

# UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

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## Introduction

Since the 1980s, various national and regional governments within the European Union have converted to the development and implementation of minority policy. This policy has been taken to task by radical antiracists as being insufficient and even counterproductive. Rather than the inequalities between ethnic minorities and the dominant majorities being eradicated, it would appear that the discrepancies between the various population groups are actually on the increase. Examples of such analyses are to be found in Belgium in research carried out by Deslé (1993) or Blommaert and Verschueren (1998).<sup>1</sup> They analyse the discourse of policy and examine the processes of categorising, which are evidenced in the use of written and spoken language. Their conclusion points to the marginalisation of minority groups by means of the very policies that were intended to give them a place in mainstream society. It is the emphasis on cultural differences on the one hand, and the push towards a homogeneous society on the other hand, that has led to a discourse on tolerance being based on the same principles as that of intolerance. The very promotion of a homogeneous society on the part of government institutions is, according to these authors, the basis of institutional racism. Institutional racism is understood, then, as racism produced by the functioning of institutions. A synonymous phrase for institutional racism, which is often found in the literature, is structural racism.

Institutional or structural racism is a far more complex phenomenon than discourse analysis would lead us to suspect, however. Discourse analysis tends to place the different levels of policy on a single level, thereby oversimplifying the institutional and structural networks that lie behind policy. As a consequence, the tensions and contradictions within policy-making are often blurred (Verlot 1999). Stating that a certain policy is institutionally or structurally racist only labels that policy. It neither offers any insight into how this type of racist policy comes about, nor suggests what modifications can be made to counteract or prevent such policies. In the end, labelling policies often prevents a thorough and theoretically more complex analysis of policy and its relation to politics. The necessity of such an insight becomes apparent when one realises that every policy and its underlying ideological legitimisation contains elements that could not only reduce racism but also promote it. I agree with Herzfeld when he states that: 'Any ideology, no matter how consistent its formal expression, may produce racially divergent applications and interpretations' (1992:14). In order to examine how racist policy is developed, it is imperative to use an approach that does not automatically reduce social reality to a priori ideological categories, but rather takes the complexity of policy making and implementation into account.<sup>2</sup>

Let us take, for example, the case of convicted immigrants in France. On top of their conviction, the state is empowered to impose on the convicts an administrative sanction and send them out of the country. This looks like a clear case of institutional/structural racism, the policy here being the administrative act of imposing an extra sentence. Nevertheless, it is possible to find many (French) politicians and judges with an outspoken antiracist orientation who will defend this type of policy. At best they will recognise that this policy is discriminatory, but policy, even under French republican egalitarianism, is in itself always discriminating, as it differentiates between individuals and groups in society. The underlying question is whether this discrimination can be morally justified or if it is driven by racist intentions or has racist effects, be they explicit or implicit. This last question is often tackled from a moral or a broader philosophical point of view. Although legitimate, such an approach only clarifies points of view and rarely leads to a change in policy.

To overcome this type of unproductive polarising of views, I argue that an anthropological approach to policy can provide a more in-depth insight by looking more closely and rigorously to policy, whilst taking the cultural sensitivities of the dominant group and its institutions into account. Ethnographic research of institutions needs to be carried out within a comparative framework in order to facilitate a

better understanding of the complex nature of institutional and structural racism, which research will, in its turn, allow us to combat that racism more effectively.

More precisely, I propose to begin by researching the influence of 'basic cultural intuitions' on (minority) policies. This will bring me to two core notions that form the basis of potential institutional and structural racism. Finally, I propose to confront the outcomes of these ethnographical case studies to facilitate a broader, international view. This international comparison is intended to gain a more substantial insight into the universals of institutional and structural racism.

### Are We Talking About the Same Thing?

Before tackling the issue of researching institutional/structural racism, it seems necessary to clarify the meaning of these terms. Within the literature one finds that terms like racism, discrimination and segregation are closely connected. Social scientists, historians and philosophers do not agree on the relation between discrimination, racism and segregation. Miles (1989:41 in Bulmer and Solomos 1999:344) describes the diverging points of view:

First, for those who define the concept as referring to a particular instance of ideology, there is a disagreement about the form and content that ideology must possess to warrant categorisation as racism. Second some writers have claimed practices and/or unintended processes or consequences. There has been, therefore, a process of conceptual inflation whereby the concept has been redefined to refer to a wider range of phenomena.

