Chapter 3

Sexuality, race and masculinity in Europe's refugee crisis

Betty de Hart

3.1. *Introduction*¹

After the large-scale sexual assaults on women in Cologne, Germany, on New Year's Eve 2015, Europe was in shock. The sexual assaults by – allegedly - asylum seekers were widely reported by news media across Europe and beyond. What actually happened is, at the time of writing in August 2016, still being studied by a parliamentary inquiry in the *Land* Nordrhein-Westfalen. What is clear is that there were 1,182 criminal reports relating to New Year's Eve in Cologne, of which 497 were about sexual violence, made by 648 victims. 284 persons reported being the victim both of sexual violence and theft. Five criminal reports involved rape (pushing fingers into the vagina of the woman). 183 men were suspected of committing the crimes, of which 55 were Moroccan, 53 Algerian, 22 Iraqi, 14 Syrian, and 14 German (which totalled 158 suspects). 73 of the suspects were asylum seekers, 36 did not have a residence status, and 11 had a residence permit. The residence status of the rest is unknown.²

This contribution does not aim to describe these events in Cologne, or to minimize their gravity. Its aim is to understand how they were reported and why they were reported in this way; in other words: the discourses that were produced. A further aim is to understand the impact of these discourses on policy development: if and how the discourses on sexual violence by asylum seekers were related to calls for a different migration management in Europe. What role did the perceptions of the Cologne sexual assaults play in changing understanding of asylum policy in Europe? Thus, this contribution is an analysis

¹ I am very much indebted to Marga Altena, who has taught me to understand and analyse images and who commented on this contribution.

² *Die Zeit* 23 June 2016, Was geschah wirklich? Die Silvesternacht von Köln wurde zur Projektionsfläche in der Flüchtlingsdebatte. Eine Frage blieb unbeantwortet.

of discourses that employ notions of difference, gender and sexuality to make its case for a politics of migration and border control. In such discourses notions of dangerous, patriarchal migrant masculinity are often employed to articulate the dangers of migration if it is not governed correctly.³

To understand how notions of dangerous migrant masculinity are used in discourses on migration management in Europe, insight into the historical trajectories of the images employed is necessary. This contribution will demonstrate that these images are not incidents, but part of a larger historical pattern in which the masculinity of racialized others has been perceived as a threat to European culture and European women. Racialization refers to the process by which a certain group's social position is attributed to 'racial' characteristics; it starts with the assumption that 'race' is a social construct. It does not necessarily involve only people who are considered visibly 'black' but also other groups, such as migrants, asylum seekers or Muslims, who can become racialized in certain times and places.⁴

To gain insight into the historical trajectories, this chapter looks back at the historical period of the interbellum, in which – alleged - mass sexual assaults by 'black' men caused uproar, both in the colonies and the metropole. In both the colonies and Europe after World War I, alleged mass sexual assaults led to campaigns for legal and other measures in which labour unions, intellectuals, politicians and women's organisations in the colonies and across Europe were involved.

This contribution is structured as follows. First, the images that were produced after the New Year's Eve events in Cologne will be discussed. Then, it will be demonstrated that claims of sexual assault, or the fear thereof, by asylum seekers did not start with New Year's Eve 2015. Sexual assaults by asylum seekers had been an issue in the media months earlier, in August and September 2015, when the reporting on the 'European refugee crisis' became particularly intensive. This will be based on an analysis of Dutch media reports. Subsequently, the historical roots of the discourses produced during the 'refugee crisis' will be explored, going back to the interbellum period. It will be argued that European images of 'black'

3 Scheibelhofer, P. (2016) 'How Would You React If You Learned That Your Son Was Gay?' Racialized Sexualities and the Production of Migrant Others in Europe', Amelina, A., K. Horvath & B. Meeus (eds) *An Anthology of Migration and Social Transformation*. Frankfurt: Springer, p. 295-306.

4 Castles, S. & A. Davidson (2000). *Citizenship and migration: Globalization and the politics of belonging*. Psychology Press.

and migrant male sexuality are built on colonial images of black sexuality, that travelled to the European metropole and were reproduced there, specifically in the European-wide debate on the 'black' French troops that occupied the German Rhineland. First, the theoretical framework will be set out on how to understand the relation between migrant sexuality and migration policy.

3.2. *Migrant sexuality and migration policy*

Numerous scholars have demonstrated that migration policy is shaped in fundamental ways by norms about gender, family and family relationships. Modern-day migration and integration policies may seem gender-neutral at face value, but are in fact informed by norms about what the roles of women and men ought to be, what marriage ought to be, what parenting ought to be and what family ought to be.⁵ This counts not only for family migration policies, but also for labour migration and asylum policies.⁶ LGTB/queer studies have drawn attention to the impact of norms on sexual behaviour on migration policies.⁷

Overall, much of this academic work has focussed on discourses on migrant women's gender roles and sexuality. Discourses on the gender roles and sexuality of migrant men and their impact on migration policies have remained relatively understudied.⁸ However, gendered images of men are ever present - although hardly made explicit - in the gendered images of women. Indeed, the image of migrant women as victims of Muslim patriarchy rests on the image of migrant

