

# Towards the next Dutch general election: the issue opportunity structure for parties

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Following on the tools provided by issue yield theory ([De Sio and Weber 2014](#)), this analysis provides a specific perspective on the data we at CISE collected through a CAWI survey few weeks before the Dutch election ([De Sio in this volume](#)). We rely here on an innovative measurement of positional issues, which allows to derive a common issue yield index for this kind of issues. *Positional* issues are, in general, defined by reference to *two rival goals* (e.g. progressive vs. traditional morality): the issue yield measure permits us to assess the presence of strategic issue opportunities for a party. The core dimensions originally developed (for positional issues) in the issue yield model are *support* (how much a policy is supported in the general public) and *within-party agreement* (how much it is supported within the party)<sup>1</sup>. The two dimensions correspond to the ideal goal of any party: the ability to keep their existing voter base intact, but with the possibility of reaching out to a much larger potential electorate; this is ideally performed through an emphasis on those issues where the party is internally united, and perhaps many voters outside the party also agree.

The issue yield index allows then us to answer the core question: what is – in electoral terms – the ideal agenda of each party? What is the selection of issues that would provide the best electoral return to each party? What is important here is to observe the issue configuration that presents the best opportunity (and the lowest risk) to each party, and then compare it with the actual choice

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<sup>1</sup> In the survey, respondents were asked to express their support on 15 positional issues. For positional issues, a first item requires respondents to choose over the two rival goals (it is a 6-point item, thus also allowing all techniques for classic positional items). Once the goal is selected (e.g. defending traditional morality), respondents are asked to mention (multiple choice) which parties they consider credible to achieve that goal.

of issues that parties stressed in their campaign, to determine how strategic was their campaigning (which relates to our initial research question). This comparison will first be made in anecdotal terms, while the coding of Twitter communication during the campaign will allow us to answer this question in quantitative terms in future analyses.

Applying this approach to the Netherlands, we are able to answer the above questions for this specific party system, which has been marked during the last years by decreasing support for mainstream parties, especially the Christian Democrats, and, to a lesser extent, the Labour party, and leading positions in the opinion polls for the right-wing liberal mainstream party VVD and the right-wing populist party PVV of Geert Wilders. In light of these developments, investigating the issue yield for all parties in the system may help to explain why certain parties are (potentially) more successful than others. Table 1 presents issues (and related parties) according to the issue yield index, moving from highest to lowest values. In this way, we can see which parties could take advantage by competing on specific issues. Looking only at very high issue yields ( $\geq 0.75$ ), there are several positional issues which can provide a very good electoral return to several parties. Indeed, excluding small parties which are below 4% in the voting intentions (in italics), parties that present a very good issue yield on several issues are the following ones: PVV (10 issues), 50 Plus (7 issues), the animal party PVDD (7 issues), the Labour party PVDA (6 issues), the green party GroenLinks (6 issues), the Socialist Party (SP) (6 issues), social-liberal D66 (3 issues), VVD (2 issues), the Christian Democrats (CDA) (2 issues). These data tell us that PVV, 50 Plus, PVDD, PVDA, GL, and SP, may potentially exploit a considerable number of issues for electoral purposes, while for D66, VVD and CDA the structure of opportunities provided by positional issues is less favourable. That said, the issue yield for a party not only depends on its absolute value, but it should also be considered in relation to the issue yield for other parties. That is, we must look at the issue yield rank. This means that an issue can have a very high yield for a party; and despite this, other parties may have an even higher return on the same issue. Consequently, it can be difficult for that party to compete on that issue, because other parties might be better positioned. For example, the VVD potentially can easily take advantage of the “completed life assistance”<sup>2</sup> position, but there are other 7 parties that can have a better return on the same issue. Similarly, GroenLinks can exploit the “fixed contract after 2 years” issue, but there are other six parties that have a better issue yield on the same theme. Anyway, looking at the issue

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<sup>2</sup> This issue in Dutch is labelled “voltooid level”. It is not part of the euthanasia law, but it regards additional legislation about ending life with assistance.

