WHITE INNOCENCE AND COLOR-BLIND RACISM IN THE DUTCH HIRING PROCESS

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Abstract

This inductive qualitative study focused on racism in the Dutch hiring process, using semi-structured interviews. Specifically, it examined how the racial theories color-blind racism and white innocence of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Gloria Wekker, respectively, were present in the Dutch hiring process. The data was collected from 11 interview participants. This study specified the different hiring processes and elaborated how the participants examined the job applicants. Moreover, this study examined how the participants evaluated racism within the Dutch labor market. The results showed that the participants evaluated racism in an individualized form that is present in other people and not in themselves. They were ignorant to the systemic and institutionalized form of racism, and therefore they could push themselves away from any accountability and responsibility. This unawareness/ignorance towards the structure of racism in combination with the 'innocent' self-positioning is what I refer to as 'white hypocrisy'. This can be considered as a combination of the theories of color-blind racism and white innocence.

Keywords: color-blind racism, hiring process, white innocence, white hypocrisy

Introduction

In recent years, ethnic and racial discrimination have been critical topics in the Netherlands. Researchers from the Bureau Omlo (2022) found institutional racism in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, released documents about the *Toeslagenafffaire* showed that civil servants, within the tax department, were purposely profiling on ethnicity, which had far-reaching consequences for the victims (NOS, 2022). Recently, politicians and ministers in the Netherlands are confronted with racial and ethnic discrimination in the labor market. To illustrate the problem, Matin Yavuz (non-Western name) wrote an application letter for an internship. She was declined. However, when she wrote exactly the same letter

under the name Lisa Spoor (Dutch name), she got accepted (De Stentor, 2022). This is one of the examples that have reached it to the news headliners (NOS, 2021).

Racial and ethnic discrimination in the labor market has been highly studied in the last decades (Betrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Fibbi et al., 2022; Lancee, 2021; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Ramos et al., 2021; Thijssen et al., 2021). Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found in their research that applicants with traditionally white sounding names had much higher call-back ratios than applicants with black sounding names. Fibbi et al. (2022) found similar results in Switzerland. They used photographs on the fictitious resumés to indicate the applicant's race. They found that black applicants need to write 30 percent more applications in order to equal the amount of job invitations compared with white applicants (Fibbi et al., 2022). These findings are comparable to even larger scale studies (Hangartner et al., 2021; Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016). Although the research did not specifically focus on race, research in the Netherlands has confirmed ethnic discrimination in the labor market (Lancee, 2021; Ramos et al., 2021; Thijssen et al., 2021). Thijssen et al. (2021) found that equally qualified applicants from Turkish origin, had a 15 percent point lower call-back ratio than their native 'Dutch' counterpart. Ramos et al. (2021) found a similar 'ethnic gap' for applicants from Moroccan origin, namely a 'ethnic gap' of 14 percent point. In addition, Van Doornik (2022) has found in his thesis, comparable to the research of Fibbi et al. (2022), racial discrimination in the Dutch labor market.

Moreover, this research focuses primarily on Dutch society. The Dutch see themselves as a 'small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations' (Wekker, 2016). Wekker (2016) has examined the Dutch self-identification and how this contributes to racial inequality in her theory of 'white innocence'. Her theory of white innocence is interrelated with the theory of 'color-blind racism' that is constructed by Bonilla-Silva (2006).

Color-blind racism can be seen as racism in which current racial inequality can sustain, arise and reproduce from the notion that whites deny or ignore that their privileged and advantaged position is a consequence from racial disparities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The color-blindness of the Dutch is integrated in their raceless linguistics (Essed, 1991), therefore the notion of the concept of race flows into their notion of ethnicity and how they refer to 'ethnic minorities'. To clarify, in the theoretical section the Dutch sense of race will be explained, and the concepts of color-blind racism and white innocence will be further elaborated.

Race and ethnicity are, in the Dutch sense, two highly overlapping concepts. Therefore it is important to define these concepts for the use of this paper. Despite the acknowledgment of the flaws and difficulties in defining these two socially constructed concepts, this paper will use the definitions of the American Sociological Association (French, 2022) "'Race' refers to physical differences that groups and cultures consider socially significant, while 'ethnicity' refers to shared culture, such as language, ancestry, practices, and beliefs". Moreover, despite the fact that the Dutch see themselves as a color-blind, race free nation, former research showed that there is racial and ethnic discrimination in the labor market (Lancee, 2021; Ramos et al., 2021; Thijssen et al., 2021; Van Doornik, 2022).

Furthermore, white innocence and color-blind racism are two theories that describe how racism can be structured within countries (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016). However, former research has not qualitatively tested the presence of certain racial theories within the hiring process. Therefore, this research will look if examples of white innocence and color-blind racism are present in the Dutch hiring process and if these theories can (partly) explain the racial discrimination that is present in the Dutch labor market. This leads to the research question: 'How are white innocence and color-blind racism present in the Dutch hiring process?'.

Theoretical Background

In this section, the theories of color-blind racism and white innocence will be explained. Therefore, the books of Bonilla-Silva (2006) and Wekker (2016) will be the starting point. Moreover, this section will have an examination of the Dutch self-identification, in context with race and ethnicity. This section will end with the analysis of literature about racism in the hiring process.

Color-Blind Racism

Color-blind racism is a racial theory in which race-related affairs are explained by raceless explanation (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Bonilla-Silva (2006) argues that direct forms of racism are less acceptable in current society, but that racism engages in an indirect form through color-blind language and actions. Bonilla-Silva (2006) conducted four central frames of color-blind racism by using the outcomes of interviews. These frames are abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism and the minimization of racism. Whites use these frames of color-blind racism to justify racial inequality.

