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Racisms
and normative
pressures:
a new outbreak
of biological racism?

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INTRODUCTION

Racism is a core topic in research on citizenship in contemporary societies, mainly regarding discrimination and the denial of civil rights. This paper presents the main lines of a research programme on racism in contemporary Europe, and its impact on social relations in diverse societies. Previous and new empirical research is presented. This research is framed by the concepts of social representation and social norms, with the metaphor of racism as an evolving virus being used to explain its mutations in contemporary societies.

Accordingly, our analytical perspective clarifies the concept of racism by approaching it as a polemical social representation that evolves and adapts according to changes in social contexts. This conceptual clarification is important because it helps distinguish the differences (and complementarities) between racism as a social representation, and the concept of racial prejudice as a negative attitude towards a social group. This distinction is fundamental to understand what is at stake when we address racism in contemporary European societies.

After this conceptual clarification, the paper proposes a dynamic analysis of racist beliefs. It specifically argues that the anti-racist norm developed since World War II transformed racist beliefs and that any reduction of the anti-racist norm pressure can induce a new outbreak of biological racism.

The final part of the paper analyses the impact of racist beliefs on discrimination against immigrants perceived as belonging to different racial or ethnic groups. The forms of discrimination addressed refer mainly to the field of basic civil rights and are contextualised by legitimation processes (Costa-Lopes et al. 2013; Pereira, Vala and Costa-Lopes 2010). In order to clarify our argument, some key empirical research is summarised in each of the paper's three parts.¹ The chapter concludes by proposing an integration

1 This chapter integrates previous work developed by the authors at the ICS-UL. It comes mainly from the chapter published in the book edited by Bethencourt and Pearce (2012) about racism in the Portuguese-speaking world, and a paper by the first author about racism as a social representation published in *Papers on Social Representations* (Vala 2013). This latter paper entirely structures the first part of the chapter. The last part of the chapter includes new data and theoretical issues prepared by the authors and Alice Ramos for publication in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migrations Studies* (Ramos, Pereira and Vala, in press). The problems addressed in this chapter follow another research programme on the construction of social differences in diverse societies (Costa-Lopes, et al. 2008), summarised in a book also focused on review research carried out at the ICS-ULisboa (*Itinerários: A Investigação nos 25 Anos do ICS*).

of the arguments and data presented, and explores the possible impact of economic crisis and rising new right-wing extremism on the weakening of the anti-racism norm and the legitimization of discrimination

RACISMS, SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND SOCIAL NORMS

Moscovici (1961, 1984) reformulated the concept of collective representations proposed by Durkheim (1898) and developed the concept of social representations accentuating the social nature of the dynamic construction of representations of complex social objects that question the life of groups (e.g. power, health, social needs, justice, social differences, the functioning of mind etc.). In Moscovici's theory (1984), societies are "thinking societies" that produce social representations or practical social or lay theories about objects that are relevant to individuals, social groups and the relations between groups. As theories, social representations are organisations of beliefs, attitudes and explanations for every significant event occurring in their social environment. As practical theories, they organise social behaviour; as social theories, they emerge, evolve and disappear in the context of everyday communication, salient social identities and power relations, and normative contexts.

We propose that the analysis of racism as a social representation provides the theoretical elements necessary for grasping racism as a lay social theory. It stimulates the diagnosis of different forms of anchoring and institutionalising racism, and makes it possible to examine the objectification of the concepts that sustain racial beliefs (Vala 2013). Finally, the theory of social representations offers an analytical framework conducive to a psychosocial analysis of racism within the context of collective memory (Cabecinhas and Feijó 2010; Licata and Klein 2010; Licata and Volpato 2010; Valentim 2008) and can promote inter-disciplinary dialogue, mainly with history (for the Portuguese context and beyond, e.g. Alexandre 1999; 2017; Bethencourt and Pearce 2012; Bethencourt 2013; Castelo 1998; Fredrickson 2002; Jahoda 1998; Matos 2006; Sobral 2004; Xavier 2012; Pollares-Burke 2012) and the articulation between racism and other concepts and phenomena like nationalism and cosmopolitanism (Balibar 1991; Billig 1995; Silva and Sobral, 2013).

Moreover, the study of racism within the framework of social representations approach allows us to establish a theoretically coherent distinction between racial prejudice and racism (Vala and Pereira 2012; Vala, Pereira and

Costa-Lopes 2009). This distinction is important for the understanding of racism in contemporary societies and is part of a theoretical debate that must be renewed. This debate was initiated by Jones in the USA (1972) and, more recently, was promoted by several authors, specifically in terms of social representations theory (Augoustinos 2009; Sanchez-Mazas 2004; Howarth and Hook 2005) and social identity theory (Augoustinos and Reynolds 2001; Vala and Pereira 2012), allowing for a deeper understanding of racism in diverse contemporary societies.

Within social psychology literature, as well as in other social sciences, the terms racism and (racial) prejudice are used almost interchangeably. With few exceptions, the majority of studies have analysed racism as a set of negative attitudes towards specific devaluated social groups, such as black people, Jewish people and Gypsies. Research has established a significant homology between racism and racial prejudice or, more generally, between racism and explicit or implicit negative intergroup attitudes, as exemplified by the classic definition of prejudice proposed by Allport (1954) and the research it inspired (for a revision, see Fiske 1998; Yzerbit and Demoulin 2010).

In contrast to this view, we propose a distinction between racism and racial prejudice, specifying that racism is not a mere negative evaluation of a specific social group, though it may include negative attitudes towards racialized groups, that is, groups defined in terms of racial categories. It is conceivable that, based on feelings of pity, individuals may express racism without negative attitudes towards racialized and inferiorised groups, and that not all negative feelings towards racialized outgroups are based on the belief of their inhumanity.

Racism is also distinct from racial prejudice since, by definition, it is a social theory inscribed in social institutions and in social thought and not a personal trait, or merely a phenomenon that reflects individual or intergroup attitudes. Racism is a phenomenon which organises asymmetrical relations between social groups. It is more than an individual negative evaluation of these groups. Prejudice, meanwhile, in social psychology literature, is the expression of an individual position with respect to a group, even though that individual position may be relatively widespread, as proposed by the concept of the cultural stereotype of “races” or “ethnicities” developed by Devine (1989) and Devine and Monteith (1993).

