



OLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT
LEUVEN

Differences in Political attitudes between Flemings and Walloons

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outline

- Introduction: about the data & political context
- Adherence to sub-nationalism (or regionalism) over time
identification, (sub)national consciousness & relation with ethnic threat, about separatism
- Attitude towards newcomers (ethnic prejudice)
are Flemish more negative towards immigrants?
- Secularisation and de-pillarisation trends
are Flemish (still) more catholic?
- Social and political trust
remarkable differences



introduction

Data:

- election surveys in 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, (2007)
large random samples in FI, Wa and Br
face-to-face
Flanders: useful panel in 1991, 1995 and 1999
comparisons between regions possible
- European Social Survey 2002, (2004, 2006)
only comparison between FR and FL

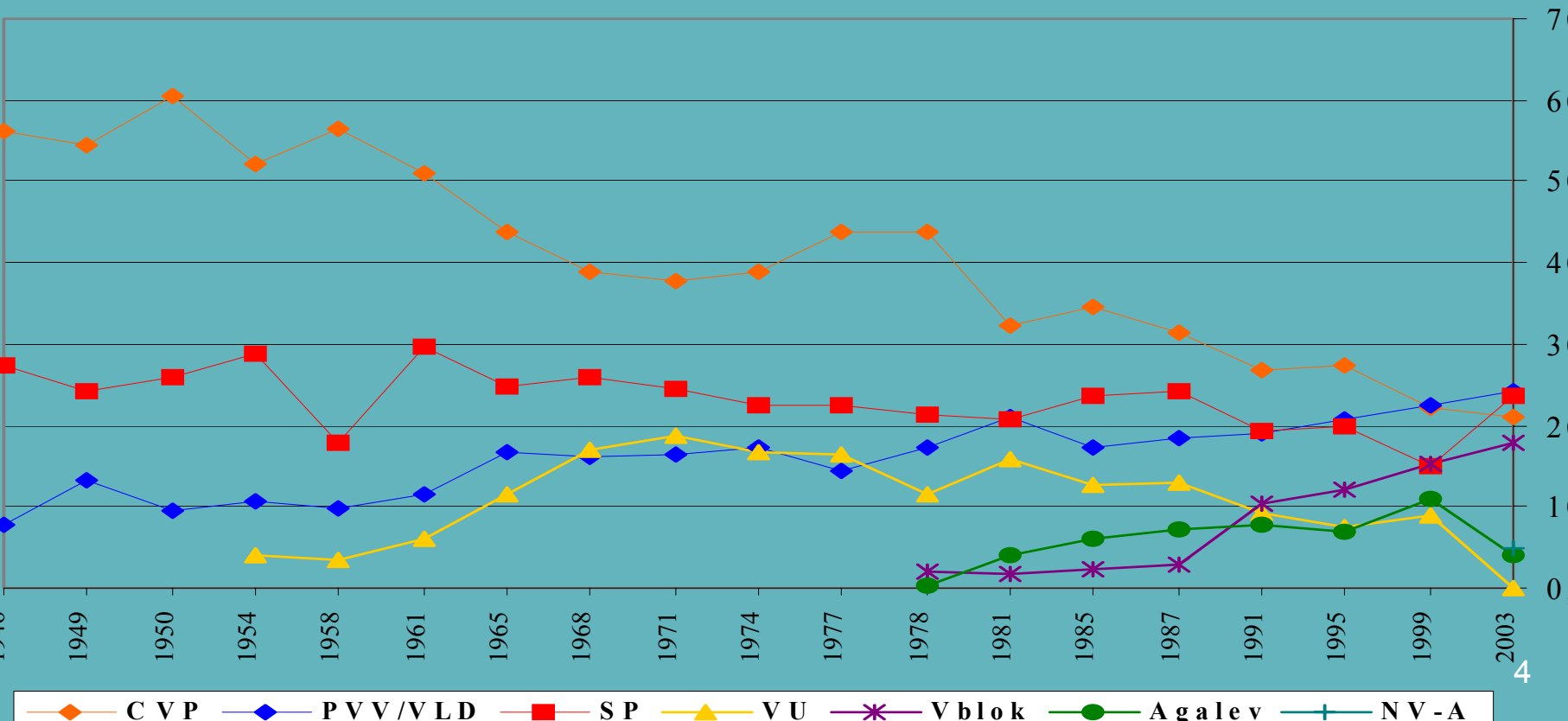
An idea of changes in Flemish & Walloon political context next figures



introduction

Figuur 1.

