

Leadership, media, and representation in The Netherlands between 1963 and 1967: the rise of audience democracy or counter-democracy?¹

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Introduction

A crisis of representative democracy?

Do people still feel represented? Are elections still useful? Have the elites taken over our democracy? While being asked frequently these days, these questions are not new. In the sixties, The Netherlands also had a certain 'crisis of democracy'. Old parties lost a chunk of their electorate, and new parties like the Farmers' Party (FP) and Democrats '66 (D66) came to rise. This was mostly due to the visibility of their leaders. Both leaders knew how to respond to their audiences, and rhetorically raised issues that appealed to their following. Hendrik 'boer' Koekoek (1912-1987) thought that the power in 'The Hague' was too centralized, and farmers were no longer in charge of their own farm, and Hans van Mierlo (1931-2010) was critical of the political system and the gap between citizens and politicians.

Within academic circles, mainly political scientists have recently also been talking about a crisis of democracy. They argue that contemporary representative democracy has gone into a state of crisis. Somehow and for some reason the people do not feel represented anymore; populism is rising, while the membership of traditional major parties is declining. Scholars like Yascha Mounk see bigger threats to liberal democracy as a whole. In his view, people are starting to oppose democracy itself.² Liberal democratic values are being undermined by populist-nativist discourses, and people are getting more alienated from politicians. Another trend is that political trust is declining. People seem to no longer trust politicians, institutions, societies' elites, and legislative bodies. According to Mounk, this could be detrimental to representative democracy and our political system, since trust is one of the key factors in legitimizing authority and the state itself.³

² Yascha Mounk, *The people versus democracy: why our freedom is in danger and how to save it* (Cambridge 2016), pg. 58.

³ Joseph Raz, 'Authority and justification', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14:1 (1985) 3-29, pg. 29.

As for the causes of the contemporary crisis and the decline of political distrust, many scholars have come up with different explanations. Recent changes in party systems, new social cleavages, and opposing institutions of democracy have often been mentioned. Another cause, which is often proposed, is that people no longer see the constraint of power to legislative bodies as sufficient for representative democracy. Other scholars see the causes in processes of globalization and the continuing mediatization of the world. But one thing most scholars do have in common: they ask themselves why representative democracy has stopped to exist. But has it stopped to exist, or has its definition and concept simply been changed over the years?

The political scientist Wolfgang Merkel states that trust in governments, elections and political parties have been declining since the 1970s. On the other hand, however, general trust in the democratic and legal system have not declined as much.⁴ This ambiguity can be explained by three things according to Merkel. First, he says this is due to the 'demos' not viewing democracy as a whole, and wrong conceptions of democracy play a large role in why they are unsatisfied. Secondly, Merkel argues that the people have a different opinion of what democracy is than scholars of democracy. Thirdly, people do not see a crisis of representative democracy, but simply want to see less power given to institutions and political parties.⁵ Merkel states that generally people don't talk about a feeling of crisis, they merely talk of distrust and express their concerns about politicians who do not represent their interests, but do not oppose representative democracy as a whole.

However, for other scholars this is not the case at all. Frank Ankersmit, historian and philosopher, has opposed representative democracy, and sees the citizen merely as passive. He sees representative democracy as an 'empty shell' and a false promise. Ankersmit argues that representative democracy is not democracy at all, but it is rather an elective

⁴ Wolfgang Merkel, 'Is there a crisis of democracy?', *Democratic Theory* 1:2 (2014) 11-25, pg. 23.

⁵ Merkel, 'Is there a crisis', 23.

aristocracy. Even if there could be something as ‘representation’, it is an illusion that in a representative democracy the ‘people’s will’ is decisive.⁶ He stressed that the rise of populism is a result of representative democracy. Underlying this trend he sees the growing differentiation between the political goals of the ‘people’ and political elites.

In line with Ankersmit, Colin Crouch sees the end of democracy approaching, and mainly relates this to growing social inequality and social-economic cleavages between the rich and poor. In 2004, he argued that democracy wasn’t meant for the people, but most of all for the socio-economic elites, who had developed democracy throughout history in a way that it would only benefit them. Crouch also claims that pressure groups are interfering with the fundamentals of representative democracy.⁷ These groups would not consider the general interests of the working class. He therefore speaks of *post-democracy*, as people are no longer being represented and have lost any influence on national politics.

In the Netherlands, we might as well speak of a ‘crisis of representative democracy’. Smaller and newer parties like *GroenLinks*, *Partij Voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) and *Forum voor Democratie* (FvD) have gained a lot of voters during national and provincial elections. Moreover, old parties are losing their electorate. One of the nation’s traditionally big parties, the *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA), went from winning 38 seats in 2012, to merely 9 seats four years later. It seems like voters do not feel affiliated with one single party anymore, but are all the more so attracted by leaders, image, and their vote is becoming the outcome of a professionalized media campaign. Like political scientists have correctly observed, we do see new leaders, smaller parties rising, and bigger parties declining. Populism seems to spread. To understand this phenomenon, it is imported to look at the past and analyze underlying historical trends.

⁶ Frank Ankersmit, ‘What if our representative democracies are elective aristocracies?’, *Rediscriptions* 15:1 (2011) 21-44, pg. 31.

⁷ Colin Crouch, *Post-democracy* (Cambridge 2004), pg. 15.

Historiography and present debates: a crisis in the 60s?

Looking at the Netherlands, the 'crisis', or the type of representative democracy we see now has found its origin during the end of the 60s. Decline of party-democracy started evidently in the sixties, where the established parties lost voters and new political media figures gained relative power. Different historians have dubbed this as a small crisis of democracy, while others mostly see it as a resurgence of populism.

According to Stijn van Kessel and André Krouwel, political scientists and historians, D66 and their leader Van Mierlo marked a real turning point in the Dutch democracy.⁸ Their main claim is that D66 and the Farmers' Party gained popularity because of new (social) cleavages and the politicization of immaterial goals: the environment, denuclearization, emancipation and developmental aid. Due to the collapse of old ideologies and growing importance of these immaterial goals, new parties could rise.

Koen Vossen, historian at Leiden University, has done a lot of research on populism the last decade, and specializes in the 'populist period' during the end of the sixties. In his view, populism went 'mainstream' in 2001 because the established parties were unable to incorporate populism. Prior to this, populism never gained much electoral power because established parties were able to reform to a certain level to keep populists pleased.⁹ Nevertheless, they did change the way politics was publicly conducted, and changed the concept of representation with their political style. Vossen mostly did research on the Farmers' Party and their leader Hendrik Koekoek (1912-1987), but also mentioned D66 as they wanted to close the gap between the voter

⁸ Stijn van Kessel and A.P.M. Krouwel, 'Van vergankelijke radicale dissidenten tot kwelgeesten van de gevestigde orde. Nieuwe politieke partijen in Nederland en de toekomst van de representatieve democratie', in: Andeweg, R. and Thomassen, J. (eds.), *Democratie doorgelicht, het functioneren van de Nederlandse democratie* (Leiden 2011) 301-317, pg. 307.

⁹ Koen Vossen, 'Van marginaal naar mainstream? Populisme in de Nederlandse geschiedenis', *Low Countries Historical Review* 127:2 (2012) 28-54, pg. 29.

and their representatives. According to Vossen, especially Koekoek and Van Mierlo managed to influence later politicians like Hans Wiegel and Dries van Agt.¹⁰

Remieg Aerts viewed the political period in the sixties as a change in demographics, which sparked the need for more modern politicians. Protest culture also became more prominent. *Provo*, the protests against the war in Vietnam, and protests against nuclear weapons sparked the need for more political influence among younger generations.¹¹ This sparked the need for reforms, and led to the rise of the FP and D66. A major factor in their rise, in Aerts' view, was furthermore that old political leaders were unwilling or too afraid to heed the calls for democratic reform.¹²

Paul Lucardie and Gerrit Voerman, sociologist and historian respectively, mostly see the 60s as a resurrection in populism.¹³ Although D66 was not purely populist, they did turn against the 'paternalism' that lived throughout the system, and the inadequate accountability that government officials and politicians expressed. According to them, Van Mierlo was weary about 'the impenetrable wall that was growing between government officials and the ordinary people'.¹⁴ Van Mierlo did not talk often about 'the people', but did speak a lot on the concept of the 'citizen'.

Another scholar who is dubbing the sixties as a 'crisis of democracy' is Wim de Jong, political historian at the University of Utrecht. After years of ideologically based politics, he sees a shift towards a call for the increasing of political influence of citizens.¹⁵ Because of the completion of the

¹⁰ Koen Vossen, 'De andere jaren zestig. De opkomst van de Boerenpartij 1963-1967', *Jaarboek Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen* 34:1 (2004) 245-266, pg. 263.

¹¹ Remieg Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren: een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-2012* (Amsterdam 2013), pg. 307.

¹² Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 306.

¹³ Gerrit Voerman and Paul Lucardie, *Populisten in de polder* (Meppel 2012), pg. 29.

¹⁴ Voerman and Lucardie, *Populisten in de polder*, 30.

¹⁵ Wim de Jong, *Van wie is de burger? Omstreden democratie in Nederland 1945-1985* (Nijmegen 2014), pg. 149.

reconstruction of the nation after the war, political trust in government declined. This led to heavy criticism of politicians, who were seen as technocrats that were puppets of the lobby-industry.¹⁶ Politics simply became too complex, and was becoming more about policy than representation. According to De Jong, this increased the desire for democratization amongst citizens. While De Jong speaks of a crisis of democracy, and is allotting D66's aim to 'blow up the political system' as a big moment in Dutch political history, he also says their success was mostly due to their 'smart campaign'.¹⁷

However, most Dutch historians look at the period from a structural standpoint, pinpointing external factors as why democracy changed. Much attention has been paid to underlying causes such as breaking of old cleavages (*ontzuiling*), globalization, and ideology, but less to the rise of television, leadership, and changes in representation. They do not conceptually further specify how democracy *itself* changed.

