Ph.D. fellowship

Date of the application: 1 February 2018
Scientific field: Humanities
FWO Expert Panel: History and Archeology (Cult3)
Motivation of panel choice: This project has a historical focus and therefore can best be judged by this expert panel.

GENERAL

Title of your research proposal

*English title*
Watching the migrants. Police and migration in Brussels, c. 1880-1914.

*Dutch title*
Migranten in het vizier. Politie en migratie in Brussel, c. 1880-1914.

Summary in layman's terms
This project aims to investigate police practices of migration control in the city of Brussels during a period of intense urban growth, mobility and industrialization. The main goal is to analyse everyday policing and the relation between police and migrants, both domestic and international, between c. 1880 and 1914. By doing this, the project contributes to historical debates on police and policing, as well as those on migration control and urbanization during the transition to 'modern' industrial society. In this way, it will also provide insight into debates on police activities in present-day society. This research adopts a broader perspective than social sciences' usual focus on ethnic and religious differences in police-migrant relations. Drawing on a broad range of police archives, the analysis will be structured around three dimensions of police practices. The first is centred on places and studies police activity in the Belgian capital, and particularly places of arrival, transit and residence of migrants, including train stations, lodging houses and hotels. Secondly, I will investigate the interactions of the police with other regulatory actors, such as migrants, owners of lodging houses and national and regional authorities, in order to establish policemen's degree of agency. Lastly, the project will study the preoccupations of policemen patrolling the streets in order to establish if, how and which migrants were singled out for control more than others.

RESEARCH

Main host institution: Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Applicant: Ayfer Erkul | Application number: 11B4219N

Supervisor
Winter Anne (ZAP (Hoofddocent))

Additional host institution(s)

Additional supervisor(s)
De Koster Margo (Assistant Professor)

Collaboration
not applicable

EXTRA DATA

Funding applied for elsewhere or already available

No

Previous FWO fellowships

No

Title of your master or final year dissertation

“To administer by force: ½ l of milk, 2 eggs, 10 lumps of sugar”. Hunger strikes in Belgian prisons: an exploratory research (1920-1940)

Supplementary studies

No:

Previous research stays

None

Planned research stays

None

Scientific awards

No

PERSONAL DATA

Personal statement

I started studying History as a work student in evening classes in 2013 and combined this with a full-time job as journalist for the Belgian quality newspaper De Morgen. After finishing my Master in History in 2017, I was offered the opportunity of a one-year research position within the VUB interdisciplinary program Cities & Newcomers, in order to apply for PhD funding with the FWO and lay the groundwork for a historical research into police-migrant relations in late nineteenth-century Brussels. Two things mattered most to me in deciding to take this step towards a PhD: the research had to be socially committed, and it had to have a criminological angle with notions of crime as a social and legal construct. This research includes all this and even more: I see this PhD project also as a way to situate the current and often problematic debates on police and migrants in a more historical perspective. Applying for a PhD position amounts to what one might call a second career for me. As a journalist I worked for more than twenty years as a staff reporter for De Morgen, where I covered the Middle-East, Afghanistan-Pakistan, Turkey and items such as terrorism, migration and crime. In my last year as a journalist (and to have more free time for my Master thesis) I became a freelancer, working mainly for the quality weekly Knack. While working...
as a journalist I received several grants from the Fonds Pascal Decroos and from the King Baudouin Foundation to engage in more profound investigative research. By the time I began research on my Master thesis on Hunger strikes in Belgian prisons (for which I was awarded 18/20), I knew I had to try to continue in academia. This was not a decision I have taken lightly; it meant putting aside a successful career in a well-paid job I liked.

Being a journalist has given me skills that will be useful in academic research as well. Extensive writing and analytical skills, expertise in time management, flexibility and persistence are only some of them. The ground work for the specific skills academic research requires, was laid during my BA and MA studies. I am now working on elaborating these. This year I could already enrol in the NW Posthumus PhD training for social and economic historians, which helps me to develop more distinctive skills as a researcher. In the second semester I will also write two articles. One will be based on my Master thesis, and is already being written. The other one will be new research on police and migrants, in collaboration with my supervisors. This paper will be presented at the Urban History Conference in Rome, in September 2018. I am also planning on taking courses in Academic Writing in English and in quantitative and qualitative research methods. Also, while working at the VUB within the interdisciplinary platform Cities and Newcomers and the research group HOST (Historical Research into Urban Transformation Processes), I am very well surrounded with knowledge and expertise.

Career breaks
In my previous career, as a journalist, I had a career break of four months in 2011 due to my pregnancy. Also, in 2015, I worked for 6 months part-time so I could follow a day course in the History Master program.

