Dutch Political Party Origins

Tracing back the isomorphic roots of the earliest party organizations in the Netherlands

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Introduction

From around 1850 until the early 20th century, modern political parties emerged in several western countries. These first parties can be seen as the origins of the political parties of today, and they are the central objects of this study. When we observe the modern political parties of the western world, we see more similarities than differences regarding their organization. When one wants to fully understand the nature of modern political parties, one should start to wonder how these similar organizations came about. Did the party organizations simply develop out of the separate national parliaments in the late 19th and early 20th century? Was their simultaneous origin just a historical coincidence, nurtured by the political developments of more responsive national parliaments and extension of the suffrage?

This seems to be unlikely. When similar party organizations developed across the European continent within the same time period, the attentive scholar might want to look for additional explanations. If party organizations look so much alike, it seems plausible that they were somehow inspired by one another, or inspired by other organizational groups that shared similar goals, like the winning of public office my mobilizing the masses. In this scenario, the argument would be that a process of diffusion took place: one political organization found success and/or legitimacy, after which another copied its structure, then yet another organization would copy the structure of the second (or first) organization, and so on. Based on these considerations, the central research question can be formulated as: *Were the earliest Dutch (nationally organized) parties inspired by organizations with a similar goal when they first founded their organizational structure?* Note that it is impossible, at least for this research project, to determine the *entire* diffusion process of *the* political party in general. We will not describe what the worlds first political party was, and through which processes its model exactly spread across the western world. We will instead focus on a single country, to determine if (and if yes, how) a process of diffusion took place when the first political parties were formed, only for that particular case.

This research project aims at integrating two different strands of literature: the more general work of political scientists, and the more specific work or historians. The main goal of this study is to combine insights from both approaches, to add further knowledge to the literature on the origins of modern party organizations. However, this project will be *exploratory* in nature: it is a first attempt to approach the origins of political parties in a different light, with a conclusion that will either dissuade or recommend a further, more extensive study on the same research topic.

Now let us discuss the studies of several political scientists, the first of the traditions under study. These often contain general explanations, as they focus on general historical developments across several countries. I argue that these studies often lack *historical specificity*, since the information they provide is presented through broad generalizations. On the other hand, the historical work that has been done focuses mostly on single case studies. In this branch of literature, I argue that there is a lack of *generalization*. Single historical case studies on the origin and development of particular parties are very informative and useful on their own, yet they do not directly add to our general knowledge on political party origins, if read separately. However, when combined, very valuable insights might emerge. In fact, in almost all of the historical case studies, the authors have hinted - in the margins - to a certain form of copy-cat behavior taking place in the process of party formation. This study combines these findings, and molds them together by using political science theory, in a first attempt to bridge the gap between the two branches of literature.

In this process, sociological institutionalism could be of use. This theory introduces isomorphism: the idea of organizations mimicking one another. When we investigate whether pre-party organizations and early political parties influenced other parties when they first formed, we are in fact investigating such an isomorphic process. The theory will help us in tracing the process of the institutionalization of political parties, and offers us explanations as to why this process came about. Thus, applying the ideas of sociological institutionalism to historical case studies can help us in adding to the body of political science literature on political party origins. With the help of sociological institutionalism, we can explain the process of the institutionalization of political parties, not only by describing the isomorphic process, but also by explaining these events in their institutional context.

In this study, several case studies within one country are compared with one another, with a most-similar systems design. This will ensure historical detail, yet provide enough room for (careful) generalizations, at least for the country under study. That country will be the Netherlands, a typical case for the phenomenon we are interested in. We will now proceed with a definition of political parties, the object of our study, while also placing political party origins in the historical context of this research project. After that, the general political theories on party origins are discussed, and the added value of sociological institutionalism will be pointed out. Then, the research design will be elaborated on further. After this, the results of the research project will be presented.

Defining the object of study: political parties and their historical background

Let us first of all sketch the historical background in which we must place the development of political parties. We begin this overview in the second half of the 19th century, and the earliest years of the 20th century. In this period, national parliaments gained power as bodies representing the people, opposing the power of the monarch. This "shift of decision-making to legislatures" (Scarrow 2006, 18), with a "relative and absolute increase of parliaments command over decisions and resources [within government]" (Tilly 1997, 246, parentheses added), while making the parliament an effective representative institution (Beyme 1984, 28), is often called *parliamentarization*.

Roughly within the same period of this process of *parliamentarization*, the extension of the suffrage took place, steadily allowing more and more people to become politically engaged. These two processes, *parliamentarization* and *extension of the suffrage*, can together be placed under the header *democratization*. This means that parliamentarization and the extension of the suffrage are both crucial to democratization (Tilly 1997, 246), which in broad terms means a shift from dictatorial (or arbitrary) rule towards the rule of law (Te Velde 2012, 3) [1]. We use these terms now for analytical clarity, yet we should keep in mind that until 1870, the term 'democracy' was hardly if ever used in the Netherlands. And if it was used, it was used in a negative way (Te Velde 2012, 3-12).

This development of democratization, entailing both parliamentarization and the extension of the suffrage, is in turn often associated with the development of the first nationally organized political parties. This is also the view of political scientist Duverger (1964): "On the whole the development of parties seems bound up with that of democracy, that is to say with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives (xxxiii)". When this development had come to full realization, people began to see political parties as fundamental for the functioning of democracy, as we still do today. Schattschneider summarizes this dominant thought with the following quote: "political parties created democracy, and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties" (Schattschneider 1942: 1, as quoted in: Scarrow 2006).

However, it took a long time for parties to become accepted as legitimate political organizations. Sartori writes that in the 18th century, parties were often seen as harmful

[1] There has been (and still is) much discussion about what the term 'democracy' precisely entails. In this study, we will not enter this debate, arguing that 'the rule of law/ the absence of arbitrary rule' is sufficient here, as a broad definition of the concept.

entities, dividing the nation into several sects, or factions. The etymology of 'party' also comes from the Latin word '*partire*', which means 'to divide'. However, the association with the word 'party' in 17th century politics was also linked to the idea of a 'part', which entered the French language as *partager*, and the English language as 'partaking': a much more positively laden word (Sartori 1976, 4). Yet, Sartori claims that the word 'party' entered the political scene at the time when the word 'sect' was on its return, thereby replacing its association with the word 'sect' (Sartori 1976, 4). Parties were thus seen as harmful entities, severing (which is the verb that the word 'sect' stems from) groups of people into different opposing factions within the nation. Blondel (1995, 130) summarizes this general, mostly pre-19th century idea by stating that "(f)actions and parties were synonymous with battles in the real sense of the word: this was how the Roman Republic ended, and it was how Italian city-states came to fall prey to monarchs who ruled nearby". In line with this, in 18th century Great Britain, the politician and philosopher Bolingbroke stated that party organizations could only be formed out of passion and interest, not out of reason and equity, which is why he rejected them. However, later thinkers, like Hume and Burke, noticed that parties could outgrow the dangerous factions by organizing common principles, thereby overcoming the mere emotional appeal that Bolingbroke assigned to them. The more positively oriented Burke also mentioned that parties made people connect with one another, and interact, enabling them to formulate their shared opinions. So slowly, during the late 18th century, the idea of the party as a legitimate body of government found its way into England (Sartori 1976, 7-10). However, within this idea of the party, coming up on par with the idea of responsible government, strong aristocratic elements remained, as *responsibility* of politicians towards the houses of parliament did not mean *responsive* government, which would mean responsibility to the people.

In the United States and France, during the revolutions of the late 18th century, the elites were also strongly against political parties at first. In America, there was fear that the new-found nation would be split by partisan conflict. In France, after the revolution of 1789, no single group wanted to claim to be 'partisan'. This was in line with the ideas of Rousseau, who despised the idea of parties, but valued individual freedom, and its ultimate expression in the general will (*volonté general*) (Scarrow 2006, 17). It was only during the 19th century, when the idea of responsive *and* responsible government found its way into these nations, that parties were not seen as detrimental for the state anymore, and slowly became accepted (Sartori 1976, 20-24).

Classifying and defining political parties

In the earlier 19th century, when voting rights were based on the property of the citizens, political parties took the form of what Duverger calls *cadre-parties*. These earliest forms of political parties were weakly organized, with an unstable membership base - often even no formal membership - and decentralized in their organizations. They relied on the occasional donations of rich supporters, and aimed at securing the support mainly of the rich and influential. The experts, prestigious people, and financiers were the ones to help the cadre-party in elections (Duverger 1964, 64-71). This lead Blondel to state that the cadre-parties were based on a system of clientelism, calling the Tories and Whigs in England his prime examples (Blondel 1995, 130-134). It was the quality of the supporters that mattered for the cadre-parties, not the quantity.

