



From “reversed quota” to “invisible quota” in the recruitment of the descendants of immigrants for public service jobs

A comparative analysis of the local implementation of “diversity politics” in Ponac (France) and in New East Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

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Abstract

Through a qualitative comparison study of the hiring of the descendants of immigrants for public service jobs in France and in the Netherlands, this article highlights the selection mechanisms implemented by local human resources personnel in the local government in two small towns, one in the Netherlands and one in France². We observed how the respective recruitment politics were designed to improve the visibility and presence of the descendants of migrants in local public services. Our results demonstrate that these two localities use very different methods to recruit the descendants of immigrants: French local authorities used “invisible quotas”, and Dutch local authorities used “reversed quotas.” They followed two different accounting systems, which in turn had diverse effects on the redefinition of the desired skillset³.

Keywords

Recruitment, quotas, diversity, comparison, local public authorities, discrimination

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² We give the case studies a name: the Ponac Study and the New East Amsterdam study (NEA study). We are not talking about France and the Netherlands but about very local cases because you cannot generalize from these studies about the entire country of F or N.

³ Here, we mean that the people have to have different characteristics according to affirmative actions.

Introduction

Non-discrimination and the integration of national descendants of migrants⁴ into the labor market are two present themes that have been on the European political and social agenda in the early years of the 21st century. However, the issue of employability of people of diverse cultural origins have been only recently been addressed in the Netherlands and in France. Private companies and local authorities' prioritize the selection principle and human resources policies for diversity. These policies fall within an approach that addresses the recruitment of people of diverse cultural origins in connection with implementation of the legislation on non-discrimination based on origin, gender, age, etc. The legal context of employment discrimination is now very wide. It is in fact defined by the Labor Code, the Penal Code, and European directives. However, the research on diversity management in local public administrations that raises issues of equal opportunity, meritocracy, performance, and competence, is complex and socially sensitive, economically but also politically. Therefore, little or no analysis of the practices of diversity management within public administrations has been compared.

This paper seeks to understand the social logics underlying the work team compositions and services of local administrations. The goal is to have a comprehensive approach of the logics of recruitment from the "bottom-up" approach. So, how are locally applied national diversity policies? First, I assume that there is an accounting system for the policies of turning visible minorities, which reveals the complexity of the single quota mechanism. Indeed, it seems that human resources managers implement "invisible quotas" in the French context and "reversed quotas" in New East Amsterdam. On the other hand, I assume that the processes of selection and recruitment have strong implications in terms of "ethnicization"⁵ of skills.

This research underlines the historical, economical and social context of diversity policies in France and the Netherlands (part 1). Through two case studies, this paper shows the selection mechanisms implemented at local level by different managers. These are designed in order to improve the visibility and presence of national descendants of post-colonial migrants in local public authorities. I distinguish "invisible quotas" in Ponac and "reversed quotas" in New East Amsterdam (part 3). These accounting systems using affirmative action have an effect of skills' ethnicisation⁶ (Part 4).

⁴ We shall use the term "descendants of migrants" to translate the legal term used in France that says literally: "persons with at least one parent or grandparent is an immigrant." It is thus necessary to specify that the respondents were people from whom at least one of the parents or grandparents were born in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Black Africa and countries overseas territories. In the Netherlands, respondents were people with at least one of the parents or grandparents were born in Morocco, Turkey, Surinam, Indonesia, Iraq.

⁵ Put in quotation if you want to use this term. Explain that this is how it is called in France. (affirmative action is the correct term in English which would be best to use here)

⁶ The ethnicization is a French concept which refers to the process (social, historical, political) construction boundaries and designation of social groups. The groups in this case, are defined (socially) or define

Some methodological details

My approach involves the use of identifications of people of cultural origin and indirect nominations to address minorities. This article proposes to circumvent this highly sensitive obstacle by, having recourse to a qualitative analysis of interpretive discourse of managers, recruited employees, and descendants of migrants who get a refusal to hire. Moreover, my qualitative choice is completed by a comparative approach. While research always tend to oppose France and the Netherlands through the simple distinction of universalism versus multiculturalism, I opted for a Franco-Dutch comparison since the two countries face a crisis of their integration models of visible minorities. Indeed, from a legal, social and historical perspective, both countries face almost identical problems of integration and representation of minorities in senior management positions. Moreover, the institutional responses of each country are similar as to how they use “positive discrimination⁷” and “affirmative action”, the aim is to address this imbalance between origins of the national population and different social groups. Thus, my research is limited to a case study of two municipalities. The first case study focused on the public administration of Ponac, is composed more than 1,000 employees. The other study focuses on the case of New East Amsterdam, which counts 950 employees in the municipality.