A broadening of the scope of racism as a social phenomenon rather than an ideological stance has led to very different perceptions of the term. Social psychologists, for instance, refer most of the time to processes of discrimination. Racism is then seen as a racially intended specific form of discrimination (Pincus 1994, 1996). Social geographers, conversely, while concentrating their research on segregation, often emphasise outcomes rather than intentions in defining a policy as racist.

This emphasis on outcomes enlarges the concept of racism considerably. Banton and Miles (in Cashmore 1994:308–309) indicate that: 'In the 1960s the word was used in an expanded sense to incorporate practices and attitudes as well as beliefs'. They declare that 'in this sense racism denotes the whole complex of factors which produce racial discrimination, and sometimes, more loosely, designates also those which produce racial disadvantage'.<sup>v</sup> Stressing intentions as well as outcomes, racism is more and more seen in sociology, anthropology,

history and philosophy, as a form *sui generis*, that is to be distinguished from, but linked with, discrimination and segregation. Referring to Wieviorka (1994), I believe that, as long as research has not falsified the nature of racism and its links with discrimination and segregation, we cannot dispense with racism as a separate and independent category, because to do so would diminish the problematic character of racism and its effects on society.

Accepting, although reluctantly because of its vagueness, that racism is a distinguishable category in its own right that can not be reduced to a simple consequence of discrimination, does not, however, imply that all is racism, nor that all types of racism are the same. Researching racism as a social phenomenon, therefore, calls for a more analytical and theoretical approach; a more complex approach. This implies a more meticulous use of terminology in order to make explicit the different levels they refer to and the way in which those levels are interconnected. For the sake of clarity I propose for the moment to distinguish three levels on which social phenomena can be analysed: everyday, institutional and structural forms (Pincus 1996). This brings me to the following scheme.

**Table 1**

	Discrimination	Racism	Segregation
Every day			
Institutional			
Structural			

The only claim this scheme makes is that it helps in a better definition of the notions, which should allow for a more analytical approach. The goal is to formulate hypotheses on the way institutions create or sustain racism.

### *The Levels of Racism*

In 1984, the philosopher Philomena Essed published an essay on everyday racism. Although contested, the term has been used by many since then.<sup>4</sup> Essed defines everyday racism: 'In terms of categories and social relationships that play a role in everyday life and in terms of the characteristic properties of everyday life' (1991:58). Put more simply:

Everyday racism is the racism of the grey areas, the ordinary automatic preference for the white [Dutch], the ordinary automatic assumption that

renders the black [Dutch] a less attractive prospect. In the work force, in policy-making circles and in many situations in between people make choices on the basis of these automatic assumptions which have consequences for the position and opportunities of both white and black [Dutch] (1991:10).

In this sense, everyday racism can be seen as a synonym for ethno-centrism.

As distinct from everyday racism there is structural racism. I define structural racism for the moment as 'referring to policy that has negative effects on minorities'. An example of this in Belgium is the general rule that political parties are subsidised by the state, which produces the result that racist parties like the *Vlaams Blok* can organise themselves better.

Often, structural racism is used synonymously with institutional racism. This too general use of the term institutional racism has often been criticised. Cashmore, in his dictionary of race and ethnic relations, quotes Jenny Williams who calls institutional racism: 'A bridging concept, linking and blurring the distinction between the material and the ideological'. The consequence is that institutional racism is to be seen as a component of structural racism as well as of everyday racism. It specifically refers to racism that exists, is developed or is legitimised through the workings of institutions. In other words, institutional racism: 'refers to the manner in which institutions generate or sustain racism, whether through the daily handling of people (everyday level) or through the mechanics of the society (structural level)'. This is also the sense in which the term is used by the black activists Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, which they introduced in *Black Power: the politics of liberations in America*: 'Racism permeates society on both the individual and institutional level, covertly and openly' (Cashmore 1994:170).