This was different for the *mass-parties*, which developed when the suffrage extended (although not always immediately). When more people were allowed to vote, mass-parties began to emerge, which did not focus on the quality of its members, but on their quantity: they started formal procedures of enrolment and relied on annual payments of a large body of members, not on occasional donations like the cadre-parties. Also, criteria for membership were not present for mass-parties (Duverger 1964, 71). The mass-parties were also much more tightly knit than cadre-parties: they were more centralized, while also being firmly based in their local branches (Duverger 1964, 67). One of the most important distinctions between the two types of party organization is the mass-parties' appeal to the public. Duverger (1964, 64) states that mass-parties appeal "to the listening, active public which receives a political education and learns how to intervene in the life of the State". So mass-parties started to teach the masses about politics, educating them to become knowledgeable, active citizens.

Neumann (1956) goes even further. He wrote about political parties in the same period as Duverger did, and did not make the distinction between mass- and cadre-parties, yet when reading his account, it becomes quite clear that he is mainly concerned with what Duverger would call mass-parties. Neumann states that "(...) parties transform the private citizen himself. They make him a zoon politikon; they integrate him into the group" (Neumann 1956, 397). So also for him, (mass) parties have a role in integrating the masses and educating them politically. In this respect, we could argue that cadre-parties mainly focus on the electors, while mass-parties focus on their members, which also include citizens that are ineligible to vote. For the cadre-party, the electors form the basis of its representation, while for the mass-party, membership is the basis of its representation (Duverger 1964, 91). When discussing our

case studies, it will be interesting to see which of the two organizational forms the earliest Dutch political parties chose.

So how can we precisely define the concept 'political party'? It seems hard to formulate an all-encompassing definition, as different scholars emphasize different features of parties. White (2006, 6) gives an overview of what some scholars emphasized when trying to define parties: for Burke and Reagan, parties most of all emphasize their ideological roots. For Epstein, Schlesinger and Aldrich, parties are most of all the tools to get into the office of government, while Downs, Key and Chambers see parties as instruments that simplify the choices of voter. For Sartori (1976, 13), modern mass-parties function as bodies of "representation, expression of opinions and the channeling of opinions", while Blondel (1955, 129) states that they most of all domesticate political conflicts within society: "they legitimize conflicts, by giving them a voice in the public debate; on the other hand, they reduce and even at the limit repress conflict".

A very encompassing definition, one that seems to grasp almost all of the above, is the one by Neumann. He defines a political party as: "the articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views. As such, it is the great intermediary which links social forces and ideologies to official governmental institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community".

Despite the existence of all these encompassing definitions that include as much tasks of political parties as possible, we choose a minimum definition here. For this study, we want to be able to include all of the earliest nationally organized Dutch political parties, including both cadre and mass-parties. However, we would want to rule out the other organizations, like trade unions, that joined hands to support their own candidates. We want to include the organizations that wrote their own political program, but also the ones that did not. For instance, the LU (*Liberale Unie*) at first did not publish a general program, since they could not agree on a common political position (Taal 1980, 104). Therefore, we take over the minimum definition used by Koole (1992, 18), who combines elements of the definitions provided by Sartori and Lipschits: "A political party is an organized group with an official label, as such presenting candidates for the elections of public office". Further, what we look at as our object of study, are political parties that are *nationally organized*.

Theory building in political science

We will now give a broad overview of the general ideas that political scientists presented when they tried to explain the emergence of political parties. We will mainly discuss the classical works written on the topic.

Following Von Beyme's (1984) analysis on Institutional Theories, it is stated that with the enhancement of the franchise, mass-parties were able to develop. Sartori adds to this that after legislatures became more responsive (*parliamentarization*), parties could develop, and because they had to compete with one another when the electorate expanded, they tried to mobilize the people (Sartori 1976, 23). So what came first: the expansion of the franchise, or parliamentarization? And which factor decisively led to the development of parties? Scarrow (2006) mentions that this differs between countries. In some, parliamentarization came *after* the expansion of the electorate, in some it came before (Scarrow 2006, 18). Whatever the order, it is clear from the literature that these two developments, parliamentarization and electoral expansion, where very important in the creation of modern parties. In this study, this broader institutional context and its role on the eventual creation of the Dutch political parties will be assessed, within the light of earlier work. Keep in mind however, that the main goal of this study, which is finding out whether parties modeled their specific *organizations* the way they did after other examples, is a unique effort within the field of political science.

What some scholars, which we will discuss now, *have* written about, is *where* parties originated. Some came out of society, first being protest groups that mainly organized against the state to fight for a certain cause, then becoming part of the state when forming a political party (often after joining hands with other organizations that shared their goals). Yet others formed out of parliament. It were, in most cases, the old cadre-parties or old elites (originating within parliament) that made franchise possible on a larger scale than before, and through direct elections. After this, the mass-party organizations could develop, either from within parliament, or extra-parliamentary. They were actively involved in mobilizing citizens to become members of their movement, and vote for them in national elections (Von Beyme 1984, 129-131). Also, they tried to bind the people that were not allowed to vote - the so called "people behind the voters" (Janssens 2001, 94) to their cause.

Duverger (1964) is another scholar that emphasizes the two different sources of party development, and that they either formed inside of the parliament, or outside of it, from organizations in society. The parties with parliamentary origins where formed by first creating "a parliamentary group, then the appearance of electoral committees, and finally the establishment of a permanent connection between these two elements" (Duverger 1964, xxiv).

The organizations that gave birth to extra-parliamentary parties were, for instance: "Trade Unions (the origins of much Labor parties), Philosophical Societies and Churches (Christian parties), Ex-Serviceman Associations (forming mostly radical parties), leagues, secret societies, clandestine groups, industrial and commercial groups like banks, big companies, industrial combines, employers federations etc." (Duverger 1964, xxxiii-xxxiv). In this research, the place of origin of the first Dutch political parties will be investigated in detail.

According to Duverger, the parties with parliamentary origins where less centralized since the electoral committees (*kieskringen*) were exerting their separate influence on the party, whereas the parties with extra-parliamentary origins were more centralized, since they had there basis in one single organization. Panebianco (1988) is another important author who writes about the degree of centralization of parties. However, we will not discuss his writings further, since he mainly focuses on the institutionalization of political parties *after* they were founded, while this study focuses on the organizational form that parties take when the first *come into being*.

Another important theoretical statement by Duverger has to be pointed out, namely this famous "contagion from the left" (Duverger 1954, xxvii). This idea entails the fact that the political movements that were seen as 'the left' at that time took a pioneering role in the organization of political parties. The left in that time period consisted mainly of the progressive people that were in favor of extending the franchise and democratizing politics. 'The right', which were the conservative political forces, were forced into a similar organizational structure by these left-wing political parties. They had to follow suit. It is interesting that Duverger claims that this organizational copy-cat behavior is not guided by the ideal of efficiency. Instead, the "underlying motive seems to be the desire to 'democratize' the party, to give it a structure more in accordance with the political doctrines of that period" (Duverger 1954, 26). This type or reasoning is also prevalent in the sociological institutionalism literature, as we shall see shortly.

When assessing the value of Duverger's thesis 'contagion from the left', we must be cautious. He seems to view the left mainly as the socialist and labour parties, that forced the conservatives into organizations that were more oriented towards the masses, with membership bases in their local branches (Duverger 1954, 25). However, in the Netherlands, it were the Christian-Democrats that formed the first political party in 1879, with the Socialists following suit in 1881, and the liberals in 1885. But which party was conservative here, and which was left-wing? The Christian-Democrats were seen as conservative, yet they were the ones to plea for 'rule by the people'. And the liberals were seen as left-wing in

ideology, but the way in which they preferred their political movement, was quite conservative. This complex topic will be discussed in detail in the pages to come.

The added value of Sociological Institutionalism

Let us now briefly touch upon the theory of sociological institutionalism, the theory that can be used very well to find and describe the possibility of a copy-process in the Netherlands of the late 19th century. It is a theory that has thus far been applied mostly to the structure of the economy, with analyses of the organizations within the economic field. Here, we obviously apply these insights to political parties.

To start with, we must emphasize that the term isomorphism -which literally means 'similarity'- is key to the theory of sociological institutionalism. For the institutionalist scholars that focused on organizations, isomorphism has three different ways in which the effects of institutions can spread through an organizational field (Scott 2014, 51). The first one of those is coercive isomorphism, which takes place when a dominant organization in a certain field forces the other organizations within the field (organizations that produce similar products), to adopt the same rules and procedures. Often, the procedures of the dominant organization are seen as the most legitimate in dealing with a certain product or production process (DiMaggio & Powell 1991, 67/68).

The second form is mimetic isomorphism. This takes place when there is uncertainty within a certain organization to which practices are the most efficient. When this occurs, the organization simply copies the practices of one or more of the other organizations that operate in the same field. Normative isomorphism, the last type, occurs when professionalization takes place. Within a certain professional field (and in this case, applied to political party organizations), people after some time will try to establish some ruling guidelines for how their profession should exactly be carried out, requiring some sort of education, some rules to follow, being able to work with a certain mindset etc. This means that often, organizations are not necessarily efficient. They just follow the appropriate 'rules of the game' (DiMaggio & Powell 1991, 69-71). Of course, these three types of isomorphism are not mutually exclusive. They could all take place at the same time, and be interwoven. The aim of this study is to apply this theory to the organization of political parties, by establishing if, and if yes, in what way, the isomorphic process took place there.

