Introduction
Minorities, Racism and Cultures of Scholarship

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Most politicians and governmental policy-makers pay little attention to events that take place beyond their jurisdiction or constituency. Whether due to budget constraints, lack of interest, or ignorance about the existence of similar problems elsewhere, most migration policies and studies are, at best, implemented on a nationwide level (depending of course on the country's size). It is no surprise then that the nation-state tends to be the unit of analysis for those who, from an academic point of view, study and scrutinize the impact of relevant governmental decisions. This in turn often leads to parochial social science research; international comparisons are rarely made by governmental think-tanks and, in the past, only slightly more often by academics. If and when the latter do engage in such an enterprise, it is worthwhile to ponder the extent to which their research affects the policy advice that they might later be asked to give their respective governments.

Academics, like most professionals, are not particularly fond of scrutinizing themselves, especially where matters of complicity are concerned. Yet with regard to the production of public policies relating to immigration and minorities and the subsequent construction of knowledge about these 'yet-to-be regulated persons' (not to mention the concepts and terminology used to discuss them), this lack of self-inspection is particularly troublesome. This special issue must therefore be understood not only as an attempt to provide a critical analysis of the knowledge production that takes place inside the ivory towers, but also as an assessment of the extent to which these academic findings and governmental policies influence one another. The latter refers to the complicity of academic knowledge production and paradigms in the creation of public policies and racist discourses. With this as our goal, we hereby present a collection of comparisons between the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands and France. In this introduction, we reflect upon some of the

questions raised in the debates that occurred at our two conferences organized at the Maison des Science de l'Homme in Paris (18–19 June 2004 and 28–9 June 2005) with the kind and generous support of its then Director, Professor Maurice Aymard.

1. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND WORLD-SYSTEMIC CYCLES

When economic reconstruction was set in motion after the Second World War, worldwide migration levels were relatively limited. First of all, the prolongation of the Cold War made it very difficult for those who wanted to move to do so. Second, a Keynesian and a Communist version of development was being preached and people were being called upon to rebuild their countries after years of devastating warfare; with the decolonization that took place in the 20 or so years following 1945, many of the newly independent governments called upon their citizens to do the same. With the exception of refugees, the hope of '*les lendemains qui chantent*' discouraged many people from emigrating. The '*Trentes Glorieuses*' (c. 1945–75), characterized by the A-phase of the Kondrati-eff cycle, temporarily lifted almost all boats in the capitalist world economy. The economic reconstruction after the War created a demand for unskilled labor. So strong was the economic outlook that during the 1950s and 1960s, metropolitan governments actively called upon workers from the periphery – often those areas that had been linked through colonialism with their empires – to come as labor migrants or 'guestworkers'. This coincided with a major reform of US immigration policy that took place in 1965, which effectively opened up that country's doors to non-European immigrants. The direct recruitment in the 1950s, 1960s and up until the mid-1970s of Algerians, Senegalese and West Indians (Guadaloupeans and Martinicans) in France; Surinamese, Moroccans, Turkish and Dutch Antilleans in the Netherlands; Moroccans and Turkish in Belgium; South Asians and West Indians in the United Kingdom; and Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Jamaicans in the United States, are all examples of these policies. The consequence of these migrations, however, was the reproduction in the metropolitan centers of the old racial/ethnic hierarchies of their respective colonial empires.

Here it would be useful to distinguish three kinds of groups: 1) immigrants; 2) colonial immigrants; and 3) colonial/racial subjects of empire (Grosfoguel, 2003). 'Immigrants' are those who, at the time of migration, are incorporated or perceived as part of the 'white majority' by the host population inside the metropoles. They frequently experience upward social mobility in the first or second generation. 'Colonial/racial subjects of empire' are those groups that have a long, direct colonial history with the metropole in which they live. The hegemonic racist discourses and dominant racial/ethnic hierarchy of metro-politan centers are frequently constructed in opposition to these colonial/racial populations. Examples of 'colonial/racial subjects of empire' would be the Puerto Ricans, African Americans and Chicanos(as) in the United States, the

