The Invisible and the Hypervisible: Anti-Asian Racism in Europe and Historico-Racial Schema

Abstract: Despite its prevalence and severity, anti-Asian racism (AAR) in Europe is often overlooked, both socially and politically. Integrating the Fanonian concept of subjectivity, this study explores how the power dynamics of AAR operate and how the EU's delayed recognition of AAR reinforce colonial stereotypes. Drawing on empirical evidence from Asian Voices Europe (2024), we argue that AAR is perpetuated not only through structural and institutional mechanisms but is also deeply embedded in social and psychological schemas that shape social perception and interactions. The historico-racial schema, which imposes a distorted identity onto racialized bodies, reveals how the White gaze constrains the lived experiences of the Asian diaspora, forcing them to navigate a dual status of hypervisibility and invisibility. This study emphasizes the necessity of deconstructing these entrenched schemas to address the complex realities of AAR and to develop more effective intersectional anti-racist strategies.

Bibliography

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1.   Introduction

The European Union (EU)'s 2020-2025 Anti-Racism Action Plan, launched by the European Commission (EC), signals that anti-racism has become "a social priority for the EU" (Pascoët 2020). In contrast to the EU's earlier steps in addressing racism, the current plan claims to recognize the structural dimension of racism through an intersectional approach (European Commission 2020). 'Intersecting discrimination' refers to "a situation where several grounds of discrimination interact with each other at the same time in such a way that they become inseparable and their combination creates a new ground" (Council of the European Union 2019: 11).

Over the past two decades, intersectionality has been widely established as a framework, a theoretical concept, and a field of study within gender studies and as a practice in feminist movements and politics. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), the term 'intersectionality' highlights the experiences of discrimination and marginalization faced by Black women, advocating for a move away from single-axis analysis in both anti-discrimination studies and feminist political strategies. Crenshaw warned that if anti-racist interventions only articulate racism along particular dimensions, this often reinforces 'strategic silence' (Crenshaw 1991: 1253). One of the adverse consequences of anti-racist mainstreaming is that policies are "decontextualized from the lived experience of racialized peoples and promote a universalized vision of equality" (Lentin 2004: 439). The importance of the new action plan against racism in the EU lies in the need to thoroughly understand the diverse contexts of oppression experienced by members of different marginalized communities. In this context, addressing the issue of anti-Asian racism (AAR) in Europe is crucial for its battle against racism.

AAR has had a long but largely undocumented history in Europe but was not officially recognized in the EU, either at the Member State or EU level until July 2022.[1] Although AAR has become more visible to Whites since the COVID-19 pandemic, colonial biases and stereotypical representations of Asian diasporas in Europe have a long-standing history.[2,3] The depiction of Asians as 'exotic' and 'dangerous' has roots in colonial narratives that date back to the 16th century and continue to influence perceptions today.[4] These portrayals oscillate between the 'Yellow Peril' stereotype - viewing Asians as a societal threat - and the 'model minority' myth - stereotyping Asians as financially successful and well-assimilated into White communities.[5] Such dual portrayals, encompassing both the 'Yellow Peril' and 'model minority' myths, draw from orientalist narratives, which act as instruments of hegemony, reinforce simplistic stereotypes, and overlook the varied experiences of Asians in Europe.[6] The narratives not only marginalize but also limit the recognition of the multifaceted realities faced by Asian diasporas and fragment Asian communities, hindering solidarity with other socio-ethnic minorities and perpetuating structural inequalities.[7] Asian Voices Europe (AVE), a consultant for the EU's action plan, provides empirical evidence which analyzes the specific forms of racial discrimination faced by the Asian diaspora in the European context and emphasizes the need for an intersectional approach in the EU's action plan.

This paper explores various forms of social inequality and oppression that AAR takes in Europe, with the primary research question addressing how these manifestations are influenced by

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[1] European Commission 2020a, 2020b, Asian Voices Europe 2024.
[2] See Painter 2020 for the capitalized use of the term 'White'.
[3] Yeh 2020, Suda, Mayer & Nguyen 2020, Mai 2020, Wang et al. 2021.
[4] Chatterjee & Eaton 2006, Mann 2007, Reid 2021.
[5] Toupin & Son 1991, M. Cho 1994, Hartlep and Bui 2020.
[6] De Cook & Yoon 2021, De Leon 202, Yeh 2014.
[7] Kawai 2005, Li and Nicholson Jr. 2021, Cho 2021.

intersecting systems of oppression. By weaving Frantz Fanon's phenomenological insights into this inquiry, the study examines hegemonic structures that sustain intersectional racism, drawing on empirical evidence from AVE's (2024) report to ground the analysis. Importantly, the relational and embodied nature of subjectivity offers a critical lens in analyzing how these power dynamics are not only socially constructed but also embodied and experienced in everyday interactions. This integrated approach provides a richer understanding of the specific oppressions and injustices tied to AAR.

