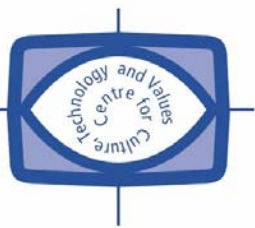


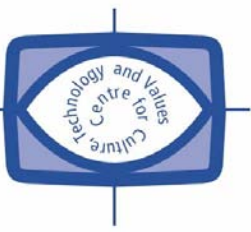
# *Sic transit gloria mundi*

*Changes in faith practice over time as evidenced from the EVS data, 1981-2008*



# Overview

- European Values Survey (EVS): a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program on basic human values
- Conducted in 1981, 1990, 1999 and most recently in 2008
- Topic Areas include:
  1. Religious denomination
  2. Religious practice
  3. Importance of religion
  4. Traditional beliefs
  5. Morality
  6. Faith in the church

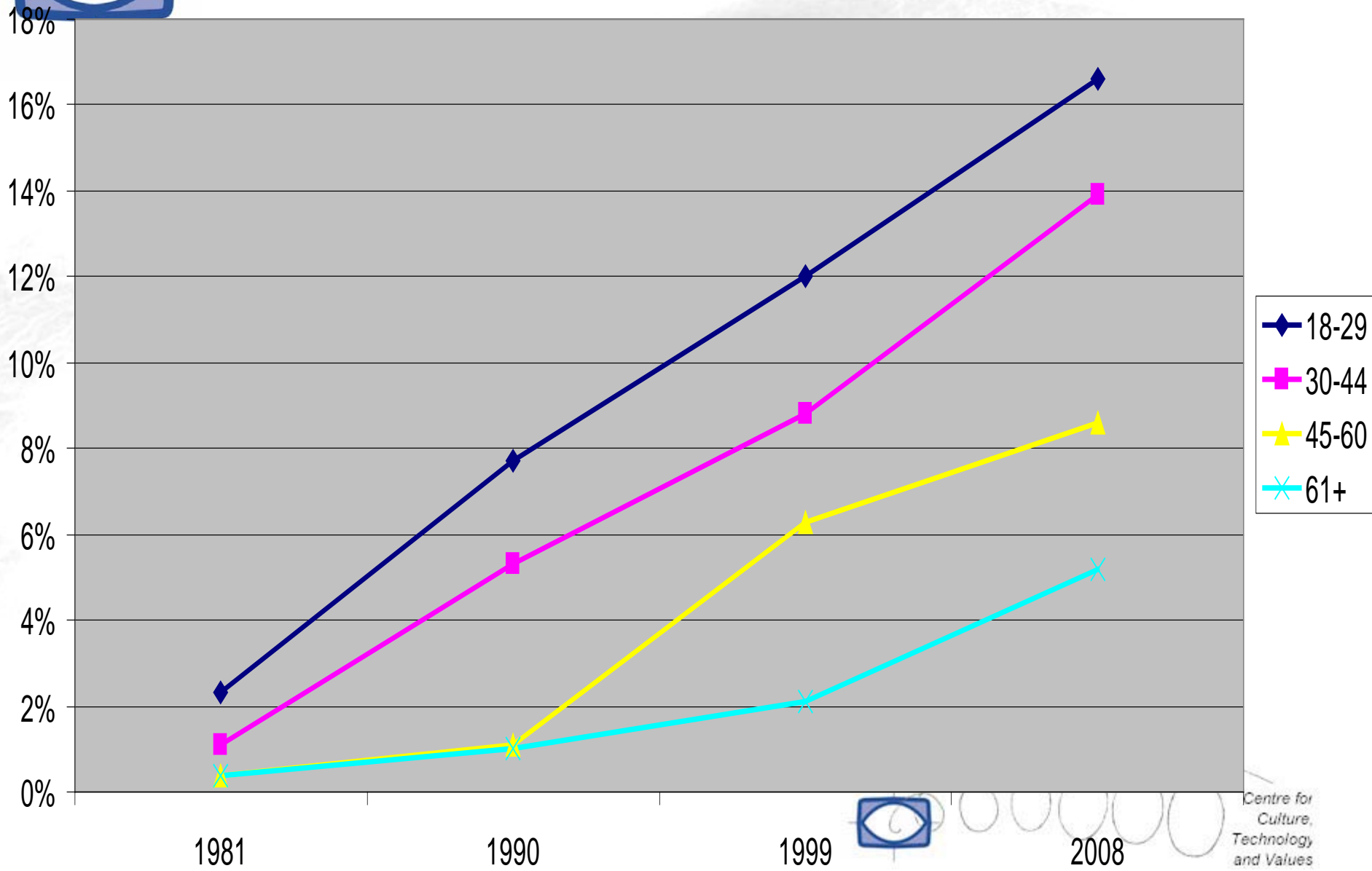


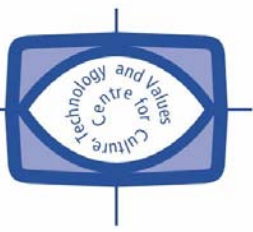
# Religious Denomination

- 11.4% of Irish people do not belong to a religious denomination.
- The proportion of Irish people not belonging to a religious denomination had doubled at each survey, from 1.3% in 1981 to 11.4% in 2008.
- The youngest cohort (18-29) has experienced the sharpest increase in non-membership, rising from 2% in 1981 to almost 17% in 2008.
- The 30-44 cohort has experienced a parallel increase, rising from just over 1% in 1981 to 14% in 2008.
- Non-membership amongst the oldest cohort (63+), while remaining at a relatively low level of 4.8% in 2008, has experienced a relatively sharp increase since 1999. A 3.1% increase in non-religious affiliation amongst the oldest age cohort compares to a parallel increase of 4.6% in the youngest cohort.



# % Within each age group not belonging to a Religious Denomination

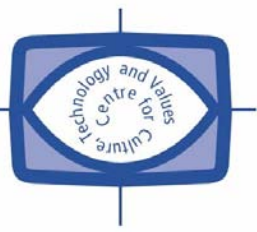




# Religious Denomination

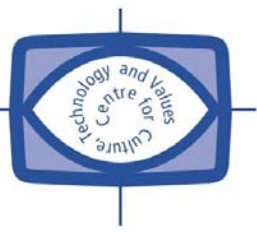
- Of those who belong to a religious denomination, the vast majority (96.3%) are Roman Catholic
- There has been a slight decline in the proportion of Catholics over the past four waves, falling almost 3% since 1990.
- Concurrently, there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of Protestants, with the most pronounced increase between 1999 and 2008, rising by 2%.
- The proportion of other religions has remained relatively small and constant over the two decades.





## Self-definition as religious or atheistic

- Trend from 1981 to 1999 of increasing numbers of people declaring themselves 'a religious person', but the 2008 survey shows a 8.7% drop since 1999.
- Concurrently the 2008 survey shows a 7% increase in those declaring themselves 'Not a religious person'.
- Convinced atheism has remained relatively constant and minimal over the three decades (0.6%-1.3%).
- Over 40% of the 18-29 and 30-44 age groups describe themselves as not religious, a sharp increase of approximately 10% since 1999.

