

Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Anti-Racist Language, Racial Perpetuation: How the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025) Frames and Perpetuates (Anti)-Racism

A Critical Discourse Analysis



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Racism & Anti Racism Master Thesis

International Master of Science, Sociology

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Wordcount: 9256

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Abstract

In response to global anti-racism movements such as Black Lives Matter, the European Commission published the Anti-Racism Action Plan in 2020, with the aim to fully implement it within five years. Building on existing EU-wide anti-racism legislation, the plan attempts to provide points of action that all EU-Member States are encouraged to follow. With the help of three theoretical schools of thought: 1) Critical Race Theory, 2) Intersectionality and 3) Postcolonial Theory, the thesis aims to unravel the meanings behind the way that (structural) racism is framed in the plan and how this contributes to the perpetuation of the issue. The Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) approach reveals that the plan mostly defines racism along the lines of individual hatred, microaggressions and unequal treatment. The framing, therefore, fails to adequately combat the issue's structural dimension. The recurring conflation between racism and racial discrimination in the plan's attempt to provide points of action, further renders it ineffective. Due to the negligence of addressing the structural side of racism, the plan fails to provide a basis for structural change. The performative use of symbolic language in the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, exemplifies broader implications on why anti-racism legislation usually fails to bring about meaningful change to the people who are subjected to it.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Race Theory, EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, Postcolonial Theory, Structural Racism*

Introduction

The European Union has long prided itself on its commitment to human rights, democracy and equality, yet racism remains a problem in European societies. The European Union's Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025) (hereafter EUARAP or 'the plan') claims to be a turning point in the fight against racism on the EU-level. The plan was introduced in response to global anti-racism movements, particularly the renewed focus on structural racism following the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. However, the EUARAP is not the first anti-racist initiative adopted on an EU-level (European Commission, 2020, p. 1). The Racial Equality Directive (hereafter the 'Directive') which laid the groundwork for the EUARAP, showcases an earlier effort to combat racism at the supranational level (Rodríguez Maeso, 2017). However, conceptualizations of 'racism' in the Directive remain broad and contextual (McInerney, 2003, p.11). The EUARAP re-frames 'racism' in comparison to the previous Directive, but its limitations call for closer investigation. Therefore, the question that arises in this context is: *How does the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025) frame its understanding of (structural) racism and how does this lead to the issue's perpetuation?*

The first and second chapter of this thesis will provide context to definitions of racism, racial discrimination, and other relevant concepts. These definitions are grounded in the following three theoretical schools of thought: 1) Critical Race Theory 2) Intersectionality and 3) Postcolonial Theory. The theories present a blend of different approaches which all shed critical light on institutional structures and their initial formation. CRT challenges the neutrality of anti-racism legislation and race definitions, while intersectionality emphasizes mutually reinforcing forms of racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Crenshaw, 1989). Postcolonial Theory sees the development of Western institutions as inherently grounded in legacies of colonial governance (Go, 2016, p. 18). Further, it is important to acknowledge that the thesis intentionally places attention on the structural aspect of racism with regards to the phrasing of the research question. In this way, it attempts to highlight how the issue is perpetuated through the use of language.

As previously implied, CRT's definitions of 'racism' and 'racial discrimination' will be used and further explained in [2.1 Racism, Anti-Racism, Discrimination, and Biological Understandings of Racism in Europe](#). As for 'structural racism' the review of literature observed a frequently interchangeable use of the term with 'systemic racism'. The term 'systemic racism' will therefore not be used in this thesis since it will be regarded as incorporated in the 'structural

racism'. To highlight that structural racism is understood as the result of racism rooted within systems of oppression, the thesis regards systemic and structural racism as inseparable. Therefore, the following definition of 'structural racism' is adopted and combines multiple interpretations of the terms in an effort to avoid the limitations of narrowly focused definitions:

Structural racism refers to the systemic and institutionalized patterns of discrimination embedded within societal frameworks, policies, history and practices that perpetuate racialized hierarchies. It operates through implicit and explicit mechanisms that sustain inequalities, not merely as individual bias but as deeply ingrained structures shaping access to rights, opportunities, and recognition. In the European context, structural racism emerges in the construction of Europeaness versus non-Europeaness, wherein intersecting characteristics such as racialized, cultural and ethnic markers define exclusion and marginalization (Sayyid 2017; Rodríguez Maeso 2018; Müller 2021; Ruzza 2000).¹

Regarding the methodological tool used to analyze the EUARAP, the thesis makes use of CDA. Chapter three outlines this, detailing the steps for a closer examination of the EUARAP. CDA provides a suitable tool to analyze the language used to frame '(structural) racism' and 'racial discrimination' as it showcases a critical and flexible research approach rather than a fixed method (van Dijk, 2001). The proposed question and subject matter are formulated in an intentionally critical way, influenced by my positionality as a Muslim woman of color. However, the inherently critical lens through which the plan will be reviewed, does not only stem from my own positionality but also from the fact that trying to tackle racism through policy generally turns out to be an ineffective strategy (Makkonen, 2012). Since the EUARAP is the most recent and arguably most large-scale effort to tackle (structural) racism on a supranational governance level, it is of utmost importance to critically investigate which framings and underlying assumptions shape its result. Therefore, the thesis aims to make a valuable contribution to the remarkably small amount of literature on the framings and perpetuation of '(structural) racism' and 'racial discrimination' in the EUARAP.

¹ Different parts of the literature are paraphrased and synthesized. Therefore, no part of this definition is a direct quote.

CH. 1: Theoretical Framework

1.1 Critical Race Theory

Originating in the field of law, Critical Race Theory (hereafter CRT) is an influential body of literature in the study of racism and anti-racism. Therefore, CRT is an intellectual movement run by left scholars “whose work challenged the ways in which race and racial power are constructed and represented in American legal culture and, more generally, in American society as a whole” (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xiii). Although the movement started in the United States, its influence has spread globally and is thus still relevant for the European context. The perspective challenges the claim that legal scholarship is ‘neutral’, ‘objective’, or ‘color-blind’.

Color blindness, in this context, “is rooted in the belief that racial group membership and race-based differences should not be taken into account when decisions are made, impressions are formed, and behaviors are enacted” (Apfelbaum et al., 2012, p. 205). Therefore, CRT is a movement arguing that race must be addressed explicitly within legal studies to fully understand racial inequalities (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Studies that use CRT as a theoretical lens are focused on – but not limited to – a critical way of looking at the foundational principles of liberal order, legal reasoning, and ‘neutral’ principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). However, even though different minority groups maintain good relations under the umbrella term of ‘CRT’, each group has established diverging focuses and priorities in their own bodies of literature (p.3).

1.1.1 Expanding Perspectives within CRT

It is crucial to understand that despite originating in legal studies, CRT is not limited to the field but rather serves as an umbrella term. As Delgado & Stefancic (2017) explain, different racialized groups have developed their own understandings and subjects of inquiry within CRT (p.3). For instance, thematic emphasis reaches from immigration policy analysis through a CRT lens by Latino and Asian scholars over indigenous people’s matters and land claims by American Indian scholars, to discrimination in the aftermath of 9/11 by Middle Eastern and South Asian scholars. It seems as though the organization of these priorities aligns with one of the core tenets of CRT, namely, shifting stereotypes across time (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 10). This notion of shifting

stereotypes describes a situation in which minority groups/individuals are racialized on different grounds across time, influenced by a change in conditions. For example, “in one era, Muslims are somewhat exotic neighbors who go to the mosques and pray several times of day – harmless but odd. A few years later, they emerge as security threats” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 10). Consequently, CRT does not refer to one ‘theory’ as one may mistakenly assume. Rather, it is about the priorities and topics that scholars aim to understand through a critical lens, questioning the foundational assumptions of the present order. Closely related to the idea of seeing different experiences of racialization in different contexts is the concept of intersectionality.

