

**Si bo guli wesu,
konfia bo korokoro!**



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For which agenda did you vote in the elections of 27th January 2006?
A comparison of party election programs

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1 Introduction

On January 27th 2006 elections were held for the parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. Fourteen political organizations participated in these elections. In the following matrix, the parties are presented in the order in which they participated in the elections. Below can be found the number of candidates on the list, the number of votes the party received, the percentage of the votes the party received and the number of seats the party obtained in parliament.

List	Name	Number of candidates	Number of votes	Percentage of votes	Number of seats
1	LNPA	12	3.851	5.46%	
2	PNP	22	7.768	11.02%	2
3	"Ban Vota"	8	484	0.69%	
4	M.O.D.P.O.R.	13	242	0.34%	
5	P.A.R.	22	18.187	25.79%	5
6	Democraat	21	2.638	3.74%	
7	PAPPS	7	185	0.26%	
8	MAN	22	13.123	18.61%	3
9	P.L.K.P.	22	4.293	6.09%	
10	E Mayoria Opshon D-C	6	41	0.06%	
11	Forsa Kòrsou	22	6.658	9.44%	2
12	FOL	22	9.582	13.59%	2
13	Pueblo Soberano	22	3.357	4.76%	
14	P100	1	99	0.14%	

Table 1.1: Parties in the order in which they participated in the elections

2 Methodology

This is the second time that the University of the Netherlands Antilles has conducted a study of this nature. The first study was conducted in June 2003 for the elections of the Island Council. Given the number of political parties (fourteen) that participated in elections on January 2006 and the results of the elections, this study will focus on the seven largest parties. It is interesting to investigate whether the quality of the election programs is increasing.

The research question is:

What are the similarities and the differences in the election programs of the seven biggest political parties who participated in the elections of January 27th 2006?

The objective is to contribute to the improvement of future election programs and so increase the interest of voters in the future. The results of this investigation were presented three months after

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the elections, to representatives of the political parties and a panel of experts. The research was finalized with the publication of this article.

In addition to the content of the program the following criteria were used:

- The ideology of the political party
- The vision of the political party on the development of Curaçao
- The financial component of the election program
- The measurability of the program
- The timeframe of the election program

Other criteria used were:

- The languages in which the programs are published
- The channels through which the programs were published
- The way in which the program was obtained
- The way in which the program was made available on the World Wide Web

The results of this study are presented in this article after having discussed them with the political parties on 25th April, 2006. The presented sequence of the parties is in accordance with the percentage of votes they received during the elections of January 27 2006.

3 Theoretical framework

In a representative democracy voters elect the representatives to act on their behalf in parliament. This is done via periodically held elections. In elections political parties present candidates and programs. The voters judge the different options presented and make a choice based on their personal agenda. After the elections, based on the results, parties negotiate a program for the government. The basis for this program are the programs of the parties that received representation. The program for government is translated into the government budget.

This theory is the classical rational approach of elections and representation. It has been challenged by the irrational approach which states that voters, politicians and political parties act rationally but many irrational elements also play a role. Elements such as charisma of politicians and propaganda are of significance. In the Antillean reality, the promises made to (individual) voters also play an important role.

Although the irrational approach has proven to be more accurate in explaining political events, all actors involved in political affairs hold that the rational approach of politics is the norm and that political systems should be rated accordingly.

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4 The comparison

In this section the programs are compared. This is done in three ways:

- General
- Comparison of the programs
- A comparison chapter by chapter

4.1 General

The following matrix is an overview which compares the programs based on the general criteria.

