Imitating the newcomer. How, when and why established political parties imitate the policy positions and issue attention of new political parties in the electoral and parliamentary arena: the case of the Netherlands

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Chapter 7: The invisible people, the left and the right

How new parties change the parliamentary party systems

"We oppose the existing parties[,] that maintain the existing ideological lines of conflict, which provide citizens with no political clarity; that are not occupied with working towards their precious ideals, but with guarding their own positions; that are a part of a new class of rulers, which operates according to the principle of favouritism; (...)" – Leefbaar Nederland (2003, 212 translation SO)

"The real essence of a party system may be seen not in the competition between the principal protagonists, be they Labour and Conservative, Christian Democrat and Social democrat, or whatever, but rather in the competition between those who wish to maintain that principal dimension of competition, on the one hand, and on the other hand, those who— 'the invisible people' — are trying to establish a wholly different dimension" - Mair (1997b, 16)

7.1 Introduction

There is an interesting parallel in the claim of the government reform populist party Liveable Netherlands and of political scientist Peter Mair. In the introductory paragraph of its election manifesto, Liveable Netherlands voices its opposition to the established parties. In its view they maintain the existing lines of conflict, even though they do not provide the voter with any clarity. Moreover, they are preoccupied with protecting their own interests and form a new class of rulers that excludes outsiders. This is the classical rhetoric of a populist party: established parties disenfranchise voters by and they form an impenetrable political class (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008). Mair (1997a, 1997b) takes the argument a level further: using the work of Schattschneider (1960) as a basis, he argues that the fact that the established political parties maintain the existing lines of conflict, is the mechanism that keeps them in power and new political parties out of power. In his eyes the competition between the established parties along the existing lines of conflict is only part of the story. By maintaining the existing lines of conflict, established parties maintain their own

position in the party system: by making sure that the voters believe that the election is about either a liberal or a socialist future for the country, they exclude those voices that believe that the future of the country should be religious, green or feminist. Mair (2001) has also argued that the entry of some new political parties may reinforce the existing lines of conflict. If these new parties are co-opted into political alliances of the left or the right, the entry of a new political party may actually reinforce the existing pattern between left and right. Mair (2001) has shown that the entry of *Die Grünen* reinforced the left-right pattern in Germany, while Bale (2003) has shown that similar patterns may occur when extreme right parties were co-opted into political alliances of the centre-right. By joining the rightwing or the leftwing political alliance, the entry of new political parties may actually reduce the number of lines of conflict because they focus the political conflict on the left-right dimension, making other dimensions (such as the religious-secular dimension) irrelevant.

This chapter seeks to find out which of the two theses of Mair (1997a, 1997b, 2001) holds in general: are new political parties able to introduce new lines of conflict? Or does their entry actually focus politics on a single left-right dimension? A change in the existing lines of conflict may be among the effects that new political parties can have on the party system (Schattschneider 1960) and, as argued in chapter 2, it can be conceived of as a form of party system change. This chapter will examine the interaction between political parties at the systemic level. It will examine the effect of each of the new parties on parliamentary party system. The parliamentary arena is selected because this is the most likely place to observe effects of new political parties. As shown in chapter 5, new political parties had a significant effect on the attention that established political parties devote to issues and on the positions that they take on these issues in the parliamentary arena. The effects of new political parties on established parties in the electoral arena (chapter 6) were far less marked or structured. This study focuses on the period 1963-2010, because for this period sufficient voting data is available. These will be analysed in four periods: 1963-1977, 1977-1986, 1989-1998 and 1998-2010. Between 1963 and 2006, six parties entered the Dutch parliament that according to the analyses presented in chapter 5, elicited such considerable reactions in terms of either party positions or attention in parliament that their entry may in turn have led to a change in the interaction between established parties in parliament. These parties are D66 (both attention to and positions on governance), the CP (both attention to and positions on immigration),

AOV and U55+ (positions on healthcare), LN (positions on governance) and the LPF (attention to immigration). These parties are of special interest here. Each of these parties are mobilisers. It seems reasonable that mobilisers are related to changes in the structure of party competition: mobilisers seek to introduce new lines of conflict, while challengers seek to reinforce the existing lines of conflict.

This chapter shows that, for as far as one can attribute changes in the lines of conflict to the entry of new political parties, new political parties are mostly associated with *reducing* the number of lines of conflict and not with increasing them. New political parties are not able to introduce new lines of conflict; rather, their co-optation into political alliances of the left or the right leads to a reduction of the number of lines of conflict and focuses political conflict on the left-right distinction.

7.2.1 Period 1: 1963-1977

Between 1967 and 1972, five new parties entered parliament: D66, DS'70, the PPR, the NMP and the RKPN. As can be seen above, the entry of D66 led to a marked and attributable change in the levels of parliamentary attention to governance and the positions of parties on this issue. The entry of DS'70, the NMP and the RKPN did not lead to significant change in attention. The entry of the PPR was followed by a marked increase in attention to the environment, but not in a way that can be attributed to the entry of the PPR.

The parliamentary period 1963-1967 is the period before the entry of any of these parties. A spatial model of voting behaviour in this period is presented in figure 7.1. In the figure one can see three blocs: in the leftwing half of the figure, the PvdA, the PSP and the CPN are located. In the rightwing half there are two clusters: the SGP and the BP in the lower right half, and the other parties (ARP, KVP, CHU, GPV and VVD) in the upper right half. The first dimension appears to be a left-right dimension, dividing the leftwing parties (PSP, CPN and PvdA) from the parties of the right. The parties of the right are divided on the vertical dimension in particular. Interpreting the vertical dimension is difficult: it divides the Christian-democratic KVP and ARP from the farmers' party BP and the orthodox-Protestant SGP. It does not divide religious parties from secular parties (as the secular VVD is placed closer to conservative Protestant ARP than the orthodox Protestant SGP).

