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Multilevel Modelling of Vlaams Blok Voting: Individual and Contextual Characteristics of the Vlaams Blok Vote

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Multilevel Modelling of *Vlaams Blok* Voting: Individual and Contextual Characteristics of the *Vlaams Blok* Vote

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Abstract

In this article we set out to improve our knowledge of voting for extreme right-wing parties, in this case the *Vlaams Blok*, by taking into account social background and contextual characteristics simultaneously. We tested five theories that provide explanations as to why certain social categories are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. The hypotheses are tested by means of multilevel analysis, using data from a national sample collected in 1995 (N=1,968). Between municipalities, large variances exist in the extent to which respondents voted for the *Vlaams Blok*. This is partly explained in terms of the number of ethnic minorities that live in the municipality.

1 Introduction

In November 1991, the Flemish voters caused an electoral breakthrough for one of Belgium's extreme right-wing parties, the *Vlaams Blok*. Party support soared to 9.7% of the Flemish votes, and the national election day became known as Black Sunday. In the general elections of 1995 and 1999, overall support for the *Vlaams Blok* increased even further to 12% and 15%, respectively. The demonstration organized by the party in January 2000 against the general pardon for illegal immigrants who had been living in Belgium for more than five years showed once again the basic image of the party, that is, one of intolerance towards out-groups.

Despite the electoral successes of the *Vlaams Blok*, relatively little attention has been paid to this phenomenon by social and political researchers, with the exception of Dutch-speaking researchers (Husbands 1992), especially compared to the attention given to the far weaker German *Republikaner*. Kitschelt (1995), although he himself left out Belgium in his comparative analyses, even asks for researchers to study the Flemish case. Recently, Swynge-

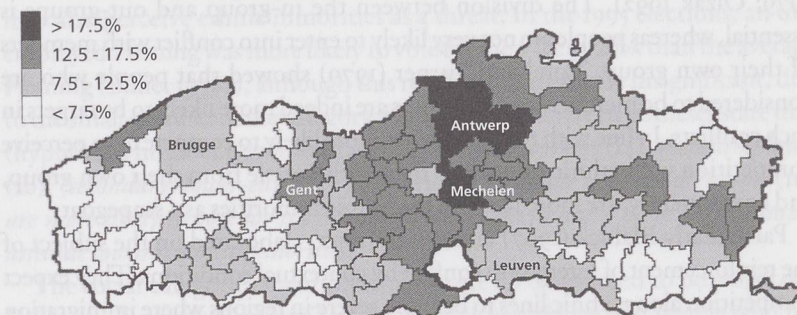
douw and Beerten (1996), Billiet et al. (1996), Billiet (1998a, 1998b), De Witte and Scheepers (1998), and Billiet and Loosveldt (1998) showed *either* who voted for the *Vlaams Blok* in the 1995 elections, *or* which political attitudes played a role for this party preference.¹ This research tradition has shown that certain social categories were more apt to vote for the extreme right-wing party: non-manual workers, secondary lower educated people, non-religious people and voters younger than 25, in particular, were more likely to do so. Furthermore, *Vlaams Blok* voters were found to be more ethnocentric, Flemish nationalistic, authoritarian and politically alienated. However, this line of research has hardly addressed the question why particular social categories vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, and combining the 'who' and 'why' questions.² Hence, our first goal in this article is to explain the preference of specific social categories for this extreme right-wing party, using the social-political attitudes that were previously found to be characteristic for the *Vlaams Blok* electorate (Billiet 1998a, 1998b; Billiet & Loosveldt 1998). By integrating these 'who' and 'why' questions with respect to voting for the extreme right-wing, we set out to test five theories which have a dominant position in recent extreme right-wing voting behaviour research (Kitschelt 1995; Winkler 1996; Tillie & Fennema 1998; Eatwell 1998; Meijerink, Mudde & van Holsteyn 1998; Mudde 1999; van der Brug, Fennema & Tillie 2000). We set out to do this in a way that is more thorough and complete than previous research.

The improvement is achieved partly because we also take into account characteristics of municipalities, therefore going beyond the micro-level.³ We set out to test whether contextual characteristics, which are considered to be important in shaping the extreme right-wing vote, are contributory in explaining *Vlaams Blok* voting behaviour, as there is very little previous work on the issue (Chapin 1997). Our test is based on multilevel analysis, a technique that allows simultaneous tests of individual and contextual effects. In short, this article will attempt to answer the questions: *which social and political attitudes make members of certain social groups more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok and which contextual characteristics, if any, are contributory in explaining voting for the Vlaams Blok?*

1.1 Regional variance in *Vlaams Blok* voting behaviour

The success of the *Vlaams Blok* started in the city of Antwerp, where it gained 4.7% of the votes in 1981 (De Witte & Scheepers 1998). Antwerp, the cradle of radical Flemish nationalism (De Witte 1998), developed itself as a bulwark of right-wing extremism. Today, the city is still the centre of the *Vlaams Blok* support in Flanders. With 26% of the votes in 1995 and 29% in 1999, the *Vlaams Blok* even surpassed all other parties in Antwerp. However, this

Figure 1 Regional variation in Vlaams Blok results at the 1995 general elections in Flanders



development is not limited to Antwerp alone, as Figure 1 illustrates. The party's central proposition that puts "our own people first" (Hossay 1995) attracted voters from all over the Flemish region, although there are large inter-municipal differences: compared to Antwerp, the *Vlaams Blok* scored 19 percentage points less in Leuven, the fourth city of Flanders.

Figure 1 shows that a pattern exists: the further a municipality is from Antwerp, the less support there is for the *Vlaams Blok*. The organization of the party and its implementation in the region seems to be very important when explaining the advance of the party into the Flemish region (De Witte 1998). Of course, there are other contextual characteristics that are expected to explain regional differences in extreme right-wing voting behaviour. In many previous studies, such contextual characteristics of neighbourhoods, regions and countries have been related to (aggregated) voting turnouts (Swyngedouw 1990; Betz 1994; Jackman & Volpert 1995; Kitschelt 1995; Anderson 1996; Husbands 1998). However, it is crucial to test contextual characteristics simultaneously with individual characteristics, not in isolation. This is not only because such a micro/macro approach fits the generally proposed theoretical models to explain extreme right-wing voting behaviour best (Kitschelt 1995; Winkler 1996; Eatwell 1998), but also because it allows the controlling of composition effects and spurious relations.

2 Theories and hypotheses

2.1 Theory of economic interests

The theory of economic interests predicts that scarcity is an important driving force for extreme right-wing parties, as Lipset also predicted (1961). The axiom, which has been put forward by theorists from the Realistic Conflict Theory tradition, is that people are in competition for scarce resources, and this could

reinforce intergroup conflict (Coser 1956; Blalock 1967; Austin & Worchel 1979; Olzak 1992). The division between the in-group and out-groups is essential, whereas people are not very likely to enter into conflict with members of their own group. Tajfel and Turner (1979) showed that people who are considered to be members of out-groups are indeed more likely to be targets in such conflicts. In line with this, people are more likely to compete or to perceive competition with ethnic minorities than with people from their own group, and consequently, are more likely to use ethnic minorities as a scapegoat.

