Second-order electoral personalization. Intra-party preference voting in Belgium and the Netherlands

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3 The demand side: motivations for preference votes

3.1 Introduction

In the introduction of this book I argued that there are three factors that have an influence on preference voting. In this chapter I look at the second factor: the demand side. Or in other words: the voters who cast (or do not cast) a preference vote. The central question in this chapter is therefore which voters cast a preference vote.

Since preference voting in proportional representation systems is a relatively new field of study, expectations about who cast a preference vote sometimes contradict each other and no established set of explanations exists (Van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2012, p. 172). Different authors have tried to distinguish different sets of explanations. Katz (1985) argues that there are three explanations for preference voting: traditionalism, sophistication and mobilization. On the one hand preference voting might be associated with traditional culture and clientelism, causing those with a low level of political sophistication to cast preference votes. In this case preference votes are cast in exchange for rewards. On the other hand, the reverse may be true when preference votes are seen as a more sophisticated vote than the list vote. In this case voters with higher levels of political interest and knowledge would be more likely to cast a preference vote. Their goal is not an immediate reward, but to have a greater influence on policies than they would have if they would only vote for a preferred party. This would be especially useful if the party allows intra-party differences and competition. In addition to these two expectations, Katz argues that a third mechanism is also possible: different sub groups within a party try to mobilize as many voters as possible to support their group by casting a preference vote for candidates belonging to the sub group. Katz finds evidence for all three explanations in the Italian context, suggesting that different types of preference votes and voters exist.

Another set of explanations can be found in the study of André et al. (2013). They distinguish three models to explain why voters cast a preference vote: a resource model, an identity model and a proximity model[33]. Some of these models overlap with the models proposed by Katz (see table 3.1). The resource model assumes that voters are more likely to cast a preference vote if they have more resources, for example political knowledge, to come to an informed choice about voting for a specific candidate within a party. Therefore this model resembles the sophistication model from Katz. The second model that André et al. use to explain preference voting is the identity model. This model assumes that a voter is

[33] In an earlier study on preference votes from André et al., the identity model was not included: in that version an instrumental model was included as the third model. The assumption was that voters are more likely to cast a preference vote, as the chances increase that their preference vote would actually influence which candidates are elected (André et al., 2012). This model does not fit the context of this chapter; in the previous chapter institutional constraints were discussed. Although this specific constraint was not discussed (see also footnote 17 on page 16).

more likely to cast a preference vote for a candidate who shares certain social characteristics, and that the chances of casting a preference vote especially increase when the voter belongs to an underrepresented group. The final model from André et al. is the proximity model, which assumes that a voter is more likely to cast a preference vote if there is more proximity between voters and candidates. This model resembles the mobilization type of preference vote in the typology of Katz. However, there is a difference. In the typology of Katz it is a group of candidates who try to mobilize voters to cast a vote for candidates belonging to their group, which makes it a top-down model. The model of André et al. is more bottom-up: the voters are looking for candidates who share certain social characteristics.

Since the sophistication and resource model resemble each other, and the mobilization and proximity model resemble each other (see table 3.1), we can distinguish four models. In the next section I will discuss these models in further detail and I present the hypotheses that will be tested in this chapter.

Table 3.1 Overview of the models for preference voting of Katz and André et al.

		Katz		
		Traditionalism	Sophistication	Mobilization
André et al.	Resource		X	
	Identity			
	Proximity			X

X = Model of Katz and André et al. resemble each other.

3.2 Expectations[34]

3.2.1 The resource model

The resource model, which resembles Katz's sophistication explanation, builds on Marsh's (1985) idea that a preference vote should be seen as a more sophisticated type of vote. While party labels can 'act as brand names from which rationally ignorant and risk-averse voters can readily infer information about the issue positions and policy commitment of all candidates a party endorsed' (André et al., 2012, p. 296), such party labels do not help when a voter has to distinguish between candidates from the same party. Voting for a specific candidate[35] therefore requires more knowledge. In order to cast a preference vote a voter needs to have information about the candidates from which he or she can choose. This implies that the voter needs to have resources available to make the right choice. Therefore, it can be expected that voters who have higher education levels or who are more politically interested or involved are more likely to cast a preference vote. Indeed, political interest has a positive effect on the chances of casting a preference vote (André et al., 2012, 2013; Van Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2012). Education has a positive effect in the Netherlands (Van

[34] In order to not end up with a long list of hypotheses, hypotheses within a certain category will be grouped. In table 3.2 (on page 88) an overview of the hypotheses is given, together with the (specific) variables which are used to test these hypotheses.

[35] Or, when voting for a candidate is mandatory: voting for another candidate than 'simply' the first one on the list.

Holsteyn & Andeweg, 2012), but in Belgium higher educational levels alone seem to be insufficient to make a difference. In Belgium, specific political knowledge or interest is thus necessary (André et al., 2012, 2013).

> **Hypothesis 3.1:** If a voter has more resources available he or she is more likely to cast a preference vote than a voter with fewer resources.

3.2.2 The identity model

The identity model assumes that voters are more likely to cast a vote for candidates who belong to the same social group. In particular members of social groups that are traditionally underrepresented in parliament are more likely to cast a preference vote for a member of their own social group (André et al., 2013). Sharing a sociodemographic characteristic can serve as a heuristic for voters to cast such a preference vote for that candidate. Cutler (2002) shows that voters are more likely to cast a vote for a candidate if the sociodemographic distance[36] between the voter and candidate is smaller. Similar results are found by McDermott (2009), who shows that voters in US elections for the House of Representatives are more likely to cast a vote for candidates having the same group associations, although the effects of these group associations have become weaker over time. Second, casting a preference vote might be a strategic consideration for underrepresented groups to promote their interest and gain better descriptive representation (Mansbridge, 1999). Groups that are more likely to cast a preference vote are women, ethnic minorities and the younger and older age categories (André et al., 2013).

Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2012) found that in the Netherlands women are slightly more likely to cast a preference vote (28%) than men (24%) in the parliamentary elections between 1998-2006. In studies on Belgium, the effects of gender are not significant (André et al., 2012, 2013). There are not many studies that have addressed the effect of membership of an ethnic minority group on preference voting. André et al. (2013) include a predictor 'non-European origin' in their models, but in Belgium this predictor has no significant influence on whether voters cast a preference vote or not. However, when distinguishing between different types of preference votes, having a non-European origin is significant: there is a significant and positive relationship between this group and preference voting for other candidates than the list-puller. Conclusions about the effect of age are contradictive: Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2012) find a negative relationship, André et al. (2012) a positive relationship.

In addition, one might expect that voters from certain regions are more likely to cast a preference vote, because they feel underrepresented. In the Netherlands, for example, in some provinces one might be more inclined to cast a preference vote because one feels that the regional interest is not represented enough in 'The Hague'. Dutch MPs from 'peripheral'

[36] A term used by Cutler (2002: 469) to describe 'the degree of similarity between two persons - in this case, a voter and a candidate'.

provinces are more inclined to represent the interest of their own region, contact regional organizations and contact the government on regional interest than their colleagues from the Randstad[37] (Thomassen & Andeweg, 2004). This may be a reason for voters in there provinces to cast a preference vote, to increase the chances that their interests are represented[38].

> **Hypothesis 3.2:** A voter belonging to an underrepresented social group in parliament will be more likely to cast a preference vote than a voter from a social group that is overrepresented in parliament.

3.2.3 The proximity model

The proximity model assumes that a voter is more likely to cast a preference vote if the voter feels connected to the candidate. For example, party members would be more likely to cast a preference vote, because they could use a preference vote to support their preferred faction within the party (André et al., 2012). However, Marsh (1985, p. 372) argues that 'party attachment provides for more trust in a party and a greater willingness to permit [the party] to determine who is elected. On this interpretation, list voting is a sign of confidence in a party'. Still, according to André et al. (2012) party membership has a strong influence on the chances of casting a preference vote. In the Dutch case, however, Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2012) found no evidence that party membership has an influence on preference voting, nor did they find an effect for party identification. This is in contrast with findings for Finland where a negative effect was found (Karvonen, 2011b).

Members of interest groups are also more likely to cast a preference vote to support those candidates who advocate their particular concerns. The study by André et al. (2012) is the only study in which this relationship between casting a preference vote and interest group membership is tested. They found that interest group membership had a positive influence on the chances of casting a preference vote.

