
Generational Perspectives: Navigating Racism and White Innocence in the Dutch National
Football Team, 1960-2000

The development of Racism in the Dutch men's national football team

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ABSTRACT

This project examines players of postcolonial descent in the Dutch men's football team. There has been an absence in academic literature on how these players narrate their experiences of racism. Starting with the first generation in the 1960s, this project explores how narratives on racism within the Dutch national team evolved across different generations. This project argues that white innocence significantly influences how players of postcolonial descent express their experiences, and it examines various forms of white innocence. In addition, this project examines various forms of racism, to indicate how player from a postcolonial background narrates their experiences of racism in the Dutch national team. Therefore, the research question addressed is: 'How did players in the Dutch national football team, who are or were (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants, narrate their experiences of racism in the media and in biographies from the 1960s to the 2000s?'. This project employs both a newspaper approach and a biographical approach to analyse forms of racism and white innocence. Additionally, it uses two case studies per timeframe to demonstrate how an incident surrounding racism was being dealt with at the time. The evidence used in this analysis demonstrates a development in how these players addressed racism, and how the newspapers and biographies reported on racism. Initially, it was handled individually in the first generation, but gradually shifted toward companionship among players of postcolonial descent in later generations. The main finding is that racism and various forms of racism and white innocence were evidently present throughout the second half of the 20th century. The Dutch football organisation KNVB, and the Dutch media, which repeatedly asserted limited action against racism, played a role in shaping perceptions. Consequently, the final generation, despite their achievements in Dutch football, still feels underappreciated in the Netherlands.

KEYWORDS: *Racism, Postcolonialism, Sports, White Innocence, Racial Colour-blindness, Racial Discrimination, Postcolonial Migration, Tolerance.*

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1 Introduction

On March 14, 2022, preceding the Football World Championships in Qatar later that year, numerous countries initiated a worldwide campaign, making a statement in favour of uniting people against discrimination.¹ This campaign was named the One Love Campaign, in which countries like Belgium, Denmark, England, and others participated.² Due to the illegal status of homosexuality and the persecution of LGBT+ people in Qatar, the campaign's aspect of LGBT+ rights gained a lot of attention, causing the other aspects, such as anti-racism, to receive less attention. In the Netherlands, the One Love Campaign was initiated at the beginning of the 2020 football season and partially took form as a response to racist incidents in Dutch football, but also still condemned all other forms of discrimination.³ The inclusion of racism in the One Love Campaign, shows the importance of making a stance against racism in contemporary football. In the 1960s, when the first postcolonial player emerged in the Dutch football scene, could they also expect this response from national and international football associations such as KNVB or UEFA?

In the past hundred years, the landscape of football regarding the issue of racism made significant progress. While there is academic interest in racism in football, studies addressing racism from the viewpoint of national teams, particularly in the Dutch context, are still virtually absent. This project focuses on players from the Dutch national football team because in previous research, this has been underexposed. The aim of this research paper is to fill in this gap, whereby the main objective is to explain how postcolonial football players dealt with racism, thus emphasising the player's perspective. The postcolonial era, a field that emerged in the 1960s, has been chosen as a starting point for this research. The choice for this selection is explained by the rise of multiple nationalities within the Dutch national football team dating back to the 1960s. The main focus here is on players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants, who were involved in racist incidents during their careers in the Dutch national football team. Therefore, the research mostly focuses on former Dutch colonies like Suriname or the Dutch Antilles. No distinction is made between these players; the primary aim is to examine the experiences of racism from the perspectives of those with a postcolonial background. Other non-Dutch players in the Dutch national team, such as Moroccan players, have not been selected because they do not

¹ "Oranje Spreekt Zich Met OneLove-Campagne Uit Vóór Verbinding En Tegen Discriminatie," accessed February 5, 2024, <https://www.knvb.nl/nieuws/themas/sportiviteit-respect/65997/oranje-spreekt-zich-met-onelove-campagne-uit-voor>.

² Ibid.

³ "Voetbalsupporters kunnen discriminatie melden via anti-racisme-app," February 8, 2021, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2367819-voetbalsupporters-kunnen-discriminatie-melden-via-anti-racisme-app>.

fit into the postcolonial category. However, it is important to note that this does not imply that these players did not experience or endure racism in their careers.

The main research question of this project is: ‘How did players in the Dutch national football team that are or were (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants narrate their experiences of racism in the media and in biographies (1960s-2000s)?’. Further explanations of this research question and additional sub-questions are discussed in the section ‘Research Questions’.

1.1 Innovation

1.1.1 Introduction

Football is the most watched and practiced sport on earth.⁴ This can magnify the experience of racism and broaden the impact. The passion and toxicity in football (fan) culture has also been written about extensively in academic literature.⁵ Even in other team sports such as volleyball or handball, reports of ‘problematic,’ ‘toxic,’ or ‘racist’ fans are much less frequent. Arguably, this could be because football is such a big sport, and because of the fan culture. Adding to this, footballers are mobile, and their skills are globally wanted, arguably more wanted than other sports athletes.⁶ In other sports, like swimming, fans tend to be much calmer and less outspoken. Altogether, this emphasizes the importance of not only initiating anti-discrimination campaigns in football but also pursuing academic research on this topic. Furthermore, the approach of this research is considered innovative. In academic research, there have been studies looking at media representation, and newspaper analysis. This research uses both newspaper, and biographies to examine how these players narrate their experiences of racism, which is also considered an innovation to this academic discourse.

1.1.2 Social relevancy

The societal relevance lies in raising awareness about racism in Dutch society. The Mulier institute, a social science sports research institute in the Netherlands, conducted research in 2021 after polling 118 pros from the Dutch Eredivisie and Keuken Kampioen

⁴ Nico van Horn and Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, “Het gelijkspel van de sport: van elitebezigheid tot algemeen cultuurgoed,” *Index : feiten en cijfers over onze samenleving*, 1999, 31.

⁵ Steve Redhead, “‘We’Re Not Racist, We Only Hate Mancs’: Post-Subculture and Football Fandom,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures* (Routledge, 2014), 290.

⁶ Gijs van Campenhout, Jacco van Sterkenburg, and Gijsbert Oonk, “Who Counts as a Migrant Footballer? A Critical Reflection and Alternative Approach to Migrant Football Players on National Teams at the World Cup, 1930–2018,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 35, no. 11 (July 24, 2018): 1073, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2019.1581769>.

Divisie.⁷ The results indicated that four in ten professional footballers in the Netherlands say racism and other forms of discrimination occur regularly in professional football.⁸ 14% have experienced it themselves. Among players with a migration background, that proportion is 25%.⁹ Thus, discrimination and racism in football culture are important issues that deserve attention. Football, as the biggest sport in the world, reaches great amounts of people, wherein numerous people in contemporary time still deal with racism and discriminations. This is grounded in my personal experiences of Dutch football. Without delving too deeply into my encounters, as a young man of African descent, I have experienced racism both on and off the pitch. This project helps raise awareness and to address these issues. Football has enormous influence and reaches a wide audience, making it a powerful tool to bring about change.

1.1.3 Scientific relevancy

Furthermore, the approach of this research is considered innovative. Since, this research fills a gap in the literature, with an innovative way of doing research. Which contributes to the academic debates. The scientific relevancy of this research is based on academic history writings. Racism and football have been examined, especially in English cases. Recently, more studies have been published on the topic, even discussing this in the context of the Netherlands. Most relevant, for instance, is the article published by Jacco van Sterkenburg and Gijs van Campenhout. This was a study that focused on media representation, meaning they studied the audience reception and the commentary, and they linked it to race and ethnicity. They also examined migrant footballers in national teams. What has been missing in the Dutch history writings, is the history writing of these colonial and postcolonial migrants and how racism developed throughout each generation, and how the response towards racism changed. The perspective of the players themselves are taken into account.

⁷ “Vier Op de Tien Spelers in Nederland Zien Discriminatie in Betaald Voetbal | Voetbal | NU.NL,” accessed June 21, 2024, <https://www.nu.nl/voetbal/6150958/vier-op-de-tien-spelers-in-nederland-zien-discriminatie-in-betaald-voetbal.html?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fcopilot.microsoft.com%2F>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

1.2 Theoretical Concepts

1.2.1 *White Innocence*

To explore unique aspects of postcolonial history in the context of the Netherlands, this project makes use of the theoretical concept ‘White Innocence’ by Gloria Wekker. This concept delves into the fact that people from the Netherlands qualify themselves as colour-blind and tolerant, whilst in reality this is not the case.¹⁰ Regarding football and racism, authors like Gijsbert van Campenhout and Jacco Sterkenburg made use of this concept in their research. Moreover, this concept is useful in explaining the position of the Dutch public, the media, and instigators of racist incidents because white innocence has been used in analysing and explaining ‘daily’ or ‘normalised’ racism, which makes it applicable to this research.

1.2.2 *Racism*

The second concept that is used in this project, is ‘Racism’, a concept that has been elaborated most significantly by the sociologist Benjamin P. Bowser. He has worked intensely on topics such as racism and diversity since the 1990s. In his research article ‘Racism: Origin and Theory’, he introduced a theorization of the concept of racism. He explains that racism has different levels that are interdependent on one another.¹¹ He explains that it moves from ‘cultural racism’, which is characterized by ‘white superiority’ and ‘racial hierarchy’, to ‘institutional racism’, characterized by the production and the maintenance of ‘racial hierarchy’.¹² Similarly to Wekker’s white innocence, he also examines the phenomenon of ‘colour-blind-racism’. Thirdly, he introduces the category ‘individual racism’, which is characterized by personal racial beliefs of individuals.¹³ The third and final category applies to my project, since it examines the players’ narrative on their racist experiences. Racism as a concept is applicable to this research project because it helps explain and analyse which different levels of racism were present in the racist experiences of coloured players in the Dutch national team, and it also helps to analyse how these levels were present. Furthermore, it is useful because it shows the different steps in the development and trends of racist incidents.

¹⁰ Gloria Wekker and Menno Grootveld, *Witte onschuld: paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras*, Herziene editie (Amsterdam: AUP, 2020), 1.

¹¹ Benjamin P. Bowser, “Racism: Origin and Theory,” *Journal of Black Studies* 48, no. 6 (2017): 581.

¹² *Ibid.*, 581.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 582.

These concepts, racism and white innocence, were used as a guiding tool to select the racist incidents for the case studies found in newspapers, autobiographies. These concepts allow a reflection upon the experiences of racism of players. Additionally, it provides clarifications on the public's acceptance of these selected players. By doing this in each case study through each generation, patterns in the development, either positive, negative, or stagnant, become clear.

1.3 Research question & Sub-questions

1.3.1 Research question

The research question is: 'How did players in the Dutch national football team that are or were (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants narrate their experiences of racism in the media and in biographies (1960s-2000s)?'. The selected period spans from the 1960s until the 2000s. The 1960s makes a logical starting point, since it provides context on the emergences of the children of postcolonial migrants. In the 60s, the first coloured players appeared in the Dutch squad, such as Humphrey Mijnaals. Mijnaals' appearance was followed by newspapers reporting on it, with titles such as 'Surinamese in the Dutch football team?'.¹⁴ The emergences of the first colonial and postcolonial migrants from Molucca is discussed here as well.

Adding to this, even though the first postcolonial footballer appeared in the 60s, during the 70s Dutch team was still predominantly white, which is an interesting phenomenon after the appearance of the first postcolonial footballer in the Dutch national squad. This is elaborated on in the second empirical chapter. In the 1980s the teams became more and more mixed, with players such as Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard, and Stanley Menzo. These players were well-known black footballers in the Dutch national team. In the 1990s and 2000s, this increasing number of players from postcolonial backgrounds joining the Dutch team continued.

By focusing on changes in the experiences of racism of individual players, also this project demonstrates how these experiences develop from feelings of isolation to collective support against racism. This is shown by the analysis. Specifically, it demonstrates how support and acceptance has developed, through comparing the experiences per generation.

¹⁴ Klaas Toxopeus, "Surinamers in Nederlands Voetbalelftal?," *Amigoe Di Curacao : Weekblad Voor de Curacaosche Eilanden*, January 13, 1960, Dag edition.

1.3.2 Sub-questions & hypothesis

To compare the experiences of different generations, the first sub-question delves into the early experiences of players with a colonial postcolonial descent, for example Mijns, and Tahamata in the Dutch national squad during the 1960s and '70s. To give context on the emergence of children of colonial and postcolonial migrants footballers entering the Dutch national team, which set the stage for more players that are descendants of colonial and postcolonial migrants doing the same. Therefore, the first sub-question is: 'How did the first generation who were postcolonial migrants in the Dutch national team narrate their experience of racism and white innocence in the media and in biographies (1960-1970)?'.

Next, the second sub-question explores how players during the 1980s and '90s navigated issues of racism. This section includes football players such as Ruud Gullit, and Frank Rijkaard. Here, the analysis of the newspaper is used to focus on their experiences of racism. Therefore, the second sub-question is: 'How did the second generation who were/are (children of) postcolonial migrants in the Dutch national team narrate their experience of racism and white innocence in the media and in biographies (1980-1990)?'.

Moving forward, the third sub-question investigates how the diversity of the Dutch national squad changed in the next-generation starting from 1996, with involvement of players such as Edgar Davids, Clarence Seedorf and Patrick Kluivert mid-90s until the 2000s and its impact on experiences with racism. Therefore, the final sub-question is: 'How did the third generation who were/are (children of) postcolonial migrants in the Dutch national team narrate their experience of racism and white innocence in the media and in biographies (1990-2000)?'.

To conclude, this project identifies patterns in the experiences of colonial or postcolonial descent with racism chronologically, by analysing and comparing the experiences of different generations. To conclude, my hypothesis poses that initially, racism was perceived by players as isolated and personal incidents, leading players to feel isolated when attempting to address the issue. In contrast, contemporary times bear witness to a collective response where players unite and step off the field against racism.

1.4 Methods and Sources

1.4.1 Newspaper analysis

The goal of the newspaper analysis is to conduct a textual analysis on the selected newspapers by following the steps formulated by Alan Mckee.¹⁵ This analysis was used by John Vincent in his research on English newspapers regarding the 2006 World cup, which demonstrates that this analysis is applicable in the context of international football and racism.¹⁶ Textual analysis is an academic way of collecting and analysing information and trends in texts such as newspapers, books, and articles.¹⁷ This is very useful for this study, since it provides a better insight into how the media affects us from a cultural standpoint.¹⁸ In this study, textual analysis is applied to analyse the personal experiences of Dutch national football players that were subjected to incidents of racism. Additionally, textual analysis also shows how the media and public reacted to these racist incidents. In his textual analysis, Mckee puts the emphasis on multiple ways of interpreting media and texts. He explains that there is no single interpretation of reality.¹⁹ Furthermore, he delves into the meanings audiences ascribe to the texts, namely the discovery that audience members draw their information and opinions from publicly available knowledge in order to make sense of the texts.²⁰

There is a downside to using text analysis, namely the potential for subjective bias. Analysing text poses a challenge, as different people may take the same piece of writing and add their own different interpretations, introducing subjectivity that could result in different conclusions. Another downside is that these only apply in the case-study of ‘spuug-incident’, and ‘tafel-incident’, and it cannot be applied in the first sub-question, which covers the emergence of the postcolonial players. Here, a biographical approach is applied. Excerpts from autobiographies of those who played in the Dutch national football team are examined to provide insights into their personal experiences of racist incidents.

1.4.1.1 Sources

This research examines two case studies dating from 1990 up to 1996. For each case study, around eight newspapers are selected from Dutch newspapers such as *De Telegraaf*,

¹⁵ Alan Mckee, “Textual Analysis: A Beginner’s Guide” 127 (January 1, 2001): 143.

¹⁶ John Vincent et al., “England Expects: English Newspapers’ Narratives about the English Football Team in the 2006 World Cup,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45, no. 2 (June 1, 2010): 199, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690209360084>.

¹⁷ Mckee, “Textual Analysis,” 143.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

de Volkskrant, and *Algemeen Dagblad (AD)*. These case studies are analysed and compared to see how players experiencing racism changed over time. This is done chronologically, starting with an event in 1990 regarding the first incident surrounding racism. The second case study is that of a new generation dealing with racist incidents. The final case study is a more contemporary case surrounding a generation dealing with racism. These newspapers were mostly retrieved from Delpher, a public site archiving books, newspapers, and journals.²¹ Delpher is a free-access website developed and run by the Dutch Royal Library.

1.4.1.2 Newspapers

The selected newspaper excerpts on the aforementioned case studies, were mostly found in the following newspapers: *Het Parool*, *Het AD*, *de Volkskrant*, *NOS*, and *De Telegraaf*. The reason these newspapers were selected is that they are all national Dutch newspapers, despite *Het Parool* and *Het AD* being more locally focused on Dutch cities Amsterdam and Rotterdam respectively.²² Furthermore, for the past 60 years these newspapers were all active in writing on sports, especially concerning national football. These newspapers are all part of the most read newspapers in the Netherlands, especially *De Volkskrant*, *Het AD* and *De Telegraaf*.²³²⁴ This provides continuity since they have been consistently reporting throughout the past 60 years, which allows for easier comparison between articles from the same newspaper.

Sources that did not make the selection were the local or regional newspapers, since most local newspapers are less consistent in their sports coverage, in comparison to national newspapers, because local newspapers usually only cover sports news that is relevant to their region. An exception was made for the analysis regarding the first sub-question on the generation from the 60s. Local newspapers covered the appearance of Mijns in the Dutch national team more extensively than national newspapers did. The newspapers used here include *Limburgs Dagblad* (currently called *De Limburger*), *Nieuwe Haarlemsche Courant*, and *Amigoe di Curaçao*. Other newspapers that were purposely excluded, international newspapers and non-Dutch publications because their coverage lack the necessary depth and relevance to the specific context of Dutch football. Similarly, specialized publications without a primary focus on sports or football events in the Netherlands are not included.

²¹ “Delpher » Kranten, Boeken & Tijdschriften,” accessed December 7, 2023, <https://www.delpher.nl/>.

