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Chapter 6.1

LANGUAGE POLICY AND IMMIGRANTS IN FRANCE: A POLICY DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Similar to other countries in Western-Europe, France became an industrial economy and a nation state in the ninenteenth century. Political elites attempted in this period to build the 'republican' democracy which was represented by institutions upholding the principles of secularism and a universal culture (Barou 2014). In principle, the French republican model only acknowledges the legitimacy of group identities outside the public sphere (Schain 2010). Ethnic and religious groups receive no special privileges, nor special protection. Support is only awarded based on individual merit and advancement. Integration of the people within this national society and social cohesion were guaranteed due to the equilibrium of three main elements of society; economy, state and culture (Schnapper 2007). However, integration in this period did not just refer to maintaining this equilibrium, but also to the process of individuals and groups being socialised into the nation (Barou 2014). This started with the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, culminating in the social and political integration of the working class. Successfully integrating citizens in French modern society was assured by two mechanisms: institutions and labour (Lapeyronnie 2009). The institutions made sure that the universal French republican norms were transmitted to every part of the nation, in particular via the republican school system, but also through the family and civil society. They promoted the idea among the populace of a unified, common system of norms and values that transcended class and cultural divisions. Labour granted workers social status and a chance of upward social mobility. As such, the working class was socially and politically integrated into French society, a process that was at its high point during the *Trente Glorieuses*, a period of outstanding economic growth and full employment after World War II (Barou 2014).

Immigration presented the French society and its ability to integrate different groups with a new challenge. France has been an immigration country since the nineteenth century, and is to this day one of the European countries housing the most descendants of immigrants (Bouvier 2012). In 1920 France was, after the USA, the country with the highest share of immigrants, namely seven per cent of the population. In the early 2000s 25 per cent of the population had a first, second or third-generation immigrant background (Algan et al. 2012). The integration of immigrants was traditionally treated similarly to that of the working class before them: they were being included in French society via the institutions and employment (Noiriel 1988). Immigrants were usually recruited during times of economic growth and were employed in many different manufacturing sectors.

Their employment allowed them to participate in French politics via their trade unions and left-wing parties (Barou 2014). Immigrants and their descendants were perceived as being assimilated to French norms and values. In many periods of French history, a policy of integration was thus deemed unnecessary, as assimilation seemed to happen automatically (Weil 2005). At least one notable exception constitutes the 1930s, which is a period that will be discussed in more depth in this chapter upon examination of the main French integration scholar of this period, Georges Mauco.

In this chapter the development of French minorities policy, in particular its language policy vis-à-vis immigrants and their descendants, will be analysed. Several key policy documents of the French state will be discussed, to analyse the historical context that shaped present-day French linguistic policy. Both official government documents and works published by influential advisory policy bureaus will be discussed. The goal of this analysis is twofold: first to gain a deeper understanding of the French minority policy tradition vis-à-vis its immigrants, and secondly, to analyse the motivations for the French government to support some type of mother-tongue education via its policy of ELCO (Enseignment de langues et cultures d'origine). It will be shown that the French republican system seems to advocate policies that contradict its principles of colour-blindness and non-intervention in the cultural domain. However, the reasons for doing so are complex, though insightful for other European cases as well.

Georges Mauco: bringing demography into French policy

France, after its complicated history during World War II, had to reshape its immigration policy after the country was liberated in 1944. The Vichy denationalisation law of 1940, which was primarily targeted at the French Jewish population, was annulled in 1944. 'The lawful status of foreigners was restored, which resulted in an ideological division that also affected the debates on the new nationality code and broader questions about immigration (Burgess 2011). A key figure in these debates is the geographer Georges Mauco, who obtained his doctorate in 1932 with a dissertation entitled *Les étrangers en France: Étude géographique sur leur rôle dans l'activité économique*. The dissertation's goal was to analyse France's migrant situation in a comprehensive manner, and provide practical solutions to manage migration flows properly in the future. In his foreword, Mauco outlined why his stance on the 'immigration question' was of particular importance to France:

> In recent years, France has become one of the primary immigration countries and the problem of foreign labour seems to be the most important of the present day. It is a relatively new problem, at least considering its scale, given the presence in France of a population close to three million foreigners. It is a difficult problem, that raises multiple questions: recruitment, selection, sanitary and professional checks, competition, adaptation, assimilation, the transfer of savings [remittances], dangers caused by minorities, not

> forgetting all the questions of social, educational, religious and moral order that always appear rapidly after large migration flows and that do not appear when the foreigners enter the country slowly, in a process of absorption that allows for rapid fusion. (Mauco 1932: I).[19]

Mauco also remarked later in his foreword that France had not yet established an official comprehensive migration policy, and he advocated its creation (Mauco 1932). Given his initial analysis of the migration situation in France, his recommendation would follow logically. He framed the question of guest workers primarily as a phenomenon creating many problems, both from a socio-economic (recruitment, selection) and a socio-cultural perspective (adaptation, assimilation, questions of social order, religious schooling and morality). These problems needed to be managed by organising a professional immigration division within the French government and strongly regulating the number of immigrants admitted. Such slow developments allowed for a 'rapid fusion' of presumably the immigrant and the native French population.

Mauco went a step further however. In his view France needed to pay attention to the 'assimilation potential' of the immigrants it admitted to the country. He argued on the topic of assimilation:

> To enable assimilation, migrants must first of all adjust and accustom to the host country. They need to find sufficient material and moral wellbeing to enjoy their new social environment and get motivated to stay. (Mauco 1932: 523).

According to Mauco there were several factors that can greatly help the assimilation process, one of the most important being the migrants' ethnic heritage:

> One of the most important factors of assimilation, if we may say so, is the degree of similarity between the migrants and the indigenous population. The more they are alike from an ethnic and linguistic point of view, the more foreigners will integrate themselves easier in their new social environment (...). Moreover, a large part of immigration is an immigration from neighbouring countries, an immigration of mixing, in every respect the best and most healthy one. The only important elements of which the assimilation turns out to be difficult because of too sharp disparities are the Slavic elements: Russians, Poles, etc. However, it needs to be remarked that these disparities are not irreducible and that mixing with the French people still remains possible (...). Eventually, it means that only the African and Asian elements, fortunately not too numerous, are almost unable to assimilate due to ethnic and cultural differences. (ibid.)

[19] The quotations from the French in this chapter have been translated by the present author.

