

Post-immigration politics and the Political Mobilisation of Ethnic Minorities. A comparative Case-Study of Moroccans in Four European Cities

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Abstract

This contribution aims to summarise the main findings of a PhD project recently finished at the Katholieke Universiteit Brussel. It consist of a study of the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities in four mid size European cities, namely Antwerp, Liège, Utrecht, et Lille. This research has three distinctive features. The first is that it is an empirically grounded comparative research in four cities and three countries. The second main characteristic is that it is the first research of this genre on the political mobilisation of Moroccans in Europe. Thirdly, it is a research which seeks to open up a more general reflection on the local management of ethnic diversity in post-immigration situations. The research actually allow three main conclusions to be drawn. The first is that there is a very important diversity of post-immigration political circumstances in European cities. This is observable in terms of immigration histories of the receiving cities, of settlement patterns of ethnic minorities, etc. The second conclusion is that there is a broad diversity in the shape of the political mobilisation of Moroccans in the four cities analysed, but also a strong convergence in that they generally remain infra-political. In other words, although the Moroccan communities are politically active within their community organisations, the impact on broader urban political dynamics is weak. Finally the third conclusion is that the political mobilisation of Moroccans has to date had a marginal impact on local politics.

1. Introduction¹

In April 2000, Ryad Hamlaoui, a 19 year old youngster of Algerian origin, was killed by a police officer during a routine patrol in Lille (North of France). Ryad Hamlaoui was shot dead in the neck where he was found, in a car on a parking place in front of the social housing estate where he lived with his parents in the neighbourhood of Lille-Sud. Ryad Hamlaoui had no criminal record and had been appointed just days before as a municipal employee in the framework of a state-sponsored employment programme aimed at combating youth unemployment, the so-called *Emplois-Jeunes*. The announcement of the young man's death triggered a wide shock-wave. Just a few hours later, the socially disadvantaged neighbourhood of Lille-Sud became the stage of violent confrontations between police forces and the youth. These urban unrests, which involved many youngsters of ethnic minority origin, were aimed at protesting against what was perceived among migrant and ethnic minority populations as a racially motivated crime by the police. The unrest lasted for more than two days and the protest ultimately culminated in a march on the municipality of Lille.

These events were the more serious violent protest in the streets of Lille involving so many youngsters who were the children of former migrant workers. Beyond the specific circumstances of the drama, the unfolding of the events makes it a cutting-edge example of the complex post-immigration political issues faced by North-West European cities. The drama included all the ingredients of the worst case scenario that could have been anticipated when the flourishing European economies of the sixties massively recruited foreign workers from developing southern countries.

Urban unrest of a comparable scale occurred in France on many occasions and the events of April 2000 in Lille can unfortunately not pretend to be isolated incidents. Since the events in the cité des Minguettes in Vénissieux in 1981, urban unrests involving violent confrontations with the police have taken place regularly in French mid-sized cities. This is however far from being unique to France. Similar events occurred in Brussels in May 1991, May 1993 and November 1997. Although Dutch cities have been generally immune from such violence, an outburst of violent urban protest involving large numbers of ethnic minority youth took place in Amsterdam in 1998.

Urban violence is certainly the most spectacular expression of the new social tensions affecting North-West European cities. It is, however, only a symptom. Its root causes actually lie far beyond the spontaneous anger of those who are coming to be portrayed as the *nouvelles classes dangereuses*. The marginalisation of the foreign labour force as a consequence of post-industrial economic transformations, their spatial isolation within decaying urban territories and their unequal access to citizenship rights have played a key role in defining the new geo-political reality of the city. During the past decade, European cities have featured

¹This contribution summarises a PhD project started while I was a visiting researcher at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and completed at the Katholieke Universiteit Brussel. The research was supported by grants provided by the European Commission (programme Human Capital and Mobility), the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Utrecht, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior, the Flemish government, the city of Antwerp, the Research Council of the KUB, and the Institute of Political Sociology and Methodology of the KUB. My thanks to all the persons in these institutions who contributed to the successful completion of this project, and more in particular to Marc Swyngedouw, Han Entzinger, Catherine Withol de Wenden, Marco Martiniello, Martin Schain, Albert Martens, Dirk Jacobs, Karen Phalet, and Adrian Favell.

higher levels of territorial socio-economic exclusion and have confronted the persistence of hostile reactions from the majority population towards the minority presence. In most European cities, such social tensions have resulted in growing political frustration and, often, in right-wing extremism. In the same time, European cities saw the emergence of immigrant minority groups as political actors with specific demands related to the policy-management of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.

These issues are the central theme of this article and are addressed with a European comparative focus. This study will indeed analyse post-immigration political issues through comparative case studies centred on Moroccans in four medium size cities in Belgium (Antwerp and Liège), the Netherlands (Utrecht) and France (Lille). In this article, these issues will be critically examined, although less with the eyes of the political theorist than with those of the political sociologist. The objective of this article is to evaluate, beyond national specificity, forms of convergence and divergence in the political strategies of ethnic minorities. Therefore, the idea is less normative than analytical, insofar as the study seeks to assess the determinants of political activity of ethnic minorities. More concretely, this article asks: 1/ What is the impact of four contexts (four different cities with distinctive institutional and ecological profiles and representing three different countries) on the political mobilisation of Moroccans? 2/ What is the shape of the political mobilisation of Moroccans in the four cities under study and what is its impact on local politics?

2. A note on methodology

2.1. Opting for urban-level research

The research at the origin of the present article sought to highlight local urban situations in Europe. The growing amount of research on policy frameworks established by city decision-makers for dealing with multicultural realities testifies to the increasing relevance of the city as an analytical focus (Ireland 1994, Tillie and Fennema 1999). There is indeed increasing recognition that processes of immigrants' incorporation are shaped by decisive factors at work locally. The city therefore becomes a particularly relevant unit for the kind of empirical investigations proposed here. Another argument in defence of a city-level research focus is that, in countries such as France, the Netherlands and Belgium, the policy interventions of public authorities aimed at enhancing the 'integration' of immigrant ethnic minorities gradually came to address simultaneously the socio-spatial dislocations confronting urban settings. A significant feature of the policy response implemented by European governments on the issue of immigrant integration has been the decentralisation of powers and resources to local authorities. Whereas the regulation of migratory flows has remained a prerogative of governmental and European approaches, the integration part of migration policies has most often been tailored as a response to the ethnic minority policy issues emerging in big cities.

2.2. The selection of cities

Besides time and budgetary limitations,² a number of concerns presided over the selection of the four project-cities. The selection process was actually guided by an attempt to encompass

² For pragmatic reasons of the same nature, I have deliberately avoided taking the capital cities of Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam as units for the case comparisons. Although Moroccans' socio-political activism in Liège, Antwerp, Lille and Utrecht is to a large extent informed by political debates and

a sufficient amount of heterogeneity. In this respect, a preliminary fieldwork ascertained that the four cities offered indeed a relevant empirical context in the sense of being dissimilar,³ non-deviant and offering sufficient material for the study of the political mobilisation of Moroccans. In other words, the four cities met the three criteria of diversity, exemplarity and critical mass. At the same time, serious attention was paid to the issue of comparability in the process of case selection.

The quest for diversity in the profiles of the project-cities is reflected in the final selection as this latter includes two different kinds of former industrial cities (Liège and Lille). Both cities were historically connected to the exploitation of coal by the mining industry, but the city of Lille has quickly turned into a relatively successful service city, while Liège has been caught in economic stagnation. The city of Antwerp provides us with a port city, a city that has an economy featuring a large industrial and commercial base. Finally, with the city of Utrecht, it is an administrative and commercial city which is selected, a city whose economy is typically dominated by the tertiary sector.

