DUTCH RACISM AS "THE GHOST IN THE MACHINE"

a Discourse Analysis of the Reproduction of Racism in Dutch Contemporary Media

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Abstract

'Dutch Racism as "the Ghost in the Machine"' examines the reproduction of racism in Dutch contemporary media by analysing the main case study, the racist responses to the Selfie posted by the Dutch soccer team in November 2014, through a critical discourse analysis of three different types of media and integrating the discipline of race relations theory to answer the main research question in a focused yet broad perspective. This thesis builds upon the scholarship of critics such as Philomena Essed, Isabel Hoving, Halleh Ghorashi, Dienke Hondius, and Teun van Dijk. As contemporary visual media present us with increasing numbers and kinds of images, we must continually reassess our criteria of evaluation, particularly for issues as precarious as racial identity and discrimination. Owing to the fact that the situation in the Netherlands is becoming increasingly hostile towards migrants and other cultures living in the country, both socially and politically, it is necessary to critically look at how the media are influencing our thoughts to fear 'the other'.

Keywords

Dutch Racism, smug ignorance, visual media, social media, (Reversed) Agenda-Setting, Dutch 'soccer Selfie'

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Introduction

"*Black Dutch football internationals gather racist abuse after selfie hits social media*" (DutchNews.nl)

On 17 November 2014 this headline appeared in the Dutch news after soccer player Leroy Fer posted a photo of himself and eight teammates online on November 14th (see fig. 1). Fer posted the picture on Twitter after which football website Voelbalzone.nl put the photo on its Facebook page where it drew a stream of racist comments over the next few days. Responses included references to the debate concerning the now controversial Dutch tradition of 'Black Pete': "9 Black Petes", comparisons to animals, "FC Ape", and allusions to slavery: "They broke loose from their chains and then this happens…" On the 17th of November both the Dutch Football Federation (KNVB) and PvdA party Parliament members Ahmed Marcouch and Keklik Yücel asked former minister of Security and Justice Ivo Opstelten (VVD) and minister Ronald Plasterk of Internal Affairs (PvdA) if the Public Prosecutor could do an investigation into the statements to show the public that racist comments like these cannot be tolerated. After the investigation the prosecutors stated on March 9 2015: "The Public Prosecutor has fined three suspects 360 euros in connection with their comments on Facebook regarding the selfie. Should they not pay, they will have to appear in front of a judge"

(Zeenews.com). Fer's personal first response in Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* indicates that expressions of racism are a prominent phenomenon in Dutch culture and there is still resentment towards people with different physical (non-white) traits: "As a footballer you get monkey sounds from the stands but what happened now is far worse. It feels like those people are saying: 'You don't belong in the Dutch team.'" (Telegraaf).

(Fig. 1)

As contemporary visual media present us with increasing numbers and kinds of images, we must continually reassess our criteria of evaluation, particularly for issues as precarious as racial identity and discrimination. Owing to

the fact that the situation in the Netherlands is becoming increasingly hostile towards migrants and other cultures living in the country, both socially and politically, it is necessary to critically look at how the media are influencing our thoughts to fear 'the other'. In addition to reassessing the current public climate it is vital to examine the state of academic research on the topic. Most published books are dated and do not cover the developments of social media yet. Therefore, this thesis will examine how substantial the role of the media is on the development and reproduction of racism and the necessity for the public to reassess our criteria of evaluation of the media; it will answer the question: How is Dutch racism mediated through contemporary visual media?

While writing this thesis an incident occurred in the Dutch news that excellently represents the tension that is raging through the Netherlands at the moment. On the 27th of June 2015 a 42-year-old man Aruban man was killed, several versions of his death appeared in the news within a few hours. In the first official statement released by the Prosecutor's Office (OM) it was stated that Henriquez was supposedly carrying a weapon and resisted the arrest causing the police to use force, after which he felt 'unwell' while driving to hospital where he past away. Online media such as NOS.nl and NU.nl immediately copied this statement and published it on their websites. However, not long after its publication, the power of social media interrupted: several witnesses filmed the arrest and the videos spread like wildfire. In the videos it becomes apparent that four to five police officers violently force Henriquez to the ground. At first his legs show movement but after a short amount of time his body appears lifeless. The officers check his veins for a pulse and look puzzled. Eventually they carry the body into the police van. The videos filmed by witnesses contrast with the official press release of the Prosecutor's Office. Shortly after the incident witnesses start posting statements on Facebook:

> *'Ik heb het begin gezien.. ze rende op hem af…besprongen hem van achter.. het was een hele groep agenten. Hij viel op de grond en zeker zes agenten zaten op hem.. een agent met een knuppel bleef slaan op zijn hoofd en benen. (…) We riepen niet slaan niet slaan maar ook wij.. mijn man.. een vrouw en nog een paar mensen werden weggestuurd en er werd op ons ingelopen door agenten."* (qtd. in Bergman)

The witness' post on Facebook states that she was present at the incident from the start, how several police officers ran into the victim and forced them to the ground. One of the officers beat him with him a bat after which the surrounding witnesses implored the officers to stop but they were forced to leave the scene.

No reports on the incident appear in the news that Saturday or Sunday night except for the statement that was published by the OM. On Monday morning none of the national newspapers published indignant headlines on the misunderstanding. It appears that the Dutch traditional media chose not to respond to the statements posted on social media.

As Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving have stated, it is essential to understand that, "Dutch racism is a complex, paradoxical, and much contested phenomenon" (9). In their introduction to *Dutch Racism* (2014) the authors explain that during the second half of the last century racism in the Netherlands has become more subtle and increasingly difficult to pinpoint, "it seemed as though the explicit adherence to race hierarchies was disappearing and that racism had become more cultural in its expression, less in your face, if still insidious" (ibid.). The Dutch have a tendency to reject their colonial past as relevant for understanding contemporary issues that arise in the media today. According to Essed and Hoving this is not new, "dominant discourses *miss* historical explanations and *dismiss* the connection between present ethnic humiliations and the brutality of colonization, slavery, and anti-Semitism" (11). There is no shared awareness among the public of the way in which racism became a part of the culture yet there is a sense of "self-satisfaction and smugness about ignoring the issue — racism is seen as an outdated topic that has no relevance to the 21st century" (ibid.). This dominant form of denial has led to the opinion that we "have moved beyond racism" (ibid.). This is partly due to the significantly narrow definition of racism in the Netherlands stated by Müller et al.: "Shared discourse only recognizes racism as such, when it is expressed with the clear intention to injure and to reflect ideological convictions" (49-50). Müller et al. rightfully argue that those who commit racist acts are left with "a discursive space through which they can avoid accountability" (ibid.). This thesis will discuss the concepts of race and racism critically so that it becomes possible to explore the most productive ways to address a social and cultural problem that is as urgent as ever, in the Netherlands as much as elsewhere.

The approach will be 'discourse analytical', which means that the news will not be treated as transparent 'messages' whose 'contents' may be analysed in a quantitative way but the analysis will rely on the examination of the complex structures and strategies of news reports, newspaper articles, posts on social media and their relations to the social context. The social context consists of the activities of professionals such as journalists in news making, as well as the interpretations and reactions of readers in the increasingly multicultural Dutch society. From this discourse analysis it will ultimately be concluded how important issues of racism are in the press and how they reflect and perhaps reproduce xenophobia in present day Dutch society. Altogether, this thesis will examine the main case study of responses to the photo of

the Dutch soccer team published in November 2014 through a critical discourse analysis of three different types of media and integrating the discipline of race relations theory to answer the main research question in a focused yet broad perspective: How is Dutch racism mediated through contemporary visual media?

Chapter 1—Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This chapter will explain the theoretical framework that entails the notion of Dutch racism, so called 'New racism' and the notion of post-racism. Furthermore it will introduce the role of the media and discourse and how Dutch terminology is significantly different from other countries and languages. Each of these elements needs to be explained to support the discourse analyses of the three types of Dutch media, namely television news, online news, and social media. By drawing on the scholarship of critics such as Philomena Essed, Isabel Hoving, Halleh Ghorashi, Dienke Hondius, and Teun van Dijk. I will show how changing global and national conditions, new forms of racism, and the rise of social media and digitalization are transforming the discursive shape of racism.

1.1. New racism(s)

In many respects, contemporary forms of racism differ from earlier understandings, or as Teun van Dijk describes it, "the 'old' racism of slavery, segregations, apartheid, lynchings, and systematic discrimination, of white superiority feelings, and of explicit derogation in public discourse and everyday conversation" (33-34). In 1981 professor Martin Barker coined the term *New Racism,* in which minorities are not biologically inferior, but different. 'Real' racism, in this framework of thought only exists among the extreme right. Interestingly, New Racism wants to be democratic and respectable, and hence denies that it is racism. Another relatively recent approach to the study of racism is Philomena Essed's *Everyday Racism* (1991). The concept of everyday racism counters the view prevalent, particularly in the Netherlands, "that racism is an individual problem, a question of 'to be or not be a racist'. The crucial criterion distinguishing racism from everyday racism is that the latter involves only systematic, recurrent, and familiar practices" (3). In these forms of contemporary racism the notions of denial and ignorance can be considered a significant part, which remain consistent today. However, the new millennium brought the world extreme events: 9/11, the economic crisis, and growing Islamophobia, which changed manifestations of racism dramatically. Together with (anti-) immigration related events in the Netherlands such as the assassination of anti-Muslim politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002, the anti-Muslim movie *Submission* (2004), the assassination of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim extremist (2004), the making of the film *Fitna* (2008) by anti-Muslim populist Geert Wilders, and his election in 2010 to

represent one of the largest political parties in the Netherlands at the time forced scholars to revisit definitions of Dutch racism.

1. 2. Smug Ignorance and Dutch Racism

As stated in the introduction, Dutch racism is a complex, paradoxical, and contested phenomenon. In order to achieve a sufficient understanding of the discourse analyses of the Dutch media it is essential to first explore the convolutional and exceptional characteristics of Dutch racism. The Netherlands, like many other countries, is facing a societal paradox. The first article of the Dutch constitution states, "All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted" (Constitution 5). The article prohibits discrimination on any grounds and yet it is an everyday phenomenon (Essed). According to Lida M. van den Broek almost half of the ethnic minority population in the Netherlands regularly experiences discrimination based on ethnicity, as became clear from the first "racism monitor" in 2006 (257). In *Dutch Racism* (2014) Essed and Hoving identify one crucial characteristic as "the intimate relation between ignorance and denial" (10). The following example illustrates ignorance and denial as key elements. In 2012 Dutch traditional and social media functioned as the discursive battlefield for the discussion between supporters and opponents of a popular screen adaptation of the Dutch book *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen*. The film featured a white Jewish young man obsessed with voluptuous "negresses" ("negerinnen), "still commonly used terminology in the Netherlands" (Essed and Hoving 10). Those in favour of the film argued that the film was not stereotyping black women but celebrating them. In a newspaper column published in *De Volkskrant* on 22 October, journalist and diversity advocate Harriet Duurvoort strongly disagrees with this view, "The Americans have a word for this: *ignorant*. It cannot be translated unambiguously as uninformed or naïve. It refers to knowing something, but also not wanting to know. Something that, perhaps with a bit of effort, you *should* know by now" (Duurvoort). Ignorance, explains Halleh Ghorashi in "Racism and 'the Ungrateful Other' in the Netherlands", refers to the self-imposed ignorance of white people when faced with racism. In a similar way historian Dienke Hondius comments in "Black Dutch Voices: Reports from a Country that Leaves Racism Unchallenged" that to ignore race is the Dutch main strategy of dealing with it. There seems to be a pervasive view that the Netherlands is "somehow above experiencing the same problems of negotiating plurality as any other country. According to

Joy L. Smith, it "comes together with a strange denial around race that permeates Dutch society" (Smith 233). Furthermore, the norm is avoidance of open discussions about race, as Hondius explains: "Rather than a heavy taboo, there is a lighter but widely agreed upon general consensus about not mentioning skin colour, not naming racial issues, Ras, daar doen wij niet aan—'We don't do race'" (qtd. in Smith 233). Important to keep in mind is that this denial around race makes it difficult to name it, openly discuss it or question it, and ultimately fight it. If it is not acknowledged it cannot exist.

Essed and Hoving compare this particular form of denial to the US where a significant theme of recent times is the idea that we have entered, or should enter, a post-race era, which, in the USA, "is linked to the culture of black celebrities (Cashmore 2012) and particularly to the presidential victory of Barack Obama in 2008" (Murji 21). President Obama's 2008 election was hailed as a demonstration that race was now less of an obstacle to American progress and achievement than it has been historically. However, an important difference is that the US acknowledged systematic racism, "while struggling with the contradictions between individual black achievement and the humiliating conditions of black lives" (Essed and Hoving 11). The Netherlands, in contrast, refuses to acknowledge racism and insists on innocence. Wekker comments on the Dutch "self-image that stresses being a tolerant, small and just ethical nation and that foregrounds being a victim rather than a perpetrator of international violence" (qtd. in Essed and Hoving 21). David Theo Goldberg argues that there is also a Dutch version of postraciality. "Dutch postraciality, as other postraciality at large, insists that racism has no relevance to the 21st century, a worthy normative proclamation at once parading as overblown contemporary descriptive fact" (411). It claims that racism is nothing more than the expression of extremist hate groups, this silences any debate on everyday racism as it "does not happen here" (410).

The assumption underlying denial and ignorance touches upon the surface of deeper feelings of discomfort and fear of the growing influence of migrants. According to Ghorashi there is an assumption, "that Dutch society belongs to the native Dutch and they have the right to feel discomfort about the growing 'threat' caused by certain groups of migrants" (102). A striking example is the statement of current Prime Minister Mark Rutte in March 2011, after the results of the elections when he said, "We will make sure ladies and gentlemen, that we give back this beautiful country to the Dutch, because this is our project" (Rutte 2011). Strong language such as this statement feeds a growing discomfort among the public. Essed and Hoving argue that most of the studies of migrants presented in the media support this assumption. As this thesis focuses on everyday racism in the media the following

example will illustrate how a daily, free of charge, Dutch newspaper *Spits* mediated a similar news item. On June 5th 2009 the newspaper published the election results of Partij voor Vrijheid (Party for Freedom, PVV) in a cover story titled, "PPV: Als je wint, heb je vrienden, rijendik [If you win, you have friends, in long lines]" by Margaret van Been. They juxtaposed the item with a story on "schrikbarende misdaadcijfers" ("shocking crime statistics") based on data presented by professor of criminology Frank Bovenkerk. His data show that 55% of Moroccan-Dutch men in Rotterdam between 18 and 24 have had contact with the police at least once. He goes on to report that the chance of a repeat offence is 90% (van Been 4). By publishing these facts close together it can be implied that readers make a connection between the involvement of Morrocan-Dutch men, the rise of crime, and winning party PVV.

1.3. The role of Discourse and the Media: Spaces of Participation

There is no need here to argue the overall power of the media in modern 'information' societies. Today, media discourse is the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. Together with powerful elite groups and institutions, such as politicians, corporate managers, professionals and professors, the media have both direct and indirect power on the lives of most people in society. This is specifically true for the role of the media in ethnic affairs, for the following reasons stated by Teun van Dijk (2000):

- Most white readers have few daily experiences with minorities.
- Most white readers have few alternative sources for information about minorities.
- More than most other topics, ethnic issues provide positive but polarized identification for most white readers, in terms of Us and Them.
- The media emphasize such group polarization by focusing on various Problems and Threats for Us, thus actively involving most white readers.
- Minority groups do not have enough power to publicly oppose biased reporting.
- The dominant (media) discourse on ethnic issues is virtually consensual.
- In particular there is little debate on the new racism.
- Anti-racist dissidents have little access to the media. (ibid.)

With these observations van Dijk argues that the media offer their audiences a limited and restricted point of view towards ethnic affairs. There seems to be a prevalent and dominant discourse and little or no possibility to sufficiently counter it. However, fifteen years after the publication of van Dijk's "New(s) Racism" Web 2.0 and social media, which allow people to

create, share, or exchange information, ideas, pictures, and videos have increased immensely. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social networking sites are

> web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. (211)

Early examples of such services are SixDegrees (1997), followed by Makeoutclub (1999) and Friendster (2002). MySpace (2003), LinkedIn (2003), Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006) were launched shortly after and the social networking sites rapidly gained popularity. On October 4, 2012, Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook, announced that Facebook had reached the milestone of 1 billion monthly active members (qtd. in Kiss). Meanwhile, a French analyst group stated that on June 1st 2012, Twitter reached the 500 million users level (qtd. in Volders 10). The effects of social media effects go both ways, on the one hand they offer a space of participation in which audiences can counter the dominant discourse, but on the other hand it can also make racism more discursive, as they are expressed and confirmed by everyday text and talk, and seem "normal, natural, and common-sensical" (van Dijk 34) to those who engage in the act of discrimination.