Level 1: Negotiating the fieldwork dilemmas

Henceforth as Zimmerman evokes that there is no “logical comparative”, the researcher need to deconstruct models in order to realize that different measures in different contexts can lead to convergent phenomena. In our case, we often oppose the French universalist republican model to the Dutch multicultural model, while there are similar problems of integration of the descendants of immigrants on the labor market in the public sector. Many specialists on comparison advice that I should not build identical objects completely similar in terms of units, but understand and take into account the differences. Therefore, in order to establish a good comparison, I have to choose two municipalities of similar size in terms of population and dynamism of the city. To do it, I sent our research project over 35 councils in the French context. We received only 4 rejection letters indicating a lack of space to welcome me in the HR department, and a phone call explaining me the sensitive context of my research. All other councils never responded. This refers to the complexity of my topic, and face to these refusal, I decided to change the terms of my research. Indeed, I said that I worked on the performance of

themselves by their origin or culture. A lot of authors work on this concept such as J.L Primon, J. Perroton, G. Noiriél, etc.

⁷ Such as Diane Gilhooley in 2008. Positive discrimination means treating one person more favorably than another on the ground of that individual’s sex, race, age, marital status or sexual orientation. So „positive discrimination” is prohibited in employment. In contrast, “Affirmative action” is permitted and may even be required in certain circumstances. Affirmative action is permitted under all strands of the discrimination legislation. Thus, employers are allowed to offer disadvantaged groups access to encourage job applications from under-represented groups.

diversity at work. After 6 months of intensive research, the city of Ponac working on the subject of disability accept me to create a "Charter of Diversity" (Charte de la diversité).

Context of the city of Ponac

With local population of 57,632 inhabitants in 2008, the average age is 39 in Ponac. However, the young population has declined. The number of young people aged 15-24 has decreased by 4.1 % (- 427 youth) between the last two censuses. Almost 22% of youth, 15-24 are not in school. In 2008, these school youth (more than two young people aged 15-24 in five) focus mainly on the neighborhood of North and South districts. Ponac experienced a high index of youth unemployment. 66% are aged 25 to 49 years, 18% were under 25 years and 16% were 50 years or older. Under 25 years are those who know the index of the largest estimated unemployment : 13.5% under 25 assets. This includes 9.5% of 25-49 years and 5.8% aged 50 and over. Among these job seekers, there is a strong representation of less educated. In fact, job seekers have a low level of education.

In the Dutch context, I also have a lot of difficulties especially as I did not have internal contacts. I was looking for local administrations with the same size as Ponac to have a solid comparison. However, the empirical reality is not what I hope for, even harder when I have to take into account, the historical, structural and functional context of the two municipalities. To bounce back after a few months, I contacted the local Office of Diversity in Amsterdam. The director promises to welcome me in his service and help me to find a municipality to conduct my research. Once arrived, after several days of observations and interviews with the director, I realize that there is not a lot of things to see at his work. Indeed, the director collect only statistics every six months of each district of Amsterdam and he has no other administrative task linked to the management of diversity. After several weeks, he told me that he was ill and it will be no possible to find a municipality willing to welcome me in its HR department in the context of crisis. Face to these obstacles, I decided to use the networks of social workers. Bourik Mohamed gave me his professional, political and ethnic network to help me. The mayor of New East Amsterdam was one of our first choices to compare it with that of Ponac because it holds the same services (the functions of civil status (: registration of marriages, births and deaths ...) ; maintenance of local roads, landscaping, and departments (Finance, and leisure, education, youth, etc.). In addition, New East Amsterdam had a similar number of employees (around more than 900 employees) and thus constituted a comparable scale in terms of number of employees.

