

Construction as Resistance

Constructing a desired and envisioned future to perceived oppression
for the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands

Charlotte Koppelman

6919642

Utrecht University

Submitted on August 1st, 2024.

A Thesis submitted to the Board of Examiners
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts in Conflict Studies & Human Rights



Utrecht University



Supervised by: Lieneke de Visser

Submitted at August 1st, 2024

Programme Trajectory: Internship and thesis writing [30 ECTS]

Wordcount: 14815

Abstract

An increasing number of people in the Netherlands view the state and established institutions, such as the news media, academia, and economic structures, as illegitimate. Within a broader anti-institutionalist sentiment, groups of "sovereign citizens," assert that the government has created a legal construct that oppresses them. They claim exemption from laws by declaring individual sovereignty. The sovereign citizen milieu is characterised by ongoing efforts to withdraw from perceived oppression by "the elite" through the creation of alternative structures, often referred to as "parallel hierarchies." This research examines how the milieu expresses resistance to perceived oppression by constructing alternatives, viewing construction as a form of resistance. It also explores how these constructive initiatives reflect an envisioned future. This analysis is conducted through a qualitative content analysis using the theoretical framework of constructive resistance, which involves initiatives where people begin to build the society they desire independently of existing dominant structures. This can be both in concrete and symbolic forms.

The thesis identifies two main areas of constructive resistance: economic and discursive alternatives. In the economic realm, perceived financial surveillance and control are bypassed by promoting non-dominant practices like using cash and issuing alternative currencies. In the discursive domain, constructive initiatives include alternative notation of names and an alternative dialect, aiming to assert individual sovereignty and counteract perceived oppression, as language is seen as a tool for manipulation by authorities. These initiatives aim to partly replace or circumvent dominant ways of behaving and thinking that are deemed undesirable and therefore serve as a form of constructive resistance. Lastly, the envisioned future reflected in these initiatives emphasises the individual as the highest authority, asserting that by genuioly listening to oneself, external rules are unnecessary. However, the intense focus on individuality may ultimately hinder the development of a structured alternative.



Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the individuals who kindly allowed me to attend their lectures, they offered valuable insights into the milieu, and I appreciated the open conversations I had with the organizers. I also want to thank all the interviewed experts; their insights introduced me to new ideas and were incredibly valuable for my research. I am also grateful to my friends and family for their support and for occasionally dragging me out of the library. Above all, I am grateful to my supervisor, Lieneke, for being there for me at unexpected moments and for her indispensable guidance and feedback throughout the research process.



Table of contents

ABSTRACT..... 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... 2

1. INTRODUCTION..... 4

 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 5

 1.2 CENTRAL CONCEPTS 6

 1.3 SOCIETAL RELEVANCE..... 7

 1.4 ACADEMIC RELEVANCE 8

2. CONTEXTUALIZING THE SOVEREIGN CITIZEN MILIEU 10

 2.1 GENERAL HISTORIOGRAPHY 10

 2.2 DUTCH HISTORIOGRAPHY 15

 2.3 DUTCH CONTEXT 16

 2.4 CONCLUSION 18

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 19

 3.1 BROADENING THE FIELD 19

 3.2 EVERYDAY RESISTANCE 19

 3.3 CONSTRUCTIVE RESISTANCE 20

 3.4 FROM THE CONCRETE TO THE SYMBOLIC 21

 3.5 DEFINITIONAL DISCUSSIONS 22

4. METHODOLOGY 25

 4.1 SOURCE OVERVIEW AND DATA COLLECTION 25

 4.2 SELECTION PROCESS 25

 4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA 26

 4.4 CRITICAL REFLECTION ON SOURCES 27

 4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 27

 4.6 REFLECTION ON OWN POSITION 28

5.0 ANALYSIS: CONSTRUCTIVE RESISTANCE IN THE SOVEREIGN CITIZEN MILIEU IN THE NETHERLANDS 30

5. CONSTRUCTIVE RESISTANCE TO THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM 30

 5.1 RESISTANCE TO THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM 30

 5.2 CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES TO ECONOMIC SYSTEMS 33

 5.3 ANALYSIS..... 35

6. CONSTRUCTIVE RESISTANCE TO DISCURSIVE SYSTEMS..... 38

 6.1 RESISTANCE TO DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES 38

 6.2 CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES 40

 6.3 ANALYSIS..... 43

7. VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE 46

 7.1 OVERALL RESISTANCE..... 46

 7.2 VARIOUS CONSTRUCTIVE INITIATIVES 47

 7.3 WHAT WOULD THE IDEAL SOCIETY LOOK LIKE? 49

 7.4 ANALYSIS..... 51

 7.5 CONCLUSION 53

8. CONCLUSIONS 54

 8.1 ACADEMIC AND SOCIETAL RELEVANCE 55

 8.2 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH 56

 8.3 FUTURE RESEARCH 56

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY 58

 SECONDARY SOURCES 58

 PRIMARY SOURCES 65



1. Introduction

Wonderland: a self-declared sovereign state located in a historically disputed strip of land between Germany and the Netherlands. It is a haven for self-proclaimed liberated individuals, who refuse to be reduced to mere citizen service numbers by the Dutch state, and is called home to several dozen sovereign citizens. It is a place where decisions are made by consensus and where the oppressive feeling of state control is absent. Like the residents of Wonderland, many sovereign citizens seek a place where they are not subjected to external rules.¹

Wonderland is a reflection of an anti-governmental sentiment that is growing worldwide.² Many people feel there is something deeply wrong in our society. Within broader anti-institutionalist sentiment, groups of "sovereign citizens" completely turn their backs on the government and other established institutions such as the news media, academia, and financial structures. Authorities are considered illegitimate (often corporate) governing bodies. Convinced that laws do not apply when you do not consent to them, many refuse to pay taxes or fines. While the group originated in the US, similar movements increasingly appear elsewhere.³ In the Netherlands, networks of sovereign citizens have also recently emerged. By 2022, nearly 8,000 individuals had submitted (quasi) legal documents to the Dutch administration to declare their sovereignty.⁴ Moreover, there is a significant presence in the online environment, such as with websites and on social media.

Defining a sovereign citizen is challenging due to significant overlap with a broader societal group that deeply distrusts established institutions and subscribes to conspiracy theories like The Great Reset and Agenda 2030. While sovereign citizens may share some of these beliefs, they are distinct in their conviction that they can employ pseudo-legal methods to partially or fully withdraw from government authority, avoiding things like tax liability and compulsory education. Given this diffusion, referring to a *milieu* of sovereign citizens rather than a distinct group is more accurate.

¹ Ellis Ellenbroek, "In Wonderland is plek voor de hele wereldbevolking," *Trouw* November 2, 2015, <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/in-wonderland-is-plek-voor-de-hele-wereldbevolking~b9fb42fb/>.

² Sam Jackson, "What Is Anti-Government Extremism," *Terrorism Research Initiative* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 13. Sam Jackson, "What Is Anti-Government Extremism," *Terrorism Research Initiative* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 13.

³ Jackson, "What is Anti-Government Extremism," 13.

⁴ Andres Kouwenhoven and Wilmer Heck, "'Autonome' burgers eisen ieder 1,5 miljoen euro van staat," *NRC*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/04/21/autonome-burgers-eisen-ieder-15-mln-euro-van-staat-a4116901>.



The phenomenon of sovereign citizens is becoming a concern for government authorities, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. Practically, sovereign citizens hinder the work of officials, such as bailiffs. On a long-term, more abstract level, authorities are worried about potentially undermining the functioning of the democratic legal system, especially as sovereign ideas seem to gain traction with a growing number of people.⁵ This concern is often underscored by the term "parallel societies," referring to individuals who withdraw themselves from dominant society and form their own alternatives. Despite frequent mentions, these parallel societies' practical implications and specifics are mostly left to the observer's imagination. This thesis aims to address part of this knowledge gap. Although academic knowledge of the sovereign citizens movement in the Netherlands is generally limited, exploring this specific aspect is relevant. Gaining a better understanding of the milieu's efforts to construct a desired future can shed light on the underlying motivations and potential societal impact. Generally, it can offer new insights into a relatively unknown and growing phenomenon.

1.1 Research question

Bearing this in mind, the central research question of the thesis will be:

In what way does the expressed resistance by the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands towards perceived oppression by the state and established state and societal institutions, manifest through the construction of institutional or discursive alternatives, and how do these efforts reflect a desired and envisioned future?

1.1.1 Sub-questions

In an attempt to answer these questions, three thematic chapters will explore diverse aspects of constructive elements in sovereign citizens' expressed resistance against authorities. The three themes relate to the economic domain, the use of language, and visions of an alternative future. Notably, while numerous constructive elements can be discerned within the milieu, this research focuses on these themes due to the limited scope of the research project and their prominence in the data gathered.

⁵ Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, *Met de rug naar de samenleving - Een analyse van de soevereinenbeweging in Nederland*, April 9, 2024, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2024/04/09/tk-bijlage-24401640-fenomeenanalyse-soevereinen>, p.21.



The first thematic chapter delves into opposition to established economic institutions and examines sovereign citizens' constructive efforts to create alternative economic structures and practices:

1.1 Why do Dutch sovereign citizens resist financial institutions, and how does this resistance take form in the construction of alternative structures and practices related to the economic system?

The next chapter concentrates on the discursive dimension of constructive resistance. It aims to illustrate how sovereign citizens' perception of oppression through language motivates efforts towards creating discursive alternatives:

1.2 Why do Dutch sovereign citizens resist established discursive structures, and how does this resistance take form in the construction of alternative discursive structures?

The concluding thematic chapter explores the diverse manifestations of constructive resistance by sovereign citizens. It examines how these can inform our understanding of an envisioned and desired future:

1.3 How do constructive resistance initiatives by sovereign citizens in the Netherlands reflect a desired and envisioned future?

1.2 Central Concepts

To make a distinction between the sovereign citizen milieu and broader societal movements that deny the legitimacy of the state and established institutions, I use the following definition for the sovereign citizen milieu for the purpose of this thesis:

The sovereign citizen milieu is a collective name for groups and individuals who reject the legitimacy of the state, the associated economic system and other established societal institutions such as the media and academia. In addition, the milieu asserts that the government has created a legal construction known as the "strawman"⁶ designed to oppress the population. It also suggests that declaring individual sovereignty through variable (pseudo-) legalistic means enables withdrawal from this legal construct and, subsequently, (partial) withdrawal from connected societal obligations such as tax liability.

⁶ In the Netherlands, this construction is called the "natural person" [natuurlijk person]. For consistency, this thesis will use the English term "strawman."



Understandably, this definition may introduce new concepts to readers unfamiliar with this subject. The background chapter will, therefore, elaborate on specific underlying reasonings. Moreover, the thesis is grounded in the theory of constructive resistance. This framework explores how individuals and groups can actively shape their desired society independent of existing dominant structures. In essence, it is about resistance through construction. Two key concepts within this framework are *resistance* and *construction*. The theoretical chapter will elaborate on their definition within the theoretical framework.

1.3 Societal relevance

The research holds societal significance for several reasons. As many sovereign citizens refuse to pay taxes or fines, numerous individuals accumulate substantial debt, with some even facing the loss of their homes.⁷ This underscores the broader social implications of sovereign citizen practices. Additionally, public institutions increasingly receive declarations from people who proclaim themselves "sovereign."⁸ Courts are mired in endless legal (often hard to decipher) paperwork that overextends collective public facilities. This intentional and excessive exploitation of the bureaucratic system is sometimes called "paper terrorism."⁹ Referring to these letters, the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, in a rare public statement, has issued a warning about the sovereign citizen milieu, stressing the importance of understanding their perspectives.¹⁰

The impact of a sovereign citizen community extends beyond the legal system. Complications arise when parents, influenced by sovereign citizen beliefs, withdraw their children from the system by not registering their births, a practice seen among sovereign citizens.¹¹ This can hinder the children's socialisation and development, underscoring the need to understand the dynamics driving sovereign citizens' disengagement from society.

⁷ Thomas Mulder, "De Autonome Droom," Pointer, October 23, 2023, video, 15:56, <https://ap.lc/YMsxM>.

⁸ Bart Zuidervaart, "Grote zorgen over burgers die zich willen losmaken van de overheid. 'Door desinformatie misleid'," *Trouw*, December 1, 2023, <https://www.trouw.nl/editie/20231202/grote-zorgen-over-burgers-die-zich-willen-losmaken-van-de-overheid-door-desinformatie-misleid~b2761669/>.

⁹ Nuance door Training en Advies (NTA), *Ideologische eilanden – de 'soevereinen' en de eigen samenleving*, (June 2023), <https://ntadvies.nl/media/1071/de-soevereinen-en-de-eigen-samenleving.pdf>, p.18.

¹⁰ Zuidervaart, "Grote zorgen over burgers die zich willen losmaken van de overheid. 'Door desinformatie misleid.'"

¹¹ Mulder, "De Autonome Droom."



The need to understand sovereign citizens is heightened by examples of similar movements turning violent,¹² such as the 2022 attempted coup in Germany and the January 6 Capitol riot.¹³ In both the US and Germany, these groups are considered extremist threats.¹⁴ Although Dutch intelligence suggests that the potential for violence is limited within this group, examples like these do create an additional sense of urgency. An empirically founded exploration of how sovereign citizens envision and attempt to build their ideal world, both symbolic and concretely, can reveal something about how their ideals contrast with dominant systems. This perspective thus offers valuable directions for policymakers, scholars and authorities in addressing its influence on social and political landscapes.

1.4 Academic relevance

The research is academically relevant in several ways. First and foremost, academic research regarding the Dutch sovereign citizens is scarce. I could only find one academic article that briefly touched on sovereign citizens in the Netherlands.¹⁵ It is, therefore, important to address the existing research gap and better understand the sovereign citizen milieu in the Dutch context, especially regarding its societal relevance.

Secondly, there has been a general tendency to equate resistance with saying no or being against something.¹⁶ While recent scholarship has begun addressing productive forms of resistance, the field of constructive resistance is still developing.¹⁷ Additionally, many case studies focus on resistance by subaltern groups, easily equating resistance as a just cause against (colonial) oppression.¹⁸ Since the field is still in development, exploring groups less typically associated with "classical" resistance is academically relevant as it may offer new insights and perspectives into the theoretical debate.

¹² Jelle van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.1 (March 2023): 97.

¹³ Dominik Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" *Illiberalism Studies Program Working Papers* 16, no.1 (March 2023): 1.

¹⁴ van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" 94.

¹⁵ van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" 88-102.

¹⁶ Mino Kofoed, "Constructive resistance in Northern Kurdistan: Exploring the Peace, Development and resistance nexus." *Journal of Peacebuilding and development* 12, no.3 (2017): 39-53.

¹⁷ M J. Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain."

Journal of Resistance Studies 2, no.1 (2016): 50-51. & Mona Lilja, "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan," *Review of International Studies* 48, no.1 (2022): 149-170.

¹⁸ Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 58.



Before exploring the thematic chapters that address various aspects of the main question, the background chapter will outline the key elements of the sovereign citizen movement through a historiography. Next, the theoretical chapter will provide insights into resistance studies and examine the theoretical framework of constructive resistance. Finally, the methodology will be discussed.

2. Contextualizing the sovereign citizen milieu

This introductory chapter will review existing literature on the sovereign citizen movement. It will begin with a general historiography, summarising scholarly discussions on common narratives, strategies, overlaps with other groups, organisational structures, and anti-institutional extremism. While there are some differences in nuance, there is a broad academic consensus on these topics. Next, this chapter will address Dutch historiography. Due to the limited scholarly literature on the Netherlands, government reports and news articles will be used as supplementary sources to provide insight into the Dutch context.

2.1 General historiography

The idea of sovereign citizenship is not new. It originated in the United States around the 1960s.¹⁹ Later, similar movements appeared elsewhere, for instance, in Canada,²⁰ the United Kingdom,²¹ and Russia.²² Arguably, one of the most notorious examples of a group with sovereigntist ideas is the German Reichsbürger, whose members planned a detailed coup to overthrow the German government in 2022. The Verfassungsschutz's (Germany's secret service) interception resulted in one of the most extensive anti-terror operations in modern German history.²³

2.1.1 Competency to stand trial

Sovereign citizens are known to take creative approaches to law, sometimes leading to their involvement in court cases. To those unfamiliar with the milieu, some sovereign arguments might appear delusional.²⁴ In this context, several academics, such as Sarteschi and Paradis, considered competency to stand trial in legal cases involving sovereign citizens. Despite popular perception, no increased probability of mental illness was detected. Moreover,

¹⁹ Caesar Kalinowski, "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," *Montana Law Review* 80, no. 2 (2019): 154.

²⁰ Barbara Perry, David Hoffman, and Ryan Scrivens, "Anti-Authority and Militia Movements in Canada," *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare* 1, no. 3 (January 31, 2019): 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.21810/jicw.v1i3.822>.

²¹ Christine M. Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 60, (2021): 1-11.

²² Matthew Luxmoore, "Flouting the law in nostalgia's name: Russia's growing movement of 'soviet citizens,'" *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, accessed June 4, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/flouting-law-in-nostalgia-s-name-russia-s-growing-movement-of-soviet-citizens-/29962523.html>.