Whereas some argue that online platforms offer a lower threshold for participation and a more egalitarian space for communication (Kellner 2001), others bemoan the ways in which online discussions erupt into a series of rants and insults among participants, known as 'flaming wars' (Alonzo and Aiken 2004). In calling themselves 'platforms' Facebook and Twitter strategically invoke connotations of openness, egalitarianism and progressiveness in its mediation of discussions. The notion of the public sphere is a central concept in thinking about communication and citizen engagement. Jürgen Habermas (1974) proposed, "early modern capitalism of the eighteenth century encouraged reasoned and critical political deliberation. Here a public sphere offered a space where public opinion could be formed out of rational public debate, enhancing consent and decision-making. Conversation is therefore considered to facilitate democracy" (qtd.in van Es). Habermas' work is often used as a normative ideal against which communication structures like the Internet are evaluated. However van Es et.al argue that the suitability of the concept for evaluating communication structures in online and social media was contested by, amongst others, Habermas himself. Rather than to work with the normative model based on Habermas' work this thesis will look into newer models such as 'flaming wars' the reversed agenda setting theory to examine social media. Flaming wars concern "an overly heated and unthinking series of rants among

participants" (Alonzo and Aiken). It is characterized by the use of profanity, obscenity and insults and often involves short responses. It is important to keep both Habermas' public space and flaming wars in mind as it contrasts public debates patterns on social media.

1. 4. Language and Terminology

The terminology of racial difference within the Dutch language is a vital part of this thesis' discourse analysis of contemporary media. Historically the Netherlands has been a multicultural society from time to time before; "in particular, the larger cities in the 17th century were quite mixed" (Hondius 275). In her chapter "Black Dutch Voices: Reports from a Country that leaves Racism Unchallenged," Hondius gives a brief overview of how Dutch terminology evolved over time:

> From the second half of the 19th century, the Netherlands became a much more closed, virtually all-white society until the 1940s. Therefore, its postwar development into a country with 13% people of color, from the former colonies, North Africa, Asia, and other countries was a real and visible change in just a few decades. Meanwhile, the terminology of racial difference came to a standstill. As a result of this stagnation, once ordinary terms but now archaic terms lingered on or were re-installed, *such as halfbloed* (litt. 'half-blood,' for a person of mixed ancestry), and *neger ('negro'). (275)*

Although these terms might sound out-dated and offensive to a foreign ear they are still commonly used. A struggle for the 'right' words started within public policy and social sciences that offered new words as alternatives to racial-sounding words. Instead of "race," words such as culture, ethnicity, migration, diverse, minority—"and the infamous dichotomy *allochtoon* versus *autochtoon* (institutionalized codes for born outside or in the Netherlands, usually meaning western versus non-western, black or brown versus white)" (ibid.)—replaced older terms. In 2009 the minister of Integration Eberhart Van der Laan proposed the term *nieuwe Nederlanders* ('new Dutch') to replace *allochtoon (*Van der Laan). Similarly, instead of using the term "racism," the inclination is to use the word discrimination, or *onderscheid maken* (distinguishing, sorting out, making difference), or *uitsluiting* ("exclusion")" (ibid). The discourse analysis of the several forms of media will show which terms are used most frequently and by which sources in particular.

1.5. Black Pete

Most of the reactions to Fer's selfie that were posted on social media refer to the Dutch tradition of *Sinterklaas* ('Saint Nicholas') and *Zwarte Piet* ('Black Pete'), celebrated annually on 5 December. It became a hotly debated topic in 2013 when United Nations investigator Verene Shepherd, in an interview, called the Dutch government's attention to what she considered the racist traits of the tradition. In "Mediating the Black Pete discussion on Facebook: Slacktivism, flaming wars, and deliberation" van Es et al. state that Sheperd had just started investigating the matter on behalf of the U.N. in response to a complaint concerning the portrayal of the Black Pete characters in the celebration:

> These black-faced companions of the Saint are depicted with curly black hair and thick red lips, and wear colorful attire including a lace collar and earrings. Shepherd's initiative unleashed until then fairly latent discussion in the Netherlands, and brought to the public's attention the fact that some had long experienced this representation as inherently racist and as glorifying the Dutch colonial past. (van Es et al. 1)

However, many Dutch denied such claims. Some argued that Black Pete's facial colour is due to the black soot in chimneys through which they climb to deliver presents to families during the night. Others took issue with the UN 'meddling' in 'Dutch culture'. The discussion exploded due to the attention in the social media, the platforms Facebook and Twitter played essential roles largely due to the introduction of *Pietitie* (literally 'Pete-'ition), a Facebook page in defence of the current form of the celebration. It soon became the fastest growing and most-'liked' Facebook page ever launched in the Netherlands with currently 1.9 million likes. As a form of pro-Pete protest the initiators set out to collect as many likes as the U.N. institutional page had at the time, which was one million. They accomplished this goal within just one day. Other voices central in the discussion countered pro-Pete actions, like Facebook page *Zwarte Piet is Racisme* ('Black Pete is Racism', ZPR), a page initiated by a group of long-time Black Pete protesters. Furthermore celebrities started to comment publicly, for example Anouk, a popular Dutch singer, who took an explicit stand in the discussion. In many other countries the use of blackface, a form of theatrical makeup used by performers to represent a black person, is seen as anachronistic and racist.

1. 6. Properties of the News

News reports have a distinctive generic structure that is politically and socially motivated, which distinguishes them from other genres. They need to reconcile two basic and contradictory functions: to entertain and to inform; or as van Leeuwen puts it, "they have to be attractive and entertaining with an element of drama attached to them and at the same time they have to be factual and objective in their presentation of events" (qtd. in Zaher 68). In addition to informing and entertaining, the news has other essential functions in society. News reports do not only present information, they also provide their audiences with a framework for understanding it. Talbot et. al. state that in addition to telling us what we want to know, need to know, and should know, "news reporting… often comes packaged with the interpretation as well" (Talbot et. al. 39). Thus, news not only disseminates information, it contributes to shaping people's knowledge, "especially as regards topics about which people are ignorant (Zaher 69). Moreover, Zaher argues, news plays a major role in representing culture, people, politics and other aspects of social life" (ibid.). Altogether, the news media actively shape public opinion, reinforce consensual notions and have the power to set particular agendas.

1.6.1. Agenda-setting theory

In 1972 Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw published their theory on the Agenda-Setting function of mass media in the context of the 1968 American presidential elections and changing political campaigns. In the study that has since been known as the 'Chapel Hill study' they interviewed 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and asked them what they thought were the most significant issues on the political agenda during the elections. McCombs and Shaw compared the results with the local and national news media coverage and found a strong correlation. It appeared that the media were able to take salient issues on their media agenda, and transfer them onto the public agenda; they argued that,

> In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues—that is, the media may set the "agenda" of the campaign. (166)

After publication Agenda-Setting theory has been examined and revisited extensively in over more than 400 studies and remains to be relevant to this date, for example in communication studies and more recently in the study of Citizen Journalism. In Citizen Journalism, ordinary people create news stories on social media, weblogs, or personal websites about events they witness or issues on their minds. This is called the Reversed Agenda-Setting effect, coined by Kim Sung-Tae and Lee Young-Hwan in 2007, which shows that such a news story, or even a comment or post, can become so popular that the traditional media eventually report on the issue. Leroy Fer's Selfie is an excellent example of reversed-agenda setting and thus how citizens now have the power to determine the discourse on social media and even affect the traditional media. Both McCombs & Shaw's (1972) and Kim & Lee's (2007) versions of Agenda-Setting theory will return in the chapters of this thesis.

1.7. Methodology

The aim of this section is to introduce the method used for the data analysis, which will focus on the following major questions:

1. How exactly do members or institutions of the media talk and write about the case study of Leroy Fer's selfie?
2. What do such structures and strategies of the media tell us about the development, reinforcement, legitimation, and hence reproduction of racism?

They will be discussed through three elements of discourse analysis, namely textual analysis, stylistics, and semantics.

1.7.1. Text Analysis

The analysis of "texts", that is the object that can be "read" whether it is a news broadcast, article, or post on social media, will offer a systematically and descriptive account of the structures and strategies, at various levels, of written and spoken discourse. It will focus on those aspects of text and talk that are particularly suitable for use by the media in influencing the minds of others. As Van Dijk explains in "Analyzing Racism Through Discourse Analysis" (1992), discourse structures are often informally divided into *surface* structures and *deep* or *underlying* structures. Although all structures are invisible, surface structures are usually associated with the forms of language use one can see or hear, "such as sounds, intonations, gestures, letters, graphic displays, and words in a sentence" (103). Underlying structures, however, are usually associated with meaning and strategies of understanding and

production, for instance syntactic structures such as word order or the use of active and passive constructions. Word order may express the role and prominence of underlying meanings. In the description for action, for example, the responsible agent of an action is usually referred to with the expression that is a syntactic subject of the sentence that occurs in first position. Other roles, such as patient, experiencer, object, or location, are usually expressed later in the sentence. Thus order may signal how speakers interpret events. Van Dijk also argues that underlying structures can be used to make agency less prominent by expressing the agent role later in the sentence as in the passive sentence "A group of black youths was harassed by police officers," (105) or by omitting an agent, "Black youths harassed" (ibid.). Similarly, agents can be replaced by nominalizations, as in "The harassment of black youths was a major cause of the riots in Brixton" (ibid.). With these headlines, van Dijk demonstrates how making some minor chances in structures can modify supposedly objective information in news reports.

This may also be true for the order of the text as a whole; a news report for instance, will highlight the information that is found to be important by its placement early in the report, the headline, or in the lead. Van Dijk writes, "textual order may express or signal prominence, relevance, importance, or interestingness, according to the mental models, and hence the possibly biased opinions, of the author". Such detailed analysis of seemingly invisible and accidental properties of news reports may reveal much about the underlying strategies and representations of the media. By examining the different representations of Leroy Fer's selfie of the Dutch national soccer team, its textual structures, and prominence in the news we will be able to verify today's presence of notions such as New racism and Smug ignorance that have dominated studies of Dutch Racism.

1.7.2. Stylistics

Even more than sounds, graphics, and syntax, the context-dependent variations in the choice of words, or lexical style, can signal significance. Van Dijk uses the "wornout" but efficient example of "freedom fighters" versus "terrorists" (106). The difference between these two words signals that whereas in modern public discourse about ethnic affairs overt racism has become rare or marginalized, negative or positive associations may occur rather subtly.

Analysing word choice will show that much of the information in discourse, and hence in news reports, is implicit and supplied by the recipients on the basis of their preconceived knowledge of the context. Van Dijk (2000) holds that in news and editorials about ethnic

affairs many meanings are merely implied or presupposed and not explicitly stated, "Because of social norms, and for reasons of impression management, for instance, many negative things about minorities may not be stated explicitly, and thus are conveyed 'between the lines'" (39).

1.7.3. Semantics

There are other means to convey or signal underlying opinions or contextual structures, namely through perspective and the degree of completeness. Events are usually described from a specific *perspective*. Van Dijk explains that this may literally be "the point of view from which events are seen, or more generally the social or political "position" of the speaker" (108). For example, incidents of racism are described rather differently by victims than perpetrators, "or more generally from the perspective of majority group members or that of minority group members. As soon as descriptions of ethnic events may imply negative properties of the majority, and especially of white elites, they may be seen as 'controversial'" (ibid.). The Dutch television show called "*Het Grote Racisme Experiment*" ("The Great Racism Experiment") broadcast on November 7th 2013, illustrates van Dijk's argument about majority perspectives and controversy. Without going into great detail about the content of the show, which is a social experiment in which people were separated based on the colour of their eyes to uncover the absurdity of stereotyping and racism, it reveals an interesting point. The show concluded that in some way or another everyone is guilty of discriminating. This conclusion can be considered to imply negative properties of the majority. Regarding this, according to several newspapers and magazines such as *Elsevier* and *Volkskrant*, BNN, the network that broadcast the show, is said to be a public broadcasting association known for dealing with controversial subjects. In terms of perspective, it can be argued that the only Dutch broadcaster that dedicates a primetime show to racism may count only as "controversial".

The level of description, or the degree of completeness as van Dijk calls it in his 1992 article, is another element that conveys meaning, "events are described at various levels of generality and specificity, (as in headlines versus the later details in a news report), and each level may again be described more or less completely" (112). Generally, important aspects of a newsworthy item tend to be described in more detail. For instance, mentioning the ethnic backgrounds of news actors in crime news may in itself be irrelevant information for the comprehension of news reports, but as van Dijk writes, "such information may nevertheless

be given as if it were an explanation of the actors' actions" (ibid.). The degree of completeness therefore plays a significant role in channeling meaning in news reports.

1. 8. Contents

In terms of content each chapter will discuss the questions stated above through these elements of discourse analysis, textual analysis, lexical form, and meaning. The chapters will be divided by type of Dutch national media: News broadcasts (ch.2), Online news services (ch. 3), and Social media (ch. 4). In more detail, the second chapter will focus on language and visual images used, the timeslot of the item, and how much time they spent on the issue. The goal of analysing the discourse of broadcast news is to display its structure as situated communicative action under conditions of mediation in the specialised domain of news broadcasting. The outcome will be compared and analysed to see whether the news programs have different approaches and attitudes towards racism in the Netherlands and whether or not they offer their audience differing perspectives.

The third chapter will analyse a recent development in news broadcasting, namely the increasingly popular trend of supplying news online. As today's generations are accustomed to having online access 24/7 it is vital to research not only the traditional means of supplying the news on television but also their online equivalents. Each and every Dutch news broadcaster or newspaper has its own online edition and more often than not an application for smartphones. This third chapter will look into the way in which the websites reported on the case study as well as how the international and specifically Dutch news landscape is changing rapidly into an online affair.

The fourth and last chapter will delve into the limitless domain of social media. Although the scope of social media is daunting, this research with its focus on one particular case study will offer a detailed overview of the impact the media have on spreading Dutch racism. Cherribi (2010), Margry (2007), and Herbert (2014), amongst others, wrote that social media are "integral to contemporary journalistic practice, for example providing the means through which targeted advance publicity for broadcasts or features can be circulated and dominant cultural memories can be articulated and refreshed" (Herbert 80). But they are also vital to the articulation of discourses of resistance and to the organisation of counter-cultural solidarities (D'Haenens 2007). This chapter will offer a close examination of the responses to Leroy Fer's selfie of the Dutch national soccer team that appeared on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to determine whether social media is today's crucial platform that fuels racial debates in Dutch

society. It will answer questions such as: Do the various types of social media attract different responses? As Twitter restricts its users to a maximum of 140 characters, does that influence the nuance of the response?

Chapter 2 – Television News

2.1 Introduction

In the spring of 2012, Dutch public service news broadcaster *NOS* launched a new format for the *NOS Journaal*, traditionally the most viewed news program in the Netherlands. Chief editor of *NOS Journaal* Marcel Gelauff stated that important changes involved the packaging of the news (e.g., news sets, leaders, graphics, and sounds), but the content was modified too: "more human interest, less distant and with an emphasis on the significance of the news for the viewer instead on a focus on facts" (qtd. in Kleemans 1). In "Arousing Television News: Concept, Causes, & Consequences" Mariska Kleemans writes that these modifications had to create a closer bond between the news and the public and aimed to improve the public task of the *NOS*, which is to provide objective and reliable news to the Dutch public. In particular, the *NOS* wanted to serve a wider audience with the renewed news format: "young and old, high and low educated and everything in between" (ibid.). What they did not mention is that these changes that appeared in the format of *NOS Journaal* were necessary in order to survive in the rapidly digitalizing landscape of traditional news media, as those media have been undergoing even more rapid changes now the internet, with its proliferating blogs, social media formats, emails, websites, etc., generates vast amounts of easy and always accessible information.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the Dutch news market it is important to note that it radically changed before; from a market with one single news program at the end of the 1980s to a highly competitive market with various news programs at the beginning of the new millennium. Kleemans gives a brief overview how the Dutch TV news landscape changed,

> "With the entrance of commercial television in the Netherlands in 1989, commercial broadcaster *RTL* became the first competitor for the *NOS Journaal* by broadcasting their own news program: *RTL Nieuws*. In 1995 commercial broadcaster SBS introduced *Hart van Nederland*, a news program focusing on local and national news. In subsequent years, the Dutch news market expanded with several news programs, either featuring (inter) national events or only domestic news. (9)

Today, both international and Dutch national news services continue to evolve in many ways—mostly because of the ongoing revolution in communication media. Traditional news services such as broadcast networks and newspapers have been sustaining great losses in

circulations, audiences, and advertising revenues. The Western press is struggling to find a new business model that will enable the "old media" to survive economically. This year's data of Reuters Institute Digital News Report, published June 2015, shows new insights about digital news consumption, including a quickening of the pace towards social media platforms as routes to audiences, together with a surge in the use of mobile phones for news and significant growth in video news consumption online.

