

**Protest or Policy? The drivers of voters' choices on 26 May 2019**  
**Note on the basis of EoS RepResent data<sup>1</sup>**

*KU Leuven*  
Ine Goovaerts  
Anna Kern  
Sofie Marien  
Lisa van Dijk

*ULB*  
Emilie van Haute<sup>2</sup>

*VUB*  
Kris Deschouwer<sup>3</sup>

Compared to the 2014 elections, the 2019 elections saw a substantial shift in party preferences in Flanders and Wallonia<sup>4</sup>. In Flanders the traditional parties all lost seats, whereas especially the radical-right Vlaams Belang (VB) and to a lesser extent the radical-left PVDA gained a substantial number of seats. Wallonia saw a similar loss of the traditional parties, with the radical-left PTB (and Ecolo) as clear winners. These parties (PTB-PVDA and VB) lost fewer 2014 voters than other parties but were also mainly better at winning voters from other parties in 2019. VB won voters from N-VA, and to a lesser extent CD&V and Open VLD. PVDA in Flanders won from sp.a, Groen, and to a lesser extent N-VA; PTB in Wallonia won primarily from the PS and to a lesser extent from Ecolo. What were the drivers of these shifts?

We know that after a decade of stability<sup>5</sup>, trust in politics decreased between 2009 and 2019 in Flanders and Wallonia. Especially trust in parties and politicians has gone down about 1 point on an 11-point scale (0-10). Even trust in institutions such as the federal parliament has gone down, with a sharper decrease in Wallonia that could be linked to the composition of the coalition at the federal level and the minority in the French-speaking group.

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<sup>1</sup> RepResent is a consortium of political scientists from five Belgian universities. It is coordinated by Stefaan Walgrave and Jonas Lefevre (UA). Partners of the consortium are Sofie Marien (KULeuven), Karen Celis and Kris Deschouwer (VUB), Virginie van Ingelgom and Benoît Rihoux (UCLouvain), Emilie Van Haute and Jean-Benoit Pilet (ULB). RepResent is an EOS project which is funded by FWO and FNRS.

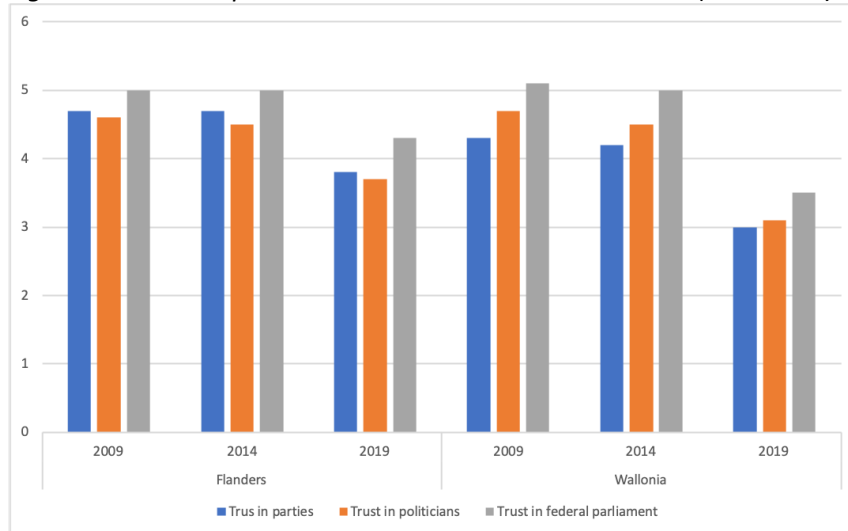
<sup>2</sup> Main contact for the Francophone media: Emilie van Haute.

<sup>3</sup> Main contact for the Flemish media: Kris Deschouwer.

<sup>4</sup> See RepResent Note on 'Vote switching in 2019. Changes in federal party preferences 2014-2019, and during the 2019 campaign'.

<sup>5</sup> Deschouwer et al (2010), *Les voix du peuple. Le comportement électoral au scrutin du 10 juin 2009, Bruxelles*, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, p. 109. ; Deschouwer et al (2010), *De stemmen van het volk. Een analyse van het kiesgedrag in Vlaanderen en Wallonië op 7 juni*, Brussel, VUB Press, p. 123.

Figure 1. Trends in political trust in Flanders and Wallonia (0-10 scale) – 2009-2019



We also know that political trust has a strong effect on voting behaviour. Therefore, this note digs deeper into the drivers of voters' choice in 2019. Were the winning parties better at attracting voters with lower levels of trust, as has often been portrayed by the media and by other parties? What role did resentment towards politics and politicians play in shaping voting behaviour on 26 May 2019, compared to previous elections? Was it all about protest, or did policies and ideology also play a role? Can we interpret the results as a sanction of the governing parties and their policies?

In this note, we aim to provide an answer to these questions. We start by looking into the role of (a lack of) trust in politics and its impact on vote choice, adopting a longitudinal perspective (2009-2019). We show that in Flanders VB was the most successful party among low trusting voters, whereas in 2014 the N-VA was most popular among this segment of respondents/voters. In Wallonia, low trusting voters turned to established parties in 2014, but in 2019 PTB is the most popular party among voters with low levels of trust. Next, we provide insights on the profile of the electorate of the various parties, with a special attention to VB and PTB-PVDA, to see whether there are differences between these voters and voters from other parties on other dimensions than the protest dimension. More specifically, we focus on (1) attitudes towards politics, (2) general political values, and (3) salient issues for voters. Finally, we look at how much each dimension weighted in the voters' choice.

The findings presented here are based on unweighted data. However, robustness checks were conducted with weights for vote choice in 2019, 2014 and 2009 (see appendix). Although most of the patterns we discuss are robust when we weight the data, there are a few patterns where this is not the case and where weighting the data results in substantial differences. In this note we always indicate when this is the case, as these findings should be interpreted with caution. This note is based on the vote choice for regional elections in 2019, in order to allow for our longitudinal comparison 2009-2019 (the 2009 regional elections were held as stand-alone). We present results for parties that have won at least one seat in the federal parliament in 2019 and for which we have a solid enough number of respondents (for robustness). We therefore exclude smaller parties, as well as respondents who did not remember their vote (and, in the bivariate analyses, the respondents who voted blanc/invalid or did not go to vote).

## Low trust in politics and vote choice, a longitudinal perspective (2009-2019)

We investigate the relationship between electoral behaviour and (a lack of) political trust over time. We define low trusting voters as the one third of respondents who had the lowest score on political trust in the samples of the different years<sup>6</sup>.

Tables 1.a and 1.b look at where low trusting voters went to in the last three regional elections. In Flanders, we see a clear change of pattern. In 2009 voters with low trust opted for CD&V and N-VA, and to a lesser extent for VB, sp.a and LDD. In 2014, these voters overwhelmingly turned to N-VA as their preferred choice. However, in 2019 low trusting voters opted for VB. With governmental participation, the N-VA clearly lost its status of leader of the protest vote, although it is still the second choice for this category of voters. Interestingly, in 2019, sp.a comes third and PVDA only fourth among these voters.

*[Note that in 2009, VB was clearly the most popular party among low trusting voters when the data is weighted on vote choice].*

*Table 1.a. Vote choice by level of political trust, in % - Flanders (2009-2019)*

| Vote choice   | Political Trust |        |      |      |        |      |      |        |      |
|---------------|-----------------|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|
|               | 2019            |        |      | 2014 |        |      | 2009 |        |      |
|               | Low             | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High |
| CD&V          | 6,9             | 10,8   | 14,0 | 13,1 | 19,2   | 25,0 | 21,9 | 34,3   | 32,4 |
| Groen         | 5,9             | 11,0   | 10,5 | 6,9  | 9,8    | 12,9 | 5,8  | 4,4    | 7,3  |
| N-VA          | 16,9            | 31,9   | 33,3 | 44,5 | 38,7   | 24,6 | 20,7 | 17,9   | 15,0 |
| Open VLD      | 4,2             | 10,0   | 11,2 | 10,2 | 12,8   | 15,8 | 10,3 | 10,4   | 17,8 |
| PVDA          | 11,9            | 6,7    | 4,5  | 4,1  | 2,6    | 0,7  | 0,4  | 1,3    | 0,0  |
| sp,a          | 12,6            | 12,1   | 9,5  | 11,4 | 12,3   | 15,8 | 12,4 | 15,7   | 19,5 |
| VB            | 37,4            | 15,8   | 15,0 | 5,7  | 3,0    | 2,6  | 13,6 | 8,5    | 2,4  |
| LDD           |                 |        |      | 0,8  | 0,0    | 0,7  | 10,7 | 4,1    | 3,8  |
| SLP           |                 |        |      |      |        |      | 0,8  | 0,9    | 1,1  |
| Blanc/invalid | 4,2             | 1,7    | 2,1  | 3,3  | 1,7    | 1,8  | 3,3  | 2,5    | 0,7  |

N= 1.844 for 2019, 752 for 2014 and 847 for 2009.

