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Marginalised voices in the inclusive recruitment discourse: a dilemma of inclusion/exclusion in the (Swedish) police

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Abstract

Recruitment for diversity is part of a range of proactive strategies for overcoming occupational stereotyping in a number of professions, as well as addressing a history of discrimination against women and minority groups. One such campaign launched by the Swedish police involves 'inclusive recruitment'. By analysing the discourse of inclusive recruitment and its subject positions in police student talk, this article shows how borders between people who are assigned different social categories are constructed, challenged and reinforced. Positive intentions in agendas towards diversity are problematised when minorities are ascribed as admitted on quotation, which places them in a subordinate and 'risky position' within an occupation and on less legitimate premises. A dilemma emerges between a call to represent minority groups and the risk of categorising them as 'others'. In particular, voices of resistance from ethnic minority police women show how practices of exclusion could jeopardise efforts to achieve inclusion.

Keywords: diversity; intersectionality; minority background; police; resistance recruitment

Introduction

Ways in which people identify themselves and others in terms of occupational choice and roles can lead to, and be influenced by 'occupational stereotyping', where the labour market is divided into gendered occupations or work tasks (e.g. Fejes & Haake, 2013; Haake, 2011). This gender-related 'horizontal segregation' of the labour market, where men and women choose different fields of study and occupation, is a concern in most European countries (EACEA/Eurydice, 2010). As literature on occupational choices stresses, traditions, social structures and the positions people occupy in society mean that the choices available to them are not neutral (for an overview, see Billet, Newton & Ockerby, 2010. cf. Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997). A number of scholars (e.g. Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017; Fejes & Haake, 2013; Galvaan, 2015; Hsu, Roth, Marshall & Guenette, 2009; Saavedra, Araújo, Taveira & Vieira, 2014) have answered a call to reject social

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determinism and focus on situational understandings of how occupational choices are made and accounted for. Furthermore, research with an intersectional approach to the positive political discourse on widened access and participation in higher and adult education shows how this discourse can work in contradictory ways (e.g. Acher, 2007; Reay, 2003). This article is in line with this approach, and contributes knowledge on how the inclusive recruitment discourse operates in terms of reproducing and challenging occupational stereotypes. The purpose is to identify and describe how inclusive recruitment (*Sw: breddad rekrytering*) to the police is constructed, what identities (subject positions) these constructions offer, and how they are sustained or challenged by police students. Although the adult education site in focus is the Swedish Police Academy, the article addresses questions of interest for policy makers, professionals and educators in various educational and work settings.

Affirmative action strategies and diversity in recruitment are part of a range of proactive approaches to overcoming a history of discrimination and exclusion of women and minority groups, as well as occupational stereotyping in a range of types of education and work sites. However, in some settings, such as the police, these strategies tend to be associated with recruitment based on gender or ethnicity alone, without reference to merit (Thornton, 2003). Despite positive intentions behind the inclusive recruitment discourse, it can have negative consequences for the proposed beneficiaries (cf. Bjørkelo, Egge, Bye & Ganapathy, 2015; Silverstri, Tong & Brown, 2013). This article outlines a number of concerns which have emerged from the ideas expressed by police students in discussions of inclusive recruitment to the Swedish police. A number of aspects of the notion of inclusive recruitment are challenged, especially through voices from ethnic minority police women. By analysing the discourse of inclusive recruitment and its subject positions, this article shows how borders are constructed, challenged and reinforced between people who are assigned different but intersecting social categories. These borders have social consequences in terms of who applies to and enters the police force, and who is seen as having entered the force legitimately. It therefore affects how people are likely to feel at home in their work.

Recruitment for diversity and the Swedish police

In line with the political climate addressing diversity in social institutions, inclusive recruitment has played a major role in efforts to improve diversity in the Swedish police. The police authority invested in campaigns at the beginning of the 2000s to recruit more women and ethnic minorities in numbers proportionate to the population. The importance of diversity has been highlighted in policies in terms of equal treatment and efforts to counteract discrimination (National Police Board, 2008; 2010a). The investments aim to improve legitimacy and trust in the police, develop the police force and provide a good service for citizens. Diversity is described as a resource for a just and efficient police force, and is approached by seeking different backgrounds, experiences and competences. Moreover, diversity is considered important to the police in terms of creating an attractive work place, and the long-term aim is a police force whose composition reflects diversity in society.

