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11 The emergence of the identity card in Belgium and its colonies

Rosamunde van Brakel and Xavier Van Kerckhoven

11.1. INTRODUCTION

National identity policy comprises a total administrative and technological regime, which encompasses a complicated series of social and policy choices (Lyon and Bennett, 2008). These choices come about through several articulations, desires and power relations that are influenced by a myriad of social, historical, cultural, political and economical factors; they function as drivers for the implementation of identity cards, which can be used for a whole array of purposes: tax, controlling movement, to sort people into categories of inclusion and exclusion, to provide people with certain benefits, and as a tool to exercise freedoms (Rose 2000; Warnick 2007; Lyon 2009). Not only do people shape technologies through the choices they make, technologies have agency. Technologies are inherently political (Winner, 1986), they can “actively contribute to the creation of certain truth regimes (whether about innocence or guilt, trustworthiness or suspiciousness, value or liability, etc)” (Monahan 2010: 218). When deployed, they start to shape behaviours and outlooks (Lyon 2009), but also social relations, and society as a whole, which can have both positive and negative consequences.

The main goal of this chapter is to provide a first academic exploration of the drivers behind the emergence of the identity card in Belgium and its colonies by looking at identity cards as assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Haggerty and Ericson 2000). Assemblages are characterised by a rhizomatic¹ structure. By studying identity cards as assemblages it becomes possible to obtain a more in depth understanding of how these technologies are governed and implemented. Moreover, drivers, actors and unintended consequences come to light, which otherwise would have stayed in the dark.

The chapter presents the first results of a broader exploration of the desires that lie beneath the implementation of identity cards in Belgium and its colonies. Although the identity card in Belgium has existed for a long time, very little to no research exists on the history of the card. Until recently, when the electronic identity card was implemented, apart from a few critical voices (Meerschaut & De Hert 2007),² most Belgian citizens did not see any issues instead, they consider it as part of everyday life. In contrast, in the United Kingdom huge resistance led to the abolition of the planned card (see chapter Whitley, Martin & Hosein). In addition as Longman (2001) notes, although many analysts have referred to identity cards in Rwanda’s colonial past under Belgian rule as playing a highly significant role in the 1994 genocide, very little research has been done on the actual implementation of official identity documentation in Rwanda. We will come back to this later in the chapter.

¹ The rhizomatic system originates from botany and is comprised of a multiplicity of shoots and connections. It can shoot out roots from any point. It has no beginning: no roots, it has no middle: no trunk and it has no end: no leaves. It is always in the middle, always in process. The rhizome is in contrast with arborescent systems which are those plants with a deep root structure and which grow along branchings from the trunk (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 8).

² See also the case that was brought before the European Court of Human Rights by Filip Reyntjens in which he considered that the obligation to carry an identity card and be subject to random identity controls breached his right to privacy and freedom of movement amongst others. See ECHR *Reyntjens v Belgium*, 09-09-1992, 16810/90.

The chapter is structured in the following way. In the first part we discuss the introduction of identity cards in Belgium and offer three hypotheses why this happened. The second part of the chapter will focus on the introduction of identity cards in the Belgian colonies with a special focus on Rwanda. The final part provides an analysis of how suggested paradigms in the surveillance studies corpus can contribute to a better understanding of this practice.

11.2. THE EMERGENCE OF IDENTITY CARDS IN BELGIUM

Registration of people was nothing new in Belgium and was first implemented during the French occupation in 1792. After becoming an independent state in 1830 a law followed in 1856 which regulated the population registers and censuses.³ Already in 1909 a type of identity card existed, which was the *carte de reconnaissance/erkenningskaart*, the main function of which was identification for all transactions at the post office. During the first World War the German occupiers demanded municipalities to start handing out *Personalausweisen* with pictures. From March 1915 onward all citizens were expected to be in possession of an identity card with picture. It was distributed by the municipality of the permanent residence of the person. One had to show their marriage booklet to receive one.⁴ Everyone was obliged to be in possession of the card from the moment they wanted to leave the municipality where they lived (Luypaert, Meeussen, Van de Velde and Willockx 2004).

