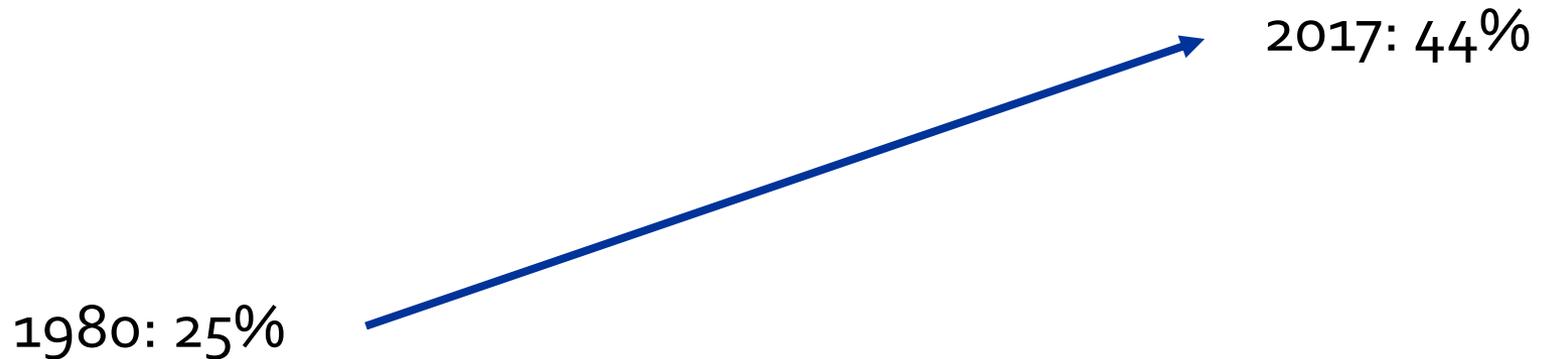


Foreign national prisoners' participation opportunities in prison: Research insights from Flanders (Belgium)

Dr. Dorien Brosens & Dra. Flore Croux
FNP Workshop Den Haag 2018

Foreign national prisoners in Belgium

- Increasing in numbers:



Foreign national prisoners

- **Main research focuses**
 - Pains of imprisonment (e.g. Ugelvik & Damsa, 2018; Warr, 2016)
 - Detention problems (Barnoux & Wood, 2013; Bhui, 2009)
 - **Scarce research attention: foreign nationals' participation opportunities in prison** (Croux et al., 2018)
- **FIP²-project** (Foreigners' involvement and participation in prison)

STUDY 1:

Helicopter overview of the participation opportunities of foreign national prisoners

Methodology

- **Research questions**
 - What activities are offered to foreign national prisoners?
 - To what extent is the activity offer accessible to foreign national prisoners?
- **20 (telephone) interviews**
 - Flemish and Brussels prison activity coordinators (n=18)
 - Radicalization officials (n=2)
- **Time frame:** June – September 2017
- **Interview scheme:** Delivered in advance