When looking at how democracy and political culture changed, other historians like Pierre Rosanvallon and Bernard Manin could provide more insight. Rosanvallon and Manin do not necessarily see a decline in representative democracy, but they do see a change. In 2008, the French historian and political scientist Pierre Rosanvallon has extensively broadened the concept of representative democracy. According to Rosanvallon, there is no over-arching 'original model' of democracy, and democracy may still have to reach its final form. He argues that after the Second World War, distrust has become a fundamental mechanism of democracy, and therefore speaks of a 'counter-democracy'.

Another renowned historian on representative government is Bernard Manin, who described three phases in the evolution of democracy: parliamentarianism, party democracy, and audience democracy. The first phase was prominent during the 19th century, where politics was based on local and personal contacts. Party democracy, where parties and ideology are the most important, was prominent until 1970, and audience democracy has

¹⁶ De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?*, 154.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

developed since then.¹⁸ With audience democracy, he means that political preference is no longer traced back to social, economic or religious factors, but is decided by the display of politicians' personalities and their media, or theater, performance. The most important political tool has become the leader of the party.

Objective, relevance and method

Because a crisis of representative democracy is not new, historians have done research on this and shed light on how representation changed after the Second World War. Because of this, they realized that distrust, populism, and swing voters are not a new phenomenon, they tried to incorporate these concepts into the broader concept of democracy itself, like Rosanvallon and Manin. However, there is still debate on how these crises emerged, and how they changed democracy at that time.

Since there are two major theories about how representative democracy has developed in the last fifty years, this thesis would like to look at an historical example in the Netherlands, and analyze what theory aligns the most with empirical evidence. The first rupture within party-democracy in the Netherlands was seen during 1963 to 1967, where two new parties that criticized certain institutions came to light and gained popularity among certain social groups.¹⁹ Historians talk about a crisis of democracy, but what do they mean by this? How did the system, political style and representation change when looking at the rise of both the Farmers' Party and Democrats '66? How did they make use of the media, and what consequences did this have for the way in which politics was conducted and the relationship between the voter and the representative? Can Rosanvallon's notion of representative democracy help us understand why D66 and the Farmers' Party gained popularity? Or does Manin's theory fit better?

¹⁸ Bernard Manin, *The principles of representative government* (Cambridge 1997), pg. 218.

¹⁹ Voerman and Lucardie, *Populisten in de polder*, 30.

Surprisingly there is little to no literature on how the sixties turned The Netherlands into an audience democracy, or perhaps counter-democracy. Moreover, the research period has not been connected to broader historical theories about the development of democracy, but has rather been viewed in a vacuum; the hypotheses of Rosanvallon and Manin have not yet been tested for the Netherlands. In this thesis, I shall examine the leaders' representative claim, their definition of political distrust, and what role leadership played in their relative popularity. For a more in-depth analysis, I shall try to answer three sub-questions: 1) how did both leaders criticize democracy, political institutions and organize distrust? 2) How did the concept of leadership change? And 3) how did the leaders (re)present themselves in the media? As these are key elements of both theories on representative democracy, I expect views on them will provide insight on both party's views on representative democracy between 1963 and 1967 and how this relates to the effects and changes within political culture. Was the 'populist' period in the sixties an example of counter-democracy, or the emergence of audience democracy?

Outline

The first main chapter will be on the theoretic views on the concept of representation and other used concepts in this thesis, which are necessary to answer the main question. The second chapter will be about D66, their 'radical' program, their leader Hans van Mierlo, and his leadership and usage of media. The third chapter will be about Hendrik Koekoek, his form of populism or criticism on democracy, his style of leadership, and his image in the media.

Concepts, theories, and definitions

Representation: Rosanvallons 'counter-democracy'

Many historians still view the victories of D66 and the Farmers' Party as anomalies, because to them politics were still heavily based upon the *verzuiling*, and parties were merely reflections of cleavages and ideologies within society.²⁰ However, Rosanvallon would say that the rise of these parties could be a result of counter-democracy, but what does he mean by this?

Rosanvallons theory stems from his work *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust* (2008). He wanted to understand mechanisms of distrust as 'elements of the political system'.²¹ Usually, democracy was just understood as electoral system, which does not fit with how democracy practically works, and thus gives a limited view on how representation changed according to the French historian. For Rosanvallon, citizens were not just voters, but also played a role within democracy as watchdogs, veto-wielders and judges.

For Rosanvallon, distrust is implicit to democracy: democracy was historically designed to battle nepotism, corruption and oppressive power. Distrust is defined here as the view that a decline of democracy should be prevented. Therefore, distrust, or the expression of distrust, is merely a way to improve democracy and representation between representatives and electors. Democracy is founded on distrust: it is made up by checks and balances, meant to control the elites and people in power. This is still the case says Rosanvallon, as the people express their distrust via three possible ways: supervision, monitoring, and judgment.²² Distrust is 'making sure that elected officials keep their promises'²³, and has been institutionalized in modern

²⁰ Arend Lijphart, *Verzuiling, pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek* (Haarlem 1968), pg. 26.

²¹ Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy: politics in an age of distrust* (Cambridge 2008), pg. 5.

²² Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy*, 104.

²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

democracies. Therefore, he speaks of 'counter-democracy', but what does he mean by this? In his theory, counter-democracy consists of three 'mechanics': 'powers of oversight', or people as watchdogs, 'forms of prevention' or people as veto-wielders, and the 'testing of judgment', or people as judge.

Powers of oversight can be further divided into three mechanics: vigilance, denunciation, and evaluation. This went hand in hand with the development of civil society in the 19th century. For example, vigilance is the continuous inspection of government that is being produced by the dynamics of civil society. Denunciation is the ability to put out statements on certain politicians. When a politician does something that is unacceptable to the people, they won't hesitate to accuse them of this public. Thirdly, an example of evaluation are NGO's who are trying to control the government, and improve the functioning of the system, like a court of audit, or the Council of State.

Forms of prevention are concentrated on how a certain bill could be blocked by public.²⁴ The people have 'veto-power' according to Rosanvallon. Through the organization of what he calls a 'negative coalition', citizens were able to put pressure on the democratic process by voicing their concerns.²⁵ Rosanvallon says that gathering a negative coalition has often been easier than gathering a positive majority.

The third mechanic, relates to how people could 'act as a judge' in a counter-democracy. An important underlying process is judicialization. Citizens were starting to gain the upper hand on government, and could even sue them if they did not agree with their policy. The strength lies in the ability to *force* governments to be held accountable, because if they were not, there would be legal consequences for government.²⁶

Rosanvallon claimed counter-democratic forces could strengthen democracy, as it was no longer a process of authorization and legitimization, but became a continuous process where groups could influence politics, even

²⁴ Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy*, 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

outside elections. 'By counter-democracy, I do not mean the opposite of democracy but rather a form of democracy that reinforces the usual electoral democracy as a kind of buttress, a democracy of indirect powers disseminated throughout society - in other words, a durable democracy of distrust, which complements the episodic democracy of the usual electoral representative system.'²⁷

Rosanvallon also put the 'people', or citizens, back on the map, and spoke of 'the myth of the passive citizen' in his works throughout the 70s and 80s.²⁸ He argued that the role of citizens within representative democracies has been misunderstood. With the concept of the 'myth of the passive citizen', he meant that citizens are not just electing a representative that would be fully autonomous after being elected, but are trying to monitor and influence policy-making in more directive ways, like taking part in unions or protests, or simply writing a policy brief.²⁹ He does not see representative democracy as a top-down structure, but rather takes a constructivist approach, and showed with his types of distrust that people can still influence policy, more so than ever before.

Representation: Bernard Manin's 'audience democracy'

Another influential theory is that of Bernard Manin and his concept of 'audience democracy', which he developed in his 1997 book *Principles of Representative Government*. In an audience democracy, politicians no longer gain power by establishing trust with their votes, or by socially representing their constituents, but they gain power by being media talents. Everything is about 'image', and this is how the leaders try to win the trust of their electorate. Image became more important than ideas. Manin says that

²⁷ Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy*, 8.

²⁸ Gregory Conti and William Selinger, 'The other side of representation: the history and theory of representative government of Pierre Rosanvallon', *Constellations* 23:4 (2016) 548-562, pg. 548.

²⁹ Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy*, 5.

postmodern democracies are slowly turning into audience democracies, as the influence of media grows and old ideologies become less important. For Manin, this does not stand for a major crisis of democracy, but just a change in the way that people were represented.³⁰ He goes on to say that electoral votes are beginning to shift a lot more in an audience democracy, and this could 'create the illusion of representation in crisis'.³¹ But this just means a change from representation on a party-level, to representation on a personal level, and does not mean there is a necessary decline of representation. Therefore, he speaks of a 'metamorphosis of representative government'.³²

Also, according to Manin, political preference is formed by leaders, and not the other way around.³³ This means that the leaders somehow managed to create feelings among society that the established parties were not representing their interests. They 'awaken' political distrust amongst their supporters. They do so because electoral campaigns pit leaders against each other in a crucial race to the ballot. Politicians become adversaries, which leads them to criticize their biggest opponents and therefore also create an image of the 'other', stressing that they cannot be trusted or are representative of an eroding political system. Representation is important here. D66 claimed that the gap between politicians and the electorate was too wide, but by using the media and appealing to the public, they tried to re-establish this bond. Media therefore is a key factor when it comes to representation, according to Bernard Manin. One could even say that media increases representative democracy, since it can enhance the bond between politicians and their supporters. For Manin, this would mean a return to parliamentarism, or his first form of democracy, where politicians were embedded in a much more communal context and had more personal relationships with their electorate.

In line with Manin's theory, the rise of media ensured the development of something that can be called a 'political stage'. Voters would then react to

³⁰ Manin, *The principles*, 223.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

³² *Ibid.*, 193.

