2024

BLACK REALITIES: CONFRONTING RACISM IN EUROPE

Exhibition Catalog

This exhibition was conceived as part of
Black History Month 2024

It was made by
EUI researchers and **Library staff**

with the support of the
Communication Service

This survey is the result of a collaboration between Black History Month (BHM) and the Decolonising Initiative (DI) at the EUI in relation to "Black Realities" exhibition - a project that intends to lay the basis for reflection and to break the silence about lived experience of racism in European societies.

This survey is **anonymous** and designed by PhD researchers. The aim is to contribute to the recognition and visibility of **experiences of racial discrimination and harassment** (not restricted to anti-Black racism) which are taking place **on the workplace or its surroundings.** It is also meant to gather feedback about "Black Realities" exhibition and BHM at the EUI.

If you have anything specific you would like to share and do not wish to use the survey, please reach out to **BHM Team** (https://www.eui.eu/en/public/black-history-month/current-members)
or **DI coordinators** (decolonising@eui.eu).

Black Realities: Confronting Racism in Europe

Black people and people of African descent experience pervasive racism, entrenched discrimination, prevalent harassment and violence across Europe which impact various facets of their lives such as employment, education, health, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system. This is the unequivocal conclusion of the 2023 report of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) which draws on a large-scale survey of the experiences of 6,800 people of African descent in 13 EU Member States[1]. In addition, the FRA noted an alarming absence of progress regarding racist harassment in Europe, despite the adoption of several EU anti-discrimination policies since 2000.

Anti-Black racism in Europe is established. Quantified. Testimonies abound. And then what? What is left from the moral "awakening" that drew crowds of protestors chanting "Black Lives Matter" in locked-down European cities in 2020? Will future historians refer to it as an anecdotical side event that had little effect on countering the normalisation of far-right politics, racist and xenophobic discourses, persecution of Muslim people and inhuman treatment of racialized migrants? Or worse, is antiracism losing the fight as it is being appropriated, watered down,

emptied of its radicality, and turned into diversity awareness training?

Race is a social construct, that is common knowledge. So common that it sounds like a platitude. There is no biological rationale that can justify racial distinctions and hierarchies. But race, be it a construct, fiction, historical fallacy, remains after all a very tangible and brutal reality for people of African descent living in Europe today. Black people are far from the only ones facing racism, but different racial and ethnic minorities do not share the same experience of discrimination and oppression. Racial dynamics are intricate, contradictory by nature and intersecting with other social categories including gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and disability. But antiracism is not about identities. Antiracism is not a culture war but a fight for equality. Reflecting on the specificities of anti-Black racism is fundamental for understanding the long history of the dehumanization and systemic oppression of people of African descent across time. It is a necessary gateway to apprehend the paradigm of Whiteness in European contemporary societies. Because talking about racism is talking about Whiteness.

"Black realities: Confronting Racism in Europe" is an exhibition that sheds light on the stark realities of the lived experience of Afro-descendants in Europe. It combines statistical information with key concepts and testimonies, mostly from Black European scholars. These quotations are first-person narratives that give meaning to disembodied data and figures. "To account for racism is to offer a different account of the world", wrote Sara Ahmed[2]. This exhibition lays the basis for reflection and for breaking the silence safeguarding the status quo.

The humanity of Europe's "Other"

The dehumanization of racialized people finds its roots in European colonialism and White supremacy: a history that Western countries never came to terms with and a system that has never been fully stamped out. Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe refers to racism as the driver of "necropolitics", a form of sovereignty that assigns different value to different human lives, a tool of power that decides whose humanity is worth more than another, who should live and who should die. In 2006, he wrote that "the most accomplished form of necropower is the contemporary colonial occupation of Palestine."[3] There was nothing visionary about this claim. The atrocities unfolding these days, a sight for the world to see, revealed not only the most sickening aspect of colonial rationale but also the sheer hypocrisy of Europe's political class. Is the Palestinian nameless - unspeakable - plight a challenge to European core values of human rights and justice? Or rather, Europe's showing its true colour(s).

