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Promoting ethnic diversity in workplaces: the limits of anti-discrimination “à la française”

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Abstract

This article analyzes the implementation of diversity policies in French firms within a traditionally colorblind institutional and cultural context. Using a mixed-method research design, I focus on the ways in which ethnoracial categories are referred to by actors involved in diversity policies. The empirical materials come from a specific diversity program conducted by a major organization between 2005 and 2011 and comprise elements on both persons involved in the implementation of the program and the recipients (young people who applied to the program). The analyses aim at investigating two main questions: (1) What are the categories of people targeted by diversity programs and how are they referred to in colorblind political and legal contexts? (2) How do potential recipients signal categories that make them eligible for the program? Findings highlight the limits of anti-discrimination policies in the French colorblind context.

Keywords: diversity policy, colorblind policies, ethnic statistics, workplace discrimination, mixed-methods

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Introduction

France is known to be colorblind; it is traditionally reluctant to the recognition of ethnic/racial groups in the public sphere and discourages the assertion of separate sub-national identities (Amiriaux and Simon 2006). The French legal framework is indeed characterized by the “non-divisibility of the Republic” and “equality before the law” (Calvès, 2005). It is therefore structurally disinclined to policies that target specific groups and this reluctance proves to be very powerful when it comes to targeting race, religion or ethnic origin generally considered to be unconstitutional[†] (Sabbagh and Peer 2008). Aversion towards group-based policies explains the relative maladjustment of affirmative action – or what French would rather call “positive discrimination” (Fassin 2003) – to the French political and legal system. More generally, this framework is quite unfavourable to the implementation of consistent and efficient anti-discrimination policies; state-level anti-discrimination action is traditionally weak and fragmented (Calvès, 1999; 2008).

The French colorblind paradigm has been increasingly challenged by evidence documenting severe discrimination in the labor market. This “clear and convincing evidence” increases the political pressure over implementing equality policies specifically targeting ethnoracial minorities. Faced with the structural reluctance of the state and its back and forth movements in

[†] Conversely to the U.S, French colorblindness is derived from the “constitutionally-grounded principle of equality” with Article 1 of the 1958 Constitution ensuring “ the equality of all citizens before the law, without any distinction of origin, race, or religion”. On this aspect of French egalitarianism and the comparison with the U.S context see (Sabbagh and Peer 2008; Sabbagh 2005)

this regard, it is the private sector that created the first tangible actions during the early 2000's, originally targeting ethnoracial discrimination and progressively establishing what since has been called *diversity policies* within a net influence of the U.S-style diversity management (Bereni, 2009; Bereni and Jounait; 2009; Dobbin, 1998; Dobbin, 2009; Doytcheva, 2010; Edelman *et al*, 2001; Kelly and Dobbin, 1998).

This article is precisely interested in the concrete implementation of such policies within a general colorblind context. While a valuable body of research addresses the legal, political and organizational contexts of the establishment of these policies, this study is designed in a much more micro fashion. It focuses on the ways in which ordinary actors involved in such policies practically refer to ethnoracial categories, on how they make use of them in interactions and on the extent to which they conceive them as legitimate categories of inequality. The analyses rely on a diverse set of empirical materials relating to three different types of actors involved in these policies: institutional actors (governmental services and state agencies.), field actors (associations and economic organizations involved in the implementation of diversity programs) and recipients (young people who applied to such programs). These materials are analyzed using mix-method approaches relying on in-depth interviews and a sample of 650 CV sent to a diversity program between 2006 and 2009.

The analyses aim at investigating two main questions: (1) What are the categories of people targeted by diversity programs and how are they referred to in colorblind political and legal contexts? (2) How do potential recipients signal categories that make them eligible for the program and how do they conceive the effect of ethnoracial background on their labor market

attainment. Findings highlight the limits of anti-discrimination policies in the French colorblind context.

Promoting diversity in French firms: anti-discrimination policies “à la française” :

Although France was relatively a pioneer in anti-discrimination legislation[‡] compared to other European countries, proactive anti-discrimination policies were rather timid before the 2000's (Lochak 1987; Halpérin 2008). This is all the more the case for discrimination related to ethnoracial characteristics (ethnic origin, skin color, and religious background) hardly framed as such (Bereni and Chappe, 2011; Fassin 2002; Simon 2004). Inequality related to these characteristics is generally supposed to be tackled through mainstreamed “common law” public actions. Ethnoracial inequality is also traditionally tightly related to immigration (Amiriaux and Simon, 2006, Ware, 2014). Hence, even though many of them are second and third generation citizens, minorities tend to be “otherized” as “immigrants” in media coverage and public debates to such an extent that the term “immigrant” is widely used as a shorthand reference to ethnic minorities. This explains the traditional incorporation of anti-discrimination policies in the more general “immigrant integration” policies. Since the 1980's, the latter have been cross-cutting and designed in close collaboration between several ministers among which the role of social and urban affairs is crucial (Safi 2014). Mainly involving proximity field actions conducted by associations, NGOs and other civil society actors, supervised and financed by public or state agencies, immigrant integration policies have been characterized by a color-blind approach

[‡] The first French anti-discrimination law goes back to 1972 when racial discrimination was criminalized for the first time. Other laws followed adding other types of discrimination (gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.).

targeting disadvantaged neighborhoods where unemployment and poverty rates are high[§]. Though they were officially labeled integration policies, they did not only target migrants but were also designed to benefit to the second and third generations often referred to as the youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods (“*jeunes des quartiers*”). The historically high presence of minority populations in these so-called “French banlieues” makes this territorial targeting indirectly reach out to ethnoracial minorities (Simon 1999; Kriszbaum 2004; Doytcheva 2007).

The French Republican model not only forcefully rejects ethnicity, race and religion as grounds for political organization and claims-making but also as the basis of categories in official statistics (Simon 2008b). Ethnic/racial types of categorization are banned from French public statistics. Only a few, small-scaled surveys conducted by specific agencies or associations do make the use of such categorizations within a quite constraining legal frame. This makes it difficult for ethnoracial inequality to be documented through representative data and for ethnoracially-based affirmative action to be enforced (Simon and Stavau-Debaugue 2004). Since the 1990s repetitive controversies over the necessity and legitimacy of the introduction of such categories have spread within the academic sphere and beyond, in what has come to be called the debate over “ethnic statistics”(Simon 2008a)**. This issue is still subject to intense contention

[§] The circular of April 10, 1991 explicitly states the “integration of foreign population” as a major concern of urban policies.

