

Fictitious Belgium: the role of media and translation in Belgian political ideologies

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Abstract

In the intricate multilingual context of Belgian politics, ideologically inspired topics are not just a matter of political conviction. They are also very much a matter of linguistic affiliation and of the way the topics are presented and translated for the audience. Developments in Belgian politics over the last decades has been characterised by the existence of large-scale political agreements and compromises between the members of the two main language communities. These agreements, often the result of strenuous governmental conclaves that can last for days and even nights, seem to be the only way to solve nationalistically based differences of opinion and to bridge the cultural and political gap between the two communities. Sometimes, compromises can only be reached through an extremely well-balanced formulation containing varying points of emphasis in each language. Thus, the framework of the discussion is very different in the northern and the southern parts of the country. The political agenda can be set along almost opposite lines.