Do Radical Right Parties Steer the Political Immigration Debate in the Netherlands?


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Abstract

Scholarly literature on the impact of radical right parties on other parties is very divided. Using the Netherlands as a case study, this research adds to the literature by testing five hypotheses that were derived from prior research. Specifically, this research asks: how does the rise of radical right parties influence the immigration positions of other parties in the Netherlands? The study breaks new ground by going beyond earlier work that is largely based on large-n methods. Moreover, this research is unique in its timeframe (2006 – 2015/16), which enables to include the recent, sudden intensification of the immigration debate. Because of this, the difference between what could possibly be the effect of the rising radical right party, or what is caused by underlying societal changes, was studied. This led to the conclusion that the actual effect of radical right parties is easily overstated, and is sometimes mistaken for the effect of changes in public concern. Differentiating between parties’ immigration positions, and the extent to which they emphasise this, is important. The conclusion is that not the rise of a radical right party, but the growing public concern about immigration and integration is the main reason why the immigration debate in the Netherlands intensified as parties of all ideological stripes speak up more loudly than before. This being said, in terms of immigration position, the right wing parties seem to be more vulnerable for the contagious effect of electoral pressures from radical right parties than the other parties in the spectrum.
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I have learned a thing since I have been a politician. We have supported a government, we have been a member of the opposition. At the moment the PVV has 0.0 power, but a lot of influence. You do not need power to have a lot of influence.

– Geert Wilders (NOS, 11-05-2014)
Introduction

Radical right parties are on the rise all throughout Europe. Even in countries where these parties have little history, such as Sweden and the United Kingdom, the Central Democrats and UK Independence Party are gaining popularity. While a vast amount of literature has been written on the reasons for the emergence of these parties, far less has been written about the possible impact this could have on other parties in the spectrum. Moreover, research in this field is very divided. In order to understand the impact of rising radical right parties on national politics, more in-depth analyses are needed. Studying the immigration positions of all national parties in a country can tell something about the direction of the debate. As remarked by Burgoon (2009, p.172), research on the development of the political immigration debate should “canvass parties of varying ideological stripes, not just extremist outliers”. This contributes to the understanding of strategic party behaviour in reaction to the rise of radical right parties, and party competition in general, and will help to examine trends in the political immigration debate. The aim of this research is to examine how the rise of radical right parties influences the political immigration debate.

Trying to group the different newly emerging parties in Europe under the same definition turned out to be difficult, not in the least due to linguistic and historical differences among the countries (Mudde, 2007). While the English would simply refer to extreme right and radical right parties as far right, the French, Germans and Dutch have more difficulty with this. Also a party’s cultural history influences how it is called in the national media. For instance, in France, where the Front National has extremist roots and some anti-Semitic members, it is often referred to as extreme right by other parties and in national media. In the Netherlands on the other hand, Party for the Freedom (PVV) leader Geert Wilders gets furious when he is called extreme right (Volkskrant, 2013, September 25), and in national newspapers this term is hardly used (van Outeren, 2016). This is contrasted by international newspapers who use very different words to describe the PVV. Examples are Right-populist (Der Spiegel, Germany), Anti-EU (Die Presse. Austria), Extreme Right (De Standaard, Belgium, and Le Monde, France) and Xenophobe-Right and Anti-Muslim (La Repubblica, Italy) (Van Outeren, 2016).

Political scientists often rely on the renowned work of Cas Mudde called Populist radical right parties in Europe (2007), who makes a distinction between extreme right and radical right. The extreme right parties are anti-democratic, and often glorify violence. An example is the Greek party Golden Dawn. The radical right party-family is defined as nativist, authoritarian and populist. Nativism – the combination of nationalism and xenophobia – is the key ideological feature of these
parties (Mudde, 2007, p. 22). Simply put, parties are nativist if they see newcomers as a threat to the national homogenous culture (see Akkerman and Rooduijn, 2015 for more specific examples of policy agendas of typical radical right parties). In case of the Dutch PVV, although its positions might be extreme, this does not make it an extreme right party. According to the definitions by Mudde (2007), its falls in the category of radical right parties. In an interview with NRC, he mentioned that the best scientific name for the PVV would be populist authoritarian nativist, but, he adds, even for academic discussions, this term is too long (Van Outeren, 2016). For sake of clarity, henceforth these parties will be referred to as radical right parties. Important to note is that the socio-economic policies of a radical right party do not necessarily have to be right wing. General consensus is that the core characteristic of these parties is their anti-immigration stance, and the large emphasis put on this issue (Mudde, 2007; 2011; Spanje, van, 2010; Davis, 2012; Akkerman & Rooduijn, 2015; and Bolin, 2015).

The electoral success of these radical right parties does not stay unnoticed by the other political parties in the country. Some of them lose votes to this party, and moreover, their progression is a clear sign of discontent among the people. One way or the other, parties have to respond to this change. How parties make strategic decisions is widely discussed in the literature, and originally knows two traditions: spatial competition and issue competition (Abou-Chadi, 2014). The first focusses on the policy positions parties take, while the second argues that parties also compete by emphasizing different issues. More recently, these two traditions have often been combined in studies on party behaviour (Super, 2015).

Although the rise of radical right parties is a recent phenomenon, its possible effects on the other political parties has received considerable academic attention. However, the conclusions are far from unanimous. Some authors conclude that all parties adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party gains seats (i.a. Bolin, 2015; Davis, 2012; Karamanidou, 2015; Schain, 1997; Spanje, van, 2010). Other disagree, and find that only mainstream right wing parties adopt stricter immigration positions, while left wing parties hold on to their position or adopt a more lenient position (i.a. Brug, van der, et. al., 2009; Abou-Chadi, 2014; Heerden, van, et. al., 2014; Akkerman, 2015; Han, 2015). Yet another group of authors sees a difference between entrepreneurs (green parties and market liberals) who adopt extreme positions on immigration and emphasise this strongly, and the ‘Goldilocks’ (Christian parties and Social Democrats) who adopt average positions and emphasise it weakly (i.a. Duncan and van Hecke, 2008; Super, 2015; Rooduijn, 2016). Additionally, the place of the immigration issue in the political spectrum is
unclear. Does this issue create a new dimension, or is it absorbed in the left-right divide? And does this mean that new parties take more extreme positions and increasingly emphasise the immigration issue because they are more able to position themselves on this new dimension? The final group of authors is sceptical of the influence of radical right parties and argue that political parties are more responsive to ‘real-world’ changes than to increasing vote share of radical right parties (i.a. Mudde, 2012; Bale & Partos, 2014; Akkerman, 2015).

A possible reason for the variety in conclusions is that most of the research in this field is based on large-n analyses. Judging the value of these different theories calls for more precise, in-depth analyses, such as a case study. Only through in-debt analyses can questions of timing and sequence be addressed. Akkerman (2015, p.63) adds that, because “mainstream parties do not have coherent positions, but follow strategies that mix cosmopolitan with nationalist positions”, it is very difficult to measure the impact of populist radical right parties based on large-n studies, or over a long period of time.

So far, few case-studies have been carried out on this topic. Some rare examples are Bolin (2015), on the Impact of the Swedish populist radical right on the immigration agendas of the established parties, Bale and Partos (2014), on the reason why conservative parties change policy on migration in the United Kingdom, and Karamanidou (2015) and Massetti (2015), on political party positions and immigration in Greece and Italy, respectively. Another interesting exception is Bale et. al. (2010). Their study the of political positioning of social democratic parties in response to rising radical right parties is explorative of nature, and asks what the challenges and responses of social democratic parties are. They construct four qualitative one-country case studies, as they argue that only through process tracing questions of timing and sequence can be addressed. In their own words (Bale et. al., 2010, p.411), “the question of timing and sequencing would appear to be crucial and this can only be captured by process tracing which takes context – including the role played by parties other than on the social democratic left and radical populist right – into account”.

The Netherlands is an interesting case for different reasons. First of all, the Netherlands was one of the first Western European countries where anti-immigration parties emerged (van Heerden et al., 2014). Moreover, the first radical right party in Europe to gain parliamentary representation was the Dutch Centrum Partij (Centre Party) in 1982. Also, the Netherlands has a proportional electoral system with low thresholds, and knows many small parties in parliament. Especially in the left flank, this resulted in high competition and many choices for strategic
positioning (Bale et. al., 2010). This fragmented nature allows the examining of the response of parties with different ideological orientations to the rise of radical right parties (Heerden et al., 2014). Davis (2012, p.17) argues that this multiparty system even fostered the rise of radical right parties, because when a system has many small parties, there are “lower levels of competition for the median voter, which leads to higher opportunities for parties to cluster together on the immigration issue, an anti-immigrant gap to come into existence, and an anti-immigration party to emerge strongly”.

Another aspect that makes the Netherlands worth studying is its remarkable policy changes regarding immigration and multiculturalism. Previously, the Netherlands had “rejected the coercive-assimilationist or ius sanguinis-exclusive approaches” of other continental European countries such as Germany and Denmark (Meer et. al., 2015). However, recently, this policy changed, resulting in an overall minority separation, and most specifically Muslim alienation (Meer et. al., 2015). The Multiculturalism Policy Index (MPI), which monitors multicultural public policies across 21 Western democracies across intervals of ten years, tells us that in 1990, 2000 and 2010, the Netherlands scored 3, 4 and 2 out of a possible 8, respectively. These scores are based on an evaluation of different aspects of multiculturalism policies, where a high score indicates that the policies in a country are strong and support multiculturalism. The changes in the MPI score of the Netherlands are remarkable, particularly due to the fact that most other countries keep the same score over time or only fluctuate by 0.5 point. Even more remarkable is that the Netherlands is the only country in this database that received a lower score in 2010 than in 2000. In 2000, the Netherlands ranked 5th on the index, while in 2010, it dropped to the 15th place.

This change is rooted in a deeper underlying trend that has been unfolding over the past two decades. In the Netherlands, radical right parties were historically met with fierce resistance from the other parties. When the Centrum Democrats entered the scene, they were demonised by the other parties (Akkerman, 2016). For instance, when Janmaat, their leader, was pronouncing anti-immigration statements, the rest of parliament simply ignored him and even walked out of the room occasionally (van Rossum, 2010). However, more recently, mainstream parties have gradually come to accept the extreme right parties. According to Akkeman (2016), part of the reason for this is the murder of Pim Fortuyn, and the death letters to Wilders. Also, Wilders has a better reputation than Janmaat had, because he descended from the respectable mainstream right party VVD, and is pro-Israel and therefore not easily accused of anti-Semitism (Akkerman, 2016). Today, in the Dutch parliament, Geert Wilders is expressing himself in a manner that would
not have been possible twenty years ago. His anti-immigration stance is accepted as a political view, and the radial right party of Wilders was even included in a government structure with two mainstream parties as supporting partners.

Most recently, two case-studies on the Dutch immigration debate have been carried out, namely van Heerden et. al (2014) and Super (2015). Remarkably, they reach different conclusions. Van Heerden and colleagues find that the ‘big three’ mainstream parties (VVD, CDA, PvdA) adopt stricter immigration positions, while SP, GL and D66 strongly campaign against the anti-immigration stances. Overall, parties are diverging on the issue of immigration according to this study. Super, on the other hand, concludes that the mainstream parties can be divided into two groups regarding their stance on immigration. The first group (GL and VVD) adopts an entrepreneurial strategy and takes a strong stance on the issue while simultaneously emphasising it. The ‘Goldilocks’ group (CDA, SGP, D66, PvdA), however, holds a position that is somewhere in the middle and tries not to draw attention to it. Both base their analysis on hand-coding of party manifestos for national elections. Part of the explanation for the difference in conclusions is that the two studies used different coding schemes for analysing these documents, and generate different types of data. To judge the value of these two works, as well as other research in this field, it is very relevant to include the preceding years in an analysis because the immigration debate suddenly became high priority after 2014 (SCP, 2016). Van Heerden et. al. study the period 1994 – 2010, and Super studies 2002 – 2010. Including the most recent years in the analysis helps to judge the extent to which changes in party agendas are caused by pressure from radical right parties, or from societal changes and voter opinions.

Specifically, this research aims to answer the question: how does the rise of radical right parties influence the immigration positions of other parties in the Netherlands? In doing so, this study breaks new ground by making a contribution to the scholarly literature on the impact of radical right parties by going beyond earlier work that is based on large-n methods. Moreover, this research is unique in its timeframe, namely from January 2006 up to and including April 2016. The recent, sudden intensification of the immigration debate in the Netherlands is for the first time included in an analysis. Because of this, the difference between what could possibly be the effect of the rising radical right party, or what is caused by underlying societal changes, can be studied. The empirical analysis is conducted on the Dutch case, providing a contextually sensitive account of changes in policy positioning of parties’ immigration stances. This contributes to the
understanding of strategic party behaviour in reaction to the rise of radical right parties, party competition in general, and the development of the immigration debate.