EU immigration strategies are another example of European necropolitics, resulting in the Mediterranean Sea becoming the so-called "largest cemetery of migrants." The metaphor is potent, yet deceptive. A cemetery is a place of remembrance, a site precisely intended to pay respect to the dead and recall the value of their lives. The Mediterranean Sea, on the contrary, engulfs bodies, drowns memories, and erases the humanity of those who apparently do not deserve to live, and, especially not, on European soil. The systemic discrimination of people of African descent in Europe, the hazardous and traumatic experience of migration across the Mediterranean, and the slaughter in Gaza are distinct cases with unique realities. But they all raise the question: will the humanity of Europe's "Other" ever be acknowledged?[4]

"Nobody is free until everybody is free." This famous motto, attributed

to civil rights feminist activist Fannie Lou Hamer, is compelling. But it should not be taken as a mere plea for international solidarity or a universal kind of moral principle. It is a normative claim. A wake-up call to confront the intersectional facets of discrimination and to dismantle the structures of social and material oppressions. Raising awareness is not an end. Allyship requires more than humility and solidarity statements. Allyship is about being ready to give up privileges and striving for changes.

Antiracism is not inconvenient, racism is.

[1]European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, (2023), *Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent*, Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480

[2]Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press, p. 3.

[3]Mbembe, A. (2006). Nécropolitique. *Raisons politiques*, no. 21, p. 43.

[4]Gilroy, P. (2019). Agonistic Belonging: The Banality of Good, the "Alt Right" and the Need for Sympathy. *Open Cultural Studies 3*, no. 1, pp.1–14.

ANTI-BLACK

Anti-Blackness defines the specific racial discrimination suffered by Black people and people visible (or perceived to be) of African descent. Because racial and ethnic minorities in Europe are not sharing the same experience of racism and discrimination, anti-Blackness paradigm consider the specificities of the **SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION** of Black people across the world. Although closely related to White supremacy, anti-Blackness is not only perpetrated by White people but also by other racial and ethnic groups. Across time and space Black people have been commodified, objectified, exoticised, sexualised, slaughtered, and exploited on a global scale. Anti-Blackness refers to the long history of the **DEHUMANIZATION** of Black people.

RACISM

"

'Regarde le nègre! Maman, un nègre! J'ai peur!'

My body was given back to me sprawled out distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a Negro, it's cold, the Negro is shivering, the Negro is shivering because is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the Negro, the Negro is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the Negro is quivering with rage, the little boy throw himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the Negro's going to eat me up. All round me the white, above the sky tears at its navel, the earth rasps under my feet, and there is a white song, a white song.

All this whiteness that burns me.

Frantz Fanon,
Black Skin, White Masks,
1952

"

White supremacy is based on a hierarchy from White down to Black, with anti-Blackness a specific feature of the system. In order to establish a secure footing, or to move up the ladder of supremacy, there is a long history of other racialized groups using Black populations as a stepping stone.

"

Kehinde Andrews,
The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World,
2021

*European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Being Black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p. 14. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480

Almost half of people of African descent surveyed in Europe experience **racial discrimination,**an increase from **39 %** in 2016 to **45 %** in 2022[1]

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EVERY–
DAY
RACISM
IN
EU–
ROPE

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The term 'everyday' refers to the fact that these experiences are not punctual. Everyday racism is not a 'single assault' or a 'discrete event,' but rather a 'constellation of life experiences,' a 'constant exposure to danger,' a 'continuing pattern of abuse' that repeats itself incessantly throughout one's biography – in the bus, at the supermarket, at a party, at a dinner, in the family.

Grada Kilomba,
Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism,
2008.

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I am mentally scarred from the constant assault of passive aggression, patronizing, undermining Whiteness, and have battled stress and depression as a result. There is evidence that for racialized minorities living in a predominantly White area is associated with increased rates of mental health issues. Being the only Black person in a room (or even a building) is an experience you have to get used to if you want to navigate life as a racialized minority, and particularly if you hope to make it working in a university or other corporate environment. Learning how to exist/dance in such environments is as necessary as qualification for 'success' as any university degrees.

