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A Divided House: An Analysis of Parliamentary Voting Divisions in the Dutch Parliament

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Abstract

This study is an effort to extrapolate the patterns that exist in parliamentary voting in the Dutch Parliament. It investigates what party- and vote characteristics influence the divisions between coalition and opposition and between left and right that exist in parliamentary voting. Using a triadic model on all recorded votes in the 2017-2021 parliamentary term, this study finds that the proposing actor, proposal type, and proposal subject are relevant predictors of the division that will come about in a parliamentary vote. Specifically, this study provides evidence for three points. Firstly, amendments, bills, and budgets are found to have a stronger left-right division than motions, which have a more dominant coalition-opposition split. Secondly, proposals from opposition parties are found to have a stronger coalition-opposition division than proposals from the government or coalition. Thirdly, contrary to theoretical expectations, this study only finds very limited effect of topical ideological distance on votes pertaining to said topic. The effect is only significant for proposals on economics and environment. This study contributes to the literature by using an extensive dataset and an innovative triadic method. In doing so, this study has attempted to further understanding of parliamentary behaviour based on coalition- and opposition membership and ideology in the Dutch Parliament.

Keywords: Parliamentary behaviour, coalition-opposition dynamics, ideology, parliament, the Netherlands

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, the Dutch Parliament has experienced a blurring of the division between coalition and opposition (Andeweg, 2011). Andeweg et al. (2008) find for the Netherlands that majority of the time the opposition votes in favour of government proposals. Furthermore, a profound increase in the number of parliamentary questions, amendments, and motions in the Dutch Parliament has occurred in recent decades (Andeweg et al., 2008). A record number of motions in one year was reached in 2022 (Boom, 2022). Contemporary developments such as these beg the question what divisions exist in parliamentary voting and what factors determine which division comes about. This question is particularly salient given the increasing fractionalisation of the Dutch Parliament (Otjes & Voerman, 2022) and divided governments being common (Otjes, 2020). Existing research on this has been limited in scope. The research puzzle of this study is what dividing lines conflict and cooperation exist between political parties occur. This study analyses parliamentary voting behaviour in the Dutch Parliament during the 2017-2021 term of office. It contributes to the existing knowledge on coalition-opposition dynamics in parliamentary behaviour. This research puzzle leads to the following research question: *what factors influence the voting divisions in the Dutch Parliament?*

The scientific relevance of this study is twofold. Firstly, this study is an effort to find patterns in party voting behaviour associated with various factors. Previous studies have found multidimensionality in the divisions in parliamentary voting (e.g., Crespin & Rohde, 2010; Van der Veer, 2018). Two of these divisions are between coalition and opposition and between left and right. Hix & Noury (2016) and Louwerse et al. (2016) find that the coalition-opposition and left-right divisions depend on coalition formation and institutional circumstances in parliamentary democracies. This study builds on the existing literature by investigating the divisions in parliamentary voting depending on proposal type, proposing actor, and topical ideological distance. In doing so, this study considers all recorded votes in the Dutch Parliament between 2017 and 2021. This study therefore contributes to the literature by including more data and by including vote- and party level variables. Secondly, this study innovates on methodology by using a triadic method. The triadic method is an extension of the dyadic method. Triadic modelling in parliamentary behavioural research was developed by Van der Veer (2018) for his analysis of voting in the European Parliament. In the triadic method, a measurement of distance between each set of two parties (a dyad) is made for each individual vote. This method allows for information on the level of the individual vote, such as the proposal type and proposing actor, to be included in the analysis. This method is yet to be

used for a case study of voting behaviour in a national parliament. Given these two scientific contributions, this study aims to extend the theoretical and methodological development of the field of parliamentary behaviour research.

The question as to what underpins the voting decisions political parties make, is salient both for political parties and for the public. For political parties, gaining understanding as to what vote types and subjects are likely to generate what kind of division in parliamentary voting can be a useful insight for developing parliamentary strategies. This allows for more evidence-based development of political strategies for parties. Parties can then allocate resources and political capital in more effective ways. Journalists may use the findings from this study to better predict what parliamentary votes will generate what parliamentary voting, allowing them to better allocate time and resources. For the public, this study shows where political conflict and cooperation occur in the Dutch parliament. This is an important insight for voters, given that they can inform their voting based on party behaviour, supplementary to ideological positioning.

2. Theoretical Framework

The literature on parliamentary voting behaviour is extensive, though it is often limited in its scope. This theoretical framework bases itself on rational choice theory. Specifically, it considers vote seeking and policy seeking behaviour, as described by Kreppel & Hix (2003) and Strøm (1990). I will consider these perspectives using some of the relevant literature and formulate the hypotheses that will be tested.

Rational choice theory provides the basis for this study's analytical framework. Rational choice theory is described by Kreppel & Hix (2003). This theory of parliamentary behaviour is rooted in economic theory. Parties are assumed to behave akin to economic actors (Riker, 1962; Shepsle & Weingast, 1994), with the goal of accumulating votes, entering- or staying in office, and passing policy proposals. Strøm (1990) describes vote-seeking behaviour of political parties. The core principle of this is that parties seek to maximise their electoral prospects (Kreppel & Hix, 2003; Downs, 1957). The assumption behind the vote-seeking behaviour is that parties do not pursue specific policies or ideologies, unless this leads to electoral gains (Kreppel & Hix, 2003). On this, Tuttnauer (2018) finds that opposition parties seek to destabilise the coalition by using parliamentary instruments, including parliamentary voting.

This is done to gain votes and to replace the coalition. Holzhacker (2002) and Van de Wardt et al. (2014) similarly argue that the opposition uses parliamentary tools and votes in pursuing office and votes. Otjes & Louwerse (2018) find that parties in the Dutch Parliament use parliamentary questions to attack parties with an overlapping electorate. I expect that vote-seeking behaviour leads to a coalition-opposition division in parliament. I expect this because opposition parties, to show their distinctiveness from the coalition, will vote against coalition and government proposals and vice versa.

Hix & Noury (2016) offer insight on the divisions in parliamentary voting in their comparative study of 16 Western democracies. They find divisions in parliamentary voting based on the coalition and opposition membership and based on ideological distance. Hix and Noury (2016) find that institutional circumstances influence the division that comes about. This finding corroborates previous studies such as Ganghof & Bräuninger (2006) who study Germany, Finland, Australia, and Denmark. In parliamentary democracies with majority coalitions, such as the Netherlands, the coalition-opposition division is found to be the most important. Landi & Pelizzo (2013) find for Italy that membership of the coalition or opposition is an important dividing line in parliamentary voting. Van der Veer (2018) argues a similar point for the European Parliament. Namely that MEPs are more likely to vote the same when they are members of the same party group. What these studies do not consider, however, is the effect vote type and proposing actor have on the divisions in parliamentary voting behaviour. I expect that the division will be influenced by the type of proposal and its proposing actor. Different types of proposals will give different levels of conflict. The Dutch Parliament has different vote types. These different proposal types may yield different divisions in parliamentary voting. I expect that bills are less susceptible to a voting division between coalition and opposition because bills carry over between parliamentary terms (Döring, 1995). I expect motions to create a greater division between coalition and opposition than amendments, bills, and budgets. I expect this because motions can easily go against government policy or the coalition agreement, leading the coalition to vote together against it. I also expect there to be a difference in coalition-opposition voting dynamics depending on the proposing actor. Specifically, I expect opposition proposals to yield a coalition-opposition division. This is the most common division, as evidenced by Hix & Noury (2016). I expect the coalition to unite against opposition proposals. For coalition and government proposals, conversely, I expect a left-right division. Coalition parties may individually make proposals on subject not covered by the coalition agreement or on subjects where there is disagreement within the coalition. As such, I do not

expect the coalition to be united among proposals initiated by a coalition party. Given these theoretical expectations, I have formulated the following hypotheses:

1. **Coalition hypothesis:** Parties that are both in the coalition will vote together more often than parties that do not share coalition membership.