In 1967, D66 entered parliament, and it raised political attention to governance. Over the course of the 1967-1971 parliamentary term two new political

Figure 7.1: model of voting 1963-1967

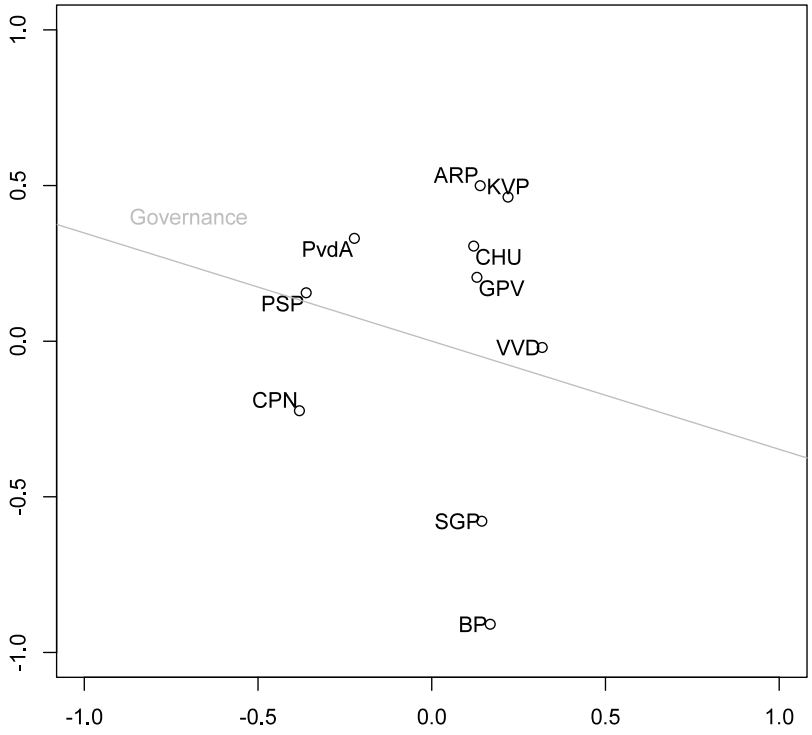
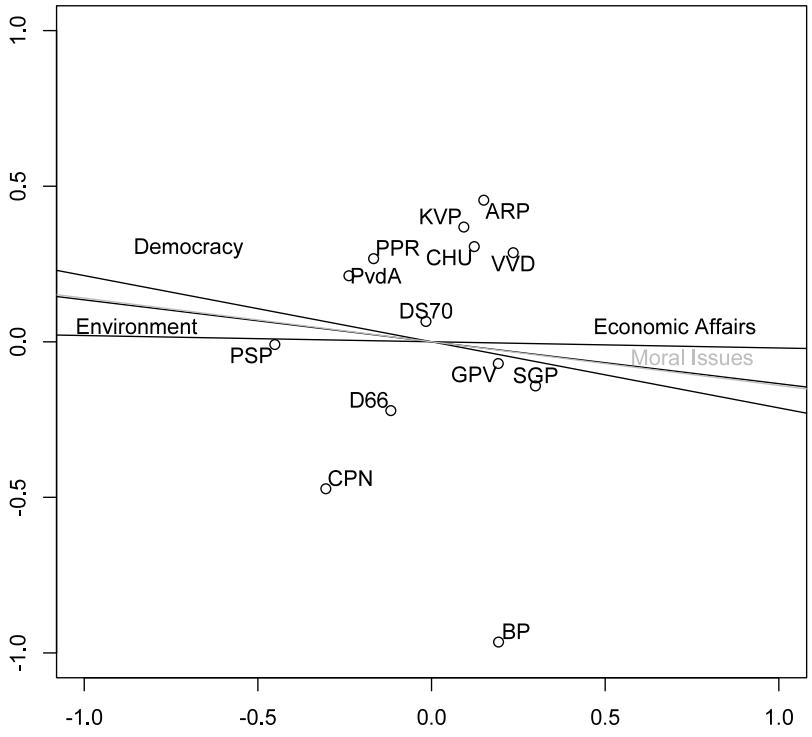


Figure 7.2: model of voting 1967-1971

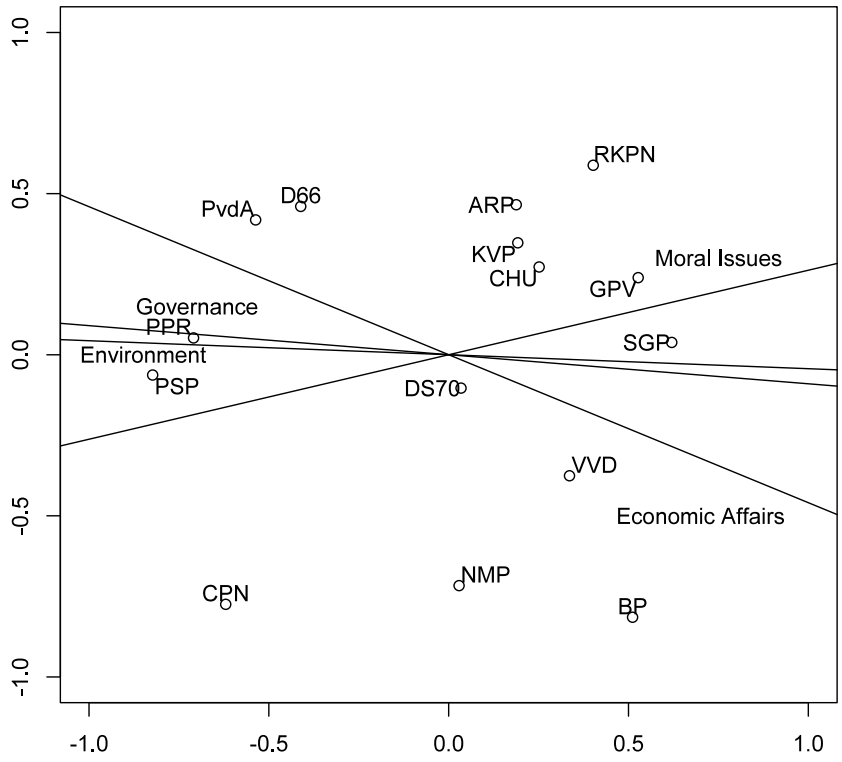


parties were formed: the Group-Goedhart broke away from the PvdA, and the Group-Aarden broke away from the KVP. The Group-Goedhart would later on evolve into DS'70 and the Group-Aarden into the PPR. The model for the after-period is comparatively more one-dimensional, and it now falls just above the basic level for one-dimensionality. The basic structure of party positions, presented in figure 7.2, is similar to the period 1963-1967: the only parties that made a marked shift were the GPV, the VVD and the SGP. The SGP and GPV moved to the centre of the vertical dimension, and the VVD took a position close to the three Christian-democratic parties. The horizontal dimension is still related to the left-right division. As said before, it is difficult to understand the vertical dimension. One can plot the four dimensions developed in sections 5.2.4 to 5.2.6 into this model (for the environment (in a broad sense), governance, moral issues and economic affairs). They relate to the horizontal dimension. The relationship between the moral issues dimension and the general voting patterns is markedly weaker than for the other issues.