The main reason for the implementation of identity cards by the Germans was to increase their control over the Belgian population. Furthermore, it was used to sort people into certain categories for specific purposes. According to the famous Flemish writer Stijn Streuvels (1979), who in his diary at that time wrote:

There was already a precursor of the news on its way but now the farmers with their horses had to go to Waregem and bring back the message, that there has been inspection and all men between 18 and 45 years are demanded to go to Germany to work and one should expect that this will also happen in other municipalities. This brings dismay to the population and all kinds of explanations are given and all the previous measures are now seen as preparation to be able to implement the regulation more easily, this explains the organisation of the control, the identity cards and the barrier. A farmer's son made the profound and desperate remark; referring to the famous 'Flying' Monday: 'The people have fled when it was not necessary, and now that it really matters, there is no possibility anymore to flee - because everything is so well organised, no one can get away from his village, one cannot meet or discuss - and one must wait passively for what is inevitable'.⁵

³ Wet van 2 juni 1856 over het houden van volkstellingen en bevolkingsregister, *Moniteur Belge-Belgisch Staatsblad*, 7 June 1856.

⁴ Unclear though what happened to people who were not married.

⁵ Original citation in Flemish: "Er was reeds een voorloper van het nieuws in aantocht maar nu hebben de boeren met hun peerden naar Waregem gemoeten en brengen vandaar de mare mede, dat er controle geweest is en men alle manspersonen tussen 18 en 45 jaren opgeëist heeft om naar Duitsland te gaan werken en men 't zelfde mag verwachten op de andere gemeenten. Dat brengt de ontsteltenis onder de bevolking en allerhande uitleg wordt er rond gegeven en al de voorgaande maatregelen ziet men nu in als een voorbereiding om de verordening te gemakkelijker te kunnen uitvoeren, zo zijn de inrichting van de controle zelf, de eenzelveheidskaarten, de gemeentesperre in die zin uit te leggen!". The author follows this with "Een boerenzoon maakt daarbij de diepzinnige en wanhopige bemerking: doelend op die vermaarde 'Vliegende Maandag'. De mensen hebben gevluht als 't niet nodig was, en nu dat 't er

This citation makes clear that identity cards were used to organise the control and sorting practices. As referred to in the citation, the card was used to identify all unemployed men between 18 and 45 years as they were supposed to go and work in Germany. From 1915 unemployed men were deported to Germany to work there. This was ratified in a decree which was signed by the general governor von Bissing on 28 September 1916. Furthermore, the document was also used to control movement serving as a pass which allows certain people to travel and others not.⁶ The implementation of the card was very strict:⁷ for instance in 1917 the Germans informed the people that if they would lose the card or unlawfully use it, this could lead to a fine of 1000 Belgian Francs or a prison sentence of six weeks.⁸

After the war on the 6th of February 1919 a Royal Decree was published in the official journal of the State (*Moniteur Belge-Belgisch Staatsblad*), which officially introduced the identity card in Belgium.⁹ The Decree states that every town council has to provide a *kaart van eenzelveigheid* (card of identity) and register every person above 15 years old with permanent residency in that town, in the population registers, according to the model which is suggested by the Minister of Home Affairs (which also appeared in the same issue of the *Moniteur Belge* (see figure 11.1 for an illustration of an identity card according to this model).¹⁰

werkelijk zou op aankomen, valt er niet meer te vluchten, - want nu is alles zo goed ingericht, dat niemand meer van zijn dorp weg kan, men malkaar niet afspreken of beraden kan - en men lijdelijk moet afwachten 't geen komen moet" (Streuvels , 1916/1979: 593-594).

⁶ See also "Verordening 188 § 1. Ten einde het verkeer beter te kunnen surveilleren, moeten de eenzelveigheidsbewijzen van alle bewoners van 't Etappen gebied (met uitzondering van de bewoners van de grensstreek) met de naam van de bevoegde Etappenkommandantur (Etappenort), alsook met de stempel E. 4 gestempeld worden." Published in a newspaper of 26 July 1916, copied in Diary of Stijn Streuvels (Streuvels 1979:567-568).

⁷ Entry in diary of Virginie Loveling on 20 May 1916: "Het toezicht over de eenzelveigheidskaart wordt streng toegepast. Wie ze niet op de eerste vraag toonen kan, loopt een groote boete op. Meiden, die aan de stoep schuieren, hebben ze in den zak, evenzoo oude wijvetjes uit een armhuis, die liggen te wieden op het land. In werkmanswijken komt het voor, dat van binnen op de straatdeur in groote letters prijkt: 'Vergeet uw pasport niet'" Loveling (1916/2007: 435).

⁸ "Bekendmaking: Het verlies van een eenzelveigheidskaart of de wederrechtelijke benutting er van wordt gestraft met een boete van 1.000 mark of zes weken gevang. Er kan ook geldboete en gevangenis gelijktijdig worden uitgesproken" Loveling (1917/2007: 553). Stijn Streuvels also refers to a 'verordening from 26 July 1916' in which paragraph 4 states who ever is caught after 10 August without the mandatory stamp on the ID card will get a fine of max 500 Mark or a commensurate imprisonment: "Wie na de 10 augustus aanst. zonder de vereiste stempel op het eenzelveigheidsbewijs betrapt wordt, zal met ten hoogste 500 mark boete of met evenredige gevangenisstraf gestraft worden." Streuvels (1916/1979: 568).

