

Issues, Discontent, and Third-Party Voting: The Case of the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Scholarly accounts of the dramatic breakthrough of the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) in the 2002 Dutch parliamentary election have mostly emphasized two factors behind the success of that party. It has first been argued that the LPF brought a distinct issue profile to the electoral arena, which made it attractive for voters holding similar policy views. The second hypothesis, that feelings of political discontent also fuelled support for the LPF, remains highly contested because of the possible endogeneity bias of cynicism attitudes. We re-examine this question using survey data from the 1998-2002 panel of the Dutch National Election Study. Our approach's novelty is to estimate 2002's vote choice using indicators of individuals' issue priorities and cynical attitudes as measured in the 1998 wave of the panel. The findings suggest that policy preferences and attitudes of discontent both contributed to the LPF vote, thus providing support for both interpretations of the rise of this party. These results are consistent with most existing work on "third" or minor party voting showing that lack of confidence toward government and politics is fertile ground for these party movements.

Never before has a new political party broken onto the Dutch electoral scene with such success as the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) did in the 2002 parliamentary election. With 17 per cent of the popular vote, the LPF gained 26 seats in the Second Chamber and became a partner in the first (but short-lived) Balkenende coalition government.

Current scholarly accounts of this dramatic breakthrough have mostly emphasized three factors behind support for the LPF. The first factor is the performance of Pim Fortuyn on the political scene, after announcing his political ambitions in the fall of 2001 (van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; van Praag 2003; Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003). Fortuyn “dominated the media and determined the content and style of the campaign” (van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003, 42). He managed to attract no less than 24 per cent of all media attention for politicians in the 2002 campaign (followed by incumbent prime minister Wim Kok and cabinet minister Benk Korthals with both just over 7 per cent of the media attention) (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003, 86). Fortuyn’s charisma, dramatically enhanced by his assassination just nine days before the election, undoubtedly contributed to the LPF result.

The personal factor in the LPF vote may have dominated popular discourse, but it was closely tied with two other, more structural explanations of the LPF success. The first of these has to do with issue (or policy) voting. It is argued that the LPF brought a distinct issue profile to the electoral arena, which made it attractive for voters with similar policy views. Among the issue priorities put forward by Fortuyn during the campaign, his radical positions on multiculturalism, asylum seekers, and crime seem to explain in good part why a significant portion of the Dutch electorate was attracted to this new competitor (van der Brug 2003; van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; van Holsteyn, Irwin and den Ridder 2003; Pellikaan, van der Meer and de Lange 2003).

The second more structural explanation, on which there is much less agreement among scholars, is political discontent. One interpretation suggests that, in addition to issue and ideological proximity with the new party, attitudes of cynicism towards government and politics were also present among parts of the Dutch public at the time of the 2002 election and significantly contributed to support for the LPF (van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; van der Zwan 2004). A different point of view has been raised which holds that the LPF created, or fuelled, much of this discontent. That is, Dutch voters first supported that party because they agreed with its main issue priorities – especially its hard stance on immigration – and then displayed more cynical attitudes that simply echoed their leader’s rhetorical attacks on the Dutch political establishment (van der Brug 2003; 2004).

The thrust of this debate thus lies in the possible endogeneity of cynical attitudes. The main reason why it has been difficult so far to distinguish between cause and effect in this situation is because these previous studies all rely on post-election cross-sectional survey data. In other words, discontent attitudes are measured *after the election event*, thus leaving wide open the question whether it was the LPF that actually created a cynical climate. It should be noted that analyses of the impact of issue distances on LPF support are also fraught with the same kind of endogeneity problems, as voter perceptions of party issue positions might be subject to projection effects.

In an attempt to overcome these limitations and to clarify the much-debated rise of the LPF, we re-examine the question using survey data from the 1998-2002 panel of the Dutch National Election Study (DNES). Our reliance on panel data constitutes an important novelty that should help resolve most of the causality issues inherent to previous studies of the LPF’s 2002 success. Our basic methodological approach is to use indicators of individuals’ issue positions and discontent attitudes *as measured in 1998* and link these to their vote choice in 2002.

