CONVERGENCE AND PERSISTENCE OF LEFT-RIGHT POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS 1978-1995

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ABSTRACT

Theory: Two theories about trends in left-right political orientations are juxtaposed: the persistence theory claiming that left-right orientations are highly resistant to change versus the irrelevance theory anticipating a move of mass publics towards the center of the left-right continuum. *Hypotheses*: The left-right ideological differences between the Dutch political parties have declined since the early 1980s. We therefore assume that the left-right political self-placements of the Dutch electorate have converged to the center position over time. *Methods:* Descriptive statistics and fractionally integrated time series (ARFIMA) models were used to analyze data from 921 independent national Dutch surveys conducted between 1978 and 1995. *Results:* The overtime distributions of left-right self-placement exhibit a depopulation of the left and right poles as people slowly gravitate to the center position. The aggregate orientations of religious and party affiliates also reveal a move to the common mid-point. Fractionally integrated time series models support the convergence thesis with right-most and left-most party affiliates converging most rapidly. However, the convergence we find may be part of a nonperiodic wave-like pattern were periods of convergence are alternated by periods of divergence. Future political conflicts may therefore again result in left-right political divergence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The data were originally collected by The Netherlands Institute of Public Opinion (NIPO INC.), the Dutch brand of Gallup International, and were made available by courtesy of the Steinmetz Archive in Amsterdam. None of these parties bears any responsibility for the analyses and interpretations presented here. The pooled data file compiled for this study and the corresponding codebook by Eisinga and Felling (1992*)* are distributed by the Archive under study number P1089. The ARFIMA models were run using OX (Doornik 1996) and the ARFIMA package by Doornik and Ooms (1997). Program, package, and data needed to replicate the time series analyses may (soon) be obtained by the internet: http://www.eur.nl/few/ei/faculty/ooms. The order of the author's names is alphabetic.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is little question that the dissolution of the USSR and the implosion of 'real existing socialism' in Eastern Europe have contributed to weakening the Marxist and non-Marxist socialist ideologies and their conservative counterpoise throughout the world. The nineteenth-century visions, once powerful resources of political thought and imagination, have exhausted their hold among intellectuals and have lost much of their truth and their power to persuade the general publics in both East and West.

This deeply eroded commitment raises the question whether the traditional division between left and right in Western Europe is also losing its popular appeal and is becoming increasingly meaningless. Most political scientists argue that it would be a mistake to assume that left-right ideology is becoming less salient (e.g., Inglehart and Klingemann 1976; Inglehart 1984; 1985; Fuchs and Klingemann 1989; Mair 1989; Ascher 1996). While their meaning and social basis have changed over time, left and right themselves are neither death nor dying. Ideological orientations, expressed in the self-identification with left or right (or center), are highly resistant to change and act as a fundamental force for continuity. Some scholars, in contrast, claim that the left-right split has had its day. De Benoist (1995), for example, argues that in France an increasing number of people consider the notions of left and right to be outdated and no longer descriptive of both the divisions between parties and their ideological self-description. This blurring of the distinction between left and right has resulted in a move of the French electorate toward the center of the ideological spectrum.

These rival views - continuity of the left-right divide versus move to the center - have long been topic of intense interest to political scientists. Curiously, however, little has been done in the way of rigorous empirical analysis and therefore concrete evidence for either of the two is quite scanty. To be sure, there have been some attempts to investigate trends in left-right orientations in West European mass publics (Lewis-Beck 1984; Converse and Pierce 1986; Van Deth 1991; Van Deth and Janssen 1994, Knutsen 1996). All studies, except Knutsen (1996), found no evidence they considered clearly to indicate ideological convergence or deideologization. In his elaborate study, Knutsen (1996) analyzed longitudinal changes in left-right self-placement over time in eight EC countries in the 1973-1992 period. He found that in many countries identification with the right has declined over time and that there has been a substantial shift in orientation in the European Community towards the center of the left-right continuum. Even Knutsen (1996), however, could use only a handful of cross sectional samples and none of the studies we are familiar with has conducted a rigorous empirical test of the convergence thesis. We therefore lack the kind of evidence that would permit strong inference. This paper draws upon 921 independent national Dutch surveys conducted between 1978 and

1995 to track trends in left-right self-placement in the Netherlands. We will examine whether the Dutch voting age population in general and religious and party affiliates in particular have moved towards the center of the left-right continuum, whether the rates of change have been equivalent for all sets of party affiliates, and whether the changes in collective opinion are either permanent or transient.

In so doing, we contribute to ongoing debates over the continued relevance of the left-right division in the mass publics of modern democracies. If Inglehart’s and Klingemann’s (1976, 272) proposition is true that abstract dimensions of political competition such as left-right and liberal-conservative (its functional equivalent in the US) "deserve high priority among the variables to be used for the study of long-term political change", then our data provide an unusual opportunity to address the durability of ideological self-identification. We will first describe the two views about the future of left and right and derive our hypothesis. Next, we examine the issue of convergence and persistence by common data analysis and by applying fractionally integrated time series (ARFIMA) models to the data. We close with a discussion of the political ramifications of the observed changes in left-right self-identification.

2. PERSISTENCE, IRRELEVANCE, AND CONVERGENCE

Left-right ideology in Europe was institutionalized in the context of the formation of traditional lines of conflict at the time of mass electoral mobilization. It is therefore largely the result of the basic political conflicts in society and how political parties have responded to these conflicts, i.e., their historical political identities (Fuchs and Klingemann 1989). While the precise meaning of left and right may vary somewhat, through the years and from one setting to another depending on the domains of conflict in society, there is consensus among political scientists that its content is strongly linked to classic-economic issues such as ownership of the means of production, distribution of income, and relative merits of the private versus the public sector. The conventional interpretation is that the left pole is associated with support for government control of the economy and policies that reduce economic inequality across social groups. The right pole is linked to support for a free market, privatization of industry, and policies that preserve economic inequality (e.g., Lipset *et al.* 1954; Sani and Sartori 1983; Inglehart 1984; 1985; Van Deth and Janssen 1994). In addition to class-based conflicts the left-right dimension in some European countries, including the Netherlands, also reflects the traditional religious-nonreligious cleavage. Because the content of left and right is determined by the nature of political conflict in society, changes in the basic conflict structure are likely to have ramifications for the salience of left and right as well. There are in general two contending theories about trends in left-right self-identifications. They are referred to in this paper as the ‘persistence’ and the ‘irrelevance’ theory.[1]

Persistence of left and right

In a number of influential publications, Inglehart (1984; 1990; Inglehart and Klingemann 1976) has argued that one's sense of belonging to the left or the right reflects both party affiliation and ideological issue preferences, with the former being somewhat more important in Europe than the latter. In the public mind political parties are intimately linked with specific points on the left-right continuum and some people identify themselves as left (or center or right) because that is where the party they support is conventionally located. This perception may reflect an accurate assessment of their current position on important political issues but it may also be a conventional stereotype based on their historical political identity. The social democratic parties in Europe, for example, have forsworn their Marxist heritage and many conservative parties have assimilated neo-liberal economic values. However, even when parties change their position, left-right self-descriptions, reinforced by party ties and linkages with labor unions and churches, are not readily altered because of the strong traditional meanings attached to left and right.