### *Discrimination and Segregation*

Racism as a social phenomenon is linked with discrimination and segregation. For the sake of convenience, the link may be hypothetically described as discrimination being the motor or the potential cause, and segregation the result or the effect, of racism.<sup>5</sup>

Discrimination is often described as: 'the active or behavioural expression of racism or sexism and is aimed at denying members of certain groups equal access to scarce and valued resources' (Troyna & Cashmore in Cashmore 1994:305). This *sensu stricto* definition is problematic, because it stresses an a priori racist intention and excludes all types of nonracist intended behaviour of differential treatment. As I am looking for a more analytical use of terms, I prefer to understand dis-

crimination as: ‘any process that deliberately differentiates between people, be it positive or negative’. This type of behaviour can lead to racism, but is not necessarily in itself racist. With this conception of discrimination in mind it becomes clear what I mean by everyday, structural and institutional discrimination. Everyday discrimination is: ‘The day by day differential treatment of people on certain subjective or objective criteria’. Structural discrimination refers to: ‘Policy like affirmative action or positive discrimination’. It is intended to differentiate between groups or individuals to make up for existing social inequalities. Institutional discrimination then refers to: ‘The way institutions differentiate between groups or individuals in a systematic way’.

Segregation refers to the literal setting apart of people. Segregation is related to racism when it is imposed or guided in a direct or indirect way.<sup>6</sup> I perceive imposed or guided segregation as a process that is the result of discrimination and that in its turn strengthens racism. ‘Segregation-by-law’ can be understood as structural segregation and ‘de facto segregation’ refers to everyday segregation. Institutional segregation is the result of institutional practices and to be observed in various social sectors such as housing, labour market and education.

## **Policy and its Relation to Structural Racism/Discrimination**

Having at least hypothetically clarified the different terms on three levels, I now want to focus on policy in relation to the above-described phenomena.

Policy refers to: ‘The manner in which politicians and administrators give shape to the management of society by way of regulations and practices’. Minority or integration policies refer to: ‘The manner in which these political actors manage social and cultural diversity in regulations and administrative practice’. It implies the structural level (parliament and government) and the institutional level (administration). Policy, in the sense of political decision making, is closely linked with the structural processes. In my opinion, structural processes are not an aggregation of processes, but are analogous with that which Sahlins (1999) describes as structures, being those processes that create a framework within which everyday and institutional processes are to be found. Policy as a result of politics is the point from which structural processes are generated or directed. The question here is how policy relates to racism.

The traditional view on this matter is that racism is rooted in a differential policy approach and can be countered by a more egalitarian policy. This point of view has, since the 1960’s, been brought to the

fore by minorities themselves, most especially black activists in the United States who demanded to be treated 'equally but different'. This shift constituted the start of the development of multicultural and antiracist policies in postindustrial democratic societies. With this shift, a shift in theory appeared. It is not simply differential policy that was now said to generate and legitimise racism, but specifically, differential policy that is inspired by nationalism.

Although this insight seems to be probable at first sight, in fact it obscures a better understanding of the complexity of racism as it focuses too much on the underlying ideologies and in doing so denies the impact of institutions. To illustrate this, I come back to the example of the double conviction of immigrants in France. Abdelmalek Sayad (1996) addresses the topic of the double conviction (*double peine*) on a conceptual level. His central statement is that the immigrant is twice guilty, first as a convicted offender and secondly, on a more semantic level, as an immigrant. 'La double peine existe objectivement dans notre façon de penser, avant même qu'on la fasse exister sous une forme objectivée, la forme de la sanction d'un tribunal judiciaire ou d'une décision administrative'(1996:17).<sup>7</sup> The reason for this double conviction lies with the concept of the immigrant and his relation to the nation state: 'Pourquoi? ... l'immigration constitue comme la limite de ce qu'est l'Etat national, comme une limite qui donne à voir ce qu'il est intrinsèquement ... qui pour exister, s'est donné à lui-même des frontières ... nationales' (1996:13).<sup>8</sup> The result is that everyone who crosses that limit (border) challenges the established order, symbolised by the State. The idea of the challenging immigrant is not an overt action of 'nationals' but a natural process of thinking:

