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A Rational Choice for the Extreme Right

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A Rational Choice for the Extreme Right

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Abstract

In the Netherlands, as in other West European countries, the extreme right party is considered to be a leper in the political arena. Most members of the political elite assume that its political discourse can not be compared with that of the other political parties. Do voters also consider the extreme right to be outside the dominant political discourse? Or do they in fact view it as a 'normal' party whose attractiveness is determined using the same criteria on which the preference for other parties is based? To answer this question the comparability of party preference is tested with an unfolding scale analysis which provides us with a one-dimensional ideological space in which we find the Centrumdemocraten at the extreme right and Groen Links at the extreme left.

Party preference is determined by the same variables for all parties. The best predictors for party preference are party size and ideological proximity. There is a modest effect of ethnocentrism on party choice, but ethnocentrism is found to be a general indicator of party preference. The same is true for the interaction between nationalism and subjective social isolation.

The only party specific effect for extreme right party preference is the interaction between ethnocentrism and the extreme right position on the left-right scale. Thus, voters who consider themselves right wing and show a high degree of ethnocentrism are likely to have a higher preference for the Centrumdemocraten. It should be stressed, however, that this interaction effect is very small compared to that of party size and ideological proximity. Overall, then, the preference for the extreme right party in The Netherlands reflects a rational choice in which all parties are considered equally.

1 Introduction

On September 19 1996, a debate was held in Dutch parliament on the general policies of the government for the coming parliamentary year (1996-1997). One of the issues discussed was asylum seekers in the Netherlands. Mr. Bolkestein, party leader of the Conservative Liberal Party (vvd), mentioned the fact that 60% of the asylum seekers had no legal papers and that a significant

number of asylum seekers 'disappeared'. He was criticized by the leader of the Labour Party (PvdA), Mr. Wallage, for "fishing in troubled water". Mr. Bolkestein reacted as follows to this criticism: "Mr. Wallage accuses us of fishing in troubled water. I find this an unjustified insinuation. It is an insinuation which leaves a bad taste in our mouth. (...) It is a long-term problem which will not solve itself." To this Mr. Wallage responded that: "Mr. Bolkestein should be aware that on every occasion he selectively shops in the question of asylum rights, he will be treated in this way." At that moment the party leader of the extreme right (CD), Mr. Janmaat, interrupted and the following dialogue unfolds (Handelingen Tweede Kamer 1996: 145-146):

Janmaat (CD): We greatly appreciate the fact that Mr. Bolkestein signalizes these problems. We have signalized them a while before Mr. Bolkestein. The difference between VVD and CD, however, is that the VVD is a governing party. (...) If you think that this is the House where problems should be discussed, then this should also be the House where problems are solved. (...) Or are you saying: "the VVD is not going that far; it signalizes a problem and that's it; Mr. Wallage gets angry and I get off the hook."?

Bolkestein (VVD): (...) To Mr. Janmaat I want to say this: he observes that there is a difference between his party and my party. I cannot emphasize enough how much this is true. (...) Maybe I can say: *non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis*, not with such help and not with such defenders.

Janmaat (CD): That's fine, but I am defending the voters who brought the CD into parliament and who you want to make use of with cheap talk. (...)

Bolkestein (VVD): I am reproached by Mr. Wallage as well as by Mr. Janmaat. Let's say that what my party proposes is sensible and that we steer a good middle course.

Wallage (PvdA): Sometimes even an objective description of facts – you were indeed criticized by two people – is politically not a correct summary of the events. I never wish to be mentioned in the same sentence as Mr. Janmaat!

The parliamentary debate received extensive media coverage which reported the 'clash' between Mr. Bolkestein and Mr. Wallage on asylum policy. In an interview published two days later in *de Volkskrant*, Mr. Wallage stated that he had watched Mr. Bolkestein make his biggest mistake ever: "Bolkestein said that the position of the VVD is between CD and PvdA. (...) A liberal party leader who places himself between CD and PvdA and who does not realize what this means politically, should think twice." (*de Volkskrant* 21-9-1996)

The debate between Mr. Wallage and Mr. Bolkestein reflects two distinct positions with respect to the extreme right. First, there is the position of Mr. Wallage who never wants to be mentioned in the same sentence as Mr. Janmaat. One could say that Mr. Wallage does not want to be compared in any

respect with the extreme right party in the Netherlands. His view implies that the extreme right is perceived to be *outside* the dominant ideological party domain. The extreme right can not be compared to any of the other parties in the party system and should thus be viewed as an anti- or extra-system party.

The alternative position is taken by Mr. Bolkestein. He states that his party proposes a sensible middle course between the extreme right and the Labour Party. This means that the extreme right, the Conservative Liberal Party, and the Labour Party are perceived on one policy issue continuum. The positions on this continuum reflect in this case different positions on the asylum seekers issue. Wouter van der Brug (1998) has demonstrated recently that Dutch voters have a remarkably accurate perception of party positions on specific policy issues. This is explained by the fact that political conflicts are structured predominantly by a left-right dimension.² Given the context of Dutch parliament (and most other European parliaments), where the political debate is framed in terms of political issues, Mr. Bolkestein's view implies that the extreme right is perceived *within* the dominant political discourse. It may be on the extreme right side of the discourse but it is still a part of it.

The question whether or not the extreme right is comparable with other political parties can be extended to the question whether or not the voter's *preference* for the extreme right is comparable with preference for other parties in the electoral system. If the extreme right cannot be compared with other parties (as Mr. Wallage argues), determinants of extreme right party choice are expected to be incomparable with determinants of other party preferences. For example, it may be the case that only antidemocratic citizens vote extreme right, while all other citizens vote for a democratic party. It may be that citizens who define the nation in ethnic terms prefer extreme right parties, whereas citizens who define the nation territorially in political terms prefer the mainstream parties (Coleman 1995; Fennema and Tillie 1996). Or it may be the case that only racist citizens vote extreme right while all other citizens vote for other parties. If, however, the extreme right is perceived within the dominant political discourse, determinants of extreme right party choice overlap to a large extent with determinants of other party preferences. This would, for example, be the case if extreme right voters vote for the extreme right and left voters for the Labour Party. There would then be common determinants of party preference and a voter would take a positions on each of these determinants that predict their final choice.