Another major value of sociological institutionalism is its ability to explain the *process of institutionalization*, in this case of political parties. The process of institutionalization is described by Jepperson (1991) as follows: "Institution represents a social order or pattern that

has attained a certain state or property; institutionalization denotes the process of such attainment" (Jepperson 1991, 145). He further explains that a pattern is fully institutionalized when departures from the pattern are punished, ignored, or made insignificant in a regulated fashion. Within an institutionalized pattern, someone does not act, but someone *enacts*. An act would be something that disturbs the pattern, or departs from the pattern (Jepperson 1991, 145-149). This study describes how this process of institutionalization went, showing how the practice of the legitimate use of political parties as fundamental entities of modern politics, came into being.

Originally, the theory explains the institutionalization of organizational practices in private and public organizations. According to the theory, the industrial revolution led to a modernization of the markets and society, making them much more complex, leading to large-scale uncertainty. In the face of this uncertainty, organizations copied the behavior and organizational structure of other successful businesses in the field. These successful businesses are making use of procedures that are seen as *legitimate*. This means that people generally see those procedures as the best ones possible: as the most efficient (Meyer & Rowan 1991, 42/44), and start applying them at a large scale. However, scholars of sociological institutionalism point out that institutionalized procedures do not necessarily have to be efficient at all. They state that "(l)egitimacy is provided by norms of rationality" which are formed by underlying 'rules of appropriateness' and a certain understanding of social reality (Meyer & Rowan 1991, 44). As should have become clear now from the discussion above, this study aims at (among other things) describing the process of how political parties came to be institutionalized as the legitimate vehicles for modern politics. The way we view 'legitimacy' here, is worth emphasizing clearly. We view political parties as 'legitimate' when they become accepted as a part of the political system. Of course, it took a long time for political parties to become accepted as legitimate. In this research, we describe the first steps of this process.

Although institutionalism is a theory about *structure* (encompassing social norms that transcend individuals), it does acknowledge that the workings of structures should be found in the behavior of individuals. In other words, the *microtranslations* of institutionalized patterns should be traceable for the theory to be valid (Jepperson 1991, 157). In this study, we can go one step further by stating that in most cases, it were individual actors that started practices that would later institutionalize, either willingly and knowingly, or unconsciously.

Research Design

Case Selection

The cases that are chosen in this analysis simply entail the first nationally organized political parties that have formed in the Netherlands, as for each of the four prevalent ideologies, a political party eventually came into being. This small -N research allows us to get into historical detail, yet because four different cases are taken, we can also generalize our conclusions, at least for the Netherlands in the particular period under study. The Netherlands is picked as a typical case of the phenomenon under study: it is a western country that developed a modern party-system in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Some further elaboration is needed on the case selection. The cases are interesting since they differ in terms of what the reason for their foundation was. As will become clear from upcoming discussing, the orthodox protestants and socialist parties were founded by leaders that *deliberately* wanted their group to organize at the national level, whereas the liberals and the Catholics largely (and for some years, successfully) *resisted party formation*, for several reasons. The liberals, for instance, ideologically opposed party formation, while the Catholics did not need a party organization - in electoral terms - up until a later point in time, as we shall see shortly. These differences make it interesting to compare the cases, and determine how the isomorphic process took place for every particular case. It will be studied for all the parties whether they came about through a process of either mimetic, coercive, or normative isomorphism, or by a combination of (some or all of) those. Also, the pressure of the legitimate institutional system on the process of party formation will be evaluated, and most of all how its influence differed from party to party.

The research to follow can be seen as a summary of the pivotal historical work that has been done on the political parties under study, complemented by historical research done by the researcher of this study himself, with the addition of a more general analysis based on sociological institutionalism.

Methodology

This small -N analysis of four cases within one political system is the ideal research design for the method of process-tracing, which is used as the method of this study. Process-tracing entails delving into history to find the causal mechanisms that led to a certain outcome. In this case, we are searching for the mechanisms that led to the eventual formation of each of our four parties under study. The mechanism that we focus on most is, of course, the isomorphic process: parties being inspired by other organizations or other parties, that exist either

domestically, or across the border. When applying the method of process-tracing, one must take account of the possibility of equifinality: the idea that several causes have led to the outcome under study (George and Bennet 2005, 207). That means that in this study, as we will keep an eye open for all the possible inspirations/reasons for party formation. This means that the goal of this study is to find out whether there is an isomorphic process taking place, and to describe it if we find it, yet the context within which this process is taking place is described in as much detail as possible.

The design of the study will be the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), also known as Mill's method of difference. This design allows for a systematic research of certain objects (in this case: parties), within the same political system. This means that the scope conditions are held constant, and difference on the dependent variable cannot be a result of a difference in these scope conditions. A systematic representation of the Most Similar Systems Design as it will be used here is shown in *Figure 1* below.

The scope conditions can also be called independent variables: the conditions taken as given. In a Most Similar Systems Design, all but one independent variable are identical for each case, while the dependent variable is different for each case. This allows the researcher to conclude that the one independent variable that differs for each case, might be the one causing the difference on the dependent variable (Mill 1970). However, we must always keep our eyes open for other possible independent variables that might play a role in causing variation on the dependent variable. In this case, we are looking for two independent variables that differ, making this a study in which the Most Similar Systems Design is not used in the most strict manner. For the four cases under study, three of the independent variables are the same: the country, the fact that parliamentarization took place, and the fact that extension of the suffrage took place. Two independent variables differ: the ideology of the four parties, and the year of party foundation. Also, the dependent variable, the inspiration and reason for forming of a political party, differs, leading the researcher to study how the different ideologies and the year of the parties foundation led to differences in the process of party formation.

It should be emphasized again here that the nature of this research is *exploratory*. Although the object of this study is nothing new (political party origins), the *approach* that is taken here is quite unique. It does not provide us with a definite and satisfactory answer to the questions at hand, yet it tests the feasibility of further, more extensive study on the topic, as exploratory research tends to do (Babby 2010, 92-3). This means that the goal is not to decisively determine whether isomorphism has been taking place during the earliest period of

party formation. The goal is to explore whether it is feasible to conduct an extensive study that *could* determine it.

Figure 1: Systematic representation of the Most Similar Systems Design

Independent variables	**Dependent variable**
Country (same: Netherlands)	Reason/Inspiration for forming political party (different)
Parliamentarization (same)	
Extension of the suffrage (same)	
Ideology (different)	
Year of foundation (different)	

Data

This study will rely mostly on secondary sources, and on some primary sources. The secondary sources are historical case studies of the parties that we have already mentioned, which contain, in a lot of instances, much hints and information as to what the cause of the establishment of the party was, and were inspiration was drawn from. The first aim of this research is to combine what has been written about isomorphic behaviour (which is information that most authors pay little attention too: they name it but do not elaborate on it in detail), and systematize it into one comprehensive study. To seek for the possibility of an isomorphic process, bibliographies of the founding party leaders are studied too, (Kuyper, Domela Nieuwenhuis, Levy and Schaepman), in search for references to organizations that could have inspired the formation of the party. The primary sources are the party manifestos (the statutes were often written years after the party had been formed, and are therefore not consulted in this study). The earliest manifestos (*beginselprogramma's*), and in particular, the often extensive commentaries added to them, will be scanned. We will search for comments by the leaders that refer to other organizations, parties, or political developments abroad that could have served as an inspiration.

Results

Context

In this section, the results of the study will be presented. Before we go on with a discussion of our four cases, some introductory facts need to be mentioned. We are writing about a time in which the Netherlands had an electoral two-round system based on absolute majorities in the districts, with differing district magnitudes. This means that during elections, every district -

which could differ in total from 62 in 1848, to 38 in 1853, to 100 in 1917 (de Jong et al. eds. 2011, 14-77) - would send one or more representatives to parliament, chosen by absolute majority. Would no single candidate receive a majority in a district, a second round would be held between the top-two candidates. As we shall see shortly, the politically relevant groups organized electoral committees (*kiesverenigingen*) in the districts, that selected, recommended, and campaigned for their candidate(s). Democracy, therefore, was organized at the local level. This system persisted until the Constitution of 1917, in which proportional representation was introduced: every single vote counted from that point on, as the district-system was abolished.

Now let us describe the process of democratization in the Netherlands, starting with *parliamentarization*. This started in 1848, with the introduction of the liberal constitution written by Thorbecke. Among other things, this document included the introduction of ministerial accountability, direct election of the Second Chamber by census (only the male citizens that paid a certain amount of taxes were allowed to vote), and the rights of amendment, interpellation and committee investigation for the Second Chamber (Blom & Lamberts eds. 2007, 320). This gave the parliament considerable strength over the King and his government. However, the King did not immediately give in, and a power struggle started, eventually culminating in the 1860s.