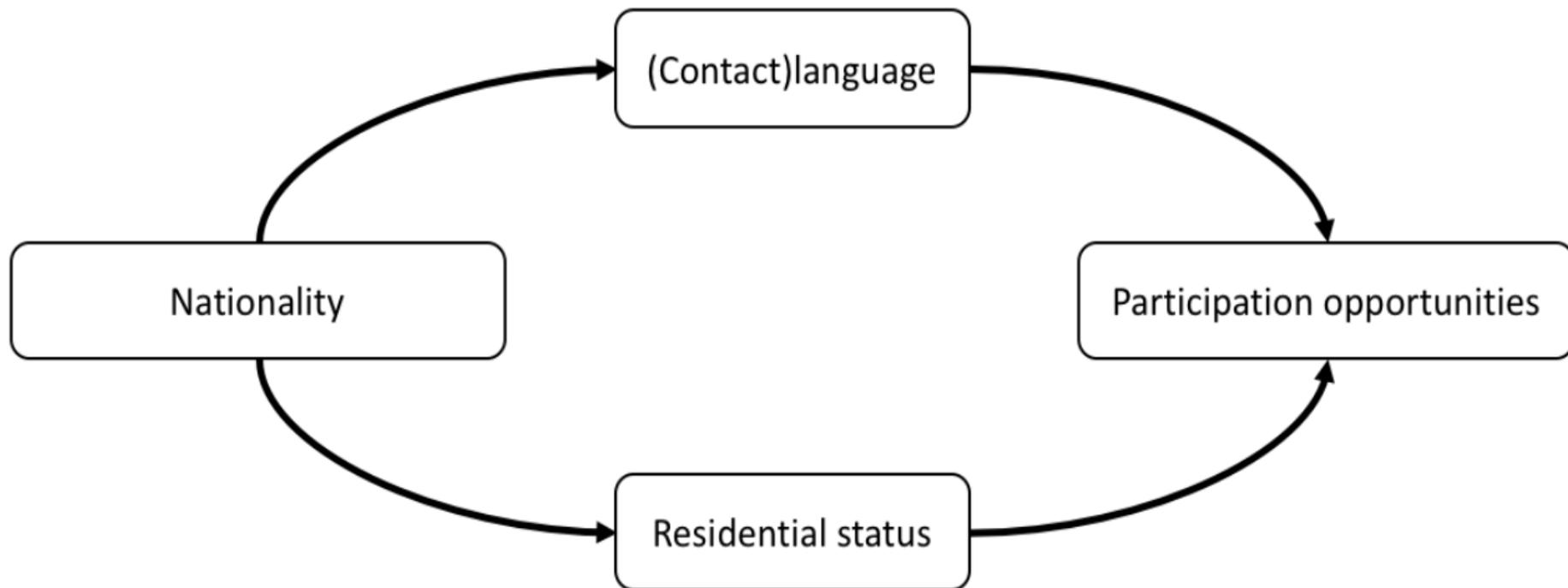


PENITENTIAIRE INRICHTING MANNEN



Accessibility of the activity offer

- In principle, the respondents say: *"no one is excluded from the existing activity offer"*
- But in practice, foreign nationals face (severe) difficulties in terms of accessibility



First factor: Importance of language

- **Language is more decisive for participation opportunities** than nationality

"Foreigners and language are two separate things. Sometimes it coincides, but sometimes it does not. We have Walloons, they are not foreigners, but they do not speak our Dutch, so they cannot always participate." (Activity coordinator, prison with wings for people awaiting trial and convicted people)

→ Nationality is not a synonym for language

First factor: Importance of language

- In practice, activity coordinators divide activities based on the language level that is required to be able to participate
 - Dutch activities
 - Foreign-language activities
 - Less-language sensitive activities

First factor: Importance of language

- **Dutch activities: are not accessible by prisoners who do not speak Dutch**
 - Courses 'being a mother/father in prison', 'victim in the picture' and 'dealing with frustrations'
- **Activities to learn Dutch**
 - Dutch as a second language, Dutch on the prison floor, learning Dutch while sporting, language point in the library

First factor: Importance of language

- **Foreign language activities**
 - Foreign-language books, CD's, DVD's in libraries
 - Gregorian singing atelier
 - Following educational courses from home country – FORINER project
- **Less-language sensitive activities**
 - Sports
 - Leisure activities (i.e. performances, multicultural market/workshops)

"Foreign national prisoners can participate in all sport activities. That is the advantage of sport, that is very accessible for foreigners as language is not really a barrier." (Activity coordinator, prison for convicted people)

Question

- How many % of the foreign national prisoners in Belgium do not have the right to stay in Belgium?
 - 20%
 - 35%
 - 50%
 - 65%
 - 80%

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 - **65%**
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Second factor: Importance of residential status

- **Different classifications**
 - Right of residence (31.5%)
 - Easier to work on re-integration
 - E.g. course about society orientation
 - Uncertain residence status (3.3%)
 - Waiting for decision of the Immigration Department
 - E.g. project on future orientation
 - No right to stay (65.2%)
 - Very difficult to work on re-integration
 - No specific programmes
 - In case of deportation: depart from specific prisons without preparation

Some reflections

- Participation opportunities are a **complex and local story**
- Link **cultural sensitivity**
 - Mainly focus on **surface structure**: Making the activity offer accessible by means of language-related strategies (e.g. translations, providing foreign-language or less-language sensitive activities)
 - Need for **deep structure**
- **Cultural sensitive competences**: Knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness of other cultures
 - Mainly focus on language skills
 - Training is necessary

Question

- Are the research results surprising?
 - Yes
 - A little bit
 - No

STUDY 2:

Interviews with foreign national
prisoners, prison guards and
activity organisers

4 prisons in Flanders

Remand prison
(closed regime)

Prison where
sentences are
executed
(semi-open regime)

Prison with wings for
people awaiting trial
and convicted people
(closed regime)

Prison with wings for
people awaiting trial
and convicted people
(closed regime)

51 interviews with foreign national prisoners

- Traditional prison research (Liebling et al., 2011) and research on foreign nationals depart from a **problem- and deficit-oriented perspective** (e.g. Banks, 2011; Warr, 2016).

