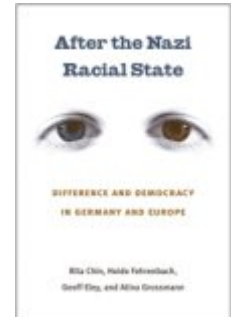**Rita Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Geoff Eley, Atina Grossmann.** *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009. vi + 263 pp. $27.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-472-03344-7.

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Racist attacks, both physical and symbolic, are proliferating in Europe. Much of this is rightly laid to the account of increasingly popular right-wing parties. Their biggest success has been to shift mainstream attention away from the racists who populate their fringes and channeling it instead into a polemical debate over the virtues and failings of multiculturalism. This transition, directed for the most part at Europe's Muslim communities, has been accomplished primarily by essentializing cultural traits--by racializing culture. The most striking feature of this development is how seldom the word "race" ever occurs in conjunction with it either in popular discourse or scholarly analysis. Racialization is happening before our eyes, and yet, without the concept of race, it seems almost literally unthinkable.

How race became a European structuring absence is the main subject of *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe,* making it a very timely book. The goal of the authors (all renowned U.S.-based historians of Germany) is to reintroduce the notion of race as a legitimate conceptual and empirical tool for the analysis of difference in Europe.

Europeans often perceive the concept of race as an American imposition that has little to do with European social reality. They see a European landscape populated with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. They feel that not only does the term "race" not properly apply to these groups; not only is it questionable whether "race" properly applies to any social group; but that to apply it to these groups would verge on a racist act. The word is thus doubly taboo. Using it to describe European social reality is considered both intellectually and morally wrong.

There are important aspects of truth to all these statements. But without the category of race, it is impossible to understand racialization. And without racialization, it is impossible to understand one of the central changes going on in Europe today. The authors freely grant that race is something socially produced rather than biologically born. But their point is that it is precisely be-

cause race is socially constructed that new cultural groups can be made into races. It is also the terrain on which races thus constructed can be deracialized back into cultural groups. Saying doesn't make it so. And not saying doesn't make it not so. The production of race--like any social reality--is bound up with much deeper social structures and institutions. But to understand it, we need to overcome the taboo on using the concept--a taboo that is itself the product of European history.

In a comprehensive introduction, Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach present this volume as a "historiographical intervention" to establish the salience of race in postwar Germany. The chapter serves two purposes. The first is to provide a working definition of the term "race." Their starting point is the distinction between ethnicity (understood as a self-ascribed sense of shared customs, language, and religions carrying positive connotations) and race (representing a more essentialist difference, and an implied hierarchy indicating the ascription from outside). Both are treated as social, political, and cultural practices that are constituted through institutions, state actions, and belief systems revealing deep structures of self-understanding and social closure. The authors are well aware that contemporary designations of race no longer operate with biological markers but rather through subtle mechanisms of racialization infusing difference with essentialist traits. It is thus not race as a social ontology, but race as a critical concept intended for the study of racialization that is the main objective of the book.

The second objective is to explain the relative absence of the term "race" in postwar Germany. The common-sense view runs something like this: The Nazis essentialized all cultural differences into racial ones. This was not only abhorrent but also obviously wrong, since the Nazis applied it to groups like Jews and Slavs, which to contemporary eyes are not races, but rather religious, ethnic, national, and cultural groups. In this view,

what happened at *Stunde Null* was simply the removal of a ghastly and criminal mistake. Europeans stopped thinking ethnic groups were races.

The authors argue that this is a presentist back projection. The reason Europeans are so sure that Jews are not a racial group is because they have a clear paradigm in the back of their minds with which they contrast it, namely blacks in America. Many progressives would hasten to add that even blackness is a cultural category, and that it is arguable if there is anything in the world that truly corresponds to what is meant by the word "race." But if forced to grant the term arguendo, they would insist on drawing a line between obviously visible differences and differences that are not--and assert that only the former can be properly called racial.

But European racial categories never worked that way before World War II--and still do not today. The Nazis did not create the idea of Jews as a race but built on a preexisting one. Jewishness was in fact the archetype of race in Europe before WWII. Its construction from religion, language, and custom, without a consistent visible biological marker, through the essentialization of just these traits, is what race has primarily and consistently looked like in Europe. We are not seeing a new development vis-à-vis today's European Muslims. Rather we are seeing a new chapter in an unbroken story, but one that has been obscured.