Whereas for some people left-right self-placement is thus a surrogate for party identification with much the same inertia, for other people it reflects their value orientations and preferences on key current issues. Now the organizing principles of left and right are remarkable for their capacity to endure and to encompass a variety of different political concerns. Moreover, still according to Inglehart (1990), the concepts are sufficiently flexible and extensive that as new issues arise, they can usually be fitted into the left-right framework. As indicated above, in some European countries the traditional class cleavage has been complemented by the 'pre-industrial' religious cleavage (Fuchs and Klingemann 1989; Knutsen 1995; 1996). These two cleavages have been part of the political scene for many decades and they have both been assimilated into the overarching left-right narrative. Left and right, so it is argued, have also accommodated the 'new politics' concerns (e.g., those relating to gender rights, ecology, and quality of life) that reflect a materialist versus postmaterialist cleavage

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[1] The concepts are taken from Kitschelt and Hellemans (1990) who have sketched four theories about the changing meaning of the left-right vocabulary: left and right lose their political meaning (irrelevance theory), they preserve their traditional economic meaning (persistence theory), they transform their meaning from class-based economic to valued-based noneconomic (transformation theory), or they merge old and new meanings in a multidimensional ideology (pluralisation theory) (see also Knutsen 1995; 1996). However, Kitschelt and Hellemans (1990, 214) themselves refer to the latter three as “persistence theories”. Obviously, the three theories all argue that left-right ideology remains important and meaningful among mass publics.

(Inglehart 1984; 1987; 1990; Inglehart and Rabier 1986; Mair 1989). What is more, now that rising levels of economic development made traditional class-based conflicts become less intense in advanced industrial society, left and right increasingly connote this new axis of materialist/postmaterialist polarization.

Hence, the persistence theory claims that the left-right dichotomy has been able to incorporate many important conflict domains, pitting proletariat against bourgeoisie, religious against nonreligious, and materialists against postmaterialists. As new issues arise, they will be coded as being of the left or the right, and political party identities and individual self-identities will be formed in consequence. This “plasticity” (Smith 1989), “absorption capacity” (Mair 1989), or “absorptive power” (Knutsen 1995; 1996) explains why, for all the drastic political changes experienced in recent years, left and right remain the major organizing principles in modern West European politics and continue to enjoy a large degree of popular resonance.

Irrelevance of left and right

The irrelevance theory, in contrast, advanced by De Benoist (1995) among others, holds that we are witnessing a progressive disappearance of the main values of left and right and that, consequently, Western mass publics are moving to the center of the left-right ideological spectrum. This convergence is taken to be the result of both the disillusion brought about by the breakdown of the USSR and the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the socioeconomic changes in the industrialized West. The fall of East European communism deprived the right-wing parties in the West of one of their chief props - anti-communism - which has focused their foreign and domestic policy for many decades. It also provided ammunition for the advocates of a free-market economy to discredit national planning and government intervention in the economy. Closely linked is the pragmatization of the left-wing parties in the West. While the right has lost its enemy - communism - and can no longer mobilize its voters by denouncing the 'evil empire', the left, at least most parts of it, has chosen to collaborate with its erstwhile enemy - capitalism - and can no longer rally its voters by proposing to change society. The left-wing parties seem increasingly unable to generate a politics that would move society in a progressive direction. Not only has the left in large part come to terms with the right on such issues as abortion, euthanasia, unemployment and even social welfare, as soon as they come to power left and right seem increasingly inclined to adopt the same policies.

The main reason for the blurring of the distinction between left and right, according to De Benoist (1995), is that the major debates which for decades have characterized the dichotomy are essentially over. One of these debates was concerned with religion - the religious concept of social order and justice versus the secular one. For some time this religious cleavage came to be integrated into the left-right split with the religious or pro-church side being catalogued on the right. Although certain political parties still have explicit religious ties, religious controversies no longer structure policy alternatives and no longer form the basis of interparty policy competition. The other debate was obviously concerned with the social question. The left identified itself with the rejection of free-market economics and advocated a planned economy. This was to last for decades before collapsing under the joined impact of the exhaustion of the welfare state and the implosion of 'real socialism', when the non-communist left became increasingly reformist. In a short period of time, many issues over which elections were fought have ceased to evoke passion and have even disappeared from the scene. The left-wing parties, so it is argued, are running out steam because they have essentially realized their program (or because parts of it have been realized by others). The left advocated redistribution of wealth and well-being for all and through shocks and crises modern industrial democracy has achieved all that.

Hence, the irrelevance theory claims that the great issues on which left and right-wing parties mobilized their voters have been more or less settled. Moreover, parties seem increasingly inclined to adopt a centrist orientation on traditional left-right issues. The result is that the traditional left-right ideology has lost its popular appeal among mass publics, producing a left-right convergence in the electorate.

Convergence of left and right in the Netherlands

The two views may be summarized as follows. The persistence theory argues that although the meaning and social basis of left and right have transformed over time, the concepts themselves are still alive and well. It therefore predicts that left-right placements have a high degree of stability over time. The irrelevance theory, on the other hand, claims that left and right political parties increasingly define themselves closer to the center. This blurring of the distinction between parties has resulted in a move of the general public toward the center position on the left-right continuum.

We have three arguments to hypothesize that left-right orientations in the Netherlands have indeed migrated centerwards over time. They all focus on changes in the two components of left-right ideological commitment, i.e., party affiliation and issue attitudes. The first one, related to the issue component, is that not all Dutch people attach the same meaning to the terms left and right. Obviously, for many people left and right simply reflect the party they support. However, to some extent, the left-right dimension also reflects their ideological issue preferences. As Irwin and Dittrich (1984) have noted, whereas most Dutch people utilize a socioeconomic definition of left and right, some refer to this dimension in terms of the traditional religious-nonreligious conflict. As the percentage of the population employing a religious cleavage interpretation is decreasing, due to secularization, left-right self-placements, especially those on the right, are likely to converge to the center position. Our second argument, also related to the issue component, is that the Dutch population has become more indifferent to classic-economic and other political issues underlying left-right polarization over the past two decades.

As shown in Table 1, the percentages of the Dutch who take extreme positions on issues such as redistribution of incomes and reduction of inequality have declined over time. Hence the Dutch are increasingly inclined to adopt a moderate position on key issues of the left. Also note that there is a trend towards decreasing polarization on the basis of materialist/postmaterialist values. Now if the left-right scale echoes much of the peoples' feelings toward significant political issues, then it seems plausible to assume that they, notably those on the left, are increasingly inclined to select a centrist position on the left-right scale. Our third and most important argument, related to the partisan component of left-right self-placement, is that during the last 15 years or so the major Dutch political parties have moved to the center on major social issues. They increasingly fail to identify themselves as left or right and to present the electorate with a coherent set of opposing programs and drastically different alternatives. In the 1960s and 1970s, much of the parties' political propaganda and campaign rhetoric was cast in terms of a left-right dimension that was tacitly assumed to be the main axis of conflict. The social democratic party in particular adopted a hard line *vis-à-vis* potential coalition parties. It characterized itself as a 'party in action' and advocated a 'strategy of polarization' to offer voters a genuine political choice. However, as several election program studies (Michels 1993; Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge 1994; Pennings and Keman 1994) have shown, from 1981 onwards the established political parties grew consistently closer to each other in ideological terms. Whereas the right-of-center Christian democratic party (*CDA)* wandered about ideologically in the center ground, the left-right programmatic differences between the left-wing social democratic party (*PVDA)* and the right-wing liberal party (*VVD)* have declined substantially since the early 1980s. A notable manifestation of this ideological convergence was the formation of the so-called 'purple cabinet' in 1994, the first coalition government of social democrats and right-wing liberals (and center-liberals: *D66*) since 1952 and an highly inconceivable option in the intervening period of political polarization.