2.   Power Dynamics and Embodied Racism

Recognizing social forces such as power, racism, and privilege, as argued by Critical Race Theory (CRT), is crucial to addressing issues embedded in societal structures.[8] CRT views racism as a system composed of 'racial prejudice plus power,' which creates a dominant race and maintains racial hierarchy (Barndt 1991: 29). Here, White supremacy is seen as a system deeply embedded in social structures and institutions, which continues to restructure itself in order to protect its privileges.[9] CRT focuses on constructing narratives which prioritize experiential knowledge that generate this power dynamic, by valuing the lived experiences of marginalized individuals to reveal the impact of racism on their lives. By adopting intersectionality within CRT (I-CRT), we are able to further examine intertwined power dynamics as well as its contestations. The concept of intersectionality has been pivotal in dissecting the complexities of societal structures and emphasizes the intersection of race with other forms of social forces such as gender and class (Collins 2019). At its core, the I-CRT approach assesses individuals' and in-groups' social positions within these intersecting power dynamics to address social injustices and effectively promote notions of meritocracy. The principles of I-CRT have been integrated into anti-racist and anti-colonial political movements, emphasizing the need for a critical social theory to inform their political praxis (Collins 2022).

Frantz Fanon's work provides a profound complement to I-CRT, by noting the existential and psychological dimensions of racism (Collins 2019: 73–83). Fanon (1952) introduces the concept of the 'historico-racial schema' to delineate how historical and social narratives of race shape the bodily experiences of racialized individuals. This offers a crucial understanding of how power dynamics operate at the levels of perception and embodiment, extending CRT's analysis beyond the structural to the interpersonal and intrapersonal realms. The 'historico-racial schema' further develops Merleau-Ponty's view on the 'body schema', a dynamic organizational structure interacting with the world at large. For Fanon, the body schema is not a neutral, enabling framework for all individuals but is instead significantly affected by societal perceptions and stereotypes imposed by others (Fanon 1952: 25-31). Unlike the body schema, which is supposed to enable intersubjectivity - seamless interaction with the world - the historico-racial schema disrupts this interaction, imposing a third-person perspective that alienates the racialized subject from their own body. If one's social relations are oppressive, due to particular bodily and cultural differences that are stigmatized, this bodily judgment is itself internalized, affecting not only how that individual responds to and is responded to by others, but also how one regards oneself and their bodily possibilities (Fanon 1952: 12-14). This dynamic creates a conflict between the body schema and the historico-racial schema, leading to a form of existential trauma that affects the individual's self-conception and their ability to act freely (Fanon 1952: 143-145). Fanon further illustrates how historical narratives and social contexts shape the lived experience of race, creating a disjointed self that struggles with both invisibility and hypervisibility (Fanon 1952: 109).

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[8] Lawrence 1987, Omi & Winant 1994, Stefancic & Delgado 2000.
[9] Bell 1995, Bonilla-Silva 2015, Harris 1999.

Through the notion of the 'historico-racial schema', Fanon (1989) explores how historical narratives and colonial legacies contribute to the formation of racialized identities. The historico-racial schema reflects the internalization of stereotypes and prejudices that are projected onto racialized bodies by the dominant White gaze. The colonizer's perception imposes an identity onto the colonized, leading to a form of internalized oppression where the colonized view themselves through the distorted lens of the colonizer (Fanon 1963: 35-37). This gaze not only objectifies but also alienates, compelling the racialized subject to internalize oppressive stereotypes, creating a fractured sense of self that oscillates between personal authenticity and identities imposed by the dominant culture's perceptions (Fanon 1963: 135-139). The historico-racial schema thus functions as a restrictive framework, redefining how the racialized body can act and be perceived, limiting its capacity to engage freely with the world. This is where Fanon's work aligns with CRT's critique of the so-called 'colorblind' legal and social frameworks that ignore these deeply ingrained narratives. By revealing how these schemas prestructure the experiences of racialized bodies, we can examine how systemic inequities are sustained and how they can be contested through narratives and counternarratives that challenge the status quo.

The historico-racial schema not only impacts the racialized individual but also intersects with other oppressive schemas, such as those related to gender and class, to further constrain the lived experience of racialized peoples (Al-Saji 2010; Gibson 2017). This intersectionality complicates the notion of a universal body schema and challenges Merleau-Ponty's idea that all bodies can engage with the world in an equally fluid and open manner. Instead, the historico-racial schema illustrates how power dynamics and historical contexts shape the very possibilities of bodily existence for marginalized individuals. Overall, the historico-racial schema reveals how deeply embedded intersectional racism is situated in the lived experiences of marginalized people: The body is not just a neutral medium of interaction but is profoundly shaped by societal narratives and histories of oppression. The coexistence of multiple oppressive schemas creates a complex web of limitations that shape the possibilities for action and self-expression for those whose bodies are alienated by society.

