Belgium
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Throughout the pre-1945 period Belgium had a parliamentary government with coalition governments. Belgian government coalitions have seen no small number of crises, which led coalition configurations to change in between elections. The most important parties in the Belgian political landscape are the Catholics (CP), the Socialists (Soc), and the Liberals (Lib). There are a few smaller parties during the period of study, but all coalitions in this period consisted of a combination of the three major parties.

At the beginning of the period of study Belgium was governed by Delacroix who headed a coalition government of CP, Soc, and Lib. In 1920, Delacroix was succeeded by his fellow party member de Wiart. The coalition initially held, but the socialists left on 24 October 1921 (Buyst Lauwers & Uytterhoeven 1991). Following elections in 1921, the combination of CP and Lib continued under Theunis. The Theunis government experienced crises in 1923 and 1924, but neither led to a change in government. (Buys et al. 1991; worldstatesmen.org)

New elections 5 April 1925 led to the a catholic government under Aloys van de Vyvere, however, his government came together following a long period of crisis and fell within a few days following its formation (minor SOLS change). Van de Vyvere was succeeded by fellow Catholic Prosper Poullet, who headed a coalition of the CP and the Socialists (minor SOLS change). Within a year the government resigned and was succeeded by a government of the CP, Soc. and Lib. with Jaspar as Prime Minister minor SOLS change). In 1927 Jaspar's coalition continued without the Socialists, which was coded as another minor SOLS change, dated 22 November. (Buys Lauwers & Uytterhoeven 1991, worldstatesmen.org)

Elections in 1929 did not change the composition of government and the Catholic Liberal coalition governed under until 1935 under a wide variety of prime ministers – ie. Jaspar, Renkin, de Broqueville, and Theunis . In 1935 Van Zeeland built a broad Catholic-Socialist-Liberal coalition that was further consolidated in the election results a year later. In late 1937, Janson takes over with the same CP, Soc. & Lib. coalition; as Janson was of the Liberal Party, however, we code a SOLS change upon Janson taking office (Buys Lauwers & Uytterhoeven 1991; worldstatesmen.org). Janson was succeeded by the Socialist Spaak in May 1938, which we code as a SOLS change. Note that neither the party composition nor the distribution of seats within the coalition change with Spaak.

In the final year before the Second World War, Belgium was governed by Hubert Pierlot of the PCS-KVV, formerly known as the Catholic Party. According to Capoccia (2001: 447), the Catholic Party had changed its name in 1937 to the Social Catholic Party-Catholic Flemish People's Party (PCS-KVV) as a result of internal reform under Pierlot. Hubert Pierlot of the reformed PCS-KVV was elected prime minister on February 9, 1939 (a major SOLS change). Pierlot subsequently headed a Coalition of the PCS-KVV and the Socialists; the PCS-KVV and the Liberals; and in the final months a broad coalition of the Catholic, Socialist, and Liberal parties. Pierlot's entry as Prime minister was coded as a SOLS change, whereas the changes in composition of his coalition were coded as minor SOLS changes, dated April 18, 1939 and September 3, 1939 respectively. Note that we code Belgium as a parliamentary democracy until

September 4, 1939, at which point it is coded by POLITY (2010) as -66 (interruption/foreign occupied).

Belgium is coded as a parliamentary democracy from 1945 until 2008. Count Hubert Pierlot ruled from London as prime minister in exile until the end of World War II in 1945. Pierlot, of the Social Catholic Party (PCS-KVV),[1]
occupation in 1940. Pierlot was replaced by Achille Van Acker of the Belgian Socialist Party (BSP) in February 1945, a few months before Belgium regained independence according to COW. We code this as a SOLS change since Van Acker's SOLS was different than Pierlot's who was the last regular leader. Van Acker initially formed a coalition government that was also composed of the Christian People's Party (CVP), Liberal Party (LP), and Communist Party of Belgium (KPB) (Woldendorp et al. 2000, 130). In 1945, Van Acker's coalition changed from BSP/CVP/LP/KPB to BSP/LP/KPB/DU/ICAT (DU is the Democratic Union; it is unclear what ICAT stands for and Broughton and Donovan 1999, p. 185 do not list ICAT.). This is a minor SOLS change (1 August 1945). There were three leadership changes in 1946, from van Acker to Paul-Henri Spaak, from Spaak back to van Acker, and from van Acker to Camille Huysmans. The first is a minor SOLS change (11 March 1946) because the coalition changed from BSP/LP/KPB/DU/ICAT under van Acker to BSP/LP under Spaak. The second is a minor SOLS change (1 April 1946) because the coalition changed from BSP/LP to BSP/LP/KPB under van Acker. The third is not a SOLS change because the coalition remained intact during the transition from Van Acker to Huysmans. In 1947 Spaak, BSP, became PM in coalition with CVP. This is a minor SOLS change (27 March 1947). In 1949 Gaston Eyskens, CVP, formed a government with the LP. This is a SOLS change.

