Does Intergenerational Class and Religious Mobility Affect Class-Based and Religion-Based Voting?

Janssen, J.P.G.; Need, A.; Graaf, N.D. de

Research Note

Does Intergenerational Class and Religious Mobility Affect Class-Based and Religion-Based Voting?[1]

Jacques P.G. Janssen, Ariana Need and Nan Dirk de Graaf

University of Nijmegen

Abstract

Increasing levels of intergenerational class and religious mobility in the Netherlands warrant an investigation of the relative importance of individual and parental characteristics in determining a person's voting behaviour. Using logistic diagonal reference models we examine how a person's social class position and church membership as well as those of the parents affect the choice to vote for a specific group of parties. These relative effects of individual and parental characteristics do not depend on a person's educational level. They in fact differ with age, which indicates acculturation: the longer a person is a member of a specific social class and church (or not a member of any church) the more his or her voting behaviour is influenced by these individual characteristics relative to those of the parents. No status maximizing strategies are found: a person's voting behaviour does not disproportionally resemble that of the highest of both groups, nor is acculturation faster for social climbers. The relative effects of one's own and of parental characteristics could not be modelled for new left (D66, GroenLinks) voting, since new left is hardly tied to traditional cleavages. The importance of parental social class and church membership has not declined relative to that of a person's own social class and church membership during the last 25 years. This justifies our question whether intergenerational class and religious mobility can explain the downward trend of (absolute) class-based and religion-based voting in the Netherlands during the last 25 years. Adding parental characteristics, and therefore taking intergenerational mobility into account, however, hardly explains the trend.

1 Introduction

Developments such as depillarization, secularization and increasing levels of intergenerational social mobility during the last few decades have led to a decline in class-based and church-based voting (De Graaf 1996; Need 1997; Nieuwbeerta 1995). In this study we answer the question *to what extent* the increasing levels of social and religious mobility offer an explanation for this decreasing association between a person's social class position and church

membership on the one hand and his or her voting behaviour on the other. First, however, we discuss some theories underlying the impact of these traditional cleavages.

The association between a person's social class and his or her voting behaviour can be regarded as a consequence of economic interests (Downs 1957). According to the instrumental theory, voting concerns a rational choice in which economic self-interest is pursued instrumentally. Hence, members of a certain social class will most likely vote for a party taking care of the economic interests of that class. Therefore, manual workers tend to vote for left-wing political parties while non-manual workers tend to vote for right-wing parties. In this way, voting behaviour becomes a legitimate instrument and an expression of the democratic class struggle (Lipset 1981). Similarly, if the instrumental theory applies to ideological, or religious interests as well, we can expect religious people to vote for religious political parties.

The instrumental theory assumes a rational choice of relatively independent group members in a balanced market of demand (i.e. interests) and supply (i.e. political parties). But rational actors may also be influenced by actors who have the same characteristics and interests. In this way we can explain why members of certain *groups* with the same characteristics are likely to prefer a certain political party collectively (Blau 1956; Heath, Jowell and Curtis 1985). The idea behind this *expressive theory* is that people from a certain social class have contacts predominantly with other people within that same social class, and consequently they will learn and conform to the interest of the group to which they belong. Class consciousness and acting accordingly thus strengthen people's beliefs. The same reasoning applies to church membership – it also strengthens people's beliefs.

During the past decades the proportion of manual labourers has decreased in the Netherlands, as has the number of people belonging to a church. Furthermore, the influence of social class and religion on party preference has decreased in the Netherlands as well as in several other Western countries (Andeweg 1982; Clark, Lipset and Rempel 1993; De Graaf 1996; Eisinga, Felling and Lammers 1994; Irwin and Dittrich 1984; Nieuwbeerta 1995). These findings suggest that both the instrumental and the expressive theories are losing their theoretical significance when it comes to predicting voting behaviour.

Our aim is to explain the declining trend in class-based and religion-based voting by looking at intergenerational class and religious mobility. The percentage of social climbers in terms of manual and non-manual workers was about 14 per cent in the early 1970s and about 20 per cent since the 1980s; the percentage of descenders during the same period was between 15 and 16 per cent (Ganzeboom and Luijkx 1995). The percentage of people who left the church increased from about 19 per cent in the early 1970s to about 30 per cent in the early 1990s (Janssen 1995). If parental social class and parental religion

affect one's voting behaviour, an increase in the levels of intergenerational mobility unavoidably leads to an increasing number of people with political preferences that are less strongly associated with their own social position. Hence, this composition effect might explain part of the declining trend of both class-based and religion-based voting.

Increasing levels of intergenerational mobility can only offer an explanation for the decline in class-based and religion-based voting when parental class and church membership continue to have an effect on a person's voting behaviour. We examine, therefore, the relative impact of a person's own social characteristics and those of his or her parents on voting. For this purpose we build upon research, published in *Acta Politica* (22), in which the relation between intergenerational class mobility and political preference was modelled using the non-linear design of diagonal reference models (De Graaf and Ultee 1987). We extend this study of relative effects of class mobility to *relative effects* of religious mobility. Unlike De Graaf and Ultee (1987), we distinguish four clusters of political parties and do not use a single left-right dimension. The four clusters that we distinguish are traditional left-wing parties, new left parties, right-wing parties, and confessional parties. In this way the multi-dimensionality in the Dutch party system is accounted for (cf. Middendorp 1991).

