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Political-Administrative Elites in The Netherlands: Profiles and Perceptions

Wilhelmina P. Seeker*

Abstract: The purpose of this article is a comparison of four Dutch political-administrative elites, i.e. Members of Cabinets and of the Second Chamber, high level civil servants and members of the Judiciary since the last half century. The article investigates some aspects of their social background, political and professional background and some role perceptions, in order to see whether cohesive behaviour is to be expected, taking common background characteristics as indicators. Some commonly shared features have been traced: a hitherto mainly masculine culture, (not exclusively) high social origins, similar occupational patterns in bureaucracy, at the bar and in universities. Proportionally less higher bureaucrats had received an academic education. Judges counted relatively more catholics than the other elites did. Notwithstanding these and other dissimilarities cohesive behaviour patterns can be discerned more clearly between the two political elites and the bureaucrats than compared to the fourth depicted elite, the judiciary. However, recently introduced new rules of external recruitment of magistrates tend to a growing professional and political congruence between all four elites. A solid basis for cohesive and cooperational behaviour seems at hand.

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1. Introduction

Empirical investigation of the process and outcome of the recruitment of political elites has for a long time been considered to be one of the most intriguing fields of socio-political science. In most Western European countries studies of this kind have been carried out in the past, be it not everywhere to the **same** extent regarding time and subjects. **Now** again, interest in elite-**studies** is **under discussion** in the **Context** of **recent developments toward European integration.**[1] This process of European integration is not entirely **new,** but since 'Maastricht' the process seems to be accelerated at last. Cooperation in several fields between the political elites of the countries who decided to join the European Union is more than ever urgently required. In this context it is worth while to see to what extent similarities or dissimilarities exist between the different national political elites in whose hands European decision-making is left.

Regarding political elites existing literature on the one hand emphasizes cohesion of elites (Mosca, Wright Mills, Meisel), at the other hand conflict (Weber). I will not review here all arguments used in the endless stream of articles on this very subject. Nor is it my intention to go into the question whether or to what extent integration is esteemed necessary, or conflict tolerable, functional or dysfunctional. Suffice it to say here that I hold with the widely adhered theory about the decision-making process that puts strong belief in elite cohesion as basic condition for a successful functioning. A certain amount of cohesion failing, the risks of bargaining ending up in conflict are life-sized, whereas internal cohesion and inter-elite relationships are central to the achievement of aimed goals. From this view it is important to analyse the political elite groups in terms of convergence and cohesion.

However, assuming that a high degree of elite congruency will advance the process of European cooperation and even integration, one first should investigate the presence or absence of this phenomenon on the national level. Integration in the European context is hardly to be expected to be successful when on the national level the elite(s) display(s) no or very low scale cohesion, internally or between them. This article therefore is meant to offer a contribution to a clearer view on the composition and some opinions of Dutch political elites. My purpose is to draw an outline of several national political elite groups on the base of some previous empirical studies and inquiries. Of each of these elite groups some data are presented, on: a. social background characteristics; b. political or professional career; c. role perceptions.

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[1] **This article is based on a paper presented at the annual meeting of the ECPR, april 1994, in Madrid, workshop: National Elites and European Integration.**

2. Outline and working method

National elite studies in the past usually aimed primarily at an analysis of changes, structural, institutional and socio-cultural. Within the framework of a national context longitudinal studies of the composition of political elites made clear to what degree changes in the society were reflected in the recruitment of members of the political class. Not that proportional representation was ever to be expected to become reality, but to a certain degree developments in society were supposed to become visible in the (s)election of representatives of the people and the appointment of other prominent national leaders.

Which elites are relevant in the context of European integration? Of the studies focused on positional political elites, in one way or another involved in the decision making process, especially members of parliament and cabinet ministers have been the main subject of interest, probably because these two elites are ranked highest between political elites at large. However, these two groups are not the only political actors on the national level. A third and eventually a fourth group should be added. As a matter of fact attention has to be paid to what has been called the fourth power elite: the national administrative elite, the senior civil servants. When it comes to influencing the decision making process, in national as well as European matters, this administrative elite should not been underestimated. Less conspiciously still another category within the governmental sector at large deserves more and more our special attention: the judiciary. Of late national judges have become increasingly involved in political processes. Not at least as a consequence of new European rules which have to be applied, judges are increasingly forced to test national legislation against international treaties and international law.

In the Netherlands several systematic studies of politically involved elite groups have come out in the last ten years.[2] Most of all members of the Second Chamber have been the subject of thorough investigations (Van den Berg 1981, 1983, 1989; Daalder 1992). Not only do we have a clear picture of the personnel composition of this House from 1848 until now, but there are also several inquiries made among MPs since the 1960s. The latter offer a rich amount of data on perceptions of MPs on politics in general, parliamentary roles, other parties and so on. About the Cabinet ministers, also from 1848 on, a similar study on social background and career characteristics came out some years ago (Secker 1991). As to matters of internal cohesion among ministers some information is available (Andeweg 1989), but less useful in this context, because it is not structured the same way as the information regarding the MPs. The study on the civil service has a basically different character from both mentioned political elite studies (Van der Meer and Roborgh 1993). It deals with a variety of aspects regarding the administration, on both the national and

[2] **See the list of references on Dutch elites.**

local level. The main subjects are size, aspects of bureaucratization and representation of the civil service. Included are some data on social background and career, of the whole apparatus, respectively divided into three hierarchical echelons. Information with respect to the higher echelons could thus be extracted to be compared to the political elites. Finally, extensive data on the judiciary are available (De Groot-van Leeuwen 1991). The study on this group contains information on social background characteristics as well as the ideas of judges and public prosecutors, based on interviews from 1988-1989.