²² “Wat Is Het Verschil Tussen Verschillende Kranten - De Puttenaer | Nieuws Uit de Regio Putten,” accessed February 3, 2024, <https://www.deputtenaer.nl/lokaal/partnercontent/681284/wat-is-het-verschil-tussen-verschillende-kranten>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “De Telegraaf - Mediahuis,” accessed February 3, 2024, <https://www.mediahuis.nl/merken/de-telegraaf/>.

Thus, tabloid-style newspapers were also excluded because they do not align with this study's emphasis on analysing serious and consistent coverage.

The selected newspapers come from different social and political backgrounds. These diverse perspectives provide valuable insights into how players, such as Mijns, were portrayed by different types of newspapers. The language and tone used by the writers reveal much about the acceptance of these players. The selected newspaper articles do not have to be overly controversial for the purpose of this research, but the players with colonial and postcolonial descent need to be involved in the articles to successfully reflect on the media coverage.

1.4.2 Biographical approach

Besides using newspapers for primary sources, autobiographies of Dutch players involved in racist incidents are very applicable for this research because they contain the personal experiences of these players. For example, *Humphrey Mijns: Minna and Simon Tahamata en andere Molukse voetbalhelden in dienst van Oranje* are used because they provide valuable insights into the players on a deeper level during the 1960s to 1980s period.^{25,26}

When looking at the 1990s onwards, *Gullit* by Bert Hiddema, and *Frank Rijkaard, de biografie* by Leo Verheul are examined. Edgar Davids' autobiography *Schaken met Edgar Davids: Voetbalverhalen rond het Nederlands Elftal*, published in 2004, is used because it delves specifically into Dutch football stories.²⁷ It offers valuable insights into the experiences of players facing racism. Kluivert's autobiography, *De Autobiografie Van Kluivert*, published in 2006, covers his entire career, including the controversial moments.²⁸ Clarence Seedorf published his autobiography in 2004.²⁹ Diederik Samwell's book, published in 2013, covers conversations with Clarence Seedorf, Stanley Menzo, and Henk ten Cate.³⁰

1.4.2.1 Source criticism

Regarding the newspapers, there are some downsides attached to analysing these sources. For example, every newspaper has its biases. This holds true for local or regional

²⁵ Tonny van der Mee, *Simon Tahamata en de andere Molukse voetbalhelden in dienst van Oranje* (Kick uitgevers, 2012).

²⁶ Danny van der Linden, *Humphrey Mijns. Minna* (Edicola Publishing, 2022).

²⁷ Rob de Leede, *Schaken Met Edgar Davids: Voetbalverhalen Rond Het Nederlands Elftal* (Deventer, 2020).

²⁸ Chris Verweij, *De Autobiografie van Kluivert* (House of Knowledge, 2006).

²⁹ Simon Zwartkruis, *Clarence Seedorf: de biografie* (Pandora, 2004).

³⁰ Diederik Samwel, *Blootvoeters en beschuitgras: voetbal Suriname en Nederland* (Singel Uitgeverijen, 2013).

newspapers in the Netherlands, influenced by pillarization in the Dutch political landscape from 1960 to 1990. Furthermore, newspapers at the time were also very politically linked. This influences the tone of a text and the word use. This is a lack of neutrality, which counts as weaknesses.

Next to this, the weaknesses that are inherent to autobiographies must be acknowledged, primarily due to their non-academic and commercialized nature. Additionally, most autobiographies are published post-football career. This has implications for factors like memory reliability and the impact of time. The autobiographies Gullit, Mijns, Davids, and Samwell's books are all post-football career.

Another important note, the authors of the biographies play a crucial role in constructing the life history, on the basis that the author makes selections, assessments, and interpretation.³¹ So, the position of the writer of the biographies used in this project needs to be reflected on. Regardless of intention, authors take their position when writing a biography, which leads to certain emphasis and interpretations.

On the one hand, the author's own cultural and social context has influences on what will be materialized in the biographies. Authors such as Leo Verheul, writer of the biography of Frank Rijkaard. He was a white Dutch journalist, and his professional experiences included publications from newspaper *Het Vrije Volk* and magazine *Voetbal International*. Considering the cultural background of Verheul, it is probable that his own cultural and social context influenced the choices he made in describing Rijkaard's life. Similar to Verheul, is Bert Hiddema author from a white Dutch background. He is known for his work on Johnny Rep, Johan Cruyff, and André Hazes. In addition, he wrote the biography of Gullit, which is used in this project. The same consideration counts for Hiddema about his cultural background, and his cultural and social context influenced the choices he made in the biography of Gullit.

On the other hand, the cultural background can also add to the accuracy by providing a better insight on cultural differences. Tony van der Mee, a journalist of Moluccan descent. His background adds a more valuable perspective to the biography of Simon Tahamata. His background and involvement leads to a more in-depth understanding of Tahamata's cultural context and experiences.

³¹ Annette de Bruijn, "De kunst van de biografie: tussen literatuur en wetenschap Vier biografen aan het woord over opvattingen, bronnen, valkuilen en zonden," in *Literatuur Zonder Leeftijd 31* (Amsterdam: IBBY-Nederland, 2017), 25, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_lit004201701_01/.

1.4.3 Case studies

This research applies a case-study approach. This project opts for discontinuous time periods, wherein each case study represents a specific moment in time. Together, the case studies demonstrate a change over time. In these case studies, newspapers are analysed. In addition, this project uses a biographical approach, which applies for the first sub-question, regarding the emergences of player that are postcolonial migrants. Racist incidents did occur in this first generation; however, these were not nationwide or international, as opposed to the two selected case studies for the second and third sub-question.

In total, two specific case studies containing racist incidents have been selected for analysis. The reason for this being that these events are limited in totality. With two cases, the representativeness of the research over the long period remains intact. The spread between the incidents are subsequent; the first incident starts in 1990, followed by the final incident, which is in 1996. This allows me to research different generations, and compare the different generations and their experiences.

For the first sub-question, namely the emergence of the first overseas players in the Dutch team during the 1960s and 70s. Which is a topic that was widely covered by Dutch newspapers, documentary sources, and biographies. There was a lack of one incident nationwide surrounding the concepts of white innocence or racism. For this reason, instead of applying a specific case-study, my project emphasises more on the biographical approach, analysing the racist events from biographies. In this period, these players from overseas descent were not yet established in the national team. So, racist incidents did not occur in the public such as '*spuug-incident*', and '*tafel-incident*', even though these players did experience racism. Thus, this sub-question focuses on the first generation of players of colonial and postcolonial descent in the Dutch national Football team, spanning from the 1960s to the 1970s.

Moving forward, for the second sub-question the notable '*spuug-incident*' (translated to: spitting-incident) during the 1990 World Cup is analysed. This incident involved players Frank Rijkaard and Rudi Völler and was documented through match footage and news reports. It resulted in both players receiving red cards, leaving a lasting mark on World Cup

history.³² After the incident, many people thought that Völler made racist remarks to Rijkaard.³³

Additionally, this project examines the *'tafel-incident'* (translated to table-incident) of June 17, 1996. Here players like Edgar Davids, Clarence Seedorf, Winston Bogarde, Patrick Kluivert, Aron Winter, Gaston Taument, and Richard Witschge were tangled in controversy due to misrepresented statements, which were then criticised by Dutch newspapers, including *De Telegraaf*, *de Volkskrant*, and *Algemeen Dagblad* (abbreviated to: *AD*).

³² Wietse Dijkstra, "Het trauma van 1974, de wraak van 1988 en de afgang van 1990," *gelderlander.nl*, October 11, 2018, <https://www.gelderlander.nl/nederlands-voetbal/het-trauma-van-1974-de-wraak-van-1988-en-de-afgang-van-1990~ab674b39/>.

³³ S.J. van den Berg, "Racistisch," *Het Parool*, July 11, 1990, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010833498:mpeg21:a0114>.

1.5 Historiography

1.5.1 Introduction

This project builds on two bodies of scholarship. The first body of scholarship which regards sociology, racism, and sport. This is a broader topic, where racism and sport were linked to each other. These studies spread awareness that racism occurs in sports. In this academic domain, sports was approached more generally. So, in the body of literature, football specifically was sparsely written about. This slowly developed into specific sports, such as basketball and boxing. Followed by a more sociological approach, by linking sports to concepts such as racism. In this body of scholarship, there is more awareness of the impact of racism in sports. However, there was a lack of academic research regarding football and racism.

In the second body of scholarship, starting in the early 2000s, there is an increasing interest surrounding football in literature. Accordingly, this developed into research on racism on a deeper level, by writers such as Gloria Wekker and Jacco van Sterkenburg, linking this to football. In this academic domain, there was an increasing interest in media and media representation. This goes along with the developments of all sorts of media platforms. Ultimately, European case studies appeared, which is consequently linked to the emergences of the black footballers in Europe. In the contemporary, notable contributions have been made by Aad Haverkamp and Mustapha Esadik surrounding the Dutch national team, mainly focusing on the representations of multicultural footballers in biographies.

1.5.2 *Sociology, Racism & Sport*

Firstly, on the sociology of racism and sports, it is important to note that postcolonial experiences in the Dutch national team, were not discussed extensively in academic research until the early 2000s. In the 1980s, there was almost no academic literature about this topic. Starting from the 1990s, academic literature delves more into sports and racism. An example of this is an article about schoolchildren with Asian heritage in physical education and sports.³⁴ However, this article was a response to anti-racist policies in British schools.³⁵ Other writings in this period cover Australia and research racism in Australian

³⁴ Brendon McGuire and David Collins, "Sport, Ethnicity and Racism: The Experience of Asian Heritage Boys," *Sport, Education and Society* 3, no. 1 (March 1998): 79.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

sports.³⁶ The coverage of sports and racism in this period is very limitedly relevant to this study because no cases of football and racism were examined. Moreover, no specific research from this period in the Netherlands can be found. In 2002, one of the first articles appeared, in the book *Power Games: A Critical Sociology of Sport*, written by John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson. This book uses a sociological approach instead of a historical approach. It delves into different types of sports like boxing, football, and basketball and here the authors link it to gender and race. The authors argue that the sociology of sports tends to focus on regression, ignoring the progressive movement.³⁷ Chapter 14 in this book, written by Ben Carrington, was especially relevant because it delves into the role of sport as a form of cultural resistance to the ideologies and practices of white racism.³⁸ Specifically, he looks into the racial signification of sports. Here, he studies different sports, such as cricket and boxing, and primarily focusses on England. He concludes that it is necessary to look at the benefits of black men but also at its limitations, which is a very broad conclusion.³⁹ Moreover, the authors question the way the football world is run.⁴⁰ Especially, the way FIFA is run in presidential elections.⁴¹ The authors do not only critique, but highlight the importance of football clubs and national teams on communities, tradition, social solidarity, and national distinctiveness.⁴²

After this publication, more research into the topic emerged. Similar to John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson's research, another book was written by Chris Hallinan and Steven J. Jackson titled *Social and Cultural Diversity in a Sporting World*. In this study, they use the idea of social and cultural diversity as a keyway to look at and understand many things in sports, using concepts like nationalism, gender, race, and ethnicity.⁴³ One chapter was written by Bente Ovède Skogvang, where she discussed African Footballers in Europe. Specifically, her research is about the complexity of the transfer of players from Africa to Europe, and the specific situations of African Footballers in Norway.⁴⁴ This is a very relevant contribution to the academic discourse surrounding black footballers In Europe in the late 2000s.

³⁶ Colin Tatz, "Racism and Sport in Australia," *Race & Class* 36, no. 4 (April 1, 1995): 43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030639689503600403>.

³⁷ John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, *Power Games: A Critical Sociology of Sport* (Routledge, 2002), 97, <http://gen.lib.rus.ec/book/index.php?md5=C154EA8429AE6F45C9C4ABD3DE58C385>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 267.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴³ Chris Hallinan and Steven J. Jackson, *Social and Cultural Diversity in a Sporting World* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2008), 1.

⁴⁴ Bente Skogvang, "African Footballers in Europe," 2008, 33, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1476-2854\(08\)05003-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1476-2854(08)05003-6).

These publications are comparable to the research of sports sociologist Toni Bruce, who in 2004 wrote a journal article titled *Marking the Boundaries of the 'Normal' in Televised Sports: The Play-by-Play of Race*. She delves into the live-sports perspective, and everything that goes along with this high-stakes environment, for example the crowds and commentators.⁴⁵ Gijs van Campenhout used these ideas, especially the discussion of commentators, and applied this to his research on the Dutch national football team.⁴⁶ Bruce also discusses the appearance of racist ideologies, normalised white culture, and the 'othering' process in live-sports television.⁴⁷ Here, the trend of the historiography is found. The topic is getting more and more awareness in academic literature, which leads to scholars researching other perspectives.

Around the mid to late 2000s, more academic literature came forth. For instance, the book titled *Football and Racism: An Inventory of the Problems and Solutions in Eight West European Countries in the Framework of the Stand Up Speak Up Campaign* by Jacco van Sterkenburg. This book was published in 2005 and researches the 'Stand Up, Speak Up' campaign. This was an event launched in French football in 2005, and it was a campaign against racism in Europe. Here, van Sterkenburg looked at eight different countries, and he analyses them within the framework of the Stand Up, Speak Up campaign.⁴⁸

Similar to this research was an article by Christos Kassimeris. He has written about the Dutch and Belgian context, although not focusing on specific footballers. He does mention the players like Frank Rijkaard, Edgar Davids, Ruud Gullit, Patrick Kluivert, Clarence Seedorf and Aaron Winter, but he does not provide an analysis based on their experiences.⁴⁹ Rather, he focuses on the demographic profiles and discrimination. Here, he takes religion and education into account to analyse the discrimination level.⁵⁰ He concludes that when it comes to football teams, racial abuse has significantly ruined the spirits and performances of the players who have been targeted by fans.⁵¹ This has also taken away the celebratory atmosphere that should be present, especially during international competitions.⁵² In the case of Belgium and the Netherlands, it is clear that even their national football teams have not been able to avoid the kind of division seen in these countries.⁵³

⁴⁵ Toni Bruce, "Marking the Boundaries of the 'Normal' in Televised Sports: The Play-by-Play of Race," *Media, Culture & Society* 26, no. 6 (2004): 875, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443704047030>.

⁴⁶ Campenhout, Sterkenburg, and Oonk, "Who Counts as a Migrant Footballer," 648.

⁴⁷ Bruce, "Marking the Boundaries of the 'Normal' in Televised Sports," 861.

⁴⁸ Jacco van Sterkenburg et al., *Football and Racism: An Inventory of the Problems and Solutions in Eight West European Countries in the Framework of the Stand Up Speak Up Campaign* (Nieuwegein: Arko Sports Media, 2005), 1.

⁴⁹ Christos Kassimeris, "Football and Prejudice in Belgium and the Netherlands," *Sport in Society* 12, no. 10 (December 1, 2009): 1330, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430903204843>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1331.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1333-1334.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1334.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1334.

Racial tension regularly affects the relationships among players in the Dutch national team, and the intolerance in Dutch and Belgian societies is just as prominent as the prejudice present in their national football teams.⁵⁴

1.5.3 *Black Footballers in Europe*

The second body of scholarship evolves around the history of racism and sports. In the research on the evolution of prejudice within the Dutch national squad and the changing treatment of individual cases over time, my projects start by looking into Gloria Wekker's notion of 'White Innocence'. She wrote a book in 2016 that challenges the idea that people in the Netherlands are not concerned with colour and are against racism.⁵⁵ Wekker critiques the dominant discourse that portrays the Netherlands as a racially harmonious and hospitable place, and she argues that it overlooks or diminishes underlying racial biases and discrimination within Dutch society.⁵⁶ Wekker's central idea revolves around the imperial Dutch rule spanning over four centuries, emphasizing its consequential but overlooked effects, especially in how individuals perceive themselves in Dutch society.⁵⁷ While Wekker primarily focused on the case of *Zwarte Piet* (translated to: Black Pete) in her research, she is specialised in 'everyday racism'. My research intends to apply this concept of 'everyday racism' to sports and media. Particularly within the context of the Dutch national squad, Gloria's Wekker theory is applicable. Furthermore, while examining other research, such as Gijs van Campenhout's study titled *Meanings Given to (Super-) Diversity in the Dutch National Team by Dutch Football Commentators: A Historical Approach*, published in 2023, it becomes clear that it also incorporates Wekker's concept of white innocence. However, van Campenhout's research primarily centres on the perspectives of commentators, whereas the aim of this research is to delve into the viewpoints of the players within the Dutch national team. Still, this shows how the notion of white innocence was used before in research about the Dutch National Team.

However, van Campenhout also made use of the concept of white innocence in his research on the footballers Kluivert, Gullit, Rijkaard, and Seedorf.⁵⁸ This is useful for my research because it gives a more comprehensive understanding of these players and their

⁵⁴ Kassimeris, "Football and Prejudice in Belgium and the Netherlands," 1334.

⁵⁵ Wekker and Grootveld, *Witte onschuld*, 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁸ Gijs van Campenhout, Arne van Lienden, and Jacco van Sterkenburg, "Meanings given to (Super-)Diversity in the Dutch National Team by Dutch Football Commentators: A Historical Approach," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 58, no. 4 (June 1, 2023): 657, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221146032>.

representation in the media. Besides, the study goes back to the World cup 1974 when there was an all-white team.⁵⁹ Additionally, van Campenhout made a data contribution to *De Bosatlas van het Nederlandse Voetbal* published by Noordhoff Uitgevers, which contains information about the history of players in the Dutch team.⁶⁰ It is helpful for my research because it contains the specific number of coloured players in the Dutch team.⁶¹ Jacco van Sterkenburg also made a significant contribution to this research by serving as co-author of the book.