Context of Nieuw East Amsterdam

Firstly, the number of people holding a higher education education is 53 % in the center of Amsterdam while this percentage is much lower in Nieuw East Amsterdam. There are only 21% of people with a higher education education. Moreover , the number of young people leaving school without a good level of basic education to prepare for the labor market is high: 15 % compared with 7 % in the center of Amsterdam. Less educated are experiencing more difficulty finding a job, also because of the economic crisis. Thus, the number of people living on a minimum income is rising. From 2001 to 2004, unemployment was high and the income of many people was considered low. As the graph below shows , it is much higher than the unemployment rate for the City of Amsterdam from 2002 effect. In 2004, the unemployment rate Nieuw East District reached almost 11% . Socio-economic position of large non-native groups is not as good as in Dutch. The table below shows the unemployment rate (as a percentage of the labor force) is only 5 % of the Dutch in Amsterdam, while all immigrant groups, including Western immigrants have at least 10% unemployment. Among non-western groups , Moroccans are in the worst position with 28 % unemployment , while 20 % of Surinamese / Antillean and 15 % of Turks are unemployed.

Despite all my efforts in the previous work of my research project to have two comparable units in terms of symmetry, scale, empirical field reminds us that the methodology of comparison is so easy as. The perfect comparability does not exist, and it is sometimes necessary to review its initial ambitions. It is in this perspective that we assume to work on these two public administrations.

Level 2: Collecting data

This paper resents the results of a study using qualitative methods including participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Analysis is based on a total of 90 interviews (N=90; n=50 in France; n=40 in the Netherlands), with two types of research subjects:

I conducted these interviews with two levels of actors:

- Resource managers, department heads, and elected mayors, who have the power to diversify and influence the selection and recruitment of candidates;
- The descendants of migrants recruited, and those who were denied employment.

For over three months in each of the two towns, I used participant observation following the ideas of ethnographic immersion (Mauss, 1902). I conducted participant

observation with the Human resources departments of the municipal government, the mayor's office, at the town hall of Ponac, I was immersed in the HR department and the political department of the city committees. In New East Amsterdam, I was working with the HR department and the "Office of Diversity" (Gemeente Amsterdam Bestuurdienst, Directie middelen in Control).

To exploit my data, I divided my work into two main areas: the first corresponds to the axis of recruitment, and the second relates to the feeling and experience of discrimination of the employees. To do it, I constructed priority indicators and optional indicators to analyze my interviews and my observations. For the first axis, I chose for example to take the measure of occupational category and type of contract, the ratio of recruits for each channel sourcing, or the criteria for the selection of candidates. For the axis about the experience of discrimination, I chose to divide the experience into five phases: the filing of application, the preselection, the daily work and the annual assessment to evolve in terms of career.

Historical background of the politics of diversity in France and in the Netherlands

A great number of authors, conceptualized & diversity as a concept representing a multitude of individual differences and similarities that exist among people. This concept encompasses a wide variety of human characteristics such as race, age, creed, national origin, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation. Today, the concept of diversity is increasingly used in the distribution of material resources and employment opportunities in the context of fight against discrimination. Here, I need to look at the laws, which permit to settle a framework of managing diversity in each country.

Laws about cultural minority recruitment in France

The notion of diversity was used right from the middle of the 1990s. First, it was addressed in the public service during the period in which public service sectors, such as the police and the army, acknowledged the need to represent the national population in their workforce [Calvès, 2005]. While the term "diversity" refers mainly to British and American cases dealing with the issue of equality in employment; in France, it is only since the 2000s (at the time of the government of Lionel Jospin years) that people with cultural backgrounds begins to be treated in relation to the issue of minority representation. Indeed, many actions have transposed a lot of European directives to put a legal and institutional anti-discrimination context [Guiraudon, 2004]. The concept of diversity acquires an ideological value and becomes part of the political agenda since the end of 2003 [Bereni and Jaunait, 2009]. Thereafter, from 2004, "diversity" extends by

⁸ Wellner, A. 2000. How do you spell diversity? *Training*, 37(4); 34-38.