2. **Opposition hypothesis:** Parties that are both in the opposition will vote together more often than parties that do not share opposition membership.

3. **Vote type hypothesis:** The coalition-opposition divide will be more important for motions than for amendments, bills, and budgets.

4. **Proposing actor hypothesis:** The coalition-opposition divide will be stronger for opposition proposals than for government/coalition proposals.

In addition to vote-seeking, parties can also be policy-seeking. Policy seeking is the pursuit of a worldview, ideology, or specific policies (Lipset et al., 1967). A parliamentary voting division based on ideology comes about due to policy seeking behaviour (Kreppel & Hix, 2003). Previous studies find evidence for a division in parliamentary voting on the ideological left-right axis, for instance in the European Parliament (Hagemann & Høyland, 2010; Hix, 2001; Kreppel, 2000; Kreppel & Tsebelis, 1999; Van der Veer & Otjes, 2021). Similarly, this ideological division between left and right in parliamentary voting is found in national parliaments, such as the Dutch Parliament (Andeweg et al., 2008), the US Senate and Congress (Crespin & Rohde, 2010; Poole & Rosenthal, 1984; Roberts et al., 2016), Spain (Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006), Sweden (Clausen & Holmberg, 1977), and South Korea (Hix & Jun, 2009). Notwithstanding this evidence, other scholars find the division between coalition and opposition to be a stronger factor determining parliamentary behaviour than ideology (Hix & Noury, 2016; Otjes & Louwerse, 2014; Tuttnauer, 2014). Hix & Noury (2016) argue specifically that coalition-opposition divides in parliamentary voting are most likely to come about in countries with a parliamentary system. Given this finding on the impact of institutions and relating it to the Dutch Parliament. I expect that the ideological distance between parties in general and the ideological distance on a proposal's subject will influence the likelihood that parties will vote the same. Parties that are ideologically close will vote the same way more than ideologically distant parties. I expect that parties that are close in their views on the specific policy field a proposal is associated with will be more likely to vote the same way (Crespin & Rohde, 2010). Some policy issues may have a stronger ideological division than others, as Clausen & Holmberg (1977) find for the Swedish Parliament. Given these theoretical expectations, I have formulated the following hypotheses:

5. **Ideology hypothesis:** Parties that are ideologically distant will vote together less often than parties that are ideologically similar.

6. **Proposal subject hypothesis:** Parties that are ideologically distant on the policy field of a vote will be more likely to vote differently on a proposal pertaining to said policy field.

Vote and policy-seeking behaviour inform this study's theoretical expectations. The scientific evidence suggests a combination of voting divisions occurring along the left-right and coalition-opposition split. Some important pieces of the puzzle remain missing, however. The effect of the vote type and the proposing actor on the parliamentary division remain to be researched systematically (Louwerse et al., 2016). The type of vote and the proposing actor may be important in determining the level of coalition opposition and left-right division present in parliamentary voting. Furthermore, this study places particular focus on how divisions in parliamentary voting behaviour interact. Of particular interest for this study are coalition-opposition status and ideological positioning of parties, both on the general left-right axis and by policy field.

3. Case Selection

This study focuses on voting divisions for the case of the Dutch Parliament during the 2017-2021 parliamentary term of office. There are two reasons why this is a relevant case study. These are the characteristics of the Dutch political system and data availability. This section argues two points. Firstly, the Netherlands is a typical case among countries in Western Europe, making it an appropriate case for studying parliamentary behaviour. Secondly, available data allows for this study to be conducted.

The Netherlands is a typical case among Western European democracies when it comes to its parliamentary structure. The Netherlands typically has majority coalition governments (though divided governments are common). The country is also characterised by its partial alternation of governing parties (Louwerse et al., 2016). Table 1 depicts the share of majority- and minority governments in 18 European countries between 1945 and 2012. Between 1945 and 2012, the Netherlands had no cabinet without a majority in the lower house of Parliament, except for several caretaker governments (Parlement.com, n.d.). The Dutch tendency towards partial alternation and majority coalition governments make the Netherlands a typical case among

Western European countries, especially countries such as Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Iceland, and Luxembourg.

Country	Single party majority (%)	Majority coalition (%)	Minority coalition (%)	Majority govern-ments (%)	Share of wholesale alternation (%)	Estimated power of the Parliament [0:1]	Party group unity (Rice score)	Parliament authority to determine the plenary agenda [1:7][1]
						(Fish & Kroenig, 2009)	Multiple sources[2] between	(Döring, 1995)
	Gallagher et al. (2006) 1945-2003				Döring et al. (2022) 2002-2012	2009	1991-2016	1995
Luxembourg	0.0	100.0	0.0	100	0			3
Netherlands	0.0	100.0	0.0	100	0	0.78	99.96	7
Austria	17.4	78.3	4.3	96	0	0.72	98.33	4
Germany	0.0	95.7	4.3	96	0	0.84	96.33	4
United Kingdom	95.2	0.0	4.8	95		0.78	99.25	1
Belgium	8.1	83.8	8.1	92	0	0.75	99.06	4
Iceland	0.0	91.7	8.3	92	0			5
France	0.0	84.2	15.8	84		0.56	99.33	2
Finland	0.0	72.5	27.5	72	0	0.72		5
Ireland	31.8	36.4	31.8	68	50	0.66	100	1
Italy	0.0	62.3	37.7	62	100	0.84	96.46	6
Spain	50.0	0.0	50.0	50		0.72	96.46	4
Norway	21.4	10.7	67.9	32	100	0.72	98.72	4
Sweden	11.5	19.2	69.2	31	100	0.72	96.57	5
Denmark	0.0	12.9	87.1	13	100	0.78	99.83	5
Average	*15.7*	*56.5*	*27.7*	*72.2*	*37.5*	*0.74*	*98.36*	*4*

Table 1: Government types of European countries

The level of power a parliament holds is a determining factor of the level of conflict between coalition and opposition (Andeweg, 2004; Andeweg et al., 2008b; Tuttnauer, 2018). When the parliament has more power, different dynamics between government and opposition can occur. This makes it a relevant factor for the suitability of the selected case. As can be found in table 1, The Dutch Parliament holds slightly above-average parliamentary power when compared to other European democracies. The Netherlands is at 0.78 on a 0-1 scale, slightly above the 0.74

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[1] Range 1:7. 1 indicates the government determines the parliamentary agenda. 7 indicates the parliament determines the parliamentary agenda without government influence.

[2] AT, BE, FR, DE, IE, IT, GB (1991-2000): Depauw & Martin (2008), CH (1991-1994): Lanfranchi & Lüthi, (1999), NL (2006-2010): Van Vonno (2016), NO, SE, DK (1991-2002): Sieberer (2006).

average (Fish & Kroenig, 2009). The Netherlands is therefore a typical case among these countries when it comes to the power parliament holds. The Netherlands has strict party discipline in parliamentary voting (Elzinga & Wisse, 1988). As can be seen in table 1, the Dutch Parliament is similar in its level of party group unity as most other Western European countries (Clausen & Holmberg, 1977; Van Vonno, 2016). The opposition influence and level of party unity make the Netherlands a typical case when compared to other Western European democracies.

