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**Managing Workforce Diversity in Big Cities: A European  
Perspective on Representative Bureaucracies in Local Government**

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# **1 Towards Representative Bureaucracies in Big City Government? And If So, Why?**

Modern societies tend to be multi-cultural societies, whereas most modern bureaucracies can be classified as mono-cultural organizations (Goldberg, 2002; Wimmer, 1997). And more importantly yet, the gulf between increasingly culturally diverse societal environments and ever more (supposedly) rational (if not technocratic) public sector organizations seems to be widening. Traditionally, civil services have been rather ethnically homogenous ‘closed-shops’. The question of who can enter the career of a civil servant prompts a legal answer referring to formal eligibility that in turn is contingent on citizenship of the respective country. In addition, the decision to enter the career civil service is highly influenced by the family socialization and often becomes a question of family tradition. The (self-)selection process of civil servants has led in most of the European civil services to a homogenous institution that does not resemble the current ethnic composition of a specific segment of population. In other words, the prevailing and legally guaranteed equal opportunity in modern civil service systems does not necessarily imply a society-wide equality of opportunity (van der Meer/Roborgh, 1996: 130).

This observation gives rise to a series of challenging theoretical and empirical questions, a small number of which will be selected for a more explorative treatment in this paper. Generally speaking, we set out to discuss – based on empirical findings from three city governments – whether traditionally relatively closed (with regard to their relations to external labor markets) and ethnically homogeneous public bureaucracies in continental Europe are turning themselves into ‘representative bureaucracies’, which aim at mirroring the ethnic composition of the constituency they are supposed to serve (van der Meer/Roborgh, 1996). In doing so, our discussion is also geared at introducing and clarifying the concept of ‘representative bureaucracies’ – a term borrowed primarily from a US-American intellectual and political tradition referring to the relationship between social and ethnic characteristics of an administrative constituency and the social and ethnic composition of the respective body of public personnel. Based on this conceptual reasoning, we finally shift attention to our guiding research questions in order to some

light on the dynamics that drive the slowly but steadily emerging development towards more culturally diverse public sector workforces.

For the purpose of this paper, societies or organizations are considered multi-cultural if they are significantly diverse in terms of their ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural parameters (Fenton, 2008). As for European societies, there seems to be a clearly discernible trend towards greater cultural variety in what used to be more rigidly defined 'nation states'. The fast and widespread growth of geographical mobility in a common European market and a globalized economy resulted in more and more people migrating for work, but also on humanitarian grounds or to find political safe havens. The accelerated process of European integration has not only lowered the hurdles for a free movement of people, but stipulated also the right of EU-citizens to join the civil service of another member state (even though specific restrictions often remain (Bundestag, 2007)). As a consequence, member states are face a continuously growing diversity of its resident population with political and social pressure building up to accommodate the specific interests and needs of the new, but sizable minority groups (see Bauböck, 1996; Riggs, 2002: 35).

In order to pursue our research questions, we have chosen the socio-political arena of big local government authorities in the three German-speaking countries as a testing ground for our field research. As a matter of fact, the city authorities of Zurich, Vienna and Berlin will serve as cases in point for the purpose of this paper. Arguably, the push factors emanating from the European-wide if not global flows of migration are most strongly felt in large urban conurbations that serve as centers of gravity for both migrating low-skill and high-skill workers. Besides, we choose to study city governments because it can be safely assumed that due to their service delivery functions and direct contact to citizens, their functioning is directly affected by the rise of multi-ethnic societies. As European cities grow more and more heterogeneous as far as their ethnic, religious and linguistic population mix is concerned, public sector organizations serving these communities come increasingly under pressure to change their personnel policies and human resource management strategies accordingly. In recent years, a number of European city governments have begun to actively recruit persons with cultural minority backgrounds for positions in the local government service. This could be interpreted as a first sign of how the traditionally

rather ethnically homogenous European civil service systems (Goldberg, 2002; Wimmer, 1997) (will) deal with the challenge of being confronted with and part of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies. Though reasons and developments of this process still lie in the dark and ask for further exploration, our three case studies of major European cities – Zurich, Vienna, Berlin – allow to explore the questions as to *how* and *why* city governments start to hire people with a migration background. These cases are especially interesting for such an investigation as they are not only central-European cities and belong geographically and culturally to a rather homogeneous region, but all their civil service systems are rooted in the tradition of the Weberian model of bureaucracy, which serves to a certain extent as an opposing model to that of a ‘representative’ bureaucracy (as will be shown below). These – if only broadly sketched – commonalities with regard to entrenched social, intellectual and cultural traditions makes it all the more worthwhile and heuristically rewarding to study the ‘representativeness creep’ in our city sample, i.e. the departure from what used to be established organizational values in order to achieve a greater degree of cultural diversity within local public sector organizations. In studying this process, our primary interest is not so much with the practicalities of managing diversity in organizations, but with the shaping factors of that underlying process of institutional change.

The following section explores the link between societal diversity and bureaucracy and tracks down the essentials of the notion of representative bureaucracies with reference to the established body of literature that emerged primarily in the context of U.S.-American public administration. Before turning to our empirical case studies, we briefly sketch in a broad-brush manner the process of ‘multi-culturalization’ against which the current institutional change has to be evaluated. The subsequent section seeks to compare the institutional trajectories towards more ‘representativeness’ in our city sample showing that to some extent a multi-cultural workforce is already a fact of daily administrative life. We proceed to discuss the rationalities behind this shared institutional trajectory across national boundaries, before suggesting some avenues for future research in our concluding section.

