

PHD RESEARCH

A short overview of recent PhD research on Belgian modern and contemporary history

LUC BLANCHART

The Engineers of Leuven University in the Belle Époque. Approach of a Technocratic Elite (1898-1902) -

[Original Title : *Les ingénieurs de Louvain à la Belle Époque. Approche d'une élite technocratique (1898-1902)*]

Université catholique de Louvain, 2012. Supervisor : Michel Dumoulin.

Since the 1970s, engineers have been the subject of research in the context of studies highlighting the genesis, the role and training of elites. Recently, new studies have shed new light on the engineer as an agent of innovation and his role in decision making by businesses. Despite this interesting historiographical debate, many questions remain to be studied about the roles and functions of engineering, social mobility, the image of engineers... This research intends to study engineers as a distinct social and professional group basing its conclusion on the specific case of engineers of Louvain in 1900.

The first part describes the higher technical education in Belgium in the nineteenth century. The second part relates the story of the Special Schools of Louvain between 1864 and 1902 and describes the training programs. In addition, we attempt to establish a profile of the students and the faculty, while seeking to measure their degree of international openness. The third part attempts to shed light on the sociability and the ideology of the engineers of Louvain. There is also a study of the Industrial Circle and the Union of Engineers of Louvain between 1872 and 1902. We have also attempted to define the ideology of Louvain engineers through what academic authorities

and engineers said about themselves. A final chapter follows the career of these engineers until after the Second World War, measuring their mobility and adaptability to the industrial and economic changes of the first half of the twentieth century.

MÉLANIE BOST

Crossing the occupation 1914-1918. From modus vivendi to strike, the Belgian magistrates in face of the enemy -

[Original Title : *Traverser l'Occupation 1914-1918. Du 'modus vivendi' à la grève, la magistrature belge face aux occupants allemands*]

Université catholique de Louvain, 2013. Supervisors : Xavier Rousseaux & Dirk Luyten.

The history of the Belgian judicial system during the Great War is largely unknown. The collective memory has mostly retained the episode of the magistracy's strike, also called '*cès de justice*', which, from February 1918 until the Armistice, paralysed the Belgian courts and led to the installation of a German judiciary. At the end of the war, this shining example of mobilisation formed one of the *topoi* of patriotic literature. In contrast, the co-existence of the Belgian judiciary with the German occupier during the preceding three years, although not incident-free, is cast in shadows and mostly reduced to the most prominent abuses of the latter.

This black-white narrative is in dire need of re-examination. With the help of the unexplored judicial archives of the Great War, Mélanie Bost revisits this remarkable period. She analyses the reactions of the magistrates – judges and public ministry – to new problems encountered within their duties and the determinants of their reactions.

What was the *modus vivendi* defined with the occupier? What were the vectors of the gradual weakening of this agreement until the 1918 strike? What role did the magistracy play during the enemy occupation? How was the judicial patriotism defined in 1914-1918? What can be learnt from the experience of the occupation period about the judicial actor in terms of behaviours, “habitus” and internal cohesion?

The answers to those questions shed new light on the relationship between occupiers and occupied between 1914-18. They also contribute to our knowledge of the Belgian judiciary, considered as a professional body and a political power, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

HENK BYLS

Remaining Catholic in France. A History of the Religious Initiatives accompanying the Flemish Migrants to Northern France - [Original Title :

Rester catholique en France. Une histoire de l'encadrement religieux destiné aux migrants belgo-flamands du Lillois, de Paris et des campagnes françaises (1850-1960)

KU Leuven, 2013. Supervisor : Jan De Maeyer.

This dissertation examines a particular aspect of the Belgian/Flemish migration in France: the Belgian Catholic religious initiatives which, between 1850 and 1960, accompanied the migrants to their various destinations. In the eyes of most of these organizations, migration was a dangerous phenomenon: the migrant was divorced from and had left behind his own (language) community and the environment it provided for experiencing traditions, religion and culture. In France, supportive Belgian initiatives sought to protect the migrants against these presumed risks.