With the help of these empirical studies on elites we are able to investigate in a certain way the degree of similarity of these groups. How much internal cohesion does exist in elite circles if one takes social, political or professional convergence as startingpoint? Using the available data on recruitment and, partly, on role perceptions of the forementioned four elites I searched for indicators pointing out to less or more internal cohesion and inter-elite connections.

Among the factors that are generally considered contributory to elite integration are similar recruitment paths and sociometric nets. Frequently mentioned as an indicator for class consciousness is homogeneity in *socio-cultural backgrounds.* One of the first aspects to look at in this respect is *gender.* Are elites in recent times to the same extent open to women? Previous research outcome has proved convincingly that social milieu is of paramount importance in matters of education, professional career, social skills in general and even possible connections in high or at least important places (Dronkers and Hillege 1994). In this respect attention is paid to *social milieu and class,* traditionally measured by means of the membership of nobility on the one hand -though the modest role of this aspect in modern Dutch society is well known-, by the occupational prestige of the fathers at the other hand. *Education* itself, level and discipline, of the members of the four elites is compared. The *religious* makeup of the political elites is not one of the least interesting characteristics in the Netherlands where -notwithstanding increasing secularization- still nowadays denomination plays a certain role in appointment and selection procedures.

A second group of indicators to measure potential congruence between elite groups could be found in the *professional career,* pre-elite positions, functional overlapping of careers, intermixed functions (of civil servants and politicians), the phenomenon of interlocking or interlaced elites, and also a practise of cross-over to other elites. Did each of the elites follow special tracks, or did their roads cross? It is well known from earlier studies that the careers of the two core political elites, cabinet ministers and parliamentarians, for a long time did not coincide for the greater part Until the second world war Dutch ministers have in majority been recruited from outside the parliament. To what extent the pre-political careers of both elites in recent times were intertwined? And how about the civil service and the judiciary? Hans Daalder long ago

pointed to the fact that close to one-half of (nineteenth century) Dutch MPs had practized in various government offices, the judiciary included. How about the situation in more recent times? And, as most recruitment studies deal with the careers of the referred elites preceding their elite position, no clear picture exists of the groups of bureaucrats and judges in this respect Did they remain loyal to their jobs or did they easily change places between them or the political elites?

Within the context of the professional and political career, some aspects of this career itself deserve our attention. They regard the *age* of the incumbents at the moment of the first reached stage in politics; also *duration* and *continuity,* and -in some cases- of the information about the situation or *reasons to leave* this position.

Apart from convergence in social backgrounds and/or careers, a third indicator for elite cohesiveness lies in *convergence of political affiliation, role perceptions and mutual acceptance of roles.* These factors can contribute to purposive and pragmatic cooperative behavior (Lijphart's accommodationism theory). To measure the convergence or integration of elites interviewing the members of the elites on matters of physical and mental, internal and inter-elite, communication is the most direct way. The physical side of communication may be expressed in terms of more or less frequent personal meetings, mental convergence on the basis of more or less commonly shared opinions in political or other professional matters. Of this kind of research some inquiries made among members of the political and bureaucratic elites in the 1970s and 1980s have been made. Of the MPs the most recent analysis, based on inquiries in 1990, has been used too (Thomassen a.o. 1992).

3. Social background

Gender. Politics, government and administration have -as most public and private sectors in society- long been dominated by a traditionally masculine culture. Emancipatory movements in the Western world at least led in the first place to woman suffrage. In the Netherlands this was the case since 1919. One year before the first female MP made her entrance in parliament for the socialist party. In all other areas of public offices the battle to make up arrears in the appointment of female functionaries only had some success after the second world war. The first female judge was sworn in only in 1947. And the first female Cabinet minister - of Social Welfare - has been appointed in 1956. In other high-ranked public offices women have been excluded for a long time, not at least by the banning of married women until the 1960s. And to the highest category of civil servants, that of »secretaris-generaal«, the first woman has been appointed only in 1991, just like the first female minister, in the department of Social Welfare.

The proportion of women in higher ranked posts is uncontestedly increasing, but at a very slow pace. In the Second Chamber their number climbed to a nine percent in the 1960s. Ten years later, in the seventies, more women were elected, up to 13 to 16 percent Since then the number of female MPs kept rising to be stabilized at about 20%. Female cabinet ministers are up to now stil 'aves rarae'. Thanks to the appointment of three women ministers in 1989, their percentage over the period since 1967 rose to six. The appointment of another four women ministers in the newly installed cabinet (august 1994) was greeted as big success of protagonists of female emancipation. A higher proportion of women, similar to that of the MPs, can be found in the judiciary. Here too one of five judges belongs to the female sex, but rather few women occupy the highest legal posts in the judiciary. In the High Court only three women have been appointed until now, the first one in 1967. Two years earlier the first female attorney-general made her appearance in this Court. In the civil service on the contrary the share of women in the higher echelons is still lower than in the other elite groups. We do not dispose of exactly comparable data, but of all women working in the civil service, a quarter of all employees, a mere 8 percent belongs to the two (of six) highest function groups against 21% of their masculine counterparts.

Social milieu. Of old the upper strata of society maintained a strong network, among other things by a policy of inter-marriages. Thus family ties remained for a long time an important factor also in politics. But after the emergence of political parties, mobilizing new strata in society, the role family connections played decreased. Since the turn of the century the proportion of politicians from prominent families rapidly declined. In Cabinet nor Parliament members from aristocratic families play a role of any importance. Only by chance, so it seems, a 'baron', 'jonkheer' or 'jonkvrouwe' is to be found in one of these two national political institutions. Among the members of the judiciary, however, stil a ten percent in the fifties was of noble origin, but in these circles also aristocracy disappeared almost completely in the last decades.