It appears that the entry of D66 (and the formation of the PPR and DS'70) coincided with a decrease in the dimensionality of the system. It raised attention to the issue of governance and party positions on this issue began to follow the left-right division more. This, combined with cooperation between the progressive parties (PvdA, D66 and PPR), led to a decrease in the dimensionality of the party system. This is not counter-intuitive as during this period polarisation started in the Dutch parliament. This does mean, however, that the entry of D66 is not associated with the creation of a new line of conflict in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*. Instead, the interaction between political parties became more one-dimensional, because of an increasing dominance of left-right voting on the issue of governance, an issue that became more important, and because of the cooperation between the progressive parties.

In the period 1971-1977, voting, as presented in figure 7.3, became even more one-dimensional than before: the APRE of a one-dimensional model moves up almost one-tenth (on a scale from zero to one). The patterns in voting behaviour are similar to the previous period: the horizontal division still follows a left-right structure. It divides the CPN, PSP, PPR, PvdA and CPN from the other parties. DS'70 stands in the centre of the political space. On its right are the parties of the right and centre-right: the Christian-democratic parties in one cluster, close to the orthodox-Christian

Figure 7.3: model of voting 1971-1977



GPV and the SGP. The VVD and the BP are in the lower half of the figure. Although in general voting behaviour was more one-dimensional than before, voting on specific issues was more diverse than in the period 1967-1971. Governance and the Environment follow the horizontal division. On economic issues, the VVD, BP and NMP take a more rightwing position than the Christian-democratic parties. On moral issues, the Christian-democratic parties (ARP, KVP, CHU) and their orthodox Christian counterparts (RKPN, GPV and SGP) stand further away from the leftwing parties. It appears that in this analysis the vertical dimension in part reflects the division between religious and secular parties, with all the religious parties concentrated in the upper-rightwing parties. On the whole, the strength of the left-right division on the horizontal dimension, combined with the fact that the model can better be scaled in terms of one-dimension than before, appears to imply that the entry of the NMP, RKPN, PPR or DS'70 has not led to the creation of a new political division, either. Instead, the pattern set in the 1967-1971 parliamentary period continues: the increased importance of issues on which voting follows the left-right

dimension combined with the formation of a leftwing bloc reinforced the existing left-right division.

All in all, the entry of D66, DS'70, PPR, NMP or RKPN has not led to the creation of a new division between political parties, but instead, during this period voting became more one-dimensional because of the formation of political alliances between progressive parties and between Christian-democratic parties. This clearly conforms to the theoretical expectation of Mair (2001) and Bale (2003): the formation of a political alliance, in this case between the progressive parties, has reinforced the existing left-right division. Instead of creating a new environmental dimension or a governance dimension, the co-optation of the PPR and the D66 into the Progressive Agreement with the PvdA strengthened the left-right division. This was combined with increasing importance of those issues (governance, the environment) on which parties are divided between left and right.

7.2.2 Period 2: 1977-1986

In 1982 the CP entered the Dutch parliament. The CP was a mobiliser focusing on immigration. As seen in chapter 5, its entry was accompanied by an increase in attention to immigration and unstable voting patterns on this issue. In this period the small Christian EVP and RPF parties also entered. These are both splits from the ARP (or the Anti-Revolutionary tendency within the CDA) one orienting itself towards the left and one towards the religious right. Is it possible that the entry of these parties influenced the pattern of interaction between political parties?

Voting in the period 1977-1981 was similar to voting in the period 1971-1977. These results are presented in figure 7.4. Even a one-dimensional model scores quite well in terms of the APRE. On the left hand side one finds the PSP, CPN, D66, PPR and PvdA. In the centre of this dimension one finds DS'70, and to its right one can find the CDA, the VVD and the smaller parties of the right (RPF, GPV, SGP and BP). Voting patterns on religion and defence, issue that were owned by the RPF and EVP respectively (the latter is typically associated with the economic left-right dimension), are both related to the horizontal dimension, although the relationship for moral issues is considerably weaker than the relationship for defence. Voting on immigration does not cohere with the model for voting on all issues. For as far as the dimension relates to the model, it separates parties in the upper-left corner from parties in the lower-right corner. The clearest pattern on the vertical dimension (of which the importance