Particularly Blalock (1967) and Olzak (1992) elaborated on the subject of the reinforcement of intergroup conflict by contextual conditions. They expect competition along ethnic lines to be more severe in regions where immigration and unemployment levels are high or in regions where the levels are increasing rapidly, either because there are absolutely more people competing for scarce resources or because there is less to share. Rapid increases in the rates of immigration and unemployment may come as a particular shock, and are widely perceived to deteriorate the social situation. Because in-group members fear their own socio-economic position, such competition eventually causes majority groups to react with exclusionary measures (Olzak 1992). The *Vlaams Blok* proposes such measures in its political programme and campaigning. Following these theoretical notions, we will test the following contextual level hypotheses: *people who live in municipalities where unemployment and immigration levels are high and/or where unemployment and the number of immigrants increases strongly are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok than those in municipalities where unemployment and immigration levels or growth thereof are low.*

We will test these macro-level hypotheses next to hypotheses at the individual level. In these hypotheses, the focus is on why certain social categories are more likely to vote for the extreme right wing. This theory also provides one reason why especially manual workers and the (secondary) less educated were found (Billiet 1998a) to be more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. As we continue to build on the notion of scarcity and the reaction to it, we may expect that in those sectors of the labour market where more ethnic minorities operate and more scarcity exists, more competition is likely to flare up. This could be an explanation why in previous research manual workers and the (secondary) lower educated are found to be more likely to vote for extreme right-wing parties.⁴ The working classes and the lesser-educated people may perceive a greater threat posed by ethnic minorities, and may have greater opposition, therefore, to ethnic immigration as well as the presence of ethnic minorities. Because the *Vlaams Blok*, and extreme right-wing parties in general, suggest that foreigners are related to a variety of problems and propose a restriction on immigration (Govaert 1995), workers and lower-educated people are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. The theory of economic interests

could also be valid for people with a low income, and for the unemployed who may also perceive ethnic minorities as a threat. In the 1995 elections, an unemployed Fleming was more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* than the average Fleming (Billiet 1998a), although this result was statistically insignificant, due to the small number of the category. Hence, our concrete hypotheses state that (hypothesis number between brackets): *manual workers (1a), the unemployed (1b), (secondary) lower-educated people (1c), and people with a low income (1d) are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok, as they have a more unfavourable attitude towards ethnic minorities.*

The social categories mentioned above are all considered to be worse off. Following Realistic Conflict Theory, we may also derive that people who *feel* worse off may react analogously. Actually, Maddens (1995) showed that voters' perceptions of the economy are important predictors of election outcomes. Because of this we expect that people who experience a discrepancy between their actual and subjectively claimed socio-economic position (Winkler 1996) may perceive ethnic minorities as a threat. Consequently, they will be more likely to have an unfavourable attitude towards ethnic minorities and will be more likely, therefore, to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. Our hypotheses state that: *(1e) people who perceive deprivation in their present socio-economic situation, or (1f) expect deprivation in their future socio-economic situation, are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok, as they hold a more unfavourable attitude towards ethnic minorities.*

2.2 Theory of psychological interests

Another explanation for the overrepresentation of the displaced social categories among the extreme right-wing electorate (Lipset 1961) is given by the classic study of the Authoritarian Personality (Adorno et al. 1950). Its basic, somewhat controversial, idea is that people have deep-lying interests, i.e., authoritarian attitudes that make them more likely to vote for extreme right-wing parties. The need for a strong authority may stem from childhood, but it may also be produced by bad socio-economic conditions that could restrict the fulfilment of desires, which in turn creates frustration (Fromm 1942; Baars & Scheepers 1993). To deal with frustration, people are likely to submit themselves to strong authorities or strong traditional norms, as well as to subordinate supposedly powerless people to themselves. The *Vlaams Blok* probably suits this psychological need, as its programme refers to traditional norms and harder punishment, whereas at the same time immigrants are accused of causing various social problems (*Vlaams Blok* on line 1999).

The theory may be applicable to the social categories mentioned above, as these are more likely to experience frustration. Previous evidence for this

hypothesis was put forward by Scheepers et al. (1990).⁵ Hence, we formulate the following hypotheses: *manual workers* (2a), *unemployed people* (2b), *secondary lower-educated people* (2c), *people with a low income* (2d), *as well as people who perceive deprivation in their present socio-economic situation* (2e), *or people who expect deprivation in their future socio-economic situation* (2f) *are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok, as they favour authoritarian attitudes.*

2.3 Social disintegration theory

The theorists of social disintegration theory have suggested another social attitude to explain why certain social categories would be more likely to vote for extreme right-wing parties. As long ago as the 1950s, scientists such as Arendt and Bendix argued that 'atomization in society' could have led people in the 1930s to vote for the NSDAP. Less people had bindings with intermediary institutions such as the churches and the unions than in the past. As a consequence, young people were more likely to be disintegrated from these institutions. They argued that disintegration is especially likely to take place in times of socio-economic crisis. Scheuch and Klingemann (1967) also followed the notion of disintegration, but they saw it foremost as the result of a fast changing society and the high mobility that demands.

The general notion of disintegration theory may be traced back to Durkheim's (1897) work on anomie and social disintegration. Its core states that the more people are integrated in a social group, the more likely they are to follow the norms and values of the group to which they belong (or feel they belong) (Ultee et al. 1996). According to this theory, those who are members of churches or unions are restricted from voting for extreme right-wing parties, as the institutions spread the norm that their members should vote for Christian and social-democratic parties respectively. The question remains, however, why an extreme right-wing party would be an attractive option for disintegrated people.

Social Identity Theory may provide an answer to this question. Central to the theory is the axiom that every human being needs to belong to a group in order to develop a positive (self-)identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979; Tajfel 1981). Therefore, people who lack social integration search for "substitute forms of integration" (Kornhauser 1960). Extreme right-wing ideology provides one of these forms: nationalism. Through symbols and overt nationalism, extreme right-wing parties provide the idea of belonging to a group (Cheles 1995), in the case of the *Vlaams Blok*, the Flemish in-group.

This theory could explain why non-religious and young people are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* (Billiet 1998a). It could also be a motive for non-union members and people who are intergenerationally mobile to vote

for extreme right-wing parties. Intergenerational mobility, whether upward or downward, implies social disintegration from the social institutions to which one belonged, inducing the need for new 'substitute forms of integration', presumably provided by nationalistic slogans of extreme right-wing parties. Thus our hypotheses state that: *non-religious people* (3a), *non-union-members* (3b), *young people* (3c), *and people who are intergenerationally mobile* (3d) *are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok, as nationalism, such as that proclaimed by the Vlaams Blok, appeals to them.*

2.4 The protest vote

A widely accepted idea, especially in the media but also among social scientists, is that extreme right-wing parties gain from political protest (Mayer & Perrineau 1992; Stouthuysen 1993; Klein & Falter 1996; Karapin 1998). From this point of view, voters for extreme right-wing parties express only political dissatisfaction, and not necessarily approval of the racist or nationalistic part of the extreme right-wing programme. The question which has been brought to fore is, of course, why do pure protest voters choose for an extreme right-wing party rather than for another opposition party (Eatwell 1998)? Previous research has shown that extreme right-wing voters do subscribe to programmatic issues other than political protest of the parties (Brug, Fennema & Tillie 2000). However, this does not make the political protest approach useless (Lubbers & Scheepers 2000a). An analysis of open questions as to why respondents voted for the party of their choice showed that 20% of the Flemish *Vlaams Blok* voters did so because of political powerlessness (Scheepers et al. 1995). Mayer and Perrineau (1992) found empirical evidence that *Front National* sympathizers principally voted for this party because of protest and not because of ideological preferences. Extreme right-wing voters in the Dutch city of Haarlem mentioned in interviews that their votes arose out of dissatisfaction with the policies of established political parties (Holsteyn 1990).

With respect to the *Vlaams Blok* voters, we expect that mainly individuals who are in a subjectively perceived bad socio-economic situation oppose established parties, are dissatisfied with politics, feel more powerless, and consequently, are more likely to vote for extreme right-wing parties. People who are content with their situation will probably be less dissatisfied with the pursued policies, and are less likely to oppose the political system. Our hypotheses state that: *people who perceive deprivation in their present socio-economic situation* (4a), *or who expect deprivation in their future socio-economic situation* (4b), *are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok, as they are more dissatisfied politically.*

2.5 Welfare state hypothesis

Kitschelt (1995) emphasized the importance of someone's social experiences, especially in the labour market, to explain why, in several studies, manual workers were found to be more likely to vote for extreme right-wing parties. A major change during the second half of the 20th century consisted of growing international competition in the labour market. This change, according to Kitschelt, made manual workers, who traditionally voted for social-democratic parties (Nieuwbeerta 1995), switch to the extreme right-wing parties, because they no longer considered that further redistributive governmental policies served their interests. Especially in societies where "comprehensive welfare states exist that absorb considerable resources in order to protect citizens from downward mobility" (Kitschelt 1995: 6), workers may have become attracted to liberal market capitalism, traditionally proclaimed by conservative or liberal parties. Kitschelt argues that manual workers might prefer extreme right-wing parties to traditional conservative right-wing parties as the former's racist and authoritarian stances, which are less obviously present with the latter parties, may also be attractive. Kitschelt tested his hypothesis by comparing the voters for the extreme right-wing to all other voters with respect to market-liberalism and finds support for his hypothesis in Austria, Denmark, France, Italy (*Legu Nord*) and Norway. In the latter two countries the 'new radical right' is even more market oriented than the moderate right.