This study questions how multidimensional racism as a system creates narratives that impact our bodies. Adopting Fanon's concept of racialized embodiment (Ngo 2017; Al-Saji 2010), we begin our analysis by examining AVE's (2024) findings to investigate how racism operates within power dynamics. Integrating Fanon's insights into I-CRT allows for a more comprehensive critique of multidimensional racism, one that acknowledges both the systemic structures that maintain social inequalities and the embodied experiences of those who live it. We aim to shift the focus from a phenomenological exploration of Fanon's works to using his insights as a tool to uncover the underlying mechanisms of racism and to reveal how intersecting forms of discrimination manifest and are reinforced. By applying this lens, we seek to identify the subtleties of how racism and oppression are embodied and maintained in everyday contexts, providing a deeper understanding of the systemic nature of AAR in Europe.

3.   Breaking Silence: The First Europe-Wide Survey on Anti-Asian Racism

AVE (2020; 2024) conducted two surveys examining the racial discrimination faced by Asian diasporas across Europe, as the first Europe-wide efforts data collection and analysis on AAR. Building on previous research, including AVE Survey I (2020) and II (2024), the reports offer a comprehensive analysis of AAR through an intersectional lens. AVE Survey I, conducted between February and April 2020, focused on anti-Asian harassment during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Netherlands and surrounding European countries. This survey, which gathered responses from 168 participants, articulated key themes such as physical harassment, verbal

abuse, social exclusion, and property damage. These findings laid the groundwork for the more expansive AVE Survey II.

AVE Survey II explored the intersectional dimensions of racial discrimination faced by Asian diasporas across Europe. Conducted from June 14 to August 6, 2021, this survey investigated how factors like gender, age, country of residence, and one's duration of residence in Europe intersect with experiences of AAR. The survey was available in 10 different languages to increase linguistic accessibility.[10] With 1,275 participants and 855 valid responses, the survey employed both quantitative and qualitative datasets, revealing the lived experiences of AAR. The data collection adhered to EU-GDPR guidelines to ensure participant confidentiality.[11]

The demographic profile of participants in AVE Survey II is as follows: The majority of the respondents are women, comprising 81%, followed by men at 16%, and a small percentage of non-binary and gender diverse (NBGD) individuals. The largest age group is 20-29 years old, making up 52% of the sample, with 31% in the 30-39 age group. The respondents are mainly of East Asian descent (70%), followed by South-East Asian (20%) and smaller proportions identifying as South Asian (3%), multiracial (4%), and others (3%). The largest group resides in the Netherlands (30%), followed by Germany (23%), France (14%), and the United Kingdom (13%). Most respondents have lived in Europe for over 20 years (32%), with another significant group residing for 3-5 years (20%). The reasons for residency vary, with 27% being born in Europe, 25% having migrated for their studies, and 16% residing as dependents, with others citing multiple reasons.

AVE (2024) seeks to dissect how social categories such as race and gender interact to shape the experiences of the Asian diaspora and to examine the complex inequalities created by interlinked and mutually reinforcing power dynamics. The report explores the marginalized voices, perspectives, and lived experiences of the Asian diaspora, emphasizing the need for their inclusion and representation in Europe. The AVE (2024) report, therefore, stands as a pivotal resource for understanding forms and patterns of AAR in Europe.

4.   Anti-Asian Racism: the Invisible and the Hypervisible

Findings from the AVE (2024) Survey II revealed that a staggering 94% of respondents recognized the existence of racial discrimination against Asians in European countries, with 92.2% of respondents reporting having experienced racial discrimination first-hand in Europe. Racial harassment emerged as a significant concern, with over 90% of respondents expressing concern. Prevalent forms of AAR identified ranged from verbal harassment (85% experiencing racist name-calling) to physical abuse (18%) with variations observed on gender, age, and other intersecting factors - figures higher than those reported in the US during a similar period.[12,13] Over half of the respondents faced such incidents multiple times a year, and 28% encountered them on a monthly basis. Here we cite an experience of physical assault and consequent neglect by both individuals and state authority, as shared by a male respondent in his 30s, residing in France:

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[10] The languages used in this survey were Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
[11] See Voigt & Von dem Bussche 2017 for the details of the Guideline.
[12] Similarly, in the US, Borja & Gibson 2021:1 found that verbal harassment was the most common form of racism (79.68%), while physical assault accounted for 16.49% of incidents, according to the Virulent Hate + report.
[13] The incidents often involved multiple types of harassment, so the percentages exceed 100% as they were tagged in all applicable categories.