	Number of pages	Website	Way obtained	Available	Date obtained
LNPA	34	www.listaniunpasoatras.com	Website	16 Jan. 2006	18-1-06
PNP	17	www.zuspnp.org	Picked up at the party office	Jan. 2006	20-1-06
PAR	21	www.par.an	website	Jan. 2006	20-1-06
MAN	31	www.partidoman.org	Picked up at the party office	Jan. 2006	26-1-06
PKLP	9	www.plkp.an	Website	Oct. 2005	22-1-06
Forsa Korsou	61	www.forsakorsou.org	Website	Oct. 2005 or earlier	27-1-06
FOI	31	www.frenteobrero.com	Website	Jan. 2006	27-1-06

Table 4.3: Overview of political programs

In the next part the programs are compared based on the following criteria:

- Measurability: Can the results of the programs be measured?
- Ideology: Is the ideology of the party mentioned and explained?
- Vision: Does the program contain a long-term objective?
- Financials
- Timeline

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	Measurability	Ideology	Vision	Financials	Timeline
LNPA	No	Is not clearly mentioned in the document	Restore the family	No	No, but makes a distinction between short term and long term
PNP	No	Christian Democrats	Abo (you)	No	No
PAR	No	Is not clearly mentioned in the document	Step by step. The Capital of the Caribbean	No	No
MAN	No	Socialist	Transition period towards new constitutional reality	No	No
PKLP	No	Labor	Is not clearly mentioned in the document	No	No
Forsa Korsou	No	Pragmatic	Good Governance	Yes	Yes
FOL	No	Socialist	Social security and respect	No	No

Table 4.2: Comparison of programs on criteria

4.2 Description of the program per party

LNPA

The document has a length of twenty-four pages including three pages of the table of contents. In addition to the Introduction, it contains five parts, A through E.

- A. Education and prevention
- B. Education
- C. Recreation
- D. Sport and culture
- E. Plan for a national institute for the family

In the introduction the program states that the family is the corner stone of society and that the family needs to be restored. This is the vision of LNPA. In the short term the party wants to dedicate attention to agendas and institutions dealing with youth and the family.

The chapters in the program are structured in the following manner: Vision, Current Situation, Action Points.

The program is dated 16th January 2006, less than two weeks before the elections. The program is written in Papiamentu. It is unclear if it is available in other languages. This could not be checked on the website in April 2006 because the website was dismantled.

The program is focused. The disadvantage is that the program has white spots.

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PNP

The document has a length of seventeen pages including two pages of the cover and of the table of contents. In addition to the message of the political leader and the vision of the political party, the program consists of the following chapters:

1. Human development
2. Education
3. Economy, Telecommunications and Transport
4. Labor
5. International Relations
6. Justice
7. Public Sector/Government
8. Health Care and Environment
9. Social Development
10. Public Finance

In the introduction the program states that PNP is a Christian Democratic party and that the party is aware that this election is the last one for the Parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. The program states that its focus is human development. To promote this progress, economic development and redistribution of income are essential. Education is essential to create independent citizens. The Antillean economy must not be isolated. Jobs must primarily be created for local youngsters. The islands must have a strategy to globalize. The PNP wants a balanced policy in the area of Justice, meaning that it shall dedicate attention to repression and prevention. The program of the PNP reserves a place for Good Governance. In the area of healthcare the PNP program mentions a national insurance program. Attention is also paid to sustainable development. The fight against poverty must continue and NGO's must play an important role. In the area of Public Finance the program addresses the issue of the national debt.

The chapters are each unique in structure and clearly formulated. However there are no specific points of action.

It is unclear whether the program is available in other languages. This could not be checked via the website in April 2006 because the site was dismantled.

The program has covered all bases; the disadvantage is that the program lacks focus

PAR

The program has a length of twenty-one pages. It is written in the form of a New Years letter. Five steps towards improving our wellbeing together:

1. Grow together
2. Learn together
3. Care together
4. Build together
5. Prosper together

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Five priorities are presented:

1. Improve safety and security
2. Eradicate poverty
3. Assure equal access to education
4. Develop and consolidate economic growth sectors
5. Re-engineer government process and redraft election laws

The program is available in three languages: Papiamentu, Dutch and English. It is a well written program with an unconventional structure, covering all the bases and with no noticeable white spots.