The pattern over time in Wallonia is also one of change. In 2009, Ecolo ranked first among low trusting voters. Interestingly, it was followed by MR and PS. In 2014, the top three choices of voters with low levels of trust were MR, PS, and cdH. It shows how existing players in Wallonia managed to capture voters with low levels of trust and contain alternative electoral offer. However, the pattern has changed in 2019. The PTB clearly appealed to the low trusting voters. Nevertheless, PS remains their second choice, and Ecolo their third. It is also interesting to note the high proportion of low trusting voters who turned to a blanc or invalid vote in 2019. This, together with the success of PTB among these voters, might be a sign that existing players are less and less able to keep low trusting voters. *[Note that in 2009, PS was the popular party among low trusting voters when the data is weighted on*

<sup>6</sup> Political trust is an additive index that is composed of respondents' trust in political parties, the federal parliament and politicians ( $\alpha = 0.937$  in 2019).

vote choice. The PS is followed by MR and Ecolo. Also when looking at weighted data, in 2014 the top three parties of choice for low trusting voters were MR, PS and PTB].

Table 1.b. Vote choice by level of political trust, in % - Wallonia (2009-2019)

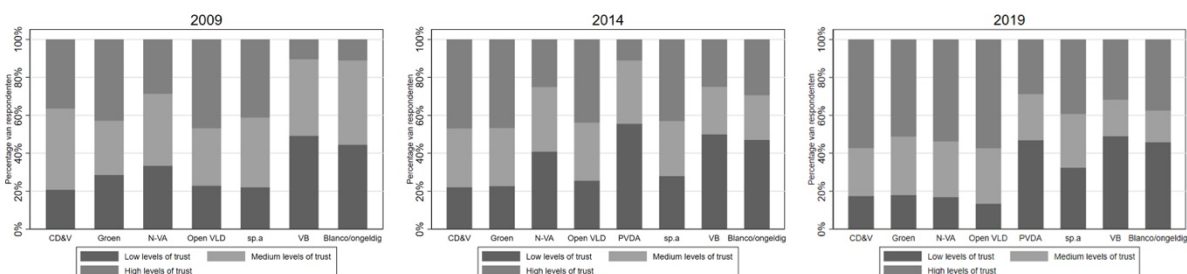
| Vote choice   | Political Trust |        |      |      |        |      |      |        |      |
|---------------|-----------------|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|
|               | 2019            |        |      | 2014 |        |      | 2009 |        |      |
|               | Low             | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High |
| CDH           | 5,8             | 7,9    | 11,9 | 17,8 | 19,1   | 21,5 | 12,2 | 16,4   | 19,3 |
| Défi          | 7,5             | 5,5    | 4,6  | -    | -      | -    | -    | -      | -    |
| Ecolo         | 14,9            | 22,6   | 15,5 | 9,1  | 11,3   | 13,2 | 32,2 | 27,0   | 22,4 |
| MR            | 9,5             | 20,5   | 29,1 | 29,8 | 25,0   | 20,6 | 24,3 | 24,3   | 18,4 |
| PP            | 7,5             | 3,7    | 1,9  | 6,3  | 4,2    | 3,2  | -    | -      | -    |
| PS            | 17,5            | 24,0   | 25,7 | 19,7 | 31,5   | 38,8 | 23,8 | 28,3   | 38,6 |
| PTB           | 26,8            | 11,8   | 7,8  | 10,1 | 6,6    | 2,3  | 0,0  | 0,4    | 0,9  |
| FDF           | -               | -      | -    | 2,9  | 1,2    | 0,5  | -    | -      | -    |
| FN            | -               | -      | -    | -    | -      | -    | 1,9  | 0,9    | 0,0  |
| Blanc/invalid | 10,4            | 4,0    | 3,4  | 4,3  | 1,2    | 0,00 | 5,6  | 2,7    | 0,4  |

N= 1.243 for 2019, 595 for 2014 and 668 for 2009.

One can also reverse the picture and look at the composition of the electorate of each party and see what proportion of low trusting voters it holds over time.

In Flanders, CD&V, Groen, N-VA and Open VLD tend to have a higher proportion of trustful voters in their electorate in 2019 compared to the previous elections (Figure 2.a). The VB attracts about the same proportion of low trusting voters, but the share of highly trustful voters compared to the middle category seems to be growing. Figure 2.a also confirms that N-VA attracted a lower proportion of low trusting voters in 2019 compared to previous years. Overall, VB, PVDA and the blanc/invalid alternative option present similarities in the composition of their electorate. Interestingly, sp.a is rather constant over time in terms of composition of its electorate based on trust.

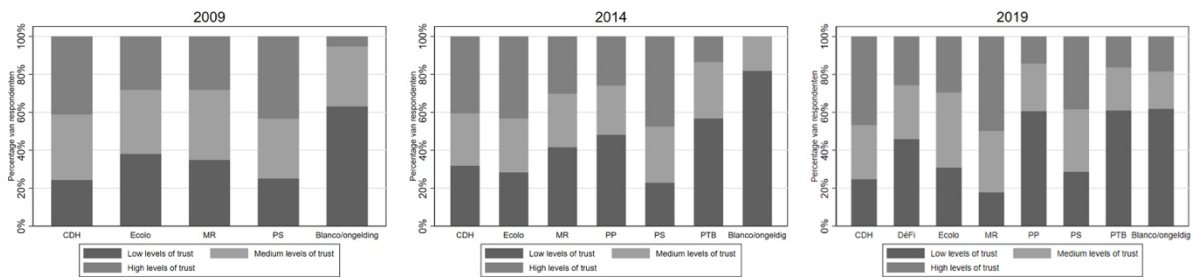
Figure 2.a Level of political trust by vote choice, in % - Flanders (2009, 2014, and 2019)



In Wallonia, cdH, Ecolo and MR tend to have a higher proportion of trustful voters in their electorate in 2019 compared to the previous elections (Figure 2.b). This is a very similar pattern as the one observed for Flanders. Overall, PTB and the blanc/invalid alternative option present similarities in the composition of their electorate, with a high proportion of low trusting voters. Again, the trend is

similar as the one observed in Flanders, with the exception of the radical right. The PS attracts more low trusting voters in 2019 compared to previous years.

Figure 2.b Level of political trust by vote choice, in % - Wallonia (2009-2019)



Overall, existing parties have seen their electorate shrink to less voters with low levels of trust, with the exception of the socialist parties in both regions. We also see that the composition of the VB, PTB-PVDA and blanc/invalid electorates is rather similar, with high proportions of low trusting voters. However, this is not the whole story: VB and PTB-PVDA also attract voters with higher levels of trust. Especially VB managed to increase its popularity among high-trust voters over time.

## Profile of the parties' electorates in 2019

### Attitudes towards Democracy and Politics

The electorates of parties differ when it comes to attitudes towards democracy and politics. In Tables 2a and 2b, we provide a profile of each party's electorate on 5 dimensions: political trust (using the same additive scale of trust in parties, politicians, and federal parliament as presented in the previous longitudinal analysis), political interest, satisfaction with democracy and with the regional government, and two scales of emotions towards politics, one negative and one positive.

We provide the average position of each electorate on these 5 dimensions. We also provide the results of ANOVA tests in order to indicate whether there is a statistically significant difference between the various electorates ( $p$  values, considered significant if below 0.05) and how large these differences are between the groups as a whole ( $F$  value)<sup>7</sup>. All our scales except the satisfaction with democracy are 0 to 10 scales, where 0 corresponds to the lowest value (lowest trust, interest, etc.) and 10 the highest. The measure of satisfaction with democracy is based on a 1-5 scale with higher scores reflecting higher satisfaction with democracy. Our two scales of emotions towards politics are based on the respondents' answers on 8 emotions that they felt when thinking about politics. These 8 emotions are here summarized in two scales based on a factor analysis: one simple additive scale of negative emotions (anger, worry, bitterness, fear;  $\alpha = 0.851$ ), and one simple additive scale of positive emotions (hope, relief, joy, satisfaction;  $\alpha = 0.920$ ).

On the trust dimension, as we already noted earlier, VB and PVDA voters display lower levels of trust in politics than traditional parties, but interestingly sp.a voters do not differ significantly from PVDA. Voters of CD&V, Groen, N-VA and Open VLD do not differ significantly from each other on this dimension.

In terms of political interest, it is interesting to note that VB tends to attract voters with the lowest levels of interest, whereas N-VA has the highest average. PVDA and VB differ strongly on this

<sup>7</sup> Note that we also ran Tuckey post hoc tests to assess the differences between each electorate separately.

dimension, with the electorate of the PVDA displaying much higher levels of political interest [*Note that the difference between PVDA and VB becomes smaller when the data is weighted on vote choice*].

The picture differs on the third dimension, satisfaction with democracy. On this dimension, Vlaams Belang voters are least satisfied with democracy, yet both Vlaams Belang and PVDA voters differ from the other parties.

In terms of satisfaction with Flemish government policy, there seems to be an overall government-opposition pattern: that is, voters of the opposition parties VB, PVDA, sp.a, and to some extent Groen, tend to evaluate the government policies more negatively compared to supporters of the government parties N-VA, Open VLD and CD&V [*Note that Groen does not significantly differ from Vlaams Belang and sp.a when we weight the data on vote choice, with Groen also being less satisfied with the policies of the Flemish government than the other traditional parties*].