Verkiezingen voor de kamer: percentages behaalde stemmen.
Parlementsverkiezingen 1946-2003 - Vlaamse kantons

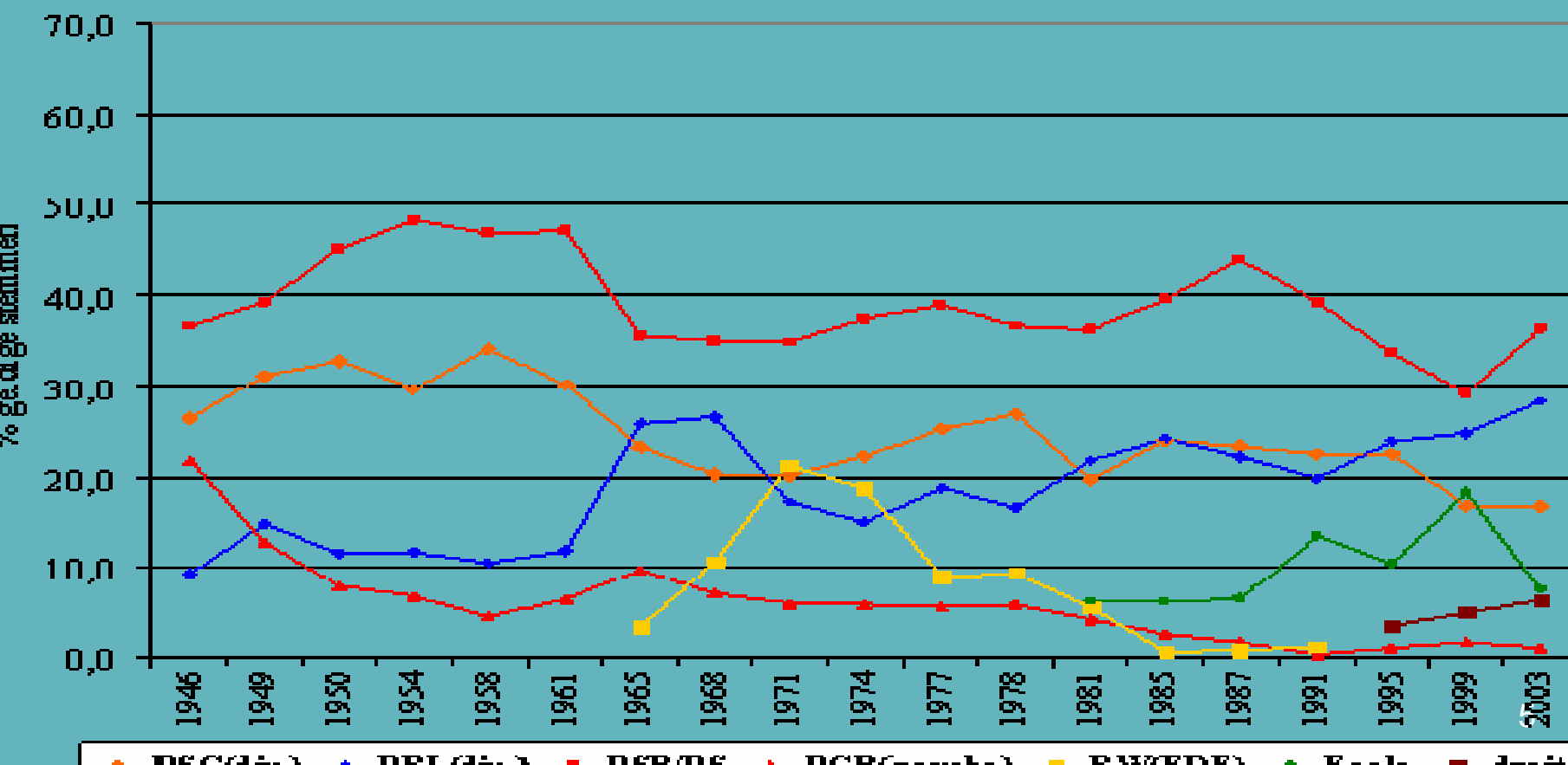




introduction

Figuur 2.

Verkiezingen voor de Kamer: percentage behaalde stemmen.
Parlementsverkiezingen 1946-2003 - Waalse kantons





