

The European Union and the Eurosceptic challenge

*The Impact of Eurosceptic Party Election Success on the Policy Positions of Mainstream Parties in
the Netherlands*

by

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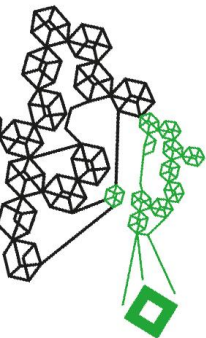

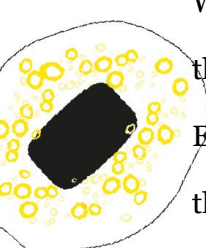
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Abstract



In Europe there has been a steady rise of populist and Eurosceptic political parties. While they have been around for multiple decades it has been a trend in the past few years that these parties have been rising to prominence in governments. In this increasingly Eurosceptic environment, it is critical for pro-European Union political parties to rethink their election campaigns, as their message (and by extension their pro-European Union policy position) does no longer resonate with large groups of citizens. This thesis seeks to find some insight into the subject of the power of Euroscepticism on EU policy positions. The central research question to do so is *How can we explain the development of the policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties over time (1998 - 2023) from the challenges by anti-European political parties?* This question is answered by analyzing the Netherlands national elections from 1998-2023 and discovering what effects upcoming Eurosceptic parties have made. This analysis is done through the lens of the scientific framework: the Spatial voting model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020) and a conceptualization based on Oosterwaal & Torenvlied (2010). What was found was that Dutch political parties have become more Eurosceptic over time. The data shows two motivations for this shift: (1) the rise of Eurosceptic parties and (2) institutional developments in the European Union.

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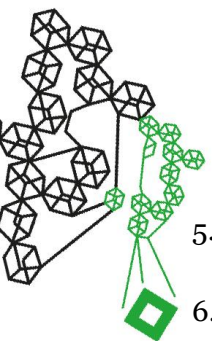
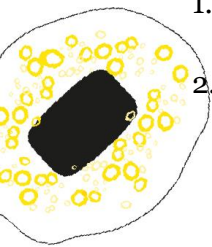
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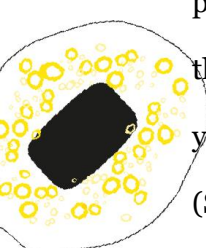
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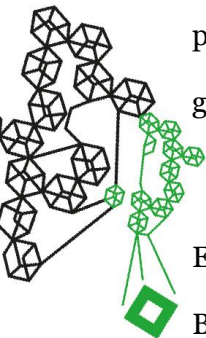
1.Introduction



In the past thirty years or so there has been a rise of populist and Eurosceptic political parties across the European Union (Jones, 2017; Rooduijn and Kessel, 2019). While these parties have long operated as a (significant) part of the opposition, there has in recent years been a trend where populist parties are becoming (leading) parts of a government (Silver 2022). An example of this is the Italian government under Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia (Silver, 2022) and the recent electoral success of Geert Wilder's Partij van de Vrijheid (PVV) (Kiesraad, 2023). In countries such as France and Germany there is also an increased support for their populist parties, the Front National and Alternative für Deutschland respectively.



What follows from this rise in populism and Euroscepticism is that the other political parties need to rethink their message and election campaigns. This is especially true for pro-European Union political parties, as social security or economic reforms can also be found in other parties. There is a clear opposition in policy position regarding the European Union (EU). While the policy position on the European Union will be one of many reasons why citizens vote for populist or non-populist parties it is unmistakable that (1) Euroscepticism is more prevalent in populist parties (Rooduijn and Kessel, 2019) and that (2) the policy position on the European Union is often related to the party ideology, with leftist parties generally being more pro-European Union than rightist parties (Melis, 2021).



This trend is also observable in the Netherlands, where the rise of the hard Eurosceptic PVV and Forum voor Democratie (FvD) and soft Eurosceptic JA21 and BoerBurgerBeweging (Otjes, 2022) have led to more Eurosceptic parties and seats in the Dutch parliament. For other parties the electoral appeal of populism and Euroscepticism might be an incentive to shift their European Union-policy position towards more Euroscepticism. This makes one wonder what the effect of Euroscepticism is on the political parties' policy position towards the European Union and by extension what the policy position of Dutch politics as a whole is regarding the European Union. This constitutes then

the goal of this thesis, to discover whether successes of Eurosceptic parties in Dutch politics have had an effect on the European Union policy position of Dutch politics as a whole. In order to address this topic, the research question of this thesis will be: *How can we explain the development of the policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties over time (1998 - 2023) from the challenges by anti-European political parties?*

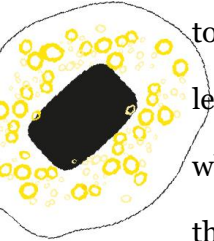
In the Netherlands there are many different parties that participate in the Dutch parliamentary elections. In the 2023 elections for example, there were 26 participating parties of which 15 won seats (Kiesraad, 2023). Of these fifteen parties there is a range of attitudes towards the European Union. An analysis of the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2021 by Otjes (2022) on the Netherlands and European Union politics ranked parties along four attitudes towards the European Union. These attitudes, in ascending order of pro-European Union, are: Eurosceptic, Eurorealist, Pro-European and Eurofederalist (Otjes, 2022). Based on the publication of the Kiesraad (2023) and the article of Otjes (2022) it can be concluded that only three parties that won seats in the 2023 parliamentary elections can be labeled as very pro-European Union. These parties are Democrats 66 (D66), GreenLeft-Labour party collaboration (GroenLinks-PvdA) and Volt. Out of these, the D66 and Volt are Eurofederalist and GroenLinks-PvdA is pro-European (Otjes, 2022).

These three parties share a socialistic character in their ideology (Otjes, 2022), and are known for their pro-climate agenda (Otjes & Krouwel, 2023). A difference between the parties is that D66 and Volt argue for extreme European integration and a European Federation (Otjes, 2022) and have a social-liberalistic ideology in their politics (Otjes, 2022; Otjes & Krouwel, 2023), while GroenLinks-PvdA does not. One big difference between Volt and the other parties is that Volt filled both the nuclear energy and pro-climate niche that none of the other pro-climate parties would touch. Otjes (2022) argues that this niche explains Volt's electoral success in their first national election. Otjes (2022) describes Volt as "a single-issue European Union integration party" which makes Volt the only one-issue party next to being a niche-party. D66 can also be described as a niche party while the components


of GroenLinks-PvdA are originally niche and mainstream respectively (Van Ditmars & De Lange, 2018). This distinction of Van Ditmars & De Lange (2018) is made based on party sizes throughout elections, with niche being relatively small parties and mainstream being large parties that are parts of governments.

In this thesis, the choice is made to focus on national elections rather than European parliamentary elections. This might seem strange as the focus on Europe, and by extension the party manifestos, could give a detailed insight into the policy positions of political parties as well as an expansive motivation for their policy positions. However, the choice for the national elections is made because the policy positions of parties are assumed not to change significantly between different types of elections. This combined with the fact that national election manifestos also allow for an insight into the importance of European Union issues compared to other issues make for a clearer analysis of the European Union Dutch politics dynamic. After all, if the European Union does not get much attention in party manifestos, then it could be assumed that even the most Eurosceptic parties will not develop much anti-European Union policies (and vice versa). Another reason to look at national parliamentary elections is the fact that there is a relationship between national politics and the perception of European politics. Ares, Ceka & Kriesi (2016) performed a study in which the relationship between perceptions of national politics (trust, satisfaction, support as well as government and party specific elements) and trust in the European Parliament was analyzed. The work of Ares, Ceka & Kriesi (2016) concludes that relations between perceptions of national politics and perceptions of European Union politics exist. Therefore, by looking at the European Union dimension of Dutch national elections the outcomes will reflect both public and Dutch political parties' perception of the European Union. This relationship between public opinion on the European Union and the state of national politics is also supported by Ejrnæs & Jensen (2019).

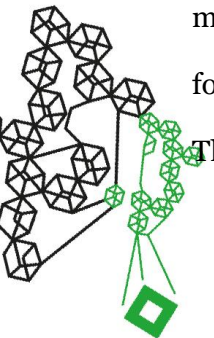
The difficulty of determining causal relationships between the rise of Euroscepticism and the policy positions on European Union issues of non-populist parties is an inherent



challenge of this research. The difficulty is in the precise determination of the factors that will lead to parties changing their policy positions. A myriad of factors could influence the decision for a political party to change a policy position, from Eurosceptic election successes to dissatisfaction with the European Union. Also, party characteristics or a change in leadership could influence such decisions. However, it is still interesting to try to discover what motivates changes in the European Union policy position of Dutch political parties, if there are any. This research gives it a shot by suggesting Eurosceptical election successes will motivate other parties to become more Eurosceptic. This approach is supported by the Spatial Voting Model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020) which will be explained later.



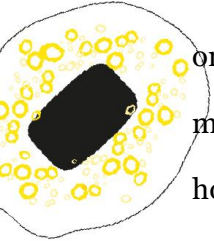
As described above, the aim of this research is to discover the effect of Eurosceptic party successes in Dutch national elections on the European Union policy position of Dutch politics as a whole. In order to create an understanding of Dutch electoral situations related to policy positions, this thesis makes use of The Spatial Voting Model by Adams, Merrill and Zur (2020). This model seeks to explain party positioning on the left-right scale through a policy position approach and incorporate the influence of valence dimensions (i.e. character-based attributes of a party or person). A part of the study of Adams, Merrill and Zur (2020) is about optimal party positioning. The analysis will consist of an analysis of party manifestos for the Dutch parliamentary elections between 1998 and 2023. From the model follow sub questions about the European Union policy positions of Dutch political parties.




These sub questions are:

- What policy positions do Dutch political parties take on the policy issue of the European Union?
- Which differences do we observe in the policy positions of political parties on the policy issue of the European Union over time?
- How does electoral success of Eurosceptic parties influence the European Union policy position of other parties?

- Are there developments in the European Union that influence the European Union policy position of a political party?



This research will contribute to science by performing an analysis that not only focusses on Eurosceptics and their success but also of pro-European Union political parties. As mentioned by Özoflu (2022) there is an abundant focus on Eurosceptic political parties and how their strategies and campaigns are designed and tackled. Since there is less focus on the pro-European Union side of these elections there is still much to be learned and discovered there. This thesis will contribute to the pro-European research by taking a look at the big picture and analyzing the effects of Eurosceptic parties on politics as a whole.



There is also a societal contribution that this thesis makes. The insights of this research will create a more complete picture of Eurosceptic effects and successes on politics. Therefore, any pro-European Union party or non-populist party can benefit by better understanding the playing field in European Union issue politics. These lessons are necessary now more than ever, as the election victory of the PVV and coalition talks with other parties with neutral policy views on the European Union, BoerBurgerBeweging (BBB) and Nieuw Sociaal Contract (NSC), will not lead to a Dutch government with a warm hearth towards the European Union (BoerBurgerBeweging, 2023; Nieuw Sociaal Contract, 2023).

2. Party entrance: theory and hypotheses

As described above there will be one theoretical model that will be used for the analysis in this research. This model will be the Spatial Voting Model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020). As described before, this model deals with the placement on policy issues of political parties on a left-right scale, and through a policy position approach allows this model to determine the voter maximization position of a party. This model incorporates non-policy influences in a party's policy position. Next to the position of vote maximization, the model works with the intention of the party, i.e. are they office seeking (aiming to be part of the governing parties) or policy seeking (focusing on their preferred policy topics). This model allows for an analysis of the strategic policy choices of the pro-European Union parties in the Dutch parliamentary elections of 2023 from the perspective of vote maximization and their end goals of the campaign.

2.1 Spatial voting model

The Spatial voting Model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020) finds its origin in the party competition models of Downs from 1957 (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). This Downsian approach to party competition works with a left right scale in policy issues and a party's position on that scale. The second element of the model is a mean voter distribution (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). This basic model shows that without other influences parties will always move as close as possible to the mean of the voter distribution as that is the place where the most votes are. This is also the case when there are three or more parties, with parties either uniting in a policy position (in the case of even numbers) or leapfrogging out of the middle (in the case of uneven parties) (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). In this model there are two types of motivation for a party's policy position. There are office-seeking parties, that aim to govern after the election and policy-seeking parties, that focus on promoting a select set of policy ideals. The basic principles are the same, but the policy-seeking parties have a slightly different approach that will be explained below (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020).

As politics in real life show, there is no moving to the center of the policy scale. The opposite is even true, with the Democrats and Republicans in the United States taking ever more extreme positions over the years (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). One of the reasons for this lack of convergence is the fact that the voter distribution on a left-right scale is never a clean normal distribution (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). One of the other reasons that is proposed by Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020) is that there are characteristic-based influences. These influences are called “valence dimensions” and are defined as “dimensions ‘on which parties or leaders are differentiated not by what they advocate, but by the degree to which they are linked in the public’s mind with conditions, goals, or symbols of which almost everyone approves or disapproves’” (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). This can include attributes like honesty, competence, empathy and charisma, and can be attributed to both parties and persons (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). The influence of valence is mathematically represented by the equation $V(A/B) = 0$ (for policy position of party A and party B on a left-right scale and equal valence) and its effects can be seen in figure 1.

