



European Network Against Racism
The voice of the anti-racist movement in Europe



Fact Sheet Briefing – Afrophobia in France

March 2016

This factsheet is based on ENAR's Shadow Report questionnaire 2014/2015, answered by Kpédétin Mariquian Ahouansou from *Les Indivisibles*, including qualitative and quantitative data.

Defining 'People of African Descent (PAD)/ Black Europeans (BE) population' is no easy task and indeed various definitions and descriptions exist for the group. The UN Working Group on people of African descent proposed that: "People of African descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (...) Africans and their descendants who, after their countries' independence, emigrated to or went to work in Europe, Canada and the Middle East."¹ The term 'Black Europeans' is used here to refer to Black people born or raised in Europe or with an EU citizenship. In some places the term 'Black people' is used to refer more broadly to all those individuals, groups and communities that define themselves as 'Black'. Accordingly, 'Black' does not necessarily refer to a skin colour so much as a sociologically constructed identity.

In 2007, the Representative Council of France's Black Associations (CRAN) conducted the first study on the size of the 'Black French' population. This research has been an important tool for understanding of the Black population in France and continues to be the only source of data for this group in many social-economic areas. According to this survey, the Black population was estimated to be close to 4% of the whole population, representing 2.6 million people.²

Key findings and examples

Political developments and political participation

- Enshrined in the French Constitution is the practice of colour-blindness. The French "traditional model"³ remains central to its policy making and at least two articles in the French legal system stress the importance of colour-blindness. In May 2013, the National Assembly voted for the abolition of the word 'race' within French legislation and its penal code.
- Proportionally, the share of political public positions is very low for Black people in France, especially when looking at the General Councils ("Conseils généraux et diversité").

¹UN Working Group on People of African Descent, Identification and Definition of People of African Descent and How Racial Discrimination Against them is Manifested in Various Regions, E/CN.4/2003/WG.20/WP.3

² Le Cran, Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires, Les discriminations à l'encontre des populations noires de France (2007). Available at: <http://www.le-cran.fr/document-cran-associations-noires-de-france/63-tns-sofres-premiere-enquete-statistique-sur-les-noirs-de-france.pdf> (accessed on 23/02/2016)

³ Hobsbawm 1992 (as cited in the French shadow report questionnaire response)

- In Seine Saint-Denis, one of the most diverse and poorest French departments, a 68,74% abstention rate was recorded in the 2014 European elections, more than 10 points above the national average.
- The lack of disaggregated equality data and information on different ethnic groups can have an impact on the visibility of minorities. If there is no information on the size of the Black population it becomes increasingly difficult to advocate for greater attention and resources to be directed to that group.

Employment

- There is no government data published on employment and ethnic minorities, however, according to the above mentioned CRAN survey, PAD/BE people make up the vast majority of minor employees in hospitals with 26.6% Black nurses and 73.4% White nurses; however there are 45.5% Black auxiliary nurses in contrast with 38.6% White.
- A CV testing experiment showed that women with a Senegalese sounding name had 8,4% chance of being called for an interview when applying for a job, compared with 13,9% for men with a Senegalese sounding name and 22,6% for women with a French sounding name.⁴
- In 2012 the unemployment rate for people of African descent was almost three times higher (22%) than non-immigrants (8.6%).⁵ Although the above figures are from several years ago there is no more recent data available.
- In 2006, a law was passed with the aim of anonymising CVs for companies of more than 50 employees, but it has not been fully implemented as the government took time to outline how it would operate. In 2014, anti-racism organisations lodged a complaint to the highest administrative court, which ruled that the law should be enforced. A government commissioned report has however since rejected the ruling, stating that it is an “inefficient” and “costly” measure.⁶

Policing and the criminal system

- According to a survey conducted by the Independent Authority to Protect Audio-visual Communication Freedom⁷, visible minorities were two times more likely to be stopped and searched, while another survey shows that PAD/BE are up to six times more likely to be stopped than White people.⁸
- In 2014, it is reported that a group of law enforcement officers were investigated after photos of a “negro party” they organised were published. These pictures showed them in blackface and holding bananas.
- It is reported that there is a disproportionately high number of Black people in prison. Ethnographic research, conducted in 2015, revealed that Black and Arab males accounted for three quarters of the total inmate population. In addition, the study showed that PAD/BE are 2.7 times more likely to be imprisoned than White people.

⁴ Petit P., Duguet E., L'Horty Y., du Parquet L. and Sari F. 2013. 'Discrimi - nation à l'embauche: les effets du genre et de l'origine se cumulent-ils systématiquement?'. *Economie et Statistiques* 464-465-466: 141-153.