1.2 Intersectionality within CRT

Within CRT, intersectionality plays a crucial role in conceptualizing the complex realities of racializing experiences. In this context, “[i]ntersectionality’ means the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation and how their combination plays out in various settings” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 58).

Crenshaw’s (1989) work on the intersection of race and sex is one of the early contributions to intersectionality literature, drawing attention to the study of racism as being oriented along a single-axis framework. In other words, Crenshaw (1989) argues that the analyses of discrimination experiences are often focused along the lines of *either sex or race*, ignoring the multi-faceted nature of the issue. The intersectional approach, therefore, aims to make sense of all sorts of factors that play into discrimination experiences, moving beyond the focus on the racial discrimination faced by the most privileged members of marginalized groups.

Additionally, intersectionality attempts to uncover the strategic silencing of multiplied discriminatory experiences (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1253). Even though Crenshaw situates her writings in an American context, strategic silencing is evident in the European context as well. It is due to this intentional way of prioritizing certain experiences over others’ that makes framing and categorizations more than just a matter of theoretical interest (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 62). This suggests that the framing of discriminatory experiences “determines who has power, voice, and representation and who does not” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 62). Even though this intersectional account is largely based on Crenshaw’s (1991) understanding of intersectionality in the American context, its core critique is applicable to the European context as well. Therefore, the silencing of underlying racist structures and their complex intersectional nature are not only

criticized by CRT and intersectionality but are also closely related to postcolonial theory (Rodríguez Maeso, 2018).

1.3 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial thought will provide another theoretical angle which fits into the critical focus of this thesis. It first emerged as ‘anticolonialism’ in the early- to mid-twentieth century (Go, 2016, p. 18). Its second wave came about in the 1980s and 1990s, spreading the idea of postcolonial ‘theory’. There are many layers to postcolonial theory and again – like CRT – pinpointing one theoretical approach within postcolonial thought would take away from its rich way of looking at contemporary influences in different areas of life. However, for the scope of this thesis, it is most important to highlight that the theory does not merely revolve around the history of colonial empires, but more on how the legacies of colonial ways of domination have shaped our ways of seeing and understanding the world, including what we fail to see or understand (p.18). In that respect, strategic silencing of the use of ‘race’ plays a role in understanding framings of racism, since a 1996 European Parliament resolution suggested avoiding the term in all official texts (Rodríguez Maeso, 2018, p. 861). Postcolonial theory sees European laws and its institutions in light of the eurocentric and colonial context in which they were formed. In other words, postcolonial theory highlights that circumventing the use of ‘race’ and ‘racism’ actively silences its existence and reproduces racism through a eurocentric as well as white² lens (p.861).

The postcolonial approach aligns well with CRT and intersectionality in that it shares the commonality of wanting to unravel underlying systems of oppression. All three theories question fundamental assumptions of race in its contemporary and particularly institutional context. It is for these reasons that the thesis will aim to investigate the priorities and framings of racism in the EUARAP, highlighting the problematic nature of plan’s building blocks through a critical, intersectional and postcolonial lens.

² The lowercasing of the word ‘white’ and capitalization of the word ‘Black’ was done intentionally to convey a message of resistance and articulate my personal positioning.

CH. 2: Anti-Racism Legislation in Europe

2.1 Racism, Anti-Racism, Discrimination, and Biological Understandings of Racism in Europe

The different distinctions and definitions explaining ‘racism’ are infinite. This section does not attempt to lay out an exhaustive list of definitions but rather provides a snapshot of definitions and distinctions in relevant literature on (anti-) racism in Europe. These definitions are situated in the scope of the theoretical concepts mentioned in the previous section. Since the most influential school of thought for this thesis is CRT, its definition of racism³ and race can be regarded as the baseline for this thesis. CRT scholars such as Lentin (2008) for instance, generally regard racism as a broader system embedded in the legacies of colonialism, slavery and post-war immigration that structurally oppress people of color and infantilize non-Europeans due to their perceived lack of ‘progress’ (p. 489). Therefore, the thesis adopts the understanding of racism as being a system of oppression, structurally and unequally impacting racialized groups within the context of historical legacies of the events mentioned previously. Discrimination, on the other hand, is understood as an issue that can occur within this system but does not necessarily reinforce it (Bobo & Fox, 2003, p. 319). This means that white people, for instance, can be discriminated against, but they are not subject to the structural systems of oppression that disproportionately affect people of color and other (historically) marginalized groups.

In the first half of the twentieth century, ‘racism’ in many states in Europe, was associated with the experience of Jewish heritage individuals under the discriminatory laws put in place by the newly elected Nazi government (Sayyid, 2017, p. 12). The historical context made ‘race’ seem inherently biological and unchangeable, rather than something created by political decisions (Rodríguez Maeso, 2018, p. 860). Hence, its use was avoided in official texts. Due to remaining traces of historical conceptualization of racism, the issue is often framed as old and outdated since it used to be defined along the lines of (pseudo) scientific discrimination against (individual) people of color (Lentin, 2008, p. 489). For many, this is why racism is no longer regarded as a pressing issue (p. 489). This notion further allows European states to call themselves ‘anti-racist’

³ For the definition of *structural* racism adopted in this thesis, please review the Introduction.

(p. 487). The thought behind it is: If we (European States) are not defining race and racism along the lines of biology, we are not participating in the hierarchically organized ‘human races’ discourse that fueled the atrocities in the past and we are therefore anti-racist. In reality, this is a clear example of color-blind ideology as explained in [1.1 Critical Race Theory](#). In this context, Kendi (2019) explains that in order to be anti-racist, one must actively articulate and act upon anti-racist ideas (p.17).

The strongly historically influenced conceptualization of race in Europe inevitably shaped its anti-racism policy responses. It is thus important to explore how scholarship on the topic assesses the framings of ‘race’ and the governance of anti-racism in the EU-context.

2.2 The Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC

When it comes to anti-racism governance at the EU-level, it is interesting to look at how specific policy documents frame racism and the priorities that are implied in this. Anti-racism legislation, action plans and frameworks leading up to the EUARAP inevitably showcase limitations since member states define and execute (anti)-racism in different ways.

The Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC laid the groundwork for future anti-racism efforts at the EU-level. It was adopted in 2000 and prohibits the discrimination based on racial and ethnic origins (Bell, 2008, p. 36). The Directive applies to the labor market and aspects of social life such as housing, healthcare and education (Waddington & Bell, 2001, p. 590). During the negotiation process of the Directive, several countries contested the use of ‘race’ since, in their view, it normalized the notion that human society can be divided into biologically distinct categories (Bell, 2008, p. 36). This yet again, showcases the apprehension to use ‘race’ in a European anti-racism context as explained previously. However, Bell (2008) still regards the implementation of the Directive as a ‘turning point’ in addressing anti-discrimination law. Waddington and Bell (2001) explain that the Directive signifies a fundamental shift in EU equality law through explicitly focusing on race and ethnic origin. However, conceptualizations of discrimination in the Directive remain broad and contextual as McInerney (2003) explains (p. 11). Therefore, McInerney (2003) criticizes that the Directive fails to address the intersectionality of race discrimination with religion, and nationality, ignoring the fact that these factors might mutually reinforce each other (p. 12). Fredman (2001) extends this view by arguing that the exclusion of nationality as a ground of discrimination showcases a ‘disturbing limitation’ within

the EU equality law developments of the year 2000 (p.145). It seems as though there is a widespread consensus that the Directive is a formal necessity, but simultaneously showcases too many gray zones and flaws for a framework that aims to prohibit racial discrimination.

