

Cross-regional divorce risks in Belgium

Laurent Snoeckx

Jaap Dronkers

Dimitri Mortelmans

Peter Raeymaeckers

Last update 12 September 2007

Paper to be presented at the fifth Meeting of the European Network for the sociological and demographic Study of Divorce, 17-18 September 2007, the London School of Economics in London.

Cross-regional divorce risks in Belgium

Laurent Snoeckx*, Jaap Dronkers**, Dimitri Mortelmans* & Peter Raeymaeckers*

* Research Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (CELLO), University of Antwerp, Belgium

** European University Institute, Florence, Italy

Abstract

This article uses a cross-national research perspective on divorce risks within a single country. We will argue that Belgium as such is an interesting test case in international perspective since it combines - in a quasi experimental setting - a mutual national divorce legislation with different regional cultural traditions. Belgium is divided into a rather catholic northern part (Flanders) and a secular southern part (Wallonia), respectively referred to as a southern (Spain, Italy) and a northern (Scandinavian) cultural pattern. In this contribution we analyse the effects of different micro-, macro- and interaction-determinants to examine to what extent they can account for the difference in divorce proneness between Flanders and Wallonia. Our results show that the different regional divorce risks can partly be attributed to different regional characteristics concerning cultural and religious traditions.

1. Introduction

The spectacular increase of the divorce rates of the latest decennia in Western Europe has been scrutinized by many social researchers. In understanding these patterns of family dissolution and other demographic behaviour, both structural and cultural macro determinants have been central and appearing side by side. In this article, we want to focus on the influence of cultural and religious attitudes on the occurrence of partnership dissolution. While previous research on divorce proneness focuses on individual (Jalovaara, 2002; Kalmijn, 2004) and couple-level (Raeymaeckers, 2006) socio-economic or couple-related relational determinants (Wagner, 2004; Cohan, 2002; Rogers, 2004; Snoeckx, 2006), we want to look at the influence of macro cultural characteristics and micro determinants. More specifically, we focus on the differences in divorce proneness between Flanders and Wallonia (Belgium).

The French speaking and Dutch speaking parts of Belgium are an interesting case to look at the relative influence of cultural and religious determinants on divorce behaviour. The two regions can be considered a micro setting of Europe's geographical pattern of cross-national differences in cultural and religious values. As the well-known Yin Yang symbol, part of Europe's Latin culture is present in the Northern Flemish part of the country while the Southern Walloon region is culturally more related to the protestant and more progressive Northern part of Europe. The uniqueness in this setting comes from the unitary Belgian state structure holding both cultures together with a unified welfare system and a central divorce law. This one-country-two-regions-setting gives the unique opportunity to analyse the net-effect of cultural macro-determinants on divorce behaviour.

2. The role of culture in explaining demographic behaviour

In this article, we join a demographic research tradition in which the impact of values on behaviour is studied (Kalmijn, 2004; Thornton, 1983; Lesthaeghe, 1986; Moors, 1996; Clarkberg, 1995). We agree with Surkyn and Lesthaeghe that a cultural shift is by no means the *only* factor responsible for demographic transitions but “*a non-redundant factor in sustaining a long-term demographic trend through periods of slower and faster economic growth alike*” (Surkyn, 2004). Cultural and religious traditions have a long-term influence on people’s life course decisions and behaviour (Inglehart, 2003). Earlier research already showed the importance of cultural values as an explanatory factor for the differences in divorce proneness between the Scandinavian countries (being Europe’s forerunners on divorce) and the Southern European countries and Ireland (Ester, 1993). Even though - from 1965 onward - the European countries are reaching more convergence and coming closer to the Scandinavian demographic patterns (Lesthaeghe, 1986; Ester, 1993), there still remains a clear geographical pattern in divorce figures (Europe, 2002). Southern European countries like Italy, Spain and Greece show significantly lower divorce rates than countries in the northern region like Lithuania, Estonia and Denmark (Eurostat, 2004). The Eurostat researchers note that, taking the divorce rates of Ireland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic – respectively Roman Catholic and atheist in general - into account, religion also has an important influence, interrelated with this geographical north-south pattern (Eurostat, 2004). This is an indication of the findings of Inglehart and Baker (Inglehart, 2000) who argue that cross-cultural differences linked with religion are being transmitted through cultural and educational institutions, and through the shared experience of the people of a nation. In explaining the national differences in value patterns across Europe, Gundelach (Gundelach, 1994) agrees with them by emphasizing that values are influenced by the specific institutional characteristics which exist in different nations.

In an article on the persistence of traditional values despite modernization, Inglehart and Baker (Inglehart, 2000) describe how modernization processes across the world and the European continent cause cultural and religious value changes and show how path-dependent these cultural values are. By mapping 65 societies into two dimensions (traditional/secular-rational and survival/self-expression), and combining those with economic zones (based on annual per capita gross national products), the structure of the labour force (percentage of labour force in industrial and service sector) and the historical cultural heritage, they show how a society’s cultural and religious tradition remains to affect the cultural values, even when taking the influence of economic determinants into account. Industrialisation and post-industrialisation cause value changes in accordance with the traditional/secular-rational and survival/self-expression dimensions, but historical traditions and especially religious heritages remain to influence the rank of societies on those dimensions. Historically Protestant societies for example, mostly situated in the northern part of Europe, obtain a higher score on the survival/self-expression scale than all of the Roman Catholic societies, situated in central and southern Europe, even when controlling for economic determinants. Ex-communist societies rank higher on the traditional/secular-rational dimension while historically Roman-Catholic societies show relatively traditional values, giving proof again of the persisting influence of path-dependent cultural zones (Inglehart, 2000; Inglehart, 2003). Like Inglehart and Baker (Inglehart, 2000) state, this indicates that economic development brings convergence in nations value systems, while long-established cultural zones persist two centuries after the industrial revolution began. Modernization theories are thus partly right, but belief systems and traditions seem to be highly path-dependent.

3. The case of Belgium

Differences and similarities in behavioural outcomes between regions can be looked upon in a European context, but also on the level of a single country. For Belgium, France and Switzerland, Lesthaeghe and Neels (Lesthaeghe, 2002) analysed the cultural path-dependency and similar spatial pattern of the First and Second Demographic Transition, respectively producing different behavioural outcomes: a strong population growth, a decline of the age at first marriage and birth control on the one hand, and a dramatic decline of marriage rates, a sharp increase of divorces and a fall in (marital) fertility rates on the other (Lesthaeghe, 2002; Zwaan, 1993). Apparently, the cultural barriers at the end of the 19th century remain influential until the 1960's. As a consequence, the spatial pattern of the determinants of the first value shift (First Demographic Transition) strongly influences the spatial pattern of the second value shift (Second Demographic Transition) which can be linked to the behavioural outcomes of the latter. In this perspective, the Second Demographic Transition is a continuation of the First, in spite of their different and sometimes contrasting behavioural outcomes (Lesthaeghe, 2002).

