

# The position of Contemporary Urban Vernaculars in Flanders

the case of *Cité Dutch*

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# Overview

1. Urban Vernaculars
2. Cité Dutch
3. Qualitative analyses
4. Quantitative analyses
5. Conclusion

# Urban Vernaculars

multi-ethnic European cities



multi-lingual urban spaces

- debate on status, but ‘unmarked’ Labovian vernacular
- diffused across youngsters without ethnic background

“Contemporary Urban Vernaculars”

# Urban Vernaculars

	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
PRODUCTION		
PERCEPTION		

# Urban Vernaculars

	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
PRODUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- discourse analyses; ethnography</li><li>- identity construction</li></ul>	
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# Urban Vernaculars

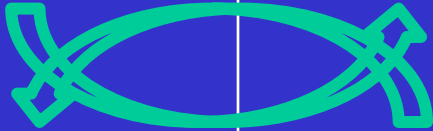
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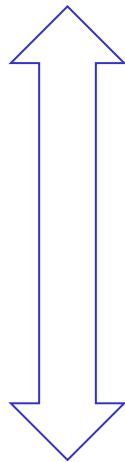


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# Urban Vernaculars

QUALITATIVE PERCEPTION RESEARCH



bridging the gap

QUANTITATIVE PERCEPTION RESEARCH

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# Citélanguage



CUV's in former ghettoized parts of Genk and surroundings

## History

### 1. First wave of migrant workers

Mainly from Italy

Concentration of communities (cités)

No access to native-like Dutch

# Citélanguage



CUV's in former ghettoized parts of Genk and surroundings

## History

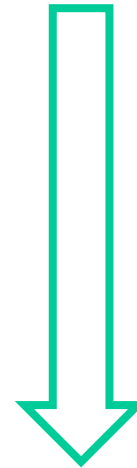
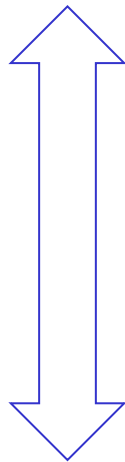
2. Second/third wave of migrant workers  
melting pot  
tuition in Dutch  
contact-induced variation and change; CUV

Perception in  
broader speech  
community?

# Perception of CitéDutch

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

**DISCURSIVE ANALYSES**



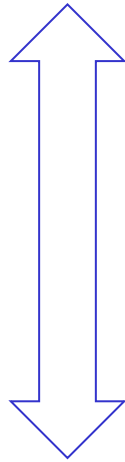
**QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH**

**LISTENER EXPERIMENT**

verify to what extent the various meanings in the indexical field of Citélanguage occur on the individual level of the speaker/hearer's mind and how these are structured

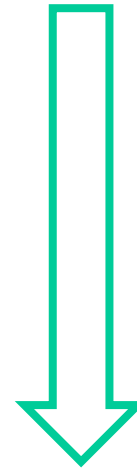
# Perception of CitéDutch

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH



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# Qualitative analyses

Societal treatment/ Texts from social media networks

Online survey

- Direct, open questions
- n = 60

# Results

## CitéDutch never stands alone

- always discussed in relation to other varieties
- always discussed in relation to its history

**Continuum** from the representation of a 'local, authentic variety to be proud of' to 'bad incorrect slang to avoid'

# Societal Treatment

Continuum:

CD = 'broken Dutch' —————> CD = legit local variety

*With this slogan, the socialist party PRO Genk is heading to the 2012 local elections. I almost choked on my morning coffee when I read the slogan in the newspaper! Instead of pointing to the lack of language skills of our youth, they prefer to glorify the stigmatized Citélanguage*

Right-wing party



Left-wing party

# Survey

Continuum:

CD = 'broken Dutch' —————> CD = legit local variety

*I'm definitely not a fan of Citélanguage, because I think **it does not sound intelligent**. It's already difficult enough as it is for young people to learn proper Standard Dutch, especially youngsters of foreign origin, who are numerous here and who **with their broken Dutch often influence Belgian youngsters**.*