In search of indications for a similar social status of the elites in modern times, another more indirect measuring-instrument is more useful. For all four elite groups at least some information is available about their social origins based on the occupation or occupational prestige of the fathers. In most Dutch elite studies an empirical prestige stratification survey of the 1950s, adapted to specific purposes, served as startingpoint. Occupations were divided into six groups, ranking from 1 (highest-ranked occupations like free professions) to 6 (lowest-ranked, unskilled labor). Although it must be admitted that this stratification survey, relevant to the population at large, is less suitable for elite studies, it undoubtedly offers a clear view of the unrepresentative character of several political elites.

In the studies on ministers and parliamentarians the same occupational prestige indicator has been used. Dividing the professions of the fathers into

Table 1: Social milieu according to father's occupational prestige or occupation (%)

	High	Middle	Low	
Ministers 1946-1967	46	50	3	
Ministers 1967-1990	37	44	10	
MPs 1946-1967	50	38	9	
MPs in 1968	56	37	6	
MPs in 1990	51	38	12	
Judiciary in 1970	60	32	8	
Judiciary in 1988	51	42	8	
	business proprietors	new middle class	old middle class	working class
Higher Civil Servants in 1951	1	66	27	6
Higher Civil Servants in 1988	2	62	21	15

three hierarchical categories, about half of both elites belonged to the highest social stratum.[3] More deputies, nine percent, came from modest families than ministers, roughly three percent The last twenty five years more ministers came from middle and lower origins, even a ten percent came from families of the lowest ranked category. We do not have comparable data on family background of all deputies serving the last two decades, but the available data for the years 1968 and 1990 do not show significant changes. Still half of the deputies have fathers belonging to the highest strata; the percentage of lower origin deputies has slightly risen to 12 in 1990.[4]

[3] **For comparative goals the ranking system has to be adapted. Professions in the civil service, the judiciary and other free professions are ranked very higly in the Netherlands, whereas in many countries these are considered typical middle class occupations.**

[4] **It is noteworth that in the prewar decades the number of deputies from middle and lower ranking milieus had increased mainly as a consequence of the entrance in parliament of members from the three major ideological subcultures: Catholics, Calvinists and Socialists. After the war inter-party differences in milieu according to**

The processing of data on the occupational background of the judges has been done more or less in a similar way. Of this elite an even higher part had fathers with high ranked occupations in 1970, 60%. But in 1988/89 this percentage decreased to 51%, similar to the share of MPs in this category. In both years only 8% of the judges was of modest origin. Information about occupational prestige of fathers of the senior civil servants has been processed differently and can not satisfactorily be compared. Especially the categories new and old middle classes are hard to translate in terms of high or middle strata. The parental occupations were classified according to four categories. The proportion of working class fathers has considerably increased: from 6% in the 1950s to more than twice as much, 15% in 1988, though this still does not reflect at all the occupational population at large.

Education. Based on the data on the social background of the elites in terms of the occupational prestige of their fathers, thus the image looms of elite groups with mainly a middle or upper class character, with very few exceptions of members coming from the lower classes. Affirmation of this impression of not strictly closed, but still rather exclusive groups is to be found in data on the educational background.

The judiciary is most exclusive in this respect; an academic degree in law is just the basic condition to start a legal career and has to be followed by a professional education of several years. Such conditions are not posed for the bureaucratic and political elites. But there too academic training seems to become increasingly a prerequisite. Ministers rank almost as high as the judges as to educational criteria. Only very few cabinet members have reached their high political post starting from a rather modest educational background.

In modern Dutch »merit«-society it is almost a miracle if one reaches the political top without previous formal tertiary schooling. In this respect fairly big discrepancies exist between ministers and MPs, although of the latter over fifty percent had an academic degree. But with over 40% of MPs with an non-university, intermediate education they resemble more the group of the senior civil servants. In this group apparently a higher proportion has reached the bureaucratic toplevel by other than educational means.[5]

Among the university graduates an education in law has been paramount from the beginning until these days. Apart from all members of the judiciary elite group more than half of the academics among the ministers (63%) and the MPs (57%), active in the two first postwar decades, had a law degree. This percentage declined since the 1960s to 34 for the ministers. For the MPs the

this measure practically disappeared, with only the liberals showing a continuing slight preponderance of higher milieus among the members.

[5] Van der Meer and Roborgh (1993) handle various dividing lines between civil servants. In general when speaking of higher civil servants, they indicate those ranked in salary-scale 10 and higher. The real 'senior' civil servants are found from level 12 on. This highest category counted 80% academics in 1988.

Table 2: Educational background (%)

	Acad.	Oth. high	Secun-dary	Pri-mary
Ministers 1946-1967	84	12	3	1
Ministers 1967-1990	85	8	7	-
MPs 1946-1967	51	18	24	7
MPs 1960-1988	56	20	21	3
MPs in 1990	63	15	17	5
Higher Civil Servants in 1951	38	53		10
Higher Civil Servants in 1988	43	57		1

percentages were 49 in 1968, 35 in 1990. Their places were increasingly taken by persons with a degree in economical or political sciences. About a fifth of the university educated members of cabinets in the period 1946 to 1967 had received an economic training and almost a quarter of those serving in the last 25 years. In parliament too more economists appeared, 17% of the academically trained before the sixties, to a stabilized percentage of about 20 in the eighties. The phenomenon of politicians from political science background is typical for the last twenty years. One of six ministers and one of ten MPs from such a background since the sixties made their appearance in politics.