Ainsi, sans qu'on a eu la possibilité d'en parler, ou avant même que l'on puisse parler de racisme ou de xénophobie, la notion de double peine est contenue dans tous nos jugements pris sur l'immigré (et non seulement les jugements des juges des tribunaux). Elle fait partie de la sorte d'anthropologie sur laquelle se formulent tous nos jugement sociaux, base que nous avons appelée 'pensée d'Etat'.(1996:17)<sup>9</sup>

This 'state thinking' by citizens seems, at first sight, to confirm the link between racism and nationalistic thinking. Sayad, however, pushes the analysis further and shows that state thinking is embedded in the mind of every 'national' and goes much deeper than can be explained by nationalistic ideology: 'Car on n'existe que sous cette forme et dans ce cadre, le cadre et la forme de la nation' (1996:15).<sup>10</sup> Those citizens who are aware of the nature of nationalism and who may even have a critical view on it, are also influenced by the mental representations that the state embodies. This explains the acceptance

of the *double peine* as a justifiable discrimination. Because the State always discriminates: 'Il est comme dans la nature même de l'Etat de discriminer et, pour cela, de se doter préalablement de tous les critères de pertinence possibles pour procéder à cette discrimination sans laquelle il n'y a pas d'Etat national' (1996:13).<sup>11</sup>

At this point we might conclude that, as everybody is profoundly influenced by the state, everybody thinks in nationalistic terms. The final conclusion is that everybody is a potential racist and that racism is unavoidable. Although this associative line of thinking might contain some semantic truth in itself, it leads us nowhere. Racism thus becomes an all-inclusive generic category that seems unavoidable. In terms of research it loses all analytical value. The alternative to this deterministic thinking is to define racism as a specific category, to be distinguished from discrimination and segregation. This is precisely what Fredrickson does, when he defines racism as: 'An ethnic group's assertion or maintenance of a privileged and protected status vis à vis members of another group or groups who are thought, because of their defective ancestry, to possess a set of socially relevant characteristics that disqualify them from full membership in a community or citizenship in a nation-state' (1997:85). Applying Fredrickson's definition of racism to the case of the double conviction of the immigrant in France, it becomes apparent that this is not necessarily a case of structural racism. Immigrants in France can, under certain conditions, become nationals and receive the same rights as any other national despite their ethnic belonging. This nuance indicates that the *double peine* is to be interpreted as structural discrimination, more precisely discrimination by the functioning of the state when it willingly differentiates between nationals and non-nationals. At the same time, it is clear that the difference between structural discrimination and structural racism is very small. The moment that the conditions of naturalisation become more strict, with the consequence that less immigrants become citizens, this *double peine* becomes a racist policy.

Sayad, in his analysis of this policy, aimed to go beyond ideological categorisation in terms of nationalism and looked for the underlying cultural features of the French State that influence the mental framework of its citizens. This *pensée d'Etat* is an example of what I call basic intuitions (Verlot 1999). These are ingrained cultural attitudes that take the form of natural features (as defined by Bourdieu) under the influence of laws, institutions and policy practices. Comparative ethnographic research into minority policy over a ten-year period in the French speaking and Dutch speaking part of Belgium shows that minority policies differ considerably in the two parts of the country. These differences become understandable by looking at the basic intu-



itions, which are put into practice in policy making by the political elite of a given society.

The conclusion that we are to draw from this analysis is that policy on a structural level is strongly influenced by basic intuitions. To gain an in-depth insight into the processes of structural racism and discrimination, one has to take the basic intuitions on which policies are built into account. A characterisation on the basis of ideological assumptions of policy and politics alone is not sufficient, because it categorises, but fails to explain in itself why and how racist or discriminatory policy comes about. Such an analysis must at least be supplemented by an anthropological enquiry into the actual functioning of policy that takes into account its cultural presuppositions and the daily practice of political decision making.