Fassinger, R. E. (2008). Workplace diversity and public policy: Challenges and opportunities for psychology. *American Psychologist*, 63, 252-268

becoming a policy about the recruitment in different domains. The first initiatives were launched by the private sector. The “Diversity Chart” (The *Charte de la Diversité*) created by HR professionals in several organizations, was the largest initiative. The public service sector then followed this dynamic to add diversity to their workforce. It is important to note that, in France, local public administrations are subject to “comply” or “explain” the principle of diversity, which gives to organizations the freedom to accept or reject the recommendations to recruit minorities. If the recommendation to recruit minority candidate is rejected, HR personnel is required to explain why. This commitment to diversity in public service sector recruitment strategies is based on the voluntary participation and accountability of HR personnel? Because there is no enforcement, it is commonly referred to as the “soft law”⁹. However, French public administrations have adopted the law of 27 January 2011 on the balanced representation of women and men on boards of directors and supervisory boards, and professional equality (which amends Articles L225-17, 20, 24). On the one hand, the French example demonstrates that that diversity management is not as institutionalized as in Ponac. On the other hand, there are very few public constraints on the implementation of these diversity policies at local level. Diversity policy in France is not prescriptive and punitive [Calvès, 2008] unlike “hard laws” in other neighbouring countries.

Laws about the recruitment of ethnic minorities in The Netherlands

In the 1980s, the Dutch government implemented national and local integration policies aimed at increasing the participation of ethnic minorities in the labor market. In the 1990s, the promotion of diversity policies in private and public organizations has become an important part of the Law on Employment Equity [Jonkers, 2003]. In 1994, the first act of Dutch equity in employment called the “law of promoting the participation of foreign-born proportion of labor” (Wet Bevordering Evenredige Arbeidsdeelname Allochtonen 1994-1997; hereafter Wet BEAA). Wet BEAA required employers to start an ethnic monitoring, the goal is to remove barriers to the participation of ethnic minorities in the labor market, and to take additional measures to increase their representation. Wet BEAA was “disqualified”¹⁰ from the start because of the discord among all participants in the legislative process, particularly in regard to the instrument of “monitoring” ethnic. After acceptance, work organization filled annual reports on some Wet BEAA and its effectiveness was severely questioned. In 1998, the first act (Wet BEAA) has been replaced by the Wet Samen: the act of stimulating labor participation of minorities “(Wet Stimuleren Arbeidsdeelname Minderheden 1998-2003). Under both laws, the representation of ethnic minorities in organizations was fair if it was proportionate for their bid on the regional labor market. The Wet Samen law was much more favorable to

⁹ It refers to quasi-legal instruments which do not have any legally binding force or weaker binding force. It is contrasted to the “hard law”.

¹⁰ VERBEEK, S.R. (2012). *Diversity Policies and Ethnic Minority Representation*. Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam (EUR) (Rotterdam). Prom./coprom.: Prof.Dr. G.B.M. Engbersen & Dr. W. Schinkel.

employers, since they were covered over as part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Indeed, the word "Samen" means together in Dutch. This law relied on a kind of reputation mechanism [Van Tulder, 2006] to ensure that employers comply with the law. The purpose was to raise private and public organizations in the issue of under-representation of ethnic minorities and the ability to target diversity policies for this group. Thus, at the turn of the century, the Netherlands experienced an economic recovery; and consequently the unemployment figures (including unemployment of ethnic minorities) decreased. Due to these results, it was decided not to extend the Wet Samen law. Thus, some people would argue that the act Wet Samen was abolished because of its success. However, it should be noted that in 2002, the right-wing party (Balkenende I) entering in the government wanted to reduce the administrative burden on employers [Guiraudon, 2005].

After the abolition of the Wet Samen law, the Dutch government always tried to find a "balance" (van Sociale Zaken Minitrie in *Werkgelegenheid*, 2004) concerning the rate of ethnic minorities by encouraging employers to develop diversity policies. The government funded a national institute for diversity management (called Div', 2010). Although the employment situation of ethnic minorities improved in the 1990s; it was deteriorated after the end of the economic recovery. In 2005, unemployment among ethnic minorities in the Netherlands was again three to four times higher than amongst the majority population. Officially, the national efforts to promote diversity in the labor market organizations (in both the public and the private sector) ended with the installation of the right-wing government (Rutte'cabinet) in 2010. As the government contract refers to: "The government puts an end to diversity policies or preferential policies on the basis of gender and ethnic origins". We can see that nowadays the selection should be based on quality. Nevertheless, in practice, many organizations are still willing to hire ethnic minorities, even if the motivation is now almost exclusively expressed in economic terms.

