Electorale instabiliteit op Curaçao
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Summary and conclusions

The first political parties in Curacao were founded in the Thirties. The number of political parties that saw the light in the past 60 years, is about fifty which is quite high. One limitation of this investigation is that it will concentrate on the period before 1994. In 1994 there were some six parties that played a political role of some importance and they are: DP, NVP, FOL/SI, MAN, NOS PATRIA and PAR. The first four parties have been active for twenty-five years or more. These four parties DP, NVP, FOL/SI and MAN together obtained more than 75% of the votes cast in each election in this period.

It is remarkable how a party as FOL managed to obtain 22% of the votes when participating for the first time at the elections of 1969. An even bigger success was achieved by PAR by obtaining not less than 47% of the valid votes when participating for the first time at the elections of 1994. The same results were achieved by the party PLKP who participated for the first time at the elections in 1998. The leaders of this new party were also leaders of the labor-union in the past. The PLKP obtained 20% of the votes cast.

It is striking that none of these parties, with the exception of PLKP that participated only in one election, have shown some stability with regard to the number of followers. All these parties, with the exception of the last two PAR and PLKP, were (almost) the largest at a certain moment, and after some years they were the smallest party (but one). For instance MAN was the largest party of Curacao in 1979 and in 1982, and that was also the case with the NVP at the elections of 1985, 1987 and in 1991. In this same period, namely between 1979 and 1994, these two parties were also the smallest parties but one. Even the PAR that obtained half of the votes in the election of 1994, had a considerable drop at the next election and obtained only 24% of the votes.

The above-mentioned shows that in Curacao it is quite possible for a (new) party to grow rapidly, but at the same time it can lose its followers just as quickly. These rapid changes show that concerning the followers of the various political parties this situation has not been a stable one during the past period.

Is the electoral instability in Curacao big?

The above-mentioned gives the impressions that there is a big electoral instability in Curacao. Compared with other countries this electoral instability indeed appears to be big. The instability in the electoral field can be indicated by means of an index. This electoral instability index varies from 0 to 100. An index of 0 means that at two successive elections all parties reach exactly the same percentage of votes. An index of 100 means that a maximum change has taken place: all parties that
participated at the previous election obtain not a single vote at the latest elections. The index is calculated on the basis of the sum of the percentages gained by all the victorious parties.

If we calculate the index for the Curaçao situation, since the introduction of the universal suffrage in 1949 up to and including the elections of 1994, the average index is equal to 15.

If we compare this electoral instability index to the European situation, this turns out to be quite high. In about the same period the electoral instability index of all of Western Europe is equal to 9. This means that the index in Curaçao in the same period is significantly higher, consequently the instability in Curaçao is significantly higher.

In the period 1949 - 1967 the instability was quite low, namely 5. In Europe, this index was higher in a comparable period. Since the elections of 1969 a big change has taken place in the electoral stability in Curaçao. The period after 1969 has an average index of about 21, whereas this was almost 9 in Europe in the same period. With the exception of the 1973 and 1991 elections the indexes of the electoral instability have always been higher than 10.

The highest values of this index appear in 1994 (48), the election in which PAR took part for the first time and immediately became the largest party, in 1979 (39) the election in which MAN participated for the first time, in 1975 (30) the election in which PSD, a party that separated from the DP, took part for the first time and FOL managed to double its number of followers. The highest index ever registered in Europe in this past century (1920!), is 32 in Germany. Comparing these indexes, it clearly shows that the instability in Curaçao is much higher than in Europe.

The electoral instability of Curaçao is also much higher if we compare it to the instability of Aruba. In the Eighties the instability index of Curaçao was twice as high as that of Aruba.

How will parties organize to attract voters?

Parties try to convince the voters to cast their votes on them. For the parties it is not important to obtain only a good result at an election, but they try to maintain as many votes as possible during several elections. Of course, this is possible by convincing a different group of voters in each election. But it goes without saying that parties will try to maintain the 'old' voters during several elections.
To maintain such a kind of stability the party will make use of certain tools. Several forms of communication with the voters are available for the parties to maintain contact with the voters.