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- 5 Bonjour, S. & B. De Hart (2013). 'A proper wife, a proper marriage: Constructions of 'us' and 'them' in Dutch family migration policy.' *European Journal of Women's Studies* 20:1, p. 61-76. Strasser, E., et al. 'Doing family: Responses to the constructions of 'the migrant family' across Europe.' *The history of the family* 14:2 (2009): 165-176. Van Walsum, S. (2008) *The family and the nation: Dutch family migration policies in the context of changing family norms*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Wray, H. (2011), *Regulating marriage migration into the UK: A stranger in the home*. Franham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
 - 6 Spijkerboer, T. (1999) *Gender and Refugee Status*, thesis Radboud University Nijmegen. De Lange, T. (2008), 'Ongehuwd en kinderloos: Regels, sekseonderscheid en arbeidsmigratie naar Nederland 1945-2006.' *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische geschiedenis* 5:1, p. 75-100.
 - 7 Luijck, E. (2002), *Entry denied: Controlling sexuality at the border*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press. Luijck, E. (2013) *Pregnant on arrival* (2013), Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.
 - 8 See however Charsley, K. & H. Wray (2015), Special Issues 'The Invisible (Migrant) Man.' *Men and Masculinities* 18:4, p. 403-423. De Hart, B. (2015), 'Superdads Migrant Fathers' Right to Family Life before the European Court of Human Rights.' *Men and Masculinities* 18:4, p. 448-467. Scheibelhofer, P. (2012) 'From health check to Muslim test: The shifting politics of governing migrant masculinity.' *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 33:3, p. 319-332. Bilge, S. & P. Scheibelhofer (2012). Special Issue 'Unravelling the new politics of racialised sexualities: introduction.' *Journal of intercultural studies* 33:3, p. 255-259.

men as the perpetrators and oppressors.⁹ Furthermore, the academic literature has largely limited itself to the question of how imageries of oppressive gender relations *within* migrant communities have impacted migration and integration policies rather than the perceived threat of migrant men *towards non-migrant European women*. Keskinen is one of the few who have explored the importance of gender and rhetoric of sexual violence and rape of Finnish white women by migrants in anti-immigration sentiments and its impact on migration policy.¹⁰ She explores how in Finland unrelated incidents of rape and sexual assault allegedly by men 'who looked like migrants' - the wrongdoers were never caught - were related to each other in a discourse on mass rape of Finnish white women by migrant men. It was a debate used by right-wing political parties in their attacks on Finnish migration policies.

As Scheibelhofer has pointed out, such images of threatening migrant male sexuality are not just images per se, but instigate specific policy actions. He also explains that these gender discourses serve not only the male domination of men over women, but also power struggles among men over what constitutes normative, hegemonic masculinity.¹¹

This chapter builds on this literature, but also moves beyond it. First, it explores specifically discourses on migrant men's sexuality as a *threat to European white women*. Secondly, it looks not only at discourses on migrant men's sexuality in the national context, but within the European context, in observing how the perception of the sexual threat of migrant Muslim men has travelled across borders within Europe. We now turn to the images that were produced in response to the Cologne attacks.

3.3. *Sexual assault in Cologne and European magazine covers*

Two months after Cologne, Dutch extreme right-wing politician Geert Wilders tweeted the image of a girl (half-woman), seemingly half-naked, huddled, covering her face with her hands as if protecting herself, in shame and/or sadness (figure 1). It was accompanied by the text: 'Islamic immigration is raping our civilisation one girl at a time' and spoke directly to the audience: 'What is YOUR daughter worth?'

9 Bonjour & De Hart 2013. Wray 2011.

10 Keskinen, S. (2011) 'Borders of the Finnish nation: Media, politics and rape by 'foreign' perpetrators.' In: Eide, E. & K. Nikunen (eds), *Media in motion. Cultural complexity and migration in the Nordic region* London: Routledge, p. 107-124.

11 Scheibelhofer 2016.

source image 1: twitter account of Geert Wilders:

<twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/702814577772392448/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw> Last visited 15 August 2016.

The picture is meant to evoke emotion and shock, to feel for the young girl being assaulted and provoke rage about the perceived wrongdoers: Islam and Muslims. It speaks to a specific audience: the parents of the girl, the parents of all girls. Herewith, Muslim migrants are accused not only of raping women, but raping children. Furthermore, it connects the rape of 'our' girls by Muslim migrants directly to the rape of 'our' civilisation. Wilders had taken the image from UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party) that shares with Wilders a strong anti-immigrant stance. This means we can assume that 'our' civilisation in its first use by UKIP meant British civilisation. Now that the image has come to be used across borders, it has come to mean 'our' European civilisation. Thus, it is about much more than 'just' the chance of girls being sexually assaulted. It is suggested that Europe is being assaulted by Muslim migration, symbolized by the rape of the girl, who we can then assume to be European. The existence and future of Europe is at stake. Asking the question *What is your daughter worth?* seems to imply that action is needed, to protect the daughters of Europe, and in this manner, Europe itself.