In 2015, 42 percent of the police were women and eight percent were co-workers with a foreign background.[1] [2] The current population with a foreign background in Sweden is 22.2 percent (Statistics Sweden, 2015). However, those admitted to the police programme are described as second-generation immigrants, and few are described as from marginalised or segregated suburbs. Three semesters in 2009 and 2010 were

considered historic, as 50 percent of the entrants (out of 36-38 percent of the applicants) were women (National Police Academy [NPA], 2010).[3] The police first suggested that this was a 'coincidence', but later attributed it to affirmative action (Schoultz, 2015, June 16).[4] This development was criticised in the media, which argued that it involved a quota system and discrimination against men.[5] 130 male applicants reported the police for discrimination and four cases resulted in arbitration and were granted compensation. Since then, the numbers of female recruits have dropped, and the figure is again down to pre-2009 levels at 30-35 percent. Over the years, the police have changed the definition of 'foreign background' in their statistics, and since 2013 statistics on employees and students with a foreign background have no longer been officially published. The latest policies no longer uses the word diversity and focuses only on the words 'equal treatment' (National Police Board, 2013, 2017). These latest policies have also left out statements regarding recruitment.[6]

Research on social categories in the police

There has been an increase in empirical research since Holdaway's (1997) call for research on the police to include micro-levels of analysis involving subjective experiences and practices within institutional police contexts. However, explorations of diversity in the composition of the constabulary have focused on pre-determined social categories, rather than on how categories are reproduced and constituted. Recent research on the latter indicates both improvements and obstacles for minority police officers in terms of ethnicity (e.g. Hansen Löfstrand & Uhnoo, 2014; Holdaway & O'Neill, 2004, 2007), gender (e.g. Fejes & Haake, 2013; Haake, 2017; Silverstri, Tong & Brown, 2013), sexual orientation (e.g. Colvin, 2009; Frewin & Tuffin, 1998; Rennstam & Sullivan, 2016) and intersecting categories (Boogaard & Roggeband, 2010; Jones & Williams, 2015; Lander, 2013; Loftus, 2009; McElhinny, 2001; Morasch & Haarr, 2012). Recent research on diversity discourses within the Swedish police has shown how diversity is contradictory and results in practical and ideological dilemmas regarding both the police work and the composition of the constabulary (Wieslander, 2014). Despite positive trends towards inclusion within the police, barriers to diversity in recruitment, retention and promotion are reported to be multifaceted, and are an under-researched area (Bjørkelo et al., 2015; Shepherd, 2014). Barriers include perceived negative attitudes towards the police among friends and family (low status and high risk), a student environment with experiences of marginalisation and exclusion (Lander, 2013; Wieslander, 2014), negative attitudes from colleagues in the work environment (Colvin, 2009; Peterson & Uhnoo, 2012; Rennstam & Sullivan, 2016) and perceived obstacles to minorities attaining positions of leadership in the police (Haake, 2017; Silvestri, Tong & Brown, 2013; Van Ewijk, 2012). Some argue that a positive, multicultural action strategy for minority officers could de-legitimise them in terms of their career, alienating them within the service (Bjørkelo et al., 2015; Shepherd, 2014).

Research setting and data

The results are based on a strand of data from a broader empirical study on diversity discourses within police trainee settings (Wieslander, 2014). The Swedish police programme covers five semesters of professional education, and during the period of this study (2010) it consisted of four semesters of theory (with a shorter period of field

practice), and a fifth probationary semester where trainees are based in a police station. The empirical data is based on ethnographically inspired field studies at the Swedish National Police Academy in 2010, where two (out of 16) randomly selected classes (a total of 45 students) were observed during a six-week course in their fourth semester. Classes, group assignments and talk during breaks were audio-recorded and combined with field notes. Discussions about recruitment and different social categories was transcribed verbatim and the text was used for analysis. In addition, a major part of the data analysed consists of a total of eight focus group interviews. Five of these interviews were conducted with 27 of the 45 police students at the end of the Academy programme (semester four), and three focus group interviews were conducted with 11 of the former 45 students at the end of their six-month probationary period of training at a police department (semester five). The interviews contained questions about diversity, inclusive recruitment and multiculturalism in relation to the constabulary and policing. Focus groups were used to highlight diverse and shared constructions on complex topics (Wibeck, Abrandt Dahlgren & Öberg, 2007). The interviews were transcribed verbatim including laughter and pauses, and lasted from 56 to 100 minutes, with an average length of 84 minutes.

Discourse theory and analysis of subject positions

As identity addresses questions of justice and equality, it works in highly politicized environments. Policies addressing discrimination and social justice through identity often do this through very distinct social categories, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic identity and so on. However, to categorise an individual can also have reverse outcomes than being just and inclusive (cf. Archer, 2007). According to Day (1988), ethnification (being positioned as the ethnic other) runs the risk of leading to exclusion in the social fellowship and in group activity. Holdaway and O'Neill (2004:857) describe similar consequences resulting from the ethnification of police officers, and also highlight an aspect of how these officers conceptualise themselves:

To be stereotyped and, thereby, categorised as a member of an ethnic minority is precisely to be set apart from the ethnic majority. De facto, it isolates an officer from the mainstream workforce, setting a framework for relationships with colleagues and a perception of oneself within a constabulary.

