

BELGIUM

Flemish

Activity: 1954-2020

General notes

- Belgium has developed from a unitary state into a fully-fledged federation. However, the federalization process was not the result of a single legislation but has occurred step by step. Significant constitutional-institutional reforms were undertaken in 1970, 1980, 1988, 1993 and 2001. A sixth reform is currently under way. In addition to these major reforms, there were also smaller acts of state-movement interaction that will be reflected in this coding. The peculiar thing about Belgium federalism is that it has both a territorial and a non-territorial dimensions as a consequence of its two different types of constituent units: There are three Communities (Flemish, French and German) and three Regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels). Whereas the Regions are territorial units, the Communities are “linked to individuals and language more than territory” (Lecours 2005: 62).

Movement start and end dates

- Flemish nationalism has a long history, but after WWII it lay dormant for a while. The first post-WWII evidence for separatist mobilization we could find is the formation of the People's Union (Volksunie, VU) in December 1954, a nationalist party which sought autonomy for Flanders on a “socially progressive, tolerant, modern and forward-looking” platform. We therefore peg the start date of the movement at 1954. The VU dissolved in 2001, but there are several other Flemish nationalist organizations which continued to make claims for more autonomy and/or independence including the Vlaams Blok (Vlaams Belang since 2004) and the New Flemish Alliance, founded respectively in 1978 and 2001 (De Winter 2004: 2). The movement is ongoing (Wiki; Global Post/Agence France-Presse 2013; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Marshall & Gurr 2003; Minahan 2002; Snyder 1982). [start date: 1954; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- Demands for cultural and linguistic equality were at the center of the Flemish demands for more self-determination (Minahan 2002). The People's Union (*Volksunie*, VU), founded in 1954 and the dominant nationalist party in the early years of the movement's activity period, aimed at autonomy and federalization for Flanders (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 315). This claim is confirmed by Breuning (1997: 16) who analyzes the party programmes of Flemish nationalist parties and states that the Volksunie's goal was “Flemish autonomy within a confederal arrangement”. We hence code autonomy as the dominant claim in the movement's first 35-odd years. [1954-1991: autonomy claim]
- A radicalization of the demand took place in the 1970s, when disaffected members of the Volksunie formed the extreme-right Vlaams Blok in 1978. The new party (since 2004 Vlaams Belang (VB)) is clearly secessionist as confirmed by their election programmes for the 1991 and 1995 election, where it stated that “it desired Flanders to become an independent state” (Breuning 1997: 17; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 315). In the early years the party's vote share mostly remained low and only in the 1991 did it manage to overtake the VU as the strongest Flemish nationalist party (Breuning 1997). The party has since achieved considerable electoral success and got as much as 24% in the 2004 election of the Flemish parliament, making it the second party in the Flemish parliament.

- Support for the VB dropped to 15% in 2009 and below 6% in 2014. Instead, the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) gained the most votes (ca. 32%) in 2014. In 2019, the N-VA won the most votes (24%) while VB gained over 18% (Wiki; Popelier 2021). The N-VA makes claims for increased autonomy and gradual independence, i.e., their ultimate goal is to make the Belgian state obsolete by continued devolution. Based on it, we code secession as the dominant claim since 1992. [1992- 2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- In 1978, Vlaams Blok (today: Vlaams Belang) was formed. The party constituted an outgrowth of the autonomist People's Union, but contrary to the latter made claims for outright independence (De Winter 2004: 2, 2; Mudde 2000: 96-97). The New Flemish Alliance, formed in 2001, advocates the gradual secession of Flanders from Belgium (NVA n.d.). In 2005, the "Manifesto for an Independent Flanders Within Europe" was published (Mnookin & Verbeke 2009: 152f; Reflection Group 2005) – which outlined the case against federalism and for Flemish independence. [start date: 1978; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

- According to Winter (2004: 12f), "in tune with the prewar tradition" and the concept of Groot-Dietsland, elements in the Vlaams Blok originally "promoted the idea that [...] a new Flemish state should seek integration with the Netherlands, in order to create a dutchspeaking federation". According to Mudde (2000: 97), irredentist claims continued to be made until the 1990s, when the idea increasingly lost traction. According to Mudde, irredentism had lost much of its support by 1997, which we use as the end date. [start date: 1978; end date: 1997]

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Flemish consists of the region Flanders, which includes the provinces of Antwerp, East Flanders, West Flanders, Limburg, Flemish Brabant, as well as the capital region Brussels (Roth 2015: 52f). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database (GADM 2019).

