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Parties and Politicians in the Parliamentary Election of 1998

Galen A. Irwin & Joop J.M. van Holsteyn

Abstract

The so-called pillarization model of voting behaviour, which once was central to understanding voting in the Netherlands, has declined in importance at recent elections. Short-term factors have become more important and replaced the long-term factors of religion and social class that defined this model. Short-term factors include the feelings that voters have about the political parties, their leaders, and their candidates. There has been much discussion about the effects of candidates, most importantly the first candidate on the party list (the 'lijsttrekker'), but only recently has empirical research begun to show the existence and importance of such effects. A two-dimensional ideological issue space can be constructed that defines heartlands of potential support for the various political parties. It can be shown that even within such ideological heartlands, popular candidates can generate (or lose) support for their parties. A leader who is more popular than his or her party can provide an electoral bonus for the party. In the elections of 1998 it was the PvdA that profited most from such a bonus. Party leader and first candidate Wim Kok was popular throughout all ideological areas and much of the electoral success of his party can be ascribed to him. For the party's strongest competitor at this election, the VVD, the situation was quite different. This party also achieved success, but this was more in spite of than due to the popularity of party leader Frits Bolkestein. Bolkestein proved to be not particularly attractive to many voters; in fact, many voters found him less attractive than his party. Although to a lesser degree, it can also be shown for the other parties that the electoral success was at least in part due to the feelings voters had about the parties' first candidates.

1 Introduction

The parliamentary election of 1998 can only be fully understood in the context of the elections that preceded it. The election of 1994 will go down in Dutch history as one of the most important elections of the twentieth century. In that year the CDA lost 20 parliamentary seats so that it had only 34 of the 150 seats in the Second Chamber. Although its partner in the 1989-1994 coalition, the

pvdA, also lost 12 seats, new coalition possibilities developed (cf. Hillebrand and Irwin 1995): it became possible, mathematically, to form a majority coalition without the CDA. D66, which had increased its number of seats from 12 to 24, became the crucial party in the centre of the political spectrum and it had a strong preference for a coalition without the CDA. Meanwhile, years of semi-secret meetings between members of the pvdA and vvd parties had made cooperation a possibility. In the end, a new and previously virtually unthinkable coalition of pvdA, D66, and vvd emerged (cf. Andeweg 1995a). The mix of the red of socialism and the blue of the Liberals led this to be called the 'purple coalition'. pvdA leader Wim Kok became the new prime minister. For the first time, the CDA became an opposition party.

The decision to join this coalition involved some hard choices that can be examined in the light of Strom's unified model of party behaviour (Strom 1990). The essential elements of this model involve the goals on which a party will focus: vote-seeking, policy-seeking, and office-seeking. The CDA did not choose to become the opposition, but its relegation to this role also forced it to reexamine its goals for the future.

Putting aside their adversity to cooperation and entering a cabinet together involved considerable risk for both the pvdA and the vvd. For decades they had presented themselves as polar opposites (cf. van Schie 1995). Cooperation means compromise, so it was unclear which policy goals of the different parties could be achieved and whether the voters would accept these compromises. Hillebrand and Irwin (1999) have examined two earlier cases of hard choices by Labour, and they concluded that in 1994 policy-seeking, at least in its purest form, gave way to office-seeking.

The risks for the vvd mirrored those of the pvdA. Much of its vote-seeking strategy in recent years had relied upon presenting the pvdA as spend-thrifty and dangerous as a guardian of public finances. To protect against this, the vvd demanded the incorporation of fiscal guarantees in the governmental programme and that it should have control of the Ministry of Finance. Yet, if this succeeded it would not only partially remove voter fear of Labour but also be potentially dangerous electorally to the party. The dilemma faced by both parties has been formulated by Aarts, Macdonald and Rabinowitz (1999: 97):

Whether such traditional antagonists as pvdA and vvd can collaborate in government over an extended period and still maintain sufficiently strong issue profiles to stimulate their constituencies remains to be seen. Yet, if they are to maintain their core support, that is the challenge they appear to face.

Although not plagued by traditional animosities, D66 also took a risk by choosing to assume office in 1994. The previous time the party joined a government coalition (1981-82) it suffered substantial losses at the subsequent elections (from 17 to 6 seats). Office-seeking has never appeared to be consistent with

vote-seeking for this party. In terms of policy, the party demanded that the new coalition introduce the possibility of holding referenda in the country and consider changes in the electoral system.

The CDA had traditionally been a party of office. Although certainly not devoid of policy interests, it had proven itself as the party of government and shown its ability to work with either the right or the left on economic issues. Now this position had been lost and the party was forced to reevaluate its position. It had no experience as an opposition party. Moreover, the party possessed a vague political profile and only a few voters viewed it as the party most qualified to make a contribution toward solving important national problems (Aarts 1995).

So in 1994, all four of the major Dutch parties entered uncharted waters. In this article, we first review the ensuing period, discussing briefly important occurrences related to party politics and personnel changes since the previous elections. We then utilize the results of the 1994 and 1998 Dutch National Election Studies to evaluate voter reactions to the changed environment. We shall concentrate on the general evaluation of parties and politicians by examining the so-called sympathy scores. Since party leaders have come to play a major role in both office-seeking and vote-seeking strategies, we examine how voters have evaluated the leaders of the various parties, and how these evaluations changed between 1994 and 1998. Finally, we discuss how these evaluations may have affected the vote decisions in 1998.

2 Moving towards 1998

An election day does not exist in isolation. It follows earlier days and weeks, in which policy decisions have been taken, political commentary has been given, and social and economic developments have taken place all of which may influence voters. How far into the past we have to go is not clear. In a volume recalling the run-up to the elections of 1998, most of the campaign strategists begin their story in 1997 (Kramer, van der Maas & Ornstein 1998).¹ In an analysis of the election campaign of 1998 and of media effects, the day of the Queen's speech in September 1997 is taken as a starting point (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1998). Yet this time period seems too short, since in the previous years events had occurred that may have put their stamp on the elections of May 6 1998. For this reason, we have chosen to begin with the previous elections for our short review of the most important occurrences for each of the major parties in the period 1994-1998.

2.1 PvdA

In 1986 the concept of 'victorious defeat' was introduced into Dutch political jargon. The PvdA had won seats at the election, but the gains were less than expected and participation in government did not ensue. In 1994 the opposite situation occurred: the party incurred substantial electoral losses, but emerged as the largest party and even provided the prime minister in the first purple cabinet. Initially, the VVD lacked confidence in the coalition. Because of differing views concerning the welfare state and social security, it seemed wise to maintain a friendship with the CDA in case the cooperation with the VVD failed (Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman 1995: 66). However, perhaps as a result of the flourishing economy, the cooperation proceeded better than virtually anyone had anticipated. As early as 1996, Kok expressed his preference for a continuation of the purple coalition following the election of 1998 (Hippe et al. 1997: 61).