²³ Remco Andersen, "Ongekend massale Duitse politie-invallen bij rechts-extremisten met coupplannen," *de Volkskrant*, December 7, 2022, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/ongekend-massale-duitse-politie-invallen-bij-rechts-extremisten-met-coupplannen~b9b2e2c1/>.

²⁴ Christine M. Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*. (Pittsburgh: Springer, 2020), 8.



demographic characteristics derived from trials reveal an overrepresentation of men around the age of fifty.²⁵

2.1.2 Common narratives

Academic literature has examined common narratives within the sovereign citizen milieu, particularly in the American and German contexts.²⁶ Adherents draw selectively from books, videos, and online manifestos to craft personalised beliefs that broadly align with the overarching framework.²⁷ Local contexts also contribute to significant heterogeneity.²⁸ Despite the diversity, certain common underlying narratives can be distinguished. While not universal, the ideas boil down to three basic premises:

1. First is a fundamental rejection of the state's authority, its institutions and the associated economic system.²⁹ This is often based on an alternative reading of history and is frequently supported by a conspiracy narrative of a mal-intentioned elite with totalitarian aspirations that acts from a secret bigger plan. This elite encompasses not only the state but also controls the media and universities. These conspiracy narratives are common across all countries.³⁰

²⁵ Cheryl M Paradis, Elizabeth Owen and Gene McCullough, "Evaluations of urban sovereign citizens' competency to stand trial," *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 46, no.2 (2019): 158–166. <https://doi.org/10.29158/JAAPL.003758-18>.

G.F. Parker, "Competence to stand trial evaluations of sovereign citizens: A case series and primer of odd political and legal beliefs," *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 42, no.3. (2014): 338–349.

J. Pytyck & G. Chaimowitz. "The Sovereign Citizen Movement and Fitness to Stand Trial," *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 12 no.2 (2013): 149–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2013.796329>.

²⁶ Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*.

J.M. Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe," *Washington, DC: Program on Extremism at George Washington University* (2016): 1-13.

Dominik Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" *Illiberalism Studies Program Working Papers* 16, no.1 (March 2023): 1-12.

Jan Rathje, "Driven by Conspiracies: The Justification of Violence among "Reichsbürger" and Other Conspiracy-Ideological Sovereignists in Contemporary Germany," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 49-61.

Parker, "Competence to stand trial evaluations of sovereign citizens: A case series and primer of odd political and legal beliefs."

Donald J, Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," *Alberta Law Review*, 55 no.4 (2018): 1045-1088, <https://doi.org/10.29173/alr2485>.

²⁷ Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe," 3.

²⁸ S.A. Kent, "Freemen, Sovereign Citizens, and the Challenge to Public Order in British Heritage Countries," *International Journal of Cultic Studies* 6 (2015): 1-16.

Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement," 1.

²⁹ Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*, 10.

³⁰ Florian Hartleb, Paul Schlieffsteiner, and Christoph Schiebel, "From Anti-Measure Activism to Anti-State Extremism? The "Querdenker" Protest-Movement and Its Interrelation and Dynamics with the "Reichsbürger" in Germany and Austria," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.1 (2023): 132.

Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?"

Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*, 10.



2. A second underlying premise is that laws are forms of contracts that only apply when you consent to them.³¹ The idea is that you can choose to follow laws but are also free to reject them. Often, alternative laws are claimed to hold higher authority than (inter) national law, including common law, natural law, maritime law or SHAEF law, resulting in a complicated web of pseudo-legal argumentation,³² with many adherents thus providing pseudo-legal justifications for their stance. Given the scope of this thesis, I will not go into specific legal arguments.
3. Lastly, sovereign citizens often use redemption theory. The argument asserts that every human is born free; however, upon registration, a second identity is created: that of the "strawman."³³ This "legal construction" appears in official documentation and is represented by a social service number, often unironically called the "citizens slavery number."³⁴ All societal duties and obligations are argued to be linked to the strawman, not the human being.³⁵ The aim of the sovereigns is to disconnect from the constructed strawman and live on as a "free human being." Many attempt to achieve this through various procedures, such as sending sovereignty declarations to the authorities. By doing so, they aim to exempt themselves from legal obligations, often including tax responsibilities.³⁶

Most scholars contend that there is no unified ideology within the sovereign citizen milieu, only shared ideological elements.³⁷ However, Rathje, studying the Reichsbürger in Germany, argues that violence is an inherent part of the milieu's ideology. He points to the central role of conspiracy theories in justifying violence, linked to a perceived existential threat to the

³¹Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement," 1.

³²Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," 1049.

Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe."

³³Kalinowski, "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," 162.

³⁴In Dutch, the social service number is called a BSN (Burger Service Nummer). Some sovereign citizens purport that the abbreviation BSN secretly stands for Burger Slaven Nummer.

³⁵Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*. Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," 1069.

³⁶Kalinowski, "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," 154.

Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe."

Verena Fiebig and Daniel Koehler, "Uncharted Territory: Towards an Evidence-Based Criminology of Sovereign Citizens Through a Systematic Literature Review," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 34-48.

³⁷Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?"

Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement."



sovereignist self-group. This is further supported by a central Manichean view of the world, assuming an imminent battle between the forces of good and evil.³⁸

2.1.3 Strategies

Some scholars have analysed prevalent strategies within the sovereign citizen milieu. Like common narratives, these strategies are not universally adopted but are nevertheless typical of the movement. Kalinowski argues that many sovereign citizens seek to affirm their individual succession from the state by sending documents.³⁹ Moreover, some actively aim to circumvent the perceived oppression by creating alternative systems.⁴⁰ Scholars highlight how different sovereign items, often sold online, are also argued to facilitate withdrawal from the system. For instance, sovereign license plates,⁴¹ diplomatic passports or embassy signs for homes.⁴²

2.1.4 Overlap with other milieus

Considerable overlap exists between the sovereign citizen milieu, far-right organisations and spiritual communities. Scholars agree that actors are often motivated "by a dizzying combination of ideas."⁴³ This dynamic also appears in online environments. Groups with clear connections to sovereign ideas also shared conspiracy narratives derived from QAnon,⁴⁴ ideas about the Great Reset⁴⁵, chemtrails⁴⁶, anti-vax and Agenda 2030.⁴⁷ According to Sarteschi, overlap makes sense because they all fit within a larger overarching conspiracy narrative of a

³⁸ Rathje, "Driven by Conspiracies: The Justification of Violence among "Reichsbürger" and Other Conspiracy-Ideological Sovereignists in Contemporary Germany," 55.

³⁹ Kalinowski, "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," 161-162.

⁴⁰ Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?"

⁴¹ Fiebig and Koehler, "Uncharted Territory: Towards an Evidence-Based Criminology of Sovereign Citizens Through a Systematic Literature Review." Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*, 14.

⁴² Jelle van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.1 (March 2023): 97

⁴³ Sam Jackson, "What Is Anti-Government Extremism," *Terrorism Research Initiative* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 9.

⁴⁴ QAnon is a far-right conspiracy theory that originated in the United States. It emerged in late 2017 on internet message boards such as 4chan, where an anonymous user known as "Q" began posting cryptic messages. Q alleged having access to classified information indicating a covert war between Donald Trump and a global network of Satan-worshipping paedophiles, which encompassed prominent politicians, business leaders, and celebrities. See fe: Mike Wendling, "QAnon: What is it and where did it come from?" *BBC*, January 6, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/53498434>.

⁴⁵ The Great Reset conspiracy narratives revolve around the idea that the World Economic Forum's (WEF) initiative is a cover for a globalist agenda to reshape the world economy and establish a totalitarian government. See fe: "What is the Great Reset - and how did it get hijacked by conspiracy theories?" *BBC*, June 24, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-57532368>.

⁴⁶ Chemtrail conspiracy narratives claim that the trails left by high-flying aircraft, which are generally known as contrails (condensation trails), contain chemical or biological agents deliberately sprayed for malevolent purposes. See fe: Leah Asmelash "The truth behind those white streaks trailing behind jets in the sky," *CNN*, March 12, 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/us/chemtrails-conspiracy-theory-explained-ccc/index.html>.

⁴⁷ Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" 1.
Jackson, "What is Anti-Government Extremism," 13.



malevolent global elite who controls the institutions, purposefully hides the truth and oppresses people.⁴⁸

Simultaneously, the overlap complicates categorical demarcations, as no two sovereign citizens hold the exact same ideas. One might adhere to QAnon-inspired notions of a blood-drinking paedophilic elite, while another might reject this idea and instead focus on the belief that the elite use vaccinations as a means to exert control over the population.

2.1.5 Decentralisation

The sovereign citizen milieu is decentralised. There are no identifiable leaders, visible hierarchy or organisational structures.⁴⁹ For example, Juling describes how the Reichsbürger milieu in Germany maintains only loose connections with each other, though they frequently use online communication.⁵⁰ Due to both its disorganised and diffuse nature, most academic literature refers to a sovereign citizen milieu rather than a cohesive group or organisation.

2.1.6 Broader sentiment of distrust

According to scholars, a widespread sense of dissatisfaction and distrust towards politics and government is commonplace.⁵¹ This dynamic has become as become more pronounced following the COVID-19 pandemic⁵² While political and institutional criticism is essential to a healthy democracy, in more extreme instances, this discontent may lead to embracing the conspiracy narrative of an evil global elite.⁵³ Van Buuren views conspiracy narratives as attempts to make sense of situations or developments perceived as unjust or intolerable. These narratives suggest that such circumstances are the intentional outcome of a group of individuals secretly collaborating with harmful intentions.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement."

⁴⁹ Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement."

⁵⁰ Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" 6-7.

⁵¹ Jelle van Buuren, Edwin Bakker and Isabelle Frens, "Rallying Around Empty Signifiers: Understanding and Defining Anti-Government Protest in the Netherlands," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.2 (June 2023): 68.

⁵² Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" 6-7.

Hartleb, Schlieffsteiner, and Schiebel, "From Anti-Measure Activism to Anti-State Extremism? The "Querdenker" Protest-Movement and Its Interrelation and Dynamics with the "Reichsbürger" in Germany and Austria," 124.

van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?"

Tore Bjørge, "Introduction to the Special Section on Anti-Government Extremism," *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism* 17, no.1 (March 2023): 68.

⁵³ Lotta Rahlf, "From Democratic Resistance to Hostility against a "Covid-Regime" – Conspiracy Theories as Cross-Milieu Catalysts of Radicalization," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2023): 1–28.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2023.2169894>

⁵⁴ Jelle van Buuren, "Doelwit Den Haag? : *complotconstructies en systeemhaat in Nederland 2000-2014*" (PhD diss., Rijksuniversiteit Leiden 2016).

<https://hdl.handle.net/1887/43818> november 2016



2.1.7 *Anti-institutional extremism?*

In academic literature and recent government publications, sovereign citizens have been considered a subgroup with anti-institutional extremism.⁵⁵ Bjørge defines this anti-institutional extremism as:

"movements, groups and individuals who express deep distrust and hatred towards the government and democratic institutions and processes and condone or show willingness to use violence to undermine the democratic legal order."⁵⁶

Sam Jackson further contends a division between two forms. The first is issue-driven anti-governmental extremism, which opposes a specific governmental stance. The second is ideological anti-governmental extremism, opposing the authorities more broadly. The sovereign citizen milieu is generally situated in the latter category. Contrary to some other scholars, Jackson classifies the sovereign citizen milieu as a type of right-wing extremism. He notes that his research is centred on the United States and recognises that there may be regional variations.⁵⁷

In both the US and Germany, sovereign citizens are considered an extremist threat.⁵⁸ In 2013, law enforcement intelligence officers conducted a survey that ranked sovereign citizens as the most significant terrorist threat, surpassing even Islamic terrorists.⁵⁹ However, this categorisation may not fully capture the full diversity within the milieu. The specifics of this will be explored in greater detail in the methodology section.

2.2 Dutch historiography

While the sovereign citizen literature base generally remains quite limited,⁶⁰ the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands is especially under-researched. The only relevant article I found that focuses specifically on the Dutch context is by Jelle van Buuren.⁶¹ His work offers

⁵⁵ Fiebig and Koehler, "Uncharted Territory: Towards an Evidence-Based Criminology of Sovereign Citizens Through a Systematic Literature Review."

⁵⁶ Bjørge, "Introduction to the Special Section on Anti-Government Extremism," 67.

⁵⁷ Jackson, "What is Anti-Government Extremism," 10-13.

⁵⁸ van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" 94.

⁵⁹ Carter et al, "Understanding Law Enforcement Intelligence Processes: Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate," (2014).

⁶⁰ Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement," 1-2.

⁶¹ Jelle van Buuren is an associate professor at Leiden University at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs. His research interests include terrorism and counterterrorism intelligence and security services, conspiracy



a brief overview of sovereign citizens and overlapping milieus and proposes an analytical model for analysing the potential security implications of extreme anti-system sentiments.⁶² Because the model is more security-oriented, I will not use it for the purpose of this thesis.

2.3 Dutch context

Sovereign citizens seek individual secession from the Dutch state.⁶³ The sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands stands out because of their explicit communication with the authorities about their unrecognised Dutch citizenship. Many send letters to municipalities and national authorities to "unsubscribe" from Dutch society, often using complex legal language to support their claims.⁶⁴ On social media, many videos circulate about the milieu's confrontation with authorities, such as bailiffs and the police. In some instances, people refuse to identify themselves;⁶⁵ in others, people try to arrest officials through "citizen arrests."⁶⁶ In the Netherlands, the milieu is also known not to vote, which, in their view, would acknowledge the fictitious state.⁶⁷ Although the milieu has significant diversity, there are also certain overlapping ideological elements, similar to the international context. As a Dutch bailiff noted: "The remarkable thing is that you keep meeting new people, but the story remains the same."⁶⁸

The sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands is not entirely new. In 2014, an article appeared on how to reclaim one's sovereignty.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the sovereign free state Wonderland issued

theories, the far right, new protest movements and anti-institutional movements. He regularly appears as an expert in the media to talk about these topics.

⁶² van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" 94.

⁶³ Cyril Rosman, "Groeiende groep Nederlanders stapt uit maatschappij, wanbetalers bezorgen overheid handenvol werk," *Algemeen Dagblad*, June 25, 2023, <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/groeiende-groep-nederlanders-stapt-uit-maatschappij-wanbetalers-bezorgen-overheid-handenvol-werk~af016ba7/>.

⁶⁴ <https://www.trouw.nl/verdieping/nederland-bestaat-niet-over-de-worsteling-met-de-autonome-burger~be9ae1fd/>

⁶⁵ Haro Kraak, "Autonome burgers erkennen het gezag van de overheid niet. Maar daar heeft de overheid geen boodschap aan," *Volkskrant*, August 16, 2023, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/autonome-burgers-erkennen-het-gezag-van-de-overheid-niet-maar-daar-heeft-de-overheid-geen-boodschap-aan~bceb4957/>.

Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*, 13-14.

⁶⁶ Thom as Mulder, "De Autonome Droom," Pointer, October 23, 2023, video, 15:56, <https://ap.lc/YMsxM>.

⁶⁷ Haro Kraak, "Autonome' burgers erkennen het gezag van de overheid niet. Maar daar heeft de overheid geen boodschap aan," *Volkskrant*, August 16, 2023, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/autonome-burgers-erkennen-het-gezag-van-de-overheid-niet-maar-daar-heeft-de-overheid-geen-boodschap-aan~bceb4957/>.

⁶⁸ Bart Zuidervaart, "Nederland bestaat niet!" Over de worsteling met de autonome burger," *Trouw*, December 1, 2023, <https://www.trouw.nl/verdieping/nederland-bestaat-niet-over-de-worsteling-met-de-autonome-burger~be9ae1fd/>.

⁶⁹ Abel van Gilswijk, "Ontevreden Nederlanders kunnen zich gewoon laten uitschrijven bij de Nederlandse staat" VICE, accessed April 24, 2024. <https://www.vice.com/nl/article/vd98a9/ontevreden-nederlanders-kunnen-zich-gewoon-laten-uitschrijven-bij-de-nederlandse-staat-143>.

During that time the website "ikclaimmijnaam.nl" [I claim my name] was important. It asserted to common sovereign narrative of the strawmen.



an independence declaration in 2015,⁷⁰ and a political party promoting sovereign ideas was active for a short time in 2012.⁷¹ However, it was only after COVID-19 that the sovereign citizen milieu started to gain increased prominence and visibility. The fact that distant government decisions could have such a direct impact on one's personal life was experienced by many as an illegitimate infringement on one's personal freedom. Some referred to the COVID-19 regulations as an eye-opening experience that enabled them to see the true colours of Dutch political leadership.⁷²

The increase in adherents has subsequently led to increased governmental attention, especially from the Dutch intelligence services. In a report from 2023, the service first mentioned the term anti-institutional extremism.⁷³ However, this classification was criticised in the academic community, as it problematised an entire group. Critics argued that the government should look to its own role in increasing distrust.⁷⁴ In later publications, the intelligence services acknowledge how growing institutional distrust could be partly explained by governmental action (or in-action), the benefits scandal serving as a prominent example.⁷⁵

It highlights how specific events within the Dutch context have led to a decrease in trust in established institutions, resulting in many people not feeling represented by political leadership.⁷⁶ In this light, the sovereign citizen milieu emerges as a distinct manifestation of a broader trend of growing scepticism and distrust towards institutions in Dutch society. In April 2024, a phenomenon analysis from the Dutch Intelligence Service (AIVD) specifically discussed the sovereign citizen movement. The analysis focuses on the common narratives

⁷⁰ Wonderland, "Declaration of independence Wonderland," Accessed 20 March, 2024. <https://vrijstaat-wonderland.online/publicaties/>.

