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A populist ‘zeitgeist’?

Has the VVD become more populist during the years 1994-2004?



Universiteit Utrecht

Bachelor thesis submitted to the Utrecht University, Department of History and
Art History

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Date: 23-03-2018

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the question if the VVD has become more populist during the years 1994-2004. Via party literature, both internal, party programs, and external, party conferences, this question is investigated. To be thorough and to increase the value of the conclusion, two different dictionaries are used to measure populism within the VVD. The first dictionary is made by Noelle Neuman (1974) and Glynn et al. (2004) and the second is made by Pauwels (2011). To further substantiate the conclusion, two different methods are used to investigate this question, namely the classical content analysis and the qualitative text analysis. The findings are also put into a wider context by examining the frequency of the word 'populism' during the same period, 1994-2004, to control for the public debate. The conclusion is that the VVD has become relatively more populist during this period and that this is the logical consequence of the fact that populism became more and more present in the Dutch public debate.

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1. Introduction

On the 6th of May 2002, Pim Fortuyn was killed by Volkert van der Graaf –nine days before an election he was destined to win. Pim Fortuyn was the leader of the party Lijst Pim Fortuyn, also known as the first populist party in the Netherlands, according to Rooduin et al. (2011), This party was known for their anti-immigration and anti-Islam publications, which spoke to the hearts of many in the Netherlands. His party won the municipal elections in Rotterdam in 2001 by a landslide, and in the polls, he was the favourite to win in the elections of 2002. This homicide created a shock wave through the Netherlands.

In this thesis, I want to investigate how political parties, specifically the *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, from here on abbreviated as the VVD, reacted to this populist ‘threat’. Lucardie (2010) and Lucardie and Voerman (2012) stated that the parties PvdA, CDA, VVD, D66, GroenLinks, SGP, ChristenUnie, de Partij voor de Dieren and 50PLUS are not populist. The populist parties in the Netherlands are SP, de LPF, Leefbaar Nederland and the PVV. Pim Fortuyn used strong populist rhetoric to gain votes. I want to find out if the VVD changed its liberal rhetoric to win elections. By investigating their party literature, this thesis hopes to find if the VVD became more populist. It is logical that significant events, such as the assassination of Pim Fortuyn, influence political parties. The political landscape changes, but by analysing the party conferences and party programs from 1994 to 2004, I will try to find out if the VVD is using more populist rhetoric than before and thus if the VVD has become more populist in these years. By conceptualizing populism as a characteristic of a message, politicians, parties, party programmes or speeches cannot be qualified as being either populist or not populist. Instead, populism then becomes a matter of degree. (Rooduijn, 2013) By doing this, a party program in 2004 can be defined as more populist than a party program in 1994. So, *has the VVD become more populist during the years 1994 to 2004?*

This thesis is divided in the following way. Chapter two describes the conceptualisation of populism including a discussion on whether populism is an ideology and a literature review. The third chapter sketches the methodology and the research design which consists of a classical content analysis and a quantitative text analysis of party congresses between 1994 and 2004 using two dictionaries which are based on the research of Noelle-Neuman (1974), Glynn et al. (2004) and Pauwels (2011). In the fourth chapter, the analysis is done on both party programs, and the party conferences and the trends that are found are compared with the

frequency of the word populism in the Dutch newspapers. In the fifth chapter, it is investigated if the VVD made a turn towards right-wing populism. Finally, this thesis will conclude that the VVD has increased the usage of populist rhetoric during these years, but that this is understandable as populism became more and more a subject of public debate, to which political parties such as the VVD react.

To be thorough, two different methods are used to analyse the party conferences. Both methods have caveats, but together they are complementary. The two methods used in this thesis are called classical content analysis and quantitative text analysis. As the classical content analysis is time-intensive, only the internal literature, namely the party conferences are analysed this way. For the external party literature and the analysis on right-wing populist rhetoric, only the quantitative text analysis is used as it proved to be sufficient.

This paper adds to the current debate that it seems as there has been something like a 'populist zeitgeist' as Mudde (2004) stated. Although, Rooduin et al. (2012) reached a different conclusion. They state that there is no such thing as an increased populist zeitgeist, that mainstream parties haven't become more populist. They base their conclusion on party programs and party manifestos. Mudde (2004) states that more mainstream parties use populist rhetoric and that this is nothing out of the ordinary in the politics of western democracies. This paper reaches a conclusion that speaks in favour of Mudde (2004). In the internal party literature, the party congresses, an upward trend of populist rhetoric is visible which is in line with the statements of Mudde (2004). However, this doesn't translate into the external party literature, namely the party programs, where this trend is not visible, which is in line with the research and conclusion made by Rooduin et al. (2012). This thesis thus concludes that to quote Mudde (2000): party programs hide 'the true nature of the party' as it is directed towards the whole electorate while the party conferences are only directed to the members of the party.'

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Conceptualizing populism

Populism has received a great deal of attention from scholars recently. Scholars such as Abts and Rummens, 2007; Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 2005; Rooduijn and

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Pauwels, 2011; all have studied this phenomenon. The main discussion point remains, however, the conceptualisation of populism. Should populism be treated as a type of party organisation, ideology or just another political style, and what does populism even comprehend?

Clarification of the main concepts seems to be the most important part in this field of research. The difficulty in this lies in the fact that the term populism has been used in many ways. The variety in which the term populism is used is endless and includes agrarian populism, cultural populism, nationalist populism, and radical right populism, just to name a few. In 1995, Paul Taggart came up with the term New Populism, in his paper: 'New populist parties in Western Europe'. In this paper, he states that these 'New populist parties' claim that they represent the people, or as they claim, the rightful source of power. The persons who have been neglected by the political elite and the self-interested politicians (Canovan, 2005). According to Mudde (2004), populism should be considered as a mainstream feature in politics in western democracies and not something that is exclusively used by political parties.

Mudde (2004) continues to define populism as 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people'. He then argues that mainstream parties in Western Europe have increasingly resorted to using populist rhetoric: 'While populism has been less prominent in main-stream politics in Western Europe, the last decade or so has seen a significant change in this. Various mainstream opposition parties have challenged the government using familiar populist arguments'. (Mudde, 2004)

Populism has been identified in many ways, Mudde (2010) calls it pathological normalcy. Taggart (2004) identifies it as a feature of representative politics. Jagers & Walgrave (2007) state that it is a political communication style and Betz & Immerfall (1998) even claim that it is both an ideology and a structure of argumentation. Safe to say is that there are many different concepts attached to populism.

Apart from conceptualising populism, there is also an academic debate going on whether populism is an ideology. Canovan (2005) for example, claims that populism is not an ideology, she states that the other 'isms' (liberalism, socialism, nationalism) 'gained a degree

of coherence from a continuous history, willingness on the part of most adherents to identify themselves by the name, distinctive principles and policies'. Populism lacks these features according to her. Pauwels (2011) states that: 'it surprising how the conceptualisation of populism as an ideology has recently won ground in the definitional debate'. Mudde (2004) goes even further when he states that populism is a distinct ideology. It is not a thick ideology, as the other 'isms, which were described by Canovan (2005). According to Mudde (2004), populism does not possess the same restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts. Other authors agree with this view, Abs & Rummens (2007) think that populism is: 'a thin-centred ideology which advocates the sovereign rule of the people as a homogeneous body'. Stanley (2008) states that:

'Populism should be regarded as a 'thin' ideology which, although of limited analytical use on its own terms, nevertheless conveys a distinct set of ideas about the political which interact with the established ideational traditions of full ideologies.'