Abstract liberalism refers to the fact that people use the ideas or ideology of economic and political liberalism to justify racial practices or to argue against (race) equality improving policies (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Abstract liberalism is used by whites to oppose, for example, affirmative action or government interventions. By claiming that people have the same opportunity, that individuals are responsible for their own success and that people should be allowed to have the freedom of choice, they argue against race improving policies, since it interferes with the liberal ideas. However, by using abstract liberalism and its color-blind language, whites justify racial inequality and ignore the way in which racial inequality and systemic racism creates inequality in opportunities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The frame of naturalization is used to explain racial disparities as an outcome of natural occurrences,

instead of acknowledging it as an outcome of systemic racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). By using words as 'natural' or the sense 'it is the way that it is', whites can for example explain segregation as a 'natural' occurrence. Moreover, the frame of cultural racism is used to explain the position of minorities (non-whites) by using cultural based arguments (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). According to Bonilla-Silva (2006), the essence of this frame is that 'the victim' is blamed for their own standing position, by saying that they (minorities) do not work hard or have not sustainable family organizations. Instead of seeing white as racially superior, Western or European culture is now seen as cultural superior, which is just another way of referring to whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wren, 2001). Therefore, the 'other' could still be seen as significantly different, referring to cultural differences, with European or Western culture as superior (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wren, 2001). The minimization of racism is a frame that is used to argue that discrimination is not the main factor anymore that affects the life chances of minorities (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). In this frame, people (whites) do not deny the existence of discrimination and racism, but do not see the position of minorities as an outcome of it (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Harper, 2012).

Since the theory of color-blind racism argues how whites engage racism, it is important how whites position and perceive themselves within the society. This is discussed by Wekker's (2016) theory and described in the next section.

White Innocence

Wekker's (2016) book focuses on Dutch society, and the Dutch self-identification, however Wekker's (2016) theory of 'white innocence' refers to a broader population. It refers to the idea that white people, particularly in Western societies, tend to see themselves as innocent and uninvolved in issues of racism and discrimination, despite benefiting from systems of white supremacy. This can be seen as the denial of white supremacy and racism as a global institutionalized system (Mills, 2015). Wekker (2016) argues that this belief in white

innocence is deeply ingrained in Western culture and is often used to dismiss the experiences and perspectives of people of color.

According to Wekker (2016), white innocence manifests in several ways. For example, white people may claim that they are color-blind and do not see race, when in fact this ignores the experiences of people of color and the ways in which race affects their lives (Orozco & Diaz, 2016). Furthermore, white innocence can involve denial or ignorance of the historical and ongoing impact of colonialism and slavery, and a failure to acknowledge the ways in which white people continue to benefit from these systems (Orozco, 2019; Wekker, 2016). This form of white amnesia, in which white occlude their own racialized history and therefore not only believe that we live in a post-racial and post-colonial society but that their colonial and racial history has no trace left in current society, allow them to position themselves in a ignorant position in which they cannot be held accountable for racialized inequalities (Danewid, 2017; Wekker, 2016). Wekker (2016) refers to this, as that whites have the power of 'not knowing, or not wanting to know'.

Both Wekker (2016) and Bonilla-Silva (2006) argue that white innocence and/or color-blind racism is harmful because it upheld systems of inequality and prevents progress towards racial justice. By denying or downgrading the existence or the role of racism and discrimination, white people avoid taking responsibility for their role in these systems and fail to work towards creating more equal societies. Moreover, the theory of Bonilla-Silva (2006), focusses more on how systemic and institutionalized racism is structured and acted upon within color-blind racial explanations and actions, whereas the theory of Wekker (2016) focuses more on the self-ignorant positioning of the white citizen and how that self-positioning contributes to the denial of racism as a power structure and its own privileged position. In order to test these theories within the Dutch hiring process, it is important to

clarify the Dutch self-perception and the Dutch perception of race and ethnicity, which is described in the next section.

Race, Ethnicity and the Dutch Self-Perception

Color-blind racism and white innocence are well related to the dominant self-perception of the Dutch. The Dutch see themselves as a 'small, but just, ethical nation; colourblind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations' (Wekker, 2016). This color-blindness is highly integrated in their raceless linguistics (Essed, 1991; Wekker, 2016). For example, the word race is not used in the Netherlands to categorize human groups (Kanobana, 2021). Instead they use the dichotomy of Western and non-Western for migrants and they refer to terms as ethnicity in order to categorize racial and ethnic groups (Hondius, 2014). For example, when they refer to groups that are seen as racially different (from the dominant white), they use ethnicity instead of race, by referring to them as a 'ethnic minority' or 'ethnically different' (Kanobana, 2021). Therefore, the culturalization of racism, which can be seen as the replacement of biological determinism by cultural determinism (Essed, 1991; Fleras, 2004), is representative for the Netherlands (Essed, 1991). The terms race and ethnicity are therefore in the Dutch sense two almost completely overlapping concepts. Moreover, the idea of being Dutch itself is racialized (Wekker, 2016; Witte, 2019). Being Dutch is being white, whereas not being white is not being completely Dutch (Wekker, 2016). For example, people who 'look different' (not white) are often called *allochtoon*, which is the old Dutch terminology for not being a native Dutch (Witte, 2019). Moreover, by seeing their own (white/western) culture as dominant and superior they use culture and color-blind language to justify their racism by calling racial/ethnic minorities 'culturally different' or 'problematic' (Essed, 1991). This relates to the idea of cultural racism which is described before (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wren, 2001).

Directly related to the 'innocent' and 'color-blind' orientation of Dutch society, there is almost no literature that investigates racial discrimination in Dutch hiring practices. However, there is an emerging body of literature that investigates ethnic discrimination in Dutch hiring practices. Therefore, the clarification of the notion of race and ethnicity in the Dutch sense, places the outcomes of the research regarding ethnic discrimination in the Dutch labor market in a better perspective. These outcomes are discussed in the next section.

Hiring Process

As described in the introduction, racial and ethnic discrimination in the labor market is highly researched (Betrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Fibbi et al., 2022; Lancee, 2021; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Ramos et al., 2021; Thijssen et al., 2021). Since this research focuses on the Dutch hiring process, it is important to highlight the findings of Ramos et al. (2021), Thijssen et al. (2021) and Van Doornik (2022). Ramos et al. (2021) found discrimination against applicants of Moroccan origin, whereas Thijssen et al. (2021) found discrimination against applicants of Turkish origin. Moreover, Van Doornik (2022), tested the effect of skin-colors in the Dutch labor market. By using assigned photographs and similar fictitious resumés for black and white applicants, he found significant discrimination against black applicants (Van Doornik, 2022). Despite that Ramos et al. (2021) and Thijssen et al. (2021) focusses on origin, whereas Van Doornik (2022) focused on skin-color, the proofed discrimination can in the Dutch sense be categorized as racial discrimination.

