Bridging the Gap?
Representation by Mainstream and Niche Parties in Dutch Local Politics

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Abstract
The paper investigates the representational performance of mainstream and niche parties and seeks to establish which of the two represents its electorate better. It measures the ideological congruence between Dutch local party representatives of both mainstream and niche parties and their voters on a variety of issues and dimensions. Using two surveys, one among Dutch voters (the 2010 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study) and one among a representative sample of municipal councilors, the distributions of the positions of the party representatives and voters on these issues and dimension are compared to establish overlap. The paper finds that mainstream parties represent their voters better than niche parties, which is largely the consequence of the extreme issue positions taken by niche party representatives.

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Introduction

The descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation of citizens by parties has been a central theme in social scientific research. In recent years, concerns have been raised about the substantive representational performance of parties, which has led to a lively social scientific and societal debate about the state of representative democracy (for the Netherlands, see for example Andeweg 2003; Bovens and Wille 2011; Rosema et al. 2011). More specifically, mainstream parties, such as social democratic, liberal, conservative and Christian democratic parties, have been accused of losing touch with the political preferences of ordinary citizens, especially on issues of immigration and European integration, and thereby neglecting their representational function. The emergence of niche parties, such as green, radical right-wing populist and social populist parties, has often been presented as the release of a safety valve in representative democracies, because it assures that poorly represented voters have the opportunity to cast a ballot for parties that address their issues and represent their positions on these issues (e.g. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012).

However, the differences in performance of mainstream and newer niche parties have not been examined empirically. In other words, although the overall quality of representation and representative democracy has received a lot of attention, less emphasis has been placed on the difference in performance between various types of political parties. The central question of this study therefore is how do mainstream and niche parties represent their voters on different dimensions and issues? The question is answered through a study of the representational performance of local mainstream and niche parties in the Netherlands, using unprecedented survey data to compare local party representatives and voters’ positions on key issues and dimensions. The representational performance of mainstream and niche parties is assessed by measuring the ideological congruence between the Dutch local party representatives and their voters, using the recently developed many-to-many measure of congruence (Golder and Stramski 2010, see also Andeweg 2011). In other words, the match between the positions of the representatives and voters of mainstream parties, as well as the match between the positions of the representatives and voters of niche parties is examined to evaluate their representational performance. This measure of ideological congruence shows to what extent voters’ ideological positions are indeed represented by the elite they have elected, which goes into the direct and substantive link between citizens and their representatives.

This study differs from previous research on political representation, because it focuses on 1) the representational performance of mainstream and niche parties; 2) their representational performance on the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension, as well as on specific issues belonging to those dimensions 3) representation as a many-to-many relationship, using a many-to-many measure of ideological congruence; and 4) representation
at the local rather than the national level. The advantages of this approach are discussed in detail below.

To our knowledge, the distinction between mainstream and niche parties cannot be found in studies of representation, even though it has been documented that these groups of parties differ in ideological outlook (Meguid 2005, 2008; Meyer and Miller forthcoming; Wagner 2012) and their strategic ( positional) behavior (Adams et al. 2006; Adams et al. 2012; Ezrow 2008; Ezrow et al. 2011; Meyer and Wagner 2013). It can therefore be expected that mainstream and niche parties represent their voters differently. Moreover, existing studies of representation mostly measure the ideological congruence between parties and voters on the left-right dimension (e.g. Budge and McDonald 2007; Huber and Powell 1994; Golder and Stramski 2010), even though it has been established that two ideological dimensions, the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension, structure politics in West European countries (Hooghe et al. 2002; Kitschelt 2004; Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; Van der Brug and Van Spanje 2009). Given that the latter dimension is especially important when accounting for the emergence of niche parties (e.g. Van der Burg et al. 2013), this study investigates the ideological congruence between mainstream and niche parties and their voters on the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension, as well as on the individual issues that make up these dimensions. The ideological positions of representatives are compared to those of their voters by looking at the overlap in the distributions of the individual preferences in the two groups (Golder and Stramski 2010). This 'many-to-many' measure of ideological congruence differs from other measures of ideological congruence that are often used in studies of representation, such as the 'many-to-one' and 'one-to-one' measure (e.g. Blais and Bodet 2006; Budge and McDonald 2007; Huber and Powell 1994; McDonald et al. 2004; Powell 2009). The 'many-to-many' measure compares the distributions of preferences of representatives and voters, instead of the distribution voter preferences with the average ideological position of representatives or the average ideological position of voters with that of representatives. Thus, it provides significantly more information that alternative congruence measures. Finally, the research is conducted at the local level, because this offers an excellent possibility to compare the ideological positions of large numbers of party representatives of both mainstream and niche parties with those of their voters, which is to a much lesser extent possible at the national level.

Thus, this study thus contributes to the body of research on ideological congruence by investigating the congruence of the distributions of citizens’ and representatives’ preferences at the local level, focusing on differences between mainstream and niche parties. It is organized as follows: its theoretical foundations are presented in the first section, the design and method, along with the details of the survey among local councilors, are presented in the second section, and the results of the analyses and the implications thereof are presented in the last section.
Ideological representation by mainstream and niche parties

Theories of spatial competition (e.g. Downs 1957), as well as the Responsible Party Model (e.g. Dalton 1985; Schmitt and Thomassen 1999a; 1999b; 2000), assume that citizens support those parties that are located closest to them on the ideological spectrum. In other words, voters are expected to cast a ballot for the party that is ideologically most similar. Congruence, or ideological representation, therefore relates to the match between the beliefs of citizens and party or political representatives, or differently put, to the correspondence between their ideological preferences or positions. This ideological match results from a two-way process. Not only do voters support the party that is closest to their beliefs, but political parties also strive to represent their voters’ positions to keep them from casting a ballot for another party in future elections (Dalton 1985: 268-267).