Furthermore, Jacco van Sterkenburg, in 2013, published his research titled *Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Audience Receptions of Football on Television in the Netherlands and England*. This research project was financially supported by the UEFA Grant Scheme.⁶² Van Sterkenburg points out that in previous literature, white commentators and audiences do not acknowledge or deny their use of their racial and ethnic stereotypes.⁶³ This is similar to Wekker's concept of 'white innocence', although this term exactly was not used by van Sterkenburg because Wekker's book was published three years after his research project. Even so, he did go into the denial of the use of racial stereotypes by white actors, which aligned with the work of Gloria Wekker. He also referenced Wekker's work surrounding the identity of black migrant refugee women movements, which is in line with a postcolonial perspective on the treatment of black women. In addition, in 2015 van Sterkenburg published an article regarding representations and audience receptions of race, nation, and gender. In this research, he discussed mostly twenty-first century media, and the researchers function in respect to diverse communities. Van Sterkenburg points out that numerous of sports research is still very obscure because they often draw on hegemonic stereotypes.⁶⁴ In this research, van Sterkenburg took global examples like Brazil and former Yugoslavia, while my research focusses on the Dutch case.

Moreover, the emergences of cases of acknowledgement of black players in Europe. For example, the book of Phil Vasili titled *The First Black Footballer: Arthur Wharton 1865-1930: An Absence of Memory* is relevant literature for my research. This book delves into the absent memory in English football history, concerning their first black footballer.

⁵⁹ Campenhout, Lienden, and Sterkenburg, "Meanings given to (Super-)Diversity in the Dutch National Team by Dutch Football Commentators," 656.

⁶⁰ "Gijs van Campenhout | Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication | Erasmus University Rotterdam," accessed February 4, 2024, <https://www.eur.nl/en/eshcc/gijs-van-campenhout>.

⁶¹ Jurryt van de Vooren, *De Bosatlas van het Nederlandse voetbal* (Noordhoff Uitgevers, 2017), 126.

⁶² Jacco van Sterkenburg, "Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Audience Receptions of Football on Television in the Netherlands and England," (A research project financially supported by the UEFA Grant Scheme, 2013), 1, https://uefaacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/20130501_Van-Sterkenburg_Final-Report.pdf.

⁶³ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁴ Jacco van Sterkenburg and Ramón Spaaij, "Mediated Football: Representations and Audience Receptions of Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Nation," *Soccer & Society* 16, no. 5–6 (November 2, 2015): 593, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2014.963317>.

Mostly, the approach that Vasili takes is relevant to my topic because he delves into the dominating white supremacy in England.⁶⁵ Similar to my project, Vasili's project is discussed in a specific context, the English context. Instead, this project focuses on the Dutch context.

Recently, new academic research has come forward. For example, the book titled *Contesting "race" and Sport: Shaming the Colour Line* by Kevin Hylton. The book explores how sport perpetuates racism, while identifying opportunities to challenge its insidious presence.⁶⁶ This study looks at how people talk about race in sport.⁶⁷ It discusses things like being white, being different, seeing things differently, being biased, having a sense of humour, and using language to fight against racism.⁶⁸ His theories show some similarity to Wekker's white innocence. Hylton's research has been used by van Sterkenburg and van Campenhout primarily when discussing whiteness. These connections show that Hylton's theories and findings are relevant and substantial in addressing issues related to race, bringing greater clarity and insight to the broader discussion on how race is perceived and represented, particularly in the context of football.

In addition, Aad Haverkamp, and Mustapha Esadik contributed to the academic literature on the postcolonial players appearing in the Dutch national team. Haverkamp focuses mainly on the third generation, 90s onwards, such as the development of 'kabel'.⁶⁹ Mustapha Esadik, who has written about Surinamese players in the Dutch team, and their representations in biographies.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Phil Vasili, *The First Black Footballer: Arthur Wharton 1865-1930: An Absence of Memory* (Routledge, 2012), 1.

⁶⁶ Kevin Hylton, *Contesting "race" and Sport: Shaming the Colour Line*, First edition, 1 online resource (142 pages) vols. (London: Taylor and Francis, 2018), 1, <http://www.mylibrary.com?id=768074>.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁹ Aad Haverkamp, "De Kabel: Tussen Vriendschap En Sekte," *De Sportwereld* 83 (2017): 27.

⁷⁰ M. Esadik, "De Representatie van Racistische Ervaringen in de Voetbalbiografieën van Drie Surinaamse Voetballers" (Master's Thesis, 2020), 6, <https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/37608>.

2 The Emergences of the First Generation, 1960-1980

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the early experiences of racism in the Dutch National Team in the early modern era of football (1960s-70s) are examined. This chapter shows how the emergences of players who are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants were accompanied by experiences of racism, on individual and even isolated levels; getting little to no support from other players, the Dutch Football organisation (KNVB) and the public.

Firstly, to provide context to the first emergences of players who are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants, the FIFA Eligibility ruleset and changes are explained, along with the migration laws at that time. This is followed by a comparison of different regulations in various countries, to investigate if the Dutch National Team was unique in accepting (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants. Here, the emergence of (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the Dutch National Team is compared to the emergence in other European countries with a colonial background, such as France, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. Thus, the chapter shortly describes the emergence of (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in their respective national teams. Nonetheless, these emergences highlight a significant shift in the football regulations regarding the eligibility criteria for national teams, and this begs the question: ‘why did these changes occur within the football scene?’. Furthermore, this section contains an analysis of the diversification of the Dutch National Team over time, and provides an exemplification of migration and its reasons using the stories of Dutch-Surinamese players known as the ‘*Klavertje vijf*’ (5-leaf clover).

Secondly, to investigate the first sub-question, this chapter analyses the emergence and experiences of the first (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the Dutch National Team. The first example of such is Humphrey Mijns, who played in the Dutch National Team during the 1960s. Mijns football career before migrating to the Netherlands is briefly explained to give context on how players such as Mijns came to play for the Netherlands, and to compare his experiences. The second player with a (post)colonial background is Simon Tahamata. Tahamata was a Molucca-Dutch football player, who played for the Dutch National Team in the late 1970s. Thus, the intertwined history between the Netherlands and the Moluccans is also explained, to provide context about Tahamata’s experiences in the Dutch National Team. Finally, Tahamata’s football career and experiences with the Dutch National Team are analysed.

Concluding, this chapter contextualizes the emergence of the first football players from colonial descent in the Dutch national team in the 1960s and 70s and investigates the sub research questions ‘How did the early experiences of (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants, such as Mijns, and Tahamata, in the Dutch national squad impact the team dynamics during the 1960s and 1970s?’, and ‘what does this tell us about the early experiences of (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the Dutch national team?’.

2.2 Context: International Rules of Eligibility and Comparison

2.2.1 FIFA Ruleset of Eligibility

Because football is an international sport, there have been some legal issues with determining whether and when a player is allowed to play for a national team. Traditionally, football has classified its participants by nationality. Nowadays, the FIFA (*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*) manages the eligibility of players. The FIFA eligibility of players and its ruleset are relevant in this research on the experiences of (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the Dutch national team because it made it possible for these players with colonial and postcolonial histories to play in European countries.

Before 1964, players enjoyed flexibility on matters of eligibility and nationality. This came to an end in 1964, when FIFA ruled that a player could only represent one nation in international competitions. Up until the 1980s, the FIFA rules worked in the following way: once a player had participated for the representative team of a football association in an official competition (at any level), they were tied to the “sporting nationality” associated with that football association for the duration of their career in the representative football team.⁷¹ The only exception was for players whose nationality was changed involuntarily.⁷²

Nowadays, these rules are more extensively elaborated in the FIFA eligibility rules. Specifically, this ruleset has been in place since at least 1990, and is meant for governing the rules on the eligibility to participate for national representative teams in international football.⁷³ This ruleset can be found in the FIFA Regulation Governing the Application of the Statutes (RGAS).⁷⁴ It starts with the ruleset provided a player was eligible to participate

⁷¹ FIFA, “Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams,” January 2021, 4, <https://inside.fifa.com/legal/media-releases/fifa-publishes-explainer-on-eligibility-to-play-for-representative-teams>.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

⁷² Ibid., 4.

⁷³ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

for the national representative team of a football association, if they held nationality of the territory where the football association is located in.⁷⁵ This is a basic rule, but this does not consider the more complex cases. For instance, when a player holds multiple nationalities or citizenships, either due to birth, ancestry, or naturalisation. Thus, a player born to parents from different countries would come across the problem of being eligible for multiple national teams. For this reason, the FIFA needed to improve their ruleset to make it more fitting for these complex cases.

The football eligibility rules, and their relation to global migration, have already been examined by historians such as Gijs van Campenhout, Jacco van Sterkenburg, and Gijsbert Oonk. According to them, despite increasing mobility, the percentage of the global population engaged in migration remained relatively stable.⁷⁶ They examined that only two to three and a half percent of the world's population moves between countries, staying for longer periods of time (for over one year), therefore, be considered migrants.⁷⁷ One of the findings showed that the majority of the international migrants are highly skilled individuals.⁷⁸ Because of their specific skills, they're globally employable and thus highly mobile.⁷⁹ Professional athletes, and in particular professional footballers, fit in this category of highly skilled and globally employable individuals.

Additionally, van Campenhout, van Sterkenburg and Oonk used the research of Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor *Moving with the Ball: The Migration of Professional Footballers*, a study on the transnational migrations of professional footballers, wherein they explain that from a historical standpoint, the global movement of footballers is not a new phenomenon.⁸⁰ Anthropologist Jeffery E Cole elaborated on their study and states that migration differs based on the timing and context. According to Lanfranchi's and Taylor's study, there was a widespread restriction on mobility because of World War II circumstances.⁸¹ World War II and the post-war period, were accompanied by restrictions on mobility and migration. However, the decades following the post-war period saw a relaxation of immigration policies, mostly due to labour shortages, and thus the prior restrictions on mobility and migration were lessened, which led to an acceleration of labour mobility and facilitated the transnational migration of professional footballers.⁸²

⁷⁵ FIFA, "Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams," 4.

⁷⁶ Campenhout, Sterkenburg, and Oonk, "Who Counts as a Migrant Footballer," 1073.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1073.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1073.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1073.

⁸⁰ Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, *Moving with the Ball: The Migration of Professional Footballers* (Berg, 2001), https://dora.dmu.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2086/694/Article_not_available_from_DORA.doc?sequence=1.

⁸¹ Jeffrey E. Cole, "People on the Move in Europe," *Identities* 13, no. 2 (July 1, 2006): 311, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890600698736>.

⁸² Ibid., 311.

2.2.2 *International Comparison*

Compared to other countries with a colonial history, it appears that there is some variance in the emergence of (children of) colonial or postcolonial migrants in their respective national teams. As shown further in this chapter, the Netherlands' first football player of colonial or postcolonial descent appeared in the Dutch National Team in 1960. Contrarily, in the United Kingdom, it was in the late 1970s when the first player of colonial or postcolonial descent debuted in the English National Team. Vivian Alexander Anderson was of Jamaican descent, with both his parents being from Jamaica. Anderson made his debut for the senior English National Team on the 29th of November in 1978, against former Czechoslovakia.⁸³ He played for the senior English National Team until 1988.

Similarly, in Belgium, the first appearance of a football player with recent colonial or postcolonial ancestry happened in the late 1980s. Dimitri Mbuyu, who was of Congolese descent, made his debut in the Belgian National Team on the 4th of February in 1987, against Portugal.⁸⁴ Thus, he was the first player of colonial or postcolonial descent to make a debut in the Belgian National Football Team.

On the other hand, in France the appearance of a football player of colonial or postcolonial descent happened much earlier, namely in the 1930s. Raoul Diagne, who was originally of Senegalese descent, made his debut for the French National Team on the 15th of February 1931.⁸⁵

2.2.3 *Consequences on diversity*

The Dutch national team was, until the 1980s, predominantly white, with almost all players being of Dutch descent. This is portrayed in a table from 'De Bosatlas van het Nederlands voetbal', which is shown in figure 2.1. Figure 2.11 shows the origins of each player from the Dutch National Team per championship (divided into World Championships (green) and European Championships (blue)). The Dutch national team did not get qualified for the tournament in the years 1982, 1984, 1986, 2002, and 2016, and thus the figure does not display data in these years. Generally, in the European and World championships, the best twenty players get selected to play in the tournament. The figure only shows the team

⁸³ Viv Anderson, "England BME Players," accessed March 21, 2024, <http://www.EnglandFootballOnline.com/TeamPlyrsBios/PlayersA/BioAndersonVA.html>.

⁸⁴ "Colourful Pioneers," accessed March 21, 2024, <https://www.rsssf.org/miscellaneous/colourfulpioneers.html>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

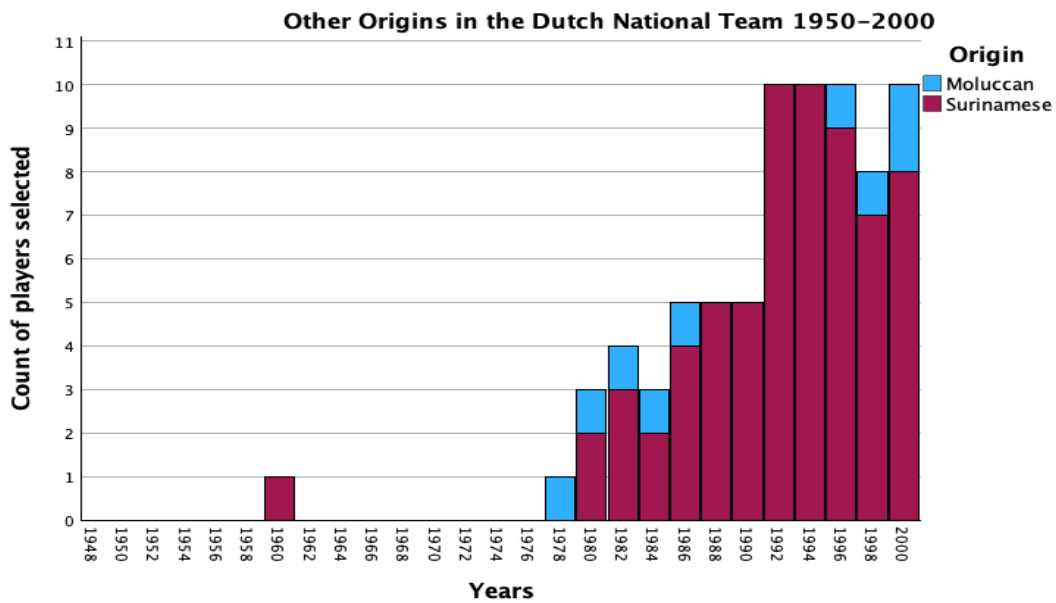
selected during the final rounds of the World and European Championships. Thus, for the European Championship of 1980, figure 1 indicates that only one player with a (post)colonial background played in the Dutch national team, namely Romeo Zondervan, who is of Surinamese descent. The figure seems to portray Zondervan as the first player descended from outside the Netherlands. In reality, Zondervan was not the first player appearing in this team, but rather he was a part of the second generation. Here, Simon Tahamata was not taken into account because he never played for the World or European Championships. He did participate in qualifiers for the European and World Championships. Furthermore, Mijns is not considered merely because the graph takes 1974 as a starting point.

Even though figure 2.1 does not provide a precise image of the exact individuals who were a part of the Dutch national team, it does provide a grasp on the development of multiculturalism and diversification in the Dutch national team over time. In figure 2.2, the qualifying games for the World and European Championships are included in the selection. This figure displays non-Dutch players in the period of 1950-2000. In comparison to figure 2.1, figure 2.2 demonstrates the gap of the 'white seventies', and the strong increase in players of non-Dutch descent in the 1980s and onwards. The 'white seventies' is the period in between the appearances of Mijns and Simon Tahamata, wherein no player of postcolonial descent appeared in the Dutch national team, is also demonstrated in this graph.

③ Selection of the Dutch national team, by origin



Figure 2.1, Dutch national team selection by origin, 1974-2016.⁸⁶



"Nederland - Selectie in detail 1950-2000," accessed April 12, 2024, https://www.transfermarkt.nl/nederland/kader/verein/3379/plus/0/galerie/0?saizon_id=.

Figure 2.2, is a graph of World cup, European championship, friendlies, and qualifiers.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Vooren and Noordhoff Atlasproducties, *De Bosatlas van het Nederlandse voetbal*, 126.

⁸⁷ "Nederland - Selectie in detail 1950-2000," accessed April 12, 2024, https://www.transfermarkt.nl/nederland/kader/verein/3379/plus/0/galerie/0?saizon_id=.

2.2.4 Exemplification: The Migration of 'Klavertje Vijf'

Pastor Graafland played a prominent role in actively trying to bring players from Suriname, such as Humphrey Mijns, to play on club level in the Netherlands. He brought players such as Frank Mijns, Michel Kruin, Charlie Marbach and Erwin Sparendam. Together with Humphrey Mijns, this group of players became known as the '*Klavertje vijf*' (5-leaf clover). The players in '*Klavertje vijf*', fit in the category provided by van Campenhout, van Sterkenburg and Oonk, namely the category of highly skilled individuals who are thus mobile and globally employable. *Klavertje vijf* went to the Netherlands because they got offered an opportunity to make money by playing football. However, there was some resistance, for instance, according to the reporter of the *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, the Surinamese people were not too keen on Mijns going to the Netherlands, and even offered him five hundred gulden to stay.⁸⁸ However, if we then look at the money received during Mijns' transfer, the player himself received a 15,000 gulden signing fee, and the club he was playing for, Robinhood, received a transfer fee of 3,000 gulden, according to Dutch-Surinamese presenter Humberto Tan.⁸⁹ There was concern about the 'robbing away of players', as Football Association president Emile de la Fuente referred to it.⁹⁰ However, the transfer was not considered strange because a second Surinamese player, Kruin, was already linked to Blauw Wit and Feyenoord.⁹¹ In an attempt to stop Mijns, he was offered 500 gulden not to enter the boat.⁹² In the end, four players left for the Netherlands, along with Humphrey Mijns.

