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The Netherlands

Political parties and the democratic mandate : comparing collective mandate fulfilment in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

Louwerse, T.P.

Citation

Louwerse, T. P. (2011, June 22). *Political parties and the democratic mandate : comparing collective mandate fulfilment in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/17723>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Political Parties and the Democratic Mandate

Comparing Collective Mandate Fulfilment
in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

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Typesetting

Typeset using the L^AT_EX Documentation System.

Print

Wöhrmann Print Service

ISBN

978-90-8570-750-9

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Political Parties and the Democratic Mandate

Comparing Collective Mandate Fulfilment
in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 22 juni 2011
klokke 16.15 uur
door

Thomas Pieter Louwverse
geboren te Vlissingen in 1983

Promotiecommissie:

Promotor:

Prof.dr. R.B. Andeweg

Co-promotor:

Dr. H. Pellikaan

Overige Leden:

Prof.dr. J.J.M. van Holsteyn, Universiteit Leiden

Prof.dr. R.A. Koole, Universiteit Leiden

Prof.dr. J.J.A. Thomassen, Universiteit Twente

Dr. W. Lowe, Universität Mannheim

Dr. R. Thomson, Trinity College Dublin

Acknowledgements

The Dutch word for doctoral dissertation is *proefschrift*: in it one has to prove ones competence as a researcher in order to be promoted to doctor. Luckily, there were many people to assist me with this test. I am very grateful to the supervision by my supervisor, prof.dr. Rudy Andeweg, and co-supervisor, dr. Huib Pellikaan. Not only did they initiate the research project which gave me the opportunity to work on this dissertation, they also provided excellent assistance when needed, they allowed me the freedom to make this project my own, and dragged me back to the right path when necessary.

It has been a pleasure to work at the Institute of Political Science in Leiden. This is not just because the people are friendly; they also showed a genuine interest in my research project. The PhD seminar and lunch seminars offered the chance to present my research in a friendly, but critical, environment. I am particularly indebted to Simon Otjes and Cynthia van Vonno, who have commented on many of my papers, and to Niels van Willigen, Floris Vletter, Benjamin Pohl, Marc Uriot and Sergui Gherghina, which whom I shared an office and who were always available to provide advice on a broad range of issues that a young researcher comes across.

The University of Nottingham has gracefully received me as an exchange PhD student in the autumn of 2008. Under the supervision of prof.dr. Steven Fielding and prof.dr. Cees van der Eijk I had the opportunity to improve my familiarity with British politics and the method of computer-assisted content analysis. The help of dr. Will Lowe in mastering these techniques has been invaluable. My stay has been supported financially from the Leiden University Fund (LUF) and the Netherlands Institute of Government (NIG). The latter also supported my participation in a number of conferences, for which I am grateful.

In 2007 I had the opportunity to visit the Debate on the Address in the United Kingdom parliament. It was not only a pleasure to see the parliament in action, rather than analysing Hansard with a computer algorithm. Also, it provided the opportunity to interview prof.dr. Philip Norton and two senior members of parliament, which helped me in reflecting on the British case and how to study it. I thank them for this.

I presented papers based on my research on a number of occasions: Politico-

logenetmaal, Conference Making Parliament Speak, ECPR Joint Sessions and a workshop of the European Network for the Analysis of Political Text (ENAPT). I thank the participants of those events – in particular the discussants – for their remarks, which have influenced this dissertation one way or another.

The support of family and friends is invaluable. For one, telling them about my research project at birthday parties and in the pub genuinely helped me to focus on the main research questions and prepare for critical reception. After all, ‘everybody already knows that parties do not do what they promise’ – at least that is what I was told over and over again by those from outside the discipline. This has always been a refreshing experience. Pursuing a doctorate is more than just a job – at the same time it should not consume you. The love and support from my parents and from Hadewych reminds me of this every day.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On 18 May 2010, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Witney, David Cameron, spoke for the first time in the House of Commons as the nation's prime minister. This was a special day for British politics. After 13 years of Labour government the prime minister was once again a member of the Conservative party. However, television viewers were confronted with an even more remarkable sight. Behind Cameron, the front bench was packed with politicians from not one, but *two* political parties. The May 2010 election had failed to provide one party with an overall majority of seats, which had resulted in this Conservative-Liberal coalition. Deputy prime minister and leader of the Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg, smiled to the camera: he had managed to get his relatively small party into office by forging a coalition government with the Conservatives. It was the first time since the Second World War that a Liberal politician, or politicians from any two parties for that matter, had sat on that bench.

The coalition government of 2010 was the exception to the rule of single-party government in Britain. The United Kingdom is the origin of the aptly-called *Westminster*-style of government. In this system, the electoral system usually provides one party with an overall majority of seats in parliament. That party automatically forms the government, leaving its contenders in opposition. How different is the process of government formation in countries with proportional electoral systems. In the Netherlands, for example, which had elections only a month later, the question was not so much whether one party could form a government, but whether a three-party coalition was at all possible. Usually, lengthy coalition negotiations are necessary to form a government after the elections. These are two different models of democracy in action: majoritarian versus consensus democracy (Lijphart, 1999).

These two political systems are similar in at least one respect: they are representative systems. The system works through the democratic election of popular representatives. These representatives have to ensure that power (*kratos*) is held by the people (*demos*), not directly, but indirectly. From a democratic point of

view, the representative relationship between people and elected politicians is crucially important. The legitimacy of the system depends on this representative link. In contemporary politics, the representative task is preformed by parties, rather than individual politicians. The question whether parties represent the people well, is one of the central questions in the debate on political legitimacy.

One way to establish a representative link between citizens and political parties is by providing political parties with a mandate. This practice is very common in most established democracies. Political parties write election manifestos in which they offer a programme for parliament. Some parties make explicit pledges to its electorate, while the programme of other parties is quite vague. Voters have the opportunity to take these manifestos into account when casting their ballot. If they vote for a party of which they like the manifesto, they increase the chance that parliament and government will take decisions that they like. Thus, the election manifestos are a mechanism through which voters are linked to political parties' parliamentary behaviour. This system is called the party mandate model.

A central requirement in the party mandate model is that parties fulfil their mandate. Usually party mandate fulfilment is studied by looking at individual parties' pledges: have they done what they promised? The mandate model is, however, eventually a system of linkage between elections and parliament. This implies that the system of party competition from which voters make their electoral choice should be similar to the system of party competition in parliament after the election. A party should compete on similar issues and its opinions about these issues should be similar during the elections and in parliament. This study looks at parties' parliamentary mandates, rather than government policy output. This allows for the study of both government and opposition parties' mandates.

1.1 Research questions

This book considers the question of party mandate fulfilment from an institutional perspective. This is apparent in the way the party mandate is studied, namely at the party system level rather than the individual party level. This builds on Pitkin's idea that political representation is not an atomized relationship between a citizen and a representative, but an institutionalized arrangement between many citizens and groups (Pitkin, 1967: 221-222). In practice this means that instead of looking at specific promises of individual parties, I compare the configuration of party preferences and priorities during the elections (the 'electoral space of competition') with the configuration of party preferences and priorities in parliament (the 'parliamentary space of competition'). Thus, mandate fulfilment is defined here as *the level of congruence between the electoral party competition and the parliamentary party competition*.

The institutional focus of this study is also apparent in the explanatory vari-

ables that are studied. The main research question focuses on the explanatory power of the model of democracy: majoritarian democracy or consensus democracy (Lijphart, 1999). The way in which mandates are fulfilled by political parties differs between countries. In majoritarian systems single party government is the rule. Under normal circumstances one party is provided with a majority of seats in parliament¹. This party is 'mandated' to implement its manifesto commitments in government. The other parties are in opposition and have very limited opportunity to influence the government policy output, which has consequences for their parliamentary behaviour. In consensus democracies, characterized by proportional electoral systems, it is quite unusual to find a single party majority government. The proportionality of the electoral system results in a parliament with multiple larger and smaller parties. Coalition governments are forged after the elections. Thus the translation from manifesto to policy output is indirect: the government's policies are a compromise between the coalition parties. These dynamics influence parties' behaviour in parliament. Thus, the way in which parliament and government work differs strongly between different types of political systems. The main research question of this study is whether these different mechanisms of linkage lead to differences in mandate fulfilment: *What consequences do the differences between majoritarian and consensus democracy have for mandate fulfilment?*

The description of mandate fulfilment in majoritarian and consensus democracies includes a second important explanation: the difference between government and opposition parties. In majoritarian democracies, government parties have ample opportunity to implement their mandates both in parliament and in government. The opposition parties, on the other hand, have little alternative but to oppose the government's policies. In consensus democracies, it is the government parties that have to compromise in order to participate in government. Opposition parties do not have to compromise and have incentives to stick to their own policy programme, because there are usually multiple opposition parties. Thus, the dynamic of mandate fulfilment of government and opposition parties differs between consensus and majoritarian democracies. The question *whether this leads to different levels of mandate fulfilment for government and opposition* is the second research question of this study.

Has mandate fulfilment changed over time? Although the period since the Second World War has been one of stability for most Western democracies, there have been many societal changes that have affected how politics is practised. Whereas in the past political parties had more or less stable bases of support, nowadays many voters change their party preference between elections or even decide what to vote in the polling booth. Parties themselves have also changed, from mass organizations that catered to a specific subsection of society to professional institutions that aim to catch as many voters as they want. *Has this resulted*

¹ Although there are exceptions, such as the practice of minority government in Canada, which has become rule rather than exception in recent years.

in lower levels of mandate fulfilment?

The last set of explanations of the variation in mandate fulfilment points at the extent to which issues matter to parties and the extent to which they take extreme positions on issues. If issues matter a lot to parties, one could expect that their position in the parliamentary competition will be very close to their position in the electoral competition. Issues can be said to matter for a party if they talk a lot about it (high issue saliency) or when they take an extreme policy position on the issue. The last research question is thus *To what extent do differences in issue saliency and policy position extremism explain differences in mandate fulfilment?*

1.2 Societal and scientific relevance

Most people will say that they do not need a book-length analysis to answer the question whether parties do what they promise. The answer is plain and simple: no². While a majority of respondents of the 2005 British Election Study believes that the party they voted for does fulfil its promises, only few believe that the other major party honours its electoral commitments³. The Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (2006) paints a similar picture: only 7% (fully) agrees with the statement that ‘Politicians keep their promises’, while 45% (fully) disagree (almost 50% choose for the ‘agree nor disagree’ option). Thus, popular belief in party mandate fulfilment is low.

Previous studies into the party mandate, which usually look at fulfilment of electoral pledges by governments, suggest that all is not so bad. Government parties manage to translate about 60% to 80% of their pledges into government policy (Petty and Collette, 2009). Even 20% to 40% of opposition parties’ pledges are translated into policy (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007). This discrepancy calls for an explanation. Are people simply too negative about party mandate fulfilment? Or does the way in which the party mandate is studied paint too positive a picture of mandate fulfilment? Below I will argue that existing studies are limited in a number of respects. This study offers a different approach to the party mandate which may shed some light on the discrepancy between popular belief and the scientific study of the party mandate.

From a societal perspective it is perhaps most important to learn how pledge fulfilment can be improved. If we better understand how institutions influence mandate fulfilment, the organization of political systems might be adjusted to create optimal circumstances for pledge fulfilment. For example, if mandate fulfilment would be higher in majoritarian democracies, countries might opt for a

²This is at least my own experience when explaining the nature of my research to people outside of academia. Naurin (2007) reports to have had similar experiences.

³The percentage of Conservative voters who believe that the Conservatives do not honour their commitments is 31.9%, for Labour voters the percentage who believe that Labour do not honour their commitments is 46.6% (British Election Study, 2005).

more majoritarian type of democracy. These insights have become increasingly important, because trust in politics has declined in many Western democracies. Although people's support for the idea of democracy is still high, they are not particularly impressed by political parties and politicians. If particular institutional arrangements can foster party mandate fulfilment, this can also help to ensure public trust in politics. At least it is important to know what explains mandate fulfilment, because sometimes democratic reforms are proposed arguing that they lead to more responsible parties and politicians, while in fact little is known about these effects.

The scientific relevance of this study is its contribution to the understanding of the party mandate at an institutional level and its functioning under different models of democracy. The approach taken here offers a more inclusive study of parties' mandates than existing studies provide, by comparing the structure of the electoral and parliamentary party competition. Where other studies have looked at policy output, this study looks at parties' parliamentary behaviour. This helps to understand the *process* of political representation. It also offers the possibility to look at the mandate of opposition parties, which have largely been ignored in the study of the party mandate thus far. Differences between majoritarian and consensus democracies have been central to many studies of political representation. Some authors find that consensus democracies outperform majoritarian democracies when it comes to the link between citizens and politicians (Powell, 2009), while others point at the merits of majoritarian democracy in terms of government party pledge fulfilment (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007; Klingemann et al., 1994). A third group of authors does not find many differences between the two types of systems (Blais and Bodet, 2006; Golder and Stramski, 2010). This calls for clarification and further study. The approach taken here will bring new evidence to the scholarly debate on the difference between consensus and majoritarian democracy. In addition to its contribution to the theoretical debate on the party mandate, this study will also contribute to the method of studying party positions and mandate fulfilment in particular, by applying recently developed content analysis techniques to the question of the party mandate (Slapin and Proksch, 2008).

1.3 Outline of the book

The first two chapters of this book outline the theoretical background of this study. The second chapter focuses on the conceptual understanding of the party mandate model. It presents the party mandate model as a theory of political representation. The main objections to the party mandate from a normative and rational choice perspective are discussed. This study is concerned with one particular aspect of the mandate model: the extent to which parties fulfil their mandates. Research into this question can be subdivided into two approaches: the pledge and saliency approach. These approaches offer partial insight into the

mandate, but a few arguments can be tabled against these approaches. The application of spatial theory to the question of the party mandate is proposed as an alternative approach. Spatial modelling has been extensively used before in the study of party issue positions and offers an attractive alternative to the pledge-focused studies that dominate current studies into the party mandate.

Chapter three discusses the hypotheses of this study: how can we explain variation in mandate fulfilment? The main explanatory factor is the type of democracy: majoritarian or consensus democracy. Contrary to the findings of previous studies, I hypothesize that a consensus democracy shows higher levels of mandate fulfilment than a majoritarian democracy. This is the result of the different conceptualization of and approach to the party mandate that is taken in this study. Three other explanations of variation in mandate fulfilment are also tested. First, the difference between government and opposition is explored. It is expected that the effect of being in government on mandate fulfilment depends on the type of democracy. Secondly, changes in party mandate fulfilment over time are studied. Based on the literature on the changing role of political parties, I formulate the expectation that party mandate fulfilment has dropped over the last fifty years. A third set of explanations is sought at the party level: whether issues that parties find very important or that they have strong feelings about make them fulfil their mandate better.

The methodological issues of this study are explored in chapter four. In the first part of this chapter I outline the basic research design involving two cases: the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In each of the two countries six elections and subsequent parliaments were selected. In the second part of the chapter I explore the techniques to measure the congruence of the structures of electoral and parliamentary party competition. In particular the methods to estimate party issue positions are discussed. In the third part of this chapter I describe how the chosen method has been applied to the two countries and how information on parties' issue priorities and issue positions has been used to construct spatial representations of party competition.

The four remaining chapters provide the empirical results for each of the research questions. In each of the chapters I look at mandate fulfilment in two respects. Firstly, congruence of parties' issue priorities: whether they talk about similar issues in their election manifesto and in parliament. Secondly, congruence of parties' issue positions, that is whether they say the same things in both arena's. The fifth chapter discusses the main research question: whether there is a difference in mandate fulfilment between majoritarian and consensus democracies. In chapter six, I focus on the difference between government and opposition parties. Chapter seven provides a detailed historical analysis of variation of mandate fulfilment through time. In chapter eight, the party-level explanations of issue saliency are put to the test.

Chapter 2

Towards a spatial approach to the party mandate

Most representative democracies rely on political parties for policy representation. Voters have a say in decision-making by voting for a party the policies of which they support. This mandate theory, mandate model or 'doctrine of responsible party government' enables citizens to influence policy (Ranney, 1954; Thomassen, 1994). The voters' decision who to elect as their representative is also a choice between different policy programs. The basic idea of the mandate model is straightforward: voters make a choice between substantially different policy alternatives put forward by parties. Parties are expected to try to fulfil their pledges in parliament ('the parliamentary mandate') or in government ('mandate for government'). This system provides policy linkage between voters and parties.

2.1 Political representation: linking citizens and representatives

The party mandate model is a model of political representation. Representation is a multi-faceted concept: the short definition of representation as 'to make present again' does not greatly enhance our understanding of it. In her seminal book on the concept of representation, Hannah Pitkin (1967) offers four perspectives on representation: formal representation, symbolic representation, descriptive representation and representation as 'substantively acting for'. In politics, she argues, the latter is the most fruitful perspective. Someone is called a political representative not merely as a result of formal procedures (formal representation), or because he symbolizes something (symbolic representation) or because he shares characteristics with a group of people (descriptive representa-

tion). Political representation is defined by the action it involves. A good representative is not he who followed the electoral procedures conscientiously, but he who acts in a proper way. Naturally, the question what the 'proper way to act' is has been the focal point of many debates, as will be outlined below.

Rehfeld (2006) criticizes Pitkin's focus on representation as 'substantive acting for'. He argues that one must distinguish between being a representative in the formal sense and acting as a good representative substantially. Someone may be a bad representative in substantive terms, but a representative nonetheless. According to Rehfeld, Pitkin is too radical in her rejection of formal accounts of representation. While Rehfeld's conceptual clarification is helpful, it does not affect Pitkin's core argument. Her argument is that the substantive dimension of representation tells us more about the function(ing) of political representation than the formal dimension. The question here is not so much whether certain people *are* representatives, but how they *substantively act* as representatives.

What is the proper way for a representative to act substantively? The debate on this question has focused on the linkage between citizens and representatives. The question was whether constituents should *instruct* their representatives and tell them exactly *how* they want to be substantively represented, or whether they should *entrust* this to the judgement of their representatives (Pitkin, 1967). This question lies at the heart of the *mandate-independence* controversy.

The 'mandate' position is held by those who believe that the represented should be able to provide their representatives with a (legally) binding set of instructions (Manin, 1997). The idea is that the represented should have control over their representative. This can either be achieved by having the right to recall him or by binding him legally to a set of instructions. This mandate would not originate from the representatives, as is common today with the practice of writing election manifestos, but from the represented. The representative receives instructions from the represented. In parliament, the representative would be bound to these instructions: there is limited room for compromise - if the representative would want to go beyond his mandate, he would have to go back to his constituents. One example is the practice in the Dutch United Provinces in the 17th and 18th century, which Mill cites as a typical example of delegation (Mill, 1862). The delegates to the States-General were not only provided with detailed instructions, "they had to refer back to their constituents, exactly as an ambassador does to the government from which he is accredited" (Mill, 1862: 233).

Proponents of *trusteeship* can be found on the 'independence' side of the controversy. They argue that no form of mandate or instruction should be given, because every representative should represent the interests of the represented, the public or the nation as he judges best (Eulau et al., 1959). Furthermore, it is argued that parliament should be a deliberative assembly, a place where different arguments are outlined and debated, where people might change their minds if they are convinced by the rationality of other arguments, and where consensus is sought (Pettit, 2009). It is argued that parliament cannot be a delib-

erating assembly if everyone is bound to a mandate. The trustee view originates in the pre-democratic parliaments of Great Britain (Judge, 1999: 47) and rests on the idea that parliament should not only be “an expression of various opinions, interests and grievances within society, it should also try to reconcile them in policies which would serve the best interests of the nation” (Birch, 1964: 28). Edmund Burke was a strong defender of this position and his works are still often cited in defence of representatives’ independence (most famously his Speech to the Electors of Bristol, 1774). J.S. Mill put forward some very different views on representation from Burke, but agreed with him that by binding representatives to pledges constituents “can reduce their representative to their mere mouth-piece” (Mill, 1862: 234). Leibholz went even further, by not only rejecting the imperative mandate, but arguing that it does not constitute representation at all:

The idea of an imperative mandate thus contradicts the very nature of representation.

(Leibholz, 1966: 73, my translation)¹

This quote points at the basic problem of the mandate-independence controversy: both sides tend to exaggerate the extremism of the other side’s position and stress that only their approach is really compatible with the concept of representation. In a sense, either side is both right and wrong. They are wrong in their *reductio ad absurdum* of their opponents’ arguments, but correct to point out that their position highlights essential parts of the concept. However, both sides destroy the concept of representation by extrapolating the part that they got right to the whole of the concept (Pitkin, 1967: 151). Representation is making something present which is, however, literally not present. One cannot represent when ignoring the opinions of the represented completely (then one does not make present what is not present), nor can one represent by exactly reproducing their instructions (because then the represented is in fact present). Contemporary accounts of trusteeship thus tend to argue that trusteeship (‘interpretive responsiveness’) does require authorization (Pettit, 2009: 75), while many proponents of delegation no longer support an imperative mandate, at least not in the context of political representation (Ranney, 1954). In addition, it has been pointed out that the delegate/trustee debate really collapses three conceptual distinctions of the aims of a representatives, their sources of judgement and responsiveness to electoral sanction (Rehfeld, 2009).

2.2 The party mandate model

Political parties have become very important in most democracies. Contemporary government usually is *party* government (Castles and Wildenmann, 1986;

¹“Der Gedanke eines imperativen Mandates widerstreitet hiernach ganz allgemein dem Wesen der Repräsentation.”

Blondel and Cotta, 2000). As a result, the question of mandate or independence does no longer play just between voters and their representative, but also between representatives and their parties (Pitkin, 1967: 147). Members of parliaments are in many respects more a representative of their party than directly a representative of their constituents: after all, most voters cast their ballot for a party rather than for a person (Thomassen and Andeweg, 2007; Van Holsteyn and Andeweg, 2008). The importance of parties can be observed in parliamentarians' voting behaviour: most representatives follow the party line when voting. Although many representatives say that they preserve the right to vote differently concerning issues of conscience, the extent to which they actually do 'rebel' against their party line varies strongly between countries (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2007; Judge, 1999; Norton and Cowley, 1996). Many constitutions resolve that representatives are not to take instructions (from their constituents or parties) when casting their vote (the so-called 'free mandate'). In practice, this constitutional rule is combined with party discipline and rather detailed party manifestos. The free mandate still exists, but only in the sense that a representative will in most countries not lose his seat when he crosses the floor. A member of parliament who regularly opposes his or her party should be prepared to pay a price in terms of political influence and a smaller chance of re-election. Therefore, the free mandate is the exception rather than the rule: under 'normal' circumstances a party observes its manifesto and an individual representative follows his party. Even if parties do in reality not always behave in a unified manner, analysing representation in modern (European) democracies in terms of parties does more justice to their roles than to analyse representation in terms of individual politicians.

The party mandate model is an attempt to overcome the mandate-independence controversy by taking the role of the party into account. (Miller and Stokes, 1963: 45). Parties are generally organized around a policy programme or an ideology². This provides an opportunity for voters to elect a party representative with whom they agree: if parties present policy programmes before the election, voters vote for the party whose programme they prefer and parties pursue their programmes in parliament or government, the party mandate provides linkage between the preferences of the electorate and the behaviour of parties (Ranney, 1954; Thomassen, 1994). If there are only two parties, one of them will win the election and form a government: in such a case there is linkage between voters preferences and government action³ (Ranney, 1954).

By presenting a policy program before the election, parties commit them-

²This is however not strictly necessary for the mandate model to work. As long as parties present a policy programme before an election and they stick to this programme in parliament, voters have information on what these parties want and can use this information for their vote.

³In section 2.2.2 the objections to the interpretation of the party mandate model as a system of linkage between citizens and government policy will be discussed. These objections are especially important when more than two parties compete in elections, which is a rather common occurrence in contemporary European democracies.

selves to particular actions. Parties are not instructed to pursue particular policies, but supported if they do. Thus, the party mandate model fits neither the 'mandate' nor the 'independence' position: parties are not bound to instructions from their constituents, nor are they completely free to do whatever they want. Parties decide on their own manifesto. They have complete freedom of what (not) to promise. However, when a promise has been made, parties are expected to keep it.

The model places on the party and the individual representative the obligation to act according to their electoral mandate (Schedler, 1998). Mandates that are not observed are retrospectively 'meaningless' (Schedler, 1998: 194-5), at least in terms of policy congruence⁴. However, the party mandate model does not propose that the party mandates should be *legally* binding. The party mandate is a vehicle of representation, instead of a legal contract. It gives parties the freedom to implement their policy commitments in a way that they seem fit, as long as they honour their commitments. No legal action can be taken if parties fail to fulfil their mandate: the ultimate sanction is electoral loss at the next elections⁵ (Ranney, 1954).

Proponents of trusteeship might object to the party mandate model because it limits parties' freedom to act as they please in parliament. Indeed, the party mandate model does offer voters a chance to choose between policies, an opportunity that is not available in the strict *trustee* role conception. It is concurrent with Mill's argument that while no man of conscience should surrender his own judgement, "the electors are entitled to know how he means to act; what opinions, on all things which concern his public duty, he intends should guide his conduct" (Mill, 1862: 245). When voting for someone because you trust him to be an able and competent member of parliament, it is hard to imagine, especially in times of general education, that this trust is not at least partly dependent on the parties' (or candidate's) policy stances (Budge and Hofferbert, 1990: 113). Voting should not be regarded solely as the transformation of private opinions into a collective opinion; neither should policy matters be excluded from the act

⁴Keeping promises is often also regarded as a moral obligation (Schedler, 1998: 192); parties are expected to stick to their electoral contracts just as private citizens are expected to keep their civil contracts. This moral obligation is, however, not necessarily a part of the doctrine of the party mandate: parties are primarily expected to keep their promises for the sake of responsible party government, not because it is generally the right thing to do.

⁵This points to a paradox in the party mandate model: it involves primarily *ex ante* controls (e.g., voting for a party with a particular manifesto: prospective voting), but without the threat of *ex post* controls these promises will probably not be enacted upon (e.g., punishing a party at the next election if it does not fulfil its mandate: retrospective voting). In reality, these two control mechanisms are combined in a single election. The voters must thus judge parties' records as well as the prospects parties offer (Manin, 1997; Mansbridge, 2003). This can lead to dilemma's for voters who for example do not like the record of the incumbent party nor the policy plans of the opposition party. Voters will thus have to weigh the importance of punishment and policy plans respectively. While this is not necessarily a problem for all voters in all elections, the 'dual' function of elections can blur the function of the electoral choice (Manin, 1997: 183). Van der Eijk and Franklin (2009: 208) show that in practice most voters vote prospectively.

of voting.

Contemporary political parties and politicians portray their activities in terms of the mandate model. Manifestos get longer and more detailed and parties in and outside parliament remain rather coherent and disciplined (Green-Pedersen, 2007; Thomassen and Andeweg, 2007; Norton and Cowley, 1996; Norton et al., 1996). If parties support mandate theory, they should observe their promises. There is no theory of representation which involves making pledges and not observing them.

2.2.1 Ex ante and from above

What the party mandate means in terms of the mandate-independence controversy can be clarified by looking at Andeweg and Thomassen's typology of political representation (2005). This typology consists of two dimensions: the control mechanism and the direction of representation (see table 2.1). The control mechanism looks at how the represented can make sure that the representatives do what they want. The idea stems from the application of the principal-agent framework to politics (Strøm, 2003; Lupia, 2003). In this framework, the relationship between representative and represented is described as an act of delegation from principal (represented) to agent (the representative). However, once the act of delegation has occurred the principal has no direct control over the agent's actions. For example, once a member of parliament is chosen a voter cannot force him to vote one way or another in parliament. The result might be that the agent acts in a way contrary to the demands or interests of the principal. To avoid this *agency loss*, the principal can use multiple strategies to control the agent. Some of these strategies have mainly to do with the selection of the agent. As this happens before the act of representation, these are called *ex ante* control mechanisms. Alternatively, a principal can try to control the agent by monitoring him and if necessary (threaten to) not re-elect him. As these strategies are employed after the representative act, these are called *ex post* control mechanisms.

The direction of representation indicates who takes the initiative in the representative relationship (Esaïasson and Holmberg, 1996; Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005). In representation from below, voters have particular policy preferences; it is the task of the representatives to translate these views into party and government policy. One critique of this model is that many citizens do not have given (exogenous) policy preferences. They rather develop views in response to the proposals put forward by representatives (endogenous preferences). This is called representation from above: here parties enter the political arena with particular policy preferences and seek support from voters. Voters do not need to have exogenous policy preferences, but they can develop their preferences in response to what the parties put forward. Voters make a choice between competing representative claims (Saward, 2006: 314). By making these representative claims, parties constitute the representative relationship (Saward, 2006: 305).

Table 2.1: *Modes of Political Representation*^a

Direction	Control mechanism		
		<i>Ex Ante</i>	<i>Ex Post</i>
	<i>From above</i> <i>From below</i>	Authorization Delegation	Accountability Responsiveness

^a Source: Andeweg and Thomassen (2005)

Andeweg and Thomassen (2005) have combined control mechanism and direction into a typology of the modes of political representation (see table 2.1). This results in four modes of political representation: authorization, accountability, delegation and responsiveness. The party mandate model is essentially a form of authorization: parties take the initiative and present distinct policy programmes to voters (from above) who vote for the party of which they like the manifesto best (ex ante). Although the party mandate model could also work when voters have a large say in the composition of the party manifestos (from below), this is not necessary for the model to provide linkage. In addition, most parties do provide some opportunity for party members to decide on the manifesto, but this is generally limited. Thus, the party mandate model is an ex ante control mechanism which is directed from above: parties put forward programmes before elections, which essentially gives voters a choice between policies.

2.2.2 Objections to the party mandate model

The party mandate model works as an ex ante selection mechanism: voters support parties with which they agree, while parties make and keep electoral promises. Whether this model works in practice is an empirical question. However, some have argued that the model cannot work in practice, because it is logically incoherent. From a logical perspective, the main problem with the mandate theory is that even if voters and parties act as they should, the party mandate is not necessarily the “people’s policy mandate” (Thomassen, 1994). Two arguments from social choice theory have been put forward in this respect: the Ostrogorski-paradox and Arrow’s General Possibility Theorem. The former highlights the problems of party representation, while the latter provides major objections to that idea that individual preferences can always be translated into a social preference in a democratic way.

The Ostrogorski-paradox is essentially the problem of parties presenting ‘fixed menus’ to voters (Rae and Daudt, 1976). Parties offer policy programs which consists of combinations of specific policy proposals. However, if one party wins the election, this does not guarantee that a majority of voters also agrees with each policy proposal of that party. The paradox can best be explained by looking at the example in table 2.2. There are four groups of voters: groups

Table 2.2: *An example of the Ostrogorski paradox*

	Policy area 1	Policy area 2	Policy area 3	Party Choice
<i>Voters A (20%)</i>	X	Y	Y	Y
<i>Voters B (20%)</i>	Y	X	Y	Y
<i>Voters C (20%)</i>	Y	Y	X	Y
<i>Voters D (40%)</i>	X	X	X	X
<i>Electorate policy preference</i>	X	X	X	

A, B and C each consist of 20% of the vote while 40% of the voters belong to group D. For each of three policy areas the voters prefer party X's or party Y's position. For example, voters in group A support party X's position on policy 1, and party Y's position on the other policy areas. It is assumed that the voters are rational and that all voters find all policy themes equally important. Voters in group A will vote for party Y, because they agree with that parties' policies two out of three times. Following this reasoning, the electors in groups A, B and C should vote for party Y and the members of group D should vote for party X. Thus, party Y wins 60 % of the vote and party X 40%. However, when looking at voters' support for parties' positions on each of the policy areas, one can easily see that a majority supports party X's position on each of the policy areas. Party representation can thus distort popular support for separate proposals.

This distortion is not present when all proposals can be subsumed into a single policy dimensions on which all voters agree, or, in other words, if preferences are 'single-peaked' (Black, 1958; Thomassen, 1994; Downs, 1957). In such a case all voters agree that support for party X's position on policy 1 implies supporting its position on policies 2 and 3 as well. The existence of a single overarching policy dimension is subject to debate (McDonald et al., 2007). There is considerable evidence that voters are able to place themselves and political parties on such a dimension: the Left-Right dimension (Benoit and Laver, 2006). However, this does not mean that the Left-Right dimension incorporates all issues without error. Even a voter who places himself on the exact same spot on the Left-Right dimension as the party of his choice will most probably disagree with this party on a number of issues. Parties offer package deals; this limits the voters' choice. Therefore, policy voting in practice is not expressing unlimited support for the whole manifesto of a party, but a comparative assessment of party manifestos. A politician is simply wrong when he says: "This proposal was in our manifesto, we won the elections, so this is what the people want". He is even wrong when saying: "This proposal was in our manifesto, so this is

what our voters want". One can only say that voters for a particular party did not oppose the proposal in question so much that they voted for another party or abstained.

Arrow's General Possibility theorem states that there is no decision rule that makes for a proper translation of individual preferences into a collective preference ordering, at least no procedure that complies with four basic (democratic) criteria (Riker, 1982; Arrow, 1963):

1. Universal Domain: All possible combinations of preferences should be allowed in the decision-making procedure. Individuals must be free to rank the alternatives as they like. The decision rule (electoral procedure) must come up with a collective ordering of preferences for each combination of individual preferences (decision set). The last criterion is sometimes separately mentioned as 'Collective Rationality'.
2. Pareto Optimality: If all individuals prefer alternative x to alternative y , the outcome of the procedure must be that x is socially preferred to y .
3. Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives: The social choice between two alternatives should not be influenced by a third alternative.
4. Non-dictatorship: The social welfare function should not be dictatorial. There should not be one individual whose choice always determines the outcome of the decision-making procedure, regardless of the preferences of all others.

Arrow's General Possibility Theorem states that these conditions are inconsistent if more than two alternatives exist. One well-known example is Condorcet's *vote paradox* (Riker, 1982). In this example the simple pairwise majority rule is used: if a majority prefers an alternative x to any other alternative, this alternative x is socially preferred. This decision rule meets the criteria of non-dictatorship (there is not one individual who determines the outcome under all circumstances), pareto optimality (if all individuals prefer x to y , a majority supports x and is thus socially preferred) and the independence of irrelevant alternatives (the social choice between x and y does only depend on people's preferences of x and y). However, the criterion of the Universal Domain is violated. For example, when voters' preferences are ordered as in figure 2.3 the pairwise majority decision rule does not produce a collective ordering of preferences. No alternative defeats both other alternatives in a pairwise vote, for example alternative x is socially preferred to alternative y , but not to alternative z . This is the classic example of a voting cycle, where each alternative is defeated by at least one other alternative.

Arrow has shown that no decision rule can meet all four criteria. From this it follows that no electoral system is the 'best' or 'fairest' translation from votes to seats. This means that if a party 'wins' the election, it wins the election under the current electoral system. Even if the Ostrogorski-paradox is not present (for

Table 2.3: *An example of a voting cycle*

	Voters		
	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
<i>1st preference</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>y</i>
<i>2nd preference</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>z</i>
<i>3rd preference</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>x</i>

example if all party voters wholeheartedly and without exception support the whole manifesto), the parties' policies are supported by the people according to the rules of the current electoral system. Except for a pure two-party majority system, the electoral system may influence the outcome: when employing a different, equally 'fair and democratic' system the result may be different (Riker, 1982: 21-113).

The Ostrogorski paradox and Arrow's theorem do not apply to all patterns of individual preferences. If policy alternatives (or parties) can be placed in a low-dimensional policy space, the dimension-by-dimension median position will in many cases be preferred by the majority of voters (Tullock, 1967; Adams and Adams, 2000). Tullock (1967) has argued that Arrow's theorem does not cause any trouble in most real-world situations. Voting cycles do not occur in many cases – especially with many voters and few choices – because political competition can often be structured in a low-dimensional space (Tullock, 1967). The important contribution of the Ostrogorski paradox and Arrow's theorem is *not* that party representation and direct democracy are necessarily flawed in every single case, but that there *could* be a problem. As a result, the mandate of the election winner cannot be simply equated with 'the will of the people'.

These criticisms are particularly consequential for the party mandate as a 'mandate for government', as described in the 'doctrine of responsible party government' (Ranney, 1954). In this version of the party mandate model, voters can choose between two parties, which results in one of these parties winning the elections and forming the government. However, the Ostrogorski paradox learns that the fact that one of these parties wins the elections does not necessarily mean that a majority of the population supports all of the winning party's pledges. They might even reject all of them. Thus, the mandate cannot be used as policy linkage between the majority of the people and government policy. It can however still function as a mechanism to enhance the representative linkage between parliamentary parties and voters. In this version, the party mandate gives voters a choice between parties and a mechanism to control their representatives: the 'parliamentary mandate'. This does not guarantee that parties' policies are actually supported by a majority of their voters, but the electorate can use them as an aid to making their electoral choice.

It should be noted that the alternatives of (party) policy representation – dir-

ect democracy or (party) representation without aiming at policy linkage – do not solve the problems put forward in the Ostrogorski paradox and Arrow's theorem. Direct democracy suffers from exactly the same problem as representative democracy when it comes to Arrow's General Possibility Theorem. Furthermore, voting as the choice between policy packages may result in more coherent policies than direct democracy does, for the latter does not offer any guarantee as to the coherence of the resulting policies. The public may vote in favour of lower taxes and higher public spending, for example, blaming politicians for high budget deficits. The other alternative, no policy representation, is equally unattractive and also implausible. Voting for people on the basis of trust may just as well involve voting on policy issues, because people tend to trust politicians with similar opinions better (Miller and Listhaug, 1998).

The outcome of the vote is not the 'will of the people', but it shows voters' support for parties with particular electoral programmes. After all, voting does require at least some effort (abstaining is easier). Therefore, the act of expressing support for a party implies at least some sense of support for what a party proposes. At the very least, elections do grant voters the possibility to reject some policies in advance. The election outcome is not 'the will of the people', but at least voters knew and accepted that their party of choice was going to pursue particular policies.

A different attempt to mitigate the problems put forward by social choice theory, the Median Mandate, acknowledges that only rarely a single party does win a majority of the vote (a government mandate). McDonald and Budge (2005) argue that voters do influence policy in another way, namely by determining the median position. The median position on a single-peaked policy scale is the only position preferred by a majority over all other positions: the median voter theorem (Black, 1958: 18). This means that the position of the median voter and, by implication, the party of the median voter is the only justifiable outcome from the perspective of democratic majority rule. If the median legislator is very close to the median voter on this policy scale, legislation will reflect the median voters' opinion, for the parliament will adopt legislation if it is supported by the median legislator. McDonald and Budge show that this is often the case: the median voter is close to the median legislator and to the government (for the government also needs the support of the median legislator). Of course this is only true if the median position is occupied by the same party for all policy dimensions or if all policy dimensions are essentially the same (the Left-Right dimension), otherwise there would be different median positions for different issues. McDonald and Budge are convinced this is rarely the case (McDonald and Budge, 2005: 43).

An essential feature of the Median Mandate theory is that it depicts mandates not as lists of pledges by political parties, but as positions on policy dimensions. This is different from the government mandate, which does not require voters to compare manifestos in a single framework: voters will vote for a manifesto they like best and whichever manifesto it is, will be fully implemented by the party

that wins the election. The Median Mandate argues that voters' opinions are taken into account, because the median legislator will reflect the median voter's position on a policy dimension. For the Median Mandate to be effective, party pledges/manifestos are to be positioned on a policy scale. The study of mandate fulfilment should thus also focus on parties positions on policy dimensions, before and after elections.

Whether mandates are based on the majority rule or on the median voter, any form of mandate requires parties to stick to their manifesto: "Parties are *supposed* to define the policy alternatives for electors and then to advance these in government or parliament. If they did not, decision-makers would act outside the frame of reference used by voters, and, therefore, popular preferences would not have a 'necessary connection' with policy output" (McDonald and Budge, 2005: 192, emphasis in original). Thus, McDonald and Budge *assume* that promises are in fact implemented. This is in fact one of the three *empirical requirements* that need to be fulfilled for the party mandate to work.

2.3 Does the party mandate model work?

The party mandate model works if three requirements are met (Thomassen, 1994). First, parties must offer clear and competing policy manifestos. If not, voters have no choice. Second, voters must make their electoral choices based on policy issues. If not, their vote is meaningless in terms of policy; their support for a particular party does not mean that they also support that party's policies. Third, parties must fulfil their policy mandate. Otherwise, what is decided in parliament is different from what voters intended to be decided.

2.3.1 Differences between parties

The first step in the mandate model consists of parties presenting distinct policy manifestos. If parties are all very similar, there is not much choice. This question is generally studied by looking at the content of party manifestos. By comparing party manifestos, one may find out whether they are all the same or actually rather different.

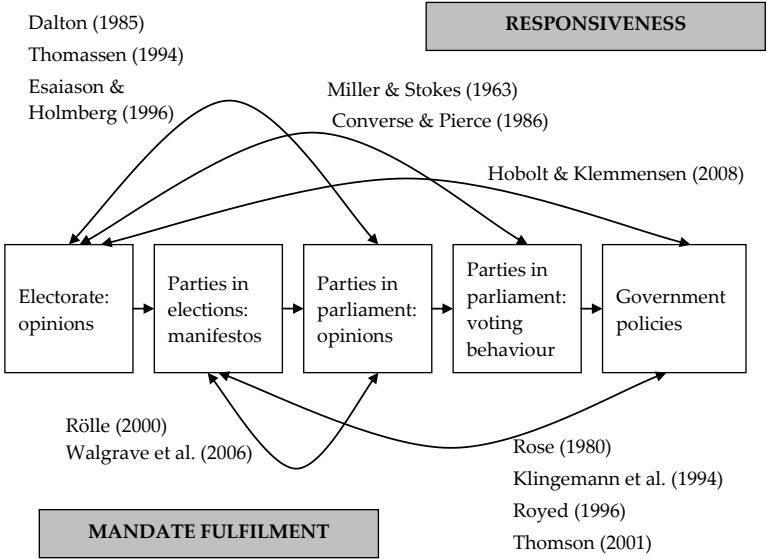
The complaint that 'parties are all the same' and that 'it does not matter who to vote for, because they all want the same thing' is often heard. It has been shown that polarization of party positions on the Left-Right dimension has declined (Green, 2007). Parties' positions on the economic role of the state have converged to a degree. Communist parties have largely disappeared or have been reformed in European countries and many social democratic parties embraced 'Third way' policies in the 1990s. Some argue that valence issues have become the most important topic of debate during election campaigns: parties try to prove their competence on a number of issues, e.g. 'we are better at reviving the economy' (Stokes, 1966). Parties do not generally disagree on the policy

direction, but they compete over who will do better at achieving these goals. However, the decline of Left-Right polarization does not necessarily mean that all differences between parties have disappeared. Green-Pedersen (2007) argues that the traditional left-right divide has been largely replaced by competition over a number of issues, for example environment, law and order and immigration. Parties do take opposing stands on a lot of (important) issues (Royed, 1996; Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006; Pellikaan et al., 2003). Kriesi et al. (2006) map party positions based on content analysis of newspaper articles. They measure both party positions and issue saliency. Their main finding is that in most countries two policy dimensions can be found (economy and culture) on which parties take differing positions (Kriesi et al., 2006: 950). Thus, party competition has not disappeared, but the traditional (economic) left-right divide has been supplemented with other issues. Old differences between parties have given way to new issues, such as the environment, Europe and immigration. There is some evidence that party policy competition has become less polarized in the 1980s and 1990s, but this does not mean that all parties have become exactly alike (Pennings and Keman, 2008). Moreover, new competitors can serve to broaden the electoral choice when it has become limited, e.g. the *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF) and *Socialistische Partij* (SP) in the Netherlands, *die Linke* in Germany and the *Dansk Folkeparti* (DF) in Denmark. The structure of party competition has changed in many countries. Parties do, however, still present distinct policy manifestos.

2.3.2 Policy voting

The second mandate step consists of voters voting for parties they agree with. One can take two approaches to establish whether they do. On the individual level, one may study whether voters do indeed vote for the party with which they agree most. These studies find that policy issue congruence between a voter and the political parties is among the most important determinants of voting behaviour. Although not everyone might vote for the party that is closest to them, people are more likely to vote for a party that is close to them, for example on the Left-Right scale, than for a party that is far away (Merrill III and Grofman, 1999; Rosema, 2004; Van der Eijk and Franklin, 2009). An alternative to this 'proximity voting' model is *directional voting*, which predicts that people will vote for the most extreme party that stands for the policy direction they want to take (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989; Macdonald et al., 2007). For example, a moderate left-wing voter is predicted to vote for a radical left-wing party in order to maximize the chance that public policy will change in the desired left-wing direction. Although the party mandate model is often perceived in 'proximity voting' terms, it does actually not really matter whether voters use 'proximity' or 'directional' voting, at least for the study of party mandate fulfilment: as long as parties' electoral positions are good predictors of their parliamentary positions, their manifestos provide an adequate tool for voters to make their electoral choice, irrespective of how voters make their choice.

Figure 2.1: *Research into the party mandate*



On the system level, one may study whether the chosen representatives do indeed have similar opinions as their constituents. The advantage of taking the latter approach is that it takes the effects of the electoral system into account. When voting is over, what is the congruence between voters' and parties' opinions? This type of research may be labelled 'policy responsiveness'. Here, the opinions of the electorate (or the constituents of a single party) are compared to representatives' opinions or voting behaviour (see figure 2.1).

Studies into policy responsiveness have been conducted in two fashions. The first studies were conducted in the United States, where constituents' opinions were compared to the opinions of their representative⁶. Miller and Stokes used their famous diamond-shaped model to explain the connections between the two (Miller and Stokes, 1963). This diamond consists of four variables, namely the constituency's attitude, the representative's attitude, the representative's perception of the constituency's attitude and his roll-call behaviour (Miller and Stokes, 1963: 50). Miller and Stokes studied the relationship between those elements, for example between the constituency's attitude and the representative's roll-

⁶Because of the electoral system and the weak parties in the United States, these studies tend to focus on individual candidates.

call behaviour. They found a rather strong connection between the constituents' opinions and the representative's roll-call behaviour on some issues, but a weak connection on other issues.

In countries without single-member districts or countries where parties dominate, studies tend to define constituencies in term of party voters. Their mean position on policy dimensions is compared to the mean position of party representatives on the same policy dimensions (Thomassen, 1976; Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996; Norris, 1995; Barnes, 1977; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999; Powell, 2000, 2006, 2009; Golder and Stramski, 2010). Other studies have compared voters' opinion with MPs' self-reported opinions (Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996), voting behaviour (Converse and Pierce, 1986) or government policy positions (Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2008). Most studies show a rather high correspondence of party voters' and party MPs' self-placements on the left-right policy scale. On separate issues, for example EU issues (Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999), there is often relative policy congruence, but not absolute policy congruence. This means that the ordering of party voters is equal to the ordering of parties, but the absolute positions of parties and their voters are not the same.

Studies into responsiveness generally draw a positive picture of policy responsiveness. Party voters and party parliamentarians share similar opinions, though congruence is admittedly not perfect. Some studies do find variation across time and countries⁷, but in general there is correspondence between the positions of parties and party voters.

2.3.3 Mandate fulfilment

The third step in the mandate model is that the parties fulfil their mandate. Studies in this field compare the party preferences in election manifesto to either policy output or the party preferences in parliament (see figure 2.1). Most studies use the former type of comparison, although some studies do compare party election pledges to their parliamentary position.

One of the often-heard criticisms to the party mandate model is that parties do not fulfil their promises (Naurin, 2007). Parties are said not to be interested in policy, merely in the spoils of office. Rather than fulfilling their electoral pledges, parties will be more interested in anticipatory representation: parties will act in a way they think will win them the next election (Mansbridge, 2003). Election pledges may be a useful tool during elections, however once these are over, parties busy themselves only with winning the next elections (Ferejohn, 1986: 7).

⁷The hypotheses and findings of studies into policy responsiveness are insightful to the study of the party mandate. Therefore, the next chapter will discuss some of the findings of these studies in greater detail.

The pledge approach

One approach to the study of mandate fulfilment is the *pledge approach* that checks whether parties' election pledges are translated into government policy. These studies draw a rather positive picture of mandate fulfilment (Thomson, 2001; Royed, 1996; Kalogeropoulou, 1989; Rose, 1980; Mansergh and Thomson, 2007). They report pledge fulfilment percentages ranging from 50% to 84% for government parties in Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007: 317). For opposition parties these rates were generally somewhat lower, ranging from 24% to 45%, which supports the government mandate theory. However, the difference between government and opposition parties in terms of pledge fulfilment was not very large in Ireland (50% vs. 45%) and only moderately large in the United States (60% vs. 49%) and the Netherlands (57% vs. 33%). Sometimes government and opposition pledges are identical, so fulfilling the governments' pledge automatically means fulfilling the opposition party's pledge. However, 40% of the implemented pledges of Irish opposition parties were *not* in direct agreement with the government parties' pledges. This does to a certain extent limit the voters' choice for government policy, because policies were enacted that a majority of voters did not support. If the elections are to have an effect, the policy output should depend on which parties win the elections. If all parties will pursue the same policies in government, what differences does the act of voting make?

The saliency approach

A different approach to the study of electoral mandate fulfilment is the saliency approach. Saliency is a measure of how important an issue is to a party. The Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) has measured issue saliency in manifestos in many countries over a long period of time. Their dataset provides estimates of the relative emphasis of parties on a range of issues by categorizing each sentence in a party manifesto in one of their 54 policy categories. A number of studies use these data to explain government spending patterns (Klingemann et al., 1994; Petry, 1995, 1988, 1991; Budge and Hofferbert, 1990; King et al., 1993). These studies find a moderately strong connection between the relative emphases on policy issues in party manifestos and government spending in the subsequent parliamentary period. There are, however, considerable differences between countries. In the Netherlands and Belgium only the relative emphasis on policy issues in manifestos did explain variance in spending patterns (the agenda model), irrespective whether a party was in government after the election. In other countries being the government party did also matter (the mandate model): spending was better explained by the manifesto issue saliency of parties that got in office after the elections. In some countries long-term ideology was of additional importance (the ideology model). On average the best model could explain 50% of spending variations in every country (Klingemann et al.,

Table 2.4: *Approaches to the party mandate*

	Pledge approach	Saliency approach	Spatial approach
<i>Object of comparison</i>	Pledge	Emphasis (saliency) of issues	Party issue saliency and position
<i>Fulfilment test</i>	Enactment	Correspondence with spending	Similarity in two arena's
<i>Representation- acquiring arena</i>	Elections	Elections	Elections
<i>Representation- enacting arena</i>	Government	Government	Parliament and/or Government
<i>Level of comparison</i>	Party level	Party level	Party level & Party-system level

1994). However, King and Laver point out that this variation could also have been explained by simply looking at the spending patterns in previous years. If one corrects for autocorrelation, party manifestos have only small explanatory power (King et al., 1993: 746).

Rölle (2000) does not compare manifestos to spending patterns, but manifestos to parliamentary debates. He finds that the relative attention for issues in party manifestos is reflected in party's attention for these issues in parliament (in terms of how long they speak on the issue). Walgrave et al. (2006) test the manifestos influence on the government's legislative agenda in Belgium. They find that party manifestos do to some extent predict the government legislative agenda (although this finding is not significant).

Limitations of the existing approaches

The pledge and saliency approaches offer different views as to what 'fulfilling the party mandate' entails. The pledge approach focuses on the particular pledges that parties make in their manifestos. Both the object of comparison as well as the level of comparison is the pledge (see table 2.4). Manifesto pledges are judged to be enacted or not. The saliency approach takes the party's issue saliency as the object of comparison. It is tested whether parties' priorities are put into practice by looking at how much governments spend in different issue areas. Both methods compare the electoral promises of parties with the policy actions

of governments. Thus, the arena where they acquire their representative mandate (the 'representation-acquiring arena') is the election. In the election, voters authorize parties to act on their behalf. The political arena where the mandate is to be fulfilled (the 'representation-enacting arena') is the government. This is the political arena where parties are expected to act upon their mandate (in terms of fulfilling pledges or spending on certain issues).

The two existing approaches to mandate fulfilment offer interesting empirical results. However, the way these approaches conceptualize and operationalize the party mandate is not self-evident, as is illustrated by the differences between the two approaches. In particular, three of the aspects of the pledge and saliency approaches lead to a limited view of party mandate fulfilment: the *object of comparison*, the choice for government as the *representation-enacting arena* and the *level of comparison* (see table 2.4).

The first criticism is related to the *objects of comparison* of the pledge and saliency approach. The pledge approach takes manifesto pledges as the object of comparison. Basically, party manifestos are reduced to lists of pledges. Although pledges are, to a degree, informative of a party's policy program, the manifesto also provides insight in the more general position of a party. By only looking at the fulfilment of pledges, one suffers from three types of adverse effects: *agenda effects*, *specificity effects* and *strategic effects*. Agenda effects occur when the political agenda changes and some of the pledges of parties are no longer relevant, while new policy issues become salient. Often, these new policy issues relate to the manifestos in broad terms, but not at the level of the specific pledges. For example, when former prime minister Blair decided to invade Iraq in 2003, his actions did not break a single election pledge, but was arguably at odds with the general foreign policy message that Labour's 2001 manifesto had contained (Labour Party, 2001). In the opposite case a party proposes to cut taxes on real estate, but in government does not do so; instead it introduces a subsidy for home-owners, which is equally beneficial to home-owners. Does this party break its mandate? It does not do what it promises, but the aim or direction of the policy (helping home-owners) is identical. Generally, the pledge approach seems ill-positioned to deal with these changing external circumstances and changing political agendas.

Specificity effects are the result of a difference in the level of specificity of manifestos and policy output. In many instances, governmental policy proposals are more specific than the manifestos or concern issues that manifestos do not explicitly deal with. Rose (1980) estimates that about 90% of government policy actually originates from within ministerial departments, not manifestos. This points to the one-sidedness of the pledge approach's comparison: it tests whether pledges are enacted, but not whether what is enacted has been pledged. The large number of policy proposals that does not refer back to a pledge will often relate to the party manifestos in a broader sense, for example to the general policy position parties take in their manifesto, as I will argue below. A full-fledged test of the party mandate needs a two-way comparison: do parties act

upon their mandate *and* do their actions reflect their mandate?

Strategic effects are the result of parties treating pledge-making as a strategic business. Parties can often choose (not) to include pledges on certain policies in their manifesto. For example, if a party promises to increase the number of windmills, subsidize solar panels, ban nuclear energy and promote biomass energy in its manifesto, and the party does just that in government (it enacts its pledges), but it also builds a dozen environment-unfriendly coal plants, voters may not exactly be happy with the party's record on the environment. What is not said in the manifesto ('we will build coal plants') is thus just as important as what is. These strategic effects are likely to be more pronounced if pledges are heavily scrutinized, for example in countries where single party government is the norm. Those parties can easily be blamed for not fulfilling their manifesto pledges; there is no compromise or coalition to hide behind. As a result, pledge making becomes a highly strategic game. On the one hand parties want to promise a lot to win the election, on the other hand they do not want to promise too much, fearing they would not be able to deliver. Under those circumstances, the most attractive strategy is to arouse expectations without making too many 'hard' pledges. Any analysis of parties' electoral position will have to take these strategic effects into consideration; my argument is that pledges are probably the most strategic elements of the manifestos.

The saliency approach is far less sensitive to the agenda, specificity and strategic effects. It involves comparing parties' policy priorities (issue saliency) with government spending on these issues (Hofferbert and Klingemann, 1990; King et al., 1993; Klingemann et al., 1994). A party's mandate is deemed to be fulfilled if the spending priorities of governments mirror the issue priority of that party. However, in practice these spending categories are very broadly defined, for example as 'education' or 'social policy'. This makes the comparison rather imprecise (Royed, 1996). One could imagine, for example, that parties want to cut back on some social policies, while expanding other social policies. Additionally, many issues cannot simply be expressed in money, such as medical-ethical issues, traditionalism, immigration and integration (Royed, 1996). Although the saliency approach does mitigate most of the problems of the pledge approach, the resulting approach is focused too much on what parties talk about instead of what they actually say.

The second criticism is directed at the *representation-enacting arena* that both approaches identify: government. Both the pledge approach and the saliency approach compare party election manifestos with government policy: they test to what extent parties' election manifestos influence government policy. That is an interesting and important question, especially from the *government* mandate point of view (Powell, 2000: 8). However, parliamentary systems basically have two representational steps. First, electors choose their representatives in parliament. Second, these representatives explicitly or implicitly support a government (Andeweg and Thomassen, 2005: 514). By focusing on government decisions or policy outcomes, parliament is almost wholly ignored. In a sense,

it is the 'black box' of mandate fulfilment studies⁸. In addition, the government mandate is very vulnerable to the objections outlined above. The Ostrogorski paradox shows that the mandate cannot be interpreted as majority support for the enactment of each and every election pledge of a winning party (Rae and Daudt, 1976; Pettit, 2009). The mandate can, however, serve as a control mechanism in the representative relationship between voters and parties, and should therefore be studied as such.

Looking at government policy output ignores the mandate of opposition parties. "Although the Government have a mandate, so do Opposition Members", John Major said in his first parliamentary debate as the opposition leader (House of Commons Debates, 1997). The mandate of the opposition parties cannot be properly studied by looking at (government) policy output. Opposition parties naturally have far less control over government policies than governing parties. There is little point in blaming the opposition for being unable to translate their pledges into government policies. The test for the opposition parties' mandate fulfilment is what they do in parliament. One can study whether both government and opposition parties present similar views in parliament as in their manifesto⁹. The pre-electoral party positions would thus have to be compared with parliamentary proceedings, rather than policy output. Research so far has focused on the government mandate; the mandate to represent in parliament (or parliamentary mandate) should be given more attention in empirical research.

A third limitation of the pledge and saliency approach is that these study the mandate (only) at *the party level*. They test whether a Labour election pledge has been translated into government policy or whether spending on social affairs can be explained by how much parties talk about issues. In this approach, the policy output is related to individual parties' pledges or issue saliency, which gives a measure of mandate fulfilment for each party¹⁰. However, the party mandate model is actually an institutional mechanism. It provides linkage because there is something to choose between. Representation is not simply the sum of individual actions by individual parties. It is an institutionalized arrangement, which should be studied as such:

Political representation is primarily a public, institutionalized arrangement involving many people and groups, and operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements. What makes it representation is not any single action by any one participant, but the

⁸Rölle (2000) and Walgrave et al. (2006) are notable exceptions.

⁹Powell (2000) distinguishes between 'government mandates' views and 'representative delegates' views of prospective representation. Whereas policy output is a good indicator only for the fulfilment of government mandates, parties' parliamentary behaviour is an adequate measure for the quality of 'government mandates' and 'representative delegates'.

¹⁰In the terminology of Golder and Stramski (2010), the pledge and saliency approach view the mandate in terms of 'many-to-one' relationships, comparing multiple parties' pledges or issue saliency to one policy output.

over-all structure and functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people.

(Pitkin, 1967: 221-222)

Thus instead of focusing on whether Labour has implemented its pledge to reform the National Health Service (NHS), or whether the *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA) has fulfilled its promise to hold an Iraq enquiry, the main interest of researchers into the party mandate should be whether the party mandate model works as a system, whether the parliamentary party competition is a good reflection of the electoral party competition. If this is not the case, a voter's electoral choice has been made on the basis of poor information: if a voter wants to base his electoral choice on policy issues, he needs to be certain that the information that is available about what parties will do in parliament is correct.

The difference between the party level and the party system-level of comparison has already been acknowledged in policy responsiveness studies. Weissberg (1978) distinguished 'dyadic' and 'collective' representation, where dyadic representation looks at the relationship between a representative and its constituents and collective representation studies the relationship between the whole representative assembly and all citizens. More recently, a similar point has been made by Golder and Stramski (2010), who distinguish between 'one-to-one' representational relationships, 'many-to-one' relationships and 'many-to-many' representational relationships. The 'collective' or 'many-to-many' representation studies investigate whether parliament *as a whole* represents the opinions of the people *as a whole*. These types of analysis are especially valuable when assessing the quality of substantive representation (Golder and Stramski, 2010). Studies of the party mandate model will benefit from a similar change in perspective: from the study of individual parties' pledges or issue saliency to studying whether the party mandate model works *on the system level*.

2.4 The spatial approach to the party mandate

The application of spatial theory to the question of the party mandate mitigates the three problems identified above. Before I further substantiate this claim, I will shortly outline the characteristics of spatial theory. Spatial analysis of party positions is the "workhorse theory of modern legislative studies" (Cox, 2001: 1). It is used in many applications involving the measurement of policy preferences of parties (and indeed other political actors). In its most basic form, it represents party issue positions on a single issue dimension. The Left-Right divide is probably the most well-known example of this (Benoit and Laver, 2006). Left-Right is often presented as a super-issue which subsumes all other relevant political divides. In other spatial analyses a multi-dimensional space is used, where a socio-economic dimension is combined with, for example a religious divide (Pellikaan

et al., 2003; Kriesi et al., 2006). Spatial models are very flexible in their application: one can build models with one dimension or many, with orthogonal or oblique dimensions.

A central assumption of the spatial analysis of party preferences is that those preferences can be expressed as positions on a continuum or in a space (Ray, 2007). This implies that there is some coherence in the specific party proposals on an issue. For example, parties that present one left-wing proposal are also inclined to support other left-wing proposals¹¹. If this is not the case, there is no coherent issue dimension. In many studies these types of issue dimensions are used to position actors on a policy issue (e.g. Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999; Powell, 2006; Blais and Bodet, 2006; McDonald and Budge, 2005). Many people are able to position themselves on these types of dimensions, even when the substance of the dimension is not entirely clear as is the case with the Left-Right dimension (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976).

The application of spatial analysis to the question of the party mandate mitigates the three problems that the pledge and saliency approaches face (see table 2.4). By looking at parties' positions on issue dimensions one circumvents the problem of comparing specific pledges. Instead of expecting that parties fulfil a list of specific policy pledges, one expects that parties at least take similar positions on issue dimensions and, therefore, similar positions in the electoral and parliamentary spaces of political competition. The problem of government-focus can be solved by looking at parties' parliamentary behaviour instead of government policy-making. This does not only open up the 'black box' of political representation, but also allows to study the mandate fulfilment of both government *and* opposition parties¹². Thirdly, spatial analysis offers a possibility to study party issue preferences at the system level. By positioning parties on issue dimensions, one can directly compare parties' preferences. As a result, one does not necessarily have to compare what a single party said before and after elections, but it is possible to compare the ordering of parties' preferences on issue dimensions before and after elections. Thus, the level of analysis is changed from the party level to the party-system level.

In this study two indicators are used to estimate party policy preferences: party issue saliency and party issue positions. The object of comparison is thus not the pledge or the issue saliency, but party issue saliency as well as party issue position. Party issue saliency captures how important a particular issue (dimension) is to a party. For example, one might reasonably expect that environmental issues are important for green parties. A party issue position captures what parties say on the issue. The scale or dimension on which this issue position is expressed can be defined a priori, for example Benoit and Laver's (Benoit and

¹¹This probabilistic version of the assumption generally fits better with real-world party behaviour than a deterministic version where supporting the most far-reaching proposal would automatically imply support for less far-reaching proposals.

¹²It is, however, also possible to take government policy-making as the 'representation-enacting arena'.

Laver, 2006) Taxes vs. Spending dimension, which ranges from 'Promotes raising taxes to increasing public services' to 'Promotes cutting services to cut taxes'. Another approach is to estimate positions on dimensions (or in spaces) that are not defined a priori. In such cases the dimension or space is induced from the variation between parties, for example in terms of their voting behaviour or their choice of words. Examples include procedures to model voting behaviour in parliament (Poole, 2005) and procedures to estimate policy positions of actors via text analysis (Slapin and Proksch, 2008). Both types of dimension can be used for the spatial analysis of the party mandate. Traditionally, spatial analyses have focused on party issue positions, not so much on issue saliency. It is, however, relatively easy to study party issue saliency within the same approach (e.g., Kriesi et al., 2006). Issue saliency and issue positions are complementary: first, one looks at how important issues are to parties, secondly one studies parties' positions on each of those issues.

Party issue saliency and positions on multiple issue dimensions can be used to construct a 'space of competition' (Sani and Sartori, 1984). This space captures all relevant issues over which parties compete. It is different from the ideological space, which defines all ideological differences between parties. The 'space of competition' only includes those issues over which parties actually compete in elections or in parliament (Pellikaan et al., 2003). Parties' positions in the ideological space and those in the space of competition will often be similar, but not necessarily. Some ideological divisions between parties might play only a small role in the electoral competition. The 'space of competition' captures what the elections and parliamentary competition are really about: what are the salient issues and how different do parties think about those issues? In this study I will take account of parties' positions on issue dimensions as well as parties' positions within this space of competition. The analysis can thus be conducted on two different levels: the party level and the level of the space of party competition.

The congruence of the electoral and parliamentary competition is studied by looking at two distinct elements. The first element is whether the properties of the 'electoral space' and the 'parliamentary space' are similar. Is the space one-dimensional or multidimensional? How do different issues contribute to the space, e.g. do parties' positions on economic issues correspond with those on democratic reform or not? These questions relate to the characteristics of the space itself. The *space* of the electoral and the parliamentary competition is congruent when the dimensionality is similar and issues contribute to the space in a similar way. The second element refers to parties' positions in those spaces, which is called the *structure* of competition. That is, are parties positioned similarly during the electoral and parliamentary competition? The congruence of the structure of the party competition depends on how similar the configuration parties' positions in the electoral and parliamentary space are. To put it simply, if Labour is to the left of the Conservatives during the election campaign, one would expect them to also be to the left of the Tories in parliament.

The limitations of the proposed approach are twofold. First, taking similar positions on issue dimensions before and after elections or to have similar positions in the spaces of electoral and parliamentary competition is a rather modest requirement. One may argue that even if parties fulfil this requirement, there is still ample room for misrepresentation. Second, it may be objected that taking similar issue positions in parliament as in the manifesto is generally not a problem; instead, translating promises into policy is problematic: that is where parties fail. Both criticisms are directed at the severity of the requirements. Taking similar positions on issue dimensions in parliament is relatively easy compared to translating specific pledges in policies. This being true, we should therefore expect that all parties will meet the former requirement. Furthermore, if parties do not meet these requirements, it is their deliberate choice. Failing to translate pledges into policy may have several causes beyond the scope of the party, for example reduced economic growth (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007: 319) and opposition from civil society and business. This may be reasons that parties cannot achieve their policy goals, but it is not automatically a reason to change these goals. What parties say in parliament is of course also subject to external influence, but in the end parties choose their own words. Even if circumstances change, parties can take similar positions on issue dimensions relative to other parties. Only in case of radically changing circumstances would large positional differences of parties be expected.

2.5 Conclusion

The mere length of contemporary election manifestos seems to indicate that today's political parties support the mandate model of political representation. Parties provide detailed policy plans for the upcoming parliament seemingly in order to provide voters with a choice.

The mandate model of political parties is concerned with the question how a representative should act. Central to the idea of mandates is that promises have to be kept. The mandate model presents a top-down and ex-ante linkage between voters and political parties: parties present their policy programs (ex-ante) and voters can only choose between these manifestos (top-down). It should be noted that the party mandate model does not guarantee the outcome of the election to be 'the will of the people'. Voters are limited to choose between pre-defined menus, a system which does not guarantee that they support every proposal in a party's manifesto. Furthermore, the electoral system in place may influence the outcome of the election. Thus, a party cannot claim that it represents 'the will of the people'. Its constituents have expressed support for the party and its policies, knowing what its opinions are, but the vote for a party does not imply that people support each and every party policy.