During the period between the elections, the PvdA was not exempt from internal tensions. This was in part a reaction to the cooperation with the VVD, who, according to some party critics had forced the PvdA to accept an incorrect set of priorities (cf. Kalma 1995). Yet, it was internal party changes that led to dissension and criticism, in particular of party chairman Felix Rottenberg. The degree of internal democracy and openness was too limited, and the party as an organization of members was neglected, turning the party – according to some critics – into an organization in line with the 'Greenpeace model' (cf. Tromp 1995, 1996).

During 1994 the PvdA slid in the polls and remained just above 20 per cent throughout 1995. In 1996 it climbed back to above 25 per cent and by 1997 things had definitely taken a turn for the better. Other polls revealed that Kok as prime minister was earning the admiration of the voters (*de Volkskrant* 4 October 1997; *De Telegraaf* 28 March 1998). According to the parliamentary press Kok stood head and shoulders above the other politicians (*de Volkskrant* 18 December 1997) and even the employers could find nothing bad to say about him (*De Telegraaf* 16 January 1998). The party was clearly ready in time for the 1998 campaign "which primarily would be a reelection campaign and in which participation in government for the PvdA and continuation in the position of prime minister for Wim Kok were the first matters of importance" (Anker 1998: 301; cf. Wiersma 1998). The most important thing was to avoid mistakes during the campaign (*de Volkskrant* 18 April 1998). According to figures from the polling agency Inter/View, the PvdA battled with the VVD for the position as largest party throughout 1997 and through the first two months of 1998, before moving ahead in the last weeks (Bank & Boerema 1998).

2.2 VVD

The vvd leader Bolkestein had originally had a preference for a coalition with d66 and the cda (Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman 1995: 85), but the vvd finally agreed to participate in the purple cabinet. Bolkestein himself chose not to accept a ministerial post, but remained in the Second Chamber, from where he regularly issued critical commentary on the actions and proposals of the cabinet and of individual ministers. These and other statements, concerning, for example, the increased role that the national interest should play in the formulation of foreign policy, the Dutch over-hospitality to asylum-seekers, and the lack of responsibility for their past that ex-communists had shown, ensured that Bolkestein was regularly in the news (cf. Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1998).

Despite minor setbacks, the vvd prospered in the polls. The party grew steadily in the period 1994 to 1997, and according to Inter/View was regularly the largest party in the polls. Bolkestein's star continued to be in the ascendant. In December 1997 he was voted the most outstanding member of the Second Chamber by his fellow members. The question of a possible premiership was raised. In August 1997 he replied that he was available if his party so desired (De Boer et al. 1998: 83). Although the question would play an important role in the 1998 campaign, it soon became clear that Bolkestein was no match for the popular Kok (cf. Anker 1998: 304). In January 1998 Bolkestein announced that he would be willing to serve as a departmental minister in a cabinet under the leadership of Kok, even if the vvd became the largest party (*de Volkskrant* 26 January 1998). Not only did this take some of the excitement out of the campaign; according to some, the shadow-boxing between rivals who had already determined to continue their cooperation in a new cabinet made the elections unnecessary (van Dam 1998; Kranenburg 1998). Although Bolkestein did announce later that he would stand as candidate for the position of minister-president if the vvd was to become the largest party (*de Volkskrant* 25 April 1998), this hardly rekindled the fire in the campaign, even though the media paid much attention to the 'polarization' between pvda and vvd (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1998: 81). In the end, at least in liberal circles, the electoral success was attributed to a considerable degree to Bolkestein and his style of political leadership (Cornielje & van der Maas 1998: 19).

2.3 D66

d66 was the driving force behind the purple coalition, but threatened to become its greatest victim. It was pvda leader Wim Kok whom the party should perhaps thank for keeping the damage within manageable proportions.

In the final television debate, Kok asked voters not to let d66 down completely, as this could endanger a second purple cabinet.

During the four years preceding the campaign, d66 had not had an easy time. After the dream of the purple cabinet had been realized, the party was confronted with a less pleasant reality. The first incident occurred shortly after the cabinet was installed, when the Minister of Economic Affairs, Hans Wijers, was accused of income tax evasion. More incidents and unpleasanties would follow: electoral losses at the provincial elections; the announcement in 1995 by Hans Van Mierlo that he would not lead the party at the next election; a series of major and minor confrontations between Minister of Justice Winnie Sorgdrager with the Second Chamber and with the top of her own department; the unavailability of Wijers as party leader. The question of leadership succession demanded considerable time and effort (Van Holsteyn & Irwin 1998a: 3-5) and once the choice had fallen on Els Borst, problems were not over. The results in the polls showed a steady decline for the entire period between the elections, and the resurgence generated by the nomination of Borst was short-lived (*De Telegraaf* 12 June 1997). This raised questions concerning her capacities to lead at the election (*de Volkskrant* 20 November 1997; 20 December 1997). Logistical and strategic problems arose for the campaign managers because Borst remained a cabinet minister and thus had responsibilities that kept her from being available full-time for the campaign (Cassee 1998). Only at the last moment did the figures in the polls improve slightly for d66. Three factors seem to have been important: first, the battle to be the largest party between pvda and vvd had been decided; second, d66 announced that it would not participate in a new cabinet if it fell below a minimum number of seats; and third Kok had appealed to voters not to let d66 fall too hard.

2.4 CDA

The cda's fall from grace in 1994 was considerable: major electoral losses and a place in the opposition. Restoring internal order was the party's major priority (*CDA-report* 1994). Party leader Elco Brinkman, successor to the eminently successful Ruud Lubbers, accepted his share of the responsibility for the loss of voters and the inability to manoeuvre the cda into a new cabinet, resigned his position, and soon left politics. He was succeeded by Enneüs Heerma, who was never to become a strong, non-controversial leader. As early as 1996 doubts began to emerge concerning his ability to lead the party at the election in 1998. Indeed, this was not to be and after a rather difficult process, Jaap De Hoop Scheffer was chosen in September 1997 to lead the 1998 list (van Holsteyn and Irwin 1998a, 1-3). This proved to be rather late: five months before the elections, De Hoop Scheffer was by far the least well-known of the

first candidates of the four largest parties (*De Telegraaf* December 9 1997). The 'late' selection was blamed by the campaign team for their inability to increase his voter recognition and present a clear image to the voters (de Vries & Wiggers 1998: 31).