He thus made a rough ethnic hierarchy between peoples that are relatively easy to assimilate (or integrate, he uses both concepts interchangeably, as was not uncommon in his time): immigrants from French border regions (i.e. England, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Spain) have the highest chance to assimilate properly. Within this group, the immigrants from Northern Europe were preferred over those of Southern Europe. Mauco later claimed that France was in fact not a Latin but a Nordic country (Burgess 2011), thus justifying this distinction. They were followed by the Slavic peoples, who would face more difficulty, but these differences were not 'irreducible'. Lastly, Mauco mentioned the 'African and Asian elements', for whom it was nearly impossible to assimilate successfully, adding that luckily there were not too many of these 'elements'. Mauco however emphasised later in his book that France, due to the ethnically diverse nature of the native French population, should in principle have little difficulty integrating different ethnicities, provided the cultural gap was not too wide. He was thus most worried about the cultural differences between the new immigrants and the native population already present (Mauco 1932: 556-557).

One of the other factors that greatly influence the assimilation process which is somewhat related to his ethnic hierarchy, is language. Mauco argues:

> Language plays an extremely important role in assimilation. It is the vehicle of thought and consequently its influence is profound in all matters. Depending whether the language of the migrant has any similarities with ours or not, he will be more or less isolated, more or less submitted to the influence of the French culture and way of life. It explains to a large extent the smooth adaptation and the rapid assimilation of the elements coming from neighbouring countries: Belgians, Italians, Spaniards, and the so difficult and slow compliance of Poles, Czechoslovaks, Russians, etc… The language is all the more important, because the migrant will continue to use it for a very long time and because, unless he is only surrounded by ethnic French, an adult foreigner will have great difficulties using the French language. For certain Slavic and Asian immigrants, the impossibility of having a sufficient command of our language is even an insurmountable obstacle to assimilation. The child itself, despite school and its malleable nature, will yield to the anti-assimilationist influence of its mother tongue. This is true in particular for the colonies or autonomous groups of the foreign population where there is a sort of veto by the adults, preventing the child from yielding completely to the influence of the French language and losing his mother tongue. He will pick it up going back home or when he speaks to his compatriots and, having religious practices, he will always use that language to pray or sing, regardless of his knowledge of the French language, because the language of childhood remains the language of the soul. (Mauco 1932: 518).

Language according to Mauco is thus a prime indicator of assimilation. Therefore, the easier it is for foreigners to learn the French language, the easier it is for them to assimilate. For a successful assimilation foreigners would need to 'submit' to the French language. His views on mother-tongue usage by migrants are thus not very positive. He claims immigrant children could submit easily to the 'anti-assimilation' influence of their mother tongues, since they will also speak that language when they are not at school. These children therefore run the risk of never forgetting their mother tongue, which is a necessary component of the assimilation process, because 'the language of one's childhood remains the language of the soul.' Mauco's language comments are particularly interesting, since he advocates the ideal-type assimilation view as mentioned in theories by Berry. His claim that all migrants need to lose their cultural and linguistic heritage in order to 'fuse' properly with the French Republic fits perfectly into a classic assimilationist view.

The final aspect of Mauco's work to be discussed is his perspective on the role of the school and the assimilation process. It is evident that language education plays a very important role in the school in particular:

> School is the most important factor of assimilation over which the country has control. One could argue that through education true assimilation comes into effect: among the second generation (...). Only the Poles received permission from their employers to found private schools with Polish instructors teaching the Polish language, history and geography during half the lesson time. But Poland is the only country to have obtained these dangerous concessions from the employers, concessions that can be explained by the large scale of Polish migration, the concentration of migrants and their attachment to their national language that has no similarities with ours. (Mauco 1932: 536-538).

Mauco thus considered schools that are partially run by migrants, where migrant languages play a prominent role, to be 'dangerous' to the assimilation process. He argued that this concession was rendered possible only due to the great extent of Polish immigration, which links back to his previous assertions that migration flows need to be managed properly so the assimilation process is not impeded.

Mauco's ideas were especially prevalent and well respected in 1930s France. After the publication of his dissertation, he was renowned as France's most prominent expert on migration (Burgess 2011). In 1938, Mauco was employed by the office of the Under-Secretary of State for Immigration, Philippe Serre. During the German occupation he allegedly collaborated with the Vichy regime and condemned the Third Republic for failing to protect France's ethnicity. After the Liberation, Mauco arguably successfully reinvented himself as a *résistant à la dernière heure* (Burgess 2011). He was appointed

secretary of the Consultative Committee on Population and the Family (Haut Comité Consultatif de la Population et de la Famille), which was charged with advising the government on a new statute on immigration. He held this position until 1970. Mauco's subsequent influence on the resulting post-war French migration policy is disputed. He had several ideological opponents in the post-war government, who advocated a more libertarian-egalitarian vision of the French ideals. In addition, in the immigration policy, elements such as racial selection were not incorporated. The concept of 'assimilation' remained in use however, but not in Mauco's definition. Successful assimilation was defined as being fluent in French. Some historians argue that Mauco's influence on immigration policy has found its way into French national consciousness and migration attitudes of the present day, whilst others claim that his influence is grossly overestimated (Weil 2005, Burgess 2011). Mauco's direct influence on the 1945 immigration and integration policy seemed to be rather limited (Burgess 2011). Even though the documents regularly use the concept of 'assimilation', they do not carry the ethnic and racial connotations of Mauco's work. However, that 'assimilation' entailed simply the capability to learn and speak the French language was a central component of Mauco's work, although arguably one that is less controversial. Sometimes it is argued that Mauco's categorisation of the assimilation potential of different immigrants made its return around the 1990s (Barou 2014).

In the post-war period, France was, similar to other West European countries, focussed on recruiting guest workers to fill gaps in the job market. The government initially turned to Algerian colonial workers, but also stimulated migration from 'European families' such as Poland and Italy in the 1950s, and concluded labour recruitment agreements with Tunisia, Morocco, Yugoslavia and Turkey in the 1960s (Weil 2004). However France, despite stimulating recruitment, did not succeed in building up the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the new immigrants, especially in terms of housing (Maussen 2009). Migrants had to find their own way in their new country and relied heavily on their own ethnic networks. These two factors contributed to migrants ending up having to live in *bidonvilles*, or shanty-towns. However, some measures were taken to accommodate them. One important aspect was the support for migrants maintaining their own cultural identity (Favell 1998). For instance, the Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian (post-independence) governments actively wished to prevent their citizens from assimilating into French culture, to facilitate their eventual return when their labour contracts in France ended. This logic is similar to other West-European countries that recruited temporary labour migrants, such as the Netherlands. However, when in the 1970s the French government simultaneously aimed to terminate the guest worker system, and realised that many immigrants would stay in France, this policy position shifted slightly. Paul Dijoud, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers, argued in a speech in the Assemblée Nationale in 1974:

> To take care of their future, is it not enough to declare that they are free to choose between durable assimilation and a return to the country of origin; it is also, and in particular, giving them effective means to assimilate whilst preserving, as much as possible, their ties with their culture and their country of origin (...).
>
> To achieve this panorama of the evolution of the foreign worker living in France, at this moment we have arrived at the point where he should be able to choose freely between durable assimilation and a return to the country of origin. What kind of policy should we implement? In the end the most reasonable solution appears maintaining, within certain limits, a politics of assimilation, which would eventually lead to a more liberal naturalisation policy, whilst (...) founding a politics which I would describe as balanced, based on the return of some foreign workers to their country of origin whenever they wish (...). Two sets of measures need to be taken. On the one hand, we would like to allow those who wish to stay in France temporarily to maintain ties with their heritage culture, facilitating as much as possible the preservation of their religious traditions, cultural ties, even the use of their mother tongue. That seems fair. (...) Finally, France has a duty to guarantee all foreign workers that contribute to our prosperity the rights (...) which are as far as possible similar to those enjoyed by the French. (Assemblée Nationale 1974: 5976).