In addition to the football opportunities, migrating to the Netherlands also brought opportunities outside the football the pitch. For instance, according to his biography, Humphrey Mijns first job was as a car mechanic for Auto Central Utrecht.⁹³ Eventually, he owned and managed a cigar store in Utrecht while playing for Elinkwijk.⁹⁴ In this period, many footballers often had their own store or business.⁹⁵ These stores were very popular with football fans, as it brought them opportunities to interact with their respective idols.⁹⁶ Around this period, footballers regularly owned a private business next to playing professional football. Paid football has only been allowed in the Netherlands since 1954, and

⁸⁸ "In Memoriam Humphrey Mijns (Deel 2)," Faja Lobi KDS, accessed May 8, 2024, <https://www.fajalobikds.nl/1/53/in-memoriam-humphrey-mijns-deel-2/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Linden, *Humphrey Mijns. Minna*, 39

⁹³ Ibid., 45.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 78.

before this football was played for enjoyment and honour.⁹⁷ During this period, migration from Suriname toward the Netherlands was considered a privilege, inaccessible to all Suriname people. These athletes were highly mobile and moving across the globe because of their skills, and thus enabled them to get a better salary.

2.2.5 Conclusion

In short, the FIFA Eligibility Ruleset as it is known today has been in place since the 1990s. It describes that players are eligible to play for a national team if they hold nationality in the territory of that national football association. However, as illustrated above, in the pre-modern football era, a player was tied to their ‘sporting nationality’ once they had participated in the representative football team in an official competition. Various countries had differences in their implementation of eligibility rules for their respective national teams. France was one of the earliest national teams to have a player of colonial or postcolonial descent, already in the 1930s. Belgium’s first player of colonial or postcolonial descent, on the other hand, only appeared in the late 1980s.

In the Netherlands, these changes in diversity in the Dutch National Team started with the appearance of Humphrey Mijns in 1960. However, the Dutch National Team only really diversified in the 1980s and onwards. To demonstrate migration trends and reasons, I have used the example of ‘Klavertje vijf’ to provide a more profound understanding of how and why football players migrated to the Netherlands to play for Dutch teams.

2.3 Empirical: First appearances of players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants.

In this section, Humphrey Mijns and Simon Tahamata’s appearances and experiences in the Dutch National Team are analysed. While conducting research on these players, the topic of racism is very rarely found to be discussed or mentioned in academic literature. Regarding biographies, Danny van der Linden was one of the first to write about Mijns, in his book *Humphrey Mijns, Minna*. Tahamata’s biography has been written by Tonny van der Mee. With the biographical approach, this project examines the racist experiences of these players.

⁹⁷ “In Memoriam Humphrey Mijns (Deel 2).”

2.3.1 *Humphrey Mijvals*

Humphrey Mijvals was the first player from overseas to play for the Dutch national team. Mijvals was born in Moengo, which is a town in Suriname. Here, he played football at club level. He also briefly played a year in Brazil before making the move to the Netherlands.⁹⁸ As explained before, the pastor Graafland played an important role in bringing players from Suriname, such as Mijvals, to play at club level in the Netherlands.⁹⁹ Other players include Frank Mijvals, Michel Kruin, Charlie Marbach and Erwin Sparendam, who together with Humphrey Mijvals, this group of players were known as the *Klavertje vijf*.¹⁰⁰ They all played for a football club in Utrecht named 'USV Elinkwijk'. In the 1970s, Elinkwijk fused with football club DOS and Velox to become FC Utrecht.¹⁰¹ Elinkwijk continued as an amateur club.¹⁰² Nowadays, it is part of DHSC.¹⁰³

According to the Utrechts Nieuwsblad (UN), travelling from Suriname to the Netherlands by boat took Mijvals 16 days.¹⁰⁴ He was received in the Netherlands by his sister, who already lived in Leiden, two Elinkwijk board members, and pastor Graafland.¹⁰⁵ Mijvals arrived on November 7th 1956, with his luggage, further carrying two massive melons and a pair of soft-toed football boots.¹⁰⁶

2.3.1.1 *Mijvals' contributions in the national team*

On October 31st in 1957, an article appeared in the local newspaper of Curaçao. This article explained that Antilles and Surinam football players were considered foreigners in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the article continued, explaining that players from Curaçao would never play for the Dutch National Team.¹⁰⁸ Up to the 1960s, these claims were perceived as common: if you were Dutch and had Dutch ancestry, you would play for the Dutch National Team. If you were born in Suriname, it was expected that you would play for the Surinam National Team.

⁹⁸ Linden, *Humphrey Mijvals. Minna*, 28-29.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁰⁴ "In Memoriam Humphrey Mijvals (Deel 2)."

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ B. M. Schilperoort, "Antilliaanse En Surinaamse Voetballers in Nederland Zijn Technisch „buitenlander",” *Amigoe Di Curacao*, October 31, 1957, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBDDD02:000211199:mpeg21:a0034>.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

However, in January 1960, another set of articles appeared, one titled *The appearance of the Surinam player in the Dutch national squad*. These articles investigated the deal being made between the Dutch and Surinam Football associations. This deal included the rule that if players from Suriname had played for at least three years in the Netherlands at club level, it would be possible for them to join the Dutch National Team.¹⁰⁹ Humphrey Mijns was the first player from Suriname to have played for the Dutch National Squad. Although Michel Kruijn also qualified for this position at that time, he never ended up playing for the Dutch National Team. Thus, at that time, Mijns was the only player of colonial and postcolonial descent playing for the Dutch National Team, as illustrated in figure 2.3 below. In his first game for the Dutch National Team, Mijns made a bicycle kick, which was remembered as an iconic moment in Dutch football history.¹¹⁰ Besides his contribution during this game, Mijns never became an undisputed starter in the Dutch national team.¹¹¹ Mijns was invited for the next game against Belgium, which took place in Antwerp, three weeks later.¹¹² This game was not a success. After a mistake by Mijns in the third minute, the Dutch conceded an early goal, and ended up losing the derby.¹¹³

2.3.1.2 Racism

2.3.1.2.1 At club level

There were mixed feelings about the appearance of Mijns at Elinkwijk in the Netherlands. On the one hand, people were very excited.¹¹⁴ This was described in the biography *Minna*. The Suriname players after their arrival became more popular by each week in Utrecht.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, as popular as they were among the supporters from Elinkwijk, this often was not the case among the opposition. In the documentary, Mijns recalled two specific experiences regarding his move to the Netherlands. One of these experiences was his debut. He describes the cold weather, and goes on to talk about how his debut was one of his worst performances.¹¹⁶ The audiences of this game reacted verbally aggressive, saying, for example, that Mijns should leave and return to his country.¹¹⁷ They

¹⁰⁹ Toxopeus, "Surinamers in Nederlands Voetbalelftal?"

¹¹⁰ Linden, *Humphrey Mijns*. *Minna*, 165.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹² "Humphrey in Oranje (Deel 7) - Faja Lobi KDS," accessed May 31, 2024, <https://www.fajalobikds.nl/1/81/humphrey-in-oranje-deel-7/>.

¹¹³ "Humphrey in Oranje (Deel 7) - Faja Lobi KDS."

¹¹⁴ Linden, *Humphrey Mijns*. *Minna*, 57.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹¹⁶ *Andere Tijden Sport: Van Mijns tot Memphis. Hoe Oranje kleur kreeg*, 2020, 5-6, <http://archive.org/details/2340421-andere-tijden-sport-van-mijns-tot-memphis-hoe-oranje-kleur-kreeg>.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

also asked him what he was doing here, implying that he was not welcome.¹¹⁸ Additionally, in 1986, an article described, the moment of the debut of Mijns and Sparrenboom, where according to the article, people from the stance pumped in to each other saying ‘ Did you see him already? The n-word’.¹¹⁹ However, it was not only the audience that made comments, but also the players.¹²⁰

The moment with Abe Lenstra was highlighted in the biography. At sports park Enschede, the Dutch footballer Abe Lenstra made racist remarks towards Humphrey Mijns.¹²¹ Stating ‘*vieze vuile zwarte, ga terug naar je land*’ which is translated to ‘dirty black, go back to your country’. Lenstra was apparently frustrated with the Suriname players, which led to these remarks. Humphrey Mijns replied shocked but shakes his shoulders because he felt like could not do anything against those remarks.¹²²

In the biography *Minna*, two additional racist incidents were disclosed. The brother of Humphrey Mijns, Frank Mijns experienced this form of racism as well. In December 1959 in an away game at MVV Maastricht. Frank Mijns disclosed after the game that he was punched by Maas in the stomach and face.¹²³ Subsequently, during the game, Maas verbally abused Mijns based on his skin tone.¹²⁴ This led to Frank Mijns punching Maas.¹²⁵ As a consequence, there were controversies in the Dutch Media surrounding this incident. In the aftermath, the board of MVV Maastricht left a formal response saying they were outraged at the incident, and they view this as a deliberate act of violence, mostly highlighting Mijns’ actions instead of Maas’ racism.¹²⁶ This was in total contradiction of the response of Frank Mijns.¹²⁷ In the response, MVV continued to defend the actions of Andre Maas and downplay the racist remarks that were made by not addressing them, and only focusing on the actions of Mijns.¹²⁸ Saying that before the punching, he already warned Maas by saying that ‘he would get him’.¹²⁹

It was also noted that ‘klavertje vijf’ felt uncomfortable with the Dutch concept of ‘Zwarte Piet’. This happened on the streets, when a child was yelling ‘Zwarte Piet’ towards

¹¹⁸ *Andere Tijden Sport*, 5-6.

¹¹⁹ Mark van den Heuvel and Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, “Opmars van Donker Talent Is Niet Te Stuiten,” *Het Parool*, November 15, 1986, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010832584:mpeg21:a0470>.

¹²⁰ *Andere Tijden Sport*, 5-6.

¹²¹ Linden, *Humphrey Mijns. Minna*, 57.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 57.

¹²³ “Reactie MVV „Veiligheid Eist Vervolging,” *De Volkskrant*, December 29, 1959, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010875749:mpeg21:a0184>.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

the players.¹³⁰ It was reported at the time, that they thought that the behaviour of the white Dutch at the time was because of very low standards.¹³¹

According to an article of Onkenhout from *Volkscrant* published in 2020, Andre Maas verbally abused him by calling him ‘*roetmop, vieze n-woord, aap en een klote n-woord*’ which is translated to ‘a sooty mop, dirty n-word, monkey and an f-word n-word’.¹³² In this article, Onkenhout goes into the fact that black football players’ were often verbally abused in the fifties and sixties by the supporters.¹³³ They often used the skin tone as a centre of their abuse.¹³⁴ Onkenhout points out that for a while in Dutch football, black players were often afraid to speak out because they were afraid they would stand alone in the battle against racism. Henk Ten Cate, football coach and former professional from Suriname descent, disclosed this fact and explains that if you chose to speak out you were called a ‘whiner’.¹³⁵ There was no support, it was just denied.¹³⁶

2.3.1.2.2 In the national team

Humphrey Mijnaals’ debut in the Dutch National Team was generally regarded as successful. The image of him making the bicycle kick is regarded as an iconic moment in Dutch sports history. After the debut of Mijnaals in the Dutch National Team against Bulgari, supporters of Elinkswijks rushed up to the field to celebrate the victory. Mijnaals was taken on their shoulders by them. According to his biography, he was the centre of attention. Even the coach participated in celebrating, giving Mijnaals a hug in the dressing room. This example shows that Mijnaals played for the national team and was considered a member of the team by the players, staff, and supporters.

The media reported in a nuanced way. On the one side, newspapers like the *Telegraaf* published an article with the title *Dark Humphrey Mijnaals has captured the hearts of the Dutch football community with his sometimes unflinching improvisations*. Even though this is a compliment, *Telegraaf* highlights the racial disparity. Besides this point,

¹³⁰ Linden, *Humphrey Mijnaals*. *Minna*, 61.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹³² Paul Onkenhout, “In de strijd tegen racisme wordt het tijd om door te pakken,” *de Volkskrant*, June 5, 2020, sec. Columns & Opinie, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/columns-opinie/in-de-strijd-tegen-racisme-wordt-het-tijd-om-door-te-pakken~b5acbee1/>.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Bart Vlietstra, “Lang was er de ‘angst om jezelf te laten horen’, nu maken voetballers massaal een vuist,” *de Volkskrant*, June 2, 2020, sec. Sport, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/sport/lang-was-er-de-angst-om-jezelf-te-laten-horen-nu-maken-voetballers-massaal-een-vuist~b880ab0b/>.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

Telegraaf goes on describing Mijns as “an athlete, footballer, and an acrobat”.¹³⁷ The newspaper, formerly known as ‘Het Vrije Volk’, and currently known as ‘AD’ also looks back on the debut with satisfaction. The question AD raised was mainly focusing if Mijns could adapt his playing style to the national team, which they thought he succeeded in. Mijns played in a couple more matches, although he could never establish himself as a starting player for the Dutch national team. In the following years, after 1960, Mijns did not get reselected for the national team.

There was some critique of Mijns’s performance in the national team, for instance Kick Geudekes. He was a journalist for the at the time popular journal ‘Sport & Sportwereld’, and he started his critique in the game against Bulgaria. He reported that Mijns was a source of disruption in the Dutch defense, where the wingbacks were accustomed to playing with the famous central defender Cor van der Hart.¹³⁸ Geudeker was critical, despite acknowledging the potential discomfort for those who carried Mijns off the field in triumph after the game.¹³⁹ Additionally, he reported that a football performance should not be measured against the backdrop of racial discrimination, which often occurred in the media.¹⁴⁰ There was some discussion in the media on the inclusion of Mijns.¹⁴¹ People feared that Mijns’ election has been influenced by his ethnicity to some extent. Mijns, on the other hand, had publicly wondered why his selection for the national team was delayed.¹⁴² Ultimately, his selection was due to Van der Hart’s absence and his good play at Elinkwijk.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ Linden, *Humphrey Mijns. Minna*, 71.

¹³⁸ NTR, “De omhaal van Humphrey Mijns,” *Andere Tijden*, accessed May 31, 2024, <https://anderetijden.nl/aflevering/604/De-omhaal-van-Humphrey-Mijns>.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*



Figure 2.3, Team photo of the 1960 Dutch national team against Bulgaria. On the bottom row, third from the right, is Humphrey Mijns.¹⁴⁴

2.3.2 Simon Tahamata

Simon Tahamata was born on 26th May 1956, in Lunetten residential area, part of Camp Vught due to direct consequences of the intertwined history between the Moluccans and the Netherlands. When Tahamata's parents arrived in the Netherlands, they did not know their final destination.¹⁴⁵ Camp Vught was previously used by the German occupiers in World War II, where, for instance, Jewish people were held captive. After the war, this former concentration camp is the new residency of many hundreds of KNIL-families. The barbed wire, and a guard post with barrier at the entrance, were still present at the time.¹⁴⁶ It was described that the living conditions were horrendous, no comfort, almost no privacy. The

¹⁴⁴ Wim van Rossem, *Nederlands Elftal 1960-04-03*, April 3, 1960, photograph, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/fotocollectie/a9aba822-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84?searchKey=1a0b3215d972020b42d33a49f0ec1dd7>.

¹⁴⁵ Mee, *Simon Tahamata en de andere Molukse voetbalhelden in dienst van Oranje*, 17.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

families lived in Wooden Barracks, and these were damp, and unhygienic.¹⁴⁷ Diseases break out would break out.¹⁴⁸ The people did not expect a permanent stay, on the contrary they expected to return to the Molucca in a few months, and the camp to be a temporary solution. For instance, they did not have to do labour, and they received pocket money.¹⁴⁹ However, months went by and frustration grew, and the return eventually never came into reality.¹⁵⁰

He is a retired Dutch football player of Molucca descent. Tahamata made his debut in the Dutch National Team in 1979 and was the first player of Molucca descent in the team. During the period Tahamata was active in the Netherlands' national team, he received criticism regarding his ethnicity, as well as when he played at club level for the Dutch club Ajax. Before analysing Tahamata's experiences of racism, first the intertwined history of the Netherlands and the Moluccans is described to provide context on the tensions between the Netherlands and Moluccans in the 1970s and 80s, which posed an influence on the stereotypes of the Moluccan people.

2.3.2.1 Intertwined history of the Dutch and the Moluccans

Part of the criticism against Tahamata had to do with the history between the Moluccans and the Dutch. They have a complicated, intertwined history, dating back to ca. 1600.¹⁵¹ The Dutch colonised the Molucca Island for bettering their trade and, in this period, they also recruited Moluccan men to serve the VOC.¹⁵² Furthermore, the Dutch established the 'KNIL' (*Koninklijke Nederlands- Indisch Leger*), a Dutch-Indonesian army serving the Netherlands. This was an important factor because the KNIL was very dependent on the Moluccans colony for soldiers, which shows the intertwining of Dutch and Molucca history.¹⁵³

In more recent history, specifically the second half of the 20th century, this relationship between the Dutch and the Moluccans became more complicated. The reason being the role of the Moluccans in the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence in 1945-1949.¹⁵⁴ In this war, the Dutch rebuilt the KNIL, with the aspiration

¹⁴⁷ Mee, *Simon Tahamata en de andere Molukse voetbalhelden in dienst van Oranje*, 17.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹⁵¹ Gert Oostindie and Fridus Steijlen, "Ethnic 'Ferociousness' in Colonial Wars: Moluccans in the Dutch Army in Indonesia, 1945–1949," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 177, no. 4 (November 5, 2021): 493, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-bja10032>.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 493.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 493.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 493.

to reoccupy the colony.¹⁵⁵ Many Moluccans were recruited for this war on a large scale, and many were under the assumption that this would be a well-paying job.¹⁵⁶ This stance of Moluccans against the Indonesian Revolution was considered to be a confirmation of the Moluccans' pro-colonial allegiance.¹⁵⁷ The Dutch military men were fighting an overseas war, from which they hoped to return safely.¹⁵⁸ However, on the other hand, the Moluccans were fighting for their way of life, as supporters of the colonial regime.¹⁵⁹

After the end of the Indonesian Revolution, when the fighting was supposed to be over, some Moluccans did not want to accept the new independent government that was formed in Indonesia.¹⁶⁰ This led to them trying to start their country, named the Republic of the South Moluccans (RMS).¹⁶¹ This further complicated and strained the relationship between the Netherlands and the Moluccans. There was a substantial group of former soldiers that supported the RMS, and both the Dutch and Indonesian governments did not want trained soldiers to be demobilised on Molucca.¹⁶² Thus, the decision was made to send these Moluccans and their families to the Netherlands. In total, 12,500 people were shipped to the Netherlands as postcolonial migrants.¹⁶³ This is a different migration trend than we have seen with Mijns. Primarily, the racism and stereotypes they had to deal with were, centred around the Dutch inferiority.¹⁶⁴ Especially, the housing situation contributed to the isolation of the Moluccans from Dutch society. In the camps, where the Moluccans resided, assimilation was difficult, since the schools were taught in Molucca.¹⁶⁵ For the older generation, it meant they could not enter the labour market.¹⁶⁶ Over time, it became clear that the return to their motherland was no option.¹⁶⁷ Eventually, in 1959, the construction of social houses in specific neighbourhoods outside the camps was realized.¹⁶⁸ However, The Dutch government did not adapt its isolationist policy over the years.¹⁶⁹ The situation

¹⁵⁵ Oostindie and Steijlen, "Ethnic 'Ferociousness' in Colonial Wars," 496.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 496.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 496.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 497.