⁷¹ Parlement.com, "Soeverein Onafhankelijke Pioniers Nederland (SOPN)," Accessed 24 April 2024. https://www.parlement.com/id/vj1oi1aceyeb/soeverein_onafhankelijke_pioniers.

⁷² Haro Kraak, "Autonome burgers erkennen het gezag van de overheid niet. Maar daar heeft de overheid geen boodschap aan."

⁷³ Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, *Anti-institutioneel extremisme in Nederland: een ernstige dreiging voor de democratische rechtsorde?*, May 25, 2023, <https://www.aivd.nl/documenten/publicaties/2023/05/25/anti-institutioneel-extremisme-in-nederland-een-ernstige-dreiging-voor-de-democratische-rechtsorde>.

⁷⁴ Maarten Keulemans, "Wetenschappers bezorgd over AIVD-rapport: ga juist in gesprek met complotdenkers," *Volkskrant* April 23, 2023, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/wetenschappers-bezorgd-over-aivd-rapport-ga-juist-in-gesprek-met-complotdenkers~bfb3199b/>.

⁷⁵ Parlementaire enquêtecommissie Fraudebeleid en Dienstverlening, *Blind voor mens en recht*, February 26, 2024, <https://ap.1c/XRSIL>.

⁷⁶ Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, *Burgerperspectieven 2023 bericht 1*, April 2023, 9-19, <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2023/04/20/burgerperspectieven-2023-bericht-1>.



within the milieu.⁷⁷ Additionally, a Dutch advisory bureau published an extensive report on the sovereign citizen movement in the Netherlands titled: "Ideological Islands."⁷⁸ This report discusses prevalent strategies and aims to give an overview of the sovereign citizen movement in the Netherlands and what it wants to achieve.

2.4 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has briefly discussed different academic and non-academic views on the sovereign citizen milieu globally and within the Dutch context. Given the extensive diversity within the movement, it is important to acknowledge that some details may have been overlooked, despite attempts to provide comprehensive coverage. With the historiography established, the next chapter will focus on this thesis's theoretical framework.

⁷⁷ Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, *Met de rug naar de samenleving - Een analyse van de soevereinenbeweging in Nederland*, April 9, 2024, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2024/04/09/tk-bijlage-24401640-fenomeenanalyse-soevereinen>.

⁷⁸ Nuance door Training en Advies (NTA), *Ideologische eilanden – de 'soevereinen' en de eigen samenleving*, (June 2023), <https://ntadvies.nl/media/1071/de-soevereinen-en-de-eigen-samenleving.pdf>.

3. Theoretical framework

This thesis is embedded within the theoretical framework of constructive resistance. According to Sørensen, the theory covers: "initiatives in which people start to build the society they desire independently of the dominant structures already in place."⁷⁹ Before discussing constructive resistance, the overarching field of resistance studies needs some elaboration. Ontologically speaking, resistance is an agency-based research area. The study revolves around the potential to challenge existing power structures, requiring emphasis on human agency.

3.1 Broadening the field

The relationship between politics and resistance has always been ambiguous. Its presence is seen as a sign of a healthy political sphere; simultaneously, the controversies it raises can pose a risk to the existing political fabric.⁸⁰ The field of resistance studies has significantly been redrawn in the last decades, broadening its overall scope. Maiguasha, for instance, emphasised the importance of distinguishing between two types of politics: the politics of governance and the politics of resistance. The latter comprises various transnational civil society actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social movements.⁸¹ Subsequent scholarship on resistance has delved into the co-constitutive relationship between power and resistance, exploring how various power characteristics influence the forms of resistance that can prevail.⁸² Additionally, Montesinos, Coleman and Tucker expanded the theoretical debate by arguing that not only power dynamics but also contextual factors, including local discourses and cultural contexts, shape how resistance unfolds.⁸³

3.2 Everyday resistance

Historically, resistance has often been conceptualised as a visible challenge to dominant power structures, for instance, through rebellions and disobedience. James Scott made a fundamental contribution to the study of resistance studies by challenging the idea that resistance always openly challenges power.⁸⁴ He argues that, instead, resistance is often informal, hidden and

⁷⁹ M. J. Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2, no.1 (2016): 49.

⁸⁰ Arianna Bove. "Resistance and Exodus," *Journal for Cultural Research* 25, no.3 (June 2021): 287-300.

⁸¹ Bice, Maiguashca, "Governance and resistance in world politics," *Review of International Studies* 29.S1 (2003): 3-28.

⁸² Mona Lilja & Stellan Vinthagen, "Sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower: resisting what power with what resistance?" *Journal of Political Power* 7, no.1 (2014).

⁸³ Coleman, Lara Montesinos, and Karen Tucker, eds, *Situating global resistance: between discipline and dissent*. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁸⁴ Mikael Baaz et al, "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance": Possible Entrances to the Study of Subversive Practices," *Alternatives: Global Local, Political* 41, no.3 (2016): 139.



non-confrontational. Scott identifies different types of everyday resistance, such as poaching, squatting, desertion, evasion, and foot-dragging.⁸⁵ His ideas inspired other research areas, such as the literature on peacebuilding, highlighting the importance of local, often hidden agency in post-conflict milieus.⁸⁶ While Scott's ideas have revolutionised the field, he is criticised for not recognising unintended resistance. While not all resistance is intended to affect power, it may undermine power relations through its consequences.⁸⁷ Scott's contribution has been pivotal in recognising non-confrontational forms of resistance, such as constructive resistance.

3.3 Constructive resistance

Nonetheless, research has generally leaned towards defining resistance in narrow and negative terms, like "being against" or "saying no."⁸⁸ Critics have argued that this focus overlooks resistance that establishes alternatives. This is where constructive resistance comes into play. It emphasises proactive initiatives that seek to build something new to challenge or replace an undesirable power dynamic. In this context, construction itself becomes a form of resistance.⁸⁹ A concept often used in relation to constructive resistance is "exodus," which describes a mass departure of people from a place. This concept stems from a belief that seeking inclusion in an oppressive system is irrational.⁹⁰

Majken Jul Sørensen is the first to offer a thorough outline and conceptualisation of this field. In his overview, he highlights how two underlying approaches have shaped discussions on constructive resistance. The first is Gandhi's concept of "constructive programme." Renowned for his non-violent struggle against British rule, Gandhi launched a broad campaign to encourage the use of homespun cloth. By refusing to buy imported (British) textiles, it promoted non-cooperation while simultaneously empowering local communities.⁹¹ The second underlying approach is that of prefigurative politics. Rather than declaring a political program, prefiguration focuses on creating alternatives within the existing societal framework, bypassing existing power structures. The approach is commonly linked with anarchism, which has a rich

⁸⁵ J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. (Yale university Press, 1985).

⁸⁶ Oliver Richmond, "Critical agency, resistance and a post-colonial civil society," *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no.4 (2011): 435-336.

⁸⁷ Baaz, Mikael. Lilja, Mona. Schulz, Michael and Vinthage, Stellan. "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance": Possible Entrances to the Study of Subversive Practices." *Alternatives: Global Local, Political* 41, no.3 (2016): 140.

⁸⁸ Mino Koefoed, "Constructive resistance in Northern Kurdistan: Exploring the Peace, Development and resistance nexus," *Journal of Peacebuilding and development* 12, no.3 (2017): 42.

⁸⁹ Lilja, Mona. "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan." *Review of International Studies* 48, no.1 (2022): 149-170.

⁹⁰ Bove, "Resistance and Exodus," 295.

⁹¹ Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 52.



tradition of prefigurative methods. Many anarchist activists abandon the goal of transforming society and instead work to establish niches of autonomy.⁹²

3.4 From the concrete to the symbolic

Inspired by Sørensen's conceptualisations, various scholars have explored the theory of constructive resistance, demonstrating its practical implications. For instance, Koefoed examines how the Kurdish movement in Turkey's Kurdish region has initiated efforts of constructive resistance by establishing semi-illegal institutions from the ground up. Examples include organised Kurdish primary schools and language classes for adults that aim to reduce dependence on oppressive educational systems. In this way, the Kurdish movement demonstrates that change can be directly implemented through constructive acts of resistance, challenging traditional power structures and fostering new societal norms. She illustrates that these initiatives embody an alternative temporality of change, where the envisioned future society is realised through the act of resistance itself. In sum, Koefoed's work highlights how resistance can be productive while undermining undesired power relations.⁹³

While Koefoed focuses on *concrete* constructive initiatives, Lilja explores the broader implications of the theory by examining *symbolic* constructive initiatives, specifically through the #MeToo movement in Japan. Because of cultural sensitivities, #MeToo was transformed into #WithYou in the Japanese context and established as a new "resistance sign." The repetition of this hashtag led to new reiterations, which established new norms. The new "resistance signs" became the seedbed of new resistance configurations, ultimately reinventing Japanese feminism.⁹⁴ Her argument shows that discourses advanced by the #MeToo movement are neither dominant nor clear-cut but developed, mixed or added as they are decoded and forwarded.⁹⁵ The #MeToo movement in Japan, she argues, connected communities and was able to construct an image of an alternative future reality and can therefore be considered as a symbolic constructive initiative.⁹⁶

⁹² Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 54-55.

⁹³ Koefoed, "Constructive resistance in Northern Kurdistan: Exploring the Peace, Development and resistance nexus," 43-50.

⁹⁴ Lilja, "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan," 169-170.

⁹⁵ Lilja, "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan," 151.

⁹⁶ Lilja, "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan," 165.



3.5 Definitional discussions

Remarkably, scholars within the overall field of resistance studies often fail to include a definition of the central subject: resistance. "The term resistance remains loosely defined, allowing some scholars to see it almost everywhere and others almost nowhere," Weitz writes.⁹⁷ Frustrated by the lack of attention to definitions, Hollander and Einwohner have produced the most ambitious overview so far, locating several key disagreements within the literature on resistance studies.⁹⁸ They find that only two features are agreed upon, namely that 1) resistance is an act and 2) that resistance is always oppositional to power. Disagreement within the literature deals with who needs to recognise an act to be categorised as an act of resistance: the actor, the target (power), or the observer (primarily the researcher).⁹⁹

Historically, the study of resistance has mainly focused on subaltern groups resisting (post)-colonial oppression. This has led some scholars to include a normative dimension in their definition. For instance, some scholars propose that resistance is "people fighting back in defence of freedom, democracy and humanity."¹⁰⁰ Here, the resistance naturally acquires a sense of legitimacy, something normatively benign. Others within the field avoid including normative and ideological aims in defining resistance. Baaz even asserts that resistance can be fundamentally antisocial, referring to examples such as misogynistic resistance against gender equality or racist movements.¹⁰¹ Sørensen adopts a similar approach: "No matter how much we might disapprove of their agenda, right-wing extremist and religious fundamentalists are also engaging in constructive resistance." Consequently, he argues that normative criteria should not be applied when establishing an analytical definition of a phenomenon.¹⁰²

In his broad definition of constructive resistance, Sørensen illustrates its diverse forms.¹⁰³ He intentionally omits any reference to institutionalized resistance, leaving room for unorganized acts of constructive resistance. For this thesis, I will adopt the definition he proposes:

⁹⁷ Rose Weitz, "Women and their hair: Seeking power through resistance and accommodation," *Gender & Society* 15, no.5 (2001): 669.

⁹⁸ A. Hollander, R.L. Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance," *Sociological Forum* 19, no. 4 (2004): 534.

⁹⁹ Hollander and Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance."

¹⁰⁰ Paul Routledge, "A Spatiality of Resistances: Theory and Practice in Nepal's Revolution of 1990," in *Geographies of Resistance*, edited by S. Pile and M. Keith (London: Routledge, 1997), 68–86.

¹⁰¹ Baaz et al, "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance": Possible Entrances to the Study of Subversive Practices," 149.

¹⁰² Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 58.

¹⁰³ Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 54.



"Constructive resistance occurs when people start to build the society they desire independently of structures of power. They can act alone, but usually, constructive resistance is carried out by groups. In order to be considered 'constructive resistance,' they necessarily have to be both constructive and provide a form of resistance, but there is a huge variety within both concepts. Resistance can be either an implicit or explicitly outspoken critique of structures of power upholding the status quo. These structures of power can be the state, corporate power or patriarchy, but is not limited to these. The constructive element can be either concrete or symbolic and ranges from initiatives that aim to inspire others to actions that partly replace or lead to the collapse of the dominant way of behaving and thinking. Constructive resistance does not exclude conventional forms for protests, boycotts and civil disobedience, but focuses on creating, building, carrying out and experimenting with what is considered desirable."¹⁰⁴

Constructive resistance thus requires both resistance and construction. Because the analysis considers both elements individually, I will provide separate definitions for the two central concepts. Considering the discussed nuances, I define resistance as:

An expression of an individual or group aimed at opposing or undermining a dominant power, system or authority that is perceived as oppressive, illegitimate and therefore undesirable by the resisting party.

The definition suggested does not necessarily pertain to a "just cause" but does include the perception of power as oppressive and/or illegitimate as a requirement for constructive resistance to emerge. Additionally, it requires a sense of intentionality by the resisting party.

Next, as previously discussed, resistance is often associated with sudden explosions of violence and destruction. New insights have brought attention to forms of resistance that can be productive; resistance can also build instead of tearing down.¹⁰⁵ In this vein, construction is defined as:

¹⁰⁴ Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 57.

¹⁰⁵ Baaz et al, "Defining and analyzing "Resistance": Possible Entrances to the Study of Subversive Practices," *Alternative Global Local, Political* 41, no.3 (2016): 139.



A process of creating and building structures that can inspire others or act as either a (partial) supplement or replacement for a dominant power, system, authority or way of behaving. This can take both concrete and symbolic forms, such as by creating alternative institutions and organisations or producing knowledge and language.



4. Methodology

4.1 Source overview and data collection

To answer the research question qualitative research has been conducted. Due to the lack of empirical academic articles in the Dutch context, I was challenged to collect my own primary sources from various online platforms. First, I examined websites of "groups" within the sovereign citizen milieu, which provided insights through blogs, videos and the occasional manifest. Second, I explored social media, focusing on Telegram, Facebook, and YouTube. This is relevant, given the prominence of digital communication within the milieu. On Facebook, I found groups advocating sovereigntist ideas, while YouTube provided videos of individuals involved in the milieu sharing their ideas. Lastly, I joined twelve (publicly available) group chats on Telegram. In large chatrooms, some with thousands of members, people share their thoughts and engage in discussions. Using the "snowballing technique,"¹⁰⁶ I was able to find a diverse range of groups associated with the sovereign milieu. Additionally, several Dutch news outlets have addressed the milieu, sometimes featuring interviews with individuals in the milieu, which serve as valuable secondary sources for this research.

Furthermore, I planned to conduct participant observations and interviews as a primary research method. However, most individuals approached were not eager to talk. Nevertheless, two organisers of lectures on sovereign ideas kindly allowed me to attend their events and conduct participant observation. While this was less than anticipated, it offered valuable insights into the milieu.

Lastly, interviews were conducted with several experts: a civil servant from the municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân, a researcher at the National Training Institute for Countering Radicalisation, employees at the NCTV¹⁰⁷, a researcher from the research bureau NTA, and Jelle van Buuren, an academic specialising in anti-institutionalism. These interviews helped interpret expressions and contextualise data.

4.2 Selection process

Studying this phenomenon is challenging, as there is no defined structure or hierarchy and not one overarching manifest or book in existence. Also, within the milieu and online, people

¹⁰⁶ The initial groups I found often featured references to other related groups.

¹⁰⁷ The NCTV (National coordinator for counterterrorism and security) is responsible for coordination in the areas of counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, national security and crisis management.



discuss (and sometimes argue) over what is "the right way." Additionally, this milieu often overlaps with right-wing organisations and spiritual communities.¹⁰⁸ The enormous variety makes categorisation challenging.

In selecting sources, the primary criterion was that accounts or groups needed to clearly communicate the perceived illegitimacy of Dutch state institutions. Since this viewpoint extends beyond the sovereign milieu, references to the legal construct of the "strawman,"¹⁰⁹ a distinctive feature of sovereign citizens, were also sought.¹¹⁰ I looked for groups that identify as sovereign citizens or autonomous individuals.¹¹¹ However, I also included those who, although not using these terms,¹¹² clearly referenced the strawman concept. It was assumed that expressions meeting these criteria would sufficiently represent the sovereign citizen milieu.

4.3 Analysis of the data

The data primarily consisted of spoken and written text. Therefore, I will study the data using discourse analysis. The goal of discourse analysis is to interpret a text by examining the values, norms, ideologies, and other contextual factors embedded within it.¹¹³ Using the two theoretical concepts of resistance and construction as reference points, I systematically coded the sources to identify underlying patterns and built a database of relevant data. This was a dialectic process, as theoretical concepts guided data collection while the collected data informed and refined the theoretical framework. Clear patterns of constructive resistance initiatives surfaced within the yielded data. In particular, the economic and discursive initiatives were most prominent. This subsequently guided the focus toward specific sub-questions.