Leadership was not the only problem for the CDA. The party had to adjust to its new role as opposition party. In fact, in January 1995, former vvd leader Hans Wiegel was invited to be a guest speaker at a CDA meeting to outline, from his own experience, the art of providing opposition (Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman 1996: 37). It was not to help. The old traditions of governance could not be transformed easily and quickly into strong opposition. With all these problems, it is hardly surprising to note that the results for the party in the polls remained disappointing. For most of the period, the party hovered around the 20 per cent figure. The actual results were somewhat lower than had been expected from the final polls.

2.5 The small left parties (Green Left, Socialist Party)

After the very disappointing 1994 election (GroenLinks 1994) Paul Rosenmöller became the new parliamentary and party leader of the Green Left party. The inability of the CDA to provide strong opposition provided opportunities for the party during the ensuing period. At the end of 1995 Rosenmöller was chosen by parliamentary journalists as the best politician and in 1997 he finished behind Bolkestein in the voting by his colleagues in the Second Chamber as the most outstanding member of parliament. Green Left's criticism of the policies of the purple coalition centred on social and ecological shortcomings and was aimed in particular at the pvdA. This criticism played a central role in the election campaign of the party, in which a major role was assigned to the popular Rosenmöller (*de Volkskrant* 2 May 1998; cf. Lagendijk & Van der Lee 1998).

In addition to the Green Left, the Socialist Party (sp) provided loud and clear opposition to the purple cabinet and to neo-liberalism in general. The sp and its political leader Jan Marijnissen were forceful both in and outside parliament and managed to attract attention in the media. Moreover, the sp was one of the few parties that managed to increase its membership in this period (Kox 1998). In the run-up to the election of 1998, the party began to fear that the advantageous starting position might lead the party to peak too early and that it would have a negative effect on the campaign in which the party wanted to present itself as the 'anti'-party, as evidenced by its slogan 'Vote Against' (Kox 1998).

2.6 The small religious right (SGP, GPV, RPF)

For the three Protestant religious parties the period 1994-1998 was one which concentrated on cooperation. Following the 1994 election, the RPF took the initiative to give more structure to cooperation between the parties in the Second Chamber (Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman 1995: 72). In 1996 the question was raised whether RPF and GPV could and should submit a joint list of candidates in 1998. The leadership of the GPV had reservations and the party's political leader, Gert Schutte, feared too hasty integration and did not favour the idea. Some members of the RPF were also hesitant and did not support the positions of party leader Leen van Dijke, who also generated national criticism because of remarks he made about homosexuals. The SGP felt that cooperation with RPF and GPV was worthwhile, but because of differences of principle would not agree to any attempt at integration (Hippe et al. 1997: 45). Eventually the parties all submitted separate lists, although they did agree to combine their lists for the purpose of distributing parliamentary seats.

2.7 The extreme right (CD)

In 1994 the extreme right Centre Democrats (CD) increased its representation in parliament from one to three seats, but the ensuing period was characterized, as has so often been the case with the extreme right in the Netherlands, by internal conflicts, struggles against extreme right competitors, and battles with the permanent animosity from the political and social environment (van Holsteyn & Mudde 1998). Combined with the improved economic situation and the satisfaction with the purple cabinet, prospects for the CD did not improve. After the municipal elections in March 1998, in which the extreme right was decimated (van Holsteyn 1998), the disappearance of Hans Janmaat and his fellow party members from the Second Chamber did not come as a surprise.

2.8 The parties for the elderly

In 1994 two parties appealing to the vote of the elderly, the General Alliance for the Elderly (AOV) and Union 55+, made a dramatic entry into the Second Chamber with no less than seven seats. The AOV, which had only been founded in December 1993, had first achieved success at the municipal elections in March and gained six of the seven seats (van Stipdonk & van Holsteyn 1996). The time had been too short to complete construction of an internal party structure; this lack of organization, but also conflicting political insights and personalities brought about a series of conflicts, breakaways, and expulsions

which helped to prevent the intended cooperation with the Union 55+ from taking effect. As a result, no fewer than four parties battled for the elderly vote in 1998, of which none gained representation.

3 Sympathy for political parties and politicians

In the remainder of this article we will examine the reactions of voters to these events and the personalities involved. No data are available to examine these reactions in relation to specific events, but we can look at the end results. A useful summary measure for eliciting the feelings of voters about parties and party leaders is the 100-point sympathy scale.² The questions have been posed in Dutch National Election Studies since 1986, so it is possible to make comparisons over the years (cf. Aarts 1987; Hillebrand & Zielonka-Goei 1987; Irwin 1998; van Holsteyn & Irwin 1992; Anker 1995).

In electoral politics, the first necessity for any party or candidate is name recognition. Thus, before examining the actual scores on the sympathy scale, it is useful to examine to what extent Dutch voters are familiar with the parties and their leaders. One way of examining familiarity is to explore whether respondents are able to answer these questions (cf. Anker 1995). Asking voters to indicate their feelings on a sympathy scale is a fairly simple task, but does require a minimum level of information.

Table 1 Sympathy scores for political parties, 1986, 1994 and 1998

Party	average sympathy score			percentage not making placement		
	1986	1994	1998	1986	1994	1998
Labour	58	57	64	3	3	3
Liberal	46	51	52	5	5	4
CDA	56	52	55	3	3	4
D66	52	58	54	12	7	5
Green Left	-	48	55	-	12	7
- PPR	39	-	-	21	-	-
- CPN	27	-	-	13	-	-
- EVP	27	-	-	23	-	-
- PSP	n.a.	-	-	n.a.	-	-
SGP	26	32	34	30	28	29
GPV	27	32	36	29	29	26
RPF	33	31	36	26	37	34
Centre Party / Centre Democrats	5	6	7	8	6	7
Socialist Party	-	-	44	-	-	20
Alliance of the Elderly	-	-	44	-	-	26

Table 2 Sympathy scores for politicians, 1986-1998

Politician	average sympathy score				percentage not making placement			
	1986	1989	1994	1998	1986	1989	1994	1998
Joop den Uyl (Labour)	54	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Wim Kok (Labour)	58	65	64	72	6	0	2	2
Ruud Lubbers (CDA)	66	70	67	-	2	0	1	-
Elco Brinkman (CDA)	-	-	46	-	-	-	2	-
Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (CDA)	-	-	-	52	-	-	-	21
Ed Nijpels (Liberal)	43	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Joris Voorhoeve (Liberal)	-	43	-	-	-	2	-	-
Frits Bolkestein (Liberal)	-	-	47	50	-	-	11	5
Hans van Mierlo (D66)	53	65	60	-	10	2	4	-
Els Borst (D66)	-	-	-	53	-	-	-	9
Thom de Graaf (D66)	-	-	-	56	-	-	-	51
Ina Brouwer (GrL)	-	-	48	-	-	-	27	-
Mohammed Rabbæ (GrL)	-	-	44	-	-	-	48	-
Paul Rosenmøller (GrL)	-	-	-	63	-	-	-	20
Jan Marijnissen (SP)	-	-	-	55	-	-	-	43
Bas van der Vlies (SGP)	-	-	38	-	-	-	83	-
Gert Schutte (GPV)	-	-	43	47	-	-	56	52
Leen van Dijke (RPF)	-	-	38	-	-	-	89	-
Hans Janmaat (CD)	-	-	5	5	-	-	5	7