2.3 The Governance of Anti-Racism in the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025)

Previous anti-racism legislation has faced criticism as illustrated in the preceding section. However, due to the relatively recent implementation of the EUARAP, very little literature on its use of 'racism' is openly available. The only piece of literature which does not come from one of the EU's institutions themselves, is Müller's (2021) approach to analyzing the EUARAP. The author argues that the plan is guilty of continuing legacies of anti-racism mainstreaming. Moreover, Müller (2021) provides a critical analysis of the structural dimension of racism in the EU, highlighting the shortcomings of the plan's reparative measures aimed at addressing the situation of racially oppressed people. Consequently, the slogan of the plan, 'United in Diversity,' according to the author, should be understood in the context of European imperialism and the structures that uphold the principles and goals of nations. Rodríguez Maeso and Araújo (2017) agree with the latter with regards to earlier anti-racism legislation, as they argue that definitions of EU-level anti-racism efforts (prior to the EUARAP) fail to recognize how racism is embedded in institutional structures and practices inherited from colonial governance (p.34).

Nonetheless, the body of literature on the plan, independent of the EU's institutions is still extremely limited which is why this thesis aims to be one of the early contributions to reflect on its framings of racism in a critical manner. By addressing these framings, the thesis attempts to provide more nuanced understandings of the underlying implications of the plan as well as their discursive power. The study of the framings will therefore be conducted using a CDA approach.

CH. 3: Research Design

3.1 Critical Discourse ‘Analysis’

In the context of a speech at the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen emphasized that: “I am glad to live in a society that condemns racism” (European Commission, 2020). In other words, it is clear that racism is not compatible with European values. However, Sayyid (2017) showcases that the self-identification as ‘not racist’ is problematic due to the fact that racism persists when its reality is denied by the lack of individuals or institutions, inevitably contributing to its reproduction. Therefore, Sayyid (2017) explains that “Racism is everywhere and thus it is nowhere . . . We are told all racists are bad, but we don’t really know any racists” (p. 12).

For these reasons, this thesis employed a Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) to examine how the EU positions itself in its latest effort to fight racism on the EU-level – the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025). Generally, “(CDA) . . . primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). CDA has a particular focus on the linguistic character of social and cultural structures (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4). This is because CDA openly articulates being invested in political intervention and social change (p.4). Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that CDA is not a specific method of analysis, but classifies as a research approach (van Dijk, 2001). In this way, the approach left room for flexibility when it came to its analytical procedure. Further, the thesis qualifies as a case study by default as it analyzed a single anti-racism legislation document. This made the use of CDA even more appropriate due to the approach’s detail-oriented way of looking at language and power structures.

3.1.1 Analytical Procedure

The data was gathered from the English version of the official Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025) document to ensure all examiners' comprehension of the source. As for the analytical procedure, it must be clarified that CDA is not explicitly interested in language use itself, but in the linguistic characteristics of social processes and structures (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4). For my analysis of the EUARAP concretely, this means that the goal was to learn more about the framings of 'racism', and 'structural racism' in the plan. In order to do this, my analysis made use of inductive coding. The codes were derived from the EUARAP in order to stay close to the text and its framings. The coding process consisted of two bigger cycles in which the first cycle broke the data into coded segments and the second one re-organized them into themes and categories (Saldaña, 2021). This process was repeated about nine times, to make sure that nothing was overlooked. A blend of in-vivo coding⁴ and descriptive coding⁵ followed naturally, with the former meaning that the literal wording of the text was adopted in the code, and the latter referring to a code that summarized the essence of a topic (Saldaña, 2021, pp. 143, 147). This approach was chosen in hope to counteract common limitations of CDA, namely, the fact that linguistic analyses often overlook sociological theories, while social and political approaches rarely conduct detailed discourse analyses (van Dijk, 2015, p. 479). With an iterative inductive CDA approach and respect to the theoretical foundational, the thesis aimed at diving into the underlying meanings of different framings of (structural) racism in the EUARAP.

3.2 Positionality

I am aware that my position as a Muslim woman of color with lived experiences of racism and discrimination on grounds of race, religion and culture may influence my interpretation of framings in the plan. Moreover, the chosen CDA approach supports this since it does not strive to be objective but can rather be seen as a social movement aiming at exposing and challenging inequality (van Dijk, 2015). This aim deeply resonates with me which is one of the reasons why I deemed it appropriate for the scope of this thesis. My critical view is also based on sources that prove that the EU anti-racism legislation's objective has not translated into its desired outcome,

⁴An example of an in-vivo code in this thesis is the code 'gender' as it literally appears as such in the plan.

⁵An example of descriptive coding is the code 'embeddedness of racism in colonial legacies' as it summarizes the topic that it represents using a term that is not literally taken from the plan's wording.

namely, eliminating racism since the issue continues to persist everywhere (Makkonen, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, my critical view on the matter does not only come from a personal standpoint but also from an empirical one. This also translates into the phrasing of the research question which gives away that I am assuming that racism is a persistent issue in the EU. Further, the thesis does not claim to be objective, since it reveals underlying assumptions on the complicity of institutional structures in the perpetuation of racism.

The theoretical lens and critical discourse approach further support my positionality in that they align with my personal views. This is done intentionally, as I believe that articulating my personal bias does not take away from the value of my subjectivity. Moreover, I believe that a critique on the framings of the plan can benefit from a deconstructive approach to the terms and definitions used in the policy realm, since they may easily escape further questioning and thus be taken for granted.

CH. 4: Findings & Analysis

4.1 Background Information and Institutional Environment of the Plan

In order to set the scene for the analysis, it is important to understand the background of the EUARAP and clarify some fundamental aspects about its implementation. Firstly, the plan was implemented in September 2020, under the European Commission's presidency of Ursula von der Leyen. Moreover, the plan's drafting was further influenced and facilitated by the first-ever appointed Commissioner of Equality Helena Dalli, a white Maltese woman (European Commission, n.d.). The mandate of 'Commissioner of Equality' was first introduced during von der Leyen's presidency and is devoted towards strengthening inclusion and equality in Europe. Therefore, Helena Dalli played a fundamental role in managing and implementing the EUARAP.

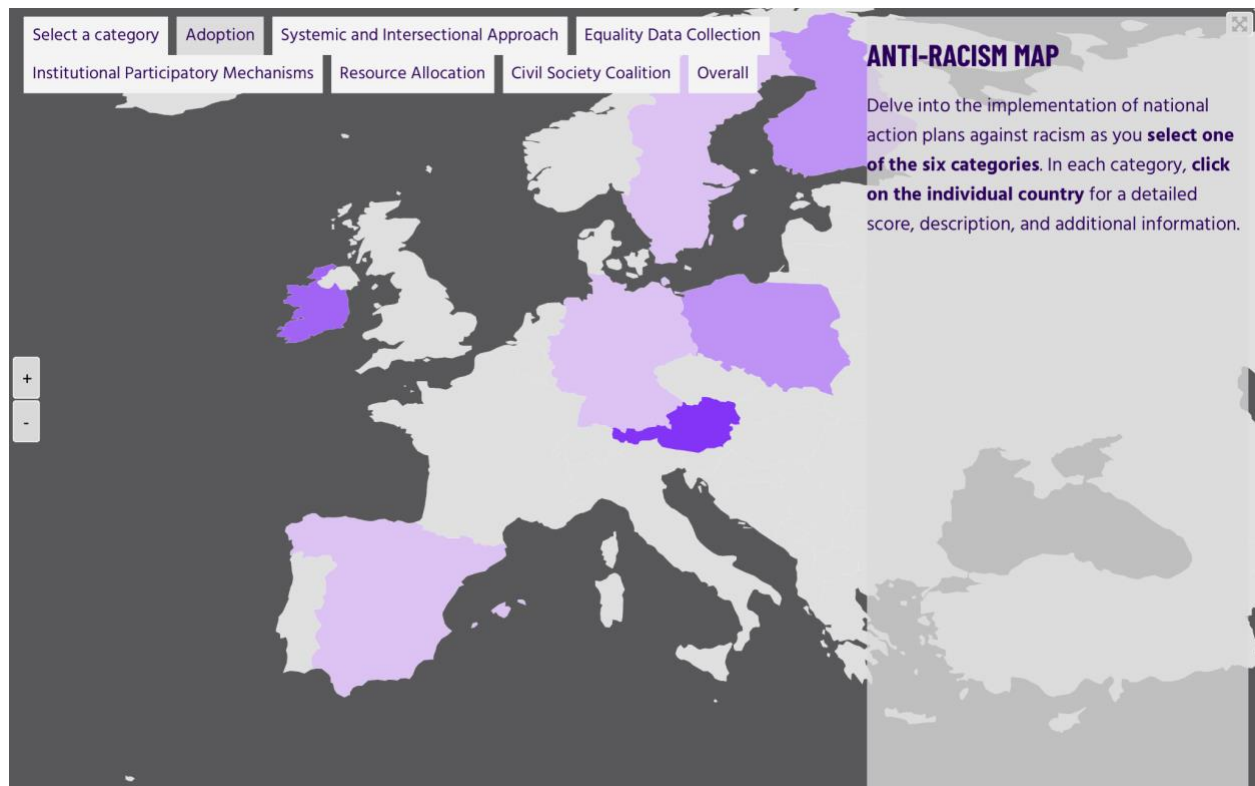
On its title page, the plan states that the document is a "communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of regions" (European Commission, 2020). Although the plan is clearly issued by the Commission and directed at other European institutions, it remains relevant to all individuals in Europe. This is because it serves as a self-proclaimed guideline instructing Member States on which tools and conceptualizations they should use to combat racism. Therefore, the EUARAP serves as an effort to mobilize local, national and international actors to implement anti-racism legislation on as many levels as possible. There is not much available information on the plan's background other than the additional documents on the European Commission's official page regarding the explanation of the plan. The supporting documents of the plan include 1) A EUARAP Factsheet, 2) A separate document on the guiding principles for national action against racism (meaning a guide as to how nation states can implement the objectives of the plan in their country) 3) An implementation report from 2024 on the execution of the plan 4) A national action plan against racism (NAPAR) Checklist. The latter is of less relevance for the context of this thesis as it merely provides a tool which is intended for the use of states to measure and report the quality of their National Action Plans Against Racism (hereafter NAPAR).

