Pim Fortuyn
The Evolution of a Media Phenomenon
Reading committee:

prof.dr. J. Kleinnijenhuis (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
prof.dr. H. Kriesi (Universität Zürich)
prof.dr. D. Minkoff (Columbia University, New York)
prof.dr. W. Van der Brug (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
dr. M. Lubbers (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Pim Fortuyn
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Jasper Camiel Muis

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1 Introduction

Issues of immigration and the integration of foreigners have become topics of heated debate in the public and political arena in modern European democracies. According to Koopmans and colleagues (2005: 3) ‘immigration and ethnic relations (...) constitute since the early 1990s the most prominent and controversial fields of political contention in West European polities’. Parallel to this development, support for anti-immigration parties has increased in several Western European countries. Examples are the French National Front, the Austrian Freedom Party and the Flemish Bloc (since 2004 Flemish Interest) in Belgium.

The Netherlands is an interesting case in the European context, because the right-wing populist challenge was rather ‘slow in coming’ (Kriesi et al. 2006: 163). A significant electoral performance of the far-right did not take place until 2002 and it had also failed to make any significant impact on the public debate until relatively recently. The Netherlands was therefore for long considered a ‘deviant case’ (Rydgren and Van Holsteyn 2004), just like for example Sweden, as the country met most conditions that according to established theories explain the emergence of far-right parties elsewhere, but these parties still remained relatively unsuccessful.

But when the breakthrough of a new right-wing challenger eventually came in 2002, it caused a stunning and dramatic ‘earthquake’ in the political party system (Chorus and De Galan 2002). The amount of seismic energy released was impressive. The May 2002 parliamentary elections were dramatic, unpredictable, emotional, exciting and tragic. The breakthrough of the populist newcomer Pim Fortuyn broke records in Dutch political history. His party List Pim Fortuyn (Lijst Pim Fortuyn, hereafter: LPF) won 26 seats (17 per cent of the vote), achieving by far the most impressive result ever for a new party at national elections.

Fortuyn was assassinated outside a radio studio in Hilversum by an animal right activist just nine days before the elections. Parties stopped campaigning at once, but the government decided not to postpone the elections in order not to disrupt the democratic process because of a violent act (Pennings and Keman 2003). Although the other members of LPF were rather unknown to the general public, the two polls held after the death of Fortuyn indicated that the LPF had become more attractive to voters.¹

The rise on the electoral scene during the course of the campaign took place to the detriment of the social democrats (PvdA) and the conservative liberals (VVD). The parties of the incumbent government coalition suffered an unprecedented defeat (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003) and the elections had an exceptionally high level of volatility, even for European standards (Mair 2008). Such a high percentage (30.7 per cent) of total electoral gains and losses of parties was unprecedented (Van Praag 2003).

Not only did Fortuyn shake up the political realm, he also changed the public debate dramatically. Newcomer Fortuyn was the most prominent politician in the news during the election campaign. He received extensive media coverage and of all politicians he was men-

¹ NIPO predicted an increase of two seats from 26 to 28 and Synovate Interview-NSS polled an increase from 19 to 24 seats. These results were published respectively two and one day before the elections.
tioned most, receiving 24 per cent of total media attention for all politicians during the period between November 2001 and May 2002; this amount equals as the politicians in the second, third, fourth and fifth position combined (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003: 86). Most of the time media coverage of the LPF involved the party leader being quoted directly (Van Praag and Brants 2005: 79). While Fortuyn had the opportunity to speak for approximately 21 and 24 per cent of the total time of news attention devoted to his party by the NOS news and the RTL news respectively, for the social democratic Melkert, the second-most prominent party leader, the percentage was only approximately 10 per cent. This outcome is particularly striking because political newcomers normally face difficult barriers to get access to the media realm, due to their lack of organizational resources and political power and reputation. Following in the footsteps of Fortuyn with similar anti-immigrant agendas, more recent Dutch populist parties have had ample means to express their views in the public debate. Nowadays, compared to the situation prior to the ‘earthquake’, populist politicians seem much more successful in attracting widespread publicity. Thus, in terms of both electoral support as well as media attention for the ‘populist challenge’ the Netherlands suddenly experienced an exceptionally successful breakthrough. The central question of this dissertation is why. My principal goal is thus to explain the rise of Pim Fortuyn during the campaign for the national elections in 2002.

1.1 Research questions

I have thus far highlighted the magnitude of the outcomes and the fact that records were broken by Fortuyn, but perhaps these figures are not even the most interesting characteristics of his rise. One should not forget the unpredictable nature of the breakthrough; these shifts occurred within a relatively short period of time and caught most people completely by surprise. Two characteristics make this eruption of right-wing populism a very intriguing phenomenon: the suddenness and the timing.

Firstly, a fascinating feature is the extreme and shocking rapidity with which the mobilization got started and succeeded. Not only everything happened quickly, but, like a typical earthquake that strikes by surprise and without any warning, Fortuyn also seemed to come out of nowhere.

What was taking place had for long been unimaginable in the Netherlands, but all of a sudden seemed inexorable. In the eyes of many political commentators, to date, the ‘Fortuynist revolt’ (Cuperus 2003) was perfectly understandable and regarded as nearly inevitable. It had its roots in widespread and long-suppressed feelings of discontent among the population, especially with the failure of multicultural policies and the consensus-oriented decision-making of the political establishment. These grievances had to erupt politically at some point.

However, we nowadays tend to overlook that the outcome was rather unexpected beforehand. Not long before the turbulent ‘eruption’, the Dutch electoral competitions seemed to be relatively dull and stable. Although in 1994 the major coalition parties had also suffered huge losses, this was not at all seen as a sign of an unhealthy or unstable democracy (Aarts and Thomassen 2008). The administration that ousted the Christian Democrats from government in 1994 (for the first time in seventy years) contained dominating elements of continuity and
consensus. Up to the end of 2001, there was a high degree of satisfaction among the population with the ‘purple coalition’ of conservative liberals and social democrats that had been in power for almost eight years. In August 2001, the emphasis in the polls and in the media was on electoral stability.

This situation changed radically in only six months’ time. Irwin and Van Holsteyn note that ‘no one really saw it coming, at least not until it was too late’ (2003: 29) and De Vries and Van der Lubben (2005: 125) state that ‘with regard to the warnings [that predicted the rise of Fortuyn]: the harvest is meagre, in the journalistic as well as in the social science field’.²

Looking back at the events, prominent journalist Hans Wansink of *de Volkskrant* writes: ‘I suspected, just like everyone else at the Binnenhof [the Dutch parliamentary building complex], that the elections of May 15th, 2002 would be a neck-and-neck race between the PvdA and the VVD. (...) All my arguments and speculations eventually appeared useless, just like those of other insiders. (...) Why was I, professional political observer, caught by surprise after surprise?’ (2004: 10-11).

Secondly, the timing of the ‘Fortuynist revolt’ remains a mystery. The suddenness described above already implicates that a large-scale political mobilization of the populist right at that particular moment was unexpected. Even if we acknowledge that the outcome was unforeseen, but well understood and explainable with the benefit of hindsight, the following question arises: Why was the stable political situation not suddenly interrupted, say, four or eight years earlier? A sufficient electoral reservoir and a favourable opportunity structure had for long been available. In other words: Why did Fortuyn succeed while other far-right political leaders before him failed to break through?

The focus on these two features - the unexpectedness and the timing of the rise - lead to a specification of my general aim by means of two research questions: (1) Why did the rise of the right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn take place so rapidly and suddenly? (2) And why did it happen at that particular moment?

### 1.2 Prevailing accounts for variations in populist party success and their limitations

Scholars have observed key similarities between new far-right contenders across Western European democracies. The unique selling point of these radical right contenders is the immigration issue (e.g. Knigge 1998; Rydgren 2005). The programmatic issue that all radical right parties have in common is their resentment against immigrants and the immigration policies of the government. They all employ the immigration issue as the core political concern in political campaigns or are considered by other established parties to do so. Often, they also advocate lower taxes, stricter crime control and more severe penalties for criminal offences (Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995). Most anti-immigrant parties are not the successors of neo-fascist movements; Pim Fortuyn is a very good example, his political track record seems to show more roots in the (radical) left (Pels 2003). Although I agree that the label ‘extreme right’ might therefore be misleading and a more appropriate label for these parties would be ‘anti-immigrant’ or ‘anti-

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² Translations of Dutch texts into English are done by myself, unless indicated otherwise.
immigration’ (Fennema 1997; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007), I will nonetheless use more common labels like ‘populist right’ or ‘radical right’ throughout this dissertation.

Identifying similar programmatic characteristics of far-right parties is one thing. It is another thing to explain their failure and success. A significant amount of literature has been written to account for the fortunes of populist right-wing parties and movements in general and the case of the ‘Fortuynist revolt’ in 2002 in particular. The literature contains several invaluable studies and exhibit many insights into the question why some of these parties are successful while others fail. There are two prominent perspectives on the rise of far-right anti-immigration parties in advanced industrial countries: demand-side and supply-side explanations (for reviews, see Van der Brug and Fennema 2007; Rydgren 2007; Kitschelt 2007). Both approaches have provided valuable insights into the structural conditions that have facilitated their emergence or breakthrough.

Firstly, demand-side explanations attribute the rise or revival of the extreme right to a growing demand among native-born populations for political parties with anti-immigrant agendas. In line with the anti-immigrant message that all right-wing populist parties in Europe seem to share, the key argument of this perspective is that the rise of these parties is the effect of shifts in the preferences of the electorate. These changes in attitudes are characterized by a growth of resistance to cultural diversity and opposition to liberal immigration policies; they are the result of globalization, large-scale immigration and the transformation to a post-industrial socio-economic structure (Kriesi et al. 2006; Betz 1994). This increasing discontent has created comparable ‘electoral reservoirs’ across Western European democracies that can be politically mobilized. With regard to the rise of Fortuyn, this perspective achieves ample empirical support from academic work that investigated the motives of people that voted for Pim Fortuyn (e.g. Van der Brug 2003; Pennings and Keman 2003; Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003).

Secondly, supply-side explanations point instead to external political and institutional factors, that social movement scholars have labelled as ‘political opportunity structures’, such as the available political space, the structure of the electoral system and the responses of established political actors (e.g. Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995; Koopmans et al. 2005). For the sake of simplicity, this supply-side view often boils down to the popular wisdom that the success of Fortuyn was the price the political elite had to pay because they had lost touch with ‘the people’. Existing parties did not provide the policy platform that a substantial part of the electorate demanded.

However, the socio-economic conditions and electoral preferences that supposedly cause the surge of an anti-immigration party did not vary much over time and therefore cannot account for the success of Pim Fortuyn. When dealing with questions about short-term ups and downs of far right party popularity, the opportunity or supply-side approaches face the same limitation as the socio-economic grievances model. Socio-economic and political-institutional circumstances have provided a fertile breeding ground for far-right parties throughout Europe in general. Without doubt, these structural conditions are important to explain why certain (considerable) changes are possible or probable; these two models point to essential and indispensable prerequisites or facilitating factors that are relevant to understand the breakthrough of anti-immigration parties like LPF in the Netherlands in 2002. However, pinpointing how these structural forces explain the sudden emergence and breakthroughs of these parties is more
elusive. They do not explain when the moments of change occur, let alone the rapidity of the changes (see likewise Kleinnijenhuis 2003: 127). In general, one can conclude that a primarily structural socio-economic or political approach has difficulties explaining sudden breakthroughs and electoral dynamics (Eatwell 1998; see also Norris 2005).

As outlined above, the key elements of my research questions are the rapidity and suddenness of the change. I will therefore focus on temporal changes that can be measured in weeks and months, rather than years and decades. To understand short-term changes, it is more useful to look at aspects that can change within short time spans. I will argue that the public debate in the media is a probable candidate to offer an explanation for these changes.

1.3 A relatively understudied explanatory factor: the public debate

In two review articles on the topic of the radical right, Van der Brug and Fennema state that ‘very little is known about the role of the mass media’ (2007: 484) and Rydgren (2007: 255) claims that, to date, ‘there has been no systematic study of the role of the mass media in the rise of new radical right parties’. But although the impact of the public debate on the successes and failures of right-wing populists is indeed a supply-side factor that has been relatively neglected until recently (Bos et al. 2010), scholars of ‘contentious politics’ have for long pointed to the fact that for a satisfactory answer to questions about political change, the role of the media should be taken into account. Following the advice of Rydgren (2007: 257), who concludes that the literature on the new radical right would benefit from better integrating theoretical mechanisms and research findings from the social movement field, this study aims to improve our understanding by focusing on ‘discursive opportunities’ (Ferree et al. 2002; Ferree 2003; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Koopmans et al. 2005).

The key element of a discursive opportunity approach is that the dynamics of the public debate, in particular in the degree and in the way in which other actors reacted to Fortuyn’s mass media statements, can account for his rapid rise. The central argument is that, in combination with the electoral potential and the available political space, these discursive opportunities are crucial for understanding the dramatic increase in mass media success and electoral attractiveness of Fortuyn’s LPF.

It should be stressed again that this explanation does not deny the importance of required fertile socio-economic and political conditions and attendant grievances lying dormant in society and being neglected by the establishment. Political entrepreneurs will not be able to successfully mobilize public attention and support without them. But these conditions, it is argued, are to an important degree amplified and to some extent even generated within the public discourse.
1.4 A broader definition of success: public claim making

A second key element of this dissertation is that I will apply a broader definition of ‘success’ than commonly used thus far in studies of the radical right. In line with my previous argument about the impact of the public debate on the mobilization of electoral support, a related implication of a discursive opportunity approach is that we need to explain why some actors achieve more media access than others. Scholars from this field therefore draw attention to the fact that it is not only necessary to explain why at particular moments certain anti-immigration parties are able to attract more voters than other parties or than at other moments, but also why they are sometimes far more successful in making their voices heard in the public debate in the first place. The role of the media is not only an answer, but also part of the question. More and more, political party leaders and social movement activists need the mass media to provide them with a stage from where they can communicate their viewpoints to the public, their potential supporters.

Thus, before the selection mechanism that consists of citizens deciding to support a particular party, another strong selection pressure manifests itself. The public sphere is a restricted communicative space in which a variety of organizations, groups and individuals compete for the scarce resources of access and attention (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). In order to gain electoral attractiveness, one needs to win the media battle first.

Moreover, it has been argued by several scholars (e.g. Castells 1997; Manin 1997; Mancini and Hallin 2004; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999) that this second indicator for success and failure has gained importance in modern democracies, because the mass media realm has become the principal arena for power struggles. Political contention increasingly consists of a battle over mass media attention and approval in the public discourse, like a play acted out on a public stage with the electorate as the audience (Manin 1997). Manuel Castells summarizes this current situation with the claim that ‘outside the media sphere there is only political marginality’ and that ‘without an active presence in the media, political proposals or candidates do not stand a chance of gathering broad support’ (1997: 312, 317).

Therefore, in this dissertation, the rise of Fortuyn covers two elements. Firstly, his success regarding the amount of public support and secondly, the increase in public claims made by Pim Fortuyn. The term ‘success’ therefore refers to the increase in electoral support, indicated by the intention to vote for this party, as well as the growth in the amount of public claim making, which indicates the extent to which he was able to publicly express his opinions and viewpoints in the mass media. Koopmans and colleagues (2005) call this second criterion for success the amount of ‘public claim making’ and Ferree et al. (2002) refer to the amount of ‘standing’ in the mass media forum.

1.5 The role of adaptation to selection processes: party strategies

As argued above, political challengers and social movement activists need the mass media to get their messages across (Gamson 2004; Wolfsfeld and Shaefer 2006). Journalists play a cru-
cial role in deciding which events should be covered and which voices should be heard, and which ones should not be. Moreover, established political actors are not capable and willing to react to all political events and demands, but will only publicly respond to a very limited selection of them. Here is how Koopmans (2004a: 371-372) puts it: ‘On an average day in a random Western democracy, thousands of press statements are issued by a variety of parties, interest groups, and movement organisations, hundreds of demonstrations, meetings, strikes, vigils, and other protests are staged, and numerous press conferences vie for the attention of the public and policy-makers. (...) We easily ignore most of the voices in this chorus, for the simple reason that what we actually see and hear, are only the select few that have in one way or another been able to attract the attention of the media and are considered relevant enough by other social actors to elicit public responses from them’. This severe selection pressure and harsh struggle for public attention and reactions brings me to the third key element of this dissertation: the role of adaptation.

The individuals and organizations that are faced with the high level of competition are not passive (Aldrich and Ruef 2006). These ‘units of decision’ can evaluate and adjust their decisions and learn from the reactions of others to their actions and messages. In this manner, successful strategies can be replicated and failing ones discarded. Hereby, it is indispensable that the feedback becomes visible for the actors involved. Following Koopmans (2004a), I think that the media discourse plays a pivotal role in providing this necessary information on the results and consequences of one’s behaviour. It provides a pivotal input for ‘the next round’ of attempts to successfully insert messages in the public sphere (Koopmans 2004a). For example, Koopmans and Olzak (2004) have shown that differential stimuli from the public sphere can account for shifts in the type of groups and persons that were violently targeted by extreme right activists in Germany during the 1990s. Apparently, (a lack of) mass media reports provides activists with important information about the results of their violent actions (and the actions of others) and it is assumed that they will change their target by trial-and-error learning from the past state of affairs as displayed in the media.

Likewise, I perceive political party leaders as active ‘units of decision’. They are able to change their programmatic position and have an interest in reacting to feedback by adjusting their behaviour in response to success and failure. This role of adaptation builds on the notion that ‘party agency’ or internal supply-side factors are decisive for achieving success. Already since the seminal work of Kitschelt (1995), it has been acknowledged that the success of anti-immigrant parties is to a large extent dependent on the moves and choices of the radical right challengers themselves.

I propose here in this dissertation to apply a cultural evolutionary approach that provides a framework for understanding social change. The evolutionary approach directs our attention to the processes of variation, selection and retention that jointly produce patterned change. It can account for the underlying mechanism by which populist leaders can find the ‘successful position’ by means of trial-and-error learning.

Therefore, I will elaborate to what extent Fortuyn’s success can be explained by his ability to adapt his position.
1.6 Relevance

The relevance of the research problem that I am dealing with extends beyond the particular case of Fortuyn. The emergence and remarkable breakthrough of the LPF is not a unique phenomenon, as already since the early 1990s, political landscapes of many other Western European countries have been ‘shaken up’ by populist newcomers with a similar anti-immigration agenda (Betz 2002; Van der Brug et al. 2005; Evans 2005; Koopmans et al. 2005). One can perhaps argue that Fortuyn was one of the first right-wing populists on the political scene who was ideologically exceptional compared with most other parties from the European ‘right-wing party family’. In contrast to the culturally neoconservative character of the extreme right ‘counter-revolution’ (Ignazi 1992), it is difficult to categorize Fortuyn as an opponent of Inglehart’s postmaterialist values - in fact, his political views explicitly contain the defence of typical liberal-progressive values like equal rights for women and homosexuals (see e.g. Akkerman 2005). For example, in a notorious interview with de Volkskrant in February 2002, his complaint about Islam was, in a nutshell, that he did not feel like ‘doing the emancipation of women and gays all over again’ (Wansink 2004: 291).

Firstly, my focus on evolutionary dynamics might provide more insight into the general mechanisms by which such an innovation in the political message of the ‘newest’ populist right parties can emerge by means of individual trail-and-error learning. It might be a fruitful alternative to the dominant rational choice approach and can be applied to the study of electoral competition in other Western democracies. My dissertation is only one of the first modest steps towards an evolutionary political science; one could elaborate the approach by investigating to what extent the ‘progressive’ variant of right-wing populism, could, next to individual adaptive learning, also spread to similar countries by way of imitation of successful cases elsewhere (Rydgren 2005).

Secondly, long-term changes in socio-economic conditions and political opportunities are often not slowly and gradually translated into the political system, but often take the form of sudden landslides. The observation that political developments are often concentrated in short periods of revolutionary transformations fits the concept of ‘punctuated equilibria’ coined by Gould and Eldredge (1977). Their claim that the history of life is not dominated by slow and steady gradualism but by punctuational change is congenial with Thomas Kuhn’s notion of scientific revolutions and Marxist theories of a revolutionary leap-like societal transformation (Gould and Eldredge 1993: 227). My argument here is that it has remained underspecified how the short-term dynamics work, in other words, how these beneficial conditions can sometimes successfully set a sudden mobilization in motion, and why, despite the existence of necessary and facilitating conditions, in another time or place we do not experience any successful mobilization. In sum, I follow Kitschelt’s advice that, because previous comparative research has been primarily cross-sectional, ‘it may be time to incorporate more intertemporal dynamics in the study of the radical right’ (2007: 1201).

I think that an analysis of this ‘Fortuyn case’ can provide insights that have an even wider relevance than for just the study of Europe-wide upsurges of new right-wing populist parties since the last decade of the last century. The dramatic changes that took place in the Netherlands share similarities with a broader range of political upheavals. Generally, most
INTRODUCTION

political upsurges, revolts, strikes and revolutions provide examples of rapid and sudden changes. It is not coincidental that the metaphors people use to describe such political changes often consist of terms like ‘sudden landslide’, ‘earthquake’, ‘outbreak of an epidemic’ or ‘explosion’ (Biggs 2003). For example, concerning the American strike wave in 1886, Friedrich Engels observed that the workers’ protest movement ‘spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire’ and claimed that ‘in ten months a revolution has been accomplished in American society’ (cited in Biggs 2003: 217; 2005: 221). Koopmans (2004b: 22) notes that ‘protest waves often seem to emerge out of nowhere, but then rapidly engulf broad geographical areas and sectors of society’. It is remarkable that in many cases there is large agreement among both participants themselves and social scientists about the fact that they were taken by surprise. In a survey conducted in March 1990, about three-quarters of East Germans still admitted to have been totally surprised by the fall of the Berlin Wall (Kuran 1995). Social scientists did not fare better. Goldstone (1995) and Collins (1995) had identified and provided structural demographic, socio-economic and political conditions that were necessary or facilitating for the collapse of the Soviet Union to occur or revolutions to break out in general. These available conditions do of course affect political possibilities, but do a poor job in accounting for sudden dynamics. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001: 312) argue that we should ‘abandon efforts to specify necessary and/or sufficient conditions for whole classes of episodes’ but instead specify how particular mechanisms work. So, for example, ‘shift studies of strike waves away from identifying conditions under which they occur to an explanation of their dynamics’.

1.7 Design and outline of the dissertation

The next chapter elaborates on the theoretical background of this study. It will provide an overview of previous work on how to explain success and failure of populist right parties, discuss the relevance of these answers for my research questions, and outline my theoretical contribution. The role of the public debate and adaptive behaviour will be at the centre of my analysis.

In the subsequent two research chapters (3 and 4) I scrutinize the role of the public debate and discursive opportunities in shaping success and failure. Chapter 3 deals with the rise of Fortuyn and focuses on explaining this political earthquake. Chapter 4 tackles my second research question about the ‘timing’ of Fortuyn’s rise. The question why the Dutch populist challenge came relatively late implies a comparative design. Therefore, I will contrast the successful rise of Fortuyn by investigating in chapter 4 the earlier failed attempt to politically break through by the Centre Democrats party, led by Hans Janmaat.

In chapters 5 and 6, the role of adaptive behaviour will be the main focus. Thus, whereas the previous chapters 3 and 4 formulate and empirically test explanations in terms of the impact of public reactions of journalists, observers, opinion makers, commentators and established political actors - external factors that were inherently outside the control of Fortuyn himself - , here the attention will shift to the strategic moves of the populist contender. First of all, in chapter 5, this will be done by presenting another investigation of the case of Fortuyn, exploring in depth to what extent adaptive behaviour can be empirically demonstrated and
accounts for his success. Subsequently, chapter 6 maps out in more detail different alternative theoretical scenarios with more complex strategies of both Fortuyn and the established parties. To this end, a simulation model is designed and validated in this chapter.

The study concludes in chapter 7 with a summary of the most important findings and general conclusions. This final chapter also raises the main points of discussion and implications for future research.
2 Theoretical background

2.1 The demand- and supply-side

Explanations for the emergence and rise of extreme right political behaviour are usually grouped into two broad approaches: one focusing on grievances and one on political opportunities. In the social movement literature, the opportunity perspective has gained predominance over grievance theories while the mainstream of political science, which focuses on the electoral fates of the radical right, often treat these parties as products of demand-side processes (Giugni et al. 2005: 160). This distinction corresponds with the market metaphor borrowed from economics distinguishing demand-side and supply-side factors (Koopmans et al. 2005; Rydgren 2007; Mudde 2007a; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007; Norris 2005; Van der Brug et al. 2005). Electoral markets can be understood as selection mechanisms, which select firms or organizations (in this case political parties) on the basis of the goods that they (promise to) offer to the public or political measures they (promise to) produce. In this economic view on voting based on the work of Downs (1957a), the ideologies of politicians play the same role as the routines of entrepreneurs. Firms that offer a low-quality, too expensive or unappealing product will lose the competition for sales in a market and eventually exit the market, whereas firms with efficient routines and high-quality products will gain market share and prosper.

Demand-side accounts often depart from socio-economic processes as pivotal factors that affect the preferences and grievances among the population, in particular worsening economic conditions and increasing ethnic competition (see e.g. Betz 1994; Eatwell 2000; Ignazi 2003). These political demands can be articulated and mobilized by existing social movements, interest groups or political parties, or lead to the emergence of new political organizations. According to supply-side theories, successes and failures are mainly shaped by networks, resources of organizations and political constraints and opportunities. These factors can be further distinguished into internal supply-side factors or ‘party agencies’ (Norris 2005), like organizational characteristics (De Witte and Klandermans 2000; Mudde 2007a) and external factors that are labelled as political opportunities, such as institutional frameworks and elite responses (McAdam 1982; Kitschelt 1995; Arzheimer and Carter 2006). The latter factors are external, i.e. they consist of elements of the environment that are relevant, but cannot be controlled by the actors themselves. In line with Goodwin (2006: 358), ‘internalist’ refers to factors operating inside the party, while ‘externalist’ refers to processes operating outside the party.

These three sets should be viewed as complementary elements of an encompassing theoretical model rather than competing factors (Van der Brug and Fennema 2007). This distinction into three building blocks matches the three requisites Kitschelt (1995) puts forward in his seminal work on the radical right. According to Kitschelt, successful occupation of an electoral niche by radical right-wing parties is dependent upon three premises. The first premise refers to the demand-side of electoral competition: the extreme right does well when societies have a post-industrial economic structure that increases the salience of the political division between left-libertarian and right-authoritarian constituencies. Kitschelt’s second and third
premises refer to the supply-side of political competition. He states that ‘the success of the extreme right is contingent upon the strategic choices of the moderate conservative parties as well as the ability of the extreme-rightist leaders to find the electorally “winning formula” to assemble a significant voter constituency’ (Kitschelt 1995: vii). Thus, secondly, it should be acknowledged that the successful emergence and rise of the populist radical right is to a large extent dependent on the responses and ideological choices of the established parties. Thirdly, it is emphasized that the strategic moves of the radical right challengers themselves are important too. An anti-immigration party can do well provided that it finds the ‘winning formula’.

2.2 Explaining the successful diffusion of an innovation

Although it is common and in line with Downs (1957a) to transfer the basic assumption of human rationality of neoclassical economics to the political domain and apply it to the explanation and prediction of political behaviour, it is not necessary or self-evident to interpret an economic approach to electoral competition as a rational choice perspective (e.g. Wohlgemuth 2002). The rational choice view’s central assumption is that observed economic phenomena can be explained as the results of rational choices of profit-maximizing firms and utility-maximizing consumers. It focuses on complete information and analytically discerning the conditions under which market equilibria exist. Of the various concepts of equilibria, the Nash equilibrium is the most important one: in this situation none of the actors involved has the incentive to change his or her behaviour unilaterally (Green and Fox 2007). Transferred to the political domain, such a stable situation where demand and supply are in balance is the equivalent of something like the ‘stable mode of political affairs’. No existing party is motivated to move away from its present position and no new parties can successfully be formed; the latter is not a profitable option because there is not enough ideological room between existing parties and thus the little probability of success does not make it worth the cost of entry (Downs 1957b: 145).

My critique to mainstream economics is inspired by the work of Simon ([1945] 1976; 1983) and Nelson and Winter (1982). Evolutionary economists argue that most decisions of firms and consumers are taken in a habitual manner, because their rationality is bounded, and stress the notion of uncertainty and incomplete information. It leads to the identification of innovation as an important factor in competition and economic change, already emphasized by Schumpeter ([1934] 1983). His key point is that capitalism is an ‘evolutionary process’ and ‘by nature a form or method of economic change and not only never is, but never can be stationary’ (1983: xviii). The key element of this theory on competition by innovation is that entrepreneurs continuously disturb this stable situation. Now and then they introduce new routines in the market.

An innovation is ‘an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption’ (Rogers 1995: 11). Although it has originally been used in an economic context for new routines (new technologies) or new products (new items you can buy), the concept of innovation can thus include and refer to a larger set of goods, services, devices and methods (Rogers 1995). Diffusion of innovation theories seek to explain the successful
spread of new goods, methods or ideas. Diffusion is the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system (Rogers 1995). A rapid adoption rate refers to the high speed at which a new idea, product, routine or technology is accepted and adopted by the population of consumers and producers. The principal questions of academic work on the diffusion of innovations are why and how certain new ideas or practices spread, and at what rate they spread.

Correspondingly, describing the emergence and rise of Fortuyn with an elaborated economic market metaphor including the concepts ‘innovation’ and ‘diffusion’, one can rephrase my research question in terms of the successful diffusion of an innovation. Explaining the rise of Fortuyn can be viewed as explaining the introduction of a new successful product in the electoral market that rapidly and successfully spread (likewise, see Mamadouh and Van der Wusten 2004). Why did the innovation spread so suddenly and rapidly and why at that particular moment? Citizens ‘buy’ or ‘adopt’ an innovation when they (intend to) vote for a particular party. The question is: Why was the ‘electoral reservoir’ of citizens that are susceptible to the message of an anti-immigration party so rapidly and successfully mobilized. And with regard to the spread of Fortuyn’s claim making in the public sphere, journalists and gatekeepers ‘buy’ the new product when they decide to give mass media access to Fortuyn and his message (and thereby neglect other actors and their messages).

2.3 Focusing on the role of adaptation and the public debate

As I explained in the introduction chapter, this dissertation extends most of the previous research on the emergence and rise of the populist far right, because two supply-side factors that have been relatively neglected will be elaborated and investigated in depth: the adaptive behaviour of the populist actor and the external constraining and facilitating role of the public debate.

Firstly, the role of adaptation is inspired by evolutionary theories of economic change. I argue that the notion of a mechanism of natural selection offers a realistic and fruitful substantive contribution to current theorizing about political party competition. Whereas it is, in the words of Nelson and Winter (2002: 24), ‘very difficult to theorize about competition as a dynamic process’ in neoclassical economic accounts, an evolutionary approach assumes that this equilibrium is perpetually being destroyed by entrepreneurs who introduce successful innovations. The Schumpeterian entrepreneur (the agent of innovation) is not a *homo economicus* but more like an adventurer prepared to take considerable risks. Most innovations fail, like the vast majority of attempts of new political parties fail to break through or remain marginal and short-lived phenomena. However, companies continuously search for innovations that open up niches and new markets so that they can have an advantage or monopoly (often only temporary, until rival firms start to imitate). While firms or organizations compete, they are learning entities that are gradually groping, innovating or evolving toward more profitable ways of doing things. This regularly disturbs the regular flow of economic life, because it forces the already existing technologies and means of production, which see their positions within the economy deteriorate, to react. Less successful firms may also try to copy the routines of
more successful firms. Eventually, unsuccessful rivals that fail to capture an appropriate market share go bankrupt and have to exit the market.

Secondly, diffusion of innovation theories emphasize the role of information networks and mass media. These theories generally reason in two ways (Strang and Macy 2001: 173). One line of analysis makes the case for efficiency: innovations are adopted because they supply ‘better mousetraps’, qualitatively better products. An alternative approach focuses on the argument that people are influenced by the decisions of others in their decision whether to buy a product or not. An innovation always needs a communication channel in order to be able to spread among the population. In this view, instead of assuming that the innate quality of a new product or new idea determines its subsequent performance, the structure of the network can have a great impact on the success or failure of an innovation, and contagious social interactions can boost popularity. Information from others provides important cues, which influences the successful spread of a new trait across a population.

Information can flow through a network that consists of node-to-node paths. By contrast, a second type of communication goes through a broadcast network that involves one single communication source, which is received directly by a very large number of people (Oliver and Myers 2003a). Nowadays, the mass media can connect a very large number of people who have no connection at all with each other apart from their common news source.

2.4 Demand-side factors: grievances of citizens

In the long term, the degree of competitiveness of organizations or firms depends on their capacity to develop products in line with the customer’s needs and tastes. Accordingly, customer demands determine the supply and product innovation is consumer-driven. Also accordingly, ‘unless there is some sort of societal change that gives rise to a widespread public grievance, a major change in the party system is unlikely to occur’ (Ivarsflaten 2008: 4). Much of the previous research on the rise of right-wing populist parties in Europe has been conducted according to this basic notion -- which is sometimes labelled as the ‘sociological approach’ (Norris 2005) -- and argues that the emergence of these parties can primarily be seen as the long-term consequence of a transformation in the electorate.

Firstly, the demand-side perspective points to increased voter volatility and the demise of party loyalty as important conditions that have created a ‘reservoir’ to be exploited by far-right political parties (e.g. Ignazi 2003). In The Netherlands this process of political dealignment is part of a general withdrawal of commitment and loyalty towards the organizational pillars in general, which divided people based on religion and social class (the Catholic, Protestant, socialist and liberal block); this process of so-called ‘depillarization’ had already started in the 1960s (Andeweg and Irwin 2005: 92). Before, during the ‘pillarized period’, campaigns of political parties were aimed more at mobilizing the faithful and retaining support, than at attempting to attract new votes.

Concerning the content of the latent demands that can be articulated and mobilized by political organizations, it is argued that societal developments have created electoral potentials that are ideologically roughly similar across Western European countries. As a result of the
transition to a globalized and post-industrial economic structure, opposition against liberal immigration policies, cultural diversity and European integration have become increasingly salient. Kriesi and colleagues (2006; 2008) argue that immigration and globalization processes have thus transformed the meaning of the existing two-dimensional policy space: the issue of immigration that divides the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalization has now become integrated into and dominates the cultural conflict dimension (Kriesi et al. 2006: 4; Bornschier 2010). Thus, the process of cultural and socio-economic modernization has resulted in a new social polarization, which has transformed the political playing field. Following the left-libertarian transformation of Western European politics that started in the 1970s, we have experienced the political manifestations of a second profound transformation since the early 1990s. The initiative and political centre of gravity has shifted from social movement protests to electoral revolts and from the left to the right, to be more precise, to the populist radical right. This is in line with Ignazi’s (1992) interpretation of radical-right parties as the by-product of a ‘silent counter-revolution’ prompted by a culturally conservative value change that has in first instance been misperceived and underestimated due to a bias towards the ‘progressive’ side of the value shift. Bovens and Wille (2010: 418) note that one could argue that ‘thanks to the recent emergence of populist parties the less educated have become more visible in the Dutch political landscape’. In this view, populism is a counter-movement against the current dominance of a cosmopolitan elite in contemporary democracies.

In line with this notion of a potential or ‘electoral reservoir’ to be exploited, a lot of previous research examined both the influence of individual background characteristics (such as one’s socio-economic status) and contextual factors (such as a country’s unemployment rate) on anti-immigration party support (e.g. Scheepers et al. 1994; Van der Brug and Fennema 2003; Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie 2000). The effects of certain socio-demographic characteristics on the radical-right vote have been extensively investigated and well documented. The consensus is that they disproportionately draw support from men, blue-collar workers, small business owners, and from those with lower levels of formal education (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 421-22; Lubbers et al. 2002; Ivarsflaten 2008). Studies also largely agree on the attitudes that match this socio-demographic profile, like higher levels of economic and political disaffection. Particularly negative attitudes towards immigrants have a powerful impact on the likelihood to cast a vote for a radical-right party (Lubbers et al. 2002; van der Brug et al. 2000; Van der Brug and Fennema 2003).

However, the distribution and intensity of demand-side preferences cannot, by itself, explain the huge temporal and cross-national differences in the strength of the radical right. It is difficult to see how they could explain short-term fluctuations within countries or large differences between otherwise mostly similar countries. Reviewing social structure and public demand explanations, Norris states that ‘their failure to provide an overall explanation is clear from even a simple glance at the clear contrasts in radical-right fortunes found between neighbouring states which appear to share similar cultural values, postindustrial service-sector economies, and comparable institutions of representative democracy’ (Norris 2005: 14). For example, Austria, where the FPÖ has enjoyed considerable electoral successes, is hardly more deprived than Germany, where the far right is weak. In a similar vein, comparing the divergent fortunes of the Walloon National Front and the Flemish Bloc/Interest, it is hard to imagine that
processes of globalization, migration, increasing cultural diversity and unemployment have created such a significantly larger electoral demand for the radical right in Flanders compared to the Walloon region.

Moreover, a grievances or discontent perspective cannot fully account for the rapid mobilization and demobilization of support and mass media standing. One can conclude that a primarily socio-economic or ethnic competition approach has problems explaining sudden breakthroughs and electoral dynamics (Eatwell 1998; Norris 2005).

The case of Fortuyn provides a case in point. Immediately after the Dutch 2002 election results, several comments in the news media concentrated on the presumed major shift to the right of the opinions of the electorate (Irwin and Van Holsteyn 2003: 35). In line with a demand-side perspective, many scholars have investigated the characteristics and motives of the people that voted for the LPF (e.g. Van der Brug 2003; Pennings and Keman 2003; Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; Dekker et al. 2003). They have focused on the socio-demographic and attitudinal profile of his supporters in order to establish the typical features of the electoral reservoir of the LPF. These results point to the existence of fertile demand-side conditions that could possibly be politically exploited. But they cannot explain why this mobilization succeeded with such an astonishing rapidity. And neither why it succeeded at that particular moment: when we ask ourselves why, compared with other West European countries, the populist challenge started so late in the Netherlands (my second research question), explanations in terms of changing socio-economic conditions and grievances of the population also clearly prove insufficient. In line with the communis opinio which holds that Pim Fortuyn finally expressed deep-seated and long suppressed feelings of discontent with multicultural policies, the hypothesis that the political changes during the May 2002 election campaign originate in sudden shifts in the attitudes of the electorate fails to fit the facts and has to be refuted (Van Holsteyn et al. 2003). There was no impressive surge to the right among the Dutch electorate prior to the elections in 2002 and the surge of the LPF cannot be ascribed to a sudden change in the opinion climate on immigration and multiculturalism. The socio-economic conditions and electoral preferences that supposedly caused the surge of the anti-immigration party did not vary much over time and therefore cannot account for the success of Pim Fortuyn alone. Changes were due to new calculations voters had to make because of the addition of a new product to the electoral marketplace (Van Holsteyn et al. 2003).

A decision to vote for the LPF was predominantly based on the content of the issues that the LPF advanced, particularly the party’s position on the issues of immigration and integration (see e.g. Van der Brug 2003; Fennema and Van der Brug 2006). Voters voted for this party because its ideological position was considered most similar to their own. Likewise, there is very strong evidence of a substantive content to the evaluation of the politician Fortuyn. The opinion voters reported on the items ‘send back asylum seekers’ and ‘foreigners should adapt’ account for the largest part of the explained variance in their amount of sympathy for Fortuyn (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003: 62). Fortuyn’s rhetoric, which partly focused on the number of immigrants in the country and their supposed lack of respect for the Dutch way of life, clearly struck a chord with a certain section of the population. His views on the issues of immigration and integration tapped into the fears of ordinary Dutch people and matched their daily experiences of minority-related crime and segregation in cities and schools.
If we take a closer look at the perceived grievances, it appears that the opinions of the Dutch on the issue of the multicultural society and admittance of asylum seekers were rather stable during the late 1990s (see Table 2.1). The limited and very gradual increase in the number of people who felt that immigrants should adapt to Dutch culture (from 54 per cent in 1997 to 61 per cent in 2002) indicates that there was widespread support for a more assimilationist approach to integration policies long before the breakthrough of Fortuyn. In a similar vein, Bélanger and Aarts (2006) show that panel data reveal that in 1998 a substantial pool of voters already felt negative towards refugees and Adriaansen and colleagues (2005) conclude that the electoral potential for a newcomer such as the LPF already existed for at least eight years.

Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007) show that tensions related to Muslims and multiculturalism were apparent long before September 11th and thus were not caused by this exogenous shock. Already since the early 1990s, about fifty per cent of the Dutch believe that western European and Muslim lifestyles do not fit well together (SCP 2003). It was perhaps inevitable that one day the discontent would be tapped into by a political entrepreneur who has ‘the guts to say what we think’, but it is not clear how this available long-term reservoir can explain the rapid mobilization within the period of a few months.

Data on the socio-economic conditions that foster (perceived) ethnic threat and xenophobic attitudes do not help us much either to account for a sudden breakthrough in 2002. The ‘usual suspects’ in this regard -- unemployment, immigration and the influx of asylum seekers -- do not show a remarkable growth. Firstly, the purple government had been successful in reducing unemployment and boosting labour force participation from 59 to 67 per cent. Over 1.4 million new jobs had been created since 1990 and unemployment had fallen sharply from approximately 6 per cent in the early 1990s to 2.7 per cent in 2001, the lowest percentage in the OECD. Therefore, and also based on the growth of the GDP, it was widely expected that the purple coalition would retain their majority in the 2002 election, as they had in 1998 (see e.g. Storm and Naastepad 2003). Secondly, the influx of immigrants and asylum seekers is another prominent contextual societal characteristic in the literature, measuring the intensity of ethnic competition, which is assumed to be decisive for negative attitudes people hold towards immigrants and ethnic minorities (for more detailed accounts, see Scheepers et al. 2002; Schneider 2008).

In his book *The Mess of Eight Purple Years* (the best sold book in the Netherlands in 2002 written by a Dutch author3), Fortuyn (2002a: 163) shows that the number of asylum applicants was 40,630 in 2000, while only 29,258 persons requested asylum in the Netherlands in 1995.4 However, a broader picture, including data of the ‘missing’ years, included reveals that it is premature to conclude the country experienced a clear upward trend (see Table 2.2). In 1994, the number had peaked at 52 thousand persons and in 2001 this number had decreased to 33 thousand.

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4 Fortuyn does not provide a source for these figures, so I do not know the reason for the slight difference in 2000 with the figure from CBS I present.
Table 2.1 The opinion of the Dutch population on the multicultural society (percentages, 1997-2002) and the degree of satisfaction with the government

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<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be completely halted</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dutch ethnic minorities should...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be able to maintain their own culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be able to maintain their own culture to a large extent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither maintain their own culture, nor adapt to Dutch culture</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt to a large extent to Dutch culture</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt completely to Dutch culture</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of satisfaction with the government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Alternatively, now and then, the existing grievances that the populist right mainly exploits are somewhat vaguely characterized as irrational and emotional, unconnected to any particular values, policy preferences or ideology. However, distrust or discontent with politics in general also proves unsuitable to account for the sudden surge of Fortuyn. Firstly, whereas we just concluded that the profile of the LPF voters has a strong basis in attitudes concerning substantive topics, results show that general feelings of disaffection from politics did to a far lesser extent contribute to a LPF vote; the hypothesis about discontent ‘remains contested’ (Bélanger and Aarts 2006: 41). This supports the general claim of Swyngedouw that populist right-wing protest is not ‘unideological’ at all, but is clearly directed against the policy concerning migration, integration and law and order (2001: 218). More importantly, opinion polls show that satisfaction with the way Dutch democracy works increased between 1973 and 2001. A sharp decline started in 2002 only after Fortuyn had been murdered and after an unstable coalition of CDA, VVD and LPF disbanded because of internal conflicts merely 87 days after it had been established (Van der Brug and Van Praag 2007).
Table 2.2 The number of asylum seekers and accepted applications in the Netherlands (1993-2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applications for asylum</th>
<th>Accepted applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>35400</td>
<td>15010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>52580</td>
<td>19340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>29260</td>
<td>18500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>22860</td>
<td>23590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>34440</td>
<td>17000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>45220</td>
<td>15100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>39300</td>
<td>13490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>43560</td>
<td>9730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>32580</td>
<td>10580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>18670</td>
<td>8820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.5 Internal supply-side factors: characteristics of the anti-immigration party

It has now become clear that a complete and satisfying explanation for a surge of extreme-right popularity and presence in the public sphere needs to go beyond the demand-side model. Therefore, this section will discuss the impact of party characteristics. The subsequent section will focus on the extent to which achieving media access and mobilizing an electoral potential depend on the competitive political environment in which parties operate.

An extreme-right party’s success not only depends on the presence of a beneficial electoral potential, but the characteristics of and resources possessed by the organization itself are critical as well. Carter (2005: 13; see also Goodwin 2006) distinguishes two sets of so-called ‘party-centric factors’: the party’s ideology and the party’s organizational structure, including its leadership. I will follow this outline but devote a separate paragraph to the role of Fortuyn’s charismatic leadership. Firstly, I will discuss and elaborate on ‘party ideology’, i.e. in which part of the political spectrum the radical-right party chooses to locate itself, and what type of political agenda and ideology it adopts.

2.5.1 The role of party position and adaptation

From an internal supply-side perspective, radical-right parties are for a large part ‘masters of their own success’ (Carter 2005: 13). It matters how well a party manages to exploit the opportunities that present themselves (Kitschelt 1995: 71). I explicitly follow the argument of Mudde (2007a) to not reduce populist parties to merely passive consequences of socio-economic processes and external political conditions, but treat them as active shapers of their own fates. This approach is in line with the plea of several others who argue that anti-immigrant parties should be partly seen as creators of their own destiny (e.g. Goodwin, 2006; Ignazi, 2003). For exam-
ple, Ignazi (2003) argues that a characteristic of a successful extreme-right party is its strategic flexibility in order to exploit whatever favourable circumstances might arise. Goodwin (2006:350) states that ‘instead of portraying extreme right parties as the by-products of forces outside their own control, in contrast they should be viewed as engineers of their own success’. These arguments can be applied to any newcomer that pursues a share of the electoral market.

What parties most importantly can achieve through their own actions as strategic agents is to find a beneficial position in the policy space. According to Kitschelt, the ideological ‘niche’ that radical-right parties have to occupy in the political space in order to achieve success, is a position that combines culturally exclusionist/authoritarian positions with liberal pro-market positions on socio-economic policies. Recently, however, Kitschelt has adjusted his hypothesis (2004; see also De Lange 2007) as the configuration of parties in West European party systems has changed since the 1990s. The new position that is said to make the radical right successful is to a more centrist socio-economic policy stance (still combined with cultural exclusionism).

So, first of all, a certain ‘winning position’ does not seem to be stable over time. To complicate matters further, it seems too unrealistic to assume that there is a specific successful position that is invariant of place and works regardless of particular circumstances of a country.

A crucial addition that I point out here is that in order to explain success, we do not only need to try to identify a certain policy package that ‘works’ beneficially independent of time and space. We need to establish a deeper explanation by providing the mechanism by which some parties are generally able or inclined to arrive at successful positions over time, whereas other parties fail to do so. Surprisingly, the concepts of learning and feedback are lacking in most ‘party-centric’ approaches.