This issue of comparability of parties (and by implication the comparability of party preferences) is not only a matter under discussion with respect to Dutch parliament or the extreme right. It has also emerged in the literature on (general) electoral behaviour. The issue has been approached from various angles. Some authors focus on multiple party preferences, i.e. the need to measure the electoral attractiveness of more than one party (Tillie 1995).

Others focus on the model choice in a multiparty electoral context (Whitten and Palmer 1996) or on the comparative analysis of party choice (Van der Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis 1996). In the case of Whitten and Palmer the emphasis is on modelling a choice process which is bounded (since the probability of voting for a party cannot be greater than one or less than zero) and in which the voter is faced with multiple choices (which implies that the electoral space is complex and potentially multidimensional). Van der Eijk et al. try to solve two problems in the comparative analysis of party choice: the ad hoc classification of parties, and the single characteristics that distinguish parties from each other. To avoid these problems, the authors employ as a dependent variable the electoral attractiveness of a political party (referred to as 'party preference'). Central in both approaches is the proposition that in order to study determinants of (extreme right) voting behaviour in multi-party systems, one must account for the comparability of party preferences (the electoral attractiveness for all parties in the political system). In other words, it is necessary to establish whether all party preferences refer to the same electoral domain.

2 Comparability of party preferences

To illustrate the above proposition, we will start with a fictitious example. Consider a political system with four political parties *A*, *B*, *C* and *D*, whose respective group of voters are denoted by *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. Let us now suppose that both the parties and the voters can be ordered according to ideological differences.³ Party *A* is a left-wing party and its voters are predominantly leftist; party *B* and its voters are centre-left; party *C* obtains its support predominantly from centre-right voters and can be placed right of the centre; and party *D* is a right-wing party which obtains its support predominantly from rightist voters. An obvious interpretation would be that voters' left-right orientations determine party choice. If we asked voters to indicate a preference for each party, this interpretation would, if correct, yield the following (ordinal) observations:

Group *a*: [*A*, *B*, *C*, *D*]

Group *b*: [*B*, *A*, *C*, *D*]

Group *c*: [*C*, *D*, *B*, *A*]

Group *d*: [*D*, *C*, *B*, *A*]

Voters in group *a* prefer party *A* most, then party *B*, then party *C*, and party *D* is their last choice. Group *b* prefers party *B*, then party *A*, etc.

Suppose, however, (hypothetical) observed multiple party preferences reveal the following preference orderings for each group of voters:

Group *a*: [*A*, *D*, *C*, *B*]

Group *b*: [*B*, *D*, *A*, *C*]

Group *c*: [*C*, *A*, *D*, *B*]

Group *d*: [*D*, *A*, *B*, *C*]

In this case the conclusion that left-right orientations determine party choice is inadequate, as the left voters *a* prefer a right-wing party (*D*) to parties *B* and *C* which, with respect to ideological position, are closer to *A*, while right voters *d* have a left party (*A*) as their second choice, etc. Given these preferences, an alternative ordering of parties and voters (according to a different characteristic than left-right) seems more appropriate. Ordering the parties, and their respective groups of voters, along a dimension which runs from *C* to *A* to *D* to *B* explains actual party choice equally well, but is superior in reflecting the basis of the preference(s) in this choice. The question remains, how should the ordering *C*, *A*, *D*, *B* be interpreted? If this can be considered, for example, as an ordering of specific issue positions (of parties and voters), then an interpretation of choices on the basis of issue position would clearly be preferable to one in terms of ideology.⁴

The example above illustrates that a study of multiple party preferences extends the way in which we can test theoretical models of voting behaviour. By only looking at the party voted for, only the final outcome of the electoral choice process is analysed, and the underlying preferences are ignored. A party preference that does not lead to a vote for that party is interpreted as no preference at all. Such a focus risks overlooking or misinterpreting some important aspects of the voting process.

However, this argument only holds if electoral preferences for *A*, *B*, *C* and *D* are comparable. It must be possible to construct a meaningful dimension on which the four parties are represented. If preference for a (extreme right) party is comparable to other party preferences, determinants of (extreme right) voting behaviour should be studied in relation to the preferences for other parties as the example above illustrates. If a party can not be represented on this dimension, then the determinants of voting behaviour should be studied by focusing on the voters of this party only.

3 Testing the comparability of party preferences

From the fictitious example above it follows that an adequate test of preference comparability should meet at least two requirements. These requirements are:

1. one should dispose of a valid indicator of 'party preference' (the electoral attractiveness of each party in the political system) and, using this indicator,

2. one should test for the comparability of party preferences (try to construct a meaningful [one or multidimensional] space in which the parties are represented).

The first requirement seems obvious. If no valid indicator of party preference is available, one can not test for the comparability of party preferences. A study by Tillie (1995) proposes the so-called 'probability to vote' (PTV) scale as a valid indicator of party preference. It is formulated as follows:

Some people are quite certain that they will always vote for the same party and that it is unthinkable that they will ever vote for another party. Others reconsider which party they will vote for each time.

I will mention a list of parties. Please indicate for each how probable it is that you will ever vote for it. Please tell me the number of the respective box on this card. If you do not know a party or if you do not know which answer to give, just say so and we will go on to the next party.

The accompanying showcard displays a 10-point scale on which only the extreme categories are labelled. Category 1 is: 'I will definitely never vote for this party', and category 10 is: 'I will definitely vote for this party at some time.'

The PTV-scale meets the following criteria:

- there is a straightforward relationship between 'probability to vote' and party choice. I.e., actual party choice can be deduced from observed preferences;
- it allows preference for more than one party to be observed;
- 'relevant' factors are not excluded or imposed. It allows respondents to take all those factors into account which they consciously or unconsciously evaluate when deciding how attractive a party is.

Given these criteria (and others: refer to Tillie [1995] for extensive validating analyses), the PTV-scale can be considered a valid indicator of party preference.