Appreciative Inquiry

What do you think is the best/most amusing activity in which you have already participated in here in prison?

If you have one wish for an activity that you would like to do here in prison, what would it to be?

51 interviews with foreign national prisoners

Topics

Experiences

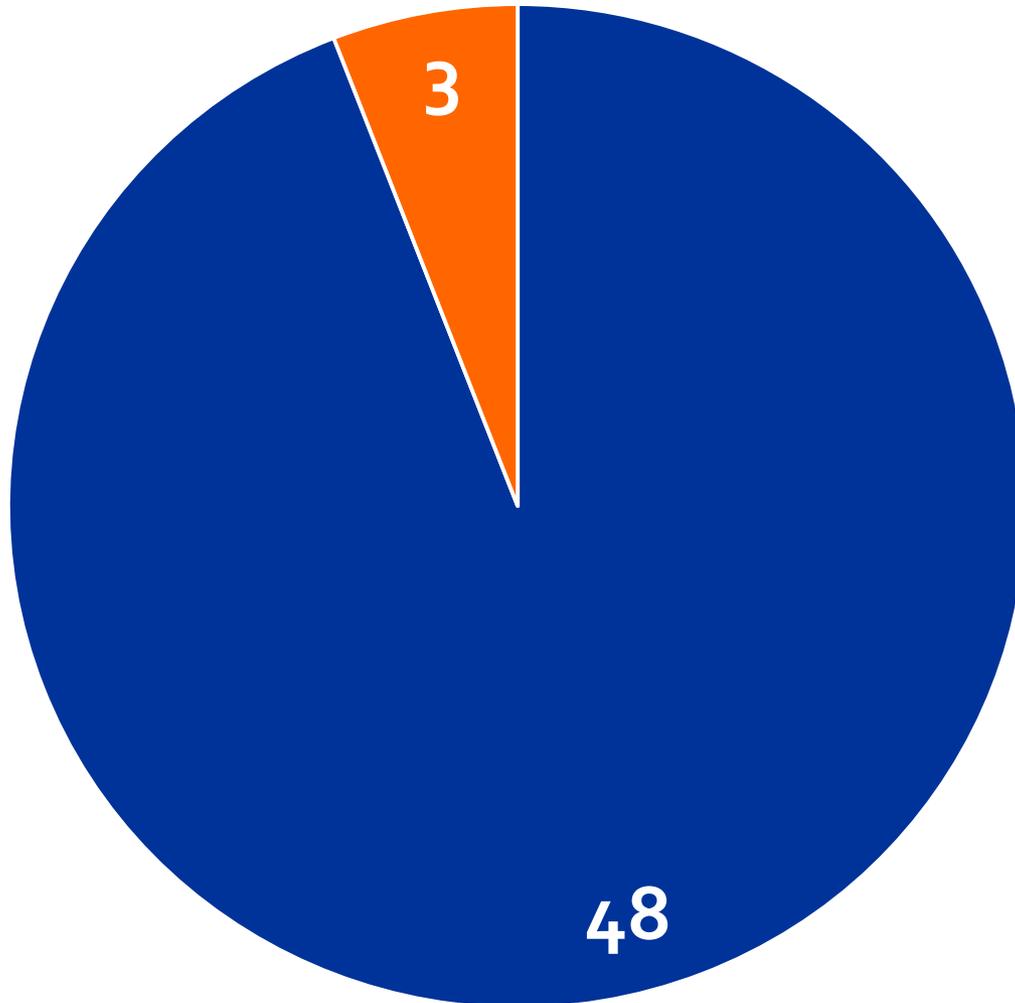
Needs

Social contacts

