

**RACE DISCRIMINATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF ETHNIC  
DIVERSITY AND MIGRATION  
AT WORK**

# INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION VOLUME 6

# **RACE DISCRIMINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND MIGRATION AT WORK: EUROPEAN COUNTRIES' PERSPECTIVES**

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# INTRODUCTION

## SETTING THE CONTEXT OF RACE DISCRIMINATION AT WORK IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Joana Vassilopoulou and Julienne Brabet

We developed the idea for this book in the aftermath of the 2014 European Union (EU) Parliament elections, which, since 1979, are held every five years across all EU countries, in order to elect 751 MEPs to the European Parliament. The results, with far-right parties such as the France's Front National taking 24.9% of the vote in France and UK independence party (UKIP) taking 27.5% of the vote in the United Kingdom ([European Parliament, 2014](#)), were strong indicator of rising racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the EU, which no longer could be ignored. That doesn't mean that there were no other and earlier signs that race, ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and anti-Semitism were on the rise in Europe previous to the elections. The 2012 Eurobarometer survey showed that 'discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin continued to be regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination in the EU (Eurobarometer 2012)'. In 2011, the German think-tank Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung examined the 'anti-other' attitudes in Germany, Poland, the UK, France, Portugal, France, Netherlands, Italy and Hungary. According to this research, 50% of the European participants thought that there were too many migrants in their country ([Zick et al., 2011](#)). In 2013, a report by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) showed that in Greece, Spain and Portugal it became common to accuse immigrants of stealing job opportunities and working for less pay and that racism in Europe was at its worst since the 1980s ([Parkes, Maynard, Karim, & Robinson, 2013](#)).

The 2014 European elections were a first wake-up call, pointing out that racism was not an isolated problem in one individual European country, but instead a problem across the EU. In this book, we draw on [Miles' \(1982, p. 157\)](#) definition of racism which is 'the ideology that makes use of essentialized phenotypical, biological and sometimes cultural difference to express and reinforce these inequalities'. The 2014 EU election ignited the idea to approach the topic of racism at work from a European perspective, instead, as from the Anglo-Saxon one, which is often dominant in the field. There is a plethora of research pertaining racism at work stemming from the Anglo-Saxon sphere, particularly the USA. However, the context of the USA is very different from that of most countries in the EU, many of which have not been immigration countries like the USA. The ethnic mosaic of European countries does not only differ to the one of the USA but also differs from country to country within the EU, depending on the immigration context and history in each country. Nonetheless, very often academics and practitioners rely on notions concerning racism and measures to combat race discrimination at work stemming from the USA. However, such notions and measures, not always translating well into other countries context, are often reinterpreted and redefined differently according to the national settings they travel to. One such example is the concept of diversity management, which has its roots in the North American context of the late 1980s. [Thomas \(1990\)](#) argued, that in the case of USA, diversity management might provide an optimal way to include ethnic minority groups, to consequently benefit the organizations in the long term. Many European countries governments view diversity management as a new way of combating race and ethnic discrimination ([Wrench, 2002](#)). However, despite the growing interest in this concept, there has been an only little study of the process of how diversity management is reinterpreted as it crosses national boundaries. [Tatli, Vassilopoulou, Ariss, and Özbilgin \(2012, p. 305\)](#) argue:

[...] direct transposition of diversity management ideas is not feasible, as would be the case with direct transposition of diversity management policies. [...] we argue that social policy should capture the local meanings and path dependencies concerning the concept of diversity with a view to transcend them.

Differences can indeed be found in relation to the terminology of race equality used in Europe. While Anglo-Saxon countries such as the USA, the UK and Ireland, use, for example, the term 'race', this is not the case in for example France or Germany where the term is taboo ([Vassilopoulou et al. 2014; Vassilopoulou, 2011, 2017](#)). In Germany, the term 'race' is taboo because of its Nazi-past and due to its meaning in the national socialistic ideology. As such, the term 'race' is only understood and used as a biological concept and not as a social construct ([Butterwegge, 1996; Leskien, 1997](#)) unlike in countries such as the USA and the UK. In France, the term was even removed from the constitution this year, using the argument that race is only a social construct and that as such it does not exist ([Washington Post, 2018](#)). This taboo around the issue of race has also prevented many European countries from collecting ethnic data.