The percentages in Tables 1 and 2 provide some interesting insights into the familiarity of Dutch voters with a broad range of parties and leaders. First, we may note that virtually all voters were sufficiently familiar with the major parties to provide an indication of their attitude to the parties. Only approximately 3 to 5 per cent were unable or unwilling to give a response for the PVDA, the CDA and the VVD. D66 is slightly less familiar, with percentages ranging up to 12 per cent in 1986. Close behind is the Green Left, which seems to have been more familiar to voters in 1998 than in 1994 (7 per cent unable to place in 1998 as compared to 12 per cent in 1994). The small religious parties are considerably less familiar to voters, with percentages ranging from 26 to 37. In 1998 voters were slightly more familiar with the two parties that entered

parliament in 1994 for the first time; 20 per cent had no opinion about the Socialist Party and 26 per cent had none about the Alliance of the Elderly. One of the most extraordinary findings in Table 1 is the extent to which the Centre Democrats is recognized. Virtually as many persons expressed their feelings about this right-wing party as about the large parties.

Comparisons of the percentages concerning the parties with those concerning individuals are quite revealing. Despite the continuity of the major parties, some politicians are apparently even more familiar to voters than the parties they represent. The percentages unwilling or unable to express their attitude to prominent politicians such as the former prime minister Lubbers, prime minister Kok, and CDA leader Brinkman are lower than for any of the political parties. More respondents expressed their attitude to Hans van Mierlo in 1986 and 1994 than to his party (D66). The fact that more respondents had an opinion about the leaders of the parties than about the parties themselves, is surely of importance when the electoral effects of leaders are examined, although this does not hold for all cases. A higher percentage of the respondents had no attitude to the VVD leader Frits Bolkestein than to his party in both 1994 and 1998. In 1994 this figure was at 11 per cent; it dropped to 5 per cent. Since Els Borst took over the leadership of D66 only a few months before the election, it is not surprising that her percentage (9 per cent) is higher than that for her party (5 per cent). In fact, she seems to have done quite well in gaining name recognition, especially if compared to the new CDA leader Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: 21 per cent of the respondents were unable or unwilling to express their attitude to him.

Whereas, with the exception of De Hoop Scheffer, the leaders of the major parties were recognized at levels only a few percentage points lower than their parties, at the worst, this does not hold in general for smaller parties. Even Green Left, which as a party ranked only slightly lower than the major parties, has had leaders with lower levels of recognition. In 1994, Ina Brouwer and Mohammad Rabbæ elicited 'no response' from 27 and 48 per cent of the respondents respectively. Paul Rosenmöller did better in 1998, but with 20 per cent still fell far below all the major party leaders (except, of course, De Hoop Scheffer). For the smaller religious parties, more than 80 per cent of the respondents expressed no attitude to Bas Van der Vlies (SGP) and Leen Van Dijke (RPF) in 1994; Gert Schutte (GPV) did not receive a rating by more than half of the respondents in 1994 and 1998. The major exception to this is the leader of the Centre Democrats, Hans Janmaat, who received no response from only 5 and 7 per cent of the respondents in 1994 and 1998, respectively.

If we look at the average levels of sympathy for the parties, we note first that the scores for the major parties tend to cluster around 50 to 60 points. Green Left has also moved into this range with 48 points in 1994 and 55 points in 1998, a considerable improvement on the scores for the component parties in 1986.

The three small religious parties received lower average ratings, between 26 and 36 points. The two new parties in 1998 are rated slightly better (44 points). As mentioned above, virtually every respondent was familiar with the Centre Democrats, however, the feelings were almost entirely negative: average scores were 5, 6 and 7 points.

Since larger parties (and their politicians) have more supporters, one would expect their scores to be higher than for parties which garner only a small percentage of the vote. More interesting, therefore, is an examination of how averages change over time. We note first that, with the exception of D66 only, the averages were higher in 1998 than in 1994. This might indicate a general rise in affect for political parties, or it may simply reflect a slightly different use of the sympathy scale by the 1998 sample. In either case, the drop from 58 to 54 for D66 is telling, and indicates that holding office was not advantageous for this party. The contrast with the PvdA – which registers the highest gain, from 57 to 64 points – is large. Clearly, the PvdA has not suffered from its participation in the purple cabinet. On the contrary, it is the only party to exceed an average score of 60. It is also the only party of the three coalition partners to profit from participation, since the VVD figures hardly changed (51 and 52 points). Both major opposition parties show a rise in average sympathy. For the CDA the increase is roughly in line with the general rise and is perhaps thus an artefact, but for Green Left it is greater. The successful opposition by Green Left has been noted above, and this seems to have been rewarded in the attitudes of voters.

The averages for party leaders are considerably more volatile than those for the parties. This should not be surprising, since most parties continue from election to election, whereas party leaders come and go. The most dramatic change was that from Ruud Lubbers to Elco Brinkman in 1994. The latter had an average score 20 or more points lower than his predecessor. In 1998, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer was rather less well-known than either, but nevertheless scored better than Brinkman. A change of leadership caused a change for Green Left that was almost as dramatic, but in this case the reaction was in the opposite direction, and Rosenmöller received the second highest average among all politicians in 1998, with an average score of 63. Perhaps somewhat less dramatic than some observers might have anticipated was the shift from Hans van Mierlo to Els Borst for D66. The average for Borst is seven to twelve points lower than that for Van Mierlo in the two previous elections, but equal to his average in 1986. Moreover, this average exceeds slightly that for both the CDA and VVD leaders. And the prospects for the future are also not bleak, since the likely leader at the next elections, Thom De Graaf, received a score of 56.

Kok and Bolkestein led their parties at both the 1994 and 1998 elections. Despite being seen by his colleagues as the most outstanding member of the Second Chamber, Bolkestein did not score particularly well with the voters.

In 1994 his score of 47 is on the 'cold' side of the scale. In 1998 the average score rises to 50, but this is still the lowest among the leaders of the larger parties. They can be contrasted with those for Wim Kok, who had an average score of 58 in 1986 and has increased since. After four years as prime minister his average rose from 64 in 1994 to 72 in 1998, the highest score in the table. Both for Kok personally (+8) and for his party (+7) the four years in office resulted in substantial gains in sympathy among the electorate.