Does the party mandate model work in practice? Existing studies show that party manifestos are generally different enough to provide voters with a sub-

stantive choice, that voters are at least to some extent guided by policy issues when casting their vote and that (government) parties fare rather well in implementing their electoral pledges. The studies into the fulfilment of electoral pledges are, however, limited in three respects. First, current research into the fulfilment of electoral pledges focuses on the government mandate: it compares all pledges to policy decisions by the government. This makes the results mainly interesting for government parties, while opposition parties are really ignored, because these have little say in government policy. Alternatively, one may study whether opposition and government parties do ventilate similar opinions in parliament as in their manifestos. This 'parliamentary mandate' has received little attention to date. Second, existing studies look either at specific pledges or at issue saliency. Little attention has been paid to parties' issue positions, as is common in election studies and responsiveness research. Thirdly, the existing approaches have looked at the influence of parties' pledges of issue saliency on government policy output: the party mandate is studied at the *party* level. Representation is, however, primarily an 'institutionalized arrangement' (Pitkin, 1967). Our main concern should not be whether individual parties fulfil pledges, but whether the party mandate model *as a system* works.

The spatial approach to the party mandate mitigates the problems that existing methods have. Instead of looking at lists of pledges, parties are positioned in a political space of competition. If the responsible party model is to work, the properties of the electoral and parliamentary spaces should be similar and so should the structure of the electoral and parliamentary competition. If not, the link between voters' opinions and those of the representatives would be impaired. By extending existing research into the fulfilment of electoral mandates in this fashion, the practice of party representation in parliament, which is especially important in non-majoritarian democracies, but also valuable for assessing the role of opposition parties in majoritarian democracies, can be more fully understood.

Chapter 3

Explaining mandate fulfilment: two models of democracy

Do parties fulfil their electoral mandates? This descriptive question dominates the debate on the party mandate. It is indeed a relevant question from the perspective of political legitimacy. If the party mandate model fails to provide policy linkage, it might be needed to reconsider or amend this model. However, understanding *why* mandate fulfilment is low or high is probably even more important from this perspective. If it is understood under which circumstances the mandate model works best, one might be able to (re)create these circumstances. This connects the study of the party mandate to one of the 'great debates' in political science: what types of institutions create the best results?

3.1 Mandate fulfilment: how institutions make a difference

Institutions matter because they shape how people behave. Take the example of political parties: these are groups of individual people, but are often treated as if they were unitary actors, not only because this simplifies matters but also because politicians' behaviour is structured by the party institution to a large extent (Thomassen and Andeweg, 2007). Similarly, the fulfilment of electoral mandates by political parties is likely to depend on the institutional arrangements in a country. These concern the formal institutional arrangements (i.e. the electoral system), but also the informal rules of a political system (i.e. consensus-building) and the power relations between parties (i.e. party system).

The study of the impact of institutions can be subdivided into three schools of thought (Hall and Taylor, 1996). Rational choice institutionalism argues that institutional rules affect behaviour. Even if parties have exogenous preferences their actual behaviour is shaped by institutional rules. For example, the presence of certain electoral rules will influence the type of election campaign parties will run, i.e. by targeting marginal constituencies. Sociological institutionalism focuses on the 'roles' and 'norms of behaviour' that institutions bring into play and the way in which institutions limit the number of options that are perceived as viable by an actor. For example, in many countries there is an unwritten practice that governments should have majority support in parliament. In multi-party systems, this reduces the number of possible government coalitions and it also explains the anxious debates in Britain about what to do in case of a hung parliament. Historical institutionalism uses both the 'calculus' (rational choice) and 'cultural' (sociological) type of explanations. Furthermore, it tends to stress the importance of historical choices for current decisions. In relation to the previous example about the majority status of governments, one can argue that these practices are the result of historical developments.

Both 'calculus' and 'cultural' explanations of the influence of institutions can be used to explain fulfilment of the party mandate. For example, countries with a proportional electoral system tend to have more political parties than countries with a first-past-the-post system (Rae, 1967). This means that party competition is organized differently. It also has consequences for the executive power. Whereas democracies with proportional electoral systems tend to be dominated by coalitions, those with first-past-the-post systems generally have single-party government. This creates a different environment under which parties are to fulfil their electoral mandates. In addition, different expectations about mandate fulfilment arise. Coalition government inevitably means compromise. Parties know and accept it – or not, but then they would not be able to take office. With single-party governments there is hardly any political obstacle that prevents fulfilment of election pledges. As a result, people's expectations about mandate fulfilment are probably different under different institutional systems. Thus the institutional theory of the party mandate builds on both 'calculus' as well as 'cultural' type explanations.

3.1.1 Majoritarian and consensus democracies

The institutional design of democracy has been a major topic of political research for a long time. A classic distinction has been made between electoral systems that are proportional and those that are not (often single-member district systems). Majoritarian electoral systems generally go hand-in-hand with a smaller number of political parties; proportional representation tends to promote multi-party systems (Gallagher and Mitchell, 2005; Rae, 1967). Furthermore, majoritarian systems tend to be biased in favour of the plurality winner (the party with the most votes). Most of the time, the plurality winner receives a sizeable

majority of parliamentary seats. Because the number of parties is generally larger in proportional systems, multi-party governments are an additional characteristic of those systems. Lijphart (1999) has extended this distinction between proportional and plurality electoral systems into a typology of democracy. He distinguishes between consensus and majoritarian systems. Consensus and majoritarian democracies are different in five respects (Lijphart, 1999: 3):

1. *Concentration of power versus power-sharing* Majoritarian systems concentrate executive power in the hands of a single-party government, while consensus systems promote executive power-sharing in broad multi-party coalitions.
2. *Dominant versus balanced executive-legislative relationship* In majoritarian systems, the executive tends to be dominant vis-à-vis the legislature, while this power relationship is balanced in consensus systems.
3. *The number of parties* Majoritarian party systems are small (two parties), while consensus systems have a large number of parties.
4. *Electoral system* Majoritarian democracies have majoritarian and disproportional systems, while consensus systems have proportional representation.
5. *Pluralism versus Corporatism* Majoritarian democracies are characterized by pluralist interest group representation. Consensus systems have coordinated and 'corporatist' interest group systems.

These five characteristics constitute Lijphart's *executive-parties* dimension. They are closely connected theoretically and empirically, with the possible exception of the fifth characteristic (Armington, 2002). Lijphart also presents a federal-unitary dimension which is mainly concerned with (de)centralization of decision-making. For the study of the mandate model on the national level the executive-parties dimension is, however, the most relevant as it concerns party competition and executive-legislative relations. It is also the most closely connected to the distinction between proportional and plurality/majority electoral systems, which is used by many authors when talking about the same types of democracies that Lijphart describes (cf. Powell, 2000; McDonald and Budge, 2005; Golder and Stramski, 2010).

3.1.2 What works better?

The successful design of political institutions is an important question for politicians and scholars alike. Many debates on electoral systems, parliamentary politics and government formation have build on the distinction between majoritarian and consensus democracy. There is, however, no consensus about what system works better in terms of political representation. Some argue that power-sharing and consensus works best for most countries (Lijphart, 1999; Powell,

2000, 2006; McDonald and Budge, 2005; McDonald et al., 2007), while others point at the merits of undivided single-party government (Ranney, 1954; Downs, 1957; Thomson, 1999; Mansergh and Thomson, 2007)¹. A third group of authors argues that there is no significant difference between the quality of political representation in majoritarian and consensus systems (Blais and Bodet, 2006; Golder and Stramski, 2010). Part of the explanation of these differences is that these studies look at different indicators of success, ranging from satisfaction with democracy to the like-mindedness of representatives and their voters (Lijphart, 1999). Of course, it may very well be that one system outperforms the other in certain areas and the other system works better in other areas. Those who study policy *responsiveness* find that consensus democracies usually show better congruence between voters and governments (Powell, 2000, 2006; Kim et al., 2010; McDonald et al., 2007), although this finding has been disputed recently (Blais and Bodet, 2006; Golder and Stramski, 2010). Studies into *pledge fulfilment* of parties show, however, that parties in majoritarian democracies fare better (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007). The *saliency approach* of the party mandate finds a less clear-cut pattern, but shows some support for the statement that majoritarian democracies show higher levels of mandate fulfilment (Klingemann et al., 1994). Thus, depending on the aspect of party representation that is studied and the approach taken, different results are found. Therefore, the debate on the merits of consensus and majoritarian democracy is important both in terms of its real-world implications as well as from a scientific point of view. Many different arguments and findings have been outlined, which warrant clarification and further research.

One way of looking at party representation in different democratic systems is by comparing voters' and politicians' preferences, so-called *policy linkage* or *responsiveness* studies (see section 2.3.2). One of the premises of the party mandate is that citizens can influence public policy by choosing a party that they agree with. This should lead to a correspondence between the policy preferences of voters and those of politicians. This correspondence is usually measured by comparing the policy position of the median voter with the government's position. Powell (2000) shows that this correspondence is higher in 'proportional' than in 'majoritarian' democracies. This finding has been disputed by others, arguing that measuring voters' and politicians' (or parties') positions in a different way leads to the conclusion that there is no difference between the two types of democracy (Blais and Bodet, 2006; Golder and Stramski, 2010). Powell (2009) argues that this is not so much a difference in measurement technique, but a difference of time periods: in more recent years the difference between majoritarian and consensus democracies has disappeared. Over a longer time period,

¹ Andeweg (2001) points out that Lijphart himself changed his mind about the merits of consensus democracy. The 'young' Lijphart argued that consociational democracy works well for heterogeneous societies, but not for homogeneous societies. The 'old' Lijphart, however, argues that consensus democracy (which is conceptually different, but strongly related to consociational democracy) works better in almost all countries.

proportional systems seem to have had the advantage.

Another line of research looks at the party mandate: whether what parties offer during elections corresponds to their parliamentary behaviour. This is part of the same process of party representation that responsiveness studies look at, but the focus is different. The question here is not whether the system leads to policy linkage between voters and politicians, but whether the choice that voters are offered during elections corresponds to how parties act in parliament (see chapter 2). In early specifications, the party mandate model was presented as a two-party 'majoritarian' political system (APSR, 1950; Ranney, 1954; Downs, 1957). Recent work argues that the party mandate model is not limited to the two-party system, but that will work better in majoritarian democracies (Thomson, 1999; Klingemann et al., 1994). The argument is straightforward. Majoritarian democracies tend to produce single-party governments, which have ample opportunity to implement their manifesto policies. No other party can stop it from fulfilling its election pledges². In consensus countries multi-party government is the rule rather than the exception. In most consensus democracies no party (or pre-electoral coalition) wins an outright majority. After the elections government coalitions are formed. The composition of these government coalitions thus depends in large part on post-election bargaining. This practice obscures the chain of representation between voter and government. Proponents of a clear government mandate argue that this is problematic, because it limits parties' ability to implement their manifesto pledges and because voters do not know which of the parties to hold to account at the next elections (Ranney, 1954).³

This study shifts the focus from *policy enactment in government* to *policy representation in parliament*. Instead of looking whether the parties in government can enact their manifesto pledges, the aim is to study whether all parties talk about similar issues and say similar things about these issues in the election campaign and in parliament. More specifically, this study observes whether the space and structure of electoral competition are congruent with the space and structure of the parliamentary competition (see section 2.4). This encompasses a change of focus from the individual party's pledges to the configuration of the space of party competition. The use of this 'spatial approach to the party mandate' leads to different expectations regarding mandate fulfilment in majoritarian and consensual democracies than the ones put forward by classic party mandate theory. Because this study looks at both issue saliency and issue positions, I will propose separate hypotheses regarding issue saliency and issue positions. It is after all

²A similar argument has been made in the policy linkage literature (Blais and Bodet, 2006).

³Some countries with proportional representation are used to having minority governments rather than majority coalitions. This presents a different parliamentary dynamic, because in these cases usually one party is able to pursue its manifesto, just as in majoritarian democracies (although a minority government would have to find some common ground with opposition parties in parliament). Although this does present an interesting case, this study focuses on the difference between majority systems with single-party majority government and consensus systems with multi-party majority government, as these present the most different mechanisms of government behaviour.

possible that there is an effect on issue saliency, but not on issue positions. In addition, the causal mechanisms are not always the same for issue saliency and issue positions.

Issue saliency

Consensus systems are expected to show higher levels of mandate fulfilment, both in terms of issue saliency as well as issue positions. The underlying explanation is, however, somewhat different for these two aspects of the mandate. The expectation that the congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency is higher in consensual democracies than in majoritarian democracies stems from a difference in the level of *government control over the parliamentary agenda*. In manifestos parties can talk about whatever they like for as long as they like, but in parliament they have to stick to the agenda and their speaking time is often limited. Thus, the extent to which parties can influence the parliamentary agenda explains the degree to which they can talk about the issues that they talked about a lot in their manifestos. Government control over the parliamentary agenda is higher in majoritarian than in consensus democracies. After all, one of the characteristics of a majoritarian democracy is that parliament is dominated by the executive (Lijphart, 1999)⁴. This theoretical point can be illustrated by plotting countries' levels of government control over the agenda (as measured by Döring (1995)) against countries' scores on Lijphart's executive-parties dimension (figure 3.1). The relationship between the two variables is strong: Pearson's correlation coefficient equals 0.679 (significant at the 0.01 level).

High levels of government agenda control are expected to lead to lower levels of issue saliency congruence. If the government determines the parliamentary agenda, opposition parties in parliament cannot address the issues they find important to the extent they might wish. If the parliament sets its own agenda, opposition parties (as well as governing parties) will have ample opportunity to table issues that they care about. This means that issue congruence, especially for opposition parties, is higher when the government does not control the agenda⁵:

Hypothesis 1: A consensus democracy shows higher levels of congruence between the electoral party issue saliency and the parliamentary party issue saliency than a majoritarian democracy.

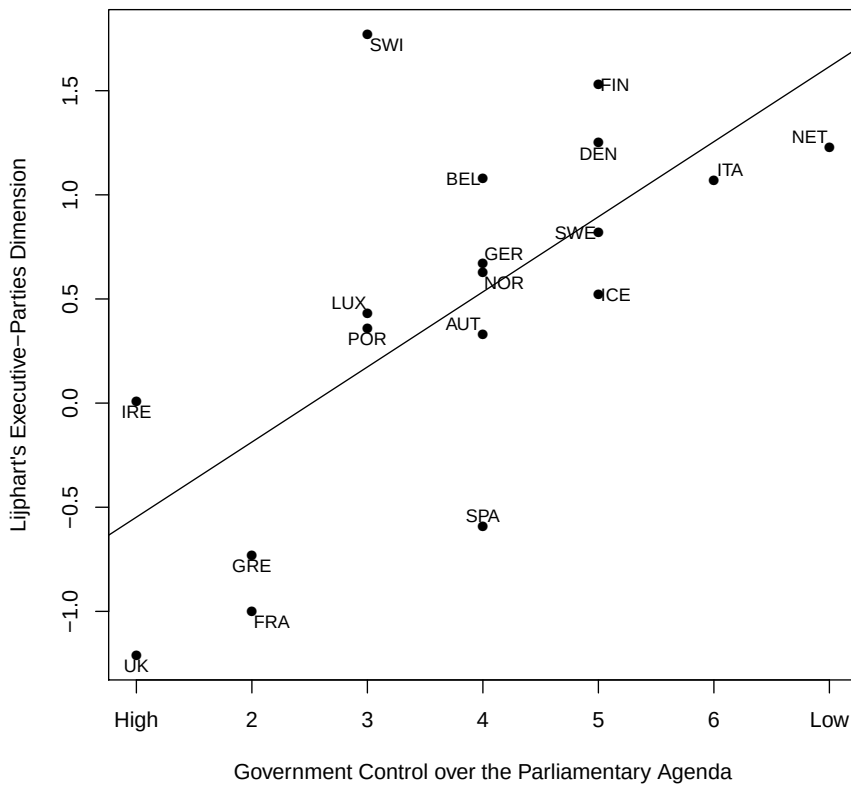
Issue positions

The traditional theory on the relationship between regime type and mandate fulfilment rests heavily on the chain-of-representation argument: majoritarian

⁴Although Lijphart operationalizes this characteristic differently, namely as the average governmental term.

⁵The difference between governing and opposition parties will be discussed in more detail in section 3.2.

Figure 3.1: *The relationship between government agenda control and Lijphart's executive-parties dimension*



Note: Low values on the executive-parties dimension indicate majoritarianism, high values consensualism. The fitted line is an OLS regression line. Sources: Döring (1995) and Lijphart (1999).

democracy offers a clear chain of representation (one party wins a majority and forms a government), thus parties will better be able to implement their mandates (Ranney, 1954; Royed, 1996; Thomson, 1999). Consensus systems lack such a clear connection between parties' electoral mandates and government policy. Government policy output is the result of post-electoral bargaining. Therefore, it is concluded that mandate fulfilment is better in majoritarian democracies.

This argument does not, however, hold in the context of parties' mandate for parliament. This study's focus is not whether individual government parties can influence policy output or policy outcome, but whether the structure of the electoral and parliamentary competition is congruent. This different view on party mandate fulfilment influences the expected relation between regime type and mandate fulfilment in three ways.

The first argument relates to the role of opposition parties. Previous studies on mandate theory have focused very much on governing. They do not look at parliamentary representation in general and the role of the opposition in particular. The essence of parliamentary democracy is that government is based on parliamentary trust. Members of parliament have their own mandate: the mandate to represent in parliament. This is equally true for opposition parties: the mere fact that they are not in government does not mean that they do not have a mandate. Only parties that fail to win any seats do not have a mandate. Opposition parties should be taken into account in the study of mandate fulfilment. When doing this, the traditional 'chain-of-representation' argument loses its strength. The question is not whether governments can enact pledges, but whether all parties stay true to their manifesto pledges during the parliamentary term. While government parties in majoritarian democracies are presumably in a rather strong position to fulfil their mandate, opposition parties on the other hand are poorly positioned. In consensus democracies government parties have to compromise to get into government, although this does not force them to adopt the governments' position in parliament: they may very well use the parliamentary arena to strengthen their own distinct policy profile – within the limits set by the coalition agreement. Opposition parties, on the other hand, have many incentives to pursue their own agenda rather than to oppose everything the government wants (see section sec:hypotheses-go). Thus, taking account of opposition parties' mandates severely reduces the applicability of the 'chain-of-representation' argument that has usually been made in defence of majoritarian democracy⁶.

Second, high levels of pledge fulfilment in majoritarian countries may be the result of parties' strategic behaviour concerning making and fulfilling pledges. As I argued in the previous chapter, political parties have incentives to avoid making certain pledges because of divisiveness within the party or because parties expect or know that certain policies will not be popular. By no means do

⁶The precise expectations with regard to mandate fulfilment of opposition and government parties in the two types of democracy are discussed in section 3.2.

parties have to provide a broad overview of intended policies in their election manifesto. Instead, parties may selectively emphasize certain policy areas and carefully select those pledges that make them win the elections. Furthermore, the relative freedom of single-party government enables them to introduce policies that are not based on manifesto pledges. These new policies may change its position on the relevant issue dimension, even if no pledges are broken. As this study looks at policy positions and issue saliency rather than pledge fulfilment, this leads to different expectations of the differences between consensus and majoritarian democracies. Pledge fulfilment may be high in majoritarian systems, but this does not necessarily mean that parties' positions are also more congruent in terms of their policy positions in those countries.

The argument that manifestos are strategic documents is likely to work in favour of mandate fulfilment in consensual democracies. In consensus democracies 'winning' the elections does not guarantee government responsibility. Government participation has to be secured in coalition negotiations. The election manifesto is important here in two respects: the prospect of coalition negotiations motivates parties to write elaborate manifestos and, at the same time, to make sure that their manifesto does not alienate future coalition partners. The election manifestos of parties are the starting point of the coalition negotiations. It is a means to exert political leverage. If a certain proposal features prominently in a party's manifesto, the party leadership can put more pressure on prospective coalition partners to agree to that proposal. Contrarily, it lowers a party's credibility if it stands firm on a proposal that was not even in its manifesto. Parties are thus motivated to dedicate some attention to every policy area in their manifesto. This also facilitates trust among future coalition partners, for it is clear what position each party takes. Of course, parties desiring to enter a government must make sure that they do not render themselves (virtually) unacceptable to future coalition partners by taking extreme policy positions on many issues. There is some tension between the use of the manifesto as leverage in negotiations and not pushing it too far, resulting in the loss of credibility towards prospective coalition partners. Nevertheless, parties are motivated to present their policies on a range of issues in their manifesto. The need for this is smaller in majoritarian democracies, which may result in lower levels of mandate fulfilment.

The third argument relates to the binding force of a coalition agreement. Coalition governments are nowadays very often the result of coalition negotiations in which a coalition agreement has been agreed upon (Müller and Strøm, 2008). The policy positions in this document are necessarily somewhat different from the positions the coalition parties took in their manifesto – unless they all took the same position in their manifesto. For some observers this is sufficient proof that consensus democracy is inferior in terms of mandate fulfilment: the coalition agreement is necessarily different from the parties' manifestos, so the mandate does not work as well in consensus systems. The merits of a coalition agreement are sometimes ignored in this debate. The agreement is indeed somewhat different from what the individual parties promised in their manifesto, but it also

serves as an anchor for government policy (Andeweg and Bakema, 1994; Timmermans and Andeweg, 2000; Müller, 2000). Deviating from the coalition agreement will potentially cause a government crisis. Of course, coalition agreements do not enact themselves and there are often conflicts on issues that were mentioned in the coalition agreement (Timmermans and Moury, 2006; Timmermans, 1999). Parties operate a range of control mechanisms to keep tabs on their coalition partner(s), for example the appointment of junior ministers and control by parliamentary committees (Kim and Loewenberg, 2005). These mechanisms are stronger under consensus systems than under majoritarian systems, where these control mechanisms are weaker or non-existent, i.e., Westminster systems often feature weak committees. Furthermore, it appears to be much more difficult for a group of back-benchers to pull the plug on their own party's government than for a coalition party to leave the coalition government. At least the former is much less common than the latter.

These three arguments lead to the expectation that, using the 'spatial approach' of the party mandate, majoritarian democracies do not fare better than consensus democracies in terms of issue saliency. On the contrary, I expect that the combination of the three mechanisms outlined above result in higher levels of mandate fulfilment in consensus democracies:

Hypothesis 2: A consensus democracy shows higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than a majoritarian democracy.

The congruence between issue positions in manifestos and parliamentary debates can be studied in different ways. One way is by looking at parties' positions on separate issue dimensions. For example, an economic left-right dimension is often used to capture parties' stances on economic issues. Alternatively, one can study parties' position within a multidimensional spatial representation of the party competition. Both methods are congruent with the spatial approach to the party mandate, because they are both essentially spatial representations of party policy preferences. Therefore, in the subsequent analyses party issue position congruence will be studied both in terms of parties' (relative) positions on separate issue dimensions as well as in terms of the congruence of the structures of electoral and parliamentary competition⁷.

3.2 Government and opposition

The 'most important and typical difference' between consensus and majoritarian democracies is the difference between multi-party coalitions and single-party

⁷I only present a single hypothesis on party position congruence that both refers to congruence on separate issue dimensions as well as congruence within spaces of competition, for reasons of clarity. Furthermore, parties' positions on separate issue dimensions and their positions within the spaces of competition are empirically related (see section 4.5).

majority governments (Lijphart, 1999: 62). This influences the way in which government and opposition parties behave in parliament and the degree to which they fulfil their electoral mandates.

Previous studies have shown that government parties are in a better position to implement their manifesto *pledges* than opposition parties (Royed, 1996; Thomson, 2001; Mansergh and Thomson, 2007). Mansergh and Thomson (2007) find that the difference is largest in the United Kingdom, the clearest example of a majoritarian country in their dataset (84 versus 24 per cent). In the more consensual Netherlands government parties clearly fare better than opposition parties, but the gap is smaller (57 versus 33 per cent). In Ireland the difference is even smaller (50 vs. 45 per cent). Explanations for the relatively high implementation rates of opposition parties' pledges in some countries include the fact that some proposals are included in both the government and opposition manifestos. In addition, the existence of informal arrangements between government and opposition parties may lead to the enactment of opposition parties' pledges. Thirdly, the government may enact some of the opposition parties' popular pledges in an attempt to gain support among the opposition parties' voters (Thomson, 1999; Mansergh and Thomson, 2007).

Because this study looks at parties' *parliamentary* mandate, my expectations concerning mandate fulfilment differ from those of students of pledge fulfilment. After all, opposition parties may not be very well positioned to translate their election manifesto into government policy, but they should be able to stand up for their policies in parliament. In terms of the parliamentary mandate, opposition parties are not necessarily in a disadvantaged position compared to government parties. The dynamics depend on the model of democracy. In majoritarian democracies, I expect government parties to do better than opposition parties. The government does not have to strike compromises and determines the parliamentary agenda, while the dominant strategy of the opposition is to oppose every government proposal. In consensual political systems I expect opposition parties to show *higher* levels of congruence between their electoral and parliamentary saliency and positions than government parties. In these systems government parties are bound to coalition agreements, while the opposition is usually divided and therefore does not have the incentive to merely oppose all government policy.

The hypotheses concerning majoritarian democracies read as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Government parties show higher levels of congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency than opposition parties, in a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 4: Government parties show higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than opposition parties, in a majoritarian democracy.

As with the other independent variables, I have distinguished between the

effect on the congruence of issue saliency and the effect on the congruence of issue positions. Government parties are expected to show higher levels of congruence. The argument concerning issue saliency builds on Döring's observation that government control of the parliamentary agenda is very high in majoritarian countries (Döring, 1995), as was outlined in the previous section. This means that the government party can decide what parliament talks about. Although the opposition parties have some opportunities to influence the agenda, the government has many more. The hypothesized result is that government parties will show higher levels of congruence between their electoral and parliamentary issue saliency than opposition parties.

The congruence of parties' issue positions during elections and in parliament is influenced by government participation in the same way. In majoritarian democracies, government parties are expected to have more congruent electoral and parliamentary issue positions than opposition parties. This is also the result of the institutional setting of majoritarian democracies. The government sets the stage in parliament; the opposition's role is to criticize and to hold the government to account. Furthermore, the opposition is the party that lost the last election. These parties might thus want to change their policy position in order to avoid another electoral defeat.

The opposition in majoritarian regimes responds to government proposals and government behaviour. This division of roles will make it an attractive strategy for the opposition to criticize basically all government policies. While the critical evaluation of government behaviour is probably a characteristic of opposition parties in many countries, the tendency to criticize is much stronger when there are only two competitors. In many majoritarian systems the opposition is truly a shadow government, ready to take over the business of the state. They can hardly make a credible case to voters if they do not present an alternative in the fullest sense of the word. Kaiser (2008) points out that there is variation in this respect between majoritarian countries and across time: in some settings this two-party dynamic is stronger than elsewhere. For example, when the Liberal Democrats became a more prominent party in British politics, it could not simply copy the Official Opposition party's strategy. Instead, it combined with Labour to oppose the Conservative government, and after the 1997 election it has to a certain extent worked together with the new Labour government. In other countries, like Canada or New Zealand the picture is even more complicated, because the number of effective parties is even larger there and because minority government has been the rule rather than the exception there. It should thus be expected that the difference between opposition and government is largest when the effective number of party is lowest⁸.

The dynamics of parliamentary competition are different in consensual political systems. In those democracies, I expect that opposition parties fare better at

⁸Kaiser's (2008) argument essentially supports the argument presented here that the dynamics of opposition behaviour are different in systems with two parties and in systems with a lot of parties.

mandate fulfilment than government parties:

Hypothesis 5: Opposition parties show higher levels of congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency than government parties, in a consensus democracy.

Hypothesis 6: Opposition parties show higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than government parties, in a consensus democracy.

One of the characteristics of consensus democracy is that both the government and the opposition consist of multiple parties (Lijphart, 1999). The government parties generally formulate a coalition agreement which is not only binding to the government, but also to the parliamentary (coalition) parties. Coalition agreements are written to find compromises on issues that divide the coalition parties (or to log-roll). A coalition agreement will thus contain policy positions that are different from the manifesto positions of the coalition parties. This means that the coalition parties have to deviate from their manifesto policy positions and, to a lesser extent, priorities. The parliamentary coalition parties will try to offset this deviation by stressing policy positions which are more in line with their manifesto positions. However, it is to be expected that these parties will, on the whole, deviate more strongly from their manifesto position than opposition parties.

Contrary to their majoritarian counterparts, opposition parties in consensus democracies generally have quite a bit of influence on the parliamentary agenda (Döring, 1995; Andeweg, 2008). This allows them to talk about the issues they find important. Maybe not to the extent they would wish for, but there is quite a lot of room, especially in comparative terms. At the same time, the dominant mode of competition that exists in majoritarian countries does not apply to the same extent in consensus democracies. Because there are multiple opposition parties, often both from the left and from the right, simply opposing the government is not a viable strategy. An opposition party has not only to show that it differs from the government, but also that it differs from other opposition parties. In this situation, sticking to the manifesto pledges seems the most likely strategy for opposition parties. Of course, occasionally opposition parties that have suffered a large defeat in the previous elections will try to reposition themselves, but this is an exception rather than the rule, especially because government participation is not a direct consequence of the electoral result: a party can win the elections and end up in opposition or vice versa. Additionally, parliaments in consensus countries are often characterized as working parliaments, in which opposition parties have many opportunities to get their proposals accepted (Polsby, 1975). Instead of opposing the government at all costs, opposition parties are thus better off working with the government parties to get some of their proposals accepted. This gives opposition parties incentives to use their election manifesto as a parliamentary mandate and try to implement it.

3.3 The decline of the party mandate?

Institutions normally change only gradually. Consensus democracies do not become majoritarian overnight. Over longer periods of time, changes in state institutions and political parties do occur that might influence the extent to which the mandate model works. One change that seems to have occurred concerns the difference between consensus and majoritarian democracies in terms of mandate fulfilment. The debate on policy linkage between citizens and politicians suggests that the difference between majoritarian and consensus systems has disappeared in recent years (Powell, 2009). Consensus systems used to show higher levels of ideological congruence, but this is no longer the case⁹.

The more general question is how party mandate fulfilment has changed over the last decades. There have been many changes in parties, party systems and electoral politics, such as dealignment, changing party organizations and systems, changing party roles and the rise of populism. These have changed how parties fulfil their representative functions, both in consensus and majoritarian democracies. Some argue that the result is that mandate fulfilment has decreased over the years, while others are convinced of the opposite.

3.3.1 Dealignment

Until the 1970s political scientists explained the, in their eyes, remarkable stability of party competition in western democracies. They argued that the political cleavages had been 'frozen' and were remarkably similar in the 1960s compared to the 1920s (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). In addition, voters' electoral behaviour was very stable over time (Rose and Urwin, 1970). Electoral volatility was low,

⁹This gap between citizens and governments has become smaller because the congruence has increased over time in majoritarian systems. The reason for this is that these systems have become less polarized (Kim et al., 2010: 182). The most important source of a lack of congruence between voters and parties in majoritarian system is the fact that the plurality party gets an electoral bonus. Generally the plurality party receives a majority of the seats. That means that the median legislator is a member of the party that won the election, but not necessarily a member of the party that is closest to the median voter. For example, in Britain the centrist Liberal Democrats are often the closest to the median voter, but they do not include the median legislator (the government party always has the median legislator if it has a parliamentary majority). Contrary to Downs' (1957) expectation, the main parties in a majoritarian system do not always converge towards the median. This lack of convergence (or centripetality) accounts for the low levels of congruence between the median legislator and the median voter. A decrease in polarization means that all parties move close to the political centre (where the median voter is usually located). This means that the distance between median voter and the government party will decline. Kim et al. (2010) show that all temporal patterns in the analysis of ideological convergence between citizens and governments disappear if polarization is included in the model. This argument does, however, not translate directly to the study of the party mandate. The effect of polarization on policy linkage is mainly a result of the distorting effect of the electoral system, which leads to an relatively large distance between median voter and median legislator. Polarization plays a different role in parties' mandate fulfilment, as is outlined in the next section. In sum, it is not likely that the cross-temporal patterns of policy linkage apply to the party mandate. Therefore, I will focus on the party mandate decline thesis here.

election results presented few surprises and there were only small swings from one party to another.

How different was the tone of the literature in the early 1980s. The decade before had witnessed increases in the electoral volatility, decline of the traditional cleavages and party alignments and the rise of new issues and (new) social movements (Daalder and Mair, 1983; Dalton, 1984). These changes were apparently so strong that the debate did not focus on the question whether there were significant changes to party politics, but whether politics would go back to a more stable system of party representation or whether the dealignment of voters would be a continuing feature of contemporary politics.

The traditional political cleavages have become less pronounced in many countries. Certainly, there are still political divides between parties and between groups of citizens, but these are to a lesser extent rooted in society. The fact that people have different ideas about state intervention in the economy is no longer simply a result of them being members of different classes. Party attachment and voting behaviour is no longer a function of social differences between people. New issues have come up, such as (radical) democratization, the environment, equal rights for women, homosexuals and minorities and (later) migration and globalization (Inglehart, 1971; Pellikaan et al., 2003; Kriesi, 2008). These issues do in many cases not reflect differences between groups in society. For example, the migration issue is not simply a conflict between the existing population on one side and migrants on the other. Many non-migrants are critical about migration, while many others stand up for migrants. Cleavage politics is replaced by issue politics (Dalton, 1984: 474). Even if one argues that there is (partial) *realignment*, which is defined as “a significant shift in the group bases of party coalitions” (Dalton, 1984: 13), linkages between citizens and parties have become more flexible.

Party membership has declined significantly over the last thirty years. Except for newly established democracies in southern and eastern Europe, membership has declined by twenty to sixty per cent between 1980 and 2000 (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001: 12). In the late 1990s, party membership as a percentage of the electorate averaged at 5 per cent in twenty European countries. It is as low as 1.92 per cent in the United Kingdom. Over the same period of time, electoral turnout has declined in most countries (Gray and Caul, 2000). In addition, (gross) electoral volatility, the percentage of votes that changes from one party to another at an election, has increased (Dalton et al., 2000: 41). This signals that more and more people change their party preference between elections: they no longer have (more or less) fixed attachments to a political party and party identification has declined (Dalton, 2000).

3.3.2 Changing party organizations and party systems

The second development that is documented in the literature is the changing nature of party systems and party organizations. These changes are partly the

result of the process of dealignment described above. Because party membership and party attachment have declined and traditional cleavages have become less important, parties had to change their electoral strategies. Another source for changes in party systems and parties is the end of the Cold War, which had traditionally reinforced the Left-Right divide (Katz and Mair, 2009). Furthermore, policy-making has increasingly been transferred outside the realm of politics, which is especially visible in the growing importance of central banks (Majone, 1994; Mair, 2006). This development can be argued to have reduced the electoral *accountability* of political parties, because major issues were removed from the electoral and parliamentary competition¹⁰.

The changes in party organizations and party systems have resulted in a debate on the existence of various 'party types' (Kirchheimer, 1966; Panebianco, 1988; Katz and Mair, 1995; Koole, 1996). Before the advent of universal suffrage, parties were essentially groups of politicians who worked together in parliament or other representative bodies. These 'elite' or 'cadre' parties did not have a need to develop a large organization outside of parliament, because the vote was restricted. As voting rights were extended and new groups organized (socialists, social democrats and (orthodox) Christian democrats), the type of party organization also changed. This marked the advent of the era of the 'mass parties'. These parties were characterized by a large membership and a large and usually strong extra-parliamentary organization. This type of organization was necessary to mobilize voters. Parties usually represented a specific societal group, such as workers, catholics, protestants or the middle classes.

Since the second world war, the mass parties seem to be in decline. Not only did their membership drop significantly in most countries, parties do also no longer cater to a specific socio-economic or religious group in society. Scholars developed new party types to capture the nature of party organization and the party system in the last decades. Two of these have been particularly influential.

The first new party type that was described in the second half of the twentieth century is the 'catch-all' party (Kirchheimer, 1966). As a result of the post-war consensus on the need for a welfare state, parties' ideological differences had declined. Parties started to compete not so much over the question what the best policy was, but who would be best at implementing it (Stokes, 1966). Parties de-emphasized the importance of the groups they had traditionally represented and aimed their policies at basically all voters. In their appeal to a wider electorate, parties downgraded their ideologies and instead presented themselves as professionals (Panebianco, 1988). In organizational terms, these new catch-all strategies meant that individual members were much less valued than before (Krouwel, 2006). The leadership became more and more important – also be-

¹⁰However, one could also argue that if the decision to remove these policies from the political sphere is taken in a democratic manner, mandated by the electorate, there is no real problem in terms of *authorization*. Furthermore, there may be parties that want to restore political decision-making over these depoliticized issues. Even so, the tendency to transfer responsibilities to non-majoritarian institutions weakens the mandate model.

cause of changes in political campaigning following the introduction of the radio and television. Because parties did no longer present coherent ideologies to voters, they often depended on others, interest groups for example, to generate new policy ideas (Krouwel, 2006).

The second influential account of how parties have changed is the cartel party thesis, which describes parties from the 1970s onwards (Katz and Mair, 1995, 2009). The thesis draws from the literature on economic cartels to describe how parties increasingly work together with each other and with the state. Over the last three decades, parties have become somewhat removed from society, while at the same time they have become closer to the state (Blyth and Katz, 2005). One aspect of this is financial: parties were bound to look for different sources of income, because of their declining membership (Van Biezen and Kopecký, 2007). Another aspect is personal: parties have professionalized and the position of the parliamentary party (leadership) has strengthened at the cost of the strength of the extra-parliamentary party (Panebianco, 1988; Webb and Poguntke, 2005). Those who run the party are directly involved in state politics, as members of parliament or government ministers. Although many parties have given more powers to their members (e.g. voting rights at conferences and/or in party referenda), the membership has become atomized (Katz and Mair, 1995). The mid-level party cadre can no longer form a powerful counterbalance to the party leadership. One implication of this is that party leaders have more freedom of deviating from the election manifesto. After all, the chances of a rebellion within the party are very small.

According to the cartel party thesis, parties have not only become more intertwined with the state, but also with each other. Proponents of the cartel party thesis argue that parties' electorates, goals, styles and policies have become more similar than before. One example of this is that parties which one would not have expected to govern together in the past now do so, such as the 'purple' (social-democrat and liberals) governments in Belgium and (especially) the Netherlands. Part of this greater similarity and cooperation is the shared awareness of the cost of losing elections. Parties have become aware that losing elections is part of the game that will happen to every party from time to time. The solution is to reduce the costs of losing. For example, in Britain financial support for the opposition party has been introduced in 1975 and the amounts (per seats and votes) have increased substantially, by approximately 10 per cent per year (Kelly, 2009). This awareness lies at the heart of the cartelization of the party system. One result of having reduced costs of losing is that winning becomes less attractive. Although most parties will probably still prefer to participate in government, the cost of being in opposition is not too high. Additionally, being in opposition might pay off during the next general election. The result is that parties that have rather similar election manifestos anyway do not really compete either. And in parliament parties would probably be even more inclined to reach a compromise. This is likely to reduce party mandate fulfilment.

3.3.3 Changing party goals

The goals of political parties are often summarized by three words: *policy*, *votes* and *office* (Strøm, 1990). Most parties seek to implement certain *policies* they believe are beneficial to society, the people they represent or themselves (although they will not admit the latter). There are certainly examples of parties that do not care about policy at all, but for most parties this will be at least one of their main objectives. Parties, by definition, put up candidates for elections. They obviously want these candidates to be elected, thus getting *votes* is another objective of a political party. There are some differences between parties as to how important it is to maximize the vote. Most notably, some parties choose to put forward manifestos that appeal to a larger section of the electorate, while other parties draw up policy programmes that will only be supported by a limited niche: there is thus potentially a trade-off between policy and votes. While getting votes is thus important, this does not automatically ensure that parties can also govern, especially in multi-party democracies with coalition government. *Office* is a third goal: in office parties can actually implement their policies. In addition, controlling office brings along jobs for the party cadre and control over the resources of the state. Again, there might be a trade-off between policy and office. Parties that want to get elected and to form a (coalition) government, must be prepared to strike policy compromises.

Most parties will aim to achieve each of these three goals. The relative importance of the goals however can differ between parties and over time. In principle, the party mandate model works with all sorts of parties: policy-seeking, vote-seeking or office-seeking. For example, even if a party only presents a manifesto because it seeks votes, the mandate model works as long as the party sticks to its manifesto policies. Vote-seeking parties will probably stick to their mandate if they expect to lose the next elections if they do not implement their pledges. A similar argument can be made for office-seeking parties. Nevertheless, it is obviously much easier to achieve the goal of mandate fulfilment if parties are intrinsically motivated to realize their manifesto policies (Strøm, 1990: 569).

The changes in the political context and party system have brought about a change in the goals of parties. Whereas the organizing principles of the mass parties were the interests of their clearly defined constituencies, the catch-all and cartel parties have increasingly equated politics with entrepreneurship (Kirchheimer, 1966). The cause does no longer seek a party, but the party seeks a cause. Whereas it is hard to believe that most politicians do no longer have any genuine interest in the policies they defend, there seems to have been a shift from policy objectives to votes and office. One example is the process of depillarization in the Netherlands (Andeweg and Irwin, 2009). Before the 1970s, parties were very stable in terms of their electoral performance, exactly because cleavages were fixed. Changes in the election results represented demographic changes more than anything else. In addition, broad coalition governments were the norm. Even if parties were excluded from a coalition, this was generally the result of

policy differences rather than the election outcome. Thus, there was little to seek in terms of votes and office. On the other hand, parties did have clear policy programmes which corresponded to the societal group they represented. When this consociational system gradually but rather quickly disappeared in the 1960s and 1970s, parties had to start pursuing votes and office more actively. For example, the left-wing parties formed pre-electoral coalitions in an attempt to circumvent the domination of the Christian Democrats in the 1970s and to form a government by themselves.

3.3.4 Populism

The rise of populist parties may be regarded as a consequence of or a response to the developments described above. The scale on which populist parties have emerged in Western Europe and impacted existing parties warrants a separate discussion of this phenomenon (Hakhverdian and Koop, 2007; Bale et al., 2010). Populism explicitly challenges the representative credentials of the established parties. It makes a clear distinction between ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt (political) elite’ (Mudde, 2004). In the eyes of populist politicians, the established parties have forsaken the people. Instead of playing their political games, politicians should listen to what the people want and do it (Mudde, 2004).

Populists argue that the system of party representation has failed (Taggart, 2004). The complaints are manifold. For one, parties do not present manifestos that are different as to present voters with a real choice. In addition, some issues are ignored by the political consensus, such as immigration and integration (Van der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009). Second, parties do not listen to what the people really want. Populists often seem to assume that there is a kind of *volonté générale*, which is consistently ignored by the political elite. Thirdly, political parties surely do not do what they promised to voters (Taggart, 2004; Abts and Rummens, 2007). Populist parties are clearly hostile to how representative democracy currently functions (Taggart, 2004). It is, however, not as clear what they propose to do instead. On the one hand many populist parties propose to strengthen direct democracy (Taggart, 2004), but at the same time they are not entirely hostile towards the idea of political representation – they primarily oppose how it functions in contemporary democracies (Mudde, 2004).

While populism might be regarded as a response to the shortcomings of the current representative system, it also presents a particular *mode* of political representation (Arditi, 2003). Arditì argues that for populists, to use Pitkin’s (1967) terms, symbolic representation is just as important as representation as ‘acting for’. He connects a populist view of representative democracy to Manin’s (1997) concept of *audience democracy*. Audience democracy, Manin argues, has replaced party democracy: political competition is no longer something between grass-roots party institutions, but rather between professionalized organizations that are involved in media campaigns. Voters have become an audience rather than real participants in this process. At the same time, the link between voters and

politicians is argued to have become more personal (although it is unclear to what extent 'charisma' of the party leader plays a part in this (Van der Brug and Mughan, 2007)). This 'personal link' relates to a different aspect of the 'populist mode' of political representation: populists regard themselves as the voice of the people, rather than its representatives (Canovan, 1999; Ardit, 2003; Abts and Rummens, 2007). While they might see the necessity of representative institutions in modern democracies, populists will argue that representative democracy should be as direct as possible. They do not value the mediating function of representatives, such as deliberation or consensus-seeking. Rather, representatives should pursue what the people want. In that sense populists are clearly more on the 'mandate' than on the 'independent' side of the debate (see chapter 2).

The success of the populist parties challenges the established parties. Established parties might have moved from 'society' to the 'state', as the cartel party thesis suggests, but the presence of populist challengers may force established parties to abandon this strategy and become more sensitive to public demands (Kitschelt, 2000). Established parties sometimes try to copy populist rhetoric in order to show that they really care about 'the people' (Meguid, 2005; Mair, 2006). At the same time, they try to remove decisions from the realm of majoritarian decision-making (Majone, 1994; Mair, 2006), which notably reduces the policy link that the party mandate model provides. Thus, populism further changes how parties fulfil their representative functions.

3.3.5 How mandate fulfilment changed

There is little debate about the question whether the developments described here change the way in which parties fulfil their representative functions. However, there are diverging answers to the question on the extent to which the developments change the degree to which parties are responsive to voters and the extent to which they fulfil their electoral mandates. While some observers argue that there is a decline of party representation and party mandate fulfilment in particular, others have argued exactly the opposite.

The first argument in favour of a decline of party mandate fulfilment is derived from the catch-all party thesis. The process of a decline of cleavage voting has arguably increased parties' need to pursue votes more actively in most countries. The percentage of the manual labourers' vote that goes to the Social Democrats and the percentage of the religious vote for the Christian Democrats has declined in many Western European countries (Best, 2008). Even while winning the elections has been a primary concern for parties in Britain for a long time, in the past they only needed to focus on the swing vote, whereas nowadays parties can only take a small part of their vote for 'granted'. In addition, their support is not necessarily limited to one particular group in society nor organized along a single dimension of issue competition: parties have to deal with different groups in society whose demands might not be easy to aggregate into a single policy programme. This basically describes the setting under which modern parties

operate. The result is that politicians start behaving like political entrepreneurs (Panebianco, 1988). On the one side, this could increase the quality of representation, because entrepreneurs will be generally interested in providing the goods that their clients ask for, at least if this will further their own interests (for example, if they think they will win the next elections by pursuing policies that people favour). On the other hand, it might entice highly strategic behaviour on the part of the politicians: they will only keep their electoral promises if they think that this might help them win the next election. If a political entrepreneur who is primarily interested in votes and office believes that he can increase his vote share at the next elections by changing his position, he will probably do so. The reference point for parties' parliamentary behaviour is not the party's previous election manifesto, but what it perceives to be a winning program at the next election (Mansbridge, 2003).

The cartel party thesis makes a different argument about how party change affects party representation. Instead of entrepreneurs in a political 'free market', parties have become oligarchs in a 'cartelized political market'. The cartelization of party politics ensures that no party really loses an election. The cartel ensures that the spoils of the state are divided among all parties, not only the winning parties. Because the (electoral) market has been divided among the players (parties), the competition for votes has declined. Even the competition for office is no longer as important as it once was, according to the cartel party thesis. Instead, democratic elections are "'dignified parts" of the constitution' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 22). It becomes a service provided by the state for society. Parties are a part of this public service (Van Biezen, 2004). Because of the cartel, parties do no longer really care about policy, votes or office (Mair, 2006). Whereas the threat of losing votes or office used to be a major incentive for politicians to be responsive to voters, the fact that no party is definitely 'out' in a cartelized party system makes this mechanism much weaker. Therefore, Mair concludes that 'the relevance of linkages which are based on trust, accountability, and above all, representation, tends to become eroded, both inside and outside the parties' (Mair, 1997: 153).

Both the catch-all party model and the cartel party model do thus present potential problems for the quality of mandate fulfilment. The problems presented by the cartel party are clearly the largest: if politicians are no longer truly interested in policy, votes or office (but only in the stability of the state) all mechanisms to hold them to account on policies will fail, or at least they become less effective. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7: The congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency has declined over time.

Hypothesis 8: The congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions has declined over time.

This argument is strongly contested by Koole (1996) and Kitschelt (2000).

First, they argue that the link between state and parties might have become stronger but the two are not similar. While subsidies for parties have increased, parties are not merely state institutions or public utilities. Second, even if parties are essentially state actors that are not motivated by votes and office, why would they not make it easy on themselves by allocating resources to parties and respond to citizens' interests at the same time? There is, according to Kitschelt, no convincing reason why state-based parties could not be responsive parties which fulfil their electoral mandate. Third, there is no reason to assume that voters necessarily reject the moderate positions and compromises of the cartel parties. The mere fact that parties' policy positions would have converged does not make fulfilling the electoral mandate impossible. Fourthly, the threat of new parties will limit the success of the cartel strategy (Arditi, 2003). The emergence of successful (right-wing) populist parties in Western Europe is an example of this. While the established parties might very well want to limit competition in the political market, they simply are not able to pull it off, because of the threat of entry of new players. The argument that parties have nothing to lose in elections seems to be an overstatement. In terms of jobs: if a party loses many seats, this does not only influence the MPs' and ministers' jobs, but also that of the support staff and the staff at party headquarters. Also in terms of policy influence being in government is still to be preferred over being in opposition. The hypotheses presented in this chapter provide a test for the cartel party view on the developments in representation, namely that there is a decline of mandate fulfilment over time. Rejection of these hypotheses will support Koole's and Kitschelt's arguments that mandate fulfilment has not declined, but might even have increased.

3.4 Issue saliency and policy extremism

The debate on the advantages and disadvantages of consensus and majoritarian democracies offers institutional explanations of the variations in mandate fulfilment. In addition to these institutional explanations, the literature also offers explanations at the party (system) and issue level. Polarization is a party system level explanation that has recently received attention in the debate on representation. It has been used to explain policy linkage between voters and politicians. Kim et al. (2010) show that voter-government distances are lower in less polarized systems, especially in majoritarian democracies. This is explained by the fact that all parties will be closer to the median voter in a less polarized system, which reduces voter-government distances. In the case of the party mandate, however, the opposite relationship is expected to hold. Parties that take on average relatively extreme issue positions will be more congruent in their issue positions. After all, if parties feel more strongly about issues, they are probably also motivated to show higher levels of mandate fulfilment. A similar argument can be made for issues that are very salient to parties in terms of the attention

they pay to it. This section presents hypotheses on the explanatory power of issue saliency, issue position extremism and party extremism.

Let us first look at the influence of issue saliency on party mandate fulfilment. Although the relationship between issues and congruence seems plausible at face value, Thomson does not find a relationship between saliency and pledge fulfilment (Thomson, 1999: 206-7)¹¹. Nevertheless, it is expected that parties show higher levels of mandate fulfilment on issues that are most salient to them. This will influence both mandate fulfilment in terms of issue saliency as well as in terms of issue positions:

Hypothesis 9: The higher a party's manifesto saliency of an issue, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party issue saliency on that issue.

Hypothesis 10: The higher a party's saliency of an issue, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party position on that issue.

The independent variable 'issue saliency' will be operationalized in two ways. First, it refers to the *absolute* issue saliency, expressed as a percentage of the total attention for issues. For example, a party might dedicate 15 per cent of its manifesto to macro-economic issues and only 3 per cent to agriculture. The second operationalization concerns *relative* issue saliency, which is how salient an issue is for a party, compared to how salient that very issue is for other parties (in the same election). Take the example of the three per cent saliency of agricultural topics. If the other parties would dedicate only one or two percent of their manifesto to agriculture, it is a relatively salient issue for the first party. If the other parties, however, have agriculture at 10 per cent saliency, the party with 3 per cent has a low relative saliency level. The relative issue saliency score is calculated by standardizing the saliency levels of an issue across parties. The expectation is that both issues that have a high absolute saliency and those with a high relative saliency show high levels of congruence.

In addition to issues with high saliency, there are also issues on which they take an extreme position (but they do not necessarily attach high saliency to it). Policy extremism has mostly been studied as an institutional characteristic (Ezrow, 2008; Kim et al., 2010). The main question was whether proportional electoral systems create incentives for parties to adopt more extreme policies than majoritarian systems. Although formal analyses of this question do lead to this hypothesis, no empirical evidence has been found to support it (Ezrow, 2008). These studies use policy extremism as a party system characteristic. Here it is used differently: either as an issue-level characteristic or a party-level characteristic. Policy extremism as an issue-level characteristic simply indicates whether a party has a relatively extreme position on an issue dimension. This

¹¹In Thomson's study the saliency of a pledge is measured by looking at its repetition in consecutive manifestos.

implies that parties can be extreme on one issue dimension and moderate on another. For example, the British Liberal Democrats can be regarded as rather extreme on the issue of democratic reform, while they are moderate on economic policy. The Dutch Centre Democrats (CD) were very extreme on immigration policy, but quite moderate on other issues. Policy extremism as a party-level characteristic captures whether parties take extreme positions overall. After all, some parties do take extreme positions on basically every issue (e.g. the German *Linke*), while other parties take generally moderate issue positions (e.g. the Flemish *Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams*).

I also expect that congruence will be higher for those issues on which parties have more extreme positions. Even if issues are not extremely salient to a party both in absolute and relative terms, one would expect that they are less willing to compromise on those issues. After all, these issues are more likely to define a party's policy profile. Deviating from an extreme position will then be more costly. Besides, if parties take an extreme position on an issue dimension, its members will most likely also have relatively strong feelings about it¹²:

Hypothesis 11: The more extreme a party issue position is, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party position on that issue.

The last hypothesis presented here relates issue position congruence to the average extremism of a party's policy positions. The independent variable is a scale ranging from moderate policy positions (on average) to extreme policy positions (on average). Parties with extreme policy positions are estimated to show a higher congruence between their electoral and parliamentary positions. These parties are more likely to have a strong ideological profile and are therefore expected to be less willing to compromise in parliament. Therefore, I expect these parties to show higher levels of positional congruence:

Hypothesis 12: The higher the average extremism of a party's policy positions is, the higher the congruence between its electoral and parliamentary party positions.

3.5 Conclusion

The main explanation for variation in mandate fulfilment offered in this study is institutional. The debate between majoritarian and consensus democracy is especially relevant for the quality of representation. The main hypotheses read that consensus democracies will show higher levels of mandate fulfilment, both

¹²One might of course argue that this should then be captured by issue saliency. However, the way in which issue saliency is generally measured focuses on attention to issues (in terms how much a party writes or talks about it). One could argue that this measurement should also include how strongly parties feel about the issue, in terms of the language they use to express their position (Thomson, 1999: 87-92). However, this would blur the distinction between issue saliency and issue positions. Therefore, I analyse parties' issue extremism separately here.

in terms of issue saliency as well as in terms of issue positions. The model of democracy also influences the extent to which opposition and government parties are able to fulfil their mandates. In majoritarian countries, it is hypothesized, government parties will outperform opposition parties, while the opposite holds in consensus democracies. This study also takes a cross-temporal approach to the party mandate. By studying mandate fulfilment over a longer period of time, the hypothesis that the congruence between electoral and parliamentary positions and saliency decreases can be tested. Finally, some party system and party-issue-level explanations for the variation in mandate fulfilment have been offered: how salient issues are and how extreme parties' positions are.

Table 3.1: *Overview of hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1: A consensus democracy shows higher levels of congruence between the electoral party issue saliency and the parliamentary party issue saliency than a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 2: A consensus democracy shows higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 3: Government parties show higher levels of congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency than opposition parties, in a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 4: Government parties show higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than opposition parties, in a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 5: Opposition parties show higher levels of congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency than government parties, in a consensus democracy.

Hypothesis 6: Opposition parties show higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than government parties, in a consensus democracy.

Hypothesis 7: The congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency has declined over time.

Hypothesis 8: The congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions has declined over time.

Hypothesis 9: The higher a party's manifesto saliency of an issue, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party issue saliency on that issue.

Hypothesis 10: The higher a party's manifesto saliency of an issue, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party position on that issue.

Hypothesis 11: The more extreme a party issue position is, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party position on that issue.

Hypothesis 12: The higher the average extremism of a party's policy positions is, the higher the congruence between its electoral and parliamentary party positions.

Chapter 4

Comparing electoral and parliamentary competition

This study looks at the congruence of the spaces and structures of the electoral and parliamentary competition. This is essentially an institutional-level approach to the question of the party mandate: does the way parties speak to each other during the election campaign predict how they speak to each other in parliament? It is quite common to hear people talk about ‘the position’ of a party or that it has ‘moved’ to the left or right. Nevertheless, there is a lot of discussion about how one can estimate these issue positions. These cannot be directly observed, because they do not physically exist nor are they part of an uncontested social reality. Different methods of estimating party positions may lead to different and equally plausible outcomes. Therefore, the choice for a specific method must be made in light of the requirements of this study and the availability of data for the selected cases.

4.1 Research design

Ideally, a study of the party mandate would encompass a broad range of (developed) liberal democracies. Given the spatial method employed here and the need for original data collection this is not feasible. Comparing party positions as laid down in manifestos with what party MPs say in parliament requires a lot of text to be analysed. Even with computerized methods of content analysis, data collection and analysis of manifestos and parliamentary speech takes resources. Therefore, the number of countries in this study has to be limited.

I have selected two ‘typical’ cases: one majoritarian and one consensus democracy, that are nonetheless quite similar in other respects (age of the political system and the party system, economic development). This increases the chance

Table 4.1: *Comparison of the United Kingdom and The Netherlands on the main independent variable and controls*

	Regime type^a	Age of political system^b	Average GDP per capita^c	EU Mem- ber since
<i>United Kingdom</i>	-1.21	1832/1928	25,767	1973
<i>The Netherlands</i>	1.23	1848/1919	20,548	1950

^a Position on executive-parties dimension (Lijphart, 1999).

^b First year: introduction of parliamentary government with suffrage based on property rights. Second year: introduction of general suffrage with equal rights for men and women.

^c Average Gross Domestic Product per capita 1980-2008 (Purchasing Power Parity) in US\$ 2005 prices. Source: World Bank (2010)

that variation on the dependent variable (mandate fulfilment) is indeed the result of the main independent variable (type of democracy). For example, differences in the levels of mandate fulfilment between two countries cannot be explained by different levels of economic development if both countries' Gross Domestic Products (GDP) are (roughly) the same. Although the current design is not a full-fledged most similar systems design in which all possible rival explanations are excluded (Lijphart, 1971, 1975), the design makes it at least plausible that a difference between two countries in terms of mandate fulfilment is a result of regime type.

The main explanatory variable is the regime type, e.g. the position of a country on Lijphart's (1999) executive-parties dimension. The two countries selected for this study are The Netherlands and The United Kingdom. These are very different on the variable regime type (fourth highest and fifth lowest on the executive-parties dimension respectively), but similar in other respects. It could be argued that in systems with little democratic tradition or systems that are unstable, mandate fulfilment would be lower. Examples of clear violations of the party mandate have been documented in Latin America (Przeworski et al., 1999). The political systems of the two selected countries have been stable over the last two centuries and the development of a fully representative system of government has taken a similar pace (see table 4.1). A second alternative explanation that was excluded due to the case selection is the level of income per capita. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is roughly similar in both countries. Third, membership of the European Union (EU) is also included in table 4.1, because the presence of a supra-national decision-making body could have influence on the way which parties are able to fulfil their electoral mandates. Although Britain has entered the European community later, both have

been members for the largest part of the period covered by this study. Therefore, if there is a difference between majoritarian and consensus democracies in terms of mandate fulfilment, one is likely to observe it in the comparison of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Conversely, if I find a difference between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in terms of mandate fulfilment, some rival explanations can be excluded and it is likely to be the result of my main explanatory variable.

4.1.1 Case selection

The difficulty of a small-*n* study is the relatively large influence of measurement error and atypical cases. If only one case (an election and subsequent parliament) would be used for each country, errors in the measurement of party positions may lead to false conclusions. Furthermore, one may assume that there is some variation in the levels of mandate fulfilment between cases. If one would study only one case per country, the probability of selecting an outlier is rather large (King et al., 1994). To increase the number of cases, I selected elections and subsequent parliaments from six decades. An additional advantage of this approach is the possibility to track changes over time. To increase the number of observations in this two-country study, six cases are studied in each country. The number of observations can be further increased by treating each party's position on each policy dimension as a separate observation for some of the analyses.

For the selection of cases, five criteria were used. First, equal spread of cases over the period of interest (1950-2006). The period between 1950 and 2010 was one of democratic stability in both countries. Furthermore, both countries have witnessed gradual but remarkable changes in the way the political system functions. In both countries the relationship between voters and parties has changed, leading to changes in parties and party systems. With six cases per country, this means roughly one case per decade. Second, an equal distribution of party participation in government. Hence, each party's share of government participation must be similar in the sample as during the whole 1950-2006 period. Third, governments lasting less than three years were excluded, because very short parliaments would produce less reliable estimates of party positions. Fourth, the selected election years preferably must be similar for both countries, to correct for the influence of important international events. Fifth, to avoid that observations from one case are dependent on the observations in another case, it is preferred that no subsequent governments are included¹.

Table 4.2 displays all governments that sat for at least three years, ordered roughly per decade. Apart from the Netherlands in the 1950s and both countries in the 2000s, in each decade there is choice between two or three cases. By selecting the second option for Britain (except in the 2000s) in each decade and the

¹Of course, the selected cases in one country will never be fully independent, because it concerns the same parties during different time periods.

Table 4.2: *Case selection^a*

	United Kingdom			Netherlands
	Years	Party ^b	Years	Parties ^b
1950s	1951-1955	Con	1952-1956	<i>PvdA</i> /KVP/ARP/ CHU
	1955-1959	Con		
1960s	1959-1964	Con	1959-1963	KVP/ARP/CHU/ VVD
	1966-1970	Lab	1967-1971	KVP/ARP/CHU/ VVD
1970s	1970-1974	Con	1972-1977	<i>PvdA</i> /KVP/ARP/ D66/PPR
	1974-1979	Lab	1977-1981	CDA/VVD
1980s	1979-1983	Con	1982-1986	CDA/VVD
	1983-1987	Con	1989-1994	CDA/PvdA
1990s	1987-1992	Con	1994-1998	<i>PvdA</i> /VVD/D66
	1992-1997	Con	1998-2002	<i>PvdA</i> /VVD/D66
	1997-2001	Lab		
2000s	2001-2005	Lab	2003-2006	CDA/VVD/D66

^a Note: The party of the Dutch prime minister is italicized. The selected parliaments are printed in bold.

^b For full party names, please refer to table B.2 on page 234.

Table 4.3: *Average government participation in the Netherlands 1950-2006^a*

	<i>Party^c</i>					
	CDA ^b	PvdA	VVD	PPR	D66	LPF
<i>Period 1950-2006^a</i>	85.7	49.6	65.2	8.3	30.2	1.5
<i>Selected cases</i>	86.0	55.6	65.0	20.2	50.7	0.0
<i>Difference (overrepresentation in sample)</i>	+0.3	+6.0	-0.1	+11.9	+20.5	-1.5

^a The figure indicates the number of days that the party participated in government as a percentage of the total number of days. The 'whole periode' figure includes all governments, not only those that sat 3 years or longer.

^b Before 1980: Katholieke Volkspartij (KVP), Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (ARP) and Christelijk-Historische Unie (CHU)

^c For full party names, please refer to table B.2 on page 234.

first option for the Netherlands, the criteria for case selection are fulfilled to a large degree². The selection includes three Labour and three Conservative governments in the United Kingdom. For the Netherlands, table 4.3 shows that each party's participation in government in the sample is roughly equal to the participation in the whole 1950-2006 period. There is a difference between sample and population for two smaller parties, PPR and D66. For the PPR this cannot be avoided, for the only cabinet in which it ever participated is included in the analysis. D66 did not exist before 1966, therefore it could not have participated beforehand. In the 1967-2006 period, D66 participated in 42.5% of the governments, hence its overrepresentation is not dramatic. Apart from the 1950s and the 1960s, the selected parliaments sat in roughly the same years in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

In principle, all parties that win seats in an election are included in the analysis. There are two types of exceptions to this rule. In Britain, the analysis is limited to the three large parties, because the other parties are regional parties. The parties in Northern Ireland form a fully separate party system from the rest of the country. The regional parties in Britain, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru do not compete in the whole of Britain either. For the Netherlands, I excluded some parties of which the electoral position cannot be estimated (i.e. there is no party manifesto).

²The 2005 and 2007 governments of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands respectively were not included, because their terms had not finished when data collection started.

4.2 Analysing parties' policy preferences

Party position is an abstract and, to a certain degree, a subjective notion. Where parties stand is conditional on the method used for studying their position. However, this does not mean that parties might very well be 'everywhere' and cannot be positioned at all. Very often different methods arrive at similar conclusions: hardly anybody will argue that the British Labour party was to the right of the Conservative parties during the 1980s, no matter which estimation procedure they use. When people talk about 'measuring' or 'estimating' party positions they do not suggest that they are measuring something which is simply out there, as if one were measuring the positions of buildings in a city or pieces on a check board. The party position compares a parties' policies or ideas with the policies or ideas of other parties, often expressed on a continuum, such as left-right or progressive-conservative.

Spaces of party competition are also abstract and constructed. The only concrete 'spaces of competition' are the buildings of parliament or maybe television studios and back rooms during campaign time. These are not the spaces of competition that I am interested in, although the most well-known dimension of party competition, Left-Right, is derived from exactly such a (parliamentary) setting (Benoit and Laver, 2006). Spaces of competition, in the abstract sense, are (visual) representations of the policy competition between political parties. The abstract nature of the space of competition makes it more difficult to estimate what it looks like. The choices in the estimation procedure are likely to affect the findings and should thus be made carefully.

4.2.1 Estimating party policy preferences

Estimating policy positions has been a major challenge for political scientists. Researchers have developed several methods of estimating party policy positions: qualitative evaluation, mass surveys, elite surveys and interviews, expert surveys, analysis of (roll call) votes and estimating positions from political texts, such as election manifestos and parliamentary speeches. Most approaches have resulted in relatively reliable and valid estimates for party positions. However, not all approaches can be used in every circumstance. For example, the analysis of parliamentary (roll call) votes can only be done if voting behaviour has been recorded.

This study seeks to compare party policy preferences during election campaigns and in parliament, both party issue saliency and party issue positions (what parties talk about and what they say). The method used to estimate these preferences must thus be very well able to distinguish between the party preferences during the election and those in parliament. This is even more of a concern, because the election and subsequent parliament occur very shortly after one another. Methods that give an estimation of a party position in, for example, the first half of the 1990s, are not specific enough to compare the preferences of Brit-

ish parties in the 1992 elections and the subsequent parliament. Another vital requirement of this study is that it should be possible to estimate party preferences from the past as this study covers the period from 1950 to 2006. The method should thus be able to arrive at an estimate long after the party preferences have been outlined.

Perhaps the least discussed, but often used, approach is a qualitative evaluation of parties' positions on issues by the researcher. This approach involves in-depth knowledge of a particular party system which allows the researchers to combine evidence from a wealth of sources to arrive at a careful ordering of parties. The need for in-depth knowledge is obviously also a major hindrance for such an approach, because it makes the study very resource-intensive. Furthermore, other researchers may arrive at rather different conclusions, so the reliability of this approach is questionable. The comparison between the party competition at election-time and the competition in parliament can benefit from the elaborateness of the analysis, but may suffer from a heavy reliance on a single (or small group of) researcher(s). This especially makes a comparison between cases more difficult.

