

**Explaining party evaluations in the Netherlands
(1970–2005)**

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1. Introduction

In electoral research voting behaviour is usually analysed in terms of a single categorical variable, namely vote choice in terms of the party or candidate voted for, and one set of explanatory variables. The latter may include concepts such as religion, social class, ideological positions, policy preferences, and so forth. Some scholars have argued that voting can best be analysed in another way. The most notable example are the Michigan scholars, who in *The American Voter* introduced the notion of a 'funnel of causality' (Campbell et al., 1960). According to this notion, "events are conceived to follow each other in a converging sequence of causal chains, moving from the mouth to the stem of the funnel." (p. 24). In the Michigan model voting behaviour was seen most directly as a consequence of attitudes towards candidates, policies, and group benefits. These attitudes are influenced by voters' party-identification, which in turn is determined by social characteristics, which are located in the mouth of the funnel.

In European electoral research applying the Michigan model appeared to be problematic, because party identification 'behaved' differently than in the United States. On the basis of a study by Jacques Thomassen the Netherlands have been considered the oddest case (Miller and Shanks 1996: 117). Thomassen (1976) questioned whether the party identification concept could be applied to the Netherlands. On the basis of an analysis of panel data from the 1970-1972 period he concluded that it probably could not. This conclusion was based on three findings: (1) party identification was less stable than vote choice, (2) the distinction between party identification and vote choice could be due to unreliability of the measurement, and (3) party identification seemed not to be prior to vote choice (p. 77). Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983, ch. 8) also concluded that in the Netherlands party identification was (too) instable. Additionally, they pointed to another problem, namely that in the Netherlands voters frequently identified with more than one party. This is incompatible with the concept of party identification, they concluded (see also Niemöller and Van der Eijk 1984: 533-534). The finding that the concept of party identification cannot be applied to the Netherlands, has led these scholars to conclude that we should instead focus on identification in terms of social groups (Thomassen, 1976) or ideology (Niemöller and Van der Eijk, 1984). It should be questioned, however, whether this is the best strategy. Political parties are such central objects in the electoral process, that how voters feel about them cannot be ignored if one wants to understand their behaviour. The only question, then, is *how* the influence of those feelings on voting behaviour has to be analysed.

In my view (Rosema, 2004, under review) the solution is to be found in an alternative conceptualisation of partisanship. Arguably, in the European context partisanship can best be conceptualised in terms of evaluation instead of identification. Such a conceptualisation builds on the social psychological notion of attitudes (Greene, 1999). This means that the link between parties and voters is conceptualised in terms of liking versus disliking, rather than in terms of a social identity. This difference in conceptualisation can be expressed by modifying the vocabulary and discussing

partisanship in terms of party evaluations (analogous to the notion of candidate evaluations, which are commonly focused on in American electoral research) instead of party identification. With respect to the causal structure of voting models, this implies that voting may be viewed as the result of a two-stage process. The first stage consists of the formation and change of images of parties, candidates, and governments, as well as the formation and change of evaluations of those same objects. The second stage is one of decision-making in relation to a specific upcoming election. According to the view proposed, voters decide on the basis of the evaluations created in the first stage, in particular the evaluations of the parties. This implies that the main task of electoral researchers is three-fold: (1) to examine to what extent people vote in line with their party evaluations, (2) to explain why some people prefer to vote for a party they do not like best (p.e., strategic voting), and (3) to explain why voters like or dislike political parties to a certain degree.

The strategy adopted may be considered interesting for one reason in particular. In voting theory it is usually assumed that what matters with respect to how voters feel about parties (or candidates) is the same across all parties (or candidates). The same set of characteristics that make up the image one has of a party is assumed to be relevant for how voters evaluate each party. For example, the proximity model of issue voting assumes that voters evaluate all parties or candidates on the basis of the same set of issues (Enelow and Hinich, 1984). Each issue is assumed to be equally important for each party or candidate. We may refer to this as the assumption of homogeneity in bases of evaluation (cf. Rosema, 2004). Explaining party evaluations and performing separate analyses for each party provides a basis to examine whether in practice this assumption is accurate. If it would be, then we should find that particular phenomena have a similar impact on voters' evaluations, irrespective of which party is focused on. According to an alternative view, one party may be evaluated on the basis of one issue, while another party is evaluated on the basis of another. Note that the idea that different parties may be evaluated on the basis of different criteria not only applies to the kinds of issues, but also to the kinds of characteristics. It is possible that one party is liked or disliked because of its policy positions, while another is because of the personal competence of its leader or because of the way it performed in the government. In voting theories such differences have often not been taken into account.

This paper will examine this matter by focusing on the explanation of party evaluations in the Netherlands. Basis for analysis are data from the Dutch Election Study (1970) and three Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies (1986, 1998, and 2002).¹ Hence, party evaluations are analysed for the period from 1970 to date by focusing on one election from each decade. Party evaluations will be analysed in relation to several variables that are commonly used to explain vote choice: voters' social characteristics, policy preferences, ideological positions, and government satisfaction. The parties that will be focused on are the Labour Party, Liberal Party, Christian Democrats, D66, GreenLeft, Socialist Party, orthodox Protestant parties, and List Pim Fortuyn.

2. The impact of religious and social class identity

In earlier decades, vote choice in the Netherlands could be explained successfully on the basis of a so-called sociological approach (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Lijphart 1974; Andeweg 1982). If one knew voters' religious denomination, frequency of church attendance, and social class self-image, their choice at the polls could be predicted fairly accurately. Across the years, however, the impact of religion and social class has decreased substantially (Irwin and Van Holsteyn 1989; Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; Van der Kolk 2000). Nevertheless, in response to the 1994 election Rudy Andeweg (1995: 125) concluded that with the present speed of developments it would still take three decades before their impact had disappeared.

Voters' religious identity can be operationalised on the basis of questions about church membership and attendance of religious services. The latter is used as a proxy measure for the strength of voters' religious identification. Voters who attend religious services more often, presumably identify more strongly with that religious community than voters who attend such services less often. Social class identity has been operationalised on the basis of a question that asks voters to classify themselves as upper class, upper middle class, ordinary middle class, upper working class, or ordinary working class.

Party evaluations have been measured in electoral research by various procedures. The method used in the surveys upon which this paper is based more or less corresponds with the feeling thermometer that has been used to measure candidate evaluations in the American National Election Studies. The question was worded as follows.