Dutch Antilleans and Surinamese in the Netherlands, the Algerians, Antilleans and Senegalese in France, the Congolese in Belgium or the West Indians and South Asians in the United Kingdom. 'Colonial immigrants' are those populations that were not directly colonized by the empire to which they migrated, but that at the time of arrival were racialized and stereotyped in ways similar to the colonial/racial subjects of the empire who have been in the metropoles for a longer time. The 'Puertorricanization' of Dominicans in New York City, the 'African Americanization' of Haitians in Miami, the 'Chicanoization' of Salvadorans in Los Angeles, the 'Antilleanization' of Moroccans in the Netherlands, or the 'Algerianization' of Kurds in France are all examples of 'colonial immigrants'. 'Colonial immigrants' and 'colonial/racial subjects of empire' are predominantly from non-European origins and are the target of anti-immigration and racist policies and right-wing movements, a major issue touched upon in these contributions as well.

During the 1970s, with increasing inflation and domestic opposition to the growing numbers of 'colonial/racial subjects of empire' and 'colonial immigrants', immigration to Europe was primarily limited to family reunification. When unemployment soared in the 1980s, far-right political parties (once strongly discredited because of their association with Nazi barbarism) used propaganda and anti-immigrant platforms to once again achieve mass appeal. When the Iron Curtain came down and the number of illegal immigrants from Eastern Europe surged throughout the 1990s, it seemed as though some in the West were actually bemoaning the fall of communism. But with the abandonment of developmentalism by governmental agencies and western academics alike (Wallerstein, 2005), the only hope for an individual to experience upward socioeconomic mobility was to move towards the core zones of the capitalist world economy (Mielants, 2002). In addition, as remittances became ever more important during the economic downturn that was set in motion after 1973, peripheral governments in countries with high birth rates began to encourage outward migration in order to compensate for their lack of direct foreign investment and jobs. Emigration also increasingly became a tool to diminish social and political discontent at home.

Since the 1980s, the core zones of the world-economy have viewed immigration as a 'problem' and applied social science has become instrumental in creating an 'appropriate' apparatus to count, classify, and 'deal with' these strangers, the existing periphery within the core. Social sciences continue the colonial role inside the metropole by producing knowledge, complicit with the white-European/Euro-American state policies, of providing ever more models and theories to regulate and handle immigration. At its worst, academics become intellectual mercenaries, providing the 'fig leaf behind which those who decry immigration can hide their nativist sentiments' (Krissman, 2005: 36).

2. MODELS OF INTEGRATION AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The different models put in place to cope with these immigrants – who are subsequently transformed into and are transforming themselves as minorities – are well-known: the celebration of multiculturalism and affirmative action programs in the USA, UK and the Netherlands versus the assimilationist model in France. In an important essay in one of France's most circulated newspapers, *Le Figaro*, Sorbonne University Professor Charles Zorgbibe (2004) summed up the French view quite succinctly:

> ... l'intolérance supposée des Francais [à propos des voiles islamiques] était la conséquence de leur vision égalitaire; la tolérance affichée des Britanniques, le reflet de leur perception d'une échelle non-dite d'ethnies et d'leur indifférence à l'égard des citoyens de troisième catégorie.[1]

In his words and that of many French intellectuals, which correspond with the official state rhetoric, multiculturalism leads to pure and simple ghettoization. Accordingly, in order to avoid ghettos and racism, a celebration of assimilation is necessary; people must be able to work and live together peacefully or '*vivre ensemble*' – an oft-used phrase of the Haut Conseil d'Intégration. In the summer of 2004, French President Jacques Chirac reaffirmed that affirmative action is not an option as it is too divisive. And in September of that year, the state outlawed the wearing of veils in public schools.

