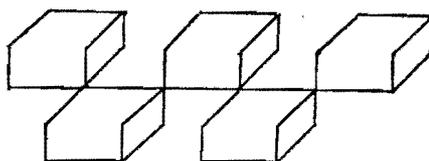


WORKING PAPERS

**MARRIAGE SEASONALITY, MORAL CONTROL AND REPRODUCTION IN  
BELGIUM (1600-1900)**

R. Lesthaeghe

IPD-WORKING PAPER 1989-4



**interuniversity programme in demography**

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## 1. Introduction

It has been commonly noted by historians that marriages in Catholic countries exhibited a marked pattern of seasonality, with few marriages being contracted during the closed periods of Lent and Advent, roughly coinciding with March and December. However, little work has been done to integrate this quantitative indicator with broader political, social and demographic history. Then, questions arise such as: which strata of the population sought dispensations for marriage during the closed periods? Why are there marked regional and temporal differences in the observance of the marriage ban? Can we infer the evolution of ecclesiastic control and secularization from it? What are the relationships with the demographic indicators of nuptiality and fertility?

## 2. Measurement and caveats

The measurement of the distribution of marriages by month constitutes one of the longest time series available in historical demography. It often goes back to the Council of Trent, i.e. to the last quarter of the 16th century. It seems therefore likely that such series may elucidate both the history of social control as exercised by the Catholic church and trends in secularization. In the present article we shall make use of the proportion of marriages contracted in March and December to approximate those in Lent and Advent. In doing so the variability of Lent is overlooked, but the resulting inaccuracy is largely neutralized by the use of broader time units of observation (10 to 25 years). In setting up the index, the proportion of marriages in these two months is divided by  $2/12$ , i.e. the proportion that would occur if seasonality is absent. The index, abbreviated as MLA (Marriages in Lent and Advent), takes the value of 100 if exactly  $2/12$  of the annual number of marriages occur in these two months.

Although it is highly convenient to have a single statistical indicator spanning a period of more than 300 years, one should be aware of changes in meaning of social indicators during the course of their observation. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the MLA-index can only rise if two conditions are fulfilled. Firstly, there must be a demand for dispensations from the public, and secondly, the ecclesiastic authorities must be willing to grant them. In other words, it is a question of demand and supply, with the latter probably being preponderant. From the French

period onward, civil marriage and civil registration create an alternative. In theory, ecclesiastic consent is no longer required, and the index gradually becomes a measure of rejection of a religious rule by the population. In other words, the meaning of the MLA-index shifts from being essentially an indicator of the direction of ecclesiastic doctrine (laxist versus rigorist) to becoming an indicator of secularization during the 19th century.

It should be noted that there is a paucity of studies in Belgium that determine the grounds for requesting dispensations, and that identify the social strata at risk. A major exception is the study by A. Verschueren (1985) for the villages around Marche-en-Famenne, where such requests were analysed for the period 1840-60. Verschueren identifies the high risk segment as the socially more marginal persons among the lower strata, and the preponderant reason for a marriage in the closed periods was bridal pregnancy. At the other end of the social spectrum dispensations were rarely sought, but, if they occurred, they equally emerged from persons with a weak social attachment to the area and for the same reason. Hence, it does not seem that the MLA-index was capturing the behaviour of philosophical dissidents in the Marche area during the middle of the 19th century. Even for a period as late as this, we should be careful in interpreting the index as an indicator of secularization.

Yet, this would also be a hasty conclusion. The study by A-M. André (1977) for the Verviers industrialists for the period 1740-1819 provides counter-indications. The MLA-index for them is very high for the pre-revolutionary 18th century, i.e. 54 for the period 1740-1789. As expected, it increases during the French period to 65 (1790-1819). This is well above the average for Verviers as a whole, with MLA-indices of only 10 for 1750-90 and 17 for 1796-1825. Apparently, the two prime reasons for breaking the marriage ban (avoidance of illegitimacy by an emergency marriage and genuine secularization among certain parts of the bourgeoisie) may have occurred simultaneously from the Enlightenment onward. However, we feel that avoidance of illegitimacy is likely to have outweighed the effect of secularization until approximately the middle of the 19th century in Belgium. More studies on the distribution of dispensations according to social strata in various regions will evidently shed the necessary light on the meaning of the MLA-index. As a result, the present interpretation is a preliminary one, pending amendments stemming from such in-depth studies.

### **3. Marriages during the closed periods and their relation to other social and demographic trends during the 17th and 18th centuries**

The largest concentration of village monographs providing information for the period concerned is found in Flanders and Brabant. This is largely the result of the numerous licence and doctoral dissertations in historical demography that concentrate on the pre-revolutionary era. By contrast, the documentation for the Flemish areas declines during the French and subsequent periods, while it increases in the Walloon part of the country. It should also be noted that we needed the full publication of the marriage distribution according to month for periods spanning at most ten years. Monographs publishing such materials for much broader periods failed to provide sufficient resolution to be useful for our purposes.

We have grouped the villages in the northern part of the country in 4 clusters: (i) the coastal region and the polders, (ii) interior sandy soil

Flanders with its early proto-industrialisation, (iii) the more extensive farming regions of Brabant, and (iv) the Antwerp Campine area. The evolution of the MLA-index is given in greater detail in the Appendix, together with the values for the entire rural part of the corresponding arrondissements from 1840 onward (Table 1). Aggregation within the 4 regional clusters brings out the basic trends shown in Figure 1.