Kehinde Andrews,
The Psychosis of Whiteness:
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Plantation Memories:
Episodes of Everyday Racism, 2016

Nearly half **(48%)** of respondents whom the police stopped in the **5 years** before the survey believe that this was because of their immigrant or ethnic minority background, including their skin colour or their religion. The rate is even higher **(58%)** among those stopped in the **12 months** before the survey.'

RACIAL

In Paris, Black people are 6 times more likely to be stopped by the police than White people, in Granada, 42 times more likely. "

Racial or ethnic profiling is the discriminatory practice of suspecting, targeting, or policing a person based on their race, ethnicity, or religion. Law enforcement agents are racially profiling when they stop, check identity, control, question, or search individuals because of how they look like rather than what they have done or how they behave. Racial profiling not only takes place in border areas, airports, or train stations, but also in public places, in streets, in shops, and in universities. Racial profiling affects racialized individuals, families, and communities by generating feelings of fear, humiliation, and alienation.

PROFILING

"

My six months in Paris as an exchange student were not supposed to be like this. I had imagined my time here as a series of clichés: after enrolling at the Sorbonne I would find a nice one-room apartment in Belleville and spend my days reading, smoking and playing pinball. Instead, it was the most intensely racist experience of my life; and it left me sufficiently alienated to be able to savour the sight of fear in the face of this man I'd never met but who had somehow, in that moment, come to represent everything I loathed. (...)
The humiliations were routine. *Colour bars in nightclubs meant that I needed white people to vouch for me. Standing in line at a taxi rank, I would wait my turn only for the driver to say he wouldn't take me anywhere (...) One evening, as the subway pulled into the Arts et Métiers*

station, I was pulled off the train and beaten up by several policemen who claimed they were looking for drugs. After that, whenever I saw police, my stomach would tighten and my legs weaken. There was no saying what they might do. My French, while not fluent, was actually too convincing for them to believe I was English. As my hair was in plaits and I wore tracksuit trousers, they would not believe I was at Sorbonne or that I lived in this area. **I was simply not credible and therefore incredibly vulnerable.** *And so, each day, I would be forced to explain myself to armed men in broad daylight.*

"

Gary Younge
Who Are we? and Should it Matter in the 21st Century?
2010

' European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.77 p. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480
' Figures taken from different studies reported by ENAR on their website (European Network Against Racism) https://www.enar-eu.org/about/security-policing/

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The very first time I visited the Psychology library at the Free University in Berlin, right at the entrance as I was walking in, I was suddenly called over by a white female employee,

who said aloud: " **YOU ARE NOT FROM HERE, ARE YOU?** The library is only for university students!" Perplexed, I stopped. Among the several dozen white people circulating 'inside' that enormous room, I was the only one who was stopped and checked at the entrance. How could she know whether I was 'from there' or 'from elsewhere?' By saying "only for university

students," the library employee was informing me that **MY BODY WAS NOT *READ* AS AN ACADEMIC BODY**. The university students she was referring to were the white others in the room. In her eyes, they were read as academic bodies, bodies 'in place,' 'at home,' as previously mentioned. I responded by showing her

the letter, which, like a passport, would also make me 'a body in place.' **THE PAPER WOULD ALLOW ME TO ENTER A SPACE THAT MY SKIN DID NOT**. Here, Blackness comes to coincide not only with 'outside,' but also with immobility. I am immobilized, because as a Black woman I am seen as being 'out of place.' The ability that

white bodies have to move freely in the room results from the fact that they are always

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RACIST

The survey asked Black parents or guardians of children of the national compulsory schooling age range if their children experienced any racist treatment at school in the **12 months** preceding the survey.

The potential acts included: offensive or threatening comments made to the child or children in person, for example insulting them or calling them names; physical abuse (e.g. hitting, hair-pulling and kicking); and exclusion (isolation) at playtime, from social events or circles of friends because of their ethnic or immigrant background.