The image of a successful assimilationist state is at the heart of French society, one in which racist incidents can happen but wherein racism is not part of the governing structure due to the latter's colorblindness and unwillingness to perceive difference. The idea of a benevolent society in which all, from the time of the birth of the Republic on, can participate regardless of the color of their skin, is a cherished one. Along with the French state, the desire to assimilate the 'other' by making him or her invisible by using the French language as an integrative glue that inevitably leads to '*un brevet de francité*' (Hagège, 2004), is a product of the Enlightenment, which produced sets of ideas still embraced by both conservatives and gauchistes alike. These concepts continue to be championed by both sides even today, as indicated by the overwhelming majority in the Assemblée Nationale that voted to outlaw the presence of religious symbols in French public schools.

For the French government and its academic defenders – legitimators like Zorgbibe – the state never institutionalized racist practices. They often point to the granting of citizenship to colored '*concitoyens*' in the colonies as evidence of the permanent colorblindness – and thus, lack of racism – in French society. The Vichy state, with its deplorable record of anti-Semitic legislation and collaboration with the Nazis, is regarded as 'unnatural' and explained away as a deplorable incident and thus intellectually dismissed as 'a vassal regime of the occupying [Nazi] power'. That the Vichy government was a purely French affair with profound roots in both French society and intellectual tradition alike, and

that it had considerable autonomy regarding the persecution of its Jewish population, is all too often forgotten. In addition, the continuity in office of those who served before, during and after the Pétain years remains an uneasy topic of conversation. Durkheimian sociology is, of course, a by-product both of the Enlightenment as well as positivism. It is perhaps not surprising that the French state still has a ministry of 'social cohesion'. Therefore, as Patrick Simon and Valérie Amiraux as well as Geoffroy de Laforcade point out, it is not well-equipped to critically analyze the presence and continuity of racist practices in French society, past, present or future. Even more sophisticated social scientists like the late Pierre Bourdieu or Alain Touraine have difficulties accounting for racism in France. Class is privileged over race, leading to the erasure of racial inequalities or to the reduction of race to class. This theoretical blindness makes the social sciences in France complicit with discriminatory public policies and 'new racism' discourses (Balibar, 1991; Taguieff, 1999).

Moreover, anti-Black and anti-Arab racism are pervasive in French society today. Although anti-Semitism is still a problem, most of French racism is focused on minorities of African and Arab descent. Yet mainstream politicians and academics focus on anti-Semitism as the main form of racist discrimination in France, centering the problem on Arabs' anti-Zionist critiques of the State of Israel. Part of the strategy is to equate any critical statement directed at the Israeli state as anti-Semitic. In other words, the people who are the most racially discriminated against in France, are the ones being blamed for racism in France today. Although there are certainly anti-Zionist expressions that reproduce anti-Semitic forms of racism, they are secondary to the critiques raised by Arabs in the West against the Zionist anti-Palestinian policies of the State of Israel. Any racist manifestations must be condemned, even if it is only a small number of people pushing for these views. But to raise these secondary anti-Semitic manifestations to the level of the main target of racist discourse in France today is, to say the least, an act of bad faith. As the recent riots in France confirm, racist discrimination in France is actually centered around the Arabs and Blacks living in the *banlieues* (suburbs). Recently, right-wing politicians, with the support of revisionist historians and policy-makers, passed a law intended to teach the positive role of colonialism in French History courses at public schools. For many of the new revisionist historians, slavery under French colonialism was not as bad as its portrayal by the anti-colonial movements and critical intellectuals. If colonial relations are perceived as positive, one can imagine the negative reactions when someone dares raise the problem of anti-Black and anti-Arab racism in France today.

In the Netherlands, by contrast, the very notion of racism as a serious problem within Dutch society is denied by a majority of academics and policy-makers. Yet it strangely enough co-exists with current policies of affirmative action that aim to compensate for discrimination and prejudices. In their contribution, Philomena Essed and Kwame Nimako refer to the particularities of a small