⁹ 6 February 1919 - Koninklijk Besluit Betreffende de invoering van de Eenzelveigheidskaart, *Moniteur Belge-Belgisch Staatsblad* 22 February 1919, p. 624.

¹⁰ Article 1 of the Royal Decree states: "De gemeentebesturen zijn ertoe gehouden aan alle personen, van meer dan 15 jaar oud, die hun gewoon verblijf in de gemeente hebben, een kaart van eenzelveigheid en van inschrijving in de bevolkingsregisters af te leveren, gelijkvormig aan het model dat door Onzen Minster van Binnenlandsche Zaken zal vastgesteld worden."

AFLEVERING fr. Spaar- en Lijfrentkas Nr.

Nr. *6777* *Van Zele*
 Naam *Emilia*
 Voornamen *Sophia*
 Burgerstand *Wed. Claeys*
Theophil
 Nationaliteit: BELGISCHE
 geboren te *Bassevelde*
 den *16 April 1874*
 Beroep *huisvrouw*
 Vorig verblijf *1/0*
 Tweede verblijf
 Ingeschreven Boek *4* Blad *538*
Bech Straat, nr. *84*
 den *11* / *0* 19

Handteeken des dragers
M. w. Gh. Claeys

Lengte 1 meter

Afgeleverd, den *20-10-1913*
 De ambtenaar van den Burgerstand
 zijn afgevaardigde
Deuker

ACHTERVOLGENDE WONINGEN IN DE GEMEENTE

STRAAT	Nr.	Ald.	Datum	Boek Bladz.
<i>Bech</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>11/0</i>		

Zie keerside.

ACHTERVOLGENDE WONINGEN IN DE GEMEENTE

STRAAT	Nr.	Ald.	Datum	Boek Bladz.

Aan te bieden bij elke woonverandering.

Koninklijk Besluit van 6 Februari 1919.

Art. 2. — Deze kaart is verplichtend en moet op elke vraag van de politie vertoond worden. Zij moet aangeboden worden bij elke woonverandering in de gemeente alsmede voor alle verklaring, vraag voor getuigschriften en wanneer men zijn eenzelveheid moet vaststellen.

Art. 3. — Deze kaart moet vernieuwd worden in geval van huwelijk en telkenmale de belanghebbende van verblijf verandert, dat is zijne woonst van eene gemeente naar eene andere overbrengt.

De door het gebruik beschadigde kaarten moeten vervangen worden; evenzoo de kaarten van de personen wier wezen niet meer met het portret overeenstemt.

Art. 4. — De personen die niet voorzien zijn van hunne kaart van eenzelveheid en inschrijving in de bevolkingsregisters en zij die, verpersd hebbende van verblijf zullen verwaarloosd hebben deze te vernieuwen, kunnen overeenkomstig artikel 6 van de wet van 2 Juni 1856, gestraft worden met eene boete welke de 25 frank niet mag te boven gaan.

Is strafbaar met dezelfde straffen, onverminderd de toepassing van strengere strafbepalingen, alle persoon wiens eenzelveheidskaart uitkrabbingen of andere vervalschingen vertoont of een portret draagt dat het zijne niet is. (K. B. n. 31-6-32)

KONINKRIJK BELGIE

GEMEENTE
BASSEVELDE

Kaart van Eenzevigeheid
 EN INSCHRIJVING
 IN DE BEVOLKINGSREGISTERS

dr. V. Pauwels, Eekloo

Figure 11.1: Illustration of a Belgian identity card of Emilie Van Zele according to the model that was implemented by the Royal Decree.¹¹

Personal data that were collected are:

On the first side of the card:

1. Number of card
2. Name
3. First names
4. Marital status including name of spouse also in case of death
5. Nationality
6. Place and date of birth
7. Occupation/job
8. Previous residence
9. Second residence
10. Book and paper: indication of where person is registered in population register
11. Street and number of residence
12. Day of registration in population register

¹¹ Permission for this picture was kindly provided by Mijn Platte Land <http://mijnplattelend.com>.

