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## Party policy and cabinet portfolios in the Netherlands, 1994: Results from an expert survey

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### 1. Introduction

In 1989, Laver and Hunt conducted a survey of experts in the politics of 24 democracies, including the Netherlands, in order to establish a comprehensive dataset of party positions on a range of different policy dimensions (Laver and Hunt 1992). Given dramatic gains and losses of votes by various parties in the 1994 elections, the arrival of new parties in the Tweede Kamer, and the possible emergence of new issues in Dutch politics since 1989, the expert survey was repeated for the Netherlands after the 1994 election. This report discussed the use of expert surveys; describes the 1994 Dutch survey; reports basic results; and briefly discusses some of the implications of these for analyses of Dutch party politics.

### 2. The empirical estimation of policy spaces

Three methods have been used to estimate the positions of parties on policy dimensions. The first is based on the content analysis of policy documents; the second on the analysis of mass survey data; the third relies on expert judgements.

One method of estimating party policy positions is to analyse their official policy documents, and a version of this approach was used by the ECPR Manifesto Research Group. The content of the election manifestos was classified in terms of the proportion of the manifesto devoted to various policy coding categories. The data thereby generated were used to construct multi-dimensional spatial maps of party policy in the countries studied (Budge, Robertson and Hearl, eds., 1987). This study was extended to include government policy programmes and reanalysed to generate both a single left-right dimension and a set of twenty policy dimensions common to many European coalition systems (Laver and Budge, eds., 1992). The main problem with this data, however, is their validity, since they are explicitly geared

to a saliency theory of party competition. Strictly speaking, what is measured is the relative *importance* of policy dimensions for each party, not party *positions* on these, although inferences about positions have been drawn by many authors on the basis of the almost certainly invalid assumption that more mentions of a particular policy dimension imply a more extreme position on it.

A direct way to get information about the overt policy preferences of voters is survey research. Inglehart and Klingemann (1976), for example, report their reanalysis of a series of Eurobarometer surveys in which respondents were asked to indicate their own position on a left-right scale. The mean scores of different groups of party identifiers can be used to locate the 'party in the electorate' on a left-right dimension. Even making the controversial assumption that such estimates can be compared across countries, however, systematic results for the most part deal only with electoral preferences on the ubiquitous left-right dimension. Surveys in the Eurobarometer series do in theory deal, for the countries studied, with a common set of substantive issues relating to other policy dimensions. However, performance does not always live up to promise; particular questions often get dropped from surveys conducted in particular countries. At present, these data do not allow us to build systematic and cross-nationally comparable multidimensional representation of party systems in a wide range of countries.

This leaves us with the third way to gather data on the policy positions of political actors, which is to rely on expert judgements. Systematic analyses of expert judgements of positions on a left-right scale can be found in the work of Morgan (1976), and of Castles and Mair (1984). Laver and Hunt (1992) extended this technique to a estimate positions on a range of different policy scales.

One great advantage of the expert survey is that it can be comprehensive. Identical questions, calibrated in the same basic terms, can be posed for as many countries as experts can be found to give judgements on. Perhaps more importantly, party positions on a wide range of policy dimensions can be estimated, regardless of the availability of primary data sources. This means that data can be generated by expert surveys on matters for which no other source is available. Obviously, these are in a very real sense 'soft' data that may say as much about the received wisdom of the political science profession as about the political world being described. For this reason the expert survey is best seen as an exploratory technique, used to sketch out the basic territory in the expectation that this will in the future be triangulated more precisely using harder data sources. For the time being in an imperfect world, however, it is often simply the best data we can get on many interesting policy dimensions.

### 3. The 1994 Dutch expert survey

The 1994 Dutch expert survey replicated the methodology of the original Laver and Hunt study, using a shorter survey form more closely tailored to the Dutch case. Expert respondents were asked to place each of the twelve Dutch parties winning legislative seats in 1994 on each of ten policy scales<sup>2</sup>. They were also asked to rate the importance of each scale for each party, and to rank all Dutch cabinet portfolios in order of importance.<sup>3</sup> Five of the original eight Laver-Hunt scales were used again in 1994: tax cuts versus public services; pro- versus anti- public ownership; policy on abortion and homosexuality; environmental policy; pro-versus anti-clericalism. Two scales were dropped entirely; these related to the centralisation of decision-making, and to the urban-rural divide, scales that had the lowest aggregate saliency scores for the Netherlands in the original survey (Laver and Hunt, 1992: 50). The foreign policy scale was redefined to reflect attitudes towards the USA, in the light of the disintegration of the former USSR and the end of the Cold War.

Four new scales were developed for the resurvey; these were intended to reflect the changing realities of Dutch politics since 1989 and to allow the adaptation of what had previously been a cross-national survey to the Netherlands. The new scales dealt with policy on the following dimensions: the European Union; immigration; institutional change; and the welfare state. More precise scale definitions can be seen in Table 1, which reports basic results for each scale.<sup>4</sup> (All tables are gathered together in the appendix to this paper.)

The expert survey was sent to a list of 34 political scientists based in the Netherlands who were deemed to be working in one way or another on Dutch politics.<sup>5</sup> There were 17 replies from the original list, a response rate of exactly 50 percent. This compares with a Dutch response rate of 27 percent from a less-selective list of 60 targets in the original Laver-Hunt expert survey. This response rate is well above average for a tedious and time-consuming postal questionnaire of this type.

The number of responses was boosted by sending additional survey forms to the chairs of four Dutch political science departments<sup>6</sup>, requesting these to ask any bright graduate student who they thought would be suitable to complete the form and return it to the author. An additional eight forms were distributed by the author to Dutch graduate students in political science attending the 1994 Polybios Summer school at NIAS. Ten further responses were generated in this way, making a total of 27 responses in all. This compares with 16 responses in the original Laver-Hunt survey, and nine Dutch responses Castles-Mair survey (Castles and Mair, 1984).

#### 4. Results

Detailed estimates of party positions on, and saliency weightings of, each policy dimension are given in Table 1 (see the Appendix for the tables).<sup>7</sup> For each dimension for each party, estimates are based on the mean of the scores given by all respondents. Table 1 also gives the number of respondents for each party for each scale, and the standard error of the mean score.

For those scales used in the original Laver-Hunt expert survey, estimates for the same scale in 1989 are also reported. Comparison of the two sets of figures indicates a very high consistency between the two surveys, showing that the expert survey methodology satisfies the important criterion of replicability. This gives us some confidence that the movements over time implied in the results may be 'real' movements, rather than measurement error. It also gives us greater confidence in the estimates for new scales and new parties.