There are at least three explanations for this left-right convergence of parties. First, the need to build electoral coalitions and coalition governments forced the major Dutch political parties to adopt a rather moderate attitude in their election manifestos (Dittrich 1987). Second, the internationalization of the Dutch economy and the establishment of common European policies and collective actions within the European Economic Community (e.g., the European Monetary System) substantially reduced the opportunity for interparty policy conflicts. Third, the political parties discovered the electoral utility of moving to the center in terms of ideology. They de-emphasized their social class or denominational clientele in favor of recruiting voters among the population at large and the vital center in particular. The new noneconomic issues did not revive partisan conflict either. The established parties have thus far tended either to sidestep these issues or to agree with each other on how to deal with them, and they had good electoral reasons for continuing that tendency. The result of this deideologization has been that the Dutch find it increasingly difficult to see any appreciable differences between the socioeconomic policy followed by the left and that adopted by the right. This has even led, as Koole (1993) has noted, to complaints about an alleged 'one-party state', e.g., by the Dutch historian Oerlemans. Although this may be an exaggeration, partisan programmatic differences today are obviously smaller than they were in the late 1970s and the last decade and a half in retrospect has clearly been an era of ideological convergence between parties. To be sure, this deideologization is part of a dynamic process since World War II of relatively modest but stable differences between parties (1950s), divergence (1960s and 1970s), and convergence (1980s and 1990s).

It seems very reasonable to hypothesize that as a result of the left-right convergence in the identities of parties the ideological self-identifications of the Dutch population have also converged to the center position over time. This is not to suggest, of course, that people must wait for parties to do the moving. Parties accommodate to the evolution of peoples' aspiration and the needs of new times. However, left-right ideological attachments provide an overall orientation towards parties and changes in partisan ideologies and programmatic images might therefore gradually reshape the mass public's outlook. Knutsen (1996) has refered to this explanation of convergence as the 'centrist location of parties and voters' theory. He has argued that parties today have an increasingly centrist orientation on traditional left-right issues and that voters have 'followed their parties' in their political orientation, the result being that voters today locate themselves closer to each other than before. To test this convergence thesis, we will examine whether the Dutch population in general has moved towards the center of the left-right continuum. Self-placement on a left-right ideological scale reflects both an issue cleavage and a partisan component. Unfortunately, we have neither information on the respondent's social class nor on their attitudes towards (post-)materialist issues.[2] However, we do have data on their religious affiliation and religion, despite secularization, is still an important cleavage in Dutch politics. We will examine whether religious affiliates have become more alike in their left-right political orientation over time. With respect to the partisan component, we will investigate whether left and right party affiliates have moved from different positions on the

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[2] For those who would use income or education as a proxy for social class position, our data show hardly any differences between the average left-right self-placements of low, medium, and high income groups (each comprising approximately a third of the sample) for all weeks since 1978 and thus no convergence over time either. The same holds for lower and higher educated (measured by the age the respondent finished education).

continuum toward the common mid-point. We will also analyze the degree of persistence in the aggregate series of party affiliates. Abstract principles like left-right (and liberal-conservative) are generally seen as a means for citizens to orient themselves in a varied and quickly changing political environment (Inglehart 1984; Fuchs and Klingemann 1989; Knutsen 1996). They not only serve the function of organizing and simplifying a complex political reality but they also serve as a sort of ‘psychological anchor’ or ‘standing decision’ that provides a relatively persistent orientation towards issues and parties.

3. DATA

The data were taken from the NIPO Inc.'s Omnibus Survey, a weekly survey based on personal interviews of a random probability sample of the Dutch voting age population (age 18 and over) residing in private households, that has been running with a relatively fixed design since the early 1950s. In addition to topics that are periodically rotated into the surveys or included on an occasional basis, the surveys contain a series of standardized questionnaire items. These items include, among others, the respondents' left-right self-placement, political party affiliation, and religious affiliation. We have extracted the 'face-sheet' characteristics from all original surveys and pooled them into a single file. A detailed guide to this massive data base can be found in the documentation by Eisinga and Felling (1992).[3] Left-right self-placement has been included in the surveys permanently as of the first week of 1978.[4] We therefore had to restrict the analysis to the 921 weekly surveys - with a total of 978,413 respondents - conducted between week 1 of 1978 and week 52 of 1995.

Left-right ideological position was measured by the respondent's self-placement on a seven-point scale with end points labeled 'left' (1) and 'right' (7) respectively.[5] To obtain a measure for religious affiliation, the surveys asked respondents to indicate which religious denomination they considered themselves members of. We labeled their affiliation: CALV

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[3] The codebook, with full documentation of survey design, variables, question wordings, data points, sample sizes, etc., and the corresponding data tape have been submitted to the Steinmetz Archive in Amsterdam (study number P1089). The code book is also available from the first author for the cost of duplication and shipping.

[4] Of the (18x52=) 936 potential week surveys for the period in question, minor calendar variations aside, the following fifteen surveys were missing (last two digits of year followed by week number): 78.52, 79.01, 79.40, 79.52, 80.01, 81.01, 82.52, 83.08, 83.31, 84.52, 85.52, 87.01, 89.52, 90.52, and 92.01.

[5] Following the custom in Western European surveys, respondents were asked to place themselves on an ideological scale running from left to right. The question, repeated in the same form in every survey, asked [after a scale with seven boxes was handed over to the respondent]: "Here are seven boxes between the words left and right. Please indicate on this scale how left, right, or in between your own political attitudes are. The numbers in the boxes have no meaning. Which box should I note for your political attitude?"

(Calvinist), CATH (Catholic), DREF (Dutch Reformed), NOAF (no affiliation), and other. The relative frequencies for all surveys pooled were 8%, 33%, 18%, 36%, and 5%, respectively. To measure political party affiliation, the surveys asked respondents which party they would vote if there were elections today. The variable has been collapsed into eight responses, labeled *ORR* (a collection of three minor Orthodox Religious Right-wing parties), *VVD* (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, i.e., right-wing liberal-conservative party), *CDA* (Christian Democratic Appeal, i.e., right-of-center Christian democratic party), *D66* (Democrats 1966, i.e., center-liberal party), *PVDA* (Labor Party, i.e., left-wing social democratic party), *GLEF* (Green Left, i.e., minor left-wing party), others (miscellaneous numerically insignificant left and right-leaning parties and splinters), and none (including no answer). The pooled relative frequencies of *ORR*, *VVD*, *CDA*, *D66*, *PVDA*, *GLEF*, others, and none (including no answer) were 3%, 12%, 22%, 9%, 24%, 5%, 2%, and 24%, respectively.

