

*Trust in Canada:*  
Its *evolution* through time,  
space and age groups

Presented by Isabelle Valois,  
Département de sociologie, Université de Montréal,  
at the 2010 Annual Conference of the Canadian Sociological  
Association,  
Corcordia University,  
Montréal, June 3 2010

Research conducted within a research project in collaboration with  
Claire Durand, John Goyder and Martial Foucault

# Why would trust be important for society?

It facilitates exchanges (for example...)

- Politically → Political participation and the health of democracy, the willingness to pay taxes
- Economically → lower costs associated with constant control, creates a climate that favors economic exchanges
- Culturally → Higher ethnic diversity is associated with a decrease in social trust and in the willingness to share resources
- Information → Information travels faster, it increases social compliance, and flexibility

# Data: multiple sources found on the web

- Canadian Election Study  
1993-1997-2000-2004-2008
- Project Canada  
(mail survey performed every five years from 1975 to 1995)
- World Value survey  
1982-1990-2000
- Political Support in Canada 1983-1988
- International Social survey : Religion II, 1998

# Questions...

What is it that we would like to know?

**How much confidence do you have in the people in charge of...**

- a) Your provincial government?
- b) Your federal government?
- c) The court system?
- d) The police?
- e) The schools?
- f) The church?
- g) Labour unions?
- h) The media?

# Questions...

## What is it that we would like to know?

How much confidence do you have in the people in charge of...

- a) Your provincial government?
- b) Your federal government?
- c) The court system?
- d) The police?
- e) The schools?
- f) The church?
- g) Labour unions?
- h) The media?

How much confidence do you have in....?

- 1. A great deal of confidence
- 2. Quite a bit of confidence
- 3. Some confidence
- 4. Little or none confidence

Transformed in a binary variable

- mostly confident
- mostly not confident

# Questions...

## What is it that we would like to know?

**How much confidence do you have in the people in charge of...**

a) Your provincial government?

b) Your federal government?

c) The court system?

d) The police?

e) The schools?

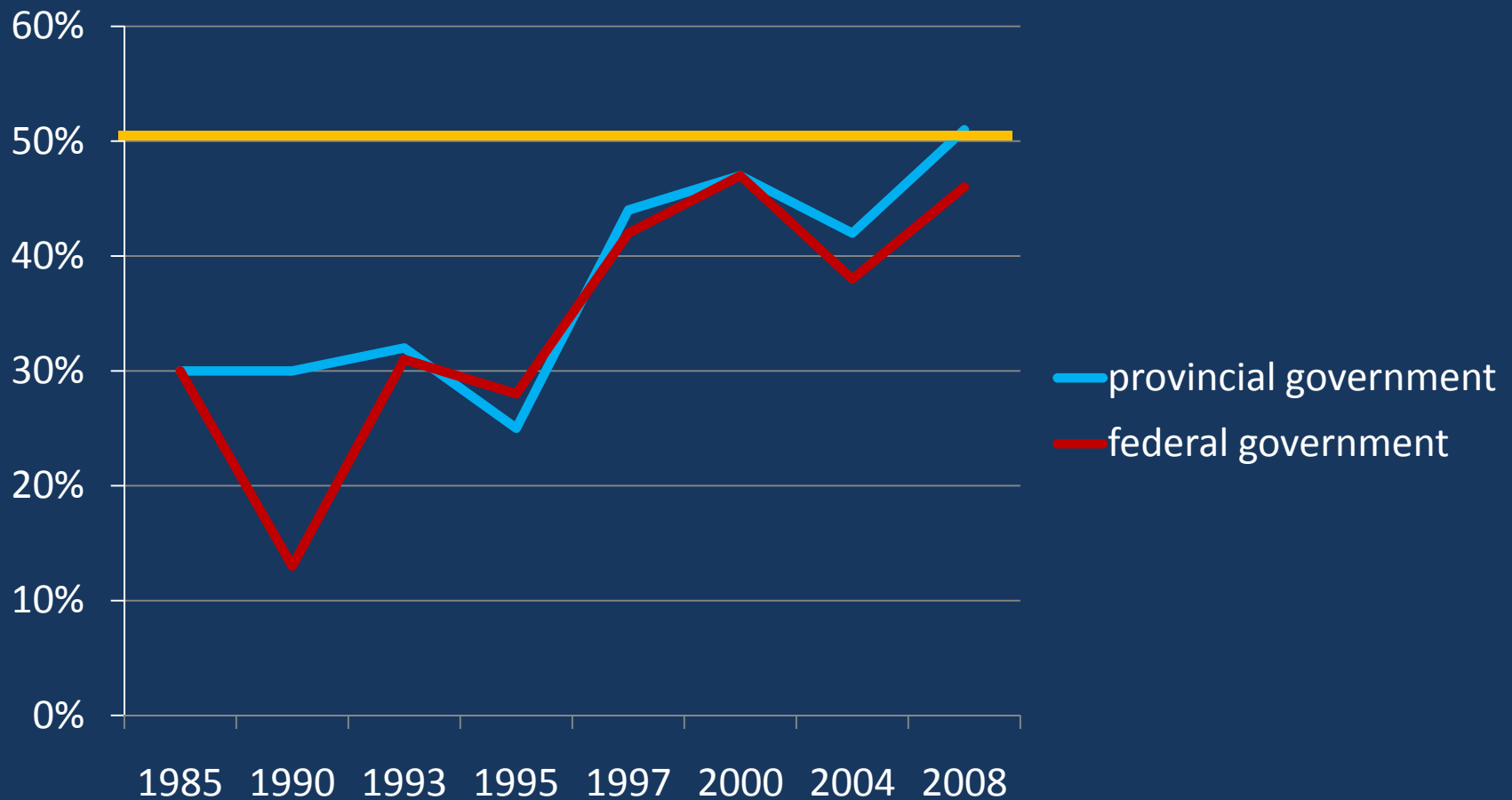
f) The church?

g) Labour unions?

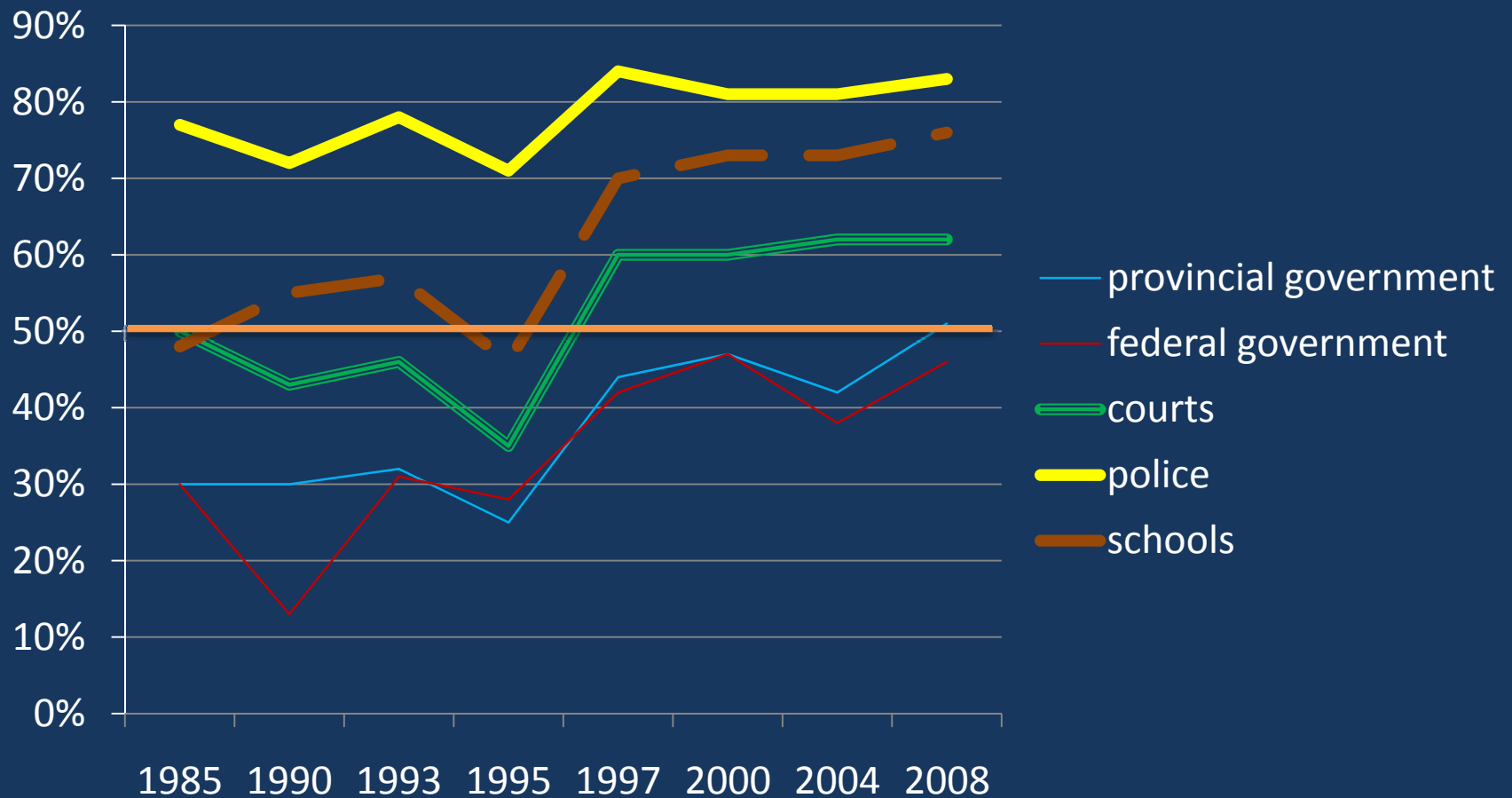
h) The media?

- Would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people ?

