

PHD RESEARCH

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

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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)*]

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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.