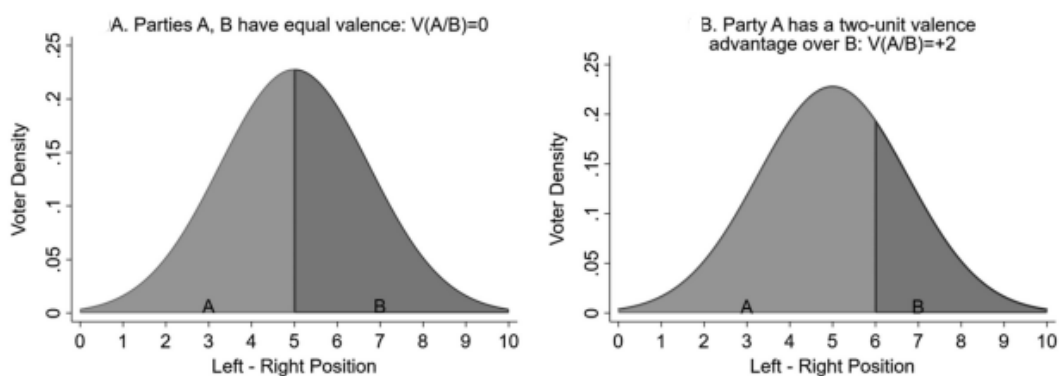
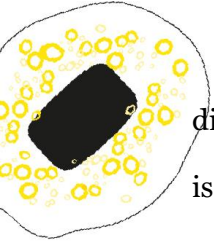


Figure 1: How valence affects voter choice in a model with one positional dimension (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020)

From this theoretical framework of party positioning the first variable to analyze the policy position on the European Union by Dutch political parties in the Netherlands is: *the policy position that the parties take regarding the European Union*. This variable is important because the position that parties take in different elections over a period of time gives an insight into the parties’ priorities and policy positions regarding the EU. At the same

time, the results of this variable when analyzed in the big picture can give insight into the effects that might have resulted in (a possible) change in a party's policy position regarding the European Union.



The motivation for policy-seeking parties on positioning in a spatial model is different from those of office-seeking parties. The basic assumption of policy-seeking parties is that “each party, like each voter, has an ideal point which is the policy position it would prefer to implement” (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). For the party this does not mean that they position themselves at their ideal policy position, as factors such as policy compromises must still be considered as well as the fact that they need an electoral victory in order to implement their policy (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020).

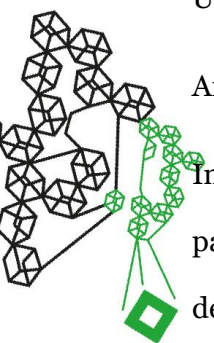
The basic rules of the spatial model that apply to office-seeking party positions also apply to policy-seeking parties. One big difference for policy-seeking parties attaches a utility to the policies that the winning party will implement. As a result, policy-seeking parties have a utility for a given party that is the valuation of the possible outcomes of the election.

Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020) use the following equations for utilities from the perspective of party L (which likes leftist policies) in an election with party R (which likes rightist policies):

Utility of L for $U_L = -L * F(M_{LR}) - R * [1 - F(M_{LR})]$ L

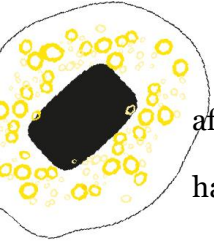
And utility of L for $U_R = L * F(M_{LR}) + R * [1 - F(M_{LR})]$ R

In which $F(M_{LR})$ is the probability that party L wins and $1 - F(M_{LR})$ is the probability that party R wins. L and R are the places the parties take on the left right scale. In order to determine the optimal party position in the voter distribution there needs to be a search for separation between the two parties' positions at the Nash Equilibrium (the point at which neither party has an incentive to change its position unilaterally) (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020).




From this part of the model follows the second variable: *are the most votes for a given party won with an office-seeking approach or a policy-seeking approach?* It could be

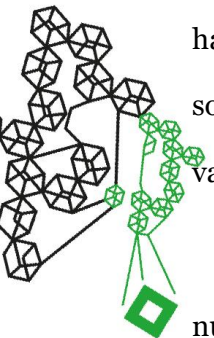
argued that given the histories of the parties and the elections there are incentives for parties to make this distinctive choice. For example, Volt, as a new kid on the block, has never been a large party. Therefore, it would be strange for them to have an office-seeking approach.



Examples of the working of valence can be found in a small analysis of the aforementioned pro-European Union parties from the introduction. The GroenLinks-PvdA have long defended the European Union and have played little significant roles in Dutch governments. GroenLinks-PvdA is a collaboration of parties that have been in parliament for a long time. PvdA even has experience as a government party in cabinet Rutte II (Rijksoverheid-7, N.D.). But there are little scandals surrounding both political parties. Therefore, it is assumed that the collaboration party has high valence.



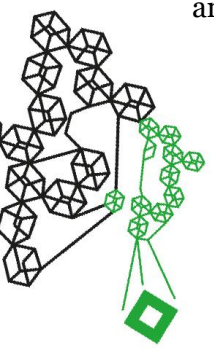
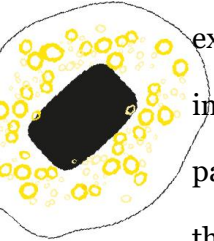
The D66 has been part of the previous two government parties, including the one that resigned prematurely as a result of the Child benefit scandal in 2021 (NOS, 2021) and has also been a part of the government that fell in 2023 over the topic of migration (NOS, 2023). This participation in two failing governments can be assumed not to be taken kindly by voters. Therefore, accepting its losses, D66 is assumed to not aim for the government and thus be a policy-seeking party. On the topic of valence, this government participation is a double-edged sword. On the one hand is their experience in government within the party and have they shown that D66 policy goals can be achieved. On the other hand, there can be some mistrust towards the party because of the failing governments. This points to medium valence.



Volt is a party that has positioned itself in a progressive, pro-European Union, nuclear climate niche (Otjes & Krouwel, 2023). From this positioning of the party there is ample reason to assume that Volt does not aim for a role in government. Therefore, the party is a policy-seeking party. The fact that Volt has only existed on a European scale since 2017 (Otjes & Krouwel, 2023) and is only part of Dutch politics since 2021 (Otjes, 2022) makes that the party has no proven track record in politics and government. This leads to the assumption of low valence

2.2 *Extreme party entrance and its effects on mainstream parties*

Now that there is a model for policy positions of political parties there is still the question of the effects that new and extremist parties will have on the policy positions of existing and mainstream parties. In order to have a theoretical understanding of the influence of new and extreme parties on the policy positions of incumbent and mainstream parties the theory of Merrill & Grofman (2019) is used. Merrill & Grofman (2019) identify the effect that the entrance of an extreme party has on a unidimensional political competition, with a specific focus in proportional representation systems (i.e. The Netherlands). The theory operates in the same context as the Spatial voting model explained above. Thus, the basis is that there are two political parties on a policy spectrum, in this case ranging from -1 to 1, with a normal voter distribution with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 0,5. The mainstream parties are assumed to be policy-seeking and the mainstream parties are assumed to have room to move their policy positions while those of extreme parties are fixed (at the ends of the spectrum). The research models predictions for outcomes with: (1) two mainstream parties, (2) two mainstream parties and one extreme party and (3) two mainstream parties and an extreme party on both sides of the policy spectrum. The two mainstream parties of the model are centrist parties, one center-left party with policy positions between -1 - 0 and 0 - 1 respectively.



PARLIAMENTARY-MEAN MODEL WHERE THE IDEAL POINTS OF THE MAINSTREAM PARTIES STRADDLE THE PARLIAMENTARY MEAN (Q2 X Q3).

	Extreme left party X_1	Mainstream left party X_2	Mainstream right party X_3	Extreme right party X_4
2 PARTIES		-0.627 (50.0%)	0.627 (50.0%)	
3 PARTIES		-0.777 (38.2%)	0.477 (54.8%)	1 (7.0%)
4	-1	-0.427	0.427	1

Table 1: Policy-seeking Nash equilibrium for mainstream parties, with two-, three-, and four-party contests, assuming a normal electorate. (Merrill & Grofman, 2019).

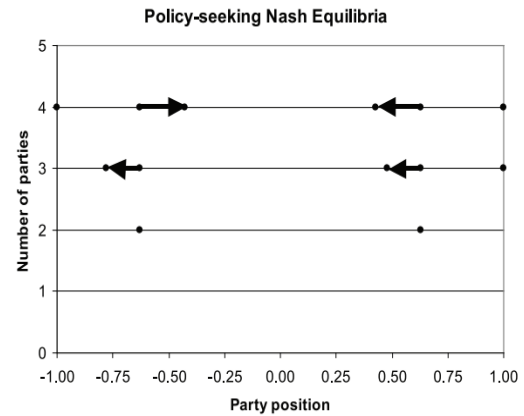


Figure 2: Effect of entrance of extreme parties on Nash equilibria of mainstream parties (Merrill & Grofman, 2019).

Note: Voters are normally distributed, with mean 0 and standard deviation 0.5. Extreme candidates, if present, are fixed at $x_1 = -1$ and $x_4 = 1$. These equilibria apply not only for the parliamentary-mean model when $q_2 \times q_3$, but also to the dominant-party model if $q_2 \times x_1$ and $q_3 \times x_4$. For the four-party scenario, it is assumed that at equilibrium, $q_2 = q_3$ (this is the case for the two-party scenario by Proposition 1). Values in parentheses are the vote shares at equilibrium.

In this defined theoretical space, there is a policy position Nash equilibrium for both the mainstream parties, as can be seen in table 1. At this equilibrium of the share of votes no party can change its policy position without hurting itself or the other party in vote count.

When an extreme right party is introduced with a fixed policy position of 1, the mainstream parties move away from this extreme party and its policy position. The reason for this is that the extreme right party draws votes away from the center-right party. This party in turn will move to the left to draw away voters from the center-left party, which results in the center-left party moving further left. This movement is identical to when an extreme left party enters the mix, only mirrored (i.e. the center-left party moves towards the center of the distribution and the center-right party moves towards the extreme right). When two extreme parties enter the competitions on both sides of the policy spectrum, the centrist parties will move their policy positions to a new Nash equilibrium in the center to account for the votes lost to both extreme parties.

From this theoretical addendum on the Spatial voting model there follows a hypothesis. This hypothesis will help to answer the sub question *'How does electoral success of Eurosceptic parties influence the European Union policy position of other parties?'* The first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: The entrance of a Eurosceptic party is followed by a shift of the mainstream parties to a more pro-European policy position.

The basis for the hypothesis is the research of Merrill & Grofman (2019) that is discussed above. This research states that with a new and extreme party on one end of the policy spectrum will motivate mainstream parties to move away from the extreme party's position. The Netherlands does not have any new extreme parties on the left (Meijers & Zaslove, 2021), because of this we may expect that any effects of Eurosceptic parties will impact according to the three-party modus with one extreme party.

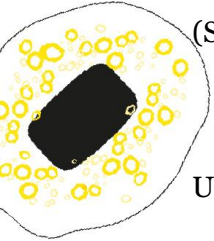
2.3 Institutional context and changes in policy position

It could be the case that there are other factors influencing changes in policy positions of Dutch parties. Therefore, this research not only looks at the effects of extreme newcomers but also searches for other factors that influence the European Union policy position of Dutch politics. This is done through the sub question *'Are there developments in the European Union that influence the European Union policy position of a political party?'*

For answering this research question, another theoretical addendum is necessary: critical junctures. Critical junctures are the moments in historical institutionalism where one or more options of radical institutional innovations are available (Capoccia, 2016). This is due to structural indeterminacy and fluidity of the institutional context. One of these options is chosen as a result of political interactions and decision-making and the consequences are long-lasting. Actors have impactful choices; the institutional outcome of these choices is constrained by antecedent conditions and the range of politically feasible options. It is important to note that these antecedent conditions do not pre-determine the outcome. Sorensen (2023) uses the definition of critical junctures: "Critical Junctures are choice

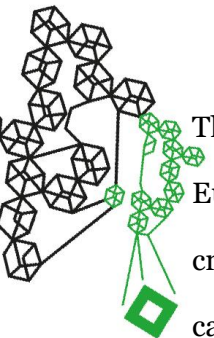
points when a particular option is adopted from among two or more alternatives. These junctures are ‘critical’ because once an option is selected, it becomes progressively more difficult to return to the initial point when multiple alternatives were still available.”