In *Rester catholique*, the interaction between these initiatives and the Belgian migrants in three specific regions is analysed: the industrial district of Lille, the city of Paris, and the agricultural areas north of the Seine. In the Lille region for example, there was a strong presence of Belgian religious institutes in Roubaix and the Wazemmes quarter in Lille. However, during the period of 1860-1880 in particular, their activities far exceeded the simple objective of gathering Belgian migrants. They acted more as an ecclesiastical cross-border zone, where the distinction between Catholic and non-Catholic was far more important than nationality. Until 1901, the Belgians constituted by far the largest migrant group in the city of Paris, where the diocese of Ghent had established an initiative on their behalf. However, the organization never truly mastered the Parisian cosmopolitan reality. This stands in contrast to the results of the ecclesiastical initiatives after the First World War towards the permanent Belgian migrants in French agricultural areas, where such initiatives were successful in consolidating transnational networks of predominantly Flemish farmers.

NICOLETTA CASANO

Networks uniting Belgian and Italian Freemasons and Laymen from the late Nineteenth Century to the Second World War. How the Italian ‘Fuorusciti’ were welcomed in Belgium - [Original Title :

Les réseaux unissant francs-maçons et laïques belges et italiens de la fin du XIX^e siècle à la Deuxième guerre mondiale. Prémisses et réalisation de l'accueil en Belgique des ‘fuorusciti’ italiens]

Université libre de Bruxelles & Università degli Studi della Tuscia, 2013. Supervisors : Anne Morelli (ULB) & Leonardo Rapone (Università degli Studi della Tuscia, Italy).

The aim of my research is to investigate further the experience of the Italian freemasons and freethinkers who were forced into exile as a consequence of their persecution by the Mussolini regime. In fact, the first associations to be persecuted by the Italian dictator were the freemason and freethinkers associations, but until a few years ago, contemporary historiographical debate hadn't really focused on the consequences of these actions because of the limited access to the archives of these associations.

It was only at the beginning of this century that these documents were found and have been put at the disposal of researchers. The study of part of these documents demonstrates that these freemasons and freethinkers, who had taken the decision to leave their country in order not to accept dictatorship, were political emigrants and found asylum in some European countries thanks to the masonic and freethinking networks that they had established from the end of the 19th century. Belgium was one of these countries, but more importantly the one where the networks described were born and developed. This fact allows us to explain the reason why many Italian freemasons and freethinkers passed through or lived in Belgium. Even if Belgium wasn't the final country in which most of them settled.

KIM CHRISTIAENS

Orchestrating Solidarity. Third World Agency, Transnational Networks & the Belgian Mobilization for Vietnam & Latin America, 1960s-1980s

KU Leuven, 2013. Supervisor : Idesbald Goddeeris.

The period of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s witnessed the rise of a plethora of social

movements that claimed common cause with political movements in the Third World and gave shape to solidarity between the First and Third World. The issue of the Vietnam War and the Chilean coup of 1973, for instance, mobilized hundreds of thousands of people into action in their societies. Traditionally, accounts have usually analysed this activism by looking into the minds of the Western activists and the societies in which they lived, without giving much, not to say any attention, to their interaction with Third World actors and their input. Using a large number of so far neglected sources, this study has however made explicit the role of Third World political movements in the development of the campaigns which emerged in support of them in Western European societies, and, more specifically, in Belgium. Analyzing four *causes célèbres* of Third World solidarity activism (Vietnam, Brazil, Chile and Nicaragua) and adopting a transnational perspective which draws on an original cross-fertilisation of the literature on transnational social movements, as well as research on Third World diplomacy, this doctoral dissertation argues that Third World political movements played an active part in the emergence, functioning and transnational identity of these solidarity movements. These Third World actors (diplomats and exiles) were not, as proposed by traditional accounts, passive recipients of support but, on the contrary, actively created networks with overseas groups in Western Europe and established direct connections and relationships in their quest for international support, money and power. These relations are key for understanding the elective affinities of activists, the organizational and ideological configuration of solidarity movements, and transnational exchange across the North-South and East-West boundaries.

JOZEFIE DE BOCK

Mediterranean Immigrants in the City of Ghent, 1960-1980. A Historical Study of Immigration, Settlement and Integration processes

European University Institute, Firenze (Italy), 2013.