Among all academic civil servants also more than half had the masters degree in law in 1947. Here the decrease of law was higher than in the other elite groups: in 1988 only 27% of the academically trained had studied law. The growing importance of economics in modern states is illustrated by the enormous increase of economically trained civil servants. From a mere nine percent of academics in the administration shortly after the war, the percentage of economists increased to 35 in 1988[6]

Religion. The Dutch political scene is known for its historical rooted division along religious lines. Strong ties between political party and denomination do not exist in all parties. However, for politicians at least, even after deconfessionalization in the 1960s, recruitment along religious lines has partly been maintained by some of the political parties. The process of deconfessionalization of the electorate was prominently made clear in the decreasing number of votes for confessionally based parties. Since the elections of 1967

[6] **See about the increasing role of economists in government in the period 1945-1975: M.L. Bemelmans-Videc (1984), *Economen in overheidsdienst, (P*h.D. diss., Rotterdam).**

the traditionally big three confessional parties lost definitely the majority they had kept over fifty years.

Table 3: Religious background

	Dutch Refor-med	Refor-med	Other prot.	Roman Cath.	Other/ none
Ministers 1946-1967	22	13	13	35	16
Ministers 1967-1990	22	14	4	24	35
MPs 1946-1967	26	10	3	36	25
MPs in 1980	17	10	4	23	46
MPs in 1990	15	13	2	19	52
Civil Servants in 1951	38	5	11	25	21
Civil Servants in 1988	16	11	4	19	50
Judiciary in 1988	+22+		6	32	41
[Occup. population in 1947	32	9	4	37	19]
[Occup. population in 1987	17	8	4	34	37]

Rather big differences are made visible in the religious background of the elites. However, developments in this respect occurred over time. No outstanding differences in religious background between parliamentarians and ministers were there until the seventies. Also in times of increasing deconfessionalisation both elites resemble each other in a same tendancy of decreasing recruitment of catholics. They differ however as to the share of Dutch reformed and not religious members. More alterations in religion show the higher civil servants. The frequently mentioned disproportional low share of catholics in high public posts was reality in 1951 and has become even worse in 1988. Remarkably the percentage of catholics among civil servants decreases with the level. On the highest levels one of five civil servants was catholic in 1988, on the lowest level (not in Table 3) one of three, and on the intermediate level one of four. The number of 'gereformeerde', orthodox-protestant civil servants, on the contrary, increases the higher the hierarchical positions: from 7% for the lower ranks up to 11 in the higher echelons. And the same applies, to an even higher rate, to the category of administrators without

religion: from 42 percent among the lower ranked to 50 percent at the top. After considerable changes in religious background of higher civil servants they now resemble most the MPs.

Obviously catholics are well represented among the members of the judiciary. In 1988 their share was much higher than in the political or administrative elites. While in the political elites since the introduction of universal suffrage recruitment on religious criteria roughly spoken went along partylines, this was quite different regarding nominations for the High Court. Until the 1960s the religious background was *de facto* considered one of the most important recruiting criteria, however, not in proportional terms. Especially the number of catholics was strictly controlled. During the first postwar years up to the sixties the number of catholic councillers deliberatedly never rose above four. Only when a catholic counciller resigned another co-religionist was appointed in his place. A fifth catholic counciller joined the Court in 1960. Since the seventies, however, no consequent policy in this respect can be recognized.

4. Careers

Pre-elite career patterns. Recruitment systems obviously are connected to demands made on the elites in question. It goes without saying that knowledge from education and expertise from previous functions belong to the most decisive factors in the recruitment process. For all four elites I tried to collect comparable information as to the previous careers, assuming to find at least some overlapping in the distinguished pre-elite careers since all four focuse on government and politics.

Of the administrative elite detailed information about the occupational past is lacking. The impression the study of Van der Meer and Roborgh left, is that bureaucracy increasingly has got a closed character. In 1950 roughly half of the senior civil servants had previous occupational experience elsewhere, against one-third in 1988. Especially the toplevel bureaucrats have started their career in the civil service immediately after the end of educational training, or are recruited internally.

With the exception of the administrative elite I divided the other three elites according to previous experience in six main occupational groups. For both political elites I registrated the occupational background twice. For MPs and ministers firstly the occupation they had at the moment of entering Parliament or Cabinet for the first time (Table 4); secondly a division of first occupational experience (MPs) or at any moment in the past (ministers) (Table 5).

Of the four elites the judiciary takes a exclusive position with a respect to special requirements. Naturally the starting point for a career is formed by university law training. Unlike the situation in other countries the Dutch

Table 4: Occupational background on election/appointment (%)

	Govern-ment/ parl	Educa-tion	Free prof.	Organi-tions	Com-merce	Other
Ministers 1946-1967	47/35	15	11	10	7	1
Ministers 1967-1990	30/53	14	2	8	7	1
MPs 1946-1967	26	9	11	36	14	4
MPs in 1968	23	9	11	27	10	20
MPs in 1980	28	25	7	17	13	11
MPs in 1990	36	14	3	19	10	19
Judges in 1951	6	1	45	-	1	1
Judges in 1974	17	7	34	2	10	4
Judges in 1986	14	12	32	2	13	4
High Court 1946-1967	3	16	10			-
High Court 1967-1987	-	29	22			2

Table 5: Occupational background
(MPs: first occupation; ministers and High Court: at any moment in the past (%))

	Govern-ment/ parl	Educa-tion	Free prof.	Organi-zations	Com-merce	Other
Ministers 1946-1967	66/43	26	25	22	22	6
Ministers 1967-1990	61/68	29	11	35	30	10
MPs 1946-1967	22	9	10	14	32	3
High Court 1946-1967	32	19	71			
High Court 1967-1987	24	36	60			

judiciary has a mixed recruitment system in terms of the occupational background of magistrates before entering. Of the generally known two inflow-routes, one by internal training, the other by the recruitment of external juridically experienced candidates, both exist and are equally applied. In the 1950s internally recruited magistrates dominated strongly. However, also those who followed the internal training have got some external experience by means of a two-years stay outdoors. From the externally recruited on the other hand at least 6 years of experience in the legal profession is required.