The image and text not only exclude Muslims as the others that European civilisation needs protection from. By presenting male Muslim migrants as the ultimate rapists, sexual violence is constructed as a new phenomenon that entered Europe with Muslim migration and was absent from European civilisation before that. Secondly, it excludes rape by white European men as well as sexual violence against Muslim women and girls. In this respect, it is in line with historical discourses on rape of white women within the context of slavery

and colonialism. Such discourses ignored rape by white men of colonized, enslaved women, which was much more widespread and a structural part of the colonial and slavery order, by pointing to the alleged sexual threat of black men to white women.

Source image 2: Cover, 'De Moslimman en Ik', *Vrij Nederland* (Journal, The Netherlands), 5 February 2016, Photo of Martin Dijkstra, Illustration by Paul Faassen.

Source image 3: Cover, 'Islamski Gwalt Na Europie', *wSieci* (Journal, Poland), February 2016.

Source image 4: Cover, 'Frauen klagen an', *Focus* (Journal, Germany), 8 January 2016.

Of course, one may want to discard the picture tweeted by Wilders as racist imagery employed by extreme right-wing politicians; just what one would expect of them. However, the image of white European women assaulted by 'other' men representing an attack on Europe was not limited to extreme right-wing groups or politicians. On the contrary, it was found on the covers of mainstream and even progressive magazines and newspapers across Europe. Figures 2 to 4 show the covers of three opinion magazines, a Dutch, a Polish, and a German one. The Dutch *Vrij Nederland* is considered a progressive opinion magazine, the German *Focus* conservative, the Polish *WSieci* is a mass-market conservative magazine. The three covers present different versions of very similar imageries: white blond women being attacked by racialized migrant (Muslim) men. The Polish one in the middle is the most extreme, both in image and text. The woman is draped in the European flag, thus clearly and explicitly representing Europe. Although this is not clear, it could be assumed that she is naked underneath. The flag is torn from her body in the assault by black and brown hands, representing migrant men. She (the white woman, Europe) cries out in fear against this act of violence.

The accompanying text says: *Islamski Gewalt na Europie* which means: Islamic Rape of Europe. Thus, as in the image tweeted by Wilders, the white woman's rape represents the rape of the entire European Union.

The German *Focus* cover is less violent, but it is part of the same imagery. First of all, the white blond woman is fully naked, covering her breasts and private parts with her hands. She stands still and is silent, remains passive against the attack by migrant men's hands. We cannot see all of her face, as the upper part (her eyes) is covered by the magazine title. The black and brown hands are painted on her naked body, herewith more indirectly than on the Polish cover representing the assault by migrant men. The accompanying text says: *Frauen klagen an. Nach den Sex-attacken von Migranten. Sind wir noch tolerant oder schon blind?* (Women impeach: after the sexual assaults by migrants. Are we still tolerant or already blind?) That the woman is naked is meaningful. As on the Polish cover, she embodies symbolically and materially the battleground on which group struggles, in this case between 'Europeans' and 'migrants' take place.¹² That her eyes are covered by the magazine title may be significant, in combination with the question *are we already blind* in the cover text.

The Dutch cover is the most moderate, but still builds on the same imagery. At least the woman is fully clothed, and the accompanying text is not about a 'we' under attack, but says *The Muslim man and I*, thus individualizing the issue. Still, this woman is also being groped by several anonymous brown hands, including her breasts, as in the other two images. One of these hands is covering her mouth as if preventing her from speaking out. Like the covering of eyes on the *Focus* cover, this is meaningful as there was a lot of talk about the media or police 'covering up' the sexual violence in Cologne committed by asylum seekers and Muslim men.

Image 5 presents the cover of Dutch quality newspaper *NRC* showing part of a nineteenth century painting and an obvious product of 'Orientalism'. Edward Said defined Orientalism as ways of speaking, thinking and writing that offers the West an 'other' in order to be able to determine the own identity.¹³

12 McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial leather. Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*, New York/London: Routledge.

13 Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, New Delhi: Penguin.

OPINIE&DEBAT

Zaterdag 9 januari & Zondag 10 januari 2016

Source image 5: Cover, 'Is dat van alle tijden?', *NRC Handelsblad* section *Opinie & Debat*, (Newspaper, The Netherlands), 9/10 January 2016; part of a painting by Otto Pilny (The Slave Market, 1910)

The image shows two Arab men, each groping a white woman, one practically naked, the other covered in harem dress; the Arab men are grinning. The accompanying text says: 'Is this of all times? (and all cultures?)'. The cover relates to two opinion articles in the *NRC*, one by Dutch-Moroccan writer Hafid Bouazza who claims that sexual violence against women is part of Muslim culture, while the second article by Mieke van der Linden argues that male sexual aggression is of all times (without going into the question whether it is of all cultures). The image refers specifically to the stereotype of Arab men as sexually aggressive, while the other cover images do not refer to a specific group of 'other' men, other than that they are apparently 'coloured', as signified by the brown groping hands.

