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Construction and Import of Ethnic Categorisations: "Allochthones" in The Netherlands and Belgium

Dirk Jacobs and Andrea Rea

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Dirk Jacobs and Andrea Rea, *Université Libre de Bruxelles*

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Summary

Schematically one can distinguish two traditions related to ethnic statistics in Europe. In France, Germany and most southern European countries, the dominant statistical categorisations merely distinguish individuals on the basis of their nationality. In contrast, most northern European countries have been producing data on the ethnic and/or foreign origin of their populations. Belgium is caught somewhere in between these two traditions. The French speaking part of Belgium tends to follow the French tradition of refusing ethnic categorisation, while the Flemish (the Dutch speaking part) try to copy the Dutch model in distinguishing "allochthones" and "autochthones". This contribution wants to offer an analysis of the construction of ethnic categories as it has been undertaken in the Dutch context. It equally wants to shed light on how the category of "allochthones" has been (partially) imported into the Belgian context and what the consequences are.

Keywords: Ethnic Categorisation, Statistics, "Allochthones", the Netherlands, Belgium

JEL Classification: B40

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Address for correspondence:

Dirk Jacobs
Institut de Sociologie - GERME – ULB
Université Libre de Bruxelles
CP 124
44 avenue Jeanne
1050 Bruxelles
Belgium
E-mail: dijacobs@ulb.ac.be

CONSTRUCTION AND IMPORT OF ETHNIC CATEGORISATIONS: "ALLOCHTHONES" IN THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM

Dirk JACOBS & Andrea REA
(Université Libre de Bruxelles)

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Introduction

In all European states the classification and counting of nationals and foreigners is regarded to be a legitimate endeavour. When examining migration and international mobility, nationality is often regarded to be the most appropriate criterion for distinction. In the member states of the European Union the category of 'EU citizen' has become sort of an intermediary category in between the 'national citizen' on the one hand and the 'genuine foreigner' on the other hand. Indeed, in a growing number of policy matters the process of *Europeanisation* has lead to equal rights for residents from other EU member states, to which other foreigners are not necessarily entitled. As a result, in all kinds of official statistics increasingly the distinction is being made between 'EU citizens' on the one hand and 'third country nationals' (inhabitants who do not hold the nationality of one of the EU Member States) on the other hand.

In contrast, counting and classifying individuals on the basis of their ethnic origin is to a far lesser degree seen to be acceptable in continental Europe, while it is a standard operating procedure in the United States, Canada and Brazil. In the latter countries interethnic relations are judged to have as much importance and relevance as gender or class relations. Official statistics routinely distinguishes races and this does not provoke large scale criticism. Indeed, in recent years, the statistical construction of ethnic and racial groups in the US has only provoked a debate with the possible introduction of the category of a 'mixed race' in the 2000 Census (Amaro et Zambrana, 2000; Krieger, 2000; Lee, 1993; Nobles, 2000; Riche, 1999; Sondik *et ali*, 2000; Waters, 2000; Williams et Jackson, 2000).

In continental Europe, ethnic classifications often have no comparable institutional or statistical translation, although they are very currently being used in day to day life. One could argue in favour of such classifications as tools to measure ethnic and racial discrimination. Moreover, targeted groups might mobilise them in order to defend their interests in policies of redistribution of social goods (jobs, housing, etc.). However, the possibility of using such categorisations to tackle discrimination apparently does not provide sufficient justification for the construction of ethnic categories in official statistics. The misfit between the vastness of the debate, particularly in France, which is triggered by the mere possibility of constructing ethnic categories in statistics (see for an overview: Spire et Merllié, 1998 ; Blum, 2002) on the one hand and the limited number of studies pertaining to the actual possibilities of operationalisation of ethnicity on the other hand (Bulmer, 1996 ; Simon, 1997, 1998; Aspinall, 2002; Lie, 2002) attests to the strong political dimension of the matter. The political passions which feed the scientific debate strongly demonstrate that the definition of statistical categories on ethnicity and race is not merely a technical matter. The construction of these categories is influenced by ideologies, visions about nations and visions about interrelations between social groups. An additional element which further complicates the debate is that they are also performative: the use of ethnic categories reinforces the ethnicisation of society. Once they are socially constructed, these categories gain their own life.

Schematically one can distinguish two traditions related to ethnic statistics in Europe. In France, Germany and most southern European countries, the dominant statistical categorisations

merely distinguish individuals on the basis of their nationality. It basically boils down to a limitation to two categories: the national and the foreigner. Often an additional distinction is made among the foreign population between those coming from other EU-member states and those who don't. With the introduction of the category 'immigrant population' (INSEE, 1999), France has tried to make the demographic contribution of immigration to its population visible without however distinguishing ethnic groups. In contrast, most northern European countries have been producing data on the ethnic and/or foreign origin of their populations. The UK has for instance a system of self-identification of ethnicity, while the Netherlands try to objectively count its population of foreign origin (regardless whether they hold Dutch nationality or not) on the basis of country of birth of the parents of its residents. The Dutch have adopted the category of "allochthones" to label the ethnic or foreign origin of segments of its population and can make distinctions with regard to countries of origin. This category, at first mainly statistical, has gradually become adopted in ordinary language as a particular social category with a number of specific connotations.

Belgium is caught somewhere in between these two traditions. The French speaking part of Belgium tends to follow the French tradition of refusing ethnic categorisation, while the Flemish (the Dutch speaking part) try to copy the Dutch model in distinguishing "allochthones" and "autochthones". In Flanders, as in the Netherlands, the term "allochthone" is widely used in academic, political and institutional circles (as in the press) to refer to immigrant origin – mainly non-EU origin - inhabitants. This difference in conceptualisation within one and the same state has not lead the federal Belgian state – which is still in charge of a lot of statistical production – to produce data on the number of "allochthones" on the national level.

This contribution wants to offer an analysis of the construction of ethnic categories as it has been undertaken in the Dutch context. It equally wants to shed light on how the category of "allochthones" has been (partially) imported into the Belgian context. Given the fact that the designation of ethnic groups is, on the one hand, linked to ordinary and institutional categorisations (and related interests) and is linked, on the other hand, to policy developments related to the issue of integration of immigrants and their offspring, we try to investigate the rise and use of ethnic categories in Belgium and the Netherlands looked at from both angles.

Minorities policy in the Netherlands[1]

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the Netherlands have attracted considerable numbers of foreign workers to alleviate the shortage in workforce in a number of sectors of the labour market. When they stopped actively recruiting foreign workers in the mid 1970s and installed a more severe immigration regime, the migratory influx nevertheless continued due to the policy of family reunification and the – although increasingly reluctant – admittance of political refugees. At the same time, a large number of 'new Dutch' people, originating from the former colony of Surinam, from the overseas Dutch territory Aruba or from the Dutch Antilles, equally immigrated towards the continental territory.

In the late 1970s, Dutch politicians and administrators began to recognize the fact that large groups of foreign residents would remain part of Dutch society and acknowledged the position and integration of ex-colonial inhabitants in the Netherlands as a policy issue. It was assessed that certain groups of foreign residents and ex-colonial inhabitants were held back in different areas of society, and agreement grew that something should be done about this. Plans were made to implement an integrated policy concerning ethnic minorities (both guestworkers and state-citizens form overseas areas). In the development of such an integrated policy, the report *Ethnische Minderheden* (WRR, 1979), written by Rinus Penninx on behalf of the academic

[1] For a more thorough and detailed overview of the development of Dutch policy with regard to ethnic minorities, see Fermin (1997) and Rijkschroeff, Duyvendak & Pels (2003).

advisory body for the government, was very influential. The document stressed the objectives to fight against arrears and exclusion of (particular groups of) immigrants and people of foreign origin on the one hand, and to stimulate the idea of a tolerant, multicultural society on the other hand (Vermeulen & Penninx, 1994). Led by these ideas, plans were made by the government to improve the position of foreign residents by means of a more or less coordinated incorporation policy, the so-called *Minderhedenbeleid*.