Social support

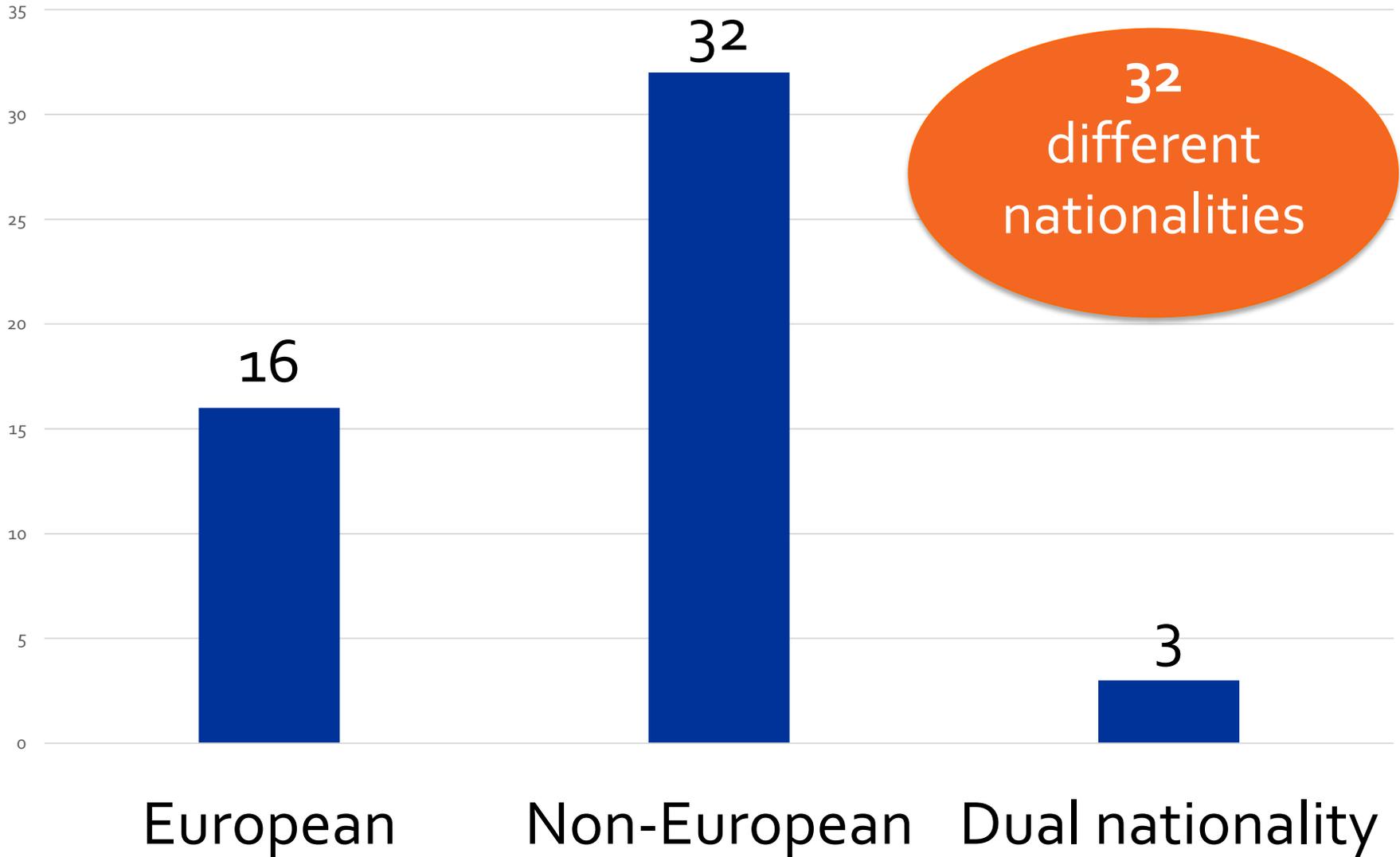
Re-integration and future

Gender

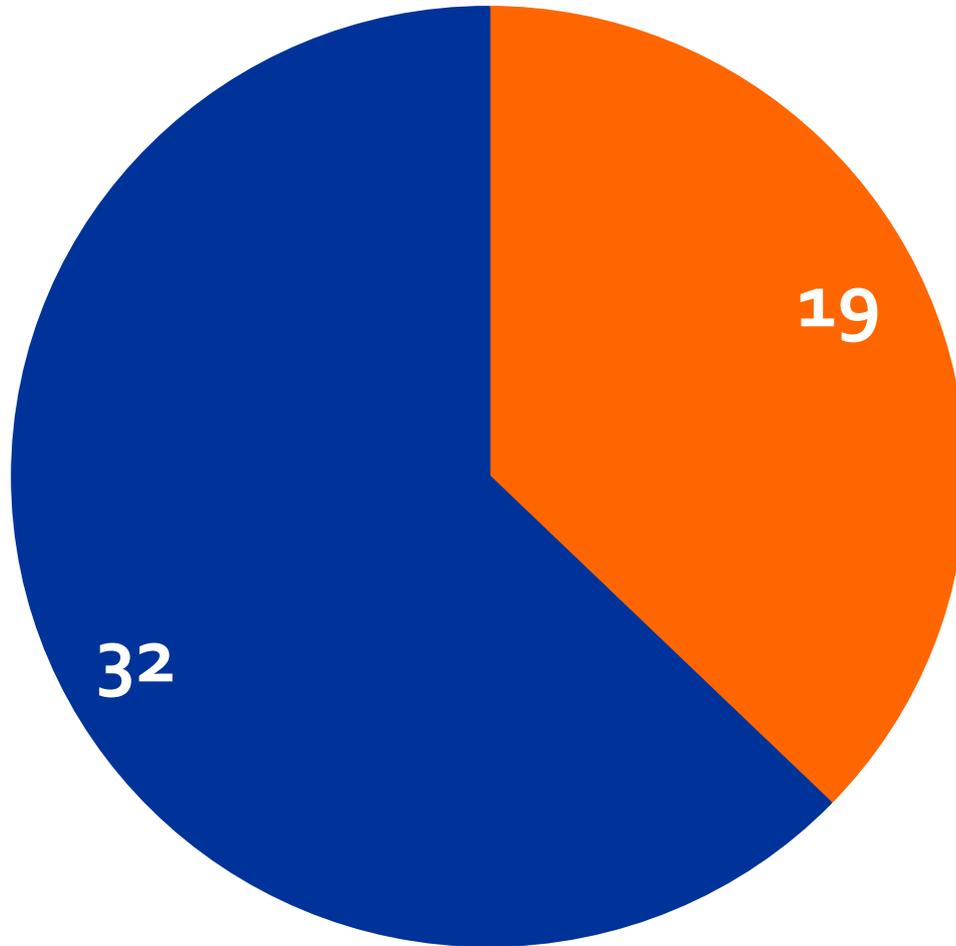


- Male
- Female

Nationalities



Interpreter



■ With interpreter

■ Without interpreter

Interviews with prison guards & activity organisers

53 interviews

(27 prison guards; 26 activity organisers)

Appreciative
Inquiry