There is one common feature on which all scholars agree upon; populism revolves around the relationship between the elite and the people. This is underwritten by Canovan (1999). She states that: 'Populism in modern democratic societies is best seen as an appeal to 'the people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society.'

The definition used in this thesis, however, is the one from Mudde (2004): 'The people versus the corrupt elite', this one is chosen because it has a distinct concept and the idea is clear that there are two groups, the people versus the elite. Furthermore, the relationship between the people and the elite has been agreed upon by several other scholars, some which have been previously mentioned (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Kessel, 2011; Stanley, 2008; Vossen, 2010).

To summarise, although the concept of populism is widely debated and many concepts are attached to it, the consensus is that populism is a thin ideology centred on the relationship between the people and the elite. The discussion on whether to interpret populism as an ideology or not is neglected for this thesis as the focus lies on the earlier mentioned definition by Mudde (2004) This thesis, however, does not assume populism is a distinct ideology nor does it assume that it is a political style. Populism is considered to be a thin ideology that possesses some features of a distinct ideology however not nearly all of them. But this choice

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is somewhat irrelevant since the most important aspect of the definition is the relationship between the people and the elite.

3. Data & Methods

3.1 Measuring Populism

In the previous chapter, the theoretical framework of conceptualising populism has been presented. The units of analysis in this thesis are party conferences and party programs. These were chosen for a very specific reason, namely that these documents can give the clearest summary on what the parties standpoints were in a specific moment in time. In this chapter, the method on how to examine populism can and will be measured by analysing party conferences and party programs from the *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD) from 1994 to 2004. 1994 is a good starting point for this thesis as it was an election year in the Netherlands, so both internal documents, namely party conferences, and external documents, namely party programs, are available. 2004 is chosen as ending point as the records from 2005 and onwards are not yet released by the VVD, so it was a natural ending point. The party congress transcript from 2001 was unfortunately not available and is therefore left out of the analysis.

This analysis doesn't rely solely on party programs or manifestos. As Pauwels (2011) states:

'Since party manifestos are typically rather formal documents with specific policy proposals, populism is less likely to found here. Manifestos are less suitable to address the people or to depict the elite as a corrupt class.'

To measure populism in the Dutch populist party Lijst Pim Fortuyn, Pennings & Keman (2003) use a party program of six pages; they conclude that mainstream parties had become too 'elitist' which is why outsiders such as Pim Fortuyn could win the election by using strong anti-elitist rhetoric. This N (amount of observations in statistics, i.e. the party manifesto of the LPF in this case) however, is too small to get convincing results (Pauwels 2011). Which is why, in this thesis, in total 1795 pages of party conference literature and 224 pages of party program literature was analysed. Mudde (2000) also states that is important that not only

party programs are analysed. He states that the party programs might hide 'the true nature of the party' as it is directed towards the whole electorate while the party conferences are only directed to the members of the VVD. A reason to study them both is given by Cole (2005) who explains that party programmes offer voters a recap and summary of the leading issues that are of importance to a party. After a great deal of debate at party conventions and within the leadership of a political party, they are presented to the public.

In this paper, two methods are used to analyse the party conferences, namely the content analysis of Neuendorf (2002) and Jager & Walrave (2007), i.e. a systematic, time-intensive, qualitative analysis of message characteristics and the quantitative text analysis. Because this is a time-intensive method, this form of analysis is only done on the party conferences, simply because of the time limit. The method here is the following, as defined earlier, populism is a thin centred ideology, the people versus the corrupt elite, so if a party starts to refer relatively more to the people, it safe to say that they try to voice the concerns of the people and are becoming more populist than they were before. By looking for words such as: mentioning what 'the Dutch', 'citizen', 'civilians', 'the people', 'think', 'feel', 'support', 'want', mentioning of 'voices', 'consultations' of 'citizens', 'poles', 'demonstrations', 'that what lives in society', 'mentioning of contact with civilians, or 'society' through 'e-mails', 'letters', 'conversations', 'talks', 'stories', 'whispers' and more (see appendix), it is systematically checked if the VVD used this rhetoric more or less in the years examined and thus if the VVD became relatively more populist in these years. These manifestations keywords of populism come from the dictionary of Noelle Neumann (1974) and Glynn et al. (2004). As is stated in the introduction, by conceptualising populism as a characteristic of a message, politicians, parties, party programmes or speeches cannot be qualified as being either populist or not populist. Instead, populism then becomes a matter of degree. Thus the party programmes can become more or less populist. However, this doesn't say anything about how populist the VVD is compared to the political landscape in the Netherlands, only if the VVD became more or less populist in this specific period.

The next method is the quantitative text analysis. Benoit (2009) defines the quantitative text analysis as a variant of content analysis, the difference lies in the fact that the quantitative text analysis is expressively quantitatively oriented, this means that texts are no longer viable for interpretation or to be seen in context, but rather as data in the form of words. So, where the classical content analysis also focusses on context, this method doesn't. This is the reason that

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both methods were introduced into the paper. I used the dictionary made by Pauwels (2011), He used it to measure populism in the Flemish parties. To search for populism in these texts, the following words were sought: *betray*; *deceit*; *treason*; absurd*; admit; arrogant*; capitul*; caste; class; corrupt*; direct; elite*; establishm*; freedom of expression; mafia; patriat*; people; politic*; promis*; promise*; propaganda; referend*; regime*; ruling*; shame*; shameless; tradition*; undemocratic. Some words are straightforward, such as people and referend*. The * sign means that the program used looks not only for referendum but also referenda for example, so all the different ways a word can be written while it still has the same meaning. As explained in the section above, parties that state more often than others that they are the voice of the people are considered more populist. Furthermore, as populism means the corrupt elite versus the common people the words elite, corruption, establishment and patriarchy are no surprise either. Finally, populists are in favour of direct democracy, so the words direct and referendum are also important as an indication of populism.

To be thorough, the words which were used to perform the classical content analysis were, the best I could, put into the program, to see if the outcomes differ much. These were the words used, translated out of the Dutch language: Netherland wants; Netherland supports; Netherland thinks; citizens think; citizens support; citizens want; civilians think, civilians support, civilians want, people want; people think; people support; society wants, everybody wants; everybody thinks; and so on. (see appendix for a full dictionary)

So, in total two different dictionaries are used to examine the party literature, this is done because it paints a more convincing picture than when just one of the two was used.

Next, the internal and the external party literature will be examined via the quantitative text analysis. As stated before, it might differ how they talk when they think no one is listening and how they present themselves to the electorate. It is therefore interesting to see if they change their rhetoric towards the outside world. It must be noted that there is overwhelmingly more material from the party congresses than from the party programs. As stated before, there is in total 1795 pages of party conference literature and 224 pages of party program literature, which is logical, but needs to be accounted for when comparing and analysing the two. The analysis will be done by checking for the 'populism' words as described earlier in this chapter.

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To put the results from the analyses into perspective, the newspaper database LexisNexis is used, and the frequency of the word populism in the Dutch newspaper is looked up for the period 1994-2004 to give a possible explanation for the results found during the analyses.

Lastly, it is also interesting to check if the VVD made a move towards right-wing populism, the category immigration will also be analysed by using the dictionary of Pauwels (2011). Words that are looked for are words such as allocht*; asylum*; foreign* halal*; illega*; immigr*; Islam*; Koran; moroc*; Muslim*; scarf*; Turk. Typical words that are related to the debate about immigration.

For the quantitative text analysis, I use the program Yoshikoder. This program is perfect for performing computer-aided content analysis (Lowe, 2006).