Within the judiciary different career patterns can be distinguished for the judges on the one hand, the public prosecutors at the other hand. Magistrates of the latter category used to be recruited much more often by internal ways than the sitting magistrates. Official policy now is to recruit fifty percent of the personnel internally, fifty percent externally. Of all magistrates in 1951 more than half, 54%, had been active somehow outside the strict judiciary field. In 1974 this number had risen to 73 percent and still higher in 1986, to 78. Practising as lawyer continued to be most often the external legal experience. This declined over the years. In 1974 and 1986 still most outdoors experience of judges had been obtained in the legal profession, but quite a few judges then had different occupational backgrounds, in government offices, commerce and increasingly in universities. In 1986 more than ten percent of judges came from university posts, in which they approached the political elites. In short, magistrates now are not only recruited from outside-judiciary backgrounds to a larger extent than in the first postwar decades, they also show more diverse occupational experience.

As to the *crime de la crime* of the judiciary, the members of the High Court, the same applies. Of those appointed after 1967 even over fifty percent came from outward posts. Twice as much practising lawyers and university professors went directly from these functions into the Court. Partly this can be explained by the enormous growth of both the bar and the number of professorships in law. To get a place in High Court one obviously has to have practized law in the most strict sense of the word. Previous experience in governmental circles, even of the highest quality, does in itself not meet with the high requirements of Court. Obviously members of the judiciary nowadays have more connections with society at large than in earlier days. But on the other hand the phenomenon of members of the judiciary who for years occupied a seat in Parliament or were active in other, local, political functions (between 1848 and 1888 this was true for over 30% of the judges), was not to be seen again in the postwar time.

For both political elites in The Hague the occupational experience before the political career looks somewhat different. What strikes the eye is the number of MPs that came from organizations of all kinds (political, socio-economical). In the last decades this proportion has declined with almost 50%, but still regards one fifth of all MPs. Both ministers and MPs continued Dutch tradition in

maintaining close linkages with government offices, in recent years still not less than one-third of both elites. It is evident that the number of MPs recruited from governmental circles has risen considerably in recent times, whereas the declining number of ministers from similar backgrounds is caused by recruitment immediately from the parliament. Ministers and MPs shared -with the judiciary, and to the same extent- affiliation with the educational field. Not many politicians in recent years came from strict judicial occupations. However, if we look at the whole previous occupational career of the ministers the picture changes in this respect. One of four ministers in the years 1946-1967 ever had practised as lawyer. Government however has kept by all means an outstanding importance as recruiting channel for ministerial candidates.

Age, duration, continuity in elite positions. The extent of crossing over from one to another elite depends among other things on the age of entrance in one of the elite-positions and also on the time spent in this place. At the very first entrance in the judiciary the mean age of the magistrates of 1986 was 41 as to the sitting magistracy, 36 to the standing magistrates. This difference in age of five years between judges and public prosecutors has continually been there. Those who were recruited internally started their judicial career much younger, at 36, than those who first occupied other functions in society. The latter category entered the judiciary at 43. In all ranks of judicial positions the mean age of the groups was lowering in recent years, but this was caused less by the entrance of younger persons than by the appointment of a large number of newcomers. The mean age of magistratres declined from 52 in 1951 to 48.5 in 1986. Very few judges or public prosecutors leave the judiciary. The majority remains loyal to their profession. Cross-over from the judiciary to politics or other sectors in society hardly ever occurs any more. Nowadays members of the judiciary only exceptionally are politically active, as senator or in local councils.[7]

In broad outlines bureaucracy shows an even more closed structure than the judiciary. A majority of civil servants - of all levels - starts directly after education. It does not surprise that the mean age of higher civil servants is higher than for the other echelons. More than half of the higher administrators is older than 40 years and less than 10 percent is under 30. Direct recruitment to the toplevel from outside the service is of minor significance.

About MPs and ministers more detailed data about age are available. This is the more interesting because members of these two elites changed places more frequently than the administrative or judicial elites. Mean age in the Second House has been lowering since 1946, especially since the sixties; after the 1963-election mean age did no longer rise above 50. Apparently the lowering of the minimum age in 1963 to 25 years greatly contributed to reach this mean

[7] **In 1986 one of the justices of the High Court held a function in the scientific institute of one of the political parties (CDA).**

lower age of the members, but part of the explanation is also to be found in the introduction of a »retirement« age for MPs. Most parties no longer nominated candidates older than 60 years. The duration of the average mandate being about two four-year terms, it becomes clear that most MPs who can not or do not wish to return to their previous jobs look forward to other challenging posts. Membership of a cabinet of course is attractive to many MPs. And we saw that especially since the sixties more and more MPs entered cabinets.