4.2 Additional Documents to the EUARAP

Analyzing the three additional documents that are published along with the EUARAP would be a valuable addition to the thesis, however, the word constraint does not allow for a closer look into them. Therefore, this section will prioritize looking at the ‘Report on the implementation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan’ (hereafter ‘Report’) as it will become more important for the following analysis.

4.2.1 ‘Report on the Implementation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan’

The Commission issued an EUARAP implementation report in 2024. It states that in 2022, 45% of people of African descent have faced racial discrimination as compared to 39% in 2016 (European Commission, 2024, p. 4). Therefore, the EUARAP has not proven successful in mitigating *racial discrimination* against people of African descent, even though it places disproportionate emphasis on the concept in comparison to (structural) racism. Moreover, the failure to achieve the desired results is a recurring theme in the 2024 implementation report, as it generally states that survey data has given evidence for higher levels of discrimination in all areas of life. It seems as though the Commission promises commitment to an intersectional approach to combating racism in the EU but has failed to materialize this for the moment. Another tool to assess the national impact of the plan’s implementation in EU states was published by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) in March 2023. This was shortly after the end of the target period in which the anti-racism action plans in all EU member states were foreseen to be implemented. The tool shows that this target was far from being met.

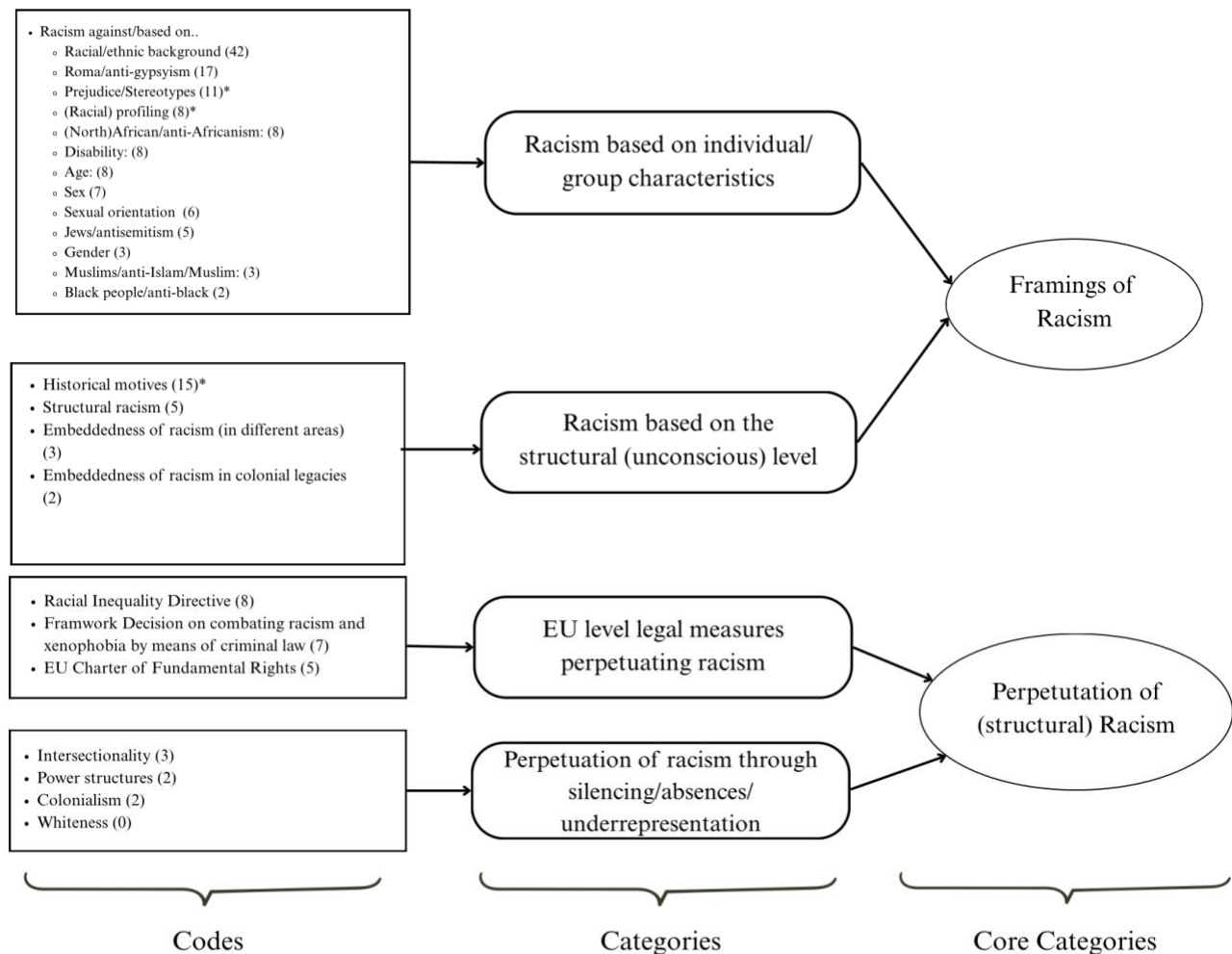


[Figure 1](#)

Adoption of NAPAR in EU Member States (Status March 2023)

The map illustrates the adoption of the National Action Plan against Racism (hereafter NAPAR) across EU Member States (European Network Against Racism, 2024). The first obvious issue is the fact that – in March 2023 – most EU Member States had not collected data on the implementation of NAPAR. Therefore, it is hard to appreciate the Commission’s commitment to NAPAR when many Member States have not even made an effort to collect data on *if* as well as *how* effectively this was done. Amongst the seven Member States that did collect data on their adoption of NAPAR, only three countries – Germany, Spain and Sweden – have formally adopted a comprehensive publicly-available national action plan against racism in March 2023. This greatly contests Helena Dalli’s earlier statement in which she stated that evidence on anti-racism action plans as a response to racism and racial discrimination have proven to be effective. With these factors in mind, the following analysis will be approached through a fundamentally critical lens, since the execution of the plan has proven to be obstructive.

