of 'power-over'
via a gun to her head – she is also stopped by the power of the state and the police as a state-enforcing institution manifested in the use of the gun. This context raises the question whether the possibility of initiating physical movement here – i.e. as a specific (hypothetical) situated doing – can be considered in the realm of agency.

5.18 There is, in stricto sensu, 'choice' since there are 'options' – e.g. Apis can stand there or walk away, talk or be silent. What is crucial here, though, is that the risk of imprisonment and gun violence does not simply rely on institutional power or police violence, and therewith on the coercive power of the gun; rather, the risk of (institutional) gun violence in Brazil – and elsewhere (e.g. Crenshaw, Ritchie, Anspach et al., 2015; Lewis, 2017) – is marked by race, class, gender as well as sexuality. A police gun aimed at anyone's head is more than a mere predicament; it is dangerous. However, there is a racialised hierarchy of risk (e.g. Alves & Vargas, 2017; Cano, 2010; Vargas & Alves, 2010); the danger for a young, black, masculine and queer woman in São Paulo – e.g. Apis – is, quantitatively and qualitatively, different and disproportionately more lethal than for middle class, white women – e.g. Carola, Manu and Eduarda. Think only of the four bullets execution, on 14 March 2018, that killed Marielle Franco – a black, queer, feminist activist and (then) recently inaugurated Rio de Janeiro city councillor – for which the police, (civil) military and paramilitary are under investigation. (Amnesty International, 2018; Bacelar, 2018; Freelon, 2018; Sudré & Brasil do Fato, 2018; Tavares, 2018). Within the intersectional context of institutional and interpersonal power relations, then, these police officers – "[o]ne man and one woman, and the two were black!," Eduarda [2.211] interprets Apis's concern – metaphorically and functionally represent the classed, raced and gendered hegemony of the state, and their gun implies the risk of 'lawful' deadly state violence. In terms of the option to walk away or not, arguably, deadly state violence is a risk that voids – 'free' – choice.

5.19 Consequently, not meeting the conditions for agency (cf. Chapter 4), Apis's corporal inactive response (i.e. she does not walk away) cannot be assessed as agentic in the context of the concrete absence of freedom – under the description of the generic 'power' of the gun, its representational authority,
and the social structural orientation with which the gun is aimed (see Mele, par.4.17). As representatives of the system, relying on racist, classist and gender-normative rules, ideas and ideals, and with legal power, as Eduarda later points to, the police officers selectively target Apis. They operate in that system, but Apis also operates therein; the coercion of the gun, then, works coercively through its material and immaterial power 'in the here and now', but also situated in – as she later hints at (see below) – Apis's pre-existing knowledge and personal and vicarious experiences with the realness of the threat of racially motivated violence, if not murder, by means of police guns. The power of the police, then, extends to, first, Apis's anticipations and expectations (cf. Wartenberg, 1992, p.xviii) regarding what the police can do and have proven to be capable of doing to (intersectionally) harm her and, second, it intersectionally impacts her agentic reach.

5.20 Power, structure and agency, then, do not only operate simultaneously and multidimensionally – and in the "the-past-as-remembered-now" and "the-future-as-anticipated-now" (see Chapter 4) – but also intersectionally. While not knowing what the actual content is, to reiterate, it is realistic to imagine that Apis's agential process consists of various considerations – e.g. weighing the 'pros' and 'cons' regarding the reach and limits of what and how she can respond. The specifics of what internal process consists of, however, remain unknown. And Apis does resist. One the one hand, she addresses the police officer as 'sir' and, as such, attributes authority to the officer and the state power he represents. At first, this might seem an expression of vocal alignment with the disciplining and coercive function of the gun – i.e. responding to the officer as is expected from her. At the same time, though, she defies his authority through the denial that she is the owner of the spray paint and stencil or even – to stick to the conceptual terminology of agency (see par.4.16) – the 'causer' of the slogan on the wall. But this verbalisation is actually incongruent with her internal process; her (and our) knowledge of what happened – namely that she did spray the slogans, albeit not on her own – is not manifested externally. This verbal action of denial consists of the disowning of the physical action of the spraying – i.e. by claiming the action is not hers, and she is not the agent of that action, she rejects responsibility. Rather than a (mere) manifestation of coercive constraints that the previous analysis offered, interestingly, this incongruence
points precisely to the agentic character of her response; in other words, in the denial of herself as the 'spraying agent', Apis does mobilise agency. This raises conceptual questions for further research about the simultaneity of non-agency and agency – perhaps under different descriptions (cf. Mele, par.4.17)

**Carola and authority**

5.21 When Carola walks away, Eduarda [2.267] tells me, she assumes that Apis is walking behind her; that is, until she hears the noise of the police car, the police getting out of the car, armed, and ordering Apis to face the wall. Having walked away far enough, Carola can turn around safely, observe what is happening, and call Eduarda [2.211]:

| Eduarda: | Do this. Stay watching for a bit, see what they are going to do. If you see that they are not going to let [her] go..., we are about to arrive [...] we are approaching. Then we see what we can say [to the officers]. Explain what we were doing, that it is nothing too much, that it isn't vandalism, or nothing! |
| Carola: | *Ay*, okay then, but I think I go there now. |
| Eduarda: | Okay! Then go, but be careful, don't be edgy, eh, [...] we are on our way. |

5.22 After Carola returns, she tells Eduarda, the attitude of the officers changes completely. Eduarda [2.211] situates Carola in the scene in terms of intersectional power dynamics: "*Look at Carola: white, light hair [...] super articulate, talking with them as equals; not calling them 'sir', or anything.*" Without fear of police power, Carola addresses the officers with a voice that demonstrates authority and ease with the situation:

| Carola: | Hey! Everything okay? |
| Police officer: | Everything okay. Were you with her? |
| Carola: | No. I was only walking here. But what is happening here? What are you doing? |
| Police officer: | I saw you with her? |
| Carola: | But what is it? Let me see what it is. |

Carola picks up the stencil and starts to explain to the officers that they are spraying slogans because of the guy’s sexist comments. Seeing that the officers
are black, Carola makes a small detour. "How was it that she said?" Eduarda tries to remember how Carola employs race, "she didn't say 'apology', she used a more difficult word that incites... [...] it makes people want to assault blacks and gays and [...] women. She said some things, like, to see whether they would give some respite." [E:2.211-215].

5.23 "Apis still at the wall!" Eduarda [2.215] continues her description, they "weren't even going to release her! Still with the gun in their hand, and Apis... And Carola there, as if she was a police officer too! You know? They didn't even... they didn't even raise their voice to [Carola]. They talked as equals, an attitude like... very sad, you know?" The officers tell Carola and Apis:

Police officer: We understand, it is very annoying what the guy is doing. Only what you are doing here is an environmental crime; you could be imprisoned... I won't even take you! I will leave you there, I won't even take your things with me, you can take them. But I don't want you here anymore. If I catch [you] here again I will take [your things]. I understand that you are annoyed, but the guy is earning money and you [would] be imprisoned.

Carola: Okay. Can we ... can we release her?

In the meanwhile Apis is still facing the wall. Then the officer responds:

Police officer: Okay. You two can go.

5.24 Without knowing the exact content of what 'orientates' her, Carola's actions are clearly agentic and her agentic intervention is in stark contrast to Apis's reach of agency; their 'capacity to act' is neither quantitatively nor qualitatively equal. "[I]f Carola wasn't there," Apis [E:2.275] tells Eduarda later (see also below), "I would have done a lot more bullshit!" Carola does not only hold structural power to mobilise her agency such that this power extends to the release of Apis, her agency actually extends beyond that. The reach of Carola's actions includes the extension of her intersectionally mobilised positions in power relations in the realm of gender, race and class – synthesised by Eduarda as 'white, light hair... super articulate' – to address them as equals, "as if she was a police officer too" [E:2.215]. It is not even necessary for Carola to

83 It is not clear whether Carola talked to Eduarda about the police officers and her motivation in racial and gendered terms, or whether Eduarda deduces this on the basis of her knowledge and observations of Carola and her conversation with Apis afterwards.
defy the officers' institutional authority; the social categorical reach of her agency suggests that she does not need to recognise it in the first place. And doing so can divert danger of state violence. The reach of Carola's agency and of the impact of her in/actions, then, includes herself as well as Apis. Additionally, her agency's intersectional mobilisation, situated in a context of unequal risk and unequal manifestations of power, is orientated towards impacting Apis's position and agentic reach to 'save' Apis by freeing her. As a white, middle class articulate woman talking to black officers who work for a white institution, the mobilisation of gendered race and class privilege might well purposefully consist of the (agential) mobilisation of her 'power-over'. Carola consciously mobilises a discourse of anti-racism, Eduarda's reflection suggests, while just having witnessed an institutionally racist action. This requires pre-existing knowledge of the system of racism and racial inequality and, among others, its institutional, structural and interpersonal aspects. Employing this, Carola seems to strategically – and selectively – mobilise her ideological and ethical concerns in the realm of race, first, to address the officers as victims of this system and, as such, of the TV personality's comments and, second, to 'empathically' include the officers as 'objects of her activist concern', while backgrounding Apis as an agential subject. Addressing them as victims rather than officers, third, Carola purposefully acts to evoke the officers' emotive investment and, therewith, their ethical and ideological solidarity. This seems to be orientated towards impacting the officers such that they – as black people rather than as police officers representing the (racist) state – would recognise themselves, first, as (potential) objects of the TV personality's hypothetical racially offensive remarks and, on that ground, second, would see themselves in Apis's position. Carola's move, then, introduces a split in which they themselves are situated as (vicarious) objects of racist agentic actions – i.e. of both the TV personality's (hypothetical) racist remarks and of their own gun – rather than as state representatives who, as subjects, agentically re/produce racist state violence. This interpersonal split seems to be orientated towards the officers' internal processes with the purpose of impacting their (agentic) handling of the gun and, through this, the release of Apis. Considering that the consequences of a fired gun can lead to death, saving, here, is both a

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The idea of a 'split' is informed by, although perhaps employed differently from, Gunaratnam and Lewis (2001).
metaphorical real quality and a hypothetical literal implication of Carola's act of 'liberation'.

5.25 This interpersonal emotive relation is marked by moral empathy; however, it is also ideologically marked by social-political consciousness employed through an exchange, one might say, of social categories marked by unequal power relations. Although Carola is affected by what happened and not completely sure what to do, according to Eduarda, she does not act as if she is intimidated. Carola not only intersectionally (inter)acts from the position of a white, middle class woman; contrasted with Apis's response to the officers, she also employs gender, class and race as tools in the mobilisation of agency – to reiterate, by talking in a "super articulate" manner, by "talking with them as equals," by "not calling them 'sir', or anything" [E:2.211]. However, race, racial equality and anti-racism do not, I observe, substantially constitute Carola's or the group's activist, empathic, ethical and ideological praxis, or otherwise feminist agenda of concerns. Challenging the police officers, she does not rebel – perhaps 'anarchically' – against their institutional authority; she ignores it. When she addresses them in order to evoke social-political self-consciousness and solidarity, she does not ground this in her solidarity or, for that matter, white critical investment; rather, she seems to act from a place of raced and classed authority. The verbalisation of her concern about the TV personality attacking "blacks and gays and [...] women," then, neither seems to be grounded in concerns about racism, homophobia and patriarchy nor does it seem to represent her and, as its main leader, the group's intersectional ideological and ethical praxis. The gun interrupting the spraying is a situational obstacle in the struggle against sexism; the aforementioned mobilised concern about the racist gun, then, appears to function as a pragmatic purposive negotiation strategy. As I discuss shortly, in this logic it is unsurprising that therein Apis and what Apis intersectionally represents become the obstacle.

5.26 While Apis – as the target of intersectional racist state violence –m mobilises agency in her 'talking back', simultaneously she becomes a bystander in the process of being 'saved'. In and of itself, this is neither grounded in Apis's multiple positions of structural disadvantage in the realm of, among others, race, class and gender vis-à-vis state violence and political coercion, nor in the
police gun that intersectionally explicates Carola and Apis’s unequal ‘partnership in feminist crime’. Rather, this is expressed on an interpersonal level between them; in her agentically active negotiation with the police for the feminist cause and, therein, her complex intersectional mobilisation of power, Carola mobilises her agency inactively through her non-engagement with Apis. By ignoring Apis on this observationally interpersonal level – even though, presumably, Carola does consider Apis internally – Apis is sidelined by Carola as an agential subject.

The silence of reflection

5.27 When they walk away, Eduarda and Manu are still on their way to find Carola and Apis. Carola calls Eduarda and they agree to meet each other down the road to return to Manu's flat close by. Back at Manu's home, the action group sits down on her door step; Apis is edgy, and so is Carola. Manu retrospectively gives alternative suggestions to, or perhaps even accuses, Apis and Carola:

  Why did you [plural, DDH] not do this? Why did you not do that..? You were supposed to say this.. [E:2,271]

"Apis did not understand the sign," Eduarda [2.275] comments to me, "we hadn't agreed to say this." Using 'you' in plural, Manu, Eduarda suggests, addressed Apis and Carola both. When our conversation continues, however, it becomes clear that this question was particularly directed at Apis. And Apis reacts to Manu:

  But I couldn't think of anything in the moment. I didn't even remember! And if Carola hadn't been there, I would have done a lot more shit! If Carola had not returned to help me, I probably would have ended up anxious, scream at the police officer and I would have been imprisoned for contempt. [E:2.275]

"From the outside, it is really easy [to know what to do]!" – Eduarda [2.275] reconsiders her earlier critique of Apis in our conversation; "[a]fterwards, you have a lot of alternatives," she [2.271] reflects on how the event evolved, "I understand! It is difficult to think of something in the moment itself! You are afraid, nervous!" We do not know whether Apis was indeed afraid or nervous, as explained by Eduarda. It is noteworthy that Eduarda does not pick up on the screaming that Apis apparently was about to express – although it is debateable

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whether this would make the situation more 'free' in terms of the aforementioned conditions for agency (Chapter 4). Whether as an expression of anger and/or anxiety, the point is that Eduarda’s reading of Apis might more accurately represent her own feelings and engagement with power relations and social categories – e.g. with regards to race, class and gender – than Apis’s actual internal process.

5.28 The (white) women seemed so surprised by what happened that I thought, at the start of that conversation with Eduarda, that the action group had not at all considered the risk of a police encounter; to the contrary, they always take the police into account when they prepare an action. "But it is not something, like...," Eduarda [2.279] elaborates, "everything that we've already done [in the past]... I think Manu has done the most, [but] nobody was ever stopped! The police never stopped anyone of us. This was a situation that we never experienced." Thinking about the possibility of the police stopping them, they agreed that they "would say to the police: 'Ah, but we saw that during the Slutwalk, everyone did this, we did not think it was a crime!'" [E:2.275]. The 'we' that thought about but had never experienced being stopped by the police was a racially hegemonic and homogenous 'we' from which not only Apis specifically was excluded – symbolically and, since Apis was not consulted beforehand, also practically – but from which also the whiteness of the white women’s experiences in a more general sense remained invisible and unquestioned.

5.29 Apis, Eduarda tells me, does not generally talk in the meetings,

[s]he always says: "I prefer to stay quiet. Listen and support you with what you say than give my opinion. Because I always think that my opinion is less valid." I feel terrible when she says this. [E:3.423]

After the event, on Manu’s doorstep, Apis does talk to them, though, about how humiliated she feels, principally because one of the police officers is also a woman and black [E:2.323]. In contrast to the aforementioned '(white) we’ that is void of violent policial experiences, Apis, Eduarda tells me, continues:

"But alright, it wasn't the worse experience I had with the police."

85 ‘Slutwalk’ in English was used as such in Brazil.
And this is all Apis shares [E:2.323,3.423]. I ask Eduarda how the rest of the action group reacted; no one said anything in response. "I let it go," Eduarda [2.327] moves to the first person singular, "but I was very curious, I wanted to know what had happened." It is as if 'it' never happened – the 'past-as-denied-now'.

5.30 After returning to Eduarda's flat, Apis and Eduarda have a brief conversation, but they talk about personal things rather than the event. Since Carola stayed at Manu's house, it is quite possible, Eduarda suggests, that Carola and Manu did talk with each other. On the (action) group level, though, the event is followed by silence; Eduarda and Apis do not discuss what happened, Eduarda does not talk about what happened with Carola, with Manu or with anyone else from the group, it is not brought to the group, it does not emerge in the group's interactions, and nobody talks with Apis privately. When, a month later (just before I return to London), Eduarda and I finally have our third and fourth (i.e. last) conversation within a week – to recall, Eduarda mentions the event for the first time in our second conversation just after it happened – the action has been publicised in social movements; nonetheless, the police gun, Apis's experience, as well as Carola, Manu and Eduarda's role therein, continue to be an absent presence in the (action) group. While it is unclear what the agency of the action group members' silence consists of, it is as if the explosive actions of the event imploded into collective inaction afterwards.

The event in context

5.31 The group does not assess Carola’s mobilisation of agency, actions and inactions and lack thereof, but they do Apis’s. First, in specifically 'asking' Apis why she did (not) act in a certain way and, second, in assessing Apis's not responding to Carola's sign and her reaction to the police officers as a failure to act in alignment with the 'protocol' (i.e. as 'not handling the situation as agreed'), they effectively assess Apis as, inactively, mobilising agency vis-à-vis the police gun and state coercion. This is a crucial point. While this thesis unfortunately does not offer an in-depth engagement with the theoretical relation between
accountability, responsibility and (assessment of) agency, it is important to
highlight that assessing the other as (in)acting agentically can put responsibility
and ownership (of said in/actions), and often therewith accountability, onto the
other – such as from the self or from social inequality. In other words, by
assessing Apis’s (non-)response to Carola and the police as agentic, the group
makes Apis – as the apparent owner of these 'agentic inactions' – responsible
for what happened and, as such, identify her as 'the problem'. While it seems
that the white middle class activists assess Apis situationally – perhaps as just
'a direct action gone wrong' – this is insufficient to make sense of the complexity
that constitutes their dealing with the situation and response to Apis. For this, I
situate in this section their response in the context of their and the group's
actions and inactions.

Assessing Apis

5.32 Not only did Apis divert from the protocol, Eduarda comments, she "bowed
her head [...] She already put herself in the position of guilty. And, like, when
you put yourself in the position of guilty, in front of the police, they will indeed
blame you." [E:2.275]. If only Apis would have just acted as agreed, one can
read, the gun would not have been pulled or aimed, as the situation would have
been de-escalated or evaporated altogether – after all, that is what happened
when Carola handled the situation with the police. It is not that they seem to
think that Apis in particular – perhaps as a black, masculine and/or working
class woman – should behave differently with the police; rather, Apis's "position
of guilty," seems to be the argument, comes from her passive, 'non-assertive'
bowing stance – i.e. from her inactive mobilisation of agency – as a result of her
non-compliance with the aforementioned 'activist protocol'. Presumably, this
position is precisely intersectionally mobilised in response to the risk that the
police poses to Apis in particular – as a black, as a masculine and/or as a
working class woman. By 'behaving guilty', they appear to argue, Apis makes
the situation worse, which induces – if not causes – the police's actions towards
her. What generated said consequences (i.e. the police's actions) is not even
the spraying, it is her verbal inaction; Apis failed to say "Ah, but we saw that
during the Slutwalk, everyone did this, we did not think it was a crime!"
[E:2.275]. This non-verbalisation is not made sense of as a 'non-choice' –
which, as discussed, would make sense in the intersectional context of Apis’s structural and situational position – and, as such, as an absence of action not mobilised by agency; rather, by proposing it as a particular option (i.e. the ‘wrong’ one), it is assessed as agentic inaction and, with Apis now as the ‘owner’ of this agentic inaction, this theoretically moves responsibility, if not accountability, onto Apis.

5.33 As Apis’s context is intersectional, so is their assessment after the event. This situational assessment, in which they attribute agency to Apis's 'inaction', seems to be grounded in three contextual reflections. First, Apis was there to begin with because "[s]he really wanted to participate and we brought her [along]." Second, Apis's character is unsuitable, because, as touched on, "she is very slow, eh! And for these things you need to have agility. If the police catch you, you need to be able to stay calm.." [E:2.231]. Rather than quick on her feet and calm, the white members argue, Apis is 'slow'. She does not have it in her, it is suggested, to effectively participate. As touched on, I do not disagree with an assessment that 'dreamy' and inexperienced activists – to reiterate, though, this is not the same as 'slowness' – might perhaps not be suitable for a risky and dangerous direct action. It is important to recognise that, first, activists contribute different qualities to social movement organising. Second, there is power, and therewith responsibility, in activist seniority. Taking these elements into consideration precisely comes with the (intersectional) territory of responsible leadership and, if you will, 'leadership agency'. In turn, not engaging with the anticipation of complex situations like these is still a manifestation of agency – although, as this event demonstrates, this can be an irresponsible, risky and problematic one. At the end of this chapter I discuss how a bird's-eye view suggests that these inactive manifestations of agency can be understood intersectionally as a lack of care and protection.

5.34 Apis is made responsible by the other women in the action group for the situation she found herself in; on the other hand, the discourse seems to be, Carola is the one who 'liberated' her. Not only is Apis made responsible for the way she reacted to the police officers; not being able to remember the protocol, she is also being held accountable for being stopped by the officers in the first place. Reflecting on how "two white, lighter meninas, who would be able to
converse" with the police officers – in line with the protocol – and "who would be more accepted in society" would have led to another outcome, Eduarda [2.287-291] attributes the outcome of the event to Apis being a chamariz – i.e. someone who draws the attention of other people, such as the officers, to herself. Because of this, and without consulting Apis, the white members of the action group decide that Apis should not be invited for the next action. On the basis of her multiple structural disadvantage visible in her appearance, Apis becomes, again, an obstacle for successful political protest in defence of – radical, middle class, white – feminism.

Eduarda assesses

5.35 Instead of these differences becoming part of the explanation of the event and attribution of responsibility to the state and, arguably the white feminists themselves, Apis seems to end up as the event's agential source. It is important to put the explanation of what happened and of who is attributed responsibility in context. In response to commenting that Apis is a chamariz, Eduarda [2.291] reflects:

After that I felt bad thinking like that: "Putz⁸⁶ That is a person who already suffers so much, and then also a gun aimed at the person's head"; that's complicated, eh?

She moves to imagining this particular experience in Apis past experiences:

It isn't something that she ... ... isn't accustomed to, but it is something that will shock each time it happens.

From this empathic imaginary exercise, Eduarda reflects on her own role:

I felt bad about this. To not being able to protect her from this situation, you know? [...] we always end up putting a person in the position of poor thing, eh. [E:2.291]

A month later, she [3.419] returns to the event and reflects:

Turned to the wall, with her hands on her back⁸⁷, while someone has to come to intervene for you, as if she was a slave master, someone has to come to liberate you. If this isn't the worst thing that you have experienced with the police, imagine what was.

Eduarda – like others in the group – does not lack reflective and critical capacities, and her social-political consciousness is acquired intersectionally –

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⁸⁶ Exclamations – e.g. putz, nossa, meu – are not translated from Portuguese.
⁸⁷ In other moments, Eduarda describes Apis as having her hands above her head.
to some extent at least; she is well aware of their interpersonal and cross-categorical differences, their differences in terms of social inequality and power, and how these imply differential treatment by the state. Additionally, she demonstrates empathic awareness of the potential psychological impact of 'bad experiences with the police', while recognising that this is, partially at least, beyond her imagination.

5.36 Also comparatively – i.e. reflecting on the police car that passed Eduarda and Manu, but did not stop – Eduarda [2.279] assesses the event intersectionally; might it be that one day someone did see them involved in direct action, such as this one, but "thought: 'Ah, I'm not going to worry about this because it is something small…' Some police officer, or someone who didn't want to denounce it because they looked at us and thought that we had the face of …? You understand?" Appealing to me doing research on, among others, race privilege, Eduarda asks me to see this in the structural light of how the state racially profiles and acts accordingly; the police do not expect, or suspect, them (i.e. Manu and Eduarda) to mobilise their agency as criminal acts – not because they are women, but because they are (middle class) white women. This, though, seems to have direct consequences for how race privilege operates in their activism. Not being racially profiled targets, they lack personal experience with and subsequent knowledge of racist state violence, and of the risk and threat thereof. Not having to fear for one's life in that context is in itself arguably an expression of race privilege; they can go out on the streets in the middle of the night to spray in the first place. However, Eduarda is aware of this.

5.37 The gun, Apis as a person, and Apis in terms of what she intersectionally represents, then, play a central role, first, in Eduarda's reflection and, second, as interpreted by Eduarda, in the way that the other women of the action group, as well as the group as a whole, relate to Apis – or, to be more precise, how they do not relate to and consider her and their differential positions, experiences and voice in terms of social categories and power. It is this intersectional non-engagement that draws my attention.
5.38 This non-engagement becomes particularly prominent in the way that the white women reflect on Carola's role in the event. When Carola talks to the police to negotiate Apis's 'liberation', as raised, she seems to ignore Apis – at least from an observational perspective. This could be interpreted as purposefully strategic in the moment itself – e.g. to align with the police's behaviour\(^\text{88}\) of treating Apis as an (indirect) object void of agency in order to distract the police from Apis and to force them to be accountable to Carola (i.e. the one with racialised power and authority). Situating it in the action group's dynamics, this non-engagement intersectionally appears to fit a pattern of inactions of a similar kind – before the event, during the event, after the event, and in the reflection on the event – where the leadership's agency and subsequent in/actions and responsibility are ignored. To exemplify, seeing the police car approaching, Eduarda [2.263] checks in with Manu to see whether Manu heard her when she told her to stop spraying; they walk away together, embraced even. In contrast, Carola says to have warned Apis that the police are approaching, but she does not check whether Apis heard her and is safe – surely a task particular to a leadership position – and nevertheless she walks away. When I ask Eduarda whether Carola could have done something else in that moment, Eduarda [2.331] responds negatively: "I think, inclusively, that [Carola] was very courageous! She returned, eh! [Apis] was already free!" Not only does Carola act irresponsibly, in my assessment, neither Manu nor Eduarda picks up on this. In turn, this non-assignment of responsibility onto Carola could arguably be made sense of as an agentic inactive engagement with whiteness and middle classness (cf. Chapter 3).

5.39 "[Carola] even, like, said," Eduarda [2.331] continues, "'If I would have walked to the Paulista [Avenue]\(^\text{89}\), I would have gone to the metro, because no

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\(^{88}\) Used in its lay meaning, 'behaviour' refers here to a way of doing (see par.4.20), rather than to a particular action or reflexive reaction.

\(^{89}\) Avenida Paulista – or Paulista Avenue – is possibly one of the most famous streets of Brazil, where the political protests and parades take place. It is the financial and business centre of São Paulo (if not Brazil), while forming a geographic and social barrier between, on the northeast side, lower class neighbourhoods with organised (drug) crime, sex work, LGBT clubs, etc. and, on the southwest side, rich(er) neighbourhoods with expensive restaurants, private security and high walls.
one would mess with me!" In contrast to Apis, Carola has significantly less to fear in the middle of the night in that particular area of São Paulo and confidently walks through the night. As far as we know, she does not give the risk of public or police violence much thought; after all, there is little risk for Carola. None of the white activists, again, consider that perhaps they – and particularly Carola, who was spraying with Apis and has an informal leadership role – should have given a thought to the possibility that race is a significant factor in the risk of (lethal) police violence and, as such, that women of colour, and particularly Apis here, certainly do risk police violence. The white women are senior and experienced activists and, in that role, they had considered the role of the police – as they should have. But their understanding of and experience with the police – with respect to the preparation and imagination of direct action – revolves around white, female middle classness, and perhaps interspecies and gendered domestic violence. Racial denial – albeit coexisting with racial awareness – seems such an everyday constituent of the cognitive process of their feminist consciousness; even in their reflection on the event as well as during other interactions of the group that I observed and that Eduarda mentioned (see below), they remain oblivious to the fact that their a priori non-engagement with racial difference, in terms of how the police respond to women activists spraying at night, first, was precisely a denial of differential risk and, second, contributed to this risk. Consequently, the risk of (racist) police violence as a realistic threat to Apis's life, in turn, is not considered. In short, the consequences of this non-engagement disproportionately put Apis at risk, which, in turn, is processed through non-engagement when, a posteriori, Carola’s responsibility is ignored.

The group and racial exclusion

5.40 The white feminists’ non-engagement becomes particularly clear when it is situated in the group as a whole. At the last meeting of the group that I attend, I read back from my field notes, there are three black women. One of them is a student, vegan, very politicised, radical, and very tough and vocal; her acceptance depends on her network and activist profile that matches the group and arguably the non-recognition of her raciality. For instance, when she tries, multiple times, to raise racially gendered issues in an activity around adverts in
magazines, she is blatantly ignored – it is as if her racial voice evaporates. Discussing this meeting, Eduarda, who was at the same meeting and also noticed this, comments that it is "[b]ecause these questions of colour\textsuperscript{90} are not important to those [white, DDH] meninas. Because, again, they're not part of their reality." The second woman works in a 'lower class' job and is completely new to feminist discourse and activism; "poor, chubby and dressed like a metal worker,\textsuperscript{91}" she is silent and more or less ignored during the whole meeting. She does not return the following meeting; "the space is not welcoming for women like her," Eduarda explains. [E:3.903-987].

5.41 Apis, the third black woman, has an established position in the group, but generally her raciality is ignored by the group's white members. Perhaps this way, first, also her experiences with racism, and the risk thereof, can be ignored and, second, the group's whiteness and colour blindness can be maintained. After all, she is 'one of the meninas'. "Would it be," Eduarda [3.983] reflects, "that we accept Apis, because she is, like, very light? [...] Or would it be that we accept Apis, more because of, like, inclusion of [racial] quota\textsuperscript{92}." At the same time, when a conversation in one of the group's meetings moves to race, Carola asks Apis: "What do you think, Apis?" [E:3.769]. Doing so, Carola expels race from her feminist consciousness and activist authority in order to project it onto the racialised other – the racialised other, as Eduarda [3.423] mentioned, who prefers to stay quiet, listen and support the white members in the group and who does not feel that her opinion is valid in the first place. However, the moment that race becomes a topic, Apis is centred by being made responsible for 'thinking about race'. In doing so, the other group's members throw race and racism in Apis's lap – perhaps under the guise of interracial empathy – where Apis becomes the object of, if not tool for, Carola's intercategorical 'good intention'; race is therewith transferred back to the margins of the (white) feminist cause.