It was in 1866 that the motion-Keuchenius was accepted in parliament, which entailed the parliamentary disapproval of the royal decision to appoint the minister of the Colonies as the new governor-general of the Dutch-Indies (Koch 2006, 120). This motion was very important in Dutch history, since it was an important step in the shift of power from the King to the Parliament. The *kwestie-Luxemburg* of 1868 can be seen as even more important. King William III was the grand-duke of Luxembourg at that time, which he wanted to sell to France: a decision with which the ministers would agree. However, the Second Chamber thought this was irresponsible in a time of tension between the powerful nations of France and Prussia, so the parliamentarians voted against the foreign affairs-budget. The Second Chamber was dissolved no less than three times over this issue, yet the composition stayed roughly the same. After that, the government had to give in to the Parliamentary pressure, and was replaced by a new government (van Klinken 2003, 30). After this moment, no single Dutch government would ever again act against a majority in parliament. It was the introduction of the so called *vertrouwensregel* (rule of confidence) (Daalder 1995, 172).

During the 19th century, the franchise extended slowly, which is the second feature of democratization: 10% in 1850; 10,7% in 1860[2]; 11,3% in 1870; 26,8% in 1890; 45,8% in 1900; 59,1% in 1910; and 67,0% in 1913 (Wielenga 2009, 36), culminating in universal male suffrage in 1917. So in the Netherlands, the process of parliamentarization largely took place during the process of suffrage extension. However, while parliamentarization reached its final stage in the 1860s, the introduction of universal suffrage came about fifty years later.

The extension of the franchise can in fact be seen as the 'modernization' of the franchise 'market', making political structures more widespread, inclusive, and complex. We regard this as the equivalent of the modernization of the economic market, as emphasized by sociological institutionalism (Meyer & Rowan 1991, 42/44). We focus on how one socially institutionalized order disappeared (before modernization, without political parties), giving way to a new socially institutionalized order (during and after modernization, with a central role for political parties). Because a chronological order is followed throughout this research, the conclusions following each case study will combine the insights from all cases that came before it. This results in a chronological narrative in which our general knowledge of the Netherlands culminates, with each particular case study adding its own share of insight.

ARP (Anti-Revolutionaire Partij)

The first nationally organized political party of the Netherlands was the protestant anti-revolutionary party, founded and led by the preacher and journalist Abraham Kuyper. He had already started working towards a political program and a party for the anti-revolutionaries in the late 1860's, and succeeded only in 1879, as the process of party formation did not run smoothly.

The story of Kuyper takes place in a period of liberal dominance. From 1848 until at least 1884, the liberals held a convincing majority in parliament (de Jong et. al eds. 2011, 26). It was against this background that Kuyper, and before him Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, sought to unite the orthodox protestants. They were strongly opposed to the progressive, secular liberals, and the liberal, less orthodox protestants (*hervormden*). The most important issue that bound the anti-revolutionaries was the 'school war' *(schoolstrijd)*. Since 1848, the liberals had imposed several laws that favored neutral state sponsored schools over Christian schools, which was something the anti-revolutionaries despised. Both Groen and Kuyper

[2] These figures are derived from the Dutch website Parlement.com

wanted to unite the anti-revolutionaries. Groen only sought anti-revolutionary consensus on one issue, the *schoolstrijd*, while Kuyper thought about organizing a national party, with a central, all-encompassing program. He already started working on this plan around 1868. Groens fear of tightly organized political parties, with a comprehensive program, was one that was prevalent at the time: that the national parliament would fall apart into political factions, when the proponent of the different ideologies would fight one another as cohesive blocks, united not on only one, but on multiple political issues (Koch 2006, 117-118).

However, Groen was a modernizer too, in the sense that he sought to establish a stronger connection between parliamentarians and their followers. He actively sought to communicate with the voter, with the goal of changing public opinion in favor of his anti-revolutionary ideas (Janssens 2001, 27). Kuyper shared this ideal, and used his own newspaper called *De Standaard*, founded in 1872, to propagate his opinion and unite the people for his cause (Koch 2006, 119). In these years, the anti-revolutionaries clearly took distance from the conservatives, the main political group that they had been identified with in the previous years (Janssens 2001, 79). In 1871, Groen left the political profession, and it was Kuyper who now tried to unite the anti-revolutionaries, which ended successfully with the foundation of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) in 1879. Yet the process did not run smoothly. Step by step, he had to convince the people that opposed him, while trying to win the favors of what he called the 'little people' *(kleine luyden)*: the antirevolutionary masses. For him, these consisted of both the ones eligible, and the ones non-eligible to vote.

Kuyper wrote the 'editors program' (*redacteurenprogramma*) in 1871 with the leaders of five other protestant newspapers, in which he pleaded for the acknowledgement of a Christian-historical political movement, legitimized by the alleged fact that the protestant God had led and protected the Dutch people throughout their history. He also wanted to replace the state schools with confessional schools, and was in favor of a lowering of the census, making it possible for more people to vote. According to Kuyper himself, he had received support for his program of no less than five thousand voters (Janssens 2001, 126).

Elections, however, still did not go well for the anti-revolutionaries, so further steps had to be taken, of which the next one was the erection of the Anti-School Law League (*Anti-Schoolwet Verbond*), on the initiative of the stockbroker Jacob Voorhoeve. Kuyper took place on the board of the League, which was solely organized to abolish article 94 of the Dutch constitution, which ensured that the secular schools were the norm, and "of constant concern for the government" (Taal 1980, 86). Voorhoeve modeled his organization after the British Anti-Corn-Law League, an organization of British liberals that fought against a law that had

imposed import-tariffs on grain-trade (Janssens 2001, 93). This latter organization, founded in 1836, had been actively rallying the people with mass-meetings and the spreading of propaganda material. It was, with its low membership fees and appeal to all layers of society, a real mass-organization (Janssens 2001, 349). The draft program of the *Verbond* was published in *De Standaard*. It was very progressive in nature: even women and people non-eligible to vote could become members. The 'people behind the voter' had a chance to become active participants too.

It was at this time that Kuyper also started to defend a very pro-democratic line in *De Standaard*, while he had earlier only tolerated democracy. He explicitly stated that the future of his Church was with democracy, and embraced the idea of rule by the people. However, with this concept, he did not embrace the 'sovereignty of the people'. His conception of 'the people' was limited to the 'orthodox nation', or 'petty bourgeoisie', out of which Jezus and the apostles originated (Koch 2006, 135-139). This points at a contradiction in Kuypers thought, given the fact that the idea of the 'rule by the people' is an ideal that the French Revolution carried out, while Kuyper himself was an *anti*-revolutionary thinker. Te Velde (2012) explains that Kuyper used the concept of 'democracy' to further his own cause. He was able to interpret the idea of democracy as he saw fit, since it was not yet used quite often at that time. He used the term in a manner that we would call 'populist' today: he placed 'the people' against the elites, claiming that *kleine luyden* (his people) needed a voice against the liberal elites. As such, he used the term as a tool to politically defend his faith against the secular liberals (Te Velde 2012, 13-17).

The *Verbond* was successful: the amount of anti-revolutionary voters amounted from five thousand in 1871 till twelve thousand at the 1873 elections. Also, the antirevolutionary local electoral committees, sections of the *Anti-Schoolwet Verbond* and its board worked together, with Kuyper also posting advertisements for the local candidates in *De Standaard* (Janssens 2007, 107). When Kuyper again wanted to push for a broadening of the political standpoints of the League, the so called 'aristocrats' (holding conservative values) and the 'democrats' (with Kuyper as their leader, holding progressive values, like extension of the franchise and further steps towards party formation), within the league opposed one another, and party development went into deadlock. The League eventually disbanded because of these difficulties. However, in Amsterdam, a central organization had taken over the coordinating tasks for the anti-revolutionary movement. Of course, Kuyper was also a member of the board of this *Amsterdams Centraal Comité* (Janssens 2007, 120-127).

Although some electoral committees were insubordinate to the central organization and preferred putting forward very conservative candidates, a breakthrough came in 1878, when the liberal J. Kappeyne van de Coppello issued a new School law which would rule that all schools were required to adhere to modern technological and safety demands, with only state schools receiving state subsidy to make this possible. This led to a large petition, organized by citizens (*Volkspetitionnement*) which gained over 300.000 signatures. It also resulted in the fusion of some anti-revolutionary electoral committees at the local level. Kuyper now dared to publish 'Our Program' (*Ons Program*) in 1879, a very comprehensive political program for a nationally organized political party, including explanatory comments of over 400 pages. It was the first of its kind in the Netherlands. On the 3th of April, during a meeting of the electoral committees, the sections of the Anti-Schoollaw League (or what was left of it), and the Christian press, the participants agreed on the erection of the Antirevolutionary Party (Janssens p. 157-164). A political party had emerged, that focused on binding as many citizens to its cause as possible. A party not only for the elite, but also for the masses, even for the ones not eligible to vote (Janssens p. 128).