On the second side of the card:

1. Portrait
2. Length
3. Date of issue of card
4. Signature of person
5. Signature of civil servant
6. Municipal seal which is put over part of the portrait¹²

In the years following the Royal Decree, the card was used for several purposes and the type of data collected changed over the years. In 1924 a law stated that if someone's driving license was suspended, this information would be added to the identity card.¹³ During the Second World War the identity card was famously used to categorise groups of people by the use of different stamps on the identity card. Whereby the most known example was the identification of Jews by putting a stamp which said *Juif* (Beer/ de Keulenaer 2006). Similarly, in a small town in Belgium, Tildonk, all the inhabitants received a stamp which said “*verplicht weggevoerde*” (required deportation). This meant that when the command was made they would have to leave the town immediately because their community was situated next to the *KW-stelling*¹⁴ (Casteels and Vandegoor 2002). Finally, in the 1960s a circular was sent round concerning the addition of the blood type of people to the identity cards.¹⁵ This was never put into practice, however, as there was no legal way to oblige people to take a blood test to establish their blood type, this could only be requested on a voluntarily basis.¹⁶

In 1983 a law was voted concerning the National Register number and in 1985 a new Royal Decree¹⁷ was published concerning identity cards stating that citizens had the right to choose if this number would be included on the card or not. The card in the 1980s still contained information about marital status and the address of the holder. With the introduction of the electronic identity card (E-ID) in 2003 the number of categories that are on the card (both visible and stored on the RFID-chip) has been decreased and marital status and address are not taken up anymore. However, the

¹² Model van de kaart van eenzelveigheid en van inschrijving in de bevolkingsregisters door de gemeentebesturen af te leveren aan alle personen van meer dan 15 jaar oud die hunne gewone verblijfplaats in de gemeente hebben. *Moniteur Belge-Belgisch Staatsblad* 22 February 1919, pp 624-626.

¹³ Addition to the law of 1 Augustus 1899, revising the law and regulations for the traffic police, Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Session of 25 July 1924.

¹⁴ A defence barricade, which purpose was to prevent the march of the Germans in the centre of Belgium.

¹⁵ Rondschrijven van 1 september 1960 betreffende de vermelding van de bloedgroep op de identiteitskaart en tot wijziging van de algemene onderrichtingen betreffende het houden van de bevolkingsregisters, de vaststelling van de verblijfs- veranderingen en de afgifte van de identiteitskaarten en -stukken, OmzFO 6846, consulted on http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=nl&la=N&nm=1986800298&table_name=titel.

¹⁶ Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Session 16 January 1969.

¹⁷ 29 July 1985 - Koninlijk Besluit Betreffende de Identiteitskaarten, *Moniteur Belge-Belgisch Staatsblad* 7 September 1985, p. 12806.

Royal Decree of 2003¹⁸ states that all new electronic identity cards will have the National Register number on them. So where this was still a choice in the 1980s now it has been made mandatory. 2009 was the year that all paper identity cards were gone and currently all Belgian citizens above 12 years have to carry an e-ID on them all of the time. Moreover, they need it when going to the bank, the health service, to pay their taxes online etc. In 2014 the E-ID will also include health data, access to e-government services and other applications.¹⁹ 2009 also saw the emergence of the so-called Kids-ID which is a voluntary electronic identity card for children below 12 years old. The card has two aims: on the one hand a means of identification and verification that the child is the child of the parents, as the parents' name is on the card and secondly as a form of protection in cases of emergency the card includes phone numbers that can be called when the child.²⁰

Three hypothetical motivations for the emergence of the identity card in Belgium

The motivations behind the introduction of the Royal Decree of 1919 are difficult to trace and initial research of the parliamentary debates yielded no results. However, three hypothetical motivations can be found. Although there is no sufficient evidence, the three possible motivations that follow illustrate the importance of exploring the larger socio-political context when studying surveillance technologies. The first possible motivation comes to the fore when exploring the general political climate and motivations of King Albert I. In November 1918 a new government under supervision of Delacroix was installed. This is known as the Loppum Revolution. It was called a revolution by Conservative critics as a number of revolutionary laws were voted including suffrage for men above 21 years, ensuring equality of the unions and equality of the two Belgian languages (French and Flemish). As King Albert I was a big supporter of universal suffrage, one could speculate that the decision of King Albert I to launch the Royal decree for the introduction of identity cards could be seen in this light: making sure that all persons who had a right to vote were registered and having a tool that could be used to identify the persons who were endowed with the right to vote.

A second possible motivation shows up in a pioneering judgement of the Belgian Court of Cassation of 18 November 1924 in the Mertz case about the legality of the Royal Decree of 1919 which has been analysed in depth by Ooms (2009). The decree implies more than just implementing the Belgian identity card. Article two of the Decree states that the card is obligatory and has to be shown to the police when asked on the public road. This article and the Royal Decree were the subject of the judgement of the Court of Cassation, which was the result of the fact that a police judge had acquitted Mertz for walking around on the public road without an identity card. The judge deemed that the obligation of carrying an identity card, which was made compulsory by the Royal Decree, did not have as goal to ensure the correctness and regularity of the statements concerning fixing and changing residence nor did it have anything to do with the census. He, therefore, ruled that he could not find any

¹⁸25 March 2003 - Koninklijk Besluit Betreffende de Identiteitskaarten, Moniteur Belge-Belgisch Staatsblad, 28 March 2003, C - 2003//00227, p. 15929.