### Institutional Racism and Administrative Praxis

An analysis of the structural features of policy only gives a partial view of what is going on. The example of the *double peine* is again enlightening. It is not the judge who, compelled by law, passes the double sentence of deportation. Deportation is decided upon by the administration, which has the power to convert the judge's conviction into a double conviction. Where the administration would systematically apply this possibility on xenophobic, ethnocentric or racist criteria, the structural discrimination is complemented by an institutional racist practice. In the end a discriminatory rule thus becomes a racist practice. To examine this shift, research into the functioning of administrations is needed. This type of research should focus on the influence of basic intuitions on the patterns of collective functioning of administrations. Herzfeld, in his study of Greek administration, proposes a similar approach: 'Theoretical arguments about the way national bureaucracies work, have not paid sufficient attention to the common ground on which bureaucratic practices and popular attitudes rest' (1992:15).

The case of the *double peine* illustrates that the relationship between basic intuitions and the institutional order is still not very clear. One thing is certain, and that is that they reinforce each other. The linkage seems to come about through symbols. Herzfeld indicates that administrations 'draw on resources that are common to the symbolism of the Western nation-states and to that of long-established forms of social, cultural, and racial exclusion in everyday life' (ibid. 1992:13). As basic intuitions some symbols prove to be extremely durable. 'As a consequence, it is often assumed that their meanings are constant' (ibid.

1992: 11). In order to be able to explain these symbols and processes, and the way they produce institutional discrimination, racism or segregation, there is a need for what Abeles (1995) has called institutional anthropology. This type of anthropology starts with the ethnographic study of administrative patterns.<sup>12</sup> Herzfeld proposes:

... To treat nation-state bureaucracy as directly analogous to the ritual system of a religion. Both are founded on the principle of identity: The elect as an exclusive community, whose members' individual sins cannot undermine the ultimate perfection of the ideal they all share ... The labour itself is highly ritualistic: forms symbols, texts, sanctions, and obeisance. (1992:10)

The goal of such research is to clarify the cultural rationale of administrative thinking and acting. This kind of analysis takes the researcher to a more thorough exposure of the concepts of modernity and related concepts of rationality, effectiveness, efficiency and the linear perception of time.

My research into Belgian government bodies demonstrates the value of such an approach in relation to the issue of institutional racism. A striking example is the decision process in 1994/95 with regard to the yearly inspection of Muslim teachers by the Belgian State security. Muslim teachers have been working in schools since 1978. Because of the shortage of Belgian born and trained teachers, most of the Muslim teachers come from abroad and have, since the very beginning, not met language and nationality demands. Normally speaking, state security should provide a report on every new teacher before he or she begins in a school. From 1995, in the French speaking Community, the number of sacked Muslim teachers appeared to be on the rise. The reason for this was to be found in the negative reports being provided by the state security, which were increased from the one-off approach of an annual inspection. The reason for this stepping up of inspection could be traced back, not to the state security, but to a junior official in the French Community's Ministry of Education. After searching for several months, I learned that the state security had been systematically late in providing reports and teachers were already working in the schools. Faced with a negative report about a Muslim teacher, who was already in service, the junior official in question decided to cover himself in the future by sending the teachers' files to state security every year. Once this routine was started, it appeared that neither more senior officials, nor even the Minister, dared to stop this practice.

This example illustrates how the administrative management of diversity is a source of institutional racism, both explicitly and implicitly. The explicit level is visible in the issuing of instructions. Such

instructions are discriminating in the neutral sense of the word, as the religious teachers were treated differently to the Belgian teachers. However, the instruction is not racist because all kinds of religious teachers who do not come from the European Union are subject to this control. This measure only became racist when the fear of Islam grew to such proportions that when a junior official applied this rule only to teachers of Islam, neither his superiors nor the Minister dared to change the systematic administrative practice.

In this example, the conjunction of particular official practice (exaggerated and continuous control) and basic intuitions that generate an islamophobic climate, turned a structural discrimination into a racist practice. The result is a racist policy.