country, especially with regard to the politicization of higher education and social science research on immigration. This is particularly interesting given the existing myth of Dutch tolerance and openness. They also discuss the taboo of acknowledging the existence of racism (quite amazing given the enormous number of related government-sponsored publications) and the lack of theoretically driven research scrutinizing everyday racist practices, while critically reflect upon the reality of a fluctuating racial/ethnic hierarchy of Surinamese, Antillean, Moluccan, Moroccan and Turkish immigrants of colonial and neocolonial status vis-à-vis the white Dutch throughout the last five decades. In Belgium, politicians are unable to decide which 'integration' policies are best: the French and the Dutch models respectively appeal to different linguistic groups in the country, and the divergent treatment of immigrants has to be interpreted within this context. The lack of academic research on racism towards Muslim immigrants in the face of recent political and social developments – most notably the continuing electoral success of the far-right – is quite astonishing and can be explained to a large extent on the remarkable degree of politicization of higher education in the social sciences.

In the UK and the US, the celebration of laissez-faire capitalism and cultural individualism has been more conducive to limited state intervention on behalf of immigrants and the poor. Yet the question remains, to what extent has their multiculturalist model been a myth, obscuring the reality of an institutionalized ethnic hierarchy? In both cases, multiculturalism is equivalent to cultural pluralism. The culture and identity of minorities are recognized and celebrated as long as they do not question white power in society. People can 'dance' and 'celebrate' their identity as long as they keep intact the racial/ethnic hierarchies that produce racist discrimination. There is an extensive academic scholarship complicit with white supremacy in both countries. Paradigms such as 'cultural pluralism' and 'culture of poverty', produced by academics and politicians, have been instrumental in concealing racism, blaming the victims and producing perverse public policies that emphasize the problem with transforming the culture and behavior inside the discriminated communities rather than on changing the racist structures and culture of the society.

Despite our earlier references to the upturns and downturns in the world economy and their relation to increased migration flows, one should not forget the specific geopolitical evolutions within the world-system. Is it a coincidence, for instance, that the US government forced local and state authorities to abolish the legal and institutionalized forms of apartheid that existed in the South in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the Cold War intensified and the USSR could lure newly independent African countries to its side by referring to the racist practices embedded within western capitalism? Is it also a coincidence that once the Communist threat ceased to exist after the unexpectedly rapid disintegration of the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites that the western welfare state increasingly came under attack? Once ghettoization and de facto

segregation in schools and residential areas no longer need to be worried about in the arena of international public opinion, savage inequalities can, at best, be deplored by those in power.

Two major events in the year 2005 raised serious questions about the western models of immigrant incorporation: the July suicide bombings in London and the November riots in the Parisian *banlieues*. Both were produced by youth of color born and raised as discriminated minorities inside their respective metropoles. These events put on the agenda a discussion about the models of integration practiced in the West. After the July bombings in London, French intellectuals and policy-makers expounded upon the evilness and failure of the UK multicultural model, praising the French assimilationist Republican model. But a few months later, with the riots in the French suburbs, the debate was inverted: British intellectuals and policy-makers attacked the French model for its failure to integrate their minorities. These debates about who is the best 'master' or who treats their exploited and racialized minorities better are not new in the history of the 'modern/colonial capitalist world-system' (Grosfoguel, 2003). Several centuries ago you had the infamous 'Black Legend' debate in the Caribbean about who was the worst slave master. These inter-imperialist debates about who is the best 'master' in the past as well as in the present skew the main problem with these debates: while in the past they took slavery for granted, in the present they conceal racist discrimination. Debating who is 'best' and who is 'worst' does not address the fundamental questions about the system that produces such inequalities. What was wrong in the past was not the fact that slaves were treated better or worse; what was wrong was slavery itself. Similarly, what is wrong today is not whether the system of minority integration failed or succeeded; what is wrong despite the different systems is the racist discrimination that continues inside each metropolitan center. Racist discrimination is at the root of the failure of both the multicultural approach and the assimilation approach. No matter how much the system respects cultural differences (in the case of the former) or how effective it assimilates people as equals (in the case of the latter), if racism continues you will continue to have a racial/ethnic hierarchical system with whites in the dominant positions and the non-whites in the dominated positions. This is what happens today in all metropolitan centers despite their different racial regimes.