Even if we would empirically find that embracing a certain policy stance has a significant positive effect on radical-right parties’ fortunes -- irrespective of time and country -- in contrast to other positions that will always lead to a marginal performance, we should identify why and how successful populist leaders were apparently able to find this ‘successful position’ and why most other attempts fail to do so. However, as far as I know, in no account of the extreme right thus far it is explicated why or how successful populist leaders were apparently able to find this ‘successful position’ and why most other attempts of politicians failed to do so. More sophisticated behavioural models of parties’ strategic calculations are useful (Kitschelt 2007).

It may not be possible for politicians to choose the optimal policy stance to begin with because the political game goes too fast and optimal strategic responses cannot be predicted or calculated in the available time. When all actors would be able to behave in a fully rational forward-looking manner, they would be able to immediately choose the most optimal behaviour, and a stable political situation would immediately follow (Tavits 2008: 50). However, in line with common perception, political competition does not seem to be heading towards any stable situation, because politicians continuously adapt their positions. This makes the model inherently dynamic because an actor continuously ‘looks back’ and alters its behaviour based on past feedback or the anticipation of future events. We are in a co-evolutionary world and (electoral) performance is endogenous: changes in the behaviour of one actor alter the environment and might affect the ‘payoff’ of other actors (Miller and Page 2007). When one politi-
Theorist makes a shift in the policy position, he or she creates incentives for other politicians to move as well, and when those politicians move, they might set an endless sequence of further movements in motion. Such platform-search dynamics are much more realistic and consistent with "the real world": political party leaders slowly converge by trial-and-error to better outcomes that can be tied to the underlying preferences of voters (Kollman et al. 1998). Thus, I will relax the assumption of actors rationally maximizing their utility. I assume that extreme-right actors cannot calculate or choose the "winning position" beforehand, but will gradually search and learn.

The processes of variation, selection and retention jointly produce a mechanism of patterned change that explains how populist party leaders can arrive at a "winning position" by this searching and learning. When the three conditions of variation, selection, and reproduction are fulfilled, adaptation takes place. Variation means that political organizations and social movements have different characteristics, messages, traits or repertoires (or "memes"). Selection consists of the features of the environment that help or harm the traits to replicate and spread. Reproduction means that successful variants (in terms of e.g. enhancing popular support, attracting media visibility or provoking public reactions) will be preserved and, similarly, activists or politicians will abandon unsuccessful traits. Elaborating the notion that extreme-right politicians will try to shape their own fate, I hypothesize that party leader Fortuyn was using adaptive decision rules and thereby he gradually increased his electoral support. I perceive actors as adaptively rational because they learn from the past and current state of affairs.

What constitutes success (i.e. to what feedback one needs to adapt) depends on the selection process. In other words: identifying a "winner" depends on what (competitive) game we are playing (Dennett 1995). Firstly, in order for politicians to be successful, they ultimately have to capture a certain amount of support for their political agenda among the electorate. Secondly, in order to get one's message across, one first needs to win the media battle and survive the "discursive battleground". The media spotlight can validate only a limited number of parties, organizations and movements as relevant, legitimate or important players. Regarding the battle on "the public stage", I assume that winning, in the eyes of the actors, is achieving media access, visibility and provoking supportive public reactions. It should be noted that actors can face a dilemma based on possibly conflicting feedback messages from these media-related selective pressures.

So in my dissertation the internal supply-side factor "formula" or "strategy" does not refer to the particular phenotype-like programmatic content or ideology a political party advocates as such (like e.g. Meguid 2005). In contrast, the role of party strategy will refer to the genotype-like set of "instructions" a party carries with itself, which guide the party in the process of determining its political position. Thus, a strategy is the general instrument an agent uses for pursuing its goals and for responding to feedback from its surroundings and past events (Axelrod and Cohen 2000). A well-known adaptation strategy in political science concerning ideological positioning over time, although not explicitly formulated in evolutionary terms, is the "past results model" of Ian Budge (2001), which consists of delivering more of the same ideology if you had won votes during the previous elections and shift in the opposite direction when you had lost them. I will discuss refinements to this basic model and present and elaborate on alternative adaptive strategies in chapters 5 and 6.
Although it is common among political scientists to define ‘populism’ as a thin ideology (e.g. Mudde 2007a), and not in terms of specific characteristics concerning organizational structure and tactics, populism is also frequently associated with a certain party strategy. In the public debate, the term is often interpreted as a style of demagogy and opportunism (Mudde 2004a). This refers to political behaviour of promoting policies with the aim of quickly pleasing the voters and adjusting one’s policy stance to boost electoral appeal without reference to a consistent plan or ideological principles, which is often accompanied with a negative connotation. My argument that populist politicians can perhaps be understood by their inclination to adapt, thus resonates with the often-heard observation in the public debate that successful populists do not have a well-defined ideology because of their ‘vote-grabbing’ and ‘opportunistic’ style.

2.5.2 Organizational arguments

It has for long been acknowledged that a political party, interest group or social movement organization meets severe problems if it cannot mobilize a sufficient number of loyal members of activists (see e.g. McCarthy and Zald 1977). Party characteristics such as organizational weakness, a lack of financial resources or appealing leadership and shortfall of active membership have frequently been proposed as pivotal factors for the failure of radical-right parties. For example, in the Dutch case, it has been argued that these internal supply factors explain why the Centre Democrats (hereafter: CD) collapsed. According to Lucardie (2000a), party leader Janmaat ran his party almost like a family business and his leadership style alienated the party cadre, especially the more ambitious and competent members. Lubbers et al. (2002) concluded that the Dutch extreme-right parties prior to Fortuyn’s party have not been appealing to the electorate because they lacked a well-organized party structure.

However, besides the charismatic leadership element, other party organization characteristics that are supposedly beneficial or indispensable for a successful mobilization do not seem to be relevant or convincing in order to account for the impressive performance of the new populist challenger in 2002. Fortuyn’s rise was indeed so remarkable because he achieved it with hardly any party organization at his disposal and with limited financial resources, relying almost entirely on media attention. The LPF entered the political mainstream with a minimum of organizational effort and its emergence and successful trajectory illustrates how access to the media can compensate organizational weaknesses.

Perhaps one can even go so far as to argue that the growth of active membership and building and improvement of an organizational structure lagged behind Fortuyn’s success, instead of the other way around; attention and support were successfully mobilized, then organizational and financial resources followed. In a review article of the existing literature on party organization effects, Ellinas states that organizational arguments ‘would need to carefully trace the evolution of party organisations to establish the direction of causality’ (2009: 219). His evidence from the French Front National indicates that organizational growth seems to be rather the effect than the cause of electoral party success, especially during earlier stages of development. In a similar vein, De Witte and Klandermans (2000: 713) assume that a lack of organizational unity is both cause and result of mobilization failure. They identify a ‘circle of organisational weakness’: weak organizations (like the CD) remain weak, whereas, in contrast,
strong organizations (like the Flemish Bloc in Belgium) become stronger over time. From a weak position (without active participants or electoral support) it is difficult to mobilize new voters or attract new participants to become active in the party. Thus, stagnation or even a downward spiral results once the party lacks the means to inform and persuade others. As an ‘independent variable’, the strength of the party organization might be more important for the persistence of extreme-right parties after their initial breakthrough (Ellinas 2009). Organizational features seem more fruitful for explaining the collapse of Fortuyn’s party, not its rapid rise. In sum, organizational resources seem rather a result than a cause of Fortuyn’s sudden rise.

2.5.3 Charisma

If organizational strength is mainly a result, not the pivotal factor that is able to set in motion an upward spiral of success, then how could Fortuyn mobilize voters or attract new participants? De Witte and Klandermans (2000) have argued that a charismatic leader who is able to maintain peace in the organization could eventually instigate an upward spiral akin to the one witnessed in Flanders. The common-sense explanation is that the compelling charisma of Pim Fortuyn is the most obvious reason for his success. The new party in the electoral marketplace was simply far more attractive because of the outstanding appeal of its party leader. Especially after his death, Fortuyn was often labelled hero, saint and prophet in journalistic commentaries (see e.g. Margry 2003). Charisma of the party leader is also a prominent supply-side explanation in the academic literature (e.g. Husbands 1998; Eatwell 2002). Fortuyn’s unique selling point supposedly was his exceptional charisma (e.g. Ellemers 2002; 2004). Likewise, because of their lack of charismatic leaders, previous extreme-right parties in the Netherlands had a limited electoral attractiveness (see e.g. Lubbers et al. 2002; Scheepers et al. 2003: 85).

It is without any doubt that many supporters attributed exceptional qualities to Fortuyn and saw him as some sort of new messiah (Margry 2003; Van Herwaarden 2005). However, there are two problematic aspects of the charisma explanation for success. Firstly, charisma is not always convincingly measured as a preceding characteristic and the explanation lacks empirical evidence when it is rigorously put to test. The commonly used method for measuring charisma is an expert judgement design (i.e. ask colleague social scientists). Lubbers et al. (2002) include it as part of a variable ‘party characteristics’. In constrast, Van der Brug and Mughan (2004) compare three Dutch party leaders (Hans Janmaat, Pim Fortuyn and Mat Herben) and find no evidence of strong leader effects. None of them had a stronger impact on their party’s electoral fortunes than the leaders of the other established parties, not even the supposedly charismatic Pim Fortuyn.

To make matters worse, the charisma explanation suffers from the tendency of circular reasoning (Van der Brug et al. 2005). Although I will not contest the observation that Fortuyn had an exceptional appeal, it should be considered as a situational factor, instead of the core explanatory factor. Charisma is not a personality characteristic, but followers attribute the property to their leader. It is a legitimization for those who appear to be the ‘heroes of a war’ and notably instable as ‘it can just as suddenly vanish as it appears’ (Ellemers 2002: 3). If a leader is unsuccessful, or if the leadership fails to benefit the followers, charismatic authority
disappears. Max Weber (1947 [1921]) illustrates this by noting that even Chinese monarchs could sometimes lose their status as ‘sons of heaven’ because of misfortune, such as defeat in war, floods or drought. More recent illustrations are the political careers of Mikhail Gorbachev or Winston Churchill (Collins 2004). Gorbachev changed from apparatchik, to charismatic leader of glasnost and perestroika, to failed politician during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Churchill was considered a failed politician during the 1920s and 1930s, became charismatic in wartime and was voted out of office after the end of the war. Collins (2004: 286) notes that ‘charisma is one of the most obvious cases where individual characteristics are part of a group phenomenon, where the individual is most patently constructed by social conditions’.

For years, Fortuyn stayed in the margins of the public debate so we should not primarily analyze the exceptional characteristics of Fortuyn, but focus on the way the sudden breakthrough was enforced (Duivesteijn 2002). Instead of assuming that a lack of charisma accounts for the success of Fortuyn, it would be better to put the problems follows: how did the attribution of charismatic appeal evolve? In other words: I consider the possession or lack of charisma as part of my research question, instead of its answer.

### 2.6 The external supply-side: political opportunities

Although I have just dismissed the role of charisma as a satisfactory explanation, appealing media performances of successful party leaders of the populist right throughout Europe are often associated with charisma. This observation offers a good starting point for a discussion of the external constraints and opportunities parties are faced with. While ideological stance and organization style seem to fit a ‘party-centric’ approach best, we have, I argue, shifted from an internal to an external supply-side perspective by introducing the role of the mass media. Emphasizing the role of the mass media corresponds better with an ‘opportunity’ view because gaining access to the mass media and one’s performance in the public debate are characteristics that are to a large extent beyond the control of the political party or social movement organization itself.

Scholars do not always refer to the same cluster of variables when they differentiate between ‘organizational resources’ and ‘organizational opportunities’. The media are sometimes primarily treated as ‘political resources’ at the party’s free disposal for the dissemination of its message. Nevertheless, a relatively clear and generally accepted distinction between these two sets of variables is that resources refer to goods of which actors can control its use and, in contrast, opportunities are elements of the environment that cannot be controlled by the actors themselves (Opp 2009). In contrast to actor-centred supply-side factors, opportunity approaches thus emphasize the role of exogenous conditions that cannot be controlled or moulded to the actor’s purposes (Tarrow 1998:18) and originate outside the mobilizing group (Koopmans 1999).

According to this third set of explanations, we should not primarily focus on the resources the new political challengers lack or possess. Populist parties face a structural disadvantage in terms of their organizational or financial resources when they try to mobilize sup-
porters, members or public attention. In this view successful mobilization is first and foremost the result of constraints and opportunities that the political and institutional context offers. Examples of such external characteristics that are likely to be relevant for new political parties are the electoral system, the ‘political space’ or ‘ideological room’ left open by political competitors, responses from established actors or splits among the political elite on the issue of the multicultural society. Researchers who focused on these supply-side factors have convincingly shown that they matter (e.g. Koopmans et al. 2005; Arzheimer 2009; Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Carter 2005; Norris 2005; Van der Brug et al. 2005; Lubbers et al. 2002). Translated to my research question, this external supply-side approach implies that for explaining the rise of Fortuyn, it is not sufficient to merely look at the adaptive strategy of Fortuyn but also -- or even mainly -- to the degree and the way other actors reacted to Fortuyn’s party. For the concrete specification of the political opportunity structure to explain the rise and demise in extreme-right public standing and electoral support, I will follow the outline of Koopmans and colleagues (2005), who distinguish two dimensions: discursive opportunities and political space.

Only the relatively volatile supply-side factors (i.e. the more dynamic aspects of the political process) seem relevant here, as the central question of this dissertation concerns developments within a single country. Deeply embedded or fixed opportunities are more useful for comparing different settings, explaining country’s differences in relative success (Gamson and Meyer 1996). Due to my single-country research design, long-term political-institutional variables hardly show variation at all and accordingly will not be discussed in detail and put to test in this dissertation. Thus, I will not elaborate any further on the fact that the Netherlands have an electoral system of proportional representation, a low electoral threshold and a consensus model of democracy, which is characterized by inclusiveness and compromise (instead of a majoritarian framework), and which provides a fertile ground for critique from the populist right. Given the empirical pattern of a stronger populist right in consensus democracies, the Netherlands were a rather ‘deviant case’ (see e.g. Andeweg 2001; for more recent research on the impact of the institutional framework on support for populist parties, see also Hakhverdian and Koop 2007).

2.6.1 Political space

Kitschelt’s second premise is that a successful emergence and rise of the populist radical right should be understood in terms of the positioning of the political parties within the policy space. This assumption about the decisive role of the behaviour of the established parties refers to the ‘political space’ factor of the supply-side of political competition. When established parties ideologically converge, they create a party configuration that leaves a ‘political gap’ in the electoral market, which can potentially be exploited by a populist newcomer. Other scholars have similarly argued that the behaviour of the mainstream competitors shapes the electoral fortunes of niche parties in general (e.g. Meguid 2005). Kriesi et al. (2006) argue that where major established parties follow a moderate course in favour of the ‘winners’ of globalization, they leave an opportunity open for the creation of parties on the periphery that focus on the
‘losers’. On the right there will be a potential for parties with a cultural-protectionist agenda and on the left for parties with a economic-protectionist programme.

In the literature, the amount of competition from the established parties or mainstream moderate-right parties in particular is measured in several different ways. Partly due to this variation in measurements, the results of previous research on the effect of the political messages sent by other parties on the electoral strength of the populist right-wing challenger show a mixed picture. Using the party statements on internationalism, multiculturalism, national lifestyle and law and order from the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP), Kai Arzheimer (2009; in line with Arzheimer and Carter 2006) found that the ideological position of the established major moderate-right party (which is labelled ‘toughness’) had no significant effect on cross-national differences in the amount of support for the extreme right. On the other hand, saliency, the relative amount of these statements in the manifestos of all established parties (ignoring the direction of the statements), is generally related to a higher level of extreme-right support. In contrast, Van der Brug et al. (2005) conclude that anti-immigration parties are indeed more successful when the moderate-right occupies a more centrist position. For the measurement of these positions, they use the respondents’ perception on a general left-right scale (based on the European Elections Studies data; it is unclear what a position on this scale exactly signifies). And in this case, the extent to which the anti-immigrant parties’ mainstream competitor emphasizes the core issue of the radical right is not significant, although they measure saliency similarly as Arzheimer (using the MRG data) by selecting the issues crime, negative references to multiculturalism and positive references to ‘the national way of life’.

For the Dutch case in particular, applying the political space theory comes down to the suggestion that ‘who wants to understand Fortuyn’s victory should study his victims’ (Pennings and Keman 2003: 51). From this perspective, the fact that the rise of Fortuyn took place relatively late can be attributed to the political space left open by the political establishment in 2002. However, Adriaansen et al. (2005: 234) conclude that the ideological convergence of the establishment does not offer a satisfying explanation. In fact, they find that, combined with the finding of the available consistent demand I have discussed above, the electoral ‘space on the right’ (measured in terms of a single left-right scale) was even larger in 1994 than in 2002. In contrast, Pennings and Keman state that ‘convergence is the key to assess Dutch electoral politics’ (2003: 58). They observe a general trend of decreasing party distances since the early 1980s -- with regard to their positioning in terms of the socio-economic left-right as well on the progressive-conservative divide -- and argue that this past behaviour of the establishment is an important explanatory factor. One can go even further and argue that Fortuyn did not find an available position in the existing political policy space, but managed to transform this space altogether by introducing a new political cleavage or by profoundly re-defining and altering the meaning of an existing line of conflict (e.g. Pellikaan et al. 2007).

This notion of an available niche in the electoral market certainly adds to our understanding of why the Dutch party system was vulnerable to newcomers and challengers (given that the demand-side distribution has remained relatively stable). Although the concept of political opportunities has been widely and fruitfully used to explain success and failure, it should still be complemented with the notion that these opportunities and constraints, particularly the
statements and responses of the political elite actors, need to become publicly visible in order to become relevant (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004). As Gamson and Meyer put it: ‘An opportunity unrecognized is no opportunity at all’ (1996: 283). In line with my argument that the media realm has gained relevance because it defines more and more which topics are politically relevant and who are the significant players in the policy arena, I believe that elite cues and responses other than those in party manifestos need to be taken into account. Besides the fact that party manifestos are probably not actually being read by many voters, they are not the only, or even the most important tools for citizens to determine what a party stands for and distinguishes from other parties. It is through the public discourse that issues are made visible to citizens, and this is the principal battleground where parties attempt to mobilize their campaigns and get their messages across. For most of the voters the daily news in newspapers and on television is the only source of political information (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1994). They do not bother to study the party manifestos and rely on mass-mediated (and perhaps simplified) claims by political parties instead.

For smaller or marginal parties, like new extreme-right contenders, the media might be even more important than for established major parties, because they often have less conventional channels or organizational and financial means at their disposal to get their message across to potential adherents. Like social movements, they are generally much more dependent on media than the reverse (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993).

2.6.2 Discursive opportunities: the role of the public debate

If we admit that a keystone of Fortuyn’s success was his capability to introduce an existing but ‘dormant’ political issue or perhaps even a profoundly new divide, this claim immediately raises the subsequent question why or how he successfully managed to break into the system and determine and dominate the issues and discussions in the public discourse during the campaign in the first place.

For a large part, I argue, the answer to this question lies in the amount and nature of the public reactions of other actors, like journalists and political opponents. The main argument is that the degree to which politicians succeed or fail to get the opportunity to publicly announce their political views is only to a very limited degree attributable to their own personal skills or decisions. In other words: the actors involved do not choose when and how to appear on stage, but gatekeepers and established political actors let them appear — and, in a frantic ‘mediacracy’, often disregard them just as quickly. Thus, when further elaborating the opportunity approach, I will focus on the actions by others in the media realm that constrain or help a populist right-wing newcomer, but that are often difficult to foresee and predict beforehand. From this viewpoint, a new political challenger (either a political party or a social movement organization) and its message can successfully appear and remain centre stage only when it achieves prominence in the mass media, provokes reactions of other established political actors and thereby also succeeds in gaining a sufficient amount of legitimacy. To what extent were the public responses of ‘his victims’ triggers and catalysts for the rise of Fortuyn in the mass media as well as in the electoral arena?
The importance and relevance of political behaviour acted out on the mass media stage has increased in Western European democracies. Due to technological and commercial developments, the media landscape has changed fundamentally. Because of intensifying competition and increased commercialization, the (assumed) wishes and desires of the public have become increasingly decisive (Castells 1997). The precursors of the current period of ‘media logic’ can be called ‘partisan logic’ and ‘public logic’ (Brants and Van Praag 2006). The ‘partisan logic’ existed in the Netherlands until approximately the mid 1960s. In this model of political communication, the mass media functioned as mouthpieces of the political elite and political parties, to which they were tied via the pluralist system of ‘pillarization’, which I mentioned earlier. Each religious and ideological denomination had its own newspaper and broadcasting organization, which were relatively obedient and servile in character. Thereafter, in the period of the so-called ‘public logic’ model, ‘facts are sacred and opinions are free’ (Brants and Van Praag 2006: 28), which means that journalists perceive themselves as watchdogs of the democratic process and take a professional stance concerning neutrality and objectivity. In the third and most recent period, it is argued that we have experienced a shift from a professional to a commercial logic. In a system driven predominantly by a ‘media logic’, the amount and nature of the news coverage is determined by how the mass media landscape is organized, e.g. by its production routines and presentation formats. As this is a highly competitive market, the *modus operandi* is mainly driven by market mechanisms. In this situation ‘media give what the public is interested in, not what is in the public interest’ (Van Praag and Brants 2005: 270). News has to sell and is therefore more and more considered entertainment and amusement, and as a result subject to simplification, personalization, and with an emphasis on scandals. Importantly, it is not just that journalists accommodate to the increased pressure of commercialism: political actors also have to adjust their performance and behaviour to these formats and rules of the media system, in order to achieve sufficient publicity and maintain their positions (Castells 1997). The logic and organization of the media frame and structure the political realm; the political institutions still remain in control of the political processes, but they are increasingly dependent on and shaped by the mass media. Although they slightly differ in the labels and the details, this process has been observed by several other scholars, who point to the ‘mediatization of politics’ (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999) or the emergence of an ‘audience democracy’ (Manin 1997). Likewise, Mancini and Hallin conclude that ‘the triumph of the Liberal Model’ (the Anglo-American media system in which market forces dominate) has led to a media-centred pattern of political communication (2004: 251).

The Dutch media landscape has indeed developed towards the American model and changed from a very steady market to a highly competitive market. Press and broadcasting have been ‘depillarized’ since the end of the 1960s and engaged in a struggle for readers and viewers (Brants 2004). After the establishment of the commercial broadcasting company RTL in 1989, the number of commercial TV channels increased drastically (Brants and Van Praag 2006: 35). Analyzing the election campaigns of 2002 and 2003, Van Praag and Brants conclude that they were not exceptional, in the sense that they fit in a gradual long-term trend towards a stronger ‘media logic’. For example, already in 1998 news coverage about who wins and who loses, the so-called ‘horse race news’, is the largest news category in the Dutch press.
With regard to radical-right parties throughout Europe, there are many indications that important changes in mass media debates over time (as well as differences between countries) may play a role in the electoral fortunes of radical right-wing parties. For example, for the French FN, media visibility fostered the party’s success in 1984. Only after Le Pen appeared on television, did his party make its first major electoral breakthrough (Eatwell 2005). While the FN captured only 0.2 per cent in the 1981 legislative elections, it achieved over 11 per cent of the vote (ten seats) in the 1984 European elections (Meguid 2005, chapter 6). The popularity of Jean-Marie Le Pen increased remarkably after he was allowed to appear on a very popular political talk show called The Hour of Truth (l’Heure de Verité). A poll carried out after the programme showed that the vote intentions for Le Pen’s FN doubled from 3.5 per cent to 7 per cent (Ellinas 2009, see also Ignazi 1989). Le Pen considered it a turning point in the party’s history and he declared:

‘Just like that, I must have changed. Just like that, I became an acceptable politician. (...) And yet, I had changed neither my look, nor my message, nor my language, nor my behaviour. What had changed was that a television network, Antenna 2, granted me an “Hour of Truth”. Sixty minutes, after a battle that has been going on for 28 years. An hour is nothing, but it was enough for me to get rid of the monstrous and carnival-like mask all my opponents have so generously applied to me’ (quoted in DeClair 1999: 76; see also Ellinas 2009: 218).

There are several other illustrations from other European countries that are also in line with the argument about discursive opportunities put forward here. For instance, the rapid rise of Haider’s FPÖ was partly the result of favourable coverage from the Kronen Zeitung, Austria’s largest newspaper (Art 2007). The increasing role of mass media in Italy is personified in businessman turned celebrity Silvio Berlusconi. His control over and use of the mass media radically transformed the competition market of political communication in 1994. It did not only contribute to the emergence and consolidation of Berlusconi’s own vehicle Forza Italia as an electorally legitimate member of the political establishment. It also brought, as Paul Statham puts it, ‘a set of “amateurs” into the political realm’ (1996: 101): Fini’s Alleanza Nazionale, the neofascist party with which it formed a tactical alliance. Lacking media resources, the AN relied on media attention and the alliance ensured the party favourable coverage at a miniscule cost.

Whereas political scientists tend to focus on the electoral side of political competition, scholars from the fields of communication science and social movements have much earlier acknowledged the pivotal role of the discursive side of political competition. The key element of ‘discursive opportunities’ is that the media discourse not only reflects the actual political contention, but also amplifies and distorts it by ascribing credibility, relevance and legitimacy to some actors, issues and points of view, but not, or to a lesser degree, to other actors (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Statham 1999a). They thus provide ideas and demands a certain degree of political acceptability (Ferree 2002). Consequently, some actors and messages will get ample visibility and provoke supportive reactions in the public debate whereas other messages are completely neglected or ‘demonized’. Differences in discursive constraints and
opportunities can be more specifically distinguished in three aspects: the amount of visibility, the amount of reactions and the nature of the reactions in the public debate (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Visibility is defined by the prominence that media gatekeepers allocate to a message. The degree to which an actor and his messages provoke reactions is called resonance. Thirdly, the tone of the responses is also likely to be relevant. Negative and positive responses are respectively called dissonance and consonance. Legitimacy refers to the balance between dissonance and consonance.

By using a discursive opportunity approach, more differentiated and actor-centred hypotheses about the influence of the public debate are generated. In contrast, media-related independent variables used in several previous studies that investigated the effect of the media discourse on electoral attractiveness were: the amount of coverage on the issues of immigration and integration, law and order or the economy (e.g. Walgrave and De Swert 2002; Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2006), or the general amount of coverage devoted to the political party in question, irrespective of the content or the speaker (Lubbers 2001; Lubbers and Scheepers 2001). They did not differentiate between extreme-right speakers and responses of other actors or between positive and negative coverage (for exceptions see Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003; Bos et al. 2010).

Public claim making or public standing is not identical to receiving any sort of coverage or mention in the news. An actor may appear in the media discourse when under scrutiny while hardly having the opportunity to express its own views in the debate in which it is involved (Ferree et al. 2002: 13). Secondly, distinguishing dissonance and consonance implies that the media can be a friend or a foe (Mudde 2007a).

The difference between achieving visibility for your party and views and receiving positive or negative public evaluations resembles the notion of Rogers (1995: 162) that there are different steps before an innovation reaches a critical mass. He distinguishes five stages of which the two stages ‘knowledge’ and ‘persuasion’ are the most relevant here. He argues that, firstly, one simply needs to raise general awareness and knowledge of one’s ideas or product. The mass media are nowadays the most effective communication channel for this goal (instead of personal networks, for instance) because information can directly spread to almost the whole population in one single step. The next step, influencing the attitudes of the public via the mass media is, according to Rogers, more difficult because influence flows often between opinion leaders and their followers. A lot of publicity is sufficient for enhancing knowledge of the innovation, but for the persuasion of the public (i.e. for developing a favourable attitude towards the innovation) it is also crucial that commentators and opinion leaders write positively about one’s ideas or product. In sum, I assume that visibility and positive reactions foster electoral attractiveness, while criticism has a harmful effect.

Of course, the mechanisms that underlie the temporal ups and downs in electoral support are not necessarily the same as those that account for fluctuations in mass media standing. Parties have to compete for votes, but also for media access, and it is not self-evident that the impact of public visibility, resonance and legitimacy is identical in these two struggles. Public disapproval is likely to be electorally harmful, because it will keep voters from voting for an illegitimate right-wing challenger, but it might indeed help politicians indirectly. News on support and criticism gives parties newsworthiness and thus greater opportunities to put their
own viewpoints in the spotlight. In the case of Fortuyn: the moment a torrent of negative reactions appeared, journalists could no longer neglect him. Negative news that comes from opponents may signal the importance and the political momentum of the criticized party.

This is shown by Kleinnijenhuis and colleagues (e.g. 2003) whose distinction of types of news coverage has similarities to the concepts of visibility, resonance and legitimacy. Since 1994, they have investigated how Dutch voters respond to developments in the news during the national election campaigns. The effects of media coverage during the 2002 campaign were to a large extent similar to the mechanisms revealed earlier during the campaigns in 1994 and 1998. Firstly, in line with the visibility hypothesis, parties have to publicly profile themselves and get their issues on the agenda. Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2003) found that more voters supported Fortuyn when he got the opportunity to publicly convey his viewpoints. Furthermore, they found paradoxical effects of legitimacy (the average balance of support and criticism). It had a significant beneficial effect on the respondent’s evaluation of the ‘media performance’ (respondents were asked if certain parties had attracted their attention recently, and if so, in a positive or negative way). In contrast, at the same time, criticism had a harmful effect on the intention to vote for Fortuyn.

With regard to media access and performance, I will focus on explaining the amount of claim making. Gamson and Meyer (1996: 282) state that mass media access ‘is a matter of both organizational routines such as news beats and journalistic norms and belief about who the serious players are in any policy arena’. Regarding the norms and behaviour of journalists, decisions of gatekeepers that play a pivotal role are shaped by so-called ‘news values’ that indicate if a message is newsworthy or not (Galtung and Ruge 1965).

As explained before, negative coverage may be harmful for maintaining electoral support. In contrast, trying to attract as much attention as possible, considering that ‘any publicity is good publicity’, might be a rather successful strategy in terms of gaining a more influential voice in the media platform. It is likely that attacks of others increase the newsworthiness of an actor because negative news enters the news channel more easily (Galtung and Ruge 1965). In line with Koopmans and Olzak (2004), I assume that public reactions (either negative or positive) increase a speaker’s chances to gain more space for subsequent messages as it makes the actor more relevant in the eyes of journalists. Even hostile publicity will enhance the potential for an actor to diffuse subsequent messages in the public sphere. Stewart and colleagues (2003: 236) argue that any media coverage is beneficial for party leaders as it ‘advantages contentious political figures; it enhances their visibility and furthers their goals, by producing some kind of public legitimation’. The difficulty of finding the right balance in your media statements between enhancing newsworthiness and electoral support is, in a more or less similar vein, observed by Bos et al. (2010: 143) when they discuss the trade-off populist party leaders face between ‘being somewhat unusual and provocative (...) (in order to guarantee newsworthiness and therefore prominence)’ and at the same time being ‘taken seriously as a party’.

Secondly, the decisions about what should be reported as news are shaped by the amount of status or ‘political standing’ enjoyed by a particular actor (Wolfsfeld and Sheafer 2006). In other words: news coverage deals mostly with those who hold power, while outsiders and challengers will have much more difficulty in gaining access and attention (Gans 2004 [1979]; Gitlin 1980). Important and influential agents, like established parties and state actors,
almost automatically gain ample opportunity to make public claims. Journalists routinely turn to those with higher levels of political standing because those in charge are expected to act when something important happens -- at least comment on it. Moreover, those with political standing have more resources, staff and skills at their disposal that allow them media access. I assume that high levels of popular support lead to more newsworthiness and opportunities to acquire media access compared to that of parties with marginal popular support (see likewise Jenkins 1999): claim making will be enhanced by higher levels of public opinion support.\(^5\)

Having public standing creates influence and importance: easy access to the news media itself can simply become another indicator of power. The mass media validate the fact that a challenger is an important player and deserves sustained publicity (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). Once an actor or message has become headline news, it will have a higher chance to remain in the media spotlight for some more time. Gatekeepers thus enhance or diminish the power of those to whom they offer or deny standing (Ferree et al. 2002). In the words of Gamson (2004: 251): ‘being visible and quoted defines for other journalists and a broader public who really matter’. Continuing coverage also justifies the decision of journalists to devote attention to a message, event or actor afterwards (Harcup and O’Neill 2001).

I will take a closer look at the impact of actions of politicians in the mass media realm and the attribution of prominence by gatekeepers in general, and not focus on differences in judgments and opinion between mass media outlets. Regarding differences between media outlets, Van der Brug and van der Eijk (2005: 257) conclude that there are no strong indications of differential media effects on the popularity of Fortuyn. Given the degree of Fortuyn’s prominence in the media, this result ‘may seem surprising’. In general, for all parties, they empirically demonstrate that changes in the evaluation scores for politicians and parties can hardly be explained by the respondent’s specific media usage (between February 2002 and May 2002). For example, respondents who watched the news bulletin of the public broadcaster NOS more frequently, did not change their evaluation of the candidates rather negatively or rather positively, compared with those who did not consume this news programme. Similarly, voters who watched NOVA (a public broadcast news show) or the SBS6 (a major commercial broadcaster) news bulletin did not change their attitudes significantly differently than voters who did not watch or hardly watched these programmes. The most obvious conclusion that can be drawn from these findings is that, apparently, media outlets do not differ substantively in their selection and tone. When political news sources do not or hardly differ from each other, differences in media consumption will not lead to media usage-related attitude differences. Likewise, Bos et al. (2010) conclude that their results refute the hypothesis of Mazzoleni et al. (2003) that there are differences between tabloid and mainstream media in the amount of media attention they devote to right-wing populist leaders. Perhaps we do not have genuine tabloid media in the Netherlands. This is also in line with the observation of Castells (1997) that the increasing role of the public debate does not necessarily imply that (individual) media outlets themselves have gained a stronger influence in shaping political success and failure, only that

\(^5\) For protest groups, this relation may be curvilinear: when they resemble or have connections with the ‘power elite’, they may be less attractive as news sources as it makes them less distinguishable as challengers and easier to ignore in the debate (Corbett 1998).
the actions and reactions that are played out on public stage are becoming more decisive (compared to, say, the actions and reactions written down in party manifestos).

In the next chapter, I will empirically investigate the impact of these actions and reactions on the public stage for Fortuyn’s rise. Later on, in chapter 5, I will return to the role of adaptive behaviour – the other explanatory factor I focus on in this book.
3 The rise of right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands. A discursive opportunity approach

3.1 Introduction

A remarkable book signing session took place in a well-known bookstore in Amsterdam in August 2001. Pim Fortuyn was present to sign his new book *The Ideal Cabinet. How the Netherlands Should Be Governed* for his public of readers, but only one person showed up. After an hour or so, the author and a few slightly embarrassed shop assistants decided to give up and go to a café. Seven months later, when Fortuyn presented his next book, *The Mess of Eight Purple Years*, which served as the programme for his new party LPF, journalists, photographers and camera crews trampled each other in the largest room of Nieuwspoort, the international press centre for the Netherlands.

Fortuyn’s rise remarkably deviated from the generally limited amount of publicity devoted to previous right-wing challengers. Shortly after the embarrassing book signing session, on 20 August 2001, Fortuyn publicly announced that he intended to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections. From that moment on, he appeared in the media almost every day (Van Praag 2003). ‘The Fortuynisation of the Media’, an article headed in *de Volkskrant* on as soon as September 12, 2001. ‘Fortuyn is hot news’, the journalist observed: ‘He appears on television almost every evening. He has appeared in many magazines the last weeks, and he has continually been giving interviews on radio, on television and to the printed media.’

This is not to say that the decision of gatekeepers to allow Fortuyn media access was self-evident. For example, the staff of the news show *Netwerk* of the public broadcaster KRO decided not to offer him a platform. According to the editor-in-chief, this decision was based on the controversial character of Fortuyn’s ‘Janmaat-like’ statements. Correspondingly is it neither obvious that being ‘hot news’ is favourable for the actor involved, as massive media publicity is of course not necessarily positive. During the book presentation in Nieuwspoort in March 2002, Fortuyn became victim of an attack by pie-throwing activists who declared: ‘Don’t give racism a vote!’ Afterwards, Fortuyn urged the prime minister, Wim Kok, to stop ‘demonizing’ him (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003). Despite this accusation of being ‘demonized’, Fortuyn himself deliberately attacked his political opponents in an unconventional, harsh manner. All in all, the 2002 Dutch election campaign has been characterized as an unprecedented negative campaign compared to other Dutch campaigns (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2006). A couple of months before the elections, the established political party leaders changed their strategy of ignoring Fortuyn and presumably reasoned that the Dutch citizens could be per-

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6 This chapter is co-authored with Ruud Koopmans. A slightly different version has been published in the *European Journal of Political Research* (Koopmans and Muis 2009). Both authors have contributed equally, the order of names is strictly alphabetical.

7 Van Liempt, Ad and Boos, Carla. ‘Van professor tot Pim’, *De Volkskrant*, 7-11-2006, p. 15; And personal communication with Ad van Liempt.


9 Ibidem.
suaded through a massive frontal attack of public statements against Fortuyn’s ‘right-wing extremist’ ideas on immigrants and Islam - as well his supposed personal weaknesses (e.g. being incompetent).

The central question of this chapter is: To what extent can the public debate in the mass media explain the sudden and spectacular rise of Pim Fortuyn and his political party? In the previous chapter, the common-sense explanation that Fortuyn’s success was a consequence of his indisputable charisma was dismissed because such reasoning is rather circular (Van der Brug et al. 2005), it lacks convincing empirical evidence (Van der Brug and Mughan 2007) and it immediately raises a pressing follow-up question: How did the attribution of charismatic appeal evolve?

Nevertheless, the observation that appealing media performances of successful party leaders of the populist right throughout Europe are often associated with charisma, offers a good starting point. Scholars of ‘contentious politics’ have long pointed to the fact that for a satisfactory answer to questions about political change, the role of the media should be taken into account (e.g., Gitlin 1980). We believe that using theories and findings from the social movement field can improve our understanding of political breakthroughs, as they draw attention to the fact that it is necessary not only to explain why anti-immigration parties are able to attract voters, but also why they are successful in making their voices heard in the public sphere in the first place. Therefore, our analysis of the rise of Fortuyn will refer to two elements. Firstly, we look at his success in the public opinion, indicated by the intention to vote for this party. Secondly, we analyze the public claims made by Fortuyn and his party, which indicate the extent to which he was able to publicly express his opinions and viewpoints in the media. Although there have been several studies that take news coverage into account – in Belgium (Walgrave and De Swert 2004), Germany (Lubbers and Scheepers 2001) and the Netherlands (Boomgaard and Vliegenthart 2007; Lubbers 2001) –, these studies only explain fluctuations in electoral support for anti-immigration parties.

Much of the previous academic work on the rise of anti-immigration parties has focused on the structural conditions that have facilitated their emergence or ‘breakthrough’. It has mainly focused on two sets of factors: demand-side and supply-side (for a review, see Van der Brug and Fennema 2007). The former refers to the conditions that have created a social and cultural ‘reservoir’ to be exploited by far-right political parties, such as increased voter volatility and the demise of party loyalty, in the Netherlands particularly caused by the process of depillarization (Ignazi 2003). Demand-side explanations also include value changes and structural cleavages related to the modernization process (e.g., Betz 1994; Eatwell 2000). Supply-side factors include political and institutional factors, which social movement scholars have labelled as ‘political opportunity structures’, such as the structure of the electoral system, the responses of established actors, and the dynamics of party alignment, demarcation, and competition (e.g., Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995; Koopmans et al. 2005). These political opportunity structures provide the radical right with a political niche which they can exploit.

We agree that these two sets of necessary conditions or facilitating factors are relevant to understand the breakthrough of anti-immigration parties like the LPF in the Netherlands. However, the question of how it was possible that public opinion and the media debate could change so dramatically within such a short time span cannot be fully answered by pointing to
comparatively slow political and institutional changes or value shifts in the electorate (likewise Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003: 14). Of course, structural conditions are important to explain why certain changes are possible or probable. But to understand these short-term changes, it is more useful to look at aspects of political opportunity that can, first of all, change within short periods of time, and secondly, are visible to people: the public debate in the media. Political contention increasingly consists of a battle over media attention and legitimacy in the public discourse, acted out on a public stage (Kriesi 2001), with the electorate behaving like an audience in a theatre (Manin 1997). This is not to say that the media by themselves determine political outcomes, but that they have become more and more the foundation of power struggles in which different actors play out their strategies (Castells 1997). The public sphere is where political parties or social movements can test the efficacy of different mobilization strategies, and where opportunities and constraints become visible by means of the public actions and reactions of other actors. To capture this role of the public sphere, scholars have developed the notion of ‘discursive opportunities’ (Ferree et al. 2002; Ferree 2003; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Koopmans et al. 2005). In the absence of fertile structural conditions and attendant grievances, political entrepreneurs will not be able to mobilize public support successfully. But such grievances, we argue, are to an important extent amplified and to some extent even generated within the public discourse. By integrating theories on social movements and media influence, it is analyzed how public discourse provides opportunities for mobilization. Our central argument is that, in combination with the electoral potential and the political space available, discursive opportunities help explain both the increase in public claim making of Pim Fortuyn, and the electoral success of his party, the LPF. Following this theoretical lead, we will show that the key to understanding the rise of Fortuyn lies in the dynamics of the public debate, and particularly in the ways in which other actors reacted to his claims.

Building on the arguments put forward in the previous chapter, the next section outlines the theoretical framework for our analysis. Section 3 describes the data used and operationalization of the variables. Subsequently, we present the results. Part 5 concludes with a summary and discussion.

3.2 Theoretical perspectives

3.2.1 Demand-side explanations: socio-economic conditions and grievances

The process of depillarization and de-alignment, reflected in higher voter volatility and declining party loyalty, has caused a shift from a structured model to what Andeweg and Irwin (2005) call an open model of electoral competition. Voting behaviour based on class and religion has been replaced by citizens who shop around for the most appealing party. Thus, the availability of a potential electorate creates a ‘propitious context’ for extreme-right parties (Ignazi 2003: 206). However, although voter choice may be differently grounded than before, ‘it has often tended to reproduce quite conventional and historically familiar outcomes’ (Mair 2002: 125). Increased volatility makes the Dutch electorate rather unpredictable (Mair 2008), but this does not necessarily translate into considerable right-wing party success. Take for
example the also exceptionally volatile 1994 elections. Floating voters might just as well suddenly return to a mainstream party, as the strong gains of the social democrats in 2003 show.

Another familiar argument holds that worsening economic conditions increase dissatisfaction with an incumbent government. But in view of the socioeconomic situation in the Netherlands in 2001, the claim that the rise of Fortuyn was a result of the country’s economic performance is not convincing. According to a survey by The Economist, the Dutch economy was remarkably healthy at the time, and experienced impressive growth under the incumbent government.10 The unemployment rate was 6.6 per cent in 1990 (a moderate level compared to other countries of the European Union) and declined to 3.5 per cent in 2000, a considerably lower rate than in most other EU member countries (CPB 2001).

A more convincing demand-side explanation is that immigration and cultural diversity resulted in a new cleavage. Theories of ‘ethnic competition’ state that support for radical-right parties is generated by an increased sense of threat by immigrants (Scheepers et al. 2002). In this view, a high influx of immigrants may increase subjective perceptions of increased ethnic competition (even if perceptions are not justified) and people become receptive to ideologies and charismatic leaders who designate specific racial or ethnic minorities as responsible for social problems (Eatwell 2000: 415). Detailed investigations at the individual level seem to offer some support for ethnic competition accounts. Voting decisions for the LPF were to an important extent based on the content of the political issues that the LPF advanced, most importantly its position on the issues of integration and immigration (Fennema and Van der Brug 2006).

However, Adriaansen et al. (2005: 234) show that the potential for the rise of a party like the LPF had already existed for at least eight years. Support for multiculturalism was already weak in 1994 and more than 60 per cent of the population held the opinion that minorities had to adapt to ‘Dutch culture’ (see also CBS 2006). Coenders et al. (2006) and Fennema and Van der Brug (2006) likewise point out that the Fortuynist potential had already been present many years before Fortuyn entered the political stage.

Objective immigration figures do not suggest a link between the rise of the LPF and increased ethnic competition either. Data provided by the Dutch Bureau of Statistics (CBS 2007) show that the monthly numbers of immigrants to the Netherlands were relatively stable during the 1990s and early 2000s. In chapter 2, I have shown that the numbers of asylum seekers even decreased from 52,580 in 1994 to 32,550 persons in 2001. The figures in Table 2.2 also demonstrated that the number of accepted applications decreased as well. Furthermore, CBS (2006) data presented in Table 2.1 showed that the amount of dissatisfaction with the incumbent government was stable at 16-18 per cent until 2002, when the figure jumped to 30 per cent. Van der Brug (2003) showed however that the rise of Fortuyn from the second half of 2001 onwards incited dissatisfaction, rather than the other way round.

With the benefit of hindsight, the success of the LPF seems easy to understand in terms of an outburst of a long-existing but unnoticed stream of discontent with the official political myth that Dutch multicultural policies were a success. But the breakthrough calls for an explanation that goes beyond the socio-structural model of voting behaviour, since the so-

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cial conditions and electoral preferences that supposedly caused the surge of an anti-immigration party did not vary much in time and therefore cannot account for Pim Fortuyn’s success. A primarily socio-economic or ethnic competition approach has problems explaining sudden breakthroughs and electoral dynamics (Eatwell 1998; see also Norris 2005). The conclusion is that social-structural and grievance theories offer at best a partial explanation for the rise of Pim Fortuyn.

3.2.2 Supply-side explanations: political opportunities

The concept of political opportunity structure (e.g., McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998; Kriesi et al. 1995) has gained widespread popularity in the literature on social movements. The basic idea is that the capacity to mobilize depends on opportunities and constraints offered by the political-institutional setting. Xenophobic and radical-right claim making and success are affected by the institutional characteristics of a political system (e.g. its electoral system) and by dynamic aspects of the political process. As our case concerns developments over time within one polity, only the second set of factors seems relevant for the case at hand. The electoral system in the Netherlands (proportional representation with a low threshold) has always offered a fertile ground for the development of new parties, but the stable character of such explanatory factors does not make it useful to include them in our research design.

An important factor that varies over time is whether established parties that are in electoral competition with radical-right parties already occupy the electoral terrain of the radical right. The average position of established parties and the political space they leave to radical-right actors affect the openness of a political system to new anti-immigrant parties (Betz 1994; Kitschelt 1995; Van der Brug et al. 2005; Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Koopmans et al. (2005) show based on data from the 1990s that there was a moderate potential for the emergence of a radical-right party in the Netherlands because established left and right parties occupied positions relatively close to one another on multicultural issues, leaving a space on the right that could potentially be exploited by an anti-immigrant party. Several other authors have also pointed to the favourable opportunity structure because of the ideological position of the mainstream right party, the conservative-liberal VVD, which left a gap on the right end of the electoral spectrum from which newcomer LPF could profit. The ‘purple government,’ which brought together the social-democratic PvdA and the VVD in one consensus-based coalition increased convergence in mainstream party positions (Pellikaan et al. 2003; Pennings and Kemman 2003; Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; Van Holsteyn et al. 2003).