*Language purists associate Citélanguage with a bad knowledge of Dutch. This is certainly not the case. Citélanguage **can simply be considered as any other dialect**, except that it is more recent*

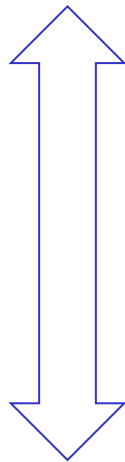
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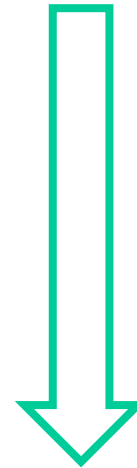
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# Quantitative analyses

## Listener experiment

- Speaker evaluation paradigm
- Voice: native Flemish actor with Italian roots, grew up in cité
- Three guises, three fillers
- N = 95

## Guises

- Standard Dutch
- Regional Limburgian accent
- Regional Limburgian + three Citémarkers
  - Palatalization of /s/ (*sjtijn* instead of *stijn* 'style')
  - Generalization of *de* (\**de meisje* 'the girl')
  - Generalization of *die* (\**die meisje* 'that girl')
- Fillers: read by a West-Flemish speaker



# Quantitative analyses

## Respondents

- Regionally stratified: Brabant, West-Flanders, Limburg
- No ethnic background
- More women than men (60 vs. 35)
- Between 15 and 55 years old (mean: 28; SD: 12.2)

## Evaluation

1. 20 characteristics (15 semantic diff. scales; 5 unidim. scales)
2. Direct questions: (1) guess ethnic origin; (2) province/city?  
(cp. Grondelaers & Van Hout on direct questions)

# Quantitative analyses

## Respondents

- Regionally stratified: Brabant, West-Flanders, Limburg

- N	SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL							
- M	Deze spreker is afkomstig van...							
- B								
	het platteland	1	2	3	4	5	een grootstad	

## Evaluation

1. 20 characteristics (15 semantic diff. scales; 5 unidim. scales)

2. D	UNIDIMENSIONAL SCALE					
	Begrijp je de spreker goed?					
	Heel goed	Goed	Met een beetje inspanning	Moeilijk	Helemaal niet	