Adherence to sub-nationalism

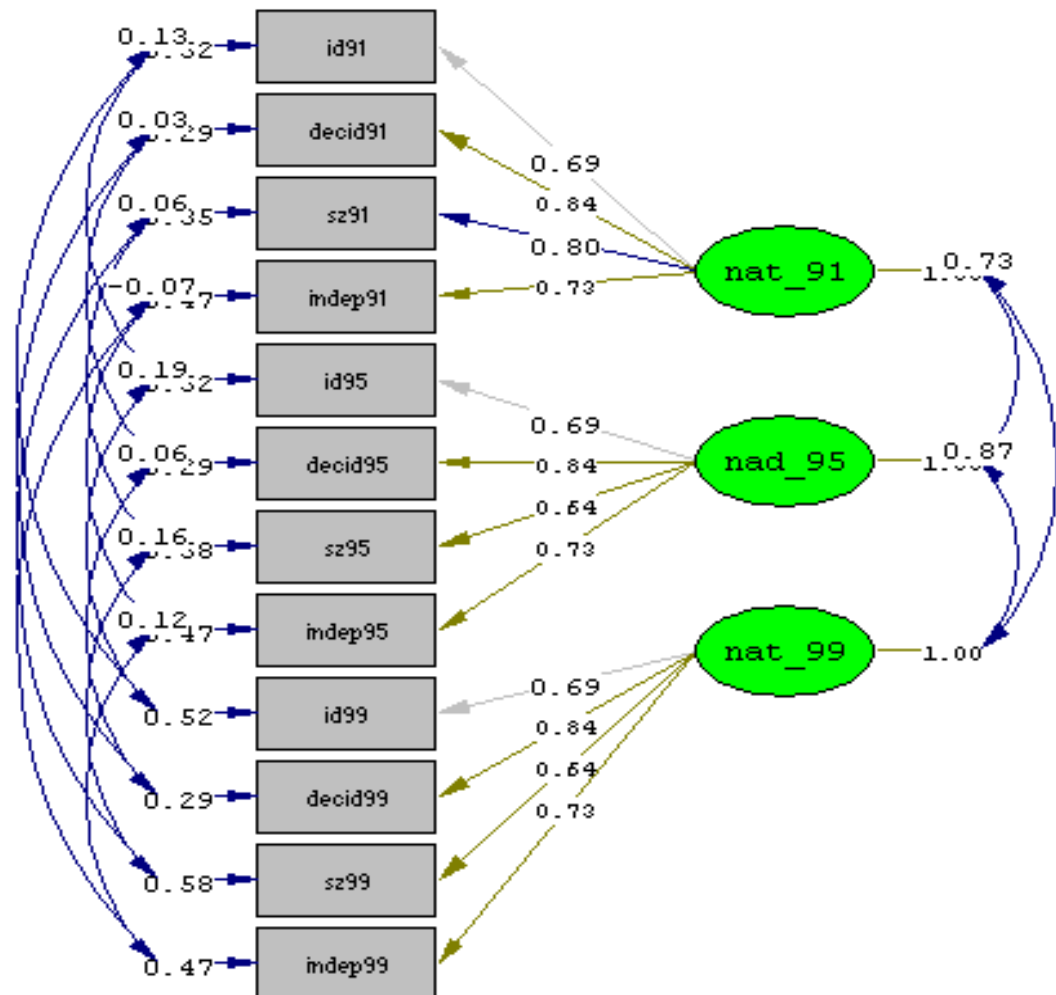
1. First identity: Flemish/Wal (5), other (2,5), Belgian (1)
2. Decisions: totaly Belgium (1) --- totaly Flanders/Wal (10)
3. Social security: keep federal (1) --- splitt (10)
4. Independence: Belgium stronger (1) ---Belgium disappears (10)
(independence Fla in 1999)

Nearly same measures in '91-'95-'99 but some changes in order and response scales.

However: equivalent: invariant relations beween indicators and latent variable over time (see figure 1: test for Flanders but +/-same in Wal: for understandable reason, indicator nr 3 (SS) does not work so well in Wallonië, and there no panel data)



Figure 1. invariant measurement model vor national consciousness over time (1.235 panel respondents)



Chi-Square=109.42, df=46, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.038



Adherence to sub-nationalism

5. Measurement in 2003 not invariant:
first identity
decisions (1-10)
More power for regions (1-5) \neq independence (last category missing)
exclusive identity (1995, 1999)
6. exclusive identity (Moreno question)
Exclusive Belgian (1) --- Exclusive Flemish (5)
In 1995, 1999, 2003
7. New question in 2007: again comparable with 1991-1999 (no data yet)



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Example: the Moreno question

Tabel 2 Identification with Belgium and the region, in Flanders and Wallonia, 1999 and 2003 (vertical percentages)

	Flanders		Wallonia	
	1999	2003	1999	2003
Only Fleming/Walloon	6.5	7.4	2.1	3.6
More Fleming/Walloon than Belgian	23.7	23.9	10.4	8.3
As much Fleming /Walloon as Belgian	42.0	42.8	43.1	39.1
More Belgian than Fleming/Walloon	13.3	14.0	20.2	18.2
Only Belgian	14.0	11.9	24.1	30.8
N	2531	1204	1303	731

Source: ISPO/PIO, 1999 General Election Study Belgium (samples weighted by age, gender, education and vote)



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Example: attitude towards desired state structure (1999)

	Flanders	Wal
Return to unitary Belgium	14.5	4
Federal state with more powers for the central authority than now	12.7	1
Federal state with more powers for the communities and regions than now	28.1	1
Federal state with as many powers as possible for communities and regions	32.6	1
Separatism	12	5
N	1760	1

Source: ISPO/PIO, 1999 General Election Study Belgium (samples weighted by age, gender, education and vote).