Supervisors : Heinz-Gerhard Haupt & Frank Castecker.

In the field of migration history, the history of post-war labour migration to Western Europe has been receiving the attention from an increasing number of scholars, especially since the beginning of the new millennium. Through applying a historical lens to a subject that has been studied by social scientists for decades, historians are trying to contextualize this migration stream, debunk some of its ancient myths and uncover the historical realities of the relatively under-researched period before the migration stops of the mid-1970s. Taking the integration processes of Mediterranean immigrants in the Belgian city of Ghent over the course of the 1960s and 1970s as a case study, this thesis engages with both the sociological and historical literature on the subject. It studies the ways in which these immigrants have constructed their lives in an urban environment over the course of the first decades after their arrival, dealing with the structural elements that framed their integration processes, looking at the strategies they used in order to realize their goals and focusing on their social life-worlds and the networks they created. In addition to a detailed narrative of these structural and social integration processes, the thesis also provides a thorough analysis of the interplay of structure and agency in these processes, following Nancy Green's call for a poststructural structuralist approach. Further, it studies the integration processes of immigrants from a multi-dimensional rather than an ethnic-focused perspective.

The thesis also takes a critical stance towards phenomena that are generally qualified as 'ethnic', and pays special attention to those aspects of immigrants' lives that crossed ethnic boundaries. What comes to the fore is a picture of post-war 'guest worker' populations that is characterized by more agency and less ethnicity, less homogeneity and more interethnic interaction than is generally the case.

LYVIA DISER

Civil servants in white coat. Laboratory science in the Belgian government policy (1870-1940) -

[Original Title : *Ambtenaren in witte jas.*

Laboratoriumwetenschap in het Belgisch overheidsbeleid (1870-1940)]

KU Leuven, 2013. Supervisor : Johan Tollebeek.

Today, the laboratory is one of the most visible and well-known manifestations of science. The man or woman in white coat holding a test tube against the light or peering through a microscope in a background setting of glass tubes is the iconic representation of science. In the second half of the century the rise of the modern laboratory gave rise to new ways of practicing science. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century onwards, laboratory science also entered government policy. In my doctoral thesis, I explore the emergence and development of the laboratory as the authoritative management tool for the modern Belgian state. I studied cultural transfers between representatives of the state and laboratory scientists. The question I wanted to answer was what made the laboratory so appealing to the government, what the scientists' interests were, and how both institutions created a new identity for themselves and the other. This identity also raised the question of

authority: how did the laboratory change the authority of the state? And furthermore, how did the laboratory itself benefit from state authority?

In approaching the state laboratory as an embedded institution, my doctoral dissertation also sheds a light on the social tipping points, such as the knowledge society, “expertocracy”, the professionalisation of science and the development of the modern bureaucracy. Throughout the period under study, the laboratory developed into a new and separate model: the state laboratory. This laboratory had very specific cultural characteristics of which the key words were objectification, social pacification, instrumentality and standardisation. This distinguished it from other laboratories during that period. The well-prepared, bureaucratic laboratory worker was the exemplification of it.

LAMBERT EKANGA LOKOKA

The Teaching of History in Secondary Schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Intentions of Reform and Field Practices - [Original Title : *L'enseignement de l'histoire à l'école secondaire en République démocratique du Congo. Intentions d'une Réforme et pratiques de terrain*]

Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté des sciences psychologiques et de l'éducation, 2011. Supervisors : Anne Morelli & José-Luis Wolfs.

The aim of this study is to analyse the practices of history teaching in the secondary schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in relation to the implementation programme of September 2005. Indeed, history teaching, which is a strategic matter in itself and represents an important challenge for second-

dary schools, has failed for several decades (from 1962 to 2005) in the essential aspect of its mission on the level of education in the DRC.

However, if the new programme (from 2005) has “decolonised” the content of the materials, practices on the ground still seem unchanged. How can this immobility be explained? In an attempt to answer this question, this thesis adopts a theoretical and empirical approach. The theoretical approach, which is addressed in the first part, gives an overall picture of the literature on this problem, and an overview of the history of education and history teaching in the DRC. It discusses the conceptual know-how of the history teacher and of history practices and finally treats the issue of the motivation of the pupils and the learning materials. The second part, dedicated to the empirical approach of the question, focuses on the methodological approach of the study, the analysis and the interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative results.