So how can sociological institutionalism help in explaining this process of party formation? First of all, it becomes clear here that the transition from one institutionalised form of political procedures to another is not easily established. Much actors wanted to hold on to the old structure, in which parliamentarians only loosely formed ad-hoc coalitions regarding a single issue and political parties were absent. Kuyper however actively tried to act: he made an effort to change this status quo, and protested against the existing political institutions. Eventually, it was liberal dominance (mostly over the education system), that led the anti-revolutionaries to unite, and made them change the former institutional structures.

Kuyper also actively sought for the *legitimacy* of his claim. He tried to reach the masses in a time in which the franchise expanded (however slowly), and parliamentarization took place. It was crucial for him to find legitimacy for his cause in the people (his people, the orthodox protestants), as we have seen with his efforts in *De Standaard* and the *Volkspetitionnement*. For a political organization, legitimacy in the eyes of the people is crucial for survival: votes determine the amount of power that a political party can exert (at least in democracies).

Now let us assess a crucial question: was isomorphism taking place? Was the foundation of the ARP inspired by examples from abroad? This was certainly the case. We already mentioned the fact that the precursor of the ARP, the *Anti-Schoolwet Verbond*, was inspired by the British mass-organization of the Anti-Corn-Law League. Yet Kuyper clearly

found inspiration in other sources too. When reading *Ons Program*, it becomes clear that Kuyper finds much legitimacy in his claim to form a political party, in examples from abroad. He writes that "abroad, party formation counts as a rule" (Kuyper 1879, 312) [3] and later that "it is the way that its done in Germany, England, America and France" (Kuyper 1879, 403). We could therefore conclude that the ARP was inspired by foreign parties through a process of mimetic isomorphism, as it was formed after other professional organizations in the same field, that seemed successful in their contexts, and enjoyed legitimacy there. There even was a *coercive* element here: it was when the liberal went to far in their dominance for the anti-revolutionaries, with the School Law of Kappeyne, that party formation eventually took place.

Kuyper even goes further, when he states in Article 21 of *Ons Program* that "(...) the ARP is a distinct party, that only wants to cooperate with other parties when they are truly independent themselves, and work with a previously described program". This means he actively wanted to change the entire Dutch political landscape. He was an actor driving institutional change, and willingly tried to institutionalize the practice of political parties in Dutch society.

SDB (Sociaal-Democratische Bond)

Where the ARP was formed as a fusion of local electoral committees, forged together by the centralizing agent Kuyper, who operated from parliament for most of the time, the SDB was formed completely out of extra-parliamentary organizations (Tromp 2002, 30). These slowly started forming around 1848, at the time when Karl Marx wrote his famous *Communist Manifesto*, which quickly spread socialist ideals across the European continent. As early as 1847, an association for the working class was formed in Amsterdam (*Vereniging tot Zedelijke Beschaving der Arbeidende Klasse*), inspired by the German *Bund der Gerechten*. However, the real growth of socialist organizations only started in the second half of the 1860's (Tromp 2002, 33). For instance in 1866, the first Dutch Trade Union for typographers (*Algemene Nederlandse Typografen Bond*) was founded. In 1869, the 'newspaper tax' (*dagbladzegel*) was abolished, and several newspapers for the working classes came into being (Kuyper had also made use of this event when he founded *De Standaard*).

Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis wrote for many of these socialist newspapers, and although the workers where much more loosely organized than the anti-revolutionaries, he

[3] Quotes from *Ons Program* are translated from Dutch.

was seen as the leader by many workers and some people that were part of the bourgeoisie. He was heavily influenced by Marx and Engels, as he admired both of them (Tromp 2002, 42; Stutje 2012, 85-86), and drew much inspiration from the organizational power of the socialists abroad as he travelled much across Europe and spoke to many socialist leaders. He was for instance inspired by the French socialists, but most of all by the situation in Germany, were the formation of a true socialist political movement had already started in the 1860s (Stutje 2012, 84).

However, in the Netherlands, the socialists were moving more slowly, as their movement was splintered. In 1869, the Dutch section of the Socialist International was founded. This international organization, of which Marx was the leader, had its bureaus in several countries, yet a strong centralizing grip seemed to be absent. The national sections were quite free to do whatever they pleased. The Dutch International had the goal of changing the Dutch political system quite radically, aiming at universal suffrage, mandatory education free of charge on public schools, lesser hours of work and the abolition of a professional standing army (Tromp 2002, 38). This organization fell apart however, because there was more support for the ANWV (*Algemeen Nederlands Werklieden Verbond*) founded in 1871, which was much more moderate in character. Instead of a focus on class struggle, it wanted to enhance the position of the worker through a coalition with the elites. Another wing of the ANWV broke off to form the Social-Democratic Association (*Sociaal-Demokratische Vereniging*) in 1878. Eventually, at the 1880 elections, the ANWV, SDV and another organization, the VvAKS (*Vereeniging voor Algemeen Kies- en Stemrecht*) joined forces. As their political program, they took over the Program of Gotha, which was the program of the German *Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands* (Tromp 2002, 40-41). In 1881, these organizations fused into the SDB (*Sociaal-Democratische Bond*) (Geurtsen 1994, 25).

This first nationally organized socialist party was still very loosely organized. During elections, the local associations were free in their choice whether to participate or not, and even when they did, they were allowed to pick a candidate of their own liking. They did have to agree with the political program, and had to pay a negligibly small contribution (2 cents total), but further than that, they had no obligations to the central party organization (Stutje 2012, 168). This loose, decentralized organization shows us that the SDB had elements of a cadre-party, which sounds paradoxical. Of course, it also showed elements of a mass-party, as the SDB aimed at a membership base in the masses, not at funding from rich aristocratic money lenders. It also aimed at educating the masses, through their extensive issuing of

newspapers. This shows us that the cadre-party/mass-party dichotomy does often not exist in practice. A party is not either one or the other, but often possesses elements of both.

The goals of the SDB were very political, while its means were not. This was quite understandable, since the system of suffrage by census did not allow the workers to vote, making it almost impossible for socialists to make it into parliament. Socialists were therefore seen by the establishment as disturbers of the peace. This was for instance illustrated by the *Palingoproer* of 1886, an event in which the national police violently attacked workers in Amsterdam who were engaged in an illegal tradition, and in which many were killed or wounded (Stutje 2012, 122-124).

Despite the loosely organized structure of the SDB, and its unconventional means, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis was elected into parliament in 1888 from the Frisian district Schoterland (de Jong et al. eds. 2011, 39; Geurtsen 1994, 25). It was the bourgeoisie who voted him into office. Although he came in second in the first round behind a liberal, he won the elections with the support of the anti-revolutionaries, as Kuyper had advised his followers to vote against the liberal candidate (Stutje 2012, 168). He did this for several reasons, for instance because he knew that the liberal candidate would vote against the anti-revolutionary plans ones he would be elected in parliament. He also personally disapproved of the liberal in question, Heldt, since he was an atheist, and a board member of *De Dageraad*, an organization of 'free thinkers', that specifically rejected the dogmatic teachings of the church (Stutje 2012, 497).

At first, Domela himself and his fellow socialists did not want representation in parliament, as they saw it as a corrupt house of the elite (Stutje 170). Also, Domela had previously not eschewed a more provocative tone, for instance when publishing an anonymous pamphlet in *Recht voor Allen* in which King William III was called 'King Gorilla' (Stutje, 93). However, he favored the way of formal politics later on, after he had spend some time in Parliament. At that point, he distanced himself from violent worker uprisings, and tried to initiate policies within parliament, although his colleagues within the house collectively turned their back on him (Tromp 2002, 49). Some years later, in 1894, the SDB fell apart in the SB and the SDAP. The former did not last long, but the latter did. This was a party that favored the conventional, parliamentary way of working collectively with the parliamentarians that held other beliefs, although its tone still often hinged towards revolutionary tendencies (Koole 1995, 206-207).

The SDB seems to be an atypical case here. Although several extra-parliamentary organizations acknowledged the need and the will to organize a political party, their members

did not necessarily prefer the parliamentary way to get things done. Inspiration, therefore, did not seem to come from the ARP. It was the international socialist scene that inspired the Dutch socialists to form an official, yet loosely organized political party. Therefore, we might label the foundation of the SDB as a case of mimetic isomorphism. Its founders copied examples from abroad, because those where their prime examples. Sociological institutionalism is certainly helpful here since the theory claims that organizations operate and take over an institutionalized social order, without being sure whether it is the most *efficient* way to see to its members needs. Organizations simply enact, which certainly seems to be the case with the SDB (Meyer & Rowan 1991, 41). Although is was founded by the people wanting to strife for their interests following a parliamentary way, and although they adopted a political program, they eventually shifted to non-conventional means. Moreover, the way they organized the party was by no means efficient, mostly because they gave the local electoral committees all the freedom to choose their own candidates and set up their own campaigns. In this respect, the election of Domela Nieuwenhuis to the parliament in 1888 was not a result of efficient party organization. His election easily could have happened in the period before the party was organized, and was solely due to the popularity of the socialist in that particular region, also among the bourgeoisie (although the anti-revolutionaries helped Domela gain a majority), not to the centralized organization of the SDB.