Critics of political opportunity structure theory have correctly pointed out that a factor such as ‘political space’ has no meaning if people do not become aware of it. Such awareness must arise based on information that becomes publicly available, and the statements by and actions of elite actors that are visible to the public. Theories of ‘discursive opportunities’ integrate this criticism by explicating how structurally given political opportunities become public-
licely visible may be considered ‘non-opportunities,’ which for all practical purposes might as well not exist at all. Only a minority of all attempts at public claim making receive the media attention that is necessary to reach wider audiences. Discursive opportunities are the aspects of the public discourse that determine a message’s chances of success or failure in the public sphere (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004).

From communications and media research it is known that the ‘news values’ of journalists shape the decisions that make a given story newsworthy (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Harcup and O’Neill 2001). The actions of gatekeepers produce the first and most basic type of discursive opportunity that we can distinguish: visibility. It depends on the number of communicative channels by which a message is included and the prominence of such inclusion. Visibility is a necessary condition for a message to influence the public discourse, and, other things being equal, the amount of visibility which gatekeepers allocate to a message increases its potential to diffuse further in the public sphere (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004).

The communication environment of any particular public actor can be envisioned as the source of two further types of discursive opportunity and constraint: the amount and character of public responses. Political newcomers are likely to remain stillborn if they do not succeed in provoking reactions from other actors in the public sphere. The degree to which an actor and his messages provoke such reactions is referred to as resonance. In the eyes of journalists and editors, messages that resonate, whether negatively or positively, become more relevant and the actors behind them become more prominent, which increases the speaker’s chances to gain more space for his or her opinions.

Following the dictum ‘any publicity is good publicity’ it may sometimes not matter whether reactions are supportive or critical, but often the extent to which the responses are negative or positive is likely to be relevant. Koopmans and Olzak (2004) call expressions of support consonance, and rejections of an actor’s claims dissonance. Public statements of support for an actor’s claims will often not appear out of the blue, but in reaction to critical remarks by others on these claims. According to Fennema and Van der Brug (2006), one of the main reasons that the earlier radical-right party of Hans Janmaat failed was that its message had been widely and consistently delegitimized and considered ‘politically incorrect’ by all other actors in the public debate. By contrast they see Fortuyn’s success as resulting from the fact that he had the image of a ‘normal’ democratic politician. Thus, we expect that consonance was beneficial for Fortuyn’s ability to air his views publicly and dissonance was harmful.

The above arguments are extended by hypothesizing that visibility and consonance will not only improve, and dissonance reduce, the opportunities for an actor to further increase the frequency of his publicly visible claims, but also help improve an actor’s support in opinion polls. Thus, the claim is that right-wing populist actors who receive prominent media attention (visibility), who draw many positive reactions from other political actors (consonance), and who receive few criticisms (dissonance) will be more successful in mobilizing voter support.
3.3 Research design

3.3.1 Data

We used content analysis to obtain data on the discursive opportunity variables and the claim making of Fortuyn. Data were retrieved from articles in two national newspapers, the liberal *NRC Handelsblad* and the conservative *De Telegraaf* (using the Lexis Nexis data base). As these two papers are rather distinctive in terms of their so-called ‘quality’ or ‘popular’ character (that is, the emphasis on entertainment versus political information), as well as the background of their readers (Bakker and Scholten 1999) we believe we have captured a representative picture of the Dutch public debate in the printed press. We used political claim analysis, which finds its origin in social movement research (Koopmans and Statham 1999b; Koopmans et al. 2005: 23-27).

A claim is defined as ‘a unit of strategic action in the public sphere that consists of the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticism, or physical attacks, which actually or potentially affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors’ (Koopmans et al. 2005: 24). A typical claim consists of an actor (the subject) undertaking some sort of strategic political action to get another actor, the addressee, to act regarding a third actor, the object. Claims must be the result of purposive action and political in nature. Examples of coded claims are ‘Balkenende [party leader of the Christian Democrats] rejects the principles of multiculturalism and thinks a civics course should become compulsory’, or ‘Hans Wiegel [ex-leader of the VVD] blames Fortuyn for being a populist and states that Fortuyn’s ideas are built on quicksand. He summons Dijkstaal [the current VVD leader] to finally address Fortuyn’.

The temporal frame of our analysis runs from the third week of August 2001 – when Fortuyn announced his entry into politics – through the first week of May 2002 – just before the murder of Fortuyn on May 6th. For this period, three experienced coders (MA students in social sciences) and the author of this dissertation scanned all issues of the two newspapers and identified and coded 1,056 claims, which are divided into three categories: 115 were statements made by Fortuyn and his party (irrespective of the substantive issue); 715 were reactions to him or his party (again irrespective of the substantive issue); and another 226 were negative claims by other actors on immigration and the multicultural society. A claim is not identical with an individual statement; for example, a press conference or interview is coded as one strategic action in the public discourse (although several different topics might be addressed and different persons might be criticized). The inter-coder reliability test conducted on a randomly selected subsample of issues of *NRC Handelsblad* showed satisfactory agreement on the identification of articles (90.1 per cent), as well as claims within articles (88.0 per cent). Agreement scores for variables used in the analysis ranged from 87.5 per cent to 100.0 per cent. More detailed information on the reliability of the coding of claims is available in Appendix A.11

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11 For more detailed information about the general structure of political claims coding and coding of individual variables, see the codebook, which is available at [http://www.jaspermuis.com](http://www.jaspermuis.com).
3.3.2 Dependent variables

All variables were aggregated to weekly scores, implying that the unit of analysis is a combination of time and score. The time sequence is a critical element in determining causation and crucial to analyze changes. The descriptives and correlation matrix of the variables can be found in Table B1 in Appendix B.

- **Public claim making by Fortuyn**: the weekly count of the number of claims made by Fortuyn and his party.

- **Public opinion on Fortuyn**: for this variable we use data gathered by the polling agency Synovate Interview-NSS. Their ‘Political Barometer’ measures levels of support for the various parties per week during the period under investigation. The political barometer gives a reliable and valid picture of the amount of support among the Dutch electorate for all political parties. The results of these polls are reported every Friday, which is why we have chosen Saturdays as the demarcation line between weeks, our units of observation. Support for Fortuyn is measured by the percentage of people that reported the intention to vote for Leefbaar Nederland (Liveable Netherlands, hereafter LN) or the LPF when asked for their party choice if parliamentary elections were to be held the next day.

  At the end of August 2001, Fortuyn announced his intention to join a political party and enter the political arena, most likely with the LN party. We will consider a voting intention for LN as support for Fortuyn from that moment on. In the second week of February 2002, Fortuyn was forced to step down as leader of LN after an interview in *de Volkskrant* in which he called Islam a ‘backward’ culture. Immediately after Fortuyn’s ejection from LN, many commentators thought that his short political career was over. However, Fortuyn founded his own party (the LPF) two days later. A voting intention for both the LN and LPF will still be considered as support for Fortuyn during the three weeks after these events, in particular because Fortuyn remained the party leader of Leefbaar Rotterdam (the local branch of LN) for the municipal elections of March 6. For many voters it may have been unclear during this period whether or not Fortuyn was still associated with LN. After the municipal elections, only the support for the LPF was included in the dependent variable.12

3.3.2 Explanatory variables

Discursive opportunities are measured by: (1) the amount of visibility in the media; (2) the amount of dissonance in the media; and (3) the amount of consonance in the media.

- **Visibility** is defined as the extent to which the claims made by Fortuyn are visible in the newspapers. Our measure of visibility distinguishes claims that were reported prominently from those that were reported less prominently. We combine different elements of prominence into a composite indicator: 1) Is the claim reported on the front page? 2) Is the claim the first

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12 We performed our analyses also including a dummy variable for the three weeks after the resignation of Fortuyn as leader of LN and until the municipal elections, in order to check whether our decision on how to deal with this confusing period had affected our results. The results are however very similar and the dummy variable is not significant.
A DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITY APPROACH TO THE RISE OF PIM FORTUYN

The variable consists of the summed score on each of the items and has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.67, which is evidence of a fair scale and indicates acceptable reliability. To avoid overlap between the dependent and independent variables, the total amount of visibility in a week is divided by the number of claims made by Fortuyn. In other words, our visibility measure indicates the average visibility of the claims made by Fortuyn in a given week.

In order to distinguish the amount of resonance from the degree to which the public reactions were supportive or critical, resonance is captured by two separate variables. Dissonance counts the number of negative reactions by other actors to Fortuyn. All instances of critical claim making that are directed to or referring to Fortuyn and his political party are included. This can also be an indirect reaction, for instance, when someone urges the leader of the Social-Democratic party to take a stronger stance against the viewpoints of Fortuyn. Consonance is measured by coding the extent to which Fortuyn and his party are supported. A claim that expresses an ambivalent or neutral position was also counted as consonance as we assume that such reactions – although not unequivocally supportive – enhanced the legitimacy of his political message.

Negative claims on immigration and integration. One of Fortuyn’s unique selling points was his viewpoint on the issue of the multicultural society. It may have been the case that other actors created further opportunities for Fortuyn by also making restrictive claims about immigration and integration. This is in line with the combination of the agenda-setting theory and issue ownership theory that Walgrave and De Swert (2004) have elaborated. They found that when the media reported more on immigrants and asylum seekers, more voters expressed a preference for the party that ‘owns’ this issue, in this case the right-wing populist Vlaams Blok in Belgium.

For that reason, the number of negative claims on immigration or integration during a week will be taken into account. To avoid confounding of independent and dependent variables, claims made by Fortuyn on this issue were excluded from this variable.

Alternatively, restrictive claims on the issue of the multicultural society may also have undermined Fortuyn’s uniqueness in this regard and thereby have reduced his opportunities to make further claims and to increase his popularity.

The impact of 9/11. We use a dummy variable to capture the effect of a potentially influential event that took place during the election campaign: the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001 (week no. 4 in our data). We explored both the temporary and the permanent effect of this event. The dummy variable applicable for an event with a temporal effect is set equal to 1 in that particular week. Modelling a permanent effect entails that the time period is divided into two parts: before (score 0) and after the event (score 1).

13 The rate of repetition was logged. It is measured independently of resonance because repetitions that occurred in the context of direct reactions to Fortuyn’s statements were excluded.

14 We additionally considered the item “is there a photograph illustrating the claim?” which was however removed from the scale because it correlated very poorly with other items and thus seemed to refer to a different dimension of prominence.
Unemployment and immigration. Data with regard to unemployment, immigration and the influx of asylum seekers were retrieved from the Dutch Bureau of Statistics (CBS 2007; 2008). Because these are monthly figures, an interpolation procedure was carried out to create weekly rates.

3.4 Analysis and results

3.4.1 Determinants of public opinion support for Fortuyn

We start our analysis with support for Fortuyn in public opinion polls as the dependent variable. To estimate the effects of the media variables, immigration, unemployment and the attacks of September 11th on public opinion during the election campaign, we use Box-Jenkins transfer modelling (see McCleary and Hay 1980). The first step in order to derive an ARIMA model is to check whether variables in the model have stationary means and variances. An inspection of the opinion poll series shows that the variance and mean of the time series increase as the level of the series increases. This is also what a graph of the polls indicates (see Figure 3.1). The time series is made stationary by log-transformation and differencing. The explanatory variables are likewise inspected, and logged and differenced in case of non-stationarity. The most common unit-root test is the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test, which shows that none of the variables contains a unit root, which implies that all series are now stationary.

The second step is an inspection of the autocorrelation and partial autocorrelation functions of the dependent variable. These functions show a single spiking (and almost significant) ACF at lag 1 and decaying PACFs, which indicates a moving average component with lag 1. A univariate ARIMA model shows a significant coefficient for a moving average parameter at lag 1. The residuals are ‘white noise’, which means that there is no remaining autocorrelation in the residuals. Similar ‘noise models’ were developed for all independent variables in the analysis except for the dummy 9/11 intervention variable. See Table B2 in Appendix B for the specification of these models.

Table 3.1 shows the results of the first model with the predicted impact of the 9/11 attacks, the unemployment rate, and immigration. The interpretation of the results depends on the fact that the dependent variable is differenced (Enders 2004: 257). An independent variable has the effect of increasing the change in the dependent variable by a certain amount of units: a significant positive predictor has an influence on Fortuyn’s popularity growth. In this model it is assumed that 9/11 has a long-term (permanent) impact with a delay of one week and there-

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15 In the analyses presented here, the immigration figures are included. Instead we have also considered the monthly influx of asylum seekers. However, asylum seeker numbers show a similar declining trend as the general immigration figures, and using this variable instead of total immigration does not influence the results.

16 For the test-statistics of Dickey-Fuller tests and transformations of the independent variables in order to achieve stationarity, see Appendix B.

17 See McCleary and Hay (1980: 243) for a thorough discussion about why the relationship can only be interpreted when the cause variable is a white noise process.
fore the intervention is lagged one period. However, the table shows that the intervention does not have a significant effect. An alternative model (not shown in the table) in which it is assumed that 9/11 only had a temporary effect leads to the same conclusion. We also have to conclude that unemployment and immigration have not affected the opinion polls during the election campaign. For immigration, this is hardly surprising since, as we indicated earlier, the rise of Pim Fortuyn occurred during a period when immigration figures had already been on the decline for about two years. Unemployment did increase slightly during Fortuyn’s rise, but on a very low level, from 3.5 per cent in August 2001 to 3.9 per cent in May 2002.

![Figure 3.1 Percentage of voters intending to vote for Pim Fortuyn per week (August 2001-May 2002)](image)

*Source: Interview/NSS.*

*Note: Week 1 starts August 18th, 2001.*

In the second model in Table 3.1, the other explanatory variables are added. Adding these variables increases the explanatory power of the model as indicated by the mean square root of the squared residuals summed over all time periods (RMS) - the standard goodness of fit measure in time-series analysis (Clarke et al. 1990). The RMS decreases from 0.040 to 0.025. The
smaller the RMS, the smaller the error and the better the fit of the model. Also, a lower AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) points to a better fit of the model.\textsuperscript{18}

Table 3.1 Determinants of public opinion support for Pim Fortuyn, 2001-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1 coefficient</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Model 2 coefficient</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moving average (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.47***</td>
<td>-3.21</td>
<td>-0.59***</td>
<td>-3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11(t-1)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (t-1)</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>-1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims Fortuyn (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06***</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonance (t-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance (t-2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative claims immigration (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMS</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>-10.98</td>
<td>-18.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (weeks)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p< 0.10  ** p<0.05  *** p<0.01

As expected, the public discourse has a significant influence on the polls. Firstly, it is important to note that the amount of claim making by Fortuyn as such does not have any effect, which means that he was not able to boost electoral support just by airing his views in the public sphere himself. He depended on discursive opportunities provided by others: visibility and consonance have significant positive effects and lead to increases in public support for Fortuyn. The impact of the variables on the polls is lagged, and strongest at the first lag (for visibility) and the second lag (for consonance). Dissonance does not have a significant effect. This implies that efforts of other political actors to delegitimize Fortuyn by making negative claims about him or his party in the public sphere did not undermine public opinion support for For-

\textsuperscript{18} The Ljung-Box Q statistic, which tests the significance of autocorrelation at each lag (see e.g. Enders 2004) indicates the absence of autocorrelation in the residuals for all models. Its significance value is less than or equal to 0.05 for 20 lags.
tuyn. On the contrary, negative reactions may have been counterproductive because criticism might have encouraged other actors to stick up for Fortuyn (thereby increasing the amount of consonance) and journalists to present further messages by Fortuyn more prominently (increasing visibility).

These results are largely in line with those of Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2003: 117), although they only analyzed the average balance of support and criticism (on a scale from -1 to +1), and not the absolute number of supportive and critical statements. As in our results, they find a positive net effect of support by political actors on the intention to vote for Fortuyn, which is mediated by respondents’ assessment of Fortuyn’s media performance.

A change in the amount of negative claims on immigration or integration does not turn out to be significant. Other Dutch studies that take media coverage into account do not give an entirely consistent picture. Lubbers (2001) does not find an (additional) effect of the number of articles on asylum seekers on the amount of support for the Dutch extreme right during the 1990s. However, including the Fortuyn period, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2007) show for 1990-2002 a positive influence of issue attention on anti-immigration party success (with a time lag of three months). The differences in outcomes might be due to the research design that focuses more on long-term (monthly) effects. The next chapter will cover the period between 1992 and 1998 and examine bi-weekly time units, and is therefore somewhat more appropriate for a comparison of the results. Secondly, in our study the positive and negative reactions only refer to political strategic statements. Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2003) find that shifts in vote preferences are also significantly affected by the nature of ‘objective’ news on real-life developments.

3.4.2 Determinants of Fortuyn’s claim-making success

As our second dependent variable we now turn to the investigation of the rate of claim making by Fortuyn, that is, the successful attempts by Fortuyn to air his views in the media. Figure 3.2 shows the amount of claims made by Fortuyn in our two media sources for each week. This variable is an event count, which has the characteristic that its values are discrete and non-negative. King (1989) explains why in such a case an ordinary least squares regression (OLS) is inappropriate.21

19 It should also be noted that they analyze the period starting at the end of February 2002 (a major part of the Fortuyn’s meteoric rise took place earlier).
20 Even if we only add this variable to Model 1, it does not have a significant effect on Fortuyn’s success in the opinion polls. In the analysis, we have also included the total amount of claims on the issue of immigration (irrespective of its tone) instead, but this does neither yield a significant result.
21 King also presents a thorough discussion and application of event count data.
Note: Week 1 starts August 18th, 2001.

Figure 3.2 Weekly count of the number of claims by Pim Fortuyn (August 2001 – May 2002)

Figure 3.3 Density distribution of the weekly number of claims made by Pim Fortuyn
In addition, we are confronted with overdispersion in the dependent variable, which means that we are more likely to see both a large number of low counts and a number of very high counts, as is shown in Figure 3.3. Thirty per cent of the weeks have a zero score, which means that in these weeks Fortuyn was not able to insert any new claims in the public discourse. In overdispersed data there is positive contagion across events, and one count (observation) increases the likelihood of observing additional events in the same period. This positive contagion implies that we have more variability than for an independent Poisson process, and therefore we will use a negative binomial distribution for the dependent variable instead (Long and Freese 2006). To model the time-series character of these event counts we include a lagged dependent variable event count as a regressor in the model.

Table 3.2 shows the results of a negative binomial regression model with the number of claims by Fortuyn as the dependent variable. In the first model, only 9/11 (with a long duration effect), unemployment, immigration and a first-order autoregression of the dependent variable are included. We find both an autoregressive effect and a strong relationship between a change in the unemployment rate and the amount of claims by Fortuyn in the subsequent week.

The second step is to investigate the effects of the discursive opportunity variables. This second model includes the amount of negative claims by other actors on immigration and integration as well as support for Fortuyn in opinion polls. The model fit statistics (Wald Chi square and log pseudo-likelihood) point to a better model. After adding these variables, both the autoregressive effect and the impact of unemployment are no longer significant.

It appears from our second model that there is no relationship between the degree of visibility of the claims of Fortuyn and the number of public claims by Fortuyn one week later. Resonance, however, has a significant impact, as in the earlier analysis with opinion polls as the dependent variable. Negative reactions significantly decreased the rate of claims by Fortuyn that made it into the media. The reverse is also true: support for Fortuyn in the public debate increased his ability to express his viewpoints through the printed media in the subsequent week. The results also show a strong positive influence of the number of negative immigration claims. This means that other actors enhanced Fortuyn’s opportunities for claim making by also making restrictive claims about immigration and integration. Support for Fortuyn in public opinion polls also had a positive effect on his subsequent rate of claim making. The general conclusion is that approval (as indicated by opinion poll support from the general public, supportive statements by other actors in the media and absence of critical reactions) enables a new political party to further make its standpoints heard in the public sphere.

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22 An illustration of overdispersion because of positive contagion is counting antelopes. Antelopes are herd animals, and when you see one, you will probably observe more. This violates the assumption that one event has no effect on the likelihood of observing additional events in the same period.
Table 3.2 Determinants of the rate of publicized claim making by Pim Fortuyn, 2001-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1 coefficient</th>
<th>z-value</th>
<th>Model 2 coefficient</th>
<th>z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claims Fortuyn (t-1)</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11(t-1)</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (t-1)</td>
<td>4.25**</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration (t-1)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility (t-1)</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonance (t-1)</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.03**</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative claims immigration (t-1)</td>
<td>0.07***</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion polls (t-1)</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-15.12*</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>-6.55</td>
<td>-0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α (dispersion parameter)</td>
<td>0.47 (.21)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.23 (.16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log pseudolikelihood</td>
<td>-72.18</td>
<td></td>
<td>-67.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald Chi-Square</td>
<td>28.37***</td>
<td></td>
<td>57.96***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (weeks)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p< 0.10; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01
Note: the standard error of α is given in parentheses

3.5 Summary and concluding remarks

This chapter set out to examine the role of discursive opportunities in the rise of the new populist right party headed by Pim Fortuyn in 2002. Pim Fortuyn succeeded in attracting by far the most media attention of all politicians and out of the blue the LPF won 17 per cent of the votes. Dissatisfaction with Dutch multicultural policies offered a fertile ground for a populist anti-immigration party, but these long-standing grievances fail to explain the explosive political career of Fortuyn. The immigration figures were relatively stable during the 1990s and had been declining since 2000, and the country’s economy was healthy. Research shows that long
before the emergence of Fortuyn, there was an electoral potential for an anti-immigration party.

The political opportunity structure perspective adds to our understanding of the potential for a radical-right party. One of the most relevant facilitating factors for the emergence of the radical right is the political space made available to it by the policy positions of mainstream parties. However, empirical evidence suggests that such an electoral niche had already been present for a long time. During the election campaign of 1998 the Dutch political elite was still able to stick to its commitment to multiculturalism by mobilizing ‘political correctness’ to delegitimize the then active anti-immigration party. Like the grievance and ethnic threat arguments, the political opportunity perspective is useful to identify the existence of an electoral potential, but it cannot explain why this potential lay fallow for so long and was then so suddenly and spectacularly seized upon by Pim Fortuyn.

Similarly, it should be stressed that we do not see the availability of facilitating political conditions that are stable or only gradually change over longer periods of time, like an electoral system with proportional representation and a low threshold, as irrelevant. The same is true for socio-economic factors or the long-term decline in party loyalty, which can identify electoral potentials. However, such slowly shifting variables fail to account for sudden breakthroughs and short-term electoral changes.

We have advanced the argument that electoral potentials and political opportunities have to be made visible in the public discourse in order to become behaviourally relevant. We use the notion of ‘discursive opportunities’ to capture the publicly visible opportunities and constraints for the claim-making behaviour of political parties. We have shown that indeed media attention for Pim Fortuyn and the public reactions to his party played a decisive role in explaining the remarkable degree to which he was able to mobilize support and express his claims in the public sphere. Applying this perspective to the explanation of both support for Fortuyn in opinion polls and his claim-making success in the media, we showed that visibility, consonance and dissonance were relevant for understanding the rise of Pim Fortuyn and his party.

Public visibility and consonance in the media significantly affected public opinion support for Fortuyn. Support by other actors in the public sphere was beneficial, but criticism was not harmful for his position in the weekly polls. Ventilating critical reactions in order to undermine the legitimacy of political opponents may have partly backfired. Negative reactions to Fortuyn could serve as an important indirect channel that, contrary to the intention of those who criticized Fortuyn, partly boosted popular support for him, by creating more consonance and visibility for his claims.

With regard to Fortuyn’s own claim-making success, we found however that critical claims referring to Fortuyn were effective to the extent that they decreased the rate at which he was able to air his positions publicly. Also in line with our expectations, consonance put Fortuyn in a more favourable position. Visibility did not have a direct impact on Fortuyn’s claim making, although it was relevant in an indirect sense by increasing his support in opinion polls. One of Fortuyn's unique selling points – his position on the issue of the multicultural society – was not undermined when other actors also made restrictive statements about immigration and integration. On the contrary, they created further opportunities for claim making by Fortuyn.
The opinion polls also had a positive effect: the more support for Fortuyn in the polls, the more space was given to Fortuyn to express his views in the media.

Combining the results for the two dependent variables, we can identify a dynamic feedback process in which the reactions by the media and by other politicians to Fortuyn (visibility and consonance) raised Fortuyn’s popularity among the electorate. In turn, Fortuyn’s support in opinion polls, combined with direct support that he drew from other political actors and failed attempts by other politicians to steal his thunder by also making anti-immigrant claims, raised the rate of claims by Fortuyn that made it into the media. When other political actors again reacted to Fortuyn’s increased public profile, and the media presented his claims more prominently, the spiral of discursive escalation was given a further swing and Fortuyn’s star rose yet further in the opinion polls. This feedback chain explains why political relations that had been relatively stable, and an election campaign that was expected by most observers to become very dull, suddenly spiralled out of equilibrium and gave rise to the greatest landslide in Dutch electoral history. Our results are thus in accord with the ‘punctuated equilibrium’ view on policy shifts, which Baumgartner and Jones (1993; see also True et al. 2007) borrowed from evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould (e.g. Gould 1989).

We believe that the relevance of these findings and the theoretical perspective of discursive opportunities that accounts for them extend beyond the case of Pim Fortuyn and can add to a more general understanding of the dynamics of sudden political transformations, shifts, breakthroughs, and breakdowns. It could be fruitful to test empirically the short-term discursive mechanisms we identified for the breakthroughs of right-wing populist parties in other European countries. For example, Art (2007) states that the difference in success for the extreme right between Germany and Austria – two politically and socio-economically similar countries – is due to the different nature of the reactions from other political parties, the media and civil society. The incessant campaign (especially of the Bild Zeitung) against the German Republikaner led to the collapse of the party very shortly after its appearance, while Jörg Haider of the Austrian Freedom Party profited from ‘free advertising’ by Austria’s largest newspaper. Rydgren (2005) argues that the emergence of the populist right-wing party New Democracy in Sweden can be partly explained by the evolution from only two public television channels in the 1980s to a variety of commercial channels in the 1990s, which increased the opportunities for visibility for the new political contender. Likewise, one of the reasons the Danish People’s Party was electorally successful was that it was given a great deal of media coverage; for example, many items dealing with immigration issues included statements and comments of party representatives (Rydgren 2004).

The success or failure of populist right parties throughout Europe is often associated with the (lack of a) charismatic personality of their leaders. We argued that such post-hoc attributions run the risk of circular reasoning and therefore cannot offer a satisfactory explanation for electoral breakthroughs (see also Van der Brug and Mughan 2007). Our results suggest that charisma is better seen as an emergent property that is part of what needs to be explained. In this view, charisma depends as much, or more, on the actions and reactions of other political and media actors than on the personality, skills, and tactics of populist political entrepreneurs.

The next chapter will investigate the period before the successful rise of the LPF in 2002. In various other European countries, populist right-wing parties started to gain ground.
already since the mid-eighties and established themselves as relevant factors in the political landscape by the mid-nineties. For instance, Haider achieved 16.6 per cent of the vote in the 1990 general elections, the breakthrough victory of DeWinter (labelled by opponents as ‘Black Sunday’) took place in 1991, and support for Le Pen’s Front National began already to swell by 1983. In the Netherlands, however, earlier attempts of the radical right to politically break through had failed. In contrast to Fortuyn, party leader Janmaat of the Centre Democrats was depicted as lacking charismatic appeal. The next chapter will examine whether this can be explained by the dynamics of actions and reactions in the public debate.
4 The rise and demise of the Dutch extreme right. Discursive opportunities and support for the Centre Democrats in the 1990s

4.1 Introduction

The story goes that one day the Greek philosopher Diagoras, also known as ‘the atheist’, was shown many painted tablets with portraits of people who had prayed and then subsequently survived a shipwreck. The suggestion was, obviously, that worshipping prevents you from drowning. It did not convince Diagoras of the existence of the gods. He replied that he did not see any portraits of those who had prayed and then drowned at sea -- and that they were more numerous (Elster 2009: 26).

Like the portraits of those who survived, in the study of the emergence and rise of right-wing populist parties and movements the most prominent and appealing examples of success get ample attention. It might easily be forgotten that the vast majority fails to break through or remains marginal and short-lived. Since the rise of Fortuyn, significant electoral performances of the Dutch populist radical right seem inevitable. Following in the footsteps of the LPF, Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom did not only achieve substantial amounts of support, but also similarly attracted widespread media publicity, for instance after he stated that a ‘tsunami of Islamisation’ engulfed Dutch society. *Fitna*, Wilders’ short movie that depicts Islam as a movement of terrorism and violence, was already a topic of heated debate several months before its release.

For a full understanding of why political mobilization against migrants is sometimes successful, we should also focus on the broad range of attempts that never made it. The Netherlands is an interesting case in point, because the ability of recent anti-immigration parties to express their views in the public debate and gain substantial electoral support constitutes a sharp contrast with the situation in the 1980s and 1990s. Remarkably, until 2002 things were completely different, although a sufficient electoral reservoir and favourable opportunity structure had since long been present. The right-wing *Centrumdemocraten* (Centre Democrats, hereafter: CD) headed by Hans Janmaat never succeeded in obtaining a strong voice in the mass media, nor in mobilizing and retaining a considerable amount of support from the Dutch population. This chapter seeks to explain why the CD remained a ‘marginal phenomenon’ (Lucardie 2000a) and failed to break out of this position.

Nevertheless, the CD did experience some ups and downs. At the start of the 1990s, the CD had experienced a long period of ‘stable marginality’ (Scheepers et al. 1994: 93). After 1991, this started to change. The unofficial and silent agreement of ‘hushing-up’ the Centre Democrats was questioned by political commentators. From about March 1993, the party experienced a second small electoral wave. From January 1994 onwards, the party received con-

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23 A slightly different version of this chapter is currently under review for publication.
24 The ‘first wave’ was the moderate electoral success in 1983 and 1984 of the Centre Party (CP) headed by Janmaat (Scheepers et al. 1994). The CP lost its only seat in parliament in 1986 and did not recapture any seats in subsequent elections. Janmaat was expelled from the CP in 1984 and joined the CD, which was founded in 1984.
sizable peaks in publicity. Media access increased considerably, but also a wave of negative reactions appeared. The expectations for the May national elections in 1994 were high, but negative publicity, it is argued, toned down the actual outcome (see e.g. Van Donselaar 1997; Mudde and Van Holsteyn 1994). The second half of the decade was characterized by the party’s further marginalization and eventual demise. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the CD lost the three seats they had achieved in 1994. There has hardly been any activity of the party after these elections and in June 1999 the CD ceased to exist. A new party was founded with the same abbreviation, the Conservative Democrats, but this party joined the multitude of attempts that signal failure and it did not participate in the elections of 2002.25

Although this study investigates electoral politics, it is also very relevant for scholars who focus on unconventional protest behaviour, for two reasons. Firstly, public protesting and new social movements have been dominated by ‘the left’, while the populist radical right mainly relies on the electoral channel when it seeks to mobilize anti-immigrant sentiments and discontent of the ‘losers of globalization’ (Kriesi et al. 2008). Only when we open the perspective to both the non-institutionalized and electoral channels, are we able to fully grasp the implications of globalization processes and large-scale immigration for political contention.

Secondly, even though the CD has been represented in parliament, hardly anyone considered this ‘anti-system party’ (Ignazi 2003) an uncontested or legitimate player in conventional politics. For example, none of the established Dutch parties at the national or local level has been willing to cooperate with the CD. Therefore, if one takes the stance that there is a rigid boundary between non-institutionalized and institutionalized actors, it is not so evident where to locate the CD. One could even go further and argue that there is never a strict border between challengers and members of the establishment. Goldstone (2003: 9) states that ‘the notion that there are in-groups and out-groups, and that the latter engage in protests while the former engage in politics, is a caricature with little relation to reality’. Groups can quickly shift up and down on the continuum from no or little access and influence through conventional politics to being integrated or aligned with the institutional authorities (Goldstone 2003).

Identical to the previous chapter, the basic tenet of this chapter is the improvement of our understanding of successes and failures of right-wing parties by integrating theoretical mechanisms and research findings on ‘discursive opportunities’ (Ferree et al. 2002; Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Most importantly, this approach first of all points to the argument that we should not only explain why certain anti-immigration parties attract more voters than others, but also why right-wing actors are at certain moments far more successful in having a voice in the public debate in the first place. As in the previous chapter, successes will refer to two elements: public opinion support and access to the mass media forum.

Secondly, by using a discursive opportunity approach, more differentiated and actor-centred hypotheses about the influence of the public debate are generated. Several previous studies that took the role of the media discourse into account (Walgrave and De Swert 2002; Lubbers and Scheepers 2001; Boomgaard and Vliegenthart 2007) examined the amount of

25 Other examples of newly founded right-wing parties during the 1990s that were not very successful are Burger Partij Nederland, Nederlands Blok, Patriottisch Democratisch Appel, and Nieuwe Nationale Partij.
media coverage on the issues of populist right-wing parties (most predominantly the issue of immigration) or the amount of coverage devoted to the political party in question. However, I will differentiate between positive and negative coverage and between extreme-right speakers and responses of other actors. An actor may appear in the media discourse when it is criticized, while hardly having the opportunity to express its own views (Ferree et al. 2002: 13).

Thirdly, as the media debate is relatively volatile, I will focus on short-term dynamics. Much previous research has examined both the influence of individual background characteristics (such as one’s socio-economic status) and contextual factors (such as the country’s unemployment rate) on anti-immigration party support (e.g. Van der Brug and Fennema 2003; Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie 2000). Limited attention has been devoted to test hypotheses by looking at variation across time, instead of spatial variation (Kitschelt 2007: 1201). Static cross-national comparisons ignore that success and failure often constitute short-term fluctuations and require mechanism-based explanations (Hedström 2005; McAdam et al. 2001).

This chapter is divided into five sections. The next section discusses explanations for the fortunes of anti-immigration parties, focusing on the role of the public debate. In essence, the theoretical framework is thus the same as the one elaborated and tested in the previous chapters. However, two explanatory variables are added: organizational unity and repressive state measures. Pim Fortuyn did not face court cases or convictions and, as was made clear in the second chapter, organizational arguments seem only relevant for an account of the collapse of the party after Fortuyn’s death. In contrast, for Janmaat these factors may have played an important role during his political career. Part three describes the research design. The subsequent section presents the results, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

4.2 Explaining radical-right success and failure: why the public debate matters

There are two major sets of explanations for the emergence and rise of extreme-right political behaviour: one focusing on grievances and one on political opportunities. This corresponds with the metaphor from economics distinguishing ‘demand-side’ and ‘supply-side’ factors (Rydgren 2007; Koopmans et al. 2005). In the social movement and contentious politics literature the opportunity perspective has gained predominance over grievance theories, while academic work that focuses on the electoral fates of the radical right often treat these parties as products of demand-side processes (Giugni et al. 2005: 160), in particular worsening economic conditions and increasing ethnic competition (see e.g. Betz 1994; Eatwell 2000; Ignazi 2003).

The grievances perspective cannot fully account for rapid mobilization and demobilization of support and mass media standing (Norris 2005). Therefore, a complete and satisfying explanation needs to go beyond the demand-side model. According to supply-side theories, successes and failures are mainly shaped by networks, resources of organizations, and political opportunities and constraints. These factors should be viewed as complementary rather than competing with demand-side explanations (Van der Brug and Fennema 2007) and can be distinguished in internal factors, like organizational characteristics (De Witte and Klandermans 2000; Mudde 2007a), and external factors that constitute the political opportunity structure, such as the institutional framework and the elite responses (Kitschelt 1995; Arzheimer and
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Carter 2006). Only the volatile and dynamic supply-side factors are relevant here, as the research question concerns short-term developments within one country. Thus, I will not review the role of relatively stable or persistent political opportunities and constraints, like the electoral system.

Although the concept of the political opportunity structure has been widely used to explain movement success, it should be complemented with the notion that opportunities and constraints, such as statements and responses of elite actors, need to become publicly visible in order to become relevant (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004). The public sphere is a restricted communicative space in which a variety of organizations, groups and individuals compete for the scarce resources of attention (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). It has more and more become the principal ground for power struggles: political contention increasingly consists of a battle over attention and approval in the public debate, like a performance on a stage with the electorate as the audience (Manin 1997). As Castells (1997: 312) has put it: ‘Outside the media sphere there is only political marginality’. For example, only after Le Pen was given access to state television, did his party make its first major electoral breakthrough in France (Eatwell 2005) and the rapid rise of Haider’s FPÖ was partly the result of favourable coverage from the Kronen Zeitung, Austria’s largest newspaper (Art 2007). For the specification of the political opportunity structure to explain the rise and demise in extreme-right public standing and electoral support, I will follow the outline of Koopmans and colleagues (2005), who distinguish two dimensions: discursive opportunities and political space.

‘Political space’ refers to the degree to which mainstream parties already occupy the electoral terrain of the radical right. Their position affects the openness of the political competition to new anti-immigration parties (Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Kitschelt 1995). According to Ignazi (2003: 211) the position of the Dutch mainstream right party (the conservative liberal VVD) could partly explain the fact that the CD lost all the seats in the 1998 elections: ‘the adoption of a tough position on the immigration issue and the articulation of anti-tax sentiments by the VVD undermined the position of the CD’ (see also Van der Brug et al. 2000). In contrast, Koopmans et al. (2005) showed that the established left and right parties occupied positions relatively close to one another on immigration and integration issues, so that there was some moderate space on the right during the 1990s that could potentially be exploited politically. In theory, the ‘political space’ for the extreme right might be very small, due to a restrictive position on immigration by the established parties, as expressed in the party manifestos or according to an expert judgement. In practice, however, this space crucially depends on the extent to which mainstream parties are actually able or willing to voice their views on immigration in the public debate.

There is no consensus on this topic in the literature. There are good reasons to expect that an increase in the salience of immigration and integration issues positively affects the support and media access of anti-immigration parties. The agenda-setting hypothesis holds that issues that appear frequently in the news tend to become the issues which voters deem important (Rogers et al. 1993; McCombs and Shaw 1972). Combined with the idea that the electorate is likely to support the most credible proponent of a particular issue or issue position (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996), it follows that media publicity for issues that are ‘owned’ by anti-immigration parties might enhance their electoral attractiveness. Eatwell
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(2000: 423) states that ‘mainstream parties play with fire when they adopt anti-immigrant themes’ and this decision can backfire because the radical right can be legitimised when the political discourse becomes contaminated by its themes, notably ones related to immigration (see also Meguid 2008: 28). In line with this current of thought, my hypothesis is that restrictive political claim making on the immigration and integration issue by other actors is likely to increase extreme right popularity and presence in the public sphere.

The key point of ‘discursive opportunities’ is that the media discourse not only reflects the actual political contention, but also amplifies and distorts it by ascribing credibility, relevance and legitimacy to certain actors, issues and points of view, but not to others (Koopmans and Statham 1999a). The opportunities refer to three elements: the amount of visibility, the amount of reactions and the nature of the reactions in the public debate (Koopmans 2004a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Visibility is defined by the prominence that media gatekeepers allocate to a message. The degree to which an actor and his messages provoke reactions is called resonance. It is also likely to be relevant if responses are negative or positive: dissonance and consonance respectively. Legitimacy refers to the balance between negative and positive responses.

I have defined two different criteria for success of right-wing parties. With regard to the first dependent variable, electoral attractiveness, Lubbers and Scheepers (2001) argue that putting a party into a ‘bad light’ might not work, as potential supporters of populist right parties will filter the news in favour of their opinion because of selective perception. They conclude that neglecting the extreme-right wing is more effective in neutralizing these parties than writing unfavourably about them: higher levels of attention for the German extreme-right in the month before the polls increased support. However, in the Dutch case, Lubbers (2001) found that media attention for extreme right parties did not affect voting intentions, in striking contrast with the conventional wisdom that the collapse of the Dutch extreme right was partly due to a ‘torrent of negative publicity’ (Van Donselaar 1997: 6) and ‘demonization by the media’ (Ignazi 2003: 167). This remarkable finding of Lubbers might be caused by the fact that the variable ‘media attention’ is a single measurement of overall coverage devoted to the parties in question. Distinguishing claim making and visibility from resonance may be the solution to the paradox: counting the number of articles taps media access for a party, but it also includes the amount of critical reactions. I assume that having the opportunity to communicate to citizens by placing one’s topics on the agenda is beneficial. A challenging movement or party will use its voice in the media for getting its message across; claims of the CD are expected to inform and persuade potential supporters. Thus, I hypothesize that public support is enhanced by claim making and media visibility of the CD. Being heard or directly quoted is not identical to receiving any sort of coverage or mention in the news (Ferree et al. 2002). Extreme-right groups may not be treated as actors with a relevant or legitimate voice and appear in the media discourse only when they are mentioned or criticized by others. I expect that delegitimization in the public sphere is detrimental for the mobilization of voters and consonant reactions in the media have a positive effect on the public opinion. My hypothesis is that public support is enhanced by positive reactions and decreased by negative reactions.

The mechanisms that underlie the temporal ups and downs in public support are not necessarily similar to those behind fluctuations in public standing. With regard to explanations
for the second dependent variable, the amount of claim making, the behaviour of journalists plays a pivotal role. Movements are generally much more dependent on media than the reverse, as journalists eventually allow participation in the media arena or not (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). Their decisions are shaped by so-called ‘news values’ that indicate if a message is newsworthy (Galtung and Ruge 1965). News deals mostly with those who hold power, while challengers have more difficulty to gain access and attention (Gans [1979] 2004; Gitlin 1980). Even though being ‘silent’ or fastidious about whether to join a particular debate or not can be a deliberate tactical choice of organizations (Rohlinger 2006), this is not an option for challenging groups that have limited media access. Publicity is positively related to the amount of status or ‘political standing’ enjoyed by a particular actor (Wolfsfeld and Sheafer 2006). Firstly, actors like established parties and state actors have more resources, staff and skills at their disposal that allow them media access. Secondly, journalists automatically turn more often to those with more political standing because powerful actors are expected to make more consequential decisions and have more influential opinions. In sum, I assume that higher levels of popular support increase newsworthiness and opportunities to acquire media access (Jenkins 1999). My hypothesis is thus that public claim making of the CD is enhanced by an increase in public opinion support.

Gatekeepers can enhance or diminish the power of those to whom they offer or deny standing, because access to the news media can by itself become an indicator of power (Ferree et al. 2002). The media spotlight validates the fact that a challenger is an important player (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). In the words of Gamson (2004: 251): ‘Being visible and quoted defines for other journalists and a broader public who really matter’. Thus, I expect continuity: once an actor or message has become headline news, it remains in the media spotlight for some time, so claim making and visibility will enhance the potential for an actor to diffuse subsequent messages in the public sphere. My hypothesis is that the higher the amount of visibility and public claim making in the previous period, the more access to the public debate in the following period.

It was argued that negative coverage is harmful for maintaining electoral support. In contrast, trying to attract as much attention as possible considering the motto ‘no news is bad news’ might be a rather successful strategy in terms of gaining a more influential voice in the media platform. In line with Koopmans and Olzak (2004) it is assumed that public reactions (whether negatively or positively) increase the speaker’s chances to gain more space for subsequent messages as it makes the actor more relevant in the eyes of journalists. It is likely that attacks of others increase your newsworthiness as negative news enters the news channel more easily (Galtung and Ruge 1965). This leads me to expect that Janmaat’s public claim making is enhanced by both negative and positive reactions.

Koopmans and Olzak (2004: 212) included all negative responses in their measurement of dissonance, so this variable covered a wide range of public rejections and condemnations directed against the extreme right, also state repression. I will discern repression from dissonance, although they are closely linked. Repression refers to the formal decisions of political elites in dealing with challengers, which can be either repressive or facilitative (Kriesi et al. 1995: 33). Although state repression may not simply have a negative effect on mobilization as it might generate moral shocks and solidarity and motivation among protesters (Almeida
Koopmans (1997) concludes that institutional repression (such as trials and bans of demonstrations) had a clear negative impact on the German extreme right’s level of mobilization in the 1990s. On paper, the Netherlands is not a ‘militant democracy’ like Germany as there are no explicit repressive actions to defend ‘the principles of the free democratic order’ (Mußde 2004b: 197). Nevertheless, the intensification in legal sanctions by the government against racist statements during the 1990s might offer an explanation for the collapse of the Dutch extreme right (Van Donselaar 1997: 15).

Like other dissonant claims, I suppose that repression had a negative impact on the party’s popularity. I will rely on content analysis of newspaper articles, although not all acts of repression might have been reported in the media. However, my argument rests on upon the role of (a lack of) attributed legitimacy as it appeared on the public stage. Repression that was not reported in the media had no impact further-reaching than the direct consequences for the offended.26 Whereas I hypothesized that dissonance was beneficial for gaining access to the public discourse, there are good reasons to expect that repression had a harmful impact in this respect. What has been unique in the legal approach in the Netherlands is the systematic prohibition of public meetings of extreme-right parties and organizations on the ground that these meetings endangered ‘the public order’ (Fennema 2000). When the extreme right would ask for permission to demonstrate in a city to get their message across, anti-fascists would announce a counter-mobilization and the mayor would ban the demonstration for fear of public disturbances (Van Holsteyn 2003; Mußde 2004b).

Finally, dissonant public reactions do not only come from outsiders, but now and then from party members as well. Therefore, the degree of organizational fragmentation will be taken into account. I assume that media statements about internal strife harm the party. Lack of a well-organized party structure, shortfall of membership and organizational disunity have been proposed as pivotal factor that explain why the CD remained in ‘circle of organizational weakness’ and eventually collapsed (De Witte and Klandermans 2000). The amount of internal strife as displayed by the mass media does of course not capture organizational conflicts that only take place ‘behind the scenes’, but my argument does not rest upon representativeness in this respect. I depart from what is acted out on the public stage. It is more difficult to see how events that take place out of sight of journalists and the public could have an immediate impact on opinion polls and mass media standing.27

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26 Also, to a considerable extent repression was a response only to the extreme right as it appeared in the public sphere. For example, the conviction of Janmaat because of his statements about the abolishment of the multi-cultural society was explicitly justified by the judge because of the fact that the speech had been delivered in public. Otherwise, it would not have been offensive or punishable.  
27 I will not discuss charismatic leadership (e.g. Eatwell 2005) again as another possible internal supply-side factor that might explain fluctuations in popular support and media access for the CD. See chapter 1 for the reasons why.
4.3 Research design

4.3.1 Data

The period under investigation starts in January 1992 and runs until May 1998. Thus, the analysis contains both a period of (moderate) success and the inglorious demise of the Centre Democrats. The temporal frame of the analysis is cut into units of observations of weeks, but also additional analyses were conducted based on biweekly units. By aggregating over biweekly and weekly units, the variables are able to capture relatively short-term media dynamics. The reason for starting in 1992 is a pragmatic one, namely the ability to make use of an extensive existing dataset for this period. Hand-coded political claim analysis data gathered by Koopmans and colleagues is used (2005; see also Koopmans and Statham 1999b).28 A political claim is a ‘strategic action in the public sphere that consists of the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticism, or physical attacks, which actually or potentially affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors’ (Koopmans et al. 2005: 24). In total 627 coded political claims were derived from articles in the *NRC Handelsblad*.29 An inter-coder reliability test conducted on a sample yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.95 for article selection, while the respective value for claim identification within selected articles was 0.92 (ibid.: 265).