The expert survey builds on the idea that political scientists generally have a fair idea of where parties are located on policy scales (Benoit and Laver, 2006; Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Laver, 1998; Laver and Garry, 2000; Warwick, 2005; Marks et al., 2006). However, instead of relying on a single researcher, they ask a number of experts, usually academics, to position parties on (pre-defined) policy scales. This leads to higher reliability of the analysis and provides an estimate of the uncertainty of the party positions found (Benoit and Laver, 2006). It is of course, pivotal, to find proper experts for such a purpose, especially since the studies rely on a relatively small number of respondents. A limitation of the method is that expert surveys cannot be reliably used to estimate positions in the past. Apart from that, it is often found that the expert estimates of party policy positions do hardly change over time. Instead of estimating a parties' position at a specific point in time, the expert surveys seem to capture a sort of longer-term party position (McDonald et al., 2007). This makes these surveys unsuitable for comparing party positions in the short term, e.g. before and after elections, unless you specifically ask experts to distinguish between the two. Even if one does that, the experts' estimates will probably result from a rather broad range of sources and may just reflect public opinion on parties' positions, rather than the behaviour of parties themselves (Marks et al., 2007).

The mass survey and the elite survey suffer from largely the same problems as the expert surveys in terms of the ability to collect data for the past and comparison over short periods of time. For politicians there is the additional question of the honesty of their answers (Benoit and Laver, 2006: 64). After all, politicians have an interest to show themselves to be rather congruent in terms of their policy positions between elections and manifestos. Although useful data sources for a large number of applications, expert, mass and elite surveys are not suitable for the current research design.

Roll call vote analysis has primarily been applied to the United States, but there is no reason why it cannot be applied in other countries as well (Poole, 2005). Parliamentary votes are obviously only a representation of the parliamentary competition, thus another source would be needed for the electoral competition. Although this may bias the comparison between the two spaces of competition, this should not be an insurmountable problem. Not all parliaments use roll call votes. In Great Britain many votes are indeed roll calls and the parliamentary record provides the vote of each individual MP. Roll call votes are, however, very rare in the Dutch parliament. The Second Chamber usually votes by show of hands, which is recorded by parliamentary party rather than by individual. Roll calls are only held when the expected majority is slim or when a party is internally divided, for example on ethical issues. Vote analysis of the Dutch parliament is thus practically restricted to the party level.

The lack of roll call votes is not necessarily a problem for the purposes of this study. After all, it looks at the party mandate, which means that party voting behaviour is just fine for my purposes. For Britain, one might aggregate individual votes to party votes, taking the majority of the party to represent the party line. The Dutch parliament usually votes by parliamentary party group. However, before the 1970s, roll call voting was the most important way in which the Dutch parliament voted, but this was used only sporadically. Instead, if only one party would oppose a proposal it would ask for an annotation of its opposition in the minutes. Even when considering these as parliamentary votes, the number of votes is basically too small for a proper analysis³.

Apart from data availability considerations, the properties of the vote should also be considered. Parliamentary votes are the result of discussions in committees and the general assembly. Although they are in a sense, the final consequence of the parliamentary work, they only represent a small portion of that work. Much parliamentary work does, for example, not result in votes, for example parliamentary questions as well as many debates. In addition, the vote reflects compromises reached earlier in the parliamentary process. Many votes, especially in the Dutch parliament, concern motions and amendments, which are usually only tabled if the government does not provide a satisfactory answer to the questions or demands of a party.

The method that will be used in this study is content analysis of political text. Political texts are manifold, for example party manifestos, interviews, articles and speeches of members of parliament. Talking is part of the 'core business' of politicians. Language is the vehicle of the party mandate: the mandate is obtained through the election programme and it is fulfilled by pursuing this programme in parliament, by voting and discussing. Studying these political texts is thus one of the most direct ways in which party behaviour can be observed (Benoit and Laver, 2006).

³It is also very skewed, with opposition parties, especially the communist party, requesting many more annotations than any other party.

A crucial advantage of studying political text is that a clear distinction can be made between what is said during the elections, for example in the party manifesto, and what politicians say in parliament. In addition, it is possible to study parties' preferences in the past, as long as the textual sources are available. For example, there are no expert surveys or mass surveys of party policy preferences during the 1950s (at least not in both of my cases), but by studying parties' manifestos and parliamentary speeches, their preferences can be estimated.

It is sometimes argued that the weakness of manifestos and parliamentary debates is that they are strategic documents (Marks et al., 2007). For example, parties may choose to ignore some topics in their manifesto in order not to alienate voters. Furthermore, depending on the context parties operate in, they might formulate some preferences very ambivalently (Marks et al., 2007: 33). It is argued that the manifesto is therefore a poor reflection of parties' actual policy positions. In the discussion of the spatial approach to the party mandate in chapter 2, I have indicated that the strategic nature of manifestos should be taken into account in their analysis. What is absent from a manifesto is at least as important as what is included. That is exactly the reason why the spatial approach looks at party positions on issue dimensions and in political spaces rather than at individual pledges. If parties do indeed exclude important issues from their manifestos for strategic reasons, one would find incongruence between their manifesto and parliamentary positions. The strategic nature of these document is thus not a problem, in the light of the current research question, but something of interest. For this study, what matters is not what parties 'really want', but what parties really say.

4.2.2 Estimating party policy preferences from text

Party policy preferences are relevant explanations for a large number of political research questions. It is thus not surprising to find that many researchers have attempted to estimate parties' policy preferences. This has led to many different approaches. Traditionally, these methods have relied on the coding of texts by humans: people reading texts and classifying sentences or paragraphs or looking for the presence of certain policy proposals. Recently, computerized methods for estimating party policy preferences from political texts have been developed, which can greatly reduce the workload involved in estimating preferences from political texts.

Manual content analysis

There are basically three approaches of human coding of political texts: the saliency approach, the network approach and the confrontational approach. The saliency approach is based on the idea that parties do not compete by adopting confronting policy positions, but by emphasizing different issues. It has produced the very elaborate and successful Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP),

which has analysed party manifestos from many countries from 1945 onwards (Budge et al., 1987, 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006). The classification scheme reflects the assumptions of the saliency theory of party competition. This theory argues that parties do not compete by adopting conflicting views on a number of given issues, but rather by selectively emphasizing certain issues over others. Thus, instead of some parties proposing all kinds of environmentally-friendly policies and another party opposing these, 'green' parties will simply emphasize the importance of the environment while other parties will ignore the issue. Saliency theory goes even further, by arguing that on most issues there is basically only one viable policy position. For example, very few parties will argue that environmental pollution is a good thing and that climate change will further the well-being of the human race. Instead, parties that are not so much in favour of green policies will simply downplay the issue, saying that the status quo is not so bad and that the problems of climate change are exaggerated. The real competition between parties does not occur by a direct confrontation of parties, but by stressing some issues and downplaying others.

The Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) uses a classification scheme that consists of 56 'saliency' categories. For each manifesto, the CMP dataset gives the percentage of sentences in that manifesto dedicated to one of these categories. A manifesto is coded by only one person, which means that there is no measure of inter-coder reliability. The authors of the project's books use the data to construct a Left-Right dimension of party competition⁴ (Budge, 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006).

Despite the CMP's claim that differences between parties' positions are unimportant, the classification scheme consists of many 'confrontational' elements. For example, some categories present (implicitly) opposed ideas, such as 'Military: positive' and 'Military: negative'⁵. This means that the dataset could also be used in a more 'confrontational' way, if one is not willing to make the assumptions of saliency theory (Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006; Klingemann et al., 2006). However, one is limited by the categories that are included in the coding scheme (which is exactly the same for all documents in all countries across all years). An example of this limitation is that the coding scheme does not contain the issue of immigration. The application of the same coding scheme to all countries and years allows for comparative analyses of party positions, but also makes it

⁴Using a partly inductive, partly deductive method they designated 13 categories as left-wing 13 categories as right-wing. The Left-Right score is simply the percentage of manifesto (quasi-)sentences devoted to right-wing issues minus the percentage of manifesto (quasi-)sentences devoted to left-wing issues. Other authors propose different methods to calculate policy scales (Kim and Fording, 1998; Warwick, 2002; Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006; Lowe et al., 2011).

⁵In fact 20 out of 56 categories are twinned in such a way. Four other categories are also directly opposed, namely those that measure support for the 'expansion' or 'limitation' of the welfare state and education. Many other issues, especially in the economic domain, represent implicitly opposed views, such as 'Controlled Economy' and 'Free Enterprise' or 'Economic Orthodoxy' and 'Keynesian Demand Management'.

insensitive to particularities in countries and years⁶.

The confrontational approach explicitly opposes the saliency theory of party competition. It maintains that party competition is centred around a number of important issues, on which parties have confronting opinions. It explicitly rejects the assumption of the saliency theory that there is basically only one viable policy position on an issue. Pellikaan et al. (2003) point out that electoral competition is not simply a case of parties 'talking past each other'. In each election, a number of important issues dominate the debate and parties often take very different positions on these issues. On minor issues, parties might indeed present proposals that no one else talks about, but the big election issues are confrontational issues.

For their analysis of the 2002 elections in the Netherlands, Pellikaan et al. (2003) selected the relevant issue dimensions based on the (unstructured) study of newspapers' campaign reporting and observers' opinions. They argue that in the Dutch election campaign of 2002 a new issue dimension had arisen, namely the 'cultural' dimension, which relates to issues on immigration and integration. This new dimension replaced religion as the second dimension of competition, next to the economic left-right dimension. For both of their issue dimensions, the researchers identify ten pivotal issues (items). They do not attempt to classify each sentence in a manifesto (like the saliency approach), but only look at support for or rejection of each of these items. For each party they simply record whether the party manifesto supports, rejects or does not mention the proposal. These scores are recoded, so that a positive score always means support for the free market, for example. The party position is simply the sum of all scores. For example, a party which supports 2 pro-market and 5 pro-state intervention proposals, receives a score of -3 (2-5)⁷. The confrontational approach only estimates parties' issue positions, it does not estimate parties' issue saliency. Obviously, the successful application of this method to a case requires a relatively great familiarity of the researcher with the situation in a country. On the other side, this makes it very easy to tailor the approach to many different countries and years: the researcher can select the relevant issue dimensions and items for each particular case.

The network approach is similar to the confrontational approach in the sense that it makes a clear distinction between party policy positions and issue saliency. On the other hand, it shares the saliency approach's method of coding each (substantive) sentence. In its original version, the network approach (also known as relational content analysis) models sentences as objects and the relations between those objects (Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg, 1995; Kleinnijenhuis

⁶The comparative benefit of common coding scheme can also be questioned, because it is not necessarily a valid coding scheme for all countries and all years. The same can be said, probably even more strongly, about the Left-Right dimension that is constructed from this data: 'What does it really say when the Bulgarian Socialist Party in 1990 is estimated to be to the right of the UK Labour party in 2005?' (Louwerse, 2009: 108)

⁷Gemenis and Dinas (2010) propose a different calculation, in which neutral scores are ignored.

and Pennings, 2001). For example, in the sentence ‘Brown wants higher taxes’, Brown is the subject (actor) who has a positive attitude towards the object ‘higher taxes’. Although such as method can be applied to all kinds of statements, not only policy statements, I will limit my discussion to these kinds of statements.

Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg (1995) apply this methodology to news media; it can easily be modified to work with manifestos and parliamentary debates. Kriesi et al. (2006, 2008) apply the method for their analysis of party positions in western democracies. They use a simpler approach, leaving out the relational element of the analysis, simply coding newspaper statements that position parties one way or another. More specifically, they position each statement on one of 12 five-point issue scales, such as ‘welfare’, ‘cultural liberalism’, ‘europe’, ‘immigration’, ‘army’ and ‘environment’. By explicitly positioning parties on issue dimensions, they make a clear distinction between the saliency of an issue for a party and its position on that issue. The issue saliency is simply the percentage of statements on one specific dimension, in other words how much parties talk about an issue. A party position reflects what message parties try to convey. The position is estimated by taking the average score of all statements on an issue. For example, a party that has 15 pro-welfare statements, 5 neutral statements and 3 anti-welfare statements, would have an average dimension score of 0.52⁸. Thus, while the network approach by and large has the same theoretical ideas about party competition as the confrontational approach, its coding method bears similarity with both the confrontational and the saliency approach.

An obvious limitation of any manual content analysis is the amount of work involved. Hand-coding documents takes a lot of time, especially if one wants to code each document by more than one coder. Therefore, the resource intensity is very high (see table 4.4). This is particularly true for methods that rely on coding all sentences in a manifesto, namely the saliency and network approach. Because the confrontational approach limits itself to ten items per dimension, the burden of coding work is lower. This study does not only analyse party manifestos, but also parliamentary debates. This increases the coding load enormously. Therefore, the use of any form of manual coding for the present research question would require a sampling strategy, where only a part of the available (parliamentary) text would be analysed.

The validity of manual content analysis methods depends on the quality of the coding scheme. If the coding scheme accurately reflects conflicts between parties on relevant issue dimensions, its application will yield valid estimates. However, the application of the same coding scheme to many different countries and over a long period of time might lower the validity, because case-specific variation is ignored. Therefore, the saliency and network approaches show ‘medium’ levels of validity in table 4.4. Cross-validation of the saliency approach estimates also shows moderately high correlations with other measures of party policy, such as expert surveys (Klingemann et al., 2006; Keman, 2007). Because

$$8 \frac{(15*1)+(5*0)+(3*-1)}{(15+5+3)} = \frac{12}{23} = 0.52$$

Table 4.4: Comparison of strengths and weaknesses of several measurement approaches^a

	<i>Manual coding</i>			<i>Computerized coding</i>	
	Saliency approach	Network approach	Confrontational approach	Wordscores	Wordfish
Resource intensity	Very High	Very High	High	Low	Low
Validity	Medium	Medium	Medium-High	Medium	Medium
Reliability	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Certainty	Unknown ^b	Unknown	Unknown	Known	Known

^a Adapted from Benoit and Laver (2006).

^b Can be estimated using the algorithms of Mikhaylov et al. (2008) or Lowe et al. (2011).

the confrontational approach allows a researcher to select specific dimensions and items for each country and each election, it is likely to yield even more valid estimates. After all, this avoids the problems of applying a common framework to many different cases. The validity of the confrontational approach does, however, depend on the level of knowledge a researcher has about a particular case: the selection of dimensions and items is pivotal.

The reliability of the estimates is also an important characteristic. For content analysis techniques, this is primarily expressed as inter-coder reliability. It measures the degree to which different coders apply similar codes to sentences. The problem of many manual coding schemes is that inter-coder reliability is unknown. The saliency approach' Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) only provides the score coders achieved on a 'coding test' and the Pellikaan et al. (2003) do not provide information on inter-coder reliability of the confrontational approach. Some publications employing the network approach do provide estimates, which range from a somewhat low Krippendorff's alpha of 0.67 to a more than fair 0.75 (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2007). The more cohesive and more tailored to a specific case a coding scheme is, the higher inter-coder reliability will likely be. However, it is clear that every method that uses manual coding will suffer from inter-coder reliability problems to a certain degree.

The uncertainty of the estimates that are produced by manual content analysis is often unknown. It is, however, important to have an idea of the certainty of the estimates, especially if one is interested in changes in the positions of parties. After all, these changes might be simply the result of uncertainties in the estimation procedure. To distinguish between 'real' change and change that is the result of uncertainty, knowledge of the certainty of the estimates is necessary. Whereas one does probably have an intuitive feeling that an estimate based on coding a 10-sentence manifesto is probably less certain than an estimate that is based on a 10-page manifesto, this is often not expressed as a certainty estimate. For the Comparative Manifestos Project's estimates, some procedures have been proposed to estimate this uncertainty (Lowe et al., 2011; Mikhaylov et al., 2008). These procedures could also be modified to apply to the network approach' estimate. The confrontational approach is essentially deterministic; dimensions and items are explicated before the analysis, which means that there is no estimate of certainty that can be associated with the estimates.

Although there are variations in the underlying theories of party competition of the different types of manual content analysis as well as their coding methods, their strengths and weaknesses are generally similar. Their resource intensity is (very) high, (inter-coder) reliability is moderate, their validity is moderate to high and the certainty of the estimates is mostly unknown.

Computerized content analysis

Computerized methods of content analysis of political text have been developed as resource-extensive alternatives to manual content analysis. These techniques

usually rely on word counts⁹: they basically count how often each unique word is mentioned in each text.

One of the main selling points of computerized coding is that it drastically reduces the amount of work. Instead of having to read and code all texts, the researcher lets the computer count the unique words in the documents. These word count matrices are used to estimate party positions. Depending on the exact implementation this can reduce the time necessary to analyse a single manifesto from several hours to a few minutes (including preparation of the document). In recent years, more and more text has been made available digitally, often on the internet. Although preparing these texts for analysis does involve some work, especially when dealing with large quantities of, for example, parliamentary speech, the amount of work involved is small compared to coding a similar quantity of text manually. The resource intensity of computerized coding is thus low, especially in comparison with manual coding (table 4.4.). Because this study includes a very large amount of text (manifesto and parliamentary debates in twelve cases), this is a huge advantage.

For human procedures, validity is relatively easy to achieve, especially if the designer of the coding scheme is involved in the coding procedure. Computerized methods are more likely to suffer from invalidity problems, as the analysis is based on the analysis of word count matrices, rather than an understanding of what the text is about. While computerized techniques have become more sophisticated, validity will remain an issue. Generally, the outcomes of computerized techniques are compared to other party position benchmarks to show their validity (Budge and McDonald, 2007; Proksch and Slapin, 2009; Klemmensen et al., 2007; Slapin and Proksch, 2008). These benchmarks show that computerized coding methods do achieve moderate levels of validity.

Another advantage of using computers instead of human coders is the reliability of computers. Whereas human coders tend to disagree on the coding of sentences or items, computers will count words exactly the same time and time again. This does not mean that there is no uncertainty in the estimation, but this uncertainty does not stem from differences between the repeated applications of the coding procedure. Instead, uncertainty is related to the amount of available information: if one deals with very short texts the party position estimate is very uncertain, especially if word usage is not consistent. The uncertainty of the document scores can be estimated from variance in the parameters of the model. Information on the certainty of the estimates can, in turn, be used to assess whether party position changes are result of uncertainty of the estimate or reflect 'real' change.

Comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the various human and computerized content analysis techniques results in the conclusion that for this project, a computerized approach is most suitable. The volume of text that needs

⁹Some methods rely on other information, such as bi-grams (combinations of two words). However, both techniques presented here (Wordscores and Wordfish) rely on word count matrices.

to be analysed is simply too large to be analysed manually. At the same time, computerized methods have shown to produce valid and reliable party policy preference estimates. Therefore, this study uses a form of computerized content analysis.

This conclusion does not mean that computerized content analysis is suitable for all research questions. In some cases manual approaches are preferable. One example is when the amount of text is small. In those cases, computerized analysis will have problems to achieve robust and certain estimates, as I will discuss below. At the same time the resource intensity of manual coding is not so much a problem if there is very little text to read. Another situation in which the advantages of manual coding will probably outweigh the disadvantages, is when dealing with very specific issues or circumstances. In those cases the word-count based automatic methods might have trouble to find clear patterns in party speech, while human coders will be able to do so. The confrontational method seems particularly well-placed to deal with such situations, exactly because it leaves quite a lot of discretion for the researcher. However, in the current study the aim is to estimate parties' positions on rather broadly defined policy dimensions using a large volume of text. Here, the advantages of computerized methods are clear.

4.2.3 Computerized content analysis of political text

Wordscores

Although other computerized methods of content analysis of party manifestos have been attempted before, Wordscores presents the first method which has been applied successfully and has remained popular among scientists studying different countries and different sources. As the name suggests, it uses the word counts in documents to estimate party positions. It uses reference texts of which the position on a one-dimensional scale is known to estimate the position of virgin texts which have an unknown position. Laver et al. (2003) use the British manifestos of 1992 and 1997 as an example. Essentially, they use the manifestos of 1992 to estimate what words are typically used by a left-wing party and what words are typically used by a right-wing party. These are the word scores. Using these word scores they then estimate the position of the 1997 manifestos. If a 1997 manifesto uses a lot of right-wing words, its document score will be similar to that of a 1992 right-wing party and vice versa¹⁰. The method uses the information of word usage in the reference texts to estimate the policy positions of the virgin texts.

¹⁰The algorithm proceeds as follows: Laver, Benoit and Garry created a matrix of word counts, which contains the number of times each manifesto uses each unique word. For the reference texts, the 1992 manifestos, they enter the position of the party which is obtained from an external source, in this case an expert survey. The next step in their algorithm is to calculate a word score for each word w , which is the sum of the conditional probabilities of reading text r when reading word w times the reference position of text r , for each text r :

Wordscores requires the researcher to make a priori decisions about the nature of the issue dimensions he wants to study. By choosing a set of documents and assigning reference scores to these texts, based on an idea of an underlying dimension, the nature of the outcome dimension is determined in advance. However, if the match of reference and virgin text is poor, the estimate will have low validity. The method assumes that the word scores are similar for both the reference and virgin text, which ignores the context in which words are used. As time passes, the relevance of words and their substantive connotation can change. For example, a word like 'multicultural' was a rather broadly used term in the Netherlands in the 1990s, while it is now highly politicized. Another problem with the validity of the scores is that a lot of information in the text is not used; the algorithm only takes word counts into account. While this approach produces rather good estimates in some cases, it may fail to get the message in other cases¹¹.

The selection of reference texts is pivotal for the correct application of Wordscores. Laver et al. explicitly argue that the reference texts and the virgin texts

$$S_{wd} = \sum_r \left(\frac{F_{wr}}{(\sum_r F_{wr})} A_{rd} \right) \quad (4.1)$$

Where F_{wr} is the relative frequency of word w in text r and A_{rd} is the a priori reference text score of text r on dimension d . In other words, words that are only used by, for example, Labour gets a word score that is equal to the reference position of Labour in 1992. Words that are used to the same extent by the Liberals and the Conservatives receive a word score which is exactly the average of these parties' reference scores. The following step is to estimate the document scores of the virgin texts, which is the sum of the relative frequency times the word score, for each word:

$$S_{vd} = \sum_w (F_{wv} S_{wd}) \quad (4.2)$$

where F_{wv} is a matrix of relative word counts for each word w for each virgin text v and S_{wd} is the matrix of word scores from equation 4.1. The scores thus obtained need to be rescaled, because non-discriminating words will cluster together the scores of the virgin texts. Laver et al. (2003) use a transformation (the LBG transformation) that preserves the mean positions of the virgin scores, but makes their variance equal to the variance of the reference texts. An alternative transformation is proposed by Martin and Vanberg (MV), which depends only on the reference texts (Martin and Vanberg, 2007). It uses the ratio of the difference between the assigned reference scores (A_{rd}) and the raw document scores of the reference texts. Essentially it multiplies each raw scores by the number of times the raw scores of the (two most extreme) reference texts have are smaller than the assigned reference scores. For example, if the difference between the two reference text's raw scores is 0.5 and the difference between their assigned scores is 3, the multiplication factor is equal to $3 / 0.5 = 6$. Benoit and Laver argue that the MV transformation could be used when the number of virgin texts is limited and the assumptions of the LBG transformation, namely that the variance of both sets of scores is equal, are not likely to be met (Benoit and Laver, 2008). Using the LBG transformation, the authors are able to calculate party manifesto positions for 1997 that are very close to expert survey estimate of those positions.

¹¹Lowe (2008) points out several fundamental problems with Wordscores and suggests that it is basically an imperfect approximation of an ideal point model for words, which would only work under conditions which will never hold for word count data. His solution is to reformulate Wordscores as an ideal-point model, which can be estimated by maximum likelihood or inferred via Bayesian methods. This remains future work.

should use the same lexicon:

This implies that we should resist the temptation to regard party manifestos as appropriate reference texts for analysing legislative speeches.

(Laver et al., 2003: 315)

This does present a problem for the application of Wordscores to the current research question. After all, to test the party mandate the most logical thing to do in a Wordscores design would be to use the manifestos as reference texts for parliamentary speech in order to assess party position change. Although such an analysis would probably tell something about parties' positions, the differences between the parliamentary and manifesto lexicon will influence the scores. In fact any analysis which tries to directly compare word usage in manifestos and parliament would have to take these lexical differences into account. An alternative strategy, would be to estimate party positions in manifestos and in parliamentary speech separately. This would, in the case of Wordscores, however require two separate sets of reference texts and position: for manifestos and parliament. However, if these estimates would already be available, there would be no need to perform the Wordscores analysis at all.

Wordscores presents a large step forward in the computerized analysis of political texts. It is reliable, fast, relatively flexible and valid. However, the need for reference texts that are comparable to virgin texts does provide an obstacle for the current study, because it is problematic to use manifestos as reference texts for parliamentary debates. Even if this would work, it will mean that the parliamentary scores are calculated in terms of manifesto word usage. One of the criticisms on the pledge approach of the study of the party mandate is exactly that its analysis focuses too much on the manifestos and too little on the post-electoral behaviour of parties. Applying Wordscores to the current research question would yield a similar problem.

Wordfish

The main alternative to Wordscores also uses word count data to estimate party positions: Wordfish uses a poisson model that predicts the number of times a party mentions a certain word (Slapin and Proksch, 2008; Proksch and Slapin, 2008). The idea is that word usage is a function of a number of latent (unobserved) variables, one of which is a party's policy issue position. Other than Wordscores, the Wordfish algorithm does not use a priori information on the position of words. The method is thus inductive: it estimates parties' positions purely from the differences in their word usage. Wordfish does not require the use of reference texts, which is an advantage for the purpose of this study. On the other hand, using an inductive method does also present problems and challenges, exactly because the method picks up on differences in word usage.

The number of times a party mentions a certain word in its manifesto is an example of count data. Count data is usually assumed to follow a *poisson* distribution. Therefore Wordfish uses a poisson model to estimate the policy positions of actors from word count data. The poisson distribution has only one parameter, lambda (λ), which represents both the mean and the standard deviation. This makes it easier and quicker to estimate the model. The lambda parameter for each word j in document i is estimated by:

$$\lambda_{ij} = \exp(\alpha_i + \psi_j + \beta_j * \omega_i) \quad (4.3)$$

The equation consists of four parameters that all are all estimated by the Wordfish algorithm. Alpha (α) captures a 'fixed party effect', which essentially controls for differences in the length of party documents or speeches. When a document is very long, the word count of basically every word increases for that document, which is reflected in a higher estimate of alpha. The second parameter, psi (ψ), captures a 'fixed word effect'. Some words are used more often than other words in all texts, for example articles or words like 'we', 'it', or 'and'. This is captured by a value of psi for each word. Thus, words that are used more often in all texts, will have higher psi values. Beta (β) captures the amount of information word j conveys in distinguishing between party positions, or put differently the sensitivity of the occurrence of word j to changes in the policy position of the documents (Lowe, 2008). To put it simply, if a certain word is used many times by some parties but not by others, it discriminates well between parties and will get a highly positive or a highly negative beta value. Omega (ω) estimates the policy position of each document, the most interesting parameter for the purposes of this study.

Slapin and Proksch have made an algorithm available which they show to perform very well in finding the maximum likelihood estimator (2008)¹². Wordfish estimates the positions of parties on a single scale. However, one can run separate analyses on different parts of the manifestos, for example on different issues. In this way the estimate of party positions can differ between issues.

Slapin and Proksch have successfully applied the Wordfish algorithm to estimate the policy positions of German party manifestos (Slapin and Proksch, 2008, 2009) and party speeches in the European Parliament (Proksch and Slapin, 2009). The method can thus be applied to both arenas. Furthermore, their analysis of the European Parliament speeches has shown that Wordfish works with different languages: the results of the German, English and French translations of the minutes were highly correlated.

The most important difference between Wordfish and Wordscores lies in the epistemology of the scales that are estimated. Wordscores uses a priori information from the reference texts and the external estimates of the positions of the

¹²The four parameters are estimated using an expectation-maximization algorithm that optimizes the log-likelihood of the model. Recently, Will Lowe's R package *Austin* has further improved the estimation algorithm and speed. However, the data analysis for this study had been completed earlier and has made use of Slapin and Proksch's Wordfish algorithm, version 1.3 (Proksch and Slapin, 2008).

reference text. The nature of the dimension is thus determined by the nature of the dimension on which the reference texts are scored. If the 'Taxes vs Spending' dimension from the Benoit-Laver expert survey is used, the virgin texts' positions should also be interpreted on this dimension (at least if the lexicon of both sets of text is comparable). Wordfish uses an a posteriori approach, which assumes "substantive meaning in the relative locations of key agents and uses this information to investigate the dimensional structure of the political space" (Benoit and Laver, 2006: 59). The algorithm does not use external information on the 'meaning' or 'scores' of words. It induces the party positions on a dimension basically from how different the word usage of parties is. If parties use many different words, they will have very different positions, if they use many similar words they will likely have a very similar position. Of course, a Wordfish analysis is not completely inductive. For one, researchers first have to split their text by issue category if they want to estimate party positions on more than one dimension. Secondly, as I will argue below, the application of Wordfish presents a number of practical problems. The algorithm sometimes picks up on patterns of word usage that are not of interest to the researcher. On example is that in some cases it finds that parties uses similar words in each year: they all talk about 'Bosnia' in one year, about 'Japan' in another and about 'nuclear weapons' in a third year. Thus, instead of picking up policy differences, the algorithm may find temporal differences. While I will show that it is possible to 'correct' for these influences, such a correction necessarily infringes on the 'a posteriori' character of the estimates. Nevertheless, compared to other approaches Wordfish uses relatively little a priori information.

The Wordfish algorithm can be separately applied to manifestos and parliamentary speech without the need for reference texts. The advantage of this is that it does not impose similarity between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of party competition. One does not have to assume that party competition on a specific issue, say for example the economy, is organized along the same lines during the elections and in parliament. Some argue that there is a difference between the dimensionality of the electoral and parliamentary space of competition (McDonald and Budge, 2005: 41). Of course, the meaning of the dimensions might be stable between elections and parliament, but for this study that is an empirical question rather than something which is to be easily assumed. Therefore the a posteriori approach of Wordfish fits well with the aim of this study to compare different spaces of competition. The major disadvantage of using an inductive method to estimate party position is that the algorithm might pick up on differences in word usage between documents that have little to do with substantive differences between parties. The validity of the scores on the dimension can be questioned in some cases, because they relate poorly to other measures of party policy preferences (see appendix A.3.5). Slapin and Proksch (2008) have, however, shown that their estimates of German party manifesto correlate quite strongly with other measures.

Another difference between Wordfish and Wordscores is the use of word

scores. The approach of Wordscores is to calculate the position of words on the policy dimension, using the assigned document scores of the reference texts. Wordfish, on the other hand, does not use word scores, but merely the informativeness parameter β , which captures how informative a certain word is for the positions of parties. The advantage of having an informativeness parameter is that the model can distinguish very well between uninformative words — words that are used equally between parties — and informative words — words that are used a lot by some parties, but not by others. The disadvantage of Wordfish is that it does not use a word score parameter, because that would make it impossible to identify the model (Monroe and Maeda, 2004). The result is that the algorithm basically ignores words that are explicitly centrist (Lowe, 2008).

Given the amount of parliamentary speech in this study, computerized analysis is the preferable method from the perspective of resources. Both Wordscores and Wordfish have shown to produce reliable and, in most cases, valid estimates of party policy preferences. Furthermore, the methods can be applied in many different ways without the need for, for example, detailed and fixed coding schemes. The choice for Wordfish over Wordscores in this project is the result of two crucial arguments. First, for Wordscores there is a lack of a good set of reference texts and estimates for those texts and using manifestos as reference texts for parliamentary speech introduces all other kinds of problems. Secondly, the *a posteriori* approach of Wordfish seems to fit the purposes of this study very well. Exactly because my interest is in comparing the structure of the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition, making a lot of assumptions on the similarity of those two spaces is problematic. Because Wordfish offers the opportunity to analyse the manifesto and parliamentary spaces separately, the two spaces are not ‘forced’ to be similar. This approach does bring along limitations for the interpretation of the spaces, because these are not directly comparable, which should be taken into account in the analysis and discussion of the results.

4.3 Data collection and the classification of text

Wordfish uses word-count matrices as its input. These matrices basically indicate how many times each document or speech uses each word. These matrices can be easily constructed from digitally available texts, but often some pre-processing is necessary, such as establishing to which party each person that took the parliamentary floor belonged to. Another step is to subdivide the text by issue. Although Wordfish can estimate parties’ positions on a single dimension using the whole document, this study assumes that party competition might be different between issues: parties that agree on one issue might disagree on another issue. Therefore, I run separate analyses for different issue categories. Furthermore, part of the party mandate is that parties talk about similar issues in manifestos and in parliament (saliency). This requires the classification of manifesto paragraphs and parliamentary speech paragraphs.

4.3.1 Text collection and pre-processing

In the last few years, many political texts have become available in digital form. This greatly aids computerized analysis of these texts. In some cases, manifestos needed to be scanned, but most material was available on-line¹³.

Three of the Dutch elections in the dataset, 1972, 1982 and 2003, were held only a year after the previous elections. In these cases, some parties did not write a new manifesto. Sometimes they just announced that their old manifesto was still valid, in other cases parties wrote a smaller pamphlet to ‘update’ their manifesto. In these cases, both the previous and current manifestos were used in the analysis.

Parliamentary debates are also available on-line for both the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. For most of the British parliamentary debates, the minutes do not record the party of an MP. This information was acquired from other sources, together with information on where the MP sat: on the front bench or back bench. The Dutch minutes have included party membership of the MPs since 1957, for the period before, this information was also acquired from other sources (Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, 2010).

4.3.2 Text classification

All texts were divided into paragraphs, which were subsequently classified in a two-step procedure. As the amount of text was too large to classify by hand, I used a computerized procedure. The first step of the procedure entails the classification of the paragraphs with the aid of a dictionary of signal words. I used the main categories of the British and Dutch Policy Agendas Project (Breeman et al., 2009). These are well-known classification schemes which are carefully designed to be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. For the Dutch case, I did add one category, namely Religion, designed to capture some of the religious remarks and issues that Christian parties often address¹⁴. This yields a total of 19 categories for Britain and 20 for the Netherlands.

For each of the categories, signal words were selected which indicate the discussion of that particular theme. For example, if the word ‘refugee’ is mentioned in a paragraph, one can be quite sure that the topic of this paragraph is migration, especially when the paragraph also contains words like ‘asylum’, ‘foreigners’

¹³Details on the collection and pre-processing of these texts can be found in appendix A.1 on page 205.

¹⁴In addition, two categories were subdivided in a second stage of classification to distinguish between ‘Medical-ethical’ issues and other Health care issues as well as between ‘Moral’ issues and other ‘Justice, Courts and Crime’. This second stage of classification applied a similar procedure as the one described in the main text, but only for one Policy Agendas Category. Thus, in case of Health care, a dictionary distinguished between ‘General health care’ and ‘Medical-ethical issues’ and paragraphs were assigned to one of those categories based on the occurrence of the dictionary words. This second stage classification did thus not change or influence the initial analysis. Medical-ethical and Moral issues were combined with the Religious issues in the Wordfish analysis to be able to capture a Religious-Secular dimension that is often used in analyses of Dutch politics.

and 'UNHCR'. For each issue category of interest, a moderately large number of these words (20 up to 50) were selected by reading the documents of interest and eye-balling for relevant words. Subsequently, the occurrence of each of these signal words in each paragraph was calculated. For example, if a paragraph contained four signal words of the Labour market category and only one for the Foreign affairs category, this paragraph is most likely to be about economic issues. I did correct for the length of the dictionary of each category by dividing the count for each category by the logged dictionary length. After all, if the list of signal words for a particular category is very large, one is more likely to come across one of these words. For the British dictionary, I used Laver and Garry's (2000) dictionary as a starting-point, the Dutch dictionary was partly based on the phrases used in the codebook of the Policy Agendas Project. I used unigrams (single words) as well as bi-grams (phrases of two words). Many of the dictionary words consist only of the first few letters of a word, designed to capture words with similar beginnings, but different endings, for example 'racis*' that matches 'racist', 'racism', 'racists' and all other words starting with 'racis'. For the Dutch case I used a slightly different version of the dictionary for the different years, because word usage in the first few years was quite different from later years. The same categories were used for all years in Britain and the Netherlands.

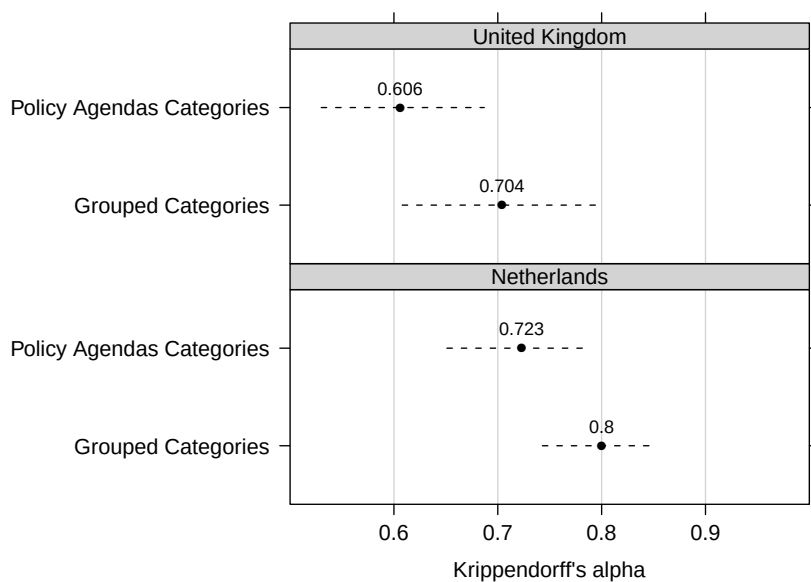
This procedure leaves an estimate of the category a particular paragraph belongs to, based on the occurrence of the signal words. In some cases, a paragraph cannot be classified using this dictionary approach: when it does not match any of the dictionary words or when dictionary words of two different categories occur equally frequently in a paragraph. In some collections of parliamentary speech, this leaves up to 40% of the paragraphs unclassified, which is too large a percentage to ignore. Therefore, paragraphs that could not be classified using the dictionary were classified with the help of an automatic classification algorithm¹⁵.

To test the validity of the computerized coding, a sample of paragraphs from the 1992 (Britain) and 1994 (Netherlands) manifestos has also been coded manually (see appendix A.2 on page 207). Figure 4.1 presents the levels of Krippendorff's alpha, a measure of inter-coder reliability (or in this case 'computer-human reliability') which takes into account that agreement might also occur due to chance (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007). For the 19 or 20 categories, the levels of alpha are somewhat low, especially for Britain. Nevertheless, these results are comparable to the results of other computerized techniques in similar applications (Breeman et al., 2009). I also calculated the accuracy for broader issue categories, which were used for the Wordfish estimation¹⁶. When looking at

¹⁵This algorithm uses the properties of the paragraphs that were classified using the dictionary approach to estimate a classification of the other paragraphs. The application of this Support Vector Machine (SVM) is outlined in appendix A.2 on page 207

¹⁶As is explained below, the Comparative Agenda Project's classification scheme with 19 or 20 categories yields too little text per category. Therefore, I grouped similar categories together to achieve

Figure 4.1: *Results of a comparison of manual and computerized classification*



Note: Dotted lines indicate 95% confidence intervals.

the computer-human reliability levels for these grouped categories, the levels of Krippendorff's alpha increase to an acceptable level of 0.7 for Britain and 0.8 for the Netherlands. The method used here does not produce a perfect agreement with the manual classifications, but for the purposes here it is acceptable. Most errors found represent somewhat ambivalent paragraphs. Wherever these are classified, they will introduce some noise into the analysis. As long as the correct classifications are a large majority, Wordfish should be able to deal with the noise in the dataset.

4.4 Using Wordfish to compare elections and parliaments

The application of any statistical method requires careful attention to the requirements of those methods and to any deficiencies they might produce. This is especially true in the application of the method is extended to cases that never have been analysed in that particular way before. In this case, Wordfish has been shown to work with both parliamentary and manifesto data, but not yet for the particular countries that are studied here. Furthermore, the comparison of parliamentary debate and manifesto requires attention.

The 19 (Britain) or 20 (Netherlands) policy agendas categories that were obtained via the classification procedure described above were combined into broader categories for the purpose of the Wordfish analysis (see table 4.5). Quite a few of these 20-odd categories received only sparse attention from parties, especially in the manifestos. The application of Wordfish to the text parties devote to these issues would result in very uncertain estimates. Slapin and Proksch's analysis of Germany consists, for example, only of three policy areas (2008). For the first three Dutch elections I limited the analysis to four issue categories, for the last three to eight. Manifestos and parliamentary speeches were longer in later years, dealing with a broader range of topics, allowing for a more detailed analysis. For Britain, five categories were used throughout. The combination of issues is based on an *a priori* understanding of their connection. For example, issues on macro-economy can be said to relate quite closely to business and labour market. Of course, this does introduce an element of choice into the analysis. However, the categories chosen relate closely to ideas about important policy dimensions (Pellikaan et al., 2003; Benoit and Laver, 2006). The issue categories are always the same for the manifesto and parliamentary competition in a certain case.

The manifesto and parliamentary documents were analysed separately. I ran a separate Wordfish analysis for each issue category in the manifestos and also for each issue category in parliament. To achieve (more) robust estimates of party positions in manifestos, I included the previous and next manifestos in the ana-

more robust estimates of parties' policy positions.

lysis. For example, the analysis of the 1992 manifesto positions includes the party manifestos of 1987, 1992 and 1997. Note that the 1987 and 1997 manifestos do not directly affect the positions of the parties in 1992, they only serve to increase the robustness of the word parameters. As the number of documents in the analysis increases, the word parameters will generally become more robust¹⁷. The 1992 manifesto positions of parties are only based on their 1992 manifestos. Including the previous and next documents is in any case necessary for the British manifestos, as the analysis would otherwise be based on only three documents (a single manifesto for each party). Because the position estimates are induced from differences in parties' word choice, having only three different parties leads to uncertain estimates. After all, idiosyncrasies are likely to influence the analysis much more when there are only three documents compared to having more¹⁸. For the parliamentary debates, texts were split per year: the texts produced by the MPs for a party in a single year were thus treated as a single observation. For the subsequent analyses, I used the mean of these per-year estimates (weighted by the length of the text per year) to compare parties' parliamentary positions with their manifesto positions.

To increase the robustness of the analysis, I applied two filters to the word count matrix. First, I excluded words that are used only in one document¹⁹. These words will distinguish perfectly between the one party (in one year) and all other parties. Wordfish does provide a correction for this perfect discrimination, but it is still recommended to remove words that are only used in one document. However, the result might be that a party with a very outspoken and unique position will be estimated to be moderate, because all of its unique words were eliminated²⁰. For example, the speech of extreme-right parties on migration contains some words which are never used by other parties. Therefore, words that were used at least three times (manifestos) or five times (parliamentary speeches) were not eliminated. Secondly, very short manifestos (less than 50 word counts in the filtered dataset) or parliamentary speeches (less than 250 word counts in the filtered datasets) were excluded. The analysis of these texts is not only likely to arrive at uncertain estimates, they may also influence the positions of other parties²¹.

¹⁷The assumption is that word usage was roughly similar in three subsequent elections.

¹⁸Other Wordfish analyses include more documents from a longer time frame (e.g. Slapin and Proksch, 2009). I found that both in the British and Dutch case, one would have to delete many year-specific words to ensure that Wordfish does not merely distinguish documents from different years instead of documents with different positions (see appendix A.3.2 on page 212).

¹⁹Document here refers to a party's manifesto in one year or the collection of speeches of one party in one parliamentary year.

²⁰Especially when the party only participated in only one election.

²¹Furthermore, I corrected for the comparison of positions over time in a parliament as well as for the positioning of the (UK) government. These issues are discussed in appendix A.3 on page 210.

Table 4.5: *Overview of observations*

Country	Periods	Issue categories
United Kingdom	1955-1959	
	1966-1970	Economy; Environment; Foreign
	1970-1979	Affairs and Defence; Government
	1983-1987	Operations; Law and Order and
	1992-1997	Migration
	2001-2005	
Netherlands^a	1952-1956	Economy, Health Care and Education;
	1959-1963	Foreign Affairs and Defence;
	1972-1977	Post-materialist issues; Religion,
		Morals and Medical-ethical
	1982-1986	Economy; Health Care and Education;
	1994-1998	Environment; Foreign Affairs and
	2003-2006	Defence; Migration; Justice, Courts and Crime; Democracy and Civil Rights; Religion, Morals and Medical-Ethical

^a For the Netherlands different issue categories were used for the first three and last three time periods, reflecting a difference in the level of detail of manifestos and parliamentary debate.

4.5 Constructing spatial representations of party competition

Wordfish produces estimates of party positions in the electoral and parliamentary arena on a number of issue dimensions. These data are used to study the congruence of parties in both arenas on individual issue dimensions. The information can also be used in a different way, namely to construct and compare the structure of the spaces of electoral and parliamentary competition between parties.

Spatial representations of party competition are an abstract way of describing what political conflict between parties is about and how parties are positioned or (strategically) position themselves towards other parties. Spatial analyses of party competition have long been used, because they offer a concise and intuitive way of displaying political conflict. Early on, Downs (1957) used a one-dimensional representation of party positions to study the dynamics of party competition. Others have extended this type of analysis to a multidimensional space, because they found that political competition could not accurately be captured on a single dimension. After all, parties that think very differently on the economy, might very well agree with each other about European integration. The spatial approach offers a way of visualizing how inter-party conflicts are related. For example, differences between parties may be very similar on one set of issues while party conflict is very different on another set of issues. This acknowledges the fact that political conflict is not simply the aggregate of differences on specific issue dimensions. The way in which party positions on issues are related is a basic characteristic of political competition.

Many spatial analyses of political party competition use a predefined notion of the relevant dimensions of the policy space. In a particular case, researchers may argue that party competition can be best described by a single Left-Right dimension, or by looking at economic left-right and GAL-TAN²² as a secondary dimension. This is an excellent approach if one is interested only in the position or movement of parties within a given space. However, it cannot analyse the transformation of the space itself. This is one of the aims here: to look at the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary space of competition. This involves the dimensionality of the space: which issues matter and how are issues related? In other words, the purpose here is not just to study the positions of the pieces on the chess board, but also the properties of the board itself. After all, political chess is not limited to an eight by eight square. If one assumes that the board has certain properties, these cannot be studied as variables. Therefore, the properties of the space should not be determined a priori.

The technique to construct spatial models of party competition used here is

²²Green, Alternative, Libertarian versus Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalist. This dimension summarizes 'new politics' issues, which are believed to relate poorly to the Left-Right divide (Marks et al., 2006: 157).

classic multidimensional scaling (MDS). MDS is a flexible technique that uses information on the differences (distances) between parties on a high number of issue dimensions to construct a low dimensional picture of parties' positions (Kruskal and Wish, 1978; Van der Brug, 1997; Borg and Groenen, 1997). The text-book example of MDS starts with a table containing the distances between cities. From this table one could easily draw a map. In the case of the map, there is a perfect fit, because the distances between the cities were actually measured from a map. Here, the fit of a two-dimensional representation is normally not perfect, because the differences between parties stem from many issue dimensions. Nevertheless, a low-dimensional spatial representation can often capture the most important differences between parties. I applied metric MDS here, because the positions have been estimated at the interval level. The distances that are used for this space stem from the different positions parties have on the issue dimensions. The distance between two parties is the Euclidean distance between their positions on all issue dimensions, which is for parties a and b equal to:

$$distance_{ab} = \sqrt{\sum_i (p_{ia} - p_{ib})^2} \quad (4.4)$$

Where p_{ia} is the position of party a on issue i . One alteration was made to the distance scores to take the salience of issues into account. Normally, the distance between parties on each issue weighs equally in an MDS analysis. However, in this study some issues are far more salient overall than other issues and therefore can be said to be more important in the space of competition. After all, if parties differ very much on an issue that they talk about a lot, this is more relevant for the competition between those parties than their difference on an issue that neither of them really cares about²³. Therefore, parties positions are multiplied by the square root of the average saliency of an issue. This preserves the relative distances between parties on each single dimension, but it lets salient issues contribute more to the total distance matrix.

The result of the MDS analysis is a low-dimensional space of party positions. Generally, one will find a one or two-dimensional solution that fits the data quite well. This space can be visualized as a plot of party positions. The horizontal and vertical dimensions of these plots have no substantive meaning: the plot can be freely rotated without losing information. Whether parties are on the 'left' or on the 'right' of the picture thus has no substantive meaning²⁴.

²³Furthermore, if one were to split an issue dimension (e.g. Health Care and Education) into smaller ones, the differences on those dimensions would become more influential in the analysis. In other words: the selection of dimensions (specifically the choice to aggregate or split them) would influence the analysis very much. From this perspective, taking into account saliency in the construction of the space of competition makes also sense, because in that case the influence of two separate 'Health Care' and 'Education' dimensions would be similar to the influence of a single combined dimension.

²⁴To ease interpretation I did however (if necessary) invert the dimensions so that parties that are generally regarded as left-wing are on the left.

To aid the interpretation of the space, I plotted the separate issue dimensions into the graph with a technique called ‘property fitting’. The dashed lines indicate how a separate issue dimensions fits into the combined space. One can find the approximate position of a party on a separate dimension by running a line perpendicular to the dashed line, through the party estimate. The fitted lines can be found by running a regression analysis where the positions of parties on dimensions of the MDS solution explain party positions on a separate issue dimension. The slope of the line is equal to the ratio of the b ’s in the regression analysis²⁵. This will only make sense if the explained variance (R^2) of the regression analysis is sufficiently high: if the dimensions of the MDS space cannot explain parties’ positions on a specific issue dimension, one cannot draw a fitting line. Those lines were omitted if the R^2 was lower than 0.8.

For each case a separate electoral and a separate parliamentary space were constructed. After all, the Wordfish analysis resulted in estimates of party positions that cannot be compared in absolute terms: the relative distances between parties can be compared between elections and parliament, but not the absolute position of a single party in both arenas. Therefore, one cannot construct a single space in which both parties’ electoral and their parliamentary positions can be represented. Although this does mean that the party positions cannot be compared directly between the two spaces, it does offer a good way to study whether the electoral and parliamentary spaces are similar. After all, the institutional perspective on the party mandate taken here goes beyond the congruence of an individual parties’ positions and primarily focuses on the congruence of the spaces themselves. This involves looking at three aspects: the dimensionality of the spaces (are one, two or more dimensions necessary to display inter-party differences?), the location of issue dimensions in the spaces and the structure of party positions within the electoral and parliamentary spaces.

²⁵It is given by: b_2/b_1 . Note that the aspect ratio of the graph should be equal to one: ‘stretching’ the graph will disturb the angles of the parties’ positions with the fitted issue dimension lines. Van der Brug (1997) describes a different procedure for estimating the slope of the lines.

Chapter 5

The party mandate in majoritarian and consensus democracies

This chapter discusses the main hypothesis of this study, namely that mandate fulfilment will be higher in consensus democracies than in majoritarian democracies. The most similar systems design used in this study allows drawing conclusions from the comparison of two carefully selected cases: the majoritarian system of the United Kingdom and the consensus system of the Netherlands. What parties talk about and what they say during elections is compared to what they talk about and what they say in parliament.

5.1 What parties talk about

One aspect of the party mandate is that parties express similar concerns during elections and in parliament, i.e. that parties talk about similar issues in both arenas. If they would switch to a completely different set of issues after the elections, one would not be surprised to find that voters are dissatisfied. Some theories of party competition even go as far as to argue that party competition is essentially about *issue saliency* rather than party positions (Budge, 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006, 1994). Although this 'saliency-only' position has been criticized for many reasons, this does not mean that saliency is not an important *aspect* of the party mandate (Benoit and Laver, 2007; Volkens, 2007; Bakker et al., 2008; Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006; Hansen, 2008).

Parties' issue saliency was estimated by classifying their manifesto and what MPs said in parliament. Each paragraph in the party manifestos and parliamentary debates (in one of the selected cases) was classified into one of twenty *Policy*

Agendas Project categories¹. From this data, I calculated for each manifesto and each parliamentary party how much text it devoted to each issue (as a percentage of the whole text, excluding non-categorized text). A party's issue saliency is thus expressed as the percentage of text it devotes to a particular issue. For example, Labour's issue saliency of 'Health' was 12.3 per cent in their 1992 manifesto and 8.3 per cent in the 1992-1997 parliament.

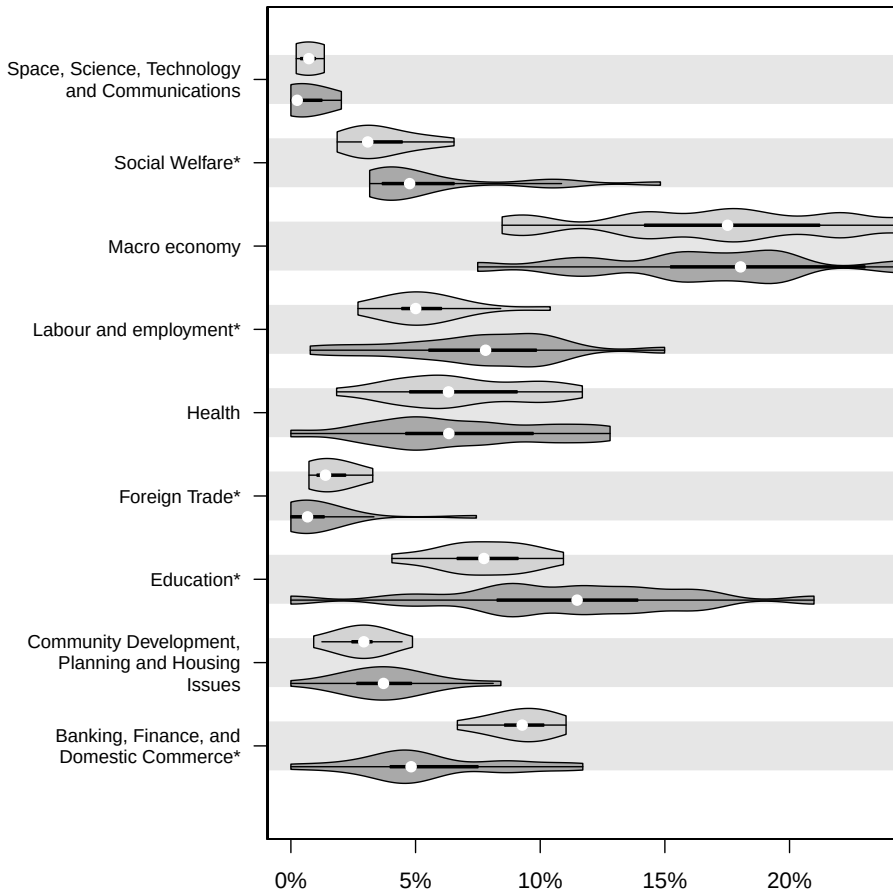
The crucial question in this study is whether issue saliency in a specific election is congruent with issue saliency in the subsequent parliament. Before I turn to this, the aggregated data – the distribution of issue saliency for each category per country per source – will be presented as these suggest that there is an overall difference between issue priorities in manifestos and parliamentary debates (figures 5.1-5.6). The violin plots show how parties' issue saliency of about 20 issue categories is distributed: a box-plot which shows the median, quartiles and ranges of the distributions is combined with a density plot which gives more detailed information on the shape of the distribution (Adler and Francois, 2009). The dark grey violins display the distributions in manifestos, the lighter ones show the distributions in parliament. If the violins are very long, parties' issue saliency differs greatly. For example, one British party did write almost nothing on Education in one of its manifestos, while another party devoted more than 20% of its manifesto to Education. In the median manifesto, approximately 12 per cent of the text is on Education.

In Britain, the category Macro economy is by far the most salient issue for parties, scoring just under 20% on average. Some other social issues, such as Education, Labour and Employment and Health also score above average. These figures confirm the importance of class-based politics in Britain. International affairs and related issues score around 5% and most categories related to Environmental policies have even lower levels of party saliency. The pattern is much alike in the Netherlands, although the Macro-Economy and Taxes category turns out to be not so popular as it is in Britain (see figure 5.4). Instead, Education and Culture, Labour and Enterprises, national trade and commerce enjoy high levels of parties' issue saliency. In addition, the category concerning Religious issues (not included for Britain) is rather important, at least for some parties (see figure 5.6).

The figures show that some issues get more attention in parliament than in manifestos and vice versa. British parties clearly talk less about Social Welfare, Labour and Employment, Education and International Affairs and Foreign Aid in parliament than in their manifesto². Other issues are discussed to a larger ex-

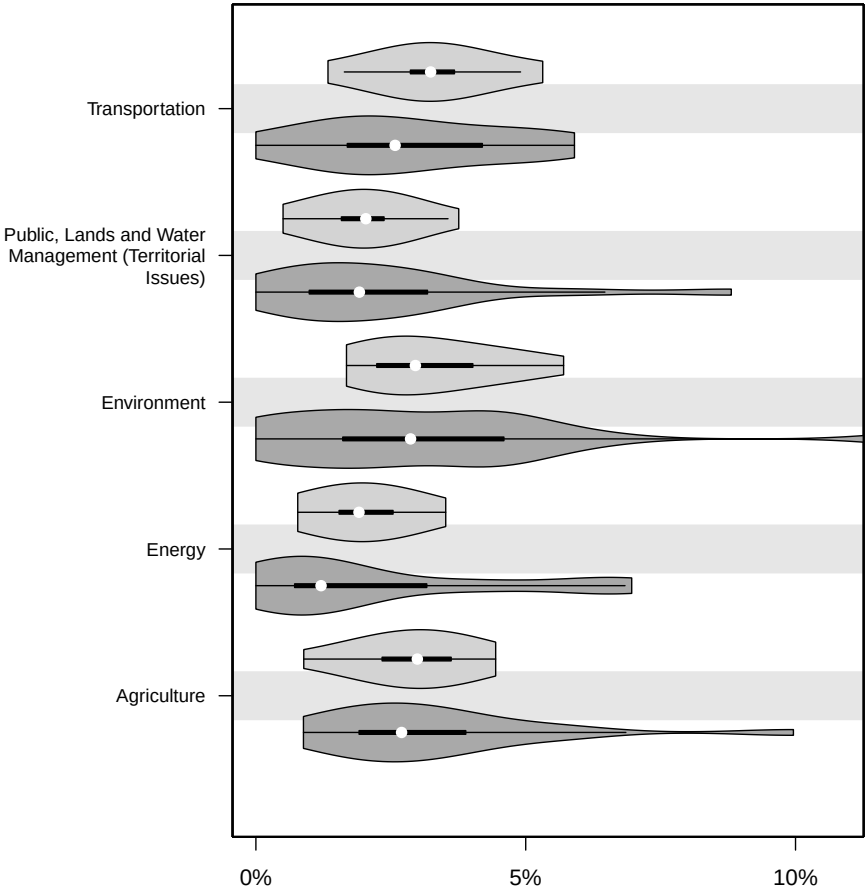
¹ As I outlined in chapter 4 I use more broadly defined categories for the analysis of parties' positions. For the analysis of party issue saliency, however, I use the Policy Agendas categories: there is no need to aggregate it to arrive at more robust estimates and in fact using more categories increases the number of observations. In addition, the Policy Agendas categories are not exactly the same for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. I have used the categories that are used in the respective national projects (Breeman et al., 2009; UK Policy Agendas Project, 2010).

² These differences are statistically significant according to a *t*-test between the manifesto saliency

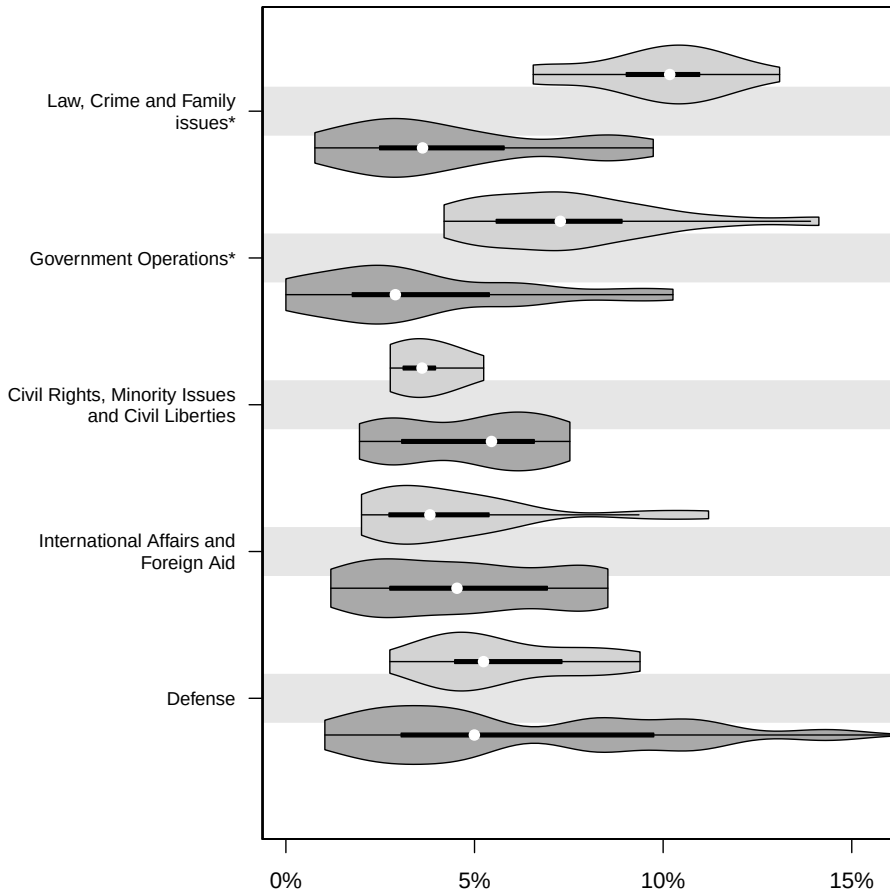
Figure 5.1: *Issue saliency in the UK: Economic issues*

Note: Dark grey violins represent the manifestos, the light grey violins represent the parliamentary debates. * indicate statistically significant means differences between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency (two-sided t-test, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 5.2: *Issue saliency in the UK: Environmental issues*

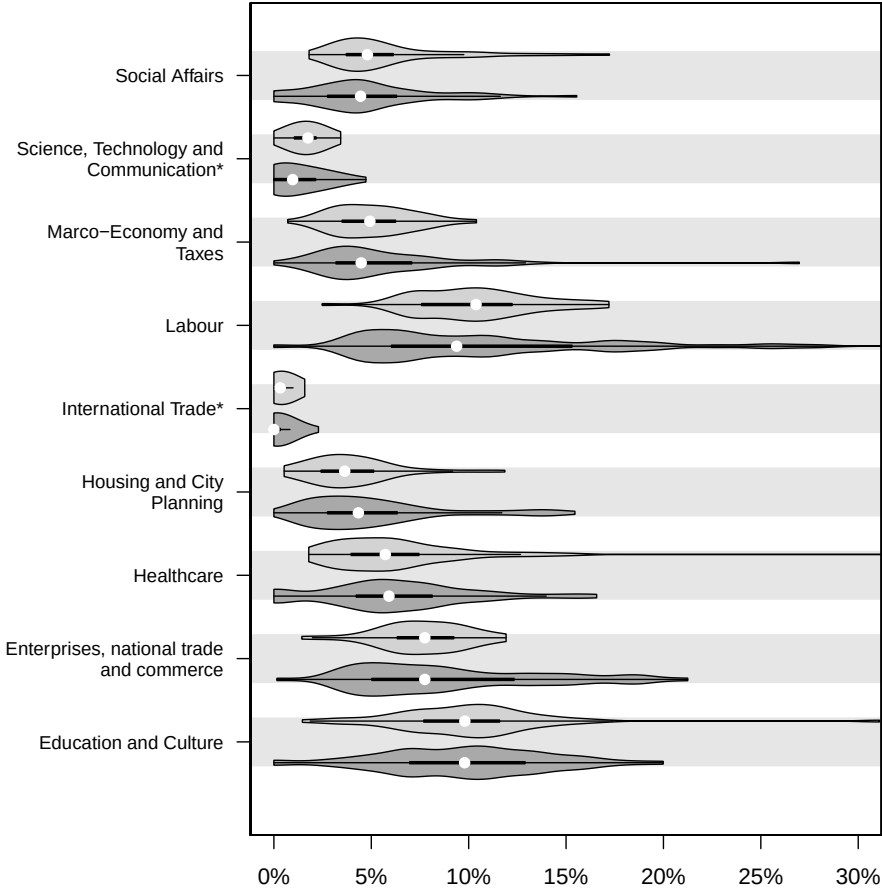


Note: Dark grey violins represent the manifestos, the light grey violins represent the parliamentary debates.