What is currently going well in working with non-Belgian prisoners here in prison?

Imagine that you are the prison governor, how would you tackle these changes?

Interviews with prison guards & activity organisers

Topics

Experiences in dealing with foreign national prisoners

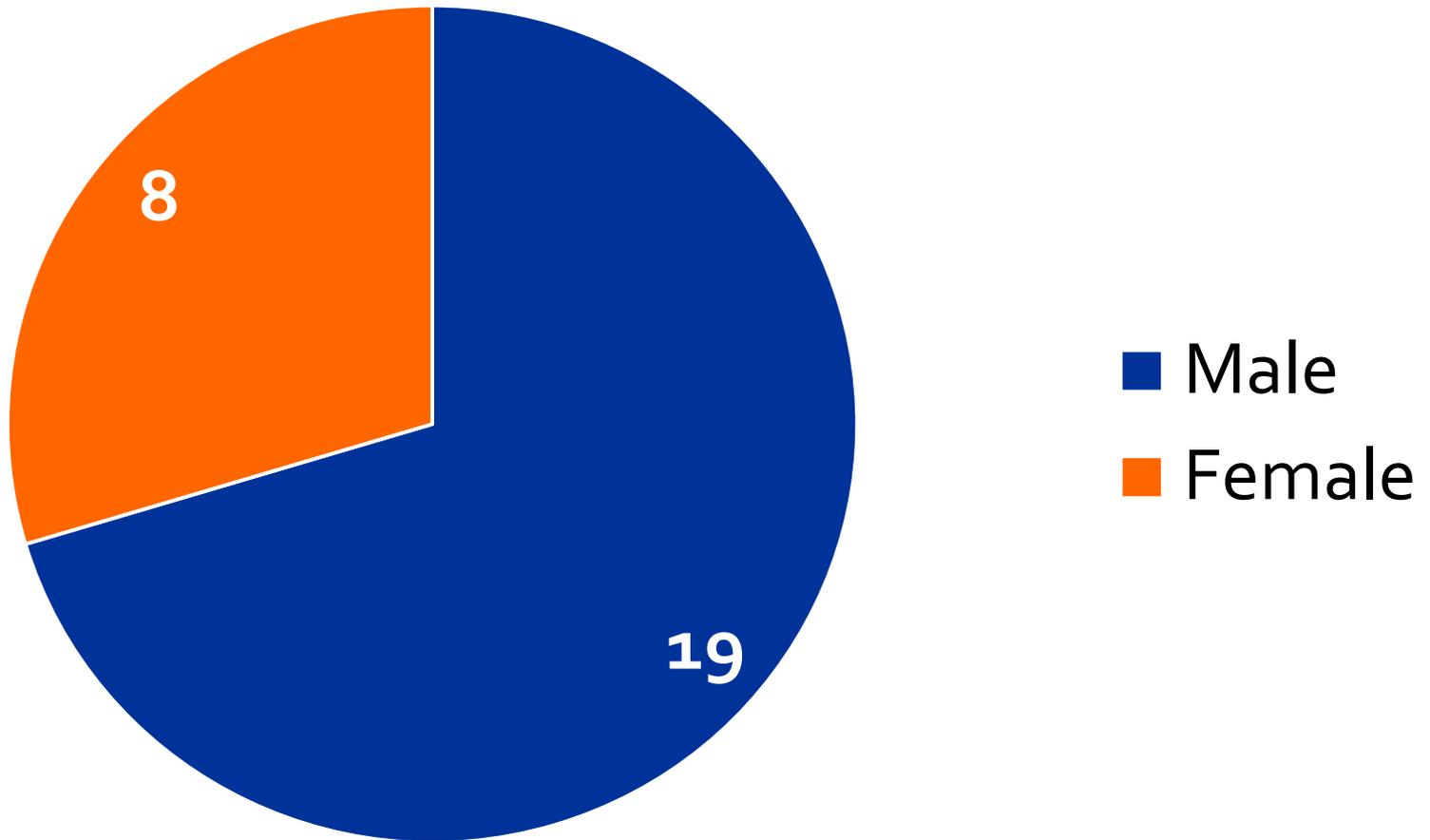
Needs in dealing with foreign national prisoners