Studying party positions can only be done indirectly. A common approach to do this is by analysing party manifestos. Since 2010, only one election took place in the Netherlands, namely in 2012. The next elections are scheduled for the 15th of March, 2017. My expectation is that by then, the agendas of many parties have changed substantially. However, this is not yet testable via official party manifestos, as they have not yet been published. Basing the position of parties on expert surveys is a reliable, and a widely used alternative. This analysis therefore relies on expert survey data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Bakker et al., 2015) for 2006, 2010 and 2014, which is extended by my own data collection covering 2015/16.

The paper will proceed as follows. The first chapter will address the question of how impact comes about by providing an overview of theories on party behaviour and strategic positioning in general. This is followed up by an overview of prior research in this field, and addresses what can be expected from the Dutch case. Based on the existing literature, several hypotheses are posed. The second chapter elaborates on the methodological debate on measuring party positions, defines the variables and explains and justifies the approach chosen in this specific study. The third chapter presents the findings, followed by an analysis chapter in which the most important findings are discussed. This chapter will also relate the findings back to the hypotheses posed in chapter two. The final chapter will wrap up with a short summary, conclusions, and suggestions for further research.
1. How does impact come about? Two theories on party behaviour

The literature on political party competition knows two traditions: spatial competition and issue competition (Abou-Chadi, 2014). The first focuses on the policy positions parties take, while the second argues that parties also compete through emphasis placed on these issues. In recent times, analyses often include both traditions. Super (2015, p.422) remarks that nowadays, “the twin choices of issue positioning and emphasis are often considered complementary”. The first subsection of this chapter elaborates on these two theories. After this, an overview of the prior research in this field is provided, categorised by type of conclusion. From these different conclusions, five hypotheses are derived. These provide the general direction for the empirical part of the analysis, which aims to judge the value of these hypotheses through a case study of the Netherlands.

Spatial competition and Issue competition

Spatial competition was famously spelled out by Anthony Downs (1957) almost 60 years ago. In his classical model of party competition Downs argues that parties are competing by positioning themselves strategically along a policy dimension. So, when one party wins a large part of the electorate, other parties will shift their positions closer to the winning party in an attempt to collect their share of the votes. The theory can be compared with competition between ice cream sellers at a beach: when there is only one stand, the newcomer should place its new stand close to the original one in order to get the most costumers. Just as people will buy their ice cream at the nearest stand will they vote for the party ideologically closest to them (Downs, 1957).

Later, this theory was revisited by Meguid (2005), who concludes that parties can respond strategically in three different ways to the rise of niche parties. The first is by copying the anti-immigration stance (which she calls accommodative), as is also suggested by Downs. Mainstream parties would opt for this approach when they are more likely to lose votes by the rise of a niche party than their opponent mainstream parties. If many parties choose the accommodative approach, parties in the political spectrum are converging. The second option is to respond by taking the opposite issue position of the new party. Meguid calls this the adversarial response. If most parties would do this the result would be a diverging political spectrum. The third option is not to take a stance on the issue at all (dismissal response). To illustrate this theory, the strategy options for a social democratic party are spelled out. According to Bale et. al. (2010), the first option for social democratic parties is to adopt the anti-immigration stance in order to accommodate the growing support for anti-immigration policies amongst general voters.
(accommodate). The second is to hold on the previous position in favour of a multi-cultural society (adversarial). The last option is to defuse, meaning that the social democratic party would try to get the topic off the political agenda by giving it very little attention (dismiss).

The issue competition theory, on the other hand, focusses on the strategic emphasising of certain topics by parties. According to Odmalm and Bale (2015), this theory assigns more agency to the parties. They explain that the spatial competition approach assumes a stimulus-response-relationship between immigration ‘shocks’ and immigration stances. These shocks could include media representation, the rise of radical right parties, terrorist attacks or growing fear in general. The issue competition theory adds that when parties are not able to successfully negotiate, or manage, external shocks, they can choose not to emphasise restrictive immigration policy. Parties could opt for this strategy when “voters’ trust in them on the issue of immigration is lower than it is for the other parties” (Odmalm & Bale, 2015, p.370). In other words, the issue competition theory holds that, when parties have converged on a general consensus regarding a specific issue, the party that ‘owns’ the issue will emphasise it, while the others will do the opposite and try to disperse attention to other topics (Super, 2015). According to Odmalm and Bale (2015), most mainstream parties today agree on the general direction of immigration policies: it should be controlled, and cultural and economic integration should be achieved. Odmalm and Bale argue that the difference between parties lies in the extent to which they emphasise the issue, which is based on whether they ‘own’ the issue or not. This suggests that competition on the issue of immigration is more a battle of strategic emphasising than of issue positioning.

Overview of prior research
This section gives an overview of the literature on the effect of the rise of radical right parties on positioning of the rest of the political parties, and the extent to which they emphasise the immigration issue. The conclusions are far from unanimous. As the core characteristic of radical right parties is their anti-immigration stance, analyses often use the immigration position of the other parties as their main dependent variable. The literature is structured by type of conclusion, starting with those that argue that other parties in the spectrum will adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party wins electorally. The second subsection gives an overview of studies that find evidence for the conclusion that only the right wing parties in the spectrum are vulnerable for the effect of electoral gains of radical right parties. The third subsection explains the position that new parties are better at positioning themselves in the immigration debate. The
fourth subsection elaborates on the theory of entrepreneurs and ‘Goldilocks’ parties, and the fifth subsection gives an overview of authors who argue that the influence of radical right parties is over estimated. Each subsection ends by presenting a hypothesis derived from the literature.

All parties adopt stricter immigration positions under pressure of electoral gains of radical right parties
A significant amount of literature argues that mainstream parties move closer to the anti-immigration position when radical right parties emerge. A famous example is Schain (1997), who saw that In the late 1980’s French parties adopted the anti-immigration rhetoric of the Front Nationale, the increasingly popular anti-immigration party. In its field, this party was truly agenda-setting. This led to a shift of the entire political spectrum to the right on the topic of immigration (Pettigrew, 1998).

More recently, Van Spanje (2010) analysed whether the success of anti-immigration parties has a contagious effect on the position of mainstream parties on this issue. In a comparative-empirical analysis of 75 parties in 11 Western European countries, van Spanje (2010) finds that the electoral success of anti-immigration parties has contagious effects on other parties, except when these parties are in government. Van Spanje expected the niche parties to be least susceptible to contagion, because when they would lose their niche they would lose their vote share. The opposite turned out to be true: the niche parties most frequently adopted anti-immigration stances after the electoral success of anti-immigration parties. Also different than expected was the response by mainstream right parties. Van Spanje expected these parties to be the first to adopt anti-immigration positions once an anti-immigration party won a large vote share. For one, these parties seem each other’s biggest political opponents and stealing the other’s thunder is probably desirable. Secondly, it is relatively easy for a mainstream right party to adopt an anti-immigration stance. Interestingly, the results show that right wing parties are not more likely to opt for the anti-immigration position. No statistical answer could be given to the question why left-wing parties often adopt anti-immigration stances. Van Spanje (2010, p.579) speculated that “a left-wing party may attempt to reduce its losses to anti-immigration challengers by withdrawing its support for the ideal of the multicultural society”. All in all, Van Spanje (2010, p.579) concludes that, “instead of only influencing individual parties that adapt to immediately-felt electoral pressures, the contagion seems to affect entire party systems”.

Two country case studies that come to a similar conclusion are Karamanidou (2015) for Greece, and Bolin (2015) for Sweden. Although her conclusion is nuanced, Karamanidou (2015)
finds that the mainstream parties are adopting stricter immigration stances when radical right parties emerge. In her analysis of the immigration stance of two mainstream Greek parties since 2000, she tests three hypothesis posed by Odalm and Bale (2015), namely that 1) parties will stress their ability to deal with immigration when intra-party consensus on the issue exists, 2) parties will downplay the issue when voters’ trust in them regarding this issue is low, or 3) when they are unable to solve intra-party disagreements. To test these, Karamanidou traces the process of position development for the two parties, one centre-right and one centre-left, based on official party documents and rhetoric used in parliament. The findings do not support hypothesis 2 and 3. Overall, she concludes that, although the mainstream parties lost voters’ trust, they still adopted the anti-immigration stances of the radical right parties.

Bolin (2015) studies the effect of the rising Sweden Democrats (SD) on other Swedish parties. Although the SD only won its first seats in parliament in 2010, they still seem to have some influence. In their time of writing, Dahlström and Esaiasson (2013), concluded that Sweden is a deviant case because, different than the rest of the EU countries, it does not know the rise of any anti-immigrant party. After the huge electoral success of the SD in the last election (2014), this statement no longer holds. Bolin (2015, p.24) is very cautious in his conclusion, but states that “based on, still allegedly rather anecdotal, evidence of the post-election debate it seems as if some parties are drawn towards more restrictive stances by leading politicians”. Based on this body of literature, the following hypothesis is posed.

**Hypothesis 1:** All parties adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party gains seats.

*Right wing parties adopt stricter immigration positions under pressure of electoral gains of radical right parties*

A second body of literature finds that when a radical right party emerges, mainstream right wing parties adopt stricter immigration stances while the left does not, or at a much slower pace. A recent example is Han (2015), who studies under what conditions parties choose to respond to success of radical right parties by adopting the anti-immigration stance, opposing this position or ignore the topic. Similar to Van Spanje (2010), Han finds supportive evidence for the hypothesis that the rise of radical right parties leads mainstream parties to adopt more restrictive positions on multiculturalism. However, he adds that left wing parties do not always shift positions, only when the threat of losing votes is high (Han, 2015).
Abou-Chadi (2014) studies the effect of the successes of ‘niche parties’, with which he means radical right and green parties, on issue positioning of mainstream parties. Interesting about his approach is that he combines the spatial and issue competition theories. He finds that the success of radical right parties provides incentives for established parties to shift their position on immigration towards a more protectionist stance, and simultaneously emphasise this position. This is especially true for mainstream right wing parties, and for those parties that lost a large part of their vote share in the previous elections. Abou-Chadi (2014) also argues that the reason why mainstream right wing parties are more likely to shift position is because they want to appeal to the left-authoritarian voters. This mechanism leads to a situation where mainstream right parties are shifting to the anti-immigration stance, while left wing mainstream parties do not do this, or at a slower pace.

Another proponent of this argument is Davis (2012), who studies the Netherlands, Flanders and the United Kingdom in the period 1987 – 2010. She reasons that the rise of radical right parties puts enormous pressure on mainstream parties, who will ultimately “follow electoral incentives when positioning themselves on immigration, despite the normative debates the immigration issue is often shrouded in”(Davis, 2012, p.2). The rational is as follows. Mainstream parties always leave an ‘immigration gap’ because their positions on the topic are too liberal according to some voters. The bigger this gap, the higher the chances of anti-immigration parties emerging. Davis finds that political competition will reflect demand-side incentives, meaning that when there is no anti-immigration party, mainstream parties will try to depoliticize the topic. When an anti-immigration party emerges, mainstream parties, and especially the right parties, will adopt more restrictive positions. Mainstream right wing parties are naturally more in favour of restrictive immigration policies, and will shift more easily towards this position in the hope to steal votes of the anti-immigration party. Mainstream left and centre parties will always lose as a stricter immigration stance is at odds with other ideological positions. The result is a fragmented political landscape, where the right adopt stricter immigration positions. Once the anti-immigration party disappears again, mainstream parties move back to their original position (Davis, 2012).

Most recently, van Heerden et. al. (2014) study the political immigration debate in the Netherlands in 1990 - 2012. The findings are that ‘big three’ mainstream parties (VVD CDA, PvdA) opted for the accommodative strategy, adopting stricter immigration stances, but “they have adjusted their positions at a different pace and in different ways” (Van Heerden et. al., 2014,
p.132). SP, GL and D66 demonstrate an opposite response, namely to strongly campaign against the anti-immigration stances. For GL, this has always been the ideology, but the other two only adopted this approach recently. On the issue competition level they conclude that the emphasis used to lay much more on the socio-economic aspects of integration, while later this shifted to cultural issues. Interestingly, van Heerden and colleagues find that the importance of immigration and integration issues was already growing before the breakthrough of LPF and PVV. It would therefore be wrong to conclude that the rise of these parties is the sole explanation for the changes in the political debate. However, “at the very least, they have accelerated and promoted changes that were already taking place” (Van Heerden et. al., 2014, p.134). Overall, they conclude that the development of the immigration debate in the Netherlands has become largely part of the left-right dimension, where the right is more restrictive and the left more lenient. From this body of literature, the following hypothesis is derived.