Ironically, it was precisely the centrality of Jews as the European paradigm of race that led to the disappearance of the term after WWII. In the first place, it came from the physical disappearance of most Jews through the most extreme conceivable manifestation of racism, namely genocide. This was followed, and not by accident, by a strong taboo against using the term "race" to describe Jews ever again. Jews were re-identified as an ethnic group. Calling them a race was now identified as the first step towards the ultimate crime--which is quite a taboo. Of course there were still racist attitudes towards the Jews that

had to be accounted for. But those were finessed by distinguishing racism and anti-Semitism. It may never have been entirely clear what the difference between them was. But arguing over that simply reinforced the paramount point. Anti-Semitism and racism had to be different because Jews were not a race--and it was morally and intellectually wrong to think they were.

The last piece of modern European common sense to be fit into place was the identification of race with blackness. This also started at Zero Hour through the experience of the American occupying army and its novel racial strictures. It was a short step to the identification of the race problem--now almost completely redefined--as an American problem. The consequent "obvious" conclusion was that race played little role in European experiences. And voilà: Europe, the site of the greatest racial crime in history, was socially reconfigured as a place without race.

But what really happened was that race was reconfigured. Race did not vanish from European reality, but simply from its discourse. Its elements were portioned out among different terms, each of which has truth in itself, but the sum of which cannot make clear what is now going on in reality vis-à-vis the European Muslim communities. This is why the authors call for the reintegration of "race" as an analytical category into mainstream historical inquiry rather than continuing to confine it to subdisciplines like minority or migration studies.

For the most part, the concept of race persisted by way of externalization. Racism was presented as a thing of the German past and during the 1950s it was identified with segregationist policies in the U.S. and the problems Germany's Western European neighbors were facing with decolonization. In a chapter entitled "Black Occupation Children and the Devolution of the Nazi Racial State," Heide Fehrenbach persuasively shows how policy attention to black occupation children (*Mischlinge*--the offspring of black GIs and white Ger-

man women) and concomitant social policies regarding abortion, schooling, and the integration of this group was a central mechanism to redefine notions of race. From the 1950s and through the 1960s, German social sciences and attendant social policies mirrored its U.S. counterparts insofar as differences were channeled into a black-white binary relation that was no longer determined by biological differences (widely discredited by the association of Nazism with scientific racism) but by psychological difficulties of interracial families--primarily focusing on the emotional conditions of mothers. Fehrenbach demonstrates how this transposition of racial categories led to the reconfiguration of race in public talk. Although the number of *Mischlinge* (a term that had great currency under the Nazis targeting relations between Germans and Jews) was relatively low, the recurrent focus on them carried great symbolic significance.

This dynamic--in which racial categories are officially tabooed, yet publicly articulated via a social scientific terminology and permeated with the persistence of deeply entrenched racial prejudices--is also evident in Atina Grossmann's study of German- Jewish postwar relations. Exploring official and public treatment of Jewish Displaced Persons, she illustrates how resistant some of the racial imagery remained. Despite the fact that anti-Semitism was officially taboo, Germans perceived Jews, mostly concentration camp survivors from Eastern Europe, as "asocial" and "homeless." Racial categories were recast into questions of entitlements as Jews were blamed for skimming off economic reconstruction efforts (one need only remember the popular opposition to Konrad Adenauer's restitution plans of *Wiedergutmachung)*.

Focusing on the complex relationship between Jewish survivors and the German population under occupation and during the 1950s, Grossmann reveals how, despite its taboo, anti-Semitism was "legible" in terminologies of racial hygiene and xenophobia that freely borrowed

from both pre-Nazi and Nazi times. With considerable social problems in DP camps German authorities dispatched researchers to study their causes. Here too, Grossmann identifies a remarkable continuity with racial policies. Partly personified by Hans Harmsen, who had applied his trade through three political regimes--as a conservative sex reformist in Weimar, advocating sterilization in the Third Reich, before becoming a demographer and "social hygienist" in the Federal Republic. Money, as reflected in the contempt for Jews active in the black market economy, was one trope of rejection. Images of graft, heavily relying on older religious notions of usury, coexisted with earlier popular Nazi tropes according to which Jews were criminals. Sex, "the other temptation" of postwar Germany, was reflected in the high degree of intermarriage between Jewish men and German women.

By the late 1960s immigration became the principal prism through which difference was articulated and discrimination was no longer associated with racial categories but instead represented as an instance of xenophobia. As Fehrenbach indicates, hatred of foreigners gradually "casts the problem as a contemporary one born of an uncomfortable period of adjustment issuing from the end of the Cold War, the demise of socialists, the ensuing surge of immigration, and growth of Islamic radicalism. That is, it locates the origins of the problem as external to the German nation and German history, rather than treating the problem as connected to a longer, complex native history of racism and notions of race" (p. 54).

