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Constructing the Other:

Securitising Discourses in the Dutch and German 2017 National Elections

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Abstract

This thesis examines the securitisation of migration and the LGBTQ+ community of two European populist right-wing parties during the Dutch and German national elections of 2017. The parties under consideration are the German Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the Dutch Forum voor Democratie (FvD). Through a critical discourse analysis of the parties' election manifestos and Facebook campaign, the thesis shows that both parties use security discourse concerning migration, however, they take different approaches with the AfD stressing physical insecurity, while the FvD stresses nonphysical insecurity. Only the AfD uses security discourses to construct an image of the LGBTQ+ community in their election manifesto, for the FvD this is seemingly a non-issue. As such the AfD takes a backlash approach to the LGBTQ+ community by fearing for the 'traditional' German family. The FvD, on the other hand, approaches the topic from a post-feminist standpoint where equality is perceived to be achieved. Consequently, they are against further anti-discrimination measures.

Keywords: Securitisation, Europe, Elections, FvD, AfD, Migration, LGBTQ+

Number of words: 20299

Contents

Introduction

"[E]mpirical studies on the definition of outgroups in the far right are overwhelmingly focused on one type of 'nativist other', i.e. the immigrant."[1]

While othering is a known tool of populist discourse, the academic focus often remains solely on the othering of immigrants.[2] This thesis focuses not only on this well-researched form of othering but also includes less researched forms of othering through a comparison of the securitisation discourses on migration and the LGBTQ+ community of two European right-wing parties.

The research will be conducted by analysing the populist discourse of the German party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), as well as of the Dutch party Forum voor Democratie (FvD) during their respective national election campaigns in 2017. This period was chosen since security discourses intensify in relation to specific events.[3] The 2017 elections being held not only during a prosperous phase for right-wing populism but equally in the aftermath of the 2015 'migration crisis' thus prove to be a relevant case study regarding security discourses.[4] The parties have been chosen for multiple reasons, the first one being linguistic as the in-depth analysis of discourse requires a certain level of language knowledge. Moreover, these countries remain untreated in a similar inclusive comparison of populist discourse.[5] Lastly, the parties are both relatively young and understudied as they were founded in 2013 and 2016 respectively with a focus on migration. The research will investigate othering in relation to factors such as migration, gender, and sexual orientation to determine excluding and securitising patterns in the party discourse.

The question that will be guiding the research is: Who are the 'Others' in the AfD's and the FvD's discourse and how are these othering narratives constructed?

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[1] Caterina Froio, "'Gabriella Lazaridis, Giovanna Campani, and Annie Benventiste (Eds) the Rise of the Far Right in Europe: Populist Shifts and "Othering" London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 289 Pp. £68.00 Hbk.,'" *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (2017): 140.

[2] Froio.

[3] Elsa Vigneau, "Securitization Theory and the Relationship between Discourse and Context: A Study of Securitized Migration in the Canadian Press, 1998-2015," *Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales* 35, no. 1–2 (October 1, 2019): 191–214.

[4] The term 'migration crisis' is put in quotation marks because it can be controversial. Nonetheless, it is used in this paper partially for ease, because this is the most frequently used term for the situation described, and partially because the framing also indicates predominating sentiments at the time which are relevant to the paper. For further explanations regarding the contestation of the term see for example Fabian Georgi, "The Role of Racism in the European 'Migration Crisis': A Historical Materialist Perspective," in *Racism After Apartheid*, ed. Vishwas Satgar, Challenges for Marxism and Anti-Racism (Wits University Press, 2019), 96–117, https://doi.org/10.18772/22019033061.9.

[5] Gabriella Lazaridis, Giovanna Campani, and Annie Benveniste, *The Rise of the Far Right in Europe: Populist Shifts and "Othering"* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016)

This topic is relevant for multiple reasons. For one, the recent increase and normalisation of populism is an issue that has occurred in many European countries. 'Othering', thus creating an 'out-group' that is different from the 'in-group' is a common characteristic of right-wing populist discourse. [6] Studying this discourse and patterns in the 'Othering' of several minority groups, even in just two European countries, can create a better understanding of right-wing populism in all of Europe. Moreover, while academic discourse has focused on European populism and minority groups, I would argue that the most discussed minority group is by far Muslims as migrants and as a minority. Other groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community, have been discussed as well in relation to populism, yet there is less literature on them.[7] Little research has been done to compare these groups in populist discourse. An exception would be the Lazaridis et al. book on populism in different countries, published in 2016.[8] Thus, my research would add to this little studied topic by not only discussing populism in countries that were left out in the book but equally providing a more recent perspective as I focus on discourses that took place after the book was published.

This paper will begin by introducing the underlying theory of the study which is the securitisation theory. After having discussed the methodology, the paper will provide an overview of the background of the 2017 elections in Europe in general but also in the countries specifically. Finally, the paper will introduce the parties in more detail and analyse party discourse which includes othering through securitisation on the basis of ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation in the two political parties and compare them.

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[6] Lajos L. Brons, "Othering, an Analysis," *Transcience, a Journal of Global Studies* 6, no. 1 (2015): 69–90.

[7] For studies on the topic see for example: Marina Calloni, "Women, Minorities, Populism," in *Minorities and Populism – Critical Perspectives from South Asia and Europe*, ed. Volker Kaul and Ananya Vajpeyi, Philosophy and Politics - Critical Explorations (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 243–64, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-34098-8_17; Eric Louis Russell, *The Discursive Ecology of Homophobia: Unraveling Anti-LGBTQ Speech on the European Far Right*, The Discursive Ecology of Homophobia (Multilingual Matters, 2019), https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788923460.

[8] Gabriella Lazaridis, Giovanna Campani, and Annie Benveniste, *The Rise of the Far Right in Europe: Populist Shifts and "Othering"* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016)

Securitisation Theory

At the tail-end of the Cold War, scholars sought new ways to conceptualise the notion of security and accompanying security threats. As a consequence, in the 1990s, securitization theory emerged as an alternative to hitherto existing realist security studies which focused on nation states and military conflict as they were not apt at explaining emerging security threats.[9] Waever[10], one of the originators of securitisation theory, disagreed with the previous narrow understanding of security and proposed to broaden it to include other issues such as "[the] environment, welfare, immigration and refugees."[11] These issues indicate that threats to security regard not only the sovereignty of states but also can refer to the identity of societies as long as these threats are urgent enough to inspire action. As such, security considerations then are not merely related to the state-level but take place on a lower level as well that takes the collective and even individuals into account.[12]

The Copenhagen School (CS), to which Waever belongs, holds that the field is required to shift from considering security solely in terms of existing subjective or objective threats to a more constructivist approach which considers security as a speech act since ultimately it is people that construct urgency with language. As Waever puts it: "In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it, something is done."[13] Thus, it is the process of constructing fear or a threat with language that is to be analysed. However, this construction is limited to powerful actors that are in a position to put security issues on the agenda.[14]

In linguistics, a speech act is constituted of three parts, namely the way something is expressed (locution), the intention of the speaker (illocution), and the effect the utterance has on the audience (perlocution).[15] In the CS theory of securitisation, it is the

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[9] Michael J. Butler and Zena Wolf, "Introduction | Revisiting Securitization and the 'Constructivist Turn,'" in *Securitization Revisited: Contemporary Applications and Insights* (London: Routledge, 2019), 1–25, https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429054648-2/introduction-michael-butler-zena-wolf?context=ubx&refId=d6c6c466-d30c-413f-ad49-1b3b2425584d.

[10] Ole Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritzation," in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (Columbia University Press, 1995), 46–86.

[11] Waever, 46.

[12] Butler and Wolf, "Introduction | Revisiting Securitization and the 'Constructivist Turn.'"

[13] Waever, 51f, emphasis in original.

[14] Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

[15] Thierry Balzacq, "A Theory of Securitization- Origins, Core Assumptions, and Variants," in *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 1–30, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=574521.

second part, the illocution and thus the speaker, which is central to the theory. This perspective is also referred to as the philosophical approach to securitisation.[16] This understanding is not uncontested. Contrary to CS, other scholars such as Balzacq, take on a sociological perspective in arguing that "securitization is better understood as a strategic (pragmatic) process that occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction."[17] It is not just the speaker that takes on an essential role by performing the act but also the situation and the effect it has on the audience. This is because, for example, the intent of the speaker can differ from the effect the speech act has on the audience.[18] Then, saying something doesn't necessarily make it a reality as Waever suggests. As such, the perlocution is central to this approach of securitisation.[19] However, this does make analysing speech more complicated as the success of a speech act can only be established retroactively.[20] What the Paris School, as this approach to the theory is also referred to, also stresses is that securitisation is not inherently a discursive phenomenon but can be, for instance, found in institutional mechanisms as well. Hence, there is a benefit to analysing these processes which make securitisation a reality.[21]

There is a third school of studies which is referred to as the Aberystwyth or the Welsh School of securitisation. It is the most realist of the schools as it diminishes the importance of a speech act through the possibility of objective threats. To them, "the existence of a security issue is not dependent on the success of a speech act- issues […] exist and threaten people regardless of whether anyone talks about them."[22] This then places the school nearer to traditional security studies and their arguments on the objectivity of subjectivity of threats. Nonetheless, there have been doubts about the division of securitisation studies into different schools as these schools are far from being

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[16] Thierry Balzacq et al., "What Kind of Theory – If Any – Is Securitization?," *International Relations* 29 (March 11, 2014): 96–96, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117814526606.

[17] Thierry Balzacq, "A Theory of Securitization- Origins, Core Assumptions, and Variants," in *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 1, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=574521.

[18] Balzacq.

[19] Balzacq et al., "What Kind of Theory – If Any – Is Securitization?"

[20] Michael C. Williams, "The Continuing Evolution of Securitization Theory," in *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, ed. Thierry Balzacq (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 212–22, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=574521.

[21] Butler and Wolf, "Introduction | Revisiting Securitization and the 'Constructivist Turn.'"

[22] Roxanna Sjöstedt, "Assessing Securitization Theory: Theoretical Discussions and Empirical Developments," in *Securitization Revisited* (Routledge, 2019), 33.

distinctly divides but rather overlap. Moreover, there are scholars who fall out of these three schools while still taking a constructivist approach to security studies.[23]

Critiquing Securitisation Theory

As is the case with most theories, the theory of securitisation is not uncontested. For one, for those who were advocates of the traditional narrow application, broadening risked security studies becoming too vague.[24] This is not only due to the broadening of areas that can experience securitisation but also due to the fact that actors and threats vary. On top of that, the definition of the audience as well as estimating their acceptance can be difficult. At the same time, the flexibility is beneficial.[25] Even though there exists flexibility in the theory, there are some areas in which it is more rigid such as the notions of power and extents of securitisation. Bourbeau[26] holds that different forms of power, as well as varying extents of securitisation, should be introduced to the theory as power is a polymorphic concept and the notion of securitisation is not merely binary. Overall, the flexible and ambiguous approach to security studies does complicate the formulation of a comprehensible methodology when researching securitisation.[27]

Furthermore, it is important to mention that securitisation theory, in general, has been criticised for its Eurocentrism.[28] This is not to say that the theory cannot be applied to contexts outside of Europe. Rather, the construction of the theory itself has been done without discussion from other academic fields or non-Western academics.[29] Several scholars go further than sole Eurocentrism by accusing the theory of being racist, however, there remain disagreements on how this is reflected in the theory and what this entails.[30] On the one hand, for Howell and Richter-Montpetit, this racism is not merely

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[23] Sjöstedt.
[24] Butler and Wolf, "Introduction | Revisiting Securitization and the 'Constructivist Turn.'"
[25] Sjöstedt, "Assessing Securitization Theory."
[26] Philippe Bourbeau, *The Securitization of Migration: A Study of Movement and Order* (Florence, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=672417.
[27] Karoline Färber, "The Absence of Methodology in Securitisation Theory," *E-International Relations* (blog), August 7, 2018, https://www.e-ir.info/2018/08/07/the-absence-of-methodology-in-securitisation-theory/.
[28] Butler and Wolf, "Introduction | Revisiting Securitization and the 'Constructivist Turn.'"
[29] Sjöstedt, "Assessing Securitization Theory."
[30] See for example Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, "Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiblack Thought in the Copenhagen School," *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 1 (February 1, 2020): 3–22, https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619862921; Lara Montesinos Coleman, "Racism! What Do You Mean? From Howell and Richter-Montpetit's Underestimation of the Problem, towards Situating Security through Struggle," *Security Dialogue* 52, no. 1_suppl (November 1, 2021): 69–77, https://doi.org/10.1177/09670106211029426; Maggie Ibrahim,

evident in the application of the theory, but rather is part of its essence.[31] This is because the "theory's norm/ exception distinction harnesses a racist, specifically civilizationist, political imaginary, in which normal politics is the achievement of civilization and 'securitization' threatens a potential backslide into barbarous 'primal anarchy'."[32] In other words, the theory emanates from the assumption that there is a 'civilized' state with 'normal' politics, mostly located in the West, that is threatened with a possible undesirable 'anarchy' which by theorists is often ascribed to Africa. These criticisms are predominantly aimed at the Copenhagen School of Security Studies because this school is concerned with the normative dimension of securitisation. Overall, because of this racist nature of the theory, the authors question whether the theory can recover by including discussions on race and colonialism.[33] Gomes and Marques, on the other hand, do agree that racism plays a role in securitisation theory, yet their conclusions are not as far-reaching. They argue that the main problem is the absence of several notions which includes not just race but equally gender. According to them, this does not mean that the theory is beyond repair.[34] On the contrary, through the inclusion of the neglected notions, which the authors deem crucial, the theory "has the capacity to capture the dynamics of power in discourse, elucidating mechanisms that maintain the colonial, racist, and gendered roots of security."[35] This assessment corresponds more with the general academic attitude on the theory than the dooming one of Howell and Richter-Montpetit. This is also because Howell and Richter-Montpetit's approach has been highly criticised for its flawed argumentation and methodology, as well as for overall lacking academic standards and even being racist itself.[36]

The next section will explore the interconnection of securitisation and minorities.