# Quantitative analyses

## Respondents

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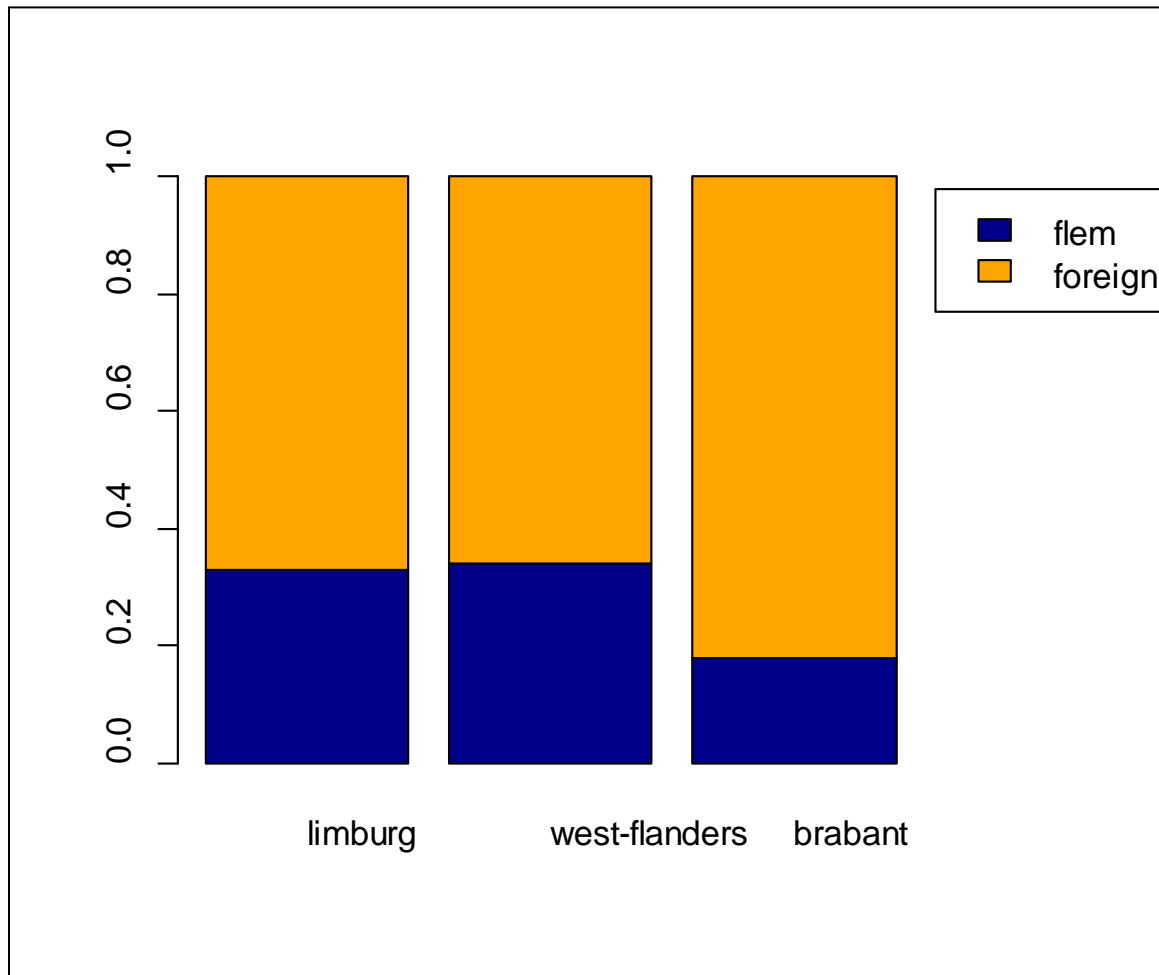
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# Results: Direct questions

## Ethnic origin

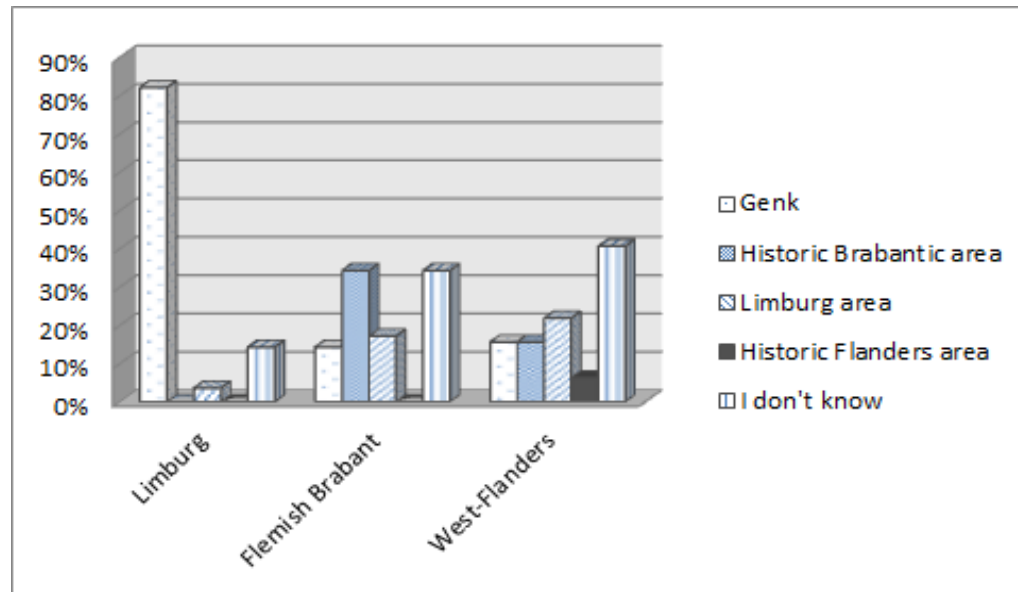
67% of respondents assigned a foreign background to the speaker



