

Netherlands

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The Netherlands is a parliamentary democracy with proportional representation. As a result of the electoral system, the country is typically governed by coalition governments. There are generally no changes in coalition partners without new elections. Parties in the Netherlands in the pre-1945 period can be divided on the basis of two main cleavages: socio-economic and religion. At the start date of the dataset in 1920, Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck was Prime Minister of a right-wing cabinet that relied heavily on the Christian parties in parliament; his coalition consisted of his own Catholic Christian democrat party “Algemeene Bond van RK-kiesvereenigingen” (AB) the Protestant Christian democrat “Anti-Revolutionary Party” (ARP), and the Dutch Reformed Christian democrat “Christian Historic Union” (CHU) and a small number of liberal independents (L.ind).

In June 1921, Ruijs de Beerenbrouck’s cabinet resigned and acquired interim status. However, it resumed power with the same party configuration within 24 days. A second crisis in 1922 resulted in the fall of the government. However, following elections, Ruijs de Beerenbrouck’s government coalition continued in the same party configuration. Note that Ruijs de Beerenbrouck’s second government also went through a period of crisis in which it had interim status for 73 days following the defeat of a bill in parliament in October 1923.

Following new general elections in 1925, Colijn of the ARP established a rightwing government coalition with the AB and CHU, which is coded as a SOLS change. The government fell and became demissionary within a few months, however. New elections in 1926 led to a cabinet by De Geer that was staffed by former civil servants and that was extraparliamentary (SOLS change), i.e. it did not find its support along party lines and contained ministers from both the left and the right. Ministerial positions were occupied by members of the ARP, CHU, AB (which had changed into the Catholic State Party – RKSP), and independent liberals, but at the same time the government was strongly opposed by the CHU and ARP.

The Geer cabinet remained in government until elections in 1929, after which point it was replaced by a government¹ under the leadership of Ruijs de Beerenbrouck consisting of the RKSP, the ARP and the CHU, which fell following a crisis in 1933. New elections returned Colijn of the ARP to power, who built a centre-right coalition (SOLS change). Colijn’s government contained ministers from the RKSP, the ARP, the CHU, the cultural liberal Democratic Union (Vrijzinnig Democratische Bond - VDB), and the Liberal Union (Vrijheidsbond –VB).

Following the 1933 elections Colijn headed four subsequent governments; the first ended in 1935 and was replaced by a coalition government with the same party composition that ended in 1937; the third took office on June 24, 1937 and consisted of only the ARP, the RKSP, and the CHU (minor SOLS change); the fourth took over on July 25, 1939 and lasted for only two days. It consisted of the ARP, the CHU, and a few independent Liberals (minor SOLS change).² Colijn’s final government was replaced by an emergency government led by De Geer of the

¹ Officially the King heads the government in the Netherlands and the prime minister heads the cabinet of ministers. In practice, the coalition is in control of the government, however.

² Leiden University Parliamentary Documentation Centre 2011. “Kabinet-Colijn V (1939)”
<http://www.denederlandsegrondwet.nl/9353000/1/j9vvihlf299q0sr/vh8lnhrp8wry>

CHU (SOLS change). De Geer's government included the Social Democratic Labor Party (SDAP), the RKSP, the VDB, and the ARP and governs until the invasion of Germany in May 1940.

In 1945, before the end of World War II, the Netherlands was occupied by Nazi Germany and under the administration of Arthur Seyss-Inquart as the Reichskommissar. After Germany's defeat, power was handed over to a provisional government first led by Willem Schermerhorn. The Parliament at this time was actually the same as the prewar parliament from 1940, and Schermerhorn (VDB) was affiliated with the newly formed Labour Party (PvdA), which led a coalition including the Catholic People's Party (KVP) and the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP). The transition from foreign occupation to domestic ownership under Schermerhorn does not represent a SOLS change since Schermerhorn was an interim leader (See Agung and Owens 1996, xviii; and Andeweg and Irwin 2002, 107).

