Seventy-Five Years of Dutch Politics in Four Relational Models

A quantitative test of the "New Matriarchy" thesis, 1948–2025

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Abstract

This essay tests a qualitative claim with seventy-five years of Dutch data. The claim is that Dutch society moves from a patriarchal towards a matriarchal order. The framework is Alan Fiske's theory of four relational models. Patriarchy is read as Authority Ranking plus Market Pricing. Matriarchy is read as Communal Sharing plus Equality Matching. Every party in every election from 1948 to 2025 is scored on these four models. Six measures are used. Three derive from the author's own writing. Two derive from expert surveys (ParlGov and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey). One derives from coded party programmes (Manifesto Project). Results are weighted by votes, by seats and by days in government. All six measures show a matriarchal peak followed by a decline. The peak falls in the 1970s in programmes and in the 1980s–1990s in the other measures. The decline since then runs mainly through Authority Ranking. Market Pricing grew in expert and own measures, but not in programmes. An earlier table by the author, produced with a language model, showed the opposite trend. The data do not support that table. They do support a broader reading: the Dutch electorate has become balanced across all four models, and highly volatile.

1. Introduction

In July 2024 I published "Het Nieuwe Matriarchaat" on constable.blog. It argued that Western society shifts from a patriarchal to a matriarchal order. Later posts applied the idea to Dutch parties. One post contained a decade table of Fiske shares from 1960 to 2024. That table was generated with GPT. It was never checked against data.

The trigger for this study was the cabinet crisis of 12–13 November 2026. The Jetten cabinet split over the 2027 tax plan. The VVD played a central role. That raised a simple question. Has Dutch politics really become more matriarchal? Or does the record show something else?

This essay answers that question with numbers. It follows a fixed order. First collect. Then order. Then check for convergence across independent measures.

2. Framework

Fiske (1991, 1992) describes four elementary forms of human relations. Communal Sharing (CS) treats people as one body. Authority Ranking (AR) orders people in a hierarchy. Equality Matching (EM) keeps balanced, tit-for-tat exchange. Market Pricing (MP) relates people through ratios, prices and utility.

My earlier work pairs these models. AR plus MP forms the patriarchal pole. It matches Lakoff's "Strict Father" frame. CS plus EM forms the matriarchal pole. It matches Lakoff's "Nurturing Parent" frame. In my colour scheme AR is blue, MP red, CS green and EM yellow.

My post "Cyclische Harmonie" (2025) links the models to ideologies. Socialism and progressive movements are CS. Liberalism is EM. Conservatism and authoritarian ideologies are AR. Libertarianism and classical liberalism are MP. This rule is used below for parties I never classified by name.

3. Data and method

3.1 Sources

- Election results 1948–2021 from ParlGov. Results for 2023 and 2025 from the official Kiesraad figures.
- Cabinet composition from ParlGov, completed with the cabinets Schoof (2024–2025) and Jetten (2026). Caretaker phases are kept as separate segments.
- Party membership from the DNPP in Groningen, 1946–2026.
- Expert positions from ParlGov (state–market and liberty–authority, 0–10).
- Expert positions from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey trend file 1999–2024 (economic left–right and GAL–TAN, 0–10).
- Coded party programmes from the Manifesto Project, version 2026a, 1946–2021 (195 Dutch programmes).

Parties without a seat are grouped as "other" and left out. Coverage is above 97% of valid votes in every election.

3.2 Five classifications

Each measure assigns every party a share of CS, EM, AR and MP that sums to one. Five are listed here; the programme measure follows in 3.3.

- Own, static. I collected 69 party assignments from 21 posts on constable.blog (2023–2026). Each post counts once per party. Its weight is split over the models it names. Parties not mentioned fall back on the ideology rule.
- Own, time-varying. As above, with the shifts my posts describe. The VVD counts as MP plus EM until 2002 and as AR plus MP afterwards. The PvdA counts as CS until 1994 and as CS plus EM from the Purple coalition onward. Confessional parties count as CS plus AR until 2002.
- Own ideology rule. Only the "Cyclische Harmonie" rule, applied to party families.
- ParlGov experts. MP equals state–market divided by 20. CS is its complement. AR equals liberty–authority divided by 20. EM is its complement. Positions are fixed per party.
- CHES experts. The same conversion, using the survey wave closest to each election. Available from 2002.