Another criterion taken into consideration in the selection was to make a choice of cities that share a comparable experience of being a receiving city for immigrant groups. The four project-cities are, to different extents, historical centres of immigration, which have attracted significant numbers of immigrant workers in the period of massive immigration from the Mediterranean (1963-1974). The final methodological concern in the case selection was to keep a balance between the cities in terms of their population. The decision was made to select four cases that are, without exception, mid-size cities. The fourth criterion for the selection of the cities was the presence of a sufficient Moroccan population. The Moroccan presence is actually comprised within a relatively modest, but still significant compass, ranging between 2.5% and 5.6% of the total population of the four localities.⁴

Table 1: Foreigners and total population of the four cities

	Foreigners	Moroccans	Total population	% of foreigners in the total population	% of Moroccans in the total population
Antwerp	59,397	20,768	447,632	13.2%	4.6%
Liège	32,721	4,752	187,538	17.4%	2.5%
Utrecht	28,527	13,342	235,629	12.0%	5.6%
Lille	16,645	6,260	172,138	9.6%	3.6%

Source: NIS 1999; City of Utrecht - Bestuursinformatie 1995; INSEE 1990.

2.3. The reference population of the study

conflicts originating from Moroccan movements in the capital cities, it was decided here to place the focus on patterns of inclusion/exclusion and on processes of political mobilisation in four smaller cities.

³ King et al. (1994: 129) recall the obvious rule that a selection of case-studies should allow for at least some variation on the dependent variable.

⁴ Although the size of an immigrant ethnic minority is in theory of little importance for inferring any judgement about its capacity to act collectively, it can be asserted here that Moroccans in the four project-cities have a sufficient critical mass. They represent more than a statistical minority as revealed by the number of ethnic organisations they have set up in these four cities.

Among the migrant labour force attracted by European economies before 1974, Moroccans represent one of the most important group. Together with Turkish immigrants, they represent the last immigration flow of unskilled workers who were subject to large-scale recruitment by European industry. Currently, the Moroccan population in Europe numbers more than one million people (OECD 1998). Among non EU-citizens, they are ranked third in size below the citizens of the former Yugoslavia and the Turks.

The selection of Moroccans as the reference population of the study is justified by two additional reasons. The first was to choose groups having had comparable migration trajectories in temporal terms.⁵ Indeed, the selection of immigrant groups having settled in overly divergent time periods would have been an important hurdle for a comparative undertaking, even if such groups shared a similar origin. In this case, it was possible to identify such a temporal commonality in the migration process. According to Belguendouz (1987, 1993), a period of massive emigration from Morocco towards North West European countries is clearly established in the period stretching from 1964 until 1973 (see Bousetta 2001, Chap. 3).

The second reason for the choice of the reference population was to have an immigrant group offering an adequate profile for the European comparative scope of the research.⁶ In this respect, the settlement patterns of Moroccans in Europe was very interesting. Moroccans are indeed probably the most ‘Europeanised’ immigrant population, as they are significantly represented in more than seven EU member States (See Bousetta 2001, chap 4). It is however in the three countries central to this study that the legally established Moroccan population is most represented. Among the more than one million Moroccan immigrants who have settled in Europe, almost three-quarters are permanent residents in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

2.4. The selection of key-respondents

Our data analysis makes use of four analogous, targeted, and structured selections of key-respondents, representing 60 qualitative interviews with 15 key-respondents per city.⁷ In addition to the key respondents, we have approached within each case-context a varying number of informants, namely civil servants, activists and politicians.⁸ The contacts with the informants often took the shape of a formal interview with a questionnaire. However, in many cases, the information was only retrieved through field notes transcribed a posteriori.

The structure of the political elite of Moroccans varies from one city to the other and the number of potential key-respondents we could identify also varied a great deal. However, within the four case-studies, it quickly became apparent that we were systematically led

⁵ “Comparable” should not be taken here as “similar in every respect”.

⁶The major interest in studying Moroccans in Europe comparatively is the possibility to hold background variables relating to the reference group quite constant.

⁷The interviews with the key-respondents lasted on average one and a half hours and were conducted within a period of four years, between March 1995 and June 1999.

⁸ The key-respondents represent the Moroccan socio-political elite and provide the basic interview material of this study. Informants are individuals with key positions in the field, who were interviewed for gaining a better understanding of the different case-study contexts. Considering that we did not have the same intellectual intimacy with the four cases, the role of these interviews was to feed the research with qualitative contextual data helping us understand the logic of the actors in the field.

towards similar profiles of key-respondents. Three categories of actors emerged from our fieldwork: Moroccan individuals mobilised within ethnic and religious self-organisation (Moroccan and Islamic self-organisations and informal organisations); respondents holding a mediatory position (such as multicultural social workers and members of consultative bodies), and people involved in host society's institutions (such as political parties, trade-unions and multicultural NGOs). These three categories may also be defined as associations *of* migrants and ethnic minorities, organisation *for* migrants and ethnic minorities, and non-ethnic organisations. Building upon this observation, we choose our 60 key-respondents so as to build up a structured selection with analogous diversity. In the four cases analysed, the key-figures were indeed selected so as to reflect in a structured way the three main profiles previously identified.

Inside each category of key-respondents, we tried to select the interviewees providing the largest diversity in terms of socio-political profiles. This broad coverage in the selection of the respondents was driven by the objective of having the most comprehensive picture of the socio-political dynamics at work within and across these communities. For example, within non-ethnic organisations, the respondents were selected, as far as possible, from distinctive political parties, distinctive trade unions and so forth.

The 60 key-respondents represent a targeted selection of individuals identified on the basis of the reputation-method (Wolfinger 1960).⁹ In other words, we selected our respondents on the basis of their past and/or present involvement in collective action. All the key-respondents of this research were chosen from among the most notorious figures within Moroccan communities in the four cities. The selection was linked to the reputation of the respondents — always of Moroccan origin whatever their actual nationality — beyond the circle of her/his private sphere. In this research, we are concerned with the respondents' representativeness, not so much from a strict sociological point of view, as from a socio-political one. The emphasis is not on the representativity of the respondents according to their socio-professional, gender, or educational background, but rather according to their role in socio-political dynamics.

⁹ During the sixties and seventies, the reputation method was widely used by American political scientists in their studies of community power. Two competing schools, namely the elitist and the pluralist, used this methodology (Perucci and Pilisuk 1970) and both emphasised the need for using the method with due care, as reputation for power/influence does not necessarily mean real power/influence.

3. The diversity of post-immigration circumstances in European cities.

3.A. Introduction

The exploration of the urban environment provided in this chapter shows that city decision-makers and ethnic minority actors operate in contexts featuring a large number of differences. The local urban environment creates very different systems of opportunities and constraints for ethnic minorities. A comparison of the four cities against a number of urban variables reveal a picture of profound diversity. However, what is noticeable from the following analysis is that there is often more intra-national differences than international ones. In other words, the two Belgian cities, Antwerp and Liège, do not necessarily converge. As will be shown further, it is even the case that Antwerp and Utrecht, on the one hand, and Liège and Lille, on the other hand, are forming two distinctive clusters on a large number of variables.

3.B. The economic background of the four cities

On the whole, the two cities that need to be singled out for the respective higher and lower potentialities of their urban economy are Utrecht and Liège. On a number of economic indicators ranging from the structure of the local economy and the state of municipal finances to the level of unemployment, Utrecht tends to perform better than the three other cities. Liège, on the other hand, reaches almost systematically the most critical juncture, marked as it is by worse economic conditions. For instance, whereas Utrecht has the lowest level of unemployment at 7%, Liège features a level of unemployment of 26.3%, and the city is deeply affected by the weakness of the share of the private sector.

This economic weakness is also evident when Liège is compared to Lille and Antwerp. In terms of economic profiles, it has been noted that both Liège and Lille are former industrial cities that have historically had strong connections with the mining industry. After 1970, and more rapidly after 1980, the economies of the two cities evolved in different directions. While Lille has successfully transformed into a service city, Liège was caught in the economic stagnation that followed the city's industrial decline. At the Belgian intra-national level, a comparison of the economic fortunes of Liège and Antwerp shows that most economic indicators are slightly more favourable in Antwerp than in Liège. To recall but one indicator, the level of unemployment in Liège is twice the level of unemployment in Antwerp. The consequences for immigrant minorities are quite clear. While the first generation of immigrants made a major contribution to the industrial development of Liège, such as in the mining sector and the heavy industry, the current economic conditions of the city offer little prospects for following generations.

