

A history of economic nationalism

The Prosperity and Pride of Nations

OLIVIER BOEHME

Politics and economics cannot exist without each other. The global financial crisis makes many people long for a government that will set things straight. Convinced Europeans seize upon the situation to appeal for yet more European integration. For radical nationalists the market is no more than an instrument for striving after their political and cultural vision. 'The Prosperity and Pride of Nations' describes the global, European and Belgian history of the complex relationship between politics and economics.

In his book Boehme focuses on the Western European nation state as it began to emerge in the fifteenth century and took shape mainly over the past two centuries, but he also looks at the United States, for example. Along the way he pays a great deal of attention to international theorists such as Miroslav Hroch, a Czech historian who distinguishes between three phases in the development of nationalism.

- In an initial phase an intellectual elite of a limited size exhibits great interest in the language, culture and history of 'a people'.
- In a second phase political agitation emerges to give shape to the nation.
- It is only in the third phase that this grows to become a mass movement. The nationalist vanguard needs to convince the masses that the agenda of nation building matches their own social and economic interests.

'The Prosperity and Pride of Nations' is an eyeopener on many fronts.



AUTHOR



Olivier Boehme (b. 1974) has a doctorate in history and works as a policy adviser at the Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO). His work is situated at the intersection of political, cultural, intellectual and socio-economic history. He has published work on subjects including the right-wing revolution in Flanders between the wars (1999) and the political-financial system in Belgium (2005). His award-winning book 'Grab for the Market' (2008) was considered an important contribution to the analysis of communal relations in Belgium. He also engages in the public debate by writing opinion pieces for newspapers.

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