

## **The Discourse of Composite Parliaments in post-Napoleonic Europe: The Belgian and Polish Case, 1815-1848**

The project seeks to explore how the language of parliamentarism may evolve in a situation of revolutionary fluctuations and numerous structural breaks and discontinuities, focusing on the example of the parliamentary discourses of Belgium and Poland in the post-Napoleonic era, i.e. in the years 1815-1848. In fact, the history of these two countries during the period justifies such a comparison. First of all, after 1815, both the parliament of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and the representative institutions operating in the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (in Warsaw, Poznań, Lviv and Cracow) were created as part of a broader trend of European parliamentarization. So while representative bodies were created on the imperial periphery to function as security valves or political laboratories in which monarchs could test the potential effects of liberal reforms, in the capitals of the Holy Alliance empires - Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg - no such institutions were established. Belgian and Polish representative bodies, functioning in an unstable institutional environment, in the conditions of changing borders, and inheriting various political traditions, were truly composite parliaments, forced to face both their own asynchronicities and the external pressure of dominant metropolises and / or imperial organisms.

The critical moment for the formation of parliamentary discourses in both contexts was the year 1830, which posed a significant threat to the order formed during the Congress of Vienna and revealed that the growing antagonisms could hardly find an appropriate solution within the existing political arrangements. Both in the Kingdom of Poland and in the rebellious Southern provinces of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, representative institutions acted as catalysts for uprisings, spurring on national revolutions. The different turns of these two uprisings, however, resulted in a clear differentiation of parliamentary histories in both countries. Therefore, a fully sovereign parliament emerged in independent Belgium, built on the basis of a revolutionary tradition and liberal values. In turn, the parliament of the Kingdom of Poland was dissolved after the failure of the uprising, while in the other representative institutions in Poland, the proceedings were disturbed, which caused further frictions and the growing dissatisfaction of members of these bodies.

The main source material that will be examined in the project consists of reports from parliamentary proceedings from Belgium (until 1830 from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands) and Poland (i.e. the Kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Poznań, Galicia and the Free City of Krakow). They will be interpreted primarily in terms of decoding rhetorical strategies, key concepts and their evolution, as well as inherited traditions; finally; concepts adapted from other national or linguistic contexts that were used in parliamentary debates. Complementary research visits aimed at contextualizing parliamentary discussions include primarily fieldwork at libraries and archives in Paris, Brussels, Poznań and Cracow.

The project envisages the involvement of two co-investigators and two post-doctoral researchers, and its effects are to be: 1) an English-language monograph; 2) a thematically coherent series of English-language articles; 3) conference papers; 4) popular science activities. The outcomes are to fill the gaps in the current state of the art regarding the wave of parliamentarism in post-Napoleonic Europe, as well as in the knowledge of discourses of particular parliaments, which so far have only rarely been the subject of more systematic studies.

In terms of methodology, the project involves a combination of toolkits drawn from conceptual history, parliamentary history and new imperial history.