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“The Normal Dutchman”

An analysis of the increased focus on national identity
in Dutch political discourse

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The EU has experienced multiple challenges during the last decade. After the financial crisis erupted in 2008, the refugee crisis followed in 2015 and Brexit in 2016. Scholars have since conducted extensive research on how the EU has coped with these crises (Schimmelfennig 2014; Kriesi & Grande 2016; Börzel 2016). In the case of the financial crisis, member states responded with the increased transfer of authority to the European level (Stellinga 2015; Börzel 2016). New supranational institutions were created, such as the European Stability Mechanism and the Banking Union (Börzel 2016). Existing supranational bodies, like the European Central Bank and European Commission, were granted additional supervisory powers (Stellinga 2015). Scholars have concluded that the financial crisis resulted in a substantial deepening of European financial integration (Schimmelfennig 2014; Stellinga 2015; Börzel 2016).

In response to the refugee crisis, the EU agreed on measures aimed at coping with the influx of refugees. An Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund was established, military operation EUNAVFOR MED was launched, a list of safe countries of origin was established and an agreement with Turkey was negotiated (Börzel 2016). However, the overall European response did not reach the goal of sharing the responsibility (Börzel 2016). Independent measures tightening national border controls were taken, financial and operational commitments were not realized, and thousands of refugees remain stranded on Greek islands (Börzel & Risse 2018). Despite efforts to ‘supranationalize’ the European response to the crisis, member states reverted to national solutions.

The financial crisis and refugee crisis were thus met with different European responses. In another development, discourse in the European public sphere is increasingly centered around issues of national identity and Euroscepticism (Van Steenbergen & Niemantsverdriet

2016; Van den Hemel 2017). In the Netherlands, governing party VVD published an open letter in which Prime Minister Rutte called on newcomers to ‘act normal or leave’ (Rutte 2017). Phrases like ‘the normal Dutchman’ have become common in political discourse (Stellinga & Niemantsverdriet 2017) and one of the primary themes of the 2017 parliamentary elections concerned national identity (Abels 2017; Thomas 2017).

This research attempts to examine to what extent these developments – the increased focus on national identity in political discourse and the different European responses to the crises – are related. Scholars have examined how established political parties framed the financial crisis (Chang 2016; Kriesi & Grande 2016) and how populist parties framed both the financial and refugee crisis (Wodak 2015; Pirro & Van Kessel 2018). This research aims to bridge the gap by examining the development of discourse of established political parties over the course of these two crises, and whether this relates to the diverging European responses. This leads to the following research question:

“To what extent is the increased focus on national identity in the discourse of established political parties related to the diverging European responses to the financial crisis and the refugee crisis?”

The three dominant approaches to European integration – neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and postfunctionalism – are unsuitable to answer this. These theories fail to account for a dynamic relationship between domestic identity and supranational integration. This research therefore uses insights from social constructivism, which focuses on the mutual constitutive relationship between identities and institutions. According to this theory, European integration should be analyzed in the light of domestic political culture, discourse and social structures (Risse 2004). This makes the theory appropriate to study the dynamics between

European integration and identity in domestic discourse. Using the Netherlands as a case study, the discourse of two established political parties is subjected to content analysis. Content analysis allows the analysis of political discourse, how this discourse is embedded in domestic norms and identities, and how this relates to European integration.

This research adds to the existing literature by examining discourse of established parties on a temporal dimension. Previous research examined the framing of both crises by populist parties (Wodak 2015; Pirro & Van Kessel 2018) and the response to the financial crisis of the political elite (Chang 2016; Kriesi & Grande 2016). Little examination has been done of elite political discourse over the course of these two crises. Insights into effects of European integration on domestic discourse is useful for future European cooperation and crisis management. As for the Netherlands, general political discourse has increasingly focused on national identity, having been ascribed partly to the growth of populist parties like PVV (Sleegers 2007; Niemantsverdriet 2016; Niemantsverdriet & Kas 2016). This research attempts to contribute to a more integral understanding of the changing discourse of established political parties.

The theoretical framework for this research is set out in chapter 2. Chapter 3 establishes the research design and the case study of the Netherlands. In chapter 4, the domestic structures in the Netherlands are identified. The collected data is presented and analyzed in chapter 5. Chapter 6 discusses the results of the research and how these relate to the theoretical argument. Chapter 7 concludes this research and indicates limitations and avenues for future research.