3.2 Limitations

Although both methods show great promise, both methods also have limitations. The classical content analysis, however systematically you do it, remains highly subjective. Furthermore, the whole process is very time-intensive. The limitations of the quantitative text method are also obvious, as another set of words as dictionary yields different results. In addition to this, words are treated as data, so any form of context disappears, this might lead to an over- or underestimation of the degree of populism in a text as some words weren't meant to be populist or are negative of it, or it could be the other way around, that some words are populist but are not included in the study. An example of this is given in the paper by Pauwels (2011), the quantitative text analysis states that the neoliberalist ideology is significant for a socialist party, as this is counter-intuitive it turned out that the words that identify with neoliberalism were used in a negative context by this socialist party.

The limitations of both the methods are the reason why, at least partially, both methods will be used. By using the quantitative text method, the subjectivity of the content analysis disappears, and by using the content method, the lack of context in the quantitative method will be compensated.

4. Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the party conferences and party programs will be presented, in total ten party conferences embodying 1795 pages and eight party programs embodying 224 pages were analysed. All the party programs that were published during the timeframe investigated are subject to the analysis, so also the programs for the European elections for example. Furthermore, also the 'four-year plans' are also included. This sounds very Stalinist, but the VVD published and still publishes in every election year their plans for the next four years, so the plans for 1994-1998 and 1998-2002 are incorporated. The party conference of 2001 is missing as it wasn't available in the depot of the Rijksuniversiteit of Groningen where all the party literature is stored.

First, the classical content analysis of Neuendorf (2002) and Jager & Walgrave (2007) on the party conferences is presented, along with some context phrases on why some sentences in the party conferences are or aren't considered populist. Secondly, the qualitative text analysis is done on the same party conferences to see if results are different when using a different method and a different dictionary. Thirdly, the results of the content analysis and the qualitative method are compared, but instead of using the words used to measure populism, the words for public opinion are used in the qualitative text analysis. Fourthly, the internal and external party literature is analysed using the qualitative text analysis. Fifthly, the trends found in the two analyses are compared to the usage of populism during the same period in the Dutch newspapers. Sixthly, right-wing populism is investigated using the qualitative text analysis, and finally, the reliability and validity of the analyses are discussed.

4.1 Classical content analysis - Party conferences

In table 1 the results can be seen from the content analysis on the party conferences, in the ten investigated party conferences, in total, 126 times populists' keywords were used. Although there is no linear increase in the usage of the public opinion, it is obvious that there is an upward trend visible. This trend is visualised in graph 1, with a high in 2003 and a low in 1997.

Table 1

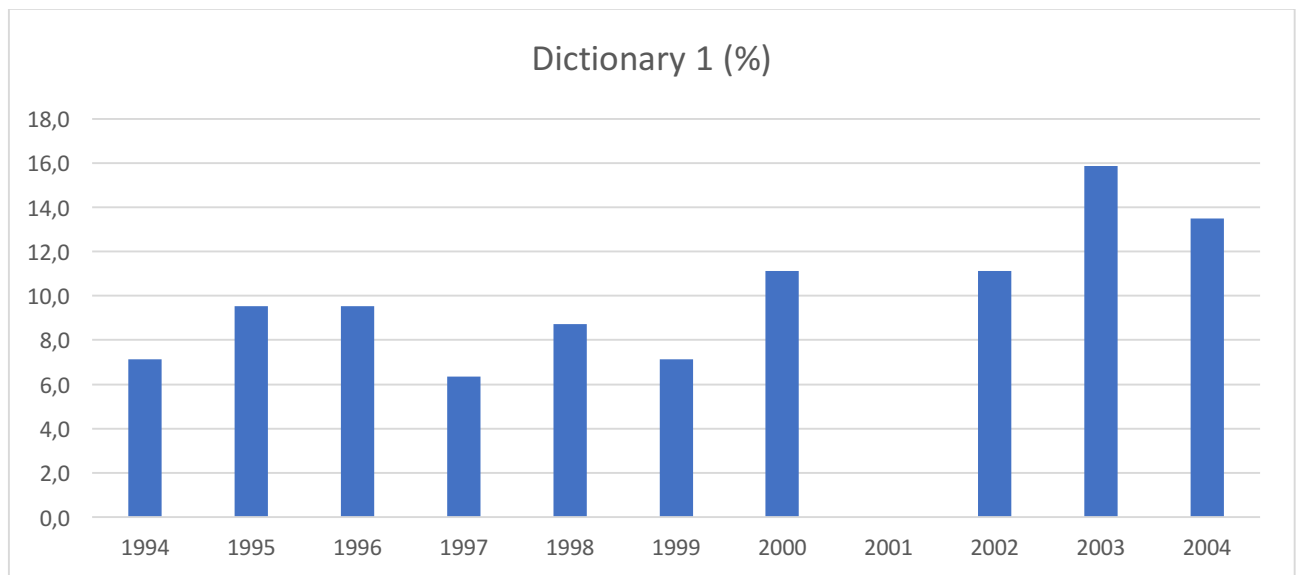
VVD party congres	Year	Dictionary 1 (N)	Dictionary 1 (%)
47th annual meeting	1994	9	7,1
48th annual meeting	1995	12	9,5
49th annual meeting	1996	12	9,5
50th annual meeting	1997	8	6,3
50th annual meeting	1998	11	8,7
51th annual meeting	1999	9	7,1
52th annual meeting	2000	14	11,1
53th annual meeting	2001	0	0,0
54th annual meeting	2002	14	11,1
55th annual meeting	2003	20	15,9
56th annual meeting	2004	17	13,5
N:		126	100

This relative high usage of the public opinion in 2003 can be explained by the fact that the VVD lost 14 seats in the house of representatives, going down from 38 to 24 out of the in total 150 available seats, in 2002. They recovered a little with the election in 2003, when they won 4 seats ending on 28 seats in total, but were still a long way down from 38. This was the first annual party conference after this defeat. Since the populist party, Lijst Pim Fortuyn won 24 seats, and it seems logical that the VVD used more populist rhetoric to win votes as it worked for the LPF. This conclusion is in line with the *learning* process described by Simmons et al. (2008). They state that the mechanism of *learning* refers to a change in beliefs, resulting either from observation and interpretation or from the acquisition of new frames or theories. As paradoxical as it might appear, populism can trigger a sort of learning process by which established political parties renew their programs and policies to reduce the gap between governed and governors.

So, according to this data, the answer to the research question: *has the VVD become more populist during the years 1994 to 2004*, would be yes, they have become relatively more populist in during these years according to their party congresses. This conclusion is also

backed by Pauwels (2011), who states that parties that often refer to the people are considered more populist. This line of thought can, naturally, also be applied in this case.

Graph 1



The benefit of content analysis over qualitative text analysis is that one can see the context in which a word is used. As the party conferences are in Dutch, the translations are presented here; the original content can be found in the appendix. A nuance that can be applied when using this method is for example in the following phrase: ‘An extraordinary amount of people is seeing immigrants as a whole as a problem but would approve the authorisation of every individual without a doubt’ (Party congress VVD, 1995, P.45). When using a computer simulation, this phrase would have been marked as populist, it contains the word people, as it would also be flagged as right-wing populism as it contains the word immigrants. This, however, would be a wrong conclusion to draw as it is neither. Another example of this is the phrase: ‘Employment is essential for the future of the people, too many people are still sidelined’ (Party Congress VVD, 2000, P.112). This phrase would have been marked as a populist phrase because it inhabits the word people, but it doesn’t voice the concerns of the people nor does it speak of a corrupt elite. A phrase that is populist is the following, which was found: ‘Well, there were a lot of angry people that send letters to us stated that they used soft drugs and became addicted to it, while we thought that it was innocent (Party Congress 1997, P.109). The voice of the ‘angry mob’ is used here to make a point, which is definitively usage of populist rhetoric.