When it comes to negative emotions towards politics, VB voters significantly differ from all other parties, with much higher levels of negativity. PVDA voters also significantly differ from all parties but s.pa [*Note that VB does not significantly differ from PVDA and Sp.a when the dataset is weighted on vote choice. While VB still shows the highest level of negativity, the difference becomes insignificant*]. The reverse picture can be observed when it comes to positive emotions, with Vlaams Belang being the least positive, significantly differing from all parties but PVDA and sp.a.

Overall, the voters from PVDA and VB sharply differ from voters from traditional parties. They share similar attitudes towards politics: low trust and satisfaction, negative emotions, and low satisfaction with the regional government's policies. However, they are not fully interchangeable. The voters from PVDA are systematically somewhat less critic, and on average much more interested in politics and less satisfied with the regional government than those of VB. Interestingly, sp.a voters are also overall less satisfied compared to other traditional parties and do not differ significantly from PVDA and VB on many dimensions.

*Table 2.a Attitudes towards democracy in the parties' electorate – Flanders*

|             | <b>Trust (0-10)</b>  | <b>Political Interest (0-10)</b> | <b>Satisfaction with democracy (1-5)</b> | <b>Satisfaction with policies of the Flemish government (0-10)</b> | <b>Negative emotions towards politics (0-10)</b> | <b>Positive emotions towards politics (0-10)</b> |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| CD&V        | 4,6                  | 6,3                              | 3,3                                      | 5,9  | 5,0  | 4,4  |
| Groen       | 4,6                  | 6,3                              | 3,2                                      | 4,9  | 5,1  | 3,9  |
| N-VA        | 4,6                  | 6,5                              | 3,0                                      | 6,4  | 5,2  | 4,1  |
| Open VLD    | 4,7                  | 5,7                              | 3,2                                      | 5,5  | 5,0  | 4,4  |
| <b>PVDA</b> | <b>3,0</b>           | <b>6,4</b>                       | <b>2,6</b>                               | <b>3,7</b>   | <b>6,0</b>                                       | <b>3,0</b>                                       |
| sp.a        | 3,7                  | 5,9                              | 2,9                                      | 4,3  | 6,0  | 3,2  |
| <b>VB</b>   | <b>2,9</b>           | <b>5,6</b>                       | <b>2,3</b>                               | <b>4,2</b>   | <b>6,6</b>                                       | <b>2,9</b>                                       |
| ANOVA       | F = 22.457<br>p=.000 | F = 14.355<br>p=.000             | F = 26.076<br>P=.000                     | F=36.269<br>P=.000   | F=16.930<br>P=.000                               | F=15.268<br>P=.000                               |

In contrast to the PVDA in Flanders, PTB voters in Wallonia display lower levels of political interest, significantly lower than MR and cdH, but not PS [*Note when the dataset is weighted on vote choice, DéFI and PS score lower on political interest*]. The PTB voters also display very low levels of satisfaction

with democracy and trust in politics. They also report higher levels of negative emotions towards politics [*even higher when the dataset is weighted on vote choice*], and very low levels of satisfaction with the policies of the Walloon government. On all dimensions, their more radical positions situate the electorate of the PTB closer to the VB than the PVDA in Flanders.

It is also interesting to note the positions of DéFI's voters on these dimensions, which are rather negative and often between the PTB and traditional parties [*Note when the dataset is weighted on vote choice, DéFI scores lower on negative emotions*]. One has to remember that the party's status in Wallonia sharply differs from Brussels. In Wallonia, it is a new party that tries to establish itself. With its newcomer status, it clearly appealed to the same type of voters as the PTB.

Among the traditional parties, MR and cdH tend to capitalize on an electorate that is overall less alienated from politics; they are followed by Ecolo, whereas the electorate of the PS is somewhere in between, and closer to PTB on interest and emotions.

*Table 2.b Attitudes towards democracy in the parties' electorate – Wallonia*

|            | <b>Trust (0-10)</b> | <b>Political Interest (0-10)</b> | <b>Satisfaction with democracy (1-5)</b> | <b>Satisfaction with policies of the Walloon government (0-10)</b> | <b>Negative emotion towards politics (0-10)</b> | <b>Positive emotion towards politics (0-10)</b> |
|------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| cdH        | 4,0                 | 5,6                              | 2,9                                      | 5,0  | 5,7   | 3,5   |
| DéFI       | 2,9                 | 5,1                              | 2,5                                      | 3,6  | 6,2   | 2,4   |
| Ecolo      | 3,5                 | 5,4                              | 2,8                                      | 4,2  | 5,7   | 2,7   |
| MR         | 4,4                 | 6,1                              | 3,2                                      | 5,3  | 5,2   | 3,9   |
| PS         | 3,7                 | 5,4                              | 2,8                                      | 4,2  | 6,0   | 3,2   |
| <b>PTB</b> | <b>2,1</b>          | <b>5,3</b>                       | <b>2,0</b>                               | <b>2,6</b>   | <b>7,0</b>                                      | <b>1,8</b>                                      |
| ANOVA      | F=22.168<br>P=.000  | F = 12.390<br>p=.000             | F=2.321<br>P=.000                        | F=26.920<br>P=.000   | F=9.391<br>P=.000                               | F=16.539<br>P=.000                              |

In both regions, more than political interest or emotions towards politics, satisfaction (with democracy or the outgoing regional government) seem to be what differentiates the various electorates the most. But does it mean that policies did not matter?

## General Values

Our previous RepPresent note highlighted that even if the election outcomes differed in Flanders and Wallonia, the voters' attitudes presented similarities<sup>8</sup>. But what is the story when we examine differences across parties within each region?

We look at the position of the parties' electorates on a general left-right scale, as well as on six general values linked to big cleavages or divisive issues within each party system: socio-economic issues, individual vs. collective responsibility, migration, moral or cultural issues, and the environment (Tables 3.a and 3.b).

There are very large differences in the voters' position on the left-right scale in Flanders. On this dimension, PVDA and VB oppose each other. It is, however, interesting to note that the average position of the VB voters is identical to the N-VA voters. PVDA is closer to sp.a and Groen.

These differences on the left-right scale do not seem to be mainly driven by socio-economic matters. On the dimension related to the level of intervention of the government in the economy, the differences across parties are much smaller. These smaller differences play out as follows: N-VA voters are least in favour of government intervention in the economy, followed by VB voters. The electorates of Groen and sp.a are most in favour of government intervention in the economy. Moreover, interestingly, PVDA voters only come third when it comes to supporting a higher level of intervention of the government in the economy and do not significantly differ from other parties [*Note that for PVDA the results must be interpreted with some caution as results with the weighted dataset on vote choice show that PVDA is the least in favour of government intervention of all parties, which is at odds with the party's position*]. However, on the dimension of collective vs. individual responsibility, PVDA voters are the ones who support the idea that one's success is more due to initial luck in life rather than individual hard work the most, followed again by sp.a and Groen. Here, Open VLD and N-VA voters compose the other end of the spectrum. VB voters score somewhere in the middle on this value, having a significantly higher score than Groen and a significantly lower score than N-VA and Open VLD. The position on this dimension divides the electorate more than the dimension of state intervention in the economy.

The issue of migrants' integration is also divisive, although the overall average points towards an electorate in favour of cultural assimilation. PVDA and Groen voters are located on the more moderate side of the scale, while N-VA voters favour assimilation, even to a larger extent than VB voters [*Note that differences on the right side become smaller when the data is weighted on vote choice, with N-VA and VB voters equally and most in favour of cultural assimilation, closely followed by Open VLD voters*].

On the moral dimension, the issue of euthanasia appears less divisive and the electorate is generally open to the possibility of euthanasia. It is therefore mainly a matter of degree. The CD&V voters constitute the least open side, whereas sp.a and N-VA voters constitute the most open side. PVDA and VB voters do not differ strongly on the issue [*Note, however, that when we weight the data on vote choice, results differ for PVDA, becoming the party least open to the possibility of euthanasia and consequently differing a bit more with VB*].

Looking at values related to the environment, differences across electorates are again more marked. First, on the responsibility regarding global warming, VB voters believe the least that behavior change is needed. They most strongly differ from Groen, followed by sp.a, CD&V and PVDA. PVDA voters score

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<sup>8</sup> 'Les Flamands et les Wallons ont voté pour des partis différents le 26 mai – mais leurs avis divergent moins sur les politiques qu'ils souhaitent', Note RepPresent, 4 June 2019. ; 'Vlamingen en Walen hebben verschillend gestemd. Maar hebben ze ook verschillende opvattingen?', Note RepPresent, 4 June 2019.



in the middle, significantly lower than Groen and significantly higher than VB [Note that the difference between VB and PVDA becomes insignificant when weighting the data on vote choice]. Second, the dimension that opposes income preservation to environmental contribution sees even larger divisions in the electorates. These divisions go in the same direction. VB voters are least likely to give up part of their income and strongly oppose Groen voters on the issue. PVDA voters are again situated in the middle, scoring significantly lower than Groen and significantly higher than VB.