5.42 However, when Apis actually is experiencing the prejudicial consequences of racism, and Carola is involved, Apis is not asked what she thinks. Although

\textsuperscript{90} Both race and colour (i.e. 'raça' and 'cor') are used to refer to race.
\textsuperscript{91} This is a classed as well as a gendered assessment of sexuality.
\textsuperscript{92} Presumably Eduarda alludes here to the affirmative action admission quota in Brazilian federal universities for students from state schools, and for black and indigenous students.
planning to talk to her, a month after the event none of the other women has
taken the initiative to approach Apis. "We didn't yet have the opportunity",
Eduarda [3.411-415] responds when I enquire, "because," she continues,
Carola and Manu "wanted to talk first with those who participated. Only us four..
[…] Carola and Manu wanted first to talk to [Apis] to see if she would feel
comfortable to talk in front of everyone [in the group]" – none of which
happened. Carola and Manu could (and should) have talked with Apis
beforehand, and each time when they meet. Mind, the group had already met
again after the event – including at the activity where natural hair was
'celebrated' and black experiences of hair non-aligned with the white members'
feminist ideals were berated [E:3.281]. Carola and Manu's non-engagement
with what happened at the event and, afterwards, with Apis's opinion, feelings,
experiences and needs, and their racial weight, becomes now Apis's
responsibility in absentia.

Withholding care and protection

5.43 From a nano-perspective, Eduarda's spraying event is a very 'active' case;
it is one of the reasons why I selected it. Even though it is not necessarily clear
what the action group members' agency consisted of, after all (vicarious)
observation does not provide sufficient access to this type of information, it is
clear that their actions – or some of them at least – are agentic. To recap some
of their actions: they prepare the action, they throw a coin to divide the tasks,
they walk in their respective directions, they are on the look-out and spray
slogans; and after Apis is standing there with a gun to her head, Carola calls
Eduarda and confers, Carola walks back, and Carola talks to, if not negotiates
with, the officers to 'liberate' Apis. These are all clearly actions in the classical
sense of the concept; they are observable doings caused by obvious doers.
Another way of saying this is that the agents caused 'their' actions (cf. Chapter
4). Herein, the white feminists express a twofold racial continuity: first, by
distancing themselves from responsibility and, second, by attributing agency
and responsibility to Apis.
While all this activity was happening, there was also so much *not* happening; it is the sense of non-commitment and non-engagement that caught my attention. It is safe to say that the agentic inaction permeates the event; not having access to the protagonists’ accounts, however, it is more difficult to identify where and when these agentic inactions were at work and how precisely agency was mobilised. To make sense of this, then, it is insufficient to guess where this 'not happening' could have taken place. This practical question (i.e. concerning the identification of, the mobilisation of, agentic inaction) is also a moral question – one that a nano-lens perhaps cannot sufficiently contribute to. The question of what 'did not happen' requires a response to the question of what *should* have happened; this, in turn, points to the question of what should have been *anticipated* – particularly by the leadership. Relying on both critical and experiential knowledge of intersectional power relations in activist organising and leadership, this points to various moments, in the realm of agency, where the event could have – and *should* have – unfolded differently. In other words, it is not that there was 'nothingness' in terms of options and the possibility for agency. Rather, these options point to moments where the white participants and leadership made particular choices, resulting in agentic inaction; without knowing the details, it can be assumed, the choices still contributed to the unfolding of the event as it did. For instance, generalising from their own hegemonic middle class, white gendered experience in their police risk assessment – where whiteness arguably functions through "epistemic distortion" (May, 2014, p.95) – they failed to consider, first, Apis's non-hegemonic gendered appearance and experiences in terms of class, race and activist seniority and, second, discuss the differential risk with her. While a nano-analysis of agency might raise questions about the accidental or coincidental negation of this difference, a bird's-eye view highlights that this is not accidental. Rather, considering the prominence of the black (feminist) movement in São Paulo and the group's leadership's access to (feminist) knowledge about (gendered) racism, this points to an accumulative non-engagement with the racial, classed and perhaps generational character of gender inequality – and specifically police behaviour – resulting in either repetitive failing to intersectionally conscientise (cf. Freire in Chapter 4) or a particular failing to intersectionally mobilise this consciousness when necessary. In response to this failure, the action group was not adequately prepared, which
should have been the responsibility of the leadership and senior activists. Practically including in the execution, but neither guiding nor including a junior activist in the preparation – who, for various reasons, is not the best equipped member for direct action in the first place – points to the same accumulative non-engagement. From a bird's-eye view, neither their repetitive nor particular inactive mobilisation of agency caused Apis to be caught by the police; arguably it did, though, put Apis at disproportionate risk through negligence grounded in 'monocategorical' (i.e. non-intersectional) prioritisation of gender (cf. e.g. par.2.18). After the event, the inaction of 'not acknowledging one's agency and subsequent responsibility' is expressed through the aforementioned projection of responsibility onto Apis. The arguments seem to be: the event unfolded this way because Apis really wanted to participate; because Apis is slow; because Apis did not stay calm; and, even, because Apis is a chamariz. Rather than the white members being accountable for their own intersectional negligence, in a twisted understanding of causality, Apis becomes the 'causer' of the police's actions and the others' inactions. This is reinforced by Carola, Manu and Eduarda's posterior non-engagement with Apis's well-being. Looking intersectionally at the event as a whole, a pattern emerges of agency and leadership that is grounded in a white and middle class homogenous feminist understanding of womanhood, and which, through a non-engagement with – if not denial of – race, class, and experience or 'activist generationality', is marked by a lack of care and protection towards Apis.

Final considerations

5.45 As touched on, in the concluding chapter I will discuss all empirical chapters together against the theoretical framework provided in Chapters 2-4, with the objective to conceptualise intersectional agency. I will return to the points highlighted in the final considerations of each empirical chapter in Chapter 8.

5.46 In this chapter I discussed an event that is observed, personally and vicariously, by Eduarda, who is the participant – but not the protagonist – in this research. As part of an action group with three other women, she sprays anti-
sexist slogans in Central São Paulo in the middle of the night. At some point, Apis – the only black, working class, masculine woman and youngest and most inexperienced activist in the action group – ends up facing the wall with a police gun against her head. Carola – the leader, who is one of the three white, middle class members and also an older and (very) experienced activist – who had been spraying with Apis in a team, had walked away and, up the road, turns around, sees the situation, returns, and calmly and with authority addresses the police officers ‘as equals’ in order to free – if not ‘liberate’ – Apis. And indeed they let Apis go. The underlying implications of this points to Apis’s and Carola’s respective differential ‘agentic reach’, which is related to the situated interplay of their respective social categorical differences in terms of, particularly race, class, gender, and activist seniority or generationality. While Apis certainly was at risk of being imprisoned or worse, Carola intersectionally mobilises authority, grounded in and employing, first, gendered race and class privilege and, second, empathy and social-political consciousness as negotiation tools, so that Apis, indeed, ‘gets away with it’. Although Apis is not void of agency in a general sense, as discussed, in terms of the gun to her head she cannot mobilise agency ‘freely’; in contrast, not only can Carola exercise agency relatively freely, she can do so challenging state authority and influencing Apis’s agentic reach. The gun itself as well as the disproportionate intersectional risk that Apis as a black, masculine and young woman from the periferia faces when facing the gun and state violence arguably point to a coercive situation that, in terms of the gun, voids freedom and, as such, agency. The argument here is certainly not that Apis would lack agency or ‘fail’ to mobilise agency, but, rather, that an assessment, by the white action group’s members, of her attributed ‘failure’ to not respond in alignment with the protocol in terms of agency is false as the conditions for agency were not met.

5.47 Relying on a non-intersectional understanding and hegemonic experience and construction of gender and feminism, and not having any personal experiences with state violence and police guns, the white members had prepared for the event on the assumption that they would simply be able ‘to get away with it’ in case of a police confrontation, as long as they would just follow the agreed protocol. While a confrontation with the police, then, was not beyond the action group’s expectations, this chapter discusses how the white feminists
in and particularly the leadership of the (action) group had not prepared for the police singling out Apis and threatening her with violence and imprisonment, due to a selective engagement with social categories and power.

5.48 The white, middle class action group members judge Apis’s not following of the protocol, then, as agentic inaction; in their view there were options, and Apis agentially picked the incorrect one, hence she is at fault. In line with this logic, in a peculiar upside-down construction of causality, and arguably responsibility and accountability, Apis is not only blamed for 'not sticking to the protocol', but also for 'acting guilty' and, arguably even, for the actions of the police and the inactions of the other members. The intersectional negligence of the white members and their recurrent withholding of care and protection, on the other hand, remain unspoken and unchallenged. Not only do the white middle class feminists – non-dialogically – assess the situation and their relations with Apis in terms of the 'sameness of women's oppression' (Mohanty, 1995, p.74; see par.2.10); failing to consider race, they fail to consider their own hegemonic role in the action, and their privilege in the face of the state and the gun – which, after all, has never been aimed at their middle class whiteness.

5.49 In this case I introduced a discussion of the conceptual boundaries of agency. I assessed the situation as one where Apis's response of 'non-walking away' and 'non-alignment with the protocol' voids agency because of a lack of freedom proper – although, courageously, she did mobilise agency by pretending to the police she had nothing to do with the spraying. However, the other members, as Eduarda presents it to me, did attribute agency to Apis. I interpreted this to be grounded, for a significant part, in their selective social categorical engagement with hegemony and privilege: by not recognising the role that race and middle classness plays in the event as well as in the leadership of the action group, the unfreedom of the situation that Apis faces, and their own role therein.

5.50 Next to questions about the role of freedom and unfreedom (or coercion) in agency, and the idea of 'nothingness', this analysis contributes to various considerations about intersectional agency. For instance, the analysis points to the simultaneous presence of agency and non-agency. Perhaps the most
important contribution, though, is that observation alone does not suffice to comprehensively understand agency; while I could deduct where agency or the lack thereof played a role, due to insufficient first-person information I could not, however, discuss what precisely the mobilisation of agency in those moments consisted of. Consequently, the analysis in this chapter is important, but lacks complexity in terms of the workings of intersectional agency. This is relevant as there is another finding that I would have liked to understand better; the relatively long duration of the event – if the weeks after the 'spraying night' are taken into account – enabled a bird's-eye view at the recurrent character of 'absence of action', where a single occurrence perhaps could have raised doubt. Grounded in my experience with leadership roles and experience with other white, middle class young feminist leaders, I identified a pattern of actual failures: Apis should have been included in the preparation; taking into account her lack of activist experience and experience with direct action specifically, an intersectional risk assessment should have taken place together with Apis; Carola should have taken up the more risky role considering her activist seniority, experience with direct action, as well as her position of privilege; in short, Apis should have received intersectionally proportionate protection and care for her well-being – before, during and after the direct action. Considering that care and protection should be part and parcel of leadership, this recurrent absence, then points to a pattern of, first, inactive manifestation of agency and, second, of, again, hegemonic classed and raced understandings of gender and activist generationality. This points to the particular relevance of combining a nano-lens with a bird's-eye view when studying, first, agentic inaction and, second, agentic inaction as a manifestation of hegemonic positions and relations, in order to both identify and make sense of the workings of intersectional agency.
Chapter 6. Luciane: A Racist Thought On The Bus To University

Introduction

6.1 Luciane sits on the bus and has a racist thought about the woman sitting next to her who, Luciane identifies from her accent, is ‘nordestina’ – i.e. from the Nordeste (i.e. the Northeast, one of the five regions in Brazil\(^{93}\)). As far as Luciane tells me, this racist thought is not followed by either a verbal or a physical non-verbal action; her neighbour remains unaware of the problematic thought and its accompanying feelings. In other words, if I had observed Luciane, I would not have been able to deduce the discrepancy between her behaviour and the internal process of agency generating this 'non-observable action' – i.e. verbal inaction. Even if her neighbour had – quite accurately – assessed this as everyday racism (Essed, 1989, 1991), which is not unlikely in light of Luciane's habit of 'non-verbal vocal' instances in seemingly pivotal moments\(^{94}\), she would not have been able to know the complexity of Luciane's inactive mobilisation of agency.

6.2 Previously I argued that, following an anti-conflationary approach to agency and action, if agency does not have to externally generate action, consequently the absence of action is a hypothetical result of agency – to reiterate, I called this agentic inaction (Huijg, 2012; and Chapters 1 and 4). While I already touched on this in Chapter 5, the current chapter provides a detailed analysis of the mobilisation of agency that results in precisely that: (external) agentic inaction\(^{95}\). Doing so, this chapter demonstrates, first, that indeed agency can be mobilised while observationally this is not necessarily

\(^{93}\) There are five formal regions in Brazil: the North (i.e. Norte), the Northeast (i.e. Nordeste), the Centre-West (i.e. Centro-Oeste), the South (i.e. Sul), and São Paulo is, last, in the Southeast (i.e. Sudeste).

\(^{94}\) Luciane continuously yawns, coughs and takes (quite long) pauses. I have wondered whether they have a particular function when the conversation turns to difficult topics, including her feelings of racial prejudice and discrimination.

\(^{95}\) See also par.1.6n10 and par.4.23n58.
noticeable; second, the analysis demonstrates that this process of agential mobilisation can be inconsistent – if not 'tensional' – in terms of social categories, power and agential elements. In this chapter I walk through the process of Luciane telling me about the racist thought – and its emotive and moral feelings – that she has or, perhaps more precisely, that emerges into consciousness, and explore the mobilisation of agency generating the non-verbalisation of the thought – i.e. external action. Before going into this, I introduce Luciane to you.

Luciane

6.3 At 18 years of age, Luciane is the youngest participant in the study. While she attends a Humanities course at a public university, which is mostly populated by educationally privileged students, Luciane does not come from an economically privileged background and still lives with her parents. She is raised in a traditional family that belongs to a conservative evangelical church, largely organised around traditional gender roles. Hearing aggressive and humiliating homophobic, sexist and racist expressions and 'jokes' in her family when growing up is a recurrent theme in our conversations. Being out to her mother, but not her father, Luciane suffers under her father's (anticipated) non-acceptance of her being gay.

6.4 Distancing herself from her family, Luciane's ideological and ethical conscientisation process (cf. Freire, see par.4.45) takes a turn after her Philosophy teacher in secondary school taught her class about animal rights and anti-speciesism and told her she needed to read Simone de Beauvoir. She becomes vegan, and increasingly self-educates about and participates in events on animal rights and feminism. She also reflects elaborately on the social privileges of hegemonic positions, such as hers, in the realm of race, gender, class/education, sexuality and 'species privilege'. Although she is not yet a militante (feminista) – i.e. a (feminist) activist – in an organised sense, she does bring her politics home; for instance, she increasingly challenges her father and tries to educate her mother about gender inequality and stereotypes.
6.5 Her mother identifies as white, but Luciane's father is visibly of Japanese
descent. "Suffering, properly, I don't think so," she responds when I ask her
whether her father experiences discrimination. "At times, a comment... [but] I
can't imagine it," she reflects on the relatively positive associations attached to
the Japanese population in Brazil: "my father does not suffer for being
Japanese, you know? But a black man suffers for being black." [L:1.707-715]. In
contrast to her father, while not economically privileged, Luciane is seen by
others as white and she self-identifies as white. She makes sense of her
position in society and race relations specifically as one "of the oppressive race"
[L:1.619]. In short, then, she has knowledge of race and racial differences (as
well as other social categories), power, (the history of) structural inequality, and
her privileged position therein.

Having the thought

Introducing the thought

6.6 Just before I am returning to London, Luciane and I have two last
conversations, taking place on two consecutive days. In the first of those, which
is our fifth conversation, she brings up the bus ride and the thought. After
having the thought, Luciane immediately thinks about me in light of the
thought's relevance for the research project: "Putz, I will develop this line of
thought to write to you." Then she continues: "I think that I would have
developed this line of thought anyway, because of, like, my own curiosities"
[L:5.407]. Having sent me entries two weeks earlier, I ask Luciane to read the
first diary entry aloud. She starts:

Sometimes, it is difficult to live with differences. Even more in a social
context... that gives birth to a hierarchy to which one can surrender oneself
at any moment and become the oppressor. [L:5.133]

"Do you want me to explain?," she asks then. Looking back I wish I had
responded affirmatively, but I ask her to continue with the 'context' of the event

96 There is a relatively large Japanese population in São Paulo. For a discussion of views
on whiteness, racism, and Brazilianness and paulistas of Japanese descent, see
97 This is not particular to Luciane; various participants had me and the research in their
mind outside of our actual conversations.
that she was introducing in the diary. Reading this aloud, I realise later, she inserts 'live reflections':

Context: momentary intolerance, I assume, I hope, to accents, in this case nordestino, possibly [a] moral leftover.. from the moral [context] in which I was raised. [L:5.137, insertions underlined]

Returning to our conversation, she explains:

Because my family is very prejudiced. [L:5.137]
And then she immediately reorientates by distancing herself, so it seems, from this yet unspecified 'prejudice':

It doesn't end up being xenophobic, because it isn't, like, another country, eh? [...] but I think for [...] the majority of the paulistas [...] there is a lot this thing of.. being from another part, like, that isn't São Paulo. [L:5.137]

Still with the 'context', I ask: "Nordeste?" Luciane [5.141] confirms:

Nordeste. This exists a lot, a lot. I think it is horrible, eh?
She does not further clarify the content of 'what is horrible', but continues to set the scene; she "was already irritated that day" and "not in her normal mental state." In this context, she explains,

you give in to some instincts of, enfim, of education with which you do not rationally agree, but, enfim, you end up surrendering yourself. [L:5.141].
This tension – that marks agency intersectionally – between socialisation, personal ideology and ethics, and actual actions is central in Luciane's account.

(Not) racialising accents

6.7 Constructing a paulista identity, Luciane excludes nordestino migrants from this collective 'regional we'. According to Luciane, her "momentary intolerance" to a nordestino accent is indeed about accents, not about xenophobia – after all, the Nordeste is a region, not a nation. However, nordestinos tend to be black or, what in English would be called, mixed-race, and are the inter-regional (intra-national) migrant group in São Paulo in the lowest paid jobs and with the lowest educational levels (e.g. IPEA, 2011, pp.6,11). Regional accents in Brazil carry a strong (economic) racial connotation and the use of 'nordestinos' by Luciane should be situated in the
realm of (classed) racism, rather than a race and class neutral 'regionalism'.
(For a discussion of similarities between racial and regional stereotypes, see
Batista, Leite, Torres et al., 2014.) When Luciane says that "it is horrible," she
does not refer, then, to 'the nordestino accent' in itself as horrible; rather, by
referring in general terms to her experience of the non-linguistic meaning of this
accent, she emotively and ethically assesses indirectly her own feelings of
"momentary intolerance to accents," to which she had referred in her diary (I
return to this).

Not telling the thought

6.8 Siting on the bus on her way to university and wanting to do some final
preparations for her exam, Luciane is annoyed by the woman next to her who
speaks loudly on her phone. She was already irritated that day [L:5.141],
though. She further contextualises:

basically, I was stressed because it is the end of the semester, like, there is
a lot to do. I had an exam that day, I wanted to study and I was trapped, like,
a lot has. [...] I was arriving late for an exam and I wanted to study, eh?, go
over [the material again] on the bus [...], but [the woman next to me] did not
shut up a single minute and she talked very loudly and I got very irritated
by this [...], There is no problem with talking on the bus, but you don't have
to scream. [L:5.145-157]

I am still trying to connect the dots. I ask her with whom the woman was talking,
and Luciane responds:

[She was talking on her] mobile. Her mobile had problems and she was
cursing her phone all the time. So, meu, like, I want to study. So, enfim. So,
that is basically it. I don't know what else I should say about it. [L:5.169]

While Luciane feels that this is "basically it," I am still wondering what exactly
happened and try to get her to "say [more] about it." Without having yet
explicated the event as racially marked, instead, Luciane starts to trace the
origins of her feelings to her family. Since she was "born [and educated] in a
very prejudiced family," she could identify "the origin of her [neighbour's]
accent" [L:5.173]. The racism she grew up with appears at various times
throughout the conversations, but she still avoids the racist character of her own
feelings; instead, she moves to being the object of familial sexist and
homophobic prejudice. Doing so, she sets out her 'cross-categorical'
intersectionally grounded empathy in the realm of structural disadvantage –

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moving the conversation to, first, how she changed and, second, to why she did not verbalise her intolerance. Returning to the event, she explains:

in the moment [of momentary intolerance] I was.. in a situation of oppression, because, like, because.. So, I had a lot of things to do, and, so, I didn't think rationally what I was doing, that is, I thought rationally about this, but I didn't control myself sufficiently, it is... this control is very important, I think, self-control. [L:5.173]

Then she is silent for more than six seconds. Returning home from our conversation, I am left with the sensation that I missed something. Did or did she not tell me what had actually happened?

*Feeling the thought*

6.9 The next day, during our sixth (and last) conversation, I try to nudge the conversation back to the event – e.g. at some point I ask her: "why did you decide to not [...] say something" [L:6.229] – but Luciane (re)turns to abstract ethical, ideological and theoretical reflections on discrimination and prejudice. When I enquire further, she argues that she does not have the right to 'say something', because "the other also exists and it is not just you" so one has to "[be] conscious of others" [L:6.251,263]. In other words, the other has to be taken into consideration in the assessment of whether one's thoughts can be communicated to them (I return to this). I realise that she stays in the (meta-moral) realm of the 'rational'; doing so, ironically she precisely avoids the cognitive part of the "momentary intolerance" – i.e. what she actually was thinking while she was momentarily feeling intolerant. I ask her where and how she physically feels this, and she responds:

In [my] head [... ...] I feel warm. When I am impatient, when I feel irritated or any other feeling, like, I feel warm. [L:6.279,283]

This irritation – warm, impatient – connects her anxiety in anticipation of her exams to the irritation that takes the form of intolerant anger as an emotive experience of her neighbour. However, the function of anger is not restricted to the emotive realm, nor does it explicate the content of her thought.

6.10 Bringing attention to the orientating character of anger (cf. Chapter 4), Eatough *et al* (2008, p.1768) argue that "we do not simply experience anger, but [we experience] anger at someone or something." This can be reflexively
orientated – observably or, as is the case here, inactively – towards someone and/or towards the self. The “feeling of anger,” contribute Keltner and Haidt (1999, p.509), discussing Solomon (1990), "provides an assessment of the fairness of events". Orientating her anger towards the impact of her neighbour on her own experience, Luciane [5.173] assesses her situation as one "of oppression." Evaluation, Robbins and Parlavecchio (2006, p.323) highlight, also has an important role in "how the self stands in relationship to its situational context" in terms of feelings and emotions. It is helpful to consider that "if one can recognize the onset of anger," which Luciane does, "one can decide how best to deal with it" (Adler, Rosen & Silverstein, 1998, p.170). And, as I will discuss, Luciane's decision is to not verbalise it. Luciane's anger, indeed, does not only highlight the evaluative character of her feeling, but, through her choice of words – i.e. 'oppression' (I return to this) – also consists therein of an ethical and ideological quality that is orientated towards her position in that particular interpersonal situation in the context of power relations.


*Nossa*, how heavy. *Nossa*, I really thought something very heavy. I thought..., *nossa*, I feel shame to say..., to verbalise it. [...] What I thought synthesised everything. And, like, it is something, it is a phrase about which I would feel repulsion to hear [it], you know? [L:6.299-303]

While still not having shared the exact content of her thought, she *does* externalise (part of) the internal conflictive process that emerges while preparing herself to share this with me. Not only is this dialogical process – orientated outwardly and inwardly, between emotive and moral feelings – and its sharing with me marked by vague feelings such as 'heaviness', but also by specific but complex emotions, particularly shame and repulsion.

6.12 Considering their social function, emotive responses are not only impacted by and impact cognitive processes. Emotions can be orientated towards self, towards an other, and towards the context; in this orientating, emotions and their related physiological qualities can both inform and prepare the individual to respond to issues, opportunities, social events and conditions, even when these
lie out of the individual's consciousness (Keltner & Haidt, 1999, pp.509-510). Considering the role of consciousness in agency (see Chapter 4), this raises questions of agency. J.H. Turner and Stets (2005, p.10) emphasise that "[h]uman experience can employ a variety of emotions that mobilize and push them to respond to each other and to situations in particular ways"; emotions, they highlight, can be qualified as a 'mediating force'. Emotions, then, play a complex role in the mobilisation of agency.

6.13 While the woman seated next to her is the actual object of Luciane's thoughts, repulsion is not merely orientated towards her neighbour, but seems to have a twofold function. First, by imagining the repulsion as an experience of her neighbour, rather than of herself, Luciane projects her own feeling towards her neighbour onto her neighbour, enabling her to empathise with and connect to her neighbour. In turn, second, this enables her to reflect on the emotive and moral content, meaning, weight and, particularly, hypothesised impact of the potential verbalisation of the thought about her neighbour by imagining how she herself would feel. The difference "between you verbalising this and you only thinking [it]," Luciane reflects, is that if you only think [it], you stop and talk to yourself in your mind: 'shut up, you're talking bull shit' [...] if you say this to another person, there is no way back, you already said it; the person already knows that you said this and will think and will remember this because this is something strong that I, for example, would remember. [L:6.311]

In terms of function, Luciane agentially moves repulsion and shame 'around' in her (Lewinian) field between her internal and her (imagined) external world (cf. Chapter 4). This enables her to anticipate the consequences of the thought would she have orientated her agency towards verbalisation of the thought. The experiencing or the having of the (moral) emotions and thought do not generate their non-verbalisation; the agential mobilisation that follows the emotions and thought, rather, is Luciane's engagement with and, as I will discuss, her transformation of these emotions and thought.

6.14 Feeling shame, Resnick (1997, p.258) explains, is about feeling 'bad', lacking value or feeling useless; the experience of shame, then, is a tool of socialisation and disciplining. Shame is also a particularly "self-conscious emotion," where one experiences one's self as an object (Robbins &
Parlavecchio, 2006, p.325), including the moral, cognitive and emotive assessment of the self grounded in the internalisation of (particular) social 'norms and mores'. Repulsion is perhaps not much different from the experience of "nojo" and the feeling that something or someone is "nojento," which circulate recurrently throughout all our conversations across power and social categories (e.g. race, class, sexuality and species). Herein, nojo seems to refer to physical, emotive and often moral feelings, somewhere on the spectrum of dirty, nausea, disgust – and at times this manifests as contempt. Luciane feels nojo towards others as well as from others. As "a unique pattern of self-directed cognitive-affective responding," Powell, Simpson and Overton (2015, p.13) explain, in turn, self-disgust involves "congruent visceral physiological reactions (e.g., repulsion and nausea), disgust-driven behavioural responses of rejection and avoidance, and a range of negative cognitions particular to disgust (e.g., 'I look rotten', 'my actions repulse me', 'I make other people nauseous')."

6.15 These feelings are not restricted, however, to interpersonal relations that are experienced 'intrapersonally' (i.e. internally). Luciane continues,

I felt repulsion to think it. [L:6.307]

This repulsion, then, is not hypothetically experienced by her neighbour in response to the hypothetical hearing of the thought in the way that Luciane 'anticipates-through-projection' that she "would feel repulsion to hear [it]" [L:6.303]. By 'thinking it', rather, these feelings are experienced by herself. Others repulse her, and she imagines others to feel repulsion about her, but so does she repulse herself. Similarly, Luciane does not only feel shame as a manifestation of her perception of me, but also of how she perceives herself. These emotions, then, are not only directed at her neighbour, or at me, but also, or particularly, at her self via (projections of her own feelings onto) 'imagined others'.

Emotions and assessments

6.16 Both feelings and thoughts, then, constitute assessments and therewith agency. J.H. Turner (2009, p.342) discusses four approaches to the relation between emotions and cognition. In short, first, cognitive processes precede
emotions. Second, emotions can generate actions without cognitive processes being causally present. Third, both cognitive and emotive processes work simultaneously in the generation of actions (and arguably inactions) "with emotions initially activated, followed by appraisal, which may arouse new emotions or channel those already activated in particular directions." Last, Turner brings attention to a more circular, interactive, social, and complex understanding – perhaps resonating with a dialogical approach (cf. Chapter 3) – of the relation between emotions and cognition, as well as actions and social structure, where,

> [o]nce emotions are aroused and are attended to cognitively, the flow of emotions may change as individuals become aware of others’ reactions to their actions, as they bring to bear relevant social structural conditions, or as they invoke relevant cultural vocabularies and normative codes. (J.H. Turner, 2009, p.342)

This becomes apparent when considering the cognitive, emotive as well as moral processes in response to Luciane’s anger – the "momentary intolerance to accents" – as well as the thought that has not yet been voiced, and the classed racism, as touched on, that they consist of.

6.17 As profoundly social and moral, emotions - particularly shame and repulsion - guide Luciane how to socially and ethically navigate her internal experience of anger and "momentary intolerance." When Luciane morally and emotively imagines what the consequences of the hypothetical verbalisation of the thought would be on her neighbour, Luciane mobilises the (moral) feelings and thoughts that emerge inside her to assess their hypothetical impact on her neighbour's imagined internal process and, parallel, to assess those (moral) feelings and thoughts themselves and, through this, assess her self. In other words, the repulsion she feels towards her neighbour is not only projected onto her neighbour, but is also reflexively orientated inwards (on)to her self; perhaps both these internal acts of projection can be understood as – sequentially – 'asynchronous parallel processes'. Her neighbour, who is unaware of her role in Luciane’s process of agency, is not only 'the Other' towards whom the feeling of repulsion is, in and of itself, orientated; her neighbour also functions as the 'projected-other-in-self' almost collapsing with Luciane’s self in the form of 'other-experienced-as-self'.
6.18 Thomas (2005, p.515) suggests that "[r]ighteous anger energizes social action to protect the disenfranchised and self-protective action when one's own rights are violated." By imagining the hypothetical impact of her anger, Luciane arguably ethically self-assesses her anger as 'non-righteous'. This self-assessment should be contextualised intersectionally. Anger and a non-specific general desire for violence, as well as self-evaluations regarding their 'righteousness' or 'non-righteousness', cross various social categorical contexts of inequality in terms of power and oppression; they are neither particular to this event nor to race or racism. Before Luciane shared the bus event with me, I had asked her whether it was always the same anger. "With animals, with women, with gays?" – she [4.475] asks me in return. "I don't know" – I reply evasively. "Yes, I think so," she [4.479] responds nevertheless, "because it is an anger.. Like, for me, all are in the category of the oppressed." However, sitting on the bus with intolerant thought and feelings, while feeling 'in a situation of oppression', she is not actually 'in the category of the oppressed' – at least not in relation to her neighbour on the bus. The repulsion Luciane feels, then, informs her about the (im)moral character of her own anger, of her own assessment of situational injustice; it also cognitively and emotively orientates her in the ideological and ethical realm in which she disapproves of and feels ashamed about her feelings and about her yet unspecified 'thought that synthesises everything'.