However, Kitschelt's interpretation remains problematic, particularly when we take the political programmes of the European extreme right into account. The *Vlaams Blok* does indeed ask for a restrictive governmental role in society: it proposes privatizing governmental institutions and minimizing the fiscal burden on companies and small independents. However, at the same time the *Vlaams Blok* suggests protection of certain strategic branches of the economy (*Vlaams Blok* on line 1999). The general criticism of Kitschelt's thesis is that many extreme right-wing parties abandoned their explicit pro-market liberalist stances in the 1990s for a more governmentally regulated policy (Minkenberg 1997; Schain 1997). The support of market liberalism may therefore be interpreted as a decrease in support of redistributive measures, as such a decrease could be "the only way to deprive immigrants and asylum-seekers from welfare benefits", which was put forward in Kitschelt's final chapter on the welfare state (1995:259).⁶ A crucial test of Kitschelt's hypothesis, now, is to compare the electorate of the *Vlaams Blok* to that of the social democrats. After all, manual workers with a market liberal attitude would have switched from the left to the extreme right-wing. Therefore, we formulate the hypothesis (5a) that: *manual workers who support market liberalism are more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok than for the Socialist Party.*

3 Data and measurement instruments

To test our hypotheses, we made use of the two-stage sampled General Election Study of 1995 from ISPO (Interuniversity Support for Political Opinion Research), in which characteristics and attitudes of 1968 respondents from 127 Flemish municipalities are stored. Figures concerning the (changes in the) unemployment rates and the (changes in the) number of immigrants in each of these municipalities were collected from various offices.⁷ Unemployment rates ranged from 4.4% to 19% in Maasmechelen.⁸ The number of immigrants varied from 0% to 10.6% in the former mining region of Maasmechelen.

With respect to party choice, the dependent variable, respondents were asked directly which party they had voted for at the chamber election of 21 May 1995. 11.1% of voters (including non-voters) said they had voted for the *Vlaams Blok*, which is rather close to the real results (12.5%). Note that in the binomial analysis the dependent variable is voting for the *Vlaams Blok* versus not voting for the *Vlaams Blok*.

In Appendix 1, the social background characteristics are reported. In the original dataset, an occupation variable has been constructed out of the respondent's description of his or her occupation at the time of the interview. The answers were categorized in the GIBS-classification (Beerten et al. 1997) and reduced to the following classification: executives and professionals, white-collar workers, the self-employed, and blue-collar workers. Those who were not professionally active were considered to be a separate category. From this last category we filtered the unemployed as another category. Furthermore, the skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers were placed in one category as manual workers. We transformed the education variable into a four-category variable that runs from lower to higher education comparable to the one constructed by Billiet (1998a). We made use of the pre-constructed household income variable, with three income categories and one category for people who did not answer the questions concerning income. Unfortunately, intergenerational occupational mobility could not be measured, as the data on the occupation of the parents were missing. As a proxy for mobility, we used the respondent's comparison of her or his own living situation with that of her or his parents. If this situation was better (51.5%) or worse (11.6%), we coded it as having gone upwards or downwards compared to the parents, whereas respondents who indicated that their living situation was the same were coded 'stable' (26.9%). Another 10% did not or could not answer this question and have been included in the analysis as a separate 'missing' category. Job insecurity was measured by the question whether one thought there was a chance of becoming unemployed within the next six months, either for the respondent or another family member. The variables not discussed (church involvement, age, union membership and gender) are either pre-constructed

or measured straightforwardly. A detailed description of the data is given by Beerten et al. (1997).

Appendix 2 presents the formulation of the items with which socio-political scales are constructed. *Deprivation in the present situation* is considered to measure the perceived socio-economic situation of the respondent: 7.3% of the respondents claimed not to have enough money or barely enough money to live. Factor analysis of the four items (Appendix 1) after transformation into items of similar scale range and similar direction of meaning supported this. The computed scale is rather weak with $\alpha=.57$. We constructed a scale with z -scores (average of zero and standard deviation of 1), and again with respect to the other ordinal variables, in order to be able to compare the results of analyses.

The *unfavourable out-group attitude* is measured with eight items concerning the presence of guest workers, Muslims and immigrants (Appendix 2). The greatest agreement (57.8%) was found with respect to the stereotype "Guest workers come here to take advantage of our social security system." Furthermore, 40% think that Muslims are a threat to culture and customs, and 40% believe that guest workers that have been living in Belgium for decades should be repatriated when the number of jobs decreases. A factor analysis on the eight items showed a clear one-dimensional structure. The items measuring *authoritarianism* are often used in international research. They refer to law and order and to authority: 25.2% of the population agrees with the idea "what we need are strong leaders who tell us what to do." Flemish nationalism (*not* Belgian nationalism, as the *Vlaams Blok* is a Flemish party and is concerned with Flemish interests) was measured with five different items concerning the identification with Flanders. Because not all items are measured with the same scale range, the items were first transformed to comparable scales. Those scales together formed the single scale of *Flemish nationalism*. *Political dissatisfaction* was measured with items referring to distrust in politicians and to political powerlessness. Finally, *market liberalism* was measured with items concerning privatization and taxes and whether the government should reduce income differentials, so that the variable is close to the one formulated by Kitschelt (1995).

4 Method of analysis

To test our hypotheses we used multilevel analysis. This analysis technique allows us to test individual characteristics (of respondents) and contextual characteristics (of municipalities) simultaneously and gives information on the variance in extreme right-wing voting at the contextual level (*between-variance*). By introducing characteristics of context, we find out whether variance is explained by the theoretically proposed characteristics of the

municipalities, whereas the introduction of characteristics at the individual level makes it possible to control for composition effects at the contextual level. This is particularly interesting since we are testing theories that make predictions at both the individual and the contextual levels. Multilevel analysis is furthermore crucial, because it deals with dependent observations, which result from a two stage (or multistage) sample (Snijders & Bosker 1999: 7). This applies to the data we are using (first a sample of communities, then of respondents). Neglecting the multilevel structure may lead to various errors, for example, shift of meaning and ecological fallacy in cases of aggregation, and risks of type I errors in cases of disaggregation (Snijders & Bosker 1999: 13). As we deal with a binomial dependent response variable, i.e., voting for the *Vlaams Blok* versus another party or not voting, we performed logistic regression (within the program *MlwiN*), with second order penalized quasi-likelihood (PQL) estimation (Rasbash et al. 1999: 105).⁹

Because some of the social background variables are related to economic position, we controlled for multicollinearity in our models. The diagnostics are satisfactory; the Condition Index is quite large (15), but it does not exceed the criterion of 30 (Belsley 1980: 105). Especially categories of occupation scored on the same dimension as the dummies of the variable job insecurity. Although the contextual variables 'number of ethnic minorities' and 'unemployment rate' are highly correlated (.73), they do not cause problems of collinearity.

For the interpretation of the models, a positive parameter β of an intermediate metric variable which is significant at the $\alpha < .05$ level denotes that the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* increases, when one considers the independent variable. When β is negative, the probability decreases. For the independent categorical variables (such as occupation, gender and denomination) the parameter β can be interpreted as the deviation in probability that a certain category will vote for the *Vlaams Blok* as compared to the predicted intercept of the population (Pelzer 1991).¹⁰ A positive parameter refers to an increase in the probability that a certain category will vote for the *Vlaams Blok* as compared to the average probability, and a negative coefficient denotes a decreased probability.