Table 6: Mean age of new MPs and ministers in cohorts (%)

	<30	<40	<50	<60	>60	Avg.
Ministers 1946-1967	-	10	43	40	7	49
Ministers 1967-1990	-	14	46	37	3	48
MPs 1946-1967	-	28	44	24	5	45
MPs 1967-1990	5	38	41	15	1	41
Mean age of definitely retiring MPs (%)						
MPs 1946-1967	-	3	19	32	46	58
MPs 1967-1990	-	7	29	42	22	53

Of the MPs in the period 1946-1967 who did not return in Parliament nearly two-thirds returned to their old or went to new jobs, one of three retired because of age or health problems. Ten percent died still in office or soon after retiring. The lowering of the mean age of MPs during the last 25 years had its consequences with regard to the post-parliamentary career. The overwhelming majority continued a professional career after leaving parliament To only ten percent age or bad health meant not only the end of the parliamentary mandate, but of their whole professional career.

Overlap and cross-over of elites. The political career of MPs but also of ministers is of another nature than the professional careers in the judiciary or in the civil service. To begin with, the election mechanism that leads to a membership of the Second Chamber is not at all comparable to procedures to enter the administrative or judicial elites. Differences in recruiting paths are reflected in the career itself. Membership of parliament can be combined with continuation of another profession, but can also be interrupted voluntarily or unvoluntarily through absence of the electorates support. Till the end of the sixties a majority of Dutch MPs did not quit the profession they practised at the moment of election. Incumbents of public offices and civil servants in general

who enter parliament have to give up their jobs for the time of their parliamentary mandate, but keep the right to return. Changing places between bureaucracy and Parliament meets with fewer difficulties than in any other occupational sector. To be appointed as Cabinet minister on the contrary means the end of earlier offices.

Regarding three of the four elites some information has already been given about previous occupational, experience. Did the elite come from at least partly convergent occupational backgrounds? Were their paths to the elite positions strictly separated? In the judicial career with its own stipulated conditions of an academic education in law plus some years of internal training we saw a growing recruitment of members of the judiciary from external occupational background during the last decades. Here a connection can be found with the administrative elite. We do not have information on the types of the previous occupational career of civil servants who were recruited externally. We do know however from which sectors externally recruited magistrates came: the free professions, i.e. the *bar,* governmental offices and the educational sector (universities). Richer information is at our disposal with respect to the pre-political careers of MPs and ministers, as illustrated earlier. Although the data do not allow to enter into details the conclusion so far might be that a considerable part of the elites has a common occupational past: in government, as lawyer, and in universities. Negatively spoken do all of them share one other point: very few of the political-administrative-judicial elites come from economic occupations in commerce, business or the like.

Little has been said so far about the cross-over from one elite position into another and vice-versa. To map data of this kind we need more information of post elite positions. We do have some data of that kind regarding the ministerial elite since World War II. These have partly been processed in a comparative context (Blondel 1991). As to the cross-over to one of the other three elites the following can be said. Of all ministers 16% was over 60 when leaving Cabinet One-third of all leavers returned to parliament, among them a few of the over-60 years old. But we know from previous research that the duration of most ex-ministers in parliament was rather short (Secker 1989). In quite a few cases post-ministerial parliamentary periods were regarded as waiting periods to look for another interesting job. Information of the continuated post-ministerial careers in the course of the time is insufficiently available. Of most of the outgoing ministers we only know the occupational situation shortly after their leaving the Cabinet. One Of five ministers returned to previous occupations, while over forty percent entered new jobs, in private business, public enterprise or in international posts. Blondel did not go into the nature of these previous or other jobs. Certainly not many of the ministers came from and returned to the judiciary.[8] However, ministers who returned to or accepted an appointment in

[8] **One of the exceptions was J. de Ruiter, minister of Justice in 1977, of Defence in 1981.**

the public sector for the first time, are no exceptions at all. Many a minister or parliamentarian can be found in offices such as burgomaster or commissioner of the Queen after retirement from politics.

Earlier the increasing recruitment of ministers from the parliamentary channels has been mentioned. Since the 1960s more than half of the new ministers are recruited from one of the Houses of Parliament. The patterns of cross-over between parliament and cabinet in the years 1946-1989 can be sketched as follows. About as many ministers in the postwar period reached their Cabinet post from a parliamentary seat as the number of ministers who came from other occupational background, respectively 71 parliamentarians and 74 non-parliamentarians. Roughly a same number of ex-ministers, 72, took a seat in one of the Houses of Parliament after leaving the cabinet, against 73 ex-ministers who did not enter or return to Parliament. This miraculous equilibrium was not brought about exclusively by the return of ex-parliamentarians reoccupying their old seats. One-third of ex-ministers made their entrance in Parliament as parliamentary 'freshmen'.

Table 7: Cross-over between parliament and cabinet (abs. nbrs.)

	Ministers with parl. experience	Ministers without parl. experience	All ministers
Ex-ministers entering Parliament	46	26	72
Ex-ministers not entering Parliament	25	48	73
All ministers	71	74	145

Most frequently interlacing of elite-positions occurred between membership of parliament and the governmental sector. This phenomenon is not new in the Netherlands. Of old politicians were recruited from »regenten« circles, from the established governmental families. The proportion of MPs recruited from administrative posts was much higher in 1990 than in the sixties, one of three against one of four. Without more information of the destination after leaving the parliament nothing can be said about increasing or declining cross-over afterwards.[9]

[9] **A recent publication about resigning parliamentarians dealt primarily with the reasons of MPs to leave, but did unfortunelately not pay any attention to the categories of new jobs, the ex-MPs went to (De Vos, 1990).**

5. Political affiliation and role perceptions

Distribution of political forces: Ministers and MPs. One of the outstanding significant features regarding the incumbents of the four elites is political affiliation. Of the core groups, parliamentarians and also ministers, this is directly connected with political relative strenght of the electorate. Cabinets, in the Netherlands since long composed of more parties, supported by a majority of the MPs, do not always reflect clearly political strenght. For a long time until the recent formation of the Cabinet-Kok, august 1994, confessional parties have continuously participated, the catholic party -KVP- without interruption, the two protestant parties ARP and CHU together or alternately. After the three parties at the end of the seventies merged into one new party -Christen Democratic Appeal (CDA) this party until now always shared responsibility in government. Participation of liberals or social-democrats determined the center-rightish or -leftish character of the government with now and then other smaller parties taking part in government too.