A difference between the Netherlands and other Western European democracies is its parliamentary agenda setting. The Dutch parliamentary agenda is determined by the Parliament itself. This gives the opposition the ability to initiate debates without influence from the government (Hix & Noury, 2016). The agenda setting power of the Dutch Parliament makes this case distinct from comparable parliamentary systems in Western Europe. Table 1 depicts the level of power parliament has in agenda setting for several Western European democracies (Döring, 1995). Agenda setting in the Dutch parliament distinguishes itself from similar countries, which typically have some level of majority or government power in agenda setting. The Netherlands also differs from countries such as Germany and Belgium by the fact that bills carry over to subsequent parliamentary sitting terms. Luxembourg, Sweden, and Switzerland do have the same rule of bills carrying over (Döring, 1995). Because of these reasons, I expect the Dutch Parliament, relative to other Western European parliaments, to have a lower degree of coalition-opposition division in parliamentary voting. I expect this especially for bills in the Dutch parliament, when comparing to countries with more government power over agenda setting and/or proposed bills being discarded at the end of the sitting term.

The second argument for using the Netherlands as a case for this study is data availability. This study uses the Dutch Parliamentary Voting Dataset (Louwerse et al., 2022). This dataset covers all votes in the Dutch Parliament between 1922 and 2021. While some studies only regard (a sample of) roll-call votes (e.g., Aldrich et al., 2017; Clausen & Holmberg, 1977; Crespin & Rohde, 2010; Hix & Jun, 2009; Hix & Noury, 2016; Landi & Pelizzo, 2013; Roberts et al., 2016), this study takes account of all parliamentary votes for the parliamentary mandate of 2017-2021. Including all votes in this period instead of a sample solves bias in sampling that is inherent to analysing only roll call votes (Aldrich et al., 2017). This study considers all parliamentary votes to discern voting patterns based on the type of vote and proposing actor. Including all votes also increases the internal validity of the results.

The Dutch parliamentary structure and government composition make the Netherlands a typical case study among similar Western European countries such as Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium, Iceland, and Austria. The exception to this is the Dutch Parliament's agenda setting, in which solely the Parliament has agenda-setting power, unlike most other Western European democracies. The multiple possible divisions and parliamentary agenda setting without government interference make the Netherlands an appropriate case for this study. The availability of high quality, comprehensive data about parliamentary voting in the Netherlands makes it possible to conduct this study.

4. Methodology and Data

4.1 Data collection

This study uses the Dutch Parliamentary Voting Dataset, created by Louwerse et al. (2022). This dataset is a comprehensive record of all parliamentary votes in the Dutch Parliament between 1922 and 2021. Louwerse and colleagues sourced the data from the official records of the Parliament for the period 1946-2017 and from the Parliament's API (data recording) between 2017-2021. They obtained supplementary data about elections, cabinets, and parties from the parlgov.org database. Additionally, this study uses the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Jolly et al., 2022) for ideological distances between parties, both in general and by policy field.

4.2 Methodology

This study uses a triadic method, which is an extension of the dyadic approach developed by Van der Veer (2018) and subsequently used by Van der Veer & Otjes (2021). In this method, the level of analysis is a pair of two actors. Observations are related to similarities and differences between these two actors. In a dyadic model, the ratio of the number of times two parties voted in the same way, based on the number of votes they both participated in (Van der Veer, 2018) is used as the dependent variable. A triadic model creates such a measurement of distance for each individual vote. In doing so, it is possible to compare divisions in parliamentary voting behaviour on the level of individual votes, accounting for vote characteristics such as the proposal type and -subject and the proposing actor. This study's level of analysis is each pair of parties that held seats in the parliamentary sitting term of 2017-2021. There were 13 parties in this period, which gives 78 possible pairs. Information collected for each pair of parties in the Dutch Parliament consists of whether the pair of parties voted in

favour or against a proposal, whether both parties are a member of the coalition or opposition, and ideological positioning.

The triadic method is appropriate for studying divisions in parliamentary voting because it gives a more complete picture than existing methods (Van der Veer & Otjes, 2021). Methods used in previous studies on parliamentary voting behaviour are the case-based approach and NOMINATE. The case-based approach uses a limited sample of voting data. Because a non-exhaustive set of votes is included in analyses using this method, the external validity of this approach is lower (Van der Veer & Otjes, 2021). It is common for studies using this method to only include roll-call votes, which makes it impossible to compare between types of parliamentary votes. Examples of studies using the case-based approach are Benedetto & Hix (2007) and Roger et al. (2017). Another commonly used method is NOMINATE, as developed by Poole & Rosenthal (1984). This method places actors in a matrix, with greater disagreement between actors being indicated by greater spatial distance. This method is used by Hix (2001) and Hix & Noury (2016). The methodological problem with NOMINATE is its relative lack of precision. Nuances get lost when a statistical relationship between variables is assessed by eye (Van der Veer, 2018; Van der Veer & Otjes, 2021). According to Van der Veer (2018), this lack of precision makes NOMINATE a good theory generating approach, but not a good theory testing one. This study is concerned with testing hypotheses based on small effects. It is possible that these effects would not be observable when using the NOMINATE method. The triadic method allows for such observations with more precision, making it appropriate for this study.

The methodological problems that come along with a case-based approach and NOMINATE are solved by the triadic method. The triadic method, unlike NOMINATE, depicts the similarity in voting between parties numerically, instead of as a visualised relationship. This allows for greater nuance in the patterns that can be observed. Its higher degree of precision and the incorporation of all parliamentary votes, not just roll-call votes, make the triadic method appropriate for this study.

4.3 Operationalisation
This study is concerned with whether the proposing actor and the topic of the proposal have an impact on the likelihood of parties voting the same or differently. The triad contains information on whether each party pair voted the same for a vote, the proposing actor of the

vote, the type of proposal the vote pertains to, and the subject of the vote. including the type of proposal. An overview of the variables included in the regression can be found in table 2. The proposal subject, proposing actor, proposal type, and the coalition-oppositions status of the parties in each dyad are included as independent variables. These variables are all included for each vote in the Dutch Parliamentary Voting Dataset. Besides that, party ideology is included on a the left-right spectrum. Further party ideological positioning on seven policy fields is added to test the proposal subject hypothesis. This study uses the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Jolly et al., 2022) for the measurements of party ideological positioning. Appendix 8.1 depicts the vote topics included in the Dutch Parliamentary Voting Dataset and corresponding CHES questions from the 2019 wave. The descriptive statistics for these variables can also be found in this table. As can be observed in figure 1, some of the ideological distances by policy field are strongly correlated. Especially GALTAN, measuring cultural and social values and social/lifestyle are highly correlated, as are migration and civil liberties. Because education is the reference category, GALTAN is not included in the regression analysis. General left-right distance and left-right distance on economics are also strongly correlated. None of the variables measuring topical ideological distance are perfectly correlated. Because there is no perfect multicollinearity between variables, the OLS assumptions are not violated.

Category	Variable	Type
Dependent	Vote distance between party pair for each vote	Dummy
Independent	Both parties are coalition parties	Dummy
	Both parties are opposition parties	Dummy
	Proposal subject	Categorical
	Proposing actor	Categorical
	Proposal type	Categorical
	Ideological distance (left-right)	Continuous [0:1]
	Ideological distance policy fields (CHES). 9 variables	Continuous [1:9]

Table 2: Variables

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	CHES variable	min.	median	mean	max.	S.D.
Left-right distance	lrgen	0.001	0.277	0.314	0.815	0.205
Education distance	GALTAN	0.036	1.718	2.093	3.156	4.764
Economics distance	lrecon	0.115	2.619	2.774	7.699	1.821
Environment distance	environment	0.000	2.670	2.754	3.583	8.308
Populism distance	people_vs_elite	0.000	3.227	3.203	8.273	2.210
Immigration distance	immigrate_policy	0.000	2.876	3.390	8.368	2.218
Law & order distance	civlib_laworder	0.091	2.636	2.919	6.848	1.898
Decentralisation distance	regions	0.000	1.725	1.830	4.450	1.211
Cultural/social distance	sociallifestyle	0.077	2.885	3.373	9.077	2.216
Foreign/EU distance	eu_position	0.083	1.878	2.221	5.846	1.436