When looking at Belgium, we expect to see regional differences in divorce behaviour that can be attributed to cultural differences and barriers underpinned by different regional historico-cultural continuities. Given the different early regional economic developments in the northern and southern part of Belgium, and the regional division of competencies with regard to cultural matters and education (*infra*), it would not be surprising that differences in divorce behaviour could be traced to the different economic and cultural history of Flanders and Wallonia. Before taking a look at the divergences in divorce proneness and other relational characteristics between the northern and southern part of Belgium, we present a short overview of the historical and political situation in Belgium. In doing so, we provide a general framework in order to fully understand the regional disparities and their impact on the divorce behaviour.

Belgium's history is characterised by remarkable different regional developments, consisting of a Catholic Northern (Flanders) and an atheist Southern part (Wallonia and Brussels) with different spheres of influence. Flanders belonged to the German part of Europe. Wallonia resided in the Latin part. Belgium has always been under the influence of foreign powers like Spain (1555-1713), Austria (1713-1794), France (1794-1815) and The Netherlands (1815-1830). Especially during those final two periods, a strong economic development took place. When Napoleon came to power (1795), Belgium became part of the French empire, and the industry took off, especially in the southern part of the country. British immigrants smuggled machines into Belgium, erected factories, and Wallonia became one of the most industrialised regions in the world. In Flanders, only the city of Ghent could profit from these economic developments (Baetens, 1984; Gaus, 1996; De Brabander, 1984). Later, under the rule of the Dutch King William I (1815-1830), the industry was supported by infrastructural developments and financial assistance to entrepreneurs. However, these advantages were especially favourable for industrialists in Ghent and Wallonia, thereby causing dissatisfaction and opposition in the rest of Flanders, where the non-mechanised industry could hardly meet the new competition. This rural opposition was supported by the Catholic Church, as their power was to be limited by the protestant king. Politically, Catholics formed a union with young Liberals, thereby inspiring an anti-Dutch, anti-Protestant movement that ultimately led to the collapse of the United Netherlands and to the new independent state Belgium. In the next decades, the Belgian economy grew fast and the first Industrial Revolution took place,

establishing Belgium as the “*second most important industrial power*” of that time (Baetens, 1984). However, within the boundaries of the unitary Belgian state, the linguistic borders always remained a cultural demarcation line, resulting in important disparities with regard to the measure of secularisation and birth control (Lesthaeghe, 2002). The enlightened ideas stemming from the French Revolution were more widely spread in the southern part of the country than in the Roman Catholic Flanders.

After World War II, the Belgian state structure evolved from a unitary state to a federal state where the central federal authority weakened and important competences on employment, education and welfare were transferred to two different types of regional authorities: Communities and Regions. First, Communities (three in total: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community) have competences on person-related matters. At this level, policy measures are taken on cultural matters (theatre, libraries, etc.), education, the use of languages and matters relating to the individual which concern on the one hand health policy (curative and preventive medicine) and on the other hand assistance to individuals (protection of youth, social welfare, aid to families, immigrant assistance services, etc.) (Federal Government, 2006). Next, the Regions (also three, but geographically different from the Communities: the Flemish Region, the Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon Region) execute responsibilities on territorial competences. Their power extends to economic matters, employment, agriculture, water policy, housing, public works and others (Federal Government, 2006).

An exception crucial for this article is the domain of family law. The divorce legislation, which is rooted in the French “Code Napoléon” from 1804 (Senaeve, 2004) remained on the central level (together with tax policy, national defence, foreign affairs and the social security legislation). In this way, the Belgian situation forms a unique natural experiment since it combines a joined divorce legislation and different macro-characteristics, in the heart of the border area between the Latin and German part of Europe. Our central hypothesis is that – despite the central (and liberal) divorce legislation - the historical regional disparities in Belgium have a long-term effect on the opinions and culture in Wallonia and Flanders, resulting in different demographic behaviour and more specific, in distinct divorce figures. The fact that the Belgian state structure was highly influenced by this historical regional dichotomy, thereby shifting competencies to the regions and producing Walloon and Flemish institutions, endorses this hypothesis.

4. Belgium’s regional differences in divorce behaviour

The Belgian divorce rates are among the highest in Western Europe, almost drawing level with the northern forerunners like Denmark (Eurostat, 2004). The Belgian divorce rates have quadrupled over the last thirty years. However, if we look closer at the divorce figures, we notice there is quite a difference between the regions of this highly federalised state. Earlier research (Snoeckx, 2006) already indicated that the mere fact of being Flemish, compared to being inhabitant of Brussels or Wallonia, significantly reduces the risk on divorce, and keeps reducing it when socio-demographic, relational and fertility characteristics are taken into account. The divorce figures of 2002 of the Belgian National Institute for Statistics also confirm this regional division: per 100000 inhabitants, 263 divorces took place in Flanders. For Wallonia and Brussels, this number respectively rises to 283 and 550. The number of divorces is twice as high in the Capital region compared to the other regions (Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek, 2005). However, it should be noted that a distortion appears because marriages of Belgian citizens who marry abroad are registered in the Brussels Capital Region. Looking at the Belgian divorce figures of the latest decennia (Nationaal Instituut voor

de Statistiek, 2005), one can notice that the proportional divorce rates in Flanders, in comparison with the other Belgian regions, have been the lowest since 1970. Jacobs (Jacobs, 2000) comes to the same finding: the Belgian high divorce rates can primarily be attributed to the divorce figures of Brussels and Wallonia.

The dichotomy between the northern and southern part of Belgium also reveals itself in the differences with regard to the relational value system. Flemings adhere more to a relational homogamous orientation with regard to religious and political opinions, and social background. This religious orientation is not surprising, given the fact that 41% of the Flemings find religion (quite) important whereas this applies for only 29% of the Walloons. With regard to church attendance, only one out of six Flemings never goes to church; for Wallonia this is one out of four. When looking at the actual relational design, Flemish inhabitants seem to stick more to the traditional family culture, according to Van den Troost (Van den Troost, 2000). More than half of the Flemings (54%) has a lot of contact with their family, but hardly meet their personal friends apart from their partner, compared to 39% of the Walloon inhabitants.

5. Hypotheses

In this article, we examine whether the regional differences in divorce proneness can be explained by specific characteristics that can be attributed to Flanders and Wallonia. Likewise, we examine to what extent the specific composition of the two regions accounts for the regional divorce effect. We estimate two different models where micro determinants, macro-variables and their interaction-effects play together. First, we interpret the different ways in which micro determinants affect the divorce risk across the regions or cohorts. Second, we examine whether the regional effects disappear by introducing macro-variables that can account for the differences in divorce proneness across the regions. On the one hand, the dichotomy in divorce rates and other relational characteristics should reflect itself in the regional interaction effects of the micro determinants. On the other hand, the macro clustering effect should be reflected in the effects of the different macro-variables. In the following, we will briefly describe some relevant micro determinants and how we expect their effects to be different across the regions. Afterwards, we will elaborate on the macro-determinants.