## 2 Comparing Models of Organization: Weberian versus Representative Bureaucracies

What actually is a “representative bureaucracy”, a term US students of public administration often used when talking about the relationship between the ethnic composition of a society and its civil service? In very general terms “representative bureaucracy” can be described as the “body of thought and research examining the potential for government agencies to act as representative political institutions if their personnel are drawn from all sectors of society” (Dolan/Rosenbloom, 2003: xi). One question is whether the bureaucracy looks like a given segment of the population in terms of its ethnic, racial, social, gender or occupational characteristics, or if the bureaucracy advocates interests of a specific segment of the population (Mosher, 1968). One argument for researching the issue of representative bureaucracy comes often from a normative position assuming that the question of having or not having an ethnically representative public bureaucracy has implications for fair and effective policy-making and implementation, the aim of integrating minorities into society by giving them the chance to be part of government, or even to control a bureaucracy that is dominated a (ethnic) majority group and which does not care for the problems of minorities (Dolan/Rosenbloom, 2003). It is not surprising that this has institutional implications for administrative regimes such as the accessibility, recruitment, self-understanding, and management of the civil service, which go in hand with the *opening* of the civil service for personnel with a migration background. The issue of representation and staffing carries important implications for the delivery of public services, the sharing of power in a society as well as it symbolizes equal opportunities and equality. Apart from this quantitative ‘pattern matching’ perspective one might ask about the organizational consequences and prerequisites. How does the internal organization adapt in order to cope with diversity and multiculturalism in its own workforce as well as with diversity in society?

Since J. Donald Kingsley coined the term ‘representative bureaucracy’ in 1944, this issue has become a major concern in the study and practice of bureaucracy. In his classical study he examined the British national administration and showed that the majority of its staff is recruited from the upper and middle class of population having enjoyed a special education and acquired the attitude of a ruling class. This selection

bias made him question whether this mentality might have an impact on the service to the public and to democracy in the end as well (...). In the meantime, not only have the United States of America written the goal of achieving a representative federal bureaucracy into the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and but years later Bill Clinton called for a government that “looks like America.” One central legal measure to achieve the goal of a representative bureaucracy, have been so-called ‘affirmative action’ policies in the U.S. The term affirmative action refers to policies that take gender, race, or ethnicity into account in an attempt to promote equal opportunity. The focus of such policies ranges from employment and public contracting to educational outreach and health programs. The impetus towards affirmative action is twofold: to maximize the benefits of diversity in all levels of society, and to redress disadvantages due to overt, institutional, or involuntary discrimination.

The academic discourse on the role and functioning of a ‘representative bureaucracy’ has also a rather long tradition (e.g. Coleman et al., 1998; Meier, 1975; Meier et al., 1999; Romzek/Hendricks, 1982; Subramaniam, 1967; Wiltse, 1941; Andrews et al., 2005; Krislov, 1974; Meier/Hawes, 2008; Mosher, 1968; Nielsen/Wolf, 2001; Pitts/Jarry, 2007; van der Meer/Roborgh, 1996) though the question whether it is good to have a ‘representative bureaucracy’ is highly contested and has raised doubts about the central underpinning of the concept itself, which is that the social background of public administrators matters in the way public functions are being executed. The key assumption is that administrators have more flexibility and discretion for example in shaping policies than strictly follow orders from above. This assumption challenges Weber’s ideal type bureaucracy. Weber viewed bureaucracies as being hierarchical and highly specialized, formalistic, and impersonal, leaving no room for personal values that could influence his or her decision. For him, the “special virtue” of this type of organization is that it is “dehumanized” by “eliminating from official business love, hatred, and purely personal irrational, and emotional elements” (...). The rule-bound and top-down controlled bureaucracy is in his eyes the clear opposite to a personalized organization that eventually leads to arbitrary decisions. This legalistic, hierarchical, and elitist model is in principle antithetic to the idea of ‘representative bureaucracy’ because it does not advocate equality and power sharing as it is often the case in the Anglo-Saxon so-called “public interest” models of public organizations.

When debating the notion of ‘representative bureaucracy’, we focus particularly on three key issues: the *functional*, the *power*, and the *symbolic* dimensions of the concept. Students of ‘representative bureaucracy’ in the U.S. have treated all of these issues in one or the other way since the mid-1970s. Without reviewing here the whole literature on representative bureaucracy, we will draw upon this rich body of research to illustrate these three functions of this discourse, which seem to form the core of this debate. The *functional* dimension addresses the impact of the ethnic, cultural etc. composition of society on the composition of the civil service itself and therefore the delivery of public services to the citizens. In the eyes of advocates of representative bureaucracy this is not only about guaranteeing equal rights and access to bureaucracy or skillfully drafting legislation but to gain societal “support for policies” by drawing a “wide segment society into government to convey and merchandise a policy” (Krislov, 1974: 4-5). In contrast to Weber, this position views the “human potentialities” (Krislov, 1974) in their whole variety as a prerequisite for a well performing administration. Good administrative performance in multiethnic environments depends to a great extent on the quality of judgment, information and social skills that bureaucrats bring into the administration. The “immense social advantage”, which Krislov sees, lies in the active representation of societal needs. The problem can be illustrated by the example of policing of white police squads in multiethnic neighborhoods or the recruitment of teachers of foreign origin for specific neighborhoods. That this question is not a theoretical one show the riots and violent protests by young immigrants in the suburbs of Paris in 2005, 2006, and 2007 (Meier/Hawes, 2008). One might therefore ask whether the ethnic composition of the police squad influences their ability to work towards a stable, secure, and calm neighborhood or a better learn environment for students in high school (see Keiser et al., 2002; Meier/Stewart Jr., 1992). The *power* dimension puts the problem of legitimacy on the agenda of the civil services in ethnically fragmented societies. The classical question of students of democratic theory – Who rules and how can people be represented in democratic decision-making and power be shared? - comes here back with its specific focus on bureaucracies. With what kind of procedures and rules do bureaucracies in multicultural societies guarantee a “good bureaucracy” and what does “good bureaucracy” mean in the context of a multicultural society? Do equal opportunities for access to public office really exist? Are entry exams really impartial? The whole problem is about reconciling the “basic principles of

representative government with the powerful roles that unelected civil servants collectively play in the formulation and implementation of public policies” (Dolan/Rosenbloom, 2003: xi). The *symbolic* function is viewed in the passive as well as active promotion of equal opportunity and equality. The civil service may even serve as an example and trigger change in broader society, such as private enterprises, or compensate for inequality and discrimination in other institutions (Krislov, 1974).

These three aspects of the ‘representative bureaucracy’ illustrate nicely the complexity of the theme from an empirical-analytical perspective but bring also into the open the high normative expectations clear that some students of representative bureaucracies attach to this topic.

