

Introduction

Frank Peter, Silvia Rodríguez Maeso

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The reports assembled in this collection examine anti-racist policies and public bodies in seven European states (**Portugal, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Denmark and UK**), including regional autonomous governments in the case of Spain, which has a highly decentralised political administration. The focus of these reports is not so much on the efficiency of these policies, usually measured in a short-term perspective on the basis of reported activities. As concerns the efficiency of direct measures taken to counter discrimination, the findings of these reports tend to confirm the conclusions of other studies on European anti-discrimination policies and agencies, namely that the efforts made to fight discrimination are not always up to the scope of the problem. Thus, for instance, in the cases of the UK and France the total output of anti-discrimination activities is astonishingly small. In the case of Germany, the resources allocated to anti-discrimination policies are insufficient for a policy aiming to be on par with the stated concern with anti-discrimination. In the case of Portugal, the specific *equality body* in charge of monitoring and inspecting racism and racial discriminatory practice lacks political independence. Additionally, the inefficiency of policies in relation to the discrimination of Roma communities along with the insignificant number of sanctions or sentences have been pointed out.

While the reports assembled here take into account such considerations, they integrate them into a broader perspective on (anti-)racism and “integration”. In such a perspective, one central question refers to the effects that anti-racist policies and integration measures produce on the way in which national identity and the right to national belonging are defined in relation to various minority groups. Thus, the reports identify a variety of connections which tie anti-racist policies to the politics of national identity and citizenship:

- (i) They insist on **the necessity to disconnect, at least partially, the question of racism from that of contemporary movements of immigration.**

Firstly, as racism is not necessarily connected to migration, as it has been made evident particularly in contexts with a colonial past of racialised governance. Secondly, and as the reports show, racism is naturalised within the discourse and practice of *integration* and *social cohesion* and the continuous redrawing of a line between ‘us’ and the ‘other’ (non-EU immigrants; ethnic minorities, “second-generation” immigrants). Understanding these processes demands that we do not confine the analysis of racism and anti-racist policies to a question of the majority’s attitudes towards immigrants and minorities.

- (ii) They discuss **the growing marginality of anti-racist measures and approaches within policy making**, a “vanishing present” that is legitimised – explicitly or implicitly – by a diversity of political *rationales*: the approach “by the positive side’ *via* integration and interculturality (Portugal, Andalusia - Spain); the comprehensive human rights approach (UK, Basque Country - Spain, France); the discourse on tolerance (and its limits) and freedom of speech (Denmark; Portugal); the economicist approach regarding the (non-EU) population as immigrant-workers that have to actively contribute to the national/regional communities (Denmark, Germany, Andalusia - Spain, Portugal); the use of racism merely as a moralising discourse (Italy, Portugal) and oriented to the “deficits” and “characteristics” of immigrants (Germany, Denmark, Portugal, Italy).

In the course of the past two decades, in public discourses and imaginaries racism has been strongly related to matters of immigration and the “inclusion” of **(ethnically/racially marked) minorities**. One of the questions that came to the fore within these debates regards how much immigration a given society can “accommodate” and under which conditions, a question to which there is certainly no consensus. However, the *assumption* that there are necessarily limits to a society’s ability to “accommodate” immigration has become evident. Put another way, the assumption that one can clearly distinguish between a ***unified national society*** (ethnically un-marked) on the one hand, and various (ethnically/racially marked) **minority groups** on the other – and that the host society naturally and legitimately cannot accept “all” immigrants – has become self-evident or is in the process of being naturalised in public debates. We argue that **it is within these dominant discourses**

and political approaches that racism is being reconfigured in contemporary European contexts.

Adopting different perspectives, the texts presented here identify how such discourses about the *natural* difference of immigrants have contributed crucially to processes of state/national-formation and the ways in which they continue to do so. As the case of the autonomous Basque country indicates, these processes can take on very specific forms. The reports also demonstrate how such discourses about “national culture and values”, in spite (or precisely because) of their **vagueness**, serve to continuously reproduce a **fundamental divide between North and South, Europe-Western and the ‘other’ non-Western**. There is no requirement to precise the content of such national “core values”, and the effectiveness of such public discourses on “integration” and “social cohesion” relies on being constantly invoked: they are performed as **a discourse of power**. The effects of such discourses are perhaps particularly significant in the cases of Portugal, Italy and Andalusia-Spain: a dominant narrative reassuring that these countries/regions are no longer an emigration but an immigration country deploys those dichotomies (North/South; wealthy/poor) validating the locus of Europe as paradigmatic of modernity and development, and of those countries/regions as its part.