The central thought expressed by Dijoud is that migrants can 'choose their own destiny' and pick between a longer stay in France and assimilation, or a temporary stay, in which case more attention needs to be given to the immigrants' heritage language and culture. When Dijoud refers to assimilation, he does not seem to advocate a complete abandonment of the heritage culture however; he states he wishes to facilitate immigrants' connection to their heritage culture as much as possible. This statement is rather vague, due to its usage of multi-interpretable vocabulary such as 'as much as possible', but Dijoud does argue that within his idea of assimilation, the government is obliged to give immigrants the means to maintain their ties with their heritage culture and country.

The analysis of French immigration policy from the time of Mauco until the mid-1970s has led to at least two preliminary conclusions. Firstly, in the three decades after the Second World War, there seems to be rather limited evidence that French immigration and integration policy was heavily influenced by its so-called republican and assimilationist traditions. In fact, the French and Dutch approaches to the guest worker programmes were strikingly similar, even though both countries had different ideological backgrounds when it came to dealing with ethnic diversity. Secondly, the concept of assimilation is used in many different ways by different officials. For Mauco, assimilation is defined along the lines that scholars such as John Berry would use fifty years later: the complete adoption of French culture and the abandonment of the heritage culture. Institutions for immigrants, in particular those teaching the migrant languages

to children, were deemed highly undesirable. However, Undersecretary Paul Dijoud's concept of assimilation does not seem to have demanded complete abandonment of the heritage culture, and temporary workers were even encouraged to maintain very close ties with their home countries. In 1973, to accommodate the children of these temporary workers, the French government set up mother-tongue education classes (Enseignment de langues et cultures d'origine) (ELCO).

ELCO was established with the explicit principle that knowledge of the mother tongue is an essential requirement for learning a second language, in this case usually French. Interestingly, on the official government website, it was stated that ELCO seeks to conform to the European directive of 1977 that compels EU Member States to offer mother-tongue education to the children of immigrant workers: 'They are put into practice on the basis of bilateral agreements based on a European directive of the 25th of July 1997, aimed at the education of children of foreign workers.' (Eduscol.fr 2019). The government cited three complementary goals that ELCO needed to fulfil, which were complementary:

- To structure the language spoken in the family environment;
- To favour the personal development of youth, from different cultural backgrounds;
- To valorise the diversification of the languages at school. (ibid.)

This list combines practical and ideological/idealistic goals, even though some might seem rather vague at first glance. It can be assumed that 'structuring the language spoken in the family' stems from the idea that in all families, informal domestic mother-tongue education does not neccesarily give the children a good linguistic grammar and vocabulary of language. Given the fact that the building up of such a linguistic base is necessary for the children to be able to learn a second language more easily, it is logical that this is an important goal of ELCO. In other words: for the mother tongue to fulfil its role as a bridge towards French language acquisition, solid education in grammar and vocabulary is paramount. The second goal, the 'personal development of youth from different cultural backgrounds', leans towards the acculturation-related argument that is often presented by integration researchers (e.g. Berry 1980). It seems to refer to the necessity for young people's cultures and languages to receive some recognition in the school system, in order for them to realise their potential. Socio-psychologists would argue that this second goal is also important to reduce 'acculturative stress', i.e. the negative emotions one may experience when trying to adapt to a different culture. Thirdly, the valorisation of the language diversity at school is arguably the vaguest goal. It is unclear how this 'valorisation' could be effected in practice, but it might refer to a general fostering of cultural diversity and perhaps the ensuing diversity in ideas and perspectives, from which all pupils may benefit.

ELCO is open to all pupils, even for children who do not have the 'correct' migrant background belonging to the respective language:

> Presently, it also concerns children who are not native speakers of the respective language and will integrate progressively in linguistic education.
>
> Education in heritage language and culture is primarily provided in the first grade. It is organised, as much as possible, in the schools, the establishments, where there is demand from the families. They are open for every child, whom the family wishes to enrol, as long as there are enough places available. (Eduscole.fr 2019).

Currently the French government has concluded bilateral agreements with nine countries, namely Algeria, Croatia, Spain, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Tunisia and Turkey. These countries were chosen with the rationale that they are the primary sources of migrants to France. The classes are organised during out-of-school hours, usually on Wednesday afternoon or on Saturday. Teachers originate from one of the nine treaty countries, or are recruited within France with the assistance of the local consul of one of these states.

ELCO and HCI

In the 1980s the French government, headed by the Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste), recognised the need to develop a comprehensive integration policy. Policies before that time, such as ELCO, had a predominantly pragmatic orientation (Maussen 2009). In the mid-1980s however, faced with numerous socio-political challenges to the French political model of unitary government and national integration under the leadership of the state, the government reinvented the so-called 'republican model' of managing cultural diversity (ibid.). Its core principles were that migrants could integrate on an individual basis in a neutral and secular public space, which leaves no room for separate ethnic institutions. In particular, this 'republican model' was seen as a contrast to the Anglo-Saxon multicultural model (Favel 1998). In this context the French government founded the *Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* (HCI) in 1990, as a scientific bureau to present policy advice to develop integration policy according to republican principles. Until its dissolution in 2013 by the Hollande government, the HCI wrote several reports on ELCO, its practical effects and its place in the French education system. The HCI's reports were mostly critical of the ELCO system for several reasons:

> These classes are mainly held outside regular school hours, and though falling under the [French] academic authority, are barely scrutinised, except in those cases where obvious unwanted deviations are being observed. Sometimes, the authorities needed to intervene in order to reprimand a teacher carrying an ostensible religious sign violating the laws concerning secularism (‘*laïcité*’) in the sphere of education. (Haut conseil à l’intégration 2013).
>
> The content and the education issues are too rarely validated. (Haut conseil à l’intégration 2011a: 27).
>
> Doesn’t the continuation of ELCO, in particular concerning lessons given outside regular school hours, stigmatise certain cultures and languages, whilst others, such as Chinese and Japanese, garner more interest, occupying an important position in the standard modern language education curriculum in recent years? (Haut conseil à l’intégration 2011a: 28).
>
> Turkey is currently shaken by a movement rejecting Kemalism, secularism, (‘*laïcité*’) and Europe. Known for its interference in foreign countries, the Turkish government is particularly active in France, especially regarding ELCO. In fact, if ELCO is not perpetuated, for example in primary education, pupils are easily picked up by associations or schools based on the Quran. The Turkish education and cultural sector has seen a strong expansion on French territory, with considerable financial support. (Haut conseil à l’intégration 2013).