This physical assault happened inside [a] store with more than a dozen customers around, including a clerk, but nobody [came to] help me even though I was bleeding from my face. I asked the clerk to report the incident to the police, but the clerk dismissed it and said, "Nothing is happening here, so I am not going to report it. Just go home quickly." [...] The pain and swelling in my beaten face worsened, and I had to go to the emergency hospital for treatment. I also tried to file a report with the police again, but unfortunately, there was no major investigation [undertaken], and all I heard from the police was, "You had no luck." These memories still hurt me a lot. [...] Whenever I try to share this experience with people, they simply brush it off, saying, "That is not a big deal." This leaves me with no one that I can [trust]. (AVE 2024: 36)

Despite the prevalence and severity of AAR, AAR was not acknowledged as a distinct form of racism until July 2022 in the EU, either at the national or Union level. This lack of recognition of AAR in European societies, both socially and politically, is not a passive oversight but an active process of rendering Asian experiences invisible within the broader racial discourse (Lee et al. 2022). The systemic invisibility of AAR is also a manifestation of what Fanon would describe as the ontological expansiveness of Whiteness (Fanon 1952: 186-191). In European societies, the dominant White body sets the terms of visibility and recognition, dictating what counts as 'legitimate' experiences of racism. This habitual orientation of the White gaze and unmarked presence defines social norms and renders the experiences of racialized others, such as the Asian diaspora, invisible. Asian individuals are not seen as subjects with complex and legitimate experiences of racism. Instead, they are often reduced to stereotypes such as the 'model minority,' presumed to be successful, integrated, and thus unaffected by racism. This perception prevents their suffering from being acknowledged and addressed. It is not that these experiences are unknown; rather, they are systematically suppressed or sidelined because racism against Asians has not been regarded as seriously as other forms of racism by the White gaze, which often focuses on a Black-White binary (cf. The Racial Triangulation: Kim 1999; Modood & Sealy 2022). This dynamic is not only a matter of perception but is deeply embedded in the social and institutional structures that shape public consciousness and policy.

This long-standing issue of AAR intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing previously overlooked issues into the consciousness of the White general public. The pandemic exacerbated discriminatory experiences, with 81% of respondents attributing increased racial harassment to it. Respondents who had lived in Europe for longer (over 16 years) were more likely to recognize this intensified racism, suggesting that long-term residents have a deeper understanding of the shifting dynamics of racism in their countries of residence. A female respondent in her 30s, residing in France, noted that these incidents occurred regularly before the onset of the pandemic, illustrating the persistent nature of AAR in her daily life:

People used to say 'Nihao' [in a] mocking [tone] countless times, but now it has changed to 'Corona'. [...] Irrespective of the pandemic, [even] before the pandemic, it was very annoying to be ridiculed for the gestures by [slanting] eyes or making [fun of me] by people [who used to] be good friends. [...] When I got angry about [those] gestures, they [didn't] take it seriously. (AVE 2024: 34-35)

This surge in anti-Asian sentiment reflects a deeper, systemic problem. The pandemic acted as a catalyst, heightening its visibility of long-standing prejudices in Europe, making them more explicit and severe. A female respondent in her 50s, residing in France, shared her experience of verbal harassment, especially after the outbreak of the pandemic:

After the outbreak of COVID-19, a person who passed by me shouted in front of my face, "Fucking coronavirus, bastards" [...] Someone shouted "fuck Corona" right in my ear in a shopping centre near my flat. [...] I was called "corona" when I walk[ed around] the city. [...] Asians including me [were] treated as if we were all corona carriers. (AVE 2024: 35)

This phenomenon can also be understood through the lens of hypervisibility, an excessive and often negative form of attention that certain social groups receive, reducing them to stereotypes

or perceived threats (Hartman 1997). During the pandemic, Asian individuals became hypervisible as supposed carriers of the virus, embodying social fears and anxieties. This hypervisibility was not a new phenomenon but an amplification of pre-existing stereotypes that framed Asians as potential dangers, reminiscent of the 'Yellow Peril' since 1870 (Tsu 2005: 80).[14] This surge in hostility reflects the broader societal tendency to scapegoat certain groups during times of crisis, its origins tracing back to the narrative of Asians as 'perpetual foreigners,' which is ingrained in the historico-racial schema. The legacy of colonialism and migration has shaped how Asian individuals are perceived, positioning them as 'others.' The pandemic reactivated these historical narratives, reinforcing them and in more visible and virulent forms, and further marginalizing Asian diasporas in Europe. This dual process of being hypervisible as 'virus carriers' while being socially invisible in their full complexity heightens the depth of exclusion faced by the Asian diaspora.