# Results: Direct questions

## Location

- **For Limburgians:** Citélanguage is clearly linked to the local region of Genk, even if it is still associated with a foreign ethnicity
- **For others:** lots of insecurity, Brussels (multi-ethnic). Geographic link supports insights on ethnic background



# Results: Direct questions

CitéDutch is systematically recognized as foreign

- Limburgians: “this speaker is foreign + from Genk”
- others: “this speaker is foreign”

→ Impact on attitudes?

# Results: Indirect questions

**Analyses:** PCA (SPSS) for each of the three varieties

**Focus on 2 components**

- speaker status (important, intelligent, serious, correct)
- speaker attractiveness (cool, funny, popular, understandable)

Together: “social distance”

# Results: Indirect questions

## General linear model

### **Response:**

- factor loadings

### **Predictors:**

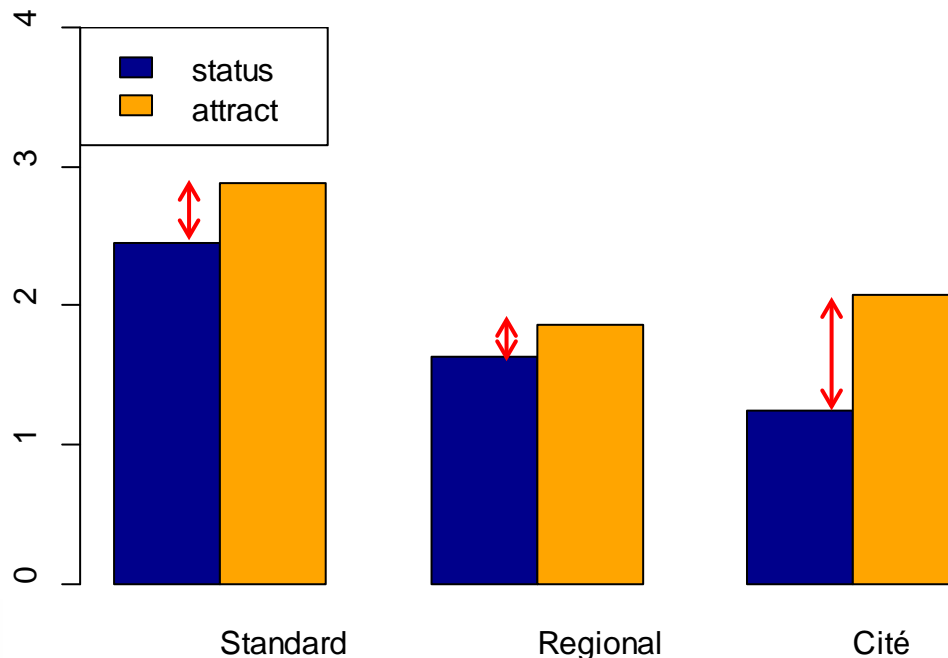
- variety (Standard Dutch, Regional Limburg and Citélanguage)
- social distance (two levels: speaker status and speaker attractiveness)
- region of origin of the respondents (Limburg, Brabant, West-Flanders)



# Results: Indirect questions

Social distance \* variety ( $p < 0.05$ )