### **3 Multi-Ethnic Cities: Current Trends and Past Experience**

Urban ethnic diversity is very much a reflection of the nodal functions of cities in today’s globalized culture and economy. Some 80% of all EU-citizens currently live in cities and larger conurbations. More than ever before, cities are populated by a mix of people, they constitute cultural and social life and are focal points of various important social functions such as politics (the organization of living together), investment, trade, education, or the production and diffusion of knowledge. It flows from this that it is only logical to talk of cities as the destinations of globalization, the ‘hubs’ of the “transnational revolution of migration” (Fenton, 2008: 119). In Fenton’s view, this revolutionary trends is even “accelerating, becoming more global, involving more countries as receiver and sender societies” (Fenton, 2008: 119). In this context, cities are those places of constant exchange of goods and services, where demand meets supply, be it of financial investments, of know-how, or of low- and high-skilled labor. As a consequence, cities increasingly serve as geographical locations where major flows of migration tend to converge.

Looking from this vantage point at our sample cities of Zurich, Vienna and Berlin, we can clearly see how the ethnic composition of the population has changed over time, thus turning what used to be more or less homogenous city populations into multicultural mixes of city dwellers working and living together. The following data

scratch only on the surface of those changes as they don't identify the specific type of ethnic origin (as Turkish, Arabic, or Portuguese), but they serve to illustrate the quantitative increase of foreign people living in our sample cities. Besides, we are restricted to data on citizenship or non-citizenship as most cities do not provide data on the ethnic background of people who are naturalized citizens but live in the country as members of the first, second or third generation of foreign descent. Arguably, these percentage figures would be much higher. The case of Germany can serve as an example: In Germany, about 7,3 million foreign residents (8,9% of the total population) don't hold a German passport, whereas no less than 15,1 million (18,4%) people of foreign descent ('mit Migrationshintergrund') live in the country (Bundesamt, 2008: 7). It was only in 2005, when the Federal Office for Statistics (Bundesamt für Statistik) started collecting data referring to 'foreign descent'. Apparently, the data on national citizenship can only be a rough indicator for the ethnic-cultural composition of a society. With regard to the cities under investigation in this paper table no. 1 gives an overview of the relevant population statistics for Berlin and Vienna. As for Zurich, only data on citizenship was available.

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city	total population 2007	non- citizens	in %	people foreign descent	of in %
Berlin <sup>1</sup>	3,35 mill.	470 T	14	863,5 T	25,7
Vienna <sup>2</sup>	1,67 mill.	317,9 T	19	588 T	35,6 [5]

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<sup>1</sup> Berlin-Brandenburg, 2008: 29f.

<sup>2</sup> Austria, 2008.

Zurich <sup>3</sup>	0,359 mill.	115,38 T	30	n.a.	40-45% <sup>4</sup>
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Table no. 1 – citizens and non-citizens in Berlin, Vienna, and Zurich

The three cities differ with regard to the size of their population as well as the share of non-citizens. Berlin counted 3,35 million inhabitants and 0,470 million non-citizens, which is about 14% of the entire population. According to the official statistical data almost twice as many people of foreign descent live in Berlin, which is about one fourth of the total population – an average percentage number that is, however, significantly exceeded in those city boroughs with much higher concentrations of migrants. The Viennese case reports – given its total population of 1,67 million – a sizeable share of 19% non-citizens. The number of people of foreign descent, however, is with a headcount of 588.000 (which translates into 35% of the entire population) significantly higher. As with the case of Berlin, we find in Vienna city neighborhoods and districts that are multi-ethnic hotspots, such as the Wien-Rudolfsheim-Fünfhaus districts with a share of 46% of the district population being of foreign descent. Zurich, though not the capital of Switzerland, is the biggest and economically most important city in the country. With no more than 359.000 inhabitants it is the smallest city in our sample, featuring, however, a relatively high proportion of non-citizens, i.e. roughly one-third of the entire city-population (or 115.000 in absolute terms). A rough estimate can set the level of city residents of foreign descent at a level of 40 or 45%.

In order to put the current statistical snapshot into a longer time perspective, we can also show that the percentage points of city residents of foreign descent have increased in each one of our sample cities since the early 1950s (figure no. 1).

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<sup>3</sup> Zürich, 2008: 23.

<sup>4</sup> Estimated percentage.

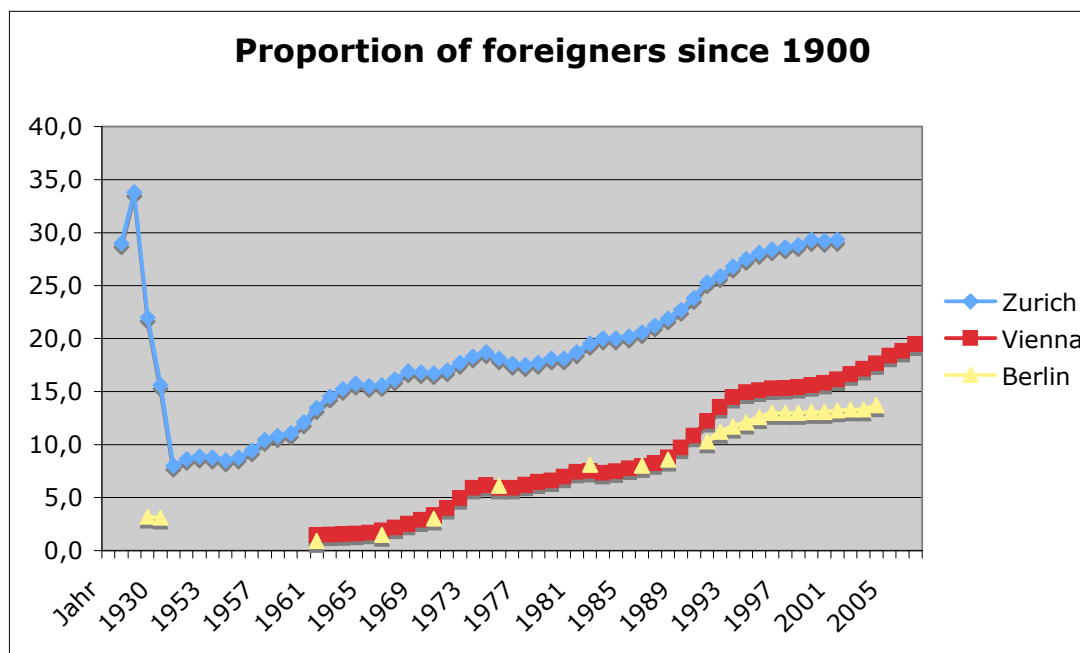


Figure no. 1 – Development of proportion of foreign population in Zurich, Vienna and Berlin