In short, the results of this study show that nearly all of the teachers instructing history in the 5th and 6th secondary grade use transmissive methods and ignore active teaching or active methods proposed by the new history programme, which probably does not motivate their students. In other words, in spite of their high qualifications, their long teaching experience and the change in content, these history teachers do not practice active teaching or active teaching methods. It would appear that we are a long way from the much desired “decolonisation” of history teaching practices in the DRC.

SHARON M. HARRISON

Belgian Labour in Nazi Germany : A Social History

University of Edinburgh, 2012. Supervisors : Jill Stephenson & Donald Bloxham.

The Nazis' deployment of civilian workers from across Europe in Germany's war economy established one of the largest forced labour programs since the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century. Between 350,000 and 400,000 Belgians worked in Germany during World War II—around half of whom went to Germany voluntarily, but under a degree of pressure due to German economic policy in occupied Belgium.

A social history with a focus on the history of everyday life, the thesis analyses the implementation of the foreign labour program through quantitative and qualitative research. A range of original sources, including the records of the Military Administration in Belgium, labour records, residence and transport lists, as well as letters, diaries, photographs and personal accounts, are used.

Dividing Belgium's population along linguistic lines, the Nazis subjected Belgians to differentiated treatment based on whether they were Flemings or Walloons. The thesis maps Belgians' varied experiences, illustrating convergence and divergence from Nazi racial policy and the key role ordinary Germans played. The thesis shows that Belgian workers were not just passive victims of the German occupation. The decision to accept work in Germany was a personal one for many Belgian volunteers, based on individual circumstances. The thesis illustrates that in Rhine-Ruhr cities close to the German-Belgian border like Düsseldorf, volunteers made up

a high proportion of Belgian workers. Their employment patterns often mirrored those of Belgian migrant workers who went to Germany during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Volunteers often completed labour assignments and returned home during winter, while others took up a series of labour assignments in Germany during the war. In hard economic times and with no end to the war in sight, Belgians tried to navigate the best course for themselves and their families. While conscripts were by definition not free, as western Europeans, Belgians enjoyed greater rights and legal protections and were able to exercise a significant degree of control over their own destinies. The analysis of Belgian women's departures also reveals a complex picture. In spite of the economic constraints and conscription, Belgian women often went to Germany for their own reasons. Belgian women were not simply victims of Nazi labour policies and working in Germany even proved a liberating and positive experience for some. A distinction must be made vis-à-vis the material advantages western Europeans enjoyed due to their elevated position in the Nazi racial hierarchy and the benefits individuals secured by virtue of their employment and linguistic skills and greater confidence.

DAVID J. HENSLEY

Fighting for French in Flanders : The Promotion and Defense of French Language Rights in Flanders, 1880-1975

The Penn State University, 2013. Supervisor : Sophie De Schaepdrijver.

This dissertation examines the efforts of French-speaking populations in Flanders to maintain a place for French in the Flemish

public realm, which I define here as the administrative, judicial, and educational institutions of Flanders. Chronologically, it spans the period between the late nineteenth century, which witnessed the first concerted legislative efforts to (re)introduce Dutch into the overwhelmingly Francophone administrative and educational institutions of Flanders, and the 1970s, when a combination of legislative measures and socioeconomic pressures erased the last vestiges of a French-language public life in Flanders. By examining the periodical press, debates in scholarly publications, political pamphlets and posters, parliamentary speeches, and private correspondence produced by Francophones of Flanders, I question how and why their arguments in favor of a legal presence for French in Flanders changed over the course of the period in question. During the *fin-de-siècle*, many Francophones of Flanders made triumphant appeals to the universality and utility of French language and culture, and did not typically present themselves as a single, coherent group. During the period between the world wars, and again during the 1960s, however, those Francophones of Flanders who wanted French-language rights in schooling and administration portrayed themselves as a *minority group*. They constructed a collective identity, couched in terms (of ‘minority rights’) that they hoped would make their claims more legitimate in the eyes of both the Belgian state and the international community. Ultimately, the Francophones of Flanders were unsuccessful in their making of claims, and the Flemish public realm has become completely Dutch, even the once-thriving Francophone periodical press having faded away. While there are still significant numbers of ‘Francophones

of Flanders’ who speak French *at home*, this is no longer a salient political or social fact.