In sum, racial prejudice is closely related to ethnocentrism (Doise 2005), while racism expresses radical alterity, to use a term coined by Jodelet (2005).

Indeed, minimal or even irrelevant biological or cultural differences are perceived as deep-seated and the cause of natural hierarchies that are hard to overcome, or can only be overcome in the historical long term.

It was within this framework that we recently proposed (Vala and Pereira 2012) the conceptualisation of racism as a social representation of the nature of humanity based on the following fundamental psychological and social processes: categorisation (belief that humanity is organised according to racial or ethnic groups); differentiation (there are profound differences between human groups); hierarchy (certain groups have a permanent superiority to others); essentialisation (differences are immutable due to biological as well as cultural “essences”); radical alterity (not all groups have all the essences which common sense considers to be specific to humans and, consequently, radical alterity is a form of dehumanisation of racialized groups). The way these psychological and social processes interweave assumes particularities according to the human groups involved, the nature of social relations between those groups (e.g. cooperation vs. domination) and the historical social contexts.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RACISM AND PREJUDICE

Is it possible to find empirical evidence in favour of analytical distinctions between racism as a social representation and racial prejudice? Research by Vala, Pereira and Costa-Lopes (2009) has contributed to this debate by examining the relationship between basic biological and cultural racial beliefs (e.g. “The human species is divided into racial groups that are very different from each other”; “The human species is divided into very similar cultural ethnic groups” (reversed); “The mixture of different human groups may weaken the biological evolution of the human species”; “Some human groups are culturally more civilised than others”) and four different expressions of racial prejudice. Results of a structural equation model showed that hetero-ethnisation (the perception of deep cultural differences between black people and, in this case, the Portuguese; Vala, Brito and Lopes 1999/2015); ontologisation (the greater attribution of natural features to black people than to Portuguese and the greater allocation of cultural traits to Portuguese than to black people; Moscovici and Perez 1997); infra-humanisation (the greater attribution to Portuguese than to black people of the capacity to express secondary emotions; Leyens et al. 2000); and the devaluation of black people

are dimensions of a latent factor that the authors called racial prejudice (i.e. negative attitudes towards a target-group). These results also showed that this latent factor (racial prejudice) is predicted by core racist beliefs integrated in the social representations about the nature of the differences between human groups (see above). These racist beliefs concern not only the biological hierarchisation of human groups (biological racism), but also the hierarchisation of cultures (cultural racism). An alternative explanatory model considered a single latent variable integrating racial beliefs and dimensions of prejudice. The results showed that the theoretical proposed model had a better fit than the one that did not distinguish between racial beliefs and racial prejudice. Thus, racism is different from prejudice, although racism may be an antecedent of racial prejudice.²

In sum, our theorising proposes that racial prejudice is a negative attitude about some social groups, whereas racism is a lay theory (i.e. a social representation) about the natural hierarchy of human groups and its insurmountability, supported by psychological essentialisation of historical processes. Indeed, as in any social representation, that representation of differences between human groups is socially anchored in social relations. Specifically, racism is anchored in ideas of domination. Firstly based on religious thinking and legitimised by religious beliefs promoting a proto-racism, and later based on and legitimised by supposed scientific evidence offered by the first wave of racial theories produced in the 19th century (for a review see Bethencourt 2013 and Fredrickson 2002), racism was incorporated by the politico-institutional sphere. It was when racial theories made inroads into political institutions that it became possible to legislate and bureaucratised racism, making racial categories familiar and perceived as being as natural as any other bureaucratic category. Both in everyday life and the institutional fabric, social groups perceived as “inferior races” were then dominated, exterminated or excluded on the basis of legitimisation processes. This approach eliminates *per se* the possibility of a dominated group racially inferiorising a dominant group. However, this positioning does not eliminate the possibility that the dominated group will express prejudice or general negative attitudes towards the dominant one.

2 A complete description of the study, including samples, methods, etc. is available in Vala et al. (2009).

THE DYNAMICS OF RACISMS: IS RACISM LIKE AN EVOLVING VIRUS?

According to our theorising, racist social representations of differences between human groups, racial prejudice and its forms of expression can evolve in and adapt to social contexts. This paper offers a contribution to this approach in contemporary European societies. It is based on socio-normative principles (Beauvois and Dubois 1988; Cialdini, Kallgren and Reno 1991; Pereira and Costa-Lopes 2012), on theories about inter-group relations (Doise 1986; Tajfel 1982) and on social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Gaertner and Dovidio 2005).

This normative approach to racist beliefs is pivotal in understanding the social expressions of racism in the dynamics of contemporary political and social relations. It is these dynamics that drive the transformation of racist expressions from overt to hidden, from conscious or deliberate to unconscious or implicit, from biologically to culturally based.

The events of the Second World War, the progressive expansion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and other social movements are all important moments in the process of delegitimising the idea of race and of social inequalities founded on race. Such social processes show the gradual dissemination of the anti-racist norm and erected obstacles to the triumph of the idea of race. After such events, racism is no longer a hegemonic social representation but a controversial social representation, the subject of dispute and conflict regulated by anti-racist legislation and the dissemination of the anti-racist social norm.

FROM EXPLICIT TO HIDDEN AND IMPLICIT RACIAL PREJUDICE

These transformations have been more successfully studied within research on racial prejudice than within research on racism itself. It is through the study of prejudice that a significant decline in the attribution of negative stereotypical traits to black people in the United States between the 1930s and the 1990s has been identified (Dovidio et al. 1996). At the beginning of the 1990s, various European studies also showed a reduction in the attribution of negative traits to people from racialized groups. For example, Pérez (1996) showed that in Spain respondents attributed more negative traits to the Spanish than to Gypsies. A similar effect was observed in Brazil by Camino et al. (2001), where white participants concealed their racist motivations by exaggerating their

attribution of more positive traits to black than white people. In both studies, respondents were clearly keen to show that they were not racist towards groups protected by the anti-racist norm.