Stable over whole period, also 2008 (see further)

Fraction of Flemish population in favour for more autonomy = now majority



Adherence to sub-nationalism

About separatism

How many separatists in Flanders?

How many voters in Flanders wish end of Belgium?

bad polls contradict each other in Sept-Dec 2007
(during difficult political period)



Adherence to sub-nationalism

- Koppen (VRT) early Sept 07: “*Vindt U een eventuele splitsing (van België) een goede zaak of een slechte zaak*”
40% good
- Several media polls Sept-Oct 07:
separatists **40-50%**
- Poll *VRT-RTBF* mid October 07: **44%** in favour of split of Belgium)
- *Laatste Nieuws* 5 Nov 07. “*Wilt U dat België splitst?*”
JA 44;4%



Adherence to sub-nationalism

My reply in media to Koppen ISPO onderzoek 1991-1995-1999-(2003): stable **12%** for independence of Flanders when the correct question is asked (real alternatives that fit with real discussion = majority for more autonomy

- Poll *De Standaard* 10 nov 07:
question with more alternative. End of Belgium **12%**
+ forced choice “*België behouden of verdwijnen*”
disappear = **12%**
- Poll *De Standaard* 9 dec 07:
“*België verdwijnt*” **10%**



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Only minority in Flanders supports separatism

From where then the other image in the media?

Discussion.....

Elements of answers: discours of political, media,
bad polls,...

Weak opinions versus strong minority opinions

And...

Reasons for voting??? (see next)



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Reasons for voting in Flanders (TNS dimarso post election survey – N = 2057)

Relations between communities (19%) at 7th place as **decisive** reason for voting after

- social security (33), health care (27), taxes (31), crime (29), employment (23), asylum and immigration (23)

If one takes also “played a role” (34% for “relation betw comm”) then this issue is at position 14. It has not played a role among 47% of the voters

Differences between parties... (see next)

Relations comm was lower in previous surveys (as far as one can compare since the choices are mostly constrained. In NTS survey every issue can be very important but alsoe carefull, now after some months of political discours – voters use media...)



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Decisive reasons for voting in 2007 by parties – Flanders (from list of 20 items) – percentages (N = 2057)

Reason	Mean	CD&V/ N-VA	Groen!	LDD	Open VLD	SP.A/ Spirit	Vla Bel
l security	33	36	25	26	29	40	3
s	31	30	13	33	38	26	3
e	29	24	13	33	20	14	6
h care	27	32	26	15	21	39	1
oyment	23	25	10	11	29	30	1
m/immigr	23	15	12	23	10	9	6
ions communities	19	24	4	14	12	6	4
ronment/milieu	19	19	61	8	14	22	1
(N)	2057	591	127	128	377	328	3



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Global view: scores on latent variable

“Flemish national consciousness”

- Means only strictly comparable over time for 1991---1999
- Relative position of each party = standard scores (grand mean = 0, STD = 1)

is relative position of CD&V and NV-A more extreme in 2003?

YES

WHY? (because CD&V was not in power in 2003?)

General rule since 60ties: Flemish parties in opposition always more radical positions (PVV-VLD before, in early 2000 CVP-CD&V)

See table



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Sample Scale		Grand mean.	Vlaams Blok	VU or N-VA*	CVP or CD&V*	SP of SPa-Spirit*	PVV or VLD	Agal
01	10 p.	3,35	4,27	5,23	3,16	2,84	2,96	2,90
	Stand.	0.0	0,34	0,73	-0,10	-0,22	-0,18	-0,20
05	10p.	4,76	5,82	6,24	4,61	4,30	4,67	4,26
	Stand.	0.0	0,48	0,68	-0,06	-0,23	-0,09	-0,25
09	10 p.	4,12	5,16	5,45	4,00	3,52	4,11	3,67
	Stand.	0.0	0,48	0,62	-0,08	-0,31	-0,02	-0,23
03	10p.	4,70	5,54	6,72**	4,76	4,29	4,39	4,21*
	Stand.	0.0	0,45	1,07**	0,04	-0,21	0,16	-0,25



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Relation between ethnic threat and national consciousness is reversed in Wal versus FL

WHY?

- Historical reasons: subnationalism in FL is right wing and in Wa is left wing
- Different kind of nationalism in dominant discourses
Wallonia is republican nationalism (regionalism)
Flanders is ethnic nationalism

See data: finding of 1995 replicated in 1999

Latent variable “national consciousness” already introduced

Ethnic threat = next table



Adherence to sub-nationalism

Table 1. Question Wordings of the Items Measuring Attitude Toward Immigrants in the 1991 and 1995 Belgian General Election Surveys

Label	Item	% (completely) agree	
		Flanders	Wallonia
Distrust (-)	In general, immigrants are not to be trusted.	26.0	31.3
Employ (-)	Guest workers endanger the employment of the Belgians.	42.9	52.9
Culture (-)	Muslims are a threat for our culture and customs.	35.0	43.9
Prosperity (+)	The immigrants contribute to the prosperity of our country.	19.6	23.4
Enriching (+)	The presence of different cultures enriches our society.	44.9	52.1
Welcome (+)	We should kindly welcome the foreigners who come to live here.	14.9	17.7