This struggle is clearly noticeable within the Dutch television landscape; in order to survive Dutch news broadcasters not only made changes in their format and content, they aired news websites that feature regularly updated news stories in text, as well as reports in audio and video. This thesis will not only discuss the traditional television news bulletins *NOS Journaal, RTL Nieuws,* and *SBS' Hart van Nederland*, but will also examine the online editions of the news suppliers and independent website NU.nl, as audiences are increasingly switching to using online means to catch the latest news (see ch.3). Against the background of the theoretical framework sketched in the previous chapter, the rest of this chapter gives a characterization of the representation of the selfie posted by Leroy Fer in news reports of the 17th of November on Dutch national television. On the basis of a review of some relevant research, this chapter is organised in a systematic but informal discourse analysis of news reports.

2.2 Discourse Analysis

"Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, the mass media shape our perspectives of the world and focus our attention, influencing our views about what are the important topics of the day." (McCombs, 1978)

The goal of analysing the discourse of broadcast news is to display its structure as situated communicative action under conditions of mediation in the specialised domain of news broadcasting. The analysis will start by systematically answering the first question: *How exactly do members or institutions of the media talk and write about the case study of Leroy Fer's selfie?* By assembling the facts and figures of several news broadcasters and their websites concerning the case study, the first question will lay the groundwork for the second, more interpretive question: *What do such structures and strategies of the media tell us about the development, reinforcement, legitimation, and hence reproduction of racism?* This chapter will examine the three national daily television news programs with the highest viewing

figures at the time of writing according to Stichting Kijkonderzoek, a Dutch institution that researches viewing facts and habits: *NOS Journaal* (1.509.000), *RTL Nieuws* (1.110.000), and *Hart van Nederland* (1.346.000). As the programs are only known in the Netherlands Holli Semetko and Patti Valkenburg compared them to international equivalents. In their article, "Framing European Politics: A content analysis of press and television news", they argue that the public newscaster *NOS Journaal* and commercial *RTL Nieuws* are best compared to the main evening network news programs in the U.S. and Britain but *Hart van Nederland* (translated as "the heart of Holland"), however, differs from the others. Although it is a national news program as well, it reports stories rarely found on the other two news programs, including local stories of "how cow strayed out of the farmer's field" (98), and it pays little attention to foreign or political news.

On Friday 14th of November 2014, the day Fer's selfie was posted, none of the national television news distributors reported on the event. It was on the 17th that *NOS Journaal, RTL Nieuws,* and *Hart van Nederland* dedicated a news item to the event in their prime time broadcasts. Both *NOS* and *RTL* allow their viewers to revisit the items through either an online website or an official YouTube channel. *Hart van Nederland,* however, does not offer an option to revisit the broadcasts after one week, therefore the information in this overview on *Hart van Nederland's* item was found in short, separately posted, videos on their official website. With regards to timeslots, McCombs and Shaw (1972) divided media news content into "major" and "minor" levels to see whether there was any substantial difference in mass media across topic. Any story 45 seconds or more in length is defined as major. As table 1 will show, *Hart van Nederland* only made two video clips of less than 30 seconds available for their audience to revisit, hence this chapter will focus mostly on the major stories by *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws*. The following table presents an overview of the items and compares them in terms of length, presentation form, interviews, and key features. It aims to present an overview of the news items in a factual form, after which it will be discussed in more detail.

Table 1: TV News Reports: 17th November 2014			
	NOS Journaal	***RTL Nieuws***	***Hart van Nederland***
Time of Broadcast	20:00 (8pm)	19:30 (7.30pm)	22:39 (6pm)
Length	01:49 minutes	03.30 minutes	00:27/00:26 minutes
Presentation	- 1 anchor:	- 2 anchors:	- Hart van Nederland:

form	Rik van de Westenlaken - Voice over: Lidwien Gevers	Merel Westrik Rick Nieman - Voice over: Pim Sedee	Two clips, made available on their website co-occurring with commentary.
Interview/Quoted	- Robin van Persie: *National team captain of the Dutch football team* - Ivo Opstelten *Minister of Security and Justice at the time*. - Ahmed Marcouch: *Member of Dutch Labour Party PvdA*	- Robin van Persie - Ahmed Marcouch - Official statement by KNVB - Douwe Linders: *Attorney* - Pim Sede *RTL reporter* - Theo de Roos: *Professor of Criminal Law*	- Clip one: general information on the event, no interviews - Clip two: interview Robin van Persie
Key Features/ Focus of the report	- Selfie and the racist reactions it received on Facebook - Investigation and possible prosecution by OM - The role of the internet as an 'open sewer' - Responses by Van Persie, Marcouch, and Opstelten (whose name is not mentioned on screen)	- Selfie and the racist reactions it received on Facebook - Investigation and possible prosecution by OM - Responses by Van Persie and Marcouch - Legal options explained by an attorney - Discussing the identities of the 'responders' who posted the reactions on Facebook - Opinion by criminal law expert	- Selfie and the racist reactions it received on Facebook - Investigation and possible prosecution by OM - First report to state the names of other football players in the photo

2.2.1 Text analysis

The textual analysis of these three television news items will both examine the surface and underlying structures of the reports, i.e. graphic displays, the order in which the information is presented, and the content of what is said. For the purposes of this section the relevant and significant examples were selected, for the full transcriptions of the items see appendix 1. Initially, the following sections will continue to be factual whereas the discussion section will present an interpretive layer to the analysis in finding how the facts result in the development, reinforcement, legitimation, and hence reproduction of racism in the Netherlands.

2.2.1.1. Order

McCombs (1978) states that there are at least three ways in which we can explain the influence of news media on the minds of their audiences. First there is awareness, which simply means the choice of the newscaster to mention the event or not. If not, the audiences are not aware of the issue and have no knowledge of them at all. Secondly, there is the influence of priorities. The media prioritizes the subjects and determine what they find more important than others. As stated earlier, the audience has a tendency to copy these priorities from the media agenda onto the public agenda. In between these versions of influence resides the third agenda setting effect, salience, which means most noticeable or more important. Volders explains it as following, "The media puts more emphasis on one issue than on the other, after which one issue is regarded as more salient on the personal agenda of the audience" (13); by for example spending more time on an item. Order in television news reports is a vital part of salience and so it is crucial to look at the way in which the editors present the attributes that define the issue: the facts, opinions, interviews, etc. This is called second level agenda setting or framing effect; the order in which the news is presented gives the public an idea of what the important issues are, the details that are presented about that certain issue determine the public's opinion and view on that certain issue. When considering this thesis' case study it can be said that *RTL Nieuws*, with its three minutes and thirty seconds, credits the most time and attention to the event, reinforced by the fact that they employ six external sources to explain the situation whereas *NOS Journaal* spends one minute and forty-nine seconds and three external comments seconds on the event.

Now, this section will go deeper into structure by breaking up the reports into several fractions. Firstly the opening of the report, which similar to a newspaper article headline, expresses the topic. In "New(s) Racism" (2000) Van Dijk holds that topics express the most

important information of a text. As news in general is written top-down, usually beginning with a summary of an event in the headline or lead, it also sets the mood of the news report. In other words negative topics have negative consequences on the minds of the recipients, and more importantly, "they are also best understood and memorized by the readers" (38). Keeping this in mind, the broadcast of *NOS Journaal* starts their news item with emphasizing the photo with its responses and mentions the possible prosecution of the individuals who posted racist responses on social media in a secondary position:

> (1) Ja een, uh, onschuldige selfie, een foto van negen donkere spelers van het Nederlands elftal. Op Facebook werden daar direct tientallen racistische opmerkingen geplaatst en het Openbaar Ministerie gaat nu onderzoeken of die opmerkingen strafbaar zijn en of vervolging mogelijk is.
>
> [Yes, an, uh, innocent selfie, a photo of nine dark players of the Dutch national soccer team. It immediately received dozens of racist responses on Facebook and the Public Prosecuter's will start an investigation whether the comments are prosecutable.]

RTL Nieuws, by way of contrast, opens with the comment that the Public Prosecutor's office will investigate the matter and mentions the selfie secondly.

> (2) Het openbaar ministerie gaat onderzoeken of de racistische reacties op een Selfie van het Nederlands elftal strafbaar zijn. Het gaat om deze foto, Leroy Fer plaatste de Selfie op zijn Twitter account en niet lang daarna verschenen de eerste racistische opmerkingen op Facebook.
>
> [The Public Prosecutor will investigate whether the racist reactions on a Selfie of the Dutch national team are prosecutable. It involves this photo: Leroy Fer posted the Selfie on his Twitter account and the first racist comments appeared not long after.]

NOS Journaal topicalizes the Selfie by then listing some of the responses on Facebook whilst *RTL* stays on the topic of legal action explaining that the Minister of Justice and the Dutch soccer association KNVB want action. Such seemingly minor differences in opposing structures, rarely noticed by receivers, set the mood of the item and feed underlying attitudes of the recipients and can result in a different way of interpreting the issue.

The second consequential element in terms of order is the sequence of external comments and/or interviews (note that the substance of the interviews is equally important and will be discussed in section 2.2.4: Meaning). According to Steven Clayman and John Heritage, who wrote *The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air* (2002), the news interview is now increasingly used as a finished news product in its own right and functions as an alternative to the traditional narrative or story form of news presentation, "although the

news story remains important, a significant proportion of the news content now consists of a journalist asking questions of politicians, experts, or others who are "in the news" (1). Both the reports of *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* confirm this observation as the shows indeed spend more time on showing several comments/interviews with a politician, experts, and a public figure instead of information being solely provided by the anchor.

As indicated in table 1, *NOS Journaal* has the following sequence of interviews: Robin van Persie, voice-over fragment, comment by Ivo Opstelten, comments by Ahmed Marcouch. *RTL Nieuws* spends more minutes on the issue and includes the comments of six different sources: Robin van Persie, Ahmed Marcouch, statement of the KNVB, Pim Sede, Douwe Linders, and Theo de Roos. One of the two videos published by *Hart van Nederland* includes the comments by Robin van Persie as well. Seeing that all three news suppliers started their interview sequence with van Persie means that they considered him to be the first and foremost source to quote as a well known public figure and soccer player associated with Dutch nationality; followed by politician Ahmed Marcouch who adds a political point of view. After showing the same sources *RTL Nieuws* chose to include two more explanatory sources, namely a legal source to suggest possible legal options, a *RTL* reporter who delves deeper into the identities of the perpetrators, and lastly a professor of Criminal Law who discusses which comments could be prosecutable. As explained earlier, the theory of Agenda-Setting (1972) maintains that the media is capable of placing an item in the focus of public attention by establishing salience by the order in which items such as interviews are presented and the amount of time that is credited to an item. Although the sequence of interviews indicates that *RTL* spends more time on the report than *NOS* and offers more perspectives with more external sources, which implies that it is a more thorough and nuanced report, we can only draw such conclusions when the contextual significance and contents of both reports are examined in order to see in what ways they mediate racism (2.2.4. and discussion).

2.2.1.2. Graphics

Today, our culture is increasingly visual in which consumers are daily faced with a barrage of options from which to obtain news and information. Broadcast and publication editors must be visually sophisticated to keep up with the high demands of consumers. The organizational hierarchy of most newsrooms now includes a "graphics" or "art" department that is home to a numbers of graphics reporters creating visually engaging illustrations to engage the audience. Information graphics and visual elements, whether for print, broadcast, or the web, provide a

method for simplifying complicated or numerically dense information, not only for making it easier to understand but more palatable for the time starved consumer as well. Thus, information graphics should be viewed as a way to thoroughly explain, enhance, and complement written stories in news coverage, as well as a viable independent form of storytelling. In the 1970s cognitive psychologist Allan Paivio developed the so-called Dual Coding Theory, which proposes that "memory consists of two separate but interrelated codes for processing information—one verbal and one visual. By integrating illustrations with text or elaborating on illustrations with explanations, the brain will encode information in both verbal and nonverbal forms, and memory is likely to be enhanced" (qtd. in George-Palilonis 7). Put simply, graphics stimulate more brainpower than words or visuals alone, leaving a greater impression on memory.

In analysing *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* several graphical distinctions occur most likely to? have an influence on the recipient's interpretation of the news item. Both *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* show the Selfie in the first scenes of the item but approach the graphics differently. *NOS* shows an image of the Facebook page including the Selfie and highlights the comments by enlarging them separately. *RTL,* however, splits the screen in two equal parts; the right side shows the list of comments whereas the left side focuses solely on a highlighted comment. The difference lies in the point of focus, *RTL* clearly displays the comment separately from the list for the audience to make a distinction between the separate comments whereas *NOS* does not separates the comments from the list and emphasis the connection between the comments.

A second graphical difference entails the visualisation of the official response by the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB). *RTL* presents the official statement in a full-screen image or a so-called infographic, which are— whether statistical, cartographic, or diagrammatic—meant to demonstrate data visually and holistically:

> (3) "De KNVB en de spelersgroep zijn van mening dat er tegen opgetreden moet
> worden door het Openbaar Ministerie. Mocht het nodig zijn dat de KNVB en de spelers
> een aanvullende verklaring geven, dan doen we dat."
> [The KNVB and the national team are of the opinion that the Public Prosecutor should
> take action. If an additional testimony is necessary, we are prepared to give it.]

RTL explicitly employs visuals in an infographic to be as explanatory as possible, allowing the words to qualify, specify, and organize the comment. *NOS,* on the other hand, mentions a different comment by the KNVB: "de bond noemt de reacties onsmakelijk", ["the association considers the comments to be distasteful"], without adding visual aid. The graphics in news

broadcasts help the viewers to absorb and retain background information while continuing to take in a steady stream of facts, hence the difference in tactics implies that *RTL* wants its audience to understand and remember the comment while *NOS* considers it to be of less urgency.

2.2.3. Lexical style

After having examined the order of elements and the graphics in the news reports this section will focus on the content of the script and the interviews. Variations in the very choice of words may signal vast underlying complexes of contextual significance. For example, which particular words did *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* select to introduce the Selfie and the comments on Facebook to their audience? And how does that add to the development, legitimisation, and reproduction of racism? The latter question will be considered in the discussion section, as this section will first objectively state the prominent differences of how both sources talk about the Selfie to achieve a clear conception of their approaches without drawing any conclusions.

The first essential difference of word choice occurs in the opening sequences of the reports by both news broadcasters. As previously stated in (1), *NOS Journaal* describes the photo as an "innocent Selfie of nine *dark* players of the Dutch national team". The anchor immediately indicates the skin tone of the football players after which he refers to the racist responses on social media. In the succeeding scene the voice over uses the term "*gekleurde* spelers" ["*coloured* players"], The *RTL* anchors, however, do not mention the skin colour of the football players throughout the entire report; skin tone is mentioned solely during the interviews by external sources.

Secondly, the two news programs selected different comments from Facebook to show in their reports.

NOS Journaal:

> (4) "FC aap", "Allemaal Zwarte Pieten", "Waar is de man met de mijter?"
>
> ["FC Ape, "All Black Petes", "Where is the man with the mitre?"],

RTL Nieuws:

> (5) "Allemaal zwarte pieten", "FC aap", "Losgebroken van de ketenen dan krijg je dit", en "Bananen shake"
>
> ["All Black Petes", "FC Ape", ""They broke loose from their chains and then this happens", and "Banana shake"]

NOS focuses on three comments, two of which refer to the Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet tradition and the debate about racism going in the country at that time of year. As was noted in section 2.2.1.2 on graphics *NOS Journaal* presented the comments in such a fashion that a connection between the comments was implied. *RTL* chose four more dispersed comments, which returns in their lexical choice of the comments.