On the other hand, in the study on racial prejudice against immigrants conducted by Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) in four European countries, the authors showed that racial prejudice manifested itself through the absence of positive feelings about immigrants (rather than the expression of negative feelings). A study carried out in Portugal in the same decade (Vala, Brito and Lopes 1999/2015) obtained similar results, and also showed that anti-black prejudice was expressed by the attribution of more positive traits to the Portuguese than to black people and not through the attribution of more negative traits to the latter. These, like other studies, showed that it is not normative to express openly negative opinions about members of groups who are the target of explicit racialization (for example, in the studies cited, Gypsies in Spain, black people in Portugal, Afro-Caribbeans and Asians in the United Kingdom, Surinamese and Turks in Holland, North Africans and people from Southeast Asia in France, and Turks in Germany).

Perhaps one of the best examples of hidden racial prejudice is the research line inaugurated by Leyens et al. (2000, 2003) about what they called “infrahumnsation”. Firstly, the authors verified that people implicitly distinguish between primary emotions (e. g. pleasure and anger) and secondary emotions (e. g. love and hope). Secondly, they empiracly demonstrated that people consider primary emotions common to humans and animals but not secondary emotions, which are considered uniquely human. Thirdly, through dozens of studies, they demonstrated that people differentiate between the ingroup and devaluated outgroups (e. g. black people) regarding the capacity to express secondary emotions (that represent human uniqueness). This means that members of devaluated outgroups are represented as less human than ingroup members.

In parallel to research on hidden racial prejudice and racism, the study of implicit prejudice introduced by Gaertner and McLaughlin (1983), which measured automatic association between words (positive vs negative) and targets of evaluation (e.g. Whites vs Blacks), showed that racial prejudice remained very active, albeit in an implicit way. This research became prominent through the dissemination of Greenwald and collaborators’ studies (Greenwald, McGhee and Schwartz 1998; Nosek, Banaji and Greenwald 2002), using the well-known Implicit Association Test

(IAT).³ This test and other similar measures, which use response latencies when positive and negative traits are associated with white and black people (i. e. genuine unobstructive measures of attitudes, Fazio and Olson 2003), made it possible to question whether racial prejudice really has been decreasing. The nature of these measures makes it impossible to consciously control responses and thus align these responses with the anti-racist norm. In other words, what the measures of implicit prejudice show is that racial prejudice is “hidden”, or is expressed in less explicit ways.

Numerous critics of this type of measure argue that such analyses of prejudice reveal feelings that are very deep-seated, but which do not have an impact on behaviour. However, this does not appear to be the case. For example, in a particularly sensitive area, such as the prescription of thrombolysis in a hospital environment, implicit prejudice, measured through the IAT, predicts that thrombolysis will be recommended more frequently for white than for black people presenting exactly the same symptoms (Green et al. 2007).

The studies mentioned allow us to confirm that the anti-racist norm has an impact on the overt expression of racial prejudice, but not on its implicit expression. On the other hand, it is important to point out that the anti-racist norm does not have the same effect with respect to all racialized groups, or in all cultural contexts. For instance, in Portuguese society, the anti-racist norm protects black people, but not gypsies (Aguiar et al. 2008; Correia, Vala and Aguiar 2007 and Correia et al. 2005). This doesn't occur in Spain, however, a country in which the anti-racist norm protects gypsies (Pérez 1996; Correia et al., 2005), but not black people. In any case, we should underline that, in the empirical studies referred to above, the role of the anti-racist norm has been suggested but not directly measured. In fact, this norm has been little studied in terms of observing its effects on the expression of racial prejudice, with the exception of the initial studies by Katz and Hass (1988) and more recent work by Crandall, Eshleman and O'Brien (2002), Lima et al. (2006), and Costa-Lopes, Wigboldus and Vala (2017), as well as in the research by Monteiro, França and Rodrigues (2009) or by Falomir, Garrot and Mugny (2009). The first two cases demonstrated the impact that the egalitarian

3 For a map of implicit racism across Europe, see the results of the project about IAT at the University of Sheffield: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/philosophy/research/implicit-bias-jennifer-saul-tackling-gender-bias-academia>; <http://theconversation.com/this-map-shows-what-white-europeans-associate-with-race-and-it-makes-for-uncomfortable-reading-76661>.

anti-racism norm has on the reduction of implicit prejudice. The remaining studies mentioned showed that the same norm impacts on overt prejudice.

ADAPTIVE MUTATIONS OF RACISM:

FROM BIOLOGICALLY TO CULTURALLY BASED RACISM

In the previous paragraphs, we argued in favour of the idea that normative pressures and the strength of social movements lead to a retraction of explicit racial prejudice. Despite being alive, racial prejudice manifests itself more in a hidden than in an explicit way. The new question that emerges concerns what happens with social representations that hierarchise social groups. We propose that when the idea of racial hierarchies is not legitimised by the anti-racist norm, transformations occur in the representation of differences between human groups: the “essences” that differentiate social groups move from the domain of biology to that of culture. This adaptive transformation has allowed racism to survive unthreatened by the anti-racist norm and is one of the best expressions of the adaptive evolution of racism as a social theory or a social representation. This hypothesis started mainly with the studies by Sears and McConahay (1973) in the United States about “modern racism” and research by Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) about anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe in the 90s.

According to our rationale, the anti-racist norm also makes it difficult these days to express overt cultural racism, i. e. the hierarchisation of cultures and the cultural inferiorisation of people perceived as belonging to other races, cultures and religions. Due to normative pressure, cultural inferiorisation is mainly practised in an indirect or hidden way, through the simple accentuation of cultural differences (Vala et al. 1999). In accordance with Taguieff’s (1987) studies, we have called this process hetero-ethnicisation, termed in the past hetero-racialisation. We have also shown that “ethnicised” groups, that is those groups attributed a cultural difference with respect to the majority group, react negatively to the attribution of this difference. In addition, the more that they believe they are seen as culturally different, the greater their feeling they are being discriminated against (Vala, Lopes and Lima 2008).

We therefore propose that racism has undergone adaptive transformations making it possible to maintain the fundamental aspects of traditional racial beliefs, without jeopardising democratic institutions and a non-racist, non-prejudiced self-representation. It is the mutation that racism has undergone,

the subtle shift from the biological to the cultural sphere that allows its overt widespread and socially effective persistence.