The first requirement for a test of party preference comparability is therefore fulfilled. This leads us to the second requirement: a test for the comparability of party preferences. The comparability condition as defined above refers to comparability between *stimuli* (parties), which implies that preferences for parties must pertain to the same domain of preference (political discourse). At first sight this seems guaranteed by the electoral focus of the preferences involved. At second sight, however, one could question the strength of this constraint. If (variance in) preferences for some parties arose from the parties' stance on economic issues, and preferences for other parties from the parties' support for or opposition to the existing political regime, and if these two kinds of concern were unrelated, their preference scores cannot be compared since they are evoked by criteria which refer to different evaluative frameworks.

Expressions of party preferences must be based on common dimensions to fulfil the condition of comparability.

With respect to extreme right parties this implies that *if* extreme right party preference is based on the same dimensions as the preference for other parties in the political system, the extreme right party can be regarded a 'normal' party (as it is perceived within the same political discourse as the other parties). If, however, preference scores for the extreme right are *not* comparable to preference scores for other parties, the extreme right party is perceived *outside* the dominant political discourse, and determinants of extreme right party preference can not be compared to determinants of other party preferences.

The need to construct a common evaluative framework for political parties (and the need to test whether extreme right parties are perceived within this framework) can be satisfied with a set of analytical tools first developed by Clyde H. Coombs (Coombs 1950; 1964). In *A Theory of Data*, Coombs offers the researcher several methods that can be used to construct inter-individually shared 'psychological spaces' (with one, two, three or more dimensions) in which stimuli are perceived. The dimensions of the space define the criteria along which stimuli are perceived, hence on which similarity can be established. To choose which method is appropriate, one has to decide upon the nature of the data to be analysed. More precisely, data has to be constructed from the recorded observations (here: the vote probability scores) and then analysed. The nature of data construction then determines the method of analysis to be used. Let us illustrate this point with the example of vote probability.

Since vote probability scores refer to various degrees of party preference, one way to construct data is by interpreting them as *preferential choice data* (Coombs 1964: 27). The notion of preferential choice data implies a precisely defined relation between subject and stimuli (political parties). This relation can be formalized by representing individuals and parties in a joint psychological space (Coombs 1964: 9). It is called a *joint* space because it contains points corresponding to individuals *and* to political parties. Each individual is characterized by his own ideal point in the space. Each political party is represented by a point in space that represents its position on each of the dimensions. The greater the perceived distance between a political party and an individual's ideal point the lesser a party is preferred, and the smaller the distance between ideal point and party the more a political party is preferred. Thus, in the case of preferential choice data, perceived distances between individuals and political parties determine party preferences. The construction of a joint space specifies (some of) the determinants of party preference. Since a joint space implies a common frame of reference for the evaluation of political parties, the empirical demonstration that such a space can be constructed implies that preference scores given to the parties represented in the space, are comparable to one another.

In order to interpret vote probability scores as preferential choice data, an analytical technique to construct a joint space from the vote probability scores is necessary. This technique is usually referred to as unfolding. Therefore, one way to demonstrate stimulus comparability is to successfully unfold probability of future vote scores into a space with one (or more) dimensions. With respect to the extreme right this would imply that the extreme right party is successfully integrated in the joint space (the extreme right is perceived within the dominant political discourse).

Although Coombs formulated the basic unfolding model as long ago as 1950, algorithms which could be applied to large datasets (datasets including many respondents and stimuli) did not become available until the eighties. One of these procedures (MUDFOLD, Multiple UniDimensional unFOLDing, Van Schuur 1984; 1993) is used here to analyse vote probability scores. Multicategorical mudfold analyses have been performed for all theoretical relevant cases (election years 1982, 1986, 1989, 1994 and the 1996 data analysed in this paper). Table 1 reports the 1996 results; the results for other years are similar.

Table 1 Multicategorical MUDFOLD-analysis (PTV-question 1996)⁵

	Hi
Green Left (GroenLinks)	.62
Social Democratic Party (PvdA)	.60
Progressive Liberal Party (D66)	.60
Christian Democratic Party (CDA)	.51
Conservative Liberal Party (VVD)	.50
Orthodox Christian Party (GPV)	.55
Extreme right (CD)	.52
N= 1363	
H= .56 (strong scale)	

For all years it is possible to construct a unidimensional space, in which all parties are located. The location of the political parties in this space supports an interpretation of the dimension in terms of left and right. And indeed, the extreme right is perceived at the extreme right of the political spectrum.

The initial question of stimulus comparability is thus answered: respondents assign vote probability scores to various parties on the basis of an evaluative criterion, the left-right dimension. The MUDFOLD analysis establishes a common frame of reference for all political parties, including the extreme right (CD). The extreme right in the Netherlands is perceived within the dominant political discourse. In this sense, the *Centrumdemocraten* can be labelled a 'normal' political party.

This conclusion has important consequences for the analysis of determinants of extreme right party preference. Since the extreme right is perceived within the dominant political discourse, the analysis of determinants of extreme right party preference should be included in a general analysis of party preference (that is, preference for all parties in the political system). A general analysis of party preference will reveal determinants of party preference which are also determinants of extreme right party choice. Moreover, a general analysis of party preference allows a distinction to be made between 'general' and party-specific determinants of party preference. This is illustrated in the next section where we analyse determinants of (extreme right) party preference.

4 Determinants of (extreme right) party preference

4.1 Research design

Starting point for the analysis of party preference is a conventional rectangular datamatrix of n respondents and p parties. Each row represents a respondent i ($i=1..n$), each column represents a party j ($j=1..p$). The cells contain preference measurements u_{ij} . At first sight, there are clearly two alternative methods which can be used to analyse the variation in preference scores. The first method studies preference scores for each party (column-oriented or inter-individual variation in preference scores), the second studies preference scores for each respondent (row-oriented or intra-individual variation in preference scores).

With the *column-oriented* approach, the preference scores for P parties are seen as P different variables to be explained. However, such a procedure has serious drawbacks. First, it does not account for the intra-individual variation in preference scores because this is reflected not in the columns, but in the rows, where individual preference scores for different parties are assumed to represent the same kind of information (party preference). Preference scores assigned to various parties can be compared to one another. A column-oriented approach is not able to do this.