MAN

The document has a length of thirty-one pages including one page of the cover. Additionally the Introduction contains six sections:

1. Finance, economy and labor
2. Justice and security
3. Education, sports, culture and art
4. Health care, social security and the environment
5. Traffic and communication
6. General affairs

In the introduction, the program states the Labor socialist ideology and the fact that this is the last election for that parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. The program is well written. In chapter two the key issues are summarized.

The website of the MAN was no longer available in April 2006.

PLKP

The document has a length of nine pages including one page of the cover. Furthermore the Introduction contains nine sections:

1. General and International Affairs
2. Economic Affairs and Labor
3. Transport and Communication
4. Justice
5. Constitutional Affairs
6. Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
7. Health and Social Development
8. Sustainable Development
9. Public Finance

In the introduction the program states the Labor Ideology and the fact that this is the last election for that parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. The program is a classic list of action points per area.

The program is dated October 2005. It is unclear whether it was available in other languages. The program is compact and easy to read but lacks an overall structure and message.

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Forsa Kòrsou

The document consists of sixty-one pages including the cover and one page of the table of contents. Besides the Introduction and Conclusion, the program consists of eight chapters:

1. General Affairs and International Relations
2. Constitutional Affairs and Personal Affairs
3. Education, Sport and Culture
4. Health Care and Social Development
5. Economic and Labor Affairs
6. Justice, Security and Criminality
7. Traffic and Telecommunications
8. Public Finance

All the chapters start with the vision of the party on the specific area and continue with elaboration on the action points.

The program is very lengthy and misses focus. It is difficult to get the core messages. It is not clear if the program was available in other languages than Papiamentu. During a panel discussion, the political leader made reference to a Dutch summary that was available. The program was available very early in the campaign.

The website of Forsa Kòrsou was still available online in April 2006.

FOL

The program consists of thirty-one pages.

The document has no table of contents or overview. It consists of the following parts:

1. General and International Affairs
2. Cooperation for Development
3. Economic and labor Affairs
4. Internal Affairs
5. Constitutional Development
6. Health and Social Development
7. Sustainable Development
8. Youth
9. Good Governance
10. Justice
11. Education
12. Sport, Culture and Arts
13. Finance
14. Transportation and Communication

It is unclear if the program was available in other languages. The program could be better structured and although it covers all bases it is not easy to get the broader picture.

The website of the FOL was under construction in April 2006.

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4.3 Comparison of the chapters of the program

	LNPA	PNP	PAR	MAN	PLKP	Forsa Korsou	FOL
Constitutional Affairs		Message of the leader	Capital of the Caribbean	Introduction	Constitutional Affairs	Constitutional Affairs and Personal Affairs	Constitutional Development
General Affairs		Public Sector/Government International Relations	Re-engineer government process and redraft election laws	General affairs	General and International Affairs	General Affairs and International Relations	General and International Affairs Internal Affairs Good Governance
Public order and safety	Chapter A: Education and prevention	Justice	Improve safety and security	Justice and security	Justice	Justice, Security and Criminality	Justice
Traffic and transport			Prosper together	Traffic and communication	Transport and Communication	Traffic and Telecommunications	Transportation and Communication
Economic Affairs		Economy, Telecommunications and Transport Labor	Prosper together Develop and consolidate economic growth sectors	Finance, Economy and labor	Economic Affairs and Labor	Economic and Labor Affairs	Economic and labor Affairs Cooperation for Development Sustainable Development
Educations	Chapter B: Education	Education	Learn together Grow together Assure equal access to education	Education, sports, culture and art	Education, Culture, Sport and Youth	Education, Sport and Culture	Education Youth
Culture & Recreation	Chapter C and D: Sport and culture, National institute for the family		Grow together Learn together	Education, sports, culture and art	Education, Culture, Sport and Youth		Sport, Culture and Arts
Social Affairs		Social Development Human development	Care together Eradicate poverty	Health care, social security and the environment	Health and Social Development		
Public Health		Health Care and Environment	Care together	Health care, social security and the environment	Health and Social Development Sustainable Development	Health Care and Social Development	Health and Social Development
Zonification & public housing			Care together Build together				
Finance		Public Finance	Capital of the Caribbean	Finance, Economy and labor	Public Finance	Public Finance	Finance

Table 4.3: Comparison of chapters in the programs

4.4 Comparison per sector

The structure presented in this chapter is often used in government. This structure will be used to compare the program of the political parties per sector.