A last point should be made after this examination of the SDB. We should, after these two case studies, start with a critically evaluation of Duvergers *contagion from the left*. First of all, let us assess how to classify these two parties on the left-right scale. In our discussion of the ARP, we saw that Kuyper's plea for 'democracy' and 'rule by the people' was aimed solely at *his* people, the anti-revolutionaries. The fact that he was also in favor of a lowering of the census also did not make him a 'progressive thinker'. He was by no means in favor of universal suffrage. Although he did play a significant role in the creation of the system of party politics in the Netherlands, his party should be classified as conservative. This is shown most clearly by the first few articles of *Ons Program*, in which Kuyper states that sovereignty does not reside in the people, but in God. His sovereign rule, for Kuyper, finds its embodiment in the Dutch Monarchy, the House of Orange (Kuyper 1878, *Artikel 2*). This would mean that in the Netherlands, a conservative party took the first steps in developing a political party system, which runs contrary to Duvergers ideas.

The SDB then, which was clearly a left-wing progressive party (shown most clearly by their plea for universal suffrage), did not force the anti-revolutionaries into political organization, as the development of both anti-revolutionary and socialist local organizations

took place in roughly the same time. Moreover, the socialists could not form any serious electoral threat until the franchise was extended to about 45% of the male population around 1900, so contagion form the SDB could not have taken place until that moment. We will come back to Duvergers 'contagion from the left' in the following section, regarding the Liberal Union.

LU (Liberale Unie)

The story of liberal political activity starts in the early 1820's, when people started questioned the authority of King William I in newspapers and pamphlets (Voerman 1992, 13; Taal 1980, 103). It was in 1846 that the *Amstelsociëteit* was founded in Amsterdam, the first liberal local electoral committee, which found success, and expanded its activity to several other major cities, erecting several local bureaus. For the largest part of the 19th century, it were the liberal politicians that completely dominated the Dutch political landscape. Some of them tried to centralize their organization somewhat, yet it never came to that until 1885, because of several factors. For instance, liberals feared a binding political program, since freedom of the individual was key to their ideology (Voerman 1992, 15). Also, this dominant political group of liberals did not need further organization and coordination, as they were already successful as it was. As a third reason, one could argue that the electoral system of that time, based on majority rule in about 40 districts, did not encourage the national organization of a national party (Taal 1980, 103), since parliamentarians were mostly the representatives of local districts. All of these facts, combined with the general distaste of parties that dominated Europe in the early 19th century (Blondel 1995, 130), liberal party organization did not come about.

The attempts that were made at organizing a national party were often quickly abandoned, or resulted in a very loosely organized entity. The *Kamerclub* - or sometimes called *Thorbeckiaanse Kamerclub* - formed a very loose political organization, looking more like a *cadre-party* with no official membership than like a *mass-party* (Voerman 1992, 15), and attempts of Van Eck to form a liberal parliamentary club in 1857 did not lead to any success (Taal 1980, 104). What did happen however, was the eventual cooperation of several electoral committees within the districts. For instance, Amsterdam had two prominent electoral committees, called *Burgerplicht* and *De Grondwet*, that joined hands during some elections, yet during others, they did not (Taal 1980, 103).

In 1884, the liberals had lost their absolute majority in parliament, due to the anti-revolutionaries, now united strongly in the ARP since 1879. Also, the conservatives had

ceased to exists as a distinctive political group in the 1870s, leaving the southern districts of Brabant and Limburg completely for the Catholics. Moreover, Kappeynes liberal School Law of 1878 did not only force the anti-revolutionaries, but also the Catholics into tighter organization (Roodhuyzen 1909, 2). In the new political constellation, three dominant blocks had formed, and the threat of the ARP and the Catholics (de Jong et al. eds. 2011, 26-31), forced the liberals into a stronger organization.

It was the electoral committee *Burgerplicht* in Amsterdam that took the initiative to form a party, inviting five electoral committees to a meeting, led by Isaäc Abraham Levy. Sixty-two of the hundred and eighty-five committees joined, giving the newly formed LU about four thousand three hundred and ninety members, growing steadily to almost twelve thousand in 1892 (Taal 1980, 104-8; Voerman 1992, 17; Koole 1995, 278-9). Levy was a very progressive liberal, in favor or universal suffrage (Charité 2013). Although he had written a concept-program for an encompassing liberal organization at a very early stage, in 1874 (which was accepted by *Burgerplicht* but turned down by *De Grondwet*) (Taal 1980, 103), he discarded the idea of a central political program in 1884, reminding his fellow liberals that they highly valued freedom of the individual (Taal 1980, 105). Also, it seemed to be the case that "anti-clericalism was (...) the only thing on which all liberals agreed" (Taal 1980, 104; also Koole 1995, 279), making it impossible for them to write a political program.

All these facts give us the impression that the liberals did not really want to form a political party at all, yet they were *coerced* into it by the upcoming Christian parties. This idea is supported when looking into the eight statutory articles that were written for the foundation of the LU. These all contained organizational procedures, accept article one, which stated that the LU's goal was to fight the organization of the Christian parties, and to further the liberal principles (Roodhuyzen 1909, 4/5). This article was quickly withdrawn because of the strong polarizing effect it turned out to have, leading anti-revolutionary Keuchenius to complain about a smear campaign against the Christians (*Christenhetze!*) (Taal 1980, 105). However, in Levy's speech at the founding ceremony, he still clearly stated that the fight against the anti-revolutionaries and Catholics was the main goal of the Liberal Union (Taal 1980, 108).

The problems within the party mainly came from the distinction between the conservative and progressive members, with the conservatives preferring the status quo, and the progressive members preferring extension of the franchise, social reforms in favor of the working class, and an overall greater role for the public sector (Wartena 2003,148). To avoid making the party seem too centralized and binding on its local committees, the party was called a League of Leagues (*Vereeniging van Vereenigingen*), and the board was called the

'Commission of Execution' (*Commissie van Uitvoering*) (Koole 1995, 279; Taal 1980, 106-109 and Roodhuyzen 1909, 4-5). These internal problems led the progressive liberal Pieter Cort van der Linden (later to become prime minister) to write a book called *Richting en Beleid der Liberale Partij* in 1886, with the goal of formulating general liberal principles (Den Hertog 2007, 101). This work, however, was not met with much enthusiasm in the party. Also, for the elections of 1887, a circular was send around from the LU, which was something different than a political program, yet it was necessary in light of the competition from the liberals that did not participate in the LU, and the socialists, who had a stronger voice now, in light of the extended franchise (Koole 1995, 279).

Cort van der Lindens book on the liberal party, clearly confirms that the foundation of the LU lies in its opposition to the anti-revolutionaries and Catholics. He states that "(t)he gap that separates liberals and clericals is not contingent or superficial, but it is necessary and reaches very deep" (Van der Linden 1886, 2)[4]. He elaborates on the difference by explaining that liberals base their opinion on reason, while Christians base their opinion on some revelation (Van der Linden 1886, 4). So also for Van der Linden, the foundation of the LU lays in its opposition to the political movements of the Christians. On top of that, he places the basis of the liberal party in the French Revolution, because that was an important turning point in history, after which people across Europe started questioning the power of the monarch. However, he also places the tradition of political parties in England, and hints at the fact that the liberals should be inspired by that country, in which the Whigs and the Tories were able to make a stance against the monarch even before the French Revolution (Van der Linden 1886, 6-8). This does not mean that the LU was created after these English examples, as Van der Lindens book was written as a justification for the formation of the liberal party *after* its creation.

These centralizing efforts did not pay off, as the history of the Dutch liberals is fraught with split-ups and fragmentation. In 1901, the more progressive members left the LU and formed the VDB, and the more conservative members established the BVL (*Bond van Vrije Liberalen*) in 1906. At elections, the liberals sometimes did work together when they were forced to, facing strong opposition from the anti-revolutionaries, Catholics, and after the franchise extended, the socialists. At other times, they operated separately, when less threat from the other parties was present. What is clear is that from the 1880's onward, the time of

[4] Quotes from *Richting en beleid der Liberale Partij* are translated from Dutch.

liberal dominance had ended (Voerman 1992, 18-28). It would also take the liberals to the years after World War II to form a single party that was seen as *the* representative party for the Dutch liberal movement, with the formation of the VVD (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*) in 1948.