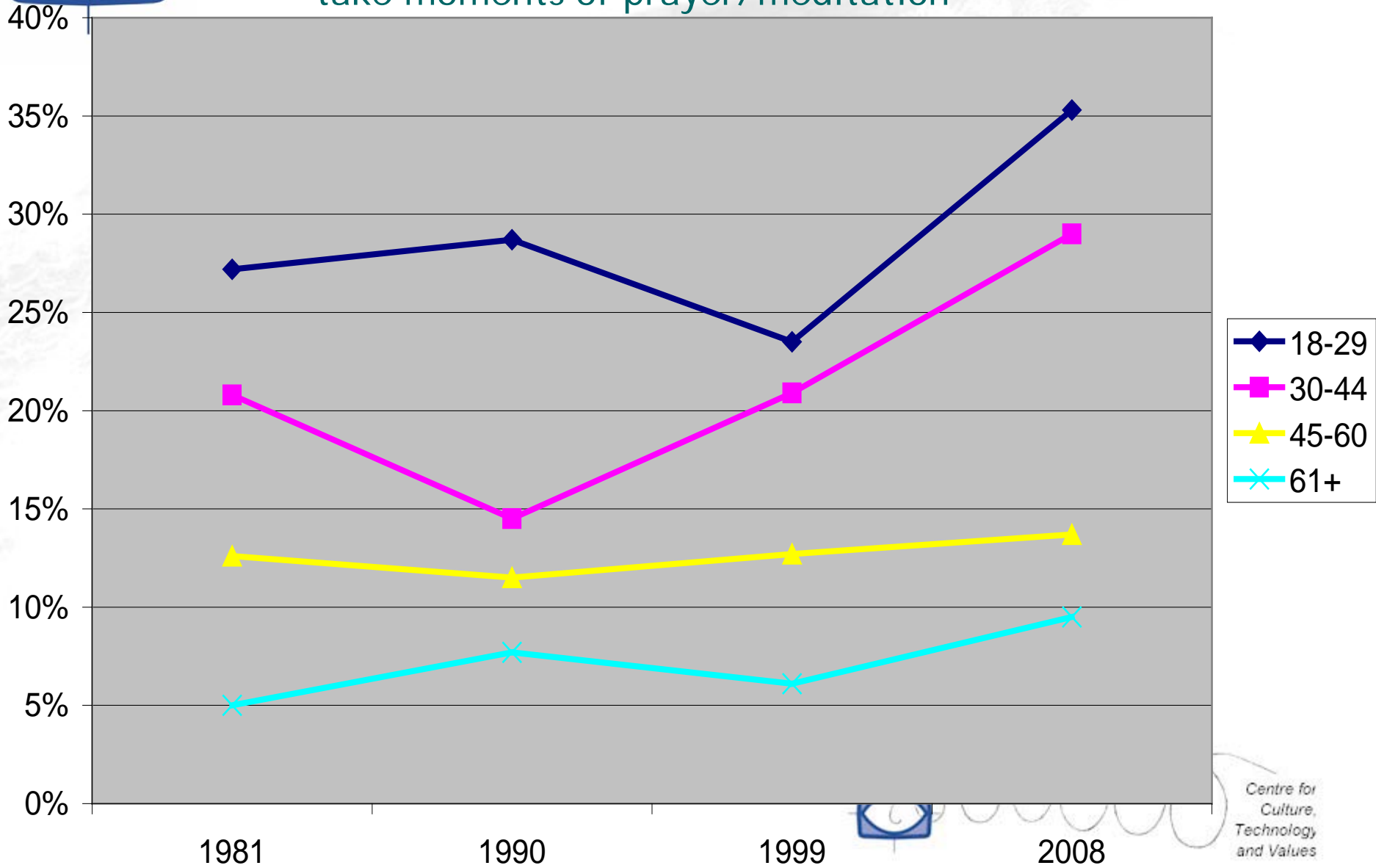


## Religious Practice: Prayer

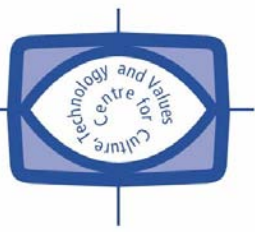
- In 2008, 77% of Irish people take moments of prayer/meditation - 7% less than in 1990 and 1999.
- Over a third of 18-29 year olds and over 30% of 30-45 year olds do not pray, compared to under 10% of those over 60.
- The proportion who never pray has increased in each age group since 1999, particularly in the two youngest cohorts.



# % Within each age group who do not take moments of prayer/meditation



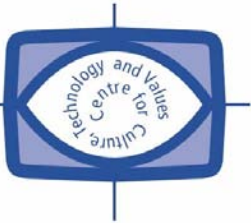




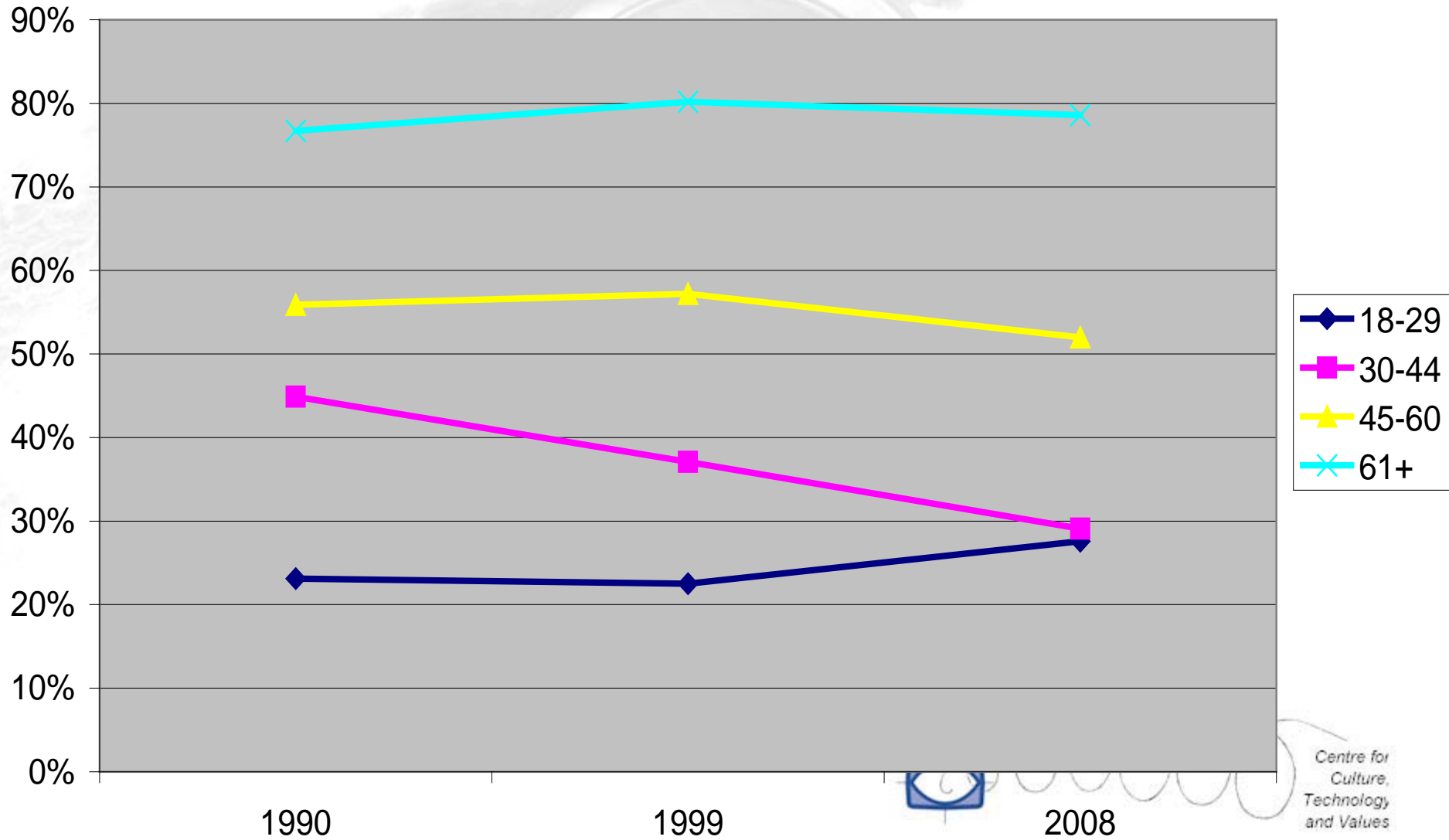
# Frequency of Prayer

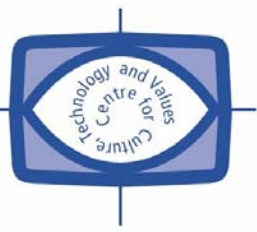
- In 2008, just over 45% of Irish people pray to God every day.
- Over two-thirds pray at least once a week.
- Just over 10% of Irish people never pray.
- The contrasts between the age groups are again apparent, with 27% of 18-29 year olds praying everyday, compared to 79% of those over 60.
- While there has been an overall decline in the proportion of people who pray everyday since 1990 and 1999, the 18-29 age group has experienced an increase, rising by 5% since 1999.