4.3.1 Operationalizing "resistance" and "construction"

Constructive resistance requires both resistance and construction. To analyse this within the collected data, I examine both elements separately. For the resistance element, I evaluate how the dominant system is challenged and perceived as undesirable. For the construction element, I assess initiatives aimed at creating alternative structures, either concretely or symbolically. Since my definition of resistance includes intentionality on the part of the resisting party, I will

¹⁰⁸ Jelle van Buuren, "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.1 (March 2023): 91-92.

¹⁰⁹ For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the background chapter.

¹¹⁰ The introduction highlights the employed definition for the sovereign citizen milieu.

¹¹¹ The news media frequently differentiated between sovereign and autonomous individuals. However, distinction criteria are very vague, also within the milieu itself. Some people I talked to told me that there was a difference, while others told me it was all the same. For consistency, I will refer to sovereign citizens.

¹¹² Some rejected the term sovereign citizen and preferred labels such as "free humans," "living heirs," et cetera.

¹¹³ Stephanie Taylor, *What is discourse analysis?* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).



look for indicators of intent (to supplement or undermine a dominant system) within the provided reasons. Constructive resistance aims to transform an undesirable situation into a desirable one. To determine what this ideal situation might be, I will analyse both what the resistance is challenging and the goals the construction strives to achieve.

As argued throughout this thesis, resistance precedes construction. Without resistance, there would be no incentive for construction. Simultaneously, within constructive resistance, the construction is a specific expression of resistance. Therefore to qualify as constructive resistance, there must be explicit expressions of resistance to perceived oppression by a power structure, and related to that, there must be constructive initiatives to change this.

4.4 Critical reflection on sources

Critically reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of used sources is crucial. First, online research is not always straightforward to interpret. While most people on Telegram engaged in polite discussions, some made hateful or demeaning comments, and in one case, I witnessed doxing.¹¹⁴ Such interactions can complicate the process of gathering information. Another factor limiting the scope of the sources was the reluctance of people from the milieu to talk to me. I approached dozens of individuals and organisations, who either ignored messages or ghosted me after initial contact, limiting my real-life sources to two gatherings. Next, some experts I interviewed are employed by national or local governments and might primarily view this phenomenon through a security lens or as a potential threat. This perspective may have constrained other valuable viewpoints. Finally, despite efforts to justify content inclusion and exclusion, the diffuse nature of the topic made precise categorisation difficult.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Online data gathering raises important ethical questions about privacy and informed consent.¹¹⁵ The primary ethical standard I follow is to do no harm, ensuring that my research does not negatively impact participants.¹¹⁶ While Facebook, YouTube and websites are entirely public, Telegram groups must be actively joined. Nevertheless, they are (easily) accessible, and people participating can reasonably expect their expressions to be visible to external parties. However, I avoided including identifiable information such as usernames. Additionally, I opted to refrain

¹¹⁴ "The action of finding or publishing private information about someone on the internet without their permission, especially in a way that reveals their name, address, etc" Cambridge Dictionary, Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/doxing#>.

¹¹⁵ Jennifer Mason, "Ethics" in *Qualitative Researching* (London: Sage Publications, 2018), 96-100.

¹¹⁶ Katherine C. MacKinnon, "Do No Harm," in *Anthropological Ethics in Context*. (Routledge, 2017), 75-90.



from participating online to avoid interfering with the discussion. I reference channel names for posts on Facebook and YouTube, as these are public.

At the two gatherings I attended, I informed the organisers of my research and identified myself as a researcher. For the first gathering, I provided an informed consent form. While this was not a problem initially, later, I was notified that the organisers wanted to make some changes to the document. After the gathering, I was sent an adjusted version to sign. To the untrained eyes (of myself), it looked much like an encoded text, full of capitals and brackets, but according to my contact person, this was the only correct way to draw up a contract. The altered form also explicitly stated that the Dutch judicial system was fictitious. As a student at a Dutch university, I could not sign this modified form, so we agreed to anonymise the data instead. To ensure empirical validity, I shared my notes with lecture organisers and interviewed experts for verification, and anonymised the interviews when requested.

4.6 Reflection on own position

As a researcher, it is important to reflect on your own position, as different roles and positions can influence your writing. These will be discussed in this section. First, during most of the research period, I interned at the municipality of Utrecht. So, while studying a milieu with fundamental hostile attitudes towards authorities, I was myself involved in a governmental institution. While seemingly contradictory, the informants I approached did not seem to mind. Furthermore, the network I developed during my internship enabled me to arrange valuable expert interviews.

Next, the sovereign citizen milieu is often labelled as (anti-institutional) extremism. While I acknowledge the existence of extremist tensions, I am hesitant to label the entire milieu in the Netherlands as extremist. This term carries negative connotations, potentially criminalising and framing it solely as a security issue. While legitimate in some instances, this lens risks overlooking other important dynamics and may oversimplify a complex societal phenomenon. Additionally, in popular debate, terms like "wappie" or "crazy" are often used to describe this milieu. After spending time within the milieu and gaining a better understanding of their perspectives and motives, I found these descriptions increasingly averse. From my perspective, terms like these only have a polarising effect.



Lastly, while I have made every effort to approach the data without bias, this is, of course, not entirely within my reach; there are always certain conscious or unconscious perceptions that play a role in the background. For instance, I experienced some frustration when my contacts requested changes to the informed consent form, perceiving it as unnecessary fuss over what I considered a routine procedure. Later, I realised that this was a manifestation of two conflicting realities.



5.0 Analysis: Constructive resistance in the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands

The following analytical chapters will consider two constructive initiatives that appeared most prominent in the yielded data: economic and discursive constructive resistance. These also highlight the diverse implications of constructive resistance, emphasising both the concrete and symbolic dimensions. The first two analytical chapters will focus on the specific alternatives within these areas. The last analytical chapter will focus on what these combined constructive initiatives can tell about a desired future within the sovereign citizen milieu.

5. Constructive resistance to the economic system

Subquestion 1: Why do Dutch sovereign citizens resist financial institutions, and how does this resistance take form in the construction of alternative structures and practices related to the economic system?

As the theoretical section has explained, constructive resistance begins with the perception that a particular power relation is oppressive and undesirable. In reaction to this, an alternative is constructed. Therefore, in the case of constructive resistance, the perception of oppression must lead to activities or initiatives aimed at circumvention or (partial) replacement of the undesirable power relation.

The chapter will show that the sovereign citizen milieu is focused on the economic infrastructure and on establishing economic alternatives. First, the primary data showed the reasons for resistance to the economic system around specific themes; these will be discussed in this section. Next, I will assess constructive initiatives to build an alternative economic structure.

5.1 Resistance to the economic system

5.1.1 All-powerful state that wants total control

First and foremost, the financial systems and institutions are viewed as incredibly powerful. These perceptions are situated within the overarching idea that the governmental incitement to



use digital money is aimed at gaining total control over individuals.¹¹⁷ For example, a YouTuber warns his audience that the digital economic infrastructure is an essential instrument for gaining control over the population.¹¹⁸ Additionally, the idea persists that the government can take money from your bank account without permission. This propagates the notion that every digital financial transaction can and will be tracked, monitored, and recorded in a manner reminiscent of an Orwellian dystopia. As a video on a sovereign website explains: "It is only about gaining that last bit of power from citizens: access to their bank accounts."¹¹⁹ The government is thus viewed as complicit in a larger scheme and is highly distrusted.

Additionally, some argue that the government profits from the legal construction of the "strawman." Allegedly, the government has opened a trust fund for every person, trading it on the stock market, with the trust amounting to between 1,5 and 2 million euros per person. Simultaneously others within the milieu refute this claim.¹²⁰

5.1.2 Fragile Digital Infrastructure

The suspicion surrounding the digital financial infrastructure is heightened by the perception that the banking system is highly fragile,¹²¹ even up to the point of near collapse. Frequently, I saw predictions for the end of the system as we know it, such as this one on Telegram: "The central banking system is on the verge of collapse .. billionaires are already buying islands and building bunkers."¹²² The exact reasons for this anticipated catastrophic scenario often remain unspecified. In a video on a sovereign website, someone explains how the monoculture of using a single currency is causing its instability.¹²³

¹¹⁷ See for instance: Ik word autonoom, Facebook, January 24, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/hJhW4qCXeUgmtw8j/>.

¹¹⁸ The Butterfly Tribe, "You Need to Prepare Now!" YouTube. May 30, 2024, video, 4:40, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pvFEB-2A3I&t=2s> [0:40].

¹¹⁹ "Geldschepping en Rente, Banken, Hun Eigenaren, Jouw Vrijheid – Een korte documentaire," Vrije Kees, accessed March 5, 2024, <https://vrijekees.nl/vlogs-docus/>.

¹²⁰ See fe: "Informatie: wat is een trust?" Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>. ; "De individuele Cestui Que Vie geboorte Trust1) nalatenschap is een testamentair erfrechtelijk gegeven," Hetbewustepad, accessed April 3 2024, <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/geboorte-trust/>.

¹²¹ See fe: "De feiten van de structurele financiële instabiliteit," De Levende Gemeenschap, accessed April 2, 2024, <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/2023/03/29/waarom-een-alternatieve-munt-een-meerwaarde-is/>.

¹²² Anonymous, Telegram Post, March 22, 2024.

¹²³ PopTech, "Bernard Lietaer: Money Diversity," De Levende Gemeenschap. May 29, 2023, video, 23:38, <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/2023/03/29/waarom-een-alternatieve-munt-een-meerwaarde-is/> [8:20].



Notably, the elites are aware of the system's fragility; in fact, they orchestrated it. Despite this, they intentionally keep ordinary people uninformed.¹²⁴ This distrust is echoed elsewhere. One website, frequently mentioned in sovereign citizen blogs, claims to have gathered evidence suggesting that the government has been committing large-scale financial fraud for years.¹²⁵

5.1.3 Interest on loans

Furthermore, sovereign citizens strongly oppose the concept of interest on loans, arguing that bank loans consist of money created out of thin air. This leads to the belief that people are forced to pay large sums of their hard-earned money (interest) to a fictional construct. Consequently, some view paying interest as part of an oppressive financial infrastructure.¹²⁶ In a simplified history lesson on interest by Henk vdf Fransen, a self-declared sovereign citizen, asserts that:

"Power decided that only Banker could print money and no one else. Then Banker lent money to man. Man had to pay interest in return. That was actually quite strange, because that way Banker got Money over something he had simply created out of thin air. So, interest was actually very unfair. Power and Banker became rich because of it, and Man had to work for it."¹²⁷

Their perspective on interest underscores a broader perception of the current economic system as fundamentally unjust and exploitative.¹²⁸ All in all, the monetary systems are perceived as oppressive, unstable and illegitimate institutions: "The way our financial system is designed is a tremendous threat to our freedom," a sovereign blog concludes.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ See fe: Anonymous, Telegram Post, April 5, 2024 ; "Geldschepping en Rente, Banken, Hun Eigenaren, Jouw Vrijheid – Een korte documentaire," Vrije Kees.

¹²⁵ "Boekhoudfraude gemeenten en provincies," Leo Verhoef, accessed March 26, 2024, <https://leoverhoef.nl/index.html>. This website was mentioned for instance in this video "Workshop part 1: Introduction Free Humans," WellStandingMen, accessed June 3, 2024, video, 55:43, <https://www.wellstandingmen.com/voorbereiding/>. And this blog: "Van de verloren naar de herwonnen vrijheid," Veilig en Vrij, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2024/02/19/van-de-verloren-naar-de-herwonnen-vrijheid/>.

¹²⁶ See fe: Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024); Anonymous, Telegram Post, June 2, 2024; Ad Broere, "Ad Broere en de parallele economie," YouTube. March 15, 2021, video, 13:13, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QifFw_17CP0&t=619s ; In this blog, the videocreater advocated for the sovereign idea of the separation between human and strawman: "Nieuwsbrief Ad Broere over de mens – natuurlijk persoon juni 2022," Vrije Kees, accessed April 10, 2024, <https://vrijekees.nl/uncategorized/nieuwsbrief-ad-broere-over-de-mens-natuurlijk-persoon-juni-2022/>.

¹²⁷ Henk vdf Fransen, *De overheid heeft niks over mij te zeggen -Tenzij ik daar in alle vrijheid mee instem* (Arnhem, 2023), 7.

¹²⁸ See fe : "Hoe vind je het dat de banken buitensporig en immoreel veel geld verdienen over jouw rug?" WellStandingMen, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://www.wellstandingmen.com/intro/>.

¹²⁹ "Geldschepping en Rente, Banken, Hun Eigenaren, Jouw Vrijheid – Een korte documentaire," Vrije Kees.



5.1.4 Expert interviews

The expert interviews confirmed the patterns emerging from the data. Van Buuren confirmed the significant suspicion of big tech and digital money. He underscored frequent references to the technological control that is seen to take place. According to him, it is perceived as living in a surveillance society, comparable to the Social Credit System in China.¹³⁰

Moreover, a researcher for NTA underscored the idea of an all-powerful state and argued that it paradoxically reflects a significant trust in the competency of institutional power. This is because the milieu does not see incompetence, no, they see unwillingness; problems are intentionally caused by bad policies. On top of this, the elites can hide their secret agenda and deliberately deceive the population.¹³¹

5.2 Constructive alternatives to economic systems.

"Money is the first and most important step in breaking free from the system"¹³² As a YouTube commentator in a video titled: "The Parallel Economy" remarked. To find a way to circumvent the undesirable economic system, some within the sovereign citizen milieu look to alternatives.

5.2.1 Use of cash

One approach to circumventing digital financial infrastructure is reverting to the pre-digital era. Some ask for payments in precious metals such as silver,¹³³ but mostly, there is an emphasis on using cash. Paying with physical money would protect individuals from financial instability and digital threats, but most importantly, it should protect people from the perceived totalitarian control of those in power. After all, the elites can monitor your digital transactions but cannot track how you use cash. Several Facebook groups, the Soevereine Staat Eurostaete¹³⁴, Ik word autonoom¹³⁵ and platforms such as handjecontantje.org¹³⁶ and Het Bewuste Pad¹³⁷ promote the use of cash as an alternative to dominant digital practices. Often, cash is promoted as: "the only

¹³⁰ Jelle van Buuren, expert interview, May 31, 2024.

¹³¹ Researcher at NTA, expert interview, May 8, 2024.

¹³² Broere, "Ad Broere en de parallele economie."

¹³³ Fe: Anonymous, Telegram Post, April 24, 2024; Anonymous, Telegram Post, May 8, 2024.

¹³⁴ See fe: Soevereine Staat Eurostaete, Facebook, July 9, 2024,

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/NHs36N3F5nVPRny9/>. ; Soevereine Staat Eurostaete, Facebook, June 30, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/zcxsk7qvR1jyy5JZ/>. Soevereine Staat Eurostaete, Facebook, March 1, 2024.

¹³⁵ See fe: Ik word autonoom, Facebook, November 23, 2023,

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/NHs36N3F5nVPRny9/>. ; Ik word autonoom, Facebook, February 16, 2024,

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/NHs36N3F5nVPRny9/>.

¹³⁶ This website was mentioned in a lecture: Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024)

¹³⁷ "Contant geld verdwijnt niet zomaar," Hetbewustepad, accessed April 3 2024,

<https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/rechten-van-de-mens/contant-geld-verdwijnt-niet-zomaar/>.

legal tender ... to stop the stop digitalisation and a totalitarian surveillance state."¹³⁸ A lecturer at a gathering also emphasised the use of cash: "For us, it is essential that we pay by cash instead of digital money"¹³⁹ The use of cash is moreover explicitly phrased as an act of resistance: "When we pay in cash now, it feels as silent resistance against Big Brother ... In a world where electronic transactions are becoming the norm, the use of cash feels like an act of resistance."¹⁴⁰

5.2.2 Introduction of new currencies

While using cash might circumvent a dominant way of behaving, it is not a new practice. More creative constructive initiatives are the introduction of new currencies. A video argues that establishing a parallel economy is essential to resist the World Economic Forum's (WEF) agenda,¹⁴¹ emphasising the importance of adopting an alternative currency.¹⁴² Several monetary initiatives are related to the sovereign citizen milieu. For instance, the self-declared sovereign state of "Wonderland" has its own currency, the Euromark and another platform promotes a natural law coin.¹⁴³ There are also more local initiatives in rotation, such as the Fryske Euro in Friesland.¹⁴⁴ The most frequently mentioned alternative currency on sovereign citizen platforms is, however, the Florin [Florijn]. The initiative started in 2021 with 1000 account holders and grew in November 2023 to 3000 account holders and 500 connected companies.¹⁴⁵ Via a search engine on their website, one can find local enterprises connected to the platform. The Florin presents an alternative currency to instigate an alternative interest-free economic structure. The interest-free character of the Florin is vigorously promoted: "Florins continue to circulate within the network, while euros disappear to the banks in the form of interest."¹⁴⁶

Interestingly, Florins can be bought through regular digital payment and can be credited to your account. However, there are also physical coins and notes in circulation.¹⁴⁷ The goal of the

¹³⁸ Soevereine Staat Eurostaete, Facebook, March 11, 2024.