So, the usage of the content method helps to find some nuance in the phrases and leads more meticulous results than the method used in the next paragraph.

4.2. Qualitative text analysis - Party conferences

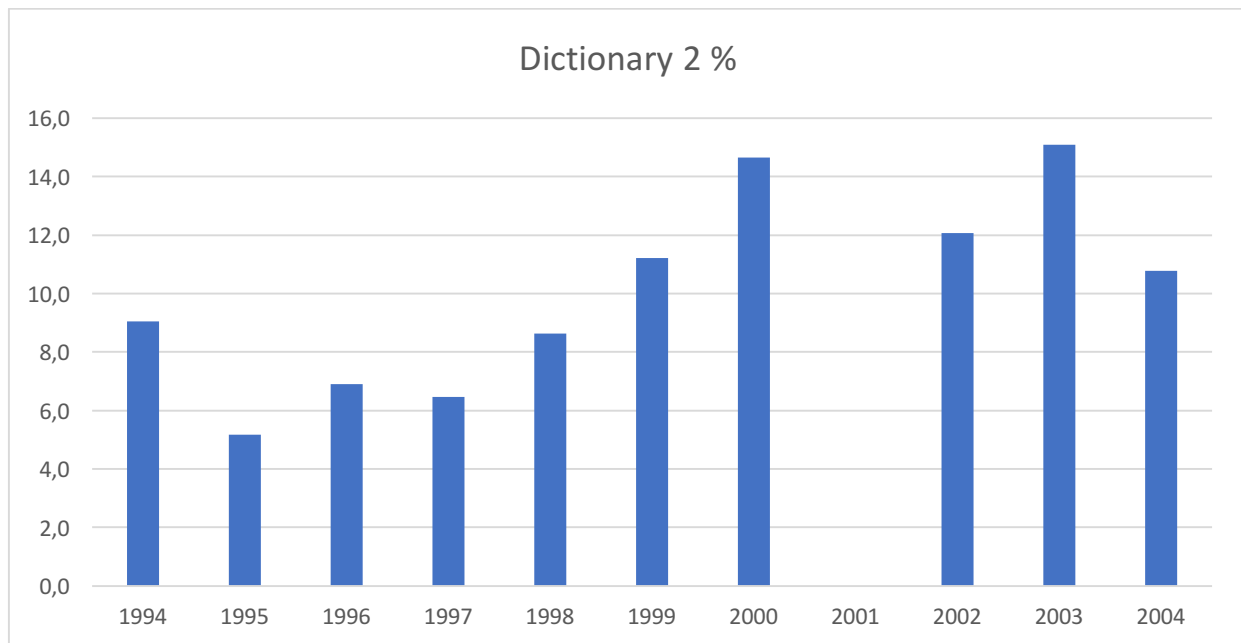
In table 2 the results from the qualitative text analysis can be found. As stated earlier, the program Yoshikoder was used to obtain these results. In total, 232 observations were made, visualised in graph 2. With a high of 35 in, again, 2003 and a low of 12 in 1995.

Table 2

VVD party congres	Year	Dictionary 2 (N)	Dictionary 2 %
47th annual meeting	1994	21	9,1
48th annual meeting	1995	12	5,2
49th annual meeting	1996	16	6,9
50th annual meeting	1997	15	6,5
50th annual meeting	1998	20	8,6
51th annual meeting	1999	26	11,2
52th annual meeting	2000	34	14,7
53th annual meeting	2001	-	0,0
54th annual meeting	2002	28	12,1
55th annual meeting	2003	35	15,1
56th annual meeting	2004	25	10,8
N:		232	100

Again, there is an upward trend visible, although not as clear as with the content analysis. Since 1995, the VVD has used significant more populist rhetoric. The high point in 2000 can be explained as a new law passed in the Netherlands, called the ‘Vreemdelingenwet’, which is also one of the words which the dictionary from Pauwels (2011) identifies as a populist word. Nevertheless, 2003 is again the high point which is in line with the result from the previous analysis. The result from this analysis backs the conclusion that was drawn in chapter 4.1 which stated that the VVD had become relatively more populist between the years 1994-2004.

Graph 2



4.3 Internal vs external party literature.

Via the qualitative text analysis, the internal party literature, the party conferences, and the external party literature, the party programmes, were analysed. The results are presented in tables 3 and 4 and visualised in graphs 3 and 4. To be complete, the dictionary for the content analysis was also put into the computer-based program as there was no time to go through all the party programs by hand but as two dictionaries are better than one, it was included to analyse the external party literature. In total these party programmes embody 224 pages. Both domestic as European election materials were included to get as much material as possible. The program from 1994, 1999 and 2004 are programs designed for the European Parliament elections, and the programs 1994-1998 and 1998-2002 are called 'core' programs, these programs are used to display the vision of the party for the next election period. Unfortunately, the 'core' program for 2002-2006 is not available.

Contrary to Pauwels (2011), where the external party literature showed a similar trend as the internal party literature, here, even without the European programmes, there is no real trend visible. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the party members are more populist internally than externally, which makes sense. Although these results might seem contradictory, as populism is a strategy to reach the electorate (Pauwels, 2011). It is quite

logical as party members often have more intense arguments within their party, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they project these views towards the electorate. According to Pauwels (2011): 'the degree of populism is always substantially higher in the internally orientated party literature when compared with the externally orientated party manifestos.'

As stated earlier, to be thorough, both dictionaries were used, and both had similar outcomes. A big difference with the internal party literature is the year 2003, in both the content and qualitative this year came out on top as the year which was relatively the most populist, but this didn't reflect in the party program. This is because the election in this year was on the 22nd of January, while the annual party conference was on May 16th. This explains why the usage of public opinion in 2002 was high, it was right before the 2002 elections, and they were behind in the poles, so there was a need for strong rhetoric. This hypothesis, however, is not supported by the data from the populism dictionary which can be found in table 4. The study would have expected a similar outcome, and although there is a moderate correlation of 69% (Pearson r : 0.69) between the external party literature doesn't indicate that there was relatively more populist rhetoric used between 1994-2004. This conclusion is in line with Rooduin et al. (2012) who conclude that: 'there is no evidence that mainstream parties change their programmes when confronted with electoral losses or successful populist challengers.'