Another explanation for preference votes has to do with the relationship between urbanisation and the use of preference votes. This is different from the regional background of voters mentioned previously. For regional background one expects that voters living at a greater distance from the political centre, from either rural or urban regions, are more likely to cast a preference vote. However, both in the centre and in the periphery one would expect that voters from rural areas are more likely to cast a preference vote, because they tend to have stronger connections with candidates from their region (André et al., 2012). In 1985 Marsh had to conclude that there was a lack of cross-national clarity with regard to the urban-rural dimension. In some countries preference voting seemed to be an urban phenomenon while in others it was rural (1985, pp. 369–370). More recent work shows no

[37] Defined as the provinces of Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland and Utrecht (see Thomassen & Andeweg, 2004).

[38] The relevance of regional background of voters and candidates will be discussed at length in the next chapter (see section 4.4.2).

conclusive evidence either. Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2012) found no linear relationship between urbanization and casting a preference vote at national elections in The Netherlands.

The general idea behind the proximity model is that voters who feel closer to a (group of) candidate(s) are more likely to cast a preference vote.

> **Hypothesis 3.3:** Voters who feel closer to a particular (group of) candidate(s) are more likely to cast a preference vote than voters who do not feel close to a particular (group of) candidate(s).

3.2.4 Negative motivations: the effect of the first candidate on the list

So far, the explanations in the literature mainly focus on positive effects of both candidates and voters. Voters have certain resources available that enable them to make an informed decision to cast a preference vote, or voters are *attracted* by a character trait or other characteristic of the candidate they vote for. The preference vote therefore has a positive character; voters are pulled towards a candidate. However, a vote does not necessarily have to be a sign of support, although this is what is normally assumed in studies on voting behaviour (Catt, 1996). There is therefore little attention for possible negative motivations which (could) play a role in voting behaviour. There is one area in which negative motivations receive attention, namely when it comes to economic voting. The idea is that voters either reward or *punish* the government based on the economic situation (Duch & Stevenson, 2008).

In this section I consider a negative motivation for preference voting, based on an evaluation of the first candidate on the list. According to King (2002, pp. 4–6), leaders of political parties can either have a direct or an indirect effect on voters. If leaders have an indirect effect, they influence how voters evaluate the political party, which in turn influences the chances of voting for that party. A direct effect occurs when the leader evaluations directly influence the chances of voting for the party of the leader.

According to some authors, a direct effect of leaders of political parties can be observed in the Netherlands. Anker (1992, chapter 5) for example discusses push and pull effects of party leaders for the electoral fortune of their parties in the Dutch parliamentary elections of 1986 and 1989. By comparing the actual vote with the normal vote[39] he shows that when voters evaluate party leaders negatively or as unsympathetic, they are 'pushed' away from that party. In other words, out of those voters who evaluate a leader as unsympathetic, fewer voters actually cast a vote for the party of that leader than would be expected on the basis of the normal vote. On the other hand, when voters have more positive feelings towards the party leader, the reversed is visible. A larger number of voters actually vote for a party if they have high sympathy scores for the leader than would be

[39] The normal vote can be seen as a hypothetical situation in which election specific effects are filtered out. The normal vote thus represents a baseline election result.

expected on the basis of the normal vote: they are 'pulled' towards the party via the party leader. Similar results can be found in the work of Rosema (2004, 2006), who shows that voters are more likely to cast an insincere vote[40] when the leader of the voter's most positively evaluated party is negatively evaluated. In addition, if leaders of other parties than the most preferred party, are evaluated more positively compared to the leader of the most preferred party, the chance of an insincere vote increases[41].

What these studies show is that the evaluation of a party leader influences the electoral decision of a voter. Based on the work of Hirschman (1970) it is possible to see three strategies for voters who evaluate the leader of their preferred party negatively: exit, voice or loyalty. Voters could still vote for the list-puller despite the negative evaluation (stay loyal) or they could vote for another party (exit). The exit strategy fits the interparty competition. However, the last strategy (voice) may be a strategy that fits the intraparty competition. In this case a push effect for the list-puller could lead to an increase in the number of votes for other candidates. In the Netherlands, this would mean an increase in preference votes. Voters with negative feelings towards the list-puller, instead of voting for another *party*, would vote for another *candidate* within the party.

The voting behaviour for the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) in 2002 and 2003 might be an illustration of this effect. In 2002 the PvdA list was headed by Ad Melkert. Two months before the national elections local elections were held. On the election night of the local elections a debate was organized with the parties' national leaders to. Melkert - according to public opinion - acted as a 'poor loser' (Van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003, p. 46) after a large victory of newcomer Fortuyn in the city of Rotterdam. Melkert could not get rid of this image, remained one of the most unpopular leaders[42] and after a crushing defeat in the national elections of 2002 (the PvdA lost half of its seats) he resigned on election night (Irwin & Van Holsteyn, 2004; Van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003). The PvdA did not only lose many seats, many voters for the party cast a preference vote: 44.1 per cent. This was much more than the overall percentage of preference votes: 27.1.

Melkert was succeeded by Wouter Bos, who won an internal leadership election. Bos was seen as a 'new, young, dynamic and 'charismatic' leader' (Van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2004, p. 158) and 'emerged as the new star in Dutch politics and thereafter dominated the campaign' (Irwin & Van Holsteyn, 2004, p. 555). Under his leadership the party quickly recovered and, only eight months after the 2002 election when new (early) elections were

[40] Rosema defines a sincere vote as a vote for the party that is evaluated most positively by the voter (2006, p. 473). An insincere vote is a vote for another party than the one that is evaluated most positively.

[41] Van Wijnen (2000) also shows that candidate evaluations have an (increasing) impact on party voting, although his research was criticized for omitting important variables (i.e. the relationship between the evaluation of the party and the evaluation of the leader of a party) (Aarts, 2001). When party evaluations are taken into account, there is no increasing impact of evaluations of party leaders.

[42] Even before the elections, there were discussions within the party about replacing Melkert after the elections. There were even suggestions to withdraw Melkert and to put forward Wim Kok (at that time the prime minister) for another term as prime minister, in case the PvdA would win the elections (Koole, 2009).

held, the PvdA became the second largest party. In addition, only 17.1 per cent of the voters of the PvdA cast a preference vote. Whether this example is an exceptional case, or whether evaluations of the list-pullers have a more general influence on preference voting will be tested with the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 3.4:** If a voter, prior to the elections, gives lower evaluations to the first candidate (list-puller) on the list, he or she is more likely to cast a vote for another candidate, i.e. a preference vote.

However, this expectation suggests that a voter does not have any other options than voting for another candidate if he or she does not want to vote for the first candidate on the list. Of course, this is not the case for each electoral system. In Belgium voters have the option to cast a list vote. Thus, if a Belgian voter has a negative feeling towards the first candidate on the list, but no specific preference for another candidate on that list, the voter has another option: to cast a list vote. Therefore, I expect that in addition to hypothesis 3.4:

> **Hypothesis 3.5:** Hypothesis 3.4 only holds if the electoral system forces a voter to vote for a candidate, and not if the electoral system allows the voter to cast a list vote.

Table 3.2 Overview of expectations for the demand side

Model	Categories	H	Expectation
Resources	Education	3.1	+
	Political interest	3.1	+
	Internal efficacy	3.1	+
	Political knowledge	3.1	+
Traditionally underrepresented group	Age	3.2	+
	Women	3.2	+
	Region	3.2	+
	Non-western origin	3.2	+
Feeling closer towards a certain group of candidates	Urbanization	3.3	+
	Member political party	3.3	+
Negative motivations	Negative evaluation first candidate on the list	3.4/.3.5	+ (NL) ~ (BE)

Note: + positive effect on preference voting; ~ no effect on preference voting.

3.3 Methods and data

3.3.1 Methods and data for the Netherlands

The data for the analysis of the Dutch case come from the Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies (DPES)[43]. Different datasets were combined into one dataset for the analyses in this chapter. The starting point was the DPES integrated file 1970-2006 (Todosijevic et al.,

[43] For more information see: http://www.dpes.nl/.

2010), to which cases from the DPES 2010 and DPES 2012 were added[44]. In the 1970-2006 integrated file, not all variables from the original studies were included. However, some of the excluded variables were relevant for this study. Therefore, these variables were included again in the dataset for the years 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2006 for the analysis in this chapter. These variables were taken from the DPES 1998, DPES 2002/3 and DPES 2006.

With the constructed dataset two analyses were conducted. First, tot test hypothesis 3.4, I study the motivations respondents had for casting a preference vote for the election years 2002 until 2012. From the DPES of 2002 onwards respondents receive a question about their most important reason for casting a preference vote. One of the answer options is 'other reason' and if people gave that answer they were asked to describe their motivation in their own words. For these motivations two things are coded: 1) if that motivation contains a (negative) evaluation of the list-puller and 2) whether a reason is given to vote for the specific candidate he or she chose instead. Studies have shown that studying open answers might result in valuable results (see for example André et al., 2015; Van Holsteyn, 1994).