5 Results: *Vlaams Blok* voting from an individual and a contextual perspective

In Table 1 below we present the logistic regression parameters from four models. The *null-model* states the percentage of voters for the *Vlaams Blok*, controlled for variation over municipalities. The variance parameter ($\Omega_u = .45$) shows significant variation between municipalities. The extra-binomial

Table 1 Models 0 to III: Multilevel variance components and logistic regression parameters b, expressing the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. Models IIIA to IIID: Unstandardized regression coefficients (b). ISPO 1995 Election data, N=1,968, ** p<.01; * .05<p<.01.

Models	0	I	II	III	IIIA	IIIB	IIIC	IIID
Vlaams Blok versus:					Outgr.	Autho.	Flem.N.	Pol.dis.
<i>Constant</i>	-2.77	-3.03	-2.92	-3.68				
Social background Characteristics								
<i>Occupation</i>								
Manual workers	.60**	.59**	.22		.31**	.13*	.01	.17*
Self-employed	-.13	-.12	-.69		.32**	.15*	-.14	.15
White collar workers	.25	.22	.30		.11	-.02	-.15	.07
Executive professional	-.18	-.20	.14		-.08	-.18*	.13	.02
Unemployed	.27	.29	.30		-.04	.00	.12	-.05
Otherwise not working	-.34	-.32	-.16		-.24*	-.02	.01	-.15
<i>Education</i>								
Lower educated	.16	.15	-.11		.31**	.19**	-.20**	.21**
Secondary lower educated	.42**	.43**	.37*		.16**	.11**	.01	.13**
Secondary higher educated	-.18	-.18	-.12		-.13**	-.05	.09*	-.07*
Higher educated	-.27*	-.27*	-.05		-.35**	-.25**	.13*	-.27**
<i>Income</i>								
Less than 60,000Bfr	-.06	-.07	-.07		.01	.08**	-.07	.02
60,000-100,000Bfr	.16	.17	.25*		-.01	-.02	.01	-.01
More than 100,000Bfr	-.19	-.19	-.35		-.05	-.06	.14*	-.03
No answer	-.06	-.06	-.38		.11	.01	-.09	.03
<i>Deprivation in present day situation</i>	.26*	.26*	.16		.11**	.00	.04	.23**
<i>Expected future deprivation</i>								
Little or no insecurity	-.24	-.22	-.02		-.12	-.01	-.02	-.15*
A lot of insecurity	.64*	.65*	.85**		.01	.02	-.01	-.03
No job (missing)	.16	.15	-.07		.13	.01	.02	.17*
<i>Denomination</i>								
Catholic	-.16	-.15	-.18		.03	.06*	.04	-.08*
Marginal Christian	.19	.18	.10		.07*	.05*	.03	.13**
Free Thinking	-.41	-.43	-.27		-.31**	-.32**	-.26**	-.18**
Non-religious	.34	.33	.34		-.06	-.13**	-.13	.08

Models	0	I	II	III	IIIA	IIIB	IIIC	IIID
Vlaams Blok versus:					Outgr.	Autho.	Flem.N.	Pol.dis.
<i>Age</i>								
18-26		.53**	.54**	.83**	-.08	-.34**	.01	-.13**
27-34		.08	.07	.34	-.18**	-.30**	-.09	-.15**
35-44		-.16	-.15	.21	-.23**	-.25**	-.09	-.07
45-54		-.53**	-.53**	-.65**	.00	.08*	.10	.04
55-64		-.11	-.12	-.59**	.27**	.47**	.03	.12*
65+		.25	.25	.23	.35**	.46**	.06	.10
<i>Union membership</i>								
Yes		-.10	-.10	-.10	-.03	-.00	.02	-.05
No		.06	.06	.06	.02	.00	-.01	.03
<i>Mobility</i>								
Stable		-.27	-.27	-.27	-.03	.00	-.03	.02
Downward/Upward		.11	.10	.09	.01	-.00	.04	-.01
No answer		-.15	-.13	-.11	.02	.00	-.17	.01
<i>Gender</i>								
Male		.25**	.24**	.33**	-.08**	.02	.10**	-.04
Female		-.25**	-.24**	-.33**	.09**	-.02	-.11**	.04
Contextual Characteristics								
Unemployment 1995			-.09	.14	-.09**	-.05	-.10**	.02
Change in unemployment 1991-1995			.21	.24	.01	-.04	-.01	-.00
Ethnic minorities 1995			.40*	.34*	.06	.00	.07	-.04
Ethnic minorities 1992-1995			.03	-.01	.03	-.02	.03	.01
Attitudes								
Out-group attitude				1.02**				
Authoritarianism				.20				
Flemish nationalism				.42**				
Political dissatisfaction				.40**				
Variance Components								
Municipality level	.45**	.63**	.46**	.34**	.001	.012	.022*	.008
Individual level	.90	.85	.89	.81	.803	.646	.917	.800
<i>R²dicho</i>	.11	.25	.26	.36	R2.20	.34	.06	.19

variation estimation of .90 is a sign of underdispersion. This implies that the model does not fit the binomial assumption. Because of this, we continued our estimation with the relaxation of this binomial assumption, which hardly affects the estimations of the fixed part of the model (Jones et al. 1992).

In *model I* the social background characteristics are introduced. In binomial models, the level 2 variance is expected to increase somewhat (Snijders & Bosker 1999). This is the case in our model. The municipality level variance increases to .63. In *model I*, we find that manual workers, secondary lower educated, young people and men are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, as was found in previous studies by Billiet (1998a). However, we also find that the subjectively perceived socio-economic situation is important in predicting the extreme right-wing vote. The stronger a person's feeling of deprivation in the present situation, the greater the probability that that person will vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. The same holds for future job insecurity. The fear of losing one's job greatly increases the probability of voting for the *Vlaams Blok*. *Model II* presents the inclusion of the contextual characteristics. We expected that the inclusion of these characteristics would reduce the variance of the municipality level. This happens to be the case: the parameter drops to .46. However, the parameter remains highly significant. Even after controlling for the number of ethnic immigrants and unemployment as well as changes in these numbers, there are still differences between Flemish municipalities in the extent to which people voted for the *Vlaams Blok*. *Model II* shows that only the number of ethnic minorities has a significant effect ($\beta = .40$): the greater the number of ethnic minorities in 1995 in a municipality, the greater the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. The other hypotheses concerning the contextual characteristics are not supported. It is interesting to note that unemployment has no significant effect. Support for the *Vlaams Blok* is not necessarily higher in the municipalities where unemployment is high. Multilevel analysis in Germany, France and the Netherlands showed a similar non-significant effect of the unemployment rate (Eisinga et al. 1998; Lubbers & Scheepers 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). We also tested for interaction effects between the contextual characteristics. None of the interaction effects proved to be significant (these numbers are not represented in the table).

In *model III* the intermediary variables are added: out-group attitude, authoritarian attitude, Flemish nationalism and political dissatisfaction. Note that the variance between the municipalities is further explained in this model. This implies that differences between communities in opinion climate partly explain *Vlaams Blok* support.¹¹ Moreover, note that the effect of the presence of ethnic minorities decreases too (from .40 to .34), implying that the included attitudes do have intermediate contextual effects, at least to some extent, on the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*.

To test the hypotheses formulated at the individual level, we compare *model*

III with *model II*. In line with conventional path-analysis (Davis 1985), we conclude that if the effects of the independent variables on voting for the *Vlaams Blok* decrease or disappear after controlling for the impact of the attitudes (*model III*), the differences in the support of the attitudes are partly or completely responsible for the effects of the social background characteristics in *model II* (Billiet 1995). To find out precisely which attitude explains why certain social categories are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, unstandardized regression coefficients derived from linear regression are shown in the *models IIIA to IIID*, in which the attitudes function as dependent variables.

