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**Voting and Party Competitio. A comment on Wolter's review: zie Acta Politica, 1980, nr. 2, 272-5**  
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den'. Stokman is kennelijk van mening dat er een directe relatie bestaat tussen de frequentie van replieken en het feit dat publikaties niet besproken worden. Van deze afschrikkende werking die er zou uitgaan van het opnemen van repliek en dupliek in *Acta Politica* is de redactie (tot nu toe) echter niets gebleken.

Stokman voegt aan bovenstaande zinsnede toe: 'Ik vind het bijvoorbeeld zeer triest dat een aantal politicologische proefschriften na drie, vier jaar nog niet in *Acta Politica* besproken is'. Zeker, men kan het triest noemen dat dit (nog) niet is gebeurd. Maar de suggestie die gewekt wordt als zou dit feit te wijten zijn aan de toename van discussies 'in het kleine politicologenwereldje in Nederland' is volkomen uit de lucht gegrepen. Wat, daarentegen wel triest is, is het feit dat recenseren (zeer) laag scoort op de prioriteitenlijst van wetenschappelijke activiteiten. Triest is het dat boekenredacteuren geconfronteerd worden met het feit dat recensies weliswaar worden toegezegd, maar niet of pas na herhaald verzoek ontvangen worden. Maar, nogmaals, dat heeft niets te maken met het feit dat er (wellicht meer dan vroeger) in *Acta Politica* gediscussieerd wordt.

Tot slot: dit naschrift is niet 'ad personam' gericht. Integendeel, Stokmans 'Reactie op repliek' biedt de redactie de gelegenheid om te benadrukken dat discussies over recensies of over artikelen, niet zonder meer niet in *Acta Politica* thuis zouden horen. Indien deze discussies kunnen bijdragen aan het verhelderen en eventueel oplossen van fundamentele meningsverschillen, staan de pagina's van *Acta Politica* daarvoor open.

### Voting and Party Competition: A comment on Wolters' review

We have some sympathy with a hard-pressed contributor who, to meet his deadline, is driven to reviewing the summary of a book rather than the book itself. Normally, since authors have had their say, they should leave their work to speak for itself in the face even of hostile criticism. Wolters' review of *Voting and Party Competition* (*Acta Politica*, XV nr. 2, p. 272-5) is, however, deficient in any indication that the reviewer has even read the introduction, let alone the book as a whole. For this reason we would like to set the record straight on some purely factual points.

First, the book does start before pag. 238! The preceding pages contain an exposition of all existing approaches used to study electoral competition, illustrating the tension that exists between the desire for a neat mathematical representation and the desire for empirical relevance. This discussion shows in detail how the direct appeal of spatial representations is usually vitiated by their inevitable incorporation of assumptions from the type of space in which they are set. Neglect of the highly restrictive assumptions involved in non-metric scaling models has limited their theoretical relevance immensely (pp. 49-64) and in spatial rational choice models has rendered them unable to represent voter's predispositions at all (pp. 131-174). In face of this discussion, Wolters' most fundamental objection to the explicit incorporation of spatial assumptions in the theoretical synthesis indicates that he has either not read the preceding discussion or did not understand it. Does he really approve of a situation where theorists are unconscious prisoners of restrictive assumptions? Assumptions 2-4 in our theory are not merely technical but on a par with assuming quadratic forms for utility functions.

The advantage of a party-defined space to represent positions, is that electors then locate themselves on all relevant grounds, including policy, social background and personal identification. Few other types of space allow for this, though we note in pp. 225-230 that certain types of factor analysis would produce a similar representation (a policy space with party-reserved areas). The natural comparison between positions in a party-defined space is in terms of ratios, and the logarithms of ratios are the natural measure of ratio dif-



ferences.

A further advantage of defining the contest in terms of the parties involved is that it forces us to consider explicitly what the parties are, and to distinguish between use of the same label at different points in time and between different groups of people (leaders, activists, members and voters). While we have to analyse tendencies in some countries rather than individual parties, this signification is of course not unique. Moreover we have shown how the analysis can be extended to individual parties in a multi party-system – actually, The Netherlands (p. 324).

In this context the reviewer's belief that our Assumption 1 precludes all but British-style election is clearly mistaken (p. 106). Wolters has failed to note that the Assumption is taken straight from the American Anthony Downs! 'At least two parties' excludes only those systems of elections which permit a vote only for the ruling party or a political system with no parties. By definition a coalition government is in power because it has more legislative and therefore almost always more popular votes than any practicable counter-coalition.

Three other points follow from Wolters' neglect of the rest of the book. The theory is not immune from testing, as even a hurried scan of the second half would have shown most Implications checked against survey data from 10 countries, and analyses of party literature from two. As a result, Wolters also treats our analysis as relating entirely to electors and voting, whereas its whole object is to set these in the wider context of party strategies. And lastly, the first seven chapters identify basic similarities in existing approaches and combine them in our synthesis. If Wolters wishes to dismiss this as unilluminating, he is, of course, entitled to do so – but it is the result of 40 years collective research which he is dismissing rather than our book.

Ian Budge, Dennis Farlie

## Rejoinder

- (1) The review was critical of the book, not hostile to the authors.
- (2) One 'indication that the reviewer has even read the introduction' is that I quote from it (in the first lines of the review). Moreover, 'I have fought my way through the book'; even though I might have preferred not to read it, not because of time constraints but since it is a bore.
- (3) Most readers of *Acta Politica* will have guessed that 237 pages precede page 238; many of them will be surprised to learn that these contain (a.o.) statements about multidimensional scaling which I judged outdated 4 years ago (in a review of Budge, Crewe & Farlie, *Party Identification and Beyond*, *Acta Politica* 77-4, pages 554-557). Apparently, the authors have either not

read the subsequent literature or did not understand it – for which they are excused in this domain of specialists.

(4) My 'most fundamental objection' was to the explicit incorporation of *technical* matters in the theoretical synthesis. Whether two scholars in Colchester represent parties in a space is immaterial to electors and politicians and, for that reason only, ought not to be included in a theory of voting and party competition.

(5) Budge & Farlie state indeed (on page 324) that the Dutch parties might be studied individually, but do not show it! Doing so 'within a party-defined space would be impossibly complex and probably unilluminating'. They suggest the use of subsidiary representations for such 'detailed' distinctions as between VVD and BP, or D'66 and CPN, but do not show results. They fail to notice the differential impact of a vote for VVD and one for BP on the process of coalition building after elections.

(6) The fact that Assumption 1 is taken straight from Downs does not quite guarantee its relevance to Dutch politics. In The Netherlands, there is no, and has never been a, *single* feasible coalition. E.g., the coalition government now in power faces a counter-coalition (PvdA-CDA) with more popular votes and more seats in Parliament. Contrary to Westminster-style politics, coalitions are built after the elections.

(7) Hopefully, the authors remember their Preface: 'With all this generous help it would seem disloyal even to envisage the possibility of errors, let alone claim sole responsibility! If any remain they must be ours alone.' I wish to point out that I reviewed the book, nothing (and nobody) else.

Menno Wolters