During the first decades of the 17th century, the MLA-index is at a very low level: generally less than 20, except for the Brabant villages. This coincides with the completion of the Spanish conquest (1604) and the Counter Reformation. French data from a new INED-sample of well over 200 villages organized by J-N. Biraben and colleagues indicate that such a low for the start of the 17th century is indeed the result of a precipitous decline of the MLA-index during the last quarter of the 16th century (provisional data kindly made available to us by A. Blum). Hence, the data on Figure 1 presumably start when the more tolerant attitudes to sex during the late Middle Ages had become the object of a counter-offensive. This is in accordance with other sources as well. Firstly, the Archdukes Albert and Isabella proclaimed a string of measures between 1601 and 1616 which were all aimed at the curtailment of popular culture and the establishment of more rigid controls (C. Lis et al., 1985). The Archdukes also insist on the prosecution of witches (C. Lis et al., 1985; R. Muchembled, 1978). The low MLA-values also correspond to the massive arrival of the Jesuit order, with the southern Low Countries having almost a third of the entire congregation on its soil in 1626. Furthermore, this period is also characterized by the stepped up activity of ecclesiastic courts. Especially in the diocese of Ghent, the repression for sexual offenses is impressive: of all such cases treated during the entire period from 1550 to 1794, no less than 55 percent are concentrated in the fifty years between 1550 and 1600 (computed from J. De Brouwer, 1971). During the next fifty years, the number of cases falls in the Ghent diocese, but they increase in the diocese of Antwerp and in the officialities of Mechlin and Brabant. Also the nature of these cases alters. Prior to 1600, most cases pertain to *fornicatio simplex*. Thereafter they become more specific and pertain to marital morality. The lead is taken by adultery (16%), seduction with marriage promise (15%), concubinage (14%), and prostitution (10%) (see Table 1). The enforcement of a new marital morality was equally on the agenda in France (see J-L. Flandrin, 1984, and P. Ariès, 1973, on the making of the "nouvelle civilité chrétienne").

There is, however, a turning point in Flanders and Brabant from about 1650 onwards. This occurs first in the polder villages, in sandy soil Flanders, and in the Antwerp Campine. It spreads to Brabant after 1675 (see Figure 1). The rise in the MLA-index is particularly impressive in the polders with a maximum of 51 being reached in 1725-50 and in the Campine villages with an earlier maximum of no less than 73 in 1675-1700. Such high levels are never to be reached again in these two areas prior to the 20th century. The increase in interior Flanders and Brabant is more modest, with peaks of 33 and 36 respectively during the first half of the 18th century (see Appendix Table A).

After 1650 Spanish central control over the southern Low Countries is weakened. This is precipitated by Louis XIV's claims on the territory and the succession of wars between 1667 and 1713. This period without strong central government is prolonged by the Allied occupation (Anglo-Dutch, Bavarians) and by the new problems with Louis XV. It then seems that the

MLA- INDEX

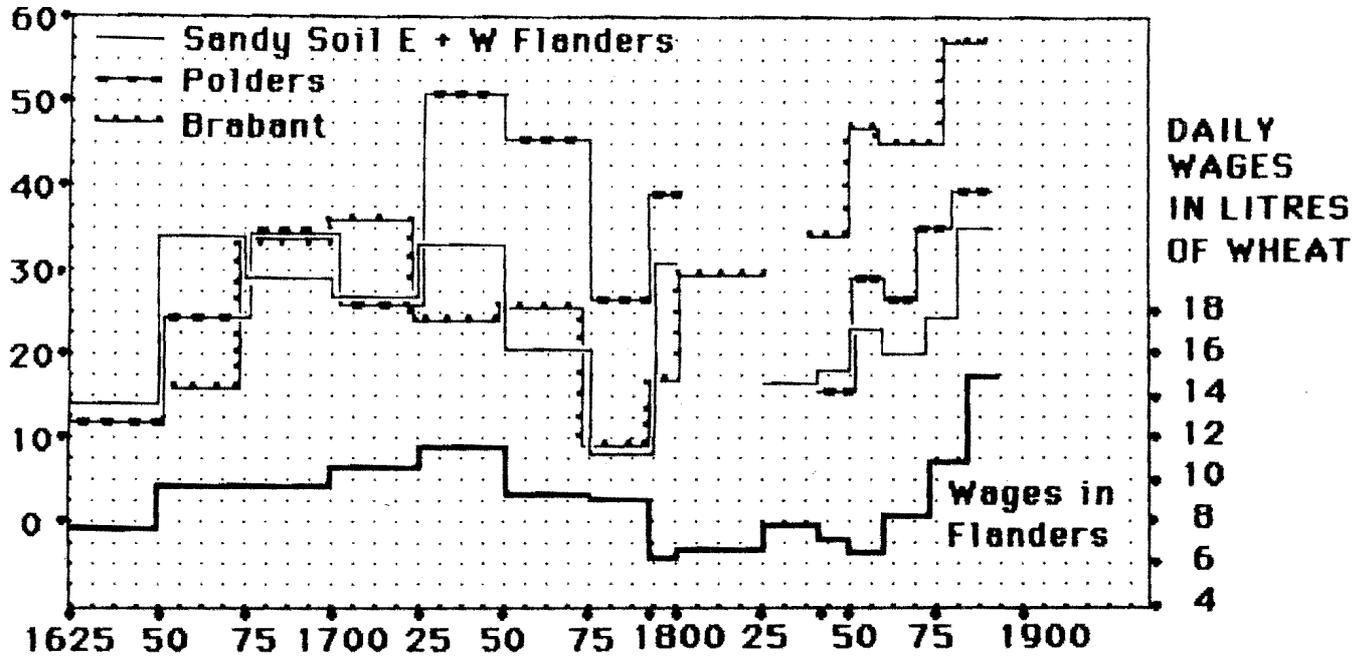


Figure 1: Evolution of index of marriages during closed periods and of real wages; Flanders and Brabant, 1625-1890.