Overall, around every fourth respondent **(23 %)** indicated that someone made offensive or threatening comments to their child(ren) in person because of their ethnic or immigrant background. There were substantial variations between countries. Almost two out of five parents in **Ireland** (39 %), **Germany** and **Finland** (both 38 %) and **Austria** (37 %) disclosed such experiences. *

FROM
THE
CRADLE?

“

When I was four, I asked my mum when I would turn white, because all the good people on TV were white, and all the villains were black and brown. I considered myself to be a good person, so I thought that I would turn white eventually.
My mum still remembers the crestfallen look on my face when she told me the bad news.

”

Reni Eddo-Lodge,
Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race,
2018

“

Until the late 1990s, being black and Irish in Ireland was to have almost unicorn status. Except everybody loves unicorns.

”

Emma Dabiri,
Don't touch my hair,
2019

* European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.48 p.https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480

The survey asked Black parents or guardians of children of the national compulsory schooling age range if their children experienced any racist treatment at school in the 12 months preceding the survey. The potential acts included: offensive or threatening comments made to the child or children in person, for example insulting them or calling them names; physical abuse (e.g. hitting, hair-pulling and kicking); and exclusion (isolation) at playtime, from social events or circles of friends because of their ethnic or immigrant background.

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[1]European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.45 p.https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480

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WHITE
IGNORANCE

White ignorance is not a passive absence of knowledge. White ignorance is not contingent. White ignorance is an ACTIVE AND PERVASIVE IGNORANCE shared among White people about racialised people, their experience and the reality of race (as a social construct weaponised to allow systemic oppression and discrimination). White ignorance is A PRIVILEGED GROUP-BASED IGNORANCE -similar to the male ignorance of gender-based inequalities, violence and oppression. White ignorance is a structural phenomenon and a historical product of Western modern period. White ignorance is not always based on bad faith. White ignorance includes MORAL IGNORANCE that is the incorrect judgement of what is rights and wrongs in moral situations. White ignorance is THE HISTORICAL ERASURE OF NON-WHITE EPISTEMOLOGIES. White ignorance is what enables the oppressive nature of White domination not to be acknowledged as being oppressive.

White ignorance is not a passive absence of knowledge. White ignorance is not contingent. White ignorance is an **active and pervasive ignorance** shared among White people about racialised people, their experience and the reality of race (as a social construct weaponised to allow systemic oppression and discrimination). White ignorance is **a privileged group-based ignorance** - similar to the male ignorance of gender-based inequalities, violence and oppression. White ignorance is a structural phenomenon and a historical product of Western modern period. White ignorance is not always based on bad faith. White ignorance includes **moral ignorance** that is the incorrect judgement of what is rights and wrongs in moral situations. White ignorance is **the historical erasure of non-White epistemologies**. White ignorance is what enables the oppressive nature of White domination not to be acknowledged as being oppressive.

WHITE IGNORANCE

"

White ignorance…

It's a big subject. How much time do you have?

It's not enough.

Ignorance is usually thought of as the passive obverse to knowledge, the darkness retreating before the spread of Enlightenment.

But…

Imagine an ignorance that resists.

Imagine an ignorance that fights back.

Imagine an ignorance militant, aggressive, not to be intimidated, an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly – not at all confined to the illiterate and uneducated but propagated at the highest level of the land, indeed presenting itself unblushingly as knowledge...

"

"

To some, the word 'privilege' in the context of whiteness invokes images of a life lived in the lap of luxury, enjoying the spoils of the super-rich. When I talk about **white privilege**, I don't mean that white people have it easy, that they've never struggled, or that they've never lived in poverty. But white privilege is the fact that if you're white, your race will almost certainly positively impact your life's trajectory in some way. **And you probably won't even notice it.**

"

In general, just **9%** of respondents who felt discriminated against in the year leading up to the survey disclosed or lodged a complaint about the incident. Notably, there were significant differences among the countries examined. **SWEDEN** exhibited the highest reporting rates at **27%**, while **PORTUGAL** and **SPAIN** had the lowest rates at **2%** and **4%**, respectively. In **ITALY**, none of the respondents indicated reporting an incident of discrimination. The findings show no progress compared to the data from **2016**.