Success factors in dealing with foreign national prisoners

Experiences of foreign national prisoners

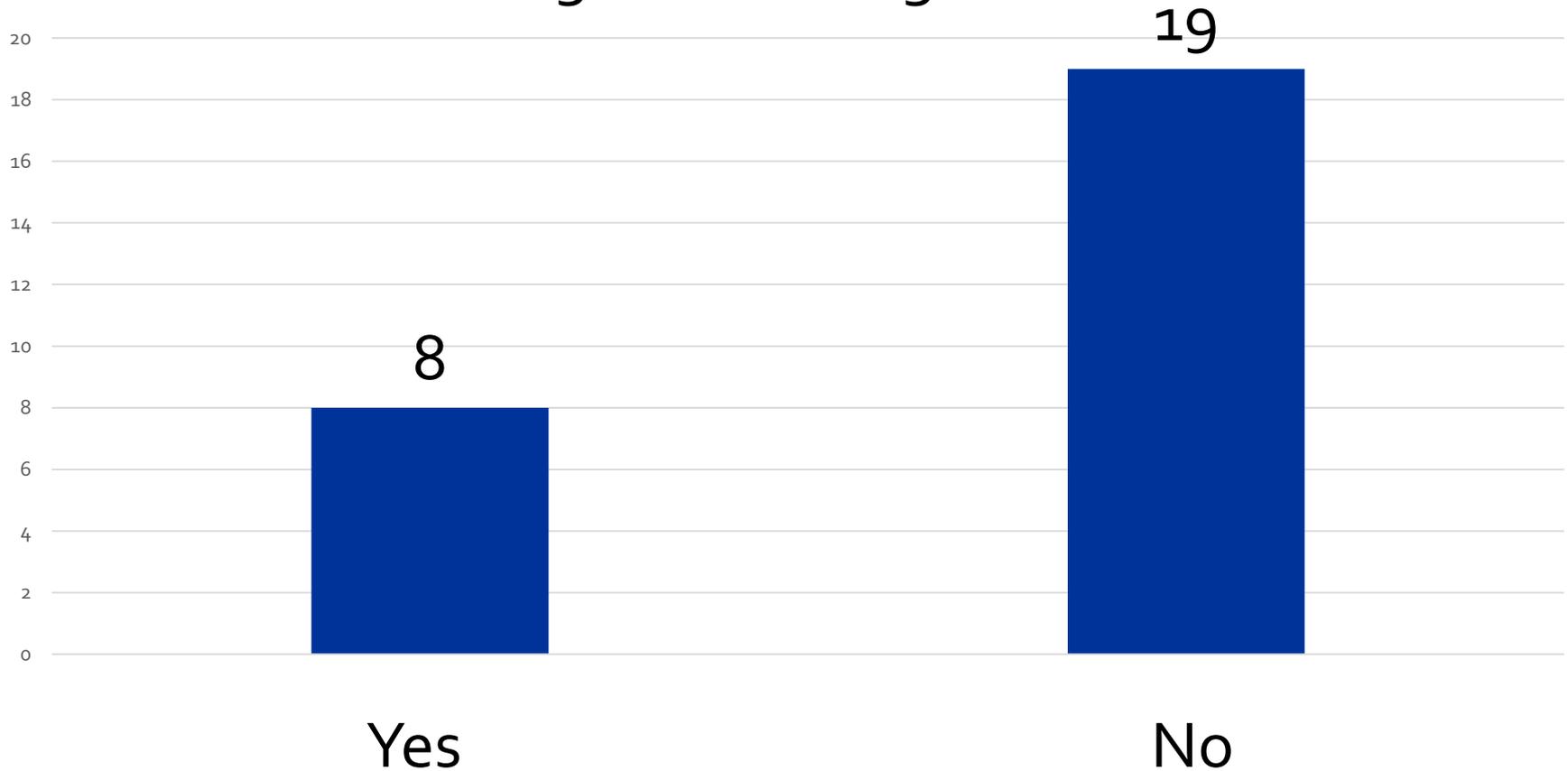
27 interviews with prison guards