(Sorensen, 2023)



For this research, this means that in the institutional development of the European Union there are moments in time where developments take place that are not so easily reversed. The results of such developments could spark more Eurosceptical or pro-European Union sentiments in political parties. An example of a possible critical juncture is the introduction of the European Monetary Union. The decision to implement a common currency required a lot of faith in the European Union as well as the will to relinquish monetary sovereignty. At the same time it is very difficult to reverse the implementation of the Euro. However, if political parties are unhappy with the Euro they have little to no ability to change this and such a lack of possible change in the institutional dimension of the European Union can spark Euroscepticism. From this possible source of Euroscepticism, we derive the following hypothesis:

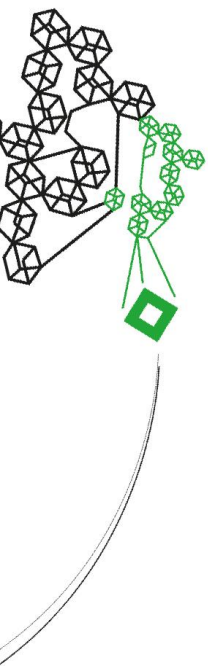
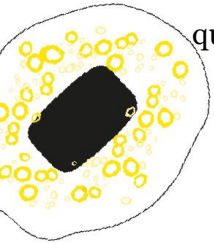
Hypothesis 2: Critical junctures in the institutional context of the European Union are not associated with the policy positions of Dutch mainstream and Eurosceptic political parties.



The reason for this hypothesis is that the analysis is centered around the effect of new, Eurosceptic parties on the European Union policy position of other political parties. When critical junctures come into play and this hypothesis is found to be not true, then a clear causal relation in the results might not exist at all regardless of what is found.

To conclude, the election results and party manifestos of political parties in Dutch parliamentary elections will be analyzed through the Spatial voting model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020). This model deals with two approaches to policy positioning, with the distinction being whether a party focuses on vote maximization and aims for office or focuses on policy results. This model incorporates the concept of valence dimensions into the more

basic concept of policy position. From this model as well as the theoretical addenda on the effect of new, extreme parties on policy positions of mainstream parties and critical junctures create a sufficiently clear framework for an analysis and finding the answers to the research questions.



3. Research design.

The goal of this research is to analyze how the rise of Euroscepticism has affected the overall policy position of Dutch politics on the European Union. For the analysis the party manifestos of Dutch political parties for all Dutch parliamentary elections between 1998 and 2023 will be analyzed using an application of the Spatial model. The application of the model requires qualitative data which will be transmuted into data usable in a spatial model. The approach for this usage of the data is described below.

3.1 Data selection

The data that is used in this research consists of party manifestos of Dutch political parties that participated and won seats in the parliamentary elections in the period 1998-2023. All the party manifestos were retrieved from the repositories of the Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen (DNPP) or the Center on documentation of Dutch political parties. The DNPP keeps track of thousands of digitalized publications and internal documents of political parties and their subsidiary organizations (DNPP, N.D.). For Dutch parliamentary elections the DNPP has a database of party manifestos going back as far as 1888. This database contains both manifestos of parties that won seats as well as parties that have never won seats but did participate in the elections.

As mentioned before the data of this research consists of all the party manifestos of parties that won seats in the elections between 1998 and 2023. From the database of the DNPP all manifestos could be retrieved and there are no missing manifestos. There is one unique case, which is the election of 2003. Because the election of 2003 was very shortly after the election of 2002 the Christen Democratisch Appel (CDA) and Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP) did not submit a new manifesto but reused the 2002 one. In the analysis the reused manifestos have been treated as 'new' manifestos. In the analysis this means that the policy positions of the parties that did not submit a new manifesto remain the same as in 2002. In total the data consists of 104 party manifestos, of which there are two reused in the election of 2003, so in total the data consists of 102 unique party manifestos.

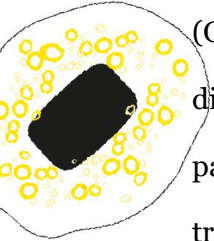
In this research the data lacks an intercoder reliability test. An intercoder reliability test is a method of measuring the agreement between different coders (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The main reason for a lack of this type of test is the fact that there is only one coder for this research, making an intercoder reliability test impossible. Reliability and validity are discussed later in this chapter.

3.2 Conceptualization: the practical application of the Spatial voting model

The Spatial voting model deals with voter distributions and a mathematical approach to the relationship between a party's policy position and its share of voters. This relationship is then expanded by the concept of valence, the influence of character elements such as trustworthiness or the competence of candidates or parties.

The Spatial model will be used to address the policy placement of political parties in European Union issues. For this thesis the spatial model will be used to map the placement of the political party's position on European integration over time. In order to do this, the method on party placement of Oosterwaal and Torenvlied (2010) is used. With this method the party manifestos of all parties are analyzed on their position of European integration. The approach of Oosterwaal and Torenvlied (2010) consists of coding the text of a party manifesto on a seven-point scale.

The manifesto then receives either a - (minus) one, a zero or a + (plus) one score, depending on the overall attitude towards the European Union on a given variable (Oosterwaal & Torenvlied, 2010). The basic idea is that there are three attitudes that a political party can have. These could roughly be described as 'pro-European Union', status quo and 'Eurosceptic'. Pro-European Union deals with attitudes that scream radical or controversial collaboration and legislation on an European Union level, think of an EU-army or more extreme: a federal European Union. Status-quo is the attitude that says: collaborations are good, yet big projects (that could reduce sovereignty for example) are not an option. The last attitude is Eurosceptic. This can be anywhere from a full on Nexit to increased self-determination in policy areas that were previously dealt with on an European



Union level (for example, closing the Dutch borders for immigrants regardless of any European solutions to migration). The starting score of all parties is four and based on the scores received on the variables the placement on the seven-point scale is determined (Oosterwaal & Torenvlied, 2010). This positioning of political parties allows for a distribution of the attitudes towards the European Union of all the parties in the Dutch parliament. For this thesis there is a second element towards party placement, namely the transition of party placement over the years. For this the party placement on European Union integration will be determined for every parliamentary election since 2006, the first year that the PVV was electable (Parlement.com, N.D.).



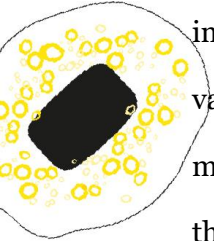
The placement on the scale is determined by the statement that a manifesto makes on three sub-categories of the variable of European integration. These subcategories are: (1) *monetary EU issues*, (2) *EU wide collaborations and influences of EU legislation on the Netherlands* and (3) *geographical size of the EU*. The monetary issues variable deals with the question whether the European Union should receive more money to deal with their assigned policy areas. This could be a whole range of budgets, from the long-term EU budget to emergency funds and everything in-between. Parties opting for an expansion of the EU long-term budget would receive a +1 while parties who accept the budget but won't support an expansion will get 0. The second variable tackles a party's disposition towards the collaborative and legislative nature of the European Union. Parties that want to retrieve tasks from the European Union and arrange them within the national borders receive a -1 while parties that are okay with collaborating on an European Union level receive a 0. Parties that are supporting large collaborations (an EU army for example) receive a +1, the reason for this is that collaborating on an European Union level is quite normal and only radical or controversial collaborations can be categorized as 'more-European Union'. The third variable is quite literally more/less European Union or status quo. It deals with the question of whether a party is for incorporating more member-states into the European Union or not (for example the candidate-member states in the Balkans). Parties in favor of doing so receive a +1 while those not supporting expansion receive a 0. Parties supporting a Brexit or




suggesting that the European Union should be divided policy wise based on a criterium receive a -1 (think of different monetary or financial policies based on the economic contribution a country makes to the European Union). Lastly, the scores that all parties receive will be corrected for the number of seats that that party received in the specific election. In this way the 'influence' of a particular policy position regarding the European Union is represented according to its power in the Dutch parliament.

The choice for the first variable monetary EU issue is made because the European Union requires a lot of money, which can be a friction point for political parties (Fuest & Pisani-Ferry, 2020). Member states contribute two-thirds of the total EU budget based on the Gross Domestic Product of a country (Fuest & Pisani-Ferry, 2020). Because this contribution of member states is so important, it is one of the cornerstones of European Integration. As a result, it is relevant to this research to assess the policy positions of Dutch political parties towards European monetary issues. Political parties might claim to be in favor of the European Union, but if they are not willing to contribute the funds to make the Union work, then that is a sign of anti-European Union sentiment. Being such an important factor in European integration (or disintegration) it is one of the variables that is used in the analysis.

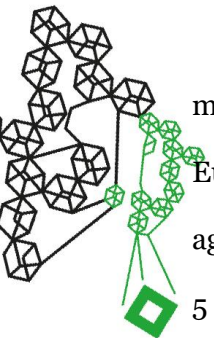
The second variable, EU wide collaborations and influences of EU legislation on the Netherlands, was chosen because according to Nanou, Zapryanova & Toth (2017) 'Europeanisation' is the basis of European integration. Europeanisation is described as a process through which "European Union policies, rules, norms and procedures become incorporated in domestic political structures and policies." (Nanou, Zapryanova & Toth, 2017) For this research this means that European Union policy, rules, norms and procedures are an important part of European integration. As a result, it is an important element to measure in order to establish a political party's policy position regarding the European Union and therefore an element that is used in this research.



The third variable, geographical size of the European Union, was chosen because it is a very clear measurement of pro- or anti-European Union attitudes. Also, the geographical expansion of the European Union is not a frictionless process, especially as countries differ in for example economic development (Kahanec & Kureková, 2011). This makes it a good variable to test whether a political party is pro- or anti-European Union, after all the party must be willing to overcome these frictions and differences when expansion is the topic. At the same time such differences might be a reason for a party to want a smaller European Union or leave the European Union.



The model will also incorporate a measure for when a political party does not make a statement that makes a policy position in a variable clear; a party could choose not to (or forget to) mention a statement that makes their opinion on a variable clear. For these missing policy positions the average score of the other variables is taken with the assumption that the opinion of the party is then somewhat approximated and incorporated into the results. This is necessary, because parties' scores can have significantly different outcomes if such a measure is not in place, and the assumption that a non-mentioned variable is in line with the other scores of the party (and thus in line with the party's opinion as a whole) is a safe one to make.



An example of how the party placement would go is: a party that does not want a more expensive long-term budget of the European Union, that is of the opinion that European Union policy competences should return to the national governments and that is against expanding the European Union but not in favor of a Nexit will receive a $4 - (0 - 1 + 0) = 5$ score with 1 being very pro-EU and 7 very Eurosceptic and is thus neutral with Eurosceptic tendencies.

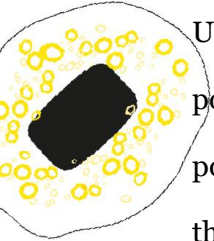
3.3 Extreme and new Eurosceptic political parties

In order to answer the third sub-question *How does electoral success of Eurosceptic parties influence the European Union policy position of other parties?* it is first necessary to establish which parties are Eurosceptic and expected to possibly influence the European

Union policy position of other political parties. To determine which parties will be looked at for their impact on Dutch politics there are a few conditions. The first condition is that the party must be Eurosceptic, otherwise the party's election success cannot move other parties to a more Eurosceptic policy position. The second condition is that the party must have had an election success, otherwise other parties have no reason to change their positions.

The parties that meet these two conditions are the Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF), PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging. The PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging are characterized as Eurosceptic by Otjes (2022). In an analysis on the Euro-characteristics of the Dutch parties in the election of 2021 this research characterizes the PVV and FvD as hard Eurosceptic and the BoerBurgerBeweging as soft Eurosceptic (Otjes, 2022). The LPF is characterized by Bruff (2003) to be populist, xenophobic and anti-establishment in nature. This character combined with the expectation that populist parties are also Eurosceptic (Rooduijn and Kessel, 2019) makes that the LPF also meets the condition of Euroscepticism. These parties have also all achieved significant election results. The PVV on two occasions in 2010 and 2023, where they participated in and led governments (Kiesraad, 2010; Kiesraad, 2023). The election success of the FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging happened in the provincial elections of 2019 and 2023 respectively, these elections also indirectly determine the composition of the First Chamber (or upper house) of the Dutch parliament (Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, N.D.). The election success was a landslide success for both parties with the FvD becoming the largest party overall (AlleCijfers.nl, N.D.) and the BoerBurgerBeweging, becoming the largest party in all provinces (AlleCijfers.nl-2, N.D.). Lastly, the LPF made waves in the election of 2002, winning a surprising second place in the parliamentary elections (Bruff, 2003; Hippe, Lucaride & Voerman, 2002).

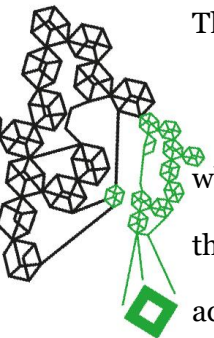
The analysis performed in this research is based on the Spatial voting model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020). In order to make this model workable in the data that was collected, the adaptation of Oosterwaal & Torenvlied (2010) forms the framework of the analysis. The analysis will be performed by placing political parties of Dutch parliamentary



elections on a one to seven scale with one being very pro-European Union and seven very Eurosceptic. All parties will receive a base score of four and will gain or lose points based on their policy position regarding the European Union in three variables. Every pro-European Union policy position will bring the score closer to one and every anti-European Union policy position will bring it closer to seven. The variables are: (1) EU monetary issues, (2) EU policy issues and (3) the geographical size of the EU. The policy positions of the parties for these variables will be determined by analyzing their election manifesto for a specific election. In this way we can create an overview of the placement and movement of political parties over time (1998-2023) on the policy issue of the European Union. Next to the insight into the placement and movement of political parties, this research is interested in the possible effects that Eurosceptic parties have on the policy positions regarding the European Union of other parties. Therefore, the placement and effects of the emergence of the PVV, FvD, LPF and BoerBurgerBeweging will be at the forefront of the analysis.