1950 saw two leadership changes: from Eyskens to Jean Duvieusart and from Duvieusart to Joseph Pholien. The first is a minor SOLS change (30 June 1950) because LP drops out of the coalition. The second is not a SOLS change because Pholien was also a member of the CVP. In 1952 Jean Van Houtte, CVP, became PM. This is not a SOLS change. In 1954 van Acker, PSP, once again became PM in coalition with LP. This is a SOLS change. In 1958 Eyskens, CVP, once again became PM. This is a SOLS change. Later in the year LP joined in coalition with CVP. This is a minor SOLS change (7 November 1958). In 1961, Théodore Lefèvre, CVP, became PM in coalition with BSP. This is a minor SOLS change (25 April 1961). In 1965, Pierre Harmel, CVP, became PM in coalition with BSP. This is not a SOLS change. In 1966, Paul Vandenboeynants, CVP, became PM in coalition with LP. This is a minor SOLS change (20 March 1966). In 1968 the CVP splintered, forming the Parti Social Chrétien (PSC) in Wallonia and the Christelijke Volkspartij (CVP) in Flanders. Thus, starting in 1968, CVP is a splinter party (Worldstatesmen.org 2010). Eyskens, as part of the newly splintered CVP, became PM, in coalition with the BSP. This is not a regular SOLS change but there is a minor SOLS change. In 1972 the Social Christian Party (PSC) joined the coalition. This is a minor SOLS change (Jan 21 1972). In 1973 Edmond Leburton, BSP, became PM in coalition with CVP, PSC, and PVV (Party for Freedom and Progress, successor of the LP (Overbeek 1993, 203)). This is a SOLS change. In

[1] PCS is the Walloon (French) spelling. In Flemish it is "Katholieke Vlaamsche Volkspartij" or KVV. This narrative follows Woldendorp et al. (2000) in listing only the French acronyms for the party names. For the Flemish translations, see Worldstatesmen.org.

1974 Léo Tindemans, CVP, became PM in coalition with PSC, PVV, PLP (the Walloon splinter party of the PVV). This is a SOLS change. Later in the year another party, RW (Rassemblement wallon), joined the coalition. This is a minor SOLS change (June 12 1974). (Note that in 1975 Worldstatesmen.org lists Boeynants, CVP as PM. Woldendorp et al. have Tindemans ruling from 1974 until 1978. We go with Woldendorp et al.) In 1976 PLP dropped out of the coalition and PRLW (Parti de Réformes et de la Liberté en Wallonie, successor to the PVV and PLP) joined the coalition. This is a minor SOLS change (9 December 1976). In 1977 BSP, Fédéralistes Démocrates Francophones (FDF), and People's Union (VU) joined the coalition and PVV, PRLW, and RW left the coalition. This is a minor SOLS change (3 June 1977). In 1978 Tindemans government fell and Vandenboeynants, PSC, became PM as part of the same coalition on an interim basis (The Independent 2001; "Language pact" 1978; "Belgian Cabinet Resigns." 1978). This is not a SOLS change. In 1979, Wilfried Martens, CVP, became PM in coalition with the PSC, BSP, PSB, and FDF (BSP-PSB was a unified party until 1978, when BSP became the Flemish branch and PSB became the Walloon branch [Worldstatesmen.org 2010]). This is a minor SOLS change (3 April 1979). In 1980 FDF left the coalition. This is a minor SOLS change (23 January 1980). Later that year PVV and PRL joined the coalition. This is a minor SOLS change (18 May 1980). In summary, the two minor SOLS changes in 1980 are: CVP/PSC/BSP/PSB/FDF (Martens), CVP/PSC/BSP/PSB (Martens), and CVP/PSC/BSP/PSB/PVV/PRL (Martens).