The first years after the war cooperation of the two biggest parties, KVP and PvdA formed the core of many a cabinet Since both parties separated in 1958 center-right cabinets became standard. Social-democrats only participated in 1965 (one year only), from 1973 to 1977, six monthes in 1981-1982, and since 1989.

In the first postwar cabinets some ministers participated without being a member of one of the political parties. This was one of the remnants of the past when the majority of the ministers was not only not recruited from parliament but was a homo novus in politicis in the broadest sense of the word. Especially heads of the departments of Defense, Foreign or Colonial Affairs used to be non-political technocrats, recruited from related sectors in society. Of course since parliamentary democracy was firmly rooted and political parties well established, this phenomenon became exceptional. The last non-party minister was the head of Foreign Affairs in 1952. Of the 68 persons who have been member of one or more cabinets from 1946 to 1967 24 were affiliated to the KVP, 14 PvdA, 10 and 9 to the two protestant parties CHU and ARP, and 7 were members of the liberal W D . Since then until 1994 89 new persons have been incumbents of the ministerial office. Half of this number belonged to the three denominational based parties which in 1980 were integrated in the new CDA. Twenty were liberals, sixteen social-democrats, whereas three new parties counted ten ministers.

Political preferences of civil servants and magistrates. In 1988 the Dutch prime minister stated that concerning recruitment of the toplevel bureaucrats quality came first and political affiliation played no role at all. His statement came after some rumours regarding the supposed privileged position of the Christian-democratic party in this respect. From the 13 highest-ranked civil servants nine belonged to the CDA. This situation, some critics argued, was contrary to

Table 8: Political composition of cabinets and political support in the Second Chamber 1946-1994

Cabinet	KVP	ARP	CHU	PvdA	VVD	Other
	[Number of seats in Sec. Ch.: 100]					
1946-1948 Beel I	32			29		
1948-1952 Drees I/II	32		9	27	8	
1952-1956 Drees III	30	12	9	30		
1956-1958 Drees IV	33	10	8	34		
	[Number of seats in Sec. Ch.: 150]					
1958-1959 Beel II	49	15	13			
1959-1963 De Quay	49	14	12		19	
1963-1965 Marijnen	50	13	13		16	
1965-1966 Cals	50	13		43		
1966-1967 Zijlstra	50	13				
1967-1971 De Jong	42	15	12		17	
1971-1973 Biesheuvel I/II	35	13	10		16	8
1973-1977 Den Uyl	27	14		43		13
		-CDA-				
1977-1981 Van Agt I		49			28	
1981-1982 Van Agt II		48		26		17
1982-1982 Van Agt III		48				17
1982-1986 Lubbers I		45			36	
1986-1989 Lubbers II		54			27	
1989-1994 Lubbers III		54		49		

principles of desirable neutrality of the civil service. Is neutrality in this sense an illusion indeed? The recent investigation into the whole civil service has led to information about political preferences of all civil servants, also of the higher level. Among the governmental officals, all levels included, strongest support is for the Labour Party, the PvdA, with 32%. Sympathy for the Christian-democratic party exists among 28% of the civil servants. The rightwing liberal party WD finds 18% of the civil servants among her adherents, the leftwing liberal D66 13%. On the whole political preferences of the civil service differ considerably of the electorate in 1989: less sympathy for the CDA, somewhat more for the W D , but twice as much for the leftwing liberals.

Table 9: Political preference of (higher) civil servants and electorate (Sec. Ch.)(%)

	Elect. 1986	Elect. 1989	All Civ.s.	Higher	Highest
PvdA	33	32	32	32	22
CDA	35	35	28	24	31
VVD	17	15	18	19	27
D66	6	8	13	18	17
Other Left	3	4	6	6	2
Other Right	4	4	3	2	1
Other	2	2	-		

More discrepancies between civil servants and electorate become visible, when the higher categories of officials are taken apart. Among the highest-ranked bureaucrats the PvdA looses much support, is the CDA represented proportionnally and are the liberals, righand leftwing, strongly overrepesented.[10] There is no question of a dominant position of conservatism in the civil service as such. But among top level civil servants there is an unmistakable inclination toward center-rightism.

As was the case with respect to the civil service, the political signature of the magistrates long time was a well kept secret. Just like the presumed neutrality of bureaucracy, judicial independence is supposed to be incompatible with political preferences. It is therefore not surprising that hardly any information of this nature was available until the inquiries held in 1986. From these inquiries it was made clear that the political affiliation of the magistrates deviates considerably from that of the whole population and consequently, of the MPs. The adhesion of one-third of the judiciary to **Christian**-democratic parties (included some 'splinters') does not deviate too much of the corresponding proportion of seats in the Second Chamber which the 1986-elections had brought to candidates of christian parties. Of the judiciary sample another third voted Conservative, i.e. liberal, and one-fifth Labour. This affiliation deviates rather strongly from strenght of the respective parties in the House, where liberals (conservatives) did not even occupy one-fifth of the seats and the social-democrats in those days about one-third. Among the judges the political

[10] **The picture changes if one distinguishes between the ministries. Officials with leftish sympathies are more frequently to be found at the ministries of Social Affairs, Social Welfare, Housing and Economical Affairs, rarely at Defence. The christian-democratic CDA is underrepresentated at almost all ministries, excepted at Agriculture and Defence. The Liberals are representated best, even overrepresentated at Finance, Traffic and Defence, whereas the left-liberal D66 is successful in all ministries.**

inclination is rather center-rightish than center-left When asked for, the magistrates themselves declared to be in favour of a political mixture of the judiciary, but excluding the extremes. The legal system, in their opinion, does not allow for too strong tensions between extremist personal opinions.