Research by Vala and Pereira (2012) supports our argument about the adaptive transformations of the expression of racism. In a study carried out in seven European countries, the authors compared the degree of overt expression of anti-black racism (the target of strong pressure from the anti-racist norm), biological racism without referring to a target (also censored by the anti-racist norm) and the expression of cultural racism (the target of this same norm, though to a lesser degree). The same pattern of response was verified in the seven countries: it was easier to show agreement with the beliefs that sustain cultural racism than with those that express biological racism, and it was more difficult to express anti-black racism than cultural or biological racism. Importantly, other results showed that not only biological racism, but also cultural racism were predictors of anti-black racism.⁴

This movement from biological racism to cultural based racism was anticipated by Lévi-Strauss (1952), theorised by Balibar (1991), among others, and has received empirical support in our own research. The fact that cultural racism correlates with biological racism and that both are predictors of cultural, economic or security threats associated with immigrants perceived as members of different racial, ethnic or religious groups (Vala, Pereira and Ramos, 2006; Ramos, Pereira and Vala, in press) is significant for the conceptualisation of cultural racism. Importantly, the association between cultural racism and the perception of a cultural threat from immigrants perceived as different indicates that social claims aimed at defending national identity are, in many cases, expressions of cultural racism. This transition from cultural racism to the threat to culture and identity is, in fact, implicit in the warning against immigration in the United States launched by Huntington (2004) in his work on “The challenges to America’s national identity”. According to him: “a multicultural America will, in time, become a multireligious America, with groups with different cultures espousing distinctive political values and principles rooted in their particular cultures” (Huntington 2004, 340).

4 This data is part of a European study about Group-Focused Enmity directed by Wilhelm Heitmeyer and Andreas Zick from Bielefeld University (<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/projekte/GFE.html>). A sample of 1 000 individuals per country was used and the data was collected in the winter of 2008/2009. The study used indicators of anti-black racism: e.g. “There is a natural hierarchy between black and white people”; cultural racism: e.g. “Some cultures are clearly superior to others”; and biological racism: e.g. “Some races are more gifted than others”.

This warning from Huntington follows more general warnings against “horizontal equalisation of cultures”. In sum, the evolution of racism from biological assumptions to the cultural domain protects racism from the norm of anti-racism but doesn’t reduce its socially negative impact in the domain of discrimination against racialized groups. This is why it is possible to talk about racism and racial prejudice as an evolving virus (Dovidio and Gaertner 1998) and analyse their historical transformations and mutations under the pressures of social norms.

BIOLOGICAL RACISM: A NEW OUTBREAK?

Based on a normative approach and framed by the concept of social representations, our hypothesis about racism as an adaptive evolving virus suggests that, in democratic western societies, anti-racist legislation and social norms have produced an evolution in the expression of racism: from overt to hidden, from explicit to implicit, and from biologically to culturally based. This same approach raises a new question: to what extent are social norms and anti-racism legislation sufficient to eliminate lay understandings of genetics, as the base for constructing differences between social groups and their hierarchy? In other words, to what extent has the anti-racism norm only been the object of circumstantial compliance in societies where inequalities continue to structure social relations that need to be legitimised?

This question is pertinent within a social and political context where a diffuse “conservative populist political culture” is apparently increasing and where “conservative thinking” (for a contextualisation of this concept, see Jost et al. 2003) is expanding and the anti-discrimination norms, pro-equality norms and anti-racism norms are actively weakened by leaders of that “conservative populist political culture” and amplified by traditional and social media. To what extent may this social, political and ideological context generate a new outbreak of biological racism?

Using data from the ESS8 (2015/16)⁵, it was possible to measure individuals’ agreement with two items expressing two core beliefs of biological racism: the superiority of some social groups over others and the essentialist nature of that

5 The European Social Survey began in 2002. It is a biennial study of social attitudes academically oriented and based on probabilistic samples and highly rigorous methodologies. The ESS8 was carried out in 20 countries involving 40 000 respondents. Data is open access and available on <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>.

superiority. Specifically, participants were asked if they agreed (0 = not; 1 = yes) with these questions: “Do you think some races or ethnic groups are born less intelligent than others?”; “Do you think some races or ethnic groups are born harder working than others?”. The combination of these two indicators allows us to calculate and index biological racism (see table 9.1). Results show that

Table 9.1

Percentages of expression of biological racism (confidence intervals in brackets)

	BIOLOGICAL RACISM
Austria	28.6 (26.7 to 30.5)
Belgium	31.4 (29.4 to 33.3)
Switzerland	35.8 (33.5 to 38.1)
The Czech Republic	44.7 (42.7 to 46.6)
Germany	23.5 (22.2 to 24.7)
Denmark	28.0 (26.2 to 29.9)
Estonia	47.9 (45.5 to 50.4)
Finland	33.6 (32.1 to 35.2)
France	34.1 (32.3 to 35.9)
Ireland	30.5 (28.8 to 32.2)
The Netherlands	10.1 (8.9 to 11.3)
Norway	12.6 (11.3 to 13.9)
Poland	20.5 (18.7 to 22.2)
Sweden	8.5 (7.4 to 9.7)
Slovenia	31.6 (28.9 to 34.3)
Spain	25.5 (23.8 to 27.2)
Hungary	33.5 (31.4 to 35.6)
Latvia	28.1 (26.2 to 30.0)
Portugal	52.9 (50.4 to 55.3)
Great Britain	31.2 (29.4 to 33.04)
Mean	29.2 (28.8 to 29.6)

Note. Data from ESS7 (2014/2015) reported by Ramos, Pereira and Vala (in press).

in 11 European countries out of 20, 30% or more of inquired people (N = 39,860, representative and probabilistic samples) expressed biological racism. Portugal, as well as France, the UK and the majority of the ex-communist countries are among them (Ramos, Pereira and Vala, in press).

Table 9.2 presents a more exigent analysis of the same results. In this table, we only consider the people that answered “yes” or “no” to both sentences. Results show that the qualified majority of inquired people (i.e. more than 2/3 of individuals) disagreed with the two items of racism only in four countries (The Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden). If we take as a criterion whether more than 50% of participants disagreed with both racism items, we find that racism is anti-normative in 14 European countries.