Chapters	
0	General Affairs
1	Public order and safety
2	Traffic and transport
3	Economic Affairs
4	Educations
5	Culture & education
6	Social Affairs
7	Public Health
8	Zonification & public housing
9	Finance

Table 4.3: Sectors in government

4.4.1 General Affairs

The main topic is the narrowing of the gap between government and the citizens. The quality of the apparatus of government and the service that must be provided to the citizen must be improved. Good service is the right of the citizens. In this context Human Resource Management is advised.

PKLP mentions technical assistance from abroad and especially from within the region.

Forsa Kòrsou mentions that the coalition system must be abolished. This point of view is shared with the PAR. Forsa Kòrsou also advocates that the Netherlands Antilles should obtain more room to maneuver internationally.

PNP states that government should be a facilitator for the other sectors.

PAR mentions a code of ethics and the promotion of Good Governance in all sectors of society. PAR also mentions the constitutional changes: the collaboration with the other islands and with the Netherlands. PAR recommends a master plan for the island.

The FOL points out that the Netherlands Antilles should operate more autonomously from the Netherlands.

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4.4.2 Public order and security

Forsa Kòrsou supports norms and values. The party believes in a repression and prevention programs for crime.

The MAN encourages a better-equipped police force.

PLKP wants the police to be more visible. A short state of emergency is necessary and international assistance is desirable. They urge more attention to schools, along with an effective immigration policy and a well guarded coast.

FOL is for the Rule of Law and is of the opinion that where changes in structure and personnel are necessary, these must take place. More locals should be part of the organizations. The police force should be better equipped. The PAR agrees on this, and the fact that there should be more attention to prevention and re-education.

PAR states that poverty in the neighborhoods should be eradicated in order to prevent crime. A plan for security should be developed and implemented.

PNP is also in favor of a balance between repression and prevention of crime. One of the proposals is that parents of youngsters who commit a crime should be forced to follow a schooling program.

Parties seem to agree on the role of the police force and a balanced approach to the problem of crime, focusing on prevention as well as on oppression.

4.4.3 Traffic and transportation

Forsa Kòrsou states that the sector of transportation is crucial to the development of the islands. The party stands for an open sky policy and for the application of the 'profijt beginsel'.

MAN stands for privatization of the Postal Services. MAN also believes in the open sky policy.

PLKP wants to improve the registration of ships and attention to air traffic control. The 28% share of the telecommunication company UTS should be passed from central government to the government of Curaçao, and the self-regulation of the Bureau for Telecommunication should be finalized.

FOL wants to dedicate more attention to the infrastructure of telecommunications and e-commerce. Moreover, liberalization of the aviation sector and standardization of a policy on media are on the agenda.

The political parties agree on the introduction of an open sky policy and liberalization in this area.

4.4.4 Economy

Forsa Kòrsou believes that the economy must grow. Like PNP for example, the party is of the opinion that the government should be a *facilitator*. The costs of doing business should be lowered. Alliances between companies should be stimulated. Forsa Kòrsou believes in liberalization and privatization. The refinery should be privatized.

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MAN endorses modernization of the economy and a dialog with social partners. The party focuses on the knowledge economy and the role of Curaçao as a logistic hub.

PLKP advocates dialogue. They make proposals to protect laborers from injustice.

PNP supports modernization of the economy.

FOL encourages international treaties to liberate the market. They also believe that diversification of the economy is important. Fiscal incentives for small businesses should be put into place in order to avoid the increase of direct taxes.