# Pray Everyday



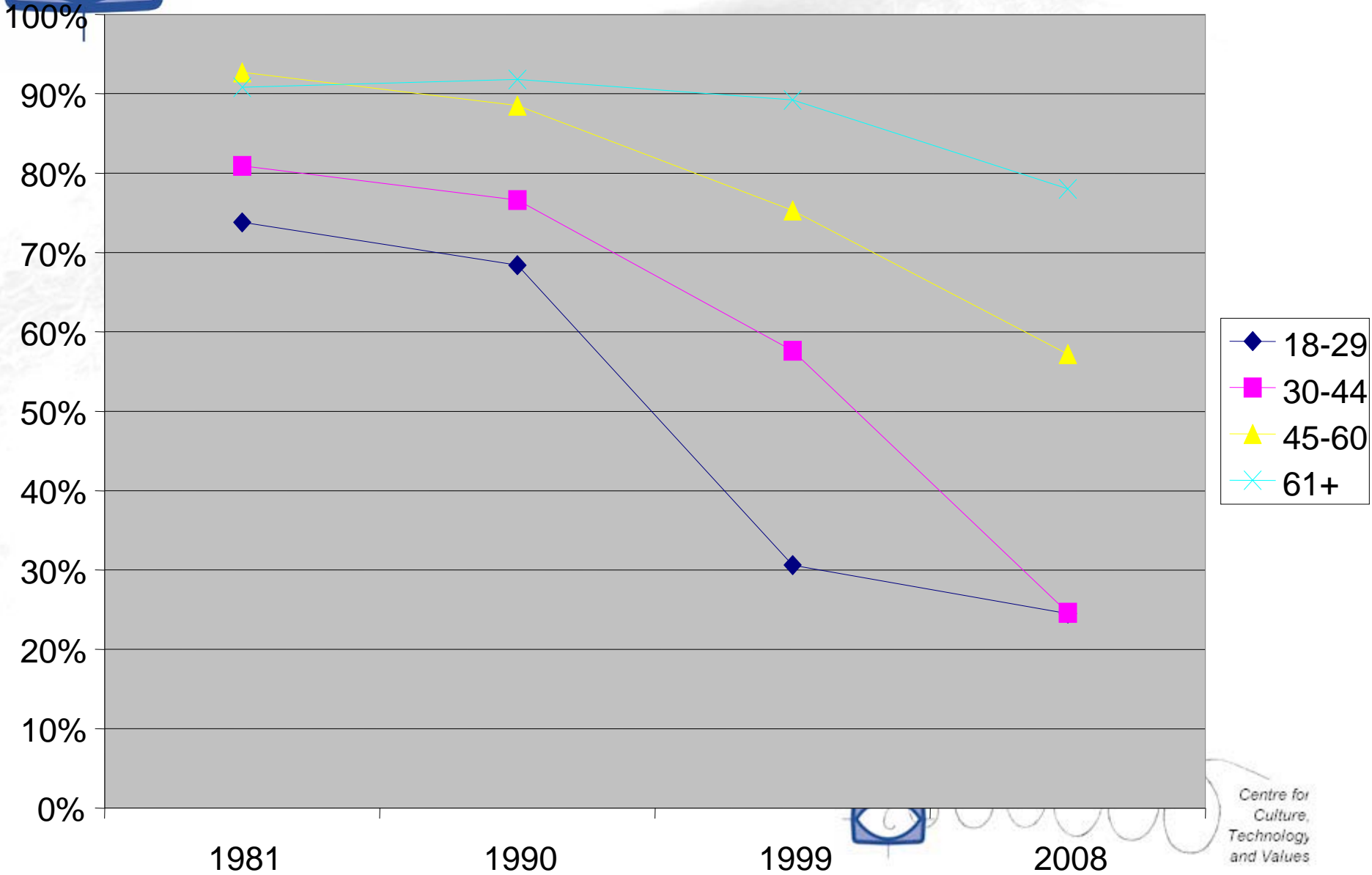


# Attendance at Religious Service

- Approximately 45% of Irish people attend religious service at least once a week.
- 10% of these attend more regularly.
- The proportion of Irish people attending service more than once a week and once a week has declined significantly since 1981, with each declining by 15-20%, with a particularly sharp decline across all age cohorts occurring since 1990.
- 13.9% of Irish people never attend religious service, with a total of 25% attending less than once a year or never.
- This 25% who attend extremely infrequently or not at all compares to 5-10% in previous surveys
- Of particular note is the fact that in 2008, significantly more 30-44 year olds never attend religious service than their younger 18-29 year old counterparts.

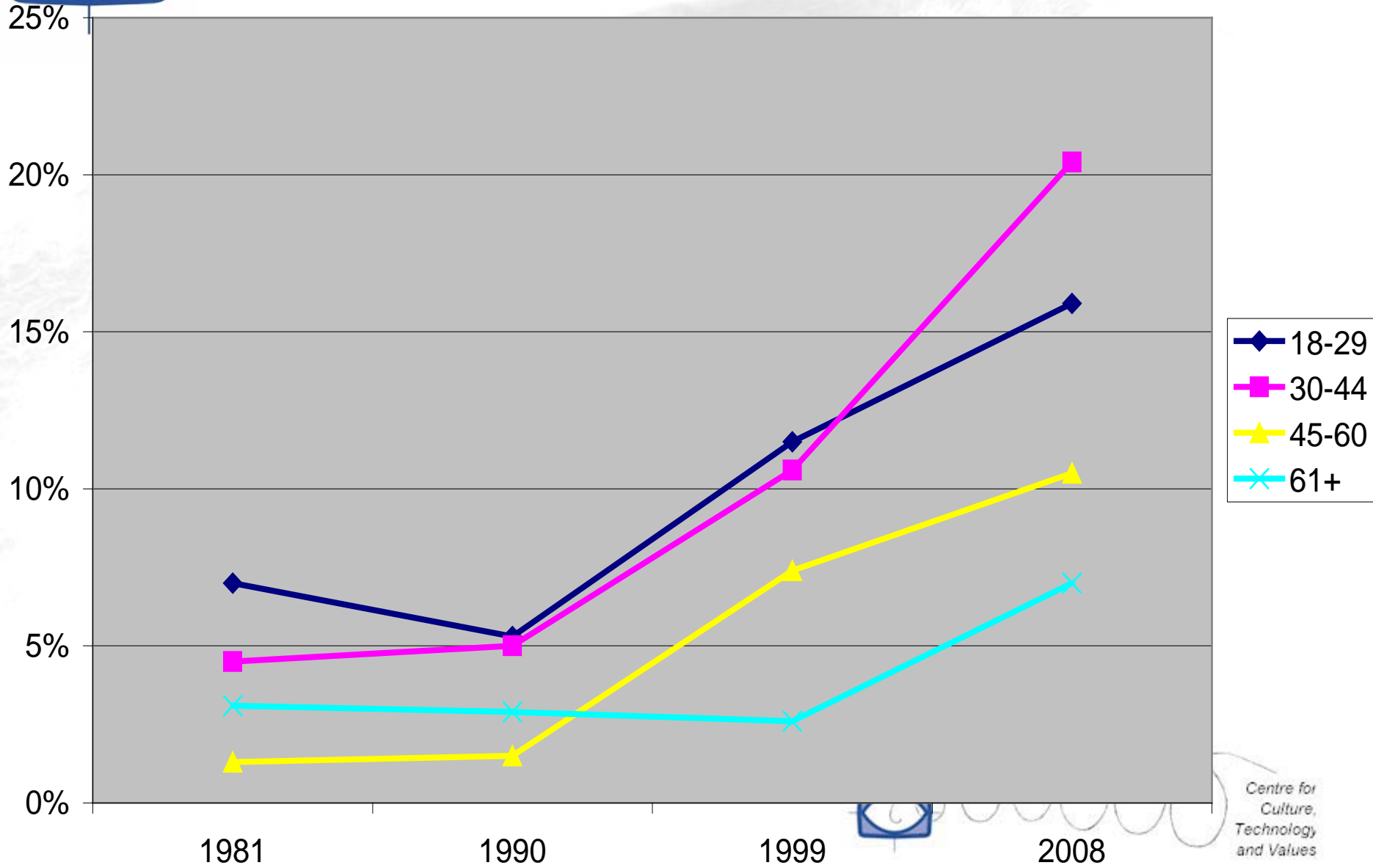


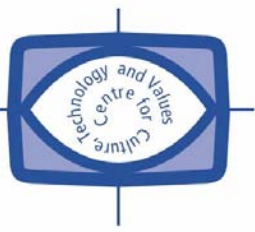
# % Within age group who attend service once a week or more





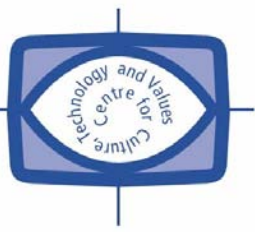
# % Within age group who never attend religious service





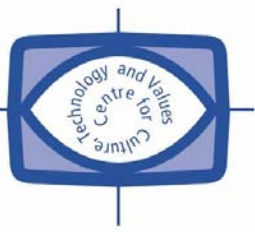
# Importance of Religion in everyday life

- 2008 continued the trend from 1990 and 1999 that has seen a steady decrease in those who declare that religion is 'very important' in their lives, falling 6% since 1999.
- The percentage of those who feel religion is 'quite important' has however remained relatively constant over the three most recent surveys, falling a mere 1.9% since 1999, and 0.3% higher than the figure in 1990.
- Those declaring that religion is 'not important' or 'not important at all' have followed the more general trend, each increasing by about 4% since 1999, building on their 4% increase between 1990 and 1999.