Sovereignty declarations

- On November 29 in 1997, Gert Greens proclaimed the Republic of Flanders. Unofficial parliamentary elections and the passing of a constitution followed the next year (Minahan 2002: 611). Since we do not code declarations that are issued by marginal organizations that do not represent a significant part of the movement, this event is not coded.

Separatist armed conflict

- Separatist riots and demonstrations have been common. But we find evidence of only one death: Jacques Georgin, a teacher who was putting up election posters for the Front des Démocrates Francophones (FDF), was killed in a Brussels suburb on September 12, 1970, by members of the Vlaamse Militantenorde, an extremist Flemish organization. Given this low death count and our coding rules, we code the entire movement as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Belgian Revolution of 1830 led to the separation of the Catholic Provinces in Flanders and Wallonia from the Dutch kingdom in which they had been incorporated by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The newly established kingdom of Belgium was an officially French speaking (first Walloon dialect) and strongly centralized unitary state (Lecours 2005).
- The French language prevailed in almost all of the country's institutions, causing a sense of Flemish grievance and leading to Flemish resentment of the Walloon domination. Despite opposition from French-speaking elites, the DeVriendt-Coremans laws in the late nineteenth century introduced formal-legal equality between French and Flemish, full cultural and linguistic equality was however far from achieved (Witte et al. 2009).
- Early industrialization made Wallonia the "economic powerhouse of Belgium" (Minority Rights Group International) in the nineteenth century. However, with expanding new industries (petroleum, chemicals, cars) centering around Antwerp and Ghent and with the parallel decline of Wallonia's coal and steel industry, the economic and social conditions reversed (Minority Rights Group International).
- Cultural and linguistic tensions intensified after World War II, when the Flemish Movement became increasingly powerful and stimulated Walloon nationalism in response. The French-speaking elite, who has been dominating the country since independence, was in decline. A new Flemish assertiveness finally led the government to implement new language legislation that would increase the status of the Flemish language in 1921 (Minahan 2002).
- No concession or restriction was found in the ten years before the start date.

Concessions and restrictions

- A 1963 law established three official languages: Flemish in the north, French in the south and German along the Eastern border. Brussels was established as a bilingual area. This Second Gilson Act resulted in the split of universities, political parties and other official institutions (Minahan 2002). [1963: cultural rights concession]
- In December 1970 constitutional amendments were passed defining the country's linguistic regions and the rights of each language community and declaring that Belgium comprised the Flemish, Walloon (French-speaking) and Brussels (bilingual) administrative regions, and with the establishment earlier in that year of regional economic councils. The territorially-defined regions were mainly active in the economic area. The 1970 constitutional amendments also stipulated the establishment of separate cultural councils for Wallonia and Flanders composed of members of their respective language groups in parliament. The councils had the power to legislate over cultural matters, education, international cultural exchanges, the language used in administration and labor relations (Blanpain 2010: 75; Witte et al. 2009). [1970: autonomy concession]
- In 1977, the Egmont Pact was negotiated as part of the government formation process. The pact aimed at resolving the status of Brussels and announced the establishment of autonomous councils for Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels (Covell 1982: 457; Tsebelis 1990: 182). However, Prime Minister Tindemands and the parliament (in particular Flemish MPs), which should have passed the Egmont Pact, were reluctant to implement the pact. First, the pact was sent back for renegotiation between the presidents of the coalition parties. In the end, the pact was rejected in 1978 due to the resignation of the government (Covell 1982: 458).
- The second constitutional reform in 1980 greatly expanded the capacity of communities and regions. The communities were granted regional legislative assemblies (Councils) and a government. As a continuation of the 1970 reform, the two regions – the Flemish Region and the Walloon Region – were also established and were granted a Council and a Government. Whereas in Flanders, the Government and the Council of the Flemish Region merged with the Government and the Council of the Flemish Community, the French-speakers kept the two institutions separate (Minority Rights Group International; Portal Belgium). [1980: autonomy concession]
- The series of constitutional revisions continued in 1988, when the regions were consolidated and given responsibility for transport and public works while the communities were granted more