Parties can maintain their contacts with the voters in two ways: by using the party-organization to do this and by using other ways where the organization is not heavily involved. In the latter case this is done primarily by mass communication. The use of mass communication will have a uniform impact on the voters of the various neighborhoods, assuming that the accessibility of newspaper, television, etc. in all areas is the same. The pressure on the voter that identifies with the party, will be the same in the different local communities.

A party also can make use of the organization to keep in touch with their voters. If the activities of the local organizations are successful, this could lead to a durable relationship with the party. In the one area this may lead to better results than in some other areas. So this means that one party can have strongholds. These are areas where such a party scores well all through the period.

As the party is continuously in contact with the local electorate via local organizations the party-identification in those local communities could be stronger than in non-strongholds. There is a big chance that voters in consecutive elections will vote for the party. In such a case the group of loyal voters in those geographical areas will be larger than that in other areas. The loyalty and the party-identification in these strongholds will be stronger than that in the non-strongholds.

To understand the instability in Curaçao we will also have to study, which motives a voter applies when voting for a party. There are several theories trying to explain the voting behavior. The most important theories are the sociological, socio-psychological and rational.

In case of the sociological theory, the voters with the same sociological background will vote for the same party under "normal" circumstances. The voter who clearly belongs to a specific social group will vote for the party that identifies most with the interests of this group. If, in the political system, there is only one party that has this role, then according to this theoretical approach, the voter will vote for this party. If there are more parties that stand up for a specific social group then the voter will have a party preference for one of these parties. The party choice then can differ at different elections. In addition, voters whose position does not completely correspond with one of the social groups may have more than one party as their preference. In such cases the social backgrounds largely play a determining role when choosing a party. The most important characteristics that influence the voting behavior according to this theory are
religion and socio-economic class. In this approach, the party choice is a stable situation under normal circumstances.

In case of the socio-psychological theory, the aspects of party-identification, candidate and issue orientation play an important role. This theory assumes that the party choice is based on certain attitudes, character traits and certain views of the voter. If all factors point in the same direction the voter will vote for the party, he identifies with. Party-identification develops quite early in the life of the voter. The party-identification develops during the social process, mainly influenced by the family and relatives.

However, also here other influences can exert pressure on the voter. These influences are of a temporary character and depend on the election campaign. If there are no short-term temporary factors, the voter will vote for the party he identifies with.

The rationally theoretic approach assumes that the voter is a rational person, who based on political stimuli and his own decision-making mechanism and process, gives his vote to the party that yields profit for him. The voter can base his choice on ideological aspects, political issues, government policy, evaluation of the candidates, etc.

According to the theoretical models, the sociological and party-identification approach is the only long-term factor that under "normal" circumstances will result in some stability in the voters' party choice. That is why it is these two aspects that will be studied to get more insight in the electoral (in)stability in Curaçao.

What are strongholds?

The investigation was limited to the period 1979-1991. In this period, the political parties DP, NVP, FOL/SI and MAN dominated the political panorama. Curaçao was divided in 40 geographical areas.

A stronghold is a geographical area where a party at several elections systematically obtains good results. If we use as a criteria for a stronghold $sp > \mu + z \cdot \sigma$ where $sp$ is the percentage of votes cast for that party in that geographical area, $\mu$ the average score for that party in all the areas and $\sigma$, the standard deviation of the result of the party in all the areas. The number of strongholds for the parties DP, NVP, FOL/SI and MAN are between five and eight.
The areas Groot Kwartier, Seru Domi, Berg Altena, Koraal Specht, Seru Lora, Mundo Nobo, Dominguito and Mahaai are the eight strongholds of the DP.

The strongholds of NVP are Westpunt, Soto, Montaña Rey, Flip and Barber. In the period 1979-1991, the strongholds of FOL/SI were Santa Maria, Buena Vista, Seru Fortuna, Koraal Specht and Rozendal. The political party MAN also had eight strongholds, namely Tera Kora, Maria Maai, Mahuma, Wanapa, Koraal Partir, Suffisant, Julianadorp and Barber.