The notion of diversity associated with the issue of representation of ethnic minorities was more or less delayed in France compared to other immigration countries (Britain, Canada) who have seen the issue earlier (1960 to 1970). In France in the early 2000s, the subject of "diversity" and non-discrimination has been treated from an entrepreneurial prism. In contrast, in the Netherlands, the State has implemented a large number of measures to treat the issue of the recruitment of diversity. Today, we observe that despite this European drive of non-discrimination there is a growing tension in the egalitarian republican project.

Recruiting descendants of migrants: Two case studies

This third part presents a detailed analysis of case studies in Ponac (France) and in New East Amsterdam (The Netherlands)¹¹. In one case there is a policy of positive

¹¹ I changed the names of the cities in which the case studies took place to protect the identities of the research subjects.

discrimination, which has the perverse effect of blocking the recruitment and of disqualifying the employees. It encourages a return to the "color-blindness". On the other case, we face an "affirmative action" that takes into account ethnicity through socio-urban criteria without influencing the logic of non-diversity.

"Reversed quotas" in New East Amsterdam: the "Targets groups"

The municipality of New East Amsterdam is one of the seven largest municipalities that compose the city of Amsterdam. This local instance counted 980 employees in 2012 and follows the "diversity program" since 2007 (to 2014). One goal of this program is to increase the percentage of "*allochtoon*"¹² among the workforce. It distinguishes between Western and non-Western immigrants, and focuses mainly on the latter group, which includes people from Turkey, Africa, Latin America and Asia, except Japan and Indonesia. New East Amsterdam has a specific program to increase the representation of ethnic minorities: there are "target groups". "Targets policy" is a policy based on a management accounting such as the system of quota but it doesn't lead to sanctions if the percentage of ethnic minorities in the workforce is not entirely reached. The goal is to have 27% of *allochtoon* in all positions, and 15% in the higher level of management positions. New East Amsterdam, the number of non-Western *allochtoons* has increased steadily from 19.5% at the end of 2006 to 22.1% at the end of 2009. In 2010, the percentage of ethnic minorities among the municipal employees is 27% before falling to 25,9% in 2011. So, there are 158 *allochtoons* among municipal employees, but only few are in positions of management or direction. However, the municipality has achieved the goal set by its diversity policy.

How do you do to recruit as much diversity in just two political offices? (2006-2010 and 2009-2013). For that, we need to question the former mayor of New East Amsterdam because the representation has been the subject of a real internal mechanism initiated by the policy. Karim Bachi¹³ is a Dutch politician originated from Morocco and former police officer, public servant, member of the Dutch Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid) and deputy since 2010. He has always put the "focus on issues of community development and I decided to radically change the internal recruitment methods of my local public authority, because I had and I want to make the difference." To do so, he used his relationships and acquaintance notably within the Moroccan community, because they represent the majority of the local inhabitants and he understands the codes and the representations. The managers were "instructed to recruit persons of foreign origin who were involved in the neighborhood, which were recommended for their skills on the territory. My views have changed because of his political speeches, but also because the

¹² The term *allochtoon* is widely used to refer to immigrants and their descendants. Officially the term *allochtoon* is much more specific and refers to anyone who had at least one parent born outside the Netherlands. Hence, third-generation immigrants are no longer considered *allochtoon*.

¹³ Name changed to remain anonymous.

job descriptions and the skills have changed "(Frank, 47, director of finance). Following the event of the death of Theo van Gogh in 2004 that affected the city of Amsterdam and specially New East Amsterdam (where the murder took place), the mayor had to answer to the political demand stating a desire to build a local network that allows it to manage local violence. Karim has decided to appeal to community networks linked by ethnicity and by religions - particularly Islam -. "Knowing the language of their country of origin, their cultural codes, religious rituals (such as how to enter a mosque, etc.) has become enhance and attractive skills when we need to recruit employees for positions of policy advisors, educators, etc." (Priscilia, 53 years old, head of the education department). But the majority of Dutch Moroccans employees are on discharge or strategic development positions. Only two are in positions of leadership and management. "I was recruited on a position as an educator and one of my close friends as a political advisor, we both did not have the skills required in normal times, it was not appropriate qualifications or knowledge for the public service. Karim knew our qualities related to our identity, and gave us the chance to enter the public service "(Samir, political advisor, 37 years old). Over 90% of respondents have been helped by a person of their network (they knew through the mosque, their ancestry, place of residence, the neighborhood association), and thought they do not have all the necessary skills when they started.