A linear development can be observed over the past five decades: the relevant percentage numbers increased for Zurich from 8,6% in 1951 to 29,3% in 2001, in Vienna from 1,5% in 1961 to 19,4% in 2007 and in Berlin from 0,9% in 1961<sup>5</sup> to 13,7% in 2004.<sup>6</sup> One should be quick to point out, however, that this timeline is confined to postwar figures only. As a matter of fact, the history of multi-ethnic cities is much older. Whereas the percentage level for Zurich in 1951 was set at 8,6%, in 1910 the Swiss metropolis already housed a sizeable minority of 33,8% of foreign citizens within its city limits. This U-shape development – a consequence of two world wars – probably describes also the migration pattern in Berlin and Vienna, although

<sup>5</sup> The figures until 1991 refer only to the situation in Berlin-West. There is no data available about the situation in East-Berlin though one knows that migrants from Vietnam and other countries worked in the German Democratic Republic.

<sup>6</sup> This data presented here compares the proportion of non-citizens. Timeline data on people of foreign descent is not available.

no precise and reliable statistical data are available. Our assumption seems to be corroborated by research findings on the history on migration, showing for most European countries that despite their ideological claims of being a mono-cultural nation states they remained highly diverse in terms of their ethnic and linguistic composition (Hoerder et al., 2007: 42). Drawing on secondary data, one can show that the multi-ethnic Habsburg empire was a center of gravity for major immigration flows (Hahn, 2007: 176f.). As a matter of fact, the population of Vienna grew between 1800 and 1900 from 250.000 to 1,7 million inhabitants. This increase can only be explained with migration from within Austria and from other countries, e.g. Hungary or Italy. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the proportion of migrants in some Austrian regions and cities went up to two-thirds or even three-quarters of the entire population (Hahn, 2007: 177). A similar picture can be drawn for Greater Berlin. The city borough of Charlottenburg was aptly called *Charlottengrad* in the 1920s. Roughly 250.000 Russians migrated to Berlin after the 1917 revolution in Russia and turned Berlin into “the capitol of the Russian book” where these migrants lived an active cultural life as publishers with more than 100 Russian publishers (Schlögel, 2007: 917).

#### **4 Multi-Ethnic Bureaucracies. The Case of Three Central European Cities**

The following section describes how the civil service in the three cities deals with ethnic diversity. First, we tackle the question whether public organizations change their body of public personnel so as to make it more representative of the social and ethnic composition of their city’s population. Secondly, we turn a closer eye to the specific measures and instruments of human resource management applied in this context. What do these responses tell us about the degree and the nature of institutional change in the selected city cases?

Though we can safely say that all three cities are home to a large number of residents with a migration background, we can also observe varying, if not opposing strategies and different rationales of coping with this phenomenon. In order to spell this out more clearly, we turn to a more detailed treatment of institutional responses to the challenge of increased multi-ethnic diversity in our three sample cities.

## 4.1 Zurich

Zurich's population consists of almost 45% of persons with a migration background and the employment of foreigners has played a significant role for the social and economic development ever since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Vuilleumier, 2007). Apart from the high number of foreigners, Switzerland as such is a multiethnic state with French, Italian, Romansh, and German as the four official languages. This makes the case exceptional compared to Berlin and Vienna. Therefore, we need to distinguish for the Swiss case between the old indigenous multi-ethnicity of Swiss citizens and the cultural diversity one of those people working and living in Switzerland without full citizenship. The majority of the Swiss people speak at least two or three of these languages. The Direction of the Swiss Bundesrat from January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2003 (no. 1442) says in more general terms that the district government shall support "multilingualism" and these specific capabilities must then also be considered in the annual employee performance appraisal. This initiative seems to be aimed primarily at Swiss nationals and could be interpreted as a response to more recent tensions between these different language groups (Germann, 1998: 155). Apparently, the source of potential conflict between ethnic groups in countries such as Belgium or Canada, which has led to a longstanding (philosophical) debate about multiculturalism and the *politics of recognition* (Taylor/Gutmann, 1992), can also be traced in the Swiss case of language politics. Germann couches these inherent tensions in rather vague terms of growing state activities and wider economic, cultural, and political developments but also shows that less and less people are able and willing to learn a second language and that the German language seems to become in Swiss federal administration the dominating language. One indicator for him is that the 'flood of paper' has become a burden with regard to the translation into the other languages (Germann, 1998: 155f.). At the same time, the the Swiss civil service seem to respect the proportional representation of official languages, though a slight underrepresentation of French and Italian speaking civil servants is discernable for the highest ranks, whereas German speaking employees are underrepresented in the lower ranks ('Überklassen') (Germann, 1998: 156f.).

The city of Zurich is exceptional in Switzerland in that it collects and makes data available that refer to the number of foreign residents on the city's payroll. Although no timeline is available, the composition of its workforce in 2002 is well-documented. In that year, the city of Zurich employed some 19.283 persons, among them 4.368 people without Swiss citizenship. This contingent of foreign-born and not yet naturalized city employees (22,65% of the total workforce) consists of citizens of no less than 105 nations (Gemeinderat, 2002). Looking at the departments they work for, however, it becomes clear that the majority of foreigners are employed in blue-collar and particularly low paid jobs. For example, 67% of the employees in garbage collection are not of Swiss nationality, and in lower-paid non-professional positions in service areas such as care for the elderly or health services the respective share ranges between 21 and 61%. This pattern of employment is also well illustrated by the table below that disaggregated the number of foreign residents according to their rank or pay scheme (with rank 1 being the lowest and 18 the highest rank):

<i>rank</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>total</i>
1-3	501	1172	1673
4-6	1050	611	1661
7-9	278	574	852
10-12	77	68	145
13-15	20	14	34
16-18	3	0	3
<b>total</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>2439</b>	<b>4368</b>

Table no. 2 - Employees without Swiss nationality according to rank and sex (Gemeinderat, 2002)

The distribution of foreign employees in the Zurich city administration shows that the majority of persons are working on the lowest pay levels. Though relatively few foreign residents are employed in top management positions (so-called 'Kaderpositionen' from rank 7 or 8 upwards), in principal these positions are open for them. With regard to the lowest ranks (1-6), 68.4% of foreigners work there compared to 34.9% of the Swiss nationals, 28.1% work in the ranks 7-12 compared to 47.3%, and in the top ranks one finds only 0.9% of non-Swiss staff compared to 14.3% of Swiss nationals.