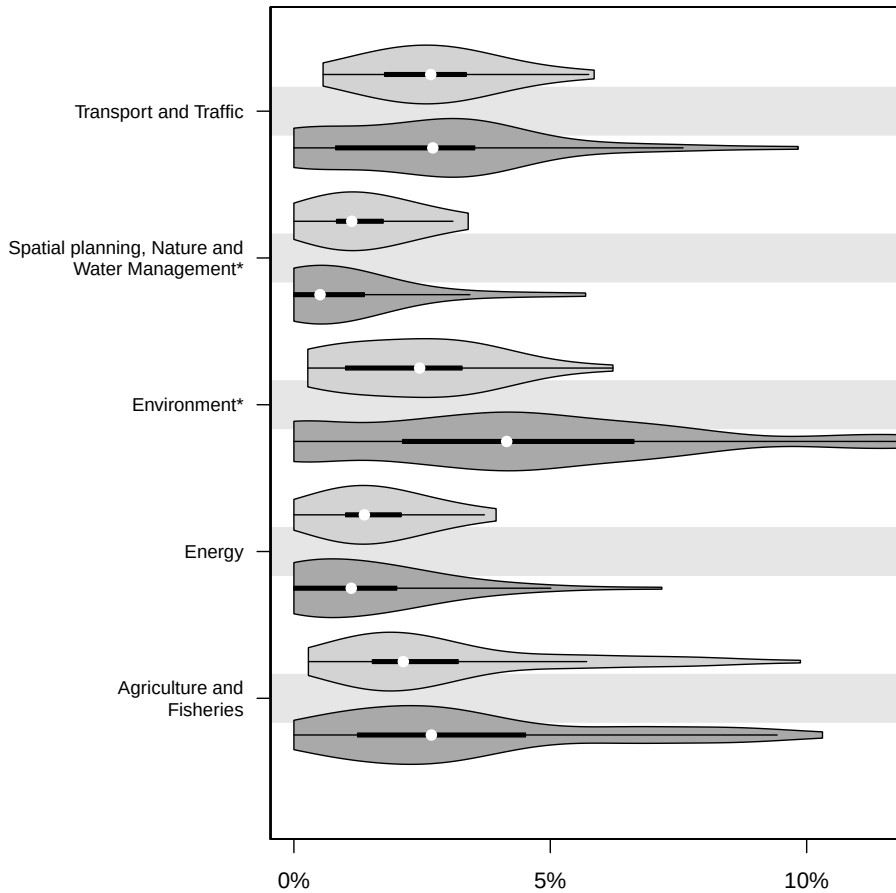
Figure 5.3: *Issue saliency in the UK: Other issues*

Note: Dark grey violins represent the manifestos, the light grey violins represent the parliamentary debates. * indicate statistically significant means differences between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency (two-sided t-test, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 5.4: *Issue saliency in the Netherlands: Economic issues*

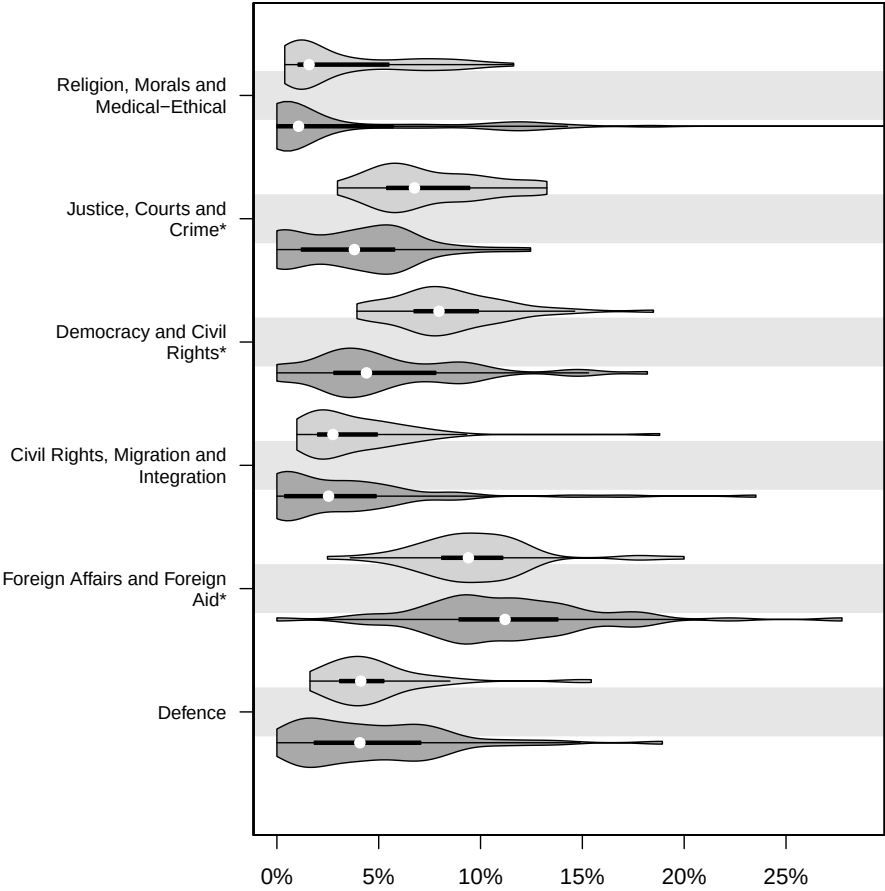


Note: Dark grey violins represent the manifestos, the light grey violins represent the parliamentary debates. * indicate statistically significant means differences between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency (two-sided t-test, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 5.5: *Issue saliency in the Netherlands: Environmental issues*

Note: Dark grey violins represent the manifestos, the light grey violins represent the parliamentary debates. * indicate statistically significant means differences between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency (two-sided t-test, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 5.6: Issue saliency in the Netherlands: Other issues



Note: Dark grey violins represent the manifestos, the light grey violins represent the parliamentary debates. * indicate statistically significant means differences between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency (two-sided t-test, $p < 0.05$).

tent in parliament: Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce, Law, Crime and Family issues and Government Operations. The fact that parties talk more about Government Operations in parliament than in manifestos will not raise many eyebrows, but the other differences are more difficult to explain. Among the issues that receive relatively little attention in parliament are some of the welfare state categories; these are apparently categories that parties feel more comfortable discussing during the election campaign than in parliament. Talking about these policies might help them win the elections. However, this can also be said about Law and order, where an inverse pattern can be observed. For Environmental issues and Foreign Affairs, Dutch parties' issue salience is relatively high in their manifestos as compared to in parliament. Other issues are discussed to a larger extent in parliament than in the manifestos: Science Technology and Communication, International Trade, Spatial Planning, Nature and Water management, Justice, Courts and Crime and Democracy and government. Except for the Democracy and Civil Rights and Justice, Courts and Crime the pattern is thus different from that in the United Kingdom.

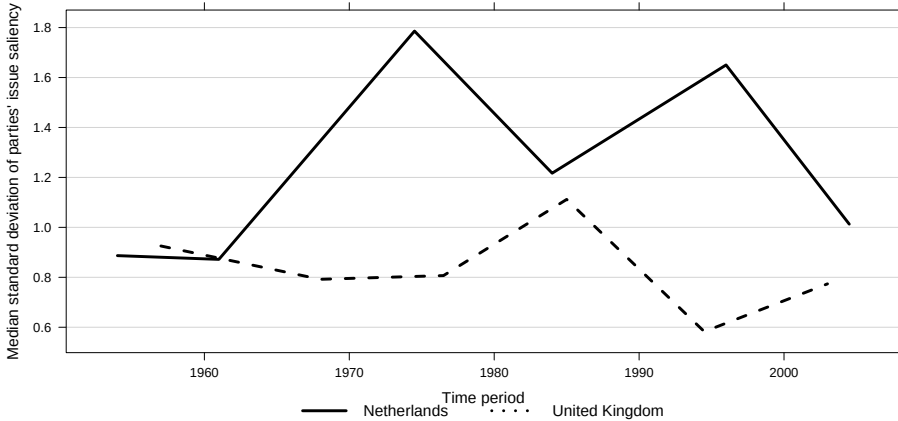
Majoritarian democracies are characterized by a high degree of control of the government over parliament Döring (1995). Government control over the parliamentary agenda is likely to result in less direct linkage between issue saliency in manifestos and issue saliency in parliament. Parties cannot talk about the issues they find salient to the extent they would like, because the agenda is controlled by the government. In systems where the parliamentary agenda is less strictly controlled by governments, opposition parties should have ample opportunity to put forward the issues that they deem important. This is even more strongly so in the Netherlands, because of the institutional rule that bills do not die. Therefore, there is less government pressure to discuss certain bills within a certain parliament. The hypothesis that was formulated in chapter 3 reads:

Hypothesis 1: A consensus democracy shows higher levels of congruence between the electoral party issue saliency and the parliamentary party issue saliency than a majoritarian democracy.

The dark-grey manifesto violins in figures 5.1-5.6 are generally longer and more oddly-shaped than the light-grey violins that display the distributions of parties' issue salience in parliament, especially in Britain. This is in line with the expectation that British parties' issue salience is more alike in parliament, due to the agenda setting powers of the government. Naturally, there could also be changes in the importance of issues over time, but these should be visible in both manifestos and parliament. The agenda-setting effect is smaller for the Dutch parties: the spread of parties is much more alike between manifestos and parliaments.

The impact of the level of government agenda control can be illustrated by looking at the standard deviations of parties' issue saliency in parliament. If an

and parliamentary saliency for each of the issues, $p < 0.05$.

Figure 5.7: *Median standard deviations of issue saliency in parliament*

Note: The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

issue is equally important to all parties (likely as a result of government control over the agenda), the standard deviation will be low³. Figure 5.7 shows the median standard deviation of parties' issue saliency in parliament in the two countries over time. This is a measure of how different parties' issue saliency scores are in parliament. This measure is consistently higher for the Dutch parliament (except for the 1950s). This means that the differences in issue saliency between Dutch political parties are generally larger than those for the British parties. This is likely to be the result of higher levels of agenda control in majoritarian democracies.

The theory of governmental agenda control suggests that (opposition) parties will not be able to put forward their salient issues if the parliamentary agenda is tightly controlled by the government⁴. This expectation was tested by a regression model that seeks to explain parliamentary party issue saliency, i.e. the relative emphasis of parties for certain issues in parliament, by looking at parties' issue saliency in manifestos. This connection should be stronger in parliaments that have larger agenda-setting powers. If, however, the government controls the agenda, the connection between manifesto and parliamentary party issue saliency is expected to be lower. The model used here incorporates a country

³Note that the standard deviation is dependent on the measurement scale, but not on the number of observations (as it is equal to the *mean* of squared deviations from the average). The measurement scale is comparable between countries, as the number of issue categories is almost the same in both countries and total issue saliency adds up to 100 per cent.

⁴The difference between opposition parties and government parties in this respect is explored in the next chapter.

dummy variable, which is coded zero for the Dutch parties and one for British parties. The idea of the model is to test whether the explanatory power of manifesto issue saliency is higher or lower for British than for Dutch parties. This effect is captured by the interaction between the UK dummy variable and manifesto issue saliency. Table 5.1 presents the results of the OLS regression⁵.

It turns out that there is a moderately strong connection between a party's issue saliency in the manifesto and a party's issue saliency in parliament: for each additional percentage point of attention in the manifesto, parties tend to spend 0.477 percentage point extra time debating the issue in parliament in the Netherlands. In Britain this effect is, contrary to my expectation, even higher. The interaction between a party's issue saliency in their manifesto and the UK country (dummy) variable is positive, which means that British parties are actually more responsive to their manifesto in terms of issue saliency. For British parties, the marginal effect of manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency is 0.572: one percentage point more attention for an issue in the manifesto translates to, on average, 0.572 percentage points more attention for the issue in parliament⁶.

One explanation of this difference is that some issues are more popular than others among *all* parties, both in the manifestos as well as in parliament. For example, parties talk a lot about Macro-economy, both in the manifesto and in parliament. They do not so much talk about Foreign Trade, neither in the manifesto nor in parliament. In this case, parliamentary issue saliency is explained well by manifesto issue saliency, because of the differences between issues. Thus, the part of the variance explained here is the variance in issue saliency between issue categories, rather than the between-party variance in saliency. In this case, the government agenda-effect will not affect the explanatory power of parties' issue saliency in manifestos.

Arguably, the most important aspect of issue saliency for the question of the party mandate is, parties' emphasis on issues, *relative* to one another. For example, the environment is not the most important issue for any party, not even for the Dutch green party (GroenLinks). However, compared to other parties, this party does talk a lot about environmental issues. Parties do generally talk a lot about the economy, but the question is which parties talk about it the most and the least, or in other words, which party 'owns' a particular issue (Stokes, 1966; Budge and Farlie, 1983). In terms of the party mandate, keeping those differences in *relative* issue saliency is as least as important as *absolute* issue saliency. Model 2 in table 5.1 fits this interpretation of issue saliency by introducing a variable 'Mean issue saliency of a category in parliament' into the analysis. If the parties' parliamentary issue saliency is indeed the result of parties having sim-

⁵This and the other models in this book were estimated using the Zelig package for R (Imai et al., 2007)

⁶0.447 (manifesto issue saliency coefficient) + 0.125 (interaction between UK and manifesto issue saliency coefficient). A similar result is found when running two separate regression analyses for the United Kingdom and The Netherlands.

Table 5.1: *Explaining parties' issue saliency in parliament*

	Model 1	Model 2
(Intercept)	0.026*	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Issue saliency manifesto	0.477*	0.121*
	(0.018)	(0.014)
UK	−0.005	0.000
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Issue saliency manifesto * UK	0.125*	−0.110*
	(0.038)	(0.033)
Mean issue saliency Parliament		0.890*
		(0.020)
UK * Mean issue saliency Parliament		0.101*
		(0.042)
<i>N</i>	1502	1502
<i>R</i> ²	0.410	0.785
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.409	0.784
Resid. sd	0.031	0.019

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

ilar priorities, their scores would be well-explained by the mean issue saliency of that specific issue in parliament⁷. If, however, parties' issue saliency in parliament is, to a degree, explained by their manifesto issue saliency (in model 2), this shows that parties do not just conform to the mean issue saliency. Instead, parties' parliamentary issue saliency is influenced by their own manifesto's issue priorities.

Model 2 confirms the theoretical expectation: when it comes to parties' relative issue priorities, the predictive power of the manifesto is higher in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom. The high coefficient on the 'Mean issue saliency in Parliament' variable shows that issue saliency in parliament depends very much on the issue: parties talk more about issues that other parties also talk about a lot. This effect is even stronger in the United Kingdom, which is shown by the significant interaction between the UK dummy and the variable 'Mean issue saliency in parliament'. Hence, the total marginal effect of 'Mean issue saliency in Parliament' is 0.89 in the Netherlands and 0.99 in Britain. The difference between Britain and the Netherlands is statistically significant. Introducing the 'Mean issue saliency in Parliament' variable limits the explanatory power of a party's manifesto issue saliency. Notably, the influence of the manifesto disappears in the United Kingdom: the sum of the coefficients of 'Issue saliency

⁷In an alternative specification, 'Mean issue saliency in Parliament' was replaced by 'Mean issue saliency in the manifestos'. The findings are similar.

manifesto' and 'Issue saliency manifesto * UK' is not significantly different from zero. In the Netherlands, there is a small influence of a party's manifesto issue saliency on its parliamentary issue saliency in Model 2. *Relative* issue saliency, that is the extent to which parties' saliency of an issue *relative* to other parties' saliency of that issue, is thus higher in the Netherlands than in Britain.

The analysis here suggests that generally parties' parliamentary agenda is better explained by their manifesto priorities in Britain than in the Netherlands. This is caused by the fact that parties have similar levels of issue saliency (as other parties) for many issues. However, *relative* issue saliency can be better explained for the Dutch than for the British parties. This suggests that in Britain, the overall agenda is more stable between elections and parliament and therefore a good predictor for parties' parliamentary issue saliency, while in the Netherlands parties' parliamentary relative issue saliency can be better explained by looking at the issue saliency in the manifesto. All in all, the expectation of a higher government influence on the agenda in Britain than in the Netherlands is partly met. The fact that the prediction of relative issue saliency is rather poor in Britain shows that saliency in a sense of 'issue priorities relative to other parties' is not carried over from the manifestos to the parliament.

5.2 What parties say

Talking about similar subjects in the manifesto and in parliament is one thing, saying similar things is another. Comparing what parties say in one document with the messages they put forward in parliament is a rather complex issue if one is interested in more than one issue, one party or one country. Even the most basic approach, reading the various documents and in some way comparing their views, involves distinguishing between issues, interpreting parties' positions on those issues and evaluating how similar their parliamentary issue position is to their manifesto position. This is even more so if one is interested in the properties of the 'space of competition' that parties operate in. As argued above, the main focus of this analysis is not the stability of individual parties' positions, but the congruence of the space and structure of party competition as a whole.

In chapter 3 I hypothesized that consensus democracies show higher levels of mandate fulfilment in terms of issue positions. This expectation runs contrary to the traditional argument that single-party governments are in a better position to enact their pledges than parties in multi-party coalition governments. However, this study looks at the parliamentary mandate rather than the government mandate. It takes into account the mandate of government parties as well as opposition parties. While government parties might have many opportunities to pursue their mandate in majoritarian democracies, opposition parties have little choice but to oppose the governments' policies. In consensus systems, opposition parties have more opportunities to pursue their own policies, because government parties are more open to collaboration with the opposition. In addition,

the coalition agreement binds members of the government coalition: this causes some deviation from their manifesto at first, but also ensures that their parliamentary positions are more similar over time. All in all, I expect that consensus democracies will show higher levels of mandate fulfilment:

Hypothesis 2: A consensus democracy shows higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than a majoritarian democracy.

To compare the electoral and parliamentary spaces and structures of competition, I constructed separate spatial representations for each election and each parliament (see chapter 4). Two things are kept constant between election and parliament: the parties included in the analysis and (very broadly defined) the issues they talk about. So, for each election-parliament, the set of parties (e.g. parties that presented a manifesto and won parliamentary representation) as well as the broadly defined issue categories are the same. For the selection of the issue categories, I used the classifications of the saliency method outlined above. This procedure resulted in an estimate of the topic of each paragraph of manifesto text and each paragraph of parliamentary speech. To allow for a more robust analysis I collapsed these categories into a smaller set of issues, depending on the circumstances of the case. Later elections allow for a more detailed analysis as manifestos and parliamentary debates are longer. Generally, I distinguished between Economic issues, Environment, Foreign Affairs and Defence, Law and Order and Migration and, for the Dutch case, Religious-Ethical issues (see section 4.4 on page 83).

The starting point for the analysis was thus a collection of paragraphs of text, grouped by party, source (manifesto or parliament), year and topic. In other words, it is known what each party said on each topic in each of their manifestos and in parliament. Using the computerized content analysis technique Wordfish, parties' issue positions on those topics were estimated. Next, using multi dimensional scaling (MDS), the party positions on issues were reduced to a low-dimensional spatial representation of the competition between parties.

This procedure yields twelve spaces of competition for both countries, namely one 'manifesto space' and one 'parliamentary space' for each of the six elections included in this study. I will discuss the properties of these spaces and the structures of party positions within the spaces, before turning to a statistical analysis of the data.

5.2.1 Britain

British politics has been dominated by three political parties since the Second World War: the Conservative party, Labour and, to a lesser degree, the Liberals (later Liberal Democrats). The analysis of six British elections since 1950 (1955, 1966, 1974, 1983, 1992 and 2001) includes only these major parties. Parties from

Northern Ireland are excluded because it is essentially a party system on its own. The Scottish and Welsh nationalists are also excluded, because these are not competing in all parts of the country. As a result, their manifestos are mainly concerned with Scottish or Welsh issues and cannot very well be compared to the manifestos of the national parties.

In the United Kingdom parliamentary spaces, I distinguish between the front bench and back bench of each party⁸. While I first made this distinction because of practical reasons⁹, the difference between front bench and back bench is also of theoretical interest (King, 1976). On the government side, one can distinguish between the government itself and the government party back-benchers. These MPs have a somewhat different position from the government itself: they are members of the government party, but not of the government itself, which means that they will generally support the government, but they also will try to influence government policy, in what King calls the *intra-party mode* of executive-legislative relations (King, 1976). In the United Kingdom, Government back-benchers have increasingly used their opportunities to do so, for example by rebelling against the government in parliamentary votes (Norton and Cowley, 1996; Cowley and Stuart, 2004). This does not mean that the government faces many defeats, but the rebellions are used as a means to signal opposition from within the government party.

The opposition party can also be subdivided into a front bench and back-benchers. The Official Opposition's front bench is the most visible group within the opposition ranks. They are the alternative government in waiting. The Shadow Cabinet is the most important group within the opposition front bench, which decides on the strategy of the opposition party vis-a-vis the government. Although their interests are normally aligned with the interests of their back-benchers, it is to be expected that the government is criticized most heavily from the opposition front benches. They have truly to present themselves as the alternative government. In King's terms, their dominant mode of executive-legislative relations is the *opposition mode*. Opposition back-benchers join with their front bench in the battle with the government. However, these members also behave in a different mode. King (1976) calls this the *non-party or private member's mode*. In this mode, back-benchers from all sides of parliament approach the government with particular concerns. For example, as a 'Constituency MP' who act as an advocate for the interests of his or her constituency or as a 'Parliament Man' who is concerned with the relationship between parliament and government (Searing, 1994)¹⁰.

The distinction between front bench and back bench adds an extra source of variation in the British case, which reflects how politics in the United Kingdom

⁸Except for the Liberals/Liberal Alliance/Liberal Democrats, because these groups are small and until quite recently did not have a shadow team.

⁹See appendix A.3.3.

¹⁰Searing (1994) distinguishes between different MPs' roles in the United Kingdom parliament. However, many of these roles can also be found in other Westminster-style parliaments.

operates. The discussion of the various British cases will show that there is often quite some difference between a party's front bench and its back-benchers. This will add to the understanding of how the process of mandate fulfilment works in a majoritarian democracy such as Britain. Note that the findings in this chapter (concerning the differences between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) would not be significantly altered if I would not have made the distinction between front bench and back bench in the analysis of the data¹¹.

1955

The 1955 election was the first one to be fought under the new Conservative leadership of Anthony Eden, who had called for a general election after succeeding Winston Churchill as prime minister. He managed to get a clear election victory both in terms of votes (49.7%) and seats (345 out of 630). Attlee's Labour party lost both votes and seats compared to the last general election, when it had outpolled the Conservatives in terms of votes, but had won fewer seats. The situation was thus quite clear when it came to an electoral mandate and who was to govern. The Liberal party was quite small; it merely won 2.7% of the vote and 6 seats.

The spaces of electoral and parliamentary competition are displayed in figure 5.8. It is important to note that the differences between the two spaces cannot be interpreted in absolute terms. For example, one cannot say that there is a two-point difference between the position of Labour in the electoral space and the Labour front bench in parliament. What is possible is to compare the configuration of the party positions, e.g. to observe that the Liberals were somewhat closer to the Conservatives in parliament than in the electoral competition. As explained in the previous chapter, the spatial figures have been estimated from parties' positions on a number of separate issue dimensions, such as 'Economy' and 'Environment'. These issue dimensions have been plotted in the figure (dotted grey lines) as an aid to interpret the content of the policy position differences between parties. Parties' positions on any of these issue dimensions can be approximated by drawing a perpendicular line through the party position of interest. Furthermore, it is possible to compare how the issue dimensions are related to one another. Figure 5.8 shows, for example, that the ordering of parties' positions on the Environment and Law and Order and Migration dimensions was similar, both in the electoral and the parliamentary competition.

In 1955, the electoral space of competition was dominated by Economic and Foreign Affairs issues, where there was a clear Conservative-Liberal-Labour or-

¹¹To estimate the difference between the '5 actor model' presented here and an alternative '3 actor model' that does not distinguish between front bench and back-benchers, I estimated parties' parliamentary issue positions (using the word parameters of the original estimation, see section A.3.3). Neither the visual spatial representations nor the quantitative analyses of the issue positions are significantly altered if the '3 actor model'-positions are used in stead of the '5 actor model'-positions. Most importantly, the difference in the explanatory power of manifesto positions for parties' parliamentary issue positions is still not significantly different ($p > 0.05$).

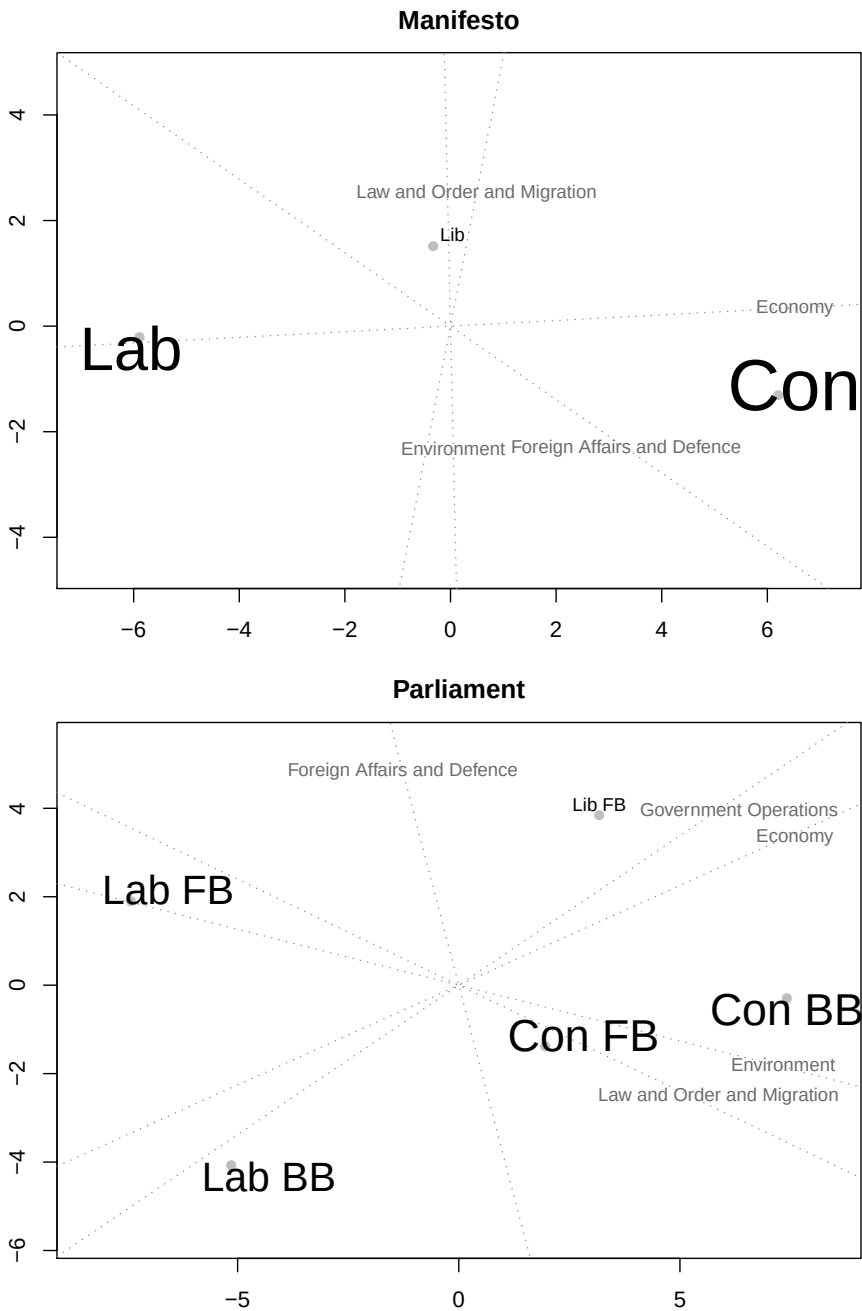
dering (figure 5.8). This is concurrent with an analysis of the content of election speeches by Butler (1955: 31-37). The second (vertical) dimension of the space can be explained by the party's positions on Law and Order (Labour-Conservative-Liberal) and the Environment category, which also includes Agriculture, but is not very salient anyway, that shows a Lib-Lab-Con ordering. Although some observers would certainly position the Liberals more towards the Conservative party, it is not entirely unexpected to find that an analysis of their position based on text of their election manifesto puts them somewhat closer to Labour. After all, the Conservatives formed the incumbent government and where thus the major electoral target.

The British parliamentary space of competition between 1955 and 1959 shows a similar ordering of parties, but the underlying dimensions have sometimes changed. The Conservatives are located on the right and Labour on the left, with the Liberals taking a moderate position on most issues. Interestingly, the Labour front bench (labelled 'Lab FB') takes one of the extreme positions on most issues, although it is very close to the Labour back-benchers on the Economy and Government Operations. The Labour benches are most different on Foreign Affairs, where the back-benchers are estimated to be closer to the conservative back benches than to their own front bench. The Conservative front bench (the government) is positioned more to the centre than its back-benchers, but this is probably partly the result of the method applied here¹². At least we can conclude that it is closer to its own back benches than to the opposition benches. The Liberals have shifted their position somewhat towards the right of the political spectrum, especially on the Economy, Environment, Law and Order and Migration and Government Operations. On Foreign Affairs and Defence they do, however, remain opposed to the government. The ordering of parties on the Economy and Foreign Affairs seems not to have changed very much, but Environment and Law and Order and Migration have completely different party orderings than in the electoral space of competition. Of course, these were not very important issues in the manifestos. Therefore, the estimates of the party manifesto positions were rather uncertain and changes are not unexpected. However, if issues are not very important and if party positions are not very clear during election-time there is a problem in terms of predictability of the parliamentary space of competition. Ideally, voters should be able to predict what the parliamentary space of competition looks like based on the electoral space of competition. If the electoral space of competition does not provide information on certain issues, voters cannot predict what the parliamentary space looks like.

Despite the changes on the issues of the Environment and Law and Order and Migration, the Parliamentary space of competition did not collapse into a single dimension. On the contrary, the variation on the second (vertical) dimension is

¹²The parliamentary space presented here is based on a Wordfish analysis that corrects for the special (institutional) position of the government in parliament (see appendix A.3.3). The consequence of this procedure is that the government is likely to be positioned somewhat more moderate than it really is. This should be taken into account in the interpretation of the spaces.

Figure 5.8: *Spaces of party competition in the United Kingdom, 1955-1959*



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberals, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

relatively large, compared to the manifesto space.

1966

The 1966 elections were called by Labour prime minister Wilson only two years after the previous elections. In the 1964-1966 parliament, Labour could only count on a very small majority of six seats. Many observers had therefore expected a Lab-Lib pact and new elections anyway. Instead, Wilson choose to govern as if he had a clear majority:

Over the whole field of government there will be many changes which we have been given a mandate by you to carry out. We intend to fulfil that mandate.

cited in Butler and King (1966: 2)

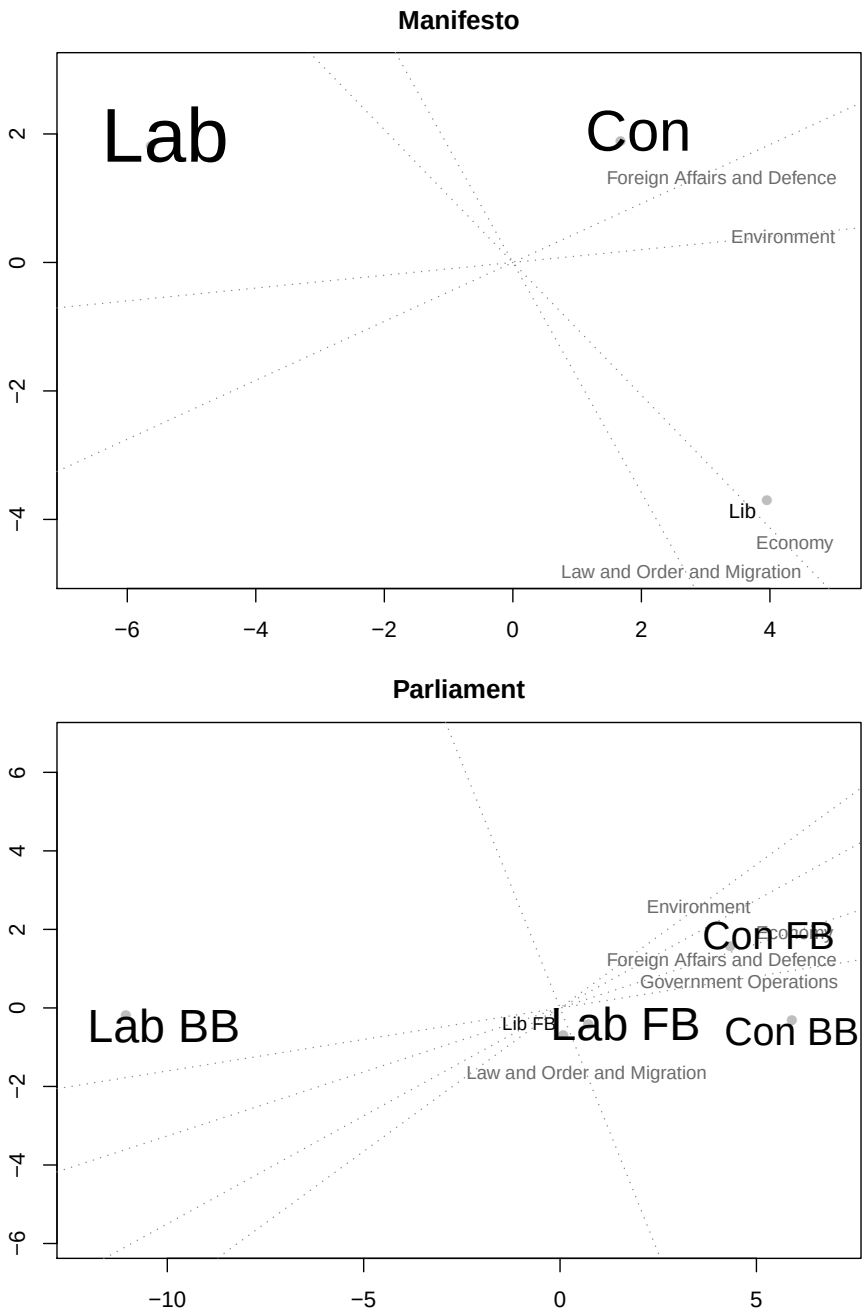
After two years, he choose, however to dissolve Parliament in order to obtain a new mandate and, more importantly, a larger majority. Labour was polling an 8 per cent lead over the Conservatives, so this seemed an opportune moment to do so. In addition, the popularity of the prime minister was at a two-year high. Although Labour had lost the elections in 1951, which had been held under similar circumstances, this time the early elections proved a good choice. Labour increased its majority to 97, which was of course a much more comfortable governing majority than the previous six.

Two things stand out from the electoral space of party competition in 1966. First, the divide on the Economy is not between Labour and Conservatives, but rather between the Liberals and Labour, with the Conservatives somewhere in the middle. The same is true for the parties' estimates on Law and Order and Migration. On the issues of the Environment and Foreign Affairs and Defence Labour is isolated on the left. Labour was the incumbent party in 1966, which can explain its isolated position on some issues: the other parties attack Labour's record. It is however, quite remarkable that the Liberals did not only move towards the Conservatives, but even beyond them. Indeed, the liberal manifesto was quite explicit on stopping nationalization and promoting free trade. Still, this effect is probably also partly due to rhetoric: after all, the Liberals had tried to work out some sort of coalition with Labour in the 1964-1966 parliament, but failed.

The parliamentary space of competition looks quite a bit different from the electoral space, although the basic left-right pattern is still very important. The Labour back-benchers are positioned very far away from all other actors, including the government itself. As I explained above, the government position might be biased towards the centre, but to find it this close to the Conservative benches and so far away from its own back bench is quite remarkable¹³. From this picture

¹³ A Wordfish analysis that includes the government in the estimation of the word parameters even opposes the Labour front bench with the Labour back benches on all issues.

Figure 5.9: *Spaces of party competition in the United Kingdom, 1966-1970*



it is also clear that there is a similar pattern of competition on almost all issues: the Labour back-benchers on the (far) left, the government and the liberals in the centre and the conservative benches on the right. The only exception is Law and Order and Migration, where the Conservative benches seem to be divided. The liberals are positioned quite clearly in the centre, rather than in the manifesto space, where they took positions on the fringes on almost all issues.

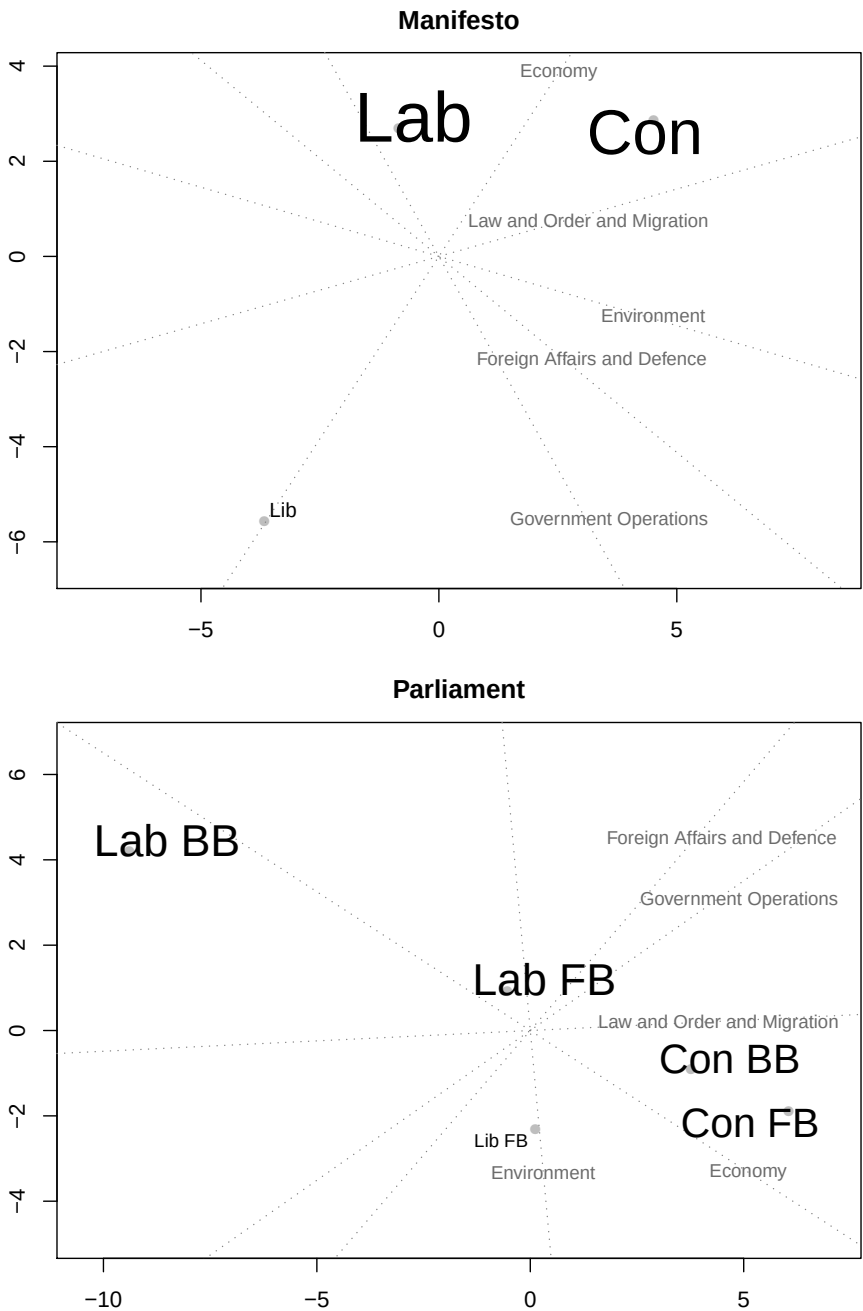
1974

The seventies were in many respects a remarkable decade for British politics. Britain witnessed both a short period of minority government in 1974 as well as a Labour government that struggled to keep its parliamentary majority between 1974 and 1979. It is also a period of reform of the Conservative party, exemplified by the change from the moderate policies of Ted Heath towards the neo-liberal politics of Margaret Thatcher. The February 1974 election came in many respects as a surprise; many observers had expected an autumn election – that, ironically, would be called after all, be it by a different government. No party achieved an overall majority in the February 1974 election, but Labour managed to win a plurality of seats. After Heath failed to form a coalition with the Liberals, he made way for former Labour prime minister Wilson, who governed for about half a year without a majority. Of course, Wilson was used to working within the margins of the parliament from the 1964-1966 period. Moreover, most parties did not press for immediate new elections and therefore the government was actually able to govern quite successfully. The fact that nobody believed that the situation would last for very long will also have contributed to the relative success of this short government (Butler and Kavanagh, 1975: 18-53).

Wilson called for new elections in October 1974, in which he hoped to achieve a proper working majority. The space of competition during these elections was clearly two-dimensional: every possible ordering of parties can be found on at least one issue. On the Economy, the Conservatives and Labour are opposed to the Liberals. On the Environment and Law and Order and Migration the ordering is Liberal-Labour-Conservative as well, although the Liberals and Labour are much closer on these issues. Foreign Affairs and Defence is the only issue category where there is a clear Labour versus Liberal and Conservative ordering, while parties are ordered Labour-Conservative-Liberals on Government Operations. Apparently, there is no clear left-right ordering in this electoral space of competition. This lack of a clear divide does reflect the moderation of both large parties at the time and the complicated situation that had arisen from the situation of a hung parliament.

The parliamentary space of competition shows a rather more clear left-right pattern of competition. The Labour back-benchers are on the left, while the Labour front bench (the government) is located somewhere in the centre of the space – much closer, still, to the opposition than to its own back bench. Just as in 1966, despite their position on the fringes of the electoral space, the Lib-

Figure 5.10: Spaces of party competition in the United Kingdom, 1974-1979



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberals, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

erals moved to the centre of the parliamentary space of competition, although the party was clearly closer to the Conservative benches than to the Labour back bench. The Conservative benches were rather close in terms of policy position, with the front bench being somewhat more on the extreme.

Despite the fact that parties seem to be ordered on a single line, the dotted lines that represent the issue dimensions suggests that the second dimension of this space is not redundant. On some issues, the Government is positioned closer to the Labour back bench, e.g. the Economy, the Environment and Law and Order and Migration, while on other issues its position is almost equal to the Conservatives (Foreign Affairs and Defence and Government Operations). A similar point can be made for the Liberals: they deviate from the general left-right ordering on Environmental issues, and to a lesser extent on Foreign Affairs and Government Operations.

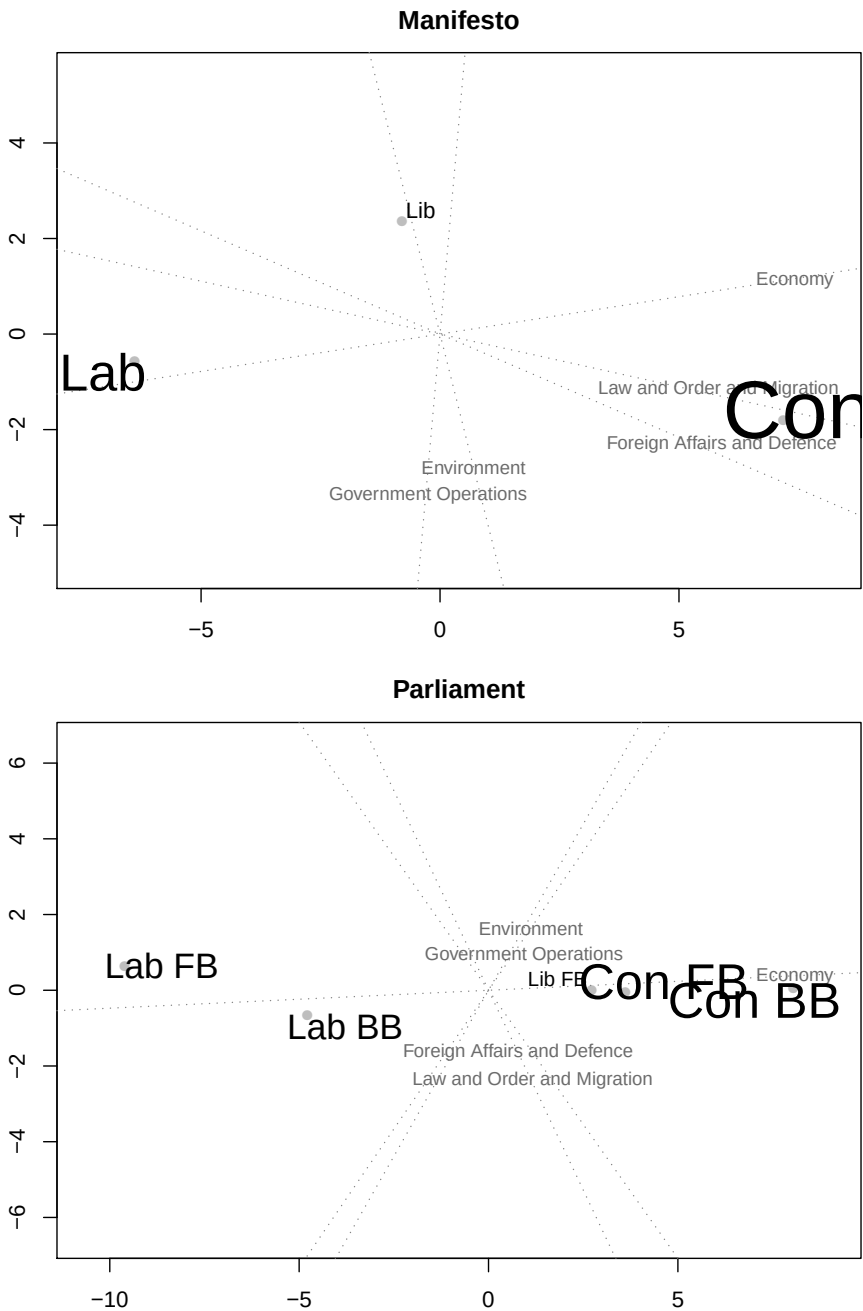
The October 1974 elections and the subsequent Parliament seem to be not very congruent. Not only is the ordering of parties different on many issues, some issues that have similar orderings in the electoral space are very different in those terms in the parliamentary space and vice versa.

1983

Margaret Thatcher, who was elected prime minister in 1979, was up for re-election in 1983. Although her government started off with some difficulty and especially social unrest, the Falklands war brought about a change in the polls. At the same time, Labour leader Michael Foot struggled with his popularity and his leadership within his party. In 1981 a group of twenty Labour MPs broke away from their party and formed the Social Democratic Party. They believed that Labour, that had fought the 1979 election under a moderate manifesto, had strayed too much to the left. The Bennites, the 'hard' left faction within the party, had grown stronger and Tony Benn only narrowly lost the deputy leadership election. The SDP almost immediately formed an alliance with the Liberals. The Liberal/SDP Alliance proved an important factor in the 1983 elections; it came in third, but its share of the vote was almost equal to that of Labour. The first-past-the-post electoral system did, however, favour Labour; it won 209 seats compared to the Alliance's 23.

The Labour manifesto has famously been called 'the longest suicide note in history' by shadow cabinet member Gerald Kaufman (Webster, 1990), because it was heavily influenced by the hard left faction of the party. The electoral space of competition confirms this analysis, putting Labour clearly on the left of the political spectrum opposed to the right-wing Conservatives, with the Liberal/SDP Alliance estimated to be slightly left of centre. However, on the issue of the Environment and Government Operations the Alliance is estimated to be the furthest away from the Conservative position. On the issue of the Economy, the Alliance is positioned towards the centre, while it is closer to Labour on other issues (Foreign Affairs and Defence and Law and Order and Migration).

Figure 5.11: Spaces of party competition in the United Kingdom, 1983-1987



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal/SDP Alliance, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

The parliamentary space of competition is in many respects similar to the electoral space of competition. The space is dominated by a clear left-right divide on Economic issues. The other issue dimensions are plotted here at an angle to the Economic issues, but similar issues as in the electoral space are grouped in pairs of two (Foreign Affairs and Defence, and Law and Order and Migration are one pair; the other consists of Environment and Government Operations). The position of the Liberal/SDP Alliance seems to have changed the most: where the party tended to lean to Labour in the electoral space, it is clearly closer to the Conservatives in the parliamentary space of competition. The Government (Conservative front bench) is positioned quite far to the right, compared with the relative positions of other governments in the discussions above. This illustrates the clear right-wing position of the Thatcher governments. In general, the comparison of spaces in 1983 shows a rather high degree of correspondence, the parliamentary space witnessing a continuation of the electoral struggles between Labour and the Conservatives.

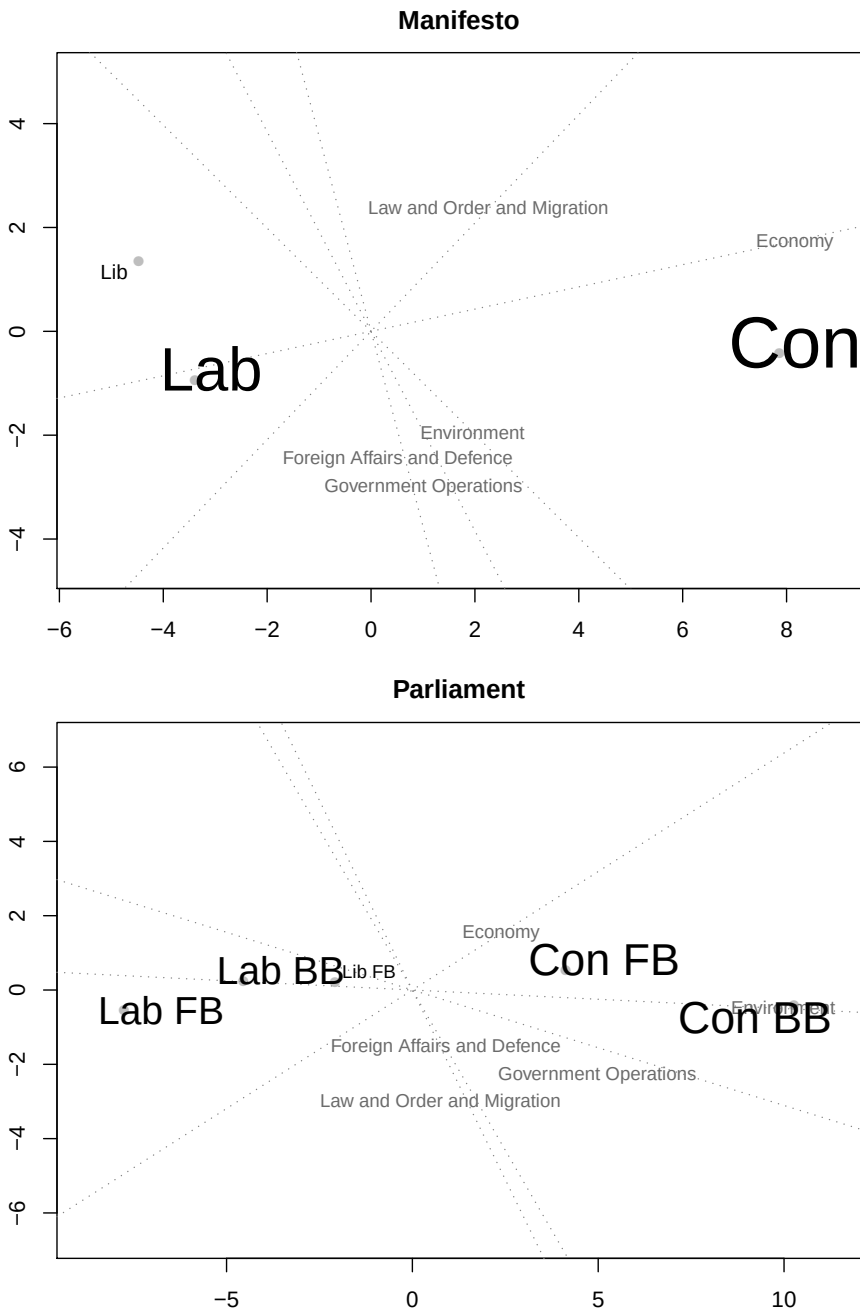
1992

The Conservatives fought the 1992 elections under a new leader and prime minister. John Major had succeeded Thatcher, after she had been forced to withdraw from the Conservative leadership contest to prevent Michael Heseltine from defeating her in that contest in 1990. The new Conservative leader had a very different leadership style from his predecessor, stressing moderation, the need for European co-operation and 'One Nation' Toryism. Although these differences may not have translated directly into a substantively different program, the symbolic differences embodied by Major did the Conservatives no harm at the time (Butler and Kavanagh, 1992).

Labour, on the other hand, was still seeking to be an acceptable government party for the centre of the political spectrum. The presence of a stronger competitor in the political centre had made life not easy for party leader Neil Kinnock, who had succeeded Michael Foot after the disastrous elections of 1983. Although the party had already reformed itself to a certain extent in 1987, accepting membership of the European Community, the sale of council town houses to tenants and a lower rate of direct taxation, the central question was how far Kinnock could move his party to the centre without losing the support of his grass roots (Butler and Kavanagh, 1992: 44). Yet, major reforms of party policy had not been pursued – the party needed another lost election to really modernize. The Liberals had merged with the Social Democratic Party in 1988 to form the Liberal Democrats. Their newly elected leader Paddy Ashdown had managed to gain an image of respectability in the Commons.

The electoral space of competition (Figure 5.12) is clearly dominated by the division between the Conservatives on the one side and the Liberal Democrats and Labour on the other side. On many issues (Government Operations, Foreign Affairs and the Environment) the Liberal Democrats are estimated to be more to

Figure 5.12: Spaces of party competition in the United Kingdom, 1992-1997



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal Democrats, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

the left than Labour. On the Economy, their position seems to be similar, while Labour is estimated to be only slightly more leftists on Law and Order and Migration. The pattern is clearly different from the one in 1983, let alone 1974 or 1966, where the Liberals were clearly in a more centrist or even right-wing position. In each of the manifesto spaces the Liberal Democrats are positioned on the opposite side of the incumbent government, which suggests that rhetoric does play a role in the analysis of these manifestos. However, their position was far more moderate in both 1983 and 1955, when the incumbent government was also Conservative. The fact that the Liberal Democrats are positioned so close to Labour also suggests that the position of the Conservative party is not as moderate as one would have expected from a 'One Nation'-prime minister.

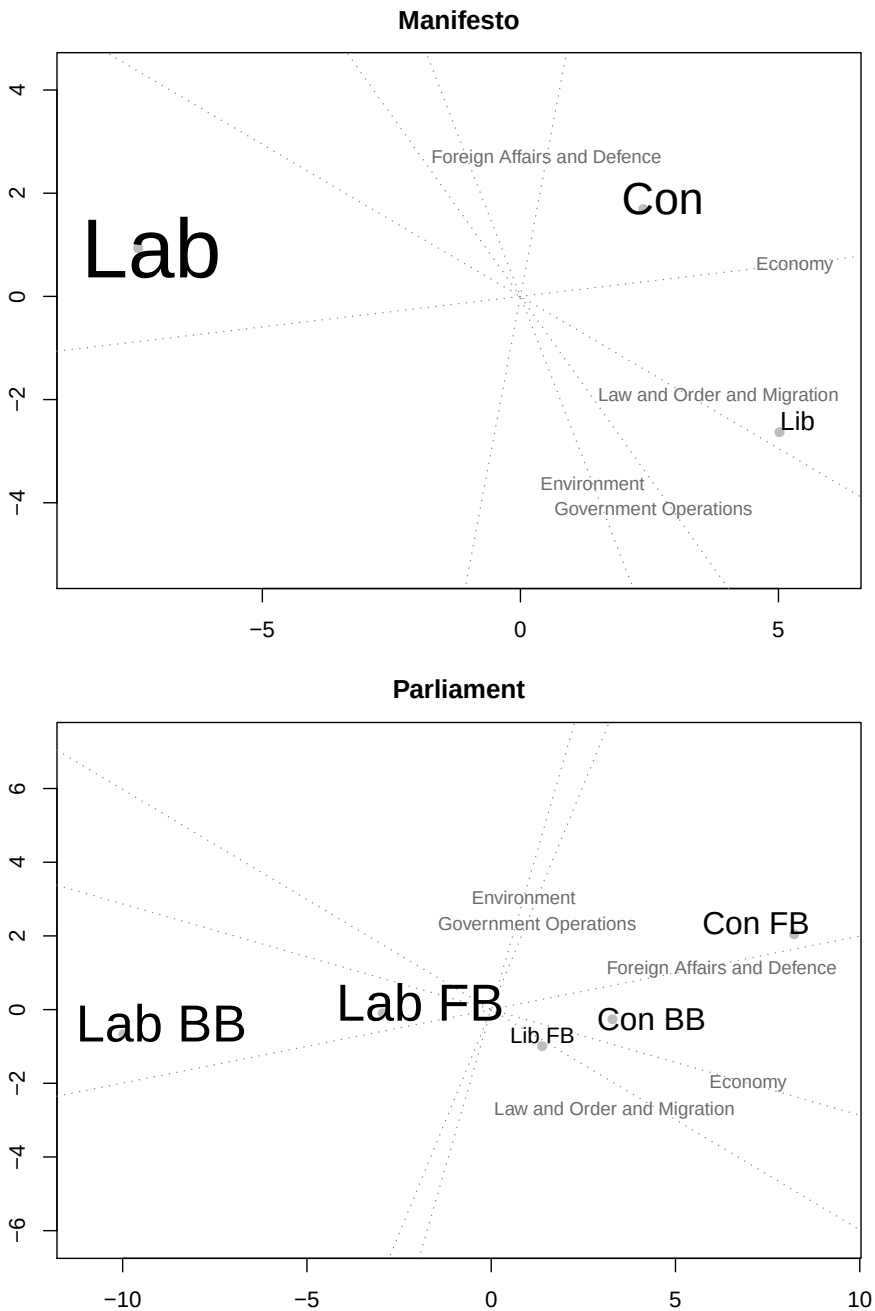
In the parliamentary space of competition, the pattern is far more like previous parliamentary periods, showing the Labour benches on the left, the Liberal Democrats just left-of-centre and the Conservatives on the right of the political spectrum. Comparison of the 1983 parliamentary space and the 1992 parliamentary space reveals that the Major government is positioned quite a bit further from its back-benchers than Thatcher's government was. The 1992-1997 parliament is indeed known for the political problems of the Major governments, especially over Europe. Foreign Affairs is one of the issues where there is a large distance between the government and its back benches. The Liberal Democrats' parliamentary position is to the right of Labour, rather than to its left. This change to the right is similar to the one the Alliance made in the 1983-1987 parliament. The main difference with the 1980s is that in the 1992 parliament the Liberal Democrats were closer to Labour than they were to the Conservatives.

2001

The most recent British case in this analysis consists of the second Labour government under Tony Blair. It is well known that Blair had managed to reform his party in the mid-1990s. He changed the name of the party to New Labour and pursued 'Third Way' policies as an alternative to old socialism and neo-liberal Thatcherism. Labour's landslide victory in 1997 had given him a clear governmental mandate, which was backed up by huge personal popularity. The Labour government was able to quickly implement devolution to Scotland and Wales and Blair's standing was much improved after the Good Friday agreement was signed in Northern Ireland. The financial policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was solid, but the government had difficulty in reaching its targets in Health Care and Education, despite a large increase in spending in these fields. Nevertheless, Labour kept doing very well in the polls and there was little doubt that it would achieve a second election victory in a row.

Labour's main political opponents were not doing very well. The leadership of William Hague had not been entirely convincing and also in terms of policy the Conservative party was looking for new directions. After all, the Conservative party had been voted out of government after 18 years of office. The party

Figure 5.13: Spaces of party competition in the United Kingdom, 2001-2005



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal Democrats, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

strayed to the right, rather than reconquering the political centre. Of course, Hague's job was rather difficult, because of the government's and Blair's popularity. The Liberal Democrats had established themselves as left-wing rather than right-wing critics of the Labour party. After Ashdown resigned the leadership, Charles Kennedy had quite successfully maintained the party image as a party of positive opposition to Labour's, that managed to put forward a somewhat different agenda from Labour: in support of proportional representation, strongly pro-European and favouring spending on education.

The electoral space of competition mirrors the previous two cases when there was an incumbent Labour government (1966 and 1974): Labour is positioned on one side of the political spectrum and the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats on the other.

In parliament, the traditional Labour-Liberal Democrat-Conservative pattern is most obvious, although it is clearer on some issues than others. On some issues the Liberal Democrats are closer to Labour, while on other issues their position is closer to that of the Conservative opposition. Most interestingly, the position of the Labour government is hardly as remarkable as it was in the 1966 and 1974 when Labour governments faced rebellious back-benchers. Although the back-benchers are estimated more to the left of the space, the Labour government is clearly positioned in the left part of the space of competition. Because this concerns the relative positions of actors, this does not necessarily mean that the government was more left-wing in 2001-2005. It is more likely that the back-benchers were more moderate, which resulted in a position that was relatively closer to the Labour front bench.

Patterns in the British cases

The qualitative discussion of the six British cases uncovers a number of general patterns in the correspondence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition.

First, the British spaces of competition are dominated by the left-right divide, especially in economic terms. This pattern is the strongest in parliament, where almost each space of competition shows Labour on the left, the Liberals somewhere in the middle and the Conservatives on the right. Nevertheless, the second dimension of the spaces does pick up on some relevant patterns that do not fit this single dimension. There is no clear pattern in these deviations: in some spaces Foreign Affairs does not seem to match the left-right patterns, while in other spaces the Environment or Government Operations deviate from the economic dimension.

The electoral spaces of competition also seem to show a degree of left-right politics. However, on closer inspection I find that the space is mainly the result of a division between the incumbent government and the opposition parties. In the elections when the Conservatives were in government, the Liberals were positioned in the centre of the space (1955, 1983) or even beyond Labour (1992).

In the election-years where Labour was the incumbent, the Liberals were positioned generally further away from Labour than the Conservatives were.

One reason for this probably surprising position of the Liberals, who are generally regarded as a force from the political centre, is the anti-government rhetoric in the manifestos from the 'outgoing' opposition parties. For example, the Liberals write many sentences about the Labour government that 'has failed' to meet their objectives (Liberal Party, 1966), 'Labour's [policy proposals] will do nothing to correct this' (Liberal Party, 1966) and 'misjudged policies from both Conservative and Labour Governments' (Liberal Democrats, 1992). Similar remarks are made by the Conservatives and Labour when they are in opposition. This incumbents versus opposition dynamic in the manifestos might be 'just rhetoric', but it does very much influence the way in which parties present themselves during the elections. This shows that rhetoric matters: opposing and supporting the incumbent governments' policies is an important part of a British manifesto. This is also a clear difference with the Dutch manifestos, where such utterances only form a minor part of manifestos, if present at all.

This study looks at the party mandate in terms of what parties talk about and what they say before and after elections. If the electoral arena is dominated by political struggles and the parliamentary arena by substantive reasoning, this reduces the congruences of the structures of those spaces. This is exactly what I observe in the cases in the United Kingdom. During the elections, the opposition parties oppose the incumbent government. Contrary to what one might expect, in parliament this dynamic is less strong, especially for the Liberals. The Liberals strongly oppose the incumbent party during the election campaign, but their parliamentary position is more moderate. The retrospective nature of the manifestos diminishes the congruence between the structures of the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition.

The distinction made here between the front bench and back-benchers of the main parties leads to a noteworthy observation. In all parliamentary spaces of competition, the dominant ordering of parties is: Government back-benchers – Government – Liberals – Opposition back-benchers – Opposition front bench. The position of the front bench and back-benchers is by no means identical, especially not for the government party. The government back-benchers form a counterweight to the relatively moderate position of the government itself¹⁴. It is not quite so difficult to imagine that the government has to take a relatively moderate position on issues. After all, the job of the government is not only to fulfil the pledges of their mandate, but also to defend 'business as usual': the large output from the bureaucracy that continues no matter who is in government (Rose, 1980). The opposition front bench, on the other hand, has got every incentive to distance itself from the government in very clear terms. This pattern can also be observed in the House, for example during the Debate on the

¹⁴The estimates of the governments' positions might be biased towards a moderate position, because of the way these positions were estimated, but this is unlikely to fully explain the moderate positions of the governments (see appendix A.3.3).

Address, the annual general debate on the outline of government policies. The Leader of the Opposition attacks the government in strong terms and the Prime Minister defends his government's policies. After the House empties the Leader of the Liberal Democrats gets to make a few remarks, and he is followed by a long list of back-benchers who sometimes strongly defend or attack the government, but generally limit themselves to mentioning one area that they find particularly interesting or to the mentioning of constituency business. The spaces of competition also show that the Labour back-benchers are generally further away from its government than the Conservative back-benchers. These remarkable differences between front bench and back benches are explored more fully in chapter 6.

5.2.2 The Netherlands

The analysis of the Dutch cases incorporates, in principle, all parties that won seats in an election¹⁵. However, some parties did not produce a manifesto for some elections or it was extremely short – these parties have not been included in the analysis. Parliamentary split-offs were also ignored. Six parliament-elections from six decades have been included: the elections held in and the parliaments starting in 1952, 1959, 1972, 1982, 1994 and 2003.

1952

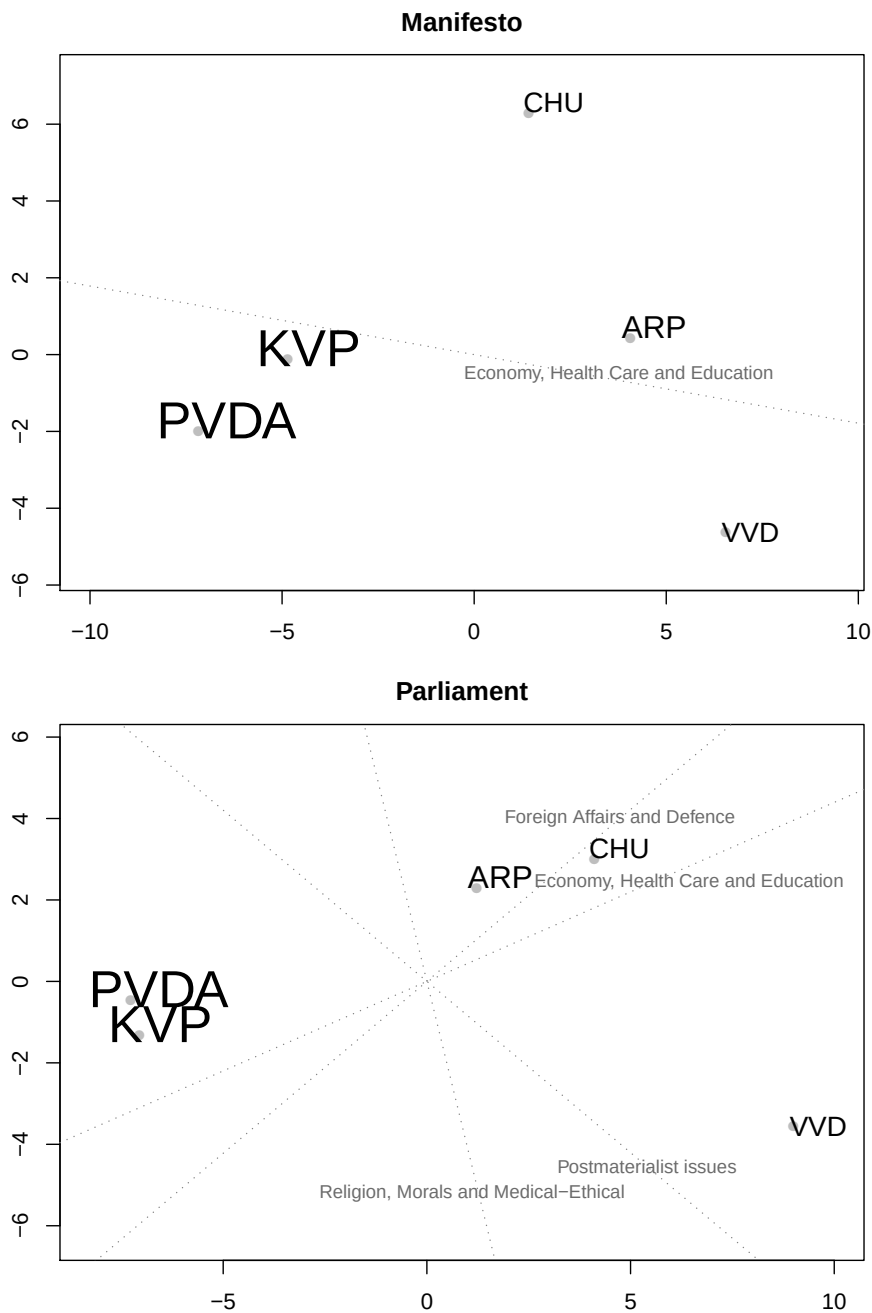
The 1952 elections in the Netherlands took place in the context of a strongly 'pillarized' society (Lijphart, 1968). Three large Christian democratic parties were dominant players: the large Catholic People's Party (KVP), the somewhat smaller Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) which aimed at protestant 're-reformed'¹⁶ voters and the Christian Historical Union (CHU) which catered to protestant 'Dutch reformed' voters. The small orthodox Calvinist party, the Political Reformed Party (SGP), is not displayed here as it did not present an election manifesto. The two main secular parties were the left-wing social-democratic party (PvdA) and the conservative-liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD). The Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) is also excluded because of the lack of a manifesto.

The manifesto space for 1952 shows a first dimension that is dominated by Economy, Health Care and Education. Although there are also differences between parties that add to a second dimension in the solution, none of the issue dimensions can be fitted in this space to explain these differences. The reason is that not all parties can be positioned on all issue dimensions, especially on the

¹⁵Other than in the British case, the lower house of the Dutch parliament (the *Tweede Kamer*) never included representatives from regional parties. Obviously, there are geographical differences in parties' support, but all parties compete on a national platform.

¹⁶The 're-reformed' protestants (*gereformeerden*) are members of a protestant church that seceded from the Dutch Reformed church (*hervormden*).

Figure 5.14: *Spaces of party competition in the Netherlands, 1952-1956*



Note: Labels are relative to party size. For full party names, see table B.2 on page 234.