To make other communities visible, employees of Surinamese origin had already been recruited before 2006, because they had the skills and qualifications, and the mastery of the Dutch language. It should be noted that very few employees are of Turkish origin, as this population is involved in the private labor market. These interviewees said "prefer to create their own business, rather clothing shops, halal butchers or fast foods "(Arkan, 31 years old, community worker).

Thus, the percentage of diversity of cultural backgrounds exploded until 2009. It reached 25%, but 15% of *allochtoons* in the categories of management are not made at all. However, in 2010, a new mayor Ahmed Chaba takes place. He has also Moroccan backgrounds, and he is member of the Labour Party when the government does not approve positive discrimination anymore. He tries to preserve the diverse backgrounds of employees recommended by the "Policy Target" percentage. In his discourse, I noticed that he did not use the professional, ethnic, or religious network to increase representativeness. But, in practice, my ethnographic immersion showed that the use of these networks did not stop, but it is at a small, personal scale around the mayor and other managers. "It is true that it continues, it works everywhere and it will never stop, but I assure you it is nothing compared to before" (Christien, Secretary Office of the Mayor, 32). The position of the mayor consists in refusing to recruit in the name of the difference, but to hire in the name of the competence and quality. Thus, in Amsterdam, actions to fight against discrimination are conducted through educational meetings, conferences in the heart of neighborhoods, but the system of positive discrimination is actually questioned. Once the mayor has reached this percentage of diversity (which figure corresponds to the political demands of the "Policy Target", the effort to improve representativeness is no longer made. The percentage of 27% to 25% stagnated for 4 years, as if the quota cannot be exceeded. Instead this device recommends a minimum

number of different backgrounds or origins, this case study shows that this system of accounts without minimum penalties based on responsibility and autonomy, reverses and blocks the recruitment of more cultural diversity. This mechanism of "target groups" allowed to actively improve the representativeness of the target population, but it did not improve the environment that disadvantages their representativeness. It actually creates other forms of social injustice and dissatisfaction. Indeed, to get the good number of ethnic minorities, many of the staff members have been selected on the basis of positive discrimination to the detriment of quality and competence. Thus, the adverse effect of this mechanism is to produce other forms of injustice because the "quota system" in New East Amsterdam has addressed the issue of the first gate-entrance, which is the recruitment. But they did not take into account the question of the career of these officials.

"Invisible Quotas" in Ponac

The municipality is composed of 1002 employees in 2012. 25% of the staff members are inhabitants of the urban renewal area of Ponac. However, they are mostly found in some specific departments (education, leisure and youth, cleaning services) and this percentage is composed for the vast majority of adults aged over 30 years. In addition, if they are present in certain employment sectors, few of them get a permanent job. Facing this lack of representation of youngsters and adults from urban renewal areas classified by the "politique de la ville"¹⁴, the Mayor wished to apply a "Charte de la Diversité" in 2014: the recruitment policy of the municipality is based on a traditional policy of non-discrimination which tends to equal opportunities for all classes, origins or gender. The selection criteria are based on the competences outlined by the job description, and diplomas and qualifications obtained by the candidate. However, following the protest of the youth from the working-class neighborhoods in revolt against a lack of recognition in the field of municipal employment in 2008, the recruitment policy and the human resources managers are directly connected to the "politique de la ville". The goal of the new patterns of recruitment is to work upstream by multiplying the networks in order to have one or two candidates from the ethnic and social diversity. Once the visibility of cultural diversity is possible at the implementation stage, the process consists in pushing the candidate (with a specific voluntarism) to reach the interview stage. But if the candidate arrives in the first place with another equally qualified candidate, recruitment is not necessarily focused on the candidate with the social or cultural diversity feature. This system of "preference" throughout the final stages of recruitment aims to hire a

¹⁴ The expression "politique de la ville" is a set of state actions to revalue certain "sensitive" urban areas and reduce inequalities between territories. It includes legislative and regulatory measures in the field of social work and urban planning, in partnership with local authorities and their partners (social housing, economic backgrounds, associations ...) often based on a contractual basis. I have to notice that because the ethnic statistics are not accepted in the French context, the professional actors, politicians often used the category ZUS (from urban renewal area) to talk about the ethnic minorities.