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Table 1. Issue yield for positional issues

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank
SGP	<i>No completed life assistance</i>	21%	100%	1	1
Voor Nederland (VNI)	<i>Less refugees</i>	60%	100%	1	1
DENK	<i>Don't close to immigrants</i>	57%	100%	1	1
Voor Nederland (VNI)	<i>Reduce pension age</i>	69%	100%	1	1
PVDA	<i>Don't close to immigrants</i>	57%	94%	0.93	2
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	<i>Less refugees</i>	60%	94%	0.93	2
ChristenUnie	<i>Foreigners should adapt</i>	69%	92%	0.92	1
SGP	<i>No higher meat tax</i>	73%	89%	0.89	1
Voor Nederland (VNI)	<i>Close to immigrants</i>	43%	89%	0.89	1
Voor Nederland (VNI)	<i>Introduce binding referenda</i>	61%	89%	0.89	1
Voor Nederland (VNI)	<i>No higher meat tax</i>	73%	89%	0.89	2
50Plus	<i>Completed life assistance</i>	79%	89%	0.88	1
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	<i>Introduce binding referenda</i>	61%	90%	0.88	2
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	<i>Completed life assistance</i>	79%	90%	0.88	2
GroenLinks	<i>Don't close to immigrants</i>	57%	88%	0.87	3
PVDA	<i>Fixed contract after 2 years</i>	79%	88%	0.87	1
PVDA	<i>Completed life assistance</i>	79%	88%	0.87	3
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	<i>Reduce income differences</i>	73%	87%	0.86	1
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	<i>Reduce pension age</i>	69%	87%	0.86	2
SP	<i>Fixed contract after 2 years</i>	79%	88%	0.86	2
SP	<i>Reduce pension age</i>	69%	88%	0.86	3
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	<i>Fixed contract after 2 years</i>	79%	88%	0.86	3
SP	<i>Completed life assistance</i>	79%	87%	0.85	4
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	<i>Foreigners should adapt</i>	69%	85%	0.85	2
PVDA	<i>Reduce income differences</i>	73%	85%	0.85	2
50Plus	<i>Abolish healthcare deductible</i>	67%	85%	0.84	1
50Plus	<i>Reduce pension age</i>	69%	85%	0.84	4
ChristenUnie	<i>Fixed contract after 2 years</i>	79%	85%	0.84	4
SGP	<i>Reduce income differences</i>	73%	84%	0.84	3

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Abolish student loans	73%	84%	0.84	1
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Completed life assistance	79%	84%	0.84	5
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	84%	0.84	5
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Foreigners should adapt	69%	87%	0.84	3
GroenLinks	Completed life assistance	79%	85%	0.84	6
GroenLinks	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	84%	0.82	2
50Plus	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	83%	0.82	6
D66	Completed life assistance	79%	83%	0.82	7
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Introduce binding referenda	61%	82%	0.81	3
GroenLinks	Stay in EU	62%	83%	0.81	1
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Reduce pension age	69%	85%	0.81	5
SP	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	83%	0.81	3
VVD	Completed life assistance	79%	82%	0.81	8
50Plus	Foreigners should adapt	69%	81%	0.8	4
PVDA	Stay in EU	62%	81%	0.8	2
SP	Reduce income differences	73%	83%	0.8	4
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	No higher meat tax	73%	84%	0.8	3
<i>Forum voor Democratie (FvD)</i>	<i>No higher meat tax</i>	73%	80%	0.8	4
<i>Forum voor Democratie (FvD)</i>	<i>Completed life assistance</i>	79%	80%	0.8	9
GroenLinks	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	81%	0.79	7
CDA	No higher meat tax	73%	80%	0.79	5
<i>SGP</i>	<i>Foreigners should adapt</i>	69%	79%	0.79	5
50Plus	Reduce income differences	73%	80%	0.78	5
GroenLinks	Reduce income differences	73%	80%	0.78	6
<i>Voor Nederland (VNI)</i>	<i>Abolish healthcare deductible</i>	67%	78%	0.78	4
<i>DENK</i>	<i>No more defence spending</i>	40%	78%	0.78	1
<i>Voor Nederland (VNI)</i>	<i>Leave EU</i>	38%	78%	0.78	1
<i>DENK</i>	<i>No higher meat tax</i>	73%	78%	0.78	6
CDA	Stay in EU	62%	78%	0.77	3