church was more forthcoming with the granting of dispensations, and that it was inclined to the more laxist philosophy of the "lesser evil" (i.e. precipitated marriage better than an illegitimate birth, even if such a marriage had to take place in the closed periods) when not backed by a strong state.

With the definitive inclusion of the territory into the Habsburg Empire (1748), the trend is being reversed again. At first, the MLA-index drops slightly between 1750 and 1775 (see Figure 1), but then very rapidly. It reaches an overall low between 1775 and 1789. This corresponds once more to the stringent measures of Joseph II (see also his prudery as an anecdotal note) against the Flemish "kermis" or village fairs and other forms of popular culture. Although at odds with each other on several important policies, emperor and church seem to have found a common ground with respect to the issue of policing public morality.

The records of ecclesiastic inquests and judgements brought together by J. De Brouwer provide further insights. As indicated before, the courts' interest primarily concerned marital behaviour during the 17th century. From 1700 onwards, the modal category becomes broken marriage promises with and even without seduction (see Table 1). During the period 1750-94, no less than 58 percent of cases involving civilians were concerned with this issue. The church becomes particularly attentive to premarital behaviour and sex. This is congruent with its increased reluctance to grant dispensations for marriages during closed periods, which presumably involved a disproportionately large number of pregnant brides. Hence, from about 1750 the church's doctrine evolves away from a laxist attitude to a more rigorist one with a greater weight being given to the philosophy of "castigatio".

But there is probably much more to the story than that. On Figure 1 we have also plotted the evolution of purchasing power, as measured by C. Vandenbroeke (1984) in the form of the wheat equivalent of daily wages. A remarkable parallel emerges between the MLA and the wage series during the 17th and 18th century. Actually, if abstraction is being made from the French period, such parallelism continues during the 19th century as well. Hence it is tempting to conclude that social and moral control over peasants, cottage workers and townspeople succeeded particularly well during periods of economic hardship. The government of Namur seems to have understood this rather well (quoted by C. Vandenbroeke, 1984):

*"L'on n'y gouverne jamais mieux les hommes dans l'innocence des mœurs que lorsqu'on les tient dans les peines du travail".*

The connection between firmer social control and economic hardship is also intimately linked to what is known from the literature on capitalism. More specifically, we are referring to the relationship between entrepreneur and wage labour, and to public policy regarding pauper control (see C. Lis and H. Soly, 1980, C. Lis et al., 1985).

The social control over the destitute had already been a major issue during the 16th century, but it reemerges in full force during the second half of the 18th century as a consequence of falling real income. The fears of public authorities for the effects of pauperization in the 18th century are essentially similar to those prevailing during the 16th century: vagabondage, criminality, immorality, heresy and rebellion. Moreover, the work ethos and the concept of time differed radically between

Table 1: Changes in the nature of moral cases judged by ecclesiastic courts in Flanders and Brabant, 1550-1794

Period	Fornicatio simplex	Abduction & elopement	Adul- tery	Concu- binage	Prosti- tution	Seduction with marriage promised	Broken marriage promise	Divorce	Incest	Other	N
1550-1600	55.3	4.2	12.9	5.8	0.0	9.7	1.8	1.8	2.4	6.1	1183
1601-1650	11.6	0.9	16.2	13.8	10.1	15.3	1.8	7.4	5.0	17.9	657
1651-1700	12.8	0.6	5.7	7.1	5.9	18.1	0.7	9.1	8.7	31.3	1284
1701-1750	5.4	0.0	1.3	1.6	0.5	33.5	12.1	11.2	1.1	33.3	1100
1750-1794	1.9	0.1	5.1	0.7	0.3	39.0	19.1	13.1	3.8	16.9	1484

Source: computed from J. De Brouwer (1971).