By using the early twentieth century orientalist painting of Arab male sexual aggression as a comment on present-day events, the continuity of such imageries becomes obvious.¹⁴

What these images have in common is that they present women as objects of sexual desire by ‘other’ men. Marga Altena has argued that in analysing images, we should take into account the motives and understanding of their makers and the editors that used the images.¹⁵ Although I have not done that, it seems definitely an interesting question how the editorial boards made the choice for these particular covers. Both the Polish and the German images were criticised by the public (on social media across Europe) and the German magazine apologised. The Dutch covers were not criticised on social media, and the editors did not apologize, but the covers have been criticised on various weblogs.¹⁶

The discussed covers were published in the weeks after the Cologne events. However, the events in Cologne were not the cause of the media attention to the sexual threat of asylum seekers. Months earlier, when the media reported extensively on the European ‘refugee crisis’, they had also reported on the alleged sexual threat by asylum seekers, as Dutch media reports demonstrate.

3.4. *Short skirts and asylum seekers in Dutch media*

In September 2015, a Dutch newspaper published an article under the heading: ‘Fear of asylum seekers is growing. Can I still wear my short skirt?’¹⁷ The same newspaper wrote a few weeks later: ‘Concerns about asylum seekers centre. Girls no longer out to play hockey in a short skirt.’¹⁸ In the same period, TV news showed Dutch white men protesting the placement of asylum seekers in their neighbourhood, claiming that their women and daughters would no longer be able to cycle home at night as they had to pass the asylum seekers’ centre. A regional newspaper *De Gelderlander*, had researched these fears, but found no indication of a rising number of rapes as a result of the influx of asylum seekers.¹⁹

14 NRC De Jong, S. 19 January 2016, Keulen: ook in de opinies schieten er voetzoekers langs.

15 Altena, M. (2012) *A True History Full of Romance. Mixed Marriages and Ethnic Identity in Dutch Art, News Media, and Popular Culture (1883-1955)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

16 See e.g. a weblog that critically analyses the representation of women in the media, <lezeresdesvaderlands.wordpress.com> January 2016, criticising the NRC cover. NRC De Jong, S. 19 January 2016, Keulen: ook in de opinies schieten er voetzoekers langs.

17 AD 18 September 2015.

18 AD 6 October 2015, Zorgen om azc. ‘Meisjes niet meer in rokje naar hockey’.

19 *De Gelderlander* 10 October 2015, Verkrachtende vluchtelingen? Onzin! (Raping refugees? Nonsense!).

Time and again, the press mentioned that the neighbourhoods close to asylum seekers' centres had nothing against the placement of refugee families, but did not want - a large number of - young single refugee men.

It was also in this period that extreme right-wing politician Geert Wilders criticised the Dutch asylum policy for letting 'walking testosterone bombs' into the country. Although he was criticised severely for using this term, the 'short skirt' issue is built on similar assumptions of uncontrollable migrant male sexuality. Municipalities and local politicians were determined to take the concerns of the people in the neighbourhoods seriously, especially after some violent rioting in one town had demonstrated what the anger and fear of local populations could lead to. At times, this led to discussions about measures to protect women and girls, as will be discussed in more detail below.

At this point, it is important to note that the discourses on the perceived sexual threat of asylum seekers not only construct racialized male sexuality, but also gendered images of the (white) women involved. Although the discourses are about women and girls, this has little to do with women-friendliness, gender equality or feminism. First of all, in these discourses, women and girls are at least partly held responsible for behaviour that invites male sexual aggression: wearing short skirts and cycling at night, is apparently dangerous behaviour for women that may lure men into sexual aggression. After the Cologne events, the mayor of Cologne was criticised for advising women to keep men always at arm's length. Such discourses reproduce historical ones on sexual violence, in which women are at least partly to blame for its cause and rape is connected to sex. This often leads to policing of women's behaviour, as the examples mentioned demonstrate.

Secondly, sexual violence is made into something that happens in the public sphere, outside on the streets, by complete strangers, although it is well known that sexual violence is more common in the private sphere of families, friends and colleagues or acquaintances. After the Cologne events, this discourse was severely critiqued by German feminist organisations that started a petition under the hash tag *#Ausnahmslos*.²⁰ They repeated the demands that they had had for many years, amongst others for a change in German criminal law that holds the victim responsible for resisting a sexual attack. They also expressly rejected the use of feminism for racism, stating sexual violence should be a priority every day because it is omnipresent. They referred to EU statistics reporting that one in three women over the age of fifteen had experienced physical and/or sexualized

20 <ausnahmslos.org/english> [14 August 2016].

violence.²¹ Other feminists, in the Netherlands and elsewhere, have put forward similar arguments in response to the reactions on the Cologne events.²²

To further understand this link between gendered and racialized discourses, the next paragraph goes into the question of why and how sexual violence against women by racialized men is linked to representations of nation and Europe.