4.3 Explanation of Findings



*refers to the perpetrators' side/ the basis on which perpetrators discriminate

Figure 2

Code tree

Figure 2 illustrates the codes which were derived from the plan, the categories as well as the core categories they correspond to. In order to answer the research question, two elements were most important: On the one hand, the framings through which racism is portrayed and on the other hand, the way that the plan and these framings perpetuate the issue. These two elements make up the core categories. Four intermediate categories out of which the first two correspond to framings of the issue as well as two categories corresponding to the perpetuation of racism were identified.

The intermediate categories summarize the broader implications of the codes that precede them. The codes are listed from most mentioned to least mentioned in their respective code box. Despite the fact that some codes are going to be given less attention than others, (for instance age and disability) they are included to illustrate the comparison to more frequently mentioned codes since this helps to identify patterns and prioritizations in the plan. It is important to notice that the codes marked with an asterisk ‘*’ refer to the perspective of the perpetrator, whereas the rest of the codes in the categories refer to the victims’ side.

Further, the analysis does not strive to be objective as alluded to in [CH. 3: Research Design](#). All codes and interpretations of these are seen in light of the theoretical framework. Therefore, the three main theoretical schools of thought are inherently critical and thus correspond well to the CDA approach. However, the thesis did place attention on the repeatability and transparency of the given approach, which is why the codes’ definitions, exclusion and inclusion criteria is explained in [Appendix A](#).

4.4 Analysis

4.4.1 Framings of Racism

The following section analyzes the first two categories under the core category named ‘Framings of Racism’. Its aim is to explain the categories and the codes which they consist of. The section differentiates between factors based on which victims are discriminated against, and factors on the basis of which perpetrators discriminate. A general observation throughout the whole plan is the fact that it conflates *racism* – as previously defined as a broader system of oppression resulting in structural inequalities – and (individual) *forms of discrimination based on race and other characteristics*.⁶ Therefore, it is difficult to make sense of when the plan is framing ‘racism’ as an individual experience, and when it is looking at the broader implications and structural impact. The following sections will attempt to disentangle and analyze the conceptualizations in the plan, as it devotes separate sections to both individual forms of racism and structural racism.

⁶ For clarity, I want to emphasize again that the terms racial discrimination and racism are often conflated (including the plan) and do *not* refer to the same concept (Carson Byrd, 2011, p. 1005). As previously explained, racism is regarded as the overarching system of oppression which causes structural inequalities for the people/groups who are subjected to it (p. 1006). Racial discrimination in this context, refers to distinct actions like every-day racializing experiences, namely, microaggressions, hatred, exclusion and harassment based on a person’s/group’s (perceived) race. Perpetrators of racial discrimination can be individuals but also larger societal bodies such as institutions (p. 1006-1007). This dichotomy is essential to my following points of critique in the plan. It will serve as a baseline for what could be regarded as an appropriate – yet by no means exhaustive – definition of the issue, in light of the theoretical schools of thought mentioned previously.

4.4.1.1 The Disproportionate and Underlying Prioritization of Specific Groups in the Plan

The plan includes thirteen group and individual characteristics in its ‘framings’ of racism. According to the plan, victims of discrimination can experience the issue due to their ethnic/racial origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age and skin color. This enumeration appears in the plan multiple times. This is likely linked to the plan’s attempt at being ‘intersectional’, although this is not explicitly stated in most cases.

While starting off by framing ‘racism’ as individual experiences of racial discrimination, it is notable that the plan has prioritized the representation of certain racially discriminated groups over others. Racial discrimination was therefore most frequently – with the highest number of forty-two times – framed and defined as being targeted towards people with a minority racial or ethnic background. When it came to the specific ethnic and racial backgrounds covered, the (racial) discrimination of Roma individuals were covered most extensively with a number of seventeen times. In this context, it is important to note that previous EU-level anti-racism efforts have devoted special attention to the Roma people. Within the context of the Racial Equality Directive discussed in previous sections, the plan states: “A particular focus was put on discrimination against Roma children in education” (European Commission, 2020, p. 4). Why the focus on Roma children was emphasized in previous anti-racism legislation as well as in the EUARAP, while Muslim and Black individuals suffer from steadily increasing racial discrimination particularly since the attacks of 9/11, is unclear (Carr, 2015). Ironically, racial discrimination against Muslim and Black people are amongst the least mentioned victim groups in the plan, with the former being mentioned three times and the latter two times. To put this into perspective, discrimination based on age was mentioned six times more often than discrimination against Muslims although the latter is generally much more polarized and framed as a widespread political, social and public security threat (Carr, 2015, p. 3). This avoidance to name the more contemporary and publicized victims of racism such as Black people, people of African descent and Muslims showcases that the plan fails to address the most directly affected victims of racism and racial discrimination, by focusing on less publicly polarized groups.

4.4.1.2 The Individual Focus on Racial Discrimination and Why it is Problematic

The plan's tendency to focus on individual forms of racism is demonstrated when it addresses the perpetrator's side.

When it comes to racial profiling in law enforcement for instance, the plan states:

‘Profiling’ involves categorising people according to their (perceived) personal characteristics, which can include racial or ethnic origin, skin colour, religion or nationality. While police officers can consider such characteristics when stopping an individual, they cannot use any of these characteristics as the sole or main criterion to stop the individual. (European Commission, 2020, p. 7)

It seems as though the mention of profiling is an attempt to acknowledge the problem's existence in society. In reality, it only distracts from the broader issue of power structures within law enforcement authorities and institutions. The framing of profiling as something that individual officers do to individual people, frames the issue as something that occurs rarely and is not a manifestation of structural racism ingrained in law enforcement. In this way, racial discrimination is ‘normalized’ and seen as an every-day practice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 8). This aligns with one of the core tenets of CRT, namely, the fact that racism is ordinary, not aberrational (p.8). Essentially, this means that racism is so deeply ingrained in society and its structures, that it has become normalized and is not seen as a deviation from the ordinary state of being. Although problematized in this section, due to the plan's framing of profiling as individual cases, the code ‘racial profiling’ was summarized under the category of ‘Racism based on individual/group characteristics’ instead of ‘Racism based on the structural/(unconscious) level’.

4.4.1.3 Racism Based on the Structural and Unconscious Level

The second intermediate category ‘Racism based on the structural (unconscious) level’ summarizes the codes which were mentioned in the part that attempts to address the structural dimension of racism in the plan. On the perpetrators side, the plan states that they can discriminate based on ‘historical motives. On the other side, embeddedness of racism was framed as being seen in colonial legacies and other areas. Specific examples of which areas are meant with this as well as examples for the most relevant codes’ appearances in the text can be viewed in the [Appendix A](#).

4.4.1.3.1 The Distraction of the EU’s Impact on Structural Racism and Insufficient Attention to Colonial Legacies

When it came to structural racism, the plan devoted a separate section to the issue. In relation to framings of racism on the individual/group level, however, structural racism is still given little attention despite the effort to include it in the plan. This is reflected in the numbers which result from adding up the code counts of both categories. Codes that address individual characteristics were mentioned 109 times whereas codes related to structural racism amount to less than half with a code count of 30. Within this number of 30 mentions, ‘structural’ racism was only explicitly mentioned five times.

Structural racism is therefore explained along the lines of being embedded in different areas such as “. . . social, financial and political institutions . . .” as well as “. . . often deeply embedded in our societies’ history . . .” (European Commission, 2020, pp. 1-2, 13). Interestingly, there is no mention of the Commission’s involvement in the embeddedness of structural racism with regards to institutions. The plan therefore offers no self-reflection on behalf of the Commission and on how European institutions have failed to disconnect themselves from these accusations.