# General trends in confidence: Governments

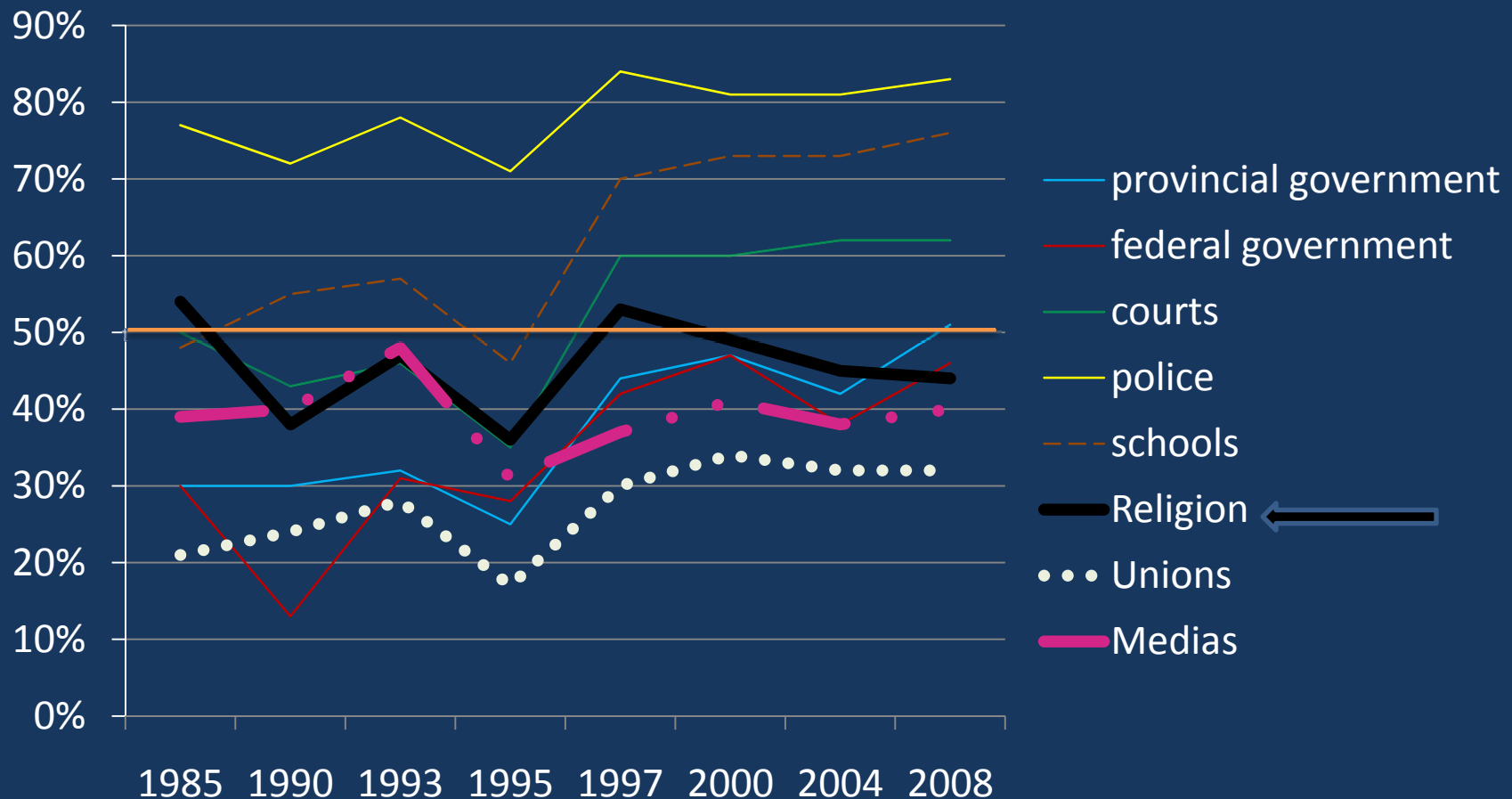


# General trends in confidence: civil institutions



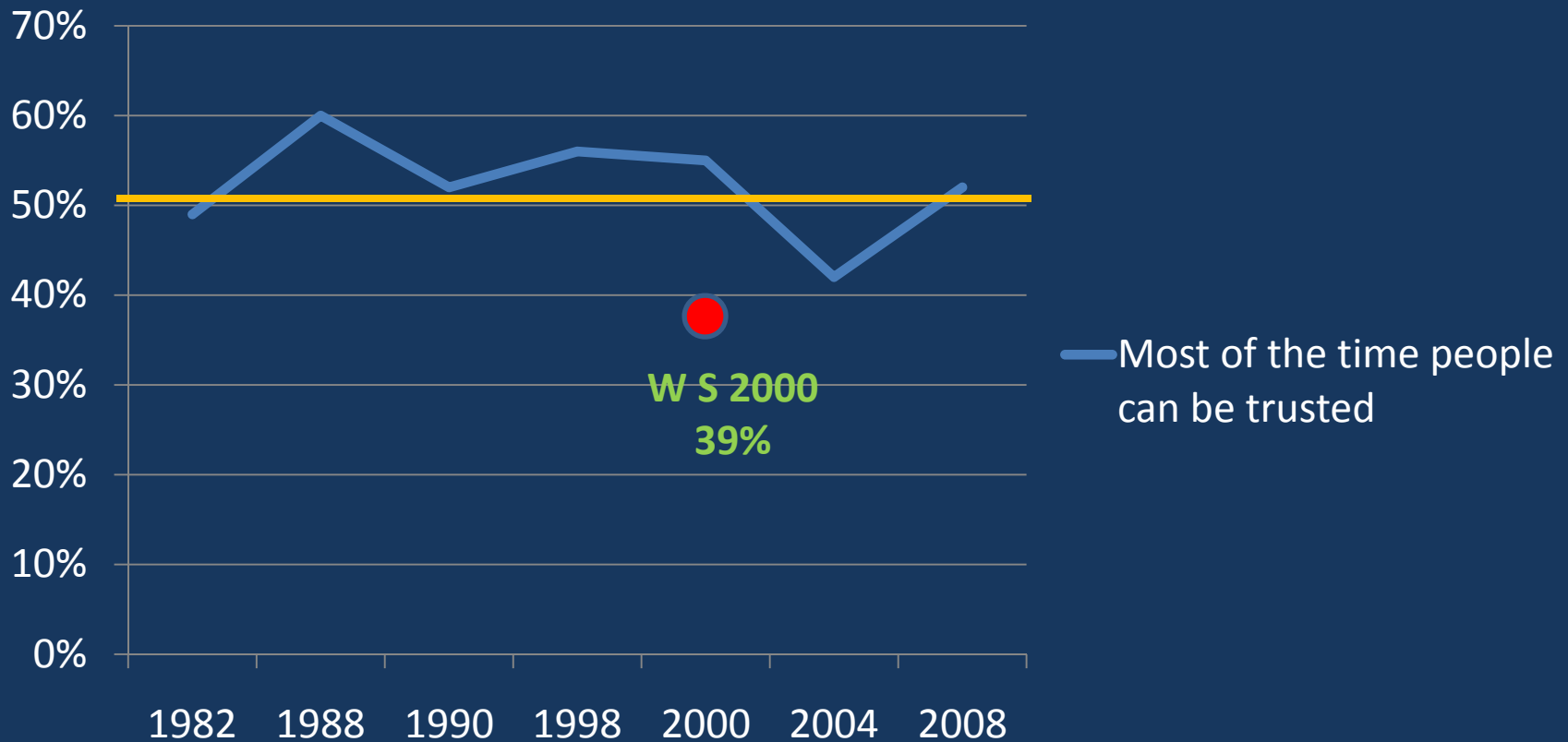


# General trends in confidence: Religion, unions, medias



# Generalized trust

## Most of the time people can be trusted



# General findings

Lowest degree of trust overall → Unions

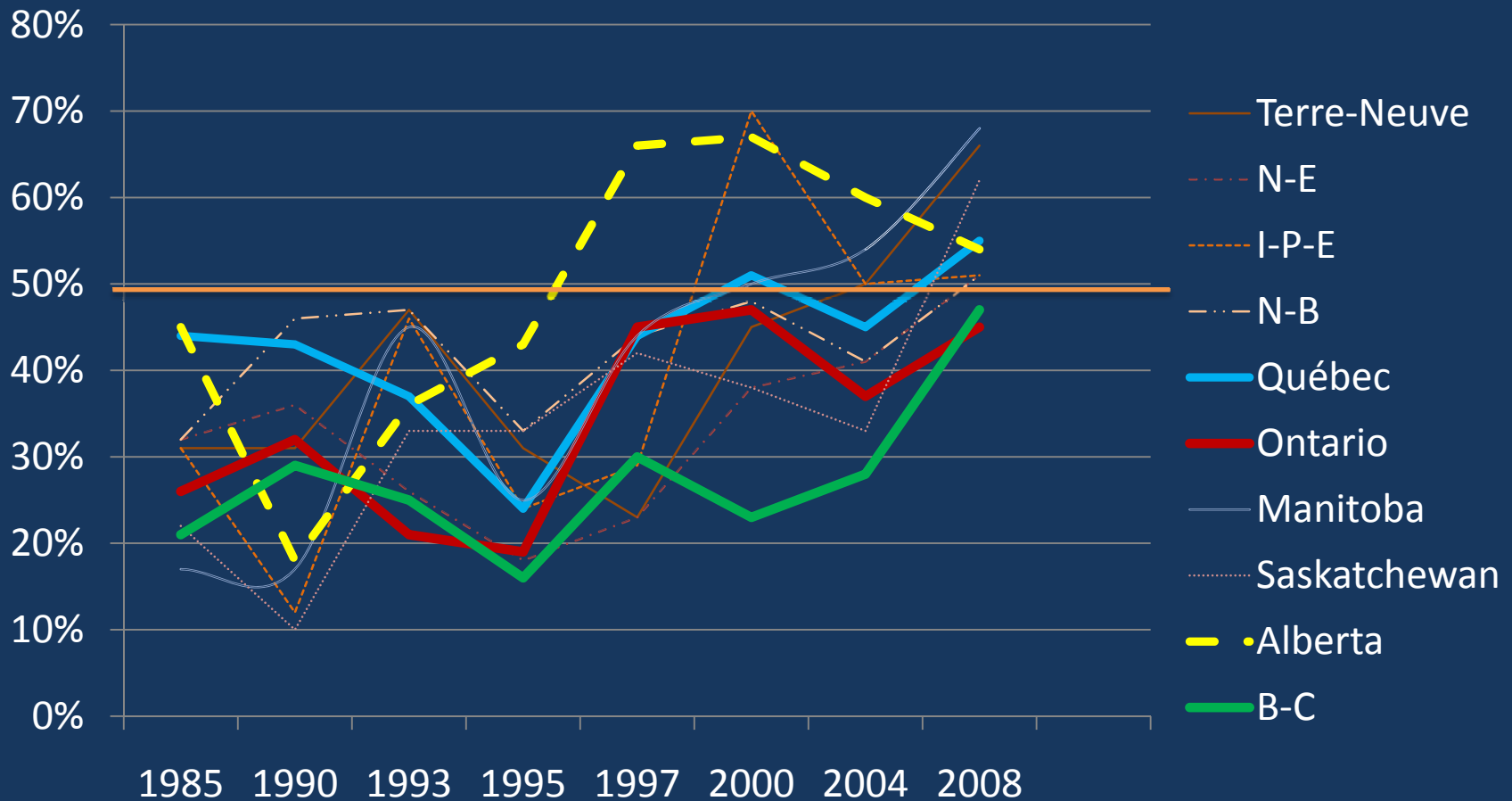
(except in 1990 where the federal government decrease below the level of trust in Unions)