**Hypothesis 2:** Only mainstream right wing parties adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party gains power, left wing parties hold on to their position or adopt a more lenient position.

*Goldilocks*’ and Entrepreneurs
A third group of authors sees a polarization in the immigration debate as a result of rising radical right parties, which is not along the left-right divide and where the parties that take most extreme positions also emphasise this the most. A recent example is Super (2015), who studies mainstream party strategies on immigration in the Netherlands and Flanders issue competition perspective. She concludes that on the issue of immigration parties are converging. She finds this remarkable, because her expectation was that only the radical right parties, who ‘own’ the immigration issue, would emphasise it. However, this is not the case. For several reasons, mainstream parties could also emphasise the issue. For instance when they are seeking office, the issue cannot be ignored because it is contested, and high on the public agenda. Another reason is the ongoing competition over a degree of issue ownership. Super (2015) aims to find out when mainstream parties choose to emphasise ‘the issue of immigration’. Several hypothesis were conducted, of which the first three were sometimes true, but not when the situation described by the last hypothesis was at stake. These are: (1) parties will try to show that they are most competent in solving the immigration issue, (2) parties with distinct immigration positions will emphasise the immigration issue, (3) smaller parties will emphasise the immigration issue, and (4) parties with intra-party ideological tensions will not emphasise the immigration issue (Super, 2015). In other words, when
the other positions and emphasis of a party are at odds with emphasising the immigration issue, parties will not do so.

According to Super (2015), the mainstream parties can be divided into two groups. The first group adopts an entrepreneurial strategy on the immigration issue by using a “combination of ideological positioning and issue emphasis to carve out a recognizable position, providing a distinct electoral product to take to voters” (Super, 2015, p.436). Typical examples are green parties and market liberals. The other group acts oppositely, which Super (2015, p.436) calls a “Goldilocks” strategy, because these parties try to find a “position that is not too far to the left and not too far to the right, not ignoring immigration/integration entirely but not trying to draw too much attention to it either”. Parties that typically belong to this group are Christian parties and Social Democrats.

Super (2015) notes that within the two groups, great variation exists in the Netherlands and Flanders. In the entrepreneurs group, opposing positions on immigration are strongly emphasised. While the market liberals advocate stricter immigration policy, the greens promote less restrictive policy. The ‘Goldilocks’ group also knows great variation. Although the parties do not emphasise the issue of immigration, they take very different positions. These “range from ‘no incentive to draw attention away from other niche issues’ approach of D66, to the not wanting to draw attention to a party dispute approach (social democratic parties) to the positional co-opting position but still not drawing as much attention to the issue as would otherwise be expected while there are party tensions (CDA)” (Super, 2015, p.436). She finds that she Socialist Party is an outlier in this scheme, as its immigration stance is quite restrictive, but not very distinct or emphasised, and stands in contrast with the overall leftist orientation. Super speculates that the reason for this anomaly is that the SP is on the borderline between mainstream and radical left.

The entrepreneurs-Goldilocks theory is supported by Duncan and van Hecke (2008, p.449), who argue that in Europe “on questions of immigration control, differences emerge not between Christian Democrats/Conservatives and Socialists, but between both of these groups and the less restricting Liberals and Greens”. Most recently, Rooduijn (2016) also saw this trend and stated that on the issue of immigration, society is not becoming more radically right, but more radically polarized. Both the defending and the opposing side are speaking up more loudly than before. Mainly based on Super’s (2015) theory, supported by several other works, the following hypothesis is constructed.
Hypothesis 3: Entrepreneurs (GL and VVD) adopt extreme positions on immigration and emphasise this strongly, ‘Goldilocks’ adopt average positions and emphasise it weakly.

New parties take more extreme positions and emphasise this more

The fourth body of literature also argues that the immigration debate transcends the traditional left-right divide, but sees a different dimension emerge in this debate. The core argument of these scholars is that ‘new’ parties know better how to position themselves in the immigration debate, and therefore become the key players on this issue. Mainstream parties are located primarily on the traditional left-right axis, and have not clearly expressed their immigration stances. Therefore, mainstream parties experience greater divisiveness on party level as well as on voter level on ‘new’ topics such as immigration. Newer parties have positioned themselves more two-dimensionally, including the ‘immigration’ dimension (Davis, 2012). Therefore, they know better how to position themselves on the immigration issue, and experience less intra-party tension. This allows them to take more extreme positions, and emphasise this more. This suggests that party responses to rising radical right parties depend on this parties ‘age’. New parties include GreenLeft (GL, 1989), the Socialist Party (SP, 1994), Christen Union (CU, 2002) and the Party for the Animals (PvdD, 2006). It must be noted that GL and CU are mergers, and not completely new. However, when parties merge, they redefine themselves. Because the defined themselves in recent times, when issues such as immigration were already on the agenda, they are considered ‘new’ parties. An example of study supporting this is Van der Brug et. al. (2009), who argue that although the immigration debate in the Netherlands has proliferated along the left-right dimension since 1990, some outliers can be identified. Some smaller parties, such as the Christian Union, take deviating positions that do not correspond with the left-right dimension. This suggest the possible “emergence of a second dimension in Dutch politics” (van der Brug et. al., 2009, p.20), which they do not find surprising, seeing that this dimension already exists among the citizens (Van der Brug & Van Spanje 2009).

However, this view is contested. Simon Otjes (2012) analyses the influence of all new parties in the Netherlands in the period 1946 – 2006 and finds that new parties do not create new conflicts, but bring new life into existing conflicts. The explanation is two-fold: existing parties follow the left-right dimension when responding to issues introduced by new parties, and at the same time new parties will be pulled into this dimension. Existing parties have an interest in preserving the original conflicts structured along the left-right dimension, because these conflicts are their raison d’être. This is confirms Mair’s (1997) theory, who claims that integration of new
parties in the left-right alliances strengthens bimodal competition. The existing parties, who have an interest in maintaining the status quo, have historically always won in the Netherlands, meaning that the left-right divide persisted (Otjes, 2012).

Another work in a similar vein is the renowned work by Kriesi et. al. (2006), who argue that as new political parties will emerge, conventional political parties will strategically reposition themselves in the new political landscape. Because of this, the immigration debate does not constitute an additional dimension to the traditional left-right structure, but becomes integrated into it. As a result, the cultural dimension is transformed, and will receive more attention than the economic dimension. This is especially visible for the topic of immigration, as populist parties have a much stronger anti-immigration agenda than (untransformed) mainstream parties, while relatively new parties like the greens are most strongly arguing the opposite. They explain that “the greens still strongly favour cultural liberalism, while the Social Democrats have moderated their position on these issues” (Kriesi et. al., 2006, p.950). In sum, Kriesi et. al. (2006) argue that, new parties know better how to position themselves in the debate over ‘new’ cultural issues such as immigration than mainstream parties. Although the literature is divided, a hypothesis is constructed in order to test both sides of the argument.

**Hypothesis 4:** ‘New’ parties take more extreme positions and emphasise this more.

*Effect of radical right parties is overestimated*

The last group of authors argues that the effects of radical right parties are overestimated. Two prominent works supporting this statement are Akkerman (2015) and Mudde (2012). Akkerman (2015) studied the effect of the rise of RRP on immigration policies of mainstream parties in Western Europe and concludes that radical right parties merely accelerate the move rightwards of mainstream right wing parties in Western Europe. Social democratic parties did not seem to be affected at all. She bases the analysis on her own index, following a position/pledge approach. At first sight, it appears that the salience of the immigration topic significantly increased, and mainstream right parties significantly shifted rightwards when radical right parties were electorally successful. However, she questions whether this is a cause or a symptom. In the Netherlands, Germany and the UK, mainstream right parties were already shifting to the right independent of the entrance of radical right parties. However, this trend was accelerated whenever a radical right party managed an electoral breakthrough. For the Netherlands, she concludes that “in 2002 and 2010, when anti-immigrant parties LPF and PVV booked notable electoral results, the VVD accelerated its move rightwards substantially” (Akkerman, 2015, p.60).
Mudde (2012) is even more sober on the impact of radical right parties. He concludes that although on average political parties are becoming more restrictive on immigration, the rise of radical right parties is not the cause of this. These “should be as catalysts rather than initiators, who are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the introduction of stricter immigration policies” (Mudde, 2012, p.1). To sum up, these authors say that political parties are more responsive to ‘real-world’ changes than to increasing vote share of radical right parties.

This is consistent with Bale and Partos (2014), who study the changes in policy positioning of the UK Conservative party regarding immigration through a process tracing analysis. They do not specifically include the rise of radical right parties in their analysis, because of “the absence of serious competition on their more radical flanks mean than we can concentrate on all other factors which may or may not cause a mainstream party like the Conservative Party to shift its policy” (Bale and Partos, 2014, p.604). Today, this seems questionable, as the rise of UK Independence Party suggests differently. They conclude that shocks of losing elections matters for changes in positioning, but leaders matter most. They remark that studies on party behaviour often forget that parties respond to real-world situations, and that politicians are trained to constantly monitor this. From this last body of literature, the following hypothesis is derived.

**Hypothesis 5:** Political parties are more responsive to ‘real-world’ changes than to increasing vote share of radical right parties

The overview above makes very clear: there is no general consensus in the literature on the impact of radical right parties on other parties’ positions and emphases. Do parties adopt stricter immigration stances when radical right parties emerge? And if so, which parties? On the basis of the existing literature, five hypothesis were derived. Not all hypotheses could be confirmed, as they are largely contradictory. They are relevant nonetheless, as they provide a general direction for the rest of this analysis. The next chapter explains the methodology and data used, followed by a chapter presenting the results and a chapter in which these results are analysed. Lastly, the most important findings and implications are discussed in the conclusion.
2. Methodology and data

This chapter elaborates on methodological choices. First, the choice for a single case study and the time frame are clarified. Then, light is shed on the methodological debate on how to measure party positions. After this, the dependent and independent variables are defined, as well as how they have been collected and manipulated. The three dependent variables are issue position, emphasis and distinctiveness of all Dutch political parties. The four independent variables are PVV position, PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern. This chapter concludes with a table, summarizing these variables.

Case study and time frame

Case studies have a mixed reputation in political science. A point of criticism often heard is that general theoretical knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical context dependent knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006) convincingly parries this statement by saying that universal theories cannot be found in social science, and in essence we only have the specific case. Human learning initially takes place on the basis of intimate knowledge, which is context dependent. Case studies help not to fall in ‘academic blind alleys’, as this form of context specific examining prevents stultified learning processes because of the closeness to the object and the surplus of feedback (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.223). Also, if all the research would be generalized within the existing theoretical frames, no new theories could emerge.

Other critique on case studies as research method is that one cannot generalize from a case as it is often difficult to summarize and develop general position and theories on the basis of a specific context. This is a valid argument, but it does not make case studies useless for scientific development. The single case study can be very useful as a supplement to other methods, as long as it is clear what the case represents (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Seawright & Gerring, 2008). In essence, a chosen case plays a ‘heroic’ role because it represents a population larger than itself (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p.294). However, the immigration debate develops within a very complex environment with many different layers, and it is difficult to define exactly what type of case the Netherlands is. In some aspects, it is a typical case, while in other aspects it could be considered a deviant case. It is important to understand that the aim of the chosen approach is not to develop an new general theory. Rather, the purpose is to test whether the existing theories could apply for a specific country. As Robert Starke pointed out already in 1978 (p.7), case studies are useful “particularly to examine a single exception that shows the hypothesis to be false”.

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The Netherlands s chosen for several reasons. For one it features a proportional electoral system with many small parties. This fragmented nature allows the examining of the response of parties with different ideological orientations to the rise of radical right parties (Heerden et al., 2014). Also, the Netherlands has a history of populist radical right parties, which at times have gained substantial parliamentary power (Bale et. al., 2010; van Heerden et. al., 2014). This has exerted pressure on other parties in the spectrum, and so presumably the expectations of the effect of rising radical right parties, as posed in prior literature, should be visible in the Netherlands.

This research is unique in its timeframe, namely January 2006 up to and including April 2016. The recent, sudden intensification of the immigration debate in the Netherlands is for the first time included in an analysis. Because of this, the difference between what could possibly be the effect of the rising radical right party, or what is caused by underlying societal changes can be studied. In 2006 – 2014, the importance of immigration as a national problem was relatively constant in the Netherlands (SCP, 2016). So, if parties change their immigration stances drastically in this period, it could indicate the influence of other factors, such as pressure from the PVV. In the last period, from 2014 until the first third of 2016, the immigration issue suddenly became (one of) the most important national issues in public opinion. Comparing these two periods will provide insights on possible factors that could have impact on party positioning. 2006 is chosen as a starting point because it includes two years before the financial crisis, which helps to indicate possible intervening factors. Moreover, the PVV won its first seats in this year.