5.1. Micro determinants

The micro-level predictors are expected to affect the divorce risk according to the wider socio-cultural context (Wagner, 2004). Therefore, we present some explanations on how these micro effects are influenced by characteristics typical of the composition of the different regions.

The first richly illustrated risk-factor that can vary due to the different composition of the regions is the *intergenerational divorce factor* (Amato, 1991; Dronkers, 2006; Kitson, 1985; Wagner, 2004; Wolfinger, 2005). Different mechanisms have been put forward to account for this intergenerational divorce-effect, from which the most recent and popular approach concentrates on the socialisation or role model explanation (Engelhardt, 2002; Greenberg, 1982; Traag, 2000). Like Engelhardt, Trappe and Dronkers mention (Engelhardt, 2002), there are interactions between these different mechanisms (e.g. economic and stress arguments), and they could succeed each other over time. If the socio-cultural barriers to divorce are low, the divorce cycle will weaken. Thereby, we believe that the effect of parental divorce will be weaker in less traditional societies where the barriers to divorce are lower.

In a traditional society where marriage is highly institutionalised and the barriers to divorce are high, the effect of *premarital cohabitation* will also be stronger. Premarital cohabitators are a more selective group in such a society (selection-hypothesis). Partners who choose to be in a cohabitational relationship, have a distinct set of characteristics. They have less conventional and more progressive values and their unions are characterised by a more heterogeneous composition concerning religion and age (Amato, 2003; Axinn, 1992; Brown, 1996; Bumpass, 1991; Cohan, 2002; Kalmijn, 2004). In addition, premarital cohabitation will be more strongly correlated with the divorce risk in traditional societies, causing different effects across Flanders and Wallonia.

Another predictor of divorce that can vary across the regions is *the presence of children*. Married couples with young children have considerably more chance of survival than childless couples (Parsons, 1956; Härkönen, 2004; White, 1990; Kalmijn, 2004; Kitson, 1985; Wagner, 2004; Tzeng, 1995). We believe this marital stabilising effect should be stronger when the divorce barriers are high because in less traditional societies - where divorces occur more frequently - a culture and policy will emerge that makes it easier for one-parent or newly composed households to raise their children.

If there is a traditional socio-cultural context with high divorce barriers, the role of *resources* (e.g. educational level, income level) becomes greater in affecting the divorce risk. More resources are necessary to overcome the high costs of divorce. In a traditional society, partners who divorce must have relatively high educational attainment, high incomes, and a low chance on unemployment to overcome the high divorce barriers. Moreover, in case of a marriage with children, a single parent needs a lot of resources when living in a traditional society with a policy that does not facilitate divorce.

The disparities in divorce proneness across Flanders and Wallonia can be explained by the different effects of the micro level determinants that vary in accordance with the distinct regional characteristics. We expect the effects of micro variables like parental divorce, premarital cohabitation, presence of children, income, employment, and education to be stronger in the more traditional Flanders than in Wallonia.

5.2. Macro-determinants

Bearing in mind Durkheim's maxim (Durkheim, 1951) that a society is more than the sum of the parts, we also want to examine whether macro-characteristics, on the level of the two regions, show a straightforward effect on the risk of divorce. People live together, interact, are part of larger communities, and act in different institutions. In that way, it would not be surprising that a life decision like divorce - just like Durkheim's anomic suicide - is influenced by the characteristics of the social environment. The cultural or religious orientations of a country for example have an influence on the divorce decision of individuals, regardless of their own orientation. Therefore, we expect that the divorce disparities between Flanders and Wallonia can be explained by varying regional macro-characteristics. As stated earlier, the divorce legislation is still equal across both regions forming a unique case to test whether other structural (e.g. income, employment) and cultural (e.g. religion, post-materialism) regional characteristics influence the divorce risk.

In our models, we will introduce cultural and structural macro variables examining to what extent they explain the divorce differences across the regions. Building on the historical-cultural and religious background of the two regions, we expect religion to play an important role. Therefore we introduce five religious macro determinants: *the importance of religion*, *the belonging to religious organisations*, *the attendance of religious services*, *the number of religious persons* and *the number of catholic votes*. The higher the scores on each of these variables, the lower we expect the divorce proneness to be in that region. Other cultural macro-determinants are *the level of justification of divorce* and *the level of post-materialism*. Based on the cultural determinants of Lesthaeghe's 'Second Demographic Transition' (Lesthaeghe, 1995; Lesthaeghe, 2002) and Inglehart's 'Silent Revolution' (Ester, 1993; Inglehart, 2003), we expect *the measure of justification of divorce* and *the measure of post-materialism* in a region to have a positive effect on the regional divorce differences.

We also include structural macro-determinants in our models. In line with Surkyn and Lesthaeghe (Surkyn, 2004), we believe that culture is not the only factor responsible for changes in demographic behaviour. Therefore, we also incorporate two structural determinants in our models: *the height of the socio-economic status* and *the height of the income*. We expect the overall height of the socio-economic status and the income-level on a regional level to have a positive impact on the divorce risk, given the fact that richer societies with well-educated and working inhabitants are more likely to have a policy that makes it financially easier for individuals to break up a relationship.

Analogous to the nesting of individuals in social environments, *time circumstances* are decisive elements in individual life decisions. Tolerance towards divorce decisions has changed over time, the economic independence of women (female employment) has increased, and policy measures that facilitate divorce decisions have emerged (Rogers, 1997; Rogers, 1997). These changing time circumstances are empirically funded with the well-know steep rise of divorce rates since the early 1960's, which continued during the 1970's and slowed down a bit during the 1980's (Teachman, 2002). In order to control for these changing attitudes towards divorce, we incorporate four marriage cohorts (< 1960, during the 60's, the 70's and after 1980). The division into four groups results in an almost egalitarian number of individuals in each cohort, as can be seen in table 1a (cf. Appendix).

6. Method and data

6.1. Procedure

Based on the theoretical framework concerning the importance of cultural and religious factors in explaining demographic behaviour, and on the empirical studies on the difference in divorce figures and other relevant characteristics between the Belgian regions, we want to unravel the regional effect in our models by introducing micro and macro determinants, as well as some of their interactions. The structure of this analysis is double. First, a basic model with the regional variable it is estimated, controlling for individual characteristics. Using this model as a baseline, we will introduce interaction effects of these individual determinants with the marriage cohort variable and the regional variable. Next, we add the macro variables to examine whether they can account for the regional divorce differences.