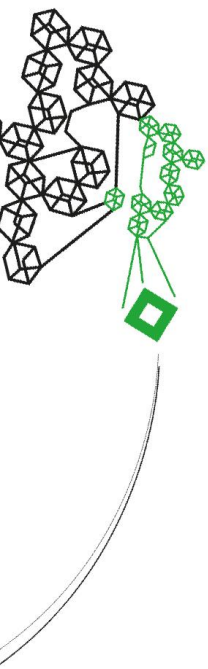
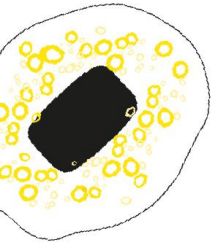
3.4 Validity and reliability

The research's validity and reliability will be strengthened through having it reviewed by a supervisor. Coding is not an exact science in which everything can be measured and recorded, and instead always deals with a measure of interpretation by the researcher. Therefore, a view from outside creates validity and reliability.



Next to this will the qualitative data used in the Spatial voting model and the way in which its outcomes are produced be included in an appendix. This allows for all readers of the research to double check the calculations made and the way the model is used for adequate reliability of the qualitative data analysis. The fact that the model, data and calculations are clear should lead to an end result that can be checked and redone time and time again. This is an approach that should produce adequate interrater reliability, which is defined as such: "Interrater reliability relates to the extent to which raters can consistently distinguish between different items on a measurement scale. The general trend in ratings is important, not the absolute value assigned by each of the raters, and the variation between

ratings and measurement error is accounted for in Interrater reliability.” (Gisev, Bell, & Chen, 2013) As mentioned above, there is ample room for this type of validity.



4. Results

The analysis of the party manifestos for parliamentary elections of Dutch political parties have shown promising insights into the motivations of parties on their policy position regarding the European Union. The analysis was done by attributing scores to the political parties that participated and won seats in the Dutch parliament. The scores were then corrected for the number of seats that the parties had won. Thus, the influence of policy positions can be measured according to voting power in the parliament and by extension its policy determining power or the policy positions of the different Dutch governments.

4.1 Party policy positions by election year

This section provides an overview of the policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties as well as a description of how these policy positions have changed over time. Over the elections between 1998 up to 2023 there is a noticeable trend: the rise of Euroscepticism. From the figures shown in the next few pages we can analyze different aspects of the developments in policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties. Figures 3a through 3i consist of political parties which are colored in their own specific color and show the policy positions on the European Union and number of seats of a political party for that election. This allows for an insight into the volatility and policy power of a specific party. Figures 4a and 4b show the development of the hardline pro- and anti-European Union camps (scores 1 to 2 and 6 to 7) in parliament. 4a shows the developments in terms of seat count that pro- and anti-European Union parties have and 4b shows the number of pro- and anti-European Union parties that are present in parliament for a given election. Figure 4c shows the development of the median scores of parliament and coalitions over time, giving an insight into not only parliament, but also the specific policy making influence of a political party.

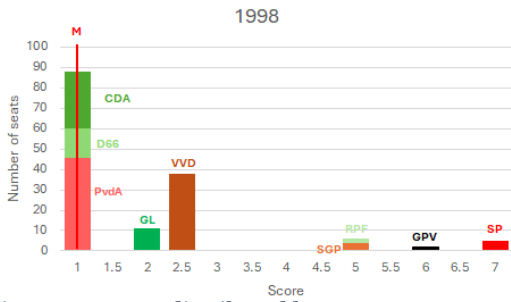


Figure 3a: Seats distributed by score 1998.
Median = 1

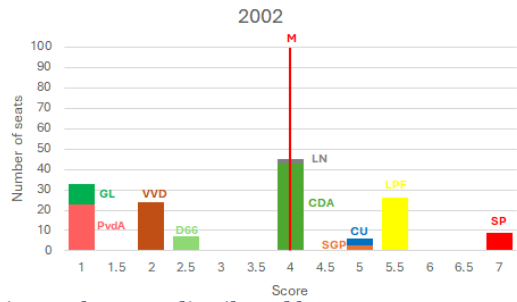


Figure 3b: Seats distributed by score 2002.
Median = 4

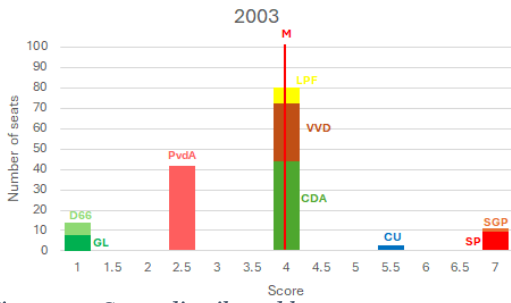


Figure 3c: Seats distributed by score 2003.
Median = 4

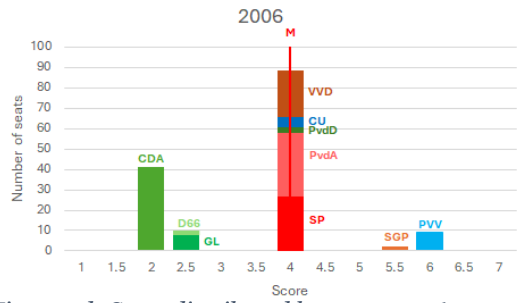


Figure 3d: Seats distributed by score 2006.
Median = 4

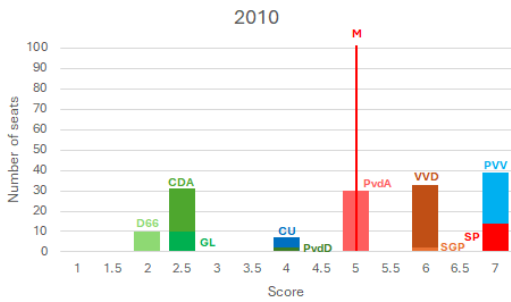


Figure 3e: Seats distributed by score 2010.
Median = 5

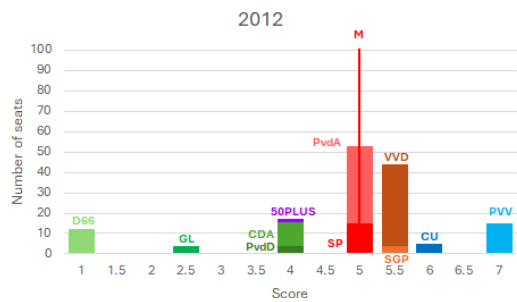


Figure 3f: Seats distributed by score 2012. Median = 5

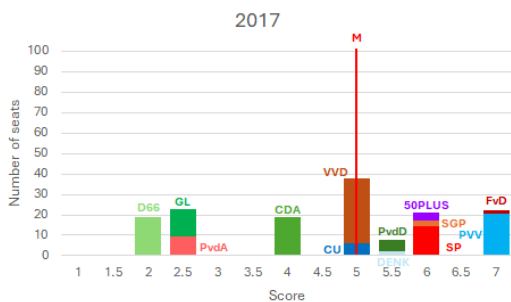


Figure 3g: Seats distributed by score 2017.
Median = 5

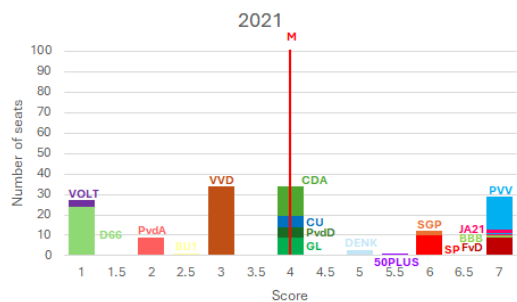


Figure 3h: Seats distributed by score 2021.
Median = 4

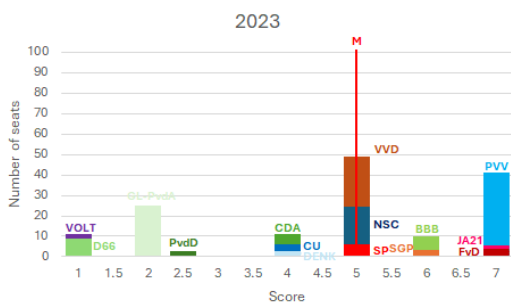


Figure 3i: Seats distributed by score 2023.
Median = 5



Figure 3a shows that in 1998 the political parties held very pro-European policy positions, reflecting a lot of optimism regarding the European Union. The upcoming introduction of the Euro as a common currency and the expansion of the European Union with the European Monetary Union (EMU) as well as the first real expansion of the EU into the former communist bloc of Eastern Europe created a sense of Euro-optimism. Over the years there have been increases in the number of member states of the European Union as well as an increase in issues commonly tackled through the European Union. The geographical expansions of the European Union have taken place in 2004, 2007 and 2013 (Dionysiou, 2022) and consist of about one third of the current number of member states.; quite a rapid expansion. At the same time there have been a series of crises in the period 1998-2023. The financial crisis of 2008-2012, the refugee crisis of 2015 and the global pandemic of 2020-2022 have only contributed to more and more collaboration in the European Union (De Wijk, 2021), with more European Union legislation as well as more European Union authority as a result. Alongside these developments of and inside the European Union a rise in Euroscepticism in the Dutch parliament arises. This can be seen in figures 3b and 3c for the LPF, figures 3d and on for the PVV and figures 3g and on for the FvD, where the parties do not only take a xenophobic policy position but also an anti-European Union one. The successes of their ideologies are noticeable in the policy position of the Dutch parliament regarding the European Union, with a noticeable increase in Euroscepticism in the period after 1998. However, this increase is not extreme, in general the parliament leans Eurosceptic, but the median score never exceeds 5. Also, many parties seem to be quite stable in their European Union policy position, always scoring roughly the same, with small deviations possible.

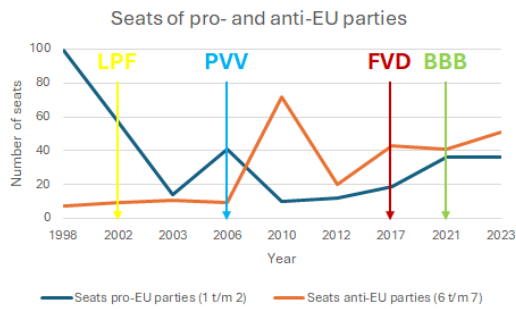


Figure 4a: Seats of pro- and anti-EU parties 1998-2023 and the introduction elections of the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging

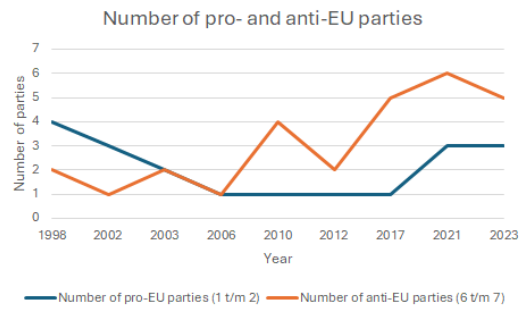


Figure 4b: Number of pro- and anti-EU parties 1998-2023

Regardless of the fact that the Dutch parliament is never extremely Eurosceptic, the influence of Eurosceptic parties is still felt, especially in the two elections where the PVV managed to secure a place in the coalition (figures 3e and 3i). In these elections the number of seats associated with a Eurosceptic party for that particular election spikes. These two elections, 2010 and 2023 respectively, are noticeably the height of Euroscepticism in the period 1998-2023, as the number of Eurosceptic seats in parliament only significantly exceeds forty seats at these two elections. At the same time, the number of Eurosceptic parties is generally rising over the years. This does not mean that the pro-European Union parties are faring any better. After the EU optimism of the 1990s and early 2000s the pro-European Union parties have lost hard in seats and the number of parties (figures 4a and 4b). Notably, there is a reversal of this trend after the first coalition participation of the PVV in 2010. While possibly unrelated it somewhat shows a rethinking of policy positions regarding the European Union by other parties as this seems to be a turning point for some parties, putting them on a more pro-European Union track. The real winners of the trends noticeable in the pro- and anti- European Union camps are the European Union-neutral parties. In general, the number of seats that can be attributed to both camps rarely exceed one third of the total number of seats (figure 4a). Thus, the Dutch parliament is mostly quite neutral regarding the European Union.

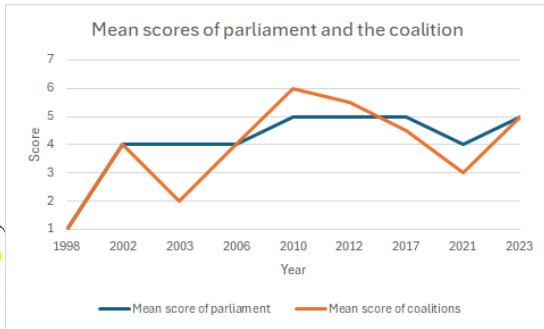


Figure 4c: Median scores of parliament and the coalition 1998-2023.