**Methodological debate on position measurements**

Many scholars have tried to measure changes in party positions, resulting in several different methodologies. As noted by Krouwel & Elfrinkhof (2014, p.1456), “like most social science concepts, party positions can only be measured indirectly”. Researchers must rely on second order information, such as party material and behavioural evidence, in order to deduct party positions on certain issues or ideological dimensions (Bakker et. al., 2015). Researchers can cross-validate their studies thanks to the availability of different types of data and methodologies. The section below gives a brief overview of the different methodologies and their specific strengths and weaknesses.

**Coding party manifestos**

The Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) is the most widely used source for internationally comparing party positioning towards policies (Gemenis, 2013; Krouwel & Elfrinkhof, 2014). It was
established by Ian Budge and colleagues in 1979. Later, the scope was expanded to more countries, and more researchers became involved. The CMP relies on trained coders, who rank each parties ‘relative emphasis’ on each of the 56 issues in the coding scheme. This emphasis is calculated based on the frequency with which the policy is mentioned. In the second step, these frequencies are used to estimate a party’s position on the left-right dimension. Haupt (2010) explains that studying the party programmes as a dependent variable is useful for several reasons. First of all, one can assume that party programmes are endorsed by the party as a whole, and are pre-election declarations for voters. Secondly, party programmes have proved to be reliable indicators for the policies that parties will pursue once they are in office. Lastly, party manifestos most clearly reveal shifts in domestic economic agendas, as they are not the result of a compromise (Haupt, 2010).

The CMP model has been criticised for its underlying theory of ‘party salience’. The assumption is that parties share a common ground of several policy positions, on which all parties agree. All parties want low unemployment, good education and proper health care. It would be electoral suicide to take a position which is different than the general consensus. In the words of Budge (2001, p.82), who is an active advocate of the CMP, the result is that policy differences between parties “consist of contrasting emphasis placed in different policy areas”. Parties compete against each other by emphasizing their differences. Laver (2001) pointed out that the ‘salience’ theory might be sufficient in Majoritarian rule systems, but does not last empirically in multi-party systems (such as the Netherlands). In this system, niche parties may express unpopular notions.

Another important limitation highlighted by Laver (2001) is that not only the frequency with which a party mentions a policy is relevant, but also the strength of the position that the party takes towards the policy. Examples are issues such as abortion and soft drugs. As Krouwel and Elfrinkhof (2014, p.1463) accurately put, “parties might have very extremist positions that only necessitate very few words to describe, while moderate, nuanced and well-argued policy positions might require multiple sentences or even paragraphs”. An example is the case of the Polish PIS party. Experts in several studies classify this party as Eurosceptic, but this does not show in the party manifesto data analysis (EES, 2009; Adam, 2012).

Another limitation of coding party manifestos is that these can differ substantially in size, which could influence the number of times an issue is mentioned. This could lead to flawed results. For example, when a short manifesto of twenty pages of basic essentials contains five
pages of pledges for very restrictive immigration policies, it cannot be regarded as equally restrictive as a 200 page manifesto of detailed policy positions that also devotes five pages to restrictive immigration stances.

Other factors limiting the usefulness of the CMP are its document collection and coding scheme. The document collection, other than the name suggests, is much broader than only official party manifestos. The sample also includes proxy documents, such as party leader speeches, drafts of manifestos, local election manifestos, advertisements in newspapers, party congress speeches, flyers, etc. (Gemenis, 2013). According to Budge et. al. (1987), this is not problematic, and these sources can be considered equally important. Gemenis (2013) makes a more convincing point in arguing that they cannot be regarded equally important. Documents with different purposes might only include a small section of a party’s policy positions, and hence including these documents when counting the frequency with which certain issues are mentioned might falsely influence the data. The coding scheme has also received much criticism, mainly because the inter-coder reliability is low due to the complex nature of the CMP coding scheme (for a recent overview, see Gemenis, 2013).

**Expert survey**

The most common alternative for CMP are expert surveys, which allows researchers to obtain positions for a large number of parties, irrespective of their size and parliamentary status, and independent of the electoral cycle (Bakker et. al., 2015). This has several advantages compared to other methods. First of all, data can be collected at any point in time. Secondly, these experts base their opinion on a combination of sources, and hence they can include what parties say, and what they actually do. The third advantage is that the dimension on which the parties are ranked can be constructed deductively, and are not limited by what happens to be on the political agenda at a given time. According to Marks et. al. (2007), expert surveys are more consistent with evaluations of voters and parliamentarians than data currently available from party manifestos.

An example of the use of expert judgements is Adam et. al. (2012), who classify parties as Eurosceptic or non-Euroskeptic and as fringe or mainstream. This is because alternative sources such as party manifestos are not always available. However, whenever they are available, they are used to validate the experts’ judgements. Expert judgements are also validated by comparing them with the party manifesto data collected for the 2009 European Parliamentary elections. “This index subtracts all anti-EU statements from all positive EU references within these party manifestos” (Adam, 2013, p.87). If this value is below 0, this indicates Euroscepticism, and when
the value is above 0, support for the EU dominates. According to Adam and colleagues, the results are satisfactory. This is mainly because all parties that are Eurosceptic according to the European Election Studies (EES) in 2009 were also considered Eurosceptic by the country experts in Adam (2013). However, the EES (2009) dataset identified more Eurosceptic parties (32) than the experts did (17). Also, in five cases, the expert judgements strongly diverge from the EES dataset results, including for example the Dutch VVD, which is classified as Eurosceptic by Adam (2013), but not according to the party manifestos. Adam (2013) concludes that the judgements by the experts are satisfactory validated by the EES 2009 data set, but I find the differences too big. The reason for the high discrepancy is probably the low number of experts per country. For each of the 11 countries, except the Netherlands, the scaling of the parties is based on the opinion of only one expert. Basing the ranking of all parties in the political system of a country on the judgement of one expert is a clear weakness.

Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) overcomes this weakness by basing its ranking of political parties in the Netherlands on the opinion of 14 academic experts who have a low standard deviation amongst each other (Bakker et. al., 2015). Overall, CHES collects policy and ideational stances of 237 national parties in 28 countries. Experts are asked to place parties on four dimensions (general left – right; economic left – right; Green/Alternative/Libertarian – Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist; and European integration). Also, more specific policies are included, to allow for analysis of relation between specific issues and general trends. The first survey was conducted in 1999, with subsequent waves in 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014. The Netherlands was included from the beginning. Bakker et. al. (2015) conclude that CHES has high inter-expert reliability and the results are similar to other measures of party positioning.

Voter and elite survey and Roll-call analysis

Another way to capture party positioning is by asking voters to place themselves and/or the parties on a dimension. Problematic is that many voters do not understand the left-right dimension, or interpret the questions very differently than was intended by the researcher (Krouwel and Elfrinkhof, 2014). An alternative is to ask party elites to place themselves and other parties on one or more political dimensions. A weakness is that parties are not unitary actors and so the response could differ per person. Moreover, elites could respond strategically (Krouwel & Elfrinkhof, 2013).

The last alternative is the roll-call analysis approach, which measures the voting behaviour of political parties in parliament. A general problem is that the results are not easily compared
internationally. Advantage is that a long time period can be studied, although the usual lag of several years before a law finally passes should be taken into consideration. An important limitation is that roll-call voting can be strategic (Krouwel and Elfrinkhof, 2014). Also, the topics that are discussed are rather rigid, and opposition parties have less influence on the topics that are on the agenda.

Variables

In the following sections, the dependent and independent variables are explained. The dependent variables of this research are the positions of all Dutch political parties on immigration and multiculturalism, and the extent to which these positions are emphasised by each party. As found by Duncan and van Hecke (2008, p.449), “differentiating between policies towards would-be migrants and those aimed at resident foreigners and ethnic minorities ... revealed nuanced differences in party positioning”. The reason for this lays with the different strategic options underpinning control and integration issues. Duncan and van Hecke argue that, knowing this, future studies on the immigration debate should apply this distinction in order attain a more nuanced understanding of party responses. Emphasis, or the relative importance of each issue for each party, is also a necessary unit of analysis. This way, party behaviour can be studied from an ‘issue competition’ perspective, by analysing the strategic emphasising of the issues by the parties.

Dependent variable 1: issue positions

This research relies on expert survey data because it gives access to the most recent data on party positions as possible, it is a trustworthy measure, and it allows for the deductive construction of the dimensions on which the parties are ranked. Two other studies on the development of the Dutch political immigration debate, which also rely on expert survey data, are Lubbers (2001) and Van Spanje et. al. (2006). Both surveys asked the question: ‘Thinking back to June, 2004 (...) could you please indicate for each of the following political parties its position towards immigration restriction? Please do so by giving each party a mark from 0 (not very restrictive) to 10 (very restrictive)’. Inconvenient is that the relative salience of this topic per party is not included in the analysis. The Benoit & Laver expert survey (2006) overcomes this weakness by asking its respondents to include how important the issue of immigration is for each party. To test the relative importance (or salience), a separate scale was attached, “asking respondents to judge the relative importance of the dimension for each party, on a scale from 1 (not important at all) to 20 (very important)” (Benoit & Laver, 2006, p.156). Unfortunately, this expert survey has not yet been repeated and the data is not recent enough.
This research relies on the CHES expert survey data of 2006, 2010 and 2014, supplemented with my own survey data covering 2015 and the first third of 2016. For an overview of the participating experts, see appendix A. The focus lays with party positions on immigration and on multiculturalism (Van der Brug et al., 2009), as well as the degree of emphasis parties put on the two issues. Immigration policy data ranges from 0 to 10, where 0 means that the party strongly opposes restrictive policy on immigration, and 10 means that the party strongly favours restrictive policy on immigration. For multiculturalism scores, the data also range from 0 to 10, where 0 means the party strongly favours multiculturalism and 10 means the party strongly favours assimilation. The CHES data asks experts to indicate scores based on the course of one year. My 2015/16 questionnaire asks them to rate party positions based on the course of 2015, and the first four months of 2016 (for the complete questionnaire, see appendix B). This way, the data is as recent as possible.

**Dependent variable 2: emphasis**

To study the changes in relative importance of immigration and multiculturalism as political issues for each party, the data from different years had to be manipulated because different questions were asked in different years. Unfortunately, only in 2006 and 2010 the position data was accompanied by salience scores per issue (ranging from 0, meaning the issue is not important at all for this party, to 10, meaning it is extremely important for this party). The questions asked are the same as question one and two of my questionnaire (see appendix B). For 2014, experts did not rank the salience of each issue for every party, but were asked to name the three Most Important Issues (MII), and rank them in order of importance for each party. This is the same as question three in my questionnaire, again see appendix B. In a personal e-mail, Mr Schumacher explained that the reason for this change is that experts had trouble to separate parties regarding salience, and this method aims to solve this problem (Mr Schumacher, 2016, pers. comm., 5 April). In 2014, the Most Important Issues are calculated for each party, by addressing ten points if an issue is ranked as the number one issue by an expert, five points if it is ranked number two, and one point if it is ranked number three (Bakker et. al., 2015).

To compare the data sets of 2006 and 2010 with the top three MII data of 2014, a new variable is constructed called ‘emphasis’. This variable is an indication of how much the issue is emphasised by a party, relative to the other issues. Sometimes this is referred to as how important this issue is for a party. The ‘emphasis’ variable is retrieved by constructing four distinct categories of issue importance (most important = 10; second most important = 5; third most important = 1; less important = 0). The emphasis scores for each party are based on this MII ranking as posed by
the CHES researchers (Bakker et al., 2015). For 2006 and 2010, it is calculated on the basis of all ‘salience per issue’ scores of all the responding experts. In excel, the top three highest scores per respondent are found. Then, the expert ratings of immigration and multiculturalism are ranked according to their importance relative to the other issues. This is done in accordance with the CHES codebook. So, when an the highest three scores of an expert were 9, 7 and 6, and this expert gave a salience score of 7 for immigration, it was marked 5 because it is the second Most Important Issue. In case of a tie, the highest score counts. So, when the highest salience scores of one expert are 7, 6, 6, and immigration was ranked 6, it also was marked 5. When immigration was ranked lower than the top three salience scores, it was ranked 0. Only when an expert did not fill in any of the salience scores was the ranking excluded from the analysis. After that, the average Most Important Issue mark per party was calculated.

In 2014 and 2015/16, the expert respondents were asked to rank the top three Most Important Issues (MII). Per expert, these scores were also given a mark of 10, 5, 1 or 0. Again, only when an expert did not fill in any of the MII scores was the ranking excluded from the analysis. Per party, per issue, the average of these marks given by all the respondents was calculated. Overall, this resulted in comparable ‘emphasis’ scores per issue, per party, for all years in the timeslot.