Second, we turn the sequence of the analysis upside-down: the basic model with individual determinants will then be elaborated by first introducing the macro variables. Afterwards, interactions between significant macro variables and individual determinants are added. Thereafter, we test whether an additional regional or cohort effect can still be recognized and whether the interaction effects between the individual characteristics and these two variables become significant. By doing so, we introduce a double control for our hypothesis: if adding the regional variable does not improve the model after introducing micro- and macro-level variables, this indicates that the macro variables can account for the regional differences.

6.2. Method

The data for the analysis come from the Panel Study of Belgian Households (PSBH). This panel study followed both individuals and households from 1992 until 2001. The total database provides eleven waves on a representative sample of the Belgian population, covering a broad range of socio-economic topics, as well as themes relating to family sociology. The prospective structure of the data set surpasses the main share of biases in retrospective and in particular cross-sectional studies.

The most appropriate method to use is a variant of survival analysis, more in particular Cox' proportional hazards technique. Cox regression models can handle both time-constant and time-varying explanatory variables (Allison, 2000; Kleinbaum, 1996). The technique assesses the effect of a set of explanatory variables on survival or event times. For this article, we estimate the effect of a set of explanatory variables - described more detailed in the next section - on the occurrence and timing of divorce. Unfortunately, information about mere union dissolution is not available in the PSBH-data, so we can only measure the official divorce proneness. By using Cox-regressions we take into account the differences in duration of marriage (our time-dependent covariate) and the right censoring of the dependent variable (spouses could still experience marriage dissolution after the panel-study has taken place).

The starting point for our analysis is the year of the first survey wave (1992), being equal for all subjects. The basic unit of the file is the individual, more specifically the individual that was married at the time of entering the panel study in wave 1. Second or higher-order marriage are excluded from the analysis, taking into account the specific divorce dynamics for this subgroup (Cherlin, 1996). For our time-dependent covariates, we use the lagged covariates to account for the correct causal ordering. For these covariates, we take the value of x_{t-1} , t being the event hazard time, introducing a one year lag.

6.3. Data

The basic data set contains 3911 individuals, who were married in the first wave (1992). Each subject at risk was followed throughout the full length of the panel study, where possible, and in case of attrition, the timing variable got the score of the wave of attrition, and the event was coded zero. The problem of attrition is a downside to panel studies, especially when this is selective and certain subgroups are more inclined to drop out. We are aware of the extreme amount of censoring ($n = 3756$). Therefore an additional set of respondents was integrated in the panel study from wave 7 (1998) until the end. However, it is crucial for our research design to follow the same subset. A total of 165 individuals did break up their marriage through the course of the follow up, meaning that only 4 % was not censored. The small

amount of divorcees in the sample size is also observed for other European panel studies (Poortman, 2000; Jarvis, 1999; Burkhauser, 1991).

The *dependent* variable is composed of the event and the number of years the individual was in the sample until the event occurred. The event is a legal divorce or a separation, and takes on value '1' if it occurs and '0' for the censored individuals who remained married or left the panel study prematurely. The timing variable refers to the wave in which the divorce occurred or the censoring wave, and ranges from 1 to 11.

For the explanatory variables, we distinguish between *micro* and *macro* determinants. Their percentages, frequencies and means are shown in tables 1a and 1b (cf. Appendix). The individual variables consist of demographic background, relational and fertility characteristics. The dummy variable "*region*" plays an important role and consists of two categories, "Flanders" (n= 1947) and "Wallonia + Brussels" (n= 1964), whereby the latter is the reference category. This two folded division had both theoretical and pragmatical reasons. Theoretically, as earlier stated, the linguistic border (under which Wallonia and Brussels co reside) forms a cultural demarcation line, marked by important disparities with regard to fertility control and secularisation. Pragmatically, the number of divorces for Brussels in our data set (n= 20) is too low in order to perform separate analyses. Furthermore we include two *educational* dummy's (reference category = lower secondary education) and an *employment* dummy (reference category = employed). The frequency table shows that there is almost an equal number of employed (n = 1949) and unemployed (n = 1886) people in our sample. The variable "*household income*" contains six categories with the lowest category being "1000 – 1499 Euro" and the highest one being "more than 5000 Euro" ("less than 1000 Euro" is the reference category). A dummy variable "*parental divorce*" takes on the value 1 if the individual experienced a parental divorce and 0 if it did not. Apparently 529 people out of 3911 witnessed a parental divorce.

Variables that refer to the couple characteristics are "*premarital cohabitation*", and "*age at marriage*". For premarital cohabitation, "no premarital cohabitation" forms the reference category. Table 1a (cf. appendix) shows that 404 respondents did live together before getting married. "*Age at marriage*" was constructed with information on age and the year of marriage that was directly obtained from the respondents. The final two variables refer to the fertility history of the couple. Included variables are "*number of children*" and "*age of youngest child*". The reference category of the dummy variable "*number of children*" is "less than three children"; the reference category of the variable "*age of youngest child*" is "0 – 3 years".

Our *macro-level* variables are taken from the data from the European Value Study (EVS) of 1990. The EVS covers nearly all European countries and is one of the most extensive data collections on opinions and ideas concerning work, religion, morals, politics and society, relationships and parenting. The used methodology has become an important standard in the international comparative research on norms and values (Ester, 1994). By combining the 1990 EVS macro variables with the 1992-2001 PSBH time-dependent individual covariates, we maintain the correct causal order between values and behaviour.

To obtain the macro-level variables, we created eight clusters by introducing four marriage cohorts for Flanders and Wallonia: one group of spouses that got married before 1960, another group during the 60's, a third group during the 70's and a final group that got married