**Development of the political parties in Curaçao**

The DP is the oldest political party of Curaçao. The DP aimed especially at the immigrant group in the society and they had a good relationship with the business-community. The DP could be characterized as a party with a weak institutionalization and territorial penetration. Furthermore, the leaders of DP are not so well aware of their strongholds.

The NVP is a party that had a solid base in the rural areas. They had the so called 'lider di bario' (leader of the local community) who had a good relationship with the voters in their community.

The conclusion is that the NVP developed according to the genetic model of Panebianco as a party with a strong institutionalization, a strong territorial penetration and charisma. According to this genetic model this has to lead to a higher stability. As the party uses a territorial approach, effects in the different neighborhoods can be expected.

**Are the political parties aware of their strongholds and do they make use of that knowledge?**

If the politicians are aware of the strongholds of their parties and apply a conscious strategy to keep their votes in these neighborhoods this should have a stabilizing influence on the voting behavior of the party followers. The former seems to be true. The intuitive feeling of the politicians concerning the strongholds seems to correspond quite reasonably with the strongholds of the parties. The aforementioned is clear from interviews with a number of party leaders.
Especially among the parties of NVP, FOL/SI and less among MAN there is a big similarity between the opinion of the political leaders with regard to the strongholds and the previously traced strongholds. Although intuitively, to some extent the party leaders seem to make use of the same model to determine their strongholds.

The political leaders of NVP and FOL/SI are aware of their strongholds. The political leaders of the DP and the MAN are not so well acquainted with their strongholds.

It is especially the NVP and FOL/SI that apply a strategy of close contacts with their voters in the communities. For NVP, it was the case in the period 1950-1970 and to a lesser extent in the ensuing period. The NVP concentrated especially on the rural areas. The FOL concentrated exclusively on the geographical areas where they could very easily make contacts with the 'have-nots'. The factors in the genetic model that could lead to a strong institutionalization namely, territorial penetration, internal legitimization and charisma are for a great part present for the parties NVP and FOL/SI. In these 'lower-class' neighborhoods, the FOL organized special activities to stay in touch with their potential voters. So, a greater stability can be expected for those two parties.

Prediction of the strongholds

It appears that the strongholds of the parties NVP and FOL/SI are largely determined by the eight sociological-cultural characteristics, sex, age, geographical situation, unemployment, income, socio-economic position, educational level and language of communication. All the strongholds of NVP could be predicted; 3 of the 5 strongholds of FOL/SI could also be predicted.

On the other hand the result of the classification of the strongholds of the DP and the MAN were not satisfactory. This could also be expected.

The leaders of the NVP are well aware of their strongholds. These strongholds can be characterized as typical native neighborhoods that are located in the rural area. This is not a surprise, because this is the group of voters the NVP always aimed at.

The classification of FOL/SI were satisfactory, almost all the strongholds of this party can be characterized as lower-class neighborhoods of Curaçao. This is also in according with the strategy of FOL/SI, which focused completely on the have-nots in the community.
Changes in the composition of the population of Curaçao in the period 1981-1992 were tested in two ways. The conclusion is that there are no substantial changes regarding the eight socio-economic and cultural variables.

The analysis until now makes use of aggregate data. Over the period 1979-1991 no individual data of the electoral behavior were available. To avoid ecological fallacy some individual data were gathered in 1994. The NVP and FOL/SI are aware of their strongholds. If these parties concentrate on a sound and durable relationship with the voters in the neighborhoods, a higher stability and loyalty in the strongholds can be expected compared with the non-strongholds.

**Differences in the party-identification in the strongholds and the non-strongholds**

With the use of the individual data, one can conclude that the party-identification in the strongholds of NVP, FOL/SI and MAN is higher than that of the non-strongholds. This conclusion was expected for the parties NVP and FOL/SI. The fact that the party-identification of the MAN is strong in the strongholds is mainly due to the strong party-identification in one neighborhood, namely Barber. This is due to the fact of specific circumstances in that area. The party-identification of the DP in the strongholds is smaller than that of the non-strongholds.