There do appear to have been some movements in party positions since 1989. Table 1, for example, suggests a move to the right on budgetary policy by the PvdA. The table suggests a rightwards move by PvdA, D66 and VVD on public ownership, an issue that has increased in salience for all parties since 1989, and a modest move towards the centre by the small religious parties. We also see a move away from environmentalism by PvdA, D66 and VVD – quite a striking move in the case of VVD. This policy dimension has also declined in salience for PvdA, CDA and VVD. The other two dimensions that are comparable between 1989 and 1994 are religious policy and policy on abortion and homosexuality. Party positions on these dimensions appear not to have changed. However, the salience of policy on abortion and homosexuality has declined for the PvdA and increased for the religious parties.

The location of new parties on each of the original policy dimensions conforms to what might have been expected, with SP and the Green Left on the Left, CD on the right, while AOV and Unie55+ are in the centre.<sup>8</sup>

Turning to policy scales estimated for the first time in 1994, we can see first that the welfare state scale – highly salient for most parties – generates party positions that are very close indeed to those for budgetary policy, with which it of course bears a strong substantive resemblance. Immigration policy is rated as very salient indeed for the CD, and salient for all of the larger parties, plus SP. Party positions on immigration policy broadly reproduce the left-right ordering found on economic policy, with some important exceptions. The most striking of these relates to the SP, which is much more to the right on immigration;<sup>9</sup> AOV/Unie55+ are also more to the right, while D66 is more to the left.

The other new policy scales order parties in quite different ways. The Eu-

ropean policy scale is striking in lining up all of the big four 'establishment' parties on the pro-European side, with all of the smaller parties appearing as significantly less pro-European. A somewhat similar pattern can be seen in the other foreign policy scale – defined in terms of attitudes towards the United States, though here the PvdA is much closer to the centre and the small religious parties are at the pro-US end of the scale. Finally, the institutional change scale also generates a broadly left-right ordering of parties, though D66 has a very distinctive position at the pro-change end of the scale. This policy dimension is however seen as salient by only a few parties, most notably D66.

Table 2 shows the weighted mean importance of each policy dimension for all parties.<sup>10</sup> From this we can see that the two most important dimensions were identified as welfare policy and tax cuts versus public services, closely followed by European policy, immigration policy, and policy on abortion and homosexuality. The three least important dimensions of those considered were rated as foreign policy (interpreted in terms of the relationship with the USA), institutional change and pro- versus anti-clericalism.

Table 3 reports estimates of the rankings of cabinet portfolios. It gives the mean ranking given by each respondent to each portfolio, and the standard errors of these estimates. As in the previous survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents ranked Finance as the most important portfolio. Next most important are Social Affairs and Economic Affairs, there is no significant difference in ranking between these. After these, in a group, come Justice, Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs. Respondents were also nearly unanimous in ranking the Development Co-operation portfolio as least important in the cabinet. These rankings are quite similar to those in 1989, though the Justice portfolio appears to have increased noticeably in importance. Compared with other European countries, the Netherlands is distinctive in the relatively low ranking given to the Foreign Affairs portfolio and the extremely low ranking given to the Defence portfolio (Laver and Hunt 1992).

#### 5. Dimensional analysis

One of the main reasons to estimate party policy positions is to generate a spatial representation of the Dutch system. This is not as straightforward as it might sound. Just as there is no universally-useful map of the physical world – we use one map for locating oceans and mountain ranges, another for deciding where to plant trees in our garden – there is no universally-useful map of the political world. Indeed we could use the estimates derived from this expert survey to generate many different maps of Dutch politics. One possible spatial representation, of course, is to use all of the data we

have collected to construct a ten-dimensional policy space. This is not, however, a very useful analytical or heuristic tool. Simpler, lower-dimensional, spatial representations tend to be both more tractable analytically and more helpful in giving structure to intuition. I will concentrate here, therefore, on trying to find a low-dimensional spatial representation of Dutch party competition that appears to be useful in structuring discussions of legislative party politics and government formation.

It should be obvious from the discussion in the previous section that the policy scales we have estimated do not reflect entirely independent dimensions of party policy. Indeed some scales are very closely related to each other. There are two distinct methodological issues here. The first has to do with different operational ways of measuring party positions on the same substantive policy dimension. The second has to do with correlations in preferences on substantively different policy dimensions.

We can conjecture on a priori grounds, for example, that two of the scales estimated in this survey may well be different ways of measuring what is in effect the same underlying variable. These are 'tax cuts versus public services' and 'expansion or contraction of welfare state'. The tax cuts versus public services scale was one of the original Laver-Hunt scales. The welfare state scale was added to the present survey because it reflected the terms of debate in the 1994 election campaign in the Netherlands. Substantively, of course, expanding the welfare state and increasing public services may well amount to more or less the same thing. For this reason, the two scales were put at opposite ends of the questionnaire, so that they could also be used to check the consistency of individual expert judgements.

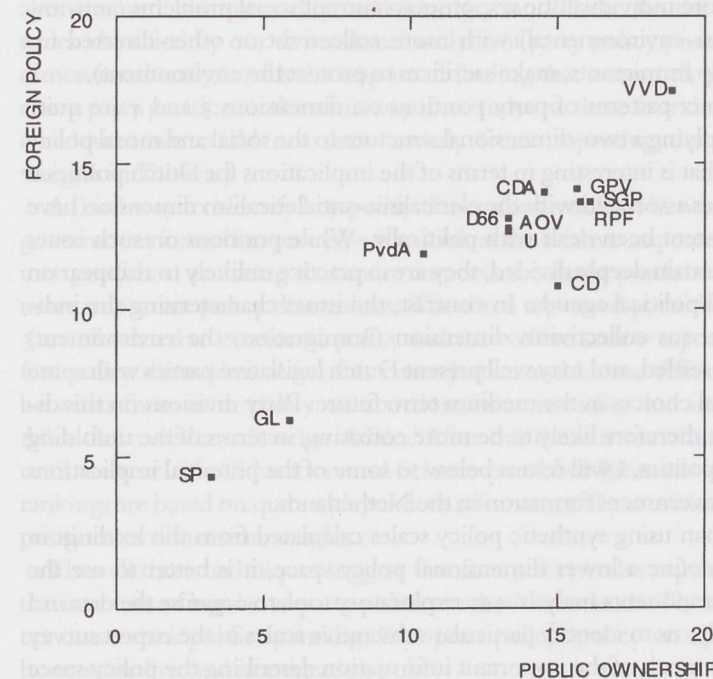
As can be seen from Table 4, which shows Pearson correlations between party positions on each of the ten scales, the correlation between party positions on the scales in question is very high indeed, at 0.97. Party positions on the two scales, indeed, are almost identical. The consistency of expert judgements seems to have been comfortably high! Given the a priori substantive similarity in their content and the very high empirical correlation between them, it makes sense to use only one of these scales. Both are rated as very salient but, despite the fact that the welfare state scale was rated as somewhat the more salient, the tax cuts versus public services scale is used in subsequent discussions to maintain comparability with the earlier Dutch expert survey, and with expert survey results from other countries, reported in Laver and Hunt (1992).