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party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Close to immigrants	43%	81%	0.76	2
ChristenUnie	Reduce income differences	73%	77%	0.76	7
D66	Don't close to immigrants	57%	78%	0.76	4
D66	Stay in EU	62%	78%	0.76	4
PVDA	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	77%	0.76	5
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Leave EU	38%	80%	0.76	2
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Reduce income differences	73%	80%	0.76	8
SP	Abolish student loans	73%	79%	0.76	2
VVD	Stay in EU	62%	77%	0.75	5
50Plus	No higher meat tax	73%	76%	0.75	7

yield rank, it is confirmed that some mainstream parties like the CDA, the D66 and the VVD have to face a less favourable strategic issue opportunities than other parties, especially the PVV.

In addition to the issue yield rank, the final point that has to be addressed in order to understand the actual strategic issue opportunities for parties is the type and size of parties that have a similar competitive advantage on the same issue. Indeed, a party that on a specific issue has few and small size competitors is in a better strategic position with respect to a party that despite having a high issue yield, is forced to compete on the same issue with a high number of other parties of the same size (and possibly even of different political families).

Therefore, which is the issue configuration that presents the best opportunity (and the lowest risk) to each party in the Netherlands? The following tables (tables 2, 3 and 4) present the pair of rival goals for the 15 positional issues associated to the Dutch parties. Within each issue, the two rival goals are ordered by the issue yield rank. By doing this, it is possible to outline a map of the (positional) issue opportunities potentially available for Dutch parties. An interesting piece of evidence that emerges by looking at Table 2 is that, among the socio-economic issues, a large number of goals appears to be beneficial to the different parties. We note there is a huge (potential) competition especially on economically leftist issues: in particular, the goals related to the requirement of fixed term contracts, the reduction in income

Table 2. Socio-economic issues: rival goals by issue yield

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
50Plus	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	85%	0.84	1	5.4
GroenLinks	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	84%	0.82	2	9.4
SP	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	83%	0.81	3	13.2
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	78%	0.78	4	0.9
PVDA	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	77%	0.76	5	4.8
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	79%	0.74	6	18.8
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	71%	0.7	7	4.5
ChristenUnie	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	69%	0.68	8	2.6
DENK	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	67%	0.66	9	0.9
CDA	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	52%	0.49	10	6.5
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Abolish healthcare deductible	67%	50%	0.49	11	2.0
VVD	Keep healthcare deductible	33%	56%	0.53	1	7.3
SGP	Keep healthcare deductible	33%	53%	0.52	2	1.9
D66	Keep healthcare deductible	33%	51%	0.47	3	7.7
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Reduce pension age	69%	100%	1	1	0.9
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Reduce pension age	69%	87%	0.86	2	4.5
SP	Reduce pension age	69%	88%	0.86	3	13.2
50Plus	Reduce pension age	69%	85%	0.84	4	5.4
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Reduce pension age	69%	85%	0.81	5	18.8
SGP	Reduce pension age	69%	63%	0.62	6	1.9
ChristenUnie	Reduce pension age	69%	62%	0.61	7	2.6
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Reduce pension age	69%	60%	0.59	8	2.0