How this project fits in the research activities of the research group
This project is embedded in the Centre for Historical Research into Urban Transformation Processes (HOST) and the inter-disciplinary research platform "Cities and Newcomers" at the VUB, both of which are directed by supervisor Anne Winter. HOST's research focuses on the social history of cities in the Low Countries from the late Middle Ages to the 19th century, while the "Cities and Newcomers" platform groups urban geographers, criminologists, sociologists and historians in a comparative analysis of the regulation and infrastructures of arrival in late 19th-century and present-day cities, with Brussels as a privileged case study. Urban migration takes center stage in the research conducted by Anne Winter in the past years and in several recent and on-going PhD's which she (co-)supervised such as those by Alexander Coppens (2017), Ellen Debackere (2016), Rik Vercammen (2014), Ruth Wauters, Vicky Vanruysseveldt, Thomas Verbruggen and Kristof Loockx (on-going), as well as in the on-going postdoc research by HOST-member Torsten Feys and in the BRAIN IMMIBEL project. Co-supervisor Margo De Koster has established strong expertise in the domain of 19th-century police studies, with particular attention to the policing of migrants and minorities. In addition to expertise and support within the HOST and Cities & Newcomers teams, expert input and feedback is ensured from collaboration in wider networks, such as the WOG "Urban Agency", the research alliance "Urban History" (UGent-VUB), NW Posthumus, the new Belgian Network of Migration Historians, and well-established contacts with national and international experts in migration history such as Leo Lucassen (IISH), Paul-André Rosental (EHESS, Paris), Idesbald Goddeeris (KUL), Frank Caestecker (UGent), and Anne Morelli (ULB).
ETHICS

In the table below questions are listed on the ethical aspects of your research proposal.

If you mark a ‘yes’ for the question, it follows that

- **For the questions marked with *:** the applicant is legally or on the basis of institutional regulations obliged to ask for an ethical advice at the competent ethics committee of the host institution; please do take into account that even when there is no obligation with regard to the research itself, for the publication of the results a positive advise still can prove to be necessary.

  If you have answered questions with a * positively, you must submit your proposal to the ethics committee as soon as your application has been approved for funding. Your fellowship can only start when this clearance has been formally given. Only if the advice relates to a work package that is planned for a later stage of the fellowship, it may be submitted just before the start of that part of the research. Please keep in mind that the advisory procedure can take some time and that therefore you should submit your proposal to the ethics committee well in time.

- **For the questions that are not marked:** the applicant and the evaluation panel are invited to reflect on the issue and take, if necessary, the necessary precautionary measures.

  You find more on the FWO policy and procedure concerning ethical issues and on legal and other documents on the FWO web page dedicated to that topic.

I confirm that none of the issues below apply to my proposal. True

I hereby confirm having taken note that an ethical clearance is needed for the start of my project. I will thus ensure submission of my proposal to the research ethics committee of my host institution.

Please specify which ethics committee(s) deal(s)/will deal with your application.

In case you will submit your proposal to the committee only before the start of work package(s) (WP) that are concerned:

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Applicant: Ayfer Erkul | Application number: 11B4219N
1. Human Embryos/Foetuses

ETHICS ADVICE RELATED TO THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD ALWAYS BE REQUESTED BEFORE THE START OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT AS A WHOLE AND ALSO REQUIRE AN EXAMINATION BY THE FEDERAL COMMISSION FOR EMBRYOS

Does your research involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?*  
- Will the hESCs be directly derived from embryos within this project?  
- Are the hESCs previously established cell lines?  

Does your research involve the use of human embryos?*  

Does your research involve the use of human foetal tissues / cells?*  

2. Humans

Does your research involve human participants?*  
- Are they volunteers for social or human sciences research?  
- Are they persons unable to give informed consent?  
- Are they vulnerable individuals or groups?  
- Are they children/minors?  
- Are they patients?  
- Are they healthy volunteers for medical studies?  

Does your research involve physical interventions on the study participants?*  
- Does it involve invasive techniques?  
- Does it involve collection of biological samples?  

3. Human Cells/Tissues

Does your research involve human cells or tissues (other than from Human Embryos/Foetuses, i.e. section 1)?*  
- Are they obtained from commercial sources?  
- Do they originate from another laboratory/institution/biobank?  
- Were they produced or collected by you from previous research activities?  
- Are they produced or collected by you as part of this project?²  

4. Personal Data

Does your research involve personal data collection and/or processing?* (¹)  
- Does it involve the collection and/or processing of sensitive personal data?  
- Does it involve collecting/processing of genetic information/data?  
- Does it involve tracking or observation of participants?  

Does your research involve further processing of previously collected personal data (‘secondary use’)?*
5. Animals

Does your research involve research procedures to live non-human vertebrate animals (incl. independently feeding larval forms, foetal forms of mammals in the last trimester of their normal development and cephalopods, and also forms in earlier stages if the experiments have consequences in later stages)?

- Are they vertebrates or live cephalopods? N/A
- Are they non-human primates? (²) N/A
- Are they genetically modified animals? N/A
- Are they cloned farm animals? N/A
- Are they endangered species? N/A

6. International Collaboration

Do you plan to use local resources (e.g. animal and/or human tissue samples, genetic material, live animals, human remains, materials of historical value, endangered fauna or flora samples, etc.)? N/A

Do you plan to import/export any material from/to other countries? N/A

Name of country/ies:

If your research involves low and/or lower middle income countries, are benefits-sharing measures foreseen? N/A

Could the situation in the country put the individuals taking part in the research at risk? N/A

7. Environment & Health and Safety

Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to the environment, to animals or plants? N/A

Does your research deal with endangered fauna and/or flora and/or protected areas? N/A

Does your research involve the use of elements that may cause harm to humans, including research staff? N/A

8. Dual Use

Does your research have the potential for military applications? N/A

9. Misuse

Does your research have the potential for malevolent/criminal/terrorist abuse? N/A

10. Other Ethics Issues

Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration? Please specify.
(¹) For these issues the Belgian commission on privacy protection (Commissie voor de bescherming van de persoonlijke levenssfeer) has to be consulted. You cannot consult the commission directly, but always first contact the research coordination of your host institution.