6.19 Shame, as Tangney et al. (1996 in Keltner & Haidt, 1999, pp.509-510) highlight, "informs the individual of his or her lower social status." Luciane's lower status is not related to her neighbour, but, rather, to her lowering ideological and ethical thought and feelings about herself. In experiencing shame, then, she self-assesses in terms of her position in the system of power relations. The experience of 'being ashamed', or of embarrassment, explain Robbins and Parlavecchio (2006, p.325), "is to have one's existence reduced to the object of another person's evaluative gaze." However, the shame that Luciane experiences here, and which informs her feelings, is not grounded in the neighbour's – or, for that matter, my – actual evaluative gaze. Rather, arguably, in that moment her existence is reduced to her reflexive evaluative gaze projected onto other persons – i.e. her neighbour and, during the conversation, me. Resnick's (1997, pp.258-259) discussion of the experience of
shame (and feeling bad), additionally, has contributed in this thesis to an understanding that shame can be employed agentically, first, as an (interpersonal) emotive tool of socialisation and disciplining – rather than as a(n agential) component of the mobilisation of agency – and, second, as a tool to regulate others’ behaviour, particularly to “ensure that the child’s behavior stays within the norms and mores of the family and the culture.”

6.20 Luciane, as touched on, did not grow up learning that racist and other prejudicial ‘jokes’ and comments were bad or shameful – to the contrary:

My upbringing, like, since [I was] a child, like, I don’t know, [was] ideological, it was always very prejudiced indeed, you know?, ..making jokes. [...] In truth, making jokes properly I never did. I only laughed at jokes. [...] with time passing I stopped, eh? ..developing a line of thought influenced by other people that this was not very cool, eh? That if it would be me who would be suffering prejudice, I wouldn’t like it. [L:5.173]

"My family has always been racist," Luciane [4.773] summarises. Racist feelings were within her family's 'norms and mores' and these jokes were tools of socialisation. "For Thandeka," Gunaratnam and Lewis (2001, p.134) highlight, "shame is a key psychic dimension of the construction and negotiation of whiteness." Shame, Thandeka argues, is

a pitched battle by a self against itself in order to stop feeling what it is not supposed to feel: forbidden desires and prohibited feelings that render one different. Such desires and felt differences must be suppressed or blocked off in some way because one's community deems them to be bad. (Thandeka, 2000, p.12 in Gunaratnam & Lewis, p.141)

Although Luciane's familial community does not deem racist feelings bad, her reorientation away from the familial moral context, particularly in the realm of species and gender, moved her towards a new and politically more conscious community of friends. In this new community, racism is deemed 'bad' and 'forbidden'. This, in turn, does generate within her a feeling of shame and arguably, therewith, a fear of rejection – from her new community and her newly self-educated self – through and perhaps because of which she internally negotiates whiteness, feelings and thoughts around race and racism.

_Telling the racist thought_

6.21 Luciane's feelings are so strong when we talk that, immediately in response to her sharing her feelings of repulsion with me, I, then, also become
(again) a player in her internal conflict of whether or not to share her exact thoughts:

You.. you really will make me say it, eh? [L:6.307]

Telling me this, Luciane suggests that I coerce her – which would restrict her agency – and, as such, that her participation in the study moves to a space of 'unfreedom'. The 'unfreedom' Luciane experiences here, however, is starkly different – in type, quality and quantity – from Apis's agentic reach in the context of the unfreedom facing the police gun (see Chapter 5). My role herein seems to be that of an internal experience of the aforementioned projected-other-in-self. Her sense of unfreedom, then, does not come from me, but, rather, from an internal experience of an impression of me, presumably a projection representing a feeling of the (i.e. her) self.

6.22 Having been a mentor to younger activists, I am concerned about our generational and therewith power difference (in terms of age as well as activist seniority). As a researcher I certainly do not want her to feel coerced. However, as an activist having been involved in workshops and conversations with other white people about race and racism, I also assess her discomfort, her projection of accountability and her 'ownership of agency' – in response to and simultaneously different from the racial quality of the thought itself – as manifestations themselves of whiteness and racial hegemony. Luciane makes sense of the reach of her agential capacity – i.e. of 'being made to say it' – in terms of unfreedom and, as such, as void of choice. Unsure of what is precisely happening, I respond to the suggestion by laughing uncomfortably and try to assure her that she does not "have to..." [L:6.309]. She does not let me finish my sentence, through which I tried to emphasise her experience of choice and explicate her de facto choice, but continues:

I know this is very important., eh., for your.. for your research. [L:6.311]

The object of the 'this that is very important' is the content and quality of her heavy thoughts and "momentary intolerance" to a nordestino accent. However, by not being accountable for her choice and arguably personal need to participate in this research and, specifically, her mobilisation of agency in the active sharing of the thought with me – i.e. by attributing its moral importance to the research rather than her own need and involvement – she seems to project moral accountability onto the study. Luciane is clearly desiring to tell this to me,
perhaps to confess, to make me witness, or perhaps to share accountability. Nonetheless, Luciane does not wait for my response, but, at last, tells me the actual thought:

So, I thought, uhm., "Ah, this disgusting nordestina that doesn't shut up." [L:6.311]

Engaging with the thought

Giving leeway to the thought

6.23 Luciane distinguishes the act of thinking the thought from the thought itself. The actual thought (and its feelings), she explains, refers to 'instincts, drives and desires' [L:5.299]; the thought, in her words, is an "impulse," an "instinctive moment" [L:6.63]. "[W]e [are not] rational the whole time," she [5.299] clarifies in her reflection on speciesism, "because we have drives, we have desires, that also guide our attitudes"[100]– i.e. our positioning of ourselves. The impulses, desires and drives, etc. lack rationality – lack agency, she seems to suggest – but still orientate our behaviour; they are uncontrollable, I understand.

6.24 Before she tells me the thought, I ask her whether there was a moment on the bus when she became conscious or noticed that she was feeling this. "All the time," Luciane [6.23] responds. This seems to contradict her comment from the day before about 'instincts, drives and desires'. When I probe further, she continues:

I already.. I already knew and I still gave leeway so that I would develop this thought. [L:6.27]

It is not that Luciane consciously generated the thought, she elaborates,

...ah, so, in the moment that I stopped and thought [about] her, the girl, eh?, of the bus, [...] I.. I allowed that I would continue to thinking [it], [6.63]

Once Luciane had the thought, one might say, she became immediately aware, "in the moment that [she] stopped," that she was thinking[ the thought about her


[100] Attitude is more than an 'attitude'; attitude refers perhaps to an 'orientating' or positioning of oneself leading to the materialisation of this positioning.
neighbour; in turn, she then consciously proceeded thinking and developing the thought. And she continues,

[[t]his was a safety valve because I can't do this in real life, like, I can only do this in my own head. [6.63]

The impulse – emotive and moral of character, marked by both social categories and power – consisted of "a feeling of anger, of placing [her]self in a superior position" [L:6.111]. This impulse of "momentary intolerance", she [5.173] explained (see also par.6.8), was a response to the "situation of oppression" that she was in because of having "a lot of things to do" and not being able to do them because her neighbour was talking loudly on her phone. In this "situation of oppression" caused by her neighbour, Luciane explains,

...I didn't think rationally what I was doing, that is, I thought rationally about this, but I didn't control myself sufficiently, it is... this control is very important, I think, self-control. [L:5.173, see also par.6.8]

6.25 In light of Luciane’s aforementioned consciousness of inequality between her and her neighbour’s – interpersonal and structural – positions of power in the realm of race relations, describing the situation as one "of oppression" is, to say the least, peculiar. In turn, this feeling of anger [L:6.111], in light of her experiencing the situation as 'one of oppression', does arguably not only refer to "an assessment of the fairness of events" (cf. Solomon, 1990 in Keltner & Haidt, 1999, p.509), characteristic of anger, nor, at that, to an "evaluation of how [her] self stands in relationship to [her] situational context" (cf. Robbins & Parlavecchio, 2006, p.323). Surely, having "a lot of things to do" and being bothered by someone's loud talking does not resemble oppression to start with; nor does it resemble the way that Luciane discusses social categorical differences, power and oppression – in the realm of gender, sexuality, class, species as well as race – throughout the conversations. Framing the situation as one of 'oppression', she assesses the reach of her agency as constrained by her neighbour's ('oppressive') actions. While recognising at length the oppressive character of her own internal process (including by identifying the moment as one of intolerance), the moment she talks about her studying needs, incongruently, she ignores the 'oppressive' quality to which, in her own words, she surrendered. Perhaps it is precisely by assessing her neighbour's loud talking as oppressive outside the realm of race that enables her to surrender to her own racially 'superiorising' feelings.
6.26 At the same time, the way that Luciane describes 'the situation of oppression' points to racial continuity between, first, the thought and, second, its contextualisation or perhaps even explanation. By talking about both sides of the situation – i.e. Luciane being intolerant to her neighbour's loud talking and her neighbour being the object of Luciane's racist thought – in similar terms of oppression, she absolves herself from, first, the hypothetical impact that a verbalisation of the thought could have had and, second, the racist quality of the thought and of the superior feelings themselves. Interestingly, it is precisely this juxtaposition, which Luciane herself seems to acknowledge and which plays a role in the subsequent mobilisation of agency, that results in the aforementioned internal (re)actions and consequential non-verbalisation of the thought (to which I turn shortly).

6.27 Luciane distinguishes the thought from her agential active and inactive engagement with the thought. Different from the 'having of the thought', then, the 'thinking of the thought' was controllable – and therewith within the realm of agency – but Luciane did not, as a manifestation of agency, self-control. The 'having' of the thought – i.e. "Ah, this disgusting nordestina that doesn't shut up" – as well as its accompanying emotions, then, cannot be controlled in its emergence (I discuss this in Chapter 8). In response to their emergence, however, agency is mobilised; Luciane does not try to control the thinking of the thought and its moral and emotive qualities – i.e. feeling irritated, angry, repulsion, superior, pleasure. (This is, emphatically, not a statement of responsibility and accountability, or of the lack thereof.) This agential process, then, consists of internal inaction through the absence of controlling herself in the internal action of thinking and, in not controlling herself, through "giv[ing] leeway to, like, all these prejudices" [L:5.185], "to develop the thought" [L:6.27] and, she explains, to "a window to pleasure" – enabled by or perhaps constituting the feeling of superiority that, in turn, constitutes the thought [L:5.299]. The thought itself, its non-control, and the subsequent thinking of the thought, then, are all related and marked by racial prejudice; while categorically related, they are, at the same time, however, analytically separate and different in terms of an analysis of agency. While 'giving leeway' and 'surrendering' perhaps have an (agentially) active feel to them, it is precisely the 'not trying'
and 'not controlling oneself', which are generated by the capacity to act – precisely, as addressed in Chapter 4 – in the form of the absence of action. Luciane's response to the thought is not, however, monolithic; it is, more or less sequentially, twofold; first, she reproduces the thought by continuing its thinking and its feelings as, predominantly, an internal inaction (see also Chapter 8). However, then, second, she modifies the trajectory of the thinking and feeling of the thought. Before returning to this modification, I want to address the role of power, hierarchy and oppression herein.

*Surrendering to hierarchy and becoming the oppressor*

**6.28** While 'giving leeway' might come across as passive, and arguably, as discussed, 'not controlling the thought' and 'not trying to control it' are inactive (although perhaps not 'passive'), none of these are manifestations of a 'lack of agency' (cf. Chapter 4). This feeling of oppression is not a receptive engagement; to the contrary, this leeway given to that feeling, Luciane suggests in her diary, precisely enables her to surrender herself to the hierarchy of the social context in which she lives and "become the oppressor" [cf. L:5.133]. Oppression, Luciane describes, is an internal experience of agency:

> you instantaneously place yourself in a situation, in an antagonistic position in relation to another person that you are oppressing, even if [that is] mentally, because you are sort of encouraging prejudice, but it is... and rationally you know this, [...] but you don't.. you don't control this because it is pleasurable for you to be in a commanding situation? It is pleasurable for you to be in this position superior to the other. I think this is extremely clear, like, for me in this question of agency, like, perfectly clear. Because it is, in fact, pleasurable. In my case, I think that only when I am very stressed that I start, you know?, to.. that then I give leeway to, like, all these prejudices. [L:5.185]

The pleasure experienced here, then, seems to be directly linked, first to a situation of stress and, second, to both the experiencing of power – e.g. command, superiority – and of power as the act of oppressing.

**6.29** It almost seems as if race operates here as a social categorical tool to achieve the 'sense of pleasure'; however, rather than this 'pleasure' being a feeling of, perhaps, 'joy' or 'delight', it refers to feeling powerful, superior, in command – standing for the 'safety valve' that she has 'in her own head', but
does not have 'in real life' [cf. L:6.63]. This antagonism – marked by the 'mental oppression of another person' [cf. L:5.185] – requires "something that differentiates you immediately from the person.. [against whom you feel] an immediate antipathy" [L:5.205]. These differences are not neutral in terms of power; rather they constitute a hierarchy in which her 'becoming an oppressor' – in turn, characterised by feeling powerful, superior and in command – is situated. Contrasting the negativity of antipathy, Luciane [5.205] emphasises how this antagonising engagement "causes […] mental well-being." This exchange of emotions points to an intersectional internal movement in, first, the structural racial and classed inequality in the realm of gender where, according to Luciane, she, unlike the woman next to her, can 'place herself in a superior position'. In turn, this informs Luciane of the intersectional reach of her agency. This 'mental well-being', related to the aforementioned 'pleasure' – marked by power and particularly race and class – refers to the "comfort of [her] social position"; a comfort that she describes as follows:

So, ah, I am white, I study at [this university]. I don't have to be a 'peão':
[L:5.209]

Translations of 'peão' can range from (rural) manual labourer to commoner or pleb(eian). One way or another, the peão here contrasts the cerebral social position of being a student that provides Luciane comfort. This comfort does not only seem to be achieved by Luciane distancing herself, against a background of gender inequality, in terms of race, but also particularly of class. By understanding and situating the raced and classed other as an imaginary peão at a distance, she situates the raced and classed self in terms of social categorical differences and positions in power relations. This comfort, thus, is not restricted to, perhaps, financial security that the completion of an undergraduate degree from her university quite certainly offers; rather, it is extended to mark the hierarchical inferiority that the peão is assigned by Luciane with the objective to feel superior. The (metaphorical) experiencing of the other as peão occurs in the leeway that Luciane gives herself in order to experience the 'pleasure' – a pleasure marked by guilt [L:5.331] – of the aforementioned raced and classed social comfort. The sentiments that Luciane puts in the peão refer to what her neighbour on the bus 'is', but which Luciane does not have to be(come).
negativity and distancing in these sentiments suggest an expression of contempt. Contempt, argue Gervais and Fessler (2016, pp.9-10), "represents another as having low intrinsic relational value as cued by their practical or moral inefficacy and expendability, and it entails devaluing and diminishing them." Considering its labour and economic connotation, a peão is exploitable, replaceable and works for and in service of the (more) powerful, as many nordestinos in São Paulo do. This contrasts with the position of the (privileged) student, who has classed and (regionally) raced power over her own (gendered) destiny in terms of financial security and autonomy.

6.30 The anger that Luciane feels concerns her neighbour's loud talking and her not thinking about others. While not unrelated to social categories, in and of itself this could have pointed to (non-social categorical) differences in personal preferences, sensory sensitivity\(^{101}\), or indeed "momentary intolerance" in times of exam stress. However, Luciane's [5.133] aforementioned difficulties with 'living with differences', experienced as anger, are not situational. As discussed in Chapter 3, they precisely point to the distinction and relation between, first, 'non-social categorical' differences and, second, social categorical differences. The moment that Luciane "gives leeway to prejudice" by identifying "the loud talking [...] as part of a stereotype of... of... a negative image that, for example, paulistas have of nordestinos" [L:6.155], the 'differences' that she has difficulty living with move into the realm of social categorical differences the moment that she situates these differences in the "hierarchy to which one can surrender oneself at any moment and become the oppressor" [L:5.133]. While a variety of social categories are at play here with regards to her reach in terms of the interplay of agency and power (e.g. what is the role of age?), Luciane explains to me the – to reiterate, racially marked – 'regional' character of 'talking loudly':

Talking loudly can sometimes be part of the stereotype... of the negative image that, for example, paulistas nourish about nordestinos [L:6.155].

While the 'intolerance to talking loudly' and the 'negative image of nordestinos' are different, they end up being mixed up, collide perhaps – as she elaborates:

\(^{101}\) Obviously, sensory sensitivity can constitute the social category 'disability' and/or neurodiversity.
When one gives leeway to prejudice, eh, this isn't a relevant question. [...] Because.. because every argument that you have available in your favour to incriminate a person [becomes] valid. [L:6.155-159]

It is this move into the *hierarchical* realm of intolerance and incrimination – to explicate, pointing to the interplay of social categories and power – that constitutes her 'intersectional agency'.

6.31 Luciane points to the arbitrary character of her auditory discomfort. She exemplifies: "if you don't like the colour of her blouse," then it does not matter whether it is pink or red, because it is not about the colour in and of itself:

> whatever you find in the person that doesn't please you ends up being a pretext or [something] aggravating [...] to perpetuate the prejudice or to intensify it. [L:6.163].

The prejudicial feelings towards *nordestinos*, in other words, precede the particular 'momentary auditory intolerance' of the situation. However, as I will discuss, also feelings of potential violence, and the desire for it (and, in turn, the fear thereof), precede and go beyond this particular situation.

6.32 Although Luciane *does* agentially engage with the option that this pre-existing hierarchy offers her, she does not surrender to *all* the options this hierarchy 'gives birth to':

> Anyone could have talked out loud, but.. I think that I associated [the accent with] a characteristic of her, eh?, which was the fact of her being *nordestina* [...] to inferiorise her immediately [...] because I can't get up and, dunno, slap her, for example, I can't, I, I shouldn't. [L:5.217, emphasis added]

The desire Luciane felt was to get up and slap her neighbour, pointing to both external and internal constraints. Slapping her neighbour is experienced by Luciane through a moral as well as an ethical lens: 'she cannot, but she also should not'. Luciane assesses that slapping one's neighbour falls beyond what is contextually acceptable in terms of social mores – 'she cannot'; however, she also finds it to be ethically unacceptable to Luciane – 'she should not'. To contrast her move to evaluate the reach of her agential mobilisation in terms of external limitations, rather than choice, I point out that, practically, she could have gotten up and slapped her. Luciane responds:

> But, since I shouldn't do this, it is sort of like.. [...] as if I had to forgive her for something. [...] It was sort of "she is indeed inferior, let her, let her compensate her life as a *peão." [5.221-225]
Luciane identifies the internal constraints to her agentic reach in terms of a, now, internalised sense of ethical and ideological motivations, in which one does not get up and slap one's neighbour – be that for racist reasons or for reasons of auditory nuisance. Here, she talks about her violent inclination in the context of racial containment. The posterior motivation of "[having] to forgive her [neighbour]" seems to reinscribe the aforementioned hierarchy as a moral status quo through which compassion operates as an intersectionally complex agential tool for the purpose of 'self-superiorisation' – positioning herself as superior – and, additionally, to morally 'self-constrain' through physical self-restraint.

6.33 By 'surrendering herself', then, the internal act of experiencing the o/Other as peão operates as a tool of agency. This 'surrendering' is a moment of choice, a moment where she could have done otherwise; in other words, as a 'moment with the potential of agency' there was the option to not surrender to hierarchy – to not feel powerful and in command – and, therein, to not 'become the oppressor'. However, rather than not engaging with the pre-existing (racial and classed) hierarchy, Luciane immediately 'inferiorises' her neighbour.

Not verbalising the thought

6.34 It took me months to realise the shift in the way that Luciane mobilised agency. This process consisted of such strong emotive, moral and cognitive elements, which she did not even attempt to control – how did she come to not verbalise them?

6.35 Once aware of the thought, Luciane gives leeway to 'everything that synthesises' the thought – the anger, repulsion, the inferiorisation of her neighbour and her self-superiorisation, the feeling of pleasure of being in command, of mental oppression. Giving leeway, she invests in continuing thinking the thought and feeling the feelings and therewith orientates her agency along 'racist lines' (cf. Ahmed, see Chapter 4), in alignment with the initial thoughts and feelings. Before she tells me the thought, however, she shares that the feelings she has in response to the thought are different from the feelings themselves of the thought. I realise that this is, what I call in
Chapter 7, the 'turning point' in her mobilisation of agency and which, ultimately, generates the non-verbalisation.

6.36 The internal action along racist lines generates another response in and from her – towards herself and her agential mobilisation. Conscious of the self, she now dialogically engages with those internal cognitive, emotive and moral processes and her re/production of (gendered) classed and regional racism. In response to this, she reacts emotively – i.e. by feeling repulsion and shame, first, thinking it and, then, hearing it – and ethically – i.e. by assessing it as horrible and prejudicial (see below). She does so while situating the thought in the context of racial inequality and racism, and particularly by situating her thinking of this as "possibly [a] moral leftover.. from the moral [context of the family] in which [she] was raised" [L:5.137] – I return to this at the end of this chapter.

6.37 I ask Luciane to clarify whether indeed there are two types of self-control in her experience – i.e. the one of not verbalising and the one of not having the thought. Luciane responds:

Indeed. In my case, for example, to have control to have the impulse.., I don't think it exists. If it exists, it hasn't been presented to me yet. But you do have control.. you have.. In my opinion, you have to have [the] control of [not] verbalising it. [L:6.87]

One can control the muscles of one's hand, Luciane explains, as she could control the (non-)verbalisation of the thought. As one cannot control the muscles and therewith the beating of one's heart, analogously she would not be able to control the thought – or the impulse to have the thought. [L:6.103]. Confusingly, as discussed, Luciane seems to suggest that she cannot control the thought as an emerging impulse; rather, she could reactively control the thought by not verbalising the thought into the external, observable realm (I return shortly to her inactive mobilisation of agency herein). However, Luciane does mobilise agency between the reproduction of the thought and the non-verbalisation of the thought.

6.38 One of the ways in which Luciane does mobilise agency in response to her own internal world – which ultimately leads to the non-verbalisation of the thought – is by moving away, first, from the antagonistic opposition and,
second, from her own experience. As touched on, she tries to consider the impact of her thought and feelings on her neighbour by imagining how her neighbour, as the 'object' of the thought, would experience hearing the thought, and would experience Luciane and Luciane's attitude towards her. Her neighbour becomes the imagined mediator functioning as an emotive-moral point of reference against which Luciane can, first, assess and, second, regulate her internal process of agency. Doing so, she assesses the thought and its feelings as "horrible." And through assessing the hypothetical impact of verbalisation, she imagines in anticipation that her neighbour would feel repulsion. When she talks about the shame she feels to verbalise her thought, that she "would feel repulsion to hear" the verbalisation, it is as if she anticipatorily projects this feeling onto me; after all, she will "say it" and, hence, I, rather than her neighbour, will "hear it" [cf. L:6.299-303]. When she tells me this, then, I become the imagined mediator functioning as a point of reference.

6.39 In this internal move she considers her 'mental oppression of her neighbour' by assessing the anticipated (potential) impact of her potential actions. The objective here is to find a way that is minimally damaging, I think it is much less damaging if you think only for yourself than if you verbalise it, because then you are exposing, eh?, making it explicit in a social sphere. [...] you keep determined impulses [within yourself] and one day you can explode. [L:6.71-75].

I ask Luciane why she decided to not say something [L:6.229] to her neighbour as an expression of the feeling of intolerance. It is important to be "conscious of others," she continues; you "do not have the right to approach someone and say: 'look, meu bem, you are garbage" [L:6.263]. She explains:

Because, first, I think that this. I am already going beyond my right. From the moment it leaves my head and I expose it to the other person [Luciane coughs various times], especially if it were the person for whom I'm nurturing a discrimination, a prejudice. [...] I am [then] already going beyond my right to speculate because then it would not be speculation anymore, it would be an attitude. [L:6.231].

Externalisation would be an "attitude that can make her [neighbour] feel bad"; in contrast, its non-externalisation would merely be "speculation" [L:6.231]. The latter, she explained, would not have any impact on her neighbour.
6.40 Luciane has particular reflections on the consequences of inaction. I ask her what she thinks the impact would be of the non-verbalisation of her thoughts. "Nothing would happen," she responds:

> Omission does not generate anything. So, I have this opinion, but from the moment that I do not manifest it nothing will happen. [...] Like, nothing apart from that what already.. already is happening, you understand? [L:5.363-367]

The omission or inaction that Luciane refers to here should not be, as recapped earlier, conflated with an absence of agency. It is not an omission of external 'nothingness' (such as when Apis continues spraying unaware of the need to walk away, see Chapter 5). In contrast, this is an omission in the externalisation of an internal process that is agentially marked. The thought as well as the subsequent generative process of non-externalisation, to the contrary, do make something happen. When I ask Luciane specifically about her thoughts on the bus, she responds that

if there was a consequence, it was in me, not in the external environment. Not something that would reach the person whom I was oppressing. [L:5.403]

A racist thought, such as Luciane's, might indeed not "reach the person whom [it is] oppressing" and, in that sense, would not immediately and/or directly (explicitly or clearly) impact the 'person being oppressed'. However, Luciane suggests earlier, while her neighbour might not be impacted, the impact might be reflexively on her, because

it gives allowance to this.. this.. to think about this question, you know? ..of agency [5.407].

This is not a flippant comment. Throughout our conversation Luciane turns and returns to the hypocrisy of people's ethical and ideological discrepancy between their ideals and their actions, and the impact of this discrepancy on power and oppression – i.e. when "[t]heoretically, you think and say one thing and you can act another way" [L:5.299]. It is in this ethical and ideological context that she morally orientates her agency towards her internal process that she is repulsed by, so to not further give allowance to this.

6.41 With reference to Gendlin's idea of 'Sich befinden' (i.e. self-finding), Robbins and Parlavecchio (2006, p.323) explain, emotions are "a certain way of finding oneself". In answering the question "How are you?" – to which Luciane
would have responded 'repulsed', or perhaps 'disgusted' – in this route to "self-finding" there are three relevant aspects in one's emotive world:

First, mood or emotion requires a reflexive act—a referencing in some way to a "self." However, the self with a mood or emotion is not an isolated, atomized self, but a self in relation to a situation. The second aspect of mood or emotion is therefore "being situated." Finally, any given emotion or mood is also characterized by a feeling, in which the "feeling" stands for one's evaluation of how the self stands in relationship to its situational context." (Robbins & Parlacevecchio, 2006, p.323)

Orientatedness is, then, a cognitive, an emotive and arguably a moral quality of agency. As such, it is helpful to make sense of the reflexive quality of 'repulsion' in terms of agency in which the having of the thought is the object of the repulsion. First, the feeling of repulsion is orientated towards the thought. Second, this repulsion is "a self in relation to a situation"; it is orientated towards the imagined hypothetical impact of the verbalisation of the thought on her neighbour. Third, it is situated, among others, in the intersectional realm of Luciane's consciousness of social categories and power and her position(s) therein. Fourth, the moral quality of the repulsion that Luciane feels is an evaluative engagement of (the having of) the thought and its imagined impact on her neighbour who(se accent and loudness) is the object of the thought. The repulsion, to which I return, is tensionally related to the thought itself – and its emotive and moral quality – as well as to the not controlling of the thought. Not only, then, is this a morally emotive response to the thought, and to the imagination of the impact of the thought in the hypothetical case of verbalisation, which is inconsistent with the thought, it is also inconsistent with the inaction (i.e. non-control) or, for that matter, with action (i.e. giving leeway) that is also a response to the thought. And, perhaps, this repulsion is inclusively a dialogical response, not merely to the thought itself, but to this in/action in which she does not control but precisely gives leeway to the thought and oppression. Agentially, Luciane mobilises her capacity to act by responding to her internal world and, specifically, to her prior mobilisation of agency.
Reflexive agency and intersectional nojo

6.42 In the conversation before Luciane shares the event with me, she tells me about her exceptional status:

I don't know whether I ever reproduced some prejudice, you know?, like "Ay, you are black," you know?, but.. [...] No, I don't think I.. I never felt, dunno, nojo, you know?, which, really, is not very common, eh? [L:4.789-793]

Nojo recurrently appears throughout the conversations, and intersectionally so. Initially, Luciane situates herself as a point of exceptionality among 'feelings of racialised nojo'. Clearly, this points to contradictions in her own statements and feelings related to the nojo, particularly considering the two remaining conversations, as discussed in this chapter. This contradiction is not, however, situational in or of the 'here and now'; she grew up with her father's and extended family's racist comments and jokes – she laughed, but, she emphasises, she never told these jokes herself.

6.43 To further complicate these contradictions, I take a step back to have a bird's-eye view at the aforementioned internal process – i.e. where Luciane mobilises agency as an ideological and ethical response to her internal experiences, including her prior (prejudicial) mobilisation of agency. Not only the nojo, but also this process of sense-making, projection and imagination should be situated intersectionally in a framework of developing and mobilising reflexive agency. Luciane's feelings of nojo and contempt about her neighbour on the bus, as hinted at, are not isolated; to make sense of this reflexive agency, these feelings should be intersectionally contextualised.

Consider, for instance, the classist quality of her talk about the women from her working class neighbourhood: "they don't have anything to do [in life other than] gossiping about the lives of others," she [5.201] tells me with contempt in her voice. To use her earlier words, perhaps she 'mentally oppresses' them; not only does she not have to be a 'peão' because she is white, following her logic and the weight of her voice, but also because she is not a working class woman.

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102 I employ 'reflexive agency' here related to the conceptualisation provided by Colapietro (2010, p.41) in terms of the focus on "transformative possibilities" (see par.4.37); however, while I agree that (reflexive) agency refers to an internal capacity, I suggest, though, that the social and external (including others) do play an important role.
in her neighbourhood who needs to gossip about others to acquire existentially valuable experiences. However, again, immediately she feels nojo about herself—and in response to herself—for having those feelings.