Our study proceeds in three steps. We first present the 2002 DNES panel data and provide details on the measurement of our variables as well as on the estimation strategy we use. We then provide multivariate analyses of vote choice in the 1998 and 2002 Dutch parliamentary elections that assess the independent effects of socio-demographic characteristics, issue distances and political discontent on the vote, with a focus on LPF support. In the same section, we also look at movements over time in cynical attitudes. We examine the shorter period 1998-2002, but also look at the long-term trends in political discontent in the Netherlands in order to put the 2002 election into perspective. We conclude by discussing the significance of our results in light of the international literature on “third” or minor party voting.

Data and Methods

Panel Data

Survey panel data provide a very powerful tool for the analysis of cause-effect sequences in individual attitudes and behavior. The 1998-2002 DNES panel originated as a fresh probability sample from the Dutch electorate, interviewed at home before the 1998 parliamentary election.¹ The panel was reinterviewed at home after the 1998 election, and again by either telephone or a mail-in questionnaire just before the elections for the European parliament in 1999. Just after the 2002 parliamentary election, the panel was interviewed once more at home. Including drop-off questionnaires distributed after the 1998 and 2002 post-election interviews, this panel has been approached six times in a period of four years.

The panel mortality over the 1998-2002 period was considerable, but not extremely large given the efforts required from the respondents. The 1998 study started with interviews with a 50 per cent response rate ($n = 2,101$). Post-election face-to-face

interviews were conducted with 86 per cent of this group (1,814). In 1999, the respondents of the 1998 post-election survey were approached with a telephone/mail survey focusing on electoral turnout, in which 56 per cent (1,009) took part. In 2002, the same group was approached once more, with a 38 per cent (689) response rate in the face-to-face interviews and 35 per cent (637) completing a drop-off questionnaire as well.

Scaling Political Discontent

We operationalize feelings of discontent toward politics using the traditional indicators of political inefficacy and political cynicism which are both measured by several items in the DNES survey questionnaires. Political inefficacy is measured by the respondent's agreement with four (or more) statements, e.g. "Members of parliament do not care about the opinions of people like me", where agreement is labelled "2" and disagreement "1". Similarly, political cynicism is measured by three statements, e.g. "Although they know better, politicians promise more than they can deliver", with response categories "completely disagree", "disagree", "agree" and "completely agree" numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4.

It is a widespread, but basically wrong use to simply add up these numbers in order to obtain an index of political inefficacy or of political cynicism. Adding item scores presupposes that the difference between "completely agree" and "agree" is the same as that between "agree" and "disagree" (both pairs of answers differ by 1), in other words: that the items are measured on interval scales. And it is also presupposed that such differences are the same for the different items constituting the index score. This, however, is a generally untenable assumption. Lacking more information, the measurement level is only ordinal. When constructing index scores, the ordinal level of measurement should therefore be taken as a starting point.

One way of constructing an index in which the ordinal character of the raw data is acknowledged, is principal component analysis with Optimal Scaling. Using an Alternating Least Squares algorithm, the items measuring political inefficacy and/or political cynicism are (optimally) scaled *and* the principal axes are determined (Gifi 1990: 177-179; for short introductions see Jacoby 1991: 74-80, and Jacoby 1999). To achieve this, we used the SPSS procedure *Princals*.

First, we scaled and analyzed four political inefficacy items and three political cynicism items measured in 1998. We pooled the inefficacy and cynicism items because, scaled separately, the resulting indexes are relatively strongly correlated ($r = 0.529$), which results in unreliable estimates of the effects of both cynicism and inefficacy on vote choice. Pooling the items is theoretically justified because these two sets of items tend to tap very similar feelings towards politics (the inefficacy items focus more on political responsiveness whereas the cynicism items underline the self-interestedness of politicians).