³³ *Ibid.*, 226.

what is happening on the stage. That is why he called his theory about representation ‘audience democracy’. But at the core lies a simple idea, which is that the basic economic theory of supply and demand would define the outcome of elections. The rise of audience democracy, therefore goes hand in hand with the rise of an electoral market and the representation of smaller groups. Because the rise of the political ‘stage’, you could say the gap between voters and elected has become more narrow. That is why politicians are no longer spokesmen for the general will, but they have become *trustees* for the people that voted on them.³⁴

On the other hand, politicians also seek to point out cleavages and stand for the people they represent. However, in contrast with party democracy, they do so by *trial and error*. They wait for the reaction of the audience, and ‘adjust’ their standpoint after the audience has spoken. This is why leaders also have become more important. No longer is the ideology of a party ‘fixed’, but it is constructed by discourse, which is mostly produced by leaders.³⁵ The most important trend that Manin observes, is the change from ideology-based politics towards image-based politics.

Political distrust

Following Rosanvallons definition, political trust is fundamentally the idea that political institutions, like socialization, economic fairness, procedural effectiveness, elections, bureaucracy and so on, are functioning properly according to citizens. It is a criticism of democracy itself, and would thus imply a weakening of democracy. Political distrust is the rejection of a political system, which stems from a feeling of dissatisfaction with the contemporary workings of representative democracy, but it can also be used to improve democracy. For Rosanvallon, politics of distrust is deeply connected with populism, but he sees populism as a part of the system. It is

³⁴ Manin, *The principles*, 227.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

all about the gap between the elites in power and the ‘people’, who are starting to feel more disconnected with the former group. But this could also be used as a *corrective* to democracy, Rosanvallon stressed.

There are two kinds of distrusts in his theory. The first, Rosanvallon calls ‘liberal distrust’. With liberal he meant that this distrust is what gave rise to Enlightenment-thinkers and 19th century constitutional lawyers. The idea of Montesquieu, where the powers are separated, is a good example of this.³⁶ Government would have to be ‘weak’, and suspicion would have to be institutionalized. For Rosanvallon, this type of distrust was not to crown citizens and strengthen citizenship, but rather to protect citizens from infringements by governments and authorities.³⁷ Liberal distrust is the institutional classical distrust of government, and is aimed at the spreading of power to prevent corruption, abuse. It was not ‘meant to crown the citizen but to protect the individual from the encroachments of public authority’.

The other type of distrust, democratic distrust, exists to make sure the citizens are empowered by giving them means to ensure politicians keep their promises and maintain pressure on the government to serve the common good.³⁸ This is what he calls ‘democratic distrust’, and is meant to increase the participation of citizenship. This is the type of distrust that Rosanvallon sees as the foundation of counter-democracy³⁹, and is the most recent kind of distrust, which ‘arose after the totalitarian era’. Essentially, democratic distrust is ‘to make sure that elected officials keep their promises and to find ways of maintaining pressure on the government to serve the common good’.⁴⁰

Communication and the rise of television

³⁶ Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy*, 8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

At the end of the sixties, democracy in the Netherlands changed. With the coming of television and new media, the relationship between politicians and voters changed. The traditional image of the ‘pillarization’ (verzuiling) was quickly broken. Personal attraction became more important than ideologies which divided people into ‘pillars’: confessional, liberal, communist and social-democratic ideologies ruled politics. This changed mostly due to the rise of personalities, media, and television.

In 1955, less than one percent of households in the Netherlands owned a television. By 1964, this number would grow to over 50%. Four years later, in 1968, more than 80% of households owned a television.⁴¹ In ten years television would grow to become an important mass medium, triumphing over radio and newspapers, because television brought visibility into political culture. According to surveys done by CBS, 87% of households that owned a TV would turn it on in the evening.

On the 6th of February 1962, parliament decided that the programs of *Zendtijd voor Politieke Partijen* would be broadcast all year long, instead of just during election periods.⁴² Every week, another party would get the opportunity to present themselves and their views on contemporal topics. This new opportunity to speak to the whole nation was exciting for many politicians, and it quickly became a tool for politicians to put certain topics on the map, which it still is to this day.

Nevertheless, because it was also still a new medium, some politicians made use of media more frequent, and with better understanding of the importance of ‘image’, than others. This ‘personalization of politics’ became prominent during the first half of the sixties, and surely had its influence on the political landscape of that time. The best speakers, the most charismatic, and the most interesting people in politics would become leading, whereas

⁴¹ Jan Bank, ‘Televisie in de jaren zestig’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 101:1 (1986) 52-75, pg. 57.

⁴² Charles Huijskens, ‘Televisie en film als wapen in de Nederlandse politiek’, in: N.P.G.W.M. Kramer, E.H.T.M. Nijpels, B.M.J. Pauw and L. Tiddens (eds.), *Politieke communicatie in Nederland: over campagnes, kandidaten en media* (Den Haag 1994) 109-115, pg. 111.

party-programs and the recruiting of 'unknown' elites became less important. Two figures stood out: Boer Koekoek, who won multiple debates on television with his enduring criticism of the political system, and Hans van Mierlo, who everyone suddenly knew after a commercial on television.⁴³

Personalization of politics

Because of the growing importance of television for politicians, their visibility and image also became more important. 'Image' of a politician is generally defined as the perceived character and qualities that followers have of their leader.⁴⁴ Alongside the importance of media, visualization, and visibility, another aspect of audience democracy is that leaders of a party have an aim to persuade and attract voters, and they try to do so with their image. When the political landscape is diffuse and electoral voted are liquid and shifting, a politician would need to influence people, and try to win them over with rhetoric.⁴⁵

To achieve this, leaders would have to be 'charismatic'. The notion of charismatic leadership was a concept developed by sociologist Max Weber, who - in his sociology of religion - defined charisma as "gift of grace", or "divine gift." He contrasted the term charismatic authority with traditional authority, which has a less intense bond between the leader and his followers. A leader with charisma had, according to Weber, the ability to make his followers believe in his program.⁴⁶

Generally, the personalization of politics is understood as the increased structural orientation on the personal characteristics, qualities, and skills of political leaders. Leaders also become marketers. They have to market a 'problem with society or democracy'. Leaders can create this

⁴³ Bank, 'Televisie in de jaren zestig', 68.

⁴⁴ Jacob A.M. Toonen, *Op zoek naar charisma: Nederlandse politieke partijen en hun lijsttrekkers 1963-1986* (Amsterdam 1992), pg. 32.

⁴⁵ Toonen, *Op zoek naar charisma*, 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

problem themselves as well. Communication scientist Otto Scholten says this has become the main ingredient for successful campaigns.⁴⁷ He compared politicians with businesses: they search for a target audience, create a product or idea (usually a political problem), and then market their product and ideas to their customers. This idea that politics should become more like business was a shared sentiment among journalists in the sixties. Willem Breedveld, political commentator at the newspaper *Trouw*, asked himself why people were generally content about the business sector, but not about politics. The big difference for him was marketing: because the business sector marketed their products and ideas, and specifically targeted a certain group of customers, this made it seem as if the business sector 'knew exactly what people wanted'.⁴⁸

With the rise of an electoral market and short-term stakes, politicians have become not just ideological opponents, but opponents in the context of their looks, their style of presentation, their personal attraction and their authority.⁴⁹ According to Scholten, this trend could best be traced back to the sixties, where television made pop stars out of politicians, and newspapers were no longer reporting on politics in The Hague, but were also more frequently 'used' by politicians in shaping their discourse.⁵⁰ The concept of politics of personalities, more generally, implies that the importance of ideology made way for the importance of image.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Otto Scholten, 'Politieke partijen en marketing: ze vreten maar gewoon wat wij maken', in: N.P.G.W.M. Kramer, E.H.T.M. Nijpels, B.M.J. Pauw and L. Tiddens (eds.), *Politieke communicatie in Nederland: over campagnes, kandidaten en media* (Den Haag 1994) 11-27, pg. 24

⁴⁸ Scholten, 'Politieke partijen en marketing', 11.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵¹ Jacob A.M. Toonen, 'Charisma in de Nederlandse politiek', in: N.P.G.W.M. Kramer, E.H.T.M. Nijpels, B.M.J. Pauw and L. Tiddens (eds.), *Politieke communicatie in Nederland: over campagnes, kandidaten en media* (Den Haag 1994) 81-91, pg. 86.

Populism

While both the FP and D66 were populist simply because they wanted more power for citizens, they were not pure populist. Moreover, both parties were not the same at all. D66 was more focused on closing the gap between voter and politics, whereas the FP was mostly focused on proclaiming and securing a social-economic position for the farmer. The biggest difference in their criticism was that D66 mostly criticized the system, whereas the FP mostly criticized the 'elites' and the sitting government on their agricultural policies.

Koen Vossen, Gerrit Voerman, and Paul Lucardie all name the period in between 1963 and 1967 a populist period, simply because two parties claimed wanted to take away power from elites and give it back to the people.⁵² The concept of populism, however, does not fully explain their success, as it is merely a 'thin ideology' with just two central notions: viewing the people as a homogenous, righteous pure group, while viewing the elites as corrupt, and secondly the idea that politics should be an expression of the 'general will of the people'.

Nonetheless, both sides advocated more bottom-up politics and criticized democracy, although this should be seen more as political distrust instead of populism, following Rosanvallons reasoning. But political distrust had different guises and definitions, and Van Mierlo and Koekoek managed to stir this up in different ways. But how did they define their distrust? And how far did their distrust in the existing political system go? D66 wanted to introduce reforms, which Van Mierlo presented as his radical utopian democracy, while Boer Koekoek no longer trusted the big established parties. Besides this, the common factor between the two parties was their charismatic leadership. Distrust on the one hand and leadership on the other are key factors in Manin and Rosanvallons theories, so they will be interesting to analyze to see how they stack up against each other when looking at these new parties.

⁵² Koen Vossen, 'Op zoek naar populisten in de Nederlandse geschiedenis', *Christen Democratische Verkenningen* 1:1 (2011) 43-51, pg. 48.