The correlation matrix in Table 4 also shows some very high correlations between party positions on scales that are clearly not tapping the same substantive policy dimension. Consider positions on taxes and on public ownership, two policy dimensions which have substantively different though clearly related meanings. The correlation between party positions on these

scales is very high, at 0.96. We also find high correlations between party positions on scales that have quite independent substantive meanings – for example the foreign policy and public ownership dimensions, at 0.95. What is obviously happening here is that, *as an empirical reality*, party positions on two substantively different policy dimensions are highly correlated.

Such correlations are important empirical findings in their own right, not mere artefacts of a measurement technology that uses two different ways to estimate the same thing. However, there is also a sense in which, when legislative party positions on one scale can be perfectly predicted from positions on some other scale, the second scale adds no new empirical information, for practical purposes, to a spatial representation of legislative party competition. If party positions on two perfectly correlated scales are plotted, they will appear on a diagonal straight line in two dimensional space. To all intents and purposes, the legislative party policy space is unidimensional.<sup>11</sup> An empirical example of this can be seen in Figure 1, which plots party positions on the highly-correlated public ownership and foreign policy dimensions in the Netherlands. The picture of the Dutch legislative party system that is generated from these two substantively different scales is effectively unidimensional.

Figure 1: Public ownership and foreign policy in the Netherlands, 1994



The dimensional structure of the Dutch legislative party policy space is described by the matrix of correlations reported in Table 5.<sup>12</sup> A more intuitive way of presenting this information, however, is to find a lower-dimensional representation that contains most of the information in the ten scales. The data collected offer three different ways of doing this, each briefly described here. The first is to identify a small number of 'underlying' dimensions that the estimated scales are related to. One way to do this is to conduct a principle components analysis of the correlation matrix in Table 4. The results of this are reported in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that almost all of the information in the 10 scales estimated in the survey (97 percent of it, in fact) can be summarised in terms of four underlying policy dimensions, labelled 1-4 in the table. The first dimension is characterised by party positions on the welfare state, public spending and public ownership. This is clearly the classical left-right economic policy dimension. The second dimension is almost exclusively characterised by European policy. The third dimension is characterised by clericalism versus anticlericalism, and by policy on abortion and homosexuality (as well as to a lesser extent by institutional reform). This is clearly the classical clerical-anticlerical dimension. The fourth dimension is characterised by immigration and environmental policy. This represents a second social and moral policy dimension that is quite distinct from clericalism versus anticlericalism. It contrasts more individualistic responses to current social problems (anti-immigrant, anti-environmental) with more collectivist or other-directed responses (help immigrants, make sacrifices to protect the environment).

The distinct patterns of party positions on dimensions 3 and 4 are quite striking, implying a two-dimensional structure to the social and moral policy domain. What is interesting in terms of the implications for Dutch politics is that the issues associated with the clericalism-anticlericalism dimension have to a large extent been dealt with politically. While positions on such issues obviously remain deeply divided, they are in practice unlikely to reappear on the practical political agenda. In contrast, the issues characterising the individualism versus collectivism dimension (immigration, the environment) are far from settled, and may well present Dutch legislative parties with some hard political choices in the medium term future. Party divisions on this dimension are therefore likely to be more corrosive, in terms of the unfolding of practical politics. I will return below to some of the potential implications of this for government formation in the Netherlands.

Rather than using synthetic policy scales calculated from the loadings in Table 5 to define a lower dimensional policy space, it is better to use the principle components analysis as an exploratory tool, to organise the data in a way that helps us to identify particular substantive scales in the expert survey that capture much of the important information describing the policy space

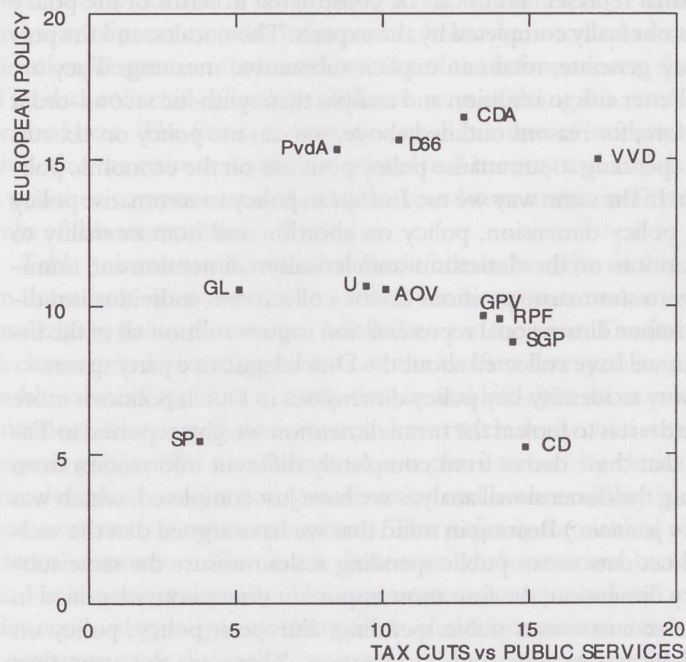
as a whole. This approach has the very important advantage that lower-dimensional spatial representations can be constructed in terms of the policy scales that were actually completed by the experts. These scales, and the policy spaces they generate, retain an explicit substantive meaning. They are therefore far better aids to intuition and analysis than synthetic second-order scales. Therefore, for reasons outlined above, we can use policy on tax cuts versus public spending to summarise policy positions on the economic policy dimension. In the same way we use European policy to summarise policy on a foreign policy dimension, policy on abortion and homosexuality to summarise positions on the clericalism-anticlericalism dimension and immigration policy to summarise positions on the collectivism-individualism dimension. This four dimensional representation captures almost all of the information that we have collected about the Dutch legislative party space.

A second way to identify key policy dimensions in Dutch politics is more straightforward – it is to look at the mean dimension weights reported in Table 2. (Note that these derive from completely different information from that motivating the dimensional analysis we have just completed, which was based on party *positions*.) Bearing in mind that we have argued that the welfare state and tax cuts versus public spending scales measure the same substantive policy dimension, the four most important dimensions identified in Table 2 are: tax cuts versus public spending; European policy; policy on abortion and homosexuality; and immigration. These are the same four scales identified by our dimensional analysis of party policy positions. (This dimensional analysis adds the important finding that not much information about party positions is thrown away if we only use these four dimensions, a conclusion we could not draw merely from inspecting the dimension weights in Table 2.)

A third way to identify key policy dimensions – at least in relation to the government formation process – is to look at the relative importance of cabinet portfolios, assuming that more important cabinet portfolios deal with more important policy dimensions. The three top-rated portfolios in Table 3 are all related to economic policy and the welfare state – captured by our first policy dimension. After this come Justice and Home Affairs – dealing between them with policy on abortion, homosexuality and immigration. After these we have Foreign Affairs. After this there is something of a gap until we reach the Education and Science portfolio. Estimates of portfolio rankings are based on quite independent information from estimates of party positions or dimension weights.