Second, some variables which may conceivably cause variance in preference scores between parties become constants when P separate analyses are conducted. These variables, therefore, cannot contribute to an explanation. A case in point is the size of a party. Party size may affect the preference scores a person associates with voting for each of the parties. Its effect on party preference can not be studied in a column-oriented approach as size is a constant for each of the parties separately.

Some of the disadvantages of a column-oriented approach are solved with a *row-oriented* approach, since the latter accounts for intra-individual variation in preference scores. For each respondent i the row-oriented approach studies

the variation in preference scores for P parties. However, preference scores are comparable between subjects (Tillie 1995). The preference score for party j given by subject i can be compared to the preference score for party j given by subject k . A major disadvantage of the row-oriented procedure is that it neglects the inter-individual comparability of preference scores and results in N different explanations for a single concept (party preference).

It is clear that the advantages and disadvantages of the column- and row-oriented approaches are complementary. Disadvantages of the first (neglect of intra-individual variation) are met by the latter and vice versa. Therefore, an adequate analysis of the variation in preference scores requires a research design which accounts simultaneously for inter-individual variation (column-oriented) and intra-individual variation (row-oriented). This can be achieved by transforming the original dataset into a so-called 'stacked' dataset (Brown and Halaby 1982; Visser 1982; Stimson 1985).

The 'stacked' (sometimes also referred to as 'pooled') dataset combines inter- and intra-individual variation by considering each preference score given by each respondent as a different case to be explained. Each respondent is represented by P rows in the dataset, which results in a dataset of $N \times P$ cases.

Original dataset (n rows)

Cells					'Stacked' dataset ($n \times p$ rows)				
Persons					Persons				
PTV party 1... party p					PTV party 1... party p				
	1	2	.	p					
1	U_{11}	U_{12}	.	U_{1p}	1	1	U_{11}		
2	U_{21}	U_{22}	.	U_{2p}	2	1	U_{21}		
3	U_{31}	U_{32}	.	U_{3p}	3	1	U_{31}		
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.		
.	.	.	.	.	n	1	U_{n1}		
n	U_{n1}	.	.	U_{np}	1	2	U_{12}		
					2	2	U_{22}		
					3	2	U_{32}		
					.	.	.		
					n	2	U_{n2}		
					.	.	.		
					.	.	.		
					1	p	U_{1p}		
					2	p	U_{2p}		
					.	.	.		
					n	p	U_{np}		

Each row in the stacked dataset refers to a unique combination of a party and a respondent. This 'stacked' dataset can be analysed as a 'normal' rectangular datamatrix, in which the rows represent 'cases' and the columns 'variables'. Doing so makes it possible to study inter- and intra-individual variation simultaneously, because the stacked datamatrix is a 'normal' rectangular matrix which is suited to standard multivariate methods. Graphically, the stacked dataset can be illustrated as shown above.

The research model used to analyse the party preference pooled dataset is discussed in Appendix 1. We will now turn to the relevant results.

4.2 Pooled regression variables and results

In order to illustrate the possibilities and characteristics of the specific (LSDV) regression model outlined in the appendix, an analysis of determinants of party preference scores using data collected in the Netherlands in 1996 is given below.⁶ However, the dependent and independent variables included in the analysis will be discussed first.

4.2.1 Variables

As explained above, the *dependent variable* in the analyses below is the (pooled) party preference score.⁷ Preference scores were available for CDA, D66, GPV, GroenLinks, PvdA, VVD, and the allegedly extreme right CD.

Our choice for the *independent variables* was guided by the relevant literature on party preference on the one hand, and by the character of the LSDV model on the other. The literature yields a series of variables which could be included in the model, either directly, or in a manner that represents interaction effects. The LSDV character of the model yields dummy variables, representing groups of individuals or parties, that have to be assessed empirically as to their value for an empirical model.

In the analysis below we will concentrate on four variables that are often considered to be important factors for explaining party choice in the Netherlands⁸: left-right, religion, social class and party size⁹. For the sake of clarity we will summarize the basic features of these independent variables.

The concept of *left-right* is closely related to economic models of voting behaviour in which party choice is determined by the perceived distance between voters and parties on certain characteristics (Downs 1957). Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983) have demonstrated for the Netherlands that party choice can be explained to a large extent by the perceived distance between voter and party on a left-right scale. Among voters there is a largely consistent

perception of political parties on the left-right continuum and most subjects vote for the party they perceive to be the closest to their own left-right position (refer also to Van der Brug 1997). Left-right will be operationalized as the voter's own perception of his or her position on a 7-point left-right scale, resulting in six dummy variables (reference category point 4. Refer to Appendix 2 for a description of the procedure used to introduce respondent characteristics into the pooled regression model).

Religion and *social class* are the two social cleavages which have dominated Dutch politics from the last quarter of the nineteenth century through to the 1960s (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Lijphart 1968). Religious and class cleavages in Dutch society have defined subcultures ('pillars') which structured social and political life to a considerable extent. These pillars provided their clientele with their own news media, schools, labour unions, professional and recreational organizations and political parties. From the 1960s on, the influence of the pillars on Dutch society has declined (known as 'depillarization'. Refer, for example, to Van der Eijk and Niemöller 1991). Nevertheless, a debate among (Dutch) political scientists continues on the extent to which these variables are still relevant in explanations of party choice, to the effect that (non-)religious voters disproportionately prefer (non-)religious parties and lower (respectively higher) class voters disproportionately prefer left (respectively right) parties.

Religion will be operationalized using three dummy variables: Roman-Catholic (0=no, 1=yes); Reformed (0=no, 1=yes) and Calvinist (0=no, 1=yes). Non-religious respondents are reference category in the analysis (for a further explanation on the analysis of dummy variables, see below).

Social Class will be operationalized using the subjective position on a 5-point category scale: 1=upper class to 5=working class. These positions are transformed into four dummy variables (position 1: yes/no; position 2: yes/no etc.), using the middle category as reference category.

As far as party characteristics are concerned, *size* is entered into the pooled regression model. The importance of party size (operationalized as the number of seats in parliament) was demonstrated in earlier analyses of party preference (Van der Eijk, Niemöller and Tillie 1986; Tillie 1995). The effects of party size are hypothesized to depend on voters' orientations towards political power. If the regression resulted in a significant (positive) parameter for size, this would imply that voters give greater preference to large parties, or, conversely, that the political power of a party is one source of preference.