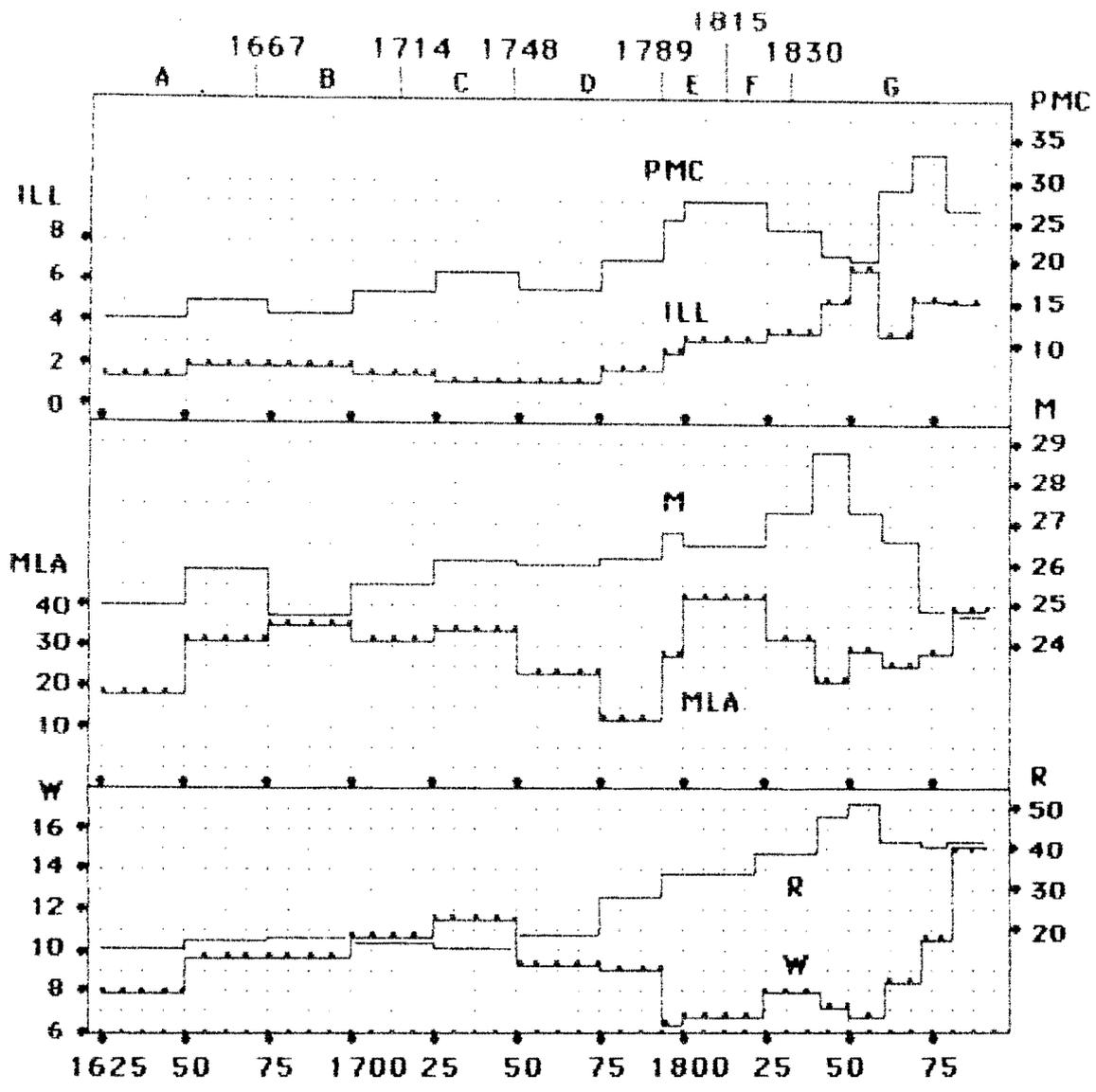
Note: totals per period sum up to 100%; combined data for the diocese of Ghent and Antwerp, and officialities of Mechelen and Brabant.

entrepreneurial elites and the wage earning class. The former continuously advocate lower wages to eradicate absenteeism and a lowering of taxes (used to finance poor relief). In short, they are in search of abundant and cheap labour. Alternatives to older poor relief arrangements were therefore found in the employment of the destitute in expanding urban textile industries. Such a reorganization of poor relief occurred in a considerable number of Belgian cities between 1772 and 1787 (see C. Lis et al., 1985, for a list). A corollary of this was increased child-labour and reduced urban literacy.

To sum up, the course of the MLA-index as presented in Figure 1 is not solely indicative of a shift in church doctrine, but it appears to be equally illustrative of a broader spectrum of moral, political and economic controls. The effects can also be traced in the evolution of certain aspects of the demographic regime, and most clearly in those that deal with household formation and the starting pattern of fertility.

In Figure 2 we have traced the evolution of a number of economic indicators together with characteristics of the marriage system. The bottom panel of Figure 2 shows the trends with respect to the material aspects of living conditions. The W-curve is the wheat equivalent of daily wages and the R-curve is the rental of one hectare of land expressed in days work. Both indicators are taken from Vandebroek (1984). They show a steady deterioration from 1750 onward. The evolution of the mean age at first marriage for women (M-curve) is depicted in the middle panel. Ages at marriage were systematically higher after 1725 (26 years or more) than before (below 26). Hence, the deterioration of the standards of living and greater population pressure corresponds with a rise in ages at household formation, as one could expect in a typically Malthusian system. Postponement of marriage does, however, not necessarily imply a corresponding postponement of sexual relations. During a first phase, one may expect that sex is likely to occur once marriage is on the horizon, that is, when the establishment of a new independent household becomes a realistic possibility. Hence, a concomittant rise in premarital conceptions. But these are still predominantly leading to a legitimate birth during the first 8 months of marriage. This trend clearly appears (see the PMC-curve in Figure 2) after 1700 and especially after 1775 in the sample of Flemish villages. As stated earlier, this is consistent with the shift in the ecclesiastic court records, but it should be noted that the preoccupation with premarital behaviour in these records occurs earlier. Also, one can conclude from this evidence that the church was still trying to push seducers into matrimony prior to the French Revolution.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the rise in premarital conceptions was met by ecclesiastic approval. Dispensations for marriages during the closed period decline between 1750 and 1790 (see MLA-curve in Figure 2). This is propitious for converting a higher number of premarital conceptions into premarital, and hence illegitimate births. The modest increase in illegitimacy (see the ILL-curve) also emerges in the villages from 1775 onward. Unfortunately, we do not possess similar information for Belgian towns. We would not be surprised to see an earlier rise in illegitimacy there as a result of urban-bound migration of rural unwed pregnant women. Such a feature clearly emerged in the French data for instance (see J-L. Flandrin, 1984).