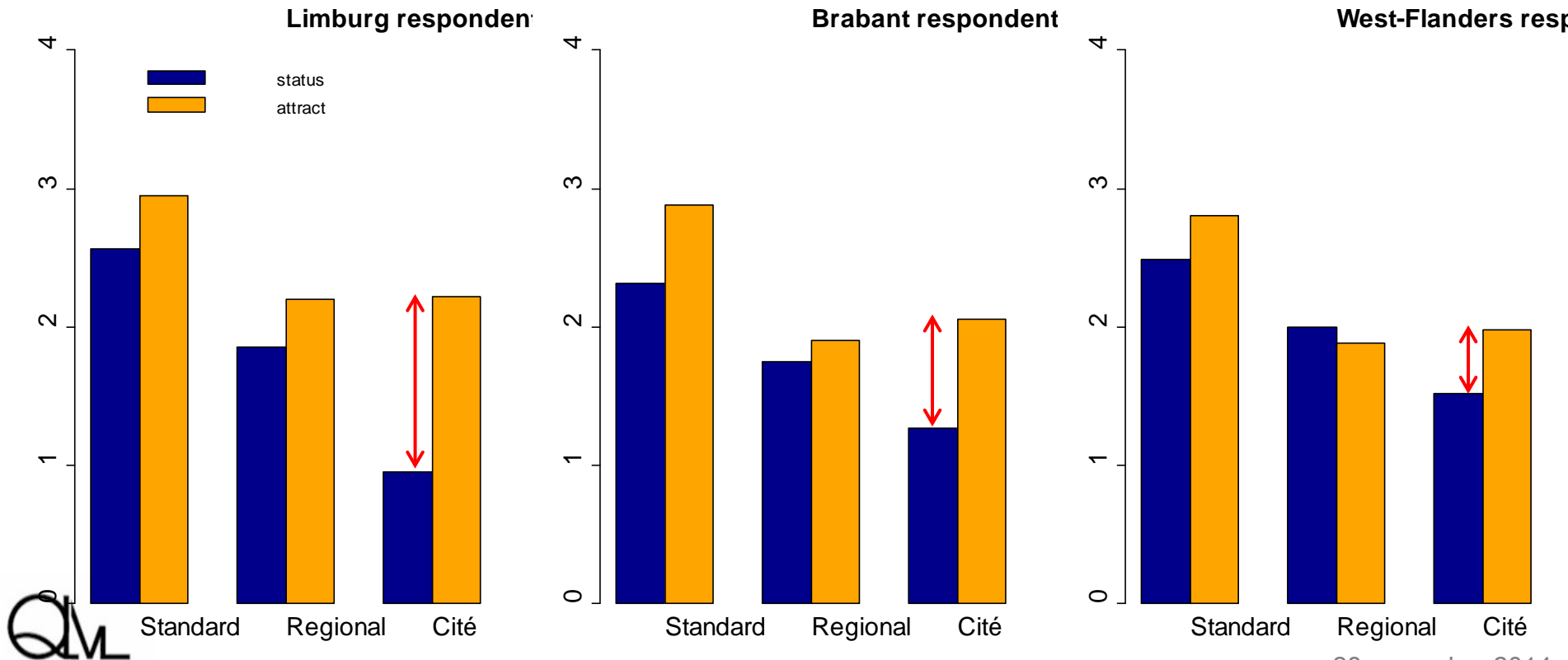
- For Standard Dutch, status and attractiveness score the highest
- Cité has the lowest score for status
- The difference between status and attractiveness is significantly more pronounced for Citélanguage in comparison with the other two varieties



# Results: Indirect questions

Social distance \* regional origin respondents (p = 0.08)