There are many political parties in our country. I would like to know from you how sympathetic you find these parties. You can give each party a score between 0 and 100. The more sympathetic you find a party, the higher the score you give. 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. First we take the Labour Party. Which score would you give the Labour Party?

Respondents were shown a card with a horizontal line with at equal distance eleven numbers, which ranged from 0 to 100 (all multiples of ten). Both end-points and the mid-point were labelled. The score of 0 was labelled "very unsympathetic", the score of 50 was labelled "neither sympathetic, nor unsympathetic", and the score of 100 was labelled "very sympathetic".²

To determine the impact of voters' religious and social class identity on party evaluations, for each party and each year multiple regression analyses have been performed. The evaluation score awarded to a particular party is the dependent variable, and religious identity and social class identity are the independent variables.³ Religious and social class identity have been operationalised in the

form of four so-called dummy variables, which indicate whether voters had a particular identity (coded 1 if voters had such an identity, coded 0 if not). If voters considered themselves member of a Christian church and attended religious services at least once a week, they are classified as having a strong Christian identity. If they considered themselves member of a Christian church and attended religious services less often, they are classified as having a weak Christian identity. If voters assigned themselves to the ordinary working class or the upper working class, they are classified as having a working class identity. If voters assigned themselves to the upper middle class or the upper class, they are classified as having an upper middle class identity. This means that evaluation scores awarded by secular middle class voters are in a sense used as a baseline. Thus, the so-called constant in the regression analyses indicates the evaluation expected for those voters, while the b values indicate the effect to be expected if voters had a particular other religious or social class identity.

Two additional remarks need to be made. First, for the sake of convenience the evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties, and in 1970 also those of the predecessors of the Christian Democrats (CDA) and in 1986 those of the predecessors of GreenLeft, are analysed jointly.⁴ Second, in analyses that involve the orthodox Protestant parties, religious identity has been conceptualised in terms of a *Protestant* identity (instead of a Christian identity). Hence, in those analyses voters are classified not on the basis of whether or not they considered themselves member of a Christian church, but whether they considered themselves member of a Protestant church.

The evaluation scores that voters awarded to the various parties clearly differed across the different groups (Table 1). Voters who had a weak Christian identity awarded the Christian Democrats scores that were about 15 points higher (in terms of the 0-100 evaluation scale) than those awarded by secular voters. For the orthodox Protestant parties the effect of a weak Protestant identity was about 10 points. A strong Christian identity had an even stronger impact on evaluations of the Christian Democrats (approximately 20 to 25 points), while a strong Protestant identity had a still stronger impact on evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties (mostly about 35 points). While with respect to the orthodox Protestant parties the effects in 2002 were as strong as before, the impact on evaluations of the Christian Democrats had weakened somewhat between 1986 and 1998. So voters' feelings towards this party became less strongly influenced by their Christian identity.

Evaluations of the other parties were also affected by voters' religious identity, but usually not as strongly as those of the Christian parties. For example, in 1970 evaluations of the predecessors of GreenLeft were about 10 points lower for Christian voters than for secular voters. In 1986 the most notable effect concerned the Labour Party. Voters with a weak Christian identity on average awarded Labour an evaluation score that was 10 points lower than the score awarded by secular voters. Among voters with a strong Christian identity the effect was about 20 points. In later elections there were again some effects, but these were fairly weak. The most noteworthy exception is D66. Voters with a strong Christian identity evaluated this party relatively negatively. Moreover, the size of this effect increased from about 10 points in 1986 to about 20 points in 2002. Finally, voters with a (weak or

strong) Christian identity evaluated the Socialist Party somewhat more negatively than secular voters did (usually about 10 points).

The effects of social class were much weaker. Moreover, the impact of social class decreased across the years and ultimately this characteristic played virtually no role. The strongest effects found concern those of a working class identity in relation to evaluations of the Liberal Party (1970) and the Labour Party (1986). In 1970 working class voters awarded the Liberal Party scores that were about 15 points lower than those awarded by middle class voters, while in 1986 working class voters awarded Labour scores that were on average about 15 points higher. Negative effects of an upper middle class identity were also present, but these were only half as large. Concerning the Liberal Party the effects weakened and in 2002 neither exceeded 5 points. Furthermore, since 1998 social class also no longer had an impact on evaluations of Labour.

The degree to which party evaluations could be explained on the basis of the model that included both religious and social class identity varied considerably across parties, and within some parties also across years. In each year, evaluations of the Christian Democrats and the orthodox Protestant parties could be explained relatively well by the model (explained variance mostly varied between 14 and 20 per cent). In 1986 evaluations of the Labour Party could be explained relatively well too, but since 1998 this was no longer the case. Evaluations of the Liberal Party could also be explained to some extent in 1970 and 1986, but less so in later years. One party shows the reversed pattern. While evaluations of D66 could initially be explained poorly, in later years the model performed better. With respect to GreenLeft (and their predecessors), Socialist Party, and List Pim Fortuyn, the model did not substantially contribute to the explanation of how voters evaluated them in any year.

3. The impact of policy preferences

The decline of the explanatory power of models of voting based on religion and social class has resulted in a search for other explanations. Among the alternatives proposed are the notions of policy voting and issue voting (Van Cuilenburg et al. 1980; Middendorp et al. 1993; Van Wijnen 2001). According to these notions, voters regard political parties as packages of policy preferences or issue stands. When faced with an election, voters are expected to choose the party whose package comes closest to their own policy preferences. The corresponding model assumes that the agreement or disagreement between voters and parties in terms of a number of salient issues determines how voters evaluate the various parties, which in turn determines their vote choice.

In the surveys used voters have been questioned about several issues. With respect to each issue respondents were shown a card with a seven-point scale at which both end-points were labelled. Voters were then asked to indicate how they perceived the positions of various political parties and what their own position was. In this way voters were asked about policies concerning euthanasia,

abortion, income inequality, building nuclear plants, arms reduction, corporate democracy, pace of the European integration, government action against crime, integration of ethnic minorities, and admission of asylum seekers. Which issues were included in the survey, to a considerable varied across years. Nevertheless, each survey included at least one issue related to religious values (abortion or euthanasia), one issue concerning to economic issues (income inequality), and one issue related to postmaterialist values (arms reduction or nuclear plants).