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party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
GroenLinks	Reduce pension age	69%	63%	0.59	9	9.4
DENK	Reduce pension age	69%	56%	0.55	10	0.9
D66	Reduce pension age	69%	57%	0.54	11	7.7
CDA	Reduce pension age	69%	54%	0.51	12	6.5
VVD	Reduce pension age	69%	51%	0.47	13	7.3
PVDA	Keep pension age	31%	60%	0.58	1	4.8
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Abolish student loans	73%	84%	0.84	1	4.5
SP	Abolish student loans	73%	79%	0.76	2	13.2
CDA	Abolish student loans	73%	74%	0.72	3	6.5
PVDA	Abolish student loans	73%	73%	0.72	4	4.8
GroenLinks	Abolish student loans	73%	73%	0.71	5	9.4
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Abolish student loans	73%	76%	0.7	6	18.8
ChristenUnie	Abolish student loans	73%	69%	0.68	7	2.6
D66	Abolish student loans	73%	70%	0.68	8	7.7
50Plus	Abolish student loans	73%	69%	0.67	9	5.4
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Abolish student loans	73%	67%	0.66	10	0.9
SGP	Abolish student loans	73%	63%	0.62	11	1.9
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Abolish student loans	73%	60%	0.59	12	2.0
VVD	Abolish student loans	73%	62%	0.59	13	7.3
DENK	Abolish student loans	73%	56%	0.55	14	0.9
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Reduce income differences	73%	87%	0.86	1	4.5
PVDA	Reduce income differences	73%	85%	0.85	2	4.8
SGP	Reduce income differences	73%	84%	0.84	3	1.9
SP	Reduce income differences	73%	83%	0.8	4	13.2
50Plus	Reduce income differences	73%	80%	0.78	5	5.4
GroenLinks	Reduce income differences	73%	80%	0.78	6	9.4
ChristenUnie	Reduce income differences	73%	77%	0.76	7	2.6
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Reduce income differences	73%	80%	0.76	8	18.8

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
DENK	Reduce income differences	73%	67%	0.66	9	0.9
D66	Reduce income differences	73%	69%	0.66	10	7.7
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Reduce income differences	73%	65%	0.64	11	2.0
CDA	Reduce income differences	73%	66%	0.64	12	6.5
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Reduce income differences	73%	56%	0.55	13	0.9
VVD	Don't reduce income differences	27%	53%	0.5	1	7.3
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Higher meat tax	27%	62%	0.6	1	4.5
SGP	No higher meat tax	73%	89%	0.89	1	1.9
Voor Nederland (VNL)	No higher meat tax	73%	89%	0.89	2	0.9
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	No higher meat tax	73%	84%	0.8	3	18.8
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	No higher meat tax	73%	80%	0.8	4	2.0
CDA	No higher meat tax	73%	80%	0.79	5	6.5
DENK	No higher meat tax	73%	78%	0.78	6	0.9
50Plus	No higher meat tax	73%	76%	0.75	7	5.4
VVD	No higher meat tax	73%	74%	0.72	8	7.3
SP	No higher meat tax	73%	75%	0.71	9	13.2
ChristenUnie	No higher meat tax	73%	65%	0.64	10	2.6
D66	No higher meat tax	73%	65%	0.62	11	7.7
PVDA	No higher meat tax	73%	56%	0.54	12	4.8
GroenLinks	No higher meat tax	73%	56%	0.52	13	9.4
PVDA	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	88%	0.87	1	4.8
SP	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	88%	0.86	2	13.2
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	88%	0.86	3	18.8
ChristenUnie	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	85%	0.84	4	2.6
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	84%	0.84	5	4.5



party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
50Plus	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	83%	0.82	6	5.4
GroenLinks	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	81%	0.79	7	9.4
SGP	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	74%	0.73	8	1.9
CDA	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	74%	0.72	9	6.5
D66	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	70%	0.68	10	7.7
DENK	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	67%	0.66	11	0.9
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	67%	0.66	11	0.9
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	65%	0.64	13	2.0
VVD	Fixed contract after 2 years	79%	62%	0.59	14	7.3

differences, the abolishment of student loans, the reduction in pension age and the abolishment of the deductible in health insurance. The interesting point is that on such issues not only traditional left-wing parties are competitive, but also right-wing populist parties like the two newcomers *Voor Nederland* (VNL) and *Forum voor Democratie* (FvD), and especially the PVV of Geert Wilders. Of course, left-wing (PVDA, SP) or environmentalist parties (*GroenLinks*), present usually the highest issue yields. Nonetheless, there is no monopoly of the left on 'leftist' economic issues. The same occurs for a culturally leftist/liberal issue as the 'completed life' stance (see Table 3). All the mainstream parties show a good issue yield on this stance and even the PVV presents a very high issue yield (0.88). Therefore, on the one hand leftist parties have several issues that can be beneficial to them in electoral terms; on the other hand, they have to face within their *core issue domain* competitive challengers from different political families. As regards some 'right-wing' economic goals, the story seems different. For instance, 'maintaining income differences' and 'keeping the healthcare deductible' are goals that provide a significant issue yield for the liberal-conservative VVD and the latter has no (or very few and small) rivals on such issues. As previously said, there are not so many positional issues that present a high issue yield