3.5. *Europe as a woman*

Source Image 6: Coin of 50 Euro, at the occasion of 70 years of Peace in Europe, 2015 (France)

The covers of the opinion magazines described above show blond white women representing Europe. For anyone familiar with the relation between gender and nation, this is hardly surprising. Women have always represented the nation, as

²¹ Fundamental Rights Agency, Violence against women, a EU-wide survey, 2014. <fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14_en.pdf>, [14 August 2016].

²² *Lover* 26 January 2016, Annelies van Doornbos & Tim de Visser, 26 jan 2016. <www.tijdschriftlover.nl/politiek_en_maatschappij/keulen_toont_hoe_racisme_en_seksisme_elkaar_versterken#sthash.xjcmCKJv.dpuf> [14 August 2016]. Renee Romkens, De Keulse kwestie: over de culturalisering van geweld en genderongelijkheid *Sociologie* 2015 (11) 3/4.

they in particular embody the national boundaries and carry the burden of representing national honour and identity.²³

Although the European Union has always presented itself as a supranational project that transcends the nation, it is constructed on the same symbols as the 'old' nation-states, including flags, coins, anthems and passports. It has been argued that the European Union in fact continues the nationalist project of nation-states, but as a collective effort by a number of nation-states instead of individual nation-states.²⁴

In its symbolic imagery, the European Union has been frequently represented as a woman, starting with its founding myth. Representations of the European Union often refer to the Greek mythology of Europa abducted by Zeus disguised as a bull, who rapes her or, in other versions, seduces her, after which she founds a new, European civilisation. This founding myth is commonly referred to in news media representations, cultural objects, public expressions by EU officials, and European law textbooks.²⁵ A sculpture by artist Leon de Pas, *Europe en avant* has been placed in front of the Justus Lipsius building, where the EU Council of Ministers is housed. And on the coin that was designed to commemorate the 70 years existence of peace in Europe in 2015, Europe is represented as a woman with stars in her hair (fig. 6).²⁶

The covers of the opinion magazines build on this imagery of Europe as a female. This embodiment of Europe by women is also at least partly the explanation for the extensive media attention after the Cologne events. During the so-called 'refugee crisis', the media often claimed that the crisis was not only about the refugees, but also about a crisis in Europe more generally. The sexual assaults on women, in this manner, represent the weakness of the European Union, of a

23 McClintock 1995. Yuval-Davis, N. (1997). *Gender and Nation*, London: Sage Publishing. Stoler, A. L. (2002) *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: Race and the intimate in colonial rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

24 Shore, C. (1996) 'Imagining the new Europe: identity and heritage in European Community discourse.' In: Graves-Brown, P., S. Jones, & C.S. Gamble, (Eds.). *Cultural identity and archaeology: the construction of European communities*. London: Routledge, p.96-115

25 Manners, I., (2010) 'Global Europa: Mythology of the European Union in world politics.' *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 48:1, p. 67-87. For a European law textbook representing the myth of Europe see Chalmers, D., G. Davies & G. Monti (2010) *European Union law: cases and materials*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, cover and p. XIX. See further on the imagery of Europe. Wintle, M. (2004) *Europa and the Bull, Europe, and European Studies: Visual Images as Historical Source Material*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

26 <www.monnaie.de/paris/fr/en/shop/coins/70-years-of-peace-in-europe-70-years-of-peace-in-europe>.

Europe in crisis, confronted with violence and flooded by uncontrollable outsiders. As women are under attack, Europe is under attack. This representation of sexual violence against European white women, shows continuity in how sexual violence has been represented in earlier times, including in colonial discourses, to which we turn next.

3.6. *Masculinity and sexuality in the colonies*

Black feminists have long since problematized the ways in which black men were presented as the ultimate rapists in order to maintain white privilege.²⁷ Studies of colonialism and imperialism have similarly demonstrated the role of imageries of savage, dangerous and/or seductive otherness in rationalizing and legitimizing conquest and exploitation.²⁸ The colonial order was built on race and the need to keep the 'Europeans' and 'natives' apart. Discourses on the sexuality of colonized men functioned to maintain this colonial order. Colonized men were seen as having a heightened sexuality, primitive sexual urges and uncontrollable lust. This lust was assumed to be always directed at European white women who, consequently, needed to be protected from black men.²⁹ In periods of crisis in the colonies, this translated into the introduction of laws and regulations that were supposed to offer this protection. In the 1920s and 1930s, in the colonies of Rhodesia and Kenya, this resulted in the establishment of civil militias and women's rifle clubs. In Australian New Guinea (the Southern part of what is now Papua New Guinea), the 1926 *White Women Protection Ordinance* was put in place, introducing the death penalty for any person who was convicted of rape or attempted rape of white women - and only white women. In 1934 on the Solomon Islands, public flogging was introduced for crimes against white women.³⁰

As historian Ann Stoler explains in her discussion of such colonial regulations, they shared several similarities. First, there was no correlation between the rhetoric on sexual assault and the actual attacks by colonized men on white women. Not that sexual assault never happened, but they were incidents, not part of a pattern of mass rape or sexual assault. Furthermore, there was no relation between these incidents and the increased anxiety at specific moments in time. Stoler puts forward the argument that they were not caused by the fact of rape itself, but by a period of more general, political crisis within the colonial

27 Hooks, B. (1981), *Ain't I A Woman. Black Women and feminism*, South End Press.

28 MacClintock 1995. Stoler 2002.

29 El Tayeb, F. (1999) "Blood Is a Very Special Juice": Racialized Bodies and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Germany.' *International Review of Social History* 44: 7, p. 149-169.