As part of the analysis, the individual-level left-right self-placements were aggregated into average positions of religious and party affiliates. To be sure that the movements over time we observe are more than the inevitable random fluctuations from sampling error, we have pooled the 921 one-week surveys into 234 four-week files (i.e., 13 readings per year).[6] We expect the resulting averages to mimic the population means, though not perfectly. Sympathizers for 'other' political parties, political 'nones' and members of 'other' religious denominations were excluded from the aggregate analyses.[7] Using the method delineated by Jones and Norrander (1996), the aggregate-level reliability coefficients for the 234 aggregated mean values all turned out to be greater than .974 for religious affiliation and greater than .996 for party affiliation. The aggregate measures are therefore extremely reliable. To our knowledge the data, notwithstanding their limitations[8], are the best sources presently available to address

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[6] For the same reason the sample mean is used in preference to the exact median. The former is more efficient (i.e., less subject to sampling fluctuations) than the latter.

[7] Cases coded ‘other political parties’ and ‘don’t vote/no answer’ were treated as missing. This decision could bias our results if these responses have increased (or decreased) markedly over the past two decades. To guard against this possibility we examined their time trends. They reveal that both series have witnessed only a small increase over time. There is a positive trend in ‘don’t vote/no answer’ after each election, but this trend changes into a negative one in weeks leading up to an election.

[8] For example, the data are not sufficiently detailed to permit an adequate analysis of age, period, and cohort effects. Any careful comparison of the changes in birth cohorts as they age must either set up age intervals that correspond to the length of periods between measurements or stagger the age groupings so that the same cohorts are readily identifiable in each period. Because age in the surveys was measured in 10-year categories, we are not able to follow the same cohort as it ages across intervals shorter than 10 years. We therefore, unfortunately, cannot give an answer to the question of how much change is coming from alteration of left-right ideology from period to period (intracohort shifts), and how much is coming from the substitution of new birth cohorts for old (cohort succession).

the issue of convergence and persistence in left-right orientations in a systematic and long-term perspective.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To examine how the Dutch population has polarized along the left-right axis over time, consecutive one-week segments were combined into one-year segments to form a pooled sample of 18 years. The annual frequencies are shown in Table 2.

The year-to-year distributions of ideological opinion all tend to be fairly symmetric with the greatest density toward the center of the scale and declining toward the extreme positions at the tails. Although the extremes (i.e., those placing themselves at positions 1 or 7) are populated, they attract only a fringe of the responses. A quick glance at the table also shows that the Dutch population has become less bipolar in its ideological thinking over time. The left and right poles have gradually depopulated as people moved to the center position. It has taken less than twenty years for the proportions favoring extreme positions (1 or 7) to halve and for those favoring the central point (4) to increase from about a quarter to one-third of the sample. Note that in general the transition has been two-sided, i.e., convergence by both sides rather than ideological capitulation by either left or right. A close look at the table reveals, however, that the right poles (6 and 7) have witnessed a larger decline than the left poles (1 and 2). This difference may be the result of an increasing nonreligious population. The statistics confirm what is fairly obvious: whereas the mean value and the exact median - both located around scale position 4 (i.e., half-way between 1 and 7) - reveal a small change in the direction of the left, the spread about the mean (standard deviation) has steadily decreased and the distribution's peakedness (kurtosis) has progressively increased. Table 1 also shows that the overwhelming majority (about 90%) of the Dutch population was able to locate itself at some point on the scale. This indicates that there is widespread recognition of (or at least minimal acquaintance with) the left-right schema within the general public. Note that there has been no substantial decline in recognition over time - an indication that in this sense the key terms have not outmoded.

Of course, these conclusions only hold true if placing oneself at the exact mid-point between left and right is not a concealed form of non-response. Converse and Pierce (1986, 128) have argued that the mid-point is the "obvious selection for a person who is neutral, uncommitted, or even thoroughly indifferent to or ignorant about this generic axis of political dispute". Indeed, it may be that the instrument forces some 'undecided' respondents toward a presumed neutral position in the center. For all surveys pooled, about a quarter (28%) of those who perceived themselves as belonging to the center (position 4) expressed no political party preferences (or refused to answer to this question). There is thus some reason to presume a lack of ideological awareness at the middle. However, the established parties in Holland have increasingly erected centrist programs and a centrist or middle-of-the-road position in politics can thus be a meaningful and dedicated one. There is therefore also reason to allow for the possibility of a reasoned 'centrist' position. As Fleury and Lewis-Beck (1993, 1102) have pointed out, "to us it does not seem conceptually implausible for a self-styled moderate sincerely to select the center of such a [left-right] scale". Moreover, according to Knutsen (1996), mass publics have 'cognitively mobilised' over time. It is therefore difficult, he argued, to interpret the increase in the center location as an increase in 'don't know'. However this may be, in general the findings seem to support the thesis of left-right convergence in the Netherlands.[9]

To further investigate this convergence, we have pooled the individual self-placements by religious affiliation and by party affiliation and calculated group means for all the 234 four-week periods. The aggregated means of the religious affiliates are presented as time series in Figure 1. The purpose of placing a confidence interval about the means is to indicate the degree of accuracy of the estimates.

What these series indicate is, first of all, that the way in which religious affiliates array themselves on the left-right scale is rather persistent. Calvinists (*CALV*) consistently tend to be most rightleaning, person with no religious affiliation (*NOAF*) most leftleaning, and Catholics (*CATH*) and Dutch Reformed (*DREF*) are in between. Note, however, that the average positions range between 3 and 5 and that the left-right differences are thus relatively modest. Second, small variations between polls taken 4-weeks apart should of course be expected as a normal result of sampling error; they do not necessarily indicate any real change in left-right ideology.

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[9] Excluding those with no party affiliation (including no answer) would not change this conclusion. On the contrary, if we exclude 'non-voters' convergence is even somewhat more pronounced; from 1978 to 1995, the percentages favoring the extreme left position (1) decreased from 6.5% to 3.0%, those favoring the extreme right position (7) decreased from 9.2% to 2.6%, and those favoring the center position (4) increased from 24.8% to 34.5%. In addition, some might argue that in comparing the left-right frequencies over time it is important to take party affiliation into account, since converge could be due, in part, to changes in the distribution of party affiliation. To examine this, the frequency data were put in the form of a three-way CxGxD table, where C denotes composition (party affiliation: 8 levels), G group (period: 18 levels for all years), and D dependent variable (left-right self-placement: 8 levels including 'no answer'). Log-linear analysis showed that the CG,CD,GD model provides an adequate description of the interrelationships among party affiliation, period, and left-right self-placement (BIC = -5748, L^2 = 5742, df = 833). The frequencies were subsequently adjusted for the interaction between left-right self-placement and party affiliation using the partial CD purging method proposed by Xie (1989). The CD purging method divides the observed frequencies by the two-way CD association parameter to obtain purged cell frequencies and then calculates adjusted frequencies. The adjusted frequencies, which are invariant to overtime changes in the marginal distribution of party affiliation, show that after eliminating the partial interaction effects convergence is even somewhat stronger. Hence the movement over time toward the center position is not confounded by changes in party affiliation.