Visually representing 'others' with insulting and distorted images is part of the problem of racism in the West, which continues the reproduction of European vs non-European racial/ethnic hierarchies. These days this is primarily articulated through an Islamophobic discourse, the most recent, and perhaps notorious example being the cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed published in a Danish newspaper. We cannot decontextualize the unequal power relations between the Muslim world and the West in the international arena, nor between the dominant white populations and Muslim minorities inside western countries. Racial/ethnic hierarchies at global as well as national levels are a fundamental

structure of the world-system. Understood within this context, the Danish cartoon crisis is not so much about 'freedom of speech' but about the colonial dehumanization and inferiorization of non-European 'others' (in the West). The reaction by millions of Muslims and anti-racist movements, both in western countries as well as elsewhere, evidences the seriousness of the issue. The result, however, is that Islam is made synonymous with 'terrorism' and even the Prophet Mohammed is considered part of the 'gang'.

It is the academic's daunting task then, to explain these discrepancies. In the face of declining welfare states in the context of globalization, this is not a trivial matter. As is pointed out in the contributions that follow, the link between academics and political decision-making is something of a revolving door and the production of knowledge (as well as that of migration and integration policies) has been overwhelmingly constructed by privileged western white males. The number of people of color who have, at present, accumulated significant political power is a topic that at times gets the attention of a minority of scholars. But the number of their peers who research migration and integration issues who are themselves representative of the subjects they study is another matter that few bother to address. And if they do so, it is unfortunately not for the sake of intellectual ramification. Frequently, the minorities showcased by the mainstream media are those whose politics are complicit with white power structures such as Condoleeza Rice (US Secretary of State), Colin Powell (ex-Secretary of State), Alberto Gonzales (US Attorney General) and Ricardo Sanchez (in charge of the US military in Iraq) in the USA; Ayaan Hirsi Ali (Liberal Party Member of Parliament) in the Netherlands, or Azouz Begag (Ministre délégué á la Promotion de l'égalité des chances) in France.[2]

3. ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND DECOLONIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

One of the urgent questions to be addressed here – but not by a substantive amount of scholars who deal with issues of migration, integration, social cohesion, etc. – is the extent to which one can de-colonize Eurocentric models of knowledge within the social sciences, models that have all too often been taken for granted. The production and subsequent dissemination of parochial social scientific truths as universalist forms of knowledge throughout the 'rest of the world' (Martin and Beittel, 1998) is intrinsically interlinked with 'our' western perspective, methodology, units of analysis, concepts, abstractions or visualizations of 'national unity and social cohesion' and (muted) self-interests, in nationalistic or personal (academic) form. This invitation to rethink common practices and policies goes far beyond the criticism of Peeters quoting Janssens, who in return, *honneur oblige*, quotes Peeters in a (until recently non-peer reviewed) academic journal like *Migrantenstudies*. Similarly, it goes far beyond the more muted way of silencing alternative critical methodologies or critical perspectives in 'prestigious' peer review journals such as the *American*

Sociological Review or the *American Political Science Review* (Dogan and Pahre, 1991). It is an invitation to de-colonize ourselves, which ultimately has to be a dialectical process; 'unthinking', to use Immanuel Wallerstein's (2001) term, cannot be done in splendid (western) isolation, just like national or personal identities and opinions about immigrants and 'foreigners' cannot be formed in isolation either. One way to rethink existing paradigms, concepts, and concurrent public policies is by engaging in an exercise of global comparative studies (e.g. Favell, 2003). All too often social scientists obliterate time and space from their study and focus on the here-and-now, limiting their outlook, analysis and policy recommendations (Dogan and Pahre, 1991).