Highest degree of trust overall → Police

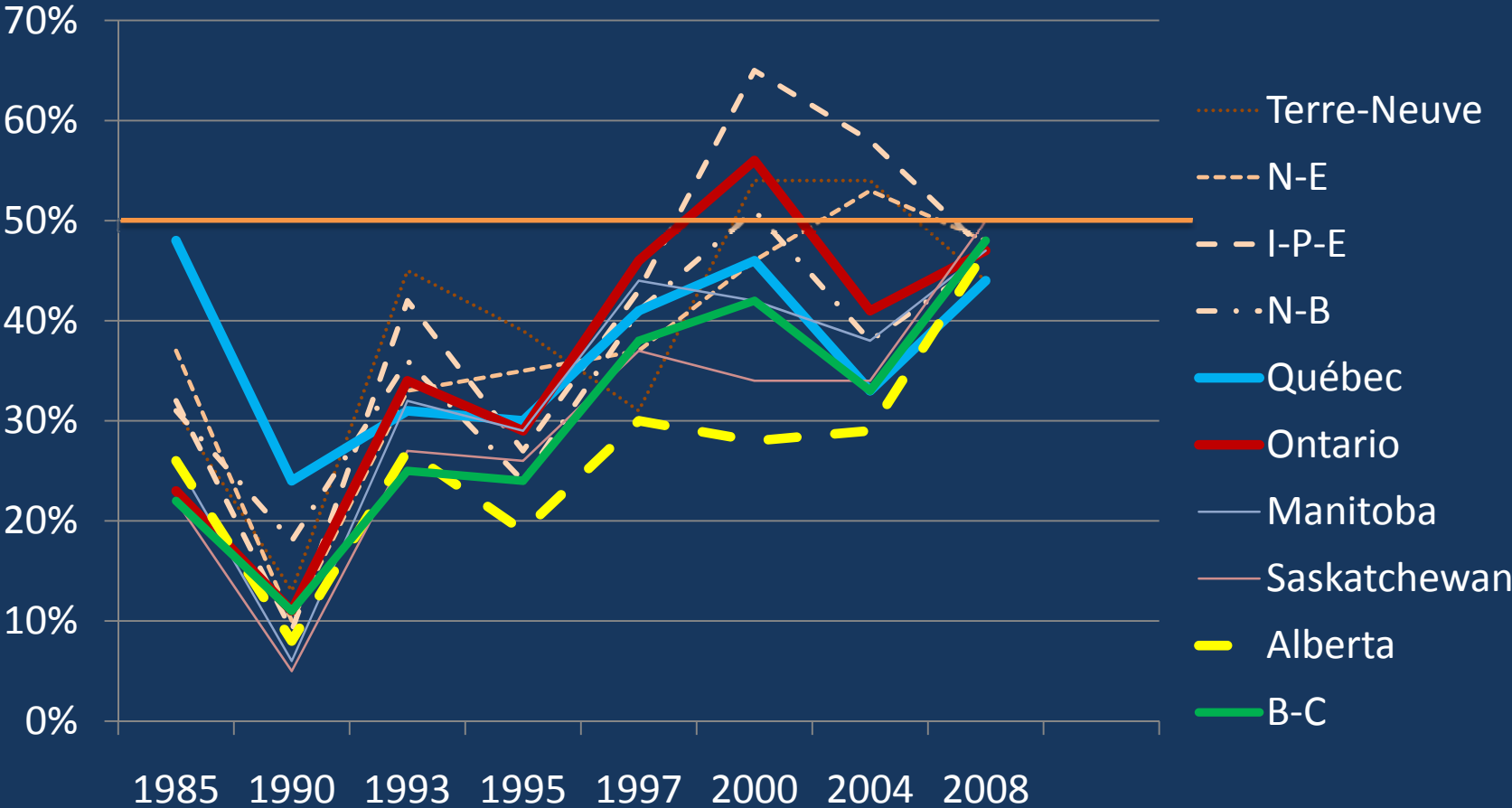
No overall decline of trust or confidence

Except for an apparent decrease of trust in religion

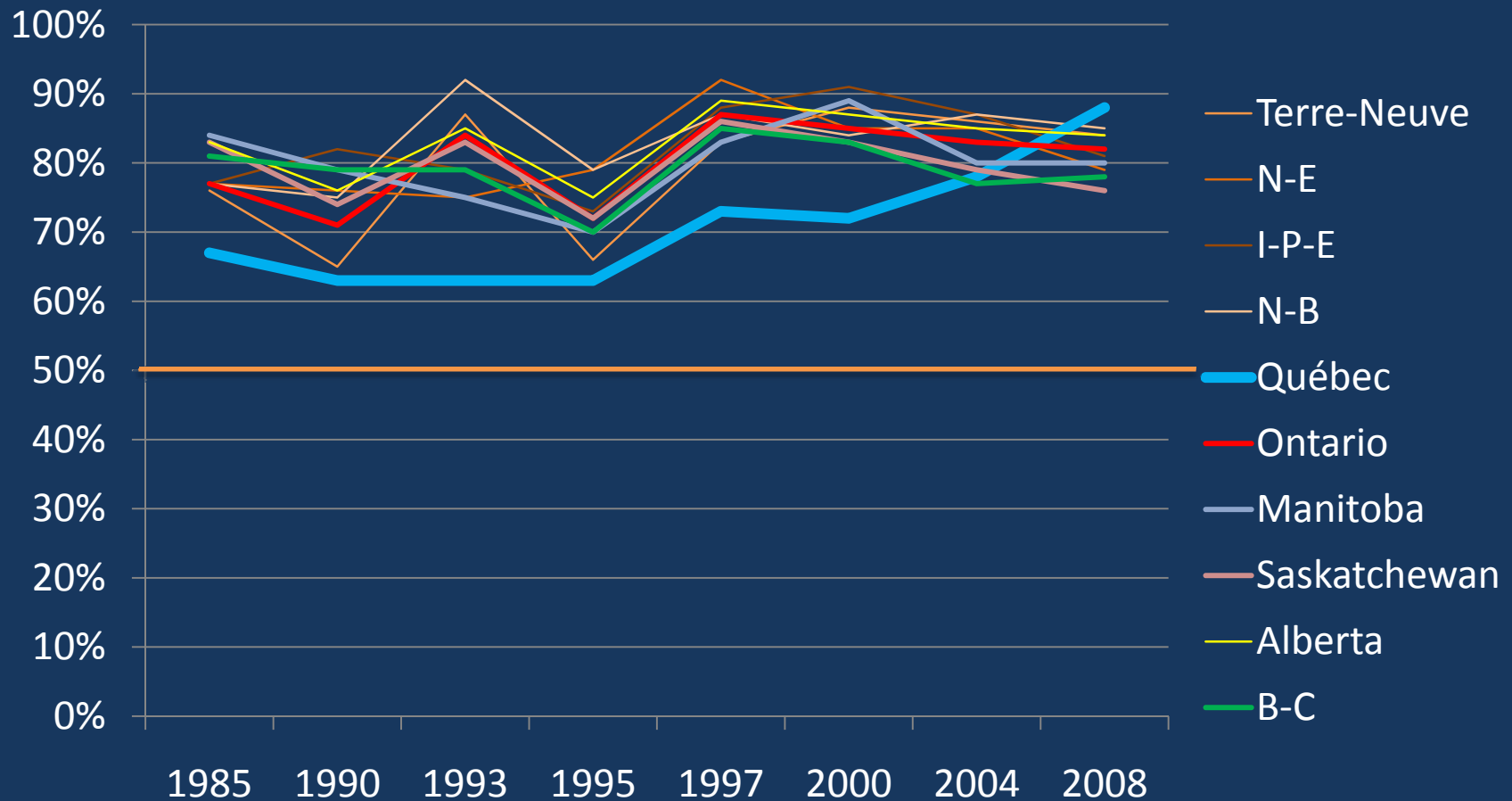
# Confidence in provincial government by provinces



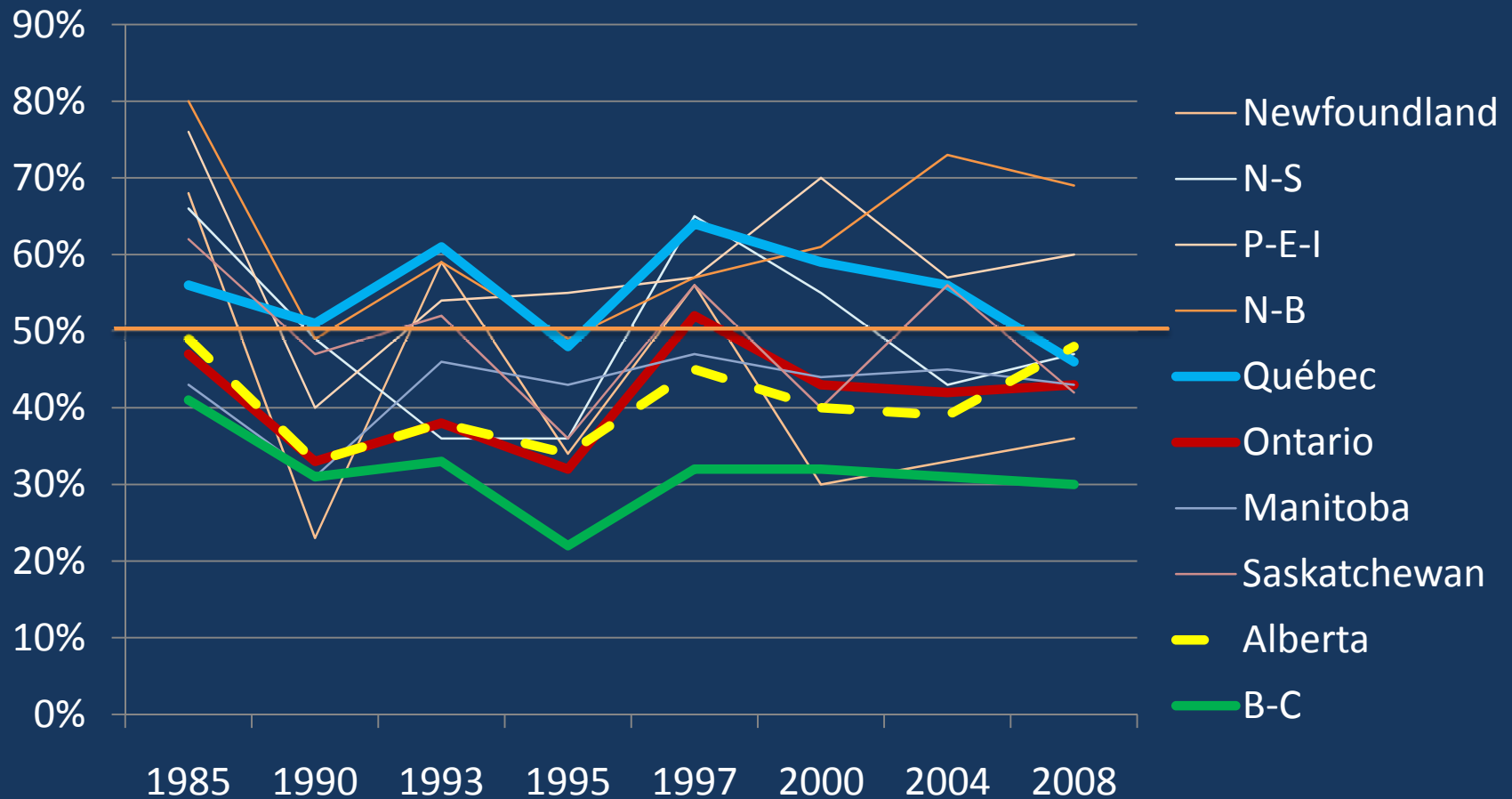
# Confidence in federal government by provinces