This project addresses several fields of scholarship. First, the French-speaking elites in Flanders provide a fascinating case study of identity formation. Historical analyses of identity formation have tended to study the ‘creation’ of national identities from previously ‘non-national’ populations, as in the work of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, or Eugen Weber; others have focused on subaltern groups who have struggled to define themselves against the ruling elite, such as Catalans, Québécois, Czechs, and, indeed, Flemings. My work, however, looks at a (former) elite group, losing its monopoly on political and cultural power, which attempted to fashion a minority identity in order to validate its claims to linguistic rights. Second, my study addresses the growing scholarship on ‘*Francophonie*’: that is, the French-speaking world outside of France. I look at the problematic role of French in a society adjacent to France, as well as the way in which the global profile of the French language changed. The decline of French in Flanders was linked to the decline of French as an international language throughout the twentieth century. Third, the story of the French-speaking elites in Flanders is one of a challenge to classical liberalism. While the French-speakers of Flanders claimed that ‘free choice’ of language was inseparable from any understanding of political liberty, many in the Flemish Movement argued that such a ‘choice’ was a dead letter in a society in which the speakers of one language – not that of the majority – held the levers of power.

TESSA LOBBES

History without dust. The many faces of the present in Belgian postwar history education, 1945-1989 - [Original

Title : *Verleden zonder stof. De gedaanten van het heden in het Belgische naoorlogse geschiedenisonderwijs*]

KU Leuven, 2012. Supervisors : Kaat Wils & Tom Verschaffel.

At the beginning of the school year, Belgian politicians are often interviewed on the importance of school subjects. History education, they claim, has a democratic mission and especially the more recent past of the Great War, the Holocaust and the European Union should be studied. In short, the study of history should be largely connected to the present. This debate is not new. After all, one of the most vexing questions in postwar history education was precisely the relation between past and present. In this PhD, I examine how and to what extent Belgian history education evolved from an encyclopedic, past-centered patriotic subject to a present-oriented subject with global and democratic ambitions. I translate this question into the study of the evolving 'figures' of the present. After all, the present appeared at diverse levels of history education (from goals, contents to didactical methods) and in diverse ways (such as judging the past from the present).

The changing position of the present is studied in relation with the implications of the growing desire to converge history education and civic education, with the interactions between history education and academic history and with the meaning of the didactical transformation of history edu-

cation into 'a science of the present'. The ideas and practices of history inspectors, members of history curriculum commissions and history teachers are central. Next to an analysis of their discourse on the present, curricula, textbooks and exemplary lessons are investigated. In contrast to older historiography, this book shows that the shock of the Second World War stimulated inspectors already in the 1950s to reorient history education from a patriotic past-oriented subject into a more international peace education dealing with twentieth century history. From the 1960s on, next to a growing internationalisation, moralisation and didactisation of the subject matter, the largest number of hours was awarded to the recent past. After all, the present was called to 'save' history education which was judged excessively past-oriented. Moreover, history lessons lost hours to the new present-oriented subject societal education. The omnipresence of the present was rejected and a more balanced attention between older and more recent time periods was implemented. Nevertheless, as a result of this postwar evolution, the present remains a strong feature of present-day history education.

LIESELOTTE LUYCKX

Soviet DPs for the Belgian mining industry (1944-1960) : The daily struggle against Yalta of a forgotten minority?

European University Institute, Firenze, 2012. Supervisor : Heinz-Gerhard Haupt.

How the policy towards Displaced Persons (DPs) changed from a policy of repatriation to a policy of protecting refugees has

been the subject of several historical studies. Research on the displaced persons themselves, later termed refugees, is much less frequent. In this study, the focus is on the Displaced Persons who were resettled in early 1947 by the International Refugee Organization, and more specifically through the Belgian resettlement scheme via recruitment in Displaced Persons camps in Germany and two-year contracts in the Belgian mining industry. The main objective of the study is to examine how the people subject to this resettlement policy, and the provisions it involved, reacted to the policy set out to them.