In the three other cities, the situation seems a little more promising on the short term. If consideration is only given to the decrease of their levels of unemployment, the cities of Antwerp and Lille have clearly entered a period of economic recovery. In Utrecht, there are evidence of a similar growth of the local economy since 1994. There are in Utrecht unambiguous indications that the combination of the economic recovery and the pro-active national employment policies brought significant results in terms of reducing the level of unemployment of ethnic minorities. In Lille and Antwerp, it is more difficult to draw a clear picture in terms of the performances of ethnic minorities in the urban economy, but what is clearly established is a decrease of unemployment rates for the whole population. While understanding the full range of economic implications for ethnic minorities is beyond the

scope of this study, previous research indicates that the development of a service urban economy on the remains of an industrial base tends, to some extent, to foster a segmented inclusion of ethnic minorities at the lowest and most vulnerable strata of the labour market (Cross 1994). Therefore, the improvement of the economic fortunes of a given city may not be systematically seen to benefit ethnic minorities.

3.C. The political background

If Antwerp and Liège are perfectly comparable in terms of the political organisation of their municipal life, Utrecht and Lille, on the contrary, diverge in several aspects. These two latter cities appear to share a relatively low degree of municipal autonomy or, in other words, they belong to countries featuring high degrees of territorial centralisation. The major consequence of this is that both cities are broadly open to national policy influence.

Another consequential difference between the two Belgian cities on the one hand and Utrecht and Lille is the degree of indebtedment of their municipalities. Although Belgian cities are quite autonomous both administratively and financially, the examples of Antwerp and Liège shows that this large autonomy was of little use in the field of the inclusion of migrant and ethnic minorities, among other things, because of the state of their municipal finances. The budgets of the local authorities of both cities have been during the eighties heavily affected by debt and this went in parallel with a gradual loss of the most dynamic and richest segments of their population. From a fiscal point of view, the process of suburbanisation of these categories of citizens was dramatically detrimental. Therefore, the pressure for keeping low public investment in social policies, let alone devising new multicultural policies, has been very high, and certainly higher in Belgian cities than in French and Dutch cities.

In terms of electoral competition, it is the case that Socialist parties have been the backbones of local coalitions in the four cities, though it is in Lille and Liège that they have the biggest political authority. In Lille, the electoral power of the PS does not face serious challenge by liberal parties in municipal elections¹⁰ and the same holds true for the PS in Liège. Although this latter party lost some of its credentials in the early nineties due to a series of serious political scandals, it remains the first political force in the city and generally attracts above 30% in elections. This also means that finding a political expression on the electoral scene for ethnic minorities is practically unavailable outside the channels of the Socialist party.

3.D. The factor 'extreme right' and its impact on municipal life

A significant difference between Antwerp and the three other cities concerns the politics of the extreme right (table 2). In Antwerp, the massive electoral success of the extreme right has provoked the collapse of the political equilibrium between the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrat Party on which the management of the city was historically based. The extreme right mobilisation has reached an unparalleled political representation in the City Council of Antwerp. This differs widely from the case in Liège, where the extreme right was never in a position to make an electoral impact comparable to that of the Vlaams Blok in Antwerp. The two extremist parties in Liège, Agir and Front National, together polled 11.5% of the vote in last municipal election. Although this result is undoubtedly significant, the mark of the extreme right on municipal politics is weak. The political and organisational deficits of

¹⁰In national elections, on the opposite, the right wing and centre parties have regularly challenged the socialist party and its allies.

these extremist parties in Liège are the reasons which led to their marginalisation. In Lille, the extreme-right is not a negligible electoral force with 11.5% of the vote at the local elections of 1995. In terms of municipal decision-making, the extreme right has nevertheless remained powerless, even though the French *Front National* is a much more coherent party than the Walloon *Agir* and *Front National*. Therefore, it is also important to note that the limited influence of the French *Front National* in Lille is also partly connected to the electoral majority system and to the enduring political dominance of the *Socialist party*. In Utrecht, the political parties of the extreme-right have, like in Liège, a weak capacity of political mobilisation, but their electoral decline has been here much more pronounced.

Table 2: Results of extreme right parties in last local elections in % and seats (before 2000)

	%	Seats	Total number of seats at stake
Antwerp	28.5%	18	55
Liège	11.5%	4	49
Utrecht	3.0%	1	45
Lille	11.5%	3	59

Source: Belgian Ministry of Interior, Municipality of Lille, Municipality of Utrecht.

3.E. Immigration and urban ecology

The analysis of immigration cycles towards the four cities shows that these cities have been shaped by immigration to different extents. Immigration shaped the fabric of cities such as Lille and Liège more deeply than either Antwerp or Utrecht. Utrecht has actually become an immigration city only in the third quarter of this century.

A rounded comparative historical analysis of immigration cycles actually needs to distinguish between time periods and categories of immigrants. Considering the issue of time, one can distinguish four important periods. The first period starts with the century and ends with WWI. The second period is the *interbellum* between 1918 and 1939. One can then identify a third period between 1945 and 1960 and a fourth one after 1960.¹¹ The following concentrates mainly on the two last periods, as they are the most significant periods of immigration in quantitative terms and those corresponding to the periods of reconstruction and industrial growth. Turning to the categories of immigrants, these may be distinguished according to the kind of immigration flows and defined by four clusters: immigration from neighbouring countries, immigration from other advanced industrial countries, immigration from southern European countries and immigration from non-European Mediterranean countries. The following concentrates on the last two categories, because in the period after 1945, Mediterranean immigrants are more likely to fit the profile of industrial immigrants. Originally, these groups came as a temporary labour force in the framework of the European industrial development and have gradually settled for good and begun to raise families.

These distinctions are made in order to stress one fundamental similarity and one fundamental difference between the four cities. The similarity is that the current composition of the four cities is characterised by the fact that Mediterranean groups, both Europeans and non-Europeans, outnumber any other foreign group. The difference is that the pathway that generated this composition was not historically the same. While Antwerp and Utrecht have experienced immigration in relatively short periods of time and hosted essentially one category of industrial immigrants, namely non-European Mediterraneans (table 3), Lille and

¹¹ An analysis of asylum migration cycles in the post 1974 period is beyond the scope of this research.

Liège had a longer tradition of immigration and a larger representation of profiles (migrants from neighbouring countries, migrants from Mediterranean countries, etc). In Antwerp, the immigration from neighbouring countries and from other advanced industrial countries was far greater than the immigration from the Mediterranean until 1980. The industrial immigration of Mediterranean groups, in this case non-Europeans, became dominant only after 1980. In Utrecht, there was no statistically significant immigration before 1960. Immigration effectively started during the seventies and is composed almost exclusively of non-European Mediterraneans (Moroccans and Turks). To the contrary, the four categories of immigrants, and more specifically Mediterranean industrial immigrants, are represented in Liège and Lille since 1945.

Table 3: Industrial immigration by period and most represented nationality groups in the four cities

	1945-1960	1960-1980
Antwerp	/	1. Moroccans 2. Turks 3. Spanish
Utrecht	/	1. Moroccans 2. Turks
Liège	1. Italians 2. Poles 3. Spanish 4. Yugoslavs 5. Greeks	1. Italians 2. Spanish 3. Moroccans 4. Turks 5. Algerians
Lille	1. Italians 2. Algerians 3. Spanish 4. Poles 5. Moroccans	1. Moroccans 2. Algerians 3. Portuguese 4. Italians 5. Spanish

Source: NIS 1999; City of Utrecht - Bestuursinformatie 1995; INSEE 1990.