Generally speaking, voter-party congruence is higher in countries with proportional representation than in countries with majoritarian representation (e.g. Blais and Bodet 2006; Budge and McDonald 2007; Golder and Stramski 2010; Huber and Powell 1994). Proportional representation tends to produce multiparty systems, often of the fragmented kind (Duverger 1959). In order to be electorally competitive, parties in these systems seek to distinguish themselves from their rivals by taking up distinct ideological or party positions, thereby offering voters greater choice (Downs 1957:126-127). Consequently, in multiparty systems the conditions are more favourable for ideological representation to work well than in two-party systems. Voters in these systems have the opportunity to choose a party that is ideologically close to them and have their preferences represented.¹

However, in recent years the representational performance of parties in multiparty systems has been criticized, with scholars and commentators claiming that especially established or mainstream parties have lost touch with voters (e.g. Bovens and Wille 2011; Deschouwer 2013). A miss-match between the positions of representatives from Christian-democratic, conservative, liberal, and social democratic parties and voters has been observed, especially on issues such as crime and security, European integration, and immigration and integration (for the Netherlands, see Bovens and Wille 2011). As a consequence, new parties, such as radical right-wing populist and social populist parties, have emerged that take positions that are markedly distinct from those of mainstream parties.

These claims point to two shortcomings in the research on representation. First of all, the representational performance of parties should be assessed on the basis of their stances on multiple issues and dimensions. Traditionally, ideological congruence is measured on the left-right dimension (e.g. Budge and McDonald 2007; Huber and Powell 1994; Golder and Stramski

¹ In multiparty systems voters might also find more than one party positioned in close proximity, which might complicate their choice in elections and thereby hamper ideological representation.
2010). However, it has been demonstrated that the political space in Western Europe is no longer defined exclusively by the traditional left-right dimension, which focuses primarily on socio-economic issues. Instead, party competition is now structured by two dimensions: the traditional socio-economic or left-right dimension and the socio-cultural dimension (Hooghe et al. 2002; Kitschelt 2004; Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; Van der Brug and Van Spanje 2009; Warwick 2002). The socio-economic dimension evolves around questions of economic redistribution and state interference in the economy, opposing those in favour of state intervention to those in favour of the free market. The socio-cultural dimension groups issues that relate to “the governance structures of social life” (Kitschelt 2004:2) and opposes those with a cosmopolitan, libertarian and progressive outlook to those that embrace authoritarian, nationalist, or traditionalist views. Issues such as crime and security, European integration, and immigration and integration are part of the latter dimension.

Secondly, the claims highlight that not all parties perform their representational function equally well (or poorly). In the contemporary literature on multiparty systems, a distinction is often made between mainstream and niche parties (e.g. Adams et al. 2006, 2012; Ezrow 2008; Ezrow et al. 2011; Meguid 2005, 2008; Meyer and Miller forthcoming; Meyer and Wagner 2013; Wagner 2012). Although the differences between mainstream and niche parties are manifold, emphasis is placed on the programmatic or ideological differences between these kinds of parties, both in terms of the salience of and positioning on issues (e.g. Meguid 2005, 2008; Meyer and Miller forthcoming; Wagner 2012). Mainstream parties first and foremost compete on the classic left-right dimension, i.e. on socio-economic issues, and position themselves in the center of this dimension. As a result, their electoral appeal is class-based and their electoral constituency can be clearly defined in terms of socio-structural characteristics. In most studies, Christian-democratic, conservative, liberal, and social democratic parties are classified as mainstream parties. Niche parties, on the contrary, reject the politics of class, politicizing new issues that do not fit the traditional socio-economic dimension. As a consequence, they appeal to voters with a variety of socio-demographic and partisan backgrounds. The best-known niche parties are green parties, radical right-wing populist parties, and regionalist parties.

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2 Other terms used to describe the socio-cultural dimension are the GAL-TAN dimension (Hooghe et al. 2002) or the libertarian-authoritarian dimension (Kitschelt 2004).
3 The distinction between mainstream and niche parties is not rigid, as niche parties have been known to adopt a mainstream profile under the influence of electoral decline (Meyer and Wagner 2013).
4 In practice, the concept of the mainstream party partly overlaps with that of the established party. Both categories are mainly comprised of the larger party families with a long history in European politics.
5 Adams et al. (2006: 513) also consider communist parties to be niche parties. However, these parties mostly emphasize traditional socio-economic issues and have an electoral constituency that is class-based and therefore do not meet all the criteria for niche party status.
There is some debate about the coherence and the scope of the programmatic profile of niche parties. Some scholars suggest they should be conceived of as single-issue parties that focus on a particular issue or set of issues (e.g. Meguid 2005, 2008; Wagner 2012). Green parties, for example, campaign first and foremost on environmental issues, while radical right-wing populist parties are best known for their stances on immigration and integration issues. Other scholars claim that most niche parties are not single-issues parties, even though they often campaign on and are issue-owners of a specific issue. They argue that green parties promote a worldview that builds on ecologism or environmentalism, internationalism, and libertarianism, whereas radical right-wing populist parties adhere to an ideology that is comprised of authoritarianism, nativism and populism (e.g. Mudde 2007). In line with this argument, most niche parties can be characterized by their positioning on the socio-cultural dimension of competition. They are located on the cosmopolitan, integrationist, libertarian extreme of this dimension, as is the case with green parties, left-libertarian parties, and social-liberal parties, or on the authoritarian, demarcationist, nationalist extreme of this dimension, as is the case with radical right-wing populist parties.