Overlooking passing fluctuations, however, the figure indicates quite clearly that the differences in collective left-right orientation have declined substantially since the early 1980s. Calvinists and people with no religious affiliation in particular have moved to the center position over time.

The aggregated data for the six groups of party affiliates are presented in Figure 2. The data reveal that the differences in the aggregated means of party affiliates are rather long-standing. The *ORR* tend to be most rightleaning followed - from right to left - by either *VVD* or *CDA*, *D66, PVDA*, and *GLEF*. This right-left ranking is faithfully replicated at each point in time and corresponds, for those who are familiar with Dutch politics, with the culturally expected order. However, the figure also shows that the left-right positions have undergone dramatic changes in the past two decades. Whereas right-wing party affiliates (*ORR*, *VVD*, and *CDA*) made by a noticeable leftward shift, left-wing party affiliates (*PVDA* and *GLEF*) followed a slow and long movement in the direction of the right pole. The result is that the ideological polarization of the groupings, in the sense of the distance between the aggregated means, has substantially decreased over time. The ideological distance between the right-most (*ORR*) and the left-most party affiliates (*GLEF*), for example, dropped from about 4 in 1978 to approximately 2.5 in 1995. In addition, the trend lines for *ORR*, *VVD*, and *CDA*, on the one hand, and *PVDA* and *GLEF*, on the other, were mostly parallel. They tend to change in the same direction and at about the same time, be it that *ORR* converged to the center somewhat faster than the other groupings. The finding that various groupings moved in parallel over time, all of them increasingly favoring the mid-point, seems to indicate that something fundamental was occurring throughout the nation among all sets of party affiliates. It is as if they all assimilated the same new ideas and political information. What is more, it is seen in Figure 2 that convergence began at least as early as 1981 and persisted over many years. This indicates that something more long-lasting and fundamental was occurring than any series of particular events such as the dissolution of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, which did not get under way with any vigor until 1989-1990. It is also remarkable that convergence began around 1981, the same year the major Dutch political parties started to grow closer to each other, according to the election program studies. Finally, note that the ideological polarization between party affiliates is much greater than the polarization between religious affiliates. In fact, if we control - on a period-by-period basis by *OLS* - the individual left-right self-placements for political party affiliation, the differences between the aggregated means of the religious affiliates vanish almost completely, for all 234 time points. Adjusting the left-right scores for religious affiliation, however, has hardly any effect on the means of the political affiliates. The only noteworthy change is a marginal shift to the center of the means of the affiliates of the two religious parties (*ORR* and *CDA),* for all time points. This finding supports the argument that, in the Netherlands at least, party ties are substantially more important to left-right self-placement than religious cleavages. For this reason we will restrict the analysis in the remainder of this paper to party affiliation.

Although it is clear from Figure 2 that the aggregate left-right self-placements of party affiliates have changed over time, the meanings of these changes are debatable. Have the rates of change been equivalent for all sets of party affiliates? Are the changes in collective public opinion permanent or temporary and of brief duration? To answer these questions time series analyses were applied to the data. To examine the length and the strength of the dependence in the aggregate series, autocorrelations were obtained at various lags. The results are presented in Table 3.

In classic ARMA-type models, observations separated by a long time period may be assumed to be (nearly) independent. The sample autocorrelations of the original level time series y_t in Table 3, however, are quite substantial in all cases except *D66* and generally reveal a pattern of slowly decaying long-range correlations. They remain significant even at high lags.[10] Hence the time series exhibit characteristics of long-range persistence implying that collective ideological positions that passed a long time ago have a relatively strong influence on collective positions today. The autocorrelations of the first-order differenced series $y_t - y_{t-1}$ generally appear to be overdifferenced with large negative autocorrelations close to -0.5 at lag one. It is well known that when an uncorrelated time series is differenced, its first-order autocorrelation equals -0.5. The detrended time series denote residuals obtained after subtracting a linear time trend. These series exhibit a dependence between distant observations that, although small, is by no means negligible. The autocorrelations decay to zero at a slower rate than one would expect from data following an ARMA-type model. Furthermore, while some of the individual correlations are relatively small, their sum is quite large. This again indicates that there is long memory or long-range dependence in the series and that the series are not well described by the ARMA class of models.

While the inertia observed is itself a finding of substantial interest, additional insight can be obtained by analyzing whether fractionally integrated time series (ARFIMA) models more adequately describe the data than ARMA-type models. The results in Table 3 suggest that neither y_t nor $y_t - y_{t-1}$ produce appropriately transformed time series and that a more appropriate transformation of the data is somewhere in between these two options. Denote L as the lag operator defined by $Ly_t = y_{t-1}$ and consider the differencing operator $(1-L)^d$, where $(1-L)^0 = 1$. For the original series y_t the value of d in the differencing filter is 0, whereas for the first-order differenced series it equals 1 since $(1-L)y_t = y_t - y_{t-1}$. Given the results in

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[10] The *CDA* series, for example, has significantly positive serial correlations up to 70 lags which is more than 5 years.

Table 3, it may be that for the aggregate time series a more appropriate value of d is in between the integer values 0 and 1. If so, the time series are called fractionally integrated.[11]

The simplest fractionally integrated time series model is defined as

$$(1-L)^d\, y_t = \varepsilon_t, \qquad -1 < d < 1 \qquad t = 1,2,\ldots$$

where the innovation ε_t is a homoskedastic white noise series with variance σ_ε^2 and where the differencing operator $(1-L)^d$ is defined by its binomial expansion:

$$(1-L)^d = 1 - dL - (\frac{1}{2!})\, d\,(1-d)\, L^2 - (\frac{1}{3!})\, d\,(1-d)(2-d)\, L^3 - \ldots$$

which is 1 for $d = 0$ and $(1-L)$ for $d = 1$. This expression shows that y_t can be described by an AR process of infinite order. When $d > 0$, the time series is said to be long memory and when d is in the range $0.5 < d < 1$, the series is not covariance-stationary. It is still mean-reverting, but very slowly so, which is directly seen from the impulse response function: $y_t = (1-L)^{-d}\varepsilon_t$.

Experimentation with different AR and MA orders of the $(1-L)^d y_t$ model for the six aggregate series (and their linear combinations) lead to the decision to evaluate the following ARFIMA (0,d,1) model for all data:

$$(1 - L)^d\,(y_t - \alpha - \beta\, t) = (1 + \theta\, L)\varepsilon_t. \qquad t = 1,2,..,234$$

The time trend variable t was included because the graphs in Figure 2 clearly show that the data are trending and we wish to allow for the possibility that this trend can be described by a deterministic regressor. We assumed a normal distribution for the error term. We also assumed that the data (in deviation from the trend) are covariance-stationary, i.e., $d < 0.5$. This enabled us to estimate the parameters d, α, β, θ and σ_ε^2 by exact maximum likelihood (see Doornik

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[11] The concept of fractional integration within the context of ARFIMA models was put forward by Granger and Joyeux (1980) and by Hosking (1981). In economics, the ARFIMA model has been applied to the mean of aggregate inflation rates and the variance of other financial time series (see Hassler and Wolters (1995) for a recent application and Baillie (1996) for a review). In the political sciences, it has been applied by Box-Steffensmeier and Smith (1996) in their study of aggregate partisanship.

and Ooms 1997).[12] The (trend-)stationarity assumption was not rejected for any of the series (and their combinations) at conventional significance levels. The estimation results for the average left-right score of the six groups of political affiliates are reported in Table 4.