Table 3: Summary statistics ideological distances

| Variable	Frequency	% of votes
Proposal type		
Amendment	1914	10.67%
Bill	468	2.60%
Budget	169	0.94%
Motion	15351	85.57%
Other	36	0.20%
Proposing actor		
Government/coalition proposal	5281	29.43%
Opposition proposal	11781	65.67%
Proposal subject		
Education	1507	8.40%
Economics	9879	55.07%
Environment	3927	21.89%
Populism	714	3.98%
Migration	528	2.94%
Law & order	1059	5.90%
Decentralisation	376	2.10%
Culture/social	292	1.63%
Foreign/EU	1971	10.99%

Table 4: Frequency table
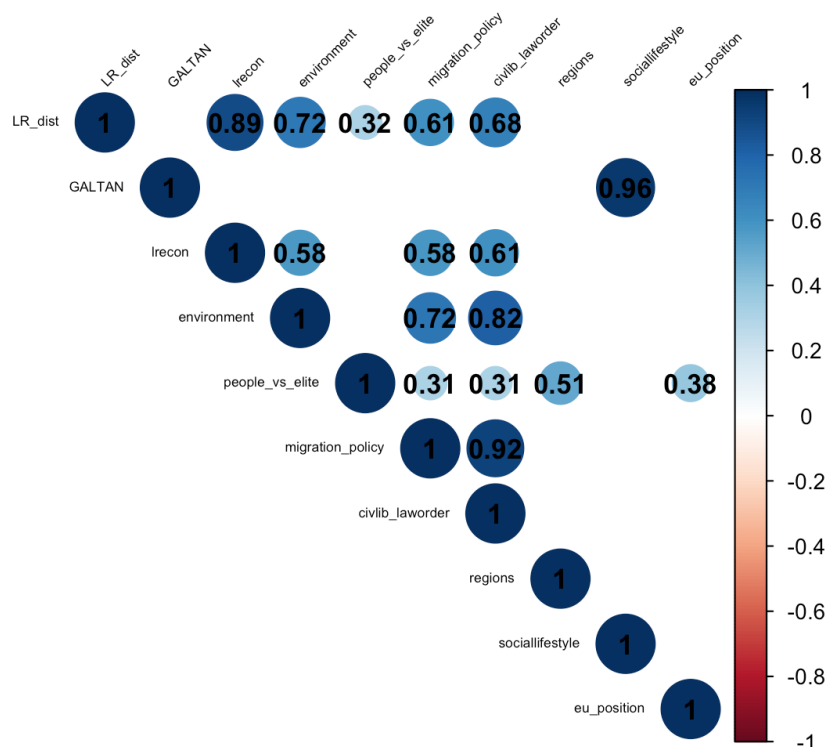
Figure 1: Correlation matrix policy fields and general left-right distance

5.2 Regression analysis

This section discusses the multivariate logistical regressions that test the hypotheses formulated in chapter 2 based on the existing literature. This section first discusses the effect of coalition and opposition membership and left-right distance on the likelihood parties will vote together. Subsequently, it considers the effects of the proposal type, proposing actor, and proposal subject on parliamentary voting behaviour. The outcome variable measures whether a pair of parties has voted the same or differently for each vote.

	Coal/opp and LRdist	Proposal type	Proposing actor	Proposal subject	Full model
Left-right distance	**1.865*****	**1.916*****	**2.009*****	**0.447*****	**0.550*****
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.031)	(0.033)
Both coalition	**-1.427*****	**-1.358*****	**-1.902*****	**-1.437*****	**-1.880*****
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.015)
Both opposition	**-0.519*****	**-0.544*****	**-0.712*****	**-0.557*****	**-0.796*****
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Amendment		**0.215*****			**0.260*****
		(0.012)			(0.015)
Bill		**-0.578*****			**-0.869*****
		(0.027)			(0.034)
Budget		**-1.237*****			**-1.613*****

	(0.052)		(0.063)
Other	**0.404*****		**1.177*****
	(0.082)		(0.101)
Both coalition x Amendment	**-0.591*****		**-0.651*****
	(0.037)		(0.041)
Both coalition x Bill	**-0.876*****		**-0.567*****
	(0.119)		(0.131)
Both coalition x Budget	-9.184		-8.636
	(10.185)		(11.130)
Both coalition x Other	**-1.065*****		**-2.291*****
	(0.330)		(0.394)
Both opposition x Amendment	0.020		**0.070*****
	(0.012)		(0.015)
Both opposition x Bill	**0.581*****		**0.849*****
	(0.026)		(0.033)
Both opposition x Budget	**1.102*****		**1.465*****
	(0.050)		(0.059)
Both opposition x Other	**0.819*****		**0.484*****
	(0.083)		(0.100)
Left-right distance x Amendment	**-0.203*****		**-0.144*****
	(0.030)		(0.037)
Left-right distance x Bill	**-0.591*****		**-0.536*****
	(0.063)		(0.079)
Left-right distance x Budget	**-0.683*****		**-0.698*****
	(0.113)		(0.138)
Left-right distance x Other	**-2.079*****		**-2.168*****
	(0.200)		(0.247)
Government/coalition proposal		**-1.079*****	**-1.260*****
		(0.009)	(0.012)
Both coalition x Government/coalition proposal		**1.650*****	**1.809*****
		(0.021)	(0.024)
Both opposition x Government/coalition proposal		**0.734*****	**0.782*****
		(0.009)	(0.011)
Left-right distance x Government/coalition proposal		**-0.376*****	**-0.335*****
		(0.022)	(0.028)
Distance Economics		**0.129*****	**0.137*****
		(0.003)	(0.003)
Distance Environment		**0.017*****	**0.020*****
		(0.002)	(0.002)

Distance Populism	0.0001	0.0001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance Migration	**-0.041***	**-0.045***
	(0.003)	(0.004)
Distance Law & order	**0.097***	**0.1013***
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Distance Decentralisation	0.001	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance Culture/social	0.0003	0.0003
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance Foreign/EU	**0.020***	**0.020***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Economics	-0.002	0.002
	(0.009)	(0.010)
Environment	**-0.041***	**-0.039***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Populism	**0.090***	**0.108***
	(0.020)	(0.021)
Migration	-0.023	-0.0003
	(0.025)	(0.026)
Law & order	**-0.021**	-0.0322
	(0.018)	(0.019)
Decentralisation	0.036	0.031
	(0.058)	(0.059)
Culture/social	**0.072**	**0.089***
	(0.033)	(0.033)
Foreign/EU	0.005	0.014
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Distance Economics x Economics proposal	**-0.005***	**-0.005***
	(0.002)	(0.003)
Distance Environment x Environment proposal	**-0.005***	**-0.005***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Distance Populism x Populism proposal	0.003	0.003
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Distance Migration x Migration proposal	0.007	0.009
	(0.006)	(0.006)
Distance Law & order x Law & order proposal	0.0078	0.0097
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Distance Decentralisation x Decentralisation proposal	-0.006	-0.006

				(0.010)	(0.011)
Distance Culture/social x Culture/social proposal				-0.017	-0.017
				(0.013)	(0.013)
Distance Foreign/EU x Foreign/EU proposal				-0.003	-0.004
				(0.005)	(0.005)
Constant	-0.978***	-0.982***	-0.702***	-1.194***	-0.898***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.014)	(0.015)
Observations	1,395,199	1,395,199	1,395,199	998,702	998,702
Log Likelihood	-849,398.0	-846,356.8	-825,901.4	-587,882.9	-563,579.3
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,698,804	1,692,754	1,651,819	1,175,822	1,127,255