This "minorities policy", which was set up in 1983, explicitly aimed at emancipation of officially defined categories of ethnic minorities, with the objective of elevating the 'ethnicized' groups to equal social status with the indigenous groups in Dutch society, while at the same time propagating the ideal of a multicultural society (Entzinger, 1993). It would be mistaken to underestimate the importance of pragmatic motives in the development of this policy: a main concern of the Dutch political establishment was to keep control over the 'foreign factor' in society (Jacobs, 1998). There is hardly any doubt that the terrorist attacks by the Moluccan minority in the second half of the 1970s, which the government had been neglecting for years, were important in creating a political consensus on the importance of immigrant integration and the option for a multicultural (group based) minorities policy. In addition, there were the informal agreements between the traditional parties to polarize as less as possible on the immigrant issue and thus isolate the extreme-right wing parties. This back stage agreement also helped to establish a coordinated policy in the domain of integration.

In the governmental discourse, the notion of "ethnic minority" did not completely correspond to the category of 'immigrant' neither to 'person of foreign origin'. The official document stipulated that the ethnic minorities policy limited itself to those immigrants "for whom the presence is seen by the authorities as being their special responsibility (due to the colonial past or because they have been recruited by the authorities) and who find themselves in a minority situation" (Minderhedennota, 1983: 12). The minorities policy thus concerns on the one hand the Surinamese, Antillians, Arubans and Moluccans (and their offspring) and, on the other hand, the Moroccans, Turks and other guestworkers from the Mediterranean area (Italians, Spanish, Greeks and (ex-)Yougoslaves) and their offspring. A foreign origin group is only considered to be an ethnic minority group if one judges that the group is structurally trapped in a disadvantageous socio-economic position (Entzinger, 1993). As a result, gypsies and asylum seekers have equally become to be considered as part of the ethnic minorities, but other groups as foreigners coming from neighbouring countries (Belgium and Germany) have not been defined as such. It is interesting to note that the Chinese have for a long time equally not been recognized as being an ethnic minority (as a policy category). In sum, the category of ethnic minority was defined in a way cumulating both the social situation as criteria of foreignness.

The main axes of the minorities policy are the development of a multicultural society and the emancipation of ethnic communities, the promotion of legal equality and the improvement of the socio-economic position of ethnic minorities. The first element, the creation of a multicultural society, puts the stress on groups rather than on individuals (Entzinger, 1993: 406). One aspect entails the support for the creation of ethnic organisations. Such organisations, which can organize activities ranging from sports to culture, can benefit public subventions. Representatives of the main organisations are members of consultative bodies for ethnic minorities (both at the local, regional and national level) which are consulted by political institutes on any kind of policy which is of concern to them.

The second element of the « minorities policy » entails the improvement of the situation of foreigners in the legal domain, amongst other measures by liberalising the procedure to obtain Dutch citizenship. Since 1953, the Netherlands had known the principle of double *ius soli* according to which people born on the national territory from parents who were themselves born on the national territory, automatically gain Dutch citizenship. The principle of *ius soli* was strengthened in 1984 when the possibility was given to the second generation of immigrants to acquire Dutch nationality through a simple declaration. Every foreigner between 18 and 25 years

old, being born in the Netherlands, could acquire Dutch citizenship through an administrative procedure. At the same time, the procedure for naturalisation was modified in order to make it swifter and more attractive. In addition, the government tried to diminish as much as possible the differences in legal status between nationals and foreigners, amongst other things by granting in 1985 local voting rights to non-nationals (Jacobs, 1998).

Finally, the third element of the "minorities policy" entails the improvement of the socio-economic position of ethnic minorities, which should become equivalent to the position of that segment of the majority group which has a comparable level of education. On this point, the success has been rather limited, as has been confirmed in the report "*allochtonenbeleid*" (1989) at the end of the 1980s, by Entzinger (1993) in the early 1990s and by the team of Duyvendak ten years later (Rijkschroeff, Duyvendak & Pels, 2003). Nevertheless, a number of observations should be made. In the field of social housing, the non-discriminatory system of redistribution has considerable limited the differences between ethnic minority groups and majority groups of the same socio-economic status. In the fields of education and access to the labour market, however, the situation is less positive, regardless of some improvements. People of foreign origin are much more often the victim of unemployment and need to benefit much more frequently from social security. There are equally considerable arrears in the field of education. For some (Koopmans, 2002) this failure demonstrates the inherent mistakenness of the "minorities policy" and the multicultural model, while others (Rijkschroeff, Duyvendak, Pels, 2003 ; Jacobs, 2003) rather think it attests to the insufficient enforcement of the policy by the state to achieve its objectives.

In the course of the 1990s the policy has been reoriented and has become somewhat more severe. The stress has moved from policy for groups towards policy for individuals. Without in practice totally abolishing the group dimension in "minorities policy" – from 1994 onwards interchangeably also called the "integration policy" [2]-, consecutive governments have taken distance of the multicultural discourse and have been opting for a more integrationist, even assimilationist, frame of reference. A so-called citizenship policy ("*inburgeringsbeleid*") was created in which newcomers are obliged to take Dutch language courses, courses on the organisation of Dutch society and attend sessions of labour market orientation. Nevertheless, this more individually oriented policy has not (yet) replaced the "minorities policy". It rather added a new layer, with more stringent stress on assimilation for newcomers.

In the period following the success of populist politician Pim Fortuyn (2002) and the murder of Théo Van Gogh (2004) by a Muslim-radical, the Dutch discursive climate has clearly – one can even say: in spectacular way – become quite hostile towards ethnic minorities, especially when of Islamic faith. One can thus hardly rule out that the Netherlands would one day strike its multicultural policy and completely opt for a more restrictive and individually oriented assimilationist policy[3]. For the time being, however, the Netherlands still have a hybrid model.

The 'allochthonous' population of the Netherlands

In the course of the 1990s significant numbers of foreigners have obtained Dutch nationality through either the option procedure or the naturalisation procedure. In the Netherlands, this does today not cause these persons to disappear from official figures, since they remain visible as being part of a specific group of nationals of foreign origin. In the Netherlands there is no taboo to monitor and keep track of foreign origin, to the extent that this has been seen to constitute a

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[2] The change was triggered by the government document *Contourennota Integratiebeleid Etnische Minderheden* (1994). It is consultable at the following web location: http://www.justitie.nl/Images/contourennota_tcm74-38867.pdf [accessed 15/01/06]

[3] Minister Rita Verdonk of the right-wing government Balkenende-II has been outspokenly pushing in this direction.

problem in countries as France and Belgium. Statistics not only differentiate according to nationality but equally with regard to (some form of) ethnic background.

The Dutch model of ethnic statistics has two specificities. First of all, in contrast to the UK system which relies on self identification, the Dutch system uses an objective criterion: place of birth of the parents. Secondly, a generic category of "allochthones" has been created, lumping together foreigners and a large part of the nationals who have a foreign background.

Although the central terminology is still 'ethnic minorities'[4] in policies targeted at foreign origin groups the category of "allochthones" has gained importance through extensive use. The notion was introduced[5] in the policy domain by the report *Allochtonenbeleid* (WRR, 1989) of the academic advisory body for the government (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid*, in short: WRR). In this document "allochthones" were defined as:

> "Allochthones are, generally speaking, all persons who come from elsewhere and have durably settled in the Netherlands, including their descendants until the third generation, in as far as the latter want to consider themselves as allochthones. Minorities are allochthonous groups which find themselves in a disfavoured position: it has to be assessed periodically which groups have to be considered to be minorities" (WRR, 1989: 10).