competences in the field of education (Portal Belgium; Witte et al. 2009: 384). [1988: autonomy concession]

- The fourth constitutional reform in 1993 effectively partitioned Belgium and made it a fully-fledged federal State. Article 1 of the constitution now reads “Belgium is a federal State composed of Communities and Regions” (Constitution of Belgium). Additional powers were devolved to the regions (Minahan 2002). [1993: autonomy concession]
- The fifth constitutional reform in 2001 (The Lambermont Accord) gave more power to the communities and regions as it strengthened tax autonomy of the former and implemented an increase in the federal transfers to the latter (Blöchliger et al. 2012: 52). According to Hooghe (2004: 26), the reform also allowed the direct election of subnational councils and introduced a senate representing subnational interests, constitutional autonomy over working rules, some international competencies and treaty power. [2001: autonomy concession]
- The sixth state reform transferred additional competences from the federal to the regional level (labor market, family allowance, part of healthcare). Furthermore, the Senate will no longer be directly elected but will be formed through an assembly of regional parliaments (Portal Belgium, Interel Belgium). [2011: autonomy concession]

Regional autonomy

- Regional autonomy is clearly given. The question remains as of when this is the case. As we require a “meaningful regional executive organ”, we consider the year of the establishment of the regional governments and community councils (1980) decisive (see above). Following the first of January rule, we thus code regional autonomy as of 1981. [1981-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- Autonomy was established in 1980 (see above) [1980: establishment of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Flemish
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Flemings
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	21101000

Power access

- We follow EPR. [1954-1969: junior partner; 1970-2020: senior partner]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.59]

Regional concentration

- In the spatially contiguous Flanders Region the Flemish make up 86% of the population. This amounts to around 5.12 million people (in 2002), which is more than 50% of the around 5,770,000 Flemish in the whole country in that same year (Minahan 2002: 606). We thus code the Flemish as regionally concentrated. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- The respective EPR group (scenario 1:1) is coded as having one kin group (Dutch in the Netherlands). This is confirmed by other sources such as Minahan (2002: 606) who additionally mentions Flemish communities (approximately 370'000 in 2002) in France. We thus code the presence of ethnic kin in a neighboring country. [kin in neighboring country]

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Germans

Activity: 1971-2020

General notes

- Belgium has developed from a unitary state into a fully-fledged federation. However, the federalization process was not the result of a single legislation but has occurred step by step. Significant constitutional-institutional reforms were undertaken in 1970, 1980, 1988, 1993 and 2001. A sixth reform is currently under way. The peculiar thing about Belgium federalism is that it has both a territorial and a non-territorial dimensions as a consequence of its two different types of constituent units: There are three Communities (Flemish, French and German) and three Regions (Flanders Wallonia and Brussels). Whereas the Regions are territorial units, the Communities are “linked to individuals and language more than territory” (Lecours 2005: 62). Unlike in the case of the Walloons and the Flemish, we only code reforms and laws affecting the autonomy of the Communities since the German-speaking minority does not have its own region.