The distinction between mainstream and niche parties has been used in earlier studies to account for differences in parties’ competitive behavior in the electoral, executive, and legislative arena (e.g. Meguid 2005, 2008; Meyer and Wagner 2013). Especially the responsiveness to public opinion of mainstream and niche parties has been researched extensively. It has been found that mainstream parties respond to shifts in public opinion at large, while niche parties do not (Adams et al. 2006; Ezrow et al. 2011). Instead, niche parties react to changes in the mean position of their own electoral constituency (Ezrow 2008; Ezrow et al. 2011). However, it has also been found that mainstream parties respond to the success of niche competitors by adjusting their issue positions and issue salience (Meguid 2005, 2008). In reaction to the success of radical right-wing populist parties, for example, mainstream parties have started to pay more attention to immigration and integration issues and have taken tougher stances on these issues (e.g. Norris 2005; Van Heerden et al 2014; Van Spanje 2010). Also on the side of voters, differences in the behavior of mainstream and niche party supporters can be observed. It has been demonstrated, for example, that partisan sorting (i.e. the adjusting of policy preferences on the basis of the content of party publications and other partisan information) happens among niche party supporters, but not among mainstream party supporters (Adams et al. 2012).

On the basis of these findings, it can be expected that there are notable differences in the representational performance of mainstream and niche parties. At the same time, however, it is

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6 It has also been demonstrated that mainstream parties respond in particular to changes in opinion by so-called opinion leaders (Adams and Ezrow 2009).
not immediately clear whether mainstream parties are more likely to adequately represent their voters than niche parties, or vice-versa. The existing research suggests that niche parties have clearly defined issues profiles (salience and positions), while the issue profiles of mainstream parties are not as strongly developed. Moreover, the link between the positions of representatives and voters (in terms of adjustment patterns) seems stronger for niche parties than for mainstream parties. At the same time, mainstream party representatives seem to have adjusted to the new situation and have become more responsive in recent years, which might have improved their representational performance.

Given that niche parties politicize other issues than mainstream parties, it could also be the case that their representational performance depends on the dimension that is being analyzed. On the socio-cultural dimension the congruence between niche party representatives and supporters can be expected to be higher than that between mainstream party representatives and supporters, while the opposite is likely on the socio-economic dimension.

In sum, we formulate three potential outcomes:

1) Mainstream parties represent voters better than niche parties
2) Niche parties represent voters better than mainstream parties
3) On the socio-economic dimension mainstream parties represent voters better than niche parties, while on the socio-cultural dimension niche parties represent voters better than mainstream parties.

**Research Design**

To compare the representational performance of mainstream and niche parties across different dimensions and issues, a multi-party system has to be selected in which both types of parties are represented and in which the structure of party competition is two-dimensional. The Netherlands is an instance of such a case. It has an extremely proportional system with the lowest threshold in Europe and as a consequence an extremely fragmented multi-party system with a wide variety of represented parties, including three mainstream parties (Christian democrats, liberals, and social democrats) and multiple niche parties (e.g. greens, radical right-wing populist parties and social populist parties). Party competition is, since the earthquake elections of 2002 in which immigration and integration issues were successfully politicized, structured by the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimension (Pellikaan et al. 2007).

The Netherlands is also a decentralized unitary state, in which the dynamics in local politics by and large mirror those in national politics. National parties have been a dominant and stable presence in Dutch local elections for decades, providing 75% of local councilors
The local chapters of national parties have strong ties with their national party organizations and translate the party ideology into stances on local issues (Boogers et al. 2006: 9; Boogers 2008: 151). Because niche parties are usually small parties with limited numbers of representatives at the national level, mainstream and niche parties’ representational performance in national elections cannot be compared that easily. In local elections, however, the number of representatives is much larger, facilitating comparisons across parties. Therefore, we employ data on the ideological positions of representatives in municipal councils, which are affiliated to national parties, and on their voters. Thus, a comparison is made between the positions of the municipal councilors of party X and the positions of its voters to measure the many-to-many ideological congruence between the two. Subsequently, the congruence scores of party X representatives and voters are compared to those of party Y, X and Z.

Table 1 lists the parties that are analyzed in this study. The three mainstream parties (CDA, PvdA and VVD) are first and foremost defined by their position on the traditional socio-economic dimension. The parties have been dominant in Dutch politics since WWII and have mainly politicized traditional issues, such as taxation, the redistribution of income, and labor market policies (Pellikaan et al. 2007). The most important niche parties are the CU, D66, GL, and the SGP, which campaign on issues that do not belong to the left-right dimension. GL is a green party, promoting environmental issues and taking progressive positions on lifestyle and immigration and integration issues. For D66, salient issues are democratic reform, emancipation of minorities (especially LBGT issues), and European integration. The CU and SGP represent the orthodox Christian community in the Netherlands and politicize mainly ethical and religious issues, such as abortion and euthanasia. The SP cannot be qualified as either a mainstream party or a niche party, because it competes on traditional socio-economic issues (like mainstream parties) but distances itself from the establishment through its populist positions (like many niche parties) (De Lange and Rooduijn 2011). Because of its attributes, it is considered a mixed party type in this study.  

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7 The other 25% of local councilors are affiliated to local parties. Local parties have a long history in Dutch local elections, especially in some parts of the country (Derksen 2003; Dittrich 1978; Zouridis and Tops 1994). Because this research focuses on the difference between mainstream and niche parties and local parties cannot be regarded as either of these, they are excluded from the analyses.

8 More precisely, each of the groups of party representatives is compared with the body of citizens that has cast a ballot in favor of the corresponding national party in the 2010 municipal elections. As a result, the ideological positions of representatives are not exclusively compared with those of citizens from their own municipality, but with those of citizens supporting their party across the Netherlands.

9 The representatives and voters of the SGP and CU are grouped together in the analyses, because they often participate in local elections with combined lists and their number of supporters in the surveys is small.