** A first major controversy was related to a public statistic survey focused on immigration conducted in 1992. The journal *Population* published a special issue involving researchers debating rather vehemently over the use of such statistics (Leridon 1998). Similarly, a new public statistic survey conducted on the topic in 2008 provoked a new controversy with a special issue in *la Revue Française de Sociologie*.(Félouzis 2008). In 2010, a large committee involving political, economic, scientific and civil society actors summarized the debates over the issue in a public report and made some policy recommendations to the government (Comedd 2010). In reaction, a collective book was

within the academic sphere, to such an extent that, as Sabbagh and Peer (2008) put it, French “color blindness,” as a legal and political frame with practical consequences, will remain with us for some time”.

This general context has nonetheless undergone considerable changes in the 2000’s. First, major improvement in statistical measurement has been made through the introduction of parental place of birth in some crucial surveys such as the Labor Force Survey (since 2005) and also through the conduction of a wide survey specifically related to immigration, diversity and discrimination in 2008 (Aeberhardt and Rathelot 2013; Beauchemin, Hamel and Simon 2015). Broadening the definition of migrant background beyond the first generation opened the way to new evidence on inequality related to migratory origins (Aeberhardt, Fougère, Pouget, and Rathelot 2010; Aeberhardt, Rathelot, and Coudin 2010; Frickey and Primon 2002; Frickey and Primon 2006; Meurs, Pailhé, and Simon 2006). This body of work usually uses information on respondents’ immigrant background (place of birth and nationality of birth of ego and his/her parents if available), with more or less detailed national or regional origins employed as de facto ethnoracial classification. These studies generally put forward the heterogeneity of socioeconomic attainments between immigrant groups and the particularly disadvantaged situation of first and second generation immigrants from North-Africa (also referred to as Arabs or Maghrebi) and Sub-Saharan Africa in the labor market, in the housing market and to a lesser extent in schools. These conclusions have been confirmed in increasingly sophisticated paired testing studies and expanded to non migratory categories. This body of work precisely highlights massive discrimination against ethnic minorities in the hiring process and shows that this

published by an *ad hoc* committee sharply criticizing the Comedd’s report. (CARSED, 2009). Other reports have dealt with these issues in different political contexts all remaining dead ended.

discrimination is related to their supposed origin, skin color or religion (Cediey and Foroni 2008; Petit, Duguet and L'Horty, 2014, Adida, Laitin and Valfort 2014; Valfort 2015). Racial discrimination also appears to be experienced by native French people from overseas departments mainly in relation to their skin color. All in all, this evidence has contributed to raising political awareness of discrimination and its role in hampering the employment opportunities of ethnic minorities in France (Simon 2009, Fassin 2006). It has also increased the pressure on public policy to specifically tackle this type of discrimination.

In addition to the increasing empirical evidence, the growing importance of the issue of discrimination (and anti-discrimination policies) experienced a phase of acceleration in the early 2000's triggered by two other important factors.

-The enhancement of European incentives towards the implementation of such policies (Borillo, 2003; Calvès 2005; Doytcheva 2009, Guiraudon 2004).

-The emergence of antidiscrimination initiatives stemming from the private sector with noticeable personal involvement of influential CEOs^{††} and swift governmental support (Bereni 2009; Doytcheva 2009).

This new context has created an anti-discrimination turn in French policies enhancing the visibility of these questions in the political debate. In 2001, an anti-discrimination public agency

^{††} Yazid Sabeg, a business man of Algerian origin missioned by the government over issues of discrimination and diversity between 2008 and 2013, and Claude Bébéar, the CEO of a major insurance company, have been among the most active. Both have played an important role in the diversity initiatives in the early 2000's. They have both published reports on the topic for Institut Montaigne, an influential think tank that plays an important role in the diversity related political debate in France (Bébéar 2004; Sabeg, 2004).

was formed with the aim of centralizing the reception of complains about all forms of legal discrimination^{††}. Most of the reported incidents were related to the workplace and a considerable share mentioned ethnic/racial motivations. Other proactive anti-discrimination initiatives directly targeting ethnic minorities emerged within the economic sector (Verkindt 2008). A “diversity charter” was established in 2004 and quickly supported by the state. Nowadays more than 3,400 public or private organizations have signed the charter. It contains a concrete commitment to general anti-discrimination principle, namely with regard to human resources management. This first initiative extended to the more ambitious project of the “Diversity Label”. Created in 2008, it is a state-recognized label issued after an audit conducted by a commission composed of representatives of the state, unions, employers and diverse experts. In order to acquire the label, organizations that apply have to prove that their anti-discrimination actions and practices meet the label’s general requirements. More than 350 organizations have been labeled since 2008, including 7 ministers.

Similar to the development of diversity management in the U.S, the implementation of such policies in France drew on the central justification that ethnic minority is good for business (Bereni 2009; Doytcheva and Alaoui Hachimi, 2010, Noon 2007). It is also framed as soft-power policy in contrast to more aggressive forms of anti-discrimination claims based on legal and civic equality principle (Junter and Sénac, 2011).

Nonetheless, and despite significant symbolic influence, the effectiveness of these emerging diversity policies in alleviating discrimination practices towards ethnoracial minorities has been rather limited. Research points their weak legal prescription and the absence of standard sets of good practices (Doytecheva 2009, Bereni and Jounait 2009; Bereni 2011). Studies also describe

^{††} This Agency was dissolved in 2011.

the tension in firms' actions between egalitarianism and differentialism which leads to sporadic actions (Simon and Escafré-Dublet 2009). A major weakness has been described in relation to the expansion of the scope and meaning of diversity relying on the moral principle of equal value and "non hierarchization" of anti-discrimination struggles. This global approach of diversity, which is also present in the U.S, appears to be particularly effective in overshadowing ethnic and racial issues in the French context. While founders of these initiatives were originally particularly concerned with ethnoracial discrimination, the concrete implementation of anti-discrimination actions in this field proved to be of the most difficult in the absence of firm-level ethnic statistics. Other anti-discriminatory targets like gender equality and positive action towards disabled workers hold the major share in firms' effort at least partly because they are much easier to assess and evaluate (Bereni 2009; Bereni and Jaunait 2009; Doytcheva 2009; Doytcheva 2010).