PAR wants to create employment in the neighborhood by investing in human capital. In their opinion, the financial sector should be stimulated and innovative. As such, Public- Private Partnerships should be encouraged and the Knowledge Economy should be motivated. They advocate the privatization of the refinery, as well as Curacao becoming the pre-clearance port for the United States.

The majority of the political parties agree on modernizing the economy by liberalizing and focusing on the knowledge economy.

4.4.5 Education

LNPA has the education of the youth as their focal point, in order to improve the quality of life.

PNP mentions that the educational system must be accessible for all citizens and that youngsters must attend school till the age of eighteen, and not till the age of sixteen, which is currently the case.

PAR wants to increase the number school hours. The quality of education and the role of the universities in the area of globalization are two factors mentioned.

MAN refers to the implementation of the innovation processes in education that must take place in order for the system to be effective. There must be more attention paid to the inspection of education.

PLKP also desires the evaluation of the innovation processes. PLKP brings forward the decentralization of government tasks regarding education.

Forsa Kòrsou is of the opinion that the age for school-leaving should be raised from sixteen to eighteen years. There should be regulation for schools educating children from zero to four years old.

FOL is of the opinion that education is a priority and essential to the development of human capital.

There is no consensus regarding the position of the mother tongue Papiamentu, in education.

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There seems to be broad support for increasing school hours, innovation of the educational system and for evaluation of the ongoing modernization.

4.4.6 Culture and recreation

LNPA suggests that more attention must be paid to recreation and sport. The neighborhood fulfills an important role in this context.

PAR also focuses on the neighborhood.

MAN views a culture policy as part of the greater policy for nation building.

Forsa Kòrsou is of the opinion that sport facilities must be improved and that sport and culture must be part of the education program.

FOL proposes that an art institute must be created, since there should be more attention to arts. The private sector must contribute to the development of such a proposal.

There is broad support among the political parties for more sporting activities in neighborhoods.

4.4.7 Social Affaires

LNPA focuses on the family. All relevant government agencies must support the family.

PNP indicates that there must be better coordination between all tracks fighting poverty.

PAR pays attention to the fight against poverty. The neighborhood is its focal point.

MAN underscores the need for general health insurance.

PLKP wants to fight poverty. In this framework they advocate a raise in pensions and the introduction of new legislation for health care.

Forsa Kòrsou supports the health care policy and the accessibility to all citizens of quality care.

FOL is also of the same mind with regard to the eradication of poverty and health care for all.

Fighting poverty remains an area of consensus among the parties, since the elections of 2003.

4.4.8 Public Health

Forsa Kòrsou is of the opinion that proper healthcare is a condition for social and economic development. Access for all is the objective. In this context the general health insurance is presented.

Prevention and a healthy life style are also important issues. In this framework AIDS prevention and drug abuse are mentioned. The party puts forward that the situation can be alleviated by concentrating the specialists in the hospitals. Medicines of generic brands should be more frequently used. The national laboratory should be privatized and a new hospital should be built outside of Otrobanda. Forsa Kòrsou mentions that some of these changes should go in to effect in 2007.

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MAN advocates the prevention of drug abuse by youth. Healthcare must become a priority in the development program.

FOL promotes an effective approach of the healthcare sector. Healthcare must be accessible to all without discrimination. The costs should be reduced by focusing on the causes. The focus should be on the care for patients. The government should have a helicopter view on the sector. FOL also stands for the introduction of the general healthcare insurance, a critical analysis of all financial institutions in the sector and a one class system in the hospital.

PLKP champions a holistic approach to health which includes the educational and social system. Government should set the policy for this sector. Restructuring of the sector is essential. A new hospital is necessary, along with general health care insurance. PLKP also mentions the issue of drug addiction.

There is consensus on improvement of the efficiency of the healthcare sector as well as on the introduction of the general insurance of healthcare and the prevention of drug abuse. There is great support for a new hospital.