Not only is the Dutch parliament quite neutral on the policy issue of the European Union, also coalitions of Dutch governments have been neutral regarding the European Union (figure 4c). The median score of the coalitions is a little bit more volatile than the median of the parliament. Regardless of this and the fact that the PVV is part of two coalitions, the median score of the coalitions is quite neutral and maybe even surprisingly pro-European Union. Figure 4c shows that the only significantly anti-European Union coalition is Rutte I, in which the PVV is a 'gedoogpartner' or complying partner. Rutte I scores as only coalition a median score of 6. Even the coalition headed by the PVV, that won the 2023 elections, has a neutral median score of 5. At the same time the government has been more pro-European Union than the parliament on two occasions. Governments Balkenende II (2003) and Rutte IV (2021) have been pro-European Union with a score of 2 and 3 respectively while parliament had a median score of 4 in both elections (figure 4c). All in all, the coalitions have followed the trend of the parliament, but with more extremes.

4.2 The influence of Eurosceptic newcomers

In this section this research will test hypothesis 1. Table 2 is used to make the influence of the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging as new and extreme parties as clear as possible. Table 2 shows the developments of the seats of these Eurosceptic parties as well as the associated changes in the median score.

ELECTION	CHANGE IN EUROSCEPTIC SEATS	CHANGE IN MEDIAN SCORE
2002	+26 (26 seats LPF)	+3 (4)
2003	-18 (8 seats LPF)	0 (4)
2006	+1 (9 seats PVV)	0 (4)
2010	+15 (24 seats PVV)	+1 (5)
2012	-9 (15 seats PVV)	0 (5)
2017	+7 (20 seats PVV, 2 seats FvD)	0 (5)
2021	+4 (17 seats PVV, 8 seats FvD, 1 seat BBB)	-1 (4)
2023	+22 (37 seats PVV, 3 seats FvD, 7 seats BBB)	+1 (5)

Table 2: changes in Eurosceptic seats (LPF, PVV, FvD, BBB) and the median score over time 1998-2023.

As can be seen in the figures 3a, 3b and table 2 there is a jump towards Euroscepticism by the Dutch parliament that coincides with the emergence of the mildly Eurosceptic LPF. This jump, however, is not very large, with anti-European Union parties scoring six seats at a score of five, 26 seats at a score of five point five and nine seats at a score of seven. This means that the Eurosceptical parties have not claimed one third of the votes. What is interesting is that both the LPF as well as the rest of the parliament moved towards a neutral European Union policy position in the election of 2003. The LPF was decimated in this election (Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman, 2004-2) so that leaves the question if the LPF’s policy position was a driving factor in this shift towards the middle.

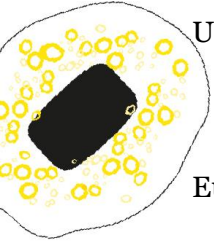
After the rise and fall of the LPF came the emergence of the PVV. As shown in figure 3d, initially the PVV was anti-European Union, but not as extreme as in later elections, with a score of six instead of seven. The same figure shows that the European Union neutral policy position of parliament has reinforced itself and that there is no large Eurosceptic bloc in parliament.

In the next two elections there is a development noticeable, figure 3e shows that the PVV, coincidingly with their participation as complying partner in Rutte I, books an election success and at the same time the parliament becomes quite Eurosceptic (table 2). With thirty seats at a score of five, 33 seats at a score of six and 39 seats at a score of seven two thirds of parliament leans towards an anti-European Union policy position and almost half of parliament is completely in the Eurosceptic camp (figure 3e). What happens next is interesting, figure 3f shows that the anti-European Union leaning parties have grown to 117 seats. However, at the same time these seats concentrate around the not-yet full out Eurosceptic scores of five and five point five, meaning that the hard Eurosceptic camp has reduced from 72 to twenty seats. This trend coincides with the PVV being the ones to crash cabinet Rutte I and the subsequent beating the PVV took in the elections (2Doc, 2021; Kiesraad, 2012).

The election of 2017 saw the introduction of the FvD as hard Eurosceptic party with two seats at a score of seven and the PVV regaining some lost seats (table 2). Figure 3g shows that at the same time that this is the election where the pro-European Union camp begins to bounce back with nineteen seats at a score of two instead of twelve seats at a score of one in 2012 and ten seats at a score of two in 2010. Still the more than half of parliament leans towards anti-European Union and almost one third is hard Eurosceptic against a 42 pro-European Union and nineteen Europhile seats in parliament.

The trend of the parliament being more spread out across the score range continues into the next election of 2021. At this election the BoerBurgerBeweging joins parliament as a mild Eurosceptic party. As figure 3h shows, the PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging make up almost the whole Eurosceptic bloc in parliament. The Eurosceptic bloc also changes little in seat count for the scores six and seven combined loses two seats compared to the previous election. Noticeably, at the same time increases the number of seats of the PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging with four seats (table 2). In this election moves the rest of parliament towards either neutral or pro-European Union, with 34 seats at a score of four compared to

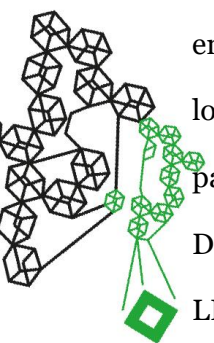
nineteen the previous election and 34 seats at a score of three compared to zero the previous election (figures 3g and 3h). The Europhile camp grows to 36 seats of which 27 are at a score of one. This means that while the number of Eurosceptic parties rises the pro-European Union camp is also gaining ground.

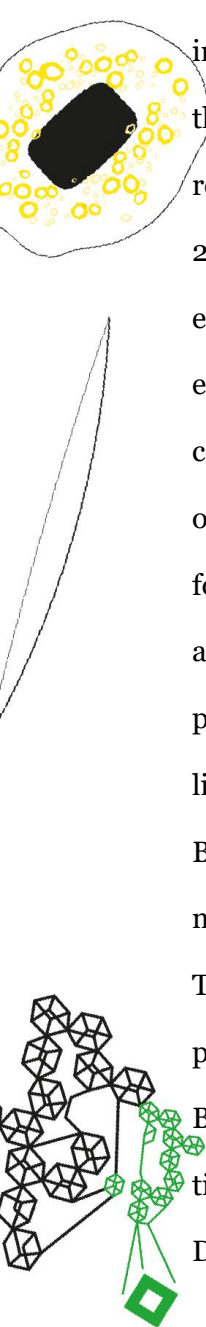


In the election of 2023 parliament swings around again. Figure 3i shows that the Europhile camp remains 36 seats large but the mildly pro-European Union seats at score three and neutral seats at score four mostly swing to a score of five. Also, the Eurosceptics win considerably in this election. As shown in figure 3h this win is almost completely the work of the PVV, which has 37 seats at a score of seven, but also the BoerBurgerBeweging contributes with seven seats at a score of six and the FvD contributes three seats at a score of seven. Overall, the Eurosceptic camp has 51 seats, so marginally over one third of the seats. The anti-European Union parties as a whole however, claim exactly one hundred seats meaning that two thirds of parliament is anti-European Union.



In all the elections between 1998 and 2023 there have been four parties that identify as new/emerging, Eurosceptic and possibly policy position shifting forces. These are the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging. In analyzing the policy positions and election results of these elections, this research seeks to find whether there is a relation between the emergence of these parties and a possible increasing Euroscepticism in Dutch politics. By looking at the shifts that have taken place with the introduction or successes of these four parties this research can suggest some relationships between the policy positions of all Dutch political parties in parliament and the election successes of the Eurosceptic parties LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging. What becomes especially clear from table 2 is the interesting effect that the PVV has on the median of parliament, both election successes of the PVV resulted in a jump towards more Euroscepticism. The question is whether this is just the PVV, table 2 also shows that while the PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging gained seats in 2021 the median score reduced from five to four. This suggests that there is another factor influencing the median score.





In the elections of 2002 and 2003 the LPF had first booked a shocking result with their election success (Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman, 2004; Hippe, Lucardie & Voerman, 2004-2), after which they immediately disintegrated. Leaving the LPF with little chance to influence other parties. The PVV participated in all elections between 2006 and 2023. In these elections there have been successes and setbacks. 2006 was their first year and did not result in a mega success (Lucardie et al., 2008) as well as their beating in 2012 (Kiesraad, 2012). The PVV participated in two coalitions and even leads one of them. At the other elections the PVV has often been the largest opposition party, which could be called an election success as well. The elections that the PVV booked its largest successes also sees a considerable jump towards anti-European Union policy positions and the elections of 2010 onwards see an almost structural anti-European Union sentiment. The FvD has participated for three elections now, at all these elections the FvD has never risen to prominence. The aforementioned provincial election and the parliamentary election of 2021 has been their peak so far (AlleCijfers, N.D.; Kiesraad, 2021). The successes of the FvD have been short lived and with the PVV seeming to be the preferred Eurosceptic party. Lastly there is the BoerBurgerBeweging, the youngest of the Eurosceptic parties. The BoerBurgerBeweging has made a flying start with the success in the provincial elections of 2023 (AlleCijfers-2, N.D.). The party also received seven seats in the 2023 parliamentary elections and will be participating in the PVV led coalition (Kiesraad, 2023; NOS, 2024). At this point in time the BoerBurgerBeweging has the ability to rise further and become an influential force. At this time however, their successes are just too small to change the policy positions of the whole Dutch parliament.

This analysis answers the sub question *'How does electoral success of Eurosceptic parties influence the European Union policy position of other parties?'* The data has shown that mainstream political parties move around a neutral or lightly anti-European Union median. The median scores suggest that election successes of specifically the PVV go hand in hand with a more Eurosceptical Dutch parliament. The hypothesis associated with this sub question is:

Hypothesis 1: The entrance of a Eurosceptic party is followed by a shift of the mainstream parties to a more pro-European policy position.

Based on the data this hypothesis needs to be rejected. It is very clear that rise of extreme, Eurosceptical parties such as the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging did not move the parliament towards a more Europhile policy position. The opposite could even be argued, as the median score moved from a one when none of the extreme, Eurosceptical party participated to a four and five for the elections that had the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweing participating in them. As a result, the idea that parties try to maximize their votes by drawing in votes from other mainstream parties seems to be not true. This means that the electoral successes of the Eurosceptic parties have motivated mainstream parties to also become more Eurosceptic.

4.3 The influence of critical junctures in the institutional context

In this section we will test hypothesis 2. This is done by establishing whether there are critical junctures in the institutional development of the European Union that political parties are concerned about. For this the party manifestos of Dutch political parties have paragraphs or chapters on the European Union for the whole period analyzed in this research. The developments that form critical junctures are presented visually in figure 5, in which the development of pro- and anti-European Union seats is displayed as well as the aforementioned developments. When looking at the concerns addressed in the party manifestos there are three elements that stand out. These junctures that also seem to have a large influence on the perceived policy position of a political party regarding the European Union.

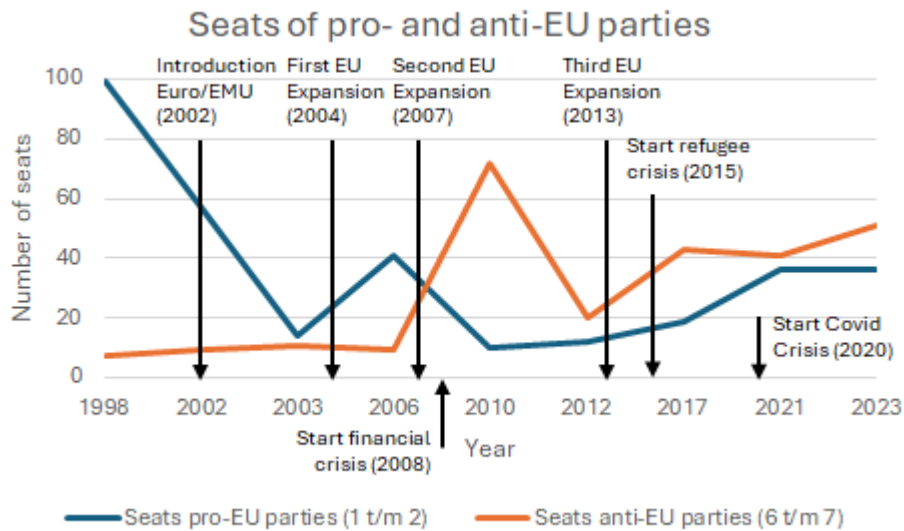
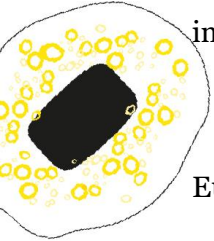


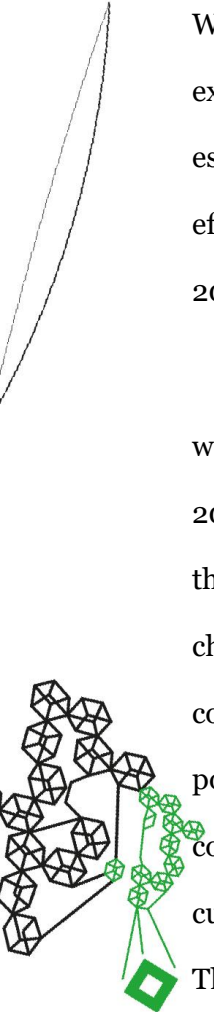
Figure 5: Seats of pro- and anti-EU parties 1998-2023 and the critical juncture events of the European Union.