## **4.2 Vienna**

The city of Vienna appears to have a clear-cut and well-publicized strategy vis-à-vis the phenomenon of cultural diversity. It heralds with much fanfare the goal of turning the city's workforce into the "mirror image of the population" ("Spiegelbild der Bevölkerung") of Vienna (Bouzek, 2008). How far they have actually gone in implementing this strategy is less clear as explicit policies don't seem to have followed from this political statement yet. The headline of a recent article about the number of migrants in the civil service in the Austrian newspaper "Der Standard" illustrates the problem of transparency quite clearly: "Many faces, few data" (Standard, 2008). Although there seems to be tacit knowledge and anecdotal evidence about the employment patterns of non-citizens in Vienna's city administration – partially reminiscent of the already well-established pattern of employment in predominantly low-paid service jobs - there are no official statistical data available to underpin these findings. One figure that is often cited for the Austrian civil service as a whole is the percentage level of 4% for the share non-citizens employed (www.immigranten.at, 2008). While no specific data on Vienna is available, one finds information about Linz, the third largest Austrian city. With about 190.000 inhabitants it is considerably smaller than Vienna. Some 26% of its population have a migration background, 13,8% are foreign passport holders and approximately 12% are foreign-born, but naturalized Austrian citizens. The city itself gives on its web site

the following numbers: in 2008, 8,9% of the employees in the ‘Magistrat’ – the core administration – had a migration background, 8,3% in the general municipal hospital, and 19,2% in the elderly care centers of the municipality (Linz, 2008). If the figures are as high or even higher in Vienna is difficult to say but as the city of Vienna runs the same institutions as Linz does and even on a larger scale one can assume that the number of employees in these areas – quite similar to Zurich – is probably around 10-12%. The police authority of Vienna reports that it employs about 5.000 people among them only 1% (or 50 individuals) of foreign descent.

### **4.3 Berlin**

Berlin too has taken the decision for a new multicultural coat of paint for its public workforce and presents this as a kind of image campaign though with real consequences as least in the area of vocational training. With regard to the question of ethnic background, Berlin explicitly states since the reform of its ‘Verwaltungsreform-Grundsätze-Gesetz’ – Principles of Administrative Reform Law – in December 2005 that “intercultural competencies” must be considered when hiring a person. One of the institutions that have explicitly tried to attract young migrants is the police force. The Police Authority of Berlin has introduced changes with regard to the German language skills that are necessary for entering the Police service. For example, a less than adequate knowledge of the German language can now be compensated by proficiency in other languages. External communication seems to form a core-component of the strategy of the Berlin Senate to bring young members of ethnic minorities into the body of public personnel. The main initiative in the city of Berlin can be seen in the set-up and support of the organization BQN in 1995, which runs the campaign “Berlin needs you!”, trying to make the civil service more attractive for young people with migration background. With regard to the number of foreigners starting a vocational training program in the administration of Berlin, one has to report that in 2003 the proportion was as low as 1.2%. Since then the number of foreigners being recruited to these programs has increased continuously. In 2006, 668 places for vocational training were offered and 58 (8,6%) foreigners were among the apprentices, one year later 688 places were available and 91 (13,2%) non-citizens joined the group. There is no equal distribution of the

trainees on the different administrative departments or districts. Those districts with a traditionally high percentage number of foreign population, e.g. Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Reinickendorf or Neukölln, offer more than 35% of their places to non-Germans, the Berlin Senate Department of the Interior (Senatsverwaltung für Inneres) leads the group of departments with 24%, and the police department aims at recruiting 10% of its staff from the group of non-Germans ((BQN), 2007; Ludwig/Vogel, 2005/06).

With regard to the overall picture of people with a migration background in the Berlin civil service, the empirical evidence does not allow us to draw conclusions about the number of foreign employees, but estimates show that the percentage of non-German employees in the entire civil service in Germany is not much higher than 2%. One methodological problem is that the personnel units are not allowed to collect data on this characteristic for reasons of anti-discrimination. Nevertheless, there exist some indicators, which we will refer to: According to the Ministry of the Interior of the State of Hessen, its workforce (including police officers) consists of roughly 152.000 persons, among them 3.081 persons of a foreign nationality. This is a proportion of 2%, whereas the percentage of foreigners living in this state is about 12% high (Landtag, 2007). One could estimate that in cities such as Berlin the respective percentage number is higher but no evidence for this hypothesis exists. Nevertheless, cities such as Berlin manage not only large infrastructure projects, they run among many other services also refuse collection, garbage incineration, hospital and elderly care services. Zurich and Linz employ in these areas the largest number of employees with a migration background. One assumption would be that the grey figure of employees with a migration background is much higher than the 2% given above.

On the basis of the available data one can conclude that the number of foreigners employed in the city of Berlin seems to be rather low compared to Zurich but that the number of young non-German people joining the civil service has recently increased. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the real figure is much higher in Vienna and Berlin especially in lower paid service functions.

#### **4.4 Institutional Change and the Opening-Up of the Civil Service**

As we are interested in how cities adapt their personnel systems in order to cope with the challenges emerging from multi-ethnic societies and what rationales underscore these adaptive processes, we now take a closer look at the ongoing institutional changes in local public personnel systems. In doing so, we may be able to identify the tipping point from a mere *passive or reactive* mode of opening-up local personnel systems to a more *proactive* mode of recruitment and personnel selection in line with the notion of a representative bureaucracy.