After establishing the importance of parents' church membership and class position for the voting behaviour of their adult children, we examine to what extent the increasing number of intergenerational mobile persons can explain the decline of 'absolute' class-based and religion-based voting. First, however, we will discuss how intergenerational mobility affects class-based and religion-based voting. For this purpose we derive hypotheses about the relative effects of a person's class and church membership on the one hand and about the effects of these characteristics of his or her parents on the other hand. Then we introduce the data and report the results of our analyses and discuss the most important implications of our findings.

2 Hypotheses

According to both the instrumental and expressive theories we expect manual workers to vote for traditional left-wing parties, non-manual employees and self-employed for right-wing parties, and church members for confessional parties. Because membership of a certain class is hardly relevant to the voting behaviour of church members, interactions between church membership and class position are taken into account. The instrumental and the expressive theories are less clear with respect to the electorate of new left political parties. In line with Inglehart (1990) we expect the young, more highly educated in particular to vote for new left parties.

In what way can intergenerational mobility affect the association between social class and church membership on the one hand and voting behaviour on the other hand? To derive hypotheses from the expressive theory we turn to the basis of Durkheim's *integration theory* on suicide (1897). By doing this, we can not only predict *in what way*, but also *under which conditions* people act according to mutual norms. From Durkheim's theses on suicide we derive the more general hypothesis (cf. Ultee, Arts and Flap 1992: chaps. 4, 5 and pp. 595-597) that people who are more strongly integrated in an intermediary group within society comply with the norms of this group to a greater extent than people who are less integrated in this group. By taking norms on voting behaviour and perceiving social classes and religious denominations as groups, we arrive at the hypothesis that people are more likely to vote for parties that look after their interests when their parents belong to the same social class and have the same religious denomination. Research shows that parental social positions affect voting behaviour (De Graaf and Ultee 1987; Turner 1992; Weakliem 1992). Therefore, we expect that a person's voting behaviour lies somewhere between whatever is the voting norm in the social and religious group of his or her parents and the voting norm in his or her own social and religious group. One could imagine a process of acculturation by which a new situation – in which one becomes more integrated over time – becomes more relevant to one's preferences at the cost of past positions (Blau 1956; De Graaf, Nieuwbeerta and Heath 1995: 1000). The accompanying acculturation hypothesis is the following:

H1 The older a person the smaller the impact of the group of origin (class and church membership of his or her parents) relative to the impact of his or her present group membership.

Since the increase in intergenerational class mobility in the Netherlands especially concerns upward mobility, it is important to know what upward mobility implies for the relative impact of parental class. Upwardly mobile people might want to adapt more quickly (De Graaf and Ultee 1987; Heath et al. 1991; Lipset 1981), whereas downwardly mobile people might want to do so less quickly. This brings us to the *status maximization hypothesis*:

H2 Downwardly mobile persons focus more on their class of origin with respect to their voting behaviour, while upwardly mobile persons focus more on their class of destination.

We also test a dynamic hypothesis (also De Graaf, Nieuwbeerta and Heath 1995). Since adaptation is a process, we focus on the speed of acculturation and introduce the *dynamic status maximizing hypothesis*:

H3 The adaptation to the voting behaviour of a person's own class (hypothesis 1) proceeds more quickly if that person is upwardly mobile than if that person is downwardly mobile.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 concern the impact of class mobility only. Next, we focus again on both class and religious mobility. The average level of education in the Netherlands has risen considerably during this century (De Graaf and Ganzeboom 1993). More than half of the Dutch population has a higher level of education than their own fathers and about 70 per cent is more highly educated than their own mothers (CBS 1994). A higher education leads to more independent personal decisions. Applying this idea to voting behaviour (Wadsworth and Freeman 1983) higher educated people vote more in accordance with their own characteristics than do lower educated people. This leads to the *interaction hypothesis for education*:

H4 The higher a person's educational level the smaller the impact of the group of origin (class and church membership of the parents) relative to that of present group membership.

We expect that during the last 25 years the relative number of people voting for a party other than the one that is traditional for their social class and church has increased, because an increasing number of persons is intergenerationally mobile. Intergenerational mobility implies that people are partly influenced by a social position that is not their own position. We use parental characteristics to explain the decreasing trend in class-based and religion-based voting behaviour. This leads to our *'no-trend' hypothesis*:

H5 Parental characteristics being controlled, there is no decrease in the influence of a person's group membership on voting behaviour.

The test of this hypothesis answers our initial question about the extent to which increasing levels of social and religious mobility explain the decreasing associations between social class and religion on the one hand and voting on the other hand.