As noted above a general analysis of party preference allows for a distinction between 'general' determinants of party preference and 'party-specific' determinants of party preference. Therefore, a group of variables referring to specific concepts which were introduced with respect to extreme right party choice are included in the analysis (refer, for example, to: Billiet and De Witte 1995; Scheepers 1996; Scheepers, Schmeets and Felling 1997). The empirical

test for party-specific variables is explained in the section on party dummies below (refer also to Appendix 1). *Ethnocentrism* (the propensity to divide humanity into groups with which one either identifies or "contraidentifies": refer to Forbes 1985: 22-27) has been presented as an independent variable to explain extreme right voting behaviour. In our analysis, however, ethnocentrism is included as an independent variable to explain general party preference. Ethnocentrism will be operationalized using a 9-point category scale: 0=low to 8=high, resulting in eight dummy variables, reference category is point 4. The same applies to *authoritarianism* (but see Middendorp 1991). Authoritarianism will be operationalized using a 5-point category scale: 0=low to 4=high, resulting in four dummy variables, reference category is point 2.

Finally, the concepts of *subjective social isolation* and *ethnic/contract nationalism* are introduced into the analysis. Both concepts are related to theories that see *social disintegration and atomization* as a cause of xenophobic nationalism. Such a theory was put forward by Hannah Arendt in her explanation for the rise of fascism. According to Arendt a direct link exists between the origins of mass society and the violent nationalism of fascist movements:

The chief characteristic of the mass man is not brutality and backwardness, but his isolation and lack of normal social relationships. Coming from the classridden society of the nation-state, whose cracks had been cemented with nationalistic sentiment, it is only natural that these masses, in the first helplessness of their new experience, have tended toward an especially violent nationalism (...). (Arendt [1951] 1973: 317)

However, with respect to the concept of social isolation it is important to distinguish between *objective* social isolation, defined as marginality in social networks, and *subjective* social isolation, defined as feelings of loneliness and lack of support. On the macro-level, objective social isolation is reflected in density and cohesiveness of social networks. On the individual level, objective social isolation refers to the number of social contacts between individuals. Objective social isolation is discussed extensively by Emile Durkheim (1897).

Objective and subjective social isolation are expected to co-vary: people who are in a state of objective social isolation, tend to feel powerless and lonely. This expectation is supported by Bell's (1957) findings that feelings of powerlessness and isolation are related to marginality in formal and informal groups.¹⁰ In this paper we will not go into the empirical and theoretical problems related to the linkages between objective and subjective social isolation, but concentrate on the latter, i.e. feelings of social isolation. These feelings, Arendt argues, give rise to *nationalism* (Arendt [1951] 1973: 231). Ethnic nationalism in particular is often seen as a kinship illusion (Fennema 1991); a metaphoric kinship that replaces social networks in decay. Yet, ethnic nationalism is not the only possible reaction to social disintegration

and feelings of social isolation. Religious fundamentalism and messianistic movements have also been regarded as possible reactions to (feelings of) social isolation (Cohn 1970).

Social reactions to (feelings of) social isolation are variegated: Hannah Arendt argues that it creates exalted forms of nationalism; Norman Cohn maintains that messianistic movements may spring from sudden disintegration of social networks and acute feelings of social isolation; and Durkheim has shown that social isolation may lead to (egoistic) suicide. We expect that only the first reaction contributes directly to preferences for extreme-right parties. Messianistic movements can be xenophobic, but are not necessarily so. Suicide leads – at the individual level – to no more than sudden death.

Subjective social isolation will be operationalized using a 7-point category scale (0=low to 6=high, six dummy variables, reference category is point 3). For more details on this scale we refer to Fennema and Tillie 1998.¹¹

Elsewhere we have argued (Fennema and Tillie 1996) that varieties of *nationalism* can be regarded as one (unidimensional) discourse running from *contract nationalism* (persons belonging to the [Dutch] nation because they live in the Netherlands) to *ethnic nationalism* (persons belong to the [Dutch] nation because they are of Dutch descent). This discourse can be measured using an unfolding scale reflecting the discursive space. Scale scores can be considered discursive positions (refer to Foucault 1969; Huijter 1996) within the nationalistic discourse. This approach of nationalism differs from studies which, following the famous study *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al. 1950), define nationalism as ethnocentrism and relate it to an authoritarian personality structure. Adorno's study contributed greatly to the interpretation of nationalism as a social-psychological category; as an integrated complex of attitudes. When this attitude is intense it is defined as respectively nationalism or ethnocentrism (Middendorp 1978; Eisinga and Scheepers 1989; Dekker and Ester 1993; refer also to Forbes 1985). We, however, define a nationalistic attitude as a subject position in a discourse which runs from contract nationalism to ethnic nationalism. It is important to underline that such a position does not say anything about the strength of the nationalist feelings (one can have strong or weak feelings towards the specific subject position). We expect, however, that feelings of social isolation lead to preference for extreme right political parties only in combination with the ethnic position in the nationalistic discourse.

Nationalism, then, will be operationalized using a 7-point category scale: 1=contract to 7=ethnic (resulting in six dummy variables, reference category point 4).¹² Additionally an *interaction effect* between subjective social isolation and nationalism is introduced into the analysis. This interaction effect is found by multiplying the subjective social isolation score by the nationalism score.

A third group of variables will be introduced into the analysis. These variables have rarely been considered (and certainly not demonstrated) to be of primary importance with respect to general party preference. They are introduced, however, for the very pragmatic reason that they could be important as party specific determinants of extreme right preference. These variables are: *age*, *income*, *education*, *urbanization* and *gender* (refer to Eisinga, Lammers, Lubbers and Scheepers 1998).

