

28. ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

As in the previous publication, our discussion of "economic geography" is restricted to general economic geography and geography of secondary and tertiary activities. Agrarian geography, transport geography, and the geography of tourism and recreation are discussed in separate sections.

During the period 1984-1995, more than 180 publications appeared on economic activities as defined above. In the past decade, Belgian economic geography demonstrated expansion with 45 more papers than those listed in the previous edition (W. VLASSEN BROECK, 1984). However, research in economic geography in both Flanders and Wallonia is the matter of a rather limited number of authors; fewer than ten authors have produced more than 50% of the studies.

In general economic geography and in the geography of secondary and tertiary activities, syntheses and theoretical publications are rare; foreign cases are not more frequent. Therefore, Belgian economic geography is more inductive than deductive and also is deeply rooted in its home territory : Belgium.

1. In the field of general economic geography, 75 papers were published; 59 about Belgium and only 4 about other countries and continents : Nicaragua and Venezuela (A. DUBREUCQ, 1988 a and b), the Third World via the very complex debt problem (W. VLASSEN BROECK, 1987), the ex-socialist countries via the links between economy and spatial organization (C. KESTELOOT, 1992).

Besides the study on the evolution of economic geography since the beginning of the century (C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1988), research on Belgium can be classified according to four major categories : territorial disparities, crisis and change, financial fluxes and investments, and regional and local studies.

Territorial disparities have been studied several times by the use of the labour-market (see also "Population Geography") : G. DE BRABANDER (1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 and together with M. VAN DER WEE, 1985) examines the regional disparities between employment and labour force and the regional sectoral evolution of the Belgian economy; M. GOOSSENS (1985) and E. VAN HECKE (1985 together with M. GOOSSENS, 1992) pay attention to the spatial differentiation of unemployment in Belgium; W. VLASSEN BROECK (1987) gives a survey of the spatial and sectoral transformation process of the Belgian working population between 1970 and 1981.

Territorial disparities have also been analysed by other criteria such as sickness benefits and disability pension (assurance maladie-invalidité) (I. THOMAS, 1995) and real estate (B. BIANCHET, 1992, J. POOTEMANS 1992 and 1993). However, the most relevant studies seem to be the different attempts on typologies, frequently based on cluster analysis : prosperity typologies (D. VANNESTE, 1985 and 1986), economic typologies (D. VANNESTE, 1988 and 1989), and socio-economic typology (B. BIANCHET, 1994); also in this field, the papers of E. VAN HECKE and C. CARDYN (1988) and D. VANNESTE (1992) where the authors apply the agglomeration-index of Hauer and the technique of potential mapping.

Crisis and structural changes (deindustrialization, tertiarization) were also a major subject studied and some necessities were emphasized : to analyse the crisis over a long time span (C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1986), to analyse strikes (C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1991), to link deindustrialization and tertiarization (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1992), to build up a theoretical

frame work (C. KESTELOOT, E. SWYNGEDOUW, 1990; P. SAEY, 1992), and to object to the over-simple idea of the duality between French and Dutch-speaking Belgium (Belgique à deux vitesses) (A. VERHETSEL, A. JORISSEN, 1992 a and b, 1994 a and b; A. COLARD, C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1995).

Financial fluxes and investments are the third focus of interest. Several issues have been studied : expenses and incomes of Belgian councils (E. VAN HECKE, C. CARDYN, 1984), the original topic of the influence of the Société Générale in Wallonia (J.R.SORTIA, 1984), a short analysis of E.C. funds in Belgium (C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1984) and three studies about foreign investments in Liège, Wallonia, Flemish Brabant and Brussels (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1990 and 1991; D. VANNESTE, 1993).

Finally, a rather large number of regions are the subject of a general economic geographical approach : Antwerp (G. DE BRABANDER, 1986; P. CABUS, 1990), Beveren (G. DE BRABANDER, K. BLOMMAERT, 1989), Flemish Brabant (K. BOELART, 1993), West Brabant (G. DE BRABANDER, 1993), Brussels (D. VANNESTE, 1991), the Centre (J.P. JANSSENS, J. LIEBIN, C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1990), the German Community area (M. LANGHOR, 1994), West Flanders (D. VANNESTE, 1994), Hageland (M. GOOSSENS, 1984), Mons-Borinage (M. HONOREZ, 1994), Pajotteland (H. MEERT, 1988), and the southern Valley of the Senne (H. MEERT, 1989).