6.44 It is helpful to consider how this raced and classed nojo, and her response thereto, relates to her experiences in the realm of sexuality; arguably there is a parallel between, first, how Luciane imagines how her neighbour on the bus and her neighbours in her neighbourhood feel about Luciane’s racist and classist thoughts and feelings and, second, how she herself always feels about herself when she experiences homophobic prejudice from others, such as the neighbours in her neighbourhood. "[W]here I live," Luciane [3.325] tells me, "it is inadmissible for you to walk hand-in-hand with a person of the same sex." She continues to reflect about how she herself has been the object in her neighbourhood of others’ nojo and contempt:

sometimes [they look at my girlfriend and me] with repulsion, sometimes with curiosity, sometimes with contempt [L:3.325]
everywhere where I walk with her [...] hand-in-hand... I know there is someone who will think: "Ay, what a nojo" – how disgusting. [L:6.359]

These experiences have been and are recurrent and are informed by growing up with a father who not only shares his racist jokes, but also recurrently expresses his homophobic and sexist views — to reiterate, without knowing Luciane is gay.

6.45 She is raised to experience nojo and contempt, but also to feel nojo and contempt about others — women, black people, gays, and presumably working class people; the "patterns that you have," Luciane reflects, "define your ideology" [L:5.287]. And these feelings and thoughts continue to emerge and she continues to, agentially, engage with them as well as respond to them. From the moment that her teacher in secondary school introduces animal and women’s rights, and perhaps from the moment that she realises she is gay, she initiates and actively engages in and pushes forward this process of reflexive change; where she is both the agential subject and the agentic object of change. As she was laughing about these racist jokes, she critically reflects on the distinction she made, she was effectively still "giv[ing] a free pass so that [they] could happen" [L:5.173]. Pointing to the simultaneity of her racist nojo and nojo about racism, Luciane talks throughout the conversations about events
where she felt *nojo* when encountering racism – be that on university campus on a poster or in comments by a friend of hers. She did not develop this process of change in isolation; through a process of conscientisation, she comments, she

developed a line of thought under the influence of other people that [prejudicial jokes] aren't very cool [...] that if it [were her] suffering the prejudice [she] wouldn't like it [L:5.173]

However, this is not an abstract or merely ideological process, she develops – a continuous cognitive, moral and emotive adjustment of her 'line of thought' – because she relates how others might feel to how she feels; or perhaps how she feels to how others might feel. This interpersonal process is not restricted to race. To exemplify, when she was 14-15 years old, she comments in an earlier conversation, she once stood up to her lesbian friend who was making sexist comments about how a 'woman's place is in the home'; in response to Luciane’s confrontation, her friend approaches her later to apologise. Reflecting on the process of, as Luciane calls it, "*self-understanding,*" she comments:

> every day you will come across a situation that goes against your ideology or your ideologies and you will have to decide to take a take stand or not [L:3.255]

As she was challenged by friends, she takes a stand and challenges others, but also herself.

**6.46** The self-criticism that Luciane demonstrates, then, is not coincidental, and it seems to be unrelated to the project or me. While it also seems to be unrelated to one particular social category only, it does develop according to a certain logic. Conscientisation in the realm of, first, sexism, homophobia and speciesism and, second, experiences of oppression, offers Luciane cognitive and moral tools to intersectionally mobilise her agency reflexively across social categories and power – i.e. when she '(mentally) oppresses others’ in the realm of class and, specifically, race. This suggests that the process that marks Luciane's shift in the event discussed in this chapter – i.e. having a racist thought, continuing to think the racist thought, not verbalising the thought (and its feelings) – cannot be made sense of in terms of situational change. Rather, it should be contextualised in a continuous process of reflexive agency – through and across social categories and power – which might be marked by and aimed
at (more) conscientisation and (internal and external) social justice, but which consists of both non-change and change.

**Final considerations**

6.47 Luciane sits on the bus next to a *nordestina* woman – a regional-racial qualifier of a woman from Brazil's Northeastern region – who talks loudly on her phone. The irritation that Luciane feels about this loud talking, inhibiting her from studying as a last-minute preparation for her exam, takes the form of "*momentary intolerance.*" That is, she has a racist thought, which is characterised by, or consists of, emotive and moral feelings – e.g. repulsion, disgust, anger – and should be situated in a socialisation process of racism and, presumably, classism. However, against the logic of this thought, Luciane does not, she tells me, verbalise this, emotive and moral, thought.

6.48 Luciane, then, starts with the having of a racist thought (coming into consciousness), and its related emotive and moral feelings. She then consciously continues thinking the racist thought – her agency here is orientated towards her neighbour, whom the thought concerns. However, then the process of mobilising agency and its direction changes and the mobilisation of agency orientates towards her own prior agential mobilisation. Her agency still consists of thoughts and emotive and moral feelings, but now they are, first, ethical and ideological assessments of precisely the prior thoughts and feelings of racial "*momentary intolerance*" and, second, situated in an intersectional conscientisation process as a personal framework situated in a general framework (cf. Essed, 1989) of, particularly, speciesism, sexism and homophobia. Condemning herself – for having and continuing the thoughts and feelings – she becomes the object of her own agential orientation. Subsequently, and consequently, she returns the orientation of her agency towards her neighbour, but now in a move of, perhaps, 'intersectional empathy' – she seems to project her feelings about herself onto her neighbour by imagining – hereby crossing social categories and positions in power – how she would have felt would she hear the (hypothetical) verbalisation (as if she would have been the neighbour).
In terms of the argument of this thesis, which I discuss more elaborately in Chapter 8, this case study brings to the conceptualisation of intersectional agency various points. First, the non-verbalisation of the thought is a clear example of agentic inaction. Second, the emergence – or, in Luciane's words, impulse – of the thought highlights, albeit differently from the previous chapter, the presence of boundaries to agency; arguably, the thought comes 'into' consciousness (cf. Damasio, 2012), but only 'becomes' agency once Luciane responds to and engages with the thought by continuing to think it. Third, Luciane's mobilisation of agency cannot be confined to or traced back to a moment; rather, it points to a process, and a process that is relational and dynamic. Fourth, part of this process is, initially, an understanding by Luciane of her agency being mobilised as an internal oppressive action in terms of the 'mental oppression of the other' – i.e. without the other being aware that they are being oppressed. One of the objectives is that this enables Luciane to 'self-superiorise', including by directing the oppression and anger she feels from being oppressed (in the realm of sexuality, for instance) onto the other, without impacting the other. This, fifth, leads to the characterisation of this process as an example of 'reflexive agency' – i.e. where the agency is orientated at the self, that is, the agent is both subject and object of her mobilisation of agency. This brings to the conceptualisation of intersectional agency, last, that agency can be ethically and ideologically mobilised in completely opposite orientations – and partially as a simultaneous or perhaps parallel process. Herein, emotive, cognitive and moral processes, as well as social categories and power, are not mobilised uniformly; rather, they are pluriformly mobilised. While from an observational perspective there is 'nothing' in the external, the process that leads to this agentic absence of action is complex, which I further discuss in Chapter 8.
Chapter 7. Sandra: Sexual Harassment While Walking In The Park

Introduction

7.1 Making leching sounds, a man approaches Sandra from behind while she tries to cross the Terminal Dom Pedro (TDP) park on her way to an activist meeting. I listen to the recording again. Hearing Sandra imitating his sexualising sounds, I get the image of a man with his tongue half out of his mouth, spit flying around, making licking sounds that need to get across an intention if not purpose of (non-consensual) oral sex. His eyes focused on her body, one of his hands maybe grabbing his penis. It feels rather disgusting, but unfortunately not unfamiliar. He is walking behind her, so the image I depict is Sandra’s (and my) imagination, expectations and (projected) memories. However, while approaching her he verbalises his vocal impressions, objectifying and sexually harassing her with a manual rape threat: "I put (sic) my hand in that big pussy there!" At times she is in too much of a hurry, other times she is too tired. This time, however, Sandra [3.335] feels "bothered beyond her limit"; to feel good about herself and leave the situation satisfied, she feels she needs to respond. In that "mini-second" [S:3.307], Sandra decides to react and responds with anger, shouting. Her "antenna" [S:3.335] is turned towards physically and verbally threatening him by reciprocating his shaming. Sandra’s shouting draws security guards from the station nearby to the scene. In the end, feeling ‘compassion’, she stops short of getting the man detained because he is of a "lower class", hence likely to face a beating in prison [S:3.139].

7.2 The mini-second, as Sandra calls and experiences it, as I discussed in Chapter 4, alludes to agency as momentary, as a split second causing the rest of the rather brief event. To explore the event, I employed variations of methodological tools grounded in, what I called, the ‘tracing back logic’ (see Chapter 1). I identified three of Sandra’s actions in her narrative as turning points where the course of the event observably changes. The first turning point
is where Sandra turns around to face the man. The second turning point is when she returns the man's verbal and physical approach and ultimately grabs him and, consequently, the event escalates. The third turning point is when Sandra leaves the scene and, effectively, the event ends. Tracing back these turning points, however, does not lead to the identification of three distinct instances of agency; rather, there are various instances where agency has been mobilised in specific ways. An analysis of the interplay of social categories (i.e. particularly class and gender), power and agential elements, first, points to the presence of inaction as well as action; however, second, this also suggests that the mobilisation of agency can be better understood as a process rather than as a moment.

7.3 In addition to some of the arguments just mentioned, the case of Sandra is particularly instructive for the conceptualisation of agency, because of the complexity of the different interrelating components of agency: of the parallel processes, if you will, that take place in terms of social categories and emotions, and of the changing character of agency. For instance, anger and gender are initially agentially mobilised as components of agency, but end up being agentially mobilised as tools for the negotiation of power, while internally class and compassion-contempt is mobilised agentially. It is this last case, then, that really forms the basis for thinking about intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism, which I develop in Chapter 8. Before turning to the unpacking of her intersectional mobilisation of agency in response to the manual rape threat, I first introduce Sandra to you, after which I present the event-as-observed.

Sandra

7.4 Sandra is the initial participant in the first phase of the project. Where I meet the other participants for the second phase quite soon after the first conversation, it takes a month for Sandra and I to meet again. She is very busy and her diary entries are never more than a page (in an already very small diary), and sometimes merely a sentence. Many of the experiences she writes about, and that we subsequently talk about, take place while in transit – on the bus, while cycling and, in the case of this chapter, while walking in the park to a
meeting. I assume this is because she is too busy to notice and write down anything else at any other moment in the day.

7.5 Sandra is a 33 year old, bisexual, sex positive, vegan woman. Throughout our conversations, she shares with me all the other places that she has lived and travelled after leaving home, in another part of the country, before arriving in São Paulo. She identifies as middle class, graduated from a ‘rich’ private university, although not one of the ‘best’. For years she worked in the creative industry, but at the time of this fieldwork Sandra had embarked on a course in the area of well-being and she started to work with clients. Her work continues to have a strong focus on helping others, but requires her to cut down on her social movement involvement as well as on financial expenses. Because of this and because she is so busy, I offer to become a client and, in turn, she offers to add a conversation to the consultation. This is when and where our conversations finally take off.

7.6 The first time that I raise the research with Sandra is during a brunch at a mutual friend’s place where we are both invited. I bring up the topic of the research and my thoughts about adjusting my methodology – from ethnography to a more phenomenological methodology – and mention that I am considering to invite someone for a pilot conversation. While we are not friends, Sandra’s path and mine have crossed over the years because of my activist friendships in São Paulo that are mutual connections. Sandra has participated in activist groups and projects in multiple social movements. I know Sandra as a radical activist (as opposed to a radical feminist). She has always been vocal about the ethical differences and disagreements she experiences – including during our conversations – and, as I knew her, she is someone who ‘walks her talk’. I do not communicate this with her, but I felt connected to her way of going about things and I shared some of her disagreements. In my memory the whole event was about anger, and it was Sandra’s anger – a ‘guiltless anger’ that I perhaps admired – that stood out for me and brought me to select this particular event.

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103 See par.5.11n81.
104 For reasons of anonymity and confidentiality, I cannot provide further details.
7.7 Remembering her enthusiasm and investment, I had approached Sandra to participate as someone reflecting critically on race privilege among other ideological and activist issues of hegemony, but also as someone living with race privilege. Since our physique is quite similar – I am only somewhat lighter in terms of skin and hair colour – I assumed similarity in terms of racial identity and experiences with race privilege. And during our conversations Sandra repeatedly identifies as white and responds when I address her as white. However, on the consent form (see Chapter 1) she fills in her racial identity as *mestiça*\(^{105}\). Because of my experience of us in terms of sameness (see also Chapter 3), as well as because of my geopolitically different experiences with and understanding of race, this information moved to the periphery of my consciousness. It is only in our seventh conversation that this emerges from the periphery to the forefront and we have a conversation about the complexity of individual and familial racial identity and experiences with personal, vicarious and intra-familial racism (see also Huijg, 2011). Expecting an active involvement in terms of her raced as well as other social categorical experiences, I invite her at various points, from the second conversation onwards, to reflect on whiteness, racial identity, experiences and structural privilege; while she responds affirmatively to my, often implicit, identification of her as white, she does not actually seem to pick up on my probing into race privilege. This is reflected in the case discussed here, which, in terms of social categories, mostly concerns the interplay of class and gender, rather than race\(^{106}\).

The event in terms of observable actions

7.8 In the previous chapter on Luciane I already demonstrated that observation does not suffice to make sense of the mobilisation of agency that generates agentic inaction. In contrast to Eduarda's event, if I had accompanied Sandra on her journey, I would have been able to observe the event as a whole. The analysis of 'spraying slogans at night' (Eduarda, Chapter 5) as well as the analysis of 'a racist thought on the bus' (Luciane, Chapter 6) raised the

\(^{105}\) See par.1.12n13.

\(^{106}\) In one of the later conversations, unrelated to the current case, Sandra did talk about race, and critically so, but that conversation did not consist of the details, depth and complexity (of social categories, power and agential elements) shared in this event.
argument that merely observation of actions does not suffice to make sense of the agency that generates it. To clarify this argument, I offer a baseline here by retelling the event 'stripped' from its contextual, interpretable and other information pointing to an unobservable (i.e. internal) process and therewith the mobilisation of agency. What follows, then, is the observable event as a whole, at least through the eyes and memory of Sandra, narrated to me, and reconstructed chronologically.

The event as observed

Sandra crosses the park to the other side. A man approaches her from behind. He makes leching noises and tells her: “I put (sic) my hand in that big pussy there!” Sandra turns around, facing him now. He then turns around and walks away. Walking away from her, Sandra responds and tells him “What is it that you said, meu irmão? You crazy, you crazy?” And she continues, “So, meu, you think that every woman has to listen to what you have to say, meu. It isn't like that, eh, cara? You have to respect women. You don't have a mother, eh?” He speeds up his walking and Sandra screams: “Get the pervert!!!” The Terminal echoes: “Pervert, pervert”. The Terminal's security guards start running. The guy is running. And Sandra runs after the guy. The security guards surround him. Sandra screams: “What was is that you said, say it now, meu, why don't you say it now what you said?” The guy responds: “No, no … uuuuwwuuw… uwwuuw”. And Sandra says: “Say [it], meu, you’ no’ macho, you’ no’ [a] man. You’re not man [enough] to say what you said? Now, say [it], meu.” The security guards who arrived are not reacting. Sandra grabs the guy and tells him: “Now, bastard, you didn’t say what you said to me, now, you will stay there being ashamed, idiot.” The security guards are not reacting. Sandra leaves the Terminal and walks under the overpass passing (other) homeless people and exits the park.

7.9 If I had observed the event, I might have described the event as follows: while Sandra walks in the park she is approached by a man talking and making sounds that suggests he desires to manually, or even orally, rape her. She turns around facing him, follows him while he walks away, and, in response to his approach, screams to him various interpretative – explanatory, suggestive, and judging – verbalisations concerning the gendered and anti-feminist character of his approach. He does not react to her satisfaction, and, approaching him, she progresses her gendered response at him clarifying her judgment of him and telling him what to do. Security guards have approached, but do not interfere.
Very dissatisfied and angry, Sandra now grabs him, increasing the volume of her voice and verbally lashes out – wanting to force him to repeat what he was saying when he was following her. When nothing comes from him, nor from the guards, she walks away.

7.10 The event as a whole would not have taken more than 20 minutes. Nevertheless, arguably three turning points can be identified where the event changes its course. The first turning point is where Sandra turns around facing the man. By turning around, the event changes from, first, merely his approach to an interaction between Sandra and the man and, second, from the man being in charge of the situation to Sandra asserting control. The second turning point is when Sandra pursues him physically and verbally and ultimately grabs him – the 'physical grabbing' is the part that I mistranslated. Here, Sandra escalates the event through various, physical and verbal, actions, while the man retreats and the guards are inactive bystanders. The last turning point is when Sandra stops engaging and walks away – arguably consisting of, respectively, inaction and action.

7.11 In this chapter I offer an analysis that centres on these three turning points. While the event as a whole consists of a variation of small actions, and inactions, these turning points, relying on the aforementioned tracing back approach, offer three points of references from where the mobilisation of agency can be 'traced back'. What will appear in the analysis is that the observational point of view – in terms of Sandra's response around sexual harassment, of gender relations and of her feminist engagement – is not congruent with the unobservable process of agential mobilisation that generates her response.
Turning point 1

The mini-second

7.12 The first turning point refers to the following section:

Sandra crosses the park to the other side. A man approaches her from behind. He makes leching noises and tells her: "I put (sic) my hand in that big pussy there!" Sandra turns around. It is the moment that Sandra turns around, after having been approached by the man in the park and in response to his leching and manual rape threat, that the course of the event reorientates due to her action. Discussing the current case as well as the experience she just had discussed about being called *gatinha* when cycling on her bike in a skirt, Sandra presents a (or, the) 'mini-second':

There is the mini-second, that you have to decide if you will do something or not, eh. I think that this is the first thought that goes through my head when, like, there is a situation, that ... *opaaaa!* ...someone did something that... that affected me, eh? Or that left me sad, or with anger, or with, eh, aí depends what the person said, how was this approach, eh, or even happy, dunno, was it a nice chat-up line, [such as] "look: the *gatinha* on the bike" [...] So, in the face of this situation, which you realise affected [you], there is that mini-second that you have to decide: will I do something, will I respond or not? It can be with words, can be with a look, can be, eh, an *attitude*.

[S:3.307]

She describes this mini-second as the decisive moment in which she "saw everything that was happening, everything that was around [her]" [S:3.351]: the second where she has to decide whether she 'will do something' – in this case,

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107 *Gatinha* is, literally, the diminutive for 'cat' (*i.e. gata*); however, when used in cat-calling it means, more or less, 'sexy lady'. However, 'Oi, *gata*' can also be used amicably between friends, meaning something along the friendly lines of 'Hey, gorgeous'.

108 *Attitude*, different from attitude, refers to a positioning of oneself, see par.6.23n100.
whether or not she will respond to a social situation that affected her [S:3.307]. At first, this makes sense; also in Luciane’s account, for instance, there is a clear ‘internal turning point’ that leads to a particular manifestation of agency. And indeed, Sandra interprets this moment as if it was a source, one that happens almost in a split second, as the generative moment of her actions – perhaps as the ‘moment of agency’ of the event as a whole.

7.13 However, Sandra’s interpretation of the ‘mini-second’, to which I returned at various times in the conversations to make sure I could make sense of its mechanism properly, is insufficiently accurate. Placing the different actions and inactions and related agential processes in a chronological timeline raises inconsistencies. Sandra’s noticing of “everything that was happening, everything that was around [her]” did not anticipate her decision to do something; it happened after she had already turned around. In other words, the decision resulting from the question “will I do something, will I respond or not?” precedes her turning around (and then seeing everything that was happening around her); however, this was not the first instance of agency in response to the man’s approach. Sandra’s own perception of her experience of agency and of the causal quality of agency is inaccurate. And even if the ‘mini-second’ is taken metaphorically as the ‘generating moment’ (of agency), then the analysis demonstrates that this was not actually ‘a moment’; considering this as a process leading to the turning around (i.e. the first turning point), rather, at least three ‘agential instances’ (for lack of a better word) can be identified that together constitute this process of agency. While the latter is initiated following the first two instances, their exact co-existent relation – parallel to some extent, perhaps co-constitutive or intertwined (to borrow terminology from intersectionality) – is not comprehensively clear. At the same time, while I present them in analytical terms as ‘separate’, it is unrealistic to assume that they would be empirically separate. On the basis of a tracing back logic, it is fair to say that the first instance is a direct response to his approach, the last instance directly leads to her turning around and, presumably, the second instance, is initiated ‘in the middle’. Arguably, there is, to some extent at least, a sequential logic to these instances. I present them, then, chronologically as they have been presented by Sandra.
Agential instance 1: non-mobilisation of fear

7.14 Sandra hears a guy coming up behind her, he makes leching noises, as if he is 'licking', and approaches even more. Then Sandra hears him telling her: "I will put my hand in that [big] pussy there" [S:3.131]. I hear it as a manual rape threat. "I didn't feel insecure" [S:3.389], Sandra tells me. Narrating to me what happens, however, she mixes up the temporal character of her experiences. Explaining in general terms which situation would evoke feelings of insecurity, she suggests that the situation actually did make her feel insecure:

Insecurity is when you are walking, for instance, when I was walking before, in the terminal [the bus terminal next to the TDP, DDH], noticing the looks, you know. [...] You notice that a guy turns around and doesn't turn back, stays watching, you know, following you with his eyes, eh. So, this leaves me insecure because you don't know whether the guy can come and talk bull shit to you just like this guy, can come and try to grab you. He can..., I don't know, eh? [S:3.389, emphasis added]

Sandra’s self-perception of her feelings is not coherent. The man-in-the-park, then, is emblematic of a guy who hypothetically could try to grab her. However, this gendered insecurity is not grounded in considerations of being grabbed only:

When the [assaults] are many, then you stay with this fear of exposing yourself, because it can be a guy who... [S:3.115]

Contrasting her later statement – i.e. that she did not feel insecure [S:3.389] – she shares her assessment of what she can hypothetically anticipate in terms of what might happen to her. This assessment is grounded in ‘general knowledge’ (cf. Essed, 1989) unspecific to this situation and is additionally accumulated through personal and, through activist involvement, vicarious experiences. She does not know who the man is, what he looks like, and whether he is alone or not. If anything, this is an event marked by (sexual) gendered relations not particular to one man or situation:

twenty men say something or react in a manner that they would not react if I would be in large shorts, I actually feel intimidated to go out again in a dress. Why? Because I will expose myself more, eh? Why? Because I have already been in a previous situation that I used a [dress or skirt on a bike] and twenty men messed with me and this leaves, in a way, it leaves you with an impression, eh, or with certainty, that if you go out [on a bike] more beautifully, if you go out more attractive, more exposed, with a body more exposed, it is... [long pause] men are more prone to do something without your... without your consent, eh? [S:3.55]
The feeling of intimidation – of fear and insecurity – is an accumulated emotion as a result of the exposure to and the internalisation of fear for gendered and specifically sexual violence:

I find physical aggression recoverable; I do not find a sexual aggression recoverable [...]. I don't know, I think it marks the soul, more than the body, because it is the violation of something that isn't exposed, eh. Your vagina, like, it is something super protected, super eh. Like, dunno, if they would break my nose, my nose is here, it's there all the time, my nose can break at any moment. Could be this, could be a bus that comes and runs me over. Can be that I fall on my nose, you understand, it is exposed. My whole body is exposed. My vagina, not, eh. So, for me, it is taking something that I am not exposing, that I'm not allowing. It isn't [meant] for this. You understand?

This fear cannot be decontextualised nor made sense of in abstract or even ideological or ethical considerations. Throughout the conversation Sandra shares various other examples in which she has been objectified and experienced involuntary sexual interactions. She also mentions that a family member sexually violated her as a child. The TDP Park experience is presented as merely the latest version of public gendered and sexually transgressive behaviour to which she has been regularly subjected. Anticipating the future as 'including' a potential reaction to actions in the now, unsurprisingly this does generate fear:

the guy today can say [something], but he can also have a weapon\textsuperscript{109} and take you to a deserted street and sexually attack or punch you. How many times men have wanted to beat me in the street because I went to say something [in response to their approach]? [S:3.115]

This fear is not merely abstract, but always lingering in the background as an undercurrent of emotions, knowledge and situational awareness – and perhaps moral consciousness of the 'wrongness' of the threat and treatment and the 'rightness' of her non-acceptance. Arguably outside the realm of agency, this fear is a background process that is activated during the reception of the man's approach.

7.15 And it makes sense to be cautious in that particular situation. Informed by pre-existing knowledge, she tells me that the park has some "super sinister places" – the viaduct that she had to walk under, before the man approached her, was "super tense". The TDP Park, she explains,

\textsuperscript{109} Knife and other very violent crimes are rather common in São Paulo and require realistic fear and precaution.
is a place without a lot of rules, there is no police, there is not a lot of surveillance, anything can happen, eh? It wasn't a route to walk. [...] There are, like, some plants, you know. It is also not a square; it isn't a place where people transit. It was the only route I knew through the TDP Park to this place [I had to go to]. Nowadays I already know another route [...] where] people pass. So, it doesn't have anything tense [about it]. Now I had to pass in the middle of where homeless people live, eh, they were all on the ground sleeping, lying, eh. [S:3.151]

She knows a lot of homeless people, she continues. Different from those elsewhere, however, "the ones that live there are not gente boa" – they are not safe or 'good people'. The 'type of men' here are 'homeless, without work, heavy drug users, without anything to do, just hanging around there'; they are a "more shady crowd". [S:3.131-155]. Without explicating this, this is also an assessment of class and, although to a lesser extent, about mental health (with regards to drug users) and race (disproportionately black and brown people are homeless).

7.16 Not unlike Luciane's (racist) thought, feelings of insecurity certainly do emerge in Sandra. Referencing Goleman (1995) and Callahan (1998), Adler et al. (1998, p.163) argue that emotions can be "impulses to act," or they can refer to feelings that, differently, "trigger the impulse to act." Arising "when the environment is perceived to contain a threat to physical safety" (Nabi, 2002, p.205), fear particularly can lead to paralysis or retreat (Adler et al., 1998, p.168; Eysenck & Keane, 2000, pp.1-2). In contrast to Luciane and to this perspective, however, Sandra refuses to engage or give space to these feelings that emerge from, presumably, her unconscious; in turn, arguably these emotions themselves do not cause her – nor cause Luciane, for that matter – to act, but the agential engagement therewith does contribute to her actions.

7.17 Fear can also, Adler et al. (1998, p.174) continue, "[mobilize] all of the body's resources to escape physical harm." The social function of fear, then, is to generate "protective behavior" (Nabi, 2002, p.205). And indeed, while Sandra presents invincible fearlessness, she also tells me about a situation where she assesses the situation as dangerous beyond her capacity; facing six strong and aggressive men in a completely different situation (where she defends a drug

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110 The expression 'gente boa' – i.e. 'good people' – here refers to safety – e.g. 'not dangerous people' – rather than perhaps a moral assessment.
addict), she backs off – "I didn't have the strength," she [6.386] reflects, "to continue fighting with him, I left [...] I was afraid since he could [sexually] assault me, eh?" While her self-assessment as invincible and fearless might be more a manifestation of desire or aspiration than a statement that represents her actual state of being, simultaneously, retreating, withdrawal or otherwise responding according to the emotion of fear, is not how Sandra goes about in the world – "it is tiring to be intimidated," she tells me, "I wasn't born to be intimidated" [S:3.115]. Rather than being intimidated – for a man to tell her how to walk, what to do, how to do it, how to behave and, Sandra [3.115] adds, acting so "that [she] should be afraid" – her response, she [3.31] says about the skirt-on-a-bike event, is to close off, to change her posture, and to show with her body language that she cannot be intimidated.

7.18 Sandra is not a fearful person, though. To the contrary, as will become clear later in the event, she has a pre-existing aggressive side herself. Not knowing who and how many men are behind her, whether they are a 'shady crowd' or not, Sandra boasts that it would have to be three men for her not to be able to fight off a sexual attack. In the seventh conversation that we have, she recalls how she used to beat up boys when she was younger and even studied a painful torture technique ("pau de arara") that she used on them. Years later she realises that she was "practising the same violence against another person, who will practise it with someone else" [S:7.815-27], retributing the sexual violence that she experienced as a child. While this point of realisation certainly initiated a process of change, Sandra is physically strong, has years of martial arts training, and is experienced in getting into (and winning) fights: "I really have, like, taken a lot of beating; of all types, beatings, blows, strangulations, all types " [S:3.179]. In short, Sandra does not fear physical violence. Her decision to not be intimidated is hardly coincidental or situational. Rather, it is a habitual response grounded in years, if not decades, of self-defence and readiness to physically fight back.

7.19 Unsurprisingly, but contradictorily, when she hears the man approach and the way he talks to her, making his leching sounds and coming closer, immediately a sense of insecurity in the form of fear of sexual violence, rather than physical violence, emerges – perhaps not dissimilar to the non-agential
emergence of Luciane's racist thought. Tracing back, it is realistic to say that, perhaps, emotions of fear were evoked – even if only momentarily, in a split second. Perhaps this is not a logical fear; nonetheless, as an accumulated experience of the past-feared-in-the-now, there is the risk that these feelings will enter the realm of consciousness to constitute agency. This first instance of agential engagement in response to the man's approach is when Sandra actively invests in rejecting the feeling of these feelings of fear that emerge and, in terms of agency, and invests in not mobilising these feelings – perhaps this could be called internal agential inaction (see also Chapter 8). The rejection that follows is not (merely) an agential response to the man's approach in stricto sensu, but to the emotions and accumulated experiences and responses that emerge in her. While leaving their functional residue, these feelings are, habitually perhaps (albeit consciously), actively non-mobilised. Sandra is not intimidated, she was never intimidated; she decides she will not be intimidated now.