Ironically, the plan’s explanations of structural racism as being visible in historical legacies, only underscores the performativity of the section. This can be explained through the fact that racism as being embedded in colonial legacies was only mentioned twice in the entire plan. When it was mentioned, it was not given specific attention and equated with other historical events such as the Holocaust and Slavery, lacking further elaboration: “Colonialism, slavery and the

Holocaust are embedded in our history and have profound consequences for society today” (European Commission, 2020, p. 14). Why these comparisons were made and why they were seen as appropriate comparisons is not further elaborated. This reinforces a central point of postcolonial theory which regards the formation of European institutions in light of their eurocentric and colonial context (Rodríguez Maeso, 2018, p. 861). The lack of self-reflection and insufficient amount of attention to racism as being largely influenced by colonial legacies, ultimately contributes to the issue’s perpetuation which will further be elaborated upon in a later section. The plan fails to acknowledge that racism is perpetuated as part of larger structures, and not because individuals are discriminated against based on their characteristics.

In this context, Lentin (2015), a CRT scholar, explains that anti-racism legislation can acknowledge structural or systemic conditions of the issue, but it is rarely prosecuted in the way that individual discriminatory behaviors are (p.2). The same practice is applied to the plan’s dealing with colonial legacies. Although referring to the case of England, Parsons (2022) explains that even adding up a set of values consisting of equity, justice, inclusion, voice and respect can be a form of performative positioning (p. 349). The author explains that decolonization must constitute of more than just removal of material that portrays people of color as inferior (p. 349). The plan fails to do this almost entirely, by barely mentioning colonialism in the plan, and not suggesting any substantial actions for change. The lack of attention to colonial legacies does not only become visible when thinking about the structural aspect of racism in the plan, but also transpires into the issue’s perpetuation.

4.4.2 Perpetuation of (Structural) Racism – The Case of Legal Foundations

The second core category deals with the ‘perpetuation of racism’. Since the term ‘perpetuation’ is a central element of the research question, it is important to define what it means in the context of this thesis. The main elements which are indicators of it are the silencing and absence of factors that influence racism such as power structures, colonial legacies, color-blind discourse and other factors which will be discussed in the subsequent sections. Moreover, the previously mentioned absence of self-reflection and distraction on the institution’s role in the perpetuation of structural racism could be seen as a form of perpetuation as well. In the following section, however, more tangible cases of perpetuation in the plan will be discussed. These include the use of legal

directives and existing frameworks as bases for the plan, which are inherently problematic in it of themselves. The following two sections are therefore an evident example of how perpetuation is reinforced by the pride in the plan's foundational legal bases.

4.4.2.1 The Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia

The three most frequently mentioned legal bases for the plan were 1) the Racial Inequality Directive, 2) the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, and 3) the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights. As there is already a separate section devoted to the [2.2 The Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC](#), this section will focus on the two remaining most frequently mentioned legal bases for the plan.

Firstly, the plan states that: “today, action to combat discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and other types of intolerance at European level rests on an established EU legal framework” (European Commission, 2020, p. 3). In November 2001, the Commission issued a proposal that criminalized racist and xenophobic speech that applied to all EU citizens (Garman, 2007). After six years of negotiations, the Council ministers reached a consensus on the proposal: “The framework criminalizes all intentional expression used to incite violence or hatred for racist and xenophobic purposes” (Garman, 2007, p. 845). Unsurprisingly, the framework decision is limited to criminalizing individual characteristics of racism and xenophobia and defines them along the lines of race, skin color, descent or national/ethnic origin (Council of the European Union, 2008, Recital 7). When it comes to the definition of ‘descent’ the framework decision explains:

. . . ‘[D]escent’ should be understood as referring mainly to persons or groups of persons who descend from persons who could be identified by certain characteristics (such as race or colour), but not necessarily all of these characteristics still exist. In spite of that, because of their descent, such persons or groups of persons may be subject to hatred or violence. (Council of the European Union, 2008, Recital 7)

While the existence of such frameworks is important to criminalize offences, it is yet another display of the plan's legal bases which only insufficiently address structural racism. Therefore, the framework decision is perpetuating racism by not being actively anti-racist. In this context, Kendi (2019) explains that “A racist is someone who is supporting a racist policy by their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea. An antiracist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy

by their actions or expressing an antiracist idea” (p. 17). Moreover, Kendi (2019) elaborates on the fact that ‘racist’ and ‘anti-racist’ are dynamic terms which are continuously replaced based on what someone is doing or not doing. According to the author, being racist or anti-racist is not permanent state of being which is why one can only strive to be the one or the other. It is precisely this lack of effort and ignorance that perpetuates racism in the plan. By not doing, not doing enough, or even worse, basing itself on an inappropriate legal basis, the plan is actively reinforcing racist structures.

4.4.2.2 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

In several instances, the plan refers back to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It explains that the action to combat discrimination is grounded in EU legal frameworks such as the Charter (European Commission, 2020, p. 3). When looking at article 21 called ‘non-discrimination’ of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the similarities to the Framework Decision are evident. Yet again the plan prides itself in having a strong legal basis, when *no part* of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights mentions the structural nature of racism.

The first paragraph of the article cites:

Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.
(Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012, art. 21, para. 1)

The paragraph is broadly regarded as the legal basis for addressing structural racism as it prohibits ‘any’ form of discrimination. However, the lack of explicit mentions of structural racism in the Charter, significantly decreases the practical impact that they can have against the issue. In light of CRT, general descriptions of anti-racism legal texts are problematic. As explained in [1.1 Critical Race Theory](#), CRT criticized the foundational assumptions of legal texts like the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and problematizes anti-racism legislation that does not acknowledge or prohibit the structural impact of racism.

4.4.3 Perpetuation of Racism through Silencing, Absences and Underrepresentation – The Case of Color-Blind Discourse

One of the most striking omissions in the plan is the absence of whiteness. This absence paired with the fact that Blackness was only mentioned twice in the entire plan, displays an evident case of participation in color-blind discourse. As elaborated in the theoretical framework, race must be *explicitly* addressed within legal studies in order to lay the foundation for any form of understanding and combat of racial inequalities (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xiii). This is not done in the plan due to the silencing of race and Blackness altogether.

Bonilla-Silva (2006) supports this by arguing that so-called ‘do-nothing social policy’ advocated by white people must be challenged (p. 213). According to the author, the use of terms like ‘equal opportunity’ and ‘individualism’ reproduces color blindness through the articulation of liberal concepts to achieve illiberal goals. In the plan, color-blind language is therefore used to distract from the need to express the domination of whiteness and the necessity of addressing the role of race.⁷ The silencing of race in these formulations and the self-insinuation as ‘inclusive’ and ‘fair to all’ are major contributors to the perpetuation of underlying racist structures in the plan.

4.4.3.1 Performative Linguistic Choices in the Plan

While discussing structural racism, the plan states: “As the impact of structural racism can be as profound and harmful as individual racism, its existence needs to be acknowledged, and it must be addressed through proactive policies. An intersectional perspective deepens understanding of structural racism, and makes responses more effective” (European Commission, 2020, p. 13).

In the whole plan, intersectionality was mentioned three times in relation to racism. Specifically in the previously mentioned quote, it is salient that intersectionality is brought into relation with the effectiveness of policies addressing structural racism. This is ironic considering that the section on the [4.2.1 ‘Report on the Implementation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan’](#) showcased evidence for higher levels of discrimination in all areas of life. The assumption that

⁷ See (European Commission, 2020, pp. 1-2, 11) for examples.

intersectional policies are an effective tool to address structural racism is therefore not substantive, but rather serves as a performative strategy.