Finally, Table 9.2 also presents the polarisation of positions regarding racism in the countries studied. This index represents the extent to which there is a concentration of individuals supporting the two extremes of the normative dimension of racism, which could serve as a proxy for the estimated tension within the country around two antagonistic positions concerning biological racism: a full support of

Table 9.2

Percentages of individuals who agreed and disagreed with both racism items and polarisation index

	% FULL DISAGREEMENT (FD)	% FULL AGREEMENT (FA)	POLARISATION
Austria	57	13	39
Belgium	55	12	38
Switzerland	43	14	40
The Czech Republic	44	31	65
Germany	60	7	31
Denmark	59	9	34
Estonia	36	34	69
Finland	46	12	38
France	48	10	36
Ireland	53	18	46
The Netherlands	84	3	17
Norway	78	1.4	19
Poland	70	11	33
Sweden	85	1.5	14
Slovenia	60	22	51
Spain	63	13	38
Hungary	54	25	56
Latvia	64	21	48
Portugal	30	39	63
Great Britain	53	17	45
Mean	58	12	38

Note. Data from ESS 7 (2014/2015). Polarisation = $(100 - d) * p$, where: d = absolute difference between FD and FA; p = proportion of participants in the extreme categories, i.e. $p = (FD + FA) / 100$.

racism vs. a full rejection of it. The assumption underlying this index is that the more polarised a country is, the greater the likelihood that the debates on racial issues will be more tense and intense among the groups that support the opposite poles of racial issues. Results presented show that polarisation varies a lot across countries, which can be classified in three levels: high polarisation, including countries with an index higher than 50% (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary and Portugal); moderated polarisation, countries with an index between 30% and 50%, and low polarisation, formed by countries with a score lower than 30% (The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). These results are important because they show that countries with higher levels of biological racism are also the most polarised, meaning that the racist representation of the differences between human groups divides those societies and that, despite its vigour, racism is no longer a hegemonic social representation but a polemical social representation, and subject to social dispute.

With the resurfacing of explicit biological racism having been identified, the question we can raise now concerns its predictors. What, at the individual level, are the factors explaining the persistence of biological racism in European societies? We tested several models (logistical regressions, Table 9.3), including biological racism as a dependent variable, but only with participants who answered “yes” to both racism indicators, and those who answered “no” to the same two indicators. This strategy allows for a better contrast between the respondents’ positions. Two hypotheses were tested. The first one (the second step of each model) predicts that ideological identifications (left-wing vs right-wing and exclusive national identification)⁶ will explain biological racism over and above the control variables, as estimated in the first model (objective and subjective social positioning: gender, age, education, subjective income and relative deprivation).⁷

6 Individuals’ positioning on the *left-right political continuum* varies from 0 (left) to 10 (right) and was measured with this item: “In politics, people sometimes talk of ‘left’ and ‘right’. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?” *Exclusive national identity* is a different score (national identification *minus* European Identification). For the rationale of this later variable, see Ross, Huici and Gomez (2000) and Vala and Costa-Lopes (2012). National identification and identification with Europe were measured by a scale ranging from 1 (not at all emotionally attached) to 4 (very emotionally attached).

7 *Subjective income* was measured by this item: “Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household’s income nowadays?” We coded answers to vary from 1 (“Finding it very difficult on present income”) to 4 (“Living comfortably on present income”); *Education* was measured by years of schooling; *Gender*: 0 = Male, 1 = Female; *Age* was measured in years; ▶

The second hypothesis predicts that power values opposed to universalistic values⁸ (see Schwartz's human values scale, 1996) predicts biological racism over and above positional and identity variables (the third step of each model). This last hypothesis is inspired by the Social Dominance Theory (SDT) proposed by Sidanius and Pratto (1999). According to this theory, societies are organised by group-based hierarchies and people that easily accept these hierarchies and agree that hierarchical systems work positively in how societies function, i. e. these individuals have a high social dominance orientation. In contrast, non-supporters of those social hierarchies have a low social dominance orientation. These different positions are supported by legitimising myths or ideologies that enhance social hierarchies (e.g. conservatism, power glorification and faith in strong leaders) or by hierarchy-attenuating legitimising myths seeking to support group equality (e.g. egalitarianism and universalism). It is in this context that we hypothesise that more support for power values than for universalistic values facilitates racism, specifically biological racism.⁹

Our hypotheses were tested in four different groups of countries, plus in Portugal alone (Table 9.3).¹⁰ Results showed a very consistent pattern of effects across regressions and are in accordance with what has been demonstrated regarding racial prejudice (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995), specifically regarding the positional variables: biological racism mainly increases when subjective income, relative deprivation and education decrease. The consistency of ideological identifications as predictors of biological racism is expressive: the support for biological racism is stronger among right-wingers and those expressing stronger exclusive national identity and, as predicted, these variables explain variance over and above the positional variables,

► *Relative deprivation* (natives vs. immigrants) was measured by this item: "Compared to you, does the government treat new immigrants better or worse?" We coded the answers to vary from 1 (less deprivation) to 5 (more deprivation).

8 *Power vs. Universalism* values is a difference score (Power values *minus* universalism values) as measured by the Schwartz scale used by ESS (scores vary from 1 – lesser adhesion to 6 – higher adhesion to each value).

9 In Sidanius and Pratto's original theory (1999), it is not clear if racism, like prejudice, is a consequence of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) or a legitimising myth of prejudice and inequality generated by SDO.

10 All countries: see Table 9.1; Northern countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden; Central European countries: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom; Eastern Countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia.

