



# Immigrant Integration in Federations: the Belgian case

Marco MARTINIELLO

Brussels, 28-29 November 2011

FNRS

Université  
de Liège



Institut des  
Sciences Humaines  
et Sociales



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# INTRODUCTION

5 parts of the presentation:

1. The post-June 2010 political context
2. Migration Trends and Immigrant Origin Population
3. “Philosophies” of integration in a disuniting society
4. Immigrant Integration Policies
5. Conclusive remarks



## 1. The post-June 2010 political context

- Still no federal government
- A center-left Belgian Patriotism VS a center-right Flemish Nationalism
- A plan B ?
- New election in early 2011 ?
- Towards a loose semi-confederation or semi-sovereign states?
- Key point 1: the federal level does not either a leadership role or a coordination role on migration and integration issues
- Key point 2: weakness (absence?) of dialogue and cooperation between federated entities on those issues



## 2. Migration Trends and Immigrant Origin Population

- Migration Data : problem of access and lack of easily accessible integrated data.
- “Ethnic” statistics, integration and anti-discrimination: here too, a North-South divide
- Different migration patterns in the 3 regions
- The number of asylum-seekers relatively stable between 2002 and 2008
- Brussels:
  - 50% of the population born abroad or born to a migrant parents
  - The world is represented but Moroccans account for 13% of the population
  - Unemployment: more than 20% of the active population



### **3. “Philosophies” of integration in a disuniting society**

- Explicit and clear vision of the ideal immigrant integration in Flanders  
VS No explicit structured, coherent vision in Wallonia
- Authoritarian approach in Flanders VS more flexible approaches in Wallonia
- Interesting debates in Brussels on cosmopolitanism and the emergence of new encompassing Brussels identity
- Rising of the discourse about diversity but no thorough discussion about the meaning of diversity. Light diversity or deep diversity ?
- The opposition between a multiculturalist Flanders and an assimilationist Wallonia belongs to the past
- Quest for conformity in both regions
- Conformity to what ? Clear in Flanders, less in Wallonia



## 4. Immigrant integration Policies

- No dialogue, no cooperation or almost:
  - EU conference on Integration on the added value of a regional and local approach, Gent, 25-26 November: no francophone guest
  - Seminar on transversal policies and local approach to integration, Namur, 8-9 November: 1 Flemish guest
  - Reception of the intercultural sessions in the different regions
- New: “Wallonia must develop a compulsory “inburgering” programme” (Erik Van Roumpuy-CD&V)
- Huge difference in budget allocation
- Duties first VS Rights first
- Stress on language, culture and values is stronger in Flanders



## 5.

## Conclusion

- What does the Belgian story tell us about developments in the EU ?
- What does it tell us about the links between federation and integration?
- Beyond the liberal dilemma ? : The development of immigration and integration policies is informed both by the rise of nationalist -populist movements and the needs of the global economy: semi-closure or openness of the borders and assimilationist take in integration policies (TO BE DISCUSSED)