3 Data and operationalization

To examine trends in mobility it is necessary to have cross-sectional datasets that cover a reasonable number of years. The datasets must also contain information about all relevant indicators. There are 10 datasets that meet these conditions, which originate from six National Election Surveys (1970, 1977,

1981, 1982, 1986, 1994) and from four other surveys (Political Participation 1971; SOCON 1985 and 1990; Dutch Family Survey 1992). See the appendix for details. From the original collapsed file containing 18,276 respondents we omitted those respondents that lacked necessary information. In most cases information about the occupation of the respondent or that of the respondent's father was missing. After selection, 10,160 respondents remained.

To account for the most important dimensions in the range of political parties we distinguished four groups of parties: old left-wing (PvdA, DS70); new left (D66, *GroenLinks* [GreenLeft] and predecessors); right-wing (VVD, *Boerenpartij* [Farmers Party], extreme right-wing); and confessional (CDA and predecessors, SGP, GPV, RPF). The advantage of these nominal distinctions is that separations and fusions of political parties can be taken into account. Furthermore, we can account for an economic left-right dimension, an ideological religious dimension, and distinguish new left (postmaterial parties) from the more traditional labour party (PvdA).

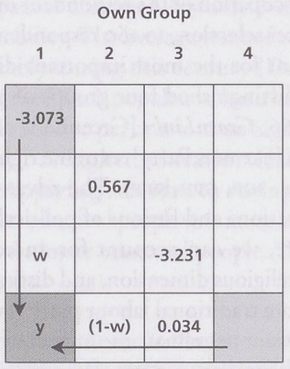
Since we want to evaluate the impact of social class and church membership on voting behaviour, and we also want to account for possible interactions between social class and church membership, we have developed a typology that we call *social group*: non-religious non-manual workers, religious non-manual workers, non-religious manual workers, and religious manual workers. 'Religious' and 'non-religious' refer to whether persons consider themselves (Christian) church members or not. Non-manual workers are members of the service class, routine non-manual workers and the self-employed; manual workers are manual workers' supervisors, trained and routine manual workers, and farm labourers.

We have also distinguished four educational levels: primary education; lower vocational or intermediate secondary education (LBO, MAVO, MULO); intermediate vocational training or higher secondary education (MBO, HAVO, HBS, VWO) and higher education (higher vocational HBO, university WO). Lastly, gender (0 = man, 1 = woman), age (measured in years from 18 onwards), and year of survey (measured since 1970) are accounted for in our analysis.

4 Relative effects of respondent's and parental social groups

To test our hypotheses about the relative effects of a person's destination and origin, we examined the impact of the social class and church membership of two generations simultaneously. Those who share their social class and church membership with their parents are considered the most 'pure' members of these groups. There are no conflicts of group interests for them. On the other hand, those who belong to a different social group than their parents, i.e. the socially or religiously mobile, are guided in different political directions. The socially

Figure 1 Diagonal reference model: log odds of voting as weighed log odds in groups of origin and destination



1 non-religious non-manual workers
2 religious non-manual workers
3 non-religious manual workers
4 religious manual workers

and religiously mobile are expected to take a position between their origin and their destination with respect to their voting behaviour. To model this we use *diagonal reference models*. The advantage of these models is that the immobile people are considered as the reference group. This means that to establish the political preference of a non-religious, non-manual worker, for example, we need to consider a person whose father is also a non-religious, non-manual worker (see also De Graaf, Nieuwbeerta and Heath 1995, p. 1007). By using diagonal reference models we build upon the first Dutch application of these models as published in *Acta Politica* (De Graaf and Ultee 1987; see also Sobel 1981, 1985 and Cox 1990).

In our basic model, we regress the logarithm of the odds of party preference on origin (social class and church membership of the parents) and destination (own social class and church membership). Furthermore, we include year, age, gender and education as co-variates. The theoretical logic behind the model without co-variates is visualized in Figure 1. The dark shaded cell Y is the log odds of voting for a certain group of parties by non-religious (see section 3) non-manual workers (group 1) whose parents are religious (see section 3) manual workers (group 4). On the main diagonal we find for each of the four possible combinations of intergenerationally stable persons imaginary natural

log odds of voting for a certain group of parties versus any other party. Y is so to speak a mixture – depending on the group of origin and the group of destination – of the logits for the light shaded areas of stable persons. We look for a weight factor w indicating the strength of the influence of the group of destination, where (1-w) is accounted for by the group of origin ($0 \leq w \leq 1$). If $w = 0.6$, we predict for individuals in cell Y: logit $Y_{ij} = 0.6 * -3.073 + 0.4 * 0.034 = -1.830$. The logistic (De Graaf and Heath 1992) basic model we use can be described by this equation:

$$S = \sum_{d=1}^{4} \sum_{o=1}^{4} w * \mu d + (1\text{-}w) * \mu o + ß_{educ} * educ + ß_{age} * age + ß_{sex} * sex + ß_{year} * year$$

where S is the log odds of voting for the party group concerned rather than for any other party group; d and o are the group of destination and the group of origin in four categories; w is the contribution in the odds of μ_d; 1-w that of μ_o; μ_d is the log odds of voting by stable persons in the group of destination; μ_o is the log odds of voting by stable persons in the group of origin; ß is a logistic regression coefficient of the co-variate in subscript; 'educ' is education in four categories, 'age' is years of age since 18, 'sex' is gender, 'year' since 1970. The parameters have been estimated using the 'NLR' procedure (Non-Linear Regression) in SPSS-X 4.1. By using these models, we can compare any one of the four party groups against all the others, rather than only one group of parties against another.[2]