Chapter 2. Theory & Concepts

2.1 Preliminary Remarks

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework for this research. This research examines the relationship between identity in domestic political discourse and European integration. European integration is defined as the pooling of sovereignty by states in supranational European institutions (White 2010). States have transferred competences traditionally thought to reside with the state to European authorities, which subsequently have jurisdiction over states regarding these competences (Hooghe & Marks 2009).

The dominant theories on European integration – neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and postfunctionalism – provide different explanations for the occurrence and consequences of integration. To determine whether these approaches account for a relationship between European integration and national identity, these are explicated first. Social constructivism is discussed subsequently, which considers the influence of social structures on political ideas and discourse (Risse 2004). Specific literature related to European integration and national identity is then critically evaluated. Based on these insights, the theoretical framework for this research is established.

2.2 Theoretical Overview

2.2.1 NEOFUNCTIONALISM

Neofunctionalism posits that states are willing to transfer parts of their sovereignty to supranational institutions if this is in their national interests (Haas 2004). Increasing processes of interconnectivity then lead to spillover and more institutional integration (White 2010). By transferring authority to the European level, politicians shield decision-making from domestic resistance (Börzel & Risse 2018). Neofunctionalism expects a positive feedback loop from this

transfer of authority, leading to domestic political spillover and eventually the ‘Europeanization’ of collective identities and interests (Haas 2004; Börzel & Risse 2018). However, neofunctionalism fails to account for the fact that national identities can also be mobilized against the EU, the prime example of which is Brexit (Börzel & Risse 2018). The theory is therefore inept to explain the dynamics between national identity and the diverging European responses to the crises.

2.2.2 LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM

Liberal intergovernmentalism posits that states control the speed and extent of integration. States will only cooperate if they have shared interests and any intergovernmental institutions created have no ability to shape context, culture or reality (Moravcsik 1998). States pool their sovereignty to strengthen their decision-making capacity over domestically controversial issues by dealing with them at the European level (Moravcsik 1998). Liberal intergovernmentalism considers interests and preferences to be isolated from integration. Domestic politics do impact government preferences regarding European integration, but once set, these preferences remain stable (Saurugger 2016). This separation of integration and identities means that liberal intergovernmentalism cannot explain how national identity in political discourse is related to the dynamics of European integration (Saurugger 2016).

2.2.3 POSTFUNCTIONALISM

Postfunctionalism posits that increased politicization of European integration engages the public opinion and triggers party competition (Hooghe & Marks 2009; Schimmelfennig 2014). Politicization – defined as the increased salience of European affairs; increased levels of polarization; and increased mobilization of actors – is expected to be a constraining factor on integration (Hooghe & Marks 2009). Political elites face an increasingly ‘constraining

dissensus' and are limited in their decision-making (Hooghe & Marks 2009). This politicization triggers identity politics, which postfunctionalism expects to be another constraining factor on European integration (Hooghe & Marks 2009).

The refugee crisis was politicized and triggered identity politics, ultimately resulting in impaired European integration (Börzel & Risse 2018). The financial crisis, however, was equally politicized, but nonetheless resulted in deepened European integration, which postfunctionalism fails to explain (Schimmelfennig 2014). Postfunctionalism thus cannot explain the different outcomes of the crises and is therefore unsuitable to theorize on the effects of these different outcomes on domestic political discourse.

2.2.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivism holds that the environment in which agents act is social and material, and this provides actors with an understanding of their interests (White 2010). Social structures and agents are *mutually constitutive*, meaning that structures define the agent's perception of identity and the agent simultaneously impacts the structure (Risse 2004). Social constructivism emphasizes that European integration should be analyzed in the light of social structures, which influence actors' preferences for European integration. Actors' decisions are not only based on a rational cost-benefit analysis, but also on normative understandings and principles (Risse 2004).

The mutual constitutiveness of agency and structure means that European institutions impact actors and their domestic culture, discourse and social structures. This happens through the 'logic of appropriateness', which contends that actors try to follow the appropriate rule in a certain social situation (Risse 2004). This ultimately leads to 'socialization', the internalization of European norms at the domestic level (Checkel 1999). Socialization occurs when political elites are subjected to social interaction and deliberation at the European level, potentially

impacting the interests of the state agent (Checkel 1999). This internalization of European norms can thereby shape domestic discourses and identities (Checkel 1999). This explains how national political elites could experience a change of interests, ideas and identities when participating in EU-platforms (White 2010).