To examine the impact of policy preferences on party evaluations, for each party and each year multiple regression analyses have again been performed. The dependent variables are the evaluation scores awarded to the various parties, and the independent variables are voters' policy preferences.⁵ To facilitate the interpretation, the scales have been recoded such that the mid-point corresponds with a score of zero and the end-points correspond with scores of plus and minus one (the left-wing position was coded plus one, the right-wing position minus one). Consequently, the constant in the regression analysis indicates the evaluation score expected for voters who positioned themselves at the mid-point of each scale, and the β values indicate the effect to be expected for voters who positioned themselves at one of the end-points of the scale. Positive values indicate that voters who took a left-wing position evaluated the party more positively than voters who took a right-wing position, while negative values indicate the reversed. Because voters' opinions regarding the integration of ethnic minorities and the admission of asylum seekers were fairly strongly correlated, only one of these issues has been included in the analyses (asylum seekers).

Policy preferences clearly had an impact on how voters evaluated the various parties (Table 2). Some policy preferences mattered more strongly than others. What is arguably even more interesting, is that the impact of particular policy preferences varied across parties. Opinions about euthanasia, for example, had a fairly strong impact on evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties. Voters who positioned themselves at an end-point of the scale awarded these parties an evaluation score that differed, on average, 15 points from the score awarded by neutral voters. Unsurprisingly, voters who felt euthanasia should be allowed liked these parties worse, and those who felt euthanasia should be forbidden liked them better. A similar effect, but of a smaller size, can be observed regarding the Christian Democrats. With respect to the other parties the effect was either small and reversed, or absent. The only exception concerns the evaluations of D66 in 2002, which showed a reversed effect of 10 points.

Voters' preferences regarding income inequality mattered most strongly with respect to the Liberal Party. Voters who thought income inequality should be decreased awarded this party evaluation scores that were usually about 10 to 15 points lower than those awarded by neutral voters, while voters who thought income inequality should be increased awarded them scores that were equally much higher. With respect to the Christian Democrats in 1986 a similar effect was found, but in other years income inequality did not matter much for how voters evaluated them. With respect to the Labour Party, GreenLeft, and Socialist Party reversed effects can be observed. The size usually

varied between a modest 5 and 10 points, except for an effect of 16 points regarding evaluations of the Labour Party in 1986.

With respect to the issues of arms reduction and building nuclear plants some effects were found, but these were smaller in size than those concerning euthanasia and income inequality. The largest effects found (9 points) concerned the Labour Party and Liberal Party in 1986. Voters who opposed building new nuclear plants evaluated the former somewhat more positively and the latter somewhat more negatively. Across the four elections the average effect reached 5 points for only two parties: Liberal Party and GreenLeft. The issue of European integration, which was only included in the surveys of 1998 and 2002, played an even smaller role: no effect exceeded 5 points.

In 2002, the issue of crime was additionally included and some effects can be observed. Voters who thought government should act tougher on crime evaluated the Christian Democrats and List Pim Fortuyn somewhat more positively, and the Labour Party, D66, GreenLeft, and Socialist Party somewhat more negatively (effects varied between 5 and 10 points). With respect to the issue of asylum seekers, the effects are in the same direction, but of a considerable greater magnitude. One effect stands out in particular. Voters who took a right-wing position, which states that as many asylum seekers as possible should be send back, awarded List Pim Fortuyn scores that were 22 points higher than those awarded by neutral voters. This is the largest effect found with respect to any party, in any year. With respect to the Liberal Party there was an effect in the same direction, but of a limited magnitude. With respect to GreenLeft the effect was fairly strong too (about 12 points), but reversed. For the Labour Party, D66, and Socialist Party the effects were in the same direction as those concerning GreenLeft, but they were smaller in size. Evaluations of the Christian Democrats and orthodox Protestant parties were unaffected.

How well party evaluations could be explained on the basis of the various effects jointly varied across parties, and within parties across years. For example, in 1970 the explanatory power as indicated by the amount of explained variance varied between 12 per cent (Liberal Party and Christian Democrats) and 20 per cent (Labour Party). In 1986 evaluations of the Labour Party and the Liberal Party could both be explained fairly well on the basis of voters' policy preferences (the explained variance was 20 per cent), while evaluations of the Christian Democrats and orthodox Protestant parties could be explained only slightly worse. Evaluations of GreenLeft and D66, however, could not be explained well. In later years the evaluations of the Labour Party, Liberal Party, and Christian Democrats could not be explained as well as in 1986, but policy preferences still mattered. With respect to GreenLeft and D66, the explanatory power of the model increased. In fact, none of the party evaluations could be explained as well as those of GreenLeft in 2002 (explained variance equalled 25 per cent). Evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties could also be explained fairly well in 2002, and so could those of List Pim Fortuyn.

4. The impact of ideology in terms of left-right

Another explanation of vote choice that has been suggested after the decline of models based on voters' social identity, is that of ideology in terms of left-right. Downs (1957) argued that if voters want to vote for a party whose policy proposals they prefer, they do not need to know the positions of political parties on all kinds of issues. They may rely on ideological agreement as a short cut, for example in terms of a left-right continuum. Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983) argued that in the Netherlands both voters and parties can indeed be characterised by a particular position on an ideological continuum of left-right, and that voters' choices at the polls can be explained well in those terms. The model states that voters perceive the left-right positions of the various parties, compare these to their own left-right position, and vote for the party that is closest to them.

This view implies that party evaluations can be explained on the basis of ideological agreement in terms of left-right. This can be tested on the basis questions that asked voters to position themselves as well as the political parties in terms of a left-right scale (usually a ten-point scale). Measures that indicate how much agreement voters perceived between their own position and those of the various parties, have been constructed by subtracting the score voters assigned to a particular party from the score they said applied to themselves; the absolute values of the resulting figures have been taken.⁶ Hence, a value of 0 means that voters perceived no difference between their own left-right position and that of the party in question. As the ideological difference increases, so does the measure. The maximum score on this scale equals 9; this score results if respondents position themselves at one end of the scale, and the party at the other end.

To analyse how well party evaluations can be explained on the basis of left-right ideology, multiple regression analyses have again been performed. The dependent variables are the evaluation scores awarded to the various parties. The independent variables are the measures that indicate the perceived agreement between voters and parties in terms of the left-right continuum. The constant in the regression analyses corresponds with the evaluation that the model predicts for voters who put themselves and the party at the same left-right position. The b-values indicate how much the evaluation score would change if the perceived ideological disagreement would increase with one point (on the ten-point scale of left-right).