Generally, comparisons between newspapers (ibid.: 261) reveal that although there are differences in the rates of coverage of claims, there is a striking similarity in the distribution of claims on their characteristics. This is in line with other research that concluded that, in contrast with the absolute amount of coverage, there are hardly any differences in the tone and portrayal of radical-right politicians (Schaafraad et al. 2009; Bos et al. 2010). Akkerman (2011: 12) found that the popular newspapers *The Sun* and *De Telegraaf* were not more sympathetic towards the national populist parties (the British National Party and Dutch Party for Freedom respectively), and neither did they devote more attention for the leaders of these parties. Her findings ‘throw into doubt whether the popular press can be clearly and consistently distinguished from the serious press in subject matter and political orientation’ and notes that such differences should not be conflated with differences in style. Counting the number of articles between 1986-2004, Schaafraad (2009) found that in absolute terms two Dutch quality newspapers devoted more attention to the radical right than the popular *De Telegraaf* -- which is not surprising as the latter has simply less extensive news content in general. Relatively speaking, however, he did not observe differences in the visibility and prominence of the radical right; neither did he find empirical support for differences in what he labelled ‘support attention’ and

28 With thanks to Thom Duyvené de Wit, who was responsible for coding these data.
29 For more information on the sampling procedure and structure of claims, see Koopmans et al. (2005: 254-265). The original dataset is based on a sample: claims were coded from the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday issues of the newspaper. I have added claims with the CD as the actor or object from the ‘missing’ days (using keyword search in the Lexis Nexis database) and added supplementary information to the original claims (visibility scores, evaluation of the object actors, and specification of the different extreme-right actors).
‘substantial attention’ -- this in contrast to the expectation of Mazzoleni (2003) that there are significant differences between tabloid and elite media.

Apparently, outlets are guided by identical news values and subject to the same competition pressures of the ‘media logic’. Moreover, to a certain extent journalists tend to imitate each other and take their cues about what is newsworthy from other media outlets, a mechanism called intermedia agenda-setting (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). Bourdieu (1998: 23-24) concluded that this mechanism had led to a ‘homogeneous mishmash’ and that journalistic products are much more alike than is generally thought. He observed: ‘For journalists a daily review of the press is an essential tool. To know what to say, you have to know what everyone else has said. (...) Editorial staff spend a good deal talking about other newspapers, particularly about “what they did and what we didn’t do” (...) and what should have been done (...) -- since the other paper did it. (...) If X talks about a book in Libération, Y will have to talk about it in Le Monde or le Nouvel Observateur even if he considers it worthless or unimportant. And vice versa’.

4.3.2 Dependent and explanatory variables

The amount of public claim making by the Centre Democrats is the count of political claims made by the Centre Democrats, irrespective of the subject.

Public opinion support for the Centre Democrats is the percentage of people that reported the intention to vote for the CD if parliamentary elections would be held the next day, using survey data gathered by NIPO (NIPO/Steinmetz-Archief 1999).

Visibility measures to what extent claims were reported prominently. It is composed of the summed scored on four elements: the article in which the claim is reported appears on the front page, the claim is referred to in the headline of the article, the claim is mentioned as the first one in the article and the claim is repeated in follow-up articles (within two weeks). The total amount of prominence during one time period is divided by the total amount of claims made by the CD.

Consonance (supportive reactions) and dissonance (critical reactions) capture all political reactions to the Centre Democrats, i.e. all instances of public claim making by other actors that are directed to or referring to the party, except repression (see below). Resonance also includes indirect reactions, for instance, when someone urges a mayor to not allow a demonstration organized by the extreme-right party. ‘Soft’ repression and non-state repression (see Linden and Klandermans 2006) are also included in this variable. Examples of such ‘unofficial’ repression claims are: ‘The workers union expels a member because of his CD membership’, ‘An owner of a hotel refuses to rent congress facilities for a CD party meeting’ and ‘The manager of a taxi company suspends an employee from duty because he has distributed CD leaflets to customers’.

Claim making by the CD and the amount of critical reactions during a period are strongly correlated (Pearson’s r is 0.78). We have to conclude that there is a close relationship between the amount of public expressions of Janmaat and negative reactions of others. Including the lagged variables simultaneously in a multivariate regression leads to multicollinearity problems. Therefore, the biweekly amount of CD claim making is subtracted from the extent to
which Janmaat and his party were criticized. Dissonance is thus the surplus amount of negative reactions (Pearson’s \( r \) is now 0.44). A zero is coded for the amount of dissonance when there were no critical statements referring to Janmaat or his party during a given time period. The variable consonance will be left out the analysis, as across the whole period of study only 17 supportive claims were reported, so there is hardly variation over time due to many periods with zero scores. The observed lack of public support is in line with findings of Schafraad et al. (2009): a relatively small amount of all news reports during the election periods in 1994 and 1998 contains exclusively positive attitudes towards the far right (3 and 7 per cent respectively). In my case, about 4 per cent of all claims referring to the CD are supportive reactions.

Repressive measures by state agencies against the Centre Democrats measures both institutional and situational repression. Institutional repression consists of general decisions taken by political authorities (such as a ban of a demonstration by a mayor) or the judiciary (such as trials and convictions); situational repression refers to unplanned ad-hoc actions of the police, such as arrests of CD members during a demonstration. Pleas for action, verbal statements that legal action should be taken, are not coded as repression but dissonance, as they are not themselves measures or decisions. Repression should also be political in nature. This implies that when a member of the CD was arrested or convicted for insurance-fraud or drug trafficking, this event was not coded as repression.

Organizational fragmentation consists of the amount of ‘defections’ of party members. It includes statements made by CD members who announce their resignation or refusal to take their seats in the local councils or decisions by the party to abandon a member. These claims are excluded from the dependent variable claim making by the Centre Democrats. Expressing loyalty or other supportive claims of CD members for their party are included in the amount of CD claims. Statements of former CD members are included in resonance.

The variable negative immigration claims measures the amount of restrictive claims on the immigration and integration issue by all other political actors.\(^{30}\)

Although I focus on short-term fluctuations in the media debate, I will take unemployment, immigration and the influx of asylum seekers into account as control variables in the analysis with biweekly units, as they have often proved to be empirically relevant for explaining extreme-right party popularity (e.g. Arzheimer 2009; Scheepers et al. 2002; Golder 2003) and perhaps also influence access to the public discourse. These data were retrieved from Statistics Netherlands (CBS 2007; 2008). Because these are monthly rates, an interpolation procedure was carried out to create biweekly rates. However, these factors would clearly better fit in a theoretical framework for explaining long-term developments and a research design with higher units of analysis, such as months, quarters or years.

Table C1 in Appendix C lists descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. The time sequence is a critical element: the cause (explanatory variable) has to precede the consequence (dependent variable) and therefore in both analyses the explanatory variables are lagged. Effects are assumed to occur at lag 1, but alternative lags at 2 and 3 units will also be tested.

\(^{30}\) This variable is based on a sample: claims that were coded from the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday issues of the newspaper.
4.3.3 Procedure

To estimate the effects of the explanatory variables on the public opinion support, I use ARIMA, also known as Box-Jenkins transfer modelling. The steps involved in developing these models are discussed in detail by McCleary and Hay (1980). For adequate Box-Jenkins modelling, the time series must be stationary, which means that the series has a constant mean and variance over time. Visual inspection of the opinion poll series (see Figure 4.1) suggests the presence of both types of non-stationarity; accordingly, the series is log-transformed and differenced. The explanatory variables are likewise inspected, and logged and differenced in case of non-stationarity. As the control variables unemployment rate, immigration and influx of asylum seekers are differenced, the impact of changes in socio-economic conditions is considered, rather than that of the absolute levels.

Dickey-Fuller tests show that none of the variables contains a unit root after these transformations (see Table C2 in Appendix C). The next step is that some of the series require autoregressive or moving-average parameters to produce ‘white noise’ residuals. The residuals being ‘white noise’ means that there is no remaining autocorrelation in the residuals. For the ARIMA specifications of the variables and Ljung-Box Q statistics (the diagnostic test for the model’s residual autocorrelation over a specified period of lags), see again Table C2 in Appendix C.

The variable claim making is an event count with discrete and non-negative values. In that case the Poisson distribution to model the data is more appropriate than the Normal distribution. Count variables are likely to display positive contagion: one count increases the likelihood of observing additional events in the same period. Observing both a large number of lower counts and very high counts (overdispersion) implies that we have more variability than that for an independent Poisson process, and therefore a negative binomial regression will be used (Long and Freese 2006).

4.4 Results

Before I scrutinize the public opinion polls and rate of public claim making by the Centre Democrats with two multivariate regression models, I will start with a brief description of the two dependent variables. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict trends in public opinion support and public claim making. It is shown that the extreme-right party experienced an electoral wave in the first half of the 90s (Figure 4.1). While the party scored about one per cent at the beginning of the time series (January 1992), support in the polls had risen to five per cent of the vote by the end of 1993. The electoral popularity of the right-wing extremist party did not last long. In the national elections in May 1994, the party gained far less than expected: 2.5 per cent of the vote (three seats in parliament).
Figure 4.2 shows that there was a wave of claims in a relatively short time period (from January 1994 until May 1994). For the total period, 121 claims are coded, most of which are made by the party leader Janmaat. The surge started in January 1994 when Janmaat stated that he did not regret the death of Labour Party minister Dales. About one week later, he proclaimed (in an interview in the magazine Elsevier) that immigrants should not be allowed to hold public positions and that Minister Hirsch Ballin should resign because of his Jewish ancestry. Not surprisingly, these statements provoked fierce criticism. That Janmaat gained more media access because he became more ‘newsworthy’ can be illustrated with the fact that his further actions concerning the incidents are reported in unusual detail, like his demand for rectification from Elsevier and the decision to send a letter to Hirsch Ballin to explain that he was incorrectly quoted. The highest peak of claims occurred around the municipal elections on March 2nd. A headline in NRC Handelsblad summarized a debate between the local party leaders in The Hague as follows: ‘Janmaat does most of the talking during political debate’.31 There was a considerable amount of reactions during this period, ranging from the advice not to vote for the CD to the plea for a political boycott. In Eindhoven activists threw a pie in the face of the local CD leader and in Rotterdam the local Labour Party leader stated that it is ‘disgraceful that 10

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per cent of the electorate votes for racists’. Negative publicity also peaked a couple of days before the Parliamentary Elections in May 1994 when a local CD member in Amsterdam admitted (on hidden camera) that he had set fire to centres that provided services for foreigners.32

4.4.1 Determinants of public opinion support

The first research question is how to explain changes in public opinion support for Janmaat’s party. The results presented in Table 4.1 show that, remarkably, electoral attractiveness was not enhanced when his claims were reported in the media, whether prominently or not: visibility does not exert any influence and there is not a positive impact of claim making in general either. Furthermore, it is shown that the larger the amount of critical reactions, the more popular support for the CD is eroded. Ceteris paribus, the coefficient (-0.05) indicates that one act of rejection produced a relative decrease in the amount of support of about five per cent.33 Expressed in absolute terms, this yields a decrease from 1.40 per cent of the vote share (the average amount of support over this period) to 1.33 per cent. As mentioned earlier, the CD claims

32 This confession is not coded as a political claim, as it not a purposive action in the public sphere. All public reactions, however, are coded claims, as well as the public statement of a journalist that the explicit political goal of the infiltration action in the CD was to harm the party.

33 The calculation is as follows: percentage change = (exp(coef)-1) * 100 (McCleary and Hay 1980: 174).
and negative reactions are closely intertwined. Given that the average number of critical reactions is higher than the average number of CD claims, this implicates that generally, claim making was even counter-productive as it was frequently preceded or followed by a larger amount of criticism.\(^{34}\)

The results show that repression has not caused a decline in support. Organizational fragmentation (claims of CD members abandoning the party or being expelled) exert a negative impact in the expected direction, but this effect is also insignificant. Alternative models (not shown in the table) in which it is assumed that these two variables have long-term cumulative effects do not significantly affect the opinion poll either. Cross-correlation functions and time series plots indicate that the main peaks in organizational fragmentation and repression seem to have predominantly occurred parallel to, or after the decline in support. If specified as an immediate effect (i.e. in the same time unit), ‘defection’ severely harms the amount of public support. However, one should be cautious with the interpretation of this relationship. It can also mean that members and voters react similarly and simultaneously -- namely, they both end their support for their party -- to an external unobserved event (like the hidden camera story).

Finally, the findings in model 1 undermine the presumed harmful role of a narrowing ‘political space’ for mobilization on the issue of immigration and integration: airing negative viewpoints on the multicultural issue by other political actors neither harmed nor enhanced Janmaat’s popularity. Additional analyses (not shown in table) show that broadening the scope of this variable by also including neutral, ambivalent and positive political statements, does not change this conclusion. This finding is in line with previous research that found that the number of articles on asylum seekers did not contribute to the explanation of over-time variance in right-wing voting in both the Netherlands during the nineties (Lubbers 2001) and Germany (Lubbers and Scheepers 2001). However, it contradicts findings showing that immigration news coverage increased support for the Dutch anti-immigration parties for the period from 1990 until 2003 (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007).

One should note however that political claims on immigration in the mass media do not necessarily coincide with news on ‘real-world developments’. For instance, Kleinnijenhuis and De Ridder (1997: 295) note that until the end of 1993, newspapers and television news contained many stories on asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands, while at the same time the major Dutch parties were relatively silent on the issue. After this period of silence, Bolkestein, the leader of the conservative liberals (VVD), forcefully expressed tough statements regarding policies towards immigrants and asylum seekers, which possibly caused sudden spectacular gains for the VVD. Further research on the radical right can thus be improved by testing the ‘political space’ argument and agenda-setting theory together in one framework by including both general factual news coverage on immigration and political statements about immigration policies on part of the established parties.

The additional analysis of biweekly fluctuations (model 2 in Table 4.1) confirms my previous conclusions about the role of the public debate: public disapproval played a major role

\(^{34}\) The original measure of dissonance (not subtracting the number of CD claims from the number of critical reactions) yields a similar negative impact. In such a model, due to multicollinearity, the variable claim-making has to be omitted from the analysis. Only including claim-making (excluding the negative reactions variable) also yields a strong negative effect (not surprisingly, acknowledging the correlation).
in diminishing the extreme-right party’s popularity. Further additional analyses of biweekly units presented in model 3 (Table 4.1) show that the addition of two control variables does not affect the results. While changes in the influx of asylum seekers yield an insignificant effect, increases in joblessness were beneficial to the Centre Democrats. Others scholars have likewise found that higher rates of unemployment provide a favourable environment for the extreme right (Jackman and Volpert 1996; Golder 2003). For the Dutch case, Lubbers (2001) similarly found that when unemployment increased, the likelihood of voting for the extreme right was greater; likewise, rising numbers of asylum seekers had no significant effect.

Table 4.1 Determinants of public opinion support for the extreme-right CD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARIMA regression</th>
<th>Model 1 (weekly)</th>
<th>Model 2 (biweekly)</th>
<th>Model 3 (biweekly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff  SE</td>
<td>Coeff  SE</td>
<td>Coeff  SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims CD (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.005e-2 0.024</td>
<td>0.014 0.032</td>
<td>0.006 0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility (t-1)</td>
<td>0.015 0.033</td>
<td>0.007 0.037</td>
<td>0.004 0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>-0.006 0.035</td>
<td>-0.004 0.022</td>
<td>-0.014 0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fragmentation (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.050** 0.020</td>
<td>-0.057*** 0.018</td>
<td>-0.056*** 0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repression (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.019 0.040</td>
<td>-0.014 0.048</td>
<td>0.015 0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-0.028e-2 0.010</td>
<td>-0.003 0.009</td>
<td>-0.006 0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immigration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claims (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δ Unemployment (t-1)</td>
<td>0.748** 0.333</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δ Asylum seekers (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.002e-2 0.014</td>
<td>-0.014e-2 0.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving average (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.817*** 0.032</td>
<td>-0.756*** 0.060</td>
<td>-0.816*** 0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>436.81 156.01</td>
<td>151.74 151.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMS (residual variance)</td>
<td>0.213 0.143</td>
<td>0.139 0.139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljung-Box Q (20 lags)</td>
<td>23.95 21.16</td>
<td>20.39 20.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>331 165</td>
<td>163 163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: e-2 = multiply times 10^-2

* p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01 (two-tailed test)

4.4.2 Determinants of public claim making

Table 4.2 shows the results of a negative binomial regression with the number of claims as the dependent variable. The table reports the incidence rate ratio (IRR), the factor change in the

35 An alternative model with the changes in the amount of immigration instead of asylum seekers also yields insignificant results. Taking more distant lags (2 and 3), assuming that these variables might operate with a longer delay, does not alter the results either.
expected count for a unit increase in the independent variable. The results reveal a strong effect of the lagged dependent variable, which indicates that the amount of public claims is strongly affected by the presence of Janmaat in the public sphere one week earlier. In model 1 it is shown that one political statement or action of the extreme-right party in the public sphere increases the expected number of subsequent public claims the following week by a factor of 1.3, holding all other variables constant. Furthermore, the results show that public opinion polls have a significant impact. These findings support the hypothesis that the more electoral support for Janmaat, the more he is able to express his viewpoints in the mass media. Dissonance had also a positive impact, which implies that, in terms of gaining more media access, the motto holds that ‘any publicity is favourable publicity’. This implies that public criticism appears to be, supposedly unintentional, counter-productive when it is the intention to diminish the media stage for populist leaders and their anti-immigration rhetoric. Organizational fragmentation yields a significant effect in the expected (negative) direction on the amount of public claim making of the CD in the next time period. Note that this could possibly be due to the simple fact that closely clustered peaks of internal strife claims of the CD party simply took the place of ‘normal’ media statements. The effect of organizational fragmentation on other explanatory media variables, such as the amount of dissonant claims, is not at stake here and might be positive. Repression does not have a significant impact. Also when long-term impacts are included (assuming that internal strife and repression permanently affect all following time periods), there is no significant effect.

Finally, the results reveal that public claims advocating anti-immigration and anti-refugee policies do not seem to have fostered Janmaat’s access to the mass media arena. Alternatively, I have also checked if instead the total amount of claims on the immigration and integration issue (irrespective of the tone) had an impact, but in none of my models this variable yields significant results. The general conclusion is that support from the general public (as indicated by opinion polls) and newsworthiness (as indicated by claim making or public reactions of others) fosters the party’s opportunity to further diffuse its standpoints in the public sphere.

Additional tests with the data cut in biweekly (instead of weekly) observation units (model 2 and 3) reveal that the same mass media dynamics also operate on a longer time scale. The only remarkable exception is that it appears that resignations or expulsions of CD members have only an ephemeral negative effect on claim making. The addition of two control variables, unemployment rates and the influx of asylum seekers (model 3) does not change the conclusions just drawn. These two factors do not affect the amount of claims by the CD in the subsequent time period. This conclusion is similar when the immigration figures are used, rather than the influx of asylum seekers, or when it is hypothesized that these variables operate with a longer delay (2 or 3 lags).

Transforming estimated coefficients to incidence-rate ratios is done by taking exp(b) instead of b.
### Table 4.2 Determinants of public claim making of the extreme-right CD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative binomial regression</th>
<th>Model 1 (weekly)</th>
<th>Model 2 (biweekly)</th>
<th>Model 1 (biweekly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRR SE</td>
<td>IRR SE</td>
<td>IRR SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims CD (t-1)</td>
<td>1.272*** 0.067</td>
<td>1.140** 0.061</td>
<td>1.166*** 0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility (t-1)</td>
<td>0.995 0.190</td>
<td>1.010 0.276</td>
<td>0.989 0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational fragmentation (t-1)</td>
<td>0.602*** 0.097</td>
<td>0.851 0.099</td>
<td>0.852 0.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance (t-1)</td>
<td>1.585*** 0.156</td>
<td>1.181* 0.106</td>
<td>1.173* 0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repression (t-1)</td>
<td>0.943 0.363</td>
<td>1.048 0.333</td>
<td>0.972 0.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative immigration claims (t-1)</td>
<td>1.035 0.712</td>
<td>1.013 0.616</td>
<td>1.020 0.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public opinion support (t-1)</td>
<td>1.334* 0.226</td>
<td>1.595*** 0.318</td>
<td>1.564** 0.303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δ Unemployment (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.163 1.845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δ Asylum seekers (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.999 0.042e^{-2}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>α (dispersion parameter)</td>
<td>1.043*** 0.406</td>
<td>1.333*** 0.292</td>
<td>1.131*** 0.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald $\chi^2$</td>
<td>90.97*** 26.2***</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.46***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log pseudolikelihood</td>
<td>-227.16 -180.39</td>
<td></td>
<td>-177.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>331 165</td>
<td></td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** IRR = incidence rate ratio; SE = robust standard error; e^{-2} = multiply times $10^{-2}$

* p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01 (two-tailed test)

4.5 Summary and conclusion

This paper investigated fluctuations over time in the amount of public opinion support for the Dutch radical-right party Centre Democrats and the party’s ability to express its opinions in the mass media. Previous studies on anti-immigration parties have taken the role of news coverage into account, but only focused on explaining electoral support. I have argued that questions on fluctuations in extreme-right party’s amount of public claim making should also be addressed.

Demand-side theories stress that unemployment and mass immigration make voters susceptible to the message of an extreme right-wing party. However, that they only point to the existence of a ‘fertile breeding ground’ and fail to provide an overall explanation ‘is clear from even a simple glance at the clear contrasts in radical right fortunes found between neighbouring states which appear to share similar cultural values, post-industrial service-sector economies, and comparable institutions of representative democracy’ (Norris 2005:14). In addition, we need supply-side theories, which emphasize the role of internal party characteristics (like organizational strength) and political constraints and opportunities (like the dynamics of party competition).

Of course, grievances, ethnic threats and political opportunities are important to explain why certain political changes are possible or likely, but they have to be made visible in
the public discourse in order to become relevant. Therefore, I have used a discursive opportunity perspective which adds the argument that publicly manifest (rather than latent) factors produce and amplify mobilization of support and attention. A discursive opportunity approach should not be seen as a ‘rival’ theory that displaces existing explanations. Rather, it explains why mobilization can emerge and cease rapidly – on a scale of weeks or months, rather than years.

Results show that it is fruitful to consider short-term temporal dynamics in the public debate in the media to fully understand fluctuations in extreme-right support and claim making. In general, with regard to enhancing prominence in the eyes of the media gatekeepers, the findings support the notion that the strategy of putting radical-right actors ‘in a bad light’ is counter-productive if the aim is to deny them media attention. Critical reactions by others in the debate did improve CD members’ access to the mass media. Furthermore, it was found that an increase in public opinion support did improve the extreme-right party’s ability to make itself heard in the debate. This implies that the electoral growth during the first half of the decade amplified the ability to communicate with potential voters.

Importantly, however, negative reactions in the public debate significantly eroded electoral support. Waves of dissonance, indicating the extent to which the public stage offered more space for criticism than for CD claim making, were disastrous for the party’s electoral attractiveness. This conclusion is in line with the finding that a perceived lack of legitimacy among voters diminishes support for populist right parties (Bos and Van der Brug 2010) and could be extended to the analysis of the fortunes of the radical right in other European democracies. Likewise, the combined hostile reactions of political parties, the mass media and civil society actors led directly to the collapse of the radical-right Republicans in Germany; one of their leaders called the media campaign against the party ‘our chief problem’ (Art 2007: 340).

Claim making of the CD, closely intertwined with the ups and downs in the absolute amount of criticism, did not affect the amount of electoral support. The only (external) factor that enhanced Janmaat’s popularity was an increase in joblessness. Increases in the influx of immigrants and asylum seekers did not politically translate into more support for the Centre Democrats, nor did the amount of political space occupied by the established political actors. In sum, Hans Janmaat appeared trapped in a feedback loop of stagnation: he was not able to further increase public support by placing his topics on the agenda, regardless of his claims being prominently published or not, in contrast to more recent populist leaders who clearly profit from being visible in the media, like Pim Fortuyn (see the previous chapter) and Geert Wilders (Bos et al. 2010). Thus, it is unwarranted to state that when the media are willing to grant extreme-right parties a voice, they are always able to achieve electoral breakthroughs (Ellinas 2009).

Following a discursive opportunity approach adds two fruitful elements to prevailing explanations for the mobilization of populist right parties. Firstly, the identification of short-term discursive spirals and feedback mechanisms extends the more static demand- and supply-side explanations, which have in common that gradual trends and cross-national differences get more attention than rapid fluctuations (Norris 2005). It is not clear how relatively stable factors indicated by political and socio-economic circumstances can explain the sudden mobilization of voters or attention shifts within the space of months. They do not predict a surge in 1994;
nor do they explain the sudden collapse shortly after. I share this dynamic view of analyzing radical-right party breakthroughs with De Witte and Klandermans (2000). My findings add that the difficulty of setting an upward spiral in motion not only concerns organizational weakness. Another important downward spiral is a lack of ‘discursive strength’. Even when the CD entered the public stage, offering means to mobilize a wider audience, it did not lead to more success. To the contrary: once on the stage, the CD suffered from being publicly criticized as an unacceptable racist party. The question remains if a break of the circle of discursive weakness had been possible if Janmaat would have been inclined to adapt and modify his views or reframe his message, in order to avoid widespread public disapproval.

Secondly, a discursive opportunity approach points us to the importance of the strategic moves of political players. Mudde (2007a) argues that many previous studies have the tendency to see anti-immigration parties as dependent variables undergoing their fates passively, instead of arguing for these parties to be viewed as independent variables shaping their own destiny. If very radical and outright racist claims provoke harsh criticism and hardly gain any legitimacy, Koopmans et al. (2005) expect that a right-wing actor would adopt a moderate populist stance in order to mobilize anti-immigrant sentiments. Ignazi (2003) argues similarly that a characteristic of a successful extreme-right party is its strategic flexibility in order to exploit whatever favourable circumstances might arise. This is in line with Goodwin (2006: 350) who states that ‘instead of portraying extreme right parties as the by-products of forces outside their own control, in contrast they should be viewed as engineers of their own success’. For example, Coffé (2005) argues that total exclusion has led far-right leaders of the Vlaams Blok to adapt their strategies, positions and rhetoric. By softening and rewriting strongly-worded texts they broadened their electoral appeal. It appears that it would not only make sense to differentiate between ‘normal’ and ‘unacceptable’ (Hooghe and Reeskens 2007), ‘neofascist’ and ‘populist’ (Golder 2003) or ‘classical racist’ and ‘culturally racist’ (Wilkes et al. 2007) anti-immigrant parties (despite their common issue agenda). It might be fruitful to distinguish parties that have an adaptive strategy from ideologically rigid parties, in order to explain why certain parties develop into successful mainstream parties and others remain marginal phenomena. Why certain parties decide to choose a certain strategy remains a pressing question. The reason for Janmaat’s ideological rigidity might be the influence exerted by the radical wing in his party. At least he must have been fully aware of the possible consequences of taking the risk of modifying his views: in 1984 he had been expelled from the radical-right Centre Party as his leadership was judged too moderate by the radical fraction.

The next chapter builds further on this argument about the role of strategic flexibility by elaborating and testing the notion of adaptive learning. The focus is shifted from the failed breakthrough of the rigid CD to the presumably more ‘opportunistic’ and vote-grabbing Fortuyn. The chapter will investigate to what extent adaptive behaviour of party leader Fortuyn can account for the successful rise of his party.
Driven by opinion polls and media success? An adaptive learning approach to the rise of right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn

5.1 Introduction

Whereas political scientists predominantly define populism as a thin (rather than full-fledged) ideology, in the public debate the term is often associated with a political style of demagogy and opportunism (Mudde 2004a). Likewise, the opinions about what Fortuynism entailed can be grouped into two schools: ideology or style (Mudde 2007b). The latter refers to political behaviour of promoting policies with the aim of quickly pleasing the voters and adjusting one’s policy stance to boost electoral appeal without reference to ideological principles or a consistent plan. This ideological flexibility to exploit whatever grievances can be mobilized is often linked up with an internal party structure of a strong central leadership that allows this kind of party behaviour (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Mazzoleni 2003: 4). Because a strategy of electoral opportunism has a negative connotation, populism is mainly used as a label to denigrate statements and viewpoints of others; populist politicians rarely call themselves populist (Canovan 1981; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008).

The label of mainly being driven by opinion polls and press headlines has also been used to discredit Fortuyn (Pels 2003). For instance, Bart Tromp, former prominent party ideologist of the Dutch Labour Party, observed that Fortuyn completely lacked a consistent programme or any well-considered ideological principles. He proclaimed that ‘compared with Pim Fortuyn, Jörg Haider is a serious philosopher’ and his ideas were totally subordinated to his strive for power and attention. This political behaviour fits the disposition of a ‘business-firm party’, of which, according to Krouwel (2003; 2006), the LPF is a typical example. In contrast to the other ‘party species’ that he distinguished, its main trait is its flexible ideological orientation and customer-oriented approach. Policy positions will be developed like products within firms, based on ‘focus groups, survey research and local trials to test their feasibility and popularity’ (Krouwel 2006: 261). Because of this flexibility, populist entrepreneurs are likely to continue to crop up, irrespective of the particular opportunities that are available. As Mazzoleni puts it: ‘neo-populism, thanks to its chameleon-like nature, may adapt to different contexts’ (2003: 5).

The general focus of this chapter is adaptive learning of populist newcomers. Is the ideologically flexible character often ascribed to populists justified? I.e. do populist challengers adapt their policy stance in response to public opinion support and media attention? More specifically, I will first investigate to what extent the Dutch populist right-wing challenger Fortuyn adapted his stance concerning the integration and immigration issue during the 2002 Dutch election campaign.

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37 I focus here on an attention- and vote-seeking strategy as the core element of a populist style. A second interpretation of a populist style could refer to the way party leaders publicly speak: the messages are often formulated in simple, strong, emotional and slogan-based language (Mazzoleni 2003: 5).
Furthermore, it is interesting to explore if there are differences in the willingness and ability to adapt over time. We focus on the 2002 campaign, but obviously Fortuyn did probably not choose a random starting position in August 2001. Political entrepreneurs might already have developed and adjusted their viewpoints before they officially decide to found a party and enter the arena. Once an actor is engaged in political competition, obvious modifications of one’s policy stance could cause severe repercussions. Although for many people Fortuyn seemed to appear suddenly from nowhere, historian Hans Goedkoop noted, ‘he had been preparing for the big leap for years’. About his ambition to achieve political power, Fortuyn himself said in 1994 that he was carefully waiting for the right moment, ‘like a panther watching his prey’. My second aim is therefore to investigate if this preparation period entailed the cultural evolution of his ideological programme. Thus, the second specific question is to what extent Fortuyn adapted his stance during the period before he announced to join politics while he was still a political outsider and observer (1994-2001).

These two questions are relevant for understanding the successful performances of populists throughout Europe. Although there are obviously many sources of popular discontent, probably one of the most heard complaints of populist parties is that the current policies are not able or willing to respond to the opinions of ‘the people’. One of the pivotal characteristics of representative democracies is that political agendas ought to reflect and react to changing popular demands (McDonald et al 2004; Pennings 2005). A system of democratic decision-making is supposed to continually bring the government’s policy stance in line with the preferences of the citizens. In this process, political parties play a central role as they represent the core linkage between the people and the state and their function is to connect the preferences of voters with policies (Walgrave and Nuytemans 2009). When established parties fail to adapt to societal demands, they are no longer able to fulfil this linkage function. A consequence might be that new parties successfully emerge to fill the electoral niche, whether by the ‘birth’ of a new political party or by a split within the existing set of parties (Laver and Schilperoord 2007). Especially since voters have increasingly lost their party loyalty and tend to ‘shop around’, parties have become vulnerable to threats of newcomers.

In general, by the application of an encompassing cultural evolutionary approach this chapter aims to make two fruitful contributions to the literature. Firstly, the internal supply-side notion that certain populists have succeeded because they strategically adjusted their message over time is often put forward without elaborating what rules or algorithms the party leaders used to adapt to the public. I argue that the evolutionary approach can theoretically underpin such party-centric explanations by providing the mechanism according to which party leaders can improve their position by learning from feedback, without relying on the less realistic assumption of forward-looking rationality (e.g. Miller and Page 2007). Populism is identified as a party strategy of adaptive learning that can account for the fact that challenging party leaders

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39 In somewhat similar fashion, Fowler and Laver (2008) distinguish between inter-electoral and electoral periods in their simulation tournament of party decision rules. The inter-electoral periods give parties time and ability to respond to polling information about levels of support, while during electoral periods parties are punished or rewarded for their chosen policy position.


are sometimes apparently able to find and exploit successful positions in the policy space, while many other attempts fail to do so. I thus propose that by a process of gradually moderating their ideological message, new or so-called ‘niche’ parties can improve their mass media performance and electoral attractiveness. Rogers (1995: 175) likewise acknowledged that a successful innovation is not necessarily a fixed entity as it diffuses within a social system, but that adaptation can take place, which means that an innovation increases its success because it is changed and adjusted according to how well it fits particular local needs and circumstances.

Secondly, in my opinion the adoption of the evolutionary terminology can improve the communication between different scientific disciplines. The concept ‘adaptation’ appears often in the political science literature on the populist radical right, but with different interpretations. With similar labels for similar concepts and relations between concepts, scholars can more easily exchange hypotheses and findings with fields like organization science, economics, computer science and evolutionary biology. In this way, specific studies on position shifts and successes of populist radical-right parties can contribute to a wider field that deals with understanding of the changes of characteristics (traits) and fortunes of organizations or even societies in general (see e.g. Aldrich and Ruef 2006; Lenski 2005). The objects of selection can refer to routines, instructions, ideas, beliefs, ideologies and other units of information within an organization, political party, company or any human group.

The next section reviews the theoretical background. It explores which policy position changes we would expect and outlines the nature of political competition. In the third section, the data, variables and method of analysis are presented. The fourth section presents the results. Finally, the chapter concludes and puts the results in perspective, sketching the general contribution to the wider literature and the implications for our understanding of the emergence and rise of populist right-wing niche parties in particular.

5.2 Theoretical background

5.2.1 The nature of political competition: shifts in the public debate and the ‘new’ cultural dimension

Before elaborating the notion of adaptive learning, I will first address two questions: What are the relevant traits for a political party? And what are the selective pressures a party can choose to respond to? With regard to the answers to these questions, this study deviates from most previous research in two respects.

Previous studies that address the question to what extent parties are responsive have first and foremost focused on information of voters: the party’s vote share and mean voter policy position. Furthermore, for the operationalization of the positioning of political parties, the data collected by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) is widely considered as the

42 Of course adaptation is not necessarily limited to right-wing challengers only. For instance, it is argued that because of its populism and marketing-like strategic shifts, the Dutch Socialist Party has steadily increased its electoral support and changed its marginal position (Voerman 2009).
most systematic and objective source of information (Dinas and Gemenis 2010) and has been
dominant (e.g. Budge 1994; Adams 2001; Adams et al. 2004, 2006; Somer-Topcu 2009; for the
radical-right parties’ manifestos in particular, see Cole 2005).

Firstly, I agree that the core feature of a party that can change over time is its ideology
as represented by its policy position (likewise see e.g. Budge 1994; Adams et al. 2004; 2006;
2009). It is common to use the traditional socio-economic left-right divide. However, as ex-
plained in chapter 2, in order to understand the success of the populist radical-right, we need to
include issues concerning immigration, globalisation and ethnic diversity. These issues play an
increasingly important role in party competition in most Western democracies, also in the
‘the epicentre of political competition has shifted from economic or left-right issues to non-
material issues such as national identity, immigration, asylum, law and order, and the future of
European integration’.

Secondly, I elaborate on another argument that has already been discussed in detail in
previous chapters, namely that a media-centred pattern of political communication has emerged
(Mancini and Hallin 2004) and that party democracy is being replaced by an ‘audience democ-
racy’ (Manin 1997). This argument implies that to achieve a successful performance in the
mass media or not is a second selection mechanism that a political party faces, in addition to
the choices the electorate has to make concerning which party to support. Thus we will include
the feedback indicators public visibility, resonance and legitimacy. An actor or organism does
not necessarily need to be conscious of which adaptation process is taking place, but Fortuyn
was well aware of the crucial importance of this second selection mechanism. During the 2002
election campaign, he noted that ‘one can go out on the streets and give speeches in rooms for
hundreds of people, but the impact is negligible. (...) Elections have become media battles. To
reach voters, one cannot do without the NOS [the public broadcaster]’ (quoted in Oosthoek
2005: 23).

This second argument also leads us to derive party positions from content analysis of
party positioning in the public debate, instead of merely using the party manifesto as an indica-
tor of the party ideology. The theoretical implication of analyzing claim making in the public
debate is that politicians are able to shift on a much smaller time-scale compared with party
programmes, as these are generally only delivered once during election times. Whereas the
manifesto coding would often generate only one observation of the ideology of each party
during an election campaign, analyzing the course of a political debate suggests that a party
ideology consists of a time series of statements and is thus a dynamic property, which is being
unfolded and shaped over time.

The public actions and statements of politicians can show more flexibility and respon-
siveness to popular feedback than party manifestos. The latter often contain a broad range of
topics, whereas in the public sphere, actors are much more restricted by the limited ‘carrying
capacity’ of the public discourse. Furthermore, Somer-Topcu (2009) found that the influence of
past election results on parties’ current policy behaviour diminishes with time. This suggests
the possibility that we could find stronger adaptation processes when analyzing party position-
ing on the smaller time scale. Perhaps the most relevant and influential ‘past’ for backward-
looking adaptive political leaders are weeks or months, rather than 4-yearly periods.
5.2.2 Choosing between power and ideals

Whereas the discursive opportunity approach used in chapter 3 led to the formulation and test of explanations in terms of external factors that were largely outside the control of Fortuyn -- namely the impact of public reactions of established political actors, opinion makers, commentators and journalists -- an evolutionary approach also points to the strategic moves of the populist actor. Because humans have the capacity to learn from feedback and adjust behaviour, populist radical-right parties, or any party for that matter, can actively try to shape their destiny (Mudde 2007a).

It has often been argued that populist movements tend to concentrate on one or very few controversial issues, such as xenophobia, nationalism, and party corruption (Mazzoleni 2003: 5). In other words, populism has often been identified as a single-issue form of political action. True, populist radical-right parties have often indeed attempted to seize on the immigration issue. However, since the work of Kitschelt (1995) it is acknowledged that in order to optimize their appeals, it is important that these parties diversify their messages. Kitschelt argued that the addition of neoliberal pro-market views is a necessary condition to achieve success. Concentrating on only a select set of topics can thus be counter-productive. Mudde did not find support for the so-called single-issue party thesis. He states that immigration has at best been the main issue of some parties in certain periods of time (1999: 190). Karapin (1998) argued that overreliance on the immigration issue and disregard of other issues have in fact hampered far-right parties in Germany and Britain. The choice of issues is thus, in the words of Cole (2005: 209) ‘an extremely important aspect of a party’s self-identification because emphasis on particular issues can either attract or repel voters’. This argument is extended to the expectation that stressing the immigration issue and neglecting other issues (or vice versa) is not only relevant for the electorate, but can also either enhance or harm newsworthiness and prominence in the eyes of journalists and commentators.

The fundamental question is whether, and to what extent parties change their policy positions. As the ideologies of parties are considered as dynamic, rather than fixed, adaptation can imply ‘losing part of their original identities’ and the erosion of support from orthodox members (Dézé 2004: 20). Parties face a difficult choice between ‘power’ and ‘ideals’ (Kitschelt 1995). They are able to change their policy positions in pursuit of votes, but on the other hand they are reluctant to adjust their viewpoints and adhere to their previous positions in order to avoid the risks related to change. In line with prevailing wisdom, we assume that mainstream parties are mainly driven by the second objective: their party leaders are concerned about their ideology and policy preferences, and try to convince the electorate. With regard to populist entrepreneurs it is expected that, in contrast, they seek to ‘say what the people like to hear’ and that they are inclined to continually pick up signals from society and accordingly adjust their views.

In accordance with an evolutionary framework, we do not assume a priori that stressing immigration and integration issues is advantageous for a populist challenger or not. This depends on the feedback a party gets. We thus expect that Fortuyn improvised and learned during the course of the campaign which message worked best at what particular moment.
Dézé argues that parties face a dilemma between adaptation and distinction, the latter concept meaning that a party stresses the most controversial elements in its platform (with the risk of being excluded or marginalized); and adaptation that one attempts to broaden the electoral base or legitimacy in the eyes of other parties by adjusting the message. However, this distinction is not straightforward, as adaptive behaviour can also prescribe to stay put. Parties can namely also be electorally penalized for moderating their policy programmes, in which case radical parties should be viewed as being a ‘prisoner of their ideology’ (Adams et al. 2006: 516).

5.2.3 Causes of party ideology change: adaptive learning

The assumption that parties are driven by the highest payoff, instead of ideals, was summarized by Downs (1957a: 28) as follows: ‘parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies’. He argued that parties aim to maximize votes, that is to say, that politicians offer a policy package that maximizes their citizen support. This assumption of forward-looking rationality leaves no room for any changes and dynamics in party positioning, as actors would calculate and select the most optimal position, immediately resulting in an equilibrium (see also Tavits 2008: 50).

Therefore, we build on approaches in political science that replace the assumption of rationality by adaptive learning, which means that the optimizing process is ‘backward-looking’ instead of forward-looking (e.g. Kollman et al. 1992, 1998; Laver 2005). Positive outcomes increase the probability that the associated behaviour will be repeated, whereas negative outcomes reduce it. This is also analogous to simple reinforcement learning models or the well-known ‘law of effect’ of Thorndike (1911): an organism modifies its behaviour in response to positive and negative feedback.

This line of argument resembles the ‘past results’ hypothesis of Ian Budge (1994). He considers how parties can decide on policy positions when there is no reliable information about the effects of these decisions on public support and voting. Although politicians make strategic choices in highly uncertain environments, past election performance is a source of information. According to this hypothesis, political parties can learn from the past and consider two pieces of information: the direction of their policy shift during the most recent period, and whether their vote rose or fell during the most recent period. A party provides more of the same – namely, it continues further in the same direction as last time – when it has gained votes, and it changes its policy direction in the opposite direction compared to the last time when it has lost votes.

The general conclusion of previous research on the responsiveness of established political parties is that they do not have a strong inclination to adapt to changes in their environment. The results are not uniform, partly as a result of the diversity in research designs. Nevertheless, the general picture that emerges from several recent empirical studies (e.g. Adams et al. 2006; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Somer-Topcu 2009) is in line with the earlier conclusion of Budge (1994) that parties are reluctant to alter their ideologies. Policy shifts are generally slow, minor and infrequent (Budge 1994; Tavits 2007). Comparative findings of McDonald et al. (2004: 860) lead to the conclusion that ‘to some extent the picture that emerges is a flattering one. Parties are principled and consistent, not opportunistic and vote grabbing’. Wal-
grave and Nuytemans (2009: 202) concluded that political parties ‘are not efficient translators converting popular wishes into party programs and, eventually, into policy measures’. For the Netherlands (1971-2002) in particular, Pennings (2005) found that parties are not very responsive to voter priorities.

Concerning populist parties in particular, the literature offers many scattered illustrations, descriptions and anecdotes of strategic manoeuvring and adaptive policy shifts of successful populist challengers and niche parties, but detailed and systematic studies are scarce (for an exception, see Adams et al. 2006). Adams and colleagues (2006) found that 10 niche parties they (simultaneously) investigated were electorally punished when they moderated their policy positions (by moving to the mean voter position). Of this set of parties, 6 belonged to the Communist party family, 1 was a Green party and 3 belonged to the Nationalist family (FN, AN and the Danish Fremskridtspartiet).

Despite the heterogeneity of the model specifications and results, the second common thread one can find is that mainstream parties don’t seem to be influenced a lot by positive results, but rather by negative results. For example, Adams and colleagues (2004, 2006) could not empirically show that the results of past elections have an effect on the direction of parties’ current policy shifts. Nevertheless, parties shifted in response to the changing attitudes of voters, but only when the public opinion clearly moved in a disadvantageous direction (Adams et al. 2004). So, for right-wing parties this means that they only shift (they moderate their views) when public opinion shifts to the left. Somer-Topcu (2009) finds that parties shift less (in absolute levels) as their previous vote share increases. These findings only partially confirm the ‘past results model’ of Budge (1994) – which assumes that parties should also deliver more of the same in case they gained votes – but are more in line with Nowak and Sigmund’s Pavlov strategy. This comes down to maintaining a position that resulted in successes, and shifting away from positions that resulted in failures (Nowak and Sigmund 1993).

Classical works in psychology support this notion. Kahneman and Tversky (1979) have demonstrated loss aversion: humans have the tendency to strongly prefer avoiding losses to acquiring gains. This is analogous to the psychological phenomenon of ‘negativity bias’, which refers to the finding that people pay significantly more attention to and give more weight to negative rather than positive experiences or information (see e.g. Baumeister et al. 2001).

All in all, this implies that we expect that only electoral losses have an impact on position shifts, and electoral gains do not lead to shifts. When a populist party loses, it infers that it has moved away from public opinion and responds. On the other hand, when it wins, under the condition of uncertainty about the current public opinion, ‘staying put’ is less risky than moving the position further in the same direction. With regard to the public debate, we have distinguished dissonance and consonance. It is plausible that the effect of public disapproval and criticism is negative, because a populist right-wing party probably wants to avoid becoming subject to ridicule or delegitimization. Risk aversion implies that positive reactions do not lead to any policy position shifts.
5.3 Data and variables

5.3.1 Dependent variable: characteristics of political claims

The time span of the election campaign started at the moment Fortuyn publicly announced his intention to join politics and to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections, most likely with Livable Netherlands (LN), on August 20th, 2001. The researched time span ends at May 6th, 2002, the day Fortuyn was assassinated. In order to track the characteristics of his political message, hand-coded political claim analysis (PCA) data was collected. This dataset covers all claims regarding the issues of ethnic relations, citizenship, minority integration, asylum and immigration during the rise of Fortuyn, as well as all claims of populist right-wing actors (even if they were not related at all to issues of ethnic relations and immigration). A claim is ‘a unit of strategic action in the public sphere that consists of the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticism, or physical attacks, which actually or potentially affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors’ (Koopmans et al. 2005: 24).

A claim is not identical to an individual statement. A speech, press conference, column or interview is coded as one strategic action in the public discourse, although several different topics might be addressed and different persons might be criticized. PCA codes each political claim only once. In other words, one strategic action that repeatedly appeared in different media outlets is not duplicated. Examples of the titles of coded claims are ‘Fortuyn is proponent of soft drugs legalization and rejects CDA plans proposing the opposite’ (May 2nd, 2002), ‘Fortuyn clarifies that when he called Islam “backward”, he meant that the religion was outdated. He emphasizes that he is not going to change his position towards Islam in order to make a coalition with CDA possible’ (May 3rd, 2002) and ‘PF says he changed his mind about the Joint Strike Fighter. He thinks the Dutch government should take part in the project’ (May 4th, 2002).