In these tables both supporters and opponents of the parties have registered their feelings. It makes a considerable difference, however, if the changes in averages came about because of changes across all voters or because of changes among supporters or opponents only. For example, if the rise in evaluation for Kok and the Labour Party came about because of intense satisfaction among traditional party supporters, this is of far less importance electorally than if the rise occurred among voters who represent potential new voters.

In order to examine the composition of these figures more closely, we make use of the concepts of 'heartlands' and a 'battlefield' (Irwin & van Holsteyn 1989; cf. Heath, Jowell & Curtice 1985). These concepts are based upon the argument that the ideological structure of the party space in the Netherlands is essentially two-dimensional (cf. Irwin et al. 1987). One dimension can be defined as the socio-economic left-right dimension; we have operationalized this using attitudes toward the distribution of income in the country. The second dimension is a religious-ethical dimension, that was first operationalized by attitudes toward abortion and later by attitudes toward euthanasia. In the Dutch National Election Studies, these attitudes were measured on 7-point scales.³ Combining the two produces 49 cells in which the respondents place themselves. We have defined what we call 'ideological heartlands' as shown in Figure 1; these are assumed to be the areas from which the PvdA, VVD and CDA draw their (ideological core) support (cf. Irwin & van Holsteyn 1989, 1997). One of the problems that D66 has always faced is that it has never been clear whether it had a specific ideological heartland or not. The Green Left competes for votes primarily within a portion of the Labour heartland, whereas the small religious parties can be found within the Christian Democratic heartland. The area between these heartlands has been termed the 'battlefield'; here all parties battle for electoral support.

In Figure 1 the percentages of the samples that place themselves in these four areas are shown for the last three elections. They seem to indicate a shift in 1998 away from the Liberal heartland to the Labour heartland and the battlefield. The CDA heartland is quite similar in size to 1994.⁴ In our analysis here we are interested in the shifts in average levels of sympathy within the various areas. These figures are given in Table 3.

Figure 1 Distribution of the electorate over the parties ideological heartlands and battlefield, 1989-1998

	reduce income differences	2	3	4	5	6	increase income differences	
allow euthanasia	Labour (PvdA) heartland 1989 29% 1994 27% 1998 32%				Liberal (VVD) heartland 1989 14% 1994 20% 1998 10%			
		2						
		3						
4				battlefield 1989 40% 1994 41% 1998 45%				
5								
6				Christian Democratic (CDA) heartland 1989 17% 1994 12% 1998 13%				
	forbid euthanasia							

The PvdA was found to have the greatest overall gain in average sympathy, and the breakdown reveals that this was *not* due primarily to greater satisfaction among its most likely supporters (a rise from 64 to 68), but more to inroads into adjoining areas of the ideological space. The rise in the battlefield area is from 57 to 64 and in the VVD heartland from 49 to 59. Participation in a coalition with the VVD seems to have had considerable impact on voters in this heartland. By contrast, VVD participation in the purple coalition produced only modest positive results and the contrast between

Table 3 Average levels of sympathy for parties within ideological heartlands and the battlefield, 1994 and 1998

Party	Labour heartland		Liberal heartland		CDA heartland		Battlefield	
	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998
Labour	64	68	49	59	55	58	57	64
Liberal	41	44	64	66	48	49	52	55
CDA	42	51	54	55	61	63	54	56
D66	59	56	58	55	49	43	60	54
Green Left	56	63	40	49	35	45	49	54
SGP	25	29	31	30	45	52	31	33
GPV	24	31	31	31	47	56	31	36
RPF	23	30	29	31	50	56	31	35
CD	5	7	9	7	5	7	5	6
SP		51		36		35		43
AOV		45		42		43		43

pvdA and vvd is great when one compares the two heartlands. In the Labour heartland there is a gap of 24 points between the two parties, whereas in the Liberal heartland this gap is only 7 points. Participation in the government coalition has been more important for Labour than for the Liberals.

Nevertheless, there is one caveat. In participating in the cabinet, the pvdA gained sympathy in all areas, particularly the adjoining ones. However, this brought risk in its own area, where the left-wing opposition party Green Left made a considerable gain and the Socialist Party received its highest score. Even the CDA managed to gain in sympathy among voters in this area, possibly as a result of the more leftist image of its election programme (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1998: 46, 75). In any case, it is telling that all opposition parties won in sympathy in the area which is seen as the source of support for the pvdA, the dominant party in the first Kok cabinet.

D66 suffered in all areas. It dropped 3 points in the Labour and Liberal heartlands and 6 points in the CDA heartland and the battlefield. Holding office has brought it nothing in any of the four areas.

Somewhat surprisingly, appreciation of the role of the CDA as opposition party seems to have been greatest not in its own area, but in the Labour heartland where the rise is 9 points. In other areas the gains are only 1 or 2 points, which, as has been stated, reflects a general trend in the two samples. The CDA has clearly not been able to compensate for its loss of office. Within its own area the rise in sympathy for the small religious parties may pose a threat. In 1998, the GPV and RPF score only somewhat lower than the CDA. This could possibly indicate that the stronger policy stands of the smaller parties is evaluated more highly by voters in this area, especially since the CDA no longer holds office.

4 The continued decline of the structured model

In previous research, we have argued that the heartland model is replacing the structured model as the basis for understanding Dutch voting behaviour (Irwin & van Holsteyn 1989; 1997). This structured model reflects the divisions within Dutch society that produced the political party system at the end of the 19th century, and is based on religion and social class. Before turning to further analysis within the heartland model, it is worth examining the continued decline of the structured model.

According to this model, practising adherents (i.e., those attending religious services at least once a month) of the three major religious groups, Catholics, Dutch Reformed, and Gereformeerd (Calvanists), are expected to vote for the CDA. Those with no religious identification (or who attend religious services infrequently) are expected to vote along social class lines, the working class for the pvdA and the middle class for the vvd. Whereas at the height of the system of pillarization in the mid-1950s 72 per cent of the voters voted in line with these expectations, in 1994 this had been halved to only 36 per cent (Andeweg 1995b; Irwin & van Holsteyn 1997). Given the steady decline, it is initially surprising to note that the figure for 1998 was 38 per cent (cf. Voorthuisen 1999).

However, this apparent rise in the percentage voting along structured lines, masks the changes that are still taking place. As late as 1968, 93 per cent of the votes cast along structured lines were cast for the predecessors of the CDA or for the pvdA. These parties formed the backbone of the pillarized structure of society. By 1994 this figure had declined to 56 per cent, and for 1998 it was even lower, 51 per cent.