This trajectory is borne out in Rita Chin's chapter on how labor migration into Germany triggered, in the words of her chapter title, an "unexpected return of race." Even if race had become a non-issue in official parlance, the demographic transformations associated with massive waves of labor migration, especially with regard to the largest single group, Turkish "guest workers," propelled the proliferation of an essential-

ized discourse. Contrary to the biological racism of the Nazis, the new racial message revolved around cultural differences highlighting fundamental incompatibilities between these guest workers (a term that reflects the official view that their stay in Germany would be temporary) and Germans. In many ways, the strains and exclusionary mechanisms began once it became apparent that they were not returning and had, for all practical purposes, become an integral (if not integrated) part of German society. This move from the outside to the inside, was de jure consolidated when Germany effectively abandoned its descent-based citizenship conception of *ius sanginis* and moved toward a model of *ius solis*, granting second- and third-generation migrants German citizenship. Ironically, instead of easing integration it exacerbated tensions by shifting to a cultural vocabulary of motives.

This cultural turn took shape during the 1980s and foreshadowed many of the contemporary European debates about migrants and national identity. As Chin succinctly states: "Culture functioned in the same way as the older now discredited category of race: it served to explain fundamental, incommensurable differences among peoples ... thus reframing distinctions traditionally associated with race in terms of national and cultural difference.... A racialized notion of cultural difference thus served to explain integration's inevitable failure and justify stiff opposition to immigration" (pp. 92-93).

Paradoxically, it is Holocaust memory and actual racial violence against Turks and others which continues to dissociate racism from its mainstream manifestations. By associating racism with the violent acts of neo-Nazis, the menacing ways in which racial conceptions have infused mainstream debates about Turkish migrants and Islam are masked. As the Holocaust and Nazism became the historical referent and threshold for acknowledging the pertinence of *Rasse* (race), other forms of banal racism are obfuscated. "The

cloak of neo-Nazism seemed to focus attention on the specter of Germany's troubled past, obscuring the fact that racial prejudice and violence were alive and well in the present" (p. 100). Chin underscores that this dynamic is not confined to the Right but is also manifest in leftist thinking. A telling example is how the British initiative of "Rock against Racism" became "Rock gegen Rechts" (Rock against the Right) in Germany. By reducing race to the Jewish question the Holocaust effectively operates as screen for the persistence of race.[1]

This development is further elaborated in a synthetic chapter, where Chin and Fehrenbach explore how Germany's democratic self-understanding has been shaped through its engagement with the Nazi past and how officially inscribed memories of the Holocaust, "highlight the ways that official national memory culture has often obscured the narrative and experiences of guest workers and other minorities, both residents and citizens, in German society" (p. 103). Chin and Fehrenbach trace the continuous non-inclusion of foreigners: via the initial insistence on an ethnocultural understanding of nationhood codified in the aforementioned descent-based citizenship legislation; to the culturalization of the Other; and to the externalization of race as a specific domestic problem rather than a generic designation for right-wing movements and attributed to foreign (primarily U.S.) racial policies.

The exclusion of race is not confined to center-right politics. They offer a critical assessment of the New Left, whose reading of Nazism subsumed it under the general umbrella of anti-fascism, thus bracketing German specificity. And its anti-racist credentials were largely reserved to outside opposition to South African apartheid and U.S. imperialism: "Consciously or not, the 1968ers, like their parents, conceived of German society as essentially homogeneous in ethnic terms. As a result, calls for democratic reform at home invoked the Nazi past and condemned selective continu-

ities with it, while keeping virtually mum on Germany's treatment of minorities, both historically and in its multiethnic present" (p. 111).

With the ascendance of Holocaust memory since the 1980s, race has been further relegated to the margins. As the Holocaust is a constitutive feature for German identity, those groups not part of the "collective of responsibility" (such as Turks, Jews, and other minorities) are, by definition, excluded. "Only those who inherited the burden of responsibility for the Holocaust could lay claim or share German identity" (p. 133). Ritualistic acknowledgment of Germany's racist past thus brackets Germany's contemporary racialization of the Other as a constitutive feature of nationhood. The problem with this conception is not to suggest that Germans are more racist than their European counterparts. Rather, like many of their European neighbors, it is by interpreting racism as coming from the outside and in outbursts from the fringes, that policymakers and social analysts miss the deep cultural resonance that race continues to exert on the public imagination. So-called attempts to normalize Germany by moving away from a Holocaust-centric identity ultimately reproduce this self-contained framework. It is not despite but because of "normalization" that debates about difference have taken center stage. Normalization then suggests the real identity crisis, not its resolution.