Note. Percentages are scores of 4 (agree) or 5 (completely agree) on 5-point scales (from “completely agree” to “completely disagree”).

discussion of strange pattern later (Wallonia more agree with neg. items)



Indicators	Λ^1 : Flanders			Λ^2 : Wallonia		
	NAT_ID	MIGRANT	STYLE (all fixed)	NAT_ID	MIGRANT	STYLE (all fixed)
1. <i>Independ</i>	.57 (fixed)			.57 (fixed)		
2. <i>Soc_sec</i>	.58 (19.33)			.29 (8.58)		
3. <i>Decide</i>	.73 (21.76)			.73 (21.76)		
4. <i>First_id</i>	.72 (21.60)			.72 (21.60)		
5. <i>Exclus_id</i>	.77 (21.49)			.77 (21.49)		
6. <i>Distrust</i>		.81 (fix)	.17		.81 (fix)	.17
7. <i>Employ</i>		.78 (39.98)	.17		.78 (39.98)	.17
8. <i>Culture</i>		.74(35.85)	.17		.74(35.85)	.17
9. <i>Prosperity</i>		-.74 (-42.16)	.17		-.74 (-42.16)	.17
10. <i>Enriching</i>		-.75 (-38.39)	.17		-.75 (-38.39)	.17
11. <i>Welcome</i>		-.713 (-37.34)	.17		-.713 (-37.34)	.17
Correlations	NAT_ID	MIGRANT	STYLE	NAT_ID	MIGRANT	STYLE
NAT_ID	1.0 (10.90)			1.0 (10.59)		
MIGRANT	.09 (1.96)	1.0 (33.10)		-.10 (-2.6)	1.0 (31.21)	
STYLE	.0	.0	1.0 (5.09)	.0	.0	1.0 (5.09)



Attitude towards newcomers

are Flemish more negative towards immigrants?

Not according to previous table, but....

General stable findings:

- social/economic threat by immigrants: Wal > Fl
- Cultural threat & social distance: Fl > Wal
- Political threat: Fl > Wal
- Asylum seekers: Wal more open than Fla

Illustrations: table slide 18 + next figures



Attitude towards newcomers

Are Flemish more negative towards immigrants?

Right to vote at local level: oppose FL = 60%, Wal/Bru = 40%

Same rights for new-comers: agree FL = 50%, Wal/Bru = 67%

Friend from other country: yes FL = 37%, Wal.Bru = +57%



Attitude towards newcomers

Attitude towards asylum seekers

		<i>language</i>	<i>(completely) agree</i>	<i>Nor agree neither</i>	<i>(completely) disagree</i>	<i>missing</i>
9	Belgium has more than its fair share of people applying refugee status N=1872; $\chi^2=5.7740$; p=0.1231	Franst. Vl. Tot.	66.8 69.0 68.1	15.4 14.5 14.9	13.5 10.8 11.9	4.2 5.8 5.1
2	Most refugee applicants don't fear persecution in own countries N=1872; $\chi^2=6.6122$; p=0.0853	Franst. Vl. Tot.	42.0 37.0 39.0	25.8 25.3 25.5	22.5 26.3 24.7	9.7 11.4 10.7
1	Refugee applicants kept in detention centres while cases considered N=1871; $\chi^2=139.8796$; p<0.0001	Franst. Vl. Tot.	22.8 13.5 17.3	33.0 17.2 23.7	39.8 67.3 56.1	4.3 1.9 2.9
3	Refugee applicants kept in detention centres while cases considered	Franst. Vl.	20.4 39.8	19.1 17.6	55.6 39.2	5.0 3.3



Attitude towards newcomers

		<i>language</i>	<i>(completely) agree</i>	<i>Nor agree neither</i>	<i>(completely) disagree</i>	<i>missing</i>
4	Financial support to refugee applicants while cases considered	Franst.	30.5	25.2	33.3	11.0
		VL.	19.2	19.2	59.3	2.2
	N=1872; $\chi^2=154.9407$	Tot.	23.8	21.7	48.8	5.8
0	People applying refugee status allowed to work while cases considered	Franst.	60.5	15.5	20.7	3.3
		VL.	62.2	11.1	24.9	1.8
	N=1872; $\chi^2=14.7465$; $p=0.0023$	Tot.	61.5	12.9	23.2	2.4
5	Granted refugees should be entitled to bring close family members	Franst.	36.3	21.1	38.8	3.8
		VL.	23.0	15.3	59.6	2.0
	N=1872; $\chi^2=80.0631$; $p<0.0001$	Tot.	28.4	17.7	51.2	2.7



Secularisation/de-pillarisation

Belgium is actually among the most secularised countries
See some indicators from ESS (2004) in which Belgium is
compared with other European countries

Indicators: here four questions

“Actual belonging to a religious group or denomination” (yes/no) (RLGLB)

“Which one” (colors in next figure)

“Past belonging to a religious group or denomination” (yes/no) (RLGLBE)

“Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?” (7-point labelled scale ranging from every day = 1 to never = 7) (RLGATND).