In the 1998 DPES the reason for casting a preference vote was asked in a slightly different way. In 1998 voters were asked if they voted for another candidate 1) because it was the first woman on the list, 2) the candidate was a well-known person or 3) for another reason. These reasons from the third category were coded in different categories, including categories that include a (negative) evaluation of the list-puller of the party. The results for the 1998 election will therefore be discussed separately.

Next, a logistic regression analysis was conducted. The dependent variable for this logistic regression analysis is whether a voter cast a preference vote (coded 1) or not (coded 0). Table 3.3 shows the percentage of respondents who said they cast a preference vote, compared with the actual percentage of preference votes. In general, the reported preference votes resemble the actual preference votes rather well. While there is a slight overrepresentation of voters who said they did cast a preference vote, the reported preference votes follow the trend of the actual preference votes.

A number of independent variables are included to test the hypotheses. These variables are education, political interest, whether the respondent thinks he or she is qualified for politics, political knowledge, age, gender, region, ethnicity, urbanisation and party membership (see table 3.2). Whether the respondent thinks he or she is qualified for politics is used to test the effect of internal political efficacy. In most waves of the DPES this variable is a scale made up of different questions. However, the qualified for politics question is the only question that was asked in all DPES between 1998 and 2012. In order to make the variable comparable between all studies, this is the only question used in the analysis. Furthermore, as control variables dummies are included for parties and election

[44] While in other parts of this dissertation the Dutch elections of 2017 are included in the analysis, at the time of writing this chapter the DPES 2017 was not yet available and therefore this election is not included in the analysis in this chapter.

Table 3.3 Reported and actual preference votes (the Netherlands)

Year	Reported preference votes	Actual preference votes
1998	23.5%	20.5%
2002	32.0%	27.1%
2003	25.6%	18.5%
2006	24.1%	22.8%
2010	15.9%	15.9%
2012	19.4%	19.0%
Total	23.0%	20.6%

Source: DPES 1970-2006 integrated file; DPES 2010; DPES 2012 (reported preference votes, unweighted); own calculations based on official election results (actual preference votes)

years. For parties a dummy is included indicating whether the party is a traditional or new party; research for Belgium has shown that voters for traditional parties cast more preference votes (Wauters et al., 2016)[45] [46]. In addition the number of candidates on the list of the party of choice is included. Research has shown that an increase in the number of candidates from which a voter can choose leads to a decrease in the likelihood of casting a preference votes, arguably since the larger the choice set the harder the decision for which candidate to vote (André & Depauw, 2017)[47]. With the exception of age and the number of candidates on a list, for all these variables dummies for the different categories are included. In appendix C.2 descriptive statistics for these variables are given. This appendix also shows the different answering categories for all variables for which dummies were created and which categories were used as reference category.

To test hypothesis 3.4 measurements of the evaluation of the list-puller are included. Based on the evaluations of parties and political leaders given by the respondents two variables were created to test the effect of leadership evaluations on preference voting. The variables 'sympathy score for party' and 'sympathy score for leader' contain the evaluations of the party and of the leader from the political party for which the respondent voted respectively. In appendix C.1 an overview is given for the parties included in the analysis, and the name of the list-puller. In the DPES from 2006 and 2012 the evaluation scores were asked in the wave after the elections. To make sure that the evaluation scores are not influenced by the behaviour of the respondents we are interested in (casting a preference vote or not), these two elections are excluded from this analysis. The first variable that is included in the analysis to test the leadership evaluation hypothesis (H3.4) is the evaluation score of the list-puller of the party a respondent voted for. A second variable was created containing the difference between the evaluation score of the list-puller and of the party for

[45] PvdA, VVD, CDA, D66, SGP, GPV and RPF are considered to be traditional parties. GroenLinks, SP, ChristenUnie, LPF, PVV and Partij voor de Dieren are considered to be new parties.

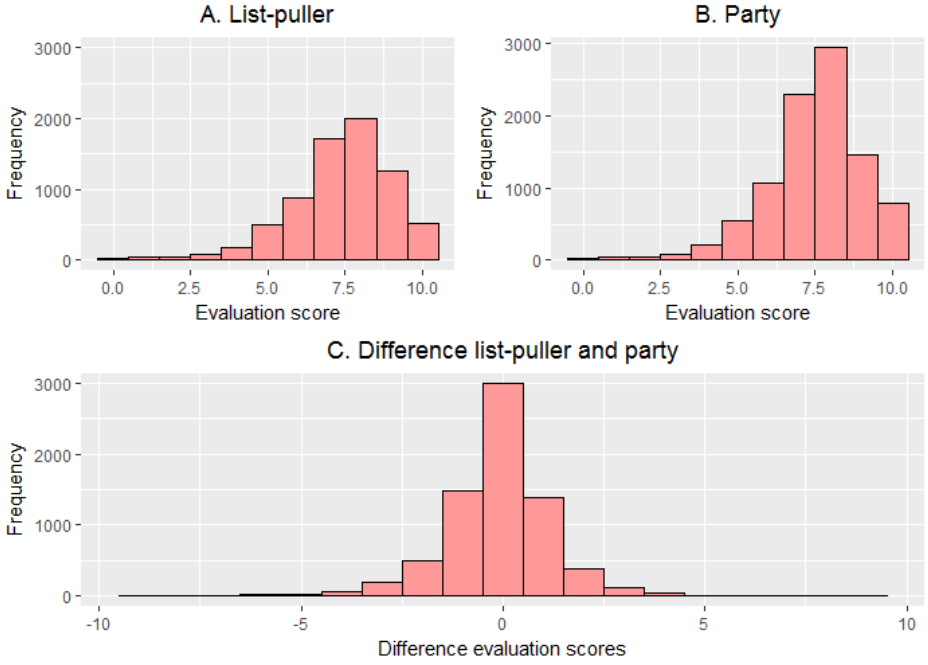
[46] Other party effects will be discussed in the next chapter.

[47] André and Depauw (2017) use the number of candidates of all parties for which a voter can vote, but since the starting point of this dissertation is that a candidate choice comes after party choice, I only count the number of candidates on the list of the party for which a respondent voted.

which the respondent voted. If this variable takes a positive value this means that a respondent gives the leader of a party a better evaluation than the party itself. A negative value means that the respondent gave the list-puller a lower evaluation than the party. In the case that the respondent has evaluated the list-puller and the party the same this variable takes the value 0.

The distributions of these evaluation scores are shown in figure 3.1. The distributions of the scores for the party and list-puller are negatively skewed. This is not surprising, since the scores are for the party for which the respondent voted. Still, we see that both the evaluation score of the party and the list-puller cover the entire range (from very unsympathetic (0) to very sympathetic (10))[48]. The party for which a respondent voted on average receives an evaluation score of 7.5 (SD 1.58). The list-puller of the party for which a respondent voted receives on average an evaluation score of 7.4 (SD 1.67). While we know that the evaluation of a party and the evaluation of its leader are highly correlated (see for example Aarts, 2001), some voters gave different scores to a party and the leader. The average difference between the evaluation score of the party and the list-puller is -0.12 (SD 1.44); of the respondents 41 per cent gave the party and the list-puller of that party for which he or she voted the same score.

Figure 3.1 Distribution evaluation scores list-puller, party and difference



[48] Up to and including the 2003 study, respondents were asked to evaluate parties and leaders on a scale ranging from 0 until 100. These scores were recoded to a 0-10 scale (see for further information and coding scheme Todosijevic et al., 2010, pp. 98–112).

3.3.2 Methods and data for Belgium

For Belgium motivations for a vote for a specific candidate of respondents in the PartiRep 2014 election study will be analysed (Deschouwer et al., 2015; PARTIREP, 2014). In this study respondents were asked for which candidates they voted if they did not cast a list vote. In the Belgian federal elections of 2014, 57 per cent of the voters did cast (at least one) preference vote. In the PartiRep Election Study slightly fewer respondents said they did cast a preference vote: 50 per cent. Belgian voters may cast multiple candidate votes. If respondents did cast more than one preference vote, they were asked to motivate the vote for their most preferred candidate. Again, for these motivations two things are coded: 1) whether that motivation contains a (negative) evaluation of the candidate at the top of the list and 2) whether a reason is given for the candidate who is chosen instead. It is important to notice that in the Belgian system not all voters have the option to cast a vote for the party leader, since they can only participate in one district[49]. However, it is not necessarily the effect of the electoral leader we are interested in, but the effect of the first candidate on the list. Therefore, the motivations will be studied to see if negative evaluations are given with respect to the *first candidate* on the list of the party the respondent could vote for.