Any institutional analysis has to tackle questions like these: What do we mean by ‘institutional change’, how can it be recognized, and is it a revolutionary or evolutionary process (Campbell, 2004: ch. 2)? To be sure, answers to these questions are highly contested and tend to differ significantly depending on the author’s loyalty to the various schools of thought in institutional theory (cf. DiMaggio/Powell, 1991; Hall/Taylor, 1996; Immergut, 1998; March/Olsen, 1989; Scott, 2001; Selznick, 1948; Stinchcombe, 1997; Katznelson/Weingast, 2005; Scharpf, 2000; Pierson, 2000). Bearing in mind that we are moving on thin ice, we follow Scott in conceiving institutions as “multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources” (Scott, 2001: 49). According to this understanding, institutions have a formal as well as informal dimension. Important ingredients are rules, norms, and cultural beliefs but this understanding encompasses also material resources as well as behavior. Furthermore, they are resistant to change, transmitted across generations, maintained and reproduced, and that institutions consists of different pillars – regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive (Scott, 2001: ch. 3). The *regulative* pillar concerns those processes and structures that are designed to constrain and regularize behavior, which is rule-setting, monitoring, and sanctioning. They are considered to be the most conscious aspects of institutions. The *normative* pillar emphasizes the prescriptive dimension of social life, which relates to norms and values. Norms and values define what is desirable and what not, define goals, e.g. tolerance towards difference or making profit, and prescribe legitimate or appropriate means to pursue specific goals. Normative systems constrain behavior, but they can also be seen as an empowerment to act in a specific way. As action is

social insofar as actors attach meaning to behavior, the *cultural-cognitive* pillar looks at factors that shape the meaning being attributed to objects and action. Symbols, gestures, words, or signs are therefore considered to be central elements of institutions. They are the basis of the unconscious, culturally formed, and taken-for-granted assumptions about reality. These pillars are not mutually exclusive but can be considered to be three relevant elements on a continuum moving from “the conscious to the unconscious, from the legally enforced to the taken for granted (Hoffmann, 1997: 36 cited in Scott, 2001: 51). Together they form an integrated conception of what institutions are and allow a differentiated analysis of institutions as well as institutional change.

For the purpose of tracing institutional change, we decided to operationalize the first ‘regulative pillar’ by looking at the changes occurring with regard to the legal conditions of opening as well as the structure & process of recruiting personnel. The ‘normative pillar’ will be represented by the self-description of the city governments, which is often illustrated in their mission statements but also in the way information are communicated to the public. The ‘cultural-cognitive pillar’ will be operationalized by looking at the existence of education and training programs that have diversity management as a core theme. The more we move from the ‘regulative pillar’ towards the cultural-cognitive pillar on the continuum, the more difficult it becomes to actually trace causal relationships (Stinchcombe, 1997). During that phase of our research we can therefore only detect the existence of certain measures without being actually able to trace the impact on the behavior of the people in the organizations we are doing research in. Nevertheless, it still allows us to trace institutional change within the organizations in a highly differentiated manner. Further steps in the research process will need to draw on multi-method approaches, which combine interpretative as well as qualitative strategies of empirical research (see Campbell, 2004).

The following section identifies some key issues in institutional change and compares them across our sample cities (table no. 3): (1) Does local government have a mission statement of multiculturalism for its body of personnel?, (2) Does a legal-normative framework exist to promote representative bureaucracies, such as quotas for foreign-born employees or ‘affirmative action’ programs?, (3) Do cities have specific

recruitment strategies in place for people with a migration background, and (4) Do cities implement specific training schemes for their employees to be able to better deal with diversity.

	<i>mission statement multicultural civil service</i>	<i>legal-normative framework</i>	<i>recruitment strategies</i>	<i>diversity trainings</i>
Zurich	yes	no	no	yes
Vienna	yes	no	no	yes
Berlin	yes	no	yes	no

Table no. 3 - comparing aspects of institutionalizing diversity

All cities define the aim of having a multicultural local government service. The exact definition of that goal, however, differs significantly. Zurich already has a multi-ethnic body of personnel due to the characteristics of the Swiss nation and the high number of foreigners working in their ranks. As for Berlin and Vienna, quite different pictures open up as both city governments convey the message that they aim at integrating individuals with a migration background into the local government services. In this respect, Vienna’s official mission statement of turning local authorities into a “mirror image” of the city’s population probably closest to the ideal-typical notion of a representative bureaucracy ideal while the city government of Zurich represents a more passive approach as its own multi-cultural outlook is more a function of multi-ethnic Swiss society and of mere labor market necessities than a proactive quest for diversity in the public sector.

Labor laws in all selected city and country cases stipulate indiscriminatory access to public office - regardless of sex, race or social background - and in none of the countries we find evidence of quotas for people with a migration background. (As for the related issue of gender mainstreaming, however, there have been debates as to

whether affirmative action programs should be implemented to grant women a privileged access to certain positions in order to fight their apparent under-representation. By the same token, disabled job candidates, if equally qualified as their competitors, are legally entitled to preferential treatment).

Among the three cities only Berlin explicitly seeks to recruit persons for the specific reason that they are of foreign origin. Although the police force in Vienna have done so, too, we do not see an institutionalized strategy in this case. Despite the fact that in Zurich about one fifth of the staff are foreigners there does not exist an institutionalized strategy to recruit people of foreign descent. Job advertisements are published only in German and there isn't any form of 'affirmative action' for migrants. While an administrative unit has been established to deal with the broader topic of "integration", its main task is not to increase diversity within the ranks of the administration. Initiatives emerging from that unit to put the issue of "public diversity management" on the agenda of city's internal management policies have not yet fallen in fertile ground in Zurich's city government.

As for training programs, the overall picture leaves much to be desired as there appear to be only rudimentary schemes to educate city employees about diversity-related challenges and possible solutions. In addition to general language training, Zurich's city government offers workshops for managers who have to deal with an ethnically diverse workforce. Vienna offers also language courses, but they primarily cater to 'street level bureaucrats' who interact with specific ethnic minorities on a regular basis. Berlin's initiatives are conspicuously silent on that front, even though the city appears to be particularly active in recruiting individuals with a migration background.

Against the background of this typology, we can show that *institutional change* happens in all three cities in the 'normative pillar' as they all have changed their mission statements recently. This move has first of all symbolical implications. With regard to the 'regulatory pillar', we find only in Berlin changes specifically geared toward the recruitment regime employed. The third component of an institution refers to the 'cultural-cognitive pillar' and we argued that this can be recognized for example by the introduction of diversity management training courses. Here we see

that Vienna and Zurich are very active in promoting these courses, whereas Berlin does not offer them.