Analysing the spatial distribution of both the foreign population and of the Moroccans compared to the French, Dutch and Belgian populations is also quite interesting and indicate that foreigners are more likely to reside within a disadvantaged urban environment. Within these four cities, there is usually a settlement pattern towards the less favoured neighbourhoods. The four cities are confronted, to varying degrees, with a problematic configuration of ethnicity, socio-economic disadvantage and space. The districts of Borgerhout and Antwerp-centre in Antwerp; the neighbourhoods of Bressoux and Droxhe in Liège; Overvecht, Zuilen, Kanaleneiland in Utrecht; and Moulins, Wazemmes and Lille-Sud in Lille are typical examples of socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods with a high representation of foreigners and also very generally a high representation of Moroccans.

Beyond this observation, a consequential difference between the four cities is the regional pattern of settlement. In this respect, this analysis yields the formulation of three observations. The first is that foreigners are more concentrated in urban centres than are nationals. The difference between foreigners and the autochthonous population is systematic (table 4). The second observation is that the situation of Antwerp and Utrecht diverge from both Lille and Liège. Looking at the settlement of foreigners, the more urban patterns are in Antwerp and Utrecht: 55.4% v 44.6% urban-rural in Antwerp and 50.7% v 49.3% in Utrecht. The less urban patterns can be observed in Liège (28.7% v 71.3%) and Lille (12.2% v 87.8%; 32% v 68% for the conurbation Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing). The third observation is that the pattern of

settlement of Moroccans corresponds to, and even accentuates, the overall pattern of foreigners except in one case: Liège. In Antwerp, Moroccans are established in urban centres in a proportion of 74% v 26% and the proportion is 60% v 40% in Utrecht. In Lille, the proportion is 17.5% v 82.5% and 26% v 74% for the conurbation Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing. Moroccans in Liège were expected to follow the same non-urban pattern than that of Lille. This is not the case. Moroccans in Liège feature a much more urban pattern of settlement than expected, given the overall findings. The proportion of urban-rural settlement for Moroccans in Liège is 58% v 42%, a result that comes close to the settlement patterns of Moroccans in Utrecht. Considering the spreading of the foreign population and the locations of the former mining industry, a more accentuated rural pattern of settlement would have seemed more logical, although there is no straightforward explanation for this finding.

From these observations, it can be argued that the settlement pattern of foreigners is more diffused in former industrial regions closely connected to the mining industry like Lille and Liège. It is usually a rather 'rurban' pattern of settlement reflecting the former locations of industrial activity. In a port city like Antwerp and in an administrative commercial city like Utrecht, the pattern of settlement of foreigners is much more urban. These different realities partly explain why in these four cities, the policy approaches to immigration and ethnic minorities have taken different roads.

Table 4: Percentage of Moroccans, foreigners, and nationals resident in the city compared to the province or Département.

	% nationals	% Moroccans	% foreigners	% total population
Antwerp	25.3%	74.0%	55.4%	27.3%
Liège	17.1%	57.7%	28.7%	18.4%
Utrecht	20.4%	60.6%	50.7%	22.0%
Lille	6.5%	17.5%	12.2%	6.8%
Conurbation Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing	13.3%	26.0%	32.0%	14.3%

Source: NIS 1999; CBS 1998; 1995; INSEE 1990.

3.F. The policy environment

A distinction is often made between general (i.e. universalistic) versus specific policy-approaches in the management of post-immigration policy-issues. Many observers have used this categorisation as a tool for distinguishing differences in style and content of local policies on a European level (Lapeyronnie *et al.*, 1992). Devising specific policies based on an explicit recognition of ethnic groups is generally the option of countries identifying themselves as 'multicultural', while general policy-frameworks are more common in countries influenced by assimilationist political philosophies in which ethnic differences are considered a private matter with no bearing on the public sphere. From a close analysis of the local policies initiated by the four municipal authorities, there are grounds to argue that the distinction between general and specific policies is a gross oversimplification. Both general and specific approaches are always somewhat entwined. For instance, it is clearly the case that general policy-frameworks such as the French territorial town policy have a specific, albeit implicit, agenda when it comes to implementation in the field. Specific frameworks on the other hand, such as the Belgian *Federal Fund for Immigrant Policy*, have regularly served non-specific objectives such as the funding of neighbourhood youth infrastructures and projects in the field of education. These observations therefore plead for not considering the distinction between general and specific policy-approach as two options that are mutually exclusive. Policy-

makers are generally not confronted with a binary choice, but with a tension in which specific and universalistic options represent two ideal typical poles allowing for a wide variety of compositions. With these precautions in mind, it can be observed that a specific orientation to local policy frameworks is much more pronounced in Utrecht than in any of the three other cities. Of the four cities, the Utrecht policy is the one featuring the largest scope and the highest level of coordination. Utrecht has adopted specific measures aimed at increasing the position of ethnic minorities in a wide number of fields (such as employment, housing, education, culture and self-organisation). Since 1995, the city of Antwerp has also followed the specific group approach, under the influence of regional policies, among other things. In Liège and Lille, specific policy frameworks are much less pronounced, but it is in Lille that the universalistic strategy focused on territories is most advanced. These are important lessons to bear in mind in order to assess how institutional practices can affect the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities. This is precisely what will be done in the next section.

4. Post-immigration politics and the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities¹²

4.A. Introduction

Up until now, I have generally preferred the concept of political mobilisation to the concept of political participation. This distinction refers to two different ways of studying political action. Within the literature, the concept of political participation is usually employed to account for individual behaviour (Barnes and Kaas 1979). Within this framework, what is sought for is an explanation of the relation between individual citizens and politics through the channel of the vote. Political participation in this tradition is predominantly focused on the analysis of individual electoral participation at the aggregate level. A very important observation made within this literature is that the concept of participation should be treated with due care. Participating in electoral politics usually implies at the individual level the belief that participating is important and this is all the more true in electoral systems where participation is not compulsory. Talking about ‘participation’ needs to take into account what political scientists call a sense of efficacy among the voters (Verba and Nie 1972). There are clear indications that this sense of efficacy is unevenly spread across social categories. The poor and the underprivileged are also most often less capable of taking advantage of the electoral system. It is precisely at this level that some authors argue that the comparison of the electoral behaviour of the majority population and of ethnic and racial minorities is a misleading exercise, because participation does not refer to the same thing within these two

¹²Studying immigration and related topics from a European point of view raises serious terminological issues. One will often be puzzled by the different definitions given to a similar concept (such as ‘immigrant’), or to the availability of concepts sounding familiar in one language, but used in a different sense in another language (such as the French and English use of the notions of citizenship and nationality), or yet to the lack of corresponding concepts from one language to the other (such as the concept of race or the Dutch concept of *allochtoon*). The use of concepts as neutral as possible is of paramount importance in comparative cross-national studies because it is necessary to find a common language for describing and analysing countries with very distinctive traditions of immigration. The solution adopted in this study is to opt for the lowest common denominator as far as possible. By post-immigration politics, for instance, reference is only made to the social and political conflicts arising from the coexistence of majority and ethnic minority groups of immigrant origin. Contrary to concepts used to qualify similar realities such as integration politics, multicultural politics, or ethnic politics, the notion of post-immigration politics is merely a descriptive category without normative nation-specific implications. It simply denotes a historical situation without implicitly assuming a course of events.

populations (Bobo and Gillam 1990, Junn 1999). What is needed therefore is a broader perspective taking into account other forms of political influence.

Within political studies of ethnic minorities on the European continent, the focus on electoral participation is not widespread except in the UK where such research is very advanced (see for instance Saggar 1998). The reason is in part linked to issues of franchise and to the fact that ethnic minorities have more often been passive objects rather than the real actors of electoral competition. As many members of ethnic groups are not nationals, they are often disenfranchised from active participation in elections,¹³ for instance in terms of voting or standing as candidates. Therefore, the European continental sociology of post-immigration politics has tended to follow a different road by focusing more deeply on non-electoral forms of political involvement. The present study belongs to this research tradition, initiated by the works of Miller (1981) and Withol de Wenden (1988). Central consideration is given to the collective political mobilisation of ethnic minorities. However, the methodology adopted in this study seeks to go beyond a rigid distinction of individual versus collective strategies of political involvement. By focusing on a small scale selection of key-respondents chosen through the reputation-method, this article will allow some lessons to be drawn from both kinds of political strategies.