Movement start and end dates

- In December 1971, the Party of the German-speaking Belgians (Partei der Deutschsprachigen Belgier, PDB) was formed. The PDB advocated federalist goals and autonomy for Belgium’s small German-speaking part (Schilling and Rainer 1990: 72; Wiki; De-academic). The party also advocated an equal status for the German entity within the Belgian federal system, once this had been established. Since this is the first evidence of organized separatist activity, 1971 is coded as start date.
- In 2009 the PDB was abolished after a weak performance in the 2006 local elections. However, already in 2008, members of the PDB had formed the Pro Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft (ProDG), a party that advocates an equal role for the German-speaking entity within a Belgium of the four regions (the three existing: Wallonia, Flanders, and Brussels, and a fourth, German-speaking entity). ProDG continues to be active as of 2020 (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Pro Deutsche Gemeinschaft). [start date: 1971; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There was considerable support for the reunification with Germany during the two world wars. However, with the defeat of the Third Reich, the German-speaking minority moved away from this goal (Eisermann and Zeh 1980). The goal of autonomy within Belgium has been the dominant goal of the German minority and the Party of the German-speaking Belgians (Partei der Deutschsprachigen Belgier, PDB) since. The PDB advocated federalist goals and wide-ranging autonomy for Belgium’s small German-speaking part and an equal status for the German entity within the Belgian federal system, once this had been established. Furthermore, the party wants a separate electoral district that would guarantee them seats in the two chambers of the national parliament (Markuss 1999). In its program, the PDB explicitly states its support for the unity of the Belgian state. The Pro Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft (ProDG), formed by members of the abolished PDB, also advocates autonomy within a Belgium of the four regions, as stated in its program (ProDG webpage).
- Note: we code a claim for autonomy and, after the establishment of the federal system in 1980, a claim for sub-state secession. [1971-1980: autonomy claim; 1981-2020: sub-state secession claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

- There was support for a merger with Germany in the interwar period, but in the post-WWII phase, claims have focused on autonomy within Belgium (Dewulf 2009). [no irredentist claims]

Claimed territory

- The demands of the PDB as well the ProDG concern nine German-speaking municipalities in the Liège province, which lie in the East Cantons in eastern Wallonia (Roth 2015: 54). From north to south, they are: Kelmis, Lontzen, Raeren, Eupen, Bütgenbach, Büllingen, Amel, Sankt Vith, and Burg-Reuland. We identify the territory based on Roth, but draw the claim using GIS data on admin units from GADM.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- We found no reports of separatist violence, hence the entire movement is coded as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The territory of the German-speaking minority of Belgium belonged to the Habsburg Austrian Netherlands which approximately coincides with what is the state of Belgium today. With the Congress of Vienna of 1815, the territory became part of the Rhine Province of Prussia (Landkreis Eupen and Malmedy) but after the First World War the region was ceded to Belgium again (Markusse 1999).
- Retaken by Nazi Germany during the Second World War, Eupen and Malmedy were again annexed by Belgium following the defeat of Germany in 1945. French became the only official language in administration and education after the Second World War and the informal use of German was “severely handicapped” (Markusse 1999: 62) in an attempt to de-Germanize the population. The use of German was, however, gradually facilitated again and by the 1960s as the old institutional position was restored (Verdoot 1968; Rosensträter 1985). In 1963, German was recognized as one of the three official languages of Belgium when Belgium was divided into four linguistic areas (Dutch speaking Flemish area, French speaking Walloon area, bilingual capital of Brussels, German-speaking area in the east). We thus code a prior concession. [1963: cultural rights concession]
- In December 1970 constitutional amendments were passed defining the country's linguistic regions and the rights of each language community and declaring that Belgium comprised the Flemish, Walloon (French-speaking) and Brussels (bilingual) administrative regions. The territorially-defined regions were mainly active in the economic area. The German minority was not granted its own region. The 1970 constitutional amendments, however, also stipulated the establishment of separate cultural councils for each language group. The councils had the power to legislate over cultural and linguistic matters (Blanpain 2010: 75; Deutsche Welle 2008; Witte et al. 2009). The parliament of the German-speaking community (Rat der deutschen