¹³⁹ Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024)

¹⁴⁰ Ik word autonoom, Facebook, February 16, 2024,

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/XqmZoutwU4AhmoL2/>.

¹⁴¹ The WEF is an annual meeting of the CEOs of the world's largest companies, international politicians, intellectuals and journalists. A conspiracy narrative surrounding this event argues that the global elite is busy pushing its ultra-left ideas through total world domination. See fe: Peter Giesen, " 'Samenzwering in de Alpen': hoe de Great Reset een mondiale complottheorie over werelddominantie werd," *de Volkskrant*, January 16, 2023, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/samenzwering-in-de-alpen-hoe-de-great-reset-een-mondiale-complottheorie-over-werelddominantie-werd~b5ff2af5/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

¹⁴² Ad Broere, *de paralelle economie*.

¹⁴³ "Ons privaat sociaal platform," de Levende Gemeenschap, accessed May 15, 2024, <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/privaat-platform-coin/>.

¹⁴⁴ "De Fryske Euro," accessed May 13, 2024, <https://defryskeeuro.nl>.

¹⁴⁵ deparallesamenleving, Instagram, January 11, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CnRKB0UjOlh/>.

¹⁴⁶ "Wat is de florijn?" Florijn, accessed March 1, 2024, <https://betalenmetflorijn.nl/wat-is-florijn/>.

¹⁴⁷ "Contanten opnemen," Florijn, accessed June 15, 2024, <https://betalenmetflorijn.nl/contanten-opnemen/>.



Florin is to generate an extra currency flow complementary to the euro.¹⁴⁸ There are also seminar platforms related to the sovereign milieu that accept the Florin as payment.¹⁴⁹ In a demonstration video, a fish seller who joined the platform remarks: "The Florin unites like-minded people. It is beautiful, and when you spend the money together, you get your own economy, so to speak."¹⁵⁰

5.2.3 Expert-interviews

The expert interviews largely confirmed the findings in the data. Many mentioned the promotion of cash to circumvent perceived digital surveillance,¹⁵¹ and several experts specifically mentioned the Florin as an effort to set up an alternative monetary system.¹⁵² A local government expert elaborated that individuals offering services on the Florin Platform are failing to pay taxes on their earnings, which constitutes illegal tax evasion.¹⁵³ Lastly, while the data showed these patterns on sovereign websites and platforms, the experts added that constructive initiatives regarding financial institutions are also visible within the larger anti-institutionalist milieu. This highlights the interconnectedness of milieus.¹⁵⁴

5.3 Analysis

The incitement to use cash and the Florin platform within the milieu fit the framework of constructive resistance. It is not just any constructive alternative but an alternative to a dominant way of doing something considered oppressive and illegitimate.¹⁵⁵ Netolitzky highlights how the perceived fragility of the economic system seen in the data is also present in international contexts.¹⁵⁶ In addition, perceived loss of privacy and aversion to interest drive people to create their own alternatives in the Netherlands. Most importantly, the idea that economic institutions are tools for illegitimate control is a significant motivating factor.

¹⁴⁸ Florijn, "Wat is de florijn?"

¹⁴⁹ Fe: "Vrije Mens in Wording," Vrijstaat Wonderland, accessed April 12, 2024, <https://www.vrijmenseninwording.nl/info/doe-mee>.

¹⁵⁰ "IJmuider Vishandel," Betalen met Florijnen, accessed March 3, 2024, video, 5:01, <https://betalenmetflorijn.nl> [2:20].

¹⁵¹ Researcher at NTA, expert interview. ; Researcher at the National Training Institute for Countering Radicalisation, expert interview, April 10, 2024.

¹⁵² Researcher at NTA, expert interview. ; Jelle van Buuren, expert interview. ; civil servant at the municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân, expert interview, May 7, 2024.

¹⁵³ civil servant at the municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân, expert interview.

¹⁵⁴ Researcher at NTA, expert interview. NCTV, expert interview, May 3, 2024.

¹⁵⁵ M.J Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2, no.1 (2016): 56.

¹⁵⁶ J Donald Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," *Alberta Law Review* 55 no.4 (2018): 1082.



The motivations for constructive initiatives within the sovereign citizen milieu illustrate a profound scepticism towards economic institutions and the government's perceived role in economic regulation, portraying them as instruments of control and oppression. It is argued that the elite instrumentalises economic institutions to gain totalitarian control over the population. Suspicion concerning economic systems is also seen in the international context. Berger, for instance, elaborates on various financial conspiracies related to sovereign citizens in the United States.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, Kalinowski highlights how the idea of hidden funds that authorities hide from citizens is also present in the American context.¹⁵⁸ From this, clear parallels can be drawn to the Dutch context, where ideas of a hidden trust fund are also prevalent.

The promotion of cash specifically addresses concerns about perceived fragility and a loss of privacy, as cash transactions provide an additional layer of confidentiality. Similarly, the Florin platform appears to be specifically designed to bypass what is seen as illegitimate interest payments. It serves as a constructive alternative to a system considered undesirable,¹⁵⁹ reflecting resistance to the concept of interest within the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands.¹⁶⁰ While the broader literature acknowledged a preference for payments in silver and gold,¹⁶¹ it did not include references to similar interest-free currencies or the advancement of using cash. The findings, therefore, might illustrate a new aspect specific to the Dutch sovereign citizen context.

Ultimately, economic institutions are perceived as another way the elite suppress and control individuals. Creating and promoting alternative methods aims to circumvent undesired power dynamics.¹⁶² The data often reveals explicit construction objectives that indicate intentionality to undermine and bypass undesirable power structures.¹⁶³ As illustrated by a lecturer at a gathering: "By continuing to use financial systems, we maintain them and pay for our own

¹⁵⁷ J.M. Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe," Washington, DC: Program on Extremism at George Washington University (2016): 8-10.

¹⁵⁸ Kalinowski, Caesar "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement." *Montana Law Review* 80, no. 2 (2019): 166, 183.

¹⁵⁹ Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 56

¹⁶⁰ Minoo Koefoed, "Constructive resistance in Northern Kurdistan: Exploring the Peace, Development and resistance nexus," *Journal of Peacebuilding and development* 12, no.3 (2017): 42.

¹⁶¹ Christine M. Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*. (Pittsburgh: Springer, 2020), 15.

Donald J. Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," 1064.

¹⁶² M.J Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 73.

¹⁶³ Koefoed, "Constructive resistance in Northern Kurdistan: Exploring the Peace, Development and resistance nexus," 42-43.



slavery to the system."¹⁶⁴ In sum, this chapter has demonstrated several economic initiatives that aim to undermine the dominant practices associated with established economic systems.

As the experts suggested, the focus on economic oppression and connected alternatives is also present in overlapping milieus. This highlights how the different milieus are closely connected, something scholars such as Juling and Jackson also notice in the international context.¹⁶⁵ While these initiatives are thus not exclusive to the sovereign citizen milieu, they were prominently present in the data. They can, therefore, provide relevant and valuable insights into the dynamics within this milieu.

¹⁶⁴ Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom." (Anonymous lecture April, 2024).

¹⁶⁵ Sam Jackson, "What is Anti-Government Extremism?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6. (December 2022): 9-11.; Dominik Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" *Illiberalism Studies Program Working Papers* 16, no.1 (March 2023): 8-9.



6. Constructive resistance to discursive systems

Subquestion 2: *Why do Dutch sovereign citizens resist established discursive structures, and how does this resistance take form in the construction of alternative discursive structures?*

While constructive initiatives can take physical forms, such as introducing an alternative currency, they can also manifest symbolically. For this, we turn to the domain of language. Several discursive alternatives exist specifically within the sovereign citizen milieu, and these will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter will show that the formation of alternative discursive structures within the sovereign citizen milieu can be viewed through the lens of constructive resistance. Different alternative discursive formations that appeared prominently in the generated data will be examined. Like the previous analytical chapter, I will first elaborate on the rationale behind this resistance, followed by a discussion on the constructive alternatives.

6.1 Resistance to discursive structures

6.1.1 *A hidden reality*

The notion that language serves as a vehicle for oppression is pervasive within the sovereign citizen milieu. The idea is that those in power employ suggestive or "coloured" language to coerce individuals into conforming to specific societal moulds. This perceived linguistic oppression creates a reality that "they" -the elite- want people to accept and internalise. A sovereign blog articulates this perspective:

"We are being tricked, deceived, misled. This whole game is even older than the road to Rome, and has existed since the origins of our language .. You are being deliberately misled, they know there is a better way but don't want you to find out what's really going on."¹⁶⁶

This statement highlights the belief in language as a long-standing manipulation strategy used to obscure the truth and maintain control. In an interview by Pointer,¹⁶⁷ a prominent figure in

¹⁶⁶ "Rechtspraak als verborgen handel," Veilig en Vrij, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2021/12/31/rechtspraak-als-verborgen-handel/>.

¹⁶⁷ A Dutch platform for research journalism.



the sovereign citizen movement displayed a letter she had sent to the authorities. In it, she declared her intention to stop paying taxes, citing the government's lack of transparency and the use of deceptive language as her reasons.¹⁶⁸ It illustrates a perspective that language is being wielded as a tool of manipulation and control.

6.1.2 *Breaking through deception*

The sovereign citizen milieu is characterised by the attempted "unveiling" of this masked language. It is commonplace to see etymological explanations aiming to reveal the true meaning of words used by those in power. One recurring theme traces the etymology of the word "person," which was explained at an attended gathering. This word originates from the Latin word "per sonare," meaning "to resonate through." The word originally referred to the use of masks by players in theatrical performances. The argument goes that, much like in ancient plays, your "strawman" is merely a mask for your true human self.¹⁶⁹

There are many more examples of this language play. Sometimes, a word is broken up into pieces, assumingly revealing its true nature. For instance, the word "information" [informatie] is explained as actually meaning "in-formation" [in-formatie],¹⁷⁰ referring to a supposed lineup in accordance with institutional wishes. Likewise, "Television" is broken down into "Tell-A-Vision." This breakdown suggests that television serves to "tell a vision" or convey a predetermined narrative crafted by those in power, suggesting that it is part of a broader strategy to influence and manipulate the masses.¹⁷¹ Another frequently cited explanation involves the Dutch word "aangifte." This word can refer to either a child's registration at the municipality or the submission of your annual taxes. Sovereign citizens argue that the word "gift" in "aangifte" refers to a bestowal, something you can willingly choose to give or withhold. A post, therefore, argues that "aangifte" implies a request rather than an obligation.¹⁷² Similarly, a video posted on a sovereign website explains that: "When the police say: do you understand? ... What

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Mulder, "De Autonome Droom," Pointer, October 23, 2023, video, 15:56, <https://pointer.kro-ncrv.nl/de-autonome-droom> [7:55]

¹⁶⁹ Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024).

¹⁷⁰ Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024); Participant observation, "Being Sovereign" (Anonymous lecture February, 2024).

¹⁷¹ Alexander Dekker, "Hoe vanuit Brunssum personen tot autonomen worden gemaakt," *LI nieuws*, September 5, 2023, <https://www.l1nieuws.nl/nieuws/2272185/hoevanuit-brunssum-personen-tot-autonomen-worden-gemaakt>.

¹⁷² See fe: "Informatie: leuke fiscale benamingen waar je heel anders over gaat nadenken," Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>; Anonymous, Telegram Post, May 8, 2024.



they are really saying is: 'Do you stand under our authority?' "¹⁷³ This interpretation reflects the notion of the milieu that language is used to subtly enforce compliance and subordination.

6.1.3 Expert interviews

Interviewed experts confirmed that words carry a lot of meaning within the milieu. For instance, a researcher mentioned that the idea that words have power is often taken quite literally.¹⁷⁴ Additionally, experts confirmed the focus on language as a tool of deception, which can be unveiled. Van Buuren, for example, asserted that he saw a tendency to break down words in an attempt to reveal their "true meaning."¹⁷⁵ Lastly, one expert noted a particular sensitivity regarding language in interactions with members of the sovereign citizen milieu. She explained that if she talked to someone and accidentally said "citizen" instead of "human," it could trigger considerable frustration. It underscores the significance that language holds for the milieu.¹⁷⁶

6.2 Construction of alternative discursive structures

Having identified language as a component of undesirable power dynamics, we now examine the development of alternative discursive structures. The use of so-called "correct" language is often associated with freeing one's human self from one's strawman. Sovereign citizens have several ideas on what this alternative language should look like.

6.2.1 Specific writing of names

Firstly, there is significant commotion within the sovereign citizen milieu regarding the specific writing of names. When citizens receive official communication from government authorities, their first and last names are often written in all capital letters. For example, a letter might be addressed to ANNA JANSEN. A manual on "the notation of names" found on a sovereign citizen website explains how this format addresses not the human but the fictional legal entity of the strawman.¹⁷⁷ To address the human, one must use the name given at birth in its original form, which in this case would be "Anna." Many sovereign citizens argue that to truly identify with their human self, they should introduce themselves using only their first name. Using only your first name curiously applies only to speech; other rules might apply in written texts.¹⁷⁸ At an attended gathering, an organiser asserted that: "The name you received at birth is your correct

¹⁷³ Infomatic Films, "Meet your strawmen," Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed February 28 2024), video, 5:01, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/> [1:15].

¹⁷⁴ Researcher at NTA, expert interview.

¹⁷⁵ Jelle van Buuren, expert interview.

¹⁷⁶ Civil servant at the municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân, expert interview.

¹⁷⁷ "Schrijfwijze namen," Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/erfrechtelijke-documenten/>.

¹⁷⁸ Fe: "Schrijfwijze na(a)m(en)," accessed April 3, 2024, <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/schrijfwijze-naamen/>. ; Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024).



name .. Your last name (family name) is made into a 'name' (see, e.g. passport), is connected to your strawman and is, therefore, incorrect"¹⁷⁹ In this context, the strawman refers to the legal entity the government uses to control individuals. By rejecting the use of their last names or the all-caps format, sovereign citizens aim to reclaim their personal autonomy and reject what they perceive as the state's illegitimate authority over their lives.

Another discursive alternative specific to the Dutch milieu is the use of "from the family" [Van de familie, abbreviated: vdf]. This addition is inserted between the first and last names in written documents. The use of "vdf" is a common denominator of the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands. For example "Anna Jansen" would be written as "Anna vdf Jansen." The inclusion of "vdf" is intended to indicate that the individual does not identify with the strawman, the legal entity that sovereign citizens believe the state uses to control and oppress individuals.¹⁸⁰ A description on a sovereign citizen website further clarifies this practice: "Names in lower case with "vdf" and all notation variants refer to the Sole Heir. [Enige Erfgenaam]." Here, the term Sole Heir refers to the human being.

6.2.2 *An alternative dialect*

Some within the sovereign citizen milieu take their linguistic modifications even further by adopting their own dialect, known as "in the truth" or sometimes "syntax grammar."¹⁸¹ This dialect is based on the ideas of the American David Wynn Miller, who claimed that his approach to language was mathematical and that he had deciphered the "code" of language. According to Miller, it eliminates the need for context to understand a sentence's meaning. Miller's dialect is characterised by an overuse of prepositional phrases, hyphens, and colons. Although Miller has passed away, his methods continue to be used by other sovereign citizens, also in the Netherlands.¹⁸² Messages on Telegram acknowledge the influence of Miller:

"When I was doing research years ago, I came across videos of a remarkable man named DAVID-WYNN: MILLER. He developed a system for the English language in 1988, but this turned out not to be applicable to Dutch. After a lot of etymological research

¹⁷⁹ Participant observation, "Being Sovereign" (Anonymous lecture February, 2024).

¹⁸⁰ Hetbewustepad, "Schrijfwijze na(a)m(en)."

¹⁸¹ See fe: "Level 1," WellStandingMen, November 30, 2022, <https://www.wellstandingmen.com/blog/>; "Symbolen," Veilig en Vrij, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2023/02/20/symbolen/>.

¹⁸² Christine M. Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 60, (2021): 3.



and adjustment, we have developed a viable fact language for the Dutch language .. by using language correctly, we avoid deception and can see reality clearly."¹⁸³

The core idea behind this dialect is that traditional elements of language, such as verbs, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs, introduce unnecessary nuance and ambiguity. Instead, the dialect aims to reduce language to its "true meaning," akin to a linear equation without risks of misinterpretation. However, this specialised dialect is reserved for written contracts and legal documents, not everyday communication.¹⁸⁴ The revised informed consent document I received was also adapted to this dialect.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, some "sovereign starters kits" available for purchase include a Security Deposit Agreement written in syntax grammar. This would allegedly: "Transfer all property from the strawman to the human. Debts remain with the strawman."¹⁸⁶ In the Netherlands, some within the milieu also offer seminars to help individuals understand this language structure and learn to "recognise and correct linguistic deception."¹⁸⁷ These seminars are designed to teach participants how to apply this dialect in legal contexts, asserting their sovereignty and resisting perceived linguistic manipulation by authorities.