This problematic bifurcation of race and other modes of social closure is mirrored in academic works, most notably among survey and migration scholars as they continue to distinguish between anti-Semitism and xenophobia. "By employing the paradigm of immigration, the analytic category of 'xenophobia' transforms German citizens into foreigners and refuses them the conceptual tools--such as 'racism- with which to fight this transformation. It denies both their existence as Germans and the very possibility of imagining and accommodating 'difference' within the nation.... In the end, sociological studies and opinion

polls of the early 1990s structurally reproduced the very phenomenon they purported to explain" (p. 131). Thus, if anti-Semitism was initially tabooed because of its racist connotations, the emergence of Holocaust memory since the 1980s further marginalizes race as a relevant social, cultural, and political category.

Together these chapters offer a rich survey of the changing history and valence of race in Germany, but there are limits to how much comparative surplus can be deduced from the German experience. Hence Geoff Eley concludes the book with a synthetic chapter, entitled "The Trouble with 'Race': Migrancy, Cultural Difference, and the Remaking of Europe," by situating the question of race in a comparative European framework. His expansive and integrative effort is an invaluable contribution to the volume aiming to reiterate the analytic and empirical relevance of race. To that end, Eley contextualizes the category of race along temporal, spatial, social, political, cultural, and institutional registers,an effort requiring a multipronged strategy that involves the recognition that the deployment and salience of race is path-dependent, shaped by specific institutional practices and attendant political-cultural orientations; and the observation that Europe is in search of a unifying culture, which during the last decade has crystallized around racialized conceptions of the Other.

Much of his empirical thrust is focused on the British case, which is least affected by the pervasive tabooization of race so rampant in most of continental Europe. Heralding to a Commonwealth past and colonial heritage marked by continuous encounters with racial categorization, the British integration model is based on the management of race relations within a multicultural model that sets a premium on the maintenance of public order.[2] Given the preponderance of such state-sponsored practices, academics in England have been at the forefront of addressing the concept of race. Eley is particularly interested in the

work of the Birmingham school and how neo-Marxists like Stuart Hall and others have attempted to reconcile the causally privileged notion of class with its prevalent correlate of race. For Hall and his collaborators "race is the modality in which class is lived. It is also the medium in which class relations are experienced" (p. 165).

The paradigmatic nemesis of the British model is France, where republicanism and policy frameworks have subsumed integration under the imperatives of universalism, secularism, and assimilation. Propagating a color-blind notion of citizenship renders race, both conceptually and empirically, a non-category, putting the French model at the other extreme of the European spectrum. The exclusion of race in the name of a putative equality in France has received much attention in recent years, with the "foulard affair" and social unrest raising doubts about the potentially adverse effects of a fundamentalist universalism.

One of the virtues of Eley's chapter is not merely its comparative scope but the way he seeks to synthesize a number of cases that seem divergent. He does so with reference to shared traditions of eugenics and related pseudo-scientific beliefs about social pathologies; legacies of colonialism and decolonization; and the consequences of labor migration. Another factor that Eley addresses is "the contemporary European preoccupation with 'foreigners' increasingly voiced during the past decades in the rhetorics of 'fortress Europe.'... In the aftermath of the security anxieties surrounding 9/11 the perceived threats to the integrity of this geopolitical imaginary then became still more heavily Islamized.... [T]here emerged an in-turned and recentered pan-European, anti-Islamic racism" (pp. 158, 160). Eley directs our attention to a long history of deep cultural beliefs. "Over an extremely long period race has demonstrated extraordinary interpolative power. Ideas and assumptions about race, along with all the associated sites and practices, circulate promiscuously through European society" (p.

175). This is happening in spite of, or perhaps precisely because, explicit engagement with race is exorcized from the public sphere while it remains sedimented in numerous identifications.