The first critical juncture that is found is the moment that the European Union takes on more responsibility than just the customs union. Figure 5 shows that the most influential of these ‘extra’ responsibilities are the EMU/Euro. Also, collaborations on agriculture or justice are seen by concerned political parties as not a European Union issue. The development of the European Union into more than just another international collaboration seems to rub parties of a specific character the wrong way. Figure 5 shows this primarily by the heavily reducing pro-EU seats in the period 1998-2003. These types of parties are political parties with certain specific traditional values, norms or principles. Although their policy position regarding the European Union can change somewhat over time these parties tend to score consistently the same score over the whole 25-year period. The same arguments are found in their manifestos for the whole period, for the SGP and ChristenUnie (CU) (and predecessors RFP and GPV) these arguments are mainly tradition, independence and sovereignty. As well as an anti-abortion policy position (they regard the European Union as pro-abortion). Being pro- European Union means a betrayal of Dutch culture and identity. These arguments, except the abortion policy position, are also prevalent in the parties PVV, FvD and to a lesser extent BoerBurgerBeweging and NSC. The only party that scores consistently anti-European Union but bases it on a different argumentation is the

Socialistische Partij (SP). The SP sees the European Union as a neoliberal project that only works for the benefit of capitalists and big companies. Other parties do not show the same concern with the European Union growing to an ever-closer union and are a lot more volatile in their policy position regarding the European Union.



Another factor that plays into this critical juncture is the increased collaboration on European Union level due to the crises of the period 2008-2022. The financial, refugee and Covid crises have been tackled by international collaboration on a European Union level (De Wijk, 2021). The result of this increased collaboration is that the European Union 'sneakily' expanded its range of policy domains to include more financial control and a newly established authority to determine border-control and health policy. Figure 5 shows that the effects of these crises are spikes in Euroscepticism in the elections of 2010, 2017, 2021 and 2023.



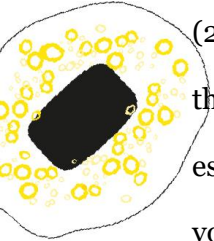
The second critical juncture that was found is the expansion of the European Union with the former Communist bloc countries. As shown in figure 5, this happened in 2004, 2007 and 2013 (Dionysiou, 2022). The consequence of this critical juncture is twofold. First the xenophobic parties fear for job security in the Netherlands due to a possible influx of cheaper laborers as well as associated consequences for public services. The second consequence is the subsequent lack of governability within the European Union. Many Dutch political parties make clear in their manifestos that the number of member states raises concerns about the ungovernability of the European Union through vetoes and the perceived cultural differences between western Europe and the southern or eastern member states. This undemocratic character of the European Union through its institutional design has been mentioned in many party manifestos throughout 1998-2023 and seems to spark Eurosceptic sentiments in some political parties. Figure 5 shows that the second and third expansions of the European Union coincided with a spike in Eurosceptic seats in parliament.

The third critical juncture that was identified is the institutional rigidity of the European Union. Through either the institutional development or the political rigidity

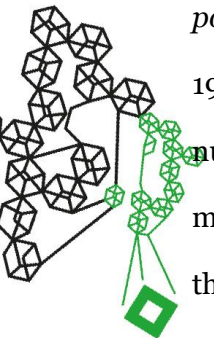
described above some parties believe that the European Union evolved into an unreformable mess. Party manifestos show that there have been many concerns, plans and ambitions that political parties had regarding the European Union in 1998 are still prevalent in 2023. But also ambitions such as a proper European Human Rights framework or an European Union defense force are also in the data since 1998. It is not unthinkable that this perceived rigidity of the European Union might make parties that don't have much warmth for the European Union and might motivate a party to be a little bit more Eurosceptic every election.

Figures 4a and 5 give in insight into the relationship between the rise of Eurosceptical parties and the critical junctures present in the European Union. The emergence of the LPF coincides with the implementation of the Euro and EMU. The emergence of the LPF however, does not lead to a lot of Eurosceptic seats and the LPF disappeared almost as quickly as it rose. From the figures it becomes clear that the successes of the LPF does not coincide with any critical junctures. The emergence of the PVV on the other hand is very much related to critical junctures. Namely, the crises that the European Union had to face in the period 2008-2022. Since the first election participation and success of the PVV in 2006 there is a clear spike in Euroscepticism after every crisis. Figure 5 shows that there is a large surge in Eurosceptic seats after the financial crisis of 2008, resulting in the election success of the PVV in 2010. At the same time there is election success in 2017 after the start of the refugee crisis in 2015 and again after the Covid crisis. The critical juncture of crises in the European Union is what seems to drive election success for the PVV. The FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging, which have not been participating very long, do not gain much from critical junctures and instead find their success in the rising polarization on the policy issue of the European Union. This is exemplified in figure 5 by the fact that both Eurosceptical and pro-European Union seats are on the rise since the FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging have been participating in elections.

The success of Eurosceptical parties is mainly thanks to the PVV and the PVV has been very successful from their second election onwards. This begs the question what the



approach has been and whether changing circumstances makes their election message resonate better with voters. From the data it is clear that the PVV was always very Eurosceptic but became more Eurosceptic between 2006 and 2010. Veul, Flasche & Venema (2016) have researched voting motivations for PVV and Socialistische Partij (SP) voters in the 2010 election. Their conclusion on voter motivation for the PVV was mainly the anti-establishment and anti-nonwestern immigrant opinions were mainly the motivation for voting PVV. From this perspective there are critical junctures that could result in PVV election success, namely the refugee crisis of 2015 as well as the expansions of 2004, 2005 and 2013, which all resulted in nonwestern immigrants moving into the Netherlands. Also, the financial and Covid crises are situations in which an anti-establishment attitude could work very well in drawing in voters that no longer believe in the government. It is not clear however, whether these voters are also voting for the PVV because they are Eurosceptic. It is likely that the European Union is blamed in some way as this is the institution that 'invited in' the eastern European countries and that did not allow for our own border policy in the refugee crisis.



The second important sub question of this research that needs answering is: *'Are there developments in the European Union that influence the European Union policy position of a political party?'* The data shows that there are critical junctures in the period 1998-2023 that are ample to make parties change their European Union policy position. The number of member states and undemocratic or ungovernable characteristics mentioned by multiple parties can be reason enough for this. For the answering of this sub question there the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: Critical junctures in the institutional context of the European Union are not associated with the policy positions of Dutch mainstream and Euro-sceptic political parties.

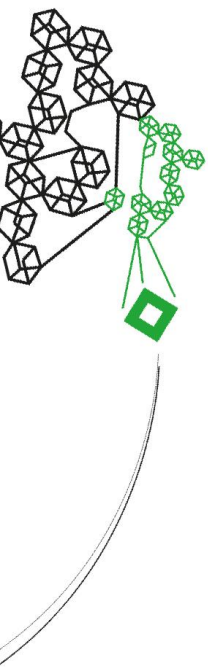
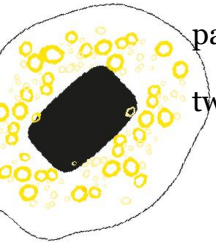
This hypothesis is also rejected. The data gives many examples and concerns that influence the European Union policy position of political parties. While some concerns

motivate parties to become more anti-European Union (like the CU) there are also parties which see these concerns as a possibility to do better (like Volt or D66). Still, the crises in the period 2008-2022 and the ungovernability and lack of democracy are ample motivators for a changing European Union policy position. The rejection of this hypothesis means that the emergence of extreme and Eurosceptic parties is not the only possible cause of changing European Union policy positions in the Dutch parliament.

4.4 Summary

The scores of all political parties that have won seats in Dutch parliamentary elections in the period 1998-2023 have given an insight in the pro- or anti-European Union policy position of Dutch politics as a whole as well as the influence of Euroscepticism. This research shows that political parties have become more anti-European Union over the years, however parliament as a whole has not become Eurosceptic but rather neutral towards the European Union. Extreme Pro-European Union sentiment at the start of the 2000s might have more influence on the anti-European Union movement because there was room to move in that way, rather than Euroscepticism moving political parties to more anti-European Union policy positions. The setup of this research was the expectation that extreme and new parties motivate the mainstream parties to move away from the extreme policy positions and thus become more Europhile. However, this was not found as the data suggest that the success years of the foremost populist and Eurosceptic party, the PVV, has led to an increase in Euroscepticism. This Euroscepticism however, fell a little bit with the PVV. Subsequent election successes of the PVV do not seem to have influenced the parliament as a whole in to become very Eurosceptic. At the same time there have been developments, or critical junctures, in the European Union that could motivate parties to change their policy positions as well. Perceived undemocratic or ungovernable characteristics of the European Union or the crises of the past twenty years and all the consequences those have are mentioned as concerns by many parties over multiple elections. The associated expectation that this was not the case was found to be not true, adding developments in the European Union to the list of possible causes for more Euroscepticism

alongside election successes of Eurosceptic parties. It is difficult to exactly determine what cause and effect relationships are present here. The data suggests that both the emergence of Eurosceptical parties as well as institutional developments of the European Union motivate parties to become more Eurosceptic. It is not possible however, to determine which of the two factors is contributing more to the trends that were discussed.



5. Conclusion

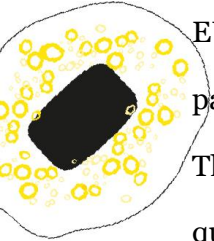
For the past few decades, the member states of the European Union have seen the rise of populist parties that also incorporate Euroscepticism in their mainstream ideology. (Jones, 2017; Rooduijn and Kessel, 2019) These Eurosceptical parties have often played a part in the opposition but are claiming more often a (leading) position in the government, such as Fratelli d'Italia and the PVV (Silver, 2022; Kiesraad, 2023). While these parties are mainly populist in nature, there are two factors that make populist parties a threat to the European Union: (1) it is unmistakable that Euroscepticism is more prevalent in populist parties (Rooduijn and Kessel, 2019) and that (2) the policy position on the European Union is often related to the party ideology, with leftist parties generally being more pro-European Union than rightist parties (Melis, 2021). In the Netherlands the rise of populism and Euroscepticism has given rise to the hard Eurosceptic PVV and FvD and soft Eurosceptic JA21 and BBB (Otjes, 2022). For other parties the electoral appeal of populism and Euroscepticism might be an incentive to shift their European Union -policy position towards more Euroscepticism. This makes one wonder what the effect of Euroscepticism is on the political parties' policy positions towards the European Union and by extension what the policy position of Dutch politics as a whole is regarding the European Union. This constitutes then the goal of this thesis, to discover whether successes of Eurosceptic parties in Dutch politics have had an effect on the European Union policy position of Dutch politics as a whole. In order to address this topic, the research question of this thesis is: *How can we explain the development of the policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties over time (1998 - 2023) from the challenges by anti-European political parties?*

The answer to this research question was sought through the Spatial voting model of Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020). This model is based on the Downsian Spatial voting model from 1957 (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). The basis of the model is a policy scale from left to right on which two parties have to take a policy position. On the same scale a voter distribution is also present. For the theoretical model it is assumed that this mean voter

distribution is distributed normally. As a result, both parties will try to move as close to the mean voter position (i.e. the middle position) as possible, as this is where the number of winnable votes is the largest (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). As we know from real life politics this is not the case, the reason for this is that in the real world there are motivations for a political party. A party can choose for a vote-seeking strategy or a policy-seeking strategy.

The vote-seeking strategy will motivate a party to move as close as possible to the mean voter position. Policy-seeking strategy will motivate a party to stay at their preferred policy position and to influence the policy agenda with the votes that they did win (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020). Next to these two strategies there is also the concept of valence. This is the perceived ability of a political party to achieve its goals and make good on its promises as well as the perceived trustworthiness. This can be impacted by the party as well as persons related to the party. High valence parties are expected to receive extra votes past their policy position (Adams, Merrill & Zur, 2020).

The way that this model is constructed to be useful in the answering of the research question is through the conceptualization of Oosterwaal & Torenvlied (2010). They provide a method in which party manifestos are translated into useable data in a spatial model. This is done by taking a seven-point scale, in this case for the policy position that a party has towards the European Union. In this scale a score of one is very pro-European Union and a score of seven is very Eurosceptic. All parties start with a score in the middle, four. Then the party manifesto of a specific party is analyzed by looking for statements in the three variables. When a party is negative about a variable, then that party receives a minus one score for that variable, for neutral or pro-status quo a zero and for positive or more European Union a plus one (Oosterwaal & Torenvlied, 2010). This gives a political party's policy position on the European Union for the specific election that the party manifesto is meant for. Lastly, the score that a party receives is corrected for the number of seats that the political party received in the specific election. This is done to correct the policy position regarding the European Union for the political influence that it has. The three variables that will be used are: (1) *monetary EU issues*, (2) *EU wide collaborations and influences of EU*

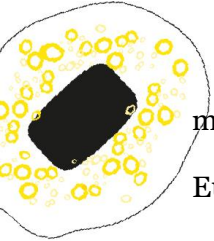


policy on the Netherlands and (3) geographical size of the EU. The monetary issues variable deals with the question whether the European Union should receive more money to deal with their assigned policy areas. This could be a whole range of budgets, from the long-term EU budget to emergency funds and everything in-between. The second variable tackles a party's disposition towards the collaborative and legislative nature of the European Union. The third variable is quite literally more/less European Union or status quo. It deals with the question of whether a party is for incorporating more member-states into the European Union or not. The conceptualization described above is applied to all political parties' manifestos for the Dutch parliamentary elections in the period 1998-2023.