3.3 Programme measure

The Manifesto Project codes each programme sentence into policy categories. I grouped these categories by relational model. CS: equality, welfare expansion, education expansion and labour groups (per503, per504, per506, per701). EM: freedom and human rights, democracy, rejection of traditional morality and support for multiculturalism (per201, per202, per604, per607). AR: military, political authority, national way of life, traditional morality, law and order and rejection of multiculturalism (per104, per305, per601, per603, per605, per608). MP: free market, incentives, economic orthodoxy and welfare limitation (per401, per402, per414, per505). Each party receives the share of each model in this content. The grouping is my proposal. It can be tested with other groupings.

3.4 Weighting and system measures

Model shares are weighted by votes per election. They are also weighted by seats and by days in government. The matriarchal share is CS plus EM. System change is measured by turnout, Pedersen volatility, the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera) and the seat share of the two largest parties.

4. Results

4.1 The matriarchal share in the electorate

Figure 1 shows the main result. All five measures move in the same direction after 2000. The matriarchal share falls. My 2024 table rises over the same period.

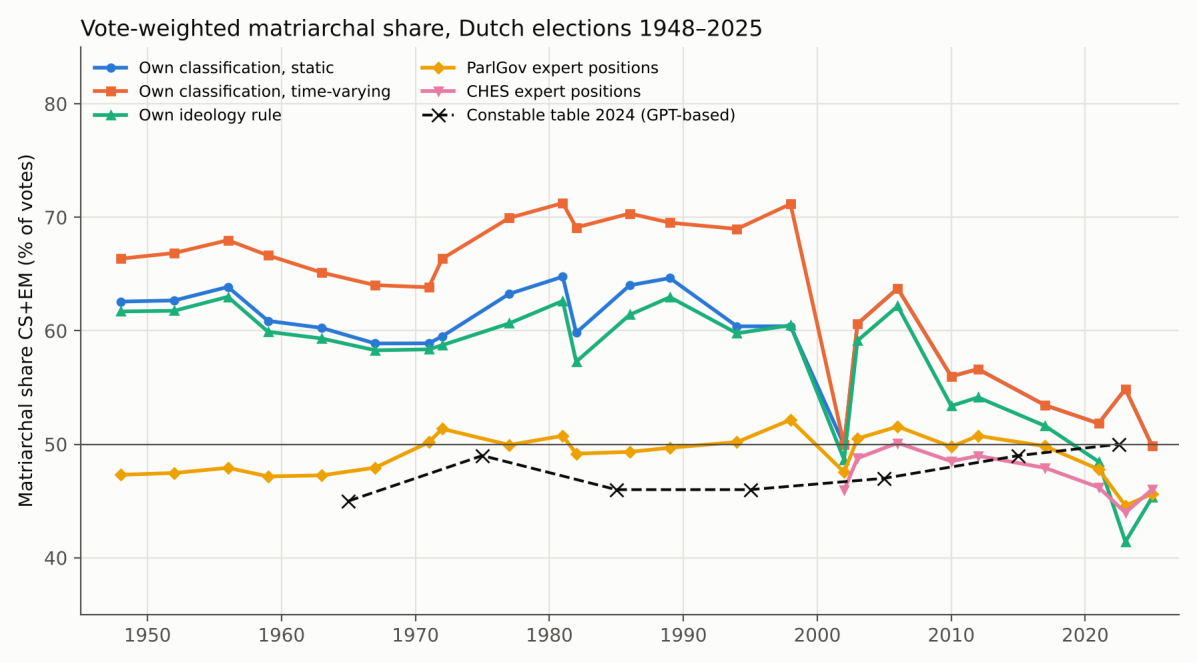


Figure 1. Vote-weighted share of CS+EM per election, five classifications, and the 2024 table (dashed).