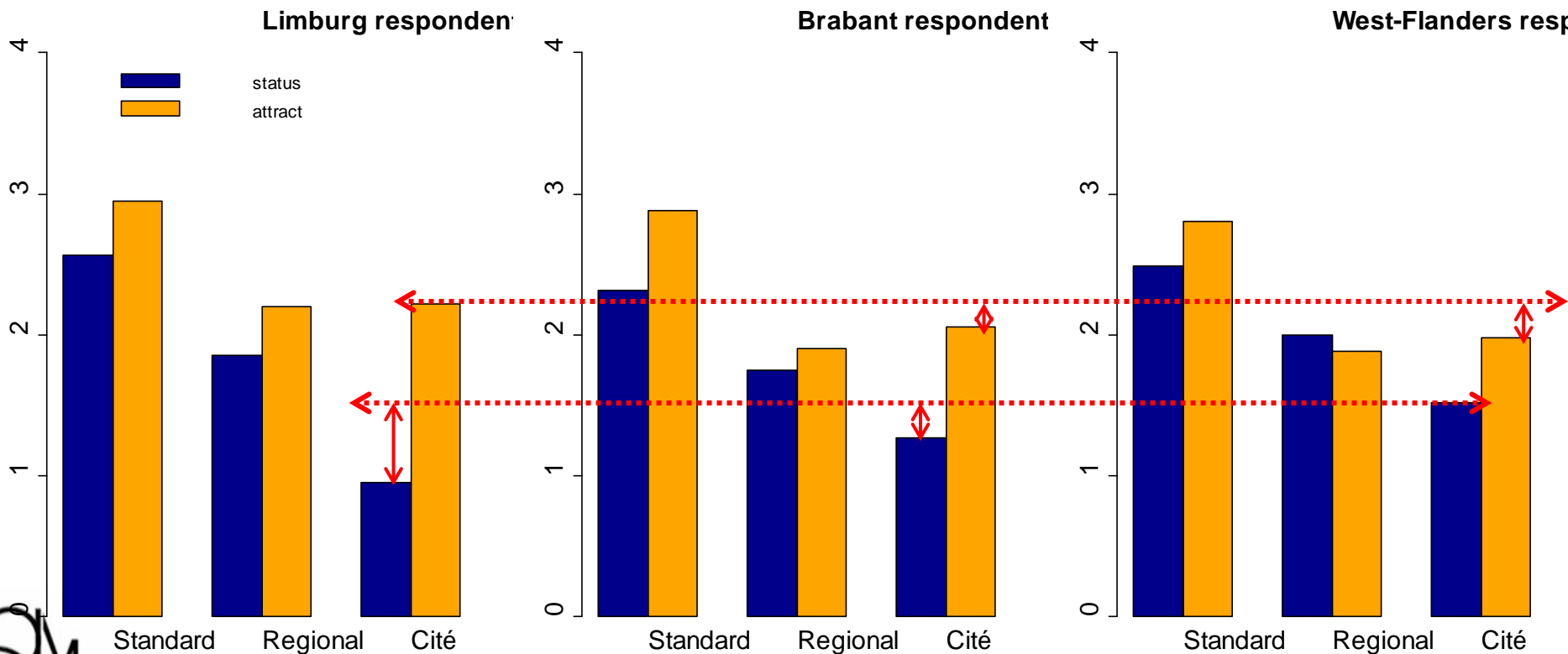
- Limburg: biggest polarization status/attractiveness



# Results: Indirect questions

Social distance \* regional origin respondents ( $p = 0.08$ )

- Limburg: biggest polarization status/attractiveness
- Due to lower status in Limburg; attractiveness very similar
- No big differences for Standard/regional guise



# Results

Continuum:

CD = 'broken Dutch' —————> CD = legit local variety

CD = low status —————> CD = high attractiveness



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# Conclusion

## Future research

- (1) Not only look at regional background of respondents, but also at sociolinguistic awareness
- (2) More data
- (3) More techniques (both on the qualitative and the quantitative side)
- (4) Focusing in on specific variables (phonetics vs. morphology?)  
(age patterns? gender patterns?)

# Conclusion

## Insights on CitéDutch:

- never discussed in isolation from other varieties or its own history
- typically linked to ethnicity, not per se to a specific location (bar Limburgian respondents) (~ history)
- if anything, assigned location echoes ethnicity
- continuum from broken language to means to add “couleur locale”
- larger polarization between status and attractiveness, specifically in Limburg

# Conclusion

## Aims of the paper

- (1) **CitéDutch**: perception of Citélanguage in the broader Flemish speech community
- (2) **CUV in Flanders (e.g. Jaspers, 2008) and of non-standard varieties in Flanders**: perception and attitude as window to language regards; from macro to micro, from ideology to regard
- (3) **CUV in Europe**: bridging the gap between qualitative and quantitative perception research.



THANKS FOR LISTENING

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