It was also in this report that a plea was held to install a system of ethnic registration which goes further than the distinction between nationals and non-nationals. The report preferred a system of self-registration. In its reaction to the report, the Dutch government, however, stated it preferred to stick to the notion of ethnic minorities (Rijkschroeff, Duyvendak, Pels, 2003: 37) and it did not go into the matter of ethnic registration. Although the notion of "allochthone" was starting to be routinely used in policy documents, it only got an operational basis in 1995, following the introduction of a new population administration system at the municipal level (*Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie*, GBA). It was the national statistical office, the *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (CBS), which *de facto* defined and constructed the new category of "allochthone" in a semi autonomous manner, using information coming from the GBA. It is their definition which would become hegemonic and is still the reference today.

Since 1999 the CBS defines allochthones as:

> "every person living in the Netherlands of which at least one of the parents was born abroad"

This definition is still valid as we write this contribution[6]. Note that the definition does not in itself suggest any racial or cultural connotation[7], the criterion is place of birth of the parents. Place of birth of the parents is used as a proxy for foreign origin. It is 'imprecise' as an ethnic category in the sense that it for instance equally includes children of Dutch expatriates.

Before 1999, the CBS already used the category of "allochthone": the allochthonous population was systematically counted on the basis of municipal data since 1995[8]. However, during the period 1995-1999, there were two definitions in use: an enlarged one and a restricted

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[4] See for instance the website of the Dutch Ministery of Justice, Foreigners and Integration : http://www.justitie.nl/themas/meer/integratiebeleid/index.asp [accessed 15/01/06].

[5] It is believed to originally having been introduced by sociologist Hilda Verwey-Jonker in 1971 (Prins, 2000).

[6] This text was written mid January 2006.

[7] It can equally be noted that, according to this definition, most members of the Dutch royal family can be considered to be "allochthones".

[8] Figures are available on the basis of estimations since 1972 and on the basis of data from the municipal administrations since 1995 (following the introduction of the *Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie* in 1994).

one. According to the enlarged definition, the allochthones were all persons who lived in the Netherlands and were either not born in the Netherlands or were born in the Netherlands but had at least one parent which was not born in the Netherlands. In a more limited definition, the CBS only took account of people born abroad of whom at least one parent was equally born abroad and of people who were born in the Netherlands but who had two parents born abroad. In the year 1998, the CBS had the habit of privileging the restricted definition in its publications. Due to insistence by the government, the CBS in 1999 however once again preferred to use the enlarged definition before finally opting for the new definition which is still in use in 2006.

The most recent definition of "allochthones" thus entails all people of the restricted definition, while adding all persons born in the Netherlands of whom at least one parent was not born in the Netherlands (De Valk et alii, 2001). The difference with the older enlarged definition is that it no longer includes people who were born abroad out of two parents born in the Netherlands. In the 1999 annual report regarding the minorities policy, the government stipulated it preferred to keep the children from "mixed" couples in the new definition (as opposed to the old restricted definition). The argumentation was as follows:

> "The mixed group is interesting because they seem to succeed better than the group of whom the two parents are born abroad »[9].

Whatever is the precise definition and operationalisation, in all cases the category of "allochthone" is broader than the one of "foreigner", since it also includes people who hold the Dutch nationality. With the choice for place of birth as a criterion, the CBS could still trace people with Dutch nationality who originate for the former Dutch colonies, without having to make any explicit racial distinction. As has been pinpointed before, these groups are official targets of the minorities policy.

Let us stress that the objective criterion of place of birth is combined with a generational criterion in the notion of "allochthone". At least in the CBS definition the third generation of immigrants is in principle automatically considered to be "autochthonous" and not "allochthonous". The statistical administrative use of the category of "allochthone" by the CBS thus differs on this point from the proposition by the WRR, who (re)launched the category in 1989. In the definition of the national statistical office, "allochthone" is restricted to refer to the first generation of immigrants (those born outside of the Netherlands) and to the second generation of people of foreign origin (born in the Netherlands but with at least one foreign parent)[10].

One of the aims of the quasi-ethnic category of "allochthone" is to be able and visualize the ethno-cultural diversity within the population, especially in the urban areas. Statistics which only rely on the criterion of nationality cannot do this in the same manner (see table 1). Geographically the allochthones are mainly to be found in the municipalities at the borders and in the four largest cities of the country. In the year 2000, Amsterdam had 44,4% allochthonous inhabitants, The Hague and Rotterdam had 40% and Utrecht almost 30%.

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[9] Our translation. "De gemengde groep is immers interessant, omdat zij beter schijnen te presteren dan de groep waarvan de beide ouders in het buitenland zijn geboren" (Tweede Kamer, 1999-2000, document 26815, p.5, note 2).

[10] In Dutch academia sometimes the term « one and a half generation » is equally used to pinpoint to children born abroad from immigrants of the first generation, who later came to the Netherlands in the framework of family reunification schemes.

Table 1. Foreign population and allochthonous population in the Netherlands, 2001-2004 (1st of January)

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total population	15 987 075	16 105 285	16 192 572	16 258 032
Foreign population	667 802	690 393	699 954	702 185
% of foreigners	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,3
Allochthonous pop.	2 870 224	2 964 949	3 038 758	3 088 152
% of allochthones	18,0	18,4	18,8	19,0
Allochthones born outside of the Netherlands	1 488 960	1 547 079	1 585 927	1 602 730
Allochthones born in the Netherlands with two parents born abroad	542 871	566 165	588 451	608 369
Allochthones born in the Netherlands with one parents born abroad	838 393	851 705	864 380	877 053

Source : *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, (http://statline.cbs.nl)

Following its operationalisation by the national statistics office, the category of « allochthone » was increasingly used in policy documents, academia, public debate and the media. As a result, it was eventually even adopted in ordinary language. Not surprisingly, in the process the notion of "allochthone" underwent a change of meaning and became increasingly used in ways differing substantially from its original administrative definition. It began to be widely used to pinpoint people of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillian origin – the largest official "ethnic minorities" - and for refugees from Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was gradually bestowed with a connotation of the "non-white non-European Other". Originally constructed as a mere descriptive statistical category by CBS, the diffusion of the term in ordinary speech acts led to a transformation into a racial-culturalist category. It was now targeted toward everyone who was supposed not to have a "western" origin. In its ordinary use it designated groups touched by what Balibar (1992) has called European racism, in particular descendents of stigmatised immigrant groups and immigrants from the former colonies (Rea, 1998). European immigrants and their offspring tended not to be included in the semantic field of the notion, in contrast to its official definition.

The pressure towards a racial-culturalist content was reflected in the statistical distinction which the CBS itself introduced in 1999 when distinguishing western allochthones and non-western allochthones[11]. This distinction is mainly used for statistical purposes in the field of education, although it has not remained limited to that policy domain.

Table 2 : 'Western' and 'non-western allochthones' of the first and second generation in the Netherlands, 2001-2004 according to the CBS

	Number of western allochthones	% in total population	Number of non-western allochtones	% in total population
2001	1 387 036	8,7	1 483 188	9,3
2002	1 406 596	8,7	1 558 353	9,7
2003	1 416 156	8,8	1 622 602	10,0
2004	1 419 855	8,8	1 668 297	10,2

Source : *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, (http://statline.cbs.nl)

[11] Since 1999, statistical data on this distinction were produced, starting with data for the year 1996.

Are part of the category of western allochthones according to the CBS: "the allochthones of European origin (with the exception of Turkey), of North-American origin, of Oceanic origin, of Indonesian origin and of Japanese origin". Are part of the category of non-western allochthones according to the CBS: "people originating from Turkish, African, Latin-American and Asian immigration, except for people of Japanese and Indonesian origin". The subdivision within the generic category of allochthones has thus more than an ethnic dimension. In the words of the national statistics office CBS the Japanese and Indonesians have to be excluded from the category of non-western allochthones because of "their socio-economic and cultural position" (http://statline.cbs.nl). The classification thus links up with two ideal typical contents of the immigrant: ethnic origin and inferior social origin. We can note that people of Indonesian origin are excluded from the category since a lot of (descendants of) Dutch colonizers 'returned' to Europe after the independence of Indonesia. In the definition of non-western allochthones the 'impreciseness' of the proxy of country of birth of parents was thus 'corrected' for a particular group of colonial expatriates (while at the same time introducing a new bias with regard to people of Indonesian origin without a genealogical link with white Dutch colonizers).