Using the sources

The most interesting type of source that will be used are the 'broadcasts for political parties', or the '*Zendtijd voor Politieke Partijen*'. For D66 the famous TV commercial by Hans van Mierlo will be used, which was broadcast during the *Zendtijd voor Politieke Partijen*. In the commercial, we see Van Mierlo walking through Amsterdam philosophizing about the wrongs with Dutch democracy and telling himself that he 'needed to do something about it'. This provides a special insight into Van Mierlo's political style. All commercials for the Farmers Party will also be analyzed. In addition, newspaper articles will serve as a source. Mainly the newspapers *De Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Handelsblad* and *Het Vrije Volk* will be used, as these papers paid the most attention to respectively Koekoek and Van Mierlo, and found them both the most interesting.

When analyzing the sources, theories on media by Rosanvallon and Manin will be used. Both see media as a big change in democracy, but their definition of that change is different. Simply put, for Rosanvallon, media would be a form of counter-democratic power of oversight, as it could act as vigilance. Media would be seen as a bottom-up mechanic through which voters could influence politicians. However, for Manin media would act as a top-down structure, through which politicians could influence voters. When looking at the newspaper-articles and television items, the way in which the medium was used will be analyzed further. Secondary sources will provide for the historical context. For this, the works of Henk te Velde, Remieg Aerts and Koen Vossen will be used.

D66: analysis and results

A crisis of representative democracy? The gap between people and politics

After 1945, besides the existence of the short-lived *Nederlandse Volksbeweging* (NVB), politics were relatively stable. The traditionally big parties, the *Katholieke Volkspartij* (KVP), *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA), and *Antirevolutionaire Partij* (ARP), were frequently part of coalitions and could count on a loyal foundation of voters.⁵³ Every four years, people would mostly vote the same, and swing votes were minimal: only a few seats would change from one party to another. This all changed in 1967, when D66 and the FP remarkably won seven seats each, and the PvdA and KVP respectively lost six and eight seats. This chapter will focus on how D66 changed representative democracy and how it relates to the theories of Rosanvallon and Manin.

D66 was officially founded on the fifteenth of September in 1966, when they announced their 'radical' democratic views in a short paper called '*Appeal to every Dutch person who is concerned about the serious devaluation of our democracy*'. The presentation was done in The Hague, at *Nieuwspoort*, a press center at the Dutch parliament, where a lot of journalists were gathered for the press conference. After receiving a lot of positive feedback, a month later Hans van Mierlo, Hans Gruijters, Peter Baehr and Erik Visser, signed themselves up at the election committee in October 1966 as *Politieke Partij Democraten '66* so they could participate in the upcoming elections of February 1967.⁵⁴

At the elections in early 1967, they would win seven seats, a phenomenal result for a new party in that period. The PvdA, where they probably got their most voters from, lost six seats, and the Christian parties combines got just under 50% of the votes in the first time in history, also due to the FP winning seven seats who attracted many Christians. This is why

⁵³ Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 295.

⁵⁴ Hans Gruijters and Hans van Mierlo, *Appèl aan iedere Nederlander die ongerust is over de ernstige devaluatie van onze democratie* (Amsterdam 1966).

many historians speak of a political landslide, and a crisis of democracy: voters no longer favored big parties and interesting leaders who arose in new media (television) suddenly became important.

If Van Mierlo was the image of the party, Hans Gruijters was the idealist of the party. Gruijters was kicked out of the VVD after he refused to attend the wedding between crown princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg, and was a progressive left-liberal, and was actually the one who wanted to start the movement, but later asked Van Mierlo to be the chairman. Their political ideas were somewhat similar to the old '*doorbraakgedachte*'; they wanted to create a breakthrough in politics. The system should be like the Westminster model, with a progressive party and a conservative party. They wanted to shake up the system.⁵⁵ D66 were in favor of chosen prime-minister, just like in the United States, and a district system, to increase the bond between citizens and politicians.⁵⁶ They also wanted to completely get rid of the Senate, which was not brought up by any other party before. This set them apart, and surely played a role in why they were perceived as refreshing and, for some, radical.

But they were also somewhat populist, mostly from a redistributionist perspective. For example, Van Mierlo wanted to invest a lot more into developmental aid. His proposal was that the World Bank should have full sovereignty and control over nations developmental aid budgets. They also wanted better salaries for middle-class people. Since Lucardie and Voerman also say they were 'semi populist', since they never spoke of the people as a homogenous group, they did want to shake up the socio-economics. In a later commercial, where they interviewed captain of football-club Feyenoord, Dick Sneijder, the captain also mentioned better salaries for working class people as one of the main ideas of D66 and that he would vote for them because of this.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 319.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

⁵⁷ See the website of the VPRO: https://www.vpro.nl/speel~WO_VPRO_041547~zpp-1973-zendtijd-voor-politieke-partijen-d66-bekende-nederlanders~.html [consulted 07-01-2021].

Another central point in D66's political distrust was that they criticized lobbyists and technocrats⁵⁸, because they would obstruct the citizen from participating in politics. Politics had, at that time, evolved into a complicated game of chess, which was too challenging for the 'normal' citizen to understand. D66 was also called the Farmers' Party for intellectuals, since both criticized the political system.⁵⁹ But they did not criticize the government on their practical and policies as such, but wanted to improve the already existing foundations of representative government: a counter-democratic mechanism.

D66 did not get much done in changing the system, but they did manage to get some reforms through, which was the abolishment of mandatory voting. The philosophy of D66 on citizen participation was that it happened voluntarily. Even though participation should be improved and should be a possibility, it should also happen willingly. Therefore they wanted to abolish mandatory voting, which in 1970 happened after the law passed the vote and was adopted by an overwhelming majority.⁶⁰ This resulted in a turnout of just 68,9% at the State Elections of 1970, which was 94,6% at the previous election. However, many politicians, especially members of D66, saw this as an improvement because they thought that no individual should be forced by the government to participate.⁶¹

More in line with Rosanvallons '*Age of Distrust*', Wim de Jong has characterized D66 as 'libertarian'.⁶² The party wanted more freedom for individuals, more political participation, and more control over authority. They wanted to break the governmental clique of 'regents', bureaucrats and liberalize the citizen and civil society. In De Jongs view, this criticism was also more important than their actual constitutional program. Participation for the individual was their key point. They were not in favor of referenda back then, and also did not want a jury in court, even though A.D. Belinfante, a liberal

⁵⁸ De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?*, 152.

⁵⁹ Voerman and Lucardie, *Populisten in de polder*, 29.

⁶⁰ De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?*, 174.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 175.

lawyer, pleaded for this during that time. Nevertheless, this could also implies that the control of authorities was more important over the implementation of a district system and a chosen prime minister.

This can be demonstrated by one of the external factors that historians think have contributed to their foundation. For example, their campaign was kickstarted by the ‘Night of Schmelzer’, which left many voters in discontent about democracy. The PvdA thought they were getting ‘backstabbed’ by the KVP, and the political right saw fundamental flaws in how politicians were not acting in service of the general will of the public. Van Mierlo played into this sentiment and saw this as evidence of a flawed system.

While D66 had an extensive, radical political program, these ideas were not as important as the image of Van Mierlo and his personality. According to political scientist Samuel Popkin, many voters would not even fully read party-programs or party-affiliated publications.⁶³ Leaders however, could function as a spokesperson for that program, and it therefore became much more important how qualified a leader was in translating their ideas to the public. The next paragraph will analyze how Van Mierlo managed to do this.

Van Mierlo and his leadership

Many historians have concentrated on the ideas of D66, and while they were important to an extent, less have focused on the presentation and image of the party and its leader, Hans van Mierlo. He was unknown before the foundation of D66, but D66 quickly rose in popularity, most likely because of him, his image and his political style. The party contrasted itself with established politicians, and presented themselves as young, fresh, progressive, and ‘different’. Politics was no longer something conducted by old men at their desks, but reached people’s living rooms via television, and

⁶³ Samuel Popkin, *The reasoning voter: communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns* (Chicago 1991), pg. 7.

became more focused on the antics of Van Mierlo, who quickly managed to rise in popularity.⁶⁴ The importance of his youth was probably a factor, as in 1963, the voting age went down to 21.⁶⁵

Although Van Mierlo was one of the first charismatic, young and attractive politicians in The Netherlands, he was not the first in the world. According to many young, progressive people, Van Mierlo was seen as the 'Dutch Kennedy'.⁶⁶ Although many did not view him as such, he got the nickname after the *New York Times* published an article on the frontpage, depicting Van Mierlo celebrating after his famous win during the election of 1967.⁶⁷ His party was also called 'D-sexy-sex', instead of D66, because of Van Mierlo's sex appeal.⁶⁸ D66 did not just want to 'Americanize' the political system, but his political style became more 'American' as well.

Before Van Mierlo, there have been other strong leaders, or 'leaders of the people'. Abraham Kuyper, the leader of the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* (ARP) who led a cabinet from 1901 to 1905, is often mentioned as the first populist leader in The Netherlands. He was loved by the people, and was more of a nationalistic leader than a strict parliamentarian. He wanted to be a leader of the people, and saw himself as the representative of Protestants in The Netherlands. Other popular leaders before the Second World War were Domela Nieuwenhuijs, leader of the *Social-Democratic Bond* (SDB), and Pieter Jelles Troelstra, leader of the same SDB, which later became the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) in The Netherlands.⁶⁹

This shift from parliamentarianism towards the increasing importance of political leaders is dated back to the end of the 19th century by

⁶⁴ Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 305.

⁶⁵ De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?*, 140.

⁶⁶ 'De nieuwe democraten', *Elsevier*, 25-02-1967.

⁶⁷ <https://decorrespondent.nl/2849/hoer-d66-symbool-ging-staan-voor-het-einde-van-de-democratie/109529805-7b4bdfbb> [consulted 28-11-2020].