Taking into consideration the role that racist constructions have played in delineating national identities can provide a different entry point to current debates about the “integration” of immigrants. Several of the following country/regional studies draw attention to the fact that discourses about integration often ascribe the causes of current “problems of integration” to immigrants. Directly or not, racism is thus being related to the “deficiencies” of immigrants and acquires the status of (natural) reactions to immigrants and their characteristics. This kind of rationalisation and banalisation of racism becomes more difficult to maintain once we abandon a limited and individualistic perspective that conceives of racism as related to extremist ideologies or reactions to difference. If we consider that **racism is the exercise of power that produces and perpetuates privilege and its naturalisation – and not an excess of race-thinking (Hesse, 2004)**, racism is well alive in the countries studied here. However, in many respects it would be more accurate to say that it is being “buried alive” (Goldberg: 2009) producing **the idea that we are living in *post-racial* societies** – societies in which people can be individuals without imposition of colour-coded cultural constraints. However, as S. Sayyid points out,

To those who believe that racism is alive and well, the talk of post-racial is either ironic or disingenuous; for them the post-racial means not the displacement of the radicalised order

but its continuation by other means (...). The post-racial arises not through the elimination of racism, but through a discursive re-configuration which makes it increasingly difficult to locate racism in Western societies except historically or exceptionally.¹

The most striking example of *post-racialism* is delivered by the policy developments in the UK where the category of racism is being dissolved into a general human rights approach. A similar development is currently being debated in France with regard to the future of the anti-discrimination agency HALDE. However, this tendency to abandon racial discrimination as a distinct category is not uniform. It intersects with national (or regional) identity narratives in which race and ethnicity take on strikingly different functions. Furthermore, it takes shape in political contexts where the significance of anti-discrimination and anti-racist policies in the past decades has varied immensely. For the case of Spain and its Autonomous Communities, “race”, racism and racial discrimination have been considered as irrelevant for public intervention; for instance, “inclusive citizenship’ within the human rights framework in the Basque Country is the main concept within “social inclusion” policies and categories considering racially or ethnically marked groups or “minorities” are absent.

The reports presented here follow a similar structure: firstly, they examine the main **state-endorsed public bodies** in charge of anti-discrimination and anti-racist policies, usually within “integration” and “social cohesion” comprehensive policies; secondly, specific **key political documents** are studied in terms of their rationale and of the relevance given to anti-racist and anti-discrimination policies; finally, **key public discourses by elites** are also analysed in order to unravel the relations between different notions and semantic fields, such as (in-)tolerance, integration, inclusion, discrimination and immigration, and the ways in which they are shaping the current understandings of (anti-)racism.

This volume presents a general framework – based on the specificities of each national/regional context – to discuss the current politics of anti-racism within the context of the European Union. Within the TOLERACE project we propose that this discussion must engage with the tension between *nationality* and *citizenship* and thus with the ways in which the governmentality of integration and social cohesion is, paraphrasing Étienne Balibar, constructing the *immigrant* and the *minority* as “race” in the sense the notion has taken on today (2004b: 37). Only thus can we overcome a

¹ See “Do post-racials dream of White sheep?” (TOLERACE - WP1: *Conceptual guide-text*, p. 170; INTERNAL DOCUMENT)

conception of *race* as “the force of prejudice exercised against newcomers (...) an irrational excess” (Goldberg, 2009: 162).

Country	Public Body	Key documents
Portugal	High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (former High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities) (ACIDI) The Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR)	Plan for Integration of Immigrant Programme <i>Choices</i>
Denmark	The Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration. The Danish Institute for Human Rights.	“Employment, participation and equal opportunities for everyone”
France	High Authority for the Fight Against Discrimination and for Equality (HALDE)	HALDE annual report: 2009
Germany	Federal Government’s Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. The Federal Anti-discrimination Agency (ADS)	National Integration Plan General Equal Treatment Act
Italy	National Office Against Racial Discrimination (UNAR)	One Year of Activities Against Racial Discrimination. ‘Tool Kit’ Against Racial Discrimination.
Spain (Basque Country)	Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Basque Country	I Basque Immigration Plan. II Basque Immigration Plan.
Spain (Andalusia)	The Government of Andalusia	Comprehensive Plans for Immigration in Andalusia.
United Kingdom	Equality and Human Rights Commission (former Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission and Disability Rights Commission) (EHRC)	Strategic Plan of the Equality and Human Rights Commission