$*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01$ S.E. in parentheses

Table 5: Regressions output

5.2.1 Coalition-opposition and left-right
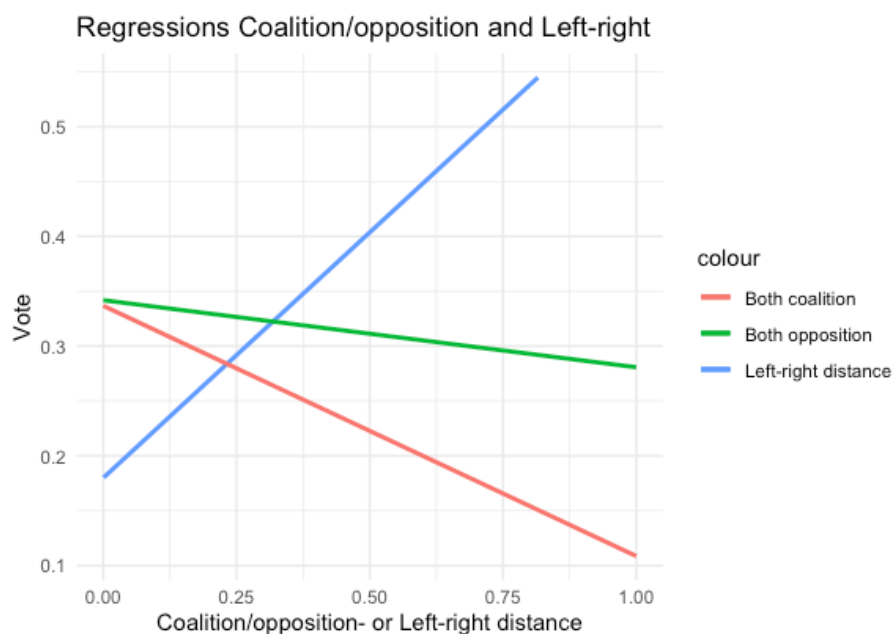
Figure 2: Regression coalition-opposition and left-right distance

The first regression, found in table 5 and figure 2 above, pertains to three hypotheses: the coalition hypothesis, the opposition hypothesis, and the ideology hypothesis. Both coalition- and opposition membership are dividing factors in voting in the Dutch parliament. When two parties are both members of the coalition or opposition, they are more likely to vote the same. This is evidenced by the negative coefficients for these variables. The effect of coalition membership is stronger than that of opposition membership. This suggests that the coalition is more united on votes than the opposition. Both these effects are significant for $p < 0.01$ and are robust to the addition of the control variables to the model. This result indicates that there is a

strong coalition-opposition division in the Dutch parliament. Given these results, the coalition hypothesis and the opposition hypothesis are confirmed.

The second observation from this regression relates to the ideological division in the Dutch parliament. Without adding the control variables, a greater ideological distance between two parties makes them less likely to vote the same. The dividing effect of ideological distance is stronger than that of both parties being members of either the coalition or the opposition. This suggests that the ideological distance between parties is more important than coalition or opposition membership. Once the control variables for vote subject are added, the effect diminishes in size, which is depicted in table 5. This suggests that a part of the effect of ideological distance on parties' voting behaviour is mediated by the distance between parties on the various policy fields that were included in the full regression. The general left-right distance between parties is robust to the addition of the controls for policy fields, however. Given this result, the ideology hypothesis is confirmed.
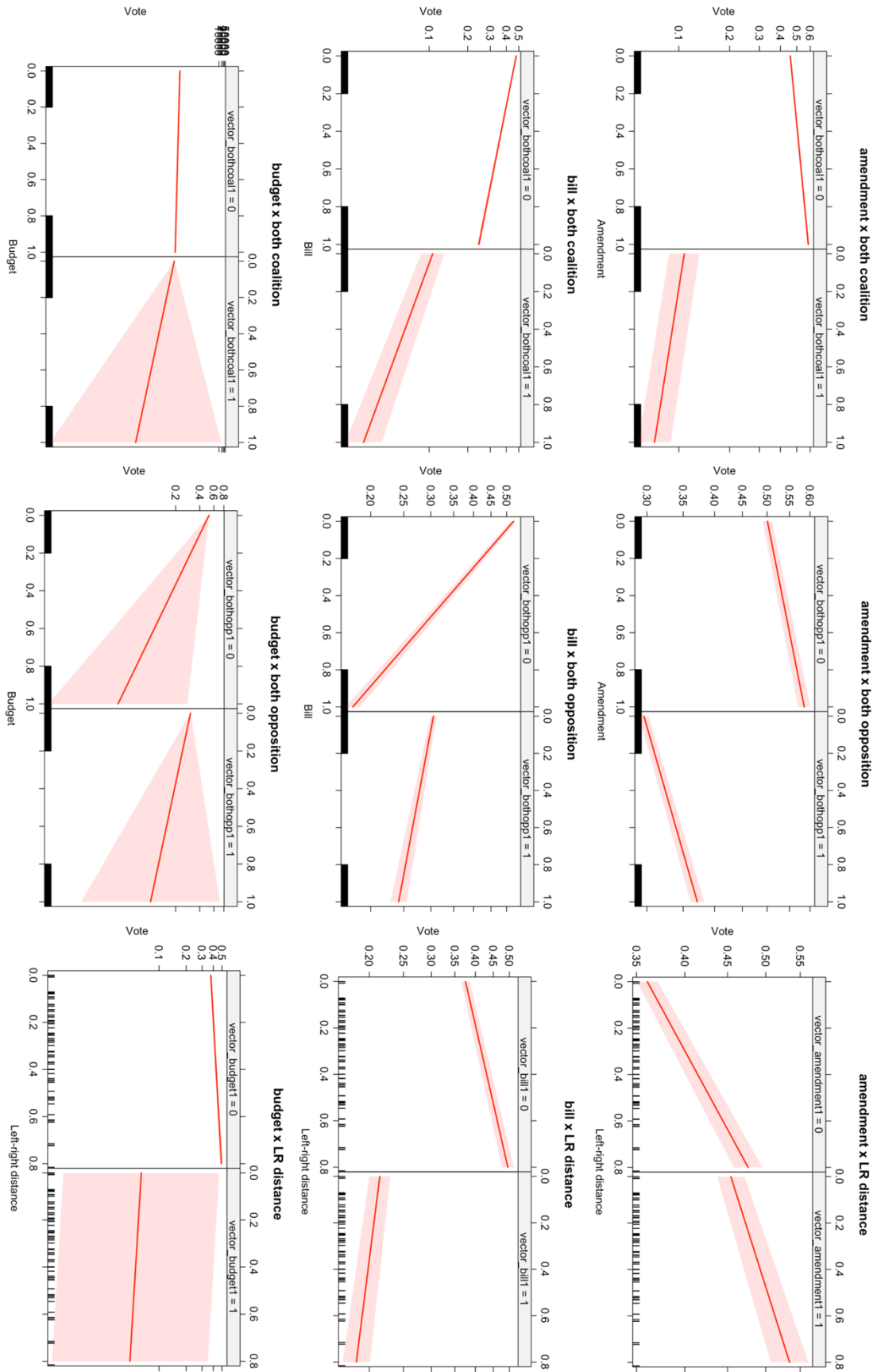
5.2.2 Proposal type

Figure 3: Interactions proposal types

Having analysed the effect coalition or opposition membership and left-right distance have on parliamentary voting behaviour, I will consider the effect of the proposal type on the coalition-opposition and left-right divisions. This section tests the proposal type hypothesis. I have hypothesised that the likelihood parties will vote the same is impacted by the type of vote (amendment, bill, budget, motion). I expect that motions have a coalition-opposition divide, while amendments, bills, and budgets have a left-right division. The full regression results can be found in Table 5. A general observation from this set of regressions is that the proposal type has a statistically significant influence on whether parties will vote the same. The reference category is motions, which is the largest category of proposals. Amendments are more controversial than motions; this is evidenced by the significant positive correlation coefficient. Parties are less likely to vote the same on amendments than on motions. The opposite is the case with bills and budgets. Parties are more inclined to vote the same on a bill or budget. These two observations lead to the conclusion that the vote type has a significant effect on the voting division. Motions and amendments divide the house more than bills and budgets.