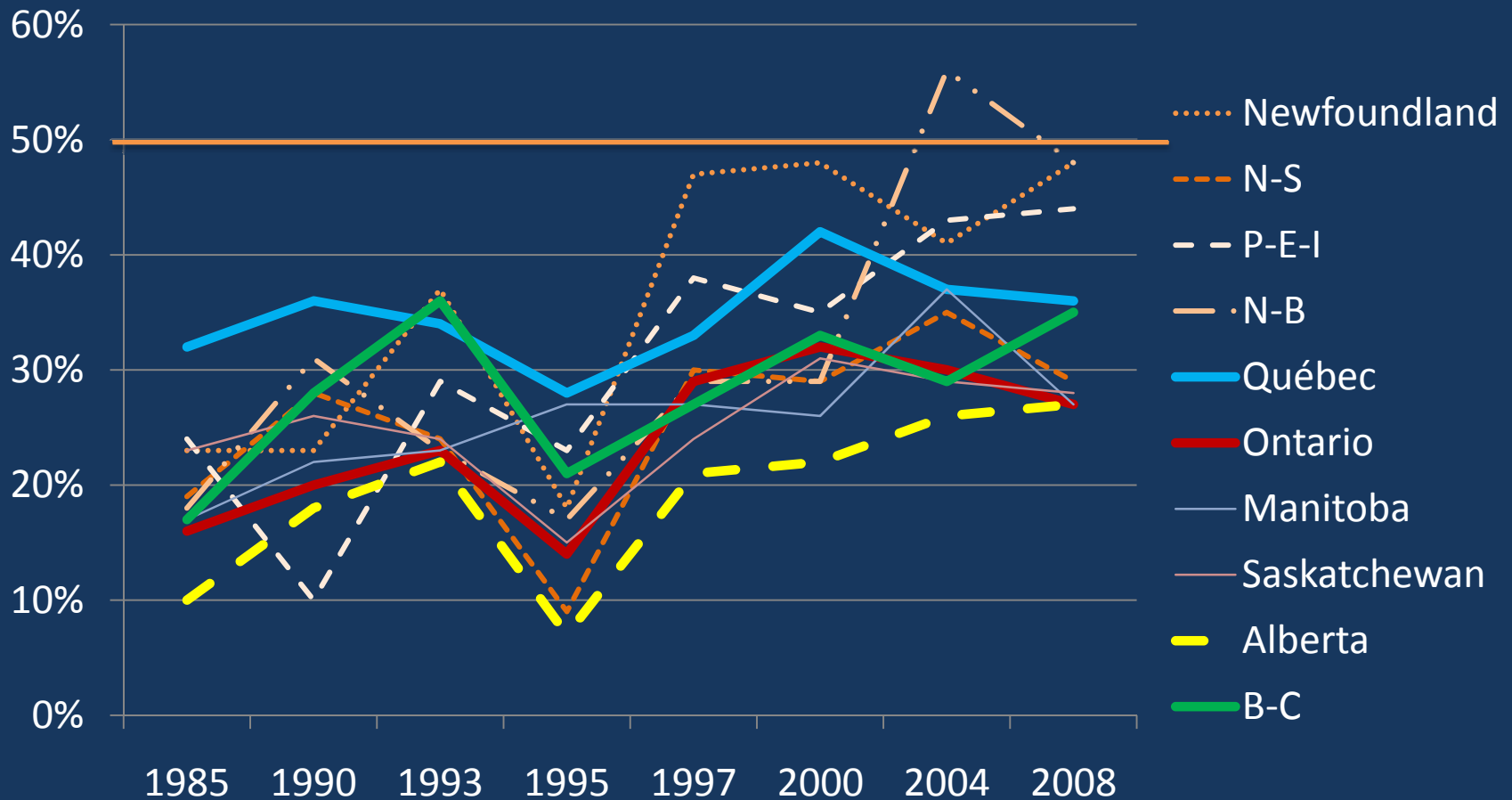
# Confidence in police by provinces



# Confidence in religion by provinces

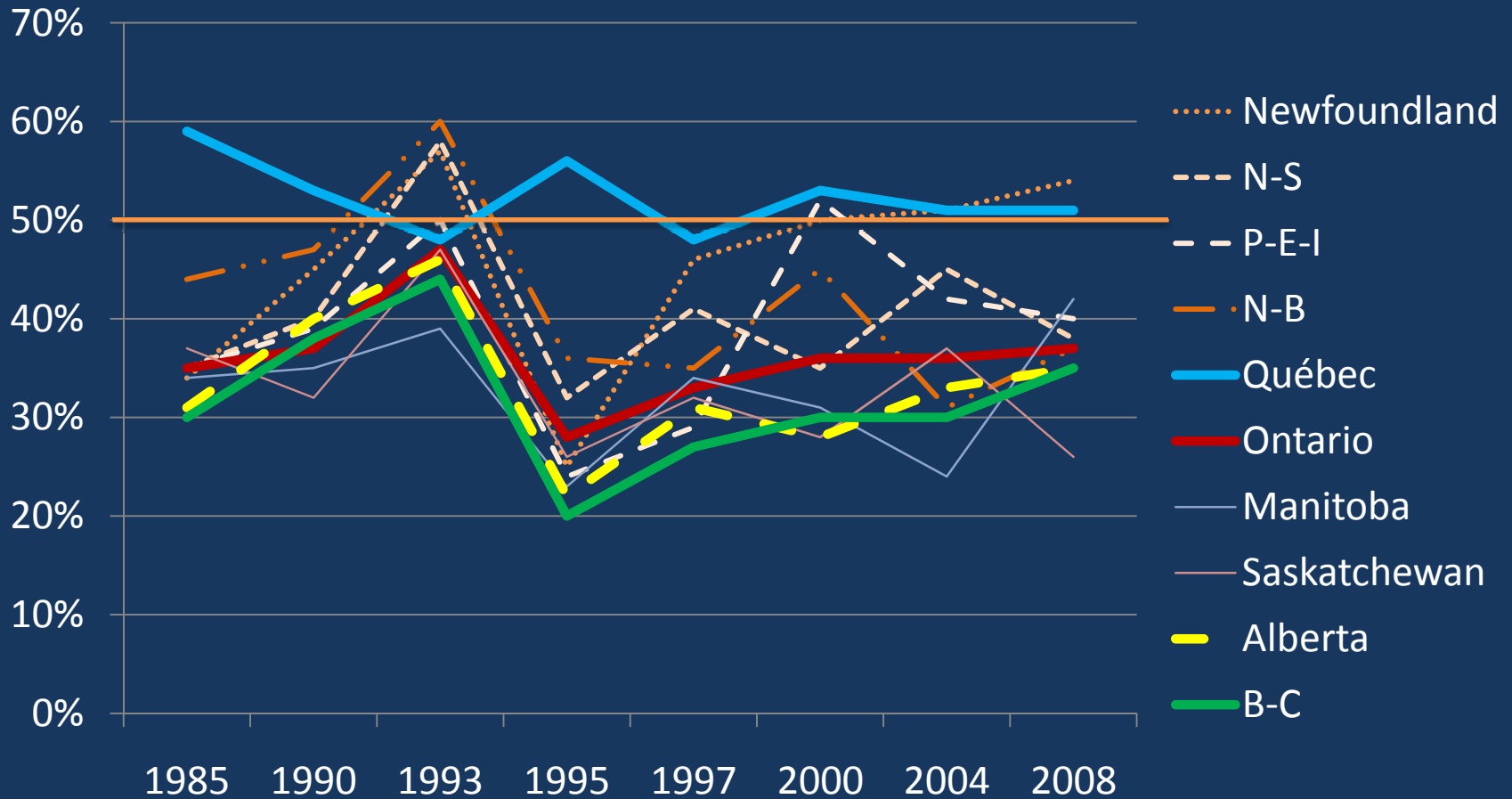


# Confidence in unions by provinces

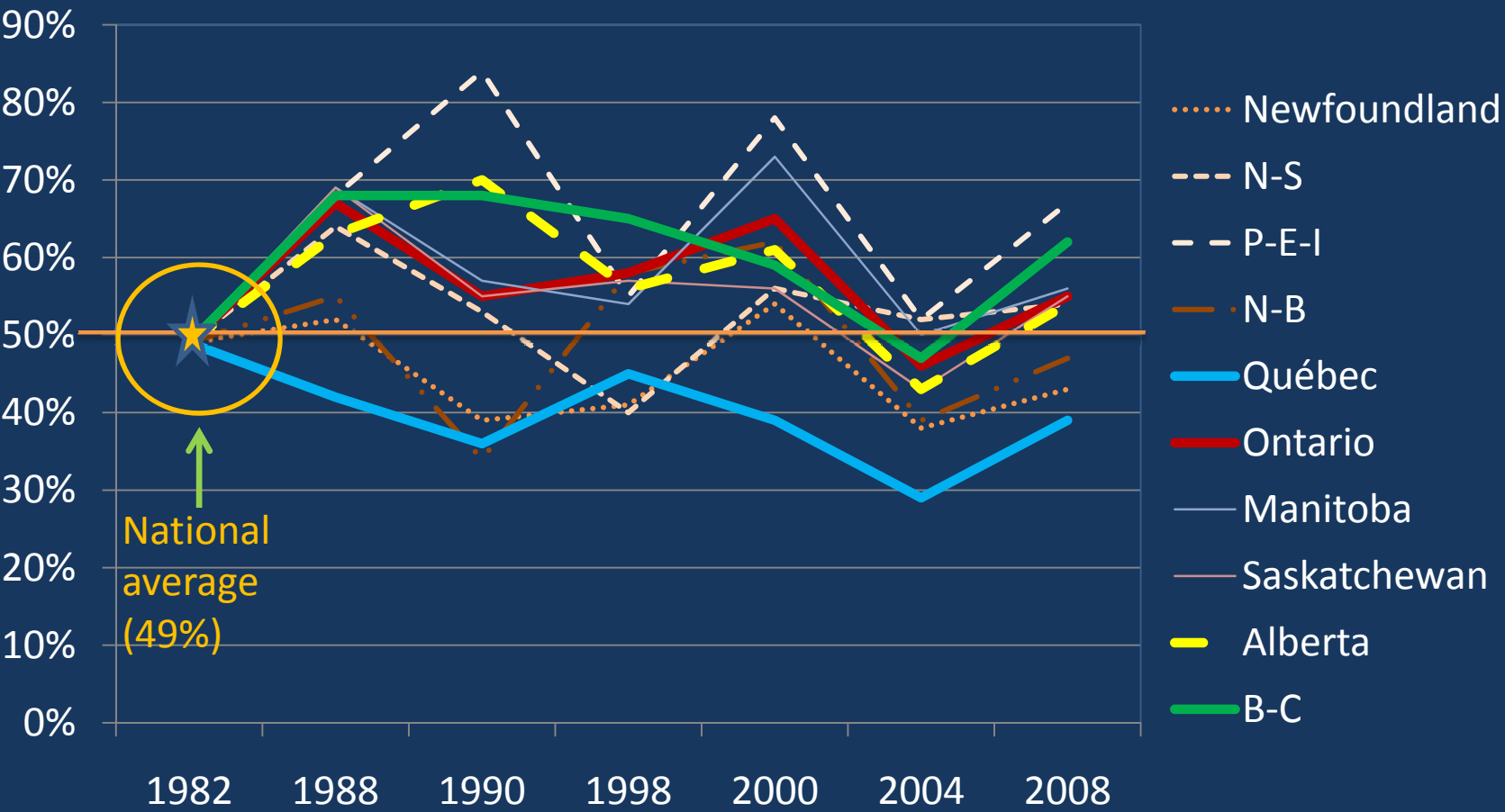




# Confidence in media by provinces














# Generalized trust by provinces

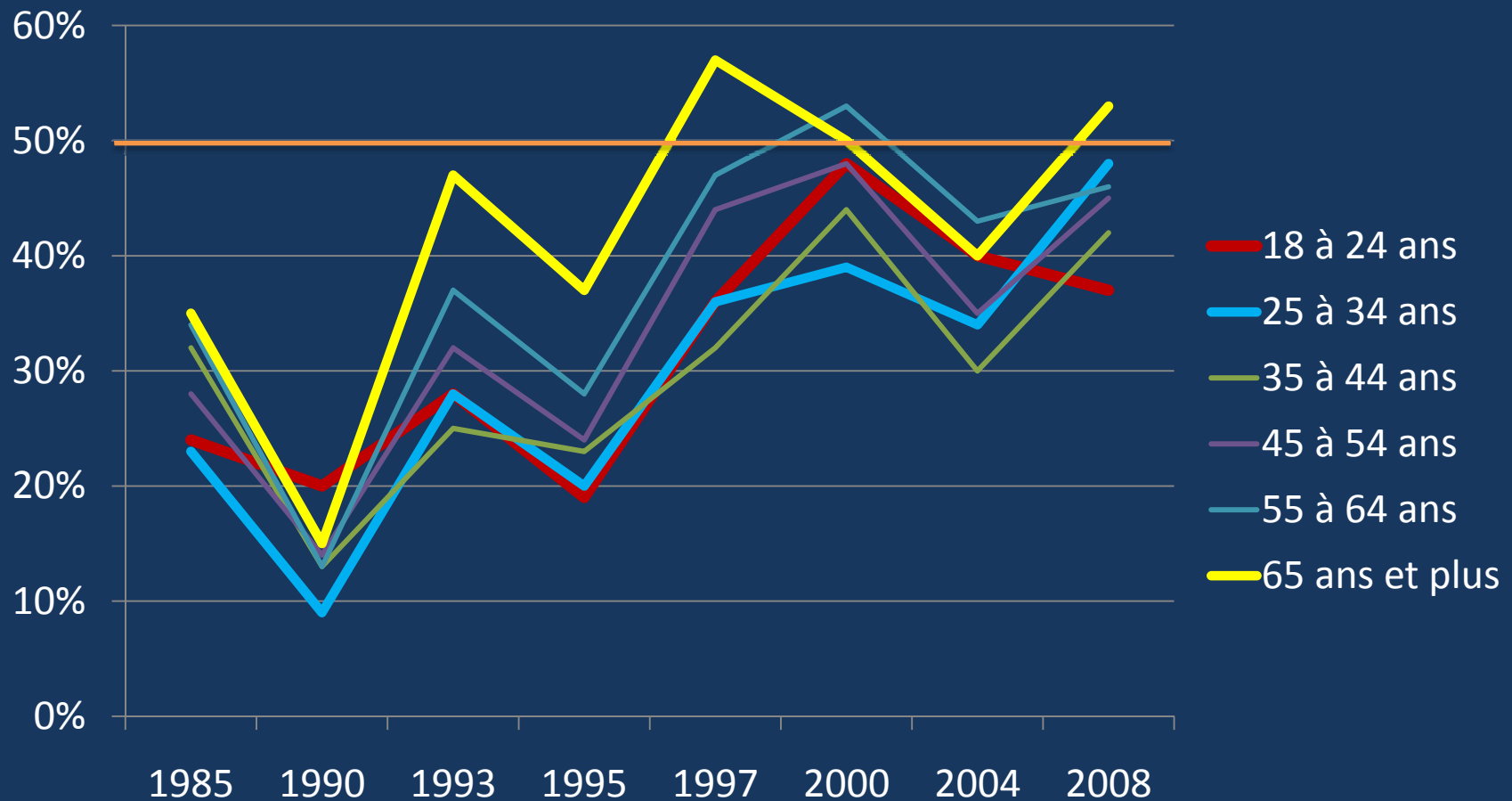