(²) In this case you already have to submit your proposal to the ethics committee in the application phase.
Indicate the state of the art.
While their actual relevance is acute, debates on migration, crime and policing have a long history. This research project will investigate the relationships between police and migrants in Brussels in the closing decades of the long 19th century, and is embedded in the traditions of police history and migration history. In recent years, both traditions have crossed paths to become the history of police and migrants. Scholars in this field have established that concerns about mobile groups, and the monitoring of outsiders, were an important driving force behind the growth of policing and police forces in the Ancien Régime and the long 19th century (Blanc-Chaléard et al. 2001, Milliot 2012). More in particular, migration control, as part of order maintenance in general, was among the first tasks assigned to the ‘modern’ police – uniformed, paid, organized and under bureaucratic state control – that started to develop throughout Europe from the end of the 18th century onwards (Storch 1976, Keunings 1980, Emsley 2000, Milliot 2006).

Early police historiography was written mainly by serving or former police officers or by individuals with close ties to the police. This mostly resulted in works that, although not always without criticism, had a celebratory aura and depicted police history as a linear evolution of cumulative progress from the 18th century to the present day (Emsley 2000). In recent decades, the history of policing experienced a renewed interest. Only three decades ago, scholars hardly ever mentioned social aspects of police and police work, as studies focused either on institutional history (mostly written by legal historians) or on manifestations of crime and deviance (Berlière et al. 2008). When the police were investigated at all, the policemen themselves often remained anonymous or were portrayed as oppressive figures. Hence, police practices and attitudes barely received attention (Berlière et al. 2008). At the end of the 20th century, new research started to emphasize the complexity of police work and to focus on policemen, everyday police work and the police’s professional culture, thereby contributing to a new social history of the police. Debates have since then focused on the circumstances and interests that shaped the modernization of policing in the 19th century. By situating the development of modern policing in its wider social and economic context of an urbanizing and industrializing society, scholars have argued that police work mainly served the upper middle classes and their ambition to maintain decorum in the streets, rather than crime-fighting (Taylor 1997). The tasks of police forces consisted mostly of surveillance and maintaining public order. This has led some historians to argue that the modern police were created to fulfil the needs of bourgeois elites who felt threatened by the rapidly growing labouring classes concentrated in the burgeoning cities (Storch 1976, Taylor 1997).

Nineteenth-century urban centres indeed underwent rapid and profound change. The population of European cities of more than 5,000 inhabitants increased six-fold between 1750 and 1914. Heightened migration to Europe’s urban centres, both from neighbouring regions and across national boundaries, generated fears of uncontrolled settlement of newcomers (Clark 2009).

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1 The word ‘policemen’ is used in this text conscious of its gender specificity; police women entered the Belgian force not before the 1970’s.
order to control mobile populations more strictly, new national legislation and regulations on migration, settlement and vagrancy were introduced at the end of the 19th century. This was intertwined with mounting concern regarding ‘the social question’ and attempts to increase formal social control, resulting for instance in increased prosecution of vagrancy and public drunkenness (Keunings 1980). These new repressive measures targeted mainly the supposedly morally dangerous behaviour of low-status newcomers, thereby continuing a long tradition in urban policy to label poor and vulnerable mobile groups as suspect and undesirable. Because of their purported tendency toward begging, vagrancy, thieving and prostitution, ‘unrooted’ lower-class newcomers were considered both as a material and a moral danger (De Munck & Winter 2012). Nineteenth-century migration controls continued to classify and monitor certain migrant groups as ‘desirable’ or ‘undesirable’ (Fahrmeir et al. 2003). In the closing decades of the 19th century, it were mostly young and single migrant workers who came into conflict with the police; those arrested had often just arrived in the city and lacked a fixed income, a place to stay, and support networks. These young labour migrants were viewed as particularly prone to vagrancy, begging or prostitution, crimes persecuted with increasing rigour in this period (De Koster & Reinke 2016).

Next to targeting specific social groups within the ranks of urban immigrants, police attention also tended to focus on certain spaces of arrival and neighbourhoods in the city, where police control was more intense than elsewhere. This over-policing of specific urban areas not only resulted from greater police surveillance of ‘usual suspects’ and known offenders in low-income communities, but also from the enforcement of local police ordinances and regulations targeting poor migrants, which were issued increasingly by urban authorities in the 19th century. These included entry regulations and passport formalities at the city gates as well as requirements for landlords and innkeepers to inform local authorities of the characteristics and previous settlement of their lodgers (Milliot 2012). Police officers were to check the registers of lodging-houses and hotels daily, and even organised nocturnal visits to verify the data (Farcy 2001).