These extracts present a good overview of the HCI’s insights on ELCO, as they have been developed since the HCI’s foundation. Its concerns can be categorised in four themes, namely (1) whether ELCO can be reconciled with the republican integration model, (2) the poor organisation of the courses and inspection of the courses, (3) the different treatment of the ELCO treaty languages when compared to non-ELCO languages such as Chinese and Japanese, and (4) the practical socio-cultural and political effects an abolition of ELCO could have on communities where mother-tongue education is still in high demand.

The first concern is to be expected, considering the HCI’s mission which seeks to promote an ‘equal’, a ‘secular’ and culturally non-interventionist public policy. ELCO, especially if children who are not mother-tongue speakers cannot enroll in the course, is in its theory and practice a contradiction to these ideals. When the report states that ‘the authorities needed to intervene in order to reprimand a teacher carrying an ostensible religious sign violating the laws concerning secularism (‘*laïcité’*) in the sphere of education’, it is an evident illustration of both the HCI’s mission, but also

a practical result of French republican policy philosophy. The second observation, the poor organisation of the courses, is a concern that is voiced in many different European countries that experimented with the same system, such as the Netherlands. The HCI's third concern is also of a practical nature and addresses a core issue when designing a mother-tongue education policy. Namely, which mother tongues should be supported by the government considering the highly diverse linguistic landscape, and whether the different foreign languages need to be treated equally in principle within the school system. The fourth concern is of particular interest, since it acknowledges the geopolitical implications of mother-tongue education policies, especially when the migrant group affected is backed by a relatively powerful kin-state such as Turkey. The HCI seems to acknowledge that French language policy also needs to take the political development of Turkey into account, especially when that country seems to run counter to French republican ideals. It warns the French government that if ELCO is not available anymore for children who are interested in learning the Turkish language, Turkey has already set up several institutions in France, sometimes with a strict religious background, where they could easily learn the language without needing consent and support from the French state. The combination of these four concerns led the HCI to propose the following in 2011 and 2013:

> Recommendation: Since its first report in 1991, the HCI has always advocated abandoning education in heritage languages and cultures, since it seemed to run contrary to the aim of integration. It [HCI] restates this recommendation here, which it considers to be an expression of the strong will to integrate in French society and to develop education of these languages integrated in the standard modern language curriculum, in particular as modern language 2 and modern language 3. (Haut conseil à l'intégration 2011a: 29).
>
> At the end of this study, we cannot emphasise enough the fact that social success of immigrant children hinges primarily on the mastery of the French language.
>
> Concerning ELCO, to suppress it or to let it slowly fade away would not aim to abandon teaching the foreign languages carried by immigrant families and their children. However, it would assume acknowledging other present day immigrant languages such as Chinese, several African languages (Bambara, Soninké), Russian, even Tamul. Taking into account the great number of languages, teaching them could only be considered with regard to local demand.
>
> For this purpose, implementing reforms of the education system by creating optional extracurricular activities could be a welcome opportunity to experiment with introducing these languages in primary schools, without restricting them, however, just to children of migrants. Mobilising

> associations and assistants being in possession of a certificate in language teaching would allow for the possibility to offer an adapted education programme controlled by the 'Education Nationale' and independent of the country of origin.
>
> Furthermore, private initiatives are flourishing. Even if the involvement of associations could be encouraged, we deem it nonetheless useful to be somewhat vigilant. Indeed, we have been made aware that, under the guise of homework help or language education, some associations have engaged in proselytising that does not facilitate integration.
>
> In any case, these forms of education need to be put into a framework that guarantees the quality of the content and pedagogic methods, respecting the values of '*la République*'. (Haut conseil à l'intégration 2013).

The HCI thus envisions a solution where the ELCO languages are integrated in the regular school system, as living languages that can be chosen by all pupils, regardless of his/her ethnic background. Rather than abolishing the system of living languages, the HCI seeks to integrate the languages better within French education by granting the government better control over the quality and teacher assignments, meaning that the material being taught is subject to much more rigid inspection. In the HCI's proposal, there is even room for languages that are arguably not high in the linguistic hierarchy in France, but can still be taught in school if there is sufficient local demand.

A system complying with the HCI's recommendations throughout is currently being implemented. It is interesting to note how HCI and the French government, even though their republican ideology is often classified as a philosophy of assimilationism, have expressed policy ideas committed to both mother-tongue education and a neutral school space. The linguistic infrastructure, a key component of motility, seems (at least on paper) to be adequately organised for children with a migrant background within this 'assimilationist' policy framework. It could even be argued that this type of infrastructure, where the 'migrant languages' are on the same level as other modern languages such as Chinese and Russian, will positively affect the value the citizens with a migrant background attach to their mother tongue (i.e. the 'appropriation' component of motility). At this point in the analysis this is merely a hypothesis however, that may or may not be verified during the interviews presented in a later section.

French language acquisition

With the reinvention of the republican tradition as a banner for national identity in the 1980s, the French language, and especially the need for immigrants to learn it, was a central point of contention in the immigration and integration debate. The normative perspective on this policy differs between scholars. Some argue that the language debate

is a covert method to restrict immigration (by imposing ever-higher language standards for migrants) and a convenient method to avoid discussing and acting upon the socio-economic aspects of migrant integration (e.g. Climent-Ferrardo 2015), whilst others praise its effectiveness and generous funding (e.g. Yoffe 2010). In 2005 the French government radically changed its language policy vis-à-vis migrants:

> Art. L. 117-1. – A proposal has been offered to every foreigner admitted for the first time in France to conclude an individual 'welcome and integration contract' with the government in a language that he understands. This contract aims at specifying the conditions under which the foreigner will benefit from state policies, taking into account his situation and personal background, and is meant to benefit his integration whilst respecting the fundamental laws and values of the French republic. These policies include in particular, if the need has been established, linguistic education. (LOI n° 2005-32).