The political claims of Fortuyn were derived from articles in two newspapers (NRC Handelsblad and De Telegraaf) and the daily eight o’clock television news bulletin of the public broadcaster (NOS Journaal). The fourth set of sources consisted of the statements, press releases, reports and columns that appeared on the party websites of LN and LPF, in Elsevier magazine, and on the website of Business Class, a bi-weekly television show hosted by Harry Mens. Fortuyn was given this opportunity by the latter because he had to quit as a columnist for weekly Elsevier magazine after he announced his entrance in the political arena. Therefore, his last contribution to the magazine appeared September 1st, and only two Elsevier claims were coded.43 For the coding of the websites, the digital archive of the ARCHIPOL project of the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties was used.44

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43 The columns that appeared on the Business Class website have later been published under the title “At Your Service”. De Laatste 32 Columns” (Fortuyn 2002b). The columns in Elsevier were published as Fortuyn (2002c).
44 See: http://www.archipol.nl/english/index.html
Thus the dataset is larger than the one used in chapter 3; it consists of 160 claims of Fortuyn. Obviously, in terms of its readership a column on the Business Class website might differ considerably from, for example an interview in a national newspaper, but the public impact of a claim is not an issue here because the data should first and foremost represent the views of Fortuyn. One might even argue that in this case the first political claim represents his views even better because selection by journalists is absent. Table 5.1 presents the sources of the number of coded claims of Fortuyn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources Used for the Coding of Claim Making of Fortuyn</th>
<th>Total claims</th>
<th>also in NRC</th>
<th>also in Telegraaf</th>
<th>also in television news</th>
<th>also on LN/LPF websites</th>
<th>‘Unique’ claim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRC Handelsblad</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Telegraaf</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>television news</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN/LPF websites</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsevier/Business Class columns</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the research on the evolution of Fortuyn’s views until the moment he publicly declared his intention to participate in the upcoming national elections, I choose the time span from January 1994 until September 2001. The claim-making pattern is captured by coding the weekly columns of Fortuyn in Elsevier that started in January 1994.

Party policy platforms are generally measured in two distinct ways (see e.g. Benoit and Laver 2006; Laver 2001). The main issue is whether the positions on various policy dimensions are stressed (a positional approach) or one focuses on the relative importance of each policy issue for a party (a saliency approach). I will hereafter refer to saliency for the emphasis on an issue and to direction for the evaluation of an issue (see likewise Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings 2001). In the saliency approach parties take positions by emphasizing the importance of certain policy areas compared to others. The coding procedure consists of sorting the statements in the party’s programme into various categories and then taking the percentage in each category as a measure of the party’s priorities. In positional approaches, the nature or direction of the statements is measured: parties take up a range of explicit positions at each issue, ranging from fully pro to fully con.

Firstly, we will examine Fortuyn’s position on immigration and integration issues. With regard to immigration and minority integration policies the position of the claim was coded. Claims in favour of a deterioration of the rights or position of immigrants or minorities or expressing a negative attitude towards immigrants or minorities have a score of -1. Conversely, a positive attitude or improvement in the rights and position of immigrants received +1. Ambivalent or neutral claims get a zero. A fourth possibility is that the claim is ‘unclassifi-
able’ in terms of the direction, and that the directional score is missing. As we will see, there is hardly directional variance to explain, therefore the second and most extensive part of the analysis will be devoted to issue saliency.

Our main variable of interest is the amount of salience, which is operationalized by the choice of the issues Fortuyn addressed. The basic elements of information are the amount of claims and the issues addressed within one claim. A maximum of three different issues was coded. Subsequently, a distinction was made between substantive and non-substantive claims. The latter consist of claims of which only the categories ‘electoral competition’ or ‘personal characteristics of opponents’ were coded. Examples are the announcement of the names of the candidates of the party, the assertion that one does not want to form a government with a certain opponent party, or that someone is for instance a good debater, a boring personality, incapable or dangerous. The main distinction we will use in our analysis is the question if a substantive claim made by Fortuyn contained the topic of the ‘multicultural society’ or not. The statements without any reference to immigration or integration issues constitute a rather diverse group, as they can contain any other substantive topic. When the claim of Fortuyn only consists of the declaration that he distanced himself from a politician like Le Pen, De Winter or Haider, without further content, this is not coded as a substantive claim.

Cross-validating party issue positions and salience from different sources, Helbling and Tresch (2009) found that whereas there were no differences between party positions, issue saliency based on media measurements deviated from expert surveys and party manifestos. A discrepancy between the ‘real’ party saliency and issue saliency reported by the media indicates that gatekeepers can distort the emphasis measurement. A statement in the public sphere is not always picked up by journalists. Our coding procedure partly avoids this distortion because the same strategic actions that repeatedly appeared in the news are not duplicated. When Fortuyn devoted attention to a certain issue or not, this not necessarily went hand-in-hand with the amount of media coverage for the party’s emphasis on this issue. For instance, all claims made on the Business Class website were ignored as irrelevant or unimportant, or went simply unnoticed. Conversely, one single statement or action can provoke a lot of mass media visibility. Fortuyn’s statements on Islam in his interview with de Volkskrant do not artificially count as subsequent claims of Fortuyn when reporters or commentators repeat them.45 Coded claims are thus relatively unaffected by the amount of visibility and responses that different statements and actions of Fortuyn receive.

5.3.2 Explanatory variables: the public debate and polls

Public opinion support

The amount of public opinion support is the percentage of people that reported the intention to vote for the party if parliamentary elections would be held, using the Political Barometer data

45 The amount of saliency also depends on the specific operationalization of the issue categories, but this is only relevant when one wants to compare the emphasis scores with other data (Helbing and Tresch 2009).
gathered by Synovate Interview-NSS. We will consider a voting intention for LN as support for Fortuyn from August 20th on. In the second week of February 2002, Fortuyn was forced to step down as leader of LN and founded his own party (LPF) merely two days later. Identical to chapter 3, I will still consider a voting intention for both LN and LPF as support for Fortuyn during the three weeks after these events, thus until the municipal election on March 6th. Many voters may have been uncertain whether or not Fortuyn was still associated with LN during this period, particularly because Fortuyn remained the party leader of Liveable Rotterdam, the local branch of LN. After the municipal elections, only support for the LPF was included in the independent variable.

The public debate

The second selection mechanism consists of the public response in the mass media debate. For the period of the election campaign, the claims were derived from articles in two newspapers (NRC Handelsblad and De Telegraaf) and the daily eight o’clock television news bulletin of the public-service broadcaster (NOS Journaal).

The three elements of feedback input for subsequent claim making are the amount of visibility, dissonance, and consonance. Visibility distinguishes claims that were reported prominently from those that were reported less prominently. We combine different elements of prominence into a composite indicator: 1) Is the claim reported on the front page (newspaper) or during the first news item (television news)? 2) Is the claim the first claim mentioned in the article or in the news item? 3) Is the claim referred to in the headline of the article or during the introduction of the news? 4) Does the claim appear in two or three media outlets? 5) How many times is the claim repeated in follow-up articles? The variable consists of the summed score on each of the items and has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.70, which is evidence of a fair scale and indicates acceptable reliability. The total amount of visibility during a week is divided by the number of claims made by Fortuyn.

In order to distinguish the amount of resonance from the degree to which the public reactions were supportive or critical, resonance is captured by two separate variables. Dissonance counts the number of negative reactions by other actors to Fortuyn. All instances of critical claim making that are directed to or referring to Fortuyn and his political party are included. This can also be an indirect reaction, for instance, when someone urged the leader of the social democratic party to take a stronger stance against the viewpoints of Fortuyn. Consonance is measured by coding the extent to which Fortuyn and his party were supported. A claim that expresses an ambivalent or neutral position was also counted as consonance as we assume that such reactions – although not unequivocally supportive – enhanced the legitimacy of his political message.

The discursive variables have been further specified. For each public response it was coded to which particular claim of Fortuyn it referred (so-called cross-references) or which

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46 The rate of repetition was logged. It is measured independently of resonance because repetitions that occurred in the context of direct reactions to Fortuyn’s statements were excluded.
47 This decision did not significantly affect the results. Additional analyses show that excluding neutral and ambivalent reactions yield substantively similar results.
issue(s) had been addressed in this public reaction. The relative degree of visibility for Fortuyn’s immigration claims is calculated by distracting the average visibility of claims containing all other substantive issues from the average visibility of immigration claims. The relative degree of consonance for immigration and integration claims is operationalized by the difference between the total number of positive and neutral reactions on these particular topics during the past seven days and the amount of positive and neutral reactions on all other substantive issues. Likewise, the relative amount of public disapproval of Fortuyn’s views on immigration and integration issues is the balance between two counts: dissonance on all other mainstream political issues is subtracted from the amount of dissonant claims that include immigration and integration issues.

For the period 1994-2001, the claims for the construction of the independent variables were derived from articles in four newspapers *NRC Handelsblad, de Volkskrant, Algemeen Dagblad* and *Trouw*. The measurements for resonance, dissonance, consonance and legitimacy are identical as described above. Visibility, however, is differently measured and refers to three elements. It captures the number of claims of Fortuyn that reach the newspaper, the number of newspapers in which a claim appears, and how many times a claim is repeated in follow-up articles.

Correlation matrices and descriptive properties of all variables used in this chapter are provided in Tables D1, D2 and D3 in Appendix D. For all analyses, VIF statistics of the independent variables were inspected which did not indicate any multicollinearity problems.

### 5.4 Analysis and results

#### 5.4.1 Direction and saliency during the 2002 election campaign

We have distinguished the emphasis on immigration and integration issues (saliency) and the nature (direction) of this policy stance. Table 5.2 depicts the amount, share and direction of the immigration and integration claims of Fortuyn per month.

It is shown that the average evaluation score for the total period is -0.80. For comparison: similar measurements of Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2003) and Kriesi et al. (2008) result in a value of -0.52 and -0.29 respectively. These significantly lower scores could be due to two outcomes. Firstly, the researched time span differs as we examine a longer range, and our analysis stops at the moment that Fortuyn was assassinated. In contrast, the data of Kriesi et al. covers the two months before the May elections and the period researched by Kleinnijenhuis et al. starts November 20th. Secondly, the PCA method is less affected by the amount of prominence and responses that different actions of politicians receive, than by the core sentence

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48 *De Telegraaf* is only digitally available in the Lexis Nexis database from 1999 onwards.
49 Again, an actor cannot make a repetition-claim and resonance-claim at the same time. Resonance is coded first in that case.
50 These scores are higher than those of the VVD and CDA; both parties get a score of -0.66 (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003). Our PCA data (the full period under investigation) reveal a score of -0.50 and -0.26 respectively.
approach. For instance, Fortuyn’s proposal for a general amnesty for asylum seekers who had already been waiting for at least five years for a residence permit in the Netherlands, reached the headlines of most national newspapers and received a lot of attention on the TV news. Our average direction score seems more in line with other general measurements that are not media-based: with regard to the item immigration, the LPF scores 18.3 points on a twenty-point scale according to an expert survey (Benoit and Laver 2006), and the average position according to a survey among Dutch voters (The Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 2002) is 6.3 on a seven-point scale (see Irwin et al. 2005). Converted into a +1 to -1 scale, these two scores yield values of -0.83 and -0.76 respectively. Coders of the LPF party manifesto give the highest value on the scale, the full 10 points (Pellikaan et al. 2003), which is identical to our coded claim for the presentation of Fortuyn’s book *The Mess of Eight Purple Years* in March (-1.00).

Table 5.2 The amount, share and direction of immigration and integration claims of Fortuyn per month (August 20th, 2001-May 6th, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>immi (n)</th>
<th>mean direction</th>
<th>other issues (n)</th>
<th>share immi (%)</th>
<th>non-substantive (n)</th>
<th>total (n)</th>
<th>opinion poll (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total / average</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average direction per month, shown in the third column in Table 5.2, shows only limited support for the complaint of Fortuyn’s inconsistency. There is no variation in the message during the first half of the time span. The indication of moderation of Fortuyn over time consists of three positive, and four ambivalent or neutral claims. All three of the positive claims refer to Fortuyn’s above-mentioned general amnesty plan. He made these claims on May 3rd, only three days before his death, to the surprise of his political opponents. The proposal was part of a larger ‘deal’ and had to be accompanied by much stricter immigration measures. Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2003: 58) suggest that supporters attracted by earlier tough statements were not scared off, while moderate voters that were still in doubt were attracted, because they needed extra confirmation that Fortuyn was not a racist. This might indeed have worked out
this way, but it is difficult to explain this particular action by adaptation. Given past experiences, we cannot account for this action in terms of learning from success of previous moderations. Regarding the consequences, the proposal produced a higher visibility and more reactions than average, and also Fortuyn’s results in the opinion polls boosted in the same week. There are only two days between this statement and the assassination of Fortuyn. The following last three claims that address the immigration issue seem to indicate that Fortuyn had no inclination to stress this more moderate position again. To the contrary, he shifted the discussion to the other part of the deal. For instance, during a debate on Radio 1 (May 5th), he proclaimed that he did not want to admit any asylum seekers and we had to ‘close the borders’.

Table 5.2 also shows the amount of claims which contained the topic of the ‘multicultural society’ and the amount of claims which contained any other substantive topic. The average share of immigration and integration claims during the researched time span is approximately 45 per cent. This indicates that Fortuyn was apparently frequently dismissive of the immigration and integration issue and found other issues more important to talk about. The radical right is often characterized as a single-issue anti-immigration movement, but Fortuyn clearly addressed other substantive issues regularly and his claim making indicates a broader ideological programme. Although there are obvious differences in emphasis each month, we do not observe a clear trend in Fortuyn’s statements towards less or more emphasis on the issues of ethnic relations and immigration. One can argue that there is the possibility and tendency to offer a broader ideological programme when the amount of substantive claims is higher, but this seems only the case in April.

Fortuyn did not introduce or intensify claims about multicultural issues in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the USA on September 11th, 2001. These attacks presumably aroused or fuelled fear and anger about Muslims, but it is evident that Fortuyn cannot be accused of populist behaviour, in the sense that he was suddenly directed at tapping these feelings in order to exploit them politically. Between August 20th and September 11th, he pleaded repeatedly for what he called a ‘Cold War against Islam’. In his column in Elsevier (August 25th) he stated that ‘the greatest threat to world peace comes from Islam’.

5.4.2 Predicting the saliency during the 2002 campaign

I will continue with an analysis of variation in emphasis. For this reason, a dataset was constructed with the claims as units of observation. An investigation of aggregated scores per time span (for instance, the amount of immigration claims per week) is less appropriate, because one has to take the total amount of substantive claims into account. Alternatively, the measurement could consist of the relative amount of statements devoted to immigration and integration issues, compared to the total amount of statements. However, in that case we would be faced with a higher chance of extreme scores when the total amount of claims is low.

A logistic regression was used, whereby the binary dependent variable is the probability that a substantive claim made by Fortuyn dealt with the immigration and integration issue. A zero is coded when Fortuyn made a claim about any other substantive issue. I investigate the impact of the two selection pressures (opinion polls and discursive success) on subsequent
claim making of Fortuyn by giving each particular instance of claim making its own specific ‘past’ that consists of the period of the previous seven days.51

Table 5.3 Logistic regression of the probability of a substantive claim of Fortuyn about immigration/integration (August 20th, 2001-May 6th, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR z-value</td>
<td>OR z-value</td>
<td>OR z-value</td>
<td>OR z-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance previous claims (t-1)</td>
<td>1.23* 1.87</td>
<td>1.25** 2.03</td>
<td>1.29** 1.97</td>
<td>1.34** 2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance visibility (t-1)</td>
<td>0.80* -1.87</td>
<td>0.80* -1.94</td>
<td>0.77** -2.08</td>
<td>0.77** -2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance consonance (t-1)</td>
<td>0.93 -0.40</td>
<td>0.98 -0.10</td>
<td>0.99 -0.06</td>
<td>0.94 -0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance dissonance (t-1)</td>
<td>0.96 -0.49</td>
<td>0.95 -0.70</td>
<td>0.94 -0.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration claims other actors (t-1)</td>
<td>1.02 1.17</td>
<td>1.02 1.16</td>
<td>1.03 1.21</td>
<td>1.02 1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.Opinion poll (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.72* -1.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.Opinion poll (t-1) * balance previous claims (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.01 0.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opinion poll (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.74 -1.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease opinion poll (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.64 -1.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease opinion poll (t-1) * balance previous claims (t-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.06 0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R</td>
<td>0.06 0.06 0.08</td>
<td>0.08 0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>108 108 108</td>
<td>108 108 108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01 (two-tailed test)

The results (see Table 5.3) show that the previous amount of emphasis predicts an ‘event’ to be more likely. This means that it is more likely that Fortuyn emphasized the immigration topic in a subsequent claim, when he had more strongly stressed this topic in his statements during the previous week, compared to other issues. This short-term continuity in the importance Fortuyn attributed to the two different sets of issues is understandable, given the fact that it is hard to come up with a completely new message at every follow-up occasion he voiced his views. For instance, he almost literally repeated a large part of his statements from the above-mentioned plea for a ‘Cold War’ with Islam (first mentioned in Elsevier) in an interview with the newspaper Rotterdams Dagblad, his column for the Business Class website, and in the September issue of the CDA Magazine.

The propensity of an immigration statement was expected to be higher when the relative degree of visibility and consonance during the previous week is higher. However, regard-

51 This means that two claims made on the same day have the identical values for all explanatory variables.
ing the impact of visibility, we observe a negative effect in line with the ‘alternation model’ (Budge 1994), which holds that a party follows a zigzag pattern. In contrast to the hypothesized ‘win-stay, lose-shift’ pattern, it means that when gatekeepers and journalists give relatively more prominence to the statements of Fortuyn concerning the multicultural society, he was inclined to diminish the emphasis in subsequent claims. Simultaneously, when claims about other topics were more prominently displayed in the news, he stressed immigration and integration in the following debates, columns or interviews, presumably in order to reassure a particular group of voters that this issue was still relevant and important.

The general logic behind such a built-in balancing party dynamic could be interpreted as another variant of adaptative behaviour (instead of vote- or attention-maximizing) that is guided by being representative for one’s current base of supporters. When a party’s principal mission is to reflect the policy stance of its current constituency (instead of recruiting ‘new’ supporters), we would expect a self-corrective response in order to satisfy both extremist and moderate supporters (see likewise e.g. Budge 1994; Adams et al. 2004), who in this case are both the ones who are only attracted by the LPF because of its views on immigration and integration issues, and the ones who deem other substantive issues equally or even more important.

Furthermore, we have to conclude that there is no evidence for shifts in Fortuyn’s priorities that can be attributed to feedback from the nature of and the amount of public reactions. Findings show that the probability is not affected by the relative degrees of dissonance and consonance during the previous seven days. Resonance (achieving more or less public reactions all combined) of immigration and integration issues compared to other issues does not have any impact either (model 2). The implication is that the results paint -- to paraphrase McDonald et al. (2004) -- ‘a flattering picture’: Fortuyn did not change his emphasis during the election campaign of 2002 for the strategic reasons I have hypothesized. This finding does not imply that the political views of Fortuyn necessarily have been stable, consistent or principled and that he did not change his mind at all, but only that we cannot explain these shifts in terms of feedback from successes and failures in the mass media.

Concerning the impact of opinion polls, adaptation would prescribe that the more the vote share increased while concentrating on the issues of immigration and integration, the stronger the tendency to continue to deliver more of the same. Similarly, adaptation would also imply that Fortuyn was inclined to present a broader ideological programme when the increased vote share had been accompanied with a stronger emphasis on other issues than Islam and asylum seekers. However, the effect of the interaction term, which indicates the presence of adaptive behaviour (see likewise e.g. Adams et al. 2006), is insignificant.

The opinion polls do have a negative impact, although the effect is only slightly significant at the ten per cent level. Apparently, Fortuyn was inclined to deploy his ‘unique selling points’ immigration and integration when he was confronted with losses (irrespective of the

52 Including both elements of the balance separately yields insignificant effects. Nevertheless, the direction of the impact of immigration visibility is negative, and that of other substantive issues is positive (its z-values are -1.62 and 1.46 respectively).

53 Models with both elements of the balance (e.g. separately including dissonance on immigration and dissonance on other issues) also yield insignificant results and thus do not alter these results.
emphasis of the previous statements), and put relatively more emphasis on all other substantive issues in subsequent claims, when he was in a ‘winning mood’.

Finally, model 4 represents adaptive learning with a negativity bias towards the opinion polls. The interaction variable now only includes the declines in support (this variable is zero otherwise) to test the expectation that only when a party has lost support in the previous period, it will significantly affect the content of the current claim. The impact of this decline is conditional on the previous amount of emphasis on immigration: opinion poll decreases should have led to a higher probability when the losses were accompanied by a lower level of immigration claims, and to a lower probability when they were accompanied by a strong emphasis on the issues of the multicultural society. However, in this case we do not find any evidence for adaptation either.

5.4.3 Predicting the saliency during the preceding period (1994-2001)

I now shift my attention to the period preceding Fortuyn’s entrance into the political arena. I will analyze the trial-and-error learning process of developing a fruitful ideological stance during a different time period and for a longer time span and thus research if an adaptation process took place during what can be called the ‘socialization period’ for becoming a politician. Obviously, the selection mechanism of electoral support for Fortuyn (in the form of information provided by opinion polls) is not available during this period. Therefore, I focus on adaptation during the struggle for the scarce resources visibility, resonance and legitimacy in the mass media.

Figure 5.1 depicts the number of Elsevier columns that Fortuyn wrote, that contain the issue of the multicultural society, per month. Fortuyn did not seem to have changed the direction of his views concerning immigration and cultural diversity: he had advocated strict policies ever since 1994. For instance, one of his columns in 1994 was titled: ‘The Netherlands is full!’ In contrast, the amount of emphasis on these issues does not seem to have been stable over time. Of approximately 16 per cent (n=60) of the claims, at least one of the three issues coded belongs to this category. Thus, there are many other issues Fortuyn has addressed over the years.

The total amount of substantive attention for Fortuyn is shown in Figure 5.2. This score is the sum of visibility and resonance and thus captures the number of statements and actions of Fortuyn that reached the four newspapers, its repetitions, and all reactions. In February 1997 attention peaked as a result of the public fuss about Fortuyn’s book Against the Islamization of Our Culture. In a notorious debate on the television show Het Lagerhuis Marcel van Dam (a former MP and minister for the Labour Party) stated that this book exploited potential fears among people against foreigners and reminded at the way in which the Dutch National Socialist Movement had attempted to gain votes in the 1930s. Figure 5.3 shows the degree to which immigration and integration issues account for the fluctuations in attention. It is remarkable that until February 1997, the issues of immigration and integration issues were not the most important cause of publicity.
Figure 5.1 The amount of Elsevier columns of Fortuyn that contain the immigration and integration issue (per month)

The peak of attention in February 1997 was not likely to be due to sudden increased claim-making activity of Fortuyn at that particular moment, as he continually attempted to insert his political views in alternative ways into the public debate over the years (besides his weekly column). He published ten books and pamphlets between 1994 and 2001, addressing a wide range of topics such as unemployment and social security policies, norms and values in politics, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, European unification, the service sector, and the societal impact of new information technology. The further diffusion of Fortuyn’s *Elsevier* claims in the Dutch media account for approximately 30 per cent (n=25) of the total amount of visibility of the claim making of Fortuyn. Other forms of claim making that are sometimes displayed in the newspapers and sometimes provoke public reactions are public speeches, opinion articles in other outlets, and book launches. In total, approximately 25 per cent of the visibility of Fortuyn was a result of a claim he made about the multicultural society; and these issues caused 50 per cent of the amount of criticism (see Table 5.4).

54 For a detailed bibliography of Fortuyn, see Pels (2003).
Figure 5.2 The amount of substantive attention for Fortuyn (per month)

Figure 5.3 The balance between attention for immigration/integration and other substantive issues (per month)
Table 5.4 Amount of attention for substantive claims of Fortuyn (Jan 1994 - Aug 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Visibility</th>
<th>Negative reactions</th>
<th>Positive reactions</th>
<th>Ambivalent/Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration, integration</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other substantive issues:</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime, justice, public order</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public services (health care, education)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General anti-establishment (corruption/integrity of government)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare state, social security</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic policy, entrepreneurship</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European integration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The monarchy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms and values</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other topics</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5 shows the results of a tobit regression of the number of immigration claims Fortuyn made per month. The dependent variable is left-censored; the largest category is a zero score (Fortuyn does not make any immigration claims) and this value can obviously not turn negative in case he had a tendency to emphasize other issues even more strongly. Identical to the previous multivariate regression, we have three measurements of media success.

Thorndike’s law of effect, the most important principle in psychological learning theory (Bendor et al. 2011: 10), would prescribe that Fortuyn was inclined to choose issues that generated positive feedback and less likely those associated with negative feedback. In contrast, we find that dissonance clearly had a positive impact. The more negative the balance (between the amount of critical reactions on Fortuyn’s views on the multicultural society and amount of criticism on other substantive issues), the stronger Fortuyn’s tendency to address immigration claims in the subsequent month. One could argue that this is caused by the conviction that any reaction is better than no reaction, in line with the motto ‘no news is bad news’ (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 116). However, controlled for shifts in dissonance, we do not find a similar additional effect of consonance. The effect of visibility is in the expected direction, but not significant.\(^{55}\) Please note that our operationalization entailed that an actor cannot make a repetition claim and resonance claim at the same time (to avoid an overlap between these two variables), and resonance is coded first in that case.

Furthermore, the positive effect of the lagged dependent variable implies that the claim-making pattern displayed continuity. Fortuyn having stressed immigration and integra-

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\(^{55}\) When the variable dissonance is omitted, the effect of consonance remains insignificant, but the effect of visibility then becomes significant at the 5 percent level (t=1.99).
tion topics during the previous month, makes a higher amount in the subsequent month more likely. Furthermore, an increase in the influx of asylum seekers is positively associated with the number of columns in Elsevier that address these issues, but the statistically significance is only marginally below the ten per cent level. Finally, the results show that the number of public claims on immigration and integration issues made by all other actors did not affect Fortuyn’s behaviour.56

In models 2 and 3 the variables visibility and dissonance are replaced by the two components of which these variables are constructed. When I include both negative reactions on immigration topics, and negative reactions on other topics (instead of one variable for the balance between these two), the debit and credit side complement each other (see model 3). The two elements of the consonance variable are both insignificant (not shown in the table).

Table 5.5 Tobit regression of the amount of substantive claims of Fortuyn about immigration/integration, per month (Jan 1994 - Aug 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coeff</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>coeff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of immigration claims (t-1)</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Immigration claims others (t-1)</td>
<td>1.25e-3</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>1.26e-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Asylum seekers influx (t-1)</td>
<td>0.35e-3*</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.35e-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance visibility (t-1)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance consonance (t-1)</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance dissonance (t-1)</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility immigration (t-1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility other issues (t-1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance immigration (t-1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonance other issues (t-1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* p < 0.10; \** p < 0.05; \*** p < 0.01 (two-tailed test)

Note: e-3 = multiply times 10^{-3}

56 This variable comes from another data source. See chapter 4 there for more detailed information on this variable. I have checked the effect of the variable ‘amount of immigration news’ from the study of Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2006; see also Vliegenthart 2007) instead (Pearson’s r = 0.45). Although in the expected direction, the coefficient is not significant (t-value = 1.33). Additional analyses reveal that there are no delayed effects (t-2).
5.5 Conclusion and discussion

We did not find empirical support for the claim that Fortuyn was ideologically driven by the opinion polls and the mass media during the 2002 election campaign. Focusing on the impact of negative and positive feedback on the content of his political message during the time span between August 2001 and May 2002, the conclusion of this chapter is in line with much previous research on the responsiveness of political parties in general: they do not have a strong inclination to opportunistically adapt to changes in their environment. Fortuyn was thus in this sense a normal party leader. The conclusion of McDonald et al. (2004: 854) that with regard to party manifestos ‘the overwhelming impression is that parties choose policy positions independently of public sentiments at the time of the election’ also seems to hold for Fortuyn. This outcome suggests that when populist radical-right newcomer parties enter the political arena, they are perhaps less distinctive in their behavioural guidelines from mainstream parties than often claimed.

The most drastic possibility is that political leaders do simply not have the willingness or capacity to adjust their opinions. In evolutionary games, rules and behaviour can be hard-wired, instead of softwired (Macy 1996). So far, models of party responsiveness have assumed softwired agents. Assuming fully responsive political actors, implies that adaptation proceeds by reinforcement or imitation. Both processes alter the distribution of traits, positions or strategies within the repertoire of each individual actor. Organisms (party leaders) can adapt their positions to their previous behaviour and successful policy stances can jump from one organism to another. In contrast, if agents are hardwired and programmed with a certain fixed ideology, fluctuations in policy positions should be interpreted as random error around a fixed mean. McDonald et al. (2007) labelled such parties as ‘homeostatic wanderers’. They concluded that this behavioural category (moving around one’s mean without developing patterns of change over time) is the modal outcome. The hindrance of change is often referred to as ‘structural inertia’ in evolutionary approaches to the study of organizational dynamics (Hannan and Freeman 1984). Without the ability for changes at an individual level, adaptation processes can only occur at the level of the population.

Concerning media visibility, the finding was even more clear in contrast to a strategy that prescribes to maintain and reproduce behaviour that is associated with rewards. We found that the issue emphasis in claim making was not reinforced because of achieved prominence in the mass media; to the contrary, it followed the opposite pattern of diminishing the emphasis on immigration and integration issues when one’s claims concerning these topics became headline news. This pattern of alternation is only understandable in the light of the aim to compensate for the distortion of your actual profile caused by journalists. The public awareness and knowledge of a party’s position largely depends on the actions on the public stage. Journalists and commentators can accentuate or overlook the party’s anti-immigration profile by giving its messages more prominence or not. If party leaders continuously try to adapt their ideology to the median policy stance of their current supporters, they will react to any media distortion of
the actual party position in an opposite, centre-seeking way.\footnote{Under the assumption, of course, that media distortion has not yet caused shifts in the average ideal point of one’s constituents, or, more importantly, that such possible shifts have not yet been observed and incorporated into the party’s new target.} Such a party-positioning strategy has been labelled ‘aggregator’ by Laver (2005) and ‘partisan constituency representation’ by Ezrow et al. (2010).

This effect of distortion is of course not only applicable to the analysis of public claim making of parties, but also to party manifestos measurements. Dinas and Gemenis (2010) argued that when extreme parties have distinguished themselves in the public debate, they are in a position to present more middle-of-the-road policy stances in their manifesto. Inversely, when the everyday mass media discourse presents a picture of small ideological differences, a party has a stronger incentive to differentiate itself in its party manifesto.

The second follow-up question in this chapter was to what extent the ideological identity of Fortuyn changed through a process of cultural evolution before he entered politics. Was his issue emphasis shaped and moulded due to adaptation during the long run-up to the political participation in the 2002 national election campaign? The answer on this second question can provide more insight in the decision of Fortuyn to enter the political arena with that particular fixed ideology at that moment. Therefore, we have analyzed the impact of feedback on the pattern in the content of the weekly columns of Fortuyn during the period from 1994 until September 2001. The main finding was that relatively more public criticism and disapproval on Fortuyn’s views as political commentator on immigration and integration issues resulted in a stronger emphasis on these issues in subsequent claim making. Populist leaders face a trade-off between being provocative (in order to guarantee newsworthiness) and being taken seriously as a legitimate actor (see e.g. Bos et al. 2010). Responding positively to dissonance appears to mainly reflect the first aim. Learning from feedback over time about what issues were apparently controversial yet ignored in Dutch politics, can explain why Fortuyn evolved over time towards the decision to enter politics with an anti-immigration agenda, instead of shifting the emphasis to any other single issue as his main selling point.

The lack of an inclination to ideologically shift during an election campaign could be explained in two ways. Firstly, being trustworthy and clearly distinguishable from other parties seems to function as a tremendous brake. Constantly adjusting one’s stance could be electorally harmful because voters are inclined to punish inconsistency and a lack of reliability. The more often a party shifts, the higher the chances are that the electorate gets confused about whether this party corresponds to its views or not. Adams et al. (2006) found that niche parties are generally more rigid than mainstream parties and display even less tendency to adjust their policies in response to changes in the mass public’s policy beliefs. According to the authors, these parties do not gain more electoral support when they moderate, and so their optimal vote-seeking strategy is to stay put and maintain their policy appeal to those core voters who are drawn to them for ideological reasons. This is in line with Kitschelt’s statement that ‘a party’s inability to pursue electorally optimal objectives could be due to the power of party activists constraining an electorally rational leadership’ (Kitschelt 2007: 1195). Likewise, concerning social movement organizations Minkoff (1999) stressed that the rewards of flexibility are extremely
limited. She found that women’s and racial minority organizations that had a history of core change were more likely to fail than those that remained committed to their original identity.

Secondly, this outcome might be attributed to the fact that politicians face a highly complex and uncertain environment in which not all information is self-evident. Even if you are losing support, how do you interpret the message this sends you? Polls do not provide complete information on what actually influences voting. With regard to party manifestos, Budge (1994) similarly questions if the election results from four years ago provide much unequivocal information and can be usefully extrapolated to a contemporary situation. Therefore, in general, a party may as well follow its own ideology and preferences.

The information provided by polls might be less ambiguous when all parties are observed at the same time. I have focused on individual learning, but party leaders might also exhibit what is called vicarious or social learning. This entails that strategic shifts are guided by looking at previous shifts, and corresponding fortunes, of competitors. Future research could further investigate the role of this second variant of adaptive learning (see e.g. Van Spanje 2010).

The distinction between being softwired (flexible) and hardwired (fixed) has important implications for our understanding of the emergence and rise of niche party contenders. When organisms (hosts that are genetically programmed with a certain ideology) can be replaced, but not be modified, adaptation can only occur at the population level. Thus, if all parties would be strongly inclined to ‘stay put’ and voters’ preferences and priorities change, the only way to update the connection between the popular and political agenda is via the ‘deaths’ and ‘births’ of political parties or political actors. In order for a new strategy, trait, rule or habit to become more frequent, it is necessary to replace one or more of the hosts that are programmed with a different and ‘outdated’ policy stance. Of course, it may also happen through shifts in political leadership instead of deaths of entire parties. According to King, the indirect influence of leadership on election outcomes, resulting from the political leader’s impact on the ideology and image of a party, is often enormously important. Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand are good examples (King 2002: 5).

If it is true that established political parties are ideologically rigid, we should simply accept the fact that now and then, new parties and political entrepreneurs will emerge and break through, like, in the Netherlands, the LPF or more recently the Partij Voor de Vrijheid of Geert Wilders. When this happens, this is something to be celebrated, rather than feared. With hardwired agents, this is the only way to ensure a proper functioning of modern parliamentary democracy, where the relationship between the preferences and priorities of voters and parties is considered to be crucial.

Yet, for the understanding of the timing and rapidity of the breakthrough of the populist radical-right challenger after having joined the political competition in August 2001, the outcome that we deal with relatively inflexible or hardwired ideological agents implies that we have to rely on the role of external opportunities, instead of a party-centred explanation in terms of tactical ideological shifts. Besides the amount and nature of mass media publicity for the populist actor (the main focus of the previous two chapters), other external opportunities are the amount of importance the media attached to different sorts of issues (agenda-setting),
and mass media attention for visibility, resonance and legitimacy devoted to (the policy positions of) the competitors.

However, one might argue that such a conclusion of this study is too hastily drawn and that the role of party-centred ideological explanations for the rise of Fortuyn should be explored in more detail and need more elaborate consideration. His stance was apparently not changed and adjusted in reaction to positive feedback from mass media success and opinion polls during his rise; thus, the beneficial effect of adaptation during the course of the campaign cannot account for his rise. The lack of evidence for ideological shifts over time as a consequence of positive or negative feedback suggests that in this respect Fortuyn seemed to have followed the device to ‘never change a winning team’. Fortuyn had generally experienced a steady improvement of his electoral support and media attention over time, but he did not try to make his team even more successful by replicating relatively successful statements more often and discarding relatively unsuccessful statements more often in subsequent opportunities of claim making.

In this empirical analysis, we tested to what extent the behaviour of Fortuyn was in line with our hypotheses derived from cultural evolutionary theory. It could be fruitful to change the direction of this enterprise: instead of focusing on the empirical outcomes and analyzing to what degree these actual developments can be explained in terms of adaptation, we could also focus on the elaboration of the implications of our expectations based on the use of or abstention from different adaptive strategies.

Such an enterprise will be the topic of the next chapter. Simulation models will be used to provide insight in the consequences of different theoretical assumptions. For instance, instead of the feedback provided by opinion polls, an alternative voter-based selection mechanism of which the consequences can be theoretically explored, is the adjustment of one’s ideological stance to the average opinion of one’s supporters.
6 Simulating political stability and change in the Netherlands (1998-2002). An agent-based model of party competition with media effects empirically tested

6.1 Introduction

Stephen Jay Gould (2002: 1341) argued that the course of American history was changed by one person called Joshua Chamberlain. He led a crucial bayonet charge (because he had run out of ammunition) in a decisive battle during the Civil War. Without his actions during this particular tipping point, the South would have probably won the battle in Gettysburg, which would potentially have led to the victory in the war. This anecdote illustrates his general plea for examining the role of contingency in history (McGarr 2003). Hereby, Gould (1989: 48) used the thought experiment of replaying the tape of life: ‘if each replay strongly resembles life’s actual pathway, then we must conclude that what really happened pretty much had to happen’.

Such experiments can be fruitful, because we know how things turned out, but obviously we have no data on how things did not turn out. This can also be applied to the case of Fortuyn. We have concluded that we cannot attribute the successful rise of Fortuyn to the fact that he gradually changed his ideology and improved his programmatic appeal during the course of the campaign by trial-and-error learning from polls and media success. Apparently, he had discovered the ‘winning formula’ before he decided to enter the political arena. Also, we found that the mass media played a decisive role, as a higher media visibility of Fortuyn led to more public opinion support, which in turn enhanced subsequent media access.

With counterfactual reasoning we are able to rewind history, explore alternative scenarios and hypothesize what would for instance have happened if Fortuyn had joined politics with a different ideological position or a different strategy. When the party Liveable Netherlands was officially launched in June 2001, it still was ideologically a rather ‘colourless’ party. The board only presented a brief pamphlet and explicitly stated that the members should bring up the important issues and decide about the political programme themselves. Would such a strategy of listening to ‘the people’ have caused any leader of the LN to evolve into a leader of an anti-immigration party?

A promising technique for developing evolutionary simulations is agent-based modelling (hereafter: ABM) as it is especially suited for the investigation of complex dynamic systems with interacting (groups of) agents (Janssen and Ostrom 2006). Axelrod (1997: 3) noted that ABM provides ‘a third way of doing science’ because one starts with a well-defined set of assumptions, like deduction. But unlike deduction, ABM is capable of analyzing consequences that cannot be deduced with conventional formal techniques. And although ABM is in itself a solely theoretical exercise, it shares with induction its main method of revealing these conse-

58 A slightly different version of this chapter has been published in the Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation (Muis 2010).
59 For an elaborate demonstration of how complex dynamics of multiparty competition make outcomes not just difficult to solve, but analytically intractable and thus cannot be solved using classical analytical analysis, see Laver and Sergenti (2011).
quences through analysis of a set of data (in this case data generated by running the computer simulation). Laver and Sergenti (2011: 18) illustrate the difference between formal and computational methods as follows: Of a circle with radius \( r \), we can formally deduce the area of that circle \( A \), because it is possible to prove analytically that the proposition: \( A = \pi r^2 \) holds for any positive real \( r \). With computation, admittedly less elegantly, we sample a large number of positive real values of \( r \), draw many circles and compute \( A \), analyze the data and observe that in every single case \( A \approx \pi r^2 \).

Kollman et al. (1992; 1998) and Laver (2005) used ABM to reflect party competition as adaptive learning by party leaders in an evolving complex system and show that it is a very effective way to investigate the deployment of different strategies of different parties within a multi-dimensional policy space. Because the behaviour of any agent in the entire system might (indirectly) affect the macro outcomes, these models use an ecological approach, which means that they do not explore the failures and fortunes of one single party in isolation. Thus, although my simulations are primarily designed to give insight in the consequences of different hypotheses on the rise of Fortuyn’s party, I will also present the outcomes concerning the ups and downs of all other political parties.

This chapter differs in two respects from most other applications of agent-based models of party competition. Firstly, theoretical progress is made by taking the role of the mass media into account. In previous work it is implicitly assumed that all parties are equally visible to citizens, whereas I will start from the more realistic assumption that there is also competition between parties for gaining attention in the public sphere. With this addition, it is possible to address the question why it is relatively rare that new parties are able to successfully compete with political actors already established in the political system.

Secondly, I argue that, if we really want to learn useful lessons from agent-based models, we should seek to empirically falsify these models by confronting the outcomes of simulations with real data. To my knowledge, to date, except from illuminating work of Laver (2005), most of the agent-based models of party competition have been an exclusively theoretical exercise. To give substance to this general argument, in part two of this chapter I will evaluate the empirical relevance of simulations of party competition in the Netherlands. Using independent data on party positions, I will validate the extent to which simulations generate mean party sizes, as well as time series fluctuations in these, that resemble public opinion polls and election outcomes.

6.1.1 **ABM as a theoretical tool for modelling party competition**

Complexity theory and agent-based modelling reflect growing awareness that the behaviour of human groups is sometimes highly complex, non-linear, path-dependent, and that collective rationality can arise without any intent on the part of the individual agents (Macy and Willer 2002). Pioneers in this field showed how simple rules of individual behaviour explain phenomena such as the emergence of spatial segregation patterns (Schelling 1978) and the evolution of cooperation based on reciprocity (Axelrod 1984). ABM permits one to study how interactions between heterogeneous autonomous agents give rise to macro-level regularities, a characteristic which Epstein (1999) coins ‘generative social science’ (see also Cederman 2005). Complex-
ity theory challenges the notion that by perfectly understanding the behaviour of each element of a system, we will understand the system as a whole. In situations in which people’s behaviour or choices depend on the behaviour or the choices of other people, any simple summation to the aggregates is often misleading. Alternatively, this approach builds the model from the bottom-up, focusing on micro rules and seeking to understand the emergence of macro-behaviour (Axelrod 1997). Thus, we have to look at evolving interactions between individuals and their environment in what Miller and Page (2007: 10) call a ‘social ecosystem’. Traditional tools that rely on reducing the system to its atomic elements fail to understand complex worlds as it is impossible to reduce the system without killing it: ‘The ability to collect and pin to a board all of the insects that live in the garden does little to lend insight into the ecosystem contained therein’.

As complex interactions between agents, either persons, nation-states or political parties, are essential in political behaviour, agent-based simulation is also a promising method for analyzing political phenomena (see De Marchi and Page 2008). The key assumption of models of political party competition is that two categories of actors continually make decisions: voters make the choice which party to support and party leaders offer citizens a certain policy package in order to attract support. With regard to party competition, there are three good reasons to move from static spatial models to systematic application of computer simulations (Fowler and Laver 2008; see also Miller and Page 2007: 78):

1. The first advantage of ABM is that it permits us to explore the inherently dynamic behaviour of a system. Social scientists have often recognized the importance of dynamic analysis (e.g. McAdam et al. 2001) but have been constrained by their tools. With the methodology of computation we are more able to model party competition as a system in continual motion: what political actors do at a certain point in time during the political process feeds back to affect the entire process at one later time period. With ABMs, we ‘analyze the dynamic processes of party competitions as they unfold, rather than just end-states or equilibria’ (Kollman et al. 1998: 157). Thus, these models are suited if one is not only interested in an equilibrium, but also wants to explore the dynamics before a phenomenon has settled down. Schelling (1978: 26) states that ‘unless one is particularly interested in how dust settles, one can simplify analysis by concentrating on what happens after the dust has settled’.

2. Although the formal approach and computation should be considered as complements rather than substitutes in the development of sound theory, computation-based models are a promising alternative in case of fundamental analytical intractability. Formal modelling usually proceeds by developing mathematical models derived from first principles. Unfortunately, the conventional formal approach works best for static, homogenous and equilibrating worlds. The entire model has to be kept mathematically tractable and if we want to investigate more complex dynamic worlds, we need to pursue other modelling approaches. Computational models allow us to consider rich environments with greater fidelity than existing techniques permit, ultimately enlarging the set of questions that we can productively explore (Miller and Page 2007: 20).60

60 The trade-off of ABMs is the cost of having less exacting analytics. Formal models are more precise. They allow little comfort, whereas there is comfort in vagueness (McElreath and Boyd 2007). But a hy-
3. Another important reason to shift from analytical to agent-based models is a reassessment of behavioural assumptions about agents: it is possible (though of course not necessary) to implement the hypothesis that agents use adaptive rationality rather than strategically forward-looking rationality (Bendor et al. 2003; Fowler and Laver 2008). Rational choice theorists assume that players choose the strategy with the highest expected utility, given their expectations about what the other players will do. Real people lack global information, infinite reasoning or calculation power and a consistent value-structure (Simon 1983); they are more likely to use trial-and-error behaviour -- repeating satisfactory actions and avoiding unsatisfactory ones. Thus, in complex landscapes like electoral competition, actors search for a satisfactory position, which might be far from optimal (Laver 2005). Evolution does not necessarily lead to optimization and often results in sub-optimal outcomes (Dennett 1995; Macy 1997).

6.1.2 The role of the mass media

To date, models of party competition involve one important assumption that is relatively unelaborated. Take, for example, the model of Laver (2005), where voters adapt their party support in the light of each new profile of party policy positions, and parties adapt to new configurations of voter support. In this process of endless search, it is not explained how and to what extent voters and parties are able to gather information on each others’ positions. Information should be a crucial aspect when investigating and modelling an election campaign as a dynamic process with co-evolving adaptive actors (De Marchi 1999), but surprisingly, the role of the mass media has not been mentioned. In this dissertation I have stressed the argument that politics have become increasingly ‘mediatized’ (Strömbäck 2008) and that political contention more and more consists of a battle over media attention and information supply in the public sphere. Political parties have finite ability to publicly express their views and not all parties are in an equal position to communicate their issue positions in the public sphere. Journalists simply cannot convey all positions of all parties on all issues at any time. The public sphere is a bounded space characterized by a high level of competition (Koopmans 2004a; Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). This can theoretically underpin the assumption of Laver and Schilperoord (2007: 1716) that a set of parties is simply ‘below the radar’ of mainstream party competition. Just like protests that receive no media coverage at all are ‘non-events’ (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993), parties that do not become publicly visible can thus be considered as ‘non-parties’.

The willingness of the electorate to undertake an extensive search for information about policy platforms is limited by costs (Downs 1957a). De Marchi (1999) includes a constraint of the costs actors will make for acquiring information. Voters have a finite amount of attention they dedicate to political issues and must actively ignore most of the potential information that they encounter, given the inherent limits of information processing (see Simon 1983). Thus, I argue that voters do not necessarily have complete information about party positions. The electorate is unlikely to have full knowledge of all party platforms if this information should not only be as precise as possible, but also give a best possible answer to a relevant question. Thus, I agree with Miller and Page (2007: 71) that ‘analytic methods provide exact answers’ but ‘good answers only make sense when we are asking good questions’.

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is hardly presented in the mass media (Jenkins 1999). Gelman and King (1993) conclude that the news media have an important effect on the outcome of presidential elections by conveying candidates’ positions on important issues. This so-called enlightened preferences hypothesis is also supported in Britain. Andersen et al. (2005) find that knowledge on party platforms varied according to the level of media attention and better informed voters were more likely to vote for a party that represented their own policy position.