The segregation of an ever increasing number of humans in ghetto-like environments in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK or the USA is actually akin to the segregation of alternative (race) critical social science research most often developed far from the Ivy League schools and published outside mainstream academic journals. But this does not imply a need to despair; quite the contrary. *Il n'est point besoin d'espérer pour entreprendre, ni de réussir pour persévérer.*

Migration studies are in need of decolonization as they tend to reproduce one of the most pervasive myths of eurocentric social sciences: the myth of a neutral, universalist, objective point of view. However, there is no neutrality in knowledge production. We always speak from a location in the gender, racial, class, and sexual hierarchies of the world-system. In the case of international migration, due to its relation to colonial legacies and the reproduction in the present of colonial situations between non-European migrants and European host populations, we always speak from a location in the 'colonial difference' produced by the coloniality of power. The 'colonial difference' is a concept articulated by Walter Mignolo (2000) as a further elaboration of Aníbal Quijano's (2000) coloniality of power. It refers to the coloniality of power at the epistemic level between colonizer and colonized that divides knowledge production in the 'modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system' (Grosfoguel, 2003). Knowledge is not detached from the 'colonial difference'. Migration studies speak from a non-neutral location in the colonial divide. It reproduces the point of view of either the colonizer or the colonized. In the case of migration studies it regularly reproduces the colonizer's point of view, frequently justifying the domination, marginalization or poverty of the migrant population in terms of a claim to a neutral, universalistic and objective cultural or economic reductionist argument. According to this literature, migrants are having 'difficulties' due to 'objective' criteria such as culture (attitudes, behavior, mentality, values, etc.) or economics (class origin, economic crisis, market factors, etc.). Issues such as discrimination, xenophobia and racism are often invisible in Migration Studies.

Critical border thinking is the epistemology that emerges in colonial situations where the hegemonic perspective is subverted from the cosmologies,

languages and epistemologies of the subaltern (Mignolo, 2000). It is a form of epistemology that emerges in the 'in-betweenness' of two languages, two cosmologies, two epistemologies, where the subversion of the hegemonic knowledge is done from the geopolitics and body-politics of knowledge of the subaltern. There are intellectuals/activists who belong and/or take the perspective of 'colonial racial/subjects of empire' or 'colonial immigrants' and who are implicated in the production of critical border thinking in metropolitan centers. Examples of this are Philomena Essed, an Afro-Surinamese scholar/activist in the Netherlands (one of the contributors to this special issue), Paul Gilroy, an Afro-Caribbean scholar/activist in England, Edward Glissant, an Afro-Martinican in New York and Paris and the cultural anthropologist Bambi Ceuppens in Belgium. These are critical border thinkers who articulate a critique to hegemonic thinking from their location as colonial subjects inside the empires. There are also migrants who are not part of the intelligentsia and who are less known, but who also articulate critical border thinking. But not all migrants produce critical border thinking. 'Immigrants' who are incorporated as 'white', as well as many colonial migrants or subjects who do not think critically and who are ideologically co-opted by the dominant ideologies/epistemologies, tend to reproduce hegemonic knowledge. Thus, this is not a call for a naive, populist celebration of whatever is voiced by oppressed groups. It is a call to decolonize knowledge by incorporating the critical thinking produced from below. Scholars in migration studies who incorporate the critical border epistemologies of the migrants into their knowledge production are able to produce a critical thinking of the power structures linked to the oppression of migrants and minorities in colonized locations at the centers of empire.

The contributors to this special issue are not hiding their partial and situated knowledge production. They attempt to take a side in the colonial difference: the colonized subaltern point of view. This is not equivalent to a claim of 'representation'. They are not speaking 'in the name of' or 'on behalf of' the migrants, but rather thinking from the structural location of the migrants and taking seriously their points of view, while formulating critical interventions on racism, immigration policies and the nature of academic knowledge. Although there are diverse perspectives represented in this special issue, a common feature to all these essays is an effort to decolonize academic knowledge production by taking the epistemic side of the subaltern.

NOTES

1   '. . . the supposed intolerance of the French (regarding Islamic headscarves) was the consequence of their egalitarian vision; the tolerance displayed by the British, the reflection of their perception of an unspoken scale of ethnicities and of their indifference regarding third class citizens' (authors' translation).

2   As Shiraz Dossa (2005: 237) put it: 'Western nation states, in the process of repositioning themselves as inclusive, are keen on symbolic icons, and congenial Asian and

black public figures constitute highly valuable capital, especially on television and on quangos'.

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