To analyse the effect of coalition and opposition status and left-right distance, I have conducted a regression with interaction effects between proposal types and these party characteristics. In analysing the interaction effects, I shall first discuss amendments after which I will consider bills and budgets. The significant interactions between coalition-opposition status and amendments and bills are depicted above. The data suggests that amendments are more divisive than motions. When accounting for coalition membership, the coefficient changes direction. This indicates that, among parties that are both members of the coalition, the likelihood of voting together is larger for amendments than for motions. Parties that are both members of the opposition remain more divided on amendments than on motions. Nevertheless, opposition parties are more likely to vote the same on amendments than parties that are not both members of the opposition. This suggests a coalition-opposition divide for amendments. A larger ideological distance between parties makes parties less likely to vote the same on all proposals. The effect of ideological distance on voting diminishes somewhat among amendments when compared to all other types of votes. These results suggest that amendments are voted on along coalition-opposition lines.

Bills are found to lead to a less divided house than motions. Coalition parties are more likely to vote the same on bills than other parties. Opposition parties show a weaker connection between bills and voting together. While bills are generally less controversial than motions

among all parties, bills are only slightly less likely to yield a division between parties that are both members of the opposition. Coalition parties will generally vote together more for bills, while this correlation is less strong among opposition parties. Bills do not have a left-right divide. Bills are generally less controversial than other votes and parties that have a larger ideological distance are somewhat more likely to vote the same for bills than for motions. There is a significant effect of coalition and opposition membership on the likelihood parties will vote the same for bills. The data does not suggest a left-right division for bills.

For budgets, the coalition is not more or less likely to vote the same than on motions, the interaction effect is insignificant. The effect of opposition membership on the likelihood parties will vote together for motions has a very large confidence interval, suggesting that the effect is not significant. Left-right distance is also insignificant. These results indicate that there is no clear divide to be found among budgets when compared to motions.

Given the findings described above, the proposal type hypothesis is rejected. I have hypothesised that the coalition-opposition divide would be more important for motions than for amendments, bills, and budgets. I have found that the proposal type influences the likelihood parties are to vote the same or differently. Whether parties will both vote the same on a proposal is also dependent on if both parties are members of the coalition or the opposition. Membership of the coalition or opposition is a stronger influence on parties voting together than ideological distance when accounting for the proposal type. Amendments and bills, when compared to motions do not have a left-right ideological division, instead showing a coalition-opposition divide. Coalition parties will be more likely to vote the same, on these proposal types. The theoretical expectation is not confirmed by the results. Instead, the interaction effects suggest that whether two parties are members of coalition or opposition is a stronger predictor than ideology for determining whether parties will vote the same on amendments and bills when compared to motions.
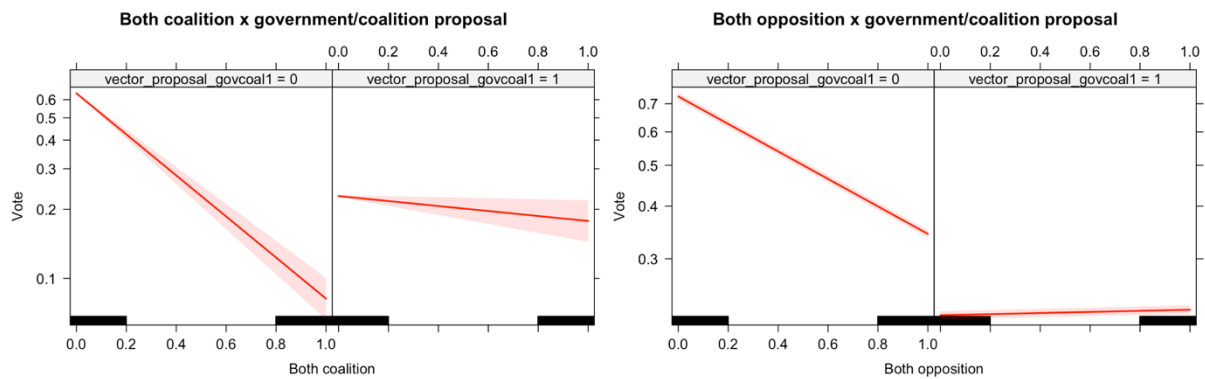
5.2.3 Proposing actor

Figure 4: Interactions proposing actor

The third set of regressions pertains to the effect of the proposing actor on parliamentary voting. I have hypothesised that opposition proposals have a stronger coalition-opposition division than government/coalition proposals. The full regression with interaction effects can be found in table 5. Before analysing the interaction terms, the regression output suggests that, compared to opposition proposals, government and coalition proposals are less divisive. This means that parties are more inclined to vote the same on government- and coalition party proposals than on votes initiated by an opposition party.

There are significant interactions between government/coalition proposals and the likelihood parties will vote together based on their coalition or opposition membership. Government/coalition proposals are less divisive both among the coalition and the opposition. Opposition proposals do show a clear coalition-opposition divide. Both the coalition and the opposition are more inclined to vote the same on proposals from the opposition. Given this result, it is evident that there is a weak coalition-opposition divide among coalition/government proposals. The coalition-opposition divide is far stronger among opposition proposals. The proposing actor hypothesis stated that opposition proposals would have a stronger coalition-opposition divide than government/coalition proposals. Given the data analysis, this hypothesis is accepted. Opposition proposals show a stronger division between the coalition and opposition than government/coalition proposals.
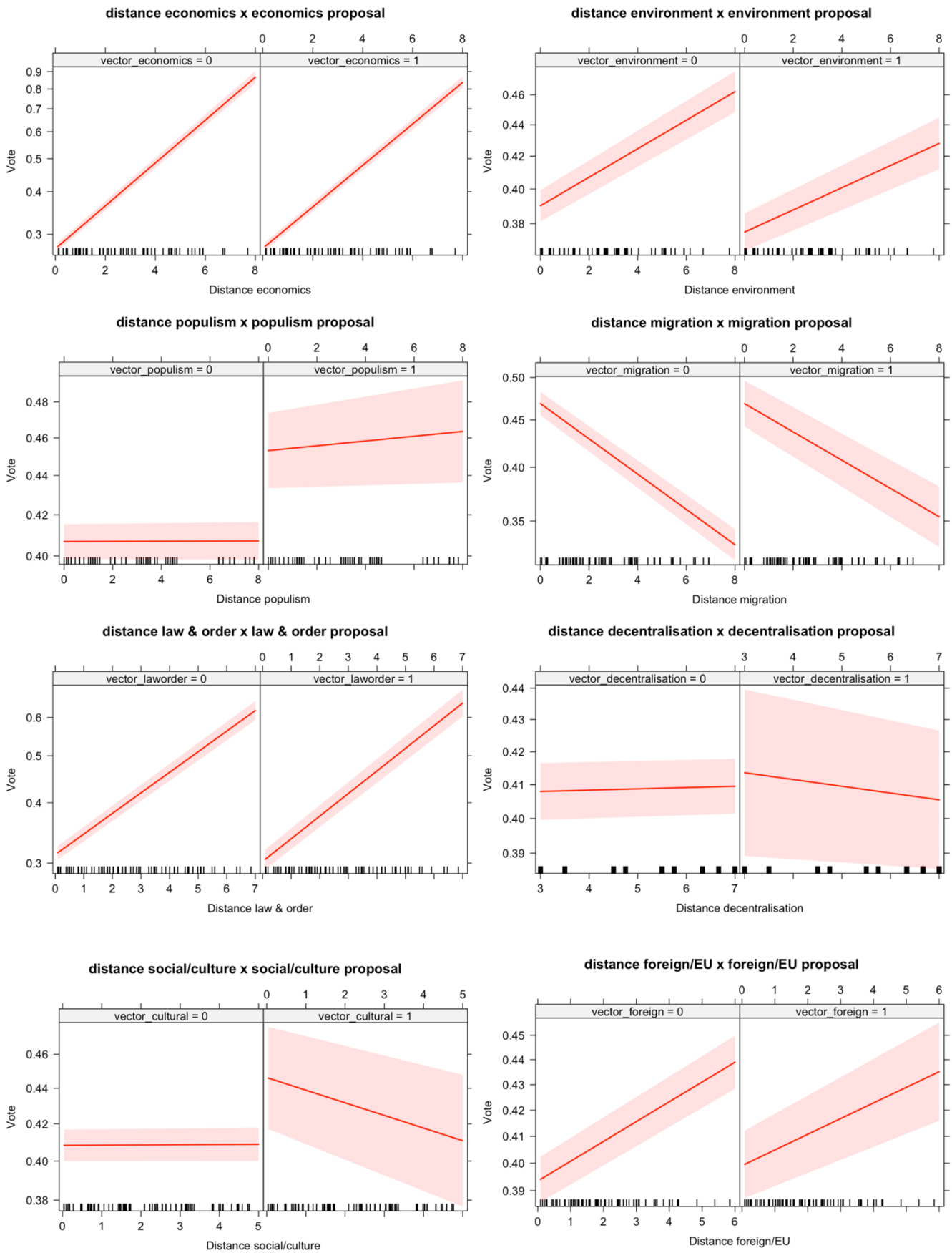
5.2.4 Policy fields