Table 3.a General values of the parties' electorate (0-10 scales) – Flanders

|             | Left-Right self-positioning | Government intervention in the economy (low vs. high) | Luck vs. hard work to have a good life | Non-western immigrants should adapt to European culture | Possibility of euthanasia | Global warming: technological innovations only vs. change in behavior | Give up part of income to improve environment |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|--|---|---------------------------|---|---|
| CD&V        | 5,4                         | 6.0   | 6.5                                    | 7.0   | 7.1                       | 7.3   | 4.4   |
| Groen       | 3,7                         | 6.3   | 5.6                                    | 6.1   | 7.8                       | 8.2   | 6.4   |
| N-VA        | 7,0                         | 5.6   | 6.7                                    | 7.9   | 8.2                       | 6.9   | 3.5   |
| Open VLD    | 5,8                         | 6.0   | 6.8                                    | 7.1   | 7.7                       | 7.2   | 4.5   |
| <b>PVDA</b> | <b>3,3</b>                  | <b>6.1</b>  | <b>5.2</b>                             | <b>6.0</b>  | <b>7.9</b>                | <b>7.3</b>  | <b>4.0</b>                                    |
| sp.a        | 3,7                         | 6.2   | 5.7                                    | 6.8   | 8.2                       | 7.4   | 3.8   |
| <b>VB</b>   | <b>7,0</b>                  | <b>5.8</b>  | <b>6.1</b>                             | <b>7.7</b>  | <b>7.7</b>                | <b>6.2</b>  | <b>2.7</b>                                    |
| ANOVA       | F=111.384<br>P=.000         | F = 2.939<br>p = 0.001                                | F = 12.111<br>P=.000                   | F = 13.538<br>P=.000                                    | F = 5.513<br>P=.000       | F = 18.48<br>P=.000   | F = 40.08<br>P=.000                           |

There are also large differences in the voters' position on the left-right scale in Wallonia, although the level of polarization is lower. On this dimension, PTB and MR oppose each other. It is, however, interesting to note that the average position of the PTB voters is identical to the PS voters [Note that when weighting the data on vote choice the average score of PTB voters is between PS and Ecolo, and PS becomes the most left-wing electorate]. Similar to Flanders, these differences on the left-right scale do not seem to be mainly driven by socio-economic matters. On the dimension related to the level of intervention of the government in the economy, the differences across parties are much smaller. In this case, PS, MR and cdH voters present similar average positions. PTB and DéFI voters display less support for government intervention in the economy. This may be connected to their higher skepticism towards politics and institutions. This seems to be confirmed by positions on the dimension of collective vs. individual responsibility. PTB voters are most supportive of the idea that one's success is more due to initial luck in life rather than individual hard work, followed by the PS. As in Flanders, the liberal voters from the MR compose the other end of the spectrum. The position on this dimension divides the electorate more than the dimension of state intervention. The issue of migrants' integration is also divisive, although the overall average points towards an electorate in favour of cultural assimilation. PTB, cdH and Ecolo voters are located on the more moderate side of the scale, while MR and DéFI voters favour assimilation. On the moral dimension, the issue of euthanasia appears less divisive and the electorate is generally open to the possibility of euthanasia. There are no significant differences across parties. On the responsibility regarding global warming, only Ecolo voters significantly differ from the rest of the electorate. They are opposed to MR and PTB voters on that scale. As in Flanders, the last dimension that opposes income preservation to environmental contribution sees even larger divisions in the electorates, but they go in the same direction. PTB voters significantly differ from all parties, being least willingly to give up part of their income and oppose

Ecolo voters on the issue [Note that when weighting the data on vote choice, the average score of cdH, Ecolo and MR voters is slightly lower, without it changing the overall interpretation].

Table 3.b General values of the parties' electorate (0-10 scales) – Wallonia

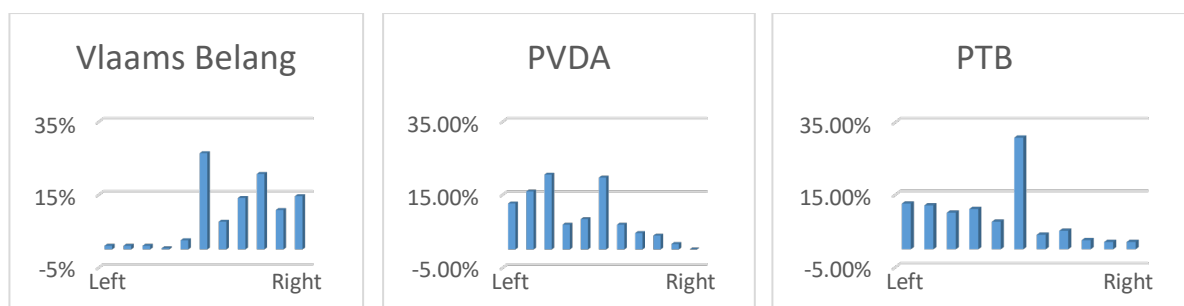
|            | Left-Right self-positioning | Government intervention in the economy | Luck versus hard work to have a good life | Non-western immigrants should adapt to European culture | Possibility of euthanasia | Global warming: technological innovations only versus change in behavior | Give up part of income to improve environment |
|------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|--|---|
| cdH        | 5,3                         | 6,3                                    | 6,7                                       | 6,5   | 6,1                       | 7,9  | 4,2   |
| DéFI       | 5,4                         | 5,9                                    | 6,6                                       | 7,6   | 6,6                       | 7,7  | 3,8   |
| Ecolo      | 4,4                         | 6,2                                    | 6,5                                       | 6,8   | 6,4                       | 8,5  | 5,4   |
| MR         | 6,7                         | 6,4                                    | 7,2                                       | 7,7   | 6,6                       | 7,5  | 4,1   |
| PS         | 3,7                         | 6,4                                    | 6,3                                       | 7,0   | 6,3                       | 7,6  | 4,0   |
| <b>PTB</b> | <b>3,7</b>                  | <b>5,9</b>                             | <b>5,8</b>                                | <b>6,5</b>  | <b>6,3</b>                | <b>7,5</b>   | <b>3,4</b>                                    |
| ANOVA      | F=43.782<br>P=.000          | F=2.371<br>P=.007                      | F=6.775<br>P=.000                         | F=6.359<br>P=.000                                       | F=.956<br>P=.485          | F=6.604<br>P=.000  | F=10.102<br>P=.000                            |

Overall, in Flanders, the political spectrum is polarized between a left side constituted of PVDA, Groen and sp.a, opposed to a right side composed of VB and N-VA. This division is clearest for the values relating to migration and the environment. The division can also be observed for the socioeconomic dimension but is less strong as parties do not differ that much.

In Wallonia, polarization exists as well but is much lower than in Flanders. The left side of the spectrum is constituted of PTB and PS on socioeconomic issues and PTB, cdH and Ecolo on migration issues, opposed to a right side mainly incarnated by the MR. On environmental issues, Ecolo is opposed to MR and PTB. If we compare the position of PTB and PVDA voters, they tend to be largely similar except on the environment issue where PVDA voters are more open to environmental concerns.

Figure 3 helps visualizing how polar opposites VB and PTB-PVDA voters are politically. It provides the distribution of the electorate of the VB and PTB-PVDA voters on the left-right scale. They are mirror opposites, with one commonality: a large proportion of these electorates opt for the central position on the scale. The PTB and PVDA distributions are very similar, with a clearer left anchorage on the PVDA side compared to the PTB where voters opt more frequently for the central position.

Figure 3. Distribution on Left-Right Self-Positioning Scale of the VB and PVDA (in Flanders) and PTB (in Wallonia) voters (0-10)



## Salient issues

Lastly, the electorates also differ when it comes to salient issues (Tables 4.a and 4.b)<sup>9</sup>. In Flanders, Groen is the party with the most homogeneous electorate: the majority of the Groen voters put the environment first. VB voters follow with a very clear emphasis on migration. PVDA and sp.a voters share an emphasis on social security. Migration also comes up first among N-VA voters, but salient issues are more diverse among this party's electorate, with the economy and taxes on second and third place; this reflects the catch-all right-wing nature of the party. The salient issues of the CD&V and Open VLD voters are less marked: social security comes first among CD&V, and the economy together with taxes for the Open VLD. The environment is also an important issue for CD&V and Open VLD but rarely get in the top-three issues of the parties' electorates. The rather high scores on the functioning of democracy for PVDA, CD&V and Open VLD voters is also to be noted. Finally, state reform is among the least salient issues together with defense. Even for N-VA the issue only comes sixth, falling far behind migration and the economy.