Although little ethnographic fieldwork in administrations has been done, the literature provides us with some valuable insights.<sup>13</sup> I summarise here the conclusions of various researches that seem to me relevant to the development of institutional discrimination and racism. I mainly use the work by Herzfeld because of its quality, and, through his work, the work of Britan (1981).<sup>14</sup>

Administrative cultures are founded on two core concepts, which are, to a large extent, relevant to the understanding of the phenomena of institutional discrimination and racism. The first is the concept of professionalism. Professionalism in administrations is built on a 'culture of accountability': 'Both bureaucracy and the stereotypical complaints about it are parts of a larger universe that we might call, quite simply, the ideology and practice of accountability' (Herzfeld 1992:3). This accountability gives rise to a number of very recognisable processes of interaction. Citizens blame lower officials, who in turn blame higher officials. These latter blame 'the system' (the laws, the politicians, the budget, ...). This phenomenon is known as the umbrella technique, and is an indicator of the first vertical structural characteristic: hierarchy. The second characteristic of administrative structure is horizontal and is indicative of the compartmentalisation of services. It is the splitting up of services, in virtue of which the citizen is sent from pillar to post; passed from desk to desk. The less secure people feel with the local customs (not knowing which papers they should have, which services they should call, how to ask questions, what they may expect), the more powerless they are in the face of the negative effects of bureaucratic management. This is where the basis of institutional discrimination is to be situated.

The second core concept of administrative cultures consists of the dichotomy of indifference/sense of differentiation. The egalitarian ethos of administrations (i.e., that every citizen is the same before the law) establishes the norm, which is that the rules come first. As

Herzfeld notes: 'Indifference to the plight of individuals and groups often coexists with democratic and egalitarian ideals' (1992:1). This deferment to the authority of rules is often used with minorities as an excuse for not taking their specific situation or needs into account. The primacy of the value of 'the rules' legitimises these inequalities. Eventually, this leads to 'the rejection of common humanity' (Herzfeld 1992:1). Exaggerated norm-based egalitarian behaviour also lies at the root of institutional racism. It is the not wanting to/being able to/being allowed to take the differences in need between people into account that makes institutional discrimination (which can, in itself, provide a sense of differentiation enabling citizens to be treated according to need) move over into institutional racism. Here I want to quote Herzfeld (1992:184) again: 'Unless we can allow difference to oppose a productive discomfort to the certainties of bureaucratic classification, indifference must eventually, to cite the official cosmology that informs and maintains it, become the unblinking destiny of all'.

Over the last two decades, politicians have started to introduce modern management techniques to administrations in order to meet the changing needs of the more conscientious citizen. Modern management techniques in relation to the optimisation of the government bodies are based on the principle that razing the hierarchy and developing a client-oriented organisation with a system of open counters will have a positive effect on the behaviour of the official to the citizen. Taking into account all that I have said above on the way administrations are influenced by basic intuitions, it should be clear that this is no more than an assumption on the part of policy makers. Neither do we know what effect this modernisation of the official bodies will have on the relationship between officials and minority groups. It is therefore entirely possible that the modernisation of administrations through the levelling of hierarchies and the development of client-oriented services will potentially or actually increase institutional discrimination or racism rather than prevent it. The final conclusion is that there is a clear need for more and better understanding of the working of institutions to prevent institutional racism. Thus, the relationship between professionalism and indifference (or its counterpart, i.e; a sense for differentiation) remains unclear.

## **A Plea for International Comparative Research**

Insight into the basic intuitions of policy and the order of administrative practice is necessary to understand and make tangible the complex processes of institutional and structural racism. This requires a

closer and more culturally sensitive analysis of policy development and praxis, as an addition to the current exposure-based discursive research. Ethnographies of policy-making and institutions are instructive in gaining insight into national and regional practices. However, in order to understand better and reach a broader theoretical framing, the comparative element is essential. After all: 'Thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And in the absence of comparison, so is all thought and scientific research' (Swanson 1971:145).<sup>15</sup> This is all the more necessary if we wish to understand the sensitive, indirect processes that we describe with the vague notions of culture and cultural differentiation.

International comparative research into the issues of institutional and structural racism implies that research needs to move into a more rigorous and methodological ethnography of policy on the one hand, and of the ethnography of institutions on the other hand.