6.2.3 Expert interviews

The experts confirmed that alternative writing styles are characteristic of the sovereign citizen milieu. For example, one expert called the use of "vdf" persistent and distinctive for the sovereign citizen milieu.¹⁸⁸ Additionally, experts also noted that lowercase first names are frequently used in writings.¹⁸⁹

Only a few experts I interviewed were familiar with the dialect identified in the data. They highlighted that while this dialect is specific to the sovereign citizen milieu, it is not widely adopted throughout the entire environment.¹⁹⁰ However, those who did not recognise it mentioned that the milieu is known for sending letters with complex pseudo-legal language that is difficult to decipher. One expert thought this apparent intricacy was aimed at creating

¹⁸³ Anonymous, Telegram Post, April 3, 2024.

¹⁸⁴ "Symbolen," Veilig en Vrij.

¹⁸⁵ For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the methodology chapter.

¹⁸⁶ "Word Mens' starterspakket: Live life claim & Zekerheidsstellingovereenkomst," wordmens.nu, accessed April 13, 2024. <https://wordmens.nu/product/toolkit/>.

¹⁸⁷ Fe: Anonymous, Telegram Post, April 21, 2024.

¹⁸⁸ Researcher at NTA, expert interview.

¹⁸⁹ Researcher at NTA, expert interview. ; Jelle van Buuren, expert interview.

¹⁹⁰ Researcher at NTA, expert interview.



confusion, particularly for recipients of such letters.¹⁹¹ Another expert speculated that the seeming complexity establishes a sense of trust and legitimacy among insiders. Because it looks complicated, people are more inclined to take it at face value.¹⁹²

6.3 Analysis

The discursive alternatives explored in this chapter fit within the framework of constructive resistance. Using alternative discursive formations embodies both a constructive and a resistance element, exemplifying a symbolic form of constructive resistance.

The resistance rationale behind this construction typically includes the notion that people are conditioned to accept a certain reality. Additionally, there appears to be some sort of semantic obsession with deconstructing words and exploring their etymological origins. Authors such as Sarteschi and Kalinowski show that assigning special meaning to words, is a practice common among similar milieus, particularly in the United States.¹⁹³ The idea is that language itself is some kind of code that has been hidden from us in plain sight, resulting in continuous efforts to break through the perceived deception and reveal the "true meaning" of words. It suggests that those in power understand the true meanings of words but deliberately obscure them to maintain control. By dissecting and reinterpreting language, the milieu aims to expose and resist what they see as hidden mechanisms of control and manipulation. Rahtje and Kalinowski illustrate how the idea of a secret agenda of the elite is also widespread among similar milieus internationally.¹⁹⁴

Within the sovereign citizen movement, specific discursive practices illustrate how constructive initiatives can be viewed as a form of resistance towards dominant practices. For example, unconventional methods of writing names—such as using "vdf" and avoiding capital letters—aim to distinguish between the strawman and the actual human self. By insisting on properly using their birth name, some claim to assert their true status as free, sovereign individuals, separate from the legal fictions imposed upon them by governmental systems. While "vdf"

¹⁹¹ Civil servant at the municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân, expert interview.

¹⁹² Researcher at NTA, expert interview.

¹⁹³ J.M. Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe," Washington, DC: Program on Extremism at George Washington University (2016): 12. ; Caesar Kalinowski, "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," *Montana Law Review* 80, no. 2 (2019): 168-171.

¹⁹⁴ Kalinowski, Caesar "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement." 153-210. ; Jan Rathje, "Driven by Conspiracies: The Justification of Violence among "Reichsbürger" and Other Conspiracy-Ideological Sovereignists in Contemporary Germany," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 50.



seems specific to the Dutch context, scholars such as Netolitzky and Parker also notice the avoidance of capital letters (which represent the strawman) in the American context.¹⁹⁵

The alternative dialect can also be viewed as constructive resistance as it reflects a desire to circumvent perceived linguistic oppression.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, it indicates that proponents are intentionally creating alternatives with the aim of evading perceived oppression through language.¹⁹⁷ Advocates argue that using correct language without the deceptive "colouring" could expose hidden truths. The idea persists that by using a specialised language, individuals can break free from the misleading and oppressive language used by authorities to deceive the public. By the specific reference to American influence in the data, the alternative dialect highlights the international connectedness of the milieu in the Netherlands. The broader literature also suggests that Millers' "In the truth" dialect has spread to similar milieus outside the United States.¹⁹⁸

These practices reflect an overall effort to dissociate from a perceived oppressive system. It exemplifies the notion that individuals can exempt themselves from governmental authority by meticulously following specific processes or employing language believed to possess special legal authority. This is primarily attempted by striving for freedom from the "strawman" by asserting individual sovereignty. Kalinowski and Berger highlight how the advancement of alternative writing methods to affirm a human status outside of the strawman is also visible internationally.¹⁹⁹

In summary, alternative spelling and discursive practices are seen as tools for reinforcing individual sovereignty and resisting perceived linguistic control. The choice of words and their presentation are viewed as mechanisms that can either affirm authority's control or declare one's

¹⁹⁵ J Donald Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," *Alberta Law Review*, 55 no.4 (2018):1069, 1077. ; Caesar Kalinowski, "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," 161. ; G.F. Parker, "Competence to stand trial evaluations of sovereign citizens: A case series and primer of odd political and legal beliefs," *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 42, no.3. (2014): 345.

¹⁹⁶ Lilja, Mona. "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan" *Review of International Studies* 48, no.1 (2022): 154-155.

¹⁹⁷ Lilja, "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan," 154-155.

¹⁹⁸ Christine M. Sarteschi, "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 60, (2021): 3. ;

1 J Donald Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," 1061-1062.

¹⁹⁹ Kalinowski, Caesar "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement," 158-159. ; J.M. Berger "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe," 5-6.



autonomy and act as resistance against perceived oppression. This chapter demonstrates how discursive alternatives are a form of symbolic constructive resistance. It challenges undesirable power relations.²⁰⁰ by providing an alternative to assert individual sovereignty.

²⁰⁰ M.J Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," 56.



7. Visions for the future

Subquestion 3: *How do constructive resistance initiatives by sovereign citizens in the Netherlands reflect a desired and envisioned future?*

The last analytical chapter will show how constructive initiatives can be seen as efforts in working towards a desired future. The first part will combine and summarise different overarching resistance rationales informing an alternative envisioned future. These can be distilled into two central arguments. The section will be relatively small because the resistance has been extensively discussed in previous chapters.

The following section will zoom out and explore the wide variety of constructive initiatives within the milieu. It will also highlight what an ideal society would look like according to the milieu and different interpretations of how best to achieve this. Lastly, I will zoom out and analyse which overarching ideas for a desired and envisioned future the constructive initiatives reflect.

7.1 Overall resistance

What has become clear throughout the research is that sovereign citizens fundamentally believe the Dutch state and associated institutions are illegitimate. Despite the enormous variety, one thing is clear: the new system must be free from perceived oppressive state control. This future vision is supported by two central lines of argumentation relating to the rationale for resistance. First, the perceived global elite has totalitarian aims that are deemed undesirable. This is reflected, for instance, in the perception of economic exploitation through usurious interest and undesired digitalisation and the perception of behavioural control through language manipulation, as discussed in previous sections. Connected to this point, strong anti-globalist tensions exist within the milieu. Institutions are considered too large, massive and powerful.²⁰¹

Secondly, the current system is seen to neglect the sovereignty of the individual. Anyplace where an overarching system compromises this individual authority is deemed undesirable, sometimes even akin to slavery. A Facebook post asserts that:

²⁰¹ See fe: "Geldschepping en Rente, Banken, Hun Eigenaren, Jouw Vrijheid – Een korte documentaire," Vrije Kees. ; "Democratie is een illusie," hetbewustepad, accessed 12 April, 2024, <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/?s=meerderheid>.



"If you do not have the exclusive right to decide what happens to the results of your own labour, time, attention and energy, can the government be considered the owner of you as an individual? If so, what do we call it again when people own other people?"²⁰²

7.1.2 Expert interviews

Experts confirm that the milieu regards established institutions as illegitimate authorities.²⁰³ Moreover, several experts recognise the strong anti-globalist tensions within the milieu. According to van Buuren, the sentiment that institutions have become excessively large and fail to represent the interests of "the people" is seen as a reaction to the dominance of technocratic politics. This is coupled with a perceived neglect of individual authority.²⁰⁴

7.2 Various constructive initiatives

The pattern in the resistance rationale emerging from the previous chapters and the data in general feed into the construction of alternatives. Although initiatives exist in nearly every societal domain, no clear coordination or structure is underpinning them. While initiatives in the economic and discursive domain are featured most prominently in the data, there are various other ways in which people withdraw from society and establish their own alternatives. Furthermore, constructive initiatives are often explicitly described as means of circumventing perceived oppression, which indicates intentionality: "As a sovereign, we need to set up our own facilities, separate from the state,"²⁰⁵ as a lecturer remarked during a gathering.

Many constructive initiatives claim to work towards a world of more individual authority. Some individuals move abroad to form sovereign communities, such as in Portugal or Sweden.²⁰⁶ Additionally, the independent community of "Wonderland," a declared free zone for "humans of flesh and blood," is located in the northern parts of the Netherlands.²⁰⁷ Wonderland has also set up its own "international school." Similar initiatives for autonomous education can also be found within the sovereign milieu.²⁰⁸

²⁰² Ik word autonoom, Facebook, January 23, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/hJhW4qCXeUgmtw8j/>.

²⁰³ Researcher at NTA, expert interview, NCTV, expert interview.

²⁰⁴ Jelle van Buuren, expert interview.

²⁰⁵ Participant observation, "Being Sovereign" (Anonymous lecture February, 2024).

²⁰⁶ See fe: Thomas Mulder, "De Autonome Droom."; Pheadra Werkhoven, "Vogelvrij leven, weg uit Nederland regelland," *Tubantia*, April 26, 2024.

²⁰⁷ See fe: Pheadra Werkhoven, "Vogelvrij leven, weg uit Nederland regelland."; Ellis Ellenbroek, "In Wonderland is plek voor de hele wereldbevolking," *Trouw*, November 2, 2015, <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/in-wonderland-is-plek-voor-de-hele-wereldbevolking~b9fb42fb/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>.

²⁰⁸ See fe: "Thuischoling," Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/autonomie-is-meer/>.



Some sovereign citizens seek to reinforce their sovereign status by acquiring sovereign items. Such as their own sovereign flag,²⁰⁹ embassy signs²¹⁰ (declaring their home a sovereign embassy) or diplomatic passports.²¹¹ There is even an autonomous postal service in running.²¹² A small minority²¹³ adopts a more militant approach, considering "common law" as the highest authority, superseding state laws. In some cases, so-called sheriffs take matters into their own hands to enforce common law. This group also advocates for common law tribunals.²¹⁴

As discussed in previous sections, the sovereign citizen milieu is known for its attempts to "disconnect" from its "strawman" so that the human being can be free from external control. There are different perspectives on the best way to achieve absolute individual freedom. One important point of discussion is whether one can fully disconnect from the strawman. Some say you should altogether leave your strawman, claiming that otherwise, you are still with one foot in the system. Others suggest you can still operate as strawman when it is advantageous:²¹⁵ "You can continue to use all the comforts and pleasures of the system if you wish." a website page argues.²¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, huge emphasis is placed on individual freedom and differentiation within this process: "The need for freedom, space and autonomy can be fulfilled differently for every human, which is why every autonomous path towards freedom can have different interpretations."²¹⁷

²⁰⁹ See fe: "Redenen waarom het hebben van een vlag belangrijk is," Veilig en Vrij, accessed March 1, 2024, <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2022/08/15/6-redenen-waarom-het-hebben-van-een-vlag-belangrijk-is/>.

²¹⁰ See fe: "Ambassade bordjes 15x21 cm," Hoge Raad van, de levende mensenkinderen, accessed April 14, 2024, <https://www.hogeraadvandelevendemensenkinderen.nl/ambassade-legatie-bordjes/>. ; "Ambassadebord incl. ophangstelsel," Autonoomtotaal, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://autonoomtotaal.nl/winkel/>

²¹¹ See fe: "DPP private indentificatie," De Levende Gemeenschap, accessed April 2, 2024, <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/product/dpp-privaat-identificatiedocument-en-reis-pas-diplomatiek/>.

²¹² "Je kan al je diplomatieke autonome post versturen met KVA Koerier Voor Autonomen," Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed March 13, 2024. <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/verzenden>.

²¹³ Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten, *Met de rug naar de samenleving - Een analyse van de soevereinenbeweging in Nederland*, April 9, 2024, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2024/04/09/tk-bijlage-24401640-fenomeenanalyse-soevereinen>, p.16.

²¹⁴ See fe: Common Law Nederland, "Welkom op CommonlawNederland.earth," Accessed March 1, 2024, <https://commonlawnederland.earth>. ; "AIVD waarschuwde OM, twee verdachten in soevereinenzaak langer vast," NOS, July 9, 2024, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2528098-aivd-waarschuwde-om-twee-verdachten-in-soevereinenzaak-langer-vast>.

²¹⁵ See fe: "Hersen- en hartdood is niet dood," hetbewustepad, accessed April 2, 2024, <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/category/rechten-van-de-mens/>.

²¹⁶ "Soeverein vs autonoom?" Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie, accessed April 13, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>.

²¹⁷ "Vrijheid," Eerste Hulp bij Autonomie, accessed April 13, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl>.



7.3 What would the ideal society look like?

7.3.1 *Individual authority*

"If we could design our ideal society, what would it look like?" One gathering I attended quite literally asked this question. The audience response reflected a longing for more individual freedom, with answers such as: "more individual space," "more financial freedom," and "less meddling in how you live your life."²¹⁸ The ideal society is one where people can live as sovereign individuals and are not subjected to external authority (such as national laws). While a lack of individual authority is part of the rationale for resistance, on the opposite side, constructive initiatives are often aimed at claiming more authority for the individual. For instance, paying with cash is a way to demonstrate that "you are your own boss."²¹⁹ Another website that promotes the use of cash asserts, "It is not about paying with cash; it is about our freedom."²²⁰ Or as someone at the gathering said: "You want to be the cause of what you carry; you don't want to carry what you did not choose."²²¹

The individual focus is often emphasised by spiritual elements present within the milieu. Some say you do not have to become sovereign; you are already a human of flesh and blood, and you just need to reconnect with your true self.²²² In addition, people are often described as having an internal moral compass. This means that humans know right and wrong and do not need external rules to tell them that. At a gathering, a lecturer remarked: "Sovereignty is no free pass for idiocy. You always have to follow your moral compass."²²³ Another website argues that: "A living human .. can trust his/her inner knowledge."²²⁴

7.3.2 *Idealized Medieval Society*

Simultaneously, when asked what their ideal society would look like, people would not only describe more individual freedom but also describe a form of community, often sketching a picture of an idealised, simplified medieval society. A small community where everyone cooperates harmoniously²²⁵ and where everyone contributes with artisanal talents. This was

²¹⁸ Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024).

²¹⁹ Ik word autonoom, Facebook, February 16, 2024.

²²⁰ "Het gaat niet om contant geld, het gaat om onze vrijheid," handjecontantje, accessed April 14 2024, <https://handjecontantje.org/verdwijnt-contant-geld/>.

²²¹ Participant observation, "Being Sovereign" (Anonymous lecture February, 2024).

²²² See fe: "Hersen- en hartdood is niet dood," hetbewustepad.

²²³ Participant observation, "Being Sovereign" (Anonymous lecture February, 2024).

²²⁴ "Soevereiniteit," hetbewustepad, accessed June 4, 2024,

<https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/category/sovereiniteit/>.

²²⁵ See fe: "Mijn diepste Hartsverlangen, mijn Hartedroom" hetbewustepad, accessed June 4, 2024, <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/category/zelfregering-en-eigenaarschap/>. ; Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook, July 4, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/YJX3Bt3w116ppZzo/>.



sometimes compared to romanticised notions about "primitive" small community tribes in the Amazon or African regions, such as during both attended lectures: "We can learn a lot from people in Africa; we colonised them for a long time and imposed a system that did not fit their way of life." Later on, the lecturer continued with another example:

"We need to move to a society where we arrange things together on a small scale. For example, they are already doing this well with tribes in the Amazon. We think here that we have done so well and are better than them, but in fact, they have arranged it better than we have. They know how to communicate with each other and make small-scale agreements among themselves."²²⁶

This future vision is not only characterised by a return to smaller, community-focused structures but also emphasises a locally oriented approach, with calls to organise a new society on a local level and connect individuals from the same regions.²²⁷

7.3.3 Expert interviews

The interviewees also reflected on what the ideal society for sovereign citizens would look like. A researcher noted that the ideal of an idyllic small community is part of other groups as well, such as extreme left or right groups. She reflected that this could be seen in the light of a longing for simplicity, authenticity and harmony with those around you.²²⁸ Another expert added that these small-knit communities require equivalent contributions from all members, which is, in reality, impossible. According to her, anthropological research has indicated the tendency for exploitation of weaker individuals without premade agreements. Adequate care for the elderly and people with weaker physiques requires communal agreements.²²⁹

Additionally, several experts recognised the idea of an internal moral compass. One expert said that many within the milieu hold the view that if you start truly listening to yourself, you will naturally be able to separate good from evil.²³⁰ Another expert mentioned that people have a strong internal sense of right and wrong, which is evident in their resistance to external authority, such as national laws. However, some people within this group follow different types

²²⁶ Participant observation, "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous lecture April, 2024).