To validate the method used to construct ‘emphasis’ data on the basis of ‘salience per issue’ scores and ‘MII scores’, the experts were asked to rank the salience per issue as well as the Most Important Issue top three in 2015/16 (see appendix C). There appears to be a slight bias of assigning higher ‘emphasis’ scores in 2006 and 2010. In 2015/16, when both the salience per issue levels and the Most Important Issue top three were included in the survey, it turned out that immigration was ranked as more important for the PVV in the ‘salience per issue’ ranking than in the ‘MII’ ranking. This is probably because a respondent feels more inclined to rank multiple issues as equally important for a party in the ‘salience per issue’ ranking. Although it is possible to rank two issues as equally important in the MII ranking, this hardly happened in the 2014 and 2015/16 data sets. This weakness should be acknowledged.

In the 2015/16 questionnaire specifically, some respondents have criticized the Most Important Issue top three, and the list of options. Critique was inter alia that ‘the economy’ is missing as an issue option. Also, more generally, some respondents thought it is too hard to rank this top three. For this reason, some did not answer this question, or only partly. The question was adopted directly from the original CHES questionnaire, so this feedback might be useful for them. One respondent answered that ‘position on integration’ (multiculturalism vs assimilation) is not
applicable for the PVV, as they have none. All the other respondent did rate the PVV’s position in integration. This expert rated the salience of the integration as 0 for the PVV. The other respondents average rating without this ranking is 9.889. This particular ranking is therefore considered an outlier and excluded from the analysis. Also, not all 10 respondents have answered all the questions. Some left blanks at small parties, such as the Party for the Animals and especially 50PLUS. In total, still enough data was collected according to CHES standards.

Overall, it appears that the decision of the CHES team to change the question that should indicate the importance of a certain issue for each party generated different answers. This could skew the data, and frustrates the comparison over the different points in time. The method proposed above aims to overcome this problem, and is innovative for trying to pursue this aim.

**Dependent variable 3: distinctiveness of party positions**
The last dependent variable, necessary to test whether the parties with the most extreme positions also emphasise immigration stance the most (relevant for hypothesis 3), is a distinctiveness measure. The distinctiveness is calculated as the absolute distance of a party’s position to the mean of each year (party position – yearly mean). The result is that the higher the distinctiveness score above zero, the relatively more restrictive the party position is. When the distinctiveness score is below zero, the party has a relatively less strict immigration position compared to the average. This data is then plotted against a party’s degree of emphasis placed on immigration. To show the development over the years, this is done for 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2015/16.

**Independent variables**
This research employs four different independent variables. The first, and most common approach to measure the strength of a party is by counting the number of seats in parliament this party has. However, using only the number of seats of the PVV in parliament as a variable to measure influence could be criticised, because it might not represent how popular the PVV is among the Dutch population. In 2006 and 2010 elections were held, so the election scores of these years can be seen as representative of the public opinion at that point in time. In 2014, elections had been held 2 years earlier and, according to the opinions polls, PVV gained a lot of popularity in this period. Even more problematic is the number of seats in 2016. The PVV went down three seats between 2014 and 2016, which was not due to decreasing popularity but to members of parliament leaving the PVV while holding on to their seat. It could be argued that, in order to
measure the impact of the rise of radical right parties, the increasing popularity of this party should be included in the analysis.

Popularity of a party is often measured through opinion polls. Including this data has some complications. Most importantly, the data is not necessarily trustworthy. It changes very frequently, and it can differ substantially by polling agency. The expert survey data rates parties over the course of at least one full year. Choosing one polling by one agency as in indicator of the party’s popularity is too arbitrary. Therefore, the average scores of all agencies of the entire year should be used. Popularity of the PVV is measured by taking the average opinion poll score over the course of the year in question. This is based on the consolidated range of different opinion poll results for the PVV in the period 2006 – 2015/16, as provided by the website allepeilingen.com. Data from the following polling agencies is included: peil.nl (Maurice de Hond), TNS NIPO, de politieke barometer (Ipsos Synovate), I&O Research, de Stemming (Een Vandaag), and NOS Peilingwijzer. The findings are presented in table 3.1.

Comparing the influence of popularity of the PVV with the influence of the number of seats of the PVV can be useful when trying to differentiate between the motives for parties to opt for stricter immigration stances. One reason could be to strategically take position close to a party with many seats. Another strategy could be to respond to changes in public opinion by expressing stricter immigration stances when the PVV is becoming more popular according to the polls. Han (2015) explains that, to find their strategic optimum, parties use ‘learning materials’. The decision to move is the outcome of intense information-gathering. Parties respond to different types of information. For example, Left parties respond more to opinion shifts of their own electorate than to opinion shifts among the mean voters (Han, 2015). PVV’s popularity in the opinion polls is regularly published, and could be seen by political parties as an indication of the public opinion on the issue of immigration. Presumably, since the PVV is above all an anti-immigration party, the more virtual seats the PVV has according to opinion polls, the more the public sentiment is in favour of anti-immigration policies.

The third independent variable is the public opinion according to survey data collected by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). In essence, this variable is used to indicate the changes in the ‘real-world’. This is necessary in order to differentiate between what the influence of the rise of a radical right party (in actual number of seats or in popularity) could be, or what should be assigned to changes in public opinion. In the end, this is useful when trying to distinguish
between the choice of parties the respond strategically to the rise of a new party, or whether they respond to real-world changes in society.

The ‘public concern’ variable is calculated as the average percentage of people who consider immigration the biggest national problem over the course of the year in question. This is collected by the SCP, and documented in Burgerperspectieven 2016/2. Survey respondents (Dutch citizens above 18 years old) have answered the question: ‘what do you currently consider the biggest problem of our country? What do you feel negative, angry or ashamed about considering the Dutch society?’. Respondents were able to name a maximum of five issues, which were later categorised in sixteen categories. Every respondent weights equally, and the weight of each issue is inversely proportional to the number of listed topics.

The last independent variable is the immigration position of the PVV. This is to examine if it makes a difference whether the PVV takes a very strict immigration position or a slightly more lenient one. For this variable the expert survey dataset is used, reaching from 0 (not very restrictive) to 10 (very restrictive).

Because the population is very small (n=4), statistical calculation such as correlation scores and regression analyses will not be very reliable. However, these are still carried out as an additional way of analysing the data, next to the visual representation in line graphs and scatter-plots. This helps to ensure that strong relationships are not overseen, and to give an indication of the possible strength of the influence of the PVV. Statistics are calculated using excel. All dependent variables (for each party their position and emphasis of immigration and multiculturalism) are regressed on the independent variables (the number of PVV seats and its popularity according to the opinion polls as well as the position of the PVV on immigration and multiculturalism).

**Table 2.1. Overview of independent variables, including the actual number of PVV seats, the average number of seats according to opinion polls and the percentage of people who consider immigration the biggest national problem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PVV seats</th>
<th>PVV popularity</th>
<th>PVV position</th>
<th>Public concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6,104</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>15.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24,390</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24,492</td>
<td>9.875</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27,655</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>20.083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Expert survey results

This chapter presents the results, based on the expert survey data. First, data on changes in party positions is presented, followed by a similar presentation of findings on changes in party emphasis on the issues. This is structured by hypothesis. H1 and H2 are combined, followed by H4 and H5. After this, the data on positioning and emphasis is be combined to find if the parties with the most emphasis on immigration are also the most extreme outliers in their immigration stances, which is relevant for hypothesis 3. In chapter 4, the most important findings and implications are discussed, followed by a concluding chapter.

Positions

Although the immigration policy positions of parties do not alter significantly over the time period, some trends can be identified. As visible in figure 3.1, most parties become less restrictive regarding immigration in 2014, and more restrictive in 2015/16. The biggest exception is the SGP, which adopts a tougher immigration stance in 2014, and more lenient in 2015/16. The second party that did not become as lenient as the others in 2014 is the Christian Democrat party (CDA). While the immigration stance became less strict compared to 2010, it is still stricter than in 2006. All the other parties hold less strict immigration positions in 2014 than in 2006.

In order to examine the position changes of the party spectrum as a whole, figure 3.3 and 3.4 present the average position on immigration and multiculturalism as well as the PVV position. For the trend line of the average positions in these two figures, parties that have not existed for the entire time period (PvdA and 50PLUS) are still relevant when examining behaviour of the party spectrum as a whole. Although almost all parties have adopted stricter immigration stances in 2015/16 compared to 2014, the average of all parties did not become stricter than in 2010. In 2010, the average immigration position was the 5.916, where 0 means fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration, and 10 means fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration. In 2014, the average dropped to 5.012, and in 2015/16 it reached 5.787. The policy positions on the issue of multiculturalism (fig 3.4) show great similarity to the positions on immigration (fig. 3.3). The average immigration policy score in 2015/16 is 5.787, and the average multiculturalism score in that year is 6.001. In 2014, the difference was larger, with scores of 5.012 and 5.519 respectively.
The correlation score of the average immigration position and the position of the PVV is 0.174, and the correlation of the average multiculturalism position is 0.326. Both of these scores are very low, which could mean that the two trend lines are not likely related each other. When the average immigration and multiculturalism position are regressed on the PVV position, the p-
value scores are 0.826 and 0.673 respectively, which is far from significant. These statistical results could be an indication that the position of the PVV does not have an influence on the average position of the other parties in the spectrum. However, as was stated before, with a very small population (n=4) these results are not very reliable and it is best to focus on the visual trends.
**Left and right wing responses to PVV’s position**

To examine the differences between right and left-wing party positions on immigration, necessary for testing hypothesis 1 and 2, two groups are created (see figure 3.5 and 3.6). The mainstream right group includes the liberal party (VVD), the Christian conservative party (SGP), and the Christian democratic party (CDA), and the mainstream left includes the labour party (PvdA), the democratic party (D66), the green party (GL) and the animal party (PvdD) (cf. Van den Berg & van den Braak, 2016). Left-right classifications can always be criticised for being arbitrary, because parties might be leftist on certain issues, while rightist on others. The Socialist Party (SP) is sometimes considered mainstream left, but more often it is considered radical left (i.e. by the CHES expert survey). Also, it could be argued that the Party for the Animals is not a mainstream left party, as its positions on social issues are not very leftist. The implication for including or excluding this party in the average left group is limited. When this party is excluded from the average left group, the shape of the line in figure 3.5 remains very similar, but is located slightly lower on the graph. Hence, with or without the PvdD, the average immigration stance among the mainstream left parties is clearly becoming more in favour of restrictive policy on immigration from 2014 onwards. D66 is also difficult to position, as it is leftist on social issues, but more rightist on economic issues. If D66 is excluded from the data, the increase of strictness of immigration position of the average left group from 2014 to 15/15 is even stronger.

Looking at the trend line, the average immigration stance of the three mainstream right parties increases slightly between 2006 and 2010, but slightly decreased from 2010 to 2015/16. Overall, The immigration position of the right wing group follows a similar pattern as the PVV’s position, although less strict, while the average position of the left wing group as well as the position of the SP shows a different trend. This is supported by the correlation scores. When the PVV position is compared to the average position of the left wing group over the time period, there is no correlation (-0.002), while the correlation score of the PVV position and the right wing group is much higher (0.834). When the trend line of the right wing group is regressed on the trend line of the PVV’s position, the p-value is low (0.166), indicating that there is a 16.6% chance that the result occurred only as a result of chance. The $R^2$ of this regression is 0.696, which indicates that average right wing position is strongly linearly related to the position of the PVV, suggesting a strong relationship between the two. Based on these findings, combined with the visual presentation of the data in figure 3.5, the right wing group seems to respond more to the immigration position of the PVV than the left wing group with regard to their own immigration positions.
Figure 3.5. *positions on immigration of mainstream left and right parties and radical left and right parties*

Figure 3.6. *positions on multiculturalism of mainstream left and right parties and radical left and right parties*

Figure 3.6 shows the positions on multiculturalism of mainstream left and right wing parties and radical left and right parties. The graph looks very similar figure 3.5, showing the positions on immigration. However, the correlation and $R^2$ scores for both the left and the right wing group, compared to the PVV position, are very low, suggesting no strong relationship. Again, these low scores could also be the result of the very small size of the population.
The influence of PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern on positions

To test the influence of strength of the PVV as a political party, three other independent variables are introduced. The first is the actual vote share of the PVV, measured by the number of PVV seats in parliament. The second is the PVV’s popularity, measured by the number of seats the PVV would have according to the opinion polls on average that year. The third is the public concern, measured as the percentage of people who see immigration and integration as the biggest national problem according to the SCP (2016) survey data. These are visually and statistically compared to the dependent variables: party position on immigration and multiculturalism.