Thirdly, the role of the Internet and social media is explicitly mentioned in the *NOS Journaal* report in a rather direct demeanour:

> (6) "Dat internet af en toe als een open riool wordt gebruikt zijn we inmiddels aan wel gewend, maar deze uitingen roepen op alle fronten hevige verontwaardiging op.
> ["By now we have become accustomed to the idea the Internet is being used as an open sewer, but these utterences have caused severe public outrage.]

After which they show a comment by Ivo Opstelten, Minister of Justice at the time, who says:

> (7) "Nou het is walgelijk wat ik zag."
> ["Well what I saw was repulsive"]

As van Dijk argued in "New(s) Racism" (2000), much information and connotations in news are merely implied or presupposed and not explicitly stated, "because of social norms, and for reasons of impression management, for instance, many negative associations with certain topics may not be stated explicitly and are conveyed between the lines" (39). However, *NOS* explicitly uses derogatory words such as "riool" ["sewer"] and "walgelijk" ["repulsive"] to indicate a negative context. In other words, when there are options of lexicalization, choosing one word or sentence rather than another often has contextual reasons, such as the opinions or choices of the speaker about a certain situation.

2.2.4. Meaning:

This section will delve into the meaning of the features and details that appeared in the news items on 17 November 2014 and will discuss the perspectives in the interviews as well as the degree of completeness of the news reports. This section will show that a news report is not a passive record of perceptions; it is the consequence of a selection process by the people who make the news. In *Manufacturing the News* (1980) Mark Fishman explains how the decisions 'newsmakers' make, or the methods they use to present and generate the facts, influences the story and the way in which the audience eventually perceives the public events reported in the news:

> News is a determinant form of knowledge not because the world out there already
> comes in determinant forms but because people employ specific methods which strive
> to organize that world into something coherent. News is the result of the methods
> newsworkers employ. Were different models used, different forms of news would result
> and publics would know the world outside their direct experience in a very different
> way. (14)

Through examining the different choices of *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* in newsmaking this section aims to demonstrate some ways in which basic, but superficially unremarkable, choice of features influence the audience's point of view on the issue.

2.2.4.1. Perspective and degree of completeness

As indicated in table 1, both *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* included comments by Robin van Persie and Ahmed Marcouch. Interestingly, the two networks chose other elements of the footage they acquired. The following quotes indicate the differences (displayed in *italics*) and the similarities in the interviews as seen in the reports.

NOS Journaal:

> (8) *Ik denk wel dat het, eh, echt tijd is om die mensen aan te pakken. Want wij*
> *vertegenwoordigen allemaal het Nederlands elftal en daarin maakt de kleur absoluut*
> *niet uit. Bij ons is dat zeker niet zo en dat moet eigenlijk ook niet zo zijn in het leven.* Ik
> kan met mijn hoofd er niet bij dat dit nog steeds een item is onder heel veel mensen.
> ["*I think that, eh, it is time to deal with these people. We all represent the Dutch*
> *national team and skin colour has nothing to do with that. At least in our team it isn't*
> *an issue and it shouldn't be in life either.* I can't wrap my head around the fact that this
> is still an issue for a lot of people"]

RTL Nieuws:

> (9) Ik kan met mijn hoofd er niet bij dat dat nog steeds een item is onder heel veel
> mensen. *En dat ja, mij maakt het heel erg verdrietig en ik vind het echt shocking.*"
> [I can't wrap my head around the fact that this is still an issue for a lot of people". *And*
> *yes that makes me very sad and I think it is truly shocking.]*

Although both networks incorporated the same interview they decided on two contrasting angles. Whereas *NOS Journaal* includes van Persie's comment on skin colour and how that should not be an issue in any case, *RTL Nieuws* makes the report sentimental by focusing on the subject's feelings, which can be considered as a part of sensationalism. Hendriks Vettehen

observed that sensationalism is a "theoretical concept that encompasses those features of journalistic products that are capable of attracting the attention of the audience" (2007). The most recent category of sensationalism is called *vivid storytelling*. Hendriks Vettehen, Nuijten, and Peeters (2006) state that the basis of this category is situated in the Vividness Theory of Nisbett and Ross (1980). It revolves around the idea that vivid information has a greater inferential impact because it is more attractive and able to hold the attention of the receiver. Vivid information can be defined as emotionally interesting, "concrete and imagery-provoking, and proximate in a sensory, temporal, or spatial way" (Nisbett & Ross 45). Examples of vivid storytelling are the insertion of comments to exemplify the public opinion.

    RTL's approach of personalising the event returns in the comments by reporter Pim Sede, who researched and reflects on the racist responses on social media:

> (10) "We hebben wat profielen, wat Facebook profielen, kunnen bekijken en er zitten mensen tussen van wie je zulke uitingen misschien helemaal niet verwacht. Bijvoorbeeld een opa met twee kinderen, twee kleinkinderen; een vrouw van middelbare leeftijd, en ja blijkbaar voelen ze zich vrij om zulke uitingen te plaatsen."
> ["We have looked into some of the profiles, Facebook profiles, and the people who responded were unexpected. For example, a grandfather with two children and two grandchildren and a middle-aged woman, who apparently felt the liberty to post such comments.]

Providing the audience with personal information on the identities of the respondents allows them to identify with the topic on an emotional level. Stating that ordinary people, of whom you might not expect it, posted the racist responses personalises the interpretation of viewers as it makes the viewers a part of the issue.

    We shall now examine the interview with Ahmed Marcouch in a similar manner to the analysis of Robin van Persie's comments since both newscasters included his comments. Marcouch's words offer the audience in both reports a political point of view, as he is a member of the Dutch parliament.

NOS Journaal:

> (11) "Racisme en discriminatie zijn in dit land verboden en op het moment dat er op social media op die manier uitingen worden gedaan en bijvoorbeeld zo'n foto wordt verwijderd in plaats van dat je die racisten van die uitspraken doen aanpakt dan vind ik dat eigenlijk een verkeerd signaal."

> ["Racism and discrimination are illegal in this country, when such responses appear on social media and they delete the photo instead of punishing the racists who posted them, I think we are sending the wrong signal."]

RTL Nieuws:

> (12) "Afschuwelijk en afgrijselijk, ongegeneerd racisme en discriminatie. Ik heb ook meteen dan de minister van Veiligheid en Justitie en de minister van Binnenlandse Zaken vragen gesteld om ervoor te zorgen dat het Openbaar Ministerie en de politie werk maken van het aanpakken van deze racisten."
>
> [Abhorrent and horrific, its shameless racism and discrimination. I immediately enquired the minister of Safety and Justice to make sure that the Public Prosecutor and the police take action in punishing these racists.]

In (12), *RTL Nieuws* starts with vivid image-provoking language to set the tone of Marchouch's comment. *NOS Journaal*, on the other hand, chose a different fragment of Marcouch's comments that explains his view on sending out the wrong signal and the punishment of racism and stresses that it is illegal. Marcouch is the last external source that *NOS Journaal* consults.

    RTL Nieuws calls on two other sources to offer a professional or specialized view on the legal situation. First, attorney Douwe Linders:

> "Je zou kunnen zeggen dat dit een strafbare belediging is en misschien wel een strafbare groepsbelediging van donker, uh, donkergekleurde mensen"
>
> ["You could say that counts as a penal insult and perhaps a penal group-insult of dark, uh, dark-skinned people."]

Although his comments should function as an explanatory and specialized view, which adds to the level of description, he remains speculative and gives no decisive verdict. The relevance of this source and whether it adds to the degree of completeness could therefore be questioned.

    We have reached the final *RTL* interview with professor of Criminal Law, Theo de Roos, which is perhaps the most explicit example of how some ideologies are conveyed through news reports. As some of the racist comments on social media were made within the context of the Black Pete debate it is important to know that Sinterklaas' helpers or assistants, called Zwarte Pieten ["Black Petes"], all have separate tasks and names like for example "Wegwijs Piet" ["Navigation Pete"] or "Rijm Piet" ["Rhyme Pete"]. Professor de Roos is asked to explain the comments to the Selfie on Facebook and whether they are unlawful and racism or not:

"Als je nou kijkt naar 'Hulp piet' dan zeg ik nou dat weet ik niet uh dat kan een flauwe grap zijn of zo, maar als ik kijk naar 'Bananenshake' zit je met een verwijzing naar, hè uh, het gebruik door apen bijvoorbeeld in een oerwoud, dan zit je al over de grens. Dat geldt ook wel voor de 'losmaken van de ketenen en dan krijg je dit' met name dat laatste is behoorlijk giftig en uh ja als het gaat om uh aap dan is het zonder enige twijfel een racistische belediging."

["When you look at 'Helping Pete' I would say, well I don't know, it could be a silly joke or something, but when I look at 'Bananashake' we see a reference to, well uh, monkeys in a forest for example, and that crosses a line. The same goes for 'break loose from their chains and then this happens'; especially the latter is quite poisonous. And, well, yes, when they say monkey then it is without a doubt a racist insult."

With prof. De Roos as a professional source *RTL* aims to add credibility to their report, however, the content of prof. De Roos' comments regarding racism is open for debate as well (see discussion). Ultimately, after having examined the contents of the interviews, we see that the last two external sources did not add factual information but added a level of vivid story telling to a achieve a more memorable impact.

2.3. Discussion and conclusion

So, based on these findings, our first assumption is that the news media do not passively describe the facts of this case study; their role is more active and reconstructive. As van Dijk already argued in 1988, the processes of news production involve more than just "selection and summarization of important events (or rather, of source texts such as eyewitness testimony, press releases, press conferences, public statements, scholarly reports, etc.). News reports have a specific schematic format, a specific lexical style, and their own rhetoric" (154). Depending on the type of TV program, like in this case *NOS Journaal*, *RTL Nieuws,* or *Hart van Nederland,* many cognitive and textual transformations separate source texts from the final news report. Events may become more focused, personalized, and dramatized in such transformations. After analysing the two news reports by *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* in great detail we can finally look at what their strategies tell us about the development, reinforcement, legitimation, and reproduction of racism.

Firstly, the way in which *RTL Nieuws* presents the newsworthy event of the Selfie by Leroy Fer and the responses on social media contains some signs of Dutch ignorance as explained earlier. For example, the analysis shows that they do not mention or explicitly name

race or skin colour in the report, except in comments by external sources. It *reinforces* the prevalent denial of racism and reflects Hondius' argument that, "Rather than a heavy taboo, there is a lighter but widely agreed upon general consensus about not mentioning skin colour, Ras, daar doen wij niet aan—'We don't do race'" (qtd. in Smith 233).

Although, in terms of Agenda-Setting, *RTL Nieuws* spends significantly more time and sources on the issue compared to the other newscasts, the contents of the report and interviews for example also indicate some level of denial and ignorance. The comments by prof. Theo de Roos lead us back to the notion of smug ignorance, which refers to the self-imposed ignorance of white people when faced with racism. On the one hand, he *legitimizes* racism by accepting the term "hulp piet" ["Helper Pete"] saying it could be a silly joke" but on the other hand, he argues "Bananashake" is definitely racism due to its allusion to "monkeys in a forest". The question that arises from his comments is why can "Hulp Piet" be discarded as a silly joke while "Bananashake" cannot? With his comments de Roos falls into the traps of smug ignorance, he refers to knowing something but also not wanting to know, "Something that, perhaps with a bit of effort, you should know by now" (Duurvoort).

As stated in the first chapter of this thesis it is important to keep in mind is that this denial around race and or racism makes it difficult openly to discuss it, question it, and ultimately fight it. From the start of the report *NOS Journaal* speaks plainly about skin colour without avoiding conceivably unpleasant terms. The language that *NOS Journaal* uses is strong, like for example saying that we have now become used to the fact that the Internet is being used as a sewer or saying that action should be taken against the individuals who posted the comments on social media, but they do not deny that racism is a major issue in the Dutch society today. In fact, the lexical choices and choice of comments made by the *NOS* seem to want to convey the seriousness of the issue and emphasise that action should be taken. In terms of the *development* of racism, with their report, *NOS Journaal* seems to act against racism to reduce its force in society without denying its existence.

Chapter 3 – Online News Formats

3.1 Introduction

Not much research examines the new digital saga of racial and racist discourse in, and in response to, online news formats. Most of traditional communication theories and hypothetical models are suggested and tested on mass media like newspapers and television. However, with the emergence of the Internet, a new news service silently took over a significant part of the traditional mass media readership, namely online news sources. Given the skyrocketing growth of social networking sites and users many traditional news services saw the online arms of their papers or broadcasts as a way to attract new readers. Currently every newscaster or newspaper has an online equivalent and it appears that today's generations follow the news through applications and frequently updates news websites instead of the traditional means of television and print. The annual report of Dutch newspaper circulation published by HOI, the Dutch National Institute for Media Auditing, shows that the number of paid subscriptions for all national newspapers declined in 2014. On May 12th, 2015, the report revealed that in fourteen years the numbers of the four major newspapers decreased by 40%, as presented by *Financieel Dagblad* in fig. 2. The number of digital subscriptions has increased from 25% to 59% between 2005 and 2014 (Statistics Netherlands). Considering the importance of the Internet in news diffusion online this chapter aims to develop the research on traditional mass media, such as McCombs and Shaw's Agenda-Setting theory, by exploring new functions of internet-mediated news instead of focusing on the extensively research print media. It will employ the same method and structure as the previous chapter to systematically show differences of how Dutch racism is mediated through examining the reports on news websites in the three days (15-17 November 2014) following the publication of the photo on Twitter on the 14th.
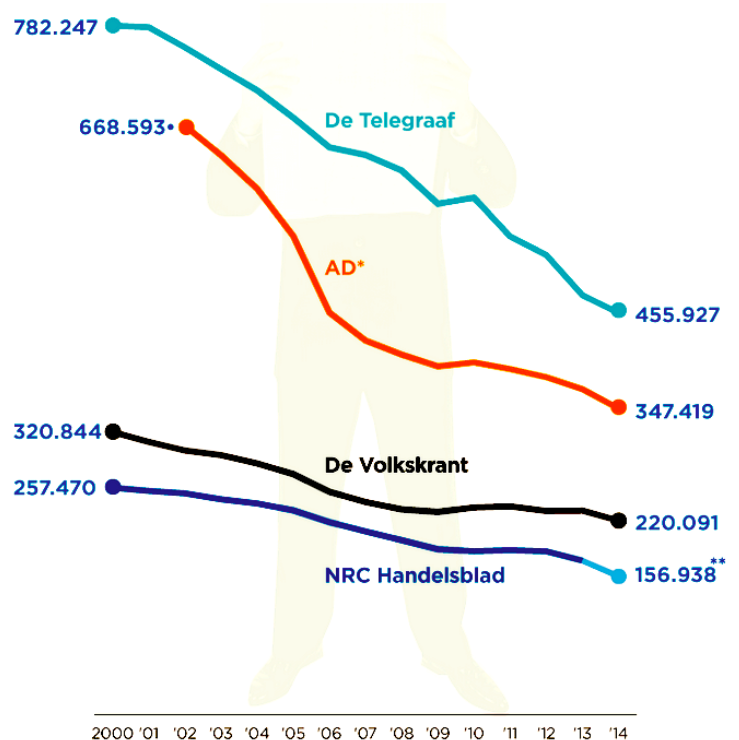
(Fig. 2)

3.2 Discourse Analysis

"Race matters in cyberspace precisely because all of us who spend time online are already shaped by the ways in which race matters offline, and we can't help but bring our own knowledge, experiences, and values with us when we log on" (Kolko et. al., 2000)

In their article "Racist comments at online news sites: a methodological dilemma for discourse analysis" Matthew W. Hughey and Jessie Daniels interrogate the methodological dilemmas of studying racism in online comments. They state that in 2004, "awash with the hope for a public sphere reinvigorated by the popular Internet, the online arms of many U.S. newspapers opened their websites for comments" (332). However, ten years into the experiment numerous newspapers and other news sources have abandoned the practice of allowing comments, "Online news sites have adopted a variety of strategies to deal with offensive comments, including turning 'comments off,' not archiving comments, and adopting aggressive comment moderation policies" (ibid.). During the mid 2000s, many news sites saw the arrival of the modern Internet as a new and potential instrument for the spreading news. Hughey and Daniels explain,

> It is fair to say that many thought such user and comment-communities would manifest, at best, as benign discussions of the news at hand or, at worst, as heated discussions surrounding hot-button topics covered by the story. Such an assumption was motivated by the notion that the web is, at its core, a neutral space (Bleeker, 1995; Schwartz, 1995) free of the confines of racial identity in which minds are privileged over the "politics of the skin" (Fanon, 1967). (335)

Although this might seem naïve today, newspapers were unprepared for the ways in which race performs like a "ghost in the machine". The notion of the "ghost in the machine" is derived from British philosopher Gilbert Ryle's 1949 description of René Descartes' mind-body dualism. It has since been appropriated "to emphasize the concern that advances in computer technology might bring about computer self-consciousness; the consciousness being the "ghost." (344). The phrase is employed here to destabilize the online/offline dichotomy in order to illustrate how racial categories and conceptions continue to "haunt" virtual sites of social interaction. Altogether, the advent of the comments sphere of online news outlets has significantly transformed the discursive shape of racism. The presence of racist comments in the public sphere suggest a problem that Howard Rheingold has referred to as a "classic tragedy of the commons dilemma," in which "flamers, bullies, bigots, charlatans, know-

nothings and nuts in online discourse take advantage of open access to other people's attention" (qtd. in Hughey and Daniels 333).