Religion, Morals and Medical-Ethical as well as the Post-materialist issues dimension. Only the Christian parties could be scored on the Religious dimension, because the two secular parties (PvdA and VVD) did not address the issue in their manifesto. Of course, the fact that they choose not to address these types of moral and ethical concerns indicates a difference in opinion between the secular and Christian parties. The CHU could not be scored on the Post-materialism issue dimension. The Foreign Affairs dimension can also not be reliably represented in this space, although it contributed to the distance matrix used to calculate the picture. The Foreign Affairs dimension ranges from PvdA to ARP, with the KVP and VVD in the centre, excluding the CHU which did not address these issues sufficiently to reliably estimate its position. All in all, the space of competition is dominated by Economic issues, with other dimensions contributing to the estimates on the second dimension.

The 1952 elections resulted in minor shifts in the composition of parliament, as was common during these years of pillarization (Andeweg and Irwin, 2009). The social-democratic PvdA increased its number of seats by three, at the expense of the catholic KVP and the communist CPN. Both the KVP and the PvdA won thirty (out of a hundred) seats. It was clear during the elections that the outgoing Drees-II government of PvdA, KVP, CHU and VVD would not continue in office, as the liberal VVD believed that the government had been influenced too much by the unions (Bosmans, 1999: 56). The clear economic left-right division in the electoral space of competition can be well understood from that perspective. In the new government the VVD was replaced by the protestant ARP. The ARP had not been in government for several years because of its staunch opposition to decolonization of the Dutch East Indies (Koole, 1995: 107-108).

The parliamentary space of competition between 1952 and 1956 looks rather similar to the electoral competition, although there are some underlying differences. The most striking difference is the position of the CHU, which is more to the right in parliament than in the electoral competition¹⁷. The ARP, however, seems to have shifted somewhat to the left, moving closer to the other governing parties. Still, the government seems to be divided between KVP and PvdA on the one side and the protestant parties (ARP and CHU) on the other. The main difference lies, however, between the government parties and the liberals, who were in opposition.

When looking at the issue dimensions that constitute the space, some remarkable differences come to light. On the post-materialist issue, the PvdA-KVP-VVD versus ARP ordering is replaced by an KVP-PvdA versus ARP-CHU-VVD ordering. It thus seems that the VVD has moved away from the position of the

¹⁷It should be stressed that the phrase 'to the right' strictly speaking does not have the political meaning that the reader might be used to, but rather means that it is literally more to the right in the figure. In addition, all of these figures display parties' relative positions. Whenever the shorthand 'party A moved to the right' is used, the correct interpretation is that party A's position was positioned relatively closer to the other parties positioned on the right of the parliamentary space than was the case in the electoral space.

Catholics and social-democrats towards the probably more government-critical ARP side of the dimension. A similar change can be observed on the Foreign Affairs and Defence issue, where the VVD has moved away from the PvdA and KVP, while the ARP has moved towards their position. It is also remarkable that the PvdA is positioned on the Christian side of the Religious dimension, despite the call of Catholic Bishops in 1954 on Catholics not to be a member of the PvdA. Government-opposition dynamics seems to dominate this dimension, the PvdA choosing the government side. On the whole the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition are quite similar; the differences that are visible seem to be the result of opposition-coalition dynamics.

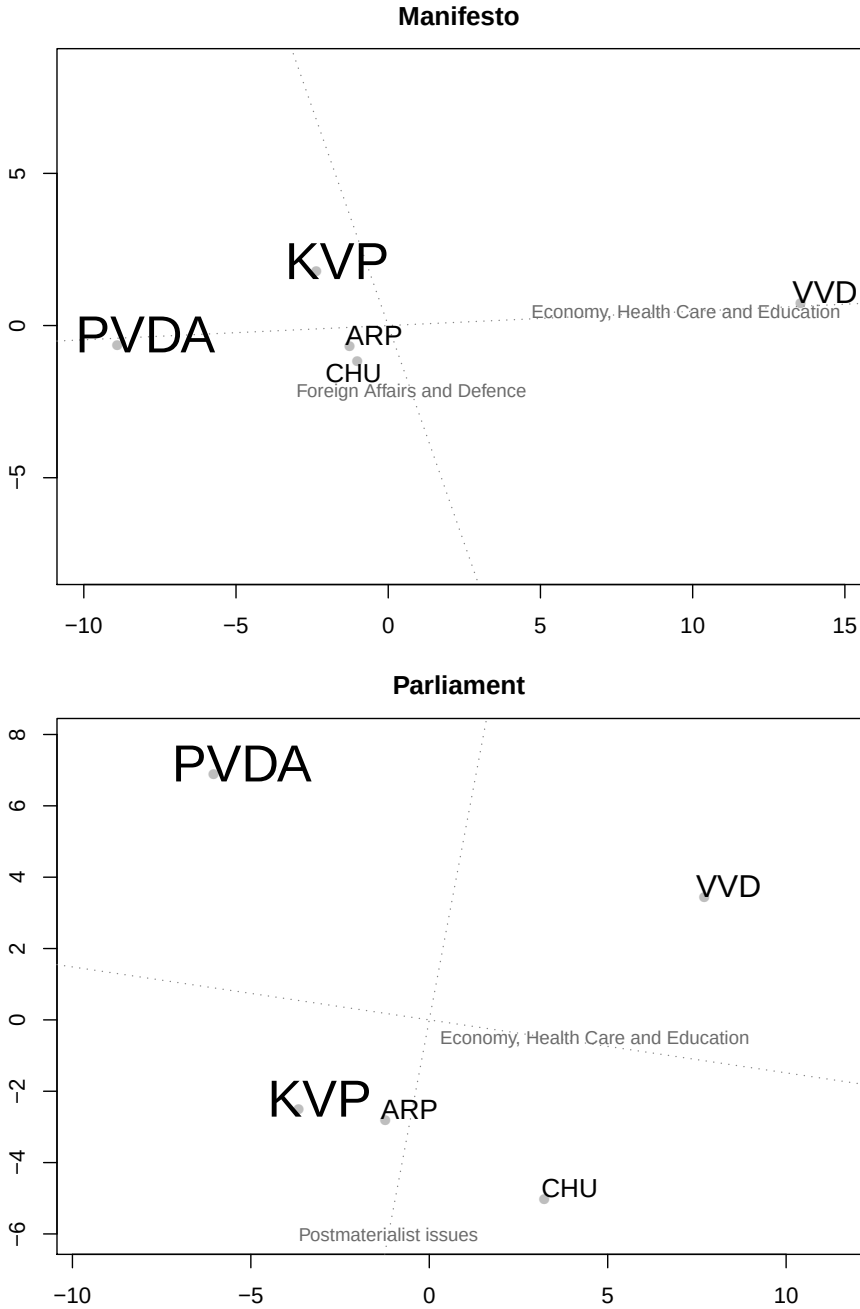
1959

In 1959 the same five parties are included in the analysis. The new Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP) only presented a very short general program, while the SGP and CPN still did not table a real election manifesto. The early elections of 1959 were necessary because the coalition of all five parties collapsed as a result of ever-increasing political tension between the PvdA and the Christian democratic parties. A caretaker government of the Christian democratic parties had dissolved parliament and called for early elections.

The electoral space of competition is clearly dominated by a left-right dynamic. The VVD is positioned on the right-hand side, clearly opposite to the position of the PvdA. The Christian democratic parties are positioned somewhat to the left of centre, contrary to what we might expect given the circumstances of these elections. Closer inspection of the data by means of a Correspondence Analysis learns that there is indeed a second dimension to the competition on economic issues, that distinguishes between the Christian democratic and secular parties. Thus, the first dimension found by the Wordfish analysis seems to underestimate the differences between the PvdA and the Christian democratic parties. This phenomenon, where a one-dimensional solution as offered by Wordfish does not always capture all relevant differences between parties, was also observed in a number of other cases¹⁸. Foreign Affairs and Defence seems to distinguish most clearly between KVP on the one side and the other parties on the other side, however the PvdA could not be positioned on this dimension. The problem of missing scores was also apparent with the issues of Post-materialism and Religion; only two parties could be scored on each of these dimensions, which makes them not very useful for the purposes here.

¹⁸Correspondence Analysis (CA) is a technique that is comparable to Wordscores, and to a lesser degree to Wordfish (Lowe, 2008). One difference is that CA can find a two- or more-dimensional solution. In case Wordfish provides a solution that seems at odds with other accounts of the party competition on an issue, CA can be used as a tool to further investigate the difference. The technique of correspondence analysis itself is under some circumstances very sensitive to outliers (see also Lowe, 2008). Therefore, I am using it merely as a tool for further investigation of the Wordfish solutions if these run contrary to expectation, rather than as the main method of analysis.

Figure 5.15: *Spaces of party competition in the Netherlands, 1959-1963*



Note: Labels are relative to party size. For full party names, see table B.2 on page 234.

The 1959 elections resulted in the formation of a coalition cabinet containing the liberal VVD and the Christian democratic parties. This was to be expected given the cabinet crisis in 1958, which was caused by conflict between PvdA and KVP about taxes. The option of a centre-right coalition was rather interesting for the KVP as it strengthened its (numerical) position within the government. The ordering of parties on the horizontal dimension of the parliamentary space of competition is very similar to the ordering in the elections. The PvdA is located on the left, the VVD on the right and the Christian parties somewhere in the centre. Bearing in mind the fact that there was now a centre-right coalition, it is in fact remarkable that KVP and ARP have barely changed their position on this dimension: only the ARP seems to have drifted somewhat to the right. The vertical dimension of the parliamentary space of competition seems to be more important than the vertical dimension in the electoral space (see section 5.2.3). The ordering of parties coincides with the Post-materialism dimension, which shows a clear distinction between the secular and Christian parties. Interestingly, the one issue dimension that one would have expected to show such a pattern, Religion, did not do so. Instead, on the Religious dimension the VVD was opposed to the other parties, although the PvdA was somewhere in the centre of this dimension. Foreign Affairs could also not be drawn into the space as a dimension, but the pattern of the PvdA opposing the governmental parties does add to the distances between the parties in the space of competition. The Christian democratic parties were much closer to the VVD on this issue in parliament than they were in the manifesto.

The parliamentary space of competition is thus quite similar to the manifesto space of competition when it comes to the horizontal axis: Economy, Health Care and Education. On other issues, the pattern is much more diverse. The Christian democratic parties group together in parliament and move somewhat closer to their governing partner, the VVD. The opposition party PvdA removed itself from the other parties; somewhat similar to the VVD's movement when it was in opposition in 1952. Economic issues were dominant in the manifesto competition. Furthermore, many party positions on Post-materialism and Religion could not be estimated for the manifesto competition, which obviously limits the variation between the parties. The fact that party positions on these dimensions cannot be estimated is, however, informative because it signifies the importance of Economic and, to a lesser extent, Foreign Affairs issues in the manifestos. While the issues did play a role in parliamentary politics, the voters were poorly informed about party preferences on these issues, which did make it more difficult for voters to take these issues into account for their vote. The parliamentary space of competition, on the other hand, does show differences between parties on the second (vertical) dimension. In this sense, there seems to be a lack of congruence between the structure of the electoral and parliamentary competition.

1972

The case of 1972 is in many respects the most remarkable case. The 1970s are known as a period of polarization in Dutch politics, with the social-democrats fiercely fighting the liberals and vice versa. It is a period of de-pillarization: the old system of pillarization had been in decline (at least) since the end of the 1960s which led to higher levels of volatility. New parties had been founded, such as the Farmers' Party (BP), a right-wing competitor which had been founded in the 1950s, but gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, Democrats '66 (D66), a force in the political centre, mainly focussing on democratic reform, and Democratisch-Socialisten '70 (DS'70) a right wing split-off from the PvdA.

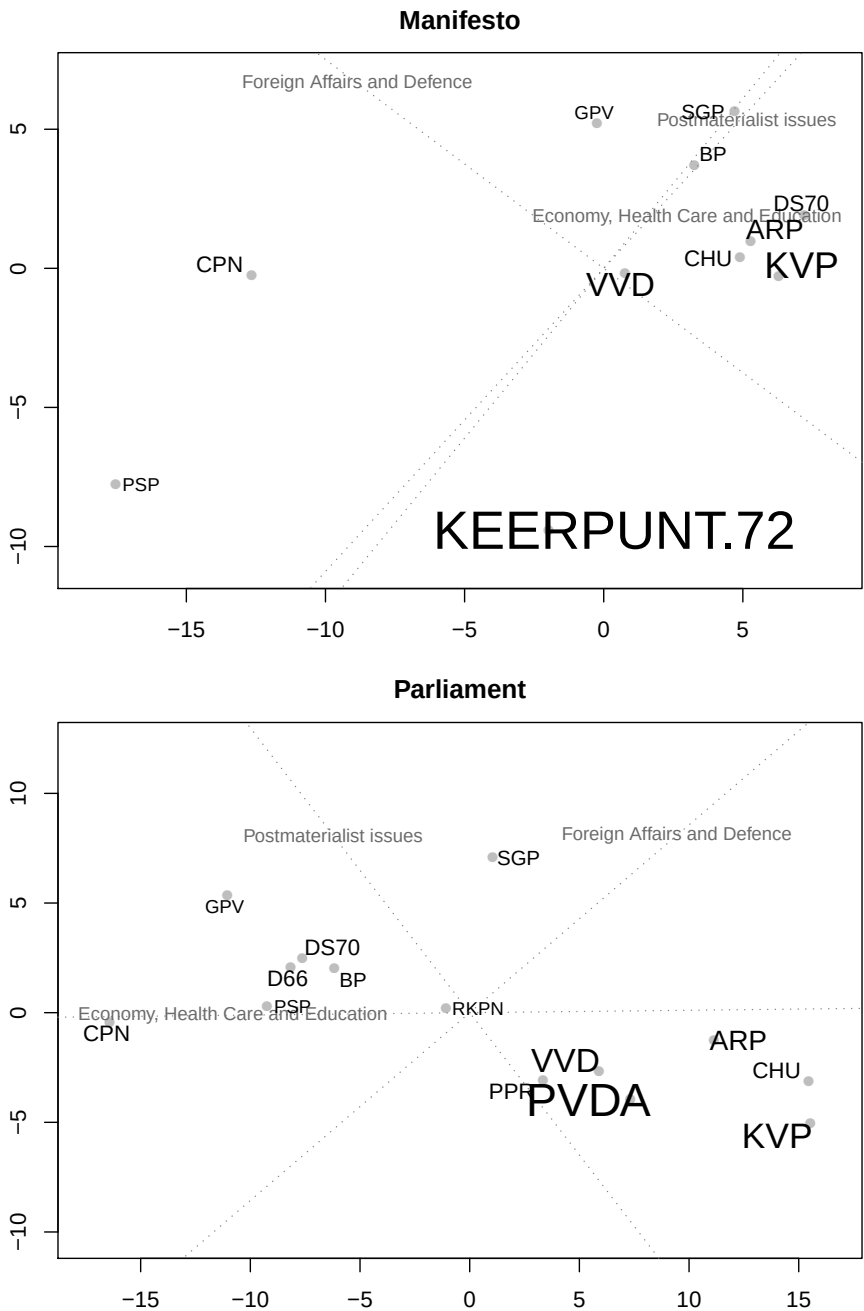
Departing from this background, many observers of Dutch politics will be somewhat puzzled by the party positions in figure 5.16. PvdA, D66 and the small left-wing Politieke Partij Radicalen (PPR) had formed a pre-electoral coalition called 'Keerpunt 72' and competed under the same program. On some issues, this manifesto is estimated to be close to the other small left-wing parties (CPN and PSP), while on other issues it is deemed to be closer to the right-wing parties. The space is not dominated by a clear left-right competition between CPN, PSP and Keerpunt on the one side and the VVD and BP on the other side. There is rather a competition between the Christian democratic and right-wing parties on one side, the smaller left-wing parties on the other side and Keerpunt located somewhat in the centre. The solution displayed here is also not very stable: inclusion or exclusion of documents can lead to rather large shifts of the position of Keerpunt, DS70, the BP and the GPV. One reason for this is the very different nature of the election manifestos included in this analysis: the program of the CPN and Boerenpartij is merely a short list of priorities, Keerpunt is essentially a pre-election coalition agreement, while the program of the PSP almost reads like a catalogue of their issue positions, especially concerning foreign policy. Slapin and Proksch have argued that such differences might lead to problems with the estimation of positions (2009). The case of the Dutch manifestos of 1972 illustrates that argument¹⁹.

In the electoral space of competition of 1972 Economic and Post-materialist issues are almost analogous: parties' position on one dimension can be predicted very well by means of the position on the other dimension. As we will see, this pattern continues to be apparent in the next decades. It shows that post-materialism has quickly been adapted to fit the left-right division in politics. The only exception is the issue of Government and democracy, which is included as a separate issue from 1982 onwards. Party preferences on this issue do not always run parallel to their preferences on economic policy.

Foreign Affairs has a different ordering from the other two issue dimensions that are plotted into the electoral space of competition. This seems to be the result of the rather extreme position of the PSP on this issues, which pushes the position of Keerpunt, the left-wing pre-electoral coalition, towards the centre.

¹⁹See Appendix A.3.5

Figure 5.16: *Spaces of party competition in the Netherlands, 1972-1977*



Note: Labels are relative to party size. For full party names, see table B.2 on page 234.

The religious dimension cannot be plotted into the space, but its influence seems to be apparent in the position of the smaller Christian parties, which are positioned a small distance away from the larger Christian and right-wing parties. Similar to the issues that are grouped in the Post-materialist issue dimension, this pattern has been visible since: the main division on the Religious dimension is between the small protestant parties and all other parties. The extent to which this dimension is visible in the space of competition, however does vary.

The parliamentary space of competition in the 1972-1977 parliament is probably even more puzzling from the perspective of polarization. One pattern that is clear and can easily be explained is the grouping of the governing parties, KVP, ARP, PvdA and PPR (but not D66). What is, however, less obvious is the position of the main right-wing opposition CHU and VVD. These parties are located very close to the governing parties.

The parties on the opposite end of the political spectrum are all small right-wing and left-wing opposition parties, with the notable exception of D66. The parliamentary discourse of this period seems very much influenced by an establishment versus anti-establishment rhetoric, which can also be induced from the words parties on opposite sides of this spectrum use. On the 'establishment' side, many technical words are used, while on the other side many very clear words with distinct political meaning are used. The fact that Wordfish fails to pick up on the politicized left versus right vocabulary however does pose a warning for the interpretation of the results. It should be noted that other methods of the analysis of word usage, such as correspondence analysis and Wordscores, produce similar findings. The analysis of word usage by parties does not always produce findings similar to what an observer or reader of the debates would likely have found. In the case of 1972 it is particularly clear that the finding of the analysis does relate rather poorly to any political intuition. In later years, the correspondence between expectation, the Wordfish results and other estimates of parties' positions is much closer.

For 1972, I must conclude that there seems to be little relation between the parliamentary and electoral spaces of competition, although a clear distinction between the main right-wing parties and the small left-wing opposition is apparent in both spaces. The analysis of the parliamentary debates does however result in a structure of competition that bears little relation to observers' accounts of the competition during that period. Therefore, the lack of correspondence between the manifesto and parliamentary spaces cannot simply be attributed to a lack of mandate fulfilment during this period. Although it is apparent that the Keerpunt parties are much closer to the other governing parties in parliament, their proximity to their main political rival suggests that the analysis picks up on many other things than substantive differences over policy.

1982

In 1977 the three large Christian democratic parties merged into the Christian-Democratic Appeal (CDA). The elections of 1982 followed after the early resignation of a CDA/PvdA/D66 cabinet. This cabinet held office for only half a year, struggling with the economic crisis at hand, fighting over the course of policy: a classical left-right divide with the PvdA on the left and the CDA on the (centre)right. The PvdA managed to win the election, but especially the VVD had a good result, increasing its number of seats from 26 to 36. This growth allowed to formation of a centre-right CDA/VVD cabinet, which was the preferred coalition of both partners.

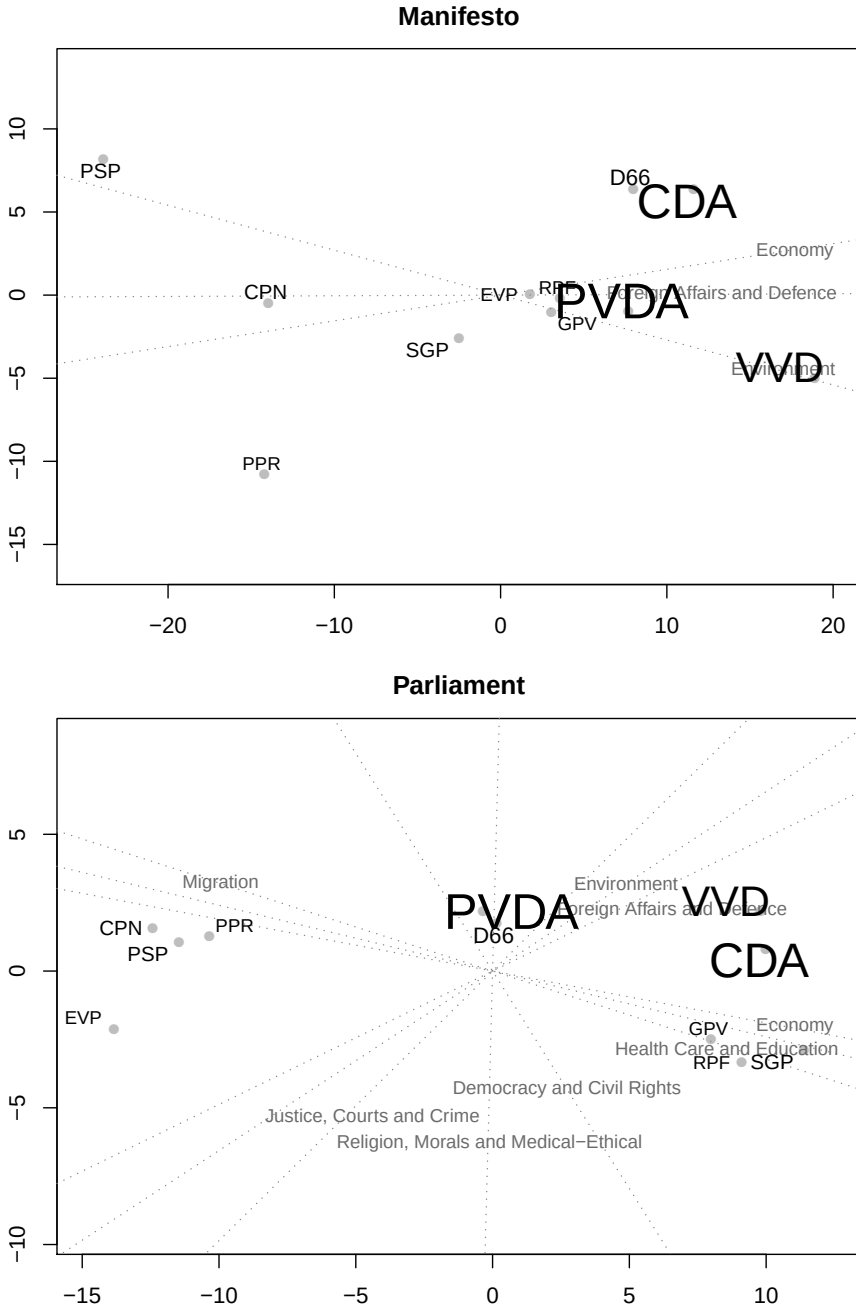
The electoral space of competition is once again dominated by Economic issues. Environmental issues and Foreign Affairs and Defence are also very much tied to the horizontal axis of this space. On the left of the spectrum the small left-wing parties PSP, CPN and PPR can be found. The PvdA is positioned right of centre, perhaps a result of the rather extreme position of the smaller left-wing parties. D66 is also positioned somewhat right to centre, as are the smaller Calvinist parties. Apparently, the Religious dimension is not very much defining the space. On the right we find the CDA and the VVD. The three large parties are thus located very close to one another, even though there was a cabinet crisis concerning policy just before. It should be noted that the analysis here is based on a combination of manifestos from 1981 and 1982, because some parties did not write (an entirely) new manifesto. Many parties said that their 1981 manifesto was still valid, with a new pamphlet covering issues that had come up in the year before.

The parliamentary space of competition reflects the composition of the government coalition. CDA and VVD had moved closer to each other. PvdA and D66, on the other hand, had moved to the left – although they were still positioned closer to the government than to the small left-wing parties. The small Christian parties were positioned in a small group on the bottom-right side of the space: they share a right-wing position of the government on Economy, Health Care and Education, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Environment, but are positioned clearly on the opposite side of the government when it comes to Religion, Morals and Medical-Ethical issues. One small party, the left-wing Christian party EVP, seems to fit its label perfectly: it is positioned on the left, but also on the Christian side of the Religious dimension.

1994

The year 1994 marks the end of the continuous government participation of Christian democratic parties since 1918. The outgoing CDA/PvdA cabinet was very unpopular for its attempt to freeze state pensions. Both parties lost dramatically in the election, but the PvdA nevertheless became the largest party. There were major gains for the liberal VVD and especially the social-liberal D66. On

Figure 5.17: *Spaces of party competition in the Netherlands, 1982-1986*



the left, a new small Socialist Party (SP) gained a foothold of two seats in parliament. The merger party GreenLeft (GL) that included PPR, PSP, CPN and EVP did not do as well as expected and only managed to win five seats. The extreme right Centre Democrats (CD) won three seats.

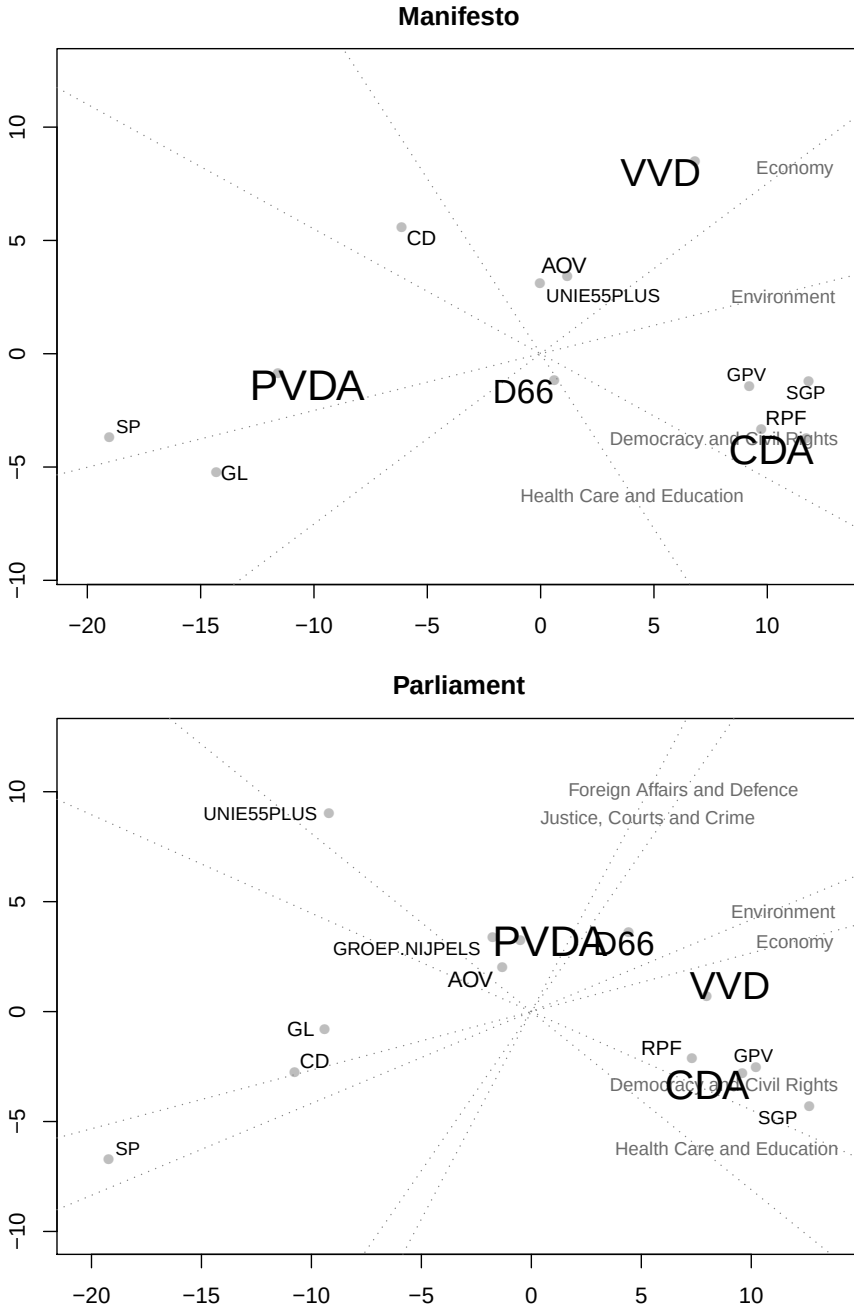
In general, the 1994 space of competition is dominated by a clear left-right pattern, as well as a religious-secular pattern. The space shows roughly three groups of parties: the left-wing parties, the Christian democratic parties and the liberal parties. The VVD is positioned to the left of the CDA, a pattern that pops up rather consistently in these analyses and runs contrary to the general expectation. In this case this seems mainly to be related to the Health Care and Education dimension, which shows a clear secular-religious pattern. As the main objective here is to compare the space and structure of the electoral competition with the space and structure of the parliamentary competition, such a deviation from the expectation is not too problematic. After all, a similar pattern is also visible in parliament, which results in the conclusion that the spaces of competition are similar, despite the fact that the configuration is different from what one would have expected.

The PvdA's position in the electoral space was very close to the smaller left-wing parties, which is remarkable compared to the 1982 situation. One explanation might be that the merger of four smaller left-wing parties into GL gives them less influence in the analysis. However, the PvdA was much farther away from GL in the parliamentary competition, which suggests that its electoral position is not merely the result of methodological complexities. One party that was located in a counter-intuitive position is the Centre Democrats (CD), an extreme-right anti-immigrant party that is nevertheless located left of centre. The reason that the CD was called extreme-right is mainly because of its anti-immigrant stance, which is reflected in the most extreme position on the migration issue dimension (not plotted in figure 5.18 as it did not fit well enough in the overall model). However, as migration is only one of many issues that form the space of competition, their extreme position on one issue dimension was compensated by far more moderate positions on other issues. Therefore, the party ends up to the left of centre. As a similar position is found in parliament, this counter-intuitive result does not greatly affect the usability of these data for my purpose²⁰.

The major shift between the electoral and parliamentary space of competition is the clustering of governmental parties. D66 and the VVD were already positioned rather close in the electoral space of competition. They were joined by the PvdA after these three parties formed a coalition-cabinet. Remarkably, the CDA did not distance itself from the government, but was positioned even closer to the government than in the election. This does indeed reflect the trouble this party had in formulating credible opposition. At the time, many argued that

²⁰ Another problem of the estimation of the CD's position is its rather unusual choice of words, which makes the estimation not very robust. Additionally, the CD was critical of the main parties and the government, just as the two small left-wing parties were.

Figure 5.18: *Spaces of party competition in the Netherlands, 1994-1998*



the 'real' opposition was not formed by the CDA, but by the small left-wing parties, especially GL. The small protestant parties (RPF, GPV and SGP) remained in their cluster on the right-wing and Christian side of the political spectrum. The distances on the left seem to have become bigger: not only has the PvdA moved away from the small leftwing parties, the distance between GL and the SP is also larger. In addition, the CD is positioned further away from the left-wing parties.

The importance of the vertical dimension of the electoral and parliamentary spaces is similar. The Religion, Morals and Medical-ethical dimension explains the position of the small Christian democratic parties, while most of the other dimensions seem to be related with economic issues, with Justice, Courts and Crime being the most notable exception, which displays rather an opposition-coalition dynamics. The political problems of Justice Minister Sorgdrager (D66) throughout the parliamentary period partly explain these dynamics. This minister had to deal with multiple crises in her own department, which lead to strong critique from parliament on multiple occasions. She could however not be forced to step down, because this would trigger a cabinet crises (Bosmans, 1999: 171-174). Therefore, government-opposition dynamics are very pronounced on the Justice, Courts and Crime dimension: D66, VVD and PvdA are positioned on one side of the dimension and most opposition parties on the other side.

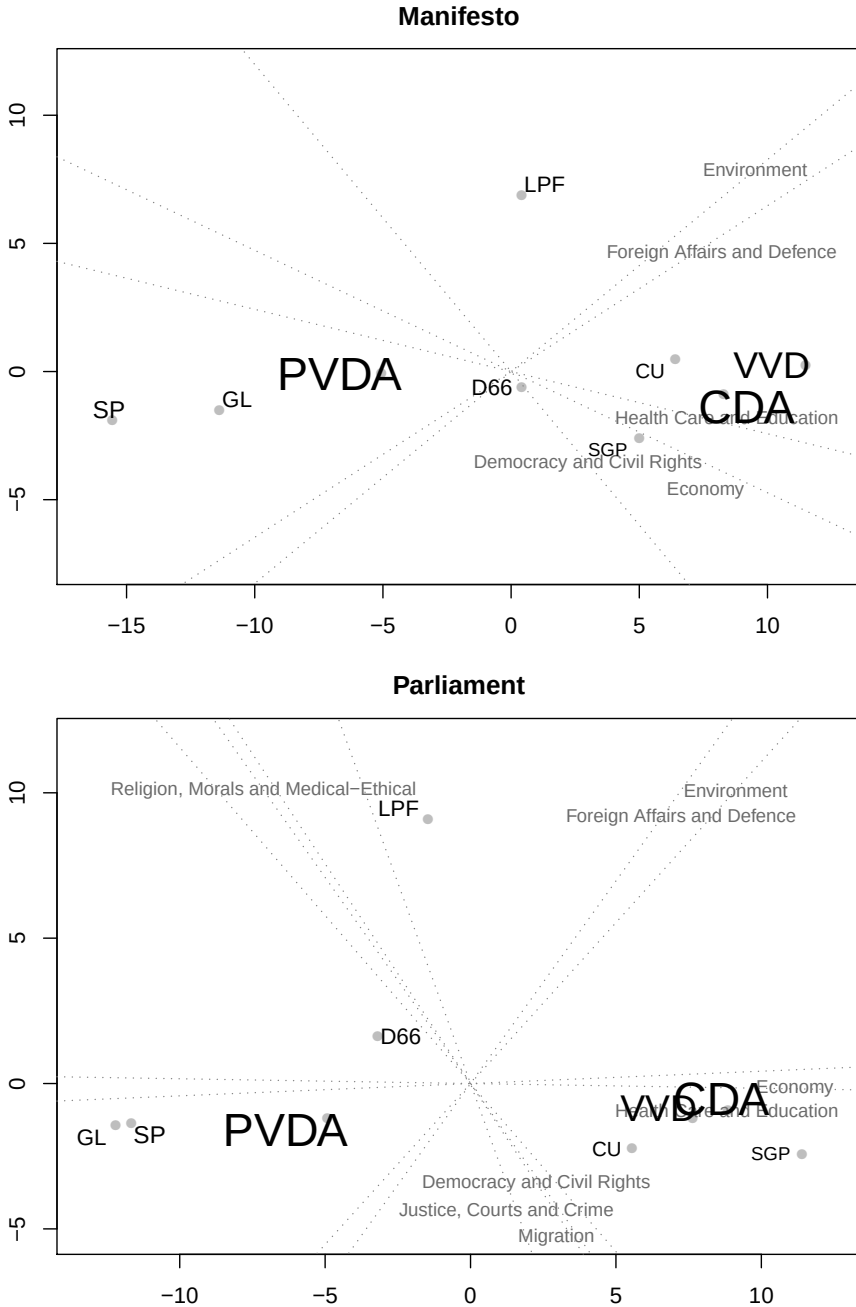
2003

Only 87 days after the first Balkenende government took office, it offered its resignation. The cabinet of CDA, LPF and VVD had been formed after the landslide victory of the right-wing populist List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) in the 2002 election. The LPF's party leader, Pim Fortuyn, had been murdered only nine days before that election, leaving his newly formed party in disarray. Although they did agree to participate in the coalition, their choice of ministers turned out to be unhappy, to say the least. Apart from continuous struggles within the parliamentary group, two of the party's ministers had weekly fights over issues and style. After three months the other coalition parties were so fed up with the situation that they "pulled the plug" in the words of VVD leader Zalm.

The following elections, held in January 2003, were to a certain degree a restoration of mainstream politics. The LPF lost sharply (from 26 to 8 seats), while the PvdA recovered most of its losses of the 2002 elections. Still, the Christian-democratic prime minister Balkenende managed to lead his party to victory for the second time, polling 43 seats. D66 and GL suffered minor losses, while the SP, despite polling around twenty seats at one time during the campaign, remained stable at nine seats. The Christian Union (CU), a merger party of RPF and GPV, was also disappointed with the three seats it won in the election – the pre-merger parties had polled a combined total of five in 1998.

The electoral space of competition of these elections was dominated by issues relating to the economy, all of which correlate very strongly with the horizontal dimension of the space of competition. The ordering of parties on this dimension

Figure 5.19: *Spaces of party competition in the Netherlands, 2003-2006*



Note: Labels are relative to party size. For full party names, see table B.2 on page 234.

is quite similar to the one in 1994: SP, GL, PvdA, LPF, D66, SGP, CU, CDA, VVD. The main 'outlier' is the LPF, which apart from its clearly right-wing position on Migration (not plotted), is more to the left on some issues (Democracy and Government, Economy, Health Care and Education) and more to the right on other issues (Environment, Foreign Affairs and Defence). The Religious dimension does not carry much weight in this space: although CU and SGP clearly take the most pro-Christian position on this dimension, it is of relative minor importance.

After coalition negotiations between PvdA and CDA failed because of policy differences on many issues and a general lack of trust, CDA, VVD and D66 formed a coalition cabinet that had a small majority in parliament. D66's participation in the government was criticized by its membership, because the party had lost seats in the last three elections. However, party leader Thom de Graaf argued that the party could achieve more in government than in opposition. Eventually, the party congress agreed to the government participation.

The parliamentary space of competition shows a number of small differences compared to the electoral space of competition. The coalition party D66 had in fact moved to the left, away from the other government parties. Although this might seem strange, observers have noted a continuous pattern of discontent between D66 and the other coalition parties, culminating in the temporary cabinet crisis of 2004 and eventually in the fall of the government in 2006. With the benefit of hindsight CDA and VVD might have preferred to opt for a coalition with the small Christian democratic parties CU and SGP, as these parties were much closer to the government parties. On the left, GL and SP had also moved closer to each other, while the PvdA remained virtually on the same spot. The same can be said for the LPF. This party has sometimes been called a 'spare member of the coalition': in case D66 would oppose the government, the government could secure parliamentary support for its proposals by turning to the LPF for support, for example on issues like the Environment and Foreign Affairs and Defence. However, the LPF's parliamentary position was rather far away from all other parties. The party had a left-wing position on some issues, while it was right-wing on others. The issue dimensions that are plotted in the parliamentary space of competition as an aid for interpretation of the space are located at virtually the same positions as those in the electoral competition²¹.

Patterns in the Dutch cases

In comparison to the British cases, discussed above, the Dutch spaces of competition are rather complex. This is of course to be expected with a number of

²¹One exception is the migration dimension, where the LPF's positions has moved from the far right to the far left. This awkward change can be explained by two factors. First, the party's use of language is very different from all the other parties, which makes it very difficult to position it on a single dimension: in these kinds of situations Wordfish might flip the party to either side of the dimension. Secondly, the LPF shares some of the critical language of the left-wing opposition on the government's policy.

parties that is far larger than in Britain. Nevertheless, Economic issues are very important both in terms of how much parties talk about these issues, as well as the degree to which parties' positions on other issues can be explained by their position on economic issues. The issue of the environment is a prime example of this: although it is an issue that is conceptually rather clearly distinguishable from economic affairs, parties' positions on the environment depend on their economic views: leftist parties are generally also more 'green'.

Religious issues do not seem to be very important in the spaces of competition of the 1950s and 1960s. One reason for this is that especially the PvdA did not talk about these issues at all, which makes it an implicit rather than an explicit issue. Everyone knew what parties' beliefs on religious issues were, so there was little need to explain them. The Christian parties did outline their beliefs, but the secular parties choose largely to ignore the issue. In a sense these were clearly saliency issues: either you talked about them as a Christian, or you kept silent on these issues as a secular politician. In parliament, these issues did, however come up from time to time. Here, no clear religious-secular divide is found either, rather a government versus opposition dynamic.

The main disturbing factor of correspondence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition in the Netherlands is the government coalition. In virtually all years, parties that form a coalition agreement are closer to one another in parliament than they were during the elections. Exceptions to this rule do exist, but are not very common (D66 in 1972-1977 and 2003-2006). From the 1970s onwards, the government parties were also located to the right of the political spectrum. Clearly even when the social-democrats are in government, the opposition from the left is more pronounced and has a large influence on the structure of the space of competition.

In general the Dutch case shows relative stability of the spaces of competition. The left-right pattern is apparent in both the electoral and parliamentary spaces. Sometimes, however, the centre parties are estimated to be more right-wing than others may expect. This is the result of inductive textual analysis, where the differences in word usage are assumed to be based on differences in political orientation. There is even more variation in the extent to which secondary dimensions are preserved. This is sometimes the result of uncertainty in the estimates for the electoral space, while at other times there seems to be a genuine shift of parties' preferences, especially in the light of government formation.

5.2.3 The dimensionality of the spaces of competition

The dimensionality of the spaces can be captured by looking at the extent to which the second dimensions of the spaces contribute to the explanations of differences between parties (see table 5.2). The spaces depict the results of a (classical) multidimensional scaling procedure, that reduce the differences between parties on multiple issue dimensions to a, in this case, two-dimensional representation. In these types of analysis the first dimension captures the largest part

Table 5.2: *The importance of the second dimension of the spaces of competition^a*

	Period	Manifesto	Parliament
The United Kingdom	1955-1959	4.26	18.79
	1966-1970	12.86	1.67
	1974-1979	10.95	3.33
	1983-1987	7.50	0.40
	1992-1997	2.58	0.41
	2001-2005	7.57	1.64
The Netherlands	1952-1956	32.15	12.41
	1959-1963	1.90	40.13
	1972-1977	15.60	6.29
	1982-1986	15.63	3.97
	1994-1998	13.27	15.38
	2003-2006	8.17	14.01

^a The figure indicates the eigenvalue of the second dimension in the solution, as a percentage of the sum of the eigenvalues of the first and second dimension. It thus indicates how much of the distances between parties on the (weighted) issue dimensions is captured by the second dimension of the solution. The theoretical range of values is between 0% (second dimension is not important) and 50% (second dimension explains as much as the first).

of the distance between parties; the second dimension captures a smaller part. In some cases, the first dimension of the space accounts for 99% of the distance between parties and the second dimension only for 1%²². In those cases, the second dimension is in fact redundant. In other cases, the second dimension accounts for more than 10% of the differences in distances between parties.

In the case of Britain between 1955 and 1959, for example, the second dimension of the electoral space accounts for just over 4% of the distance. This seems very low, but it should be kept in mind that for the estimation of the models, the party scores were weighted by issue saliency. This means that the most important issue contributes a lot to the distance matrix. In other words, the 'distance' between parties is more influenced by more important issues. The first dimension in the MDS solution will therefore largely correspond to the most important issue dimension(s). This does not mean that second dimension is unimportant: parties are ordered differently on some of the less salient issue dimensions. The relative eigenvalues are especially instructive in a comparative fashion: between manifesto and parliament and over time. In the 1955-1959 British parliament-

²²The classical multidimensional scaling technique used here is very similar to Principal Components Analysis (PCA). It applies a matrix decomposition to the matrix of distances between parties. Therefore, one can talk about eigenvalues and the contribution of dimensions to the explanation of the variance in the original data.

ary space the second dimension accounts for over 18%. This confirms my above analysis of the spatial figures which showed a more different orderings of parties in the parliamentary than in the electoral competition. The table shows that the case of 1955-1959 is markedly different from the other British cases in one respect: in 1955, the second dimension of the space is more important in parliament than in the manifesto, while in all other cases the opposite holds true. The normal pattern in Britain is that the second (vertical) dimension is more important in the electoral spaces than in the parliamentary spaces. Observing that the horizontal dimension represents the Economy issue dimension in each of the cases, this runs contrary to the conventional belief that left-right structures the electoral competition, but not so much the parliamentary competition between parties (McDonald and Budge, 2005).

In the Dutch cases, the second dimensions of the spaces of competition are generally more important. Typically, the second dimension explains about 10 to 15 per cent of the total variation captured by the spatial representation (see table 5.2). In the 1959-1963 parliamentary space the second dimension even explains about as much variation in (weighted) party positions as the first dimension. One explanation of the importance of the secondary dimension in the Dutch case is the number of parties. If there are more parties, it becomes more unlikely that a one-dimensional solution captures all variation in party policy preferences²³. However, the Dutch cases in the 1950s and 1960s, which only include five parties, also show importance of the second dimension in the spatial model. This supports the idea that Dutch politics has always been characterized by the presence of multiple issue dimensions (Lijphart, 1999; Koole, 1995).

With regard to the congruence of the Dutch pre- and post-electoral spaces, there seems to be no clear pattern. In some cases, the second dimension plays a more important role during the elections (1952, 1972 and 1982), while in other cases the parliamentary space is 'more' two-dimensional (1959, 1994 and 2003). The incongruencies between electoral and parliamentary spaces seem to be the result of factors specific to a particular case, rather than to represent a generalized pattern, as is the case in the United Kingdom. While some of the differences in table 5.2 are quite substantial, these differences do not necessarily imply that mandate fulfilment is hugely problematic in a particular case. In the 2003-2006 case, for example, the second dimension plays a more prominent role in parliament (14.01%) than during the election campaign (8.17%). However, figure 5.19 suggest that this has mainly to do with the position of the LPF; the overall congruence is not particularly poor in this case.

²³This argument can also be reversed: if there is only one relevant policy dimension, it is unlikely that one will find many political parties. The number of parties will increase with the number of issue dimensions (Lijphart, 1999).

5.2.4 Party position congruence

The spatial representations of party competition during elections and in parliament is useful in identifying a number of broad patterns, while keeping in mind the particularities of the selected cases. An alternative way to assess the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary competition is by means of a statistical model. The model presented here aims to explain the positions parties take in parliament on issue dimensions by the positions they have on these issues during the elections. The units of analysis here are parties' positions on the separate issue dimensions, rather than their positions in the spaces, because the positions on single dimensions are more easily compared between the electoral and parliamentary arena²⁴.

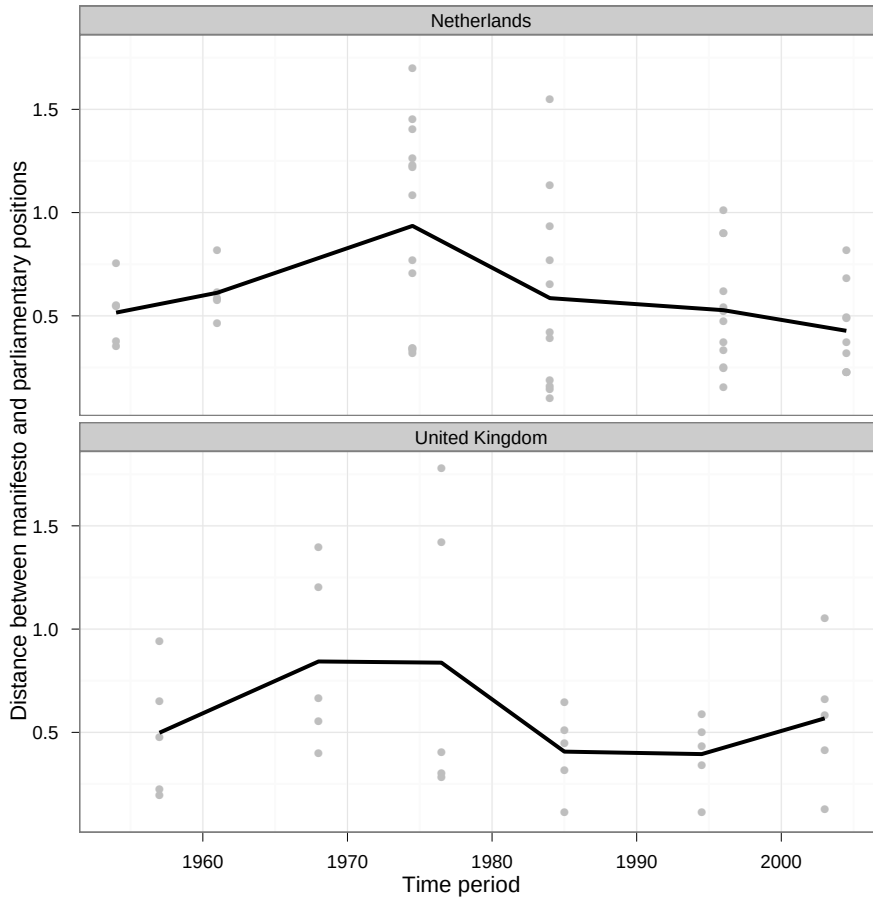
The position measurements used in the analysis are *relative* party positions. Wordfish produces standardized estimates of the party positions, which cannot be compared in absolute terms between the election and parliament. This means that a comparison of parties' *absolute* positions is impossible, but their relative positions on the dimensions can be compared²⁵.

An intuitive way of measuring the differences between parties' positions on issue dimensions is by calculating the 'distance' (the absolute difference) between those two relative positions (Achen, 1978). To calculate a party's overall congruence on all issue dimensions, I took the mean of these distances, weighted by the saliency of each issue. After all, distances on more salient dimensions are more important in terms of the party mandate²⁶. Figure 5.20 displays these mean party position distances in both countries over time (grey dots) and the mean value per county per year (black line). In both countries, the median value ranges between 0.4 and 0.9. In the Netherlands, the largest outlier is the 1972-1977 case, which confirms the qualitative analysis above. Although it was certainly not as bad as the Dutch 1972-1997 case, the 1966-1970 elections and parliament in Britain show the largest median distance between parties' electoral and parliamentary positions. In Britain, the range of party values is particularly large for the 1966-1970 and 1974-1979 case. In those cases there is a large difference between the relatively congruent Conservative opposition on the one hand and the large distances for the Liberals and Labour. In all other years, the range is relatively small in Britain. In the Netherlands, the range of values is larger in most cases, which is to be expected because of the larger number of parties. Overall, the mean party distance scores are slightly lower in Britain than in the

²⁴It should be noted that this still concerns parties' relative positions. The analysis is thus not strictly on the party level.

²⁵Because Wordfish does not ensure that right wing parties are always on the right and vice versa (dimensions may be flipped without any substantive implication), I reversed the dimensions were necessary to achieve a positive correlation between the electoral and parliamentary dimensions.

²⁶An alternative advantage is that this ensures that the choice of issue dimensions does not greatly affect the results. If one would, for example, split the Health Care and Education dimension in to separate 'Health Care' and 'Education' dimensions, the weighted mean distance of that party would not change.

Figure 5.20: *Distances between electoral and parliamentary positions*

Note: The figure displays the mean distance between a party's electoral and its parliamentary positions on each of the issue dimension, weighted by the saliency of those dimensions (grey dots). The black line indicates the average of those values per country per period. The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

Table 5.3: *Explaining parties' issue positions in parliament*

	Model 1	Model 2 (Front bench)
(Intercept)	0.030 (0.042)	-0.003 (0.042)
Manifesto position	0.614* (0.041)	0.625* (0.044)
Country: UK	-0.042 (0.064)	0.063 (0.086)
Manifesto position * Country: UK	0.077 (0.065)	-0.288* (0.092)
<i>N</i>	440	382
<i>R</i> ²	0.489	0.365
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.486	0.360
Resid. sd	21.103	0.712

Standard errors in parentheses

* indicates significance at $p < 0.05$

Netherlands, but the difference is small.

An alternative way to analyse the mandate fulfilment in terms of party positions is by using a regression model (Achen, 1978). The model predicts a parties' (relative) *parliamentary* issue position on a certain dimension by its *electoral* issue position. The underlying idea is that parties' relative issue positions in both arenas should be similar or congruent. If this is the case, we expect that the predictive power of manifesto positions are high. In this case, voters will be able to tell how parties position themselves (vis-a-vis each other) by looking at the differences between the parties' election manifestos. From the perspective of mandate fulfilment, a high degree of predictive power of the manifesto for parliamentary debate is thus desirable. If parties' parliamentary and electoral (relative) positions are, on average, identical, then the *b*-coefficient in the analysis will be equal to one. In order to estimate the influence of the political system, I also included two other variables in the model: country as a dummy variable and the interaction between country and the electoral position of a party on an issue. This makes it possible to check whether there is a significant difference in the predictive power of the electoral position between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The total dataset consists of 440 observations. One problem in conducting the analysis is the fact that we know that the estimates of party positions are not equally certain. To take into account the certainty of the estimates, I weighted the cases by the manifesto word count of a party on an issue. This means that party-issue estimates that were based on more words are weighted more heavily in the analysis than observations that were based on only a few words.

The first model specified in table 5.3 shows that there is a moderately strong

connection between a party's position in parliament and its electoral position. The regression coefficient of 'Manifesto position' equals 0.614, which indicates that Dutch parties with a standardized electoral position of one are estimated to have a parliamentary position of 0.614. This is not perfect, but quite reasonable. For the British parties, we have to add to this the coefficient of the interaction effect 'Manifesto position * Country UK', which captures how the British parties differ from their Dutch counterparts. Thus, for the British parties, the model estimates that parties with a standardized position of 1 have an parliamentary position of $0.614 + 0.077 = 0.691$. The difference between the Dutch and UK cases is, however, not statistically significant²⁷. The main hypothesis of this study is that mandate fulfilment is higher in countries with a consensus political system than in countries with a majoritarian political system. The analysis displayed in model 1 does not support this expectation.

The first model includes both the front bench and the back bench positions in the United Kingdom. However, one can argue that in the United Kingdom the 'party line' is first and foremost represented by the front bench, not by the back-benchers. After all, back-benchers are free to express their own concerns and they do in different ways, i.e. some Labour MPs are well-known leftists, while others present themselves as more moderate than the front bench. The front bench, on the other hand, must present a coherent and consistent policy programme. The second model in table 5.3 fits this interpretation by excluding the back-benchers in Britain. In this model the interaction between UK and Manifesto policy position becomes significantly *negative*. This means that mandate fulfilment of front-benchers in the UK is significantly lower (0.337) than for parties in the Netherlands (0.625). Thus, the front benches seem to fare a lot worse in terms of mandate fulfilment than their colleagues on the back bench. In addition, the explained variance of the model drops from .49 to .37.

This effect can partly be explained by the method of estimating the government's position in Britain which results in an extreme position for the government party back bench and a more moderate position for the government party front bench (see appendix A.3.3). As the positions are standardized, this will almost automatically mean that the positions of the back bench are closer to the manifesto positions of the parties. Take, for example, the 2001 election and subsequent parliament. In the manifesto space, Labour occupied a position in the left of the figure, far removed from its competitors. In parliament, the most extreme position was occupied by the Labour back-benchers, while the Labour front bench took a more moderate position. This explains why, if we try to predict the position of the two Labour actors in parliament, the coefficient of the back-benchers is higher than that of the front-benchers. Another reason for the discrepancy is the fact that all Liberals are included as front-benchers; if one would treat them as back-benchers, the effect disappears. Although these kind of choices do affect the results, the case-by-case analysis of the data above shows

²⁷If the observations are not weighted, the coefficient is even negative, but also not significant.

that the results of model 1 are not simply the result of methodological choices, but rather substantive. After all, even in the case where both the front bench and back bench have been included for Britain, there is no difference between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in terms of mandate fulfilment.

5.3 Discussion and conclusion

The analysis of what parties talk about and what parties say during elections and in parliament reveals that there are no large differences between the consensus system of the Netherlands and the majoritarian system of Britain. Looking at the topics that parties discuss in their manifesto and in parliamentary debates, the results are mixed. Parties in Britain show a higher degree of correspondence in terms of absolute issue saliency: a model explaining the percentage of parliamentary speech devoted to an issue predicted by the percentage of manifesto text that is devoted to the issue works better for Britain than for the Netherlands. I have shown that this is, however, the result of large between-issue variance. That means, the model works well because all parties talk a lot about Macro-economy during elections and in parliament. When looking at the *relative* correspondence of issue saliency, whether parties' prioritize similar issues in both arena's, I find that the model works better for the Dutch political parties.

What parties say in their election manifesto and in parliament has been studied by comparing the spaces and structures of party competition before elections and in parliament. If the properties of these spaces are similar, e.g. if the dimensionality of the space is the same and similar issues are important before and after elections, and if the structure of party competition is similar before and after elections, one can conclude that the mandate model of party representation functions well from an institutional perspective. Qualitative analysis of the twelve election-parliaments selected for this study learns that there are differences between the two countries in terms of the correspondence of the spaces. Both countries show a reasonable degree of correspondence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces, especially concerning economic issues. Deviations from the ideal situation in Britain are caused by the retrospective nature of election manifestos. Most manifestos discuss the performance of the incumbent government extensively, which yields a clear government-opposition pattern in the manifesto spaces. These patterns are much weaker in parliament. In the Dutch case, a lack of correspondence seems often the result of coalition formation: parties that enter a governing coalition tend to clamp together in parliament. The dynamics are thus different between the countries.

A quantitative analysis of the issue positions of parties in election shows that overall, the correspondence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition does not vary significantly between the Netherlands and Britain. The British parties seem to profit from the parsimony of political competition: there are two large and one small contender which makes the choice relatively

straightforward. Furthermore, it does not take much to recreate these patterns in parliament – in terms of pure chance recreating similar patterns of competition in parliament is quite feasible with only three parties. On the other hand, the battle between government and opposition makes manifestos less informative of the substantive issues at hand, which distorts the correspondence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition. The Dutch political spaces are generally more complex, as more parties compete for seats. This makes it less likely that parties remain stable on all issues. However, as a result of the party system and the lack of clear government-opposition dynamics, manifestos are generally informative of the substantive policy positions of parties. The main disturbing factor in the Dutch case is coalition formation.

Both systems of governments have properties that are positive as well as properties that are negative for mandate fulfilment. In this way, my conclusions fit well with the analysis of Blais and Bodet (2006) and Budge and McDonald (2007), who argue that there are trade-offs in the choice of electoral system for the level of median voter representation. It is also consistent with earlier work of Klingemann et al. (1994) who find that the mandate model of political competition does not work better in Westminster-style countries. However, the outcomes of the pledge approach studies have shown that pledge fulfilment is consistently higher in majoritarian countries (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007). This can be explained by pointing out two essential differences between their approach and mine. First, where I have looked at the similarity of spaces of competition, the pledge approach looks at specific pledges. As I have argued above, there are many reasons to assume that the advantage of majoritarian systems in terms of pledge fulfilment do not hold when looking at the similarity of the spaces of competition. Secondly, the pledge approach compares manifesto pledges with government actions, whereas I have compared party positions in manifestos with their positions in parliament, which does more fully include the mandate fulfilment of opposition parties.

The finding that there is no discernible difference between majoritarian and consensus democracies in terms of mandate fulfilment, leaves the question what does explain mandate fulfilment. One explanation might be that there are different mechanisms at play, which cancel each other out: majoritarian democracies do better in one respect and consensus democracy in another (cf Blais and Bodet, 2006). Another argument is that there may be variation within countries.

Three sets of alternative explanations will be explored in the next chapters. First, the difference between opposition and governing parties is studied. It is expected that the model of democracy in a country has an important influence on mandate fulfilment by opposition and governing parties. In consensus democracies, opposition parties are expected to do better than governing parties, while in majoritarian democracies the governing party is expected to fare better. The type of democracy might thus indirectly explain variation in mandate fulfilment. The second explanation that will be further explored is the variation of mandate fulfilment over time. The description of spaces of competition from various decades

in this chapter has already produced some evidence of variance over time. How large is this variation exactly? Can we observe a decline of the party mandate, as is sometimes argued? The third explanation looks at party-level explanations of mandate fulfilment: how important issues are in terms of issue saliency or policy position extremism, is expected to explain the degree to which parties fulfil their mandates.

Chapter 6

Government and opposition

In the previous chapter I examined the relationship between the type of democracy of a country and mandate fulfilment. The main finding is that the difference between these systems are small and in most cases statistically insignificant. However, this does not shed much light on the underlying mechanisms. The fact that the resulting levels of mandate fulfilment is similar in both systems does not imply that the process of representation is the same in both countries. In this chapter I examine one particular difference between consensus and majoritarian democracy, namely the way in which governments are formed, that can contribute to the explanation of the process of mandate fulfilment.

Government participation changes the political game after elections considerably. One or more parties take up office, thereby taking the policy initiative, but also obliging themselves to defend the conduct of the governmental institutions. The other parties are in opposition and will, to a varying degree, oppose the government's policies.

The extent to which government and opposition parties fulfil their electoral mandates is expected to be dependent on the type of democracy of a country. As I have argued in chapter 3, the large agenda-setting powers of the government as well as the practice of single-party government should allow governing parties in majoritarian systems to follow their manifesto more closely than the opposition, which is forced to adopt the government agenda and to oppose the government in basically every aspect of government policy (Döring, 1995, 2001). In a consensus system one would expect opposition parties to obey their mandate more closely than the governing parties, which are bound to the coalition agreement and also have limited agenda-setting powers compared to their majoritarian counterparts (Timmermans and Moury, 2006).

6.1 What parties talk about: setting the parliamentary agenda

The effect of government participation on issue saliency congruence (between elections and parliament) is explained by the government's power over parliament, specifically its agenda-setting powers (Döring, 1995; Lijphart, 1999). In majoritarian countries, governments have a lot of control over the parliamentary agenda. This means that government parties can talk about the issues they find important, while opposition parties are forced to discuss the government's salient issues. Therefore, I expect that the congruence between parties' electoral and parliamentary issue saliency is higher for government than for opposition parties in majoritarian democracies. In consensus democracies, the degree of government agenda control is much lower. Opposition parties have more opportunities to demand attention for issues they find important. For example, the Party for the Animals (PvdD), a Dutch one-issue-party, has managed to gain considerable attention for animal rights by asking many parliamentary questions and tabling a large number of parliamentary motions on the issue. At the same time, government parties in consensus democracies are often bound to a coalition agreement, which limits their ability to talk about all the issues they like. The expectation for consensus democracies is that opposition parties will have higher levels of issue saliency congruence (between electoral and parliament) than government parties¹:

Hypothesis 3: Government parties show higher levels of congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency than opposition parties, in a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 5: Opposition parties show higher levels of congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency than government parties, in a consensus democracy.

These expectations were tested by a regression model of parties' issue priorities. The model explains parliamentary issue saliency by manifesto issue saliency. From the analysis in the previous chapter, it is known that issue saliency in parliament is to a large degree explained by the average issue saliency in manifestos. In other words, all parties talk a lot about some issues (e.g. macro-economy), both in their manifesto as well as in parliament, while paying little attention to other issues (such as foreign trade). For example, if all parties devote 60 per cent of their manifesto and their parliamentary speech to macro-economic issues and 40 per cent to the environment, congruence between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency is very high, but it does offer little choice between parties in terms of issue saliency. The party mandate requires congruence between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency, but also that there is a choice

¹See also section 3.2.

between parties. What matters from the perspective of the party mandate is the variation between *parties* (not issues). To look at between-parties rather than between-issues variation, the average manifesto saliency of an issue is included in the model as an explanatory variable (see section 5.1). If parties are simply talking as much about certain issues as everybody else does, the coefficient of 'average manifesto saliency' will be high. If however parties do talk a lot in parliament about issues that they *themselves* talked about a lot in their manifesto, the coefficient of 'party manifesto issue saliency' will be high. The model thus distinguishes between the extent to which parties' issue saliency is influenced by the average saliency of an issue on the one hand, and a parties' manifesto issue saliency on the other hand.

The third explanatory variable in the regression model is government participation, which equals one for parties that are in government and zero for parties that are not. Because the expected effect is different in consensus and majoritarian systems, I ran a separate model for my majoritarian and consensus cases, e.g. a separate model for the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

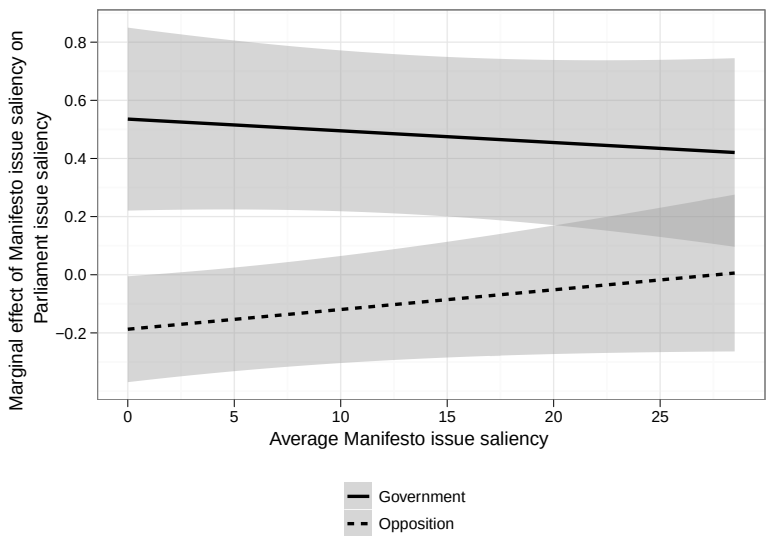
The regression model explains a party's parliamentary issue saliency by the interaction of the three variables described above and all of their constitutive terms: a party's manifesto issue saliency, the average manifesto saliency of an issue and a dummy for being in government. This yields a model with three variables, three two-way interactions and one three-way interaction². As the effect of each of the variables depends on four coefficients, it is very hard to interpret the results in a traditional regression table³. Instead, a graphical representation of the *marginal effect* of a party's manifesto issue saliency and the average manifesto issue saliency shows whether both effects are significant and whether they differ between opposition and governing parties.

Figures 6.1-6.4 present the results of the regression analysis. More specifically, these figures display the marginal effects of party manifesto issue saliency and average manifesto issue saliency for opposition and governing parties. The marginal effect is the effect of one unit change in the independent variable on the dependent variable (including the interaction effect). Normally these marginal effects can be read in the regression table, i.e. 'one unit change in the independent variable is predicted to result in 0.55 units change in the dependent variable' (*b*-coefficient). For models with interaction effects the interpretation is less straightforward, because the marginal effect of one independent variable depends on

²Including many interaction variables does raise the issue of multicollinearity. Often the interaction variables are correlated to their constitutive terms. Sometimes, centring is presented as a solution to this problem. However, it can be shown that centring of the variables does not alter the algebraic form of the model. Because centred variables are numerically different from the non-centred variables, the coefficients and standard errors in the 'centred model' will be different from those in the 'non-centred model'. However, the marginal effects of each of the variables and their variance does not change (Kam and Franzese Jr., 2007: 93-99). The multicollinearity in the data here does not seem an issue, because the analysis of the UK, which has the highest levels of collinearity, shows a very clear distinction between government and opposition parties.