In *model II* we find that manual workers are more likely than average to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* ($\beta = .59$). If the attitudes are to have some explanatory power, the parameter of manual workers in *model II* has to approach zero, or at least decline compared to *model I*. This is the case: the parameter falls to $\beta = .22$ and becomes non-significant. This implies that the attitudes explain why manual workers are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. More specifically, we expected the political preference of manual workers to be explained in terms of an unfavourable attitude towards out-groups (hypothesis 1a) or in terms of an authoritarian attitude (hypothesis 2a). In *model IIIA* we find that hypothesis 1a is accepted, because manual workers do indeed hold a more unfavourable attitude towards out-groups ($b = .31$). However, as authoritarianism does not increase the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, hypothesis 3a is refuted. Moreover, all hypotheses in which it is proposed that authoritarianism will reinforce a vote for the *Vlaams Blok* are, due to non-significance, not proven (hypotheses 3a to 3f). It turns out that manual workers are also more likely to be dissatisfied with politics (*model IIID*; $b = .17$).

We know from previous research that the unemployed (hypothesis 1b) are not more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* (Billiet 1998a). This can also be found in *model II*. However, the parameter ($\beta = .27$) is in the expected direction; its non-significance might be due to the small number of unemployed people in the data. Bearing this in mind, the political attitudes still do not explain why the unemployed are somewhat more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, as the parameter β increases in *model III* to .47. We have to refute hypotheses 1b and 2b, in which we expected that the unemployed would be more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*.

The greater probability that the secondary lower educated will vote for the *Vlaams Blok* is partly explained in terms of the attitudes, as in *model III* the parameter decreases to .37. This decrease is explained in terms of the unfavourable attitude towards out-groups (*model IIIA*; .16), as we expected in hypothesis 1c, but also because of political dissatisfaction among the secondary lower educated (*model IIID*; .13). The lowest educated are, however, are even less favourable towards out-groups and even more politically dissatisfied. Nevertheless, they are not more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. This is the

reason why the parameter for the lowest educated in *model III* turns negative. People with the lowest income are not more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* ($\beta = -.07$). This falsifies the hypotheses in which we formulated that people with the lowest incomes are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* because of their unfavourable attitude towards ethnic minorities or because of their authoritarian attitude, hypotheses 1d and 2d respectively.

The predictions concerning the subjectively perceived deprivation in the present situation or in the future with respect to one's job do hold. Both variables have strong effects on extreme right-wing voting behaviour. The effect of deprivation in the present situation on the logit voting for the *Vlaams Blok* versus not voting for this party is equal to $\beta = .26$. In *model III*, the effect of deprivation in the present situation falls to .16, and becomes non-significant. In *models IIIA* and *IIID*, we find that this is caused by the unfavourable attitude towards out-groups of people who perceive deprivation in their present situation ($b = .11$), as we formulated in hypothesis 1e, and because of their political dissatisfaction ($b = .23$), as was put forward in hypothesis 4a. Therefore, both hypotheses are as yet accepted.

The effect of the category of people who perceive a lot of insecurity with respect to their jobs is strong ($\beta = .65$). Yet, those insecure people do not seem to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* because of the theoretically proposed political attitudes, as this parameter even increases in *model III* (to $\beta = .85$). This implies that there must be other social-political attitudes not covered in our hypotheses that may add to the explanation why people who are afraid to lose their job are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*.

With respect to the other categories about which we formulated hypotheses – the non-religious, the non-union-members, the young and the intergenerationally mobile people – we can be brief. Although Billiet (1998a) found a significant effect of the non-religious to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, we do not.¹² None of the distinguished categories of denomination deviate significantly from the predicted average probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, however, this does not mean that denomination has no effect. It may well be possible that the non-religious are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* than the Catholics. Nevertheless, even if this difference was significant it could not be explained in terms of Flemish nationalism, because non-religious people subscribe less to Flemish nationalism ($b = -.13$). Furthermore, only the young are significantly more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* when compared to the average probability to do so ($\beta = .54$). Flemish nationalism does not explain, however, why the young are more likely to vote for the party (*model IIIC*; $b = .01$). In fact, none of the included social-political attitudes explains this. Therefore, we have to refute hypotheses 3a to 3d, in which we formulated that disintegrated categories would be more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, because Flemish nationalism appeals to them.

Finally, men are very dominantly present among the *Vlaams Blok* electorate ($\beta = .26$). This is no exception compared to other European extreme right-wing electorates. Men are more likely to subscribe to Flemish nationalism ($b = .10$), which is in line with expectations proposed by Rippl (1999), but, surprisingly, they hold less unfavourable attitudes towards out-groups than women ($b = -.08$).

6 Multinomial modelling of the extreme right-wing vote

Next to binomial logistic regression, even more information can be derived from the multinomial approach, in which we compare the *Vlaams Blok* electorate with the Christian *CVP*, the liberal *VLD*, the *Volksunie*, the social-democrat *SP*, the environmentalist *Agalev*, and with the non-voters. Results from such analyses tell us to what extent social background characteristics and attitudes are indeed specific to the *Vlaams Blok* electorate. Billiet (1998b) showed this with respect to attitudes to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* in the 1995 elections. He found that non-voters were more dissatisfied politically than *Vlaams Blok* voters, whereas this cannot be shown in a binomial logistic regression. With multinomial analyses we are also capable of testing hypothesis 5, in which Kitschelt's hypothesis is formulated. Although it is not our intention – nor is it possible – to sum up all combinations of characteristics that belong to the various electorates, a multinomial approach gives additional information on extreme right-wing voting behaviour. We have to remark, however, that this method of multinomial multilevel analysis is relatively new, and as yet far from ideal. Although we can test the effects, including the contextual characteristics, the variance components in complex models are unreliable and in this case are estimated zero in the full model.

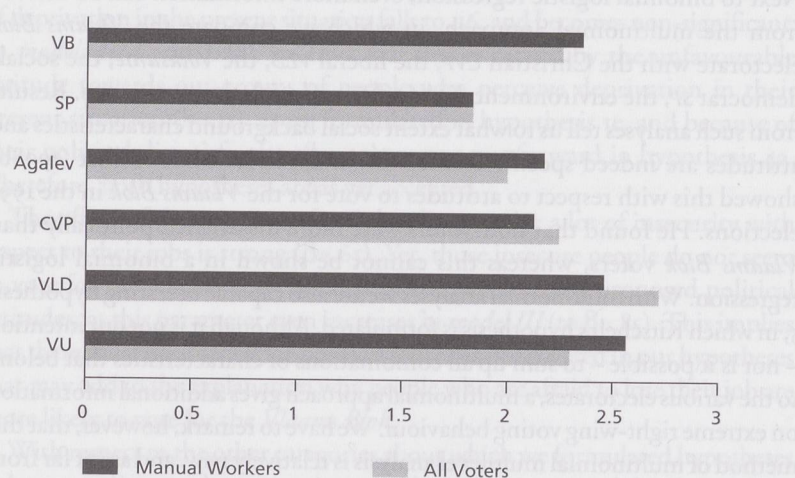
The results of the multinomial analyses are contained in Appendix 3, in which the *Vlaams Blok* is the reference category. The signs of the parameters are just in the opposite direction compared to the parameters derived from the binary logistic regression. This means that in multinomial logistic regression, a *negative effect* indicates that the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* increases for the concerned category and, consequently, that the probability to vote for the party with which the *Vlaams Blok* is compared decreases.

In *model I* of Appendix 3, we find the estimations of the multinomial intercept-model without any explanatory variables. The results show particular variation in *Vlaams Blok* voting versus *Volksunie* voting and in *Vlaams Blok* voting versus non-voting. In other words, in communities where the *Volksunie* scores well or where the proportion of non-voters is relatively high, the *Vlaams Blok* scores relatively low.