Our scaling procedure is summarized in Table 1. The table's first column lists the items. The second column displays the results of the optimal scaling procedure, in which the original, ordinal values for each response category have been replaced by a quantified value. For example, the ordinal starting values of the first inefficacy item, "Members of parliament do not care about the opinions of people like me", were 1 (false) and 2 (true).² After optimal scaling, the quantifications are now -0.78 (false) and 1.34 (true). Note that the quantifications of the first three inefficacy items are rather similar, but that the answer "true" on the fourth item is associated with a larger scale value. This answer would contribute relatively strongly to a general feeling of inefficacy and cynicism. So do the "agree completely" answers to the three items tapping political cynicism. This is in accordance with the common-sense expectation that cynicism is a sharper manifestation of political discontent than political inefficacy.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The optimal scaling/principal components analysis for the 1998 data results in a single factor (as specified by us) which explains 43 per cent of the variance in the responses to these seven items.³ The loadings of each item on the factor can be found in the third column of Table 1. As in ordinary principal components analysis, these loadings can be viewed as the square root of the portion of the variance in the item that is explained by the principal component (the square root of the communality h_i^2). It can be seen that all items show moderate to strong loadings on the factor; the single item with the weakest loading (0.425) is the fourth inefficacy item (“So many people vote in elections that my vote does not matter”).

The score of each respondent on the principal component (obtained by regression) is stored for use in subsequent analyses as an indicator of political discontent. These scores are normalized (with zero mean and unit standard deviance) for the whole sample. Negative values indicate a low level of political discontent; positive values point to a high level of discontent.

Measuring Issue Distances

We are also interested in assessing the extent to which the vote is affected by distance between the voter and the parties on some of the major conflict dimensions in Dutch politics in recent years. Three of these issue dimensions are included in our analysis: left-right ideology, income redistribution, and admission of refugees and asylum seekers.⁴ Left-right ideology stands for a generalized ideological disposition towards politics (cf. Fuchs and Klingemann 1990). Income redistribution refers to the classic political issue of a just distribution of wealth in society. The survey question establishes to what extent the respondent thinks the differences in income should be smaller or larger

than they are now. The admission of asylum seekers and refugees is a relatively new issue, that emerged as one of the major national political problems (in response to open-ended questions) since the early 1990s. The survey question establishes to what extent the respondent thinks the Netherlands should allow more asylum seekers, or should send back as many asylum seekers as possible.

For all three issue dimensions, both the respondent's own position and the perceived position of the major political parties has been asked. In spatial models of politics, parties occupy a single position on the issue dimensions. As a proxy of this party position, we have used the average perceived position of all respondents.

Issue distance measures were simply computed as the absolute distance between the respondent's position and the (average) party position on each issue scale (running from 1 to 10 in the case of left-right ideology, and from 1 to 7 for the other two issues). As with political discontent, we use the respondent's position *in 1998* to compute issue distances; when predicting the 1998 vote, the 1998 party positions have been used, whereas the 2002 party positions are used in the analysis of the 2002 election.

Estimating Vote Choice

Our model of vote choice in 1998 focuses on the three major parties in the Netherlands (see Lucardie 1991): the Labour party (PvdA), the Liberal party (VVD) and the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), which together received 72 per cent of the vote in these elections. For vote choice in 2002, the LPF is added to this list of parties. Taken together, these four parties attracted around 75 per cent of the vote in 2002. For practical reasons, we exclude all smaller parties from the analysis of both elections.⁵

The 1998 and 2002 vote choice models are estimated using conditional logit regression analysis, with the vote for either PvdA or VVD or CDA (or LPF) as dependent

variable. Conditional logit regression is the most appropriate method of analysis when the dependent variable (in our case, party choice) is categorical, and at least some of the explanatory variables are characteristics of the possible choices (parties) rather than individual voters. In our model, issue distances are choice-specific independent variables. The respondent's score on the combined inefficacy/cynicism factor – political discontent – is included as an individual-specific independent variable, as are the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. These include the respondent's age, gender, frequency of church attendance, level of education, and social class self-image. The general strategy is to first present the results for the set of individual-specific variables. In a second stage, we add the issue distances for income redistribution, immigration, and left-right ideology.