Kulturgemeinschaft) was set up in 1973 in the capital of Eupen while the region remained part of French-speaking Wallonia and was “kept under the watchful eye of the Wallon parliament” (Deutsche Welle 2008). [1970: autonomy concession]

Concessions and restrictions

- The second constitutional reform in 1980 expanded the capacity of communities and regions. The communities were granted regional legislative assemblies (Councils) and a government. The cultural communities became known just as Communities and were granted the competencies to decide not only about cultural matters but also person-related matters such as health and social services. As a consequence of the 1980 reform, the name of the parliament was changed to Council of the German-speaking Community (Rat der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft) in 1984 [1980: autonomy concession]
- The series of constitutional revisions continued in 1988, when the regions were consolidated and given responsibility for transport and public works while the communities were granted more competences in the field of education (Portal Belgium; Witte et al. 2009: 384). [1988: autonomy concession]
- The fourth constitutional reform in 1993 effectively partitioned Belgium and made it a fully-fledged federal State. Article 1 of the constitution now reads “Belgium is a federal State composed of Communities and Regions” (Constitution of Belgium). The constitution also mentions four language areas and three communities (among which the German-speaking, Art. 2) with competencies for culture, education and person-related matters (Markusse 1999: 64). [1993: autonomy concession]
- The fifth constitutional reform in 2001 (The Lambert Accord) gave more power to the communities and regions as it strengthened tax autonomy of the former and implemented an increase in the federal transfers to the latter (Blöchliger et al. 2012: 52). According to Hooghe (2004: 26), the reform also allowed the direct election of subnational councils and introduced a senate representing subnational interests, constitutional autonomy over working rules, some international competencies and treaty power. [2001: autonomy concession]
- The sixth state reform transferred additional competences from the federal to the regional level (labor market, family allowance, part of healthcare). Furthermore, the Senate will no longer be directly elected but will be formed through an assembly of regional parliaments (Portal Belgium, Interel Belgium). Since the reform does not concern the communities but only the regions, we do not code this.

Regional autonomy

- EPR codes the Germans as regionally autonomous from 1973 onwards. The Walloons and the Flemings, on the other hand, are only considered regionally autonomous by EPR as of 1981 despite them also having cultural councils and even regional economic councils as of 1970. Since the 1973 Rat der deutschen Kulturgemeinschaft cannot be considered a meaningful regional executive organ we overrule EPR and also code the Germans as regionally autonomous as of 1981. [1981-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- [1980: establishment of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Germans
<i>Scenario</i>	No match/1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Germans
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	21103000

Power access

- EPR codes the Germans in Belgium relevant as of the establishment of the parliament of the German-speaking community in 1973; from this year onwards they are coded as powerless. For the previous years, however, they are considered politically irrelevant. Since we could not find evidence for German representation in the central government prior to 1973, we extend the powerless code to 1971-72. [1971-2020: powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.01]

Regional concentration

- The German territory in Belgium is divided into two cantons (the more populous Eupen in the north and Sankt Vith in the south). In both parts the Germans make up a majority (Wolff 2000: 33). We could not find evidence of significant German population outside this area (apart from Brussels), which is why we code the Belgians as regionally concentrated. Note: the two German territories are separated by a small strip populated mainly by French speakers; but the threshold is met also including this area. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- EPR codes ethnic kin (Germans) in various countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Romania, Russia, Namibia, Kazakhstan). [kin in neighboring country]

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Walloons

Activity: 1945-2020

General notes

- Belgium has developed from a unitary state into a fully-fledged federation. However, the federalization process was not the result of a single legislation but has occurred step by step. Significant constitutional-institutional reforms were undertaken in 1970, 1980, 1988, 1993 and 2001. A sixth reform is currently under way. In addition to these major reforms, there were also smaller acts of state-movement interaction that will be reflected in this coding. The peculiar thing about Belgium federalism is that it has both a territorial and a non-territorial dimensions as a consequence of its two different types of constituent units: There are three Communities (Flemish, French and German) and three Regions (Flanders Wallonia and Brussels). Whereas the Regions are territorial units, the Communities are “linked to individuals and language more than territory” (Lecours 2005: 62).