4.4.9 Finance

PNP states that there must be means in the budget to implement policies. Therefore, incomes must rise and the expenses must be cut. In the design of the constitutional changes, there must be paid special attention on the monetary policy.

PAR promotes saving and investments, and highlights the national debt as an example of the need to execute policy.

MAN is also concerned about the national debt and requests measures to control government expenditure.

PLKP wants responsible reduction of government expenditure, with attention to the increase in government income and the social ramifications. In this context creating jobs by stimulating the economy is recommended.

Forsa Kòrsou refers to the upcoming constitutional changes, and the role that the Netherlands must assume with regard to the issue of the national debt.

Most political parties agree that the national debt should be handled in the context of the upcoming constitutional changes of 2007.

6 Financial ramification of the programs

Based on the information in the programs it is very difficult to estimate the financial consequences of the propositions. However it is clear that if the national debt is handled, this will improve the financial picture substantially. On the other hand, the financial impact of the introduction of a national health care insurance system is unclear. It is also not clear how the increase of service in the area of law and order will be financed.

7 Discussion with political parties

The results presented above have been discussed with political leaders in a meeting on 25th April 2006 at the University of the Netherlands Antilles. Present at this discussion were the following leaders:

Party	Representation
LNPA	Not represented
PNP	Mr. A. Rosaria
PAR	Not represented
MAN	Mr. C. Cooper
PKLP	Mr. N. Smith
Forsa Kòrsou	Mr. N. Navarro
FOL	Mr. A. Godett

Table 7.3: Representation of parties in the discussion

Added to the panel was journalist Mrs. A. Looman.

The following statements were discussed:

1. Ideology plays no role in elections
2. The voters have no need of a party election program
3. The parties have no need of a party election program
4. The internet plays no role in elections

Ad 1. Ideology plays no role in elections

All political parties, with the exception of Forsa Kòrsou, believe that ideology is still important. They agree that it seems to play a lesser role with the voters. The voters vote for candidates that appeal to them, but ideology remains important. It is the guiding force of the organization. The party may lose course but eventually will get back on track by using the compass of ideology.

Ad 2. The voters have no need of a party election program

The parties agree with this statement. The voters do not demand much in the election programs. They are more interested in T-shirts, caps and other paraphernalia. It is a known fact that in general the population does not like reading.

Ad 3. The parties have no need for a party election program

The political parties consider the political program as very important. Much time and effort goes into it. It is important to align the messages of the candidates of the parties during the election campaign, and the program. The program is also important after the elections, when a coalition must be negotiated.

The political parties do not agree that all the programs look alike and that they are not specific in the manner they are going to achieve the stated objectives, but, they agree that the programs will be ameliorated. They are positive about the initiative of students of the University of the Netherlands Antilles to study the programs and they are sure that this will not only improve the quality of the programs but also the usage of the programs by voters in the future.

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Ad 4. The internet plays no role in elections

The political parties disagree that the internet plays a minor role in elections. More and more households are being connected to the World Wide Web and as such, the political parties agree that government should make an effort to ensure that all households have access to the internet in the near future.

8 Conclusions

All political parties had a program for the elections of 27th January 2006. It is not clear if the party P-100 had a program. Almost all parties covered all the bases in their programs.

The programs are very well structured. This makes it easy for readers to grasp the essence of the documents. This was in some cases very effectively done by an attractive layout. Most of the programs can improve in their structure.

The distribution and availability of the programs was poor. The political parties admit to this and state that this is a consequence of the Christmas holidays.

Half of the websites were dismantled before or in April 2006. This means that the voters can not revisit the programs. It is not clear why this is done.

The overall conclusion is that there is progress but that there is still a lot of room for improvement.

9 Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations are proposed.

The structure of the programs can be improved by making use of better layout. The ideology of the parties should be clearly stated in the introduction of the programs.

Timely distribution of the political programs is essential and programs should be available at least two months in advance.

Websites of political parties should be permanent, given the increasing importance of web presence of organizations.

For which agenda did you vote in the elections of 27th January 2006?

Literature

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