Model II presents the full model, with all explanatory variables. With these

results we can also test hypothesis 5, in which we formulated that manual workers who support market liberalism are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* versus the social democrats, as proposed by Kitschelt (1995). Basic statistics already show that manual workers voting for the *Vlaams Blok* are more market liberal than manual workers voting for the Socialist Party (Figure 2). These descriptives show that only manual workers who voted *VLD* and *Volksumie* have greater support for market liberal attitudes than manual workers who voted *Vlaams Blok*.

Figure 2 Support for market liberalism among the various electorates and manual workers within those electorates.



In the multinomial analysis we find a comparable result. Being a manual worker increases the probability to vote for the *SP* when compared to the *Vlaams Blok* ($\beta = .44$). At the same time, a more market liberal attitude decreases the probability to vote for the *SP* versus the *Vlaams Blok* ($\beta = -.51$). This implies that with an average market liberal attitude, manual workers are significantly more likely to vote for the *SP* when compared to the *Vlaams Blok*. But when manual workers have a more than average market liberal attitude, the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* increases and the probability to vote for the social democrat *SP* decreases. This does not refute the hypothesis formulated by Kitschelt, who expected that manual workers who were more market oriented would turn their backs on the social democrats and favour an extreme right-wing party.

To conclude we want to discuss the effects of the contextual characteristics in the multinomial analyses. The effects of the change of unemployment level and the number of ethnic minorities are rather uni-dimensional. In communities where unemployment increases rapidly, the probability to vote

for the *Vlaams Blok* increases at the expense of all other parties, although this is not the case when compared to non-voting. In other words, the percentage of non-voters and *Vlaams Blok* voters is relatively large in communities where the unemployment level has increased strongly. The number of ethnic minorities causes an increase in the percentage of *Vlaams Blok* versus all other parties but the Greens. The level of unemployment decreases the probability to vote for the *Vlaamse Unie* versus *Vlaams Blok*, whereas a strong increase in the number of ethnic minorities increases voting for the *Vlaams Blok* only when compared to the *CVP*, the *Volksumie* and the non-voters.

7 Education and the *Vlaams Blok*

The finding that not the lowest but the secondary lower educated are most likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* needs to be addressed in greater depth. We found that the lowest educated were most unfavourable towards out-groups but not significantly more likely than average to vote for the extreme right wing. Note, however, that they are still more likely to do so than those who are educated to secondary higher and higher level: if one were to take the category 'highest educated' as reference category in the analyses, the results would not refute the hypothesis that 'the lowest educated are more likely to vote *Vlaams Blok*, because they are more likely to hold an unfavourable attitude'. Furthermore, we found in an additional random slope analysis that the effect of the lowest educated varies between communities and that there is a significant positive interaction with the number of ethnic minorities. The question, however, is more likely to be solved by answering the question 'Why were the lowest educated more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* in 1991, but not in 1995?' Although it is somewhat beyond the scope of the initial research question, this is certainly the question that comes to mind if one takes these findings into account. As there are panel data available (for 1991 and 1995), we can track the voting preference of the educational categories.

A first possible explanation could be, that there are measurement errors due to a high drop-out rate among the lowest educated as well as among *Vlaams Blok* voters in panel analyses. However, this explanation is rejected as the data collectors took this into account when they sampled the data (Beerten et al. 1997). Indeed, Table 2 shows that in 1991 the percentage of lowest educated people who voted for the *Vlaams Blok* was higher among panel members (11.1%) than among all respondents in 1991 (9.2%).

The striking result shown in this table, is that the percentage of *Vlaams Blok* voters among the lowest educated panel respondents dropped dramatically from 11.1% in 1991 to 7.3% in 1995. At the same time, among the secondary lower educated panel respondents the percentage of extreme right-wing voters

Table 2 Percentages of Vlaams Blok voters among the lowest and secondary lower educated in 1991 and 1995

Sample:	Total 1991-data (including drop- outs)	Panel respondents (in 1991 and 1995 data)		Total 1995-data (also new sampled respondents)	new sampled respondents 1995 (new voters)
	1991	1991	1995	1995	1995
Vlaams Blok vote among:					
Lowest educated	9.2	11.1	7.3	8.6	11.6
Secondary lower educated	9.1	9.2	11.6	12.6	15.5

increased from 9.2% in 1991 to 11.6% in 1995. This tendency progressed within the newly sampled respondents (including young people who had not been eligible to vote in 1991): 11.6% of the lowest educated voted *Vlaams Blok*, but 15.5% of the secondary lower educated.

Of the lowest educated people who voted for the *Vlaams Blok* in 1991 (46 respondents) only 25% voted for the party again in the 1995 elections, another 25% chose the Socialist Party, whereas the votes of the other 50% were spread almost evenly among the other options. For the other educational categories the percentage of 'stable *Vlaams Blok* voters' is much higher: around the 50%. A possible explanation for these changes could be that the economic situation deteriorated, particularly for the secondary lower educated, whereas it did not for the lowest educated. The ISPO 1991 and 1995 data provide evidence for this: unemployment among the lowest educated increased only a little from 8.3% to 8.9%, whereas it increased dramatically among the secondary lower educated from 5.9% in 1991 to 8.8% in 1995.

8 Conclusion and discussion

In this article we set out to answer the question: *which social and political attitudes made members of certain social groups more likely to vote for the Vlaams Blok at the 1995 elections?* Furthermore, we improved upon previous research by taking into account multilevel characteristics. Next, by using multilevel analysis we answered the question: *do contextual characteristics, considered important in previous research, contribute to the explanation of voting for the Vlaams Blok?* This use of multilevel analysis is a necessary and innovative step in the analysis of voting behaviour when answering questions about contextual effects.

Testing various theories in one analysis, together with more levels of

analyses, is essential for building and testing general theories of extreme right-wing voting behaviour (Winkler 1996; Eatwell 1998). Controlling for various effects at the same time maximizes the chance of finding spurious relations and minimizes the likelihood of corroborating hypotheses that are in fact refuted.

Our research showed that the *Theory of Economic Interests* can offer an explanation why certain disadvantaged categories are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. For people who experience deprivation in the present situation, for secondary lower educated people and for manual workers, we found that their unfavourable attitude towards ethnic out-groups explains why they are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. Our interpretation is that these groups are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* as they are more likely to perceive ethnic out-groups as competitors for scarce resources, and consequently develop unfavourable attitudes towards them. However, this does not hold for the unemployed. The overrepresentation of these social categories could not be explained by the *Theory of Psychological Interests* in the Flemish situation, because the effect of the authoritarian attitude was not significant.

With respect to the *Social Disintegration Theory*, we found some evidence that disintegration from intermediary institutions increases the probability to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. Particularly younger people are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. However, nationalism offers no explanation why certain supposedly disintegrated categories are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*. Scheepers et al. (1995), Billiet (1998a) and Lubbers & Scheepers (2000a) found similar results. As a result all hypotheses pertaining to socio-political attitudes derived from the Social Disintegration Theory are not supported. The core of this theory is quite seriously under pressure, as we found that disintegrated people are not motivated to vote for extreme right-wing parties by a need for 'substitute forms of integration'. Instead, as Billiet (1995) argued, disintegrated categories might be more likely to emphasize "individual freedom, non-conformism with respect to traditional norms, rejection of moral authorities, refusal of compromises in politics and a desire for social change." Despite the finding that Flemish nationalism is a strong predictor of extreme right-wing voting behaviour, further research should focus on non-conformism as an explanation why disintegrated categories vote for extreme right-wing parties.

The hypotheses formulated with respect to *Protest Voting*, that people who perceive deprivation in the present situation are more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* because of political dissatisfaction, can be accepted. However, people who are afraid of losing their jobs are not more dissatisfied politically than the average in the population, even slightly less so. The protest vote explanation also holds for the secondary lower educated and the manual workers: both categories are significantly more disappointed in politics than the average in the population.