Decade	Table 2024	Own static	Own time-varying	Ideology rule	ParlGov	CHES
1960–1970	45	59.6	64.6	58.8	47.6	–
1970–1980	49	60.5	66.7	59.2	50.5	–
1980–1990	46	63.3	70.1	61.1	49.7	–
1990–2000	46	60.4	70.1	60.1	51.2	–
2000–2010	47	58.1	58.1	56.6	49.9	48.3
2010–2020	49	55.3	55.3	53	50.1	48.5
2020–2025	50	52.2	52.2	45.1	46	45.4

Table 1. Matriarchal share (CS+EM) by decade, % of votes.

The level differs by classification. My own classifications put the share above 50%. The expert measures put it near 50%. That gap is a matter of scale. The trend is not. Between 1990–2000 and 2020–2025 the decline ranges from 5 to 18 points. The 2024 table shows a rise of 4 points.

The turning point lies around 2002. That year the LPF won 26 seats. In the time-varying classification part of the break is built in, because the VVD changes class in 2002. The expert measures contain no such switch. They still show the decline.

4.2 Which model grew

Figure 2 splits the time-varying classification into its four models. Communal Sharing fell from 62% in 1948 to 25% in 2025. Market Pricing rose from about 5% to 25%. Equality Matching peaked in the 1990s. Authority Ranking fell until the 1990s and then recovered.

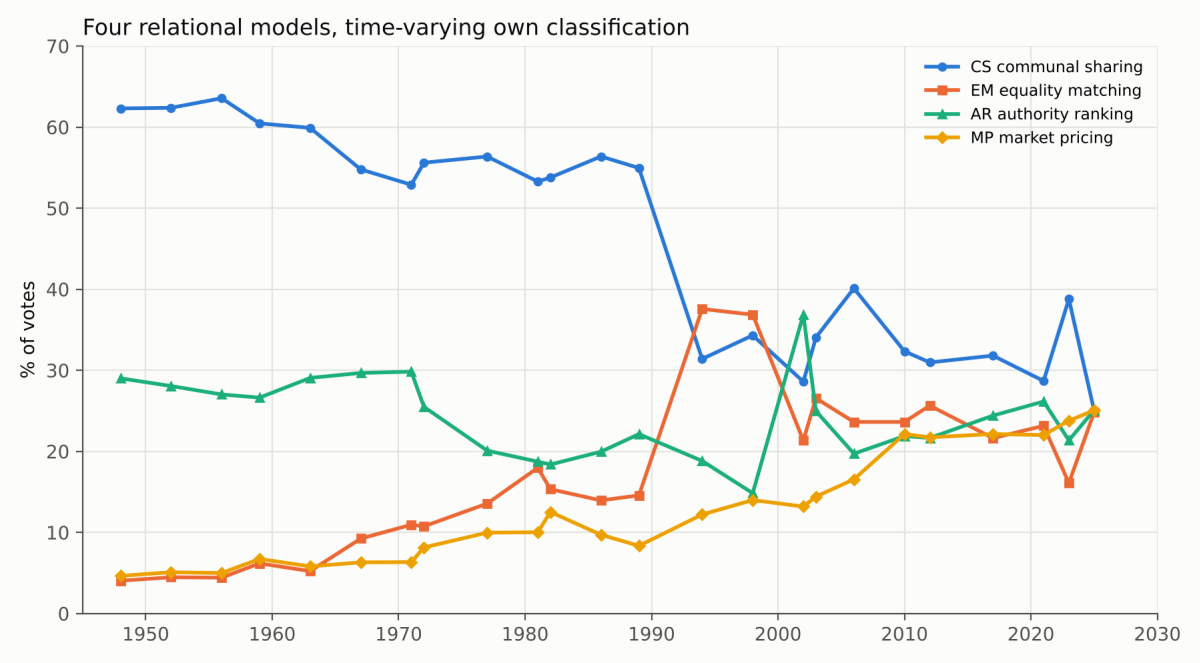


Figure 2. Four relational models, time-varying own classification, % of votes.