It is difficult to classify the LU as either a cadre- of a mass-party, since it has elements of both. As we recall from our discussion of Duverger, cadre-parties are weakly organized, decentralized in their organization, with an unstable membership base. Mass-parties on the other hand are strongly centralized, and membership is firmly based in their local branches (Duverger 1964, 64-71). Based on this distinction, the LU has elements of both a cadre- and a mass-party, since its organization was quite decentralized, with no encompassing, centralizing program to keep the local branches together (characteristic of a cadre-party). However, there was a clear and extensive membership base, stemming from these local branches (characteristic of a mass-party). Another element of the LU is clearly a feature of a mass-party: the LU was not dependent on occasional donations by wealthy, carefully selected members as was common practice in cadre-parties. It yielded low levels of membership requirements, and aimed at requiting and reaching as many members as possible (Duverger 1964, 64-71). There is also an element of the LU in which it differs from the typical mass-party, namely in its appeal to the public. According to Duverger (1964, 64), mass-parties actively engage in teaching the masses about politics, and educating them politically. Thus far, we have seen this behavior of the ARP and the SDB, but less so of the LU, since there simply was no clear liberal ideology to teach the masses. We also have seen that attempts at formulating an overall ideology have largely failed for the liberals. We might conclude that the liberals were not eager to form a political party, and would prefer the loosely organized cadre-type party. However, since it needed to adapt to the political changes of that time, the LU was forced to adopt some practices that pushed it in the direction of a mass-party.

We have learned now, from the three case studies we have discussed, that internal division has been no reason for political ideologies to refrain from forming a party. When the electoral need to form a solid block was there, party formation and cooperation took place, no matter how big the internal differences. The ARP was internally as much divided as the liberals (recall the discussion above on the 'aristocrats' and the 'democrats'), yet they had to eventually organize against liberal dominance. For the liberals, the formation of a nationally organized party only became necessary after 1879. However, one centralized, strong party was no requisite for the liberals to keep finding electoral success. Forming several political organizations was enough for them, since they enjoyed legitimacy and a strong voter base

already. A different logic counts for the SDB, an organization that was aimed at political representation, even when that was not its primary means to reach its political goals.

The liberals were forced into party organization, mainly by the anti-revolutionaries and Catholics, making the formation of the LU a case of *coercive isomorphism*. The diffusion process that took place here was clearly initiated by the ARP, with the LU following suit out of necessity. Kuyper seems to have succeeded in his mission to change the political order, as two of the most significant politicized groups in society (the liberals and the socialists) had organized themselves in national political parties shortly after the ARP came into being, with the Catholics following somewhat later. In this respect, we should again question Duvergers *contagion from the left*. For the liberals, the process that had taken place was clearly *contagion from the right*! In their early years, they mostly feared the formation of the Christian parties, seen at that time as the political right. This led them to take over some of the organizational features of the ARP, for instance forging together several local electoral committees, and introducing an official membership base, originating from the branches. Agents of the LU were even forced into taking over some practices of the ARP during elections, for instance the 'circular', in which some general political views and plan were advocated.

RKSP (Rooms Katholieke Staats Partij)

The first nationally organized Dutch Catholic Party (*RKSP*) was formally founded quite late: in 1926, making it fourth in line as we strictly follow the chronological order. However, already in 1848, a national committee was founded with the goal of erecting local electoral committees in each district. These plans did not come to fruition, just as the efforts of the Catholic leader Herman Schaepman, who had also written a political program as early as 1883. He was inspired by his Protestant rival Abraham Kuyper, who was his ally in the *Schoolstrijd*, the confessional fight against the liberal doctrine that did not allow religious schools to receive state subsidies (Rogier & de Rooy 1953, 350-361)[5]. Moreover, Schaepman shared Kuypers anti-revolutionary ideas, especially on this issue. His aim was to unite the Catholics, in an effort to fight against the liberals and the conservatives, *together* with the orthodox protestants of the ARP (Bornewasser 1995, 17). He writes in his *Proeve van een Program*:

[5] Earlier, around 1850, the Catholics sought the cooperation of the liberals, since they would never discriminate on the basis of Religion. The Catholics that supported the liberals at that time were called *'papo-Thorbeckianen'* (Koole 1995, 153)

"(t)hat is why they [Catholics] want a political program, a program, that does not place them against protestants, but against liberals and conservatives (...) a program, that is anti-revolutionary through and through, yet nevertheless shows its own color, carries its own character" (Schaepman 1883, 8: parentheses added)[6].

However, when reading Schaepmans *Proeve van een Program*, it becomes clear that he also tried to form a Catholic block *next to* the anti-revolutionaries. From his opening pages, one can clearly see that he is displeased about the position of the Catholics in the Netherlands, with them having been a marginalized group for a long time. He also stated that Dutch citizens (especially the protestants) tend to forget that the Catholics exist as a political force. Therefore, he claimed that without a doubt, the Catholics had a duty to organize themselves in a political party with a program, to gain visibility and political legitimacy. He wanted recognition, also from the protestants (Schaepman 1883, 3-6; Bakvis 1981, 59). Later on, he stated that Kuypers idea that the Netherlands were a 'Protestant Nation' is false. According to him, the Catholics had a very important part in Dutch history, and were just as constitutive to the nation as the protestants were (Schaepman 1883, 19-20). Moreover, from 1891 onward, the year in which the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was published, the Catholics were also prone to fighting the socialists, which were seen as unjust disturbers of all order (Manning 1990, 272; Bakvis 1981, 63). Apart from being inspired by the anti-revolutionaries Kuypers and De Savornin Lohman, Schaepman drew inspiration from the German Centrum-party, a Catholic party that fought for the interests of a Roman-Catholic state, being affected by Bismarcks *Kulturkampf* (Bornewasser 1995, 13-14; Schaepman 1883, 7).

From 1883 until the eventual founding of the RKSP, multiple other attempts were made by Catholic leaders to unite the local electoral committees to form a party, but this process developed extremely slowly for a couple of reasons. First of all, there was no need for the Catholics to unite, since they were always able to sent Catholic deputies to parliament from Brabant and Limburg, the provinces that were dominated by the Catholics (Bornewasser 1995, 11; de Jong et al. eds. 2011, 41). Secondly, the Dutch Catholics were no discriminated group anymore. They did not suffer, for instance, from a *Kulturkampf,* (a nation-wide program introduced by Bismarck to fight Catholic ideals) like the German Catholics did (Bornewasser 1995, 20), making it unnecessary to organize on a large scale. The April-movement (*Aprilbeweging*) of 1853 had been a strong protestant protest against the

[6] Quotes from *Proeve van een Program* are translated from Dutch.

reinstallation of the Episcopal hierarchy, but it did not reach its goal (de Rooy 2007, 68-72), making the Catholics a legitimate societal and political force form that moment onward, as their bishops were reinstalled. Thirdly, the Catholic MPs were strongly divided between the more progressive members, who where -for instance- in favor of extension of the suffrage, and the more conservative members, just as the anti-revolutionaries were divided on this topic. As long as they did not necessarily have to, these two camps were reluctant to unite. Finally, since the elections of 1888, the Catholics had sometimes collaborated with the ARP, thus being able to grasp a majority over the liberals. The Catholics in the districts above Brabant and Limburg, where they knew that they wouldn't receive a majority of the votes, often voted for the ARP candidate, helping him to gain a majority. This allowed the Catholics to exert all the influence they wanted, without losing voters or seats (Bornewasser 1995, 21-23). So until 1917, the Catholics were content with forming a *Vereeniging van Roomsch-Katholieke leden der Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal* (1891), and an *Algemeene bond van R.K. Kiesverenigingen* (1904) (Bornewasser 1995, 23/32).

While this *Algemeene bond van R.K. Kiesverenigingen*, founded in 1904, was at first a very loosely organized whole, the Catholic leader Willem Hubert Nolens managed to centralize and strengthen its organization in 1917, when definitive steps towards a nationally organized party had to be taken by the Catholics. Nolens had managed to integrate all electoral committees within one party, steering the Union (*Algemeene Bond van Rooms Katholieke Kiesvereenigingen*) towards one program, favoring the more progressive orientations over the conservative ones (Bornewasser 1995, 36-41). In 1918, when the first election took place within the electoral system of proportional representation, the name of the Union changed to *Algemeene Bond van Rooms Katholieke Rijkskieskringorganisaties*, but in practice, the name *Rooms Katholieke Staatspartij* (RKSP) was already in use. Its organization was quite federative in character: the local branches had much autonomy, making the organization quite decentralized. Also, members of the local branches were not necessarily members of the national party. However, in 1926, the organization of the party was centralized, with the members of the local committees becoming members of the national party automatically. One could argue that the at this point, the party lost an important cadre-party feature, and gained a mass-party feature. This was also the year in with the RKSP was formally founded (Koole 1995, 153-155).