Figure 7.4: model of voting 1977-1981

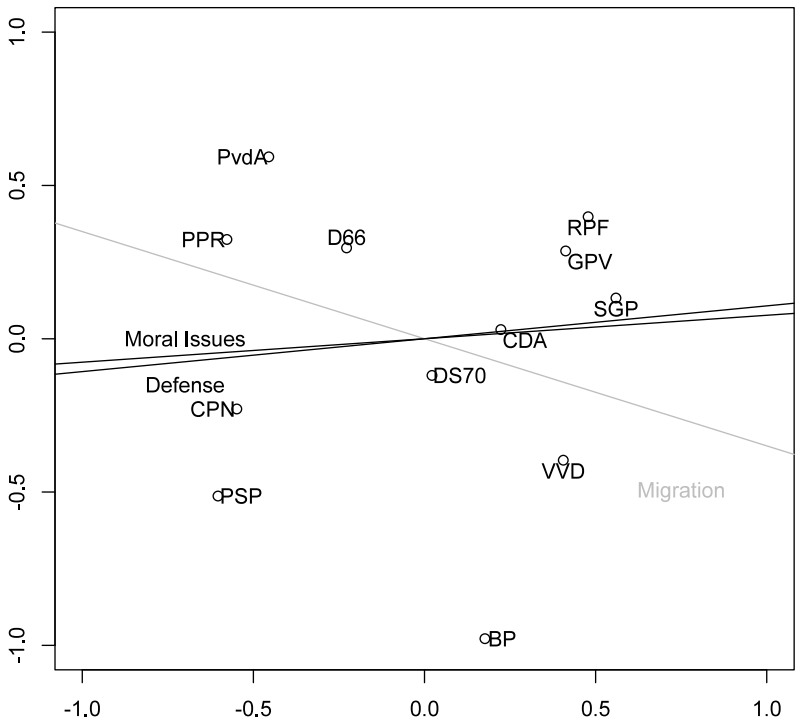
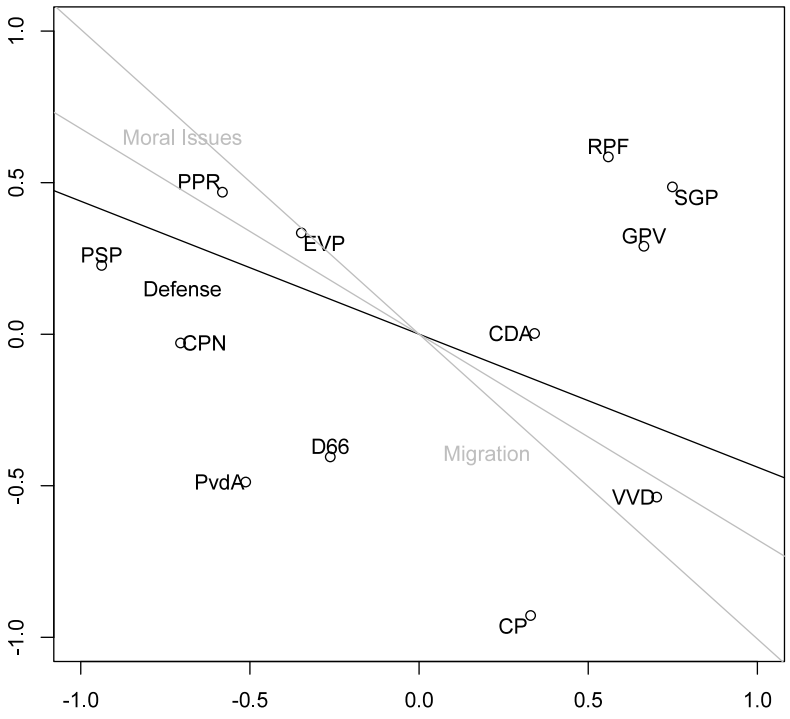


Figure 7.5: model of voting 1981-1986



should not be over-interpreted because a one-dimensional model fits quite well) is that the religious parties are all located in the upper-right corner.

The model for the period 1981-1986 is presented in figure 7.5. The entry of the RPF and the EVP has reinvigorated the moral issues and the defence dimension, while the entry of the CP upset voting patterns on immigration. It may be possible that this has influenced the basic structure of interaction between political parties. Compared to 1977-1981, the voting patterns show change and continuity. One can see four clear clusters: the small parties of the left (PSP, PPR, EVP and CPN) are in the upper-leftwing corner; in the lower leftwing corner one can see the PvdA and D66, the main parties of the centre left; the secular rightwing parties CP and VVD are situated in the lower rightwing corner; and the Christian parties (CDA, GPV, SGP and RPF) are all in the upper-rightwing corner. The party positions on the vertical dimension are similar to the period 1977-1981 and can easily be interpreted in terms of the left-right division. If one looks at the correlation, the party positions on the vertical dimension are different from the period 1977-1981. This is, however, almost exclusively caused by the movement of the PPR away from PvdA towards the PSP. The small leftwing parties of are now clearly distinguishable from the larger parties of the moderate left. These small leftwing parties take a position opposite from the VVD, and the mainstream leftwing parties take a position opposite from the CDA. One can understand part of this pattern in terms of a change that occurred in the PPR: in the early 1980s it decided to cooperate with the small left parties instead of cooperating with the PvdA (Waltmans 1983). The similarity in the voting patterns between the small left parties may be a result of this decision. On the whole, the extent to which voting behaviour can be modelled in terms of one dimension has decreased. Party positions on the vertical dimension changed markedly and voting on this dimension matters more than before. To aid interpretation, one can run property fitting models for the three issue-dimensions analysed: voting on defence and immigration divides the small leftwing parties in the upper left corner from the secular rightwing parties in the lower right corner. Voting on immigration, however, coheres only weakly with voting on all issues. Voting on moral matters divides the PvdA and D66 from the Christian parties. The religious dimension correlates more with the vertical dimension than the defence and immigration dimensions do, but on the whole, however, its relationship with the entire model is markedly weaker than before. The left-right division measured in this case by the defence dimension structures party positions.