Although an approach in which the agency is central is traditions since it has recourse to oral sources, we chose instead chose to use administrative sources as the main sources : the personal files of the displaced persons drawn up upon their arrival in Belgium. It concerns more specifically a sample of the recruited Displaced Persons whose personal files kept by the Foreigners Registration Bureau and the Belgian branch of the International Refugee Organization.

The sample showed several strategies that recruited Displaced Persons used in order to by-pass the straightjacket in which the Belgian policy makers tried to put them. Although a second re-emigration appeared the most tried one, it was nonetheless remarkable that quite a high number of the recruited displaced persons would eventually remain in Belgium.

MATTHIAS MEIRLAEN

Diligence, Providence and Progress. History as a Secondary School Subject in the Southern Netherlands, 1750-1850 - [Original Title : *Vijt, voorzienigheid en vooruitgang. Geschiedenis in het secundair onderwijs in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1750-1850*]

KU Leuven, 2011. Supervisors : Kaat Wils & Tom Verschaffel.

Between 1750 and 1850, various educational reforms were carried out on a national level in the Southern Netherlands. Due to the stormy political climate, the educational system continually changed. Proceeding from centralistic motives, each new regime wanted to leave its mark on education. The Austrian government in 1777, the French revolutionaries in 1795, the Napoleonic authorities in 1802, the Dutch administration in 1817 and (to a lesser extent) the new Belgian rulers in 1831, all engaged in education and prescribed new official school programmes – with the exception of the Belgian unionists in 1831. In my doctoral thesis, I examine how history became a separate school subject in the Southern Netherlands, what narratives the subject produced and how it was taught differently depending on the varying political and local contexts. To this end, I do not only analyse subject-related sources, such as directives for history teachers, published history textbooks or surviving notebooks, I contextualise the creation of history as a school subject within the broader ongoing debates on education and the curriculum. Hence, intellectual treatises on education, political plans for reform, and all kind of documents on discipline and organisation in colleges are included in my analyses

as well. The thesis paints a vivid picture of how old practices survived, how historical representations subtly changed, and how teachers' personal engagement often involved new didactical methods and approaches. The publication of the book is expected before the end of this year.

JORIS MERCELIS

Leo H. Baekeland (1863-1944) as Scientific Entrepreneur : A Transatlantic Perspective on the Science-Industry Nexus

Universiteit Gent & Museum voor de Geschiedenis van de Wetenschappen, 2013. Supervisors : Christophe Verbruggen & Danny Segers.

Starting from the career of Belgian-American chemical innovator Leo Baekeland, this dissertation casts new light on the connections and interdependencies between science and industry. It does so by focusing on the themes of intellectual property and scientific entrepreneurship, together with related ethical issues. Moreover, in contrast to earlier studies on the development of the science-industry nexus in the United States, a transnational perspective is applied.

The first part of the dissertation focuses on Baekeland's career before the invention of Bakelite, the first synthetic plastic, in 1907. Special emphasis is placed on Baekeland's social and educational background and the (dis)advantages that it brought him during his early endeavors in the Belgian and American photographic industries (chapters 2 and 3); Baekeland's intellectual property strategy for Velox photographic paper, his main innovation from the 1890s (chapter 4), and the moral context in which Baekeland, a practically minded innovator, became

a leading figure in scientific circles (chapter 5).

The second part of the study concentrates on the interplay between Baekeland and Bakelite. An overarching theme is the relation between Baekeland's preferences and actions as a technical-scientific expert, and his decisions taken as leader of the General Bakelite Company and its successor, the Bakelite Corporation. This aspect is first discussed in connection with transnational patent issues (chapter 6) and the development of early applications of Bakelite (chapter 7). The final two chapters deal with theoretical discussions on the molecular structures of synthetic plastics like Bakelite, and the Bakelite company's dedication to science and industrial research and development.