To test our first four hypotheses involving interactions, we add interactions to the weight factor 'w'. Each additional parameter is tested for significance against the basic model (see Table 1). Before we test our hypotheses we add an interaction with the year of survey (model 2) which models possible trends. Next, we added all interactions yielding a significant contribution to the model for at least one party group to our final model. In this way, the models of all four party groups were the same. After a nested model comparison[3] we preferred model 8, which contains the interactions of hypotheses 1 to 4. The parameter estimates of this model are presented in Table 2.

In the model predicting voting for new left parties, the weight factor of relative effects exceeds the 0-1 interval, which is the logical range if we speak of relative effects. After controlling for the co-variates, the weight parameter for destination is slightly greater than 1, but not significantly different to 1. Furthermore, the estimation of the relative importance of parental characteristics is greatest in the model that estimates the chance of voting for right-wing parties. None of the weight factors differs significantly from 0.5, which means that we cannot say that either the person's own social group or the social group of the parents has the greatest impact: they are about equal.

Table 1 Test of significant contribution of interaction parameters on the weight factor

	party group			
	old left-wing	*new left*	*right-wing*	*confessional*
model				
1 (baseline) RMS	0.54185 (10,151)	0.44204 (10,151)	0.45719 (10,151)	0.50754 (10,151)
2 (interaction year) vs 1	-0.563 (1) ns	0.919 (1) ns	10.895 (1)***	-0.400 (1) ns
3 (interaction education) vs 1	1.688 (1) ns	0.690 (1) ns	12.897 (1)***	1.401 (1) ns
4 (interaction age) vs 1	1.688 (1) ns	1.609 (1) ns	6.002 (1)*	4.205 (1)*
5 (1 + social mobility) vs 1	21.210 (1)***	0.000 (1) ns	2.223 (1) ns	15.426 (1)***
6 (interaction social mobility) vs 5	-0.939 (1) ns	8.048 (1)**	-0.222 (1) ns	-0.401 (1) ns
7 (interactions age and social mobility) vs 5	1.691 (1) ns	1.609 (1) ns	6.893 (1)**	4.211 (1)*
8 (7 + three way interaction age and social mobility) vs 7	0.000 (1) ns	-0.919 (1) ns	4.450 (1)*	-1.003 (1) ns

Note: Given in the left column: model number, type of model, and model to which it is compared. For basic model 1 given: Residual Mean Square and degrees of freedom; for all other models: X^2 differences for model with odds of voting for party groups against all other parties; (degrees of freedom); significance: ns: $0.05 < p$, *: $0.01 < p \leq 0.05$, **: $0.001 < p \leq 0.01$, ***: $p \leq 0.001$. N = 10,160.

First, we will discuss the effects of the co-variates (i.e. the ß's in Table 2). A high level of education is associated with voting less for old left-wing and confessional parties, and more for new left and right-wing parties. Young people tend to vote more for new left parties and less for confessional parties. Furthermore, women are more likely to vote for both types of left-wing parties and less likely to vote for a right-wing party. Social mobility has a significant effect as well: compared to social descenders social climbers vote more for old left-wing and right-wing parties and less for confessional parties.

As Table 1 shows, adding the interaction term of year with the weight factor of origin and destination improves the basic model of right-wing voting only. In Table 2 we see that it concerns a negative effect, which indicates a growing importance of parental characteristics.

We will now discuss the results regarding hypotheses 1 to 4. The interaction term of age, new left, and the weight factor is only significant with respect to the likelihood of voting for a right-wing party or a confessional party. As predicted by the acculturation hypothesis (H_1), the older one is the more the impact of parental class and church membership diminish relative to that of one's own class and church membership. This suggests that adaptation to one's own group is a process over time.

The interaction between social mobility and the weight factor appeared to improve the basic model of new left voting only. Although this interaction effect itself is significant in the final model, it is negative. This implies that upwardly mobile people are more likely to vote in accordance with their group of origin than with their group of destination. This contradicts the status maximization hypothesis (H_2). However, we have to realize that in this model, which predicts new left voting, the relative weight parameters of own and parental characteristics exceeded the 0-1 boundaries. This probably causes the negative interaction effect of social mobility. Therefore, we can not draw firm conclusions about a possible status minimization effect. Nevertheless, we clearly have to reject the status maximization hypothesis (H_2) for all party choices.