# Lets recap: Trends by provinces

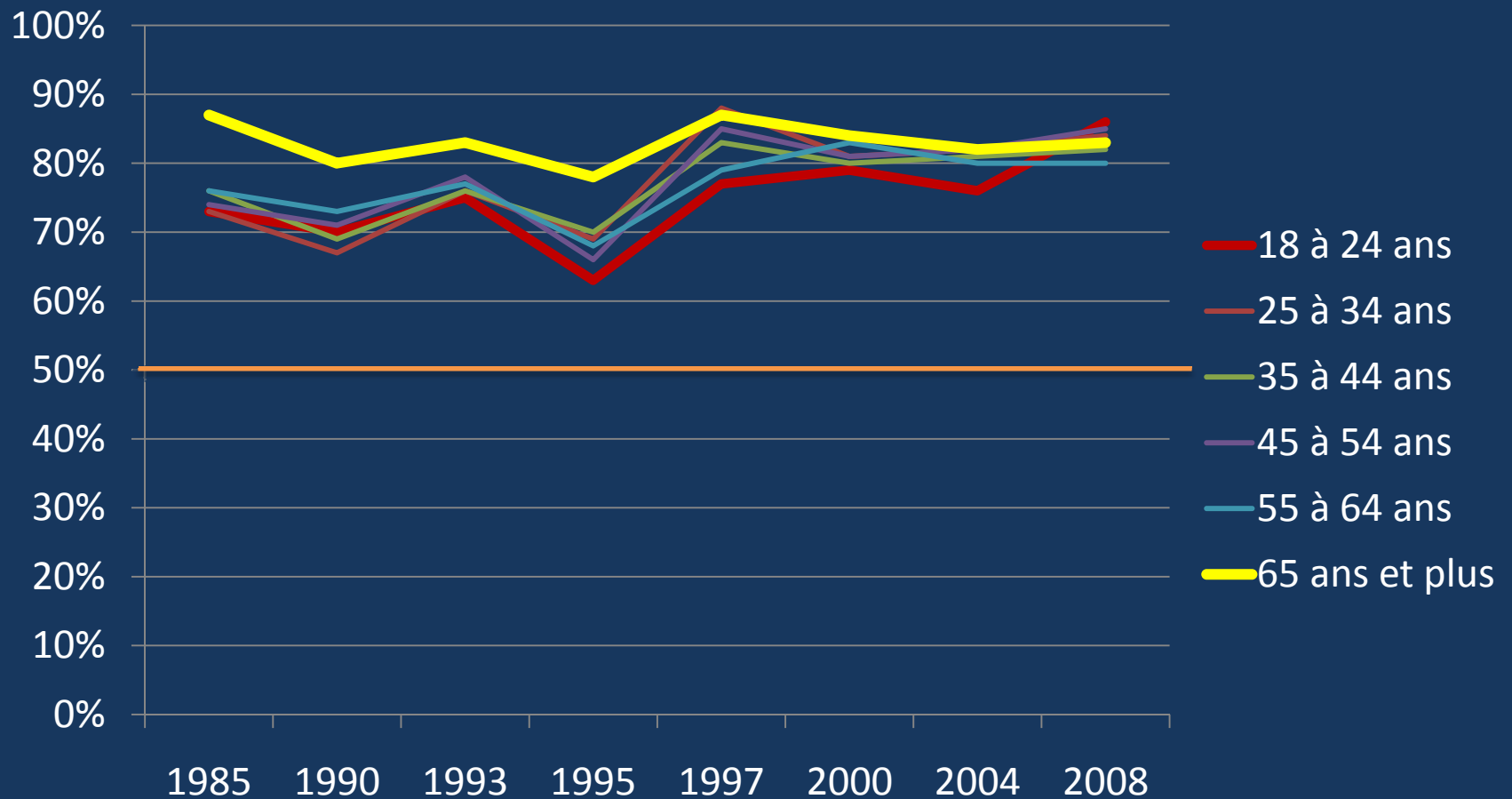
- Provincial government
- Federal government
- Police
- Religion
- Unions
- Media
  
- Generalised trust

- Alberta  BC 
- Alberta 
- Québec 
- Québec  BC 
- Québec  Alberta 
- Québec  BC 
  
- Québec 

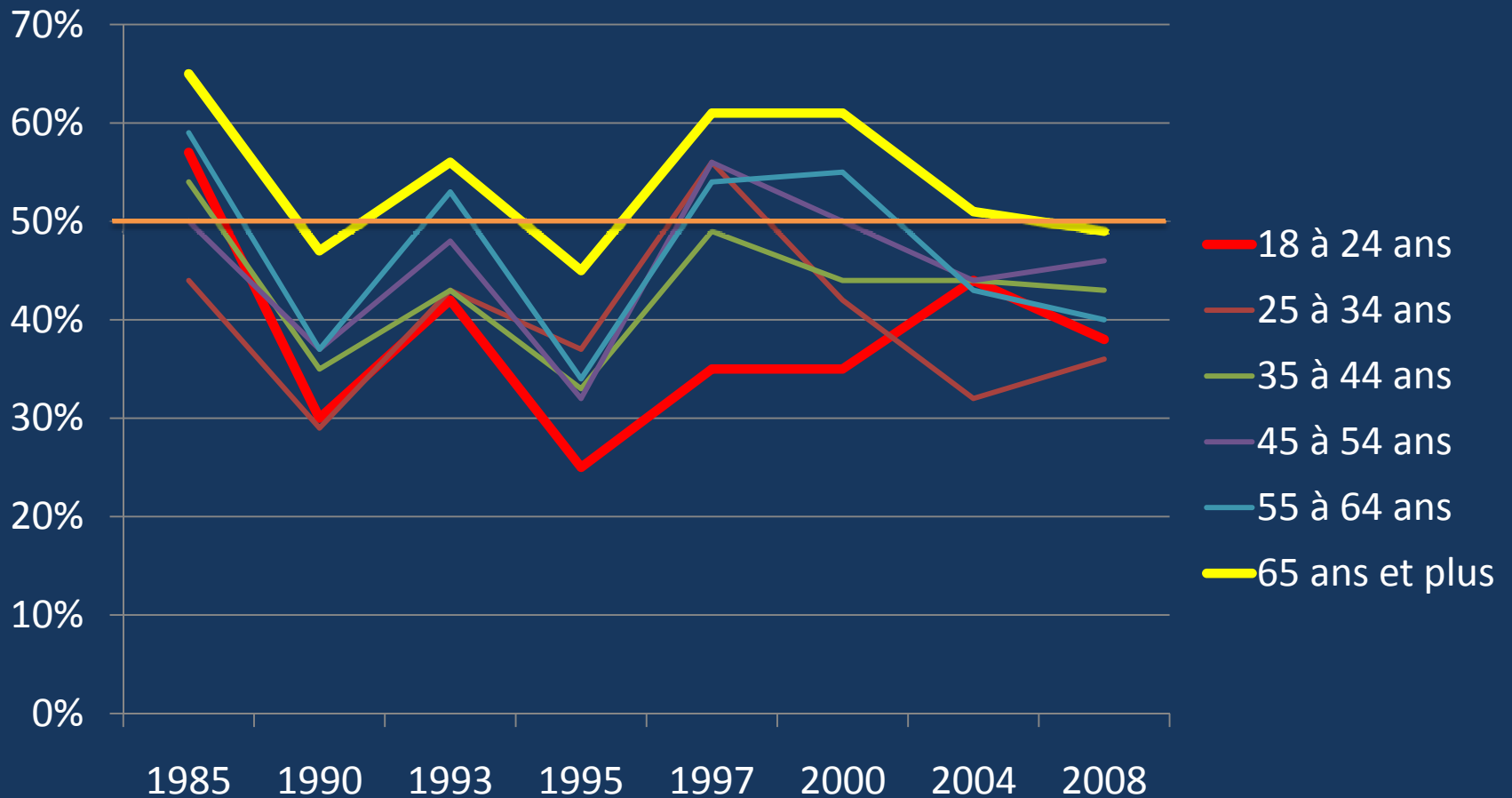
# Confidence in the federal government by age groups