# Importance of God

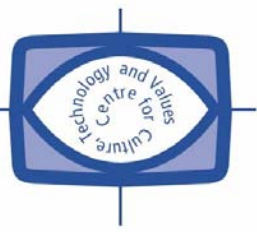
- The percentage responding that God is very important (10 on a 10-point scale) have declined sharply from the relatively constant percentages in the 1981, 1990 and 1999, dropping over 10% in 2008.
- While this drop is reflected in the increase since 1999 in the percentage responding not at all (1 on a ten point scale), the change in this response is only 2% higher than in 1999.
- The decline in those responding very (10) has caused a slight increase in the percentages in the upper middle range, thieve, sixes, seven, eights, nines, since 1999.



# Importance of Religious Services

- The importance of religious services at birth and marriage continued the trend from 1990 and 1999, with percentage yes responses falling slightly by 2.2% and 4.5% respectively.
- The relationship between age and these variables was not as clear cut however, with a higher percentage of 18-29 year olds feeling religious service was important at birth than 30-44 year olds.
- Generally though, the relationship conformed to patterns apparent with previous religious variables.



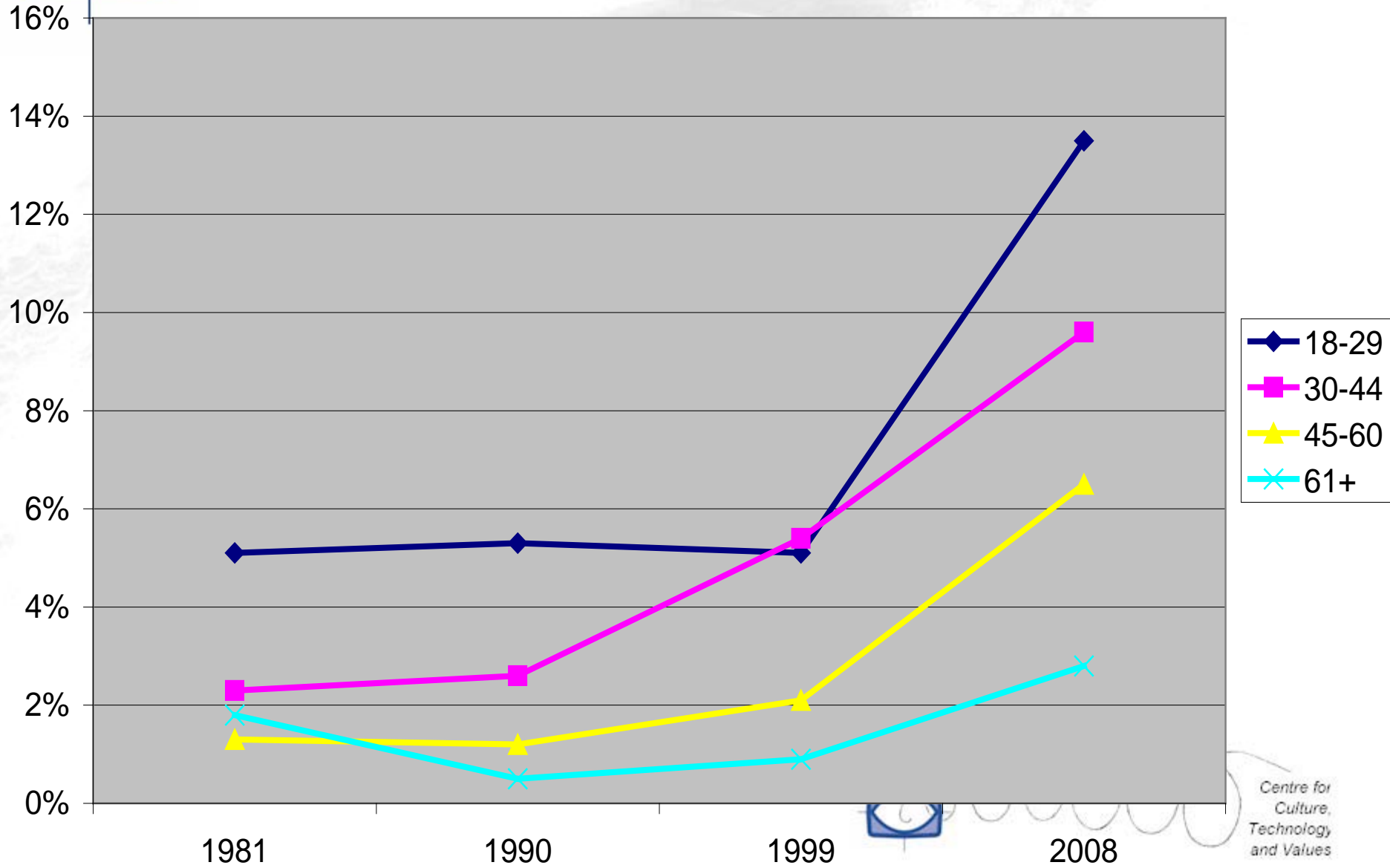


# Traditional Beliefs

- After remaining relatively constant through 1981, 1990 and 1999, Belief in God fell by approximately 8% in the 2008 survey.
- The 18-29 age group had the largest proportion (15%) who did not believe in God. 97% of the over 60 group did believe in God.
- Belief in Life after death, heaven, hell, sin, all continued the trend of decline since 1990, all falling by between 3.6 to 10.5%.
- There was again a pretty clear linear relationship between age and these traditional beliefs, with the youngest age group consistently having a higher percentage of disbelief, and the oldest category having the highest percentage of believers.