¹⁹ Schriftelijke vraag nr. 5-8133 van Jean-Jacques De Gucht (Open Vld) d.d. 14 februari 2013 aan de vice-eersteminister en minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Gelijke Kansen, <http://www.senate.be/www/?MIval=/Vragen/SchriftelijkeVraag&LEG=5&NR=8133&LANG=nl>.

²⁰ Ministry of Home Affairs, Kids-ID, <http://www.ibz.rrn.fgov.be/index.php?id=1504&L=1>.

legal basis in the law of 1856 to convict Mertz and decided to disregard the Decree on the basis of article 159 of the Belgian constitution. The question then posed by the Court of Cassation was whether the Royal Decree could be considered as an execution of a law, more specifically the Law of 2 June 1856 about conducting censuses and the population registers. The Court ruled that the executing power, within the limits of her constitutional competence may not extend the width of a law nor may it limit it. Rather, it had the competence to deduce consequences from the principle of the law and its general design, which naturally result from it, according to the spirit of the law and the goals it strives for.²¹ This arrest supports its argument by implying that the identity card is intimately connected with the goal of the installation of the population registers which were implemented in the law of 2 June 1856 (Ooms 2009). What is interesting for this chapter is that the court officially provided a motivation for the implementation of the identity card, namely that it naturally flowed out of the 1856 law.²² Following from this motivation we understand that the identity card was implemented as a method of proof that people were registered in the population registers. It is just a logical next step to make administrative procedures more efficient.

However, apart from or in addition to the motivations above one can argue there is a third possibility underlying the decree. After the war the democratisation of the Belgian political system led to a growing government intervention in the social - economic life of the people (Caestecker, Strubbe and Tallier 2009). This transformation had the effect that registration of individuals and identity cards or “securitisation of identity” (Rose 2000) and membership to the Belgian nationality became increasingly important as the bureaucratic access to rights. For instance in 1928 an amendment was made to the law of 21 July 1844 concerning pensions of citizens and clergy. Article 44 was replaced and part of the new clause stated that the pensions are given to the rightful person after they present their identity card: “De pensioenen worden óm de drie maanden aan den rechthebbende uitgekeerd, mits overlegging van diens identiteitskaart.”²³ It was a tool that simplified certain bureaucratic processes and could be used to identify people who were entitled to certain rights. However, at the same time, the identity cards led to an increased administrative control of foreigners in Belgium and non nationals were excluded from more and more domains. This also led to a new sort of crime: the mobility crime. Immigration without explicit permission of the authorities could now be criminalised. In this climate, the identity card which was introduced by the German occupiers was a thankful tool for the post-war government. Although not everyone was very happy about such strict control. On the front page of a socialist weekly of 1925 it was written that a Belgian citizen without an identity card was punished worse than when providing benzole to the enemy to blow up their own allies:

During the war the habit was forced upon each of us to own an identity card, which contained our date of birth, occupation and residence, even the length of our person, does not matter how unimportant, was written down. Since the war this has become a general police measure. A Belgian without an identity card is punished

²¹ The court ruled: “Attendu que si le pouvoir exécutif, dans l’accomplissement de la mission que lui confère l’article 67 de la constitution, ne peut étendre pas plus qu’il ne peut restreindre la portée de la loi, il lui appartient de dégager du principe de celle-ci et de son économie générale les conséquences qui a présidé à sa conception et les fins qu’elle poursuit”, cited in Ooms (2009: 5).

²² This arrest raised a lot of eyebrows, see for a good discussion Ooms (2009).

²³ Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Session of 8 August 1928.

more severely than providing benzol to the enemy to bomb its own allies.²⁴ (Coole 1925)

All three hypothetical motivations presented above are possible drivers for why the choice was made to issue a Royal Decree implementing the identity card officially in Belgium.

11.3. INTRODUCTION OF IDENTIFICATION MEASURES IN THE BELGIAN COLONIES

Similar to the events in 1910 in Congo,²⁵ after the Belgians assumed control in 1916 of the territory of Ruanda-Urundi from Germany they implemented a system of indirect rule (Longman 2001; Vijgen 2005).²⁶ Before the colonial era Rwandans were identified by their nationality and belonging to a clan. Every person belonged to a clan which was well defined and known. In each clan there were three social groups called Batusti, Bahutu and Batwa. Although the exact meaning of these categories remains contested in the literature there is consensus that these categories of identity were relatively fluid and identities could change (Uvin 1997; Longman 2001).