Quillian and Midtbøen (2021) identified theories about discrimination in the hiring process. Homophily and cultural matching theory, relies on the idea that employers hire employees based on a 'cultural match' and employers that they feel socially connected (Tholen, 2023; Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). Rivera (2012), who conducted this theory based on interviews, found that employers emphasize the role of a 'connection'. Sentences that came up were 'you just know when it is a match' or 'it's a good feeling'. Imdorf (2010)

clarified the importance of emotion in the decision making process of new candidates. According to Imdorf (2010), decisionmakers rationalized their personal interest in the selection process by arguing that they had a great sense or a great 'gut feeling'. However, since decision makers use themselves as a proxy, they often had this 'good feeling' with people that had similar backgrounds or who looked similar (Rivera, 2012). This is also known as the affinity bias (Österlund, 2020; Russel et al., 2019). Despite the color-blind language, the cultural matching gives room for racial discrimination. The theory of biased stereotypes can be linked to cultural discrimination and white innocence (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021; Wekker, 2016). The theory suggests that employers hire employees on culture based stereotypes that are incorrect or exaggerated (Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). Midtbøen (2014) found, by analyzing how Norwegian employers refer to 'ethnic minorities', that they generalize negative experiences across different groups. He found that the employers had negative beliefs about 'ethnic minorities' that were based on no evidence (Midtbøen, 2014).

Quillian and Midtbøen (2021), Tholen (2023), Rivera (2012) and Midtbøen (2014) identified theories about discrimination in the hiring process based on interviews, whereas other scholars (Betrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Fibbi et al., 2022; Lancee, 2021; Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Thijssen et al., 2021) showed racial discrimination in the labor market by using quantitative analysis. However, the current literature has not given sufficient explanation to the findings. Therefore, this research, in which the present two racial theories will be tested among participants that have an important role in the hiring process, can potentially give an explanatory feature to the recent findings.

Methods

In this section the methods that are used will be described. Moreover, this section describes what sample is used, how the data is analyzed and if there are ethical or moral concerns regarding this research. This section includes my personal position in this research topic.

Structure

In order to answer the research question, an inductive qualitative study was designed, that consisted of interviews. This research focuses on the racial theories of color-blind racism and white innocence. Since color-blind racism and white innocence are the theories that move through- and are expressed in terms of words, explanation, meaning and expressions, a qualitative method is most helpful in order to explore the present of these theories. The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. By doing that, the researcher had the freedom to go deeper into topics when the answers were remarkable. However, because the interviews followed a beforehand constructed structure, the research can be replicated, which is important for the external validity of the research (Ali & Yusof, 2011). The interviews started with general questions about the hiring process and continued with more specific questions about the needed qualifications or skill sets of the applicants. In the last section of the interview, the findings of previous research about racial and ethnic discrimination were discussed with the participants.

Sample

The sample consists of eleven participants. Eight participants identified themselves as woman whereas three participants identified themselves as man. Moreover, nine participants were white, whereas two participants were of color. The ideas of color-blind racism and white innocence are not centralized into one singular 'type' of person. Moreover, the aim of the

sampling was not to sample one certain 'type' of participants but rather participants that have

a specific role. Therefore, the participants have an important role in the hiring process of their

company or institution, but were not obligated to fit a list of specific (socially significant)

characteristics. In this sense, all the participants are representative of a larger organizational,

institutional structure. The specified characteristics regarding the work field of the

participants can be found in table 1. The sampling method that is used is self-convenience

sampling and snowball sampling (Berndt, 2020).

Table 1

Participants characteristics

Pseudonym	Gender	Self-defined race/heritage/ethnicity	Sector	(Former) role in company
Jill	Female	Dutch-Indian	Hotel branche	HR
Bonnie	Female	Dutch-Nigerian (Mixed-Race)	Environment consultancy	Manager
Willem	Male	Dutch (White)	Legal (work and education)	Director/Dean
Robbin	Male	Dutch (White)	Education	Director
Frida	Female	Dutch (White)	Health	Department head

Naomi	Female	Dutch (White)	Health	Team Leader
Lisa	Female	Dutch (White)	Health	Department head
Jolanda	Female	Dutch (White)	Health	Project leader
Marielle	Female	Dutch (White)	Pension	Manager
Flore	Female	Dutch (White)	Relocation	Recruitment
Jan	Male	Dutch (White)	Pension	Recruitment

Interviews and Coding

All the interviews were recorded with permission of the participants. In data transcription, analysis and writing, the participants were given pseudonyms, which guarantee their anonymity. The interviews were between 30 to 60 minutes and they were held online and in person. All the interviews were completely transcribed. This research is inductive, therefore the coding process existed out of open coding, axial coding and selective coding. With the help of ATLAS.ti the interviews are coded into various codes and code groups. Codes that are for example used are 'cultural racism' or 'language problem', these different

codes are combined in code groups as 'I don't see racism but' or 'Match & Gut feeling'. Moreover, by analyzing the interviews, the reader is provided with an overview of the different forms of the hiring process itself.

Personal Positioning and Ethics

For the validity and reliability of this research it is important to acknowledge my position in this field of research. I am a white male researcher. This could have a potential value, since I have interviewed participants that were mostly white. They could more easily interpret me as an equal minded person, which can lead to more honest answers. However, being a white male gives me a dominant and privileged role in society. Since my research focuses on race and racism, my position as a white male can also potentially influence the responses of the (non-white male) participants. However, since the participants will not know that my research focuses on racism in the hiring process, I am confident that my position did not have a big influence. Moreover, it is an important note that the participants did not know the specific topic of my research. Therefore the participants are in definition slightly manipulated. Due to the sensibility in this field of research the ethical checklist is fulfilled, which gives more specific information about the ethics in this research and it will confirm that this research is moral and ethical.