The racialized subject, confronted with a hostile social gaze, absorbs societal perceptions and views themselves through the lens of the oppressor, leading to a distorted self-conception. This internal conflict creates a fractured sense of self, wherein the individual struggles between how they are perceived and how they wish to express their own identity. AVE II's findings on self-censorship showed avoidance of public spaces.[15] A non-binary respondent in their 20s, residing in the Netherlands, shared their experience of avoiding going outside to reduce the risk of facing racial discrimination:

[B]ecause of the pandemic, I have stayed at home a lot to reduce the risks of [facing] racial harassment. I still think that [after] the pandemic and the way the media covered it [to begin with], I would face a lot more discrimination if I chose to go out as much as I wanted to [...] (AVE 2024: 35)

In this context, intersubjectivity, where subject and object are intertwined, allows us to see this process of racialization as more than just external oppression; it becomes internalized. Asians are not just seen as others; they must navigate their identity within this imposed framework, often modifying their behavior, speech, or appearance to mitigate the effects of the White gaze. This shapes how individuals see themselves and their place in society. The internalization of the White gaze, as Fanon describes, forces racialized subjects to conform to the stereotypes and limitations imposed on them, resulting in feelings of alienation and a restricted sense of agency.

5.   Gendered Racism: Double-Bound Subjectivity

AVE (2024) revealed intersectional patterns of AAR, with gender playing a significant role in shaping lived experiences. NBGD populations (100%) as well as women (93.8%) displayed a higher level of concern about racial discrimination compared to men (77%) (AVE 2024: 28-32). Similarly, compared to male respondents (50%), women (93%) and NBGD people (100%) reported higher rates of discrimination based on racial and ethnic identity.[16] Based on sex-/gender-related remarks, NBGD people (86%) and women (50%) also reported having experienced violence at higher rates compared to men (16%), as shown in Figure 1 (AVE 2024: 30):

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[14] While the precise terms have varied over time, the historical roots of the 'Yellow Peril' can be traced back to the emergence of Western anxieties about the perceived threat from the East, during the era of Genghis Khan and the Mongolian expansion into Europe in the 13th century. See also Marchetti 1994, Keevak 2011.

[15] Similarly, nearly two-thirds (67.45%) of anti-Asian harassment incidents in the US occurred in public places like streets, and public transit, heightening fear and anxiety among Asian Americans (Borja & Gibson 2021: 2).

[16] The gender pattern is also observed in the US: Asian women were exposed to anti-Asian harassment in 68% of cases (Borja & Gibson 2021:13).
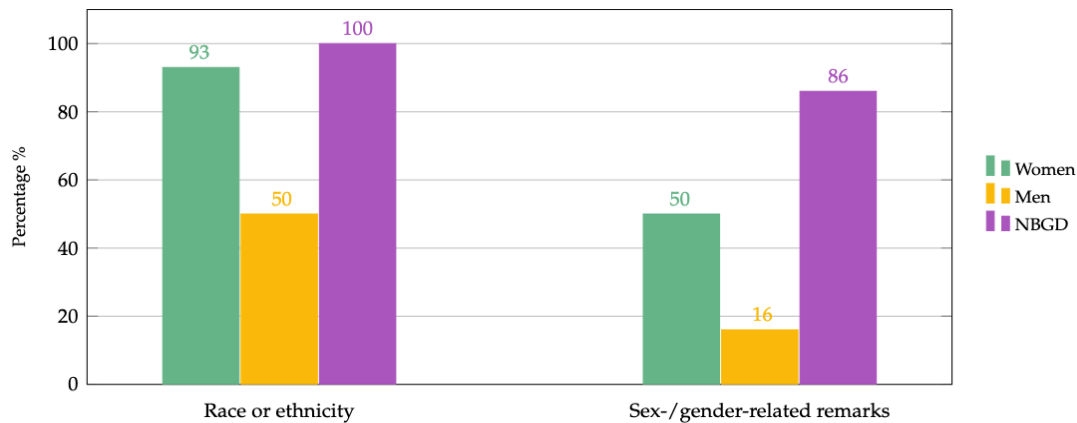
Figure 1. How do people across gender groups experience the two forms of discrimination? (n=855)