The collection of racial statistics, at, for example, schools, the workplace, etc., is absent in most European countries and in France, such data collection is even often illegal. Racial statistics are associated with Nazi Germany, and hence, such data are not been collected. However, one could argue that if genuinely aiming for race equality and equal opportunity, it is necessary to keep and collect ethnic records. The extent of race discrimination at the workplace cannot be measured without ethnic monitoring and without such knowledge it remains difficult to combat race discrimination at work (Vassilopoulou, 2009). However, ethnic monitoring as conducted in the USA and, for instance, the UK has its limitations and simply copying it for other European countries is not advisable. For instance, the categories used in the UK, such as white, other white, black and Asian, might not apply in the same way across other European countries, which, for example, do not have a history of colonialism and as a result a very different mix of ethnicities in their countries. We are only scratching the surface of this topic in this introduction, since ethnic monitoring will be discussed in more detail in Chapters in this book; the refusal of collecting ethnic data is a major obstacle in combating race discrimination at the workplace in the EU.

Since the 2014 EU parliament elections, things, and with that we mean racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, have gone from better to worse in the EU and further afield. In the USA, President Trump unsuccessfully attempted to impose a travel ban for citizens from seven Muslim majority countries. His administration is now focused on building a wall along the US and Mexican border and has recently deployed the military to stop the so-called migrant caravan entering the USA from Central America. Social and political instability, civil war, environmental disasters, collapsing economies and widening income inequality have led to migration as an avenue for survival for many (Ng & Bloemraad, 2015). The arrival of a large number of refugees in Europe, particularly in the summer of 2015, a number of terror attacks in countries, such as France and the UK over the last few years, and the way they have been handled by politicians and the media across Europe, have powered far-right parties and far-right sentiment across Europe, which fuelled racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism on a scale that hadn't be seen in Europe since the second world war. As a result, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism have become publicly acceptable in parts of societies across Europe. A recent study on authoritarian and far-right attitudes in Germany (Decker & Brähler, 2018) found that nearly one in three Germans supports xenophobic views and that xenophobia is becoming increasingly widespread throughout Germany. The study surveyed 2,416 people (west: 1,918, east: 498) focusing on topics such as advocating a right-wing authoritarian dictatorship, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and trivialization of National Socialism. Other findings are that 36% agree with the statement that foreigners only come to Germany to exploit the welfare state; over 25% would like to send foreigners back to their home countries if there were a shortage of jobs in Germany and around 36% think that Germany is swamped by foreigners. Analysing the same data, Pickel and Yendell (2018) found an alarming increase in Islamophobia, with, for example, 55% of respondents stating that they felt

