

Religion and church in Belgium and the Netherlands

by Loek Halman, Karel Dobbelaere, Ruud de Moor and Liliane Voyé

In this article similarities, differences and changes in religion are examined in Belgium and the Netherlands using the data of the European Values Survey, gathered in 1981 and 1990. It is investigated whether the process of secularization has continued or not. In both countries secularization appears in a decline in degree of religiosity, measured by general religiosity, traditional belief and confidence in the churches. Particularly in Belgium changes in the religious domain are extensive and as a consequence of this development the Netherlands and Belgium seem to converge.

Despite this convergence trend, there still remain large differences between Belgium and the Netherlands, particularly regarding church involvement. There consists a large difference in number of churched and unchurched people. In the Netherlands half of the population is unchurched, whereas in Belgium this is about one third of the population. On the other hand churched people in the Netherlands appear to be far more often a core member than church members in Belgium.

Ethnocentrism in the Low Countries: opinions about 'own' and 'other' people in the Netherlands and Flanders

by J. Billiet, R. Eisinga and P. Scheepers

In this study, differences between the Netherlands and Flanders regarding ethnocentrism and related phenomena are explored, based on two comparable large scale surveys held in 1990-1991. It appears that the people in Flanders subscribe more strongly to ethnocentrism as well as to a number of its predictors. Interpretations for these findings relate to historical patterns, intergroup tensions, politics and economic fluctuations in the Netherlands as well as in Flanders.

The evolution of the party organizations in Belgium and in the Netherlands, 1960-1990

by Kris Deschouwer and Ruud Koole

Political parties are relatively young phenomena. Yet during their short life, they have changed quite a lot. Since 1960 there seems to be a 'defreezing' of the party systems, which means that the old traditional parties tend to decline, while new parties appear on the scene.

This article wants to describe the evolution of the party organizations in Belgium and in the Netherlands since 1960. It focuses on the question whether the traditional parties adapted in the way Kirchheimer expected, i.e. in becoming catch-all parties. It also tries to explain the rise and success of new parties as a challenge to traditional forms. This challenge might then be stronger when the traditional parties have problems to adapt. The latter seems to be more

the case in Belgium than in the Netherlands. The description of the parties deals with centralization, professionalization, membership, finance and ideology.

The Development of Corporative Welfare States in Belgium and the Netherlands

by Staf Helleman and Rita Schepers

This article compares the character and the trajectories of the welfare states in Belgium and the Netherlands over the past hundred years. Both welfare states are characterized as corporative (as opposed to liberal and etatist welfare states), i.e. by the vast presence of societal organizations in the direction and execution of the caring activities. This goes back to the strong impact in both Belgium and the Netherlands of the 'pillars' – i.e. impressive networks of organizations, expressing the ideological divisions.

Notwithstanding these similarities, there were also profound differences. They help us explain the widening gap after 1960 between the two countries as to the organization of welfare activities. Whereas fears are expressed in the Netherlands of a growing etatisation and commercialization of the depillarized 'middle field', in Belgium complaints are directed against the fragmentation of the (welfare) state by the ideologically weakened, but organizationally still viable pillars.

The impact of media policy on the structuring of the broadcasting system in Belgium and the Netherlands

by Jan Servaes and Louis Heinsman

This article assesses the impact of media policy on the structuring of the broadcasting system in Belgium and the Netherlands. It argues that, as a result of political deregulation and economic demonopolization, the public service broadcasting structure and philosophy has undergone major changes throughout the last decades. These changes, initiated by internal as well as external factors, have affected the organizational and finance structures, and the programming of public service broadcasting.

Therefore, in the late 70s and 80s, as a result of mainly commercial (in the Netherlands), or mainly political (in Flanders), or mixed (in the Walloon region) pressures, a more mixed system has been established: a *duopoly* in which the public service system has to compete with a commercial broadcasting system.

The market of leisure and pleasure: the rise of an autonomous youth culture in Belgium and the Netherlands

by Henk Kleijer, Rudi Laermans and Ger Tillekens

In the Post War period the rise of the modern consumer society coincides with the rise of the autonomous youth culture. Commonly both phenomena are explained by the attraction exerted by a new market of leisure and pleasure on new groups of consumers. Comparing the development of youth culture in Belgium and the Netherlands, the authors argue against this explanation. Given the differences between both countries, the modern consumer mentality seems to be a cultural solution of daily life problems caused by the rationalization of the social system, rather than an effect of consumer greed. The cultural form this new mentality took in youth culture, is slightly different for Belgium and the Netherlands. The developmental differences seem to depend largely on the modality of the professional attention which surrounds the world of youth. Therefore in future research the aspect of professionalization deserves more attention.