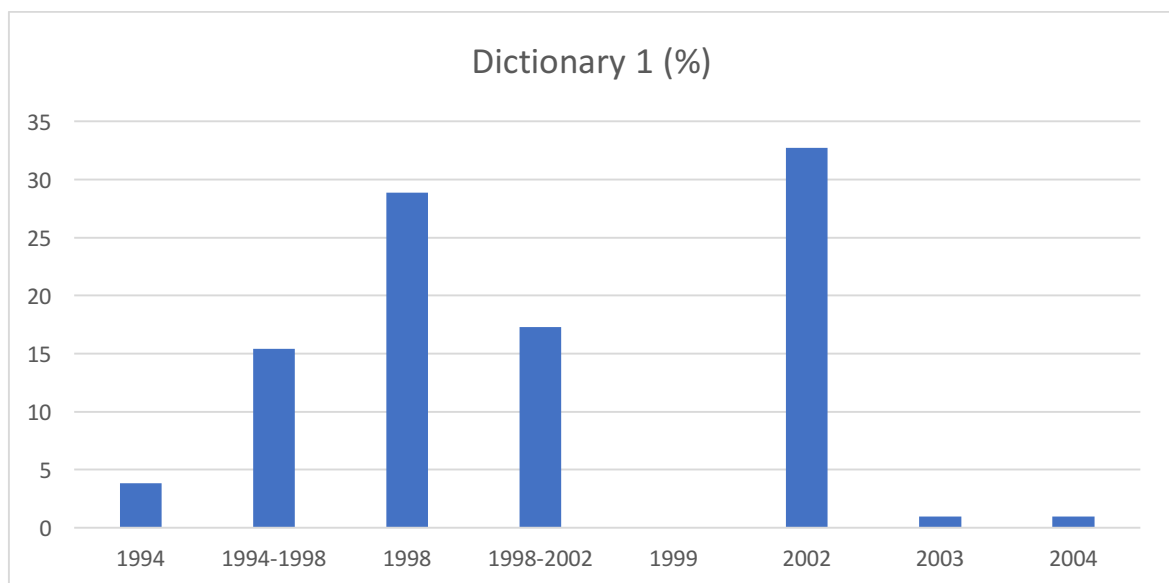
Table 3

Party programs	Dictionary 1 (N)	Dictionary 1 (%)
1994	4	3,8
1994-1998	16	15,4
1998	30	28,8
1998-2002	18	17,3
1999	0	0,0
2002	34	32,7
2003	1	1,0
2004	1	1,0
N:	104	100

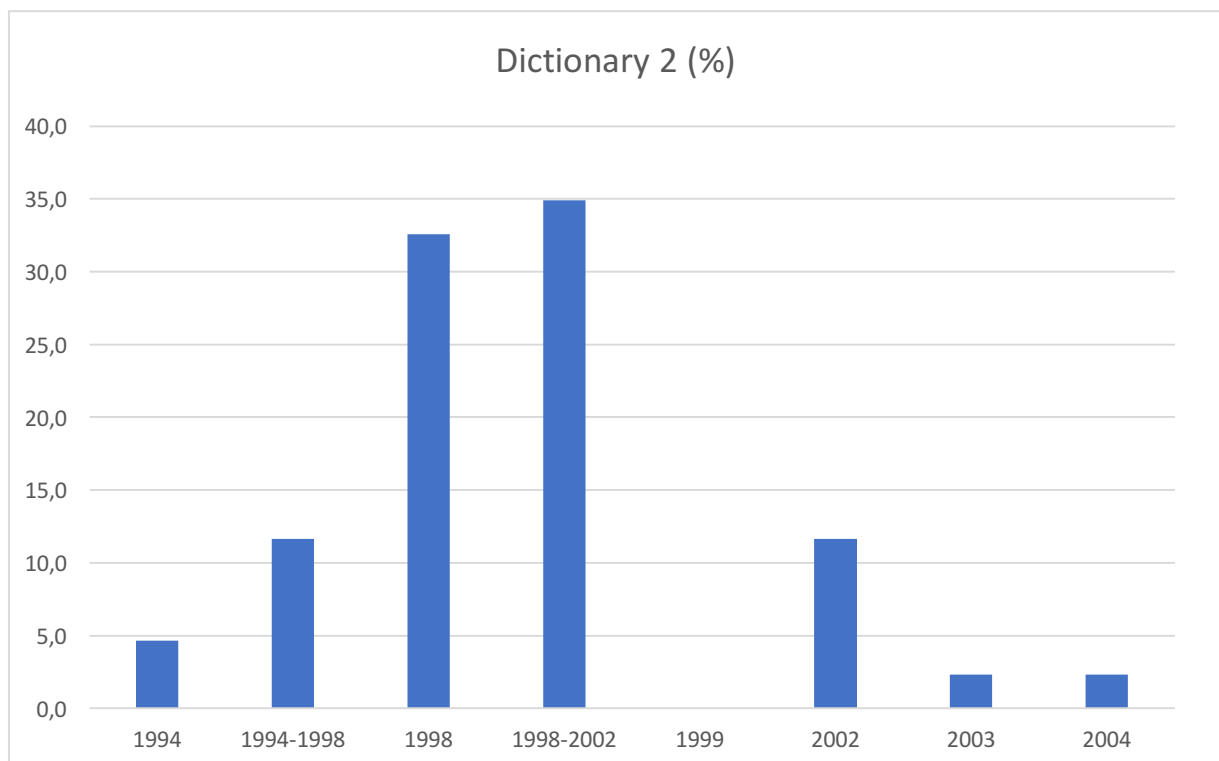
Table 4

Party programs	Dictionary 2 (N)	Dictionary 2%
1994	2	4,7
1994-1998	5	11,6
1998	14	32,6
1998-2002	15	34,9
1999	0	0,0
2002	5	11,6
2003	1	2,3
2004	1	2,3
N:	43	100

Graph 3



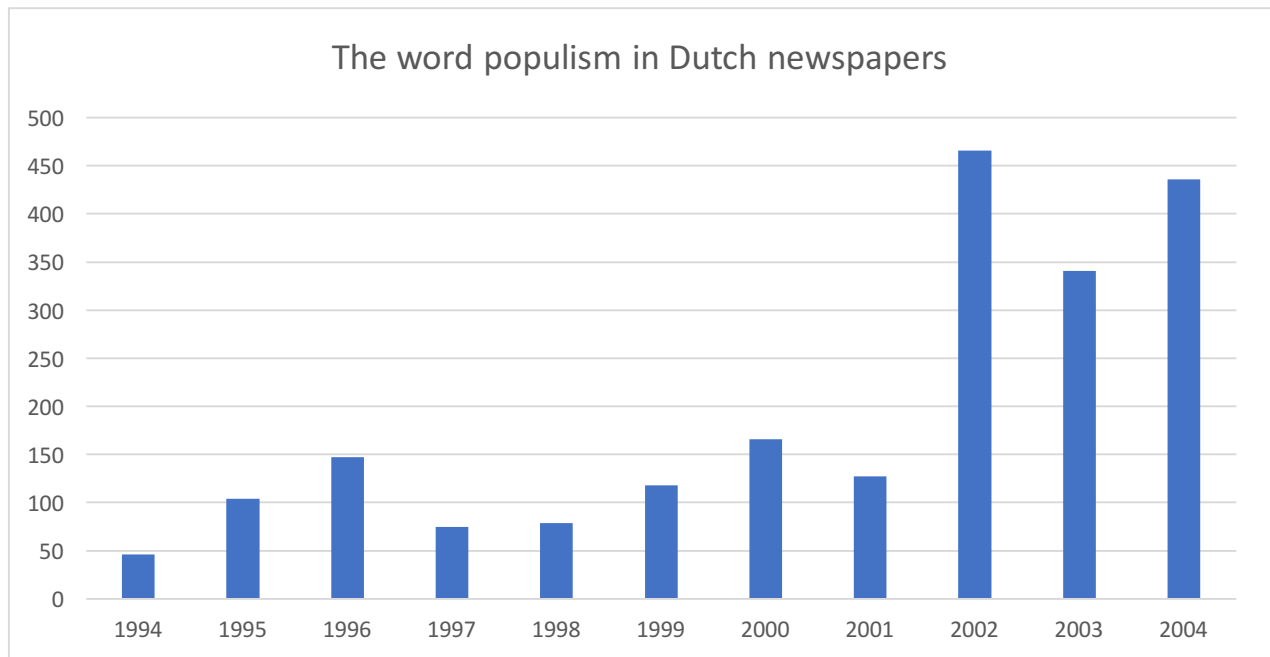
Graph 4



4.4 The political landscape: A populist 'Zeitgeist'?

As was mentioned earlier, a lot of things changed in the political landscape during the years 1994-2004. Especially since the attack on the twin towers on the eleventh of November, 2001. After this, Pim Fortuyn was murdered in 2002, and the outspoken anti-Islam film maker Theo van Gogh was murdered in 2004. There is no doubt that this changed the political landscape in the Netherlands. As politicians and political parties serve by the grace of the people, it is interesting to check if the public debate turned towards these 'populistic' topics. To check this, LexisNexis is used. LexisNexis is a database that holds the newspapers, Dutch but also foreign. The results are shown below in graph 7.