As we have already stressed, the third generation of foreign origin is automatically considered to be 'autochthonous' by the definition of the CBS. The category of "allochthone" hence does not function as an eternal racial category. Nevertheless, in ordinary life this limitation of the definition of "allochthone" is not as strictly respected. Interestingly, although the CBS scrupulously avoids to use the term "allochthone" to designate the third generation, the national statistical office has tried to keep track of this third generation. Indeed, since 2000 the CBS offers figures related to the "non-western third generation", in which it classifies everyone who has at least one grandparents who was born abroad in a 'non-western' country (following the earlier distinction between 'western' and 'non-western'). The data is produced in quite some detail, allowing to distinguish those who have respectively 1, 2, 3 or all 4 grandparents of non-western origin. Specific data is provided for groups of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Antillian origin. It should be noted that comparable figures are not made available for the "western third generation".

Integration policy in Belgium

Contrary to the Netherlands, the Belgian colonial past has had no large impact on its history of immigration. Relatively few people originating from the former colonies and protectorates (Congo, Rwanda, Burundi) have migrated to Belgium after independence. Predating independence the Congolese had a status of Belgian subjects but were not Belgian citizens. They were never automatically entitled to migrate to Belgium and had no preferential rights for migration either.

Post-war immigration to Belgium can be analytically divided up into different phases. In the 1950s immigrants mainly originated from Italy and other southern European countries. After 1964, immigrants mainly originated from Morocco and Turkey. After 1974, migration from outside the European Community only continued due to family reunification and under the framework of the right to asylum. Up to 1974, the date of a migration stop for non-EC citizens, there was a quasi total lack of integration policy. It were immigrant associations and pillarised (socialist and christian-democratic) organisations which organised a limited number of integration activities (legal counselling and social support). Integration policy really takes off in 1984 with the introduction of double *ius soli* in the nationality legislation. In the following two decades the importance of *ius soli* is gradually strengthened in procedures of acquisition of citizenship and conditions for naturalisation are loosened. In particular the most recent, very liberal modification of nationality legislation in 2000, has lead to an important increase of the number of people of foreign origin who have acquired Belgian citizenship. More than half of the Moroccan origin

population has become Belgian. Since these people disappear from official statistics as a separate category, the debate on ethnic statistics has sprung up in the Belgian context.

There are two main axes of the Belgian integration policy: the fight against racism and discrimination and specific measures in the fight against unemployment and social exclusion. These axes can be seen as a direct response to the rise of the extreme-right, especially in Flanders, and to riots with immigrant origin youngsters in Brussels (Rea, 2001). Hidden behind an apparent uniform vision on the federal level, there are important divergences between Flemish and Francophones. During the parliamentary debates on the liberalisation of the nationality legislation, these differences have particularly come to the fore. A majority of Flemish politicians wanted to maintain a number of more 'subjective' criteria (as the degree of cultural integration or the loyalty to the receiving society) and language related criteria (such as knowledge of Dutch when living on Flemish territory, or, more in general, knowledge of one of the national languages) for the acquisition of citizenship. A majority of Francophone politicians, on the other hand, preferred to only retain 'objective' criteria such as the length of legal stay on the territory. It is more than a merely linguistic cleavage, since the first set of criteria is more often supported by the right, while the second set of criteria is more often upheld by the left. In general, however, one can say that the argumentative frame for the Flemish is fed by references to the *ethnos* (a cultural vision of the nation) while the Francophones tend to privilege the *demos* (a political vision of the nation).

In another form this divergence in framing was made apparent in 1993 at the moment of the creation of the federal institution in charge of the fight against racism. A lot of debate was spent on the denomination of the institute. A majority of the Flemish, inspired by the work of the British *Commission for Racial Equality*, wanted the centre to have as its main mission the promotion of ethnic equality. The Francophones, however, resisted any reference to the notion of ethnicity or of ethnic minorities. In an attempt to find a compromise between these two perspectives, a typical comprise for a consociational democracy was found (Rea, 1993): the institution would be called the Center for equal opportunities and the fight against racism, acknowledging both the preference of the Flemish (Center for ethnic equality) and the preference of the Francophones (Centre for the fight against racism).

One federal state but two visions on ethnic minorities

Due to the complex institutional framework of the Belgian federal political system (see Jacobs & Swyngedouw, 2003), both the Flemish community and the Francophone community have jurisdiction with regard to policies concerning 'their' immigrants or ethnic minorities. There are a number of striking differences which have crystallized in discourses and policy making with regard to ethnic minorities on Flemish side and on Francophone side. In the Francophone Community an integration discourse dominates which is clearly inspired by French republicanism and tends to deny the relevance of cultural specificities and ethnic origin of immigrants and their offspring. In Flanders, in contrast, recognition of ethno-cultural diversity is welcomed and the existence of ethnic minorities affirmed. The Flemish vision has clearly been inspired by the (original) Dutch minorities policy.

The first systematic Flemish policy outline was presented in 1990. The aim of the Flemish migrant policy ("*Migrantenbeleid*") was said to be a "multicultural society with intercultural exchange". It is stated that there is a need for a specific policy approach, with a double focus: on the one hand attention to societal arrears, on the other hand attention to emancipation through recognition of cultural identity. The targeted group of the policy are "all the people who reside in the country and find themselves in a disfavoured position due to their weak socio-economic status and/or due to their ethnic origin, regardless whether they have the Belgian nationality or not" (*Coordinatienota Migrantenbeleid* 1992).

In 1996 the Flemish government opted for a new terminology and modified its 'migrants policy' into a 'minorities policy' ("*Minderhedenbeleid*"). The overarching designation is changed from "migrants' policy" to "minorities' policy", to mark the inclusion of travelling communities. The Flemish "minorities' policy" has three basic components. First, there is the "policy for emancipation" aimed at full participation in society of legally settled citizens of foreign origin and from travelling groups. Second, there is the policy to facilitate integration for legal newcomers. Third, there is the policy towards illegal residents in securing minimum needs with regard to health care, welfare and education.

In 1998, the Flemish government formalised the new policy line through the so-called "minorities' decree" *("minderhedendecreet"*). In the decree the position of three types of actor is clarified: the targeted groups; the Flemish government which is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the minorities' policy; and the so-called "categorical sector" *("integratiesector*") – a number of quangos – which is being delegated the tasks of developing local and subregional policies for integration of the target groups and providing support for interest representation by the groups themselves. Five target groups are distinguished: (1) allochthonous citizens (defined as having one parent or grandparent born outside Belgium and being in a position of societal arrears due to their ethnic origin or their weak socio-economic situation), (2) citizens with official refugee status, (3) travelling groups, (4) non-Dutch-speaking newcomers and (5) illegal residents *("mensen zonder papiere*n"). These groups are referred to as "ethno-cultural minorities" *("etnisch culturele minderheden*").

It is clear that the overarching policy framework is based on the recognition of ethno-cultural groups, a notion copied from the situation in the Netherlands and partly in line with Anglo-Saxon ideas of group-based "multicultural" policies (Jacobs 2001; Verlot 2001). Notably, entire sections of policy documents pertaining to the new minorities policy are copied from Dutch documents (Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004). Although the Flemish government strives for a so-called "inclusive policy" according to which diversity should be automatically taken into account in whatever policy field (*mainstreaming*), there is still ample room for "categorical policy" which is specially (and exclusively) oriented towards foreign-origin groups. The support for immigrant self-organisations testifies to the belief – which was equally imported from the Netherlands – that preservation and development of their own cultural identity among immigrants can stimulate emancipation within the host society[12]. In the same line of reasoning, room has been made for first-language education within the Flemish education system. An important difference with the Dutch system is that there is no explicit recognition of particular ethnic communities (as, for example, Moroccans or Turks) as "official" ethno-cultural minorities which should be distinguished from each other - although this is often done in practice.