We conclude from this that the *passive way of opening-up the administrative ranks to a more culturally diverse workforce* is still the dominant approach. This might change (rapidly) within the next years as we observe a more vibrant discourse within in the administration as well as among organized interest groups, and politicians about developing strategies to integrate migrants into local government services more actively. This more recent development leads us to a more in-depth discussion of the driving motives and basic rationales behind the ‘diversity debate’.

#### **4.5 Why Making Local Government Services More Diverse? The Rationales Behind the Debate**

Any local government service’s trajectory towards a more representative bureaucracy can be shaped by a series of independent variables: Political pressure, most likely in the form of organized interests representing immigrants or home-grown ethnic minorities, comes to mind as an effective motor of increased public sector diversity; legal provisions enacted by higher levels of government (i.e. national or EU-legislators) such as anti-discrimination laws or quota system may also prompt reform steps in that direction. In other cases, public sector diversity programs may come along as a spill-over from other national or regional policy initiatives, if, for example, local employers are expected to add their fair share to more broadly-defined ‘integration policies’ or to fight high unemployment rates among young immigrants. This spill-over effect can further be amplified by newly-emerging professional standards among local government politicians and officials across national boundaries (European-wide networks of cities are cases in point) that increasingly shift attention towards issues of multi-culturalism and diversity. In broader political terms, a move towards representativeness in city government may send a symbolic message to current city dwellers to increase of the acceptance and legitimacy of local politics, but also to businesses and individuals abroad to make the city more attractive for international investment. In this respect, an increase in globalized economic competition and / or deepened and widened European integration can also be

considered as energizers of the ‘diversity’ debate. More fundamentally still, the shift away from homogenous and organic conceptions of state and society towards a pluralistic understanding of life styles and a greater recognition of group rights (‘politics of recognition’) furthers a wider acceptance of the notion of representative bureaucracies.

Against this background, we argue that there are two dominant rationalities for ‘opening-up’ local government services and making them more accessible for people with a migration background: one way of reasoning about diversity is driven by functional requirements and operational needs of public sector organizations, another way of arguing of cultural representativeness revolves in To be sure, in reality these rationalities often mix and overlap but analytically these are two distinctive categories. A first and foremost *functionality*-driven strategy suggests that trends towards more ethnic diversity – or the lack of them – simply reflect the match or mismatch between staffing needs of an organization and the quantity and quality of available labor at any given time. In turn, we can distinguish between reactive and proactive variants of this functional explanation. As for the former, we can draw on insights developed by ‘old institutionalists’ such as Selznick or Stinchcombe in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s -- which have almost been forgotten in the meantime – that any organization has “basic needs”, which are essentially related to the self-maintenance of it, such as “integrity” or “continuity” (Selznick, 1948: 29). A functional reason for recruiting personnel would solely look at the internal operational *needs* of the organization, which can of course also be intercultural competencies or the command of several languages. These needs are rationally determined by their function in the administrative production process and influenced by factors such as the labor market. Accordingly, a tendency towards an ethnically and culturally diverse workforce can even be seen as an accidental side-effect of certain labor market necessities. From this vantage point, local government employers show no regard for the ethnic, linguistic or cultural background of applicants, but purely seek to fill staff positions according to their established operational job requirements. A passive or reactive stance on diversity issues like this might in fact, although not intended, lead to an sizeable influx of foreign-born employees, particularly at the lower end of the pay-scales (where employment is least attractive for the established middle classes – that serve as the archetypical talent pool for public sector employment) and specific top-paid

expert positions (where demand can often not be met by supply from the local labor market). In contrast, a more proactive strategy towards ethnic or linguistic diversity in public organizations values the contribution that new entrants make to the performance of the organization specifically based on their cultural background. While the underlying rationale is still entirely based on the functional and operational needs of the organization, a proactive stance on diversity recognizes the value of having a multi-cultural staff ‘on board’ in order to improve their organizational performance.

Another perspective opens up, if we consider motives and reasons for change that are based on *normative or political* considerations. As a matter of fact, more recent experience has shown a certain politicization of the whole issue and therefore also a stronger role of external actors pressing towards an opening-up of the civil service. Typically, factors grouped into this category are not necessarily inherent to the functioning of the organization, but externally driven, for example by coalitions of representatives of minority groups, political parties, NGOs, or so-called ‘integration commissioners’. They have a primarily political dimension as they infuse non-managerial norms, values, and interests into the decision-making process. Political and normative considerations find their common focal point when the argument in favor of representative bureaucracies follows the discourse of the ‘politics of identity’ or ‘politics of recognition’ debate. In this (philosophical) line of thought, the inclusion of cultural minorities is not contingent on functional necessities or politically opportunistic behavior. Rather, the concept of representative bureaucracies is a manifestation of minority rights that exist *per se*. It flows from this that there is also a politically powerful symbolic meaning attached to those pressures to open-up public sector organizations as working for “government” can be interpreted as a particularly strong signal of a more successful integration of minority groups into statehood and the majority society. As with many political and administrative power-sharing arrangements, for example in cases of ethno-federalist systems or consociational democracies, the inclusion of cultural minorities is believed to increase system trust and overall legitimacy of politico-administrative institutions. From a different angle, of course, the interest of minority groups to be represented in official positions can also be seen in the light of rent-seeking (Krueger, 1974) or as a struggle for collective goods provided by government and being able to influence, change, or get

them (Wimmer, 1997). Admittedly, there might also be a considerable degree of potential overlap between political considerations and what we earlier coined as organizational-functional requirements. In particular, it could be argued that the quest to enhance system trust and overall legitimacy through measures towards representative bureaucracies falls into the category of functionally-defined rationales as they are also concerned with improved administrative performance. And yet, we find that the distinction between overall ‘system performance’ – as with the normative-political rationale – and functional requirements at the level of individual organizations is heuristically meaning- and useful.