In response to these simplifications of categories and their potential exclusionary outcomes, this article aligns with an intersectional approach that challenges reductive ways of framing difference (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality takes into account individuals' multiple belongings and how identities, or social positions, *intersect* with each other and within social structures, and it can thus reveal power relations (both oppressed and privileged) in a nuanced way. In contrast to research based on social categories *as a point of departure* for occupational choice and skills, this study applies a discourse approach in order to analyse how aspects of inclusive recruitment and intersecting social categories are *constructed* and *negotiated* in conversations between police students. The empirical data are analysed with reference to critical discursive psychology (cf. Edley, 2001; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 2001), seeing discourse as a social practice and analysing the subject positioning emerging from these discursive practices. This meso-analytical approach considers both the local accomplishment of the discourse, as well as the broader social implications. It not only examines how identities are produced in specific contexts and for particular occasions, but also the performative, or productive capacities of discourse, namely 'how

it comes to structure both subjective experience and our sense of who we are' (Edley, 2001, p. 191). This means that both the content and discursive resources used to legitimise certain claims are considered significant for understanding how the inclusive recruitment discourse and its subject positions are constructed – and what it accomplishes in a specific context. Discourses make some positions more attractive than others, and make it preferable to avoid certain positions. Hence, this post-structural perspective acknowledges people as active subjects who are given and reproduce power through the use of discursive formations, but who also have the opportunity to resist. Resistance can take the form of using alternative discourses and discursive resources to negotiate or avoid a social positioning (Day, 1998; Edley, 2001; Wieslander, 2014). This means that an individual's belonging to a social category in a "factual sense" is less relevant. Rather, the analysis focuses on *how positioning is done* in conversations, and includes both reflexive positioning (how one positions oneself) and interactive positioning (how one positions others) (Davies & Harré, 2001). The three main questions that have guided the analysis are: 1) How is inclusive recruitment to the police constructed? 2) What subject positions are offered and assumed? 3) How are these subject positions sustained or challenged? The results and their social consequences are discussed through critical perspectives on multiculturalism (Ahmed, 2012; Archer, 2007; May, 2009).

Findings

The findings are presented in two sections. The first section, 'Inclusive recruitment as the others', focuses both on how inclusive recruitment is constructed and what subject positions it offers and assumes. The second section, 'Negotiating a position as the successful female immigrant recruit', focuses on how the subject of 'the successful female immigrant recruit' is challenged in discussions by police students. This subject position is also resisted, primarily by female students with minority backgrounds. In both these sections the social consequences of the results are discussed.

Inclusive recruitment as the others

In police policies (National Police Board, 2008) as well as among students, inclusive recruitment is distinguished through the social categorisations "women", "ethnic minorities" and "homosexuals". These categories are contrasted with a perceived norm, and thus are expected to contribute to improved diversity within the police force. However, some people and groups are seen as *more* different than others, which places difference in a hierarchical structure. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from a group interview, where Mirko answers David's question about the percentage required for police education to become multicultural:

> [Excerpt 1]
>
> Mirko: If you have a Swedish mum and a Finnish dad you are included in the group of immigrants the police are after. /…/ So you don't know how accurate these numbers are. (Focus group four, semester four)

Different subgroups or nationalities covered by the label 'immigrant' are seen as more or less qualified to represent diversity in the constabulary. The definition of immigrant background is contested by Mirko. As in the large empirical corpus, immigrant police

students are defined in terms of foreign names and visible appearance, and this does not include Swedish or Finnish students who look like or act like the norm. This also appears in Tara's (female student with a Kurdish background) account that police education is 'not really multicultural' and that 'the National Police Board should recruit real immigrants' since 'the immigrants at the Academy are native-like' (Focus group one, semester four). These constructions result in hierarchical categories within the label 'immigrant', which are made invisible in most other cases where groups are constructed as homogenous.

The term 'ethnic matchmaking' has been introduced as a resource that the public can identify with and that can help them trust the police (Hansen Löfstrand & Uhnoo, 2014). It involves police officers with minority backgrounds being considered suitable to work in areas with large numbers of minorities. These officers become linked to restricted areas of policing such as suburbs and stigmatised neighbourhoods, or to certain issues such as honour and hate crimes, or as language interpreters. Being seen as resources, however, restricts and limits their legitimacy within the police. Consider the following statement, which suggest that female, veiled minorities are restricted to policing segregated areas (suburbs):

> [Excerpt 2]
>
> Isabelle: there are large areas with only immigrants, where it can actually be good to have [veiled immigrant police officers] (Focus group three, semester four)

The next excerpt shows how different subject positions are played out among each other in one of the group interviews when the students talk about inclusive recruitment to the police:

> [Excerpt 3]
>
> Jonas: In this group Tara has another background, and in this group you represent an immigrant student or whatever /…/
>
> Tara: Here I represent women too, apart from … guys.
>
> Jonas: You have a lot to deal with today [smiles].
>
> Tara: *Yes, it's tough, really tough* [laughs] … I think you'll be approached in a different way if not all cops look the same, if they're not just male, or female, er, special appearance (Focus group one, semester four)

Inclusive recruitment is constructed through practices of differentiation with binary constructions of 'us' and 'them'. In the large empirical corpus, Swedish, white, heterosexual, secular men are normalised. At the same time, this reduces 'the other' to a deviant from the norm, with the consequence that *other attributes* are linked to their identity and their entry into the police force is based on other qualifications.