Subsequently, a logistic regression model was conducted to test which voters are more likely to cast a preference vote. Unfortunately, the PartiRep election study contains no questions about evaluations for leaders of political parties. Therefore, it is not possible to also test hypothesis 3.4 and 3.5 using a logistic regression model based on the PartiRep data[50]. However, it is possible to test the first three hypotheses.

The dependent variable refers to whether a respondent did cast a preference vote. Note that a preference vote in Belgium is different than in the Netherlands. Since voters in Belgium have the option to cast a list vote all votes on a candidate are considered as preference votes. Whether a respondent did cast one or multiple preference votes does not make a difference for our purpose. Thus, the dependent variable measures whether a respondent did cast a vote for at least one candidate.

Several independent variables are included: education, political interest, political knowledge, age, gender and party membership (see also table 3.2)[51]. In addition also for Belgium the number of candidates on the party list and whether the respondent did cast a vote for a traditional or newer party is included[52]. In appendix C.2 the answer categories for the different variables are shown; some descriptive statistics are included as well.

The absence of evaluation scores for list-pullers / political leaders in the PartiRep 2014 election study is unfortunate, but not fatal for the analysis of this chapter. The dataset

[49] In general, the party chairman is considered the electoral leader (see also Wauters et al., 2016, p. 7).

[50] In other election studies for Belgium which are known / available to me, no evaluation scores for political leaders are available either.

[51] Since I use excising election studies in this chapter for Belgium and the Netherlands, it was not possible to create two identical models for Belgium and the Netherlands. This may be considered to be a shortcoming, but it is more useful to have slightly different models than two identical models with fewer variables.

[52] Coded as traditional parties are: CD&V, open VLD, sp.a, PS, MR and cdH.

is very valuable in the sense that motivations for preference votes are well documented, which makes it possible to test the fourth and fifth hypotheses of this chapter. Moreover, based on the data collected for the experiment described in the previous chapter it is possible to conduct a logistic regression analysis which resembles the one conducted for the Netherlands. However, since this experiment was conducted only in Flanders and was not designed to be a comprehensive study on real election behaviour, we have to be careful in drawing conclusions from the analysis.

A logistic regression analysis was performed using all respondents from the first and second group of the experiment; i.e. those respondents who had the option to cast a list vote. The dependent variable for this analysis is whether a voter did cast a preference vote. The independent variables which are included are: education, political interest, whether the respondents thinks he or she is qualified for politics, age, gender, party membership, whether the respondent did cast a vote for an traditional party, the evaluation score for the list-puller and the difference between the evaluation score for the list-puller and the party.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Preference voting in the Netherlands

In the Dutch elections held between 1998 and 2012 on average approximately 20 per cent of the voters cast a preference vote. Preference voting in the Netherlands peaked in 2002, when 27.1 per cent of the voters cast a preference vote (see also section 1.2)[53]. Table 3.4 shows the reasons respondents of the DPES gave for casting such a preference vote. The most important reason to cast a preference vote is that the candidate is a woman. For each election approximately one third of the preference votes are cast because the candidate voted for is a woman. The fact that a candidate comes from the same region is for many voters another important reason to cast a preference vote[54]. In the election study of 1998 the question consisted of fewer categories, and this may explain why in 1998 the percentage of voters who said their reason was that they knew the candidate personally was much higher. Since the question in the study of 1998 only had two predefined answers (see section 3.3.1) and 'did know the candidate personally' was one of them, the higher percentage might be explained by more methodological reasons. For a quarter of voters the qualities or the interest the candidate represented was an important reason to cast a preference vote. All these reasons suggest a 'pull' mechanism: the candidate for whom the preference vote is cast is in one way or another interesting and attractive for the voter.

It is interesting to see how these reasons for casting a preference vote relate to the

[53] In the 2017 election, which is not included in the analysis in this chapter, this 'record' was almost broken, when 27.0 per cent of the voters cast a preference vote.

[54] Whether this is true for all voters, or for a (geographically) specific part of the electorate will be discussed later in this chapter, when the results of the logistic regression analysis are presented. Moreover, the issue of regional candidates will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, see section 4.4.2.

Table 3.4 Reasons for casting a preference vote

Reason	1998[1]	2002	2003	2006	2010	2012
It is a woman	31%	33%	41%	30%	35%	37%
It is a man		3%	2%			
Someone I know personally	23%	3%	7%	4%	5%	4%
Someone who represents certain interests	6%	8%	7%	12%	5%	8%
Someone from this neighbourhood/region[2]	10%	7%	12%	9%	14%	19%
It is a good candidate	18%	25%	17%	22%	11%	8%
He/she is from an ethnic minority			1%			
Negative about first candidate	11%					
Other reason	5%	20%	15%	23%	30%	24%
Total (N)	353	476	307	519	315	270

[1] In 1998 some respondents gave multiple reasons, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100.
[2] This category combines answers with any reference to a specific area the candidate comes from. This can be the same neighbourhood, municipality, a wider region or province.
Source: DPES 1970-2006 integrated file; DPES 1998; DPES 2010; DPES 2012.

Table 3.5 Gender and casting a preference vote because the candidate is a woman

	Gender		
Reason for preference vote	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Other reason	87.7%	60.7%	72.6%
It is a woman	12.3%	39.3%	27.4%
Total (N)	1197	1511	2708

χ^2 (1) = 245.533, p < .001; φ = .301

Table 3.6 Gender and casting a preference vote because the candidate is a man

	Gender		
Reason for preference vote	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Other reason	98.2%	96.5%	97.2%
It is a man	1.8%	3.5%	2.8%
Total (N)	331	452	783

χ^2 (1) = 2.087, p < .149; φ = .052
Period: 2002-2003.

Table 3.7 Region and casting a preference votes because someone is from this region

	Region				
Reason for preference vote	**North**	**East**	**West**	**South**	**Total**
Other reason	82.3%	91.0%	96.6%	83.9%	90.8%
Someone from this neighbourhood	17.7%	9.0%	3.4%	16.1%	9.2%
Total (N)	361	565	1199	583	2708

χ^2 (3) = 112.513, p < .001; φ = .204

variables presented in the hypotheses in this chapter, to get an idea of how plausible the hypotheses are. Because of data limitations, it is not possible to relate all the answer options to one of the variables, but three reasons can be linked to the variables. First, it is possible to check whether there is a relationship between gender and the reason 'It is a woman' (table 3.5). Almost 40 per cent of female voters (who cast a preference vote), said they cast a preference vote for a candidate because that candidate was a woman. For male voters, this percentage was much lower (12 per cent). This relationship is statistically significant, and represents a medium effect. In table 3.6 the relationship between gender and casting a preference vote because the candidate is a man is shown. The table shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between both variables. These two findings support the idea behind hypothesis 3.2, as women are underrepresented in politics and underrepresented groups are, according to the hypothesis, more likely to cast a preference vote.

We now look at the relationship between the region and stating 'someone from this neighbourhood' as the reason for casting a preference vote (see table 3.7). We would expect that, based on the logic behind H3.3, voters from the western region are less likely to cast a preference vote based on this reason than voters from the other regions. This is indeed what the table shows, since out of the respondents from the west only 4.4 did report this reason, while in the north, west and south this reason was given by respectively 17.7, 9.0 and 16.1 per cent of the voters who cast a preference vote. This is a statistically significant, but relatively small effect.

A substantial number of respondents said they had other reasons to cast a preference vote, ranging from 5 per cent in 1998 to 30 in 2010 (see table 3.4). The reasons these voters gave were coded and analysed. For each motivation two things were coded: whether the motivation for the preference vote included a negative evaluation of the list-puller, and whether or not the voter gave a reason for voting for a specific other candidate instead.

In table 3.8 the results of the analysis of the motivations are reported, which shows that a substantial number of voters had negative reasons to cast a preference vote in each election, ranging from 4.2 per cent of the voters who cast a preference vote in 2003 to 9.4 per cent in 2010. For some voters the reason was simply that they disliked the list-puller or did not think the list-puller was a good candidate. Others said that the list-puller already received enough votes, so they voted for another candidate. The majority of these voters only gave the reason they did not vote for the list-puller. Some voters who explicitly mentioned they did not want to vote for the list-puller also gave a reason why they voted for the other candidate. However, this group was much smaller. Of those voters who did cast a preference vote motivated by negative evaluations of the list-puller, approximately one out of every five respondents gave a reason why they did cast a vote for the other candidate.