Referring to the above categories, the city government of Zurich pursued passively a functional strategy vis-à-vis the employment of non-citizens or foreign-born staff. Clearly, the high percentage of non-Swiss nationals in their ranks is reflection of the traditional shortage of highly qualified experts as well as unskilled workers on the Swiss labor market. With a relatively small national working population, the growing industrial and service sectors in addition to rising living standards of Swiss citizens, the dependence on migrant workers in both the private as well as public sectors has also grown (Vuilleumier, 2007). Similarly, functional reasoning like this can also help to explain the sizeable share of ethnic minorities and / or non-citizens in the poorly paid segments of local government services in Berlin and Vienna. It was mainly unskilled labor from migrant workers that kept those ‘blue collar’ jobs filled. More proactive strategies, still based on perceived organizational needs, however, can also be observed in our city samples. This needs-driven explanation captures, for example, initiatives of the Berlin police authority and fire department to recruit more members of ethnic minorities into their ranks. As these new entrants can also be considered to fulfill a kind of expert function due to their language skills and knowledge of specific cultural communities, a functional *needs-driven* explanation seems to be appropriate. We can safely assume that similar initiatives are also under way in administrative departments that deal with social services, health matters or education policies.

In other cases, however, the rational-functional logic seems to be augmented if not sidelined by normative and political considerations. On the one hand there seem to be *symbolic* reasons that made the Senate of Berlin cooperate with minority group representatives to push this issue of actively opening the civil service for immigrants.

Figures show that the unemployment rate of young migrants is significantly higher than the one of young German adults. It can also be shown that the share of apprentices with a migration background in Berlin's private and public employments sectors dropped from 8,8% in 1993 to 4,8% in 2003. Only 1,2% of all vocational training positions in Berlin's public administration were filled by young Berliners with a foreign passport (Ludwig/Vogel, 2005/06). At the same time, the concern about ethnic minorities forming "parallel societies" has given rise to heated public debates on how to improve their integration into majority society. In this context, representatives of minorities groups argued for – in tune with political office holders – that public sector employers have to offer more job opportunities to members of this target group. It can therefore be seen as a predominantly externally driven development. Vienna's mission statement of having a 'multicultural administration' mirroring the city's ethnic composition has prompted little in the way of concrete recruitment programs, but is – as a prime example of symbolic politics – meant to appeal to a wider audience in- and outside the city limits. While policy shifts towards multi-culturalism have received high media coverage in Berlin and Vienna, Zurich's city government has kept a relatively low profile in its public relation efforts. Apparently, city managers in Zurich have successfully managed to keep 'external' rationalities out of their managerial-functional logic of public sector recruiting.

To sum up, we observe a timid transformation from a *passive* way of recruiting migrants to a more *active* strategy which means that migrants are increasingly being recruited for having specific intercultural competencies such as language skills or group knowledge. The 'passive opening' happens without a reflection of who is being recruited as positions must be filled and the labor market restricts available choices. In this case the administration hires migrants not for their 'multicultural background' but for their availability and eventually price. This seems to be applicable to what has happened during the past 30 years especially in 'blue collar' functions. The 'active opening' describes a personnel recruitment of personnel with a migration background on the ground of a specific institutionalized policy, reflection, or idea. Here the organization wants to gain from the specific qualification, e.g. language skills, knowledge of culture, region, or group, of a candidate and develops an institutionalized strategy to hire these persons.

## **5 In Conclusion: Where Do We Go From Here?**

This paper set out claiming that while European cities grow more and more heterogeneous as far as their ethnic, religious and linguistic population mix is concerned, public sector organizations serving these communities come increasingly under pressure to change their personnel policies and human resource management strategies accordingly. In a comparative case study of three cities – Berlin, Vienna, and Zurich – we investigated the ‘opening-up’-thesis by trying to show how diverse local government services actually are and what institutional means are employed to increase the cultural diversity in public sector organizations. Subsequently, we have identified analytically distinct, though empirically overlapping rationales that underscore the process of making local government bureaucracies more representative. Broadly sketched, there is a discernible need-driven rationality of organizational leaders behind recruiting immigrants, which, however, is supplemented if not trumped by a more political-symbolic rationality.

It can be shown that European city administrations are to some extent already “multiethnic” and that diversity is therefore a fact of daily life. However, this finding is highly rank-related and sector-specific. Local government services tend to be more open than commonly assumed as they employ a large number of migrants, but most frequently in positions that don’t enjoy any decision-making discretion and that are generally considered as ‘blue collar’ low-paid services (see also van der Meer/Roborgh, 1996). One could therefore argue that the city governments investigated here are still far away from being a ‘representative bureaucracy’ that actively encourages a cultural-ethnic composition in all its ranks and organizational functions in order to mirror the ethnic composition of its community (Meier, 1975). In regard to lower-ranking positions in auxiliary functions of the core administration, multi-culturalism is basically a function of labor market necessities without any concern for the ethnic and / or linguistic background of employees. More recently, however, this passive approach seems to have given way to a more proactive strategy of recruiting members of ethnic minorities into public sector organizations. Also, functional requirements based on organizational needs have increasingly been corroborated by normative and political considerations that tend to recognize the need

for political representation of minority groups in public administration for reasons of societal stability and overall system legitimacy and trust. We don't find it coincidental that these developments are most visible at the local government level and / or in policy sectors that are most affected by recent social changes.

Our insights into the administrative reality of ethnic and cultural diversity in public bureaucracies are primarily informed by anecdotal evidence, self-assessments of public organizations and very sketchy official statistics. This shaky empirical base has to be broadened and consolidated by more in-depth quantitative and qualitative empirical analyses that not only shed more light on the actual representation of minorities in the ranks of public sector organizations, but also looks more closely at the underlying motives and rationales of moving or not moving towards cultural representativeness in the public sector. Whether this call for intensified research in this area will fall on fertile ground, however, is highly debatable as neither the theoretical aspects nor the empirical testing of the notion of representative bureaucracies have attracted too much attention by European students of public administration (whereas this issue has received much currency among private and public sector management experts alike in countries like the US and Canada (see van der Meer / Roborgh, 1996). And yet, there seem to be a number of push and pull factors that might trigger more research activities in the future: the quickly rising demand for highly qualified administrators in knowledge-based societies, an overall aging workforce, the growing competition between private and public employers for the best graduates of ever smaller age cohorts are only few pointers into that direction. More importantly, the global flows of migration – coupled with intensified European integration, home-grown ethnic minorities in European countries and the heightened political and social tensions resulting from it – are likely to catapult the question of making local and national public sector workforces more culturally diverse to a top position on the political and administrative reform agenda.

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