**Agential instance 2: expelling shame**

7.20 Talking about how she felt in the park, Sandra reflects on the white dress she was wearing and her body therein:

> I was [wearing] a dress that already exposed my body a lot and I already wasn't feeling comfortable there in the TPD park. [S:3.127]

Although the man-in-the-park's approach can be understood as an expression of verbal sexual violence and as a threat of its materialisation, it is also a means of gendered objectification, sexualisation and, in that light, of shaming in more general terms – perhaps as a socialisation and disciplining tool situating Sandra outside "the norms and mores of the culture" (cf. Resnick, 1997, pp.258-259). Experiencing shame, to reiterate, reduces one "to a corporal body, [...] one's existence reduced to the object of another person's evaluative gaze" (Robbins & Parlavecchio, 2006, p.325). Through his leching sounds, his approaching of her – licking his way to her, talking as if he rapes her, crossing invisible boundaries of being – he attempts to invade her; his vocal penetration attempts to evoke internalised feelings of sexual objectification, reducing her value to that of an object for the purpose of his sexual and gendered gaze. He 'exposes' her body and assesses (or: presumes) her sexual availability, to him and to anyone
else who witnesses the situation, such as the bystander whose eyes she already felt watching and following her while she was crossing the park. Through shaming she is called upon as someone shameful, not worthy if not incapable of sexual and gendered agency. Having years of feminist and other critical activist training, however, Sandra is well equipped to cognitively and morally assess the man's vocal and verbal approach as shaming. While these gazes are in the present, being on the receiving end of his gaze in the 'here and now', this is also a 'compiled gaze' related to and perhaps blending in with a 'generic gaze' as well as an 'anticipated gaze' of men who sexually objectify her and verbally share their sexualisation with her. Shaming is not neutral, but rather a tool to negotiate power and control and here it has a social function in the context of gender and sexual relations, as well as perhaps, albeit differently, in the realm of class and race.

7.21 In the previous chapter I suggested that feeling shame has a strong moral quality to it – concerning feeling 'bad', lacking value or feeling useless (Resnick, 1997, p.258). In addition, as a "self-conscious emotion" (Robbins & Parlavecchio, 2006, p.325), shame generates self-referential objectification. Obviously, shaming does not necessarily lead to feeling shame. The internalisation and experience of shame depends on the assessment of one's self-in-context – arguably in itself an agential engagement with the shaming. Having rejected the activation of or having inactively mobilised emergent feelings of fear and intimidation, Sandra resists this reduction of her self to 'a corporeal body'; through situational non-internalisation, it is as if she expels his, and other men-in-the-park's, gaze, objectification and sexualisation. This expulsion or non-internalisation is not solely orientated 'in the moment' towards the man – or even the men – in the park; perhaps forming the foundation for her subsequent decision to respond, as I discuss shortly, it is also orientated towards herself and the collected memories of and experiences with sexual and gendered shaming and violence and fear thereof within her. Refusing his current shaming, it is as if she also expels part(s) of her pre-existing internalised shame and previous experiences with being sexualised, objectified and, thereby, shamed.
7.22 Tangney *et al.* (1996 in Keltner & Haidt, 1999, pp.509-510) explain that "shame informs the individual of his or her lower social status"; as such, the negotiation of power relations characterise the social function of shame. When Sandra rejects intimidation, she refuses the other's power to intimidate her and, as such, being made smaller. Referring to a generic category 'men', Sandra comments that "*they are not prepared for this type of situation [as there] are not many women who react*" [S:3.135] – therewith refusing the lowered status of 'woman who does not react'. The point here is not that her own agential process is void of emotions – fear *does* emerge, after all – but that the particular emotive approach of shaming by the 'leching man' is agentially refused. Not grounded in shame, her refusal of his approach evokes an emotive experience and engagement of anger in Sandra which she mobilises agentially, guiding her actions towards the second turning point - I return to this shortly.

7.23 The second agential instance is marked by her refusal to being ashamed and to feel shame. Reading back the account, it is as if she expels or perhaps 'non-internalises' his attempt to shame and objectify her. It is as if this attempt slides just right off her; *not* allowing not just his objectification and shaming to impact her, not accepting it as a part of her, but also specifically not allowing to 'enter' her in the first place. This non-internalisation – pointing here to Sandra's (conscious) refusal to make his attitude her own (alluding here to VandenBos, 2015, p.553) – can perhaps be understood as an internal agentic inaction through the non-engagement with his approach and/or as the agential mobilisation of internal resistance in the emotive realm. However, in the moral and cognitive realm, her *claiming* of an ethical and ideological self-assessment on her own terms can be understood as an internal active agential engagement with his approach.

7.24 While the internal action of the rejection of fear and the refusal of shaming seem similar, they are qualitatively different. The fear emerges from within – albeit as a reaction to his approach and the situation – and the rejection is a response to that internal emergence. However, the expulsion (refusal or non-internalisation) of shaming is a response to *his* approach as it externally reaches her. Both internal processes of agential engagement, though, also respond to other elements of agency. The rejection of fear is grounded in the
experiential knowledge that she is physically strong as well as in the actual accumulative experience with self-defence and aggression towards boys and men. Differently, perhaps a compilation of memories and experiences with objectification – e.g. the bike man she had just been talking about – blend into one to which the expulsion of shaming and the man and his approach is added. Neither the rejection nor the expulsion, though, causes Sandra to turn around.

*Agential instance 3: responding or not*

7.25 I ask Sandra when she made the decision to respond; it was, she clarifies, when he said: "I put (sic) my hand in that big pussy there!" [S:3.323]. Her decision to respond could not exactly have happened when he said this, even though she might have experienced it as such. Earlier [3.307] Sandra told me that she was deciding in the mini-second whether or not to respond. Later, she tells me that the turning around constitutes this mini-second [S:3.347]; she explains: "the moment I turned around, I saw everything that was happening, everything that was around [there]" [S:3.351]. As mentioned already, all these suggestions are illogical. The third agential instance – which causes the action of responding by turning around – follows from the previous two, which were preceded, in turn, by his approach. All of the three agential engagements, nonetheless, constitute the agential process that forms the foundational groundwork for the action of turning around and the decision thereto.

7.26 When a man approaches her in an inappropriate way, the first thing that Sandra thinks is always "a sort of standard thought": "douchebag, meu," she thinks, when a man messes with her, "it could be so.. so different" [S:3.39-43]. The event under discussion, Sandra seems to say, is an exemplary experience – one that she has experienced many times in one form or another, one that is familiar to her, so familiar that her thinking follows a cognitive pattern. However, her specific use of "babaca," which I translated here with ‘douchebag’, should be situated in the realm of power relations; it refers to the devaluation of the person she assesses (or scolds, to be precise) – calling someone a babaca more or less precludes the assessment of that babaca as fear-inducing. In other words, by the time that Sandra in this standard cognitive pattern assesses the guy as a babaca, she seems to have stopped feeling fear. In and of itself,
interestingly, this suggests that at least the first and the third agential instances are not only sequentially initiated, but are also empirically separate. Note that the temporal relation between the first and the second agential instance, and between the second and third agential instance, are more fluid and, at least partially, parallel.

7.27 When Sandra refers to the thoughts about the person approaching her and the assessment of possible consequences of her turning around – 'not having any idea who he could have been' – she presents a neutral image in terms of social categories and power relations. When I ask her whether she knew that he was of a lower class by the way he talked, since she had just told me this, she insists that she did not know.

He could have been security [...]. I didn't know who he was [...]. I didn't know whether he was a man of two meters [...] or a dwarf [S:3.327-331] – using an ableist pejorative term. Although she would have felt intimidated if she would have faced "six basketball players," she insists that she still "would [have] responded in the same way" – and returns to her somewhat boasting attitude [S:3.397].

7.28 The leching and sexually harassing voice could have been anyone's, she suggests – implying that her mobilisation of agency leading to the turning around is void of any social categorical particularity. Even without having seen him, however, she clearly does assess him. To start with, when Sandra talks about the people in the park, she only mentions men; implicitly she must have identified the lecher as a man. Where her earlier agential engagements concerned the rejection of fear and expulsion of shaming, the decision to respond is grounded in the assessment of the impact of his behaviour on her – and telling me this she imitates his leching, her voice with increasing anger – as being "bothered beyond her limit," and as being disturbed and "profoundly offended" over his leching approach [S:3.315-355]. Possibly resonating with Luciane's 'mental oppression', Sandra now initiates an internal process where the man is the object of her agency; rather than merely reacting, she initiates a

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111 I refer here to the pejorative character of the original term – i.e. nanico – in Brazil, as well as Sandra's 'normal' sensitive approach to disability.

112 It is unclear to me whether Sandra's reference to 'basketball players' is a coded racial term – as it might have been in the USA.
proactive acting. Arguably, her internal process has moved to the predominantly cognitive-moral realm.

7.29 And Sandra’s body and sexuality are approached such to make them 'bad', lacking existential value. His making-her-bad, however, does not imply that Sandra receives and internalises this; although she is aware of her 'role' in the perspective of the other(s), she does not conform to misogynistic 'norms and mores' nor does she feel 'bad' or useless on the basis of shame. Sandra is certainly very capable "to project [her]self into the position of the observing other" (Robbins & Parlavecchio, 2006, p.325). Doing so, however, she does not become a shamed person. Instead, she mobilises a pre-existing ideological and ethical framework as if his evaluative and objectifying gaze bounces off this wall of objections and, consequently, almost habitually, she does not internalise it. To the contrary, she mobilises her 'corporal body' for the purpose of a response on her own ideological and ethical terms.

7.30 Not seeing him does not exclude experiencing and assessing him and, in this calculated anticipation, doing so intersectionally. The way he approaches her, making these leching sounds, positions him in an intersectional range that goes beyond gender. The 'Paulista-man', who emerges later in our conversation, is a hypothetical and stereotypical man in a suit and with a university degree who can typically be found (working) on the Avenida Paulista\textsuperscript{113}. The 'Paulista-man' is not just a man in a suit with a degree, but a white, middle class, able-bodied and, presumably, sober man who can rely on a hegemonic sense of safety, belonging, and a sense of certainty regarding his position in the intersectional realm of power. The 'TDP Park man', on the other hand, is likely, Sandra sketches, a substance abuser, homeless, and someone who experiences mental health challenges; intersectionally he almost fits the opposite profile to the Paulista-man. Due to the classed and raced character of the TDP Park and its location in São Paulo, it is very unlikely that this Paulista-man would walk in the TDP Park and, if he would, it would be very unlikely that he would have sexually harassed Sandra there, in that context, and in that way – it would not fit his intersectionally marked public profile. I do think that her

\textsuperscript{113} See par.5.39n89.
judgment of 'the unknown man' as a *babaca*, a douchebag, is indeed a standard thought – which she would have thought in either the TDP Park or on the Avenida Paulista. However, the aforementioned general knowledge framework operates herein as an intersectional foundation for this situational assessment (Essed, 1989; see par.2.1), resulting in the decision that she has to 'do something'.

7.31 The aforementioned cognitive pattern – and maybe also the 'turn' in the realm of power – is familiar, practiced, trained, perhaps even habitual readiness; as she explains in the next conversation:

> I know that in certain situations that, if I will *tensionar*, the thing will take off. [S:4.283]

'Tensionar', Sandra explains, is when

> I position myself, speak, scream, whatever I think at the time has to be done, like, to not let the situation pass, you know? [S:4.287]

While *tensionar* might be done in the everyday – on the bus, in the park – in the examples she mentions it is a strategic tool, employed by Sandra, as a micropolitical social justice move. In other words, it is a particular mobilisation of agency. While her *tensionar* only properly takes off after she has turned around, which I discuss shortly, her choice to turn around is a decision "to not let the situation pass."

7.32 While her cognitive process is standard and so is her strategic orientation, her actual response – in the "mini-second that you have to decide: will I do something, will I respond or not?" [S:3.307] – is situational and awkwardly pragmatic. At the end of the day, Sandra explains, the decision to respond or not depends on the orientation of her "antenna" [S:3.335] on that particular day or in that moment. "It depends", she explains, "on whether I feel good on the day or not, if I am happy or not, if I am patient or not, if I have PMT [pre-menstrual tension, DDH] or not. *Meu*, when I have PMT, the least, the least thing, will piss me off. *E ai*, I have to react, sometimes much more exaggerated than I would have needed to be. [...] If, suddenly, the day is really good, many good things happened, you know, I am so relaxed, *tal. Meu*, sometimes, the same thing said to me on one or other day, I won't even care, I will not even hear it, almost, you know. I will walk [away]. *E ai*, when I have PMT, *meu*, I want to go to bed. Like, I throw my backpack on the ground and [scream]: "WHAT IS IT?!?!!?!!?" [3.343]
What ultimately points her antenna to responding "in this mini-second" is a cognitive-emotive assessment of 'the situation of the day' on the basis of pragmatic, if not arbitrary, reasons of, for instance, time, energy, and physical and mental well-being. And that day, so it appears, she was up for it and the two conditions necessary for her to respond were met: first, she had time and energy and, second, her antenna was directed at responding, doing something about it and, as such, at facing the situation and turning around to face him.

7.33 Before moving to the second turning point, it is important here to briefly consider that this first process of mobilisation of agency and therewith three agential instances, leading to the first turning point, is not monolithic. While it mostly consists of emotive elements and responses thereto – e.g. fear and insecurity, sexual gendered objectification and shaming, and perhaps fierceness and non-intimidation – this moves towards the realm of moral-cognitive assessments. Another important point to consider is that there is a discrepancy between an observational perspective of Sandra's turning around and the more complex insight into the agential process leading to this action. Observationally, only deduction can suggest that this revolves around gender; the agential instances clearly divulge their gendered and sexual quality, while also suggesting more complex intersectional background processes. Again, observationally her turning around might come across as a simple reaction or, in Luciane's words, as an 'instinct' or 'impulse', and as one action only. Again, first-person insight into the agential process, however, reveals more complexity and points to this process consisting of, among others, multiple agential instances. Last, the turning around might observationally not even be analytically considered a separate action; after all, the initial action of the next turning point, when she starts to talk loudly and walk after him, might well appear as one and the same as the turning around. This, as I discuss now, would be an inaccurate assessment of the situation, and of agency specifically.
7.34 Until I developed the method of tracing back the event from its actions and inactions to seek its chronological development, as well as to 'strip down' the event and identify its different layers and 'movements', I understood Sandra's anger as an agential response to the guy's leching and manual rape threat. Herein, however, I made a fourfold assumption. First, considering the anger that she talked 'with' (see below), I assumed that anger marked the whole event and, as such, all of the agency being mobilised. This was reinforced by the way that Sandra communicates in the conversations, which I identified as 'angry'. Second, I assessed all anger that Sandra talked about, or perhaps that I identified, as 'the same anger' – with the same quality, origin and purpose. Third, I assessed all anger as the same in terms of agency; I identified anger to constitute her agential process and, because of that, in its external manifestation as coherent expression of her internal process. Fourth, I interpreted Sandra's self-assessment of the 'mini-second' as accurate, which she describes as follows:

In this mini-second I turned around, when I turned around I saw who it was and I saw him, like, turning and that left me with a lot of anger because he was going to escape from the situation that he created. [S:3.347]

As discussed, Sandra suggested that the 'mini-second' was, first, a direct response to the guy's approach and, second, was generative of the first turning point, if not the event as a whole. Only when I realised that the agency at work once turned around was significantly different from the agential process leading to the turning around, it became clear that this was also the turning point of her anger. Gradually her anger escalates agentically towards the end of the second turning point, but agentially de-escalates until, in the second turning point, it leaves her agential process altogether. In other words, as I will discuss now, the
anger as a component in the mobilisation of agency starts to take a different form – i.e. from an agential element to an agentic tool – near the end of the turning point.

7.35 When doing a closer examination of the sequence of actions marking the turning point as whole, a more complex image emerges:

Sandra turns around, facing him now. He then turns around and walks away. Walking away from her, Sandra responds and tells him "What is that you said, meu irmão? You crazy, you crazy?" And she continues, "So, meu, you think that every woman has to listen to what you have to say, meu. It isn't like that, eh, cara? You have to respect women. You don't have a mother, eh?" He speeds up his walking and Sandra screams: "Get the pervert!!" The Terminal echoes: "Pervert, pervert". The Terminal's security guards start running. The guy is running. And Sandra runs after the guy. The security guards surround him. Sandra screams: "What was is that you said, say it now, meu, why don't you say it now what you said?". The guy responds: "No, no … uuwwuuuuw… uuwww". And Sandra says: "Say [it], meu, you' no' macho, you' no' [a] man. You're not man [enough] to say what you said? Now, say [it], meu." The security guards who arrived are not reacting. Sandra grabs the guy and tells him: "Now, bastard, you didn't say what you said to me, now, you will stay there being ashamed, idiot.

7.36 From an observational perspective, her 'having turned around' might seem the same as the previous external action – i.e. the turning around – and as such as consisting of the same agential process generating these actions. However, a very different mobilisation of agency informs the chasing, and then grabbing, than did the turning around. This second turning point – with a clear start and ending in terms of observational actions – refers to an escalating process of agential mobilisation, rather than, as in the previous turning point, specific identifiable agential instances. The whole process of agency here that guides both actions – and those in between – is very different from the previous. It would seem likely, to an observer, that this all revolves around gender. And, indeed, the mobilisation of agency leading to the first turning point is mostly about gender, and a particularly assertive response at that. However, the second turning point is predominantly marked by gender in very different ways – a process that is grounded in anticipatory (racialised) class assessments.

7.37 The turning point starts with Sandra having turned around. "When I turned around," she explains, "I saw who it was." Facing the man, she sees a "small, tiny, skinny" guy. Although she had told me about feelings of insecurity,
even though, as discussed, she actually already felt "very secure," she feels "[e]ven more after [she] saw him." Different than the "six basketball players" she hypothesised about\textsuperscript{114}, she would easily be able to "beat the shit out of" the park-man [S:3:397]. In her perception, she only becomes aware of their classed difference and difference in terms of physical strength at the point of actually seeing him. Once she sees him, she explains to me, she identifies him, very different from her own background, as someone from a "very low class" [S:3:259]. He is an older man, she observes, about fifty years old, with the appearance of "[someone] dirty"; his beard is unshaven and turning grey, he is wearing stained linen trousers, a top and old shoes, and his clothes are worn out and dirty [S:3:283-287]. According to Sandra's general knowledge of the park, she likely assessed him as a homeless man – as she mentions, as someone 'without work, a heavy drug user, without anything to do, just hanging around there', perhaps even part of the "more shady crowd" [S:3:131-155]. When I ask Sandra what the rest of his appearance was, she responds: "Skin colour? He was a.., he was a very light brown, almost, I don't know… The one that you never know if you [have to] say white or brown" – he was, she clarifies, "neither white nor black". [S:3:257-397]. Although Sandra is very specific in her description of his skin colour, she engages with this question – one that I had not asked (yet), but she asks herself – as if skin colour is a mere physical attribute that can be decontextualised. 'Colour' – 'cor' (and 'colour prejudice') – is often used in Brazil in place of race, including in research on racism (Bento, 2003c; PNUD, 2005; Turra & Venturi, 1995). This is particularly relevant in an intersectional context in Brazil where class can modify racial identification. While a 'very light brown man' might be considered white on the Avenida Paulista, in the TDP Park it is realistic for him to be expected to be treated as someone (light) black. This intersectional context also impacts, in the realm of race, the way that the gendered class difference between Sandra and the man operates.

7.38 He does not stand still; turning around, away from Sandra – to walk to the other side of the park – he was "escap[ing] the situation that he created" [S:3:347]. His turning does not only mean that he literally tries to get away from

\textsuperscript{114} It is unclear to me whether this is actually a (hidden) racial comment.
the situation that he generated, but also that he attempts to try to get away with it. This leaves her with "a lot of anger" [S:3.347]. The "situation that he created," however, is not one that is observational or, even less, objective; it refers to, first, Sandra's ethical and ideological assessment of 'the situation' and of their relation therein and, second, to her assessment of his non-alignment with what the right response to her would have been. In between the lines, I read that the correct thing for him to do would have been to acknowledge his behaviour – his role in generating his actions, his actions and the consequences of his actions – and be accountable and be held accountable for this. In other words, Sandra starts to chase the man physically and verbally in response to her assessment of his non-engagement and non-accountability. Arguably, this anger that generatively informs her subsequent 'stream of agential assessments' results in her verbal and physical reaction to the withdrawing-man. However, this explanation does not suffice.

7.39 When she tells me her reaction, at first, I tell her in my mind: "good for you." I make sense of her agency in terms of social change. In activism, particularly – racialised – gendered emotions such as anger and aggression have been recognised for their social function via individual and collective behaviour and ideological mobilisation, and as a threat to the status quo; as such, they have been emphasised as quite positive and productive. (e.g. Lorde, 1984b; Sabucedo, Durán, Alzate et al., 2011, p.28; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer et al., 2004; Wolff, 2015, p.979). This changes once I start to understand the complexity of Sandra's response to the man.

7.40 Seeing that he turns around, Sandra initiates her verbal and physical chasing of him: telling him he is crazy; questioning him about his feminist principles, whether he really thinks that all women should listen to him, and explaining that he should respect women; and then offering him a point of reference by asking him 'whether he does not have a mother', suggesting that he 'really already should know'. When looking at this in more detail, my attention is drawn to the repetition and emphasis on certain types of words and phrases. For instance, Sandra uses gender and masculinity, or maybe even sexism and toxic and hyper-masculinity, to make a point, to question his manhood or, on a more sexist level, to emasculate his 'machoness', emphasising his vulnerability
and powerlessness. Although the moral manifestations of her anger are expressions in the realm of gender, they are conflicting and, therein, problematic expressions. She moves between 'feminist teachings' and a sexist gendered framework; to reiterate, from

you think that every woman has to listen to what you have to say [.]. You have to respect women [S:3.139]

to

You don't have a mother? [...] you' no' macho, you' no' [a] man. You're not man [enough] to say what you said [S:3.139]

He becomes the object of her feminist gaze, and she becomes the knower of gender and definer of 'proper manhood'. Her agential orientation moves from, indeed, an assertive response to a moral return of shaming – if not humiliating – him. Perhaps not dissimilar from Luciane's agential 'superiorisation', Sandra's mobilisation of anger seems to become an agentic tool with the social function to inferiorise him and, agentially, for her to situate herself firmly in the realm of power.

7.41 Sandra then reorients her agency towards anyone who might be able to hear her, screaming very loudly at someone unknown that they should "get the pervert." This is so loud that the Terminal next to the park echoes "pervert.. pervert..." [S:3.131,397-405]. Then the man is running and Sandra runs after him. She shouts so loudly that the bus terminal's security guards come out115. The event escalates; first the man runs, Sandra increases her running, but also the security guards are joining in with the running now. Sandra's screams are so loud, she tells me, that it is as if the (bus) terminal stops, as if everyone there stops and turns their attention to the situation between Sandra, the man and the arriving security guards. "Everyone stood still," she [3.139] tells me laughingly, apparently more amused than angry, "like, men, women, children, you know, nobody knew well what to do, what had happened". The world standing still, the man-in-the-park just stands there. With the security guards arriving, Sandra repeatedly orders the guy to tell her what he said. When I listen to the recording, it seems like he responds in fear – "No, no ... uuwwuuww... uuwwww"

115 At no point does Sandra mention or suggest that she was aware of the security guards' presence and, as such, that she was actually aiming her screaming at them specifically – rather than, e.g., at random bystanders she noticed before (staring at her). Since she was quite transparent, I took her word for it and have excluded that option from the analysis.
– he appears diminished, small, nothing like the man chasing and threatening her. Sandra continues telling him that he is not really a man, and that he is not even 'man enough' to repeat what he said.

7.42 At some point, the security guards surround him. While closing in, Sandra notices that nothing is happening. The security guards who arrived are not reacting; they do not hold him and they do not otherwise take action. This agential process, then, finishes when Sandra decides to physically grab the guy – a fact that I mistranslated for a long time (see par.1.21,3.9) – and, last, tells him: "Now, bastard, you didn't say what you said to me, now, you will stay there being ashamed, idiot" [S:3.131]. For a bystander, such as the security guards who arrive at the 'scene' in response to Sandra's loud screaming, I assume it must have looked like the interaction was escalating: a white, middle class woman in distress – a, racialised and classed, gendered distress – they would need to respond to. However, internally, Sandra is not escalating. The first agential process consists mostly of emotive feelings, but the mechanism of agency mobilised here seems to consist of a more complex interplay of emotive and moral feelings. While in the first agential process emotive feelings are agentially mobilised, and the second turning point starts with all that anger that Sandra feels, increasingly the anger and the shaming are mobilised agentically as strategic tools. From the outside, she comes across as angry – perhaps even as livid. This is no coincidence. After all, her actions are – and escalatingly so – marked by anger. This anger, however, is not simply a manifestation of an internal experience; rather, in anticipation of the next turning point, it decreasingly marks her agential process.

7.43 The shaming that marks Sandra's verbal response can be made sense of intersectionally only through the framework that she interprets as belonging to the third turning point (to which I return shortly), but which, tracing this back, was initiated during the second turning point towards the third turning point. Having turned around, Sandra starts to increasingly 'intersectionally assess' her environment: the guy that she is facing in front of her particularly, and her external environment as a whole, the security guards therein and her reach of agency in terms of the likely impact of her actions on him. Where externally she mobilises anger as a tool, her agential internal process moves to, on the one
hand, 'pleasure' (as I touched on) and, on the other hand, 'compassion' and 'empathy' (to which I return) – and problematically so. Increasingly, to reiterate, she employs anger as a strategic tool of interaction, in line with the social function of anger (cf. Chapter 6). The point is not that Sandra does not feel angry at all, but it becomes clear that she decreasingly experiences anger, while she is increasingly expressing anger. Her shouting at him is not similarly motivated by anger anymore; rather, the function of her anger seems to be orientated reflexively so that she would feel "very good":

So, the moment that I said this [pervert, DDH] and everyone looked at the guy and the security went after him, was very good. It was, like, tipo meu, a rematch, like, eh. You think you can say just anything, so look at what I can say, eh. You can say [things], I can also say [things], eh. It isn't just you who has a mouth. [S:405]

Seeing him and seeing how he responds to her, she starts to assess him as someone she does not have to fear, someone vulnerable, someone she can feel pleasure about by putting him in his place. Even though she demands a response from him, his non-accountability was what evoked her anger in the first place; he actually "was not able to respond" to her – Sandra intimidated him in such a way that he could not say anything anymore [S:3.157-163]. She actually was not even anticipating that he would respond to her [S:3.167]. Her verbal aggression, 'feminist teachings' and emasculation, then, were not (just) generated by her anger and the need for him to be accountable. I ask her how his response – feeling intimidated, "staying there ashamed" [S:3.139], not being able to respond to her – made her feel. She tells me that this was what she was expecting: "I got what I wanted, eh?" [S:3.163-167]. The anger that she mobilises, it seems, is a tool for her desire for retribution. As I discuss further in the next section, this anger leaves the constitutive realm of agency as a mechanism and becomes a tool in the toolkit of how she mobilises agency in these 'type' of situations.

7.44 There seems to be two cognitive-moral processes at work, both grounded in power relations. First, there is the process that she ideologically and ethically agrees with, and which she will mobilise in the third turning point. And then, second, there seems to be a process at work that is grounded in contempt and perhaps, as raised, self-superiorisation (cf. Chapter 6), through which she seems to reciprocate his shaming by, now, shaming him. From the
conversations it is not clear whether Sandra is aware of the second process – i.e. whether this is within the realm of or on the periphery of consciousness. This raises questions about whether this belongs to the realm of agency and, consequently, whether this is a parallel process or perhaps an unconscious process underlying the first. Effectively, she does not explicitly talk about this in terms of thoughts and feelings; I deduce their existence based on her verbalising them in relation to the third turning point. In contrast to Luciane, then, Sandra does not demonstrate awareness of these feelings.

Turning point 3

7.45 Similar to the first turning point, the third turning point is quite short. In observable terms, this is what it consists of:

The security guards are not reacting. Sandra leaves the Terminal and walks under the overpass passing (other) homeless people and exits the park. This last agential mobilisation of this event, then, leads to the closing moment. The man-in-the-park does not respond to Sandra, at least not the way she wants. The security guards do not respond to the man, apparently still not knowing what to do with him. She decides to not respond anymore to the situation. Instead, she decides to 'leave the situation', to walk away and return to the initial purpose of her journey. Bystanders, such as the security guards, might have observably assessed her leaving in a variety of ways – it is very unlikely, however, that they would have guessed the actual motivation for her decision.

7.46 Until this moment, as discussed, gender played an important role in the assessment of the event. The first turning point is almost exclusively marked by gender. In the second turn point, her actions are marked by gender (in terms of
experiencing social categorical difference, but also emasculation and feminist teachings), but she also already assesses her environment in terms of, for instance, class, race, mental health and physical strength (or the lack thereof). At this moment, though, it seems as if Sandra's assessment concerns the man's relation with the hypothetical police and, as such, the consequences of his class situatedness. It is not classed gender relations, nor emotions as such, that characterise the agential process leading to the above presented actions (be they inactions). The employment of her agential capacities culminating in the decision to not respond anymore but to withdraw from the situation is, in terms of how Sandra presents it, an expression of her conscientious and activist self-identity. Although she explains that the message she wants to get across is gendered, be it feminist, the rationale she provides for her decision is actually class based – although closer analysis sketches a more intersectional (i.e. interrelated) picture.

7.47 Although arguably consisting of both an action and inaction, Sandra held on to the guy briefly after she grabbed him (in the previous turning point). She assesses her environment and her social categorical and power relation to all the event's 'participants' – i.e. the guy she is holding, perhaps the bystanders who are now looking at them, but particularly the security guards. Sandra realises that the security guards are not up for dealing with the situation, since "there are not many women.. who react" [S:3.135]; they would not know, seems Sandra's assumption, how to deal with a woman who does react. Consequently they just stand there without any reaction, without knowing what to do; Sandra understands that it is up to her to make a decision. She already has grabbed the man – what now?

Or I would tell the security guards to take him to the police, eh? Because there comes a moment that it has to be resolved. But I also don't believe in the police as the best resolution method for things, eh? I also don't think that the guy needs to be imprisoned and beaten up. It was a lower class guy, eh, a person who probably will have a hard time, eh, if he would, like, be imprisoned. And, so, I decided that "No", I simply left the situation. And, meu, solve it, stay ashamed there, you know, like.. [S:3.139]

Sandra presents this to me as if this were a heroic act: saving the man from a beating in prison. Another reading of the event, however, presents a dual agential process – initiated, as discussed, when Sandra turned around and 'saw everything around her'.
7.48 Sandra feels, then, that she has to make a decision to 'resolve' the situation: either she continues the course of the event, escalating it more, so that the man will be taken into custody and receive a beating in prison; or, alternatively, she lets go and nothing worse happens to him. It is a very clear agential instance, although not a singular one; at the same time, it is part of the aforementioned 'stream of agential mobilisation'. When she assesses her environment, there and then, she inclusively assesses this contextually and intersectionally in light of her position in the world at large. Therein, the reach of her agency is far reaching; with great accuracy she can anticipate what the likely consequences of the options available to her will be, and therewith, what the repercussions thereof would be on the guy she has her hands on, literally. None of these internal cognitive-moral considerations, however, are manifested externally; while they constitute her agential process, they remain inactively mobilised. Observably, the action that she does take, namely walking away, could mean many things, and could be similarly caused by many possible mobilisations of agency; but what actually happens in terms of agency cannot be observed.