TRIVIALIZATION

INVISIBLE

INVISIBILIZATION

MINIMIZATION

BANALIZATION

INVISIBILITY

TOO TRIVIAL

DELEGITIMIZATION

The reasons most commonly mentioned
for not reporting an incident of discrimination are:

- Nothing would happen or change by reporting discrimination **(40%)**
- It was too trivial, not worth reporting it **(36%)**
- I had no proof **(22%)**
- It happens all the time **(19%)**
- I didn't want to create trouble **(14%)**

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European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.46-49 https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480

COLOUR-BLIND RACISM is the ideology that suggests that discrimination can be eliminated if everyone is treated as equally as possible, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or culture.

When a person chooses not to "see race", they dismiss the experiences of racialized individuals. In doing so, they suggest that racism does not exist and refuse to engage in conversation about race and racism.

I DON'T SEE COLOURS, I JUST SEE PEOPLE.

I DON'T SEE RACE!

I AM COLOUR-BLIND, WE'RE ALL EQUAL.

I TREAT EVERYONE THE SAME.

"

If one is working hard for the common good, how can one possibly be accused of racism?

'We are a small nation, *innocent*; we are *inherently antiracist*; we do not have *bad intentions*' is shorthand to sum up this *white sense of self*. These defense mechanisms serve to preserve *this ideal image of ourselves as deeply color-blind and antiracist*. Questioning this most dearly held core of the Dutch sense of self means putting oneself above 'us'; it also runs deeply counter to another strand in the Dutch sense of self, egalitarianism."

It happens regularly that in public meetings about race and racism, it is *white men who speak out first* and authoritatively, invariably maintaining that there is no racism either in the academy, in society, or in the figure of Zwarte Piet. At a meeting at the Free University in Amsterdam, organized in the framework of anti- racism in the academy, a twenty-something white male student tells me self-assuredly that *there is no racism in the Netherlands*. He, an inhabitant of Volendam, a small, overwhelmingly white town by the borders of the Ijsselmeer, has not noticed it at all. The epistemological question about who has knowledge about what and on what grounds does not seem to enter his picture. This is militant, *aggressive ignorance*, posing as knowledge, that will not go away quietly. No sensitivity is evident, neither a questioning attitude, nor the slightest hint of an awareness that he might learn something here, merely the aggressive rejection and denial that is often characteristic of white men, even when they see themselves as politically progressive.

"

Gloria Wekker,
White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race,
2016

I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE BLACK, WHITE, GREEN, OR PURPLE-POLKA-DOTTED!

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I DON'T SEE RACE!

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If one is working hard for the common good, how can one possibly be accused of racism?

'We are a small nation, **innocent**; we are **inherently antiracist;** we do not have **bad intentions**' is shorthand to sum up this **white sense of self.** These defense mechanisms serve to preserve **this ideal image of ourselves as deeply color-blind and antiracist.** Questioning this most dearly held core of the Dutch sense of self means putting oneself above 'us'; it also runs deeply counter to another strand in the Dutch sense of self, egalitarianism.

It happens regularly that in public meetings about race and racism, it is **white men who speak out first** and authoritatively, invariably maintaining that there is no racism either in the academy, in society, or in the figure of Zwarte Piet. At a meeting at the Free University in Amsterdam, organized in the framework of anti- racism in the academy, a twenty-something white male student tells me self-assuredly that **there is no racism in the Netherlands.** He, an inhabitant of Volendam, a small, overwhelmingly white town by the borders of the Ijsselmeer, has not noticed it at all. The epistemological question about who has knowledge about what and on what grounds does not seem to enter his picture. This is militant, **aggressive ignorance,** posing as knowledge, that will not go away quietly. No sensitivity is evident, neither a questioning attitude, nor the slightest hint of an awareness that he might learn something here, merely the aggressive rejection and denial that is often characteristic of white men, even when they see themselves as politically progressive