This article is motivated by the investigation of this specific paradox. It is mainly concerned with the day-to-day implementation of such policies studying both the actions and perceptions of actors in this regard. How does the implementation of diversity policies work without diversity categories? What types of categories are used within diversity programs that aim at tackling ethnoracial inequality? To what extent do the program recipients signal such categories and perceive them as legitimate categories of inequality? The research design presented below aims at tackling these questions.

Data and Methods

This article builds on a mixed-methods design that involves field research and qualitative interviews on the one hand and the collect and exploitation of quantitative data on the other hand.

Diverse empirical materials have been collected on different actors involved in diversity policies in France:

-A long-term field research within an organization that was a main actor in diversity policies in France (we refer to this organization using the acronym DO, “Diversity Organization”). DO’s work is oriented toward promoting the social role of firms and economic actors namely in terms of guaranteeing equal access to employment. DO was closely involved in the Diversity Charter project in 2004 and played a major role in the establishment of the Diversity Label in 2007. DO’s activities include a variety of programs that target employers and firms, potentially discriminated populations, and the French society in general through awareness campaigns^{§§}. The focus of this study is on a particular program of the organization that was quite innovative at the time, which specifically aimed at enhancing the employability of *visible minorities*^{***}. The program took a three-stage approach: a sourcing stage (call for CVs from visible minority job seekers), a matching stage (matching CV with job offers received from DO’s corporate partners) and an interview stage (arranging interviews for the matched candidates and coaching them). The program also regularly organized employment forums in which job applicants communicated with employers. This experience lasted from 2005 to 2011. I made several visits to the organization in 2013 and 2014 and conducted in-depth interviews with the main persons that

^{§§} DO defines its field of intervention in a broad way as aiming at “*valuing differences*”. On the organization’s website one can read that “*Diversity is understood as equal participation of all segments of society. It revolves around three main actions: promoting professional equality between men and women, keeping seniors in employment and enhancing the integration of disable persons, visible minorities, or youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods.*”

^{***} This is how the program mainly referred to the targeted population as developed in the next section.

were in charge of the program. The collected materials comprise documentations, observations, informal discussions, and about 15 hours of recorded interviews.

-The data also include materials collected on beneficiaries of DO's diversity program. During my visit to the organization, I have been granted authorization to access archives of CVs sent by applicants to the program. Thousands of printed CV were stored in boxes and sorted according to the date of application. I collected and coded CV data on approximately 650 applicants. I coded information about applicants' sociodemographic and professional profile as it was signaled in the CVs. Some CVs were attached to a letter of motivation. DO also provided a list of persons that benefitted from the program; most of them attended a forum or had a job interview arranged by the program. I contacted some of these candidates and managed to conduct in-depth interviews (N=23).

-Finally, I also conducted in-depth interviews with governmental officers involved in anti-discrimination, immigrant integration and diversity promoting policies, municipal officers responsible of such policies within the city of Paris, and representative of associations that collaborate with the state in such programs (N=7).

Thus, the empirical material gathered for this study allows mixed-method approaches and enable us to confront information from diverse actors (governmental, civil society, economic actors and recipients).

Findings

Whom to target? Non-blind targeting in colorblind France

Anti-discrimination initiatives in the French context lack the vocabulary and even the concepts to tackle ethnoracial discrimination. The word ethnicity is very rarely used in the public debate and in official publications. Race is even less frequently used and quite negatively charged. It is proscribed from the political discourse despite frequent controversies triggered by politicians' slip of the tongue. Both words are nonetheless used in French legislations despite recurrent debate over the banning of the word race in particular (namely from the constitution and other legislations).

This difficulty of naming ethnicity and race is very clear in all the interviews conducted in this study. Interviewees from the public or associative sectors seldom use the word ethnicity (and even more rarely race) and have in consequences a lot of difficulty in referring to the targeted population in diversity policies. One may note the use of a wide variety of expressions indirectly referring to minority populations. The most frequent one is "*population stemming from migration*" which is widely used both in the political and scientific fields, as politically correct expressions to refer to ethnic minorities. Some interviewees make the use of the word "*youth*" with a generic ethnoracial connotation especially when associated with the word neighborhood (the "*neighborhood's youth*" "*jeunes des quartiers*"). Some others frequently employ indirect expressions such as « "*specific*" *population categories*^{†††}» or "*populations with foreign origins*". In rare cases, interviewees also spoke of "*visible minorities*".

This issue of naming goes hand in hand with the issue of measuring, or what interviewees usually refer to as the "*invisibility*" of the public or the difficulty to "*find*" the target audience. This is constantly repeated by Sarah, the director of the DO program. Sarah, who has a Master degree in human resources and who has been extremely involved in the DO program since its very

^{†††} Used with air quotations.

beginning, stresses that any will to conduct wide proactive programs of this sort is confronted to the issue of “*stamping*” – to use her word *i.e* marking the program beneficiaries as such. This is how she describes the reaction of firms to her proposition to draw on DO’s first experience in order to establish a large-scale and more constraining program on the national level.

It is mostly the firms that said, we’re not well equipped, we can’t find young people, we can’t find young people. We would be happy to recruit them but we just can’t find them, and then we cannot make any use of ethnic statistics, how do you want us to mark young people with migrant background?

The issue of “identification” is also clearly raised by Sebastian, a senior civil officer working at a minister department in relation with migrant employment policies.

The problem is to identify the public because you talk about the public but who are they? Are they people who just arrived, are they foreigners... er...are they immigrants? Therefore, the problem is about statistically identifying these people which is very difficult to do.

This difficulty of identifying is frequently associated to the official illegality of ethnic statistics in firms. Nonetheless, many interviewees note the discrepancy between theory and practice in this regard, reporting examples of indirect use of such statistics, usually within an attempt to better monitor diversity in human resources. The most widely used “methodology” relies on employees’ surnames. These practices are referred to by Sebastien as “good practices”:

Some firms have good practices that can help identify...er... For example firm X uses...er... studies its employees’ surnames and then annually repeats this study in order to see if the surnames are changing... if things evolve.

Lila, a civil society representative at a French public agency who was in charge of a report on the effect of diversity policies on firms' economic performance clearly describes the *de facto* ethnic statistics as a diversity monitoring strategy.

Some companies told me, we use ethnic statistics on the side, hiding in the corner of our office, while counting our staffs...er...er...according to their patronymic consonance and then we conclude... here it is, we have as much diversity as that!