Secularisation/de-pillarisation

typology used by sociologists of Religion:
adapted to situation with only 3 indicators

BLG	RLBLGE	RLGATND	TYPE
DT	YES		2d gen not belong
	NO		1st gen not belong
		daily-monthly	marginal member
ES		less	marginal member
		daily-holy days	member

next figure: (1st+2d not belong) versus member

colours for kind of dominant denomination: KATH, PROT, ORTH,

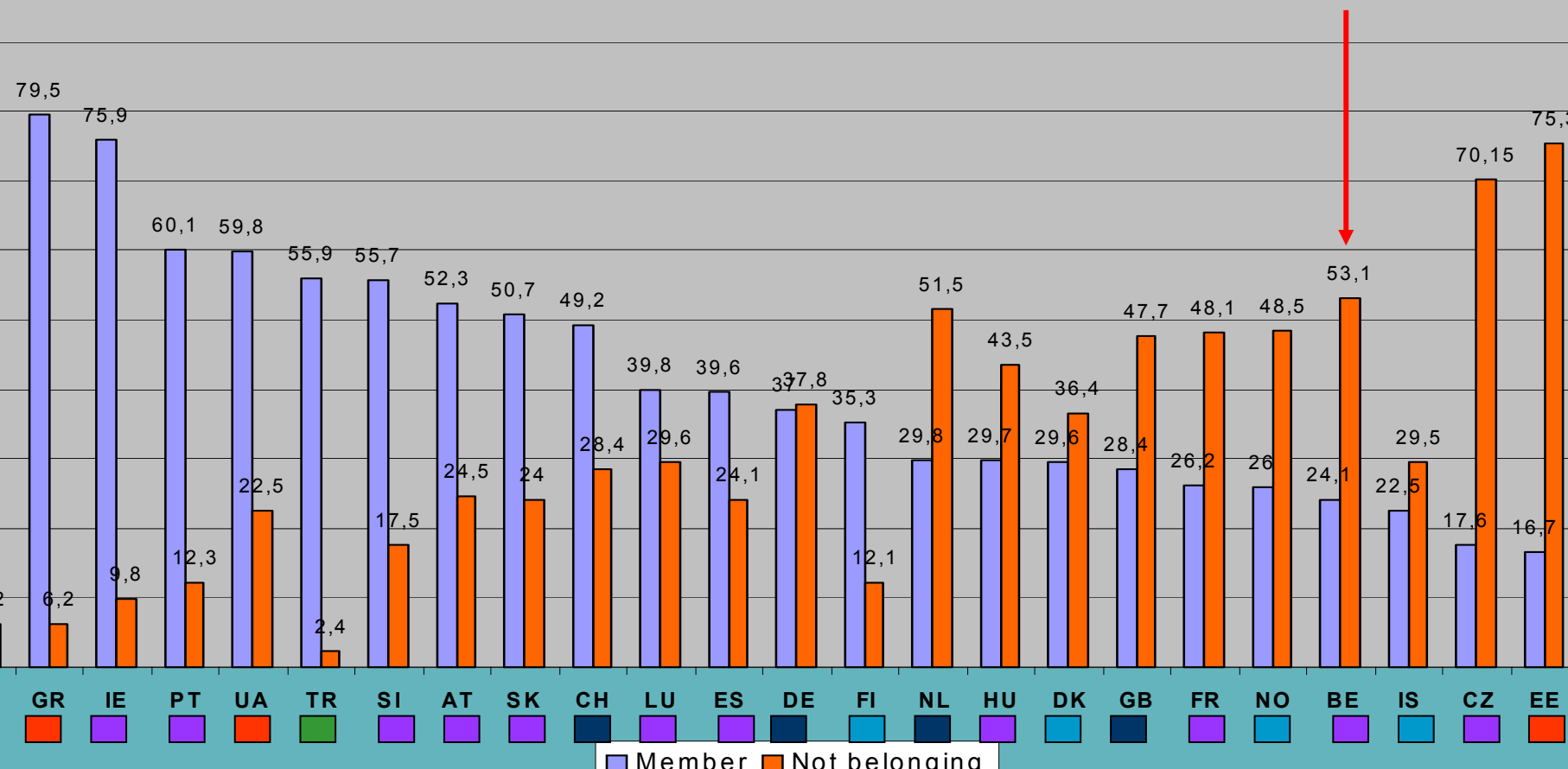
MUS, ISLAM



Secularisation/de-pillarisation

Member versus not belonging - ESS R2 (percentages)