Thus all three techniques suggest that four policy scales capture much of the structure of legislative party politics in the Netherlands. These scales are: tax cuts versus public spending; European policy; policy on abortion and homosexuality; and immigration policy.

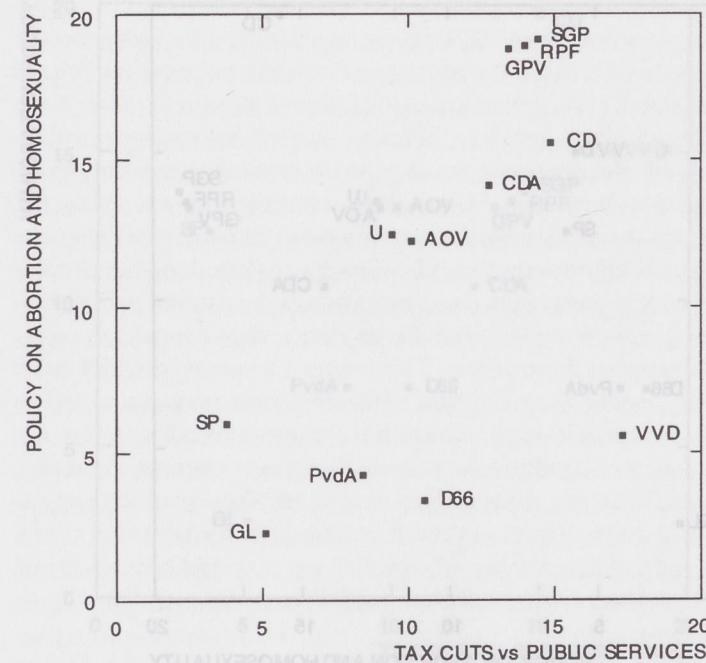
Figure 2: Economic and European policy in the Netherlands, 1994



It is difficult to squash a picture of a four dimensional policy space onto a two dimensional page. Four different two dimensional slices of this space summarise a number of its salient features, however. Figure 2 plots economic policy against European policy and highlights the way in which European policy separates the big four establishment parties from the others. Pro- and anti-European parties can be found on both right and left and there are in effect three left-right scales: a pro-European scale at the top, with the big four parties; an anti-European one at the bottom, with SP and CD; and a neutral one in the middle, with the other small parties.

When we plot economic policy against policy on abortion and homosexuality, in Figure 3, we see a very pure version of the classic picture that distinguishes liberalism from conservatism in western Europe and which is also a very familiar portrayal of the ideological structure of the 'traditional' Dutch party system. The most striking feature of this picture is of course the position of the VVD, conservative on economic policy but liberal on the clerical-anticlerical dimension. To a lesser extent D66 follows a similar pattern. The expert data do refine this picture somewhat, however, as the two dimensional picture they generate can be seen as defining two distinct groups of parties. In the lower part there is a left-right economic axis of anticlerical

Figure 3: Economic policy and policy on abortion and homosexuality in the Netherlands, 1994

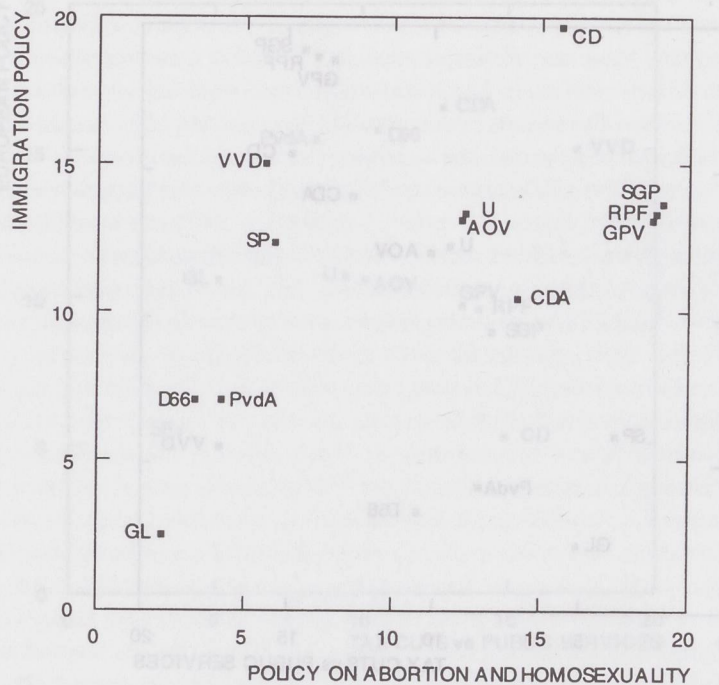


parties; in the upper part, there is a cluster of more pro-clerical parties, in which there is some relationship between party positions on economic policy and policy on social and moral issues – with the CDA and the parties representing the elderly (AOV and Unie 55+) being more moderate on both dimensions than the more fundamentalist religious parties.

A far more striking departure from the traditional picture of Dutch party politics can be seen in Figure 4 however, which, plots policy on abortion and homosexuality against immigration policy. While there is some correlation between the two – no party that is conservative on abortion and homosexuality is liberal on immigration – there are some notable outliers. The most striking of these are the VVD and SP, both rated as liberal on abortion and homosexuality and conservative on immigration. The CD is more conservative on immigration than might be predicted from its policy on abortion and homosexuality. In contrast, all religious parties are less conservative on immigration than might be predicted from their policies on abortion and homosexuality.

Figure 4 thus shows the implications for the structure of the Dutch party system of the distinction between the two underlying dimensions in the social and moral policy domain. Most strikingly, the economically conserva-

Figure 4: Immigration policy and policy on abortion and homosexuality in the Netherlands, 1994