In 2025 the four models hold almost equal shares: CS 25.0, EM 24.8, AR 25.1, MP 25.1. No model dominates any longer. The pillarised electorate of 1948 was a CS electorate. The electorate of 2025 is a balanced one.

4.3 Positions on the raw scales

Conversion to four shares compresses the expert data, since most parties sit near the centre. Figure 3 therefore shows the raw vote-weighted positions. The market score moved between 4.8 and 5.6 until 2017. It reached 5.75 to 5.96 in 2021–2025, the highest level in the series. The authority score fell from 5.4 in 1948 to 4.3 in 1998. It returned to 5.0–5.1 in 2023–2025.

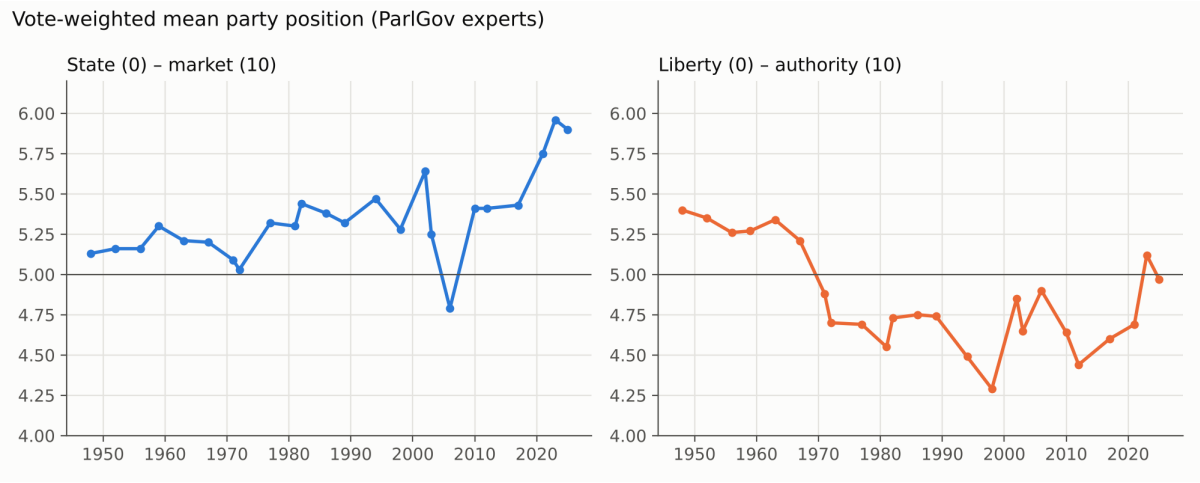


Figure 3. Vote-weighted mean party position, ParlGov expert scores.

The reading is clear. After 1970 the electorate moved towards liberty. After 2002 it moved back towards order. Since 2021 it has also moved towards the market. Both moves are patriarchal in the framework.

4.4 Governing coalitions

Cabinets tell the same story with larger swings (Figure 4). Weighted by days in office, the matriarchal share of coalitions peaked under the Purple cabinets of the 1990s. In the time-varying classification it

reached 80%. It stood at 41% in the 2020s. The ParlGov measure puts every decade between 40% and 56%.