The estimate of the percentage of negative preference votes is probably conservative, for several reasons. Since not all respondents answered the open part of the question, it might be that other respondents were also motivated by negative evaluations of the list-

Table 3.8 The negative preference vote

Year	Against list-puller without motivation for other candidate	Against list-puller with motivation for other candidate	Total
2002	4.8	1.4	6.2
2003	3.9	0.3	4.2
2006	4.9	1.1	6.0
2010	6.8	2.5	9.4
2012	7.0	0.7	7.7
Total	5.3	1.3	6.6

Source: DPES 1970-2006 integrated file; DPES 2010; DPES 2012

puller, but gave their secondary reason for voting for another candidate in the first question. This interpretation is supported by what is found for 1998. In the 1998 DPES respondents only got two options in the multiple choice question, and as a result many more respondents answered the open question. For 11 per cent of the respondents who gave a reason for casting a preference vote the evaluation of the list-puller was the reason for casting a vote for another candidate (see table 3.4). This percentage is higher than any percentage in table 3.8, and fits the suggestion that the estimates in table 3.8 are rather conservative. The conclusion is that in the Netherlands, given the obligatory candidate vote, a small part of what is called a preference vote is in fact a vote against the list-puller or motivated by a negative evaluation of the list-puller, rather than a vote in favour of the other candidate.

In table 3.9 the relationship between the evaluation of the list-puller and casting a preference vote is further explored. The table shows how respondents in the DPES evaluated the list-puller of the party they voted for on a scale ranging from 0 (very unsympathetic) to 10 (very sympathetic) and whether they cast a vote for the list-puller or a preference vote. It shows, in line with previous results, that voters who gave the list-puller lower evaluations are more likely to cast a preference vote. Out of those who give their party's list-puller an evaluation score below 7, more than 30 per cent cast a preference vote. This is much more than among voters who evaluate the list-puller with the maximum score. Within this group only 14 per cent cast a preference vote.

The same analysis was conducted per party (results not shown here). In general, these separate analyses did not show different results. For the biggest parties (CDA, VVD, PvdA and D66) the results were similar and also highly significant. However, some

Table 3.9 Evaluation score list-puller and casting a preference vote

	Evaluation score											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
LP	56	75	70	65	62	68	68	76	80	84	86	77
PV	44	26	30	35	38	32	32	25	20	16	14	23
Total (N)	18	47	53	80	175	500	883	1707	1994	1262	511	7230

LP = Vote for list-puller; PV = Preference vote. χ^2 (10) = 168.020, $p < .001$
Source: DPES 1970-2006 integrated file; DPES 2010; DPES 2012.

differences should be noted. For some parties the effect was visible, but not significant (GroenLinks, ChristenUnie). For four parties there did not seem to be a negative correlation between the evaluation of the list-puller and whether voters cast a preference vote: PVV, LPF, SP and SGP[55]. Three of these parties are seen as populist parties (PVV, LPF and SP) (Hakhverdian & Koop, 2007), often characterized as parties with strong leaders (e.g. Taggart, 2004, p. 276), which might explain the absence of any effect in these parties.

In the remaining part of this section the results of the logistic regression models are discussed in order to see if the relationship between the evaluation of the list-puller and casting a preference vote remains intact when included in a model with other explanatory factors. Table 3.10 shows the result of the logistic regression model for the elections between 1998 and 2010[56]. Ideally, political knowledge, party membership and ethnicity would also be included in this model, but these variables are not included in all DPES. Three additional models are therefore presented in appendix C.3 which each include one additional variable: with political knowledge (Table C.3, page 178), with ethnicity (Table C.4, page 179) and with party membership (Table C.5, page 180). All tables contain one model without (model 1) and one model with (model 2) the evaluation scores of the list-puller[57]. The interpretation of effect sizes based on a logistic regression table is not always straightforward. Therefore, for each independent variable the change in the predicted probability of casting a preference vote was calculated with the effects package for R (Fox, 2003) when that independent variable would take its minimum value and its maximum value, while keeping all other variables at their mean (for interval-ratio variables) or modus (for dummy variables).

Hypothesis 3.1 states that voters who have more resources available are more likely to cast a preference vote. Variables measuring the levels of education, political interest, internal efficacy and political knowledge are therefore included, and a positive effect for all these variables is expected. This expectation is empirically supported. Voters with higher levels of education are more likely to cast a preference vote. I estimate that those with the highest level of education have approximately an 11 percentage points higher predicted probability of casting a preference vote than those with the lowest level of education. Political interest also has a significant effect in the model presented in table 3.10. For voters with the highest level of political interest the predicted probability of casting a preference vote increases with 8 percentage points, compared to those with the lowest levels of political

[55] These differences could also have a methodological reason, since there are fewer observations for these smaller parties. While 22 combinations are possible, many cells for these parties have no observations and a low expected count, which is problematic. Therefore, the analysis was also redone by making a dummy of the evaluation scores (with an evaluation score of 6 as cut-off point). This did not make a difference in the results.

[56] The elections of 2006 and 2012 are not included, see also section 3.3.1.

[57] In this section primarily the results of the models in table 3.10 will be discussed, complemented by the results of the three specific variables in the models from the appendix. The effects of the variables in the appendix also presented in table 3.10 will only be mentioned if there are notable differences between the model presented in this chapter and in the appendix. If not, the reader may assume there are no differences.

Table 3.10 Preference voting in the Netherlands

	Model 1		**Model 2**	
(Constant)	-1.742***	(0.300)	-1.304***	(0.342)
Education (Ref. = Elementary)				
(Lower) Vocational	0.220	(0.172)	0.234	(0.177)
Secondary	0.275	(0.168)	0.323	(0.172)
Middle level vocational, higher level secondary	0.571***	(0.162)	0.614***	(0.166)
Higher level vocational, University	0.650***	(0.156)	0.695***	(0.161)
Political interest (Ref. = 0 (Low))				
1	-0.081	(0.186)	-0.016	
2	0.133	(0.190)	0.195	(0.194)
3	0.287	(0.193)	0.374	(0.198)
4 (High)	0.429*	(0.205)	0.568**	(0.211)
Qualified for politics (Ref. = fully disagree)				
Disagree	0.145	(0.084)	0.177*	(0.086)
Agree	0.258**	(0.097)	0.289	
Fully agree	0.598**	(0.173)	0.630***	(0.175)
Age	-0.010***	(0.002)	-0.008***	(0.002)
Woman	0.386***	(0.067)	0.378***	(0.068)
Living outside *Randstad*	0.130	(0.074)	0.139	
Urbanization (Ref. = Very strongly urban)				
Strongly urban	-0.301**	(0.105)	-0.323**	(0.107)
Mildly urban	-0.303**	(0.113)	-0.326**	(0.115)
Hardly urban	-0.318**	(0.115)	-0.344**	(0.116)
Not urban	-0.190	(0.122)	-0.213	
Candidates on list	0.010**	(0.003)	0.010***	(0.003)
Party old	0.135	(0.114)	0.070	(0.116)
Evaluation score list-puller			-0.101***	(0.023)
Evaluation score list-puller - evaluation score party			-0.213***	(0.027)
-2LL	5986.856		5809.554	
Cox and Snell's R2	0.049		0.079	
Nagelkerke R2	0.074		0.118	
N	5697		5697	

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Standard errors in parentheses. Election dummies are included in model, but not presented here. The elections of 2006 and 2012 are excluded from the model.
Source: DPES 1970-2006 integrated file; DPES 1998; DPES2002/03; DPES 2010;.

interest. However, in only one of the six models in the appendix the effect is also significant. Therefore, the support for the expectation that political interest has a positive influence on preference voting in the Netherlands is not very strong. The effect for internal efficacy, i.e. whether a voter considers him- or herself qualified for politics, is approximately of the same size as the effect of education. Those who fully agree that they are qualified for politics have a 12 per cent higher predicted probability of casting a preference vote than those who fully disagree with that statement. The effect of political knowledge is smaller, but the effect is statistically significant: those with the highest level of knowledge have an increased chance of 8 percentage points to cast a preference vote compared to those with the lowest level of knowledge. These are quite large effects, given the fact that approximately 20 per cent of the Dutch voters cast a preference vote. The resource hypothesis s therefore convincingly supported by the data.