It is seen that the estimated values for d are all larger than zero. In fact, they are approximately equal to 0.4. Since d = 0.5 is within the *95%* confidence interval around the estimate, the ARFIMA models are not decisive as to whether the series are non-stationary. Another important result from Table 4 is that the estimated trend parameter β is significantly negative for *ORR, VVD*, and *CDA*, insignificant for *D66*, and significantly positive for *PVDA* and *GLEF*. Hence, there seems to be a deterministic tendency towards less extreme ideological positions. We also see that, both on the right where $(\alpha - 4) > 0$ and on the left where $(\alpha - 4) < 0$, party affiliates favoring extreme positions converge faster towards the center position than those favoring moderate positions. Another notable feature of the trend estimates β is the difference in 'average' convergence speed between left and right. Right-wing party affiliates converge faster than left-wing affiliates. One could argue that this is probably the result of voters switching parties. However, the difference in convergence rate between left and right was also apparent in the frequencies reported in Table 2, which did not involve party affiliation. This suggests that the observed convergence is not caused by changes in party affiliation (see also footnote 8).

Given that certain fractionally integrated series display the same tendency towards the center position and that the estimated d values in Table 4 are similar across the series, it is of interest to examine whether pairs of time series display convergence. Eisinga and Franses (1996) adopted a convergence testing approach that sets d = 1 for all individual series and investigated whether for linear combinations d equals 0. Here we refine their method by defining convergence between two series x_t and z_t (where x_t is chosen such that it generally takes larger values than z_t) when the difference $y_t = x_t - z_t$ can be described by an ARFIMA model with d < 0.5 and a negative value for the trend parameter β (while the intercept α at the beginning of the sample is clearly positive). Hence, two series are said to converge when their difference y_t (in deviation from the trend) is covariance-stationary, i.e., when d < 0.5. In addition, when β < 0 while α > 0, the difference series $x_t - z_t$ converges to zero. Note that

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[12] We extended Sowell's (1992) exact MLE to simultaneously estimate α and β. Dahlhaus (1995) suggested that efficiency gains are obtained compared to *OLS* estimation of α and β. An extra advantage is provided by the automatic computation of the correct standard errors for α and β. We also used a nonlinear least squares technique, as described in Beran (1995), which allows for the estimation of d in the entire range -0.5 < d < 1. The results are available upon request.

our definition implies that we only investigate whether x_t and z_t are converging, not whether the series have converged. The results are in Table 5.

The estimation results indicate that only the difference series *ORR-VVD*, *ORR-CDA*, *VVD-D66,* and *PVDA-GLEF* have an estimated d values which is significantly smaller than 0.5. Because the β values for *ORR-VVD*, *ORR-CDA*, and *VVD-D66* are significantly negative, we can say that *ORR* seems to converge to *VVD* and to *CDA*, and that *VVD* and *D66* converge. The *PVDA-GLEF* series has an insignificant β parameter. Hence, for these series we can only conclude that they have common persistence properties, i.e., an important part of the shocks to the series is propagated alike and has similar long-run effects. For all other pairs of time series in Table 5, the two-sided *95%* confidence interval around the estimated d includes 0.5. This implies that shocks can have such a long-lasting influence that the sample variance of the series grows over time, in fact it grows at a rate of T^{2d-1}, where T is the sample size and d > 0.5. Consequently, the long-run forecast interval for the series (in deviation from the linear time trend) eventually contains all possible values, as is well known for the random walk case d = 1. Table 5 reconfirms the findings reported in Table 4. The larger the initial difference in level between the series, the faster the pairs converge. In other words, there is a strong correlation between α and β across the pairs of groupings. Note that, by construction, the estimated β parameter for most of the difference series is negative (while α is positive). Hence there seems to be a deterministic converging tendency. However, because we cannot reject the hypothesis that $d \geq 0.5$, we should interpret this tendency as a sample-specific phenomenon. Remember that the standard errors are based on the assumption that d < 0.5. For d > 0.5, it is impossible to obtain α using standard likelihood methods because it is no longer identified in that case. This implies that during the last two decades left-right positions of party affiliates have come closer to each other, but in most cases it may well occur that future political shocks and innovations will cause their left-right positions to diverge again. It may be that our sample covers only the convergence part of a wave-like pattern were periods of convergence are alternated by periods of divergence. In other words, there can be relatively long periods of divergence and long periods were left-right identifications tend to converge. When one looks only at a relatively short time period, then there seem to be local convergence trends. However, looking at a longer series, there may be no apparent persisting trend.

In our sample, the variance of these long nonperiodic cycles is clearly dominated by the deterministic trend which should be explained by sample-specific exogenous factors. In fact, having knowledge of how the data are constructed, we know in advance that our specification of the trend will not remain valid outside the sample very long. We may therefore conclude that for the most rightleaning (*ORR*) and the most leftleaning party affiliates (*GLEF)* there appears to be a general (i.e., not sample-specific) tendency towards more central positions. For the moderate party affiliates, however, the movement over time towards the center need not be permanent, and may be temporary and of brief duration.

5. DISCUSSION

The question whether left and right have lost their relevance in recent decades is on the lips of many political scientists and comparative scholars. Despite widespread claims and perceptions, there is little systematic evidence of changes in left-right polarization simply because relevant empirical information has been virtually unavailable. Our findings based on 18 years of data from a large number of national Dutch surveys suggest that in the Netherlands at least left-right self-identification today is not as important as it used to be. Over the past two decades large proportions of the Dutch population have moved from opposite positions on the left-right continuum in the direction of the presumed neutral mid-point. They currently locate themselves much closer to each other than before. In addition, both religious and party affiliates have become more alike in their left-right political orientation, the result being an ideologically more homogeneous Dutch population. It may be true, and probably is, as some political scientists have argued, that left-right self-identification has changed its meaning. But despite a change in meaning, its salience in the Netherlands has declined over time.

Obviously, any declaration of the extinction of left and right in Dutch politics would be premature. While the categories of left and right have fallen out of favor in Holland, their blurring should not lead us to mistake a temporary weakening of the dichotomy for its final eradication. This is not an ‘end-of-ideology’ or ‘end-of-history’ thesis in miniature. Although we would disagree with the notion that in this study history is reduced, in Barrington Moore’s (1958, 131) words, to “merely a storehouse of samples”, our results are obviously bracketed and placed in a period by the happenstance of data availability. Our time series analysis supports the thesis of left-right convergence, with right-most and left-most party affiliates in particular migrating centerwards. However, it could be that the time period we studied covers the convergence part of a long nonperiodic wave-like pattern were periods of divergence are alternated by periods of convergence. Our time series began at the conclusion of a period of political polarization, from the early 1960s to the late 1970s. It may well be that future domains of conflict in society will cause the left-right positions of the general public to diverge again. In general this finding suggests that in sociopolitical life and in sociomental processes there may be present some factor which, in the long run, does not permit any single or extreme current to absorb the others for any length of time. Perhaps our results give a concrete example of the principle of ‘immanent self-regulation’ of broad sociopolitical change.