The impact of perceived ideological agreement in terms of left-right on party evaluations was relatively stable across the years, as well as across parties (Table 3). In most cases, the size of the effect was about four to five points. This means that voters who saw a minor difference between the ideological position of a particular party and their own ideological position (equal to one point on the ten-point scale of left right), awarded that party an evaluation score that was about 5 points lower than the score awarded by voters who perceived full ideological agreement. Although the size of the effects was fairly similar across the parties, some differences can be observed. These concern the Labour

Party in particular. The strongest effect found concerns the Labour Party in 1986 (7 points), and the weakest effect concerns that same party in 1998 (3 points).

Although the size of the effects was fairly similar, the explanatory power of the left-right agreement model varied considerably across parties and across years. This means that other factors than perceived agreement in terms of left-right were more important for some parties than for others. In 1986 the model performed best with respect to evaluations of the Labour Party (the explained variance was 40 per cent). In that year the model also performed fairly well with respect to the Liberal Party and the Christian Democrats (explained variance was about 30 per cent). Regarding the other parties the corresponding figures varied between 10 and 20 per cent. On the whole, in 1998 and 2002 the explanatory power of the model was somewhat weaker, but ideological agreement in terms of left-right still mattered. In 2002 the explained variance was about 20 per cent with respect to GreenLeft, Liberal Party, and List Pim Fortuyn, about 15 per cent with respect to Labour Party and Christian Democrats, and about 10 per cent with respect to Socialist Party, orthodox Protestant parties, and D66. The most striking differences across the years concern the Labour Party. While in 1986 the explanatory power was 40 per cent, by 1998 it had decreased to only 8 per cent. In 2002 the figure was again higher, but still far behind that of 1986.

Another striking finding is that the evaluation that is predicted by the model for voters who perceive full agreement with a party in terms of left-right, differs markedly across the parties. In 1986, for example, voters who placed the Labour Party at the same position as themselves awarded them a score of about 80, while voters who placed the Liberal Party at the same position as themselves awarded them a score of about 65. The values also varied across time. While with respect to the Labour Party in 1986 the evaluation predicted for those voters was about 80, in 1998 it was about 70, and in 2002 it was about 65. This suggests that other factors that play a role favour some parties more than others; the degree to which they do may vary across time.

5. The impact of government satisfaction

Among the other factors that may influence how voters evaluate parties are their feelings about the performance of the latest government. According to the notion of retrospective voting (Fiorina, 1981), voters' choices are based primarily on judgements about the past. The notion of government satisfaction is closely related to this. Government parties may be expected to benefit from satisfaction with the government, whereas opposition parties may benefit from dissatisfaction with the government. Government satisfaction has been operationalised on the basis of a question that asked voters to indicate whether in general they were very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with what the incumbent government had done.

Multiple regression analyses have again been performed to examine the impact of government satisfaction on party evaluations. Because few voters indicated they were *very* satisfied or *very* dissatisfied, these are joined with those who said they were satisfied or dissatisfied, respectively. The dependent variables are the evaluation scores awarded to the individual parties. The independent variables are two dummy variables that indicate whether or not voters were satisfied, and whether or not voters were dissatisfied (each coded 1 if they were, coded 0 if they were not). This means that the constant in the regression analyses indicates the evaluation score expected from voters who were neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied with the government; these individuals will be referred to as ‘neutral voters’. The b-values indicate the effects of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Various effects are possible. One possibility is that we will see a positive effect of satisfaction for the government parties and a negative effect for opposition parties. With respect to dissatisfaction a reversed pattern may be expected. These expectations are based on the idea that government parties benefit from satisfaction with the government, and opposition parties from dissatisfaction. Another possibility is that government satisfaction affects only voters’ evaluations of the government parties, and that evaluations of the opposition parties are thus based solely on other factors. A third possibility is that some government parties benefit from satisfaction with the government, whereas others do not. Likewise, some opposition parties may benefit from dissatisfaction with the government, while others do not.

The results of the analyses provide some support for each expectation (Table 4). First, voters who were satisfied with the incumbent government evaluated the parties that had participated in the government more positively than neutral voters, and voters who were dissatisfied with the government evaluated those same parties more negatively. For example, in 1986 voters who were satisfied with the Lubbers-I government awarded the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Party evaluation scores that were about 15 points higher than those awarded by neutral voters. If voters were dissatisfied with the government, they awarded those parties scores that were about 20 points lower. In later years government parties were awarded evaluation scores that were about 5 to 10 points higher among satisfied voters than among neutral voters, while dissatisfied voters awarded the government parties scores that were about 8 to 15 points lower. The only exception concerns the Liberal Party in relation to the two purple coalitions (Kok-I and Kok-II), which showed some weaker effects.

Without exception, in each year the largest effects found – positive as well as negative – involved the party of the incumbent prime minister (Lubbers’ Christian Democrats in 1986, Kok’s Labour Party in 1998 and 2002). Apparently, the prime minister’s party got the credits as well as the debits of the performance of the government more strongly than other coalition partners. The differences are limited, however, and other coalition parties usually benefited or suffered only slightly less.

On the whole, dissatisfaction had a stronger effect on evaluations of the government parties than satisfaction. In each election, the mean negative effect of dissatisfaction was about 4 points larger than

the positive effect of satisfaction; across parties and years the mean effect was 8.5 for satisfaction and 12.5 for dissatisfaction.

Evaluation scores awarded to opposition parties were affected by government satisfaction too, but in different ways. In some cases voters who were satisfied with the government awarded particular opposition parties lower scores than neutral voters did, while dissatisfied voters awarded them higher scores. For example, in 1986 with respect to the Labour Party the effects were as large as with respect to the governments parties (between 15 and 20 points), but in the opposite direction. A similar pattern can be observed that same year with respect to the predecessors of GreenLeft, and in 2002 with respect to List Pim Fortuyn (most effects were about 10 points). In other cases, however, the patterns were reversed and evaluation scores of opposition parties were affected similarly as those of the government parties. For example, in 1986 voters who were satisfied with the government awarded the orthodox Protestant parties higher scores than neutral voters, while dissatisfied voters awarded them lower scores. The effects were not as large as those regarding the government parties, but they were still of a considerable magnitude (between 4 and 14 points). In 1998 and 2002, on the other hand, voters who were satisfied with the government awarded the orthodox Protestant parties similar or slightly lower scores, and dissatisfied voters awarded them slightly higher scores. These differences can be understood if one realises that the first two cabinets included the Christian Democrats, whereas the latter two did not. Finally, in some cases government satisfaction had virtually no effect on how voters evaluated a particular party. For example, effects did not exceed 5 points with respect to the evaluations of D66 in 1986, GreenLeft in 1998, and the Christian Democrats and Socia list Party in 1998 and 2002.