An important dimension correlated to the analysis of the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities is the observation of the increasing role of particular identities in shaping politics. The upsurge of ethnic conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe since after the fall of the Berlin Wall testifies to the emergence of a politics of identity. It is beyond dispute that the nature of the claims formulated by territorial minorities, or national minorities, are profoundly different from those of ethnic minorities of immigrant origin and, according to Kymlicka's theory of multicultural citizenship, so too are the legitimacy of their claims for group-differentiated rights (Kymlicka 1995). However, the commonality between territorial and immigrant ethnic minorities is that both have thrown into question the integrative capacity of nation States (Joppke 1998). Their political activity has also triggered wide discussions about the capacity of the liberal democratic tradition to accommodate ethnic claims. Current debates in normative political theory have widely documented the tension between liberal democratic principles and group-differentiated demands for recognition within the public space formulated by minorities (Phillips 1995).

A dominant argument in the current literature holds that the shape of the political context is a key variable influencing the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities (Ireland 1994, Statham 1999). Existing research has also emphasised the active role performed by public institutions in the activation of ethnicity in political contentions (Favell 1997, Kastoryano 1996). This study converges with these writings when they emphasise the role of institutions in shaping post-immigration politics. However, it argues that a major weakness in institutional analyses of ethnic minorities' political mobilisation lies in their proclivity to provide what can be called a 'one-dimensional institutionalism'. In other words, differences in the shape of ethnic minorities' political mobilisation is analysed in terms of a simple outcome of different institutional contexts. Our hypothesis here, which is derived from institutional political sociology, holds that institutions have a differentiated impact upon ethnic minority actors according to the level at which political mobilisation is played out. As discussed in the next sections, four concepts are central to this explanatory framework: the field of post-immigration politics, the levels, forms and performances of political mobilisation.

¹³ Utrecht is the one and only city among our four case-study context where foreigners are enfranchised for local elections.

4.B. Levels of political mobilisation

The field of post-immigration politics may be conceived of as being divided into three distinctive analytical levels, consisting of the level of state's political power, the organisational political level, and the infra-political level. By levels of political mobilisation, we do not refer to administrative levels of power such as the level of the municipality, the region, or the nation-state. Although the latter vocabulary is more usual in political science, use is made of a categorisation that only makes reference to the nature of political activity, what is essential here is the degree of publicity of political debates and the degree of interaction between state actors and organisational actors (ethnic and non-ethnic).¹⁴

The first level of the framework is the level of state-centric politics. It corresponds to the fundamental and complex distinction between state and society. A broad range of actors are involved at this level. State actors operating here are indeed internally differentiated between levels of government and between executive and legislative branches. From a conceptual point of view, it is sufficient to maintain that the various actors who account for a share in the state's coercive power and authority may be simply conceptualised as 'state actors'. What is important for the present purpose is to underline that state actors all converge to create and implement institutional norms and public policies.

The organisational level is the second layer of political mobilisation that needs to be explicitly identified for the present analytical purposes. It consists of the realm of open political contention, competition and co-operation between organised groups and state actors. It is at this level that mobilised actors interact openly with political institutions and try to gain access to the policy process either in a conflictual or cooperative way. It is indeed at the juncture of the spheres of the state's political power and that of organisations that policy-communities and policy networks are formed.¹⁵ The element of openness and visibility is one important defining element of the organisational sphere. Empirically, this is reflected in the acceptance of control mechanisms established by the state. Actors involved at this level must indeed comply with the formal rules, the norms and routines of a public space. Without being exhaustive, an ethnic actor's positioning within the organisational level will depend upon the latter's compliance with institutional rules such as the laws regulating the right of association and the more specific requirements linked to the allocation by the state of public resources. In sum, the level of transparency — in relation to the public and the media — is variable in degree, but should necessarily exist. The actors involved in the organisational political sphere are most often formally organised as voluntary associations, inter-organisational co-ordinating bodies, professional organisations, branches of trade unions, and similar.

The third layer of the proposed framework is the level of infra-politics. Traditionally, the concept of infra-politics has been employed as an analytical tool for understanding the politics of powerless and marginal groups. The present study's understanding of the concept follows the same tradition and derives from the work of Scott (Scott 1990). The concept is freely applied to account for the whole bulk of political action acted offstage by individuals and

¹⁴ Insofar as we are mainly concerned with local politics, this vocabulary is not likely to lead to any confusion.

¹⁵ The distinction between policy communities and policy networks is borrowed from Marsh and Rhodes (1992). Reference is made to the degree of internal cohesion. Whereas policy communities are strongly integrated, policy networks tend to involve participants in a more flexible way.

groups within immigrant minority communities. An important difference between the infra-political level and the organisational level is the ideological structure of the socio-political competition. The infra-political sphere of ethnic communities is structured according to a number of community-specific ideological divides, which may be significantly distinct from the ideological divides structuring politics within the organisational sphere. Homeland related conflict is the most illustrative case in point. Infra-politics is also identifiable by the more opaque mode of political operation it requires. It remains generally obscure to the public eye. At this level, the strategies of the actors involved are oriented towards the control of community agenda. What is indeed at stake for collective actors evolving infra-politically is how to increase their power and control over community resources, networks and organisations without necessarily conflicting, competing, or co-operating within the broader institutionalised political system (see Breton 1983).

4.C. Forms of political mobilisation

The forms of political mobilisation are the strategic choices open to ethnic minority actors. Charles Tilly (1986) once labelled the sum of these strategies of resistance and of political assertiveness a ‘*répertoire of collective action*’. The point of departure of this research is to describe and analyse three main forms of political mobilisation: political mobilisation within ethnic associations, intermediation, and political mobilisation within non-ethnic associations. These forms of political mobilisation correspond to the profile of our selection of key respondents. This initial approach can, however, be refined in order to reflect the diversity of our respondents’ political activity.

In order to provide a more refined analytical perspective on the forms of political mobilisation experienced by Moroccans, these can be distinguished, from another angle, into seven non-mutually exclusive forms according to the political level at which they take place (see Figure 1). The forms of political mobilisation need also to be analysed in parallel to the strategies of state actors. This research is actually contending that the forms of political mobilisation are well correlated to some extent to the strategies of State actors. However, no uni-dimensional institutional effect, let alone a causal relationship, can be advocated between the strategies of ethnic minority actors and those of the State.

Figure 1: An interpretative framework of the field of post-immigration politics.

Three levels of local politics	Three levels of political contention	Forms of political mobilisation	Strategic options of local decision-makers
Macro-level	State-centric politics	1. Intermediation in the public sector 2. Consultation 3. Electoral mobilisation	1. Universalistic policy-approach 2. Specific policy approach 3. Absence of policy
Meso-level	Organisational politics	4. Integrationist organisational incorporation 5. Organisational protest.	4. Policy-community 5. Policy-network 6. Absence of organisational channels of negotiation and communication.

Micro-level	Infra-politics	6. Infra-political resistance 7. Quiescence	7. Repression 8. Laissez-faire
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5. Convergence and divergence in the forms of political mobilisation of Moroccans in the four cities.

At the state-centric level, three forms of political involvement may be generally isolated, namely intermediation in the public sector, consultation, and electoral mobilisation. The reason why these strategies are defined as state-centric is due to the fact that they bypass the traditional channels of collective organisation to engage in a straightforward manner in political interactions with state actors. The common characteristics of state-centric strategies are that they are not necessarily collective ones. The three forms of political mobilisation defined as state-centric can indeed be negatively defined in comparison with meso-level strategies. Contrary to the latter, they do not necessarily feature the three definitional characteristics which are typically attached to organisational political action, namely independence, permanence, and formal structure.