²²⁷ See fe: "Autonomie is meer," Eerste Hulp Bij Autoomie, accessed March 11, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/autonomie-is-meer.>; Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook, February 28, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/y8HGRku2R1dHJeY/>.

²²⁸ Researcher at NTA, expert interview

²²⁹ Civil servant at the municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân, expert interview.

²³⁰ Researcher at the National Training Institute for Countering Radicalization, expert interview.



of laws, like natural or common law, which can be seen as contradictory since they still believe in some form of external authority.²³¹

All in all, the experts agreed that a clear image of what the world would look like after the fall of the elite is lacking. This lack of organisation is typical for the milieu generally.²³² One expert added that the sovereign's ideas are relatively novel to the Dutch context. Ideologies are often incoherent in the beginning stages and could possibly develop more coherency over time.²³³

7.4 Analysis

Within the milieu, there is a principal emphasis on individual authority, which is seen to be neglected in the current system. It suggests that only you should decide how you organise your personal life. No one has the right to impose a responsibility on you that you did not choose yourself. The individual has centrality. Always. These ideals are mirrored in different constructive resistance initiatives within the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands. For instance, using an alternative currency is seen as resistance against perceived economic oppression to regain individual privacy and control. Here, the resistance is against the perceived economic oppression, the construction is the use of the alternative currency,²³⁴ and the underlying future aspiration is a restoration of the perceived loss of individual authority. Juling highlights how the desire for the greatest possible individual freedom is also present in the German context.²³⁵ Additionally, a recurring theme in the resistance rationale driving these constructive initiatives is a conspiracy narrative positing that a powerful elite is secretly rolling out an agenda that aims to control people completely and strip away freedoms. Rathje and Fiebig and Koehler indicate that these narratives are also pervasive in related milieus abroad.²³⁶

Overall, there appears to be an inconsistency in the envisioned future ideal. On the one hand, there is a strong desire for community and simplicity, a move away from complex societal structures and a "return" to small, harmonious communities. This longing is also reflected

²³¹ Jelle van Buuren, expert interview.

²³² Jelle van Buuren, expert interview.

²³³ Jelle van Buuren, expert interview.

²³⁴ M.J Sørensen, "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain," *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2, no.1 (2016): 56.

²³⁵ Dominik Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" *Illiberalism Studies Program Working Papers* 16, no.1 (March 2023): 9-10.

²³⁶ Jan Rathje, "Driven by Conspiracies: The Justification of Violence among "Reichsbürger" and Other Conspiracy-Ideological Sovereignists in Contemporary Germany," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 50.-51. Verena Fiebig and Daniel Koehler, "Uncharted Territory: Towards an Evidence-Based Criminology of Sovereign Citizens Through a Systematic Literature Review," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 36.



internationally, as Juling describes how some groups retreat to rural areas to live as farmers.²³⁷ On the other hand, there is an emphasis on individual autonomy, where each person decides which burdens and duties they wish to bear and which views human agreements as contracts from which one can withdraw at any time if they no longer agree.²³⁸

This creates a contradiction: the desire to build something together conflicts with the absolute interpretation of individual authority. If people can opt out of a cohabitation agreement at a time, it creates a precarious foundation for constructing an alternative structure.

7.4.1 *Internal barrier*

This emphasis on individualism often leads to fragmented efforts and a lack of unity, as each person or small group may prioritise their own perspectives, making it difficult to achieve consensus or mobilise a cohesive group around shared goals and initiatives. This could partly explain the decentralised and unorganised nature of the milieu seen in the Netherlands, which is also seen across contexts.²³⁹ The hyper-individualistic focus within this milieu might create internal barriers to communal construction, ultimately hindering the development of a coherent alternative.

In a broader sense, this hyper-individualistic orientation could be understood within the broader neoliberal political framework, which has increasingly shifted responsibility from the collective onto the individual.²⁴⁰ According to historian Remieg Aerts, 25 years of neoliberalism has resulted in many citizens feeling little to no connection to the powerful executive apparatus of the state. Consequently, this has fuelled the anti-establishment attitude characteristic of the sovereign citizen milieu.²⁴¹

7.4.2 *Good-natured humanity*

For sovereign citizens, the vision of an ideal society is both community-oriented and deeply rooted in the principle of individual sovereignty, with each person viewed as the ultimate authority. At first glance, these core elements may appear contradictory. How can a stable and

²³⁷ Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" 9.

²³⁸ See fe: "Jouw eigen voorwaarden," wordmens.nu, accessed June 13, 2024. <https://wordmens.nu/jouw-eigen-voorwaarden/>. ; "Soevereiniteit," hetbewustepad.

²³⁹ Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" 6. ; Christine M. Sarteschi, *Sovereign Citizens, A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*. (Pittsburgh: Springer, 2020), vi-vii.

²⁴⁰ Barbara Misztal, *Trust in modern societies: The search for the bases of social order* (John Wiley & Sons, 1996).; David Harvey, *A brief history of neoliberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

²⁴¹ Jelle van Buuren, Edwin Bakker and Isabelle Frens, "Rallying Around Empty Signifiers: Understanding and Defining Anti-Government Protest in the Netherlands," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.2 (June 2023): 67.



sustainable society be built on the fundamentally unstable premise of absolute individual sovereignty? The reconciliation of these elements becomes more apparent when viewed through an optimistic view of human nature.

Even though the global elite is considered evil and intentionally oppresses people,²⁴² the idea persists that once these oppressive systems collapse, humans will naturally live together in peace. This belief is grounded in the idea that humans have an intrinsic moral compass that allows them to distinguish between good and evil. It echoes Rousseauian notions of human nature, which posit that people are inherently good and altruistic. This viewpoint shows the potential for creating a community-based society that respects individual sovereignty.²⁴³ While there were clear indications of this perspective in the data from the Netherlands, I did not come across any references to a perceived moral compass in the broader literature. Since it was prominent in the data, this may be unique to the Dutch context.

7.5 Conclusion

In summary, the analytical chapters have demonstrated how constructive initiatives can be understood as constructive resistance. Among the various initiatives, those in the discursive and economic domains emerged as most prominent in the data. These initiatives represent attempts to resist and circumvent perceived oppression from a dominant system, with a clear intent to challenge and partially replace unwanted power structures.

The economic chapter showed how this resistance manifests through the advancement of unconventional practices, such as using cash and introducing new currencies. Within the discursive initiatives, the focus is on revealing the true nature of language, with constructive initiatives seemingly providing means to reinforce one's sovereign status and become free from undesirable state control. Additionally, the constructive initiatives reflect underlying aspirations for a desired future. The tension between a strong emphasis on individual authority and a desire for a close-knit community can be understood through a perspective that views humanity as inherently good. This viewpoint suggests that the corrupting influence of oppressive systems is the primary obstacle to achieving a just and harmonious society. Even though the sovereign citizen milieu does not have a structured and well-thought-out future vision, the constructive initiatives to escape the system contain specific underlying values and worldviews.

²⁴² J Donald Netolitzky, "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony," *Alberta Law Review*, 55 no.4 (2018): 1075,108. ; Juling, "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" 10

²⁴³ Lee MacLean *The free animal: Rousseau on free will and human nature*. (University of Toronto Press, 2013).

8. Conclusions

This thesis explored various ways in which the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands is working towards a desired and envisioned future through various constructive initiatives, guided by the following research question:

In what way does the expressed resistance by the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands towards perceived oppression by the state and established state and societal institutions, manifest through the construction of institutional or discursive alternatives, and how do these efforts reflect a desired and envisioned future?

In this chapter, I will formulate an answer to the research question posed in the introduction. The data collected was structured around this research puzzle. Similarly, the research question guided the approach to the data, focusing on identifying constructive initiatives to circumvent or undermine perceived oppression. Two constructive domains appeared most prominent in the collected data: economic and discursive constructive initiatives. This consequently guided the direction of the sub-questions. In the economic domain, the analysed data revealed how the milieu focuses on perceived control of financial transactions and the perceived fragility of monetary systems and fosters an aversion to interest on loans. These themes in the resistance rationale consequently guided constructive initiatives aiming to circumvent or partially replace dominant practices, such as promoting the use of cash and issuing alternative interest-free currencies.

In the discursive domain, the data demonstrated that the milieu strongly perceives linguistic oppression by authorities. In response, the milieu focuses on providing numerous etymological explanations to "expose" the true meaning of words. The perceived linguistic oppression drives constructive initiatives such as alternative spelling of names and an alternative dialect. These initiatives aim to circumvent perceived discursive oppression and reinforce a sovereign identity distinct from the "strawman." Secession from this legal construct is believed to confer immunity from laws that do not apply to the liberated human being. The constructive initiatives discussed in both areas represent a form of resistance. The data demonstrates that these efforts are motivated by a resistance rationale and aim to partially replace or circumvent perceived undesirable power relations.



The final sub-question examined how constructive initiatives reflect a desired and envisioned future. Various initiatives underscore an absolute interpretation of individual authority. Simultaneously, an ideal society includes a collective element, albeit on a small scale. This apparent contradiction is partially reconciled by the milieu's reliance on an internal moral compass, which refers to their individual sense of right and wrong that guides their actions. This would foster a harmonious society once perceived authoritarian rule is dismantled. The focus on individuality furthermore serves as an internal barrier to a coordinated strategy and might compromise efficacy in achieving communal goals.

In summary, the findings collectively address the research question by demonstrating how the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands employs both symbolic and concrete constructive initiatives to resist perceived oppression and build a future that aligns with their vision of individual sovereignty.

8.1 Academic and societal relevance

The findings of this thesis offer new insights in several ways. First, it contributes to an under-researched academic domain. While the sovereign citizen milieu has generally been the subject of limited scholarly focus, the Dutch context remains particularly underexplored. Additionally, the thesis offers a unique perspective on the theory of constructive resistance in two ways. First, it showcases the theory's broad applicability by exploring both institutional and discursive contexts. Second, it applies the theory to societal domains not commonly associated with resistance studies. The constructive initiatives in the data are inspired by a resistance rationale in which conspiracy narratives hold a significant position. It emphasises that the experience and perception of oppression play a critical role in motivating resistance, regardless of whether the oppression can be empirically validated. In this way, it underscores how groups less commonly associated with resistance can nevertheless engage in practices of constructive resistance. The findings, therefore, provide a fresh academic perspective on the theory of constructive resistance.

The findings are relevant academically but also have societal implications. Examples from abroad and the current societal visibility and impact of the milieu's tactics underscore the need for a deeper understanding of the milieu. This research enriches our understanding of its dynamics and perspectives by empirically exploring how the sovereign citizen milieu envisions and works towards its ideal world. Consequently, it provides new insights and offers potential



guidance for practitioners and policymakers to address the societal implications of the milieu's action. While one might disagree with their methods or ideas, the sovereign citizen movement is a result of a growing group that feels alienated and disconnected from society. Authorities should seriously consider the origins and implications of this increasing distrust.

8.2 Limitations of research

This thesis has several limitations worth acknowledging. The main limitation is that of difficulty in generalisation within a hyper-individualistic environment. As discussed throughout the research, the milieu consists of heterogeneous individuals with divergent beliefs and motivations. Generally, the data and experts noted that this milieu is highly correlated with other milieus. Although I made efforts to argue for specific selection criteria, the identified patterns may not be representative of the entire milieu or only represent tendencies in parts of the milieu. The data and experts, for instance, confirmed that specific discursive initiatives are distinctive to the sovereign milieu but do not represent everyone.

On the other hand, economic initiatives appeared in sovereign group chats but are not distinctly sovereign as some overlapping milieus with anti-institutional sentiment also support these initiatives. Although the lack of organisation and individual focus inevitably hinders the ability to draw clear distinctions, it remains a limitation of the research. Additionally, the milieu's heterogeneity may lead to overlooked or left unmentioned important aspects. Another limitation is that the research does not comprehensively discuss the concept of power. As power and resistance are co-constitutive, it is relevant to consider which specific forms of power are being challenged.

8.3 Future research

Future research could address some of these limitations. While the sovereign citizen milieu may be noticeable because of their explicit communication with authorities, overlapping milieus sometimes make similar efforts to withdraw from mainstream society by setting up their own institutions. Future research may take a broader scope to understand this broader societal trend better. Furthermore, an intriguing starting point for future academic exploration of the studied phenomenon in relation to what sort of power it opposes, could be Foucault's power triangle



(sovereign-, disciplinary- and biopower).²⁴⁴ Additionally, it would be relevant to academically examine the extent to which this constructive resistance is counter-hegemonic.²⁴⁵

Future research could also build on this thesis's findings, which reveal a milieu that intersects with certain right-wing tensions while simultaneously holding a positive belief in human nature. Exploring this atypical combination could be a compelling starting point for a political-philosophical analysis. Additionally, the tension of hyper-individualism observed may reflect a broader trend toward increased individualism. Therefore, a philosophical examination of individuality could provide valuable insights in further exploration.

In conclusion, this thesis has shed light on the complex and multifaceted ways the sovereign citizen milieu in the Netherlands expresses resistance and constructs alternatives to perceived oppression. By examining economic and discursive domains, the research has revealed how these initiatives are not only acts of resistance against systems that are considered undesirable, but also attempts to create an envisioned future aligned with underlying values.

²⁴⁴ Mona Lilja & Stellan Vinthagen, "Sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower: resisting what power with what resistance?" *Journal of Political Power* 7, no.1 (2014).

²⁴⁵ Dani Filc, "Is resistance always counter-hegemonic?" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 26 no.1 (2021).



9. Bibliography

Secondary sources

"AIVD waarschuwde OM, twee verdachten in soevereinenzaak langer vast." *NOS*, July 9, 2024. <https://nos.nl/artikel/2528098-aivd-waarschuwde-om-twee-verdachten-in-soevereinenzaak-langer-vast>.

Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten. *Anti-institutioneel extremisme in Nederland: een ernstige dreiging voor de democratische rechtsorde?* May 25, 2023. <https://www.aivd.nl/documenten/publicaties/2023/05/25/anti-institutioneel-extremisme-in-nederland-een-ernstige-dreiging-voor-de-democratische-rechtsorde>.

Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst. *Met de rug naar de samenleving - een analyse van de soevereinenbeweging in Nederland*. April 9, 2024. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2024/04/09/tk-bijlage-24401640-fenomeenanalyse-soevereinen>.

Andersen, Remco." Ongekend massale Duitse politie-invallen bij rechts-extremisten met coupplannen." *de Volkskrant*, December 7, 2022. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/ongekend-massale-duitse-politie-invallen-bij-rechts-extremisten-met-coupplannen~b9b2e2c1/>.

Andres Kouwenhoven and Wilmer Heck. "Autonome burgers eisen ieder 1,5 miljoen euro van staat." *NRC*, April 21, 2022. <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/04/21/autonome-burgers-eisen-ieder-15-mln-euro-van-staat-a4116901>.

Asmelash Leah. "The truth behind those white streaks trailing behind jets in the sky." *CNN*, March 12, 2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/us/chemtrails-conspiracy-theory-explained-cec/index.html>.

Baaz Mikael, Lilja Mona, Schulz Michael and Vinthage, Stellan. "Defining and Analyzing "Resistance": *Possible Entrances to the Study of Subversive Practices*." *Alternatives: Global Local, Political* 41, no.3 (2016): 137-153.



Coleman, Montesinos Lara, and Tucker Karen, eds. *Situating global resistance: between discipline and dissent*. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

Berger, John. "Without prejudice: What sovereign citizens believe." *Washington, DC: Program on Extremism at George Washington University* (2016): 1-13.

Bjørgo, Tore. "Introduction to the Special Section on Anti-Government Extremism." *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism* 17, no.1 (March 2023): 67-72.

Bove, Arianne. "Resistance and Exodus." *Journal for Cultural Research* 25, no.3 (June 2021): 287-300.

Buuren van, Jelle. "Breaking (with) the System: Exodus as Resistance?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.1 (March 2023): 88-102.

Buuren van, Jelle. "Doelwit Den Haag? : complotconstructies en systeemhaat in Nederland 2000-2014." PhD diss., Rijksuniversiteit Leiden 2016.

Buuren van, Jelle, Bakker Edwin and Frens Isabelle. "Rallying Around Empty Signifiers: Understanding and Defining Anti-Government Protest in the Netherlands." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.2 (June 2023): 60-73.

Cambridge Dictionary. "Doxing." Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/doxing#>.

Carter, D. L., Chermak, S., Carter, J. G., & Drew, J. "Understanding Law Enforcement Intelligence Processes: Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate." (2014)

Dekker, Alexander. "Hoe vanuit Brunssum personen tot autonomen worden gemaakt." *LI nieuws*, September 5, 2023. <https://www.l1nieuws.nl/nieuws/2272185/hoe-vanuit-brunssum-personen-tot-autonomen-worden-gemaakt>.



Ellenbroek Ellis "In Wonderland is plek voor de hele wereldbevolking." *Trouw*, November 2, 2015. <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/in-wonderland-is-plek-voor-de-hele-wereldbevolking~b9fb42fb/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>.