This is particularly evident in current debates about multiculturalism. The near absence of an analysis of these debates is perhaps the only empirical quibble I have with this volume. The term does not appear in the index, where it deserves a separate entry considering that polemics about multiculturalism have been the main vehicle for essentializing difference and legitimizing racialized conceptions. If multiculturalism had previously been denounced because of its focus on groups, contemporary attacks against multiculturalism are no longer exclusively waged in the name of individualism but also in defense of majority rights. Difference and heterogeneity are perceived as a threat to an imagined homogeneity that characterized the postwar experience of many Europeans. If exclusion previously operated within the conception of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the new mode of exclusion works through the *Wertegemeinschaft*. Racialization serves the purpose of reproducing a national self-understanding which does not want to reckon with difference. Clearly this view is based on historical memories which frequently omit the integration of earlier immigration waves. Moreover it excludes the fact that many of the legal rights for residents involving, for instance, the acceptance of religious rights "were won by earlier generations of Catholics and Protestants; they have nothing to do with naïve multiculturalist Islamophilia," as some opponents of multiculturalism would have it.[3]

The problem for most Western European nation-states is less that second- and third-generation descendants of migrants are not assimilated. Instead it is the combined quest of being de facto part of the national collective while at the same time insisting on the recognition of difference which evokes the contested nature of national identity. Racism then is not only or perhaps even

chiefly about the Other but an attempt to control the erosion of national homogeneity. Efforts by young Muslims to assimilate difference into the national body, are triggering the rejection of majorities and bringing to the fore deep-seated racial conceptions. Essentialism is a stigma for the outsider and an assumed virtue for the insider. Europe is racializing itself.

Ultimately, the challenge is how to disentangle meaningful scholarly analysis from the public polemics, while shaping the very contours of the debates. The volume makes an important contribution toward that goal by offering a detailed historical perspective. Another vital device to accomplish this is to provide a strong conceptual tool kit. At the risk of appearing somewhat churlish, but intended as a constructive call for more interdisciplinarity, I would point out that on the conceptual front the volume remains vague. The theoretical paucity is, I suspect, related to the fact that all the authors are historians and the original intent to provide a "historiographical intervention." Consequently, there is little substantive engagement with a burgeoning social scientific literature on race, though Eley does provide some relevant citations. Full disclosure: this reviewer is a sociologist.

While this reservation might be dismissed as a case of (my) professional deformation, I do believe that typological distinctions and a more explicit engagement with the social scientific literature would have accomplished two central objectives the authors pursue: It could have clarified the analytic purchase of race, and thereby strengthened the case for their intervention. After all, the absence of race in public conversation does not imply that it is lacking in analytic weight.

A first necessary step then, is to de-essentialize the Other without abandoning the reality of difference. The work of Rogers Brubaker, which Eley cites, seems particularly pertinent to clarify how the two levels are connected. Processes of essentializing are predicated on a priori concep-

tions of groupness. "Groupism," Brubaker tells us refers to the "tendency to treat various categories of people as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes, and to take ethnic and racial groups and nations as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis."[4] Trying to escape this groupist ontology is not denying the fact that collectivities organize themselves and interpret the world in groupist terms. But as Brubaker suggests it does provide "resources for avoiding analytical groupism while helping to explain the tenacious hold of groupist, even primordialist ways of thinking in everyday life. Instead of conceptualizing the social world in substantialist terms as a composite of racial, ethnic, and national groups, cognitive perspectives address the social and mental processes that sustain the interpretation of the social world in racial, ethnic, or national terms."[5] Recognizing the salience of race without conflating the analytical and observer perspectives seems to be the real challenge for the study of difference in Europe (and elsewhere).

The point then is not merely to demonstrate that, for instance, Turks in Germany are not a homogeneous group--for various reasons and the simple fact that ethnic affiliations in modern societies are only one modality of belonging. But it is also to underscore how this presumed homogeneity, in terms of both self-identification and ascription, can become politically and culturally consequential.

With or without the acknowledgment of race, culturalization is the handmaiden of a racialized discourse which glances over stratifying problems of educational disparities and dismal employment opportunities, transforming them into problems of cultural adaptation, religious fervor, or immigration adjustments. Whether race and ethnicity are self-ascribed categories and ways of interpreting the world through primordialist self-under-standings or whether, say, Islamic self-conceptions are a response to the inequities minorities face vis-à-vis dominant majorities, they need to be analyzed within a conceptual framework that wrestles public and political debates away from both the denial of race and insidious racialization. This volume takes an invaluable step in that direction.

Notes

[1]. This dynamic is not confined to the German case. As David Goldberg has pointed out: "In making the Holocaust the referent point for race, in the racial erasure thus enacted in the European theatre another evaporation is enacted. Europe's colonial history and legacy dissipate if not disappear." David Theo Goldberg. "Racial Europeanization," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (2006): 331-364; 336.

[2]. Adrian Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

[3]. John R. Bowen, "Nothing To Fear. Misreading Muslim immigration in Europe," *Boston Review* (January/February 2010).

[4]. Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 28.

[5]. Ibid, 34.

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