**Differences in the loyalty in the strongholds and the non-strongholds**

The party-loyalty of voters of the four parties DP, NVP, FOL/SI and MAN is higher in strongholds than in not-strongholds. The difference in party-loyalty between strongholds and non-strongholds of the DP and MAN is small. It is only 3%. The difference of party-loyalty for NVP between strongholds and not strongholds is much higher, namely 9%. The difference for the political party FOL/SI is even higher (10%). It is not surprising that the differences for the parties NVP and FOL/SI are higher than that of DP and MAN.

The political parties NVP and FOL/SI apply a strategy that is more oriented towards the local community in the various neighborhoods. That is why one can expect a higher party-loyalty in the strongholds of these parties. The difference could even be higher than 9%, 10% if it had not been for two special cases in the neighborhood Westpunt (stronghold of NVP) and Roozendal (stronghold of FOL/SI).
It is understandable that the difference of party-loyalty for the DP in strongholds and not-strongholds is small. The DP is not aware of their strongholds and they did not build durable contacts with the voters in their strongholds.

What is the role of the new political parties in this?

We already mentioned that the 1994 election had been a special year, as PAR participated in the elections for the first time. At this election the party managed to score an electoral success, namely obtaining almost half of the votes cast. That is why it is of importance to have a closer analysis of the concept of "new parties" and their electoral success. How far can we expect more new political parties to appear at the Curaçao political horizon? How can we explain the rise of new parties? What type of new political parties can we distinguish (in Curaçao)? Under which conditions can we speak of success of these new parties? These are the questions which, for the Curaçao situation in particular, have to be answered.

Many scholars have studied the development of new parties in Western democracies. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) showed that the European parties owe their rise to "big revolutions" in the past centuries. Chambers and Burnham (1967) mainly studied the impact on party development of the big structural transformations as of the 16th century up and including the 20th century.

The development of new parties has particularly been focused on, as a result of the changes that arose in the Western party systems (Crozier et al., 1975; Epstein, 1980; Flanagan and Dalton, 1984).

The first question we should ask ourselves when analyzing new parties is: what are really new parties? We could argue that new parties are those parties that merely come up with new issues and compete for one or more seats in parliament. Such a definition can be narrowed down by replacing "compete at elections" with "obtain a certain percentage of votes or seats at national elections" (Janda, 1980). Harmel (1985) applied a broader definition, namely parties participating for the first time at elections. Based on this definition he calculated the mean of new parties for South and Central America, which is 0.50 per year. This means that on average in a period of 10 years 5 new parties saw the light. In Africa and Asia this is slightly lower in the period of 1960 - 1980, namely 0.42. This figure is the highest in Western Europe, namely 0.58. This has been calculated for Curaçao for the period 1960-1980. The total number of parties participating for the first time at elections in this period is 14. This means that the
measure for Curaçao in this period was 0.70. There is no considerable change in the period 1980-1995, viz.: 0.60.
So we can conclude that the number of newly founded parties which participated in elections in Curaçao in this period, deviates from that in the region and in Western Europe. In Curaçao, the number of new parties turns out to be higher.

The rise of new parties can be explained in various ways. Founding of new parties is related to "something that went wrong". Hauss and Rayside (1978) distinguish between institutional and political factors. The most important institutional factor is the electoral system. In a country with a proportional system, the chance for the rise of a new party is bigger than in a country with a majority system. A political factor that is of great importance for the rise of new political parties is the way in which the existing parties can play along with the wishes of (certain) groups within the community (Miller et al, 1977). If the voters are of the opinion that the existing parties have no solution on hand for important problems or whether they have no confidence in these "traditional" parties then the soil is fertile for the rise of new political parties.

Another very important factor at the foundation of new parties is the "available and potential voters". If the voters in a country have a very strong party-identification with the existing parties it is very difficult for a new party to attract new followers (Burnham, 1972).

Furthermore, the success of a new party strongly depends on the leader qualities and organizational skills of the founders of the new party. Popular and charismatic leaders can be very effective in attracting voters for the new parties.

Concerning the development of new parties the situation in Curaçao largely matches the above mentioned theoretical view. Curaçao has a proportional system that promotes the development of new parties.