30 Inglis, A. (1975) *The White Women's Protection Ordinance: Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Papua*. St. Martin's Press.

order, e.g. because of increased civil rights and nationalist activities by colonized subjects. Hence, it was not coincidental that these anxieties about sexual violence occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, when in the European colonies nationalism and independence struggles were intensifying. The regulations also often followed periods of tension within the European community in the colony itself, such as labour strikes. An example Stoler mentions is that in the late 1920s, corporations on Sumatra in Indonesia intensified the activities of vigilante groups in response to labour protests by Indonesian and European employees, arguing that it was necessary to ensure that 'their women were safe and workers kept in place'.³¹

A second commonality was that the rape laws were race specific, as it was only rape of white women that was criminalised, not that of colonized women - although the rape of colonized and enslaved women by white men was much more large-scale and part of the colonial order. The laws made all colonized men into potential transgressors, as just being found in the vicinity of the house of a European woman could be enough to be considered 'attempted rape'.³²

Third, these anxieties led not only to the increased surveillance and punishment of colonized men, but also of European white women. The European women were often held responsible for instigating the assault by their 'loose' behaviour and voluntary sexual relations with colonized men were just as reproachable (or even more) as rape. Hence, in Rhodesia a law was put in place prohibiting European women from making an 'indecent gesture' towards native men. And if not by introducing laws, their behaviour became subject to increased surveillance by social norms and etiquette regulating their behaviour.

As Cooper and Stoler have pointed out, such discourses did not remain confined to the colonies but travelled to the metropole in Europe.³³ In twentieth century Europe there were numerous periods of increased anxiety about sexual relations between European women and racialized men, including sexual violence.³⁴ At

31 Stoler, A.L. (1989) 'Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures.' *American ethnologist* 16:4, p. 634-660.

32 As was also often the case in lynching practices of black men in the United States. For instance, in 1955 in Mississippi, African-American youngster Emmet Till (14) was lynched for allegedly flirting with a white woman.

33 Cooper, F., and A. L. Stoler (1997). *Tensions of empire: colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

34 Bland, L. (2005) 'White women and men of colour: Miscegenation fears in Britain after the Great War.' *Gender & History* 17:1, p. 29-61. Schrover, M. (2011) *Om de meisjes, voor de meisjes. Een historisch perspectief op problematisering en bagatellisering van onderwerpen die te maken*

one particular time, during the interwar period, such relations caused uproar across Europe, that is: during the occupation of the German Rhineland by French colonial troops after World War I.

3.7. The 'Black Shame'

Source Image 7: Coin, 'Die Wacht am Rhein/Die schwarze Schande', by Karl Goetz 1920

After the First World War, France sent its colonial soldiers to occupy the German Rhineland. This occupation caused anxiety that spread across Europe, about the alleged mass rape of white German women by these colonial soldiers. Across Europe, the news media reported on the so-called 'Black Shame' and campaigns called for the withdrawal of these 'black' troops (consisting mainly of Moroccans, Tunisians and Senegalese) from the German Rhineland. Feminist organisations across Europe, including the Netherlands, were involved in these campaigns.³⁵ They considered it an opportunity to put sexual violence on the political agenda, and used the racist discourses on the 'Black Shame' to achieve their goal. Dutch newspapers wrote about the events in the Rhineland under the heading 'the Black Shame' often without putting into question the information about 'black bands that violate helpless German women and girls'.³⁶ Across Europe, images

hebben met migratie en integratie Leiden: Universiteit Leiden. Stovall, T. (1998) 'The Color Line behind the lines: racial violence in France during the Great War.' *The American Historical Review* 103:3, p. 737-769.

35 Van Galen Last, D. (2012) *De zwarte schande: Afrikaanse soldaten in Europa*. Amsterdam-Antwerpen: Atlas Contact.

36 E.g.: *De Grondwet*, 21 December 1920, *De zwarte schande*. *Limburger Koerier*, 15 December 1921, *De zwarte Schande*.

were being produced referring to the 'Black Shame', such as those in the Dutch left-wing magazine *De Notenkraaker* (The Nutcracker, image 8) and the German magazine *Simplicissimus* (image 9).