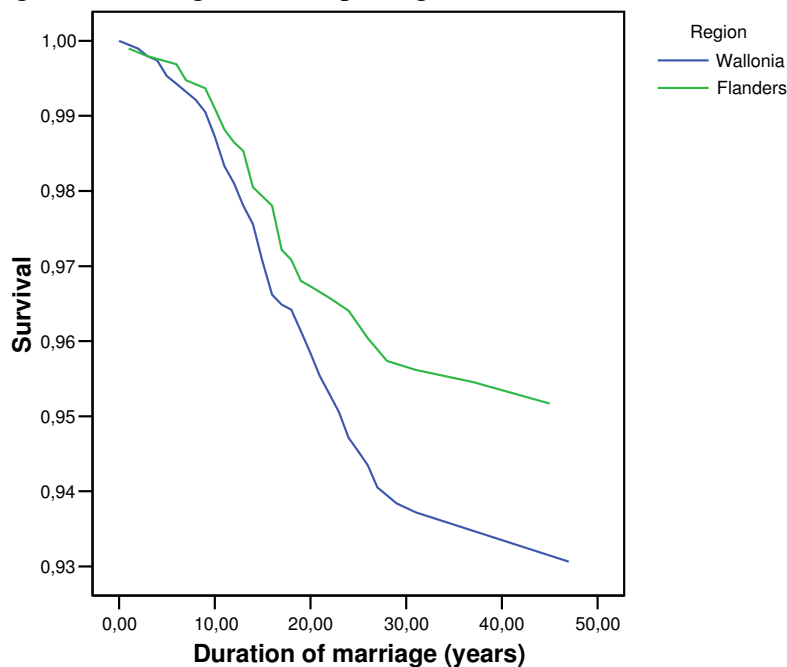
during the 80's or later. By combining these groups with the corresponding macro cultural value indicators from the EVS-study, we can control for the clustering of individuals in these higher hierarchical entities and how these can hold responsible for the differences in divorce proneness. The values of these variables are obtained by taking the percentages of the extreme categories of the corresponding variables in the EVS-study. The categories, frequencies and values can be found in table 1b (Cf. appendix). We are aware of the small number of clusters. In order to obtain some statistical power, we prefer less clusters containing a larger number of observations. A division into provinces for example leads to a very small number of valid observations per cluster and is less appropriate to test whether our theoretical assumptions concerning regional effects are correct.

The following macro variables, which are different for the eight combinations of two regions and four cohorts, are introduced in the models: *the importance of religion, the belonging to religious organisations, the attendance of religious services, the number of religious persons, the number of catholic votes, the level of justification of divorce, the level of post-materialism, the height of the socio-economic status, the height of the income* and the *unemployment rate*. The latter variable originates from Gaus (2001), not from the EVS-data.

7. Results

Figure 1 depicts the survival function of marriages for Flanders and Wallonia. The Flemish marriages tend to last longer in Flanders than the Walloon ones. By introducing micro, macro- and interaction effects, we want to explain the disparities between these two lines.

Figure 1 Marriage survival per region



The result of the first set of analyses is shown in table 2. We used stepwise models, first introducing only our regional variable, followed by individual determinants, interaction effects with *cohort* and *region*, and macro variables. The bottom line of the table shows the decline in $-2 \log$ likelihood as the model gets more extended. As explained earlier, the

purpose of this stepwise structure is to explain the regional effect by introducing parameters that take account for the regional divorce differences.

A first observation concerns the significant effect of *region* (0.70; $p < 0.05$) in model 1. The mere fact of being Flemish reduces the chance on getting divorce, compared to being Walloon. Model 2 shows that this effect remains the same when background, relational and fertility characteristics are added. Notice the strong effects of *the marriage cohorts*. As elaborately shown in international literature, older marriage cohorts tend to divorce significantly less than the younger ones. However, it should be noted that the cohort-effects are probably overestimated due to the fact that marriages of older cohorts are initially more likely to survive within the data set. The other effects are also generally in the line of the expectations: *high education* (1.66; $p < 0.05$), *premarital cohabitation* (3.43; $p < 0.001$) and *parental divorce* (2.57; $p < 0.001$) increase the chance on getting divorced; being *employed* (0.44, $p < 0.001$), having a *high income* (0.25, $p < 0.01$; 0.07, $p < 0.05$), *marrying at an older age* (0.95; $p < 0.05$) and having *more than three children* (0.39; $p < 0.001$) significantly reduce the divorce proneness. The negative effect of the variable *age of children* can probably be explained by the connection with *the duration of marriage*; the age of the children usually will be higher as the marriage lasts. It also confirms findings of Hiedemann et al. (Hiedemann, 1998; Snoeckx, 2006) concerning the decreasing pressure of upbringing on the relation between spouses as the children get older.

As the cohort-effects in our model are very strong, we introduce cohort-interaction-effects in a third step to examine whether they can account for the divorce differences. The results show that getting married in an old marriage cohort and having lived together before marriage (4.35; $p < 0.05$) increases the divorce proneness, which is not very surprising when bearing in mind the selection-hypothesis (Bumpass, 1991; Axinn, 1992; Cohan, 2002; Amato, 2003; Kalmijn, 2004; Brown, 1996). Those few couples in the oldest cohort who lived together before marriage must have had more liberal (and thus more pro-divorce) attitudes than the majority of the other couples of their generation who started living together after marriage. Other cohort-interaction-effects, which we tested, were *tertiary education* ($p = 0.09$), *age at marriage* ($p = 0.07$) and *the presence of children* ($p = 0.08$), but they were not significant after their inclusion in the equation.

Model 4 shows the introduction of the regional interaction effects. If the effects of the individual determinants differ across the regions, it indicates regional differences in divorce processes. Apparently, some determinants seem to affect the divorce risk in different ways across the two regions. Spouses in Flanders who lived together before marriage (3.40; $p < 0.01$), or have no children (3.49; $p < 0.01$) or have children older than 18 years (4.75; $p < 0.05$) have a higher divorce proneness than comparable couples in Wallonia. The first result fits also into a selection-hypothesis: Flemish couples who lived together before marriage must have more liberal attitudes about marriage and divorce than the comparable Walloon couples, for whom living together before marriage is more normal. In the same way Flemish couples without children will have more liberal attitudes than the comparable Walloon couples, because childlessness is less common among the former than among the later. The stronger cultural aversion against divorce in Flanders makes it less probable that couples with young children divorce. As a consequence Flemish couples with adult children will divorce more often than comparable Walloon couples, who divorce more often when they have young children. However, the regional main effect continues to significantly affect the chance on getting divorced; the individual and cohort- and region-interaction effects are only able to explain a part (from 0.71 to 0.37) of the effect of region.

Table 2: Micro-, interaction- and macro-effects (exponents of Beta's) on divorce proneness, stepwise Cox-regression (Wald)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Region	0.70*	0.69*	0.71*	0.37***	16.77
Tertiary education		1.66*	1.73*	1.79*	1.78*
Employment		0.44***	0.43***	0.42***	0.43***
Income: 3000-4999 euro		0.25**	0.25**	0.29*	0.29*
Income: > 5000 euro		0.07*	0.07*	0.08*	0.08*
Age at marriage		0.95*	0.95*	0.95*	0.95
Premarital cohabitation		3.43***	0.01	0.01*	0.008*
Age youngest child					
<i>No children</i>		0.03***	0.03***	0.02***	0.01***
<i>3 – 6 years</i>		0.37**	0.40**	0.44*	0.44*
<i>6 - 12 years</i>		0.13***	0.13***	0.13***	0.12***
<i>12-18 years</i>		0.03***	0.03***	0.04***	0.04***
<i>> 18 years</i>		0.01***	0.01***	0.00***	0.00***
Number of children >3		0.39***	0.38***	0.35***	0.36***
Parental divorce		2.57***	2.62***	2.62***	2.59***
Marriage Cohort '61-'70		25.455***	25.10**	23.65**	6.90
Marriage Cohort '71-'80		155.236***	152.18***	140.30***	29.83**
Marriage Cohort > 1980		343.300***	255.72***	244.99***	34.71**
Cohort*premarital cohab.			4.35*	4.99**	4.47*
Region*premarital cohab.				3.40**	2.69*
Region* <i>No children</i>				3.49**	6.00***
Region* <i>Age child > 18y</i>				4.75*	8.23**
Number of religious pers.					0.84*
-2 log likelihood ¹	2435.98	1929.02	1920.38	1905.08	1899.72