This gendered pattern of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains consistent across the four countries where the majority of our respondents are located, as illustrated in Figure 2 (AVE 2024: 30). Although their degree of exposure varies, Asian NBGD people faced the highest levels of violence in all surveyed countries (except in France, where data is limited). Asian women are exposed to SGBV at rates higher than men. For instance, in Germany, women (62%) reported experiencing SGBV at nearly five times at the rate of men (12%), while in France, the incidents reported by women (40%) were almost four times higher that of men (11%):
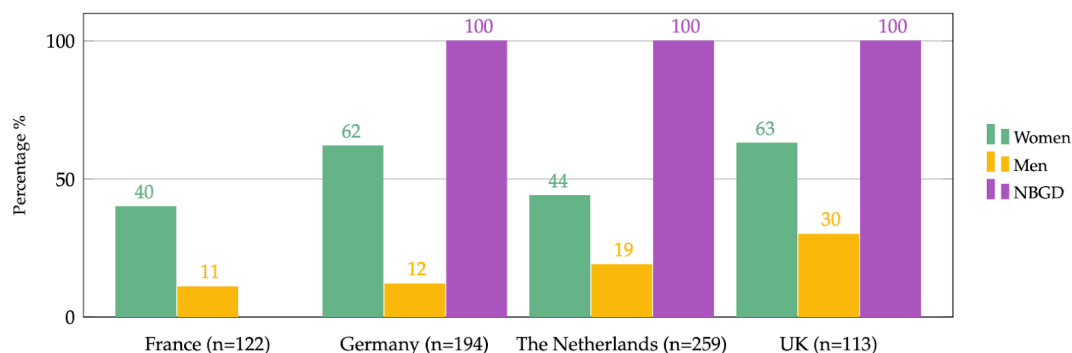

Figure 2. SGBV experienced by different gendered groups in four European countries

Fanon's historico-racial schema can be extended to include a 'gender schema' that dictates acceptable gender expressions within a racialized body. AVE's data shows that NBGD participants report a higher rate of racial and ethnic discrimination and a far higher rate of SGBV compared to their cisgender counterparts. For NBGD people, particularly those who are racialized, the White gaze reinforces binary gender stereotypes, categorizing individuals into rigid (cis)gender roles. Their identities are viewed as deviant because they disrupt the binary framework that dictates societal norms. The same White gaze that racializes Asian bodies also polices gender conformity, positioning NBGD individuals at the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination. This 'gender schema' sustains itself by excluding queer and racialized bodies, aggravating their experiences of discrimination, forcing Asian NBGD individuals to navigate their identities within a society that views their non-conformity as both racial and gender

deviance. The intersection of these schemas exposes them to physical and verbal harassment, and creates an environment where their very existence is policed and constrained by both racial and gendered hierarchies. This gaze leads to discrimination against queer Asians at the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality (Di Stasio & Larsen 2020), by perpetuating power imbalances under the 'normality' and marginalizing those who do not conform.

To better understand the violence experienced by Asian women, we compared the findings from AVE Survey II with data from the SGBV Index, which covers multiple countries in Europe, similar to the scope of AVE's survey. This index provides a score between 1 and 100 to measure gender equality across EU Member States. The domain of violence uniquely focuses on women's experiences of violence without comparing them to those of men, providing a lens to monitor the most prevalent forms of violence against women in the EU. In comparing the SGBV Index with AVE Survey II, Asian women in Europe seem to face significantly higher rates of violence on average (50%), with rates in the UK (62%) and Germany (63%) being 2.5 times higher than the EU average, as illustrated in Table 1 (AVE 2024: 31):

Country	EU Survey (2017) [*]	AVE Survey II (2024)
The Netherlands	44.9%	44%
France	44%	40%
United Kingdom	43.9%	62%
Germany	35.1%	63%
Average	33%	50%

[*]Violence; Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality 2017)

Table 1: Comparison of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Index

This disparity suggests a crucial need to consider intersectional factors such as race and ethnicity when analyzing experiences of gender- and sexual-based violence. This finding from AVE Survey II, which combines societal categories of race/ethnicity and gender, shows that Asian women and NBGD individuals are subject to higher rates of discrimination and violence as compared to their male counterparts.

Qualitative data from AVE (2024) further explores the gendered forms of AAR experienced by Asian women: fetishization, sexual harassment, and stereotyping as submissive. Fetishisation includes experiences of micro-insults (Sue et al. 2007) including being treated as 'exotic', sexually objectified, or subject to stereotypical references (also known as 'yellow fever'). Asian women report being harassed by unwanted sexual comments, honking, provocative gestures, indecent exposures, stalking, and persistent sexual advances in public areas such as streets, shopping malls, and public transportation. An experience of such intertwined racial and sexual assault in a public space was shared by a female respondent in her 30s, residing in Germany:

[I have personally] experienced catcalling as an Asian woman, and the remarks were hurtful and offensive. [...] I [was] asked by a stranger where I was going [in a] tone [that was] sexually [suggestive]. [...] When I was having a conversation in Japanese with my friend on the street, a strange man [approached] me and started to sexually harass and insult me. He even went as far as following me to my house, simply [because I am] an Asian woman. (AVE 2024: 41)

Being 'stereotyped as submissive' includes the assumption that Asian women are passive, submissive, and obedient (Denzin 2017; Kawai 2005). This experience shows the impact of sexist dynamics, where power imbalances and stereotypes continue to shape gender roles (Ellemers 2018; Heilman 2012). A female participant in her 30s, living in France, shared an experience of being treated in such a manner:

In France, [...] during a family [gathering], my husband's relative (she) started to make a joke by associating my skin color (yellow) with a yellow wine glass. When I pointed out that the comment was problematic, she didn't retract what she said. [...] She also started enlightening me out of the blue, because of her stereotypical assumption that I am submissive because of my Asian heritage. And [she told] me that I am an obedient Asian woman. (AVE 2024: 40)

Asian women in Europe face not only a racialized but also a sexualized gaze, which subjects them to dual forms of oppression. Findings from AVE (2020) highlight the higher levels of racial and gender-based discrimination Asian women experience, compared to their male counterparts, a pattern evident in their disproportionate exposure to forms of violence and harassment, as shown by the comparison with the SGBV Index. Being subjected to manifestations of 'yellow fever', where Asian women are exoticized and hypersexualized, exemplifies how the colonial male gaze positions them as objects of desire, valued only for their perceived exotic allure. On the other hand, the stereotype of submissiveness frames them as passive and obedient, suitable for subjugation and control. This pattern of 'doubly adumbrated perception' is deeply rooted in the imposition of a third-person perspective on racialized and gendered individuals (Al-Saji 2010). This sexualized and racialized gaze forces Asian women to constantly navigate between the identities imposed upon them and their self-perception, creating a fractured sense of self. Such experiences reflect how the colonial male gaze objectifies Asian women, transforming them into symbols of exoticism and subjugation, thereby restricting their agency and reinforcing systemic power imbalances.

6.   Microaggression: Normalization of Embodied Racism

AVE Survey II shed a light on the damaging effects of microaggressions, which are often seen as subtle, unintentional acts of discrimination including name-calling, race-based jokes, and social exclusion (AVE 2024: 44-49, 53-54). The report's finding that 85% of respondents are exposed to microaggressions through racist name-calling reflects how these behaviors have almost become unconscious elements of social interactions. A female participant in her 50s, residing in France, shared her experience of repeated verbal harassment based on her race and ethnicity:

[There are] times when I was just walking down the road and suddenly heard strangers yelling "Chinese!" or "Foreigner!" from [passing] cars, or even facing harassment from the clerks [at the store]. I am tired [of facing such] incidents repeatedly. (AVE 2024: 41)

The cumulative effect of such seemingly minor, insidious acts can lead to significant psychological and emotional distress for those targeted. Many respondents reported feelings of anger, humiliation, and vulnerability, with 87.8% feeling upset and 69.5% feeling humiliated or vulnerable (AVE 2024: 43). A female participant in her 40s, residing in Germany, shared her concern that her experiences of racial harassment would continue into the future and affect her young daughter:

I am more worried [about] my 4-year-old daughter [who I expect will] be racially discriminated against in the future like me. She (my daughter) still doesn't fully understand the racial discrimination [that has] happened to her [...] [I am] worried that she will get hurt when she grows up and starts to fully understand the language. (AVE 2024: 47)

Microaggressions are not abstract offenses but embodied racialized experiences that influence how individuals repeatedly perceive themselves and navigate social spaces. When an Asian person is subjected to a dismissive joke or exposed to microinsults, these experiences are inscribed onto their bodies, shaping their sense of belonging and self-worth. They are not recognized as co-participants in the social world but are reduced to racial stereotypes. These embodied experiences of being subtly but persistently 'othered' can lead to a heightened sense of alienation and discomfort in everyday interactions, profoundly affecting their identity and social presence (Fanon 1952: 152-159). Microaggressions, as repetitive and often unchallenged actions, become ingrained within historico-racial schemas, creating a habitual way of perceiving and treating Asians.

Moreover, the constant negation of one's experiences of microaggression can lead to a form of disembodiment, where individuals feel disconnected from their own lived reality because it is not mirrored or recognized in the social world around them. Experiences of microaggressions are often dismissed, as shared by a female participant in her 30s, residing in France:

[I encountered] many excuses and arguments that dismissed racial discrimination as just a joke. It's frustrating and tiring to see how some people look down on me solely because of my Asian identity. (AVE 2024: 48)

Despite the significant impact reported, 74.4% of respondents chose not to respond to discriminatory incidents, with only 5.7% confronting the perpetrators (AVE 2024: 44). When experiences of being racialized are continually denied or ignored, it affects how individuals perceive and inhabit their own bodies. The normalization of microaggressions conditions both the dominant and marginalized groups to perceive these power dynamics as natural or inevitable, making it difficult to challenge and change the underlying structures of discrimination.