"The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse," *International Migration* 43, no. 5 (2005): 163–87, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2005.00345.x; Tariq Amin-Khan, "New Orientalism, Securitisation and the Western Media's Incendiary Racism," *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 9 (2012): 1595–1610.

[31] Howell and Richter-Montpetit, "Is Securitization Theory Racist?"

[32] Howell and Richter-Montpetit.,7.

[33] Howell and Richter-Montpetit.

[34] Mariana Selister Gomes and Renata Rodrigues Marques, "Can Securitization Theory Be Saved from Itself? A Decolonial and Feminist Intervention," *Security Dialogue* 52, no. 1_suppl (November 1, 2021): 78–87, https://doi.org/10.1177/09670106211027795.

[35] Gomes and Marques, 85.

[36] Lene Hansen, "Are 'Core' Feminist Critiques of Securitization Theory Racist? A Reply to Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit," *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 4 (2020): 378–85; Ole Waever and Barry Buzan, "Racism and Responsibility – The Critical Limits of Deepfake Methodology in Security Studies: A Reply to Howell and Richter-Montpetit - Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, 2020," *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 4 (2020): 386–94.

Migration, Minorites and Desecuritisation

Racism plays a role not only in the theory of securitisation but equally in Western securitising discourses on migration and minorities. The increasing securitisation of migration has been accompanied by the politicisation of migration. The latter is defined as the "growing importance of migration as a political issue, and the clash of different opinions and ideologies concerning immigration."[37] Although advantages of migration were considered in the past, over time, the Western discourse on migration has shifted from emphasizing the economic benefits towards stressing the threat that the migrant supposedly forms to host societies. While this shift has been noticeable since the 1980s, later events such as 9/11 have cemented this discourse and given it more urgency. This has happened to the extent that the threat discourse has been normalised and is not only perpetuated by right-wing voices but also by academics, governments, and the media in general.[38] In some cases it even remains unclear whether such discourses originate from the politicians, or they 'merely' respond to the demand of the general public.[39] The normalisation goes hand in hand with the development of a new sort of racism that focuses on cultural difference instead of biological superiority which seems less controversial. Part of the focus on cultural difference is the apprehension toward the 'other.'[40] As mentioned above, the securitisation of societal issues is done on the presumption that the society's identity is threatened in a way that necessitates action to ensure its endurance.[41] Thus, the new racism contends a homogeneity of society and holds that ultimately "cultural pluralism will lead to inter-ethnic conflict which will dissolve the unity of the state."[42] This has led Western governments in the last decades to increasingly install policies that restrict immigration[43] or that try to keep migrants from leaving their home countries in the first place.[44] However, outside of CS, it is not solely the existential threat

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[37] Jarmila Androvičová and Martina Bolečeková, "Migration: The European Discourses," in *Migration: The Challenge of European States*, ed. Jakub Bardovič and Jaroslav Mihálik (Stuttgart: ibidem, 2019), 8, http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2117498&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
[38] Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration."
[39] Androvičová and Bolečeková, "Migration: The European Discourses."
[40] Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration."
[41] Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritzation."
[42] Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration," 166.
[43] Gallya Lahav and Marie Courtemanche, "The Ideological Effects of Framing Threat on Immigration and Civil Liberties," *Political Behavior* 34, no. 3 (2012): 477–505.
[44] Ibrahim, "The Securitization of Migration."

discourse that accounts for this but equally the governmentality of unease in institutions which leads to the institutionalisation of securitisation.[45]

While previously a positive connotation to increasing security prevailed, the Copenhagen School also takes a normative approach in rejecting increasing securitisation of subjects such as immigration and refugees.[46] It is argued that, in areas where securitisation is not desirable, it is necessary for these subjects to be taken off the security agenda and thus be desecuritised. Thinking of a subject in terms of security might, for instance, be less effective in dealing with the issue than dealing with it through usual politics.[47] Furthermore, there are democratic objections to securitising issues, as this calls for extraordinary measures which therefore can pose a threat to democratic procedures and the rule of law.[48] Desecuritisation is possible, for example, through the failure or the voluntary diminishing of the speech act.[49] Yet, the ideal desecuritisation would entail issues not being framed as security threats in the first place.[50] Seeing that this is not always possible, Huysmans[51] proposes a deconstructivist effort of desecuritisation which conveys the narrative of migrants in everyday problems that the audience can relate to. However, while this might work for individual migrants, Roe[52] argues that for the entirety of minorities and their rights such a course of action would be unfeasible. This is because "to desecuritize in the societal sector entails that the language of maintaining collective identity be effectively taken out of the discourse."[53] It would mean neither considering the uniqueness of the group nor stressing its identity which threatens the very existence of said minority.[54] Hence why desecuritisation is not always an option.

Even though security issues around migration and minorities can be present in discourses from various actors, they are frequently invoked by those on the radical right.

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[45] Didier Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives* 27, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 63–92, https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754020270S105.
[46] Jef Huysmans, "The Question of the Limit: Desecuritisation and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism" 27, no. 3 (September 1, 1998): 569–89.
[47] Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritzation."
[48] Huysmans, "The Question of the Limit: Desecuritisation and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism."
[49] Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritzation."
[50] Paul Roe, "Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 279–94.
[51] Huysmans, "The Question of the Limit: Desecuritisation and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism."
[52] Roe, "Securitization and Minority Rights."
[53] Roe, 290.
[54] Roe.

Hence it is relevant to examine the connection of populism and security discourses further.

Populism and Securitising Discourses

Populism is a modern notion as its origins can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when it arose alongside the increasing dissemination of democracy in Europe and North America.[55] Over the last decades, populism has increasingly become a popular subject for academic research. Yet, despite extensive research on the subject, a precise definition or theory of populism still eludes us.[56] This is due to several reasons. For one, the ambiguity of the concept derives directly from the diverse nature of populist actors.[57] Populism is neither confined to one place on the political spectrum, as it can be found on the right as well as on the left, nor can it once defined as either right or left provide a clear understanding as populist parties themselves are far from homogenous.[58] Furthermore, there are geographical differences regarding meanings of populism. While European populism predominantly is connected to migration and pluralism, the term takes on a more economic dimension in Latin America.[59] Naturally, this thesis will concern itself more with the European dimensions of populism.

Nonetheless there exist some commonalities that researchers can agree on. An essential part of populism is the rejection of 'the elites' with an appeal to 'the people' for whom populists often argue to speak.[60] Moreover, one common tool in populist discourse is the use of 'Othering', thus creating an 'out-group' that is different from the 'in-group.'[61]

Overall, Mudde and Kaltwasser provide the ideational definition of populism being *"a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the* volonté générale *(general will) of the people."*[62] The term thin-centred ideology here refers to an ideology, thus "a system

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[55] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1378915&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

[56] Jan-Werner Müller, "Introduction: Is Everyone a Populist?," in *Introduction: Is Everyone a Populist?* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1–6, https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812293784-001.

[57] Campani, Benveniste, and Lazaridis, *The Rise of the Far Right in Europe*.

[58] Müller, "Introduction"; Campani, Benveniste, and Lazaridis, *The Rise of the Far Right in Europe*.

[59] Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism*.

[60] Müller, "Introduction."

[61] Brons, "Othering, an Analysis."

[62] Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism,* 6, italics original.

of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it" that is neither all-encompassing nor exhaustive.[63] This explains the flexibility and diversity of populism and denotes it as a concept that does not stand on its own but is always connected to other ideologies such as nationalism or socialism.[64]

Populist Right Discourses on Gender and Sexuality

Fiers and Muis define two standpoints for European populist right discourses on gender and sexuality, namely the backlash standpoint and the post-feminist standpoint.[65] The former approach, which completely opposes progressive thinking around gender and sexuality, occurs the most. This backlash position promotes traditional gender roles and defends patriarchal values they see threatened by modern society. Contrary to this, the second, post-feminist standpoint sees rights related to gender and sexuality as a Western accomplishment and part of the Western civilized world which they contrast to Muslims as a way of othering. Muslim immigrants, then, would threaten these Western values which acts a further reason for rejecting immigration. This standpoint can mostly be found in Northern and Western Europe. This is because the right-wing actors "tend to adjust their frames to the available discursive opportunities of the national cultural context in which they operate."[66] In other words, in countries where gender and sexual rights are already well-established, it makes more electoral sense to embrace the given situation and use it as an argument against immigration. At the same time, this standpoint sees gender and sexual equality as achieved which to them makes further efforts in this area redundant. In this case, the subject becomes a nonissue for the parties.[67]

Applying Securitisation Theory

Academic literature on securitisation mainly focuses on the securitisation of migration. Studies concerning securitisation often study either media or political discourses. As a high point of migration in Europe, the 2015 'migration crisis' has also been relevant in texts concerning securitisation. As such research has focused on securitisation discourses

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[63] "Ideology | Nature, History, & Significance | Britannica," accessed July 8, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/ideology-society.
[64] Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism*.
[65] Ruud Fiers and Jasper Muis, "Dividing between 'Us' and 'Them': The Framing of Gender and Sexuality by Online Followers of the Dutch Populist Radical Right," *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2021): 381–402, https://doi.org/10.1332/263169020X16039796162173.
[66] Fiers and Muis, 5.
[67] Fiers and Muis.

in countries such as the Netherlands but also Turkey, for example.[68] Regarding the Netherlands, studies often focus on a comparative study of all Dutch parties with the PVV taking a lead role, while the FvD was not yet elected at the time of the crisis gains less attention.[69] Studies on Germany have equally focused on securitisation, however, not necessarily through AfD discourse.[70] Studies on the securitisation of the LGBTQ+ community focus predominantly on less tolerant countries such as Russia and Hungary.[71]

This paper aims to contribute to the current discussions by assessing the role of securitisation in the discourses on migration and minorities of the German AfD and the Dutch FvD. Since the paper refrains from a normative approach, it aims to sidestep concerns about racism within the theory itself. Furthermore, in discussing exactly the groups that are normally neglected, the paper contributes to their visibility within the theory. Since the research is focused on elections instead of formed governments, the paper will focus on the discursive aspect of securitisation theory and not on the institutional aspect concerning the implementation of securitisation after the discourse.[72]

There are four pivotal aspects often connected to the securitisation of migration. Firstly, there is the socioeconomic aspect that concerns for example unemployment and welfare issues. Secondly, there is a security aspect around the fear of losing control over sovereignty, borders, and security. Thirdly, the identity aspect perceives threats to the national identity and fears demographic imbalance. Lastly, there is a political aspect which relates to discourses opposing migration.[73] On top of that, Vigneau identifies three sub-narratives of security discourses related to migration.[74] These sub-narratives include, firstly, connecting migrants to crime or terrorism, secondly, mentioning ways to control

[68] Recep Gulmez, "The Securitization of the Syrian Refugee Crisis Through Political Party Discourses," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 20, no. 3 (August 1, 2019): 887–906, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0637-2.

[69] Joost Kraak, "The Securitization of Migration in the Netherlands During the European Refugee Crisis: A critical discourse analysis of the political migration debate and the influence of the populist radical right," (MA thesis, Wageningen University, n.d.); Maartje van der Woude, "Euroskepticism, Nationalism, and the Securitization of Migration in the Netherlands," in *Crimmigrant Nations*, ed. Maartje van der Woude and Robert Koulish, 1st ed., Resurgent Nationalism and the Closing of Borders (Fordham University Press, 2020), 227–48, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxrpzhz.13.

[70] Ayelet Banai and Regina Kreide, "Securitization of Migration in Germany: The Ambivalences of Citizenship and Human Rights," *Citizenship Studies* 21, no. 8 (November 17, 2017): 903–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2017.1380649.

[71] Fernando G. Nuñez-Mietz, "Resisting Human Rights through Securitization: Russia and Hungary against LGBT Rights," *Journal of Human Rights* 18, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 543–63, https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2019.1647100.

[72] Nuñez-Mietz.

[73] João Estevens, "Migration Crisis in the EU: Developing a Framework for Analysis of National Security and Defence Strategies," *Comparative Migration Studies* 6 (October 1, 2018), https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40878-018-0093-3.

[74] Vigneau, "Securitization Theory and the Relationship between Discourse and Context."

or defend from individual migrants and limit migration flows, and, lastly, linking migration to public health concerns. These sub-narratives will be referred to throughout my research possibly not only in discourses related to migration but where applicable equally to other securitised groups. However, the securitisation of different groups does not necessarily overlap completely.

Regarding the securitisation of the LGBTQ+ community, Nuňez-Mietz holds that "Lawmakers in the immunizing state enact a discourse according to which (1) their country is imperilled by LGBT rights (i.e., a foreign, transnationally diffusing, and culturally degenerative norm), and (2) special legislation, curtailing the promotion of this norm, is necessary to protect the national identity."[75] The term immunising refers to the process of norm immunisation which is a type of norm backlash that aims to hinder the development of unwanted norms within a state. Thus, it opposes the process of norm internalisation which denotes the acceptance of the norm. Norm immunisation in the case of minority rights is geared towards restricting fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, association, and assembly. The norm in question describes the non-discrimination towards and equality of the minority group rather than more tangible freedoms such as the right to marriage.[76] This makes it possible to apply the concept to minority groups in countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, even though they have generally tolerant laws towards the minority since equality and non-discrimination can remain complex issues.