Sylvie, who is in charge of diversity programs at DO, nonetheless points out the drawbacks of surname-based approaches and describes alternative ways in which firms try to bypass official constraints:

Some companies have tried to do things...what is happening a lot lately is questionnaires on perception of discrimination that is to say highly regulated tightly framed - you must know these things very well – do I feel I belong to an ethnic group and if yes do I feel discriminated against and stuff like this. That's the only solution one may find. And the studies based on patronymics are known to be completely “biased” because actually uh it is not because your name is not foreign-sounding that you won't be Black or Asian.

Conversely to the sensitivity of ethnoracial background, parallels are frequently drawn with other more tangible, more measurable categories. In these comparisons, most interviewees invoke migratory, territorial, gender or disability categories. The limitation of official migratory categories (such as place of birth or nationality) and their ambivalent relations to ethnoracial categories are frequently emphasized. This is illustrated by this quote by Philippe, head of equal opportunity programs in a French public agency.

Still regarding the populations...um...migrant populations, it's quite easy because the nationality criterion works quite well [...] the difficulty for us lies in, um, the second and third generations.

When we talk about racial discrimination... and with the default of statistics which would allow us to account for people's origin. But that is still an almost taboo debate in this country.

Relation to migration is indeed usually analyzed as confusing. Many of the interviews convey a tension between diversity policies on the one hand and immigration and integration policies on the other hand. The confusion is related to the fact that the emerging racial question in France is linked to the postcolonial nature of a considerable share of its immigration (Simon 2010). While Europeans form the majority of first and second generation immigrants, the most recent waves come from ex-French colonies (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and sub-Saharan Africans mainly from francophone West Africa) (Insee 2012). This tension between immigrant integration policies and anti-discrimination policies is described by Ahmed, a representative of an association that works in the field of migrants' employment, as a major source of confusion in the monitoring of diversity actions.

What do we mean when we talk of integration? Are we talking about recently arrived immigrants are we talking about the French youth of immigrant origins [...] because in reality it is as if there was a disjunction between...er...a dissonance uh [...] to be clearer integration should obviously mainly apply to immigrants uh so to the newly arrived people whereas it is used to talk about young people with immigrant background.

After having worked on the report on diversity policies, Lila realized she needed to make a “clear distinction” between these two policy areas. She highlights that diversity policies should reach out to French visible minorities and that they should disconnect from the issue of immigration.

It is true that I became aware of the issue of immigration and migration flows. I became aware of it last year [...] when I presented the study and people were talking to me about immigrants but I

said, what are we talking about here? we are moving away from...er... there was a belated awareness on my behalf on the issue [...] in fact it is two different things a foreigner who comes to France anyone of foreign origin who comes to France in order to acquire the French citizenship, to settle and so on... this ain't the question.. When a young person is born in France, when he is born in France, he got his degree and then he wants to work. So it's not at all the same thing...

Diversity policies are thus clearly confronted to an identification issue analyzed by the diverse interviewees as a main drawback in the implementation of antidiscrimination actions. Diversity actors are thus structurally confronted to the limitations of their programs and should keep working in the field all the while respecting a general colorblind framework. This context does not only constrain the scope of policies, it also limits the ability of communicating over these actions and more generally the possibility of naming things. As Sarah puts it, such programs have to know *“how to communicate about diversity while remaining consistent with the French constitution that is to say no affirmative action and no ethnicization »*.

The DO program

While the DO diversity program under study was designed within this general institutional and cultural background, the program was intrinsically related to the burgeoning diversity policies in France and was originally an overt attack on ethnoracial discrimination. A crucial step consisted in the publication of a famous public report in 2005, “Fauroux report”, which states things in an unusually provocative way: *“Discrimination towards North-Africans and Blacks, to call a spade a spade, whether they are French or not, is practiced widely and with impunity in the labor market.”*(Fauroux, 2005, p.1)

The program studied in this article is one of the earliest diversity programs that belongs to this general dynamic and was therefore explicitly oriented toward ethnoracial type of discrimination. Combatting ethnoracial discrimination is described as the main motivation of Sarah, the principle organizer and conceiver of the program. The issue of defining and identifying the targeted population was therefore clearly raised from the very beginning and all through the implementation of the program. Moreover, given that DO program was highly dependent on a phase of sourcing, which means that potential recipients had to reach out to the organization in order for it to help them finding a job in a second stage, the issue of identification was all the more crucial. DO's communication campaigns were consequently very clear about them targeting "visible minorities" which was at the time quite new in the French policy landscape. Even if visible minority is never defined as a policy category in France (conversely to its use in Canada for example), it was very clear through the discussions that Blacks and Arabs were the most explicitly targeted. But this targeting used negation rather than direct references; the targeted recipients should not be Europeans/Whites as clearly stated in this exchange with Sarah describing people who applied to the program.

A variety of people came. There were a few Asians. There was one particular case, don't know whether to say it or not. There was a Dane who had contacted me. It slipped through my fingers. These things happen, because I process 800 CVs. So I invited her to a forum. And this young woman obtained three internships at the end of the forum. So I was angry. Not just upset. Really pissed off. Because this young Danish woman, she took the place of someone. It was obvious she ended up there by mistake. I made the mistake I take responsibility.

More generally, distance was clearly drawn with official migratory categories (based on nationality or place of birth) considered as more politically correct in the public discourse. As an example, this is what Sarah says while speaking of the type of public she was confronted to:

Sarah: These young French people of foreign origin have been joined by foreigners. And then we were not reaching our targeted audience anymore

Interviewer: You didn't wish to help young foreigners?

Sarah: It's not that I didn't want to help young foreigners. It's simply not our target. It was young people with foreign origin that we were interested in [...] The idea of the project is to help those who were born in France, grew up in France, studied in France. That was emphasized by the project founders. Let's focus on our fellow citizens first before the others.

Nonetheless, even if the program was clearly targeting disadvantaged ethnic minorities, this criterion is never presented as self-sufficient. It is always associated with other type of highly correlated characteristics. When communicating on its activities and manifestations, the program states it was targeting “college educated youth from sensitive neighborhoods^{###} and/or visible minorities”^{\$\$\$}.

Hence, even if the program is clearly targeting ethnic minority (and not migrant population), still ethnicity is rarely framed as directly discriminatory. It is usually associated to more legitimate categories of discrimination that are more socioeconomic in nature. I distinguish amongst 3 of the most frequent criteria evoked in the interviews: educational, territorial and sociocognitive.