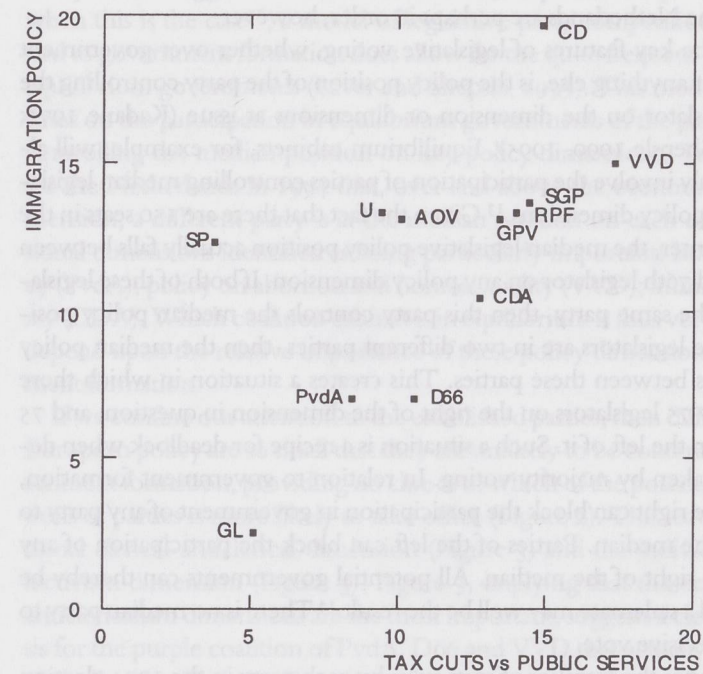


tive VVD, whose position to the left of the clericalism dimension might be thought of as one of the defining features of the traditional Dutch party system, appears on the right of the 'new' individualist-collectivist dimension. If this latter dimension is rising in importance, relative to the traditional clericalism dimension, then this has quite radical implications for the structure of Dutch legislative party politics, a matter to which I will return below.

Finally, Figure 5 plots the relationship between economic and immigration policy. From this we can see the key feature that distinguishes the clericalism-anticlericalism and individualist-collectivist dimensions – parties with right-wing positions on economic policy also have right-wing positions on immigration. The result is that the empirical structure of party positions looks much more unidimensional.

This trend is particularly clear-cut among the established parties. Looking a little closer at the figure, however, it is also clear that the main trend among the outliers is for some of the newer parties to have a much more conservative policy on immigration than would be predicted from their economic policies. Indeed, there are almost two distinct axes of competition, a mainstream diagonal axis containing the established parties and an axis above this

Figure 5: Economic and immigration policy in the Netherlands, 1994



– comprising SP, AOV, Unie 55+, and CD – all with more conservative immigration policies than might be predicted from their economic policies. This implies that the individualism versus collectivism dimension may contribute to the definition of the Dutch party space in two quite distinct ways. The first, which have already noted, is the identification of a set of unresolved political issues in the social and moral policy domain on which party positions are highly correlated to their positions on the economic policy dimension. The second is that this dimension identifies a set of newer parties (SP, U, AOV, CD) that occupy an area of the policy space that distinguishes them from the more traditional Dutch parties. This potentially explains the entry of the newer parties into the system, and suggests an avenue of research into changes in the structure of preferences in the electorate.

## 6. Discussion

What is the point of all this? The most important point, given the prevalence of spatial models of party competition in contemporary political science, is to

provide an empirical update of the spatial map of Dutch legislative party politics. A few words about the implications of these results for government formation in the Netherlands are perhaps in order, however.

One of the key features of legislative voting, whether over government formation or anything else, is the policy position of the party controlling the median legislator on the dimension or dimensions at issue (Kadane 1971; Laver and Shepsle 1990, 1995). Equilibrium cabinets, for example, will almost certainly involve the participation of parties controlling median legislators on key policy dimensions.<sup>13</sup> Given the fact that there are 150 seats in the Tweede Kamer, the median legislative policy position actually falls between the 75th and 76th legislator on any policy dimension. If both of these legislators are in the same party, then this party controls the median policy position. If these legislators are in two different parties, then the median policy position falls between these parties. This creates a situation in which there are precisely 75 legislators on the right of the dimension in question, and 75 legislators on the left of it. Such a situation is a recipe for deadlock when decisions are taken by majority voting. In relation to government formation, parties to the right can block the participation in government of any party to the left of the median. Parties of the left can block the participation of any party to the right of the median. All potential governments can thereby be blocked and a stalemate may well be the result.<sup>14</sup> There is no median party to exercise a decisive vote.

Table 1 uses the number of seats won by each party in the 1994 election to identify the party controlling the median policy position on each policy dimension – highlighted in bold italic type. It might be thought that situations in which sets of parties on both the right and the left of a key policy dimension each have exactly fifty percent of the seats, so that no single party controls the median policy position, would be pathological and rare. As Table 1 shows, however, *this situation was produced by the 1994 Dutch election for no fewer than four of the ten policy scales that were estimated* – tax cuts versus services; public ownership; welfare state policy; and environmental policy. (In these tables, *both* parties straddling the median are identified in bold type.) As we have seen, the first three of these scales characterise what is clearly the most important policy dimension in Dutch politics. This situation is the product of an interaction between the policy positions of each of the parties and an election result which meant that a number of combinations of parties controlled exactly 75 seats between them.<sup>15</sup>

If only economic policy was important to government formation in the Netherlands, then this implies that the government must contain both D66 and CDA, the parties straddling the median position on economic policy. When more than one dimension of policy is important, as is clearly implied by the dimensional analyses in the previous section, then the situation gets

far more complicated. While the general spatial model of legislative party competition suggests that there will be no equilibrium policy outcome when this is the case<sup>16</sup>, a model of legislative party competition specifically tied to government formation does allow for the quite frequent possibility of equilibrium governments (Laver and Shepsle, 1995). This model lays heavy stress on the participation in equilibrium governments of the party or parties controlling the median position on key policy dimensions. Table 1 shows for the Netherlands in 1994 that, over and above the economic policy dimension, a different party is at the median position on each of those additional dimensions identified as being particularly important: European policy (PvdA); policy on abortion and homosexuality (VVD); immigration policy (CDA). Which coalition cabinet is in equilibrium is thus very likely to be depend upon the relative importance of these policy dimensions to government formation.

If we confine our attention to the established parties, then differences over European policy are so small that they are unlikely to be contentious in government formation, providing no clue as to which of the potential combinations of parties is more likely to take office (Figure 2). This leaves the traditional clerical-anticlerical dimension (Figure 3) and the individualism-collectivism dimension (Figure 5). Figure 3, implying that the economic and anticlericalism dimensions are the most important, suggests a clear policy basis for the purple coalition of PvdA, D66 and VVD that actually took office, excluding the Christian Democrats from government for the first time since World War 1. While PvdA is more or less indifferent to (equidistant from) VVD and CDA as potential coalition partners, D66 is clearly closer to VVD. Given the traditional ideological structure of the Dutch party system, the possibility of a coalition uniting VVD and PvdA to exclude CDA has clearly been lurking on the agenda for some time. The deadlocked election result of 1994 might be seen as a stimulus for the realisation of this possibility.

As we have already noted, however, the anticlericalism dimension comprises for the most part issues that had already been resolved politically by 1994, and which were unlikely to present the government forming at that time with any serious political decisions. Thus, while this dimension might superficially have appeared to be an attractive basis for policy agreement between the coalition partners, such agreement could well be of limited *practical* relevance for the political life of the government.