Before going into the background and introductions as well as the analysis of the AfD and the FvD, the following section will introduce the methodology of the paper, namely critical discourse analysis.

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[75] Fernando G. Nuñez-Mietz, "Resisting Human Rights through Securitization: Russia and Hungary against LGBT Rights," *Journal of Human Rights* 18, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 544, https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2019.1647100.
[76] Nuñez-Mietz.

Methodology

The following section introduces the methodology utilised for the research, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA). It will further show how CDA lends itself well for studies of securitisation and describe how the method will be applied to the case studies of the paper.

Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis

The methodology underlying this research is CDA which is one of the different approaches to discourse analysis (DA). Before going further into discourse analysis and CDA, it is important to specify the meaning of discourse in this paper. There are manifold definitions of discourse, and these definitions can overlap or diverge from each other. This paper considers discourse along the lines of Dunn and Neumann who define discourse "as a system of meaning-production that fixes meaning, however temporarily, and enables actors to make sense of the world and to act within it."[77] This definition was chosen because it not only establishes discourse as a way to shape the world and create meaning, which is often a common denominator in the definitions, but also gives space for the role of action within it. Since action, or rather calls for action, are a crucial part of the construction of securitisation discourses, this definition of discourse is an appropriate base for the ensuing research.

The study of discourse involves social practices and can be based on a narrow or broader understanding of the word discourse. Contrary to the narrow understanding which concerns itself mainly with the linguistic elements, the broader understanding includes elements of behaviour for example. Social relations, identity, and power are at the forefront of DA.[78] As Boreús and Bergström explain: "The overarching purpose of DA is often to study issues related to power, an example being how different categories of people […] are linguistically constructed and how this might affect their possibilities to act."[79] In this method, language is understood to be able to shape and alter social identities by for example creating in- and out-groups as is the case with othering.[80] In DA there can

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[77] Kevin C. Dunn and Iver B. Neumann, "Variations in Theories and Approaches to Discourse Analysis," in *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research* (University of Michigan Press, 2016), 17f, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.7106945.5.

[78] Kristina Boréus and Göran Bergström, *Analyzing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2017).

[79] Kristina Boréus and Göran Bergström, *Analyzing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2017), 8.

[80] Boréus and Bergström.

be difficulties in trying to neatly distinguish the theory from the method.[81] As this paper combines securitisation theory with the method of CDA, this issue should not occur.

One of the pioneers of CDA is Norman Fairclough who developed the concept in the 1970s and 1980s. CDA is one of the most influential approaches to discourse analysis to date.[82] CDA operates on the basis that next to the discursive world, there exists a real non-discursive world that is there even if it is unknown. Moreover, proponents of CDA argue that "discourses can have a measurable degree of causality that often leads to claims of empirical rigor."[83] In other words, there is a tangibility to the notion of discourse which makes it measurable, and which can make observations of discourses accurate. On the contrary, more poststructuralist approaches disagree with these positions as they see the world as constructed through discourse which has no distinctive non-discursive world because they see meaning to always be shaped through language.[84] Thus, while poststructuralist approaches, as the name indicates, see the world completely as a social construct, CDA balances realism and social constructivism in its approach.[85]

According to Fairclough, CDA is relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary. CDA is thus focused on social relations, rather than individuals, and does not see discourse as a detached entity to be studied but rather as an intrinsic part of relations. Critical discourse analysis is further seen to span different fields of study, approaches and frameworks.[86] CDA is said to be suitable for a diverse range of areas, including but not limited to, political discourse, ideology, racism, economic discourse, media language and gender. These areas are all suitable to the method because they concern power relations and inequality.[87] This corresponds well to the topic under consideration.

However, the method is not without its flaws. Critique, for one, has focused on the fact that the method is vague in relation to concepts, areas of application and techniques. Furthermore, the prevalence of the researcher's own interpretation has caused questions on selectivity, bias, and the apparent assumption that there is only one right way to read and interpret a text instead of multiple.[88] While these critiques might be hard to

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[81] Dunn and Neumann, "Variations in Theories and Approaches to Discourse Analysis."
[82] Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29 (2000): 447–66.
[83] Dunn and Neumann, "Variations in Theories and Approaches to Discourse Analysis, 35."
[84] Dunn and Neumann.
[85] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, vol. Second ed. (Taylor and Francis, 2013), https://www.perlego.com/book/2192459/critical-discourse-analysis-pdf.
[86] Fairclough.
[87] Blommaert and Bulcaen, "Critical Discourse Analysis."
[88] Blommaert and Bulcaen.

overcome, the author's as well as the reader's awareness of possible selection or general bias and the understanding that interpretations are never completely objective might already contribute to diminishing pitfalls.

All in all, even though there are some criticisms the CDA methodology lends itself well to the theoretical framework as well as the case study. This is for one because discourse is at the heart of securitisation theory. Furthermore, the underlying power relations that are key to CDA are also relevant in Othering discourses that aim at securitisation. National elections demonstrate this well since parties attempt to convince potential voters of the policies they aim to implement once in power. These policies "are dependent upon representations of the threat, country, security problem, or crisis they seek to address."[89] These representations, in turn, concern minorities who are often disadvantaged in terms of power. The following sections will concern the specific case study and the specific application of the methodology.

Research Approach

The case study being the countries of Germany and the Netherlands, this comparative research follows a most similar systems design and will be of qualitative nature. The discourse analysis will consist mainly of primary sources such as the election manifestos as well as social media posts on Facebook leading up to the respective elections on March 15th in the Netherlands and September 24th in Germany.

As the saying *nach dem Wahlkampf ist vor dem Wahlkampf* (after the election campaign is before the election campaign) shows, it can be hard to pinpoint the beginnings of an election campaign. The Dutch campaign period officially started around the second week of January, as parties had finalized their manifestos and candidate lists, and entered its most crucial phase in February.[90] The election in Germany enters its most crucial phase after the summer break around six weeks before the elections.[91] As this corresponds with the Dutch case, the research will focus on this most crucial phase that started around six weeks before the elections in both countries. Thus, the research

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[89] Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006), 5, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203236338.

[90] Joop J. M. van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017," *West European Politics* 41, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 1364–77, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1448556.

[91] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Wahlkampf und die Bundestagswahl 2017," bpb.de, accessed July 12, 2022, https://www.bpb.de/themen/politisches-system/wahlen-in-deutschland/336026/wahlkampf-und-die-bundestagswahl-2017/.

timeframe for the Dutch elections is from February 1st until March 15th, while that for the German elections is from August 13th until September 24th, 2017.

Digital campaigning has accompanied traditional campaigns in recent years and as such has become an important tool for parties during election campaigns which is also the case for the two selected parties. For this study, I have selected to focus on the respective election campaigns on Facebook, since it has the largest number of active uses and was a very successful platform for both the Afd and the FvD.[92]

Since the language of communication in the two cases are Dutch and German respectively, the discourse analysis will provide quotes in the original language followed by the author's English translation in parentheses.

For the analysis of securitisation in the Facebook election campaigns, Facebook's filtering system was used to select posts discussing migration or the LGBTQ+ community during the specified periods of the election campaign on the parties' respective pages. Relevant posts were selected by keywords such as *immigration, migration, Muslims, influx, Islam, religion, integration, terrorism, identity,* and *borders* for the securitisation of migration and *LGBTQ+, homosexual, transsexual, sexuality, gender, family, identity* and *quota* for the securitisation of the LGBTQ+ community. These keywords were chosen in accordance with the subject and equally based on an initial assessment of the posts. Post under consideration were posts with text containing one or multiple of these keywords. Videos or linked articles were not included, even though they might have mentioned the concepts. So, if the description alongside the linked material did not include the keywords, the post is not considered. However, should the description include one of the keywords the linked material might be taken into consideration for context.

The discourses analysis will be guided by questions based on security discourses in relation to migration and the LGBTQ+ community as identified by Vigneau and Nuňez-Mietz.[93] As such, it will ask:

Q1: Are the discourses connecting migration to terrorism or crime?

Q2: Are the discourses arguing for the limitation of migration flows?

Q3: Are the discourses linking migration to public health concerns?

[92] Léonie de Jonge, "Is the (Mass) Party Really Over? The Case of the Dutch Forum for Democracy," *Politics and Governance* 9, no. 4 (November 24, 2021): 286–95, https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v9i4.4525; Mario Voigt and René Seidenglanz, "Was -lernen wir aus dem -digitalen -Wahlkampf 2017? - Kampagne | politik&kommunikation," *Politik & Kommunikation* (blog), January 11, 2018, https://www.politik-kommunikation.de/politik/was-lernen-wir-aus-dem-digitalen-wahlkampf-2017/.
[93] Vigneau, "Securitization Theory and the Relationship between Discourse and Context"; Nuñez-Mietz, "Resisting Human Rights through Securitization."

Q4: Are LGBTQ+ rights said to endanger the country?

Q5: Is special legislation hindering the diffusion of the norm (i.e., the internalised acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community) suggested?

Q6: Are discourses aimed at restricting fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of expression, association, and assembly?

The presence of these discourses will thus show the extent of securitisation of migration and minorities in the discourses of the AfD and the FvD and the different approaches the parties take.

Considering the importance of context established above, the following section will provide the relevant background information about the 'migration crisis', the LGBTQ+ situation in the respective countries, as well as the 2017 elections.

Crises and identity: What shaped the 2017 elections in Europe

The following section will provide some background information relevant to the understanding of the thesis and the ensuing discourse analysis. This is especially important as, as seen in the theory chapter, securitisation is highly dependent on context. The first part of the chapter presents an overview of the 2015/2016 migration crisis which intensified right-wing discourses in Europe and influenced the core topics of the 2017 elections. Following is a brief introduction to the situation of the LGBTQ+ community in the Netherlands and Germany at the time of the elections. Finally, the chapter will move on to the elections themselves by discussing 2017 as a year of elections and challengers before describing the course and results of the elections in the two countries under consideration.

The 2015/2016 'Migration Crisis'

The so-called 'migration crisis' or 'refugee crisis' describes a period from the summer of 2015 to the spring of 2016 when there was an increase in migration toward Europe as a consequence of wars or conflicts in countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Eurostat, migrants from Syria constituted the largest group, making up around 29 per cent of the asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016.[94] Since 2011 Syria is experiencing a devastating civil war that originated in the Arab Spring protests and the harsh suppression of the protests by the government. The conflict initially led many Syrians to flee to neighbouring countries. The ongoing conflict and the bleak prospects for the refugees in neighbouring countries resulted for many in the effort to reach Europe in 2015. For Europe, this indicated the direst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War.[95] The two most travelled routes were from Libya to Italy and from Turkey to Greece leaving these two countries with the responsibility for the asylum applications according to the Dublin Agreement. Not only the number of migrants coming to Europe but equally

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[94] Eurostat, "Asylum in the EU Member States" (Eurostat news release, March 4, 2016), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/790eba01-381c-4163-bcd2-a54959b99ed6; Eurostat, "Asylum in the EU Member States" (Eurostat news release, March 16, 2017), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7921609/3-16032017-BP-EN.pdf/e5fa98bb-5d9d-4297-9168-d07c67d1c9e1.

[95] Stefan Lehne et al., "The Roots of Europe's Refugee Crisis," Carnegie Europe, October 1, 2015, https://carnegieeurope.eu/2015/10/01/roots-of-europe-s-refugee-crisis-pub-61465.

the dangers of the route they undertook, resulting in a few thousand deaths in total, appeared frequently in the newspapers.[96]

The number of new asylum seekers in Europe exceeded one million in 2015 and 2016 respectively, which was more than twice as high as in 2014. Germany received 441.800 asylum applications in 2015 which was an increase of 155 per cent compared to the previous year. In 2016 there were another 722.265 new asylum applications which indicated an augmentation of 63 per cent when compared with 2015. The Netherlands received 43.035 asylum seekers in 2015, constituting a 98 per cent augmentation from 2014. Unlike Germany, the Netherlands obtained only 19.285 new asylum applications in 2016 which was less than half compared to the previous year.[97]

Germany was the most requested European country for asylum due to chancellor Merkel's somewhat surprising "wir schaffen das" [we can do it] attitude and opening of the borders in September 2015.[98] Thus, countries such as Germany but also Austria showed that they were willing to take in refugees that were rejected in other countries such as Hungary.[99] As such Germany took the largest brunt of the increased immigration in Europe. However, not everyone agreed with Merkel's approach to the situation, even in the CDU, her own party. After a while, her management of the issue led to critique of conservative politicians including important actors of the CSU, and part of the public. Hence the government was divided with Merkel and the CDU arguing for a solution on the European level, while the CSU plead for German border controls.[100] These disagreements led to an increase in popularity of the AfD which positioned itself clearly on the conservative side regarding the refugee issue.[101] This is because "right-wing populist parties in Western Europe gain support if established parties introduce conservative positions in a heated debate and then back away from these positions."[102] In the Netherlands the migration issue also caused problems in the coalition of the centre-right VVD and the centre-left PvdA. The more immigrant sceptic VVD proposed a plan

[96] William Spindler, "2015: The Year of Europe's Refugee Crisis," UNHCR, December 8, 2015, https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2015/12/56ec1ebde/2015-year-europes-refugee-crisis.html.
[97] Eurostat, "Asylum in the EU Member States," March 4, 2016; Eurostat, "Asylum in the EU Member States," March 16, 2017.
[98] "Sommerpressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel," Webseite der Bundesregierung | Startseite, accessed July 8, 2022, https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/pressekonferenzen/sommerpressekonferenz-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-848300.
[99] Spindler, "2015."
[100] Timo Lochocki, "Germany's Political Center Is Stronger than It Looks" (German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2016), http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep18839.
[101] Lochocki.
[102] Lochocki, 2.