The explanatory power of the model based on government satisfaction largely reflects the size of the effects just discussed. In 1986 evaluations of the Labour Party, Liberal Party, and Christian Democrats could be explained particularly well. The explained variance was 25 per cent with respect to the former two parties, and even 35 per cent with respect to the latter. Evaluations of the predecessors of GreenLeft and orthodox Protestant parties could be explained to some extent too (explained variance equalled 11 per cent). In subsequent years with respect to the government parties the explained variance was at most as high as 15 per cent (Labour Party in 2002), but sometimes as low as 1 per cent (Liberal Party in 2002). After 1986, the only two opposition parties for whom the model resulted in an explained variance of 5 per cent were GreenLeft and List Pim Fortuyn in 2002. In all other cases the explanatory power of the model was very limited. Hence, the model based on government satisfaction cannot be applied successfully with respect to all parties and all years. However, in some instances government satisfaction appeared to play an important role, in particular in relation to government parties.

6. Multivariate analyses

To determine the joint impact of the four factors analysed, multivariate analyses have been performed. These analyses indicate how much each factor attributes to the explanation of party evaluations once the others are taken into account. The dependent variables are the evaluation scores awarded to the various parties. The independent variables are all measures discussed previously in this paper. To facilitate comparisons across the various variables, standardised coefficients (beta weights) are presented.

All factors influenced party evaluations to some extent (Table 5). This means that the effect of none of the factors was mediated – at least not fully – by other factors. So, the effects of religious and social class identity were not mediated fully by policy preferences, and the effects of policy preferences were not mediated fully by perceived left-right agreement either (nor the other way round). Second, the size of the impact of the various factors varied clearly across parties, and within parties sometimes across time. Third, earlier conclusions concerning the size of the impact of the various factors are supported by the multivariate analyses. Let us focus on these in some more detail.

The size of the impact of social identity varied strongly across parties, and within parties to a limited extent across time. Voters' religious identity had a strong impact on their evaluations of the Christian Democrats (beta varied roughly between 0.15 and 0.25) and, especially among voters with a strong Protestant identity, on their evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties (beta varied between 0.25 and 0.30). Evaluations of D66, GreenLeft, and Socialist Party were sometimes also affected by voters' religious identity (four beta's varied between 0.10 to 0.20), while evaluations of the Labour Party, Liberal Party, and List Pim Fortuyn were virtually unaffected. The impact of social class identity was limited with respect to all parties. If effects were at all significant, their size was limited (beta's mostly varied between 0.05 and 0.10).

The impact of policy preferences also differed across parties. With respect to the Labour Party and Liberal Party the issue of income inequality mattered most (beta's varied between 0.12 and 0.18), while the influence of the asylum seekers issue was only slightly weaker (beta's varied between 0.09 and 0.14). Evaluations of the Christian Democrats and D66 were not affected that strongly by opinions on any issue, although various issues mattered somewhat. The position of GreenLeft, and to a more limited extent also that of the Socialist Party, was different. Their evaluations were affected fairly strongly by various issues, in particular those of asylum seekers and income inequality. The orthodox Protestant parties and List Pim Fortuyn took a different position: only one issue mattered, and it did so strongly. In the case of the orthodox Protestant parties this concerned the euthanasia issue (beta's varied between 0.14 and 0.27), while voters' evaluations of List Pim Fortuyn were affected very strongly by their opinions about asylum seekers (beta equalled 0.32). No issue had such a strong impact in any year.

The only factor that had a relatively similar impact across parties, was left-right agreement. In general, evaluations of the various parties were affected fairly strongly by perceived ideological disagreement (most beta's were close to 0.25). The most notable exceptions are that evaluations of the Labour Party in 1986 and of the Liberal Party in 1998 and 2002 were affected by left-right disagreement more strongly (beta's varied between 0.35 and 0.41), while in 2002 evaluations of D66 were affected by left-right ideology less strongly (beta equalled 0.17).

Finally, the impact of government satisfaction varied across parties in a particular way. Among government parties satisfaction and dissatisfaction usually had a fairly strong impact, while evaluations of the opposition parties were not affected much. An exception concerns the evaluations of the Labour Party in 1986, which were affected in the opposite way. With respect to the evaluations of government parties it is noteworthy that the effect of satisfaction was slightly weaker than that of dissatisfaction. Note also that evaluations of the Christian Democrats in 1986 were affected relatively strongly by satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the Lubbers-I government, while evaluations of the Liberal Party in 1998 and 2002 were not affected much by voters' evaluations of the two purple coalitions led by Kok. Hence, the degree to which satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the government affected evaluations of government parties, varied somewhat across them. In each election, the strongest effects found involved the prime minister's party.

Given the differences across parties in the size of the effect of various factors, it is no surprise that a similar observation can be made regarding the explanatory power of the multivariate model. In particular, evaluations of the Labour Party, Liberal Party, and Christian Democrats could be explained well in 1986 (explained variance was about 50 per cent), while in later years the model performed less well. Nevertheless, evaluations of these three parties could also be explained to a considerable extent in later years (explained variance varied between 20 and 35 per cent). Figures regarding the evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties and GreenLeft did not deviate much. The same applies to evaluations of List Pim Fortuyn in 2002, which could be explained as well as those of most other parties. The model performed relatively poorly, on the other hand, with respect to evaluations of the Socialist Party (explained variance equalled 20 per cent) and with respect to D66 when they were in opposition (explained variance equalled 13 per cent).

Another thing to note concerns the constants in the regression analyses, which varied across parties and time as well. These values refer to a rather peculiar class of voters: secular middle class voters who had no pronounced views on the various issues, perceived full agreement in terms of left-right, and were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the government. Nevertheless, these values do tell us something about how voters evaluated the various parties, irrespective of the factors included in the model. The most noteworthy changes across time were that the evaluations of GreenLeft were considerably more positive than those of their predecessors. The findings furthermore indicate that the orthodox Protestant parties and List Pim Fortuyn were evaluated relatively negatively. With respect to the former this can be understood if one realises that the reference group to which the constant refers

concerns secular voters. This may also explain why the constant regarding the Christian Democrats was usually slightly lower than that of most other parties. For the negative evaluations of List Pim Fortuyn such a straightforward explanation is not available.