Table 4.a Salient issues among the parties' electorate, in % – Flanders

|             | Empl<br>oyment | Envir<br>onment | Crim<br>inality | Mig<br>ration | Econ<br>omy | State<br>reform | Defen<br>se | Taxes       | Socia<br>l<br>Secu<br>rity | Funci<br>oning<br>of<br>democ<br>racy | TOT<br>AL |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| CD&V        | 14,6           | 17,0            | 3,9             | 7,3           | 12,1        | 1,0             | 0,5         | 13,6        | <b>23,8</b>                | 6,3                                   | 100       |
| Groen       | 5,8            | <b>54,1</b>     | 4,1             | 7,0           | 1,7         | 0,6             | 0,0         | 5,8         | 16,9                       | 4,1                                   | 100       |
| N-VA        | 8,4            | 6,5             | 8,6             | <b>32,8</b>   | 14,8        | 7,1             | 0,2         | 13,1        | 5,4                        | 3,1                                   | 100       |
| Open<br>VLD | 11,6           | 15,9            | 6,1             | 14,0          | <b>18,3</b> | 0,6             | 0,0         | <b>18,3</b> | 9,8                        | 5,5                                   | 100       |
| PVDA        | 6,1            | 12,9            | 1,5             | 4,5           | 7,6         | 0,8             | 0,0         | 20,5        | <b>36,4</b>                | 9,8                                   | 100       |
| Sp.a        | 12,3           | 11,8            | 6,4             | 8,8           | 6,9         | 1,0             | 0,5         | 13,7        | <b>33,8</b>                | 4,9                                   | 100       |
| <b>VB</b>   | 4,0            | 5,5             | 15,1            | <b>44,6</b>   | 3,3         | 2,8             | 0,3         | 10,6        | 10,8                       | 3,0                                   | 100       |

In Wallonia, parties' electorates present less homogeneous profiles in terms of salient issues. Only Ecolo has a majority of its voters opting for the environment as their top issue. For PTB and PS who present very similar profiles, this is mainly due to a split between two issues: employment and social security (whereas in Flanders voters focused more clearly on social security) [Note that when weighting the data on vote choice, the score of PTB is somewhat higher on migration and lower on

<sup>9</sup> Voters were asked: 'Pouvez-vous indiquer quels seraient les thèmes les plus importants pour déterminer votre vote si les élections avaient lieu maintenant? Vous pouvez indiquer un maximum de deux thèmes'. There was no rank order in the two themes chosen by voters. We only display their first choice here.

taxes, evening out these two issues]. The two parties mainly differ on migration, which is more salient among PTB voters compared to PS voters who stick much more to traditional socio-economic issues. DéFi and cdH voters also present very similar profiles: diluted priorities, with the environment ranking first, the employment second, and taxes/economy third. For both parties, it is interesting to note the higher score on the functioning of democracy [Note that when weighting the data on vote choice, the scores on functioning of democracy are even higher for these two parties], on which the PTB voters also score higher (as in Flanders). The MR voters distinguish themselves by an emphasis on the economy, employment and taxes, a trio very much anchored on the socio-economic scale. They also distinguish themselves by higher scores on criminality and migration (law and order issues).

Table 4.b Salient issues among the parties' electorate, in % – Wallonia

|            | Employment  | Environment | Criminality | Migration | Economy     | State reform | Defense | Taxes | Social Security | Functioning of democracy |
|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|---------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| cdH        | 18,3        | <b>23,1</b> | 1,9         | 12,5      | 14,4        | 0,0          | 0,0     | 13,5  | 9,6             | <b>6,7</b>               |
| DéFi       | 16,2        | <b>23,0</b> | 4,1         | 10,8      | 13,5        | 4,1          | 0,0     | 16,2  | 4,1             | <b>8,1</b>               |
| Ecolo      | 18,2        | <b>52,8</b> | 1,9         | 2,8       | 8,4         | 0,9          | 0,0     | 5,6   | 7,0             | 2,3                      |
| MR         | 17,5        | 15,0        | <b>9,2</b>  | 12,1      | <b>20,8</b> | 0,4          | 0,8     | 15,4  | 5,8             | 2,9                      |
| PS         | <b>34,9</b> | 11,3        | 4,4         | 4,7       | 12,0        | 1,1          | 0,7     | 11,6  | <b>16,4</b>     | 2,9                      |
| <b>PTB</b> | <b>26,0</b> | 10,2        | 2,6         | 10,2      | 9,2         | 3,1          | 0,0     | 15,8  | <b>16,3</b>     | <b>6,6</b>               |

### The determinants of voters' choice in 2019

Comparing the attitudes towards democracy and policy positions of the parties' electorates provides a first view of the drivers of voters' choice in 2019. However, it does not provide any insights into the importance of these various factors on electoral choice: did low trust drive the VB and PTB-PVDA vote, and what was the role of issues and policies? In order to disentangle the role of each dimension, we ran a multinomial regression analysis (see Tables A.6.a and A.6.b in appendix). The goal is to understand the probability to choose VB (in Flanders) and PTB (in Wallonia) over the other parties based on our selected variables: attitudes towards politics (political interest, trust, negative emotions, satisfaction with democracy and with the regional government), and values (left-right placement, and the position on migration and the environment). We also control for sociodemographic variables (gender, age, education).

In Table 5, we present the summary of these analyses. We show how each of our selected variables (attitudes, values, socio-demographics) change the probability to vote VB in Flanders and PTB in Wallonia compared each of the other parties. In order to assess how important each determinant is, one has to refer to Tables 6.a and 6.b in appendix: the further away the coefficient is from 1 (above or lower), the stronger the weight of this determinant on the vote choice.

In Flanders, the main drivers of the vote for VB are the position of the voters on the left-right scale, their level of satisfaction with democracy, and level of education. Scoring high on the right side of the spectrum, low on satisfaction with democracy and having a lower level of education strongly

discriminate between VB voters and the electorate of all other parties, except the voters who cast a blanc/invalid vote or did not vote (and sp.a for education).

Gender has almost no impact on the VB vote, nor has political trust. This might be surprising, but it is mainly because the differences across parties are better captured and explained by the other attitudes towards politics. Political interest mainly helps understanding the choice between three ‘protest’ options: VB, PVDA, and a blanc/invalid/no vote. PVDA voters are more interested in politics than VB voters, who are themselves more interested than the blanc/invalid/no vote electorate. Negative emotions towards politics mainly discriminate between traditional parties (CD&V, N-VA, Open VLD – not sp.a) and VB-PVDA. Lastly, and quite logically given the composition of the coalition at the regional level, satisfaction with the regional government opposes CD&V and N-VA (but not Open VLD) voters to VB voters.

*[Note that when weighting the data on vote choice, the effect of satisfaction with democracy remains but opposes voters with low levels to the others; the middle category is not discriminant. The main changes have to do with the impact of sociodemographic variables: being a male lowers the probability to vote for Groen or N-VA compared to VB; being young and with a lower level of education lowers the probability to vote for Open VLD compared to VB. The effect of values also diminishes and becomes not significant for Groen, N-VA, PVDA and Blanc/Invalid voters vs. VB]*

Table 5. Determinants of vote choice for VB (in Flanders) and PTB (in Wallonia)

|   | Compared to the probability to vote VB in Flanders...                  | Compared to the probability to vote PTB in Wallonia... |
|---|--|--|
| Being a man                                 | ↓ probability to vote sp.a   | ↑ Blanc/invalid/no vote                                |
| Low age                                     | ↓ CD&V, N-VA, sp.a   | ↓ cdH, Ecolo (18-34), MR, PS (35-54)                   |
| Lower education                             | ↓ CD&V, Groen, N-VA (Open VLD and PVDA)                                | ↓ Ecolo  |
| Lower political interest                    | ↓ PVDA<br>↑ Blanc/invalid/no vote                                      | ↑ Blanc/invalid/no vote                                |
| Lower political trust                       | ↓ Groen  | No significant differences                             |
| Lower negative emotions                     | ↑ CD&V, N-VA, Open VLD   | ↑ Ecolo, MR, cdH, PS<br>↑ Blanc/invalid/no vote        |
| Lower satisfaction with regional government | ↓ CD&V, N-VA   | ↓ cdH  |
| Lower satisfaction with democracy           | ↓ probability to vote for all other parties<br>↑ Blanc/invalid/no vote | ↓ PS, MR   |
| More left on the L-R scale                  | ↑ probability to vote for all other parties except Open VLD and N-VA   | ↑ probability to vote for all other parties            |
| Lower on assimilation scale                 | ↑ CD&V, Groen, PVDA  | ↓ probability to vote for all other parties except cdH |
| Lower on environment scale                  | ↓ probability to vote for all other parties                            | ↓ Ecolo  |

In Wallonia, the main drivers of the vote for PTB are the position of the voters on the left-right scale, their level of satisfaction with democracy, and age. Scoring high on the left side of the spectrum and being younger (18-34) strongly discriminate between PTB voters and the electorate of all other parties and scoring low on satisfaction with democracy discriminates them with MR and PS voters.

As in Flanders, gender has almost no impact, nor has political trust. This might be surprising, but it is mainly because the differences across parties are better captured and explained by the other attitudes towards politics. Political interest mainly helps understanding the choice between a PTB vote and a blanc/invalid/no vote (with the latter displaying lower levels of political interest). Negative emotions towards politics mainly discriminate between Ecolo and MR, but also with a blanc/invalid/no vote option. This option seems more the choice of apathetic citizens (low interest, low negative emotions) whereas a PTB choice could be described as a voice option (interest and negative emotions). Lastly, satisfaction with the regional government opposes cdH voters (the only continuing partner of the coalition throughout the legislature) to PTB voters.