Characteristic for the 1994 election is the election victory of the new party, PAR. This is largely due to the lack of confidence among the local voters in the traditional parties. At these elections, the political restructuring of the Antilles did not play an unimportant role; at the referendum of a couple of months earlier, the group had strongly advocated a restructured Antilles. Besides the party leader of PAR, Mr. Pourier, enjoyed much admiration, among other things because of a successful professional career as director of one of the largest banking institutions on Curaçao. Until that moment he had not stressed his distinctive characters as a politician, which, considering the strong distrust at that moment of the traditional politician, worked in his advantage. The 1979 elections, in which the "new" party MAN (again) participated for the first time, resulted in a large victory for this party. In this period "an honest and incorruptible" government policy was an important issue. Besides, the party leader of MAN, Mr. Martina, enjoyed quite some acceptance among the voters because of his correct and firm way of acting as a
commissioner in the FOL Administration. At the 1969 elections FOL right away succeeded in obtaining a large election victory. This was mainly due to the voters' rejection of the government policy of the sixties. Besides, party leader Godett, a dockworker had much support among the laborers.

New parties can be distinguished in various ways. Rochon (1985) especially distinguishes two types of new parties, viz. challengers and mobilizers. The first group is characterized by: "a discontented group within an existing party is usually able to make a credible threat to form a separate party if its demands are not met. These new parties are generally formed to exercise influence on established parties. They are not, in the main, a response to changing voter alignments" (Rochon, 1985: 421). The "mobilizers" are characterized as a party that comes up with new issues or approaches old problems in a completely different way. Such parties profit from changing social and political structures. The new Curaçao parties are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Year ¹</th>
<th>Party type</th>
<th>Durability ²</th>
<th>Electoral success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Un poco</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Challengers (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRP</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Challengers (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URA</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Challengers (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOL</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Mobilizers Ja</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASA</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Challengers (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAN</td>
<td>1971 (79)</td>
<td>Mobilizers Ja</td>
<td>&lt;10%(&gt;30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Challengers (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akshon</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Challengers (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alianza</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Challengers (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>META</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Challengers (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNION</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Challengers (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Challengers (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS (Nos Pais)</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Mobilizers (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nos Patria</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Mobilizers (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Mobilizers Ja</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. Types of new parties that participated in elections in the period 1960-1995.

¹ Year in which the party participated in the elections for the first time.
² Number of elections in which the parties participated. 'Yes' means here that the party still (1999) exists.
In this period the following parties also registered to participate in the elections: Union Social ('62), Partido Liberal ('64), Accion Social Progresivo ('66), Hubentut na Marcha ('79), PAPU ('82), Partido Progresivo ('87), PAN ('87), and KARA ('89). These parties have not been included in above chart as they did not obtain the required number of signatures at the pre-elections to be allowed to participate in the elections. Of the new parties in Curaçao only five can be labeled as "mobilizers". Three of these parties, viz. FOL, MAN and PAR at their very first participation obtained more than 20% of the votes. Not a single challengers' party has succeeded in doing this. What is furthermore noticeable, is that it is the "mobilizers" that enjoy a longer existence.

From above analysis can be concluded that the number of new parties in Curaçao is higher than that in the same period in the region and Western Europe. The institutional and political circumstances in Curaçao are quite suitable for this. Consequently, it is quite understandable that this is higher for Curaçao than somewhere else. The electoral success of the new parties is largely based on the type of new party, namely "mobilizers" or "challengers". It is mainly the "mobilizers" that have been responsible for the big electoral shifts and who have the right to exist on the long term.

At last!

The period after 1969 is the period that is characterized by a big electoral instability. It has not been the subject of this study whether the sociological characteristics and the party-identification in the period of before 1969 have played a role on the electoral stability. But given the big electoral stability on Curaçao in the period of 1949 -1967 it is not unthinkable that just as in several European countries and in America these stabilizing factors, namely the sociologically structural characteristics and the party-identification have played a big role. In fact, the period just before and just after World War II was very important for the political formation of the Curaçao voters. It is in this period that we hear a strong cry for autonomy and universal suffrage. This resulted in the introduction of universal suffrage in 1949 and the signing of the Statute Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954. The effectuation of universal suffrage meant that being a Roman Catholic or not, was no longer the basis for the political division. In so far as the thirties and the forties showed a segregation after the Dutch model, the introduction of universal suffrage put a stop to this. Around 1948 new forms of political clustering started to take shape. Most probably, these forms
were based on birthplace, place of residence on the island, and social position. Because of, among other things, patronage politics many voters were strongly tied to some party. Because of patronage politics of the parties in Curaçao, in particular the DP and NVP, many voters and their next of kin felt "linked" with the party. Considering the large electoral stability in the fifties and sixties it is not unthinkable that in this period the sociological characteristics were the valid explanation for the voting behavior. A stability that in that period was even bigger than the one in Europe. Consequently, the period can best be characterized as a period of alignment around the new patronage lines. So actually a period of traditional patronage voting.