Results

The 1998 Election

We start by examining the effects of socio-demographic characteristics and political discontent on vote choice in the 1998 parliamentary election. The conditional logit estimates appear in Table 2. Note that the coefficients in the table are presented as odds ratios, and that the reference category for the estimation is vote for the incumbent PvdA. As a reading example, consider the coefficient for political discontent in the VVD column. This should be read as: “the odds of voting for the VVD rather than for PvdA or CDA in the 1998 election increase by 1.23 for every unit increase in political discontent, controlling for socio-demographic characteristics. These odds differ significantly from 1.00.”

The results in Table 2 first confirm the significant impact of traditional social cleavages on Dutch voting behavior. Young and male voters are more likely to support the right-leaning VVD over the left-leaning PvdA. Likewise, the higher individuals locate

themselves on the social class scale, the higher their propensity to cast a right-wing vote as opposed to a left-wing (PvdA) vote. Voters who frequently go to church are more likely to support the CDA over the PvdA, as are those with lower levels of education. Discontented voters also have a higher tendency to support the CDA (and VVD) over the incumbent PvdA, but this effect becomes insignificant once we control for the choice-specific issue distance variables in Table 3.⁶ Indeed, left-right distance as well as distance to the parties on the issues of immigration and income redistribution all have a strong and significant pull on the vote.

[TABLES 2 AND 3 ABOUT HERE]

The 2002 Election

Tables 4 and 5 present similar conditional logit results for the 2002 election, with the addition of LPF as a party choice. Socio-demographic effects on the vote remain basically identical to what we found for 1998 for the VVD and CDA (compared to PvdA). In addition, we can see that the LPF significantly attracted support from the young, the males, the low educated, and the highest social classes. As for political discontent, this factor again appears linked to a vote for the opposition CDA, but this effect vanishes once policy views are controlled for. However, the impact of discontent on LPF support is more robust, as it remains highly significant even after taking into account issue distances.

[TABLES 4 AND 5 ABOUT HERE]

The latter result is remarkable considering the strong pull issue distance variables have in our vote choice model. Distance between parties and voters on the left-right ideology scale strongly structures vote choice, as do distances on the issues of asylum seekers and income redistribution, just as one would expect with regard to the 2002 election. But, as the regression results indicate, feelings of discontent also constituted a

significant motivation for Dutch voters to support Pim Fortuyn's party list. This result is also remarkable for two additional reasons. First, the political discontent variable used in the regression is measured in the 1998 wave of the panel, that is four years before the arrival of the LPF on the Dutch electoral scene. The indicator is thus free of any contamination effect that would be due to supporting the LPF. Second, the number of degrees of freedom in the regression's estimation is limited due to panel attrition, a situation that generally makes it more difficult to uncover significant effects for variables of interest.⁷

A related question of interest is whether the Dutch electorate became more cynical in 2002. Some have argued that political discontent was largely fuelled by the LPF, implying that Dutch voters were not really cynical before the rise of Pim Fortuyn in spring 2002. The DNES panel allows us to examine this question by looking at movements in discontent attitudes between 1998 and 2002. Table 6 compares the mean levels of political discontent for 1998 and 2002, with a breakdown by 2002 partisan groups. Note that political discontent in 2002 is measured in the post-election wave of the survey using the exact same questions as in 1998, and that the resulting index has been constructed using the optimal scale values obtained for 1998.

[TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

The table first indicates there has been a slight overall increase in inefficacy/cynicism during the four-year period. However, this increase seems largely attributable to LPF supporters. This group's mean level of cynicism increased by .16 point on the scale, whereas very few upward (or downward) movement can be observed for the other partisan groups. It is thus clear that, in contrast to other surveyed individuals, 2002 LPF voters appeared more discontented than they were four years earlier. But Table 6 also reveals that, compared to the other groups, these future Fortuyn supporters were by far the

most inefficacious and cynical in 1998. The mean 1998 discontent score for this group is .35 while that of the closest group (the supporters in 2002 of the main opposition party CDA) is of .09. This finding, coupled with our earlier conditional logit results from Table 5, suggests that a substantial pool of discontented voters already existed among the Dutch electorate back in 1998, and that these voters were significantly attracted to the LPF four years later when the party appeared on the electoral scene and challenged the established party elites.

Long-Term Trends

One last question worth raising with regard to political discontent in the Netherlands is: how does the 1998-2002 period compare with earlier trends in attitudes of inefficacy and cynicism in that country? Was 2002 an unusual outburst of cynicism among the Dutch people? Looking at long-term trends of confidence in politicians and government in 16 advanced industrialized countries since the 1960s, Dalton (2004, 29-31) recently showed that citizens in these societies were displaying less political support over time (see also Norris 1999; Pharr and Putnam 2000). But he also concluded that the Netherlands constituted the sharpest deviation from this general pattern of declining confidence.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the trends in political inefficacy and cynicism as measured since 1971 by the Dutch National Election Studies cross-section surveys. As multicollinearity is not relevant in the presentation of trends, we have now (in contrast to the analyses presented thus far) constructed separate measures for political inefficacy and political cynicism, both based on optimal scaling and principal component analysis. For the presentation of these trends, we have assumed that the scale values of the various items obtained in 1998 are good approximations of the scale values of these items on other time

points.⁸ The (unweighted) 1998 result thus serves as a “calibration” for the other time points. Finally, the figures show trends based both on unweighted and on weighted data.⁹

[FIGURES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE]

The two figures basically confirm Dalton’s conclusions about the Netherlands: there is no clear pattern of increased inefficacy or cynicism to be observed over the last thirty years in the country. Rather, there are apparent ups and downs throughout the period. Although it remains difficult to exactly determine the extent to which the 2002 rise in discontent was directly fuelled by the LPF, Figures 1 and 2 reveal three other episodes of slight increase in political inefficacy and cynicism that appear strikingly similar to 2002: these episodes are 1971-72, 1981-82, and 1994. In each of these periods, there was important public unrest toward Dutch politics and government. The 1971 and 1972 elections were marked by the success of several smaller parties (DS70, PPR) in the aftermath of the rise of D66 and the Farmers’ Party (BP) in the 1967 election. In contrast, the 1977 election shows a strong decline in support for these smaller challenging parties. In the 1981 election, after four years of center-right coalition government under increasingly bleaker economic outlooks, no important newcomers appeared, but in 1982 – after a CDA-PvdA-D66 coalition failure that in some respects resembles the first Balkenende cabinet, twenty years later – the extreme-right Centre Party made its debut in parliament. Finally, the 1994 election, following a very unpopular CDA-PvdA coalition period, was marked by not only the large losses of both incumbent parties and gains of D66 and the extreme-right Centre Democrats, but also by the success of two new parties for the elderly (which together received 4.5 per cent of the vote). These situations were in many respects not very different from the situation that prevailed on the eve of the 2002 election and that helped catapult Pim Fortuyn’s party list into parliament. All this also suggests that, unlike in other advanced industrial democracies, discontent attitudes in the

Netherlands might be more affected by the political circumstances of the day than by long-term structural conditions.

Discussion

Some students of Dutch party politics have suggested that small parties like the Centre Democrats in the 1980s not only attracted support from ideologically motivated extremists, but also from voters wanting to protest against “politics-as-usual” (Voerman and Lucardie 1992). Our study indicates that this has definitely been true for the List Pim Fortuyn in the 2002 parliamentary election. Findings from the panel data presented in this paper suggest that policy preferences and attitudes of discontent both contributed to the success of this party, thus providing support for both interpretations of the rise of the LPF.