⁶⁸ "Profiel van Van Mierlo en zijn 'D sexy-sex'", *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 25-02-1967.

⁶⁹ Henk te Velde, *Stijlen van leiderschap: persoon en politiek van Thorbecke tot Den Uyl* (Amsterdam 2002), pg 58.

political historian Henk te Velde, when political parties came about and party-democracy emerged all over Europe.⁷⁰ Before that, politicians were just civil servants, with mostly a background in constitutional law, and were not interested in the public or the people at all, let alone to represent them. Most saw themselves as the elites who knew better and thought the public would have a negative influence on policy.

In the sixties, leadership again became important, this time boosted by the widespread usage of television. Leadership was not just speaking to crowds and leading a group of people anymore, but became more affiliated with ‘image’ and ‘personality’ instead of pure rhetoric. This is where Van Mierlo comes in, as the first ‘charismatic’ leader in The Netherlands, and one could say that, together with the rise of Hendrik Koekoek from the FP, audience democracy emerged in The Netherlands at that time.

De Telegraaf specifically focused on his character. Although he was not someone who would ‘storm the world’ according to the editors, Van Mierlo was ‘robust, romantic, profound, and beloved’.⁷¹ The author of the article mentioned that this was most likely the way that ‘his friends would also describe him’. The portrait of Van Mierlo went on to describe him as the ‘maverick’ of politics, and emphasized how Van Mierlo was different from others.⁷² It also showed a picture of Van Mierlo, together with his wife Olla and daughter Marieke.

Another portrait, by the *Leeuwarder Courant*, focused on Van Mierlo's character. The article emphasized how quickly Van Mierlo gained his image: within one year he was a well-known politician. This was mostly due to his ‘communication skills, his energetic but warm appearance, perfect voice, and humble but insinuating personality’.⁷³ The authors interviewed campaign manager Martin Veltman, who admitted that it was intended that Van Mierlo

⁷⁰ Te Velde, *Stijlen van leiderschap*, 59.

⁷¹ ‘Portret van de jongste partijleider: Mr. Hans van Mierlo: ’t buitenbeentje’, *De Telegraaf*, 17-02-1967.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Campagne D’66 gericht op ‘clean imago’: Mr. Hans van Mierlo: het ‘smoel’ van een partij”, *Leeuwarder Courant*, 23-02-1967.

would come across as a person that their target audience would want to identify with: ‘our program is the product, Van Mierlo is our packaging’, he said. Veltman also told the interviewer that he was inspired by John F. Kennedys speeches, which were ‘calm, clean, textually well composed and with a clear message’.⁷⁴ Not only did Veltman advise Van Mierlo on communication, but advised him to wear a better suit and told him to go to the barber as well, which shows how important he was in the campaign and was meant to be the face of the party. Veltman was also asked what he thought of the ‘caravan of the Labour Party’. His answer was that he thought it was ‘a bit of a carnival, and would not fit the political style of D66, which is why they mostly concentrated on media performances, because the team of professionals around Van Mierlo thought it would be more beneficial than campaigning the old way.’⁷⁵

Another newspaper spoke of Van Mierlo as the person bringing ‘excitement’ to politics.⁷⁶ They mentioned that during a debate in March, Van Mierlo was lively debating the new plan of the cabinet of the confessional Piet de Jong. ‘Through numerous interruptions, Van Mierlo forced the members of cabinet to answer and justify their policies.’⁷⁷ He somewhat distrusted the other politicians, which made him a ‘leader of the people’, not through speaking to crowds, but also through mobilizing distrust, Rosanvallon would say. Van Mierlo was not a politician, but a journalist, and managed to create a citizen movement: a counter-democratic force based in civil society.

But Van Mierlo was mostly renowned for his ‘charisma’. Van Mierlo was one of the first politicians who placed a lot of attention on character and personality. This shows by many portraits of Van Mierlo on television and in the newspapers, who all saw him as a relatively competent leader who was completely able to change the system. Not one newspaper article spoke

⁷⁴ “Campagne D’66 gericht op ‘clean imago’: Mr. Hans van Mierlo: het ‘smoel’ van een partij”, *Leeuwarder Courant*, 23-02-1967.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ ‘Mr. Van Mierlo zorgde voor veel opwinding’, *Leeuwarder Courant*, 21-04-1967.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

negatively of him, besides some interviews with members of the Farmers' Party.

Van Mierlo presented himself as new, fresh, and young. Remieg Aerts also mentioned his youthful and refreshing appearance as a big cause for Van Mierlo's popularity.⁷⁸ With presenting himself this way, he appealed to a certain group. Individuals would be able to identify with Van Mierlo, which created a collective of companions, like Manin argued would happen in an audience democracy.⁷⁹

With his style of politics, and 'charming' personality, he was appealing to the people. Moreover, like Veltman described, Van Mierlo was specifically packaged as a product that was to be 'sold' to the public. Even though Gruijters was the party's ideological leader, and Van Mierlo was the chairman of the party, the early members of D66 voted for Van Mierlo to lead the party with an overwhelming majority.⁸⁰ This shows the impact of his short media-campaign, which made him stand out from other founders like Gruijters, Baehr and Visser.

Historians like Gerrit Voerman and Douwe Jan Elzinga also argued that the personalization of politics could be deduced from the way posters, buttons and political billboards changed. Before the elections of 1967, parties mostly used symbols in their propaganda material. Around 1967 however, posters were starting to portray the faces of politicians.⁸¹ Moreover, Voerman added, the fact that after the 1967 elections they were mostly affiliated with Koekoek and Van Mierlo shows how important these the image of these leaders was in changing the political landscape.

Van Mierlo and his relationship with the media

⁷⁸ Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 305.

⁷⁹ Toonen, 'Charisma in de Nederlandse politiek', 82.

⁸⁰ 'Mr. Van Mierlo lijstrekker van Democraten '66, *De Telegraaf*, 28-12-1966.

⁸¹ Gerrit Voerman and Douwe Jan Elzinga, *Om de stembus: verkiezingsaffiches 1918-1998* (Amsterdam 2002), pg. 17.

Television played a big part in the popularity of Van Mierlo, and the campaign of D66 was mostly focused on creating professional commercials. Van Mierlo is famously known among historians for his impactful media performance. Van Mierlo could count on his friends in the media, according to Remieg Aerts. Van Mierlo used to work at *Algemeen Handelsblad*, one of the biggest newspapers at the time. Because of this, he knew how important media was, but also how media worked.⁸² They set up a campaign plan with the help of a commercials company and worked together with a well-renowned director, Leen Timp, who had won the *Gouden Televizier* (a prestigious television award in The Netherlands) for best director that year.⁸³

The famous commercial in which Van Mierlo walks through the streets of Amsterdam was different from the other commercial by political parties. It did not show a politician talking in the House of Representatives, nor did it show Van Mierlo sitting behind a desk, like usually was the case. Van Mierlo was seen slowly walking the streets of Amsterdam, sharing his thoughts with the viewers on how democracy should be improved.⁸⁴ The short film was impactful, and many were intrigued by the new politics. In this commercial, Van Mierlo presented himself as a fresh, motivated politician. At the end of the commercial, he walks into a television studio and says ‘now I have to tell this right’, which can also imply that the way politicians speak, or present their views was more important than the views themselves.

The commercial was directed and written by a professional company, and the text was written by Martin Veltman. Meanwhile, traditional parties did not invest as much in television programs. Big traditional parties were still mainly touring the country, handing out flyers, and talking to their following in real life. For example, the Labour Party’s leader Jaap Burger said during a congress that television ‘did not interest him as much’. This shows in how their television items were simple and common. In one of the first items by the PvdA, Joop den Uyl, the party’s parliamentary leader, sat in his chair

⁸² Aerts, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 304.

⁸³ Toonen, *Op zoek naar charisma*, 145.

⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxO2hloScpE> [consulted 18-11-2021].

behind his desk, talking about ideology and the party's views, but he did so in a rather dull and static way compared to Van Mierlo, as Aerts and De Jong have written.

Remarkable is the amount of portraits of Van Mierlo written by newspapers in the years 1966 and 1967, prior and after the elections. Every newspaper was interested in the 35-year old politician who was the most successful newcomer in politics until then, having been a journalist up to April 1966. They mostly depicted him as a young, charismatic but also as 'ordinary', contrasting him with older politicians who were presumptuous and pedantic. *De Telegraaf* even wrote that this was the main reason for D66's success. In 1967 they wrote that 'the youthful appearance of Van Mierlo was probably more important than their program, attracting many young voters who probably only know that the party wants something different'.⁸⁵ The author assumed that most of their young voters did not even read their program. Whether he was right or not, it is interesting that even newspapers at the time were more interested in Van Mierlo, and less in the party's ideological views.

Not just the usage of media was 'professionalized' by D66, but Van Mierlo came across as a verbally strong intellectual and capable leader in his media appearances. He was not just charming, but also presented himself often as 'Mr. Van Mierlo', referencing his degree in Law. Magazine Elsevier for example, did not mention his charisma, but saw Van Mierlo as refreshing, developed, voluble, and wise young man.⁸⁶ He also came across as confident and self-assured when asked about many seats he expected to 'steal' away from the KVP and PvdA. 'As least six or more, or I would have quit ahead', Van Mierlo answered to a journalist after a D66 congress. With his rhetoric, he came across as trusted, according to newspaper *Het Vrije Volk*.⁸⁷ These type of articles show how praised Van Mierlo was in the media, and was received by many as their 'savior' of democracy.

⁸⁵ 'Een welkome afwisseling: het jeugdige gezicht van de partij die wat anders wil', *De Telegraaf*, 18-02-1967.

⁸⁶ 'De nieuwe democraten', *Elsevier*, 25-02-1967.

⁸⁷ 'Enquête wijst uit: Van Mierlo heeft meeste vertrouwen', *Het Vrije Volk*, 12-01-1970.