Table 9.3 Predictors of biological racism (logistic regression coefficients)

	ALL COUNTRIES (N = 23715)		NORTH EUROPE (N = 4411)		CENTRAL EUROPE (N = 7353)		EASTERN COUNTRIES (N = 7500)		PORTUGAL (N = 785)	
	b	Odds	b	Odds	b	Odds	b	Odds	b	Odds
Intercept	-2.27***	.10	-2.76***	.06	-3.45***	.03	-2.08***	.13	-1.97**	.14
Socio-Positional Variables										
Subjective Income	-3.5***	.70	-5.6***	.57	-1.13**	.87	-1.11*	.91	-.21	.81
Education	-1.0***	.90	-.21***	.81	-.09***	.91	.00	1.00	-.16**	.85
Gender	.00	1.00	-.13	.87	.02	1.02	-1.18**	.84	.08	1.09
Age	.01***	1.01	.01***	1.01	.02***	1.02	.01***	1.01	.03***	1.03
Relat. Deprivation	.31***	1.36	.27***	1.31	.32***	1.38	.16***	1.18	.30**	1.36
R ²	.09***		.10***		.08***		.02***		.18***	
Ideological Variables										
Left-right	.09***	1.09	-.18***	1.19	.12***	1.13	.05***	1.05	.11***	1.12
Exclusive National Ident.	.41***	1.57	.75***	2.11	.59***	1.80	.88***	2.40	.87*	2.39
R ²	.11***		.13***		.10***		.03***		.22***	
Human Values										
Poder vs. Universal.	.27***	1.31	.22***	1.25	.34***	1.40	.06*	1.06	.27***	1.31
R ²	.13***		.14***		.13***		.04**		.24***	

Note. Data from ESS7 (2014/2015). The samples only consider participants that answered “yes” or “no” to both indicators of biological racism. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

further supporting the relevance of symbolic and psycho-social variables in predicting racism.

In the same vein, the salience of power values over universalistic ones, as hypothesised, is also relevant to the prediction of biological racism, demonstrating that support for social inequalities and the enhancement of social hierarchies are key factors in the persistence of biological racism. Note, however, that the explained variance in the five models is not high and, in fact, is particularly lower in eastern countries. This suggests that new theoretical models are needed to understand the persistence of biological racism in contemporary European societies and that these models should rely more on symbolic and ideological dimensions than on socio-positional variables.

RACISM AND IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DISCRIMINATION: IMPACTS ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Previous arguments have proposed that racism, as a social representation, underwent a process of evolving adaptation due to the pressure of the anti-racism norm after World War II and that, recently, a weakness of that norm induced by the conservative populist political climate seems to have revitalised blatant biological racism. However, are these dynamics in social thinking actually important to understand discrimination against racialized minorities? Do they specifically help understand resistance to immigrants' civil rights and, consequently, the social climate of today's diverse societies? The third part of this chapter analyses the impact of racial beliefs on attitudes and discrimination against immigrants perceived as belonging to different racial or ethnic groups.

This topic involves a conceptual controversy: is discrimination already a part of racism? For instance, Brown (1995) defines prejudice as "the holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, the expression of negative affect, or the display of hostile or discriminatory behaviour towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group" (Brown 1995, 8). In the same vein, Bethencourt (2013) defines racism as a combination of prejudice and discrimination. The inclusion of discrimination in the concept of racial prejudice or that of racism goes against the Allportian tradition (Allport 1954), followed by Pettigrew (1991), and many others. This tradition does not include discriminatory behaviour as part of the concept of prejudice, instead race based discrimination is seen as a consequence of racism. Accordingly, we propose that,

from an analytical point of view, it is important to analyse when and how racist beliefs generate discriminatory behaviour. We will focus mainly on facets of discrimination related to core aspects of civil dimensions of social and political life, like access to naturalisation, the use of ethnicist criteria in the selection of immigrants or behavioural orientation against anti-discrimination laws.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION THROUGH THE INTERGROUP TIME BIAS

The first research discussed in demonstrating the effective impact of racist beliefs on discrimination will address a particular implicit or non-deliberative form of discrimination: depersonalisation, i.e. not consider the *other* as an entity *per se* but only as a group member, a first step to dehumanisation (Vala et al. 2012) and exclusion of basic rights. This research evaluates the time invested by white people in forming an impression of white and black people. The hypothesis was that participants would show an implicit intergroup time bias (ITB), meaning that they would put more time into forming an impression of white than black people, an implicit form of discrimination with potential impact on several areas of social life, such as the evaluation of students in schools, employees at work, patients for medical diagnosis, when making political and administrative decisions about minorities. Time, here, signifies the degree of interest, consideration and attention that a person object of evaluation deserves. To test our hypothesis, we carried out a series of studies which showed, as predicted, that white participants invested more time in forming an impression of other white people than of black people. We also showed that the ITB correlated with other unobstructive or implicit measures of prejudice and with the homogenisation of black people (the perception they are not individual entities but mere members of a group). More importantly, our studies also showed that explicit racism is the main predictor of ITB. In a broader sense, ITB is a form of discrimination predicted by racism that depersonalises or negates an individual identity or a personhood status, the first step to being considered a citizen, to *other*.

RACISM, OPPOSITION TO NATURALISATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND TO ANTI-RACIST LEGISLATION

The negation of personhood status to a member of a racialized group is an important step in the process of their dehumanisation and, consequently,

negation of citizenship. As with our studies about ITB, other research has analysed the relationship between racism and discrimination at interpersonal or group levels. For instance, several authors have shown the impact of racism on avoiding contact with people perceived as members of a racial outgroup (Verkuyten and Thigs 2002; Williams and Eberhardt 2008). Other studies have shown that racism facilitates the rationalisation of social inequalities (Yzerbyt, Rocher and Schadron 1997); or even that people who hold racist beliefs are more likely to racially stereotype others (Bastian and Haslam 2006). However, few studies demonstrate the impact of racial beliefs on discrimination concerning public policy domains.

Contrary to this panorama, Pereira, Vala and Costa-Lopes (2009, study 2), using data from the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme, 2003)¹¹ carried out in Portugal and Switzerland, analysed the correlation between an explicit measure of racism and a measure of opposition to the naturalisation of immigrants. Results clearly showed that the higher the endorsement of racist beliefs, the higher the opposition to the naturalisation of immigrants the key to their access to civil, political and labour rights (for a contextualisation of citizenship and immigration in Portugal, see Peixoto 2013).