    This section will focus on the main articles published on Dutch online news formats to get a factual view of the way in which this form of media presents the news event of the Dutch national team Selfie as contrasted with traditional television news. It will not, however, go into great detail regarding the comments on the official sites themselves as the variety of strategies that news sites adopted to fence of offensive comments present discourse analytical problems. Chapter 4 will discuss the racist comments posted on social media, in the context of the Dutch team Selfie, where these restrictions have not yet appeared. By focusing solely on the press releases on the official news websites we will still be able to see how the stylistic and semantic structures impart in the development, reinforcement, legitimization, and hence reproduction of racism. The news formats that will be reviewed are the three online equivalents of the newscasters discussed in the previous chapter: *NOS.nl, RtlNieuws.nl*, and *HartvanNederland.nl*. Additionally, it will discuss online news provider *NU.nl,* Holland's biggest independent online news format with daily 2.5 million online visitors on the responsive site, iOS and Android apps. On a monthly basis *NU.nl* attracts 1 billion page views, 75% of which are on a mobile device. Many news providers now have, next to websites, applications for mobile devices like smartphones and tablets that allow readers 24/7 access to news in their preferred environment. The following table presents an overview that allows us to compare the articles in terms of source, date, time, and headline in a factual form, after which they will be discussed in more detail.

Table 2

Datum	Tijd	Rubriek	Headline
NOS.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	-		
16-11-2014	18:02	BINNENLAND	"Vervolging voor racisme tegen Oranje"
	21:32	VOETBAL	"Van Persie wil actie na racistische reacties"
17-11-2014	15:24	ALGEMEEN	"OM onderzoekt racistische reacties of selfie Oranje
	15:56	BINNENLAND	"Leroy Fer een aap noemen, mag dat?"
RTLnieuws.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	17:32	BINNENLAND	"Foto Oranje-spelers leidt tot racistische reacties"
16-11-2014	-		
17-11-2014	15:34	BINNENLAND	"Marcouch: "Pak racistische reacties op selfie hard aan"
HartvanNL			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	20:15	ALGEMEEN	"Spelers Oranje ernstig gediscrimineerd"
16-11-2014	20:58	TOPNIEUWS	"Van Persie reageert op racisme na selfie"
17-11-2014	17:16	TOPNIEUWS	"Orienterend onderzoek naar racistische racties selfie"
NU.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	-		
16-11-2014	21:23	ALGEMEEN	"Van Persie hoopt op vervolging na racistische reacties op foto"
17-11-2014	15:28	POLITIEK	"OM onderzoekt racisme tegen Oranjespelers"

Table 2 (translation)

Date	Time	Section	Headline
NOS.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	-		
16-11-2014	18:02	DOMESTIC	"Prosecution racism directed at Dutch team"
	21:32	FOOTBALL	"Van Persie wants action after racist responses"
17-11-2014	15:24	GENERAL	"Public Prosecutor investigates racist responses directed at Selfie by Dutch team
	15:56	DOMESTIC	"Calling Leroy Fer a monkey, is that OK?"
RTLnieuws.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	17:32	DOMESTIC	"Photo Dutch team leads to racist responses"
16-11-2014	-		
17-11-2014	15:34	DOMESTIC	"Marcouch: " Serious action should be taken against racist responses"
HartvanNederland.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	20:15	GENERAL	"Players Dutch team severely discriminated"
16-11-2014	20:58	TOPNEWS	"Van Persie responds to racism on Selfie"
17-11-2014	17:16	TOPNEWS	"Exploratory investigation for racist responses to selfie"
NU.nl			
14-11-2014	-		
15-11-2014	-		
16-11-2014	21:23	GENERAL	"Van Persie hopes for prosecution after racist responses to photo"
17-11-2014	15:28	POLITICS	"OM investigates racism directed at Dutch team

3.2.1 Text analysis

Similar to the textual analysis of the previous chapter this analysis will both examine the surface and underlying structures of the reports, i.e. graphic display, the order in which the information is presented, and the content of what is written. As the subjects of this chapter are actual 'texts' instead of spoken words in videos it is relevant to also analyse the syntactical elements of the headlines seeing that word order will reveal many significant facts such as the use of active and passive constructions, and the prominence of underlying meanings. For the purposes of this section the relevant and significant examples in the articles were selected, for the full texts see appendix 2. Initially, the following sections will continue to be factual whereas the discussion section will present an interpretive layer to the analysis in finding how the facts result in the development, reinforcement, legitimation, and hence reproduction of racism in the Netherlands.

In comparison to table 1, which includes an overview of the broadcasts on the Selfie, the first observation that can be made from this overview in table 2 is that it was three days after the Selfie was posted, on the 17th, that the television news broadcasters *NOS Journaal* and *RTL Nieuws* dedicated news items of 1:49 and 3:30 minutes during their prime time broadcasts. The online media were significantly quicker in publishing the news as *RtlNieuws.nl* published an article on the 15th of November at 5.32 pm entitled "Photo Dutch team leads to racist responses". The *NOS* website first reported on the event, a full day later, in an article called "Prosecution for racism directed at Dutch team". *NU.nl* was last to report the news whereas *HartvanNederland.nl* was comparatively quick on the 15th. Let us return to McCombs and Shaw's Agenda-Setting theory (1972) and the three tactics that allow the media to influence the minds of the audiences. As explained, the first one was awareness, or the choice of the news provider to mention the event or not. In terms of the presence of the Selfie in the online news media we see that some news websites considered the event to be more prominent than others. *RtlNieuws.nl* and *HartvNederland.nl* gave the item priority (McCombs' second media tactic), which offered their audience the chance to copy it onto their own public agenda. As both news formats continued to publish on the topic in the following days they created salience, the third agenda-setting effect. This means that *NOS.nl* and *NU.nl* were already a few steps behind on their fellow online news formats.

3.2.1.1 Order

Firstly, this section will examine the headlines of the first articles that the websites posted because the highest topics of a news report are always expressed in the headline. Sometimes this allows manipulation: some important topics may be purposefully "downgraded" and not be expressed in the headline, whereas more detailed information of a news report may nevertheless appear in the headline. To illustrate this phenomenon we return to the example of "Black youths" by Van Dijk (1991, 2000), mentioned earlier in chapter one of this thesis. He makes a distinction between the way in which headlines can be presented: "A group of black youths was harassed by police officers", "Black youths harassed", and "The harassment of black youths was a major cause of the riots in Brixton". It does not only set the mood negatively or positively, it also signals agency and topicalizes the rest of the article. As a matter of fact, in the coverage of the two "riots" in 1985 in the British press, the occasion of these riots—the shooting death of a Black woman resulting from a police raid—was less prominently topicalized than the ensuing violence of Black youths (van Dijk 1991). Furthermore, in the description of action, for instance, the responsible agent of an action is usually referred to the expression that is syntactic subject of the sentence, and that occurs in first position. Thus order may signal how speakers or writers interpet events, that is, what their mental models of such events look like, and how they influence the mental models of their readers.

The headlines are analysed in a chronological order with regard to syntax and word choice: **RtlNieuws.nl** posted the first headline **(15-11-2014):**

>   (15) "Foto Oranje-spelers leidt tot racistische reacties"

>   ["Photo Dutch team leads to racist responses"]

The order of the sentence shows that *Rtl* made the "photo" of the Dutch team the subject of the sentence. In terms of semantic relations in generative grammar it takes up the agent role, which is the participant in the sentence that he meaning of the verb specifies as doing or causing something, possibly intentionally. By giving the photo this position in the sentence it becomes the responsible agent of the action and by leaving out the specific individuals that posted the racist reactions their responsibility is taken away. On a slightly different note, it should be explained that "Oranje" ["Orange"] is a nickname for the Dutch national football team. Orange represents the Dutch national colour historically, and it is the colour of the Dutch team home shirts.

Hart van Nederland.nl: (15-11-2014)

>   (16) "Spelers Oranje ernstig gediscrimineerd"

[“Players Dutch team severely discriminated”]

Hart van Nederland takes a different approach. In this sentence, the players of the Dutch team are the subject and take the patient role, which is the participant that the verb characterizes as having something happen to it, and as being affected by what happens to it. Note the agentless passive; by whom was the Dutch team severely discriminated? This takes away responsibility for the racists and suggests a victim role for the Dutch team.

NOS.nl: **(16-11-2014)**

(17) “Vervolging voor racisme tegen Oranje”

[“Prosecution racism directed at Dutch team”]

NOS presents yet another version of the event. The headline opens without an agent or patient role but makes “vervolging” [“prosecution”] tts subject. It emphasizes the prosecution instead of any responsible agent; however, it does make clear that the Dutch team was the target of racism.

NU.nl: **(16-11-2014)**

(18) “Van Persie hoopt op vervolging na racistische reacties op foto”

[“Van Persie hopes for prosecution after racist responses to photo”]

Lastly, *NU.nl* adds a new character to the ensemble; Dutch team captain Robin van Persie, a character who is mentioned by the other news formats in a separate article posted in the days. This headline includes an agent, Van Persie who hopes for prosecution, the racist responses, and the photo. The grammatically active sentence makes the title more urgent. The headline includes more information than the other headlines as *NU.nl* was last to report the issue and needed to catch up with the others.

3.2.1.2 Graphics

The overall strategy of much majority discourse, specifically online discourse, includes the use of graphics or visual expressions, such as the position of news reports, size, fonts of headlines and leads, and the use of photographs. Pictures, for example, can be a compelling means for the interpretation of texts, “and hence for the formation of (biased) models of the events the texts are about” (Van Dijk 2000, 106). All four news sites display a fairly large sized picture of either the Selfie or a different photo of the Dutch national team. This indicated that photographs are a set feature in online news media. Animation for online graphics differs greatly from traditional newspaper articles or even television news reports as they are generally accompanied by a degree of interactivity uncommon in any other form of

graphic story telling. Jennifer George-Palilonis wrote a practical guide to 'graphics reporting' in which she explains, "The nature of the Internet is such that the reading experience can and should be *non-linear"*. In other words, while print media—such as newspapers and magazines—generally promote a linear engagement in which the audience reads a story or visual package in a predetermined order" (33)—beginning, middle, end—the online format allows the audience the opportunity to choose the order in which they will engage with information. For example, some words in the online text are highlighted and provide a link to another webpage or photo link when you click it:

> (19) Vooral op Facebook, waar dezelfde foto gedeeld werd door
>
> voetbalnieuwssite Voetbalzone, regende het vervelende reacties.
>
> [Mostly on Facebook, where the same photo was shared by
>
> football news site Voetbalzone, it rained nasty comments"]

Online readers have greater amount of control over the pace and order in which they receive information. That means that interactive graphics that the audience gets to pick and choose, click and navigate in a random fashion must be planned and written to stand on its own. Thus, the most effective online graphics are those "presented in a manner that promotes a high degree of interactivity while at the same time observing a clear and logical organization with attention to the variety of ways in different online readers may choose to engage with the content" (ibid.). The recurring photos of the Dutch national team are confirming examples of how online articles use pictures to engage the readers.

Another significant element that sets online news media apart from traditional media is the previously discussed option of 'reader comments'. As Hughey and Daniels explained, many online news sites have adopted a variety of moderation policies to minimize the number of offensive comments. United States flagship papers demonstrate varied but relatively unified approaches towards civil commentary. For example, the *New York Times* stated on its website that one should:

> use respectful language that does not abuse or discriminate on the basis of race, religion,
> nationality, gender, sexual preference, age, region, disability, etc. Hate speech of any
> kind is grounds for immediate and permanent suspension of access to all parts of this
> service. (qtd. in Hughey and Daniels 335)

USA Today states that: "Hate speech or stereotypes that attack or disparage an ethnic, sexual or religious group or a member of any such group may result in comment removal" (ibid.). Lastly, The *Wall Street Journal* states that users will:

> not upload, post or submit anything that is obscene or contains profanity or that may be
> hateful or offensive on racial, ethnic, sexual or any other grounds; is harmful, vulgar or
> distasteful; or is defamatory, libelous, or invades another person's privacy or proprietary
> rights. (ibid.)

Before a shocking wave of hateful and discriminating comments many of these papers allowed anonymous commenting. As a moderation policy the readers of these papers must now register and "provide "real life" contact information about their identities, ways to verify their identity, and how they may be contacted if need be" (ibid.). The Dutch online news sources are at variance when it comes to free commentary. *NOS.nl* and *NU.nl* do not offer the possibility of commenting whatsoever, except a link to share the article on social media platforms Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and email. *RtlNieuws,nl* and *HartvanNederland.nl*, however, do allow comments from registered readers. The *RtlNieuws,nl* article received 187 responses and *HartvanNederland.nl* got a minimal of 3 comments. On both sites the comment option is displayed on the bottom of the page, after the article and visual images. As opposed to the United States online newspapers there is no mentioning of moderation strategies to prevent comments that include obscenity or racism.

3.2.3. Stylistics

After analysing the specific order in the headlines and the graphics of the online articles this section will focus on the content of the articles posted online. Variations in the topics may signal vast underlying complexes of contextual significance. For example, which particular focus points and specific words did *RtlNieuws.nl, HartvanNederland.nl, NOS.nl, and NU.nl* use in the context of the Selfie and the comments on Facebook? And how does that add to the development, legitimisation, and reproduction of racism? The latter question will be considered in the discussion section, as this section will first objectively state the prominent differences of how both sources write about the Selfie to achieve a clear conception of their approaches without drawing any conclusions.

Being the first to report on the chain of events revolving around the Selfie, *RTL Nieuws'* first article has an explanatory purpose to inform their readers on what had happened on social media, as prosecution was not on the agenda yet. The article starts with:

> (19) Een onschuldige selfie die international Leroy Fer vanmiddag deelde op social
> media heeft tot veel racistische reacties geleid. De middenvelder van Oranje zette
> vandaag een <u>gezellige foto</u> van hemzelf en zijn collega-internationals Gregory van der

Wiel, Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekik en Memphis Depay op Twitter en Instagram. De foto werd veel gedeeld op Twitter en Facebook.

["An innocent selfie was shared on social media by international Leroy Fer this afternoon and lead to many racist responses. The midfielder of the Dutch team posted a friendly photo of himself and is co-internationals Gregory van der Wiel, Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekik and Memphis Depay on Twitter and Instagram. The photo was shared repeatedly on Twitter and Facebook."]

Followed by:

(20) "Voor veel mensen was de foto echter ook aanleiding om allerlei racistische opmerkingen te maken."

["However, many people saw this photo as an immediate reason to make various racist comments"]

By using words such as *innocent* and *friendly* to describe the Selfie *RTL Nieuws* conjures affect. The readers are more likely to empathise with the team members as they are portrayed as the victims of racism. The perpetrators are mentioned in a secondary position and are therefore less prominent in the article. This resembles *RTL's* headline, it focuses on the Selfie and the Dutch team instead of the Dutch racists. Note that throughout the full article (see appendix 2) *RTL Nieuws* does not explicitly mention skin colour whatsoever.

Hart van Nederland, being the second in line to post an article on the events on the 15th of November 2014, also provides an explanatory article that starts as follows:

(21) "Spelers van het Nederlands elftal worden ernstig gediscrimineerd op social media. Onder een selfie die voetballer Leroy Fer op facebook plaatste, komt een stortvloed aan racistische reacties binnen. Op de betreffende foto staan spelers Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekijk, Gregory van der Wiel, Leroy Fer en Memphis Depay, die de selfie maakte. Deze foto was voor velen aanleiding om hen uit te maken voor Zwarte Pieten en apen.