Kitschelt formulated the idea that manual workers shifted from traditionally left-wing redistributive politics to the more authoritarian, racist and anti-interventionist extreme right wing. Our findings indeed show that someone who is a manual worker and supports market liberalism is more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* versus the Socialist Party. However, the *Vlaams Blok* programme does call for some protective measures against international competition, which contrasts the interpretation that manual workers espouse market liberalism. Instead, the interpretation that *Vlaams Blok* manual workers have dissociated themselves from social-democratic redistributive measures to deprive out-groups of welfare benefits seems more applicable and is not refuted by our findings. Kitschelt applied this interpretation only to supporters of the so-called welfare chauvinist parties (Kitschelt 1995: 259).

Finally, the contextual characteristics of the Flemish municipalities are discussed. The number of ethnic minorities in a municipality does contribute to the understanding of extreme right-wing voting behaviour in Flanders. This is what we expected, based on the *Realistic Conflict Theory*: in municipalities where a larger percentage of the population belongs to ethnic minorities, there is more likely to be competition for scarce resources between the in-group and out-groups, and thus more members of the in-group will perceive ethnic minorities as a threat. Consequently, members of the in-group will choose a party that claims to protect the members of the in-group and to exclude out-groups from these scarce resources. Neither the unemployment level nor the change in the unemployment level nor the change in the number of ethnic minorities in the last few years before the 1995 elections had an effect. Since similar results were found in Germany (Lubbers & Scheepers 2000a) and in the Netherlands (Coenders & Scheepers 1998; Eisinga et al. 1998), these findings refute the general idea that these factors do affect extreme right-wing voting behaviour. Further research based on multilevel research should detect whether these relations are similar in other countries.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1

Descriptive statistics of the social background characteristics. ISPO 1995 Election data, N=1,968.

Variable	Percentage	Variable	Percentage
<i>Occupation</i>		<i>Age</i>	
Manual worker	19.6	18-26	16.1
Self-employed	8.6	27-34	16.7
White collar worker	13.0	35-44	20.2
Executive Professional	14.1	45-54	16.4
Unemployed	6.2	55-64	15.5
Not working	38.5	65+	15.0
<i>Education</i>		<i>Union membership</i>	
Lower educated	30.2	Yes	37.9
Secondary lower educated	20.7	No	62.1
Secondary higher educated	24.5	<i>Mobility</i>	
Higher educated	34.1	Stable	10.7
<i>Income</i>		Downward/Upward	63.1
Less than 60.000Bfr	34.1	no answer	26.2
60.000-100.000Bfr	38.1	<i>Gender</i>	
More than 100.000Bfr	18.3	Male	50.3
No answer	9.5	Female	49.7
<i>Expected future deprivation</i>		<i>Denomination</i>	
Little or no insecurity	47.8	Catholic	44.4
A lot of insecurity	5.4	Marginal Christian	32.7
No job or missing	47.8	Free Thinking	9.3
		Non-religious	13.7

Appendix 2

Descriptive statistics of deprivation in the present situation. ISPO 1995 Election data, N=1,968.

Deprivation in present situation

To what extent are you satisfied with life in Belgium?

Very dissatisfied						Very satisfied					
0.5	0.5	1.3	2.8	3.7	14.3	13.1	24.8	26.3	6.5	6.2	

If you compare your life in our society to your situation 4 or 5 years ago, are you more or less satisfied?

Less						More					
1.5	1.1	3.3	8.9	10.1	36.2	9.4	11.9	12.6	2.5	2.4	

Does the total household income allow you to cover your expenses in a satisfactory way?

We have more than enough, we even manage to save money	We have sufficient money to live without problems	We have barely enough money and it is hard for us to make a living	We do not have enough money and it is very hard for us to live
41.9	50.9	5.7	1.6

If you compare your living situation at the moment to your living situation at the start of your professional life, do you think it has got better or worse?

A lot better	A little better	The same	Worse/A lot worse
39.4	34.0	13.9	12.8

Descriptive statistics of the socio-political attitudes (intermediary variables).

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree
Out-group attitude					
Belgium should not have allowed in guest workers	8.5	31.9	22.3	22.3	15.0
Immigrants cannot be trusted	9.2	33.7	28.7	19.8	8.5
Guest workers are a threat to the employment of Belgians	6.5	27.8	24.5	30.1	11.2
Guest workers come here to take advantage of our social security system	5.0	15.8	21.4	37.2	20.6
Muslims are a threat to our culture and customs	7.4	28.0	24.4	27.4	12.9
If the number of jobs decreases, guest workers should be repatriated	8.6	25.7	23.6	27.6	14.4
Participation in political activities should be prohibited for immigrants	9.2	27.5	22.6	23.0	17.7
Guest workers should inter-marry	15.7	36.0	23.9	15.8	8.6

Appendix 2

Flemish Nationalism				
<i>Strive for independence of Flanders</i>				
completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree
11.0	30.0	22.8	26.6	9.6
<i>The form of state that the country should have is still being discussed. Some think that "Flanders must be able to decide everything itself". Others think that "Belgium, Flemish and Walloons together, must be able to decide about everything" Where would you place yourself on this scale? (10-point-scale reduced to 5 points scale).</i>				
Belgium must decide everything		Flanders must decide everything		
20.2	19.6	33.7	15.8	10.8
<i>Some people consider themselves Flemings, others don't. Do you consider yourself a Fleming?</i>				
never	seldom	sometimes	often	almost always
6.5	13.7	32.2	14.5	0.3
<i>I consider myself</i>				
only as a Belgian	more Belgian than Fleming	equal Fleming and Belgian	more Fleming than Belgian	only as a Fleming
1.9	16.8	44.8	23.4	3.8
<i>Which group do you consider yourself to be a member of in the first place?</i>				
Flemish	Other			
25.5	74.5			

Appendix 3

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree
Authoritarianism					
Obedience and respect for authority are the two most important virtues children have to learn	1.6	10.5	13.9	50.9	23.1
Young people are often rebellious, but they will have to adapt to society as they get older	1.0	10.5	19.0	58.0	11.6
What we need most, more than laws and institutions, is a few courageous and devoted leaders that people can trust	2.3	11.3	19.4	45.8	21.1
People can be divided into two distinct classes: the weak and the strong	5.3	25.8	21.4	35.9	11.6
Most of our social problems would be solved, if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked people	4.1	19.5	24.2	40.6	11.7
Everybody would be better off if people talked less and worked harder	7.2	33.1	24.4	28.3	10.0
What we need is strong leaders who tell us what to do	13.8	37.1	24.0	18.8	6.4

	completely disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	completely agree
Market liberalism					
The government must reduce income differentials	12.8	45.1	21.5	17.4	3.2
Cut down the employment taxes for employers	2.1	14.1	21.3	43.7	25.8
Privatize parts of social security	9.9	26.8	28.2	27.0	8.0
Political dissatisfaction					
There is no point in voting; the parties do what they want anyway	5.8	29.1	17.5	30.0	17.5
Political parties are interested only in my vote, not in my opinions	0.8	14.6	19.5	45.9	19.2
In the elections, one party promises more than the other, but in the end nothing much happens	0.9	6.3	18.0	54.4	20.5
Politicians have never learned to listen to people like me	2.0	17.5	27.8	39.2	13.5
Most politicians promise a lot, but don't do anything	0.7	13.9	24.3	40.2	20.8
As soon as they are elected, politicians think they are better than people like me	1.3	19.8	29.9	33.9	15.2

Appendix 3

Multinomial logistic regression (deviation) parameters b , expressing the likelihood to vote for the Vlaams Blok versus another party. Source: ISPO 1995; $N=1,938$ in both models; bold parameters $p<.05$.