A second indication that, despite the initial impression, the structured model actually declined in importance in 1998 is found if one computes the minimal figure for each election. This figure is found by assuming that the distribution of the vote for the electorate as a whole also held for each of the components of the structured model. If the vote was randomly distributed over the groups, the expected percentage of votes along structured lines would have been 21 per cent in 1994. In 1998 this rose to 24 per cent. The actual figure for 1998 is thus only 14 per cent higher. The structured model continues its slow road to oblivion.

5 Short-term factors

The ideological dimensions of the heartland model help to structure the thinking of voters concerning the various political parties. However, short-term, external factors are influential in either strengthening resolve or moving voters away from the most favoured party in the heartland and in deciding the fate

of the parties in the battlefield. Two factors that have been seen as particularly important in recent elections are how voters feel about the economy and the economic performance of the government, and how voters react to the leaders of the various parties.

In another contribution to this special issue it is noted that voters were extremely happy with the policies of the Kok government. Voter satisfaction with the policies of the purple coalition was higher than for any other coalition in the previous two decades. 60 per cent of the voters felt that government policies had had a positive influence on the general economic situation in the country; 64 per cent thought the impact on employment had been positive; and 27 per cent felt that their personal financial situation had been influenced positively. Only 8, 12, and 23 per cent felt that policies had had a negative influence in each of these three areas, respectively.

In journalistic accounts of the 1998 election, considerable attention was also given to the party leaders. It was often pictured as a battle between Wim Kok of PvdA and Frits Bolkestein of VVD (cf. Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1998). Separating the appeal of the party leader from that of the party is extremely difficult. Dutch voters claim that they vote for the party not the man (or woman) (Irwin 1998; Irwin & van Holsteyn 1998), but aggregate analysis shows that popular leaders and excellent electoral results often go hand in hand.

The fact that politicians are seen as important for the electoral success of political parties is hardly new (cf. van Holsteyn and Irwin 1998b; van Praag 1998), but with the decline of the structured model this importance has increased. It remains difficult, however, to gain insight into the precise mechanisms the voters employ and how they allow their evaluations to impact their vote choices. Questions concerning various aspects, characteristics, or appearance of politicians that may be important have been employed to increase understanding in this area, but none has emerged as dominant (cf. Anker 1992, 1995; Enzlin 1998; Irwin 1983, Irwin et al. 1987; Jansen & van Holsteyn 1998; Pröper & Bouwman 1994; van Holsteyn 1987).

One way of attempting to disassociate candidate and party is to compare the sympathy ratings of the party with that of the party leader (Irwin 1998). If a party leader receives a higher level of sympathy than the party, the candidate may be able to pull some additional votes for the party. If, however, the rating is lower than the party, the danger that votes can be lost to other parties surely increases. Table 4 presents a comparison of the party leader, that is the first candidate on the electoral list, and his or her party for both the 1994 and 1998 elections.

In addition to the first candidates on the list, figures are given for 1994 for Ruud Lubbers, who was then no longer a candidate. These figures are of interest for comparison and because Lubbers played an important, albeit controversial role in the campaign that year. Even after his retirement from politics

he was still seen at various times before and during the campaign in 1998 as the possible saviour of the Christian Democrats (Bloemendaal & van der Horst 1997; *De Telegraaf* 4 March 1997). Lubbers had received quite high marks in several elections and this continued in 1994, as two-thirds of the voters viewed him more positively than his party. This is the highest rating above the party found in the table. The contrast with his successor, Elco Brinkman, could hardly have been greater. Almost half of all voters rated Brinkman lower than the party. Although causality cannot be proven, it is hard not to look to Brinkman as a source of the loss of 20 seats in 1994 (cf. de Vette 1996). In 1998, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer hardly did better than Brinkman; the primary difference is that he was simply less well-known rather than disliked by many voters. He undoubtedly suffered from his lack of experience as a government minister which for so many years had been the basis for building voter confidence in CDA politicians when the CDA held office.

The politician who has succeeded Lubbers as the politician most highly rated above his party is Wim Kok. Already in 1994 a majority of the voters gave him a higher rating than his party. Many observers feel that his experience as

Table 4 Comparison of sympathy ratings of party leaders and their parties.

		scores politician (Po) - party (Pa)			
		Po > Pa	Po = Pa	Po < Pa	no comparison*
Labour	1994: Kok	52	25	19	4
	1998: Kok	51	30	15	4
CDA	1994: Lubbers	68	18	11	3
	1994: Brinkman	23	24	49	4
	1998: De Hoop Scheffer	20	26	33	21
Liberal	1994: Bolkestein	25	22	41	12
	1998: Bolkestein	28	30	37	6
D66	1994: Van Mierlo	36	31	24	8
	1998: Borst	33	23	33	11
Green Left	1994: Brouwer	22	19	28	30
	1994: Rabbae	13	12	25	50
	1998: Rosenmøller	38	24	17	22
GPV	1994: Schutte	21	14	6	59
	1998: Schutte	24	15	8	54
SGP	1994: Van der Vlies	6	6	4	84
RPF	1994: Van Dijke	4	4	3	89
Centre Democrats	1994: Janmaat	6	75	11	8
	1998: Janmaat	8	70	11	11
Socialist Party	1998: Marijnissen	28	16	10	46

* Either the candidate or party received no rating by the respondent, so no comparison can be made.

prime minister has made him even more popular and there was often talk of the 'prime-minister electoral bonus'.

During the campaign, Frits Bolkestein at times attempted to defuse the presentation of the election as a struggle between himself and Kok. The figures in Table 4 provide an insight into the reasoning behind this strategy. Although there was talk of a 'Bolkestein effect' in both 1994 and 1998, this was probably overrated. Only roughly a quarter of the voters rated Bolkestein higher than his party, with only a small increase between 1994 and 1998. In general he was rated lower than the party in both years, approximately 40 per cent.⁵

It becomes difficult to blame Els Borst for the losses suffered by D66. At least in terms of this summary measure, she was not evaluated that much more poorly than her predecessor Van Mierlo. Among the smaller parties, the most substantial change was for Green Left, where Paul Rosenmöller was not only more visible than his predecessors Brouwer and Rabbæ, but also more highly rated. 38 per cent of respondents rated him more highly than his party which is exceeded only by Lubbers and Kok. In 1998, among those who recognized him, Jan Marijnissen often received a higher rating than his party. All of the parties on the left thus had leaders in 1998 who were more highly rated than their party. Such figures make it more understandable why Kok attempted to

Table 5 Relative sympathy ratings of party leaders in heartlands and battlefield.