like foreigners in their own country because of large numbers of Muslims. The findings of the survey show that anti-Semitism is widespread, with up to one-third of respondents agreeing at least in part with anti-Semitic statements. Strikingly, 40% of young German adults know little to nothing about the Holocaust. Lastly, the study also found that people with far-right views are now turning away from the Christian Democratic Union and Social Democratic political parties and finding a new home in the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) (Alternative for Germany). In 2017, the AfD received 13.3% in the last national elections in Germany. The AfD is not the only far-right party that has gained ground in Europe. Nationalism has risen across Europe and with that a number of right- and far-right-wing parties have sprung up in countries such as Italy, Germany, France, Sweden, Hungary and Poland. Across Europe, nationalist and far-right parties have made significant gains in recent years. Some have taken office and others have become the main opposition voice with the result that many mainstream parties have adopted their language in order to not lose 'more' votes. This has meant that much of European mainstream politics in terms of language and often policy have experienced a major shift to the right (BBC, 2018). The AfD and other parties such as The Front National are mostly concerned with what they allegedly view as the Islamification of Europe and so are other right-wing movements such as the pan-European identitarian movement, which have emerged over the last decade. The identitarian movement is a European and North American far-right and white nationalist movement originating in France that opposes Islam and multiculturalism amongst other things. Islamification has become a topic mostly since 9/11 and Islamophobia has dramatically increased since particularly fuelled by Islamist terror attacks in countries such as the UK and France. The founding idea of UKIP has been mostly grounded in the desire to exit the EU. In 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU a vote that was largely based on the desire to stop the free movement of European Citizens to the UK and to gain back the allegedly lost sovereignty from the EU. There was an unprecedented spike in hate crimes against migrants, black and ethnic minorities in the UK right after the referendum; however, this spike was equivalent to the one following the recent Manchester and London terror attacks. Devine (2018) argues that pre-event 'inflammatory rhetoric' drove the link between hate crimes and the referendum. All of the above makes for an increasingly hostile environment, making it more difficult to challenge race inequalities and uphold values of equality and social justice.

For a long time, ethnic minorities and immigrants have been locked out of much of the workplace in Europe, denied jobs, segregated into lower-paying jobs, victims of pay discrimination, victims of the glass-ceiling and racial harassment. Combating race discrimination in employment has been on the EU agenda particularly since the Treaty of Amsterdam from 1997, strengthened by the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC, which is an Act of the EU, concerning EU labour law. It implements the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in the workplace. Despite this, the latest ENAR Shadow Report 2013–2017, exploring racism and discrimination at



work in 23 EU countries, found that no progress has been made in reducing race discrimination in the European labour market and that little has changed since their last report four years ago, a report that had already highlighted the ongoing race and ethnic discrimination in the workplace. The new report illustrates not only the weakness of existing EU antidiscrimination laws, but in particular their weak enforcement across the 23 EU countries examined in this study (ENAR, 2018). Across Europe, ethnic and religious minorities do often not have the same opportunities as their majority population counterparts. One hurdle are foreign-sounding names as compared to 'local' names, which across Europe often make it difficult for ethnic and religious minorities to even be invited to a job interview. For instance, in Belgium, job applicants with foreign-sounding names are 30% less likely to be invited for a job interview compared to applicants having Flemish sounding names and with similar profiles (ENAR, 2018). Ethnic and religious minorities find different strategies to deal with such unequal treatment. For example, some ethnic minority individuals chose to change their Arabic names in France to French ones, as a strategy of blending in and in order to prevent themselves from being discriminated against (Al Ariss, Vassilopoulou, Özbilgin, & Game, 2013). Generally, it is more difficult for ethnic and religious minorities to get through the different stages of the often discriminatory recruitment process. This in combination with structural inequality has led to higher unemployment rates for migrants and ethnic and religious minorities and for them being often overrepresented in less desirable jobs and sectors, such as for example agriculture and care.

Discrimination and inequality that ethnic and religious minorities face do not stop at the entry stage of their work experience. Once in a job, migrants and ethnic and religious minorities often experience more inequality, such unequal pay as, for instance, in Germany where black workers earn almost 25% less compared to the majority population; race discrimination and race incidents at work and underemployment (ENAR, 2018). The unemployment and underemployment of migrants and ethnic and religious minorities is often explained in relation to their alleged lack of cultural and social capital, such as insufficient educational attainment and qualifications, poor language skills, poorly educated parents and acute cultural differences. While there are studies which explore discrimination in the workplace and structural disadvantage in particular labour market sectors, the prevalent approach in much of the European literature examining the labour market experience of ethnic minority workers focuses on their skills and resource deficits (Euwals, Dagevos, Gijsberts, & Roodenburg, 2007), which is used to provide justification for their over-representation in unemployment or low-skilled, poorly paid, insecure and generally undesirable work (Wrench, 2001). However, highly skilled migrants and ethnic and religious minorities, for example, in France and Germany often face similar problems (Al Ariss et al., 2013). In contrast, the focus in UK studies, for instance, acknowledges that black and minority ethnic workers are in an unfavourable labour market position in spite of rather than because of their skills, where instead the focus is turned to the pre-existing structural barriers and systemic

inequalities which reinforce and reproduce an ethnic penalty (Catney & Sabater, 2015; Holgate, 2005).