According to hypothesis 3.2 underrepresented groups are more likely to cast a preference vote. For age, we indeed find that younger voters are more likely to cast a preference vote. In addition we expect that women, voters coming from another part of the country than the *Randstad* and voters with a non-Dutch origin are more likely to cast a preference vote. The expectation from hypothesis 3.2 is supported for women. Women have a 7 per cent higher predicted probability than men to cast a preference vote. Not all expectations are supported. For those living outside the *Randstad* the chances of casting a preference votes increases with 2 percentage points. However, this finding is not statistically significant, although in most models the p-value is only slightly above the conventional .05 level[58]. In addition, voters with a non-Dutch background are not significantly more likely to cast a preference vote. For those with a non-western background the coefficient in the model is even negative, suggesting that they are less likely to cast a preference vote. Yet, this finding is only based on only one edition of the DPES, and further research on the use of preference votes by ethnic minorities is necessary. Overall the hypothesis that traditionally underrepresented groups are more likely to cast a preference vote is empirically supported.

We also expect that voters who had close 'contact' or at least are more familiar with candidates are more likely to cast a preference vote (hypothesis 3.3). Therefore, we expect that those living in rural areas are more likely to cast a preference vote because the chance that they come in contact with a candidate from their neighbourhood is higher. With regard to this impact or urbanisation we find something else than expected. It seems that voters living in the most urban and the most rural areas are more likely to cast a preference vote. Furthermore, we expect that party members have a higher chance of casting a preference vote, based on the assumption that they have more contacts within the party and are more likely to know a candidate. The probability that members of a political party cast a

[58] It should be noted that a further exploration of which voters outside the *Randstad* are more likely to cast a preference vote (results not presented here) shows that, especially those in the North and South of the country are more likely to cast a preference votes. Voters in the east of the country are not significantly more likely to cast a preference vote than those living in the *Randstad*.

preference vote increases by 6 percentage points, compared to the probability of a voter who is not a member of a party. However, we should be careful with drawing this conclusion, since the coefficient is slightly above the .05 significance level in model 1 and the significance level is just below the .05 level in model 2 (see table c.5). The evidence for hypothesis 3.3 is therefore not very strong.

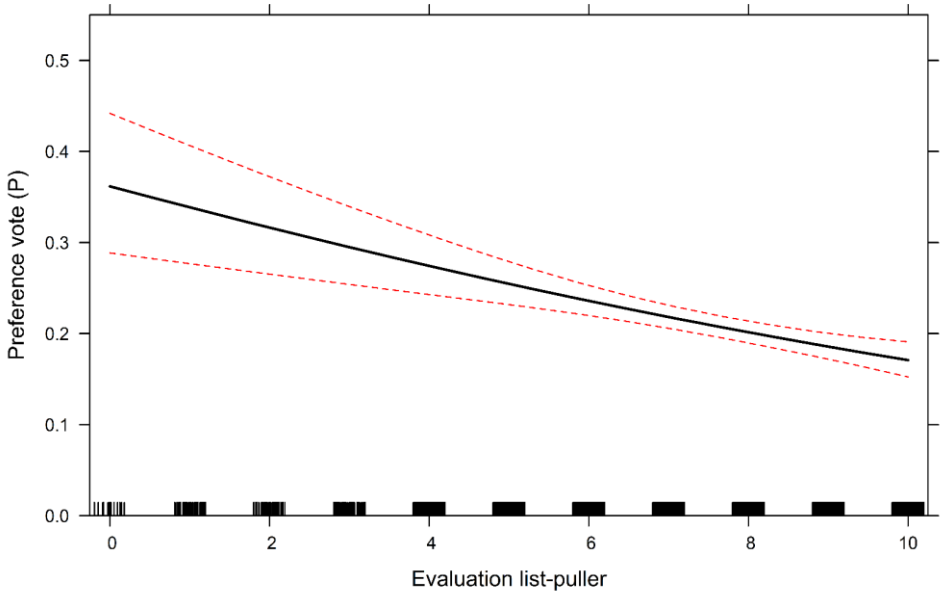
The models contain two control variables, one for the number of candidates on the party list and one for separating established from newer parties. Since they are control variables we have to be cautious to causally interpret them, but the length of the list seems to have a very small positive effect on preference voting, contrary to what was expected. The expectation was that too much choice would let voters to abstain from casting a preference vote. Instead, the result seems to suggest that more choice leads to higher probabilities of casting a preference vote. However, the effect is not significant in all models and is only very small. With respect to party age, voters for traditional parties are indeed more likely to cast a preference vote (an increase of 4 per cent), but this effect is neither statistically significant nor consistent across all models.

In each table a second model is presented as well which includes the affect or evaluation score a voter gave the list-puller of the party he or she voted for, and the difference between the evaluation score of the party and the list-puller. The inclusion of the two evaluation variables results in a significant improvement of the model ($\chi^2 = 201.720$, df = 2, $p < .001$)[59]. In addition, the inclusion of the evaluation scores hardly has an effect on the other variables included in the model. In all models the two evaluation variables are highly statistically significant, and for both variables the effect is also substantial. The effect of the evaluation score of the list-puller is also presented in figure 3.2. The figure shows the effect of the evaluation score of the list-puller on the probability to cast a preference vote, when all other variables remains at their mean or (for categorical variables) at their modal value. The difference between the evaluation of the list-puller and the party is kept constant at 0 in this figure, because that is the only score on the difference variable that allows the evaluation of the list-puller variable to take all possible values between 0 and 10. This figure shows quite a substantial effect. Other things being equal, there is a clear drop in the probability of casting a preference vote of almost 25 percentage points, moving from a very negative or unsympathetic to a very positive or sympathetic evaluation of the list-puller.

In addition, the difference between the evaluation score of the list-puller and the party also has a significant and substantial effect. Using the 'divide by four rule' (see Gelman & Hill, 2007, p. 82), the maximum decline of the probability of casting a preference vote is 4.5 per cent if the difference between the two evaluation scores increases with one point on the evaluation scale (meaning that the list-puller is evaluated relatively better). The effect of the difference between the evaluation scores is plotted in figure 3.3. The effect is shown for the range from -4 (the evaluation score of the list-puller is 4 points below the evaluation

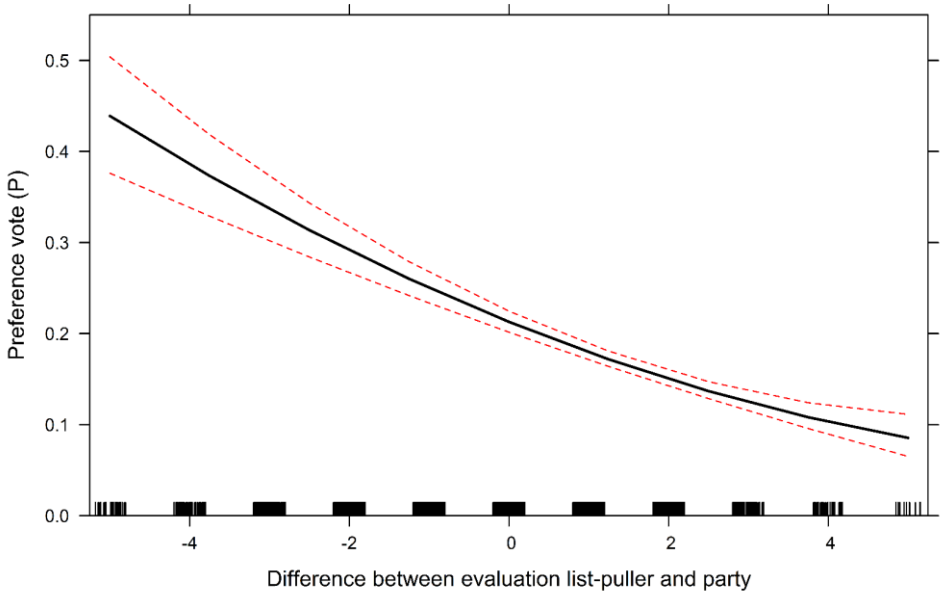
[59] The models presented in the appendix also show a significant improvement.

Figure 3.2 Effect evaluation list-puller



Note: the variable 'difference evaluation party & list-puller' was set to 0.

Figure 3.3 Effect difference between evaluation list-puller and party



score of the party) until 4 (the evaluation score of the list-puller is 4 points above the evaluation score of the party). Within this range the probability of casting a preference vote drops with approximately 25 percentage points. Given these large effects, both figures confirm that the results presented in table 3.8 indeed may be conservative. I argued that the results presented there might be conservative, because maybe not all voters who cast a preference vote for another candidate because of a negative evaluation of the list-puller actually said this was their reason for casting a preference vote, given the question that was asked. Since the differences between the percentages presented in table 3.8 and in the regression models are so large, it seems likely that the negative preference vote is more common than can be seen in table 3.8.