The key policy measure proposed here concerns the 'contrat d'acceuil et d'intégration' (CAI) ('Welcoming and integration contract'), the goal of which was to commit new migrants to respect the so-called 'fundamental values' of the French Republic. The contract itself states the following on the French language (CAI):

> The French language is one of the foundations of national unity. Knowledge of French is thus indispensable to your integration and will facilitate contact with the wider population. (...) The enrolment to these free courses is carried out by the Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration. (...)
>
> Article 1: Commitments of the Government
>
> If necessary, language learning, and the time it takes is based on the needs and learning capacities of each individual. These courses aim at achieving a linguistic level corresponding with the level required for the '*diplôme initial de langue française*' (Contrat d'intégration républicaine 2016).

In the proposal, the only fundamental value that is explicitly mentioned is a compulsory linguistic education. In the contract, language plays a very prominent role and is on the same value-level as equality between men and women and the interdiction of polygamy and forced marriages. The moral value the French government attributes to its language can hardly be understated. In 2016 the CAI was replaced by the 'contrat d'intégration républicaine' (CIR), which did not fundamentally change the value-based language approach.

The French language thus became a symbol of successful or failed general (not just linguistic) integration. The government officially organised several facilities to help the newly arrived migrant to attain the desired linguistic proficiency. In the CIR it is stated that

after a language test, the migrant is prescribed 50, 100 or 200 hours of language lessons (CIR 2016: 7). Courses were intended to be financially and geographically as accessible as possible, even though the latter goal proved difficult to achieve for migrants in rural areas (Yoffe 2010). An empirical assessment of the post-CAI/CIR language policy does not exist to this date. Based on interviews with policy makers, previous scholars have identified several shortcomings, such as a lack of teacher quality control and the rigid content standardisation which offers few possibilities to adapt to specific individual linguistic needs (ibid.). At the same time, language providers are offered organisational flexibility, so they can tailor both to working migrants by teaching in the evenings, or provide longer days of classes for those who wish to progress more quickly.

Conclusion

Drawing a line from the work of Georges Mauco and the post-war period until the present day presents a rather complicated picture of the French linguistic policy on paper. The conceptual thread binding different French policies from different time periods together consists of one word: assimilation. This is a concept that was already *en vogue* in the nineteenth century, with France being one the few immigration countries of its time. In the 1930s Mauco's understanding of assimilation was both ethnic and linguistic in its nature. Starting as early as in the post-war immigration act of 1945 however, assimilation became seen as just the ability to speak French. There seems to be a strong tradition of treating the French language as the most important aspect of a migrant's acculturation process, that culminated in the CAI and CIR contracts in the present day.

The effects of CAI and CIR are debatable, especially in the absence of comprehensive empirical evidence. It seems questionable whether the single act of signing the contract motivates migrants to respect the 'French values'. Furthermore, as Climent-Ferrardo (2015) argues, the French language policy could very well be set up with the indirect goal of rendering it more difficult for would-be migrants to enter the country and obtain a residence permit. Especially the fact that most migrants already need to pass a French language test in their country of origin before even being allowed to enter French territory seems to suggest at least an ulterior motive on the part of the French government.

As argued previously, the linguistic infrastructure (access) is a key component in assessing a migrant's, or group of migrants', motility. In that sense, the CAI and CIR provide quite generous facilities: migrants receive reasonably extensive hours of language training in a financially and geographically accessible way. Furthermore the ELCO system is on paper quite generous as well. The HCI, the main advisor of the French government until the organisation's dissolution in 2013, always assessed ELCO critically, but with the goal of preserving and improving the policy, not discarding it. The idea to open up the ELCO languages also to pupils who are not mother-tongue speakers seems a sound method to ensure the migrant languages' survival in the education system.

The existence of ELCO alongside France's strong focus on the French language paints a complicated picture of the country's assimilation/republican model. Policy-wise, it seems the French government does not discourage migrant mother-tongue speakers from using their own languages, and even facilitates some of them in the official education system by integrating them fully in the language curriculum. However, it is very clear that the French language is leagues ahead in terms of policy priorities. Policy-makers are arguably satisfied with migrants' 'assimilation' from a linguistic point of view when the newcomers speak French. At that point, speaking other languages alongside French is not deemed problematic, and is even supported if the language is high enough in the linguistic hierarchy. The question is how this system of promoting linguistic assimilation on the one hand and supporting some linguistic diversity on the other would impact the immigrants' perception on the value of their linguistic repertoire (the 'appropriation' aspect of motility).

Chapter 6.2: Interviews Poles in France

Polish migration to France is a centuries-old phenomenon and can be divided into five phases (Debaene 2013). Firstly, between 1831 and 1835 roughly 50,000 to 100,000 Polish refugees migrated to France as part of the 'Great Emigration'. They fled repression associated with the partitioning of Poland, which was exarcerbated after the collapse of the November Uprising in 1831.[20] Secondly, in the twentieth century Interbellum, France welcomed a large influx of Polish workers, mainly from poor, rural regions, as part of the second migration. They worked primarily in the mining and agricultural industries. The Polish community grew rapidly in this period, and in 1931 it numbered 507,811. Thirdly, many Polish Jews migrated after 1968, due to political upheaval and anti-semitic policies in their homeland. Their numbers were estimated between 12,000 and 20,000. The fourth wave is referred to as 'Solidarity migration', and consisted of political refugees who fled the country after the declaration of martial law by the Polish Communist authorities (1981-83). These migrants usually intended to stay permanently, and had a relatively easy path to French citizenship, before Communism collapsed after 1989. Around 600,000 Polish nationals were granted French citizenship between 1980 and 1989. The fifth wave of Polish migration to France occurred between 1989 and the present day, and was primarily economically motivated. The freedom to move across borders, which was further reinforced after Polish accession to the EU in 2004, stimulated a large wave of often temporary economic migration. It is difficult to obtain exact figures on the number of individuals with a Polish background in France, since the country does not collect statistics based on ethnicity, especially not concerning second and third-generation migrants. In 2012 the number of Polish nationals living in France was estimated at 350,000 by Eurostat, but this does not include the number of French citizens with a Polish background.

In total eleven Poles in France were interviewed in areas around and in Paris in 2017 and 2018. Most of the interviewees were female (7 females and 4 males). The age range varied from 22 to 61, with a relatively even spread within that range. All the interviewees were first-generation immigrants. Most respondents were either highly educated or in the process of obtaining higher education. Interviews were either conducted face-to-face or by telephone, after the interviewee and the interviewer had met briefly in person, and were held in English or French, and in one case with the help of a translator, depending on the preference of the interviewee.

[20] Also referred to as the 'Polish-Russian war 1830-1831', this was an armed rebellion in partitioned Poland against the Russian Empire.