This edited book explores developments and manifestations of race discrimination in the labour market in eight different countries in the EU. In order to understand race discrimination at work, we need to understand the intricate interplay between historical context that gives meaning to race and ethnic differences; the social and political framing of racial and ethnic groups as well as the legal frameworks which help regulate the field of ethnic relations in the different EU countries. Each of the chapter country contributions includes thus a brief description of the historical context in which issues of racism and discrimination at work, equality and diversity arise; provides facts, stats and demographics about ethnicity in society and at work in the respective country; illustrates the discourse pertaining race discrimination and race equality at work; and examines the measures deployed at the national and organizational levels to combat race discrimination and their effects. These brief descriptions are followed by the specific country case. Hopefully, the common elements of the chapters will make it easier for the reader to compare the different countries. This book includes country perspectives from France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Cyprus and Greece. The editors were hoping to include more countries in this book, such as Eastern European countries; however, this has sadly, despite several attempts, not been achieved for this book.

Before moving to the different country perspectives, the next chapter of this book titled 'Reflections on Definitions, Methods, Challenges of and Ways Forward for Ethnic Counting in Europe', by Karakas and Ozbilgin, examines the notion of ethnic diversity with a view to explore Europe-wide differences in defining and managing ethnic diversity and equality. When people define and talk about a particular conception of race, they create a social reality through which social categorization is achieved. In the diverse geographic context of Europe, concepts such as ethnicity and race have found various interpretations and social categorizations, which will be explored in this chapter. The focus of this chapter is on the way ethnic diversity is accounted for and debated in terms of categories of ethnicity, ethnic representation and visibility particularly in national census data. When compared to gender diversity, ethnic diversity does not enjoy similar levels of success in Europe. The chapter illustrates that this is due to the fact that ethnicity and ethnic categories are national. In fact, there are different levels of discussion on ethnicity, where the debate is limited due to historical, cultural and legal differences. The authors argue that the subject of ethnic diversity, which has long been ignored or taboo in some countries, has been legally protected and has been debated as part of social policy and operationalized via organizational level interventions.

The presentation of the nine different European country perspectives starts with the chapter 'The French Model and the Discriminations toward Visible Minorities at Work', by Brabet, Bruna, Chanlat and Labulle. It presents the French Republican Model and the '*laïcité*, French version of secularism', that are supposed to protect the citizens, at work or elsewhere, against any form of discrimination. However, despite this inclusive model and a long history of

immigration, ethnical and racial discriminations at work are nevertheless observable toward visible minorities in France today. North African as well as overseas territories' origins people are heavily penalized in the job market. Neither direct and indirect laws nor companies 'voluntary initiatives' seem able to solve this problem when massive unemployment and terrorist Islamic attacks are creating a situation of crisis. Through an analysis of the literature and two case studies, the authors underline the invisibility of ethnic and religious discrimination drowned under the mass of other discriminations whose treatment is more consensual. They analyse the difficulties in getting a consensus and implementing policies that fight these discriminations at national or companies' levels.

The chapter 'An Overview of Diversity Policies in the Public and Private Sector That Seek to Increase the Representation of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in the Workplace: The Case of Germany', by Vassilopoulou, Merx and Bruchhagen presents the German case and focuses on diversity policies in the public and private sector. This chapter is partially based on an unpublished Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) background report, titled 'OECD Research Project on Diversity in the Workplace: Country Report Germany', which was written by the three authors. While the OECD country report illustrates how diversity policies and related diversity instruments targeting various diversity dimensions have developed in Germany over recent decades, this chapter focuses solely on the management of ethnic diversity and its related policies. In Germany, diversity management has no human rights background, but also does not strongly promote the elimination of discrimination at workplace. Gender issue dominates the discourse on diversity management. The government started recently to promote diversity management as a tool for the better 'integration' of ethnic minority and migrant workers in Germany. Consequently, terms such as 'valuing ethnic diversity' have increasingly appeared in the public and political debate. However, it is not clear what, if any, impact these governmental interventions have had. Germany is characterized by a relatively high degree of inequality between migrants/ethnic minorities and non-migrants as well as restrictive and assimilationist integration policies.