7. Conclusion

Previous electoral research has made use of various factors to explain vote choice in the Netherlands. These include social identity, left-right ideology, policy preferences, and government satisfaction. In this paper their impact on the evaluations of individual parties has been examined. The analyses have shown that virtually all factors contribute to our understanding of why voters evaluate parties as they do.

Perhaps the most striking observation is that the explanatory power of the models varied considerably across parties, and within parties across time. Evaluations of the Labour Party could be explained best in 1986 on the basis of left-right agreement, while in 1998 and 2002 models including left-right agreement, policy preferences, and government satisfaction performed about equally well. Evaluations of the Liberal Party could also be explained best on the basis of left-right agreement, while the model that included policy preferences clearly outperformed the other two models. The only exception was 1986, when evaluations of the Liberal Party could also be explained well on the basis of government satisfaction. With respect to the evaluations of the Christian Democrats in 1986 government satisfaction and left-right agreement resulted in the best explanations, in 2002 left-right agreement and social identity did, while in 1998 the model based on social identity performed best. With respect to the evaluations of D66 the most notable observation is that each model had only limited explanatory power. Evaluations of GreenLeft, on the other hand, could usually be explained rather well on the basis of voters' policy preferences as well as in terms of perceived left-right agreement. With respect to the Socialist Party models including these factors had less explanatory power, but more than the other two. With respect to the orthodox Protestant parties social identity and policy preferences both explained evaluations rather well, and more so than left-right agreement. Finally, evaluations of List Pim Fortuyn could be explained best on the basis of policy preferences, while the model based on left-right agreement outperformed the other two.

These findings illustrate that each model tells a part of the story. This in a sense justifies the application of a model that combines the various concepts. In such a multivariate model perceived left-right agreement played a major role, irrespective of which party was focused on. Apparently, voters perception regarding the extent to which parties' political views correspond with their own opinions in terms of this general ideological dimension always matter. With respect to government parties voters' satisfaction with the incumbent government more often than not played an important role too, in particular if the party of the prime minister was involved. Additionally, voters' Christian

identity was highly relevant regarding the Christian Democrats and the orthodox Protestant parties, and to a more limited extent with respect to D66. Social class identity, on the other hand, played only a minor role. Finally, in some instances particular issues had an impact that could not be accounted for by the notions of left and right, nor by any of the other factors. The most noteworthy case concerns List Pim Fortuyn. Evaluations of this newcomer were affected very strongly by voters' opinions regarding the issue of asylum seekers. The same issue played a role, although less strongly and with effects in the opposite direction, with respect to evaluations of GreenLeft and Socialist Party. Another case where opinions on a particular issue had a large impact, concerns the issue of euthanasia in relation to the orthodox Protestant parties.

The fundamental implication of these findings is that one of the assumptions that underlie virtually all electoral research, should be considered false. After all, most models of voting build on the idea that the degree to which voters like or dislike parties depends on their image of those parties, that the image of each party consists of the same set of elements, and that the evaluations of those elements jointly determine the overall evaluation of a party. Parties are thus assumed to be liked and disliked for the same reasons. According to the view adopted in this paper, evaluations of different parties may have different bases. Media reports and personal conversations about one party may involve different subjects than those concerning another party. Consequently, whereas evaluations of one party may be explained well on the basis of a particular factor, evaluations of another party may not. The analyses presented provide support for this view. The extent to which voters' social identity, policy preferences, perceived ideological agreement with parties, and satisfaction with the incumbent government affected their party evaluations, clearly differed across those parties. Contrary to what models of voting often assume, the bases of evaluation are not the same across parties. Voters do not like or dislike different parties for the same reasons. Voters like or dislike different parties for different reasons.

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Tables

TABLE 1 The impact of religious and social class identity on party evaluations
(b values in multiple regression analysis, constant, adjusted R²)

	Labour Party				Liberal Party			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
weak Christian id.	- 4.0	- 9.7	- 1.8	- 4.5	5.2	6.6	3.1	3.8
strong Christian id.	- 9.6	- 22.0	- 7.0	- 9.4	3.5	4.5	- 4.5	- 3.5
working class id.	9.9	14.0	3.2	4.8	-14.0	- 11.0	- 6.4	- 4.9
upper middle class id.	- 3.6	- 7.0	n.s.	n.s.	6.8	10.1	2.6	3.1
constant	58.1	61.5	65.7	57.8	53.4	45.7	52.6	51.9
explained variance	0.08	0.15	0.02	0.03	0.11	0.09	0.03	0.03

Note: the constant indicates the evaluation score expected for secular middle class voters; n.s. indicates an effect is not significant.

TABLE 1 (continued)

	Christian Democrats				D66			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
weak Christian id.	13.9	16.9	12.2	13.2	- 3.3	n.s.	- 4.4	- 4.5
strong Christian id.	28.6	27.1	18.8	19.8	-10.4	- 9.4	- 15.2	- 21.3
working class id.	- 2.7	- 8.0	- 2.3	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	- 2.8	n.s.
Upper middle class id.	n.s.	n.s.	- 2.6	n.s.	n.s.	6.2	4.0	4.2
constant	53.7	48.8	49.2	50.9	58.1	54.8	57.1	54.5
explained variance	0.23	0.17	0.14	0.15	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.11

TABLE 1 (continued)

	GreenLeft				Socialist Party	
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1998	2002
weak Christian id.	- 8.3	- 8.5	- 6.7	- 4.5	- 7.1	- 6.9
strong Christian id.	- 13.5	- 9.7	- 9.4	- 9.3	- 12.3	- 10.6
Working class id.	4.1	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
upper middle class id.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	4.6	n.s.	3.9
constant	51.9	47.8	58.5	56.3	48.0	50.6
explained variance	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03

TABLE 1 (continued)

	Orthodox Protestant				List Pim Fortuyn
	1970	1986	1998	2002	2002
weak Christian id.	6.4	8.1	8.0	11.5	n.s.
strong Christian id.	24.6	35.2	33.7	36.7	n.s.
working class id.	- 3.2	- 3.3	n.s.	n.s.	- 4.1
upper middle class id.	n.s.	n.s.	- 4.4	n.s.	n.s.
constant	39.8	29.9	38.0	37.9	35.4
explained variance	0.10	0.16	0.19	0.20	0.00

Note: With respect to the orthodox Protestant parties the effects of a religious identity concern a Protestant identity instead of a Christian identity.