* p <.05; ** p< .01; *** p<.001

In a final step, all macro-variables are added to examine whether they can fully explain the regional effect, but only the *number of religious persons* has a significant effect. Notice the decreasing effects of the marriage cohorts in the final column; the effect of the retained macro-variable is partly a cohort-effect. *The number of religious persons* in a region also has a significant negative net-effect on the divorce risk. *The number of catholic votes* and the measure of *attendance of religious services* are not included into the equation, based on the insignificance of the Wald statistic of their parameters. Yet the most important conclusion of this final model is the disappearance of the significant regional effect due to the addition of a cultural macro variable. This means that the divorce differences between Flanders and Wallonia can be explained by the regional and cohort differences in religious beliefs. Moreover, the -2 log likelihood ratio of this model shows the best fit.

As announced earlier (cf. 6.1 Procedure), we reverse the story in our second set of analyses. Considering the power of the macro variables to account for the regional effect, we start with introducing them to see whether a regional effect can still be observed. Before doing so, our

¹ The R² is not shown. The focus of the model lies within the relative importance of the determinants, not in their explanatory power towards the dependent variable.

standard basis model is constructed. The first column (model 1) in table 3 shows that the effects are similar to the ones in the first model of our first set of analyses (cf. table 2).

Table 3: Micro-, macro - and interaction-effects (exponents of Beta's) on divorce proneness, stepwise Cox-regression (Wald)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Tertiary education	1.71*	1.66*
Employment	0.45***	0.44***
Income: 3000-4999 euro	0.26**	0.25**
Income: > 5000 euro	0.08*	0.07*
Age at marriage	0.95	0.95*
Premarital cohabitation	3.52***	3.44***
Age youngest child		
<i>No children</i>	0.03***	0.03***
<i>3 – 6 years</i>	0.34**	0.37**
<i>6 - 12 years</i>	0.12***	0.13***
<i>12-18 years</i>	0.03***	0.03***
<i>> 18 years</i>	0.01***	0.01***
Number of children >3	0.40***	0.39***
Parental divorce	2.38***	2.57***
Marriage Cohort '61-'70	25.46**	21.93**
Marriage Cohort '71-'80	152.19***	130.45***
Marriage Cohort > 1980	323.97	275.73***
Number of religious pers.		0.98*
-2 log likelihood	1933.85	1928.50

* p <.05; ** p< .01; *** p<.001

In a second step, all the macro variables are introduced. Based on the Wald statistic, only *the number of religious persons* has a significant parameter. The higher the value of this variable, the lower the divorce chances of couples, living in that region. This forms an indication of the influence of cultural and religious determinants on people's divorce behaviour.

In a third and fourth step, we added regional and cohort effects and interactions between these two parameters and micro determinants. However, in accordance with our expectations, the stepwise model selection removes the regional effect, thereby clearly indicating that this effect does not (no longer) make any difference in predicting the risk on divorce. Neither cohort effects, nor interaction effects of micro determinants with region or cohort are retained in the Cox-regression. When looking at the variables not included in the regression, we find supportive evidence for the disappearance of the regional effect when macro characteristics are taken into account: the significance of the regional variable amounts to 0.44. The main conclusion is that the differences in divorce proneness across the two Belgian regions are not caused by the different composition of the inhabitants, but can be attributed to different regional cultural characteristics.

8. Conclusion

The Belgian case lends itself to use a cross-national perspective within one single country, since the unique opportunity is given to analyse the net-effect of different regional characteristics on divorce behaviour, centrally regulated by one national divorce legislation. In this contribution, we join a demographic research tradition in which the impact of cultural and religious values on behaviour is emphasized, without neglecting the influence of

structural conditions. Following earlier research on the explanatory power of macro-cultural values on diverging divorce risks in European perspective (Ester, 1993) and the cultural path-dependency of the First and Second Demographic Transition in Belgium, France and Switzerland (Lesthaeghe, 2002), we give a culturally coloured interpretation on the differing Walloon and Flemish divorce risks in Belgium.

To explain these regional disparities, we estimate the impact of both micro and macro determinants and their interaction-effects by using a twofold stepwise strategy. Our first analysis takes the model with the regional variable as starting point and examines whether and to what extent this regional effect can be explained by micro-, interaction- and macro-determinants. In line with previous research (Snoeckx, 2006), the regional effect remains to influence the divorce risk when controlling for micro background, relational and fertility characteristics. As expected, some micro-determinants affect the divorce risk differently according to the regional context (Wagner, 2004); the interaction-effects show the varying divorce processes in Flanders and Wallonia. These interaction-effects can be explained by the stronger selection effect of living together in Flanders, where it is less normal and thus reflecting a more liberal attitude toward marriage and divorce, or where Flemish couples without children will also have more liberal attitudes than the comparable Walloon couples. The stronger aversion against divorce in Flanders explains the other significant interaction effects of children older than 18 years. Flemish couples with children will postpone their divorce more often than comparable Walloon couples, who divorce more often when they have still young children. The final step in our analysis introduces macro-determinants to explain the remaining divorce differences between the two regions. The non-redundant influence of cultural traditions on people's life-decisions, as shown by Ester, Lesthaeghe et al. (Ester, 1993; Lesthaeghe, 2002) also applies for the Belgian case since the religious tradition in the Flemish region is an important factor for the different regional divorce numbers.

On the one hand, the cultural Yin Yang pattern of this country, with a South-European Latin culture in the northern Flemish region and a North-European progressive culture in the southern Wallonia, remains very specific. On the other hand, the Belgian test-case is very relevant in international perspective since it shows the net-effect of cultural and religious traditions on divorce behaviour. We believe the Belgian case adds value to the existing research tradition in divorce behaviour. Further research should take advantage of this peculiar Belgian case, instead of treating it as an anomaly.