*[Note that when weighting the data on vote choice, the effects remain very stable. Some sociodemographic variables gain some effect: being male lower the probability to vote for DéFI compared to PTB, and the effect of age and education on the probability to vote MR vs. PTB become stronger. The main differences emerge when it comes to the probabilities to vote PS vs. PTB. The effect of satisfaction with democracy disappears, but dissatisfaction towards the Walloon government lowers the probability to vote PS, as does scoring lower on the migration scale].*

## Conclusion

- **Political trust has declined** in 2019 compared to 2014 and 2009
- In 2019, low trusting voters **turned to VB** and to a lesser extent **PVDA** in Flanders (opposed to N-VA in 2014) and to **PTB** in Wallonia (opposed to traditional parties)
- Attitudes towards politics: **PVDA and VB voters share similar attitudes towards politics**: low satisfaction and trust, negative emotions, and low satisfaction with the regional government's policies. However, PVDA voters are more interested in politics and less satisfied with the regional government. Sp.a voters do not differ significantly from PVDA and VB on many dimensions. **PTB voters** display lower levels of political interest and trust, satisfaction with democracy and with the policies of the Walloon government, and higher levels of negative emotions towards politics. They **are closer to the VB than the PVDA** in Flanders.
- **Larger polarization in Flanders than Wallonia.**
- **Position on policies: PVDA and VB sharply differ** and constitute opposing blocks on the left-right scale. They also oppose on socio-economic and migration issues, where PVDA, Groen and sp.a oppose to a right side composed of VB and N-VA. The same opposition appears on environmental issues, but with a narrower opposition between Groen and VB. PTB shares the left side of the spectrum with PS on socioeconomic issues and with cdH and Ecolo on migration issues. The main opponent on the right side is the MR. If we compare the position of PTB and PVDA voters, they tend to be largely similar except on the environment issue where PVDA voters are more open to environmental concerns.
- The **drivers of the VB and PTB vote are similar** in Flanders and in Wallonia: the main drivers are the position of the voters on the left-right scale (left for PTB, right for VB), their level of satisfaction with democracy (low), and age or level of education. Gender has almost no impact, nor has political trust. **Political interest helps discriminate between an alienated option (blanc/invalid/no vote) vs. a protest option (VB or PTB). Negative emotions towards politics mainly discriminate between traditional parties and VB/PTB.** Finally, evaluations of the regional government oppose voters from governing vs. opposition parties
- The 2019 elections and the respective successes of VB and PTB-PVDA were predominantly about structural factors (left-right), even if satisfaction with democracy and negative emotions towards politics (more than trust) were also important drivers of the vote.

## Appendix

We base our analyses on two surveys of the RepResent online panel. These surveys were conducted by Kantar TNS at the request of the Excellence of Science consortium RepResent (Representation & Democratic Resentment). In the first survey respondents were questioned between April 5 and May 5 2019. The second survey, among the same respondents, took place between May 28 and June 18 2019 (after the elections). The gross sample consisted of respondents that were recruited from diverse online panels (Kantar’s own panel as well as panels from other online companies). The target was a net sample that would be representative on gender, age and education for the voting aged population in their respective regions. Due to non-response, the final samples differ from the target population distributions somewhat (wave 1: N= 3.405 Flemish and 3.103 Walloon voters; Wave 2: N=1.971 Flemish and 1.429 Walloon voters). The analyses presented in the main text are unweighted. However, as an additional check proportional weights on vote choice in 2019 were calculated through iterative proportional fitting. These weights set the marginal sample distributions to match the population distributions on this variable. We ran each analysis with the unweighted data, weighted data based on vote choice. When patterns we find and discuss are not robust, we mention this in the text, as these results should be interpreted with caution. For reference, Table A shows the unweighted and weighted vote distributions in the sample used in the analysis.

**Table A.1. Distribution of unweighted and weighted vote choice**

| <b>Flanders</b> | <b>Vote share unweighted</b> | <b>Vote share weighted</b> |  | <b>Wallonia</b> | <b>Vote share unweighted</b> | <b>Vote share weighted</b> |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| CD&V            | 10.4%                        | 12.1%                      |  | cdH             | 6.6%                         | 8.4%                       |
| Groen           | 9.0%                         | 8.4%                       |  | DéFI (FDF)      | 6.3%                         | 3.3%                       |
| N-VA            | 27.0%                        | 21.8%                      |  | Ecolo           | 16.1%                        | 11.7%                      |
| Open VLD        | 8.9%                         | 11.5%                      |  | MR              | 18.1%                        | 16.2%                      |
| PVDA            | 6.9%                         | 4.8%                       |  | PP              | 4.4%                         | 2.5%                       |
| sp.a            | 10.8%                        | 9.3%                       |  | PS              | 20.8%                        | 20.6%                      |
| VB              | 20.4%                        | 15.9%                      |  | PTB             | 14.0%                        | 10.9%                      |
| Other           | 1.4%                         | 1.7%                       |  | Other           | 3.3%                         | 5.3%                       |
| Blanc/Invalid   | 2.5%                         | 4.2%                       |  | Blanc/Invalid   | 6.1%                         | 7.4%                       |
| Did not vote    | 2.9%                         | 10.3%                      |  | Did not vote    | 4.4%                         | 13.7%                      |



**Table A.2. Vote choice by level of political trust in Flanders (in %) – weighted data**

| Vote choice   | Political Trust |        |      |      |        |      |      |        |      |
|---------------|-----------------|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|
|               | 2019            |        |      | 2014 |        |      | 2009 |        |      |
|               | Low             | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High |
| CD&V          | 8,2             | 12,9   | 16,1 | 13,5 | 20,2   | 26,1 | 14,7 | 25,3   | 25,7 |
| Groen         | 5,1             | 12,3   | 10,5 | 5,9  | 8,4    | 11,0 | 5,9  | 4,9    | 8,8  |
| N-VA          | 15,5            | 28,1   | 27,9 | 38,5 | 34,1   | 21,5 | 13,5 | 12,9   | 11,6 |
| Open VLD      | 7,7             | 14,2   | 14,0 | 10,9 | 13,8   | 17,0 | 10,6 | 11,7   | 21,5 |
| PVDA          | 10,3            | 5,1    | 3,3  | 4,2  | 2,7    | 0,8  | 0,6  | 2,1    | 0,0  |
| sp.a          | 13,4            | 9,9    | 9,6  | 11,2 | 12,4   | 15,7 | 10,3 | 14,3   | 19,1 |
| VB            | 32,5            | 14,0   | 14,7 | 8,5  | 4,5    | 3,9  | 23,4 | 16,0   | 4,9  |
| LDD           | -               | -      | -    | -    | -      | -    | 12,1 | 5,1    | 5,1  |
| slp           | -               | -      | -    | -    | -      | -    | 0,9  | 1,1    | 1,3  |
| Blanc/invalid | 7,4             | 3,5    | 3,9  | 7,4  | 4,0    | 4,2  | 8,0  | 6,7    | 2,0  |

N= 1.844 for 2019, 752 for 2014 and 847 for 2009; weighted data.

**Table A.3. Level of political trust by vote choice in Flanders in 2019 (in %) – weighted data**

| Vote choice | Political Trust |        |      |       |      |        |      |       |      |        |      |       |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|
|             | 2019            |        |      |       | 2014 |        |      |       | 2009 |        |      |       |
|             | Low             | Medium | High | Total | Low  | Medium | High | Total | Low  | Medium | High | Total |
| CD&V        | 16,2            | 25,4   | 58,4 | 100,0 | 22,1 | 31,0   | 46,9 | 100,0 | 20,8 | 42,7   | 36,5 | 100,0 |
| Groen       | 14,0            | 33,5   | 52,5 | 100,0 | 22,6 | 30,7   | 46,7 | 100,0 | 28,6 | 28,6   | 42,9 | 100,0 |
| N-VA        | 16,4            | 29,5   | 54,1 | 100,0 | 40,8 | 34,1   | 25,1 | 100,0 | 33,3 | 38,0   | 28,7 | 100,0 |
| Open VLD    | 16,2            | 29,9   | 53,9 | 100,0 | 25,5 | 30,6   | 43,9 | 100,0 | 22,9 | 30,3   | 46,8 | 100,0 |
| PVDA        | 48,1            | 23,7   | 28,2 | 100,0 | 55,6 | 33,3   | 11,1 | 100,0 | 20,0 | 80,0   | 0,0  | 100,0 |
| sp.a        | 32,7            | 24,2   | 43,1 | 100,0 | 28,0 | 29,0   | 43,0 | 100,0 | 22,0 | 36,8   | 41,2 | 100,0 |
| VB          | 44,3            | 19,0   | 36,7 | 100,0 | 50,0 | 25,0   | 25,0 | 100,0 | 49,2 | 40,3   | 10,5 | 100,0 |
| LDD         |                 |        |      | 100,0 |      |        |      | 100,0 | 52,0 | 26,0   | 22,0 | 100,0 |

|               |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |       |
|---------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
| SLP           |      |      |      | -     |      |      |      | -     | 25,0 | 37,5 | 37,5 | 100,0 |
| Blanc/invalid | 41,1 | 19,2 | 39,7 | 100,0 | 47,1 | 23,5 | 29,4 | 100,0 | 44,4 | 44,4 | 11,1 | 100,0 |

N= 1.844 for 2019, 752 for 2014 and 847 for 2009, weighted data.