At the same time, however, the Flemish government has taken policy measures that are said to be aimed at the "assimilation" of newcomers. Since the end of the 1990s the Flemish have been preparing and experimenting with so-called citizenship trajectories *("inburgeringstrajecten*") in which lessons on the Dutch language and lessons of introduction to Flemish/Belgian society are to be taken by certain categories of immigrant newcomers. The aim is to actively promote a certain degree of language and cultural assimilation. This scheme, once again copied from the Netherlands, has become compulsory for (most) non-EU newcomers in Flanders from April 2004 onwards and optional in Brussels.

On Francophone side, the discourses with regard to people of foreign origin are identical in Wallonia and Brussels. Ethnic minorities are not recognised in policy nor in discourse. Categorical policy is marginal. Integration policy is embedded within indirectly targeted policy schemes (priority action zones, zones of positive discrimination, etc.) which use social criteria (percentage of unemployed, percentage of renters, etc.) and demographic criteria (percentage of foreigners) to pinpoint areas of attention. Although clearly imprecise, the most commonly used

[12] We should note, however, that in 2005 there was ample debate on the future policy lines towards ethnic organisations (see Jacobs, 2005).

denominator for foreign origin inhabitants in political discourse and media discourse is "immigrant" and sometimes "person of foreign origin".

Although multiculturalism is often presented as an inherent Walloon virtue, every reference to the notion of ethnicity is scrupulously avoided. Immigrants and their descendants are seen as an intrinsic part of Walloon history. This is mainly because they were members of the working class which is seen as an essential element of Walloon collective identity. In this respect, it helps that most of the immigrants originate from southern European countries and that cultural and religious differences are judged to have been absorbed. The Walloon integration policy aims at improving the socio-economic position of people of foreign origin. It has no clear cultural dimension. Although the 1996 Walloon decree with regard to the "immigrant population or population of immigrant origin" states that the integration policy opts for positive discrimination in order to promote equal opportunities, there is not a single legal disposition which implements this instrument. Nor is there any project financed which operates along the lines of positive discrimination. Immigrant associations can get funding as a result of the decree, but only if they offer activities of social insertion (alphabetising, vocational training), not because of an ethnic identity.

In Brussels, the Francophone integration policy was organised between 1993 and 2003 by a policy document pertaining to the "integration and cohabitation of local communities". It was formalized in 2004 in a decree on social cohesion. In the decree the words 'foreigners' and 'people of foreign origin' are simply absent. The notion of social cohesion is regarded to cover all socio-economic and cultural cleavages in the city-region. Instead of resorting to euphemisms, the new piece of legislation simply ignores the relevance of ethno-cultural differences. Here as well, the objectives are more socio-economic than cultural. As is the case in Wallonia, the self organisation of ethnic minorities is not endorsed. Associations of ethnic minorities can, however, get funding for broadly defined activities (for instance in the fields of education, sports or citizenship). There is a refusal – at least on the discursive level - to subsidize any activities which have a dimension pertaining to cultural identity. One can remark, however, that both in Wallonia and Brussels a number of events of intercultural nature or linked to religious activities as the Ramadan have been supported.

Overall, we can state that among the Belgian Francophones the dominant frame of reference with regard to integration of immigrants has been imported from France - although Belgium is neither Jacobin nor freethinking (*laïc*). Although the imported discourse is not always straightforwardly translated into real policy in day to day life, it does exercise a strong pressure on ethnic minorities to conform to the Francophone model. Ethnic minorities tend to seek social inclusion through existing pillarised structures and ethnic background is downplayed.

The main differences in the Flemish and francophone policies towards immigrants and ethnic minorities are schematically represented in Table 3. Although the Flemish and Francophone policies towards immigrants and ethnic minorities can be fitted into this general typology, it should be borne in mind that different dimensions can be stressed in specific policy subfields and government agencies – for example depending on the ideology of the minister who is responsible (given the fact that Belgium always has coalition governments). Furthermore, while there is a clear divergence on the level of official rhetoric and policy statements, differences sometimes tend to be a lot less clear 'in the field'.

Whether the divergent policy choices have different effects with regard to immigrant integration is something we cannot assess since we have no appropriate data which would allow a genuine Flemish-Francophone comparison. In fact, this impossibility to compare is a direct consequence of the divergence of the discourses and policies themselves: there are no data on the situation of Belgians of foreign origin which we could in a sensible way compare, because there is no consensus on the fact whether it is legitimate (or not) to construct this kind of data in which a distinction is being made between state citizens on the basis of their ethnic background.

Table 3. Policy Approaches of Flemish and Francophones towards People of Immigrant Origin

	Policy emphasis for integration of settled immigrants	Policy for newcomers	Foreign inspiration
Flemish approach	- recognition of the existence of ethnic-cultural minority groups - general and categorical policies - cooperation with, and support of, immigrant self-organization	Citizenship trajectories (include language courses)	Dutch (and Anglo-saxon) ideas of group-based multiculturalism Dutch model of *inburgering*
Francophone approach	- individualistic approach - general policies using socio-economic indicators - only indirect targeting of immigrant groups (for instance, in certain neighbourhoods)	No specific policy (but punctual projects are being financed)	French assimilationist-republican model

Apart from self-evident reasons of linguistic affinity and cultural links between Flanders and the Netherlands (which played an important role in the import of the citizenship trajectories), the import of the Dutch multicultural policy model to Flanders should be understood in the light of the position of the Flemish movement within Belgian history. The Flemish, the demographic majority, have for over a century endured francophone cultural domination, articulated through social practices and incorporated in state institutions, when Belgium was still a unitary state. For the Flemish acknowledgement and recognition of ethnic identity is seen to be a legitimate endeavour. Not denying a cultural identity, fostering and defending a minority culture (in the sociological and political sense) have been at the cradle of Flemish political identity (and has led to the creation of the federal state). One could say that, through structural homology, the Flemish elite now does not want to impose on its ethnic minorities what it has lived itself as a former minority group. In essence, the Flemish situation can, however, be qualified as being one of 'inegalitarian multiculturalism' (Martiniello, 1997): the Flemish culture always has to take precedence.

Inversely, for the Francophone elites, the discursive preference for the French assimilationist position, while at the same time sometimes paying lip service to the idea of cultural diversity, has a strategic significance. Ethnic difference is only applauded in case of individual success and support for ethnic diversity is thus limited to 'meritocratic multiculturalism' (Rea, 2001). As a general principle, conformity and adaptation to the Belgian-Francophone culture is being expected. In a federal state in which they now hold the minority position and are heavily dependent on Flemish (financial) solidarity, the Francophone establishment is faced with an assertive Flanders which is pleading for more and more autonomy and is questioning its responsibility to keep up solidarity with their Francophone compatriots. While defending national identity and national unity, they adopt a strategy of trying to transform the new Belgians into Francophones (and not into sub-minorities). 'Belgicizing' and 'frenchizing' the newcomers helps to take a stand against the powerful Flemish. The power struggle between both linguistic communities within the Belgian framework thus – although mitigated by other ideological cleavages - helps to explain the discourses they use and the positions they hold in developing sub-state policies with regard to immigrant integration (Martiniello & Rea, 2004; Jacobs, 2005).

The import and use of the category "allochthone" in Flanders

In the Belgian context the term "allochthone" for the first time appears in the report of the Royal Commissioner for Immigrant Policy (CRPI, 1989), a federal institution charged with preparing recommendations for a coherent integration policy. It has then just been (re)launched in neighbouring country the Netherlands through the WRR-report "*allochtonenbeleid*". Copied from the Dutch, the term gradually increases its popularity in Flemish academic and political circles but does not impregnate the discourse on Francophone side.