As explained in previous chapters, the impact of the amount of media publicity for a party can be supplemented with hypotheses about the impact of the tone of the coverage. However, for the sake of simplicity, I will implement one single parameter in my thought experiment labelled ‘media distortion’ to act for the total impact of mass media attention. With the addition of such a parameter added, it is possible to address the question why it is relatively rare that new parties are able to successfully compete with political actors already within the political system. Especially insurgent parties are dependent on the news media for mobilizing popular support (Jenkins 1999). The problem of new or marginal parties of being below the radar is not (only) a result of the lack of quality of their ideological platform, but mostly a result of not gaining any attention. Apart from the ideological gaps in the market, the success of a new party will depend on the extent to which the newcomer is able to launch a successful promotion campaign. As a necessary condition for winning seats, a new party needs at least a minimal campaign budget and a minimal amount of publicity (Lucardie 2000b). For example, Jenkins (1999) explains the breakthrough of the new Reform Party in Canada by its opportunity to get a considerable share of the scarce media resources.

6.1.3 Empirically testing ABMs

Although more recently an increasing number of scholars are confronting their models with empirical observations (Janssen and Ostrom 2006), most of the agent-based models have been exclusively theoretical exercises and highly abstract thought experiments (Boero and Squazzoni 2005). This implies that a hypothesis is only constructed, but not tested. For example, in a recent article on a tournament on political party strategies, Fowler and Laver (2008: 71) explicitly claim that ‘our task was not to create the most realistic possible model of party competition’. Therefore, like in most simulation models in general, this work can be extended with follow-up questions concerning the match with empirical data. Is the winning strategy (as generated by this tournament model) in line with observed patterns in real party competition? Do the failing party strategies really perform as badly in reality? The answer may be yes, and crucially, it may be no. It is precisely this latter possibility that qualifies the agent-based computational model as a scientific instrument (Epstein 1999). In line with the critical method (Popper 1973) I argue that an essential purpose of an empirical approach is to generate statements that are consistent with observed patterns. If we really want to learn useful lessons from agent-based models, we should seek to empirically falsify these models by confronting the outcomes of simulations with real data.61 Therefore, I will evaluate the empirical relevance of different

61 This critique on a solely theoretical application of recent agent-based models is similar to the criticism towards sharp-end rational-choice theorists, that despite its theoretical sophistication, rational choice
simulations of the party competition in the Netherlands and test the extent to which simulations generate an empirically adequate representation of what really happened.

6.2 Building the model

6.2.1 The dependent variable: party support

In line with an ecological approach, the model captures the complete Dutch political system. Therefore, the data that the ABM generates automatically consist of the fluctuations in electoral support and party positions for all parties. However, my main targets of interest were the electoral performances and ideological pathways of both Liveable Netherlands and List Pim Fortuyn over time during the 2002 election campaign. Nevertheless, I have replayed the tape of history already from the prior elections in May 1998 onwards, because the run-up period shapes the eventual availability and sizes of the predicted niches in the political landscape in 2002.

The explicandum party support not only entails the election results, but also the variations over time in support. Data on monthly levels of support for the various parties during the period from May 1998 until May 2002 are provided by the polling agency Synovate Interview-NSS. Party support is measured by the percentage of people that reported the intention to vote for the party when asked for their choice if parliamentary elections would be held the next day.

6.2.2 The independent variables: assumptions about the setting and the agents

Voter and party distribution in a two-dimensional space

Two basic breeds of agents are created: voters and candidates. The first step in the simulation is to construct a spatial representation of the policy positions of parties and voters. What are the most realistic and relevant dimensions and how do Dutch parties score on each of these dimensions? I made three important decisions during the construction of the model.62

Firstly, in line with the two-fold interpretation of ‘party ideology’ in the previous chapter, the question is whether I should stress the positions on various policy dimensions (a positional approach) or mainly focus on the relative importance of each dimension for each party (a saliency approach). The importance parties attach to policy dimensions can be quite distinct from the positions they take on these same dimensions (Benoit and Laver 2006). The Manifesto Research Group (Budge et al. 2001) believes that issues are mostly salient in nature, i.e. parties pay attention to some issues and neglect others, regardless of their positions on these

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62 I used Netlogo, version 4.0.2. The programming code for the entire model is available on www.jaspermuis.com. Michael Laver was helpful by sending me his programming code used for his APSR 2005 article.
issues. Each party is believed to have a set of issues that belong to it and therefore parties emphasize these issues, while rival issues are neglected (Pennings and Keman 2003). Others scholars (e.g. Downs 1957a; Kitschelt 1995) argue that issues are generally more often confrontational and not valence in nature, i.e. that parties take up a range of explicit positions at each issue, ranging from fully pro to fully con.

In the previous chapter, data was presented on both the direction and emphasis of the political statements of Fortuyn. To my best knowledge, simulations of multi-dimensional, multi-party competition that have been developed thus far has used the positional language. Therefore, in contrast to my focus on issue emphasis in the previous chapter, I will focus on the direction of policy positions in this chapter.\(^{63}\)

Secondly, I decide to reduce Dutch politics to two dimensions. This assumption seems theoretically sound; several scholars make the same assumption. The first dimension is the socio-economic divide that consists of promoting raising taxes to increase public services versus promoting cutting public services to cut taxes (Laver and Mair 1999). The second continuum reflects accepting immigration and promoting policies helping immigrants versus opposing immigration and policies helping immigrants. Citizens considered issues related to minorities and refugees as the most important problems facing the Netherlands since the early 1990s (Aarts and Thomassen 2008). I will hereafter refer to it as the cultural dimension. Using a socio-economic left-right dimension is quite common, whereas it is a lot harder to choose the appropriate second divide as there is considerable variety in the label and content of such a second dimension: libertarian-authoritarian (De Lange 2007), progressive-conservative (Pennings and Keman 2003), social liberalism (Benoit and Laver 2006) or communitarian (Pelikaan et al. 2003). Most of these dimensions include the politics of multiculturalism versus monoculturalism, but also tap other aspects like religious norms (Pennings and Keman 2003) or individual freedom and collective decision modes (De Lange 2007). I will follow Van Holsteyn et al. (2003: 83) who show (using principal components analysis) strong empirical support for the claim that the admittance of asylum seekers and assimilation of foreigners represent a different dimension (besides the traditional left-right dimension) among voters as well parties. I assume that a third religious-secular dimension (Van Holsteyn et al. 2003) played no substantive role in Dutch politics in the researched years. Such an ethical dimension is only relevant to explain the marginal but fairly stable electoral support for two small fundamentalist Christian parties (CU and SGP). Thus, I will exclude these parties from my analysis. These two parties are against marriage between homosexuals and the legalization of euthanasia, issues that were not contested by any other party, not even the Christian Democrats (Van Kersbergen 2008).

The third decision is how to measure the position of Dutch parties on each of these dimensions. For an overview and comparison of measurement approaches of party positions, see Laver (2001) and Benoit and Laver (2006). The positions of the parties on both dimensions are derived from expert judgement scores reported by Laver and Mair (1999). The main reason

\(^{63}\) It should be noted, though, that the parameter ‘policy stance’ in the simulation I present here can theoretically also be interpreted as the amount of emphasis. Stressing rightist, rather than leftist issues could easily be represented spatially in a similar policy field. Only the empirically embedded assumptions about the initial party positions will probably differ somewhat in that case.
for using expert scores instead of the political claim-making data used in previous chapters is consistency. The claim-making data source contains detailed information of claims on the issues of immigration and integration, but statements of all parties on traditional socio-economic issues were not coded. Table 6.1 presents the scores of the Dutch parties on these two dimensions in 1998. The lower the score on the socio-economic divide, the more a party supports state intervention and raising taxes to increase public services. Low scores on the cultural dimension indicate that the party embraces a multicultural society and is against measures to restrict immigration. I have also provided the media-based scores of Koopmans et al. (2005) on the multicultural/monocultural continuum (for the period from May 1997 to the May 1998 elections) to check the relationship between the two scales. The Pearson correlation between the claim making and expert scores is 0.94.

Table 6.1 Scores of Dutch parties in 1998 on the economic and cultural dimension (expert-judgement scores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Multicultural vs. monocultural policy dimension</th>
<th>Socio-economic policy dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media scores position (z-score * 10)</td>
<td>Expert scores position (z-score * 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original score</td>
<td>expert score</td>
<td>position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>-8.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
<td>-12.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>19.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Koopmans et al. (2005) (media-scores) and Laver & Mair (1999) (expert-judgement scores).

Notes: High scores indicate a greater emphasis on the market in socio-economic policy and stronger stance in favour of a monocultural society on the cultural dimension. There were no claims of the SP in the media data on this issue. For the expert-scores of the CD, the score is taken from 1994 (Laver, 1995) as no score is measured in 1998.

Voters

Firstly, my assumption is that citizens choose the ideologically most proximate party and all votes are what Van der Brug and Fennema call ‘idealistic’ (2003: 59). Thus, strategic choices in terms of party size and government formation are neglected. Also a directional model of party choice (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989) is not utilized here. Voters calculate the...
distance each time period and change their party support immediately when another party is ideologically closer. Moreover, it is assumed that the salience of the dimensions is fixed and equal across the two dimensions. This means the distance on the x-axis is just as important as the distance on the y-axis. A third important assumption is that voter preferences are fixed. Although one could be tempted to explain the stunning political changes during the May 2002 election campaign in terms of sudden shifts in the attitudes of the electorate, this hypothesis has to be rejected (Van Holsteyn et al. 2003). This is in line with the *communis opinio* which holds that Pim Fortuyn finally expressed long suppressed feelings of discontent with multicultural policies. Chapters 2 and 3 have presented support for the claim that attitudes on multiculturalism and immigration policy (e.g. Fennema and Van der Brug 2006) and the amount of support for ethnic discrimination (Coenders et al. 2006) have been relatively stable since 1993. Panel data reveal that already a substantial pool of voters felt negative towards refugees in 1998 (Belanger and Aarts 2006); the potential electoral success for newcomer LPF already existed for at least eight years (Adriaansen et al. 2005). Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007) show that strains over Muslims and multiculturalism were apparent long before September 11th and thus were not caused by this exogenous shock. Already since the early 1990s, about fifty per cent of the Dutch believed that western European and Muslim lifestyles do not fit well together (SCP 2003). Also on the economic dimension (reducing vs. increasing income differences) the distribution of the public opinion has been quite stable between 1994 and 2002 (Aarts and Thomassen 2008; Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003). Political changes were due to new calculations voters had to make because of the addition of a new product in the electoral marketplace (Van Holsteyn et al. 2003).

In the set-up of the simulation, 10,000 voters are created and randomly scattered in the policy space with a normal distribution around the mean party position in the policy space \((x=0,y=0)\) and a standard deviation of 8. Data of the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 1998 empirically support the claim that scores of the electorate are normally distributed on both dimensions and not completely independent of each other (see Appendix E). Following the latter finding, I impose the modest correlation as indicated by these data (Pearson’s \(r = 0.32\)) between the voter scores on the x-axis and y-axis. Obviously, the voters’ mean position does not necessarily coincide with the weighted mean party position. According to Van der Brug (2007; see also Van der Brug and Van Spanje 2009), surveys show that in most West European countries, the majority of the population tends to be more on the left in the socio-economic dimension and to the right in the cultural dimension, compared with the average party orientations. This is also clearly the case in the Netherlands in 1998 (see again Appendix E). I will develop my model in line with these findings, but also compare several alternative

---

prefer party B as it is located further away from the centre. Moreover, it is necessary to add a parameter (the ‘region of acceptability’) to penalize extremism, otherwise a right-wing moderate, for example, would prefer to vote for an extreme right, rather than for a right-wing moderate party. Aarts et al. (1999a) showed that the directional model slightly outperforms the proximity model in predicting party evaluations in the Netherlands; however, their analysis is restricted to a selection of the four largest parties. In general, empirical support on which model best represents voting is ambiguous (see e.g. Blais et al. 2001).

65 The mean position of the parties is weighted by the share of vote won by the party in the 1998 election.
models in order to check for sensitivity of the parameter settings. More about this issue -- the dependence of the outcomes to changes on initial conditions -- will be dealt with in the results section. To get an idea of the final picture, Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of voters and parties in the two-dimensional policy field.

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**Figure 6.1 Dutch voters and parties in a two-dimensional policy space (1998)**

**Note:** Immigration policy on y-axis and tax cuts vs. public spending on x-axis

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**Adaptive behaviour of the political parties**

So far, I discussed stable assumptions of the model. Now, I will introduce two parameters that vary during the analysis, labelled ‘behaviour of parties’ and ‘media distortion’. With regard to the behaviour of parties, agents face a dilemma, consisting of the struggle between ‘power’ and ‘ideals’. Parties follow a ‘vote-maximizing logic’ (Kitschelt 1995) as they want to win elec-
tions, but at the same time they prefer to maintain their ideology. The main consequence of this optimization problem is that parties will stay close to their current position and only locally adapt (Kollman et al. 1998).

Like Kollman et al. (1998), the assumption is that politicians see reactions of the public through the opinion polls. I will use three basic political party strategies elaborated and used by Laver (2005) and Fowler and Laver (2008) and adopt their labels ‘Sticker’, ‘Aggregator’ and ‘Hunter’. A Sticker is a party that is never inclined to change its position. It represents an ideological party, which is only concerned with maintaining its policy position and does not seek to adapt its policy in order to increase support. Uncertainty can explain why choosing for a fixed ideology is a natural option (Budge 1994). As the information that polls provide is not unequivocal, a political party cannot be completely sure about what actually influenced voting intentions. An Aggregator sets its policy position every time at the mean position of all current party supporters on both dimensions. Thus, the label ‘democratic party’ might be suited for this party, as it is responding to the preferences of its supporters, although I should stress that in this case, the democratic principle refers to the voters, not exclusively to the members of the parties. A Hunter compares its amount of supporters with the amount it had the previous period and moves in the same direction if this move was followed by an increase in support. In case the previous move did not increase support, a Hunter turns around and makes a random move in the opposite direction (it chooses a random value between turning 90 and 270 degrees). I will assume that adaptive parties can only locally adapt (taking steps of 0.5 or 1.0 in the field) from their current position in order to exclude the very unrealistic option that party leaders can make quick and radical jumps and choose any position each run without any costs or consequences. Note that Hunters do not need to use global information on the policy space to allow them to find electorally more successful positions. I assume that a Hunter is greedy, i.e. constantly searching for more voters.

As already said, I will explore the implications of different sets of assumptions about party behaviour and not fix this parameter beforehand. Nevertheless, it seems wise to reduce the virtually unlimited number of scenarios that can be explored by focusing on the most plausible options. Following Kollman et al. (1998), who consider the incumbent party to be fixed while the challenging party is searching an electorally more successful platform, one could argue that the situation in the Netherlands during the researched period is that the incumbent government parties were probably Stickers. Pellikaan et al. (2007: 298) state that the Dutch political and ideological competition between the conservative liberals (VVD), social democratic Labour Party (PvdA) and CDA was frozen before 2002. Illustrative of Sticker behaviour is that party leader Kok (PvdA) simply appointed his successor (Andeweg and Irwin 2005). Although several dissatisfied party members of the PvdA and VVD proposed to copy Fortuyn’s proposals and modify the electoral programmes after Fortuyn’s success in the local elections in March 2002 (Pellikaan et al. 2007), detailed reports show that neither Hans Dijksta, the leader of the VVD (Schulte and Soetenhorst 2007), nor Ad Melkert, the PvdA leader (Monasch 2002) had the intention and willingness to adjust their political messages.

The behaviour of all parties together will determine to what extent there are areas in which there are a considerable number of voters, but no existing parties to meet their political preferences. These voids in the competitive space offer an opportunity for new political parties
that may enter the space to serve these neglected voters. The new party Liveable Netherlands (hereafter: LN), entering the arena in June 2001, announced to be a movement for renewal and declared old politics to be ‘bankrupt’. It is difficult to place LN in the political space as they deliberately started without a clearly defined policy position and only presented a brief pamphlet with 25 topics. Van Praag (2003) characterized LN as an anti-establishment-party with a left-populist program, containing a mixture of progressive and more conservative points. It is remarkable that the party feared being associated with extreme-right parties. The provisional issue list contains a strong stance against discrimination and racism, but also the proposal of not admitting more than 10,000 asylum seekers every year. As the position of the party was (not) yet obvious in June 2001, I will give the party a central position, but with a tendency to the economic left \((x = -1)\) and restrictive immigration policy \((y = 1)\). The board of the party explicitly stated that the definite manifesto should be established by the members at the congress held in November 2001. This seems to fit the strategy of an Aggregator. From November on, the manifesto should then be considered as fixed.

The other newcomer during the election campaign is List Pim Fortuyn. Fortuyn was forced to step down as a party leader of LN in February 2002 after a notorious interview in which he called Islam a backward culture, but founded his own party only two days later. The findings in the previous chapter do not support the claim that Fortuyn used a vote-maximization strategy, which would fit the behaviour of a Hunter. The assumption that Fortuyn was a Sticker party leader would make it hard to explain why he was suddenly rejected by the board of LN. Ideologically adjusting to the views of his adherents over time (Aggregator) might thus perhaps yield the most accurate outcome, but this will of course be investigated rather than assumed beforehand. All three behavioural options for Fortuyn and corresponding scenarios will be explored.

**Media distortion**

In line with the enlightened preferences hypothesis, it was argued that the electorate perceives less information on the issue position of a political actor if there is less attention devoted to this actor in the mass media. Thus, it is assumed that it is beneficial for political actors to follow the dictum ‘any attention is better than no attention’. The degree of penetration in the population of information about the party’s platform is operationalized by the relative amount of media attention for the party (as percentage of the total attention for political parties). Lack of attention (i.e. lack of knowledge about where parties stand) is labelled ‘media distortion’ and has an impact on the perceived ideological similarity between voter and party. This is done by distorting the perceived distance: the distance is correctly perceived by the voter (and left untouched) when parties get sufficient attention and conversely perceived as larger the smaller the amount of attention. Reed (2004) uses a similar procedure with a variable called ‘voter’s information level’ which represents the purity of information the voter receives about his or her distance to the candidate’s position. A complete lack of attention leads to a maximum distortion by multiplying the distance by three. Thus, poorly visible agents are not able to fully mobilize their electoral potential. In contrast, parties with the most attention will attract all potential voters. Furthermore, I assume an effect of diminishing returns and thus a non-linear relation-
ship: the more attention a party gets, the less a party will profit from a further increase in attention.\textsuperscript{66} An increase from, for example, 0 to 1 per cent in media-visibility has more impact than an increase of, say, 25 to 26 per cent attention. The ceiling effect implemented means the higher the amount of attention for a party, the smaller the additional benefit of gaining more attention. The actual ceiling after which there is no distortion anymore is set at about 40 per cent.

The simulation thus implies that the more a voter is unaware of the position of a party, the more he or she shifts towards another party that is ideologically nearest. Kleinnijenhuis and Fan (1999) found that such a proximity model performs empirically better than pushing voters to the undecided category or spreading them proportionally over all other parties.\textsuperscript{67} Admittedly, in case a party suffers from being hardly visible, it is not so obvious why the perceived distance does not simply become unavailable (a missing value) or a random number, rather than being enlarged. However, the conducted procedure leaves some room for voters to have at least an idea about where a party stands because of other channels than mass media, like networks, personal communication and memory.

Although the role of the mass media is implemented, its role in this simulation is limited only to an informative effect. Media only help parties by conveying their policy positions; persuasion effects on voters are neglected. One might argue that the assumption used in this chapter -- the more publicity the better -- is too simplistic and should be extended: apart from the distribution of attention, also the content of the news matters. Although news about the issue positions of parties is the focal point of political news, it might entail other types of coverage like support and criticism for parties or news about success and failure of political actors (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007a). However, effects of negative reactions are not so obvious. A party might suffer by continuously being put into a bad light, but the condemnation and rejection of a party’s message might also enhance diffusion of the message in the public sphere (Koopmans 2004a).

Determining the fit

To measure the extent to which simulations fit the opinion polls and election outcomes, I will firstly calculate the mean absolute difference (MAD) between the simulated party sizes and ‘real’ (polled) party sizes. Laver (2005) uses this property of the data as well. Secondly, I will also use a measurement that is slightly different and similar to the calculation of a standard deviation: I square the absolute differences for each party and take the square root of its average (MAD\textsuperscript{2}). Thus, larger deviations are amplified and more severely punish the fit. For both measures holds that a lower value indicates a better fit of the model. All presented scores are averages of simulations run a 1000 times. The following box presents the model run in a nutshell:

\textsuperscript{66} The formula for media distortion is as follows: Distortion = 3 - ln(1 + sqrt(Media attention)).

\textsuperscript{67} In this case, the role of the media referred to effects of a party suffering from negative news, not from a shortage of attention.
6.3 Outcomes

6.3.1 The elections in 1998. No serious opposition against the incumbent parties?

Table 6.2 shows the Dutch parliamentary election results in 1998 and 2002 and Figure 6.2 presents time-series of opinion polls tracking changes in party support for the period in between these two snapshots. This Political Barometer shows that levels of support for the various parties were generally quite stable, but during the campaign for the 2002 elections this picture dramatically changed and the competition suddenly turned out to become not as dull as many had expected beforehand.

Table 6.2 Parliamentary election results in the Netherlands in 1998 and 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>May 1998</th>
<th>May 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% seats</td>
<td>% seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPF</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turnout</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>79.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: For 1998 the results of the CU the two parties that formed the CU (GPV and RPF) are combined.
I start to replicate the results of the elections in 1998 and analyze to what extent the simulation is able to predict these outcomes. Table 6.3 presents the election outcomes and, to give an idea about how to interpret the MAD and MAD2 values, the third column shows the values of these fit-measures, based on the opinion polls in the week before the election. The MAD and MAD2 are 1.29 and 1.47 per cent respectively. The reported standard deviations indicate to what extent the MADs of the different runs tend to deviate from the average fit.

Model A shows the basic model without imposing any restrictions because of mass media effects. The relatively poor fit of the model is caused by underrating the electoral strength of the Labour Party (PvdA) and conservative Liberal Party (VVD) and an overestimation the size of the Christian Democratic Party (CDA), Socialist Party (SP) and the right-wing extremists (CD). The simulated amount of support for the CDA is about 28 per cent and, for the CD, about 9 per cent, whereas during the elections these parties did not succeed in gaining more than 19.9 and 0.7 per cent of the vote respectively. One could perhaps argue that the
right-wing Centre Democrats should not be considered a serious option for voters because it was not perceived as a normal democratic party (e.g. Fennema and Van der Brug 2006). Leaving out the CD indeed improves the results (model B in the Table). However, in this case the problem of overestimating the size of the Christian Democrats is still pressing. According to this spatial representation, the CDA should do electorally well and has a pivotal position in Dutch politics as this party is positioned near the mean position on immigration and also in the centre with regard to the economic dimension. It is remarkable that the CDA was excluded from the government again in 1998. Laver (1995: 18) stated that, if this spatial picture is correct, a government without CDA is out of equilibrium and therefore ‘the purple coalition formed in 1994 should be relatively short-lived’.

Table 6.3 Simulated and real results for the parliamentary elections in May 1998 (party sizes in percentages, standard deviations in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>28.4 (0.44)</td>
<td>30.0 (0.44)</td>
<td>19.5 (0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>11.9 (0.32)</td>
<td>19.3 (0.38)</td>
<td>23.9 (0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>13.6 (0.36)</td>
<td>13.6 (0.35)</td>
<td>26.6 (0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>15.9 (0.36)</td>
<td>15.9 (0.37)</td>
<td>18.6 (0.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.2 (0.29)</td>
<td>9.2 (0.29)</td>
<td>5.7 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>11.7 (0.32)</td>
<td>12.0 (0.32)</td>
<td>5.2 (0.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.2 (0.29)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.2 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(MAD\)       | 1.29                     | 9.30 (0.12)               | 7.37 (0.14)         | 3.10 (0.12)          | 2.62 (0.12)       |

\(MAD2\)      | 1.47                     | 10.59 (0.14)              | 9.10 (0.15)         | 4.11 (0.16)          | 3.08 (0.15)       |

Notes: Elections and opinion poll percentages are corrected for the exclusion of CU and SGP. The CD polling percentage is the average estimation of first three months of 1998

Table 6.4 shows the distribution of news coverage devoted to the parties during the election campaign in 1998. Kleinnijenhuis et al. (1998: 50) conclude that ‘opposition against the purple government was hardly taken seriously by journalists’. Attention for the opposition parties is rather scarce. The figures support the claim that media attention matters for understanding the sizes of the parties, as the parties that should perform much better (according to the simulations solely based on ideological positions) are the ones that have a relatively small amount of media attention. For example, it is shown that the CDA was far from being the centre of attention in the public debate, although the party is ideologically positioned in the centre. Hans Janmaat, the leader of CD - another opposition party that gains far less support than expected - does not even appear on the top 30-list of most mentioned politicians, in contrast to 1994, when he occupied the 8th position (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 1995).
Model C shows that including the distortion effects of the mass media significantly improves the results of the model. The social democrats now take over the position of largest party from the Christian democrats (models A and B). The only anomaly in the simulation is the considerable size of D66. Furthermore, it is obvious that the party support for the right-wing Centre Democrats is decimated. This suggests that the strategy of hushing-up the extreme right was already sufficient to explain the meagre results of the CD as there is not much unexplained variance left in this simulation for which additional hypotheses would be necessary, such as the presumed effects of organizational incompetence or lack of charisma of the party leader. The closer a party is positioned near another party in the arena, the larger the potential effects of distance-distortion. The Labour Party (PvdA) and Christian Democrats (CDA) are positioned rather closely to each other, so particularly their vote shares estimations are more sensitive to different parameter settings.

Finally, in model D the assumption of a socio-economic left and socio-cultural right population is implemented. The improved fit supports Van der Brug’s (2007) claim as the average voter orientation seems indeed significantly dissimilar from the (weighted) mean political party position. Systematically running all simulations with every possible combination of discrete values as the mean voter positions (not shown in Table) reveals that the Dutch population is positioned slightly left on the economic policy dimension (x -1) and support a more assimilationist approach to integration policies (y +1). The improvement in fit will partly be caused by the huge decrease in support for the left-liberal D66. Finally, I have also explored the sensitivity of the 0.32 correlation between the two dimensions (not shown in Table). Different correlations have hardly any impact on the overall model fit. Only for one single party (SP), this relationship matters: the higher the correlation, the stronger the amount of support is diminished.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Kleinnijenhuis et al. (1998: 50)*

### 6.3.2 The period from 1998 until 2001. Stable Dutch politics?

The road to the May 2002 election outcome is divided into two episodes. I will analyze the period from May 1998 until May 2001 separately, as in June 2001 a new party, Liveable Netherlands, is officially founded and enters the arena. Table 6.5 presents the measures of fit of the simulations compared with the monthly opinion polls until May 2001. The average scores of the complete period are based on 10,000 runs of 37 months. At the start of each run, the values
are of course similar to the scores I presented earlier in Table 6.3.68 Additional information about the amount of support for each party (in May 2001) is provided in Table 6.6.

Model A is a basic simulation with ideological parties and media-distortion. All party positions are fixed: agents stick to their policy position and small variations over time in party support should be considered as random variation around a mean party size. As no party adapts its position, this gives a rather dull picture as it does not produce any dynamics. To test the hypothesis of ideologically rigid behaviour of Dutch parties during this period, I ran several alternative models with different behavioural assumptions. In trying to reject this model, I will not show all possible alternative models (as distinguishing 7 parties and only 3 strategies would already yield 2187 possible variations) but only the ones that seem most plausible and realistic.

Table 6.5 Fit measures for simulated amounts of party support, May 1998-June 2001 (standard deviations in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Party behaviour assumptions</th>
<th>MAD</th>
<th>MAD2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>All parties are Stickers (ideological)</td>
<td>3.84 (0.24)</td>
<td>4.57 (0.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>All parties are Aggregators (except CD)</td>
<td>6.24 (1.23)</td>
<td>8.69 (1.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>CDA, GL, SP are Aggregators (democratic)</td>
<td>5.22 (0.55)</td>
<td>6.94 (0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>CDA, GL, SP are Hunters</td>
<td>4.76 (1.14)</td>
<td>5.55 (1.40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6 Simulated and real results for party support, ‘end situation’ in May 2001 (party sizes in percentages, standard deviations in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Polls (May 9th-31st, 2001)</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
<th>Model D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>19.5 (0.40)</td>
<td>15.2 (0.41)</td>
<td>20.6 (0.51)</td>
<td>17.1 (6.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>24.4 (0.43)</td>
<td>25.4 (0.80)</td>
<td>17.0 (0.52)</td>
<td>23.9 (1.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>28.3 (0.44)</td>
<td>23.7 (0.67)</td>
<td>29.8 (0.56)</td>
<td>30.7 (5.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>15.0 (0.32)</td>
<td>27.0 (0.84)</td>
<td>19.3 (0.39)</td>
<td>15.7 (2.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>5.7 (0.21)</td>
<td>4.8 (0.36)</td>
<td>6.6 (0.36)</td>
<td>5.8 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7.1 (0.23)</td>
<td>3.8 (0.44)</td>
<td>6.7 (0.36)</td>
<td>6.9 (1.58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MAD</th>
<th>MAD2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAD</td>
<td>4.07 (0.12)</td>
<td>7.18 (0.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAD2</td>
<td>4.92 (0.13)</td>
<td>9.89 (0.36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Opinion poll percentages are corrected for the exclusion of CU and SGP.

68 Minor differences are due the fact that the election results and first opinion poll after the elections slightly differ.
Model B assumes that all parties are Aggregators, which implies that all parties set their policy positions at the mean positions of their voters. The fit is worse (MAD2 = 8.69) in comparison with the first model, especially because D66 increases its party size considerably and CDA is worse off. Model C assumes that incumbent parties are fixed and the opposition parties continually seek to represent their supporters. This assumption seems to better reflect the party support during this period (MAD2 = 6.94), but is still significantly worse than the model with only Stickers. Especially the loss of support for the conservative liberal VVD is decreasing the fit. Perhaps opposition parties were more ambitious and actively tried to attract more voters. Model D shows the results for the greedy Hunter: when the previous move was followed by an increase in party support, the parties decides to move further in the same direction with one step and reverses and browses (also with a 1.0 step) when the last move did not increase support. This model has a significant better fit than the aggregator models, but still cannot beat the rigid ideology model.69

Interestingly, according to these simulations, opposition parties are not able to profit when they switch from Sticker to Hunter. Nor does being ‘democratic’ instead of ‘ideological’ increase support for the Socialist Party (SP) and Green-Left party (GL). Only the Christen-Democrats (CDA) achieve a slightly larger share of the vote when the opposition parties aggregate. It is worth to note that the ‘opportunistic opposition’ model D is far from robust. The range of predicted party sizes over similar 37-cycle runs is remarkably large as indicated by the standard deviations. While the estimated final party sizes only slightly differ from those of the model A, the final party position clearly gets more unpredictable in case of the blind Hunter strategy. It contains a larger random component and involves more risks, especially for the CDA (sd = 6.34). Thus, assuming a normal distribution, in 16 out of 100 runs they will score about at least 23 per cent, but likewise also at least 16 runs will yield a significant loss of at least 6 per cent of the vote. In sum, we have to conclude that all parties seemed to have stuck to their position, at least until 2001. Keep in mind that I have assumed that no changes occur in the mass media attention, which implies that journalists see no reason to change their focus and the ruling government parties, prominently visible during the election campaign in 1998, preserved their prominence.

6.3.3 The birth of Liveable Netherlands: a successful innovation?

As explained earlier, the position of Liveable Netherlands was (not) yet clear in June 2001, so I will give the party a central position, but with a small tendency towards the economic left (x = -1) and towards a restrictive immigration policy (y = 1). I assume the party is an Aggregator until the second party congress in November, which implies that the final position depends on what supporters the party initially starts with and thus where one places the party in the policy space in June 2001. The first opinion polls in June 2001 indicated that LN gained 2 per cent of the votes, which is impressive for a newly founded party. In November 2001, the amount of support had risen to about 6 per cent.

69 Less risky steps of 0.5 instead 1.0 make the results somewhat better (MAD = 4.1 and MAD2 = 4.8) but are still worse than the basic ideological model.
Table 6.7 shows the effects of assuming alternative start policy positions on the potential party support and party position in November 2001 according to my model (ceteris paribus). These models are run without giving any media attention to the new party (distance distortion = 3). I have also presented the party positions and amounts of support in May 2002 in case LN would have continued to aggregate. It predicts that adapting to the voters’ mean position causes a shift of the party position, especially on the y-axis. Interestingly, it also shows that fixing the party position in November at the mean voter-position (the consequence is that the party stops being democratic) is an electorally sub-optimal outcome. A slightly larger niche (of about 8 per cent) is found elsewhere, around y = 9.9, which is a stronger mono-culturalist/anti-immigration position than the established party with the most critical stance on immigration (the VVD) in 1998 (y=8.2). Also models B (0)(0) and E (1)(1) show a considerable move upward on the y-axis to a more favourable position. According to Pellikaan (2004: 217), who presents party positions based on the coding of 20 items in the party manifestos, the final position of the LN and LPF is (0.1)(7.0) and (3.6)(15.9) respectively, which is a considerably higher score, but in line with the shift on the cultural dimension. A party that starts in the more crowded positions (0)(0), (-1)(-1) or (+1)(-1) gets sometimes stuck at its position and can electorally be considered ‘redundant’. Some expected this to be the fate of the LN (Wansink 2004).

Table 6.7 Effects of the start position of LN on party support (in percentages, standard deviations in parentheses) and position in Nov 2001 and May 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start position (x)(y)</td>
<td>(-1.0)(+1.0)</td>
<td>(0.0)(0.0)</td>
<td>(-1.0)(-1.0)</td>
<td>(+1.0)(+1.0)</td>
<td>(+1.0)(+1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>1.56 (0.13)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.05)</td>
<td>0.28 (0.06)</td>
<td>0.76 (0.08)</td>
<td>1.99 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position (x)(y)</td>
<td>(-2.2)(3.9)</td>
<td>(0.5)(1.2)</td>
<td>(-2.1)(-1.4)</td>
<td>(2.6)(-0.9)</td>
<td>(2.7)(3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>7.83 (0.40)</td>
<td>1.93 (0.34)</td>
<td>1.06 (0.17)</td>
<td>1.92 (0.24)</td>
<td>6.32 (0.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position (x)(y)</td>
<td>(-3.6)(9.9)</td>
<td>(0.2)(8.0)</td>
<td>(-5.7)(2.0)</td>
<td>(4.9)(3.3)</td>
<td>(-0.4)(8.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>8.11 (0.32)</td>
<td>8.88 (0.39)</td>
<td>5.73 (0.86)</td>
<td>5.21 (0.36)</td>
<td>8.96 (0.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3.4 The 2002 election campaign: the breakthrough of Fortuyn and rebirth of the CDA

I will now move to a dynamic model (from June 2001 until the May 2002 elections) including the other parties. Table 6.8 present results the average fit of the simulations and Table 6.9
shows the simulated party sizes for the end situation in May 2002. Again, I start as simple as possible in order to keep track of the effects of different parameters in the model.

Model A is a basic model in which Liveable Netherlands does not get any media attention and the internal strife between Fortuyn and the board of LN is neglected. \(^7\) In model B the split in the party is added and LPF makes its entrance into the political arena in February 2002. As just shown, setting the policy at the mean voter position means that the party should continue to modify its policy position. So far, the simulations have set the amount of media attention for both LN and LPF at zero. In spite of this severe disadvantage, Fortuyn is able to harvest 7 per cent of the votes (about 10 seats in parliament) while Liveable Netherlands gains 6.4 per cent. This outcome partly contradicts the notion that the success of the newcomers was just a hype created by the media.

Table 6.8 Fit measures for simulated amounts of party support, May 2001 - May 2002 (standard deviations in parentheses) and simulated end positions of LN and LPF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Position LN Nov 2001</th>
<th>Position LPF May 2002</th>
<th>MAD</th>
<th>MAD2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>*Only LN (no split-up)</td>
<td>(-2.2)(4.0)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*LN = Aggregator (until Nov 2001) and becomes Sticker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*media = 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>*LPF = Aggregator</td>
<td>(-2.2)(4.0)</td>
<td>(-3.7)(10.7)</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*media LN &amp; LPF = 0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>*media LN = 1% (until Feb 2002)</td>
<td>(-2.3)(5.1)</td>
<td>(-3.5)(11.5)</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*media LPF = 1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*LPF = Aggregator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>*LPF = Hunter</td>
<td>(-2.3)(5.1)</td>
<td>(-2.1)(5.1)</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>*media LPF = 9% (from Feb 2002)</td>
<td>(-2.3)(5.1)</td>
<td>(-2.0)(10.5)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*LPF = Aggregator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>*LPF = Hunter</td>
<td>(-2.3)(5.1)</td>
<td>(-2.2)(5.2)</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>5.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like previously, I will empirically embed the media impact assumption by using data collected by Kleinnijenhuis and colleagues. But before that, I will first explore another alternative scenario based on an educated guess of a shift media attention distribution in August 2001. We lack of comparable figures for the period before the actual start of the election campaign. Thus, in models C and C2, it is posited that it is easier for the Dutch electorate to take notice of LN

\(^7\) In model A, the ‘real’ party size of the LPF is used for the calculating of the fit after the split-up; LN is ‘missing’ so not affecting the MAD.
after August 2001 (media = 1), in line with the idea that the party profited from a ‘Fortuyn-effect’ (Chorus and de Galan 2002) because of the involvement of a publicly well-known person. In order to keep the total amount of attention at 100 per cent, I assume this is at the expense of the three purple government parties. Reasoning counterfactually, we explore what would have happened if Fortuyn did not experience a boost of media attention, but remained at the 1 percent level over the course of the campaign.

The fit measures (MADs) of the simulation become worse over time, which will be mainly due to the remarkably recovery of the Christian Democrats during the last months. With 17.9 per cent still the country’s third biggest party in January 2002 (the PvdA and VVD gain 24.5 and 18.8 per cent respectively in that month) - in line with the simulations - the CDA wins an unexpected landslide victory (29.6 per cent) in May 2002.

Model C2 implements the assumption that Fortuyn is hunting in order to attract as much support as possible, no matter what ideological platform that delivers. Remarkably, aggregating tend to do better at winning votes than hunting. This alternative adaptation scenario, in which Fortuyn is not a ‘democratic’, but an ‘opportunistic’ party leader results in striking differences in the party position in May 2002. In general, an Aggregator delivers a much stronger anti-immigration view (y = 11.5) in comparison with a Hunter (y = 5.1). Guided by this strategy, the LPF is not inclined to shift on the cultural dimension (y-axis) after the split-up with LN.

Communication scholars have demonstrated that the average amount of issue news for the LPF was 9.7 per cent during the 2002 election campaign, and taking all sort of news for politicians into account, Fortuyn attracted no less than about 25 per cent of all attention (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003). In the final models (D and D2) the outcome is shown when we implement a strong increase in media attention in February 2002, when Fortuyn is removed as LN leader after stating that Islam is a ‘retarded culture’ and starts his own party. I will set the amount of attention at 10 per cent from that moment on. Not surprisingly, in the models the amount of support for LPF is boosted. This addition increases the average accuracy of the prediction of the opinion polls series (MAD = 3.90; MAD2 = 5.03). Model D is superior, both in terms of the average fit over the months (Table 6.8) and prediction of the election outcomes (Table 6.9). Although the greater size of the LPF is empirically more accurate, this increase is partially at the expense of the CDA. This second part of the prediction is clearly falsified by the sudden resurrection of the Christian Democrats just before the 2002 elections.

Thus, all in all, with these simulations the election outcome in May 2002 is still rather difficult to grasp.71 The evolution of the fit values over time shows a striking spike in the last period (in model D the average MAD = 4.62; MAD2 = 6.88). It should be noted that opinion polls from May 2 also predict the results of the electoral contest relatively poorly. After Fortuyn was assassinated by a left-wing environmental activist nine days before the elections,

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71 An alternative model in which it is assumed that the CDA becomes an Aggregator or Hunter, in line with the idea that the reason for electoral success was the replacement of the party leader by the more adaptive Jan-Peter Balkenende who more strongly mobilized dissatisfaction with the multicultural society (Van Kersbergen 2008), the party indeed slightly shifts on the y-axis. This model does not fare better as the move out of the centre supports the PvdA and D66 and severely harms Fortuyn.
political campaigning was put aside by all parties.\textsuperscript{72} We can only speculate on the precise impact of this event, but it seems likely that many of the supporters who realized that the party leader of the LPF was irreplaceable, suddenly shifted to the ideologically closest CDA, the only uncontroversial opposition party (Irwin and Van Holsteyn 2004). The opinion poll figures suggest that the assassination has indeed significantly boosted support for the CDA and severely damaged the PvdA and Green Left party. Particularly these later two parties were accused of having demonised Fortuyn - and thus having instigated a harsh political climate in which such a murder could take place (Irwin and Van Holsteyn 2004). According to Kleinnijenhuis et al. (2006), the unexpected victory of the CDA can be (partially) explained by the ‘sleeper effect’ of distrust in the party leaders: (dis)trust in the leaders of the CDA, PvdA and VVD was already shaped by the news in March, but its effects did not become apparent until election day. The two leading governing parties PvdA and VVD had been severely criticized in the news during the previous months.

Like all random shocks, it would theoretically not be very useful to try to implement specific parameters to capture this rare event. Otherwise a model will be too specialized and detailed to fit any regularities except the particular regularities for which we have constructed it. For all attempts to explain empirical regularities, eventually, a certain amount of simplification is inevitable. Thus, eventually the remarkable rebirth of the CDA can partly be interpreted as a product of a random chance event and thus a matter of ‘sheer luck’ (Van Kersbergen 2008).

Nevertheless, to the extent that the recovery of the CDA was not correctly predicted by the simulation because relevant general explanations for fluctuations in electoral support were neglected -- in other words: when part of the unexplained variance is due to omitting important variables, rather than one random event in the last period -- it can be theoretically useful to improve the model by adding or modifying parameters. The CDA had already become the biggest party in the May 2002 polls (23.3 per cent), a couple of days before the murder. The assumption that a lot of media attention is by definition favourable is perhaps a good example of a parameter that should be adjusted in future research. That the three losing parties D66, VVD and PvdA are positioned in different parts of the political spectrum, but have in common that they formed the ruling coalition, suggest that not only the amount, but also the nature of the media coverage might have had a huge impact. Although the CDA did attract a relatively small amount of issue news attention (7.6 per cent), it did not suffer from the widespread image of the country being ‘in a mess’ caused by the government parties (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003). Moreover, the CDA profited from a non-aggression contract with the LPF: the party leaders did not publicly attack each other during the campaign (Van Kersbergen 2008).

\textsuperscript{72} Adjusting the simulation because of the fact that political campaigning was put aside after the assassination (by turning all media distortion off after that moment) is only significantly better when Liveable Netherlands is excluded (otherwise they become very large). The model fit for the election outcome is 4.40 and 5.34 (MAD and MAD2) and it is correctly estimated that the CDA is the winner (with about 22 per cent).
Table 6.9 Simulated and real results for party support, June 2001 - May 2002 (party sizes in percentages, standard deviations in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Elections May 2002</th>
<th>Polls May 2002</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
<th>Model C2</th>
<th>Model D</th>
<th>Model D2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>12.4 (0.38)</td>
<td>13.2 (0.34)</td>
<td>11.5 (1.03)</td>
<td>13.3 (0.32)</td>
<td>9.7 (1.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>21.7 (0.40)</td>
<td>20.1 (0.45)</td>
<td>22.2 (1.04)</td>
<td>16.3 (0.41)</td>
<td>18.3 (1.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>24.8 (0.44)</td>
<td>24.1 (0.43)</td>
<td>24.5 (0.92)</td>
<td>22.9 (0.43)</td>
<td>21.6 (0.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>15.0 (0.36)</td>
<td>14.9 (0.38)</td>
<td>14.9 (0.41)</td>
<td>14.6 (0.34)</td>
<td>14.6 (0.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>5.7 (0.25)</td>
<td>5.8 (0.24)</td>
<td>5.7 (0.27)</td>
<td>6.1 (0.26)</td>
<td>6.1 (0.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.0 (0.26)</td>
<td>6.8 (0.25)</td>
<td>7.0 (0.36)</td>
<td>6.6 (0.24)</td>
<td>6.3 (0.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.4 (0.31)</td>
<td>6.2 (0.26)</td>
<td>2.8 (1.62)</td>
<td>4.2 (0.23)</td>
<td>0.6 (0.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPF</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>7.1 (0.30)</td>
<td>8.8 (0.34)</td>
<td>11.4 (1.85)</td>
<td>16.0 (0.37)</td>
<td>22.9 (1.28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*MAD*  2.40  7.45 (0.11)  6.82 (0.13)  6.65 (0.56)  4.95 (0.12)  5.57 (0.34)

*MAD2* 3.12  8.93 (0.13)  8.31 (0.14)  8.52 (0.54)  7.18 (0.13)  8.26 (0.43)

*Note:* Election and opinion poll percentages are corrected for the exclusion of CU and SGP.

6.4 Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter I have analyzed political party competition using ABM, as introduced by Kollman, Miller and Page (1992; 1998) and further elaborated by Laver (2005) and colleagues (Laver and Schilperoord 2007; Fowler and Laver 2008). The key assumption of these models is that two categories of actors continually make decisions: voters make the choice which party to support and party leaders offer voters a certain policy package in order to attract support. I have explained why ABM is a promising theoretical tool for the analysis of party competition as it offers three improvements in the construction of testable propositions about political phenomena.

Firstly, ABM generates propositions about the mechanism at work responsible for generating outcomes on the aggregate level. Secondly, the theory does not need to make unrealistic assumptions of fully rational forward-looking actors, but can assume adaptive rationality instead. Finally, this methodology gives more precise statements than words as ABM forces scholars to be explicit about their assumptions. Kollman et al. (2003: 8) state: ‘Computational models are a good middle ground between verbal theories that are flexible but have limited built-in checks on rigor and mathematical theories that are rigorous but demand extreme simplification for tractability’.

Concerning ABM models of party competition, I have argued that propositions explaining fluctuations in party support over time should take the role of the mass media into account. In previous work it is implicitly assumed that all parties are equally visible for citizens, whereas severe competition between parties for gaining attention in the public sphere seems far more realistic.
As most of the agent-based models of party competition have been exclusively theoretical exercises, the second part of this chapter was devoted to an empirical illustration by confronting the outcomes of simulations with real data. I believe that the relevance of this work extends beyond this particular case, as it can encourage other scholars to empirically test ABMs, thus making simulation work more valuable for a much wider academic public. For a broad range of related simulations, it could be fruitful to adopt a similar procedure for measuring the degree of fit. Relevant empirical data, like longitudinal public opinion surveys and protest event data, have become increasingly accessible. In addition, the procedure used for modelling mass media effects and competition between groups might be applicable in similar settings, for example in the study of the mobilization of ethnic groups (Srblinovic et al. 2003), civil violence (Epstein 2002), network and media effects on protest waves (Oliver and Myers 2003a), competition between social movements (Oliver and Myers 2003b), and the dissemination of cultural diversity (Axelrod 1997).

The outcomes demonstrate that it is feasible and realistic to simulate and test party competition with agent-based models. I measured the extent to which simulations generate mean party sizes, as well as time series fluctuations in these, that resemble public opinion polls and election outcomes from May 1998 until May 2002. It is shown that models with mass media assumptions yield significantly better outcomes compared with simulations solely based on political party positions. Competition for electoral support does not only involve finding a favourable policy platform, one should also make sure that potential voters take notice of your policy position by publicly airing your views. Especially if we do not want to exclude small parties beforehand from our analysis or explain why attempts of political newcomers are rarely successful, models without the ‘media factor’ are clearly incomplete.