Figure 7.6: model of voting 1989-1994

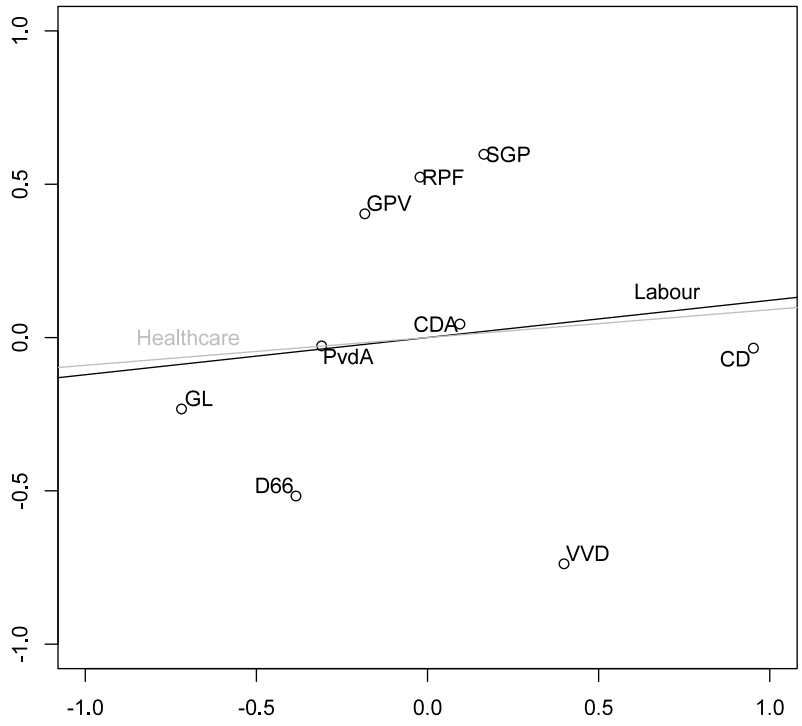
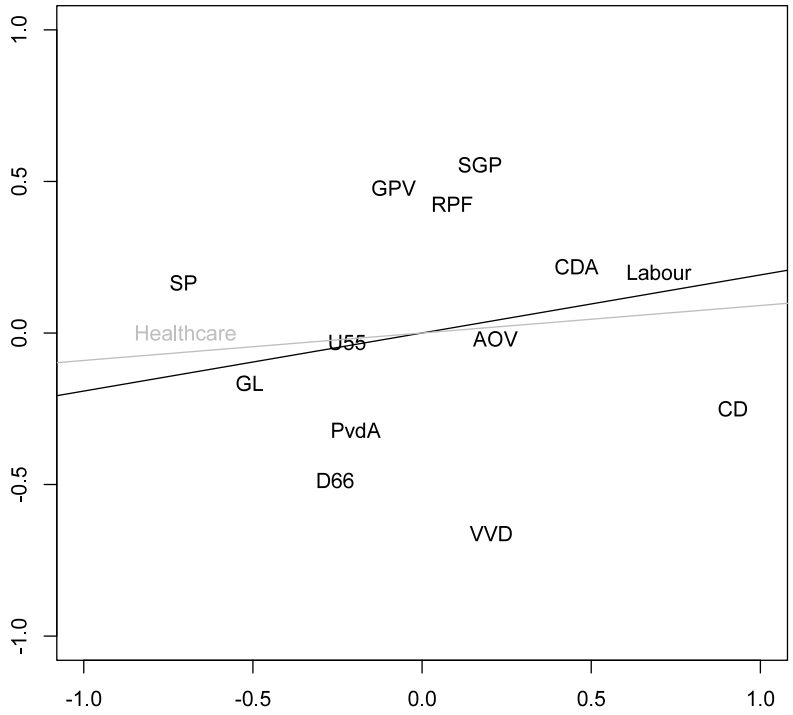


Figure 7.7: model of voting 1994-1998



Between 1977 and 1986 the pattern in voting behaviour changed, but not drastically: the vertical dimension remained as important in structuring party positions before and after 1981, but several parties shifted position. Especially on the left there was a marked division between the small parties of the left (PPR, EVP, CPN and PSP) and the larger parties of the left (D66 and PvdA). The change in dimensionality of the system cannot be attributed to the entry of the CP into the political system: it was not its issue that is most related to the changing vertical dimension.

7.2.3 Period 3: 1989-1998

In 1994 three parties entered parliament: the pensioners' parties AOV and U55+ and the socialist party SP. All opposed the cuts in the welfare state that the centre-left coalition of CDA and PvdA proposed. After the 1994 elections PvdA, VVD and D66 formed a coalition. This was the first coalition in the Netherlands since 1918 that was formed without the Christian-democrats, the traditional pivotal player in Dutch politics because of its centrist position on the economic dimension between the conservative liberal VVD and the social democratic PvdA. The coalition parties shared a commitment to liberal policies on gay rights and euthanasia. One may expect that the parliamentary space became more two-dimensional, because the second, religious-secular dimension played a large role in the formation of the cabinet. As seen in chapter 5, the entry of the AOV and U55+ upset voting patterns on healthcare.

Between 1989 and 1994 the models of voting were clearly two-dimensional. The voting patterns are represented in figure 7.6. Here, one can see roughly three clusters of parties: the secular parties of the left (PvdA, GL and D66) are in the lower leftwing corner. The secular parties of the right (VVD and CD) are in the lower rightwing corner. The religious parties (GPV, RPF, SGP and CDA) are in the upper half of the figure in the centre. This pattern is clearly reminiscent of the traditional division in Dutch politics with a left-right and religious-secular divide. Voting on labour relates to the horizontal dimension of the model, as does voting on healthcare, but this is much weaker.

There is no rupture in the voting patterns in 1994, as presented in figure 7.7. The SP has joined the system on the left; the U55+ and the AOV take a place in the centre. PvdA and the CDA have moved away from the centre. More than any model analysed here, a one-dimensional solution does not fit the data. Voting during this period is clearly two-dimensional. One can hardly attribute this to the entry of the