Ten years later, in the Flemish decree of 1998, the Flemish government imports the notion of "allochthone" as constructed by the Dutch CBS but modifies it in three ways. First of all, the generational criterion is extended to the third generation. Secondly, the weaker socio-economic position – which inspires the Dutch category of 'non-western allochthone' – becomes an integral element of the Flemish definition. Thirdly, the definition is bestowed with a clearer cultural dimension. The definition in the 1998 decree is as follows:

> "By allochthones we understand all persons who are legally residing in Belgium and simultaneously fulfil the following conditions, whether they possess Belgian nationality or not: a) have at least one parent or grand-parents which is born outside of Belgium, b) find themselves in a disfavoured position because of their ethnic origin or their weak socio-economic position".

While this definition has as official purpose to clearly define the targeted groups of the Flemish integration policy, it cannot be used in the collection of official statistical data. The federal administration merely uses the distinction between Belgians and foreigners in its statistics. In this regard an article in the law on public statistics is of particular importance. The law stipulates that the national statistical office, *l'Institut National de Statistique* (INS), does not have the authorisation to produce any statistics relating to ethnic origin:

> "In no case whatsoever can the investigations and statistical studies of the national institute for statistics be related to the private life, the political, philosophical or religious opinions or activities, race or ethnic origin"[13].

The NIS seems to follow this guideline in a strict manner and thus refrains from producing statistics on place of birth of parents and grand-parents (one of the criteria of the Flemish definition of "allochthone"). In an internal note, the national statistical office INS comments the article in the following way:

> "Exluding all research into political, philosophical or religious opinions or activities, into race or ethnic origin and into sexual life, article 24 quinquies allows the national institute for statistics to remain sheltered from all controversy. The national institute for statistics has to be a neutral and independent organism and a trustworthy and credible instrument for the administration of the country" (INS, 1986)[14].

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[13] Our translation of article 24 quinquies of the law of 4 July 1962 relatif to public statistics, modified by the law of 1 August 1985 : « En aucun cas, les investigations et études statistiques de l'Institut national de Statistique ne peuvent concerner la vie privée, les opinions ou activités politiques, philosophiques ou religieuses, la race ou l'origine ethnique »

[14] Our translation of the following passage: « En excluant toute investigation sur les opinions ou activités politiques, philosophiques ou religieuses de la population, la race ou l'origine ethnique et la vie sexuelle, l'article 24 quinquies permet à l'Institut national de Statistique de rester à l'abri de toute controverse. L'Institut national de Statistique doit être un organisme neutre et indépendant ainsi qu'un instrument fiable et crédible d'administration du pays » (INS, 1986).

The Francophone political elite has up to this moment categorically kept refusing any production of federal data with regard to ethnic origin, including proxies as place of birth of the parents – and it should be said that the Flemish political elite has not made a priority of trying to change this either[15]. The lack of consensus on the federal level blocks any change at this power level. Since the production of statistical data is still largely a federal prerogative and the sub-state statistical offices are highly dependent on the national office for statistics, the Flemish thus do not have the kind of data they would require in order to be able and count the number of allochthones.

Although the texts of the Flemish integration policy very precisely define the criteria of the category of "allochthones", there is hence no systematic operationalisation of the notion in administrative and statistical practices in the Flemish region, while relying on federal data. The model of the neighbouring country – and its category of "allochthone" - has, in other words, been copied without assuring the possibility of implementing it in practice. This situation has been criticized by several academics (Verhoeven et alii, 2003; Caestecker, 2001). Some divisions of the Flemish administration have attempted to undertake an operationalisation - independently of the federal level -, but very often using debatable *ad hoc* procedures. The Flemish unemployment agency (VDAB) has, for instance, used a number of methods and criteria to make a distinction between ethnic groups while using the category of "allochthone". It tries to differentiate between autochthonous and allochthonous jobseekers by using data on nationality and country of birth, by using a system of voluntary registration (mainly for African and Asiatic "allochthones") and by using a name-recognition program (onomastic analysis on first and last name) for Turkish and Maghrebian names (Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004c).

The most systematic effort of identification of "allochthones" in Flanders, however, stems from the domain of education. In 1993, the 'declaration of non-discrimination' (*non-discriminatieverklaring*) strived to obtain a better repartition of foreign origin pupils and to fight against discriminatory practices. A specific policy of positive discrimination was developed (*onderwijsvoorrangsbeleid*) which allotted more financial means to schools with high numbers of allochthonous pupils (Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004b) and high numbers of pupils in need of special assistance. To identify these schools, an inventory of ethnic origin of pupils was systematically constructed from 1993 until the year 2000[16]. In 2000 the ethnic criterion was dropped from the set of criteria to select schools which need special support – one of the (debatable) arguments for this was that high concentrations of ethnic pupils would be indirectly tracked down in any event through the other criteria being used.

Interestingly, the accessibility of data with regard to ethnic origin of the school population not only affected public policy but equally influenced academic research (and linked to that, in a later stage, increased the pressure of the scientific field on the political world). It seems indeed to be the case that the mere existence of this kind of data has contributed to the multiplication of scientific research on the school careers of immigrant youngsters in Flanders, contrary to the situation in the Francophone Community (Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004b ; Florence, 2004). On Francophone side there were a lot of academics who raised the hypotheses of discriminatory

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[15] We perhaps should equally note that counting linguistic affiliation has been forbidden since 1964 (following the latest modification of the language borders).

[16] Data on ethnic origin were collected in order to count the number of targeted pupils. This was done in a very precise manner. The targeted pupils (« *doelgroepleerlingen* ») were pupils of which the grand-mother on mother's side was not born in Belgium and did not have Belgian nor Dutch nationality and of which the mother did not continue her studies after the age of 18. Since 2000 a new definition of targeted pupils was used in which ethnic origin was no longer taken directly into consideration. Schools who could benefit from the system of positive discrimination now had to have a particular number of pupils who's profile corresponded to general indicators of unequal opportunities (for the debate on the operationalisation, see: Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004a ; 2004b).

practices being at the basis of poor academic performance of immigrant origin youngsters and their systematic reorientation into particular types of vocational training. However, in contrast to the Flemish situation, the Francophone researchers hardly ever had instruments to their disposal which would allow to show this in a quantitative manner.

Different types of data: the Brussels case

In the field of education, the data which are available for the bilingual region of Brussels – in which a large majority of the population speaks French and a minority speaks Dutch - allow us to demonstrate the potential (and the limitations) of particular types of statistical constructions and the impossibility to compare data sets when basic categories have been constructed differently. In Brussels, there are parallel Francophone and Flemish schooling systems, in which teaching is done in respectively the French or the Dutch language. The educational market of Brussels is ethnically very segregated, both on Francophone as on Flemish side. The segregation is a widely acknowledged fact for the vast majority of involved actors, albeit that it has not been documented in systematic scientific studies on Francophone side. Parents have an almost complete liberty in choosing a school for their offspring. Knowledgeability of the ethnic distribution of the educational market is one of the major elements influencing parental strategies.

The registration procedures with regard to the composition of the school population are different in francophone schools from the ones used in Flemish schools. As can be noted in table 4 (which provides data for kindergartens), the Francophone community only distinguishes its pupils on the basis of their nationality. Every local observer, even a layman, will agree that the distribution of 69% of Belgians and 31% of foreigners does not correspond with the dominant social representations which circulate about the bulk of the Francophone schools in ethnic terms. Indeed, the importance of offspring of immigrants is far more important in the Francophone schooling system than these figures suggest. The relevance of some kind of system of ethnic statistics would, however, be most useful on the individual school level. The creation of some sort of objective system for counting pupils of foreign origin in schools, would allow to abandon euphemistic and stigmatising expressions as "difficult schools" which are currently routinely used to identify schools in which ethnic minority groups are overrepresented. It would equally show which schools need to clean up their act and should allow in a more diversified student population.