7.49 When I ask Sandra how her response to the man would have been had he been in a suit, she takes the conversation into three – spatial – directions. First, similar to Eduarda imagining Apis's home situation, Sandra imagines the man-in-the-park's reality back home 'there'. In turn, this 'there' intersectionally plays a central role in Sandra's development of ideological and ethical awareness particular to the event and forms the foundation for her decision to walk away so that the man is not held by the guards and certainly not sent to the police. Second, she situates the man-in-the-park in comparison to someone like him; in her own words,

    a person of a lower class, less education ... less opportunities in life [...] only lived here in São Paulo, only knows the neighbourhood where he lives [...] a quite limited perspective [...] like the janitor of the building [S:3.303],

by which she refers to the building where she lives and about which she talks elsewhere in the conversation. The man that works in her building does not live, at least according to the logic of Sandra (who does not live in a lower class neighbourhood, nor, for that matter, in a middle class or upper class one), in the
neighbourhood where he works and grew up in, nor does, obviously, the man in
the park – if he has a home to live in in the first place. This is how Sandra
intersectionally imagines the guy-in-the-park's upbringing and his 'faulty'
conscientisation process:

I understand that a person who has less study, eh, that they had less
contact with the world, like, eh, [with] other people, other type of people,
eh, lived only in his [own] neighbourhood, already comes from a situation
often of oppression, of humiliation, unstable family, father who beats,
mother who gets beaten, you know, mother who works and the husband
doesn't do anything... I already think that a person has less frame of
reference to know what this is, like, how much this is detrimental for
women, eh..., like, has less reflection about this. [S:3.299-303]

The agency that she here mobilises in its orientation towards the man,
ultimately, consists of pity – she feels sorry for him, after all he doesn't know
any better. She seems to explain this to herself as, if you will, '(racialised)
classed altruism' of perhaps gendered 'compassionate protection'. And maybe
this is not too dissimilar from Carola's engagement with Apis in the face of the
officers' gun, or from the pity that Luciane expresses by making sense of the
woman next to her as a peão. The imaginative function of spatial comparison,
then, illustrates Sandra's distance to the 'park-guy' and the 'Paulista-man', who
occupy their respective spaces (be that here or there) – none of which are
Sandra's. Third, she situates the man-in-the-park as someone unlike the
'Paulista-man':

If it would have been the guy from the [Avenida] Paulista, [who has] studied,
with [a university degree], with I don't know what, meu, he has the
obligation to know that that is really prejudicial to a woman. And that you
are doing something that is not consensual. [S:3.303]

In terms of physical distance, the Avenida Paulista is not too far from the park
Sandra was crossing; socially, and arguably politically, however, the 'Paulista-
man' and Sandra are, in her opinion, light years away. The location 'there' is not
an accidental avenue where a guy in a suit might walk. Would the man-in-the-
suit on the Paulista, very different from the man in the park, have approached
her, Sandra tells me, most likely she would have punched him or would have
him be 'made to' be held by the security guards or even be sent to the police.

7.50 The decision that Sandra makes to not let the police be called is not
causally in her hands. Her agential capacities, in stricto sensu, do not stretch
(conceptually) to the actions of others; aligned with an anti-conflationary
approach, to emphasise, one can influence but not cause the impact of one’s actions. In other words, it is neither agentially nor agentically in her power to control or determine what others do or do not do; bar coercive and other unfree situations, she can only cause her own action (and inactions). Sandra realises that if she pushes any further, the security will call the police. It is up to her whether or not he will be taken away by the police – as she is certain that he will be taken away by the police would she insist that they be called. After all, if the police would get involved, they would take the man away and physically abuse him in prison, is her line of thought; being ‘from a lower class background’, he will be beaten up in prison due to his position in class relations. The power on the basis of which she can get the police to be called is not in the realm of agential capacities; the power lies elsewhere. Her assessment of the risk that the man runs of being taken in by the police, and the consequent beating he will receive, should be situated in the context of her relation to the police. Had she been a black woman and/or 'of a lower class' herself, and I emphatically point here to Apis's experience, it is unlikely that her gendered position as a victim of sexual harassment would evoke a similar police response. This provides her with the power to not call the police. The mobilisation of her inaction – i.e. to discontinue her reaction to him – that keeps him off the hook is gendered, classed and raced. Her racial position and her whiteness give her leverage in terms of how white women are treated by the police. In other words, she can rely on and, consequently, mobilise the power that is 'granted' to her on the basis of her structurally advantageous position as a middle class white woman.

7.51 Still angry externally, Sandra tells me, she put her foot down to show her emotive intentions; however, arguably her cognitive-moral and ideological-ethical motivation is, by that time, void of anger. To the contrary, according to Sandra, her walking away – as an agential manifestation grounded in ideological and compassionate considerations – is intended as a statement through her attitude, "showing" that "it isn't with any woman that you can turn up and go talk bullshit and it will be all right" [S:3.143]. The anger that she demonstrates, then, is now firmly an agentic tool, rather than an agential element, of influence and strategy. Sandra initially became angry precisely because the guy was not accountable. In contrast, now, in her narrative, she is accountable by not disproportionatively causing harm – i.e. by taking
responsibility and walking away so that he will not be 'receiving a beating in prison'. Agentically, she mobilises structural power and inequality – and gendered class and race privilege particularly. Agentically, on the other hand, she mobilises power on the same intersectional grounds, by assessing the reach of her hypothetical actions and inactions. While her power would intersectionally be operating if she had got him arrested, similarly not getting him arrested, by walking away and therewith de-escalating the event, she relies on the same intersectional mobilisation of power – she just strategically employs it differently.

**Rebalancing power**

7.52 The reason that Sandra walks away, at least according to herself, is because of the 'compassion' she feels for the guy; after all, she wants to avoid him receiving a beating in prison, being a guy of a "lower class" [S:3.139]. While this might have been the motivation that she self-attributes to her agential process – generating her ultimate disengagement with the event, her turning around and then walking away – at the same time, it contrasts the rest of the agency mobilised throughout the event. A bird's-eye view complements this reading.

7.53 Initially, feelings of insecurity and fear emerge, feelings that she refuses to engage with. Then she rejects the shaming – sexualisation and objectification – that the man's approach entails. Entering the park, Sandra is a fierce, powerful woman. When the guy verbalises his manual rape threat, not only is she under attack, but also her powerfulness seems to be under attack. The event, then, starts with a power imbalance; from powerful she risks becoming powerless.

7.54 Once she has turned around and sees him, any lingering threat, fear or risk of an attack is gone; he is a short, old and unkempt man who turns around to walk away from her. When I consider the event from a distance, perhaps briefly losing sight of the content of the man's approach, I listen to the recording and hear how she repeats his vocalisations of (perhaps righteous) fear – "[n]o, no … uuuwuwuwuw… uwuw." All I can imagine is the man shrinking from her
reaction. From the moment Sandra turns around (i.e. turning point one), she mobilises a gendered, a feminist and a sexist discourse – seemingly to achieve his shaming, sexualisation, humiliation – by expressing her contempt: he is crazy, he should be ashamed of himself, he does not respect women, perhaps he does not have a mother, he is a pervert and, last, he is not man and macho enough. Where initially class was mostly an assessment of the external environment, it is particular ideas around class, gender and perhaps race – presented in the conversation to understand him and prepare for the aforementioned 'compassion' – that are behind this discourse. It is not this understanding that she expresses, however; rather she expresses anger mobilised in order to diminish him. When he does not respond to her standards – i.e. stopping so that he can be accountable by doing what Sandra expects or tells him to do – she increases the quantity and quality of her verbal and physical chasing; she screams so loud that the security guards approach. And she does so in order for her to feel "very good."

7.55 While it is, to some extent at least, anger that is employed to grab him, it is not anger that she feels when she ultimately grabs him; rather, as discussed at length, it is a strategic tool employed agentically to teach him a lesson since no one else does. Once the situation is where it was to start with before the imbalance – she is powerful and he is a man 'up to nothing' in the park – she decides that it is enough, and that she does not want him, in my words, to be disproportionately impacted by the police's anticipated beating in prison. Only then, intersectionally mobilising the aforementioned gendered and classed 'understanding of his situation', does she disengage and walk away; although she is not angry – to the contrary, she feels pleasure as she achieved what she wanted – nonetheless she walks away 'with a firm step', to consolidate her power and, perhaps, to still teach him (or them) a lesson.

7.56 Considering the event as a whole through an intersectional lens, it becomes clear, to recap, that agency, emotions, social categories and power are mobilised strategically. With the man increasingly losing force, Sandra works towards regaining her position of strength, at risk at the start of the event; once she has shown that she cannot be intimidated and does not accept someone 'talking bullshit' to her, and the guy-in-the-park has paid sufficiently for
his attack, she feels that she has achieved her goal and can walk away. What a nano-lens cannot offer, a bird's-eye view brings into the picture: in the end, this event revolves around the mobilisation of agency – and agential elements, social categories and power therein – orientated at rebalancing power.

Final considerations

7.57 Of the three cases discussed, the case study of Sandra is the most complex and rich. Sandra crosses the park, when a man approaches her making leching sounds and verbalising his manual rape threat to her. I divided her response into three observable turning points that change the course of the event: first, she turns around and starts to physically and verbally chase him; second, when he does not respond, while still screaming at him she also grabs him; third, having two options ahead of her – either continuing to hold him until the police comes and he will be imprisoned and receive a beating, or not continuing – she decides to walk away and, doing so, ends the event.

7.58 With the aim to contribute to the understanding of this 'principle' of intersectional agency, the case of Sandra does precisely that. It builds on the insightful contributions emerging from the previous two cases. While I will shortly return to these contributions and the analysis thereof in the following chapter, I want to highlight some specific contributions of the current case to the conceptualisation of intersectional agency. Sandra herself identifies the origin of her response in the 'mini-second', alluding to a generative 'split second' of agency. However, this is inconsistent with the analysis of our conversations. Perhaps the most obvious contribution, which formed the structure of this chapter, is that agency in this case cannot always be distinctly identified; it was easier to divide agency in terms of observable turning points in the event (from which agency is traced back). Therein, then, agency changes character; the mobilisation of agency leading to the first turning point consists of, at least, three 'agential instances', some of which operate in parallel ways; the agency generating the second turning point presents itself as a 'stream of agential mobilisation' and is both ongoing and escalating; the last turning point is succinct but complex. In all these turning points, agency can be orientated
outwardly and inwardly and, therein, can be incoherent; most importantly here is that what is observed in terms of what is agentially mobilised (as tools of agency external to the individual) can be in opposition to what is agentially mobilised (as components of agency internal to the individual) in terms of social categories, power and agential elements – which refutes the 'agency is observable' hypothesis. An interesting observation is that Sandra's case clearly shows how agency can operate across social categories – I also refer to this as the 'cross-categorical' character of intersectional agency. Relatedly, this case also suggests that intersectional agency can consist of, if you will, cross-component interplay – i.e. pointing to the interrelatedness of, for instance, class and contempt and compassion, or of anger and gender. Last, and this observation also emerges in the other two cases, agency does not only consists of the 'here and now'; but also the 'there' and the 'then' (past and future) play and role. It is particularly the current case that required me to consider agency as even more complex – i.e. as multilayered – than I initially hypothesised with the anti-conflationary approach. I will now turn to this complexity in Chapter 8, where I will first consolidate the anti-conflationary approach and then discuss intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism.
PART III

THEORISING INTERSECTIONAL AGENCY
Chapter 8. Intersectional Agency

Research summary

8.1 This thesis explores intersectional agency at the junction of social categories and power and, as such, various social categorical differences and positions in power relations. This exploration starts with the theoretical recognition that intersectional agency exists as a phenomenon (discussed earlier in Huijg, 2012). This recognition is relevant as there is no existing theoretical framework of intersectional agency in either intersectionality studies or agency studies. While both offer insightful contributions (see Chapters 2-4), neither of them alone suffices to make sense of intersectional agency. In other words, there is sparse knowledge of what form(s) intersectional agency can take empirically, how the intricacies of intersectional agency function, and, as such, how intersectional agency can be thought of. In response to this, two research questions are central to the thesis. The first question is: How do racially privileged feminist activists intersectionally mobilise agency? To this end, I explored three (empirical) case studies, which, as discussed in Chapter 1, are based on three events resulting from 'phenomenological conversations' that I had with three racially privileged feminist activists in São Paulo (Brazil) – i.e. Eduarda (Chapter 5), Luciane (Chapter 6) and Sandra (Chapter 7). While this empirical question has been discussed at length, the objective of the thesis is not to come to a concluding (let alone a conclusive) response. Rather, this discussion was intended to enable the exploration of the second question: How can 'intersectional agency' be conceptualised? In this concluding chapter, I respond to the second research question and offer a conceptualisation of intersectional agency. The first part of this conceptualisation concerns the consolidation of the anti-conflationary approach to agency provided in Chapter 4. The second part of the chapter argues that intersectional agency functions as a polylithic mechanism. Before I turn to this conceptual endeavour, I will now provide a synthesis of the case studies.
Case studies

8.2 The first case study, in Chapter 5, is an event told to me by Eduarda. Eduarda is part of an action group, which belongs to a larger lesbian feminist group. With this action group, consisting of four women, she goes to central São Paulo in the middle of the night to spray slogans in protest at a TV personality's sexist comments. While Eduarda talks to me, without the others knowing, she is not a protagonist in the event and much of what she tells me is not even personally observed. Three of the activists (Carola, Manu and Eduarda) are white, middle class, and relatively older and quite experienced with direct actions. Carola is the informal leader of the group. The fourth activist, on the other hand, is Apis; she is a black, masculine (and small) woman, from a working class background. Additionally, Apis is also the youngest member of the group and very inexperienced in terms of activism. Having split up, Apis and Carola, who are the protagonists of the event, form one team. The division of labour means that Apis is spraying the slogans, while Carola is on the lookout. Carola sees the police approaching and leaves. While Carola is on her way, Apis – who did not hear Carola's warning – is caught spraying by the police and ends up facing the wall with a gun to her head. Up the road, Carola turns around, returns and negotiates with the police 'as equals' and, in doing so, 'saves' Apis. Chapter 6 is a very different event. Therein, Luciane, a racially privileged and young student, sits on the bus early in the morning on her way to university and tries to prepare for an exam she will have upon arrival. She identifies the woman sitting next to her as a nordestina woman (i.e. from Brazil's Northeast), which is a racialised regional identification. She is irritated by her neighbour talking loudly on her phone, and finds it difficult to concentrate on her studies. In response to this, she experiences "momentary intolerance" [L:5.137], consisting of a racist thought – accompanied by moral and emotive feelings – about her neighbour. However, Luciane does not verbalise any of this to her neighbour. In Chapter 7, Sandra, a middle class, racially privileged and very experienced activist, crosses a park in central São Paulo on her way to an activist meeting. She is approached from behind by a guy who makes leching sounds and verbalises a manual rape threat. From the moment this happens, Sandra responds in a series of actions and inactions. Therein, I identify three observable turning points that change the course of the event: in the first turning
point Sandra turns around; in the second turning point she goes after him verbally and physically and ultimately grabs him; and in the last turning point Sandra decides to end the event by, first, disengaging and, second, walking away.

8.3 While I sought to provide an intersectional analysis of these cases, as raised, the objective of this thesis has not been to acquire specific – let alone generalisable – knowledge about, for instance, the way that gender and race or, specifically, gender disadvantage and race privilege interact (in paulistano feminist activism). This would also have been important research, and perhaps was an implicit research interest at the start of this project. The current study, however, focusses on the way that agency functions in terms of the interplay of social categories and power. Hence, I selected cases that would enable an intersectional exploration of the various conceptual characteristics of agency – if you will, to theoretically consider the empirical shape(s) or perhaps configuration that agency can take.

8.4 Each of the empirical chapters contributes to the understanding of intersectional agency. I return to this in detail shortly, but will already highlight some specific contributions that an analysis through an up-and-close nano-lens brings. The case of Eduarda in Chapter 5, for instance, points to the limitations that emerge when analysing agency on the basis of (vicarious) observation: to the role of agency in interpersonal interactions; to the interplay of various social categories; to the role of coercion in agency; to the attribution of agency onto the 'unfree other'; and to the role of hegemony and denial of power and social categorical (racial) difference therein. With the case of Luciane, very differently, Chapter 6 contributes foremost a very clear and consolidating example of agentic inaction to the understanding of agency; furthermore, it points to the role of 'emerging' non-agential feelings into consciousness; to the idea of engagement as an initial or initiating point in the mobilisation of agency; to the role of gender, class and race based assessments of the other in one's mobilisation of agency; and to agency as a changing as well as a reflexive process. I ended the last chapter (Chapter 7) with contributions from Sandra's case, such as the diversity in the way that agency can operate (e.g. from agential instances to a stream of agential mobilisation), which establishes the
refutation of the 'agency (is action) is observable' hypothesis (see Chapter 4); the simultaneous interplay of different agential elements, social categories and power; and the role of, for instance, the past and the future in the mobilisation of intersectional agency.

8.5 In turn, an analysis based on a bird's-eye view highlights that the agentic quality of the 'absence of action' – e.g. through the withholding of care and protection (Chapter 5) – can be assessed by identifying a recurrent pattern of inaction grounded in the homogenising idea of racially neutral sameness of gender and women's oppression, gendered hegemony and an ideology of 'monist feminism' (cf. hooks, 1997, pp.167-169; King, 1988; see par.2.10). Situating agency in the account as a whole can bring to the fore both the (re)production of racial intolerance and reflexive agency\textsuperscript{116} as an individual social change project, where the agent or the self is both subject and object of her agential and agentic mobilisation (Chapter 6). Last, looking at the development of the mobilisation of intersectional agency in the event as a whole, in turn, can point to a different quality of this mobilisation – e.g. agency aimed at the rebalancing of power (Chapter 7) – which cannot be identified by looking at particular mobilisations of agency in isolation. A more in-depth analysis of what a bird's-eye view in the analysis of agency can bring to, first, a nano-lens and, second, to the conceptualisation of agency has to remain, unfortunately, for further research.

**Social categories and power**

8.6 In Chapter 2, I explored the genealogy of intersectional thinking and organising 'avant la lettre', particularly developed by black feminists and feminists of colour. While Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in 1989, the 'field of intersectionality studies' (Cho et al., 2013) has only more recently expanded exponentially, which evoked the exploration of the field's theoretical boundaries. Seeking to contribute to this exploration, the current study responds to calls to look at agency through an intersectional lens (e.g. Nash, 2008). The current study of agency is, as such, grounded in principles as set

\textsuperscript{116} See par.6.44n99 for a comment on my use vis-à-vis Colapietro's use of 'reflexive agency' (par. 4.37).
out in intersectionality studies (e.g. Cho et al., 2013, p.785; Collins, 2015, p.4; Collins & Bilge, 2016, p.194; see par.3.1). Grounded in prominent intersectionality scholars’ identification, Chapter 3 discusses three ‘orientating features’ – i.e. intersectionality as an epistemological, dialogical and social justice project – as foundational principles of intersectionality. The centrality of power to intersectionality, I suggest, is actually a principle of social categories, rather than of intersectionality itself. This suggestion forms the foundation for the distinction between social categorical differences from non-social categorical differences (grounded in e.g. Anthias, 2013b, pp.4,15n2).

Particularly relevant for the development of the argument in this chapter is that social categories and social categorical differences, which operate as building blocks of intersectionality, are multidimensional, dynamic, relational and contextual. Arguably, then, intersectionality is a theory of the interrelatedness of social categorical differences and positions in power relations. With this in mind, particularly relevant for this project is the employment of an intersectional lens to reveal and understand the differentiated and uneven ways that power and its social reproduction work (Cho et al., 2013, p.806; Chun et al., 2013, p.922) – hereby looking at both sides of inequality, oppression and power. In the exploration of intersectional agency, thus, this study puts a particular emphasis on the way that privilege and hegemony are employed intersectionally by racially privileged women.

8.7 Initially, I wanted to provide a separate analysis in this chapter of the role that social categories and power – and specifically social categorical differences and positions in the realm of power – play in intersectional agency. This, however, is a superfluous issue; the cases were selected because of the role of social categories and power therein, hence they are everywhere in the accounts of Sandra, Luciane and Eduarda. Race privilege, for instance, plays a central role in Eduarda’s and Luciane’s cases, but less so in Sandra’s case. Gender plays a prominent role in Eduarda’s and Sandra’s cases, but not in Luciane’s case. In turn, class plays a role in all the cases, but is never presented as central by the participants. Similarly, power operates in various ways in the cases; Luciane’s case seems to be about (racial) oppression and ‘surrendering to hierarchy’. However, this should be made sense of against a background of, first, growing up while hearing and experiencing prejudice in the realm of race,
sexuality and gender, and presumably class and, second, 'intersectional empathy' through projections across social inequalities and positions in the realm of power. Sandra, quite differently, experiences verbal (sexual and gendered) assault, but then 'returns the favour' across social categorical relations and, particularly in the realm of class, through which she ends up, cross-categorically (i.e. across social categories), mobilising hegemony and shaming her verbal assaulter. In Eduarda's case, privilege is a homogenising undercurrent that arguably leads to negligence, but is also agentically employed by Carola as one of her negotiation tools.

8.8 A discussion of social categories and power perhaps does not, in itself, require an analysis of agency for it to be meaningful. While it is clear that agency is present in the examples just discussed, this discussion does not clarify, however, how agency is intersectionally mobilised. Not knowing agency in this process implies, first, that not all inactions can be identified and, second, that the internal processes behind what happens 'in the external' remains hidden. What makes an intersectional analysis of agency urgent is not only the identification of social categories and/or power, and the question raised here is not 'where' social categories and power 'are'. Rather, an analysis of intersectional agency seeks to understand, first, the complexity of the interrelatedness of social categories and power, but particularly, second, the complexity of their interplay of social categories, power, and of other components – perhaps called 'agential building blocks' – in the intersectional mobilisation of agency. To conceptualise the aforementioned complexity, which I will later discuss as a polylithic mechanism, towards which this chapter works, I now turn to a discussion of the anti-conflationary approach to intersectional agency.

An anti-conflationary approach to intersectional agency

8.9 A study of agency tends to start with a study of action, and many approaches to agency conceptually include agency into their understanding of action; they understand agency to be a part of action. This thesis challenges that conflationary approach and has offered an anti-conflationary understanding
of agency and action, as well as, for instance, causality and capacity. An initial theoretical exploration thereof was offered, preliminarily, if you will, in Chapter 4. I will now consolidate, as well as complement, this approach by grounding it in observations resulting from the empirical analysis.

**Agency, actions and inactions**

**8.10** For a working definition of action, I referred to Alexander’s (1992, p.8) narrow conceptualisation of action as "the movement of a person through time and space." This was useful; for instance, it enabled a discussion of Carola’s talking to the police and Sandra’s turning as actions. In Chapter 4 I raised the tension in theories of agency to understand action as social or not. Campbell (1996, p.6) discusses whether or not social actions are a *separate kind of action*. Some actions are obviously social, such as the police gun directed at Apis’s head; not only is it an interpersonal engagement, and an engagement with (or by) the state, it is also an action quite clearly marked by social categories (e.g. race, class and gender), although in complex ways, and power. However, other actions are more ambiguously social, such as Sandra’s turning around. Observationally, her turning around might simply be a ‘movement through time and space’; the turning around might as well be understood as non-social – after all, does her body not simply move from position A into position B? With the changing orientation of her physical body, however, she changes her social orientation in and towards the world – i.e. toward confronting the man who verbally harasses her; not just so she would face him in practical terms, but also, in terms of function, so he would need to face *her*. I disagree with the argument that social actions are *social actions* because they 'embody social meaning' or 'occur in a social context or situation', as Campbell (1996, pp.140-141) describes the discussion. ‘Social’ can best be understood as an adjective qualifier of action, rather than as a separate empirical phenomenon, to enable, pragmatically, the analysis of all the other components that action can be qualified with. In turn, this is necessary for an anti-conflationary approach that argues that agency and action are distinct phenomena.

**8.11** The anti-conflationary approach further states that agency and action can only be made sense of through the recognition of its alternative. Relying on the
working definition of agency as 'the capacity to act', taking into consideration the role of choice as a condition for agency, it is implied that the alternative option of the capacity to act must logically be the capacity to not act. This is a theoretical argument that I offered before (Huijg, 2012), and which I raised as a point particularly relevant in the study of hegemony (e.g. whiteness and race privilege), but one that required empirical unpacking. This point is clearly demonstrated by Luciane’s non-verbalisation of her racist thought; she mobilises agency, but she does so in such a way that it generates the absence of action. This absence is not a mere 'nothingness', such as Apis’s not walking away when she was spraying slogans, unaware of the police approaching and of the option to walk away (I return to this shortly). At the same time, there are similarities in Apis’s not walking away and in Luciane’s non-verbalisation. Nothing changed in the sequence of their actions: Apis was part of the action group before the spraying and was part of the action group after the spraying; Luciane did not talk before and continued to not talk during and after the woman talked loudly. However, what changed in both cases, then, was that Apis’s not walking away (while spraying) was also void of agency due to a lack of options and awareness, whereas Luciane’s non-verbalisation was agentially mobilised in response to the racist thought she had precisely grounded in options and awareness. In other words, Luciane’s non-talking was generated as an alternative to the perhaps causally more logical option of verbalising her thought. While there was no "movement of a person through time and space" (cf. Alexander, 1992, p.8), such as in Apis’s not walking away, Luciane’s lack of movement was generated by agency. I called this agentic inaction (see par.4.27-29). It is perhaps noteworthy, and this is an observation that requires more research, that agentic inaction in the case of hegemonic relations cannot necessarily be identified by looking at a single case. For instance, in Eduarda’s case, only a bird's-eye view can identify the recurrence of 'voids' as the withholding of care, concern and protection and, as such, as agentic inactions – even when the inner workings of agency cannot be identified (e.g. in Chapter 5). Consequently, for the purpose of clarity, throughout this thesis I adjusted the aforementioned working definition of agency to ‘the capacity to act or to not act’.

8.12 The analysis in this thesis hopefully confirms the obvious now; agency cannot be observed. Even if Luciane was observably expressing herself
physically – as she did during our conversations – and observation of Luciane’s hypothetical non-verbal communication would have pointed to the mobilisation of agency and would have suggested that this mobilisation was racially marked, the complex intricacies of her mobilisation of agency are simply unobservable from her ‘verbal void’. Not only are agency and action, and agency and inaction, distinct phenomena, agency is indeed an internal capacity (to act or not act).

8.13 While the argument that agency as an internal capacity stands, the suggestion that action and inaction consequently are necessarily external and observable is not, however, consistent with the case studies. This is consistent, however, with the idea of internal dialogue, self-talk, etc. (e.g. see Archer, 2003; Chalari, 2009; Wiley, 2010; see par.4.35). For instance, the case of Luciane consists of a complex process of ethical, emotive and cognitive actions internal to her in response to the rejection of the racist thought – none of which are externalised. Not only does agency seem to generate internal actions, Luciane’s case particularly suggests that the mobilisation of agency can also generate internal inactions. Prior to her rejection of the racist thought, Luciane responds to the thought through, first, "giv[ing] leeway to, like, all these prejudices" [L:5.185] and by doing so, second, by "develop[ing] the thought" [L:6.27]. Additionally, these internal in/actions are not only cognitively or conversationally marked; they also revolve around social categories (e.g. race), power (e.g. superiority), moral feelings, and intersectionally mobilised emotive imaginations and projections. This thesis has not offered an alternative definition for internal actions and inactions; however, Alexander’s definition for action does not suffice anymore. Possibly, future research can explore the idea of agentic action and inaction as one's 'external or internal doing or not doing generated by agency'.

8.14 The conceptual boundaries of action as well as agency have also otherwise been challenged. Apis’s ‘not walking away’ (while spraying) that I referred to earlier is not caused by agency. After all, the conditions for agency are not met; there is no consciousness of change in her environment, hence there is no awareness of and reflexivity about her environment and about the options available (i.e. continuing spraying or stopping and walking away). This void of action is not caused by Apis, hence this is not (agentic) inaction, but, as I raised, a ‘nothingness’ or void of agency – I discussed this before as ‘non-
agentic non-action' (Huijg, 2012, p.14). Also Apis's not turning around to face the police officer's gun cannot be conceptualised in terms of agency, but for different reasons. Alluding here to the freedom-determinism debate, the coercive character of the pointed gun – after all, through their 'power-over' (Townsend, 1999, p.23), the police could make Apis do something she would not normally do (cf. Haugaard, 2002, p.6), including killing her – qualifies Apis's 'not turning around' as 'nothingness that voids agency'. However, what this simultaneously introduces, to anticipate a later discussion, is that the same situation could possibly be made sense of in parallel terms. Here, the specific context of the gun might have voided agency in that specific situation or moment, but in that situation only; after all, while not walking away is not an option, Apis does mobilise agency in a different way, namely through verbal resistance (see Chapter 5) – and presumably there are also other (agential) internal processes that the observer is not cognizant of. Perhaps this can be made sense of in terms of there being an 'item A' as well as an 'item B' that are each assessed in terms of their particular conditions for agency, but can exist alongside each other (par.4.17). In other words, Apis's case suggests that agency and non-agency can exist simultaneously – a finding that requires further research.

8.15 The conceptual boundaries of agency are not restricted to the generative properties of agency and, as such, the identification of an absence of action as agentic or non-agentic. Also agency itself has its conceptual limitations. This is demonstrated in all the case studies. In both Luciane's and Sandra's cases, there is an emergence of, respectively, a racist thought and a feeling of fear – neither of which can be interpreted as constitutive of agency. Luciane referred to this as an "impulse" [L:5.793]. The question of agency emerges through the different ways that they respond to this emergence. The thought 'enters' the realm of agency once Luciane engages with the thought – by 'giving leeway' to and then thinking the thought. However, in contrast, arguably the feeling does not actually enter the realm of agency; Sandra rejects the feeling, even though the rejection itself is agential. What is important to emphasise here, at the risk of stating the obvious, is that the 'non-agential' quality of the thought and the feeling does not preclude the thought and the feeling from being void of any other cognitive, moral and emotive quality; respectively, Luciane's thought is
racist, and marked by the devaluation of her neighbour and the "[pleasure] to be in a commanding situation" [L:5.185]. In turn, Sandra's feeling is marked by gendered fear and a momentary lack of power – very different, to emphasise, from her response to the feeling. Neither experiences the thought itself and the feeling itself within their control or, in terms of this thesis, in the realm of agency; to reiterate, it is the cognitive, emotive and moral engagement or response, rather, which initiates the process of agency.