Source Image 8: Drawing by George van Raemdonck, 'De Opmarsch Der Beschaving', in: *Notenkraaker* (Journal, The Netherlands), 4 September 1920; original in the collection of the International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam)

Source Image 9: Cover, 'Justitia im Ruhrgebiet' (Justice in the Ruhr Region; subtitle: Oh Judgment, you've absconded with the stupid brute), *Simplicissimus* (Journal Germany), 28 May 1923

As is obvious, these images are not only highly racialized, but also highly sexualized, portraying defenceless white women, violated and threatened by ape-like black male figures representing the colonial French soldiers. As Iris Wigger has pointed out in her work on the 'Black Shame' propaganda, the images employed were often (close to) pornographic, and they were about the fantasies of its makers, offering them an opportunity to put a naked woman on the cover, and imagine what sexual violence by black men against white women would look like.³⁷ It could be argued that this is exactly what the editors of the opinion magazines covers did after Cologne.

³⁷ Wigger, I. (2010) "Black Shame"—the campaign against 'racial degeneration' and female degradation in interwar Europe.' *Race & Class* 51:3, 33-46. Wigger, I. (2002) "' Against the laws

Years after the media hype about the 'Black Shame', research demonstrated that there had been no mass rape, and that the international media had fallen for German propaganda. They did so because, as we have seen, the stereotyping of black men as sexual aggressors on white women was familiar to many European countries that were colonial powers at the time. At the beginning of twentieth century Europe, racial thinking was common and mainstream, and scientific racism and eugenics were at their peak. It was only after the Second World War had demonstrated – again – the disastrous consequences of race thinking, that it was rejected as an explanation for social issues. This makes the media representations and images after Cologne, although familiar, all the more remarkable. After Cologne, unrelated incidents of sexual violence by migrant men continued to make the headlines, wherever in Europe they occurred, suggesting, as Keskinen has observed, a pattern of continuous sexual violence and rape by migrants.³⁸ The main message remained that mass sexual violence by migrants towards European white women happened and that there had to be consequences. It is to these consequences that we now turn.

3.8. *Changing migration policy and policy measures*

After the Cologne events, commentators claimed that Merkel's position of *Wir schaffen das* had weakened within her own party, at national level, and at European level. So far, there has been little indication of measures or changing asylum policies at European level. EU Commissioner Avramopoulos condemned the sexual violence in Cologne in a speech before the European Parliament, but denied that all refugees were a threat to public order. His talk was on the refugee crisis and herewith he connected the two issues, even in his denial.³⁹

At a national level, there are some signs of changing policies in migration law and other fields of law. In Germany, one week after the Cologne events, Angela Merkel announced that asylum seekers who had committed crimes would be expelled more rapidly. This required a change in legislation, which was submitted to the *Bundestag* in February.⁴⁰ Referring to the German bill, the Dutch did the

of civilisation": Race, Gender and Nation in the International Racist Campaign Against the 'Black Shame.' *Berkeley journal of sociology*, p. 113-131.

38 *Telegraaf* 5 July 2016 Massa-aanranding schokt Zweden; *NOS* 18 August 2016, Nine arrest for group-rape on NewYears Eve in Vienna.

39 <europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-215_en.htm> [14 August 2016].

40 *Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur erleichterten Ausweisung von straffälligen Ausländern und zum erweiterten Ausschluss der Flüchtlingsanerkennung bei straffälligen Asylbewerbern*, 16 February 2016, *Drucksache* 18/7537.

same a few months later, making it possible to reject or withdraw an asylum residence status in cases of criminal acts, including sexual crimes.⁴¹

Outside the context of migration law, the German legislation on sexual assault and rape was amended. According to this amendment, submitted in February and accepted by a large majority in the Bundestag on July 7, 2016, it is enough to prove rape or sexual assault where the victim makes it clearly known that there is no consent to the sexual act, for instance just by saying ‘no’. Before this amendment, proof was required that the victim had clearly resisted the sexual act, for instance if the perpetrator had used violence. Groping has also become criminally punishable, and persecuting such acts committed by groups has become easier.⁴² German women’s organizations had been lobbying for such a change in the law for years, but earlier bills submitted in 2014 and 2015 had not been accepted by the Bundestag.⁴³ Apparently, the Cologne events changed the position of German political parties”.

The fear of sexual assault by asylum seekers also had consequences at a local level. In the Netherlands, some local authorities became reluctant to host asylum seekers because of the concerns of the local population who feared that ‘our women and daughters’ would no longer be safe. Some of the municipalities decided to host smaller groups of asylum seekers, others not to host any asylum seekers at all, such as the town of Steenberg after riots that threatened the safety of the members of the local board.

Furthermore, some local authorities announced measures to protect women and children. In one Dutch town, municipal authorities offered to arrange for volunteers to accompany children who had to cycle past an asylum seekers’ centre to arrive at their local primary school. It made the free nationwide

41 *Second Chamber* 2015-2016, 19 637, 1288. These measures had already been proposed earlier, in October 2015, but now came to be framed in the context of the Cologne events by some parties.

42 *Focus online* 7 July 2015, Bundestag stimmt für Verschärfung des Sexualstrafrechts. On the same date, an Integration Act for refugees was adopted. It was not explicitly linked to the Cologne events, with the exception of the alternative bill, by Bündnis/die Grünen, that connected the sexual assaults to lack of integration of the wrongdoers. Drucksache 18/7651, p. 4.