Van Mierlo did not participate in many debates, since he was a new politician, and nobody expected him to get seven seats. However, he did give a lot of press conferences. In these presentations, Van Mierlo touched on the things what the political system was missing, and expressed how ideology was not important to him at all, showcasing how he played a part in creating audience democracy. ‘Discussing ‘old issues like the ‘*schoolstrijd*’ (a tug of war between liberals and confessionals on whether confessional schools should be subsidized), and the ‘*sociale kwestie*’ (an attempt by socialists to improve factory laborers’ work environments), was no longer needed’, Van Mierlo said in February 1967.⁸⁸ A new age demanded a new party, he argued. Instead of big parties based on ideology, Van Mierlo wanted the system to be based on pragmatics. Moreover, politics needed a ‘strong leader who represented these pragmatic ideals’⁸⁹, which shows how he personally played a role in creating an audience democracy.

Conclusion: counter, or audience democracy?

On the 17th of December, D66 broadcast a commercial where Van Mierlo and Hans Gruijters presented their party and ideas at a convention of D66.⁹⁰ Van Mierlo touched on how amazed he was by rapid growth of the party. Gruijters later expressed why D66 was founded, and told the 500 members who were present that it was meant to ‘give the citizen its grip back on the government’: the central notion of a counter-democracy: mobilizing distrust was certainly a trend in the 60s.

Although D66 criticized the system, they did only criticize certain parts of it, and did not criticize the system or democracy as a whole. They were still democrats, which even is the name of the party itself. They only

⁸⁸ Menno van der Land, *Tussen ideaal en illusie: de geschiedenis van D66 1966-2003* (Den Haag 2003), pg. 36.

⁸⁹ De Jong, *Van wie is de burger?*, 171.

⁹⁰ https://www.vpro.nl/speel~WO_VPRO_038826~nos-17-december-1966-d-66-presenteert-zich-toespraken-van-mierlo-en-gruijters~.html [consulted 03-01-2021].

wanted to reform certain aspects of democracy to make it better. They were convinced that voters needed more influence, and therefore mainly wanted two things: 1) a chosen prime minister, 2) the reintroduction of the district system. Even though they wanted a 'radical democracy', and may have called this their ambition, Rosanvallon would probably view this as an expression of his '*powers of oversight*'. Although they thought democracy was in decline, they sought to improve it, and were rewarded by voters and citizens with their electoral win.

Both theories can explain and describe how D66 could rise, but Manin would fit better. Van Mierlo did stir up political culture, but not the political system. Many historians focus on the 60s as a 'crisis of democracy', or call at least call it a turbulent time for the democratic system, like Aerts and De Jong. However, after analyzing the sources I would conclude that the style of leadership and growing importance image were the bigger change. For example, when looking at the fact that mostly young people and women voted for D66, it can be deduced that this was mostly because of Van Mierlo, and not because of the specific changes the party wanted to make.

Manin also argued that distinctive leaders are becoming more interesting when the traditional big parties are becoming more alike. The *Katholieke Volkspartij* (KVP), *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA), *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD), and *Anti-Revolutionaire Partije* (ARP) all became more alike after the Second World War, when the goal was rebuilding the nation based on broad coalitions. The result was that there was not only less to choose for voters, but that leaders could make the biggest difference between parties.

There was definitely a call for democratic reform. However, this was also due to the time period. As Arend Lijphart and historians have argued, the *ontzuiling* and individualization lead to the younger generation not feeling represented anymore by traditional parties. *Provo* and anti-authorial movements were pressurizing the government to maintain a healthy democracy. This would be a perfect example of counter-democracy.

However, while the success of D66 can be viewed as a counter-democratic movement, it was not fundamentally caused by the mobilization

of distrust from a bottom-up perspective, but by campaigning and using civil society and media as a way to gain influence. Therefore the theory of Manin would be most fitting, since Van Mierlo was actively trying make politics into a theater, targeted an audience, and gained a following through media appearances.

The Farmers' Party: analysis and results

A crisis of democracy? Populism and political distrust

Alongside D66, the Farmers' Party was just as successful when looking at amount of seats they won, and they played the same part in changing political culture and representative democracy in The Netherlands at the end of the 60s. The FP was founded in 1958, with an announcement in *De Vrije Boer*, saying that the FP was meant for 'the Dutch people as a whole, and seeks to battle the guided economics on principal grounds'.⁹¹ The rhetoric of the FP was, in their early years, mostly directed at working class rural peoples and small farmers.

At the elections of 1959, they only received 0.6% of the votes, and didn't reach the electoral threshold. In 1963 however, they won three seats in the House of Representatives, with 2,1% of the votes. During these years, the leader of the party Hendrik 'boer' Koekoek managed to stir up politics and was one of the first successful political newcomers in parliamentary history. During the 1967 election, the FP was even more successful, gaining four more seats, reaching a total of seven.

The FP started out as just an agricultural-populist party, according to historian Koen Vossen. However, after 1963 the party slowly started turning into a right-wing populist party, attracting many members from other smaller parties, like *de Liberale Staatspartij*, *Liberale Unie*, *Nieuwe Democratische Partij*, and the *Partij Economisch Appèl*.⁹² Slowly the party gained every voter that was on the far right of the political spectrum. According to Vossen, this was mostly due to Hendrik Koekoek, who at 1965 was voted 'most popular politician' in many surveys.⁹³

The party's program was primarily based on economic freedom for farmers. They wanted to 'give farmers their farm back', and gained popularity

⁹¹ Vossen, 'De andere jaren zestig', 256.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 257.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 258.

with the rhetoric that farmers did not have enough judicial and political control over their own farms.⁹⁴ The FP also opposed the increasing of taxes, and the decreasing in price of farm products. Farmers, who were ‘already working hard as it is’, should not be taxed even further.⁹⁵ The FP wanted to battle the ‘mismanagement’ of the governments of the past 20 years, which had caused economic decline for Farmers in their view.⁹⁶

Vossen and others were also right to say the FP was populist. Just like D66, they were redistributionist populist. Nico Verlaan, the most important member of the FP after Koekoek, wanted to cut 100 million on housing construction, and people with salaries above average would have to pay more taxes. The FP wanted more freedom for farmers. The big parties however, wanted to implement more rules and expand the state apparatus.

The FP also criticized D66, saying they were a ‘far-left party’, who did not care for workers and farmers in their own country. Nico Verlaan said on national television that D66 was effectively campaigning against the interests of the Netherlands.⁹⁷ The FP redistributionist populism was based on a nativist approach, and was to be in favor of rural workers, while D66’s version of populism was more focused on the influence of citizens and the redistribution of wealth throughout the middle class and on a global basis.

But like D66, the FP also criticized the elites for the stepping down of cabinet Cals after the ‘Night of Schmelzer’. They thought this was undemocratic, and most importantly, voter deception. They especially looked at the fall of Cals’ administration from the voter’s perspective, and noted that they were ‘betrayed’ by the people who voted them in office. This was brought up by Nico Verlaan in one of the parties’ television commercials.⁹⁸ Here we see Koekoek and the FP actively mobilizing political distrust towards the government.

⁹⁴ “Hendrik Koekoek: ‘boer is niet vrij op eigen bedrijf’”, *Friese Koerier*, 30-03-1963.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ <https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/11054/> [consulted 12-01-2021].

⁹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0zmDdfk2qU&t=499s> [consulted 14-01-2021].

⁹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8TzhP1LLTM> [consulted 21-11-2020].

The FP criticized not democracy, but the government. For Koekoek, ‘negligent’, was one of his favorite words to use when he spoke about the government. In many debates and speeches in the House of Representatives he criticized the government for being negligent. This is why the party is also seen as a ‘reactionary party’, or ‘anti-establishment party’. For Koen Vossen, this is also the result of historians mostly focusing on the sixties as a progressive age, with younger people, women and social rights movements. The image of Koekoek, a conservative, but popular leader, did not fit well within the broad historiography on the 60s.⁹⁹

But they also criticized the opposition. They criticized the parliamentary leader of the PvdA, who supposedly did not prevent his party from making natural gas-related trade deals. Verlaan spoke to his following saying this directly impacted farmers, because of natural gas getting pricier while at the same time being important for farmers to run their farm.¹⁰⁰

Koekoek also criticized the fusing of companies in the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises, as this undermined ‘the small entrepreneur’. He promised on television that the FP was going to make sure that these small businessmen didn’t lose their job, and they did not only make this promise to farmers. They also ‘claimed’ to represent bargees, fishermen, and other rural workers. They also criticized subsidies for art, festivals, and theater, which were mostly ‘obscene pieces’ in their eyes. The FP wanted to cut on other abstract and city-related subsidies, as well as the catering industry.

The main spearhead of the FP was the criticism on the *Landbouwschap*, a semi-governmental organization that was primarily tasked with setting rules and look after the interests of the collectivized agricultural sector.¹⁰¹ Smaller farmers saw this as an infringement on their rights and were starting to dislike the organization, and Koekoek managed to become a spokesperson for them. Even back in 1963, this was the main conceptual idea driving the party to fame. Later that year, many newspaper interviews with

⁹⁹ Vossen, ‘De andere jaren zestig’, 246.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8TzhP1LLTM&t=13s> [consulted 14-01-2021].

¹⁰¹ Anne Bos and Charlotte Brand, ‘Koekoek op de barricaden’, *Openbaar Bestuur* 3:1 (2008) 19-20, 19.

Koekoek were about how farmers were supposedly 'not free on their own land'.¹⁰² In one interview, Koekoek went on to promote to strengthen market economy. Therefore Koekoeks party was mainly a right-wing party, economically and culturally.

With the upcoming elections of 1967, the FP presented themselves less like a party just for the small farmer. In their program for 1967, they explicitly mention that the party 'would stand up for every group who was neglected or whose interests were not pursued by the government'.¹⁰³ In the media, the FP also presented themselves more and more as a party that wanted to represent more people, and increased their statements on how the government should be supervised and that they wanted less governmental rules.