Graph 5



This graph follows more or less the same trend as the dictionaries on populism, which makes sense. This is just another piece of evidence that supports the claim the VVD has become more populist. Political parties react on what is happening in society, and, as the graph seven shows, the public debate became increasingly influenced by populist rhetoric thus it is only natural and logical that political parties responded by using more populist rhetoric and discussing more topics that are considered to be populist. This graph only visualises the word populism in the Dutch newspapers but if the two dictionaries were used, the result would probably be similar. This result, although it is a bit opportunistic as only one word is used in the search, gives an explanation on the why the VVD used relatively more populist rhetoric during the years 1994-2004. Interesting to notice is that within the party programs, the upward trend begins around 1997, which is similar in the newspapers. In the newspapers, the death of Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and the death of Theo van Gogh in 2004 are visible. 9/11, however, is not very visible, on the other hand, it had nothing to do with populism, so it is explainable. Populism was more a consequence of 9/11 than a cause, as people became hesitant towards immigrants, than before 9/11.

So, there is some evidence, based on the frequency of the word populism in the Dutch newspapers, that the public debate in the Netherlands became increasingly about populism. The trend that is visible in graph 7 is like that of graph 1 and graph 2, which is logical as

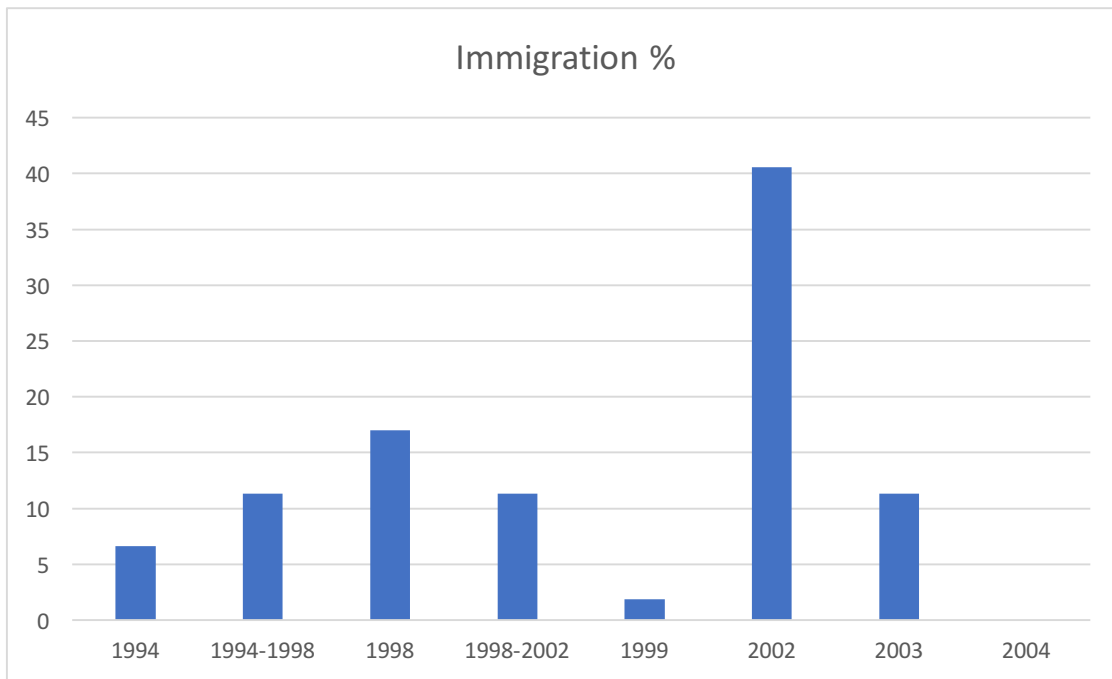
politicians and political parties react towards the public debate. As in the public debate, there was an increase in populist rhetoric, it is, in retrospect, no surprise that the VVD used relatively more populist rhetoric during the years 1994 – 2004.

4.5 A turn to the right? Right-wing populism examined in the VVD party literature.

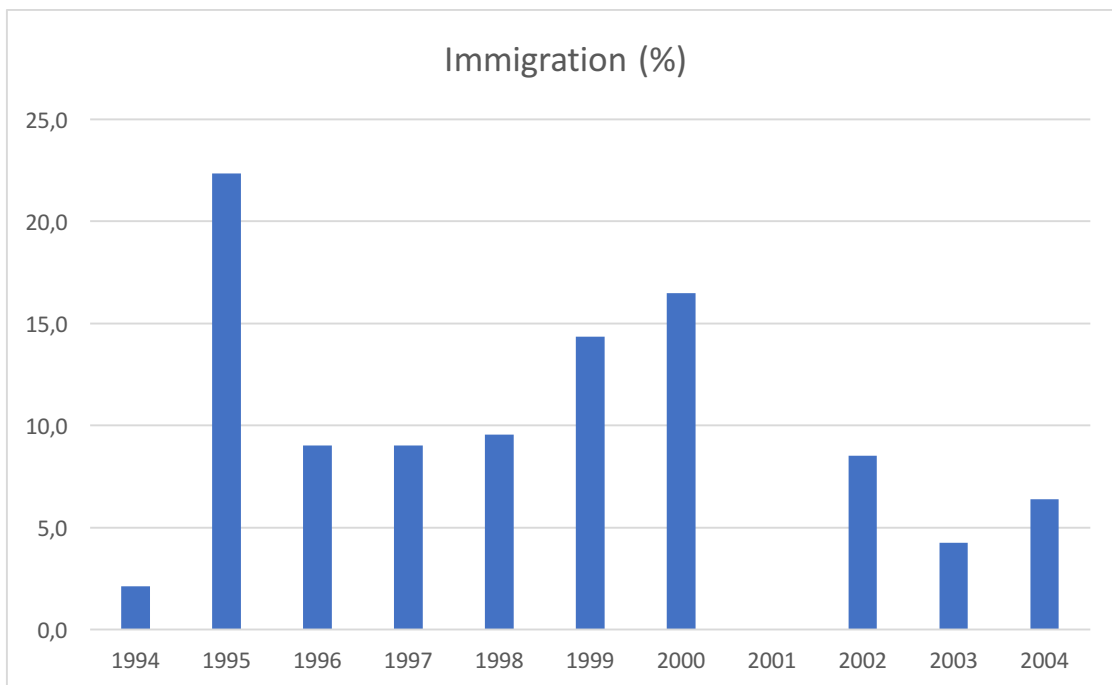
The dramatic outcome of the 2002 elections, when the party of Pim Fortuyn was elected to power with 24 seats in the house of representatives, is one of the puzzles when explaining the rise of populism in the Netherlands. Overall, it is explained as a consequence of a long-lasting dissatisfaction with politics, resulting from a lack of attention to popular concerns around integration, migration and multicultural society (Koopmans et al. 2005). Fortuyn managed to create an altogether new form of right-wing political ideology; he formulated a new immigration critique that explicitly distanced itself from the traditional extreme right. From 2002 onwards, the Dutch integration debate changed from being about minorities and immigrants to being about Muslims (Uitermark 2010). The political situation that followed should be seen as the consolidation and cumulation of a ten-year period in which a discourse centred on national identity, Islam, law and order, terrorism and immigration came to dominate the Dutch public debate. Oudenampsen (2013) states that: ‘This would not have been possible but for the dramatic impact of cataclysmic media events such as 9/11 and the subsequent political assassinations of Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and the filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004.’