certain number of candidates from different cultural backgrounds. It is a targeted percentage calculated according to the proportion of people living in urban renewal areas (ZUS). The goal is to reach a similar landscape in the public instance to that within the residents, which means reaching 15% of employees from ZUS in the workforce. This is why I suggest developing the concept of "invisible quotas." In other words, we move from a "quota" which is independent from personal qualities to an "affirmative action" (such as "égalité des chances"), which is at equal opportunity but at different social and cultural background. These "quotas" are invisible processes, which are not displayed to all staff members of the municipality, nor to the inhabitants. These are guidelines followed by the officials from the department of human resources: elected officials, the mayor, department heads and political actors of Ponac. Although the term "invisible quotas" is more or less approved by interviewees, it is never linked explicitly to ethnicity. The matter is rather addressed in terms of social classes. However, this measure to accompany youth and adults "from employment" in local public authorities is primarily aimed at recruiting candidates with visible ethnic characteristics. As it is sensitive to define the population descendants of migrants, managers generalize categories of public action for "youth stemming from immigration" and "youth from ZUS". We could say that, given the structure of the postcolonial immigration in France, this is more or less correct as most migrant families come from the working classes. However, these invisible accounts do not address the issue of recruitment of those graduated young adults from the middle-class, especially for managerial jobs. Moreover, in all internal classification, the institution explicitly defines this action on a territorial basis and therefore it is based on a social eligibility criterion. It is mainly the residential address of the candidate in Ponac that will be considered. And that is probably because the "neighborhood" component is fundamental and the socio-territorial dimension is firstly taken into account. Thus, this action actually addresses the recruitment of descendants of migrants. This "special attention" is not a public statement or a goal explicitly quantified. This territorial referent is a "roundabout approach" to address the representativeness of ethnic minorities. Thus, these quotas underlying recruitment practices rarely appear explicitly. And, in most cases, this tendency to euphemism remains dominant. Indeed, the accounting process to make visible what is invisible (minorities) is itself invisible (quotas). It means that the quota system is designed as a deliberate action. It creates and comes from below in order to ensure a significant representation of these groups in recruitment. It is an initiative that the level of compliance is not reported and sanctioned in case of failure of the proportional representation system. It sought a minimum rate but it is never set in concrete and legibly. This action is part of a process of positive discrimination, but always based on a territorial criterion. Therefore, it maintains a permanent ambiguity about the legitimacy of the criterion of ethnicity to characterize the public. By displaying the social origin and by hiding the question of ethnicity, the managers and politicians actually produces an unidentified, problematic category and creates—a taboo. Here, we must distinguish "French positive discrimination" which establishes quotas in the selection process (like parity) and not in the results themselves. It is also characterized by its unspoken, including denial of "quotas linked to ethnicity"

that pushes actors to go through more or less transparent substitutes, such as affirmative action and “politique de zonage territorial”¹⁵

Ethnicization of competences

The diversification of the workforce consists in prioritizing the development of a realistic strategy supported by management, broadly communicated and integrated into the culture of the organization. Combining political equality of opportunity and treatment could influence both on short-term (positive actions are defined in time) or long-term (through actions on attitudes and processes). For a number of years, there has been a rise of ethnic readability (especially via culturalism) of deviance declined in figures of crime and vulnerability [Sheepers, 2013]. Within this framework, educators, leaders from minority populations appear to be more likely to intervene in populations considered to “their image.” In this last part, I question the link between ethnicity, professional skills and target of public action of local authorities. It notes that the concept of ethnic minorities, the naturalization of skills and the mobilization of ethnicity in the interactions are subject to internal debates in the French and Dutch context.