As shown above, the whole structure of the field of post-immigration politics is actually different from one city to the other. As a consequence, the participatory opportunities open to ethnic minorities have a different shape and this has a tangible impact on how they mobilise at both the state-centric and organisational level (not at the infra-political !). Although there is no mechanical impact at work, it can be shown that intermediation in the public sector, including professional intermediation, is more widespread in cities providing well-developed immigrant policies such as Utrecht (see table 5). In other words, well developed immigrant-policies have a higher propensity to co-opt the elite of ethnic communities than others.

Table 5: Degree of professionalism-volunteering of the selection of Moroccan key-respondents in Antwerp, Liège, Utrecht, and Lille in relation to immigrant policy (1995-1999)

	Antwerp	Liège	Utrecht	Lille	Total
Full time	8	3	11	6	28
Part time	3	4	2	4	13
Sub-total professionals	11	7	13	10	41
Employment without connection with immigrant policy	2	8	0	3	13
Not professionally active (students, retired, unemployed)	2	0	2	2	6
Sub-total volunteers	4	8	2	5	19
Total	15	15	15	15	60

Source: Boussetta 2001

Consultation is a declining strategy of political mobilisation. This is the lesson allowed by the analysis of the local immigrant local consultative councils, such as those of Antwerp and Liège. In the light of this overall weakness of consultation bodies, it comes as no surprise to observe that consultation has not triggered an important political activity among our respondents.

Electoral mobilisation is, on the contrary, an increasingly important strategy of political mobilisation. However, the ethnic political activity within the electoral arena seems more dependent on the institutional dynamics internal to political parties, than to local immigrant policies. It is for instance startling to note that the enfranchisement of Moroccans in the

Netherlands did not lead to a significantly more important electoral political activity among Moroccan elites in Utrecht. What is also noticeable is that the electoral channel of involvement has not yet led to a significant increase in numerical representation. Over the last electoral cycles, only 1 in 10 Moroccan candidate has been elected.

Table 6 : An evaluation of the electoral mobilisation of Moroccans as candidates

	Big parties		Share of women		Successful candidacies		Total number of candidacies	Electoral cycle
	Abs	%	Abs	%	Abs.	%	Abs.	-
Antwerp	23	51%	29	64%	4	9%	45	1988-1999
Liège	6	27%	6	27%	1	4%	22	1988-1999
Utrecht	22	92%	3	13%	9	37%	24	1990-1998
Lille	17	26%	22	33%	2	3%	65	1993-1998
Total	68	43%	60	38%	16	10%	156	-

Source: Boussetta 2001: 326

At the organisational political level, there are two forms of political mobilisation, namely integrationist political incorporation and organisational protest. By integrationist political incorporation, we refer here to the co-operative mobilisation of an organisational actor with state actors. This strategy generally takes the form of active participation either within policy communities or within policy networks. The notion of ‘integrationist’ is used to refer to the fact that when ethnic associations pursue this strategy, it usually involves a more or less explicit adherence to the policy-objectives defined by local state actors and/or by the policy community or network on their part. The other strategy may be termed organisational protest. It is a form of oppositional politics using conventional political methods. It necessarily involves an open confrontation with state actors, which generally takes the form of a challenge to their policy-options, but does not feature a character of mass involvement. These two forms of mobilisation are defined by the fact that they hinge on collective actors who are formally organised, structurally independent in the legal sense (not necessarily in the political sense), and who are a vehicle for continued mobilisation over time.¹⁶

As discussed above, policy strategies of municipal state actors may be grossly defined as either universalistic or specific. In the first variant, state actors seek to target ethnic minorities as part of underprivileged groups in society, and they generally focus on socioeconomic or territorial processes. By specific policies, reference was made to policies targeting ethnic groups of immigrant origin on the basis of their ethnic backgrounds. Positioning the policies of the four local authorities on a universal/specific scale would place Utrecht and Lille at two opposite ends and Antwerp and Liège in-between.

¹⁶Obviously, it is empirically difficult to disentangle the two ideal-type strategies that we identify. Among our respondents, those who used this strategy most consistently are the respondents of the secularist left in Lille. But most often, our analysis suggest that ethnic minority organisational actors usually tend to play both cards according to their objectives. The same organisation can simultaneously co-operate and conflict with public authorities either within the same policy domain or in different ones.

There is no doubt that the local immigrant policies of local state actors, either specific or universalistic, have influenced patterns of interaction with ethnic minority actors. What the experience of Moroccans suggests is that local policy networks and communities have tended to favour certain types of involvement and specific strategies of identity constructions. In Antwerp, for instance, the combination of the local integration policy and of the Flemish regional policy of support to migrants self-organisation has given political centrality to the federation of immigrant associations (FMV, FMDO, and VOEM), which base their political mobilisation on a vertical integration of a large number of local ethnic associations. In Utrecht, such vertical ethnic integration is also observable, though it has been central to the field for a longer period of time. Associations such as AMMU and VDMN (former KMANU) have always played a central role of political representation for the Moroccan community before the municipality. In Liège, the mobilisation of Moroccans in the organisational public sphere has followed the lines of multi-cultural integration with other ethnic and other Belgian solidarity groups. Finally, if local institutions had an effect on the political mobilisation of Moroccans in Lille, it was clearly in the sense of stimulating the emergence of territorially-based identities, such as those connected of decaying neighbourhoods.

At the infra-political level, two approaches may be theoretically identified, although one is out of gaze.¹⁷ By infra-political resistance, reference is made to the collective strategies taking place within community networks, within both formal and informal organisations. Infra-political resistance may be the outcome either of deliberate isolation or of exclusion by state actors. The infra-political level has an important political dimension because it provides the political space in which new ideological movements mature before entering the organisational political sphere. In a sense, infra-political activities have a good predictive power of the future shape of mobilisation of ethnic groups. As shown by the example of the political mobilisation of mosques for the elections to the Belgian Islamic Chief Organ, infra-political mobilisation may, under certain circumstances, turn into political strategies within the public political sphere (Bousetta 2000).

It is of particular importance when discussing the infra-political mobilisation of ethnic minorities not to conflate them with homeland oriented mobilisations. Infra-political mobilisation overlaps them to a certain extent but is clearly broader. Homeland oriented political activities are a component of the infra-political world of ethnic minorities and not the converse. Homeland political parties and trade unions have found a great deal of support among Moroccan emigrants communities. However, compared to other ethnic minority communities such as Italians or Turks (Martiniello 1992, Manço 2000), the organisational political role of homeland political parties and trade unions has been much less important, largely due to the role of diplomatic authorities in refraining political action among Moroccans.¹⁸ Homeland political conflicts have played an important role in structuring the internal politics of the community. They have acted as a school of political socialisation for a number of activists, notably in our selection of key-respondents. This is most obvious among the secularist left, but it is also evident among the Amazigh movement, among women associations, and Islamic associations. Opposing homeland political mobilisation with local

¹⁷Quiescence is an exceptional case for any social group. Very few groups in society are entirely passive. Quiescence corresponds to the theoretical situation where collective action within civil society is made irrelevant because all collective needs are met by state provisions.

¹⁸To mention one example, one should recall that only a very tiny minority of associations identified by the present study is hierarchically connected to a transnational mother organisation in the country of origin, which is a very distinctive sociological feature in comparison to other immigrant communities.

ones becomes to a large extent inadequate, because both are deeply entwined. The idea of an infra-political action is much more apt in terms of addressing the current realities of ethnic minority communities.

6. The performances of Moroccans' political mobilisation

In a comparative study of France, Germany, and the Netherlands, Virginie Guiraudon emphasises the paradox that although xenophobic and hostile reaction to the immigrant minority presence has gained enormous support among European populations and electorates, the position of the former in terms of access to citizenship rights has generally improved in the post-war period (Guiraudon 1998). Looking at the long historical perspective, it is indeed a noticeable finding that democratic institutions have generally managed to preserve themselves from the xenophobic and far-right politics and have developed policies aimed at increasing the social, economic, and cultural opportunities of ethnic minorities. There is certainly room for contention about the progress made by immigrant minorities in terms of citizenship rights and in terms of struggling against discriminatory practices, but, in spite of these dimensions, the paradox illuminated by Guiraudon is all the more startling when considering the patterns of political reaction implemented by ethnic minorities.