⁵ Observatoire des inégalités, *Emploi: les immigrés discriminés ?* (12 August 2014). Available at: http://www.inegalites.fr/spip.php?page=article&id_article=1942 (accessed on 12/02/2016)

⁶ Rodier A., *La fin du CV anonyme*, Le monde (19 May 2015). Available at : http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2015/05/19/la-fin-du-cv-anonyme_4636135_3234.html (accessed on 23/02/2016)

⁷ Information gathered by the national shadow report, stating that CRAN had a survey conducted by the Independent Authority to Protect Audiovisual Communication Freedom [Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) coming to the above-mentioned results

⁸ Jobard et al, *Police et minorités visibles: les contrôles d'identité à Paris* (2009) p.6.

- There is no official data collection on racial discrimination perpetrated by the police, however, there are reports that this is a significant issue in France. For example, in September 2014, a female student from Guinea and his cousin were placed in police custody for shopping with a 500 Euro note. Instead of using the counterfeit detector to check the validity of the note, the police was notified. Unable to reach a bank, again to check the validity, the police officers detained the two individuals in custody for over 20 hours. Eventually the note was found not to be a forgery.

Media

- The CRAN notes that minorities rarely take part in the production of media content or are invited as experts. Research shows that there is only one individual on *France Télévisions'* executive board that is part of a 'visible minority' and less than 1% of *Le Monde's* journalists are non-White.⁹
- Social media platforms continue to provide a space for hate speech and Black people in the public eye are often the target. The activist Rokhaya Diallo, as well as the former Minister Christiane Taubira, are regularly and violently attacked online.
- The far-right magazine *Minute* received a 10,000 euro fine for a front page photo of the Minister with a caption that read: "Clever as a monkey, Taubira gets her banana back".

The Antenne de mémorisation et d'observation de la négrophobie (AMON) is an online initiative by the Brigade/Collectif Anti Négrophobie set up to monitor hate speech directed at PAD/BE. <http://amon-france.com/nos-actions/>

Health

- There is a large Black population living in the often poor, suburban areas of Paris. This group can experience insufficient health care, especially when it comes to emergency cases. For example, it is reported that SOS-Médecins, an after-hours medical service covering Paris and Ile-de-France, refused calls from inhabitants of Ile-de-France.
- In August 2014, a 10 year old boy died due to a lack of medical attention as both the emergency medical service (SAMU) and the fire department rejected the parents' demand to take their child to the emergency centre.

Migration

- During the last 12 months, the government has publicly made links between migration and terrorism. There is a real risk that Black communities, already disproportionately stopped by immigration control and the police, will bear the brunt of these tighter controls.
- The far right Front National politician Jean-Marie Le Pen stated in May 2014 that Ebola could be a solution to curb immigration to Europe.¹⁰

⁹ http://www.statistiquespopulaires.fr/statistiques-populaires_lire_3_12_1_0.html. http://www.statistiquespopulaires.fr/statistiques-populaires_lire_3_14_1_0.html.

¹⁰ M. Privöt, Ebola: Is Europe Immune... to Racism?, Huffington Post (15 October 2014). Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/michael-privot/ebola-europe_b_5977126.html

Recommendations

- In partnership with civil society organisations, and according to data protection principles, equality data must be collected annually to monitor the outcomes of people of African descent/Black Europeans in key social indicators in employment, health, education and housing and develop policies in response to persistent racial inequalities.
- Establish public duties to promote equality and increase diversity within all public bodies as well as develop special measures and traineeships for PAD/BE within all public institutions, and in particular public broadcasting agencies, so that ethnic minorities are able to gain entry and access into the roles that currently lack diversity.
- Ease and ensure the process of recognition of foreign qualifications and practical experiences as well as improve local employment offices practice in order to better match jobseekers to relevant positions.
- Ensure that national legislation and police guidelines prohibit ethnic profiling and establish a requirement for reasonable suspicion for all police stops. Gather data based on the use of stop and search forms to be filled in by agents after every stop. Moreover, ensure regular training of law enforcement agents on unconscious bias and that performance appraisal systems for law enforcement sanction the use of ethnic profiling.
- Change policing policies and strategies that currently encourage police to profile certain groups based on their ethnicity and/or the race and religion.
- Establish clear and truly independent oversight mechanisms to monitor all action that impacts on rights and freedoms such as counter-terrorism measures, raids, surveillance and arrests.