These two effects again show that the evaluation of the list-puller of a party impacts the probability of casting a preference vote (in line with hypothesis 3.4). This finding may not be extremely surprising, but it has important implications if a voter can only vote for a candidate, as is the case in the Netherlands. However, before discussing these and other implications, the results for Belgium will be presented.

3.4.2 Preference voting in Belgium

Of the respondents in the 2014 PartiRep election study 628 gave a motivation for their vote for a specific candidate. This was approximately one third of the respondents who participated in the study and half of the respondents who said they cast a vote in the federal elections. From these 628 respondents only 5 (0.2%) mentioned the first candidate on the list in their motivation to vote for another candidate[60]. These respondents said they would not vote for the first candidate because they did not like the first candidate on the list. Four of these respondents said they therefore randomly picked another candidate and one respondent gave an additional reason for the choice for the other candidate. Thus in Belgium the number of voters who cast a preference vote as a result of a negative evaluation of the candidate on top of the list is much lower than in the Netherlands. This does not mean that all preference votes in Belgium are pure, personalized preference votes. Table 3.11 shows what was most important for respondents when they voted: the party or the candidate. For most respondents the party is much more important than the candidates, even if he or she voted for a candidate. In the next section these results are discussed, thereby reflecting on hypothesis 3.5.

The results of the logistic regression model for Belgium, presented in table 3.12, show a different picture than the results for the Netherlands. With regard to the first hypothesis, on the basis of which we expect that higher education, better political knowledge and higher levels of political interest increase the chances of casting a preference

[60] If this percentage would have been higher, it would have been interesting to perform an additional analysis to see whether there was a difference between lists where the political leader headed the list or where other candidates headed the list. But since only 0.2 per cent of the respondents mentioned the list-puller in their motivation, it is not very interesting to make this distinction: such negative motivations clearly do not play a role in the Belgian system.

Table 3.11 Party vote versus candidate vote (Belgium)

Candidate or party?	List vote	Preference vote	Total
0 - Only candidate(s) matter(s)	1.6%	8.5%	5.0%
1	0.4%	2.2%	1.3%
2	0.7%	3.1%	1.9%
3	0.9%	4.5%	2.6%
4	0.6%	4.0%	2.3%
5	8.4%	16.6%	12.5%
6	3.8%	6.7%	5.2%
7	11.9%	12.8%	12.4%
8	23.1%	19.0%	21.1%
9	9.8%	7.7%	8.8%
10 - Only the party matters	38.7%	14.9%	26.9%
N	687	673	1360

Source: PartiRep election study 2014 (PARTIREP, 2014). The question was (translated to English): What has been the most important factor in determining your vote: the candidate(s) or the party? You can answer on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that only the candidate(s) was (were) important and 10 means that only the party was important.

vote, the evidence is mixed. All variables have an effect in the expected direction, but they are not all significant. Education and political interest have a small and positive, but no significant effect. Political interest is significant: for each step on the scale from 0 to 10 the chances of casting a preference vote increases with approximately one per cent.

For the second hypothesis fewer indicators are included compared to the model for the Netherlands. The PartiRep dataset did not contain information about a candidate's origin (a further discussion of this issue will follow in the final section of this chapter). While according to the model women are more likely to cast a preference vote, this effect is not only smaller than in the Netherlands but also not significant. This might have to do with the Belgian regulations for gender equality. On each list an equal number of men and women should be presented (in case of an uneven number of candidates there may be a difference of one) and the top two places of the list should be occupied by one man and one woman. Despite these rules women are still underrepresented in parliament. So based on the logic behind the identity model we would still expect that women are more likely to cast a preference vote. In contrast to the Netherlands, older people in Belgium are more likely to cast a preference vote.

The proximity model assumes that members of political parties are more likely to cast a preference vote, which is supported by the analysis. Party members are almost three times more likely to cast a preference vote than voters who are not a member of a political party.

Finally, the two control variables show the same direction as in the Netherlands. The number of candidates has a positive effect on casting a preference vote, but is not significant. In line with what was expected, voting for a traditional party strongly increases the chances of casting a preference vote.

In table 3.13 the results of the second logistic regression analysis are presented, based on data collected for the experiment in the previous chapter. What is interesting is that the

Table 3.12 Preference voting in Belgium

	Model 1	
(Constant)	-2.092***	(0.042)
Education (Ref. = Low)		
Middle	0.356	(0.233)
High	0.471	(0.244)
Political interest	0.047*	(0.024)
Political knowledge (Ref. = 0 - Low)		
1	-0.126	(0.173)
2	0.044	(0.177)
3	0.141	(0.196)
4 - High	0.125	(0.264)
Age	0.011**	(0.004)
Woman	0.200	(0.118)
Party member	1.035***	(0.235)
Candidates on list	0.012	(0.008)
Party old	0.750***	(0.119)
-2LL	1784.005	
Cox and Snell's R2	.070	
Nagelkerke R2	.093	
N	1358	

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Standard errors in parentheses.
Source: PartiRep election study 2014 (PARTIREP, 2014)

Table 3.13 Preference voting in Belgium including evaluation scores

	Model 1		**Model 2**	
(Constant)	0.233	0.357	0.078	0.703
Education (Ref. = Low)				
Middle	-0.229	0.292	-0.230	0.295
High	-0.368	0.319	-0.330	0.321
Political interest (Ref. = Not interested)				
Somewhat interested	0.067	0.283	0.068	0.287
Highly interested	-0.254	0.392	-0.281	0.400
Qualified for politics (Ref. = fully disagree)				
Disagree	0.206	0.297	0.219	0.299
Agree	0.775**	0.342	0.798**	0.345
Fully agree	0.420	0.473	0.440	0.476
Age	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000
Woman	-0.054	0.239	-0.028	0.242
Party member	-0.157	0.346	-0.148	0.356
Party old	0.287	0.241	0.284	0.243
Evaluation score list-puller			0.017	0.084
Evaluation score list-puller - evaluation score party			0.138	0.100
-2LL	440.050		436.014	
Cox and Snell's R2	.038		.049	
Nagelkerke R2	.051		.067	
N	338		338	

Note: *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001. Standard errors in parentheses.
Model improvement: $\chi^2 = 4.036$, df = 2, p = .133. Source: Own dataset.

results show that the evaluation of the list-puller and the difference between the evaluation of the party and list-puller for which was voted do not have a significant influence[61]. While this test is very conservative, it is in line with the findings presented earlier in this chapter: a negative evaluation of the list-puller has less influence in a system where it is possible to cast a list vote.

3.5 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter set out with the aim of explaining which voters cast a preference vote. Table 3.14 gives an overview of the expectations and the findings for Belgium and the Netherlands presented in this chapter.

Table 3.14 Summary of findings for chapter 3

Group	Categories	H	Exp.	Bel.	Net.
Resources	Education	3.1	+	~	++
	Political interest	3.1	+	++	+
	Internal efficacy	3.1	+		++
	Political knowledge	3.1	+	~	++
Traditionally underrepresented group	Age	3.2	+	+	-
	Women	3.2	+	~	++
	Region	3.2	+		~
	Non-western country	3.2	+		~
Feeling closer towards a certain group of candidates	Urbanization	3.3	+		M
	Party member	3.3	+	++	+
Influence negative evaluation first candidate on the list	-	3.4/.3.5	+ (NL) ~ (BE)	~	++

Note: ++ strong positive effect; + positive effect; ~ no effect; - negative effect

Current literature on voting behaviour works from the assumption that voters cast a vote for a specific party or candidate because they evaluate that party or candidate positively; they are pulled towards that party or candidate. For preference voting one might therefore expect that voters with more resources are more likely to cast a preference vote, because they are better qualified to decide which candidate best fits their interest. Furthermore, voters from underrepresented groups are more likely to cast a preference vote. By casting a preference vote for a candidate with a similar background, these voters might try to improve the representation of their group in parliament. Finally, those voters who have more contact or are more familiar with candidates are also expected to be more likely

[61] In the experiment the same lists were used for all respondents. This is different from the real-life situation in Belgium, where voters can only vote for a list within a district. In the experiment all respondents therefore could vote for the electoral leader, which is not true in real elections in Belgium. Therefore, the results based on this analysis should be seen as highly tentative.

to cast a preference vote. For the Netherlands, all these expectations are empirically supported (although not all as convincingly). For Belgium the evidence is somewhat mixed. While most of the hypotheses are supported in the current literature on preference voting in Belgium on the regional or municipal level, for the federal elections of 2014 this is not the case.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the results for Belgium and the Netherlands is the role gender plays in both countries. In the Netherlands, gender is one of the stronger predictors of preference voting while in Belgium it has no effect. There seems to be one obvious explanation for this difference. In Belgium rules determine that there should be a balance between male and female voters on party lists. In the Netherlands such rules do not exist, resulting in unbalanced lists (for most parties). Although in Belgium these rules do not result in a perfectly gender balanced parliament, this might reduce the incentive for women to cast a vote for a female candidate. In the Netherlands, where most lists are dominated by male candidates, voters – and especially female voters - might have a higher incentive to cast a vote for female candidates. Of course, based on the regression models in this chapter it is not possible to say whether women actually cast a preference vote for female candidates, but other results presented in this chapter seem to suggest they do. Even so, it will be interesting to see whether this difference is reflected in the support for female candidates in Belgium and the Netherlands. This is discussed in the next chapter, which discusses the candidates.