Inclusive recruitment as quantity

When diversity is recognised by the students as an important political goal within the police it centres on aspects of legitimation, representability and trust. Inclusive recruitment is viewed as part of this, and seen as a strategy for developing a police force which mirrors the diversity in society. However, inclusive recruitment becomes linked to

quantitative measures through a 'body-count routine' (Jonsson, 2009). This body-count routine literally involves counting the number of individuals (bodies), where the individuals are representatives of an ascribed category. The following excerpt shows the body-count routine in use in a focus group interview:

> [Excerpt 4]
>
> Nick: But the papers say 15 percent, right? But where are these 15 percent? /…/ I thought I read that somewhere, that there is 15 percent with an immigrant background at the Academy.
>
> Nora: That's hard to see.
>
> Nick: Yes, I have a really hard time seeing that.
>
> /…/
>
> Jesper: Yes, it's absolutely fine but I also think it's a danger saying 15 percent should be like that and 25 should be like that. [Isabelle: Yes, exactly, yes, I think so too] ( ) then the quality drops. (Focus group three, semester four)

The body-count in use here is immigrant background, which is quantified to 15 percent. The number, taken from policy documents, is questioned by the participants, and the discussion ends, as it often does, in a rhetorical question: 'According to the percentage they should be here, but where are they?' This can be described as a vacuum which makes people invisible, where for example ethnic, sexual and religious identity is spoken about in its absence. Labelling them as 'hard to see' suggests that they carry visible attributes which distinguish them from others. Jesper problematises the body-count routine by suggesting that it reduces the quality of the police force. His reply can be seen as demonstrating resistance to legitimising inclusive recruitment strategies through quantitative measurements, and a preference for qualitative aspects. The account modifies the question what diversity means when inclusive recruitment is expected to involve *other* qualifications in police recruits.

Inclusive recruitment as quota

Discourses which represent some occupations as more suitable for men or women have consequences not only for occupational choices and work tasks (cf. Fejes & Haake, 2013), but also for who is seen as fit for the work. According to research, physical strength and speed are prerequisites for the police, and together with different admission requirements in terms of physical tests for women and men, these issues have introduced a silent cultural preconception of who is legitimately considered for admission (e.g. Lander, 2013). This being the case, the discourse on police work as a macho, physically demanding and action-based occupation can be considered an obstacle for diversity within the force (Lander, 2013; Loftus, 2008, 2009). As outlined below, my data tend to support this argument. In the following excerpt a student criticises the possibility that people, with what he sees as better policing skills, are at risk of being rejected in the recruitment process in favour of people admitted in order to fulfil political aims.

[Excerpt 5]

Jesper: A lot is gained. Everyone can identify themselves if it mirrors society. But then it never will, I think … considering their recruitment system is catastrophic. /…/ You can't quota people, or discriminate against people, and then it's supposed to mirror society. If you admit people who are not up to the standards and then think they will meet the standards in practice … Or sift people out using these standards. /…/ They told me [at the recruitment interview] 'If you end up in the same situation as a girl or a migrant, you might not be selected, even though you're as suitable as they are'.

/…/

Nora: But I think it's one thing to say 'you're an immigrant and you're a Swedish guy', if you're just as good. They want more immigrants, and I can accept them admitting immigrants if they're just as good=

Jesper: Would you like to be rejected or discriminated against in that way? (Focus group three, semester four)

According to the accounts in this excerpt, inclusive recruitment is a practice where 'people who can't meet the standards' are selected. Affirmative action is redefined as discrimination and quotas when people from under-represented groups are admitted with the same qualifications. Jesper suggests that there is discrimination against the Swedish male position, but not that it would be the other way around for minority groups if he is selected. Women and migrants are assigned other qualifications, a practice of differentiation which is also constructed in a hierarchical order. Hence, the position as a Swedish male is normalised and given high social standing and to be of superior quality. When they are described as the object of discrimination, those constituted as the norm are given priority in the police force when 'others' gain access to the occupation. This practice of equating the normative position with higher quality, which disregards concepts of structural inequality, has been identified as contributing to a colour-blind approach, and it is argued that this is often found in the way white people consider affirmative action (McElhinny, 2001, drawing on Frankenberg, 1993). This has been reported elsewhere as a condition of 'white victimhood' and a 'white backlash' to the politics of multiculturalism, and is seen as an attempt to preserve a hegemonic police culture and a privileged position (Loftus, 2009, p. 81). By bringing in quality and merit on the basis of physical tests (best suited for the job), and using the rhetoric of 'we are all blue' in the police (rather than acknowledging social differences), people avoid speaking in terms of race or ethnicity and claim that this is non-racist, fair and objective because they are building on occupational identity. However, colour-blind rhetoric conceals inequalities, as it directs the focus away from social hierarchies and avoids the politics of power. As Archer (2007: 647) explicitly points out, diversity strategies for widened participation have to be viewed in relation to structural inequalities in the society; "[t]he policy focus upon reified student bodies as a key marker of 'diversity' and 'equality' within higher education masks the way in which these bodies are located and situated within unequal social structures.".