¹⁶⁴ Charlotte Laarman, "3. Representations of Post-Colonial Migrants in Discussions on Inter-marriage in the Netherlands, 1945-2005," in *Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands*, ed. Ulbe Bosma (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 58, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048517312-003>.

¹⁶⁵ Hans van Amersfoort and Mies van Niekerk, "Immigration as a Colonial Inheritance: Post-Colonial Immigrants in the Netherlands, 1945-2002," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32, no. 3 (April 1, 2006): 330, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830600555210>.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 330.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 330.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 330.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 331.

surrounding the Moluccans was dragged into the 1970s, resulting in 80% of the Molucca population in Holland without official citizenship.¹⁷⁰

Jumping forward to 1975, Moluccan youth hijacked a train at Wijster, as well as in 1977 at De Punt. Coincidentally, schoolchildren were being held captive at Bovensmilde by the group of Moluccan youth. The Dutch public was shocked and impacted by these tragic events in Drenthe. The reason for the Moluccan's train hijacking has been described by the National Archive. The Dutch government did not support the goal of the Moluccans, namely the establishment of a Republic of South Molucca.¹⁷¹ This eventually led to the radicalisation of Moluccan youths in the Netherlands, which in turn led to the train hijackings.¹⁷² After the train hijacking, this immensely impacted the image of the Moluccans. These Moluccans were from the same generation as Tahamata, which was the second generation of Moluccans in the Netherlands. There were the lingering stereotypes of the Moluccans, that they were the train hijackers, and this spread internationally. This is not only inferior, but also generalizing the whole population. This violence had the Dutch public in shock, and this resulted in a lingering 'bad name'. Tahamata, since he is a well-known footballer, he is often asked about his opinion.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, he understands what drives his peers to those actions.¹⁷⁴ He points out, that there is a story behind it. He believes, how the Dutch government treated them (the Moluccans), that goes very far and very deep. That history needs to be told, including in education. 65 years after the train and school hijack, Tahamata reflected on these incidents. He described that at the time he related to the Moluccans who struggled, and so also would relate to the train hijackers. In 1979, he grew out to be a fan favourite of Ajax. Especially, in the dark period for the Moluccans with the train hijacks. Tahamata, For the Moluccans living in the Netherlands, was considered a beacon of light.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Amersfoort and Niekerk, "Immigration as a Colonial Inheritance," 331.

¹⁷¹ "Treinkapingen (1975-1977) | Nationaal Archief," accessed March 21, 2024, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/beleven/onderwijs/bronnenbox/treinkapingen-1975-1977>.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ "Simon Tahamata: de kapers hebben ons op de kaart gezet," March 21, 2016, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2094316-simon-tahamata-de-kapers-hebben-ons-op-de-kaart-gezet>.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Tonny van der Mee, "Tahamata was slachtoffer van racisme Ajax-bestuur," AD.nl, October 30, 2012, <https://www.ad.nl/nederlands-voetbal/tahamata-was-slachtoffer-van-racisme-ajax-bestuur~a4064741/>.

2.3.2.2 Tahamata's experiences on Racism

2.3.2.2.1 Club level

During his time at Ajax, he was regularly called out for being a train hijacker, and he was often taunted by supporters that he should return to his country.¹⁷⁶ Generally, Tahamata's Ajax period was considered a successful one by himself and the public. The board at Ajax criticized him for his physicality, but also because he's from the Molucca and not for his football skills.¹⁷⁷ He was sold unexpectedly because the board wanted to get rid of him, and it has been alleged that they did not want to be associated with a Moluccan player. Tahamata himself was not interested in leaving, and his departure came as a surprise. For instance, Secretary Jan Westrik was one of those involved in his departure, according to the biography. Several racist gestures were made by Westrik towards Tahamata and his family, such as asking Tahamata's father for the admission ticket to an Ajax match, implying that Westrik viewed Tahamata's father as unworthy of being in the stands.¹⁷⁸ Adding to this, sports journalist David Endt reported that when it came to Tahamata's football skills, critics expressed concerns not only regarding his small stature, but also about his ethnic background.¹⁷⁹ Endt believes Simon was the victim of questionable business practices and prejudice.¹⁸⁰

Besides the national reaction of shock, these train hijackings had further consequences for the acceptance of Moluccans in the Netherlands. These tensions may explain the reactions and criticisms towards Tahamata. Tahamata explained that he and his peers were often refused entrance in entertainment venues.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, in football stadiums, he often experienced racial abuse.¹⁸² This led to the KNVB needing to organise the 'atmospheric actions' to show their intolerance of these racial utterances.¹⁸³

2.3.2.2.2 National level

When Tahamata was in a less successful spell at Ajax, he was selected for the Dutch national team. Tahamata played a good match, which also led him to be a starter again at

¹⁷⁶ Mee, *Simon Tahamata en de andere Molukse voetbalhelden in dienst van Oranje*, 76.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

¹⁷⁹ Mee, "Tahamata was slachtoffer van racisme Ajax-bestuur."

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Andere Tijden Sport*, 8-10.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 8-10.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

Ajax. Tahamata describes a moment in which he was selected for the ‘world team’, even though he did not expect to be selected for the special occasion.¹⁸⁴ In his biography, Tahamata states that he takes a seat among the international stars and takes to the reserve bench and says ‘yes they knew me and knew my origins’. Causio replied, ‘The Molucca made shooting moves due to his knowledge of the train hijackings’.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the hijack was not solely restricted to the Netherlands.

In total, he played twenty-two times for the Dutch national team. While, the details of Tahamata’s experience in the national team are scarce. It is likely that he had a complex relationship with his Dutch heritage, considering that his experiences, both on and off the pitch, were mostly mixed. In the Moluccan population, he was cherished, however there was also negativity involved surrounding the hijacks. These experiences shaped a Tahamata’s sense of belonging and identity.

2.3.3 Conclusion

2.3.3.1 *White innocence*

The white innocence in this chapter primarily lies in the fact that the Dutch view themselves as colour-blind and tolerant. However, when the treatment of these players are examined, this is not the case. Despite Mijns’ talent and qualification, people struggled to understand how and why he appeared in the Dutch national team. This reflects the denial of racial discrimination and the idea and believe that all players are treated equally. His appearance challenged the Dutch self-image of tolerant and colour-blind. Gloria Wekker refers to the dominant racial positioning as the normative positioning on race, silently perpetuated despite the contrary.¹⁸⁶ The normative position, in this case, perpetuates the denial of racism and reinforces white privilege.

Furthermore, there is an absence of sources which directly addressed the scepticism about Tahamata’s inclusion in the Dutch national team. His experiences do highlight the tensions between the Dutch self-image of tolerance, colour-blindness, and the reality of unequal treatment. The criticism Tahamata received was often about his physical attributes, despite his talent, his dribble skills, and agility. The board of the KNVB, which consists predominantly out of white men, played a role in decision-making surrounding policies, priorities, and cultural norms in Dutch football. The lack of diversity perpetuated the denial of racism, which in turn reinforced white innocence.

¹⁸⁴ Mee, *Simon Tahamata en de andere Molukse voetbalhelden in dienst van Oranje*, 54.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁸⁶ Wekker and Grootveld, *Witte onschuld*, 125.

2.3.3.2 *Racism*

These overseas pioneers made spectacular emergences in the Dutch football scene. Mijns came over to the Netherlands because he was offered a job and a future. Tahamata, like other people from Molucca, arrived in the Netherlands due to postcolonial migration, wherein they were forced to live isolated in the Netherlands. On the one hand, they experienced support and popularity from their fans. They were accepted by local supporters, and by people with similar descent.

On the other hand, racism was present in both cases, considering the Dutch national football association, hardly ever spoke out on this matter. Even though the newspapers did report on some of the issues, others racist incident were left out, and there was also a lot of attention. Their biography also covers this part, but topics such as how they were perceived in the dressing room were left out. The writer of Mijns, Danny van der Linden, is ethnically a white Dutch man. This could have contributed to the fact that these occasions, such as the dressing room, were not deemed as important.

2.4 **Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter provides insights on the early experiences of players of colonial or postcolonial descent in the Dutch National Team, specifically those of Humphrey Mijns and Simon Tahamata. First, the FIFA Rules of Eligibility and their development were explained, as well as a short comparison of different countries with colonial pasts. Next, the chapter analysed and described Mijns' and Tahamata's experiences of racism, from their perspective, and provided context on their backgrounds. This chapter provides further context for the period 1980-2020, which is the main focus of this research. Mijns and Tahamata have different experiences, but both are tied to postcolonialism.

In Mijns case, he was born in Suriname. Suriname has had a colonial history for centuries. In Suriname, there was slavery and everything that goes along with it. The verbal abuse that Mijns experienced was also based on this and how the abusers were using the feeling of inferiority on these players like Mijns. Here it is also evident that how these players received and dealt with the racism, it was very much an individual situation you had to deal with. Therefore, there was so no group action to let the public know that this behaviour is not tolerated. Moreover, what is often said in newspapers, that the supporters

are just trying to keep these players out of the game by distracting them with racial slurs. This is very much aligned with the concept '*witte onschuld*' (white innocence).

In Tahamata case, the colonialism was focused on the Asian continent instead of the Americas. The Dutch were often brutal in the Asian colonies, but the use of slaves on plantations, were primarily in the Americas. This means that the remembrance of these colonies period was different. By giving context on the Dutch and Molucca intertwined history, it is evident that this is deeply linked to the separate colonial histories. The abuse that Tahamata faced from his perspective was mainly focused on the train hijacking in the 70s, which was a consequence of the postcolonial history in Indonesia. To conclude, these players narrate their experiences of racism in this early period, as clearly present, and without a response from both national and international football institutions.

3 The Emergences of the Second Generation in the national team, 1980-1990

3.1 Introduction

After the appearance of Mijns in 1960, the next player of (post-)colonial descent was Tahamata, a player of Moluccan descent who appeared in the Dutch national team in 1979. The second Surinamese player to start for the Dutch national team was Romeo Zondervan in 1981.¹⁸⁷ Thus, there is a gap of twenty years between these players of Surinamese descent, which is also shown in figure 2.2 in the previous chapter. This absence can be explained by looking at migration trends in the Netherlands, which changed throughout the 1970s. The argument of the previous chapter evolved around the fact that the Dutch Public hold the opinion that they are not racist, referring to themselves as colour-blind. This is in complete contrast with the experiences of the players. This second chapter builds upon this argument, and it examines if this trend continues in the second and third generation of players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants. I argue that this trend continues, even though awareness about racism in sports was raised in newspapers and become more widely known. However, the results of more wide coverage and awareness of racism in sport did not yet have an effect on the experiences of players with racism. It was still considered something a player had to deal with individually.

In this chapter, the second and third generation that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the Dutch national football team are discussed. These players appeared sometime after the first appearance of the (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the 1960s. The specific reason for this discontinuation is unclear. In this period, talents, that are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants, are coming up, such as Ruud Gullit and Frank Rijkaard. These players came up by making their debut on club level, and slowly paving their way towards the Dutch national team. This generation of players moved to the Netherlands for different reasons than players from 'klavertje vijf' who went to the Netherlands on the initiative of pastor Graafland. Surrounding the 1970s, we see this migration trend change, and accumulate over the following years. This led to people having a different motivation for moving from a former colony to the cold Netherlands, and eventually to a large group of (children of) postcolonial migrants appearing in the Netherlands. In this chapter, I argue that these groups experienced and witnessed racism and forms of white innocence. The theory of white innocence is further explained in this chapter,

¹⁸⁷ Linden, *Humphrey Mijns*. *Minna*, 130.

followed by the case studies to demonstrate the alignment of these theoretical concepts to the research objectives, which is the personal experience of the players with racism and white innocence. In this chapter, the lead up to the incidents are taken into examination as well. For instance, in the spitting accident, the game between West-Germany and the Netherlands had deeper history, which had influence on the sentiment of the game, and also on how the fans and, more importantly, the players experienced it.

These are discussed as followed: firstly, the trends in postcolonial migration are explained using the data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), which has done research together with many historians and the Dutch government. Secondly, the case studies are explained, which are then linked to the theoretical concepts of racism and white innocence. The analysis is applied to different newspaper articles reporting on the events of the selected case studies. In short, this chapter delves into the second sub-question: ‘How did players of (post)colonial descent navigate issues of racism during the 1980s and 1990s?’. This section includes football players such as Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard, and Aron Winter. Here, the analysis of the newspaper is used to focus on their personal experiences of racism and white innocence.

3.2 Context: Postcolonial migration to the Netherlands

3.2.1 Introduction

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) is a Dutch institution which collects data on Dutch society surrounding societal and economical topics, and these findings are processed into statistical information.¹⁸⁸ In 2008, the then State Secretary for Justice, Mr. N. Albayrak, emphasized the necessity for a comprehensive overview of international migration to and from the Netherlands.¹⁸⁹ N. Albayrak, who is a Turkish-Dutch administrator and former Labour Party politician, embarked this comprehensive research on migration, on which researchers such as R.P.W. Jennissen, H. Nicolaas, J. de Boom, G. Oostindie also contributed.

In this research, they describe migration from Dutch colonies to the Netherlands as early as in the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁰ After the second world war, the Dutch-Indonesian migration trend shows an increase in migration from Indonesia to the Netherlands in comparison to previous years. This increasing Dutch-Indonesian migration trend, declined

¹⁸⁸ Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, “Over ons,” webpagina, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, November 14, 2023, <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/over-ons>.

¹⁸⁹ R. P. W. (red) Jennissen et al., “De Nederlandse Migratiekaart,” *Den Haag*, 2011, 5.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

after the 1960s, which more or less stabilised from the 1960s and onwards, a period that is discussed in the previous chapter. Primarily, the Surinamese migration towards the Netherlands increased from the 1960s and onwards. This is demonstrated in figure 3.1 below. In 1966, 13 000 Surinamese lived in the Netherlands, and this number increased to 51 000 in 1972.¹⁹¹ Van Amersfoort examined this migration trend, and states that in the 1950s and 60s, there was a widespread belief in the Dutch population in relation to the Malthusian fear of overpopulation, simply the belief there was a fixed relation between the size of the population and prosperity.¹⁹² With the arrival of thousands of Surinamese, many Dutch people feared this would come at the cost of their welfare. Thus, migration was considered an unwelcome phenomenon by the Dutch public.¹⁹³ Which leads to stereotypes and other forms of discrimination towards the migrated population.

3.2.2 *New generation*

The second generation of football players of (post)colonial descent, Gullit, Vanenburg, Roy and Rijkaard, were all born in the Netherlands. With the exception of Fraser, Menzo, and Zomervan, who were born in Paramaribo, Suriname. Their parents emigrated in the fifties and sixties to the Netherlands.¹⁹⁴ For instance, Frank Rijkaard was born in Amsterdam on 30 September 1962, and his father, Herman Rijkaard, migrated from Suriname to the Netherlands in 1955.¹⁹⁵ According to Frank Rijkaard's biography, it was explained that until the mid-1950s, travelling was a privilege of the Surinamese upper class.¹⁹⁶ However, when the common people also got a Dutch passport and transport prices were significantly reduced, the first flow of migration to the Netherlands began.¹⁹⁷ This very much aligns with the figure 3.3, where the migration flow is demonstrated. The motivation of Herman Rijkaard was that the general standard of living in the Netherlands was better in comparison to Suriname. Additionally, he wanted to pursue his football dream. However, he has stated that if this did not succeed, he was sure that he would be able to find a financially better and more enjoyable labour in the Netherlands than he would in Suriname.¹⁹⁸

This is similar to the story of Ruud Gullit (birth name: Rudi Dil), who happened to live only minutes away from Frank Rijkaard at the time. They even played together growing

¹⁹¹ Amersfoort and Niekerk, "Immigration as a Colonial Inheritance," 4.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁹⁴ Haverkamp, "De Kabel," 27.

¹⁹⁵ Leo Verheul, *Frank Rijkaard, de Biografie* (Bruna Uitgevers B.V., A.W., 2011), 10.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

up.¹⁹⁹ Ruud Gullit's father, George Gullit, was a Surinamese man that migrated to the Netherlands similar to Herman Rijkaard, Frank Rijkaard's father. Ruud Gullit was born in Amsterdam, and on his 19th birthday he made his debut for the Dutch national team against Switzerland. The second generation of players consisted out of Romeo Zomervan, Frank Rijkaard, Gerald Vanenburg, Ruud Gullit, Bryan Roy, Aron Winter, Stanley Menzo, and Henk Fraser. Frank Rijkaard and Ruud Gullit were the most prominent.