already in March 2015 to close European borders, while the PvdA argued for a humane approach to migration and for the borders to remain open. The coalition parties came to a compromise which favours the approach of the PvdA in the short-term by opening the borders and supporting the redistribution of refugees throughout Europe. Yet, in the long term, the VVD approach of a stricter immigration policy is agreed upon.[103]

Protest against immigration increased due to security concerns after the terror attacks in France in November of 2015 which were utilized by right-wing actors to connect refugees to Islamic terrorism.[104] Adding to that apprehension in Germany were equally the events on New Year's Eve 2015 in Cologne where the night escalated with a large group of young men of predominantly North African and Arab descent committing crimes such as theft but especially sexual harassment and assault of hundreds of women.[105] While, the Netherlands received fewer migrants than Germany during the crisis, opinions on the matter were divided and as in other European countries voices against immigration arose. There were several protests among which a violent protest in December 2015 against the planned arrival of an asylum centre in the village of Geldermalsen.[106] The protest managed to halt the procedure.[107]

The path to a solution to the migration issue was not an easy one. The European-based solution supported, among others, by Merkel and Hollande was heavily discussed and divided the continent. The Dutch prime minister Rutte also supported the European refugee allocation plan, however only under the conditions that this would be only a temporary solution and that all the EU member states would cooperate.[108] The 2015 EU allocation plan consisted of a quota system which foresaw a dispersion of the refugees throughout Europe in an act of solidarity. This dispersion was aimed at relieving the pressure from the European countries where the refugees arrived and its calculations took into account the population size, the national income, unemployment rate, and the number

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[103] Fons Lambie, "Knetteren, botsingen en crisis: VVD en PvdA over asielbeleid," RTL Nieuws, November 12, 2015, https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nederland/politiek/artikel/866901/knetteren-botsingen-en-crisis-vvd-en-pvda-over-asielbeleid.
[104] Georgi, "The Role of Racism in the European 'Migration Crisis.'"
[105] Deutsche Welle, "Fünf Jahre danach: Lehren aus der Kölner Silvesternacht," dw.com, December 31, 2020, https://www.dw.com/de/f%C3%BCnf-jahre-danach-lehren-aus-der-k%C3%B6lner-silvesternacht/a-55980209.
[106] "Raadszaal Geldermalsen ontruimd wegens protest tegen komst azc," NOS, December 16, 2015, https://nos.nl/artikel/2075643-raadszaal-geldermalsen-ontruimd-wegens-protest-tegen-komst-azc.
[107] Małgorzata Pacek, "The Netherlands and the Migration Crisis," *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 15, no. 3 (2017): 55–72.
[108] Avinash Bhikhie, "Rutte verwacht Europese weerstand bij herverdeling vluchtelingen," NU, September 10, 2015, https://www.nu.nl/politiek/4122975/rutte-verwacht-europese-weerstand-bij-herverdeling-vluchtelingen.html.

of refugees already taken in so as to not overwhelm the receiving countries.[109] However, the solution caused an uproar, especially in Eastern European countries that did not want to take in refugees.[110] While the relocation scheme did lead to some Northern and Western European countries to take in refugees from Italy and Greece, many Central and Eastern European Countries never budged in their stance on migration.[111] Ultimately, countries that did take refugees under the allocation scheme rarely accepted the complete number of refugees they were supposed to take. As such the Netherlands took in only around 20 per cent and Germany around five per cent of its calculated allocation number through the scheme.[112] The plan did not work due to lacking overall solidarity within the EU.

Finally, in the spring of 2016, the European Union came to an agreement with Turkey that was aimed at diminishing the intensity of the migration flow and is said to mark the end of the 'crisis.'[113] The so-called Joint Action Plan foresaw Turkey would undertake efforts to limit migration to Europe, especially to Greece, and would take back people who arrived irregularly without the right to asylum. The EU, in turn, would provide monetary assistance, would take in refugees whose right to asylum was previously established in Turkey in exchange for those sent back, would loosen visa regulations for Turkish travellers, and would reopen accession talks for Turkey to join the EU.[114] This agreement seemed successful as in 2017 the number of first-time asylum seekers went down to 650.000, thus declining by half compared to the previous year.[115] Yet, even after migration flows had dialled down, the issue of migration continued to fuel right-wing discourses in Europe.[116]

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[109] Pacek, "The Netherlands and the Migration Crisis."
[110] "EU 'has East-West Split' on Migrant Quotas," *BBC News*, December 14, 2017, sec. Europe, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42352876.
[111] Spindler, "2015."
[112] Elspeth Guild, Cathryn Costello, and Violeta Moreno-Lax, "Implementation of the 2015 Council Decisions Establishing Provisional Measures in the Area of International Protection for the Benefit of Italy and of Greece," Think Tank | European Parliament, March 7, 2017, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_STU(2017)583132.
[113] Georgi, "The Role of Racism in the European 'Migration Crisis.'"
[114] European Commission, "EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan," Text, European Commission, October 15, 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_15_5860; International Rescue Committee, "What Is the EU-Turkey Deal? | The IRC in the EU," Rescue.org/EU, March 18, 2022, https://eu.rescue.org/article/what-eu-turkey-deal.
[115] Eurostat, "Asylum in the EU Member States" (Eurostat news release, March 20, 2018), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8754388/3-20032018-AP-EN.pdf/50c2b5a5-3e6a-4732-82d0-1caf244549e3.
[116] Georgi, "The Role of Racism in the European 'Migration Crisis.'"

LGBTQ+ Situation in Germany and the Netherlands

Even though the LGBTQ+ community situation was not one of the specific core issues of the 2017 elections, it does touch on the notion of identity which was at the centre of attention. Consequently, it is important to highlight their situation in the respective countries because it can indicate why or why not they were part of populist campaigns.

One tool to obtain an overview of the community's legal situation in Europe is the Rainbow Europe Map published annually by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA).[117] The map gives an indication of the legal and political human rights situation for the LGBTQ+ community in Europe, by assessing European countries law on issues related to the community and scoring the country in percentages with 100 per cent indicating full equality and respect of human rights. These scores are depicted on a map which is equally coloured in traffic light colours giving differing shades of green to countries that do well to colouring countries with lacking regulations in yellow or red shades. According to the Rainbow Europe Map of 2017, Germany and the Netherlands were both green and ranked relatively well.[118] The Netherlands has the higher ranking with 64 per cent which puts it in a similar LGBTQ+ rights situation as Croatia (62 per cent) and Spain (67 per cent). Germany has 10 per cent less with 54 per cent which places it in the direct vicinity of Ireland (52 per cent) and Austria (56 per cent). The community's situation is measured according to rights in several categories namely, equality and non-discrimination, family, hate crime and speech, legal gender recognition and bodily integrity, civil society space, and asylum. These are further divided into subcategories. In the last three categories, the two countries overlap entirely. However, the others show differences. The table shows for example that while Germany does well in the categories of equality and non-discrimination, the country lacks in the category of hate crime and speech. As such, in 2017 there were only regional policies aimed at tackling hatred based on sexual orientation and gender identity but no laws. The Netherlands does have a hate speech law which gives it a slight advance in that category. Contrary to Germany, the Netherlands does less well regarding equality and discrimination since while the country has measures for equality on the basis of sexual orientation, it does less for equality on the basis of gender identity. Yet, the country is more advanced in terms of family rights than Germany in terms of, for instance,

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[117] ILGA-Europe, "Rainbow Europe," February 4, 2022, https://www.ilga-europe.org/rainbow-europe/.
[118] ILGA-Europe, "Rainbow Europe Map and Index 2017," May 17, 2017, https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/rainbow-europe-2017/.

marriage equality, joint adoption, and automatic co-parent recognition. So, overall Germany seems to be more conservative in family matters, while the Netherlands struggles to adapt to aspects of the LGBTQ+ community other than sexual orientation. The Rainbow Map has been criticised for neglecting people's lived experiences (which can be more positive than indicated) or continuing struggles (in countries where there is good legislation) by solely focusing on the legislative rights of the community.[119] Nonetheless, I would argue that a country's legal framework does reflect its culture to an extent and the Rainbow Map can thus be a useful tool to gauge general attitudes towards LGBTQ+ persons, especially since this paper concerns itself most with political discourse. Further critique points out that over time more aspects are included in the Rainbow Map, thus "virtually moving the bar of equality year by year."[120] This can, for example, be seen in the fact that while in 2017 the category of equality and non-discrimination consisted of 19 subcategories, by the time the 2021 map was published this number had increased to 25.[121] This critique might be useful when comparing the status of the countries from one year to the other. However, since social identities are in constant flux there is no real argument as to why the measuring system should not reflect changes in the community and issues that have more recently come to the awareness of the organisation.

A Eurobarometer was also dedicated to the subject of social acceptance of the LGBTIQ in the Member States in 2019.[122] Assuming that the situation didn't drastically change in the time between the elections and the survey, it holds relevant information on opinions on the community in Germany and the Netherlands. Perhaps not surprisingly, both countries are tolerant with 97 per cent of the respondents in the Netherlands and 88 per cent of the respondents in Germany agreeing that the community should have equal rights to heterosexual people. This puts the Netherlands in the second highest place and Germany in 6th place of all the Member States. In comparison to a similar Eurobarometer of 2015 included in the 2019 document, the Netherlands shows to have been already very

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[119] Francesca Romana Ammaturo and Koen Slootmaeckers, "The Politics of Rainbow Maps," The London School of Economics and Political Science, *Engenderings* (blog), May 28, 2020, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/gender/2020/05/28/the-politics-of-rainbow-maps/.
[120] Ammaturo and Slootmaeckers.
[121] ILGA-Europe, "Rainbow Europe Map and Index 2017"; ILGA-Europe, "Rainbow Europe Map and Index 2021," May 17, 2021, https://ilga-europe.org/report/rainbow-europe-2021/.
[122] European Commission, "Eurobarometer on the Social Acceptance of LGBTIQ People in the EU," Text, European Commission, 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/eurobarometer-social-acceptance-lgbtiq-people-eu-2019_en.

tolerant in 2015 with 96 per cent of the respondents agreeing to the question about equal rights. In the four years between the surveys, the percentage of Germans agreeing has augmented by 18 per cent, thus having 70 per cent of the people agreeing with this statement in 2015. From this, it can be concluded that in 2017, the agreement of Germans was likely somewhere between 70 and 88 per cent, while for the Dutch it remains around 97 per cent. This does leave a noticeable distance between the two countries. Questions that concern gender identities instead of sexual orientation receive less support overall. As such legal gender recognition by allowing transgender persons to alter the sex on their civil documents received 82 per cent support in the Netherlands and 70 per cent support in Germany and even less approve of the inclusion of a third gender in public documents (61 and 59 per cent respectively). Thus, more recent and progressive gender issues are less supported than different sexual orientations in both countries.

In general, from the onset, it seems that both countries are doing well and that the presence of the LGBTQ+ community in the countries is recognised and measures aimed at creating a more safe and equal space for them are enforced. Nonetheless, hate crime and speech are less regulated in Germany, while the Netherlands still struggles to include people based on gender identity. Furthermore, the acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community is high in both countries, although this is more the case regarding sexual orientation than gender identity. Germany has changed attitudes towards the community to a more progressive stance over the last years but remains somewhat less progressive than the Netherlands. The high scores in both countries contribute to an assumption that identity issues in this regard would not be a core topic in the 2017 elections. Moreover, if thematised there is a larger possibility for negative attitudes in German discourses and in discourses regarding gender identities.

The 2017 Elections

The year 2017 saw numerous national elections in European countries such as the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Malta, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. The media and general focus of these elections was on the right-wing populist actors as some were foreseeing or already perceived a 'populist revolution' in Europe.[123] This populist turn could already be seen in the 2014 European Parliament

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[123] David Francis, "The Force Behind Europe's Populist Revolution," The Fiscal Times, May 28, 2014, https://www.thefiscaltimes.com/Articles/2014/05/28/Force-Behind-Europe-s-Populist-Revolution.

elections, as well as the 2016 Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump as American president the same year.[124] Hence why these elections received an above-average amount of international attention.[125] They were considered a pivotal moment in deciding the future course of Europe.[126] Seeing that the thesis concerns two Western European countries, the following section will focus to a greater extent on this geographical area.

The elections were marked by the emergence and especially by the rise of parties that were challenging the mainstream parties which had dominated European politics for decades.[127] However, populist parties are not a new phenomenon in Europe and some relevant parties nowadays have been around since the 1980s with varying successes in various periods. Nonetheless, their approach has slightly changed, moving from outright fascism or racism based on biological factors to more covertly racist, nationalist approaches based on culture. This also explains their success in the 2017 elections.[128] In Western Europe in general it seems that voters were "favourable to cultural demarcation and to economic protection."[129] Not surprisingly, the main topics of the elections in the Netherlands and Germany were the issues of identity and immigration.[130] This was beneficial for challenger parties who oftentimes focus on issues instead of developing full-fledged ideological frameworks. As such, they could also refrain from taking positions on some disputed subjects which might have cost them votes.[131] Challengers further benefited from the rather new importance of social media in political campaigns. Yet, far from replacing traditional campaign strategies and media, social media was used

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[124] Daphne Halikiopoulou, "A Right-Wing Populist Momentum? A Review of 2017 Elections Across Europe," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. S1 (2018): 63–73, https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12769.

[125] van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017."

