

*Mobilizations and opinions about and of asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants in Belgium: frames, motivations and actions*

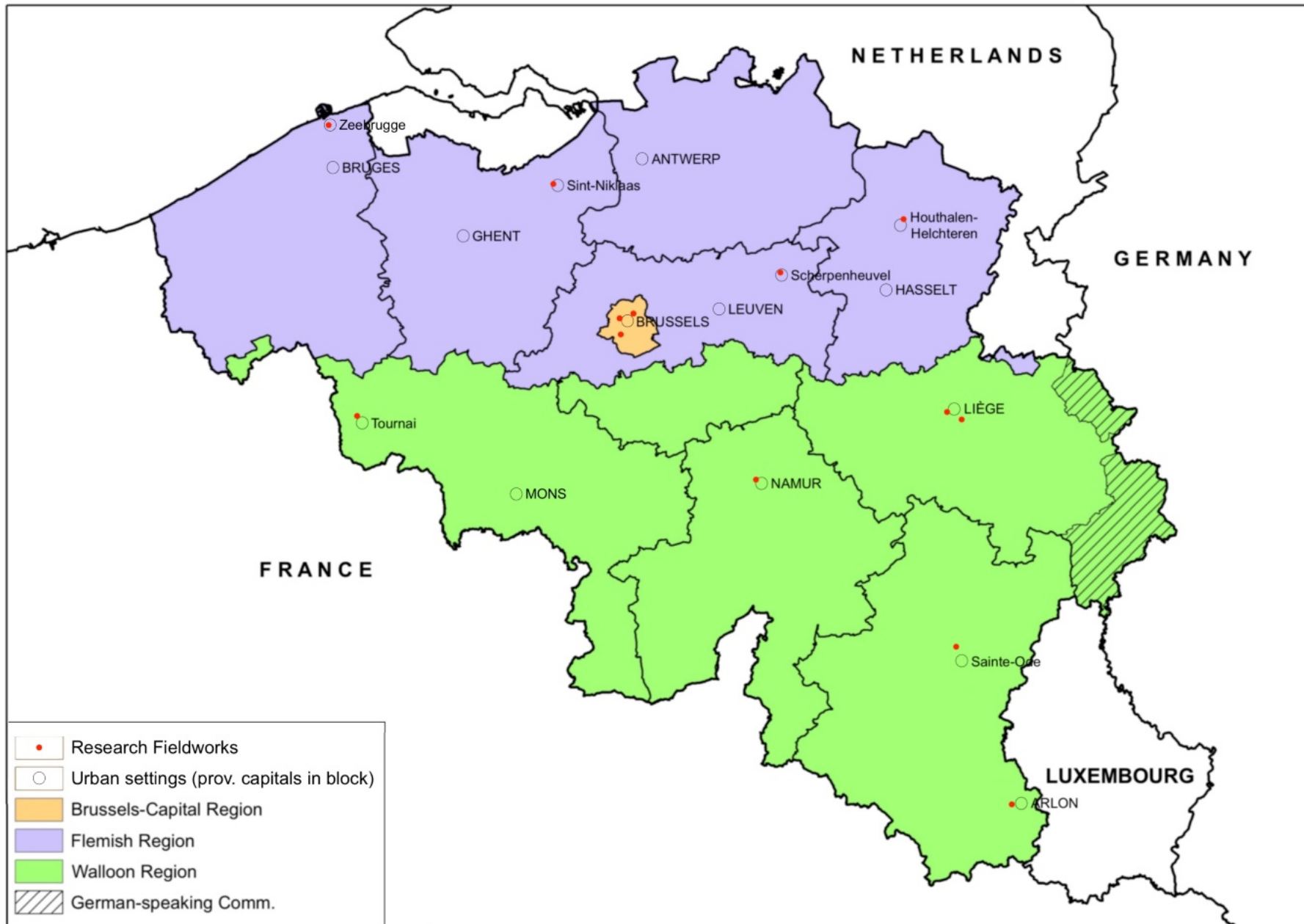
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## *Why Belgium?*

- Heightened visibility due to increase in migrants' arrivals in 2015
- “Welcoming atmosphere” (Karakayali, 2019) vs. ‘crisis’ for Belgium in terms of culture, economy and security (De Cleen et al., 2017)

## *Focus on the local level:*

- Map and explain mobilisation pro/anti
  - Emerging around a reception centre
  - Grassroots initiatives
- Impact of reception centre on the local community



## *Which types of motivation can explain mobilisation pro asylum seekers?*

- Empathy and solidarity

*“They come because where they live is misery, they will be killed”*

- Reciprocity

*“I preferably work for people who really need it and who are happy when someone does something for them. I prefer working for those people than for spoiled brats”*

- Contribution to cultural integration

*“Children have to grow up in our society, join in our mentality. [...] they can live here and they can be like us”*

## *What about mobilisation against reception centres?*

- Rare and non-structured

Explanation: limited protest because of positive stance of local political actors  
(Haselbacher & Rosenberger, 2018)

- BUT: importance of transparent information

*“We also realised that those people [the asylum seekers] had to be helped, but that was not the point for us. We just wanted correct information”*

## *How do non-mobilised citizens react to a reception centre in their neighbourhood?*

- Limited contact
  - Activities organised by the centre mainly attract people previously engaged or interested in the reception centres
  - No need for contact
  - Language barrier
- Neutral cohabitation – habituation
- Noteworthy: volunteers barely live in the direct environment of the centre

## *What impact does a reception centre have on the local community?*

- From no effect to severed ties

*“You see people who have been friends for twenty years, but now do not talk to each other anymore because of different opinions on refugees”*

- Three elements:

- 1) Neighbourhood composition: migration history?
- 2) Location of the reception centre in the neighbourhood
- 3) Previous experience with a reception centre



## *Conclusion:*

- Initiatives and opinions are initiated and influenced by a variety of factors
- Role of contextual factors should not be underestimated
- Motivation and opportunity as levers to trigger concrete action