**Table A.4. Vote choice by level of political trust in Walloon region (in %) – weighted data**

| Vote choice   | Political Trust |        |      |      |        |      |      |        |      |
|---------------|-----------------|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|
|               | 2019            |        |      | 2014 |        |      | 2009 |        |      |
|               | Low             | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High | Low  | Medium | High |
| CDH           | 8,2             | 8,7    | 14,1 | 9,6  | 11,4   | 13,9 | 9,0  | 12,3   | 14,2 |
| Défi          | 5,0             | 3,9    | 2,2  | -    | -      | -    | -    | -      | -    |
| Ecolo         | 13,6            | 19,8   | 11,7 | 6,0  | 8,3    | 10,6 | 21,5 | 18,3   | 14,9 |
| MR            | 10,9            | 21,0   | 28,9 | 24,5 | 22,9   | 20,4 | 21,9 | 22,3   | 16,6 |
| PP            | 5,2             | 2,4    | 1,3  | 6,1  | 4,6    | 3,8  | -    | -      | -    |
| PS            | 20,2            | 24,6   | 31,2 | 19,3 | 34,6   | 46,0 | 29,8 | 36,0   | 48,2 |
| PTB           | 21,9            | 13,7   | 5,8  | 16,7 | 12,1   | 4,6  | 0,0  | 2,6    | 5,2  |
| FDF           | -               | -      | -    | 4,1  | 1,9    | 0,8  | -    | -      | -    |
| FN            | -               | -      | -    |      |        |      | 4,5  | 2,2    | 0,0  |
| Blanc/invalid | 15,0            | 5,9    | 4,8  | 13,7 | 4,2    | 0,00 | 13,2 | 6,4    | 1,0  |

N= 1.243 for 2019, 595 for 2014 and 668 for 2009; weighted data.

**Table A.5. Level of political trust by vote choice in Walloon Region (in %)**

| Vote choice | Political Trust |        |      |       |      |        |      |       |      |        |      |       |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|
|             | 2019            |        |      |       | 2014 |        |      |       | 2009 |        |      |       |
|             | Low             | Medium | High | Total | Low  | Medium | High | Total | Low  | Medium | High | Total |
| CDH         | 28,0            | 24,7   | 47,3 | 100,0 | 31,9 | 27,6   | 40,5 | 100,0 | 24,3 | 34,6   | 41,1 | 100,0 |
| Défi        | 47,7            | 31,1   | 21,2 | 100,0 |      |        |      | -     | -    | -      | -    | -     |
| Ecolo       | 32,7            | 39,7   | 27,6 | 100,0 | 28,3 | 28,4   | 43,3 | 100,0 | 38,1 | 33,7   | 28,2 | 100,0 |

|               |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |       |
|---------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
| MR            | 19,2 | 30,7 | 50,1 | 100,0 | 41,6 | 29,2 | 30,2 | 100,0 | 34,9 | 36,9 | 28,2 | 100,0 |
| PP            | 61,4 | 23,3 | 15,3 | 100,0 | 48,1 | 25,9 | 25,9 | 100,0 | -    | -    | -    | -     |
| PS            | 28,3 | 28,7 | 43,0 | 100,0 | 22,9 | 29,6 | 47,5 | 100,0 | 25,1 | 31,5 | 43,4 | 100,0 |
| PTB           | 56,1 | 29,2 | 14,7 | 100,0 | 56,8 | 29,7 | 13,5 | 100,0 | 0,0  | 33,3 | 66,7 | 100,0 |
| FDF           | -    | -    | -    | -     | 66,7 | 22,2 | 11,1 | 100,0 | -    | -    | -    | -     |
| Blanc/invalid | 60,9 | 19,9 | 19,2 | 100,0 | 81,8 | 18,2 | 0,0  | 100,0 | 63,1 | 31,6 | 5,3  | 100,0 |

N= 1243 for 2019, 595 for 2014 and 668 for 2009, weighted data.

**Table A.6.a Determinants of vote choice in Flanders, 2019 (reference category = VB vote) - unweighted data**

|                             |        | CD&V     | Groen      | N-VA     | OpenVLD  | PVDA      | sp.a      | Blanc/Invalid/No Vote |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Gender                      | Male   | 0,749    | 0,464      | 0,685    | 0,858    | 0,757     | 0,584*    | 1,161                 |
| Age                         | 18-34  | 0,434*   | 1,770      | 0,341*** | 0,555    | 1,303     | 0,545*    | 0,657                 |
|                             | 35-54  | 0,336*** | 1,004      | 0,571**  | 0,727    | 1,118     | 0,466**   | 0,759                 |
| Education                   | Low    | 0,126*** | 0,131***   | 0,300*** | 0,519    | 0,660     | 0,813     | 0,893                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,332*** | 0,284***   | 0,422*** | 0,483**  | 0,520*    | 0,857     | 1,004                 |
| Political Interest          | Low    | 0,490    | 0,873      | 0,725    | 1,157    | 0,346**   | 1,130     | 3,387**               |
|                             | Middle | 0,789    | 1,010      | 0,930    | 1,036    | 0,623     | 0,728     | 1,982                 |
| Political Trust             | Low    | 1,157    | 0,259*     | 1,259    | 0,829    | 1,857     | 0,982     | 0,948                 |
|                             | Middle | 1,262    | 0,286*     | 1,689    | 1,181    | 1,333     | 1,403     | 1,721                 |
| Negative emotions           | Low    | 3,458**  | 2,009      | 3,748*** | 3,383**  | 1,859     | 1,126     | 1,100                 |
|                             | Middle | 2,688**  | 1,616      | 1,850**  | 2,579**  | 1,238     | 0,978     | 1,253                 |
| Satisfaction with Democracy | Low    | 0,188*** | 0,130***   | 0,273*** | 0,120*** | 0,309**   | 0,199***  | 1,206                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,291**  | 0,389*     | 0,419**  | 0,261*** | 0,398*    | 0,283**   | 1,578                 |
| Satisfaction regional gvt   | Low    | 0,231**  | 0,852      | 0,216*** | 0,569    | 1,759     | 0,773     | 0,705                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,610    | 0,833      | 0,560*   | 0,788    | 1,700     | 0,764     | 0,521                 |
| Left-Right                  | Low    | 4,960**  | 195,350*** | 0,196*   | 2,026    | 93,814*** | 95,683*** | 7,255***              |
|                             | Middle | 6,882*** | 16,587***  | 1,012    | 4,415*** | 7,680***  | 10,335*** | 3,400***              |
| Value 3 Migration           | Low    | 0,886    | 0,898      | 0,755    | 0,497    | 1,676     | 1,141     | 0,287                 |
|                             | Middle | 2,535**  | 2,262*     | 0,751    | 1,318    | 2,371*    | 1,554     | 1,103                 |
| Value 5 Environment         | Low    | 0,208*   |            | 0,496*   | 0,620    | 0,418     | 0,191**   | 0,739                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,386*** | 0,187***   | 0,588*   | 0,384**  | 0,490*    | 0,512*    | 0,540*                |
| R2 Nagelkerke               | 0,620  |          |            |          |          |           |           |                       |
| N                           | 1340   |          |            |          |          |           |           |                       |

Note: All scales were standardized in 3 categories (0-10 scales: 0-3=low; 4-6=middle; 7-10=high; 1-5 scale: 1-2=low; 3=middle; 4-5=high). For each variable, the reference category is the highest. Values above 1 indicate that this category has a higher probability (compared to the highest category) to choose this

party over the VB; values below 1 indicate that this category has a lower probability (compared to the highest category) to choose this party over the VB. For instance, the probability to vote CD&V over VB is 0.434 lower if the voter is between 18 and 34 years old rather than above 55 years old; it is 3.458 higher for voters who score low on the negative emotions scale compared to voters who score high. The number of stars indicate the level of statistical significance of the result: \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,001$ .