This possibility highlights a very important and hitherto neglected point about the relative importance of different policy dimensions. The effective political salience of any policy dimension for a particular time and context depends upon the de facto decision making agenda. Agreement between political actors on a dimension characterising issues which are not on the agenda may have little practical political relevance. Disagreement between

actors on issues on which decisions just cannot be avoided obviously has much greater salience. The de facto political agenda is obviously to a great extent an endogenous product of political interaction itself – government parties, for example, can agree to sideline issues on which they disagree. The big bad world cannot be entirely bargained away by political actors, however. External forces (most obviously deriving from the international political and economic system) may simply force the need to make decisions on certain issues onto the agenda. Policy disagreements on such issues will bear greatly on the birth, life and death of governments.

Arguing along these lines in the Dutch context, it might well be felt that the individualism–collectivism dimension, characterised by issues such as immigration and the environment, was likely to present any government forming in 1994 with some tough political choices. Figure 5, shows the picture of the Dutch party system showing this dimension, together with economic policy, as the most important to government formation.

The striking feature of this picture is the pivotal position of the CDA, at the median position on immigration and one of two parties beside the median position on economic policy. It is this very difficult to see how the CDA can be excluded from any equilibrium government, assuming the de facto salience of these dimensions. This implies that if Figure 5 is the most appropriate portrayal of the Dutch party space, then any government excluding the CDA is likely to be out of equilibrium.<sup>17</sup> This further implies that the purple coalition that formed in 1994 should be relatively short-lived.

In short, any analysis of government formation in the Netherlands after the 1994 election is bound to be very sensitive to the precise empirical characterisation of the Dutch legislative policy space that is adopted. This is not merely a methodological issue. In the Netherlands in 1994, giving different saliency weights to different policy dimensions often implies different equilibrium cabinets. In such a situation, as political events unfold, changing the relative importance of different dimensions, this seems very likely to undermine the equilibrium position of any incumbent cabinet. In short, the interaction of the policy positions reported in Table 1 and the election results of 1994 imply a period during which it will prove difficult both to build *and particularly to maintain* a coalition cabinet in the Netherlands.

## Notes

1. The author is grateful to Monique Leijenaar and Peter Mair for comments and suggestions on the draft survey form and an earlier version of this paper.
2. Scale positions ranged from 1 to 20
3. A copy of the survey form is available from the author.
4. These tables are arranged in the order in which the scales that they deal with ap-

peared in the questionnaire.

5. The survey was mailed on 18 May 1994, with a covering letter and a pre-addressed return envelope. Those who has not replied were sent a reminder on 6 July 1994, with another copy of the survey form.

6. University of Amsterdam, Free University of Amsterdam, University of Leiden and University of Nijmegen.

7. The original Laver–Hunt survey conducted an extensive series of bias checks to assess whether individual expert estimates of party positions were correlated with the ideological position of the respondent. This found very little evidence of bias among experts (Laver and Hunt, 1992: 123–132). Accordingly, and since the bias check involved including a controversial question about respondents' personal political orientations on the survey form, this part of the analysis was not repeated in 1994, and the 1989 bias finding are taken still to apply.

8. As the Ns in the tables show, response rates were rather lower for Unie 55+ and AOV.

9. However, note that, as the standard errors in Table 6 show, respondents were much less in agreement on the SP's position on immigration than they were for other parties.

10. For each dimension this is calculated as  $\sum_i i_p w_p$ , where  $i_p$  is the estimated importance attached to the dimension by party  $p$ , and  $w_p$  is the proportion of legislative seats controlled by party  $p$ .

11. In other contexts, of course, if legislative parties are on this straight line and voters are located somewhere else, then the fact that there are attractive places for new parties to enter the system is vital information. In that context, the possibility that the one dimensional configuration of legislative parties is set in a two dimensional electoral policy space may well be critical. This example provides a good political illustration of why no one spatial map of a party system is suitable for all purposes.

12. Note that Tables 13 and 14 based on an analysis that treats each party as an unweighted case. In other words, all parties are considered equal, regardless of their legislative weight. The logic of this is that, if a party promotes a policy position and wins at least some legislative representation, then this policy position is on the agenda of legislative politics, even though some policy positions command greater support than others. Precisely *why* some positions command greater support than others may well be one of the things we wish to use the policy space to investigate. For this reason, the unweighted analysis is considered, on a priori grounds, to be superior.

Once more, the methodological issue of whether cases should be weighted or unweighted in exploratory dimensional analyses used to derive policy spaces shows quite clearly that no single spatial map summarises all of the information we might be interested in and highlights the fact that every spatial representation is a *substantive interpretation* of the data rather than an *objective summary* of them.

13. If only one dimension is important, and if the cabinet does not contain the median legislator's party, then the opportunity exists for a majority coalition of parties on one side or the other of the median, and including the median party, to defeat it. A generalisation of this type of argument in the government formation context to multidimensional policy spaces can be found in Laver and Shepsle (1990, 1995).

14. Of course there will always be a government formally in office. In the event of a stalemate over government formation, however, this is likely to be a caretaker administration with no powers of policy innovation (Laver and Shepsle, 1995).

15. Intriguingly, it is a situation that the original Downsian model of unidimensional

party competition would predict to arise in party systems with an even number of legislative parties.

16. See Laver and Schofield (1990) for a review of the literature that developed this argument.

17. According to the model developed by Laver and Shepsle (1995), the CDA is a 'strong party', that belongs to every equilibrium government; according to Schofield, the CDA is a 'core party' (at least considering only the established parties), whose ideal point should determine government policy, and which there is therefore no point in excluding from government (see Laver and Schofield (1990) for a non-technical elaboration of the notion of a core party). On either interpretation, if Figure 5 is right, the CDA should be in any equilibrium government.

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Appendix

Table 1: Party positions and saliency weightings: the Netherlands, 1994

Dimension 1: Promote raising taxes to increase public services (low) versus cutting public services to cut taxes (high)      Dimension 2: Oppose close relationship with United States (low) versus Promote close relationship with United States (high)

Party position	1994 N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean	Party position	1994 N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
SP	27	3.81	0.57		SP	25	4.40	0.62	
GL	27	5.15	0.51		GL	27	6.30	0.55	
PvdA	27	8.48	0.53	5.79	CD	23	10.83	1.01	
Unie55+	23	9.43	0.86		PvdA	27	11.96	0.47	
AOV	25	10.08	0.85		AOV	24	12.67	0.77	
<b>D66</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10.56</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>10.36</b>	Unie55+	23	12.83	0.61	
<b>CDA</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12.70</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>13.57</b>	<b>D66</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13.19</b>	<b>0.48</b>	
GPV	25	13.44	0.46	14.83	RPF	26	13.65	0.81	
RPF	25	13.92	0.45	16.17	SGP	26	13.73	0.83	
SGP	24	14.42	0.54	16.00	CDA	27	14.04	0.58	
CD	25	14.88	0.57		GPV	25	14.12	0.70	
VVD	26	17.31	0.37	17.36	VVD	27	17.41	0.43	