To test the dynamic status maximization hypothesis (H_3), we apply a three way interaction of age and social mobility on the weight factor for own and parental characteristics. Although the addition of this term improved the fit for the right-wing model, the parameter estimate itself is not significant

Table 2 Parameter estimations of the final model; odds of voting against all other parties with interactions: log odd effects (standard errors) odds effects

	party group			
	old left-wing	*new left*	*right-wing*	*confessional*
parameter				
RMS (df = 10,145)	0.54063	0.44152	0.45591	0.50644
w (weight factor)	0.527 (0.108) *	1.126 (0.309)	0.368 (0.247) *	0.476 (0.081) *
μ_1	0.123 (0.150) 1.13 ns	-1.616 (0.161) 0.20	-1.189 90.157) 0.30	-3.035 (0.208) 0.05
μ_2	-1.486 (0.140) 0.23	-2.438 (0.157) 0.09	-1.898 (0.144) 0.15	0.510 (0.129) 1.67
μ_3	1.184 (0.140) 3.27	-1.608 (0.144) 0.20	-2.849 (0.176) 0.06	-3.326 (0.235) 0.04
μ_4	-0.188 (0.116) 0.83 ns	-2.280 (0.137) 0.10	-2.906 (0.147) 0.05	-0.025 (0.111) 0.98 ns
β_{educ}	-0.153 (0.035) 0.86	0.277 (0.039) 1.32	0.192 (0.036) 1.21	-0.186 (0.035) 0.83
β_{age}	0.002 (0.002) 1.00 ns	-0.024 (0.003) 0.98	0.001 (0.002) 1.00 ns	0.010 (0.002) 1.01
β_{gender}	0.154 (0.061) 1.17	0.146 (0.063) 1.16	-0.219 (0.063) 0.80	-0.099 (0.061) 0.91 ns
β_{year}	-0.021 (0.004) 0.98	0.014 (0.005) 1.01	0.012 (0.005) 1.01	0.003 (0.004) 1.00 ns
β_{socmob}	0.248 (0.076) 1.28	0.134 (0.104) 1.14 ns	0.621 (0.274) 1.86	-0.184 (0.053) 0.83
I_{year}	-0.004 (0.004) 1.00 ns	0.021 (0.011) 1.02 ns	-0.015 (0.006) 0.99	-0.003 (0.003) 1.00 ns
I_{educ}	0.041 (0.030) 1.04 ns	-0.099 (0.082) 0.91 ns	-0.080 (0.046) 0.92 ns	0.043 (0.023) 1.04 ns
I_{age}	0.004 (0.002) 1.00 ns	0.007 (0.006) 1.01 ns	0.015 (0.006) 1.02	0.003 (0.001) 1.00
I_{socmob}	-0.009 (0.043) 0.99 ns	-0.374 (0.144) 0.69	0.040 (0.059) 1.04 ns	-0.028 (0.043) 0.97 ns
$I_{age*socmob}$	-0.001 (0.001) 1.00 ns	-0.000 (0.001) 1.00 ns	0.003 (0.002) 1.00 ns	0.000 (0.001) 1.00 ns

Note: ns > 0.05. df = number of degrees of freedom; RMS = Residual Mean Square; in parentheses for effects: standard error. * = 0.5 is within 95% confidence interval (for weight factor); 'I's are interaction parameters on weight factor. N = 10,160.

(Table 2). The dynamic status maximization hypothesis (H_3) can, therefore, also be rejected. Apparently, people who have climbed the social ladder compared to their parents do not acculturate faster to their current group than people who have descended.

To test our fourth hypothesis we modelled an interaction term of education on the weight factor. This resulted only in a significant improvement of the model that predicts right-wing voting (see Table 1). In the final model in Table 2, the effect appears to be insignificant. This leads to the rejection of the interaction hypothesis for education (H_4).

5 Social class, church membership and voting behaviour: evidence of trends?

Our previous results suggest that parental class and church membership indeed affect voting behaviour. Furthermore, the relative impacts of origin and destination depend on one's age. This implies that mobility does affect voting behaviour and that acculturation is important. However, we still do not know to what extent mobility patterns can explain the decline in absolute class-based and absolute religion-based voting. In our final hypothesis (H_5) we claim that these trends may be explained by parental characteristics. To test this, we used logistic regression analysis. We regressed the natural logarithm of the odds of voting for one of the party groups against all the others on the social group, i.e. the combined categorization of social class and church membership. We control the effects in the analyses for age, gender, educational level and year of survey. To establish trends, we added an interaction term of social group and year (1970 = 0). Parental social group is added to examine the trend effects controlling for parental characteristics.

Table 3 χ^2test of significant contribution of the trend effects of social group on voting behaviour with and without controlling for parental social group, N = 10,160

	without controlling parents			controlling parents		
party group	**Δ (χ^2)**	**Δ (df)**	**p**	**Δ (χ^2)**	**Δ (df)**	**p**
old left-wing	28.034	3	0.000	22.802	3	0.000
new left	15.845	3	0.002	15.225	3	0.002
right-wing	37.881	3	0.000	33.561	3	0.000
confessional	7.578	3	0.054	6.378	3	0.093

First, we tested whether adding the trend effects significantly improves the model by looking at χ^2 differences between the model with and without trend effects. We did the same for a model including parental social group as a predictor. The χ^2 values with accompanying significance are presented in Table 3, both for the model with and for the model without parental social group.