Table 4 : Number of children in Francophone kindergartens in the Brussels Capital-Region according to nationality (2000-2001)

	Belgians		Foreigners		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
Public (municipal)	12.132	69,0	5.536	31,0	17.668
Public (Community)	919	58,0	681	42,0	1.600
Private (Catholic)	9.755	71,0	4.025	29,0	13.780
Total	22.806	69,0	10.242	31,0	33.048

Source: Service des Statistiques, Ministère de la Communauté française[17]

When we compare these figures with those of the Flemish schools in Brussels (see table 5), one would be at first inclined to think that the importance of foreign origin pupils is less important on Francophone side than on Flemish side. This is surely not the case.

[17] The data were kindly made accessible by mr. Alain Dufays, director of the *Service des Statistiques*, *Ministère de la Communauté française*.

Table 5. Number of children in Flemish kindergartens in the Brussels Capital-Region according to origin (2000-2004)

School year	« Belgian origin»		« Foreign origin »	
	Numbers	**%**	**Numbers**	**%**
00-01	5 513	55,6	4 406	44,4
01-02	5 251	52.7	4 711	47.3
02-03	5 449	54.4	4 567	45.6
03-04	5 671	55.1	4 628	44.9

Source : Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, Brussels Onderwijs Punt (http://www.bop.vgc.be)

In the Flemish schools of the Brussels Capital-Region, the registration of pupils has been done since 1991-1992 taking into account their cultural origin. A distinction has been made between "families of internal origin" (*binnenlands gezin*) and "families of foreign origin" (*buitenlands gezin*). Within this last category, since 2002-2003 a distinction is being made between "western families" and "non-western families". It is not nationality but ethnic origin which is used as a criterion for counting these "foreign origin families". In case of mixed families, it is the cultural origin of the mother which counts. Until the year 2000, a systematic collection of data on the 'objective' criterion of the place of birth of the grand-mother on mother's side was undertaken within the framework of the Flemish policy of positive discrimination (*onderwijsvoorrangsbeleid)*. In contrast to this systematic procedure, the data of more recent years – which are being cited above – are the product of a subjective definition on the part of the school administrators, which self evidently creates a bias.

What is of interest to us here is the fact that we cannot compare the composition of the overall school population of Francophone and Flemish schools in Brussels. In one system only data on nationality is available, in the other system only data on ethnic background (and not on nationality) is being collected. Given this situation it is impossible to assess whether there are more or less – or as many - pupils of foreign origin (or even without Belgian nationality) in the schools on Francophone side than on Flemish side in Brussels. You cannot compare apples with pears.

Let us shortly address another topic related to the Flemish schools in Brussels (data on language use at home), before discussing the repercussions of different modes of data collection on 'foreignness'. Given that this is equally taken into consideration in educational policy on Flemish side, the Flemish statistics also assess the languages used at home. They distinguish four categories: homogeneous Dutch speaking families, mixed families with one Dutch speaking parent, homogeneous French speaking families and families in which neither of the parents talks French or Dutch at home. In the school year 2000-2001, it was shown that the Dutch speaking are clearly in a minority position in the Flemish schools: there are 14,2% families which are homogeneously Dutch speaking, 23,4% mixed families with one Dutch speaking parent, 34,9% families with homogenously French speaking parents and 27,5% families using another mother tongue.

The registration of this kind of data allow to assess the proportion of Flemish who attend the Flemish schools and to reorient the educational policy, for instance in trying to limit the number of pupils who only speak French. In 2006, for instance, a new inscription policy was introduced in Flemish schools in Brussels. Since 2003, children are inscribed in Flemish schools on a 'first come, first served' basis, thus banning the possibility for schools to select their pupils. The aim of the so-called equal opportunities policy was to guarantee equal access of all groups to all kinds of schools. The policy was, however, counterproductive. A rush was triggered to particular – often catholic - schools, where parents even camped days before the start of the inscription procedure in order to secure a place for their child. In a number of neighbourhoods,

the result was a worsening of social and ethnic segregation in the Flemish schools – for instance a high concentration of white Flemish middle-class and white Francophone middle- and upper-class children in one type of school and a high concentration of ethnic minority children in another type of school, both situated in the same area. Furthermore, given the large success of Flemish schools in Brussels, quite a few Flemish parents who were late in trying to inscribe their child, had difficulty in still finding a Flemish school. To alleviate this problem a new procedure is being introduced in 2006. Two groups of children will be given priority during a preliminary inscription period of one month: children who speak Dutch at home will be allowed to fill quota of 30% and children who are in a socially disadvantaged position[18] will be allowed to fill quota of 20% in each school. Only in a next phase everyone is allowed to inscribe on a 'first come, first served' basis. In practice the aim is to improve the distribution of both Flemish children as of children of ethnic minority background (who often fall in the category of the socially disadvantaged). At the same time it is made a bit more difficult for children from middle- or upper-class Francophone families to go to Flemish schools in Brussels. It will, of course, have to be seen if the procedure will indeed produce these effects.

Let us return to the topic of ethnic minorities. Clearly, the different approaches are not without political and scientific repercussions. Ethnic registration allowed for positive discrimination of schools with high numbers of foreign pupils (*onderwijsvoorrangsbeleid*) on Flemish side (until 2000). On Francophone side another type of data is being used – in a far less precise manner - to pursue the same objective: aggregated socio-economic data should help to determine which schools need extra support. Moreover, the Flemish approach offered instruments which allow for the systematic study of school trajectories of immigrant origin children, of selective orientation towards particular types of schooling and, most of all, of educational segregation. Of course, punctual studies could deliver the same kind of knowledge, but only in a partial way and limiting possibilities for comparison over time. Ethnic data, or data on foreign origin, has helped to improve academic assessments and allow policy monitoring in a far more efficient way (Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004b ; Florence, 2004).

This last remark also holds for other domains as the labour market or the housing market. Due to a lack of qualified data it is at the moment extremely difficult to assess the precise importance of ethnostratification of the labour market or to judge the vastness of the problem of discrimination in job allocation, both in Flanders, Wallonia as in Brussels (Adam, 2004 ; Balancier, 2004 ; Van der Straeten & Jacobs, 2004c). It is for this reason that diverse Flemish administrations, among which the one in charge of integration policy (*Interdepartementale Commissie Etnisch-Culturele Minderheden*), insist that data would be collected related to the allochthonous population. Such a demand is up till now practically non-existent within Francophone institutions (Florence, 2004).

Let us note that a large part of the Francophone elite believes it is dangerous what the Flemish are trying to do. Although the ethnic data might now be useful for Flemish policies of equal opportunities, they might just as well be useful for future Flemish policies of *un*equal opportunities. Given the fact that the racist party *Vlaams Belang* holds 25% of the votes in Flanders and fearing that it might be difficult to block them from power eternally, ethnic registration can be regarded to be playing with fire.

A debate which also divides the academic world

[18] The criteria for assessing a socially disadvantaged position are : (1) the mother does not have a diploma of secondary education, (2) the family lives of a welfare allowance, (3) the child lives outside of the family (court order) or (4) the child is of a travelling family.