Findings and Analysis

In this section the main results and findings are presented. Moreover, the first part gives a broad overview of the different hiring processes of the participants. The other parts also provide the analysis of the findings. The end of this section will provide the overlapping analysis of the results with the main finding of white hypocrisy. In that part, there will not be any new results presented.

The Hiring Process Itself

The working sector of the participants varied widely, as described in the method section. However, the selection process for new employers all had the same foundation. They all make or made use of a multiple selection process. The first step for applicants was always to send the resumé and an application letter or a standardized questionnaire. The participants hired applicants for a variety of positions, therefore the hard requirements differed as well. However, despite the exception of Jill, who hired people for positions in which there were no hard requirements, all the other participants required 'hard skills' for their applicants. This could be a degree in nursing, teaching, law or health, but also *academisch denk niveau* (literally: academic think level), years of experience or the requirement of being a fluent Dutch or English speaker and writer. For ten of the participants the second step was a job interview, in which they got to know the applicant. These job interviews were mostly done by multiple people. Therefore the participants could discuss the outcomes of the job interviews with colleagues. Some of them had a possibility to do a third interview, but for most of the participants the decision was made after the second interview. Four of the participants worked with assessments and example cases to examine the applicants.

Willem, who selected applicants for a dual master and working program in the legal sector, was the only participant who worked with an almost complete standardized selection process. The selection process consisted of standardized assessment forms for the resumés, standardized tests, a psychological evaluation of a psychologist and even standardized job interviews with again standardized assessment forms to assess the applicant in order to minimize personal biases. However, even in this process, in the last step, people had a small part of freedom to assess the applicants based on personal feelings. Therefore, a complete standardized hiring form did not exist.

Moreover, all the other participants worked without or almost without a standardized assessment process, despite the requirements of some hard skills in the first selection round. In that process, the decision makers all had the freedom to assess the applicants based on their personal interests. Lastly, all the participants who worked in the health sector were obligated to prefer internal applicants over external applicants.

The Importance of a 'Match' and the Significant Role of the 'Gut Feeling'

As described in the section above, most of the participants had the freedom to assess without a standardized assessment form. To illustrate what freedom means for the decision makers, a quote of Willem is used;

And, yes, in the end, you know, it was all people who worked on the department as a lawyer, at the minimum level department head, but also above, and at the end it was sometimes just about, do you see this person sitting with you in the corridor as a nice colleague, as a good colleague?

Match Importance

In order to understand the decision making process, the participants were asked what they emphasize besides the general qualifications of the applicants. One of the most consistent findings was the importance of the so-called 'match'. Jill, who works in the hotel and hostel industry, clarified the significant importance of a 'match'.

So the focus is actually from moment one, is it a match? And if it is a match, it is also a match for you?

However, a match is vague, namely a match with who or what? The answer to this question had two outcomes. First, participants emphasized the importance of a team match and secondly, if it is a match with the company culture. The team match was the most

profound answer and again the significance of this was stated by Frida, who is a department head in the health sector, and Flore, who works in the relocation business. Frida said:

[Matching] is a criterion on which we can reject. I think this just won't match.

Whereas Flore said:

One reason not to do it is if I think it's just not something that fits within our team.

It is not surprising that the participants emphasize the importance of a team, since it determines the atmosphere. However, to give a better understanding, the participants were asked if they had preferred characteristics that made applicants a good team fit or a good fit in the company culture. Again, the answers were vague. The participants talked about a certain 'type' of person. The four participants in the health sector emphasized a type of person that wanted to help people, and that helped a colleague when they had a hard time. Whereas others looked more at their team or the company culture and decided what kind of 'type' they needed. However, social skills were in all the 'types' of persons preferred, eight of the eleven highlighted the importance of it. Therefore, you have to be more than just good at your job. Robbin, who is a school director, phrased it very clearly:

A kind of, do you fit in the team? Do you fit into the team atmosphere? You are not only a teacher, but there should also be some friendliness and so on.

The 'Gut Feeling'

The importance of the match is there. However, despite the effort to define the match, the terms the participants used, as 'type of person', 'socially skilled', 'company culture', 'team match' are hard to measure. Therefore the participants were asked how they tested these soft skills. The answers they had can be clustered to the sense of a 'gut feeling'. Some argued that by doing this for a large number of years they developed a good sensor, whereas some

just directly said that 'sometimes it is just a matter of feeling' or 'sometimes you just know'. Jolanda, who works as a project leader in the health sector, defined this feeling very strong:

Sometimes you know it immediately. Right? You may not have experienced it yet but that someone still has to come through the door and then you think... Oh God, that person really has to do its best.

The theory of homophily and cultural matching theory, relies on the idea that employers hire employees based on a 'cultural match' and employers that they feel socially connected (Tholen, 2023; Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). The cultural match as described by Quillian and Midtbøen (2021) is similar to the match based on the 'company culture' as described by the participants. Moreover, the participants emphasize the importance of social skills in order to be a match. Again this is in line with the theory of Quillian and Midtbøen (2021), since they emphasized that employers hire employees based on a social connection. These sentences are racialized since these matches are dominated by matches between people who look similar. Moreover, the findings about the gut feeling of the participants is also related to previous research about emotions in the hiring process (Imdorf, 2010; Rivera, 2012). The findings of Rivera (2012) that people hire applicants based on feelings, as described by sentences such as 'you just know when it is a match' or 'it is just a good feeling', are similar with the results that are presented.

Since the match is important and the qualification of a match is partly based on a feeling, biases could potentially influence the decision making about the applicants. For example, Willem and Jolanda were aware of the danger of this 'gut feeling' and its potential consequences. Willem stated:

It can also be a very dangerous, a gut feeling. Because we got an excess of young, flattering, very intelligent blonde girls with a pony tail.

The findings about homogeneity, (affinity) biases and naturalization will be presented in the next section.