3.2.3 *From migration to lingering stereotypes*

In 1955, Suriname ceased to be a Dutch colony, but it remained part of the Dutch Kingdom until 1975 when Suriname achieved its independence.²⁰⁰ The Dutch state remained control over the mobility of Suriname people moving towards the Netherlands.²⁰¹ The Dutch mobility regime had criteria used by Dutch officials to distinguish between those who were eligible to travel and those who were not.²⁰² This contributed to the racial stereotypes that persisted, since the Dutch population maintained 'whiteness' as a fundamental character of their national identity.²⁰³ In contrast, this meant that 'blackness' and migration were often perceived as 'alien' to the Dutch identity. In addition, multiculturalism was sometimes redefined as 'ethnicism', which implied an ethnic and hierarchical order.²⁰⁴

In 1973, the oil crisis occurred in the Netherlands, which led to industrial restructuring.²⁰⁵ Many postcolonial migrants worked in these industries, and high unemployment rates occurred among postcolonial migrants. These high unemployment rates contributed to social tensions and increased racist sentiments among white Dutch people, consistent in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁰⁶ In turn, this influenced the treatment of the postcolonial population in the Netherlands, and racism and underlying racial biases persisted throughout the late twentieth century. Despite, the Dutch self-image being tolerant, and colour-blind. This generation had to deal with this, similar to the next generation, which will be discussed in the next chapter, and had to endure these same notions of racism and white innocence.

¹⁹⁹ "Op pleintje van vroeger kijken Gullit en Rijkaard naar helden van nu," March 5, 2020, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2325899-op-pleintje-van-vroeger-kijken-gullit-en-rijkaard-naar-helden-van-nu>.

²⁰⁰ Koen Leurs and Philipp Seufferling, "The Media Operations of Postcolonial Mobility Regimes: The Cases of Filmstichting West Indië and Vereniging Ons Suriname in 1940s and 1950s Netherlands," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 26, no. 6 (November 1, 2023): 688, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779231198124>.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 688.

²⁰² Leurs and Seufferling, "The Media Operations of Postcolonial Mobility Regimes," 688.

²⁰³ Sabrina Marchetti, "Black Europe? Some Views from Afro-Surinamese Migrants in the Netherlands," *The GRaSe Blog* (blog), accessed June 17, 2024, <https://blogs.eui.eu/grase/black-europe/>.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

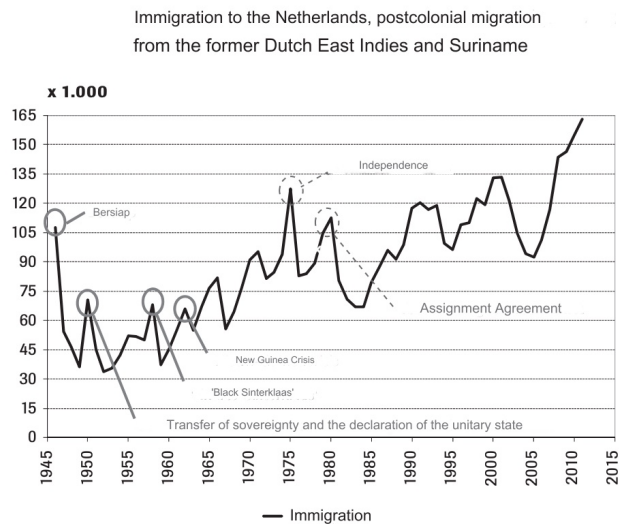
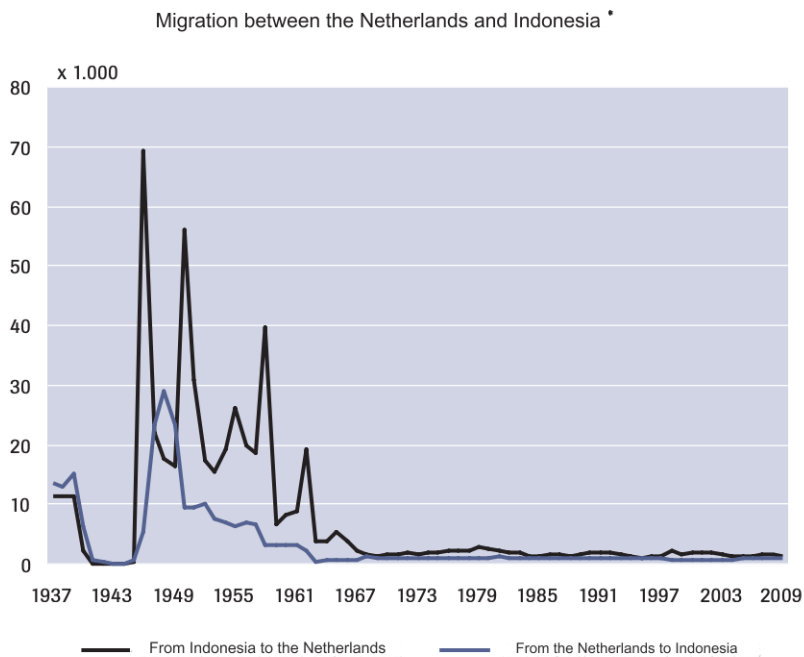


Figure 3.1, *Immigration to The Netherlands, Postcolonial Migration from former Dutch-Indie and Surinam.*²⁰⁷



Source: CBS

Figure 3.2, *migration between the Netherland and Indonesia, 1937-2009.*²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ R. P. W. Jennissen, "De Instroom van Buitenlandse Arbeiders En de Migratiegeschiedenis van Nederland Na 1945," *Justitiële Verkenningen* 39, no. 6 (2013): 12.

²⁰⁸ Jennissen et al., "De Nederlandse Migratiekaart," 254.

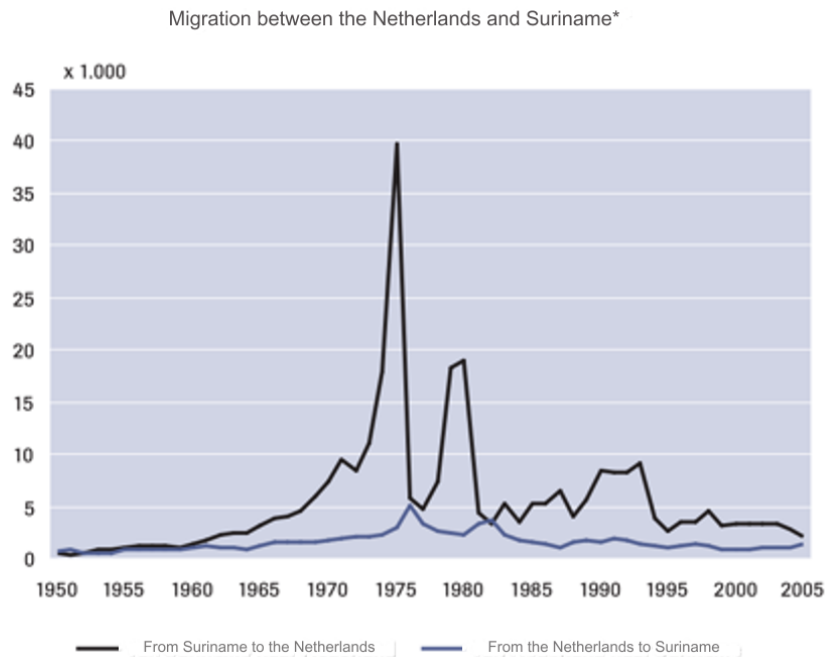


Figure 3.3, *Migration between the Netherland and Suriname, 1950-2005.*²⁰⁹

3.2.4 Conclusion

The migration trend throughout the Dutch history was inconsistent. Since the 1960s, there was a notable increase in migrants from the former colonies. With this migration, stereotypes developed, which was noticeable for the migrated populations. These stereotypes contributed to maintaining the normative racial positioning in the Netherlands as their self-image as tolerant and colour-blind. However, in reality, there was an unequal view of these postcolonial migrants. This ultimately translates into the treatment of the postcolonial migrated people in the Netherlands. When footballers, from a postcolonial descent come to the stage of professional football, it is inherent that these views, which originated from the colonial history and from the migration, contributed to how the players were viewed and treated.

²⁰⁹ Jennissen et al., “De Nederlandse Migratiekaart,” 258.

3.3 Empirical: Experiences of second generation football players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants

In this section, the case study ‘spitting incident’ is analysed using various newspaper articles, and is consequently linked to the theoretical concepts of racism and white innocence. However, before making any argument about this incident, the lead up to this event and the underlying factors should be taken into account to fully grasp why it happened, and why it happened during this game against Germany and not any other opponent. The arguments here is, that this incident did not occur randomly, but had underlying aspects which played a part in it. This is demonstrated by providing context on migration, ‘dark eighties’ and the existing rivalry between Germany and the Netherlands.

3.3.1 Lead up to the incident

The early eighties came to be known as ‘the dark eighties’ for the Dutch national football team.²¹⁰ The dark eighties were an unsuccessful chapter in the history of the national team. This ultimately resulted in paying for the national team was very pressured, especially because of the previous successful years. This leads to rising fans expectations. Ultimately, this heightened pressure influenced the intensity of games, a trend that continued into the 90s.

The dark eighties started in 1980, where the Dutch national team was quickly knocked-out of the group stage of the European Championship. West-Germany continued on to win this tournament. In 1982, the Netherlands did not get through the qualifications. This meant that the Dutch national team did not qualify to play for the World Tournament hosted in Spain.²¹¹ Next, during the European Championship of 1984, the Dutch national team was on course to get qualified. In the qualifying games, the Dutch national team did well compared to the previous years. In the decisive final game of the group stage, Spain and the Netherlands went head-to-head for the last ticket to the European Championship. Spain faced an improbable task: they needed to win by 11 goals against Malta to qualify. Against all expectations, Spain won with a 12-1 victory, securing their place in the tournament.²¹²

Then followed the World Championship in 1986, where the Dutch national team missed the World Championship in Mexico. They finished second, behind Hungary, which

²¹⁰ “Oranje: Herinneringen Aan de Donkere Jaren 80,” accessed April 29, 2024, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2197394-oranje-herinneringen-aan-de-donkere-jaren-80>.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

gave them an opportunity to play play-offs against Belgium for the final spot. After the first game in Brussels and the second game in Rotterdam. The Netherlands suffered a 1-0 defeat in Brussels and won 2-1 the second game in Rotterdam. However, this was not enough to get the final ticket to Mexico. The Dutch national team won the European Championship in 1988, which eased up the pressure of the dark eighties to win a trophy. In 1990, the Netherlands was motivated to extend their success and win against their rivals in the upcoming world cup.

3.3.2 *German Dutch rivalry*

According to Alexander Brand and Arne Niemann, the rivalry between Germany (West-Germany at the time) and the Netherlands is based on football developments, such as dramatic victories or losses of the two national football teams.²¹³ For example, the 1974 World Cup Final between West Germany and the Netherlands, which the Netherlands dramatically lost 1-0. There was still a deep resentment among many Dutch fans since Germany became World Champion in 1974 by beating the Dutch ‘dream team’, ending their dreams of an international trophy.²¹⁴

Furthermore, this rivalry is fuelled by a historical-political legacy.²¹⁵ In the Dutch case, this was primarily hatred and resentment towards Germany because of the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II.²¹⁶ This is explored by Dieter Bartels, a cultural anthropologist who grew up in post-war South-Germany. He elaborated the Dutch ‘fixation’ on Germans, and argues that international football played as a substitute for modern warfare between European Nations.²¹⁷ According to Bartels, this played a key part in keeping alive the anti-German sentiment.²¹⁸ He examines language such as ‘moffen’, which is a Dutch cuss word used during the World War. This cuss word was regularly used by Dutch people as a derogatory term to describe Germans. Besides ‘mof’ being deeply rooted in World War II, it still carries the same weight as during the World War. The Germans would call the Dutch ‘cheese heads’.²¹⁹ The weight of this term ‘cheese heads’ is way less heavy in comparison to ‘mof’, which implies that the Germans were fond of the Dutch, in comparison to the Dutch not being as fond of the Germans in the aftermath of

²¹³ Alexander Brand and Arne Niemann, “Football and National Identity in Europe,” *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs* 1 (2014): 45.

²¹⁴ Dieter Bartels, “Moffen En Maffen,” n.d., 4.

²¹⁵ Brand and Niemann, “Football and National Identity in Europe,” 45.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

²¹⁷ Bartels, “Moffen En Maffen,” 4.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹⁹ Brand and Niemann, “Football and National Identity in Europe,” 45.

World War II. This continued on in football, where supporters from the respective countries would use these terms against the opponents' players and fans.

Adding to Bartels, this anti-German sentiment contributed to the high pressure in the game between West-Germany and the Netherlands in 1990. This has also been noticed in the practices in the lead up to the game against West-Germany. Leo Beenhakker, the trainer of the Dutch national team, stated that there was increasingly more aggression and motivation shown by the players in the lead up to the game.²²⁰

3.3.3 Case Study and Newspaper Analysis: *The Spitting Incident*

The spitting incident happened on Sunday the 24th of June in 1990. It was an incident which happened between the players Frank Rijkaard and Rudi Völler, during a round of 16. Frank Rijkaard at that time was a well-established player in the Dutch national team. Players that were (children of) postcolonial migrants, such as Gullit and Winters, were among the starting players of the game. Nowadays, most do not relate the incident to racism, and this incident became rather obscure over time. However, when it happened, it was speculated to be indeed closely linked to racism. Most of the Dutch public watched this game, and thus the incident, on Dutch live broadcast television. What is seen here is Rijkaard spitting at Völler, and Völler notices this. Next, they can be seen interacting and arguing with each other, which almost becomes a physical altercation. This led to both players getting sent off the field with a red card. During this commotion, Rijkaard can once again be seen spitting on Völler again.

When analysing the newspapers, it becomes evident that there were two overarching narratives about this spitting incident. One of these narratives was that the actions of Rijkaard were a response to discriminatory language and racist remarks made by Völler. However, a second narrative that can be found, was that Rijkaard lost his temper out of frustration during the game, and took this out on Völler. Here it is said that Völler did not make any racist remarks.

3.3.3.1 Narrative linked to racism

Five articles stemming from the Parool, Telegraaf and Trouw reported on this case, just in the aftermath of the incident. Primarily, these articles portray the incident as racially motivated, explaining that Rudi Völler was spit in the hair by Frank Rijkaard, after Rijkaard

²²⁰ Bert Hiddema, *Gullit* (Amsterdam: Luitingh-Sijthoff, 1998), 196.

received racist remarks from Völler during the game.²²¹ The articles elaborated on Rijkaard already having a contentious history with Völler, illustrated by Rijkaard telling his friends that in previous games, including games on club level, Völler used discriminatory language to provoke him.²²² They also report on Rijkaard keeping the real reasoning for spitting on his opponent to himself because he did not want this situation to escalate any further.²²³ Both players were active at club-level in Italy, at a time when the Italian society showed signs of racism.²²⁴ The newspaper articles used examples from English and Italian newspapers, which had already reported on Völler being known for provoking players of colour, to strengthen their arguments.²²⁵

Other articles like the *Volkskrant* continue, and report on all the different forms of racism on and off the pitch, including a detailed account of the spitting incident, taking the side of Rijkaard. Provoking titles are applied here; for instance, Marcel van Lieshout and Frank van Zuil published an article titled '*De voetballer als vuile kanker-zwarte*', which literally translates to 'The footballer as dirty cancer-black'.²²⁶ A direct translation does not contain the cultural meaning or weight of the term. It's a highly derogatory term used against individuals of colour in Dutch society. Not only is this word an insult, but it also carries historical connotations of racism and dehumanisation. This heavily titled article is argued with the narrative that Rijkaard's actions were provoked by discriminatory remarks from Völler. Furthermore, it tells us a lot that this at the time, this weighted insult could be used to make a point about racism in newspaper articles. Other titles were more nuanced, for instance *Rijkaard: "Völler irriteerde me"* (Rijkaard: "Völler irritated me") or *Rijkaard doelwit van Völlers racisme* (Rijkaard targeted by Völler's racism).

Building on this, other athletes of the national team were mentioned in the newspaper articles. Other players like Stanley Menzo, Ruud Gullit, and Aron Winter were also reported on, as they were whistled at several times when they got on the ball. Football and racism did not get enough attention and thus investigative research by the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport had never been done.²²⁷ Menzo spoke out numerous times on racism in football, which was especially unprecedented for a goalkeeper.

²²¹ Matty Verkamman, "Van Het Apennijns Schiereiland," *Trouw*, June 28, 1990, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010825221:mpeg21:a0211>.

²²² Rob Fleur, "Rijkaard Doelwit van Völlers Racisme," *Het Parool*, June 26, 1990, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010833536:mpeg21:a0056>.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Marcel van Lieshout and Frank van Zijl, "De Voetballer Als „vuile Kanker-Zwarte”," *De Volkskrant*, June 30, 1990, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010857581:mpeg21:a0691>.

²²⁷ Mark van den Heuvel, "'Doe Een Beetje Voorzichtig Met Oranje' Teleurstelling Nog Steeds Niet Verwerkt," *Het Parool*, June 26, 1990, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010833536:mpeg21:a0056>.

In addition, other footballers responded to this event, such as Anthony Baffoe and Souleyman Sane, both ex-footballers who played in Germany. Their responses to racism in the field is clear.²²⁸ Baffoe thinks racism in football does happen a lot, and he also dealt with it. He explains the racism he endured while playing in Germany. He believes that black players should help each other out when it comes to football and racism. When he says, ‘only the white men in black suits do not quite understand that yet’, it sums up his opinion.²²⁹ This underscores the need for awareness and actions in Football. In contrast, Souleyman Sane says he experienced racism in relatively limited forms, so in his answers he is more nuanced about racism in football. He does acknowledge that racism occurs in football and in the German society; however, he believes there is little to nothing to do to change this.²³⁰ Similar to the opinions of KNVB-officials.

3.3.3.2 *‘Loss of temper’-narrative*

On the other hand, the articles were not only taking the side of Rijkaard. Some newspaper articles focused mostly on the ‘loss of temper’-narrative. For instance, Silvio Berlusconi, who at the time was a high official at AC Milan, strongly condemned the actions of Rijkaard.²³¹ He had announced that he would hold Rijkaard accountable and threatened him with a fine. Like the trainer of AC Milan, Arrigo Sacchi could not understand Rijkaard’s actions. He then replied, stating, that he was unable to grasp why Rijkaard had spat at Völler, and that Rijkaard must have blacked-out.