French vs Polish

All the interviewees thought the French language to be of great instrumental importance. They either spoke the language fluently, were actively trying to learn it by enrolling in language training courses, or deeply regretted that due to varying circumstances had not been able to learn the language. One interviewee states, when asked why she thinks learning French is important to her: 'my family lives in France, my husband is native French. I need French for my social contacts and to be independent.' (Appendix 2.3.1). Another interviewee, who is a young mother, claims: 'I want to learn French so I can communicate with French children and their parents when I take my own child to the playground. I also learn it to obtain the French nationality.' (Appendix 2.3.3). This type of practical approach to the French language is characteristic for all the interviewees. However, considering the fact that virtually all interviewees were planning to stay in France long-term, this might not come as a surprise.

When it comes to Polish, the respondents emphasise mostly the practical and sometimes the cultural benefits of speaking the language and transmitting it to their children. One interviewee states: 'Our Polish family does not speak French, so I want my child to be able to communicate with his grandparents. (...) I also want them to be able to participate in Polish religious activities. We have to maintain our language, culture and religion.' (Appendix 2.3.4). Another claims: 'Polish is the key to understanding their culture. (...) Through me, they are connected to Polish culture. Also, there are a lot of academic studies that claim bilingualism is very beneficial.' (Appendix 2.3.2).

Thus, the accounts of the Polish French interviewees are quite straightforward, and comparable to other ethnic groups. They approach both languages with a great sense of practicality, and feel a stronger cultural connection to the Polish language. It is interesting, but at the same time somewhat predictable, to note that the one interviewee with concrete plans to leave France in the foreseeable future is also the one with the least motivation to learn the French language. This type of calculated reasoning (weighing the effort needed to learn the language against the language's practical use in daily life) is something that can also be seen at some of the other interviews with other ethnic groups.

In terms of motility, there is one striking observation that can be made on the basis of these short accounts: namely the importance of the role of the teachers, and government officials, when discouraging or promoting multilingualism. Several respondents (5 out of 11) explicitly mentioned that French teachers encouraged the bilingual education of their children, and that this encouragement played a significant role in deciding whether to teach their children Polish at home. This greatly influenced the 'appropriation' factor, as the government emphasises the value of the parents' mother tongue, which in turn makes them perceive their language as more valuable and worthy of respect.

Mother-tongue education

Many respondents have children whom they send to a French-Polish school, usually privately financed (i.e. not supported by the French government). They thus have, through their children, experience when it comes to this type of education. Furthermore, respondents mentioned the 'Lycée Montaigne' as a French school that supports bilingual education, also in Polish. The interviewees' perspectives on mother-tongue education show strong variation. For instance, when asked their opinion on whether the French government shows enough support for Polish education, one interviewee claims: 'No, the French government is doing nothing. I wish they would do more.' (Appendix 2.3.5). Another argues: 'It is impossible for the French government to accommodate all languages. Therefore it is much better for them to only focus on French.' (Appendix 2.3.1). Then, a different interviewee, who is of Polish descent but grew up in Belarus, provides yet another perspective: 'It is great that the French government allows the setting up of private business, such as mother-tongue education schools. I come from Belarus, so I have nothing to complain about the French government.' (Appendix 2.3.3). These three responses symbolise the three-way divide in perspectives: a greater call for more state intervention (i.e. more financial and organisational support for mother-tongue education), an understanding for the French monolingual position and an advocate of a laissez-faire approach.

The respondents disagree on whether mother-tongue education can be a driver for segregation of minorities instead of inclusion. One respondent: 'This [segregation] does not happen with the Poles.' (Appendix 2.3.5). There are also different perspectives, underlining potential problematic aspects of mother-tongue education: 'mother-tongue education is only problematic when the parents do not speak French at all. I do speak French, so it is not a problem for me, but it might be for others' (Appendix 2.3.6); 'for the Poles it is not an issue, segregation might happen with other cultures.' (Appendix 2.3.1). A third interviewee remarked,

> Even if mother-tongue education could cause segregation, it is still better to control it as a government. If the government does not offer anything, parents who still want a bilingual education for their children will look for alternatives on their own. Then you will have no idea who teaches the classes and what kind of education and cultural ideas are being taught to the children. (...) Such a [mother-tongue education] system would also stimulate the migrant children to be more connected through French culture, since it also respects the children's own cultural and linguistic background. (Appendix 2.3.11).

These responses, albeit quite different, do share one common characteristic, namely the nuancing of the role of the education system in wider societal outcomes. Polish immigrants who have the will to raise their children bilingually will find ways to do

so, either by enlisting them in private schools (if they have the financial means) and/or by teaching them Polish at home. One of the respondents claims on the topic of linguistic assimilation: 'monolinguism does not work. People travel, go on the internet, it cannot work. Assimilation is in our time simply not possible.' (Appendix 2.3.1). This means that regarding motility, the French mother-tongue education system seems to be of rather little consequence, neither positive nor negative. An exception could be made on an individual level for the attitudes of the teachers. They might influence parents who are on the fence when it comes to mono- or bilingualism. The teachers' advice can thus help determine the linguistic capabilities of the French-Polish children, therefore either increasing or decreasing their motility.

French language acquisition

One of the respondents migrated to France as a political refugee in the 1980s when she was 9 years old, and followed most of the French education system in a small village school. At the time of migration, she spoke no French and was simply put in a regular class school with native French pupils:

> At first I refused to speak, but I still understood a lot. The school paid a lot of attention to me and offered me several methods to catch up to the other children. One of them was to go to a summer camp with other French children to be completely immersed in the language. At the same time they offered me courses on Polish culture and language. This worked very well, after one year I had completely caught up. (...) If France has a reputation for having a bad language policy, then I guess I was very lucky to stumble upon the right school and the right teachers. They helped me through the difficult linguistic moments. (Appendix 2.3.6).

Naturally this account is anecdotal, but it symbolises that government policy in theory and its practical application on 'the ground' are not always congruent. The French language policy, which is sometimes characterised for its monolinguism and lack of understanding for language diversity, has worked very well in practice for this respondent.

In more recent times, many interviewees either already spoke some French before they migrated, learned French through a government programme or took privately organised lessons. The result is that most of them have a fluent or near-fluent command of the language, despite being first-generation immigrants. Some followed courses at the municipality: 'There are lots of good courses offered by the Paris municipality. There are many different levels and you can enrol for a very affordable price (...) They have certainly helped me a lot.' (Appendix 2.3.11). Another respondent stated: 'The courses are very decent. They might be too theoretical though [there is too much focus on grammar].' (Appendix 2.3.4). A third respondent learned French following an online course: 'I enrolled in a télélangue online course. I do not know why I did not go the

municipality, my husband recommended the online courses. I probably would have learned more with a good teacher, but these courses are quite effective nonetheless.' (Appendix 2.3.3). And then, there are interviewees who came to France with a previous background in French (learned at high school in Poland) and simply improved upon this knowledge when they arrived in the country.