["Players of the Dutch national team were severely discriminated on social media. A selfie, posted on Facebook by football player Leroy Fer, attracts many racist responses. The selfie in question includes players Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekijk, Gregory van der Wiel, Leroy Fer and Memphis Depay, who took the selfie. The photo was an immediate cause for many to call them Black Pete and monkeys."]

Although the article seems factual and straightforward, one facet stands out. Again, skin colour or the Dutch racists are not explicitly mentioned, moreover the article uses "gediscrimineerd" ["discriminated"] where the other sources wrote "racist" or "racism".

Initially, *NOS.nl* did not respond to the Selfie or the racist comments it attracted until legal action was mentioned. The first article by *NOS* appeared on the 16th when the Selfie had already become public news through *Rtl Nieuws* and *Hart van Nederland*.

(22) "De PvdA wil dat het Openbaar Ministerie actie onderneemt tegen mensen die zich racistisch uitlieten over een selfie van Oranje-speler Leroy Fer. Op de foto is een aantal gekleurde internationals te zien."

["The Dutch Labour Party wants the Public Prosecutor to take action against the people who posted racist comments on the selfie by Dutch football player Leroy Fer. The photo shows a number of coloured internationals"]

In contrast to the previous news sites *NOS.nl* does call a spade a spade and clearly mention skin colour. The article continues with a determined message:

(23) "De Kamerleden vinden dat op deze manier een signaal kan worden afgegeven dat racistische reacties niet te tolereren zijn."

["Members of Parliament state that this offers a chance to show that racist comments are not tolerated"]

It is only after discussing intolerance of racism and prospective prosecution that *NOS.nl* explains the situation, most likely to inform unaware readers and/or remind the readers of the facts of the now national news event:

(24) "De foto van Fer werd gisteren op Facebook geplaatst. Daar regende het racistische uitlatingen over de spelers op de foto. 'FC Aap', 'allemaal Zwarte Pieten' en 'waar is de man met de mijter', schreven verschillende mensen. De foto is inmiddels van Facebook verwijderd."

["Fer's photo was published on Facebook yesterdag. It attracted a stream of racist utterences concerning the players in the photo. "FC Ape", "All Black Petes", and "Where is the man with the mitre?", as various people wrote. The photo has now been removed from Facebook."]

Lastly, *NU.nl* takes yet another approach in telling the story. On the 16th they publish an article that reports mainly on Robin van Persie's comments:

(25) "Ik word hier heel verdrietig van", aldus Van Persie over de racistische reacties op de selfie waarop een aantal gekleurde spelers van de nationale ploeg staan."

[""This makes me very sad", says van Persie in response to the racist reactions on the selfie that shows a number of coloured players of the national team."]

This article zooms in on the feeling of sadness and disappointment expressed by van Persie.

(26) **"Verdrietig"**

"Ik heb het er met de betreffende spelers over gehad en zij zijn hier ook verdrietig van", ging hij verder. "We kunnen dit niet voorbij laten gaan. Kleur moet niet uitmaken. Wij vertegenwoordigen met z'n allen ons land, maar ook los daarvan is het diep triest dat dit gebeurt."

["**Sad**"]

["I discussed it with the players in the photo and they are sad too", he continued. We cannot let this pass quietly. Skin colour shouldn't matter. We all represent our country together, in any way possible it is tragic that it happens.""]

NU.nl, literally translated as "now".nl, assumes that after three day the Dutch public is informed on the event. It choses a different angle to set itself apart from the others to attract readers. By focusing on the disappointed feelings of van Persie, a renowned soccer player and public figure, it tries to engage readers on a sentimental level. It does not reject skin colour, racism, or the Dutch racists and through the words of van Persie they address the issue head on (see (30)).

3.2.4. Semantics

Through analysing the sources that the articles have quoted we will be able to see how the news sites perhaps implicitly signal underlying opinions or contextual structures. As Shyam Sundar points out in "Effect of Source Attribution on Perception of Online News Stories", considerable ambiguity surrounds the concept of 'source', "while some researchers have conceptualized sources at the level of media channels and technologies, others, especially source-credibility researchers, consider gatekeepers as sources of news" (56). However, when journalists refer to sources, they usually mean the information providers quoted within news stories. Much of the journalistic preoccupation with sourcing "is premised on the belief that receivers actively monitor sources while processing and evaluating the piece of news presented to them" (ibid.) Sundar argues that there is substantial evidence pointing to receiver's bias for human sources in information processing and perceptions of story content. Therefore, this section will discuss the quotes used in the online articles to uncover the underlying motives to influence the reader's understanding of the event.

3.2.4.1. Perspective and degree of completeness

The four news sites quoted the following sources in their articles:

Rtl Nieuws: Daniel Carbot Kerkdijk, editor in chief of the Dutch sports website Voetbalzone.nl

Hart van Nederland: Royal Dutch Football Association KNVB; and Bas Ticheler, press officer of the Dutch National football team

NOS: No external sources

_Nu.nl:_   Dutch team captain Robin van Persie

For each of the four websites, the quotes and their analysis are presented below:

RtlNieuws.nl:

> (27) "Hoewel de foto in de loop van de middag dik 8.000 likes had, waren de reacties zo beneden peil, dat we besloten hebben om de publicatie te verwijderen. Facebook moet leuk en positief zijn, zo vinden wij."
>
> ["Although the photo received more than 8000 likes by the end of the afternoon the comments that it received were so despicable that we decided to remove the publication. In our opinion, Facebook should be a fun and positive platform."]

Voetbalzone.nl's Daniel Carbot Kerkdijk says that they decided to withdraw their association or participation in mediating racism by deleting the photo and the comments. However, deleting such a photo can be considered a message too; instead of dealing with the problem of racism they delete and deny it.

Hart van Nederland:

> (28) KNVB: "We vinden het onsmakelijk. Het Nederlands elftal zou Nederland juist moeten verenigen."
>
> ["We consider it distasteful. The Dutch national team should reunite the Netherlands."]

The KNVB is a well-known association in the Netherlands and their official statement is likely to add credibility in the eyes of the Dutch reader. In _Hart van Nederland's_ second quote, press officer of the Dutch team states that the team will first focus on the next game:

> (29) Tichelaar: ""Daarna komen wij zeker met een reactie."
>
> ["After that, we will give a statement"]

One could argue that the press office of the KNVB awaits the game to anticipate the responses of other institutions or prominent members of society before giving an official response. Again, it signals the precariousness of addressing Dutch racism but offers no direct solution.

Nu.nl:

>(30) "Het is in elk geval niet moeilijk te achterhalen wie het zijn, want bij hun
>reactie staat hun naam en hun profiel."
>["It will not be a problem to find the people who did it, as their responses are
>accompanied by their names and profiles."]

As the other quotes by Robin van Persie, see (25) and (26), have already been discussed in the previous section, example (30) presents his final comment. Van Persie implicitly addresses the Dutch readers and among them the people who posted the racist comments and encourages punishment for their actions.

3.3. Discussion and conclusion

In his 1995 book *Being Digital* Nicholas Negroponte predicted that in the future, online news would give readers the ability to choose the topics and sources that interested them. The vision of "The Daily Me," as Negroponte called it, that seemed cutting edge and worrisome twenty years ago seems to have become partly true. This chapter has shown that audiences are switching to online news providers in great numbers. Although the news broadcasts on television remain to have regular audiences, news websites offer both the producer as well as the consumer the opportunity to keep up to date 24/7. Especially the rise of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets has changed the news landscape. Not only do unlimited access, timing, and location play a significant role, contents are crucial too. It is important to keep in mind that not only consumers have more access to online news media; the online forms of media also have more access to us as readers. For example by creating salience in the numerous and up to date articles they will have more influence on the public agenda and our perception of issues surrounding race and racism.

The editors Beth E. Kolke, Lisa Nakamura, and Gilbert B. Rodman of *Race in Cyberspace* (2000) wrote:

>*"Race matters in cyberspace precisely because all of us who spend time online are*
>*already shaped by the ways in which race matters offline, and we can't help but bring*
>*our own knowledge, experiences, and values with us when we log on"* (Kolko et. al.)

Although it was once believed, the Internet provides no escape route from either race or racism. Instead, racism persists online in ways that are unique to the Internet, "alongside vestiges of century-old forms that reverberate both offline and on (Hughey and Daniels 333).

The first and perhaps most essential finding of this chapter is that smug ignorance indeed plays a significant part in Dutch online media. A number of strategies were used in the online articles to turn a blind eye to the persisting issue of race and racism, even while discussing racism.

From the analysis it appears that the syntactic roles in the headlines have an influential effect on the readers' perception of the issue and therefore play a part in the reproduction of Dutch racism. An agentless passive headline, for example, takes away all responsibility from the Dutch racists who posted the online comments. Although such differences in headlines seem of little consequence they set the tone of the reader's mindset; by ignoring their presence, readers will not feel the urgency or even the presence of racism in Holland.

This is enhanced by the fact that *RtlNieuws.nl* and *HartvanNederland.nl* do not mention the skin colour of the football players in the Selfie at all, as opposed to *NOS.nl* and *NU.nl* who did. In the context of the Dutch colonial past a feeling of shame and guilt remains in national thinking caused by the cultural memories of slavery, the Dutch East Indies, exploitation, and war crimes. That feeling manifests itself in the Dutch tendency to reject their colonial past as relevant for understanding contemporary issues that arise in the media today. According to Essed and Hoving "dominant discourses *miss* historical explanations and *dismiss* the connection between present ethnic humiliations and the brutality of colonization, slavery, and anti-Semitism" (11). The remnants of Dutch colonial past therefore caused a feeling that it is racist to name the colour of a person's skin. However, what is racist is the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to a certain race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race. Racism is a systematic way of doing things that, it "operates by mediating between users and techniques to create specific forms of oppression and discrimination, then enforced forgetting of the familial or historical past is surely a key part of its workings" " (Hartman 1997). By ignoring skin colour these online news sites legitimate and reproduce a false sense of Holland as a 'post racial' or 'colour blind nation'.

Chapter 4 – Social Media

"A.J. Liebling once said, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed to only those who own one." Now, millions do." (Bowman and Willis 47)

4.1. Introduction

Editors of *Race After the Internet* (2012) Lisa Nakamura and Peter A. Chow-White wrote, "The current generation of young people is the first to have always had access to the Internet; these so-called digital natives are both hailed as omnipotently connected and decried as fatally distracted" (1). Today, most of us have the means and power to both produce and consume information on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, which makes the streams of information that reach other individuals increasingly inadequate, including the conversations about race and racism. These mediatized conversations about race, "whether on the Internet with human interlocutors or with the torrent of digitalized media texts" (ibid.), have become an increasingly important channel for discourse about our differences. Therefore, it is crucial that these images and modes of informatics are critically examined as we have become unwilling to have the conversations with each other, face to face. This chapter will have a different structure than the previous three as a discourse analysis is complicated by the involvement of independent users. Christian Fuchs (2014) considers social media a participatory culture, a term often used for designating the involvement of audiences, consumers, users, and fans in the creation of culture and content. The participatory culture model is often used opposed to the traditional mass media and broadcasting model typical of newspapers, radio, and television, where there is one sender with and many recipients, which allows a more structured discourse analysis. Although this chapter does not resemble the others, it will analyse the power of social media considering race and racism by researching both international examples of racism in social media and the events around the publication of Leroy Fer's Selfie with the Dutch national football team.

4.2. Racism and Social media: Revolution 2.0?

4.2.1. Social Media and the Arab Spring

In *Social Media: A Critical Introduction* Christian Fuchs engages in critically analysing the implications of Web 2.0. and social media platforms such as Google, Facebook, YouTube,

Wikipedia, Twitter, for power, the economy and, politics. In doing so he illustrates some changes that occurred in 2011, a pivotal year for social media: "2011 was a year of protests, revolutions and political change. It was a year where people all over the world tried to make their dreams of a different society reality" (2). Wael Ghonim is the administrator of the Facebook page "We are all Khaled Said". He says that this page and other social media were crucial for the Egyption revolution: "I always said that if you want to liberate a society […] if you want to have a free society […] This is Revolution 2.0. […] Everyone is contributing to the content" (qtd. in Fuchs 2) Technology analyst Evgeny Morozov, in contrast to Ghonim, says that social media do not bring about revolutions: the talk of Twitter and Facebook revolutions is "a naïve belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside" (Morozov xiii). Pointing, clicking, uploading, liking, and befriending on Facebook or other social websites would be "slacktivism"—"feel-good online activism that has zero political or social impact. It gives those who participate in 'slacktivist' campaigns an illusion of having a meaningful impact on the world without demanding anything more than joining a Facebook group" (ibid.). The influence that the racist responses by Dutch Facebook users had on both social and traditional media shows that the power of users resides somewhere in between the ideologies of Ghonim and Morozov, which will be explained through the theory of Reversed Agenda-Setting.

4.2.2. Reversed Agenda-Setting

The Dutch national team Selfie is an example of what Kim & Lee called Reversed Agenda Setting. In 2007 Kim Sung-tae and Lee Young-hwan wrote an article called "New Functions of Internet Mediated Agenda-Setting: Agenda-Rippling and Reversed Agenda-Setting" in which they attempted to find what effects the changes in the media environment had on McCombs and Shaw's Agenda-Setting theory. In their study Kim and Lee researched ten cases in which a single person posted his or her concern online, on either a message board, forum or website. Other users then shared this concern massively and the issue turned into an online trend. News websites like the ones discussed in chapter 3 picked up the issue and eventually the traditional mass media covered the issue as well. The following summary of one of their cases illustrates Kim & Lee's research:

> During the Korea-Japan 2002 World Cup Games, on June 13, an accident took place in which two girls were killed by a US armored vehicle. The incident received some mentions in the traditional media but it never became a major headline because the main

topic of the news was the world cup event. The issue seemed to be forgotten until the trial against the US troops started at the end of November. On November 27, an unknown net user posted a message on a website's free debate room in which he proposed a candle light vigil on November 30th. The message spread rapidly across the internet and was soon picked up by OhMyNews, an independent online newspaper which reported on the vigil and posted an article about it. Vigils went on and eventually caused debates on the US – Korean Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), and it became a focal point leading up to the elections in Korean parliament. The vigils even received attention from the US government and foreign media and on December 14th, the day of the largest assembled vigil, drew an official apology from US President George W. Bush. (Volders 16)

The Selfie of the Dutch national team and the racist responses it received went through a similar process, that is to say, the traditional media only reported on the issue after it went viral on the Internet. It became an issue on the public agenda not because of the traditional media, as McCombs and Shaw concluded in their Agenda-Setting theory (1972), but because of the interactivity of the Internet and the determination of the audience.

4.2 3. Backstage and Frontstage Racism

After seeing *how* the racist responses to the Selfie became national news, another question has yet to be answered: *why* did it become national news? Racism in the press is not new (van Dijk 1991, 2000), why does this particular event shock an entire nation and stands out from the others? Simply put, because many now avoid public discourse that even hints at overt racist intent or content. Let us return to the new forms of (Dutch) racism by Barker (1981) and Essed (1991). Barker's New Racism wants to be democratic and respectable, and hence denies that it is racism. Essed's concept of everyday racism counters the view prevalent, particularly in the Netherlands, "that racism is an individual problem, a question of "'to be or not be' a racist". The crucial criterion distinguishing racism from everyday racism is that the latter involves only systematic, recurrent, and familiar practices" (3). In these forms of contemporary racism the notions of denial and ignorance can be considered a significant part, which remain consistent today. Hughey and Daniels (2012) demonstrate how racist rhetoric has changed form: "what once was said in overt Jim Crow-style epithets, now finds expression in subtle, symbolic, and polite forms" (336). They describe two ways that can be used to convey subtle, yet potent racism:

Coded language

Online comment fields engender specific types of subtle and coded language to fly well under the radar. They appear well reasoned and focused on the common good yet are racist nonetheless. For example, in reference to Islam and the conflation of "Muslim" with "terrorist" a comment from the *New York Times* on the 10th of August 2006 states:

> Please explain to me just one more time why we must value diversity, sensitivity and political correctness more than National Security, The 'religion of peace' is at it again! (qtd. in Hughey and Daniels)

Now compare this coded message to some of the comments on the Dutch Selfie:

> "FC aap", "Losgebroken van de ketenen dan krijg je dit", ""Allemaal zwarte pieten", "Bananenshake"

> ["FC Ape", ""They broke loose from their chains and then this happens", "All Black Petes", "Banana shake"]

The comments on the Selfie were not worded in a subtle or coded way whatsoever, which differentiates them from subtle racism in dominant discourse.