A final group of independent variables results from the discussion of how to specify an appropriate model for stacked data. This brings a set of *party dummies* into the analysis. If the probability of future vote question is asked for p parties, $p-1$ party dummies will be included in the regression, using the remaining one as reference category. The regression parameters to be estimated for these dummies represent the difference between the average party preference score of the party in question and the reference party (Stimson 1985: 936). We decided to choose one of the major political parties, the PvdA, as reference category in the regression analysis. When a dummy parameter is significant, further research should be conducted to explain the variance for the party in question.¹³

Furthermore, the introduction of party dummies allows for a test of party-specific determinants of party choice. Given the general determinants in the LSDV-model, one can test whether additional explanatory variables can be introduced for specific parties. Thus, suppose left-right is a common determinant of party preference, but given this determinant racist voters still prefer the extreme right more than non-racist voters, racism could be labelled a party-specific independent variable which only explains extreme-right party preference. Technically, party-specific effects can be tested by introducing the interaction between 'racism' (or any other independent variable) and party dummies (in this case the CD-party dummy).

4.2.2 Regression analysis results

The results of the LSDV analysis are shown in Table 2. Only significant variables are included ($\alpha=.01$)¹⁴. Thus the variables education, gender and authoritarianism are not included in the table because they have no significant effect upon party preference.

Before we discuss the results of Table 2, one preliminary remark should be made. All variables referring to respondent characteristics necessarily give (at least at a bivariate level) a positive result since they refer to the predicted preference scores of separate regression analyses. To interpret the significant effects of these variables we should, therefore, turn to the sign of these variables in the separate regression analyses.

Table 2 Overall predictors of party preference

Predictor	Unst. coeff. ^a	Stand. coeff.
Constant	0.05 (0.01)	
Size	0.01 (0.00)	0.53
Left-right	0.81 (0.02)	0.30
Religion	0.71 (0.04)	0.17
Income	0.75 (0.08)	0.09
Ethnocentrism	0.40 (0.05)	0.07
Urbanization	0.54 (0.08)	0.06
Social class	0.72 (0.13)	0.05
Interaction nationalism/social isolation	0.52 (0.12)	0.04
Specific predictors of extreme right party preference		
Interaction Ethnocentrism/ left-right position 7 (extreme right) and CD-party dummy	0.53 (0.15)	0.03
Party Dummies		
D66	0.13 (0.01)	0.15
CDA	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.03
GPV	0.08 (0.01)	0.09
GroenLinks	0.25 (0.01)	0.28
R ² = 0.44		
N = 7768		

^aCoefficient standard errors are in parentheses

Table 2 shows that size is the strongest predictor of party preference, followed by left-right and religion (as is reflected by the standardized regression coefficients). The direction (sign) of the coefficients of these explanatory variables fits our theoretical expectations, i.e. preference is enhanced by increasing size, and by ideological and religious similarity.

First and foremost voters want their party to be electorally successful. A large party is far preferable to a small one. People are apparently power oriented. Political ideology comes in second and has a relatively strong predictive power. This finding corroborates the assumption that the CD is considered as a

'normal' party and that relatively few voters prefer the CD for reasons other than ideological ones. The suggestion that voters prefer the CD because it is the leper in the political arena is unwarranted. As a predictor of party preference religious similarity comes third. Hence, in 1996 the traditional religious cleavages only play a modest role in determining party choice. The small effect of income reflects a distinction between VVD/D66 and the other parties. The former parties being preferred by high income groups. There is a modest effect of ethnocentric attitudes on party choice.

Ethnocentrism, it should be stressed, is found to be a *general* indicator of party preference. It structures preference for all the parties in the electoral system and not only for the extreme right. It appears that respondents who score high on the ethnocentrism scale prefer right-wing parties (especially CD and VVD, and to a lesser degree CDA), and respondents who score low on the scale prefer left-wing parties (GroenLinks, PvdA, D66).

Even more modest, but still significant, is the effect of urbanization on party preference. The GPV, CDA and D66 are preferred by voters in rural areas. The small effect of social class reflects a distinction between PvdA/CD and other parties. The Labour Party and the extreme right are preferred slightly more by working-class voters.

The significant but very small effect of the interaction between nationalism and social isolation refers mainly to a distinction between CD on the one hand and GroenLinks, PvdA and D66 on the other hand. The more contract nationalist and the less isolated one feels, the more one prefers GroenLinks, PvdA and D66. The more ethnic nationalist and isolated one feels, the more one prefers the extreme right.

There appears to be only one small (but significant) extreme right party-specific effect. *After all the general determinants of party preference have been accounted for, ethnocentric-right voters still have a higher preference for the extreme right (and only the extreme right).*¹⁵

The significant coefficients for D66, CDA, GPV and GroenLinks indicate that additional general indicators of party preference should be introduced, in order to account for the variance in the preference scores for these parties with respect to the other parties.

In the analysis, 44% of variance is explained, which is quite acceptable for an analysis that accounts for preferences for all parties in the electoral choice process and not only for the party voted for (refer also to Tillie 1995).

Summarizing, the two most important determinants of party preference appear to be *size* and *ideological proximity*, followed by *religion*. *Ethnocentrism* appears to be a general indicator of party preference. It structures preferences for all parties in the electoral system and not only for the extreme right. The same goes for the interaction between *nationalism and social isolation*, which basically refers to a distinction between the extreme right and GroenLinks,

pvdA and D66. So far, only one extreme-right party-specific determinant can be identified: the interaction between *ethnocentrism* and the *extreme right* position on the left-right scale.

5 Conclusion

The most important conclusion from our analysis is that voters evaluate the extreme right party in the Netherlands according to the same criteria by which the other parties are judged. In other words, the Centrumdemocraten are seen as a 'normal' party by most voters. The analysis shows that voters perceive the CD in the same way as Mr. Bolkestein did in the parliamentary debate cited in the introduction of our article, and not in the same way as Mr. Wallage.

Hence, the Dutch voter does not evaluate the CD as a racist party and therefore juxtaposed to the non-racist mainstream parties. Rather it is seen as extreme right in the literal sense of the word. It is the most right-wing party of the political spectrum and as such preferred by persons who place themselves on the (extreme) right side of the left-right dimension. Many voters who prefer the VVD for its size would have voted CD if it had been as big as the VVD. Thirdly, the CD, like the pvdA, D66 and the VVD, is preferred by non-religious voters. Party preference is predominantly determined by strategic considerations, by ideological position and by religious affiliation. Ethnocentrism and the interaction between nationalism and subjective social isolation also contribute to the variance in party preference, although they do so for only a small amount.