Leaving out the trends worsens the fit of both models significantly, except in the case of confessional voting, where the significance of the χ^2 difference is just above the 5 per cent level. This suggests that there is a decreasing influence of the social group on voting behaviour, except on confessional voting. The lower χ^2 values on the right-hand side of Table 3 suggest that mobility indeed explains the trends to some extent. However, the trends remain significant. Furthermore, all trend effects controlled for parental social group are within the 95 % confidence intervals of the trend effects not controlled for parental social group. Adding parental characteristics, therefore, does not significantly lower the trend towards less class-based and religion-based voting.

Figure 2 Odds of voting for each party group by 43-year-old lower-secondary educated men in the four social groups, 1970-1994

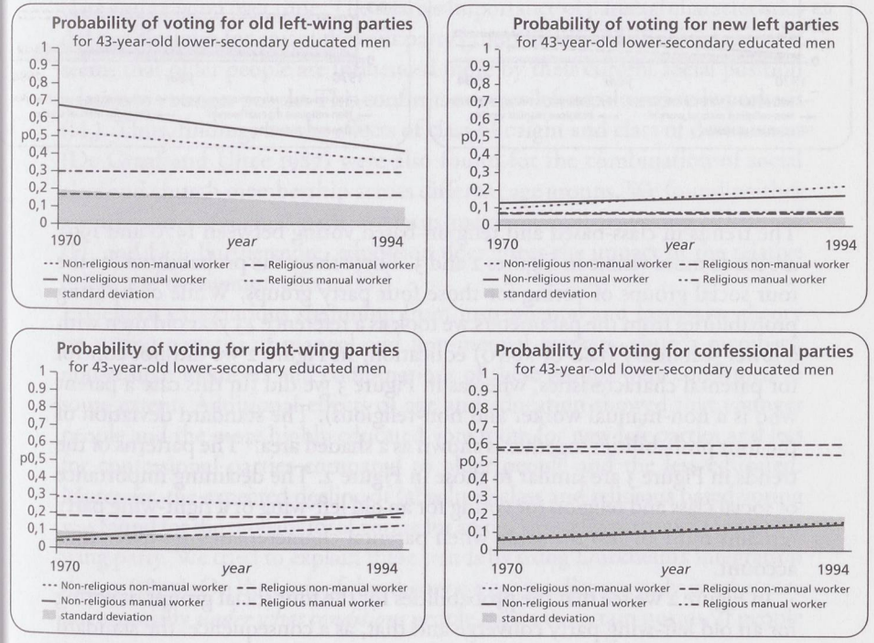
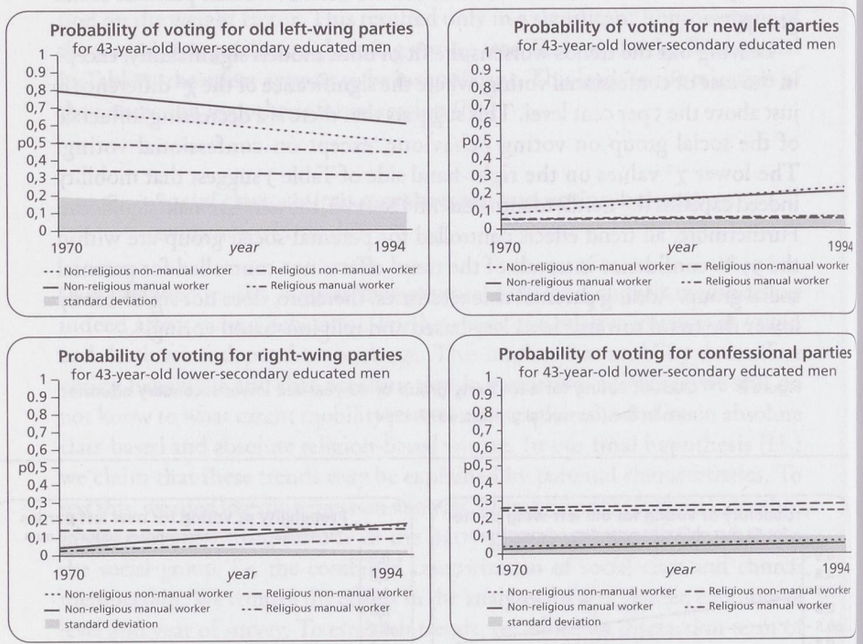


Figure 3 Odds of voting for each party group by 43-year-old lower-secondary educated men in the four social groups, controlling parental social group (non-religious manual workers), 1970-1994



The trends in class-based and religion-based voting between 1970 and 1994 are made more visible in Figures 2 and 3. These show the probabilities for the four social groups of voting for those four party groups. While computing probabilities from the parameters we took as a reference 43 year old men with a lower secondary (LBO or MAVO) education. In Figure 2 we did not control for parental characteristics, whereas in Figure 3 we did (in this case a parent who is a non-manual worker and non-religious). The standard deviation of the four probabilities together is shown as a shaded area.[4] The patterns of the trends in Figure 3 are similar to those in Figure 2. The declining importance of social class and religion for voting for an old left-wing or a right-wing party remains more or less the same when parental characteristics are taken into account.