"Common sense" racism

When coded language is not used, online commenters often cover their racialised speech in "common sense" appeals to "supposedly race-neutral principles and/or by appealing to historically dominant and well entrenched racial stereotypes that are collectively shared and rarely challenged"(338). This defence usually occurs in three ways:

> (1) abstract arguments that invoke the individual's right to engage in "free speech," (2) accusations of victimhood that appeal to "political correctness," and (3) seemingly matter-of-fact statements that are based on implicit racial stereotypes and myths. (ibid.)

They shift focus from the specifics of the racialised content to abstract principles of democratic discourse. Or to supposedly scientific or "obvious" racial differences considered natural or innate. To illustrate how this "common sense" racism plays out let us look at this example of an online user comment about "Illegal Immigration" (15 August 2006) selected by Hughey and Daniels:

> Immigrants have and continue to change the US landscape. As a 3rd generation CA resident imigrants have effected our lives. The violence and low level of education are the main concerns. Over crowding, over reaching government policies such as rent control to public smoking bans are not what I consider effective government. The CA

school system is closer to the bottom of 52 than the top. This is due to immigrants

whose mother tongue is not english. (338)

Here, the commenter combines his dislike of "politically correct" government policies (e.g. smoking bans and rent control) with his displeasure regarding "immigrants whose mother tongue is not english". Hughey and Daniels rightfully argue that "This comment locates the sources of racialized social problems in the bodies of the darker-hued people, while avoiding the systematic and patterned relations that differently allocate resources and which affect immigration rates". By blaming the "illegal immigrants" the racist discourse slips by and is reproduced in this online space.

Furthermore, it seems that racist discourse has not only shifted form, it has also changed location. Given that racist language has (1) changed form to become more subtle and (2) "moved backstage to private areas, one might view the intersection of racist discourse and the internet as a third space betwixt and between the public and private spheres" (ibid.). It allows for intimate discursive interaction and the formation of an "imagined community", which is different from an actual community because it is not (and cannot be) based on face-to-face interaction between its members (Anderson 1991). The interaction occurs between users who think that they are conversing in the private "backstage," when, in fact, their comments are on a public "frontstage" for everyone to read. The imagined community and the feeling of being "backstage" creates more distance and makes it easier to post whatever opinion online. Now, as opposed to other public discourse, the racist responses to the Dutch Selfie were so blunt and shockingly outspoken that it attracted wide attention. The fact that the Selfie was posted on Facebook, where the entire nation had access to it, by a member of one of the most well known institutions of the Netherlands, its national soccer team, blew up its infamy even more.

4.2. Discourse analysis

Cherribi (2010), Margry (2007), and Herbert (2014), amongst others, wrote that social media are "integral to contemporary journalistic practice, for example providing the means through which targeted advance publicity for broadcasts or features can be circulated and dominant cultural memories can be articulated and refreshed" (Herbert 80). However, they are also vital to the articulation of discourses of resistance and to the organisation of counter-cultural solidarities (D'Haenens 2007). Are social media today's crucial platform to fuel racial debates in Dutch society? First this analysis will introduce the three platforms of social media, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which played significant parts in the online publication of

Leroy Fer's Selfie and how they attracted different responses. What do the numbers of users say about their influence on society? What implications do the specific formats of the platforms have on the message of a post?

4.2.1. *Social media platforms and Fer's Selfie*

4.2.1.1. Facebook

"The sheer online ubiquity of Facebook is astounding" (Wilson et. al. 203). Wilson et. al. share the impressive facts of the use of the platform in their "Review of Facebook Research in the Social Sciences":

> As of February 2012, Facebook had over 845 million users (more than the population of Europe) who spent more than 9.7 billion minutes per day on the site (Facebook, 2012; Rusli, 2012) Users share four billion pieces of content per day, including uploads of 250 million photos, and Facebook is now integrated with over seven million websites and applications (Facebook, 2012; Tsotsis, 2011). In March 2010, Facebook passed Google to become the most visited website in the United States, accounting for 7.07% of all U.S. web traffic (Dougherty, 2010). And Facebook's dominance extends well beyond the United States, with over 80% of current users residing outside of the country (Facebook, 2012). (ibid.)

In other words, since its creation in 2004, Facebook has become a spectacular success by creating a massive new domain in which millions of social interactions are played out every day. After registering to use the site, users can create a profile; add others as friends, exchange messages, post status updates and photos, share videos and receive notifications when others update their profiles.

Although Leroy Fer posted the Selfie of him and his teammates on Instagram, it was quickly 'shared' by football news site Voetbalzone on Facebook. Numerous Dutch users started commenting on the photo which was now posted on Voetbalzone' Facebook page with harmful and overtly racist intentions. The same day Voetbalzone posted this:

> Vandaag publiceerden wij een groepsfoto van enkele voetballers van het Nederlands elftal. Wij betreuren, én nemen pertinent afstand van, de racistische reacties die daarop volgden en hebben er derhalve voor gekozen om deze foto te verwijderen. Onze excuses dat er nog mensen zijn die zo respectloos met elkaar omgaan.

["Today we published a group photo of a number of football players of the Dutch national team. We deeply regret, and distance ourselves from, the racist responses that followed. We have decided to remove the photo. We offer our apologies for the fact that people still treat others with great disrespect."]

Although many applauded the removal of the photo as a sign of resistance against racism other considered it weak. Ahmed Marcouch, member of the Dutch Labour Party said the following in a *NOS Journaal* news broadcast:

"Racisme en discriminatie zijn in dit land verboden en op het moment dat er op social media op die manier uitingen worden gedaan en bijvoorbeeld zo'n foto wordt verwijdert in plaats van dat je die racisten van die uitspraken doen aanpakt dan vind ik dat eigenlijk een verkeerd signaal."

["Racism and discrimination are illegal in this country, when such responses appear on social media and they delete the photo instead of punishing the racists who posted them, I think we are sending the wrong signal."]

The process that can be identified here is that (1) the Selfie was posted by one (publically well-known) individual on Instagram, after which (2) it was shared on Facebook by official sports news site Voetbalzone where is received many racist responses. They removed the photo (3) as a sign of resistance, which fuelled even more criticism. Then (4) it turned into a national debate as other official news sites picked up the event and reported on and ultimately resulted in printed newspaper articles and television broadcast items.

4.2.1.2. Twitter

Twitter was launched in 2006 and has since grown to become the biggest micro blogging service in the world. In May 2012, there were 500 million registered Twitter users, sending an average of 58 million messages per day (Volders 17). Twitter allows its users to send massages of 140 characters, called tweets. With these messages users can comment on or discuss any desired subject. By using a '#', or hashtag, in front of a topic or word people can inform others on their interests of the day and in return they can see what is being said about that same topic by others. Users can start conversations with other users by mentioning them in their message by using a '@', followed by the account name of the person they contact. When one searches on Twitter for content or a hashtag, current tweets, people results/accounts and worldwide Twitter trends are displayed. Volders expresses the signifying benefit of Twitter as a social platform:

> Users can also share messages from others, by 'retweeting' that message. On of the appealing aspects of Twitter is that you don't need to be friends with the people you follow. This means that users can also follow the Twitter activity of people they are interested in or who they admire, like athletes, politicians and musicians. (18)

Twitter is primarily used by millions of people for newsgathering, to stay updated on status updates of friends as well as news media. Many news corporations use Twitter to quickly inform the audience on events by raising interest in a tweet and providing a link to the website of the source. The fact that Tweets contain a restricted number of 140 characters makes it an ideal tool to raise or provoke interest in a topic. It also means that it is not a platform suitable for long, well argued opinion pieces.

Note how it is possible to follow other users, "like athletes" for example, without consent of the other. This enabled website Voetbalzone.nl and many other users to share Leroy Fer's Selfie on their personal Twitter and/or Facebook pages. As explained in the graphics section of chapter 3, nearly every website offers the option to share a post on one social media site onto many other social platforms. This option of sharing between online platforms is what caused the exceedingly fast pace of the racist comments, counter-responses, and online news items.

Another element of Twitter is essential when thinking about the case of the Dutch team Selfie, namely its 140 characters. There is a limitation of freedom of speech and public opinion on Twitter due to this restriction, which leads to the question: Can meaningful political or social debates, such as debates on racism, be based on 140-character short messages? Fuchs holds that "short text may invite simplistic arguments and be an expression of the commodification and speeded-up nature of culture" (8.5). This is where the concept of flaming wars comes in, which concerns "an overly heated and unthinking series of rants among [the] participants. According to Alonzo and Aiken (2004) it is characterized by the use of profanity, obscenity and insults (qtd. in van Es). Flaming wars often involve short responses; the term draws attention in particular to the quality of the debate. The responses to the Selfie, as for example the ones that refer to the Black Pete discussions, were marked by reactions

(Fig. 3)

rooted in a perception that opponents jeopardise Dutch culture and identity.

4.2.1.3. Instagram

Instagram was launched in October 2010 as a free online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of other platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. The service was acquired by Facebook in April 2012 and grew by 23% in 2013 to over 300 million active users as of December 2014 (*Our Story*). Instagram was the original source on which Leroy Fer posted the Selfie, after which it was shared onto Facebook and Twitter. On Instagram only the Selfie now has 1,030 comments and 10,000 likes.

In response to the photo on Instagram many news sites and newscasters identified it as "innocent". However, in "I'm Going to Instagram It! An Analysis of Athlete Self-Presentation on Instagram" authors Lauren Reichart Smith and Jimmy Sanderson hold that sharing a photo or personal information is not as innocent as the media proclaim, especially for athletes. Using these platforms, "athletes take a more active part in their public presentation and share more aspects of their identity than is typically portrayed in mainstream media coverage" (ibid.). Self-presentation traces back to Erving Goffman's (1959) seminal piece, *The Presentation of Everyday Life*. Goffman posited that people functioned as performers, "expressing their identity through verbal and non-verbal massages with a goal to display the most credible image to audiences (others)" (343). Leary and Kowalski (1990) argued that self-presentation tends to be goal-driven, thus, as individuals consider to self-present, they balance both individual goals and the "self" that they perceive the audience desires (Bortree 2005). Goffman (1974) considered self-presentation to consist of both frontstage and backstage performances, "With frontstage performances, one is typically very guarded and cautious of the "self" that they are presenting, whereas with backstage performances, one is generally less scripted and perhaps less filtered with the "self" that is presented" (Smith & Sanderson 344). Goffman argued that self-presentation is a continual process of complex negation between these two positions, each of which may contain a multitude of presentation strategies that a person seeks to manage through a revolving process of interpreting audiences, goals, and contexts.

In this light, the Selfie posted on Instagram, or any photo posted on social platforms, becomes more intentional. As a public figure and athlete, using Instagram, you are always part of the process of complex negation between backstage and frontstage performance.

Although athletes expressing more of their personality on social media can be liberating, it may also foster particular judgements and negative consequences. It was not Fer's intention to become the subject of hate and racism or to start such a heated national debate in the Netherlands. However, calling a Selfie on social media innocent is perhaps not possible anymore because of its incredibly sensitive property of interactivity; anyone with online access can join the debate. The history of hate and racism on the internet, which includes considerably more than Fer's Selfie, caused that one always has to consider what they post, where they post it, and what they might get in return.

4.3. Discussion and Conclusion

As Hughey and Daniels (2013) explained, there are many methodological pitfalls for the systematic investigation of the prevalent pattern of racism in online comments in the public sphere. However, this chapter has dealt with these methodological intricacies by looking at reversed agenda-setting, backstage and frontstage racism, and the implications of the three relevant social media platforms. The analysis showed that the effects of social media go both ways, on the one hand they offer a space of participation in which audiences can counter the dominant discourse, but on the other hand it can also make racism more discursive, as they are expressed and confirmed by everyday text and talk, and seem "normal, natural, and common-sensical" (van Dijk 34) to those who engage in the act of discrimination.

The first observation of this chapter considers the power relations between traditional and social media and how an "innocent" Selfie can turn into a heated national debate. By applying Kim and Lee's reversed agenda-setting theory to the Dutch team Selfie and it appeared that the traditional media started reporting on the issue after it went viral on the Internet. It became an issue on the public agenda not because of the traditional media, as McCombs and Shaw concluded in their Agenda-Setting theory (1972), but because of the interactivity of the Internet and the determination of the audience.

Secondly, after showing *how* the Dutch team Selfie became national news through social media we also observed *why* this example stands out from the others. The unexpected (for some) emergence of overt racism in the online comments to the Selfie shocked the country that is used to subtle and coded racial language, or as Hughey and Daniels put it, "what once was said in overt Jim Crow-style epithets, now finds expression in subtle, symbolic, and polite forms". The idea that overt racism is not present in the Netherlands enhances the general consensus in the Netherlands that racism is nothing more than the expression of

extremist hate groups and usually silences any debate on everyday racism as it "does not happen here". However, by decoding the somewhat hidden racial implication in comments shows that they are in fact present in Dutch society.

Lastly, by discussing the social media platforms separately, we have achieved a better understanding of how the world of social media works. Our analysis of Facebook resulted in the following observation: (1) the Selfie was posted by one (publically well-known) individual on Instagram, after which (2) it was shared on Facebook by official sports news site Voetbalzone where is received many racist responses. They removed the photo (3) as a sign of resistance, which fuelled even more criticism. Then (4) it turned into a national debate as other official news sites picked up the event and reported on and ultimately resulted in printed newspaper articles and television broadcast items. The highly interactive characteristic of Facebook eventually caused the explosion of the topic.

The analysis of Twitter questioned whether such a crucial social debate could be based on the restricted short texts on social media as they may invite simplistic arguments and are expressions of the commodification and speeded-up nature of culture. In the case of the Dutch team Selfie it lead to flaming in the comments and Tweets, like for example the ones that refer to the Black Pete discussions as they were marked by reactions rooted in a perception that opponents jeopardise Dutch culture and identity.

Finally, the workings of Instagram in the context of Fer's Selfie have shown that the possibility of particular judgements and negative consequences is intrinsic to social media. It seems that social media and its users are struggling as much as the online arms of newspapers (ch. 3) with how to disentangle discourse from racism and other cultural wars. The ghost of racist categories and conceptions continues to "haunt" the virtual sites of social interaction, which is one of the reasons why critical theory is important for analysing social media and technology as it allows us to question and explain the online/offline stuggle that has become a significant part of our lives.

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, contemporary visual media present us with increasing numbers and kinds of images so my aim was to emphasise that we must continually reassess our criteria of evaluation, particularly for issues as precarious as racial identity and discrimination. Owing to the fact that the situation in the Netherlands is becoming increasingly hostile towards migrants and other cultures living in the country, both socially and politically, it is necessary to critically look at how the media are influencing our thoughts to fear 'the other'.

Altogether, this thesis has examined the main case study of responses to the photo of the Dutch soccer team published in November 2014 through a critical discourse analysis of three different types of media and integrating the discipline of race relations theory to answer the main research question in a focused yet broad perspective: How is Dutch racism mediated through contemporary visual media?

The analysis of the second and third chapters resulted in several significant observations. Firstly, news media do not passively describe the facts of this case study; their role is more active and reconstructive. The processes of news production involve more than just "selection and summarization of important events (or rather, of source texts such as eyewitness testimony, press releases, press conferences, public statements, scholarly reports, etc.). Depending on the type of TV program, *NOS Journaal, RTL Nieuws,* and *Hart van Nederland,* or their online equivalents *NOS.nl, RtlNieuws.nl,* or *HartvanNederland.nl,* many cognitive and textual transformations separate source texts from the final news report. Events may become more focused, personalized, and dramatized in such transformations. The findings of the analysis also indicated that some news provides fall into the straps of smug ignorance, a characteristic of the Dutch way of dealing with racism. Through denying or ignoring racism they legitimize and reproduce racism. I will state one last time that it is important to keep in mind is that this denial around race and or racism makes it difficult openly to discuss it, question it, and ultimately fight it.

Secondly, from the detailed text analysis of the order, graphics, stylistics, and semantics in television news items, headlines, and articles, we see that the new racism(s) of Dutch society is a system of ethnic or 'racial' inequality consisting of sets of sometimes subtle and everyday discriminatory practices sustained by socially shared representations, such as stereotypes, prejudiced, and coded ideologies. This system is not only reproduced in the daily participation

of social media but especially by the public discourse of traditional media. Text and talk in the news media, function primarily as the source of ethnic beliefs and as a means of creating salience, cohesion, and legitimating Dutch racism. A striking example was ignoring skin colour in online news sites, which legitimates and reproduces a false sense of Holland as a 'post racial' or 'colour blind nation'.