Our results are consistent with most of the other findings about the 2002 vote for the LPF indicating that Fortuyn’s issue agenda attracted support from Dutch voters holding similar policy views, most notably on the question of refugees and asylum seekers. They are also consistent with results from several, but not all, studies about the LPF and about other anti-immigrant parties in Europe suggesting that disaffection from politics is also a significant motivation to support these non-established parties (Lubbers and Scheepers 2000, 2002; Lubbers, Scheepers and Billiet 2000; Mayer and Perrineau 1992; Mudde and van Holsteyn 2000; Swyngedouw 2001; van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; van der Zwan 2004). The latter conclusion finds echo in other studies of “third” or minor party voting in the United States (Peterson and Wrighton 1998; Hetherington 1999) and elsewhere (Bélanger 2004; Bélanger and Nadeau 2005; Miller and Listhaug 1990) showing that lack of confidence toward government and politics is fertile ground for challenging party movements.

Scholarly works dismissing the protest voting argument usually do it on the grounds that it allegedly implies irrational behavior on the part of voters, that it does not consider such votes as votes for “normal” parties, and that attitudes of cynicism are largely endogenous (e.g., van der Brug 2003; 2004; van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie 2000; Koch 2003). We believe that such criticisms are unwarranted. Our research design based on panel data has allowed us to show that, while discontent attitudes are not impervious to change, their effect on vote choice is mostly exogenous.

The protest vote hypothesis implies that politically disaffected voters will want to express their discontent at the polls by opting for a non-established party alternative. While they might be in agreement with the policy positions of the party, an additional motivation for these voters to support such a party is that it is not part of the governing establishment. As such, third parties hold the potential of doing politics differently than what citizens are accustomed to (and are disaffected from). Such voting behavior is no less rational than the one implied by a policy (or ideological) voting model. Voters’ discontent results from a more or less systematic evaluation of the performance of the political process and its institutions, including the traditional governing parties and their elite (Easton 1965, 1975; Gamson 1968; Williams 1985; Dennis and Owen 2001; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Discontented citizens will tend to support non-established parties because they consider the major governing parties as partly responsible for the system’s underperformance (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 45-46). Their vote for a non-traditional party is instrumental in the sense that it aims at affecting the functioning of the political system, and not only (or simply) at affecting public policies. Third and minor parties are thus viewed by disaffected voters as potential agents for improving, or changing, the political system.¹⁰

Like any other “normal” parties, third parties such as the LPF effectively occupy an ideological niche of their own on the political spectrum. But they also try to mobilize support by often presenting themselves as a new kind of representational vehicle, different from the old-line parties. They picture the established party elites as incompetent, unresponsive and untrustworthy, and argue that they will do differently. This image makes them highly attractive to the discontented parts of the electorate. Political entrepreneurs like Fortuyn have this ability of being sensible to public opinion and of tapping into such pre-existing attitudes, galvanizing them in the process. That is why they turn out to be so successful.

Endnotes

¹ Full documentation of the 1998 study is available in Aarts, van der Kolk and Kamp (1999). Additional documentation for the 1999 and 2002 components of the panel is in the process of preparation (currently available from the authors upon request).

² We reversed the order in the original data set in order to make the direction in all items comparable.

³ Without using optimal scaling, the factor solution in this case would have been very similar to the one presented in the text. On the original ordinal scales, the first component explains 41.5 per cent of the variance. The loadings are in the same magnitude and show the same pattern as the solution presented in Table 1.

⁴ Other political issues, such as law and order, might be considered relevant. Unfortunately, no other measures of voter and party positions at both time points are available in the 1998-2002 DNES panel survey other than for the above three issue dimensions.