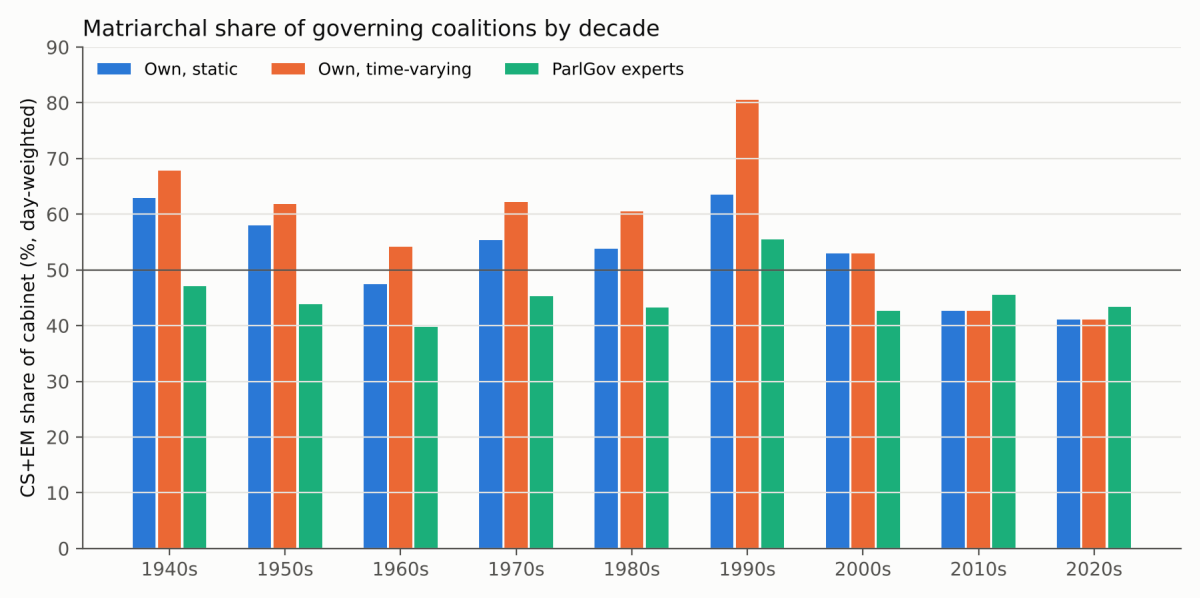


Figure 4. Matriarchal share of governing coalitions, weighted by days in office.

4.5 The party system

Figure 5 shows the system behind these shifts. Volatility stayed below 9 until 1967. It reached 32 in 2002 and 34 in 2023. The effective number of parties rose from about 4 to above 8. The two largest parties held 60–70% of seats until 1989. Since 2017 they hold 35–41%. Turnout fell sharply when compulsory voting ended in 1970. It has stayed between 73% and 88% since.