To these four major categories, one must add some specific studies, notably three studies about the location of industrial and tertiary top-management in Belgium and in Brussels (E. VAN HECKE, 1991, 1992 and 1994), two papers about the spatial dimensions of informal economic activities in Brussels (C. KERSTELOOT, H. MEERT, 1993; S. SAVENBERG, H. MEERT, C. KESTELOOT, 1993), one analysis of the location and relocation of small scale enterprises in the inner city of Antwerp (M. GOOSSENS, E. SYMENS, 1987), one reflection about the new employment poles on the periphery of Brussels and Liège (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1984), and a general evaluation of the international role of Belgium (J. DENIS, J. CHARLIER, W. DE LANNOY, 1992) and of Liège (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1992).

Concerning the 12 general papers, these are often syntheses dealing with new research themes : for example, new links between economic activities and towns (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1987 et 1990; G. DE BRABANDER, 1993; G. DE BRABANDER, D. YZEWIJN (Eds), 1993), local development (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1990), financial communication between banks (J. DENIS, 1991), methodological problems in the study of disparities and territorial dynamics (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1994) and the spatialization of capitalism (C. KESTELOOT, 1990 a and b). One must add the short interrogation of G. DE BRABANDER (1987) about economic geogra-

phy, the paper of J. ANNAERT (1995) on the hazard of geographical locations and the basic paper of H. BEGUIN (1984) on the evolution of economic geography : evolution of ideas, general concepts and theories.

2. With 57 papers, *industrial geography* is still a major research theme. As for the other themes, the Belgian context and the profound changes of the last 30 years are the major topics. Among the most studied subjects, one finds again both crises and change. For French-speaking researchers, interest is particularly strong in "old industrial regions" with some historical papers (L. SWYSEN, 1984; C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1988; G. VAN HAMME, 1993) and an interesting special issue of the *Revue belge de Géographie* with the contributions of geographers from the I.G.U. "Old Industrial Regions" commission (C. VANDERMOTTEN, P. BRUYELLE, H. GREEN, 1992).

Spatial and structural changes in Belgian industry were also studied in depth, notably by A. DRUMAUX and C. VANDERMOTTEN (1984), C. VANDERMOTTEN (1985, 1989 and 1990) and P. NORRO (1992). In 1992, a synthesis was produced in another way by B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER and C. VANDERMOTTEN; in 1986, J.P. DONNAY and B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER presented an industrial typology of Belgian local authority areas. A lot of contributions emphasize aspects of the industrial sector in specific regions : Flanders (P. CABUS, 1991; P. CABUS, R. VAN PEER, 1991), Wallonia (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1984 and 1987), the "Kanaalzone" and the Ghent agglomeration (W. VLASSEN BROECK, 1983, 1988 and 1995), the "Louvain Kanaalzone" (J. POOTEMANS, M. GOOSSENS, 1989) and Belgian Limburg (E. SWYNGEDOUW, 1988; H. KEERIS, P. DE GROTE, M. SWINNEN, 1989; H. KEERIS, 1992). This province seems to interest researchers more than the others. For E. SWYNGEDOUW (1988), Limburg is a good case-study to learn about the spatial linkages of firms, an important explanatory factor in the diffusion process of new technology adoption in established manufacturing plants.

New industrial spaces, notably industrial estates and business centres, have also interested many researchers. In this research field, case studies were developed : in Liège (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1985, 1986; B. BIANCHET and B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1991), in Brussels, in Flemish Brabant or elsewhere in Flanders (D. AMEELE, 1987; M. GOOSSENS and A. DEPOORTER, 1987; J. POOTEMANS, 1993). Syntheses on "industrial estates" (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1985 and 1991) and on "business centres" (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1986 and 1987) were also produced. In the same way, B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER has written six papers on areas of industrial dereliction (1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1992 a and b). Such areas of industrial dereliction are undoubtedly the most visible scars caused by recent economic changes. In a synthetic paper, the same author (1985) has tried to interpret the new linkages between towns and industries.

In their concern to disseminate their research on industry, some geographers have conceived new products : field trip guides for Brussels (M. DE BEULE, J. PUISSANT, C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1989), the Centre area (J.P. JANSSENS, J. LIEBIN, M. HOLVOET, C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1990), and Western Hainaut (T. BRULARD, V. CAPPELIEZ, B. DUHANT, 1992), and also a game on factors of localization (B. BIANCHET, Y. DEMEUSE, B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1993).