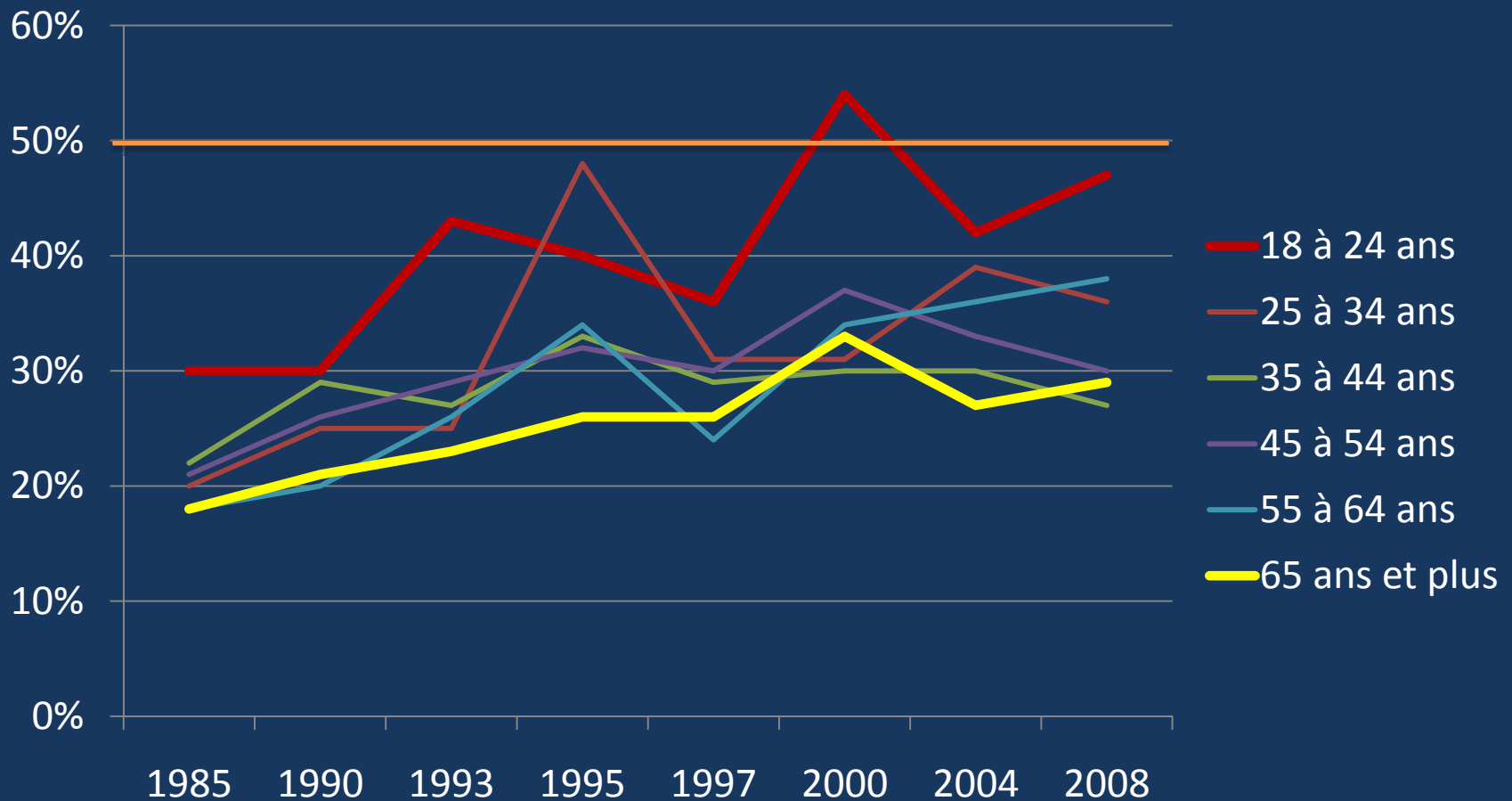
# Confidence in police by age groups



# Confidence in religion by age groups



# Confidence in labour unions by age groups



# Trends of confidence by age groups

- When confidence by age groups appear to differ, they differ between the youngest and the oldest
- The youngest trust the unions and tend to trust less other type of institutions
- The oldest trust the governments, the police, religion, but not unions



# Limitations

- Are the labels truly equivalent?
- Need statistical analysis confirmation
- What are the questions measuring exactly?

# Conclusion

- No apparent decrease of trust in Canada except for religion.
- Confidence varies a lot between provinces
- Confidence varies a lot between the older and younger age groups
- We should be careful when examining trends that we have enough data.

# Any questions?

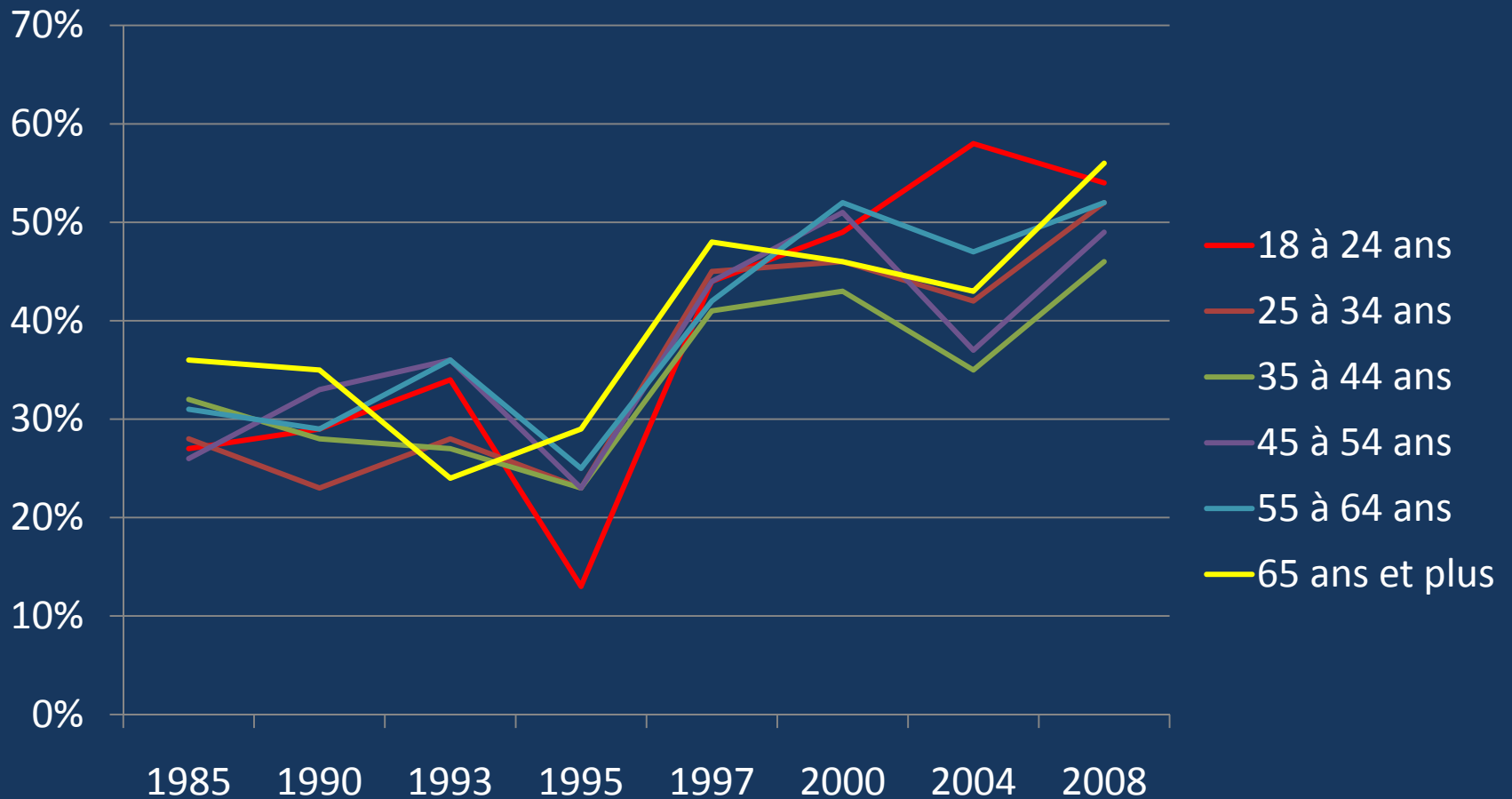
## Thank you!

[isabelle.valois@umontreal.ca](mailto:isabelle.valois@umontreal.ca)