When the immigration and multiculturalism position trend lines of all parties are regressed on the number of PVV seats and PVV popularity, most results were not significant at any level. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most strongly significant scores are found when PVV’s own position was tested as dependent variable. When the immigration policy of the PVV is regressed on the number of PVV seats and the PVV popularity according to opinion polls, the correlation scores are 0.748 and 0.957 respectively. Both these scores are highly significant (p < 0.001), suggesting that the change that the results occurred only by chance is extremely low. This is an indication that when the PVV has more seats, and especially when it gains popularity according to the opinion polls, it adopts a stricter immigration position. For the multiculturalism issue, the PVV position does not have a significant score when regressed on PVV seats and popularity.

To test hypothesis 1 and 2, the mainstream right wing and left wing parties are grouped together and regressed as dependent variables on PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern (see fig. 3.7 and 3.8). For the immigration issue, the relationship between the average position of the right wing group and the number of PVV seats truly stands out. The $R^2$ of this regression is 0.978 and the p-value is smaller than 0.01, indicating a significant linear relationship. The correlation of the average position of the right wing group and the number of PVV seats (0.989) is also very strong. In other words, these results indicate that the more seats PVV has, the more restrictive the average right wing position is. It must be noted that, according to the statistical analysis, the right wing group does not seem to be responsive to changes in the popularity of the PVV. Overall, the right wing position on immigration seems to be motivated more by the actual electoral strength of the PVV than by popularity of the PVV according to the opinion polls. Also relevant is that, while the average positioning of the right wing group on immigration correlates significantly with the number of PVV seats in parliament, each party individually does not show a correlation at a significant level. For the average left group, no statistical relationships were found, which could suggest that both the vote share of the PVV and the popularity of the PVV does not
have an influence the average immigration position of the left-wing parties. Also, looking at the average immigration or multiculturalism position, no significant relationships were found either.
To test hypothesis 4, stating that new parties know better how to position themselves in the immigration debate, the new parties are clustered as a group. New parties are defined by their age, and so the new parties in the Netherlands are GL (1989), SP (1994), CU (2002), PvdD (2006) and 50PLUS (2009). Because the SP does not fit easily in any cluster, the group average is measured once with the SP, and once without the SP. The average positions on immigration and multiculturalism of both clusters are regressed on the independent variables PVV seats, PVV immigration and public concern. Although none of the statistical analysis results are significant at any level, the correlations between immigration and multiculturalism positions of this group are stronger when compared to PVV popularity than to PVV seats. This is different than the other parties, who generally have higher correlation scores when their positions are compared to PVV seats. Overall, the new parties seem to respond stronger to increasing popularity of the PVV by taking opposite position; the more popular the PVV, the more in favour of multiculturalism the new parties are (see figure 3.9).

Remarkable is that two parties within the ‘new parties’ group, namely Green Left and the Party for the Animals, behave oppositely. Besides being both classified as new parties, these parties are also clustered in the same ‘green parties’ family according to the CHES classification. The party for the animals became more slightly more lenient on immigration when the PVV gained seats (-0.277) but stricter on immigration when the PVV became more popular (0.871). Green Left did the opposite, and became stricter on immigration when the PVV gained seats (0.428) and more lenient when the PVV gained popularity (-0.258). Overall, the ‘new parties’ group is very divided, with on the one side Green Left and Christian Union, who act in accordance to hypothesis 4, and on the other side the Party for the Animals, the Socialist Party, and 50PLUS, who do the opposite.

To test hypothesis 5, the immigration and multiculturalism position trend lines of all parties are regressed on the public concern variable, expressing the percentage of people who view immigration and integration as the biggest national problem. To provide a visual overview, figure 3.10 presents the three independent variables discussed in this section on the primary y-axis and compares it to the average immigration and multiculturalism position of all Dutch parties on the secondary y-axis. None of the independent variables are significantly related to the trend line of the average party positions, but of the three, the average immigration and multiculturalism position of all parties seem to have the strongest relationship with the changes in public concern.

For the multiculturalism positions, two relationships stand out. The first is the multiculturalism position of D66. This relationship has an $R^2$ of 0.873, and a correlation score of
Figure 3.9. Position of new parties on immigration and multiculturalism (secondary y-axis) compared to PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern (primary y-axis).

Figure 3.10. Average party position on immigration and multiculturalism (secondary y-axis) compared to PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern (primary y-axis).

0.934 that just misses a significant level. Still, this indicates a rather strong relationship between the two, as also visible in figure 3.9. In other words, when more people in society regard immigration and integration as the biggest national concern, D66 is likely to adopt more strict
multiculturalism positions. The second remarkable finding is the relationship between the average multiculturalism position of the parties in the right wing group (CDA, VVD, SGP) and the level of public concern. The $R^2$ is 0.973, and the correlation is -0.953 and significant at the 5% level. This suggests that, when public concern about immigration and integration increases, the average right wing policy position becomes more in favour of multiculturalism. This negative correlation seems odd, as public concern about immigration can be understood as a wish for policy which is stricter, and more in favour of assimilation. A response like D66 seems strategically rational. However, this reasoning oversees one big difference between the two: the average multiculturalism position of the right wing group is very strict over the entire time period, while D66 constantly has the second most lenient position (see fig. 3.2 and fig 3.10). This starting position has in influence on how parties respond to increased public concern about immigration and integration.

**Emphasis**

Now, let’s turn to emphasis as the dependent variable. As the figures 3.11 and 3.12 show, the degree to which parties emphasise, and thereby prioritize, the issue of immigration and multiculturalism has been subject to change in the period 2006 – 2015/16. The importance of the immigration issue decreased slowly in the period 2006 – 2014, but suddenly increased drastically in 2015/16. Noteworthy is that some parties increased their emphasis on the immigration issue much more than others. The difference is the largest for GroenLinks, which increased went from 0 to 6.25 on a scale of 10 in the last period. In 2014, GroenLinks was primarily emphasising the environment as a political issue, according to the 2014 CHES dataset. In 2015/16 however, the party became the second biggest emphasiser of the immigration issue. Almost as much as the PVV, which dropped to 6.667. The relative importance of the multiculturalism issue in parliament follows a very different pattern, building up in 2006 to a peak in 2010, to much less important in 2014 to not important at all in 2015/16.

To study the difference between left and right wing parties, relevant for hypothesis 1 and 2, the amounts of emphasis they place on immigration and multiculturalism are analysed as dependent variables (see fig. 3.13 and 3.14). These are regressed on PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern as independent variables. For the emphasis placed on immigration, the statistical results show no real difference between the left and the right wing parties when studied as a group and regressed on PVV seats or popularity. In general, most parties, except the SGP, SP, PVV and PvdD, put less emphasis on the immigration issue then the PVV has more seats. When
the PVV gains popularity, none of the parties, except PVV itself, shows a significant correlation with the amount of emphasis placed on immigration.

However, the difference between the left and the right wing group is much bigger when analysing the emphasis they put on multiculturalism. For the right wing parties (CDA, VVD, and SGP), there is no correlation (0.100) between the number of PVV seats and the importance of the
multiculturalism issue. For the left wing group, the correlation is much stronger (0.638), although not significant. This is an indication that when the PVV has more seats in parliament, the left wing parties emphasise the issue of multiculturalism more, while the right wing parties do not change the amount of attention dedicated to this issue. When the PVV is becoming more popular, both left wing and right wing parties decrease the amount of emphasis placed on multiculturalism, although the right does so to a much larger extent (-0.758) than the left (-0.312). Taking a closer look at the data, the results are very skewed by the Green Left party. When regressing the trend line of emphasis placed by Green Left on multiculturalism on the PVV’s popularity as an independent variable, the $R^2$ is 0.906 and the correlation (-0.952) is significant at the 5% level. This indicates a significant negative linear relationship between the two. In other words, when the PVV gains popularity, Green Left puts more emphasis on multiculturalism in response. When regressing the emphasis placed by Green Left on multiculturalism on PVV seats, the results are far from significant. This suggests that the actual number of PVV seats does not influence the degree to which multiculturalism is emphasised by Green Left.

To test hypothesis 4, stating that new parties know better how to position themselves in the immigration debate, the new parties group is analysed (excluding SP and 50PLUS). The average amounts of emphasis placed on immigration and multiculturalism of this group are regressed on the independent variables PVV seats, PVV immigration and public concern (see fig. 3.15). Almost all correlations do not reach a significant level, except when the group average amount of emphasis placed on immigration is regressed on the public concern trend line. The two are positively correlated (0.978) at a significance level of 0.05, with a $R^2$ of 0.956. This suggests that the new parties together respond to increasing public concern about immigration and integration by emphasising their own immigration position more fiercely.

Figure 3.16 compares PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern with two dependent variables, namely the average amount of emphasis put on immigration and on multiculturalism by all parties, relevant for testing hypothesis 5. The relationship between the average amount of emphasis put on immigration and the public concern variable is stronger than this relationship with the average level of emphasis on multiculturalism. For immigration emphasis and public concern, the $R^2$ is 0.735 and the correlation score is 0.858, which suggests a strong positive relation between the two although it just misses statistical significance. This indicates that when more people see immigration as the biggest national problem, parties put more emphasis on this issue. No individual party has a statistically significant correlation between their level of emphasis placed
on immigration and the changes in public concern. However, the liberal party VVD, Green Left and the Christian Union all have strong positive correlation scores that are approach significance. When the trend lines of the average positions are compared to the other two independent
Figure 3.15. *New party emphasis on immigration and multiculturalism (secondary y-axis) compared to PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern (primary y-axis).*

Figure 3.16 *Average party emphasis on immigration and multiculturalism (secondary y-axis) compared to PVV seats, PVV popularity and public concern (primary y-axis).*

variables, the correlation scores are extremely weak, suggesting that PVV popularity or the number of PVV seats does not have an influence on the average amount of emphasis placed on immigration.
Position and emphasis combined
To test whether the parties with the most extreme positions are also the parties that emphasise this the most, relevant for hypothesis 3, Figures 3.9, 3.10, 3.11 and 3.12, visually represent the relationship between distinctness and party emphasis. Distinctiveness is calculated as the positional distance from the mean of each year, which is then plotted it against a party’s degree of emphasis placed on immigration. The PVV is a constant outlier, permanently at the top left of the graph. This indicates that it has an extremely strict immigration position relative to the other parties in the spectrum, and places a lot of emphasis on in. More interesting is the behaviour of the other parties.

The levels of variance of the immigration position, and the degree of emphasis placed on this issue, helps understanding the development of the immigration debate in the Netherlands. The variance in immigration positions among the parties in the spectrum did not change substantially over the years. The standard deviation of immigration positions of all parties except PVV was fairly constant throughout the years (1.731 in 2006, 1.981 in 2010, 2.261 in 2014, and 1.846 in 2015/16). It is interesting that it increased in the period 2006 – 2014, and decreased in 2015/16. This indicates that, in the first period, parties were adopting more diverse immigration positions, while in the last year the variance became less. On the other hand, the standard deviation of levels of emphasis placed on the immigration issue among the different parties (excluding PVV) shows a different pattern, namely 0.814 in 2006, 0.756 in 2010, 0.568 in 2014 and 2.342 in 2015/16. In other words, the variance among the amount of emphasis placed on immigration decreased in the period 2006 – 2014, while it suddenly increased to more than 3 times as much in 2015/16. So, in this last year, some parties suddenly strongly emphasised the issue, while others did the opposite.

Looking at the figures, it is very clear that 2015/16 is a very different year that the other three years. Where in 2010 and 2014 no party other than the PVV emphasised the immigration issue more than a rating of three, in 2015/16 no less than six parties suddenly became strong emphasisers with an emphasis level above a rating of three (CDA, CU, D66, GL, PvdA, and VVD). At the same time, three other parties (SGP, PvdA and 50PLUS) almost do not emphasise the issue at all. Also noteworthy is that the parties that strongly emphasise the immigration issue are not necessarily at the ideological far sides of the spectrum. The biggest emphasiser in 2015/16 (besides PVV) is Green Left, which also has the most lenient position in absolute terms, and the furthest from the mean. However, the second biggest emphasiser is CU, with a position that is not far from the mean at all (-1.662). VVD and PvdA share the third place in the emphasis rating, but
VVD relatively has the most strict position on immigration (excluding PVV) while PvdA is very close to the medium position on this issue. According to Super’s (2015) theory, as stated in hypothesis 3, only the entrepreneurs (GL and VVD) should take strong and emphasised positions. However, the PvdA emphasises the immigration issue as much as the VVD in 2015/16, and Christian Union does so even more. According Super’s theory, these two parties should behave like Goldilocks by not taking extreme positions and not emphasising the issue. Although the first part is true, it was not predicted by the theory that these parties emphasise their immigration position very strongly.
**Figure 3.17.** Distinctiveness of party positions and emphasis of immigration, 2006

**Figure 3.18.** Distinctiveness of party positions and emphasis of immigration, 2010

**Figure 3.19.** Distinctiveness of party positions and emphasis of immigration, 2014

**Figure 3.20.** Distinctiveness of party positions and emphasis of immigration, 2015/16
4. Analysis
This chapter analyses the most important findings and relates these back to the literature. The hypotheses, as posed in chapter 2, are discussed one by one. The conclusion is that not the rise of a radical right party, but the growing public concern about immigration and integration is the main reason why the immigration debate in the Netherlands intensified as parties of all ideological stripes speak up more loudly than before. This being said, in terms of immigration position, the right wing parties overall seem to be more vulnerable for the contagious effect of electoral pressures from radical right parties than the other parties in the spectrum.