		Heartlands			Battle	Overall
		Labour	Liberal	Chr.Dem.		
Labour	1994: Kok	19	46	49	34	34
	1998: Kok	25	52	41	39	38
CDA	1994: Lubbers	62	60	41	58	57
	1994: Brinkman	-22	-21	-34	-29	-26
	1998: De Hoop Scheffer	-9	-11	-19	-17	-16
Liberal	1994: Bolkestein	-6	-33	-2	-20	-17
	1998: Bolkestein	-3	-19	-2	-14	-9
D66	1994: Van Mierlo	9	14	24	10	12
	1998: Borst	-5	-10	18	0	-1
Green Left	1994: Brouwer	-18	7	10	-9	-6
	1994: Rabbæ	-25	-3	2	-14	-13
	1998: Rosenmöller	13	30	26	25	22
GPV	1994: Schutte	14	18	3	19	16
	1998: Schutte	15	19	10	18	16
SGP	1994: Van der Vlies	3	3	-2	2	2
RPF	1994: Van Dijke	2	3	-4	2	1
Centre Democrats	1994: Janmaat	-3	-7	-2	-6	-5
	1998: Janmaat	-4	-6	-3	-3	-3
Socialist Party	1998: Marijnissen	7	27	24	22	18

avoid a direct confrontation with his leftist rivals during the campaign (cf. *de Volkskrant* 21 april 1998).

Once again, a breakdown to examine the figures within each of the various areas of the heartland model provides additional insight into the potential for leaders to gain (or lose) votes for their party. In Table 5 we have presented the difference scores, that is the percentage rating the person higher than the party minus the percentage rating the person lower than the party. In this way we obtain an indicator for those cases in which the leader should prove a bonus to the party and those cases in which the candidate may be a detriment (cf. Anker 1992). The latter is important, since, although analysts are more often inclined to attribute positive effects to candidates who win votes for their party, research has shown that candidates may also repel voters and lose votes for the party (Irwin 1983: 194).

The first conclusion to be drawn from this table is that, without exception, the lowest difference scores are those within the natural heartland for a party. The explanation seems fairly obvious. Within the heartlands, voters have an ideological affinity with the party (or parties). They may identify themselves strongly with the party and tend to give the parties high sympathy ratings. Achieving a rating that is even higher than the party may be a major achievement for a party leader. In the other two heartlands, the ideological affinity for such parties is naturally less, as will be reflected in the sympathy score for the party. But an impressive leader may be admired by voters outside the party he or she represents. This mechanism also lies at the heart of the idea that holding the position of prime minister may bring an electoral bonus.

If we look at the leader-party relationship for each of the parties, we again see the importance of Wim Kok for the Labour Party. He is far ahead of his party in each of the other heartlands and the battlefield. The shift from Minister of Finance in a cabinet with the CDA to prime minister in a cabinet with the VVD seems to have affected his ratings in the related heartlands. His difference score rose by 6 per cent in the Liberal heartland and dropped 8 per cent in the Christian-Democratic heartland. Comparison of these figures with those for the CDA leaders shows that the PVDA should be aware of what danger may lie ahead when Kok is no longer party leader. Former prime minister Ruud Lubbers had even greater popularity above his party in each of the four areas. It proved impossible, however, to transfer this popularity to his successor Elco Brinkman, who was roughly equally unpopular in each of the areas. In 1998 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer managed to reduce the negative scores, particularly in the Labour and Liberal heartlands, but it is hardly likely that this gained many votes for his party.

For Frits Bolkestein the most important change between 1994 and 1998 was his effectiveness in reducing his negative score within his own heartland. However, the 1998 score of -19 remains one of the lowest scores within one's

own heartland. Bolkestein does not seem to have profited as much as Wim Kok from his party's participation in the purple coalition. This may be related to his decision not to accept a ministerial post, but his figures remain unchanged in the Christian-Democratic heartland and drop only 3 points in the Labour heartland. Based on these figures we must conclude that the gains by the vvd in 1998 were probably due more to other factors than the sympathy for the party leader.

D66 was given relatively low ratings in the CDA heartland. However, both Van Mierlo in 1994 and Borst in 1998 are viewed more mildly and score above their party in this heartland. Van Mierlo also had positive difference scores in the other areas; Borst, however, has negative scores in the other areas, albeit barely in the battlefield.

Rosenmöller scored far better than his predecessors Brouwer and Rabbae, two more examples of instances in which candidates had positive scores in some areas and negative in others. Rosenmöller has positive scores in all areas, with his greatest difference in the Liberal heartland. Even though affinity with Green Left may be low in this area, a difference score of 30 may be large enough to pick up at least some votes. The same conclusion can apply to Jan Marijnissen, who also has positive scores in each of the areas.

6 The vote

The ideological heartlands have been labelled according to the major parties that are expected to draw strong support in these areas, but short-term factors can move voters away from or towards the party in the heartland. From the information presented above, we can sketch how these factors, particularly economic performance and quality of leadership, could potentially influence the vote in 1998. First of all, we noted that levels of satisfaction in economic performance were high in all areas. This should have produced a beneficial climate for the partners in the coalition. However, since voters can choose only one of the three partners, the question is how they make this determination. Most likely this will have worked to the detriment of D66. When voters are dissatisfied with the economic performance of the government and the major party in their heartland, they often turn to D66 (cf. Kaashoek 1995: 202-3). However, with satisfaction high there is no reason to do so, and voters may remain with the heartland party. In the battlefield, since D66 was the smallest partner and the other partners were more prominent in economic policy (and the popular D66 Minister of Economics Wijers was not a candidate), it is unlikely that D66 would benefit from the satisfaction with economic performance.

The Labour Party clearly had the strongest candidate in Wim Kok. How-

ever, he also faced the strongest opposition, since both Green Left and the Socialist Party fielded attractive candidates. Liberal leader Bolkestein was not a particularly strong candidate, nor was Els Borst for D66, so economic and other policy considerations may have prevailed for these parties. The CDA produced a leader who was relatively unknown and not sufficiently attractive to regain voters who had been lost in 1994.

Given these considerations, we can examine the vote within each of the heartlands for 1994 and 1998 (see Table 6). Beginning with the Labour heartland, we find that the pvdA received 44 per cent of the vote in this area. This is a slight increase over 1994. There was strong competition from the Green Left and the Socialist Party, but both the CDA and the vvd increased their percentages slightly. D66 and the Alliance of the Elderly lost heavily. In this area, both in 1994 and 1998, four out of every five votes went to the three leftist parties (pvdA, Green Left, SP) or to D66. Short-term factors redistributed the vote among these parties; the inroads of 'outsiders' was minimal.