One can add that L. DE SMET proposed in 1987 a short reflection about the new industrial geography, which was the main topic of the university textbook written by B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER for the Nathan Université series (1991). The same author and the same publishing house also published a textbook on the geography of energy (1993). Five other publications were noted on this theme : a special file on electricity (W. DE LANNOY, J. WILLEMS, 1983), an important work on energy and basic industry (M. GOOSSENS, 1987), two papers on the restructuring of the refining industry in both Belgium and the Netherlands (J. CHARLIER, D. PINDER, 1990; D. PINDER, J. CHARLIER, 1990), and a synthesis on the world energy flows (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1994).

Finally, one can mention four papers by C. KESTELOOT on Japanese industry : spatial distribution, structure and processes, location factors (1989 a and b, 1990, 1993), a study about the dynamic sector of computers and semiconductors in North-America, Europe, Japan and some NICs (D. VANNESTE, S. VERHELST, 1993), and an analysis of the industrial space in South-West Zaïre (N. MABOLOKO, 1989).

3. In relation to the general growth in services, *the geography of the tertiary activities* (52 papers) has recently increased, namely in the field of retail geo-graphy with 29 papers mostly from French-speaking authors. Besides this major topic, there are also investigations into some specific aspects of the tertiary sector : offices (J.P. DONNAY, 1985; W. VLASSEN BROECK, 1985 and 1991; B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1991; D. RECOLLECTE, 1995), car dealers and transport companies (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1986), wholesale trade (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1986), the banking sector (W. VLASSEN BROECK, 1987; G. DE BRANBANDER, K. DICK- ELE, 1992), finance and insurance companies (J.R. SORTIA, C. VANDERMOTTEN, 1987), estate agencies (W. VLASSEN BROECK 1991 and 1992), service industries (P. CABUS, 1992), and general practitioners (D. VANNESTE, 1992). This research sector also includes several analyses of the spatial structures and processes of the Belgian service sector, especially an important survey by E. VAN HECKE and D. VANNESTE (1991), a general presentation of the sector by W. VLASSEN BROECK, P. DE GROOTE and M. GOOSSENS (1992), several analyses of tertiary activities in towns (F.

ORBAN-FERRAUGE, 1984 and 1987; W. VLASSEN BROECK, 1989) with two case-studies, one in Brussels (H. NICOLAI, 1989) and the other in Liège (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1989). In addition, in 1992, H. BEGUIN published an excellent brief synthesis about the location of everyday activities.

However, it is retail geography that has focused the largest number of papers. Started in 1964 by J.A. SPORCK in the University of Liège, studies grew in number and became more diversified in the 1980s. In addition to a few case studies (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1987, 1991), there is a will to assure a strong epistemological basis (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1987) and to set up powerful methodological tools. As in the field of the geography of industry, researchers are anxious to analyse and explain changes both spatially and structurally (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1986, 1991) by studying : the development of self-service stores and shopping centres (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1983, 1992), the localization strategy of retail chains (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1992), commercial activities linked to crises and social changes (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, M. COPPENS, 1987; C. KESTELOOT, 1995), hotel and catering activities (W. VLASSEN-BROECK, 1994 and 1995; P. PILLEN, 1995). However, the question of location is still the major issue (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1984, 1992; J. C. THILL, 1986 and 1987; J.P. GRIMMEAU, L. MARROU, 1991) even if some other subjects have been studied : retail planning (J.A. SPORCK, 1985; B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1983, 1988, 1995), and spatial behaviour of consumers (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1987). In other respects, in the same way as industry, researchers have also tried to be useful to the wider public (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1989); hence, they have developed geomarketing (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, 1990; J.P. GRIMMEAU, M. ROELANDTS, 1995) and have published a practical guide for store location (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, A. BROWET, 1988). Finally, a paper examines Third World retail activities by studying the "floating" retail trade in Lubumbashi (B. MÉRENNE-SCHOUMAKER, I. BUKOMÉ, 1988).

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29. TRANSPORT GEOGRAPHY

As in the previous period (BRULARD, 1984; MÉRENNE, 1988b), Belgian transport geographers have dealt recently with most aspects of the discipline, theoretically, technically or spatially. A new textbook should be mentioned first (MÉRENNE, 1995), as well as two edited jubilee books (CHARLIER, 1986d; DE BRABANDER e.a., 1992). However most published material consists of book chapters or papers in academic journals or professional