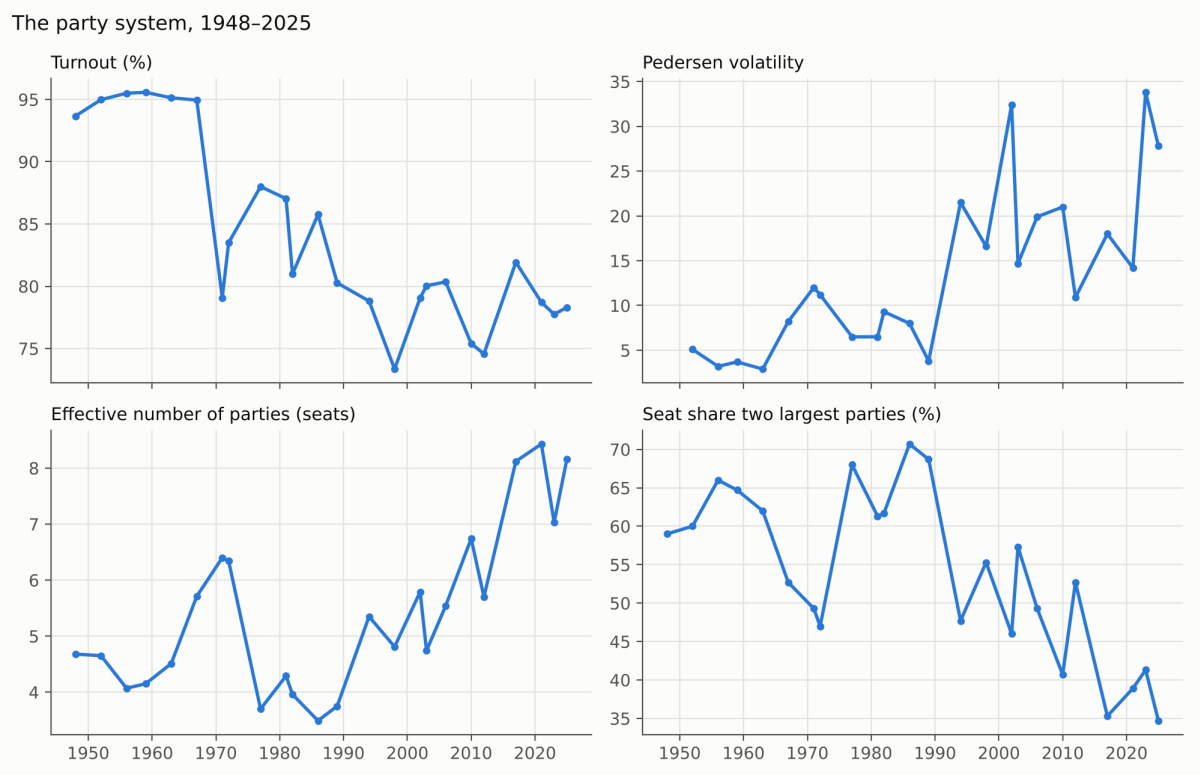


Figure 5. Turnout, Pedersen volatility, effective number of parties and top-two seat share, 1948–2025.

Membership tells a parallel story. Total party membership in the DNPP series peaked around 1960 at about 696,000. It fell to roughly 290,000–320,000 between 2000 and 2020. It recovered to about 393,000 in 2025, spread over many more parties. Voters belong less. They choose per election.

4.6 The VVD

The VVD illustrates the post-2002 shift. In my posts every one of its 15 mentions names AR, MP or both. EM appears once. The CHES data agree in direction. Its GAL–TAN score rose from 5.0 in 2019 to 5.9 in 2024. That is its most traditional score in the series. Its immigration score reached 8.6, also a maximum. Its economic score eased from 8.2 to 7.7. The party moved towards authority more than towards the market.

4.7 Party programmes

The programme measure covers 1946 to 2021. It adds what parties say, not how experts or I classify them. Figure 6 shows the result.