**Table A.6.b Determinants of vote choice in Wallonia, 2019 (reference category = PTB vote) - unweighted data**

|                             |        | CDH      | DéFI     | Ecolo    | MR       | PS      | Blanc/Invalid/No Vote |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|-----------------------|
| Gender                      | Male   | 0,661    | 1,306    | 1,225    | 1,043    | 1,029   | 1,829*                |
| Age                         | 18-34  | 0,173*** | 0,407    | 0,357**  | 0,268**  | 0,452*  | 0,745                 |
|                             | 35-54  | 0,335*** | 0,902    | 0,651    | 0,453*   | 0,548*  | 0,892                 |
| Education                   | Low    | 0,339*   | 0,380    | 0,177*** | 0,467    | 0,965   | 0,750                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,570    | 0,414*   | 0,485**  | 0,569    | 1,269   | 0,818                 |
| Political Interest          | Low    | 0,888    | 1,208    | 1,503    | 0,780    | 1,442   | 4,032**               |
|                             | Middle | 0,976    | 0,673    | 1,076    | 1,013    | 1,008   | 1,828                 |
| Political Trust             | Low    | 0,923    | 2,347    | 0,532    | 1,188    | 0,543   | 0,438                 |
|                             | Middle | 1,936    | 3,037    | 0,875    | 2,313    | 0,887   | 0,386                 |
| Negative emotions           | Low    | 2,035    | 2,424    | 3,776**  | 3,467*   | 1,906   | 3,200*                |
|                             | Middle | 2,438*   | 1,050    | 2,503**  | 2,145*   | 1,891*  | 1,468                 |
| Left-Right                  | Low    | 0,150**  | 0,081*** | 0,712    | 0,015*** | 1,139   | 0,138***              |
|                             | Middle | 1,263    | 0,479    | 1,218    | 0,152*** | 0,768   | 0,536                 |
| Value 3 Migration           | Low    | 0,489    | 0,196*   | 0,229**  | 0,118**  | 0,340** | 0,196**               |
|                             | Middle | 1,119    | 0,646    | 1,074    | 0,429*   | 0,584   | 0,674                 |
| Value 5 Environment         | Low    | 0,659    | 0,994    | 0,121    | 1,734    | 0,922   | 0,597                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,523    | 0,638    | 0,276*** | 1,328    | 1,105   | 1,726                 |
| Satisfaction with Democracy | Low    | 0,397    | 0,451    | 0,671    | 0,153*** | 0,298** | 1,334                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,766    | 0,525    | 0,909    | 0,624    | 0,843   | 2,299                 |
| Satisfaction regional gvt   | Low    | 0,080*** | 2,332    | 0,416    | 0,386    | 0,292   | 0,517                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,124**  | 3,315    | 0,641    | 0,587    | 0,472   | 0,299                 |
| R2 Nagelkerke               | 0,523  |          |          |          |          |         |                       |
| N                           | 919    |          |          |          |          |         |                       |

Note: All scales were standardized in 3 categories (0-10 scales: 0-3=low; 4-6=middle; 7-10=high; 1-5 scale: 1-2=low; 3=middle; 4-5=high). For each variable, the reference category is the highest. Values above 1 indicate that this category has a higher probability (compared to the highest category) to choose this

party over the PTB; values below 1 indicate that this category has a lower probability (compared to the highest category) to choose this party over the PTB. For instance, the probability to vote cdH over PTB is 0.173 lower if the voter is between 18 and 34 years old rather than above 55 years old; it is 2.438 higher for voters who have a medium score on the negative emotions scale compared to voters who score high. The number of stars indicate the level of statistical significance of the result: \*  $p < 0,05$  ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$  ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,001$ .

**Table A.7.a. Determinants of vote choice in Flanders, 2019 (reference category = VB vote) – weighted data**

|                             |        | CD&V     | Groen      | N-VA     | OpenVLD  | PVDA       | sp.a      | Blanc/Invalid/No Vote |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|------------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Gender                      | Male   | 0,763    | 0,507*     | 0,665*   | 1,053    | 0,966      | 0,643     | 1,334                 |
| Age                         | 18-34  | 0,431*   | 1,575      | 0,388**  | 0,366**  | 2,419      | 0,319**   | 0,553                 |
|                             | 35-54  | 0,424**  | 0,839      | 0,563*   | 0,572*   | 1,409      | 0,389**   | 0,789                 |
| Education                   | Low    | 0,149*** | 0,144***   | 0,355*** | 0,444*   | 0,859      | 0,621     | 1,286                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,356*** | 0,250***   | 0,427*** | 0,408**  | 0,516      | 0,744     | 1,198                 |
| Political Interest          | Low    | 0,482*   | 1,374      | 0,719    | 1,160    | 0,746      | 1,436     | 2,687**               |
|                             | Middle | 0,869    | 1,504      | 0,903    | 1,031    | 0,798      | 0,885     | 1,411                 |
| Political Trust             | Low    | 2,173    | 0,309*     | 1,596    | 1,142    | 3,679      | 1,325     | 1,495                 |
|                             | Middle | 1,755    | 0,417      | 2,130*   | 1,207    | 2,538      | 2,251     | 1,911                 |
| Negative emotions           | Low    | 3,595**  | 2,031      | 3,333**  | 2,256*   | 1,394      | 1,141     | 1,405                 |
|                             | Middle | 2,772**  | 1,936      | 1,525    | 2,149*   | 1,305      | 0,791     | 1,524                 |
| Left-Right                  | Low    | 0,257*** | 0,187***   | 0,419**  | 0,098*** | 0,560      | 0,276**   | 1,426                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,620    | 0,787      | 0,673    | 0,424*   | 0,612      | 0,454     | 1,462                 |
| Value 3 Migration           | Low    | 0,223**  | 1,247      | 0,226*** | 0,835    | 2,180      | 0,946     | 0,630                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,584    | 0,570      | 0,567*   | 0,948    | 1,539      | 0,621     | 0,500                 |
| Value 5 Environment         | Low    | 4,537*   | 229,032*** | 0,140    | 1,730    | 109,153*** | 92,147*** | 16,150***             |
|                             | Middle | 6,129*** | 13,092***  | 0,863    | 3,434*** | 4,582**    | 8,382***  | 4,362***              |
| Satisfaction with Democracy | Low    | 0,904    | 1,144      | 0,940    | 0,470    | 1,198      | 1,010     | 0,226*                |
|                             | Middle | 2,533**  | 1,670      | 0,787    | 1,132    | 1,915      | 1,349     | 1,133                 |
| Satisfaction regional gvt   | Low    | 0,300    | 0,001***   | 0,833    | 0,777    | 0,713      | 0,327     | 1,029                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,334*** | 0,279***   | 0,716    | 0,404**  | 0,632      | 0,572     | 0,848                 |
| R2 Nagelkerke               | 0,602  |          |            |          |          |            |           |                       |
| N                           | 1361   |          |            |          |          |            |           |                       |

Note : \* p<0,05 ; \*\* p<0,01 ; \*\*\* p<0,001.



**Table A.7.b. Determinants of vote choice in Wallonia, 2019 (reference category = PTB vote) - weighted data**

|                             |        | CDH      | DéFI   | Ecolo    | MR       | PS      | Blanc/Invalid/No Vote |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|----------|---------|-----------------------|
| Gender                      | Male   | 0,733    | 2,626* | 1,219    | 1,073    | 0,985   | 2,412**               |
| Age                         | 18-34  | 0,095*** | 0,354  | 0,357**  | 0,109*** | 0,470*  | 0,443*                |
|                             | 35-54  | 0,337**  | 0,679  | 0,566    | 0,299*** | 0,405** | 0,517*                |
| Education                   | Low    | 0,262**  | 0,304  | 0,176*** | 0,305**  | 1,095   | 0,943                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,566    | 0,329* | 0,489*   | 0,544    | 1,536   | 0,14                  |
| Political Interest          | Low    | 0,765    | 1,625  | 1,668    | 0,742    | 2,296*  | 4,935***              |
|                             | Middle | 0,961    | 1,128  | 0,930    | 1,227    | 1,384   | 1,941                 |
| Political Trust             | Low    | 0,951    | 3,408  | 0,302    | 1,080    | 0,415   | 1,140                 |
|                             | Middle | 2,031    | 4,325  | 0,795    | 2,462    | 0,892   | 1,590                 |
| Negative emotions           | Low    | 1,118    | 3,316  | 2,813*   | 2,107    | 1,824   | 2,480*                |
|                             | Middle | 2,508*   | 1,211  | 2,830**  | 2,321*   | 2,504** | 0,964                 |
| Left-Right                  | Low    | 0,585    | 0,803  | 1,934    | 0,187**  | 0,514   | 0,949                 |
|                             | Middle | 1,323    | 1,424  | 2,545    | 1,306    | 1,508   | 3,072*                |
| Value 3 Migration           | Low    | 0,039*** | 1,161  | 0,309    | 0,204    | 0,123** | 0,526                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,047*** | 0,905  | 0,287    | 0,242    | 0,156** | 0,289                 |
| Value 5 Environment         | Low    | 0,219*   | 0,134* | 1,090    | 0,027*** | 1,986   | 0,195***              |
|                             | Middle | 2,135    | 0,535  | 1,523    | 0,219*** | 0,835   | 0,551                 |
| Satisfaction with Democracy | Low    | 0,479    | 0,460  | 0,214*   | 0,210*   | 0,318*  | 0,240**               |
|                             | Middle | 1,031    | 0,424  | 1,020    | 0,335**  | 0,488*  | 0,665                 |
| Satisfaction regional gvt   | Low    | 1,199    | 0,302  | 0,148    | 1,456    | 0,574   | 0,488                 |
|                             | Middle | 0,918    | 0,829  | 0,271**  | 1,858    | 1,354   | 2,046*                |
| R2 Nagelkerke               | 0,553  |          |        |          |          |         |                       |
| N                           | 906    |          |        |          |          |         |                       |

Note : \* p<0,05 ; \*\* p<0,01 ; \*\*\* p<0,001.