Movement start and end dates

- Several Walloon Congresses were held in the late 19th century and early 20th century. In 1942, the Walloon Democratic and Socialist Party (RDSW) was formed and started pushing for an independent Wallonia in November 1943 – seeking “the formation of an independent Walloon State [...] integrated into the defensive system of France” (Delforge n.d.).
- The first evidence for separatist mobilization we could find in the post-WII period was in October 1945, when the Walloon National Congress (Congrès National Wallon) was held in Liège. The Congress, which was not an official state organ but a civil society organization, initially opted in favor of unification with France, but ultimately settled on a claim for federalism. Several other Walloon Congresses were held in subsequent years (MRGI; Conway 2012; Wikipedia).
- The Democratic Front of French-Speakers (Front Démocratique des Francophones, FDF) was founded in May 1964 with the aim of preserving the French character of the Belgian capital and it incorporated various militant francophone groupings of Brussels. The FDF made claims for greater autonomy.
- The FDF’s three Chamber seats in the 1965 elections were increased to 10 by 1977, after which it joined a coalition government with the Christian Socials and Socialists and assisted with the enactment of the 1978 Egmont Pact on regional devolution. Under the plan, Brussels was to become a separate (bilingual) region, i.e. not included in surrounding Flanders as some Flemish nationalists had demanded. The FDF remains active as of 2020, though it is today known as the Démocrate fédéraliste indépendant, or DéFI.
- The Rassemblement Wallon (RW), another Walloon party, was formed in 1968. The RW participated in a coalition government with the Christian Socials and Liberals in 1974-77, which helped to secure the passage of the Egmont Pact on devolution, but it gradually became weakened by defections of moderates to what became the Liberal Reformist Party. In 1985 it merged with other radical Walloon groups to form the Walloon Party (Parti Wallon, PW), a left-wing nationalist party advocating a socialist Wallonia, which since then has been consistently active in Belgian politics (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Marshall & Gurr 2003; Minahan 2002; Parti Republicain Wallon; Roth 2015: 53).
- According to Roth (2015: 63), the largest contemporary Walloon nationalist party is the Front National, a right-wing party which favors greater autonomy. According to Roth, Walloon separatist sentiment is notably weaker than that of the Flemish. [start date: 1943; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There had been some secessionist and irredentist tendencies in the late nineteenth century, when French-speaking intellectuals wanted to break-away and join France (Minority Rights Group International). There were claims for outright independence during WWII and, in a 1945 poll at the second Walloon National Congress, a majority favored unification with France. However, when the poll was declared invalid, a second round turned out in favor of a federalist option inside the Belgian state (Mabille 2000; Minority Rights Group International). As a whole, the movement quickly moved towards the support of a federalist project for Belgium in the post-WWII period (van Haute and Pilet 2006).
- The two most popular regionalist movements (FDF and the Rassemblement Wallon RW) turned from a protectionist project to a federalist option. Secessionist ideas emerged again during the 1970s and 1980s with the Front pour l'Indépendance de la Wallonie and the programmatic turn of the Rassemblement Wallon. Their popular support was weak though.
- According to Roth (2015: 63), the largest contemporary Walloon nationalist party is the Front National, a right-wing party which favors greater autonomy. [1945: irredentist claim; 1946-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- In 1942, the Walloon Democratic and Socialist Party (RDSW) was formed and started pushing for an independent Wallonia in November 1943 – seeking “the formation of an independent Walloon State [...] integrated into the defensive system of France” (Delforge n.d.). While the dominant claim switched to autonomy after this, independence claims continued to be made:
 - o In 1950, divisions over the referendum over the return of King Leopold III (in which Walloons voted ‘no’ and the Flemish voted ‘yes’) led to a “Walloon government” assembling in Liège and wishing “to declare independence” (Eurominority, n.d.).
 - o Secessionist claims also emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1974 the “General Council of Free Wallonia” organized a conference to look into the possibility of an independent Wallonia (Delforge n.d.).
 - o Calls for independence re-surfaced in the late 1970s: In 1977 Gérard Lambert published a manifesto “in favour of a Walloon Republic”.
 - o On April 12, 1980 the “Manifesto for the Self-Determination of Wallonia” was published – followed by the establishment of the Front pour l'Indépendance de la Wallonie (FIW) (Delforge n.d.).
- Support for independence gradually decreased subsequently. We code the end of the independence movement in 1990 following the ten-year rule. It is important to note that independence for Wallonia has never been very popular (Pirrotte and Courtois 2010: 7). [start date: 1943; end date: 1990]