The import and translation of the category of « allochthone » in Belgium and the positive effects for academic research of the production of ethnic data, equally triggers debate in the scientific field (Florence, 2004b). Reflecting the importance of institutional frameworks and discursive traditions in the process of constructing scientific categories, Flemish researchers have overall uncritically adopted the notion of "allochthone" while Francophone researchers have just as routinely rejected it. Research reports written by academics from the two linguistic communities use a distinctive terminology when talking about the same groups: the Flemish use the category of "allochthone", while the French use the category "population taken out of immigration" (*population issue de l'immigration*) or "person of foreign origin" (*personne d'origine étrangère*). It is, however, striking that no matter what linguistic background academics have, they all tend to talk about "ethnic minorities" once writing in English…

The arguments used by Francophone researchers to refuse the category of « allochthone » are threefold. First of all, it is criticized that the reference to state citizenship disappears from the concept. It lumps together in one group foreigners and nationals of foreign origin, up to the third generation in the Flemish case, thus putting groups of people together who do not dispose of the same rights. Secondly, by making a distinction – often arbitrarily – between different groups of foreign origin according to their national origin (and hypotheses about the socio-econcomic position linked to this national origin), a debatable cultural component is added to its definition. Moreover, the construction of the category of "allochthone" as being opposed to the "autochthone", does not provide us with a clear definition of the latter category. The use of the category of "allochthone" furthermore seems to suggest that "allochthonous" state citizens are not so genuinely members of the nation as are the "autochthonous" citizens. Finally, the construction of this category leads to an essentialisation of social groups which risks to strengthen the ethnicisation and racialisation of social relations. In a worst case scenario ethnic statistics can be an instrument for exclusionary politics.

Flemish researchers, of whom a substantial part has started to use the category of « allochthones » as a replacement for earlier used categories such as « migrants » (*migranten*), have on their part at least three reasons for doing so despite of the criticism. First of all, given the fact that quite some people of foreign origin in Flanders use the term themselves, Flemish academics do not consider the category to be of a belittling kind. Being "allochthone" does not mean one is a second class citizen; it is merely an analytical distinction which is being made within the group of all citizens (just as one might distinguish men and women). Secondly and related to the first remark, they point to the fact that the notion of "allochthone" does not necessarily feed racism and does not have an outspoken racist connotation. They stress that the extreme right party *Vlaams Belang* systematically uses the terminology of "foreigners" (*vreemdelingen*) in their discourse when they talk of people of foreign origin. Moreover, if they wanted to install an exclusionist policy they will do so in any event, with or without prior existence of ethnic registration. Thirdly, recognizing the ethnicisation of Flemish society, they motivate the use of the category of "allochthone", being determined by place of birth, as a means to evaluate and fight against ethnic and racial discrimination on the one hand and to respond to the demands of certain ethnic minority groups to be able to defend their specificities.

All this being said, academics of both linguistic communities in Belgium admit that whatever classification is being used, there is always a double process at work: (1) On the one hand an evaluation is being made in comparison to a group of reference which constitutes the norm. (2) On the other hand a representation of the social world is being strengthened in which an ethnic division is being accentuated. For some these are sufficient reasons to keep rejecting any form of ethnic classification, for others it are merely important caveats which should not preclude the use of some sort of system to determine foreign origin. While there is a clear divergence of opinions in the academic field on the opportunity and relevance of the use of the imported (and translated) category of "allochthone", there is at least a growing consensus that

there is a genuine need to produce statistics which try and take into account ethnic differenciation and/or foreign origin. How this should precisely be done, is still a matter of debate.

Conclusion and debate

History has shown that ethnic statistics can be used for purposes of control, stigmatisation, segregation and even extermination. However, 'ethnicised' groups can equally profit from the existence of such data, for instance when statistical data allow them to document their discrimination. The adoption in June 2000 of the European directive relating to equal treatment further stimulates debate on the matter of ethnic categorisation (Simon & Stavo-Debauge, 2004). Indeed, ethnic statistics can be an indispensable instrument to objectify the degree of discriminatory practices and evaluate public policies with regard to equal opportunities and the fight against racism.

In the Netherlands the category of "allochthone" is the central notion in the production of ethnic statistics. The category of "allochthone" was able to gain legitimacy due to its highly formalized nature (based on birth place of grandparents). Its success was not so much directly related to the bureaucratic identity of the Dutch national office for statistics (CBS) which systematized its use. Its rapid diffusion should probably rather be considered to be the expression of the special capacity of the use of statistics – amongst others, by actors like the CBS - to create performative categories (Desrosières, 2000). If the strength of the category of "allochthone" originally resided in its high degree of formalization, its weakness is that – parallel to its successful diffusion - it has gradually become a (dis)qualifying social category. It has proven to be a useful instrument in documenting discriminatory practices and social exclusion of ethnic groups. At the same time, however, the differentiation between western allochthones and non-western allochthones has added to the process of racialisation of Dutch society. The notion of "allochthone" has become common good in academic, media and political discourse. In the process it has become polysemic and, hence, suspect (especially when suggesting that "allochthones" might not be "real" nationals).

The same problem manifests itself in Flanders, Belgium, which imported the category of "allochthone". That is to say, it imported the word and modified its definition, while at the same time not having the means to statistically operationalise it. Statistical production is a federal competence and the federal level has not produced appropriate data, due to the resistance of the Francophone elite to anything which seems to suggest recognition of the existence of ethnic minorities (and their registration). The difference in point of view on the matter on the two sides of the linguistic border is linked to diverging perspectives on the nation (*ethnos* versus *demos*) and on the way in which foreign groups should be treated.

On Francophone side the importance of ethnic identity is being denied (and the notion of ethnicity is judged to be dangerous), while on Flemish side ethnic identity is being cherished. As such, Belgium in fact embodies in a micro-cosmos the different views which compete on the topic of ethnic registration within the European framework. Data on immigrants and ethnic minorities of different European countries are today hardly comparable. A number of countries can produce very detailed distinctions with regard to the foreign origin and composition of its population, while other countries feel the production of such data is inappropriate and dangerous. As a result, we have data on apples and pears and proper comparative social scientific work is being frustrated.

The analysis of the construction of the category of "allochthone" in the Netherlands and its importation in Belgium shows that statistical categories (and their use) are not neutral. The category of "allochthone" becomes dangerous when it suggests an inferior status. It could strengthen populist visions which distinguish between "real nationals" and those of "foreign origin". Every ethnic category equally holds the risk of essentialism: it reifies ethnic groups by (mis)taking words for things and the signifier for the signified (De Rudder, 2000: 26). They

reflect dominant opinions about who is 'in' and who is 'out', which are embedded in a specific time and place. Scientific classifications, and their statistical formalisation, are not immune to this. They are equally subordinate to the societal context and power relations as other social products.

We agree with Bourdieu when he writes: "every science which pretends to propose criteria which are in the best way anchored in reality should not forget that it does not do anything else than registering a particular *state* of the struggle of classification, that is to say, a particular state of material and symbolic relations of power between those who have an interest in this or that particular way of classifying and who, just as itself, call upon scientific authority to establish in reality and in reason an arbitrary division which it hopes to impose" (Bourdieu, 1980: 66). The double hermeneutics which are inherent to social scientific activity does not allow us to imagine the constitution of scientific categories which are truly autonomous. Products of a social and political context, they are not immutable. They can be redefined when the context changes or they can loose their relevance when they have been instrumentally used – for instance when being used more as means of declassification than as means of classification. Categories which want to distinguish social groups and individuals should thus be treated with prudence and large reservations.

Nevertheless, one should equally be able to name problems in order to resolve them and to identify particular groups in order to be able and study them. Patrick Simon has nicely formulated this dilemma with which researchers and policy makers are confronted: "(…) is it preferable to defend the invisibilisation of ethnic differences in the observational apparatus, while at the same time risking to allow hidden discriminatory practices to prosper, or should one construct categories which, by their simple existence, can potentially reinforce a stigmatising designation of particular populations?" (Simon, 1997: 9). In the post-migration context, especially in countries with liberal nationality legislations, it is clear that the legal category of foreigner will not be sufficient as a selection criterion when wanting to evaluate the integration of groups of foreign origin. Social scientists (and policy makers) need new categories to be able and count and classify people according to their ethnic origin in order to be able to examen their integration and measure the racial discriminations or processes of social exclusion of which they are victim. The classification of ethnic groups most probably constitutes a necessary tool in the construction of an efficient policy aiming at equal opportunities and in the struggle against racism. The hesitations with regard to the performative effects of ethnic categorisations, especially in their statistical form, should invite us to epistemological vigilance but should not frighten us in a way leading to retreat.

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