References

- Allison, P.D. (2000). *Logistic Regression using the SAS system. Theory and Application*. Cary, North Carolina: SAS Press.
- Amato, P., R., Johnson, D.R., Booth, A., and Rogers, S.J. (2003). Continuity and Change in Marital Quality Between 1980 and 2000, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **65**, 1-22.
- Amato, P.R. and Booth, A. (1991). Consequences of Parental Divorce and Marital Unhappiness for Adult Well-Being, *Social Forces*, **69**, 895-914.
- Axinn, W.G. and Thornton, A. (1992). The relationship between cohabitation and divorce: Selectivity or causal influence? *Demography*, **29**, 357-374.
- Baetens, R. and Bauters, P. (1984). *Industriële revoluties in de provincie Antwerpen*. Antwerpen: Standaard.
- Brown, S.L. and Booth, A. (1996). Cohabitation versus marriage: A comparison of relationship quality, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **58**, 668-679.
- Bumpass, L., Sweetser, D.A., and Cherlin, A.J. (1991). The Role of Cohabitation in the Declining Rates of Marriage, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **53**, 913-928.
- Burkhauser, R., V., Duncan, G., J., Hauser, R., and Berntsen, R. (1991). Wife or Frau, women do worse: a comparison of men and women in the United States and Germany after marital disruption, *Demography*, **28**, 353-360.
- Cherlin, A.J. (1996). *Public and private families: an introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Clarkberg, M., Stolzenberg, R.M., and Waite, L.J. (1995). Attitudes, Values, and Entrance into Cohabitation versus Marital Unions, *Social Forces*, **74**, 609-634.
- Cohan, C.L. and Kleinbaum, S. (2002). Toward a Greater Understanding of the Cohabitation Effect: Premarital Cohabitation and Marital Communication, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **64**, 180-192.
- De Brabander, G.L. (1984). *Regional differentiation of economic growth in Belgium, 1846-1977*. Antwerpen: Studiecentrum voor Economisch en Sociaal Onderzoek.
- Dronkers, J. and Harkönen, J. 2006. "Is the divorce cycle really related with the societal context? A cross-national test." Presented at the Fourth Conference of the European Network for the Sociological and Demographic Study of Divorce 'Family Dynamics and Family structures in a comparative perspective', 22-24 June 2006, Italy, Florence. www.iue.it/Personal/Dronkers/English/divorcecycle.pdf.
- Durkheim, E. (1951). *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: The Free Press.

Engelhardt, H., Trappe, H., and Dronkers, J. (2002). Differences in family policy and the intergenerational transmission of divorce: A comparison between the former East- and West-Germany, *Demographic Research*, **6**, 296-320.

Ester, P., Halman, L., and Moor, R.d. 1993. "The individualizing society. Value change in Europe and North America." Pp. 252. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.

—. 1994. "Value Shift in Western Societies." Pp. 252 in *The individualizing society. Value change in Europe and North America.*, edited by P. Ester, L. Halman, and R.d. Moor. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.

Europe, C.o. 2002. "Recent demographic developments in Europe." Pp. 121: Council of Europe.

Eurostat. 2004. "Population and Social Conditions." Pp. 150, edited by P. Statistics: Eurostat.

Federal Government, 2006, <http://www.belgium.be/eportal/index.jsp>.

Gaus, H. (1996). *Politieke en sociale evolutie van België*. Leuven: Garant.

Greenberg, E.F.and Nay, R.W. (1982). The Intergenerational Transmission of Marital Instability Reconsidered, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **44**, 335-347.

Gundelach, P. (1994). National value differences. Modernization or institutionalization? *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, **35**, 37-58.

Härkönen, J. and Dronkers, J. (2004). Stability and Change in the Educational Gradient of Divorce. A Comparison of Seventeen Countries, *European Sociological Review*, **22**, 501-517.

Hiedemann, B., Suhomlinova, O., and O'Rand, A.M. (1998). Economic Independence, Economic Status, and Empty Nest in Midlife Marital Disruption, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **60**, 219-231.

Inglehart, R.and Baker, W.E. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values, *American Sociological Review*, **65**, 19-51.

Inglehart, R.and Norris, P. (2003). *Rising Tide. Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jacobs, T. (2000). *Gezinsontbinding in Vlaanderen. Boek I. Persoonlijke relaties in beweging*. Antwerpen: Universiteit Antwerpen.

Jalovaara, M. (2002). Socioeconomic Differentials in Divorce Risk by Duration of Marriage, *Demographic Research*, **7**, 538-561.

Jarvis, S. and Jenkins, S.P. (1999). Marital splits and income changes: Evidence from the British Household Panel Survey, *Population Studies*, **53**, 237-254.

Kalmijn, M., de Graaf, P.M., and Poortman, A.-R. (2004). Interactions Between Cultural and Economic Determinants of Divorce in The Netherlands, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **66**, 75 - 83.

Kitson, G.C., Babri, K.B., and Roach, M.J. (1985). Who divorces and why, *Journal of Family Issues*, **6**, 255-293.

Kleinbaum, D.G. (1996). *Survival analysis: A self-learning text*. New York: Springer Verlag.

Lesthaeghe, R. 1995. "The second demographic transition in Western countries: an interpretation." Pp. 329 in *Gender and Family Change in Industrialized Countries*, edited by K.O. Mason and A.-M. Jensen. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lesthaeghe, R. and Meekers, D. (1986). Value Changes and the Dimensions of Familism in the European Community, *European journal of Population*, **2**, 225-268.

Lesthaeghe, R. and Neels, K. (2002). From the First to the Second Demographic Transition: an interpretation of the spatial continuity of demographic innovation in France, Belgium and Switzerland, *European Journal of Population*, **18**, 325-360.

Lesthaeghe, R. and Van de Kaa, D.J. (1986). Twee demografische transitie's? *Mens en Maatschappij*, **61**, 9-24.

Lesthaeghe, R. and Neels, K. (2002). From the First to the Second Demographic Transition: an interpretation of the spatial continuity of demographic innovation in France, Belgium and Switzerland, *European Journal of Population*, **18**, 325-360.

Moors, G. (1996). Gezinsvorming en processen van waardenselectie en -aanpassing, *Mens en Maatschappij*, **71**, 4-24.

Algemene Directie Statistiek en Economische Informatie (2005), FOD Economie, Bevolkingsstatistiek.

Parsons, T. (1956). *Family Socialization and Interaction Process*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Poortman, A.-R. (2000). Sex differences in the economic consequences of separation. A panel study of the Netherlands, *European Sociological Review*, **16**, 367-383.

Raeymaeckers, P., Snoeckx, L., and Mortelmans, D. (2006). Marriage and divorce in Belgium. The influence of professional, educational and financial resources on the risk for marriage dissolution., *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, **46**, 151-174.