The dynamics of socialization are further explained through the ‘ideational life-cycle thesis’ (Marcussen 2000). This cycle starts with an ideational equilibrium, a situation where political elites share certain common, uncontested understandings. A radically changing environment or crisis leads to contestation of these prevailing norms. The old paradigm is incapable of dealing with the new situation at hand, a situation called the ideational vacuum (Marcussen 2000). In this situation, the internationalization of norms that constitutes socialization can easily take place (Marcussen 2000). The new ideational path chosen eventually leads to the institutionalization of the new norms and a new ideational equilibrium (Marcussen 2000).

Social constructivism thus focuses on the two-way process between European integration and domestic politics and explains how norms develop and influence domestic identities and discourse. It is often used to theorize on the dynamics between identity formation and European integration (Risse 2004; White 2010). This makes it a suitable theory to examine how domestic political discourse is impacted by various forms of European integration. The following paragraph discusses current literature related to identities and European integration.

2.3 Literature Review

Examining why a pan-European identity failed to take hold, Tyler White (2010) argues that support for the EU does not necessarily translate into a change in identity perception. He finds that, besides correlating with economic self-interest, “support for EU institutions and their perceived effectiveness are largely determined by political elite’s ability to shape and frame

discourse on EU integration to mirror and reflect national interests and culture” (White 2010, 4). Accordingly, further European integration efforts should largely fit within ‘the national narrative’ to be supported by national elites (White 2010). By examining case studies of Ireland, Germany and Poland, White makes a convincing argument that support for European integration is dependent on both national identities and social structures as well as (economic) interests. Although unstructured and cluttered at times, his argument adds value by incorporating rationalist elements into the social constructivist framework.

Also attempting to complement social constructivism with a more rationalist approach, Gamze Tanil (2014) creates the social constructivist fusion perspective. This model attempts to account for the influence of domestic structures as well as interests on agents’ behavior, and how this influences their attitudes towards the EU. She concludes that both domestic structures and EU structures influence national elites in their domestic contexts (Tanil 2014). Although her attempt is understandable and her theoretical framework solid, her hypotheses and conclusion fail to incorporate the added value of the fusion perspective. Stressing the mutual constitutiveness of domestic and European structures on political elites’ interests, the model mainly reflects the basic assumptions of social constructivism and thereby fails to provide a substantive contribution to the literature.

Börzel and Risse (2018) examine which theory of European integration best explains the different outcomes of the financial crisis and refugee. They apply the three major theories outlined above to both crises and state that neither fully explains the different European responses. They argue that the sequence of the two crises is crucial in explaining the different outcomes (Börzel & Risse 2018). The financial crisis ‘used up’ what remained of the permissive consensus, leading to increased Euroscepticism. Combined with the nationalist and anti-immigration narrative provided by populist parties during the refugee crisis, this impaired a coherent European response (Börzel & Risse 2018).

Their theory is clear and insightful, but their reasoning is occasionally unsubstantiated. They conclude that by incorporating insights from social constructivism, the major theories on European integration would be able to grasp the dynamics of the different crises, but neglect to further develop this argument. Moreover, they draw on ample research to illustrate the framing of the financial crisis by the political elite. As for the refugee crisis, they state that the political elite failed to provide a competing narrative for the ‘populist forces’, but support this statement only with anecdotal evidence.

2.4 Theoretical Framework & Conceptualization

This research examines the relationship between the increased focus on national identity in political discourse and the different European responses to the financial and refugee crisis, using insights from social constructivism. Social constructivism contends that agents act in an environment of both material and social structures (Risse 2004; White 2010). Scholars generally agree that social structures are made up of shared, collective understandings constituting norms, values, culture and traditions (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998; White 2010). These structures define how actors perceive their identities (Risse 2004).

This research is concerned with social identity, which is defined as the awareness of membership of a group and a psychological attachment to this group (Huddy & Khatib 2007). Such a group constitutes an ‘imagined community’, which could pertain to the nation state or the EU, but also to sexual or political orientation, for instance (Marcussen et al. 2001). National identity can be defined as “the subjective or internalized sense of belonging to the nation” (Huddy & Khatib 2007, 65). The nation as imagined community implies a demarcated territory to which members feel they belong and with which they identify themselves, as well as a sense of political community (Smith 1991). This definition thus includes social structures applied to a national or domestic level. Social constructivism posits that domestic social structures

influence actors' perceptions of their national identity and interests. This leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: The ideas, identities and interests of established political parties are influenced by domestic structures – i.e. norms, values, traditions and culture.

This research aims to bridge the gap in the literature by examining established political parties. Established political parties are defined as parties with 'governing potential' (Abedi 2002) and accordingly constitute parties that have participated in government or those regarded as suitable governing partners; as well as parties willing to join main governing parties in a coalition (Abedi 2002). This definition allows the isolation of established political parties from populist parties which are often characterized as hostile to representative politics (Taggart 2000).