Table 3. Cultural issues: rival goals by issue yield

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
50Plus	Completed life assistance	79%	89%	0.88	1	5.4
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Completed life assistance	79%	90%	0.88	2	18.8
PVDA	Completed life assistance	79%	88%	0.87	3	4.8
SP	Completed life assistance	79%	87%	0.85	4	13.2
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Completed life assistance	79%	84%	0.84	5	4.5
GroenLinks	Completed life assistance	79%	85%	0.84	6	9.4
D66	Completed life assistance	79%	83%	0.82	7	7.7
VVD	Completed life assistance	79%	82%	0.81	8	7.3
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Completed life assistance	79%	80%	0.8	9	2
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Completed life assistance	79%	67%	0.66	10	0.9
CDA	Completed life assistance	79%	51%	0.47	11	6.5
SGP	No completed life assistance	21%	100%	1	1	1.9
ChristenUnie	No completed life assistance	21%	69%	0.68	2	2.6
DENK	No completed life assistance	21%	67%	0.66	3	0.9
SGP	Keep weed illegal	48%	74%	0.73	1	1.9
ChristenUnie	Keep weed illegal	48%	62%	0.61	2	2.6
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Keep weed illegal	48%	56%	0.55	3	0.9
50Plus	Keep weed illegal	48%	56%	0.53	4	5.4
VVD	Keep weed illegal	48%	56%	0.53	5	7.3
CDA	Keep weed illegal	48%	54%	0.51	6	6.5
DENK	Legalize weed	52%	67%	0.66	1	0.9
GroenLinks	Legalize weed	52%	65%	0.61	2	9.4
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Legalize weed	52%	60%	0.59	3	2
SP	Legalize weed	52%	64%	0.59	4	13.2

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
PVDA	Legalize weed	52%	60%	0.58	5	4.8
D66	Legalize weed	52%	58%	0.55	6	7.7
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Legalize weed	52%	56%	0.53	7	4.5
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Legalize weed	52%	54%	0.43	8	18.8

for the VVD. Nevertheless, the liberal-conservatives can easily exploit some economic issues pertaining to their *core issue domain*.

As expected, the Party for the Animals (PVDD) monopolizes the goal ‘higher meat tax’ with a good issue yield (0.62), whereas the opposite goal provides good issue yields to many parties of different ideological families.

As regards ‘demarcationist’ issues (Table 4), among the most supported goals according to [Emanuele, De Sio and van Ditmars in this volume](#) (i.e., those shared at least by two-thirds of respondents), only one traditionally rightist goal emerges, namely the requirement for foreigners to fully adapt to the Dutch culture. Here it is interesting to notice that such a goal provides not only very high issue yields to religious right-wing (*ChristenUnie*, SGP) or populist parties (PVV, FvD), but also good issue yields to mainstream (CDA, VVD) or radical-left parties (SP). The opposite goal is monopolized only by the (small) left-wing multiculturalist party DENK.

Finally, as regards the more divisive goals within the electorate – namely those related to the European Union (staying in the EU), introduction of binding referenda, immigration, and welfare chauvinism – it is noteworthy to notice that the goal ‘leaving the EU’ is *strategic* for the PVV, given that it provides a high issue yield without facing ‘dangerous’ rivals (just minor populist parties). Conversely, the opposite goal provides a good electoral yield to all mainstream parties, which have to ‘share’ the electoral opportunities. The same occurs as regards the issue related to ‘closing borders to immigrants’: the PVV is located in a strategic position in terms of issue yield and in terms of number and size of competing parties. As regards the introduction of binding referenda and the attitudes towards refugees, the PVV has to face a little bit more competition. Anyway, Geert Wilders’ party on the ‘less refugees goal’ shows a very high issue yield (0.93), much higher with respect to the issue yields of its main rivals on the right of the political spectrum like the VVD and the CDA. Conversely, the opposite goal (maintain current refugee policy) can be strategically exploited by