[126] Lorenzo De Sio and Aldo Paparo, "The Year of Challengers? Issues, Public Opinion, and Elections in Western Europe in 2017" (Rome: CISE, 2018), https://iris.luiss.it/bitstream/11385/218335/1/CISE010_2018_10EN_16x23%2C5.pdf.

[127] De Sio and Paparo.

[128] Halikiopoulou, "A Right-Wing Populist Momentum?"

[129] Lorenzo De Sio and Aldo Paparo, "The Year of Challengers? Issues, Public Opinion, and Elections in Western Europe in 2017" (Rome: CISE, 2018), 11 https://iris.luiss.it/bitstream/11385/218335/1/CISE010_2018_10EN_16x23%2C5.pdf.

[130] van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017"; Steven Erlanger and Melissa Eddy, "Angela Merkel Makes History in German Vote, but So Does Far Right," *The New York Times*, September 24, 2017, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/24/world/europe/germany-election-merkel.html.

[131] De Sio and Paparo, "The Year of Challengers? Issues, Public Opinion, and Elections in Western Europe in 2017."

as an additional tool to strengthen one's campaign and foster voter engagement and mobilisation.[132]

The importance of the elections was not only seen in foreign attention but equally domestically in the high voter participation. In the Netherlands, the participation reached 81 per cent which is the highest participation rate since 1986 and in Germany 76,2 per cent of the people voted which was fairly high but not as significant an increase as in their neighbouring country.[133]

The Dutch elections were the first to take place in 2017 and were thus said to set the tone for the rest.[134] Against expectations and opinion polls, Geert Wilders' right-wing Partij voor de Vrijheid (Party for Freedom, PVV) did not manage to become the biggest force in the Netherlands. This is in part due to the fact that he faced competition on the right from the FvD.[135] The most important factor, however, remains that the governing centre-right Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD), as well as the centre-right Christen-Democratisch Appèl (Christian Democratic Appeal, CDA) embraced the cultural demarcation discourse *for* Dutch identity and *against* Islam, thus delivering a similar message as Wilders. This gave Wilders less of a monopoly on one of the most important issues in the elections and profited the centre-right parties.[136] Overall, the elections showed that Dutch voters were divided which consequently led to a higher fragmentation of the political landscape and the governing parties to lose more votes than ever before. Yet, the VVD managed to remain the largest party and Mark Rutte, the Prime Minister, was able to continue his work in another legislative period within a different coalition. This is also because the losses of the VVD, which went from 26,6 per cent in 2012 to 21,3 per cent in 2017, are not necessarily completely linked to the discontentment of the voters with the previous government.[137] However, the VVD's coalition partner until 2017, the centre-left Partij

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[132] Voigt and Seidenglanz, "Was -lernen wir aus dem -digitalen -Wahlkampf 2017?"
[133] Tom van der Meer, Henk van der Kolk, and Roderik Rekker, "Aanhoudend wisselvallig: Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek 2017" (Stichting KiezersOnderzoek Nederland (SKON), January 2018), https://kennisopenbaarbestuur.nl:443/rapporten-publicaties/aanhoudend-wisselvallig-nationaal-kiezersonderzoek-2017/; "Wahlbeteiligung bei Bundestagswahlen in Deutschland bis 2021," Statista, June 22, 2022, https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/2274/umfrage/entwicklung-der-wahlbeteiligung-bei-bundestagswahlen-seit-1949/.
[134] De Sio and Paparo, "The Year of Challengers? Issues, Public Opinion, and Elections in Western Europe in 2017."
[135] van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017."
[136] De Sio and Paparo, "The Year of Challengers? Issues, Public Opinion, and Elections in Western Europe in 2017."
[137] van der Meer, van der Kolk, and Rekker, "Aanhoudend wisselvallig."

van de Arbeid (Labour Party, PVDA) was punished for entering into the governing coalition with the VVD and lost remarkably, going from 24,8 per cent of the votes in 2012 to a mere 5,7 per cent in 2017.[138]

The German elections were held later in the year when most elections had already taken place and the fear of a populist revolution was diminished. Nonetheless, in Germany, the AfD obtained a great election win and thus disproved the assessment that because of its national-socialist past, right-wing actors would be less successful in Germany.[139] These elections showed that even though the populist right developed later in Germany than in other European countries, it had become a relevant political force at that time.[140] As in the Dutch elections, the overall results of the elections in Germany led to a weakening of the government as the governing parties lost votes. The previous government consisted of a coalition between the two largest parties in Germany, the Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) with its Bavarian sister party Christlich-Soziale Union (Christian Social Union, CSU) and the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD). The CDU went from 41,5 per cent of the votes in 2013 to 32,9 per cent in 2017, while the SPD went from 25,7 per cent to 20,5 per cent.[141] These numbers also show that the political fragmentation in the Netherlands exceeds that of Germany significantly with the two largest parties in the Netherlands in 2017 (PVV and VVD) add up to 34,4 per cent of the votes, while in Germany the two largest parties still obtained half of the votes. Furthermore, in the Netherlands 13 parties were voted into the Second Chamber of the Parliament while in Germany only six entered the Bundestag. That the two largest German parties lost so many votes is due to different reasons. While the CDU is said to have been punished for their handling of the 'migration crisis', the SPD was subject to a more general discontentment.[142] Contrary to their Dutch centre-right counterparts, the German CDU maintained Merkel's tolerant line in the handling and the discussion of the refugee issue and general immigration.[143] Therefore, the AfD had little to no competition for right-wing voters in Germany on the issue of culture and immigration. This made it

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[138] van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017."
[139] Halikiopoulou, "A Right-Wing Populist Momentum?"
[140] Hanspeter Kriesi, "The 2017 French and German Elections," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, no. S1 (2018): 51–62, https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12756.
[141] Kriesi.
[142] Kriesi.
[143] De Sio and Paparo, "The Year of Challengers? Issues, Public Opinion, and Elections in Western Europe in 2017."

relatively easy for them to fill this political gap, claim ownership of this issue, and in this way attract previous non-voters and voters disillusioned with the politics of the CDU.[144]

Overall, the 2017 elections in Europe were a success for populist actors, albeit not to the extent that some hoped for, and others feared.[145] Nonetheless, right-wing populist parties overall increased their support over the last years and consequently have become "more effective in driving the policy agenda and setting the terms on which mainstream actors compete."[146] Hence why it is relevant to research the discourses that right-wing actors utilise to shape current political issues. The following section concerns these discourses of the AfD and the FvD.

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[144] Karin Priester, "Die Alternative für Deutschland," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 67, no. 3 (July 1, 2019): 443–53, https://doi.org/10.1515/vfzg-2019-0027.
[145] Halikiopoulou, "A Right-Wing Populist Momentum?"
[146] Halikiopoulou, 72.

Discourse Analysis FvD

The following chapter will present an overview of the FvD as a party as well as the reasons for choosing to analyse the FvD instead of the better-known PVV. Then the chapter will provide a discourse analysis of the party's election manifesto as well as its Facebook campaign in 2017.

When discussing populism in the Netherlands, the PVV is one of the most infamous and successful examples. Founded in 2006, the party was well-established by the time of the 2017 elections where it managed to become the second-largest party by winning 13,1 per cent of the votes. Nonetheless, this paper is mainly concerned with another party, the FvD, which ended with 'merely' 1,8 per cent in the same elections. This choice was made for several reasons. Firstly, it is interesting to include the FvD in a comparison with the AfD, since they are both newcomers elected successfully to parliament for the first time in 2017. Secondly, being a newcomer, the FvD remains understudied especially when compared with the PVV which received a substantial amount of international academic and media attention at the time.[147] By focusing on the FvD then, this research fills a gap in academic literature. Thirdly, while the electoral success of the FvD was comparatively low to that of the PVV, they managed to attract many former non-voters, while the PVV depended "on a hard core of supporters" and "was unable to draw many new, undecided voters" while campaigning even though his core issue, Dutch identity, was in the spotlight.[148] Moreover, the attraction of previous non-voters can also be seen in the election results of the AfD, as mentioned above, which makes it an interesting commonality between the two parties in focus. Thus, overall, it might have as much or even more merit to research discourse in the election campaign of the FvD than the PVV.

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[147] Matthijs Rooduijn, "Dutch Elections: What Is the Wilders Effect?," Aljazeera, March 14, 2017, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2017/3/14/dutch-elections-what-is-the-wilders-effect; Monique El-Faizy, "All Eyes on Far-Right Politician Geert Wilders in Dutch Election," France 24, March 7, 2017, 24, https://www.france24.com/en/20170307-dutch-far-right-politican-geert-wilders-serves-test-case-populist-candidates-europe; Ayhan Kaya and Ayşe Tecmen, "Europe versus Islam?: Right-Wing Populist Discourse and the Construction of a Civilizational Identity," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 49–64, https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2019.1570759; Andreas C. Goldberg and Carolin Ischen, "Be There or Be Square – The Impact of Participation and Performance in the 2017 Dutch TV Debates and Its Coverage on Voting Behaviour," *Electoral Studies* 66 (August 1, 2020): 102171, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2020.102171; Kraak, "The Securitization of Migration in the Netherlands During the European Refugee Crisis."
[148] Joop J. M. van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017," *West European Politics* 41, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 1372, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2018.1448556.

Originating from a think tank founded in 2015, Forum voor Democratie [Forum for Democracy, FvD] was founded as a Dutch right-wing populist party in 2016. The most famous and influential member of the party is Thierry Baudet, one of the party founders and its leader. Even though the party's name implies democracy the party organisation is structured in a way that leaves most power and decision-making to the leadership and not the members.[149]

While the party won 1,8 per cent of the votes in 2017, their most successful elections remain the 2019 provincial elections in which they obtained 14,5 per cent, the most votes of all the parties, making them very influential in the Dutch Senate.[150] Since in the Netherlands the election hurdle is relatively easy to surpass, especially compared to Germany, the FvD entered Parliament in 2017 with two seats. Given the high fragmentation in the Dutch political landscape, these numbers are significant for such a young party.[151] Due to internal fighting and scandal surrounding extremist messages in the party's youth organisation, the FvD lost some of its momentum.[152] Nonetheless, in the 2021 elections they won 5 per cent of the votes, thus still increasing their result of 2017.[153] The FvD voter base consists of predominantly new voters, educated voters (who find the PVV too rough), younger white men, and previous PVV voters.[154]

Their 2017 election programme focused on limiting immigration, increasing national sovereignty, leaving the European Union, and reforming democracy.[155] Their campaign relied heavily on social media advertisement as well as interaction on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This is also what contributed to the quick success of the party.[156]

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[149] Jonge, "Is the (Mass) Party Really Over?"
[150] "Verkiezingsuitslagen voor FvD - Forum voor Democratie," AlleCijfers, March 31, 2022, https://allecijfers.nl/politieke-partij/fvd/.
[151] van Holsteyn, "The Dutch Parliamentary Elections of March 2017"; Jonge, "Is the (Mass) Party Really Over?"
[152] Jonge, "Is the (Mass) Party Really Over?"
[153] "Verkiezingsuitslagen voor FvD - Forum voor Democratie."
[154] Sebastiaan Faber, "Is Dutch Bad Boy Thierry Baudet the New Face of the European Alt-Right?," The Nation, April 5, 2018, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/is-dutch-bad-boy-thierry-baudet-the-new-face-of-the-european-alt-right/.
[155] Forum voor Democratie, "Verkiezingsprogramma FvD [Election Programme FvD]" (DNPP, https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/10938/1/FvD_verkprogTK2017.pdf).
[156] Jonge, "Is the (Mass) Party Really Over?"

The Election Manifesto

Forum's 2017 election manifesto consists of 30 pages and discusses 26 different categories including but not limited to their fight against the party cartel of which they accuse the established parties, a law for the protection of Dutch values, the sovereignty of the Netherlands, direct Democracy, the remediation of the Dutch public broadcaster NPO, and the European Union.[157]

In the introduction, the FvD states that "[e]en existentiële crisis bedreigt het voortbestaan van de Nederlandse samenleving" (an existential crisis is threatening the survival of Dutch society).[158] This they ascribe to several things such as the EU but also to borders being left open which would lead to the country being overwhelmed by immigrants and the terror threat to increase. At the end of the introduction, they highlight that something has to change in the Netherlands. These statements can all very easily be ascribed to securitisation discourses as they portray the state in grave danger and urge to introduce measures altering this course.