Social constructivism assumes that ideas influence interests and thereby behavior (Risse 2004; White 2010). Marcussen et al. argue that "on the one hand, embedded identity constructions define the boundaries of what actors consider to be legitimate ideas – thereby constituting their perceived interests; and on the other hand, perceived interests define which ideas actors select in their struggle for power among those available to actors" (Marcussen et al. 2001, 103-104). This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: The ideas, identities and interests of established political parties influence their attitude towards the European Union and European integration.

Social constructivism expects European structures to also impact actors and domestic social structures (Risse 2004). European norms are internalized at the domestic level and shape domestic discourses and identities through socialization (Checkel 1999). National political

elites are subjected to social interaction and deliberation at the EU-level, potentially impacting their interests and ideas. This leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: In reverse, European integration influences the ideas, identities and interests of established political parties through the socialization process.

The ideational life-cycle thesis provides additional insights into the process of socialization during crises. When a crisis leads to an ideational vacuum and the old paradigms are unfit to deal with the current situation, political elites are especially susceptible to socialization, or the internalization of norms. Norms are defined as standards of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998). Agreement on an emerging norm among a critical mass of actors can create a tipping point, leading to widespread acceptance (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998).

This research focuses on the different European responses to the financial and refugee crisis. As discussed, the first led to a coherent European policy, whereas the second resulted in member states resorting to national policies. It might therefore be expected that the EU's response to the two crises resulted in different processes of socialization, and thus a different influence on domestic discourse and interests. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

H4: The diverging European responses to the financial crisis and refugee crisis are related to diverging frames used by established political parties in their domestic discourse.

In the case of the financial crisis, the agreement on and implementation of European measures would indicate acceptance of emerging norms and could have enabled the filling of the

ideational vacuum with a credible European frame. This fuels the expectation that the financial crisis is framed by established political parties in regulatory terms. The refugee crisis did not lead to a coherent European response and is therefore expected to not have led to a credible European frame to fill the ideational vacuum. The rejection of European policies by member states would not indicate agreement on an emerging European norm, and thereby no internalization of the norm. The discourse surrounding the refugee crisis is therefore expected to be related to an increased focus on domestic structures, like national identity. The following chapter explicates the research design, the case study of the Netherlands and operationalization of the variables.

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1 Case Study: The Netherlands

The Netherlands was one of the original members of the European Coal and Steel Community and has since been a supporter of European integration. Recently, however, Eurosceptic discourse has gained in strength (Vollaard & Voerman 2017). The PVV advocates a Dutch withdrawal from the EU, an argument getting more attention since Brexit (Vollaard & Voerman 2017). This has coincided with an increased focus on the Dutch identity, society and culture in political discourse. Dutch values and the ‘Jewish Christian’ heritage are frequently referred to in debates (Van den Hemel 2017) and the last few years have witnessed debates about the exterior of ‘Zwarte Piet’ and the celebration of Christmas and Easter (Beerekamp 2016; Niemantsverdriet & Kas 2016). National identity was one of the central themes of the 2017 elections (Abels 2017; Thomas 2017). The long-time membership of the EU and the increased focus on national identity in political discourse makes the Netherlands a suitable case study.

This research focuses on discourse of two political parties: VVD (‘People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy’) and PvdA (‘Labor Party’). These two parties are considered to be part of the political establishment, both having been in government regularly (Vollaard & Voerman 2017). They have thus also represented the Netherlands at the EU and have therefore been subjected to potential socialization. Both parties were in government between 2012 and 2017, during both the financial and refugee crisis. These parties are therefore suitable for examining the development of discourse over the course of these two crises.

3.2 Method & Data

The first hypothesis of this research expects the ideas, identities and interests of established political parties to be influenced by domestic structures. The second hypothesis posits that these ideas, identities and interests influence parties' attitudes towards the EU and European integration. These hypotheses thus require the establishment of relevant domestic structures present in the Netherlands.

Social structures constitute shared, collective understandings that make up norms, values, culture and traditions. These understandings define how actors perceive their identities (Risse 2004). Social structures related to the Dutch national identity need therefore be determined. National identity is defined as the subjective or internalized sense of belonging to a nation (Huddy & Khatib 2007) and requires the establishment of structures that make members feel they belong to the nation. This includes a broader sense of the functioning of Dutch society but also a focus on specific norms and values prevalent in the Netherlands.