Educational targeting

^{###} Sensitive neighborhoods refer here to official territorial categorization that has been the basis of urban policies in France since the 1980's (*zones urbaines sensibles*).

^{\$\$\$} Variations on these designations of targeted populations can be found in announcements for forums, sourcing campaigns, and other materials communicating about the program.

The program is clearly targeting highly educated visible minorities (2 to 5 years of college). This strategy is justified by DO by its capacity of filling the gap of exclusively low-skill-oriented employment policies. It is also an acknowledgement that discrimination hits the educated minority as Sarah states rather heatedly.

The non-educated [...] we always look after them. While graduates...er...on the pretext that they are highly educated that means they have no problem. It's not true! Because education does not protect from discrimination!

Sarah also justifies this focus on the most educated as a communication strategy highlighting minorities' skills and talents contrary to widespread representations conveyed by the media.

The image I have of this youth with migrant background is much more...er...about young graduates...it is on the contrary young graduates who can do well... and I much more see them like that rather than idle, young people who don't know where they are heading, lost, exclusively living in suburbs... for me it ain't this [...] though of course it is a reality but for me [...]Because we only mention the bad side [...] we don't talk about the good side. all these young people who just want to do well who do not necessarily live in the suburbs, who are educated these youth-nobody talks about these young people.

This educational criterion draws on a central opposition between public universities on one hand and elitist “*grandes écoles*” on the other hand, which is supposed to explain a great deal of minority disadvantage. Because they do not have the economic, social and cultural capital that enhance French elites' educational trajectories and because they overwhelmingly attend public French universities where selection is low and job prospects are limited, educated minority are trapped in relegated and low-promise tracks. Educational arguments are associated to ethnoracial

disadvantage to such a degree that they have gradually overshadowed it during the period of implementation of diversity policies. As asserted by the person in charge of equality programs at DO, more recent actions are more directly aiming at “increasing educational achievements of the youth and reinforcing job prospects for university students”. Such programs are designed within a totally colorblind frame.

Territorial targeting

The DO program studied in this article uses territorial targeting. Drawing on French official territorial categorization, geographic targeting is convenient in terms of measurability and traceability. Sylvie puts forward these practical aspects of using territorial tracking and stresses the ways in which this facilitates the reporting and evaluation of the program:

[...] that is to say, they are strictly speaking from a neighborhood targeted by urban policies. It is a software verification that allows us to use that statistic.

As pointed by Sarah in the following extract, the association with territorial categorization is also related to a more general framing of ethnic/racial discrimination as tied to spatial disadvantage.

Basically, it [the program] first touched young people with immigrant background, and also concerned the French with French origins who, since they live in difficult areas, have the same issues as young French people with foreign origin.

This spatial reductionism more generally corresponds to a socioeconomic reductionism of ethnoracial inequality clearly addressed in Sylvie’s developments below:

I’ll tell you honestly I think it’s, it’s multiple causality. Young people are often discriminated against because they live in a neighborhood and they just happen to be Black in addition... and

they just happen to have been to the university... but, what I want to say, 'uh honestly I can't say what criterion is predominant [...] Because for example a young visible minority who went to a "grande école" ...er... versus a white young person who went to the university, you see what I mean?

Despite these justifications, it is clear that territorial categorization is used as a euphemism, in a context where it is much more accepted than the use of ethnoracial categorization. It clearly appears as a default solution, as illustrated by the below extract from interview with Philippe, head of equality programs in a French public agency:

We had to accept this... we found ourselves faced with walls [...] I remember at the time the inter-ministerial delegation to the city to be clear [...] said nope [...] this is great but you just remove this ethnic thing uh uh ethnic minority and you replace it with neighborhood...and it is perfect. You see... see at one point [...] and I think everyone aligned with this a bit!

This spatial and socioeconomic reductionism may be interpreted as contributing to the invisibilization of ethnicity and race as legitimate categories of equality policies. In the following development, Philippe elaborates on the progressive process of interfacing of ethnoracial issues in social policies starting by territorialization and more recently leading to socioeconomic reductionism.

Since we have left the field of immigration moving towards the territorial dimension with the notion of neighborhood. so we've already rendered the question of Blacks and Arabs invisible which is the question that poses problem in this country [...] now we're moving on from the territorial-specific action [...] which was at least indirectly related to the issue of immigration...er.. [...]now we're moving on into the problem of poverty which means that actions will be led in territories that are no longer defined by the somehow specificity of their

immigration history [...] they are otherwise defined in relation to a poverty index [...] we make an additional step towards the invisibility of immigration problems... that it's it..

Sociocognitive factors

Finally, ethnoracial inequality is often associated with sociocognitive factors, mainly presented in terms of lacking soft skills and weakening social network. Interviews with Sarah are full of references to this soft skills problem she calls the issue of “codes”. In this extract, she describes the ways in which some corporate partners that were collaborating with her in the program alerted her on the issue:

They [employers] told me that the applicant is technically good but she doesn't have some codes. I did not know what that was about. So, they found her a job sponsor. It was a lady with an ENA degree [...]. She trained her. And even on Saturday she would take her to the museum to broaden her knowledge [...]. That's the core problem, it was the knowledge of codes of conducts. It was really our main problem.

In another extract, she describes her progressive realization of this youth “code problem” not without some disappointment.

Throughout the time, I realized that there were some people who did not know the codes. I was quite disappointed. I thought that those youth, they knew how to behave, they got the codes. It's not always the case because universities did not teach them that.

Here again, this sociocognitive repertoire used to explain ethnoracial characteristics potentially weakens the legitimacy of ethnoracial targeting and pushes policy actions towards coaching and training rather than direct access to jobs.

Applying as whom? Signaling or not signaling categories of discrimination while applying to the program

This section focuses on the program’s recipients and attempts to describe the ways in which they refer to ethnoracial categories of discrimination. I draw on two types of materials. First, I use objective data from their applications to the program (CVs and letters of motivation). I also collect their perceptions and experiences of ethnoracial discrimination during in-depth interviews.

Although the majority of collected CV’s have names with ethnic connotation (78%), other direct or indirect references to ethnic/racial background are rare. I identify 7 items where such signals may be potentially suggested: first and/or last names, nationality, photo, number of language cited, foreign language reported as native, professional experience abroad and education abroad.

Table 1 describes the distribution of these variables in the sample.