Thus, in general the respondents' opinions on French language acquisition programmes are remarkably positive, especially when compared to the Dutch and Swedish groups interviewed. Sometimes the overly theoretical approach is criticised, but in general, the courses are praised for their effectiveness and accessibility. It needs to be emphasised again, however, that many of the respondents were either affluent or highly educated, or both, and most seem to have little trouble picking up a new language. The one respondent with a lower education background, who only speaks Polish, stated as previously noted that she had trouble combining her full-time job with language training.

Mobility in Europe

In general, the interviewees stated that English is the most important language for mobility in Europe. Some also mentioned that learning one of the Slavic languages (e.g. Czech or Russian) offers access in most of Eastern Europe. Polish is not seen as a valuable language for being mobile. Some interviewees claimed that they do not enjoy associating with Polish enclaves in other EU countries. Going back to Poland is also a rather controversial topic, as this response shows: 'Polish is the most useless language of all. Poland does not accept strangers. I will never go there. It is a country without multiculturalism.' (Appendix 2.3.2). This last sentiment might be motivated more by the interviewee's political view rather than the value of the Polish language itself.

Conclusion

The views of the Poles in France interviewed in this sample show several interesting motility-related aspects, especially concerning appropriation and the linguistic infrastructure of French society.

On appropriation, it is interesting to note that these respondents were heavily influenced by both academic studies, or in some cases even conferences, and the native French teachers on the subject of bilingualism. These sources helped them convince themselves of the fact that it is valuable to speak and transmit the Polish language in France. It is clear that some parts of the French education system, in particular the existence of bi-lingual schools and certain teachers promoting multilingualism, influence appropriation.

At the same time the influence of that same education system is nuanced, when it comes to mother-tongue education. It is seen as a positive facility, and some argue that it could help integration by showing immigrants and their children that French society is prepared to support financially and organisationally the development of

minority languages and culture in France. However, at the same time, it is deemed that bilingualism will continue, even if the French government fails to offer support.

On the topic of French language acquisition however, the perspectives are completely different. There is remarkable satisfaction with the language acquisition programmes offered by the French government, much more so than in the other two countries (the Netherlands and Sweden) that are analysed in this research. Thus, insofar as knowledge of the French language increases motility (which it notably does, both directly through offering more migration options in Europe, and indirectly, by facilitating inclusion in French society, which in turn improves individuals' economic wellbeing), this aspect of French policy has a clear and positive influence. Mother-tongue education, however, seems to have very little influence.

Chapter 6.3: Interviews Turks in France

Similar to other West European countries, large-scale Turkish migration to France was initiated by a bilateral labour recruitment agreement signed by France and Turkey in 1965, in an attempt to cover shortages on the French labour market. The French National Bureau of Immigration (OFII, L'Office Français de l'Immigration et l'Intégration) actively recruited Turkish workers to industrial areas (Alsace, Vosges, Rhône-Alpes). After 1974, formal labour recruitment ended, and a significant number of Turkish migrants moved their families over to France through family reunification. Currently the majority of Turkish immigrants and their descendants are still located in these industrial areas, as well as Paris, Côte-d'Azur and Provence. Similarly to the Poles in France, exact figures on the Turkish community in France are unavailable, since France does not collect data based on ethnicity. However estimates range from 800.000 to 1.2 million.

In total eleven Turks in France were interviewed in Paris and Mulhouse (a city in the Alsace region) between 2016 and 2018. The sample is relatively balanced in terms of important social characteristics. Of the eleven interviewees, three were younger than 25 years old, 5 were between 25 and 65 years old, and 3 were older than 65. Furthermore, four belonged to the so-called 'third generation' (i.e. grandchildren of immigrants), two to the second generation and five were first-generation immigrants. A major difference between this sample of Turks in France on the one hand, and the Dutch and Turks in Sweden on the other, is the slight overrepresentation of Turkish Kurds and political refugees. Four interviewees (about a third of the total sample) were Kurdish political refugees. All interviews were conducted in French, without the help of a translator.

French vs Turkish

The interviewees all deemed it of the utmost importance to master the French language. The language was seen as a crucial tool to succeed on the French labour market: 'if I do not speak French, it is impossible to find a job in France' (Appendix 2.6.8); 'I want to stay in France. I want to work here and start a new life.' (Appendix 2.6.3). Alongside the economic reasons, many respondents also cited the important socio-cultural benefits of speaking French: 'I admire the French culture of liberty and equality, it was one of the reasons I chose France over other European countries. Knowing the French language gives me access to the richness of French culture.' (Appendix 2.6.5).

The French language thus served a major practical purpose for these respondents, as they argued it is necessary for them to integrate well in French society. They approached the Turkish language with a similar practical angle. All respondents greatly valued the Turkish language, but mainly to stay in touch with their Turkish friends and family: 'my grandparents speak French very poorly. If I cannot speak Turkish, I cannot talk with them.' (Appendix 2.6.4). 'I still have lots of family in Turkey, I need to be able to speak Turkish if I want to communicate with them.' (Appendix 2.6.3).

The reasons cited for valuing both the French and Turkish languages were arguably straightforward and practical. In the case of these Turks in France however, the arguments they have not mentioned to defend their attitudes might be even more interesting than the ones they did present, especially compared to the Polish and Turkish immigrants in the other countries. Particularly concerning Turkish, the mother tongue of these interviewees, it is striking that they only mentioned practical benefits of knowing the language. The Dutch and especially Turks in Sweden mentioned the importance of Turkish to gain access to cultural and religious resources from Turkey. The Turks in France mentioned none of these arguments.

Mother-tongue education

Staying true to their practical approach regarding the Turkish language, the interviewees in general favoured the French government supporting mother-tongue education at state schools. An often cited reason: 'the more languages one speaks, the better it is.' One interviewee summarised the practical angle of most respondents quite well: 'I raise my children bilingually, they speak both French and Turkish. However, I am not a Turkish nationalist. If we were able to, I would be just as happy teaching them French and Chinese.' (Appendix 2.6.3). The first-generation respondents either spoke both Turkish and French at home with their children, or only spoke Turkish and let their children learn French at school. Both methods seemed to have the same result: the children were fully bilingual. There was however a split in opinions regarding both the availability of mother-tongue education at school and the organisation of this mother-tongue education. Some respondents argued that their schools, or their children's schools, offered mother-tongue education in the regular curriculum: 'I finished my final exams this year. I was given the option to follow Turkish classes during my school time, and I took them. Sadly the courses were hardly ever held due to practical reasons. However, one of my subjects on my final exam was Turkish and I passed it with flying colours.' (Appendix 2.6.4). However, apparently other schools offered no such facilities: 'My children right now cannot follow Turkish at school. I think it would be good if they could.' (Appendix 2.6.3). Another mentioned: 'It would be good if the French government would organise these mother-tongue education classes. It would show the immigrants that the government also respects and recognises their cultural needs, which is in my opinion very important in this day and age.' (Appendix 2.6.5). These respondents came from the same region (Mulhouse in the region of Alsace-Lorraine) and were discussing roughly similar time periods (mainly the year 2018), so it is difficult to explain why there is such a great difference in facilities offered.