Negotiating a position as the successful female immigrant recruitment

As further developed in the following section, recruitment campaigns have been based on a premise that minorities represent a larger community (ethnic matchmaking), with

special experiences and knowledge common to a whole group. Minority officers are presented as resources who embody knowledge of areas of interest for the police. When Tara becomes positioned as an immigrant police student, she resists and negotiates the position, implying that it is a stigmatised one. Even Jonas, who positions Tara several times during the interview as an immigrant with specific resources for policing, acknowledges this dilemma:

> [Excerpt 6]
>
> Jonas: If we were to leave this room to work with traffic today, I would want to work with Martin 'cause we would make a damn good team. If we were off to another case, we might end up in Rinkeby [suburb of the capital city of Sweden], then Tara has resources no one else has. Everybody contributes something and no one contributes everything, which makes us ... as we talked about before, we bring beneficial things. And I think it's nice with that great variety. 'Cause I know what I'm good at but also what I do poorly …
>
> [A few seconds' silence]
>
> … but it's also depressing if I consider, if you take it one step further, if Tara is taken as an example, it's depressing always to be put in a box for this reason. I mean ... Tara and I - say that we had identical qualifications but she had an immigrant background, it's depressing if you're always put in the immigrant box. That must suck [Lukas: exactly].
>
> [Overlapping talk. Robin: Like on the first day. Tara: Yes, exactly].
>
> Lukas: Yes, like Tara, she arrives somewhere, and this will be a good connection with … it takes ( ) … then nothing will ever happen, then it will always=
>
> Tara: I can be just as I am, even if I would have been adopted and have always been … [Overlapping talk. Lukas and Martin: No, precisely] the whole time …
>
> Lukas: That's what I meant. I was born Swedish and will never learn to … it will never change … so there's a problem. (Focus group one, semester four)

Tara is described as a police officer with certain skills and assignments in Rinkeby. She is made the deviant in the group, with resources no one else has. Rinkeby is marked as a place which differs from other suburbs, a possible reference to it as a segregated suburb with many cultures and languages and with requirements for certain qualifications in police officers. Since Tara is placed in an 'immigrant box', certain immigrant skills are assigned to her identity. Thereafter, Jonas articulates a new perspective, questioning regularly-used categorisations and stereotypes.

When Tara is addressed as an immigrant, her identity as a Swedish person is diminished. As an immigrant, only with some effort can she be positioned as Swedish at the same time, just as her positioning as a woman (in excerpt 3) distinguishes her from the men around her. The ascribed position is difficult to extricate herself from, and she becomes a symbol of diversity (woman and immigrant) in the room and a double representative of deviants in the police.

Besides Tara being ethnified and facing the risk of exclusionary practices, Lukas' reply sheds light on another problem arising from the reproduction of stereotypes in the police; diversity in the constabulary only becomes a requirement because of the diverse population in certain areas of society. Ethnic minority officers are recruited to meet and encounter an ethnic minority population in society and, hence, become legitimised as a means of solving other problems. In this sense, diversity in the police is reduced to a

project for minorities, rather than being seen as a development in society as a whole, benefitting and creating equality and justice for all. Through Lukas' account, it becomes clear that a more inclusive rhetoric on diversity – as relating to the whole population and relevant regardless of who the police encounter – is marginalised in the context. Through the dominant construction on the need for diversity where diversity is perceived to exist (suburbs), 'the immigrant others' are constructed as people with specific needs. Minority police officers become translators or mediators, and may be restricted to assignments where these skills are considered to be needed. There are no corresponding arguments involving a need for a diverse police force in areas with greater socio-economic resources. This perspective is highlighted by the participants. The view of diversity in society 'will never change', as Lukas suggests, and ethnic Swedish officers 'will never learn'.

Symbolic positioning as an organisational policy strategy

Ethnic matchmaking can be described as a symbolic positioning with the purpose of increasing confidence in the police and policing. Police organisations emphasise that diversity in the police force will make the police an attractive occupation and help to reduce suspicion towards it (Ben-Porat, 2008; National Police Board, 2010a). Recruitment of minorities is also considered to reduce the problem of under-policing in areas where people feel culturally and linguistically alienated from the police (Ben-Porat, 2008). Diversity within the police is important on a symbolic level, but this does not necessarily mean that minority populations feel the need to be assigned police officers with the same ethnic background. Minority officers also express a lack of interest in working with this type of strategy (cf. Ben-Porat, 2008).