For the modern period, migration and police historians alike have tended to concentrate overwhelmingly on national and international legislation and measures of migration control (Caestecker 2012). Recently, however, scholars have demonstrated that the local level remained a crucial actor in migration control throughout recent history. Firstly, in shaping newcomers’ access to local poor relief. Although legal regulations regarding access to assistance were increasingly nationalized from the 19th century onwards, discussions and decisions about newcomers’ entitlements to relief remained largely in local hands and continued to be shaped to a large extent by local perceptions of belonging and deservingness (De Munck & Winter 2012). Secondly, recent research has stressed that local authorities and local police forces retained a crucial role in practices of migration control (Vercammen & Vanruysseveldt 2015, Debackere 2016, Coppens 2017). Scholars have emphasized the “impuissances bureaucratiques” that have kept the emerging nation-states from effectively implementing national regulations such as passport controls throughout the long 19th century (Noiriel 1991).

In addition to attention for local practices and enforcers of migration control, bottom-up perspectives have recently proven their added-value for examining the complexity of relations between urban police forces, mobile groups and other actors in the city streets (Emsley 2000, Inwood 2011, Milliot 2012). Indeed, recent work has nuanced the traditional view (of British
Marxist historians and French Foucauldian studies) of the police as a bourgeois force that effectively moralized and disciplined the working classes (Inwood 2011), by exposing the flaws of police surveillance in the streets and the many difficulties the police faced in implementing migration laws and regulations (Blanc-Chaléart et al. 2001). Despite the huge growth in police powers and tasks in the 19th century, daily police operations remained determined by financial and political constraints. Practices of the local police often differed from national policy ambitions because of resource issues, diverging priorities of superiors, unexpected events on the ground or individual decisions (De Koster 2010). This raises the question of agency: which choices were made and which strategies were developed in the daily police control of migrants by officers in the field, by police chiefs steering daily operations and by the local authorities in charge of the police.

Describe the objectives of the research.
This project aims to move beyond the rather narrow perspective in current social science research and in much of the historical work on migration and policing in the 19th and 20th centuries. While the former usually employs a lens with a cultural, ethnic or religious focus, the latter mostly adopts a national perspective in its approach. My objective is to focus on police instruments and practices that were used at the local level to control migrants in the city of Brussels at the closing decades of the long 19th century, between c. 1880 and 1914. The central issue is how local police in the city of Brussels dealt with its extremely high population turnover in this period of political, social and economic upheaval. The main objective is to gain insight in the nature of police-migrant relations by examining how police practices manoeuvred between imperatives of moral panic and political demand for intervention on the one hand, and policemen’s priorities, pragmatic choices and logistic constraints on the other hand. To what extent did these imperatives inform the construction of types of ‘problematic stranger’ in police practices, and did these vary according to space, place and (police) actors involved? This perspective complements Coppens’ (2017) former research on administrative practices of foreigners’ police in Brussels between 1850-1880, by focussing on police practices in the streets, adopting a wider view of migrants, and focusing on the subsequent period of intense turnover.

Investigating the day-to-day practices of the local police in Brussels in their relation towards migrants will give us insight in the ways in which the police operated in the streets. Despite the recent focus on the local level of migration control and the attention for bottom-up perspectives, the relationship between police and migrants in the field has so far remained out of the picture. By investigating this relationship in everyday practices during a crucial period, when a modern police force came into being and processes of urbanization and industrialization generated a huge turnover of migrants, this work will contribute to debates on the origins and efficacy of modern policing. At the same time, my research will contribute to the history of migration and migration control and to the history of urbanisation during the transition to ‘modern’ industrial society, as it will contribute to ongoing debates on how domestic and international migrants shaped urban society and state practices in Europe. I aim to do so by focusing on three dimensions that directly impacted on the relation of the police with the urban population in general, and migrants in particular: places, agency and preoccupations.
1. **Places.** Police and other control instances tended to divide the urban territory into specific zones, and subject each of these to specific types and degrees of monitoring and intervention (Denys 2010). I want to investigate how this division was organized and whether police singled out some zones more than others for daily patrolling and/or targeted interventions. Within these different districts I want to examine what events a policeman encountered while patrolling the streets, whom he fined (and why) and whom he arrested. In investigating the division of zones, it should also be possible to see whether some zones in Brussels were considered no-go zones and as such dangerous for police to patrol. In order to gain privileged insight into day-to-day relations between police and migrants, I will investigate police activity with regard to places of residence and transit at neighbourhood level. Within the city of Brussels two types of ‘places’ were of particular relevance for police regulation of migrants: places of residence in urban neighbourhoods (lodging-houses, dwellings, shelters, etc.) and places of transit through which newcomers entered (and left), such as train stations. Due to patterns of chain migration and residential segregation, immigration flows were not evenly dispersed over the city but tended to concentrate in specific urban areas. For instance, recent research into international migration to Brussels observed how foreigners tended to reside more in the city centre due to the availability of hotels and lodging houses (Wauters 2017). It will be useful to examine to what extent this was also the case for internal migrants and in what way this (lack of) dispersion influenced police-migrant relations.