TABLE 2 The impact of policy preferences on party evaluations
(b values in multiple regression analysis, constant, adjusted R²)

	Labour Party				Liberal Party			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
abortion	3.4				3.3			
euthanasia		6.3	2.7	4.7		n.s.	1.9	2.3
Income inequality	6.0	16.2	4.5	6.1	- 7.3	- 15.3	- 11.9	- 9.2
arms reduction	6.4				- 6.0			
nuclear plants		8.5	2.7	3.8		- 8.8	- 3.9	- 5.3
corporate democracy	12.0				- 6.0			
European integration			4.8	4.0			2.6	1.9
crime				5.2				- 2.6
asylum seekers			3.7	7.0			- 8.8	- 6.3
constant	49.0	50.6	61.1	55.9	50.2	53.3	55.4	53.5
explained variance	0.20	0.20	0.07	0.15	0.12	0.20	0.16	0.14

Notes: The constant indicates the evaluation score expected for voters who positioned themselves at the mid-point of each scale; n.s. indicates an effect is not significant

TABLE 2 (continued)

	Christian Democrats				D66			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
abortion	- 8.0				5.3			
euthanasia		- 9.5	- 8.6	- 8.0		4.5	6.1	9.7
income inequality	n.s.	- 10.3	n.s.	- 2.4	2.9	n.s.	n.s.	3.2
arms reduction	- 6.0				3.9			
nuclear plants		- 6.1	n.s.	- 3.5		2.2	2.5	1.6
corporate democracy	n.s.				9.5			
European integration			4.5	n.s.			4.8	5.0
crime				- 7.0				6.1
asylum seekers			- 2.8	n.s.			5.4	4.4
constant	66.3	62.3	58.0	57.8	47.5	51.2	50.7	51.2
explained variance	0.12	0.15	0.08	0.10	0.15	0.02	0.09	0.16

TABLE 2 (continued)

	GreenLeft				Socialist Party	
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1998	2002
abortion	4.9					
euthanasia		n.s.	5.5	5.4	5.0	4.4
income inequality	5.3	8.5	6.3	9.4	5.8	8.7
arms reduction	6.8					
nuclear plants		5.7	5.1	4.2	3.1	4.0
corporate democracy	8.0					
European integration			n.s.	5.2	n.s.	n.s.
crime				6.3		4.6
asylum seekers			13.0	11.1	10.9	7.9
constant	35.4	38.8	50.6	54.9	39.9	46.9
explained variance	0.17	0.07	0.17	0.25	0.10	0.12

TABLE 2 (continued)

	Orthodox Protestant				List Pim Fortuyn
	1970	1986	1998	2002	2002
abortion	- 10.4				
euthanasia		- 14.2	- 14.8	- 18.0	n.s.
income inequality	n.s.	- 6.0	n.s.	n.s.	- 6.5
arms reduction	- 7.6				
nuclear plants		n.s.	- 2.0	- 1.7	- 3.3
corporate democracy	n.s.				
European integration			- 2.2	n.s.	- 2.5
crime				n.s.	- 7.5
asylum seekers			n.s.	n.s.	- 22.3
constant	39.9	37.1	47.7	49.2	28.9
explained variance	0.14	0.14	0.17	0.22	0.24

TABLE 3 The impact of left-right agreement on party evaluations
(b values in multiple regression analysis, constant, adjusted R²)

	Labour Party				Liberal Party			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
effect of disagreement		- 7.2	- 3.2	- 4.5		- 5.7	- 5.1	- 4.9
constant		81.1	70.8	66.0		65.7	64.7	64.3
explained variance		0.40	0.08	0.16		0.30	0.23	0.20

Note: Entries indicate effects of one point distance at the ten-point scale; constants indicate the evaluation score expected for voters who put themselves and a party at the same position.

TABLE 3 (continued)

	Christian Democrats				D66			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
effect of disagreement		- 6.0	- 3.8	- 4.8		- 3.5	- 3.5	- 4.2
constant		73.4	62.6	65.8		62.4	60.1	59.6
explained variance		0.29	0.11	0.15		0.11	0.07	0.10

TABLE 3 (continued)

	GreenLeft				Socialist Party	
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1998	2002
effect of disagreement		- 4.5	- 4.4	- 5.2	- 4.5	- 4.3
constant		53.5	68.5	69.6	59.4	61.5
explained variance		0.14	0.15	0.22	0.14	0.12

TABLE 3 (continued)

	Orthodox Protestant				List Pim Fortuyn
	1970	1986	1998	2002	2002
effect of disagreement		- 4.4	- 4.1	- 4.3	- 5.8
constant		48.5	52.5	53.4	50.7
explained variance		0.18	0.14	0.11	0.18

TABLE 4 The impact of government satisfaction on party evaluations

(b values in multiple regression analysis, constant, adjusted R^2)

	Labour Party				Liberal Party			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
effect of satisfaction		- 20.3	6.9	7.3		15.2	3.3	2.2
effect of dissatisfaction		15.8	- 8.7	- 14.8		- 17.4	- 8.2	- 3.3
constant		62.2	62.4	56.6		45.2	51.6	52.8
explained variance		0.27	0.08	0.15		0.27	0.03	0.01

n.s. indicates an effect is not significant

TABLE 4 (continued)

	Christian Democrats				D66			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
effect of satisfaction		16.9	n.s.	- 2.3		- 4.4	6.9	5.6
effect of dissatisfaction		- 22.6	- 5.1	n.s.		- 3.1	- 8.3	- 12.5
constant		55.5	55.8	58.2		55.5	51.6	52.2
explained variance		0.35	0.01	0.00		0.01	0.07	0.10

TABLE 4 (continued)

	GreenLeft				Socialist Party	
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1998	2002
effect of satisfaction		- 11.0	n.s.	3.2	n.s.	n.s.
effect of dissatisfaction		9.1	- 4.7	- 10.0	4.4	- 3.7
constant		44.8	55.9	55.8	43.2	48.8
explained variance		0.11	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.00

TABLE 4 (continued)

	Orthodox Protestant				List Pim Fortuyn
	1970	1986	1998	2002	2002
effect of satisfaction		7.2	n.s.	- 3.3	- 6.3
effect of dissatisfaction		- 14.3	5.3	6.5	11.3
constant		34.4	40.6	42.4	34.4
explained variance		0.11	0.01	0.02	0.05