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Gloria Wekker,
White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race
2016

SILENCE

EVIDENCE

DENIAL

ERASURE

INJUSTICE

POWER

"

The major difficulty commonly faced by those who have experienced a racist, sexist, or sexual attack is the too-frequent impossibility of providing tangible, material evidence. (…) And so it is necessary to discern the power relations that play out there, against a backdrop of hierarchical associations that are articulated through age, social class, and university status. Race is then added to these elements. Because bodies do speak, despite the silence imposed by society. The body's words are the fruit of the history of France and many other Western powers in the modern era. This conversation, secret because silent, happens every day and everywhere – even and above all within institutions that are unable to imagine themselves outside of either the legacies of history or contemporary realities. Racism functions notably thanks to silence. This silence is imposed and maintained. Nonetheless, it rages on. It rages on all the more because it can be neither proven nor shown irrefutably. Indeed, it is rarely even spoken of aloud in France. Yet – and this is crucial – it is felt. Every time. When one experiences it, it is about a feeling: a gaze intercepted, heart palpitations, a sudden drenching in sweat, the feelings of injustice, anger, and frustration. But all of it is almost systematically relegated to silence. You didn't hear anything. Nothing was actually said. So nothing happened. The experience is denied you, confiscated. Yet, it is real. How then, can its existence be acknowledged? How can it be rendered audible and visible?"

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Maboula Soumahoro,
Black is the Journey, Africana the Name,
2022

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DISCRIMINATION
IS

Anyone can be subject to discrimination based on various grounds: skin colour, ethnic background, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Yet, people of African descent are more subject to discrimination on any ground than the rest of the population in Europe.

INTERSECTIONAL

While the general population in the **EU-27** has a prevalence of discrimination on any ground at **17%,** as per the **2019** Eurobarometer survey, the rate is significantly higher for individuals of African descent in the 13 Member States surveyed in the **2022** FRA survey, reaching **36%.**

The biggest gaps between the general population and people of African descent are in **Germany** (49 percentage points),

Finland
(41 percentage points) and

Austria (40 percentage points)

*European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.29 https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/327480

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WORK
WORK
WORK

To be invited to an interview, **A BLACK JOB SEEKER** must send about **30%** more applications than **A WHITE CANDIDATE**, even though they hold the same passport, and share equivalent linguistic, educational, and professional qualifications.*

TOO QUALIFIED? Overqualification rate is the proportion of people with tertiary education who are employed in a low- or medium-skilled occupation. There is a higher risk for people of African descent to work in a job requiring qualifications below their education level. The survey shows that the overqualification rate,

REGARDLESS OF CITIZEN-SHIP is **46%** for people of African descent and **22%** for the general population in the EU-27.

JOB SECURITY? Nearly 30% of employed individuals of African descent hold **TEMPORARY CONTRACTS**, encompassing both limited-duration contracts (lasting less than 1 year or exceeding 1 year) and those engaged in ad hoc (daily or weekly) work. This figure is nearly three times higher than the corresponding percentage for the general population across the 27 EU Member States, which stands at 11%.

Spain has the highest percentage of individuals of African descent employed with temporary contracts, standing at **45%**. This country also exhibits the most significant disparities, with a *27-percentage-point* difference between the general population and people of African descent. Substantial differences are also noticeable in **Belgium** (*26 percentage points*) and **Germany** (*22 percentage points*). Conversely, **Poland** (*4 percentage points*), **Sweden** (*5 percentage points*), and **Austria** (*6 percentage points*) show the smallest variations.

* Fibbi, Rosita, Didier Ruedin, Robin Stünzi, and Eva Zschirnt. 2022. « Hiring Discrimination on the Basis of Skin Colour? A Correspondence Test in Switzerland ». Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 48 (7): 1515–35.