2. **Agency.** Here, I will investigate the extent of agency that local policemen enjoyed when fulfilling their everyday task of patrolling, controlling and fining or arresting people in general, and migrants in particular. Which room did policemen have when carrying out orders from their superiors, whose actions were themselves often subject to political and public pressure? Studying policemen’s degree of agency, and especially in their relation towards migrants, will inform us about their actual role in urban migration regulation. It will also help to reveal to which extent they targeted specific migrant groups or certain areas in their daily control practices, and whether they did so by demand of their superiors or at their own discretion. For example, research has demonstrated that police in the city of Antwerp used their discretionary power to maintain order in a selective way, balancing between repressive action and selective performance (De Koster 2010). The police are, of course, not the only actors in the streets and specifically in police-migrant relations we have to take into account the role of intermediaries such as owners of hotels and lodging houses and migrants themselves. For example, the archives contain several notes on peddlers (mostly domestic migrants) who were fined for unlicensed peddling only to be fined again a couple of hours later for the same reason. This shows that they did not necessarily bow to police authority but tried nevertheless to continue their commerce. This could also imply that intense fining did not mean prosecution, might even have become a ‘calculated cost’, and that the main concern of the police here was clearing the streets, even if only for a couple of hours, rather than really persecuting offenders.

3. **Preoccupations.** Here, I aim to investigate to what extent the policing of urban newcomers was informed by, and at the same time reproduced, specific forms of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions regarding (certain) migrants that defined the migrant “Other”. The objective is to see if local police acted differently towards migrants than towards the population in general. Did the police through registration, classification and counting practices and/or via selective interventions, frame the issue of migration within specific problem or ‘risk’ categories and geographical boundaries? Important here is establishing who was and was not considered a migrant in Brussels in the given period. Were foreign migrants more subject to control than their internal counterparts? Did ethnicity or nationality play a role when it came to selective police interventions? Was there a distinction in the way some internal migrants were treated by local police differently than others? Were newcomers without support networks, job or residence in
the city – so-called low-status migrants – more likely to become ‘police property’ and, as such, more subjected to police power than others? More generally, what was the role of origin, social class, occupation, gender and age in influencing and framing differential police-migrant interactions? I for instance expect that the police’s preoccupation of order in the streets led to the singling out of certain categories of ‘conspicuous migrants’, whereby migrants were targeted primarily and disproportionately as vagabonds, mendicants or prostitutes.

In this research I will consider migration, in line with Moch (2003), as the process of change of residence that is “beyond a municipal boundary, be it village or town”. Thus, the ‘stranger’ I study in Brussels is the migrant in the broad sense, the person who is not born in the city (Milliot 2006), but who moved there for various reasons. This broad definition not only reflects the reality of the Brussels’ situation in this period, but also allows comparing policemen’s interactions with different ‘types’ of migrants. It is possible to keep the definition broad because archive material shows how policemen meticulously noted down the birth date, address and birth place of the persons they fined or arrested, or who came by at the police station.

Due to the unavailability of relevant police archives for the Brussels agglomeration I have to limit my research to the city of Brussels. This creates the disadvantage that the neighbouring municipalities, which had a larger industry and therefore attracted a lot of migrants, are not included in this research. Nevertheless, as the capital city of one of the most industrialized and urbanized countries in the world, Brussels represents an extremely relevant case to examine police-migrant relations during a period of social upheaval. In the late 19th century, fears of crime rates, often inflated in the media, and concerns about morally dangerous groups dominated political discourse (Keunings 1980). This gave way to stricter laws and implementation, for example against vagrancy and begging, by both urban and central authorities, to tighten their grip on mobile populations. The extent of mobility was unprecedented: at the end of the 19th century Brussels experienced a yearly turnover equivalent to 10 per cent of the population, with the city as an important place of arrival and departure in an extended transportation network. The consecutive mayors of the city, already under pressure of the bourgeoisie and national government to intervene against perceived lawlessness, were confronted with new phenomena such as the intensification of traffic and increasingly mobile patterns of crime. Therefore, they invested in professionalising the local police corps: better equipment, more policemen and specialized branches. By 1914 Brussels had the largest police corps per capita in Europe with one policeman for every 215 habitants. (Keunings 2009).

Describe the methodology of your research.
This project will investigate police-migrant relations in Brussels between c. 1880 and 1914 through a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods from a bottom-up perspective. To better understand the concerns, interests and strategies involved in the policing of migrants, my research will look at everyday interactions between police and the Brussels population in general, and various categories of migrants in particular. These include regional, interregional and international migrants, ranging from those newly arrived and people in transit to established local minorities. Two types of sources will be used to address the central research question. For the first part, the police’s priorities, pragmatic choices and constraints in the field, I will use the archives of the Brussels’ local police. The second part of the central question, imperatives of moral panic and political demand for intervention, will be investigated with the analysis of
reports on the debates in the Belgian parliament and in the city council of Brussels, and analysis of a selection of newspapers.

Archives of the local police

As my prime focus of research lies in examining daily police practices, the bulk of my sources come from the rich collection of local police archives that are conserved in the City Archive of Brussels and which due to inadequate inventorying have not been accessible for research until now. Here, I will use a mix of research methods, from quantitative methods that can discern police actions in different places and arrest rates of migrants versus non-migrants, to qualitative methods such as thick description and content analysis on for example orders of the police chief to the district stations and requests of mayors to the police chief, in order to trace agency.