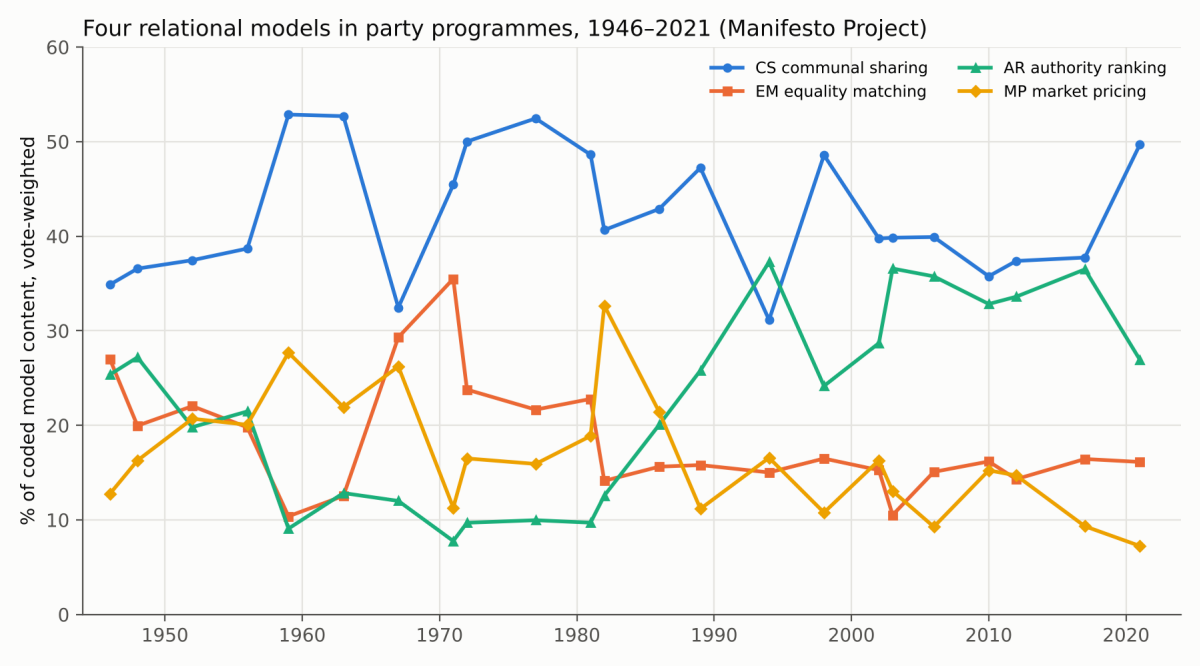


Figure 6. Four relational models in Dutch party programmes, vote-weighted, Manifesto Project 2026a.

The matriarchal share in programmes peaked in the 1970s at 76%. It fell to 56% in the 1990s and to 53% in the 2010s. That confirms the decline. The timing differs: programmes turned twenty years earlier than votes.

The composition also differs. Authority Ranking rose from 9% in the 1970s to 34% in the 2010s. Market Pricing did not rise. It fell from 24% in the 1960s to 13% in the 2010s and 7% in 2021. The economic market index (markeco) shows the same fall.

2021 is an exception. The matriarchal share jumped to 66%. Welfare emphasis reached its highest level since 1963. This was the pandemic election. Programmes for 2023 and 2025 are not yet in the dataset.

The VVD programme follows the same pattern. Its AR share rose from about 10% before 1985 to 28–45% after 2002. Its MP share fell from 30–60% to under 30%.

5. Discussion

Six measures converge on one pattern. That pattern has three parts. First, the pillarised CS order dissolved. Second, a matriarchal peak followed. Programmes reached it in the 1970s. Votes and cabinets

reached it in the 1980s and 1990s. Third, a patriarchal correction followed and continues. Authority Ranking returned in every measure. Programmes, CHES and ParlGov agree on that.

The measures diverge on the market. Expert positions and my own classification show MP growing. Programmes show MP shrinking. One reading is that parties perceived as market-oriented gained votes while writing less about markets. Another is that experts read economic positions from behaviour, not text. This divergence needs further work.

The 2024 table missed the third part. It also showed AR falling, while every measure shows AR recovering. The likely cause is method. A language model produced plausible numbers without a data source. The exercise shows why such tables need a check against measured data.

The result does not refute the matriarchy thesis as a long-term claim. It shows that the electoral record does not yet carry it. Two readings remain open. In panarchy terms, the 1990s may have been a release phase rather than a new order. Or the matriarchal shift may run outside parties, in networks, families and work, where voting data cannot see it.

5.1 Limitations

- My own classifications come from posts written in 2023–2026. Applying them to 1948 is anachronistic. The time-varying variant reduces this problem but does not remove it.
- The conversion from expert scales to four shares is one of several possible mappings. Raw positions are reported to show that the trend does not depend on it.
- ParlGov positions are fixed per party. Change in that measure comes only from shifts in votes.
- The programme measure ends in 2021. The grouping of Manifesto categories into four models is my own and should be tested against alternatives.
- Volatility is computed with merged successor parties. Values therefore differ slightly from published series.

6. Conclusion

Dutch politics did not move steadily towards a matriarchal order. It moved there until the 1970s in programmes and until about 2000 in votes. Since then it has moved back. In 2025 the four relational models hold almost equal shares of the vote. The electorate is balanced, fragmented and volatile. The most robust single trend is the return of Authority Ranking. The role of the market remains contested between measures. Further work should test alternative groupings of programme categories, add the 2023 and 2025 programmes, and test whether the matriarchal shift appears outside the party system.

All data, scripts and intermediate tables are kept and available on request.

Annotated references

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Jolly, S., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2022). Chapel Hill Expert Survey trend file, 1999–2019. Electoral Studies, 75, 102420.

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