⁵ Because (voters of) smaller parties are excluded, our analysis cannot address the effects of inefficacy and cynicism on voting for such parties, nor is the presence of these parties considered in explaining the vote for the three major parties and the LPF. Except for D66 and GroenLinks, both of which are established parties together receiving over 16 per cent of the vote in the 1998 election and around 12 per cent in 2002, the small number of respondents stating that they voted for other parties makes more detailed analyses difficult.

⁶ The results pertaining to the socio-demographic variables are only slightly affected once issue distances are controlled for, and have for reasons of presentation been omitted from Tables 3 and 5.

⁷ We also performed a simple binary logit estimation of support for the LPF, similar to what van der Brug (2003) did. Our 1998 index of inefficacy/cynicism continues to exert a

statistically significant effect on the 2002 LPF vote (odds ratio of 1.35, $p < 0.05$), controlling for socio-economic status and issue distances.

⁸ Estimating scale values for each time point separately makes no sense because the factor scores are normalized, with a mean of zero and standard deviation of one, per time point. Two alternatives may be considered. First, pooling the data from all time points does not seem warranted given the differences in sampling designs, response rates, and numbers of observation. Second, using an I(tem) R(esponse) T(heory) model that can accommodate incomplete data structures can be used (see Glas et al. 2004), but this option has been abandoned because of constraints on time and resources. The reader should know that we also looked at these trends using raw (non-optimally scaled) scores, which revealed the same basic trends as the ones presented in Figures 1 and 2.

⁹ The program of Dutch election studies has, not unlike many other survey research programs but especially sharply, been criticized for the declined survey response rates in recent decades (cf. Voogt 2004). One of the weighting procedures suggested to correct for the likely bias in descriptive inferences based on the election studies is the so-called CBS weight, based on a weighting model including voting behavior (party choice and non-voting), age group, gender, marital status, region, and degree of urbanization. This weight has been computed by Statistics Netherlands for all election studies until 1998, and by Jan Spit of the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office for 2002 and 2003.

¹⁰ The above reasoning is largely inspired by Hirschman's (1970) seminal work. See Bélanger (2004) and Bélanger and Nadeau (2005) for similar applications of this framework. See also van der Zwan (2004, 79-80) for a somewhat similar argument about the political character of a protest vote.

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Table 1 Scaling Political Discontent, 1998

<i>Item</i>	<i>Quantification</i>	<i>Loading on Political Discontent Score</i>
Members of parliament do not care about the opinions of people like me	False -0.78 True 1.34	0.745
Political parties are only interested in my vote and not in my opinions	False -0.95 True 1.10	0.740
People like me have absolutely no influence on governmental policy	False -0.84 True 1.23	0.665
So many people vote in elections that my vote does not matter	False -0.31 True 3.24	0.425
Although they know better, politicians promise more than they can deliver	Disagree completely -1.61 Disagree -1.61 Agree -0.22 Agree completely 2.04	0.598
Ministers and state secretaries are primarily concerned about their personal interests	Disagree completely -1.35 Disagree -0.58 Agree 1.31 Agree completely 2.99	0.710
One is more likely to become a member of parliament because of one's political friends than because of one's abilities	Disagree completely -1.07 Disagree -0.77 Agree 1.02 Agree completely 2.69	0.646
Total fit = 0.430	Multiple loss = 0.570 Single loss = 0.000	n = 1,670

Table 2 Socio-Demographic Factors, Political Discontent, and Vote Choice, 1998

	PvdA	VVD	CDA
Political Discontent Score 1998	1	1.229** (0.106)	1.337** (0.136)
Age	1	0.985** (0.005)	1.011 (0.007)
Male	1	2.270** (0.363)	1.816** (0.359)
Church	1	0.966 (0.079)	2.513** (0.181)
Education	1	0.968 (0.035)	0.911* (0.040)
Social Class	1	2.503** (0.286)	1.765** (0.213)
(Constant)	1	0.085** (0.036)	0.009** (0.004)
n = 3,057 Pseudo-R ² = 0.230 Initial log-likelihood = -1012.101 Log-likelihood at convergence = -861.781			