In the graphs shown below, it can be seen how this rise of right-wing populism affected the VVD's right wing rhetoric. By using the dictionary of Pauwels (2011) on immigration, the search criteria are focussed on national identity, Islam, terrorism and immigration. Via the route, the thesis hopes to find out if the VVD took a turn towards the new right-wing populism of Pim Fortuyn. Summarized under the topic Immigration, both the party programs and party conferences were summarised and visualised, as can be seen below in graph 5 and 6.

Graph 6 Party programs



Graph 7 Party conferences



According to the data, the VVD didn't take a right turn during the years 1994- 2004. Again, it has to be stated that with a different dictionary there might be different results. According to the dictionary, the immigration chapter wasn't mentioned relatively more in the years 2002-2004, when Pim Fortuyn's influence was the highest and Theo van Gogh was shot, than

before, in the party programs, the contrary seems to be the case. A possible explanation for this is that, as is mentioned by Uitermark (2013), the discourse centred on Islam instead of minorities. The word Islam, for example, is mentioned 0 times between 1994 and 2000 but mentioned seven times between 2002-2004. This evidence is too thin however to conclude that the VVD took a turn towards the right-wing populism. Perhaps a dictionary solely focussed on the right-wing rhetoric of the Lijst Pim Fortuyn would yield different results. This is one of the disadvantages of using computer coding, this result invites an explanation, and I try to give one to explain the result, but it is not possible to substantiate these from the study of these party literature themselves. (Rose et al. 2014)

4.6 Validity of the analyses

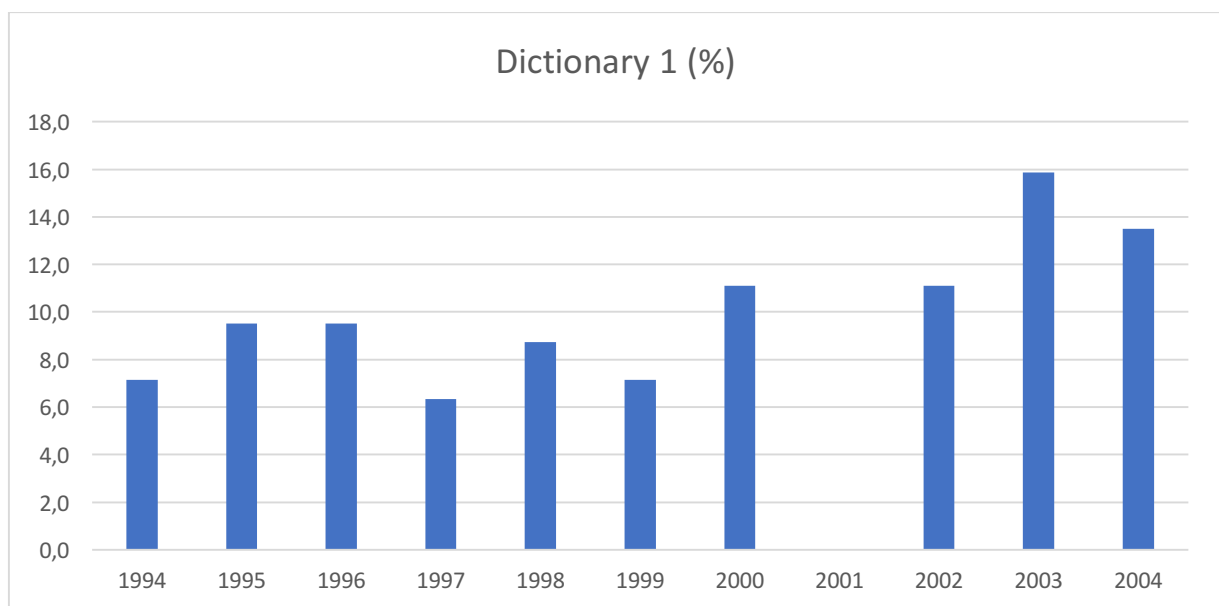
Rooduijn & Pauwels (2011) use three types of validation to justify their content and qualitative analysis, namely *content validation*, *face validation* and *concurrent validation*. According to Adcock and Collier (2001), a measurement is *content valid* if the systematised concept is adequately captured by its indicators. In this thesis, Mudde's (2004) definition of populism is used namely: 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite"'. In the classical analysis, words that measure 'the people' came from a scheme of Noelle Neumann (1974) and Glynn et al. (2004) and were verified at every measurement. The computer-based analysis is less content valid as it is harder to verify every measurement and it is hard to measure if enough or too little indicators have been edited to the program. Another caveat is that populist words might have changed in the period after this investigation, so populist words in 1994 might differ from those in 2010. Weber (1990) states that a measurement has *face validity* when it appears to be measuring the concept that it intends to measure. In this case, the measurement of populism has face value when the VVD turns out to be more populist. The results of the party program analysis have already been presented, and the VVD has become relatively more populist, so the measurements seem to be face valid. Adcock & Collier (2001) furthermore state that *concurrent validity* entails that a measure is valid if the results of a measurement of a systemised concept in one study are empirically related to the measurement of the systemised concept in another study. This concurrent validity can be checked by comparing the results in 4.1 and 4.2. The results show that it can be concluded that the results are concurrent. By calculating the Pearson r , it is checked to which degree there is a correlation between the two results. The Pearson r between

these two results 0.64 or 64%, which means that there is only a moderate correlation, however, it is statistically significant at a level of 5% ($P= 0,048 \rightarrow P < 0.05$). This means that the two dictionaries can be used to measure populism as they yield significant results.

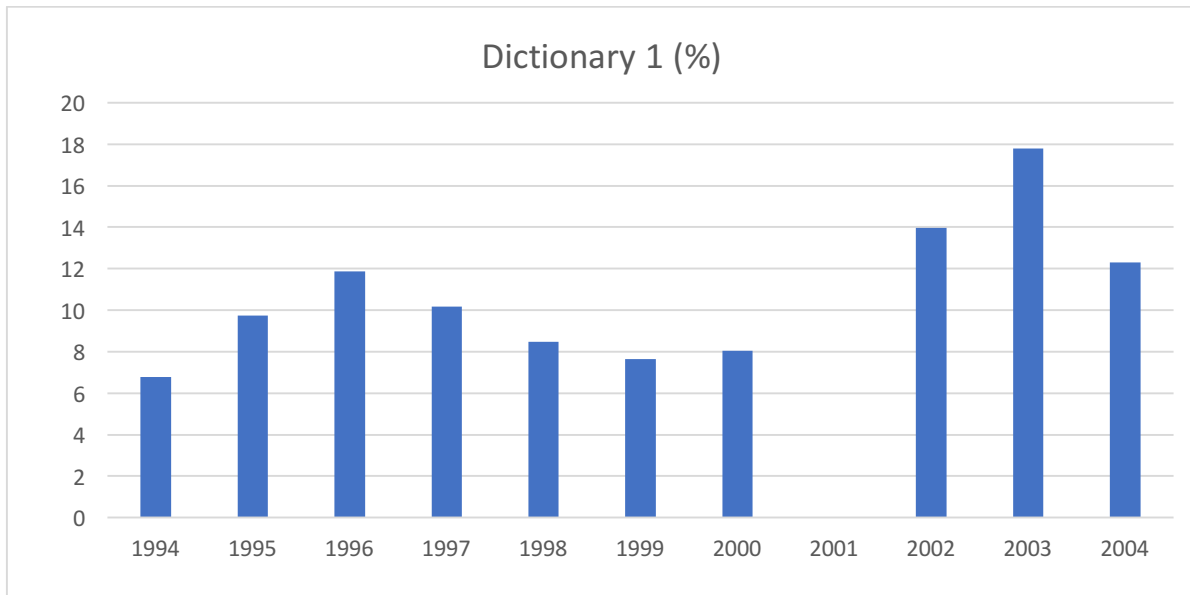
To be thorough, the graphs of the relative public opinion figures are presented below. This means that the dictionary used for the content analysis, also known as the public opinion dictionary, has been put into Yoshikoder to check if the dictionary is valid, apart from the validity that it has in the theoretical literature. As the absolute numbers are higher in the computer-based analysis, the relative numbers are used to make a valid comparison. The public opinion is measured via the classical content analysis, as in 4.1, and, secondly, via the computer-based analysis. It is already obvious that they follow the same trend as can be seen from the graph. The first two validation methods are still present when conducting using the computer-based analysis on the public opinion, only the third one changes. However, the results show that they are, logically, even more correlated, with a Pearson $r: 0.8$, the two results are highly correlated and highly statistically significant at 1% ($P= 0.006 \rightarrow P < 0.01$), the visualisation of this can be found in graph eight and nine.