Homogeneity, Affinity Bias and the 'Inevitable Outcome'

Affinity Bias

As described in the sections above, the participants had freedom in their decision making, and most of them partly used their feelings to decide whether to hire an applicant or not. Without knowing herself, Flore sentenced that she is influenced by the affinity bias;

For example, we have a girl working here, who has proposed her girlfriend who is exactly the same person as her and that you can see a little back. But it works, because she likes it, and so that girlfriend too.

However, four participants recognized that the affinity bias could have led to a homogenic (white) working place. They argued that people tend to hire what they know, and therefore homogeneity can be a potential consequence. Jolanda described it as follows;

But sometimes you've had a choice, one looks more like us, the other looks less like us. And then you may be inclined somewhere to take the one that looks like us. But then you have to look at it again, what has the other to offer. We talked about it more often at some point. In the past, it was often... No, it is just good. He is like me.

These findings are in line with the theory of homophily (Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). According to the theory, people tend to hire people who look like them, also known as the affinity bias (Russel et al., 2019). The example of Flore, shows that this theory works in practice, despite the fact that she takes her colleague as a proxy instead of herself, which differs slightly from the findings of Rivera (2012). Nevertheless, four acknowledged the power of racialized bias. Therefore, the finding that a racial occurrence is partly explained by

a racial explanation differs from the theories of Bonilla-Silva (2006) and Wekker (2016). However, despite Jolanda, other participants acknowledged that the affinity bias could influence other people, but that it did not influence their own practices. This could be considered as white innocence regarding their own responsible position in the hiring field, and it could be considered as white ignorance regarding the possibility to be unconsciously influenced by biases (Wekker, 2016).

Homogeneity

Moreover, whereas four participants recognized the affinity bias, in total six participants referred to their working place as predominantly white. The two participants of color did not refer to their own working place while talking about diversity. Two participants had different thoughts about being diverse. One participant said that her working place is very international, another participant said that her working place is very diverse since she works with all different kinds of persons, despite that she later said that in her previous job she worked with people from a different 'culture', which was different from her current job. One participant, Marielle, who works in a big corporate company, which is overwhelmingly white, did not really talk about the diversity in her team. However, when she was asked if she have recognized racial or ethnic discrimination, she made a clear statement;

Well, last year we had, I don't even know where he came from. He at least has a dark skin color, and has a bit of rasta-like hair. He is hired, but there has also been a very Dutch man, who is already at the age of 50. And there is someone who has been hired who is very young, I just call it a whispering Young Dog, who just comes from his study. A middle-aged woman was adopted. So for me, but that's also how I look at it, it really doesn't matter at all and I absolutely don't recognize it.

The quotation above is an example of the theoretical analysis of what it means to be Dutch (Wekker, 2016; Witte, 2019). Being Dutch is being white and not being white is not being Dutch. Moreover, the fact that she does not recognize racism since she just hired a black man, is the equivalent of the example, 'I have a friend who is black and therefore I can't be racist' (Wekker, 2016). By doing that she is ignorant to the fact that racism itself is a systematic power instead of a personal preference and therefore she denies its presence.

The 'Inevitable Outcome'

Since six of the participants stated or recognized that their working place was very white homogeneously, the participants received questions of how this could occur. As described above, four of the participants have recognized that the affinity bias could be a possible reason. Moreover, there was one more important explanatory finding, that could be categorized as 'the inevitable outcome'. Five of the six referred that the applicants for the jobs were overwhelmingly white and that therefore the outcome was a consequence of that occurrence. One participant said that people with a different culture or heritage see the government as an enemy and therefore they do not want to work there, while three participants said that people from a different culture do not want to do the study health, and one other said that it is just hard to find 'those people'. They all saw it as a problem that occurred long before their own hiring process. Willem summarized it with a powerful statement;

So we thought that was actually an insoluble problem. That is where it comes down. We've tried, but we're never really there, we really haven't found a solution for it.

This finding about 'the inevitable outcome' can be considered as a combination of white innocence, naturalization and cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016). The finding is in a sense very similar to the concept of naturalization, however it differs slightly.

The participants see the homogeneous workplace as an outcome of previous events and therefore the outcome is inevitable, which is similar to the idea of naturalization, in which the segregated outcome is seen as a natural consequence of preferences (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Moreover, the participants present themselves as innocent. This self-perception in an ignorant white view is present in their explanations. By referring that the problem is within the preferences of different 'cultures', they withhold themselves from responsibility and mostly they could not be accountable for this segregation. Moreover, different countries and therefore different 'cultures' also have a health and teaching sector and people who work for governments, therefore their statements about cultural preferences are quite empty. They could be absolutely right that certain studies have an overrepresentation of whites, however they ignore historical events that could have led to this outcome, by referring to it as a cultural preference (Wekker, 2016). Moreover, they present themselves as color-blind since they use culture as the profound reason for a white-dominant working environment (Essed, 1991; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016).

I Am Not Racist, We Do Dot Discriminate, But.., and the Language Problem

In the last section of the interview the participants were confronted with previous findings about racial and ethnic discrimination on the Dutch labor market. They were asked if they have seen or experienced it during their career and since they all have a role within the Dutch hiring process, if they could elaborate their thoughts about these findings. One major finding was that only Jolanda and Bonnie acknowledged that they have discriminated or can potentially discriminate because of biases. Bonnie, a mixed-race woman, who works as a manager in the commercial environment consulting business, phrased it honestly;

No, I think it leads me to bias. And a bit of positive discrimination. I do not want it to be so.

But I still think I just want more women. I want more people of color. I want more

homosexual people. I really want to see more marginalized groups in a working environment.

And If I have two people with the same skills. And a person is, for example, a white man and

the other person is not. Consciously, I do not want to do it. But there will be something in me

anyway that thinks, I really want that other person.

I Am Not Racist, But..

Moreover, all the other participants acknowledged that there was discrimination within
the labor market but they were confident that they would absolutely not discriminate and most
of them had also not seen those around them. Three of them even said that at this point having
a different culture, heritage or color was a benefit in the hiring process. However, these
outcomes were racialized since they referred to it as 'giving them the benefit of the doubt', or
'taking a risk' and that they were 'cheering' when they hired someone with a non-Dutch last
name. Nevertheless, six of the nine white participants stated that they want to see a better
representation of the society within the working environment. Jan made it clear;

What I actually say, I hope that my teachers team will become a little more [racially diverse]..