Entries are effects on the odds ratio of voting for a party (e^b) obtained by conditional logit analysis for voters of the three major parties only. Standard errors between parentheses. PvdA is reference group. * : p < 0.10; ** : p < 0.05

Table 3 Political Discontent and Issue Distance Effects on Vote Choice, 1998

	PvdA	VVD	CDA
Political Discontent Score 1998	1	1.030 (0.113)	1.198 (0.133)
Income Redistribution [†]		0.682** (0.034)	
Admitting Refugees [†]		0.765** (0.046)	
Left-Right Ideology [†]		0.576** (0.025)	
n = 3,057 Pseudo-R ² = 0.408 Initial log-likelihood = -947.055 Log-likelihood at convergence = -662.678			

Controlling for socio-demographic effects (refer to Table 2)

[†] : Issue distances computed from respondent and party position in 1998.

Table 4 Socio-Demographic Factors, Political Discontent, and Vote Choice, 2002

	PvdA	VVD	CDA	LPF
Political Discontent Score 1998	1	1.155 (.212)	1.395** (.233)	1.761** (.334)
Age	1	0.976** (0.012)	0.980* (0.011)	0.952** (0.013)
Male	1	2.840** (0.938)	1.570 (0.474)	2.354** (0.828)
Church	1	1.142 (0.191)	2.586** (0.353)	1.288 (0.217)
Education	1	0.917 (0.068)	0.745** (0.052)	0.752** (0.062)
Social Class	1	2.409** (0.520)	2.348** (0.437)	1.881** (0.394)
(Constant)	1	0.180** (0.150)	0.284* (0.209)	2.351 (1.974)
n = 1,760 Pseudo-R ² = 0.241 Initial log-likelihood = -550.900 Log-likelihood at convergence = -463.237				

Entries are effects on the odds ratio of voting for a party (e^b) obtained by conditional logit analysis for voters of the four major parties only. Standard errors between parentheses. PvdA is reference group. * : p < 0.10; ** : p < 0.05

Table 5 Political Discontent and Issue Distance Effects on Vote Choice, 2002

	PvdA	VVD	CDA	LPF
Political Discontent Score 1998	1	1.023 (0.210)	1.291 (0.233)	1.560** (0.329)
Income Redistribution [†]		0.818** (0.076)		
Admitting Refugees [†]		0.794** (0.058)		
Left-Right Ideology [†]		0.664** (0.043)		
n = 1,760 Pseudo-R ² = 0.320 Initial log-likelihood = -539.565 Log-likelihood at convergence = -414.834				

Controlling for socio-demographic effects (refer to Table 4)

[†] : Issue distances computed from respondent position in 1998 and party position in 2002.

Table 6 Movements in Cynicism Between 1998 and 2002, by 2002 Partisan Groups

2002 Vote	1998 Political Discontent Mean Score	2002 Political Discontent Mean Score
PvdA	-.179 (.967)	-.171 (1.045)
VVD	-.180 (.948)	-.223 (.886)
CDA	.093 (.975)	.079 (.920)
LPF	.327 (1.149)	.490 (1.047)
Other party	-.250 (.902)	-.199 (.966)
Total	-.051 (.989)	-.029 (.986)
n =	642	622

Entries are mean (1998 optimally scaled) scores with standard deviation in parentheses.

Figure 1 Feeling of political inefficacy
The Netherlands, 1971 – 2003



Unweighted and weighted data, four external efficacy items.
Questions asked in pre-election interviews (1971–77), or post-election interviews (1981–2003)

Figure 2 Political cynicism
The Netherlands, 1977 – 2003



Unweighted and weighted data, three cynicism items.
Questions asked in post-election interviews