Scheepers et al. (1994) have shown that ethnocentrism was a factor in the explanation of the extreme-right vote. Yet they did not – and could not – see that ethnocentrism explains the preference for other parties in the political arena just as well. Indeed, the more ethnocentric a voter, the more he – or she – prefers a right-wing party. It is only in combination with an extreme right position on the left-right scale, that ethnocentrism explains preference for only the extreme right (although only to a small extent).

Income and social class predict but a very small part of party preference in the sense that VVD and D66 are preferred by high income voters and pvdA and CD are preferred by lower class voters. Urbanization, finally, has a significant but small impact on party preference. Voters from the countryside tend to prefer the GPV, the CDA and VVD.

Party size is by far the best predictor for party preference. Voters are power oriented: a sizable extreme right party would be preferred by more people than the actual CD just because of its size. In that respect nothing succeeds like success. To some readers this may seem like a trivial conclusion: large parties attract more voters than small parties. But this is not the case. Rather we

have shown that party size is a strong predictor of party preference *sui generis*. Many people prefer political power to ideological affinity. They are political pragmatists rather than political idealists (refer also to Tillie [1995] for a discussion on the interpretation of the effect of party size on party preference).

Overall, then, our findings tend to underline the rational choice character of party preference. Especially the predominant influence of party size on party preference stresses the strategic character of party choice. The fact that the left-right dimension is the second predictor adds to the conclusion that party preference is the outcome of a process of rational deliberation which is not predetermined by social or economic status of the voter. Only two variables, income and urbanization, reflect 'objective' conditions of social existence.

Appendix 1: Model specification for the analysis of a 'stacked' dataset

A research design which combines inter- and intra-individual variation requires a so-called 'stacked' dataset. How should such a dataset be analysed?²¹⁶

A natural starting point for the analysis of stacked or pooled data is the use of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) models, which is probably the most frequently used model for such data. The particular nature of a stacked dataset, however, may conflict with the assumptions of the OLS model.

The OLS estimate (b) of the unknown population parameter b :

$$\beta = [X'X]^{-1}X'Y \quad [1]$$

implies an expected error covariance $\sigma^2 I$, where σ^2 is the expected constant variance for all cases and I effectively incorporates the notion of uncorrelated error. In general, these assumptions may, in the case of stacked data, be violated in three particular ways. First, the 'cases' in the stacked data may contain interdependencies, and therefore violate the assumption of uncorrelated error terms. The background of such autocorrelation is, of course, that characteristics of individuals affect their response to the party preference questions, and are therefore reflected in all scores of each individual. Autocorrelation of this kind does not affect all 'cases' in the stacked dataset, only those which belong to the same individual. Furthermore, autocorrelation of this kind is only caused by so-called omitted variables: these are characteristics of respondents that are not included in a model as independent variables.

Second, a particular form of heteroscedasticity is difficult to avoid in pooled party preference data. Preferences for some parties contain more variance than those for others at all times, which causes heteroscedasticity in regressions. Compare, for instance, party preferences assigned to large parties (more variance) with those assigned to small parties (less variance).

Third, the assumption of homogeneity of the dependent variable (pooled vote probability scores) can be violated. For example, take the preference scores for three political parties: A, B and C. Suppose the scores for party B fluctuate for all respondents around the pooled mean, the scores for party A fluctuate around a level above this mean and those for party C below. Fitting a regression for the pooled data will show that the results for party B will be well-behaved. The regression will fit relatively well, leaving little apparent autocorrelation of residuals. But the results for party A (and similarly for party C) will be considerably different. The regression predictions there will always be below the observed data points, leaving uniformly positive residuals (and therefore positive autocorrelation of residuals).

The factors which cause such violations in the simple regression model can

be included explicitly in a somewhat more elaborate regression model. Such modelling allows the magnitude of these effects to be estimated. More importantly, if these causes of autocorrelated error are taken explicitly into account, they can no longer cause violations of the assumptions of the model. This results in the following model for the analysis of pooled party preference data:

$$Y_{ij} = a + \beta_1 X_{1ij} + \beta_2 X_{2ij} + \dots + \beta_k X_{kij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad [2]$$

where Y_{ij} is the preference score for party j given by respondent i ; X_{kij} is the value of the k th explanatory variable for respondent i and party j ; and

$$\varepsilon_{ij} = \alpha_i + \tau_j + \mu_{ij} \quad [3]$$

where α_i are respondent-specific effects, τ_j party-specific effects, and μ_{ij} specific effects for each combination of respondent and parties and which are uncorrelated in the stacked dataset. The error, ε_{ij} , consists of three components, two of which are estimated and of which the third, μ_{ij} , conforms to the assumptions of OLS estimation.

In a pooled party preference analysis, we are not particularly interested in the serial dependency of p preference scores given by each respondent (α_i). Estimating α_i as a purely individual parameter would imply modelling the idiosyncracies of n different respondents. One can, however, imagine *groups* of respondents answering the probability of future vote question in a different manner. For example, respondents attaching only small probability scores to each party or, vice versa, respondents expressing only high probability scores. This would result in violations against the common regression assumptions which can be compared to the first and third mentioned above. It could imply that the dependent variable is not homogeneous across (groups of) respondents, which also leads to unacceptable levels of autocorrelation. A close study of the distribution of regression residuals can reveal the existence or non-existence of non-homogeneity across respondents (compare Fox 1991). More specifically, given the model specified by expressions (2) and (3), non-normally distributed errors or deviating error distributions across subgroups imply non-homogeneity of the dependent variable across respondents. This can be accommodated by introducing additional (dummy) variables (characterizing the groups involved) in the regression equation in order to model such deviations.

As far as τ_j is concerned, this party-specific error component of the error term can, if necessary, be fitted with dummy variables each of which represents a fixed effect for a political party.

Estimating α_i and τ_j using dummy variables results in a so-called *Least Squares with Dummy Variables* (LSDV) regression model. This model will be used for the analysis of pooled party preference data.