Hypothesis 1 and 2: (right wing) parties adopt stricter immigration positions
Looking at the immigration issue, the most noteworthy difference between the left and the right is that when the PVV has more seats in parliament, the average position of the right wing group (VVD, CDA and SGP) significantly becomes stricter. The right wing group is less responsive to changes in PVV popularity or public concern. The immigration positions of the left wing group do not seem to respond to either increasing number of PVV seats, PVV popularity or public concern. Regarding multiculturalism, the left and the right also behave differently. The left wing parties, and especially Green Left, emphasise their (lenient) multiculturalism position more when the PVV becomes more popular in the opinion polls, while the right does not. When public concern about immigration and integration increases, the average right wing policy position becomes more in favour of multiculturalism, while some of the left wing parties act oppositely by adopting stricter multiculturalism positions.

Relating this back to the literature, it seems that the right wing group opt for the accommodative strategy in the words of Meguid (2005), as it responds to increases in PVV seats by adopting stricter immigration positions. The other parties are much less responsive to changes in vote share of the PVV. The left wing position on immigration does not become more lenient, so there is no general trend of diversion. It would also be wrong to speak of overall conversion of issue positions on immigration. The description that fits the best is that the mainstream right parties are most susceptible to contagion of the anti-immigration stance of the radical right party when it gains vote share. These findings are in line with Abou-Chadi (2014) and Davis (2012) who both find that the success of radical right parties especially provides incentives for established right wing parties to shift their position on immigration towards a more protectionist stance. This also supports Han (2015), who finds that the rise of radical right parties leads mainstream parties to adopt more restrictive positions on multiculturalism. All three authors find that left wing parties
do not always shift positions on these two issues. According to Han (2015), they will only do so when the threat of losing votes is high. My findings do not support Van Spanje (2010), who argues that the contagion of anti-immigration positions affects the entire party system and that right wing parties are not more likely to opt for the anti-immigration position. These findings seem to support hypothesis 2: ‘only mainstream right wing parties adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party gains seats, left wing parties hold on to their position or adopt a more lenient position’. Hypothesis 1, stating that ‘all parties adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party gains seats’ can be rejected.

Remarkable is that my results are very different that van Heerden et. al. (2014), while we study the same topic using the same country case. Van Heerden et. al. (2014) find that the mainstream parties opted to accommodate the anti-immigration position while D66, GL and SP strongly campaigned against it. They found that both VVD, CDA, and PvdA adopted stricter immigration stances, although “they have adjusted their positions at a different pace and in different ways” (Van Heerden et. al., 2014, p.132). My findings support the statement that CDA and especially VVD opt for the accommodative strategy by adopting stricter immigration stances, but the PvdA is less articulated (average of 4.694 over the entire period studied). In the period 2006 – 2015/16, no substantial fluctuations for either of these three parties were found. Also different than van Heerden et al is that, according to my data, only the VVD emphasised the immigration issue throughout the entire period. While I agree with van Heerden and colleagues that D66 and GL are opposing the anti-immigration position, I cannot confirm that the SP does so as well. According to my results, the Socialist Party is quite restrictive over the entire time period. Moreover, both SP and D66 are not ‘strongly campaigning’. D66, and especially SP, do not emphasise the immigration issue in the period 2006 – 2015/16.

The difference in our results can be assigned to the different approaches used. Van Heerden et. al (2014) base their analysis on hand-coding of party manifestos for national elections, and study the period 1994 – 2010. They argue that the Comparative Manifesto Project data is not precise enough, because it assumes issue competition, and not spatial competition. Therefore, they supplement this dataset with a ‘confrontational approach’, which also includes the issue positioning of the parties. They make a distinction between four frames that can be used by parties, including ‘immigration’, ‘cultural integration’, ‘legal integration’ and ‘socio-economic integration’. One point of criticism is that they chose not to code sentences that are factual. The example they give is “The Netherlands has always been a multi-cultural society” (Van Heerden et
al., 2014, p.126). This choice seems odd, because the mentioning of a ‘fact’ in a party manifesto is in itself a strategic choice. However, this probably does not influence their results.

More importantly, van Heerden and colleagues make a distinction between immigration issues, cultural integration issues, legal integration issues and socio-economic integration issues, and find which categories receive more attention over time. By rating the salience of each issue, they aim to “find out how the immigration and integration debate in the Netherlands has changed over the years” (van Heerden et. al., 2014, p.124). They measure the salience based on the proportion of sentences addressing immigration or integration in each party manifesto. In other words, the more often an issue is mentioned, the more important it must be for that party. This method can be criticised, as was done by Laver (2001), because is that not only the frequency with which a party mentions a policy is relevant, but also the strength of the position that the party takes towards the policy. The expert survey data used in my research is more sensitive for these differences because it represents a collective opinion based on a combination of sources, including what parties say and what they actually do. Moreover, the time period I study extends van Heerden et. al. (2014) with almost 6, turbulent, years.

**Hypothesis 3: Goldilocks and entrepreneurs**

The results show that hypothesis 3: ‘Entrepreneurs (GL and VVD) adopt extreme positions on immigration and emphasise this strongly, ‘Goldilocks’ adopt average positions and emphasise it weakly’, cannot be accepted because there are too many parties that behave differently. Also, it appears that the parties that most strongly emphasise the immigration issue are not necessarily at the ideological far sides of the spectrum. The biggest emphasiser in 2015/16 is Green Left, which also has the most lenient position in absolute terms, and the furthest from the mean. However, the second biggest emphasiser is Christian Union, with a position that is not far from the mean at all. VVD and PvdA share the third place in the emphasis rating, but VVD relatively has the most strict position on immigration (excluding PVV) while PvdA is very close to the medium position on this issue. According to Super’s (2015) theory, as stated in hypothesis 3, only the entrepreneurs (GL and VVD) should take strong and emphasised positions. However, the PvdA emphasises the immigration issue as much as the VVD in 2015/16, and Christian Union does so even more. According Super’s theory, these two parties should behave like Goldilocks by taking a position that is neither strict nor lenient and not emphasise it. However, according to my data, the PvdA and CU emphasise their immigration issue relatively strongly, while their position on immigration is close to the mean.
Why would these parties opt for this strategy? The most extreme outlier to Super’s theory is the Christian Union. The CU is small and is a new party, founded in 2000 as a merger of the Reformed Political Alliance and the Reformatory Political Federation. CU’s strategy is remarkable, as it suddenly became one of the strongest emphasisers of the immigration issue in 2015/16, while holding on to its position that is very close to the average position on this issue. In general, the party is conservative on most social issues, but quite progressive on economic issues and immigration. In prior research, van der Brug et al. (2009) also saw the Christian Union take deviating position from the original left-right divide. They added that this could be a sign of a newly emerging dimension. In later work however, they undo this statement and conclude that the “sociocultural discourse on immigration has become largely part of the left–right dimension” (van Heerden et al., 2014, p. 133). A speculative reason for the extraordinary move of the Christian Union could be that it is a relatively young party, but as the other new parties behave differently, this cannot be concluded based on the current data. Hence, the real reason remains unclear and merits further research.

The Labour Party is also an outlier to Super’s theory, and as it has always been a big party this might even be more remarkable. When looking at the PvdA in a broader perspective, it is interesting that the party changed its immigration position into more restricting already before the large success of the radical right party List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) in 2001 (Bale et al., 2010; Super, 2015). The purpose of this strategy was to defuse the fear for immigration among the citizens by taking government action on the issue (the PvdA was in government at that time). This strategy was unsuccessful, because their coalition partner VVD continued to express their anti-immigration agenda in a populist manner. “while the PvdA tried to frame immigration and integration in social-economic terms (labour market access, income and education) Bolkestein, and later Fortuyn, insisted that the failed integration of minorities was more to do with language, religion and social behaviour” (Bale et al., 2010, p.416). This strategy is also visible in the expert survey data as the PvdA was the strongest emphasiser of multiculturalism in 2010 (excluding PVV), but dropped to almost zero in the years after. The failure to defuse the issue, and their previous choice not to hold on to their old pro-multiculturalism position, leaves the PvdA no choice but to adopt a slightly more restrictive immigration stance (Bale et al., 2010). Still, the question remains, why would this party emphasise this position?

Perhaps the answer lies in the large amount of competition for the social democratic labour party in the Netherlands. On its far left, the Socialist Party (SP) is running an anti-
immigration, anti-Europe and pro social democracy and classic welfare spending (Super, 2015), which is an attractive alternative for the PvdA voters who do not agree with their pro-immigration stance. Also in the left spectrum is Green Left (GL), which defends the multicultural and pro-Europe position with increasing emphasis. At the time of writing, Bale et. al. (2010, p.417) conclude that the PvdA lost a large part of its vote share because “all the other parties – the SP, Green Left and even D66 – looked more authentic and less opportunistic than the PvdA, which, many argues, had tied itself up in knots trying to adapt to the transformed political landscape”. Bale and colleagues could not have guessed that in 2012, the PvdA would win 38 seats in parliament. The most convincing explanation for this is that at the time this election was held, immigration was very low on the public agenda. At that time, in the wake of the financial and Euro crisis, people were mainly concerned about the economy, healthcare, and unemployment (SCP, 2016). On a more general level, this can explain why the PvdA chose to emphasise the immigration issue: the need to take a strong position in this as the party grew in size and the issue is high on the public agenda. The fact that they are in government from 2007 to 2010 and later since 2012 might have forced them to clearly pronounce their position.

Hypothesis 4: New parties know better how to position themselves

To test hypothesis 4, which argues that new parties know better how to position themselves in the immigration debate, they are clustered as a group. Different than all the other parties, the correlations of immigration and multiculturalism positions of this group are stronger when compared to PVV popularity than when compared to the number of PVV seats. Overall, the new parties seem to respond stronger to increasing popularity of the PVV by taking opposite position; the more popular the PVV, the more in favour of multiculturalism the new parties are. Moreover, the new parties together respond significantly to increasing public concern about immigration and integration by emphasising their own immigration position more. It is likely that the relationship between PVV popularity and multiculturalism emphasis is spurious, as the real underlying cause is the changes in public concern about immigration and integration.

The biggest outlier of the group is Green Left, which is the only party that significantly emphasises its (lenient) multiculturalism position more when the PVV becomes more popular in the opinion polls. In other words, when general sentiments among citizens are becoming more in favour of restrictive immigration policies, Green Left starts to emphasise their lenient multiculturalism position. In doing so, this party is clearly opting for the ‘adversarial’ response, by arguing in favour of multiculturalism in times of growing anti-immigration sentiments. The data does support Davis (2012), who argues that newer parties have positioned themselves more two-
dimensionally, also including the ‘immigration’ dimension. However, this is not enough information to accept hypotheses 4, because not all new parties take strong positions on immigration (PvdD and CU), and not all emphasise this (PvdD).

Overall, it can be concluded that the new parties that know how to position themselves when the immigration debate heats up are the Christion Union and Green Left (cf. hypothesis 4), but the Party for the Animals, 50PLUS and the Socialist Party choose a very different strategy. It could be argued that these parties should not be grouped together with the new parties, because there the first two are one-issue parties and the third a radical left party. If this statement were to be accepted, it could mean that hypothesis 4 were to be accepted. On the other hand, a valid point of criticism is that this is a form of cherry picking, and that only the results that suited the theory were accepted. In this particular research, ‘new’ parties are defined by their age. This choice can be debated, and perhaps this has large implications for the conclusions regarding new parties. For now, the definition of new parties remains a topic of debate, and their role in the immigration debate merits further investigation.