Role perceptions of MPs and bureaucrats. From a research project on elite integration regarding Dutch MPs and senior civil servants, carried out twenty years ago, no basic cleavages were discovered between the two elites.[11] Both elites agreed in a remarkably high degree as to its own and the other's roles. Both placed the policymaking role at the highest priority. As a matter of course views were expressed in the interviews that emphasized different aspects of elite roles. Sometimes the separation of the roles of bureaucracy and politicians got more attention, in other interviews the spokesmen suggested that such roles were mixed or overlapping. The senior civil servants seemed to have taken on roles that were positively linked to the policy process, changing these roles as polity and society were changing. The neutral executor role scored rather highly. The majority of the civil servants thought themselves loyal supporters of their minister irrespective of his party. The researcher's conclusion was that Dutch senior civil servants tend to be non-Weberian in their total perspectives. Notwithstanding different emphases, by and large the role perception of the bureaucrat as involved in policymaking seemed to prevail. And it is the latter, in which, according to Eldersveld c.s., MPs for the most part concur. The MPs seemed especially aware of their different roles, as public representatives, communicators with the masses, supporters of interest and causes, and servants of constituents. However, they were preoccupied most with representative and policymaking roles, with special expertise as a good third role or quality. Convincing relationship between background variables such as age, number of years in the service and role orientations was not found. Factors of at least some relevance are university training and party preference.

Most interesting were the perceptions of MPs and bureaucrats regarding actual influence among elites. Both groups agreed on the overwhelming importance of MP-specialists and ministers. On most other actors, such as trade unions, parties, newspapers, action groups they disagreed more or less. Their mutual perceptions of the role of the civil servants showed »some evidence of basic disagreement, but no real extremeness in their positions«. MPs saw civil servants as more influential than this elite did itself.

One of the major observations which Eldersveld derived from his research in 1973 was that »to speak of consensus or congruence, and dissensus or distance, between Parliament and the bureaucracy is a gross oversimplification* (Eldersveld 1981: 218). It is better instead to underline the heterogeneity of both elite groups. At the same time however it would be a wrong impression to

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[11] **Eldersveld a.o.** (1981), **especially Chapter** 4: **Role Perceptions of Bureaucrats and M.P.'s. Next section is entirely borrowed from this book.**

as their male colleagues. However, several tokens indicate a growing acceptance of and a slow development toward a proportionally more reasonable appointment policy in this respect. High social origins constitute the second factor which contributed largely to reach the depicted elite-positions, but in a less degree. None of the elites is closed. However, in all four groups incumbents from lower social strata remained only a minority. From a comparative perspective of the four elites bureaucracy showed up to be the most, judiciary the lest open to 'social climbers'. The latter elite also deviated somewhat from the other three in religious composition. More catholics have been appointed in the judiciary than in the other elite-positions. With the exception of the higher civil servants the majority is university trained; this has not been changed since Eldersveld described, based on his investigations in the 1970s, university education as the key credential for getting into one of the elite positions. The judiciary excluded, a same development among the academics among the elites is visible: from an overwhelming majority of law-trained to a growing influx of specialists sharing an academic background in economics or political science.

Eldersveld suggested adult socialization experiences after university to be more influential than any other mentioned social background aspect. Among the contributory factors he counted the type of party for MPs, the type of ministry for the bureaucrat, and the associations and interactions which their position and roles in these contexts led to. We do not have comparable evidence of this kind, but from the career patters one may conclude that a considerable proportion of the elites shared similar occupational patterns: in bureaucracy, at the bar, and in universities. Or, in the negative, very few members of the elites came from the large sector of commerce and industry and the like. Very few magistrates seem to be tempted to leave the judiciary and cross over to the political or administrative elites. By contrast quite a number of higher-ranked civil servants choose to continue - for a shorter or longer period - their professional career in other surroundings, to a certain degree in the judiciary, more explicitly in political institutes.

With a view to party-political affiliation of the various elites it is striking that the two groups who -formally- are not appointed according to political dividing lines, the bureaucrats and magistrates, show roughly similar political preferences: more center-rightish than the two strictly political elites. From a radically different professional perspective of neutrality judges in general hold politicians in rather low esteem, whereas there apparently exists strong mutual consensus as to role definitions and perceptions between bureaucrats and MPs.

All mentioned aspects considered, cohesive behaviour patterns are at hand at least between two or three of the four elites. Regarding the fourth elite, the judiciary, is is true that notwithstanding mainly similar social background characteristics, she apparently differs most from the three other depicted elites as to role perceptions. At least, this holds for the sitting magistrates; their

standing colleagues seem to approach the higher civil servants in carrying out policy lines. However, the professionally based monocultural tradition of the judges tends to be counterbalanced through converging political sympathies on the one hand, by means of increased external recruitment of magistrates on the other hand. Similarities between the elites as to the investigated characteristics both the common social background characteristics, as well as professional and political congruence, point out to a solid basis for cohesive and cooperational behaviour.

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