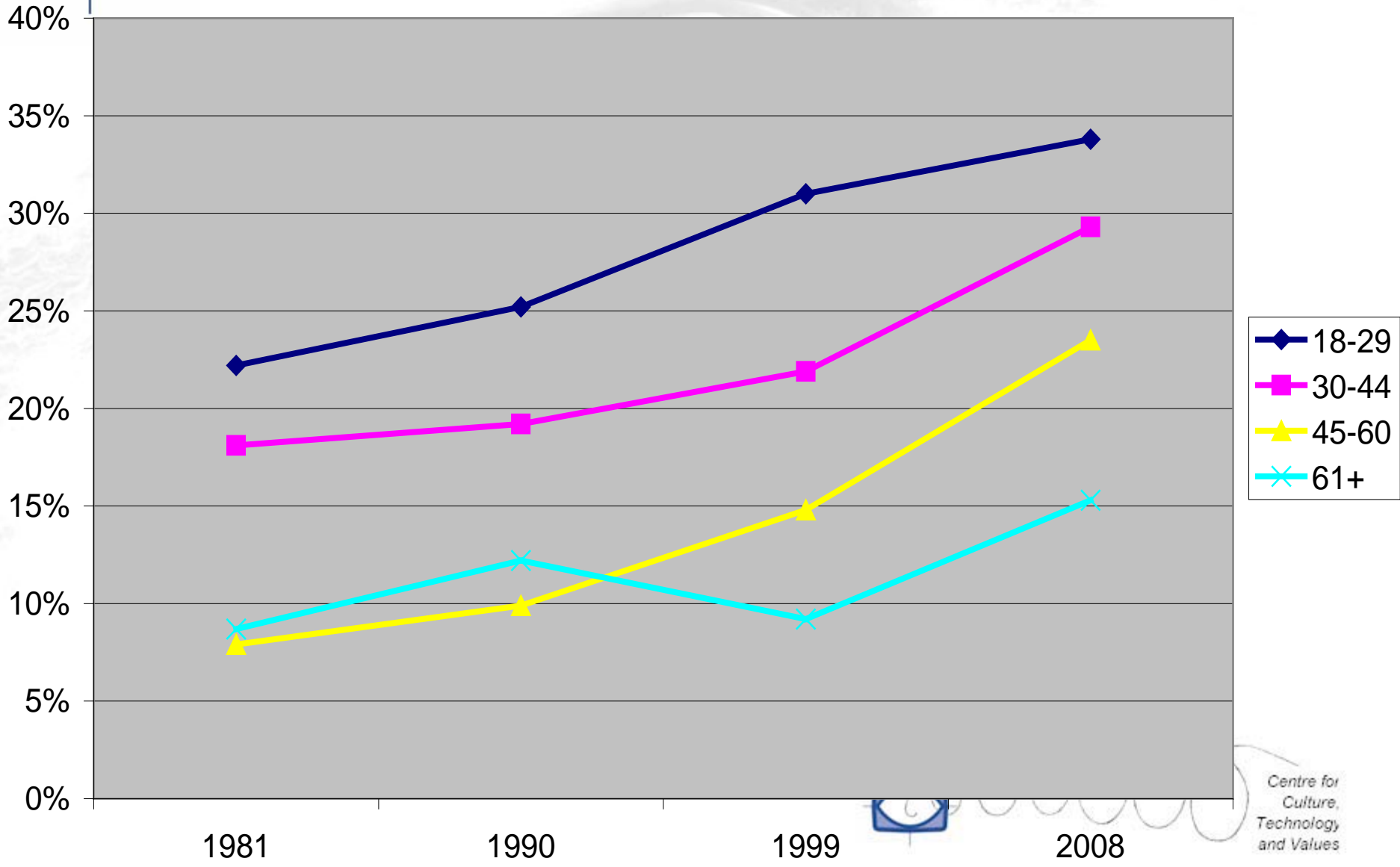


## % Within age group who do not believe in God



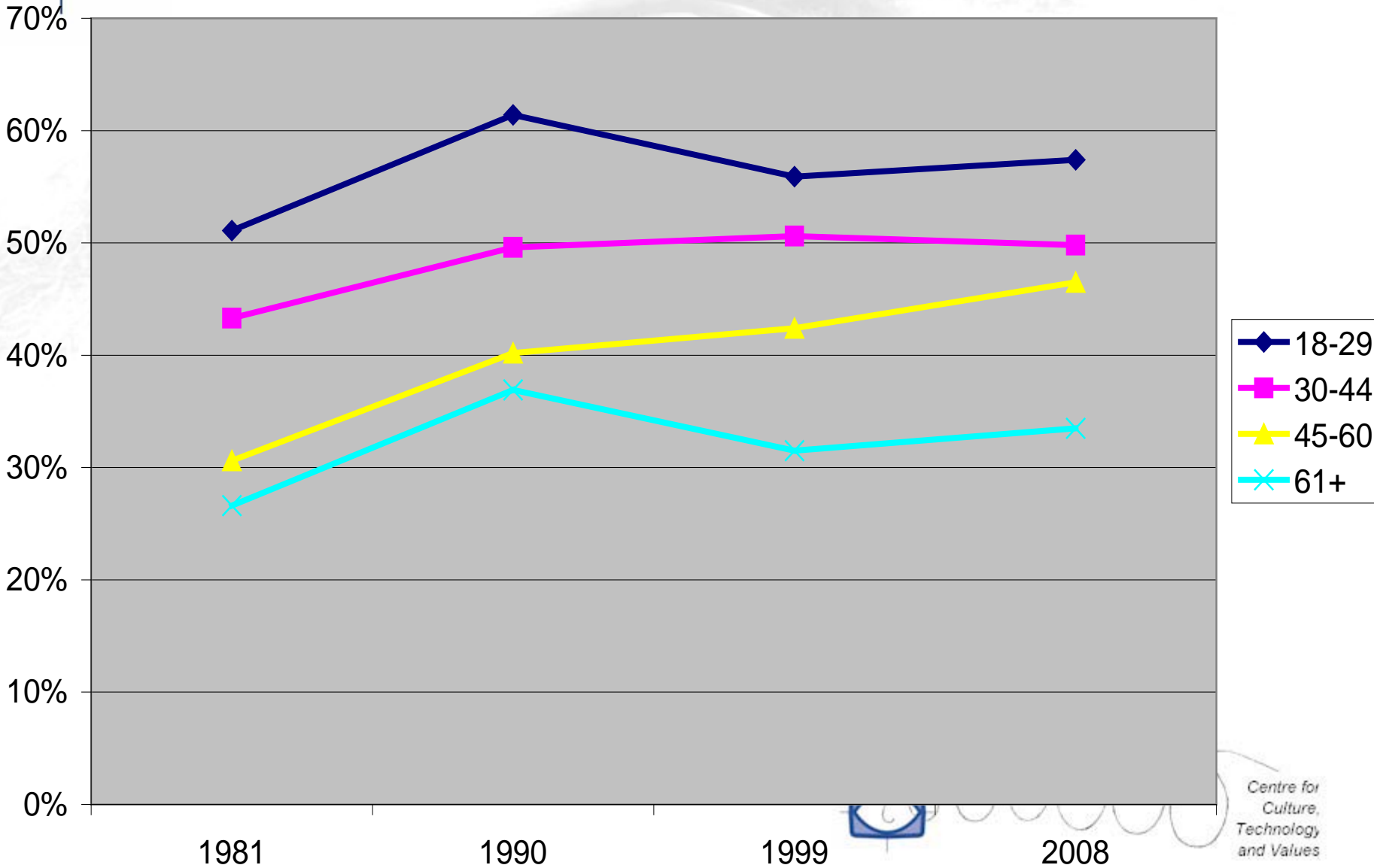


# Within age group who do not believe in Life after Death



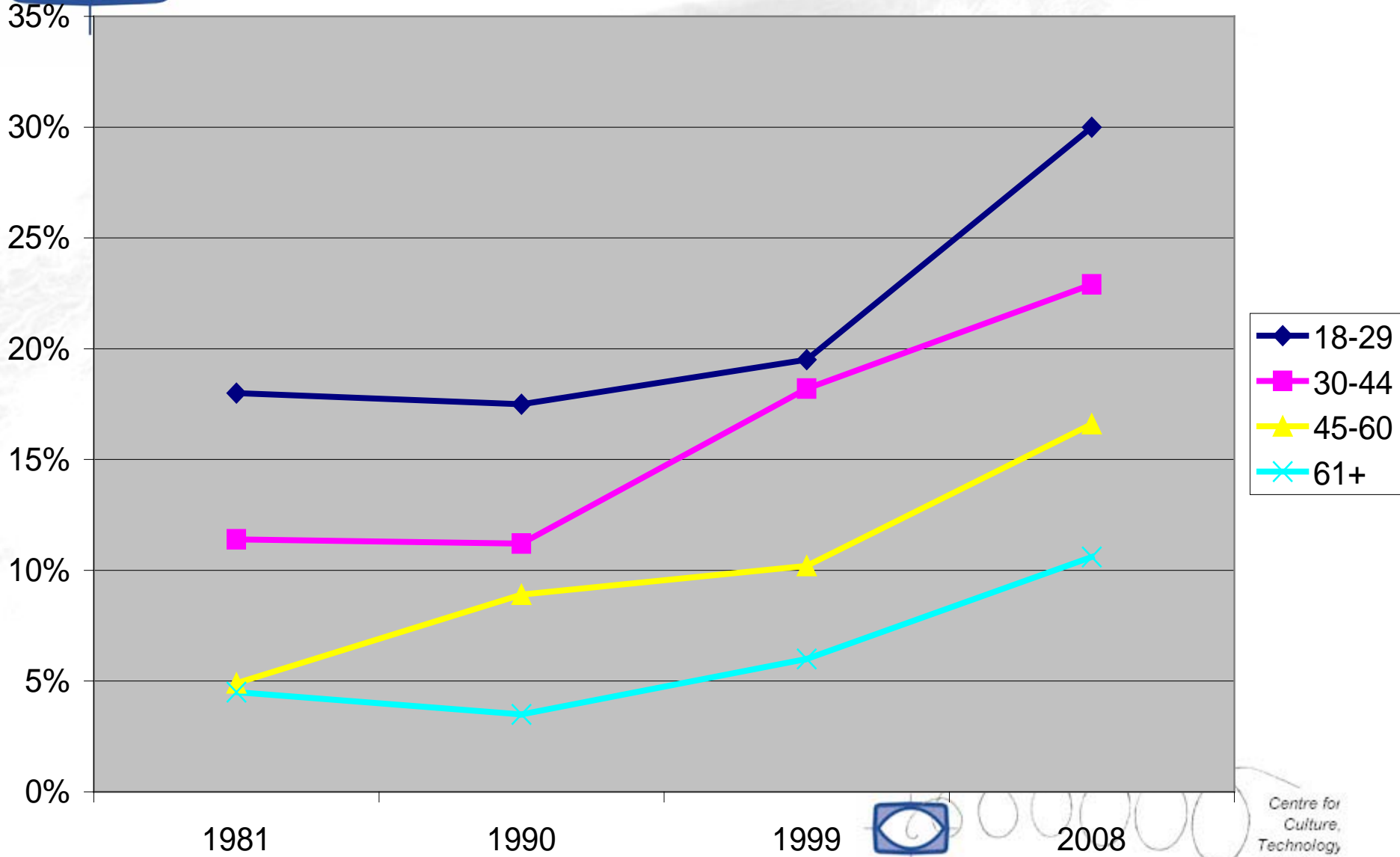


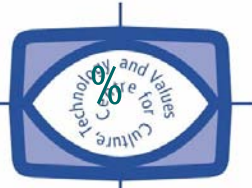
# % Within age group who do not believe in Hell