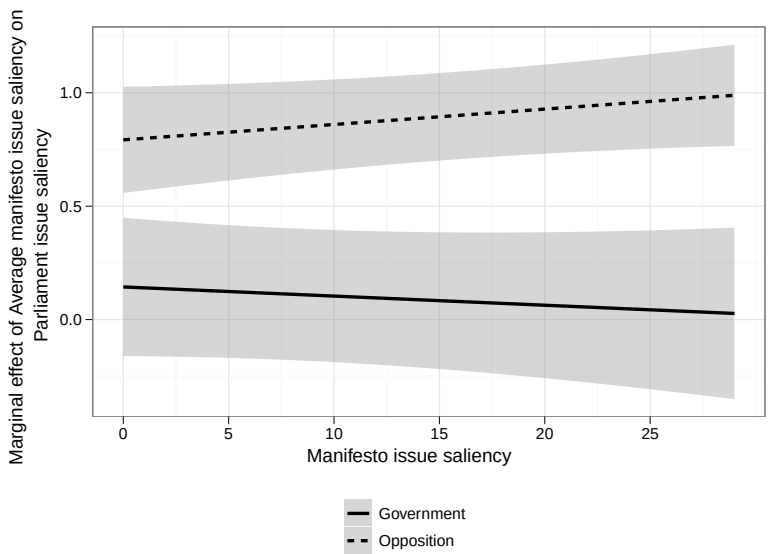
³It is included in the appendix as table A.2 on page 226.

Figure 6.1: *The marginal effect of manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency: government and opposition in the UK*



Note: Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence interval.

Figure 6.2: *The marginal effect of average manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency: government and opposition in the UK*



Note: Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence interval.

the value of another independent variable. For example, in the current model I expect that the marginal effect of a party's manifesto issue saliency depends on government participation (and average manifesto issue saliency). Thus the effect of a party's manifesto issue saliency is different for parties in government and parties in opposition. In the specification used here, the effect of a party's manifesto issue saliency depends on two other variables: government participation and average manifesto issue saliency. Thus, the marginal effect of a party's manifesto issue saliency is different for different levels of average manifesto issue saliency as well as for parties in government and parties in opposition. For example, in figure 6.1 the marginal effect of a party's manifesto issue saliency is displayed for various levels of average manifesto issue saliency and for two groups of parties: those in government and those in opposition. For the government parties, the marginal effect is about 0.55 for issues with a low average issue saliency and about 0.45 for issues with a high average issue saliency. The effect is 0.5 for issues with an average manifesto saliency of 10%. This means that for government parties, an increase of one percentage point in the manifesto saliency of an issue with an average manifesto saliency of 10%, results in a predicted increase of half a percentage point in their parliamentary saliency of that issue. For the opposition parties, the effect is quite different. The grey line shows that there is a negative marginal effect (although it is not significant, because the 95% confidence interval includes zero). The effect of an opposition party's manifesto saliency is thus not significantly different from zero.

Figure 6.1 shows that the UK government is sensitive to its manifesto issue saliency. The confidence interval is rather wide, but it does not include zero, which means that the effect is statistically significant. No matter what the average manifesto issue saliency is, the governing party is responsive to its own manifesto. This is quite different for the parties in opposition. The marginal effect of their own manifesto issue saliency on their parliamentary issue saliency is not significantly different from zero. In fact, the coefficient is below zero, which suggests it is negative rather than positive. Note that this does not mean that there is no correspondence between the opposition parties' manifesto issue saliency and their parliamentary issue saliency; it means that, once one takes the average manifesto issue saliency for an issue into account, the influence of a party's own manifesto issue saliency disappears.

For the opposition parties, it was expected that they are not able to follow their own manifesto's issue priorities, but have to talk about issues that are tabled by the government. This expectation can be tested by looking at the effect of the average manifesto issue saliency on a party's parliamentary issue saliency levels. In figure 6.2 one can observe the marginal effect of the average manifesto issue saliency for each level of manifesto issue saliency for both opposition and governing parties in the United Kingdom. The grey 'opposition' line is much higher than the black 'government' line, which means that party issue saliency of opposition parties is much more sensitive to the average manifesto issue saliency than the governing parties' issue saliency. The confidence interval of the gov-

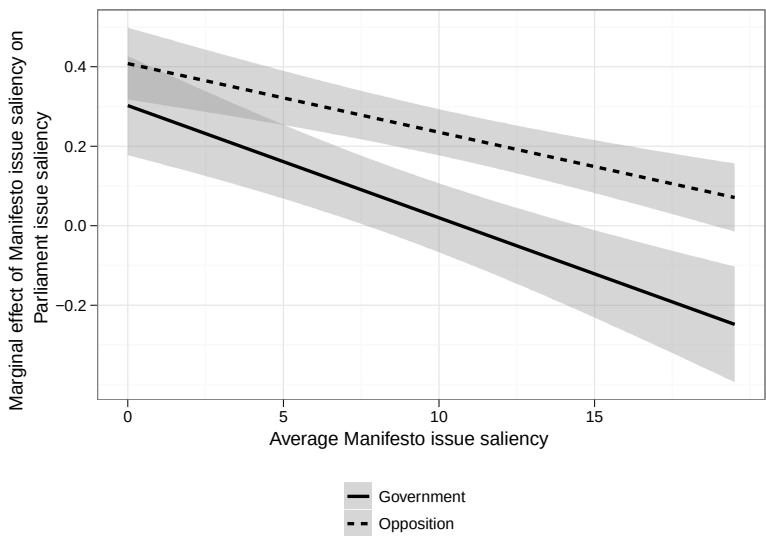
ernment estimate includes zero for each value of manifesto issue saliency, which means that for the governing parties there is no effect of average manifesto issue saliency on their parliamentary issue saliency estimate. Thus, the opposition parties' parliamentary issue saliency is very sensitive to the average manifesto issue saliency, while the government's parliamentary issue saliency is not. These figures do not depend very much on the levels of a party's manifesto issue saliency: the slopes of the lines are almost equal to zero. Thus, the effect is similar for issues that are salient and issues that are not salient to parties. These findings for the UK correspond to the expectations: governing parties show correspondence with their own manifesto issue saliency, while opposition parties' parliamentary issue saliency is better explained by looking at the average manifesto issue saliency.

The Dutch models show a very different picture. Figure 6.4 presents the marginal effect of the average manifesto issue saliency for opposition and governing parties for varying levels of manifesto issue saliency. Two things stand out from this figure. First, there is no discernible difference between government and opposition parties. Both are influenced to a similar extent by the average manifesto issue saliency. Second, both lines show a clear negative relationship between a party's manifesto issue saliency and the marginal effect of the average manifesto issue saliency. This means that if a party's manifesto issue saliency is high, its parliamentary issue saliency cannot easily be explained by the average manifesto issue saliency. In most cases this will be issues where parties deviate strongly from the average manifesto issue saliency both in their manifesto as well as in parliament. In those cases, the average manifesto saliency does not explain its parliamentary issue saliency.

The marginal effect of a party's manifesto issue saliency in the Netherlands is displayed in figure 6.4. The figure shows that as the average manifesto issue saliency increases, the marginal effect of the manifesto disappears. For governing parties, this effect is stronger than for opposition parties. In addition, the marginal effect of manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency is significantly higher for opposition parties than for governing parties when the average manifesto issue saliency is larger than 5 per cent. For governing parties, there is no effect which is significantly different from zero for issues with an average manifesto saliency above 11 per cent; for issues with an average manifesto saliency above 15 per cent the effect is even negative. That means that for issues with an average manifesto saliency above 15, a governing party's own manifesto issue saliency is negatively related with its parliamentary issue saliency (*ceteris paribus*). Opposition parties' control over their parliamentary issue saliency is thus higher than governing parties' control. This suggests that the opposition parties in the Netherlands do indeed have the opportunity to talk about the issues that they find important.

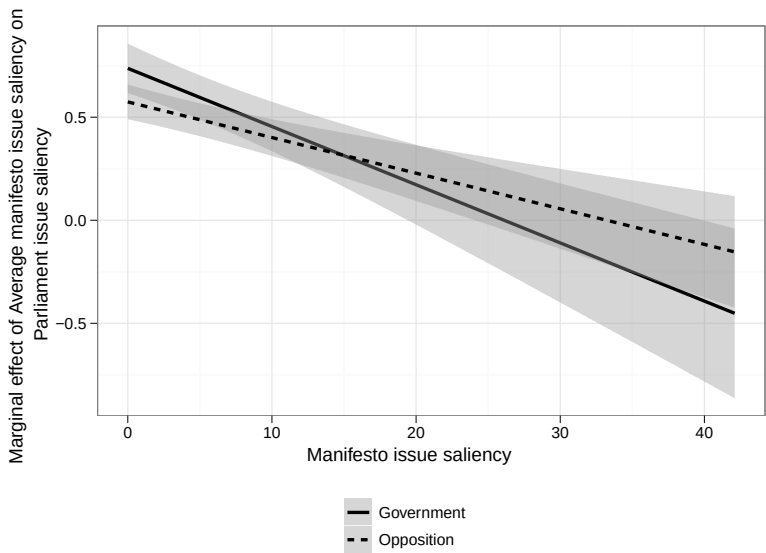
Analysis of the saliency data largely corroborates the expectations concerning the effect of governing participation on mandate congruence. In the United Kingdom, governing parties follow their own manifesto, not the average at-

Figure 6.3: *The marginal effect of manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency: government and opposition in the Netherlands*



Note: Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence interval.

Figure 6.4: *The marginal effect of average manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency: government and opposition in the Netherlands*



Note: Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence interval.

tention for issues, while opposition parties do not follow their own manifesto agenda, at least not if one also includes the average manifesto saliency of issues. In the Netherlands, the picture is reversed. While the differences are smaller, the predictive value of the manifesto issue saliency is stronger for opposition parties than for governing parties, when correcting for the average attention for issues. For the analysis of the Dutch case, not all differences between opposition and government are statistically significant, and there is thus only limited support for the hypothesis concerning consensus democracies. The data does show support for the hypothesis that in majoritarian countries governing parties show higher levels of mandate fulfilment than opposition parties in terms of issue saliency.

6.2 What parties say

The expectations concerning issue *position* congruence between elections and parliament are similar to those concerning issue saliency congruence. In majoritarian democracies, government parties are expected to show higher levels of congruence than opposition parties, whereas the opposite effect is expected in consensus democracies⁴:

Hypothesis 4: Government parties show higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than opposition parties, in a majoritarian democracy.

Hypothesis 6: Opposition parties show higher levels of congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions than government parties, in a consensus democracy.

What parties say in elections and in parliament can be compared by means of a spatial representation of the party competition in these arenas. Figures 6.5 and 6.6 represent the change of parties' relative issue positions by overlaying the manifesto and parliamentary policy space in one single space. The spaces were also rotated to achieve the best fit between the manifesto and the parliamentary party positions⁵. The arrows connect the manifesto and parliamentary position of a party. It is important to keep in mind that an arrow does not display the change of a party position in a single space. The arrows merely suggests how much a party's position has to be changed to arrive at the configuration of the parliamentary space. The party positions have to be interpreted in *relative* terms. For example, in 1974 there is a very long arrow between the Labour manifesto position and the Labour back bench position. This does not necessarily mean that the Labour back bench has moved to the left, it means that *relative to the*

⁴See section 3.2.

⁵For Britain, I matched the manifestos with the front bench party positions, which ought to be kept in mind for the interpretation of these figures.

other parliamentary parties the Labour back bench is much more extreme than the Labour manifesto was *relative to the other electoral parties*.

In the United Kingdom parliamentary spaces, I distinguish between the front bench and back-benchers of each party⁶. Each of the parties' manifestos has arrows running in two directions (see figure 6.5). The opposition parties' front bench is generally positioned more towards the outskirts of the space than its back-benchers. The opposite holds for the governing party: the government itself is positioned more towards the centre of the space, whereas its back-benchers are positioned more towards the extremes. However, the degree to which this pattern holds varies over time. Particularly in 1966 and 1974 there were large changes in the relative positions of the Labour manifesto and the parliamentary Labour party, with especially large differences between the Labour government and the Labour back benches. At the same time, the Conservative benches' position changes were relatively small. Moreover, the Conservative front benches and back benches were positioned relatively close to one another. The Liberals moved to the centre of the spaces in these years: during elections their position was rather strongly in opposition to the incumbent, but in parliament they took a moderate position.

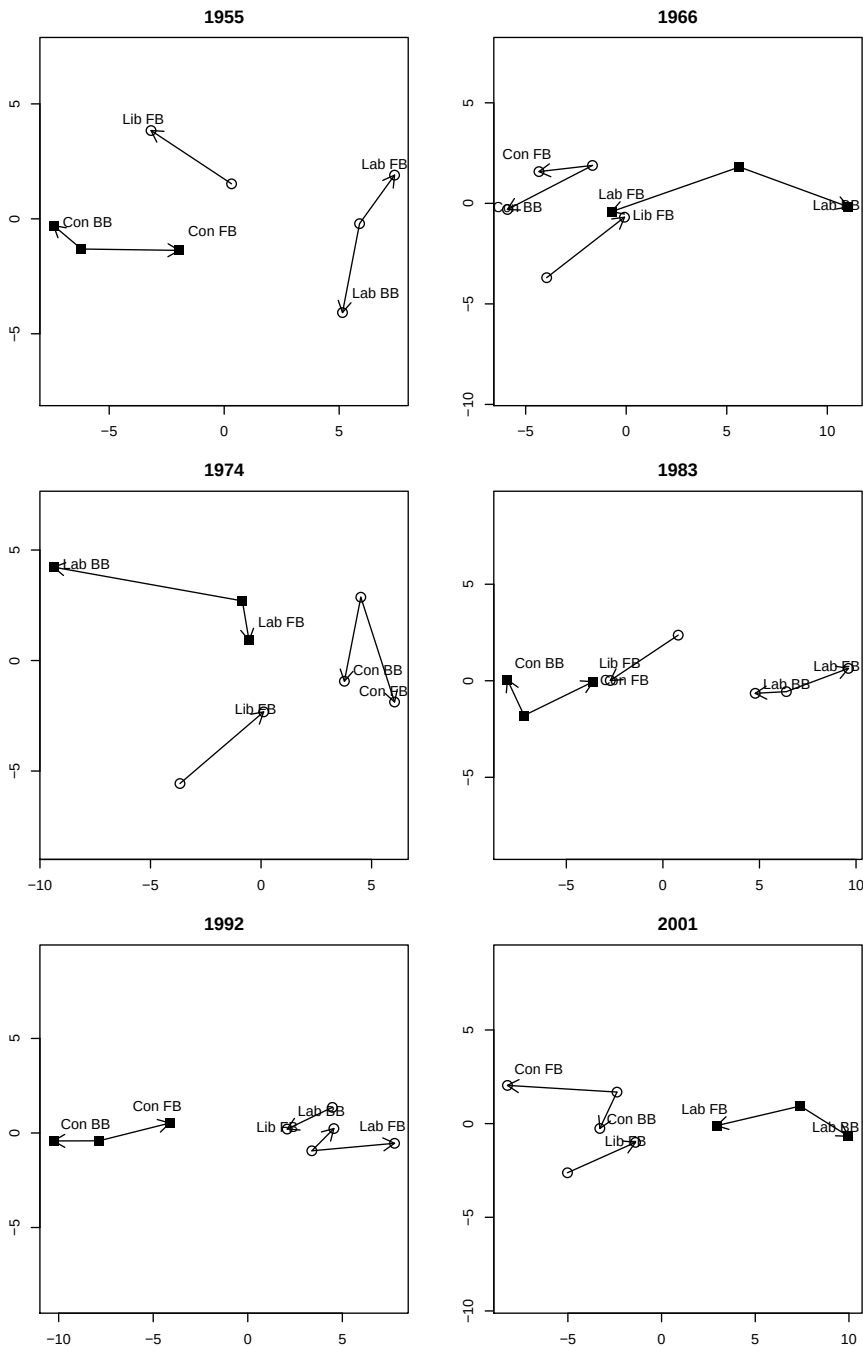
The changes between manifesto and parliamentary spaces were apparently much smaller during the Conservative governments, especially in 1983 and 1992. The extent to which the government moved to the centre and the back-benchers towards the outskirts was much smaller than in the 1966-1970 and 1974-1979 parliaments. This pattern also held in the 2001-2004 parliament when the Labour government was positioned more towards the centre than its back-benchers, but the differences between the two were smaller during the earlier Labour governments.

In the Netherlands, one would expect that coalition formation leads to a convergence of governing parties and a larger distance between opposition and governing parties. In 1952 and 1959 this expectation was only partially met (see figure 6.6). The position of two of the governing parties in 1952, PvdA and KVP, converged. The two other governing parties, CHU and ARP, also got somewhat closer, but these two blocks (PvdA/KVP and CHU/ARP) were still located rather far away from each other. The opposition party, VVD, did move away somewhat from the governing parties. In 1959, the opposition party PvdA also moved away from the governing parties. The three Christian governing parties moved away from the PvdA on the vertical dimension, but not so much on the horizontal dimension. The VVD, also in government, moved towards the other governmental parties on the horizontal plane.

The space of 1972 did not show a clear government convergence. The governing parties ARP, KVP, PPR and PvdA did move closer to one another, but so did two main opposition parties: VVD and CHU. One of the opposition parties, D66,

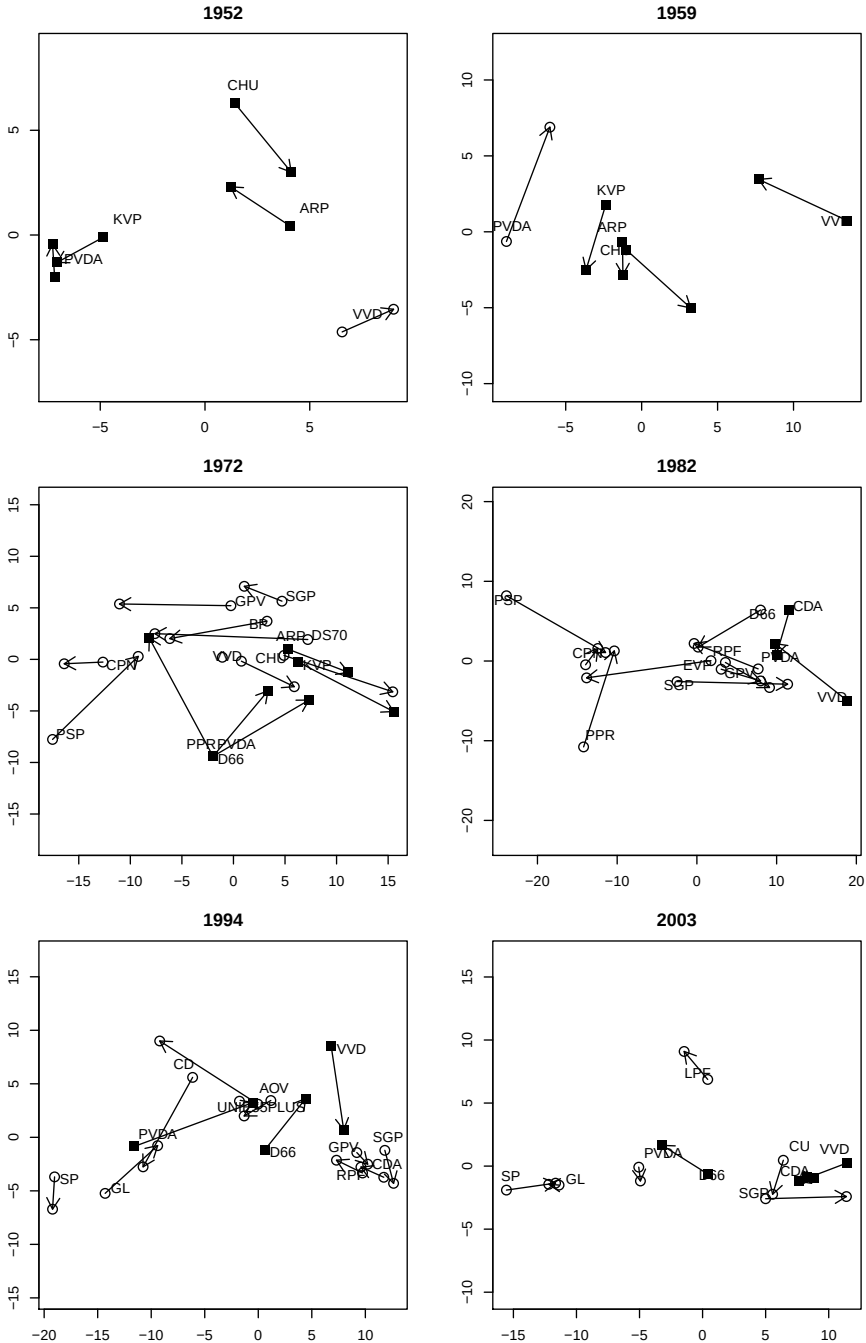
⁶Except for the Liberals/Liberal Alliance/Liberal Democrats, because these groups are small and until quite recently did not have a shadow team.

Figure 6.5: *Party position changes between manifesto and parliament, United Kingdom*



Note: Government parties are marked by black squares, opposition parties by circles.

Figure 6.6: Party position changes between manifesto and parliament, the Netherlands



Note: Government parties are marked by black squares, opposition parties by circles.

moved in the direction of the other opposition parties. The parliamentary competition was organized in two clusters: most of the smaller (opposition) parties versus the larger parties.

The combined spaces of 1982, 1994 and 2003 showed evidence of governing parties' convergence. In 1982, governing parties CDA and VVD moved even closer to each other than they already were. At the same time, the opposition rearranged itself into three groups: left-wing opposition (PSP, CPN, EVP and PPR), centre-left opposition (PvdA and D66) and religious opposition (SGP, RPF and GPV). Because the governing parties were already rather close to each other, these parties did not change their position very strongly, whereas some of the opposition parties did (e.g. EVP, SGP and PSP). This shows that coalition dynamics do not necessarily lead to larger position changes for the governing parties.

The 1994-1998 parliament did show large position changes for the governing parties PvdA, D66 and VVD, which moved towards one another. To the right of the government, there was some minor movement of the religious parties (SGP, RPF, GPV and CDA). The left-wing opposition did also slightly change its position, but not too much. The three other parties (AOV, UNIE 55+ and CD) showed larger position changes. In 2003 there seems to have been particularly little change between the manifesto and parliamentary space: the arrows connecting manifesto and parliamentary positions of parties are rather short. The governing parties CDA and VVD did move closer to one another. The third governing party, D66, however, moved away from its coalition partners, compared to its manifesto position. This government did eventually end when D66 withdrew its support.

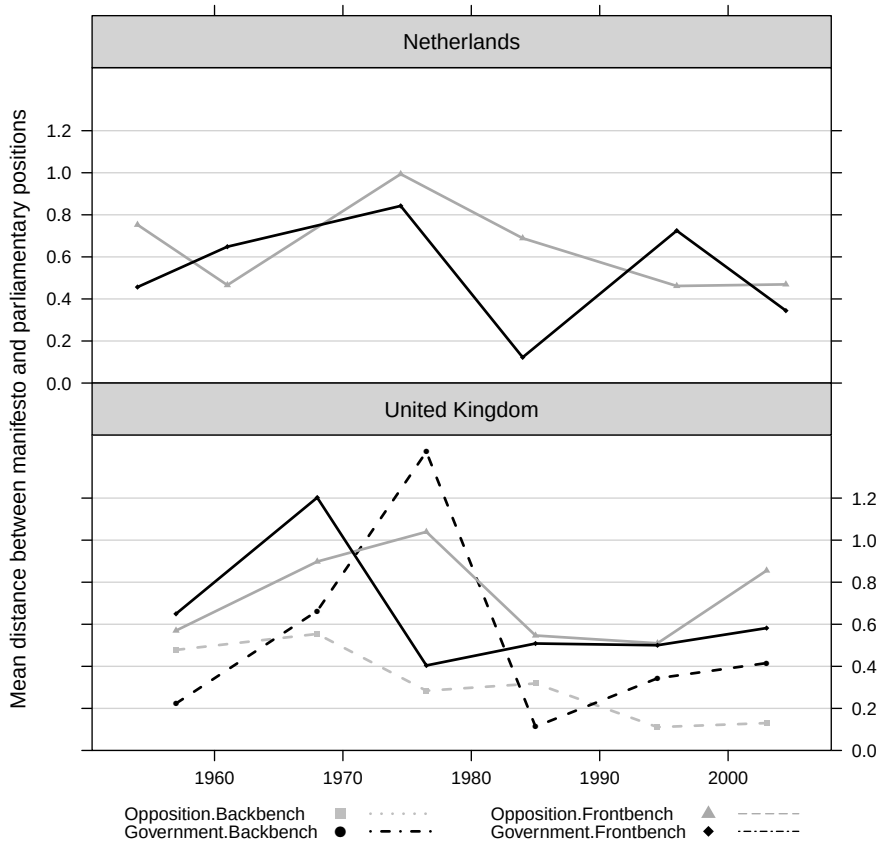
With the exception of 1972, there is thus some proof for the influence of coalition dynamics on parties' parliamentary positions. Generally, the positions of coalition parties converge in the Netherlands. This does not imply that the relative position of governing parties changes less than that of opposition parties. Exactly because this comparison is between the relative positions in the manifesto and the relative positions in parliament, looking at patterns of convergence is more appropriate than simply measuring distances of government and opposition parties.

The differences between government and opposition parties in terms of the stability of their relative policy positions can be expressed in terms of the mean distance between the manifesto and parliamentary positions of parties on the separate issue dimensions⁷. For the Netherlands I distinguish between opposition and governing parties, while in Britain an additional distinction between front bench and back bench has been made, which yields four groups in total.

In the United Kingdom, the difference between front bench and back bench in terms of the difference between manifesto and parliamentary positions, is larger than the difference between government and opposition (see figure 6.7). The

⁷The distance for each party was calculated using a mean of the distance on each issue, weighted by the saliency of each issue for a party. In this way, distances on more important issues contribute more to the total statistic.

Figure 6.7: *Distances between manifesto and parliamentary positions*



Note: The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

distances between the party manifesto and the opposition back bench is relatively low in each of the election-parliaments. In fact, it declines over time from just over 0.5 in the 1950s and 1960s to just over 0.1 in the 1990s and 2000s. Taking into account that the positions on issue dimensions are standardized and therefore generally lie between -2 and +2, a change of 0.1 means that the relative position of a party (group) is as good as stable. Government back-benchers do also take a (relative) position in parliament that is generally close to their party's manifesto position. The one clear exception is 1974 when the (governing) Labour back-benchers were further away from their manifesto (at least in relative terms) than any of the other groups, which is also very clear from the long arrow in figure 6.5. Apart from this exception, the mean distances are consistently lower for back-benchers than for front-benchers.

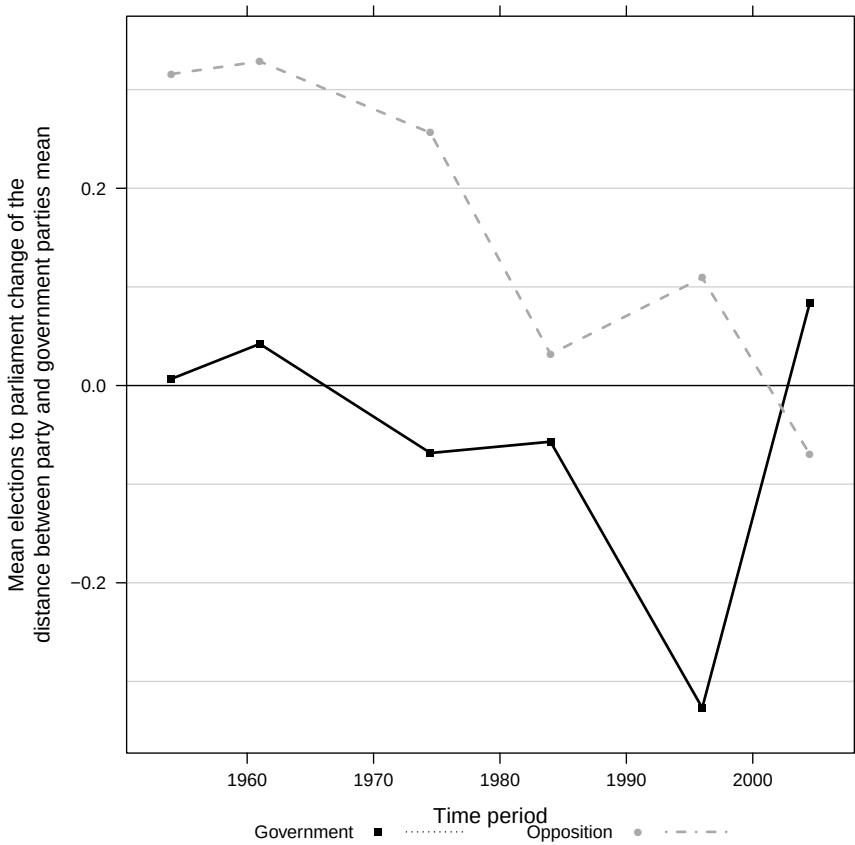
The difference between the United Kingdom government and opposition front benches are generally rather small. In the 1950s and 1960s the distance is somewhat smaller for the opposition front benches. In these cases, the government moves to a considerably more moderate position than its manifesto, which resulted in a large distance (see figure 6.5). In all other years, the distance was somewhat smaller for the government front bench, especially in 1974.

The explanation of the relatively large distances of the front benches is different for the opposition and for the government. For the government, it is the result of the government taking a more moderate position in parliament than in its manifesto. I outlined in chapter 4 that although this is partly a result of the measurement procedure, I am confident that it does reflect actual accommodating behaviour on the part of the government (see also appendix A.3.3). The Liberals also show a tendency to move towards the centre of the political spectrum. The main opposition party front bench, on the other hand, is always positioned on the outskirts of the space of competition. Thus its movement is not explained by accommodation but rather by confrontation.

In the Netherlands the governing parties' distances between their electoral and parliamentary positions are smaller than those of the opposition parties in four out of six election-parliaments. As I argued above, part of the explanation is that we are comparing relative positions of parties. One cannot easily distinguish between 'movement' of parties that is the result of a party itself changing its position and 'movement' that is the result of other parties changing their position. Additionally, there are large position changes for some of the (smaller) opposition parties in some cases (see figure 6.6, e.g. EVP, PPR and PSP in 1982, AOV and CD in 1994). These changes can often be attributed to the fact that the manifesto was short and focused on a limited set of issues. Longer manifestos generally provide better predictions in terms of saliency and positions than shorter manifestos.

One way of studying the effect of coalition government in the Dutch case is by looking at the distance between a party's position and the (weighted) position of the governing parties. If the argument is that coalition politics leads governing parties to abandon their manifestos in favour of a coalition comprom-

Figure 6.8: *Parties' movement towards the mean government parties' position, the Netherlands*



Note: the distance change between a party and the mean government position on an issue is given by:

$$distancechange = |pp_{parliament} - mgp_{parliament}| - |pp_{manifesto} - mgp_{manifesto}| \quad (6.1)$$

where pp is the position of a party and mgp is the (weighted) mean position of the government parties. . The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

ise, these parties should be closer to one another in parliament than during the electoral competition. Figure 6.8 shows that this is indeed the case. Negative values in this graph mean that the governing parties were, on average, closer to the (weighted) mean of the government parties in parliament than they were to the (weighted) mean of the governing parties in the manifestos. To put it differently: the governing parties were closer to each other in parliament than in the manifesto (except for the second and the last case). This shows that a government effect does exist. The effect is the most pronounced in 1994-1998, when governing parties are clearly closer in parliament than in their manifestos.

By the same logic, one could expect that opposition parties would distance themselves from the governing parties. Figure 6.8 illustrates this. Positive values mean that the opposition parties, on average, are further away from the mean position of governing parties in parliament than in their manifestos. This shows that the opposition parties in the 1950s and 1960s clearly moved away from the governing parties' mean position in parliament. However, in the 2003-2006 parliament the opposition parties actually moved towards the governing parties' mean position⁸. The dynamics are even opposite to what one would expect: the governing parties move away from each other, while the opposition parties move towards the governing parties mean position. From figure 6.6 one can observe that this is primarily caused by the governing party D66 moving to the left, away from its governing partners. At the same time, the mean position of the governing parties shifts somewhat to the left, slightly bridging the gap with the opposition parties. Of course, the governing parties are much closer to their mean position than the opposition parties are.

Government-opposition polarization in the Dutch parliament is stronger in the 1950s and 1960s than in the 2000s. It must be said that in the 1950s and 1960s the analysis includes only one opposition party, making the picture more clear-cut than in later years. In later years, for example, the 1982-1986 and 2003-2006 parliament the governing parties were already rather close to one another: there is little room for further convergence. However, the graph for the 2003-2006 case does show a problematic pattern from the point of democratic representation. If opposition and coalition converge in parliament towards the governing parties' mean position, this will fuel the complaint that parties are too much alike. Even if the convergence is the result of the coalition being in a more moderate position, as it seems to be in 2003-2006, the development can be a reason for caution from the party mandate perspective. After all, it does limit the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition.

The analysis of relative party position change shows patterns of change that are most likely the result of government-opposition dynamics. In the United

⁸One can observe from figure 6.6 that in 1994-1998 the move away from the government position is caused by the smaller parties, while the larger opposition parties (especially CDA) are actually located closer to the government position in parliament than in the electoral space. If one weights the distance by the parties' seat share, the opposition actually moves almost as far towards the mean government position as the government itself.

Kingdom, the government generally takes a somewhat more moderate position, whereas the opposition front bench moves towards an extreme position. The largest differences are found between the front benches and the back-benchers. The relative positions of back-benchers are generally closer to the party's relative manifesto position than those on the front bench. On the whole, there is no difference in the positional congruence of government and opposition parties.

A further analysis of the Dutch spaces shows evidence of a government-opposition effect. This cannot be directly translated into a larger positional difference for governing parties than for opposition parties, because of the relative nature of the measured positions. In some cases, such as the 1982-1986 government, the governing parties were already close to one another and occupied one side of the political spectrum. The governing parties remained on that side of the spectrum, while opposition parties changed their positions away from the government. In other cases, such as the 1994-1998 cabinet, there were large changes for governing parties, but also some changes for the opposition parties. In general, governing parties move closer to one another and opposition parties move away from the average government position. The congruence in terms of policy positions of the governing parties does not differ from the congruence of the opposition parties. The effect of coalition formation is visible in the direction they change in: towards or away from the government.

These findings imply that the hypotheses that government participation results in higher (United Kingdom) or lower (Netherlands) levels of issue position congruence have to be rejected. The influence of being in government is visible at the level of the party system, but not at the level of the relative positions of individual parties.

6.3 Conclusion

The effect of being in government on a party's electoral-parliamentary congruence is most clear for party issue saliency. In the United Kingdom, governing parties show higher levels of issue saliency congruence when correcting for the mean issue saliency than opposition parties. In the Netherlands, the opposition parties are slightly more congruent by this measure, although the differences are not statistically significant in each case.

Governing parties are not more or less congruent in terms of their relative issue positions than opposition parties. However, government formation does play a role in the parliamentary spaces of party competition. I find that there is a general tendency of governing party convergence in the Netherlands, while opposition parties distance themselves from the governing parties except for the latest two decades. The government effect is thus visible at the level of the party system, but not at the level of the individual parties. In the United Kingdom, the difference between front-benchers and back-benchers is more pronounced than the difference between government and opposition. The front benches show the

largest positional differences between elections and parliament: governments move towards the centre, the official opposition to the extreme and the Liberals to the centre. On the whole, there is no discernible difference between government and opposition.

The findings here are somewhat different from those of researchers in the pledge and saliency traditions. Royed (1996) finds that governing parties are much better able to implement their manifesto pledges than opposition parties. In the Netherlands, the difference is smaller but still quite substantial (Thomson, 1999, 2001). Of course, the difference between my findings and these findings is primarily the result of a different conceptualization of the party mandate. Whereas Royed and Thomson measure the enactment of manifesto pledge, the current study examines the congruence of issue positions between elections and parliament. The saliency approach taken by Klingemann et al. (1994) is closer to my approach, both in terms of the research design as well as the result. They find that in Britain, public spending relates just as strongly to issue saliency of opposition parties as it relates to the saliency of governing parties. They argue that there is no 'mandate' effect in Britain, meaning that whether a party is in government does not enhance the predictive power of their manifesto for government spending. The results of this study show that there is a *parliamentary* mandate effect in Britain, meaning that the manifesto position of a party predicts its parliamentary position rather well. This effect is equally strong for opposition and governing parties. When looking at issue saliency, I find that governing parties are better able to pursue their manifesto priorities than opposition parties. Klingemann et al. (1994) find that the Dutch case fits none of their models. They find a 'reverse' effect of ideology: when the left-wing PvdA shares government with the Christian-Democrats, policy moves to the right, and when the right-wing VVD shares government responsibility, policy moves to the left. The findings here show that the Dutch opposition is relatively strong in terms of agenda setting powers, especially if one compares the Dutch and British cases. Coalition formation does have an effect on the parliamentary space of party competition, but this affects the congruence of both the government's as well as the oppositions' positions. The general pattern found here is that opposition and governing parties move away from each other in the Dutch parliament.

Chapter 7

The party mandate in historical perspective

Institutions are normally rather stable. This is certainly the case for parliamentary party politics in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Even parties, which have incentives to adapt to the context they operate in, seem to change only gradually. However, over longer periods of time these gradual changes can be observed. Because the dataset used here ranges from the 1950s to the 2000s, I should be able to observe changes in party representation if these occur.

7.1 The decline of political representation

An extensive literature on the decline of parties and on the decrease in trust of parliaments and governments suggests that the quality of party representation has worsened over time. In chapter 3, I outlined three developments that lead to the hypothesis that the mandate fulfilment has declined: dealignment of voters, the changing role of political parties in terms of organization and their relationship with society and the state and changing goals of political parties.

These three developments have been gradually changing parties from mass organizations with specific socio-demographic constituencies attached to particular core ideologies to political entrepreneurs that look for the marginal vote within a system of limited competition. Parties in the past had certain fixed beliefs which they tried to implement in parliament and in government, which should lead to a high congruence between manifesto and parliamentary behaviour. A political entrepreneur, however, adjusts his position for maximal gains, in terms of votes and office. Especially if one believes that policy has become a means, rather than an end, it should follow that congruence will only be upheld if it is beneficial to the entrepreneur. If the party believes that it can increase its

vote share at the next elections by adopting a different policy position – even in the current parliament, it is expected to do so. Voters are aware of this and their trusts in party pledges and the ability of politicians to deliver has declined (Andeweg, 2003: 156). In chapter 3 I formulated two hypotheses relating to the congruence of issue saliency and issue positions over time:

Hypothesis 7: The congruence between electoral party issue saliency and parliamentary party issue saliency has declined over time.

Hypothesis 8: The congruence between parties' electoral issue positions and parties' parliamentary issue positions has declined over time.

7.2 What parties talked about

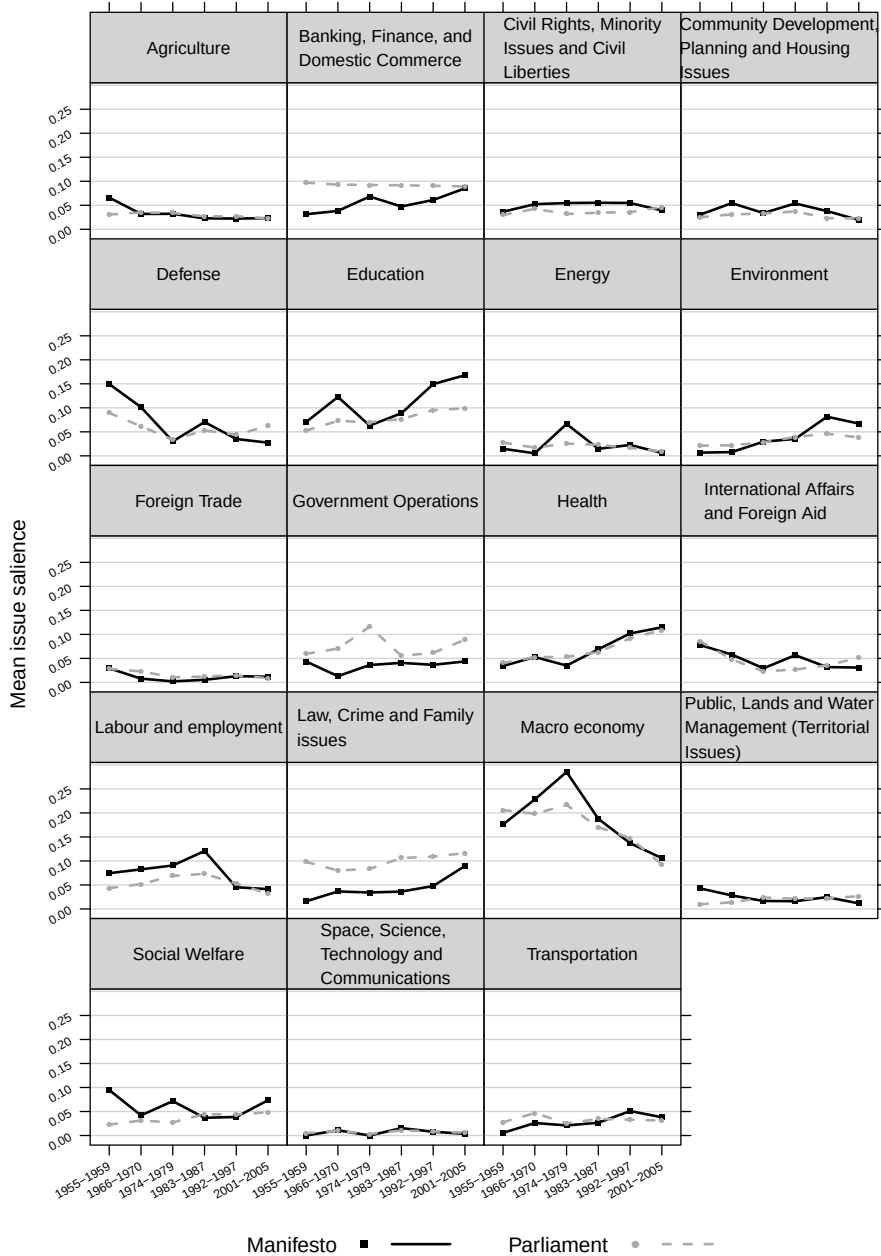
What parties talk about is an important aspect of the party mandate. Over time, some issues have become more important in parties' manifestos and parliamentary debates, while other issues have become less salient. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 present general patterns of party issue saliency in election manifestos and in parliamentary debates, measured as the proportion of text parties devote to particular topics. Mean issue saliency shows how important topics were historically in manifestos and in parliament¹.

Some issues have become more important in British politics, such as Education, Health, Transportation and Law, Crime and Family Issues. These issues have become more salient both in parliament as well as in the electoral manifestos. The attention for other issues has declined, i.e. Defense, Marco-economy and International Affairs and Foreign Aid. In the Netherlands, Civil Rights, Migration and Integration, Environment, Healthcare, Justice Courts and Crime, Energy, Transport, Science, Technology and Communication, and Democracy and Government have become more salient. The issues Enterprises, National Trade and Commerce, Housing and City Planning, and Defence show a decline in importance. For other issues, there are differences between years (i.e. Labour), but there is no clear trend². Overall, there seems to be a decline in issues related to in-

¹One could argue that over-time comparison of issue saliency is problematic, because the exact meaning of certain categories does change over longer periods of time (Pellikaan et al., 2003). For example, abortion may be framed as a women's rights issue in the 1960s, while it may be perceived to be rather a religious issue in the 1990s. While this may be an issue in some cases, it should not affect the general patterns found here. It would, for example, be hard to argue that the increase of saliency of environmental issues is merely the result of a different understanding of particular subjects. Furthermore, the over-time comparison concerns issue saliency rather than issue positions, which might indeed be more sensitive to changes in understanding of party policy competition (Louwerse, 2009).

²The trends described in the text show statistical significance in an analysis of variance of manifesto issue saliency levels, where time period was the independent variable. The coefficients are reported in appendix tables A.6 and A.7 on page 230-231. A similar analysis for parties' parliamentary issue saliency showed statistically significant differences over time for almost all issues, because inter-party differences are smaller in parliament than in the manifesto.

Figure 7.1: Mean issue saliency in the United Kingdom



ternational affairs and 'general' economic issues, while specific socio-economic issues, such as Healthcare and Education, post-materialist issues, such as the Environment, and issues relating to migration have become more salient both in Britain as well as in the Netherlands.

From the perspective of the party mandate it does not really matter what parties talk about per se, but that they talk about the same issues during elections and in parliament. One way of comparing the congruence of party issue saliency between manifesto and parliament is by calculating a party issue saliency congruence score. The formula for this congruence score is similar to the well-known formula for electoral volatility (Pedersen, 1979). It measures the percentage of a party's attention that has not shifted between the election manifesto and parliament³. If a party's issue saliency is the same for all issues during elections and in parliament, the congruence score is 100. If a party mentions only one set of topics in the election manifesto and a completely different set of topics in parliament, the score amounts to 0:

$$\text{congruence}_p = 100 - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n |\text{saliency.manifesto}_{ip} - \text{saliency.parliament}_{ip}| \quad (7.1)$$

Where p is a party and $i_1, i_2 \dots i_n$ are the issues.

Figure 7.3 shows the average congruence scores in Britain and the Netherlands (per decade). Both countries display an increase of issue saliency congruence. Parties are more congruent in terms of issue saliency now than in the past. The levels are slightly higher in Britain than in the Netherlands, which is consistent with the findings in chapter 5. Levels in Britain have increased between the 1950s and the 1980s, but remained stable thereafter. In the Netherlands, a sharp increase in issue saliency congruence is visible between the 1960s election and the 1970s election. Over the most recent three elections, issue saliency congruence gradually increased slightly.

The increase in issue saliency congruence can be partly explained by the increased length of manifestos. Figure 7.4 shows the average length of party manifestos over time. There is a marked increase in manifesto length both in Britain and the Netherlands, especially from the 1960s to the 1970s. In recent years, manifesto length has stabilized in Britain, while it kept increasing in the Netherlands. There is a strong relationship between the length of a manifesto and the effect of manifesto saliency on parliamentary saliency (Figure 7.5). For very short manifestos this marginal effect is only 0.4, while for very long manifestos the effect is about 0.7. This means that for parties with very short manifestos, each percentage point of attention for an issue in their manifesto adds 0.4 percentage

³For ease of interpretation the 'volatility' formula has been adapted, so that 0 means low congruence and 100 high congruence.

Figure 7.2: Mean issue saliency in the Netherlands

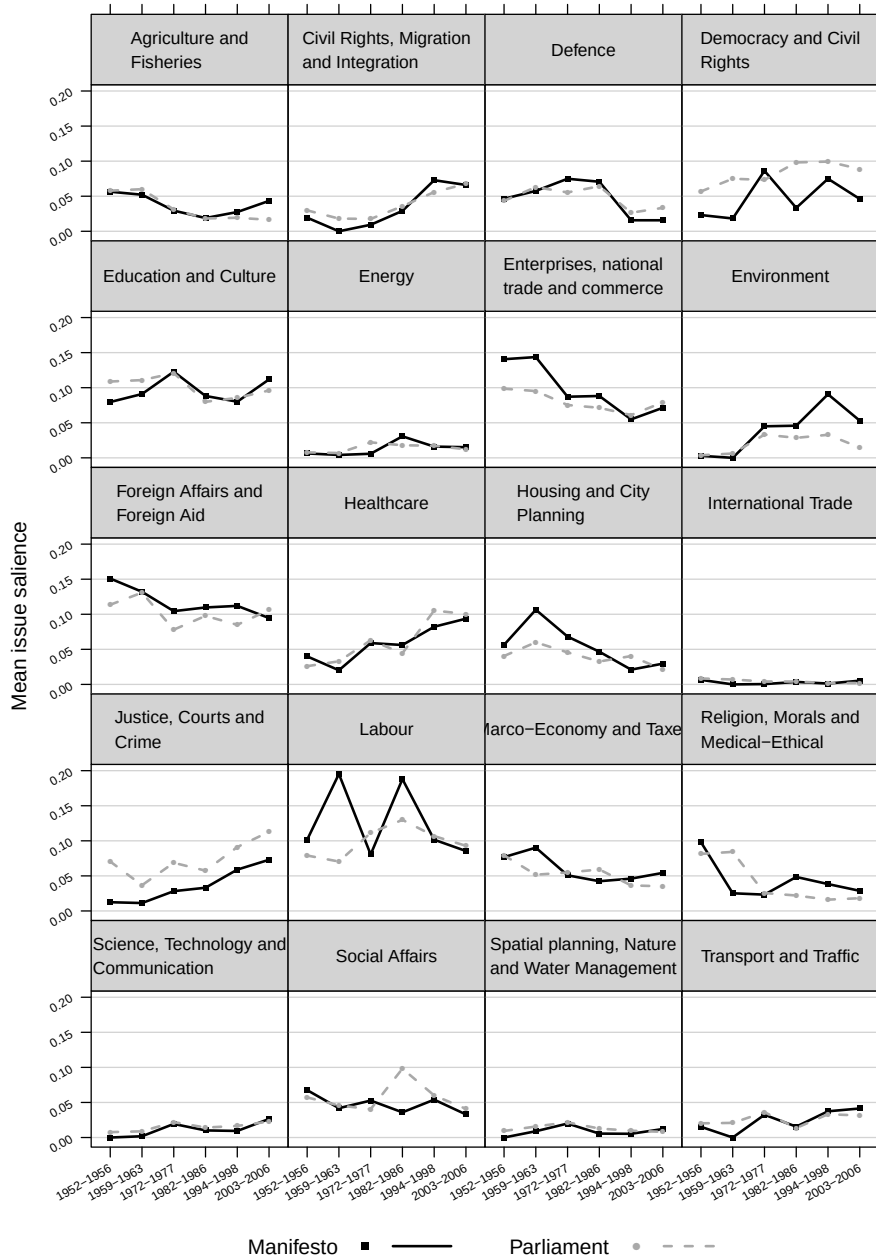


Figure 7.3: *Mean issue saliency congruence score*



Note: The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

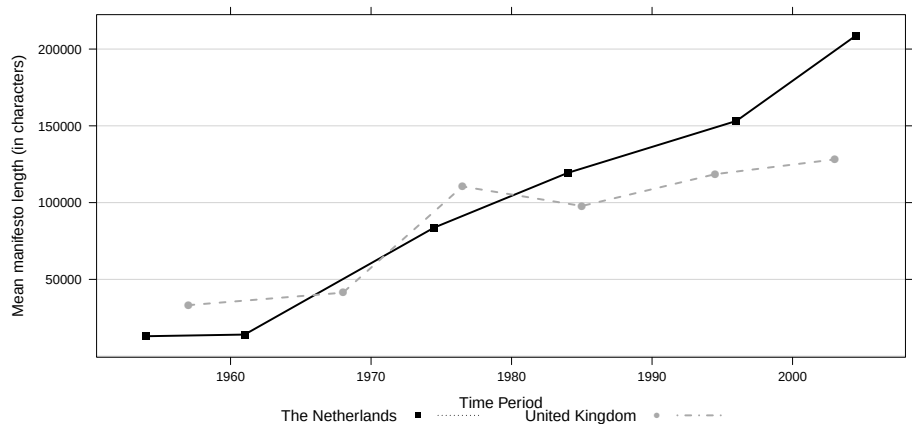
point to their parliamentary issue saliency of that issue, while for parties with very long manifestos each percentage point of manifesto saliency of a particular issue is estimated to lead to a 0.7 percentage point increase of their parliamentary issue saliency of that issue⁴.

The reason that longer manifestos are usually better when it comes to issue saliency congruence lies in the level of detail that longer manifestos provide. Manifestos come in different flavours. There are very long manifestos with detailed policy proposals on many issues, the ‘encyclopedia’ type. Other manifestos are short pamphlets that try to get across the issue (positions) that really matter to a party. These short manifestos tend to focus a limited number of issues. In other words, the ‘topic concentration’ is high: the party devotes a lot of space to a limited number of issues. In parliament, parties pay attention to a broader range of issues and they tend to be more alike in terms of their issue priorities. Topic concentration is thus generally lower in parliament. Therefore, poor congruence for parties with short manifestos can be explained by a difference in topic concentration between the manifesto and parliamentary debates.

The normalized Herfindahl index measures the topic concentration in manifestos and parliamentary debates (Hirschman, 1964; Breeman et al., 2009). It ranges from a perfectly equal distribution of attention at a value of zero to exclusive focus on one issue, with value one. Thus, a value of zero means that a party

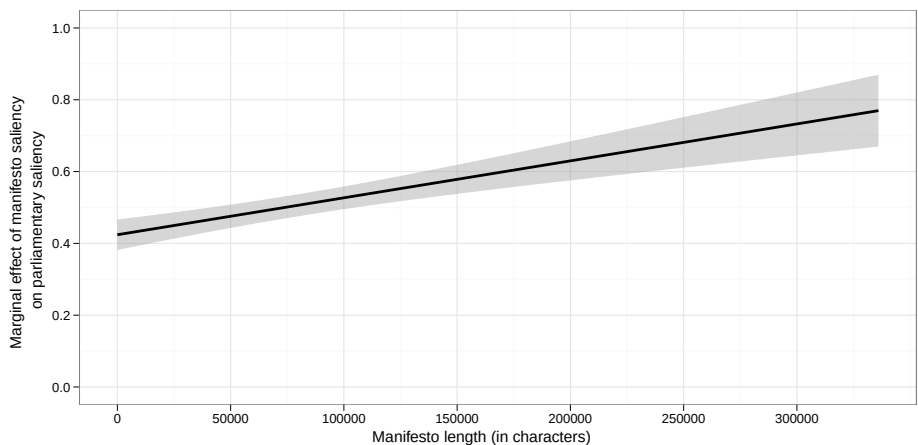
⁴Figure 7.5 is a graphical presentation of the marginal effect of manifesto saliency in a regression model where parliamentary saliency is the dependent variable and manifesto saliency, manifesto length and the interaction of these two variables are the independent variables. The regression table is included as table A.5 on page 229.

Figure 7.4: Mean length of party manifestos over time



Note: The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

Figure 7.5: Marginal effect of manifesto saliency on parliamentary saliency for various manifesto lengths



Note: Shaded area indicates 95% confidence interval.

dedicates all of its manifesto or parliamentary speech to a single topic, while a value of one indicates that a party dedicates equal amounts of words to each issue. Figure 7.6 shows topic concentration in manifestos and parliament over time. Levels of topic concentration were high in the manifestos of the 1950s and 1960s, especially in the Netherlands. The normalized Herfindahl index shows levels above 0.10 for the Netherlands in the 1960s, which is substantially higher than in other years. Topic concentration plays a smaller role in Britain; levels are more similar over the years, peaking in the 1970s, when parties devote on average over 25 per cent of their manifesto to Macro-economic issues. In Parliament, topic concentration is rather stable in both countries and generally lower than in the manifestos. Over time, the gap between topic concentration in manifestos and topic concentration in parliamentary speeches has declined in both countries.

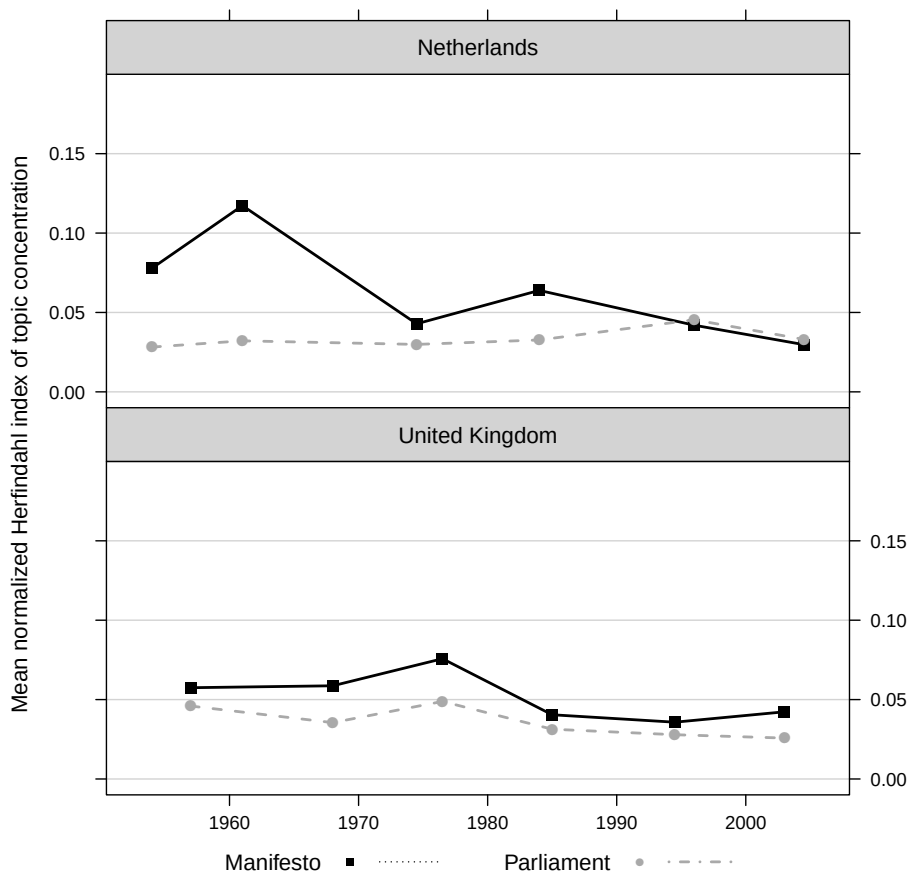
Thus, parties' manifestos were shorter in the past. As a result, these manifestos focused on a limited number of topics (topic concentration was high). In parliament, topic concentration has been low throughout the period of investigation. The gap between high topic concentration in manifestos and low topic concentration in parliamentary debates partly explains the relatively low levels of issue saliency congruence in the 1950s and 1960s.

The second way to measure the congruence of parties' issue saliency in manifestos and in parliament is by means of an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis. I fitted a statistical model in which a party's issue saliency in parliament was explained by party issue saliency in the manifesto. A perfect congruence would be achieved when the intercept of this model equals zero and the coefficient equals one (Achen, 1978). The historical variation was studied by adding 'time period' dummy variables to this model, one for each but one of the cases (an election and the subsequent parliament), and the interaction between the year dummy variables and the manifesto saliency. This way the marginal effect of manifesto saliency on parliamentary saliency in each parliamentary period can be estimated. The model thus allows to compare the predictive effect of manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency over time, providing an estimate of the statistical significance of the between-year differences.

Figure 7.7 presents a graphical representation of the marginal effect of manifesto saliency on parliamentary saliency. It simply displays what the total effect of manifesto saliency was on parliamentary saliency in each included parliament. This eases interpretation as compared to a standard regression table with interaction effects (Brambor et al., 2006; Kam and Franzese Jr., 2007)⁵. The top diagram provides an estimate of the marginal effect in the whole dataset, including both Britain and the Netherlands. The trend is increasing from a marginal effect of around 0.4 in the 1950s to almost 0.7 in the 2000s. This means that congruence has increased during that period. The length of the error bars in this

⁵The regression table is included in the appendix as table A.3 on page 227.

Figure 7.6: *Topic concentration in manifestos and parliamentary debates*



Note: The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

graphic suggests that the differences are larger than those that are to be expected by chance. There is an increase, rather than the hypothesized decrease, of issue saliency congruence over time.

The model has also been fitted separately for Britain and the Netherlands, which allows for a direct comparison with the congruence scores in figure 7.3 and for the study of country-specific patterns. The regression analysis finds a slightly different pattern for Britain than the congruence measure in figure 7.3. Although the 1955-1959 period shows the lowest levels of congruence in both analyses, the differences between the time periods are clearly smaller in figure 7.7. The figure shows that the confidence intervals are rather large, probably as a result of the fact that the number of observations is low for Britain ($N=342$). Therefore, none of the differences are statistically significant. The marginal effects in the six Dutch cases are similar to the congruence measure displayed in figure 7.3. There is low congruence in the 1950s and 1960s, a clear improvement in the 1970s, then a lower score in the 1980s and again an increase afterwards. The tendency is thus towards higher levels of party issue saliency congruence, instead of lower levels. The data on saliency shows no support for hypothesis 7 that outlined an expected decline of issue saliency congruence. On the contrary, I observe an increase in congruence of party issue saliency in the Netherlands and (at least) stability in Britain.

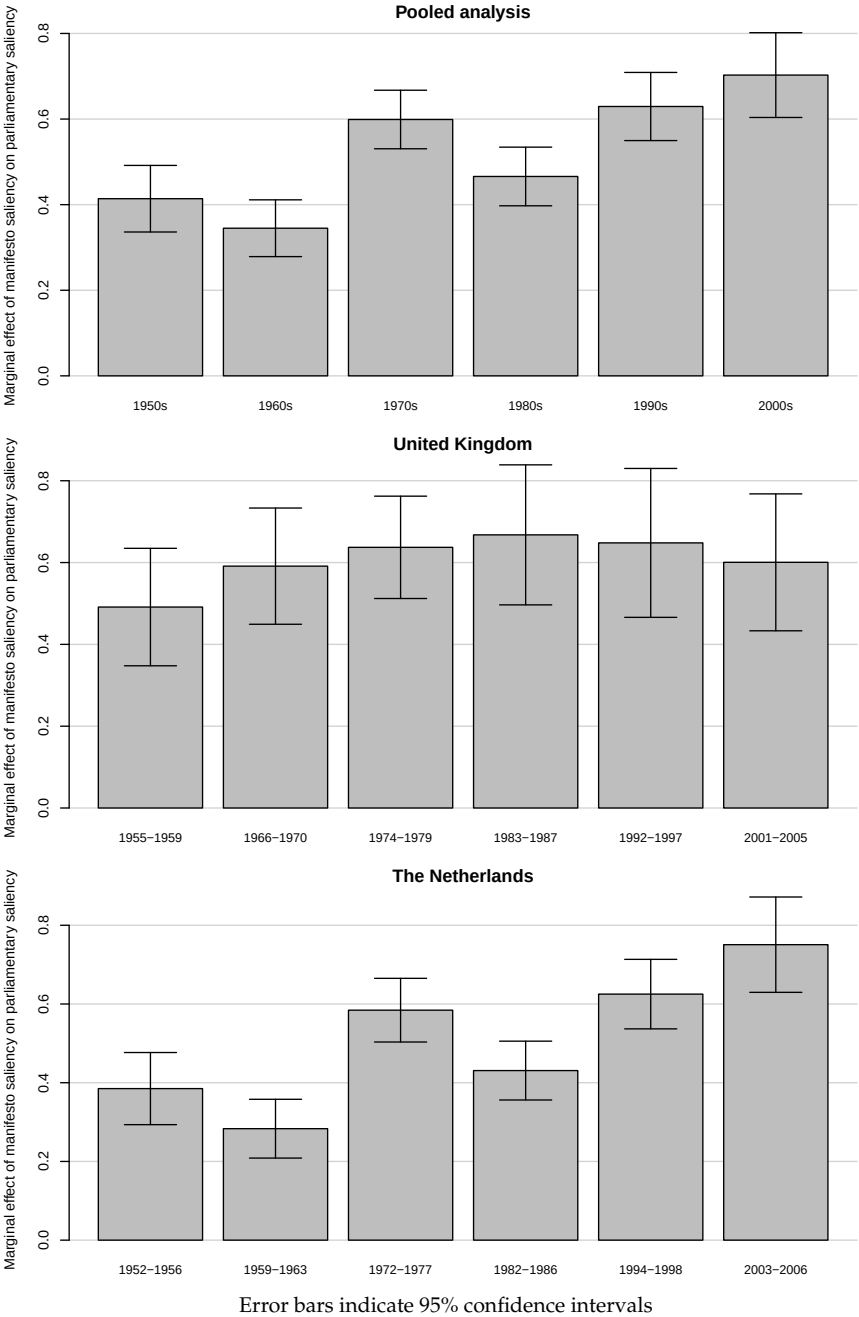
7.3 What parties said

In chapter 5 I discussed the spatial models of party competition in elections and subsequent parliaments in detail. Without repeating the descriptive aspect of that analysis, the most important historical variations in the congruence of the spaces of competition will be outlined here in more detail. These findings will be backed up by a statistical analysis of the congruence of positions.

The electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition presented in chapter 5 showed a fairly high degree of stability over time both in terms of what issues were relevant and how parties were ordered. Issues related to the economy, health care and education have high saliency levels and generally produce a traditional left-right pattern both in the British as well as in the Dutch cases. Although other issues have become more important over time, such as the environment and migration, the economy-issues explain the positions of parties in the space very well. In the Netherlands, religious issues have become less salient over time, but the ordering of parties has become clearer.

British Labour governments are estimated to be rather centrist, compared to their back-benchers. This is especially clear in the 1966-70 and 1974-79 parliaments. As the estimated positions are *relative* positions, one cannot necessarily conclude from this that the Labour government was very right-wing. What is clear, however, is that the Labour back-benchers are positioned strongly to the left of the Labour government. Although Conservative governments are also

Figure 7.7: *The effect of manifesto issue saliency on parliamentary issue saliency in different time periods*



shown to be more moderate than their back-benchers, the differences are much smaller there. The 2001 parliament does present some sort of a change here. The Labour back-benchers are estimated to be on the left of the government, but the difference is far smaller than in the two other cases where Labour was in government. Indeed, the literature suggests that Blair had less trouble with his back-benchers than Wilson (Cowley and Stuart, 2004: 227).

During the Conservative governments of 1983 and 1992, the spaces of competition showed a large degree of congruence. Both the electoral and parliamentary spaces showed a clear Lab-Lib-Con ordering on most issue dimensions. In addition, the government's position was clearly in the centre, corresponding to the position of the Conservative manifesto. The years of polarization clearly brought about a high degree of correspondence between manifesto and parliamentary space of competition.

The Dutch cases show a small increase in congruence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition over time. The 1950s and 1960s show congruence, especially in preserving the PvdA-Religious Parties-VVD competition. In 1959, however, the parliamentary space of competition displayed a larger difference between the PvdA and the Religious parties than the electoral competition, presumably because of coalition dynamics. The 1970s and 1980s show more incongruence, especially the 1972-1977 case which shows low levels of congruence (see appendix A.3.5). The 1982-1986 case shows more similarities between the manifesto and parliamentary competition, although the large positional differences for some of the smaller parties (PPR, PSP, EVP) lowers the overall congruence scores. The 1994 and 2003 cases display relatively congruent solutions – at least the positional changes that do occur can largely be explained by coalition dynamics. Interestingly, the smaller parties seem more stable than in the 1970s and 1980s, which suggests that these parties have professionalized in terms of producing a more inclusive manifesto, but also that these parties' manifestos and parliamentary speeches are more closely connected to those of the larger parties, adding to a more stable space of competition.

The analysis of the structures of the Dutch spaces of competition reveals no deterioration of the congruence between the structures of the electoral and parliamentary space of competition. On the contrary, the spaces seem slightly more congruent in later years. The influence of the coalition is a stable factor in the Netherlands: in all cases, government parties get (even) closer together and the main opposition parties distance themselves from the government, with a few notable exceptions.

Statistical analysis of the data can be used to substantiate the findings presented above. I present two ways of measuring the congruence of the policy spaces (Achen, 1978). The first is based on the absolute difference of the policy positions on each of the issue dimensions. The second analysis uses the information on the manifesto position of a party on an issue dimension to predict a party's position in parliament. The first technique presents an intuitive measure of party policy congruence, while the second approach offers an estimate of statistical

significance.