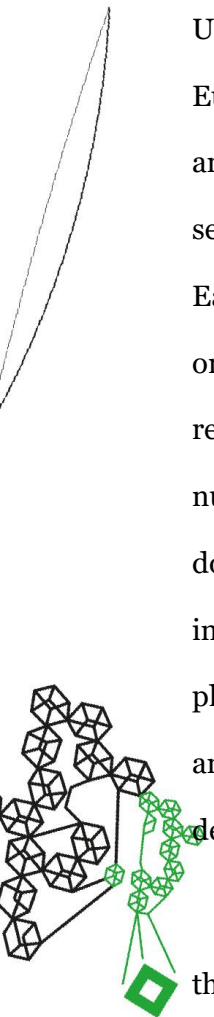


What was found using the conceptualization mentioned above is that Euroscepticism has been on the rise in Dutch politics. It has however, not come to dominate Dutch politics and it can even be said that there have been only two Eurosceptic successes in Dutch politics, the electoral successes of the PVV. The basis for this is that the earliest elections analyzed in this research were extremely pro-European Union. The upcoming introduction of the Euro and the EMU combined with the enthusiastic policy position on incorporating the former communist bloc of East Europe into the European Union results in many pro-European Union policy positions in the earlier elections. Noticeable is that anti-European Union sentiment in the later elections is often a result of this early pro-European Union policy position. The expansions of 2004, 2007 and 2013 consists of about one thirds of the current amount of member states (Dionysiou, 2022) and creates many xenophobic concerns in Dutch parties' election manifestos. Also there have been a series of crisis in the period 1998-2023. The financial crisis of 2008-2012, the refugee crisis of 2015 and the global pandemic of 2020-2022 (De Wijk, 2021). These crises have resulted in more collaboration in the European Union, as well as European Union legislation and authority (De Wijk, 2021). Which is also a problem for many anti-European Union parties (party manifestos of the PVV, FvD, CU, SGP). The policy positions of parties have been moving towards the anti-European Union side over the years, especially in the period 1998-2010, the reason for this not that Eurosceptics had major successes but that the period 1998-2003 was very pro-European

Union. The move towards anti-European Union stopped when the median reached the neutral scores. However, every success of (especially) the PVV was followed by a move towards Euroscepticism by the median score of parliament.



The second result found was that there are three critical junctures that seem to motivate parties to become more Eurosceptic. The first juncture is the transformation of the European Union from a customs union into the ever-closer union. Party manifestos show that the ever-increasing number of responsibilities and policy competences of the European Union collide with the traditional and sovereign values of some political parties. The European Union, in the eyes of these parties, is a betrayal of Dutch culture and sovereignty and is often seen as an institution that is holding back Dutch industry and agriculture. The second juncture is the geographical expansion of the European Union with countries in Eastern Europe. This juncture gave rise to a cheap labor force in the Netherlands that would only profit from Dutch institutions and send all their money back home. The second concern related to this juncture is the ungovernability of the European Union. Through the large number of member states there is a higher risk of a veto and the Eastern European countries do not share the culture of the rest of the European Union. The third critical juncture is the institutional rigidity of the European Union. Through whatever reason there have been plans, concerns and ambitions that are mentioned throughout the whole 25-year period analyzed in this research. 25 years in which there have been little changes that are clearly desired. This rigidity also motivates parties to become more Eurosceptic.



The hypotheses in this research state the expectation that the election successes of the new, Eurosceptic parties motivate other mainstream parties to become more Eurosceptic and that there are no institutional developments in the European Union that influences policy positions of political parties. The research found that the opposite of the first hypothesis happened, political parties became more Eurosceptic. At the same time the data showed that there are critical junctures that can motivate political parties to become more Eurosceptic.

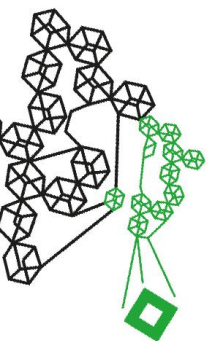
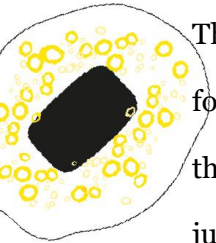
The rejection of the first hypothesis requires some further discussion, after all it implies that the theoretical framework of Merrill & Grofman (2019) is incorrect. This does not have to be the case, however. The first reason why the rejection of the hypothesis does not imply an incorrect model is that the model (1) operates in a two-party system much like the United States, (2) the parties are assumed to be policy-seeking and (3) it assumes a normally distributed voter distribution. At this point it is difficult to say whether the two-party character of the model makes any difference, but the Dutch elections encompass ten parties or more, which are also not all policy seeking (the VVD, which ran the government for fourteen years, often changed its policy position on the European Union). As a result, there may be many more motivations for political parties at the basis of their policy position than just votes. This ties in well with the third point, the assumed normal distribution. A normal distribution would imply that the political parties can reason their losses based on the new extreme party and find their new optimal position, however a real-life voter distribution is probably not normally distributed, and valence also makes vote winning not as simple and straightforward. The second reason why the rejection of hypothesis 1 does not imply a faulty model is that the model is used to look at one policy aspect of Dutch elections. And not a major one at that. So, the Dutch voter might make its choice for a political party completely unrelated to a party's European Union policy position. This could very well mean that policy positions and the voter distribution on this specific policy issue are not related to one another, and that parties do not take them into account when positioning themselves on other issues.

The central research question of this research is: *How can we explain the development of the policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties over time (1998 - 2023) from the challenges by anti-European political parties?* In order to answer this main research question, there were four sub questions. The first two were used to describe the actual policy positions of Dutch political parties on the European Union and hoe these policy positions developed over time. The third sub question was used for the analysis of the effects of extreme party entrance on policy positions of mainstream parties, in

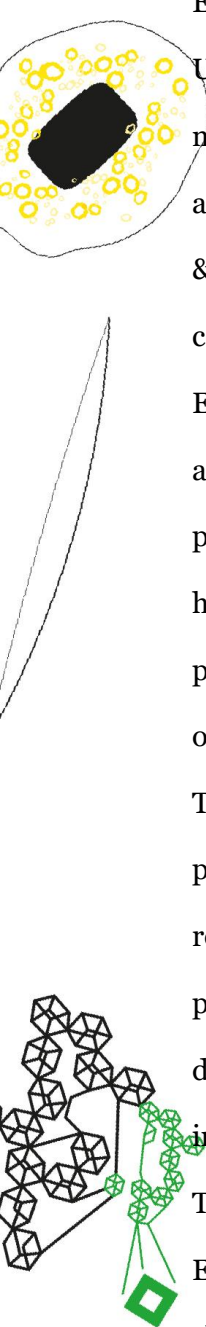
this case the entrance of the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweing. The fourth sub question was used to analyze whether there had been institutional developments within the European Union itself that could have caused political parties to change their policy position.

The analysis of the effects of Eurosceptic party entrance found that the emergence of these four parties motivated the mainstream political parties to become more Eurosceptic rather than the expected less Eurosceptic. At the same time the data showed the existence of critical junctures that could motivate political parties to change their policy position on the

European Union. Based on the data that was found and analyzed the answer to this question is twofold, the developments of the policy positions on the European Union of Dutch political parties can be explained by (1) the election successes of upcoming, Eurosceptic political parties and (2) critical junctures in institutional developments in the European Union.



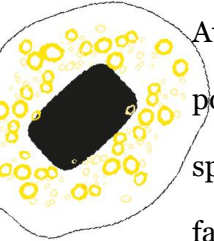
6. Discussion



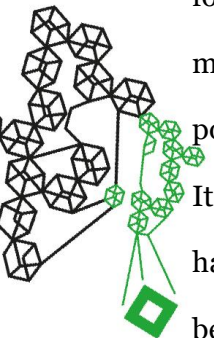
All in all, this research has tried to gain insight into the influence of extreme and Eurosceptic political parties on the policy position of Dutch political parties of the European Union over a time span of 25 years. This was done by analyzing all parties' election manifestos for the Dutch parliamentary elections in that period. The manifestos were analyzed through an application of the Spatial voting model as described by Adams, Merrill & Zur (2020). This application followed the approach of Oosterwaal & Torenvlied (2010) and consisted of analyzing political parties' opinions on the European Union through three European Union related variables. These variables are (1) monetary issues, (2) policy issues and (3) size of the EU. From a theoretical addendum on the influence of new and extreme parties on existing, mainstream parties this research formulated two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the emergence of extreme and Eurosceptic parties motivates mainstream parties to become more pro-European Union. The second hypothesis is that there are no other developments that motivate parties to change their European Union policy position. The data showed that together with the emergence of the Eurosceptical and extreme new parties LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging the Euroscepticism in the Dutch parliament rose. Especially the election successes of the PVV correlate with higher Euroscepticism of the parliament as a whole. At the same time did the data reveal many institutional concerns and developments in the European Union over the 25-year period which are also very likely to influence the policy positions on the European Union of mainstream political parties. Therefore, this research found that both the emergence and election successes of the Eurosceptical parties as well as developments in the European Union motivated parties to change their European Union policy position.

The research process in and of itself went quite smooth. There is already a lot of research on the emergence of Eurosceptical parties throughout Europe and there is a lack of research on the specific impact that these Eurosceptical parties have. This creates the perfect niche for research on that impact. The Spatial voting model gives a clear understanding of

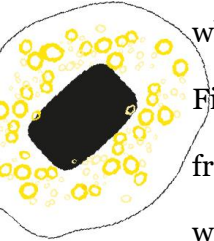
party motivations and their relations to policy positions. At the same time is the method of Oosterwaal & Torenvlied (2010) a clear application of this model. By approaching party manifestos through three variables, it was possible to gain insight over a large period of time.



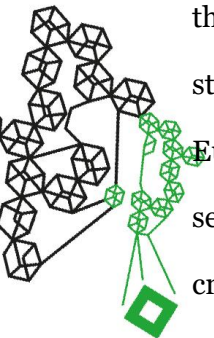
At this time there is no clear research on what variables are related to a political party's policy position on the European Union. As a result, these variables have been constructed specifically for this research. It would be useful for future research to establish all the major factors that come into play, so later research can do the same research with more variables. A standard list of variables will also increase the validity and reliability of later research and could increase it in hindsight for this one. At the same time would such a research help validate the variables chosen in this research. After the analysis of the party manifestos and the correction for the number of seats that specific parties won a pattern was quickly discovered. The elections with specifically PVV success correlate with more Euroscepticism. Yet, the party manifestos also revealed that parties had other motivations for having the opinion on the European Union that they have. Especially the Christian parties CU and SGP were very adamant in their belief in Dutch sovereignty, together with the typical populist and Eurosceptic parties. Already mentioned concerns about the ungovernability of a large European Union with veto powers for every member state or the cultural differences between former east bloc countries versus western European countries seem to persist in all the party manifestos of these parties. The difficulty that springs from this is that it makes it difficult to point out which cause is more motivating for political parties to change their policy position. It could even be argued that it is now unclear if and what effect the Eurosceptical parties have had. However, this research has been a first attempt at establishing relationships between the emergence of certain types of parties and the policy positions of other political parties. The outcome still shows that Dutch politics is not committed Eurosceptical, but rather on the Eurosceptical side of neutral.



The emergence of the new and radical parties that was analyzed in this research has shown that over time the emergence of the LPF, PVV, FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging has led to more Euroscepticism. In the results section it was made clear that the PVV flourished on

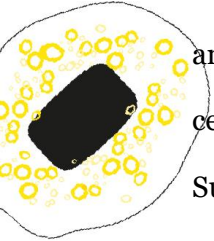


crises and the expansion of the European Union due to its xenophobic character. The FvD and BoerBurgerBeweging have thrived in a time of rising polarization on the policy issue of the European Union. The real question here is whether these are parallel developments or whether the European Union is a driving force in the Eurosceptic rise in the Netherlands. First off, it is impossible to see the developments in the European Union as disconnected from the emergence and successes of the PVV, FvD and BoerBrugerBeweging. Directly, as with the refugee crisis being solved on an European Union level, or indirectly, such as European legislation creating pressure on farmers and the Dutch government, the European Union is a driving factor in concerns raised by Eurosceptics. It is impossible to see critical junctures such as ‘an ever-closer union’ separate from concerns about sovereignty or the fact that the EMU requires a lot of monetary policy transfer from member states to the European Union. Notably the concerns raised by Eurosceptic parties are often similar to those of pro-European Union parties. The question is more often than not whether to approach the solution in a European manner (solving the issues together with all member states) or in a national manner (and thus to seek the solution by turning towards the national government).