SAARTJE VANDEN BORRE

Foreigners on familiar. Sociocultural life and integration of Belgian migrants in Northern France (1850-1914) -

[Original Title : *Vreemden op vertrouwd terrain. Het sociaal-culturele leven en de integratie van Belgische migranten in Noord-Frankrijk*]

KU Leuven, 2012. Supervisors : Tom Verschaffel, Marc Depaepe & Lieven D'hulst.

Saartje Vanden Borre obtained her PhD at the interdisciplinary Centre for the History of Intercultural Relations at Kulak in Kortrijk. Her research focused on the integration of Belgian migrants in Northern France (1850-1914). While many historians had already contributed to our knowledge about the specific migration and integration process, there was very little qualitative research to back their opinions and suppositions.

Vanden Borre studied the sociocultural life of these Belgian migrants through the semi-official sources of club records, carnival songs and local newspapers. She showed that, even though Belgians and Frenchmen may have been competitors in the workplace, they still shared a common associational life through various organizations. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, such clubs recruited among the locals, regardless of their personal background or nationality. The vibrant sociocultural life made local society in this border region essentially *Franco-Belgian*, which in its turn facilitated the integration of Belgian newcomers.

At the end of the nineteenth century however, the French nation state forced its interpretation of what it meant to be 'French' upon the border region and its inhabitants. Paris ruled out equality between the French and Belgian inhabitants of the northern department. Gradually, the presence of Belgians became problematic and the national authorities developed an (expensive) 'integration course' resulting in naturalisation. Belgians had suddenly become foreigners in a society they were all too familiar with.

JACQUES VANDERBROUCKE
**Fortified Position of Namur (FPN)
 in May 1940. From Brialmont to
 the 18 days' campaign (1888-1940) -**

[Original Title : *La Position fortifiée de Namur en mai 1940. De Brialmont à la Campagne des 18 jours (1888-1940)*]

Université catholique de Louvain, 2013. Supervisor : Michel Dumoulin.

At the start of this research, the role of the Fortified Position of Namur (FPN) had not led to any broad historical study. Based on

the systematic analysis of Belgian, French and German public archives, on previously unpublished private and iconographic sources, and on over 300 oral testimonies, this thesis describes the defense of the FPN in 1940. By the end of the Great War, the Belgian defensive system had proved ineffective and the demilitarization of the Meuse's fortifications was planned. But under the leadership of General Galet, military authorities agreed to restore and upgrade the old forts. Intended to break the enemy offensive in the center of Belgium, FPN was assigned an important garrison by the creation of the 7th Army Corps in 1939.

On May 10, the Reich invaded Belgium. Namur saw the arrival of French troops within the framework of the so-called "Dyle maneuver". In 1940, the defense of FPN can be divided in two successive stages: from May 10 to 15, the troops awaited for the enemy attack; from May 15, following the retreat of the infantry, the forts were left to their own devices under orders to offer maximum resistance. May 12 was a watershed moment for several reasons. On May 13, the Germans crossed the Meuse eventually causing the collapse of the 9th Army, and forcing French troops to leave the FPN on May 15 and retreat towards Flanders. The first forts to endure the fire of the 269th Infantry-Division were those of the northern FPN. The forts of the South and the *Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse* would face the 211th Infantry-Division. Gradually destroyed by bombing aviation and artillery, gradually deprived of their means of defense, the forts were forced to surrender. The first to cease fighting was Marchevelette on May 18 while Fort Dave would endure the longest (until May 24).

The thesis' conclusions tackle the following issues: On May 10 1940, was the FPN prepared? What was the relationship like between French and Belgian soldiers in Namur ? Were there similarities between August 1914 and May 1940? What were the consequences of the retreat of May 15? What was the impact of the forts'capitulation? Why and how did provincial governor Bovesse leave Namur May 12, 1940? Did the FPN resisted fully, consider the resources it had available?

JAN VAN DE POEL

Between participation and representation. Contextual and structural dimensions of the Flemish third World solidarity movement, 1955-2000 - [Original Title : *Tussen*

participatie en representatie. Contextuele en structurele dimensies van de Vlaamse derde wereldbeweging, 1955-2000]

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2012. Supervisor : Guy Vanthemsche.