The next excerpt indicates resistance to this symbolic positioning in the training context. Tara recalls her first day at the Police Academy, when she was asked to pose for a photograph as a new student, to show the diversity of the students. Tara resents this role model, as she was only asked because of her skin colour and not her experience:

> [Excerpt 7]
>
> Tara: My face goes red and I think, 'Wait a minute, what the hell is happening?' I said, '<u>No</u>'. End of story! 'I'm really sorry, but if I'd done anything to deserve being on the website, I wouldn't mind'. In five, six weeks, when we've done some exercises or whatever, but just to show that we now have a person of colour and a [laughs] wog[7] on the webpage, that we've been admitted and the quotas have been filled, and that we want to show them off. I said, 'I'm sorry, but I won't do it'. I'm so disappointed that the school has a need to show off these two immigrant girls who've been admitted to the programme. (Focus group one, semester four)

Tara directs her resistance towards difference as an exterior, visual concept, related to physical appearance. Her resistance can also be seen as a lack of interest in working in a context of ethnic matchmaking. The group continues to discuss Tara's earlier positioning, and Lukas suggests that symbolic positioning is a management strategy:

> [Excerpt 8]
>
> Lukas: I don't know about the webpage but … I can imagine that the aim is to attract more … applicants with immigrant backgrounds, but you might not want to be the model (*Sw: skyltdocka*) for that.

> Tara: No, but attract more. Why attract more by showing people who are already … it's like attracting fat people and show off the worst [laugh] - yes, but you know. It didn't feel right. It definitely didn't feel right. [Lukas: No].
>
> Jonas: It might fulfil a purpose because people might think they don't stand a chance [Lukas and Tara: Yes], but I can still see a risk of ending up in a box.
>
> Tara: Precisely, that's the reason I wanted to be a guide at the police museum and talk to youngsters there who might be thinking about it. That's a completely different thing. (Focus group one, semester four)

This strategy represents Tara as a model, or token, for the public face of the Police Academy (cf. Loftus, 2009). Tokenism is a strategy that organisations use for developing diversity through identification, a strategy Tara resists, partly because of the feeling it produces. Instead, she proposes an alternative strategy, not based on showing off her skin colour in a police uniform, but on talking to people who show interest in the occupation and visit the police museum.

The same discussion took place during a seminar on prejudice in the other class, where Maria, a police officer student, recalled being positioned in a similar way to Tara on her first day at the Academy. Maria describes how she was asked to represent immigrant women in a magazine about the police programme:

> [Excerpt 9]
>
> Maria: On the first day I was asked to represent immigrant women in the programme magazine. She approached me and said, 'Yes, because we need immigrants and you also look good in pictures', and I just said, 'What?' It was the same as we talked about earlier. I was admitted on merit. I've never, ever played an immigrant card. I was born in Sweden. I feel Swedish. Just as Swedish as anyone else who has been living in Sweden their whole life. So I think it was almost an insult for that reason. It was a bit odd, so I didn't volunteer, and still she phoned me several times and left a message, and wanted it to look good, bla bla bla. Then I thought, 'Look good for whom?' (Field work, day 17. Transcribed audio recorded class room seminar on prejudice and hate crimes)

In a similar way to Tara, Maria resists being categorised and defined as an immigrant. Thereafter Chris, a fellow student, suggests (like Lukas in the group interview) that this is a ploy by the Academy's Board of Directors to attract people from other social strata by announcing in the media and to the public that diversity is addressed at the Academy. He gives an example from his field practice as an officer, where he 'talked to some kids at some party, and then we started to talk and they were curious about this police thing. But they were from Alby, Fitja, Rinkeby and the like [suburbs of the capital], and I said, 'But you can apply', and they said, 'No, it's only people like you: big, strong Swedes with short hair, shaved – shit, not me' (Field work, day 17. Recorded quote from class room seminar). In terms of symbolic positioning, Chris' story illustrates a situation where 1) people with minority ethnic backgrounds are made deviant in terms of the police force as a whole, and 2) the police are trying to change. Maria formulates her reply like Tara, who said, 'If that's the case the board can choose real immigrants for the programme', with the experiences they want them to have, and who can convey a better message in their marketing.

Tara and Maria's resistance to being treated as models can be compared to what Cashmore (2002) termed window dressing within the police in the early 2000s, where cultural diversity is portrayed as a way of addressing discrimination and institutional

racism, but is ineffective as a strategy for diversity. Cashmore's study is based on interviews with ethnic minorities in the British police force whose attitudes differ considerably from the policy. Like these subjects, the police students' interpretation of diversity is in opposition to the organisation's operational strategies for inclusive recruitment, and the policy becomes challenged from within. Like Cashmore, I construe the participants' critique of the diversity policy as a superficial image of changes within the police. Maria's account 'look good for whom' indicates how the organisation's image can benefit from these policy strategies, while the individuals targeted pay the price for it.