**PMC : PREMARITAL CONCEPTIONS IN PERCENT OF FIRST BIRTHS**  
**ILL : ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS IN PERCENT OF ALL BIRTHS**  
**M : MEAN AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE FOR WOMEN**  
**MLA : MARRIAGES DURING LENT AND ADYENT ( 2/12 = 100 )**  
**R : RENT OF 1 HECTARE OF LAND IN DAYS WORK**  
**W : DAILY WAGE IN LITRES OF WHEAT**

Figure 2: Evolution of demographic and economic indicators in Flanders, 1625-1890.

(SOURCE ALL INDICES EXCEPT MLA : C. YANDENBROEKE, 1984, 1985)

The joint increase in premaritally conceived legitimate births and in illegitimacy continues during the French period in tandem with a weakening of the seasonal marriage ban. Hence, the trend in illegitimacy is by no means to be explained solely in terms of the restrictive policy with respect to seasonal marriage dispensations. Rather, the real roots are the deterioration of conditions necessary to establish new households and the postponement of marriage. Such conditions prevail throughout the period 1789-1815.

From 1820 till about 1850, ages at first marriage rise further to a historical maximum in the 1840s. The MLA-index drops quite clearly following the interruption of the French period. This not only occurs during the restoration, but continues during the first two decades of Belgian independence (1830-50). The church is gradually recovering and reaffirming its pre-revolutionary policy. Also the incidence of illegitimacy rises further after 1820, but there is a drop in premaritally conceived legitimate first births. The outcome is clear: from the Napoleonic period onward, premarital conceptions are increasingly channeled to illegitimacy rather than to remedial marriage.

A likely explanation for this new feature is that the church's possibilities of forcing unmarried seducers into marriage came to an obvious end with the French revolutionary invasion and subsequent occupation. But the revolutionary ideas may also have something to do with it. As is well known, the libertarian bourgeoisie had come to view marriages of love as superior to marriages of reason. Hence the revision of divorce laws and, for a short while, the improvement of the legal position of illegitimate children. But aside from the reversal with the Napoleonic Code, such an "enlightened morality" was of little practical value for the bulk of the population. For them, the disconnection of romance and sex from the Malthusian prerequisites of union formation remained a highly risky strategy. In other words, premarital sexual liaisons remained inconsistent with the patient and prudent preparations necessary for the establishment of an economically sound household. The French revolutionary ethics created in fact false expectations and contributed to the ideological ambivalence surrounding romance, sex, procreation and marriage, at a time when the Malthusian constraints on household formation were getting firmer than ever before. During the Empire, both state and church seek their way out of this predicament by protecting the legitimate family at the expense of the unwed mothers and their children. Both institutions were again on the same track, but they essentially fail to cope with the aggravated consequences of a tighter Malthusian nuptiality regime during the first half of the 19th century.

#### 4. The role of secularization in the Belgian fertility transition

In earlier works (Lesthaeghe, 1978; Lesthaeghe and Wilson, 1986) we have indicated that the Belgian fertility transition was not only connected with a rise in real income from about 1660 onward, and hence with the structural transformations linked with industrialisation or urbanization, but equally with an ongoing secularization process. The decline of marital fertility is viewed as the joint or synergetic effect of factors connected with both motivation and legitimation. The former pertain to economic advantages of fertility limitation accruing to households, and the latter to the moral acceptability of such action. The alternative model, defended by

inter alia R. Leboutte (1987), stipulates that secularization and marital fertility control entertain no causal link since both of them are the consequences of a common cause, being industrialisation and rising income. Leboutte uses the materials for the Liège industrial basin and documents that the fertility decline starts during the 1870s, which corresponds indeed with rising salaries from 1865 onward. However, there is no history on the roots of secularization based on quantitative indicators and their time series to substantiate his proposition that secularization was equally triggered off by rising income.

This alternative thesis can be evaluated from two perspectives. The first one consists of testing it through a cross-sectional comparison involving many regions, and not just Liège alone. This has essentially been done: numerous other Walloon arrondissements were leading in the fertility transition in Belgium, but most of them were not the location of industry or did not contain any expanding urban centers. In fact they remained rural and several of them had a negative migration saldo. Examples of rural arrondissements with fertility declines as impressive as the one seen in Liège are: Philippeville, Dinant, Huy, Waremme, Arlon, Virton and Neufchâteau (see Lesthaeghe, 1978). Moreover, the explicit measurement of the degree of secularization, approximated by the 1919 vote for secularized parties (Liberal + Socialist) proved to have a decisive and independent statistical effect on the speed of the marital fertility decline in the Belgian arrondissements.