The vvd advanced substantially in its own heartland from 54 to 62 per cent. The pvdA increased its vote slightly and the other parties of the left made slight inroads into the area as well. D66 fell from 18 to 10 per cent of the vote here,

Table 6 Vote preferences in heartlands and battlefield, 1994 and 1998

	Labour heartland		Liberal heartland		Christ.-Dem. heartland		Battlefield	
	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998
Labour	42	44	9	11	19	19	23	26
Liberal	8	9	54	62	5	10	20	25
CDA	8	10	13	12	45	31	24	21
D66	18	12	18	10	6	3	22	15
Green Left	13	15	1	3	2	3	4	7
SGP					4	7		
GPV	0				6	7		0
RPF					8	17	1	1
CD		0	1	1	1		1	0
SP	3	9	0	1	1	1		3
Alliance of the Elderly /								
Union 55+	6	1	3		3		4	0
Other	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	100%	101%	100%	101%	101%	99%	100%	99%
N	359	???	277	???	137	???	562	???

while the CDA also lost slightly. In this heartland, VVD and D66 account for more than 70 per cent of the vote in both years.

The CDA fell dramatically from 45 per cent in 1994 to only 31 per cent in 1998. A large percentage of these votes went to the smaller religious parties. A hypothesis for this shift might be that, since the CDA was no longer a governing party, voters felt that the smaller religious parties better expressed their ideological sentiments than the CDA. Other votes shifted to the VVD (from 5 to 10 per cent). The PvdA held its own and D66 lost somewhat. The figure of 19 per cent for the PvdA in each of the elections is the highest figure for a party outside its own heartland or the battlefield. The CDA is thus being squeezed from three sides – by the small religious parties, PvdA and the VVD. Since the size of the area is also declining, the challenge for the future of the party is great.

As usual, the battlefield best reflects the general electoral trends. The PvdA and VVD showed strong gains in this area, while D66 and the CDA lost votes. The Green Left and the Socialist Party made strong showings with 7 and 3 per cent respectively.

7 Conclusions

In 1994 the PvdA and the VVD took the risky decision to cooperate in a cabinet. The risk centred on how well they could convince the electorate in general and their traditional supporters in particular that they could remain true to their ideals and still work together. In particular for the PvdA this meant a shift toward the centre of the political spectrum. In the Strom terminology, policy was sublimated to office. The hope was that whatever policy compromises would have to be made, the electorate would react positively to an improved image of the party as a responsible, and especially no longer spend-thrifty party and to the leadership of prime minister Wim Kok. With opponent parties to their left, this strategy presented greater risks for the PvdA than for the VVD. Frits Bolkestein was well aware of the risks for his party. His decision to remain in the parliament rather than accept a ministerial post surely rested in part on a desire to maintain a separate identity. In this he was quite successful, as at times it seemed almost as if he was the opposition leader. From his position in parliament he was able to concentrate on the formulation of the policy goals of the party, while at the same time enjoying holding office.

The strategies of both parties proved successful, at least in the short run. Both were helped by excellent economic results and resulting high levels of satisfaction in the electorate. In this case, office was translated into votes. We have seen that the voters reacted positively to both the PvdA and to party leader Kok. Office remains a precarious choice for Labour, however. When the party moves to the centre and cooperates with the right, votes are lost to the left.

Highly policy-oriented voters do not always appreciate the compromises that office makes necessary. The challenge for the party will be to transfer the confidence in Wim Kok to a successor and to the party itself in order to compensate any losses in its own heartland with gains in other ideological areas.

The CDA is presented with a strong challenge. After decades of building its reputation in office, it saw this fall away in 1994. This contributed to additional loss of votes in 1998. The smaller religious parties in this heartland have always been more explicit in their policy goals, since they never have to compromise in office. But once the CDA no longer held office, some voters may have turned away from this party and turned to the smaller parties for more clearly specified policy positions. If the CDA attempts to combat this by formulating stronger and more explicit goals, especially along the religious dimension, it risks making collaboration with the other parties more difficult and a return to office more uncertain.

Once again, a choice for office has proven detrimental to D66. The policy goals of D66 are the least clearly perceived by the electorate. When in opposition, D66 can profit from dissatisfaction with governing parties. When in office itself, it loses this possibility and is seldom given the credit for the good things the cabinet achieves.

The first purple cabinet was blessed with a period of economic boom, profited from the situation electorally, and translated this into a second purple cabinet. The purple sequel may not, however, be as fortunate.

Economic developments and a change in party political leadership can have significant influence upon the vote, and thereby affect the policy-office-vote calculations. The structured pillarized model of voting behaviour has a strongly diminished ability to explain the vote, and the ideological heartlands model seems to be losing rather than gaining in importance. This is to be expected as a result of the continued cooperation between PvdA and VVD, the two parties who are presumed to be the most removed from one another along ideological lines. In the future, understanding voter decisions will probably be forced to rely even more on the role that certain factors play, such as reactions to performance in office, particularly economic performance, how well parties are able to translate their policy desires into governmental policy, and the characteristics and attractiveness of party leaders.

Notes

1. See the review of this book by Van der Kolk in this issue.
2. After the following introduction, voters are asked to express their feelings toward various stimuli:

"There are many political parties in our country. I would like to know from you how sympathetic you find some of these parties. To that end, you can give each party a score between 0 and 100. The more sympathetic you find a party, the more points you give it. A score of 50 means that you find a party neither sympathetic nor unsympathetic. If you don't know a party, please feel free to say so."

...

"I would also like to know how sympathetic you find some of our politicians. If you don't know a politician, please feel free to say so."

3. The questions read as follows:

"Now a few questions about political affairs that are regularly in the news. When a doctor ends the life of a person at the latter's request, this is called euthanasia. Some people think that euthanasia should be forbidden by law. Others feel that a doctor should always be allowed to end a life, if the patient makes that request. Of course, there are also people whose opinions lie somewhere between the two extremes.

Suppose that the people (and parties) who think that euthanasia should be forbidden are at the beginning of this line (at number 1), and the people (and parties) who feel that a doctor should always be allowed to end a life upon a patient's request are at the end of the line (at number 7).

I will ask you first to place some political parties on the line. If you have no idea at all which position a party has, then please feel free to say so."

...

"And where would you place yourself on the line?"

"Here is another showcard. Some people think that the differences in incomes in our country should be increased (number 1). Others think that these differences should be decreased (number 7). Of course, there are people whose opinion is somewhere between the two extremes."

...

"And where would you place yourself on this line?"

4. For more on the attitudes of voters toward such issues, see the contribution of Pieter van Wijnen in this issue.

5. This does not exclude the possibility that Bolkestein has influence in a rather peculiar, ideosyncratic way (cf. Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1998: 135).

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