The persistence of microaggressions reinforces racial hierarchies and social dominance. The trivialization of these experiences by the majority culture reinforces the notion that Asian individuals are perpetual outsiders, furthering their exclusion from meaningful participation in social life. The systematic denial of AAR disrupts intersubjective relations by positioning Asian individuals as outsiders to the discourse on racism. They are not recognized as equal participants in this social dialogue, and their voices are often dismissed or minimized. This denial creates a barrier to genuine intersubjective engagement, where mutual recognition and understanding can occur. Asians are, therefore, not just subject to individual acts of racism but are systematically denied the opportunity to have their experiences validated and their identities affirmed within broader social and political spheres.

7.   Social Movements: A Counterframe to Historico-Racial Schema

The racialized gaze involves being perceived as an 'other,' whose existence is defined by external, often hostile perceptions. It turns the racialized subject into an object of scrutiny, shaping the historico-racial schema that hinders genuine intersubjective relations, positioning the racialized body outside mutual recognition and engagement. However, social movements challenge these dominant power structures and offer a 'counterframe' to the historico-racial schema by facilitating intersubjective engagement (Suda & Köhler 2023).[17] For instance, AVE

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[17] See Wang & Li 2023 for 'networked solidarity'.

successfully lobbied the EC to take its first steps in officially recognizing AAR as a standalone category of racial discrimination to be documented and addressed. Moreover, AVE's (2024) report provided critical empirical evidence on the pervasive nature of AAR in Europe, indicating the urgency of addressing the denial and invisibility of AAR. This represents an initiative in deconstructing the schema, reshaping the dominant narrative that has long overlooked the complexities of AAR.

Combating AAR requires more than just recognizing individual acts of racial discrimination; it calls for a profound shift in how Asian bodies are perceived and engaged within the European public sphere. Policy recommendations in AVE (2024: 57) emphasizes that effectively addressing AAR requires not just policy creation but also active engagement with the social sector. Establishing a dedicated advisory group on AAR is also crucial, ensuring continuous dialogue between policy makers, communities, and individuals with lived experiences. Acts of resistance against AAR, including public demonstrations, community organizing, and advocacy was fostered by community platforms and solidarity networks, re-embodying marginalized individuals.[18] Through this mutual recognition, social movements reshape societal norms and values, as well as challenge the reductive stereotypes and systemic injustices that perpetuate discrimination.

Social movements, particularly intersectionality-focused ones, effectively resist these oppressive frameworks by amplifying marginalized voices and forging collective identities. Such movements not only challenge stereotypes and narratives that form the historico-racial schema but also the social and institutional structures that perpetuate them. By exploring the interconnectedness of various forms of racial discrimination, social movements encourage a broader understanding of how racism is intertwined with other social hierarchies. Through a shared mission and solidarity-building, social movements actively work to dismantle power dynamics that marginalize racialized individuals. These movements often transcend local struggles, forming international networks that challenge entrenched systems of inequality across different contexts (McFarlane 2009). This reassembly of power and space weakens the hold of the dominant racialized gaze and creates new opportunities for mutual recognition and inclusion, allowing marginalized individuals to reclaim their identities and agency from the restrictive frames imposed by dominant groups.

8. Conclusion

Incorporating Fanonian concepts into the analysis of the AVE report emphasizes the significance of addressing the embodied and multidimensional nature of racism. Fanonian insights into embodiment, the White gaze, and the historico-racial schema provide a useful lens in understanding the depth of AAR, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to anti-racism that fully acknowledges and addresses the lived realities of all racialized groups. This suggests that combating racism requires not only structural and institutional change but also a reorientation in how we perceive our bodies and relate to others. Such an approach can deepen our understanding of the experiences documented in the AVE report and provide a framework for envisioning more inclusive and equitable social interactions.

While the development of I-CRT serves as a pivotal foundation of transformative potential across various fields and practices, one concern that has been raised is that the concept of 'intersectionality' might drift away from its original anti-racist principles. It is argued that narratives have been adapted to align with prevailing frameworks of knowledge, losing their original focus on social change through a bottom-up transformation from racialized and

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[18] See AVE (2024: 56) for a list of activist groups advocating for AAR.

sexualized perspectives (Kelly et al. 2021: 11). This critique advocates for researchers to collaborate directly with those trained in women's and gender studies, whose work serves both theoretical and practical functions.

Our key takeaways emphasize the value of engaging in interdisciplinary projects that balance social and qualitative insights with empirical and quantitative data (Weller and Barnes 2014). The tenets of intersectionality, as outlined by Bowleg (2017; 2012), proved pertinent to our work, emphasizing the necessity of centering historically oppressed groups when applying intersectionality. This study signifies the importance of exploring the lived experiences of those affected by our studies and practices, urging a sustained allegiance to intersectionality. Critically embracing the framework of intersectionality allows for a deeper understanding of identities and discrimination, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable society.

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