Jürgen Klinsmann, who played during this game, responded similarly, and expressed that he was not understanding the actions of Rijkaard. However, his views are presented more nuanced. His reason for not understanding the incident is that because Rijkaard is normally considered a figure of sportsmanship.²³² Even Völler agrees on this point; stating: ‘He’s one of the most sportsmanlike players in the Italian league’.²³³

The incident resulted in the FIFA deciding that Rijkaard’s behaviour was unacceptable. Moreover, newspapers reported on the FIFA decision-making regarding this incident.²³⁴ During the FIFA ruling, Rudi Völler was present to challenge his exclusion in

²²⁸ Arthur de Boer, “De Hachelijke van Twee Kleurlingen in de Bundesliga,” *Het Parool*, November 24, 1990, Dag edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010833308:mpeg21:a0677>.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Fleur, “Rijkaard Doelwit van Vollers Racisme.”

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Verkamman, “Van Het Apennijns Schiereiland.”

²³⁴ Ibid.

the Milan derby, while Rijkaard was not.²³⁵ Here, Völler claimed not to have any blame for the incident and strongly denied that he would have uttered any of the racist language that he was accused of by Rijkaard and others. ‘For those claims I can only laugh’ Völler said. Furthermore, there is an interview with Rudi Völler about “what actually happened”.²³⁶ Others, who witnessed the incident, do take Rijkaard’s side, such as Frans Beckenbauer. However, Völler did somewhat defend Rijkaard: “for me, this great sportsman should not be heavily punished”. Völler’s stance is questionable. It could be motivated because perhaps some form of guilt made Völler argue for a lighter sentence.²³⁷ On the other hand, it could also be the case that Völler pleaded in favour of Rijkaard, so that the FIFA judge would consider that a sporting gesture, and thus would perhaps consider Völler’s red card as unjustified.²³⁸

Finally, the perspective of the KNVB is explored. The KNVB’s position can be exemplified in a quote from chairman A. de Haas of the disciplinary committee of the KNVB Amsterdam division: “But discriminatory remarks between football players are not all that bad”.²³⁹ De Haas continues that it is difficult to pinpoint the problem of racism because he believes there is no way to do anything about it.²⁴⁰ The only case where he believes something can be done against racist remarks is if a player confesses themselves that they have indeed offended someone. In any other case, de Haas sees it as ‘just pointing fingers’. He thinks it is difficult to judge and said to have never handed down punishments for discrimination.²⁴¹

3.3.3.3 Current perspective

Years later, in a newspaper article, Frank Rijkaard came out and explained that Völler mistreated Rijkaard. Rijkaard, however, does not explicitly mention the discriminatory remarks. In another newspaper article, he elaborated on keeping the real reasoning for spitting on his opponent to himself because he did not want this situation to escalate any further, especially when in the Italian society, signs of racism are present.²⁴² In the biographies of Rijkaard and Gullit, the incident was shortly mentioned. Rijkaard talks about the shame and guilt, but racist remarks were not mentioned. It could be explained that

²³⁵ Verkamman, “Van Het Apennijns Schiereiland.”

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Lieshout and Zijl, “De Voetballer Als „vuile Kanker-Zwarte”.”

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Fleur, “Rijkaard Doelwit van Vollers Racisme.”

Rijkaard did not want to link this incident with Völler to racism, as this incident is football history worthy.

3.3.3.4 Conclusion

This incident, despite Rijkaard never explicitly explaining what happened, still tells a lot about how racism was seen and dealt with at the time. Moreover, an important shift is visible from dealing with racism on an individual and isolated level towards a more supportive group of people speaking out against racism. Even though, for the most part, we see that Rijkaard had to deal with the shame and guilt of this incident by himself; publicly, such as in the aforementioned newspapers, we see players like Sane, Menzo, Gullit, and Baffoe speaking out on the incident and defending Rijkaard. Furthermore, it appears that this generation was more aware of their impact on the public via the media, and their potential to serve as a role model for the wider public, than previous generations.

3.3.3.4.1 Racism

It's clear that the players of the second-generation experienced racism, which is demonstrated in the case study. The analysis of the newspapers showed different perspectives on the incident, with some explicitly framing it as a racist act against Rijkaard and others providing more nuanced views. Some titles of articles directly accused Völler of racism, while others focused on Rijkaard's perspective or the broader issue of racism in football. A recognition of the historical weight and impact of such incidents in Dutch society is reflected in the use of derogatory and racially charged language in newspaper headlines and articles, highlighting the enduring nature of racism in sports and beyond.

Besides this incident evolving around racism, clearly covered in multiple newspaper articles, it became clear from the analysis of these articles that multiple players of colour faced discrimination and racist remarks from opponents and spectators during that time. Experiences of racism were not limited to the incident between Rijkaard and Völler but extended to other players as well, such as Stanley Menzo, Ruud Gullit, and Aron Winter, who faced discrimination both on and off the pitch. Responses from ex-footballers like Anthony Baffoe and Souleyman Sane reflect varying degrees of acknowledgment and acceptance of racism within football and society, with Baffoe advocating for solidarity among black players and Sane expressing a more resigned attitude towards the possibility of change.

Despite footballers of colour throughout Europe speaking out on the spitting incident, Rijkaard described clearly how he dealt with the guilt and shame without the support of his teammates in his biography. He further explains that he was ashamed of the incident, and later he also retired from the national team.

In Gullit's biography, German supporters make monkey noises as he or Rijkaard on the ball. It slips past Gullit, but Rijkaard gets the hang of it. Rijkaard dealt with a divorce at the times which is revealed here, and misses his little daughter Lindsey. After the match finished, Gullit responded that this incident was the breaking point in the match. The whole of the Netherlands snapped as the Dutch lost 1-2. What does this tell us about the experiences of these players? As was stated in Gullit's biography by Gullit's father; 'In a country full of white people, you have to try extra hard to reach the top as a black person'.²⁴³

3.3.3.4.2 White Innocence

White innocence, as explained by Wekker, is about examining the postcolonial legacy in the Dutch history. White Innocence challenges the notion of Dutch innocence by exposing the denial of racism and the expression of innocence that protect white privilege. Prior to the 'spit incident', the way the Dutch football Association (KNVB) failed to take decisive action against racism, which manifested in various forms. This was followed by the KNVB and its officials providing minimal support to players who had to deal with this racial discrimination. This resulted in a clear divide between the players and the football organisation. These players from postcolonial descent narrate The Dutch football organisation KNVB as 'white men in suits'. This went hand in hand with the feeling of the players that they had to perform better than the white players to be able to get a sport in their respective clubs, in other words, white or Dutch privilege. Another result was in the national team. These players in the national team, they dealt with racism individually, and it is absent in the newspapers and biographies on the support from their fellow teammates.

This incident demonstrates that the media's portrayal of this incident played a crucial role in shaping the public perception. These journalists were predominantly white, and they had clear tendencies to deny, downplay or overlook racial discrimination committed by white individuals. This is a form of white innocence, where racism is conveniently ignored.²⁴⁴ For instance, when the incident occurred, there were numerous reports linking it to racism. After a short period, this changed and there were increasingly fewer reports

²⁴³ Hiddema, *Gullit*, 79.

²⁴⁴ Wekker and Grootveld, *Witte onschuld*, 156.

linking this to racism. This showcases how easily racism was dismissed in the media. Wekker highlights how dominant discourses often dismiss racism, and this discourse overlooks power relations, and the impact on the broader marginalized communities.²⁴⁵ Similar to, the writers of the biographies of Rijkaard and Gullit, who were white individuals, inadvertently perpetuate this narrative which downplays or overlooks these narratives of racial discrimination.

3.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter examines the migration trend and the stereotypes associated with it. These stereotypes, prevalent during a socio-political crisis related to migration, escalated significantly in the 1970s. They had a profound impact on society and influenced players who were making their mark on the global football stage. For second-generation postcolonial migrants, these stereotypes created a perception that they needed to work harder than their white counterparts, shaping how they narrated their experiences of racism.

The case study sheds light on an incident involving racism and provides insights into how these players confronted direct forms of racism. It also highlights the role of the media and football organizations in shaping the narrative. During the emergence of the incident, journalism primarily consisted of white men. While initial coverage addressed racism, it quickly shifted focus, emphasizing Rijkaard's frustration. Unfortunately, this dominant narrative overlooked the concept of white innocence. Had there been black journalists involved, they might have highlighted specific aspects of racism rather than brushing them aside.

²⁴⁵ Wekker and Grootveld, *Witte onschuld*, 156.

4 The Third Generation in the National Team, 1990-2000

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a new generation of players from a colonial descent appeared in the Dutch national team. The reason for their appearance is different from the previous generation, which is investigated in this chapter. Specifically, the players; Winston Bogarde, Giovanni van Bronckhorst, Clarence Seedorf, Edgar Davids, Patrick Kluivert, Michael Reiziger, Gaston Taument, Ferdi Vierklau, and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink were the third generation of players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants.²⁴⁶

In the 1990s, the previous generation of football players like Gullit and Rijkaard had retired for the national squad. This offered opportunities for younger players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants in the national team. Some of these young players still had to prove themselves, which they did on club level; winning the Champions League in 1995 with Ajax. Here players such as Seedorf, Davids, Reiziger, and Bogarde played a crucial part, which ultimately led to them getting selected for the Dutch National Team.²⁴⁷ Winter was already playing for the national team since 1987, Taument appeared in 1992, and the players such as Reiziger, Seedorf, Kluivert and Davids started appearing in the national team in 1994.

Here, the concept of ‘white innocence’ is used to show how the Dutch were not as tolerant or colour-blind as they imagined being because the players endured criticism based on their race/nationality. Additionally, ‘racism’ to uncover the underlying stereotypes and prejudice that were present at the time. This is done through a case study, which highlights the divide in the national team between the players of Surinamese descent, referred to as ‘kabel’, and the ‘Dutch’ side of the team. This was reported on and caused for disturbance in the media but also inside the national squad.

In this case study, it is argued that these players endured racism, and previous generations dealt with racism individually. However, in this generation, there is a clear shift because these players who were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants formed a clear companionship. Different sorts of media responses such as interviews or articles and biographies demonstrate this.

²⁴⁶ Haverkamp, “De Kabel,” 27.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

4.2 Context: Migration in Dutch Politics and Stereotypes

4.2.1 Introduction

In this generation, there were numerous more player's playing with postcolonial descent for the national team. These players were very successful in their respective careers and the Dutch national team already in the 1990s. For instance, Aron Winter was at the time (1990s) the player the appeared the most in the national team. In 1996, Ajax won the Champions League with youth players starring the starting eleven.

The migration trend is examined, considering the stereotypes which originated from this migration. This is followed by examination of the lead up to the incident, where there were positive aspects and negative aspect brewing surrounding the Surinamese players. The emergences and development of the newly introduced term 'kabel' is explained.

4.2.2 New Generation

The designation of Joop den Uyl as prime-minister of the Netherlands in 1973 had disastrous impact on the Surinamese migration towards the Netherlands. The migration was increasing exponentially, before the policy shift by Joop den Uyl.²⁴⁸ Therefore, his top priority was to curb the flow of Surinamese immigrants.²⁴⁹ However, the results of his policy shift turned out to be contradictory, and caused panic in Suriname. This panic resulted in an unprecedented migration towards the Netherlands. One contributing factor that stimulated migration was that the immigrated population held their contacts in Suriname, and these would in turn immigrate.²⁵⁰ Van Amersfoort explains, when immigrants are settled in a certain country, it generates a chain migration.²⁵¹ Ultimately, this led to more Surinamese getting involved in migrating towards the Netherlands.²⁵²

A Surinamese person was generally imagined as an uneducated black man who did not integrate into society and was engaged in the drug trade and prostitution.²⁵³ To understand this selective and stereotypical image, we have to realize that the number of Surinamese had indeed increased in those years, but was still minimal in relation to the total Dutch

²⁴⁸ Hans van Amersfoort, "How the Dutch Government Stimulated the Unwanted Immigration from Suriname," *IMI Working Paper Series 47* (October 1, 2011): 8.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 8.

population. There were hardly any Surinamese living outside the big cities.²⁵⁴ Therefore, the negative stereotypes regarding the Surinamese largely emerged from a void.²⁵⁵

Considering that Rijkaard and Gullit had a Dutch-born parent.²⁵⁶ In the biographies, this becomes clear when Gullit talks about his nationality. According to Gullit, he has seen himself as a global citizen, not Surinamese nor Dutch.²⁵⁷ On television, Gullit talked openly about his nationality, and said that he saw himself as Dutch despite his colour.²⁵⁸

The new generation players such as Davids and Seedorf were Paramaribo-born sons of parents who emigrated from the Netherlands from Suriname in the 1970s. Similar to Bogarde, who spent part of his childhood in Suriname. Moreover, Jimmy Floyd Hassailbank, who was born in Paramaribo, but grew up in the Zaanstreek. Even though they immigrated to the Netherlands, they still held their strong connections to Suriname.

²⁵⁴ Amersfoort, "How the Dutch Government Stimulated the Unwanted Immigration from Suriname," 8.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁵⁶ Haverkamp, "De Kabel," 27.

²⁵⁷ Hiddema, *Gullit*, 71.

²⁵⁸ *Andere Tijden Sport*, 10-11.

4.3 Empirical: Kabel; Experiences of third generation football players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants

4.3.1 Prior to the 'tafel-incident'

Before the 'kabel' and the 'tafel-incident' occurred, there were already controversies surrounding Kluivert and Seedorf, which adds to the incident. One mayor controversies in the lead up to the European Championship was the car accident of Patrick Kluivert. Kluivert's controversies evolved around the fact that Kluivert was involved in a car crash on September 9th 1995 when he was only 19-years old.²⁵⁹ The investigations revealed that Kluivert was driving a borrowed BMW at the speed of 104 kilometres per hour within the residential area.²⁶⁰ Kluivert was uninsured, and at the same time driving twice the speed limit. This act led to the death of 56-year-old Marten Putman, and his wife was seriously injured in the collision.²⁶¹ Kluivert was prosecuted for culpable homicide and sentenced to a one-and-a-half-year disqualification from driving, and 240 hours of community service.²⁶² Nonetheless, the conviction did not lead to the end of his career.²⁶³ As the public prosecutor stated; it was a case that does come up from time to time, but never before has there been so much attention to it.²⁶⁴ When 60 journalists from the Netherlands and abroad were present at the prosecution, and fifteen camera crews without the consent of Kluivert. His coach at Ajax, Louis van Gaal, and chairman, Michael van Praag were also present to support Kluivert, which shows the support the Ajax gave Kluivert in this troublesome period. The prosecutor first demanded a jail sentence for around nine months with three months conditional, but Kluivert avoided jail-time.²⁶⁵ Instead, Kluivert received the punishment of community service, which allowed him to participate in the 1996 European Championship.²⁶⁶ It did damage his public image. The incident stimulated written death treats and racial about to him and his family.²⁶⁷ At the time, his family was looking for a move to the Dutch Antilles because of the amount of abuse and scrutiny they received.²⁶⁸

²⁵⁹ Jesper Roele, "Deze topsporters kwamen ook in aanraking met de politie," Het Parool, November 4, 2019, <https://www.parool.nl/nederland/deze-topsporters-kwamen-ook-in-aanraking-met-de-politie~bb845ec4/>.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ 1996: *Kluivert veroordeeld wegens dood door schuld*, 2020, 1, <http://archive.org/details/2360885-1996-kluivert-veroordeeld-wegens-dood-door-schuld>.

²⁶⁵ "Dutch Football Star Denies Dangerous Driving," The Herald, May 2, 1996, <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12059561.dutch-football-star-denies-dangerous-driving/>.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

There was an ongoing dispute over the club salaries of Davids, Kluivert, Seedorf, and Reiziger.²⁶⁹ Youri Mulder, a former member of the national team, shared a room with Kluivert during the tournament as a roommate.²⁷⁰ He disclosed that before the tournament, the youth players of Ajax such as Davids, Kluivert, Seedorf, and Reiziger got a little less pay, in comparison to the other established players such as Danny Blind.²⁷¹ Mulders also states that this was normal at the time.²⁷² This even led to Davids saying about Hiddink during the tournament that he was too deep in the ass of Danny Blind, the captain at the time.²⁷³ These negative aspects were not known at the time in the Dutch public, but certainly played a role in the negative sphere around these players prior to the 1996 European Championship.

4.3.2 *The 'Kabel'*

According to Aad Haverkamp, the qualifying match for the European Football Championship in England in 1996 became symbolic for two reasons. The first one being the appearance of a new generation of Dutch-Surinamese footballers breaking through in the Dutch team. The second reason being, this match became the beginning of a representation process in the media. After the game, Patrick Kluivert, introduced the term 'kabel' (cable), referring to the strong bond the players have had. Eventually, this term would take on a life of its own within the media. According to Haverkamp, more than half consisted of Dutch-Surinamese players, however these statistics itself played no role in the pre- and post-match press. Only when Kluivert's goals were highlighted in Trouw, it was reported that the goal was 'Surinamese-made'.²⁷⁴ Considering that Davids gave that assist to Kluivert that game. Symbolic significance, and in particular the link to 'kabel' was only later attached to this match.

Haverkamp has argued that this was the starting point of the media representation of the Surinamese players in the Dutch national team.²⁷⁵ He introduces three phases where the meaning of 'kabel' changed, which include a newspaper analysis. His analysis of the three phases aligns with my analysis. Here, I build on the three phases introduced by Haverkamp.

²⁶⁹ Jamie Jackson, "Holland Row Was More about Money than Divide over Racism," *The Guardian*, February 27, 2012, sec. Football, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2012/feb/27/holland-euro-96-racism-england>.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Haverkamp, "De Kabel," 28.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 28.