Figure 7.8: model of voting 1998-2002

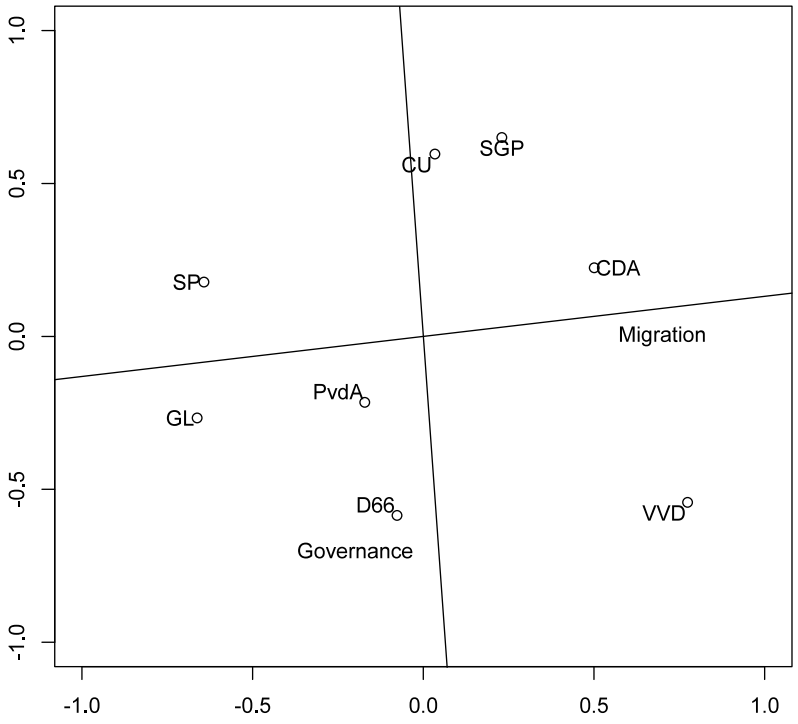
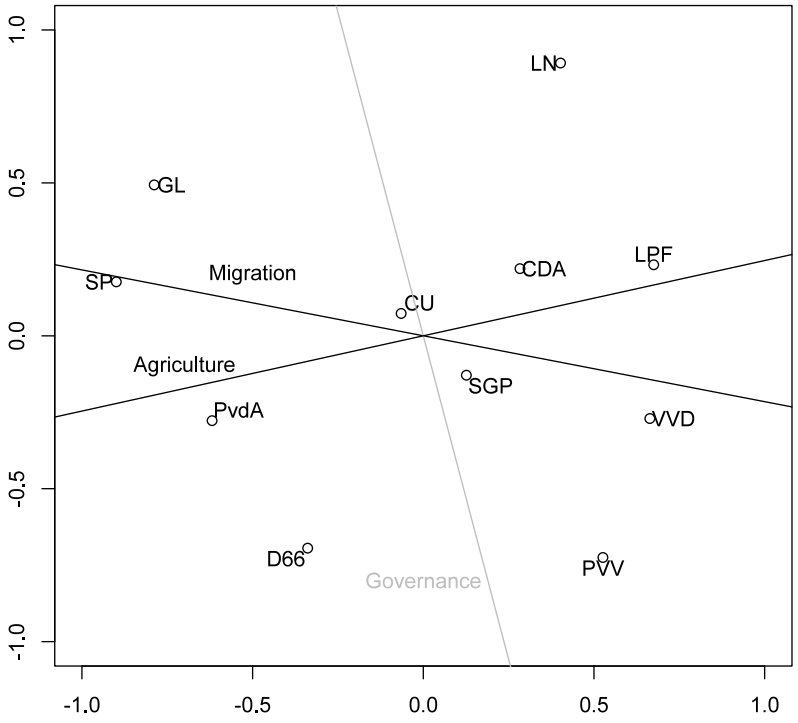


Figure 7.9: model of voting 2002-2006



pensioners' parties, however. After 1994 voting on healthcare does not conform to the political space at all. The AOV and U55+ take a position in the centre and voting on their issue relates weakly with the entire model. These parties were not able to force a new line of conflict into existence.

All in all, the 1994 elections did not upset the patterns of parliamentary voting behaviour: the entry of the U55+ and AOV and the remarkable patterns in voting behaviour on healthcare did not upset the party system. The entry of the SP or the formation of the cabinet of PvdA, VVD and D66 has not upset voting patterns, either.

7.2.4 Period 4: 1998-2010

In 2002 both the LPF and LN entered parliament. The entry of the LPF was associated with a marked increase in attention to immigration; the entry of LN was associated with instability of the voting patterns on governance, which was the issue of LN. The LPF was immediately co-opted into a centre-right cabinet formed by CDA and VVD. It may be possible that the entry of LPF and LN influenced the interaction between political parties. The events surrounding the entry of the LPF has been characterised as “party system change” (Pellikaan et al. 2007), a “revolt of the citizens” (Couwenberg 2004) and “a punctuation of the equilibrium of Dutch politics” (De Vries & Van der Lubbe 2004).

The voting patterns in the period 1998-2002 (in figure 7.8) are extremely similar to the voting patterns in the period 1994-1998. There are three clusters of parties. The VVD stands in the lower rightwing corner. The secular leftwing parties (GL, PvdA, D66 and SP) all stand in the lower leftwing corner. The Christian-democratic parties (SGP, CDA and CU) all stand in the upper rightwing corner. It appears to be the case that the vertical dimension divides religious from secular parties and that the horizontal dimension divides the left from the right. Voting patterns on immigration relate to the horizontal dimension. These are typical left-right issues. Governance divides religious from secular parties, with the PvdA, VVD and D66 favouring government reform and the CU and the SGP opposing it.

After the 2002 elections voting patterns remained remarkably stable. The results are presented in figure 7.9. The most marked change is that one can model voting behaviour more easily in terms of one dimension after the entry of the LPF than before. The second dimension has less meaning than in the period 1998-2002. Positions on the horizontal dimension are similar in both models: the basic structure

remains intact: a difference between parties of the left, with the SP and GL more to the left and PvdA and D66 more in the centre. There also is a division between religious parties (CU, SGP and CDA concentrated in the upper rightwing corner) and secular rightwing parties (VVD, joined in 2002 by LN and LPF). Most voting patterns studied (agriculture and immigration) are related to the horizontal dimension. Party positions on immigration, which, as Kriesi and Frey (2008) have observed, stand perpendicular to social-economic issues among voters, coincide with party positions on economic matters for political parties. This reinforces similar findings about the relationship between party positioning on this issue by Van der Brug and Van Spanje (2009). The governance dimension weakly conforms to the vertical dimension. Given the position of religious parties on this dimension, one should interpret it in terms of a classical division between religious and secular parties. Between 1998-2002 and 2002-2006, the importance of the vertical dimension has decreased. Two developments have contributed to this: first the increased importance of immigration on the parliamentary agenda. On these issues voting is clearly one-dimensional and conforms to the horizontal, left-right dimension. Moreover, the political cooperation between the LPF, CDA and the VVD added to the reduction of the dimensionality of the party system, as Bale has observed (2003).