Table 1 Potential suggestions of origin

	%
Foreign connotation in first or last name	78.14
Nationality	
French nationality	32.70
French and Foreign nationalities	5.03
No mention	62.26
Place of birth	
Abroad	0.47
French localities	25.31
Not reported	74.21
Languages (Number)	
None	9.56
One	14.40
Two	38.77
Three or more	37.82
Foreign Language reported as native	12.26
Photo	34.12
Professional experience abroad	24.21
International mobility	37.26

Unsurprisingly, first and last names are the most massive signals of ethnic origin. Other signals are quite rare in the CV. Migratory categories are the rarest: nationality and place of birth are not mentioned in the majority of the CVs. A photo is included in 34% of CVs. And even criteria that may represent professional assets (languages, education abroad or professional experience abroad) are quite rarely mentioned.

A close look at languages suggests strategic omission or at least a sort of understating of foreign origin. Table 2 compares the order of the languages listed by the candidates and Table 3 focuses on languages that are reported as native. English is overwhelmingly cited as a first language (73% of CV). 10% of the candidates state French as their first language. This may obviously stem from the fact that French is considered as taken for granted for the majority of candidates and languages cited are usually “foreign languages”. Yet, 10% of CVs do report French first in the language section and 55% among them of candidates refer to it as being native. Such candidates may be assuring employers of their French fluency in case their ethnic origin may signal lower language abilities. More strikingly, Non-European languages are very rarely cited. Moreover, when cited such languages tend to appear least in the languages list. Only 3% of first languages are non-Europeans and this share steadily increases with language order: 12.5% of second languages and 18% of third languages. Table 3 shows, that even when such languages are native, they tend to be on the bottom of the list. When language 1 is reported as native, it is a non-European language in 22% of cases while this share rises to 81% when the second language is reported as native and 100% when the third language is reported as native. This clearly contrasts with the overwhelming North and Sub-Saharan origins of candidates as suggested by first and last names.

Table 2 Declared language in first, second or third position

	Language 1		Language 2		Language 3	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	61	9.56	153	23.98	402	63.01
French	67	10.50	13	2.04	7	1.10
English	465	72.88	78	12.23	22	3.45
European	25	3.93	314	49.22	91	14.26
Other	20	3.13	80	12.54	116	18.18

Table 3 Languages declared as native

	Language 1 is native		Language 2 is native		Language 3 is native	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
French	31	55.36	2	7.41	0	0
English	10	17.86	1	3.70	0	0
European	2	3.57	2	7.41	0	0
Other	13	23.21	22	81.48	35	100
Total	56	100	27	100	35	100

This strategic omission of ethnic origin lies in the belief that such a signal can never be « economically useful » and may even do more harm than good;

One interview describes an experience where he explicitly signaled his interest in a job position located in his parents' country of origin believing that his profile might be of interest to the employers. He describes his interaction during a forum organized by DO.

It was actually labeled a diversity forum and there was an audit company that had offered me a job but...uh...a local contract to work in Algeria uh [...] I told them I was interested in a job contract in Algeria...er... because it is a country I know well and whose culture I like, etc. I am of Algerian origin ...uh... but then, they tell me...uh...this is a local contract and...uh... when you're French and you are looking for a job in Paris, in France...uh...it's not your goal to go settle in

Algeria and earn 500 € per month [...] I found it a little bit uh how to say this uh I thought they had nerve to suggest that in this specific forum!

In other cases, omission may be related to a fear of discrimination. This seems to be overwhelmingly the case when it comes to the omission of the photo. Kadija, a Black woman with a degree in arts and the textile industry who participated in some of DO activity, speaks of this fear when she elaborates on her perception of diversity policies.

I had a little doubt that perhaps...hum...may be if...uh...it is that my family name is already terrifying. Do I have to put a photo or not...uh...should I send an anonymous CV or not...well, finally I've never sent anonymous CV because I then thought, well if people focus on that.

And Latifa, a Black woman with a master in nutrition who did not attach a photo to her CV sent to DO, describes her relief when she learnt that she was not obliged to put a photo.

To put a photo, there is no way I put a photo... uh... and therefore I felt less afraid and so I sent my CV everywhere. I had no fear

Interviewer: Because it scares you to put your picture ?

Yes because one cannot completely trust, um... it is not about racial profiling or whatever but with the boss. and it's even worse if it's a man.. he will take a beautiful girl and then me with my dreadlocks; this won't make it... but there it goes there was no such apprehension so no when I used to put my photo I remember but, um, I must have sent just two or three of my CVs with my picture but then people told me that is no longer needed hmm I didn't know it it was a law or what but people told me that it is not the trend at the moment.

But paradoxically, attaching a photo to the CV might also be a strategy that may prevent candidates from wasting time with potentially racist employers. Odile, a Black young woman with a Master's degree in human resources, describes the « surprise » of some employers when the CV does not include a photo or any signal of origin.

“they do not expect to see a Black girl even though my name [...] I certainly didn't add a photo and uh [...]so then one feels when the recruiter is not expecting to see you [...]and well suddenly this person between the moment she invites you for an interview and the moment you arrive well you feel that the interview will last 20 min while it took you 2 hours uh to get there! [...]This friend for example she finds herself in an interview [...] well, her last name is Pascal and so she puts a photo, etc. So well it is true that one would expect to see a White girl and she would have to face the recruiters [...] and once a recruiter [...] told her I am sorry I am very confused I did not expect at all that you would be Indian!

This leads candidates not only to refrain from signaling origins in the CV, but also lie in order to circumvent potential discrimination. Karim, a young man with Algerian origin who has a Master's degree in business, mentions the use of such a strategy by many of his acquaintances:

People with whom I grew up who have similar origins as mine uh with almost the same educational trajectory and like me cannot' rely on networks, they similarly struggled...uh...and... so you end up lying in your CV. We invent another background. I have friends who went very very far to get their first job, well so so far.

One may think that a letter of motivation may be a good opportunity to signal origin in such a program without referring to it explicitly in the CV. Nonetheless, only 44% of the CVs included in this study are attached to a letter of motivation. And in the vast majority of cases, motivation letters are short (one or two sentences), quite formal and do not mention origin or any other

ethnoracial signal. Most of them are the occasion to emphasize the candidate's flexibility and his/her willingness to take any job, even when it does not correspond to his/her profile. The three following extracts represent good examples of such motivation letters:

« May I add that I can easily adapt to diverse and changing schedules depending on the volume of activity and seasonal factors »

« Holding a master in management, I am looking for a position as responsible in recruitment. Having a versatile profile, I will nonetheless study any other proposal »

“In order to optimize my professional integration, I am nonetheless ready to accept a mission that does not necessarily relate to my education level”

The general tendency to omit or overstate ethnoracial signals in the CV and in the letter of motivation is in contrast with the few cases of disabled candidates that we have in the sample (N=16). Indeed, some of these CV's explicitly mention the candidate's disability mainly using official categorization. Some candidates do not make any reference to their disability in the CV but expand on this in the motivation letter. Finally, a few signal it in much indirect ways for example through allusion to parasports in miscellaneous sections.