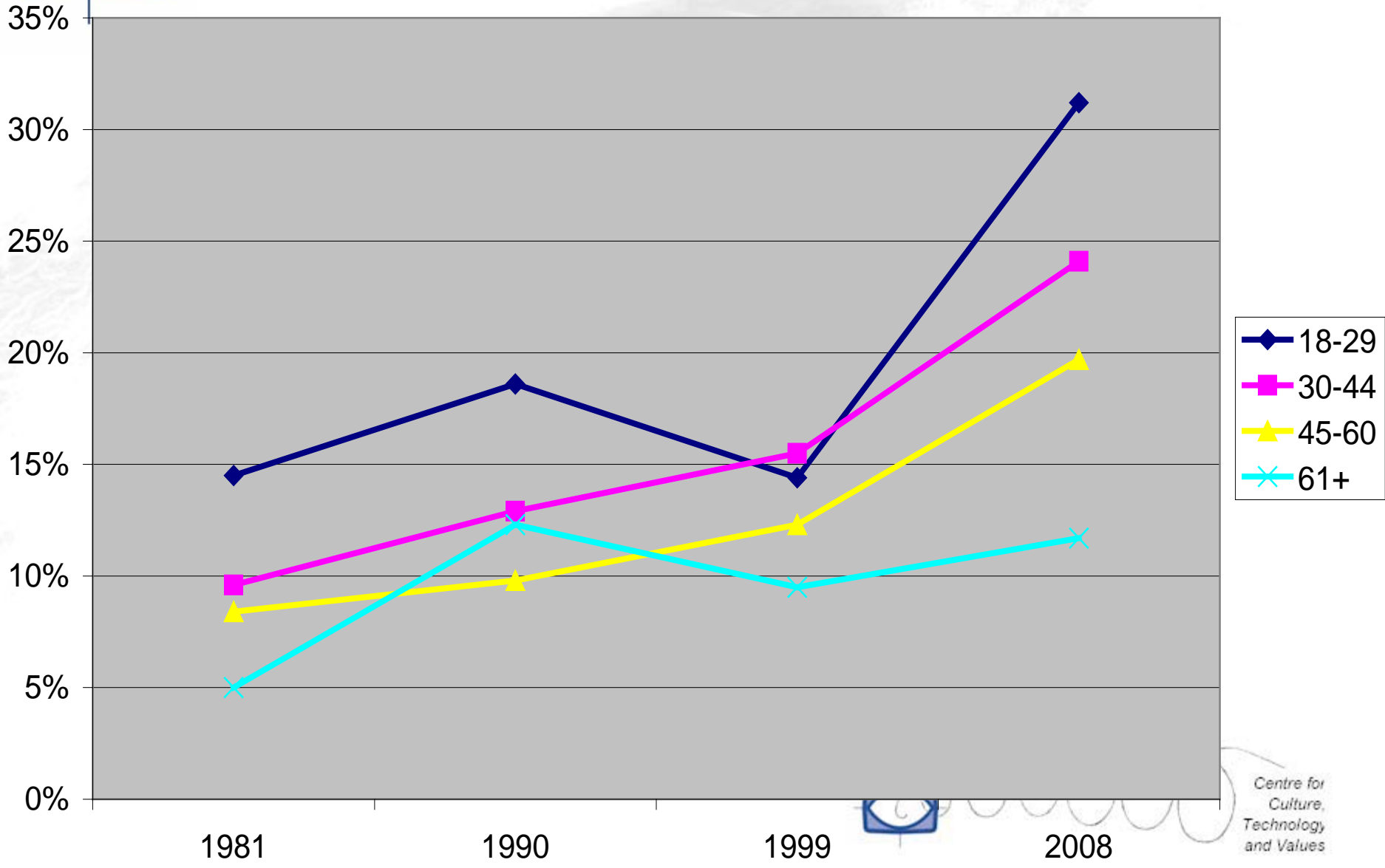


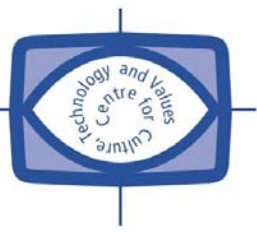
## Within age group who do not believe in Heaven





# Within age group who do not believe in Sin

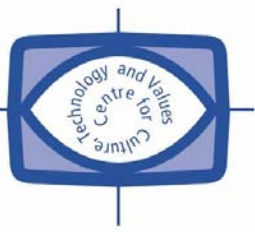




# Morality

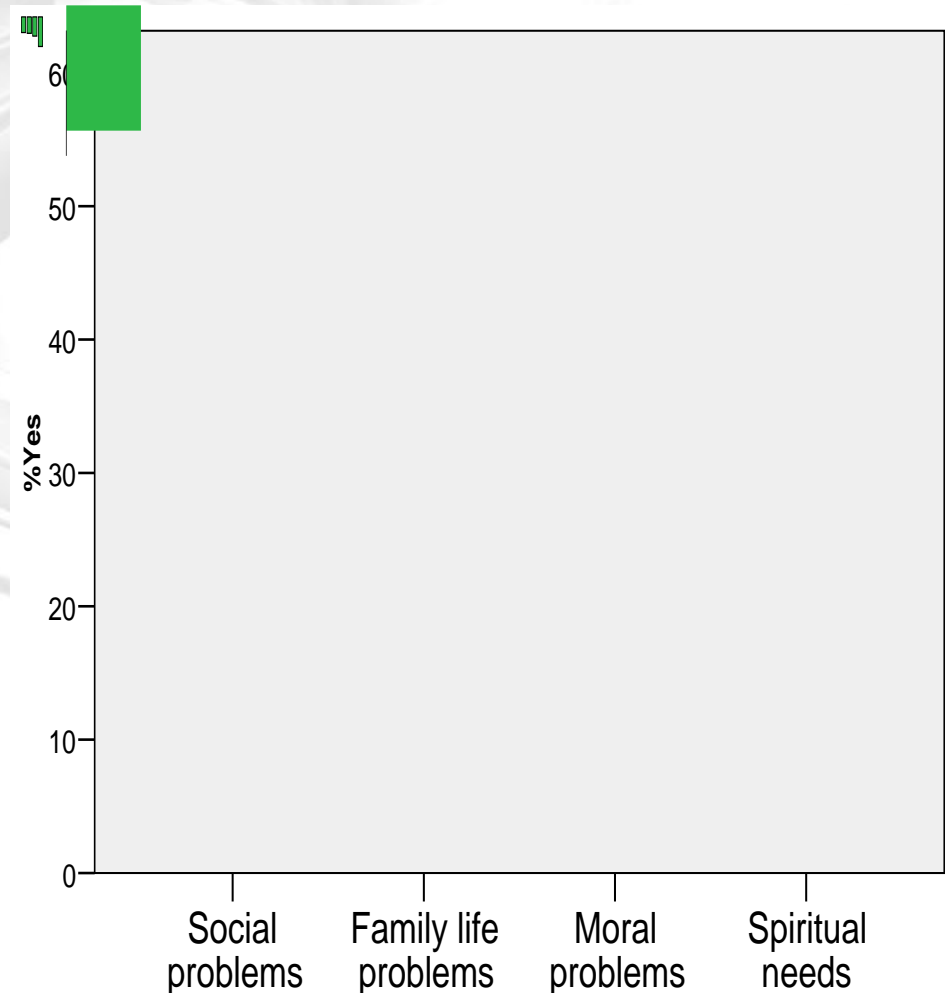
- Respondents asked to rank on a ten-point scale whether an action was always justified (10) or never justified (1).
- Comparing the proportion of never justified responses over all four waves it is apparent that Irish people have become much more morally permissible over the last two decades
- Cheating on taxes is the only action that has seen an increase in 'never justified' responses from 1981 to 2008, rising by over 12% since 1981.
- Taking soft drugs, divorce, homosexuality and euthanasia all seem to have become significantly more acceptable than they were thirty years ago, the proportion of 'never justified' responses falling by at least 25-30% for each since 1981.
- Young people are certainly more morally permissible with regard to actions such as casual sex and taking soft drugs, but the relationship between age and moral permissibility is not as clear cut regarding the justifiability of the death penalty adultery, euthanasia, taking a bribe and joyriding.