The first post-war elections were held in 1946 and resulted in the KVP getting the most votes but not enough for a majority. Under instruction from Queen Wilhelmina, Louis Beel, a member of KVP, formed a coalition government uniting the KVP and the PvdA. Beel, became Prime Minister July 3, 1946 and served as Prime Minister until August 7, 1948. During the 1946-1948 time period, Beel maintained the same SOLS. Dr. Louis Beel represented the KVP (at the head of a coalition including the less represented PvdA). Accordingly, this was a change of SOLS for the Dutch government. Dr. Beel served in the position until 1948, when new elections put the PvdA back in power at the head of a parliamentary coalition (including the KVP, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), and the Christian Historical Union (CHU)) with Willem Drees as their Prime Minister. Drees served consistently until his cabinet broke up in 1958; the only minor SOLS change in time was 1952, when the ARP replaced the VVD as a coalition partner.

Dr. Beel formed a provisional cabinet in 1958, with a coalition of the KVP, ARP, and CHU. This cabinet does not represent a SOLS change, because it was formed explicitly to set the stage for elections. In 1959, elections were held; the same coalition from above plus the VVD came to control the government with Jan Edward de Quay as the Prime Minister. His personal party was the KVP, and they stayed at the head of the coalitions in power for some time to come. This is a SOLS change.

1959 through 1963 and 1963 through 1965 were administrations under de Quay and Victor Merijnen in which the KVP led the above coalition. In 1965, a minor SOLS change occurred when the CHU and VVD dropped from the coalition and the PvdA was added; this was not a major change because the new prime minister, Joseph Cals, was still a member of the KVP.

On April 14, 1965, the Merijnen cabinet collapsed and fellow KVP party member Jo Cals became the new Prime Minister. Along with the new prime minister came a new cabinet consisted of the KVP, PvdA, and ARP. On November 22, 1966, the Cals cabinet was brought down when its financial policies were attacked. Replacing Cals as prime minister was Jelle Zijlstra of the ARP party as a caretaker government until elections could be held in 1967. Since the Zijlstra cabinet is just a caretaker government, there is no SOLS change.

Control and SOLS shifted in 1967, when general elections were held. They resulted in another win for the KVP. The new prime minister was now Petrus de Jong, a member of the KVP and the new cabinet consisted of the KVP, ARP, CHU, and VVD; this occurred on April 5th. However, this was only a minor SOLS change.

Piet de Jong's coalition saw the addition of the Democratic Socialists '70 (DS70) party, and it continued to rule under the new administration of Barend Biesheuvel and the ARP, to

which he belonged, in 1971. This change is coded as a transfer of SOLS. In 1972, a minor SOLS change occurred when the DS70 was dropped from the ruling coalition. Major SOLS change occurred again in 1973; a new government led by the PvdA and including the KVP, ARP, Political Party of Radicals (PPR), and Democrats '66 (D66) took control under the leadership of Prime Minister Joop den Uyl. Den Uyl's coalition lasted until 1977.

In 1977, a new coalition took hold under Dries van Agt of the Christian-Democratic Appeal (CDA). From 1977 to 1981, the coalition was simply the CDA and VVD. From 1981 to May of 1982, it was the CDA, PvdA, and D66. Finally, from May of 1982 to November of 1982, it was only the CDA and D66. As van Agt was the Prime Minister for this whole period, the 1977 transition is coded as a SOLS change, but the following two are only minor.

In November of 1982, the CDA retained power, but they installed a new prime minister and gained a different coalition partner. The transition to Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers and the new coalition of the CDA and VVD is coded as a minor SOLS change. This situation stayed constant until 1989, when the Lubbers cabinet dropped the VVD from its coalition and replaced it with the PvdA (representing another minor SOLS change).

1994 saw a major SOLS change from Lubbers to Prime Minister Willem Kok, who led a coalition of the PvdA, VVD, and D66 parties. This government ruled until 2002, when Jan Peter Balkenende became prime minister with a coalition of parties including the CDA, VVD, and a new party called Pim Fortuyn List (LPF). This obviously denoted a SOLS change as well. Balkenende has been the prime minister since 2002, but there have been minor changes: in 2003 the LPF was replaced by the D66, in 2006 the D66 itself was dropped, and finally, in 2007, the CHU and PvdA joined the CDA in government.

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