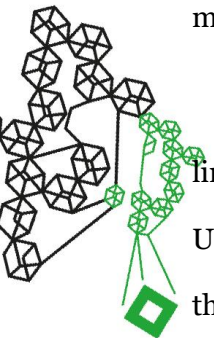


The scientific contribution that this research expected to have, was the contribution to an expanded overview of politics in relation to Euroscepticism. Özoflu (2022) stated that there is an abundant focus on Eurosceptical parties and their successes and campaigning strategies. This research does provide a broader picture of politics in relation to Euroscepticism. The first way in which this research contributes to this broader picture is by searching for alternate reasons for Eurosceptic tendencies in other political parties. The critical juncture theory that was also researched, explains that election successes of Eurosceptical parties are not the only motivators for taking a more Eurosceptical policy position. The measure to which the influence of these two elements actually relates to more Euroscepticism is not encompassed and could be part of future research. Next to the fact that this research uncovered that there are more motivations for Eurosceptic policy positions, there is the insight into the policy position movement of all political parties that are researched. This gives a clearer overview because the influence of other parties’ election

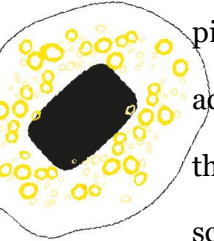
results is insightful. This makes it possible to analyze broader than when the research just looks at the median scores and the seat counts for Eurosceptic parties.




The societal contribution that this research was expected to make was the creation of an insight into the effects of Eurosceptic successes on politics. This insight is created to a certain extent, the motivations for a more Eurosceptic policy position have become clearer. Such an insight can motivate pro-European Union actors to alter their plans and to tackle the issues that some political parties have with the European Union. The outcomes of the critical juncture analysis for example could be taken as a motivator to tackle the undemocratic and ungovernable characteristics of the European Union. Knowing that the European Union functions better internally will not take away xenophobic concerns of parties, but the parties that have problems with the institutional characteristics of the European Union could become less Eurosceptic when the Union changes internally. For Dutch political parties that are pro-European Union this insight could also be a motivator to take the critical juncture concerns into account when trying to collaborate with Eurosceptical parties on European Union issues. The shortcoming of this societal insight is that it doesn't present an answer for Dutch pro-European Union parties. The solutions to the critical junctures concerns are solvable on the European Union level and would require the approval and collaboration of all member states.



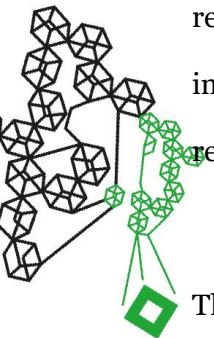
The chosen approach to conceptualize the Spatial voting model does have some limitations. The first limitation is that there is some dilution of the role of the European Union in the data. First and foremost is there the fact that the results are partly influenced by the complete party manifestos. The relationship between a party's policy position on the European Union, the public opinion on the European Union and the election results are not singular related to one another. There are for example, many factors that influence how parties win seats. At the same time, parties might not focus on the European Union in their policy plans or political activities. As a result, there are many factors that contribute to the results that have been left outside the scope of this research. The second limitation to the



chosen approach is that it does not allow for measuring the actual policies implemented with regard to the European Union. The measurement of Euroscepticism of Dutch politics could have been done by analyzing the European Union related policies of the past 25 years and pinpointing whether these can be characterized as Eurosceptic or not. In such a way the actual Eurosceptic results could be measured. The third limitation to the chosen approach is that it only measures the policy position on the European Union of political parties. The scores are corrected for the number of seats a party received for a specific election which does give an idea of the public opinion on the European Union. Regardless, any precise conclusions on public opinion on the European Union and the influence of Euroscepticism in voting behavior cannot be done from the data.

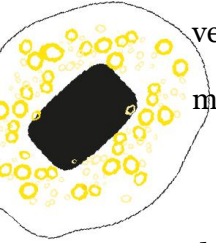


The measurements of this research have been done by defining three variables and then looking at the way in which a variable was present in a party manifesto. This method does bring in some difficulties for the research. The first and foremost is that the attribution of a score is done by only one researcher and that the statements of the manifesto might be interpreted differently by different persons. While the results and the attributed scores in general are not expected to differ a lot, there is still the potential of a few scores being attributed differently. In the larger scheme of the research this could possibly have far reaching consequences. Parties with more seats will have a lot of influence in possible shifts in median scores. Such an extreme difference in the results is not expected, as that would require a multitude of false attributions of scores combined with relatively large parties.



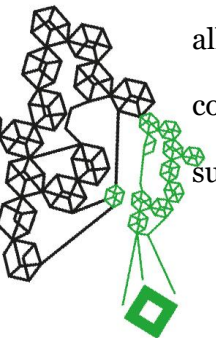
There is a difficulty that the chosen conceptualization approach has no answer for. This difficulty is the dealing with missing values. The conceptualization part of the research does talk about how this particular research approaches missing values, but it does not discuss possible effects. In line with the concerns raised in the previous paragraph there are some elections in which the results are heavily skewed by missing values. The average percentage of missing values is 23 percent over all elections. With the elections between 2002 and 2012 all having more than 25 percent missing values. The research includes an

expectation and approach to working with these missing values by assuming that the missing value can be compensated by the average of the other values. And while this produces results there is still a quarter of the values missing. The actual score of these missing values could very well be very different from what they were assumed to be. Especially for parties that are more in the middle and show a more volatile policy position on the European Union.



Future research could focus itself on two main topics. The first option is to further develop insight into the different variables and characteristics that political parties use to determine their policy position on the European Union. When such a list of variables is clear, similar research could be conducted with all the variables. This gives not only a more precise analysis of all policy positions and how they have changed but also the factors that have motivated parties to change that policy position over time. Other research that also falls in this category could focus on proper ways of measuring the variables related to the European Union. Such research should look for ways to compensate for the issue of missing values that this research has.

The second option is to conduct similar research on other policy areas or in other countries. Research could better determine the relationship between policy positions, changes in policy positions and the emergence of new political parties more in depth when all major policy areas of Dutch politics are analyzed in similar research. Then an answer could be found to the question whether developments in the European Union or the elections success of Eurosceptics motivates parties to change their policy positions.



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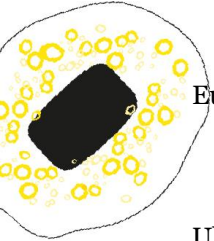
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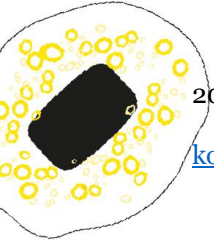
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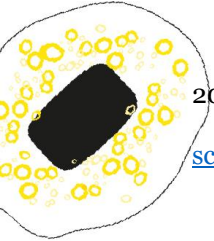


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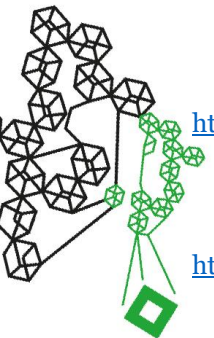
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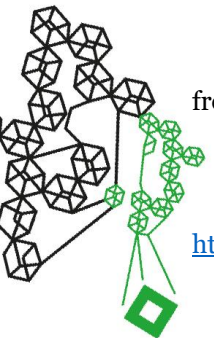
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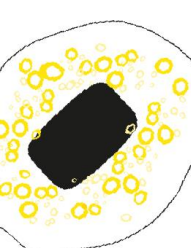
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Appendix A



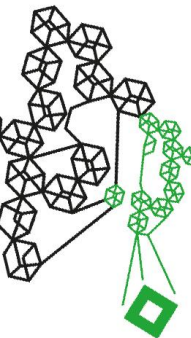
PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	-1	-1 (M)	7	5
PVDA	1	1	1	1	45
GL	0	1	1	2	11
D66	1 (M)	1	1	1	14
SGP	-1	-1	1	5	3
RFP	-1	-1	1	5	3
GPV	-1	-1	0	6	2
CDA	1	1	1	1	29
VVD	1	0	0.5 (M)	2.5	38

Table 3: Scores of political parties in the election of 1998. M is a missing value.



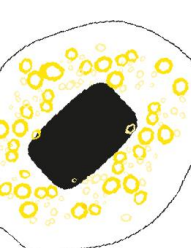
PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1 (M)	-1	-1 (M)	7	9
PVDA	1	1	1	1	23
GL	1 (M)	1	1	1	10
D66	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	7
SGP	0	-1	0	5	2
CU	-1	-1	1	5	4
CDA	0 (M)	0	0	4	43
VVD	0	1	1	2	24
LPF	-0.5 (M)	0	-1	5.5	26
LN	0 (M)	0 (M)	0 (M)	4	2

Table 4: Scores of political parties in the election of 2002. M is a missing value.




PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	-1	-1 (M)	7	9
PVDA	0.5 (M)	0	1	2.5	42
GL	1 (M)	1	1	1	8
D66	1 (M)	1	1 (M)	1	6
SGP	-1 (M)	-1	-1 (M)	7	2
CU	-0.5 (M)	-1	0	5.5	3
CDA	0 (M)	0	0	4	44
VVD	0 (M)	0	0	4	28
LPF	-1	0	1	4	8

Table 5: Scores of political parties in the election of 2003. M is a missing value.



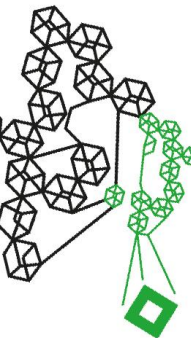
PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	0	0	0	4	25
PVDA	0 (M)	0	0	4	33
GL	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	7
PVDD	0 (M)	0 (M)	0 (M)	4	2
D66	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	3
SGP	-0.5 (M)	-1	0	5.5	2
CU	0 (M)	0	0	4	6
CDA	1	1	0	2	41
VVD	0 (M)	0	0 (M)	4	22
PVV	-1	-1	0	6	9

Table 6: Scores of political parties in the election of 2006. *M* is a missing value.



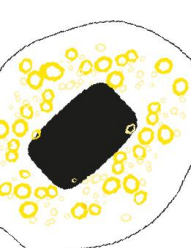
PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	-1 (M)	-1 (M)	7	15
PVDA	-1	0	0	5	30
GL	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	10
PVDD	0 (M)	0 (M)	0 (M)	4	2
D66	1	1	0	2	10
SGP	-1	-1	0	6	2
CU	0 (M)	0	0	4	5
CDA	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	21
VVD	-1	-1	0	6	31
PVV	-1	-1	-1 (M)	7	24

Table 7: Scores of political parties in the election of 2010. *M* is a missing value.



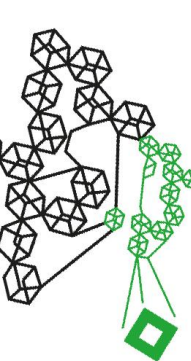
PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	0	0	5	15
PVDA	-1	0	0	5	38
GL	0	1	0.5 (M)	2.5	4
PVDD	0 (M)	0	0	4	2
D66	1	1	1 (M)	1	12
SGP	-1	-0.5 (M)	0	5.5	3
CU	-1	-1	0	6	5
CDA	0 (M)	0	0	4	13
VVD	-1	0	-0.5 (M)	5.5	41
PVV	-1	-1	-1	7	15
50PLUS	0 (M)	0 (M)	0 (M)	4	2

Table 8: Scores of political parties in the election of 2012. *M* is a missing value.



PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	-1	0	6	14
PVDA	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	9
GL	0.5 (M)	1	0	2.5	14
DENK	-0.5 (M)	-1	0	5.5	3
PVDD	-1	0	-0.5 (M)	5.5	5
D66	1	1	0	2	19
SGP	-1	-1	0	6	3
CU	0	-1	0	5	5
CDA	0 (M)	0	0	4	19
VVD	-1	0	0	5	33
FVD	-1	-1	-1	7	2
PVV	-1	-1	-1	7	20
50PLUS	-1	-1	0	6	4

Table 9: Scores of political parties in the election of 2017. M is a missing value.



PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	-1	0	6	9
PVDA	1	1	0	2	9
GL	0 (M)	0	0	4	8
DENK	-1	0	0	5	3
PVDD	0	0	0	4	6
D66	1	1	1	1	24
VOLT	1	1	1 (M)	1	3
SGP	-1	-1	0	6	3
CU	-1	1	0 (M)	4	5
CDA	0	0	0	4	15
VVD	1	0	0	3	34
FVD	-1	-1	-1	7	8
BBB	-1	-1	-1 (M)	7	1
JA21	-1	-1	-1	7	3
PVV	-1	-1	-1	7	17
BIJ1	1	0	0.5 (M)	2.5	1
50PLUS	-1	-0.5 (M)	0	5.5	1

Table 10: Scores of political parties in the election of 2021. M is a missing value.

PARTY	MONETARY ISSUES	EU COLLABORATIONS	SIZE EU	TOTAL SCORE	SEATS
SP	-1	0	0	5	5
GL-PVDA	1	1	0	2	25
DENK	0 (M)	0	0 (M)	4	3
PVDD	0	1	0.5 (M)	2.5	3
D66	1	1	1	1	9
VOLT	1	1	1	1	2
NSC	0	-1	0	5	20
SGP	-1	-1	0	6	3
CU	0 (M)	0	0	4	3
CDA	0 (M)	0	0	4	5
VVD	-1	0	0	5	24
FVD	-1	-1	-1	7	3
BBB	-1	-1	0	6	7
JA21	-1	-1	-1 (M)	7	1
PVV	-1	-1	-1	7	37

Table 11: Scores of political parties in the election of 2023. *M* is a missing value.