Another central aspect of basic rights in modern democracies includes the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of race or ethnicity. To learn the position of Europeans on this, Ramos, Vala and Pereira (2008) inquired about opposition towards anti-racist laws in thirteen European countries, and about the factors underlying opposition to anti-racist legislation. According to the anti-racism norm, only 18% of Europeans showed an overt opposition to such policies in 2002 (ESS1). More importantly, however, is the fact that the same study demonstrated that individual factors, more than contextual or structural ones (unemployment, percentage of foreign people, percentage of non-European people, and vote for right-wing parties),¹² explain the opposition towards anti-racist legislation. Indeed, conservation

11 The item used to measure racism in this study was: "Imagine that one of your children has children with someone of a different colour. In other words, imagine that your grandchild was a different colour from you. Would you have any difficulty in accepting this?" As we know, the prohibition of "interracial" marriage was supposedly a way to guarantee white purity and supremacy, a core aspect of racism.

12 These results were obtained through a *Multilevel Analysis* (for a complete description of the results, see Ramos, Vala and Pereira 2008).

of social order values, racism¹³ and the feeling that immigrants constitute a threat¹⁴ contribute to opposition to anti-racist legislation. Moreover, adhesion to universalistic values was positively related to support for anti-racist legislation.

To consolidate the role of racist beliefs on discrimination in the domain of public policies, Ramos, Pereira and Vala (in press) hypothesised and found the impact of both biological and cultural racism on support for ethnicist criteria in the selection of immigrants that can be received by a European country: to be white, Christian and able to speak the host country's language. In other words, exclusion was based on ancestrally and supposedly "natural" criteria and not on aspects that individuals can control.

Despite the clear prejudice in racialized people being denied civil rights, naturalisation and anti-racist legislation, the anti-racist norm has operated efficiently by obliging discrimination to justify itself through legitimising mechanisms. This is the final step of our argument in favour of an approach to racism based on the articulation between social representations and social norms.

RACISM AND THE LEGITIMATION OF DISCRIMINATION

Legitimation refers to the social and psychological processes by which attitudes and behaviours are justified and perceived as appropriate, conforming to social norms, fairness and justice. Legitimation and legitimacy are fundamental factors in interpersonal, intergroup, social and institutional functioning (for a review, see Tyler 2006; Costa-Lopes et al. 2013; Jost and Major 2001; White and Crandall 2017). The need for legitimation is particularly relevant when a non-normative belief or behaviour is a stake.

13 The items we used to measure racism in the ESS1 wave (to accept or not accept a hierarchical superior from another race or ethnic group; to accept or not accept a relative's marriage with a person of another race or ethnic group) are sometimes considered measures of prejudice, sometimes measures of social distance. From our point of view, these items can be considered measures of racism because they address key points of lay thinking about race: the superiority of one group relative to another; and the superior group's fear of degeneration through sexual contact with an inferior group.

14 Two dimensions were considered on the perception of threat: a *symbolic* and a *realistic* one (Stephan and Stephan 2000). The symbolic dimension regards the threat to identity and cultural factors; the realistic one regards threats to personal security and economic well-being. Recent research suggests the importance of demographic threat in relation to immigration (Outhen et al. 2018), an aspect that could be included in the threat to in-group security.

As summarised by Ramos, Pereira and Vala (in press), the social psychological mechanism involved in legitimising processes of racial prejudice have been specifically analysed by the Theory of Aversive Racism (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986) and the Justification – Suppression Model (Crandall and Eshleman 2003). Both theories propose that normative justifications allow individuals to express prejudice without feeling or perceiving auto or hetero disapproval and, consequently, protect their self-esteem. The Justified Discrimination Model (JDM) (Pereira, Vala and Leyens 2009; Pereira, Vala and Costa-Lopes 2010) has also examined the hypothesis that discrimination should be legitimised specifically in contexts where the egalitarian norm is salient (Pereira, Vala and Leyens 2009).

It was in this theoretical context that our research aimed to demonstrate that perceptions of threat play an important legitimising role in discrimination and racialized social relations. It was found that the relationship between racism and discrimination was legitimised by the perception that those who are racialized represent a threat to society and, consequently, when they are a target of negative interpersonal or institutional behaviours, these behaviours are not the result of racism or prejudice but the consequence of the need to protect society.

Using data from ESS7 (2014/15), Ramos, Pereira and Vala (in press) showed that biological and cultural racism not only predict the preference for ethnicist criteria in the selection of immigrants, but also that both biological and cultural racism predict the perception that migrants from poorer countries outside Europe and migrants perceived to belong to a different race or ethnic groups represent an economic threat and a threat to the cultural identity of host European countries. Importantly, these threat perceptions legitimise the association between racism and the preference for ethnicist criteria for selecting immigrants. The preference for those criteria are psychologically dissociated from racism and associated with threat perceptions and, therefore, the self-image of individuals is protected from the censure of the anti-racism norm and self-esteem is maintained (Pereira, Álvaro and Vala 2018).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary European societies are “racially” and “ethnically” diverse. This diversity will continue to increase due to European demographic and economic

needs. Peaceful social relations in diverse societies thus imply recognising the rights of all types of minorities, particularly those that are the target of racialisation and ethnicisation. This is why the study of racism is a core topic in research about contemporary European societies, mainly regarding the discrimination processes against minorities and their exclusion from civil rights. It is here that this chapter offers new contributions to better understand the social representations that create and hierarchise social categories as if they were natural entities, and the mutations those social representations have gone through regarding the supposed inferiority of some human groups and the role of the anti-racist norm in those mutations: from overt to covert, from explicit to implicit, from biologically to culturally based.

Finally, the paper addresses the complex relationship between racism, discrimination and legitimation. This dynamic approach to racist beliefs does not mean that when a “new” form of expressing racism emerges or is identified, the others disappear. For example, cultural racism coexists with biological racism, albeit with the latter being more anti-normative.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

In order to analyse these social and psychological processes, we propose three changes in the study of racism. The first is the conceptual differentiation between racism and racial prejudice; the second is the analysis of racism within the framework of social representations; the third change refers to the need to introduce social norms into the analysis of racial prejudice and racism. In this last domain, we have shown how normative pressures have provoked a shift in overt biological racism and forced social representations of differences between human groups to be reconfigured, associating them not only with biological essences but also cultural ones.

AN OUTBREAK OF BIOLOGICAL RACISM?

