

Panel 3: Political discontent and anti-establishment politics

Chaired by: Claartje Brons, (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations) and Julien van Ostaaijen, (Tilburg University).

Dutch politics is adrift. The year 2002 is often seen as the turning point, a 'crisis year' according to some (e.g. see the theme issue of Bestuurskunde, fall of 2008). The rise of Pim Fortuyn on both national and local levels showed that fierce antagonism was possible in Dutch politics and was 'rewarded' by Dutch voters. Pim Fortuyn also launched the take off for a since then broadly audible sound of political discontent and anti establishment feelings. Eight year later, new parties and movements have arisen, such as Proud of the Netherlands (Trots op Nederland) and the Freedom Party (Partij voor de Vrijheid), that focus on similar themes (integration, safety) and all articulate strong anti-establishment sentiments. Regarding elections and elections polls, these movements (at least the Freedom Party) seem to appeal to a considerable part of the Dutch electorate. The latest European Parliamentary elections results show that the electoral room for parties that take an aversive position regarding 'established' or 'mainstream' politics by no means remains limited to the Netherlands.

Paper interests and connection to the NIG theme 'Citizens and governance'

In this panel we were interested in the previously described developments from both a citizens' perspective as a more institutional 'governance' perspective. What motivates citizens to support anti-establishment or 'populist' political parties? What has changed in citizens' attitudes and the supply side of politics that might explain their political discontent and choice for these new parties? On the other hand we were interested in the governance aspects that are attached once new political movements gain success. What can such political parties accomplish when winning elections and – probably even more important – gain government responsibility? We invite authors to develop papers on both these issues. We planned to discuss these papers and the general developments regarding this topic thoroughly during the NIG conference and possibly – and of course optionally - start a more joint collaboration afterwards.