43 Grieger, K., C. Clemm, A. Eckhardt & A. Hartmann (2014), "Was ihnen widerfahren ist, ist in Deutschland nicht strafbar, Fallanalyse zu bestehenden Schutzlücken in der Anwendung des deutschen Sexualstrafrechts bezüglich erwachsener Betroffener", Berlin.
<www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/fallanalyse-zu-schutzluecken-im-sexualstrafrecht.html>, [29 July 2016].

newspaper *Metro* and national radio.⁴⁴ The alderman explained that they had not succeeded in convincing the parents that their 'feelings of insecurity' were not justified. Just a few days later it was reported that the measure had been dropped because of a lack of demand. Elsewhere in the media, it was reported that the municipality of Enschede (a midsize town in the east of the Netherlands) had suggested that women should no longer wear short skirts. After a member of the public mentioned this to a regional newspaper, the alderman denied that the municipal authorities had ever made such a suggestion, at least not in an official capacity.⁴⁵

Finally, there has been some indication of vigilante activities to 'protect' European women. Geert Wilders distributed pepper spray (labelled as 'resistance spray') to Dutch women to protect themselves from the so-called testosterone bombs. When a group of Dutch feminists organised a demonstration against this use of racism to fight sexism, they were sexually harassed by Wilders' supporters and arrested by the police.⁴⁶ Sexual harassment also occurred at town hall meetings, against women speaking out in favour of the placement of asylum seekers (groups of Dutch white males shouting: she needs to have a penis inserted (*daar moet een piemel in*)). In Finland, the extreme right-wing group *Soldiers of Odin* was established, with factions in other European countries, including the Netherlands. In a Dutch town, members of this group were reported to have made a citizen's arrest of an asylum seeker who had, allegedly, sexually harassed women.⁴⁷ The media also reported on the surge in weapon sales, especially pepper spray, in Germany after the Cologne events.⁴⁸

3.9. *Concluding remarks*

In this contribution, I have suggested that there are similarities between the discourses on sexual assault by asylum seekers in present-day Europe and earlier discourses on black male sexuality in Europe and its colonies, specifically in the interwar period.

44 *Metro* 20 December 2015, Leerlingen met rugzakje begeleid langs azc.

45 *Tubantia*, 6 November 2015, Wethouder Hatzenboer: Kort rokje is niet uit den boze na komst azc Enschede.

46 'Keulen' toont hoe racisme en seksisme elkaar versterken: <www.tijdschriftlover.nl/politiek_en_maatschappij/keulen_toont_hoe_racisme_en_seksisme_elkaar_versterken#sthash.itOporut.dpuf>, *Lover* 26 January 2016, Annelies van Doornbros en Tim de Visser.

47 *Volkskrant* 21 July 2016. Asielzoeker niet mishandeld door burgerwacht Soldiers of Odin.

48 *Tageschau* 8 February 2016, Sprunghafter Anstieg seit November "Kleiner Waffenschein" hat Konjunktur.

First, it was demonstrated that there was no correlation between the rhetoric on sexual assault and the actual attacks by asylum seekers. As was illustrated by the discussion in Dutch media debates, discourses on the dangerous sexuality of refugee men had started months before the Cologne events, although Cologne certainly intensified such discourses.

Second, the anxiety about dangerous male refugees' sexuality emerged in a period of more general perceived crisis or even threatening collapse of the European Union, as has been observed by many commentators. The attacks on European white women have come to represent this feeling of crisis in Europe, and exemplify what the crisis is about. We have also seen that the anxiety about male asylum seekers has resulted in increased surveillance of European (white) women, who were held partly responsible for instigating the alleged attacks, by wearing short skirts, or cycling at night.

Third, in response to the Cologne events measures specifically targeting asylum seekers were taken. The anxiety about sexual assault by asylum seekers, preceding the Cologne events had resulted in asylum seekers not being placed in certain towns or neighbourhoods in the Netherlands, or placed in smaller numbers. Expulsion of asylum seekers has become easier in Germany and the Netherlands, at least partly in response to the Cologne events. lastly, the women's movement demands for the amendment of German rape laws, finally met with success. Although feminist organisations expressly resisted the connection between racism and sexism, it seems that the Cologne events offered a window of opportunity to finally achieve their goals. On the other hand, the Cologne events have also drawn attention to sexual assaults committed during other large-scale public events such as the *Oktober fest*.

Self-evidently, this is not to suggest that we can draw a straight line from the colonies to modern-day Europe in terms of discourses on the sexuality of racialized men. The use of racialized stereotypes by the media discussed in this contribution has been severely criticised by feminists, anti-racists and others, editors have apologized and reflected on their own reporting. However, such critical comments are mainly found on opinion pages, weblogs and social media.

It still raises questions about the state of European anti-racism and gender equality that the events in Cologne were able to produce this age-old stereotypical imagery within the mainstream media.

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