Resisting a 'risky position'

When being addressed and positioned as subjects, people respond to these positions in different ways (Davies & Harré, 2001). The construction, meaning and consequences of categories shift according to context, circumstances, and the people involved in the social interaction. The participants depend on each other's interpretations, so positioning becomes a socially regulated practice.

The analysis of Tara and Maria's resistance shows how resistance to reductionist descriptions of their identity can be understood in relation to a specific context; recruiting for diversity is a 'risky positioning' in the police because of possible consequences of exclusion and de-legitimation. A factor contributing to their resistance was their positioning as 'the other' because of their physical appearance. They considered themselves to be defined as immigrants based on a template of what immigrants and a successful recruit in the police look like. Ahmed (2012) also claims that when diversity is rendered as something to *add* to the organisation, like skin colour, it confirms the white dominance already in place. When the variously coloured representatives of diversity are shown in police images, the organisation is portrayed as marked by diversity. However, as Ahmed argues, people 'can get stuck *in* institutions by being stuck *to* a category' (2012, p. 4. Italics in original).

Stigma restricts people's ability to act. The label 'immigrant' involves a diacritical practice which differentiates between Tara, Maria and other students at the school, for example, and suggests they contribute different skills or resources. It is not until Tara and Maria resist the positioning that they can adjust the design of the template and the way in which they belong to it. Their resistance challenges the model of ethnic and gendered matchmaking when Tara gives an alternative example of how to approach people who are interested in the police (guiding at the police museum). In conversations on inclusive recruitment, questions of quotas in the police programme arose in both class and in interview discussions. In line with these local factors, Tara and Maria's resistance is directed against the risk of being positioned as a quota (cf. Boogaard & Roggeband, 2010; Egge et al., 2008; McElhinny, 2001). Maria makes this explicit in the classroom discussion, saying she did not play 'the immigrant card', and emphasises instead how she passed on her own merit. Her resistance highlights the fact that she does not share immigrants' experiences, and instead suggests that she was admitted on other, more legitimate and accepted premises which her peers will not question.

There are different ways of re-negotiating or nuancing conventional expectations about members of a category (Day, 1998). These negotiations create an opportunity to redefine oneself and others. One way is to oppose an ascribed position to a category, and adjust and reduce the meaning of it. Another strategy is to nuance the attribute of the category which can increase and broaden a category to include a larger group. Instead of

broadening the concept inclusive recruitment to involve more categories and include more people, the participants reduce the categories of diversity so they themselves do not fit into them, because if they fit they risk being stigmatised. The students avoid reproducing their own affiliation as deviant, and position themselves as part of the majority, for example describing themselves as 'native-like', 'not real immigrants', 'born in Sweden', and 'feeling like a Swede'. Their negotiating focuses more on their own positioning than the category as such, though their negotiation adjusts the meaning of the category at the same time; immigrants have *other* specific qualifications to contribute. Tara's own language skills and Kurdish background are not made relevant here, but are in other circumstances common features in distinguishing cultural resources within the police force. In their definition of 'real immigrants', they oppose belonging to this category and the ability to refer to immigrant experiences, while the concept of the immigrant becomes 'the other'; a subject with no Swedish language skills, with deviant attitudes and experiences, and outside the constabulary. The constructions also constitute identity as an either / or concept, rather than addressing people as both Swedish and Kurdish, for example. The negotiations are examples of how the category 'immigrant' is defined more narrowly and displaced to an even more marginalised position in relation to the police community.

In this analysis, power is placed inside discourses. Power relations are reproduced and challenged when some positions are normalised and placed in a hierarchy in relation to other positions. The positioning of Tara and Maria as deviant is one example of this, and their resistance to the discursive formation of their positions and identities is another example of power in use. However, their resistance can be understood in the light of historical forms of dominance in society, where discourses which legitimise white, Eurocentric maleness have regulated the power and control over defining and ruling in society, and have also regulated the ways in which resistance has been possible and by whom (e.g. van Dijk, 1992). This power can be found at an institutional level, where ways of addressing positions are constrained, and this in turn influences the individual level. Not everyone has the same opportunities to exercise resistance in every kind of situation. Tara and Maria's resistance could potentially be related to the contextual framing where classmates have known each other for almost two years. In other police contexts and groups their opportunity to resist might be more circumscribed.