This can also be confirmed when looking at the ‘points of action’ presented in the plan. Firstly, there is no mention of an explicitly articulated strategy devoted to the combat of structural racism through intersectionality. In this context, the plan leaves many questions open: Intersectionality of what? Who shall it benefit? How is this achieved? What steps is the Commission planning to take? Most importantly, how will these strategies help in combating (structural) racism? As these questions are obviously not answered in the plan, it underscores the fact that the use of ‘intersectionality’ and ‘intersectional approaches to combat racism’ serve a symbolic function. Rosen (2009) explains this comprehensively by arguing that “policies can be thought of as public performances designed to dramatize particular ideals and values, elicit or inspire particular emotions, and communicate particular symbolic messages” (p. 270). As explained in the previous section, Bonilla-Silva (2006) demonstrated how the use of color-blind language is a conscious linguistic choice. Statements such as “The EU can and must do more to ensure equal treatment and equality for all”, “The EU has legal instruments in place and a comprehensive policy to build a true Union of equality”, and “Children should be taught early about equality, respect and inclusion and be empowered to promote such values among their peers and in their communities” are examples for the use of color-blind language to distract from the need to expose the domination of whiteness as well as the fact that EU institutions avoid the explicit use of ‘race’ in their legislation (European Commission, 2020, pp. 1-2, 11).

Ultimately, the plan’s strategic linguistic circumvention of race, structural racism and domination of whiteness, are only possible due to the Commission’s exertion of power. Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power expands upon this idea (Swartz, 2013). It argues that authority can deflect attention away from deep-rooted power structures (Swartz, 2013, p. 80). Power, in this case, requires legitimation. Moreover, Bourdieu explains that legitimation is the practical recognition of social hierarchies without the recognition of their arbitrary character (p. 81). This phenomenon is also observable in the plan. The plan mentions the code ‘power structures’ twice in its entirety. The negligence to elaborate and acknowledge the power structures that are at play in a plan like the EUARAP, is an abuse of power in itself. Since EU institutions and their work is broadly trusted and legitimized, it is difficult to reveal the hierarchies that are at play in the construction of the plan. In the case of the EUARAP, its arbitrary character lies in the fact it is

constructed by a group of white people, but targeted towards helping people whose faith is determined by individuals who have not undergone the same racializing experiences. Therefore, the Commission and involved parties in the formation of the plan do not just misrepresent those affected by structural racism but rather perpetuate the issue by deflecting attention away from structural change.

CH. 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The thesis attempted to answer the question ‘*How does the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025) frame its understanding of (structural) racism and how does this lead to the issue’s perpetuation?*’ in a critical light. Throughout the process of the analysis, it became evident that the EUARAP does not significantly differ in its approach to combat racism compared to previous EU-wide anti-racism legislation, despite insinuating itself as groundbreaking. The plan prides itself in having an ‘intersectional’ and developed approach to the combat of racism, yet it showcases a highly individualized conceptualization of the issue. Its attempt to tackle structural racism is rather performative than substantive. These performative and symbolic functions of policies can be powerful in gaining widespread legitimation (Bonilla-Silva, 2016; Swartz, 2013). The two-cycle iterative coding strategy enabled an inductive analysis of the plan’s framings of racism which closely worked with its original wording. Throughout this process, it did not take long to observe the perpetuation of (structural) racism in the plan’s framings. The perpetuation was most prominent in the plan’s strategic attempt to distract from the discourse on race, power structures, whiteness and its performative insinuation of legal texts as progressive foundations for the plan. The plan’s use of intersectionality and the broader framings of structural racism were instrumentalized to place the plan in a better light, and thus failed to provide action points for substantive structural change.

The three main theoretical schools of thought CRT, Intersectionality and Postcolonial Theory, were all mentioned in the plan, but ultimately perpetuated racism due the plan’s failure to engage with these fundamentally critical concepts. Therefore, with the help of CRT, the embeddedness of structural racism in the plan’s main legal foundations 1) The Racial Equality Directive, the 2) Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia and the 3) EU Charter of Human Rights was criticized. All three legal texts failed to mention structural racism and participated in color-blind racism. Colonial legacies were also given little attention with no broader elaboration

on how they affect structural racism. In fact, colonialism was mentioned as part of an enumeration of other historical events which were motivated by racist hatred. This fatal negligence of colonial history is deep-rooted in institutions' eurocentric and colonial context (Rodríguez Maeso, 2018, p. 861).

Despite the fact that there was no shortage of racializing framings in the plan, it was difficult to find suitable theoretical literature to support both theoretical framework and analysis. Since most authors explained race and racism in an American context, it was challenging to draw parallels to racism in Europe. Moreover, this thesis is shaped by its highly subjective character. While this aligns with the chosen CDA approach, it can be seen as both a strength and limitation. This is because reliability of the findings could be low with regards to its consistency. In other words, if the applied method would be repeated, there is a high probability it would yield different results each time. To counteract this limitation, I attempted to capture the process of my method in detail, so that my steps are comprehensive and concise. This is documented in detail in [CH. 3: Research Design](#) and [Appendix A](#). Another difficulty that one must consider when criticizing the plan is that the national implementation of it is strongly encouraged, however, it remains on a voluntary basis. Although this does not mean that the EU should not push for the adoption of anti-racism legislation anymore, it does highlight the broader challenge of addressing issues at the European level with the intent to tackle firmly established structural problems.

Racism is relevant to everyone in society. Victims of racism must be overtly acknowledged by institutions. Racism operates in ways that cannot be combated by small-scale efforts and must be challenged with fundamentally deconstructive measures. Moreover, racism is ingrained in societal as well as institutional structures which has unmanageable disadvantages for marginalized groups. Through an attempt to analyze and expose the destructive framings and perpetuation of racism in the plan, this case study is representative for the broader weaknesses of anti-racism legislation at the EU-level. They tend to reproduce color blindness, performativity and serve a symbolic function. Future research must therefore continue to challenge and expose the performative character of anti-racism legislation. Despite being one of the most elaborate efforts to combat (structural) racism at the EU-level, close to no research has been done on the plan's conflation of racism and racial discrimination and the consequences that this has on the people who are subjected to it. Therefore, anti-racism policy must not do 'just enough' to not be racist, but actively be *anti*-racist. As long as institutions do not call out and try to act against their own

structural impact on the perpetuation of racism, anti-racism legislation will not combat *racism* but only criminalize individual offences of *racial discrimination*. Research on anti-racism should therefore call out color-blind language and the dismissiveness of claiming that everybody is ‘equal’. As Bonilla-Silva (2006) assertively summarizes:

We all must participate in the new movement and contribute in what-ever way we can. Some will provide expertise, others money, others time, and others will craft and participate in the actions required to advance the new politics of change. We all need to regain the energy we seem to have lost, drop the pessimism that has filled our souls, and get over the individualism and materialism that has eaten so many of us from within. Our participation in this movement is a must. We cannot remain as spectators of the racial game being played before our own eyes . . . (p. 236).

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Appendix A

Code book

Appendix A consists of a code book which aims to put the most relevant codes for the analysis into context. Each code in each category was carefully selected to best answer the research question. The number in brackets after each code represents the amount of times the code was mentioned in its given context. To support repeatability and transparency of the research, inclusion and exclusion criteria of the most relevant codes are explained in their context. For the codes that are included in this code book, only the most relevant information is given due to word limit constraints.

Framings of Racism

Category: Racism based on individual/group characteristics:

1. Racism against/based on:

Code: Racial/ ethnic background (42)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned and exclusively explained racism as being situated within the boundaries of racial and ethnic background/origin. This was done to get an idea of how much ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ is emphasized in the context of racialization/racist experience to be able to better compare the factor in relation to the following intersecting codes/factors.

Inclusion Criteria:

- The code was counted if racism was explained as being based on race and ethnicity, even if it was not part of a broader enumeration
- The code was also used when the plan suggested recommendations for people who are discriminated based on their race and ethnicity

Examples (included):

- “All too often, racial and ethnic origin is used as a ground to discriminate” (p.1).

Exclusion criteria:

- The code was *excluded* when it was followed by additional intersecting factors that contribute to racist experiences to ensure that only the times where racism was framed within the boundaries of race and ethnicity are counted towards the final number. Further, the code was excluded from the code count in case the term was used but was not related to racism on the individual and group level.

Examples (excluded):

- “Recent events highlighting racial tensions have raised concerns . . .” (p.3) .