Although the procès-verbaux have not been conserved, many other series illuminate how the police tried to capture the urban population on paper and provide details about daily interactions between police and inhabitants:

- **The Contraventions (Infractions)** were compiled by policemen after their daily rounds, in which they noted the offenses they had observed and the names of the persons whom they had fined, together with the latter’s date and place of birth and their occupation. The books show dozens of fines per day, mostly targeting prostitutes, unlicensed peddlers and traffic infractions. Interesting for my research is that the place of offense is mentioned together with the address of the offender. While the series is not complete, I will collect the main data from the Contraventions for two sample years that were fully preserved, 1893 and 1913, in a database to allow for quantitative and diachronic analysis of the number, location and types of infractions in relation to perpetrators’ backgrounds, in order to establish whether and how migrants were targeted more than others. As the names of the policemen were also recorded, this will also allow me to investigate possible differences between particular policemen.

- **The Permanences (Police permanencies)** are a very rich source that mention who passed the night at the police station and why, up to 30 persons per night. Most of them were rounded up on suspicion of vagrancy, prostitution or drunkenness, but many – mostly migrants – also asked to spend the night there voluntarily, which is illuminative for the complex relationship between police and population. As the books record the names, date and place of birth together with address (if any) of all these persons, I will use this information to examine whether certain categories of migrants, such as those with families and children, were ‘lodged for the night’ rather than incarcerated. Given the sheer volume of material, I will limit myself to a three-year sample (1881-1891-1910) as the basis for a database that will allow for diachronic quantitative analysis of these “Permanences”.

- **The Ordres Administratives (Administrative orders)** contain two strands of information. First, they include everyday reports of people passing at the police station to declare disappearances and lost objects. Second, they contain the orders of the mayor or the head of police to the respective districts of Brussels police, informing us among other things on planned identity controls by the district police units, from routine checks requested by local authorities which involved ‘neighbourhood interviews’ to occasional ‘crack-downs’ and other large-scale police operations. Selected analysis of the daily instructions of the Brussels chief constables will reveal how different legislative impulses were translated into daily priorities and strategies as ordered by the local police authorities. I will select a sample of the same two years as for the Contraventions to enter these orders in a textual database in order to trace agency.
- The Registers of Belgian and foreign hotel guests provide an overview of migrants who stayed in a Brussels lodging house or hotel. These voluminous books are based on guest lists compiled by innkeepers, and mention guests’ names, their arrival date, date and place of birth, their occupation and place of stay. To span the period I will use the years 1880, 1895 and 1910 to collect this information in a database, that allows me to investigate the profiles of temporary domestic and foreign migrants over time, as well as day-to-day fluctuations in arrival and departure, which can also be compared with an existing database on foreign residents in Brussels for 1880 and 1910, finalized by Thomas Verbruggen, Hilde Greefs and Anne Winter. This will also allow me to spatially map and investigate patterns of arrival and re-settlement of these ‘lodgers’ in comparison with the patterns of residence and dispersion of foreign residents as investigated by Wauters (2017). A critical, targeted comparison with the registres d’entrée for internal migrants and the population registers will also provide us better insight in how complete or incomplete these administrative efforts were vis-à-vis internal migrants, who in principle enjoyed freedom of movement but were to be formally registered in the population books.

- The Registers of vagrants record all those incarcerated in the central police prison (amigo) on the grounds of vagrancy. Given the importance of vagrancy as a prime intervention tool to discipline poor migrants but also local inhabitants (Vercammen & Winter 2016), the data from this register provide valuable indications to determine how many vagrants were migrants and by whom they were arrested. This can then be linked to the book of Contraventions and the names of policemen that patrol the streets, which gives us the opportunity to ‘follow’ vagrancy disciplining through time.

Archives of debates in parliament and Brussels’ city council, and newspapers
In order to examine the extent to which police practices were (also) informed by imperatives of moral panic and political demand for intervention, I will complement the research in the police archives with a selective research on debates in the Belgian Parliament and the Brussels city council to discern political demands for police intervention, and on newspapers to chart examples of public demand for police intervention. The minutes of the debates in the Belgian Senate and Chamber of Representatives are electronically accessible and searchable with OCR via www.senate.be and www.plenum.be, while also the debates in the city council are searchable via full pdf versions of the Brussels Bulletin Communal. Together these archives provide an extensive source to retrieve signals of political commotion, demand or pressure concerning police activity. Via www.belgicapress.be I will make a selection of newspaper articles that signal episodes of increased public commotion or demand concerning police intervention. To analyse political demands and public commotion I will use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on a series of Parliamentary and city council debates and selected newspapers. The experience I have with this method, where I used CDA on newspapers for my Master thesis, will add to a more fluent processing of this part of my PhD. Rather than attempting any exhaustivity here, I will use these sources to select and focus on a small number of particularly illustrative instances of intense political and public attention for police intervention, and complement this with targeted research in the police archives to investigate to what extent these impacted upon police behaviour or police action in practice. One example of such highly-publicized episodes of great political and public concern over police activity in Brussels, was the “white slave trade” affair of 1880, in which dozens of Belgian and foreign under-age women were discovered to work in Brussels brothels with tacit compliance by the police. By complementing existing research on this episode (e.g. Chaumont and Machiels 2009) with the “Ordres Administratives” of the years 1880 and 1881, I
will investigate the extent to which public and political outrage resulted – or not – in lasting changes in police practices. Likewise, I will link Parliamentary and Council debates with the “ordres administratives” of 1891-92 to investigate the extent to which political concerns and legislative changes in the wake of Lejeune’s new Vagrancy Law of 1891 (Vercammen 2014), fostered actual changes in police practices.