Dimension weight	1994 N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean	Dimension weight	1994 N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
CD	26	9.19	1.13		Unie55+	23	4.22	0.62	
SGP	25	9.52	0.75	7.82	CD	24	4.79	0.64	
GPV	25	9.88	0.82	6.91	AOV	24	5.00	0.80	
RPF	25	10.00	0.89	7.91	SP	26	9.81	0.93	
Unie55+	22	10.73	1.24		RPF	26	9.85	0.84	
AOV	24	11.13	1.16		SGP	26	9.96	0.85	
D66	26	12.35	0.67	12.00	GPV	26	10.00	0.83	
GL	26	13.27	0.90		D66	24	11.46	0.79	
CDA	27	14.37	0.62	13.77	PvdA	27	11.67	0.79	
PvdA	27	14.93	0.67	15.08	GL	26	11.77	0.92	
SP	24	15.21	0.99		CDA	27	12.04	0.95	
VVD	27	18.11	0.33	16.92	VVD	27	15.04	0.73	

Dimension 3: Promote public ownership of business and industry (low) versus Oppose public ownership of business and industry (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
SP	25	3.20	0.44	
GL	25	5.92	0.54	
PvdA	25	10.40	0.57	8.31
AOV	21	13.29	0.79	
Unie55+	20	13.30	0.84	
<b>D66</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13.32</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>11.69</b>
<b>CDA</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14.50</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>13.85</b>
CD	23	14.96	0.91	
GPV	24	15.58	0.56	17.20
RPF	24	15.71	0.61	17.27
SGP	24	16.04	0.67	17.64
VVD	25	18.80	0.31	16.92

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
Unie55+	21	4.76	0.98	
AOV	22	4.91	0.92	
CD	23	5.57	0.92	
RPF	24	9.17	0.73	6.88
GPV	24	9.21	0.72	6.22
SGP	24	9.33	0.74	6.22
D66	25	10.40	0.75	8.73
PvdA	25	11.96	0.66	11.18
CDA	25	12.36	0.75	9.90
GL	25	14.04	0.77	
SP	24	15.63	0.80	
VVD	25	16.08	0.91	12.91

Dimension 4: Oppose close relationship with European Union (low) versus Promote close relationship with European Union (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
CD	24	5.29	0.89	
SP	27	5.52	0.87	
SGP	27	8.81	0.81	
RPF	27	9.56	0.88	
GPV	27	9.67	0.87	
GL	27	10.56	1.01	
AOV	25	10.64	0.64	
Unie55+	24	10.67	0.67	
VVD	27	15.04	0.56	
<b>PvdA</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15.41</b>	<b>0.45</b>	
D66	26	15.73	0.41	
CDA	27	16.48	0.45	

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
AOV	25	5.28	0.76	
Unie55+	24	5.38	0.78	
CD	24	9.00	1.01	
SGP	25	10.36	0.79	
RPF	25	10.52	0.78	
GPV	25	10.56	0.80	
SP	26	11.50	0.88	
GL	25	12.64	0.78	
VVD	26	13.88	0.85	
D66	26	14.19	0.84	
PvdA	27	14.30	0.77	
CDA	25	15.24	0.79	

Dimension 5: Promote permissive policies on abortion and homosexuality (low) versus Oppose permissive policies on abortion and homosexuality (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
GL	27	2.26	0.31	
D66	27	3.37	0.32	3.93
PvdA	27	4.26	0.39	4.00
<b>VVD</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>5.63</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>6.13</b>
SP	23	6.04	0.89	
AOV	22	12.27	0.62	
Unie55+	21	12.43	0.61	
CDA	27	14.19	0.40	14.80
CD	24	15.63	0.73	
GPV	27	18.78	0.28	19.15
RPF	27	18.85	0.28	19.31
SGP	27	19.07	0.30	19.39

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
AOV	24	6.67	1.04	
Unie55+	23	6.70	1.11	
CD	23	8.43	1.30	
SP	23	8.87	0.97	
VVD	27	11.93	0.70	13.00
PvdA	27	12.67	0.72	16.07
D66	27	13.63	0.92	15.14
CDA	27	14.89	0.67	14.69
GL	27	15.37	0.69	
GPV	27	18.19	0.47	14.00
RPF	27	18.33	0.43	14.82
SGP	27	18.41	0.43	14.00

Dimension 6: Accept immigration and promote policies helping immigrants (low) versus Oppose immigration and oppose any policies helping immigrants (-high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
GL	27	2.48	0.33	
D66	27	7.04	0.51	
PvdA	27	7.07	0.55	
<b>CDA</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10.46</b>	<b>0.45</b>	
SP	24	12.38	1.18	
AOV	23	13.13	0.63	
GPV	26	13.15	0.58	
RPF	26	13.35	0.68	
Unie55+	22	13.36	0.69	
SGP	26	13.69	0.57	
VVD	26	15.00	0.46	
CD	27	19.70	0.12	

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
AOV	25	7.68	1.05	
Unie55+	24	8.33	1.04	
SGP	25	9.76	0.77	
GPV	25	10.00	0.83	
RPF	25	10.28	0.84	
CDA	25	12.76	0.57	
PvdA	27	12.85	0.74	
D66	26	13.04	0.58	
SP	25	13.84	0.79	
VVD	26	15.96	0.54	
GL	26	16.23	0.66	
CD	27	19.74	0.11	

Dimension 7: Promote environmental protection, even if this slows economic growth (low) *versus* Promote economic growth, even if this damages environment (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
GL	27	2.07	0.27	
SP	24	6.79	1.07	
D66	27	7.44	0.54	4.54
PvdA	27	9.07	0.46	6.07
RPF	25	11.32	0.82	10.67
GPV	25	11.40	0.79	10.00
<b>SGP</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12.40</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>10.62</b>
<b>Unies55+</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12.52</b>	<b>0.55</b>	
AOV	24	12.67	0.52	
CDA	26	12.81	0.61	10.00
CD	24	14.63	0.71	
VVD	27	15.96	0.57	10.93

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
AOV	26	5.38	0.74	
CD	25	5.44	0.84	
Unies55+	25	5.48	0.77	
SGP	25	8.92	0.82	10.08
GPV	25	10.32	0.88	10.08
RPF	25	10.32	0.85	10.38
CDA	26	11.77	0.55	13.43
VVD	27	12.19	0.82	14.21
SP	24	13.04	1.02	
PvdA	27	13.44	0.54	16.00
D66	27	15.44	0.43	16.21
GL	27	19.15	0.19	