TABLE 5 The multivariate model and party evaluations
(beta coefficients, constant, and adjusted R² in multiple regression analysis)

	Labour Party				Liberal Party			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
weak Christian id.		n.s.	n.s.	- 0.04	- 0.05		n.s.	n.s.
strong Christian id.		n.s.	- 0.08	n.s.	- 0.07	- 0.08	- 0.05	
working class id.		0.11	0.06	0.06	- 0.05	- 0.10	- 0.05	
upper middle class id.		n.s.	- 0.05	n.s.	0.09	n.s.	0.07	
euthanasia		0.05	n.s.	0.08	0.06	n.s.	0.07	
income inequality		0.16	0.14	0.14	- 0.15	- 0.18	- 0.12	
nuclear plants		0.08	0.06	0.09	- 0.12	- 0.04	- 0.09	
European integration			0.08	0.07			n.s.	n.s.
crime				0.06				n.s.
asylum seekers			0.09	0.10			- 0.14	- 0.12
left-right disagree ment	- 0.41	- 0.21	- 0.22		- 0.27	- 0.35	- 0.37	
satisfied with gov.	- 0.13	0.17	0.14		0.17	0.06	0.07	
dissatisfied with gov.	0.10	- 0.16	-0.20		- 0.18	- 0.08	-0.09	
constant		67.5	65.6	60.7		60.7	65.0	63.3
explained variance		0.52	0.21	0.31		0.46	0.32	0.28

n.s. indicates an effect is not significant

TABLE 5 (continued)

	Christian Democrats				D66			
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1970	1986	1998	2002
weak Christian id.		0.13	0.26	0.24	- 0.06	- 0.07	- 0.05	
strong Christian id.		0.16	0.24	0.22	- 0.09	- 0.19	- 0.18	
working class id.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	
upper middle class id.		- 0.04	- 0.05	n.s.	0.10	0.07	0.07	
euthanasia		- 0.11	- 0.10	- 0.08	0.07	0.06	0.14	
income inequality		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	0.08	0.10	
nuclear plants		- 0.05	n.s.	n.s.	0.07	0.07	0.05	
European integration			0.08	0.05			0.08	0.10
crime				- 0.08				0.07
asylum seekers			n.s.	n.s.			0.11	0.06
left-right disagreement		- 0.24	- 0.22	- 0.29	- 0.29	- 0.20	- 0.17	
satisfied with gov.		0.20	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	0.14	0.08	
dissatisfied with gov.		- 0.26	- 0.08	n.s.	- 0.08	- 0.09	- 0.16	
constant		62.2	56.8	57.8	61.7	56.0	57.0	
explained variance		0.50	0.23	0.25	0.13	0.21	0.28	

TABLE 5 (continued)

	GreenLeft				Socialist Party	
	1970	1986	1998	2002	1998	2002
weak Christian id.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	- 0.08	n.s.
strong Christian id.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	- 0.12	n.s.
working class id.		- 0.09	n.s.	- 0.06	n.s.	n.s.
upper middle class id.		n.s.	n.s.	0.07	n.s.	0.11
euthanasia		n.s.	0.12	0.10	n.s.	0.07
income inequality		0.15	0.13	0.19	0.10	0.13
nuclear plants		0.11	0.10	0.10	n.s.	0.08
European integration			n.s.	0.09	n.s.	n.s.
crime				0.08		n.s.
asylum seekers			0.24	0.17	0.20	0.14
left-right disagreement		- 0.27	- 0.25	- 0.26	- 0.26	- 0.25
satisfied with gov.		- 0.15	n.s.	n.s.	- 0.07	n.s.
dissatisfied with gov.		n.s.	- 0.06	- 0.07	n.s.	n.s.
constant		51.4	60.2	62.0	58.4	52.8
explained variance		0.22	0.25	0.34	0.21	0.19

TABLE 5 (continued)

	Orthodox Protestant				List Pim Fortuyn
	1970	1986	1998	2002	2002
weak Christian id.		0.06	0.09	0.13	n.s.
strong Christian id.		0.25	0.28	0.26	n.s.
working class id.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
upper middle class id.		n.s.	- 0.06	n.s.	n.s.
euthanasia		- 0.22	- 0.25	- 0.27	0.06
income inequality		n.s.	n.s.	0.07	- 0.06
nuclear plants		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
European integration			- 0.05	n.s.	n.s.
crime				n.s.	n.s.
asylum seekers			n.s.	0.08	- 0.32
left-right disagreement		- 0.24	- 0.22	- 0.23	- 0.26
satisfied with gov.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	- 0.08
dissatisfied with gov.		- 0.14	n.s.	0.07	0.09
constant		43.5	49.4	49.3	41.9
explained variance		0.34	0.33	0.33	0.31

Note: With respect to the orthodox Protestant parties the model includes dummy variables for a weak or strong Protestant identity instead of a weak or strong Christian identity.

Notes

¹ Documentation on these studies is provided by Heunks et al. (1977), Van der Eijk et al. (1986), and Aarts et al. (1999); documentation on the DPES 2002 should become available soon.

² Analysis using data from the DPES are based on evaluation scores that have been rounded off to the nearest multiple of ten, in order to make findings of the various years more comparable (cf. Rosema, 2004).

³ In order to exclude effects that are not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), in all multivariate analyses a backward procedure has been used. In each analysis dummy variables were coded '1' if voters belonged to a particular category, and '0' if they did not.

⁴ Evaluations of the orthodox Protestant parties (SGP, GPV, RPF, and Christian Union) are analysed in terms of the highest evaluation score awarded to any of these parties. Similarly, the evaluations of the predecessors of the Christian Democrats (ARP, KVP, and CHU) and the predecessors of GreenLeft (CPN, PPR, PSP, and EVP) are analysed in terms of the highest evaluation score awarded to any of them.

⁵ Note that testing the impact of policy preferences on the basis of the proximity model (Enelow and Hinich, 1981) or the directional theory of issue voting (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989) would require the inclusion of data concerning voters' perceptions of parties' positions with respect to the various issues. As such data are mostly not available in the surveys used, the analyses presented only include voters' own policy preferences. With respect to ideology in terms of left-right, on the other hand, these data are available and the proximity model may thus be applied.

⁶ In order to make findings comparable, scales have all been transformed (if necessary) into a scale with values ranging between 1 and 10.