Similar to other groups researched in this study, the Turks in France who did have any experience with mother-tongue education in France were critical of the way it is organised:

> I would never send my children to mother-tongue education here. The teachers are flown in from Turkey and are civil servants of the Turkish state.

> They carry their religious and political ideologies with them and teach them to our children. If the teachers were not civil servants of the Turkish state, I would certainly send my children to these classes. (Appendix 2.6.5).

This respondent was not one of the political refugees, but rather a labour migrant. Another interviewee had a similar perspective : 'I would never send my children to a school with Turkish classes, even if I had the opportunity.' (Appendix 2.6.1). Another respondent was however quite satisfied with the current facilities: 'The state is already organising Turkish lessons at school. Turkish mosques also give lessons. The children can go there. We should never force the children to go, it should be voluntary. Even children of four years old can already decide for themselves.' (Appendix 2.6.6).

French language acquisition

The interviewees in general had a positive view of the facilities offered by the French government to learn the French language. Those who were born in France, or migrated at a very young age (4 years old or younger) smoothly learned the language at school. However, even those who went to a French school at a later age, because they migrated when they were older, and adult first-generation immigrants, were rather positive. When prompted on his experience when coming to France at the age of 14, one interviewee recollected:

> I went to a special school for foreigners (Espace Alpha). Within three months they taught me the basics of the French language, so I could transition to a regular French high school. I was not fluent, but I spoke the language quite well, especially considering the short time I was at Espace Alpha. This system worked very well. The school also helped me tremendously with the mental health problems I had as a result of my difficult migration history. The school found a loving host family and I was allowed to attend the classes, despite being an undocumented migrant for four years. Sarkozy [president between 2007 and 2012] sadly closed the school however. (Appendix 2.6.3).

Another interviewee was six years old when he came to France, and had more difficulty adapting to the language:

> I was simply dropped immediately into a regular French school. This was very difficult at the start since I did not speak French at home, and I had no background at all in the language. Eventually, after a long ramp-up time however, I managed to learn the language properly. Right now I am fluent. (Appendix 2.6.2).

In other words: the accounts of the respondents show the effectiveness of the French system to teach younger newcomers the French language from their perspective, even though this might have changed in very recent times given the forced closing of schools

such as ‘Espace Alpha’. Even for the older immigrants there were facilities offered by the French government. However, this group had to overcome a more difficult barrier to actual attendance:

> When I came to France in the 1970s, I was in my early twenties. I spent thirteen years working in Paris. I had to work sixteen hours a day. After one year, the French government offered me the opportunity to follow French language lessons for free. I was not allowed to do so by my employer, since he wanted me to keep working, so there would be no time to attend the classes. Later, when I moved to Mulhouse, I learned some French myself by talking to my colleagues. At that point the French language acquisition courses were too easy for me, since they started with the very basics, so in the end I never followed any courses. (Appendix 2.6.1).

Another interviewee recounts a similar story: ‘I am the son of a single mother with two children. She had to work hard to support her family and that allowed for no time to follow any of these courses.’ (Appendix 2.6.4). In other words: the facilities were there but due to difficult economic conditions this interviewee could not attend the courses. This is a familiar scenario that was also heard among the other immigrant groups in this study: first-generation immigrants with little financial security often do not have the opportunity to attend language acquisition courses, since it is difficult to combine them with their often time-consuming jobs. However, it needs to be noted that there were no complaints about the facilities offered, but rather about their accessibility for the less financially secure immigrants.

Mobility in Europe

Completely in line with their practical angle, the Turks in France often cited English as being the most useful language for mobility in the EU, as it is at least a secondary language in most countries. Those living in the Alsace also often mentioned German as a useful language to learn and speak, citing that ‘Germany is our neighbour’ (Appendix 2.6.2) and ‘Germany is Europe’s biggest economy, if I could speak German I could also go work there.’ (Appendix 2.6.4). The Turkish language was also often cited as a very useful tool for mobility in the EU: ‘if I want to migrate, it would be very easy to connect to a different Turkish community. That could help me tremendously when I have just migrated.’ (ibid.). However, none of the interviewees had any concrete plans to leave France, not even to go back to Turkey after their retirement. This made the Turks in France again an exception compared to the Swedish and Turks in the Netherlands, They seemed to be more attached to their current country of residence when compared to the other groups. When discussing motility though, it is very interesting how its three different components (access, competence and appropriation) interplay in the case of these Turks in France.

Firstly, the Turks in France expressed a positive opinion regarding the facilities for learning French, and were split regarding facilities offered for Turkish. The 'access' component of French language policy (i.e. the linguistic infrastructure) is therefore debatable. However, it is interesting how government policy seemed to have very little effect on either competence or appropriation. All respondents spoke Turkish fluently, including the third-generation migrants, and taught their children (if they already had them) Turkish at home. All interviewees spoke at least French and Polish and had bilingual children. Also, French language policy either did not influence the migrants' attitude to the Turkish language at all, or at best its influence was not significantly negative. The interviewees still see great practical value in learning, speaking and transmitting Turkish. In other words: for these Turks in France government policy (i.e. 'access') is practically irrelevant for the way they perceive their mother tongue's value in enhancing their motility.

Conclusion

The Turks in France in this sample can be characterised by a single word: practicality. They view languages as tools to improve their socio-economic and, to a much lesser extent, socio-cultural wellbeing. For that reason they all emphasise the importance of the French language, but also place great value in maintaining and speaking the Turkish language as well. Other immigrant groups also expressed a somewhat utilitarian approach regarding language learning; however, this was also largely based on socio-economic status. The financially poorer immigrants valued the socio-economic aspects of language much more highly than the richer ones. This relationship between the desire for multilingualism and socio-economic status cannot be found among the Turks in France. The sample was diverse in terms of socio-economic status, but the practical focus was omnipresent.

This practical focus also seemed to affect the way they value their different languages for their motility. The Turks in France evaluated how different languages can help their mobility potential in the EU, and government policy could do very little to change their perspective. A good illustration of this development is the mixed opportunities offered by France to follow mother-tongue education on the one hand, and, on the other, the staunch determination of all the Turks in France to maintain their own language for practical purposes.