Figure 4: interactions policy fields

I have hypothesised that an increase in ideological distance on a specific policy field decreases the likelihood parties will vote together on a vote pertaining to said policy field. I have first investigated whether there was a significant correlation between any of the policy fields and the proposing actor. The regression results can be found in Appendix 8.2. I found that proposals on migration are somewhat more likely to be proposed by the government, at a 10% significance level. The fourth set of regressions tests this hypothesis. The full regression results can be found in table 5 and depictions of the interaction effects are presented in figure 4 above. The sample size declines somewhat with the regressions that include policy fields. This is because there was no data for the Freedom Party (PVV) on their environmental stance and no data for the Reformed Party (SGP) on their stances regarding social, and lifestyle. Before testing this hypothesis, the results warrant some general observations. There are only three out of eight policy fields that yield a different degree of divisiveness when compared to the reference category education. Environment proposals are less divisive, while proposals related to populism and social/cultural matters divide the house more than the reference category. Ideological distance by policy field is also limited in its divisiveness among parties. Parties that are ideologically distant on economics, environment, migration, law and order, and foreign affairs will vote together less often on all votes. Populism, decentralisation, and social/cultural distance between parties does not lead parties to vote the same way less often.

Subsequently, in testing the hypothesis, the effect of ideological distance by policy field on proposals pertaining to said policy field is considered. Only two of these interactions yield a significant result. Parties that disagree on economics or environment are slightly more likely to vote differently on proposals that pertain to either of those policy fields. The effects are significant at the 10% level, which is a limited degree of statistical significance. From the interaction graphs, as presented in the appendix, some of the coefficients change in slope or direction. Yet, none of these are significant.

When accounting for ideological distances by policy field, the strength of the effect of general left-right ideological distance diminishes in size but remains significant. This suggests that at least a part of the effect of ideological distance on voting behaviour is mediated by the policy field ideological distance between parties. The effects of coalition-opposition status are generally unaffected. Given the very limited effect of ideological distance on proposals pertaining to said policy field, the proposal subject hypothesis is rejected. Parties' ideological distance measured by policy field is generally not a relevant predictor for whether parties will

vote the same or differently on said policy field. Coalition-opposition status of parties remain relevant predictors of voting behaviour when accounting for policy field ideological distance.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

6.1 Summary of the findings

This study has set out to investigate the divisions that exist in parliamentary voting behaviour in the Netherlands. I have used a triadic model to ascertain the influence of the proposal type, proposing actor, and proposal subject on the coalition-opposition and left-right divisions that exist in parliamentary voting. This study has contributed to the literature on parliamentary voting behaviour by using the triadic method on a dataset that included an exhaustive dataset including all recorded votes for the 2017-2021 parliamentary period. This methodological choice has allowed for a more complete analysis of parliamentary voting beyond the sample reduction methods that are commonly used (Hix, 2001; Hix & Noury, 2016), which do not allow for the distinction of nuances patterns in the data (Van der Veer, 2018). This study's inclusion of all parliamentary votes improves the internal validity of the results. Previous studies generally only include a sample of roll-call votes (e.g., Aldrich et al., 2017; Clausen & Holmberg, 1977; Crespin & Rohde, 2010; Hix & Jun, 2009; Hix & Noury, 2016; Landi & Pelizzo, 2013; Roberts et al., 2016), which runs the risk of sampling bias.

In line with previous studies (Hix & Noury, 2016; Otjes & Louwerse., 2014; Tuttnauer, 2014), this study has found that both a coalition-opposition and a left-right division exist in parliamentary voting. Not accounting for the control variables, this study finds the ideological divide to be stronger than the divide between coalition and opposition. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the coalition is more united than the opposition in their voting behaviour. This study has further investigated the factors that influence the coalition-opposition and left-right divisions in parliamentary voting behaviour. The analysis shows that differences in voting divisions between proposal types is profound. Parties are less likely to vote the same on amendments and motions than on bills and budgets. Coalition parties are more united on amendments than they are on motions. The opposition is not more united on amendments than on motions. The data does not show a left-right division with votes on amendments. Instead, the effect of ideological distance on voting is smaller on amendments than on motions. This suggests that amendments divide the house along coalition-opposition lines. The data shows a similar story for bills. The coalition votes together on bills more than on motions and the opposition is not more united on bills than on motions. Bills also do not have a left-right

division. This, again, indicates a coalition-opposition divide for bills. For budgets, the analysis does not yield any strong effects. There is no clear division found for votes on budgets. These findings lead to the rejection of the vote type hypothesis. Amendments and budgets have a coalition-opposition divide, while no clear divide was found for budgets. This goes against the hypothesised effect of left-right distance for these proposal types.

A second finding pertains to the proposing actor of votes. The analysis shows that the coalition tends to be more united on opposition proposals, while the opposition is more united on proposals from the government. Furthermore, the interaction effects suggest that there is a stronger coalition-opposition divide among opposition proposals than on votes initiated by the government. This is in line with the proposing actor hypothesis, which stated that opposition proposals would have a stronger coalition-opposition divide than government/coalition proposals.

Thirdly, the proposal subject and ideological distance specifically related to said policy field. I have hypothesised that a greater ideological distance between parties on each policy field would lead parties to vote together less often on proposals related to said policy field. This hypothesis is not confirmed by the data. Only for proposals on economics and environments does ideological distance impact how likely parties are to vote the same. Ideological distance on any other policy field does not lead to parties being more likely to vote differently on votes related to said policy field.