Gender



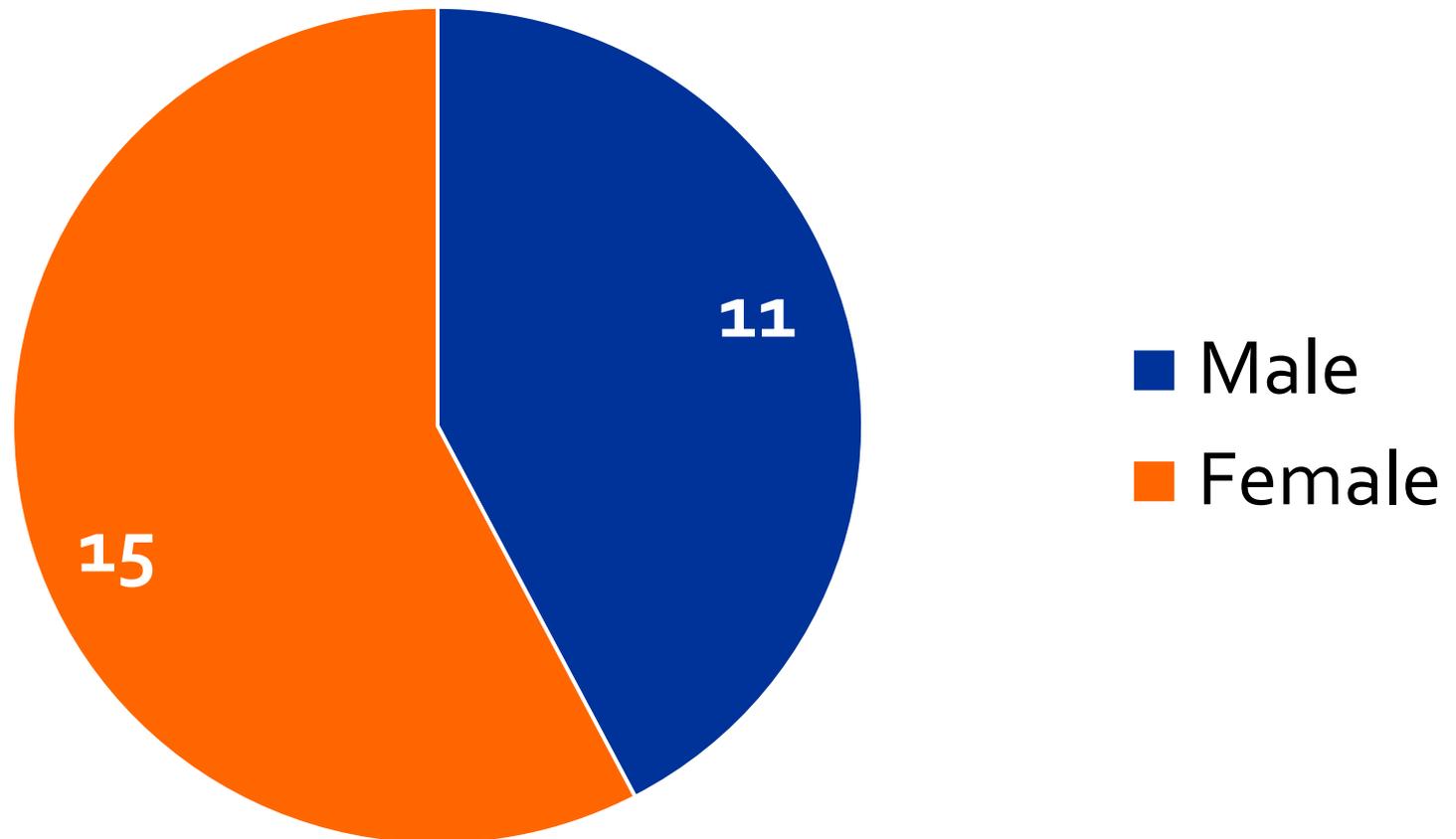
27 interviews with prison guards

Migration background



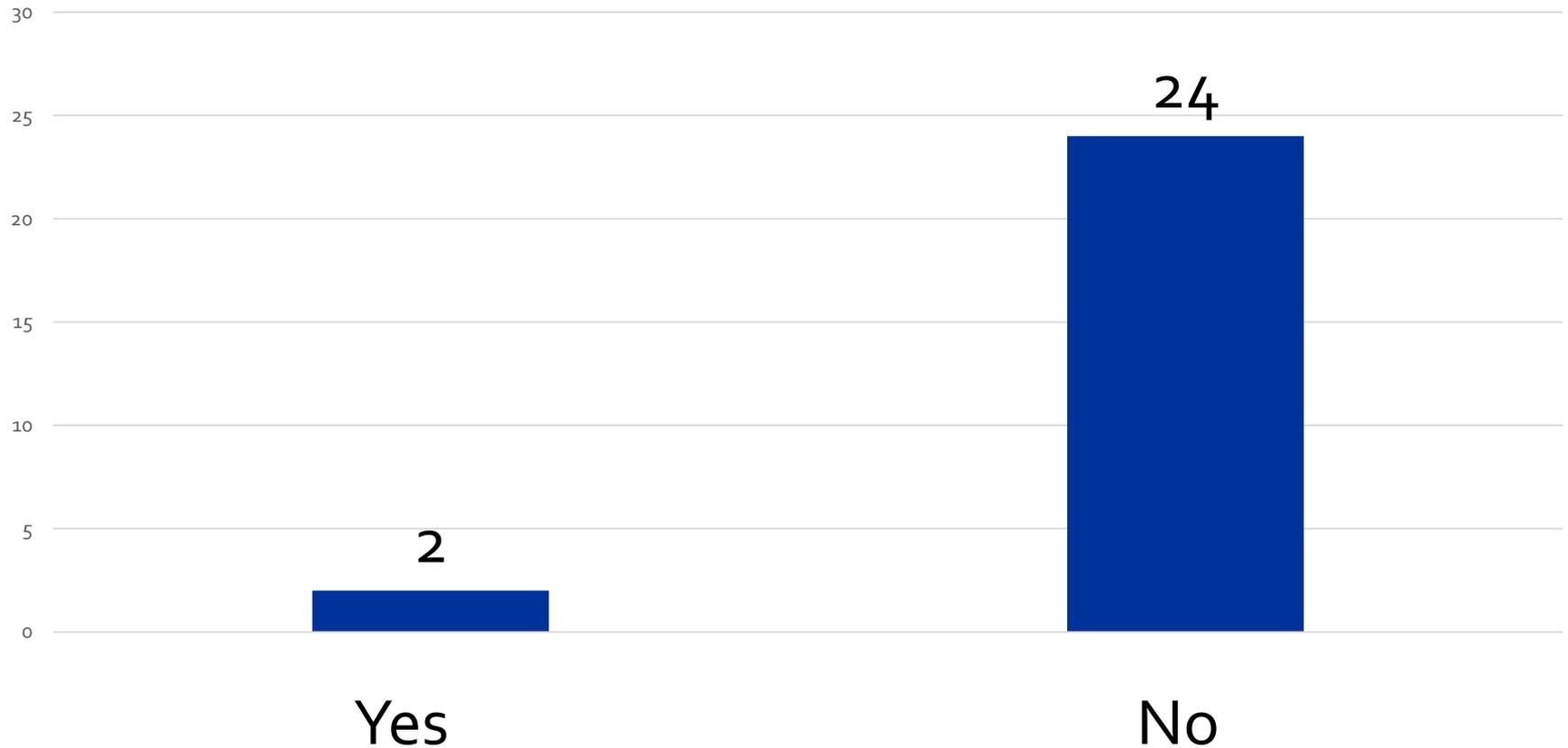
26 interviews with activity organisers

Gender



26 interviews with activity organisers

Migration background





Thank you for your attention!

Contact: dorien.brosens@vub.be & flore.croux@vub.be