So why did the Catholics suddenly organize themselves more firmly after 1917? The new electoral system had only strengthened them politically, as all the votes of the Catholic voters in the southern provinces counted now. This led them to hold a majority of seats in

parliament after the 1918 elections (De Jong et all. eds. 2011, 70). They also appointed the first Catholic prime minister in that year: Ruys de Beerenbrouck (Koole 1995, 155). With their 30 seats, they left the ARP (13 seats) far behind them, just as the Liberal Union (6 seats), and the other liberal parties (VDB 5 seats; *Bond van Vrije Liberalen* 4 seats; *Economische Bond* 3 seats). The *Sociaal-Democratische Arbeidspartij* (SDAP) however, came out of the elections as the second largest party, with 22 seats (De Jong et all. eds. 2011, 70). It was fear of these socialists that led the Catholics to organize themselves more strongly, especially because of the socialist appeal to all workers. The possibility of Catholic workers choosing the side of the Socialists existed, making the Catholics refrain from cooperating (solely) with them, and look for cooperation with the conservative ARP (Koole 1995, 156).

The earliest attempts to form a party, made by Schaepman, can be seen as a move towards *mimetic isomorphism*, and *normative isomorphism*. In an environment in which the ARP, SDB and LU were seen as the legitimate vehicles for modern politics, Schaepman thought that the Roman-Catholics should follow suit (mimetic), being inspired by the success of the ARP (*and* the success of the German Centre Party) (normative isomorphism). However, the formation of a strong centralizing party did not occur for the Catholics until 1917, when the social-economic cleavage became prominent in society with the upswing of the Socialists. Stronger organizion of the Catholics was needed, since the socialist party could torn at their membership base by taking away Catholic workers. Therefore, we can state that party formation eventually occurred through *coercive isomorphism*, that is, through the coercive power of the Socialists. So Duverger's contagion, is this particular case, *did* come from the left, namely from the SDAP. The Catholics even took over (part of) the party organization of the SDAP, which were (in contrast to the SDB) strongly centralized, with a firm basis in their local branches (Koole 1995, 208).

Conclusion

This research project aimed at uniting the two theoretical disciplines of historical case studies and political science, on the topic of political party origins. This was done with a most-similar systems design in which four separate cases were studied within one country: the Netherlands. The procedure taken here was to produce an overview of the main historical work done on the four cases, add some new insights from the study of primary and secondary sources, and review it all through the lens of sociological institutionalism. The main research question that guided the research project was: *Were the earliest Dutch (nationally organized) parties inspired by organizations with a similar goal when they first founded their organizational*

structure? This question was central to the analysis, but we had to be sensitive to all contextual factors too. It has been tried to show the overall isomorphic diffusion process, that led one legitimate institutionalized political system to move towards another. This was a move from a system without parties, to a system in which parties are the one central feature of politics. Also, the present theories about political party origins were critically assessed during this research project. The main findings are listed below.

The process of institutional change took place within the context of parliamentarization and extension of the suffrage, a process that had been set in motion, slowly, since the introduction of the liberal constitution of 1848. These factors, that increased democracy and a sensitivity for the 'common people', led to an overall political climate in which parties could eventually develop. What is important, is that the process of party formation had started much earlier outside of the Netherlands than within the Netherlands. Therefore, foreign examples cannot be underestimated as sources of inspiration for the first parties that were organized at a national level in the Netherlands.

The protestant ARP, the first of our cases, was largely inspired by such foreign examples. Its precursor, the *Anti-Schoolwet-Verbond*, was based on the British Anti-Corn Law League, and Abraham Kuyper, the founder of the Anti-Revolutionary Party itself, was inspired by the political systems of the United States, France, Germany and England. The process through which the party came into existence was one of mimetic isomorphism, with also a hint of coercive isomorphism: it was liberal dominance that eventually 'forced' the party into existence. The ARP itself was formed out of the already existing anti-revolutionary electoral committees at the local level, bound together by Abraham Kuyper from within parliament. It was a real mass-organization, that tried to bind the people, both voter and non-voter, to the party. Kuyper was also actively trying to change public opinion in favor of party politics, stating that he would not do political business with a group that was not formally organized in a political party. He was an actor that actively tried to institutionalize change, and change the legitimate existing order. He succeeded at that by influencing the formation of other political parties within the Netherlands.

The SDB, the socialist party, was formed extra-parliamentarily, through the joint effort of trade unions, workers associations, and local electoral committees. Inspiration for forming a party did not come from the ARP, it came from abroad, with the socialist international having several branches in different countries across Europe. Also, in many countries, the socialist movement had organized itself in a political party. It was from these German and French examples that Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis took his inspiration. The SDB could be

seen as a mass-party, as it tried to rally as many members as possible, while educating them politically with its journals. However, the party was very decentralized, as the local branches enjoyed a lot of autonomy, which are clear a feature of a cadre-party. What also needs to be mentioned is the more radical stance of the SDB. They did not aim at taking part in conventional politics at all. When the SDB was founded, it resented parliament as a corrupt house of elites, and sought to further its goals outside of conventional politics. This is a clear case of mimetic/normative isomorphism, in which not efficiency, but conformity was the reason for adopting this type of organization.

The liberal LU was formed out of several local electoral committees, and parliamentary leaders forged it together, just like the ARP. This party shows the most clear case of coercive isomorphism, as the liberals were very divided, and stood reluctant to political organization, yet did had to organize when their rivals did. It was because the formation of the ARP (and SDB), and the upcoming Catholics, that they had to form a political party themselves. They had in fact lost their absolute majority in parliament, and were eager to get it back. Although this party was very loosely organized, and its founders resented the idea of a strongly centralized political party, it possessed features of a mass-party, as well as features of a cadre-party.

The RKSP was formed only in 1926, also by a process of coercive isomorphism, like the ARP and LU, in a process in which the local electoral committees were united by parliamentary actors. Earlier during the 19th century, much attempts were made to form a party by a process of mimetic/normative isomorphism, most of all by Herman Schaepman, but this was unsuccessful. The Catholics were always completely sure of political survival in parliament within the electoral/majority district system, because in all the districts in the southern provinces, Limburg and Brabant, Catholic candidates were voted into office. It was only in 1917, when the electoral system changed to proportional representation, that the parliamentary position of the Catholics was threatened - although they now possessed the most seats in parliament- by the Socialists. The fear was that the Catholic workers would vote for the socialists, so the Catholics were forced into forming a mass-party organization in 1926.

The validity of Duverger's thesis *'Contagion from the left'* has been nuanced for the Netherlands, based on what we have found. The first element of his thesis is his claim that the initiative in political party formation came from the political left. But for the Netherlands, we have seen that the ARP, of the political right, took the first initiative. The second element of his thesis is the claim that right-wing parties took over the more 'democratizing' party elements of the left-wing mass-parties (mostly the socialists). For the Netherlands, the ARP

was a peculiar case in this regard. Although its ideology was very conservative, its party organization was oriented towards the masses. Some features of this were taken over by the liberal LU, which was a *left-wing party*, that was -at least in the beginning- *reluctant* to form a mass-party. So for the left-wing LU, contagion came from the right. The SDB case also falls outside of Duvergers pattern. Its founders were inspired by socialist parties from abroad, but the loosely organized party that occurred was by no means the mass-party type that inspired other party organizations. The only situation in which Duvergers thesis is applicable to the Netherlands, is the case in which a successor of the SDB, the SDAP, inspired the Catholics to organize a mass-party. In 1917, the left-wing SDAP had electorally become a threat for the Catholics, which formed a centralized mass-party, the RKSP, in 1926. So for the conservative, right-wing RKSP, contagion *did* come from the left.

This research can be seen as a first exploratory step in finding an isomorphic process of political party institutionalization in the Netherlands. We have found hints of all three types of isomorphism, with a very important role for the coercive type. Also, we found that for three of our four cases, *efficiency* was an effect of party formation. Only for the SDB it was not, at least in the sort term. So were sociological institutionalism would argue that an isomorphic process not necessarily leads to efficiency, it did for most of our cases. Note however, that the outcome of party formation was efficient for the ARP, *because the legitimate institutional order had changed*, in light of the developments of parliamentarization and the extension of the suffrage. The legitimate institutional order was changed even further by the ARP, which meant the introduction of political parties as the legitimate vehicles for politics, and the SDB, LU and RKSP following suit. This means that sociological institutionalism plays a significant explanatory role in interpreting the process of party formation in the Netherlands. Within the process of democratizing institutions, an isomorphic process of party formation took place, leading, in three of our four cases, to efficient political party organizations.

As this project was mainly based on secondary sources, a more extensive follow-up should be done to verify whether (and if yes, why and how), a process of isomorphism has taken place that led to the formation of a party system in the Netherlands. This study should consist of extensive archival work, in a search for the reasons and thoughts of the Dutch pioneers that founded the first nationally organized political parties. After that, similar projects could be done in several countries, to see whether sociological institutionalism could play a role in explaining the entire process of party formation, across countries. Such a study would enrich both historical work on the earliest political parties, and political science theory,

by using the wisdom that lays in both approaches, and combining them into one comprehensive study.

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