10 Two radical right-wing populist parties were present in the Dutch parliament at the time of the surveys were conducted: the PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid, Freedom Party) and TON (Trots op Nederland, Proud of
Data
To investigate the many-to-many congruence between local representatives and their voters, two survey datasets are compared: the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES) 2010 and a survey among a sample of local councilors conducted in 2012-2013. In the latter survey a number of questions about positions on issues such as economic redistribution, ethics, multiculturalism and nuclear energy, were taken from the DPES 2010 and posed to a representative sample of local councilors. Relevant party and demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and social class were also asked. Thus, the two datasets contain the exact the same variables, which enables us to compare the distributions of preferences of the voters and representatives on identical issues and dimensions.\footnote{A potential difficulty is the time gap of more than two years between the periods in which the two surveys have been conducted (spring 2010 – winter 2012). However, since the questions are mostly about general ideological positions and not about temporarily salient policy issues, the data still provide valuable insights into ideological representation. Studies have shown that individuals’ attitudes are rather stable over time, even over large time spans (Carsey and Layman 2006; Sears and Funk 1999). Therefore, it is unlikely that voters’ answers to the issue questions do not provide an adequate representation of their current ideological orientation with a time gap of two years. The data of both surveys can thus be compared to provide insights into the ideological congruence between voters and representatives.}

The DPES is an established voter survey in The Netherlands, conducted by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the Dutch Electoral Research Foundation (SKON). The data collection of the 2010 survey took place between April 2010 and July 2010, using a representative sample of Dutch citizens over the age of 18. The final number of respondents who completed both waves of the survey (before and after the national elections) is 2621. This dataset is representative of the Dutch population in terms of place of residence, gender, age, and marital status (Stichting Kiezersonderzoek Nederland et al. 2012). This study only included respondents from the DPES who indicated that they had voted in the municipal elections of 2010, because this enables us to compare the positions of these voters to the positions of the representatives of the party of their choice.

The local representatives have been approached by e-mail in November 2012 to participate in the online survey, which closed in January 2013. A two-stage sampling procedure has been used in which the primary units are municipalities; and the secondary units are the council members in these municipalities. All Dutch municipalities (415 at time of the survey) are divided in 5 strata on the basis of number of inhabitants, because this determines the number of city council members. Larger municipalities have more city council members.

The Netherlands). However, the PVV only participated in two local elections (Almere and The Hague), while TON was unsuccessful in the municipal elections. As a result, the two parties are insufficiently represented in the surveys and cannot be included in the analyses.
approach ensures that they are proportionally represented in the sample. Within each stratum a systematic sample has been drawn of municipalities. This has resulted in a first stage sample of 161 municipalities (39% of the total number of municipalities). Depending on the number of inhabitants, a random sample of 7, 12, 15, or 20 council members has been drawn per municipality. Of the 1620 representatives that have been approached, 796 have completed the survey, which yields a response rate of 49%. More detailed information about the sampling procedure can be found in Appendix A.

<< Table 2 about here >>

A comparison of the background characteristics (e.g. age, education, ethnicity, and gender) of the population of representatives in municipal councils with those of the representatives in the final dataset shows that only representatives with (a) parent(s) born abroad (-1.7) and women (-3.7%) and are slightly underrepresented in this study (see Table 2). To investigate the possibility of self-selection bias, a comparison is made between the background characteristic gender of the representatives in the sample that was drawn and in the final dataset. Table 2 demonstrates that male representatives (+2.0%) were slightly more likely than female councilors (-2.0%) to complete the survey. All in all, it can be concluded that the final dataset consists of a representative sample of local councilors with respect to the most important demographic characteristics.

A comparison between different parties included in the survey confirms this conclusion. The sizes of the parties in the final dataset correspond closely to the percentages of representatives they have in local councils (see Table 3). With the exception of the VVD, which is clearly underrepresented in the final dataset (5.0%), most parties’ percentages of representatives in population, sample and final dataset are almost identical. The CU (+2.05), GL (1.5%) and the SP (1.6%) are slightly overrepresented, but overall the final dataset seems to mirror the composition of the population quite well. Only the slight underrepresentation of the VVD councilors could potentially cause bias in the analyses.

<< Table 3 about here >>

12 Since the respondents were forced to answer most of the questions, there are no missing values for the issue questions that are used in the congruence analyses.
13 Only completed surveys are used in the analyses, 138 non-completed surveys were left out of the analysis.
14 The information about figures of ethnicity and level of education are not based on factual numbers of all representatives, but on a survey that was held under all representatives, which received a response of 50% (Ministerie van BZK 2012).
15 It could, for example, be the case that VVD representatives that are less engaged and aware of voter positions have declined to participate in the survey.
Method

To compare the positions of representatives and voters on the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimension and calculate congruence scores, Mokken scales were constructed (Mokken and Lewis 1982; Niemöller and Van Schuur 1983; Van Schuur 2003). Mokken scales capture parties’ positions on several issues in a parsimonious manner, representing these positions on a priori defined dimensions. Identical Mokken scales were constructed for the local representatives and their voters, using the same issues (called items in Mokken scale analysis). The items in the surveys that theoretically tapped into positions on socio-economic or socio-cultural issues were selected (for an overview see Appendix B). All socio-economic items were expected to belong to the socio-economic dimension, whereas the remaining items were expected to belong to the socio-cultural dimension. Exceptions to this rule were the issues about the elected mayor and the EU, because these types of issues generally do not fit this dimension (Costello et al. 2012). Subsequently, all items that did not meet the requirements of scalability (a scale Homogeneity coefficient of at least 0.3 and item H-coefficients significantly higher than zero) were excluded from the analysis (Mokken and Lewis 1982: 422; Niemöller and Van Schuur 1983: 132).