From the vantage point of the present analysis of Moroccans, one can observe that a great deal of the political mobilisation of Moroccans has been historically infra-political and in large part disconnected from public political issues and this is still the case to a large extent. Among our 60 respondents, only a third report that they have frequent contact with city decision-makers (Bousetta 2001: 268). In the same time, it is true to say that an increasing number of Moroccan associations have gradually turned their focus to local political agendas and have become important players in the field of post-immigration politics. Among the 92 Moroccan ethnic associations identified in the four cities, a number have managed to establish and legitimise themselves as key partners of the four municipal authorities. However, even when they moved to the public political sphere, they have remained characterised by a number of weaknesses, the most apparent being the internal divisions and the clear lack of co-ordination. Another weakness, which is not limited to the strategies of ethnic associations but which is characteristic of most of the Moroccan socio-political elite, is that they have increased their political performances within a very specific area of local politics. The field of post-immigration politics is actually a subordinated field in local politics. Moreover, it is a political arena which often suffers from symbolic disqualification. Therefore, this leads to the conclusion that the socio-political elite of ethnic minorities remains to a large extent cut off from the mainstream dynamics of urban development at work in European cities.

The performances of the political mobilisation of ethnic minorities cannot not only be assessed from the perspective of the distribution of political goods. They also need to include consideration of the non-material symbolic dimension of political interactions. In this respect, we mentioned above that local approaches to immigrant policy varies enormously. The politicisation of the ethnic minority presence is quite different in a city like Utrecht than it is in Lille. While in the Dutch case context the *problematique* of ethnic diversity is a component of the democratic political debate, until recently this has been the converse in the three other cases. In political systems seeking to depoliticise post-immigration issues such as Liège, Lille, or Antwerp before 1994, ethnic minority actors have generally had more difficulties in establishing and legitimising themselves as political actors. As perceived early on by Crowley (1993), ethnic minorities face more serious difficulties in legitimising themselves as political

actors in political systems actively seeking to depoliticise post-immigration issues than in political systems where these are openly played out in the framework of democratic political institutions, as was the case in Utrecht. Depoliticisation weakens the capacity of ethnic minorities to emerge as political actors. In that it seeks to keep ethnicity and post-immigration issues out of political public debate, the politics of depoliticisation can actually be defined as the opposite end to the politics of multicultural recognition advocated by a number of political theorists (Taylor 1994)

Parallel to the issue of politicisation-depoliticisation, our analysis suggests that the social construction of ethnic minorities in the public debate is also an important element insofar as the policies providing discursive recognition of ethnic groups will tend to elicit public political reactions about ethnicity, and will facilitate the construction of ethnic political actors. When territory or class experience serve as a metonymic definition of ethnic diversity, the emergence of ethnic political actors in the organisational political sphere has generally been inhibited. As illustrated by the experience of Moroccans in Lille, other identity constructions will be elaborated by ethnic minorities in the public debate and the relevance of ethnicity will remain at best infra-political. What the experience of Liège in relation to the same issue shows is that the dilution of ethnicity in universal discourses has tended to place ethnic minority actors in competition with non-ethnic solidarity organisations controlled by the majority. All this confirms that the position of ethnic minorities in public political debates has been articulated quite differently in the four project-cities, but it also suggests that increasing the performances of political mobilisation has to involve an increasing control over the way in which one's group is ideologically and discursively constructed.

On the whole, the foregoing suggest a very negative assessment of the political performances of Moroccans. But as perceptively seen by Guiraudon, it would be unsafe simply to equate the weak autonomous performances of ethnic minorities, including Moroccans who, it should be recalled, represent one of the largest groups of non-EU origin within the EU, with powerlessness. The main reason explaining Guiraudon's paradox is the intervention of third parties. Ethnic minorities have actually been the main beneficiaries of a significant number of public political struggles led by 'white liberals', namely solidarity organisations, academics, semi-public organisations, and leftist political parties.

The other main reason explaining this finding is that the phenomenon of collective defiance, such as the urban riots which happened in French and Belgian cities, have indirectly contributed to maintain post-immigration political issues on the agenda. For methodological reasons, our analysis was not apt to address the issue of urban collective defiance up front. This was nevertheless analysed by many respondents as the main stimulus behind national and local policy developments. The threat to social peace inherent in urban violent unrests make it difficult to local decision-makers in such mid size European cities to deflect their attention from the potential for instability and violence in the underprivileged urban neighbourhoods.

From a normative multicultural perspective, this is obviously far from satisfactory. Any multiculturalist would not only argue that the substantive claims of ethnic minorities need to be accommodated, but also that their role as distinct political actors in the public sphere should be acknowledged. Yet from the analytical perspective developed here, one can only conclude that the response of Moroccans to their social, economic and political marginalisation has of course consisted in public political action to some extent, but has very often been the organisation of infra-political structures of resistance. The exclusionary

dynamics to which they were confronted did not lead to political quiescence, but to this very specific mode of socio-political organisation.

7. Conclusion

The most striking finding of this study may be stated as follows: although the four cities have experienced very diverse post-immigration circumstances, the case-study of the political mobilisation of Moroccans reveal a number of puzzling similarities. The central one is that their mobilisation has had a very weak impact on the course of local policies. The description and analysis of the political activity of our key-respondents show contrasted, but meagre performances. As far as ethnic associations are concerned, these have featured important political activity internal to the ethnic community and much less in mainstream politics. Although a number of Moroccan ethnic associations have recently emerged as socio-political actors within the public political sphere, the vast majority of them remain active within infra-political community networks. As far electoral mobilisation is concerned, we observed that this is an emerging phenomenon, but it is still too early to assess its performances comprehensively. Up until now, however, the success of Moroccan politicians have been quite limited. Out of 156 candidacies identified in local, regional, national and European elections, only 16 were successful across the four cities during the electoral cycle 1988-1999.

These findings converge to a certain extent with social movement research holding that collective forms of political mobilisation by social movements generally seem to comply with 'country specific templates' (Tarrow 1989: 4). However, our analysis goes beyond and argues firstly that public institutions (both local and national) cannot be taken as a causal factors of immigrant political activity. While national and local institutions impact on the strategies of identity constructions and on the forms of political mobilisation of ethnic minorities, they do it only to a certain extent and within a specific location of the public political sphere. This leads us to consider that a number of institutional theoretical accounts (i.e. political opportunity structure models) are incomplete. There is a whole sphere of political action acted offstage by ethnic minorities which does not follow institutionalised channels or, to use the words of March and Olsen, the 'rules of appropriateness' of the institutional setting (March and Olsen 1996). This is the reason why similarities between the patterns of political mobilisation of Moroccans are more important at the infra-political level than within the public political sphere.

One of the major concern of this analysis has been to retrieve the infra-political dimension of ethnic processes. Although intra-community political processes have been quite neglected within the field of ethnic and migration studies, it has been argued here that such a focus may enhance our understanding of ethnic politics and provide complementary insights into other variants of institutionalism such as political opportunity structure models. The distinction proposed between infra-political, organisational, and state-centric political mobilisation provides a reasonable explanation for the observation that groups may appear to display weak levels of mobilisation in relation to the general political agenda, but intense levels of mobilisation within community organisations. Within the four cities in which empirical work was conducted, the mobilisation patterns of grassroots ethnic organisations and mosques come closest to the very idea of infra-political dynamics. The recognition of these diverse orientations to political mobilisation has a number of methodological implications. If, as argued here, infra-political action is defined by a relatively more opaque mode of operation, then the objectivation of such phenomena may prove very problematic. Such a problem may be resolved by the implementation of innovative research strategies combining qualitative and

quantitative methods. It would appear, though, that participant observation in the most traditional anthropological sense, remains the most suitable approach for uncovering such practices.