Irredentist claims

- Historically, after the Belgian Revolution of 1830, there was support for unification of Walloon with France (Stengers 2000). There was no “rattachist” movement after 1831, however (Stengers 2000) although there might have been minority support for the idea among the population.
- In 1945, the National Walloon Congress held a meeting in which the majority voted for secession and unification with France (van Haute & Pilet 2006: 300; Mabille 2000). The second ballot instead supported federalism, and the movement as a whole turned to internal autonomy (see above). [start date 1: 1945; end date 1: 1945]
- We find no further evidence of support for a merger with France until 1999, when the Rassemblement Wallonie France (RWF) party was established in Wallonia and Brussels. Its stated aim is secession from Belgium and unification with France (RWF 2014). The party has achieved vote shares between 0.4% to 1.5% in Belgian elections and remained active as of 2020 (Wikipedia n.d.). [start date 2: 1999; end date 2: ongoing]

- Additional information: a poll from 2010 indicates that approximately 32% of Walloons support unification with France if Belgium splits up (Figaro 2010).

Claimed territory

- Although Wallonian demands initially focused on Brussels, the movement's dominant claim concerns Wallonia, which consists of Liège, Namur, Walloon Brabant, Luxembourg, and Hainaut (Roth 2015: 53). We code this territory based on the Global Administrative Areas database (GADM 2019).

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- Riots and demonstrations have been common, but no reports of deaths, hence a NVIOLSD classification. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Belgian Revolution of 1830 led to the separation of the Catholic Provinces in Flanders and Wallonia from the Dutch kingdom in which they had been incorporated by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The newly established kingdom of Belgium was an officially French speaking (first Walloon dialect) and strongly centralized unitary state (Lecours 2005).
- French language prevailed in almost all of the country's institutions, causing a sense of Flemish grievance and leading to Flemish resentment of the Walloon domination. Despite opposition from French-speaking elites, the DeVriendt-Coremans laws in the late nineteenth century introduced formal-legal equality between French and Flemish, full cultural and linguistic equality was however far from achieved (Witte et al. 2009).
- Early industrialization made Wallonia the "economic powerhouse of Belgium" (Minority Rights Group International) in the nineteenth century. However, after World War II, with expanding new industries (petroleum, chemicals, cars) centering around Antwerp and Ghent and with the parallel decline of Wallonia's coal and steel industry, the economic and social conditions reversed (Minority Rights Group International).
- French speakers were discriminated by the Nazi-Germany authorities during WWII, which fed nationalist sentiment (Minority Rights Group International; Conway 2012).
- Cultural and linguistic tensions intensified after World War II, when the Flemish Movement became increasingly powerful and stimulated Walloon nationalism in response. The French-speaking elite, who has been dominating the country since independence, was in decline. A new Flemish assertiveness finally led the government to implement new language legislation that would increase the status of the Flemish language in 1921 and 1963 (Minahan 2002).