These findings are in line with the theory of white innocence (Wekker, 2016). Wekker
(2016) argues that the Dutch see themselves as people who do not discriminate, they are not a
product of a discriminatory system and therefore they are not able to discriminate based on
race. By arguing that they would never discriminate or not even mention their own personal
position they are ignorant towards its own privileged position that could unconsciously lead to
discrimination. This unawareness is even more present when they talk about giving 'them the
benefit of the doubt', 'taking a risk' or when they are 'cheering' when someone with a non-
Dutch last name is hired. These racialized pronunciations show that they are in a dominant

privileged role, but it also shows that they have no awareness of their position. The unawareness of the self-positioning and the use of racialized language is problematic and can be considered as color-blindness, cultural racism and white innocence (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016; Wren, 2001). This is in complete contrast to the statement of Bonnie, who is aware of their own biases and can speak about it with vulnerability. This might be due to how she experienced racism herself, in which black women learn in a very indirect manner about racism (Essed, 1991)

Since most of them did not recognize the discrimination within their own environment, the follow up question became more general: 'could the participants think of other explanations that could potentially influence other people that are working in the Dutch hiring process? ' This question had different outcomes than when the participants were asked why their work environment was predominantly white. In this case six of them referred to the unconscious bias towards different groups. Moreover, despite that they argued that they do not discriminate or intend to see differences between groups, Flore and Lisa had a dominant view on how they saw people that were from a different heritage or culture, which could potentially influence 'other' people that work in the hiring process. Flore said;

When you look at it, you are on the street. What kind of people you see riding around the street. They are, if you go out now, often people with, I say, a Turkish or a Suriname or a Moroccan descent who still sit on the street hanging and doing. Meanwhile, I am at work.

Whereas Lisa said;

I have experienced that with certain cultures that the dramatic is greater than we know, if a woman is pregnant from a certain culture she is actually almost 100% sick, from day 1, you think how?

These two examples are a very clear example of how two participants stereotyped potential hires. Moreover, the example of Lisa and Flore is in line with the concept of cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wren, 2001). Lisa explicitly does not mention that the people that she talks about are also mostly born in the Netherlands and therefore Dutch, but she also indicates that heritage is a measurement that influences the potential of not working. This is in line with the finding of Essed (1991), in which Dutch refer to 'ethnic minorities' as 'problematic' and she also uses one negative experience to generalize a complete group (Midtbøen, 2014). Furthermore, Lisa indicates that some cultures do not have the same working ethos based on inadequate stereotyping as native Dutch, in which she put her own culture as superior (Wren, 2001).

The Language Problem

Furthermore, the main finding in the explanatory question was the language problem. Ten of the eleven participants emphasized the importance of 'good' language. They understand that managers find it crucial that applicants speak good Dutch, since they have to communicate or write for the job. They assumed that good language is correlated with a different heritage, culture or color. Marielle phrased clear how she saw language and color;

The only thing I can imagine, if someone does not speak purely Dutch, then that is very silly, but then it is often linked to a different skin color.

Moreover, she went further with the importance of good language;

And then I think, what do you expect? Should you imagine calling about your retirement as a Dutch? We are a supranational company, right? The pension is Dutch, it is not international. And I have a question about my retirement, and then I get someone on the line who speaks poorly Dutch and who can't explain it to me well. It simply cannot. It just can't really. So that's more the only thing I think, someone just has to meet the criteria we set.

The importance of good language is absolutely understandable. However, Bonnie, who is of color, relativize 'good' language when she explains what happens if she would speak with an accent;

So that, for example, I speak ABN ['proper' Dutch], but when I would speak with an accent or deficient Dutch, I personally know that it is not because I am less competent. But I think that society or many people in the workplace have learned through all those things from history or have unconsciously learned that that means less competent. Because it has been taught that the majority or intelligence depends on speaking, for example, ABN. Speaking Dutch is very eloquent. If you understand what I mean?

The linking between language and race, ethnicity or culture, (since the participants use different terminology for different groups), is again an extension of the self-perception of how the Dutch see themselves and how they see others (Wekker, 2016). Since they use language as an explanation for discrimination they undermine that racial and ethnic minorities speak good Dutch. Bonnie shows that she is treated differently if she speaks with an accent. Using language as an explanation for racism can therefore be seen as a form of cultural discrimination, since speaking poor Dutch is apparently correlated with being a non-white (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

It is noteworthy that seven participants were in favor of positive discrimination. Despite that they argued that they would not need it, they found it important since apparently others are influenced by skin-color or non-Western names.

White Hypocrisy

In the section above, the findings are presented and separately analyzed. Nevertheless, if the results are analyzed as a whole, there is one major outcome which I would refer as white hypocrisy. The main difference between my findings and the existing theories of color-blind

racism and white innocence is that there is found a general awareness of racism within the participants. Most of them recognize that racism is a real problem in the Dutch hiring process and more broadly in the Dutch society. Therefore, this general finding can argue that there is a development in the Dutch self-perception, which differs from the perception described in the theory of Wekker (2016).

However, among the white respondents, they only see evidence of racism in other people. They argue that some others are influenced by affinity bias, or that other people unconsciously have biases toward certain groups based on stereotypes. They see racism as an outcome of biased individuals. By individualizing racism they ignore the fact that racism is systemic and institutional. Therefore, by individualizing racism instead of addressing it systemically and institutionally , they could easily point to others and ignore their own position and withdraw their own responsibility. Other bodies of literature, including Freeman's (1978) perpetrator perspective underline how it is essentially white to understand racism as individual acts. The ignorance regarding the understanding of racism as something that is systemic and institutionalized can be considered as an interpretation of the theory of color-blind racism and white innocence (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016). Therefore, this positioning and the explanations of the participants cannot be one on one related to the theories of color-blind racism and white innocence but the combination contributes to its existence (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016). This is what I would refer as white hypocrisy.