provide a work plan, i.e. the different work packages and a detailed timetable.

work package 1. ordres administratives and contraventions – 6 months

in order to investigate agency of policemen I will create a database for the years 1893 and 1913 of the “ordres administratives”. This will be cross-correlated with a database of the “contraventions” for the same years. The database of the “contraventions” will also be used as tool to retrieve what kept policemen on the streets busy on a daily basis. As I will be starting this part of my research in the coming months, I expect it to take up another six months of my first year. The results of this WP1 will form the basis of a first conference paper at the forthcoming Urban History Conference and journal article.

work package 2. permanences and registers of vagrants – 1 year

I will set up a database with names, date and place of birth and addresses of migrants who spent the night in the police station for three sample years (1881, 1891, 1910) and analyse the results to investigate their profile and numbers and examine whether certain categories of migrants ran more risk to be incarcerated rather than ‘lodged for the night’ than others. Collecting, processing and analysing the results will take approximately eight months. In this WP I will also do a quantitative analysis on the registers of vagrancy in order to chart the social and migratory profile of the vagrants incarcerated for the years 1881, 1891 and 1910. This will take four months. The results will form the basis of a second paper that will also serve as a dissertation chapter.

work package 3. hotelregisters – 6 months

Together with a number of job students financed by existing funds from my supervisor, I will collect the names, arrival dates, date and place of birth, occupation and place of stay of migrants in the years 1880, 1895 and 1910, in a database in order to investigate the profiles of temporary domestic and foreign migrants who stayed in hotels of lodging houses, and spatially map and investigate their arrival or re-settlement patterns. These sources will then also be critically compared with the Régistres d’entrée, the Foreigners’ Registry and the Population Books in order to better establish the limits and ambitions of capturing Brussels’ mobile population on paper. Processing, analysing the results and writing a dissertation chapter will take six months.

work package 4. ordres administratives, newspapers and debates – 1 year

During this Work Package (WP), I will analyse moral panic and political demands in relation to the “ordres administratives” to gauge the influence of the former on the second. I will first do a CDA on news articles in selected newspapers and on debates in parliament and city council on the case of the “white slave trade”-affair of 1880 and the Vagrancy Law of 1891. I will compare these pressures to the administrative orders in the same period to evaluate their potential influence, and may decide to add one or two cases of high-level political or public concern over police activity. I expect this WP to take up one year.

work package 5. writing – 1 year

This WP consist entirely of finalizing the dissertation.
Enumerate the bibliographical references that are relevant for your research proposal.


Indicate below whether you think the results of the proposed research will be suitable to be communicated to a non-expert audience and how you would undertake such communication.

The current public debates on police and migrants in Brussels offer this project a high degree of relevancy. In the past year the police held several important raids to remove newcomers that had settled in a park in the Belgian capital. The announcement of tougher regulations and the defence of the strict measures by the government created a harsh polemic on migration and its policing. These discussions recently amounted in a fierce public debate about migration, police, ‘no-go-zones’ and criminality. In a society where single male refugees with no fixed income arouse suspicion (‘is he a terrorist? Or maybe a rapist?’), migrants are seen as a burden and politicians speak of no-go zones in the capital, the dissemination of my research results to a larger, non-expert audience will be very important. Due to this relevancy, I am convinced that the results of this PhD will interest a wider audience: in academic terms, it provides the opportunity to address wider inter-disciplinary audiences in the social sciences dealing with contemporary questions on policing and migration in cities, next to an audience of migration, urban and police historians. I therefore plan to present and publish my research both in historical journals such as Urban History and Social History and more cross-disciplinary journals such as Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies or Crime, History and Society. But also beyond academia, I see an opportunity to engage a wider audience. I will address my journalistic network to disseminate the results of my research to non-academic media. I am convinced that lectures on police practices and migrants will not only interest the wider public in general, but also policymakers. Also, I am planning on setting up a website/blog where I can post material that occurs during my research, and I would invite other academics studying similar topics to contribute to this as well. I will use my network and the social media to make publicity and raise interest for this website.

Please provide full bibliographic details of your five main publications and update all your scientific publications through the E-portal. (Optional)
Van CULT@fwo.be    Aan ayfer.erkul@vub.be
Datum 5 July 2018 02:31    Gebruiker fwo\ep    UIT
Betref 1184219N feedback

#Error
Concerning Evaluation application PhD Fellow:

Watching the migrants. Police and migration in Brussels, c. 1880-1914.

Dear researcher,

This year, the FWO received 1,048 applications for a PhD fellow, 215 of which could eventually be granted by the board of trustees after a rigorous selection procedure.

Based on the scientific comparison of the candidates and given the limited supply of financial means, the FWO Expert Panel Cult3: History and Archeology ranked your application in second order for funding. You are ranked at position 4 out of 4.