- Rogers, S.J. (2004). Dollars, Dependency, and Divorce: Four Perspectives on the Role of Wives' Income, *Journal of marriage and the Family*, **66**, 59 - 74.
- Rogers, S.J. and Amato, P.R. (1997). Is marital quality declining? The evidence from two generations, *Social Forces*, **76**, 1089-1101.
- Snoeckx, L., Raeymaeckers, P., and Mortelmans, D. (2006). Relationele kenmerken en echtscheiding in België. Een analyse op basis van de Panel Studie van Belgische Huishoudens., *Tijdschrift voor Sociologie*, **27**, 157-177.
- Surkyn, J. and Lesthaeghe, R. (2004). Value orientations and the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) in Northern, Western and Southern Europe: An update., *Demographic Research*, **special collection 3**, 45-86.
- Teachman, J.D. (2002). Stability Across Cohorts in Divorce Risk Factors, *Demography*, **39**, 331-352.
- Thornton, A., Alwin, D.F., and Camburn, D. (1983). Causes and consequences of sex-role attitudes and attitudes change, *American Sociological Review*, **48**, 211-227.
- Traag, T., Dronkers, J., and Vallet, L.-A. 2000. "The intergenerational transmission of divorce risks in France." Presented at ISA Research Committee 28 (Social Stratification) Spring Conference, May 11th-14th, France.
- Tzeng, J. and Mare, R.D. (1995). Labor Market and Socioeconomic Effects on Marital Stability, *Social Science Research*, **24**, 329-351.
- Van den Troost, A. (2000). De relationele markt anno 2000. Een exploratie van waardeoriëntaties en vormgeving, *Tijdschrift voor sociologie*, **21**, 131-157.
- Wagner, M. and Weiss, B. (2006). On the Variation of Divorce Risks in Europe: Findings from a Meta-Analysis of European Longitudinal Studies, *European Sociological Review*, **22**, 483-500.
- White, L.K. (1990). Determinants of Divorce: A Review of research in the Eighties, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **52**, 904-912.
- Wolfinger, N.H. (2005). *Understanding the divorce cycle. The children of divorce in their own marriages*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Zwaan, T. (1993). Recente transities in huwelijk, gezin en levenscyclus. In Zwaan, T. (Red.), *Familie, huwelijk en gezin in West-Europa* (pp. 240-264). Boom: Open Universiteit.

Appendix

Table 1a: Descriptive information on the micro-level determinants for Belgium, Flanders and Wallonia

Variables	Categories	Belgium		Flanders		Wallonia	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Divorced	<i>Yes</i>	165	4.2	69	3.5	96	4.9
	<i>No</i>	3746	95.8	1878	96.5	1868	95.1
Region	<i>Flanders</i>	1947	49.8				
	<i>Wallonia - Brussels</i>	1964	50.2				
Lower secondary education		1718	45.4	948	49.9	770	40.8
Higher secondary education		1041	26.6	521	27.5	520	27.6
Tertiary education		1023	26.2	428	22.6	595	31.6
Employment	<i>Works</i>	1949	49.8	979	51.0	970	50.7
	<i>Does not work</i>	1886	48.2	942	49.0	944	49.3
Income:	<i>< 1000 euro</i>	303	7.7	180	9.24	123	6.26
	<i>1000 - 1499 euro</i>	822	21.0	406	20.9	416	21.2
	<i>1500 - 1999 euro</i>	731	18.7	399	20.5	332	16.9
	<i>2000 - 2499 euro</i>	661	16.9	311	16.0	350	17.8
	<i>2500 - 2999 euro</i>	617	15.8	324	16.6	293	14.9
	<i>3000 - 4999 euro</i>	686	17.5	294	15.1	392	20.0
	<i>> 5000 euro</i>	91	2.3	33	1.7	58	3.0
Parental divorce	<i>Yes</i>	529	13.5	190	9.8	339	17.3
	<i>No</i>	3382	86.5	1757	90.2	1625	82.7
Duration of marriage		28.5		28.7		28.4	
Age at marriage		23.9		23.8		24.2	
Premarital cohabitation	<i>Yes</i>	404	10.3	149	7.9	255	13.7
	<i>No</i>	3333	85.2	1733	92.1	1600	86.3
Presence and age of children:	<i>No children</i>	1563	40	39	2.0	54	2.8
	<i>0-3 jaar</i>	93	2.3	797	40.9	766	39.0
	<i>3 - 6 jaar</i>	275	7.0	128	6.6	147	7.5
	<i>6 - 12 jaar</i>	601	15.4	284	14.6	317	16.1
	<i>12-18 jaar</i>	626	16.0	311	16.0	315	16.0
	<i>> 18 jaar</i>	753	19.3	388	19.9	365	18.6
Number of children	<i>Less than three</i>	3394	86.8	1702	87.4	1692	86.2
	<i>More dan three</i>	517	13.2	245	12.6	272	13.8
Marriage Cohorte	<i>Married before 1960</i>	1081	27.6	538	27.6	543	27.6
	<i>Married during the 60's</i>	745	19.0	382	19.6	363	18.5
	<i>Married during the 70's</i>	887	22.7	455	23.4	432	22.0
	<i>Married after 1980</i>	1198	30.6	572	29.4	626	31.9

Table 1b: Descriptive information on the macro-level determinants for the different clusters

Macrolevel determinants	Flanders < '59 (n = 538)	Flanders '60 – '69 (n = 382)	Flanders '70 – '79 (n = 455)	Flanders '80 - ... (n = 572)	Wallonia < '59 (n = 543)	Wallonia '60 – '69 (n = 363)	Wallonia '70 – '79 (n = 432)	Wallonia '80 - ... (n = 626)
Importance of religion (very important)	34.2	15.2	16.3	9.6	24.75	22.25	13.65	11.35
Belonging religious organisations (belong)	23.9	15.2	16.3	9.6	14.25	16.95	8.8	6.1
Attend religious services (>once a week)	21.9	6.9	3.4	2.3	16.1	5.65	2.6	1.2
Number of religious persons (religious person)	89.1	86.4	81.7	76.6	69.9	57.2	57.6	56.5
Number of catholic votes (high)	47.8	35.5	23.1	18.5	18.75	15.95	16	13.8
Justification of divorce (never justified)	36.4	24.2	19.4	13	27.85	15.35	8.5	11.9
Post-materialism (12 items) (post-materialist)	5.1	13.9	17	20.4	10.9	14.05	11.8	21.75
Post-materialism (4 items) (post-materialist)	15.3	20.2	23.9	36.7	3.6	17.25	16.65	26.5
Socio-economic status (high)	91.7	58.2	24.0	15.0	88.5	55.8	26.45	17.15
Income (10 categories) (high)	3.3	4.8	15.5	9.5	4	16.65	12.95	8.8
Income (4 categories) (high)	10.8	29.3	47.5	47.3	19.3	33.65	46.9	34.6
Unemployment rate (percentage unemployment)	3.6	1.8	9.6	8.0	2.65	2.75	11.1	15.15