On the basis of the results of the Mokken scale analysis, we constructed a socio-economic scale comprised of three issues (blue-collar workers; class differences; and companies) and a socio-cultural scale comprised of six issues (asylum seekers; crime; foreign aid; illegal immigrants; multiculturalism; and Muslims). The H coefficients for the socio-economic scale are 0.46 (for the voters) and 0.55 (for the representatives) and the H coefficients for the socio-cultural scale are 0.45 (for the voters) and 0.52 (for the representatives). The difference in number of items per scale is due to the fact that it was difficult to find a set of socio-economic issues that formed a proper scale in both groups of respondents, because the attitudes of voters and representatives were not structured the same way.

On the basis of the Mokken scales two index variables were created, for which the answers to the different issue questions have been summed up to calculate voters’ and representatives’ positions. Since Mokken scale analysis can be used to construct an ordinal scale (Van Schuur 2003), the variables that form a scale can be added up in the index without

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16 Mokken scale construction was preferred over factor analysis or reliability analysis, because the latter procedures assume equal means and variances (Van Schuur 2003).
17 The scales are constructed using the programme MSP of Sijtsma et al. (1990).
18 N voters is 1089, N representatives is 796.
19 N voters is 1595, N representatives is 796.
20 The issues that are used for the socio-economic scale have a relatively large number of missing values, which results in the relatively low number of voters in the analysis. This missing value problem does not exist for the issues that are used on the socio-cultural scale. Unfortunately, it was not possible to construct a strong socio-economic scale using issues with lower numbers of missing values.
recoding them to the same number of answer categories. The scale measuring representatives and voters’ positions on the socio-economic dimension ranges from 1 to 12, the scale measuring their positions on the socio-cultural dimension from 1 to 28. Low scores correspond with respectively left-wing and progressive/libertarian positions, high scores with respectively right-wing and conservative/authoritarian positions.

As mentioned in the introduction, a many-to-many-congruence measure is used: a relatively new type of congruence measure introduced by Golder and Stramski (2010) in which the distributions of two groups are compared to see how much they overlap.

<< Figure 1 about here >>

The way in which this measure has been calculated is demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows the collective congruence between the all voters and all representatives included in this study. In each of the figures two lines have been drawn depicting the distributions voters’ and representatives’ preferences on the socio-economic dimension (left) and the socio-cultural dimension (right). The overlap between these two distributions is the congruence between the positions of representatives and voters. Golder and Stramski (2010) make use of cumulative distribution functions to calculate the common area under both curves. Andeweg (2011) has improved on Golder and Stramski’s method, using normal instead of cumulative distributions functions. He compares the percentage of voters and representatives on every point on the ordinal issue scales and takes the lower of the two percentages as congruence measure (Andeweg 2011:43). The sum of these scores is the common area under the curve, which provides a congruence measure that indicates in this example that on the socio-economic as well as the socio-cultural dimension 84% of representatives and voters have overlapping preferences, because they have the same position on the dimension. The reason that Golder and Stramski (2010) use cumulative distribution functions is that it takes the distance between the two distributions into account when they do not overlap (Andeweg 2011:52, endnote 1). However, this is a purely theoretical argument, because the chance that the distributions will have no overlap at all is very low. We therefore use Andeweg’s method, because it is also an intuitive measure that is easily presented in a visual manner.

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21 Because of the ordinal nature, the difference between positions on the scale is not known, but only the ordering. Therefore, ordinal answer categories of different number can be added up to an index to create a variable representing the position on the Mokken scale.

22 With this type of congruence measure, there is no use of significance checks, as is the case for many-to-one congruence measures because then mean scores are compared. However, because the results for both groups have to deal with the same type of reliability issues, potential deviations are of the same influence in both groups as well, which is therefore not expected to cause bias in the results for one specific group. Therefore, this lack of significance checks does not lead to validity problems.
Results
We present the results of the ideological congruence between the different parties in our analysis and their voters, focusing mainly on the difference between mainstream and niche parties. We assess the congruence on the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimensions and subsequently on an extensive set of separate issues.

The congruence on the two dimensions is presented in Table 4. At first sight, the mainstream parties perform overall better than the niche parties. The highest congruence scores are found among the mainstream parties, and on both dimensions: 85% congruence for the PvdA on the socio-economic dimension, followed by 83% congruence for the VVD and 77% for the CDA on the socio-cultural dimension. The best performing mainstream party is the VVD, because it not only has high congruence on the socio-cultural, but also on the socio-economic dimension (83% congruence). The lowest congruence score among the mainstream parties is 64% on the socio-economic dimension for the CDA, the worst performing mainstream party. The niche parties score significantly lower, with the highest scores for D66 and GL on the socio-economic dimension (respectively 73% and 70%) and CU/SGP on the socio-cultural dimension (70%). The best performing niche party is D66, with 73% congruence on the socio-economic dimension and 64% congruence on the socio-cultural dimension. The lowest niche party score is for GL, having a score of 43% congruence on the socio-cultural dimension. The SP, a party with both niche and mainstream features, performs worst with 47% and 51% congruence scores respectively.

<< Table 4 about here >>

Taken together, the congruence between niche party representatives and their voters is lower than that between mainstream party representatives. Moreover, two of the three niche parties perform better on the socio-cultural than on the socio-economic dimension, while two of the three mainstream parties perform better on the socio-cultural than on the socio-economic dimension. The relatively high scores of D66 and GL on the socio-economic dimension may indicate that this dimension is more salient to these parties’ representatives and voters than would be expected for niche parties. The same goes for the high scores of the CDA and the VVD on the socio-cultural dimension.