**Hypothesis 5: the Effect of PVV position is marginal, real world is leading**

The average immigration and multiculturalism position of all parties seem to have the strongest relationship with the changes in public concern (judging by figure 3.9 and 3.16, not by statistical analysis). On general, looking at party positions, changes in public concern seem to have more influence on multiculturalism positions than immigration positions. Also, the starting position on multiculturalism has an influence on how parties respond to increased public concern about immigration and integration. When the multiculturalism position of a party is very strict in general, rising public concern can make this position more lenient. The other way around is also true, especially for D66: with a very lenient position in general, rising public concern can lead to a stricter multiculturalism position.

When analysing the amounts of emphasis parties put on these issues, the relationship between the average amount of emphasis put on immigration and the public concern variable is stronger than this relationship with the average level of emphasis on multiculturalism. Looking at the figures, especially 3.17 – 3.20, it is very clear that 2015/16 is a very different year that the other three years. Where in 2010 and 2014 no party other than the PVV emphasised the immigration issue more than a rating of three, in 2015/16 no less than six parties suddenly became strong emphasisers (CDA, CU, D66, GL, PvdA, and VVD). Also, the variance among the amount of emphasis placed on immigration decreased in the period 2006 – 2014, while it suddenly increased
to more than 3 times as much in 2015/16. So, in this last year, some parties suddenly strongly emphasised the issue, while others did the opposite.

On the whole, the emphasis placed on immigration increased drastically in 2015/16 compared to 2014. This is an indication that the average amount of emphasis placed by the Dutch parties on immigration is not very responsive to whether or not a radical right party is present. Parties seem to adjust the extent to which they emphasise the issue response to changes in the ‘real world’. These real world changes are visualised in figure 4.1 and 4.2, and show that immigration numbers increased rapidly in 2015, and citizens started to see this as a big national problem. Also, as was presented in figure 3.1, although the actual positions on immigration do not alter substantially over the entire time period, the biggest changes took place in between 2014 and 2015/16. Assuming that, in order for the immigration debate to be kept parties have to emphasise their positions on this issue, this means that the immigration debate is only held when the issue is high on the public agenda. Overall, parties seem to respond to changes in public opinion, not rise of a radical right party. This confirms hypothesis 5: ‘political parties are more responsive to ‘real-world’ changes than to increasing vote share of radical right parties’.

Figure 4.1 and 4.2 also suggest that fear for immigrants is related to the increase of actual immigration numbers. This is relevant to mention, as it addresses the question of whether the fear for immigrants increase vote share of radical right parties, or the other way around. Recently, the relationship between fear for immigrants and the rise of Radical Right Parties was studied by Berning & Schlueter (2015). Using a voter survey, they ask respondents whether they fear immigrants, and what their opinion is towards the Dutch radical right parties PVV and Proud of the Netherlands (TON). The aim was to find out what the causal relationship is between the rise of radical right parties and the fear of immigrants. The group conflict theory argues that the fear of immigrants leads to the increased preferences for radical right parties. The party identification theory argues the opposite, namely that when people identify with a radical right party, and this party starts expressing more negative opinions towards immigrants, these party supporters will also adopt more negative opinions regarding immigrants. The third hypothesis is that the process is reciprocal, and the two interact in tandem. Berning and Schlueter (2015) find supportive evidence for the group conflict theory: the more citizens perceive immigrants as a threat, the more they prefer RRP parties. This corresponds with Swank and Betz (2002), who find that in western European countries the volume of foreign migration has a direct highly significant positive effect
on the vote share of the new far right, whereas other factors including increased trade openness and capital mobility do not significantly bolster the vote share of radical right parties.

The dark blue line represents the public concern about immigration and integration. Light blue represents concerns about the way people live together, dark pink is health and elderly care, light pink is politics and government and green is income and economy.

**Figure 4.1. The five most important national problem in the Netherlands according to citizens above 18 years old, 2008 – 2016/2 (in percentages of national problem awareness).**

Retrieved from SCP (2016).

**Figure 4.2. Asylum applications in the Netherlands, 1990 - 2015**

Retrieved from Engbersen et. al. (2015).
5. Conclusion

This research aimed to examine how the rise of radical right parties influences the immigration positions of other parties in the Netherlands. Most importantly, it is found that this influence is not as substantial as claimed in prior literature. Overall, parties respond more to changes in public opinion than to the rise of a radical right party in terms of increasing vote share. Political parties are more responsive to ‘real-world’ changes, and it is the increasing concern about immigration and integration among the people that has most influence on the political debate. In fact, regardless of the number of seats of the radical right party, when the immigration issue is not high on the public agenda, it is not prioritized by the Dutch political parties. This is the strongest determinant of the timing and fierceness of the debate. Parties of all ideological stripes speak up more loudly than before. This conclusion is in line with works of Mudde (2012), Bale and Partos (2014), and Akkerman (2015). Perhaps, in prior research, radical right parties are sometimes mistaken for a cause, while they should be considered a symptom. It must not be forgotten that parties consist of politicians who monitor societal sentiments and respond to this, and that it is too simplistic to view these parties merely as rational unitary actors who only making strategic choices in response to one another.

Regarding party behaviour on the issue of immigration, some comments can be made on the development of the Dutch immigration debate. Most noteworthy is that in 2015/16, the debate became more pronounced on all ideological stripes in the spectrum. To argue that the Dutch political immigration debate is diverging, or is becoming more polarised, would ignore the behaviour of the Labour Party and the Christian Union. Although their positions are mild and average, they emphasise this with great strength. Simultaneously, these findings suggest that the immigration debate is integrated in the original left-right dimension. It is not necessarily the new parties that take strongest position, but the issue is fiercely debated by a wide ideological range of parties. This is consistent with Otjes (2012) and Mair (1997), who explain that existing parties follow the left-right dimension when responding to issues introduced by new parties because they have an interest in preserving the original conflicts on which they are founded.

Another comment on party behaviour regarding this issue is that the right wing parties overall seem to be more vulnerable for the contagious effect of electoral pressures from radical right parties than the other parties in the spectrum. The right wing group appears to adopt stricter immigration positions when the PVV has more seats. Left wing parties seem much less responsive to electoral gains of the PVV. The right wing is also more responsive to popularity of the PVV.
according to the opinion polls. When the PVV is popular, the right decreases the amount of emphasis on multiculturalism. Green Left is the only party that significantly increases its emphasis on its (lenient) multiculturalism position when the PVV becomes more popular in the opinion polls. Hence, this party is clearly opting for the ‘adversarial’ response, by arguing in favour of multiculturalism in times of growing anti-immigration sentiments. All in all, these are indications that mainstream right wing parties adopt stricter immigration positions when a radical right party gains seats, while left wing parties hold on to their position or adopt a more lenient position.

No firm conclusions can be drawn on the behaviour of new parties in the immigration debate, because of too much variation within this group. Regardless, the data does suggest that some parties in this group behave as hypothesised in prior literature, namely that they take more extreme positions and increasingly emphasise the immigration issue because they are more able to position themselves on towards this topic. However, the definition of ‘new parties’ and their role in the immigration debate merits further investigation. Another suggestion for further research would be to compare these results with a manifesto analysis of party programs for the Dutch national elections in 2017. This could verify the expert survey results, and hereby make the conclusions and method more reliable.

For now, it can be concluded that extending the timeframe of previous research has shed more light on the development of the Dutch political immigration debate. This contributed to the understanding of strategic party behaviour in response to the rise of radical right parties. Mainstream right wing parties are more inclined to adopt stricter immigration stances when radical right wing parties gain vote share, following spatial competition logic. However, only when public concern increases will parties emphasise their position more and engage in competition over issue ownership. This suggests that competition on the issue of immigration is more a battle of ‘strategic emphasising’ than of ‘issue positioning’. The overall conclusion is that the actual effect of radical right parties is easily overstated in the literature, and occasionally mistaken for the effect of changes in public concern.
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Appendix A. List of experts

The experts are selected on the basis of their excellent knowledge of the Dutch political parties and their immigration positions. Some are interested in party politics in general, others more specifically in the political immigration debate. The questionnaire was sent on 18-4-16, and the experts responded within three weeks. In total 43 experts were approached. 27 experts did not respond, six replied by saying that they will not fill in the questionnaire, and ten responded and filled in the questionnaire. This meets the requirements set by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey.


dhr. dr. D.B.D. Bannink. Expertise: governance of activating labour market policies

dhr. dr. D.J. Berkhout. Expertise: support and Opposition to Migration


mw. Prof. dr. L. Hooghe. Expertise: European integration, political parties, and public opinion.


dhr. dr. G. Schumacher. Challenges to Democratic Representation and CHES


Appendix B. Candidate questionnaire

Welcome and Instructions

Welcome!

Dear expert, I am extremely grateful for your participation in this survey, which aims to extend the Chapel Hill Expert Survey dataset. Thank you in advance for sharing your expertise!

I would like you to reflect on the position of the leadership of national parties in the Netherlands over the course of 2015 and 2016 until the time of writing. The leadership of a political party consists of the party’s chair, the party presidium, and the parliamentary party (as distinct from the party base or local and regional party officials).

The questionnaire contains questions on party positions on immigration policy, and on multiculturalism. Also, the salience of the two topics for each party is asked. Lastly, you are asked to indicate which were the first, second, and third most important issues over the course of 2015.

Below you will find the abbreviations and full names of national parties, in the country language and in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full name</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Christen Democraten Appèl</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>Partij voor de Arbeid</td>
<td>Labour Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</td>
<td>People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>Democraten 66</td>
<td>Democrats 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>GroenLinks</td>
<td>GreenLeft</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij</td>
<td>Political Reformed Party</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Socialistische Partij</td>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>ChristenUnie</td>
<td>ChristianUnion</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVV</td>
<td>Partij voor de Vrijheid</td>
<td>Party for Freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>PvdD</td>
<td>Partij voor de Dieren</td>
<td>Party for Animals</td>
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<td>50PLUS</td>
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1. Position on immigration policy.

Could you please indicate for each of the following political parties its position towards immigration restriction? Please do so by giving each party a mark from 0 (Fully opposed to a restrictive policy on immigration) to 10 (Fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration).

Also, could you give an indication of the importance/salience of the immigration policy for each party? Please do so by giving each party a mark from 0 (Not important at all) to 10 (Extremely important).
2. Position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (multiculturalism vs. assimilation).

Could you please indicate for each of the following political parties its position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (multiculturalism vs. assimilation)? Please do so by giving each party a mark from 0 (Strongly favours multiculturalism) to 10 (Strongly favours assimilation).

Also, could you give an indication of the importance/salience of integration of immigrants and asylum seekers for each party? Please do so by giving each party a mark from 0 (Not important at all) to 10 (Extremely important).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Position on integration of immigrants and asylum seekers (multiculturalism vs. assimilation)</th>
<th>Multiculturalism importance/salience</th>
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<td>CDA</td>
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3. Most Important Issue

Lastly, for each party, could you please indicate which were the first, second, and third most important issues over the course of 2015? This is asked in order to validate my method of recalculating the issue salience of given in the 2006 and 2010 CHES datasets, into the ‘Most Important Issue’ measure used in the 2014 dataset.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>MIP one</th>
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<th>MIP three</th>
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<td>VVD</td>
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Most Important Issue Options:

1 = Anti-elite rhetoric  
2 = Civil liberties  
3 = Corruption  
4 = Decentralization  
5 = Deregulation  
6 = Environment  
7 = Ethnic minorities  
8 = EU integration  
9 = Immigration  
10 = International security  
11 = Multiculturalism  
12 = Nationalism  
13 = Public services vs taxes  
14 = Redistribution  
15 = Religious principles  
16 = Social lifestyle  
17 = State intervention  
18 = Urban vs. rural
Appendix C. Salience scores

To verify the most important issue data the ‘salience per issue’ data is presented in figure B.1 and B.2. As explained, only 2006, 2010 and 2015/16 is available. It is remarkable that the respondents, when asked specifically to rate the salience of immigration and multiculturalism for the PVV it is almost 10 in 2015/16. While, in the same survey, not all experts state that immigration and multiculturalism are the most important issues for this party. Other issues that are frequently listed in the top three are anti-elite rhetoric, ethnic minorities and EU integration.

Figure A.1 salience of the immigration issue, relative to party size

Figure A.2 salience of the multiculturalism issue, relative to party size
Figures B.3 and B.4 show the scores the ‘importance scores’ of immigration and multiculturalism, respectively. The scores are relative to the size of each party, calculated as ‘importance per issues’ scores times the number of seats for each party. In order to show how the political debate developed over the years, scores are relative to size and presented in bar diagrams. If the data would not be relative to the number of seats per party, the total score of the importance of the immigration issue in 2015/16 is higher. Hence, small parties seem to profile themselves more on these issues.

**Figure B.3** Importance of immigration per party, relative to party size

![Diagram showing the importance of immigration per party](image)

**Figure B.4** Importance of multiculturalism per party, relative to party size

![Diagram showing the importance of multiculturalism per party](image)