The chapter 'Race Discrimination and the Management of Ethnic Diversity at Work: The Case of Elementary Teachers in Ireland', by Walsh and Mc Daid, explores the issue of ethnic diversity and race discrimination among elementary school teachers in Ireland. It examines both the historical precedents of this discrimination and uses the current experiences of Immigrant Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) living in Ireland to explore the phenomenon contemporaneously. The chapter begins by delineating the historical context of immigration in Ireland and more recent population data. It then explores the relevant legislative provisions to address employment and race discrimination in the Irish context. Owing to the deep-seated and historical origins of the current race discrimination, a particular focus is placed on delineating the evolution of the selection and recruitment of elementary teachers in Ireland. Drawing on data ascertained through semi-structured interviews with a range of IETs, positioned within the aforementioned analyses of relevant historical documents, the chapter

then moves to explore some experiences of IETs seeking to work in the Irish elementary school system. The chapter analyses these data through a Bourdieuan lens, paying particular attention to ways in which power has been, and continues to be, exercised by the State in regulating access to prestigious mainstream teaching positions. The chapter proceeds to root these analyses within Kitching's work on 'race moves', arguing that immigrant teachers have been racialized as 'other' on the basis of an absence of proficiency in the Irish language.

The chapter by Kamasak, Ozbilgin, Yavuz and Akalin is titled 'Race Discrimination at Work in the United Kingdom'. In this chapter, the authors highlight the role of history in framing race relations in the UK. In particular, they focus on the history of colonization on the racial order in the UK and subsequent efforts to remedy the historical injustices in the field of race discrimination. Race discrimination at work in the UK remains intact despite centuries of struggles against racism, slavery and xenophobia at the societal level and decades of activism, legislation and interventions for race equality in the workplace. They present a four-pronged typology of how ethnic diversity is framed in the UK. They locate the detrimental consequences of the way the race equality debate is locked in the deficit approach and explicate how organizational efforts should move towards combating institutional racism. Taking stock of a brief case on the entry of large numbers of minority ethnic workers to technology enabled private hire companies as drivers, they show that technological change does not always bring exclusion, deskilling and ethnic polarization. In fact, technology can help open up opportunities for traditionally excluded ethnic groups to gain new route ways into employment and entrepreneurial careers.

The chapter titled 'Ethnic Discrimination in the Labour Market: The Dutch Case', by Andriessen, focuses on ethnic discrimination in the Netherlands. One in every five of the almost 17 million inhabitants in the Netherlands is a first or second-generation migrant. The largest immigrant groups with a non-Western background are Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans. Their labour market position is weak, which higher levels of unemployment, larger dependency on temporary (rather than fixed) contracts and lower job levels. A substantial part of the migrants perceives that their weaker position is due to discrimination. Statistical analyses and field experiments show discrimination in hiring and indicate that part of the differential position of migrant workers in the Dutch labour market may be attributed to discrimination as well. Discrimination is a heavily debated topic that polarizes the political debate and public opinion. With the surge of right-wing politicians such as Geert Wilders, a Dutch politician who has been the leader of the Party for Freedom since he founded it in 2006, discrimination has been shown to have mobilizing powers in politics. The high levels of public attention for the topic not only spurs citizens' initiatives and governmental policies for combating it but may also facilitate recognition of discriminatory practices resulting in relatively high levels of perceived discrimination within a European context.

The chapter titled 'Discrimination at Work: The Case of Norway', by Midtbøen, reviews the historical and political context of immigration to