To be able to investigate how the ideological mismatches we have observed come about, we present the figures of the distributions of party representatives and their voters on the dimensions for those parties that achieve less than two-thirds overlap with their voters. This reference point (also used in qualified majority voting) is chosen because if a party reaches two-thirds overlap or more, this means that the group of voters that has an ideological mismatch
with his representatives is at least twice as small as the group that is ideologically represented by the representatives. We first present the distributions on the socio-economic dimension and then on the socio-cultural dimension.

<< Figure 2 about here >>

The figures in Figure 2 show that for all parties reaching less than 67% congruence on the socio-economic dimension (CDA, CU/SGP and SP), the representatives are more radical in their stances than their voters. In the case of the SP the representatives are much more left-wing than their voters, while for the CDA and the CU/SGP the representatives are more right-wing than their voters. The SP has a very substantial mismatch, which is created by the large majority of representatives that is found at the extreme left of the scale (between positions 1 and 3). Their voters, on the other hand, are much more widely dispersed over the scale with two peaks, at positions 4 and 7 on the scale. For the Christian parties, we find similar outcomes at the other end of the dimension, albeit to a much lesser extent. The voters of CDA and CU/SGP have their peak at the mid-point of the socio-economic dimension, whereas the peaks of representatives are found at position 8. We can conclude that generally speaking, voters take more moderate ideological positions than their representatives, a pattern already observed by May (1973). According to his law of curvilinear disparity, party activists advocate more extreme positions than party leaders and voters, which is exactly what we find here.

<< Figure 3 about here >>

Looking at the distributions of representatives and voters on the socio-cultural dimension for the cases with less than 67% congruence (GL, SP, D66 and PvdA) similar results are found (see Figure 3). The mismatches are created by the fact that representatives take more progressive positions on this dimension than their voters. Most of the voters’ distributions in Figure 3 resemble normal distributions, which are sometimes a bit more skewed towards the conservative end of the scale, especially for SP and PvdA voters. Their representatives are more progressive, with peaks of the distribution more towards the progressive end of the scale. For GL, we see a relatively large gap between two very similar-shaped distributions. However, the two groups are situated towards the same end of the scale. The same is found for D66, but with a larger overlap. However, for the parties SP and PvdA, relatively large shares of voters are situated towards the conservative end of the dimension. These parties do not actively campaign on the issues found on this dimension, resulting in shares of voters who find their positions not represented by their representatives.
By assessing the congruence on separate issues, we can more precisely investigate the congruence between voters and representatives to see how the previously found ideological (mis)matches come about. Furthermore, we can assess the congruence on several issues that are salient to specific parties, which could not be included in the Mokken scales. These results are found in Table 5, in which the party congruence is shown for all issues from the dataset.

<< Table 5 about here >>

Similar results are found as in the previous analyses: niche parties reach overall lower levels of congruence than mainstream parties, which is quickly seen by looking at the average scores on all issues. The mainstream parties perform well on these separate issues, with average issue congruence ranging from 78% to 84%, corresponding with their overall good performance on the two dimensions. The niche parties reach overall lower average scores, between 69 and 80%. However, the average score of CU/SGP (80%) is higher than that of PvdA (78%).

Looking at the separate issue congruence scores, we can investigate how well parties perform on issues that are relevant to them. The social-democratic PvdA has high congruence scores on all socio-economic issues, while these scores differ more strongly for socio-cultural and other issues. This shows the same pattern as the previous analyses. The PvdA’s highest congruence score (98%) is unexpectedly found on the genetic manipulation issue; the lowest (64%) on the foreign aid issue. The Christian-democratic CDA has the lowest congruence on the retirement age issue (63%); and the highest congruence of 96% on two ethical/religious issues (adoption by homosexual couples and shops on Sunday), showing that these issues are indeed important for the Christian-democratic party representation. The VVD scores high on almost all issues with the lowest score at the elected mayor issue (73%); the highest congruence is an unexpected outlier on the green issue about nuclear plants (95%). On the traditional socio-economic issues, this mainstream party also performs well, with scores ranging from 71% (retirement age) to 94% (bank support).

For the niche parties, it is remarkable to conclude that these parties do not find their best congruence scores on the issues that are salient to them. GL even reaches its lowest score on an issue of high importance to the party, with only 51% congruence on the nuclear plants issue. The party however reaches very high scores on the issues that were placed on the socio-economic dimension (between 87 and 90%). Although D66 and CU/SGP find their highest scores also on non-key issues, such as on cutting taxes (both around 92%) and support for banks (both around 97%), these parties perform relatively well on issues that are salient to them. For D66 this means an overlap of 72% on the elected mayor issue; and 80% on the gay
couples adoption issue, although the party performs relatively poorly on the two EU issues (61% and 69% congruence). CU/SGP shows especially high levels of congruence on the two ethical/religious issues: genetic manipulation and shops on Sunday, of 85% and 96%. For SP, a pattern similar to GL is found: the party mainly advocates socio-economic issues, but performs with large varying degrees of success on these issues (ranging from 34% to 91%). It can be concluded that SP, GL and D66 seem to suffer from (small) systematic ideological mismatches between citizens and representatives, although their average issue congruence scores are not problematic with a lowest score of 66%, which comes close to our cut-off point of two-thirds overlap.

Taken together, it can be concluded from the results that mainstream parties reach overall higher levels of ideological congruence than niche parties. However, the niche parties do not perform badly either. The lowest congruence scores are found for GL and SP, which does not point at a specific niche party pattern, since SP is not considered a niche party. Furthermore, the other niche parties, D66 and CU/SGP, perform rather well, although their congruence scores are mostly lower than those of mainstream parties. The ideological mismatches of GL and SP (which are also to a lesser extent found for D66) can be explained by the fact that representatives take more extreme positions than voters. This is found in the distribution over the two dimensions and on the separate issues as well. Voters are more widely distributed over the answer categories and take less extreme positions, which sometimes results in low congruence scores. As mentioned earlier, May's (1973) law of curvilinear disparity may provide an explanation for these findings. Some party representatives are more radical in their ideology than their voters, explaining the mismatches in the distributions on the dimensions and separate issue questions. These mismatches may therefore seem more serious than they in fact are: voters and representatives choose the 'same side' on salient issues, but representatives only take more extreme positions (e.g. most voters choose 'agree' while most representatives choose 'fully agree', which causes a mismatch in the congruence measure used here).