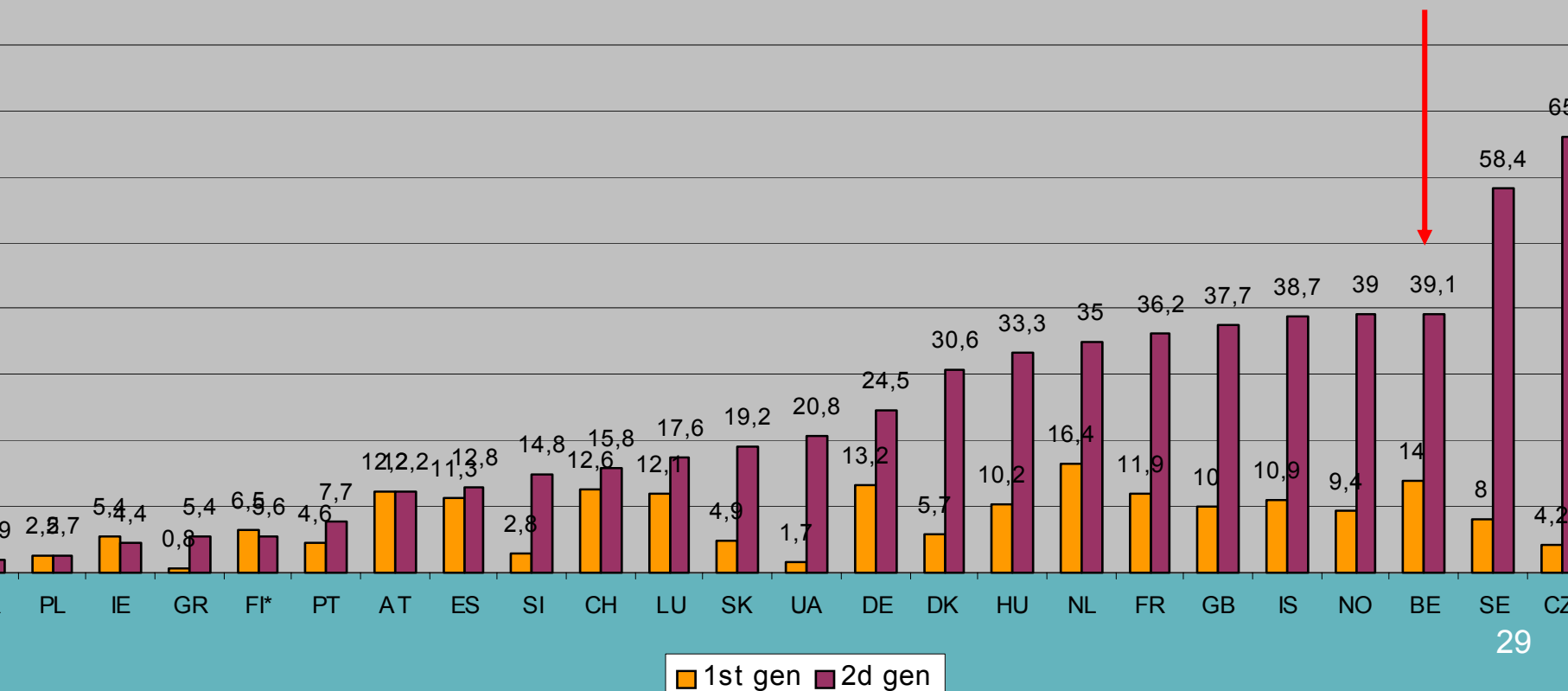
«marginal» not in table





Secularisation/de-pillarisation

First & second generation not belonging to religious denomination - ESS R2





Secularisation/de-pillarisation

Percentages in 2006

- Belonging to religious denomination: Yes FL = 44,5 Wal = 40,9
- Which one? Catholic Fla = 40,9 Wal = 37,3
- Weekly religious practice: Vla = 8,9 Wal = 9,1
- Weekly or monthly: Vla = 16,5 Wal = 14,4
- At least religious holy days Vla = 31,8 Wal = 33,7

Flanders and Wallonië not so much different any more

Next figure is indication of increasing individualisation in sense of weaker link between voting and structural variables

Relations of pol.parties with soc.org changed a lot....