Conclusions

Recruitment for diversity has been addressed in many educational and occupational contexts to enhance equality and inclusion, and to overcome occupational stereotyping. As well as in society at large, this is seen as important on a symbolic level and as a strategy against discriminatory tendencies. This article contributes to knowledge in this field by showing empirically how different activities to gain equality and inclusion can work in contradictory ways. More specifically, it shows how minority officers (women are still in minority within the police) become positioned in the inclusive recruitment discourse as quotas, as a quantified number, and with their qualities questioned. Moreover, this article argues that this discourse actually reproduces the social order by affirming social categories which are assumed to be inherent in the representatives of diversity. On the other hand, the students also contest these positions, giving minorities a voice. A dilemma emerges between a call to ensure that minority groups are represented in a segregated occupation and the risk of defining these groups as 'others', thus placing them in a marginalised position. Hence, diversity in the police addresses and nuances some of the

consequences of the paradox involved in recognising people's social backgrounds on the one hand, and disregarding them on the other.

Parallel processes of inclusion and exclusion are made visible in talk about the composition of the constabulary. Diversity strategies are met with resistance through a discourse on the police work in which it is described as macho and action-based, which contributes to limiting diversity and inclusion within the police (cf. Lander, 2013; Loftus, 2008, 2009). Minority officers are considered to have been recruited in pursuit of politically correct goals and on the basis of their social group and affiliation, rather than on individual merits, and are therefore not seen as equally competent. Meanwhile, officers ascribed to the norm (ethnic Swedish, heterosexual, white men) are considered to have been recruited for individual – and more legitimate – reasons. Hence, constructions of police minorities as resources for the police and the public are contested through constructions of minorities as quotas and as not the most suitable for police work. Minority officers are requested due to their social categorisation and labelled in terms of diversity, which means they also risk being excluded by it.

Categories are politically and socially constructed. They are used for distinguishing groups, and contain different degrees of stigma in different contexts (May, 2009). Police officers attributed minority backgrounds are viewed as resources vis-à-vis different groups in society, which mobilises boundaries between people on the basis of tokenism and ethnic matchmaking in the inclusive recruitment discourse. These constructions risk locking people into certain work tasks and reducing their occupational choices. The inclusive recruitment discourse is also hierarchical, as some social groups are portrayed as being more representative of it than others. I label the categories related to inclusive recruitment as 'risky positions', due to the potential risk of them leading to exclusion and de-legitimation within the police. Nobody wishes to be ascribed a position as a minority police officer student because of the stigma associated with it. Hence, the inclusive recruitment discourse conceals normative positioning and privileges ascribed to people within hegemonic police cultural norms (ethnic Swedish, heterosexual men), while minorities continue to be reproduced as 'outsiders within' (cf. Loftus, 2008; 2009; McElhinny, 2001; Peterson & Uhnoo, 2012). Although diversity strategies aim to promote equality in the police the inclusive recruitment discourse also reproduces the status-quo and conceals both differences between people and the socially constructed inequality between different groups (Archer, 2007).

In order to improve equity and equality in occupational choice, and produce a diverse police constabulary in the longer term, comments on, and criticism of quotas and marginalising practices need to be taken into consideration. Both the recent prominent increase in women in the Swedish police programme, as well as the subsequent decrease of women after the public criticism, has reinforced a notion of quotas and arbitrary selection in recruiting police officers. While the aim of more inclusive recruitment is to empower certain groups, the analysis shows that this may reinforce structures which promote inequality and provoke feelings of otherness and discrimination (cf. Boogaard & Roggeband, 2010; Shepherd, 2014). These may limit the legitimacy of selected individuals, and raise questions about people recruited through standard procedures. In the long run, this influences whether people feel at home at work.

In sum, the results show that the inclusive recruitment discourse can be understood as a complex and contradictory practice. It can be liberating and give a group autonomy, but it can also limit individuals (cf. Wetherell & Potter, 1992) in terms of occupational choices and access. A critical perspective needs to be addressed when differentiating practices of social categorisation are at play - practices which risk locking individuals in

fixed stereotypes. Otherwise, diversity strategies may jeopardise efforts to improve social equality.

Notes

[1] SCB defines foreign background as born abroad or with both parents born abroad.
[2] Women = 31 percent police officers and 67 percent civilian staff. Foreign background = 6 percent police officers and 11.2 percent civilian staff, according to unpublished documents received by e-mail from the police's HR department.
[3] Applicants with foreign background varied between 17-27 percent during 2009-2010, but after 2010 the numbers dropped to 9-12 percent (see appendix 1 in Wieslander, 2014). Admission to the police programme is based on formal admission requirements as well as different tests and on interviews.
[4] In a report from October 2010, the National Police Board states that at least 40 percent of each gender should be admitted to the Police Academy (National Police Board, 2010b).
[5] In Sweden, quotas, meaning the recruitment of under-represented people with unequal merits, are prohibited by law. Affirmative action, or positive discrimination, meaning recruitment of under-represented people with equal merits in relation to other candidates, is not prohibited.
[6] During 2017 the Swedish Police removed all former officially published policy documents concerning diversity and equal treatment from their website.
[7] Slang for immigrant person with dark skin (Sw: *svartskalle*).

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