Public defence Ph.D. in Social Sciences: Sociology by David De Wachter

The public defence of the Ph.D. in Social Science: Sociology for David De Wachter will take place on Wednesday July 10th 2013 at 6pm on the Etterbeek-campus of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels in Building D, level 2, room D2.01.

The Ph.D. thesis is called "Postponement or Renouncement? A Longitudinal Formation using the 1991 and 2001 Census." (Promoters: Prof. dr. Patrick Deboosere (VUB) and Karel Neels (UA)

Please confirm your attendance by Wednesday July 5th to Christel Vaeremans

Abstract:

This dissertation focuses on three major changes in the Belgian demographic regime after the mid 1960s: the decline of marriage, the increasing popularity of premarital cohabitation and the decline of period fertility below the replacement level. The first objective is to reconstruct trends in first marriage and first premarital cohabitation in Belgium for the period 1960-2000 and for female cohorts born between 1930 and 1975. A pertinent question is whether declining first marriage rates reflect the postponement of marriage or reflect a genuine decline of the marriage intensity. And related to this question, which role premarital cohabitation has played in the postponement/renouncement of marriage and whether it is mainly a prelude to marriage or has become an alternative to it. Trends in first marriage and premarital cohabitation are further stratified by level of education and region of residence. The second objective is to analyse socio-economic differentials in fertility outcomes among Belgian women and their partners during the early 1990s. Over successive cohorts higher educated women have increasingly made the transition into parenthood and have consistently realised the more frequent progression to second and third births. This leads to two questions: (i) does the distribution of activity status and household type vary in terms of educational attainment and (ii) does the effect of household type and activity status on birth hazards differ between the educational groups. An important question is whether female education and activity status continue to have an independent effect on birth hazards after controlling for the characteristics of the male partner. Subsequently, we explore whether the effects of household positions and socio-economic characteristics vary by region or whether regional differentials in education, household positions and activity status can (partially) explain regional differentials in period fertility. The dissertation makes use of individual level data drawn from the 1991 and 2001 Belgian censuses. The third objective has been to assess the quality and representativeness of the census data, both (i) as a source for reconstructing trends in first marriage and first premarital cohabitation from a period and cohort perspective and (ii) as a prospective source to analyse educational and regional differentials in order-specific fertility during the 1990s.