In the first phase, Haverkamp has argued the importance of the upcoming players, arguably more than the postcolonial players did in the previous generation.²⁷⁶ Here, ‘kabel’ was popular, even though it was not or hardly ever used in the newspapers.²⁷⁷ When it was used, it aimed at the unique relationship between Kluivert, Seedorf, and Davids. With the exceptions of Winter, and Reiziger. For instance, in the article *Opluchting bij Oranje* (Relief at Oranje), the article reported innovation and renewal of Dutch football with ‘Twins de Boer’, ‘Tandem Jonk/Bergkamp’, and ‘Kabel Seedorf, Reiziger, and co’.²⁷⁸ At this time, it was reported that the players and the staff were satisfied with the way of playing and togetherness of the squad.²⁷⁹

4.3.3 Case Study: ‘tafel-incident’

In the second phase, is when the ‘tafel-incident’ occurred. The incident arose after the 17 June 1996 photo taken by Guus Dubbelman appeared in the *Volkskrant*. It was taken in the garden, Sopwell House in St. Albans, while the players and staff were having lunch. The photo was published. after Davids was sent off for making the remarks about Hiddink. Visible in the picture, on the left behind the standing Guus Hiddink was the table with ‘Surinamese’ players and Richard Witschge. Visible in the picture, from left to right: John Veldman, Winston Bogarde, Patrick Kluivert, Aron Winter, Gaston Taument and Richard Witschge. According to Haverkamp, this picture in *Volkskrant* entirely changed the way the Dutch national team was written about in the Dutch press.²⁸⁰ There was an increase in emphasising differences between dark and white players in the team.²⁸¹

On first glimpse, it is clear that the white and black players were seated separately, with only one exception. Richard Witschge, visible by his blond hairs, was seated at the table with the black footballers. Even, Hiddink was posing in front of a table with only white players, which aligned with the previous comments Davids made about Hiddink. Furthermore, what the Dutch public thought that the black players separate themselves, was really pointed out with this picture. For the press, it also seemed that the black players had secluded themselves from the white players.²⁸² The press constructed a narrative of division

²⁷⁶ Haverkamp, “De Kabel,” 28.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁷⁸ Mark van Rijen, “Opluchting Bij Oranje,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, September 2, 1996, Dag edition.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Haverkamp, “De Kabel,” 29.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁸² F. M. H. Editorial, “Black and White in the Orange,” *Football Makes History*, June 22, 2020, <https://footballmakeshistory.eu/black-and-white-in-the-orange/>.

by emphasizing perceived differences between black and white players.²⁸³ Instead of the explanation of Kluivert of the term ‘kabel’ which was used to symbolize their bond, and the press did not consider the complexity of humans bonds. These black players mostly shared the same cultural and history. However, we do not see the press considering this. On the other hand, the press constructed it in a way that this photo was considered proof of the cable.²⁸⁴



Figure 4.1, Newspaper report on the tafel-incident.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Editorial, “Black and White in the Orange.”

²⁸⁴ *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNNVARA, 2017), 12, https://npo.nl/start/serie/de-wereld-draait-door/seizoen-13/de-wereld-draait-door_450.

²⁸⁵ Haverkamp, “De Kabel,” 30.



Figure 4.2, *Tafel-incident*.²⁸⁶

4.3.4 Post-‘tafel-incident’

4.3.4.1 Against ‘kabel’

This image influenced the press, and it produced enormous amounts of negative press against ‘kabel’, I found fifteen articles from the AD during the period 1994 – 2005, and analysed them, and these were all negative. Some articles had polls which demonstrated that all the black players were unpopular. Such as numbers, Kluivert with 11%, Davids 9%, and, Seedorf and Bogarde with 6% unpopularity in the national squad. On the other hand, the white players were popular in the polls, Overmars and Bergkamp 11%, and Van der Sar 5%.²⁸⁷ Fans even sent mail in for the removal for the players of cable, this comment was left by the at the time director of technical affairs of football club Roda JC, Nol Hendriks.²⁸⁸ Moreover, it was often referred to ‘kabel’ as if they were speaking out of one voice, such as, ‘kabel’ felt betrayed by Hiddink.²⁸⁹

Other articles, were more nuanced, and gave the players a platform to speak on the issues. Such as the article written by Chris Nijnatten, who touched upon the fact that these black footballers had to work harder to get recognition in comparison to white footballers.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ Guus Dubbelman, *Tafel 96*, June 16, 1996, photograph, Engeland Saint Albans, https://www.debeeldunie.nl/stock-photo/engeland-saint-albans-16-6-1996-xdnerlands-elftal-aan-tafel-aan-de-lunch/search/detail-0_00379119.html.

²⁸⁷ “Bijna Kwart Rekent Op Eindzege Oranje,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, June 10, 1998, Dag edition.

²⁸⁸ Nol Hendriks, “Quotes,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, October 27, 2003, Dag edition.

²⁸⁹ Mark van Rijen, “Hiddink Moet Mijneveld Snel Opruimen,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, June 24, 1996, Dag edition.

²⁹⁰ Chris van Nijnatten, “Leiderschap Komt Vooral Uit Je Schoenen,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, October 14, 1997, Dag edition.

One recurring thing these players bring up, is that they feel like the black players need to prove themselves more than the white players should have.²⁹¹

4.3.4.2 Pro 'kabel'

Gloria Wekker has examined 'kabel,' and clarified that 'kabel' was mostly used negatively in the press whenever one of the players made a mistake.²⁹² Often, their achievements in the Dutch national team are downplayed in the media. One of such examples, is that most of the time their characters are discussed by commentators in the media and not their football skills.²⁹³ She has highlighted that the opinion-makers, mainly white men, are given exorbitant amounts of space to express their historically rooted opinions.²⁹⁴ Their opinion contrasts with the black communities in the Netherlands, who support 'kabel'. In this community, 'kabel' remains popular, despite the media's attempts to portray them negatively.²⁹⁵

4.3.4.3 New narratives on 'tafel-incident'

Youri Mulder, also a player who was part of the team in 1996, reflected on the table incident on the Dutch broadcast show '*De Wereld Draait Door*' (The World Goes On). Mulder offered an explanation which was not considered by the Dutch media. He explains that at a tournament such as a European Championship, loads of food product came over from the Netherlands, such as sprinkles, and peanut butter. Moreover, Suriname food products were brought over, however not enough for the whole group of players in the squad. This led to the caterer trying to come up with a solution, and resulted in the Suriname players sitting at the same table simply because it was easier to serve.²⁹⁶ Mulder is convinced that colour and race had nothing to do with the incident, even though it was portrayed as such in the media.²⁹⁷ He also believes this only amplified when the Davids made remarks about Hiddink, followed by the photograph by Guus Dubbelman.²⁹⁸ Dubbelman, a photographer known as 'White photographer with a black heart', did not seem to have negative intentions, based on his previous work which records important black

²⁹¹ Nijnatten, "Leiderschap Komt Vooral Uit Je Schoenen."

²⁹² Gloria Wekker, "Een Nederlands Fotoboek ~ Momenten in de Multiculturele Samenleving. : Rozenberg Quarterly," accessed June 18, 2024, <https://rozenbergquarterly.com/een-nederlands-fotoboek-momenten-in-de-multiculturele-samenleving/>.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ *De Wereld Draait Door*, 12-13.

²⁹⁷ Jackson, "Holland Row Was More about Money than Divide over Racism."

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

cultural moments.²⁹⁹ Mulder reflects on the media of back then, and compares it to present-day media. He states when stories like these come out, it is very difficult to stop them. This element of the media has not changed, according to Mulder.³⁰⁰

4.3.5 Conclusion

4.3.5.1 Racism

‘Kabel’ and the ‘tafel-incident’ are absent in David’s biography. It does report on the incident with Hiddink, and even looking at Jordi Cruyff getting a spot in the Dutch national team, the spot where him and Seedorf played. It is then described in his biography, that at the 1996 European championship game against Scotland, Seedorf played outside his position (from midfield to central defender), in the first 30 minutes. Here he received a yellow card, which led to Hiddink substituting Seedorf for Johan de Knock. Davids, who was a substitute that game, was dissatisfied with Hiddink’s previous actions. This led to Davids accusing national coach Hiddink of ‘sticking his head up white players’ asses’. Due to speaking out against his head coach, Davids was removed from the national squad. According to Gloria Wekker, this was the beginning of his misery, and that of other black players, who showed signs of not being colour-blind.³⁰¹

Simultaneously, the media presented the Dutch public with the term ‘the cable’, in which black players like Davids, Seedorf, Bogarde, and Kluivert banded together, thereby expressing their identification as Surinamese players with each other and with Suriname.³⁰² Wekker argues it was a deliberate act of the media, wherein they presented the Dutch public with the term ‘the cable’.³⁰³ Black players were portrayed as ‘banding together’, thereby expressing their identification as Surinamese players with each other and with Suriname. Ultimately, creating the separate group in the national squad. In addition, players such as Bogarde, Kluivert, and Seedorf, were interviewed by the Surinamese-Dutch magazine ‘Obsessions’ in October 1997.³⁰⁴ They narrate their experiences of racism as a lack of appreciation in the Netherlands. Bogarde and Kluivert clarified that they sometimes felt discriminated against in the Netherlands, at their former club Ajax and at the Dutch national

²⁹⁹ Villamedia, “Guus Dubbelman, de witte fotograaf met het zwarte hart,” Villamedia — Website over journalistiek, September 21, 2020, <https://www.villamedia.nl/artikel/guus-dubbelman-de-witte-fotograaf-met-het-zwarte-hart?cduid=948e606d-e6ac-4ffd-8fa7-c643b3a2f44d>.

³⁰⁰ *De Wereld Draait Door*, 13.

³⁰¹ Wekker, “Een Nederlands Fotoboek ~ Momenten in de Multiculturele Samenleving.”

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ Haverkamp, “De Kabel,” 30.

team. They also stated that they felt more comfortable in the presence of Surinamese than Dutch footballers.³⁰⁵

4.3.5.2 White Innocence

In this chapter, the concept of ‘white innocence’ within the Dutch football generation of the 1990s-2000s has been examined. The narrative constructed by the media surrounding the Surinamese players, particularly the term ‘kabel’, revealed a fundamental divide within the Dutch national team. These narratives indicated underlying racial tensions within the national team. Whether this was factual or not, it had effects on the public and the national team itself. This was all in contrast with the dominant Dutch self-image as tolerant and colour-blind. This negative media portrayal of ‘kabel’ has contributed to a decline in popularity for these Surinamese players within the national team. Coincidentally, the media strategically used the term “kabel” to construct their narrative, rather than highlighting the players' camaraderie. This indicates that the media was not as tolerant and colour-blind as it claimed to be.

On the contrary, in the black community in the Netherlands, ‘kabel’ remained popular despite the media’s portrayal. This indicates a clear divide in Dutch society and that the media was not a clear representation of the Dutch public, since these narratives supporting these postcolonial players were absent in the major Dutch newspapers.

³⁰⁵ Haverkamp, “De Kabel,” 30.

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter examined how players, who were children of postcolonial migrants, narrated their experiences of racism in the Dutch national squad during the 1990s and 2000s. This generation dealt with racism differently than earlier generations. They pointed out that there was a lack of support from the Dutch football organisation KNVB. With the dominant media narrative being against 'kabel', many supporters sided with opinion-makers, leading to numerous articles highlighting the unpopularity of 'kabel'. These players narrated their experiences of racism as clearly present, felt from fans and media alike. They even mentioned feeling more comfortable among Surinamese players compared to white players. Despite their national and international achievements, these players often felt underappreciated.

In contrast, there's been little focus on players of Moluccan descent, with most attention on Surinamese players. The Surinamese migration was still ongoing, which was not the case for the Moluccans. These societal stereotypes, partly originating from the consequences of migration and the Dutch socio-political situation, reflect societal stereotypes, affecting even those starting for the national team.

5 Patterns and comparisons

5.1 Conclusion

To answer the research question of this project, ‘how did players that were/are children of postcolonial migrants narrate their experiences of racism in the Dutch national team from the 1960s until the 2000s?’. In the first generation, Mijns and Tahamata narrate their experiences of racism as clearly present. They dealt with forms of racism, such as racist fans and players they encountered on and off the pitch. They dealt with white innocence, through the officials of the football organisation. These were predominantly white men, who openly stated that there was nothing to do against these injustices. This led to the players dealing with forms of racism and white innocence as isolated, and it was expected from the players to deal with this individually. In this generation, there was a lack of support from their teammates and from the Dutch football organisation KNVB to step up or to make a statement against racism. This section examined briefly how this institutional structure perpetuated white innocence and failed to address racism during this period. Nevertheless, these players pleaded for more support, such as spheric events. However, this did not get materialized. The migration trend differed, and so the stereotypes and prejudice, as well, differed from the Moluccan and Surinamese players.

The second generation narrates their experiences of racism similar to the first generation. They dealt with racism on and off the pitch. However, an important note about this generation, is that they felt like they had to work twice as hard as the white players to get opportunities in football. Players, such as, Gullit and Menzo, spoke out in public to address this ongoing problem. In the case study, this appeared and even extended to black players from Germany speaking out on racism and sharing their personal experiences. The case study demonstrated that racism extended to players that were not directly involved in the incident, and were also targeted by the fans in the stadium and in the media. Similar to the previous generation, when these players encountered racism they dealt with this individually. However, there is a small change, since more players in the national team could relate to racial discrimination. These players spoke out together, but there was no clear companionship among the players of postcolonial descent. The predominately white journalism became apparent in this case study, considering the publicity the racism narrative surrounding the ‘spuug-incident’ received. At the start of the incident, this was apparent. However this narrative slowly disappeared, and was replaced by the dominant narrative that Rijkaard was frustrated by Völler.

The third generation experienced the most scrutiny from the media, and here it really becomes clear that the media reporting on this issue, is predominantly white. Here, one of the forms of white innocence comes forth, since ‘kabel’ was popular in the black community in the Netherlands. First, they were portrayed as a group of talented young footballers that formed a companionship, which remained consistent throughout the years. The Dutch media reported on the division of the white and black players in the national team. However, this divide existed only in the media. There is a lack of writing on the support of the white players in the national team. However, it becomes more apparent with the new narrative explained by Youri Mulder. Racism, endured by these players and other postcolonial who weren’t directly linked to ‘kabel’, came in the form of being judged based on the colour of their skin, instead of on their football capacity. Their narration of racism, is that it had an effect on their national team career, since they were increasingly less popular after the ‘tafel-incident’. Their way of dealing with this racism is significantly different from the previous generations, because of their companionship. Since there are fewer reports on Moluccan players such as Giovanni van Bronckhorst and Denny Landzaat, it becomes clear that they were increasingly popular than in previous generations. The associations with the preconceived stereotypes of the 1970s are not rekindled.

Thus, the three generations of players with postcolonial backgrounds in Dutch football witnessed a progression in awareness and collective action against racism. While the first generation faced racism individually, the second generation courageously spoke out. The third generation endured intense media scrutiny but also saw more players speaking out together.

5.2 Limitations

Although this project covers a large extent of the postcolonial players involved in the national team, there were certain limitations. One of them being, the extent to which the Moluccan players were examined. Primarily, Simon Tahamata’s experiences were covered. However, this could have been explored more since the case study did not include other players who were Moluccans. Because this project was primarily focused on players that were or are (children of) colonial and postcolonial migrants, this could offer new perspectives. This project highlighted to some extent the Moluccan perspective, and the Surinamese perspective at length. Since the Surinamese migration increased during the later half of the twentieth century, there were a lot more Surinamese in the Netherlands and so more Surinamese players came to play for the Dutch national team.

Another limitation was the use of sources. With the biographical approach, this project aimed to examine how these players narrate their story. Because the majority of these biographies have been written by white Dutch writers, they emphasised aspects such as the player's life, their football success, and meeting legendary sportsmen, which proved to be less relevant for the topic of this research. Other aspects were notably downplayed, such as more-in-depth insights into the player's perspectives on racism. As a result, it does not offer a new perspective, which this project was hoping to receive. For this reason, this project underscored the importance of knowing the author of the biography, since they are responsible for deciding what content will be included in the biographies.

Although this thesis examined the institution KNVB, which was touched upon briefly, this could have been expanded on more. This final limitation underscores the importance of the KNVB in making a stance against racism, and protecting the footballers involved against forms of racism. A more-in-depth analysis of the KNVB, the specific people involved, and their successful and failed actions against racism could give a valuable insight into the perspective of the KNVB.

5.3 Future research

When looking at the future research, it is evident that interviews should be included when analysing how players narrate their experiences of racism. It adds the option of asking specific questions and situations, such as in locker rooms, which newspapers and biographies do not cover. Even though, interviews are very difficult to arrange, and the preparations for these interviews would also need to be taken into account. It can still be a valuable contribution to this project. By revealing the locker room situations, it tells us a lot about the dynamic between the white Dutch and the postcolonial players. Do they interact on the topic of racism? Or is this widely ignored? These are relevant questions, which the biographical and newspaper approach do not cover.

In addition, future research should include the latter generations, who make a more profound team statement when it comes to racism. This shows the development of societal awareness of racism. In addition, the role of social media could play an important role here, since these players can address their fans and haters in a more direct form. The athlete-fan engagement, where players directly communicate with their fans through social media, emerges in this generation. With the emergences of social media, counter-narratives are evident. These players can set the record straight, when media narratives misrepresent or oversimplify a footballer's story. With the appearance of social media, players can address

rumours, clarify statements, and share their side of the story. This has effects on fans. On the one hand, positive, considering these players have a more direct form of engagement with their fans. It allows fans to follow these footballers, receive updates, and even interact with them through comments, likes, and direct messages. This translates into a sense of closeness and loyalty among fans towards a footballer. Players can challenge stereotypes and misconceptions directly, which leads to fans becoming more informed and less likely to rely solely on media narratives. This adds to the international solidarity and allyship. Through social media, the world gets more interconnected. The engagement does not solely reach the Dutch public but extends to the wider sports public around the globe. The allyship between players plays a massive role here. On the other hand, this engagement can also backfire, and lead to massive unpopularity, and so reinforce the misconception about the players. It is worth exploring this phenomenon, and how it shaped the current football landscape. How did this affect the experiences of the players regarding racism?

In addition, the European Championship 2024, white Dutch supporters had dressed, and painted their faces up to looklike Ruud Gullit. This was reported in the news as controversial; however, Gullit's responded with that he felt honoured. This is a case study that would fit the current generation, and could show the white innocence still involved in men's football. Simultaneously, it demonstrates the societal relevance of this project, since white innocence, and racism proof to be continuous.

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