**Conclusion and Discussion**

On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that Dutch local councilors are quite representative of their voters. Mainstream and niche parties participating in local elections succeed by and large in representing their electoral constituencies. Nevertheless, differences in representational performance between parties exist, and generally speaking mainstream parties represent their voters marginally better than niche parties, especially on the socio-cultural dimension. Thus, despite findings from previous research suggesting that niche parties fill a gap in the representational system, especially on new issues such as crime and security,
European integration, and immigration and integration, niche parties’ representational performance is not necessarily better than that of mainstream parties.

The reason that mainstream parties succeed better than niche parties in establishing an ideological link with their voters may be that they represent a more diverse range of opinions, since they are larger and less ideologically distinct. Although this may seem a *contradictio in terminis*, it could offer an explanation for our findings. When a party does not have a clearly distinct ideological position, larger groups of voters can find themselves represented because of the larger variety in the positions taken by party representatives. The pattern that has been identified to explain the ideological mismatch between some niche party representatives and their voters seems to support this logic: niche party voters take less distinct and more diverse ideological positions than their representatives. Mainstream party voters and their representatives on the other hand both take a wider range of positions, which indicates less distinct ideological positions. The party characteristics that therefore seem of importance for successful ideological representation are an ideology that is not too extreme or distinct and that leaves room for some variety in the ideological positioning of representatives. An exception herein is the VVD, the mainstream party that has the highest congruence between voters and representatives while the party’s councilors and electorate have a clear ideological positioning on both dimensions. It is not clear whether this finding is caused by the underrepresentation of VVD representatives in the survey, which may have resulted in a self-selection bias of more committed VVD representatives who stand close to the people they represent, or that the party indeed succeeds best in establishing an ideological connection with its voters.

These findings have implications for how the role of niche parties in a representative democracy is perceived. In the literature on populist parties, for example, it has been argued that the emergence of these parties has led to the politicization of new issues, such as European integration and immigration, and has therefore improved representation in Western Europe (Akkerman and De Lange 2012:37; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012:21). Although not all niche parties are populist, it could be expected that these parties perform the same function in West European party systems. After all, they politicize new issues as well, such as the environment or gay emancipation, and therefore may attract voters that do not feel represented by mainstream parties. Consequently, they are believed to be beneficial to representative democracy. However, the findings of this study question the corrective, positive role attributed to these parties. When niche party voters have less in common with niche party representatives than mainstream voters do with mainstream party representatives, how much do they in fact contribute to the representation of all attitudes and interests in society?

Further research is needed to investigate how the link between mainstream and niche party voters and their representatives works, in order to explain in detail why there is an
ideological mismatch between niche party representatives and their voters; and why this is not the case for mainstream parties and their voters. It is also important to research how severe the mismatch is since the more extreme stances taken by niche party representatives may not necessarily cause serious representational problems. After all, their positions are not opposite to those of their voters, but they are merely more extreme. Moreover, it is relevant to see whether the use of different congruence measures leads to the same conclusions with respect to party representation. Previous research has shown that the use of a many-to-one congruence measure can lead to different outcomes than the use of a many-to-many congruence measure (Golder and Stramski 2010), because the former does not take the distributions of preferences into account.
References


Deschouwer, K., 'Politieke partijen in ontwikkeling: Kansen en Bedreigingen', Keynote Speech at Conference on Political Parties, organized by the Dutch Council for Public Administration, 18 April 2013, accessible via rob-rfv.nl


Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Wilson, C.J. (2002) 'Does left/right structure party positions on European Integration?', Comparative Political Studies, 35 (8), pp. 965-989


Appendix A

Sampling procedure

Table A
Stratified sample details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>strata</th>
<th>No. of inhabitants/ municipality in stratum</th>
<th>N (total no. of representatives in stratum)</th>
<th>no. of selected municipalities/stratum</th>
<th>no. of selected representatives/municipality</th>
<th>n (total no. of selected representatives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt; 200.000</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.001 - 200.000</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.001 - 100.000</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.001 - 50.000</td>
<td>3296</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt; 25.001</td>
<td>3282</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9218</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of the data collection of this study, The Netherlands knew 415 municipalities\textsuperscript{23}, in which the number of representatives is determined by the number of residents of the municipality. The largest cities have 45 representatives in the city council; the smallest municipalities have 9 councilors. This results in 9218\textsuperscript{24} local councilors at the time of this study, who have been elected in the previous municipal elections held in March 2010. All 415 municipalities have been divided into 5 strata, by number of inhabitants. Within each stratum a systematic sample has been drawn. This has resulted in a first stage sample of 161 municipalities (39% of the total number of municipalities). Because the number of small municipalities is very high compared to the number of large municipalities, the stratified character of the sample ensures that municipalities are proportionally represented relative to their number in the population of municipalities. Depending on the number of inhabitants, a random sample of 7, 12, 15, or 20 council members has been drawn per municipality, because municipality size determines the number of representatives in the city council. Although 1646 representatives were selected in the sampling process, 1620 representatives have been approached to participate in the survey because 26 representatives could not be reached, due to changes in the composition of the selected city councils or problems with regard to contacting the councilors. Of the 1620 representatives that have been approached, 796 have completed the survey, which is a response rate of 49%.