Secularisation/de-pillarisation

Church involvement and voting: strength of the relation over time

Flanders	1974	1991	1995	1999	2003
Characteristic (number of categories)	Parliamentary N = 497	Parliamentary N=2.690	Parliamentary N=2.099	Parliamentary N=2.179	Parliamentary N=1218
Church attendance (6)	0.274	0.246	0.228	0.205	0.190
Professional organisation (4)	(-)	0.246	0.207	0.237	0.174
Health insurance fund (4)	0.294	0.325	0.329	0.320	0.281
Wallonia	1974	1991	1995	1999	2003
Characteristic (number of categories)	Parliamentary N = 364	Parliamentary N= 1.179	Parliamentary N= 915	Parliamentary N= 863	Parliamentary N= 552
Church attendance (6)	0.319	0.203	0.247	0.301	0.228
Professional organisation (4)	(-)	0.218	0.220	0.222	0.190
Health insurance fund (4)	0.360	0.263	0.301	0.367	0.283

All association measures differ statistically significantly from zero ($p > 0.05$)



Secularisation/de-pillarisation

Church involvement and voting: net effects (controlled for relevant background vars)

Flanders	None (11.1%)	Free thinker (6.7%)	Non- practising (46.6%)	Irregular churchgoer (20.7%)	Regular churchgoer (11.9%)	Total*
2003						
Agalev	+0.47	+4.92	-0.13	+0.45	-2.38	3.9%
CD&V	-12.18	-16.85	-4.09	+10.12	+25.82	20.9%
N-VA	+0.44	-2.95	-0.60	+1.09	-0.54	4.6%
SP.A-Spirit	+10.90	+11.03	-1.07	-4.54	-3.59	23.6%
VLD	+1.73	-3.72	+4.07	-4.86	-11.22	24.3%
Vlaams Blok	-1.59	-0.29	+1.53	+3.78	-10.29	17.9%
Wallonia	None (13.4%)	Free thinker (11.7%)	Non- practising (42.0%)	Irregular churchgoer (16.9%)	Regular churchgoer (11.8%)	Total*
2003						
CDH	-9.94	-10.30	-1.78	+7.40	+17.20	15.2%
Ecolo	+5.85	-1.88	-3.59	+1.99	-1.05	7.3%
FN	-4.95	+10.01	+3.54	-5.07	-4.92	5.5%
MR	-2.53	-13.47	-0.30	+6.62	+8.62	28.0%
PS	+5.27	+9.27	+4.40	-5.82	-18.22	36.1%



Secularisation/de-pillarisation

Relation between party voting (% each party) among members unions (ISPO/PIOP)

Vlaanderen	1999			2003		
	ACV	ABVV	Alle kiezers	ACV	ABVV	Alle kiezers
Agalev	12,7	12,1	10,9	4,9	6,4	3,9%
VP	29,1	4,1	22,0	-	-	-
D & V	-	-	-	26,9	5,7	20,9%
V-A	-	-	-	5,2	1,6	-
.a(-Spirit)	7,7	46,3	14,8	19,7	37,1	24,3%
LD	19,6	14,6	22,2	17,1	16,1	23,6%
l. Blok	14,6	17,9	15,3	20,7	29,4	17,9%
U&ID	9,2	4,2	8,9	-	-	-
lanco/ong.	7,2	9,0	6,1	5,4	3,2	4,6%
(100%)	433	249	2.197	216	109	1.022
Wallonië	1999			2003		
	CSC	FGTB	Alle kiezers	CSC	FGTB	Alle kiezers
dH	-	-	-	18,3	6,4	15,2%
SC	25,6	2,1	16,1	-	-	-
colo	18,9	17,3	17,6	8,9	6,1	7,3%
N	12,8	8,5	5,3	12,4	0,0	5,5%
RL-FDF	15,7	8,1	23,6	-	-	-
R	-	-	-	19,6	14,8	28,0%
S	16,3	53,9	28,3	35,1	65,8	36,1%
lanco/ong.	10,7	10,2	9,2	5,8	6,9	7,9%
(100%)	117	174	991	63	66	599



Social-political trust

In general less trust in Wallonia, but exceptions:
Press, King, European Parliament, central administration
See next table



Social-political trust

Table 6. Confidence in social institutions in the Belgian regions in 1999 (percentages of respondents with reasonably high confidence)

<i>Institution</i>	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Total
Education system	72.6	55.0	52.2	65.5
Preferred political party ^{ns}	47.5	43.8	51.3	46.5
Judging	41.3	52.2	49.6	45.5
Federal police (<i>Rijkswacht</i>)	38.1	29.7	24.6	34.4
Fire services	37.7	24.0	28.1	23.4
Federal Parliament	19.1	25.8	27.8	21.9
European Parliament	18.2	25.0	30.0	21.2
Media press	16.3	28.1	23.6	20.6



Social-political trust

Institution	Flanders	Wallonia	Brussels	Total
Trade unions	18.3	20.3	22.5	19.2
The government	17.1	24.2	22.3	19.8
Church ^{ns}	18.3	20.3	16.7	18.8
Central administration	12.3	23.8	16.0	16.3
The judicial authorities	13.9	19.9	17.5	16.1
Employers' organisations	11.7	14.3	12.9	12.7
Political parties ^{ns}	8.2	11.1	11.2	9.4
	2,179	1,483	577	4,239

ISPO/PIOP data from 1999 electoral research. All differences are statistically significant.

Not statistically significant at level 0.01.



discussion