



Universiteit
Leiden

The Netherlands

Shadowboxing: legal mobilization and the marginalization of race in the Dutch metropole, 1979-1999

Fischer, A.L.

Citation

Fischer, A. L. (2025, September 18). *Shadowboxing: legal mobilization and the marginalization of race in the Dutch metropole, 1979-1999*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4261301>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4261301>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Shadowboxing: Legal mobilization and the marginalization of race in the
Dutch metropole, 1979-1999

Alison Leigh Fischer

1. Racialization, defined as the social (and legal) processes and practices that confer material benefits on people racialized as white at the expense of people racialized as non-white, has been an integral part of Dutch society since at least the 17th century.
2. Law and legal practices have played an essential role in racialization in the Dutch context, and continue to do so, although the manner in which the state deploys law has changed from explicit and active interventions in the colonial era to failures to intervene in existing racialized hierarchies in the post-colonial era.
3. Both the creation of the Landelijk Bureau Racismebestrijding, and way that organization executed its mandate, illustrate how practices of non-performative antiracism operate in the postcolonial Dutch metropole; these practice nominally support antiracist rhetoric and non-discrimination norms but fail to enforce those norms or policies.
4. Non-performative antiracist legal mobilizations contribute to historical erasure and occlusion with respect to racialization as afterlife of Dutch colonialism because they prevent evidence of racializing practices from becoming part of legal archives.
5. In the postcolonial period, withholding state power through inaction or failure to extend legal protections, for example by failing to enforce non-discrimination norms and policies, should be considered racializing practices that contribute to maintaining existing racialized hierarchies.
6. When it comes to racialization and the afterlives of colonialism, traditional Dutch political practices such as the polder model and ‘politics of accommodation’ as described by Arend Lijphart, are more likely to uphold racialized hierarchies than be effective at challenging them.

7. While there has been substantial theorization of the impact of European and American opposition to Nazi 'racism' during the Second World War on discourses around racialization in post-war Europe, the subject merits further empirical study, especially as it relates to the analysis of 'afterlives of colonialism and slavery' in the Dutch context.
8. Studies of 'racism' and 'racial discrimination' that explain those phenomena only through the lens of personal prejudice and do not address material origins of racialization are of limited effectiveness in theorizing how to combat these problems at structural and societal levels.
9. Widespread general education about the material roots of racialization is a necessary, though not sufficient, component of effective political and social campaigns against these inequalities.
10. Legal scholars, especially those engaged in legal education, have a responsibility to understand and make visible the ways facially neutral modern legal practices may be vectors for transmitting colonial, racializing or other oppressive practices into the modern world so that their students can responsibly decide how to exercise that power in society.
11. Autocratic and fascist governments are right to fear critical, historical scholarship which helps people make sense of our world and how it got this way; critical scholars of history who operate from positions of social and economic privilege cannot afford to be afraid.
12. Secondary school teachers are superheroes.