The election manifesto furthermore argues for the introduction of a law protecting Dutch values. The FvD argues that the arrival of large groups of Islamic immigrants would put pressure on the accomplishments and core values of Dutch society. As a consequence, this would lead to population groups standing opposite each other. While saying immigration puts a strain on aspects of Dutch society does not seem as extreme as the wording of an existential crisis used before, the perceived pressure is large enough for the party to deem protection measures necessary which is an argument often seen in securitisation. Moreover, the placement of this law as the second point of their programme speaks for its importance to the party which gives it more urgency than simply the wording. When discussing the law, they highlight five fundamental values they want to see supported by all institutions including religious ones. The fourth point states that: "Alle mensen zijn fundamental gelijkwaardig, ongeacht geslacht, ras of seksuele gerichtheid" (All people are fundamentally equal, regardless of sex, race or sexual orientation).[159] While this seems a purely tolerant statement at first glance, in the context of a proposed law that in essence is based on the othering of Muslim immigrants coming to the Netherlands, it can be regarded as an act of homonationalism. "Homonationalism [...] is a form of nationalism in which the recognition of LGBTQ rights is used to promote

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[157] Forum voor Democratie, "Verkiezingsprogramma FvD [Election Programme FvD]."
[158] Forum voor Democratie, "Verkiezingsprogramma FvD [Election Programme FvD]," 1.
[159] Forum voor Democratie, 3.

a particular version of the nation at the expense of others, sometimes entailing outright racism toward others, especially Muslim others [...]."[160] This is a frequent discourse pattern for right-wing actors.[161] Through this, here indirect, labelling of Muslims as homophobic by highlighting it as one of the Dutch core values that need to be protected from them, the FvD continues to portray the immigrants as an 'out-group.' Other aspects of the law include the predominance of freedom of speech and the right to choose one's partner. Furthermore, religious schools are ordered to teach various religions and leave the students free to believe in whichever religion they choose. The FvD also makes an effort to stress that the teaching of the holocaust would be mandatory in all schools. Foreign funding of these religious schools would be forbidden. Lastly, wearing niqabs, balaclavas, and other face-covering clothing would not be allowed in public. In general, the law aims to control migrants and defend Dutch society from them which corresponds to the Vigneau's securitisation mechanisms introduced before.[162]

One of the essential aspects of the FvD's campaign in 2017 was their critique of the European Union and their intention to leave the EU as soon as possible. The reasons put forward are that the EU would be undemocratic, the Euro untenable as a currency, and the open borders would lead to uncontrollable immigration and put the country at a higher risk of terror attacks. As mentioned in the securitisation of migration, the arguments that migration causes terror attacks and should be limited are key aspects of securitising discourses. These discourses can also be found in section 17 on safety and justice. In this section, the FvD argues for the reintroduction of border controls to prevent terrorism and to wherever possible let non-naturalised immigrants stand trial in their country of origin instead of the Netherlands. The following section on immigration and remigration states that in the last decade the country has witnessed an immense influx of migrants and Dutch society "kan dit niet meer behappen" (can't handle it anymore).[163] Countermeasures proposed include only issuing temporary asylum instead of residence permits, finding and evict illegal migrants currently residing in the Netherlands, and having a selective immigration policy that only allow immigrants which the country needs and can take in. Being able to take in immigrants additionally depends on their cultural

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[160] Miriam Smith, "Homonationalism and the Comparative Politics of LGBTQ Rights," in *LGBTQ Politics*, ed. Marla Brettschneider, Susan Burgess, and Christine Keating, A Critical Reader (NYU Press, 2017), 458–76, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1pwt8jh.32.
[161] Alexander Dhoest, "Homonationalism and Media," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication, December 17, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.1163.
[162] Vigneau, "Securitization Theory and the Relationship between Discourse and Context."
[163] Forum voor Democratie, "Verkiezingsprogramma FvD [Election Programme FvD], 18."

background which based on the previous suggested 'Protection of Dutch Values Law' can be interpreted as a proposal to prohibit Muslim immigration. Moreover, the safety and justice section aims at fostering voluntary and introducing punitive remigration.

As in the section on Dutch values, the geostrategy of the FvD is wary of the Middle East, which has Islam as a majority religion, and concerned about the situation of various minorities such as Christians and homosexuals in the region. The situation in the Middle East would also lead to uncontrolled immigration and increased terror threats in Europe. It is noticeable that the fear of more terror attacks is exclusively mentioned in relation to increased immigration throughout the entire manifesto.

Overall, the election manifesto of the FvD does show forms of securitisation discourses, by painting a picture of a country under threat which necessitates extreme measures quickly. In some way, the discourses are seemingly mild because they do leave a space for immigration and Islam in the Netherlands, although this space comes with a high degree of assimilation to what Forum deems core Dutch values and culture. This 'mildness' is also to be viewed compared to the major right-wing party PVV whose one-page election manifesto aims to "de-Islamise" the country. This the PVV proposes by not only closing the borders completely for asylum seekers and migrants from Muslim nations, but also by preventatively locking up radical Muslims, closing all mosques and Islamic schools, and forbidding the Quran.[164] Thus, the PVV security discourses call for more extreme measures against the supposed threat of Islam than the FvD's discourse. Nonetheless, the FvD uses securitisation discourses related to migrants frequently in several categories and should thus not be underestimated. The only argument that is not used in their securitising discourse is that of the migrant as a threat to public health. Lastly, the fault of these existential crises the FvD describes is always put in the hands of the political elite and the EU. Consequently, the measures proposed to end the threat to Dutch society and culture always comes back to dispose of said elite and exit the EU.

Further interesting is that except for their inclusion in the "Protection of Dutch Values Law" the LGBTQ+ community and the mentioning of their situation in the Middle East, ares not mentioned in any other part of the manifesto. Thus, in the context of the manifesto, LGBTQ+ rights are a non-issue which could stem from the opinion that

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[164] Partij voor de Vrijheid, "Verkiezingsprogramma PVV-Nederland weer van ons! [Election Manifesto PVV- The Netherlands ours again" (DNPP, October 21, 2016), https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/628/.

equality has been achieved in the Netherlands and no further attention regarding the issue is needed. This puts the FvD in the category of post-feminist populism.

Facebook

In the period from February 1st to March 15th, 2017, Forum voor Democratie published 132 individual posts.[165] Posts include but are not limited to, the promotion of the party's manifesto, the promotion of interviews and articles from other platforms or traditional media, videos, calls for donations, and interim opinion polling updates. Of these 132, twenty-three posts related to the keywords and all except one were related to the topic of migration. That means around 17 per cent of their posts were related to migration and Islam. The data was taken from the site in July 2022 and might have been altered before or after that period. The first post mentioning the subject stems from February 6th and the last from March 10th, thus five days before the elections. The posts were published throughout the whole period in a frequency of a post about migration every one to four days. The following section discusses the most relevant of these posts. The relevancy is based on for example whether one of the keywords is simply mentioned (low relevance), or whether the post puts forward an actual argument (high relevance).

In general, since the research concerns several weeks of election campaigning, posts do repeat general ideas and aspects of their campaign without expanding too much on the argument. Among these are calls to close borders, border protection, protection of freedoms, temporary asylum, and other measures proposed in the manifesto such as the "Protection of Dutch Values Law."

A post from February 9th promotes Theo Hiddema's (who occupied the second place on Forum's candidate list in the 2017 elections) book on Pim Fortuyn, the Dutch politician who founded his own far-right party well-known for its aversion to Islam and who was ultimately shot during the national election campaign of 2002. The passage shared lauds Fortuyn and his arguments especially because they caused such surprised and confused reactions from the other politicians. Regarding Islam, Hiddema holds that the Islam supposedly would deteriorate the already existing problems in the Dutch education system, would be only focused on group mentality, and ultimately would be dull and colourless. This is why, according to Hiddema, there should be a population

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[165] "Forum Voor Democratie -FVD | Facebook," accessed July 16, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/forumvoordemocratie.

policy to prevent people who don't fit Dutch society to obtain a residency permit. This could be done through a Green Card system similar to the United States and regarding arguments that the US was built on migrants, Hiddema holds that the comparison would not hold, as "dat zijn niet de immigration met wie wij zo veel te stellen hebben" (those are not the kind of migrants we have to put up with). In this passage, Othering of the Islam is very evident, however, securitising arguments are not developed. Pim Fortuyn is again remembered later that month as a politician who fought against the established parties and warned against the "problematic" aspects of Islam and "difficult" integration.

Posts later on, such as the one published on February 11th, are blunter in their securitising aspects. In this post, it is argued that the continuing migration pressure, which according to them is aimed at helping the electoral success of the PvdA, has caused the destruction of Dutch education and health care and has contributed to the establishment of a "parallel society" based on peer pressure, "mock decency", and hypocrisy. Adding to this there would be "religious hysteria", distorted sexual morals, and "rif-related violence."[166] All of this would be at the detriment of "our self-respect, our freedom and our humour." Again, two days later, Forum posts that the immigration "problem" while supposedly being one of the largest problems of our time, remains a taboo subject. They further link their website describing their position on immigration. Three day later they post that the "ongecontroleerde immigratie bedreigt de maatschappelijke vrede" (uncontrolled immigration threatens the societal peace). In other posts, they refer to war criminals walking around in the Netherlands and critique the fact that, for example, Wilders had to go to court because of his rhetoric on Muslims which the FvD regards as an attack on the freedom of speech. Moreover, the last post before the elections shows a picture from 2016 of a Jewish school in Amsterdam with a fence for protection. The extra protection was installed after a radical Islamic terror attack on a Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2014.[167] Forum calls it a 'bunker' and that they "zullen niet rusten todat Nederland weer de vrije, open, tolerante samenleving is die we kennen van vroeger en iedereen weer in vrijdheid en veiligheid zijn of haar godsdienst en tradities kan belijden" (wil not rest until the Netherlands is once again the free, open, tolerant society like it was

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[166] "Rif-related violence" is referring to the Rif Mountains in Morocco; some right-wing actors hold that people from that region would be more aggressive. "Kamerlid Theo Hiddema (FvD) blijft actief als advocaat," AT5, March 23, 2017, https://www.at5.nl/artikelen/167127/kamerlid_theo_hiddema_fvd_blijft_actief_als_advocaat.

[167] NOS, "Stalen hek om joodse school Amsterdam," NOS, October 7, 2016, https://nos.nl/artikel/2136490-stalen-hek-om-joodse-school-amsterdam.

in the past and everyone can practice their religion and tradition in freedom and security).[168] The continue in saying that the FvD, if voted, would end mass immigration and integration problems. Using the word bunker to describe the school creates an image of war which goes well with the narrative of threats to existential freedom. This time it is the Jewish faith and not gay rights which are defended in the effort to distancing oneself from the 'Other.'

Some posts, however, add more nuance to the debate on migration and have less of a security focus. In a post on February 17th, they argue that the money that is spent on "uninhibited" immigration would be more effectively spent on asylum in the region, thus outside of Europe. Further, should asylum be necessary for whatever reason, this should not lead to a permanent residence permit but always be temporary. The aim is, according to the FvD, to ultimately return the people to their country of origin should the situation in that country allow it. This seems to allow a little space for asylum should it be necessary. This sentiment is further expressed on a post from the 23rd of the same month which holds they thought about immigration and "hoe we dit op een manier kunnen doen waardoor we aan de ene kant niet alles gaan verbieden en afschaffen maar aan de andere kant ook ophouden met het vrijblijvende gepraat en het wegkijken" (how we can solve this in a way where we on the one hand won't forbid everything but on the other also stop with the non-committal talking and looking away). Once more on March 2nd the FvD quotes Baudet saying that "niemand in het hele debat zegt: er mag helemaal niemand meer in" (no-one in this debate is saying: no one at all is allowed in). However, this is followed by Baudet saying there is an unbridled influx of migrants who would claim to be from a war zone which is not always true and that 70 per cent of the migrants arrive without a passport which often just has been thrown away. In another post, they hold that unlike other parties such as the PvdA they propose *realistic* solutions in the areas of immigration and integration. Thus, they seem to make efforts to establish themselves as a firm but reasonable party regarding these subjects.

Finally, the only post that discusses something related to the LGBTQ+ community is a post from February 28th, concerning quotas and is thus not even directly aimed at the community but also includes for example women in general. The post concerned a debate with Sylvana Simons, a former television presenter who founded her left-wing party BIJ1 (formerly Artikel 1). BIJ1 did compete in the general election in 2017 but did not enter

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[168] "Forum Voor Democratie -FVD | Facebook."

parliament in that period. The party is an advocate for anti-racism, feminism, and minority rights.[169] In the excerpt of the television show Het Lagerhuis linked in the post, Baudet and Sylvana discuss quotas for job applications. In the video, Baudet says it wouldn't be wise to install quotas to ensure diversity in government because it would have a reversed effect because people who obtain a position through a quota regulation would feel uncomfortable with that fact. His argumentation against quotas does not rely on the securitisation of minorities.

Overall, there are securitising discourses in the FvD's Facebook election campaign on migration. The migrant is often used as a tool to critique the established parties or the EU but also finds itself in the centre of security arguments. Throughout its campaign, Forum argues against taking in migrants but attempts to portray itself as reasonable. This makes Forum's whole approach to migration more ambiguous.

The LGBTQ+ community seems to be as much of a non-issue in the FvD's Facebook campaign, as it is in their election manifesto. When thematized, which is not initiated by the FvD but takes place in a debating tv show, the FvD does not argue for non-discrimination measures but equally does not invoke security aspects in his arguments. It is important to keep in mind that even though the securitisation of minorities does not play a significant role in the 2017 election campaign of Forum voor Democratie, this does not necessarily mean that the party is as inclusive towards the minority as it may seem, as this conclusion is drawn from only a short time period. It does, however, mean that the FvD expects no electoral gain from negative positions on the LGBTQ+ community.

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[169] Kiara Grouwstra, "BIJ1 - Spreek je uit beken kleur," BIJ1, accessed July 22, 2022, https://bij1.org/.

Discourse Analysis AfD

Like the previous chapter, this chapter will provide an overview of the discussed party, the AfD before going into the discourse analysis of their 2017 election manifesto and Facebook campaign.

The Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany, AfD) is a German right-wing populist party founded in 2013 by previous members of the CDU, one of Germany's largest parties and politically located on the centre-right. While the AfD emerged as a Eurosceptic party, migration and Islamophobia have transformed into one of its most important topics since the 2015 migration 'crisis'.[170] This novel thematic focus was accompanied by a significant rightward shift of the party. Over time, two distinctive streams within the party developed with one being more extreme right, the other more moderate. The so-called *'Flügel'* (wing), the extreme right stream, was the most weighty and influential faction of the party during the 2017 elections.[171]

In 2013 the party participated in the German national elections for the first time, however, they received only 4,7 per cent of the votes, failing to surpass the 5 per cent election hurdle. Thus, they did not manage to enter the government during that period. Yet, during the next elections in 2017, the AfD obtained 12,6 per cent of the votes which not only meant that they increased their support by 7,9 per cent in only four years but equally that they were then suddenly the third biggest party in Germany. With the two biggest parties, the CDU and the SPD, forming a coalition government, the AfD equally became the largest opposition party in that legislative period. In the 2021 elections, they won 10,3 per cent of the votes, making 2017 their most successful national election to date.[172]

In its strategy paper for the 2017 elections, the AfD identified five, not mutually exclusive, target groups. These groups include Eurosceptics, protest voters, non-voters, citizens with substandard incomes, and citizens with so-called liberal-conservative values.[173] The latter is explained with, for instance, concerns about migration and *"Genderwahn"* (gender delusion) and denotes people who have lost their faith in

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[170] Benno Hafeneger et al., "Die 'Alternative Für Deutschland': Geschichte, Themen Und Merkmalsräume," in *AfD in Parlamenten: Themen, Strategien, Akteure* (Frankfurt am Main, GERMANY: Wochenschau Verlag, 2018), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=5325455.

[171] Priester, "Die Alternative für Deutschland."

[172] Deutscher Bundestag, "Bundestagswahlergebnisse Seit 1949 – Zweitstimmen," accessed June 19, 2022, https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/wahlen/ergebnisse_seit1949-244692.

[173] Alternative für Deutschland, "AfD- Manifest 2017; Die Strategie Der AfD Für Das Wahljahr 2017," December 22, 2016, http://www.talk-republik.de/Rechtspopulismus/docs/03/AfD-Strategie-2017.pdf.

established parties and "are critical towards or reject the zeitgeist of arbitrariness and multicultural ideology."[174] '*Genderwahn*' for the far-right functions as an umbrella term criticising equal rights for same-sex couples, Gender Mainstreaming, and the thematization of sexual diversity in general as well as in education.[175] Ultimately, analyses show that the 2017 election win was predominantly caused by former CDU voters as well as former non-voters. The win was also evidently related to the recent migration 'crisis', the media coverage of the 'crisis,' the discontent of some citizens with the management of the situation, and the so-called '*Willkommenskultur*' (welcoming culture) of the German government.[176]

While all of the German parties made use of social media campaigns, they experienced varying successes. The most successful in their use of social media were the centre-left SPD and the AfD.[177] The AfD's most relevant platform was Facebook which was also due to their use of microtargeting which tracked visitors' activity and enabled the party to target receptive audiences with paid advertisement. This did lead to questions about data protection. The AfD was the only party to make use of this method during the campaign. After Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were the most useful platforms for the AfD. Despite their efforts to post videos on their YouTube channel, this platform turned out less profitable than the others.[178]

The Election Manifesto

The 2017 election manifesto of the AfD includes 76 pages which are divided into 15 categories of which in turn most have multiple sub-categories.[179] Categories are, for instance:

1. Verteidigung der Demokratie in Deutschland (Protection of Germany's Democracy)
4. Innere Sicherheit (Internal Security)

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[174] Alternative für Deutschland, 4, my translation.
[175] "'Demo für Alle' - Rechtskonservative Kampfbegriffe und Akteur*innen," LSVD, accessed May 27, 2021, https://www.lsvd.de/de/ct/652-Demo-fuer-Alle-Rechtskonservative-Kampfbegriffe-und-Akteur-innen.
[176] Priester, "Die Alternative für Deutschland."
[177] Voigt and Seidenglanz, "Was -lernen wir aus dem -digitalen -Wahlkampf 2017?"
[178] Voigt and Seidenglanz.
[179] Alternative für Deutschland, "Wahlprogramm Der Alternative Für Deutschland- Programm Für Deutschland [Election Programme AfD- Programme for Germany]" (AfD, April 2017).

5. Asyl brauch Grenzen: Zuwanderung und Asyl (Asylum needs borders: Immigration and asylum)

6. Der Islam im Konflikt mit der freiheitlich-demokratischen Grundordnung (Islam in conflict with the free democratic basic order)

7. Wilkommenskultur für Kinder: Familienförderung und Bevölkerungsentwicklung (A culture of welcome for children: family promotion and poulation developments)[180]

The AfD mentions migration in the majority of its election manifesto categories. This ranges from briefly mentioning that migration worsens existing problems, like in parts of the programme related to economy or healthcare, to being developed solely to discuss migration such as the section on asylum. LGBTQ+ issues are mainly discussed in one section related to the family.

The first section on the defence of German democracy alludes to migration and the LGBTQ+ community more generally. For one, they argue for more direct democracy on the basis that the government would not be able to respond to the myriad of current crises, among which the migration crisis and the "confrontation" with Islam, alone.[181] Migration and Islam here are mentioned but are not part of the main argument. Furthermore, the AfD holds that they are against political correctness, quotas, and anti-discrimination laws. While the LGBTQ+ community is not mentioned specifically, all of these measures for equality do concern the community as well as other often disadvantaged people. These discourses do not have a high level of security construction, but they highlight what are considered issues according to the party.

Securitising discourses are very explicitly constructed in ensuing parts of the election manifesto, starting with the third chapter on foreign policy. This foreign policy suggestion is highly influenced by perceptions of migration. As such, they view Islamist terrorism as a serious threat to the international community of states which should be combated by all legal means possible. This also includes having the military operationally prepared again due to the "gegenwärtige Bedrohung Europas" (current threat to Europe) as well as the realignment of the foreign policy of the USA to the Pacific Rim and the East of Asia.[182] In other words, the USA's foreign focus is no longer on the regions the AfD considers the most relevant for its foreign policy, namely Africa and the Middle

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[180] Alternative für Deutschland, 3ff.
[181] Alternative für Deutschland, 9.
[182] Alternative für Deutschland, 19.

East. They aim at creating a national security strategy that protects citizens from "gewaltbereite Akteure, die sich bereits legal oder illegal im Land befinden" (violent actors that already reside, legally or illegally, in the country).[183] For this, border patrols need to be established that would protect the country, while still ensuring the free movements of people and goods. The AfD's foreign policy further holds that mass immigration augments German instability without solving the problems in the so-called crisis regions. The AfD supports efforts to enable the countries concerned to develop on their own, which in turn would decrease the attraction to migrate towards Europe and especially Germany.

The fourth section concerning domestic security starts by mentioning the terror attack on the Berlin Christmas market as only one of many events that showcase the bad state of German security. This, as well as the first subheading "[w]irksame Bekämpfung der Ausländerkriminalität" (effective abatement of foreign crime), shows that migration is identified as the most important threat to domestic security by the AfD.[184] Counteractive measures such as facilitating expulsion for foreigners who committed a crime, impeding them from obtaining German citizenship by for example basing citizenship on lineage not birthplace, and withdrawing naturalisations when involved with crime or terror organisations. They further want to establish prisons for foreigners in close countries under German law and management. One of their measures to combat organised crime is equally to facilitate expulsion since "[d]ie Mehrzahl der Täter im Bereich der Organisierten Kriminalität sind Ausländer" (most of the offenders in the area of organised crime are foreigners).[185] Moreover, the current stricter gun regulations would not regulate illegal weapons utilised for terror attacks and are thus rejected by the AfD. Instead obtaining a gun license should be facilitated for law-abiding citizens.

The 5th section treats the subject of asylum in Germany. The section starts with a depiction of demographic trends in which the German population is sinking, while the population in Africa is increasing. Then it is stated that many people from Africa and the Arab world are willing to migrate and specify that the largest part of those people is male. All of this would lead to a mass migration to Europe which the continent would not be able to take, since asylum was meant for a small number of people only. They stress that the future of Europe and Germany is in danger and that they want the country to remain

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[183] Alternative für Deutschland, 19f.
[184] Alternative für Deutschland, 23.
[185] Alternative für Deutschland, 25.

recognisable as Germany. In general, "Ziel der AfD ist Selbsterhaltung, nicht Selbstzerstörung unseres Staates und Volkes" (the AfD aims at self-preservation, not self-destruction of our nation and people).[186] As a consequence, borders should be closed completely to avoid mass immigration because successful assimilation would not be possible for many people. On top of that, not only do they reject a migration limit suggested by parties such as the CSU, as they oppose migration completely, but they even want to introduce a minimum deportation rate.[187] If these measures remain untaken, the AfD foresees Europe to be threatened by an explosion of population and migration flows. Along with the proposal to curb migration, they aim at changing the German constitution, the nature of European cooperation (which should merely concentrate on securing the outer borders) as well as the 1951 Refugee Convention. The latter defines who should be granted refugee status and the rights of asylum holders. Furthermore, the AfD aims at changing the possibility for families to join asylum holders in Germany, since these families would probably live off social security benefits which the German system would not be able to bear. The AfD is not only weary of families arriving in Germany but also unaccompanied children of whom they estimate 50 to 80 per cent to lie about being a minor. These children would have a higher crime rate against which the state would be defenceless.

Section six of the AfD manifesto exclusively discusses Islam in Germany. As such the party sees "eine große Gefahr für unseren Staat, unsere Gesellschaft und unsere Werteordnung" (a great danger for our country, our society and our value system) in the presence and expansion of Islam in Germany.[188] What is noticeable in this section is how Muslims are not just targeted through the securitisation of migration but also the securitisation of them as a minority in Germany. As such the AfD argues that mosques are a way for Islam to augment its power and that they are involved in a "Kulturkrieg" (culture war) and aims at being stricter regarding the building and organisation of mosques.[189] They further denounce minaret towers and the call of the muezzin to prayer, and they demand that sermons be held exclusively in German. The securitisation of Muslims as a minority is equally established in a later category concerned with schools,

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[186] Alternative für Deutschland, 28.
[187] WELT, "Bundestagswahl 2017: Das verspricht das Wahlprogramm von CDU und CSU," *DIE WELT*, August 11, 2017, https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article167574785/Das-ist-das-CDU-CSU-Wahlprogramm-im-Ueberblick.html.
[188] Alternative für Deutschland, "Wahlprogramm Der Alternative Für Deutschland- Programm Für Deutschland [Election Programme AfD- Programme for Germany], 34."
[189] Alternative für Deutschland, 34.

where the teaching of Islam in schools is supposed to be forbidden entirely and the teaching of Islam in associations related to mosques is to be monitored and controlled. If enforced, these measures would limit Muslim rights of association, expression, and equality.

Securitisation discourses are further established in connection to German culture. They consider a plethora of things to be German 'Leitkultur' and accomplishments including among others Christian values, the Enlightenment, the German language, and the rule of law. Regarding these, the AfD holds that: "Die Ideologie des 'Multikulturalismus' gefährdet alle diese kulturellen Errungenschaften" (The 'multicultural' ideology endangers all these cultural accomplishments).[190] Moreover, they argue that multiculturalism is non-existent and efforts to multiculturalism would only result in so-called parallel societies which would cause domestic political conflicts and an inoperative state. Indeed, a real culture war between Europe and Islam is said to be raging on the continent. The therefrom resulting destruction of European values and the cohabitation of "enlightened" citizens hence would require far-reaching restrictive measures to prevent a complete loss of German culture. Noticeable is that in the first section concerning the democracy in Germany, the AfD does state that they desire a country of "Einheit in Vielfalt" (unity in diversity).[191] This unity in diversity is, however, related to Germany's federalist division and the diversity is related to different cultures within the nation and does thus evidently not apply to foreigners.

Regarding LGBTQ+ rights, the AfD discusses them in the 7th section of their manifesto. Firstly, they hold that the 'gender ideology' "will die klassische Familie als Lebensmodell und Rollenbild abschaffen" (wants to abolish the classic family as a life model and role model).[192] The previous three pages of the 7th section are dedicated to the importance of the German family to Germany in terms of strengthening the country and its values. Along these lines, they see the traditional German family of mother, father, and children as a way to avoid the country being left to people who according to them would waste or plunder the country in the future. Since they make a point of stressing the ancestral character of this traditional German family, one can deduce that they are afraid that the migrants would take over the country. As such LGBTQ+ rights are portrayed as an existential threat to German values and society in two ways. Firstly, alternative

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[190] Alternative für Deutschland, 47.
[191] Alternative für Deutschland, 7.
[192] Alternative für Deutschland, 40.

identities or families threaten the AfD's conception of what a family is supposed to look like and living accordingly is endangering the existence of the traditional German family and culture. Secondly, this diminishing of the traditional family which in part is attributed to the LGBTQ+ community is feared to lead to migrants taking over the country because they would not contribute to counteracting downward trends of the German demography. Consequently, the AfD here sees a need for action. The suggestions to counter the threat made by the party include disestablishing Gender Studies, quotas meant to increase diversity, and what they title to be propaganda such as Equal Pay Day and gender-neutral language. Since belonging to the LGBTQ+ community is regarded as a choice by the AfD, simply limiting information flows, efforts for equality, and freedom of expression are defined as ways to counteract the emancipation of the community. This is thus compatible with the efforts of limiting norm diffusion as well as fundamental freedoms when it comes to the securitisation of minorities described by Nuñez-Mietz.[193]

Furthermore, this existential threat toward the traditional family roles connected to German values is mentioned again in the discussion of sex education classes in schools. They reject a diverse sex education in schools and thus reject the right to equality and expression of persons with a different sexuality. They argue that inclusive sex education is an effort of the elites to eliminate das "bewährte, traditionelle Familienbild" (the established, traditional family pattern) through "staatlich geförderte Umerziehungsprogramme in Kindergärten und Schulen" (state-funded re-education programmes in kindergartens and schools).[194] This conspiratorial depiction of the situation surrounding LGBTQ+ equality makes evident the existential peril of the country in the eyes of the AfD and links the community to the, in their eyes, corrupt elite.