Being ranked in second order means that you can be funded if one of the candidates ranked in first order for one of the available fellows in the Expert Panel Cult3 would fall out. In that case you will be contacted by the FWO.

Attached you will find a compilation of the pre-reports by the panel members.

There will be no further correspondence about this feedback.

With kind regards,

your account administrator
Assessment of the applicant

Research ability

Obviously, Erkul has proved during the former years to possess a high research potential, which she combines with a long experience as a journalist.

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Scientific independence

Although she developed this proposal in the context of an existing project, Erkul obviously paved her own way within it.

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Personal statement

The personal statement betrays the enormous dedication of a student who decided at a later stage in life to study history and opt for academic research

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Mobility (previous or planned)
Although Erkul did cover international affairs as a journalist, in her academic career so far she did not travel, and has not integrated research stays abroad in her proposal. Given the Belgian character of her proposal, this should not be seen as a problem.

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**Conclusion : SWOT-analysis of the applicant**

Ayfer Erkul is a candidate who combines maturity and writing experience with an enormous dedication to research. There seems little doubt that she will be able to deliver a high-quality PhD within the set period of time.

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*Very interesting candidate.*

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Assessment of the project
Originality

Within the well-developed field of migration history, Erkul has been able to carve out an original approach by focusing on the interaction between the police and migrants at a local level. However, it remains rather unclear whether and in which ways this project might contribute to the existing literature on the history of national migration policies.

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Feasibility

By focusing on one city, and by carefully selecting a set of sources (and samples within these sources), the feasibility appears to be guaranteed.

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Focus

The focus on only one city (and even one neighborhood within this city) might turn out to be too tight to reach meaningful conclusions about factors that determine police-migrant relations. A comparison with at least one other city (within or outside of Belgium) might have been helpful. On the other hand, the research about Brussels does suffer from a certain lack of focus. If the relationship between police and migrants is at the heart of the project, why exactly should hotel registers be a central source? It would have been preferable only to deal with those sources that illuminate the interactions between police and migrants - but to do so for more than one city. By doing so, the applicant might have been able to discern to which degree concrete police interactions with migrants were determined by migration policies at a national and or local level.

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Methodology
If the proposal betrays a thorough knowledge of the existing sources, it is much less explicit about the methodology that will be applied to them. Erkul promises to use critical discours analysis, but does not elaborate what exactly this approach can mean in the context of this research. Lacking in the project design, is any research into the social, educational and professional background of the Brussels police forces. To which degree and in which way, for example, where these policemen prepared for interactions with migrants from different parts of the world? To which degree did they share the existing suppositions and stereotypes with their surrounding milieux?

Conclusion: SWOT-analysis of the project proposal
This is a very promising project whose general scope, however, is a little too limited, whereas its concrete design suffers from a certain lack of focus.

The project aims to examine “how police practices manoeuvred between imperatives of moral panic and political demand for intervention on the one hand, and policemen’s priorities, pragmatic choices and logistic constraints on the other hand.” It will do so by focusing on migrants, both internal (i.e. domestic) ones and foreigners. This is a highly interesting topic, but there are several methodological problems.

First, the candidate will use police sources for both facts and perception or policy, i.e. for migration patterns (facts) and policemen’s priorities (perception or policy). For instance, “foreigners tended to reside more in the city centre due to the availability of hotels and lodging houses. It will be useful to examine to what extent this was also the case for internal migrants and in what way this (lack of) dispersion influenced police-migrant relations.” In other words, she will study internal migration and the authorities’ and police’s attention, contrasting to the one to foreigners by means of the same sources. However, she fails to explain how she will reconstruct internal migration: part of this remained beyond the police’s scope and, accordingly, will also remain invisible to her.

Second, and related to this, she wants to “see if local police acted differently towards migrants than towards the population in general”. For instance, she wants to examine “whereby migrants were targeted primarily and disproportionately as vagabonds, mendicants or prostitutes.” This is highly relevant, but she misses a test population. Critics will argue that migrants were overrepresented within these groups, and that this accounts for the police’s larger attention to migrants. The applicant does not explain how she will tackle such criticism. There are methods, e.g. a focus on ethnic labelling, but she keeps silent about this.
Third, she will also look at debates in the Belgian parliament, the city council of Brussels and in media. She will search and select “a small number of particularly illustrative instances of intense political and public attention for police intervention”, and then check to what extent these impacted on police behaviour or police action in practice. This seems interesting, but, However, she will examine the police archives for very particular years, e.g. 1893 and 1913 for the ordres adminstratives and contraventions. In other words, the two pillars of the research do not match. What if debates took place in other years? How will she study their impact on police behavior? She may change her sample years, but it is not clear if the archives will be available for those years.

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Quality of supervision and guidance

Outstanding

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## PERSONAL DETAILS

Erkul Ayfer

**Date of birth**  
12 October 1969

**Country of birth**  
Turkey

**Nationality**  
Belgium

**Gender**  
F

**E-mail**  
ayfer.erkul@vub.be

## PAST AND CURRENT STUDIES

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## DISCIPLINES

## CAREER

*Overview of positions NOT related to FWO and connected to a receiving university/organization*

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