Dimension 8: Strongly anti-clerical (low) *versus* Strongly pro-clerical (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
SP	24	3.04	0.41	
GL	27	5.56	0.58	
D66	27	6.07	0.55	6.31
VVD	26	7.31	0.63	7.31
<b>PvdA</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>7.44</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>7.31</b>
CD	24	8.42	0.63	
AOV	24	12.25	0.35	
Unies55+	23	12.35	0.37	
CDA	27	15.52	0.43	15.39
GPV	27	19.11	0.22	20.00
RPF	27	19.15	0.19	19.73
SGP	27	19.52	0.15	20.00

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
CD	24	4.54	0.70	
SP	25	6.28	0.76	
VVD	26	6.92	0.62	5.62
PvdA	27	7.00	0.55	6.00
D66	27	7.70	0.72	5.82
AOV	25	7.96	1.03	
Unies55+	24	8.25	1.09	
GL	26	8.46	1.95	
CDA	27	15.67	0.47	12.69
GPV	27	19.37	0.19	17.82
RPF	27	19.44	0.15	18.64
SGP	27	19.52	0.15	18.91

Dimension 9: Promote institutional change as a solution to problems (low) *versus* Argue problems can be solved using existing institutions (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
D66	27	3.11	0.53	
GL	26	5.92	0.73	
SP	25	6.52	1.02	
PvdA	27	8.15	0.64	
CD	23	10.87	1.15	
Unies55+	24	12.75	0.62	
<b>AOV</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12.80</b>	<b>0.64</b>	
VVD	27	14.15	0.72	
CDA	27	14.22	0.64	
RPF	27	14.81	0.78	
SGP	27	14.85	0.78	
GPV	27	14.89	0.61	

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
AOV	25	5.44	0.61	
Unies55+	24	5.50	0.64	
CD	26	7.00	0.85	
GPV	27	8.15	0.74	
SGP	27	8.70	0.82	
RPF	27	8.74	0.82	
CDA	27	8.85	0.71	
VVD	27	9.07	0.68	
SP	27	11.30	1.00	
PvdA	27	11.30	0.72	
GL	26	13.54	0.84	
D66	27	17.56	0.72	

Dimension 10: Promote expansion of existing welfare benefits (low) *versus* Promote cutting back of existing welfare benefits (high)

Party position	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
SP	27	3.26	0.43	
GL	27	4.74	0.45	
AOV	26	7.88	0.83	
Unies55+	25	7.96	0.86	
PvdA	27	10.11	0.57	
<b>D66</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>11.63</b>	<b>0.34</b>	
<b>GPV</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13.38</b>	<b>0.48</b>	
CDA	27	13.67	0.40	
RPF	26	13.69	0.45	
SGP	26	14.35	0.49	
CD	24	15.17	0.81	
VVD	27	17.41	0.42	

Dimension weight	N	1994 Mean	1994 SE	1989 Mean
CD	22	10.73	1.08	
RPF	25	11.72	0.57	
GPV	25	11.76	0.54	
D66	26	14.04	0.53	
CDA	26	15.81	0.42	
SGP	25	15.96	4.41	
GL	26	16.65	0.57	
VVD	26	16.69	0.61	
PvdA	26	16.73	0.46	
Unies55+	24	17.04	0.62	
AOV	25	17.08	0.59	
SP	26	17.88	0.52	



Table 5: Varimax rotated principle components analysis of party policy positions

ROTATED LOADINGS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WELFARE STATE	0.931	0.101	0.221	0.223	0.008	-0.136	-0.069	0.002	-0.009	0.020
TAXATION	0.896	0.022	0.294	0.318	0.084	-0.004	0.030	0.016	0.012	0.027
PUBLIC OWNERSHIP	0.830	0.182	0.363	0.323	0.025	0.182	0.089	-0.014	-0.008	0.006
FOREIGN POLICY	0.734	0.460	0.313	0.293	0.050	0.251	-0.022	0.002	0.004	-0.001
ENVIRONMENT	0.550	0.044	0.261	0.785	0.083	0.033	0.021	0.057	-0.000	0.001
EUROPEAN POLICY	0.248	0.950	-0.137	-0.133	0.000	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.000	0.000
RELIGIOUS POLICY	0.284	0.023	0.955	0.044	0.020	0.065	-0.018	-0.004	0.024	-0.004
ABORTION & HOMOS.	0.263	-0.317	0.856	0.293	0.076	-0.053	0.032	0.008	-0.037	0.006
INSTITUTIONAL REF.	0.336	0.004	0.717	0.456	0.406	0.016	0.001	-0.001	0.001	-0.000
IMMIGRATION	0.369	-0.472	0.201	0.772	-0.011	0.001	-0.018	0.062	-0.003	-0.001
VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY ROTATED COMPONENTS										
	3.661	1.483	2.652	1.866	0.188	0.123	0.016	0.008	0.002	0.001
PERCENT OF TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED										
	36.612	14.825	26.515	18.660	1.879	1.234	0.163	0.077	0.022	0.012

## Economisch kiesgedrag in België

Bart Maddens

### 1. Inleiding: modellen van economisch kiesgedrag

Dat er een verband bestaat tussen de economische conjunctuur en de politieke voorkeur van de burger kan worden afgeleid uit de analyse van geaggregeerde data. Om te weten op welke manier de individuele kiezer de economische factoren betreft bij zijn partijkeuze moeten we ons echter op survey-data baseren. In dit artikel maken we gebruik van de data van het Belgische kiesonderzoek van 1991 om een aantal alternatieve modellen van economisch kiesgedrag tegen elkaar af te wegen<sup>1</sup>.

#### 1.1 De persoonlijke versus de algemene welvaart

Intuïtief zou men geneigd zijn te denken dat de kiezer een aantal tastbare elementen uit het dagelijks leven als basis neemt om de economische competentie van de regering te beoordelen. Is zijn koopkracht stabiel gebleven tijdens de voorbije legislatuur? Is hij al dan niet werkloos geworden? Heeft hij meer of minder belastingen moeten betalen? Dit is harde en eenvoudige informatie die de kiezer kosteloos ter beschikking heeft en die dus allicht meer invloed zal hebben op de partijvoorkeur dan droge cijfers en statistieken over de algemene economische conjunctuur. Eigenaardig genoeg wijzen alle onderzoeksresultaten in de tegenovergestelde richting. Weliswaar maakt de persoonlijke situatie enig verschil uit, maar de dominante factor is de perceptie van de algemene economische toestand. De kiezer blijkt niet 'egocentric', maar 'sociotropic' georiënteerd, in de terminologie van Kinder en Kiewiet (1981).

In de *Verenigde Staten* wordt er als verklaring voor dit fenomeen meestal naar de zogenaamde 'ethic of self-reliance' verwezen. De meeste burgers leggen de verantwoordelijkheid voor hun materiële welstand of armoede in eerste instantie bij zichzelf. De minderheid die toch vindt dat de overheid daar een hand in heeft stemt zijn partijkeuze inderdaad meer af op schom-