The second way of checking the endogeneity hypothesis with respect to secularization consists of explicitly tracing its evolution through time and in space simultaneously. This possibility is now explored as a result of the information contained in the series of MLA-indicators. We shall try to document that the secularization map for Belgium was clearly in the making before 1865 and therefore preceded the rise in real income. Moreover, we would also like to inspect to what extent secularization was linked to industrialisation and urbanization, or alternatively, to what extent it could also be found in strictly rural areas. Hence, we need to go back in time to the period immediately preceding the French Revolution.

A number of measurements for the northern and southern parts of the country are available for the periods 1750-1789. The MLA-indices were essentially identical. The mean MLA-values for the Flemish-speaking villages are respectively 24 and 12 for these two periods (see Appendix Table A). Values above 30 are only found in the Westhoek (arrondissement Veurne) and in one Brabant village (St. Martens Lennik). As indicated earlier, the number of observations in the French-speaking part of the country is substantially smaller for the pre-revolutionary era, but the MLA-values vary between 0 (Antheit) and 23 (Liègeois villages). There is furthermore no difference in the towns either: in the North, values are recorded between 6 in Kortrijk and 34 in the St Jacob parish in Antwerp; in the South, values are intermediate with data for Verviers and Liège of the order of 10 to 20. This is hardly a surprise, given our earlier argument that the MLA-index was essentially a measure of ecclesiastic doctrine, and at that time not yet a measure of secularization.

But matters change after the French invasion and the introduction of civil rather than ecclesiastic registration. The evolution is particularly noticeable from about 1800 onward. In the Flemish village set, MLA-indices rise to values between 13 and 44 during the decade 1790-1799.

Unfortunately, we have only a couple of observations left for the Napoleonic and Dutch periods. They exhibit levels around 45. This is also the value found in Bruges during the first half of the 19th century. The Walloon observations -- which now become more numerous -- show substantial variation. At the low end, a few cases (Esneux, Verviers) still have values below 30 for the period 1800-24, but the median or mean are considerably pulled upward by values above 50 (Wasmes and Warquignies, villages of the Basse Meuse) and even above 70 (Beloeil, villages around Liège). The city of Liège itself records a MLA-value of no less than 135 in the years XIII and IX. Admittedly, the number of observations for the period 1790-1825 are quite small and definitely not representative for the whole of either the North or the South, so that the comparison above is less than adequate. Nevertheless, we think that it is indicative of the onset of an earlier secularization in Wallonia than in Flanders, in rural and urban environments alike (a nice subject for licence theses).

The fog clears up for the 1840s when detailed registration data cover all arrondissements and also urban and rural areas within each of these. This allowed us to construct the three maps of the MLA-index for respectively 1841-47, 1860-65, and 1881-84. They are brought together on Figure 3. The earliest map clearly confirms our earlier suspicion: MLA-values for Walloon arrondissements are markedly higher than for the Flemish ones during the 1840s. But there are some further striking features. The highest MLA-levels (60 or higher) are not found in the Hainaut industrial belt, but in the Liège area and, quite unexpectedly, in the rural arrondissements of Bastogne, Neufchâteau, Virton, and Arlon. Of the 10 arrondissements with intermediate MLA-levels comprised between 40 and 59, only 2 are located north of the language border, and one of them contains of course the bilingual capital. Twenty years later, i.e. during the 1860s, MLA-levels in Wallonia have increased further: secularization is spreading to the arrondissements that are adjacent to that of Liège, and the Hainaut arrondissements have caught up with the rest. Clearly, the connection between industrialisation and secularization is now showing up. Nevertheless, the rural Walloon arrondissements maintain their earlier advanced position. On the Flemish side the Campine arrondissements and the southern half of the province of West-Flanders show up as the least secularized, just like 20 years earlier. The map for the 1880s bring this out even more clearly. Moreover, it shows again that the rural-industrial contrast remains of restricted value for discriminating between strongly and weakly secularized areas. This entire story is repeated in the form of correlation coefficients. This coefficient between secularization as measured through voting in 1919 and the MLA-index as early as the 1840s is .55. As the MLA-map approaches the voting map, the correlation rises to .73 (MLA 1860s) and .83 (MLA 1880s). There is furthermore no doubt that the underlying dimension is indeed secularization. The MLA-index of the 1880s correlates with secular voting in 1958, when there was a second school war, to the level of .72, and with absenteeism from Sunday Mass in 1964 to the level of .65. To sum up, the MLA-index is indeed gradually capturing the secularization dimension during the 19th century, and the map prevailing at the time of the marital fertility transition (1870-1930) has roots that precede the onset of rising real income (1860s) by at least half a century. Moreover, early secularization is to be found in strictly rural arrondissements of Wallonia as well.