8.16 Another point on the boundary of agency, where perhaps the conditions for agency – e.g. consciousness and orientatedness – are not met, refers to habituality in agency. This emerged in Sandra's response to the man's approach – to his talking and leching; while it seems, at first, that she ideologically and ethically considers his shaming and intimidation, there is also a suggestion that her response of a "standard thought" actually is habitual rather than conscious – perhaps not dissimilar from Damasio's (2012, p.164; see also par.4.33) "nonconscious autopilot." Her expulsion of his shaming is neither an impulse, such as described by Luciane, nor a spontaneous thought or feeling – it is also not completely outside of the realm of agency. However, neither does Sandra engage in a particularly deliberate or conscious cognitive or emotive process. Rather, her response seems compiled or accumulated from repetitive approaches and her repetitive responses – perhaps a trained activist practice that follows a cognitive pattern or even practice and, as such, takes place as an 'autopilot' on the borders of agency.

8.17 In this thesis I have taken 'the individual' outside the individual-social debate and, rather, approach her as the 'smallest human unit' of sociological research (cf. Plummer, 2016, p.23; see par.1.6). However, this implies a challenge to the idea that the social is external. Instead, I have distinguished the 'internal' and the 'external environment' (see earlier in this chapter and Chapter 4) of the individual. The consequence of this line of thought is that both the external and the internal environment of the individual, then, can be social. While this is, to me, an obvious statement, it is an important one to make because it also challenges the agency-structure distinction (see par.4.4), which, in turn, enables an analysis of the internal and, as such, agency as social and consequently as marked by structure. This is consolidated in this thesis.
Eduarda orientates her actions on the ground of continuous reflection on other people’s and her own position of structural disadvantage in the realm of gender, sexuality, class, race, etc.; while she also considers her own role in light of structural advantage, she does not necessarily mobilise agency accordingly and, hence, does not act on it. Luciane’s thought, the emotive and moral feelings it consists of, and her response thereto are, first, marked by years of being socialised amidst racist remarks in family conversations and internalised ideas around, for instance, class inequality (perhaps resonating with, for instance, ideas of false consciousness, and the internalisation of sexism, Western culture and colonisation, see Anzaldúa, 1990a, pp.142-148; Engels, 1968 [1893]; Lieberman & Bond, 1976, p.372; see par.4.45). Second, they are developed through (successful and unsuccessful) formal and informal interpersonal and collective learning across social categories and positions in power. The fear that emerges in Sandra and its rejection consist of accumulative (responses to) real and anticipated interpersonal (abusive) experiences marked by gender and sexuality; her decision to not be intimidated and, thus, to turn around to face the man approaching her is an almost habitual manifestation of feminist and other activist socialisation; her decision to walk away (in the third turning point) is marked by racialised and gendered class based ‘compassion’ as well as more complex moral and emotive feelings and thought processes related to power and specifically hegemony. Hopefully, as I stated earlier (par.4.30), the argument that agency is thoroughly ‘social’ is now stating the obvious.

Agential elements

8.18 One of the most important observations emerging from the empirical analysis is that agency is not a uniform phenomenon; rather, it consists of various elements – which I called cognitive, moral and emotive elements\(^{117}\). Not only are there different elements, but often more than one agential element is – but does not have to be – at play in the mobilisation of agency. In other words, agential elements point to agency as more complex than just a capacity, or even just the aforementioned ‘self-talk’. This is relevant. In Chapter 4 I raised

\(^{117}\) Arguably, physical elements also play a role, and perhaps there are still other agential elements that did not emerge in this thesis.
that agency tends to be conceptualised in terms of rationality, and sometimes morality\(^{118}\) (see par.4.30). Recognising the role of the cognitive and moral in the mobilisation of agency, the presence of the emotive and emotions, however, was so prominent, that I needed to introduce theories of emotions (in Chapters 6 and 7) – concerned with the relation between cognition, morality and emotions, the (agental and agentic) function of emotions, and the specific emotions of anger, shame, fear and disgust – to enable the analysis of agency. The objective was not to make sense of how specific emotions manifest themselves in agency; rather, I needed conceptual tools to make sense of, first, the interaction between emotive elements and cognitive and moral elements, and, specifically, of the particular role of the emotive in the mobilisation of agency.

8.19 The role of emotions and the emotive in the mobilisation of intersectional agency deserves its own study. At this stage it is relevant to reiterate the importance of including emotive elements as constitutive of agency. These elements do not, so it seems, operate separately. All the cases in this study consist of an interplay of all the elements – the cognitive, moral as well as the emotive. Considering the depth of Sandra's account, her case demonstrates this complexity most clearly. For instance, when she leaves 'the scene', she engages with all three elements to come to that decision; emotively, she mobilises her empathic skills, marked by class and gender, to place herself in the man's shoes and, for that, relies cognitively on her knowledge about structural inequality and police practices therein, and morally assesses this as ethically – and ideologically – undesirable. The simultaneity in the mobilisation of these elements, however, does not point to homogeneity and congruence. In anticipation of a discussion of the polylithic character of intersectional agency, emotively Sandra acts with anger, if not contempt and disgust, but the same decision to walk away is grounded in an internal assessment of having achieved a sense of pleasure or satisfaction and, arguably, a moral non-engagement with the incongruence of these emotive processes in relation to the aforementioned agential considerations. As such, to reiterate, I argue that all agential elements

\(^{118}\) ‘Moral agency’ is a common area of research, particularly in psychology, philosophy and cognitive sciences.
– i.e. the cognitive, moral, emotive, and arguably also the physical\textsuperscript{119} – are constitutive of the principle of the capacity to act (hence of agency), and therein can interrelate across agential elements, as well as, as discussed, across social categories and power. However, the question of whether all agential elements must be present in a particular agential process remains unanswered.

\textit{Causality}

8.20 The theorisation of the mobilisation of agency is grounded in the distinction between agency, action, inaction, and the identification of choice and agency as a ‘causer’ of action. In other words, causality is central to the idea of agency. In this thesis, then, I have used ‘causality’ to talk about the relation between agency and action, albeit in a non-determinist sense (see par.4.41). This made sense when I started to analyse Sandra’s event – the first case I looked at returning from fieldwork. Sandra talks about a "mini-second" [S:3.307] that she experienced as the source, as if it were a 'split second', of her decision to respond and turn around – the turning around being the action 'caused' by the mini-second. The idea of the 'mini-second' resonates with a narrow understanding of agency as monolithic, uniform, decontextual and atomic – an idea that I have already implicitly challenged. While I do not question Sandra’s (retrospective) perception of her experience, our experience of our internal processes, as discussed, is not necessarily accurate (cf. par.1.37). Both Sandra’s case and Luciane’s case urged me to reconsider the uniform interpretation of agency on the basis of an analysis of causality.

8.21 Causality suggests that there is a moment of choice in the past to which action can be traced back (cf. Huijg, 2012, p.13n8). Indeed, this linear logic has been the basis of the ‘tracing back logic’ employed in this thesis, which enabled me to employ a nano-lens to explore agency. However, causality, even when merely chronologically understood as ‘generating’, has been shown to be insufficient for identifying, describing and making sense of agency. There are three objections to this, which I address in more detail here because it will point to the foundation for thinking about intersectional agency as a polylithic

\textsuperscript{119} Perhaps internal physical capacities also play a role – think of the regulation of one’s breathing – even though this did not emerge in the thesis.
mechanism. I divide the objections into, first, those related to a nano-lens; second, those related to a bird's-eye view; and, third, those related to the idea of action A (contra-)causally traced back to moment M of agency.

8.22 First, then, agency does not need to consist of one – monolithic, singular, atomic – identifiable 'moment' to which the generated action can be traced back. Luciane's response to the racist thought, for instance, cannot be pinpointed clearly; the non-verbalisation of the thought cannot be traced back to one particular moment of engagement with the thought as the 'causing source of agency'. Furthermore, there are almost contradicting occurrences in terms of, among others, race, power, feelings, ideology and ethics when the non-verbalisation of the thought is traced back to the (non-agental) thought. In Sandra's case, the first turning point consists of three instances, rather than a moment, all of which are different of character; the second turning point cannot even be made sense of in terms of moments or instances – nor, for that matter, can her actions there distinctly be identified. This confirmed that observation – of, for instance, Sandra's turning around – would have provided insufficient information about the agency to which it can be traced back. After all, as briefly touched on, the way we perceive and experience ourselves and, as such, construct knowledge about ourselves – including the self-attribution of agency – is partial, perspectival and often incomplete, if not erroneous (see Sie, 2009, p.520, in par.4.34). Methodologically, this also confirms that merely a phenomenological approach to agency, without critical analysis by the researcher, would not suffice. These arguments, then, contest a monolithic, uniform, and momentary approach to intersectional agency.

8.23 The second reason why causality is an inadequate tool or logic to make sense of agency is, to stick to Luciane's case, that the tracing back of the non-verbalisation of the thought to the (non-agental) thought offers insufficient and incomplete information for comprehensively understanding the agency mobilised in response to the thought and leading to (or causing) the non-verbalisation. A bird's-eye view complements the nano-lens and contributes to a more comprehensive and complete understanding of agency. A bird's-eye view here points to the role of reflexive agency as both a descriptive and an explanatory factor. The shift in her mobilisation of agency, tracing back through
a nano-lens, can descriptively be understood as 'reflexive agency' – to recap, this refers to agency where the agent is both subject and object of the orientatedness of her mobilisation of agency (see also par.6.44-47) – but this only provides a narrow understanding of what happened. From a bird's-eye view, when the aforementioned shift is situated in Luciane's account as a whole\(^{120}\), the reflexive agency mobilised can be particularly identified in terms of social change – where the orientatedness is aimed, effectively or not, first, at her own racist thought and "momentary intolerance" and, second, at (ethical, ideological, practical, etc.) social transformation – and complexly and intersectionally so. This also suggests that her reflexive agency is mobilised cross-categorically, by which I refer to its development across social categories and power. A bird's-eye view, then, complements the analysis with a contextual and, as such, more comprehensive understanding of the process of agency that takes place.

8.24 Third, 'causality' suggests that action A is caused by a moment M (of agential capacity). I already challenged the idea that agency can be captured in terms of monolithic, singular, atomic moments. For instance, Sandra's first turning point consists of identifiable – albeit partially parallel – agential instances. In Eduarda's case, as touched on, agency can be clearly identified, but it refers neither to moments nor to instances; rather, the inactions can only be identified as agentic due to their recurrent pattern, their situatedness in a contextual framework of power dynamics marked by gender, race and class, and pre-existing knowledge about the specifics of activist leadership.

8.25 Considering these three objections, I suggest that it is useful to think about agency – and I already employed it this way – as a process (perhaps aligned to Wheeler's 2000, p.29, understanding of the individual or self). Agency as a process can consist of clearly identifiable instances or, in other situations, can be made sense of rather as a 'stream of agential mobilisation' (cf. par.7.48).

\(^{120}\) Reflexive agency is not, to emphasise, specific to Luciane. Perhaps because the participants are feminists, among other reasons, this is a recurrent theme.
In Chapter 4, I discussed orientatedness as a condition for agency – I return to this briefly here in anticipation of a discussion in the next section of, first, contextuality and multilayeredness and, second, of agential and agentic mobilisation. Agency and agential elements, I mentioned, can be orientated outwardly as well as inwardly. Part of this argument relates to the aforementioned point of causality; agency orientates outwardly in its generation of external and observable actions and inactions, but it is also orientated inwardly generating internal and unobservable actions and inactions. This understanding of orientatedness, however, does not sufficiently convey its complexity. In the first turning point, Sandra’s ‘decision’ to not be intimidated, which results in the action of her turning around to face the ‘intimidating man’, for instance, is interpersonally orientated outwardly through agentic action towards the man who has been approaching her and whom she is about to face – this is a very literal interpretation of orientatedness. However, her agency is also mobilised as ideological orientatedness towards this man’s, as well as all other men’s, shaming, objectification and sexualisation. At the same time, it is orientated inwardly towards the memory of all the times that she faced men and towards the accumulated experiences of being at risk of being intimidated and sexually violated. At its basis, emotively the (perhaps habitual) decision to not be intimidated is also orientated inwardly towards the rejection of the feeling of fear that was about to emerge. Eduarda’s and the other white women’s orientatedness towards Apis is, again, a literal recurrence of inaction. However, it is also marked by non-accountability through, first, an inactive gendered engagement with their racial and class difference and, particularly in the case of Carola, second, perhaps also an inactive engagement with her position of activist seniority and informal leadership. In Luciane’s case it is particularly prominent through the role of ‘nojo’, which is orientated towards and circulates across social categorical differences, emotions and positions in power relations – through which her agency is reflexively orientated towards, if you will, others as well as the "self-as-object" (cf. Damasio, 2012; see par.4.42). In the next sections I will explore the orientatedness of agency further; for now it is important to emphasise the possible simultaneity of these inwardly and outwardly directed ‘orientatednesses’.
I started my understanding of agency with its conceptualisation as 'the capacity to act' and adjusted this later to 'the capacity to act or to not act'. A capacity refers to an "ability or power to do or understand something," whereas an ability refers to "the possession of the means or skill to do something" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a; 2016b; see par.4.14). I then hinted that the gap between a capacity (a skill or means) to do something is not the same as the doing of that something. The latter refers to action; the former refers to agency. The analysis in this thesis requires, then, a reconsideration of the idea of agency (merely) as a capacity to act. Even only on practical terms, it was simply impossible to hold up this initial working definition; how could I talk about agency and action without another verb to address their, if you will, 'causal' or generative relation? For this reason, I started to suggest that the capacity to act needs to be mobilised for this capacity to 'materialise' as acting – or not acting. To demonstrate this, I will briefly return to an example already touched on. Being confronted with Luciane's racist thought, when this question became particularly urgent, I first made sense of it as constitutive of agency. This analysis, however, was questionable. Not only did Luciane herself identify this thought as an 'impulse', as I discussed in Chapter 6, this (morally) cognitive and emotive "momentary intolerance" actually emerges from outside of the realm of agency. It enters her realm of agency because she engages with the thought and its constitutive social categories and power. On the other hand, the guy-in-the-park's shaming reaches Sandra and, as such, informs her agential response to his shaming (cf. Tangney et al., 1996 in Keltner & Haidt, 1999, pp.509-510; see par.7.22), but, resisting its situational internalisation, it is as if she refuses its entrance into her capacity to act. Agency, then, cannot be merely a capacity; it needs to be mobilised for it to generate action or inaction. The difference between Luciane’s and Sandra’s cases, then, is that Luciane mobilises agency to engage with the thought, through which the thought becomes a constitutive component of her (mobilisation of) agency; however, Sandra mobilises agency in response to his shaming, but refuses to engage with his shaming. In short, by respectively engaging and not engaging, Luciane and Sandra mobilise their capacity to act differently.
There is another reason why it is important to centre mobilisation in the conceptualisation of agency. If agency would merely be the 'capacity to act or not act', which causally suggests capacity as a 'moment', there is little room for complexity. Earlier in this section I already suggested that it might be more useful to consider agency as a process, rather than a moment or only as instances. Near the end of the analysis of the empirical data, I started to think about the way that agency was operating in the cases as a mechanism. Others in intersectionality studies (e.g. Chun et al., 2013, p.922; see par.3.4; Nash, 2008, p.11; see par.4.3) and agency studies (e.g. Archer in Sharrock & Tsilipakos, 2013, p.211n4; see par.4.36) also refer to (parts of) agency or intersectionality as a 'mechanism'. The term is contestable; for instance, Hedström and Swedberg (1998) seem to refer to a mechanism as a type of explanation of causality. I think of this mechanism as an engine where all the different components are analytically distinct but concretely operate together for the mechanism of that engine to function so that the engine functions (for a discussion on the relation between the analytical and concrete, see par.3.22 where I refer to Anthias, 2013b, p.7; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.4). In other words, I employ 'mechanism' quite lightly here – merely referring to a concept that points to the interplay of various components of agency. After all, the cases were explored to describe, rather than to explain\textsuperscript{121}, how different components were interrelating in intersectional agency. Mechanism refers herein to the particular forms interrelatedness can take, to the interplay, the 'functioning together', or perhaps the configuration of these components. I now turn to a discussion of the polylithic character of the mechanism of intersectional agency, in which I propose intersectional agency as polylithically multidimensional, pluriform, contextual and multilayered, in which its components can be mobilised agentially as well as agentically.

While I relied on the cases of Eduarda, Luciane and Sandra up until now, not having access to the protagonists' first-person account in Eduarda's case significantly limited the possibility to explore complexity in terms of intersectional agency. The next section, then, is mostly grounded in the cases of Luciane and Sandra.

\textsuperscript{121} Having said that, describing agency might, to some extent, 'explain' actions and inactions.
Intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism

Multidimensionality

8.30 In Chapter 3, I challenged the reductionist reading of foundational intersectionality scholar's work specifically and, more generally, of intersectional theory, wherein social categories are interpreted in terms of one dimension only – i.e. as either identity (or representation), or as system of inequality and oppression (or social structure). I referred to these dimensions of social life as 'social dimensions'. Examples of social dimensions – other than, for instance, identity and social inequality – can be social relations, interaction, action, social institutions, the group, the symbolic, norms, values, ethics, and ideology. This list is not exhaustive, and the qualifier 'social' is loosely offered here – other scholars also refer to, for example, economic, political and cultural dimensions (Brah & Phoenix, 2004, p.76). An understanding of intersectionality as a theory of the interrelatedness of power and social categories and social categorical differences requires a multidimensional understanding of social categories and, as such, of intersectionality (see par.3.24). There are two observations to make here. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, multidimensionally, social categories can operate as or through a variety of social dimensions. To exemplify, Sandra mobilises gender inwardly by calling on her feminist norms and ideological framework that women, and she specifically, are not there to be intimidated, sexualised and objectified. Inwardly, she assesses the guy-in-the-park's actions and reactions and, particularly, his walking away in interactional, structural, systemic and symbolic terms. Again, inwardly, she assesses their relation to each other in terms of gender and class in the realm of power and, doing so, she understands him and his identity as a moral, ideological and concrete representative of a social group – i.e. as the situational category of 'homeless men who are likely addicted', as the general category of 'sexist men', and as 'sexist men from the periferia who grew up with

122 As a side note, it is interesting to consider that, conceptually, some social dimensions – such as social structure and identity – tend to be associated with intersectionality, while other dimensions are associated with agency or even with particular agential elements; for instance, action and interaction are associated with physical capacity, beliefs and ideology with cognitive capacity, morals with norms, and emotions can possibly be considered a social dimension in itself. However, empirically, as the analysis demonstrates, while interesting, this associative distinction is neither helpful nor accurate.
domestic violence and traditional gender relations'. Last, providing him with feminist teachings, she mobilises gender outwardly through an ideological and cognitive framework. Outwardly she also mobilises gender very differently – namely, in the realm of values, by devaluing him through emasculation and, in doing so, by operating in the moral and emotive as well as the structural and symbolic realm.

8.31 The empirical analysis points, second, to another important observation in line with intersectionality as a theory of the interrelated character of social categories. In the mobilisation of agency, social categories can, interrelatedly, operate through various social dimensions at the same time. This is demonstrated particularly by Luciane’s case, who, differently from Sandra, does not act and, as such, neither interacts. In the realm of ethics, she judges herself for having the racist thought; in the realm of ideology she explains why this is problematic; in the realm of internal action she remembers and reflects on the symbolic role of the thought around nordestina accents as a "moral leftover" (see par.6.6.37) from her familial upbringing – interpreting this leftover in both collective and structural terms. While being self-critical, at the same time Luciane elaborates on the ethical justification for her internal emotive reaction. This continues to be outwardly directed at her neighbour, as a representative (in the realm of race, class and regionalism) of nordestinas as a social group, but it is now being situated outside the realm of power through moral and social categorical neutralisation [cf. L:5.125-169]. At the same time, she seeks to abide by her internal ethical and ideological framework around social norms and power when not verbalising the thought.

8.32 Unsurprisingly, agency is not confined to one particular dimension only – in either of the two case studies (i.e. Sandra and Luciane). To the contrary, the cases make clear that not only are various social dimensions at play in the mobilisation of agency; often, first, they are at play simultaneously, sequentially, parallel and/or in their interplay and, second, they do so orientated outwardly and inwardly.
8.33 Addressing the role that agential elements, social dimensions, social categories and power play in the mobilisation of agency, I do not suggest that they are demarcated areas according to which – or in which – agency operates and, as such, that agency could work uniformly. In terms of the mobilisation of intersectional agency, according to this thesis, it is impossible if not inaccurate to make sense of intersectional agency uniformly. Also agency itself, as 'the capacity to act or not act', cannot be understood in uniform terms – think of the dual agential process in Sandra's third turning point (see par.7.47). As raised, the tracing back (from action or inaction) does not only point to (a) 'capacity'. Also otherwise, agency does not consist of one component only. This is also already indicated in the discussion just now on the simultaneity of the multidimensional quality of intersectional agency. Rather, then, intersectional agency is characterised by pluriformity. The importance of emphasising intersectional agency's pluriform character revolves around the recognition that single components of agency can never separately encompass intersectional agency. By this I mean that each separate component per definition operates, and does so complexly, with or through other components – be that agential elements, social categories, social dimensions and/or power. In other words, the pluriform character of intersectional agency points to the (multidimensional) simultaneity of all these components in the inward and outward mobilisation of agency.

8.34 Pluriformity appeared in various ways in the analysis, such as in the way that moral processes and ethical considerations and reflections follow each other up – back and forth, and, it seems, in contradiction – in response to Luciane's thought and its non-verbalisation, and do so outwardly grounded in race and regional frameworks, and inwardly in terms of class as well as sexism, homophobia and speciesism. Or consider how Carola's empathic engagement towards Apis is intersectionally grounded in age and activist seniority. However, her verbal and physical engagements are cognitively and morally grounded towards Apis and the officers in alignment with her position in race and class structures. Differently, the mechanism of intersectional agency leading to Sandra's walking away consists of both agentic action and agentic inaction,
which seem to be parallel (and perhaps partially sequential) processes, complexly marked by, first, social categories (e.g. race, class and gender), second, agential elements (i.e. cognitive, emotive, physical and moral processes), third, various social dimensions (e.g. social structure, ideology, social norms and roles, identity) and, last, positions in the realm of power (i.e. both disadvantage and advantage, as well as a complex intersectional interplay of disadvantage and advantage). Pluriformity does not, however, sufficiently and comprehensively describe the mechanism of intersectional agency.

*Contextuality and multilayeredness*

8.35 In Chapter 4, I discussed how agency relates to the idea of context. First, each agent is situated "in the world she inhabits," but also "amidst the workings of the mind" (Hornsby, 2004, par.1). Relatedly, second, agency, alluding to Alexander (1993, p.503), consists of an internal and an external environment. From this follows, third, the idea of a Lewinian (unified) field, which recognises that each individual is situated in a "web of interconnection[s] between person and situation, self and others, organism and environment, the individual and the communal" (Parlett, 1997, p.16), and where the individual's "inner' and 'outer' reality are both contained within the field" (p.18). Indeed, each actor should be "conceived as a spatially and temporally located person" (Alexander, 1992, p.9), and each 'essence' of a phenomenon should always be considered as temporal, spatial, situational and, as such, "in relation to [its] context" (Maso, 2007, pp.163,170-162). Specifically, considering the outwardly and inwardly orientated character of intersectional agency, an individual's mechanism of intersectional agency is not restricted to its orientation in the 'here and now'. Particularly instructive is the argument that Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.964) foreground, namely that "different simultaneous agentic orientations" are not only "embedded within many such temporalities," but are also "oriented toward the past, the future, and the present."

8.36 While agency is mobilised, arguably, in the 'here and now', at the same time, understanding this mobilisation in mono-temporal terms was unhelpful. It seemed as if different layers were continuously present and employed as layers over which agency was mobilised. I refer to this as contextuality; not just the
context as an external environment, but, as raised above, as an internal environment in terms of time, space and sociality. This interpretative framework is informed by the Lewinian idea of 'contemporaneity', in which a "person's experiential" field in the 'here and now' can simultaneously consist of "the-past-as-remembered-now" and "the-future-as-anticipated-now" (Lewin, 1952, p.54 in Parlett, 1991, p.5; see par.4.42). It might be helpful to consider sociality in light of fluctuating I-positions, which, as agentially orientating, position, reposition and counterposition within "the self and between self and perceived or imagined others" (cf. H.J.M. Hermans & Gieser, 2011, pp.2-3) and the (reflexive) orientation of agency towards the "self-as-object" (cf. Damasio, 2012).

8.37 Having expanded this idea of contextuality with the idea of layeredness, I refer to the specific role that different 'layers' of time, space and 'sociality' play in both the external and the internal environment of the mobilisation of agency. Not only is the (future and past) 'then' part of the world that the individual inhabits, the 'then' also inhabits the 'workings of the mind' and, as such, of agency. Space and sociality function similarly; in the mobilisation of agency, respectively, also the 'there' – or: the there-imagined-as-(the-)here’ – inhabits the mechanism of agency in the 'here', and the 'other'– or: the other-imagined-as-(the-)self’ – inhabits the mechanism of agency in the 'self'. Think of the role that the Avenida Paulista or the idea of one's 'home neighbourhood' plays in the different cases. The 'other' and the 'there' can also come together, such as with regards to the 'Paulista-man' in Sandra's account; and similarly, in her account, do the 'other', the 'there' and the 'then' come together in her account on the guy-in-the-park's upbringing in his lower class neighbourhood and family (see par.7.49). Considering that the mobilisation of agency can be orientated outwardly – towards the 'then', the 'there' and the 'other' – the mobilisation of agency can also be orientated inwardly – towards the then-as-experienced-in-the-now, the there-as-experienced-in-the-here, and the other-as-experienced-in-the-self.

8.38 The 'other' appears, for instance, in Luciane’s event. At first, her agency seems to be orientated towards the woman next to her. Another view on this suggests that she does not actually orientate her agency towards the actual concrete 'real' woman sitting next to her talking loudly on her phone; rather, her
feelings of *nojo*, "*momentary intolerance*" and their management are marked by orientatedness towards a 'reductionist, racialised and classed other', but also towards an 'other in the (distant) there'. Her empathic engagement is orientated (inwardly) at the fantasised emotive experience of a projected other. Her ideological and ethical engagement is inwardly orientated towards an idealised and ideal self that is a 'good person' – albeit arguably more in the realm of species and sexuality than in that of race or class. In turn, Luciane makes a(n emotively and morally marked) cognitive detour about a gendered and classed 'there' by bringing in the women from her working class neighbourhood to highlight how she experiences and feels about the *nordestina* woman sitting next to her – in terms of social categories (class, race, gender), emotions, morality and power. These 'others' in the mechanism of the self, then, are not only (physically) located in the external domain towards which the individual is orientated, but they intersectionally play, in multilayered ways, concrete roles in Luciane's internal 'here and now' of her mobilisation of agency.

**8.39** Sandra orientates her agency not only towards the man in front of her (i.e. the 'real other' in the factual here and now), but particularly also towards men-as-possible-sexual-harassers as 'compiled other' – consisting of 'remembered others' (i.e. memories of various and many actual previous experiences with other men); of 'accumulated other' (i.e. an accumulation of unspecified men whom Sandra previously experienced or feared harassment from); of the 'ideological other' (i.e. a representation of her ideological opposition to men and their role in sexual harassment of women, and as subjects of misogyny and structural gender inequality and sexism); of 'anticipated' or 'fantasised other' (i.e. of the projection of all the 'others' onto a feared, possible and anticipated future); of the social categorical 'comparative-other-there-in-the-now' of the 'Avenida Paulista man'; and of 'imagined other' (i.e. of the poor men who grew up in the *periferia* in a situation of domestic violence whom she feels empathic classed compassion for and needs to help out). In turn, these gendered and sexual 'accumulated other' and classed and gendered 'fantasised other' also, respectively, refer to Sandra’s remembered-or-compiled-past and the anticipated-future operating in and as the now.
I have touched on inward and outward orientatedness. There is, however, a particular quality to this in light of agency. In Chapter 1, I briefly touched on the difference between the qualifiers 'agential' and 'agentic' (e.g. par.1.7n11) and in Chapter 4 I distinguished agential from agentic mobilisation (par.4.47). I wrote that 'agential' refers to components, elements or processes that are constitutive of or internal to the mechanism of agency, whereas 'agentic' refers to components, elements or processes that are generated by or tools of (and, as such, external to) the mechanism of agency. The latter can be employed purposefully and strategically in the mobilisation of agency (see par.1.7n11). For instance, agentially, Luciane mobilises race and class through anger, nojo and feelings of superiority orientated towards her neighbour. Then, agentially still, she mobilises similar social categories and emotive and moral feelings, which she orientates towards herself. In turn, she then projects these agentically onto her neighbour, as a strategic tool to intersectionally empathise with this 'imagined-neighbour-in-the-self' (after all, her actual neighbour is completely unaware of this). The cases provide examples of apparently agentially and agentically 'tensional' employment of social categories. For instance, when Sandra agentically mobilises anger, humiliation and gender as strategic tools towards the second and during the third turning point, she agentially mobilises particularly class (albeit grounded in ideas of gender, mental health and perhaps race) and empathic compassion (and arguably a sense of superiority therein).

The point is that the observable manifestation of her agency contradicts, but also works together with, the internal workings of her mobilisation of agency. This is not only, however, a comment about the way that agency works. This is particularly relevant as the above discussions also point to the cross-categorical interplay of social categories in and between the agential and agentic mobilisation of intersectional agency.
8.42 In terms of intersectional agency, the discussion above brings a different insight into the way that social categories 'interrelate'. This contrasts many understandings in intersectional studies, as raised in Chapters 2 and 3, which suggest that intersectionality refers to the 'intertwined', 'synergetic' or perhaps 'mutually constitutive' relation of social categories 'at their intersection'. I do not contest that intertwinedness and synergy can be qualifiers of the interrelating way that social categories operate intersectionally. Arguably, however, these do not suffice to make sense of the complexity of all cases of intersectional agency, such as set out in this thesis. While qualifiers might grapple with the question of interrelationality, they do not necessarily clearly or accurately describe how, agentically and agentially, agential elements, social categories, social dimensions, power, and different layers interrelate.

