

# IMMIBEL

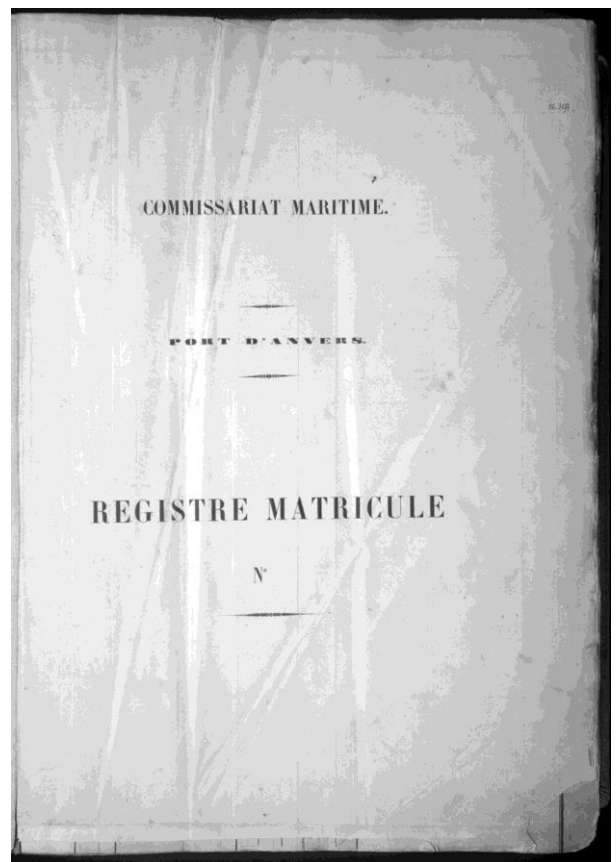
## Outcast or Embraced? Clusters of Foreign Immigrants in Belgium, c. 1840-1890

DURATION  
15/12/2014 - 15/03/2019

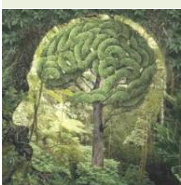
BUDGET  
896.930 €

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project aims to investigate the scale and nature of socio-cultural encounters and confrontations that emanated from foreign migration to Belgium between c. 1840 and 1890 by cross- and interdisciplinary analysis and valorization of a series of exceptionally rich but underexploited series of the federal historical heritage. Situated at the crossroads of migration history, maritime history and the history of science and technology and of social policy, this project employs these sources to map the characteristics of foreign migration streams to Belgium and to gain insight into their varied interactions with their host society. It focuses on an exceptional period in European and Belgian history, that was characterized by rising mobility and increasing economic integration, but also witnessed the emergence of the 'modern' nation state, in which the distinction between 'foreigner' and 'national' became more important. The project aims (1) to map the scale, chronology and profiles of foreign migration to 19th-century Belgium, and (2) to investigate the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of interactions of foreigners with different layers of Belgian society. Its underlying assumption is that increasing international *mobility* and *circulation* – rather than one-off *migration* – had a profound influence on the economic, political, cultural and social history of 19th-century Europe in general, and Belgium in particular. The research results from this project will therefore not only contribute to a better insight into the 'national' history of Belgium, but will also provide major contributions to several international debates in migration history, including on the nature of a so-called 'mobility transition' (Lucassen & Lucassen 2009), the interactions between state policies and migration patterns (Noiriel 1998; Rosental 2011), the role of migration 'chains' and networks (Wegge 1998; Lesger et al. 2002), the international dimensions of the 'knowledge economy' (Black 2013), and the long-term integration of international labour markets (Hatton & Williamson 2006).



In line with recent conceptual innovations in the fields of migration studies and migration history, this project aims to integrate three scales of analysis, the so-called 'macro' (structural conditions), 'meso' (social networks and institutions) and 'micro' level (individual and household characteristics). Each level pertains to other research questions and requires distinct research methods, ranging from quantitative aggregate statistics and life-course and social network analysis to qualitative analysis of individual biographies.



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While some of the more aggregate analyses can be pursued for the totality of foreigners recorded in the sources, in-depth qualitative analysis at the meso and micro will be concentrated on three distinct subgroups, that are illustrative of the great social variation in foreign migration and in their interactions with Belgian society: (1) expelled foreigners, i.e. 'unwanted' migrants who interacted with repressive state policies; (2) sailors, working in one of the most internationalized labour market segments; and (3) scientists, technicians, academics and other 'actors of knowledge', who contributed to the diffusion of new ideas and technologies in the wake of Belgium's progression towards the second industrial revolution.

This project is only feasible thanks to the existence of a number of archival series that are part of the federal historical heritage of the State Archives, among which more than 150,000 individual foreigners' files in the "first series" of the Sûreté Publique (1840-1890), c. 40,000 entries to the seamen's registry, c. 13,000 royal expulsion decrees, c. 2,700 denization files and c. 4,800 naturalization applications over the same period. Making optimal use of the possibilities of 'digital history' and record linkage combined with statistical, GIS, life course, social network and qualitative analysis, the great strength of the proposed method lies in its possibility to combine aggregate quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative analysis, to combine cross-sectional with longitudinal analysis, and to combine diachronic with spatial comparisons. By integrating the resulting databases in the search engine and website repository of the State Archives ([www.arch.be](http://www.arch.be)), the accessibility of these exceptionally rich archival series will be greatly enhanced both for the interested public and for further academic research.

The project will result in an on-line public database, two PhD's to be published as monographs, ten paper or poster presentations at academic conferences, ten articles in international peer-reviewed journals, three articles in national peer-reviewed journals, the organization of public lectures and a closing workshop aimed at the wider public.

The image shows a historical document with a table structure. The table has several columns, including 'NOM, PRENOM ET SURNOMS', 'DATE DE LIEU', 'INDICATION DES SEXES', 'AGE', 'DATE DE LIEU', 'DATE DE L'ARRIVEE', and 'REMARKS'. The rows contain handwritten entries, likely representing individual records of foreigners or migrants. The document is divided into sections, possibly by date or location, with some entries marked with 'D' or 'M'.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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