In Figure 2 we see that the probabilities for the four social groups of voting for an old left-wing party converge and that, as a consequence, the standard

deviation diminishes. The same applies to right-wing voting. This suggests that the combination of social class and church membership becomes less influential. Also obvious in Figure 2 is the fact that no significant trend can be found for confessional voting. This is contrary to earlier findings (e.g. De Graaf 1996: 238). In our present figures, the lines for confessional voting are more or less straight and parallel. In the model predicting new left we can see that the non-religious non-manual workers have not only caught up with non-religious manual workers, but have even overtaken them. Considering all four lines together and the trend of their standard deviation, we find that class-based and religion-based voting for a new left party has increased rather than decreased. We must conclude that the expectation of a trend towards less class-based and religion-based voting behaviour only holds for models concerning old left-wing and right-wing voting. However, we have to consider that due to a floor effect the impact of class and church membership for voting for a new left party cannot become much less.

6 Conclusions and discussion

In this paper we tested in the first place whether parental social class and religion have a lasting impact on voting behaviour relative to the impact of own social class and religion over time. The relative importance of parental characteristics did not diminish for any of the four party groups discerned. To some extent it seems that older people are influenced more by their current social position relative to younger people. This confirms our new left acculturation hypothesis (H_1). Thus, findings for the effects of class of origin and class of destination (De Graaf and Ultee 1987) were also found for the combination of social class and church membership across different age groups. We found neither a static nor a dynamic path of status maximization in voting behaviour (H_2 and H_3). Furthermore, education does affect the impact of the relative origin and destination effects (H_4).

General expectations stemming from instrumental and expressive theory on voting patterns of manual and non-manual workers, church members, non-church members and combinations of these groups were confirmed to some extent. Additional effects of age and education showed that younger people and the more highly educated vote more for new left parties and less for confessional parties compared to older people and the less educated. Moreover, the expected decline of (absolute) class and religious based voting was found for the probability of voting for an old left-wing party and for a right-wing party. We tried to explain these trends by using Durkheim's integration theory (1897). On the basis of this theory we can predict not only *in what way* but especially *under what conditions* people adjust to certain norms. If people

are still integrated in the social group of their parents, the parental social position can have a lasting impact on their voting behaviour. However, increasing intergenerational religious and class mobility could not explain the decline of class based and religion based voting (i.e. for old left-wing and right-wing voting).

The existence of a so-called 'purple coalition', consisting of an old left-wing, a right-wing and a new left party, may indicate that contradictions based on religion have become relatively much more important than those based on social class. The influence of social class and church membership on voting for old left-wing or right-wing parties has decreased in the past 25 years. This finding is in accordance with earlier research (De Graaf and Nieuwbeerta 1995; Eisinga, Felling and Lammers 1994; Nieuwbeerta 1995). Yet in contrast to earlier research, we found that the effect of the social group on the probability of voting for a confessional party did not decline. Earlier research does show such a decline (Eisinga, Felling and Lammers 1994; Need 1997). Besides the fact that we analyzed a shorter period, our finding may also be a result of the use of four party groups or of the simple distinctions used for class and church membership. Differences in voting behaviour between social classes and religious denominations do exist. Since the relative sizes of these subgroups have changed in the last 25 years, the distinction of church membership may be a reason for not finding a decline of (class- and) religion-based voting for confessional parties (cf. Eisinga, Felling and Lammers 1994; De Graaf 1996: 238).[5] We think, however, that we have used the most important distinction, i.e. distinguishing between church members and non-church members and between manual and non-manual workers. Furthermore, trends in voting behaviour do not appear to change when the categories are redefined (Need 1997; Nieuwbeerta 1995). Therefore, we do not expect our conclusions to be heavily biased. Besides, we lack the necessary statistical power to test interaction effects properly, even when a stacked dataset is used, as we did. For this purpose the continuing tradition of large scale data collection is of great importance.

The application of the design of diagonal reference models for modelling the impact of traditional cleavages on voting behaviour was not suitable for new left voting. This suggests that more post material parties, D66 and GreenLeft, indeed crosscut traditional class and religious structures pertaining to voting behaviour. These parties did not come into existence until just before the period investigated here. Therefore, most parents of the persons researched did not have the opportunity to vote for new left parties, and an intergenerational tradition of certain religious and social groups to vote for those parties can not exist. Nevertheless, effects of people's own social and religious groups on new left voting do exist (cf. De Graaf 1995).

The number of practising church members in the Netherlands has decreased gradually since the 1950s, as has the percentage of those groups voting CDA

and its predecessors (Andeweg and Irwin 1993: 98-99; Van Holsteyn and Niemöller 1995). At the same time the CDA's share of the vote has been reduced in fits and starts and not gradually. Other things being equal, the influence of church membership on voting confessional does not diminish in our analyses. CDA may not have become a general party of the middle, but it does seem to have become secularized in the sense that more people at the edge of church are still part of its electorate. Furthermore, the spasmodic decrease of the CDA electorate indicates the importance of short-term effects of political issues for election results. However, our focus was on social inequality and cohesion. It was not our aim to explain voting behaviour as such, but to account for the reduced explanatory power of religion and class, i.e. the decline of these two classical cleavages.