Code: Roma/anti-gypsyism (17)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned racism against Roma people and anti-gypsyism.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was only included if racism/racist experiences were related to Roma people.
- If the code appeared alongside other groups, it was still included in the count. This was done for all codes in this category, – except for the code ‘Racial/ ethnic background’ – as the majority of group characteristics on the basis of which individuals are discriminated, were mentioned as part of a broader enumeration rather than isolated, dedicated sections.

Examples (included):

- “A particular focus was put on discrimination against Roma children in education” (European Commission, 2020, p.4).

Code: (Racial) profiling (8)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan references (racial) profiling as a form of (unconscious) racism/bias.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with racial profiling
- If the code appeared alongside other group/individual characteristics of racism, it was still included in the count due to factors explained previously

Examples (included):

- “Profiling is commonly, and legitimately, used by law enforcement officers . . .” (European Commission, 2020, p. 14).

Code: (People of) (North) African descent (8)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned people of (North) African descent in relation to racism/racist experiences.

Inclusion Criteria:

- The code was only included if racism *against* and *experienced* by people of (North) African descent was mentioned
- If the code appeared alongside other group/individual characteristics of racism, it was still included in the count due to factors explained previously

Example (included):

- “As regards access to goods and services . . . people of North African descent (27%) faced the highest level of discrimination” (p.3).

Exclusion criteria:

- The code was *excluded* when it was not directly related to racism.

Examples (excluded):

- “European Parliament resolution . . . on fundamental rights of people of African descent” (European Commission, 2020, p.14).

Code: anti-Jews/ antisemitism (5)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned racism against Jewish people/ on the grounds of antisemitism.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with Jewish people/ antisemitism.

Example (included):

- “People of Asian and African descent, Muslims, Jewish and Roma people have all suffered from intolerance” (European Commission, 2020, p. 1).

Code: Muslims/anti-Islam/ anti-Muslim (3)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned racism on the grounds of/in relation to Muslim people/Islam.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with Islam and Muslim people.
- If the code appeared alongside other group/individual characteristics of racism, it was still included in the count due to factors explained previously

Example (included):

- “There are different forms of racism, for example . . . anti-Muslim hatred” (European Commission, 2020, p. 2).

Exclusion criteria:

- The term was excluded from the code count when it appeared to be part of a title included in the footnotes
- The term was excluded from the code count when Islam and Muslims were mentioned but not related to racism

Example (exclusion):

- “In addition, the Commission is working with the European Federation of Journalists on a series of online seminars planned for early 2021 to foster awareness and promote balanced storytelling about Muslims and Islam” (European Commission, 2020, p. 14).

Code: Black people/ anti-Black (2)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned racism against Black people.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation Black people.
- If the code appeared alongside other group/individual characteristics of racism, it was still included in the count due to factors explained previously

Example (included):

- “There are different forms of racism, for example anti-Black racism . . . ” (European Commission, 2020, p. 2).

Category: Racism based on the structural (unconscious) level

Code: Historical Motives (15)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the term ‘history’ or ‘historical’ was used and related to racism’s relation to historical events and motives. The rather broad definition of the code was constructed intentionally, in order to cover both historical racism against individuals and historical racism which is based on group characteristics. Racism based on colonial legacies specifically, will be defined in a separate code in the next section, as it is of particular relevance for the theoretical angle for the thesis.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with the term ‘history’ and ‘historical’.
- The code count also included historical events which were mentioned without explicitly stating the term ‘history’ or ‘historical’, regardless of whether this was related to, for instance, older or more recent events such as Colonialism and Covid-19.

Examples (included):

- “The COVID-19 crisis is likely to further exacerbate inequalities, in particular in health, where people with a minority racial or ethnic background and refugees are more vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic” (p.1).

Exclusion criteria:

- When the term ‘history’ was used in a link or title of a cited article included in the footnotes.

Example (exclusion):

- See page 14 of the plan footnote number 76 and page 12 footnote number 65.

Code: Structural racism (5)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned structural racism.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with their structural aspect/character.

Examples (included):

- “This structural racism perpetuates the barriers placed in the way of citizens solely due to their racial and ethnic origin” (European Commission, 2020, p. 2).
- “The impact of structural racism can be as profound and harmful as individual racism . . . ” (p. 13).

Exclusion criteria:

- The term was excluded from the code count when the term ‘structural’ was used but not related to racism

Code: Embeddedness of racism (in different areas) (3)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned racism as being embedded in different areas/spheres.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with their embeddedness in different areas.

Examples (included):

- “Racist and discriminatory behaviours can be embedded in social, financial, political institutions . . . ” (European Commission, 2020, p. 1-2).
- “Racism is often deeply embedded in our societies’ history . . . ” (p. 13).

Exclusion criteria:

- The term was excluded from the code count when the term ‘structural’ was used but not related to racism

Code: Embeddedness of racism in colonial legacies (2)

Definition:

This code was used whenever the plan mentioned racism as being embedded in different areas/spheres.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if racism/racist experiences were brought into relation with their embeddedness in colonialism and colonial legacies.

Examples (included):

- “Colonialism, slavery and the Holocaust are embedded in our history . . . ” (European Commission, 2020, p. 14).

Perpetuation of Racism

Category: EU legal measures perpetuating racism

The three codes regarding the main legal foundations of the text were not elaborated here since their inclusion in the code count was straightforward. This means that every time each of the legal texts were mentioned in relation to the thesis, they were counted towards the word count. The final code count of each of the codes in this category can be viewed in [Figure 2](#).

Category: Perpetuation of Racism through silencing/absences/underrepresentation

Code: Intersectionality (3)

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if it was used in relation with (structural) racism.

Examples (included):

- “In addition to religion or belief, racism can also be combined with discrimination based on other grounds . . . This needs to be taken into account through an intersectional approach” (European Commission, 2020, p. 2).

Code: Colonialism (2)

Definition:

This code was used to represent the frequency and more largely the absence of mentions of colonialism. The goal, is therefore, to showcase how little ‘colonialism’ was given attention to in the plan.

Inclusion criteria:

- The code was included if it was used in relation with (structural) racism.

Examples (included):

- “As part of EU action . . . rights and values programme will offer support for projects that seek to remove barriers . . . including aspects such as the place of minorities in European society and the historical legacy of colonialism” (p. 14).

Code: Whiteness (0)

Definition: This code was included to showcase that there was not a single time in the plan, in which Whiteness was mentioned. Further explanation and implication that this has are elaborated in the analysis.

Appendix B

Ethics and Privacy Checklist

Ethics and privacy checklist



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF

RESEARCH INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Anti-Racist Language, Racial Perpetuation: How the EU Anti-Racism

Action Plan (2020-2025) Frames and Perpetuates (Anti)-Racism

Name, email of student: Akhtar, Alina Rana, 735017aa@student.eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: French, Bonnie,

french@essb.eur.nl Start date and duration: 23-03-2025 -

22-06-2025

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?

(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants? YES - **NO**

If 'NO': skip to part V.

- If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - **NO**

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)?

YES - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent?

YES - NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable. Continue

to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

EU Commission's official website and page on the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020-2025).
https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-anti-racism-action-plan-2020-2025_en

EU Commission's official website and page on the EU-Anti Racism Action Plan's 2024 Implementation Report:

https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/4968fa88-5350-48d9-bf36-abd3c0142aa8_en?filename=Report%20Antiracism.pdf

And the European Network Against Racism page on the Anti-Racism Map

<https://www.enar-eu.org/napar/>

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

The analysis is based on a single 27-Page document (the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan). Therefore, the sample size is 1.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample? 0.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

On my personal electronic devices (laptop and tablet).

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

Myself.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Each time after editing it.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

I will not be collecting any personal data.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

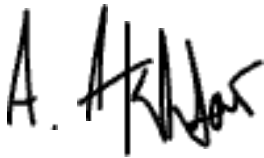
Name student: Alina Rana Akhtar

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date: 12-03-2025

Bonnie French

Date: 21-03-2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Akhtar'.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'BF'.

Appendix I: Informed Consent Form

Not applicable