The convergence-pattern we do find is by no means a small matter. Some may rejoice about it in the name of ‘consensus’, but they are obviously wrong. Democracy is not the end of conflict but conflict mastered. For a society to function democratically, agreements must be established over the framework and modalities of political debate. If these agreements result in the disappearance of debate, however, democracy will also pass away. Democracy implies a diversity of opinions and choices as well as the recognition of the legitimacy of conflicts between them. Yet, if parties are no longer distinguished by anything other than insignificant differences in their manifestos and advocate basically the same policies, if citizens no longer see themselves confronted with real political alternatives, then debate ceases to have any raison d'être and the democratic framework for it becomes nothing more than an empty shell which most people, not surprisingly, prefer to ignore. Maybe the real question is not whether left-right ideology in Holland has had its day, but when and in what form it will return. The answer to this will appear slowly, as ideologically divergent parties begin to adopt divergent policies and as new domains of conflicts become coded politically in the structure of left and right.

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Table 1. Intensity of Issue Attitudes(1)

	1980	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*
Class differences ought to be smaller(2)	30.6%	19.9%	15.8%	17.0%
Trade unions have to adopt harder line(2)	24.3	18.5	13.1	12.7
Workers still have to struggle for equality(2)	23.9	17.4	11.9	14.7
Greater/smaller income differences(3)	74.1	67.6	60.4	64.0
Promoting greater equality in society(4)	31.4	29.1	25.6	26.0
Breaking through relations of power(4)	34.0	30.2	25.5	23.8
Materialists and postmaterialists(5)	51.0	41.9	38.0	34.1

(1)Figures represent percentages of individuals in Dutch national samples who take extreme issue positions, i.e., who 'strongly agree' or 'don't agree at all' with issue statement(2), who believe that differences have to become 'smaller' or 'greater'(3), or who consider the issue 'very much important' or 'unimportant'(4). The bottom-row represents the combined frequencies of pure materialists and pure postmaterialists (four-item battery). Missing data were excluded from percentage base. Source: Eisinga, Felling, Peters, and Scheepers (1992) and SOCON 1995 data tape. The 1980 data on (post-)materialism are from Abramson and Inglehart (1992).

Table 2. Year-by-Year Distributions of Left-Right Self-Placement

year	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
1 left	5.8%	5.5%	5.2%	5.6%	5.0%	4.0%	3.9%	3.8%	3.9%	3.4%	3.2%	3.7%	3.4%
2	9.5	8.9	8.5	9.4	9.5	9.7	9.5	10.1	10.0	10.1	9.1	8.8	8.4
3	14.8	14.7	14.6	16.1	15.1	16.3	17.1	18.1	18.3	17.8	18.5	18.2	18.3
4	26.3	27.0	27.6	28.9	29.1	30.1	31.2	30.2	30.2	31.4	33.3	34.2	34.8
5	14.7	14.4	13.9	14.0	15.1	16.3	15.9	16.2	16.4	16.5	15.3	15.6	15.1
6	9.8	9.3	8.7	8.4	8.5	7.9	7.5	7.3	7.3	7.0	6.4	6.2	5.9
7 right	8.2	8.3	8.2	6.9	6.8	5.0	4.3	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.5
no answer	10.8	11.9	13.3	10.8	10.9	10.8	10.6	10.3	9.6	9.9	10.6	9.6	10.6
median(1)	4.06	4.07	4.06	3.96	4.02	3.98	3.94	3.91	3.91	3.92	3.90	3.90	3.90
mean	4.08	4.10	4.10	4.00	4.04	4.00	3.96	3.92	3.93	3.93	3.92	3.91	3.92
stddev	1.62	1.60	1.60	1.55	1.53	1.44	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.36	1.33	1.33	1.31
kurtosis	-.59	-.53	-.48	-.40	-.40	-.25	-.16	-.19	-.19	-.13	.05	.09	.17
n (thousands)	46.6	54.6	56.3	53.2	62.8	52.9	56.0	56.5	70.6	49.5	52.5	52.8	50.2

(1)Left-right values are group mid-points.

Table 3. Autocorrelations of Average Left-Right Self-Placement Series of Party Affiliates (T=234 Four-Weekly Observations)

Autocorrelation	*Original Series*					
at lag	ORR	VVD	CDA	D66	PVDA	GLEF
1	.85*	.87*	.95*	.30*	.86*	.61*
2	.84*	.85*	.94*	.15*	.81*	.58*
3	.82*	.83*	.92*	.33*	.78*	.57*
4	.83*	.84*	.90*	.15*	.75*	.54*
5	.81*	.80*	.89*	.16*	.71*	.56*
10	.76*	.74*	.81*	.03	.65*	.42*
15	.65*	.69*	.75*	.05	.55*	.35*
20	.60*	.60*	.67*	.08	.44*	.39*
25	.51*	.52*	.59*	.07	.42*	.26*
	First-Order Differenced Series					
1	−.52*	−.44*	−.41*	−.41*	−.30*	−.47*
	Detrended Series(1)					
1	.30*	.34*	.51*	.29*	.68*	.30*
2	.33*	.27*	.44*	.14*	.56*	.25*
3	.29*	.25*	.39*	.33*	.51*	.26*
4	.35*	.31*	.34*	.15*	.43*	.22*
5	.31*	.22*	.37*	.16*	.34*	.27*
10	.29*	.06	.14*	.03	.25*	.09
15	.04	.10	.19*	.05	.06	−.01
20	.08	−.02	.08	.08	−.19*	.08
25	.00	−.16	.04	.07	−.22*	−.13*

*Significant at the .05 level, since the absolute value exceeds twice the standard error. Under the assumption of zero-valued autocorrelation the approximate standard error is $1/\sqrt{T}$, which is .065 here.

(1)Detrended series are residuals obtained from regression on the time trend variable t, which runs from 1 to T=234, by OLS.