The generation that DP not consciously witness the period of before World War II has fewer ties with traditional position of the Curaçao voters of former days. With the May insurrection of 1969, a new period of a larger electoral instability has set in. This period was preceded by an economic depression in Curaçao. Due to, among other things, the rational policy of the oil refinery on Curaçao poverty and unemployment were the harsh reality. The insurrection of 1969 brought about a big social swing.

The electoral instability in this period, of 1969 until 1994, is characteristic for the big social shifts that took place in this period. Consequently, it is not surprising that in this situation a new party can come with an issue that appeals to the voters. The traditional parties are not well acquainted with the situation or have not seen to it to remain well informed via their contacts what lives among the voters. The new parties that pick up these issues and consequently build a bridge towards the voters can score large electoral gains. These new parties, especially the "mobilizers" parties, look at old problems differently or tackle completely new issues. This was the case with FOL in 1969, that especially wanted to fight for the "have-nots" ("e homber chiki"). This is also the case with MAN (1979) and PAR (1994) that were both advocates of corruption free government. MAN used the slogan "man limpi" (clean hands). PAR used the issue "restructuring of the Antilles" and "clean up the mess in the government". These two parties in particular have caused a big electoral instability.

If parties strive for a bigger stability, they will have to expand the contact with their supporters. Moreover, they will have to see to it that these contacts really contain communication, that is a two-way communication. Moreover, these contacts should not be restricted to the election period.
It looks as if the traditional patronage voting has come to a stop. In the first place, we see here the rise of FOL in 1969, championing the rights of the laborers and have-nots in the society. This electoral shift was nothing else but the consequence of the social eruption that took place during the well known May insurrection in 1969. An insurrection that had been preceded by social unrest since 1966. The electoral instability knew its next peak in the year 1975 with the foundation of PSD and the temporary merger of MAN and FOL. The PSD resulted from a split in the DP party, the party that by many political opponents was considered the main culprit for the May insurrection and partly due to this had several splits in the seventies. The reconstruction of MAN in 1979 and the participation of PAR at the 1994 election moreover show that each peak of the instability goes hand in hand with the participation at the elections of a party appointing itself as the alternative. This voting behavior can best be indicated by "alternative" voting or "retrospective" voting or "prospective" voting. "Alternative voting" means that a voter chooses a party that appoints itself as the alternative and was not politically infected till that moment. The voting is based on the rejection of the policy pursued by the authorities (retrospective) or just by choosing for a policy that still has to be pursued (prospective). It seems that in the Curaçao situation the voting behavior is just the combination of the three.

That is why when analyzing contemporary voting behavior in Curaçao more attention should be paid to the so-called "alternative voting" and "retrospective" and "prospective voting." To what extent is the Curaçao voter (always) searching for an alternative or an alternative party? When is a new party a real alternative? Is everything new that shines really gold in the Curaçao politics? To what extent does the aspect of the Curaçao culture "mester dun'é un chëns" (we have to give them a chance/opportunity) play a big role in the party choice? When will the voters vote massively for an alternative party? How is the policy of the past governments evaluated by the voter? What kinds of evaluation mechanisms does the Curaçao voter use when evaluating the policy pursued by the parties in power? What is the role of the party programs in this? What is the influence of the candidates on the several political slates? How are parties organized and in what way are they in contact with the potential voters?

In the future, the studies on the voting behavior of the Curaçao voter will have to focus on these questions because the period of 'traditional patronage voting' with its electoral stability is definitely over!