Overall, within the election manifesto, the AfD's narrative on migration but also the LGBTQ+ community is full of securitising discourses. Migration is frequently linked to crime or terrorism and border controls among other measures to curb migration are stressed. This also includes the proposal of extreme measures with far-reaching consequences such as changing the German constitution and law, leaving the EU, and renegotiating international agreements. The only sub-narrative not utilized is that of migrants bringing diseases to the country thus causing public health concerns. The only

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[193] Nuñez-Mietz, "Resisting Human Rights through Securitization."
[194] Alternative für Deutschland, "Wahlprogramm Der Alternative Für Deutschland- Programm Für Deutschland [Election Programme AfD- Programme for Germany], 41."

health-related concern that is brought up are the, what they see to be excessive, healthcare costs of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Facebook

In the period from August 13ᵗʰ until September 24ᵗʰ, the AfD published around 19 posts related to the keywords concerning migration.[195] Keywords regarding minorities did not arise within the actual text of the Facebook posts during the campaign. Many posts regarding migration highlight the supposed violence that comes therefrom.

What is noticeable is that multiple of the posts discuss increased terrorism due to migration. This starts with a post on August 18ᵗʰ that declares the new welcoming culture would endanger German security, freedom, as well as people's lives. Consequently, the closing of borders and expulsion of Islamic "endangerers" would be necessary. Should this not happen, what happened in Barcelona would happen again: "Barcelona ist überall" (Barcelona is everywhere). This, of course, refers to the terror attacks in Barcelona which took place around the 17th of August that year. On the same day, they quote an article from the conservative German newspaper "Die Welt" in which it is stated that one cannot deny the connection between Merkel's asylum policy and the increasing terror attacks. This would be because both the attacker in Berlin in December 2016, as well as those responsible for the terror attacks in November 2015 in Paris, were "asylum seekers" (quotation marks theirs) that came to Europe via the Balkan route. Still, according to the article, Merkel would not budge even in case of future Islamist attacks in Germany which would be inevitable. These frequent terror attacks would also cause a certain amount of dulling due to people getting used to the terror.

Almost a month later, on September 15ᵗʰ, the AfD writes about terror attacks which would be an almost regular occurrence on European soil at that time. They mention the bomb attack in London that day which cost the lives of 18 people among which a ten-year-old child. They further hold these messages didn't exist to this extent before September 2015 and warn that "[d]ie Sicherheit der Menschen in Europa sinkt seitdem rapide, doch ein Einlenken Merkels ist nicht in Sicht" (the security of the people in Europe is diminishing rapidly since then but Merkle is far from giving in). This would be because

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[195] Unlike on the FvD's page, the total amount of posts in that period could not be established due to lacking filter options. "AfD | Facebook," accessed July 21, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/alternativefuerde.

the borders remain open, and Merkel wants to continue receiving immigrant "contingents." There would be more family reunifications and another two million migrants could be expected. To maintain their freedom and security in Germany and Europe, the voter is called on to vote for the AfD so Merkel's "fatal" asylum policy could end. The day after they published another post on the same subject accusing Merkel that opening the borders in 2015 has brought Islamist terror into everyone's lives. The media would hide facts such as, for example, that next to the attack in London the previous day, there were two other ones in France where in two different places people were attacked and the perpetrator was shouting "Allahu Akbar" and "something related to Allah" respectively. On September 22nd, they continue arguing that Merkel is responsible for the open border and millions of migrants coming to Germany. This would have led to terror attacks, an increase in sexual assaults, higher crime rates and high costs. Then the AfD addresses the voter directly: "Hol Dir Dein Land zurück" (get your country back). All these references shape the picture of a country in danger due to the terrorist threat which is everywhere. They link this situation to the current government arguing that not being welcoming to refugees might have prevented this scenario. As the last post shows, the AfD connects migration not only to terrorism but also to crime.

Next to the images of terror, crime in connection to migration also plays a large role for the AfD. As such, they, for example, posted a live stream on the topic of "crime due to immigration." This perceived increase in crime was equally thematized in a post discussing how the AfD distributed pepper spray to its members because there would be curfews in parks due to "massive Übergriffe und Gruppenschlägereien" (massive assaults and group fights) by those "die noch nicht so lange in Deutschland leben" (who haven't lived in Germany for long).

Lastly, there is the argument of limiting immigration flows due to supposedly uncontrollable amounts of immigration. Hence why voters are urged to vote for the AfD because otherwise the "gates" would probably open again right after the elections. As such they demand the routes the refugees take to be closed as well as their return to their "starting point." On top of that, they argue for a communications strategy to deter migrants from coming to Europe in the first place. In another post on August 29th, the AfD also holds that with the refugees' option for family reunification another two million people would come to Germany in 2018. This would have considerable implications for the domestic security that are yet to be established. However, one thing would be sure: "Deutschland, wie wir es kennen, wird von der Bundesregierung nachhaltig zerstört"

(Germany as we know it is being permanently destroyed by the federal government). This would also have disastrous financial implications for the country. Thus, overall, it would be time to pull the "emergency break" and vote AfD.

All in all, the narrative that is created surrounding migrants is that of a present and urgent threat to the physical safety of German citizens. Islamic terror attacks in Germany and abroad as well as crime are mentioned frequently within the election campaign creating almost a dystopian image of the current situation in Germany. In addition to that comes millions more refugees that would flood the country leaving domestic security in peril and presenting large costs. Only the argument of migrants as a concern for public health was not invoked.

Somewhat surprisingly, despite having securitising statements on the LGBTQ+ community in their election manifesto, the party focuses their attention almost exclusively on migration in the Facebook campaign. This does not mean that the party does not care about the issue. Rather, it seems that the AfD in its online campaign took on more of a reactive role. They reacted to the terror attacks taking place during the campaign. Furthermore, the migration issue was still ongoing which they showed by going to a refugee camp and reporting from there. The LGBTQ+ issue was not thematised on the AfD's Facebook because there were no major events regarding the community during the election campaign that they needed to react to. This was different in June 2017 when there was a debate regarding marriage for all where the AfD published several posts regarding that subject on their Facebook opposing the notion.

Comparison

Firstly, when comparing the election manifestos of the respective parties, it becomes evident that while they have many things in common such as the intention to leave the EU and the regulation and limitation of immigration, they differ in other aspects. The AfD manifesto, which is double the size of the FvD's, makes a point in highlighting their views on family and children where they also include restrictions for the LGBTQ+ community. Forum only mentions this community in a homonationalist manner to differentiate Dutch values from immigrants. They never thematize the community otherwise and as such seems more tolerant towards them than the AfD, at least during the election campaign of 2017. Thus, in terms of radical right-wing discourses on sexuality previously introduced, the AfD seems to take the backlash position in their manifesto while the FvD takes the post-feminist approach. These positions correspond in general trends with the legal situation of the LGBTQ+ community discussed earlier. On the one hand, Germany in general and the AfD, in particular, hold more traditional views on family and the AfD fights the norm diffusion of LGBTQ+ rights for that reason. On the other hand, the Netherlands and the FvD seem more tolerant in this area and the norm appears to be spread. Whether or not the FvD chooses to be more tolerant out of actual belief or whether the already established norm simply makes it impossible to gain voters through this issue is unclear. So, the perceived tolerance could just be part of the aforementioned populist right frame adjustment to the national context in which they find themselves.

It even might be necessary to split the LGBTQ+ community according to sexual orientation and gender identity. As already established from the Rainbow Map, diverse sexualities are better taken into account than people with diverse gender identities in the legal framework. This might even translate into Dutch society and Dutch politics. As such it is argued that Dutch right-wing populist parties "are critical towards particular progressive gender issues, that is, diverse gender identities and gender neutrality."[196] This is because these diverse identities are seen to be a threat to the homogeneity of the nation which is crucial for the conservation of the national people and what is deemed to be the national culture.[197] Research showing that far-right voters in the Netherlands embrace the post-feminist standpoint when it comes to women and gay rights but, at the same time,

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[196] Fiers and Muis, "Dividing between 'Us' and 'Them,' 4."

[197] Niels Spierings, "Eén angst, één volk? De emancipatieparadox van populistisch radicaal-rechts," *Res Publica* 59, no. 4 (2017): 507–12, https://doi.org/10.5553/RP/048647002017059004007.

take a backlash standpoint when it comes to more progressive gender questions seems to support this assumption.[198]

Regarding the Facebook posts, it is noticeable that the FvD mainly posts about the negative effects of immigration they see in Dutch society, such as the supposed threat to freedom of religion and expression. The main threat that is established is thus the threat to Dutch culture. The AfD, on the other hand, invokes more pictures related to the recent 'migration crisis' and possible future terror attacks. Terror attacks are directly mentioned in the FvD's election manifesto but only mentioned indirectly on the Facebook page of the FvD. In the AfD's election manifesto and postings they take a prominent position.

Overall, both parties construct Muslim migrants and Islam as an Other. However, their approach remains different. Thus, it seems that the FvD produces discourse in which the Othering of immigrants is more concealed and indirect than the AfD's more outright racism. While in both election campaigns securitisation discourses are present, the AfD exceeds those of the FvD in quantity and well as urgency. As such the AfD makes use of more terms related to threats, wars and the end of the German state, culture, freedom, etc. That the FvD is less direct in its securitisation than the AfD could be that while for the AfD the migrants are the ultimate Other, for the FvD the biggest enemy are the current elites. Even though the AfD consistently critiques Merkel in their Facebook posts, it is more because of her concrete handling of the migration crisis than general critique of elites. Consequently, while the AfD defines Islam as completely incompatible with Germany and denies the possibility of multiculturalism, the FvD talks about 'problematic' *aspects* of Islam and a difficult, not impossible, integration. This shows more nuance in the debate on the side of the FvD, even though they, like the AfD, oppose migration. While the AfD makes more efforts to highlight violence and terrorism as a consequence of migration, the FvD stresses more the infringement of human rights through migration. Thus, the AfD seems more concerned with the perceived physical threat of immigration whereas the FvD fears more the perceived nonphysical consequences.

There are several reasons why this could be the case. For one, it is necessary to highlight that the terror attacks the AfD refers to in their Facebook posts had not happened yet at the time of the Dutch elections. As such, the FvD, for example, did post about the terror attacks in Barcelona on the 18th of August. Yet the FvD did not mention the terror attacks mentioned by the AfD, even though they had happened before the Dutch elections

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[198] Fiers and Muis, "Dividing between 'Us' and 'Them.'"

such the attacks in Paris and Berlin. So, it is unlikely that timing was the only reason for the parties' differing approaches on Facebook. Another reason could be that the FvD aimed at distinguishing itself from the other radical right-wing party in the Netherlands, the PVV, by focusing more on the "intellectual" threat to appeal to the more highly educated voters since they were a target group of the FvD. Thus, portraying themselves as reasonable, intellectual, and more nuanced would be more convincing for their voters.

The only securitising sub-narrative that was unused by both parties was that of migrants as a threat to the public health of the country. This could be because in our globalised world perceptions of a specific group of people bringing illnesses to the country is simply outdated. Discussions on health, then, are more about the health issues migrants encounter because of the harsh journeys they undertake.[199] Naturally these discussions do not fit into the right-wing security discourses.

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[199] "Consultation Discusses Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on Health of Migrants and Refugees," World Health Organization, April 18, 2019, https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/consultation-discusses-regional-strategy-and-plan-of-action-on-health-of-migrants-and-refugees.

Conclusion

The AfD and the FvD show similarities in many aspects. As such they are both relatively new, populist right-wing European parties opposing the political establishment, the EU, and migration. On top of that, they both use securitisation in their discourses on migration. Nonetheless, through this research, some differences have become evident. For one, they approach the topic of the LGBTQ+ communities and their rights differently. On the one hand, the AfD, in taking a backlash approach, perceives the community and their rights as a threat to the traditional German family and culture. Consequently, they establish securitising discourses in their election manifesto that reject diversity and equal rights. The FvD, on the other hand, takes a post-feminist approach regarding the LGBTQ+ community in seeing equality as accomplished and no more non-discrimination measures as necessary. The community is a non-issue in both of the parties' Facebook election campaigns which might be because it was not a core issue since migration was at the forefront of most debates. Regarding migration, even though both parties used security discourses in framing the subject, they did it in different ways. The AfD was more overt in their securitisation of migration and highlighted especially the aspect of violence and terrorism, while the FvD was somewhat more concealed in their approach showing more nuance and focusing less on the violence and more on the infringement of human rights. This could be for one because the German campaign took place at a time when there were several terror attacks to which the AfD reacted. It could also be due to the fact that the FvD aimed at distinguishing itself from the other radical right-wing party in the Netherlands, the PVV, by portraying itself as reasonable and intellectual to speak to the more highly educated people it tries to convince.

One limitation of the research is the narrow timeframe of the analysed material due to the scope of the paper. Another one was the AfD Facebook page which did not allow filtering for timeframe and only allowed for filtering by words, leaving it uncertain whether all relevant posts of the election campaign were included in the analysis. This is especially the case since the keyword search, on the one hand, sometimes brought up posts unrelated to the keywords inserted while, on the other, sometimes showed posts including a second keyword which wasn't presented before when searching for said second keyword. The search engine proved thus not completely reliable. This overall, complicated the discourse analysis of the AfD's Facebook election campaign.

This research indicated that security discourses in election campaigns may differ from those constructed outside of these periods. Further research could focus on discrepancies between the official party discourse during election campaigns and discourse outside of election campaigns by either party channels or even party leaders. The latter could prove interesting because individual persons might have less inhibitions in posting their views than the official party channels.

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