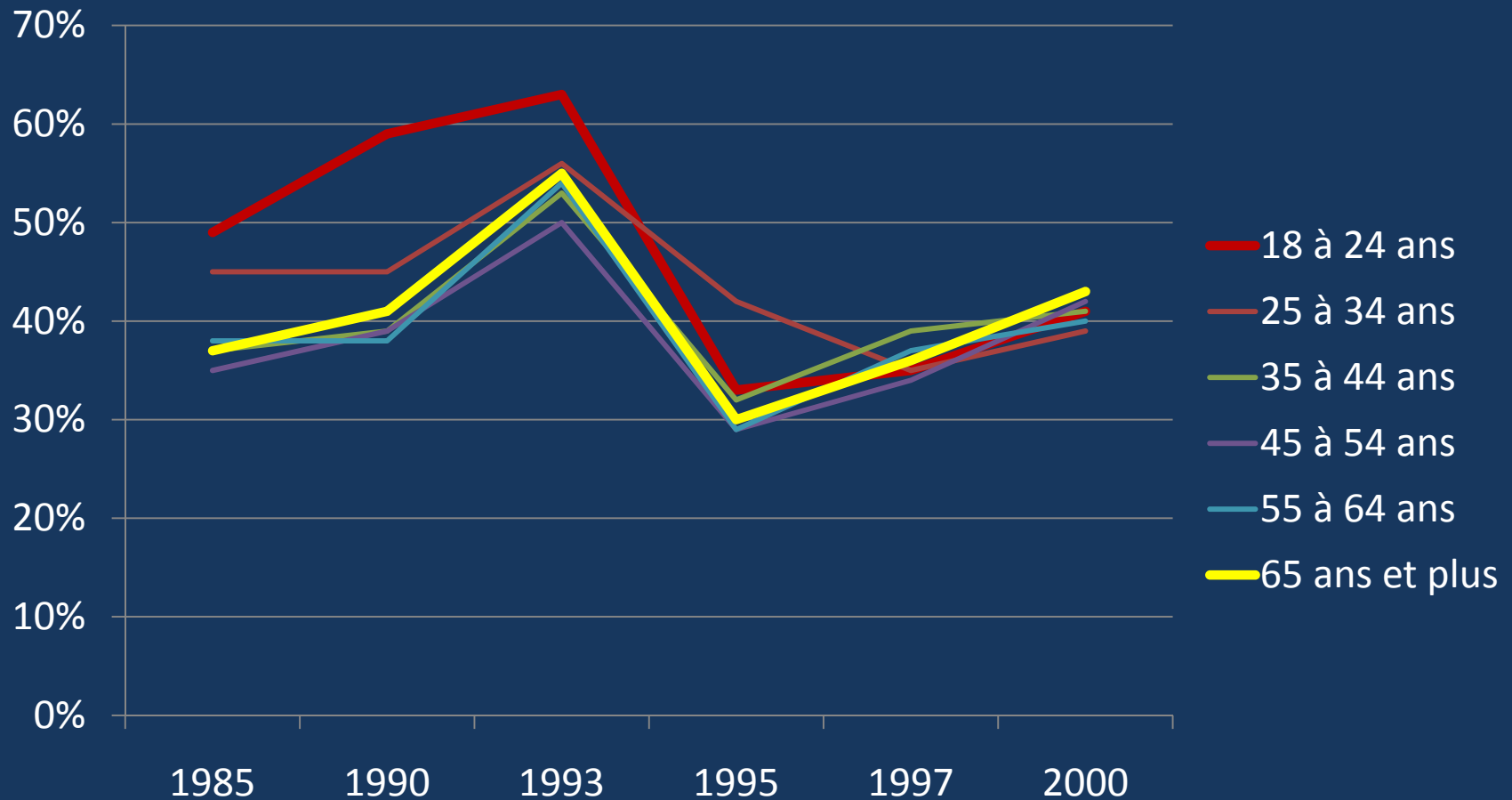
# Bibliography

- Knack & Keefer, (1997), Algan & Cahuc, (2007), COLEMAN, J. S. (1990), KAZEMIPUR, A. (2006), LEVI, M., STOKER, L. (2000), LEVI, M. (1998), HELLIWELL, J. (1996), LUHMANN, N., (1968), PAXTON, P., (2004), PUTNAM, R. (2000,2001), RAHN, W. M. and TRANSUE, J. (1998), ROTHSTEIN, B. & STOLLE, D. (2008), SOROKA, S. et al. 2005., WEBER, L. & CARTER, A.I., (2003) SMITH Tom, (2008)

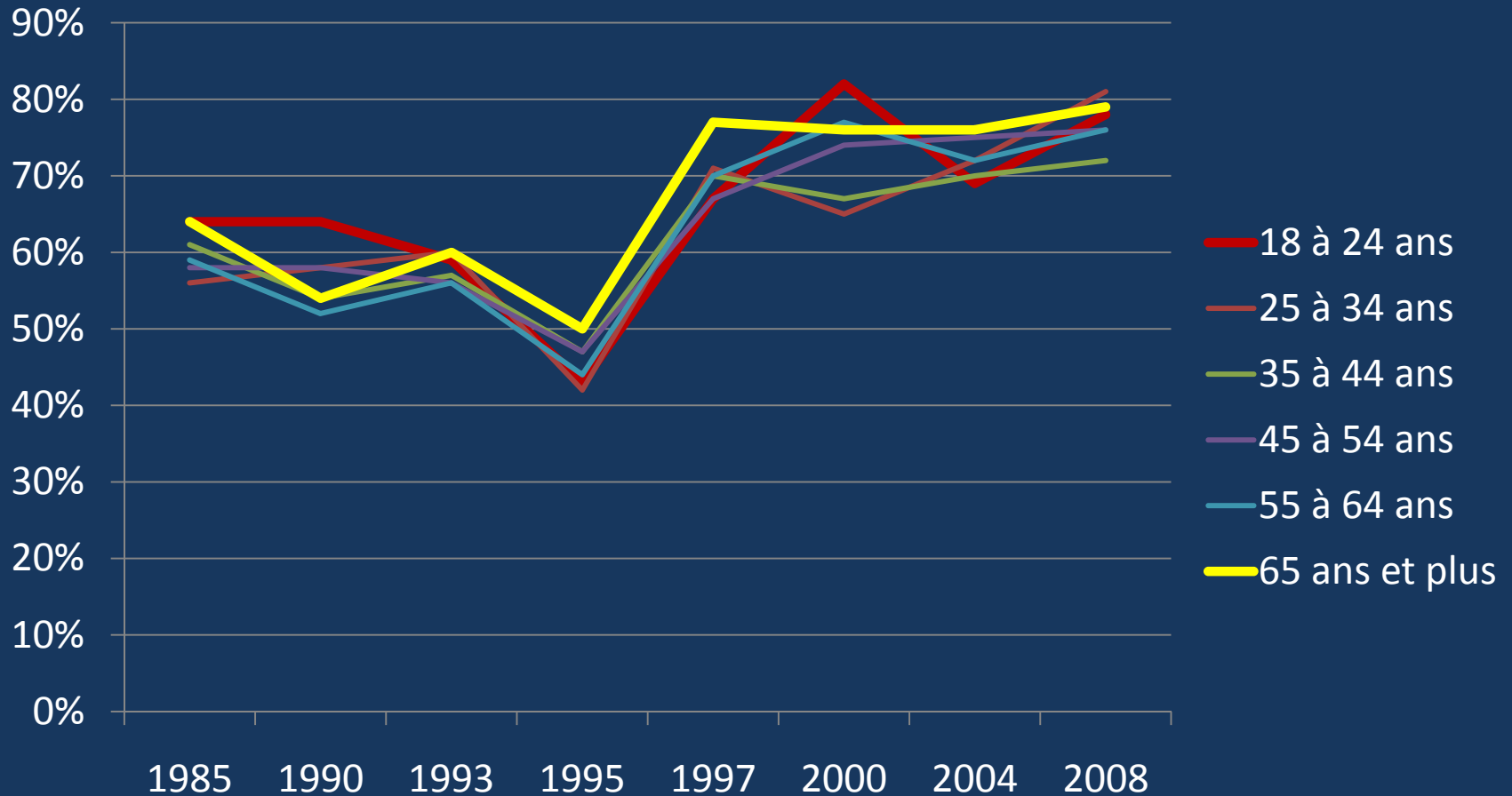
# Confidence in provincial government by age