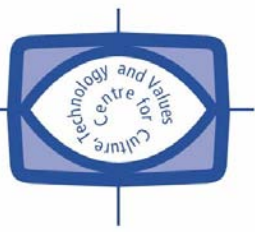


# Answering the Problems of Everyday Life

- A series of questions in the EVS attempt to gauge whether the church is providing answers to today's problems.
- The majority of people feel the church is not giving adequate answers to social problems, family life problems, and moral problems. Two thirds of Irish people do however feel that the church is giving adequate answers to people's spiritual needs.







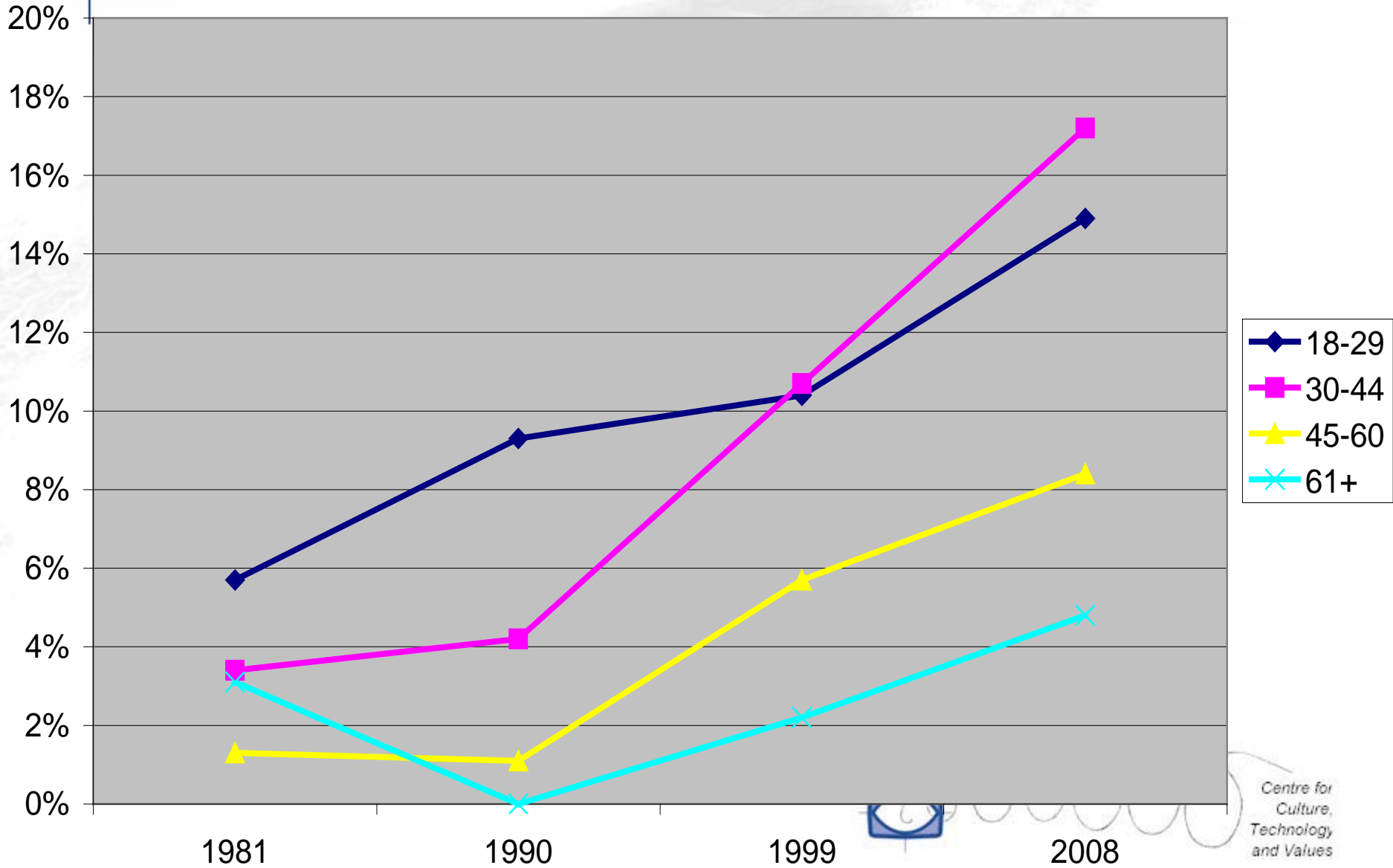
## Faith in the Church

- The percentage of those declaring they had 'A great deal' of confidence in the church declined in 2008, as it has done in the 1999 and 1990. The level of decline (falling just 4% since 1999) however is much less drastic than the decline that between 1990 and 1990 (falling 15%). The decline is quite drastic however when the 2008 percentage of 20.4% is compared to 1981 levels of 50.5%.
- The percentage having 'quite a lot' of confidence in the church has risen since 1999 by 2%, and is 7.5% higher than the percentage in 1981. Furthermore, the percentage having 'not very much' confidence has decreased since 1999 by 5%, although still considerably higher than the 18.2% in 1981.
- The numbers declaring that they have 'none at all' confidence in the church has risen since 1999 by 4.5%, and 7.5% higher than the 1981 figures.
- In comparison to other institutions, the church ranks second only to the education system in terms of 'a great deal' of confidence, higher than The Armed Forces, The Press, Trade Unions, The Police, Parliament, The Civil Service, The Social Security System, the EU, NATO, the UN, the Healthcare System, the Justice System, Major Companies, Environmental Organisations, Political Parties and Government.