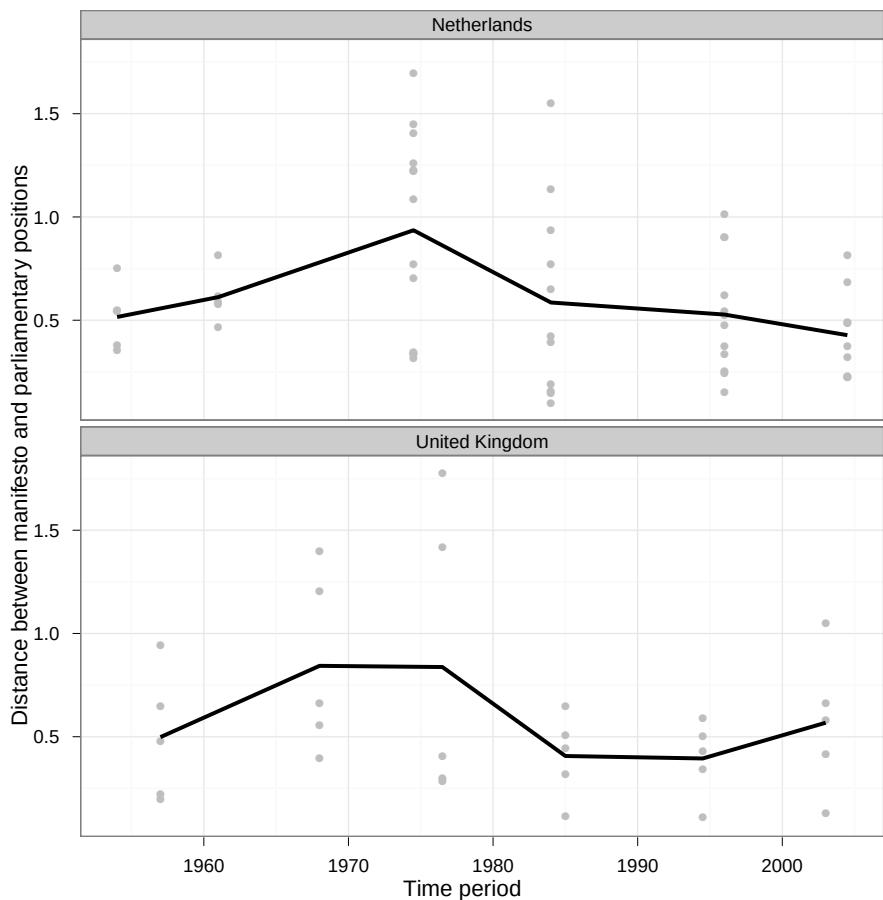
The first measure is simply the (weighted mean of the) distance between a parties' manifesto and its parliamentary issue position (see figure 7.8). The Dutch figure shows mean distances of around 0.6 with the 1972 as the outlier, which confirms my earlier conclusion about the low congruence in 1972. It should be noted that the range of values is high in 1972 and 1982: some parties deviated very strongly from their manifesto position, while other parties remained very close to these position. For other years the range is much smaller, most notably for 1952 and 1959. The increase in congruence that I observed from the spatial representations is not so high in the statistical analysis. This data suggest that congruence in the Netherlands is relatively similar over time.

The median distances are generally slightly lower in the United Kingdom than in the Netherlands, although the difference is not very large. The largest drop in the mean distance occurs between 1974-1979 and 1983-1987. The clear differences between Conservatives and Labour that were apparent in these years of polarization in British politics did indeed seem to result in higher levels of congruence. After that, levels of incongruence steadily, but slowly increase to almost 0.6. The range of values is large for the 1966-1970 and 1974-1979 cases. Differences between parties within each time period are larger than differences between the time periods.

The second measure that was used to analyse the historical trends in the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces of competition made use of a regression analysis. After all, I am interested in the question whether the manifesto spaces of competition are good *predictors* of the parliamentary spaces of competition. The model is in fact very similar to the regression model used for the saliency data. Taking a party's position on an issue dimension as the dependent variable, its position on that dimension in its manifesto was taken as the main explanatory variable. Furthermore dummy variables were added for each (but one) of the election-parliament combinations. The model also includes an interaction effect between the manifesto position and each of the dummy variables. This way, I can capture the historical variation in the predictive power of the manifesto position. Figure 7.9 presents the marginal effect of the manifesto position on the parliamentary position in each decade⁶. The top figure that pools the observations from both countries shows that the marginal effect of the manifesto position has declined somewhat (although not significantly) between the 1950s and 1970s. After the 1970s, there is an increase of this marginal effect, peaking in the 1990s. The confidence intervals are, however, rather large which means that none of the effects found here are statistically significant. The number of observations is very low in Britain (25 party issue positions per election-year) and there are large differences between parties as figure 7.9 shows. In the Netherlands, the pattern is similar to Britain: a non-significant decline between the 1950s and 1970s, and afterwards an increase in the marginal effect of the mani-

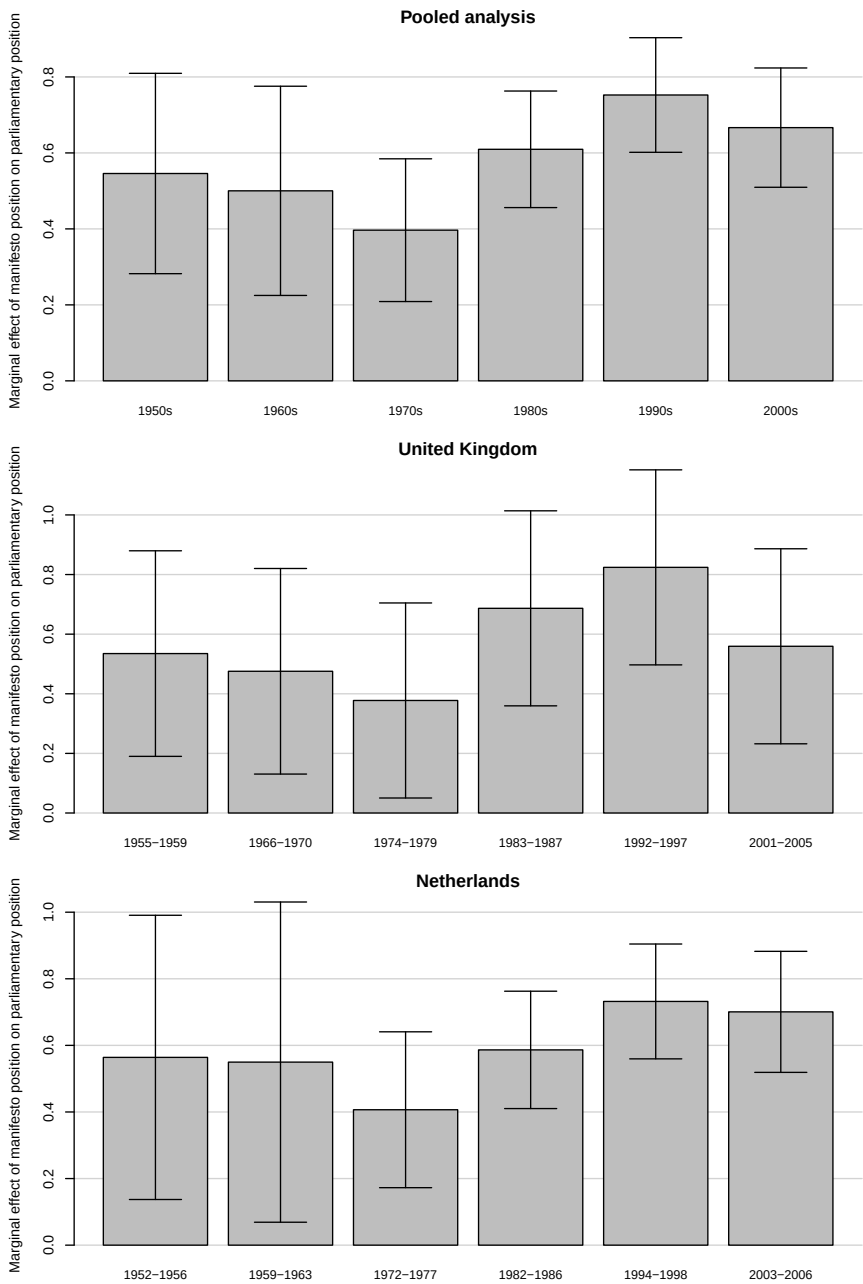
⁶The regression table is included as table A.4 on page 228.

Figure 7.8: *Distances between electoral and parliamentary positions*



Note: This is a reprint of figure 5.20 on page 139. The figure displays the mean distance between a party’s electoral and its parliamentary positions on each of the issue dimension, weighted by the saliency of those dimensions (grey dots). The black line indicates the average of those values per country per period. The figure only includes the selected cases for this study, plotted at the midpoint of the parliamentary period.

Figure 7.9: *The effect of manifesto issue positions on parliamentary issue positions in different time periods*



Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals

festo issue position. Despite the different settings and systems in the Netherlands and Great Britain, the over-time patterns of issue position congruence are thus remarkable similar.

7.4 Conclusion

Insofar as there is historical variation in the congruence between parliament and manifesto, there is an increase of the congruence rather than a decrease. Most of the effects found are not statistically significant, but those that were pointed at an increase of congruence. Therefore, I have to reject hypotheses 7 and 8 as there is clearly no historical decrease in the congruence levels. What does this mean for the theories that predict such a decrease? Three arguments can be made: parties' faithfulness in the past should not be overestimated, the development parties went through has had positive results for the party mandate and one should look for different explanations of the lack of trust in political parties.

Parties were not perfect when it came to mandate fulfilment in the past. The days of mass parties are easily taken as an ideal-type reference point for the analysis of political parties; this introduces the risk of equalizing the practice of the mass party with the theory of the mass party. In theory, the mass party did rely on broad public support, but in practice party membership was far from universal (Katz et al., 1992). The ideal-type mass party encompasses bottom-up decision-making, but in practice it was more top-down. The stability of the Dutch political system in fact depended on the willingness of party leaders to overcome the segmentation in society by consensual government (Lijphart, 1968). They had to reach compromises on the important issues of the day. Such compromises can only be reached if parties are willing to deviate from their manifesto. One reason to shy away from compromise is the possibility of electoral punishment: voters might not like the compromise and change parties. However, in the 1950s and 1960s electoral volatility was low in the Netherlands. Voters were loyal to their party. This created the much-needed room for compromise between parties. This practice seems to have had a negative influence on mandate fulfilment.

In Britain, struggles between Labour's party organization and the parliamentary party over decision-making authority and the right to instruct the parliamentary group date from the very beginning of the party (Judge, 1999: 77-80). The Conservative party has long been explicitly organized hierarchically, with the leadership elections limited to the members of parliament and policy making largely the prerogative of the party leader. Only in the last decade or so has the party changed in this respect. In theory, the mass party fights for the interests of its cleavage-based constituents. However, in practice the closed nature of elections, with voters traditionally voting for the party along cleavage lines, allows parties a lot of policy flexibility. Manifestos did not need to be very long, because voters were readily aware of the policy differences between parties – at least in

the parties' perception – and their vote was in any case not primarily based on policy, but on class membership.

The changes in the nature of political competition and political parties are not necessarily bad for the ability of parties to fulfil their political mandate. Parties' relationships with voters are no longer taken for granted and, probably as a response to this, manifestos have become longer and deal with a broader range of topics. This has increased the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary competition in terms of issue saliency. Increased electoral volatility and the availability of poll data makes parties more aware of what voters think; their response to voter's opinion may be more strategic, but as long as the strategy dictates to fulfil the mandate and listen to voters concerns, there is no objection from the theory of representation. The very fact that parties have become more vote-seeking also leads to more awareness of voters' opinions. Parties have lost something, the attachment to a core constituency defined by the relevant political cleavages, which made sure party policy was relatively stable. On the other hand, this loss has increased public scrutiny of what parties promise, do and whether they listen to the voters. This can help to foster the congruence of the electoral and parliamentary competition.

The finding that the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary competition has not decreased over time does not imply that voters are plainly wrong when they talk about not trusting parties to do what they promise. The congruence between elections and parliament is after all not perfect: parties' priorities and positions are similar between election and parliament, but certainly not in exact correspondence. However, the data present in this chapter does not support the thesis that mandate fulfilment has worsened over time. This finding calls for an alternative explanation of voters' discontent with parties' performance and party mandate fulfilment in particular (see Naurin, 2007). In the conclusion of this book, I will offer avenues for further research on this question.

Chapter 8

Issue saliency and policy extremism

Not all issues matter equally to parties. This has been the idea behind analysing the congruence of party issue saliency between elections and parliament: the party mandate requires parties to emphasize similar issues in the different arenas. However, whether an issue matters to a party can also be used as an explanatory variable: it is to be expected that parties are more congruent on issues that they care more about.

Whether parties care about issues can be expressed in two ways: issue saliency and policy extremism. Issue saliency has already been used extensively in this book and basically means how important an issue is to a party, understood as how much they talk about it. However, issues can also be argued to matter to parties if parties hold extreme opinions about them. Parties that are positioned towards the extreme of an issue dimension generally hold strong opinions on issues or at least positions that are very different from most other parties' stances. Policy extremism is thus understood as the extent to which a party's issue position is different from the mean position on that issue¹. It does not necessarily mean that this party places itself beyond the realm of acceptable parties, as for example the label 'extreme right' can imply. Policy extremism is used here in a neutral sense: the extent to which a party position is different from the mean position. The argument is that parties with extreme positions are likely to hold firm beliefs about an issue, which expects them to stick to those beliefs in parliament.

A related measure is a party's overall policy extremism. This captures whether parties hold extreme position on all issue dimensions, rather than just one or two issues. For example, on the whole the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA)

¹Policy extremism is related to polarization, but is measured at a different level of analysis (Kim et al., 2010; Ezrow, 2008). Polarization is basically an issue-dimension measurement: the competition on a certain issue is polarized (or not). Policy extremism refers to the position of a single party on an issue dimension: is the party located at the centre of the dimension or towards the outskirts.

has been quite moderate in the last few elections; nevertheless, it was quite extreme on some issues (and very moderate on most). The Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP), on the other hand, was very outspoken and extreme on almost all issues. For the former party some specific issues were of extra concern, while the latter party took a radical stance in general. Overall party policy extremism captures whether parties are ideologically motivated. Parties that are will probably take a more extreme stance on many issue dimensions. Because of this ideological motivation, parties with overall extreme policy positions are expected to better stick to their positions in parliament.

The above expectations have been formalized in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 9: The higher a party's manifesto saliency of an issue, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party issue saliency on that issue.

Hypothesis 10: The higher a party's manifesto saliency of an issue, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party position on that issue.

Hypothesis 11: The more extreme a party issue position is, the higher the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary party position on that issue.

Hypothesis 12: The higher the average extremism of a party's policy positions is, the higher the congruence between its electoral and parliamentary party positions.

8.1 Saliency and issue saliency congruence

The first aspect of mandate fulfilment is whether parties talk about similar issues during elections and in parliament: issue saliency. If parliament discusses wholly different matters than the issues that were central in the election, the latter is not a good predictor for the former. In that case, the electoral choice voters make is based on an entirely different political debate than the parliamentary representation. Issue saliency can be expressed in two ways: absolute and relative issue saliency. Absolute issue saliency refers to the amount of attention, often expressed as the amount of text, parties devote to an issue. One can, for example, say that the saliency of Agricultural issues is 7% for the Labour Party. That is, 7% of the Labour party manifesto is devoted to agricultural issues. Relative issue saliency captures how important an issue is to a party, in relation to other parties. For example, religious issues are not the *prime* concern of the Dutch religious party Christian Union. However, in comparison to other parties, who talk even less about these issue, religion is a very salient issue to them. Relative issue saliency thus captures the saliency of an issue, relative to other parties' saliency of that issue. The congruence of relative issue saliency is an important measure

Table 8.1: *Explaining the percentage difference between manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Intercept)	0.481*** (0.011)	0.345*** (0.008)	0.435*** (0.011)
Manifesto Saliency	−0.023*** (0.001)		−0.017*** (0.002)
Manifesto Relative Saliency		−0.082*** (0.008)	−0.035*** (0.009)
<i>N</i>	1498	1456	1456
<i>R</i> ²	0.143	0.063	0.129
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.142	0.062	0.127
Resid. sd	0.294	0.293	0.283

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

of mandate fulfilment, because it indicates which issues are emphasized by parties, which issues they really ‘own’ (Stokes, 1966; Klingemann et al., 1994; Budge, 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006). Just as I have argued that comparing the parties’ relative issue *positions* is important from the perspective of voters who have to make a choice between parties, parties’ relative issue *saliency* can play a role in voters electoral choice. Indeed some even argue that this is what matters most (Budge et al., 1987; Budge, 2001).

The extent to which parties deviate from their manifesto priorities in parliament is expressed as a percentage of the average level of saliency in the manifesto and in parliament². After all, on issues with an original saliency of one percent, an increase of one percent means that a party talks twice as much about the issues, whereas the same increase would only mean a five percent increase of saliency for an issue that a party originally devoted twenty percent of its manifesto to. Therefore, using the percentage difference gives the best estimate of the extent of the issue saliency change.

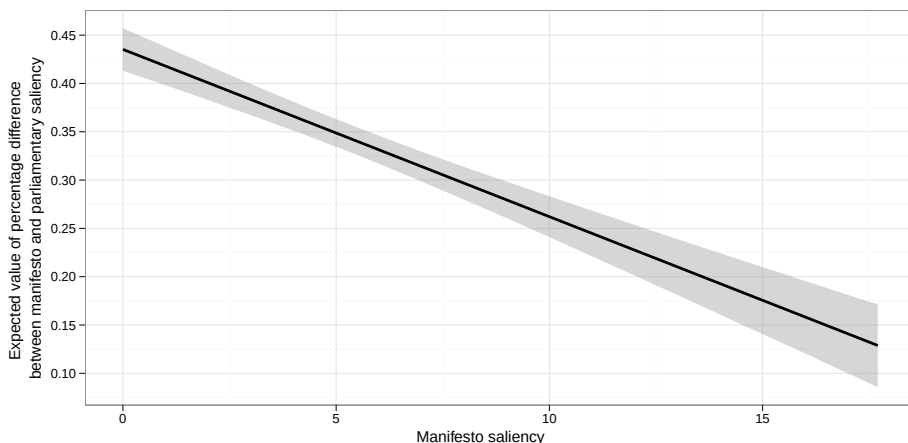
Three OLS regression models were fitted to test the influence of saliency on the difference between manifesto and parliamentary saliency³. The first model

²The formula used to calculate the percentage difference d for manifesto issue saliency level m and parliamentary issue saliency level p is:

$$d = \text{abs}(m - p) / (m + p) \quad (8.1)$$

which results in a measure ranging from 0 (no change) to 1 (a change from no attention in one arena to any level of attention in another arena). Using the sum of the manifesto and parliamentary issue saliency as the base for the calculation (and not just manifesto saliency) nicely keeps values between 0 and 1 and avoids calculation errors in case manifesto saliency is zero.

³The regression model used in other chapters is not suitable for this analysis, because the regression coefficient measure does not work properly when analysing party-level variation.

Figure 8.1: *Expected value of issue saliency distance for various levels of issue saliency*

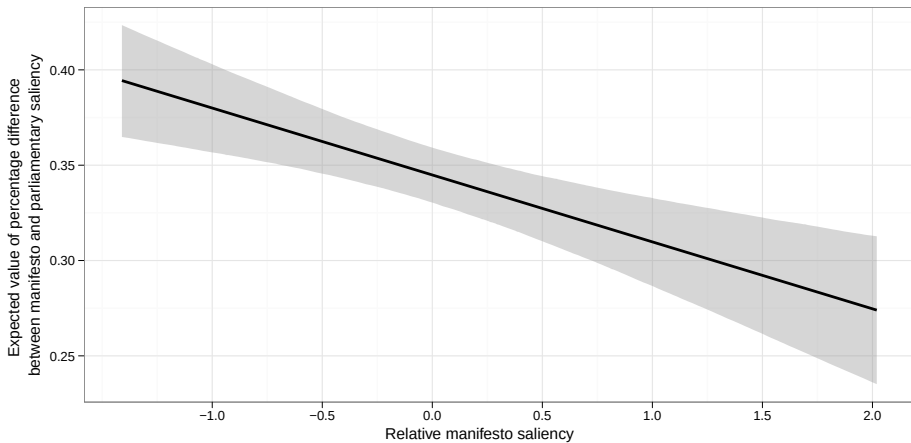
Note: Shaded area indicates 95% confidence interval.

takes manifesto saliency as its explanatory variable, while the second model takes relative issue saliency as its independent variable (see table 8.1). As there were no significant differences between the two counties, I present only the pooled analysis. Both variables have a significant negative effect on the difference between manifesto and parliamentary saliency. This means that as an issue is more important for a party, both in absolute and in relative terms, the percentage difference between its manifesto issue saliency and parliamentary issue saliency becomes smaller. The more salient an issue for a party, the higher the congruence between their electoral and parliamentary issue saliency level.

A visual presentation can make the extent of the effects more clear. The expected value of the dependent variable was estimated for each level of the independent variable of interest, keeping the other variables at their mean (King et al., 2000; Imai et al., 2007). Figure 8.1 presents the expected value of the percentage difference between manifesto and parliamentary saliency for a range of manifesto saliency values (keeping relative manifesto value at its mean)⁴. When in a party's manifesto the saliency of an issue is close to zero, the expected difference is about 0.4, or 40%. This means that parties deviate on average 40% from non-salient issues. For issues with a saliency over 15 per cent, the deviation drops to under 20 per cent. The 95% confidence intervals are small, indicating that this difference is statistically significant.

The effect of relative issue saliency can be visualized similarly. In figure 8.2 the *relative* issue saliency varies between its minimum and maximum value, while the manifesto saliency is kept at its mean. For issues that parties do not

⁴The graphs present the effects of model 3 in table 8.1. The effects of models 1 and 2 are similar.

Figure 8.2: *Expected value of issue saliency distance for various levels of relative issue saliency*

Note: Shaded area indicates 95% confidence interval.

find very salient in comparison to other parties (relative manifesto saliency is negative), they deviate about 40 per cent from their manifesto saliency value. Issues on which parties show the highest relative saliency, on the other hand, show only about 30 per cent deviation. The effect of relative manifesto issue saliency is thus less strong than the effect of absolute manifesto issue saliency, but it is substantive and significant.

Parties deviate least strongly from the issues that were most salient in their manifesto. Both the absolute saliency and the relative saliency comes into play. Parties deviate least strongly from issues they talk most about in their manifesto (absolute saliency). There is a separate effect for issues they talk most about in their manifesto relative to other parties (relative saliency). This corroborates hypothesis 9 that higher levels of issue saliency lead to higher levels of congruence between the electoral and parliamentary competition.

8.2 Issue saliency, policy extremism and the congruence of positions

Issue position congruence is measured separately per issue dimension (see chapter 4). Mandate fulfilment refers to the congruence of parties' (relative) electoral and parliamentary issue positions. The dependent variable in the analysis is the distance between a parties' (relative) electoral position and its (relat-

ive) parliamentary position⁵. Because the data concerns parties' positions relative to the other parties in an election or parliament, caution is warranted when using the distance between those positions as a measure of position congruence. After all, relative positions change not only when a party changes its own opinion, but also when the other parties change.

The congruence of parties' policy positions can be explained by three variables: issue saliency, issue extremism, and party extremism. Issue saliency is expected to influence issue position congruence similarly as it influences issue saliency congruence. If an issue is important to a party, it should be more inclined to stick to that position in parliament. Parties with *extreme* policy position are also believed to stick better to their priorities. This argument can be made at two levels. First, parties can have specific issues on which they have relatively extreme policy positions. As these issues are likely to define these parties' profiles, one would expect parties to show congruence between elections and parliament on particularly these issues. The second way in which policy extremism comes into play is on the party level. Some parties take more extreme policy stances overall. These are likely to be the more ideologically motivated parties. It is to be expected that these parties are less willing to compromise on issues in parliament.

Policy extremism is measured as the distance between a party's manifesto issue position and the mean issue position of all parties⁶. The party policy extremism measure is the mean of those distances for a single party, weighted by issue saliency. The party policy extremism scores are plotted in figure 8.3. In the Netherlands, the traditional parties of the left and right have high policy extremism scores. However, the far right-wing parties such as the CD, LPF and BP, do not stand out. While these parties may stand out in terms of their policies towards migration, their speech suggests that overall they are less extreme than expected (see also chapter 5). In Britain, the picture is also mixed. In some years the Liberals are extreme, while in other years the party is more moderate. This seems to be related to the incumbent government at the time of the election: when Conservatives were in office, the Liberals tended to be less extreme in their manifesto issue positions than when Labour formed the outgoing government.

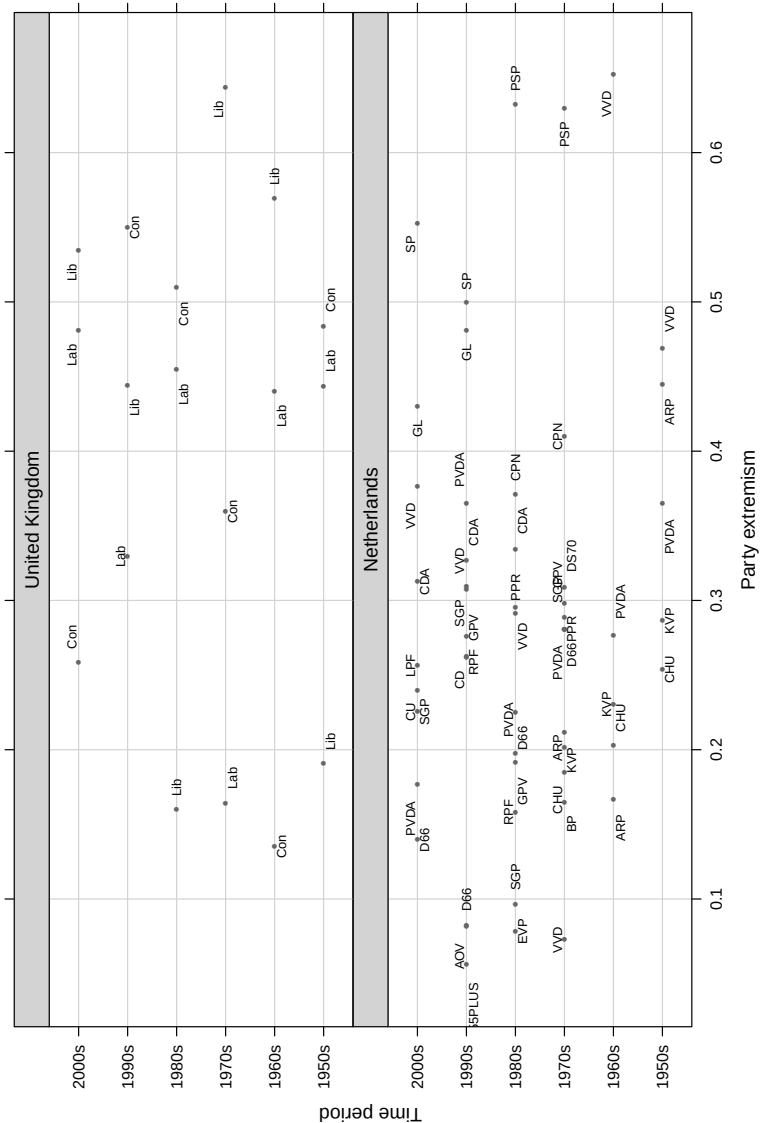
The regression model using manifesto issue saliency, manifesto issue extremism and party policy extremism as explanations for the distance between manifesto and parliamentary positions is presented in table 8.2. The first model includes all observations, while the second and third models include only the observations from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands respectively. I included these country models, because there were important differences in the directions of the coefficient between the countries.

Contrary to my expectation, manifesto issue saliency does not have an effect

⁵The scales of both scores were transformed to range from 0 to 1, so that the maximum party position distance is equal between issue dimensions.

⁶Alternatively, the distance to the median legislator's position could be used. This does not change the direction of the coefficients in the regression model.

Figure 8.3: Parties' overall policy position extremism



Note: Figure only includes the selected cases for this study, i.e. '1950s' refers to 1955-1959 UK case and 1952-1956 Dutch case.

Table 8.2: *Explaining the distance between the manifesto and parliamentary position*

	All cases	United Kingdom	Netherlands
(Intercept)	0.293*** (0.029)	0.336*** (0.070)	0.304*** (0.032)
Manifesto Saliency	-0.016 (0.062)	-0.122 (0.101)	0.061 (0.078)
Manifesto Policy Position Extremism	-0.183* (0.078)	-0.181 (0.134)	-0.185† (0.095)
Party Overall Policy Position Extremism	0.037 (0.094)	0.110 (0.171)	-0.131 (0.116)
<i>N</i>	438	146	292
<i>R</i> ²	0.017	0.025	0.047
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.010	0.004	0.037
Resid. sd	0.235	0.264	0.214

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

This analysis only includes the front benches.

on the congruence of the party positions. While the sign is negative both in the pooled analysis and the analysis of the British cases, this finding is not statistically significant. For the Netherlands, the sign is even positive, suggesting that parties deviate more on issues they find important (although it is not significant). The evidence is thus mixed at best⁷. It confirms Thomson's (1999) finding that more salient election pledges are not more likely to be fulfilled. Apparently, the fact that issues have more attention from parties does not enable or force them to take more congruent positions on these issues. Thus, hypothesis 10 has to be rejected.

More extreme manifesto policy positions seem to be more congruent. The coefficient is moderate and significant: if positions are one point more extreme on the extremism scale, the distance between the manifesto and parliamentary position is expected to be 0.18 point smaller⁸. This confirms the expectation that parties will stay closer to their manifesto position if that position is more extreme. Because the positions used here are expressed in relative terms, some caution is warranted: the relative position of parties with more extreme positions on an issue is expected to be more congruent than the relative position of parties with more moderate views on an issue.

⁷The result is similar if *relative* issue saliency is used instead of absolute issue saliency.

⁸Part of this effect is explained by the fact that the most extreme parties will have a position of either 0 or 1. If these parties remain the most extreme party in parliament, their distance score is automatically zero. If these parties are deleted, the effect is smaller and no longer significant.

Concerning party policy extremism, there is a difference between the two countries. In the Netherlands, parties that are more extreme overall, are more likely to be congruent in terms of their issue positions. Thus, more ideologically driven parties seem to be somewhat more congruent than parties taking generally middle-of-the-road positions. However, in the United Kingdom the opposite seems to be the case, although neither finding is statistically significant. One explanation is that some of the more extreme positions are the result of the competitive nature of the manifestos, especially in Britain. Especially when Labour is the incumbent party, the Liberals are positioned on the other extreme from Labour in the electoral space of competition. However, in parliament they move towards a more moderate position, which causes low levels of congruence between their electoral and parliamentary positions. Notably in the Netherlands, there is a number of small parties that is concerned with voicing certain policy stances rather than actually implementing these policies in government. Being a party with relatively extreme policy views in general seems to have a negative (but not significant) effect on the congruence between their electoral and parliamentary position. Because neither finding achieves statistical significance, hypothesis 12 has to be rejected.

8.3 Conclusion

Whether issues matter has some effect of the congruence of parties' electoral and parliamentary issue saliency and issue positions. Concerning issue saliency congruence, parties tend to be more similar on those issues that matter most to them, both in absolute terms and in relative terms. The difference between manifesto and parliamentary attention for issues is smaller for issues that parties talk a lot about. This difference is also smaller for issues that parties talk much about in relative terms, thus more than other parties. Although these effects are moderate in size, these are highly significant and can thus safely be argued to play a role, also beyond the specific cases that were studied here.

Concerning issue position congruence, what matters seems to be expressed more in terms of issue position extremism than issue saliency. There is no support for the hypothesis that parties are more congruent in positional terms for issues with higher levels of issue saliency. However, parties with more extreme positions on specific issues *are* inclined to show higher levels of (relative) issue position congruence between election and parliament. Their relative positions in the elections and parliament are more congruent than those of parties with more moderate positions. When looking at *party* (overall) policy extremism, a difference between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom is revealed. In the Netherlands, parties with more extreme views overall tend to be more congruent in their issue positions, while in Britain the opposite holds. It strengthens the idea that some of the more extreme parties in the Netherlands are primarily policy-driven (even if that means staying out of government), while the three

parties in Britain aim for the enactment of their policies in office.

The conclusion concerning issue position congruence seems to run contrary to the findings of Kim et al. (2010), who show that polarized political systems show lower levels of policy linkage between citizens and governments. Polarization is, however, an issue dimension measurement, which is based on the same idea as policy position extremism, but measures in fact how different parties are, not how different a single party is. Despite this difference in the level of measurement, Kim et al.'s (2010) results would not likely be different had they conducted a party-level analysis. The difference between their findings and mine stem from the fact that they compare preferences of the median voter with government issue positions, while I am looking at party mandate fulfilment. Higher levels of polarization lead to party positions that are further away from the median voter, which leads to a larger difference between the government's positions and the median voter, particularly in majoritarian democracies. For example, relatively high polarization in the 1980s in Britain, got the Conservatives elected on a manifesto that was relatively far away from the median voter (the Labour manifesto was even more radical). Policy linkage between voters and politicians thus suffered from high polarization. At the same time, high polarization seems to have resulted in relative stability in terms of mandate fulfilment: parties stuck to their clearly defined manifesto positions in parliament. In addition, Dalton (1985) has found that dyadic correspondence between a party and its voters is higher when a party's position is more extreme. Thus while polarization can have a negative effect on policy linkage between the median voter and the government (especially in majoritarian democracies), it probably aids mandate fulfilment⁹. This is also relevant in the context of the difference between majoritarian and consensus democracy: majoritarian democracies with two-party systems have a tendency to show higher levels of polarization, which is good for mandate fulfilment. However, this does apparently not result in higher levels of mandate fulfilment in the United Kingdom than in the Netherlands.

The effects found in this chapter are relatively small. One explanation might be that party issue positions are measured in relative terms. The effect is that a party's position may change because other parties' positions change; thus it tends to blur the movement of individual parties somewhat. Whereas looking at relative positions is thus informative from an institutional point of view, the party-level effects are likely underestimated by the relative congruence measure. The party-level effects might therefore be more pronounced when studied at using an absolute measure of parties' electoral and parliamentary positions.

⁹The effect of polarization on mandate fulfilment should not be overestimated, because the last chapter showed relative stability over time while Kim et al. (2010) show that polarization has changed quite strongly over time.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Different systems, similar levels of congruence

This study's main research question was whether there is a difference in the level of mandate fulfilment between majoritarian and consensus democracies. The difference was studied by comparing a typical example of a majoritarian democracy, the United Kingdom, with a typical consensus democracy, the Netherlands. Other than expected, these two countries do not differ significantly in terms of collective party mandate fulfilment. Where differences do exist, these are small and often not statistically significant. Regarding issue saliency congruence, I found that British parties are somewhat more congruent than their Dutch counterparts. The reason is that British parties are more similar in terms of their attention to issues, both in their election manifestos and in their parliamentary speeches. When looking at *relative issue saliency* (how important an issue is to a party, relative to how important it is to other parties) the Dutch parties outperform the British parties somewhat. Regarding issue position congruence, there are no significant differences between the British and Dutch cases. For both countries there is a fair correspondence between parties' electoral and parliamentary positions in most of the cases, both in terms of the similarity of the spaces and structures of electoral and parliamentary competition as well as in terms of the predictive power of parties' electoral positions on issues for their parliamentary positions. Where positions are not congruent, this relates most strongly to parties' roles: whether they are in government or opposition.

Previous studies did find a difference between majoritarian and consensus democracies (Klingemann et al., 1994). Government parties in majoritarian democracies fulfil more of their electoral pledges than government parties in consensus democracies (Thomson, 1999; Mansergh and Thomson, 2007). The difference between these findings and mine relates to how the party mandate is studied. The 'pledge approach' takes an individual pledge by a specific

party and checks whether the government has taken a decision that qualifies the pledge as fulfilled. The 'spatial approach' used in this study, however, looks at the congruence between the electoral party competition and the parliamentary party competition. These approaches thus differ with regard to their object of comparison (pledges or party positions), the fulfilment test (enactment or congruence), the 'representation-enacting arena' (government output or parliament) and the level of comparison (party level versus party-system level). In terms of the enactment of pledges by government parties, majoritarian democracies tend to fare better, but the broader perspective of the current study shows that mandate fulfilment in terms of the congruence between electoral and parliamentary competition, which includes both government and opposition parties, is similar in both my majoritarian and consensus case. This study has provided a broader picture of mandate fulfilment, including both opposition and government parties and looking at party's issue positions and issue saliency rather than specific pledges. Whereas there is no doubt that the various types of research provide valuable insights, the contribution of this study lies in the fact that it does include both the government parties' as well as the opposition parties' mandates.

This finding has important consequences for democratic theory. Traditionally it has been assumed that majoritarian systems provide a clear line of linkage between citizens and parties. Consensus systems were thought to lead to unclear compromises after the elections (Ranney, 1954; Klingemann et al., 1994). This study shows that the fulfilment of parties' parliamentary mandates does not differ between the two systems. The structure of the electoral space of party competition is not a better predictor of the structure of the parliamentary space of party competition in majoritarian countries than in consensus democracies. In addition, other studies have shown that consensus democracies fare at least as well as majoritarian democracies in terms of policy responsiveness: policy linkage between citizens and parties (Powell, 2000; Blais and Bodet, 2006; Golder and Stramski, 2010).

One must part with the idea that majoritarian democracy is superior to consensus democracy in terms of collective mandate fulfilment. This difference was not found in the current comparison of a typical majoritarian case (the United Kingdom) with a typical consensus democracy (the Netherlands). On the other hand, consensus democracies do not provide a clearer linkage between the electoral party competition and the parliamentary party competition either, as was hypothesized. In reality, political processes are always a bit messy and there are always some deviations from the party mandate: you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs. However, on the whole this study shows that in *both* consensus and majoritarian democracies collective mandate fulfilment is quite reasonable and probably higher than many people expect (see page 4). The spaces of electoral and parliamentary competition are congruent and so are the structures: parties' relative positions in the electoral and parliamentary competition are quite similar in most cases.

9.1.1 Government and opposition

Using the spatial approach to the party mandate, this study has been able to look at the difference in mandate fulfilment between government and opposition parties. Concerning issue saliency, this difference is clear-cut. In the majoritarian system of Britain, government parties are in a better position to influence the parliamentary agenda. Their attention for issues in parliament is best explained by looking at the attention they had for issues in the manifesto. For opposition parties, however, their parliamentary attention for particular issues is best explained by the *average* attention for the issue in parties' manifestos. This supports the government agenda control mechanism put forward by Döring (1995). In majoritarian systems governments control the parliamentary agenda.

In the Netherlands this difference between government and opposition was not found. Dutch opposition parties seem even somewhat better able to follow through on issues that they found important in their manifestos than Dutch government parties. This confirms Döring's (1995) observation that government agenda control is very low in the Dutch parliament. Opposition parties have many opportunities to table those issues that they find important. Apparently they are using their prerogatives to put the spotlight on issues that would otherwise have gotten little attention in parliament. The governing coalition parties also succeed in doing this, but to a lesser extent than the opposition parties.

A visual comparison of the electoral and parliamentary party competition in both countries learns that the main source of *positional* incongruence differs between countries. British parties frame their manifestos very much in favour or against the incumbent government. For example, the Liberal Democrats in 2001 were located far away from Labour on many issue dimensions, because Labour was in government and the Liberal Democrats were in opposition (although many observers would argue that both parties could be characterized as centre-left). Parliamentary debates seem to be less influenced by this 'incumbents vs. opposition' pattern. The parliamentary spaces show a dominant ordering of parties: Government back-benchers - Government - Liberals - Opposition back-benchers - Opposition front bench. While parties' attitudes towards the government do play a role, the polarization between government and opposition is less strong than in the electoral competition. This pattern is visible in all British cases and leads to lower levels of congruence between the electoral and parliamentary spaces.

The main source of lower levels of congruence in the Netherlands is the formation of a coalition government. Government parties collide (to a degree) after the elections, while the differences between governing and opposition parties increase. The most obvious example of this pattern is the 1994-1998 period in which the first government without the Christian Democrats in over 70 years had been formed. The centre-left PvdA and the centre-right VVD had to work together in a coalition government, which resulted in a change of their issue positions towards one another. In other periods the distance between opposition

and coalition parties also increased (except 2003-2006), albeit that the effect was less pronounced.

Dissimilarities between electoral and parliamentary competition are often related to parties' government or opposition roles, but this does not imply that opposition or governing parties show higher levels of positional congruence. The 'incumbency effect' on the British electoral competition influences the relative positions of both the government and opposition parties. The Dutch 'coalition effect' similarly influences both the coalition parties' as well as the opposition's relative issue positions. The distinction between government and opposition influences the whole space of competition, rather than only the individual government or opposition parties.

In addition to the differences between government and opposition, the British case revealed a difference in the positional change of the front benches and the back-benchers. The back-benchers of the two major parties are positioned closer to the party's manifesto position than the front benches. The government's position is usually more moderate than that of its back-benchers, while the opposition front bench takes a rather more extreme position than the opposition back-benchers in the parliamentary space of competition. These roles seem to be related to the constitutional position of both actors. The government has a policy mandate that drives its parliamentary behaviour, but it also has to defend a large amount of business that originates from Whitehall. The opposition front bench, on the other hand, has no such obligations and is rather motivated to criticize and oppose all of the government's policy plans. The effect is that both the governing party's front bench as well as the opposition party's front bench are more incongruent in terms of issue positions than their back bench colleagues are.

British politics is not as adversarial as is sometimes described in the literature (cf. *Finer, 1975: 6*). My findings suggests that the political position British governments display in parliament is more accommodating than confrontational. Governments usually take a moderate position in the parliamentary policy space compared to their back-benchers. The majority of the bills and regulations they put forward has been planned by the bureaucracy rather than the party headquarters and is often rather technical in nature – a different government would probably have defended a very similar piece of legislation, had it been in power (*Rose, 1980*). This finding supports the conclusion that mandate fulfilment does not differ between consensus and majoritarian countries. After all, the selling point of majoritarian democracy is exactly that the government parties are able to fulfil their electoral mandate. The finding that governments in the United Kingdom are accommodating rather than adversarial undermines that argument. Although governments in majoritarian democracies fulfil more of their electoral pledges, as was shown by research in the pledge tradition (*Mansergh and Thomson, 2007*), their political positions are not more congruent between elections and parliament than those of governing parties in consensus democracies.

9.1.2 Changes over time

I find no evidence for a decline of party mandate fulfilment over time. There is rather an increase of issue saliency congruence in the Netherlands and stability on positional congruence in both countries. This runs contrary to the expectation that party mandate fulfilment will have declined, because of dealignment and party (system) change. Proponents of the cartel party thesis argue that electoral competition is no longer a free market, but a cartel of parties who have divided the spoils of office (Katz and Mair, 1995, 2009). Winning and losing elections is no longer the most important aspect of the political game. The result is that parties do not really care about mandate fulfilment any more. Elections are merely 'dignified parts of the constitution' (Katz and Mair, 1995: 22). This arguably severely weakens the representative link between citizens and parties. However, in practice I do not observe such a clear deterioration of the representative relationship, neither in terms of issue congruence (Powell, 2009) nor in terms of mandate fulfilment. How can this be explained?

First of all, one should not overestimate the quality of representation in the past. Sometimes the era of the mass party is taken as the ideal-type situation for political representation. However, mass parties were not really parties of the masses; membership was usually not higher than about 10 per cent of the population. This is certainly higher than today, but party membership was far from universal. More importantly, mass parties catered to specific socio-demographic constituencies: Labour parties for working men, Christian democrats for religious people and Liberal as well as Conservative parties for the more affluent part of the population. While parties did thus have specific interests at heart, the fact that most people voted for the party which represented their group, gave these mass parties quite a lot of freedom regarding the exact policies parties put forward in parliament. It would take a lot to convince a manual labourer that the Liberals would represent his interests better than Labour.

The Dutch system of pillarization (or 'consociational democracy') in fact depended on the willingness of (party) elites to cooperate and compromise (Lijphart, 1968). Society was segmented in various social groups ('pillars') which were relatively autonomous. For example, Catholics had their own newspapers, their own schools, their own hospitals and their own football clubs. Lijphart has argued that this societal segmentation has been overcome by elite cooperation. Governments consisted of party representatives of most of these 'pillars'. This cooperation could only work because the elites were prepared to strike compromises. Judging from the data gathered in this study, these compromises seem to have led to a somewhat lower level of mandate fulfilment than in later years. Parties had to deviate from their manifestos to make the system work. Voters were loyal to their party and did not punish parties for this behaviour. The result is that mandate fulfilment was not particularly high during the years of pillarization.

Secondly, the effect of dealignment and cartelization of the party system

turns out to be not as negative as is sometimes argued. Some of the developments are even helpful to mandated representation. The support of voters is no longer taken for granted by parties. Election manifestos have become longer and more detailed, allowing for a better estimation of their issue positions, and they deal with a broader range of topics. This has contributed to higher congruence between parties' electoral and their parliamentary issue saliency. The decline of cleavage-based attachments to parties and the resulting increase of electoral volatility seems to have made parties more aware of their constituents' opinions (Kitschelt, 2000). While their response to voters' opinions may be strategic (in order to win votes or office), this does not so much matter from the perspective of party mandate fulfilment, as long as it brings parties to fulfilling their election mandates. The fear that voters will punish parties that break their electoral mandates helps to ensure that parties take their mandates seriously (Mansbridge, 2003). In addition, Kitschelt argues that if cartelization of party competition leads to alienation between voters and citizens, two mechanisms will reduce cartelization (Kitschelt, 2000). First, members of the cartel may break the cartel if they feel that the cost of leaving it are outweighed by the benefit of reaching out to voters. If the cartel parties have distanced themselves too far from the public, a party that breaks loose from the cartel has a good chance of benefiting in electoral terms. Alternatively, the cartel parties may be challenged by new parties from outside the cartel. The success of right-wing populist parties may partly be attributed to this factor. And these new parties do not necessarily remain outsiders: in some cases they have been part of the governing coalition (Belanger and Aarts, 2006; De Lange, 2008). The results of this study seem to confirm Kitschelt's argument about parties' sensitivity to voters' concerns, rather than the 'alienation' thesis that is implied in the cartel party thesis.

9.1.3 What matters most to parties

The final hypothesis concerning party mandate fulfilment studied here concerns how important issues were to parties and whether they take 'extreme' positions on issues. Issue saliency congruence is higher for issues that matter more to parties. However, parties' issue position congruence is not higher for more salient issues. Thus the influence of the importance of issues is mixed: it matters for issue saliency congruence, but not for issue position congruence.

Recently, polarization and issue position extremism have been looked at to explain (a lack of) policy linkage between citizens and parties (Kim et al., 2010). Here it has been used to explain mandate fulfilment by political parties. Whereas polarization has been shown to decrease policy linkage, especially in majoritarian democracies, this study has shown that parties' electoral and parliamentary issue positions are more congruent when their issue position is more extreme. Parties with more outspoken views tend to fulfil their mandate somewhat better, at least on those issues where they have an extreme view. In consensus countries, parties that have more outspoken views on all issues tend to show

even higher levels of mandate fulfilment, although this effect is not significant. Contrarily, in the United Kingdom, parties which hold views that are extreme overall show lower levels of mandate fulfilment. This seems to be the result of the, in some cases, rather outspoken manifesto views of the Liberals, which they do not translate in extreme positions in parliament. On the whole, parties show higher levels of mandate fulfilment on issues where they have more outspoken or extreme positions.

9.2 Implications

How can the conclusions from this study be used to further the day-to-day practice of political representation?

First of all, this study shows that overall there are only small differences between consensus and majoritarian democracies in terms of mandate fulfilment. This finding is similar to the conclusions of studies into policy responsiveness, which show that while in the past consensus democracies have shown higher levels of policy linkage between citizens and politicians (Powell, 2000), although the difference with majoritarian democracies seems to have become smaller over the last decade (Powell, 2009; Golder and Stramski, 2010)¹. These findings should be taken into account in the debate on political reform in both countries. In the Dutch debate on political reform, the proposals to reform the electoral system or to introduce a directly elected prime minister have sometimes been substantiated by the argument that this would lead to better linkage between citizens and politicians (Van Thijn, 1967). It has been argued that this reform would lead towards a more majoritarian system of government and therefore to clearer lines of responsibility, less voter confusion and more government decisiveness (Andeweg, 1997: 237). However, the results from this study and previous studies show that it is unlikely that institutional reform will increase either policy linkage or collective mandate fulfilment.

Secondly, the level of congruence between the electoral and parliamentary competition is reasonably high both in Britain and in the Netherlands. In addition, there is no decline of mandate fulfilment over time, rather an increase of issue saliency congruence. Why then do so many people believe that parties do not fulfil their electoral promises? And why does trust in public institutions decline in most Western countries (Pharr and Putnam, 2000)?

The finding that the congruence between the electoral and parliamentary competition has not decreased over time does not imply that voters are plainly wrong when they talk about not trusting parties to do what they promise. The congruence between elections and parliament is after all not perfect: parties' priorities and positions are similar between election and parliament, but certainly

¹Golder and Stramski (2010) do not find a difference between consensus and majoritarian democracy (treated as a dichotomy), but they do find a relation between the electoral system disproportionality (measured at interval-ratio level) and many-to-many congruence.

not in exact correspondence. Even if one argues that the correspondence is at an acceptable level, this does not mean that voter distrust is necessarily misguided. First, parties may say in parliament what they promised during the election, but this does not mean that issue congruence between voters and parties is high. Voters might not like any of the parties' manifestos and are therefore not really given a satisfactory choice. Second, people might have one or two issues that they really care about on which parties do show a poor record (Thomson, 2011). One example is the rise of the pension age from 65 to 67 in the Netherlands, which was supported by a parliamentary majority in 2009. However, in the 2006 elections, only one party had said in its manifesto that it wanted to do this and many parties had explicitly said they would not. The issue has attracted considerable attention in the news media and people might thus feel that parties have broken their promises. Liberal leader Nick Clegg had a similar experience in 2010 when he had to go back on a promise not to increase tuition fees. Even if parties' social or educational policies have been congruent on the whole, incongruence on a specific policy measure might arouse negative feelings about pledge fulfilment.

Party manifestos have become longer over the last fifty years. The paradox of longer manifestos is that they give more information, which does enable citizens to make a better electoral choice, but at the same time makes it less likely that people are actually going to read them. While I do maintain that manifestos are informative of a party's electoral and predictive for a party's parliamentary position, another question is whether they are in practice a source of information that people use extensively. Most voters will only encounter the party manifestos via another medium, for example television debates, media reports, interviews with candidates, party propaganda or vote advice applications. Kriesi et al.'s analysis of party positions reported in newspapers illustrates that these party positions are roughly similar to the parties' manifesto positions, but they are not identical (Kriesi, 2008). The filter via which voters get to know manifestos may influence their expectations about how parties behave in parliament. This is certainly a topic that warrants further research.

Thirdly, the analysis shows that party position congruence between elections and parliament is higher for issues on which parties have a more extreme or outspoken positions. Voters can take this into account when casting their ballot. Although an extreme issue position is no guarantee of it being kept, there is a small positive effect. In addition, parties show higher issue saliency congruence for issues that they talked more about in their manifesto (both in absolute as well as in relative terms). If voters thus want to put one issue or another more firmly on the parliamentary agenda, a vote for a party that finds this issue more important than other parties may help. Voters should, however, be aware that the government formation process will probably have a greater influence on party mandate fulfilment than manifesto issue saliency or manifesto issue position extremism.

9.3 Approach and method

The spatial approach used here proved to be able to uncover a number of phenomena that have previously remained hidden. The current study is the first to examine the party mandate both in terms of issue saliency as well as issue positions. Equally important is that it manages to mitigate some of the adverse effects that the pledge approach is susceptible to: agenda effects, specificity effects and strategic effects: the pledge approach cannot take agenda changes into account, it suffers from differences in the degree of specificity of manifestos and government policy (or parliamentary debate) and it is prone to strategic choices in pledge-making by parties. The saliency approach used by Klingemann et al. (1994) mitigates these problems, but has the disadvantage of looking only at issue saliency (how much parties talk about issues), not at parties' positions on those issues. The spatial approach used in this study offers a way to reduce the problems of the pledge approach, while allowing to study both issue saliency as well as party issue positions. With regard to the latter it shows that the patterns concerning issue saliency congruence are not always similar to those of issue position congruence. For example, I observe a statistically significant increase over time of issue saliency congruence in the Netherlands, while issue position congruence is more or less stable.

This book provides a broad comparison of the party mandate: it covers the similarity of parties' issue saliency and position on basically all policy issues, rather than only specific pledges or specific topics. There is a trade-off between having a broad comparison and one that is aimed at identifying incongruence on specific issues. Whereas the spatial approach is well suited to do the former, it is not very good at identifying a lack of mandate fulfilment on specific issues. This study provides an estimate of the overall congruence of the electoral and parliamentary competition, but does not tell whether the Conservative party kept its 1983 promise to 'update the Cruelty to animals act 1876' (Conservative Party, 1983). This is in particular due to way the spatial approach was implemented here, using word-count-based algorithms (Wordfish) to estimate parties' policy positions. Still, the aim of this study was to look at the party mandate from an party-system level perspective, which arguably translates better into a 'broader' measure of party policy than a more particularized one. Whereas previous studies, especially those in the pledge tradition, have already provided important insights in the fulfilment of specific pledges, the broader party system-level perspective had remained largely unexplored.

This study is one of the first to study opposition parties' mandates. Previous studies were not very informative about opposition parties' mandate fulfilment, because they looked at government policy output - over which opposition parties obviously have very limited control. This study has shown that when using a better test of opposition parties' mandate fulfilment, namely what they say in parliament, there is little difference with governing parties. Their positions are equally congruent between elections and parliament as those of the government

parties. As I outlined above, I do find that the dynamics of government and opposition influences the overall congruence of the policy spaces. Incongruence of parties' relative positions in the spaces of electoral and parliamentary competition is related to these dynamics.

Studying parties' parliamentary mandate rather than their government mandate has provided new insights into the process of party representation. Instead of looking at the mandate in terms of the fulfilment of specific pledges this study looks at the similarity of party competition during elections and in parliament. This led to a similar conclusion regarding the overall level of mandate fulfilment as in previous studies: in most cases the electoral and parliamentary competition are fairly congruent. However, contrary to previous studies I did not find a difference between my majoritarian case, the United Kingdom, and my consensus democracy, the Netherlands (cf Thomson, 1999). Thus, my different approach leads to different conclusions.

One of the drawbacks of looking at parties' parliamentary behaviour rather than governments' policy output is that it would be relatively easy to say similar things before and after elections, whereas translating pledges into actual policies is a more genuine test of parties' willingness to stick to their mandate. Similarity of speech before and after elections is only a part of the 'representative chain' (Müller, 2000). While I do not necessarily disagree with that statement, one should not underestimate the cost of speech, certainly not in a parliamentary setting. Saying something in parliament does have consequences for a party. Parliamentary debate is not just a philosophical discussion devoid of any implications, but it deals with very specific proposals to create or change actual legislation. When a party says something different in parliament than it did in its manifesto, this will give rise to remarks about its mandate fulfilment. And so will a party that says one thing, but does another, for example by voting. It is hard to conceive that a party will very often argue against a particular proposal at length in the debate on a bill and then continue to vote in favour of it. In many ways a parliamentary debate is more of an opportunity to motivate how an MP or a party voted rather than to convince other parties of their position. In addition, the findings on the level of mandate fulfilment in this study do not suggest that saying things in parliament is so much easier than implementing specific pledges. As far as the two are comparable, the levels of fulfilment found in this study seem similar to the ones found in previous studies (Royed, 1996; Thomson, 1999, 2001).

The spatial approach adopted here allowed for the study of the difference between front bench and back-benchers in the United Kingdom. Although the relevance of the distinction between front bench and back bench has been known for a considerable period of time, it had been thus far largely neglected in the study of the party mandate (King, 1976). Admittedly, the current study had not originally planned to study front bench and back bench separately, but the combination of the way British parliament works and the methodological approach of this study necessitated making the distinction. The finding that United King-

dom governments are accommodating rather than adversarial sheds new light on issues that have until now only been described qualitatively. While it would be necessary to confirm these patterns using other ways to estimate parties' and governments' positions, this does show that spatial analysis provides a degree of flexibility that goes beyond the methods previously employed. In future work, this type of analysis can be extended to factions within parliamentary groups or individual members (cf. Gianetti and Laver, 2005; Bernauer and Bräuninger, 2009).

To properly judge the spatial approach to the party mandate as a useful perspective in the study of the party mandate, a clear distinction should be made between the approach itself and the way it has been operationalized in this particular study. The spatial approach entails comparing parties' positions before and after elections and comparing the structure of the party competition before and after voting day. In this particular study, I have used the latter party-system level approach. Because of methodological constraints, only parties' *relative* issue positions could be compared. While this fits well with an institutional or party-level approach of the question of the mandate, there are (party level) explanations that would require the comparison of parties' absolute policy positions. These types of questions could be studied very well using the spatial approach, just not with the exact same tools that have been used here.

This study is one of the first that uses computerized content analysis to compare parties' manifesto positions with parties' parliamentary positions. The application of computerized content analysis techniques has enabled many types of document analysis that were not feasible by means of manual content analysis. The comparison of parties' manifestos with a huge body of parliamentary speech is a good example of a situation where this advantage pays off. My comparison of two different types of documents (manifestos and speeches) does, however, present a problem. The reason for this problem is that existing techniques rely on word usage, more specifically word counts, and this is different in manifestos and parliamentary speeches. In this study this problem has been circumvented by comparing the manifestos and parliamentary debates not directly, but indirectly. Using Wordfish, I estimated the manifesto positions on a number of issues. The parliamentary positions were estimated in a separate analysis. This results in two scales with party position estimates for each issue: one manifesto scale and one parliamentary debates-scale. As I have stressed before, the positions on these scales cannot be compared in absolute terms, but parties' relative positions on those scales can be compared. From the perspective of spatial approach this is a very informative comparison. The advantage is that party positions in the two arenas have been estimated separately and thus no similarity has been 'forced' upon the two scales.

There are two drawbacks to this method. First, the lack of data on absolute issue positions makes it difficult to say anything about individual parties changing their positions on specific issues. After all, because of the relative nature of the positional data, the fact that a party is positioned differently (vis-a-vis other

parties) in parliament than in the electoral competition might be the result of a change of its own position, but also of other parties changing their positions. The second drawback is that the inductive nature of the Wordfish estimation might pick up on other things than policy related differences between parties. For example, the analysis of the 1972-1977 Dutch parliament produced patterns that did not fit very well with conventional wisdom: the two main parties of the left (PvdA) and right (VVD) were positioned very close to one another in parliament, while one (PvdA) was in government and the other was in opposition.

9.4 Avenues for further research

Scientific research usually results in some (tentative) answers and many new questions. Progress is achieved by refuting incorrect ideas and being able to pose better questions. This study is no exception to that rule. Here, I present three avenues for further research into mandate fulfilment.

First, government versus opposition dynamics lead to deviations from perfect mandate fulfilment both in majoritarian and consensus democracies. In majoritarian democracies, incumbency is a major element in the political campaigns, even in the manifestos, while the process of government formation changes the way parties behave in consensus democracies. One particular type of consensus democracy has, however, not been studied here: countries with minority governments (Lijphart, 1999). Minority governments are a rather frequent phenomenon in the Scandinavian countries (Strøm, 1984). One or two parties work together in government, but they do not command a parliamentary majority. For each of their policy proposals they need to find a parliamentary majority. In terms of mandate fulfilment, this seems to be a good solution for the consensus and majoritarian systems' troubles with the party mandate. On the one hand, there is a multi-party setting, which makes sure that the electoral competition does not solely focus on the record of the incumbent party. On the other hand, parties will have to compromise less, because they do not necessarily need a parliamentary majority to govern. On some issues opposition parties might want to strike a deal, but presumably only if they can enact some of their own policies. Do systems of minority government present something like the 'best of both worlds'? This is an empirical question that warrants further research. At the same time, it should be noted that most 'minority governments' are in fact watered down coalitions rather than pure-form minorities, think of the Lib-Lab *pact* in Britain, the agreements between the government and the Danish Folkeparti and the Dutch *gedoogdakkoord* between the government parties and the Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV). It is to be expected that the stronger the link between the supporting party and the government parties, the more it will behave like a normal coalition. Another type of democracy that has not been studied is coalition government in a majoritarian democracy. The Conservative-Liberal coalition formed after the 2010 elections presents a crucial case that allows the

researcher to disentangle the effect of the 'majoritarian style' of politics and the effect of coalition formation on mandate fulfilment. Similarly, the Dutch minority government that was formed in 2010 presents an interesting new case of mandate fulfilment in the Dutch case².

The second research topic that would benefit greatly from further research is people's perspective of party mandate fulfilment. When we know that party mandate fulfilment is generally quite reasonable, why do people tend to think that parties do not fulfil their mandates? Parties commit themselves to certain policies and as my analysis shows, they generally stick to these policy commitments in parliament. However, there seems to be a difference between the actual promises made and the expectations of many voters (Naurin, 2007). Perhaps parties do sometimes paint to rosy a picture of what their policy plans can achieve. Whereas their issue position may be clear, their advertisements and party leader speeches do sometimes suggest that these policies lead to a 'better Britain' or 'a fairer Netherlands'. Voters may thus judge them on these very general outcome policies rather than the specific measures and targets in the manifesto (Naurin, 2007). In addition, news media perhaps play a role by putting more emphasis on some pledges than on others or by paying more attention to the pledges that parties failed to fulfil than on those that did get enacted. This research question thus moves the perspective from actual mandate fulfilment to perceived mandate fulfilment. From the viewpoint of political legitimacy this is equally important. One task of researchers may be to inform people about actual mandate fulfilment, another is to understand why people do not believe in party mandate fulfilment. Eventually, a major aspect of political legitimacy is whether people regard institutions as legitimate.

Thirdly, the comparison of parties' relative issue positions is an insightful exercise for the analysis of the party mandate on the system level. Comparing the structures of party competition fits well with an institutional perspective and an institutional explanation of the party mandate. However, the chapters on government and opposition and particularly on issue saliency and issue position extremism uncovered the limits of the comparison of relative positions: it is difficult to draw strong conclusions on party position change of individual parties. Therefore, these types of research question would benefit from a way to compare the positions of parties in an absolute manner. Fortunately, development of party position estimation techniques is moving forward rapidly (Lowe, 2008; Benoit and Lowe, 2010). The developments of new techniques and the application of those to the analysis of issue-level and party-level predictors of mandate fulfilment will further enhance our understanding about when parties fulfil their electoral mandates.

²The government itself consists of ministers of only two parties, but it is supported by a parliamentary majority of three parties.

Appendix A

Technical appendix

A.1 Text collection and pre-processing

In the first stage of the data collection, the relevant textual sources were acquired. The British manifestos can be found on-line (Parliament, The United Kingdom, 2010), while the Dutch manifestos had to be retrieved mainly via three other channels: the archive of the Documentation Centre Dutch Political Parties (DNPP), partly available online, the annual Parliament & Kiezer (before 1970) and the collections of manifestos published by Lipschits until 1998 and Pellikaan and Van Holsteyn since then (Lipschits, 1977, 1981, 1986, 1989, 1994; Lipschits and Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen, 1998; Pellikaan et al., 2003, 2006). About a quarter of the manifestos needed to be scanned and its contents recognized by optical character recognition (OCR). These scanned versions were carefully proofread to check the accuracy of the OCR software. This was also done for the other manifestos, as these were scanned by others and also contained some errors. For some of the Dutch parties, manifestos before 1975 were not available, either because these did not exist (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)) or because these cannot be retrieved, even in the party archives (Communistische Partij Nederland (CPN)). Three elections in the dataset, 1972, 1982 and 2003, were held only a year after the previous elections. In these cases, some parties did not write a new manifesto. Sometimes they just announced that their old manifesto was still valid, in other cases parties wrote a smaller pamphlet to ‘update’ their manifesto. In these cases, both the previous and current manifestos were used in the analysis.

The parliamentary debates were acquired on-line. The House of Commons has recently scanned all of its Hansard archives from 1804 to 2004 (Parliament, The United Kingdom, 2010). The texts were recognized via OCR and proofread by human correctors. The resulting text was formatted in the machine-readable Extensible Markup Language (XML) and made publicly available on the par-

liament website. The Dutch parliamentary debates have been published on the website *Parlando* from 1995 onwards (SDU, 2010). These are offered as Portable Document Files (PDF), which can be converted into usable plain text by use of the freely available software *PdfToHtml* (Ovtcharov and Dorsch, 2004). The Dutch parliamentary debates dating before 1995 have been scanned by the National Library and are available as XML files via their dedicated *Staten-Generaal* digitaal website (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2010). In all cases, dedicated scripts were written to automatically download and convert all parliamentary debates in the years of interest.

Although the text of the British parliamentary debates is readily available, *Hansard* does not indicate the party to which an MP belongs. As this is a quality of interest in this study, a computer program was written to perform the task of combining the information in *Hansard* with a separate list of MPs and their party affiliations. This list was compiled by the author based on the source files and lists in the Wikipedia encyclopaedia¹ cross-referenced with other sources, such as member's own pages, Leigh Rayment's website (2008) on Peers and Members and *Twentieth-Century British Political Facts* (Butler and Butler, 2000). The computer program recognized somewhat over 3 million speeches and could determine who the speaker was in 99.89% of the cases, leaving just 0.11% of the speakers undetermined, mainly due to spelling errors or inconclusiveness of the designation. The computer program also added information about a person's position within their party (front or back bench) to the dataset. This information was based on the *Shadow Cabinet Membership* lists in Punnett (1973), Butler and Butler (2000) and the *Official Website of Parliament*.

The Dutch parliamentary debates before 1995 presented a different challenge: these were uncorrected scanned texts, leaving quite some spelling errors in the texts, including the speakers' names and party designations. Therefore, speakers names and party labels were cross-checked with the *Parlement & Kiezer* database of Dutch Members of Parliament (*Parlementair Documentatie Centrum*, 2010). This was also necessary for the period before 1958, for which the minutes do not include party labels.

Both the British and the Dutch parliamentary debates were parsed into a similar document format easily readable by both humans and computers. Non-speech information, such as captions, headers and footers, were dropped, as far as possible. This procedure generally produced clean speech, including information on the Member of Parliament that produced each speech. This information was saved in a common format (*Extensible Markup Language*, XML) to ease further use of the data².

¹<http://www.wikipedia.org>

²The Dutch debates were formatted according to Gielissen and Marx's specification (2009)

A.2 Text classification

The first step of the classification procedure entails the classification of the paragraphs with the aid of a dictionary of signal words. I used the main categories of the British and Dutch Policy Agendas Project (Breeman et al., 2009). These are well-known classification schemes which are carefully designed to be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. For the Dutch case, I did add one category, namely Religion, designed to capture some of the religious remarks and issues that Christian parties often make. This yields a total of 19 categories for Britain and 20 for the Netherlands.