> To be invited to an interview, a **Black job seeker** must send about 30% more applications than **a White candidate**, even though they hold **the same passport**, and share **equivalent linguistic, educational, and professional qualifications.**[1]

Too qualified? Overqualification rate is the proportion of people with tertiary education who are employed in a low- or medium-skilled occupation. There is a higher risk for people of African descent to work in a job requiring qualifications below their education level. The survey shows that the overqualification rate, **regardless of citizenship** is 46% for people of African descent and 22% for the general population in the EU-27.

Job security? Nearly 30% of employed individuals of African descent hold **temporary contracts**, encompassing both limited-duration contracts (lasting less than 1 year or exceeding 1 year) and those engaged in ad hoc (daily or weekly) work. This figure is nearly three times higher than the corresponding percentage for the general population across the 27 EU Member States, which stands at 11%.

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[2]European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.88-89

WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK!

UNSAFE
ISOLATION
HYPERVIGILANCE
ANXIETY   FEAR
A S S A U L T
APPREHENSION
VIOLENCE

In the survey, respondents were asked how often they were worried about getting harassed, offended or physically attacked due to their ethnic or immigrant background in public settings. **35%** expressed that they were worried at least sometimes about being confronted with RACIST VERBAL INSULTS, HARASSMENT AND PHYSICAL ATTACKS, while **45%** shared concerns about inappropriate staring or offensive gestures in public.

The highest percentages of individuals worried at least sometimes about potentially experiencing racist harassment or violence in public are Germany, Finland, and Austria, with over 70% in each category.

Fear of harassment translates into AVOIDANCE OF CERTAIN PLACES, which are perceived as unsafe. Among the respondents, 14% said they avoided certain places such as shops, cafes, or taking public transports. The highest proportions were in Germany (30 %), Finland (29 %), Ireland (29 %) and Austria (27 %), and the lowest proportions in Spain (7 %), France (10 %) and Italy (12 %).

* European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Being black in the EU – Experiences of people of African descent, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, p.68-69

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EUROCENTRICISM

"

'white' audiences often seem obsessed with hearing **'black'** people talk about racist experiences, which is sort of peculiar when you think about the source of the racism and which only serves to center white people again.

Of course, there are some white people who are interested in indigenous African cultures, but they constitute far smaller numbers and don't generally look to those cultures for philosophical insights or think about their having much to contribute to world-making politics

We should learn about non-European cultures *not just because it is nice or* **"antiracist"** *to do so but because we're stuck.* What lessons might we learn from cultures with different understandings of subjectivity outside of Enlightenment humanism?

"

Emma Dabiri
What White People Can Do Next: From Allyship to Coalition
2021

"

Ethnocentrism is, of course, **a negative cognitive tendency** common to all peoples, not just Europeans. But with Europe's gradual rise to global domination, the European variant becomes entrenched as an overarching, virtually unassailable framework, **a conviction of exceptionalism and superiority** that seems vindicated by the facts, and thenceforth, circularly, shaping perception of the facts. **We rule the world because we are superior; we are superior because we rule the world.**

Charles W. Mills
Black rights/white wrongs: the critique of racial liberalism
2017

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DEALING **WITH RACE**

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During the discussion of one item at a faculty meeting on equality, the dean said something like **race is too difficult to deal with.**¹ I remember wanting to challenge this. But the difficulty of speaking about racism as a person of color meant that I did not speak up during but after the meeting, and even then I wrote rather than spoke. Saying that race is "too difficult" is how racism gets reproduced, I put in an email to the dean. **The belief that racism is inevitable is how racism becomes inevitable**, I pointed out. (One of the favorite arguments made by senior management was that the university was "very white" because of geography—and that you can't do anything about geography.) Do something about it, he replies. It shouldn't be up to me, I answer.

"

Sara Ahmed
On being included: racism and diversity in institutional life
2012

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During the discussion of one item at a faculty meeting on equality, the dean said something like **'race is too difficult to deal with.'** I remember wanting to challenge this. But the difficulty of speaking about racism as a person of color meant that I did not speak up during but after the meeting, and even then I wrote rather than spoke. Saying that race is "too difficult" is how racism gets reproduced, I put in an email to the dean. **The belief that racism is inevitable is how racism becomes inevitable,** I pointed out. (One of the favorite arguments made by senior management was that the university was "very white" because of geography—and that you can't do anything about geography.) Do something about it, he replies. It shouldn't be up to me, I answer.