Our main conclusion is that intergenerational class and religious mobility indeed affect class-based and religion-based voting, as can be seen from the lasting intergenerational effects. Mobility does not, however, affect voting in such a way that it can explain changes in overall class-based and religion-based voting for old left-wing and right-wing parties. Furthermore, using data over a longer period Need (1997) showed that there is also a decline of religious-based voting and that withdrawal from the church can explain a substantial part of this decline. Therefore, the mobility explanation should not be abandoned at this stage.

Appendix: Datasets used

(1) Dutch Election Study (Nederlandse Verkiezingsstudie) 1970-1973 (Heunks et al. 1977).
(2) Participation study 1971 (Verba et al. 1971).
(3) Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek (NKO) 1977 (Irwin, Verhoef and Wiebrens 1978): NKO77.
(4) Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek (NKO) 1981 (Van der Eijk, Niemöller and Eggen 1981): NKO81.
(5) Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek (NKO) 1982 (Van der Eijk, Koopman and Niemöller 1983): NKO82.
(6) Sociale en Culturele Ontwikkelingen in Nederland (SOCON) 1985 (Felling, Peters, Schreuder, Eisinga and Scheepers 1987): SOCON85.
(7) Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek (NKO) 1986 (Van der Eijk, Irwin and Niemöller, 1988): NKO86.
(8) Sociale en Culturele Ontwikkelingen in Nederland (SOCON) 1990 (Eisinga et al. 1992): SOCON90.
(9) Dutch Family Survey (Familie Enquête Nederlandse Bevolking) 1992 (Ultee and Ganzeboom 1993): Fam92.
(10) Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek (NKO) 1994 (Anker and Oppenhuis 1995): NKO94.

Files 1-9 can be found in Nieuwbeerta and Ganzeboom (1994).

Notes

1. This article is based on the M.A. thesis of the first author (Janssen 1995).

2. Mutinomial logistic diagonal reference models are possible as well (Nieuwbeerta and Wittebrood 1995).

3. The first-order interactions were tested first, the higher-order interaction with social mobility at a later stage, because the first-order interaction needed to be entered first. The χ^2-distributed measure for improvement can be computed as (Sobel 1981):

$$\Delta_{f\text{-}n} = -2 * \ln \left(\sqrt{(\text{RMS}_f)} / \sqrt{(\text{RMS}_n)} \right)^N$$

where RMS is the *Residual Mean Square*, Δ the G^2 difference, f the full (unrestricted) model and n the nested (restricted) model. Of course, a significant contribution to the baseline model does not necessarily imply that the effect itself is significant in the resulting final model. This is to be assessed next.

4. This is the *standard deviation* indicating the dispersion of the four lines at each point around their joint average, not the *standard error* of individual effects.

5. Of course, a possible way to check this is to distinguish several religious denominations. Doing this, we get some fairly small categories and in fact more data is needed to model interactions with such categories.

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Research Note

A Purple Paradox: Decision-Making about the Modernization of the University Administration (MUB)

Marcel van Dam[1]
University of Leiden

Abstract

Lijphart concluded more than 20 years ago, that there are hardly any empirical examples of the voting paradox. Today, this observation is still valid: in 20 years, only one empirical example has been published in leading Dutch journals. In this article, a recent example is presented and analysed: decision-making about the modernization of the university administration (MUB). It is shown that the situation can be characterized as a voting paradox, created by actors who used the ordering of their preferences to influence the outcome. In the end, the actor who would have been the least well off as a result of the expected outcome, withdrew an amendment and in doing so removed the paradoxical character of the MUB case. And this, it is concluded, is another explanation for the limited number of empirical examples of the voting paradox: actors involved in decision-making also make calculations.

1 Introduction

"Although there is almost unanimous agreement in the literature that the voting paradox is a frequent occurrence, empirical examples are virtually absent." This observation made by Lijphart (1975: 188, my translation) more than two decades ago remains valid. Lijphart's remark is supported in the two editions of the study by Van den Doel (1978: 118 ff.; Van den Doel and Van Velthoven 1990: 113 ff.). While an additional empirical example of a voting paradox is provided, the fact that the same example is used in both editions and that the example concerns a parliamentary debate on taxes in 1970 only lends greater support to Lijphart's conclusion. In Dutch journals, such as *Beleid en Maatschappij, Beleidswetenschappen, Bestuurskunde, Bestuurswetenschappen* and *Mens en Maatschappij*, not one article has been published in the last 20 years which presents an empirical example of the voting paradox. Towards the end of 1996, an article was published in *Acta Politica* (Vergunst 1996) providing an empirical example: decision-making about the modernization of the Borssele nuclear plant in the Netherlands. It was the first empirical example in this journal for two decades.