Models	I: only independent variables						II: inclusion of attitudes						
	Vlaams Blok versus:	CVP	VLD	VU	SP	Agalev	NV	CVP	VLD	VU	SP	Agalev	NV
<i>Constant</i>		.87	.67	-.49	.57	-.67	-.18	1.65	1.45	-.10	1.27	-.42	.62
Social background Characteristics													
<i>Occupation</i>													
Manual workers								-.47	-.18	.36	.45	-.18	.32
Self-employed								.79	1.41	.43	-.27	-1.51	1.21
White collar workers								.30	-.11	.99	.49	-.98	.62
Executive professional								.37	-.29	.86	.19	-.25	.31
Unemployed								-.76	-.43	-2.48	-.27	.27	-.60
Other								-.05	.00	-.53	-.36	.81	-.66
<i>Education</i>													
Lower educated								-.12	-.10	-.30	.66	-.26	.60
Secondary lower educated								-.25	-.54	.06	-.14	-.15	.05
Secondary higher educated								-.02	.05	-.01	-.31	.26	-.46
Higher educated								.27	.38	.24	-.28	.14	-.23
<i>Income</i>													
Less than 60,000Bfr								.21	.18	.37	.11	-.04	.24
60,000-100,000Bfr								-.07	-.37	.19	-.16	-.15	-.26
More than 100,000Bfr								-.54	.19	-.87	.02	.43	-.25
No answer								.57	.47	-.40	.21	-.09	.66
<i>Deprivation in present day situation</i>													
								-.06	-.11	.08	.15	.40	.26
<i>Expected future deprivation</i>													
Little or no insecurity								-.29	.12	-.52	-.27	.62	-.25
A lot of insecurity								.13	-.36	-3.15	-.83	.66	-1.01
No job or no answer								.28	-.08	.88	.36	-.69	.37
<i>Denomination</i>													
Catholic								1.08	.20	.59	-.55	.21	.01
Marginal Christian								-.30	-.18	-.26	.22	-.30	-.17
Free Thinking								-2.37	.05	-1.32	.85	.36	-.20
Non-religious								-1.17	-.24	-.41	.49	-.22	-.50

Models	I: only independent variables						II: inclusion of attitudes					
	CVP	VLD	VU	SP	Agalev	NV	CVP	VLD	VU	SP	Agalev	NV
Vlaams Blok versus:												
Age												
18-26							-1.28	-.51	-.40	-1.15	.31	-1.54
27-34							-.85	-.42	-.39	-.60	.30	-.36
35-44							-.13	-.58	-.06	-.23	.65	-.93
45-54							.68	.70	-.07	.68	-.12	.80
55-64							.50	.18	.26	.72	-1.24	1.15
65+							1.24	.84	.75	.72	-.13	1.24
Union membership												
Yes							.36	-.03	.07	.41	.26	-.36
No							-.22	.02	-.04	-.25	-.16	.22
Gender												
Male							-.23	-.14	-.15	-.29	-.57	-.16
Female							.23	.14	.15	.29	.57	.16
Contextual Characteristics												
Unemployment level 1995							-.05	.05	-.18	.11	.17	-.06
Change in unemployment level 1991-1995							-.26	-.41	-.55	-.36	-.57	-.17
Ethnic minorities 1995							-.69	-.33	-.74	-.40	-.11	-.77
Ethnic minorities 1992-1995							-.38	.21	-.58	-.06	.11	-.23
Attitudes												
Out-group attitude							-1.13	-.96	-1.71	-1.24	-2.05	-1.13
Flemish nationalism							-.45	-.51	.54	-.42	-.34	-.37
Authoritarianism							-.18	-.28	-.25	-.32	-.30	-.83
Market liberalism							-.02	.41	.11	-.58	-.25	-.03
Political dissatisfaction							-.60	-.07	-.56	-.71	-.15	.32
Variance Components												
Community level	.06	.08	.32	.02	.01	.30	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Individual: extra binomial variance			.95							1.68		

Notes

1. Previously, De Witte (1992), Billiet and De Witte (1995), Scheepers, Billiet and De Witte (1995) and De Witte and Scheepers (1996) studied *Vlaams Blok* voting behaviour for the 1991 elections.
2. The questions concerning 'who' and 'why' were answered for the 1991 elections by Scheepers et al. (1995).
3. See comments on micro, meso and macro-levels in the theoretical work on extreme right-wing voting behaviour by Eatwell (1998).
4. In 1991, the lowest educated were most likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, whereas in 1995, the secondary lowest educated were most likely to do so. In 1995, the lower educated were more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok* than the higher educated, but not compared to the average.
5. This previous research also revealed that self-employed people are more likely to hold authoritarian attitudes. However, since the self-employed have not been shown to be more likely to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, at least not in Flanders, we did not include this social category in the hypotheses.
6. Kitschelt gives this option for the Welfare Chauvinist type of extreme right-wing parties, but not for the New Radical Right-wing parties (NRR).
7. Statistics derived from: Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling (1992), Steunpunt voor Werkgelegenheid en Arbeid in Vlaanderen (1998) and Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek/NIS (1991; 1992; 1996).
8. This does not imply that this municipality is in the sample; this also holds for the other municipalities that will be mentioned.
9. The binomial assumption of the models we estimated implies that the variance at the individual level is normally fixed to 1 (Snijders & Bosker 1999). This binomial assumption, however, needs to be tested on extra-binomial variation, which means a relaxation of $\pi_{ij}(1-\pi_{ij})/n_{ij}=1$ assumption. First, deviations from this assumption (under-dispersion or over-dispersion) were thought to be model misspecifications, but recent studies have shown that deviations – at least under-dispersion – are due to sparse data structures (Wright 1997; Yang et al. 2000). Already in 1992, Jones, Johnston and Pattie showed that freeing the binomial assumption did not change the interpretation of their models on voting behaviour.
10. Dummification is structured in such a way that the parameters correct for the size of a category. By doing this, the parameters express the deviation in the likelihood to vote for the *Vlaams Blok*, as compared to the *predicted mean likelihood* Pelzer (1991).
11. However, the relation may also be reversed: when the *Vlaams Blok* is strong in a community and is active in its communal campaigning, the opinion climate may turn more strongly against out-groups.
12. This is due to the use of multilevel analysis. Some variation at the individual level is now composed at the municipality-level.

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Vlaams Blok and the Flemish Local Elections of 8 October 2000: A Postscript

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Since the writing of the article "Multilevel modelling of the *Vlaams Blok* vote", which is based on the election results of 1995, support for the *Vlaams Blok* has only been on the increase. In the general elections of 1999, the *Vlaams Blok* increased its share of votes to 15.4% and in the local and provincial elections of 8 October 2000 the upward trend continued, causing another black Sunday. The evolution of the party between 1995 and 1999 in the general elections was now followed by a similar trend in the local elections between 1994 and 2000. Stagnation for the *Vlaams Blok* is found only when the provincial election returns are compared to those of the general elections of 1999. In the provincial elections of 8 October, the party received approximately 14.5% of the votes against 15.4% in the 1999 general elections (the results have not yet been officially provided by the minister). However, Deschouwer (2000) showed in the 'election show' of the television channel vrt, that the *Vlaams Blok* traditionally scores somewhat less in local and provincial elections than in general elections. In Brussels the *Vlaams Blok* also gained, but to a relatively smaller extent than in Flanders. At the same time, the already less successful *Front National*, though still scoring 6.5% in Charleroi, lost dramatically in both Brussels and Wallonia. This is sometimes called the Belgian paradox: whereas the wealthy Flanders is confronted with a large extreme right-wing electorate, in the less economically prosperous Wallonia the importance of the party decreased.

In Antwerp, where the foreign press had come together to inform themselves about the evolution of 'Dewinter's party', the *Vlaams Blok* unexpectedly gained another 5%. This meant that not less than one out of three inhabitants in the Flemish capital voted for the extreme right-wing party. Philip Dewinter, chairman of the Antwerp faction, received 50,000 preferential votes, leaving all other politicians far behind. The *Vlaams Blok* saw its greatest increase in votes in Beveren, the electoral district geographically west of Antwerp, and there were also considerable increases in the other municipalities in the Antwerp circle. As well as in Antwerp, the *Vlaams Blok* has now become the largest party in Mechelen, Boom and Kapellen.

To find out the evolution of the party for the whole region of Flanders, we should compare the general election results of 1999 to those of 1995, as at the