Fiebig Verena and Koehler Daniel. "Uncharted Territory: Towards an Evidence-Based Criminology of Sovereign Citizens Through a Systematic Literature Review." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 34-48.

Filec Dani, "Is resistance always counter-hegemonic?" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 26 no.1 (2021): 23-38.

Giesen, Peter. "'Samenzwering in de Alpen': hoe de Great Reset een mondiale complottheorie over werelddominantie werd." *de Volkskrant*, January 16, 2023. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/samenzwering-in-de-alpen-hoe-de-great-reset-een-mondiale-complottheorie-over-werelddominantie-werd~b5ff2af5/>.

Gilswijk van, Abel. "Ontevreden Nederlanders kunnen zich gewoon laten uitschrijven bij de Nederlandse staat." *VICE*. Accessed April 24, 2024. <https://www.vice.com/nl/article/vd98a9/ontevreden-nederlanders-kunnen-zich-gewoon-laten-uitschrijven-bij-de-nederlandse-staat-143>.

Hartleb, Florian, Schliefssteiner Paul, and Schiebel Christoph "From Anti-Measure Activism to Anti-State Extremism? The "Querdenker" Protest-Movement and Its Interrelation and Dynamics with the "Reichsbürger" in Germany and Austria." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 17, no.1 (2023): 123-144.

Harvey, David. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hollander A and Einwohner R.L. "Conceptualizing Resistance." *Sociological Forum* 19, no. 4. (2004): 533–554. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11206-004-0694-5>.

Jackson, Sam. "What is Anti-Government Extremism?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6. (December 2022): 9-18.



Juling, Dominik. "Reichsbürger: An Old German Ideology in New Clothing?" *Illiberalism Studies Program Working Papers* 16, no.1 (March 2023): 1-12.

Kalinowski, Caesar "A Legal Response to the Sovereign Citizen Movement." *Montana Law Review* 80, no. 2 (2019): 153-210.

Keulemans, Maarten. "Wetenschappers bezorgd over AIVD-rapport: ga juist in gesprek met complotdenkers." *Volkskrant* April 23, 2023. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/wetenschappers-bezorgd-over-aivd-rapport-ga-juist-in-gesprek-met-complotdenkers~bfb3199b/>.

Koefoed, Minoo. "Constructive resistance in Northern Kurdistan: Exploring the Peace, Development and resistance nexus." *Journal of Peacebuilding and development* 12, no.3 (2017): 39-53.

Kraak, Haro. "Autonome burgers erkennen het gezag van de overheid niet. Maar daar heeft de overheid geen boodschap aan." *Volkskrant*, August 16, 2023. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/autonome-burgers-erkennen-het-gezag-van-de-overheid-niet-maar-daar-heeft-de-overheid-geen-boodschap-aan~bceb4957/>.

Lilja, Mona. "Pushing resistance theory in IR beyond 'opposition': The constructive resistance of the #MeToo movement in Japan," *Review of International Studies* 48, no.1 (2022): 149-170.

Lilja Mona and Vinthagen Stellan. "Sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower: resisting what power with what resistance?" *Journal of Political Power* 7, no.1 (2014): 107-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2014.889403>.

Luxmoore, Matthew. "Flouting the law in nostalgia's name: Russia's growing movement of "soviet citizens." *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, accessed June 4, 2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/flouting-law-in-nostalgia-s-name-russia-s-growing-movement-of-soviet-citizens-/29962523.html>.



MacKinnon, Katherine C. "Do No Harm." in *Anthropological Ethics in Context*. Routledge, 2017. 75-90.

MacLean, Lee. *The free animal: Rousseau on free will and human nature*. University of Toronto Press, 2013.

Maignashca, Bice. "Governance and resistance in world politics." *Review of International Studies* 29.S1 (2003): 3-28.

Misztal, Barbara. *Trust in modern societies: The search for the bases of social order*. John Wiley & Sons, 1996.

Mulder, Thomas. "De Autonome Droom." Pointer. October 23, 2023. Video, 15:56, [\https://ap.lc/YMsxM.\](https://ap.lc/YMsxM)

Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. *Burgerperspectieven 2023 bericht 1*. April 2023. <https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2023/04/20/burgerperspectieven-2023-bericht-1>.

Netolitzky, J Donald. "Organized pseudolegal commercial arguments as magic in ceremony." *Alberta Law Review*, 55 no.4 (2018): 1045- 1088. <https://doi.org/10.29173/alr2485>.

Nuance door Training en Advies (NTA). *Ideologische eilanden – de 'soevereinen' en de eigen samenleving*. June 2023. <https://ntadvies.nl/media/1071/de-soevereinen-en-de-eigen-samenleving.pdf>.

Paradis M Cheryl, Owen Elizabeth and McCullough Gene. "Evaluations of urban sovereign citizens' competency to stand trial." *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 46, no.2 (2019): 158-166. <https://doi.org/10.29158/JAAPL.003758-18>.



Parker G.F. "Competence to stand trial evaluations of sovereign citizens: A case series and primer of odd political and legal beliefs." *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 42, no.3. (2014): 338–349.

Parlementaire enquêtecommissie Fraudebeleid en Dienstverlening. *Blind voor mens en recht*, February 26, 2024. <https://ap.lc/XRSIL>.

Parlement.com. "Soeverein Onafhankelijke Pioniers Nederland (SOPN)." Accessed 24 April 2024.

https://www.parlement.com/id/vj1oi1aceyeb/soeverein_onafhankelijke_pioniers.

Pytyck J & Chaimowitzy, G. "The Sovereign Citizen Movement and Fitness to Stand Trial." *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 12 no.2 (2013): 149–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2013.796329>.

Perry Barbara, Hoffman David, and Scrivens Ryan. "Anti-Authority and Militia Movements in Canada." *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare* 1, no. 3 (January 31, 2019): 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.21810/jicw.v1i3.822>.

Rahlf, Lotta. "From Democratic Resistance to Hostility against a "Covid-Regime" – Conspiracy Theories as Cross-Milieu Catalysts of Radicalization." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2023): 1–28.

Rathje, Jan. "Driven by Conspiracies: The Justification of Violence among "Reichsbürger" and Other Conspiracy-Ideological Sovereignists in Contemporary Germany." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 16, no.6 (December 2022): 49-61.

Richmond Oliver. "Critical agency, resistance and a post-colonial civil society." *Cooperation and Conflict*, 46:4 (2011): 419–440.

Rosman, Cyril. "Groeiende groep Nederlanders stapt uit maatschappij, wanbetalers bezorgen overheid handenvol werk." *Algemeen Dagblad*, June 25, 2023. <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/groeiende-groep-nederlanders-stapt-uit-maatschappij-wanbetalers-bezorgen-overheid-handenvol-werk~af016ba7/>.



Routledge, Paul. "A Spatiality of Resistances: Theory and Practice in Nepal's Revolution of 1990." in *Geographies of Resistance*, edited by S. Pile and M. Keith. London: Routledge, 1997, 68–86.

Sarteschi, Christine M. "Sovereign citizens: A narrative review with implications of violence towards law enforcement." *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 60, (2021): 1-11.

Sarteschi, Christine M. *Sovereign Citizens A Psychological and Criminological Analysis*. Pittsburgh: Springer, 2020.

Scott, J.C. *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (Yale university Press, 1985).

Sørensen, M J. "Constructive Resistance: Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain." *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2, no.1 (2016): 49-78.

Taylor, Stephanie. *What is discourse analysis?* Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

Wendling Mike. "QAnon: What is it and where did it come from?" *BBC* January 6, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/53498434>.

"What is the Great Reset - and how did it get hijacked by conspiracy theories?" *BBC*, June 24, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-57532368>.

Werkhoven, Pheadra. "Vogelvrij leven, weg uit Nederland regelland." *Tubantia*, April 26, 2024.

Weitz, Rose. "Women and their hair: Seeking power through resistance and accommodation." *Gender & Society* 15, no.5 (2001): 667-686.

Zuidervaart, Bart. "Grote zorgen over burgers die zich willen losmaken van de overheid. 'Door desinformatie misleid.'" *Trouw*, December 1, 2023.



<https://www.trouw.nl/editie/20231202/grote-zorgen-over-burgers-die-zich-willen-losmaken-van-de-overheid-door-desinformatie-misleid~b2761669/>.

Zuidervaart, Bart. " 'Nederland bestaat niet!' Over de worsteling met de autonome burger." *Trouw*, December 1, 2023. <https://www.trouw.nl/verdieping/nederland-bestaat-niet-over-de-worsteling-met-de-autonome-burger~be9ae1fd/>.

Primary sources

Lectures

- Participant observation. "How to take ownership of your freedom" (Anonymous Lecture, April, 2024).
- Participant observation. "Being Sovereign" (Anonymous lecture February, 2024).

Facebook accounts:

1. Ik word autonoom
2. Soevereine Staat Eurostaete

Telegram

- 12 anonymous group chats.

Websites:

1. <https://vrijekees.nl>
2. <https://www.wellstandingmen.com>
3. <https://betalenmetflorijn.nl>
4. <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl>
5. <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/welkom-levende-man/>
6. <https://thebutterflytribe.io>
7. <https://veiligenvrij.nl>
8. <https://wordmens.nu>
9. <https://handjecontantje.org>
10. <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu>
11. <https://www.vrijmenseninwording.nl>
12. <https://autonoomtotaal.nl>
13. <https://commonlawnederland.earth>
14. <https://www.hogeraadvandelevendemensenkinderen.nl>

YouTube Channels:

1. Wentelteefje
2. Butterfly Tribe
3. Ad Broere
4. Dileila Theunisz Nederlands Official
5. Cafe Weltschmerz



Individual references to primary sources:

- "Ambassadebord incl. ophangstelsysteem." Autonomoototaal. Accessed February 16, 2024. <https://autonomoototaal.nl/winkel/>.
- "Ambassade bordjes 15x21 cm." Hoge Raad van, de levende mensenkinderen. Accessed april 14, 2024. <https://www.hogeraadvandelevendemensenkinderen.nl/ambassade-legatie-bordjes/>.
- "Autonomie is meer." Eerste Hulp Bij Autoomie. Accessed March 11, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/autonomie-is-meer>.
- Ad Broere. "Ad Broere en de parallele economie," YouTube. March 15, 2021. Video, 13:13. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiFfw_17CP0&t=619s.
- "Boekhoudfraude gemeenten en provincies." Leo Verhoef. Accessed March 26, 2024. <https://leoverhoef.nl/index.html>.
- Common Law Nederland. "Welkom op CommonlawNederland.earth." Accessed March 1, 2024. <https://commonlawnederland.earth>
- "Contant geld verdwijnt niet zomaar." Hetbewustepad Accessed April 3 2024. <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/rechten-van-de-mens/contant-geld-verdwijnt-niet-zomaar/>.
- "Contanten opnemen." Florijn. accessed June 15, 2024. <https://betalenmetflorijn.nl/contanten-opnemen/>.
- "De Fryske Euro." accessed May 13, 2024. <https://defryskeeuro.nl>.
- "De feiten van de structurele financiële instabiliteit." De Levende Gemeenschap. Accessed April 12. 2024, <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/2023/03/29/waarom-een-alternatieve-munt-een-meerwaarde-is/>.



- "Democratie is een illusie." hetbewustepad. Accessed 12 April, 2024.
<https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/?s=meerderheid>.
- "De individuele Cestui Que Vie geboorte Trust1) nalatenschap is een testamentair erfrechtelijk gegeven." Hetbewustepad. Accessed April 3 2024.
<https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/geboorte-trust/>.
- deparallesamenleving. Instagram. January 11, 2023.
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CnRKB0UjOlh/>.
- "DPP private indentificatie." De Levende Gemeenschap. accessed April 2, 2024.
<https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/product/dpp-privaat-identificatiedocument-en-reis-pas-diplomatiek/>.
- "Geldschepping en Rente, Banken, Hun Eigenaren, Jouw Vrijheid – Een korte documentaire." Vrije Kees. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://vrijekees.nl/vlogs-docus/>.
- Henk vdf Fransen. *De overheid heeft niks over mij te zeggen -Tenzij ik daar in alle vrijheid mee instem* Arnhem, 2023.
- "Het gaat niet om contant geld, het gaat om onze vrijheid." Handjecontantje. Accessed April 14 2024, <https://handjecontantje.org/verdwijnt-contant-geld/>.
- "Hersen- en hartdood is niet dood." hetbewustepad, accessed April 2, 2024,
<https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/category/rechten-van-de-mens/>.
- "Hoe vind je het dat de banken buitensporig en immoreel veel geld verdienen over jouw rug?" WellStandingMen. Accessed June 3, 2024.
<https://www.wellstandingmen.com/intro/>.
- "IJmuider Vishandel." Betalen met Florijnen. Accessed March 3, 2024. Video, 5:01,
<https://betalenmetflorijn.nl>.



- Ik word autonoom, Facebook post, January 24, 2024,
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/hJhW4qCXeUgmtw8j/>
- Ik word autonoom. Facebook. February 16, 2024.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/NHs36N3F5nVPRny9/>.
- Ik word autonoom. Facebook. November 23, 2023.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/NHs36N3F5nVPRny9/>.
- Infomatic Films. "Meet your strawmen." Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie. Accessed February 28 2024. Video, 5:01, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>.
- "Informatie: leuke fiscale benamingen waar je heel anders over gaat nadenken." Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie. Accessed February 28, 2024.
<https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>.
- "Informatie: wat is een trust?" Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>.
- "Je kan al je diplomatieke autonome post versturen met KVA Koerier Voor Autonomen." Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie. Accessed March 13, 2024.
<https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/verzenden>.
- "Ons privaat sociaal platform." de Levende Gemeenschap. Accessed May 15, 2024.
<https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/privaat-platform-coin/>.
- "Jouw eigen voorwaarden." wordmens.nu. Accessed June 13, 2024.
<https://wordmens.nu/jouw-eigen-voorwaarden/>.
- "Level 1." WellStandingMen. November 30, 2022.
<https://www.wellstandingmen.com/blog/>.
- "Mijn diepste Hartsverlangen, mijn Hartedroom." Hetbewustepad. Accessed June 4, 2024. <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/category/zelfregering-en-eigenaarschap/>.



- PopTech. "Bernard Lietaer: Money Diversity." De Levende Gemeenschap. May 29, 2023. Video. 23:38, <https://levende-gemeenschap.eu/2023/03/29/waarom-een-alternatieve-munt-een-meerwaarde-is/>.
- "Rechtspraak als verborgen handel." Veilig en Vrij. Accessed February 26, 2024. <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2021/12/31/rechtspraak-als-verborgen-handel/>.
- "Redenen waarom het hebben van een vlag belangrijk is." Veilig en Vrij. Accessed March 1, 2024. <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2022/08/15/6-redenen-waarom-het-hebben-van-een-vlag-belangrijk-is/>.
- "Schrijfwijze namen." Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie. Accessed February 28, 2024, <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/erfrechtelijke-documenten/>.
- "Schrijfwijze na(a)m(en)." Accessed April 3, 2024. <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/schrijfwijze-naamen/>.
- "Soeverein vs autonoom?" Eerste Hulp Bij Autonomie. Accessed April 13, 2024. <https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl/informatie/>.
- "Soevereiniteit." Hetbewustepad. Accessed June 4, 2024. <https://geboortetrust.hetbewustepad.nl/category/soevereiniteit/>.
- Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook. February 28, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/y8HGRku2R1dtHJeY/>.
- Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook. July 4, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/YJX3Bt3w116ppZzo/>.
- Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook. July 9, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/NHs36N3F5nVPRny9/>.



- Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook. June 30, 2024.
<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/zcxsk7qvR1jyy5JZ/>.
- Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook. March 1, 2024.
- Soevereine Staat Eurostaete. Facebook. March 11, 2024.
- "Symbolen." Veilig en Vrij. accessed February 26, 2024.
<https://veiligenvrij.nl/2023/02/20/symbolen/>.
- "Systeem." Vrije Kees. Accessed March 23, 2024,
<https://vrijekees.nl/uncategorized/systeem/>.
- The Butterfly Tribe. "You Need to Prepare Now!" YouTube. May 30, 2024. Video, 4:40. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pvFEB-2A3I&t=2s>.
- "Van de verloren naar de herwonnen vrijheid." Veilig en Vrij. Accessed February 26, 2024. <https://veiligenvrij.nl/2024/02/19/van-de-verloren-naar-de-herwonnen-vrijheid/>.
- "Vrijheid." Eerste Hulp bij Autonomie. Accessed April 13, 2024.
<https://eerstehulpbijautonomie.nl>
- "Workshop part 1: Introduction Free Humans." WellStandingMen. Accessed June 3, 2024. Video, 55:43. <https://www.wellstandingmen.com/voorbereiding>.
- "Wat is de florijn?" Florijn. accessed March 1, 2024. <https://betalenmetflorijn.nl/wat-is-florijn/>.
- Wonderland. "Declaration of independence Wonderland." Accessed 20 March, 2024.
<https://vrijstaat-wonderland.online/publicaties/>.
- "'Word Mens' starterspakket: Live life claim & Zekerheidsstellingovereenkomst." wordmens.nu. Accessed April 13, 2024. <https://wordmens.nu/product/toolkit/>.