All in all, the examination of applicants' CV reflects a process of reconstruction of social trajectories with a selection of signals that seems to be affected by social desirability consideration as well as anticipations of employers' expectations and requirements.

When asked about the reasons that may explain discrimination, interviewees actually share the common categories of inequality described in the former section. They very rarely assess their ethnoracial characteristics to be related to their potential professional difficulties. They indeed

more frequently mention their educational or territorial backgrounds to be the main disadvantaging factors. It is rather because they haven't attended the "right universities", did not enjoy an appropriate "educational orientation" or don't come from the right social "milieu", etc. They also acknowledge the complexity of identifying the specific factor of discrimination given the ways in which they overlap, as it can be shown in Karim's below development:

It is the story of the egg and the chicken if we talk about diversity and educational orientations – have we been mis-oriented because because our parents haven't been uh to college or so or uh or is it because uh we come from this diversity background that we can't find a job. In short you see what I mean [...] all this is intertwined like that and ultimately we do not know"

And when they do raise the issue of origins or skin color they do so with a lot of precautions describing their doubts and hesitations, as it is the case for Latifa in the following extract:

When things didn't work sometimes I started saying to myself that maybe it was because my name was Saou or that maybe it was a problem of skills or something. And therefore I made other colleagues read my CV or other girlfriends or family members too. so it's true that I was a little bit in doubt. And as I've heard about all these identity crises...uh... I mean on TV. I started wondering [...]

And even when they had been confronted to situations where discrimination was a plausible interpretation, they tend to refrain from drawing general conclusions out of their personal experience as described in Karim's statement.

Frankly, people who had a name with a "de" [...] I was probably a little bit jealous at the time but they could easily find...uh...very very easily and very nice internships. Well, at the end everyone ends up finding something, but I found one long after the others. Well, never mind...er..

I was not the only person coming from a diversity background among my classmate... so here I can't, I can't say, uh, statistically that it was because of that... but perhaps some of that was at play

This may be explained refusal of victimization and stigmatization as a resilience strategy for coping with discrimination (Lamont *et al.* 2016; Dubet *et al.* 2013). It may also be related to the power of the “Republican habitus” in the French context, and the way it hinders the interpretation of the subjective experience of racism in terms of discrimination (Eberhardt, 2010). Most interviewees indeed tend to understate the importance of ethnoracial discrimination and to emphasize individual effort, intelligence, hard work, etc. as efficient success strategy. Moreover, they feel uncomfortable referring to themselves as ethnic minorities or labeled by others as such even within anti-discrimination programs. Karim hence describes his feelings while attending one these “diversity job forum”:

I found it a bit degrading actually, being in a box [...] it's a bit discriminating what I am going to say here but I had the impression of being in a forum for social disability...uh... or what and I know it's even harder to find a job when you are disabled. So... uh.... clearly actually it means you you have a handicap you don't know what it is, but the society has said you have a disability and therefore you are here with other disabled people and we will help you find a job because you need it and, uh, I am exaggerating, I am a little violent here but actually this was my feeling yeah [...] I found it degrading this forum.

Some rare interviewees nonetheless do make overt racial interpretation of the reason behind their professional difficulties but it is the mainly Black interviewees who do so relating this to basic racism. Hence, while her CV clearly shows that she is a hard worker, studying law all the while

working Odile interpret the recruiter's emphasizing the necessity of hard work in relation to racist stereotype about Black work ethics.

I find the interview to be super weird, so it's questions like "you know here we have to work hard hard hard" yeah, yes it is normal, that is work [...] yes, yes no problem [...] I could not see what on my file could bring a recruiter to repeat five or six times that in her company one should work hard, because what, uh, what usually the rumors say that me, apart from sleeping under the coconut trees, I do nothing [...] it was a bit of that!

Finally, although brief, clear mentions of ethnoracial discriminatory characteristics can be found in some rare motivation letters. Explicit reference to ethnoracial discrimination is present in less than 5 letters out of 283. It is for example the case of Inès, who used this letter to signal her headscarf (in parentheses at the end of a short letter)

I wish to inform you that I am veiled, and I want to work while keeping my scarf

Rajat also took the opportunity in the letter to report prior discrimination in the French labor market:

"I should point out that my profile receives interest in England or Belgium but I do not get feedback in France unless I present my CV with a Frenchified name"

Finally, a few motivation letters are used to express candidates' exasperation. It is the case of Youssef who added this sentence to a very brief motivation letter:

"Cumulating temporary handling missions, I wonder if we, young "marked", would not do better abandon our dreams to embrace the fatalism of factory work initiated by our fathers!"

And Liam desperately asks “*what to think?*” and “*what to do?*” describing his intense frustration after receiving a rejection letter for a job position despite an apparently successful interview.

The limits of colorblind anti-discrimination: measurability, accountability and competing categories

DO program lasted for 6 years with rather modest results. According to the organization’s official documentation on the topic, 500 recruitments have been achieved through the program between 2006 and 2011. The evolution of the types of jobs also clearly indicates a running out of steam with more and more precarious position such as internship or temporary job contracts. This is also measured through the increasing orientation of the program activities toward coaching and organization of forum rather than direct matching of candidates with vacant jobs.

The program stopped in 2011 in the middle of a transitory phase during which Sarah, the main person in charge of the program, wanted to draw on this experimentation to establish a large-scale national program with more engaging actions on behalf of firms and therefore sought support from both the state and the private sector. She was surprised, and certainly frustrated, to notice the huge reluctance her idea was received with from both sides.