Table 4. 'Demarcationist' issues: rival goals by issue yield

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Introduce binding referenda	61%	89%	0.89	1	0.9
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Introduce binding referenda	61%	90%	0.88	2	18.8
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Introduce binding referenda	61%	82%	0.81	3	4.5
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Introduce binding referenda	61%	75%	0.74	4	2
50Plus	Introduce binding referenda	61%	74%	0.73	5	5.4
DENK	Introduce binding referenda	61%	67%	0.66	6	0.9
SP	Introduce binding referenda	61%	64%	0.58	7	13.2
D66	Introduce binding referenda	61%	53%	0.49	8	7.7
PVDA	No binding referenda	39%	69%	0.67	1	4.8
GroenLinks	No binding referenda	39%	62%	0.58	2	9.4
SGP	No binding referenda	39%	58%	0.57	3	1.9
ChristenUnie	No binding referenda	39%	54%	0.53	4	2.6
CDA	No binding referenda	39%	55%	0.52	5	6.5
VVD	No binding referenda	39%	51%	0.47	6	7.3
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Leave EU	38%	78%	0.78	1	0.9
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Leave EU	38%	80%	0.76	2	18.8
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Leave EU	38%	60%	0.59	3	2
50Plus	Leave EU	38%	57%	0.55	4	5.4
GroenLinks	Stay in EU	62%	83%	0.81	1	9.4
PVDA	Stay in EU	62%	81%	0.8	2	4.8
CDA	Stay in EU	62%	78%	0.77	3	6.5
D66	Stay in EU	62%	78%	0.76	4	7.7
VVD	Stay in EU	62%	77%	0.75	5	7.3
ChristenUnie	Stay in EU	62%	73%	0.72	6	2.6
SGP	Stay in EU	62%	68%	0.68	7	1.9
DENK	Stay in EU	62%	67%	0.66	8	0.9
SP	Stay in EU	62%	62%	0.56	9	13.2

Towards the next Dutch general election: the issue opportunity structure for parties

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Stay in EU	62%	58%	0.56	10	4.5
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	No welfare chauvinism	50%	76%	0.74	1	4.5
DENK	No welfare chauvinism	50%	67%	0.66	2	0.9
PVDA	No welfare chauvinism	50%	67%	0.65	3	4.8
GroenLinks	No welfare chauvinism	50%	68%	0.65	4	9.4
D66	No welfare chauvinism	50%	56%	0.52	5	7.7
SP	No welfare chauvinism	50%	52%	0.44	6	13.2
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Welfare chauvinism	50%	75%	0.69	1	18.8
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Welfare chauvinism	50%	67%	0.66	2	0.9
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Welfare chauvinism	50%	60%	0.59	3	2
SGP	Welfare chauvinism	50%	58%	0.57	4	1.9
50Plus	Welfare chauvinism	50%	57%	0.55	5	5.4
VVD	Welfare chauvinism	50%	56%	0.53	6	7.3
ChristenUnie	Welfare chauvinism	50%	54%	0.53	7	2.6
CDA	Welfare chauvinism	50%	51%	0.47	8	6.5
GroenLinks	Keep refugees coming	40%	71%	0.68	1	9.4
PVDA	Keep refugees coming	40%	67%	0.65	2	4.8
D66	Keep refugees coming	40%	61%	0.58	3	7.7
ChristenUnie	Keep refugees coming	40%	58%	0.57	4	2.6
DENK	Keep refugees coming	40%	56%	0.55	5	0.9
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Keep refugees coming	40%	56%	0.53	6	4.5
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Less refugees	60%	100%	1	1	0.9
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Less refugees	60%	94%	0.93	2	18.8
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Less refugees	60%	75%	0.74	3	2
50Plus	Less refugees	60%	74%	0.73	4	5.4
VVD	Less refugees	60%	68%	0.66	5	7.3
CDA	Less refugees	60%	62%	0.59	6	6.5