In 1933 a decree was published in the *Bulletin Officiel du Congo-Belge*: "Décret sur les circonscription indigènes",²⁷ which gave the first legal basis for identity cards. This decree was pronounced in the meeting of the Belgian Colonial Council on 27 October 1933. It states that all adult "indigènes" of Congo and neighbouring colonies need to be registered, and when a person registers they will receive a "certificat d'identité" or "eenzelvigheidsbewijs." The decree does not mention what the identity card would look like or which information would be included. What it does make clear in article 11 is that the "Gouverneur Général", respectively of Ruanda-Burundi and Congo decides how the registration will take place, the formalities needed, and the model of the documents that are distributed to the "intéressés"; in other words, the governor is held responsible for providing the model of the card.²⁸ Preliminary study of volumes of the *Bulletin Officiel du Ruanda-Urundi*

²⁴ Original citation in Flemish: "Gedurende den oorlog wierd ons de gewoonte opgedrongen elk een eenzelvigheidskaart te bezitten, waarop onze geboortedatum, beroep en woonst aangeduid is, tot zelfs de lengte van ons persootje, hoe nietig ook, is er op neergeschreven. Sedert den oorlog is dit een algemeene politiemaatregel geworden. Een Belg zonder eenzelvigheidskaart is erger strafbaar dan benzol leveren aan den vijand, om eigen bondgenooten omver te blazen" (Coole 1925).

²⁵ See Décret de 10 Mai 1910 whereby the local chiefs were involved in colonial administration.

²⁶ On August 23, 1923, the League of Nations officially mandated Rwanda and Burundi under Belgian supervision, (see Melvern, 2000: 9).

²⁷ Décret sur les circonscriptions indigènes, *Bulletin Officiel Congo-Belge 1ère partie*, 1933, pp. 1004-1035.

²⁸ Article 11: "Le Gouverneur Général détermine: 1. Le mode suivant lequel s'effectuera le recensement; 2. les formalités à accomplir tant pour les mutations; 3. le modèle des pièces à délivrer aux intéressés." None of the existing literature refers to primary sources though. Further research in both *Bulletin officiel du Congo-Belge* and *Bulletin officiel du Ruanda-Urundi* has not uncovered any more information about the introduction of the identity card in Ruanda-Urundi or Congo. However, several issues were missing in the archive including an issue of the *Bulletin officiel du Ruanda-Urundi*, which should have a model of an identity card in it.

between 1933 and 1943 does not reveal anything more about the implementation of the identity cards.²⁹

Apart from the identity card, the decree mentions a passport (*passport de mutation*) which the indigène needed for travel outside the area they lived (*circonscription*). No one was allowed to leave the area for a continuous period of more than 30 days except if they obtained explicit permission from the local administrator to receive such a passport. Travel passes were not a new phenomenon in the Belgian colonies. In an article titled "Émigration des noirs" from 1922 from the Bulletin Officiel du Congo-Belge it states that without a "passeport de sortie" the *indigènes* from Congo and neighbouring colonies could not leave the colony. Furthermore, Belgians who wanted to enter the Colonies needed a special passport which includes a picture, and states the place they were going to.

No specific research or literature was found that dealt with the implementation of identity cards in the Belgian Congo. In the existing literature about Ruanda-Urundi there is consensus that the 'ethnic' identity cards were introduced together with a census in 1933 (Reyntjens 1985; Mahoux and Verhofstadt 1997; Mamdani 2001; Longman 2001; Hintjes 2001). By adding the ethnic category to the identity card each person was thereby defined, as one or other of the three recognized social categories: Bututsi, Buhutu and Butwa³⁰ (Hintjes 2001). Several experts of the Rwandan genocide (Mamdani 2001, Hintjes 2001) see the introduction of the identity card in Rwanda as an instrument of the process of racialisation by the Belgian colonial authorities. There is consensus in the literature that Belgian civil servants and missionaries in Ruanda-Burundi and Congo generally accepted the Hamitic hypothesis. The "Hamitic race" was considered superior to or more advanced than other races in Africa, descended from Europe, whereby it was assumed that all significant achievements in African history were the work of "Hamites".