In 1981, Martens was replaced by Mark Eyskens. Since Eyskens is of the same party as his predecessor, we code no major SOLS change. Instead, since his coalition did not include PVV and PRL, we code minor SOLS change here (6 April 1981). Later in 1981 Martens, CVP, once again became PM in coalition with PSC, PVV, and PRL (Parti Réformateur Libéral, successor to the PLP). This is a minor SOLS change (17 December 1981). In summary, the minor SOLS changes in 1981 are: CVP/PSC/BSP/PSB/PVV/PRL (Martens), CVP/PSC/BSP/PSB (Eyskens), and CVP/PSC/PVV/PRL (Martens). (There seems to be a conflict between Woldendorp et al. and Archigos. Woldendorp claims that Mark Eyskens, CVP, began his term in 1980 when the PVV and PRL left the coalition. Archigos has him starting in 1981. We go with Archigos for Eykens' entry date).

In 1988 Martens' coalition changed from CVP/PSC/PVV/PRL to CVP/PSC/PSB/BSP/VU. This is a minor SOLS change (9 June 1988). In 1992 Jean-Luc Dehaene, CVP, became PM in coalition with PSC, PSB, BSP, but not VU. This is a minor SOLS change (13 March 1992). In 1999 Guy Verhofstadt, VLD, became PM in coalition with PSB, PRL-FDF, BSP, Ecolo (French-speaking Green party), and Agalev (Dutch-speaking Green party) (Rihoux 2001, 340). This is a SOLS change. In 2003 the coalition changed from VLD/PSB/PRL-FDF/BSP to VLD/PSB/MR/SPA-SPIRIT (MR is the Mouvement Réformateur; SPA-SPIRIT is the joint list of the Socialistische Partij Anders (SPA)—a splinter of the BSP— and Spirit, the Sociaal-Liberale Partij party) (Rihoux et al. 2004, 954). This is a minor SOLS change (July 12, 2003). In 2007 the coalition changed from VLD/PSB/MR/SPA-SPIRIT to VLD/CD&V-NVA/MR/PSB/CDH (CD&V-NVA is a cartel between the Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams (CD&V) and the Nieuw-Vlaams Alliantie (NVA); CDH is the Centre Démocrate Humaniste) (Rihoux et al. 2008, 921). This is a minor SOLS change (December 21 2007). In 2008 Yves Leterme, CD&V (still in cartel with NVA), became PM in coalition with MR, VLD, PSB, and CDH (Rihoux et al. 2009, 904).

This is a SOLS change. Later in the year Herman Van Rompuy, CD&V became PM in as part of the same coalition as his predecessor (Rihoux et al. 2009, 906). This is not a SOLS change.

Leterme got a second chance to serve as prime minister of Belgium in 2009 when Herman Achille Van Rompuy resigned as prime minister to become the President of the European Council (Isenson 2009). Leterme and Van Rompuy were both from the same political party and the governing coalition remained the same, thus according to the democratic coding rules, there is not a SOLS change nor a minor SOLS change in 2009. In 2010, the Open VLD (O-VLD) party quit the governing coalition, resulting in a minor SOLS change (News Wires 2010). The withdrawal of the O-VLD resulted in a collapse of the coalition government and Leterme's resignation as PM (Shoichet 2010). While Leterme only served as prime minister from November 2009 to April 2010 (5 months), he served as caretaker prime minister for over one year (Mulvey 2011). Elections were held in June 2010, but a government was not formed until 2011 (Waterfield 2011). Elio Di Rupo was sworn in as prime minister on December 6, 2011 after forming a six-party coalition (Waterfield 2011). Di Rupo, leader of the PS party, was from a different party than Leterme, thus the transition is coded as a SOLS change.

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