However, the simulation has problems with tackling the last couple of turbulent months before the 2002 elections. Especially the election outcome itself is difficult to grasp. Although the surge of the LPF is the most prominent phenomenon in virtually every account of the Dutch election campaign in 2002, the simulation has clearly more trouble with explaining the remarkable Christian Democratic phoenix and unprecedented defeat of the Labour party. The unexplained variance was likely to be partly the result of ‘random events’, like the assassination of Pim Fortuyn. When systematic deviations between predicted and actual fluctuations in electoral support manifest themselves, it can be fruitful to further improve models by the modification or addition of general assumptions that are presumed to cause these differences.

In general, the list of possible extensions of models of party competition is virtually unlimited. I have ignored, for example, assumptions about the loyalty of voters (they won’t switch immediately to another party) or non-voting (voters will stay home in case of large ideological distances between the voter and all parties). Furthermore, one could add more policy dimensions or assume differences in the evaluation of the distances (voters might find the position on one axis more important than the distance on another axis). The positions and issue priorities of voters could be made dynamic, for instance by assuming that these are shaped by mass media agenda-setting (see e.g. Muis and Scholte 2011) or the behaviour of parties. Citizens are backward-looking and vote retrospectively in the two-party competition models of Bendor et al. (2011; see also Muis 2011). Moreover, citizens have endogenously evolving aspiration levels and they learn which payoffs delivered by governments are sufficient or ac-
ceptable. Thus, voters can acquire unrealistically high demands after prosperous periods, and as a result, mistakenly throw an incumbent party out of office, even when it has implemented the median voter’s ideal point.

However, for all attempts to explain empirical regularities, one should keep in mind that eventually, for a model to be useful, a certain amount of simplification is inevitable. As Schelling (1978: 89) has put it: ‘models tend to be useful when they are simultaneously simple enough to fit a variety of behaviours and complex enough to fit behaviours that need the help of an explanatory model’. If a model is too parsimonious, it may explain only very simple events, for which we may not need ABM. Alternatively, if the model is extensive and complicated, it may be too specialized to fit any events except the particular events for which we constructed it.

Although this is not an easy task, future models should pursue to incorporate the dynamics of the media endogenously in the model, in order to avoid a partially deus ex machina style of explaining fluctuations in party support. In this chapter, I gave the parties different amounts of attention (based on independent data collected during the campaign), but instead we should try to implement media attention as a variable to be predicted by the model. For example, I have assigned more media attention to Fortuyn after his notorious interview with de Volkskrant, which leaves the question unsolved why the same statements a couple of months earlier in another newspaper Rotterdams Dagblad failed to provoke such an excessive amount of attention of other journalists. It also involves the question why political actors decide to react to a certain message of another competitor in the public sphere (thereby increasing its newsworthiness), whereas the multitude of other public claims are simply ignored.

The consequence of modelling media as a dependent variable is that the strategic behaviour of parties should get a wider meaning and could refer as well to competition for attention and support from journalists and gatekeepers, rather than electoral competition only (as in the model presented here). Previous chapters have discussed the decisions of journalists to assign much prominence to certain political actors, and far less to others. Chapter 3 revealed that faring well in opinion polls was a so-called news value (Galtung and Ruge 1965) and was an important factor that increased the media access of Fortuyn. Thus, modelling both party support and media attention endogenously would yield a self-reinforcing process that was empirically demonstrated for the rise of Fortuyn in chapter 3: increasing support raised the amount of mass media attention and in turn, more public visibility further boosted the opinion polls.

Such a feedback mechanism explains why political relations that had been relatively stable can suddenly spiral out of equilibrium. When positive feedback processes enter a system, the dynamics of the competition is fundamentally altered, which can lead to ‘large events’ (Miller and Page 2007) or ‘information cascades’ (Watts 2003) as happens in fads, revolutions, riots or stock market crashes (Macy and Willer 2002; Biggs 2003). Positive feedback makes outcomes less predictable beforehand as self-reinforcing processes can be explosive, while self-correcting processes, by their nature, prevent any dramatic changes (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). In line of the idea of demand and supply on an electoral market, the entry of Pim Fortuyn on the political stage turned out to be a successful innovation. What makes successful innovations so hard to understand and difficult to predict beforehand is that in many cases their
success has not only something to do with the individual characteristics or quality of the product, but also with the pattern of interactions. To be able to spread from a source to adopters, an innovation needs a channel, a role that seems to be fulfilled to a large extent by the mass media nowadays.
Summary, conclusion, and discussion: what have we learned and how to proceed?

7.1 Research question and theoretical perspective

The aim of this dissertation was to explain the sudden rise of right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn and his party during the run-up to the parliamentary elections in the Netherlands in May 2002. Fortuyn was initially associated with, and subsequently headed, the newcomer party Leefbaar Nederland (LN), which was founded in June 2001, until he was discharged and founded his own party Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF) in February 2002. Despite being a newcomer in electoral politics, he succeeded in attracting an enormous amount of media attention and electoral support within a relatively short period of time. Fortuyn was brutally assassinated nine days before the elections, which catapulted his anti-immigration party into a position of political power, winning 17 per cent of the vote. The outcome shattered the Netherlands’ reputation as a bastion of tolerance after years of being seemingly protected against the political backlash of social unease about immigration and growing cultural diversity seen elsewhere in Europe. The two-fold question was, firstly, how Fortuyn managed to mobilize so much mass media attention and electoral support so suddenly and so rapidly and, secondly, why such a successful rise of a right-wing populist challenger took place at that particular moment -- and not, say, four or eight years earlier.

Chapter 2 offered a brief overview of the scholarly literature on the fortunes of populist radical-right parties in Western European democracies. Explanations can be grouped into two broad perspectives: one focusing on popular grievances, and one on political opportunities and party characteristics. Scholars often borrow the market metaphor from economics distinguishing these two sets of factors into the demand-side, and the external and internal supply-side (e.g. Rydgren 2007; Mudde 2007a; Van der Brug and Fennema 2007; Norris 2005). In the economic view of voting behaviour, the policies that parties promise to deliver to the public play the same role as the goods or services offered by firms or organizations on the economic market (Downs 1957a). To be successful on electoral markets, parties not only need to identify the demands of the potential customers and correspondingly provide an attractive product, but also have to outcompete rivals who try to maintain or increase their market shares at the same time.

This electoral market perspective has been very fruitful for identifying the underlying popular grievances and political opportunities that provided the electoral reservoir that was exploited by Fortuyn. A widespread consensus among scholars has emerged that, as Van der Brug (2003: 102) has summarized, ‘voters voted for the LPF because this was the party they agreed with most on an issue they considered important: immigration’. Even though scholars disagree about whether the policy position that the LPF advocated deserves a label such as ‘extreme right’ or ‘radical right’, it has become clear that Fortuyn’s party could anyhow be considered as a ‘functional equivalent’ of classical radical right-wing parties elsewhere: its product fulfilled more or less the same electoral needs (Van Holsteyn and Rydgren 2005: 41).
However, the abrupt, disruptive manner in which the political earthquake occurred remains poorly understood. The breakthrough of Fortuyn is just one of the prominent examples that demonstrates that successes of right-wing populist contenders are not always manifested slowly and gradually in electoral politics. Political changes often have a sudden, unexpected character. Although the rise of Fortuyn seemed deceivingly understandable in hindsight, very few political scientists, journalists and politicians anticipated it. The failure of foreseeing the remarkable populist breakthrough has somewhat been disguised by post-hoc accounts that stress the fertile political conditions and electoral breeding ground that had been present. This theoretical approach offers little insight in short-term dynamics; a theory that is formulated in the language of dynamic systems is needed to fully grasp the Fortuynist revolt.

Therefore, an evolutionary approach to the analysis of economic processes seems a more fruitful perspective. Although it is common to equate the economic market metaphor with a rational choice perspective on electoral competition, this is neither self-evident nor necessary. If individuals would be capable of behaving in accordance with the assumption of forward-looking rationality of neoclassical economics, a stable mode of political affairs would quickly have to follow, i.e. a situation where demand and supply are in balance and none of the actors involved has an incentive to change his or her behaviour unilaterally (Green and Fox 2007; Tavits 2008). However, in line with common perception, political competition does not seem to be heading towards any stable situation. Evolutionary economists focus on processes of change and stress that the rationality of firms and consumers is severely limited. They have identified the ongoing introduction of innovations by entrepreneurs as an important motor of economic change (Schumpeter [1934] 1983). Innovations are hard to comprehend as the direct outcome of optimal forward-looking decision-making: experience tells us that the majority of innovations utterly fail.

Innovations can refer to a larger set of new ideas, goods, services, practices or methods (Rogers 1995). Correspondingly, the rise of Fortuyn’s party can be viewed as a new product that succeeded to rapidly spread in the electoral market. Guided by the evolutionary approach to the diffusion of innovations on economic markets, I derived two explanatory factors that have been relatively neglected or have remained somewhat unelaborated until recently in the scholarly literature on the emergence and rise of the populist far right: adaptive learning of the populist actor, and the role of the public debate.

First, diffusion of innovation theories emphasize the role of information networks and mass media when they seek to explain the successful spread of new goods, methods or ideas (Strang and Macy 2001). Like any innovative product that is inserted in any market place, a new political party requires a channel by which its message can spread among the population. Nowadays, various forms of mass media increasingly fulfil this role as they are able to connect a large number of people (Andrews and Biggs 2006).

Even though levels of discontent among the population and party positioning of the established parties in the competitive space are important determinants of political changes, the analytical utility of these factors is limited by the varying ability parties have to communicate their messages to voters. Especially during their earlier phase of development, it is likely that challenging parties need to rely on the mass media to publicize their views to national publics, as they often lack the organizational and financial resources necessary to make their positions
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known. Following this theoretical lead, I argued that it is necessary to explain why some actors achieve more media access than others. Thus, besides accounting for ups and downs in the levels of electoral support, fluctuations in the ability of anti-immigration parties to express their views in the mass media should also be brought into the analysis. Therefore, in this dissertation, Fortuyn’s rise covered two separate elements: the amount of public opinion support, and having a voice in the mass media. The latter is also referred to as ‘claim making’ (Koopmans and Statham 1999a) or ‘standing’ (Ferree et al. 2002) in the public sphere. Put differently: citizens ‘bought’ or ‘adopted’ the innovation when they decided to (intend to) vote for Fortuyn’s anti-immigration party, similarly journalists and gatekeepers ‘adopted’ the new product when they decided to give mass media access to Fortuyn and his message.

In order to account for the fluctuations in these two forms of successful diffusion, I used the notion of discursive opportunities (Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Ferree et al. 2002). Fertile conditions for the spread of a new product, I argued, are to an important extent amplified and even partly generated within the public discourse. The characteristics of the public discourse open avenues for achieving vote support and a voice in the media, or rather impose constraints. Thus, all actions of actors involved in the public debate together shape the adoption of a new actor and its message.

More specifically, in this case media-based opportunities and constraints consist of the degree and the way in which other actors involved in the mass media debate reacted to Fortuyn’s public statements. Following Koopmans and Olzak (2004), I firstly postulated that visibility matters, the amount of prominence that gatekeepers and editors allocate to a certain message. Secondly, it is likely that higher amounts of public reactions (resonance) yield more successes. Finally, previous research revealed that the content of the reactions matters. The media can be a friend or a foe (Mudde 2007a) and public responses vary from negative to positive: dissonance and consonance respectively. Whereas I hypothesized that dissonance was beneficial for gaining subsequent access to the public discourse, because conflicts increase newsworthiness, there are good reasons to expect that the effect of public disapproval and criticism on popularity is negative. In terms of electoral attractiveness, a populist right-wing party probably wants to avoid becoming subject to ridicule or delegitimization in the public discourse.

In addition to the importance of diffusion channels, evolutionary theories of economic change point to the role of feedback and adaptive learning, which constitutes the second principal explanatory factor in this dissertation. I have argued that the elaboration and application of the notion of adaption to selection pressures provides a fruitful substantive contribution to current theorizing about political party competition, as it fills a remarkable gap in the literature on the populist radical right.

Surprisingly, although policy positions and ideological distances are central concepts in theories of party competition, scholars seldom identify the reasons why or mechanisms through which successful populist leaders are sometimes able to find a ‘fertile niche’ in the policy space, while many other attempts fail to do so. True, many scholars have acknowledged that we need to take into account that radical-right challengers are able to actively shape their own fate, because their successes are to a large extent shaped by their own tactical moves and ideological choices (e.g. Kitschelt 1995; Mudde 2007a; Goodwin 2006). For example, Kitschelt (1995) claimed that, in order to gain success, the radical right had to adopt a combi-
nation of a liberal pro-market position on socio-economic policies with a culturally exclusionist position. Nevertheless, this internal supply-side notion that populists have to find a so-called ‘winning formula’ to increase their chances of success is often put forward without elaborating what rules or algorithms party leaders can use in this search. Often, the way in which radical-right challengers pursue to adjust their ideological programmes to the specific competitive environment they face is not explicated at all.

The evolutionary answer to this gap is straightforward: populist party leaders adapt their position to the demands of the public and to the available opportunity structures by way of an iterative trial-and-error process. The advantage of this theoretical approach is that it requires no overly unrealistic assumptions about individuals being prospective optimizers. By continuously reproducing the options that worked, and discarding the ones that failed, firms or organizations are learning entities that gradually grope towards more profitable ways of doing things. Thus, it has been researched if and to what extent Fortuyn adjusted his political message over time by adaptive learning. It might be the reason why he apparently found a favourable ‘winning formula’ and therefore succeeded in achieving broad support and attention; this in contrast to Hans Janmaat, the party leader of the radical right-wing Centre Democrats, which demised at the end of the 1990s.

7.2 Overview of the results

The first part of this study (chapters 3 and 4) focused on the impact of the public debate. Chapter 3 has given support to the argument that the public debate in the mass media has played a pivotal role in the rise of Fortuyn. The results showed that discursive opportunities have significantly affected the degree to which his party was successful in the competition for voter support, as well as regarding Fortuyn’s ability to diffuse his claims in the public sphere. Thus, the public reactions of journalists, opinion makers, commentators and political actors to Pim Fortuyn and his party shaped both his ability to further express his views in the mass media, and to achieve more support among the Dutch electorate.

Media attention proved crucial in the mobilization of voter support. Visibility and consonance positively affected the opinion polls: the ascription of prominence by journalists to Fortuyn’s statements and positive public reactions of other actors raised Fortuyn’s popularity.

In turn, voter support enhanced standing in the media. Fortuyn’s media career was furthermore shaped by the intensity of the reactions of other political actors to Fortuyn. Consonance significantly increased Fortuyn’s opportunities for claim making, whereas dissonance undermined it. Media access for his statements was also increased by restrictive statements of other politicians in the media on immigration issues. Negative claims on the issue of immigration and integration by others presumably raised the prominence of these issues and therefore also increased the relevance of Fortuyn’s political agenda and thus enhanced his ability to further diffuse his viewpoints.

Combining these two results, the consequence is an escalating spiral of electoral attractiveness and mass media standing. Such a positive feedback process can explain how a seemingly stable political status quo suddenly spiralled out of equilibrium. In other words, a
dynamic cumulative effect can explain how Fortuyn’s party managed to mobilize so much attention and support within such a relatively short period of time.

Chapter 4 focused on the moment of the populist upsurge. It addressed the question to what extent the public discourse can account for the fact that the Dutch populist challenge was relatively late and the Netherlands could long be regarded as a ‘deviant case’ (Kriesi et al. 2008; Rydgren and Van Holsteyn 2004). Therefore, the more specific research question was put forward to what extent the debate in the mass media can explain why the Dutch extreme right party Centrumdemocraten (CD) headed by Hans Janmaat had failed to break out of its marginal position during the 1990s, and eventually ingloriously disappeared from the political arena in 1998. Like in the previous chapter, supply-side explanations were extended with the argument that latent political opportunities need to manifest themselves in the public discourse in order to become relevant.

The results showed that rising opinion polls led to more public claim making. Furthermore, negative public reactions also enhanced the party’s access to the public debate. This finding supports the assertion that putting radical-right actors in a bad light is counterproductive, when the aim is to deny them media attention.

However, the radical right-wing party was not able to increase public support by making itself more prominently heard in the mass media. Neither public claim making itself, nor higher visibility for its media statements were beneficial for raising popularity. Hence, even when the CD entered the public stage, offering means to communicate with a wider audience, it did not lead to more electoral success. In contrast, public criticism of others significantly eroded the electoral support.

In sum, in contrast to Fortuyn, party leader Janmaat of the CD appeared trapped in a feedback loop of stagnation. We have to conclude that the product that Janmaat offered on the electoral market faced a decisively harmful public sphere for it to diffuse and become adopted among the population. Having a more prominent voice did not increase the number of voters; to make matters worse, it was accompanied by a larger amount of negative publicity. Thus, achieving mass media access, generated by public opinion support, was in fact counterproductive for further increasing the party’s electoral attractiveness.

In the second part of this dissertation (chapters 5 and 6) the focus of attention was shifted to the strategic moves of the populist contender. Can Fortuyn’s rapid political career be better understood as a result of swift adaptation of his political message to the demands of the public and the available opportunity structure by way of an iterative trial-and-error process? More specifically, the research question in chapter 5 was to what extent Fortuyn strategically adapted his political stance concerning the integration and immigration issue, both in the course of the 2002 national election campaign, and during the years before he joined electoral politics.

I did not find any empirical support for the claim that Fortuyn was driven by success and failure in the opinion polls and mass media debate during the 2002 election campaign. This does not support the claim that successful populist right-wing leaders have a distinct ‘chameleon-like nature’ (Mazzoleni 2003) or exhibit ‘strategic flexibility’ (Ignazi 2003). But it is in line with the general tendency of established party leaders, who are predominantly policy-motivated, ideologically rigid and thus choose their policy positions relatively independently.
from past performances. In that sense, in contrast to being opportunistic, Fortuyn can be considered a ‘normal’ party leader. We have to conclude that the fact that Janmaat remained in a marginal position and Fortuyn succeeded to spectacularly break through was not due to a strategic populist strategy of the latter during the election campaign. Apparently, Fortuyn had already chosen a ‘winning formula’ at the moment when he joined electoral politics.

The second part of chapter 5 revealed how Fortuyn actually could arrive at this ‘starting position’. In the years that Fortuyn worked as a journalist writing about politics in the largest Dutch weekly magazine *Elsevier* (1994-2001), i.e. before he entered the stage as relevant political actor, the conclusion about his strategic adaptation is different. For obvious reasons no information feedback in the form of electoral support is available during this period, so I focused only on adaptation processes with regard to the struggle for the scarce resources visibility, resonance and legitimacy in the public debate.

Results showed that the more his statements on immigration and integration issues provoked negative public reactions (compared to criticism on other issues), the higher was the probability that Fortuyn subsequently addressed these topics again in one of his columns during the following month. This indicates that when receiving media attention for your voice is (still) anything but self-evident, any publicity is welcome and ‘no news is bad news’ (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). Apparently, any resonance was desirable.

Concerning electoral politics, the findings of chapter 5 suggest that adaptation to the environment within the party system does not so much seem to occur through the individual adaptive learning of parties or party leaders, but that adaptive upgrading processes occur at the population level. This finding is in line with a population ecology approach of organizations (e.g. Hannan and Freeman 1977; 1984), which emphasizes that organizations have a strong tendency toward inertia. Organizations seldom succeed in making radical changes in strategy and structure. Even in the face of environmental threats, they have a fundamentally limited ability to exhibit adaptive flexibility. The stronger the structural organizational inertia, the more likely it is that the total organizational change on the population level can be reduced to the extinction of unsuccessful and the birth of new and better adapted organizations.

The outcome that we deal with relatively inflexible or hardwired ideological political actors implies that we have to rely on the role of external opportunities, instead of party-centred explanations in terms of tactical ideological shifts. But does this mean that the role of public reactions and mass media attention is all there is? Despite our conclusion that strategic flexibility of the political position appears to be not relevant, it does not necessarily imply that in order to achieve success, Fortuyn could have freely chosen any fixed policy position from the start.

Needless to say, it is not possible in the real world to test theories about events that never happened. Therefore, systematic thought-experiments were conducted in chapter 6. Agent-based computer simulations mapped out the theoretical implications of cultural evolutionary assumptions; they provided insight in the consequences of different sets of expectations concerning the presence of mass media effects and the use of or abstention from different adaptive strategies. The outcomes in chapter 6 should thus be interpreted as ‘alternative theoretical scenarios’ (Bernstein et al. 2000), not as empirical findings.
This counterfactual reasoning revealed that refraining from imposing any restrictions on parties’ ability to communicate their policy stances to voters (as a result of varying mass media coverage), generated simulated data, which resembles relatively poorly election and opinion poll data. Adding the mass media factor, which was implemented by distorting the voters’ perceived ideological distances to parties, clearly improves the model fit. In other words: the developed scenario based on the notion that the public debate yields opportunities for some parties, and constraints for others, matches actual empirical time series more closely than a scenario built without these assumptions.

Without media distortion, there is a hypothesized niche for the Centre Democrats in 1998 of about 9 per cent of the vote, whereas the simulation including this effect decimates this electoral support. In line with chapter 4, this suggests that media distortion of the radical-right party during that campaign is already sufficient to explain the meagre results of the CD in 1998 (it did not obtain any seat). In fact, hardly any unexplained variance is left in this simulation for which additional hypotheses would be necessary, such as the presumed effects of organizational weakness or lack of charismatic leadership.

The simulations also revealed that Fortuyn’s policy position seemed to have mattered. Expected party positions and amounts of support in May 2002 of the newcomer Liveable Netherlands were shown, based on different assumptions, while replaying history from its foundation in June 2001. It is shown that the initial party position of LN is clearly not the optimal electoral foundation. Another electorally sub-optimal choice is already finishing with adapting the party position to the mean position of its supporters in November 2001. Interestingly, if LN would have pursued a so-called aggregating strategy, i.e. if it had ‘listened to the people’ during the election campaign by continuously adapting to its supporters’ mean policy position, the party would have shifted its political ideology more strongly towards a more restrictive stance on multicultural society issues. The largest niche, of about 9 per cent of the vote, that is available for a media-disadvantaged challenger was a stronger anti-immigration position than the established party with the most critical stance on immigration at the time (the VVD). Any newcomer that would be looking for the most promising ‘electoral gap’ guided by this strategy would have moved there. In other words: if we set the world back to 2001, it is very likely that an adaptive populist leader of this newcomer party would have arrived at Fortuyn’s position.

This outcome supplements the previous mass media argument. It has to be stressed that explaining the rapidity and timing of the diffusion of the radical right-wing political agenda in terms of the public debate is complemented, rather than displaced. In the competition with the existing parties, discursive opportunities proved pivotal. This argument states that the ‘objective’ presence of a fertile political gap should be manifested and perceived in order to become behaviourally relevant for voters and journalists. Thus, it does not displace the following question: for exactly which kind of political ideology would mass media prominence potentially yield the most electoral support?

In sum, for a concise answer to the main research question, we can identify two mechanisms that foster abrupt and punctuated, rather than smooth and gradual, political changes. Firstly, positive feedback dynamics in the public debate can account for
the rapidity, because they imply a self-reinforcing spiral. Because of the political changes in 2002, one can conclude that ‘Holland was normalized’ (Eatwell and Mudde 2004: xiv). That is to say, the Dutch political system was brought in line with the situation of most other Western European countries, which have generally faced similar socio-economic and political conditions, but experienced significant performances of radical right-wing populists much earlier. The catalyst factor in the form of a spiral of discursive reinforcement can explain how such an ‘acceleration of history’ could take place.

An electoral potential that lays fallow for a relatively long period can suddenly be fully seized upon and exploited by a political entrepreneur because human decisions to adopt an innovation (or not to do so) are interdependent. The popular opinion shapes the debate in the mass media, and public debate shapes the public: gatekeepers decide to devote mass media attention to a new product when opinion polls indicate voter support for it, and, in turn, voters’ popularity increases when gatekeepers display the product’s message more prominently. This can explain why we observed a snowball effect, generating a large wave of success within a short period of time, even when we do not observe much variation over time in the number of voters that are susceptible to the message of the populist right.

Secondly, adaptive learning of political party leaders would prevent any relatively dramatic changes. Due to its self-correcting nature, a smooth, ongoing process of individual-level policy position adjustments would generally lead to more overall stability in party systems (Mair 1997). In contrast, if policy stances are kept fixed over time, party leaders lack the capacity or willingness to (quickly) respond to changing environmental conditions. This prevents that changing popular demands and new political opportunities are immediately and constantly being taken advantage of.

This leads to more radical adjustments as more important potential driving forces behind ‘adaptive upgrading’ of the supply-side, the party system: the replacement of party leaders or even the disbanding and foundation of political parties. When established parties cannot respond to emerging societal demands, new party formation is likely to occur (Hug 2001). Without individual-level adaptation, parties thus risk decline and decay due to newcomers (Mair 1997). Given the generally large obstacles for newcomers to break into the political arena and communicate their existence and messages to voters, the supply-side can be considered as relatively fixed. As a result, an electoral niche can be neglected for long periods of time, only to be exploited when a new actor succeeds to enter the public stage.

7.3 Discussion and wider relevance of the findings

The conclusions can be extended beyond the case of the Netherlands and there are broader lessons in the theoretical approach and empirical findings of this study. Firstly, the conclusion that the sudden rise of Fortuyn’s party, and persisting marginality of the predecessor anti-immigrant party, remains inexplicable without reference to the dynamics in the public sphere might prove insightful for cases elsewhere. For instance, Sweden has, like the Netherlands, been considered an exceptional case for a long time. The public debate in the Swedish media may account for the relatively late breakthrough of the radical right Sweden Democrats (in the
recent 2010 parliamentary elections), in spite of the fact that the country already showed several important indicators (like e.g. widespread popular xenophobia) for a potential available niche for a such a party since at least 2002 (Rydgren 2002). Assuming that the mainstream moderate right-wing parties in Germany cannot be considered as a ‘functional equivalent’ of the radical right in terms of their supply (as argued by e.g. Helbling and Tresch (2010)), both political space and popular demand arguments seem insufficient to understand why a new party that attempts to exploit this niche might utterly fail. Whether for instance Die Freiheit, founded in 2010 and programmatically modelled after the Dutch Party for Freedom, will spiral up or collapse in upcoming campaigns is likely to depend on the course of the public discourse.

The identification of discursive spirals supplements the predominantly static demand- and supply-side approaches that have characterized most previous research on the fortunes of the radical populist right. Earlier studies have mainly addressed the question why populist radical-right parties have advanced in some countries, but not in others (Kitschelt 2007; Ellinas 2007). This theoretical perspective is not wrong, but incomplete. Countries can be shaken up by populist radical-right contenders within a relatively short period of time when parties are furnished with the opportunities necessary to disseminate their message. The ‘usual suspects’ such as popular grievances concerning large-scale immigration and multiculturalism and a political space provided by mainstream parties are perhaps indeed necessary but not sufficient conditions for success, because these factors do not automatically and immediately translate into electoral support or media access.

A second lesson of this study, closely related to the fact that political changes can exhibit punctuations, is that it points out why it is rather difficult to foresee when new political challengers will become important political factors. Would we have been more able to predict the timing of the political ‘normalization’ of the Netherlands, acknowledging the role of upward spirals in the public sphere? Are we, for that matter, more able to foresee political upheavals and large-scale protests in general, like the recent uprisings in the Arab world? This is doubtful. A corollary of self-reinforcing processes is that outcomes become less predictable (Baumgartner and Jones 2002). In contrast, a system that responds to perturbations in such a way that it reduces its effects (negative feedback) boils down to a self-correcting mechanism to deviations from the status quo.

The more heavily voters’ decisions to support a particular party depend on how many others have already decided to do so, the more likely we are to observe unexpected consequences due to snowball effects. In a similar vein, sudden large mass media shifts can occur if gatekeepers strongly tend to copy and reinforce each other’s decisions about what is important to cover. To the extent that Fortuyn’s media career was mainly based on such a bandwagon effect, we have to conclude that it was partly a result of a ‘media hype’ (Vasterman 2005).

When choices of individuals would be solely contingent on the choices of others, we face a process that is radically path-dependent, which can be illustrated as follows: We fill an urn with balls of three different colours, draw one ball randomly and replace it together with three new balls of the same colour, and subsequently randomly draw a ball again, etcetera. The colour that is initially chosen will tend to prevail even more in the long run. As a result, we simply cannot predict which colour will dominate the urn when it has become completely filled (Goldstone 1998). If history were to be repeated several times, with the same set of competing
balls, the competition could quickly generate completely different winners. Tiny initial differences can thus generate potentially enormous differences in final outcomes, a phenomenon which is similar to the famous ‘butterfly effect’ in chaos theory. Relatively small advantages in the opinion polls or in mass media standing can have large consequences when the public-debate dynamic strongly amplifies and feeds back on these initial differences. In fact, we can even experience a journalistic self-fulfilling prophecy (Kleinnijenhuis 2003: 158). Because the importance and relevance of political actors can be derived from the eventual actual outcomes of parliamentary elections, it even can be justified post-hoc why much publicity was devoted to the actor in the first place.

Of course, this phenomenon is in itself not necessarily merely good news for populist parties. Downs (1972) has described the way media attention goes through particular ‘issue-attention cycles’. Media attention for actors and topics can rise and fall through dynamics exogenous to ‘real-life’ developments and endogenous to the media system itself. Likewise, successes of parties that rely heavily on the news media can show a ‘flash character’. Parties can suddenly subside, like for example the right-wing populist newcomer Trots op Nederland (Proud of the Netherlands) headed by Verdonk has shown. Before its popularity evaporated into thin air after a wave of negative publicity initiated by an internal party conflict, it had succeeded to poll more than 20 virtual seats in parliament in 2008 (and crowded out Wilders’ Party for Freedom to the political margins).

Obviously, these conclusions are not necessarily limited to the realm of electoral politics only. We encounter similar escalating processes in other markets as well. For instance, cascades and self-fulfilling prophecies prominently feature in theories on behaviour in financial markets (Prast 2004). Feedback processes constitute one of the ‘largely unsolved problems’ in theory and research on protest participation (Opp and Kittel 2010: 97). They explain the explosive and surprising nature of many protest movements: often, either they fail utterly, or they experience an explosive growth once they reach a certain threshold (Granovetter 1978). Especially in so-called ‘cultural markets’ we can observe similar snowball mechanisms at work, because the intrinsic quality of products that are offered in such markets is relatively ambiguous (Salganik and Watts 2008). When people are faced with the choice which book, play, film, painting or fashion style to buy or comment on, they are strongly inclined to mainly look at the behaviour and opinion of others, because they have little guidance what to choose when they would have to choose solely based on their own preference. As Baumgartner and Jones (2002: 23) have put this as follows: ‘as long as kids want the same toys as their friends have, rather than choosing what to play with independently and in isolation from others, then we can predict that there will always be cascades and fads in the toy industry’. In other words: future surprises will remain inevitable.

Even if all participants in a social system would consider this phenomenon as undesirable, this would not automatically prevent it to occur. As a matter of fact, one might even predict that the intensity of future fads and cascades in the electoral market is likely to increase. This can be derived from the argument that a partisan and public logic of political communication is gradually being replaced by the internal media logic (Brants and Van Praag 2006; Van Aelst et al. 2008). In the former two models, respectively, journalists function more or less as mouthpieces of political parties, or they are predominantly driven by the norm of informing the
citizens as objectively, balanced and fair as possible. To the contrary, the latter model boils
down to a harsh competition between mass media outlets for audience ratings. The acts of each
journalist involved in the debate that contributes to the reinforcement of a hype might make
perfectly sense from an individual point of view when such acts attract the attention of the
public. All actions taken together, however, have negative external effects for the public de-
bate, or even society as a whole (Castells 1997). Likewise, politicians would probably never
plea for a general ‘scandalization’ or ‘demonization’ of the public discourse, although they can
hardly escape making fierce statements themselves now and then, if they want to survive the
‘media battle’ for attention.

With regard to the impact of the strategic choices of a political party, I have considered its
ideology, represented by the policy position, as the core feature (or core ‘trait’) that can be
subject to changes over time (likewise see e.g. Budge 1994). This study thus fits in a broader
research field investigating party positioning over time, a topic which has received increased
attention from scholars recently. One can distinguish two strands within this field: one group of
researchers focuses on the empirical study of parties’ policy strategies in real-world party com-
petitions (e.g. Adams et al. 2004; 2005; Somer-Topcu 2009; Budge et al. 2010), and another
group has applied computer simulations to study party strategies (e.g. Laver 2005; Smirnov
and Fowler 2007; Laver and Sergenti 2011; Bendor et al. 2011). Whether and how parties
respond to changing popular opinions or changing levels of electoral support, is at the core of
understanding political representation, as the ideological congruence between citizens and
policy makers is considered as one of the principal features of a democratic system (Huber and
Powell 1994).

Two sets of feedback feature prominently in this literature on ideological shifts of par-
ties: the amount of voter support (either in the form of election results or information provided
by opinion polls), and the policy position of the voters (either in the form of the mean position
of the total voter population or the position of one’s supporters). In line with the findings of the
empirical chapters based on the discursive opportunity approach, this study enlarged the scope
of this research field by introducing a third factor: the role of the public debate in the mass
media.

Firstly, a theoretical contribution has been made by taking this realm into account as a
selection mechanism into computer simulations of party competition. To date, prior models
have implicitly assumed that all party positions are equally visible for citizens. This study
showed that it is feasible and fruitful to implement the more realistic assumption that there is
competition between parties for gaining attention in the public sphere. Media distortion could
also be applied to simulations of other complex dynamics where the exposure to other’s behav-
ior via indirect information channels potentially plays a pivotal role, like outbursts of civil
disturbances and ethnic violence (e.g. Epstein 2002).

With this addition, it is possible to address the question why it is relatively difficult
for new parties to successfully compete with political actors which are already in the political
system, even if they occupy a potentially fruitful political space. By adding such a non-policy
factor into spatial models of party competition one creates ‘biased voters’ (Adams 2001). If
strategic party shifts in the policy field have repercussions for levels of mass media distortion
of one’s public profile, the nature of the party competition is even more profoundly affected. Electoral support might not necessarily be enhanced when a party strategically moves closer to another rival party, as a moderating policy shift might negatively alter the amount of newsworthiness, which in turn hampers the ability to communicate its policy stances to the voters. Thus, the mass media selection mechanism can perhaps contribute to the solution of a long-standing puzzle, namely the question why parties tend to stay out of the epicentre of the policy field and tend to remain distinct from each other (e.g. Schofield and Sened 2005). A possible explanation for poor performances of centre parties would be that these fail to publicly demonstrate to voters what they actually stand for.

Secondly, the responses to feedback about mass media have been addressed in this study. Therefore, I have extended empirical studies of party responsiveness by not only investigating the extent to which programmatic shifts can be predicted by learning behaviour from polls and public opinion, but also from media performances. This study has extended prior conclusions that there is limited empirical support for vote-maximizing behaviour of political parties, and supports the view that parties are non-strategic, policy-pursuing and dominated by ideology (e.g. Budge et al. 2010). It suggests that parties neither seem to possess media-maximizing motives for changing their programmes. If we do not even find empirical evidence for adaptive shift in the case of the alleged opportunistic and ‘attention-driven’ party leader Fortuyn, it seems unlikely that we would find effects for other mainstream party leaders. Future research should establish the robustness and generalizability of this suggestion, particularly because Fortuyn did not encounter large and enduring setbacks in this respect during the 2002 election campaign.

This observation brings me to another point: when a radical-right party passes the so-called ‘threshold of relevance’ different mechanisms might be at work. My approach to go further back in time in order to research the evolution of the ideas of party leader Fortuyn is in line with the plea to differentiate among various phases of party development (Ellinas 2007; 2010). For example, Norris (2005) posits 3 per cent of the vote share as the critical hurdle to differentiate between ‘fringe’ and ‘relevant’ actors. Before a radical-right party, or any niche party for that matter, has emerged and gained at least a minimal level of electoral relevance, journalists and established political actors can easily ignore such marginal actors and their claims; most of their messages will probably go even entirely unnoticed.

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that parties and organizations have a stronger inclination to adapt before they have reached the stage in which they are at least considered relevant. Analyzing the role of strategic adaptation to mass media selection for the performances of radical right actors might thus appear to be most fruitful if research concentrates on marginal groups or organizations that have hardly any voice yet or on the period prior to party leaders’ entry on the political stage, i.e. before they have reached a certain level of newsworthiness (in the eyes of the gatekeepers) or political standing (indicated by public support). When the aspiration level of an actor is to become politically relevant, satisficing would prescribe to stay put after having reached this stage.
7.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Despite its contributions, this study also has a number of shortcomings, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs, as well as suggestions for future research that may address these limitations and follow-up questions.

Firstly, it was beyond the scope of this study to explore what shapes the discursive opportunity variables themselves. Left untouched was the issue of underlying factors explaining shifts in visibility, the intensity and nature of the public responses, and in the amount of mass media statements of other actors on immigration and integration issues. For example, why do gatekeepers ascribe more visibility to certain actors and their messages at certain moments than others? Similarly, to what extent can we explain why actors publicly responded (or not)? Apart from endogenous media dynamics being probably at work here, one can point to other plausible accounts.

Decisions of media gatekeepers about allowing or depriving radical-right claims access to the debate, will probably share large similarities with decisions about whether or not to devote more prominent publicity to other actors. Thus, given that the ability of both Fortuyn and Janmaat to publicly voice their views profited from increasing public opinion support, it is likely that electoral popularity also influenced the amount of visibility for their claims. In general, the political standing of parties and social movement organizations affects their chances of becoming headline news or not (Andrews and Caren 2010). Likewise, there is in general probably a higher chance of public reactions of other politicians when radical-right contenders pose larger electoral threats to them.

Besides short-term factors, scholars have also pointed to more long-term societal and technological developments that have gradually shaped the facilitating or constraining characteristics of the media debate. For example, until 1989 there were only two Dutch TV channels, both publicly funded. It was already noted that, as a consequence of increased competition due to a growing number of media outlets, decisions of journalists about what to prominently cover have increasingly been determined by what sells best. Furthermore, besides an increasing role of audience-driven and profit-maximizing ‘news values’, ideas about which political claims are sensible, realistic and legitimate are rooted in relatively stable conceptions of nationhood and citizenship (Koopmans and Statham 1999a). Nevertheless, timing can play a crucial role here: when mainstream parties adopt the issues of the extreme right, it may signal to the public that extreme-right claims are no longer a taboo in the discourse (Arzheimer 2009; Thranhardt 1995). When citizens, journalists or judges update their current judgements about which political views are acceptable and which ones are not, they will probably be influenced by the developments in policy stances and corresponding performances of both mainstream and radical right-wing parties.

Secondly, a related point is the question to what extent explanations for the successful diffusion in the public debate have a more proximate character, or are rather more ultimate causes, compared with other demand-side and supply-side factors.
Rydgren (2002: 49) argues that we should put greater effort in creating hierarchies of the various explanatory factors, i.e. determine the importance of the different factors mentioned in the scholarly literature. One might argue that, eventually, structural developments and available political and socio-economic conditions matter most, as they provide the indispensable, initiating ‘deeper’ set of causes.

It should be kept in mind, though, that the task of explanation is not only to pin down the ‘final’ exogenous causes, but also to unravel endogenous processes (Biggs 2005; Sgourev 2010). These explain why mobilization can emerge and cease rapidly, on a scale of weeks or months, rather than years or decades. Thus, it should be stressed again that answers concerning the pace and pattern of the political ‘normalization’ of the Netherlands do not displace existing accounts that reveal that the political and socio-economic conditions had made the Netherlands ready for a populist revolt to occur.

Thirdly, with regard to the distinction of the relevant characteristics of the public debate, one could argue that further specification of variables is desirable or necessary. Nevertheless, this study has advanced over many prior studies in the sense that specific and actor-centred variables were derived. In contrast, in many other studies media-related variables consist of the amount of attention for different issues (like immigration and integration, law and order, the economy etcetera.) or the amount of media publicity devoted to a political party in question, irrespective of the content or actor (for exceptions, see e.g. Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003; Bos et al. 2010; Van der Pas et al. 2011).

Future studies on the radical right could devote more attention to the question whether it is fruitful to distinguish more specific characteristics of the public debate, and if so, how to apply and measure these. In the previous chapters it was already explained that public claims on immigration do not necessarily coincide with news on ‘real-world developments’, and that the variable political claim making taps something substantively different than the amount of visibility attached to claims by journalists. Therefore, public statements of political parties can be relatively insensitive to the fluctuations in prominence that journalist attach to these claims. Further research can be improved by testing the ‘political space’ argument and agenda-setting theory together in one framework by including both general factual news coverage on immigration and political statements about immigration policies on the part of the established parties.

Furthermore, critical public responses appeared in different guises. Whereas dissonance diminished the electoral support for Janmaat, it did not for Fortuyn. I have not presented detailed descriptions of the content of the hostile public reactions towards both parties, but, in line with common perception, it has been shown before that the LPF faced less stigmatic associations with Nazism and violent extremism than the CD (e.g. Schafraad 2009). The label ‘dissonance’ may thus not have covered a constant substantive meaning over a ten-year period.

Fourthly, in line with the previous current of thought, it can be pointed out that the ideologies of the two radical-right parties differed, and that these differences might have had crucial consequences. In chapters 3 and 4, the amount of claims of both parties was analyzed, not their precise content. Although the empirical investigation of the number and visibility of claims of
radical-right actors themselves over time in the mass media is in my view already a considera-
table improvement over examining the total amount of media publicity for the radical right in
general, irrespective of the speaker, future research on how the public debate shapes divergent
fortunes could be further improved by scrutinizing in more detail the actual content of mass
media statements. In the introduction, I have pointed out that the political agenda of the CD
and LPF can be considered comparable because they shared the tough anti-immigrant stance as
their unique selling point. However, it can be argued that the claims of both parties were still
somewhat distinct in their ideological character.

The results have shown that a more prominent voice in the debate enhanced Pim For-
tuyn’s electoral attractiveness, whereas this pivotal effect was absent in the case of Hans
Jannoat. Acknowledging that the size of the potential electoral reservoir for an anti-
immigration party has been relatively stable over time, this raises the follow-up question to
what extent these different effects of media visibility can be explained by the fact that the polit-
ical statements of Jannoat and Fortuyn actually differed (see also e.g. Pauwels 2010). It has
been argued that Fortuyn’s potential appeal to the Dutch electorate was considerably larger
because he promoted a civic instead of ethnocentric type of nationalism (Akkerman 2005;
Rydgren 2008). Also some ‘new left’ issues, such as gender equality, were incorporated into
his anti-immigration agenda (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007).

Carter (2005) demonstrated a relation between the type of ideology radical-right par-
ties employ and their levels of success, although she encountered some notable exceptions. The
Dutch CD seems a deviant case: most of the party’s ideological counterparts have flourished,
like in Austria (FPÖ), France (FN) and Belgium (VB). The ideological character might not
only have direct effects on the fortunes of parties, it can also interact with other explanatory
factors. Golder (2003) finds that increasing unemployment and high levels of immigration only
yield more electoral success for the group of extreme-right parties labelled ‘populist’, but not
for the ones that are labelled as ‘neofascist’. Despite these two examples, to date, research that
elaborates the internal supply-side notion that one’s specific ideological stance crucially mat-
ters, and systematically tests effects of radical-right parties’ platforms is relatively scarce (for
another exception see e.g. Kitschelt 1995); the focus on external opportunities and demand-side
factors has clearly prevailed. Instead of figuring as an explanatory factor, party ideology has
played a more dominant role in delimiting the dependent variable.

The two studies cited above illustrate a remarkable weakness that, in my opinion, has
severely hampered a fruitful elaboration of explanations based on ideological positioning:
Carter considers the CD as similar in ideological outlook as for instance the FPÖ, FN and VB,
based on an extensive typology that (in theory) distinguishes no less than 16 mutually exclu-
sive sub-types within the family of the radical right; in contrast, according to a straightforward
dichotomy outlined by Golder, the CD is different from these three other radical- right parties.
For some reason, many scholars seem to reason only in clear-cut categories instead of gradual
distances. This does not only concern the identification of differences within the broad group
of radical-right parties, but also the attempts to distinguish the mainstream from the radical
right. Notwithstanding the consensus about the evident ‘usual suspects’, the black and white
treatment of cases results in more discussions and difficulties than necessary. In the case of the
LPF, many scholars have categorized the party as radical or extreme right, whereas others have
rejected such a label. For example, Mudde (2007a) categorizes the LPF as neoliberal populist instead, Rydgren (2008) introduces the new label ‘new’ radical right-wing to capture the distinct character of the party (which it shares with the Norwegian Progress Party), and Ignazi (2003: 219) calls the LPF a ‘quite unfathomable phenomenon’.

In this respect, future work in this field could benefit from studies on external opportunities in the form of the political space provided by the mainstream parties, which has led to much more fruitful research and findings (e.g. Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Arzheimer 2009; Koopmans et al. 2005; Norris 2005; Meguid 2005). In contrast to party-centric explanations, the ideological niche available on the electoral market is usually measured with continuous variables. For example, Arzheimer (2009) uses the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) data to estimate the degree of ‘toughness’ of the established parties (i.e. any party that is not considered as part of the extreme right, which in this case includes Fortuyn) on the issues associated with the extreme right, like multiculturalism, the national lifestyle, and law and order.

I admit that many subtle differences between ideological programmes of parties are lost when we reduce them to one gradual scale that incorporates several related topics like the support for a tough immigration policy, opposition to multiculturalism, or opposition to increasing European integration. True, it is difficult to pinpoint the difference between a ‘classical racist’ and ‘cultural racist’ argument for a restrictive immigration policy (Wilkes et al. 2007) with a one-dimensional measurement. However, the main advantage is that it is easier to formulate and test theories on the impact of party positioning on the electoral fortunes of parties that includes both the views of populist contenders and the views of the establishment in a comparative manner into one model.73 It is actually not even necessary to distinguish two clear-cut categories of parties at all.

In a similar vein, this dissertation has reasoned from the analytical possibility and utility to position all Dutch parties’ ideological stances in one political landscape. With regard to the issues of integration and immigration, the political claim analysis data revealed a difference in ‘toughness’ between the LPF (-0.80) and CD (-1.00) that was almost identical to expert survey scores on the item immigration: -0.83 and -0.97 respectively (Laver 1995; Benoit and Laver 2006).74 Based on these relatively small differences, it was therefore not surprising that the empirically embedded simulations revealed that both parties could potentially have mobilized a relatively similar share of the electoral reservoir if assumed that voters are ‘sincere’ and solely guided by ideological proximity.

At first sight, it seems somewhat unlikely that relatively small ideological differences between two parties can deliver such disproportionately large differences in media attention and electoral support. However, scholars who pursue to advance simulation experiments by adding

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73 Research on party positioning has mainly relied on the CMP data, which has systematically excluded new and small niche parties, but the analysis of other data like expert surveys or mass media statements provide good alternatives. For example, Kriesi et al. (2008) use a two-dimensional policy space to demonstrate the differences and similarities in the supply offered by both the populist and mainstream parties in several Western European countries. See likewise Koopmans et al. (2005) for the issues of immigration and integration.

74 I have converted the expert scores to a -1 to +1 scale. The original scores were respectively 18.3 and 19.7 points on a 20-point scale.
endogenous media dynamics are likely to be confronted with the puzzle of butterfly effects mentioned earlier. Even when a small policy shift yields only a small increase in electoral support, this can in turn diminish the bias of mass media and subsequently further boost the opinion polls. Thus, Janmaat remained a marginal phenomenon, while Fortuyn evolved into a winner, in spite of relatively small initial differences.