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
SGP	Less refugees	60%	58%	0.57	7	1.9
SP	Less refugees	60%	61%	0.55	8	13.2
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Close to immigrants	43%	89%	0.89	1	0.9
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Close to immigrants	43%	81%	0.76	2	18.8
50Plus	Close to immigrants	43%	63%	0.61	3	5.4
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Close to immigrants	43%	55%	0.54	4	2
DENK	Don't close to immigrants	57%	100%	1	1	0.9
PVDA	Don't close to immigrants	57%	94%	0.93	2	4.8
GroenLinks	Don't close to immigrants	57%	88%	0.87	3	9.4
D66	Don't close to immigrants	57%	78%	0.76	4	7.7
CDA	Don't close to immigrants	57%	69%	0.67	5	6.5
ChristenUnie	Don't close to immigrants	57%	65%	0.64	6	2.6
SGP	Don't close to immigrants	57%	63%	0.62	7	1.9
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Don't close to immigrants	57%	62%	0.6	8	4.5
SP	Don't close to immigrants	57%	58%	0.52	9	13.2
VVD	Don't close to immigrants	57%	51%	0.47	10	7.3
DENK	Foreigners keep culture	31%	56%	0.55	1	0.9
ChristenUnie	Foreigners should adapt	69%	92%	0.92	1	2.6
Forum voor Democratie (FvD)	Foreigners should adapt	69%	85%	0.85	2	2
Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)	Foreigners should adapt	69%	87%	0.84	3	18.8
50Plus	Foreigners should adapt	69%	81%	0.8	4	5.4
SGP	Foreigners should adapt	69%	79%	0.79	5	1.9

party	statement	General agreement	Agreement within party	Issue yield	Issue yield rank	Party size
CDA	Foreigners should adapt	69%	71%	0.69	6	6.5
Voor Nederland (VNL)	Foreigners should adapt	69%	67%	0.66	7	0.9
SP	Foreigners should adapt	69%	69%	0.64	8	13.2
VVD	Foreigners should adapt	69%	66%	0.63	9	7.3
Partij voor de Dieren (PVDD)	Foreigners should adapt	69%	60%	0.58	10	4.5
D66	Foreigners should adapt	69%	58%	0.55	11	7.7
GroenLinks	Foreigners should adapt	69%	53%	0.48	12	9.4
PVDA	Foreigners should adapt	69%	50%	0.47	13	4.8

relatively few competitors: *GroenLinks*, PVDA and D66. Similarly, as regards the opposition to welfare chauvinism, the better issue yields are showed by DENK, PVDA, *GroenLinks*, D66. Conversely, as regards the pro-welfare chauvinism, the PVV has to face a certain competition in term of issue yield not only by small religious or populist parties, but also by other more relevant parties like the party for the elderly, 50Plus, and especially the VVD.

To sum up, the analysis of the strategic issue opportunity structure shows that an anti-establishment right-wing populist party like the PVV faces a peculiar cross-cutting issue configuration that can be remunerative in electoral terms: on the one hand, Wilders' party is (almost) a monopolist on 'demarcationist' issues related to immigration and especially to the European Union; on the other, it is competitive also as regards both traditional economic 'leftist' issues related to defence of social protection and leftist/liberal cultural issues related to the defence of individual freedoms like euthanasia. These results confirm that the quite different electoral strategy that the PVV takes seems indeed to be paying off. Their electoral campaign is different with respect to mainstream parties' strategies in several ways: they only take position on a few issues and stress them all the time through a harsh rhetoric, they do not usually participate in TV/media debates (in which they could be forced to take stances on issues) and they have an election manifesto of one page (<https://www.pvv.nl/visie.html>).

On the contrary, mainstream parties are ‘confined’ within their traditional issue domains. Furthermore, within such domains social-democratic or radical left parties have to face the competition of other political actors, including new challengers like the PVV.

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