In France, problems in the territory of Ponac (crime, social vulnerability, rebellion) are continually processed by the municipality. A striking example is the manifestation of youth and adults from ZUS. Several individuals are mobilized to achieve a better numerical representation. The mayor decided to recruit youth descendants of migrants in order to quickly calm down the spirits. The public event was analyzed by politicians in terms of social revolt, instead of a call for recognition. This collective problem was solved by hiring two persons (a black and a Moroccan). No action over time has emerged, but on the contrary on the long-term, it weakens the solidarity between the French descendants of migrants. Indeed, some individual cases have been recruited as community worker, service cleanliness or a woman serving home. These recruitments were exploited, displayed in a local newspaper to show the consideration of the question of diversity. All respondents of my interviews have declared that their ethnicity was a resource, a quality, a competence. The ability to negotiate with the youth in their native language, to create mediation or to explain administrative procedures to illiterate parents helps to make the public service more efficient and meet the local demand. The mayor of Ponac is in a deeply ambivalent situation as it constantly oscillates between a valuation of these differences related to ethnicity and their stigmatization, because of the weight of the republican tradition. Assigned employees, whether male or female, young or older perpetually find themselves in the role of “big brothers”, designated as mediators and negotiators [Mace, 1997]. Consequently, for fear of being assimilated to a community, and assign specific roles rejected by the republican model, these employees with ethnic backgrounds use their skills to perform their duties, but will resolve all ties with the community of origin. There is a complete separation that leads the descendants

¹⁵ The implementation of public policies is relied, in France, on the delineation of geographical areas or specific-“areas” - depending on specific objectives of each criteria.

of migrants to no longer use their networks and mobilize themselves? [Lapeyronnie, Kokoreff, 2013].

In the Netherlands, following the international event of the death of Theo Van Ghogh, the question of integration of descendants of immigrants was addressed in a comprehensive and timely manner. A policy of positive discrimination has emerged that triggered a real internal change in Amsterdam. Very soon, over 25% of employees were stemming from post-colonial migrants in New East Amsterdam, although their contracts were sometimes precarious (several fixed-term contracts). HR actors in this radically changed their ways to recruit: one of the main changes was to rework the job descriptions. The mayor reclassified the skills: the language (written and / or spoken), the acquisition of cultural codes, ethnic and religious networks were especially valued and sought by managers. If the experience and feeling of prejudice and discrimination are distinguished [Dubet, Mace, Rui, Cousin, 2013], my interviews with Dutch employees have proven that there is a very weak feeling of prejudice, because a large number of employees are descendants of migrants and the mayor himself has Moroccan origins. However, the Dutch positive discrimination has a perverse effect: the feeling of discrimination is stronger in higher positions, because the system does not compensate the initial inequalities. Managing diversity through a recruitment system by "target policy" has failed to correct inequalities starting by monitoring training. To conclude, in both national cases, the ethnicization of professional skills related to the position of public employees is real and affects the feeling of discrimination and prejudice among the workforce. However, it is not treated in the same manner and with the same intensity in the Dutch municipality: this ethnicization of skills, and of professional qualities are institutionalized to the extent that it is subject to managerial tools. In the French case, it still appears to be informal, hardly blameless because it emphasizes the ambivalence of the republican model.

Conclusion

Since the 2000s, recruitment of cultural diversity is a real economic issue, but it has mostly become a political and social issue, actively crossing the fight against discrimination. The article highlights the mechanisms underlying the recruitment and selection of cultural origins in two local public authorities. On one hand, in the New East Amsterdam, we move from a positive discrimination through a system of target policy to a return to the "color-blindness" due to its negative impact in terms of ethnicization of skills. On the other hand, in Ponac, we move from an affirmative action denying any description or accounting of minorities in terms of ethnicity, to a local policy supporting ethnic differences during the non-displayed political processes.

There are two dimensions in these systems. The first dimension concerns the location of the inscription of the quota system. Indeed, in the Netherlands the "reversed quotas" of candidates fixed by the legislation are inserted and designed the composition of ethnic minorities among the staff members. It establishes and imposes a minimum number of ethnic minority candidates (26%). While in the city of Ponac, the "invisible

quota” set by recruiters are adopted voluntarily and take the form of internal and non-displayed requirements. The organization should have a minimum percentage of descendants of migrants. As for the second dimension of the quota system, it relates to the level of the selection process and appointment quotas that consider ethnic minorities. A quota system may seek to change the ethnic composition of the pool of potential candidates (during pre-selection) or candidates running for the position (maintenance) and / or recruited.

Finally, we note that in both contexts, diversity policies are not applied on behalf of a pseudo-equality of opportunity, or places, or in the name of social justice, but it was created and established on a conventional manner (compared to other European nations [Verbeek, Groeneveld, 2012], and strategic interest (meet local needs). However, the issue of diversity is a real problem for managers who wish to mirror their local community. They have to face empirical and adverse effects of positive discrimination such as ethnicization.

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