\textsuperscript{23} Since January 2012, The Netherlands has known 415 municipalities due to the unification of some smaller municipalities. At the time of the most recent municipal elections, in 2010, there were 431 municipalities. As of January 2013, this number has been reduced to 408. Because the data collection has started in November 2012, the municipal structure that was present at that time has been used in this study.

\textsuperscript{24} After the municipal elections of 2010 the actual number of representatives was 9289 (Ministerie van BZK 2012). However, due to the reduction of municipalities (see previous footnote) the number of representatives has also been reduced.
Appendix B

Survey questions

7-point scale

**Crime**
People think differently about the way the government fights crime.

**Income differences**
Some people think that the differences in incomes in our country should be increased. Others think that they should be decreased.

**Asylum seekers**
Some people think that The Netherlands should allow more asylum seekers to enter. Others that The Netherlands should send asylum seekers who are already staying here back to their country of origin.

**Multiculturalism**
In The Netherlands, some think that foreigners should be able to live in The Netherlands while preserving their own culture. Others think that they should fully adapt to Dutch culture.

**Nuclear plants**
Some people think that nuclear power plants are the solution to a shortage of energy in the future. Others think nuclear power plants shouldn’t be build, because the dangers are too great.

**EU integration**
Some people and parties think that the European unification should go further. Others think that the European unification has already gone too far.

**International missions**
Some people think The Netherlands should never provide soldiers to international missions. Others think that the Netherlands should always do this when they are asked for it.

5-point scale

**Blue-collar workers**
Blue-collar workers still need to struggle for an equal position in society.

**Class differences**
The class differences in The Netherlands should be reduced.

**Elected mayor**
The mayor should be elected by the inhabitants of the municipality.

4-point scale

**Homo adoption**
Adoption by homosexual couples should be possible.

**Foreign aid**
The Netherlands should spend more money on development aid.

**Turkey EU**
Turkey should be able to become a member of the EU.

**Companies**
Large companies are a threat to democracy.

**Taxes cut**
The taxes should be lowered, even if this would come at the expense of the level of facilities.

**Shops Sunday**
Shops should always be closed on Sundays.

**Illegals**
All illegal immigrants that have been living in The Netherlands for a long time, should be able to stay.

**Muslims**
The arrival of Muslims in The Netherlands should be completely stopped.

**Mortgage**
The tax benefits for people with a mortgage should be abolished.

**Gen. manipulation**
The genetic manipulation of plants should always be prohibited.

**Pensioners pay**
People with a good pension should help pay for the collective retirement facilities.

**Retirement age 67**
The retirement age should be raised to 67.

**Bank support**
If banks are threatened with bankruptcy, they should be supported by the government.

---

25 Respondents were provided with the following instruction: Where would you place yourself on a line from 1 to 7, where 1 means [the government is acting too tough on crime] and 7 means [the government should be tougher on crime]?

26 Answer categories: fully agree, agree, do not agree, do not disagree, disagree, and fully disagree

27 Answer categories: fully agree, agree, disagree, and fully disagree
Table 1
*National parties represented at the Dutch local level, included in this study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Party family affiliation</th>
<th>Party type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partij van de Arbeid</td>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christen-Democratisch Appèl</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Christian democrats</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</td>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>Liberal conservative</td>
<td>Mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GroenLinks</td>
<td>GL</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Niche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democraten 66</td>
<td>D66</td>
<td>Social-liberal</td>
<td>Niche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChristenUnie / Staatkundig</td>
<td>CU/SGP</td>
<td>Orthodox Christian</td>
<td>Niche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gereformeerde Partij</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tables & Figures*
### Table 2

*Descriptive characteristics of population, sample and final dataset*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% in population</th>
<th>% in sample</th>
<th>% in dataset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>72,3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>26,7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher vocational</td>
<td>40,8</td>
<td></td>
<td>39,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university</td>
<td>26,4</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country of birth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>96,1</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>3,9</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent(s) born abroad</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td>94,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (mean)</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Representatives per party in population, sample and final dataset*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>% in population(^{28})</th>
<th>% in sample</th>
<th>% in dataset</th>
<th>difference between population and dataset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>+2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Lists</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local party</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TON</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{28}\) Source: Results Municipal Elections 2010, Dutch Election Authority, through [www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl](http://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl). Percentages are calculated by us on the basis of the total number of seats and number of seats per party obtained in the elections.
Table 4
Congruence on socio-economic and socio-cultural dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAINSTREAM</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NICHE</th>
<th></th>
<th>MIXED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>GL</td>
<td>D66</td>
<td>CU/SGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-cultural</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N voters</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N representatives</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N voters = 791 (soc-ec) / 1157 (soc-cult)
N representatives = 555

29 These are the total numbers of respondents used in the analyses: the number of missing values for voters differs per dimension and per issue.
Table 5
Congruence per issue and party (in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAINSTREAM</th>
<th>NICHE</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>VVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companies</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar workers</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class differences</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social-cultural dimension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seekers</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegals</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign aid</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income differences</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes cut</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners pay</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement age 67</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank support</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear plants</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU integration</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey EU</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International missions</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected mayor</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homo adoption</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shops Sunday</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Manipulation</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average all issues</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N voters per issue and party = min. 56, max. 300
N representatives per issue and party = min. 36, max. 140
Figure 1

Collective congruence on the socioeconomic and social-cultural dimension

N voters = 1089
N representatives = 796

N voters = 1595
N representatives = 796
Figure 2
Congruence on socioeconomic dimension for SP; CU/SGP; CDA

N voters = SP 54; CU/SGP 57; CDA 166
N representatives = SP 36; CU/SGP 68; CDA 140
Figure 3
Congruence on social-cultural dimension for GL, SP, D66 and PvdA

N voters = GL 94; SP 71; D66 151; PvdA 280
N representatives = GL 52; SP 36; D66 52; PvdA 115