So, the two dictionaries are valid for researching these party programs and party conferences.

Graph 8 - Content Analysis Party Conferences



Graph 9 - Quantitative Analysis Party Conferences



4.7 Reliability of the analyses.

The classical content analysis is not very reliable as the author is the only one who did the coding. In contrast to, for example, the paper of Rooduijn & Pauwels (2011), who extensively trained 11 coders and calculated inter coder reliability. Although the dictionary of Glynn et al. (2004) and Noelle Neumann (1974) was used, it remains highly subjective on what outings of the public opinion are and what not. The computer-based reliability, however, is very reliable, it doesn't matter how many times the dictionary is run, the results are always the same. Laver & Garry (2000) even claim that: 'computer coding is 100% reliable'. This is a bit optimistic as different results are obtained when using different dictionaries, but in essence, it is true.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate if the Volkspartij voor de Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) became more populist in the period 1994-2004. Two different methods, namely a classical content analysis and a qualitative text analysis, were adopted to investigate this case. First, both the content analysis and the qualitative text analysis were used to examine the party conferences. Secondly, the internal party literature was compared to the external party, and finally, it was investigated if the VVD took a turn towards right-wing populism.

The conclusion from the investigation into the party literature is that there has been an increase in the usage of populist rhetoric during the years 1994 – 2004. This conclusion is based on the internal party literature which was investigated by using two methods and two different dictionaries. Although the investigation into the external party literature didn't reach the same conclusion, it is assumed that, following Mudde (2000) and Pauwels (2011), that the external party literature hides the true nature of the party. To explain where this increase in populist rhetoric originates from, the trend is compared with the usage of populism in the Dutch newspapers in the same period. As was expected, a similar trend was found in the usage of the word 'populism' in the Dutch newspapers which lead to the conclusion that populism became more and more present in the Dutch public debate. This means that it is not surprising that there was an increase of the populist rhetoric of the VVD. The VVD reacted, as politicians and political parties do, to the shift towards populist subjects. Ultimately, politicians do rule by the grace of the people, and if they start to neglect issues important for the people, they do not fare well.

As there is currently a debate going on whether there is something of a 'populist zeitgeist' present in Europe, this thesis adds to this debate and the current literature that, at least during 1994 – 2004 there was an increase in populist rhetoric which coincides with the statement of Mudde (2004). By investigating a not so usual suspect as the VVD, it significantly adds something to this debate. Rooduijn et al. (2012) state that parties primarily present their ideas in their party programs and they find no evidence that Western- Europe became more populist. This research shows, however, in accordance with Mudde, that these party programs only tell part of the story. Within the party, there has been a significant increase in populist rhetoric as this thesis shows. To be thorough, two dictionaries and two different methods were used, and the conclusion stayed the same. The VVD has become more populist during the years 1994- 2004, based on their internal party literature.

This, however, doesn't mean that the party is considered to be populist. This is an important nuance to make; this thesis simply concludes that they have become relatively more populist during these years.

Contrary to what was previously expected, the VVD didn't take a turn toward right-wing populism; no real conclusion could be drawn from the data, even though both internal and external party literature was examined. Future research could investigate this by using a

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dictionary specifically build for right-wing populism in the Netherlands. At the time of writing this thesis, this dictionary was unavailable.

A limitation of this study is that to control for the public debate, only the frequency of the word 'populism' in the public debate was measured. This is a bit short-sighted as there are many outings of populism, but this seemed the most straight forward and logical. Further research should examine if this usage was proper and justified. Another limitation is that the classical content analysis was only done by one person instead of many persons, which would have increased the credibility of the study and made it more reliable.

Also, future research could be done on the other mainstream parties, such as CDA and D66, in the Netherlands during the same period. Did they experience the same phenomenon or was it only the VVD? Based on the findings in this thesis, I expect that the other mainstream parties have gone through similar progress as the VVD, as populism and populist subjects became more present on the national agenda. This claim still needs to be investigated, however. Other suggestions could be that there needs to be a dictionary made to examine Dutch Populism. Currently, the Belgian version was used.

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Appendix

Dictionary 1 – Classical content analysis

Mentioning what ‘the Dutch’, ‘citizen’, ‘civilians’, ‘the people’, ‘think’, ‘feel’, ‘support’, ‘want’,
Mentioning of ‘voices’, ‘consultations’ of ‘citizens’, ‘poles’, ‘demonstrations’, ‘that what lives in society.’
Mentioning of contact with civilians, or ‘society’ through ‘e-mails’, ‘letters’, ‘conversations’, ‘talks’, ‘stories’, ‘whispers’.
Mentioning the consultation of ‘interest groups, ‘experts’
Mentioning of: ‘A lot of people’, ‘everybody’, ‘a great deal of people’, talking about the ‘average’ person, pointing towards a specific group in society, referring to the poles. Terms that suggest unanimity.

(Source: Noelle Neuman 1974, Glynn et al. 2004)

Dictionary 2

Populism	*bedrog*; *verraa*; *verrad*; absurd*; arrogant*; belof*; beloof*; belov*; capitul*; corrupt*; directe; elite*; establishm*; heersend*; kaste; klasse; maffia; meningsuit*; ondemocratisch*; particrat*; politic*; propaganda; referend*; regime*; schamteloos; schand*; toegeven; traditio*; volk	*deceit*; *treason*; *betray*; absurd*; arrogant*; promis*; promise*; capitul*; corrupt*; direct; elite*; establishm*; ruling*; caste; class; mafia; freedom of expression; undemocratic; particrat*; politic*; propaganda; referend*; regime*; shameless; shame*; admit; tradition*; people
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(Source: Pauwels, 2011)

Dictionary 3- Immigration

Immigration	marok*; turk; allocht*; asiel*; halal*; hoofddoek*; illega*; immigr*; islam*; koran; moslim*; vreemd*	moroc*; turk; allocht*; asylum*; halal*; scarf*; illega*; immigr*; islam*; koran; muslim*; foreign*
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(Source: Pauwels 2011)

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Party conferences & Party programs

Internal sources

Annual party conferences VVD Available at: http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/view/party/VVD/congresstukken.html	1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004
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External sources

Party programs Available at: http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/view/party/VVD/verkiezingsprogramma.html	1994, 1994-1998, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004
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