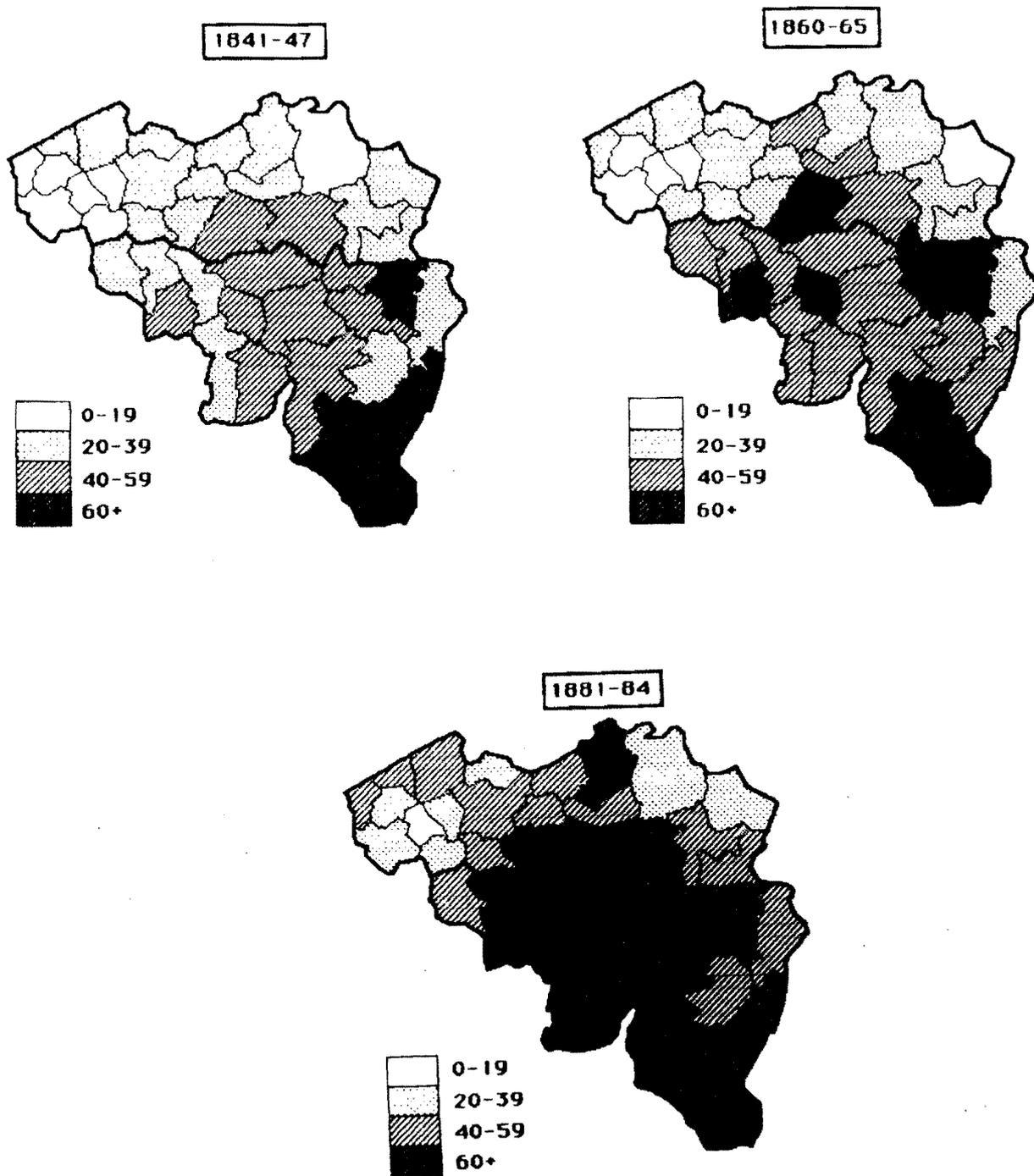


Figure 3: Index of marriages during closed periods in Belgian arrondissements, 1840-1885.

Table 2: zero-order correlation coefficients for relationships between measures of secularization, socio-economic structure and language, and measures of family formation; 41 Belgian arrondissements

A. <u>Measures of secularization</u>	<u>Marital fertility level (<math>I_g</math>)</u>		<u>Speed of marit. fert. transition <math>\Delta I_g</math> (1880-1910)</u>	<u>Index <math>I_h</math> Illegitimacy 1880</u>	<u>Divorce per 100,000 married women, 1967-70</u>
	1880	1910			
- Marriage index Lent & Advent (MLA)					
- 1841-47	-.55	-.51	.38	-.02	.35
- 1860-65	-.68	-.69	.58	.17	.57
- 1881-84	-.78	-.78	.71	.34	.69
- Vote Socialist + Liberal					
- 1919	-.81	-.93	.89	.42	.82
- 1958	-.72	-.86	.89	.63	.87
- Absenteism Sunday Mass					
- 1964	-.70	-.77	.79	.69	.87
B. <u>Measures of socio-economic structure</u>					
- % act. males in agric. 1890	.67	.82	-.81	-.43	-.82
- % act. males in agric. & cottage industries 1900	.60	.77	-.82	-.66	-.89
- literacy pop. 15-55, 1880	-.34	-.17	-.03	-.43	-.06
C. <u>Linguistic divide</u>					
- % francophone, pop. 15+, 1880	-.87	-.79	.65	.02	.55

The connections with the demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 2, again in the form of simple correlation coefficients. The connection between advancing secularization as indicated by the MLA-index and the parameters of marital fertility levels (Coale's index of  $I_g$  in 1880 and 1910) or the speed of the transition (Delta  $I_g$ ) is obvious and expressed in rising correlation coefficients. The magnitude of these coefficients for either MLA in the 1880s or secularized voting in 1919 and  $I_g$  are of the same order as these between structural socio-economic indicators and  $I_g$ . Also note the much weaker predictive power of adult literacy, which becomes easier to understand given the preponderance of education in Catholic schools. Finally, the linguistic divide with respect to the marital fertility transition in Belgium is not solely to be explained in terms of the faster industrialisation or the more rapid rise in income in the South, but equally by the much higher levels of secularization in the numerous Walloon rural arrondissements. Political patronage and pillarization (*verzuiling*) are intimately linked with the late 19th century demography in Belgium.