6.2 Limitations

This study has several important limitations that must be disclosed. These are related to the independence of observations, issues when it comes to measurement, model specification, and the time period of the data included. Firstly, issues with independence of observations. Given the fact that this study pertains to voting behaviour of political parties, it is important to bear in mind that the individual observations are not independent of one another. Outcomes of previous votes will inevitably impact the voting decisions of parties on future proposals. A second limitation is the measurement of ideological distance and the categorisation of votes into policy fields. It is likely that the variables chosen from CHES do not cover the full extent of ideological positioning of parties pertaining to each of the policy fields included. The categorisation of votes into nine policy fields may also be imprecise. It goes without saying that various other approaches to categorisation of votes based on subject are possible. Some of

the ideological metrics by policy field are also highly correlated with one another. Even though there is no perfect collinearity and therefore no violation of the OLS assumptions, these strong correlations may make the findings presented in this study less reliable. Future studies with different categorisations and metrics of ideological distance by policy field may find interaction effects that are different from this study due to other choices in categorisation.

A multilevel model could have accounted for the effects if time periods, the proximity of elections, and how controversial an individual vote was. This can be done by adding a random intercept to the models. This study has therefore limited itself to analysing voting behaviour on the level of individual votes, leaving the possibility of the nesting of data on different levels than the individual vote aside. A fourth and final limitation of this study is the fact that a portion of the votes included in the analysis was held during the Covid-19 pandemic. National crises are found to increase public support for incumbent governments. This is also found to be the case for the Covid-19 pandemic (Johansson et al., 2021; Kritzinger et al., 2021; Nielsen & Lindvall, 2021). This study has not accounted for the potential effect of the rally-around-the-flag effect caused by the pandemic. Some other effects that may be beneficial for further specification of the model are a distinction between time periods in which there is a caretaker government and whether the government holds a majority in the upper house (Hohendorf et al., 2021).

6.3 Implications

The findings from this study have implications on future research on parliamentary voting behaviour. This study has found that both a coalition-opposition and a left-right division is present in parliamentary behaviour in the Dutch parliament. This study further finds that the proposal subject and proposing actor have a relevant influence on whether parties will vote the same or differently. This implies that theorisation on parliamentary behaviour should consider both party-level factors, such as coalition or opposition membership and ideology, but also vote-specific information such as the proposing actor and proposal type. This study shows that patterns of parliamentary behaviour are influenced by a diverse set of factors. To further develop theories on what conditions and institutional factors impact parliamentary voting divisions, scholars should further theorise on the impact vote characteristics have on the division between coalition and opposition that comes about in parliamentary voting. A beneficial addition to the literature would be comparisons between various institutional environments. For instance, Hohendorf et al. (2021) study the effect of bicameralism and

divided government on voting divisions. Comparing between time periods and between countries would be a beneficial addition to further test the hypotheses of this study. As mentioned before, accounting for caretaker governments and the general level of controversy of votes can be useful in further exploring the divisions in parliamentary voting. Comparative models between countries and over time is also a welcome extension to existing research. Such studies will lend greater external validity than this study has been able to, given that this study has only investigated one case during one parliamentary sitting period.

This study also has implications for political parties, policymakers, and the public. Most importantly, parties can use the findings of this study on the influence of proposal types and proposing actors on voting divisions as a tool in their efforts to create both ad hoc and structural coalitions for parliamentary proposals. Given that the Netherlands has seen a record high 8.5 effective parties in its parliament (Otjes & Voerman, 2022) by the time of the general elections in 2021, the party landscape is complex. Forming coalitions based on ideological proximity between coalition and opposition may be necessary. As such, knowledge about what influences parties' voting behaviour may be useful in strategic decisions of governments and political parties. For parties and individual politicians, having knowledge on what proposals are likely to be controversial between ideological blocks and between the coalition and opposition may be beneficial in the decisions such actors make in negotiating and composing coalitions.

This study has investigated the divisions in parliamentary voting between coalition and opposition and between the left and right. It has found that the proposal type and proposing actor have an impact on the strength of the coalition-opposition division. The ideological distance between parties on specific policy fields was not found to be a relevant influence on voting divisions. The data analysis suggests that ideology is a stronger predictor of whether parties will vote the same or differently than coalition or opposition status. The proposal type and proposing actor do, however, influence the coalition-opposition divide more than the divide between left and right. By using a triadic method, this study has made a methodological- and empirical contribution to research on parliamentary voting behaviour, investigating the 2017-2021 parliamentary sitting period in the Dutch Parliament.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Policy categories

Policy category	Distance measurement CHES	Subcategories	Subcategories English
Education	N/A	Basisonderwijs, Beroepsonderwijs, Cultuur, Hoger onderwijs, Kunst, Media, Onderzoek en wetenschap, Overige vormen van,onderwijs, Sport, Voortgezet onderwijs	Primary education, Vocational education, Culture, Higher education, Art, Media, Research and science, Other forms of education, Sports, Secondary education
Economics	lrecon	Arbeidsomstandigheden, Begroting, Belasting, Financieel toezicht, Geneesmiddelen en medische hulpmiddelen, Gezondheidsrisico's, Huren en verhuren, ICT, Industrie, Inkomensbeleid, Jongeren, Kopen en verkopen, Levensloop, Markttoezicht, Nabestaanden, Ondernemen, Ouderen, Recreatie, Toerisme, Verzekeringen, Voeding, Werkgelegenheid, Werkloosheid, Ziekte en arbeidsongeschiktheid, Ziekten en behandelingen	Working conditions, Budget, Taxation, Financial supervision, Medicines and medical devices, Health risks, Renting and letting, ICT, Industry, Income policy, Young people, Buying and selling, Life course, Market supervision, Surviving relatives, Entrepreneurship, The elderly, Recreation, Tourism, Insurance, Nutrition, Employment, Unemployment, Illness and disability, Diseases and treatments
Environment	environment	Afval, Bodem, Bouwen en verbouwen, Bouwnijverheid, Dieren, Energie, Geluid, Lucht, Luchtvaart, Natuur- en landschapsbeheer, Netwerken, Planten, Ruimtelijke ordening, Spoor, Stoffen, Transport, Voedselkwaliteit, Water, Waterkeringen en waterbeheer, Weg	Waste, Soil, Building and renovation, Construction industry, Animals, Energy, Sound, Air, Aviation, Nature and landscape management, Networks, Plants, Spatial planning, Rail, Substances, Transport, Food quality, Water, Flood defenses and water management, Road
Populism	people_vs_elite	De Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba, Parlement, Staatsrecht	The Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, Parliament, Constitutional Law
Migration	Immigrate_policy	Immigratie, Integratie, Nederlanderschap, Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Tijdelijk verblijf	Immigration, Integration, Dutch citizenship, Development cooperation, Temporary residence
Law & order	civlib_laworder	Criminaliteit, Politie, brandweer en hulpdiensten, Rampen, Rechtspraak, Staatsveiligheid, Strafrecht, Terrorisme	Crime, Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Disasters, Judiciary, State Security, Criminal Law, Terrorism
Decentralisation	decentralisation	Bestuursrecht, Gemeenten, Provincies, Rijksoverheid	Administrative law, Municipalities, Provinces, National Government
Cultural/social	sociallifestyle	Burgerlijk recht, Ethiek, Gezin en kinderen, Religie	Civil law, Ethics, Family and children, Religion
Foreign/EU	eu_position	Defensie, Europese zaken, Handel, Internationale samenwerking, Militaire missies	Defence, European affairs, Trade, International cooperation, Military missions

8.2 Logistic regression proposing actor and policy fields

Dependent variable:	
Government/coalition proposal	
Education	-0.020
	(0.074)
Econonomics	0.042
	(0.048)
Environment	0.036
	(0.050)
Populism	0.071
	(0.093)
Immigration	**0.190***
	(0.103)
Law order	0.077
	(0.076)
Decentralisation	-0.034
	(0.120)
Cultural/social	0.111
	(0.129)
Foreign/EU	0.022
	(0.057)
Constant	**-0.894*****
	(0.049)
Observations	17,938
Log Likelihood	-10,953.670
Akaike Inf. Crit.	21,927.340
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01