The participants, with the exception of Bonnie, present themselves as people who would not discriminate and some would be happy to see a more diverse working place. However, most of them are contradictory in their interviews. Two participants would love to see a more diverse working space and that racism is not the reason that the working space is white, but they also prefer internal applicants above external applicants, while they acknowledged that the company or institution that they work in is almost completely white

(minimization of racism). One other, would never discriminate, but nevertheless, if you look at the street, you see what kind of people are hanging there. Five participants see their own white working space as an inevitable occurrence (naturalization), while another participant sees her team as very diverse despite that in her previous job she had to work with different kind of 'cultures', in which women were sick after one day of pregnancy and that was completely different (cultural racism). Finally, others are against positive discrimination since they are against all these rules and people should just hire the best candidate (abstract liberalism). These examples can be related to the concepts of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Moreover, most of them are aware of their whiteness, but they do not recognize their own position and they ignore the construction of racism as a consequence of historical events, which made it systemic and institutionalized. That ignorance is in line with the theory of white innocence (Wekker, 2016). There was only one participant who recognized that racial and ethnic discrimination on the labor market is a consequence of historical events. Bonnie said;

I think that it has very much to do with the long, miserably long history of putting people or groups in cages and how I think society has always shaped itself in a certain way. And how some have been put in certain neighborhoods or have been put in certain schools. Others were assessed or had fewer possibilities. As a result, it is still the case that there are a lot of people who have fewer opportunities and less chances. That many people have fewer resources and are also less developed. And that, that is also seen as the truth.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this section the main findings will be summarized and the research question: 'How are white innocence and color-blind racism present in the Dutch hiring process?', will be

answered. Moreover, the limitations of this research will be discussed and further recommendation for future research will be given.

Conclusion

In order to understand the criteria on what basis applicants get hired, the participants were asked what they find important regarding their job applicants. Besides the obligated requirements such as specific diplomas, years of experience, Dutch or English speaking, the main finding was that the participants emphasized the importance of a match. A match that is based on the 'company culture' or if it is a 'team match'. This finding was in line with previous research about discrimination in the hiring process, in which the theory of homophily and cultural matching was explored (Tholen, 2023; Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). Moreover, the theory emphasizes that employers need to feel socially connected to the applicant, which was in line with the findings about the importance of social skills to be a match. Furthermore, the participants argued that they had a certain 'gut feeling' in order to know if it was a match or not. This is comparable to the findings of Rivera (2012), that people feel a connection and then they 'just know it'. The theory and also the participants saw the danger of this feeling, by arguing that it could lead to a homogeneous workplace.

Six participants recognized that their workplace was predominantly white. They gave two explanations for this occurrence. The first was the affinity bias, people tend to hire people more likely when they look similar, with the side note that besides Jolanda, they will not do it themselves. The second explanation was the so-called 'inevitable outcome' of previous selection. This explanation is very similar to the argument of naturalization, as described by Bonilla-Silva (2006) as part of his color-blind racism theory.

In the last section of the interview the participants were confronted with the findings of previous research about racial and ethnic discrimination in the labor market. Almost all the

participants recognized that racism is a real problem, however they do not discriminate and

they also have not seen it in their own environment. Even some argue that it is a plus to be so

called 'culturally different'. The racialized language and their own positioning could be very

well related to the self-perception of the Dutch as described in the theory of white innocence

(Wekker, 2016). Moreover, since they recognized the problem of racism, they were asked

how this could potentially evolve. Some participants argued that people tend to be influenced

by stereotypes based on 'culture' or 'heritage'. However, the most profound explanation was

the 'language problem', in which the participants linked culture, heritage or color towards not

speaking good Dutch. This can be related to the concept of cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva,

2006; Wren, 2001).

The main finding of this research was the overlapping finding of white hypocrisy. As

described earlier, the participants recognized the problem of racism in the Dutch society,

which differs from the described perception in the theory of white innocence. According to

that description the Dutch see themselves as a race and racism free country (Wekker, 2016).

Therefore this finding can be interpreted as a development within the Dutch self-perception.

However, by arguing that they do not discriminate and more importantly that they do not see

racism within their own environment they put themselves in a race and racism free position.

Moreover, they individualize racism by arguing how others are influenced by personal biases

or preference. By individualizing racism they ignore that racism is systemic and institutional

and therefore they can easily push themselves away from any accountability or responsibility.

Furthermore, the participants were contradictory in their own statements. By using color-blind

language they were not aware of their own biases and contradictions in their own hiring

process. They were aware of individualized racism by others, but were not able to self-reflect

on their own process. Therefore, this combination of contradictory, self-positioning and using

color-blind racial explanations for why others discriminate can be seen as the concept of

white hypocrisy. This concept of white hypocrisy is in essence an combination of the ignorance and self-positioning of the Dutch citizen as described in the theory of white innocence and the use of color-blind explanations for racism which is described in the theory of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Wekker, 2016).

To conclude, the research question of this research is: 'How are white innocence and color-blind racism present in the Dutch hiring process?'. The answer of how it is present is described above, but the final conclusion is that the combination of both theories is integrated in the white Dutch citizen and therefore its existence can be seen as present in the Dutch hiring process.

Discussion

The main finding of this research is in essence the way that the Dutch see racism as something that is individualized instead of something that is systemic and institutionalized. Therefore, I would recommend a more broad research in how the Dutch explore racism since this finding differs a little from the finding of Wekker (2016), that the Dutch see themselves as a nation that is free of race and therefore free of racism. This development of self-perception can be interesting and even more useful for Dutch education about race and racism. Moreover, this research used participants in all different working sectors, therefore it could be interesting to do more specific research in one specific field in order to better understand racial discrimination within certain fields. This research made only use of 11 participants, therefore the outcomes cannot be interpreted as an outcome for all the workers within the Dutch hiring process. The findings can therefore only be interpreted as an outline for future research regarding this topic. Moreover, in this research there were only two people of color and it would be interesting if future research could make a more broad and generalizable statement about the differences in outcomes for whites and non-whites. The main limitation of this research is however that the companies or institutions were not

quantitatively tested on racial or ethnic discrimination. This combination of quantitative and qualitative results could really show whether the participants or their environment truly do or do not discriminate, which would be very interesting.