Where Rosanvallon said political distrust was a good thing, with the FP this was not necessarily the case. This is because their distrust was not a 'counter-democratic' form, but looked more like opposing certain governmental institutions, the *Landbouwschap*, not to make them better, but to reduce their influence. However, the FP did not fundamentally criticize democracy, and was not opposed to it. They only criticized bureaucracy, ongoing centralization and the presumptuous character of established big parties. Thus, political distrust as a broad concept was not the reason for the success of the FP. Their success was - to an extent - more so based on anti-establishment sentiment, which they also sparked amongst their voters. However, this anti-establishment feeling was mostly mobilized by their leader, Hendrik Koekoek. His role will be analyzed in the next paragraph.

Koekoek and his style of leadership

Hendrik 'boer' Koekoek embodied the Farmers' Party, and he knew it was important for him to be heard and seen by the members of his party. He

¹⁰² "Hendrik Koekoek: 'boer is niet vrij op eigen bedrijf'", *Friese Koerier*, 30-03-1963.

¹⁰³ <https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/11054/> [consulted 12-01-2021].

wanted to establish a connection with them via television and media, where other, more traditional politicians still shied away from the public.¹⁰⁴ In fact, most traditional politicians ‘feared’ the new device. P.S. Gerbrandy, member of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), expressed concerns due to television giving rise to immoral values. Also its cultural influence was feared. Gerbrandy stated that television would ‘cut right through society and ordinary family life’.¹⁰⁵

He did not highlight his image over and over, and it is hard to say if Koekoek intentionally presented himself as a stolid, sober farmer, or if he really was like that and did not invent any image. But nevertheless, he was an eloquent speaker in its simplest form.¹⁰⁶ He tried to connect his image to that of ordinary farmers. He presented himself as ‘The Free Farmer’: a dystopian image of a farmer that would have full sovereignty over their farm. Dystopian or not, farmers reacted to this image, and saw Koekoek as their representative. His speaking style was not complex, but it was simplistic, and it appealed to the masses, especially rural people could identify with his dialect. After winning three seats at the elections of 1963, he rose to fame, not just as a representative, but as Boer Koekoek, and became somewhat of a cult figure.

At party meetings, Koekoek was always the first speaker. At a protest against the lowering of milk prices, Koekoek ridiculed the idea, which was imposed upon farmers by the ‘big parties’. In dialect, he managed to distinguish himself from other leaders. This might be why many people voted for him, because he was not like the other politicians. According to Manins theory, because Koekoek had created this image for himself that was distinct from the universal image of a politician at that time, this would make it easier for his following to identify with him.

When looking at his image, he presented himself as an anti-parliamentarian. He did not like debating inside parliament. When the

¹⁰⁴ Van Kessel and Krouwel, ‘Van vergankelijke radicale dissidenten’, 308.

¹⁰⁵ Bank, ‘Televisie in de jaren zestig’, 53.

¹⁰⁶ Vossen, ‘De andere jaren zestig’, 258.

minister of Agriculture told Koekoek that the House of Representatives was the place to debate, Koekoek replied that he ‘did not have much interests in debating’, and ‘never really valued the House of Representatives’.¹⁰⁷ According to political historians Anne Bos and Charlotte Brand, the success of the FP was only due to their leader. Beginning every statement with ‘we, from the Farmers’ Party’, and his provincial accent, he managed to acquire an underdog position, which made him attractive.¹⁰⁸

He also clashed with other representatives numerous times, which turned into quite the show according to newspapers. For example, in 1966 a representative of the VVD, J. Baas, critiqued FP-member H. Adams for his affiliation with the old collaborating party, the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (NSB). After Adams then insulted him, ironically calling Baas a ‘peasant’, Baas then punched the FP-member.¹⁰⁹ A month later, Koekoek insinuated that another VVD-member, Zegering Hadders, had reported multiple pilots to the German occupants. Koekoek could not back up his claims with evidence and a resolution of disapproval was called for by Parliament. The motion was adopted by 102 votes against the two votes of the FP-members who were present that time.¹¹⁰

Koekoek managed to present himself as the *underdog*, which led to people sympathizing with him as he stood out from the rest of the Members of Parliament, who used difficult words and were mostly busy with dossier files and their laws and policies. Koekoek, coming across as an ordinary, straight-forward politician was attractive to a lot of people. This can also be derived from the fact that not only ‘hardcore’, smaller farmers voted for him. During the elections of 1966, 25% of the people that voted FP lived in cities with 70.000 inhabitants or more.¹¹¹ Koekoeks ‘friendly’ image was also mentioned in many letters sent to newspapers. In *Nieuwsblad van het*

¹⁰⁷ Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (HTK) 1965-1966, 1658.

¹⁰⁸ Bos and Brand, ‘Koekoek op de barricaden’, 19.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Ongekend incident in kamergebouw: senatoren schelden en slaan’, *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 22-09-1966.

¹¹⁰ Bos and Brand, ‘Koekoek op de barricaden’, 19.

¹¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agDnW1UbGgk> [consulted 06-01-2021].

Noorden from april 1966, a reader mentioned that the FP attracted two kinds of voters: firstly, 'hardcore' farmers, and secondly 'people who thought Koekoek came across as very sympathetic in the television items of the FP'.¹¹²

'Koekoek is everywhere!': Koekoek and the media

Indefinitely, television was very important for the success of the Farmers' Party. In 1963, some farmers in Hollandscheveld, Koekoeks birthplace, did not pay their contribution to the '*Landbouwschap*'. Riots broke out, and the violence was firmly suppressed by police action. The event quickly turned violent and was extensively televised. Many farmers who saw the clashes between police and the 'free farmers' felt solidarity and empathy with their colleagues.¹¹³ Koekoek played a huge role in the riots, and declared himself the leader of the rioters, which made him very popular amongst smaller farmers.

Koekoek also played a key role in the commercials of the FP, in which mainly Koekoek is seen speaking at party congresses and meetings, and to a lesser extent his right-hand Nico Verlaan. Criticism was mainly voiced against the 'major parties' on how they were shying away from democratic values. There was also criticism of the political elites, who saw themselves as better than the people. "We consider the population to be 100% competent to make judgments," Koekoek said in the House of Representatives, thereby agitating against prime-minister Jo Cals (KVP), who previously said that 'newspaper readers were not capable of making any political decisions on complicated topic'.¹¹⁴

Not just commercials gave visibility to Koekoek. He also managed to win one of the first debates on national television in 1966 against his

¹¹² 'Boerenpartij: veel geschreeuw, weinig wol', *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 16-04-1966.

¹¹³ Vossen, 'De andere jaren zestig', 253.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8TzhP1LLTM&t=14s> [consulted 13-01-2021].

opponent from the ARP, Bouke Roolvink.¹¹⁵ The debate showed how personality was becoming more important than dull statements, even though they were factual. While Koekoek was not always right during the debate, with his political style he managed to put Roolvink on the defense, as he was reading files out loud trying to defend his point. Koekoek's simple criticism was not easy to deal with for Roolvink, according to newspapers. *De Telegraaf* reported the next day that Koekoek won the debate.¹¹⁶

At the bigger debates in 1966, before the upcoming elections, Koekoek was mostly not invited, but still, in a survey by the *Nederlands Instituut voor Publieke Opinie* (NIPO), Koekoek was one of the politicians that was 'most remembered' by people who watched television, as was reported by the *Algemeen Handelsblad* in 1963.¹¹⁷ Koekoek was often on television in the news. For example, many times when he was speaking in the House of Representatives he got laughed at by other Members of Parliament whenever he did not understand a certain law or procedure.¹¹⁸ Certain people thought that this was 'not done', which can be deduced from the letters that readers sent to *De Telegraaf* and *The Haagsche Post*, where they expressed their sympathy for Koekoek whenever he got ridiculed inside the House of Representatives.¹¹⁹

When the elections of 1967 were coming up, media in general were interested in who these new, unorthodox politicians were. In the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, there was a political portrait of the Members of Parliament from the FP.¹²⁰ In their analysis they gave credit to the Koekoek, who managed to achieve something big in their eyes. At the end, the authors touched on how the FP attracted a lot of old collaborators, and that it could be seen as a

¹¹⁵ Bank, 'Televisie in de jaren zestig', 68.

¹¹⁶ 'Koekoek versloeg Roolvink', *De Telegraaf*, 19-02-1966.

¹¹⁷ 'Het verkopen van gedachten', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 20-07-1963.

¹¹⁸ Vossen, 'De andere jaren zestig', 258.

¹¹⁹ 'Niet fair', *De Telegraaf*, 24-02-1966 & 'Boerenpartij', *De Tijd*, 09-02-1967.

¹²⁰ 'Politiek portret van een boerenfractie', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 06-06-1966.

backlash of anti-democratic values, but they end with saying that it is not 'unhealthy that farmers now would be able to have a voice in politics'.¹²¹

Although the campaign of D66 was a lot more professionalized, Koekoek managed to turn politics into theater by his media performances and image. Manin would say that Koekoek acted before an audience. He was entertaining for people. Koekoek even recorded songs: '*Koekoekslied*', and '*Boerenwals*', which were both used in broadcasts during the *Zendtijd voor Politieke Partijen*, and played at rural festivals that the party organized.¹²²

Important for Koekoeks success was the radio-platform *Radio Exploitatie Maatschappij* (REM). The REM was broadcasting from an island, illegally, which was in turn banned by the Dutch government.¹²³ Koekoek, on the other hand, publicly supported the station, which was very popular right before it was banned. He even appointed a former worker at REM as his secretary. The REM also endorsed Koekoek, and he became their spokesman in parliament. The REM would later become a part of the *Televisie Radio Omroep Stichting* (TROS), which would also battle - alongside Koekoek - against the ideologically divided public broadcasting system.