Thirdly, it has become clear that audiences are switching to online news providers in increasingly greater numbers. Although the news broadcasts on television remain to have regular audiences, news websites offer both the producer as well as the consumer the opportunity to keep up to date 24/7.

The fourth chapter dealt with the three relevant social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. It showed *how* the Dutch 'soccer Selfie' became national news through reversed agenda-setting and *why* it was different from other events considering racism. Simply put, because the unexpected (for some) emergence of overt racism in the online comments to the Selfie shocked the country that is used to subtle and coded racial language. Furthermore the chapter showed that social media offer a space of participation in which anyone can post anything, including hurtful and overtly racist remarks. The ghost of racist categories and conceptions continues to "haunt" the virtual sites of social interaction, which is one of the reasons why critical theory is important for analysing social media and technology as it allows us to question and explain the online/offline struggle that has become a significant part of our lives.

As a final remark I would like to inform you on the outcome of investigation conducted by the Dutch Public Prosecutor after the publication of Fer's Selfie on the 14th of November 2014. On the 9th of March 2015 the Public Prosecutor posted an official report that stated the outcome:

> Het OM heeft drie verdachten een transactie van 360 euro aangeboden in verband met hun op Facebook geplaatste reactie op de 'voetbalselfie'. Medewerkers van OM Amsterdam die gespecialiseerd zijn in de strafrechtelijke aanpak van discriminatie beoordeelden de drie reacties van verdachten als 'strafbare uitlatingen'.

> Deze drie verdachten, woonachting in de regio's Den Haag, Rotterdam en Breda, zijn vervolgens door de lokale politie-eenheden gehoord. De officieren van justitie van de betreffende parketten hebben de drie verdachten elk een transactie van 360 euro aangeboden. Wordt de transactie niet betaald, dan zal diegene door het OM gedagvaard worden en alsnog voor de rechter dienen te verschijnen.

It says that the Public Prosecutor has obliged three suspects to pay a fine of 360 euros for posting their comments on the 'soccer Selfie' on Facebook. Staff members of the Public Prosecutor's office who are specialised in the criminal liability of discrimination pronounced the three specific responses of the suspects as 'statements punishable by law'. Needless to say, the Dutch media reported on the official statement by the Public Prosecutor in both online and offline items. I expect there to be strong differences in the representation of the issue in the news items, and more examples of how Dutch racism is mediated. I leave it to you and future research to determine if these expectations are true.

Like Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving's stated in their book *Dutch Racism* (2014), I hope to have opened a much-needed free space in which the concepts of race and racism can be discussed critically, so that it becomes possible to explore the most productive ways to address a social and cultural problem that is as urgent as ever, in the Netherlands as much as elsewhere.

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Fig. 1. Fer, Leroy. Selfie Oranje-speler Leroy Fer. Digital image. *NOS*. N.p., 14 Nov. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2015.

Fig. 2. Number of Digital Subscriptions. Digital image. *Financieel Dagblad*. N.p., 12 March 2014. Web. 10 Aug. 2015.

Fig. 3. Fer, Leroy. Selfie Oranje-speler Leroy Fer. Digital image. *Twitter*. N.p., 14 Nov. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2015.

Appendix 1: Transcriptions News Broadcasts

<u>NOS journaal 20:00 – 01:49 min.</u>

Rik van de Westelaken: "Ja een, uh, onschuldige selfie, een foto van negen donkere spelers van het Nederlands elftal" op Facebook werden daar direct tientallen racistische opmerkingen geplaatst en het Openbaar Ministerie gaat nu onderzoeken of die opmerkingen strafbaar zijn en of vervolging mogelijk is."
Voice over(Vrouw): "FC aap", "Allemaal Zwarte Pieten", "Waar is de man met de mijter?". Het is maar een greep uit de reacties op de selfie van negen *gekleurde* spelers van het Nederlands elftal. Volgens aanvoerder Robin van Persie gaat dit alle perken te buiten.
Interview Robin van Persie: "Ik denk wel dat het, eh, echt tijd is om die mensen aan te pakken. Want wij vertegenwoordigen allemaal het Nederlands elftal en daarin maakt de kleur absoluut niet uit. Bij ons is dat zeker niet zo en dat moet eigenlijk ook niet zo zijn in het leven. Ik kan met mijn hoofd er niet bij dat dit nog steeds een item is onder heel veel mensen.
In beeld: Robin van Persie – Aanvoerder Nederlands Elftal
Voice over: "Dat internet af en toe als een open riool wordt gebruikt zijn we inmiddels aan wel gewend, maar deze uitingen roepen op alle fronten hevige verontwaardiging op.
Interview Ivo Opstelten: "Nou het is walgelijk wat ik zag." *Geen naam in beeld*
Voice over: De PvdA wil dat het cabinet een signaal afgeeft dat racisme niet wordt getolereerd.
Interview PvdA kamerlid Ahmed Marcouch: "Racisme en discriminatie zijn in dit land verboden en op het moment dat er op social media op die manier uitingen worden gedaan en bijvoorbeeld zo'n foto wordt verwijdert in plaats van dat je die racisten van die uitspraken doen aanpakt dan vind ik dat eigenlijk een verkeerd signaal.
Voice over: de KNVB en de spelers vinden dan het OM op moet treden de bond noemt de reacties onsmakelijk, voor zover bekend is er nog geen aangifte gedaan.

<u>RTL nieuws 19:30 – 03:33 min.</u>

Merel Westrik: "Het openbaar ministerie gaat onderzoeken of de racistische reacties op een selfie van het Nederlands elftal strafbaar zijn.

Rick Nieman: Het gaat om deze foto, Leroy Fer plaatste de selfie op zijn Twitter account en niet lang daarna verschenen de eerste racistische opmerkingen op Facebook. **Westrik:** Minister van Justitie, tweede kamer leden en de KNVB roepen vandaag op tot actie en hoewel de spelers zelf geen aangifte doen gaat het OM wel onderzoeken of de schrijvers van de kwetsende teksten vervolgd kunnen worden en mogelijk zelfs de cel in moeten.

Voice over (man): De foto leidde tot de volgende reacties op Facebook: "allemaal zwarte pieten", "FC aap", "Losgebroken van de ketenen dan krijg je dit", en "Bananen shake". De spelers van Oranje zijn geschokt.

Beeld interview voetballer Robin van Persie: "Ik kan met mijn hoofd er niet bij dat dat nog steeds een item is onder heel veel mensen. En dat ja, mij maakt het heel erg verdrietig en uh ik vind het echt shocking." *In beeld: Robin van Persie – aanvoerder* Oranj

Voice over: De reageerders moeten bestraft zeggen de KNVB en politici.

Beeld interview Ahmed Marcouch: "Afschuwelijk en afgrijselijk, ongegeneerd racisme en discriminatie. Ik heb ook meteen dan de minister van Veiligheid en Justitie en de minister van Binnenlandse Zaken vragen gesteld om ervoor te zorgen dat het Openbaar Ministerie en de politie werk maken van het aanpakken van deze racisten." *In beeld: Ahmed Marcouch - PVDA*

Overzicht met reactie KNVB: "De KNVB en de spelersgroep zijn van mening dat er tegen opgetreden moet worden door het Openbaar Ministerie. Mocht het nodig zijn dat de KNVB en de spelers een aanvullende verklaring geven, dan doen we dat."

Voice over: De spelers doen nog geen aangifte maar het OM gaat zelf onderzoeken of de reageerders vervolgd gaan worden en volgens juristen is de kans reëel dat dat ook gaat gebeuren.

Beeld interview Douwe Linders: "Je zou kunnen zeggen dat dit een strafbare belediging is en misschien wel een strafbare groepsbelediging van donker, uh , donkergekleurde mensen, uhm, ik denk ook dat het haalbaar zou zijn in dit geval, men waant zich weleens anoniem op internet maar dat is natuurlijk niet zo en zeker niet op Facebook. De meeste mensen hebben gewoon een account op hun eigen naam en met hun eigen foto dus ze zijn traceerbaar." *In beeld: Douwe Linders - Jurist*

Voice over: Theoretische kunnen de reageerders een half jaar gevangenisstraf krijgen maar vaak leidt het tot een taakstraf".

Rick Nieman: We gaan naar verslaggever Pim Sede op de redactie: Pim, die mensen die de racistische opmerkingen op Facebook hebben geschreven en geplaatst hè, wat zijn dat voor een mensen?

Beeld verslag Pim Sede: We hebben wat profielen, wat Facebook profielen, kunnen bekijken en er zitten mensen tussen van wie je zulke uitingen misschien helemaal niet verwacht. Bijvoorbeeld een opa met twee kinderen, twee kleinkinderen; een vrouw van middelbare leeftijd, en ja blijkbaar voelen ze zich vrij om zulke uitingen te plaatsen. We hebben het ook vaker gezien denk bijvoorbeeld aan zangeres Anouk die sprak zich uit tegen zwarte Piet en zij kreeg ook een stortvloed aan racistische uitingen over zich heen maar in dit geval zou het dus kunnen dat de reageerders wel degelijk vervolgd gaan worden. *In beeld: Pim Sede – verslaggever*

Westrik: Ja, maar Pim wat kun je nou wel of niet zeggen of Facebook? Wat is nou strafbaar en wat niet?

Sede: Dat hebben we voorgelegd aan strafrecht deskundige Theo de Roos en hij zegt dat er inderdaad een verschil in zit maar dat er meerder reageerders zijn die met deze uitingen wel degelijk strafbaar zijn.

Theo de Roos (half beeld: in combinatie met Facebook quotes - Reacties op Selfie): Als je nou kijkt naar 'Hulp piet' dan zeg ik nou dat weet ik niet uh dat kan een flauwe grap zijn of zo, maar als ik kijk naar "Bananenshake" zit je met een verwijzing naar, hè uh, het gebruik door apen bijvoorbeeld in een oerwoud, dan zit je al over de grens. Dat geldt ook wel voor de "losmaken van de ketenen en dan krijg je dit" met name dat laatste is behoorlijk giftig en uh ja als het gaat om uh aap dan is het zonder enige twijfel een racistische belediging"

Interviewer: "En dus strafbaar". **De Roos:** "En dus strafbaar." *In beeld: Theo de Roos – Hoogleraar Strafrecht*

Sede: Openbaar Ministerie gaat nu onderzoeken wie precies wat heeft gezegd en onder welke omstandigheden dat is gebeurt en daarna weten we of er daadwerkelijk reageerders zullen zijn die vervolgd gaan worden.

Westrik: Ok Pim Sede, dank je wel.

Hart van Nederland: 19:18 – 00:27 min.

Oriënterend onderzoek naar racistische reacties selfie.

Het Openbaar Ministerie (OM) gaat een "oriënterend onderzoek" doen naar de racistische reacties op de selfie van Oranjespeler Leroy Fer. Dat laat het OM maandag weten aan Hart van Nederland. Spelers van het Nederlands elftal werden zaterdag ernstig gediscrimineerd op social media. Onder een foto die voetballer Fer op Facebook plaatste, kwam een stortvloed aan racistische reacties binnen. Op de betreffende foto staan spelers Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekijk, Gregory van der Wiel, Leroy Fer en Memphis Depay, die de selfie maakte. Deze foto was voor velen aanleiding om hen uit te maken voor Zwarte Pieten en apen. De KNVB liet maandag in een officiële reactie weten de racistische reacties op de foto 'onsmakelijk' te vinden.

Appendix 2: Newspaper articles

<u>NOS.nl:</u>

"Vervolging voor racisme tegen Oranje"

De PvdA wil dat het Openbaar Ministerie actie onderneemt tegen mensen die zich racistisch uitlieten over een selfie van Oranje-speler Leroy Fer. Op de foto is een aantal gekleurde internationals te zien.

PvdA-Kamerleden Ahmed Marcouch en Keklik Yücel hebben aan de ministers Opstelten en Plasterk gevraagd of het OM onderzoek kan doen naar de uitlatingen en eventueel vervolging kan instellen, ook als er geen aangifte is gedaan.

'FC Aap'

De Kamerleden vinden dat op deze manier een signaal kan worden afgegeven dat racistische reacties niet te tolereren zijn.

De foto van Fer werd gisteren op Facebook geplaatst. Daar regende het racistische uitlatingen over de spelers op de foto. 'FC Aap', 'allemaal Zwarte Pieten' en 'waar is de man met de mijter', schreven verschillende mensen. De foto is inmiddels van Facebook verwijderd.

Gepubliceerd: 16 November 2014 18:02

Foto Oranje-spelers leidt tot racistische reacties

Een onschuldige selfie die international Leroy Fer vanmiddag deelde op social media heeft tot veel racistische reacties geleid.

De middenvelder van Oranje zette vandaag een gezellige foto van hemzelf en zijn collega-internationals Gregory van der Wiel, Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekik en Memphis Depay op Twitter en Instagram. De foto werd veel gedeeld op Twitter en Facebook.

ZIE OOK: PvdA: Bestraf racisme op social media

Voor veel mensen was de foto echter ook aanleiding om allerlei racistische opmerkingen te maken. Vooral op Facebook, waar dezelfde foto gedeeld werd door voetbalnieuwssite Voetbalzone, regende het vervelende reacties. Er werden vergelijkingen gemaakt met apen, en veel mensen beschreven de spelers als zwarte pieten en slaven. "Losgebroken van de ketenen en dan krijg je dit", schreef iemand. Een ander: "Bijna 5 december en dan komen ze overal tevoorschijn."

Beneden peil

Voetbalzone distantieert zich van deze opmerkingen, laat hoofdredacteur Daniel Cabot Kerkdijk weten aan RTL Nieuws. "Hoewel de foto in de loop van de middag dik 8.000 likes had, waren de reacties zo beneden peil, dat we besloten hebben om de publicatie te verwijderen. Facebook moet leuk en positief zijn, zo vinden wij."

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Spelers Oranje ernstig gediscrimineerd

Spelers van het Nederlands elftal worden ernstig gediscrimineerd op social media. Onder een selfie die voetballer Leroy Fer op facebook plaatste, komt een stortvloed aan racistische reacties binnen.

Op de betreffende foto staan spelers Kenneth Vermeer, Karim Rekijk, Gregory van der Wiel, Leroy Fer en Memphis Depay, die de selfie maakte. Deze foto was voor velen aanlei ding om hen uit te maken voor Zwarte Pieten en apen. Ook worden gemene racistische grappen onder de foto geplaatst.

De KNVB reageert verontwaardigd op de kwetsende reacties: "We vinden het onsmakelijk. Het Nederlands elftal zou Nederland juist moeten verenigen." De perschef van het Nederlands elftal, Bas Ticheler, laat aan de redactie van Hart van Nederland weten dat de spelers zich nu concentreren op de wedstrijd van zondag. "Daarna komen wij zeker met een reactie."

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Van Persie hoopt op vervolging na racistische reacties op foto

Robin van Persie zou het een goede zaak vinden als de mensen vervolgd worden die op sociale media racistische reacties plaatsten onder een foto met voetballers van het Nederlands elftal.

De aanvoerder van Oranje zei dat zondagavond na de 6-0 overwinning tegen Letland.
"Ik word hier heel verdrietig van", aldus Van Persie over de racistische reacties op de selfie waarop een aantal gekleurde spelers van de nationale ploeg staan.
Middenvelder Leroy Fer had de selfie op Twitter gezet, waarna verschillende sites de foto op Twitter en Facebook deelden.
Een aantal mensen vergeleek de spelers vervolgens onder anderen met Zwarte Pieten. "Het is schokkend dat zoiets in 2014 nog gebeurt", stelde Van Persie. "Dit moet keihard aangepakt worden. Het is tijd om een voorbeeld te stellen."
Verdrietig
"Ik heb het er met de betreffende spelers over gehad en zij zijn hier ook verdrietig van", ging hij verder. "We kunnen dit niet voorbij laten gaan. Kleur moet niet uitmaken. Wij vertegenwoordigen met z'n allen ons land, maar ook los daarvan is het diep triest dat dit gebeurt. De KNVB zal er ook nog wel wat over zeggen."

Mogelijk gaan de betreffende voetballers aangifte doen. De PvdA liet eerder op zondag al weten dat wat hen betreft het Openbaar Ministerie hoe dan ook actie<u>onderneemt</u> tegen de daders.
Van Persie zou het toejuichen. "Het is in elk geval niet moeilijk te achterhalen wie het zijn, want bij hun reactie staat hun naam en hun profiel."

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