The last limitation of this research is the acknowledgement for the researcher that I am. This research was my first qualitative research and therefore it was a full on learning process. During the process I became more comfortable and more confident about the things that I was doing. However, if I look back I see an incredible amount of things that I could have done differently or better, regarding interviewing and the use of methods. Therefore it is important to interpret the findings of this paper with the acknowledgement of the lack of experience of the researcher himself.

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Appendix 1: CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Colour-Blind Racism and White Innocence in the Dutch hiring process.

Name, email of student: Niels Neervoort, 668917nn@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Bonnie French, french@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 15-02-2023, duration is 4 and a half month.

Is the research study conducted within DPAS   YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1.   Does your research involve human participants.   YES

        If 'NO': skip to part V.

        If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research?   NO
        Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

2.   Does your research involve field observations without manipulations
        that will not involve identification of participants.   NO

        If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3.   Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary
        data that has been anonymized by someone else).   NO

        If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them?   NO

2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study?   NO

3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants?   NO

4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants?   NO
    Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).

5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants?   `   NO

6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)?   YES

7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent?   NO

8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study?   NO

9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured?   NO

10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study?   YES

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

The study will look at racism in the Dutch hiring process. However the participants are not aware that the aim of this research is to look at racism. Therefore, the outcomes of the study

can implicate that the participants have giving answer that are considered to be racist. This can be painful. However, it is unavoidable to hide the research topic, since the answers of the participants should be as honest as possible. Therefore, if the research topic is known, this could influence the participants answers and that will harm this research.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

The participants will all get the opportunity to read the final thesis. Moreover, the anonymity of the participants will be guaranteed, because the study will make use of pseudonyms.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

It could be painful for participants to read my research if the outcomes are confirming racial ideologies. However, the research will not be a personal attack. Moreover, also the company, for which the participants work will be anonymous. Therefore, it could not have any harm on the personal career of the participants.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

The data will be collected out of personal interviews. The participants will all have an important role in the hiring process for their company.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

11 participants.
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

The population size is the amount of people that have an important role in the hiring process for their company. There is no clear size for this population.
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The data will be stored in a online drive on my computer. The transcriptions of the interviews will be stored in a separate map. Moreover, since the interviews will be recorded, the records will be stored on my mobile. The coding will also be stored in a online drive.
Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I am responsible.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

I will do it weekly.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

The participants will be made anonymous with the use of pseudonyms. Therefore, the data is anonymous. The personal details will be held separated from the rest of the data.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Niels Neervoort   Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date: 17-3-2023   Date: 21-3-2023

Information and Consent Form

Introduction and contact information

I am Niels Neervoort and I write a thesis Erasmus University Rotterdam, more specific for the faculty Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. I am conducting research on the Dutch hiring process.

I will explain the study below. If you have any questions, please ask me. While reading, you can mark parts of the text that are unclear to you.

If you want to participate in the study, you can indicate this at the end of this form.

What is the research about?

The research is about the Dutch hiring process.

Why are we asking you to participate?

We ask you to participate because you have a roll in the Dutch hiring process.

What can you expect?

If you participate in this study, you will take part in:

An interview:
The interview will last between 30 and 60 minutes. If you do not want to answer a question during the interview, you are not required to do so.
I will make an audio recording of the conversation.

You decide whether to participate

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. .

What personal data will I ask you to provide?

During the interview the following personal data will be collected from you: Name, age, gender, audio recordings, occupation, cultural background, ethnic background and racial background.

Who can see your data?

- I store all your data securely.
- Only persons involved in the research can see the data. This means only the researcher (I), my thesis supervisor and the second reader.
- Recordings are transcribed. Your name is replaced with a made-up name.

- Data such as your name, ethnical and racial background (all personal information) will be stored separately from your the transcription.
- We will write an article about the results of the study which will be published. The results will be accessible by anyone.
- We may use your specific answers in the article.

How long will your personal data be stored?

Your data will be retained for a minimum of 10 year. We retain the data so that other researchers have the opportunity to verify that the research was conducted correctly. We will ask permission to you, if we want to restore the data for a longer period.

What happens with the results of the study?

Each participant will receive the final thesis by email.

Do you have questions about the study?

If you have any questions about the study or your privacy rights, such as accessing, changing, deleting, or updating your data, please contact me.

Name: Niels Neervoort
Phone number: +31630217896
Email: 668917nn@eur.nl

Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email the Data Protection Officer Marlon Domingus (fg@eur.nl, privacy@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250)

Do you regret your participation?

You may regret your participation. Even after participating, you can still stop. Please indicate this by contacting me. I will delete your data.

Your rights

Below you will find your rights below each other:

1. You have the right to access your data
2. You have the right to rectify, erase or restrict the processing of their personal data
3. You have the right to withdraw consent at any time
4. You have the right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority.

Ethics approval
This research has been reviewed and approved by an internal review committee of Erasmus University Rotterdam. This committee ensures that research participants are protected.

Declaration of Consent

I have read the information letter. I understand what the study is about and what data will be collected from me. I was able to ask questions as well. My questions were adequately answered. I know that I am allowed to stop at any time.
By signing this form, I
1. consent to participate in this research.
2. consent to the use of my personal data;
3. confirm that I am at least 18 years old[1].
4. understand that participating in this research is completely voluntary and that I can stop at any time; and
5. understand that my data will be anonymised for publication, educational purposes and further research.

Check the boxes below if you consent to this.

Required for research participation,

Data

 I consent to the researcher's collection, use and retention of the following data: *race and ethnicity*

Audio recording
I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

My answers in the article
I give permission for my answers to be used in papers, such as an article in a journal or book. My name will not be included.

Use for educational purposes and further research
I hereby consent to having my personal data, stored and
used for educational purposes and for future research, also in other areas of research th[   ]s research.

New research
I give permission to be contacted again for new research.

Name of participant:

Participant's signature: **Date:**

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[1]