8. Policy challenges

8.A. The challenge of democracy

Analysing the European experience of post-war immigration, Yasemin Soysal has identified a new set of discourses and rights breaking with national models of citizenship. She argues that something of a post-national idea of membership and rights has been radically transforming the traditional notion of citizenship rights being attached to the members of national political communities (1994). While the call for reconceptualising the dynamics of citizenship rights by critically looking at old conceptions of the national identity and of the national political community is persuasive in principle, it captures merely one dimension of the contemporary reconfiguration of political structures and fails to capture the increasing relevance of political processes below the level of the Nation-State. A feature of the contemporary challenge to the Nation-State is indeed what Hall suggestively calls the global cross lateral exchanges below and above the Nation-State (Hall 2000). As this contribution sought to illuminate, it is indeed at the level of cities that some of the major issues for citizenship and democracy are currently at stake. The growing impact of transnationalism and globalisation, central to post-national theories, is far from leading to the city losing its relevance as a locus of post-immigration politics.

In this connection, it is important to recall that immigration has constituted the focal point for a range of political dynamics which represent a cause for concern. As shown by the experience of Antwerp, immigration has represented a key factor in the extreme-right mobilisation. The electoral progression of right-wing extremist parties and the spreading of exclusionary ideologies represents a serious threat to the fundamental values of democracy. As shown above, these trends have been relatively well contained within the four cities, but it is a point of note that the consequences of the extreme-right mobilisation are manifesting themselves most acutely at the level of the local democracy. In the same time, there are compelling arguments for rethinking the meaning of political representation within the boundaries of European Nation-States. Contrary to the British and American experiences, immigrant ethnic communities in European cities raise a very fundamental issue to the functioning of local democracies in terms of franchise. The disenfranchisement of foreigners of non-European origin, especially in local elections, is one key democratic challenge that is being faced by three of four cities reviewed here. As recalled above, Utrecht is the only city where local voting rights have been granted to foreigners. Considering the European-wide enfranchisement of EU citizens for local and European Parliament provided by the Maastricht Treaty, the binding relationship between nationality and political citizenship which persists for foreigners of non-European origin in Belgium and France is coming to represent a major anomaly for the shape and vitality of local democracies. In the long-run, the maintenance of the gap between legally resident populations and electoral constituencies will become increasingly problematic. Addressing this democratic deficit is a key policy-challenge facing European cities.

8.B. The challenge of equality

The challenge of equality has a dual dimension. It is posed at the level of formal citizenship rights and at the level of substantial socio-economic equality. In terms of their legal status, it was shown that Moroccans, and non-EU citizens more generally, have faced serious limitations to their citizenship rights in the three countries. There is no doubt that their situation have gradually improved in the course of the last three decades in terms of civil and social rights. However, and even though the Netherlands has distinguished itself by a liberal attitude in terms of local political rights, it would be overstated to consider that one of the three countries has made a significantly stronger impact in terms of protecting the citizenship rights of immigrant of non-European origin. This is especially true if consideration is paid to the access to residence rights. Therefore, from the perspective of our reference group, cross-national similarities tend to overwhelm differences.

Another important development relates to the fact that international economic processes associated to the post-industrial transition have triggered a reorganisation of urban economies and geographies while simultaneously activating and demarcating ethnic boundaries between the immigrant population and the majority. This phenomenon has resulted in a situation where uneven access to scarce resources has gained significance. The cumulated effect of labour market transformation and the evolution of the residential patterns among urban populations is currently giving rise to the development of spatialised processes of socio-economic segmentation and dislocation. Without being the only group victim of such processes, the position of Moroccans in this area is a real cause for concern. They are methodological limitations to a truly comparative evaluation of the socio-economic position of Moroccans, but existing data do not leave us assume that Moroccans would be significantly better off within one country than another. When looking at data aggregated at the national level, what is found on the opposite is a systematic disadvantage between them and nationals. Once again, a group-centred comparative analysis leads to the conclusion that similarities are clearly more significant than differences.

8.C. The challenge of multiculturalism

The challenge of multiculturalism is the third main challenge as far as post-immigration political coexistence in European cities is concerned. There is no doubt that European cities need to reconsider their approach to ethnic and religious diversity. Up until now, European decision-makers have generally been guided by a kind of reactive approach to an issue that they perceived as transitional. To the exception of Utrecht, the three cities reviewed here have lacked a perceptive sense of policy-anticipation on the issues raised by ethnic minorities. Considering the inequality in terms of citizenship rights and in terms of socio-economic achievements, the challenge of multiculturalism is however a challenge which is considered relatively less urgent in continental European cities.

A key question when debating multiculturalism is to what extent should multiculturalism provide institutional recognition of ethnic and religious differences in terms of group-differentiated rights? According to the perspective adopted in this contribution, there is a genuine necessity to maintain a distinction between ethnicity and culture. How can multiculturalism offer protection to minority cultures without actually privileging factions? Our research findings indicate indeed that an immigrant ethnic group such as Moroccans in Europe, who often claim a common culture, is actually a shorthand for a variety of political actors, articulating a variety of identifications and claims, and located at a variety of positions within the field of post-immigration politics. While some actors have very articulated political identities and claims, it is clearly less the case for a number of other, which may, for instance, be embedded within infra-political networks with less visibility and less bearing on public political process.

If as argued by our institutional perspective, the patterns of political interaction established locally with state actors influence the type of political strategies and claims raised by minorities, then, the institutionalisation of multicultural frameworks allocating group-rights may face two flaws. The first is that if multiculturalism is about a fair institutionalisation of the internal diversity of ethnic communities, it will run the risk of generating a diversity of ethnic political identities which may prove unmanageable in practice. The second potential flaw is that if multiculturalism is about shaping a politics accommodative of monolithic ethnic identities, it is likely to end up being oppressive to some segments in the community and to create minorities within.

9. Scenarios for the future

In his comparative study of France and Germany, Brubaker (1992) concluded that the openness of French citizenship would inexorably provide ethnic minorities in France with more life chances and socio-economic opportunities than their counterparts in Germany. In this statement, Brubaker was merely concerned with the effect of nationality legislation on citizenship rights. Looking more broadly at the experience of Moroccans in the three European societies considered in this study, Brubaker's conclusion cannot be simply confirmed. There is actually a significant and persistent gap between the socio-economic performances of Moroccans on the one hand and of that Belgians, Dutch and French on the other hand (Bousetta 2001). In terms of citizenship rights, we have also argued that similarities often tend to be relatively more important than differences.

Does it mean that the patterns of political inclusion of Moroccans will be similar in the three countries in the long run? There are actually a number of reasons which may leave us to assume that the opposite is as much likely. Although this is not yet the case, the differentiation are likely to significantly increase in the future if and only if European cities keep on making significant investments in terms of immigrant policy-making. In order to justify this statement, one should distinguish between the likely short-term effect and long-term effect of local institutions and environments. In the short term, the infra-political sphere will continue to provide ethnic minority political actors with a political space where they will find the resources to resist institutional exclusion (among other through self-funding, self-help mobilisation, etc.). In the long term, however, one may speculate that infra-political actors will either manage to enter the more public field of organisational political contention, as it is currently the case for very organised infra-political actors such as Moslems, or will be doomed to decline, as many first generation associations of Moroccans have experienced during the last 25 years in the three countries.

In the first scenario, what can be anticipated is an increasing adaptation to the local institutional rules of the game. Involvement within the public political sphere will unavoidably affect the political socialisation and ultimately the political attitudes of ethnic minority actors. In the long run, institutions are likely to transform Moroccan socio-political elites into established players much more likely than their predecessors of the first generation to adapt to institutional opportunities. In terms of strategies of identity construction, institutional political factors are likely to take further pre-eminence and will unavoidably transform old identities into symbolic political resources. In this context, the question which spring to mind is whether it really is a necessity to freeze such identities through rigid multicultural institutional arrangements?

10. Reference

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