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WHITENESS

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Even now, when I talk about racism, the response from white people is to shift the focus away from their complicity and on to a conversation about what it means to be black, and about 'black identity'. They might hand-wring about what they call 'identity politics' – a term now used by the powerful to describe the resistance of the structurally disadvantaged. But they won't properly engage in the conversation, instead complaining that people mustn't divide themselves off into small groups, and that we're all one race, 'the human race'. *Discussing racism is not the same thing as discussing 'black identity'. Discussing racism is about discussing white identity.* It's about white anxiety. It's about asking why whiteness has this reflexive need to define itself against immigrant bogey monsters in order to feel comfortable, safe and secure. Why am I saying one thing, and white people are hearing something completely different?

"

Reni Eddo-Lodge
Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race
2018

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THE
HUMANITY OF EUROPE'S "OTHER"

"

Whether race is figured as natural history, as culture or as political anatomy, institutionalised racism imagines and assembles it as an absolute, division in social and political life. Human and infrahuman can, it seems, always be distinguished if not by nature then by the equally formidable signatures of culture and ethnicity.

These are considered vulgar and even disruptive points to raise in polite, scholarly company. **Analysis of racism is almost always ruled out of serious discussion either because its history remains deeply discomforting and has therefore been firmly repressed, or because, where its legitimacy is conceded, it can only be appreciated retrospectively and gets relegated to the past.** From that perspective, racism is considered to be over and done with. It tells Europe what it was and is no longer. If racism is discovered still to be active, its residual significance is accepted only within a narrow band of postcolonial locations, not least of which is the political and economic archive of Europe's modern expansion across the Atlantic.

I want to suggest, against that popular viewpoint, that **racism remains a more significant, even a constitutive aspect, of European history.** It has travelled, mutated and grown from its enlightenment roots in the same intellectual soil that yielded the idea of essential human equality but which, we should always remember, provided no significant obstacles to the exterministic consolidation of European colonies and empires. The undoing of those governmental and economic systems was a largely unacknowledged element in the creation of the EU as a political and commercial unit.

The intertwined histories of race and empire, colonies and decolonisation can still furnish us with valuable analytic tools with which to **come to terms with modern Europe's democratic promise** as well as its limitations and pathologies. We can employ some of those resources to begin to explain how today's dismissal of vulnerable people as vermin by the influential commentators who have urged military responses to their encroachment on European sovereign territory, has become part of a powerful, popular politics in so many different national states.

The desperate, **unwanted incomers** who have been targeted for that violent treatment can sometimes be grudgingly admitted into the most abstract grouping of humankind. They are assigned to **lower orders of existence** where the problems presented by their alien attributes can be managed anthropologically as expressions of racial, ethnic and cultural difference that belong elsewhere. I am oversimplifying here. We should acknowledge significant regional and cultural variations in the intensity of attachment to race, to the norm of whiteness and to religious or ethical habits that might qualify them. **The degree of humanity identified in or awarded to Europe's others fluctuates** and consequently determines the quality of sympathy and/or empathy that will be expressed once the **veil of alterity** has been torn to reveal, unexpectedly, a needy, vulnerable human countenance beneath.

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Paul Gilroy,
"Agonistic Belonging: The Banality of Good, the "Alt Right" and the Need for Sympathy"
2019

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Black History Month (BHM) at the EUI is an initiative that comes from researchers of African descent who believe in the need to make Black European history visible, to stimulate a reflection on the notion of race and to address the structural imbalances that continue to shape the experience of Black people in Europe.

To know more about BHM events and activities organised at the EUI in February 2024 : https://www.eui.eu/en/public/black-history-month

BHM at the EUI contributes to the broader initiative of Black History Month Florence (BHMF), cross-institutional network for Black cultural production that promotes the diversity of Afro-descendent cultures in the context of Italy.

http://blackhistorymonthflorence.com/