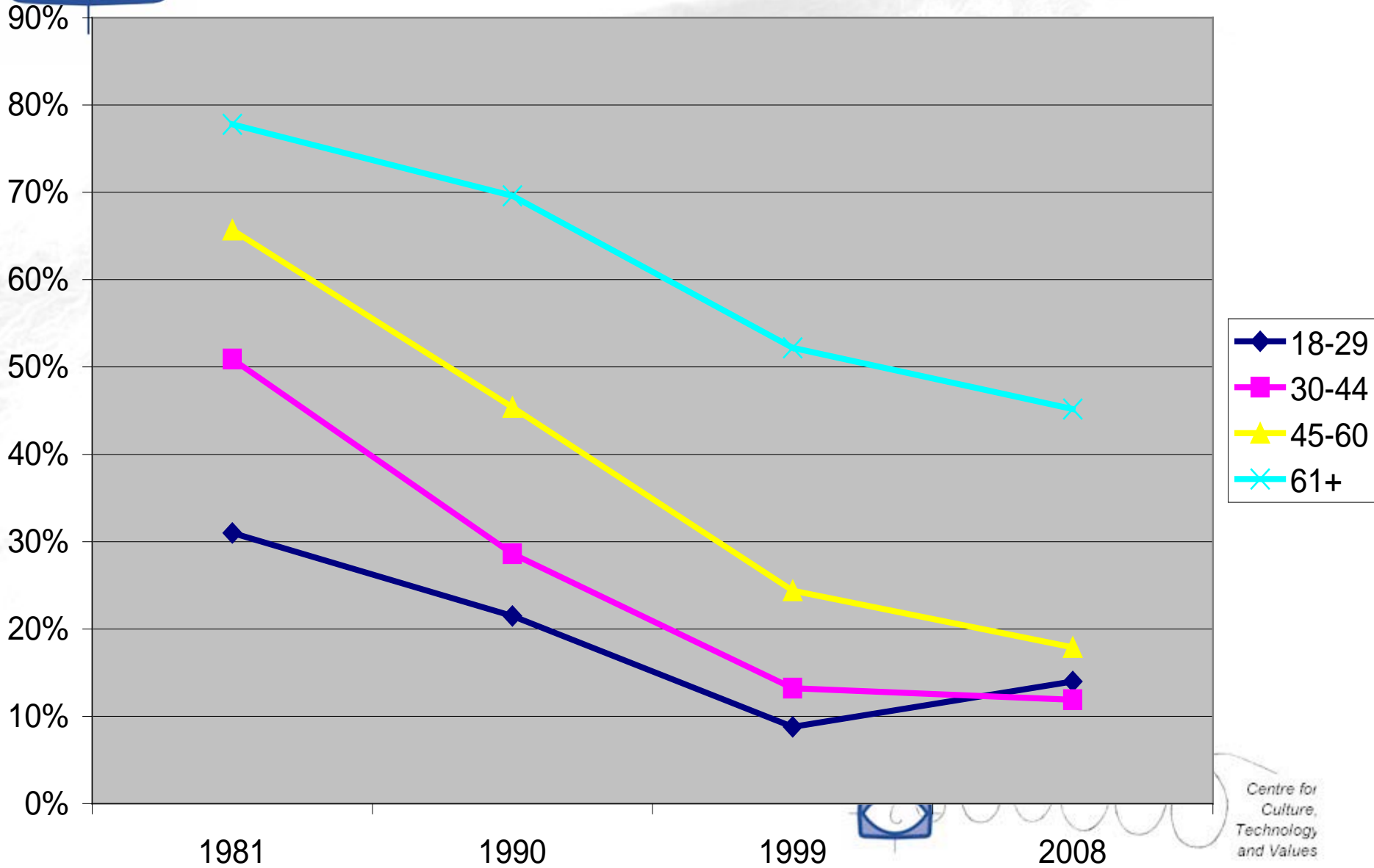


# Confidence in the Church: None at All



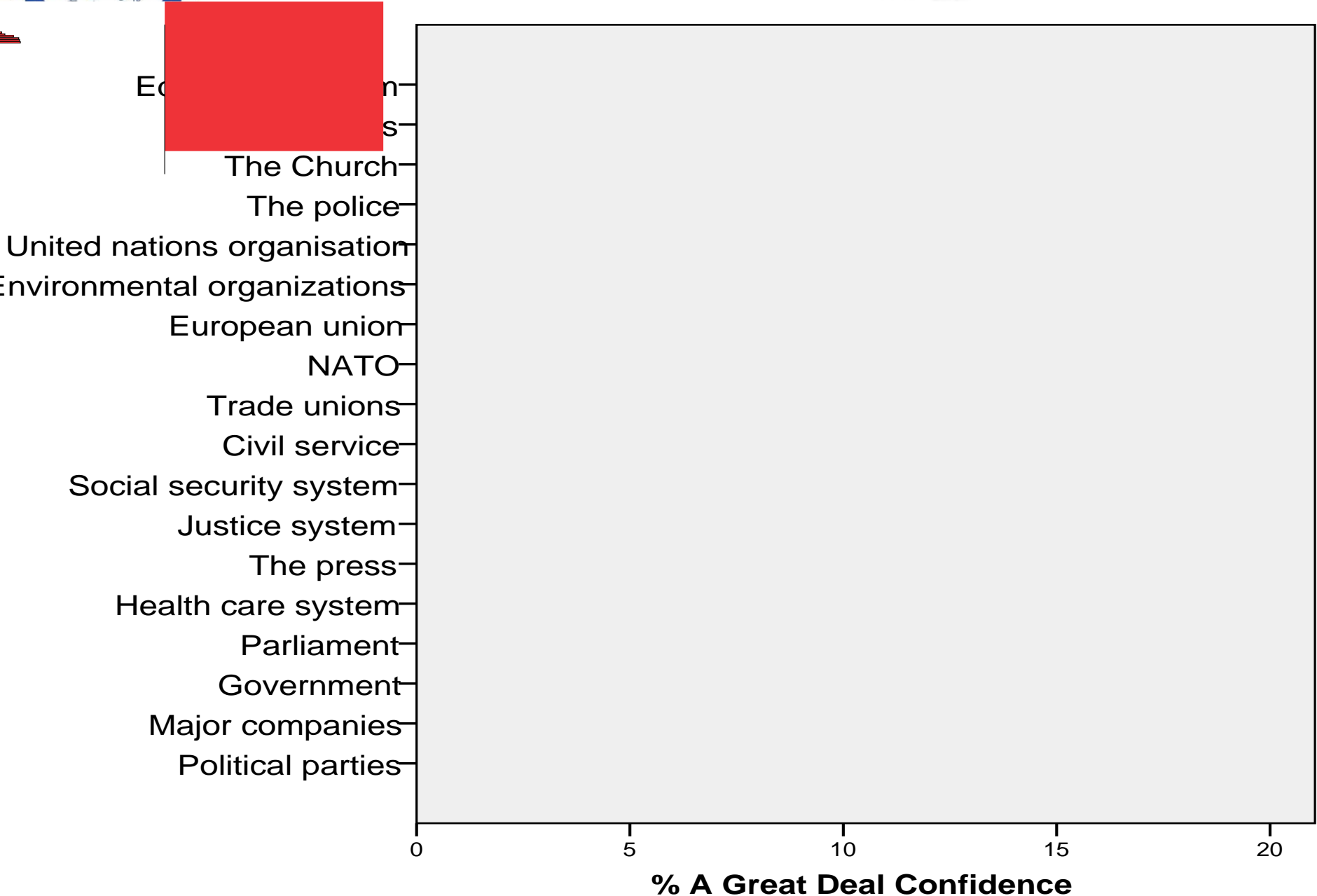


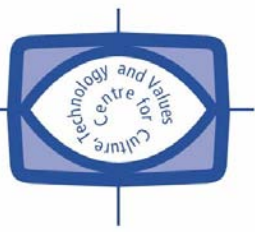
# Confidence in the Church: A Great Deal





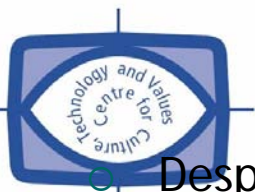
## A Great Deal of Confidence





# Summary I

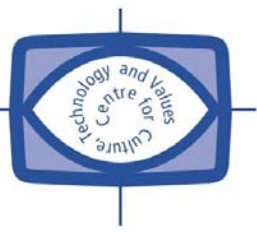
- A decline in religious practice
- A waning of traditional beliefs
- A fall in the importance of religion.
- An increase in moral permissiveness.
- A decline in confidence in the church.
- The youngest age group have a markedly different relationship to religion and religious values than their older counterparts, particularly the oldest age cohort.



## Summary II

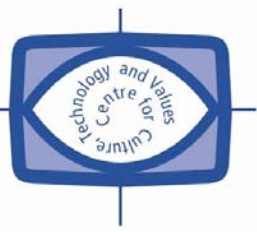
- Despite declining 10% since 1981, just under 90% of the Irish population belong to a religious denomination.
- There are only 2% less Roman Catholics in Ireland as there were in 1981.
- Almost 70% of the population describe themselves as a religious person, compared to 1% convinced atheists.
- Despite the youngest age group having the lowest proportion of 'a religious person' almost 60% describe themselves as one, and only 1.3% describe themselves as convinced atheists.
- Over three-quarters of the Irish people pray/meditate, two-thirds of those aged 18-29.
- Over two-thirds of Irish people pray at least once a week, including 45% who pray everyday.
- Just 10% of the population never pray.
- 45% attend religious service at least once a week.
- Less than 25% of 18-29 year olds attend service once a week or more.
- Almost a third of Irish people rank the importance of God in their daily lives ten on a ten point scale, three quarters rank God's importance above five.
- The vast majority of Irish people feel Religious service is important at key life events.
- Over 90% of the population believe in God, 86% of 18-29 year olds believe in God.





## Summary III

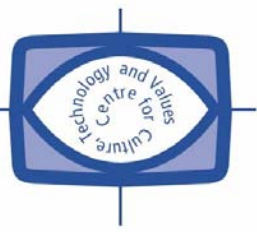
- Irish people are more morally permissible than ever, particularly of taking soft drugs, divorce, and homosexuality. The youngest cohort are more permissible than the old, particularly of actions like casual sex or divorce.
- Yet there are actions where they are united in their moral outlook, such as the (non) justifiability of the death penalty.
- Although a large majority feel that the church is not giving answers to social, moral, and family life problems, the proportion of people who feel that they are has risen since 1999.
- And although the majority of people feel the church is answering people's spiritual needs, there has been a slight decline in the proportion of people who feel that they are.
- In terms of levels of confidence, the church fares very well in comparison to other institutions, especially the mass media



# Conclusions I

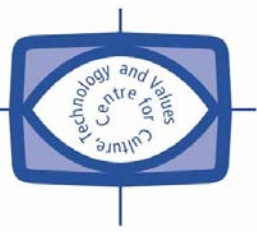
- Religious practice has decreased
- Spirituality remains strong
- Significant age differences have become more marked
- The importance of the institutional churches is diminished/diminishing
- There are important implications for society





## Conclusions 2

- Health, educational and social care institutions were often run by the institutional churches on a voluntary basis. The future is unclear.
- There are social ramifications to a loss of religiosity in society. What are they?
- What are the alternatives to religious practice and religious faith?
- Where does spirituality fit in?



## Conclusions 3

- Morality and ethics?
- Religion as private?
- Relationship of faith to public policy, if any?
- Implications for education