## 5. Conclusions

In the present article, we have tried to document that institutional actors such as state, church, or later, political parties, have played a very significant role in the nations demographic history from the 16th century onward. The clarification of the precise links owes tribute to the MLA-index, which is however not without limitations. The meaning of the index is still "fuzzy around the edges", but more historical research into the nature rather than into the magnitude of seasonal marriage dispensations in connection with social control and social stratification will undoubtedly reduce this fuzziness. Hence, we are again witnessing the need for symbiosis between quantitative and qualitative approaches in historical sociology.

The second finding is that secularization is not purely endogenous in the model that links income or industrialisation to marital fertility control. Hence, whether dealing with the nation as a whole or with specific areas, there are two histories to write when analyzing the demographic response, namely the history of material conditions AND that of ideology. Both are evidently connected, as we have shown by comparing the real wage curve with the MLA-curve for three centuries, but this cannot be reduced to the assumption of endogeneity of ideology, institutional policy and secularization. The purely economic model, either formulated at the micro level (rationality in households) or at the macro level (impact of economic structural transformation) is necessary, but far from sufficient.

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Table A1: continued

	villages										rural parts of complete arrondissements					arrondissement of villages
	pre 1650	1650 1674	1675 1699	1700 1724	1725 1749	1750 1774	1775 1789	1790 1799	1800 1824	1825 1839	1841 1847	1851 1856	1860 1865	1870 1876	1881 1884	
D. <u>Brabant</u>																
- St. Martens Lennik	-	-	-	-	33	37	9	-	-	-	38	50	54	48	55	arr. Brussels
- Geetbets	26	16	34	36	15	14	0	17	29	66	36	44	37	42	60	arr. Louvain
$\bar{X}$	26	16	34	36	24	26	9	17	29	66	37	47	45	45	57	2 arrondissements
N of villages	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	
$\bar{X}$ rural Flanders & Brabant	19	31	35	31	34	24	12	27	42	32	21	29	25	28	39	11 arrondissements
N of arrondissements	6	7	8	9	10	10	7	7	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	

- a) Adinkerke, Koksijde, Oostduinkerke  
b) Bulskamp, Steenkerke, Wulpen, Eggewaartskapelle, Stuivekenskerke  
c) Avekapelle, Gijverinkhove, Haringe, Lampernisse, Leisele, Pollinkhove  
d) Werken, Zarren, Bovekerke, Kortemark, Handzame  
e) Evergem, Zeveneken, Wachtebeke  
f) Moerzeke, Wetteren

Table A1: continued

	villages									villages or rural parts of arrondiss.					arrondissement of villages	
	pre 1650	1650 1674	1675 1699	1700 1724	1725 1749	1750 1774	1775 1789	1790 1799	1800 1824	1825 1839	1841 1847	1851 1856	1860 1865	1870 1876		1881 1884
<b>E. Industrial areas of Hainaut &amp; Liège</b>																
- Beloeil	-	-	-	-	-	10	34	72	32	31	45	53	56	63	arr. Ath (rural part)	
- Wasmes & Warquignies	-	-	-	10	7	52 <sup>a)</sup>	62 <sup>b)</sup>	47	67	60	66	76	arr. Mons (rural part)			
- 5 villages Bassin Liègeois <sup>d)</sup>	-	-	-	16	23	83	75	80	77	52	72	95	5 villages Bassin Liègeois (arr. Liège)			
- 4 villages Basse Meuse <sup>e)</sup>	-	-	-	29	19	55	53	63	60	53	50	63	4 villages Basse Meuse (arr. Liège)			
- Esneux	-	-	-	21	22	18	11	23	14 <sup>c)</sup>	-	61	66	71	73	89	arr. Liège (rural part)
<b>F. Other rural Wallonia</b>																
- Antheit	37	20	0	8	23	30	0	14	-	-	45	57	61	66	70	arr. Huy
- Marche + 6 villages <sup>f)</sup>				29	23	47	-	32	51	51	-	59	arr. Marche			

a) 1791-1830

d) Cheratte, Herstal, Jupille, Vivegnis, Wandre

b) 1831-1849

e) Haccourt, Hermalle, Heure, Visé

c) 1801-1811

f) Aye, Champion, Hollogne, Marloie, Ort, Waha

Table A1: continued

	urban parish or city							total city			
	1700	1725	1750	1775	1790	1800	1825	1841	1851	1860	1880
	1724	1749	1774	1789	1799	1824	1839	1847	1856	1865	1884
<u>G. Major cities</u>											
St. Jacobs parish, Antwerp	47	42	34	15	-	-	-	35	53	50	71
Bruges	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	50	43	51
Kortrijk	13	-	6	7	-	-	-	11	16	18	-
Ghent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44	50	50	60
Brussels	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	75	76	90
Charleroi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	69	65	96
Mons	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	69	72	58	100
Liège	-	-	18	-	135 <sup>a)</sup>	-	75 <sup>c)</sup>	82	90	81	102
Verviers	-	-	-	10	29 <sup>b)</sup>	39	-	43	41	44	57
Namur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	76	65	69

a) years VIII and IX

b) 1797

c) 1828