When I proposed the project to some companies, the companies immediately told us, they told me [...] oh no no, with this we would commit to quotas and then we already can’t manage with the disabled, you will give us additional work with this [...] We will continue to proceed with some kind of recruitment but at the whim of the encounters we will make in forums and we will decide whether we want to move on in the recruitment procedure or not

Sarah points to a paradox that explains the failure of her ideas. According to her, it is the very institutionalization of diversity policies, and in a sense their success, which has slowly

demolished their capacity for establishing powerful anti-discrimination programs targeting ethnoracial origins. More precisely, the institutionalization of diversity policies occurred in a context where operational definition of the targeted population was still totally lacking as far as ethnoracial discrimination is concerned. In the prior phase, most of the emerging diversity programs were targeting visible minorities through small actions based on the voluntary engagement of some firms. Their motivations and actions in this field have clearly lost ground after the institutionalization phase because firms could in way include these actions in their administrative assessments. This diagnostic is shared by Lila who points the impossible accountability of such actions as a major factor of their gradual abandonment.

*From the time that these policies...uh...diversity policies or the societal aspect of RSE**** policies began to take an official turn in firms, with the necessity of paying attention to other issues [...] that is to say that it has incorporated women and dealing with the problem of professional equality and that of the disabled [...] and senior workers [...] but as for these three issues, there is either laws or quotas or agreements it was easier for firms to invest these topics to implement concrete actions in these three themes .In comparison to young people with migration background for which there is no law nor agreements nor uh there was nothing [...] Firms ended up saying anyway we can do nothing for them, they don't reach out to us, and anyway when we take action we cannot assess the utility of our actions since ethnic statistics are not allowed .*

This paradox created intense competition and increasing tension between categories of discrimination. Analyzed in research describing the evolution of such policies, it is also acknowledged by the majority of interviewees who constantly contrast the inefficiency of ethnoracial-oriented actions to the ones that focus on the disabled, the seniors and the women.

**** In French, RSE stands for societal responsibility of firms and refers to a set of principles and actions in the social and environmental fields that have to be reported and assessed for.

Firms invest a lot in the questions of the disabled, seniors uh but the question of origins is still a question that remains a matter... uh...uh still very complicated to address in the workplace I mean (Ahmed, responsible in an association promoting migrant employment)

I said that the Charter of Diversity has been diverted from its main aim because initially, it targeted the visible minority youth, the youth with immigrant background while firms have ended up paying much more attention to seniors, the disabled, promoting professional equality in fields where such actions have legal bases, where it is easier to implement (Sarah, in charge of DO program).

This drowning of ethnoracial discrimination in the course of the implementation of diversity policy made it extremely difficult for Lila to convince other members of agency where she is a civil representative of the accuracy of dedicating a report on this specific issue.

“I had so many problems when I talked about the target. I told them that it was those who are young fresh graduates with immigrant background who live in France then they told me that it wasn’t only about youth with immigrant backgrounds, but that diversity is also men and women, the disabled, and all that. I said yeah but when the charter was established it did not mention that at all [...] Consequently, the charter itself has been driven away from its initial recipients and...er...not only it was misrepresented, but also we’ve completely forgotten the audience that was originally targeted. And that... er... for me it was important to remind them of that and to re-assert that and I wanted to go back to the fundamentals of this Charter...

Later on, Lila follows the same issue in the interview describing the reaction of other members of the Agency in which she represents the civil society.

I hit them where it hurt [...] I offended many because I touched on their deep sensitiveness to the Republican model. So what lies behind the Republican model while saying that everyone is equal and, uh, there's no, there's no positive discrimination [...] everyone is the same, but for women quota system does exist!

This reality leads some interviewees to be quite skeptical about the efficiency of any action in the field of ethnoracial antidiscrimination. This is clearly the position of Philippe as illustrated in the following extract:

As long as we do not have access to such statistics, but this is only my personal point of view that I am telling you now, because I would not be able to defend this argument it's taboo, this statistics issue, but as long as we don't have the ethnic statistics that will allow us to check the reality [...] of the situation of these populations, we won't succeed, we will be doing much more of rhetoric than anything else [...] You are working on a field where the question of evaluation related to discriminations remains a thorn in its side in this country due to the absence of such statistical data.

Conclusion

This article describes the ways in which ethnoracial categories are used in diversity policies in France. Through the concrete example of an employment program in a major diversity organization, I analyze modes of targeting ethnoracial minorities in a colorblind institutional context and show how ethnoracial categories are necessarily articulated with other more legitimate categories of inequality. I also document how the recipients refrain from signaling their origin while applying to the program. Recipients moreover tend to play down the impact of their origin on their employment trajectory even when they have clear and convincing experience of direct discrimination.

The implementation of diversity policies has crystallized tensions between two paradigms of equality in France. The first paradigm is related to the French universalistic tradition usually referred to as “indifference to differences”. The second paradigm draws on the increasing framing of equality policies in terms of equality of opportunity (*égalité des chances*) (Dubet, 2010; Fassin 2002; Savidan 2007) with growing pressure to combat discriminatory interactions that violate this principle whether oriented towards women, seniors, youths, disadvantaged neighborhoods’ residents, ethnoracial minorities, sexual minorities, the disabled, etc. Except for ethnoracial characteristics, this tension has been solved within state-level policies; differences such as gender and disability have been increasingly targeted by specific policy programs in France including the use of affirmative-action-style policy and even quotas (Revillard, 2016; Bereni 2015)..

+++ On the distinction between equalizing opportunity and equalizing outcomes in the U.S context see (McCall 2016).

Conversely, this traditional “indifference” proved to be the most strictly respected when it comes to ethnoracial types of differences. The tension between the French universalistic paradigm of equality and the paradigm of equal opportunity in relation to ethnoracial inequality has been apparently solved through the implementation of diversity policies without the state. The private sector has indeed been at the *avant-garde* in the implementation of policies targeting ethnoracial characteristics largely by drawing on U.S diversity management methods and vocabulary and trying to apply it in the French context all while respecting its general colorblind tradition.

Establishing diversity initiatives tackling ethnoracial discrimination appear thus to be a waste of time for everybody. Overall results are rather modest and are largely limited to good intentions rhetoric. The different actors involved gradually withdraw from the topic leading ethnoracial discrimination, which was the original motivation of such programs, to become less and less central. Recipients themselves refrain from signaling their ethnoracial disadvantage and frequently invoke more legitimate categories such as educational tracks or place of origin as explanatory factors. The case-study presented in this article is thus an illustration of the pernicious effects of rhetoric stances in policies tackling ethnoracial antidiscrimination in France: Not only are these policies ineffective, but they counterproductively tend to reduce the relevance of their very initial purpose. Consequently, ethnoracial discrimination is most probably to remain with us for some time in France.

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