8.43 Earlier in the chapter I argued that the case study of Sandra suggests that the role of social categories and emotions changes in the process of agential mobilisation throughout the turning points. To make sense of this, it was particularly important to separate all the different elements, components, and processes at work. In the development of the mobilisation of agency with the event progressing, the way that social categories, power, and agential elements change is different; their pace is different, their quality is different, and their function is different. For instance, the social categories and the cognitive, moral and emotive processes move in the mobilisation of agency from being only agential experiences to also agentic tools in the management of power dynamics. To exemplify, initially anger operates as an experience or sensation in the realm of gender, grounded in the now and in the past-as-(remembered/accumulated/compiled-)now; this changes, near the end of the second turning point, so that anger becomes a tool employed to manage gender relations and power dynamics through the use of, among others, raced class knowledge, behaviour, preconceptions, and institutional power. Perhaps it can be said that the function of anger changes from what might be called self-defence to domination (if not attacking), and it does so cross-categorically. Initially, gender solely constitutes the internal, but increasingly also becomes a tool in the external domain. Internally this was grounded in an accumulative
experience as a woman (and girl) of being objectified, harassed and subjected to men, consequently in fear of sexual violence, but also in the resistance thereto. Then, Sandra commences to employ gender grounded in, first, an ideological engagement that is both feminist and sexist, while relying on the way that gender and femininity operate institutionally in classed and raced terms. In turn, knowledge of racialised class relations – including with regards to white middle class femininity – operates in the background at the start of the event. Near the end of the event, however, this quickly moves to the foreground where, while continuing to operate in the internal domain, it dominates her agential – although not her agentic – mobilisation. Her intersectional knowledge operates multidimensionally; it operates in the arena of emotions and ideology through the mobilisation of compassion or pity, and it operates institutionally and in terms of social structure, by means of her knowledge about, first, how the security guards will respond to both her and the man (and the likelihood they would call the police would she have insisted) and, second, the police in terms of expectations regarding what is likely to happen to the man would he indeed have been taken to prison. The gendered anger transforms into contempt and, almost, hatred. She not only shames and intimidates him – returning his toxic masculinity by emasculating him – but shames and intimidates all the men before him, although this can hardly be said to be grounded only in gender and experiences of structural disadvantage. Sandra’s pre-existing knowledge of racial class relations, and of the specific context that the event is situated in, invites the reflection that her contempt and intimidation might not be grounded in classed feelings, but is grounded in her assessment of the balance of power in that situation and her intersectionally structural advantage. This provides her more agentic and perhaps agential space or reach, first, to act in particular ways, second, to predict with likelihood how the man will respond and, third, to experience a habitual sense of entitlement and certainty that there will mostly likely be no consequences to her actions. In other words, although she cannot cause a lack of consequences, she does rely on structural intersectional knowledge and her own position therein – as she also tells herself. Additionally, she attributes – in terms of contextual sociality – classed explanations of his diminished gendered education and capacity to engage with her in a non-sexist way. In this framework she explains her own internal emotive processes as marked by classed empathy and compassion, which, through the interplay of
emotions, social categories and power, seem to restore some sense of power balance. Arguably, however, Sandra’s external manifestation takes the form of white middle class masculinity manifested in physical and verbal aggression. This seems to have the social function of intimidation in relation to the man – in the interpersonal sense – and to give out a(n intimidating) gendered ideological and moral message to the man and to everyone else there. However, this also seems to operate in conjunction with the aforementioned classed feelings and with the ideological explanation she provides as motivation for her agentic action, characterised by gender, in order to restore a sense of power and a sense of balance of (interpersonal) power – both in herself and in terms of the external context. In this light, her walking away – a gendered inaction, but a classed action – and, with that, her ending of the event, does not actually seem to be (only) a manifestation of compassion, generosity and proportionality – as she explains it – but, rather, a restoration of power. She does not need further interference; she has retributed what she had received (and possibly a bit more), she feels satisfied, and there is nothing more to gain.

8.44 As the event progresses, the agential process, to reiterate, transforms in character in terms of the interplay of social categories and power. First, it becomes increasingly complex, multidimensional, pluriform and polythetic. Second, it suggests a transformation in terms of a more ‘spontaneous’ or ‘impulsive’ – and, arguably, less (or even non-)agential – to a more ‘deliberative’ and ‘conscious’ agential and agentic process. Third, it becomes clear that, in terms of social categories and power, there is indeed tension between the internal and external environment of agency.

8.45 What has become clear already is that the interrelational quality of intersectionality, and of intersectional agency specifically, is not confined to the interrelatedness of agential building blocks, social categories, social dimensions, power, or, for that matter, to its multidimensional, pluriform, and its contextual and multilayered quality. This study suggests, rather, that the mechanism of intersectional agency consists of the dynamic, fluid and changing complex interplay of all these aspects; I refer to this as the polythetic mechanism of intersectional agency.
Concluding thoughts

8.46 This thesis has offered an explorative study of intersectional agency. While 'intersectional agency' and related questions have emerged in some other studies, as discussed, this seems to be the first in-depth empirical and theoretical exploration. However, this exploration has not been exhaustive. To exemplify, first, the analysis in this thesis only touched on cognitive, emotive and moral processes; an exploration of the role of physical agential elements will be insightful. Second, Sandra points to the role of her "antenna" in deciding whether or not she would engage that day, that time, that situation (see par.7.32). Also Luciane points to the contribution of situational aspects – after all, she says, she "was already irritated that day" and "not in her normal mental state" (see par.6.6) – to her particular mobilisation of agency. More research on the interrelatedness between the situational and intersectional quality of agency could, then, be instructive. Third, I demonstrated the importance of employing a nano-lens, but highlighted the contribution of a complementary bird's-eye view; their methodological dynamic in the theorisation of agency needs more development. Fourth, the role of the interplay of social categories and power in the simultaneity of agency and non-agency, such as in the context of coercion that Apis experiences, requires further study. Fifth, the cases suggest that agency can generate internal actions and inactions; a study of the area of 'internal inactions', specifically when it comes to its relation to hegemony (e.g. race privilege, middle classness), could contribute significantly to the understanding of intersectional agency. Sixth, this study has pointed to boundaries of agency and suggests that the unconscious, as well as social categories and power (e.g. whiteness), play a role herein; it would be interesting to learn more about this. Seventh, in the cases I point to the role of the intersectional assessment of the (expected) reach of one's agency in the mobilisation of one's agency. Contra the conflation of the consequences of one's agentic actions and inactions with one's mobilisation of agentic actions and agentic inactions, the point of 'agentic reach' requires specifically more understanding in light of structural advantage (e.g. race or class privilege). Eighth, while I have discussed power and social inequality at length throughout the thesis, an understanding of the actual interplay of structural disadvantage and structural advantage certainly could benefit from further research. In that
light, it would also be instructive, ninth, to explore intersectional agency of individuals unwilling to discuss their position of structural privilege (even though 'phenomenological conversations' might not be an appropriate method here). Last, I want to draw attention to able-bodied and able-minded normativity in theorisations of agency (e.g. see par.4.26); the (theoretical) relation between agency and disability urgently requires more attention.

8.47 This thesis responded to the first research question – How do racially privileged feminist activists intersectionally mobilise agency? – in the empirical chapters to enable a response to the second research question – How can 'intersectional agency' be conceptualised? An anti-conflationary working definition of agency, relying on the conditions of choice, consciousness, reflexivity and orientatedness, has been formulated as an individual’s 'capacity to act or not act'. In other words, agency can cause agentic actions and/or agentic inactions. This identifies agency as 'internal'; consequently, agency cannot be observed. However, this capacity must be mobilised to 'materialise' as actions and/or inactions. The mobilisation of intersectional agency can consist of identifiable agential instances – perhaps a 'stream of agential mobilisation' – and operates like a process rather than a 'moment'. The inner workings of agency arguably function as a mechanism. This mechanism of intersectional agency can consist of various components. Agential elements, by which I refer to cognitive, moral and emotive elements, are together the component constitutive of agency. Other components that agency can consist of, but which are not 'of' agency, are at least social categories, power, and social dimensions. This points to the social character of the internal and of agency. It is useful to speak of the internal environment and the external environment of agency, because agency can be orientated outwardly and inwardly. Consequently, first, all these components can be mobilised in both realms and, second, this mobilisation can generate external actions and/or inactions as well as internal actions and/or inactions. Intersectionality can arguably be conceptualised as the theory of the interrelatedness of social categories, social dimensions and power. The mechanism of intersectional agency, then, refers to the interrelatedness of the various components in the mobilisation of agency. In turn, this can refer to the interrelatedness internal to a specific component – e.g. the interplay between social categorical differences,
or between agential elements. Or, second, this can refer to the interrelatedness across components – e.g. between a social categorical difference, a social dimension and an agential element. These interrelating components can be mobilised agentially – i.e. internal to the mechanism of intersectional agency – or agentically – i.e. as an instrument of or external to the mechanism of intersectional agency. This mechanism is, then, multidimensional and pluriform. Herein, time, place and sociality function as layers in the mechanism; the 'then', 'there' and the 'other' play a role in the internal context of the mechanism. I refer to this as the mechanism's multilayered and contextual character. Polythetically complex, last, all the aforementioned aspects can be mobilised agentially and agentically (at the same time), across components, and they can interrelate sequentially, parallel and simultaneously. Responding to the lack of an existing conceptual framework in both intersectionality studies and agency studies, this thesis contributes to both the empirically grounded understanding of intersectional agency as a polylithic mechanism.
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Participation Information Sheet

You are being approached to take part in a study on young feminism and activist agency in Greater São Paulo. Before starting my PhD in Manchester, I have been active in various (young) feminist groups and networks in the Netherlands and, to some extent, in Brazil. Now I have translated my feminist commitment into an academic research. This study is part of a bigger research that will lead to a PhD degree.

This study consists of two parts. At this moment you are invited to and might agree to participate in the first part. This first part concerns the engagement and ideas of young feminists about (your) feminism. For this part I hope to interview 20-25 young, feminist activists. Though the age limit is not very strict, with ‘young’ I refer to women of 18-35/40 years old, that is, the generation post-Second Wave. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to respond to some general questions on (young) feminism, on your feminist ideas, your feminist practice and, under the terms of consent, some general questions about yourself.

Before you decide to participate or not in this first part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please, take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with other people, if you wish. Please ask me what you like to clarify or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.
Who will conduct the research?

**Researcher**
Dieuwertje Huijg (Dyi)

**University**
Department of Sociology
School of Social Sciences
The University of Manchester

**Address**
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL
United Kingdom

**Title of the Research**
"Young Feminism and Activist Agency in Greater São Paulo"

**What is the aim of the research?**

As many other countries in Latin America (but also in Europe and other continents), Brazil has shown a significant rise of young women (post-Second Wave) who organise collectively, autonomously and/or as part of the general feminist movement. Young feminism in São Paulo has played a leading role in this process. And, due to the struggle of young women, there is a growing recognition of young feminism inside and outside the feminist and the women’s movement. But there is also cynicism, and young feminism, young feminists and young feminist groups are questioned.

- "What is different, what is the same?"
- "What is specific of young feminism and the feminism of young women?"
- "How do they organise differently?"

The aim of this first part of the research is to understand better what is ‘young feminism’ or ‘feminist activism of young women’ and think about commonalities and differences with the previous generations.

**Why have I been chosen?**

For this research I am looking for activists of the feminist movement and, generally, 'young' women who are activists (inside or outside the feminist movement) and identify themselves as feminists. Either I have approached you directly, or you have received this flyer or e-mail from a friend. Probably, you are a 'young', feminist activist; that is, between 18-40 years old and active in metropolitan São Paulo..

I find it important that young feminists from different types of organisations and groups take part; be it from a young, feminist collective, the cultural scene (music, theatre, etc), a student organisation, a general women’s organisation or as an autonomous activist. Next to the aforementioned criteria (younger than about 40 years, self-identified feminist activist, active in Greater São Paulo), I intend to include a diversity of women. I will only interview one or some women per group.

I hope you want to participate. If you do not want to participate, that is fine as well.

If you have any doubts before taking a decision, please approach me with your question or invite me to a meeting to explain more.
What would I be asked to do if I took part?

If you agree to participate, I will ask you to questions about (young) feminism, about your feminist ideas, feminist practice and about your activist feminist involvement. On the consent form, you can respond to some general questions about yourself.

Some of the questions might be personal, but you can decide at any moment to be as open as you want, and to respond or not respond to questions. Please, feel free to do so!

For the second part of this study, I will approach only a couple of activists (5-8). That part will be quite intense. If you agree, it can be that I will get in touch with you again. If this is the case, we will talk again and I will explain in detail what will happen; that will be a part that we do in collaboration. But at this moment that is not relevant.

What happens to the data collected?

The data will be used for analysis. Next to these data, I am collecting 'activist material' (flyers, etc) and read about current young feminism and the feminist movements before this. To have a general idea, I will also attend various activities organised by the feminist movement and will ask specific feminist groups if they agree that I take part in their activities and make notes ('observe') what is happening. All data will be confidentially treated and anonymously analysed!!

At the end of this process I will write a PhD Dissertation. I will talk about the research outcomes in articles, presentations, etc.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All data (general descriptions, quotes and other data) will be anonymised. Pseudonyms will be used in all cases; for both individuals and organisations. Any other easily identifiable data will be rigorously modified, left out of the final research or 'disconnected' from the participant and her organisation to make sure that she will stay anonymous.

All the data obtained in this study will only be accessed by the researcher and, indirectly, by the researcher's supervisors. Other people will not have access to the data.

In the consent form the participants agree that citations from the data may anonymously be used for publications and presentations.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to participate in this first part of the study, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There is no financial remuneration for participation in this research.
What is the duration of the research?
The duration of this part is the duration of the interview.

Where will the research be conducted?
The research will be conducted in Greater São Paulo.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?
Yes, outcomes of this research will be published in my PhD Dissertation. Additionally, research outcomes can be published via conference papers, academic journals and academic books, as well as via non-academic publications and presentations.

Will data be anonymised?
Yes.

Contact for further information
Dieuwertje Huijg (Dyi)
T: +11-82872872
E: pesquisafeminismojovem@gmail.com (preference)
E: Dieuwertje.Huijg@manchester.ac.uk
W: www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/sociology/postgraduate/current/huijg/
W: manchester.academia.edu/DieuwertjeDyiHuijg

What if something goes wrong?

Please contact the researcher
Dieuwertje Huijg (Dyi)
T: +11-82872872
E: dyi@huijg.net

To file a formal complaint
Head of the Research Office
Christie Building
University of Manchester
Oxford Road, Manchester
M13 9PL
United Kingdom
Appendix 2

Young Feminism and Activist Agency in Greater São Paulo

Research Phase 1

CONSENT FORM & PERSONAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

[translation]

If you are happy to participate in this research, please respond to the personal information questions and sign the consent form below.

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<td>Please, sign here</td>
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<td>• I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.</td>
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<td>• I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and without any detriment.</td>
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<td>• I agree to the use of anonymous quotes</td>
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<td>• I confirm that the researcher can contact me after the interview to discuss the possible participation in the second part of the research. That part will be more intense.</td>
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### Personal Information
*(the answers will be processed anonymously!)*

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ii. Can you provide me with your contact details? (for the researcher’s administration, they will not be shared)

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I agree to take part in the above project,

............................................  ............................................  ............................................

Name of the participant  Date  Signature

Dieuwertje Huijg (Dyi)  ............................................  ............................................

Name of the person taking consent (researcher)  Date  Signature
Appendix 3

Young Feminism and Activist Agency in Greater São Paulo

Research Phase 1

TOPIC LIST

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW ABOUT YOUNG FEMINISM

[translation]

1. Involvement feminist activism / other movements?
2. Participation in activist groups? (what, where, with whom, objective etc.)
3. Why feminist?
4. Identification as feminist? (when, why, how did identification start)
5. What is feminism (for you)?
6. What are important themes for young women?
7. What should be (the) objectives of feminism for young women?
8. What is the best way to do this? (methods of organisation etc.)
9. Who is the target group of feminism / young feminism?
10. Which groups does feminism / young feminism has least to offer?
11. Do you feel something is missing in the activism of young feminism / young feminists? (Do you find this in other social movements?)
12. What are differences and commonalities with older feminists?
A while ago you took part in the first and general part of this research on young feminism and activist agency in Greater São Paulo. In Part 1, I interviewed you about young feminism, your feminist involvement and your ideas on feminism. This Part 2, on the other hand, focuses on activist agency. In this Participation Information Sheet I will try to explain to you what this project is about and inform you on the procedure, the purpose and any other important aspect of the research.

Before you decide to participate or not in this second part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Background of the research

This research originates in my own background as a feminist activist. In 2001-2002 I studied a year in Brazil for my course in Latin America Studies in the Netherlands. I did an internship in the feminist organisations SOF and União de Mulheres de São Paulo. Even though I had been active in the anti-racist and LGBT movement before and had already taken gender studies modules at the University in Amsterdam, I only started my feminist activism in 2002 in São Paulo. Inspired by the feminist activism in São Paulo and as a result of my conscientisation process in the field of race and, to a lesser extent, generational relations, I co-organised a conference on generational, racial-ethnic and international cooperation in the women’s movement when I returned to the Netherlands in 2002-03.

In Brazil and later in Amsterdam, I took more modules in women studies and also started to take modules on race relations. In university I came across the concept
of 'whiteness'. Critical whiteness studies looks at the racial position of white people in the system of racism and it problematises the invisibility and the privilege of white people in race relations. This helped me to reflect on my own and other white women's position in feminism. This also contributed to understand better how racism and racial inequality function in the complex intersection with sexism and gender inequality (along with issues of generation, sexuality and class). At the end of 2004 I became a board member of a black, migrant and refugees women's organisation (ZAMI) and in 2005 I started a young women's network in the Netherlands with other young feminist (V-mania). Even though black and migrant women in the Second Wave already addressed racism and racial inequality in the feminist movement, this was not an integral part of the feminism of white young women – both in the Netherlands and in Brazil.

Out of these experiences, I did in 2005-06 an initial research on experiences of this racial position by white, female activists; they had very complex and sometimes contradictory feelings about their gender and racial identity and mixed ideas about how to translate this into an activist position in relation to both sexism and racism. This brought about questions I want to explore in this research: How is feminist activism constructed when one's (disadvantaged) gender position contradicts one's (advantaged) racial position? Considering that feminists oppose the oppressive system of sexism and patriarchy, what and whom do they oppose when, in the racial sense, they inhabit this oppressive system as white or light women? What does that do to the feminists and their activism? And, then, how do feminist activists reconcile these apparently opposite positions?

What is this research about?

Before going into more practical details, I would like to explain a little bit about this research itself. This research is about feminist activist agency: phenomenological action research from an intersectional perspective. These are quite some sociological terms, let me guide you through this step by step.

The first part of the research (the interview in which you participated) was, generally, about the feminism of young women. In this second part I hope to explore the idea of "agency". Agency is a social scientific and philosophical concept. Though there are different definitions, I refer here mainly to the potentiality, capacity or 'property' that every individual has and that she can mobilise or exercise in order to act: to walk, talk, demonstrate, sing, write, dance, etc. Agency is an internal property of the individual; it is in her mind, body, head and/or heart - to be honest, we might not exactly know 'where' to locate it. We could imagine that agency, then, can consist of thoughts and visual images, memories, feelings and emotions, desires and bodily sensations. This way, it is only really accessible to her; as a researcher, to understand how agency works, I will only know about it if you communicate these thoughts, images, feelings (etc) to me: via an interview, via written text or in any other form that it becomes 'public'. Via this, I hope to understand with you how 'your agency' works: how the process works that initiates acting and/or not acting; I hope to discover with you what external aspects (as social structure) and what internal influences (as thoughts, memories, feelings) play a role and how they work or do not work together.

Activist agency, then, could be understood as the internal process that the individual manifests socially and collectively; that gives form to activism and aims at social change via ideas and praxis. At the same time, it is also influenced by your activism, by ideas and praxis, by internal influences are (as thoughts, memories, feelings), by other people and by social structure and the experience of your social position, hence by 'the system'. To act as an activist, you internalise, negotiate, reproduce, reject, modify and produce all these and other aspects into your feminism. In this research, I hope to explore with you how you as an individual are influenced by and are part of this system and, consequently, how you construct a social project of
transformation and how you perceive and experience that. Let me elaborate a bit more on that.

Even though agency as a concept is quite widely used, there is little research on how it actually works. This is specifically the case when we think about agency in a feminist activist context and from an intersectional perspective. With intersectionality I mean that we do not only look at gender, but also at race and other 'social categories' (as class, sexuality, spirituality/religion) and how these influence each other.

Though there are various ways feminism can be understood, and you all already gave me a variety of definitions, they share their strong preoccupation with the experiences of women, the discrimination they face and the structural disadvantageous position women have in society. At first sight, this might appear an obvious statement. But not all women have the same experiences, face the same discrimination or have similar structural disadvantageous position in society.

Additionally, you all problematised the advantaged side in society; men if we talk about gender relations. For society to modify, all part in gender relations must change. Hence, society only changes if both sides of the coin change; as the position of men has to change to abolish gender inequality, this also counts for the position of white people to eradicate racial inequality. Since we cannot be split in a separate gender and a separate race part, we could say that they are present and influence us simultaneously. Let me briefly turn to two extremes.

For instance, domestic workers, as various of you have pointed out, are almost all women. And in their majority they are also black, poor and from the periferia. Their stigma and position cannot solely be understood from a gender perspective, because their intersectional position is one of multiple disadvantages. At the other extreme, we could look at the position of white and light women. Even though white and light women experience discrimination and structural disadvantage on the basis of their gender, their racial position grants them, in various degrees, structural privilege; their gender complicates their agency, but their racial position facilitates their agency.

This brings other issues to the forefront. All feminists, at least all that partake in this research, do not just oppose gender injustice, but also racial injustice (and injustice on the basis of sexuality, class, etc). White and light feminists fight against gender discrimination and the system of sexism or patriarchy, but the oppressive system of racial inequality privileges them. Previous research, and my own background as a white feminist activist concerned with both gender and racial issues, demonstrated that this double position in relation to discrimination, oppression and social dis/advantage, and specifically the ideological opposition to the 'oppressive system', can generate complex and even contradictory thoughts, images and feelings about one's social position, one's identity and one's activist praxis and ideology.

This leads to the question how this apparent contradiction influences young feminists, how this influences you; your life, your identity, your feminist activist praxis and ideology. How do you deal with that? How do you experience, think, imagine and feel that? How do you process and negotiate this contradiction? And, then, how do you produce something new out of that? Last, how do you construct your feminist activist agency from an intersectional perspective?

Methodology

To explore these questions, and other questions that hopefully you will bring up during the research, there are two methodological schools that seemed most applicable for data collection. They respond to, first, the 'political' and 'collective' character of the activist side and, second, to the 'micro' and 'individual' character of the agency side of this research.

First, this research departs from a phenomenological approach; it is strongly reflexive and focuses on the individual experience and perception of you as the
participant. It aims at understanding an idea, a 'phenomenon', namely 'agency'. There is no intention to be 'objective' or find a 'truth'. To the contrary, this perspective allows for profound exploration of the understanding how, for some people, agency actually works.

Second, it relies on action research; it aims at social change and desires to be a "a systemic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical and undertaken by participants in the inquiry" (McCutcheon and Jung 1990:148). The collaborative character opens up the possibility for you as the participant, during the process of data collection, to contribute for example in redefining the research problem, express your individual and collective needs and curiosities (and critique!), and suggest research questions and research findings.

Who will conduct the research?

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Title of the Research

"Young Feminism and Activist Agency in Greater São Paulo"

What is the aim of the research?

This part of the research aims at understanding how agency, specifically activist agency in a feminist setting and from an intersectional perspective, works.

Why have I been chosen?

For this part of the research I have approached feminist activists who find themselves in the complex intersectional position as described above. With the other participants you have in common that you identify yourself as feminist and you are from the 'post-Second Wave' generation. In various degrees, you experience gender discrimination and, on the other hand, you occupy a racially advantageous position. When we look at other aspects - as, for instance, political orientation, mode of activism, sexual orientation, veganism, religion and spirituality, and class background - you are all quite different. And even how you experience your gender and your racial identity varies.

You all have already participated in the general interview on feminism of young women. From that interview and activist settings, I know that you all are articulate, curious, open and have strong opinions. During the interview it appeared that you have a great amount of personal and political reflexivity, which is necessary for the participation in this second part. Additionally, you showed interest in the research. And you all have an interesting story to tell!

This research does not pretend to be representative. You also do not have to represent anyone else then yourself. In this research there is no 'wrong' or 'right' answer. To the contrary, it will be an explorative process in which we will work together during
fieldwork (before analysis). Even though 'you have been chosen', you should not worry about being interesting enough, doing it good enough. I am very appreciative that you are willing to invest your time and energy and are committed in participating!! Any participation is perfect! Please, inform me about your worries at any time so we can discuss these.

What would I be asked to do if I took part in the process of data collection?

Conform the philosophy behind action research, I think it is important that we work on this process of data collection together – at least as much as you feel comfortable. As discussed in the beginning, there are general questions that guide this research, but your input and experiences frame the process. It is a personal and reflexive process!

Hence, I do not know yet what your participation consists of; I do not have a pre-defined trajectory for this part of the research. Not because I have not prepared a research plan, but because each participant is different and, consequently, every process will be different for each participant. Remember that you can decide at any moment to be as open as you want, and to engage or not engage with questions. You can also always suggest to (temporarily) change the direction of the process. Please, feel free to do so!

We might start with a general question and, depending what comes out of that, we can discuss a next step. You can think of keeping a diary, going to a feminist activity or watch a movie together and talk about it later, you might write reflexively on a specific experience you had or maybe you have another suggestion. One way or the other, I hope that you as a participant will feel stimulated to have your say. Please, tell me what questions you would like to focus on and share with me your needs and issues that you would like to bring in. I also hope that you will feel comfortable enough to give critique whenever you feel so. On the other hand, if any of this makes you feel uncomfortable or you want to participate but feel you do not have the time or energy to think about all this, you can also leave it to me. Both are perfectly fine!

What happens to the data collected?

The process of doing a PhD broadly consists of, on the one hand, the collection of data in fieldwork and, on the other hand, the analysis of data and the process of writing up. Now, during fieldwork, I am "collecting data". This is the information that comes out of the interviews and the participants (your) contribution in this second part of the research. Even though this process is very intense, it is actually only one part of academic research.

Now, even though the collection of data is a collaborative process (as described before), I, as the researcher, will do the analysis alone. It could be said that the collaborative process ends when the collection of data ends. Though, the analysis of the data will be methodologically grounded and academically sound, as a researcher I depart from the idea that my perspective as a researcher is just one perspective out of many. Since I, as the researcher, am solely responsible for the analysis of the data, the research outcomes will, thus, reflect my academic perspective. This means that they will not always reflect your perspective. You will have your own interpretation (and rightly so!) that can coincide or differ from mine: afterwards you might at points agree with my perspective and at other moments you might disagree with my analysis. That is all great!

The analysis of data, after fieldwork, is a long process and will take at least 1-2 years. In (and after) this process, the research outcomes will be presented at, for example,
conferences or in articles. At the end I will write everything down in a PhD Dissertation and, hopefully, graduate as a Doctor. If you would like to receive a copy of any of these, you can approach me at a later moment.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**

In this part of the research only a small number of women will participate. Even though I am looking for participants from diverse sides of the feminist movement, it can happen that participants know each other. I will not discuss your participation with other participants. In case you know other participants in this research, of which you might or might not be aware, I will ensure that this relation remains invisible in any publication.

Because of the intimate character of this study, participants will share personal information in the research process. This means that I am quite concerned about the vulnerable situation this puts you in as a research participant: both during the data collection and, after I have analysed the data, in the case of a publication. With this in mind, **confidentiality is on the top of my priorities!**

In the consent form the participants agree that citations from the data may anonymously be used for publications and presentations. During the collection of data and the analysis afterwards, 'raw data' obtained in this study will *only* be ever seen by the researcher and the researcher's supervisors in Manchester. During analysis, *all* data (general descriptions, citations and other data) will be anonymised. Pseudonyms will be used in *all* cases; for you, for others *and* for organisations. Any other easily identifiable information will be modified, left out of the research or 'disconnected' from you as the participant, from your network or your organisation to ensure that everyone stays anonymous. If necessary, more than one pseudonym will be used for the same person. My objective is that you and those around you are non-recognisable to both the general reader as well as to other activists.

You can also contribute to your anonymity. Please, be careful with whom you share your participation in this research, it might jeopardise your anonymity at a later stage. You might consider sharing this with only a few people close to you.

Last, since this research is collaborative of character, I will also share personal information with you. I would like to ask you to keep the same confidentiality in relation to me and to what I share with you.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to participate in the second part of the study, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

There is no financial remuneration for participation in this research.
What is the duration of the research?

The duration of the research depends on your time. It will be spread over several months in which we will have regular contact. Most contact will be face-to-face and via e-mail. But we could also arrange meetings via, for instance, Skype or MSN.

Where will the research be conducted?

The research will be conducted in Greater São Paulo. When we meet we will most probably choose location that is somewhere in between where we live. We could also meet at one of the women's organisations that have an extra room. You will do most work, though, at home or another location of your choice.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Yes, outcomes of this research will be published in my PhD Dissertation. Additionally, research outcomes can be published via conference papers, academic journals and academic books, as well as via non-academic publications and presentations.

To emphasise, all data will be anonymised.

Contact for further information
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What if something goes wrong?

Please contact the researcher
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To file a formal complaint
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Appendix 5

Young Feminism and Activist Agency
in Greater São Paulo

Research Phase 2

CONSENT FORM PARTICIPANTS

[translation]

If you are happy to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet and had time to consider the information and to ask questions to the researcher and had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I can discuss this with the researcher. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason.

☐

3. I confirm that confidentiality and anonymity have been discussed with the researcher.

☐

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.

☐

I agree to take part in the above project,

Name of participant

Dieuwertje Huijg (Dyi)

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent (researcher)

Date

Signature

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