For each of the categories, signal words were selected which indicate the discussion of that particular theme. For example, if the word 'refugee' is mentioned in a paragraph, one can be quite sure that the topic of this paragraph is migration, especially when the paragraph also contains words like 'asylum', 'foreigners' and 'UNHCR'. For each issue category of interest, a moderately large number of these words (20 up to 50) were selected by reading the documents of interest and eye-balling for relevant words. Subsequently, the occurrence of each of these signal words in each paragraph was calculated. For example, if a paragraph contained four signal words of the Labour market category and only one for the Foreign affairs category, this paragraph is most likely to be about economic issues. I did correct for the length of the dictionary of each category by dividing the count for each category by the logged dictionary length. After all, if the list of signal words for a particular category is very large, one is more likely to come across one of these words. For the British dictionary, I used Laver and Garry's (2000) dictionary as a starting-point, the Dutch dictionary was partly based on the phrases used in the codebook of the Policy Agendas Project. I used uni-grams (single words) as well as bi-grams (phrases of two words). Many of the dictionary words consist only of the first few letters of a word, designed to capture words with similar beginnings, but different endings, for example 'racis*' that matches 'racist', 'racism', 'racists' and all other words starting with 'racis'. For the Dutch case I used a slightly different version of the dictionary for the different years, because word usage in the first few years was quite different from later years. The same categories were used for all years in Britain and the Netherlands.

This procedure leaves an estimate of the category a particular paragraph belongs to, based on the occurrence of the signal words. The approach has basically two problems. The first occurs when a particular paragraph does not match any of the signal words. The second problem is when signal words for two different categories occur about equally frequently in a paragraph (correcting for the size of the dictionaries). In both cases there is no 'winner': it is impossible to (clearly) identify the category of which the signal words occur most frequently. This leaves up to 40% of the paragraphs unclassified, especially sections of parliamentary debates, which seem to cover a very wide range of issues. To capture all categories one would need to have very large dictionaries, which is very la-

bour intensive.

In the second step of the classification procedure, the data of the first step is used to predict the classification of the paragraphs that were not (with high certainty) classified using the dictionary approach. This is done by means of a linear Support Vector Machine (SVM). Support Vector Machines are computer programs that can learn to classify any kind of data by training on some data of which the classification is known. In this case, I used the known classification of some of the data to train the SVM to classify the rest of the data. The input data is the (normalized) frequency with which every word occurs in each paragraph.

For the paragraphs in the training set, the actual classification of the paragraph is also put into the program. This type of data may be considered as a collection of points (the paragraphs) in a high-dimensional space (each word is one dimension). The SVM will calculate the position of a hyperplane in this space which is able to separate different classes of paragraphs, e.g. it will try to find a hyperplane through this high-dimensional 'word space' that separates 'economic' from 'foreign affairs' paragraphs. Furthermore, it will select the hyperplane that is, on average, as far away from the data points as possible, as to achieve maximum separation. When this hyperplane is found, it can be used to classify paragraphs of which the classification is not known. As the data for paragraphs has both a large number of instances (paragraphs) as well as features (words), using a linear SVM is both reliable and fast. For the estimation of the model and the prediction, I used the computer software Liblinear (Fan et al., 2008).

The linear SVM will classify each paragraph that one requests to be classified. However, this may lead to results that are very uncertain when working with very small texts. Therefore, paragraphs shorter than 50 characters were not classified. In addition, paragraphs shorter than 200 characters that did not contain any of the signal words were included in the training set as a set of 'ambiguous' paragraphs. This was to introduce this category into the training set to prevent over-classification. The Support Vector Machine will classify all of the 'virgin' paragraphs even if they do not really match one of the categories. This problem of over-classification can be reduced by including some ambiguous sentences into the training set. Furthermore, all parliamentary speech by the Speaker was designated to be of a procedural nature and included as such in the training data set. Therefore, procedural speech by members of parliament could also be picked up by the SVM and classified as procedural. About 2% of the parliamentary text was classified as procedural.

To test the accuracy of the computerized classification procedure described here, a small number of paragraphs from the Dutch election manifestos of 1994 and of the British election manifestos were coded manually as well as automatically. Table 4.5 presents a confusion matrix of the classification of a sample of the paragraphs of the Dutch 1994 manifestos. I manually classified a sample of 250 paragraphs. In the confusion matrix one can observe how many paragraphs were manually assigned to each category and what the computer classification of

Table A.1: Confusion matrix classification Dutch manifestos 1994

Manual classification	Computer classification																				Tot.
	01	05	13	14	15	17	03	06	04	07	08	10	21	16	19	02	12	20	24	NC	
01 Marco-Economy and Taxes	6	4	1				1											1	1	2	16
05 Labour		15	1																	1	16
13 Social Affairs		2	5				1														9
14 Housing and City Planning				6																	6
15 Enterprises, nat. trade & comm.					3		1													1	5
17 Science, Technology Commun.						2														1	3
18 International Trade										1											1
03 Healthcare			1	1			13		1											4	20
06 Education and Culture					1		15									1		2		2	21
04 Agriculture and Fisheries																					
07 Environment	2				1		1		7	2		1			2				1	1	13
08 Energy									2	7					2					3	19
10 Transport and Traffic											3										3
21 Spatial planning, Nature							1		1			7								1	9
							1					1	1								3
16 Defence														2	4						6
19 Foreign Affairs and foreign aid			1				1	1	1						22	1	1			1	29
02 Civil Rights, Migration & Integration																16				1	18
12 Justice, Courts and Crime												1					15				16
20 Democracy and government			1						1							1		8		3	14
24 Religion																			3		4
Not coded		2	2							3			1		1	1		7		2	19
Total	10	25	10	7	5	2	19	16	11	15	3	9	3	2	31	20	16	18	5	23	250

those paragraphs was. For example, out of a total of 16 paragraphs that I manually classified as Macro-Economy and Taxes, six were classified the same by the computer, four as Labour, and the others in one of the other categories or not at all. For this particular category, the match between the manual and computer coding is thus not very high. Most errors were made by assigning paragraphs to the Labour category. For some categories, there are very few errors, for example Justice, Courts and Crime and Civil Rights, Migration and Integration. These are categories with a rather distinct vocabulary, thus the chance of errors is small. Many of the errors also have to do with the choice to leave a paragraph unclassified, because it does not contain a policy message or if it is very ambiguous. The lining in table A.1 groups the 20 categories into 8 broader categories. These are the categories that were used for the Wordfish analyses in 1994 in the Netherlands. I grouped the categories for the Wordfish analysis, because some of the categories did receive very little attention from parties, especially in their manifestos. Using this information would have given very uncertain position estimates. Therefore, I grouped the categories on a priori grounds: categories that were conceptually much alike were taken together, such as Foreign Affairs and Defence. The confusion matrix shows that many errors are indeed made within those groups. For Britain, this is even more so the case.

The inter-coder (or rather ‘computer-human’) reliability reported in figure 4.1 on page 82 was calculated by looking at the correspondence of substantively coded issues only. First of all, because the ‘not coded’ category contains generally rather short statements, which do not influence the analysis very much: they contain few words and therefore do not influence the Wordfish analysis greatly and the issue saliency levels calculated from the classification is weighted by the length of the paragraphs (in characters). Secondly, whether or not an issue is vague or ambiguous is often a matter of discussion. Manual inspection of these errors learns that, for example, many of the issues that I manually classified as ‘not coded’ did contain some vague policy statements, especially on Democracy and Government (which has indeed a high score). If these statements are indeed general and vague, inclusion of those statements in a Wordfish analysis is not likely to influence the analysis very much. These errors are much less important than misclassifications between substantive policy categories.

A.3 Using Wordfish to compare spaces of competition

Wordfish is based on a simple model of how parties use words: it is assumed that word usage is primarily motivated by parties’ policy preferences. While the model based on this assumption does produce good results in many cases (Slapin and Proksch, 2008; Proksch and Slapin, 2009), there may be circumstances where the assumption is violated: when parties’ choice of words is motivated by

something else than policy. This section discusses a number of circumstances where this seems to be the case and provides suggestions how to deal with this. Sometimes the solution can be to exclude a certain actor from the initial analysis or to exclude certain words, because these are related to something else than policy preferences. It is important to realize that the application of techniques like Wordfish does require careful consideration of the data at hand.

A.3.1 Application of Wordfish to Manifesto and Parliamentary speech

Wordfish has been successfully applied to both manifestos in Germany and parliamentary speech in the European parliament. The object of this study is to compare what parties say in manifestos with what party politicians say in parliament. This goes beyond a separate analysis of manifesto and parliament and requires that one is able to compare the two arenas. I argued before that one of the advantages of Wordfish is that it is able to analyse the manifestos and parliamentary speech separately, avoiding any 'forced congruence'. However, one could also take one of two different approaches, in which the Wordfish analyses of both arenas are linked.

One is by simply putting manifestos and parliamentary debates in one Wordfish analysis. The problem here is that one will usually find the parliamentary parties on one side of the scale and the manifesto parties on the other side. This suggests that word usage in parliament is indeed quite different from word usage in parliament, probably not so much because of policy reasons, but because a carefully prepared written document is a different sort of text from speech in a debate. For the comparison of parties' issue positions this approach does not seem to work³.

Another approach is to estimate a Wordfish model for the manifestos and use its word parameters to estimate a parliamentary model. This would in fact keep two of the four parameters in the Wordfish model fixed (the fixed-word effect ψ and the word-sensitivity β). That would mean that for the estimation of parties' policy position in parliament, one would use the word information from the manifestos, somewhat alike a Wordscores analysis. This could be a good strategy when one is concerned that party speech is very strategic: by imposing the word parameters from the manifesto analysis, one would basically analyse parliamentary speech in same terms as the manifestos. One problem is that the estimates of the parliamentary positions are far more moderate than the manifesto estimates, which is basically the same problem as Wordscores has. This could be solved by applying a rescaling procedure⁴. However, this approach

³These observations also hold when excluding words that are only used in parliament or only in the manifestos or even when excluding words that are far more likely to be used in either of the two arenas (by excluding words based on the log-odds).

⁴The absolute positions on such a scale have thus the same interpretation problems as Wordscores estimates have. One would be certain that the underlying score would have the same meaning,

would never be able to observe if the use of words in parliament is really different from the use of words in the manifestos. Therefore I opt to analyse the manifesto and parliamentary positions of parties in separate Wordfish analyses.

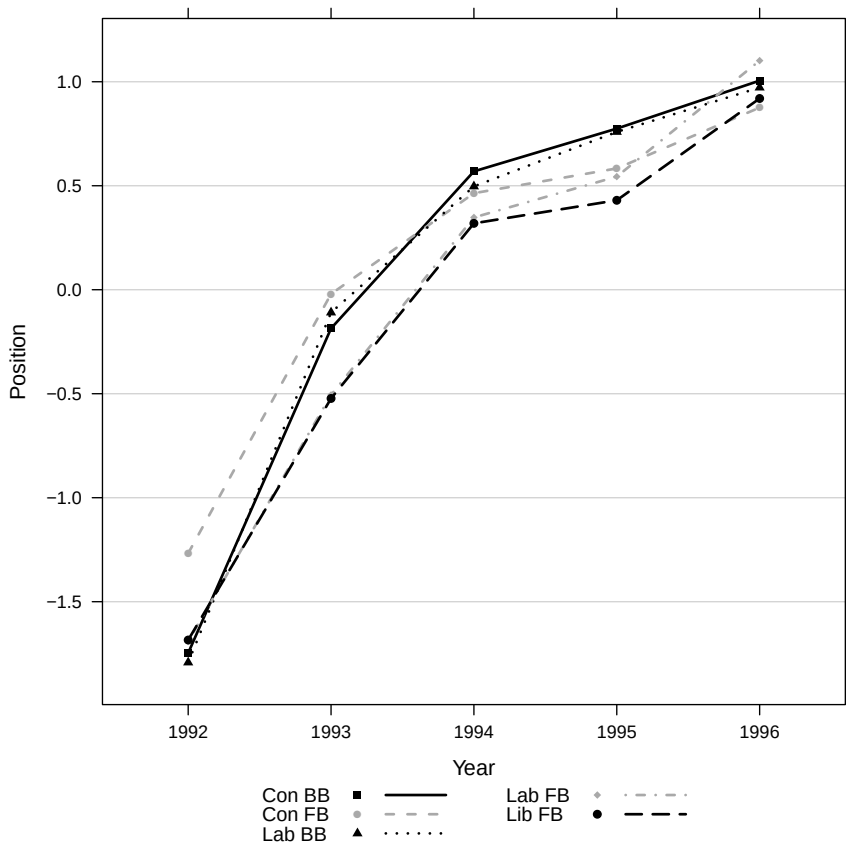
A.3.2 Comparison over time

Many of the Wordfish analyses in this study involve documents from different years. The analyses of the electoral competition included, besides the manifestos of the election year, the manifestos from the previous and next elections. This allows for a more stable estimate of the word parameters. This is certainly necessary for the British elections, where I would otherwise have only three documents per analysis. The parliamentary competition was estimated using a party's MPs' parliamentary speeches for a single year as one document⁵. For example, the analysis for the 1992-1997 parliament in Britain included five 'documents' for the Conservative front bench: 'Conservative front bench 1992', 'Conservative front bench 1993', etc. This does not only allow to track-over-time differences between parties, but also makes for more stable estimates of party policy.

One problem that can arise when including texts from different years into one analysis is the possibility that Wordfish distinguishes documents from different years, rather than documents with different policy views. An example is the analysis of Foreign Affairs and Defence speeches in the United Kingdom 1992-1997 parliament (figure A.1). In 1992, all parties have a strongly negative score, ranging from -1.3 to -1.8. These scores become more positive over the years, to end between 0.9 and 1.1. The graph clearly shows that all parties have very similar scores in each single year. In other words, the Wordfish analysis finds small differences between parties, but large differences between years. Inspection of the word parameters learns that this has to do with the issues that arise in each year. For example, in 1992 words like 'Saharawi' (the Western Sahara, which had become an important issue in 1992), 'Ben-Menashe' (the author of a 1992 book) and 'EFA' (the old name for the EuroFighter, which was renamed in 1992) were used a lot. Words with a high positive beta value, which were used a lot in 1996, include 'Netanyahu' (who was elected prime minister of Israel in June 1996), 'IFOR' (an international military mission in Bosnia from 1995 to 1996) and 'single-shot' (used extensively in the debate on the extension of the Firearms Act 1968, which is [incorrectly] classified as a foreign affairs issue). This shows that word usage does not only vary between parties, but also over time. This is certainly the case

but the absolute positions of manifestos and parliamentary documents cannot directly be compared without making assumptions about the distributions of parties.

⁵More specifically, each 'year' includes the documents of one year after an election. For example, the year 1992 includes documents from April 1992 to April 1993. This is to avoid that some years are much shorter than others. In some cases, the few last months of a Parliament (which would have formed a separate year) were excluded from the analysis for that reason, for example April May 1997.

Figure A.1: Analysis of 1992-1997 parliamentary positions on Foreign Affairs, without correction

Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal Democrats, FB = front bench, BB = back bench.

for a topic like Foreign Affairs and Defence where certain international events tend to dominate the debate.

To remedy this problems, words that distinguish very well between years but not between parties are excluded from the analysis. I used the Gini coefficient to calculate if words were used equally throughout the years or only in one year and not in others ⁶. When word usage is exactly similar in each year, the Gini coefficient equals zero⁷. When a word is only used in one year and not in other years, it equals one. The same was done for the usage of words between parties: if parties use a word equally, the Gini coefficient equals zero, when only one party uses a word, it equals one⁸. When the 'year' Gini coefficient was higher than the 'party' Gini coefficient, I excluded the word. This method thus excludes only those words that discriminate better between years than between parties. The approach taken by Slapin and Proksch (2009), who only included words that were used both before and after 1990 in German politics, could be considered as well. However, including only those words that are used in every year seems too restrictive, while excluding only those words that are used in a single year provided too little a correction in many cases.

Figure A.2 shows the result of a Wordfish analysis of the filtered Foreign Affairs and Defence 1992-1997 word count matrix. The graphs looks very different from the previous one: the between-year differences have largely disappeared. Instead, the differences between parties stand out. Some words, like 'MI5' and 'pacifist' are used far more often by Labour and other words predominantly by the Conservatives, such as '[Sinn] Fein-IRA' and 'Northolt' (an RAF airport). This suggests that we analysis of the filtered dataset focuses much more on content rather than changes in the policy agenda.

This correction comes at the cost of including fewer words. The original analysis of the example used here contained 14169 unique words, while the filtered dataset included only 8076 unique words. This reduction in the number of words can be a problem for the analyses of the manifestos, which generally include far fewer unique words. Therefore, the correction described here was only applied when there was an apparent 'year-effect', that is if the range of parties of the first year did not overlap with the range of parties in the last year. Another disadvantage of this correction is that it limits the variation in party position be-

⁶The calculation was done by first constructing a matrix X of word counts for each year (or each party). The Gini coefficient was calculated using the following formula:

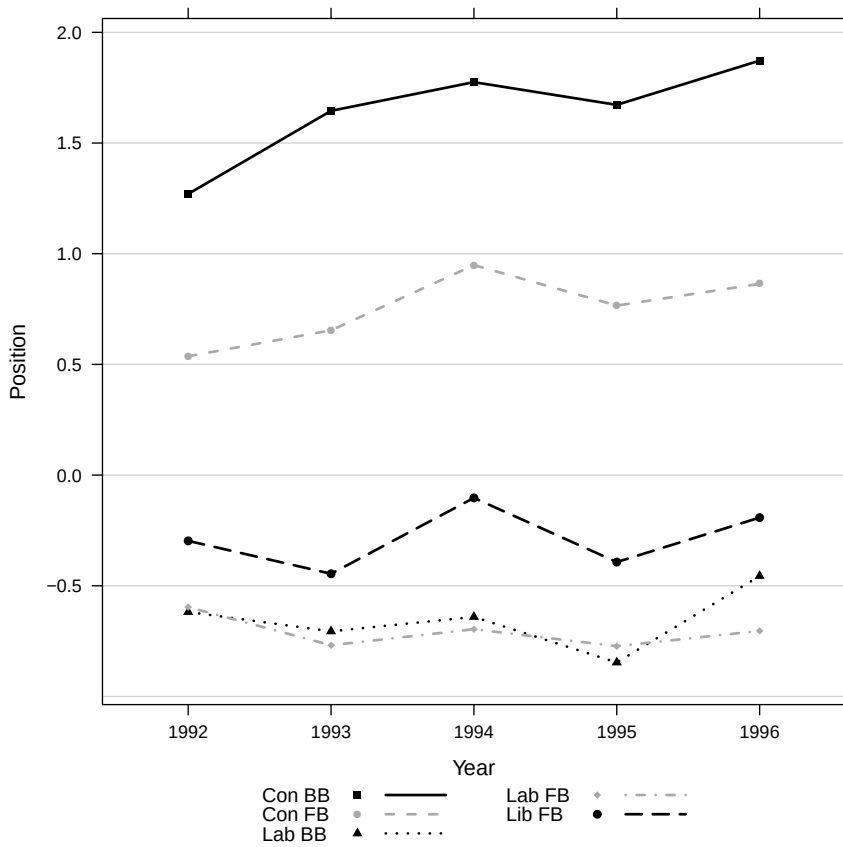
$$G = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (2i - n - 1)x_i}{n(n - 1)\mu} \quad (\text{A.1})$$

Where $i = 1 \dots n$ are the ordered individual document-groups (for example years or parties), x is the relative word frequency for i (ordered by size) and μ is the mean relative frequency (Damgaard and Weiner, 2000).

⁷I calculated the Gini scores using the relative frequency of a word in a year, which corrects for possible differences in the length of texts.

⁸Note that words which are used only in one document (or by one party in one year) have already been excluded, but not words that are used by one party in multiple years.

Figure A.2: Analysis of 1992-1997 parliamentary positions on Foreign Affairs, with correction



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal Democrats, FB = front bench, BB = back bench.

tween years, because words that are used predominantly in one or two years are excluded. This could only be avoided by completely changing the Wordfish model, by incorporating a fixed-year effect. For the purposes of this study, the correction using Gini coefficients is, however, sufficient.

A.3.3 The position of the UK government

In the United Kingdom, members of the government have to be members of parliament. Most members of the government sit in the House of Commons. They sit on the front bench to the right of the Speaker opposite the Shadow Cabinet of the Opposition. When a government minister speaks, he does not just defend government policy, he also defends party policy. This is different from the Dutch practice, where cabinet members are not allowed to be a member of parliament and where the party line is primarily represented by the members of the parliamentary party.

The fusion of government and party roles of the largest party's front-benchers does present a problem for the analysis here. The choice of words of actors in the British parliament is not only the result of different policy stances, but also of different constitutional positions. The government proposes new policies and it defends its record. It has to answer all kinds of questions; these questions would in many cases presumably have been quite similar if the other party would have been in government. For example, in case of emergencies or international events. A lot of departmental business continues and comes to the House irrespective of what party is in government⁹. This taken together has quite a large effect on the use of language in parliament. Figure A.3 presents the parliamentary space of competition for 2001-2005, which is essentially a summary of parties' positions on all of the separate issue dimension in the analysis¹⁰. Five actors are present in the space: the Labour front bench (the government), the Labour back benches, the Conservative front bench, the Conservative back benches and the Liberal Democrats. One divide dominates the plot: the government (Labour front bench) is on one side of the space and all other actors (including the Labour back benches) on the other side. This pattern can be observed in all of my cases¹¹, for each of the separate policy dimensions. This shows that MPs' choice of words in the United Kingdom parliament can be primarily explained by their constitutional position: in or out of government. After all, if it would rather be the result of a conflict over policy or even a conflict over the trust in government, one would expect to find the government back-benchers (generally) closer to the government.

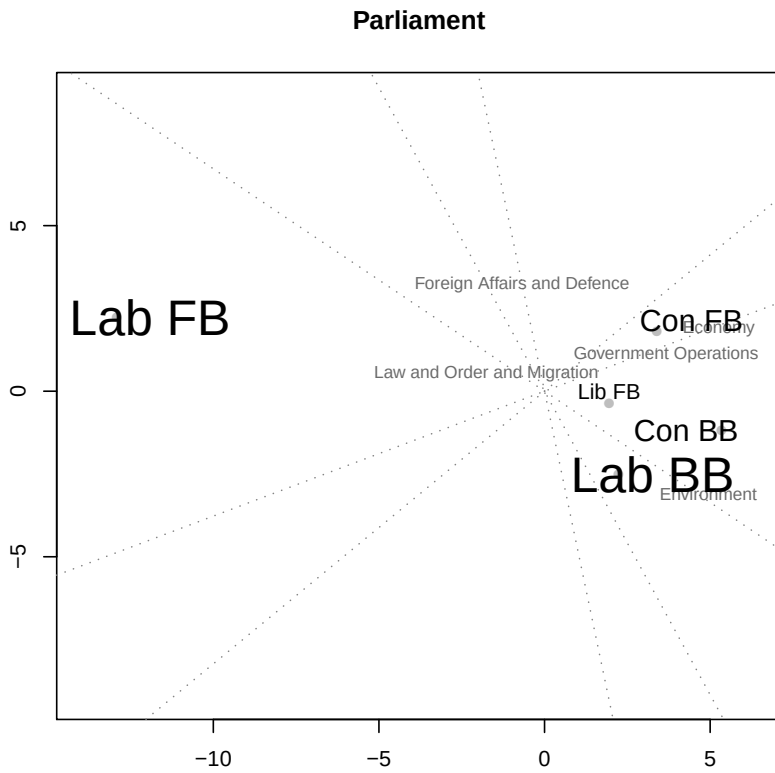
The concern of the present study is however not so much whether parties have different opinions because of a different constitutional position, but be-

⁹I thank a former Conservative government minister for pointing this out to me.

¹⁰The method to calculate this space is discussed in section 4.5 on page 86.

¹¹Including the Dutch government in the analysis of the Dutch cases yields a similar pattern.

Figure A.3: Analysis of 2001-2005 UK parliament without government correction



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal Democrats, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

cause they take a different policy position. Therefore I used the following procedure to remove this ‘government’ bias in the Wordfish analysis of parliamentary speeches. First, I ran the Wordfish algorithm excluding the government. This gives party positions of the four other actors, including the government back-benchers. Next, the word parameters of this first estimation are used to estimate the position of the government. The logic is simple: if there are differences between those belonging to the governing party (the government back-benchers) and other MPs, these will be captured by a Wordfish analysis that excludes the Government itself. Applying these word parameters to the government will capture how the government can be positioned on this divide¹².

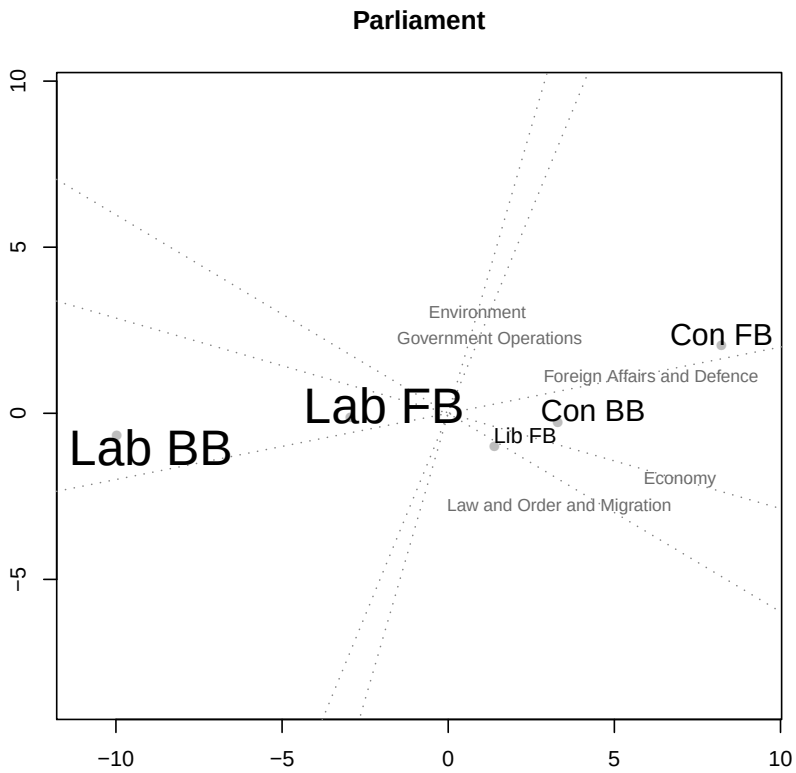
Figure A.4 displays the estimated space of competition using this correction. In this figure, the Government-opposition divide has disappeared. Instead, the Labour back bench is positioned on one extreme, the government somewhat left of centre and the opposition parties more to the right of the figure. The downside of this correction is that it is likely to portray the government as somewhat more moderate than it really is. After all, the word usage of the government does not at all influence the estimation of the word parameters. As a result, also words which do substantively differentiate the government from opposition parties have a lower beta (the informativeness parameter) value. Specifics in the word usage of the government back-benchers is taken into account in the estimation of the parameters, which probably overestimates how extreme its position is in comparison with the government. However, this ‘moderation effect’ is not entirely an artefact of the method. Using exactly the same procedure, one can also estimate the position of the smaller parties (e.g. Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru). In some cases their policy positions are more extreme than that of the (Labour) government back-benchers. They used a more left-wing vocabulary, even if we measure the word parameters without those parties. In any case, even if the moderation effect does affect the government’s position strongly, this influence would be visible in all six cases. A comparison of the relative position of the government between those six cases is thus possible.

A.3.4 The position of marginal parties in the Netherlands

A problem that comes up in the analyses of Dutch manifestos and parliamentary speeches is the word usage by small parties. Sometimes these smaller parties have a very specific vocabulary which will result in a Wordfish analysis that distinguishes between those marginal parties on the one end and the other parties on the other end of the scale. Whereas in some cases this might indeed correspond to a substantive difference in parties’ positions, in many cases it is related to

¹²An alternative method that excludes words that are used more often by the government than between opposition parties (using the Gini method described in section A.3.2) yields largely similar results. The advantage of excluding the government altogether for the estimation of the word parameters is that no words are excluded from the analysis (except for those that are only used by the government).

Figure A.4: *Analysis of 2001-2005 UK parliament with government correction*



Note: Lab = Labour, Con = Conservative, Lib = Liberal Democrats, FB = front bench, BB = back bench. Labels are relative to party size.

consistent lexical differences between parties rather than substance. I employed two different strategies to correct for these difficulties.

One strategy was applied to deal with the small religious parties. Since 1979, three of these parties are represented in parliament (two of them merged in 2000). All of these parties use a rather conservative and religious vocabulary, often stressing the importance of God in relation to all kinds of issues. If there would be only one of these parties, the strategy of deleting words that are only used by a single party would suffice. Because there are two or even three parties with this Calvinist religious vocabulary, this strategy does not work. In addition, because there are multiple confessional parties, Wordfish is more likely to pick up on their deviating word usage. Therefore, I included only those words that were used by at least two non-religious parties (including the large nominally religious party Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA))¹³. This removes the tendency for the Calvinist parties to be put on the extremes of dimensions, except when there really is a substantive difference, for example concerning the category 'Religion, Medical-Ethical and Morals'. This is also the reason not to exclude these parties entirely from the initial analysis as was done with the government in Britain. It is well-known that the smaller confessional parties do represent one of the extremes on this dimension, which would have been lost entirely by excluding them from the analysis.

The other strategy was applied to the parties for the elderly that partook in the 1994-1998 elections and parliament. Their manifestos were very much focused on policy for the elderly. In parliament, these parties were internally divided and as a result, one of them did not participate in the whole parliament while the other one split. Because of this, their manifestos and speeches influenced the analysis of the positions of other parties. For example, the economy dimension divided the parties for the elderly from all other parties. While elderly policy is indeed part of the economy dimension, this division is more likely to be a reflection of the single issue nature of these parties than a proper reflection of the debate on economic policy in the 1994 elections. Applying a similar method as for the confessional parties did not change the results very much. The reason is that the parties for the elderly do not so much use different words, but rather use some words very often (like 'care', 'pensions' and 'AOW' (Dutch state pension)). Taking into account these parties' relative instability, I estimated their positions using the method that was also applied to position the British governments. First, I estimated a Wordfish model with all other political parties. The word parameters from this estimation were used to calculate the positions of the parties for the elderly.

¹³I also ran analysis where I removed all words that are used significantly more by the religious parties than by other parties, but this did not substantially change the outcome.

A.3.5 What goes wrong with the Dutch 1972 parliament?

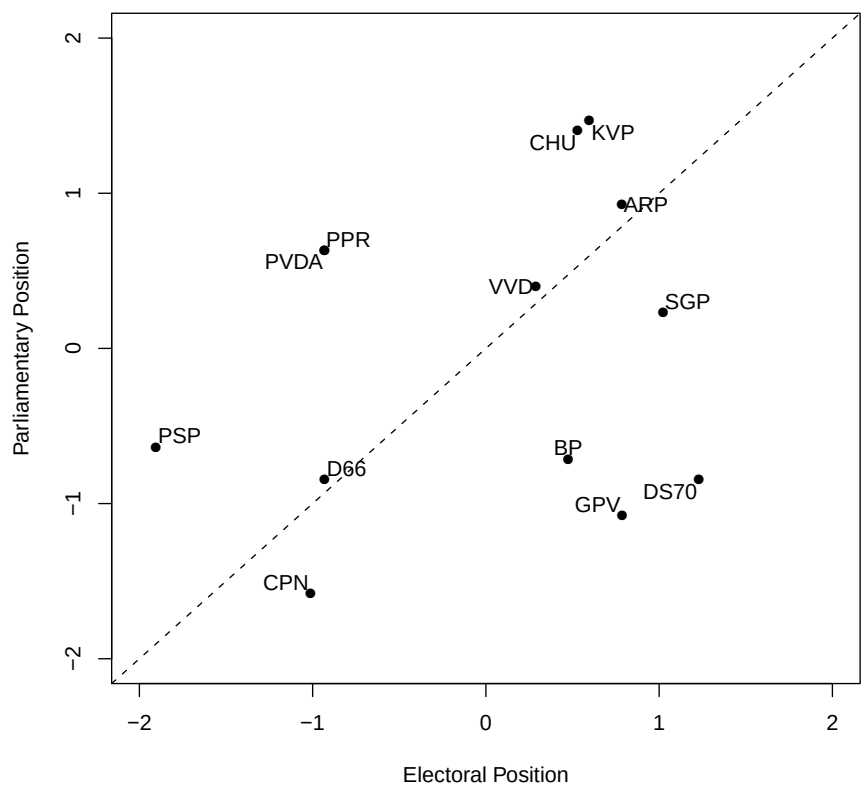
Although this chapter is not the place to present the results of the Wordfish analyses, I will describe the case of 1972 here to outline which problems can still arise when applying Wordfish. In Dutch politics the 1970s are generally regarded as an era of polarization. The liberal VVD became a broad people's party and the main antagonist of the social-democratic PvdA. In 1972, early elections were held after a right-wing cabinet had resigned. Three left-wing parties formed an electoral coalition (Keerpunt), which they hoped would win the elections and provide them with a majority of seats. As they fell clearly short of this target, they had to engage in protracted coalition negotiations with individual members of two Christian democratic parties. Only after almost a year the new government was installed, consisting of ministers from three left-wing parties (PvdA, D66 and PPR) and two Christian parties (KVP and ARP). The main opposition parties were VVD and CHU, generally regarded as right-wing or at least centre-of-right parties. Other parties in opposition included the communist CPN and the pacifist PSP, both to the left of the PvdA.

The analysis of parties' parliamentary speeches does, however, produce an unexpected result. Figure A.5 provides a scatter plot of parties' position on the issue dimension 'Economy, Health Care and Education'. The horizontal axis displays parties' electoral position and the vertical axis parties' parliamentary positions¹⁴. If there would be a perfect correspondence between those two positions, all points would be plotted on the dotted line. However, many of the points are rather far removed from this line, which means that correspondence is far from perfect. The electoral competition on economic issues seems to have been organized along left-right lines (although some observers might expect the VVD more towards the right and DS'70 more to the left). However, the order of parties was quite different in parliament: PvdA and PPR had moved toward the three Christian democratic parties (CHU, KVP and ARP). Some of the smaller right-wing opposition parties (BP, GPV and DS70) had moved towards the position of the small left-wing opposition parties. Although there seems an element of government-opposition dynamics at work, this cannot fully explain the patterns. For example, government party D66 is part of the 'opposition group', while opposition parties VVD and 'CHU' are part of the 'government group'. This curious ordering is not limited to economic issues, but also apparent for the other issue dimensions, except 'Religion, Morals and Medical-Ethical'.

One explanation of this pattern is that there is a distinction between parties that use a lot of parliamentary jargon ('tripartite', 'boventallig', 'bestuursraad', 'SPO', 'SVO', 'protokol') and parties that use a rather more unpolished vocabulary ('kolder', 'echec', 'graai', 'rotwoord', 'absurditeit'). The more unpolished is also the more critical vocabulary. This might be a distinction between the smaller and larger opposition parties: the former are more outspoken in their criticism of

¹⁴As with all other presented positions, these are standardized scores. The absolute manifesto and parliamentary scores cannot directly be compared.

Figure A.5: *Party positions on Economy, Health Care and Education in the 1972-1977 elections and parliament (The Netherlands)*



Note: the dotted line indicates a situation of perfect congruence.

the government and more radical in their choice of words. Another explanation is that Wordfish has trouble to deal with multiple dimensions of word usage. It always produces a one-dimensional estimate of party position, but in the case of 1972 we can at least establish three possible orderings: one based on policy (left-right), one based on government participation (government-opposition) and one based on party size (small-large parties).

A third explanation, which points to a fundamental problem of word-count analysis, is that parties that have confronting opinions on issues can actually have very similar word usage. PvdA and VVD talk a lot about the same issues (they disagree), while other parties have a whole different set of issues that they are concerned with, for example religious issues (KVP, ARP, CHU) or radical left-wing issues (CPN, PSP). If this is the case, Wordfish will likely come up with a solution where PvdA and VVD are positioned close towards each other.

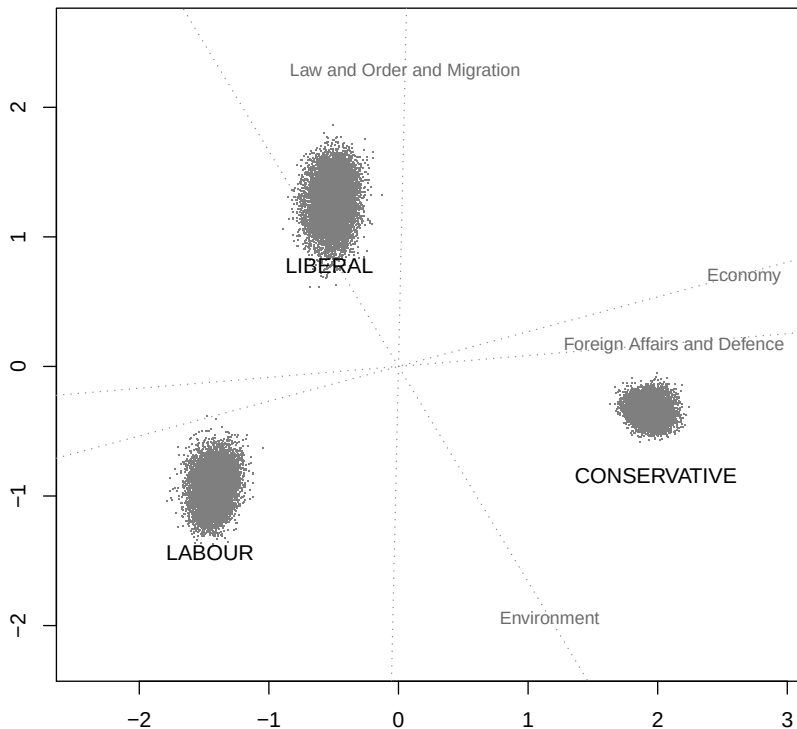
The problems identified here are not easily solved within the existing Wordfish specification. As currently defined, Wordfish will always come up with a one-dimensional solution. One could try to filter out those words that distinguish parties on dimensions that are not considered relevant, for example words that distinguish very well between government and opposition and those distinguishing well between small and large parties. In this particular case, this did not significantly alter the outcome of the analysis.

This case presents a warning for careful interpretation of Wordfish results. Because the estimates are the result of an inductive analysis, they might pick up on other inter-party differences than those that are of primary interest for the researcher. The relevant question for this study is, however, whether the electoral and parliamentary competition are different. The Wordfish estimates of party positions may be different from those of experts, but if this difference is similar for manifestos and parliamentary speech, the data are still useful. In those cases, the bias of Wordfish is similar for both spaces of competition and therefore does not affect the incongruence between the two spaces. The problematic cases are those where certain biases are present for the analysis of one space of competition, but not the other.

A.3.6 The uncertainty of the estimation

The certainty of Wordfish estimates depends on the number of unique words that the estimate is based on. If the number of unique words is low, uncertainty can become a problem for further analysis of the data. The uncertainty in the Wordfish point estimates can be estimated by means of a parametric bootstrap. This means that the parameter estimates of the model are used to create a number of new datasets¹⁵. For each of these 'simulated' datasets, the Wordfish parameters are estimated in a new analysis. When doing this for 100 new datasets,

¹⁵The value of lambda for each cell in the word-count matrix is calculated. For each cell, one takes a random draw from a Poisson distribution with mean and variance lambda. The matrix containing these randomly drawn values form the new dataset (Slapin and Proksch, 2008).

Figure A.6: *Uncertainty in the estimation of parties' positions: UK manifestos 1955*

one would have 100 estimates of the party position parameters. A simulated 95% confidence interval could then be calculated by taking the 0.025 to 0.975 quantiles as the lower and upper bound.

The bootstrap estimates can also be used to calculate uncertainty in the space of competition. As an example, I used the British manifestos of 1955. This is one of the years with relatively short manifestos. Therefore it might potentially present difficulty in the comparison of the manifesto with the parliamentary space. If there is a lot of uncertainty in the estimates, parties could be virtually everywhere in the policy space. For the 1955 manifestos, I calculated the parameter estimates for 100 parametric bootstraps. This was done for each of the five broad policy categories. Thus, for each of the five dimensions, I calculated 100 different parameter estimates using the parametric bootstrap. This inform-

ation was used to compile 10,000 different combinations of possible outcomes: each of these combinations consists of one randomly drawn set of party position parameters for each issue category. Thus, each of these 10,000 new party position datasets consists of one estimate for each party on each issue dimension. For each of these party position datasets, I estimated a low-dimensional space of competition using multidimensional scaling (see section 4.5 on page 86). These spaces were rotated to match each other as good as possible. The result, displayed in figure A.6, displays an estimate of the error of the policy space estimates. Even for rather short manifestos, there is not much overlap between the parties. The errors are smallest for the Conservatives, that had the longest manifesto (11,855 words), followed by Labour (2,872 words) and the Liberals (2,403 words). The estimates thus have low uncertainty, even for the small manifestos. The estimates of the parliamentary positions are even smaller, because the number of unique words is very high. The estimation of all these errors would, however, take considerable computational power¹⁶. Therefore, I will not include these estimates in the further analyses. In addition, most standard techniques are not equipped to deal with uncertainty in the measurement of variables. From a statistical perspective it would be better to take these uncertainties into account; in the interpretation of the spaces and other analyses, one should not put too much weight on small differences in party positions.

¹⁶The estimation of the parameters of some of the issue dimensions takes up to an hour on a modern computer. Repeating this estimation for 100 random datasets will thus take a very long time.

A.4 Tables

Table A.2: *Explaining parties' issue saliency in parliament: government participation*

	United Kingdom	Netherlands
(Intercept)	1.739*** (0.355)	0.763*** (0.206)
Manifesto issue saliency	−0.187* (0.093)	0.408*** (0.046)
Government party	0.150 (0.633)	0.231 (0.329)
Average manifesto issue saliency	0.792*** (0.119)	0.574*** (0.043)
Manifesto issue saliency * Government	0.723*** (0.186)	−0.106 (0.079)
Manifesto issue saliency * Average manifesto issue saliency	0.007 (0.004)	−0.017*** (0.003)
Government * Average manifesto issue saliency	−0.649** (0.196)	0.163* (0.075)
Manifesto issue saliency * Government * Average manifesto issue saliency	−0.011 (0.007)	−0.011† (0.006)
<i>N</i>	342	1160
<i>R</i> ²	0.621	0.512
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.613	0.509
Resid. sd	2.634	2.824

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table A.3: *Explaining parties' issue saliency in parliament: history*

	All cases	United Kingdom	Netherlands
(Intercept)	0.030*** (0.003)	0.027*** (0.005)	0.031*** (0.004)
Manifesto issue saliency	0.414*** (0.040)	0.491*** (0.073)	0.385*** (0.047)
1960s	0.004 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.005 (0.005)
1970s	-0.010* (0.004)	-0.008 (0.008)	-0.010* (0.005)
1980s	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.009 (0.008)	-0.002 (0.005)
1990s	-0.011** (0.004)	-0.008 (0.008)	-0.012* (0.005)
2000s	-0.015** (0.004)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.018*** (0.005)
Manifesto issue saliency * 1960s	-0.069 (0.052)	0.100 (0.103)	-0.102† (0.060)
Manifesto issue saliency * 1970s	0.185*** (0.053)	0.146 (0.097)	0.199** (0.062)
Manifesto issue saliency * 1980s	0.052 (0.053)	0.176 (0.114)	0.046 (0.060)
Manifesto issue saliency * 1990s	0.215*** (0.057)	0.157 (0.118)	0.240*** (0.065)
Manifesto issue saliency * 2000s	0.289*** (0.064)	0.109 (0.112)	0.366*** (0.077)
<i>N</i>	1502	342	1160
<i>R</i> ²	0.429	0.527	0.408
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.425	0.511	0.402
Resid. sd	0.031	0.030	0.031

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Reference category for time period dummy variables: 1950s

Table A.4: *Explaining parties' issue positions in parliament: history*

	All cases	United Kingdom	Netherlands
(Intercept)	−0.009 (0.115)	−0.000 (0.156)	−0.022 (0.179)
Manifesto issue position	0.546*** (0.135)	0.535** (0.176)	0.564* (0.218)
1960s	0.009 (0.168)	0.000 (0.220)	0.022 (0.271)
1970s	0.009 (0.146)	0.000 (0.216)	0.022 (0.212)
1980s	−0.002 (0.137)	0.000 (0.216)	0.007 (0.198)
1990s	0.015 (0.136)	0.000 (0.216)	0.031 (0.198)
2000s	0.009 (0.137)	0.000 (0.216)	0.022 (0.199)
Manifesto issue position * 1960s	−0.046 (0.195)	−0.059 (0.249)	−0.014 (0.328)
Manifesto issue position * 1970s	−0.149 (0.165)	−0.157 (0.243)	−0.157 (0.248)
Manifesto issue position * 1980s	0.064 (0.156)	0.152 (0.243)	0.023 (0.236)
Manifesto issue position * 1990s	0.207 (0.155)	0.289 (0.243)	0.168 (0.235)
Manifesto issue position * 2000s	0.121 (0.157)	0.024 (0.243)	0.137 (0.237)
<i>N</i>	440	146	294
<i>R</i> ²	0.388	0.356	0.405
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.373	0.304	0.382
Resid. sd	0.730	0.746	0.736

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Reference category for time period dummy variables: 1950s

Table A.5: *Explaining parliamentary issue saliency: manifesto length*

	Model 1
(Intercept)	0.029*** (0.002)
Manifesto saliency	0.424*** (0.022)
Manifesto length	−0.000*** (0.000)
Manifesto saliency * Manifesto length	0.000*** (0.000)
<i>N</i>	1502
<i>R</i> ²	0.417
adj. <i>R</i> ²	0.416
Resid. sd	0.031

Standard errors in parentheses

† significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table A.6: *Significance of issue saliency changes over time, United Kingdom*

Issue category	Levene's Statistic	F	Welch Statistic
Agriculture	3.105 [†]	2.861 [†]	1.385
Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce	1.060	1.485	1.290
Civil Rights, Minority Issues and Civil Liberties	3.889*	.517	1.166
Community Development, Planning and Housing Issues	3.802*	1.939	6.143*
Defense	2.194	11.145***	9.616*
Education	2.494 [†]	4.476*	5.317*
Energy	7.169**	10.694***	68.895***
Environment	5.815**	3.373*	3.358 [†]
Foreign Trade	6.497**	.862	1.011
Government Operations	2.424 [†]	.382	1.361
Health	.987	9.405***	9.607**
International Affairs and Foreign Aid	1.504	3.113*	7.954*
Labour and employment	.711	4.289*	2.620
Law, Crime and Family issues	1.631	5.911**	21.943**
Macro economy	1.401	19.769***	20.407**
Public, Lands and Water Management (Territorial Issues)	2.600 [†]	.756	.453
Social Welfare	2.614 [†]	1.932	1.471
Space, Science, Technology and Communications	3.969*	3.497*	.
Transportation	2.543 [†]	4.022*	7.140*

Note: Reported figures are the coefficients of an analysis of variances, with issue saliency as the dependent variable and time period as the independent categorical variable. Analysis of variance assumes equal variances, an assumption which is tested with Levene's statistic. If the assumption is not met (Levene Statistic is significant), the Welch statistic provides a robust alternative to the F-statistic.

[†] significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table A.7: *Significance of issue saliency changes over time, Netherlands*

Issue category	Levene's Statistic	F	Welch Statistic
Agriculture and Fisheries	3.762**	2.864*	2.300 [†]
Civil Rights, Migration and Integration	3.667**	6.912***	.
Defence	2.244 [†]	9.104***	13.284***
Democracy and Civil Rights	2.579*	7.498***	6.782***
Education and Culture	.901	2.117 [†]	2.086
Energy	.539	6.299***	6.924***
Enterprises, national trade and commerce	2.847*	6.152***	4.405**
Environment	7.028***	15.750***	.
Foreign Affairs and Foreign Aid	1.666	1.500	1.279
Healthcare	.650	4.963***	3.986*
Housing and City Planning	7.421***	10.463***	12.416***
International Trade	15.028***	3.093*	.
Justice, Courts and Crime	.120	10.690***	8.961***
Labour	5.565***	3.855**	2.166
Marco-Economy and Taxes	4.452**	1.684	1.093
Religion, Morals and Medical-Ethical	2.989*	1.432	.593
Science, Technology and Communication	6.661***	7.934***	.
Social Affairs	5.460***	1.369	2.264 [†]
Spatial planning, Nature and Water Management	4.948***	3.730**	.
Transport and Traffic	2.542*	6.163***	.

Note: Reported figures are the coefficients of an analysis of variances, with issue saliency as the dependent variable and time period as the independent categorical variable. Analysis of variance assumes equal variances, an assumption which is tested with Levene's statistic. If the assumption is not met (Levene Statistic is significant), the Welch statistic provides a robust alternative to the F-statistic. For some of the categories the Welch statistic could not be computed, because all parties' issue saliency in a particular year was equal to zero (thus, no variance).

[†] significant at $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Appendix B

Abbreviations of party names

Table B.1: *Abbreviations of British party names*

Abbreviation	Full Name	Remarks
Con	Conservative Party	
Lib	Liberal Party	until 1983
	Liberal/SDP Alliance	from 1983 to 1991
	Liberal Democrats	from 1991 onwards
Lab	Labour Party	

Table B.2: *Abbreviations of Dutch party names^a*

Abbreviation	Full Dutch Name	Full English Name
AOV	Algemeen Ouderen Verbond	General Old People's Party
ARP	Anti-Revolutionaire Partij	Anti-Revolutionary Party
BP	Boerenpartij	Farmer's party
CD	Centrum Democraten	Centre Democrats
CDA	Christen Democratisch Appèl	Christian Democratic Appeal
CHU	Christelijk Historische Unie	Christian Historical Union
CPN	Communistische Partij Nederland	Communist Party of the Netherlands
CU	ChristenUnie	Christian Union
D66	Democraten 66	Democrats 66
DS'70	Democratisch-Socialisten 1970	Democratic Socialists 1970
EVP	Evangelische Volkspartij	Evangelical People's Party
GL	GroenLinks	GreenLeft
GPV	Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond	Reformed Political Union
LPF	Lijst Pim Fortuyn	List Pim Fortuyn
PPR	Politieke Partij Radicalen	Radical Political Party
PSP	Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij	Pacifist Socialist Party
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid	Labour Party
RKPN	Rooms-Katholieke Partij Nederland	Roman Catholic Party of the Netherlands
RPF	Reformatische Politieke Federatie	Reformed Political Federation
KVP	Katholieke Volkspartij	Catholic People's Party
SP	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party
SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	Political Reformed Party
Unie 55+	Unie 55+	Union 55+
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	People's party for Freedom and Democracy

^a Based on Andeweg and Irwin (2009).

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Politieke partijen en het democratisch mandaat: de vervulling van het collectieve mandaat in het Verenigd Koninkrijk en Nederland

Houden partijen zich aan hun verkiezingsmandaat? Doen ze wat ze beloven? Veel mensen geven een uitgesproken – vaak negatief – antwoord op deze vragen. Dit proefschrift is er bewijs van dat de wetenschappelijke beantwoording van deze vragen veel minder eenvoudig is. Want wat is precies het ‘partijmandaat’ en hoe kunnen we controleren of partijen zich daar voldoende aan houden? Dit proefschrift bekijkt deze vragen vanuit een ander perspectief dan eerdere studies en gebruikt nieuwe methoden voor de analyse van politieke tekst met behulp van computeralgoritmes. De belangrijkste onderzoeksvragen zijn of de inrichting van het democratisch systeem invloed heeft op de mate waarin partijen zich aan hun mandaat houden, of er een verschil is tussen regerings- en oppositiepartijen en of er verandering is door de tijd heen.

Alle bestaande benaderingen van het partijmandaat richten zich primair op de relatie tussen beloftes en het gedrag van de regering. Dit boek past de ruimtelijke benadering uit de politieke wetenschap toe op het vraagstuk van het partijmandaat. In deze benadering wordt het partijmandaat bekeken vanuit de vergelijking tussen de inhoudelijke standpunten van partijen tijdens de verkiezingscampagne, in het bijzonder in hun verkiezingsprogramma, en in het parlement. Er wordt dus niet gekeken naar de vraag of partijen specifieke beloftes hebben weten om te zetten in beleid, maar of hun politieke positie voor en na de verkiezingen vergelijkbaar is. Waar eerder onderzoek het partijmandaat voornamelijk op het partijniveau analyseerde, bekijkt dit proefschrift de vraag van het partijmandaat op het partijsysteemniveau. Het gaat er niet zozeer om dat één partij zijn verkiezingsbeloftes vervult, maar dat de partijcompetitie als geheel voor en na verkiezingen op elkaar lijkt. Er wordt daarbij gekeken naar zowel de vraag welke onderwerpen een rol spelen tijdens de campagne en in het parlement, als naar de politieke stellingname van partijen op deze onderwerpen. Het voordeel van de gebruikte benadering is dat het een vollediger beeld geeft van de

vervulling van het partijmandaat dan de in eerdere studies gebruikte perspectieven. Er wordt niet alleen gekeken naar de vraag of partijen doen wat er in hun programma staat, maar ook naar de vraag of wat partijen doen in overeenstemming is met het verkiezingsprogramma. Daarnaast maakt het bestuderen van het mandaat van partijen in het parlement het mogelijk zowel naar de mate van succes van regerings- als van oppositiepartijen te kijken.

De hoofdvragen van dit onderzoek zijn geanalyseerd aan de hand van gegevens over verkiezingen en de opvolgende parlementaire periodes in twee landen: Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk. De keuze voor deze twee landen is gemotiveerd op basis van de belangrijkste onderzoeksvraag, namelijk die naar de samenhang tussen de inrichting van het democratisch systeem en de mate waarin partijen zich aan hun mandaat houden. In de literatuur wordt onderscheid gemaakt tussen twee vormen van democratie: consensussystemen en meerderheidssystemen. De eerste groep kenmerkt zich door een groot aantal partijen, een evenredig kiesstelsel, coalitieregeringen en corporatistische structuren. De tweede groep wordt juist gekarakteriseerd door een klein aantal partijen, een onevenredig kiessysteem, eenpartijregeringen en pluralistische structuren van belangenvertegenwoordiging. De gekozen landen zijn typische voorbeelden van beide systemen: Nederland is een duidelijk voorbeeld van een consensusedemocratie gedurende de periode na 1950 en het Verenigd Koninkrijk is de bakermat van de meerderheidsdemocratie, ook wel het *Westminster system* genoemd. In beide landen zijn zes verkiezingen geselecteerd uit de periode na de Tweede Wereldoorlog; ruwweg één per decennium.

Een analyse van politieke standpunten van partijen kan op vele verschillende manieren worden gemaakt. In deze studie is gekozen voor het gebruik van tekstanalyse met behulp van computeralgoritmes. De keuze voor tekstanalyse komt voort uit de noodzaak om partijposities uit het verleden te analyseren: andere bronnen, zoals het ondervragen van experts, leveren daarbij te onzekere resultaten. Eerst is van elke paragraaf tekst met behulp van een woordenlijst door de computer vastgesteld tot welke categorie uit het Comparative Agendas Project deze behoort. Daarna zijn de teksten per categorie geanalyseerd met behulp van het algoritme Wordfish, dat in staat is om op basis van de verschillen in woordkeuze de politieke posities van partijen te bepalen. Bij de toepassing van Wordfish moet voorzichtig te werk worden gegaan om te voorkomen dat het algoritme in plaats van een onderscheid tussen partijen op basis van inhoudelijke verschillen, een onderscheid aanbrengt tussen regering en oppositie of tussen documenten uit verschillende jaren. Hiervoor is zo nodig gecorrigeerd.

Wat is de invloed van de inrichting van het democratisch systeem invloed op de mate waarin partijen zich aan hun verkiezingsmandaat houden? Deze centrale vraag is van groot belang. Immers, als we willen bevorderen dat partijen zich aan hun mandaat houden, moeten we onderzoeken welke omstandigheden daarop invloed hebben. De verwachting was dat in een consensusedemocratie de overeenstemming tussen de electorale en parlementaire competitie groter zou zijn dan in een meerderheidsdemocratie. Hoewel regeringspartijen in meerder-

heidssystemen kunnen doen wat ze willen – ze zijn immers vrijwel altijd alleen aan de macht – kan worden beargumenteerd dat in consensusdemocratieën ook veel ruimte is voor regeringspartijen om hun eigen partijlijn neer te zetten. Daar waar het regeerakkoord de coalitiefracties bindt, zorgt het er ook voor dat de verhoudingen in het parlement worden ‘bevroren’: men moet zich committeren aan het eenmaal vastgestelde regeringsprogramma. Oppositiepartijen in meerderheidsdemocratieën hebben over het algemeen weinig machtsmiddelen: het is lastig om leden van de regeringspartijen te overtuigen om met de oppositie mee te stemmen. De dominante strategie voor de oppositie is daarom: kritisch staan tegenover alles wat de regering doet, ook al was de partij het er tijdens de campagne misschien mee eens. In consensusdemocratieën ligt dat anders. Daar zijn namelijk altijd meerdere oppositiepartijen met elk een eigen profiel. Zij hebben er met het oog op de volgende verkiezingen juist belang bij om dit eigen profiel te benadrukken. Een combinatie van deze factoren zorgt voor de verwachting dat de mate van congruentie tussen de electorale en parlementaire competitie hoger is in een consensusdemocratie dan in een meerderheidsdemocratie.

In tegenstelling tot de verwachting blijkt er geen verschil te zijn in de mate van congruentie van de partijcompetitie in Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk landen. Als wordt gekeken naar de mate waarin partijen voor en na verkiezingen spreken over dezelfde thema's kan worden vastgesteld dat Britse partijen dit over het algemeen beter doen. Dit komt vooral doordat alle partijen voor én na verkiezingen over dezelfde onderwerpen spreken. Er is dus niet zozeer sprake van een verschil in prioriteiten tussen partijen, maar juist van een grote eensgezindheid. Nederlandse partijen scoorden juist weer beter als het ging om de congruentie van prioriteiten: als een partij een onderwerp relatief belangrijk vond tijdens de verkiezingen, dan vond deze partij dit ook relatief belangrijk in het parlement. In Groot-Brittannië bleek dit in mindere mate het geval. Het tweede aspect waarin Nederland en Groot-Brittannië werden vergeleken betreft de mate waarin de politieke stellingname van partijen (ten opzichte van elkaar) voor en na de verkiezingen veranderde. Zowel een bespreking van de grafische modellen van de partijcompetitie als een cijfermatige analyse laat zien dat er geen significant verschil is in de mate waarin Britse en Nederlandse (relatieve) partijposities voor en na verkiezingen hetzelfde blijven. In beide landen bestaat een redelijke overeenkomst tussen de electorale en parlementaire competitie. Als partij A op een gestandaardiseerde schaal 1 punt ter rechterzijde van partij B staat gedurende de verkiezingen, zal deze partij gemiddeld genomen ongeveer 0,65 punten ter rechterzijde van partij B staan in het parlement. Als in het Verenigd Koninkrijk alleen wordt gekeken naar de politieke stellingname van de partijleiders (de *front bench*), bestaat wel een significant verschil met de Nederlandse casus: dan laten de Nederlandse partijen namelijk een hogere congruentie tussen verkiezingen en parlement zien. Dit valt te verklaren vanuit de gematigde positie die de regering meestal inneemt en de vaak incongruente positie van de Liberaal-Democraten.

Juist het verschil tussen regering en oppositie vormde de tweede onderzoeks-

vraag van dit onderzoek. Daarbij gold de verwachting dat in het Verenigd Koninkrijk regeringspartijen meer congruentie zouden vertonen tussen electorale en parlementaire positie. Regeringspartijen kunnen daar namelijk veel invloed uitoefenen op de parlementaire agenda. De analyse van de beschikbare gegevens bevestigt deze verwachting. Wat betreft de overeenkomst tussen de electorale en parlementaire posities van partijen is de conclusie minder eenduidig. Er zijn duidelijk aanwijzingen dat de interactie tussen regering en oppositie leidt tot een verstoring van de congruentie voor en na verkiezingen. Zo zijn de Liberaal Democraten tijdens verkiezingen altijd te vinden aan de kant van de dan zittende oppositiepartij, terwijl ze in het parlement een gematigder positie innemen. Opvallend genoeg is de polarisatie tussen de zittende regering en de oppositie dus sterker tijdens verkiezingen dan in het parlement.

Congruentie tussen de electorale en parlementaire positie wordt ook in Nederland verstoord door de interactie tussen regerings- en oppositiepartijen. Hier zijn het echter eerder de oppositiepartijen die in het parlement hun eigen agenda kunnen nastreven. Zij slagen er in om de parlementaire agenda te beïnvloeden door in debatten consequent aandacht te vragen voor bepaalde thema's en bijvoorbeeld door de aanvraag van spoeddebatten. Regeringspartijen lukt dit ook tot op zekere hoogte, maar minder goed dan de oppositie. De parlementaire posities van regerings- en oppositiepartijen lijken op het eerste gezicht even ver van hun electorale posities af te wijken. Dit komt doordat de vergelijking in deze studie de *relatieve* positie van partijen betreft. Nadere analyse leert dat regeringspartijen in de meeste onderzochte casus dichterbij elkaar staan in het parlement dan tijdens de verkiezingen, terwijl de oppositiepartijen zich juist van de coalitiepartijen verwijderen.

Het derde onderzochte vraagstuk betreft de verandering van de vervulling van het partijmandaat door de tijd heen. In de periode sinds de Tweede Wereldoorlog zijn politieke partijen en campagnes sterk veranderd. Er heeft een proces van *dealignment* plaatsgevonden, waarbij mensen zich niet langer beperken tot de eigen sociale groep, bijvoorbeeld arbeiders, katholieken of orthodox-protestanten. Mensen wisselen vaker van politieke partij. Partijen hebben veel leden verloren en richten zich niet langer op een bepaalde sociale groep. In dit verband wordt wel gesproken over het ontstaan van *catch-all* partijen die in principe alle kiezers aan zich willen binden. Voorts wordt beargumenteerd dat partijen in de laatste dertig jaar steeds meer onderdeel zijn geworden van de staat en een kartel hebben gevormd met als doel politieke uitdagers buiten de deur te houden. Mede in dit licht wordt ook wel gesproken van veranderende doelen van partijen: ze zijn niet meer primair programmatisch gemotiveerd, maar er is juist ook op gericht om zo veel mogelijk kiezers en uiteindelijk politieke posities te verwerven. De opkomst van (rechts-)populistische partijen kan worden gezien als een reactie op deze ontwikkeling. Over het effect van deze ontwikkeling op het partijmandaat bestaan verschillende visies. Sommigen beargumenteren dat er sprake is van een afname van de representatieve rol van partijen en daarmee het vervullen van het partijmandaat. Partijen zijn niet langer geïnteresseerd

in het vertegenwoordigen van mensen, maar verdelen de politieke macht en functies onderling. Anderen beargumenteren juist dat de electorale competitie steeds vrijer is geworden: winst of verlies bij verkiezen wordt bijvoorbeeld steeds sterker. Partijen hebben er dus steeds meer belang bij om zorgvuldig te luisteren naar wat burgers willen. Daarbij past het ook om een duidelijk verkiezingsprogramma te presenteren en zich daar zo veel mogelijk aan te houden – anders lopen de kiezers de volgende keer weg.

De onderzochte casus in Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk geven steun aan de laatstgenoemde verklaring. Er is hier namelijk geen achteruitgang van de vervulling van het partijmandaat waar te nemen. Sterker nog, de congruentie van de aandacht voor onderwerpen is in Nederland toegenomen. De thema's die in verkiezingsprogramma's centraal staan, zijn ook de belangrijkste in het parlementaire debat. De congruentie van posities is zowel in Nederland als in het Verenigd Koninkrijk stabiel: er is dus geen sprake van een achteruitgang van de mate waarin partijen hun mandaat vervullen.

De laatste vraag die in dit proefschrift wordt behandeld is welke invloed het belang van onderwerpen en de extremiteit van de positie van partijen hebben op de mate van congruentie tussen de electorale en parlementaire positie. De verwachting was dat partijen een hogere mate van congruentie zouden behalen voor onderwerpen die belangrijker voor hen waren. De analyse laat zien dat dit inderdaad geldt voor de mate waarin partijen voor en na verkiezingen spreken over dezelfde onderwerpen, maar niet voor de congruentie van hun beleidsposities. De mate waarin de electorale posities van partijen afwijken van het gemiddelde (extremiteit), biedt wel een verklaring voor de afwijking van hun parlementaire posities: partijen met extreme standpunten wijzigen deze relatief het minste na de verkiezingen.

Uit de bovenstaande observaties trekt dit proefschrift drie hoofdconclusies. Ten eerste moet men in het debat over politieke hervormingen niet al te gemakkelijk betogen dat een meerderheidssysteem zorgt voor een betere vervulling van het partijmandaat. Eenpartijregeringen vervullen weliswaar meer specifieke verkiezingsbeloftes, maar als de electorale partijcompetitie als geheel vergeleken wordt met de competitie in het parlement, zijn er geen verschillen tussen consensus- en meerderheidssystemen te zien. Het zou verstandig zijn als de deelnemers aan het debat over democratische vernieuwing deze inzichten ter harte zouden nemen.

De tweede conclusie betreft het vertrouwen in de mate waarin partijen voldoen aan hun verkiezingsbeloftes. Hoewel veel burgers maar weinig geloof hechten aan de beloftes van partijen – die doen in hun ogen na de verkiezingen toch wat anders – blijkt uit dit proefschrift, evenals uit eerder onderzoek, dat er wel degelijk een redelijke overeenstemming bestaat tussen het verkiezingsmandaat en hoe partijen zich na de verkiezingen gedragen. Men kan zich afvragen hoe het komt dat bij burgers veelal een andere indruk bestaat. In dit proefschrift wordt betoogd dat er wel degelijk een grond kan zijn voor de onvrede van burgers over het vervullen van het mandaat. Burgers kunnen bijvoorbeeld ontevree-

den zijn over specifieke beloftes die voor hen belangrijk zijn. Daarnaast kan disproporzioneel veel media-aandacht voor niet- vervulde beloftes een verklaring zijn voor het negatieve beeld van veel burgers. Toch doen burgers er verstandig aan om verkiezingsprogramma's van partijen serieus te nemen. Hoewel deze geen perfecte voorspelling geven van het gedrag van partijen in het parlement, geven ze op zijn minst een redelijk beeld. Iemand die met zijn stem een inhoudelijke boodschap wil geven, kan daarbij verkiezingsprogramma's goed gebruiken.

Ten derde kan worden opgemerkt dat de in dit boek gebruikte benadering en methode op meer soortgelijke vragen toegepast kunnen worden. Weliswaar is de gebruikte methode van computeranalyse van politieke tekst niet onfeilbaar, hij biedt relatief goede resultaten en geeft de mogelijkheid om grote hoeveelheden tekst te analyseren – iets wat voorheen vrijwel onmogelijk was. De gebruikte ruimtelijke benadering geeft een kapstok om ook andere vragen, zoals de vraag in hoeverre de absolute posities van partijen vergelijkbaar zijn, te onderzoeken.

Curriculum Vitae

Tom Louwerse (Vlissingen, 1983) attended pre-university education at the Christelijke Scholengemeenschap Walcheren (CSW) in Middelburg, the Netherlands. He studied Political Science and at Universiteit Leiden, the Netherlands. He obtained his *propaedeuse* diploma in Political Science *cum laude* in 2002. In 2006, he received a Masters degree (*doctoraalexamen*) in Political Science (*cum laude*) and a *propaedeuse* in Law (*cum laude*). He conducted his PhD research at the Institute of Political Science, Universiteit Leiden, from 2006 to 2011. Since 2010 he has been working as a Lecturer in Political Science. From 2011 he is a post-doctoral researcher in the university research profile *Political Legitimacy: Institutions and Identities*.