The central question we put regarding the racism dynamic concerns a possible outbreak of biological racism. Based on an ESS7 carried out in 20 European countries (2014/2015), high levels of biological racism were identified in eleven countries, despite the anti-racism norm continuing to be majoritarian. It is in this context that the social representations of the organisation of social groups sustaining racism are no longer hegemonic, but polemical, i. e. subject

to social controversy and dispute, and the source of conflictual relations between groups.

However, the anti-racist norm can be weakened by emergence of a far-right political culture. Indeed, immigrants and refugees are a target of populist political leaders, and their anti-immigration and pro-white supremacism messages are amplified by conventional media and electronic social networks (and receive support from the revival of “race science”). Thus, the weakening of the anti-racist norm can open the door to an outbreak of biological racism. Moreover, the combination of these factors can increase the representation of immigrants perceived as belonging to another race or ethnic group as inferior and a threat to host countries’ security, economic well-being and sense of attachment to European identity and culture.

Until now, however, and contrary to the messages spread by both the traditional and new social media, the majority of Europeans are resisting anti-immigration and pro-white supremacist positions disseminated by far-right leaders. According to the ESS results, openness to receiving immigrants increased, albeit slightly, from 2002/3 to 2016/2017 across Europe, except in 7 out of 20 countries (Ramos 2018): Slovenia, the Check Republic, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Austria and Italy. In those countries, negative attitudes towards immigrants are statistically higher than both the European mean and the middle point of the evaluation scale used.

Moreover, threat perceptions associated with immigration in the economic field decreased across Europe from 2002/2003 to 2016/2017, except in Austria and Hungary. The picture, however, is not as positive regarding threat to cultural identity. The perception that immigration represents a cultural threat increased across Europe (despite being below the medium point of the scale used, except in Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Lithuania and the Check Republic) (Ramos 2018). Note, however, that the effect of active and structured minorities can easily spread anti-immigration feelings across Europe.

This panorama is, therefore, characterised by a diffused increase in the perception of immigrants as a threat to cultural identity and by expressive percentages endorsing racial beliefs in a significant number of European countries. Despite the salience of the anti-racism norm, that panorama indicates that the legitimization of discrimination against immigrants has space to increase, specifically regarding discrimination in the domain of basic civil rights. The diagnosed scenario is thus a mixture of anti-racist norm resistance and the emergence of conditions that could facilitate the outbreak of biological racism.

FUTURE RESEARCH ISSUES

Our data and theoretical reasoning raise several questions that deserve future attention. One question that arises is the role that financial crises and austerity policies could have had in the panorama we have described. It was not possible for this chapter to address these topics systematically, because we don't have data that directly enables a comparison between pre and post financial crisis concerning racist beliefs. However, a rough comparison of data from ESS7 (2014/15) regarding biological racism and the data collected in 2008/2009 from the GFE project (Vala and Pereira 2012) suggests that the situation is now apparently worse. Contrary to this, as described above, the representation of immigrants as a threat decreased in 2014/15 compared to 2002/3, except regarding the perception of threat to European cultural identity. If one considers the apparent inconsistency between that data and the fact that individual racial beliefs and attitudes towards immigration are more dependent on moral values than individual economic concerns (Ramos et al. 2008), the direct impact of financial crisis on the social phenomena studied is not obvious. However, financial crisis and restrictive measures in social public policies may have an indirect effect on racial beliefs and attitudes towards immigration via the scapegoat role that right-wing parties and the far-right attribute to immigration. The best illustrative case of this hypothesis is the UK's Brexit debate.

In any case, and despite the impact of financial crisis on everyday life, the pro-immigration and anti-racism norm continue to be majoritarian, in spite of suffering some weakening as shown by the increased far-right vote in recent elections, mainly across central European countries. Nevertheless, this hypothesis should be empirically evaluated because immigration issues may be only one of the drivers of this increase (other drivers may include: nationalism, protectionism, conservatism, perceived insecurity, or the revival by the far-right of a social agenda, a topic abandoned by most conventional left-wing parties, etc.).

Readers may also be surprised by the high expression of biological racism in Portugal, and data demonstrating that it was only in the ESS 8 (Ramos 2018) that Portugal manifested a position towards receiving immigrants perceived as racially or ethnically different that was below the middle point of the scale. We propose the hypothesis that this is less an effect of economic insecurity than of a widespread luso-tropicalistic ideology (Valentim 2008), according to which the Portuguese are naturally a people overt to diversity, dialogue with other cultures and the creators of a cordial colonisation. Our hypothesis is that

these beliefs can implicitly protect people from the idea that they share racist beliefs. We hypothesise that, ironically, the belief that racism doesn't exist in Portugal could facilitate the spontaneous expression of racism.

The results about high levels of racist expression in Portugal can also stimulate questions about the space for the far-right in the country. Our hypothesis here is that one or two more generations would be required for the far-right to have an organised political expression in Portugal. Currently, the fascist dictatorship and its social consequences is very alive in collective memory and the match between authoritarian beliefs and adherence to a political organisation that promotes such beliefs is difficult to construct due to the negative cognitions and emotions collective memory evokes.

IS RACISM INEVITABLE?

Our final comment about the issues discussed in this chapter is on the question of the inevitability of racism. In the theoretical context of social psychology, the process of social categorisation and the differentiation between groups it creates drives a high probability of intergroup negative attitudes and forms of discrimination that can vary from innocuous ingroup favouritism to radical alterity and the representation of members of the other group as inferior or non-human. These socio-psychological processes may feed racist beliefs but racism as a social representation of how human groups are organised is dependent on the structure of social relations. It evolves according to social changes and activates discrimination and legitimising processes if and when discrimination needs to be legitimised; in other words, in democratic contexts. Racism is not inevitable, but it survives in democratic contexts via legitimising processes.

Indeed, the research results that are reviewed in this chapter illustrate how the expressions of racism are not crystallised across countries. They also show how different levels and forms of expression of racism depend on the social relations' dynamic framing the motivations underlying social identities, and the content of social representations about the nature of human groups. Moreover, results presented validate the hypothesis that the salience of egalitarian norms, like the anti-racism norm, may weaken racist beliefs and inhibit the expression of racism. Despite that we may recognise the possibility that the anti-racism norm has led racism into "adaptive mutations" only in contexts in which the "vaccine of universalism and egalitarianism" has been more widely disseminated.

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