One may question the extent to which the LPF was successfully co-opted into a rightwing governing bloc. After the fall of the CDA/VVD/LPF-cabinet, a coalition cabinet was formed of D66, CDA and VVD. The LPF was left in opposition. The rightwing bloc had splintered. If one looks at voting patterns in general, however, one can see that in parliament the CDA and VVD also often relied on the LPF to obtain a parliamentary majority. The second Balkenende cabinet was a special majority cabinet: it could rely on both the LPF and D66 to get a majority for its policies. The SGP voted with the CDA and VVD most often, followed by the LPF, D66 and the CU. Even though D66 was in government, the LPF had a voting record that was more similar to that of the CDA and VVD than to that of D66. It may be interesting to delve further into these patterns. In table 7.1 one can see the percentage of votes in which D66 and LPF voted the same as VVD and CDA.[193] D66 and the LPF are roughly in balance if one looks at all the votes. Both parties voted the same as CDA and VVD in

[193] That is when they voted the same, which is the case in 86% of the votes. It is important to note that this concerns all votes, not just those selected to remove the interference of the coalition/opposition division.

Table 7.1: all votes 2003-2006

		D66		
All votes [a]		Like CDA and VVD	Unlike CDA and VVD	Total
LPF	Like CDA and VVD	64%	15%	79%
	Unlike CDA and VVD	15%	6%	21%
	Total	78%	22%	100%
Economic issues [b]				
LPF	Like CDA and VVD	68%	9%	76%
	Unlike CDA and VVD	18%	6%	24%
	Total	86%	14%	100%
Cultural issues [c]				
LPF	Like CDA and VVD	62%	21%	83%
	Unlike CDA and VVD	12%	5%	17%
	Total	74%	26%	10%

[a] N=5162
[b] N=1344; Economic Affairs, Labour, Social Affairs, Enterprise, Science
[c] N=718; Justice and Immigration

around 80% of the cases. In 64% of the votes, both voted the same as the VVD and CDA. In 6% of the votes they both voted against the CDA and VVD. In 15% of the cases the LPF voted the same as CDA and VVD, but D66 did not, and vice versa. However, there are striking patterns. D66 tended to agree with CDA and VVD on cases where there is a political disagreement between CDA and VVD and their junior social-economic issues. In these cases, D66 voted the same as CDA and VVD more often than the LPF: 85% compared to 75%. The same is true for votes on healthcare and education. On other issues, such as the immigration and justice, one can see that the LPF tended to vote like the CDA and VVD more than D66 did. The LPF voted like CDA and VVD in 83% of the votes; the support of D66 is only 74%. In those partner D66, the LPF jumped in.[194] The same pattern can be observed for the environment and foreign affairs. Even though the LPF was in opposition, its political cooperation with the CDA and the VVD continued in parliament.

After 2006, when the PVV won its first seats in the election, there is a marked change. This is presented in figure 7.10. Again the model can be represented in terms of one dimension. The first thing that stands out in the model is that most parties are clustered along a diagonal. The ordering goes from SP to VVD. The positions of these

[194] Perhaps the most famous example is the motion of no confidence proposed by Femke Halsema at the end of the parliamentary debate about the nationality of Ayaan Hirshi Ali. The motion was narrowly rejected because the LPF MPs voted against the motion of no confidence, while D66, a coalition party, favoured the motion. D66 withdrew from the cabinet, which continued as a caretaker minority cabinet.

Figure 7.10: model of voting 2006-2010

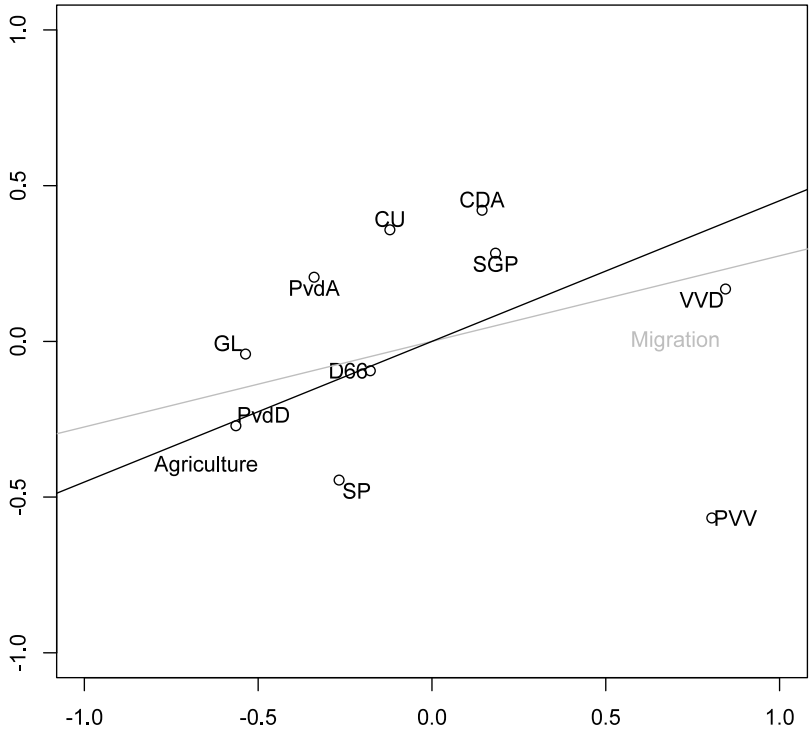
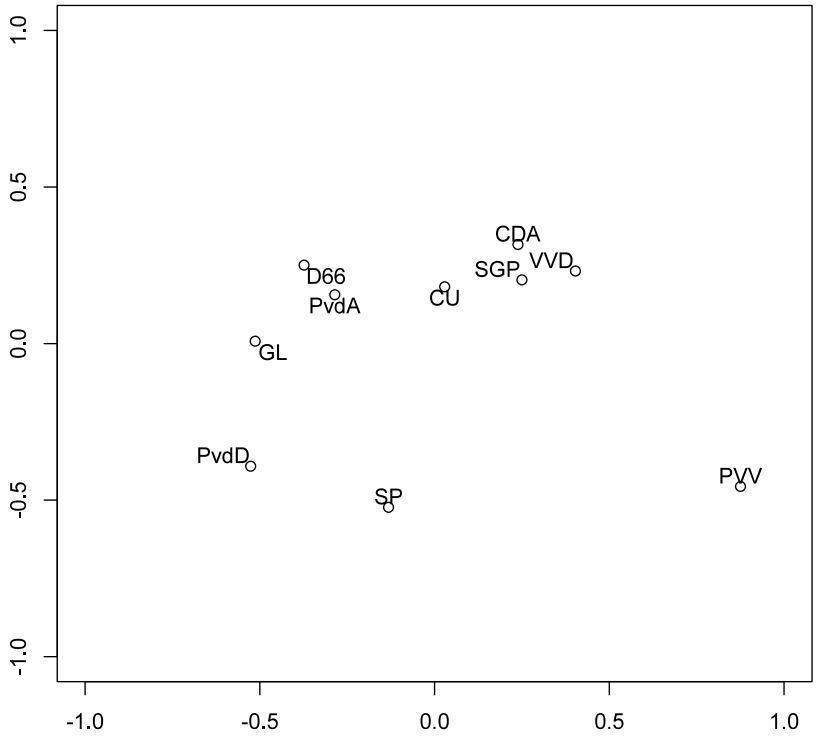