Appendix 2: Introducing respondent characteristics into the LSDV regression model

The introduction of respondent characteristics into the pooled regression model requires a specific procedure, as is illustrated in the following example.

Suppose, we distinguish three classes (working, middle and upper class) and three parties (A, B, C). Now suppose further that all working class people support party A, all middle class respondents support party B, and all upper class respondents support party C, justifying the conclusion of a clear relationship between social class and preference score. This correlation, however, will not be uncovered in a pooled analysis. The datamatrix would have the following structure:

Respondent's class	Party	Preference
W(orking)	A	10 (high)
M(iddle)	A	low
U(pper)	A	low
W	B	low
M	B	10 (high)
U	B	low
W	C	low
M	C	low
U	C	10 (high)

Each value of social class (W, M, U) is connected to both high and low preference scores and hence no correlation between the two variables can be expected. Therefore, in order to study the effect of respondent characteristics on party preference, an alternative procedure is required. This procedure can be summarized as follows (refer also to Tillie 1995; Van der Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis 1996):

- run, for each party separately, (Ordinary Least Squares) regression analyses with party reference as dependent variable and 'social class' as independent variable (transforming the 'social class' variable, for example, into two dummy variables, using 'middle class' as reference category). From the estimated regression equation predicted 'social class' preference scores for each party can be calculated (the $\hat{Y}$ in regression parlance).
- centre the predicted preference scores. This means, subtract, for each party separately, the mean predicted $\hat{Y}$ from the individual predicted scores.

This controls for the effect of party characteristics (such as size) on the predicted preference scores.

- pool the (centered) predicted 'social class' preference scores and enter them as independent variable into the stacked (pooled) regression model. The resulting $b(X_{ij})$ estimates the effect of social class on party preference.

Notes

1. The authors wish to thank Thom Duyvené de Wit for his assistance in analysing the data.

2. The analysis of Van der Brug shows no signs of a two-dimensional ideological space as has been suggested by Ronald Inglehart and his numerous followers (Kitschelt 1995). The political discourse in the parliamentary arena can be mapped in a one-dimensional space.

3. Deduced, for example, from perceived party positions and selfratings on a left-right scale.

4. One may argue that, in the examples above, the effect of (for example) issue positions on voting behaviour would also be uncovered if one only looks at the party voted for, since voters with a specific issue position still vote for a party representing the same issue position. Although this is correct, it would at best result in *two* competing and equally plausible explanations of voting behaviour: 'left-right' and 'issues'. Studying multiple party preferences gives the possibility to discriminate between such rival explanations, which, in the second example, leaves only *one* principal determinant of voting behaviour: 'issues'.

5. Results are reported in terms of the scalability coefficients H and H_i . The first of these coefficients (i.e., H) yields information about the (unidimensional) scalability of the *entire* set of items, whereas the second (H_i) reports the (unidimensional) scalability of each item vis-à-vis the other items combined. In general, the following guidelines are used for the interpretation of the size of these coefficients: $H(i) < .30$ – no scale; $.40 > H(i) \geq .30$ – weak scale; $.50 > H(i) \geq .40$ – medium scale; $H \geq .50$ – strong scale.

6. Data were collected by Stichting Telepanel. We want to thank the International Research Group on Methodology and Comparative Studies (IRMCS) and especially Prof. Dr. Willem Saris for making the data available.

7. That is, preference scores were recoded into party utilities (refer to Tillie 1995).

8. See, among many others, Daalder 1987, Bronner and de Hoog 1978; Van der Eijk and Niemöller 1983, 1985, 1991; Eggen, Van der Eijk and Niemöller 1981; Van der Eijk, Niemöller, Tillie 1986; Middendorp 1991; Irwin, Van der Eijk, Van Holsteyn and Niemöller 1987; Van Deth and Geurts 1989; Tillie 1989, Anker 1992; Van Holsteyn and Irwin 1992; Nieuwbeerta and De Graaf 1992; Van Holsteyn 1994; Tillie 1995; Oppenhuis 1995.

9. One may wonder whether it is meaningful to combine these independent variables into a single analysis of party preference, as they are often seen to stem from different theoretical traditions. We think a combination of these variables is appropriate for two reasons. First, the theoretical traditions are ideal-type models.

Whenever they have empirically been applied, researchers have invariably included variables from other traditions into their analyses (refer, for example, to Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Rabinowitz et al. 1989). They did so because, they were well aware of the fact that statistical analyses would not allow for serious falsification if variables from competing theoretical models are not taken into consideration. Furthermore, in order to obtain correct estimates of effects of the theoretical concepts they were primarily interested in, they were compelled to include 'other' variables in their analyses to arrive at properly specified models.

A second reason for combining variables from different theoretical traditions into a single model is that such a combination by itself does not violate any assumptions in any of these separate models. The differences between different traditions involve mainly expectations with respect to sign and size of effects, or — were one to engage in causal modelling — assumptions with respect to causal orderings between variables.

10. Yet this relation is likely to be more complicated than one may assume at first sight. People may feel powerless and lonely, in spite of being highly integrated in social networks. The other way around, hermits do not necessarily feel powerless or lonely.

11. Respondents are presented six statements such as "even from your direct relatives you can expect little sympathy" or "if you have real problems, you are ultimately alone". Subjects can respond to each of these items in terms of a 10-point category scale of which the extremes are labelled: (1) completely disagree and (10) completely agree. The six statements form a Mokken-scale, which results in 7 scale values.

12. The unfolding scale was established using items such as "Anyone who lives and works in The Netherlands has a right to Dutch nationality" and "Solidarity develops throughout the centuries". Resulting scale scores were recoded into 7 scale values (1=contract, 7= ethnic).

13. This interpretation and use of party dummies can be compared to the 'primary function of comparative inquiry' proposed by Przeworski and Teune: 'whenever there is a system [party] specific factor that seems to be necessary for explanation, the conclusion should not be that systems are unique but rather that it is necessary to identify some general factors so far not considered' (Przeworski and Teune 1985: 13).

14. Except for the significant effect of age. This effect appeared to be a response-effect. That is, older respondents assign lower preference scores to all parties.

Party interaction effects were tested for all parties and all independent variables.

15. The following statistical line of argument is taken from Stimson 1985.

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