Table 4. Estimated ARFIMA (0,*d*,1) Models for the Average Left-Right Self-Placement Series of Party Affiliates(1)**:**

$$(1-L)^d\,(y_t-\alpha-\beta\,(t/100)) = (1+\theta\,L)\,\varepsilon_t \qquad t=1,2,\ldots,234$$

y_t	d	θ	$\alpha-4$	β
ORR	.44	-.31	2.20	-.40
	(.07)	(.10)	(.11)	(.04)
VVD	.34	-.08	1.11	-.22
	(.09)	(.12)	(.04)	(.02)
CDA	.40	-.03	1.14	-.31
	(.08)	(.10)	(.05)	(.02)
D66	.32	-.11	-.42	.03
	(.11)	(.16)	(.04)	(.02)
PVDA	.44	.09	-1.15	.13
	(.06)	(.09)	(.08)	(.03)
GLEF	.35	-.16	-1.74	.15
	(.10)	(.13)	(.06)	(.03)

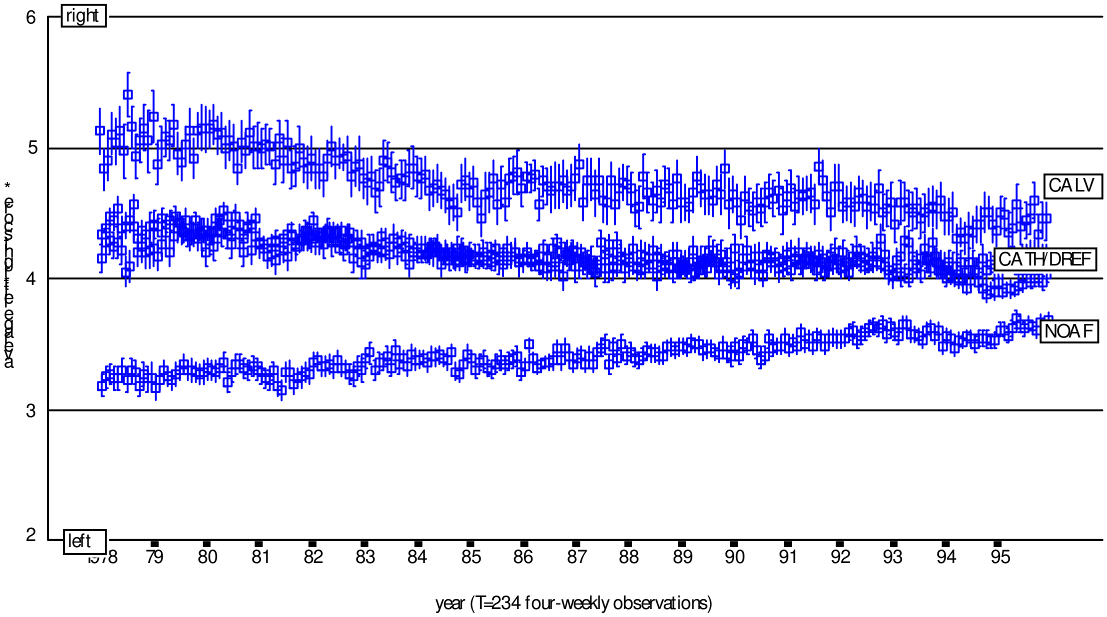
(1)The lag operator L is defined by $Ly_t = y_{t-1}$. The unknown parameters are the fractional differencing parameter d, the constant α, the trend parameter β, and the moving average parameter θ. The variable ε_t denotes the uncorrelated Gaussian zero mean innovation. The parameters are estimated using maximum likelihood (see Sowell 1992). The estimated standard deviations are given in parentheses.

Table 5. Estimated ARFIMA (0,*d*,1) Models for Pairwise Difference (y_t) between Average Left-Right Self-Placement Series of Party Affiliates(1)

y_t	d	θ	α	β
ORR-VVD	.26	-.11	1.09	-.18
	(.09)	(.13)	(.05)	(.03)
ORR-CDA	.24	-.16	1.05	-.08
	(.11)	(.14)	(.04)	(.03)
ORR-D66	.43	-.28	2.63	-.44
	(.07)	(.11)	(.12)	(.05)
ORR-PVDA	.43	-.24	3.35	-.53
	(.07)	(.11)	(.13)	(.05)
ORR-GLEF	.45	-.29	3.94	-.55
	(.08)	(.09)	(.18)	(.07)
CDA-VVD	.38	-.26	.04	-.10
	(.09)	(.12)	(.05)	(.02)
VVD-D66	.20	.05	1.51	-.24
	(.09)	(.12)	(.03)	(.02)
VVD-PVDA	.40	-.01	2.25	-.34
	(.08)	(.10)	(.09)	(.04)
VVD-GLEF	.41	-.16	2.84	-.36
	(.08)	(.10)	(.11)	(.05)
CDA-D66	.39	-.08	1.57	-.35
	(.08)	(.11)	(.07)	(.03)
CDA-PVDA	.44	-.07	2.29	-.44
	(.06)	(.09)	(.09)	(.04)
CDA-GLEF	.36	-.09	2.88	-.46
	(.09)	(.12)	(.08)	(.04)
D66-PVDA	.39	-.15	.72	-.09
	(.10)	(.14)	(.07)	(.03)
D66-GLEF	.41	-.23	1.31	-.11
	(.09)	(.12)	(.09)	(.04)
PVDA-GLEF	.26	-.05	.59	-.02
	(.08)	(.11)	(.04)	(.03)

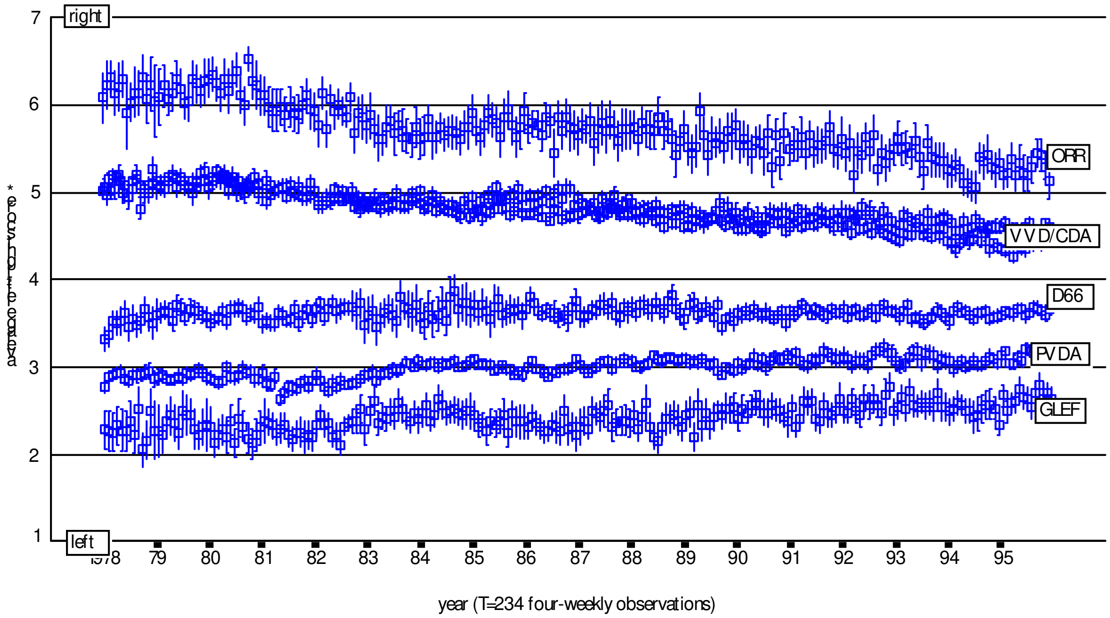
(1)See Table 4.

Figure 1. Average Left-Right Self-Placement of Religious Affiliates



* point estimates and 95% confidence intervals

Figure 2. Average Left-Right Self-Placement of Political Affiliates



* point estimates and 95% confidence intervals