Ethnographic policy research, in my view, should focus on the way basic intuitions of political elites in different countries or regions influence the management of diversity as comes about in, for example, identity or minority policies.<sup>16</sup> Rather than looking at traditional immigrant countries like the United States, Canada or Australia, I would focus in the first instance on the European countries that have a strong national tradition and, until recently, regarded immigration as a temporary phenomenon. Most of the countries in the European Union have started to implement so-called integration policies. At the same time they are adapting their immigration policies in the framework of an evolving European Union. Comparing the cultural premisses of these policies will lead to a more thorough insight into the differences and similarities underlying these policies. In a second movement, a comparison between traditional immigrant countries and the European countries can broaden the perspective.

This type of comparative policy research needs to be complemented with ethnographic research on administrative practices in national and regional administrations. Such research can be linked to the ongoing process of administrative optimisation by looking at the cultural components and processes of professionalism/indifference.

In the end, combining the research on policy and administrative cultures should enable different political actors like politicians, administrators, unions, the media and nongovernmental organisations to elaborate strategies that take into account and anticipate the cultural sensitivities of majorities as expressed by their politicians and administrators. These more culture-sensitive strategies will, in my view, allow us to counter and prevent institutional racism more effectively than the exposure based discursive research has done so far.<sup>17</sup>

## Notes

1. Desle, E. 1993. In: Desle, Lesthaeghe, R., Witte, E. (eds) *Denken over migranten in Europa*. Brussel, Balans, VUBpress; Blommaert, J. & Verschueren, J. 1998. *Debating diversity. Analysing the discourse of tolerance*. London, Routledge.
2. A similar need is expressed by the historian G.M. Fredrickson (1997:77) 'But comparative historians need sharper tools and stronger conceptualisations; otherwise they are likely to find implicit, attitudinal racism in most times and places – a given of any situation that appears to involve 'races' – or an explicit ideological racism in only a few places and for limited periods'.
3. Banton and Miles indicate a third, more academic meaning: 'Racism as a historical complex in which black labour is treated as a commodity'. They also point out that: 'There is no reason why the word racism should not be used in different senses for different purposes' (Cashmore 1994:308).
4. E.g., Eliasoph, N. 1999.
5. Solomos and Back (1996) point out that the links between racism, discrimination and segregation are complex because the phenomena evolve all the time.
6. Segregation can also be voluntary. Research shows, for example, that immigrants of the first generation often tend to group together to recreate their home environment. Except for particular religious groups, voluntary segregation rarely continues more than one generation.
7. Although this text has been published in a later version (Sayad, A. 1999. 393–413) as a posthumous tribute to the author, I use the earlier, more elaborated version, published as a paper in 1996.
8. Why? immigration constitutes the limit of the nation state, a limit that makes clear what it really is, ... to be able to exist has given itself national borders.
9. As such, without having had the possibility to speak about it, or even before one could speak about racism or xenophobia, the notion of the double sentence is included in all our judgements on the immigrant ( and not only the rulings of the judges). This notion is part of that kind of anthropology on which our social judgements are formulated, which we named 'state thinking'.
10. Because one only exists in that form and in that framework, the framework and the form of the nation.
11. It is in the nature of the State to discriminate and for that reason to give itself all the possible and pertinent criteria to proceed towards discrimination, without which there is no national State.
12. Concerning the field of institutional ethnography: Grahame, P. 1998. O'Neill, B.J. 1998. Townsend, E. 1996.
13. The reason for the scarcity of institutional ethnography has different reasons. The first is the high inaccessibility of administrations, the second is the complexity of administrations, and the third is that ethnographers have rarely seen administrations as an object of study.
14. Britan, G.M. 1981.
15. Swanson, G. 1971.
16. Verlot, M., and Dietz, G. 2000. 'Comparing subnational and transnational identity processes in Belgium and Spain'. Paper delivered at the sixth Biennial Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists - Krakow, Jagiellonian University, 26–29th July (workshop 13).
17. For an example in the field of educational politics, see: Verlot, M. 2000.

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