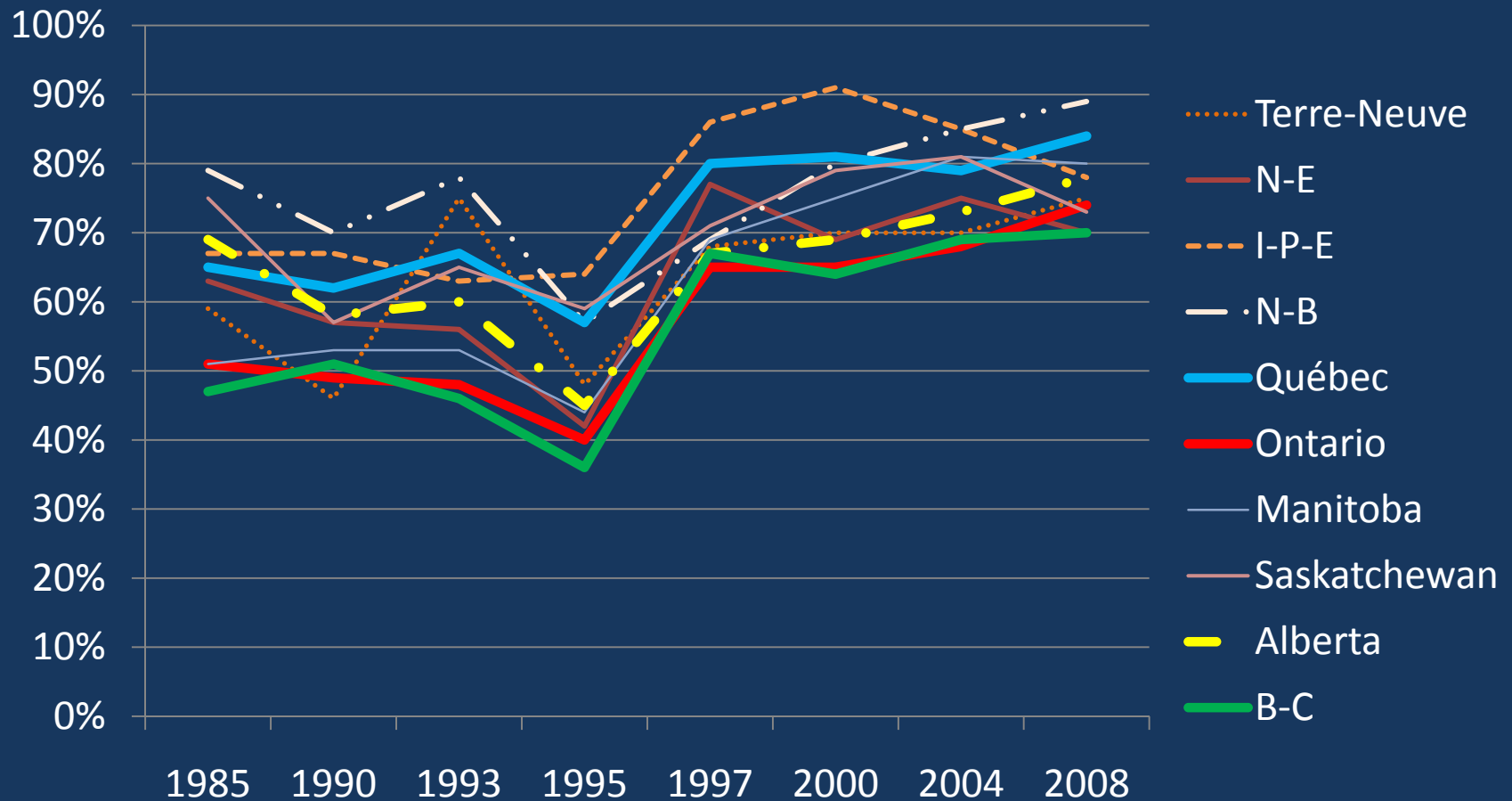
# Confidence in the media by age groups



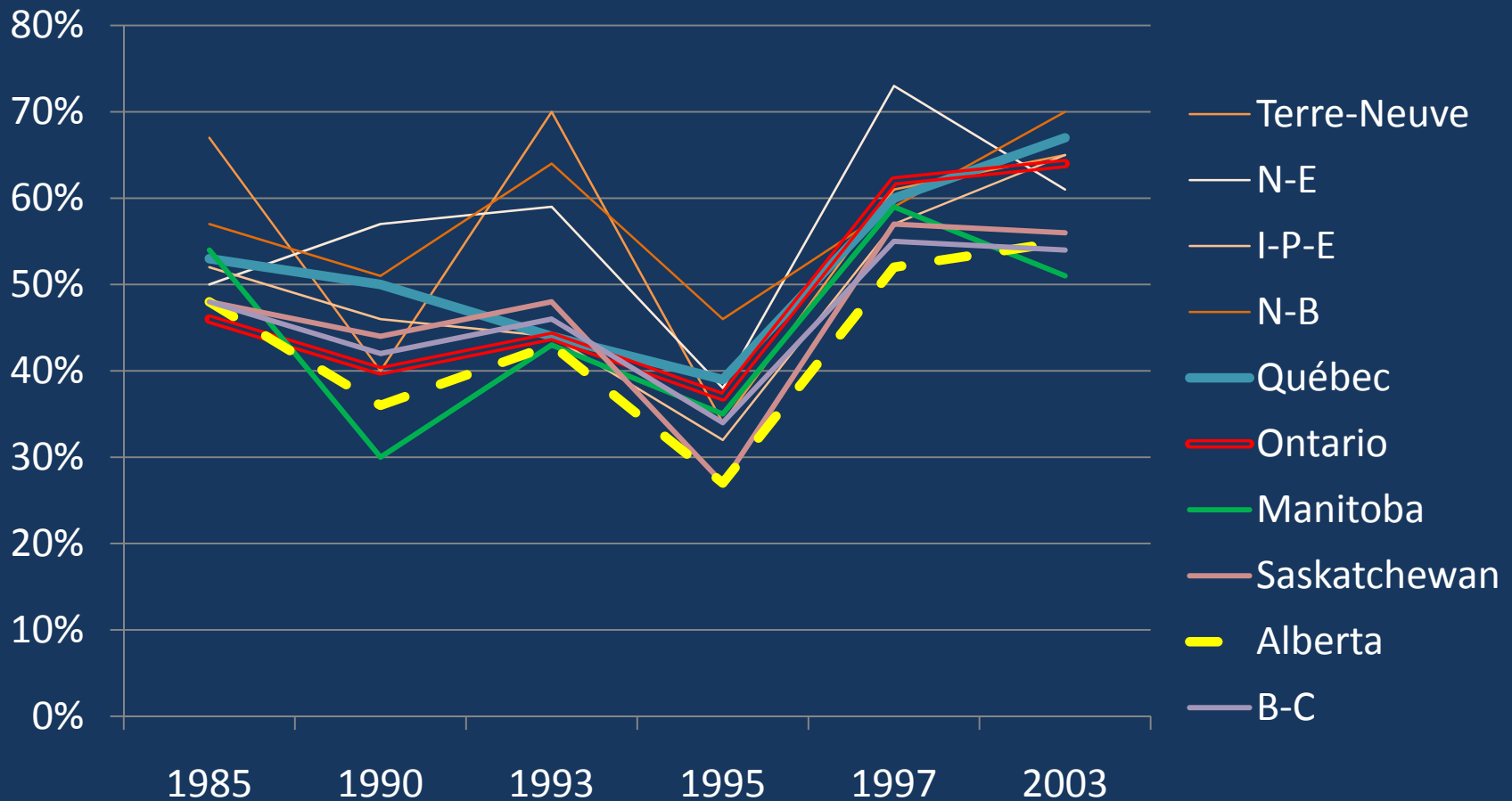
# Confidence in schools by age groups



# Confidence in schools by provinces

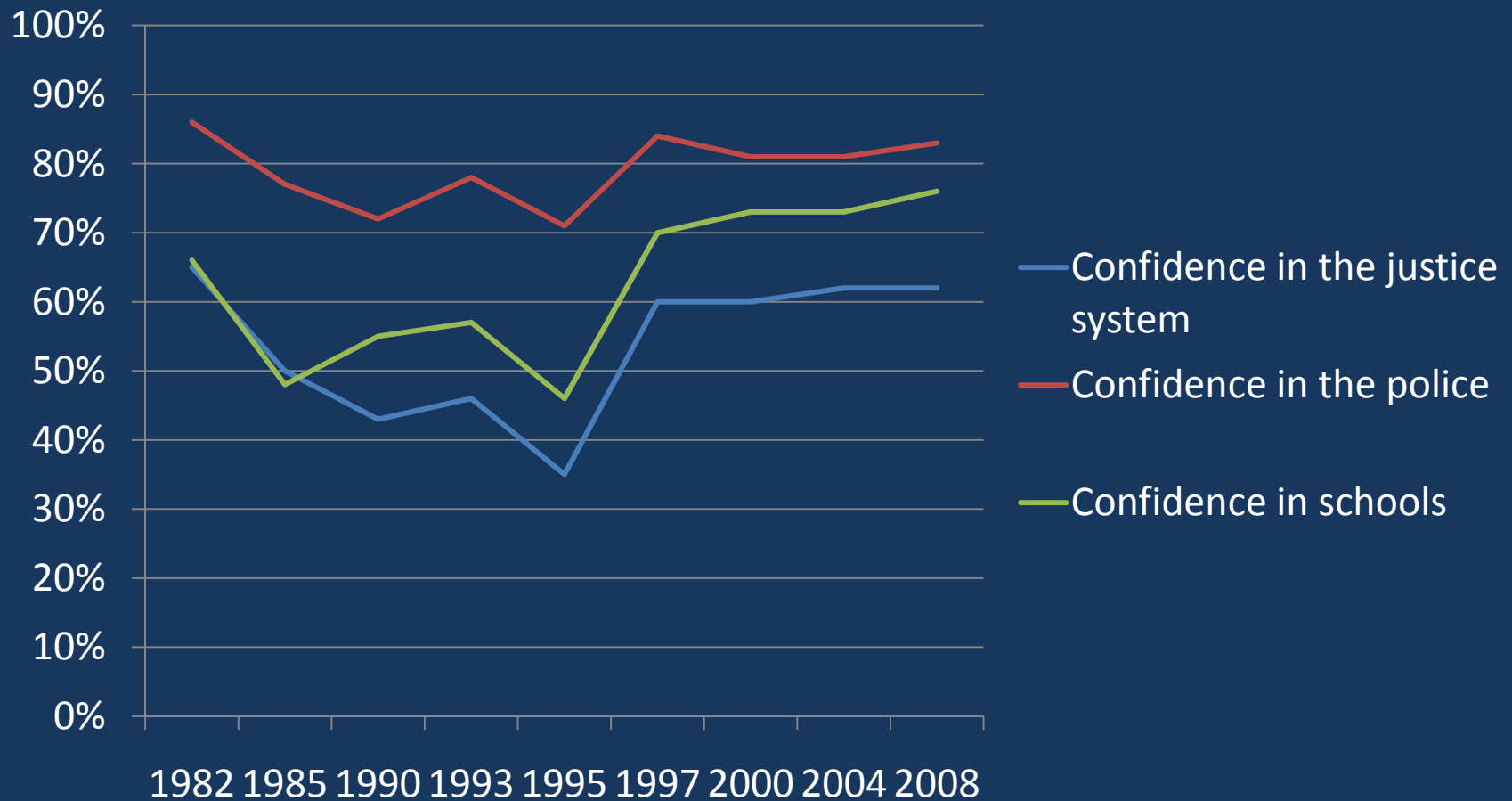


# Confiance dans le système de justice par province

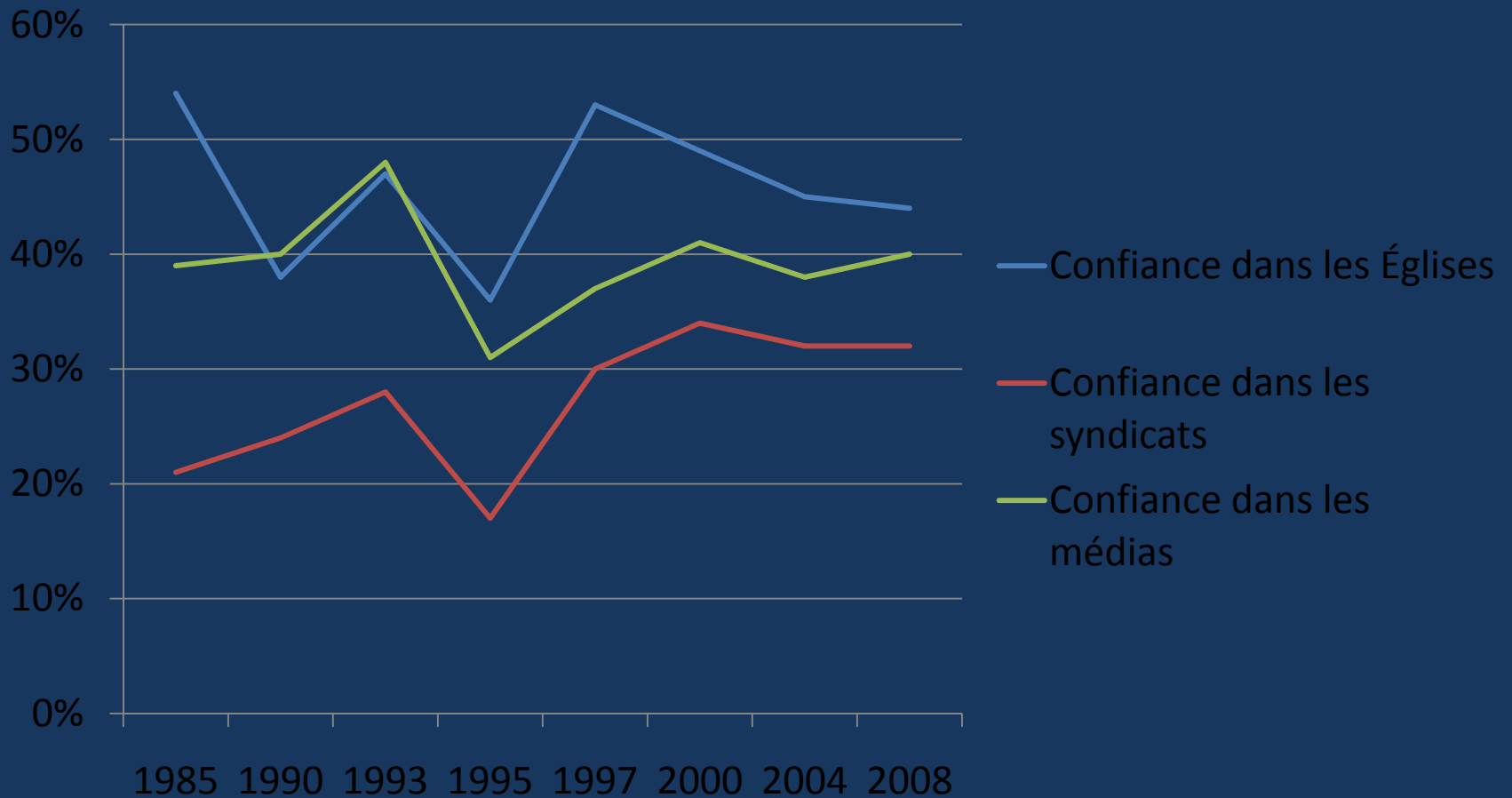




# Confidence in institution protecting civil society



# Confiance Misc.



# Trends

- **British Columbia** → Often lowest provincial government, religion, media
- **Alberta** → High on confidence in provincial government, low on confidence of federal government
- **Québec** → lowest on confidence in police (exc. recently), generally high for confidence in religion, media and unions and lowest on generalised trust
- **Ontario** → very close to the national average

# Confidence in the justice system by age groups