Concessions and restrictions

- In December 1970 constitutional amendments were passed defining the country's linguistic regions and the rights of each language community and declaring that Belgium comprised the Flemish, Walloon (French-speaking) and Brussels (bilingual) administrative regions, and with the establishment earlier in that year of regional economic councils. The territorially-defined regions were mainly active in the economic area. The 1970 constitutional amendments also stipulated the establishment of separate cultural councils for Wallonia and Flanders composed of members of

their respective language groups in parliament. The councils had the power to legislate over cultural matters, education, international cultural exchanges, the language used in administration and labor relations (Blanpain 2010: 75; Witte et al. 2009). [1970: autonomy concession]

- In 1977, the Egmont Pact was negotiated as part of the government formation process. The pact aimed at resolving the status of Brussels and announced the establishment of autonomous councils for Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels (Covell 1982: 457; Tsebelis 1990: 182). However, Prime Minister Tindemands and the parliament (in particular Flemish MPs), which should have passed the Egmont Pact, were reluctant to implement the pact. First, the pact was sent back for renegotiation between the presidents of the coalition parties. In the end, the pact was rejected in 1978 due to the resignation of the government (Covell 1982: 458).
- The second constitutional reform in 1980 greatly expanded the capacity of communities and regions. The communities were granted regional legislative assemblies (Councils) and a government. As a continuation of the 1970 reform, the two regions - the Flemish Region and the Walloon Region - were also established and were granted a Council and a Government. Whereas in Flanders, the Government and the Council of the Flemish Region merged with the Government and the Council of the Flemish Community, the French-speakers kept the two institutions separate (Minority Rights Group International; Portal Belgium). [1980: autonomy concession]
- The series of constitutional revisions continued in 1988, when the regions were consolidated and given responsibility for transport and public works while the communities were granted more competences in the field of education (Portal Belgium; Witte et al. 2009: 384). [1988: autonomy concession]
- The fourth constitutional reform in 1993 effectively partitioned Belgium and made it a fully-fledged federal State. Article 1 of the constitution now reads “Belgium is a federal State composed of Communities and Regions” (Constitution of Belgium). Additional powers were devolved to the regions (Minahan 2002). [1993: autonomy concession]
- The fifth constitutional reform in 2001 (The Lambertmont Accord) gave more power to the communities and regions as it strengthened tax autonomy of the former and implemented an increase in the federal transfers to the latter (Blöchliger et al. 2012: 52). According to Hooghe (2004: 26), the reform also allowed the direct election of subnational councils and introduced a senate representing subnational interests, constitutional autonomy over working rules, some international competencies and treaty power. [2001: autonomy concession]
- The sixth state reform transferred additional competences from the federal to the regional level (labor market, family allowance, part of healthcare). Furthermore, the Senate will no longer be directly elected but will be formed through an assembly of regional parliaments (Portal Belgium, Interel Belgium). [2011: autonomy concession]

Regional autonomy

- Regional autonomy for the Walloons is clearly given. The question remains as of when this is the case. As we require a “meaningful regional executive organ”, we consider the year of the establishment of the regional governments and community councils (1980) decisive (see above). Following the first of January rule, we thus code regional autonomy as of 1981. [1981-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- Autonomy was established in 1980 (see above) [1980: establishment of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Walloons
<i>Scenario</i>	No match/1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Walloon
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	21102000

Power access

- We follow EPR (and apply the 1946 code also to 1945). [1945-2020: senior partner]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.4]

Regional concentration

- In spatially contiguous Wallonia the Walloons make up 83% of the population. This amounts to around 2.778 million people (in 2002), which is more than 50% of the around 3.61 million Walloons in the whole country in that same year (Minahan 2002: 2040). We thus code the Walloons as regionally concentrated. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

- The respective EPR group (scenario 1:1) is coded as having several linguistic kin groups in both neighboring and non- neighboring countries. These kin groups live in France, Switzerland, Italy (Aostans), Canada and Mauritius. Apart from the Aostans in Italy, all groups mentioned by EPR have a population larger than 100,000. The presence of ethnic kin is confirmed by Minahan (2002: 2040) who has a narrower definition of ethnic kin and who only lists the Walloons in France (approximately 200,000 in 2002). [kin in neighboring country]

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