The newspaper *De Telegraaf* was very important for Koekoeks popularity as well. In an article published on the fourth of June, 1966, the newspaper even hypothesized that the FP would become a part of the government. The article, called '*Koekoek heeft oog op drie ministeries*', was an interview with Boer Koekoek, in which he stressed that the party would definitely want to govern, and would like to be appointed Minister of Agriculture.¹²⁴ Although the FP would only get seven seats in 1967, during the latter half of 1966 it was not weird to think the FP could be a coalition partner, since their party ranged around fifteen seats in the polls, and during the

¹²¹ 'Politiek portret van een boerenfractie', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 06-06-1966.

¹²² https://www.vpro.nl/speel~WO_VPRO_041551~over-de-landdag-nieuwe-oogst-presentatie-hentty-benninck-boerenpartij-zendtijd-voor-politieke-partijen-juli-1967~.html [consulted 14-01-2021].

¹²³ Vossen, 'De andere jaren zestig', 256.

¹²⁴ 'De boerenpartij is klaar: Koekoek heeft oog op drie ministeries', *De Telegraaf*, 04-06-1966.

provincial elections in March 1966, the FP got 6,7% of the vote. Still, Koekoek philosophizing about his role in cabinet was notable regarding at the time, he only had three seats, and the 6,7% of the votes he won during the elections in march would only give him ten seats. In this light, the interview could be seen as an attempt by Koekoek to make his image more 'serious', by showing he was capable and ready to govern.

De Telegraaf also commented positively on Koekoek after his debate versus Bouke Roolvink.¹²⁵ Not just the editors, but readers sent letters as well. One of them, J. van Bommel, praised Koekoek for being more eloquent than Roolvink, even though he was 'just a farmer'.¹²⁶ He thought it was not fair that Roolvink was attacking Koekoek with his own personal opinions. In June 1966, the newspaper also published a story headlining 'The character of Boer Koekoek', where the author compared him to Max Tilleur, one of The Netherlands biggest comedians at that time, confirming his image as an amusing leader on a political stage.¹²⁷

The name of their weekly newspaper, 'The Free Farmer', was also a historical term. It was used in relation to serfs: unfree farmers who would not own their land and had to serve their landlord. The farmer should not only fulfill his duties, but also has rights. This is what Koekoek never directly mentioned, but within his rhetoric the 'sovereign' farmer was always the underlying principle. The newspaper had a weekly editorial by Koekoek himself. Party members' letters were also published in the newspaper, often depicting Koekoek as a solid politician and describing him positively.¹²⁸ The FP continued to make the personality of Koekoek a central theme throughout publications of the magazine.

Often, Koekoek's image as 'The Free Farmer', would be supported by propaganda. The FP released many television items that would give farmers an image. For example, they made a song with a farmer who supposedly was

¹²⁵ 'Koekoek versloeg Roolvink', *De Telegraaf*, 19-02-1966.

¹²⁶ 'Niet fair', *De Telegraaf*, 24-02-1966.

¹²⁷ 'De figuur van Hendrik Koekoek', *De Telegraaf*, 14-06-1966.

¹²⁸ 'Boerenpartij', *De Tijd*, 09-02-1967.

sent to jail because he did not follow certain governmental guidelines. Members of the party praised him for this. They also showed a national get-together of farmers, called *Nieuwe Oogst* (new harvest), in 1966, on national television.¹²⁹ This ‘grand happening’, as Hetty Benninck (the anchor of the Party’s television items) called it, was an exhibition of farmers’ lives. It was a *faire* where farmers showed off their equipment and cattle, and had a chariot race which people could participate in. The commercial showed Koekoek talking to a big crowd at a ‘country day’ (*landdag*) from the FP on the 12th and 13th of July. While the commercial was obviously propaganda, farmers and potential voters could interpret the commercial as a documentary on how rural society was a community and how farmers all collectively supported the FP.¹³⁰ It heavily implied that the FP and the community of farmers were identical on a personal level, not on an ideological level: exactly how representation changed in the 60s and 70s according to Bernard Manin.

Conclusion: counter, or audience democracy?

When comparing the emergence of the FP to the theories of Rosanvallon and Manin, a few things come to light. Koekoek was an entertainer, literally and figuratively. When he spoke in the *Tweede Kamer*, it attracted a lot of media coverage, but he also was funny, and knew how to speak to a crowd. Another popular figure within the Farmers’ Party was Nico Verlaan, who was younger and more energetic than Koekoek. He also was humoristic, like Koekoek, and served as his right hand.¹³¹ The ‘theater and audience-metaphor’ in the theory of Manin is rightfully applicable here, where democracy turned into an

¹²⁹ https://www.vpro.nl/speel~WO_VPRO_041551~over-de-landdag-nieuwe-oogst-presentatie-hetty-benninck-boerenpartij-zendtijd-voor-politieke-partijen-juli-1967~.html [consulted 10-01-2021].

¹³⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmyuWhw15fE&t=1221s> [consulted 21-11-2020].

¹³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0zmDdfk2qU&t=499s> [consulted 18-01-2021].

audience democracy, where leaders were becoming the main product within the electoral market.

On the other hand, there was also political distrust. But this did not spring from the intention to change democracy radically. Moreover, it was not initiated by voters, but it was mainly a product that Koekoek tried to sell to the group of voters he claimed to represent. Koekoek did emphasize the gap between voter and politician. But nevertheless, he did represent the farmer, and perhaps closed the gap himself by entering politics. He was successful because of his image, which was a lot like how anyone would imagine how a typical farmer would act in The Hague. Many other smaller parties, like the Boerenpartij, participated during the elections of 1963, but did not win any seats, as Koen Vossen stated in his work. This would indicate that the The X-Factor, so to speak, was indeed Koekoek.

Therefore, looking at the FP, a crisis of democracy would be a little exaggerated. It would be better to say that there was a change in the way representation worked: it no longer happened through ideas, but through personalities. No longer were big parties, with broad ideologies setting the political stage, but smaller parties who stood for a certain smaller group in society entered the political landscape. The rise of television played a big part as well, as it was one of the main reasons why Koekoek managed to be visible and gained popularity.

After looking at the sources, Koekoeks political style was a deciding factor in his popularity and the success of the FP. The emergence of an audience democracy would even fit better with the FP than D66, because D66 actually had the intention of bettering the political system via institutionalizing political distrust. Koekoek therefore is the typical type of leader in Manins theory.

Conclusion

In this thesis, the goal was to find which theory fit better with the metamorphosis, or crisis of democracy in The Netherlands at the end of the sixties, and analyze changes in the way 'people' were represented. After looking at the sources and applying the used concepts, Manin's audience democracy would be best to describe the years between 1963 and 1967 in The Netherlands. Mostly this was because of three mechanics: viewing the electorate as a market that could be tapped into which professionalized politics. Secondly, a huge factor was the upcoming of television and the introduction of *Zendtijd voor Politieke Partijen*. Thirdly, leaders tried work on their image and emphasized their personality, rather than centering their rhetoric around an ideology.

Rosanvallon is an important thinker, but his theory is not as descriptive as the one by Manin. It is more of a recognition and historical law of democracy which resides in the understanding that citizens have certain 'powers' they can deploy to keep politicians in check. He therefore says political scientists and historians have massively underestimated the role of citizens and civil society within representative democracies. Rosanvallon puts emphasis on a bottom-up structure of democracy, while Manin puts emphasis on a top-down structure of democracy. Nevertheless, Manin would see elections a way for citizens to have influence, so he does not negate voters, but sees them as an audience that reacts to the political stage, rather than actually *deciding* the political stage, like they would via Rosanvallons 'counter-democratic' mechanisms.

While counter-democratic forces were resurging during the 60s, they were not new, but only took on new forms. Rosanvallons notion of political distrust is inherent to democracy, and also existed (although not as notable) before 1945. Therefore, the sixties has might have been a revitalization of counter-democracy, but there was no clear caesura. Manin, on the other hand, described 'principles' that were completely new in the 60s and 70s, and therefore his theory would be more fitting to describe how representative democracy changed in The Netherlands. Political distrust also was more of a

structural result of leaders using media as a corrective to democracy. Koekoek and Van Mierlo mobilized this distrust, but also 'battled' it through their leadership, and citizens voting for them meant that they were successful in doing this.

However, it should be mentioned that historians also negate the influence of D66 and FP. Radically changing democracy did not work and most of D66's ideals were not implemented. Nevertheless, these views mostly relate to the *political system*, while there have been changes in *political style*. And they had consequences for the future. As the historian Koen Vossen argued, Van Mierlo's style had a great influence on the style of later politicians, such as Hans Wiegel (VVD) and Dries van Agt (KVP), who both did not like the old style of parliamentarianism, came across as 'ordinary', and knew how to make relatively good use of the media compared their colleagues.

While D66 still exists today, the FP did not manage to stay alive for long. Mostly this was because of growing pressure and criticism towards the high amount of old collaborators that were connected to the party. Especially the 'J. Adams affaire' led to a breakup in the party's parliamentary group: four members split off from the FP and started their own party. After that the FP slowly died out, and was disbanded in 1981. D66 has grown to a big political party today, but they were not as big in the sixties as they are today. The FP also never exceeded seven seats in the House of Representatives, which was still not much compared to the KVP and PvdA. Thus, D66 and the FP did not fundamentally change representative democracy, but they did change political culture.

Moreover, there was not really a crisis of representative democracy, like Manin and Rosanvallon both would say. Van Mierlo and Koekoek also made a representative claim and wanted to reach a specific target group. Not only did they contribute to growing 'distrust', but at the same time they themselves created a relationship of trust with their constituencies, thus winning the vote of the voters. Therefore, they were not necessarily game-breakers of representative democracy, but rather game-breakers of political style. They did this mainly by making good use of the media, establishing a representative bond, and by entertaining an 'audience'. Therefore we should

mostly speak of an audience democracy developing in the Netherlands, for which the period between 1963 and 1967 is a clear historical example.

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