The Hamith myth played a significant factor in the thinking and behaviour of the Belgian administrators and missionaries and consequentially in the big administrative reform in Ruanda-Burundi in the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, which in essence entailed the reformation and expansion of the territories of the chiefs (from 200 chiefs to 40). According to Gatwa (2005) the colonial authorities used both blood tests and measurements, which included weight, nose width and nasal and facial characteristics to conclude that the Batutsi were much taller than the Bahutu and Batwa.³¹ It was official policy that Bututsi's were given preference when appointing domestic political authorities. In sum, by assuring a Batutsi monopoly of power this created a crucial element in sorting and controlling the population, and also established different political categories (Mahoux and Verhofstadt 1997).

Mamdani (2001) also emphasises the role of the missionaries in this process. In 1902 for Father Léon Classe, the future bishop of Rwanda the Tutsi were "superb humans" combining traits both Aryan and Semitic, just as Father François Menard,

²⁹ We have, however, found an indication on the Internet that a model of identity card can be found in the edition of 1944, CEHRGLA Lot 22 V, <http://www.cehrgla.com/index.php/articles/105-lot-22-v.html>. This volume was missing in the archive of the Central Library, Catholic University Leuven we consulted. Future research will need to be done in other archives to find this volume.

³⁰ Interesting observation is that in the media and more vulgarising publications the ethnic category of the Butwa is not mentioned.

³¹ Hintjes (2001) indicates that Europeans were obsessed with height at this time, since 'most anthropologists equated small stature with racial inferiority.' It should be noted though that neither Gatwa, nor the report by Mahoux and Verhofstadt (1997) to which Gatwa refers, mention primary sources for this.

writing in 1917, who saw a Tutsi as “a European under a black skin” (Mamdani 2001). Therefore, according to Mamdani (2001), the Belgians had a discriminating policy and the identity card was used as a tool to enhance this policy. Similarly, Hintjes (2001: 30) argues that the introduction of the identity cards was “a significant first step in ‘slicing up’ Rwandan society into vertical, parallel tranches of humanity”. She does note that although assuring a Tutsi monopoly of power, the Belgians set the stage for future conflict in Rwanda, such was not their intent. They were not implementing a “divide and rule” strategy so much as putting into effect the racist convictions common to most early twentieth century Europeans (Hintjes 2001).

Longman (2001), the only author who has specifically written about the introduction of identity cards in Rwanda, argues that because the available evidence is so meagre regarding the origins of the policy of official identity registration the most likely explanation is that identity cards were issued for mundane administrative purposes and not with the intention of fixing ethnic membership which is often proclaimed by certain scholars studying the genocide. He argues further that the perceived need to fix identities was not unique to the Belgian colonies as the identity card had been implemented in Belgium after the First World War. He further illustrates that ideas about identification are nothing new by giving the example of a colonial administrator in the Belgian Congo who in 1914 suggested to implement fingerprinting as a means of fixing the identities of subjects, because of the unreliability of names as a means of identifying individuals (see also Borgerhoff 1914). Registering ethnicity was, therefore, merely one component of a broader program to increase the regulation of Belgian subjects according to Longman (2001).

When studying the discussions of the Colonial Council (Conseil Colonial),³² which proceeded the decree of 1933, there was nothing that specifically mentions different treatment of different groups of people or adding ethnic categories to the identity card. However, this does not mean anything; the Gouverneur Général was responsible for the model of the identity card as was mentioned above. One of the main motivations given is that they want to install a status for the indigenous people which is adapted to the conditions of their situation: “a satisfactory status for indigenous communities, adapted to the conditions of their current situation and likely capable of meeting the requirements of a normal evolution for an extended period” (Conseil Colonial 1933, 949).³³

They also go on to say that they want to keep the local structures intact as much as possible but will use the European methods of classification: “This is because the decree does not interfere in the internal life of the indigenous communities where the custom remains sovereign.” Furthermore, it was considered preferable “to adopt a method of classification of its *dispositions*, not according to indigenous concepts, but in the spirit of how the officials who will execute it are trained” (Conseil Colonial, 1933, 950).³⁴ On the basis of these citations one could argue that as the Belgian

³²This was the official body that gave advice about each colonial legislative act and was consulted about all important colonial issues.

³³Original citation: “d’un statut satisfaisant pour les communautés indigènes, adapté aux conditions de leur situation actuelle et vraisemblablement susceptible de répondre durant une période assez longue aux exigences d’une évolution normale.” *Bulletin Officiel Congo Belge - 1ère partie*, 1933: p.949.