This research on the origins and evolution of the third world solidarity movement in Flanders since the late 1950s does not essentially see NGOs for development cooperation as a means of transferring resources to the 'global South' ('third world') but as an exteriorization of a social movement. Our assumption is that NGOs, as social movement organizations, prefigure a societal alternative with ideological, praxeological and organizational implications. The focus in this research is on the organizational aspect. The central question is whether and how NGOs for development cooperation remain a social movement that brings into the practice the principles of participative democracy.

Based on the available literature in the social sciences this research develops the central assumption that democratic governance of NGOs is determined by both contextual and structural dimensions. Contextual dimensions refer to the socio-political structures and actors outside the organization that give them a certain legitimacy, while structural dimensions refer to the relations between different actors inside the organization.

This research, based on seven carefully selected NGOs (*Broederlijk Delen*, NCOS-11.11.11, *Wereldsolidariteit*, *fos*, *Oxfam-Wereldwinkels*, *Vredeseilanden* and *Coopibo*), demonstrates that NGOs for development cooperation do not mechanically adopt the most rational organizational forms. NGOs developed defensive mechanisms that protected them from an exclusivist rational-bureaucratic logic. The success of those mechanisms depends on the ways in which NGOs are able to realize an equilibrium between their participative (i.e. members and constituency) and representative (in regard to their surrounding socio-politic structures) functions. Moreover this research reveals a number of factors that co-determine this equilibrium : a broad, but purposeful and selective, relation with the constituency and general public, a co-operative, but complementary, relation with the government and the channeling of the internal organisational conflict in the function of the 'genetic code' of the organization.

HANS VANGRUNDERBEEK

Jumping from gymnastics to science? Processes of academic and professional profile keeping within the university field of physical education in Belgium

KU Leuven, 2013. Supervisors : Pascal Delheye & Geert Vanpaemel.

In 1908, physical education was incorporated as a new university discipline within the Higher Institute of Physical Education (HIPE) at the State University in Ghent. During the 1930s, university institutes for physical education were also established in Liège, Brussels and Leuven. This university institutionalisation of physical education symbolized the starting point in a difficult quest for professional and academic respect. Several professional profiles were developed through the university education program, namely the formation of university-educated teachers instructed in the Swedish pedagogical gymnastics method, the training of health guardians with medical-scientific knowledge for the school and sports sectors, the instruction of sports trainers, fitness instructors, sports managers, outdoor trainers, adapted physical activity coaches and movement experts. The retention of this profession profile, however, was not realised. The academic profiling equally did not result in a strong, unique academic identity for the field, which is now characterised by fragmentation, both on a national and international level. Therefore, reflecting on, and striving for, both professional and academic profile seems necessary to maintain the field of physical education or kinesiology at university level, as the demarcation of its own social and scientific field must enable the field to finance and thus legitimise itself.

FREDERIK VERLEDEN

The 'Representatives of the Nation' in the service of their party. The relationship between Belgian political parties and their MPs (1918-1970)

- [Original Title : *De 'vertegenwoordigers van de Natie' in partijdienst. De verhouding tussen de Belgische politieke partijen en hun parlementsleden (1918-1970)*]

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Supervisor : Emmanuel Gerard.

This thesis explores the relation between Belgian political parties and their members of parliament from 1918 until 1970. Political scientists, the press and even politicians label the Belgian political system a 'Partitocracy', in which the parties yield too much power. In the 20th century-era of 'mass parties' the parliamentary party group was supposed to be an *agent* of the party on the ground. Hence, this thesis explores the relationship between the parliamentary party group and the party organisation as the relation between *agent* and *principal*. The thesis looks at the mechanisms the principal has at his disposal to overcome the agency's problem: the possible opportunistic behaviour of the agent. The analysis reveals Belgian political parties used several mechanisms in order to gain control over the behaviour of their MPs in the period. Their success in doing so has led to a marked increase in the levels of parliamentary voting cohesion. Full party discipline however was never achieved in matters putting both language groups against each other : Flemish and French-speaking Belgians. Our research highlights the different paths the Belgian parties have followed since the First World War. These different historical trajectories are significantly affected by the

differences in party organisation the displayed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The Catholic and Liberal 'cadre parties' had much more difficulties in turning their members of parliament into subordinate party *agents* when compared with the 'mass' Socialist party.