Two findings suggest further research is needed. First, with regard to the ethnic background of voters one important remark has to be made. In this chapter I was only able, based on existing survey research, to tentatively look at the influence of a voter's ethnic background on preference voting. Therefore it is difficult to draw strong conclusions about the existence of an effect for this group of voters and to identify what the precise effect would be. The ethnic preference vote deserves more attention in electoral research. Second, the contradicting effects of age in Belgium and the Netherlands are difficult to explain. Further research should focus on this topic to conduct a more fine grained analysis of the effect age has on preference voting.

While some differences exist, the analyses for both countries show that positive factors play a role in casting a preference vote. What this chapter also shows is that negative factors play an important role as well, which is an understudied aspect of voting behaviour (Catt, 1996). I specifically explored one negative factor: the evaluation of the list-puller. While research has shown that at the interparty level leaders could have a negative effect on the number of votes their party receives, I argue and show that, especially in a context in which the list vote is absent, list-pullers can also have an impact on the number of preference votes that are cast.

In the Netherlands votes for the list-puller are often primarily seen as a party vote. Only votes for other candidates are called preference votes. The assumption is that votes for other candidates reflect a specific choice for that individual candidate. However, analysing

the motivations voters gave for casting a preference vote, we can conclude that a substantial part of voters cast a preference vote because they do not want to vote for the list-puller. These preference votes can be seen as a 'negatively motivated preference vote'[62] and are not a deliberate preference vote for the other candidate, but rather an anti-vote against the list-puller.

The extent to which the phenomenon of a negatively motivated preference vote exists is difficult to tell. By studying the motivations of Dutch voters I estimate that there is a lower limit somewhere between 6 and 10 per cent of the preference votes. But the logistic regression analyses showed that the effect of the evaluation of the list-puller is quite large, and therefore this percentage might by conservative. What is sure is that it complicates, in the Dutch case, the distinction between a party vote and a preference vote. The existing literature assumes that a vote for any other candidate than the party leader is necessarily *not* a pure party vote[63]. This is for example visible in the distinction Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2010) make when they look at what comes first in the Dutch case: the party or the person. A vote for the list-puller in their operationalization can be: 1) a vote for the party (party above person), 2) a vote purely for the person (person above party) or 3) a vote for that person, within that party. For other candidates they only distinguish between the second and third option. This implies that a vote for another candidate than the list-puller from their perspective cannot be a pure party vote in the voter's mind. The results of the experiment on voting behaviour presented in the previous chapter challenges this (one of the findings is that the option to cast a list vote equally affects voting for the list-puller and voting for other candidates) and this is again confirmed by the analyses in this chapter.

This negatively motivated preference vote is absent in a situation where a voter can cast a list vote, such as in Belgium. In Belgium the negatively motivated preference vote is near to absent. When looking at the differences with regard to the electoral systems in Belgium and the Netherlands, it seems reasonable to expect that the option to cast a list vote is the cause of this difference. For Belgium, voters who do not have a specific preference for a candidate or who have a negative feeling towards the first candidate on the list and no other preferences, there is always the option to cast a list vote. Therefore, the distinction between a list vote on the one hand and a candidate vote on the other hand in Belgium is much clearer. It also more accurately grasps what a voter intends to 'say' with his or her vote. The fact that in the Netherlands there is one single district, while in Belgium there are

[62] In an earlier publication Nagtzaam and van Erkel (2017) called these preference votes 'preference votes without preference'. While for most of these votes it seems to be true that the voter does not have a specific preference for the candidate for which the vote was cast, the term negatively motivated preference vote seems more appropriate. It more accurately grasps of the reason behind the preference vote: a negative evaluation of the first candidate on the list.

[63] A pure party vote in this sense can be seen as a vote that, despite being cast for a candidate, has little to do with that individual candidate. The voter did not have a preference for that candidate, but only wanted to vote for the party of the candidate. That the voter voted for that candidate is only an effect of the fact that Dutch voters can only vote for a candidate and does not have the option to cast a list vote.

11 districts, could also have a potential influence on this result. After all, in Belgium not all voters have the option to cast a vote for the electoral leader of the party. Since these are the most visible candidates in election campaigns, it is also more likely that a voter has a (negative) opinion about that candidate. In the Netherlands all voters have the option to cast a vote for the leader of their preferred party. Thus, the Belgian districts could also be an explanation for the difference. However, this explanation is not very strong, since the effect did not appear on those lists where the electoral leader headed the list. It also seems unlikely that the fact that voting in Belgium is compulsory could explain this difference. It would even be more likely that the phenomenon occurs in a situation where voting is compulsory, since in such situations voters do not have the option to abstain if they do not want to vote for a specific candidate. Therefore, the conclusion should be that, although other differences between Belgium and the Netherlands exist, the list vote probably has a large influence on the extent to which negatively motivated preference votes exist.

In the Netherlands the direct effect of 'negatively motivated preference votes' (i.e. whether a candidate gets elected or not) might be limited. Parties after all also have a large influence in determining which candidates are elected. However, in electoral systems that are fully open and in which voters only have the option to cast a preference vote (e.g. Finland), such effects might be stronger. In addition to for example a primacy effect (Van Erkel & Thijssen, 2016), this might further influence the impact of the list-order has on the outcome of the election.

The results presented in this chapter have important implications. First, the results show that motivations for preference voting are not always (entirely) rational. This is in line with previous findings on preference voting (Van Erkel & Thijssen, 2016, p. 253). This has, as Van Erkel and Thijssen argue, important implications, since political parties use the electoral performance of individual candidates to decide whether to promote them to better list positions or other political functions (André, Depauw, Shugart, et al., 2017; Crisp et al., 2013; Folke et al., 2016; see also chapter 5 of this dissertation). However, if not all preference votes are true *preference* votes, the electoral success of a candidate becomes a less precise indicator of the actual popularity of a candidate. Therefore this phenomenon might disturb the influence voters have beyond the direct effect of casting a preference vote, namely influencing the composition of the parliament.

In addition, the results show that the debate on personalization is a very complex one. The current literature distinguishes between centralized personalization and decentralized personalization (Balmas et al., 2014). In the case of centralized personalization a leader of a political party or cabinet gains more power, while in the case of decentralized personalisation individual members other than the leader gain power. These are considered as two separate types of personalization, which are "more or less opposite processes" but nevertheless "can exist simultaneously". The results in this chapter indeed show that both processes can be connected. In addition, the results relate to the concept of 'negative personalization' (Pruysers & Cross, 2016): a strategy adopted by parties to attack leaders of

other parties. While Pruysers and Cross relate this concept to the interparty competition, negative personalization might have an impact on intraparty competition as well. How all these concepts relate to each other remains open for debate. Further research on what the concept of personalization actually entails is therefore needed.

The results presented in this chapter have implications for further research on preference voting[64]. For election studies in the Netherlands it would be advisable to at least include an answering category to the question about the reason for voters to cast a preference vote which includes the evaluation of the list-puller, to get a better understanding of the precise magnitude of the negatively motivated preference vote. It would be even better to extend the questions, if included, around the counterfactual thought experiment described by Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2010) and to also leave voters the option to call a 'preference vote' a vote for the party (thus giving both voters for the list-pullers and voters for other candidates the same options to describe their vote). For Belgium it would be interesting to include questions on evaluation of list-pullers or at least political leaders, to further study whether the phenomenon of negatively motivated preference voting is truly absent in Belgium.

[64] The conclusion (Chapter 0) contains a discussion with more practical implications of these findings for the Dutch electoral system.