³⁴Original citation: “C’est parce que le décret n’intervient pas dans la vie intérieure des communautés indigènes où la coutume reste souveraine, sauf exclusion de ce quelle contient d’incompatible avec notre civilisation, et qu’il est systématiquement orienté vers l’établissement, dans un intérêt communautés et l’autorité européenne, qu’il fut jugé préférable, lors de la rédaction, d’adopter une méthode de classement de ses dispositions, conforme non pas aux conceptions des indigènes, mais à la

authority expresses the desire not to intervene in the existing social structures they nevertheless added the ethnic category on the identity card to reflect existing social categories. Hence, it was not the desire of the colonisers per se to use the identity card to segregate or sort out populations but the deployment of the card itself which created the possibilities for ethnic sorting.

One tentative conclusion from this first exploration of official documents is that, what is argued in the literature on Rwanda about “putting into effect the racist convictions common to most early twentieth century Europeans” (Des Forges, 1999: 36) and the discriminatory policy of the population according to ethnicity, cannot be found in the official discourse of the Belgian government and therefore on the basis of the consulted documents it is impossible to conclude that the Belgian government had the express intent to ethnically sort the population. This is in line with Longman's (2001) argument that the most likely driver for the issuance of identity cards in Ruanda-Urundi in the 1930s seems to have been an extension of a policy issuing identity papers implemented in Belgium during the interwar years, and that the registration of ethnicity was merely one component of a broader program to increase the regulation of Belgian subjects. Which is a much more mundane explanation than argued by authors such as Mamdani (2001) and Hintjes (2001). However, given the fact that the motivations and decisions about what to include on the identity card were made by the Gouverneur Général of Ruanda-Urundi further research will be necessary to explore this.

11.4. DISCUSSION

Just as Lyon (2001) argues that the history of identification reveals both inclusionary and exclusionary features of identity documentation this chapter shows how identity cards can work in a myriad of ways and are often the result of an interplay of different desires, which in their turn are influenced by the socio-historical context. Identity cards can serve as a tool for some to get access to certain services and rights, as a tool of administrative control, as a tool of control of movement, as a social sorting tool. The technology itself is mouldable and different purposes can be folded into the technology. As we have seen in the case of the implementation of the cards in Belgium there were probably several motivations playing a role.

Moreover, by looking at surveillance technologies as an assemblage, it becomes clear how other actors apart from the traditional binary opposition between the surveyor (government) and surveilled (the citizens), play an important role and need to be taken into account when exploring the unintended consequences of the implementation of these technologies (Martin, van Brakel and Bernhard 2009). As we have seen surveillance technologies are shaped by multiple actors, at multiple levels of governance who all have their own desires. In the case of Ruanda-Urundi there was the decision from the Belgian government to hold a census and introduce the identity card, but it was the local governor-general who made the specific decisions about how the identity card would look like. Furthermore, the way the colonies were governed by indirect rule meant that the power was not merely top-down but much more dispersed over several actors. The power is not just panoptic, it is also pastoral. As Foucault observes in his essay *Subject and Power*: “The state’s power (and that’s one

formation d'esprit des fonctionnaires qui l'exécuteront.” *Bulletin Officiel Congo Belge - 1ère partie*, 1933: p. 950.

of the reasons for its strength) is both an individualizing and totalizing form of power. Never I think in the history of human societies (...) has there been such a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques and of totalization procedures” (Foucault 1994, 332).

As we have seen, the technology itself plays an active part in the assemblage. Although a certain technology might not have certain intentions such as the identity card serving as a tool for genocide, the simple fact that the technology is there, means that it can be used for a whole array of purposes. In other words although the intentions for adding for example ethnic categories on the identity card might not be intended as an explicit way to sort and control certain groups of people, once the technology is in place it opens the door to use it for all kinds of control purposes, but also for abuse. This also highlights another characteristic of the surveillant assemblage, namely that it is important when studying these practices to keep in mind that they are always in process, and depending on the other actors involved the purpose and use of technologies will change over time. This becomes very clear when looking at the development of the identity card in Belgium and the different way the cards were used in different times and how it was negatively used during the Second World War. This highlights the importance of studying surveillance technologies in their historical context.

11.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter we presented a first phase of an exploration to find the drivers behind the implementation of identity cards in Belgium and its colonies. On the basis of the research carried out for this chapter we arrive at two main conclusions. Firstly, when studying the implementation of surveillance technologies such as identity cards, it is important to understand the whole administrative and technological regime (Lyon and Bennett 2008) or the socio-technical assemblage of the identity card. By using the rhizome metaphor to look at such practices several important variables come to light including the focus on process, different power dynamics, multi-actor, desires and unintended consequences. Secondly, this chapter shows how focusing on desires and drivers behind implementation, and approaching these surveillance technologies as assemblages the typical picture of the totalitarian central government who is surveilling the subjects becomes messier and this questions using the Panopticon metaphor as general framework for studying surveillance.

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