Figure 7.11: model of voting 2010-2011



parties follow the left-right dimension. This is reflected by the fact that party positions on the horizontal dimension are similar to party positions before 2006, and by the fact that party positions on agriculture and immigration all correlate with the horizontal dimension. One party defies this pattern: the PVV. It takes a rightwing stance on the horizontal dimension, but it is in the lower half of the figure. The position of the PVV also explains the low correlation of the immigration dimensions with the entire model: it is the most extreme party on these dimensions, but on the horizontal dimension it takes a position similar to the VVD. The vertical dimension captures the difference between the PVV and the VVD. The PVV is the only party studied that has been able to create a pattern between itself and the rest of the parties that has influenced the entire model. While all other parties are integrated into the left-right pattern, the PVV has created its own dimension, which is perpendicular on the left-right dimension. This dimension is the result of the fact that the PVV often voted against the proposals of the government. As one can see in the model, the PVV sometimes joined the opposition parties PvdD and SP in their opposition to government proposals. All in all, the PVV is the only party in this study that can be linked to the formation of a new line of conflict in parliament. However, given that one can comfortably model the party positions in terms of one dimension, the importance of this second dimension should not be overestimated.

Moreover, this pro-system-anti-system dimension that the PVV forced, is not a durable phenomenon. In figure 7.11 one can see a preliminary analysis of the voting patterns in the Dutch parliament between June 2010 elections and the start of the 2011 summer recess. Given the low number of votes the results should be interpreted cautiously. Two things stand out: first, more than in the period 2006-2010, party positions can confidently be modelled in terms of one dimension in the period 2010-2011. Only in the polarised period 1971-1977 voting patterns were as one-dimensional as in the period 2010-2011. Second, the structure is similar to the structure in the previous period. There are some shifts of individual parties (especially the VVD and the CDA stand close together), but on the whole the correlations on both dimensions are significant. The second dimension, although less important than before, is more pronounced in the period 2010-2011. For as far as there is a second dimension in Dutch politics, it is caused by similar voting patterns between the SP, the PvdD and the PVV. The decreasing dimensionality of this space should be understood in the first place as a sign of the strength of the left-right dimension, since

the PVV supported the rightwing coalition cabinet of VVD and CDA. These preliminary figures show that again a new party was co-opted successfully into the alliance of the centre-right.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter took particular interest in several parties when studying the changing patterns of interaction between political parties. These parties were D66, CP, AOV, U55+, LN and LPF. Two of these can be clearly linked to changes in the patterns of interaction: the LPF and D66. The saliency of their issues increased, and voting patterns on their issues conformed to the horizontal left-right dimension. The interaction between political parties became more one-dimensional after their entry into the parliamentary arena, as the value of adding a second dimension to the model decreased after 1967 and after 2002. On the whole, the developments seem to reinforce the perspective of Mair (2001) and Bale (2003): after the entry of these parties into parliament, the dominant pattern in parliamentary voting was that between the leftwing and the rightwing bloc. D66 was co-opted into a leftwing bloc and the LPF into a rightwing bloc. One can also place other parties into this picture: in 1971 the PPR was co-opted into the leftwing bloc as well, and like the LPF, DS'70 entered a rightwing cabinet and maintained a position on the rightwing side of parliament afterwards.

Given that these parties were not able to create a new line of conflict, one has to dismiss the idea that new parties and especially mobilisers are able to introduce new lines of conflict in parliament. Instead, the study shows the strength of the existing left-right dimension in incorporating new parties and absorbing new issues into it, even when they are not an intrinsic part of it. In addition to D66 and LPF, special attention was devoted to CP, AOV, U55+ and LN. Their entries into parliament coincided with a marked change in party positions on their issues. As seen in chapter 5, the party positions on immigration were unstable after the entry of the CP, the party positions on healthcare changed markedly after the entry of AOV and U55+, and after 2002 there was a marked change in party positions on governance. But instead of changing the pattern of voting patterns in general, all that these changes in issue dimensions resulted in was that these issue dimensions no longer related with the general voting patterns.

One party is related to a change in the general voting patterns: the PVV. It is

the only one of the parties studied here that influenced the patterns of voting behaviour almost exclusively through its own behaviour. After the PVV entered parliament, two lines of conflict structured voting in the parliamentary arena: a left-right line of conflict, in which the PVV is on the far right, and a line of conflict, which basically pitted the PVV against the established parties. This dimension existed primarily because the PVV voted against many proposals of the government, sometimes together with parties of the leftwing opposition (SP and PvdD). But the support of the PVV for the rightwing government coalition of CDA and VVD further reinforced the left-right dimension. It made the party system more one-dimensional and weakened the relevance of this dimension.

As the Netherlands and the specific cases under special scrutiny were selected as a likely case, some conclusions can be drawn about new parties in general: it is unlikely that many other new parties introduce new significant lines of conflict in parliament, which completely upset parliamentary interaction between established political parties. It seems more likely that, if new parties are successfully co-opted into a political alliance of the right or left, new issues will be integrated into the existing left-right dimension, and that if this is not the case these new dimensions will be weak.

The fact that Dutch political parties are so effective in diffusing the threat that new political parties form to the party system actually reinforces the centrality of the conflict that Mair (1997b, 1997a) described. In the conflict between those who have an interest in maintaining the established lines of conflict and those who have an interest in creating a new line of conflict, the former have consistently won.