Obviously, it is in such a case hard to establish a priori which specific political platform will set into motion an upward spiral, and which one will remain marginal. Many thought that the political career of Fortuyn was over in February 2002 when his fierce anti-Islamic statements had been unmasked as extreme right. The difficulty of establishing a threshold beforehand resembles the difficulty of defining the ‘region of acceptability’ in directional voting theories. In this view, voters will reward parties that are like-minded concerning a specific issue and that express their opinion with the greatest intensity, provided that the appeal of intensity is within a certain acceptable limit.

Finally, I will return to the explanation of breakthroughs of populist leaders in terms of their outstanding charismatic appeal. This explanation has been dismissed as unconvincing in the theoretical background chapter as it suffers from circular reasoning. This study suggests that charisma is better seen as an emergent characteristic, that is to an important extent generated by the actions and reactions of others, rather than by the skills and personality of the concerning leader. This interpretation is in line with a more sociological understanding of leadership, which Gibb has articulated as follows: ‘Leadership is not a quality which a man possesses; it is an interactional function of the personality and of the social situation’ (cited in Femia et al. 2009: 2). In contrast, a classical perspective on leadership has primarily focused on the unique and heroic personalities of great leaders, and often depicted them as almost all-powerful figures capable of controlling and manipulating crowds (Femia et al. 2009).

Arguments related to charisma stress that strong, evocative and simplistic language is what really counts. These arguments reflect a third way of defining the concept of populism, namely predominantly as a certain communication style, independent of the content of the policy position that is advocated. Mazzoleni noted that visible and controversial leaders like Haider or Le Pen are endowed with distinctive public-speaking skills: their messages are often formulated in ‘highly emotional and tabloid-style phrases’ (2003: 5). Besides interpreting the core characteristic of populism as an ideological position, or alternatively as an algorithm that guides party positioning, I have neglected this third interpretation as an explanatory factor in this dissertation. However, I am not convinced that the distinctive public-speaking skills of Fortuyn provide crucial additional insights for answering the research question and understanding the rapidity and timing of his rise.

Mudde (2004a: 542) considers the interpretation of populism as an emotional and simplistic discourse directed at the gut feeling of people as ‘highly problematic to put into operation in empirical studies’, because it is very difficult to distinguish whether a statement mainly expresses emotions or rather well-considered thoughts. In relation to this, disentangling the evaluations of parties and party leaders is notoriously difficult as the two are strongly associated (Andeweg 2001). Relying on counterfactual reasoning might prove fruitful in this case. For instance, Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2010) found that the overwhelming majority of the
supporters of Geert Wilders choose party loyalty over personal loyalty: only one quarter of them responded that they would still have voted for him in the hypothetical situation that he would have been the leader of another party.75

A second problem of the ‘evocative language argument’ is that employing slogan-based language constitutes the core of political campaigning from the left to the right (Mudde 2004a). All parties, irrespective of their platform, will pursue to address both heart and mind of voters. Typical illustrations from the 2002 election campaign are quoting from the diary of Anne Frank by De Graaf, the former leader of the progressive liberal D66, or the exclamation ‘The Netherlands, wake up!’ during a political speech of Melkert, the Labour Party leader at that time. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that Janmaat’s unsuccessful career is principally a result of the lack of using simple and strong language. Lucardie (1998: 116) remarked that the party leader could not be considered as particularly eloquent, but he could be considered very ambitious, experienced and at ease as a public speaker and debater. He even observed that Janmaat was ‘often too emotional to convince anyone but his own supporters’. After an analysis of the role of personality factors in modern elections, King (2002) concluded that elections remain overwhelmingly political contests. One of the main reasons, he argued, is that a strong preselection process takes place: those who evidently lack ambition or public-speaking skills will not be chosen and put forward by the party as its leader anyway.

Some other non-policy related traits of successful leaders, such as ‘portraying self-confidence’ in public (see e.g. Van der Pas et al. 2011), are admittedly less vague and easier to operationalize than charismatic appeal, but clearly suffer from likewise circular reasoning. For instance, the euphoric, self-assured tone of Fortuyn in a notorious debate following his surprising victory in the local elections in March 2002, and corresponding manifest irritation of the incumbent party leaders, can only be understood in the context of a radical shift in the balance of power, which increased uncertainty about subsequent developments. With regard to waves of contentions, Koopmans (2004b) has noted that, contrary to the classical collective behaviour approach, so-called ‘moments of madness’ do not foremost originate from changes in the states of mind of protesters, but from changes in the interactions across the social system.

Experimental findings from political psychology on how the electorate decides have led Lau and Redlawsk (2006) to the conclusion that people mainly go with their gut feeling when party leaders hardly differ on the issues they put forward. If lacking information about substantive differences, voters are more strongly inclined to choose the one who they most identify with, or based on how the party leaders make them feel. Given the common wisdom that Fortuyn had outspoken views on the multicultural society that were unrepresented by any other party, evocative and strong language seems a more relevant and important factor if one would address the decisions of voters when several like-minded radical right-wing parties are in competition with each other.

This was for instance the case in the Dutch 2006 national elections: four ideologically similar right-wing populist parties participated (headed by Stuger, Nawijn, Pastors and Wilders respectively), moreover, the conservative liberal VVD had a candidate on its list (Verdonk) who also conveyed a populist message of defending Dutch identity. As it is unlikely that voters

75 Unfortunately, the question did not contain any information about the politician’s new party.
have been able to notice the relatively small ideological differences between the views, it is implausible that these can fully account for the divergent electoral fortunes (Bos et al. 2010). Findings indicate that the amount and nature of the mass media attention were more decisive: what Wilders clearly distinguished from the other successors of Fortuyn was his greater publicity (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007b).

To the extent that the media debate should be considered as an external property that cannot be controlled and moulded by one single actor, this observation emphasizes again that successful leadership depends as much on the surrounding situational context as on individual traits. Given that the causes of the emergence of mass media phenomena like Fortuyn at least partly originate from all interactions of all individual actors involved in the debate, only a co-ordinated hush-up of the claims of populist right-wing contenders seems to be a possible counterstrategy if one’s goal is to reduce their successes. However, the question whether a modern democracy should be satisfied with the absence of a political voice that expresses and represents the views of a substantive group of citizens, remains unanswered.
Appendix A  Reliability test for political claims data

The inter-coder reliability test was conducted on a randomly selected sub-sample of issues of *NRC Handelsblad* during three periods: from February 5th-8th, March 4th-7th, and from March 27th-30th, 2002. Three coders participated in the test. The reliability is calculated on three different levels: the reliability of article selection, the reliability of claims-identification and reliability of single claim variables.76 Coded were all claims on the issue of integration, immigration and xenophobia/racism or claims about Islam and Muslims, all claims made by immigrants and ethnic minorities, and all claims made by or about the extreme right and xenophobic groups (including Pim Fortuyn and Liveable Netherlands). No pilot reliability assessment was done, as a similar coding procedure had been used before and proved to be reliable (see Koopmans et al. 2005: 264).

1. Reliability of article selection

Reliability of article selection was calculated with as units the total number of articles that potentially contained relevant claims (by using keywords), amounting to 198 articles.77 Thus, we assume each coder has to take 198 decisions and each decision is either a hit or a miss.78 The percentage of agreement is calculated by dividing the number of agreements (‘hits’) by the total number of decisions. Detailed information about who selected which article and what the majority’s decisions were is given in Table A2. The reliability in the article selection process is calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nr. of coders</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total nr. of articles</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisions to be made</td>
<td>198 * 3 = 594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minority decisions</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>match</td>
<td>(594-59)/594= 535/594 90.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correlation:</td>
<td>sqrt. 0.901 0.949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76This reliability test is similar to the procedure of the EUROPUB.COM team; see [http://europub.wzb-berlin.de](http://europub.wzb-berlin.de).

77The following keywords were used: immig! OR alloch! OR asiel! OR discrim! OR inburgering! OR vluchteling! OR ethnis! OR integra! OR moslim! OR islam!

78This results in a conservative estimate of inter-coder reliability, as we only include those articles that the keyword search identifies as potentially relevant, thus excluding articles (on which inter-coder agreement to exclude them would obviously have been extremely high) that have no link whatsoever to Pim Fortuyn or to immigration issues. Alternatively, one can calculate the reliability based on the total amount of articles published for the relevant dates, totalling 1,472 articles in *NRC Handelsblad* during the periods to be coded. When this is taken as the total number of articles that coders have to scan and judge whether they are relevant (i.e., contain any claims) or not, inter-coder agreement on article selection is as high as 98.7 per cent.
2. Reliability of claim-identification

For the calculation of the reliability of claim identification we used the 21 articles that were selected by all three coders. The total number of different claims that were derived from these articles by any coder was 39. For more information about coding and majority decisions on these claims, see Table A3. A claim is considered to be the ‘same’ if it refers to the same instance of claim making by the same actor at the same time and location. An instance of claim making is not identical with an individual statement: a press conference or interview is coded as one strategic action in the public discourse. Therefore, two identical claims may be coded differently by two coders, for example with regard to the number of topics that are addressed or the number of persons that are criticized. The reliability of claim-identification is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coders</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total nr of claims</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisions to be made</td>
<td>39 * 3 = 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minority decisions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>(117-14)/117 = 88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>sqrt .880 = 0.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Reliability of claim-variables

For the calculation of inter-coder reliability of single-claim variables, 25 claims that were identified and coded by all three coders, were tested. For detailed information on these claims, see Table A3. The total number of decisions that had to be tested for reliability was 25 * 3 (claims * coders) = 75. Again the majority decision within a claim was taken as the norm and every divergent decision was taken as a mistake. Reliability scores were calculated only for the variables that were used for the current analysis, not for all other variables in the codebook. Table A1 shows the reliability of the variables used in the analysis (first column) and claim-variables (second column) from which they are derived respectively. Other relevant claim-variables concerning the 2nd and 3rd party and actor are not shown because these show at first sight almost excellent reliability, which simply results out of the majority decision that there is none.
### Table A1  Reliability of claims-variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Claim variables used to construct variables used in the analysis</th>
<th>maj</th>
<th>min</th>
<th>match</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claims Fortuyn</strong></td>
<td>PARTY1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACTNAME1</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACTNAME1, ACTNAME2, PARTY1, PARTY2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visibility</strong></td>
<td>CHEAD (Frontpage)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIRSTCL (First claim)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AFRPAGE (Headline)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consonance/Dissonance</strong></td>
<td>* Object: OBJ1, EVAL1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Address: ADRPART, ADRNAME1, SACPART, CACN1, SACN3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Frame: CAUS, CONS, ATTR, CAUS2, CONS2, ATTR2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative immigration claims</strong></td>
<td>FIELD1, FIELD2, FIELD3, POSIT1, POSIT2, POSIT3, OBJ1, EVAL1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

* Reliability of the visibility variables was calculated for all claims, not only for Fortuyn’s claims. The other two indicators of visibility (published in both newspapers and repetition) were not included as the sample for the reliability test only consisted of issues of *NRC Handelsblad* during a limited time period; ** Resonance/dissonance/consonance: The measure of reliability is again a conservative estimate, as the total amount of decisions only includes those cases where at least one of the coders coded PF as resonance (address/object/frame) = 14 claims (i.e., excluding all the cases where coders agreed that no reference to Fortuyn was made); *** The amount of decisions was based on the total number of claims (9) about integration/immigration; claims made by Fortuyn were excluded.
Table A2 Article selection: articles selected by any coder

X, Y, Z = coders  
0 = article not included  
1, 2, 3 etc. = number of claims coded from the article  
MAJ = number of minority decisions  
MIN = number of majority decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AHEAD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>MAJ</th>
<th>MIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From March 4th until March 7th, 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aantal abortussen flink gestegen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse juist, conclusie niet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijzonder onderwijs (3)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijzonder onderwijs (2)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolkestein: Kok heeft Fortuyn gebaard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bos: onroerend zaak belasting inruilen voor andere heffing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dag Wim en alsnog de groeten van Pim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De jolly joker aan de macht</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dieptreiste avond voor coalitie</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domper voor Leefbaar Hilversum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epicentrum Rotterdam</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuyn brengt slag toe aan gevestigde politiek; Verlies paarse partijen bij raadsverkiezingen 'Leefbaar' grootste in Rotterdam; Lage opkomst</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Teeven gevraagd als leider van LN; Congres moet instemmen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geen getreur</td>
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<td>Kiezer wil iets anders maar wat?</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Kritiek Turk en de Grave om PKK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leefbaar Rotterdam zoekt naar coalitie</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lokale democratie aan vernieuwing begonnen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marokko stelt drie dossiers open</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Korthals werft Britse cipiers voor gevangenis drugskoeriers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOS zicht voor lokale's</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nu nog op een rode knop drukken</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontreddering en triomf in Rotterdam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ook noodcellen drugskoeriers in Roermond</td>
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<td>Pim heeft het feestje bedorven</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA op bezoek bij de bijlimmers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA-campagne is schrijnend slecht</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Raadsverkiezingen</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Schilderswijk herkent Rosenmoller niet</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Senaat stemt schoorvoetend in met 'bolletjeswet'</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFe r neemt wagen mee</td>
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<td>Stemmen</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop met maken van folders in talen van allochtonen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkije laakt Nederlandse aanpak PKK; Te tolerantie opstelling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vader Hans</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valse advertentie Van Gogh</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Vlaams blok enthousiast over uitslag; Dewinter ziet rechtse opmars in Rotterdam, Antwerpen, Wenen en Rome

Afkeer van Paars
Asielbeleid
Eberhard wilde zetel 'kopen' bij LN
Dijkstal: kiezer is verwende diva
Een dam van documenten: bedrijven willen spoedloket voor hun buitenlandse werknemers
Eis: celstraf voor mensensmokkel
Fortuyn noemt Blair een gevaarlijke man
Fortuyn product van verveling
Groenlinks Den Haag
Ik kan je waarschuwen als het misgaat
Kandidaat LPF werk geschorst
Kerk moet oordeel rechters respecteren
Leefbaar dreigt onwerkbaar te worden
LPF: langer wachten op zorg
Moord op de politiek
Nederland is nog lang niet vol
Open spoeddebat werkmigrant
Politieke partijen mijden Bromet
Prijsschieten op elkaars partij programma's
PvdA Rotterdam is niet aan evalueren toe
Rekenschap
Rokende puinhopen
Er zit weer bloed op de blazers
Kerk voor protestant 'hulpje' bij oordeel; onderzoeker de Lange over de invulling van het morele huishoudboekje

From March 27th until March 30th, 2001

"Linkse dictatuur bij tv; Hans Kraay om politieke redenen weg bij Studio Sport"
De partijdigheid van Rottenberg
Drie mannen na 02-02-02 uitgezet
Maxima is godsgeschenk
Moslims moeten jong vee offeren
Mvv in drie maanden
Vermeend stopt kinderbijslag voor Marokko
Vermeend treft onschuldige Marokkanen
Werving in Slowakije mag niet
Wiegel gaat voorop in strijd met Fortuyn
'Afghanen blijven nog'
'Fortuyn heeft ons program gejat'
Importbruid
Marokko onnodig getart
Nederland mag niet zelf gaan spuieren
Toestemming voor vier man in een cel; Noodwetten goedgekeurd
### Table A3 Claims identification

Claims identified by any coder from articles selected by all three coders

1 = coder identified the claim  
- = coder included the article, but did not identify the claim (as he/she identified another claim).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ahead</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>MAJ</th>
<th>MIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eberhard wilde zetel LN kopen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vice president of LN Schnetz says that number 13 of the LPF candidate list, Eberhard, has tried to 'buy' a seat in parliament (a place on the candidate list of LN) and has offered to pay 50,000 to 60,000 guilders.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 13 on LPF election list Eberhard denies having tried to 'buy' seat in parliament with LN; he merely wanted to support LN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eis: celstraf voor mensensmokkel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The public prosecutor of Leeuwarden sues (demands prison term of 24 months, 8 of which suspended) a 45-year old man, who is the owner of an employment agency for smuggling/human trafficking Somalis.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuyn noemt Blair een gevaarlijke man</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fortuyn criticizes in monthly magazine of Amnesty International UK PM Blair, and former US foreign minister Albright; he calls them (and the current US foreign policy) very dangerous; also, he thinks Arafat is a villain and argues that we should fully support Israel; he pleads for an introduction visa for Antillians. Also, he argues that the Antillian elite is corrupt.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuyn product van verveling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historian Ankersmit agrees with Scheffer about failures of the cabinet having led to the rise of Pim Fortuyn. But he also thinks that his popularity is caused by boredom followed by displacement of politics from parliament to international networks and institutions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPF: langer wachten op zorg</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>NRC</em>-columnist De Kam states that Pim Fortuyn incorrectly presents himself as a professor. Moreover he excoriates the budget deficits. Especially in the health care branche, the plan is an empty promise; in order to eliminate waiting lists investment is necessary rather than it being possible to save money.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prijschieten op elkaars partij programma's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDA leader Balkenende advices Pim Fortuyn to calculate the financial consequences that will follow from his electoral program by the CPB. According to Balkenende this will lead to more insight in Pim Fortuyn's ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Linkse dictatuur bij tv: Hans Kraay om politieke redenen weg bij Studio Sport'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hans Kraay sr. considers Pim Fortuyn an intelligent debater and rejects the fact that he is a populist. Furthermore he argues that Paars has ruined the health care system and that the Dutch media is a political left bastion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvv in drie maanden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State secretary Kalsbeek confirms the promise made by the head of the IND about the authorization of provisional residence for asylum seekers and pledged that the waiting period for such an authorization at the end of this year will be less than three months.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vermeend stopt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minister of social affairs Vermeend (and Secretary of state)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

171
<p>| APPENDICES |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <strong>kinderbijslag voor Marokko.</strong> | Hoogenvorst) want to stop the provision of child allowances for Dutch Moroccans whose children live in Morocco. This discussion follows from a diplomatic dispute with the Moroccan government concerning the implementation of welfare laws. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <strong>Werving in Slowakije mag niet.</strong> | State secretary Vliegenthart does not grant permission for the recruitment of 300 unemployed nurses in Slovakia. She has severe objections with respect to placement of large groups of foreign nurses in single institutions and prefers EU-nurses. She writes her opinion in a letter to parliament, majority of parliament agrees. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <strong>Wiegel gaat voorop in strijd met Fortuyn</strong> | By using a quote of liberal patriarch Thorbecke, VVD prominent Hans Wiegel blames Fortuyn for being populistic during a party meeting in Kerkdriel, and says that Fortuyns politics are parasitic, lacking principles, and that he uses every occasion to attract attention. Furthermore he states that Fortuyns ideas are based on quicksand. He criticizes Dijkstal for not challenging Fortuyn. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <strong>'Fortuyn heeft ons program gejat'</strong> | Head of D66 De Graaf says in newspaper interview that with Fortuyn a coarsening of the political debate has started in the Netherlands; he accuses Leefbaar Nederland of having stolen D66's programme for political renewal. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <strong>Marokko stelt drie dossiers open</strong> | The Moroccan government allows Dutch civil servants to inspect three social assistance files in the Moroccan land register. By doing so Rabat obliges itself to cooperate in hunting for social security fraud as was asked by the Dutch government. | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 |
| <strong>Bolkestein: Kok heeft Fortuyn gebaard</strong> | During a VVD meeting in Noordwijk, member of the European Commission Bolkestein calls Fortuyn the 'Emile Ratelband' of politics; maybe funny during the electoral battle, but neither useful in the Parliament, nor as a coalition partner for the VVD. He thinks his party should not take him seriously. Islam is not a danger of any kind to the Netherlands. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <strong>Dag Wim en alsnoog de groeten van Pim</strong> | NRC-columnnist Bik states that Pim Fortuyn operates as a catalyst on the dynamic electoral market consisting of swing voters. He thinks Fortuyn profits from the political discomfort because of the extensive coalition agreement of the purple coalition which banned all discussion. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <strong>Turkije laakt Nederlandse aanpak PKK; 'Te tolerante opstelling'</strong> | Dutch minister De Graaf of Defence understands the Turkish critique considering the Dutch policies towards radical Turkish groups and the PKK, but at the same time emphasizes that Dutch Turks have civil rights, which need to be respected. | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| <strong>The Turkish government (by means of navy minister Mirzaoglu and viceprime minister Yılmaz) has criticized the Dutch government for its tolerant position towards the</strong> | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDICES</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish movement PKK. Minister Yilmaz can not understand the indifference of the Dutch towards the PKK and the DHKP-C.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘PvdA-campagne is schrijnend slecht’ Psychologist Van Ginneken of Amsterdam university says that he thinks the credibility of Fortuyn will disappear in the long run, because he lacks the personality to lead his party. He states that Fortuyn must put his cards on the table by providing a credible list of candidates and a party programme; but Fortuyn does not have the personality to lead his faction or organization.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former PvdA campaign manager Kramer says the Fortuyn effect must not be exaggerated, 'It is a law of nature that people are bored after eight years of a cabinet with the same coalition'.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two former campaign managers (Houterman and Schinkelschoek) state that PvdA and VVD must go in constant debate with Fortuyn. It doesn't pay off for established parties to ignore Fortuy and other such actors, this only makes the latter stronger.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontreddering en triomf in Rotterdam Sjaak van der Tak describes the Fortuyn revolt in Rotterdam as an explosion of discontent. He expresses his doubts about whether he wants to form a coalition with Leefbaar Rotterdam.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorensen (second man of Leefbaar Rotterdam) says the PvdA didn't expect such a victory of Leefbaar Rotterdam when they excluded them. Now they should get organized, because the PvdA makes a lot of plans but doesn't solve anything.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pim Fortuyn says after local elections in Rotterdam that he had hoped for such great results but had not expected it. He asks his opponents to take their responsibility and form a coalition with Leefbaar Rotterdam.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local VVD leader Jansens does not consider ruling with Pim Fortuyn and Leefbaar Rotterdam a good idea, since they do not have an electoral program that offers solutions for societal problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alderman Kombrink says the success of Leefbaar Rotterdam in the election isn't caused by bad local government, but by the national cabinet and 9/11, and that the entertainment politics of LR is a hype, which will pass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA leaders Cremers and Kuyper state in the aftermath of the Fortuyn victory in Rotterdam, that she is surprised about that much discontent among the electorate and utters that she is not very keen on forming a coalition with Leefbaar Rotterdam.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pim heeft het feestje bedorven CDA leader Balkenende says not to exclude a coalition with Fortuyn. Although he rejects previous utterances of Pim Fortuyn concerning the WAO and article 1 of the constitution, he does not rule out cooperation with the LPF.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor Vermeulen writes that the rise of Fortuy is caused by the perceived immigration problems and the reluctance towards the established political parties, which have failed to renew the political system.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National PvdA leader Melkert considers the electoral success of Pim Fortuyn shocking and blames the electorate in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rotterdam for voting for a man who lacks a political program. He moreover turns his back on Pim Fortuyn during the final debate.

During the final debate of the national political leaders, Pim Fortuyn advices Melkert to cheer up. | 1 | - | - | 2 | 1 |

Stop met maken van folders in talen van allochtonen. Legist Werdmoller criticizes Rob Oudkerk who was a fierce proponent of translating governmental brochures for immigrants, doing so gives non-natives the feeling that they can live in the Netherlands without learning the language, which will hamper integration. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Vlaams Blok enthousiast over uitslag Head of Vlaams Blok Dewinter considers Pim Fortuyn's homosexuality and extravagant lifestyle disgusting and disagrees with his view on Islam (Fortuyn's idea that Islam is backward culture goes too far). But he is delighted that Pim Fortuyn has won in Rotterdam, which is caused by concentration of immigrants. It confirms his feelings about a presence of a rightist underflow in Europe. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Fortuyn distances himself in a declaration from Vlaams Blok leader Dewinter and ultra-left or ultra-right sympathies | 1 | - | - | 2 | 1 |
## Appendix B  Description of the variables used in chapter 3

### Table B1 Descriptive statistics and Pairwise Pearson correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Public claims Fortuyn</th>
<th>(2) Opinion poll support (%)</th>
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### Table B2 Dickey Fuller unit-root test for stationarity and ARIMA models of dependent and explanatory variables used in analysis (from August 2001 to May 2002)

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<tr>
<th>Transformation</th>
<th>DF test statistic</th>
<th>ARIMA model</th>
<th>Box-Ljung Q (20 lags)</th>
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Notes: */** indicates that the test fails to reject the null hypothesis of unit-root at the (p< 0.01) and (p< 0.05) level respectively; The Box-Ljung Q indicates that the residuals are ‘white noise’ (p< 0.05).
### Appendix C  Description of the variables used in chapter 4

Table C1  Descriptive statistics and Pairwise Pearson correlations

#### BIWEEKLY UNITS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Public claims CD</th>
<th>(2) Support CD (%)</th>
<th>(3) Unempl. (%)</th>
<th>(4) Immigration</th>
<th>(5) Asylum seekers</th>
<th>(6) Organizational fragmentation</th>
<th>(7) Negative immi. claims</th>
<th>(8) All immi. claims</th>
<th>(9) Repression</th>
<th>(10) Visibility</th>
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#### WEEKLY UNITS

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<th>(3) Organizational fragmentation</th>
<th>(4) Negative immi. claims</th>
<th>(5) All immigration claims</th>
<th>(6) Repression</th>
<th>(7) Visibility</th>
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<td>444</td>
<td>1692</td>
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Table C2 Dickey Fuller unit-root test for stationarity and ARIMA models of dependent and explanatory variables used in analysis (from January 1992 to May 1998)

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<th>Transformation</th>
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<th>ARIMA model</th>
<th>Box-Ljung Q (20 lags)</th>
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<td>Public claims CD</td>
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<td>MA (1)</td>
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<table>
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<th>ARIMA model</th>
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<tr>
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Note: ** indicates that the test fails to reject the null hypothesis of unit-root at the (p< 0.01) and (p< 0.05) level respectively; The Box-Ljung Q indicates that the residuals are 'white noise' (p< 0.05).
# Appendix D  Description of the variables used in chapter 5

Table D1 Descriptive statistics and pairwise correlations (August 20th, 2001 - May 6th, 2002)

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<th>(5) Balance dis</th>
<th>(6) Balance res</th>
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<td>.01</td>
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Mean                        | .45               | -.96                   | .40             | .23           | -.81          | -.59                 | 18.1                  | 0.57             | .74            | -.18             |                      |

SD                          | .50               | 2.20                   | 2.31            | 1.52          | 4.16          | 5.28                 | 10.4                  | 1.23             | .98            | .52              |                      |

Note: unit of all covariates is the period of 7 days prior to claim of PF (t-1); n=108.

Table D2 Descriptive statistics and pairwise correlations (January 1994 - August 2001)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(1) Immi-claims PF</th>
<th>(2) Immi-claims PF (t-1)</th>
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<th>(9) Vis other issue</th>
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<td>-.64</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<td>-.08</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mean                  | .84                      | .82                     | -.27                 | -28.1              | -.37            | -.08            | -.03               | .21                 | .58                 | .19                 | .22                 |

SD                    | .82                      | .81                     | 15.3                 | 612                 | 1.13            | 1.04            | .92                | .59                 | .97                 | .71                 | .53                 |

Note: monthly units; all covariates is are lagged one month (t-1); n=90.
### Table D3 Dickey Fuller unit-root test for stationarity of variables (January 1994 - August 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformation</th>
<th>DF test statistic</th>
</tr>
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<td>Immi claims others</td>
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<td>Asylum seekers</td>
<td>Dif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance visibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance cons</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance dis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vis immi issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis other issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dis immi issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dis other issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* */** indicates that the test fails to reject the null hypothesis of unit-root at the (p< 0.01) and (p< 0.05) level respectively; The Box-Ljung Q indicates that the residuals are ‘white noise’ (p< 0.05).
Appendix E Assumptions about the electorate used in chapter 6

This appendix provides more detailed empirical background for the assumptions made about the Dutch electorate. Firstly, support for the claim that preferences on multiculturalism were rather stable was already presented in Table 2.1 in chapter 2. It indicated that public opinion on the multicultural society (the cultural dimension) had not changed much during the late 1990s (1997-2002).

I use the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study of 1998 (Aarts et al. 1999b) to empirically underpin my assumption about the setup of the electorate. In this survey, two questions were included that tap the socio-economic divide. It was asked to what extent respondents think the differences in income should be reduced or increased (v0123, reverse coded) and to what extent the social benefits are too low or too high (v0736), both on a 7-point scale. The lowest score (1) indicates the most leftist position: supporting smaller income differences and the social benefits are considered much too low. Two other items (v0130 and v0144) were used as an indicator for the mono-multicultural divide: ‘The Netherlands should allow more asylum seekers to enter’ (value 1) vs. ‘The Netherlands should send back as many asylum seekers as possible’ (value 7) and ‘Foreigners should be able to live in the Netherlands while preserving all customs of their own culture’ (value 1) vs. ‘Foreigners in the Netherlands should fully adjust themselves to the Dutch culture’ (value 7). The correlation between the socio-economic and cultural scale (the summed score on the two questions) is modest (Pearson’s r = 0.32). The x and y expert judgment scores of the Dutch parties I used show a much stronger relationship (r = 0.61), but it should be noted that this calculation is based on only a few observations (n = 7).

It was also checked to what extent the assumption of normally distributed voters is valid. Figure E1 depicts the frequency distributions for the answers on these four questions. Both skew and kurtosis values should be zero for a perfectly normally variable. As a conservative rule of thumb, values have to be in the range between -1 and +1. Table E1 below shows that the variables do not fail the normality test.

Finally, it was tested whether the assumption is correct that the Dutch voters are not zero-centred, but on average more on the left of the socio-economic dimension and to the right of the cultural dimension (compared with the average party position). See again Table E1. Respondents were asked to place political parties on the same four lines as described above. Unfortunately this is not asked for all parties, so it is not possible to construct an overall mean (weighed) party position. However, the data seem to support the assumption. Taken the average of the five parties (weighed to the vote share in the 1998 elections), the electorate generally perceives the political parties more on the economic right than average and also more multicultural. In addition, because the average party position does not include all parties, these scores are compared with the mean expert scores (again weighed) for these five parties (see Table E1). The values are 2.40 and -1.41 on the economic and cultural dimension respectively, which implies that excluding the SP and CD pushes the mean party position, as can be expected, towards the economic right and towards a more multicultural stance.
APPENDICES

Figure E1 Frequency distributions for four items indicating the position of the Dutch population on the cultural and economic dimension

Source: Aarts et al. (1999)
Table E1 The position of the Dutch population on the cultural and economic dimension and the perceived position of five parties (on a 1-7 scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent’s position</th>
<th>Party position according to respondent (Mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (St. dev)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income differences</td>
<td>3.04 (1.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social benefits</td>
<td>3.79 (1.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum seekers</td>
<td>4.36 (1.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration foreigners</td>
<td>4.69 (1.62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aarts et al. (1999)

Note: High scores indicate a greater emphasis on the market in socio-economic policy and stronger stance in favour of a monocultural society on the cultural dimension.
REFERENCES


REFERENCES


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<http://jasss.soc.surrey.ac.uk/6/1/1.html>.


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Pim Fortuyn: de evolutie van een mediafenomeen


Onzien des feit dat Fortuyn een nieuwkomer was in de politiek, slaagde hij er in de aanloop naar de verkiezingen van 2002 in om binnen een relatief korte periode een opvallende hoeveelheid media aandacht en electorale steun te verwerven. De tweeledige vraag van dit proefschrift is ten eerste: hoe Fortuyn erin slaagde om zo plotseling en binnen zo’n korte tijd zo veel aandacht en steun te mobiliseren en ten tweede: waarom een succesvolle rechts-populistische doorbraak juist op dat moment plaatsvond.

Verklaringen voor de successen van rechts-populistische partijen in West-Europa worden besproken in hoofdstuk 2. Onderzoekers gebruiken vaak de marktmetafoor uit de economie om twee perspectieven te onderscheiden. Het vraagzijde-perspectief is gericht op de wensen en grieven van de bevolking. Onderzoekers die daarentegen het belang van de aanbodzijde benadrukken wijzen op externe politieke omgevingsfactoren en interne partijkenmerken. Als partijen succesvol willen opereren op de electorale markt moeten ze niet alleen een product aanbieden dat aan de behoeften van een groep potentiële klanten voldoet, maar ook aantrekkelijker zijn dan hun rivalen en concurrenten.


Er bestaat inmiddels een brede wetenschappelijke consensus over de voornaamste reden dat kiezers zich tot de LPF aangetrokken voelden: dit was de partij waar zij het meeste mee eens waren over kwesties die zij erg belangrijk vonden: immigratie en integratie. Kortom, Fortuyn verwoordde standpunten waar een grote groep kiezers het al sinds lange tijd mee eens was, maar die niet of nauwelijks door andere politici naar voren werden gebracht. Men kan blijven twisten over de vraag of etiketten zoals ‘rechts-radicaal’ of ‘extreem-rechts’ van toepassing waren op de LPF of niet, maar het is wel duidelijk geworden dat Fortuyns partij in elk geval beschouwd kan worden als een ‘functioneel equivalent’ van andere rechts-populistische partijen elders in Europa. Het aangeboden product voorzag inhoudelijk gezien in min of meer dezelfde electorale behoeften.
Hoewel de voedingsbodem die aan de Fortuyn-revolte ten grondslag lag uitgebreid in kaart is gebracht, is de vraag waarom hij op zo’n abrupte en verrassende manier tot stand kwam, nog grotendeels onbeantwoord gebleven. De rechts-populistische doorbraak was achteraf bezien misschien begrijpelijk of zelfs onvermijdelijk, toch zagen opvallend weinig mensen de politieke aardverschuiving aankomen. Daarom staat in dit proefschrift de dynamiek van de snelle opkomst centraal. Geïnspireerd door een evolutionair perspectief op de verspreiding van innovaties op economische markten draag ik twee factoren aan die tot voor kort onderbelicht zijn gebleven in wetenschappelijke verklaringen voor de successen van rechts-populistische uitdagers: de rol van het *publieke debat* en de rol van *adaptief gedrag*.

In het eerste deel van deze studie (hoofdstukken 3 en 4) wordt de impact van het publieke debat empirisch onderzocht. Net als elk ander nieuw product in een markt heeft een nieuwe politieke beweging kanalen nodig, waardoor haar bekendheid zich kan verspreiden onder de bevolking. Omdat nieuwkomers vaak over weinig organisatorische en financiële middelen beschikken, ligt het voor de hand dat juist zij van mediaberichtgeving afhankelijk zijn om hun standpunten bij een groter publiek onder de aandacht te brengen. Ik beargumenteer daarom dat het noodzakelijk is om niet alleen de aandacht te richten op het verklaren van fluctuaties in electorale populariteit, maar ook te verklaren waarom sommige actoren zich meer toegang tot de media weten te verschaffen dan anderen.

Aansluitend bij dit uitgangspunt vormen theorieën over hoe de kenmerken van het publieke debat openingen bieden voor, of juist beperkingen opleggen aan, de mobilisatie van politieke partijen en bewegingen (aangeduid met het begrip ‘discursieve gelegenheden’) het eerste theoretische bouwsteen van dit onderzoek. De kans op een succesvolle mobilisatie van stemmers en het verkrijgen van een stem in de media, zo is de gedachte, wordt voor een belangrijk deel gegenereerd binnen het publieke discours. Drie factoren zijn hierbij van belang: (1) de mate waarin actoren er in slagen om hun boodschappen op een prominente manier in media weten te krijgen (zichtbaarheid), (2) de mate waarin deze boodschappen reacties oproepen (resonantie), en (3) de aard van deze publieke reacties; actoren en hun boodschappen kunnen door anderen publiek ondersteund worden (consonantie) maar ook afkeuring oproepen (dissonantie).

Bovengenoemde discursieve variabelen zijn met behulp van een inhoudsanalyse van mediaberichtgeving empirisch in kaart gebracht: een zogenoemde ‘politische claims analyse’. Claims zijn alle communicatieve handelingen in de publieke sfeer, zoals toespraken, interviews, persverklaringen, statements en oproepen. De belangrijkste dataset die in dit proefschrift wordt gebruikt is gebaseerd op een codering van claims in *de Telegraaf* en *NRC Handelsblad*.

De bevindingen in hoofdstuk 3 laten zien dat het publieke debat een belangrijke rol heeft gespeeld in de opkomst van Fortuyn. De reacties van andere politieke actoren aan het adres van Fortuyn beïnvloedden de mate waarin hij de gelegenheid kreeg om met zijn politieke boodschap in de media door te dringen. Door ondersteunende reacties namen Fortuyns mogelijkheden voor het maken van claims toe, terwijl dissonantie dit ondermijnde. Meer ruimte in de media voor statements van Fortuyn werd ook veroorzaakt door harde taal van anderen over immigratie- en integratiethema’s. Wanneer gevestigde actoren vaker
negatieve publieke claims maken over deze kwesties, neemt het belang van deze onderwerpen in de ogen van journalisten kennelijk toe. Derhalve ook de mate waarin rechtspopulisten in staat worden gesteld om hun politieke agenda voor het voetlicht te brengen. Tot slot blijkt dat electorale steun ook een positieve impact heeft gehad op Fortuyns media carrière. Hoe gunstiger hij er voorstond in de peilingen, des te vaker kwam hij vervolgens aan het woord.

Media-aandacht blijkt cruciaal voor de mobilisatie van kiezers. De reacties op Fortuyn van alle deelnemers aan het debat, zoals commentatoren, journalisten, opiniemakers en politici, hebben ervoor gezorgd dat hij erin slaagde kiezers voor zich te winnen. Zichtbaarheid en positieve reacties hadden namelijk een gunstig effect op de opiniepeilingen. Hoe prominenter journalisten Fortuyns uitspraken in de media weergaven en hoe vaker andere actoren in het debat blijk gaven van ondersteuning, des sterker groeide de populariteit van Fortuyn.

Deze bevindingen tezamen leiden tot de conclusie dat er sprake was van een opwaartse spiraal van populariteit en publiciteit. Dit zelfversterkend effect verklaart waarom Fortuyn en zijn partij in zo’n kort tijdsbestek zoveel media-aandacht en kiezers wisten te mobiliseren. In het algemeen gesproken verklart dit mechanisme van positieve terugkoppeling hoe een opvallend stabiele politieke status quo in korte tijd uit evenwicht kan raken. Deze bevindingen geven ook aan dat het voor de verklaring van het verschijnsel Fortuyn niet alleen (misschien zelfs niet in de eerste plaats) belangrijk is om te kijken naar het karakter of de acties van Fortuyn zelf, maar dat we vooral moeten nagaan op welke manier andere actoren op hem reageerden.

De vraag is echter waarom een succesvolle populistische doorbraak in Europees perspectief bezien in Nederland relatief laat plaatsvond. Er was immers genoeg ‘vraag’ naar een rechts-populistische partij en deze partij was er ook al: de extreemrechtse Centrumdemocraten (CD) onder leiding van Hans Janmaat. Deze partij slaagde er gedurende de jaren ’90 echter niet in om uit haar marginale positie te breken en verdween uiteindelijk in 1998 roemloos van het politieke toneel.

De resultaten in hoofdstuk 4 wijzen uit dat stijgende opiniepeilingen tot meer publieke claims van de CD leidden. Ook afkeurende publieke reacties pakten wat het vergroten van media-aandacht betreft gunstig uit voor de partij: het gevolg hiervan was dat Janmaat vaker toegang kreeg tot het publieke debat. Deze bevinding ondersteunt de stelling dat het contraproducentief is om politieke tegenstanders te bekritiseren, indien het doel is om te verhinderen dat zij in staat zijn om hun standpunten voor het voetlicht te brengen.

Opvallend is echter, dat de CD niet in staat bleek om haar electorale aanhang te vergroten wanneer zij als sprekers meer prominent in het debat aanwezig waren. Er is in de analyse rekening gehouden met interne twisten; zelfs indien dat soort uitspraken buiten beschouwing worden gelaten, dan nog leverden media statements geen grotere aanhang op. Negatieve berichtgeving over de partij en haar leider had daarentegen wel een enorme negatieve impact. Hoe meer publieke afkeuring, des te steviger ging de CD er vervolgens in de peilingen op achteruit. Omdat uitspraken van de CD gemiddeld genomen gepaard gingen met een grotere hoeveelheid kritiek, concludeer ik dat een stem in de massamedia in feite nadelig uitpakte voor het vergaren van electorale steun. In tegenstelling tot Fortuyn bleek de CD lijsttrekker Janmaat in een discursieve greep van negatieve terugkoppeling en stagnatie.
In het tweede deel van dit proefschrift (hoofdstukken 5 en 6) verschuift de aandacht naar de rol van adaptief gedrag. Al vaker is het idee naar voren gebracht dat politieke uitdagers, willen ze een overlevingskans hebben in de strijd om de zetels, een zogenoemd ‘gat in de electorale markt’ moeten vinden en exploiteren. Er is in de literatuur echter vooralsnog geen overtuigend en goed uitgewerkt antwoord op de vraag waarom sommige politieke uitdagers wat betreft deze zoektocht erg succesvol blijken, terwijl veel anderen het onderspit moeten delven. De op de neoklassieke economie gebaseerde aannamer dat individuen in staat zijn te anticiperen en opties kiezen die hun doelen maximaliseren (de rationele keuze theorie) schiet duidelijk tekort om deze vraag te beantwoorden. Uitgaande van dit perspectief wordt elke kans of gelegenheid op voordeel namelijk door iemand benut en verzilverd. Electorale markten zouden in dit perspectief in principe stabiel moeten zijn omdat vraag en aanbod steeds onmiddellijk op elkaar afgestemd worden. Dit is in de politieke werkelijkheid duidelijk niet het geval.

Het evolutionaire antwoord op deze lacune is vrij eenvoudig: partijleiders verschuiven hun handelingsrepertoire door middel van *trial and error*. Wanneer bepaalde eigenschappen van groepen of individuen voordelig zijn in de competitie om schaarse goederen (zoals zetels of media aandacht) en gunstige eigenschappen zich sterker voortplanten dan ongunstige eigenschappen, dan zal het karakter van een groep of individu onder invloed van deze selectie geleidelijk gaan veranderen (het evolutionisme). Dus door opties die mislukkingen opleveren weg te gooien en opties die wel werken te reproduceren, kunnen bedrijven of organisaties stap voor stap een gunstigere handelswijze ontwikkelen. Toegepast op de snelle opmars van Fortuyn is de onderzoeksvraag in hoofdstuk 5 in hoeverre zijn politieke carrière kan worden begrepen als een resultaat van een voortdurende aanpassing van zijn politieke boodschap aan de wensen van het publiek en aan de selectiemechanismen in het debat.


Gezien zijn onophoudelijke successen tijdens de verkiezingscampagne had Fortuyn weinig redenen om zijn programma te veranderen (‘never change a winning team’). Uiteraard is het helaas niet mogelijk om de geschiedenis terug te draaien en te analyseren wat er gebeurd zou zijn indien dat wel het geval zou zijn geweest. Daarom worden in hoofdstuk 6 gedachte-
experimenten uitgevoerd met agent-gebaseerde modellen. In tegenstelling tot de meeste andere simulatie-onderzoekers vergelijk ik de verschillende scenario’s die het model genereert ook systematisch met de feitelijke ontwikkelingen.

In lijn met mijn eerdere bevindingen genereert de aanname dat het publieke debat sommige partijen benadeelt en andere profijt oplevert (die in het model werd geïmplementeerd door de gepercipieerde ideologische afstand tussen kiezers en partijen te manipuleren) uitkomsten die duidelijk meer overeenstemmen met de empirie. Met andere woorden: scenario’s die rekening houden met de rol van de media komen sterker overeen met de opiniepeilingen en verkiezingsuitslagen dan scenario’s zonder deze aanname. Zo zijn de verschillen in mediaberichtgeving tussen de partijen al voldoende om de slechte verkiezingsuitslag voor de CD in 1998 te verklaren (de partij behaalde geen enkele zetel en verdween uit het parlement).

De simulatie-uitkomsten onderschrijven de stelling dat naast publiciteit ook de inhoud van Fortuyns boodschap telde. De aanvankelijke ideologische positie van Leefbaar Nederland is duidelijk niet de optimale positie in het politieke speelveld. Indien LN zou hebben ‘geluisterd naar het volk’ en haar standpunten tijdens de campagne voortdurend zou hebben aangepast aan de mening van haar aanhang, had de partij moeten schuiven, namelijk richting hardere uitspraken over immigratie en integratie dan alle gevestigde partijen. Zelfs zonder noemenswaardige media-aandacht omvatte deze niche al ongeveer 9 procent van de stemmen (14 zetels). Met andere woorden: als we de geschiedenis vanaf 2001 zouden herhalen, zou elke flexibele, adaptieve nieuwkomer hoogstwaarschijnlijk beland zijn bij een Fortuynistisch partijprogramma.

Samenvattend stel ik in hoofdstuk 7 vast dat er in deze studie twee mechanismen zijn geïdentificeerd die inzichtelijk maken waarom politieke veranderingen zich niet op een geleidelijke, maar sprongsgewijze manier voltrekken. Door de politieke aardschok in 2002 kan men vaststellen dat Nederland op een abrupte wijze ‘genormaliseerd’ raakte. Dat wil zeggen, dat de politieke situatie in een opvallend kort tijdsbestek in overeenstemming werd gebracht met de situatie in de meeste andere West-Europese landen. Die hadden immers al veel eerder en langer te maken gehad met florerende rechts-populistische partijen.

Ten eerste verklaart de positieve wederzijdse invloed tussen successen in het mediadebat en successen in de peilingen hoe in Nederland zo’n ‘acceleratie van de geschiedenis’ kon plaatsvinden. Het verklaart waarom het aantal kiezers dat vatbaar is voor een rechts-nationalistische boodschap door de tijd behoorlijk stabiel is, toch opeens een onverwachte golf van succes gegeneereerd kan worden. Een electoraal potentieel dat lange tijd braak lag kon plotseling volledig worden gemobiliseerd door een nieuwkomer omdat de beslissingen van mensen om een innovatie te omarmen sterk afhankelijk van elkaar zijn. Wanneer journalisten en kiezers niet zelfstandig en los van anderen bepalen welke politieke partij nieuwswaardig is en welke een stem verdient (of niet) maar in sterke mate hun keuzes van elkaar imiteren en versterken, kan men zelfs spreken van een zichzelf waarmakende voorspelling (*self-fulfilling prophecy*).

Ten tweede moeten we vaststellen dat plotselinge, relatief ingrijpende veranderingen uitgesloten zouden zijn indien politieke partijen adaptief zijn. Continue, geleidelijke aanpassing
van standpunten door partijleiders zou, vanwege het inherente zelfcorrigerende karakter ervan, leiden tot meer stabiliteit. Indien partijleiders echter in hun opvattingen niet responsief zijn en het vermogen of de bereidheid missen om zich aan te passen aan veranderende omgevingsfactoren, kan een *adaptive upgrading* van het politieke systeem alleen middels meer radicale aanpassingen plaatsvinden. Als belangrijkste drijvende kracht achter het afstemmen van de aanbodzijde aan de behoeften van de kiezers blijft dan alleen over: het vervangen van partijleiders, of het verdwijnen en oprichten van politieke partijen als geheel.