This research is specifically concerned with political discourse surrounding the financial and refugee crisis. Therefore, social structures related to immigration, financial integration and European integration need to be determined. These domestic structures are established through secondary sources, including public opinion data from Eurobarometer and academic and historical accounts of the Netherlands. This is similar to data collection by other scholars establishing social structures (White 2010).

The third hypothesis expects European integration to influence the ideas, identities and interests of established political parties through socialization. The fourth hypothesis states that the diverging European responses to the crises are related to diverging frames used by political parties in their domestic discourse. To answer these hypotheses, it is measured how both crises are presented in the political discourse of VVD and PvdA. This discourse is subjected to content analysis. To determine the framing of discourse and how this relates to measures of European

integration, the analysis of messages in verbal and textual form is required. Content analysis is appropriate for this because it allows a contextual analysis of data (Krippendorff 2004). Content analysis is a “technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff 2004, 18). It thus allows the analysis of VVD and PvdA’s discourse, how this is embedded in domestic structures, and how it has been influenced by European integration.

Social constructivist research is often concerned with analyzing communicative and discursive practices (Risse 2004). The understanding of social actions requires the examination of words, language and other communicative acts (Risse 2004). Checkel, for instance, uses content analysis to examine the way international norms affect debates on citizenship and minorities in Germany (Checkel 1999), and again to determine the role of socialization in actors’ compliance with international norms (Checkel 2001). Kriesi et al. rely on content analysis to analyze the impact of globalization on the national political space (Kriesi et al. 2006).

To determine how the financial and refugee crisis are represented in discourse, data from the public, national level of discourse is collected. This includes campaign debates and election programs from the parliamentary elections of 2012 and 2017. Election programs are gathered from the parties’ websites. Campaign debates analyzed are those where the party leader of PvdA, VVD, or both participated. This collection is based on a list of campaign activities on PvdA’s website, including all debates with the PvdA party leader.¹ This list is supplemented with debates where the VVD party leader participated. Of these debates, three are not accessible online. This leads to a total of 11 debates, five in 2012 and six in 2017.

¹ See <https://www.pvda.nl/nieuws/overzicht-campagneactiviteiten/> for the 2012 overview and <https://www.pvda.nl/campagneactiviteiten/> for the 2017 overview.

The collected data is subsequently subjected to content analysis. The codebook is adopted from the Comparative Manifesto Project (Werner et al. 2015), although adjusted to fit this project's objectives. Three domains of interest are identified: 'External Relations', 'Economy' and 'Fabric of Society'. 'External Relations' encompasses parties' attitudes towards European integration and international cooperation. 'Economy' includes the conception of financial responsibility and the response to economic crises. 'Fabric of Society' captures both views on the national way of life and attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism.

It is expected that discourse from the 2012 elections contains less references to the 'Fabric of Society' and more references to 'Economy'. This research expects the coherent European response to the crisis to have enabled political parties to frame the crisis in regulatory, economic terms. It is therefore also expected that PvdA and VVD made positive references to the EU in relation to the crisis. This research furthermore assumes that the EU failed to provide a coherent answer to the refugee crisis, and political parties therefore resorted to national identity in political discourse. This fuels the expectation that discourse of the 2017 elections contained more references to the 'Fabric of Society' and more negative references to the EU. The recording unit of the content comprises a quasi-sentence. When parties make one statement per sentence, the quasi-sentence equals one sentence. It is also possible that one sentence contains more than one unique argument and is therefore coded in more parts (Werner et al. 2015).

3.3 Coding Scheme²

Domain 1: External Relations	Domain 2: Economy	Domain 3: Fabric of Society
101. Military: Positive 102. Military: Negative 103. Peace 104. Internationalism: Positive 105. European Integration: Positive 106. Internationalism: Negative 107. European Integration: Negative	201. Free-Market Economy 202. Incentives 203. Market Regulation 204. Economic Planning 205. Economic Goals 206. Keynesian Demand Management 207. Economic Growth 208. Controlled Economy 209. Economic Orthodoxy	301. National Way of Life: Positive - 301.1. <i>General</i> - 301.2. <i>Immigration: Negative</i> 302. National Way of Life: Negative - 302.1. <i>General</i> - 302.2. <i>Immigration: Positive</i> 303. Traditional Morality: Positive 304. Traditional Morality: Negative 305. Law and Order: Positive 306. Law and Order: Negative 307. Civic Mindedness 308. Multiculturalism: Positive - 308.1. <i>General</i> - 308.2. <i>Integration: Diversity</i> 309. Multiculturalism: Negative - 309.1. <i>General</i> - 309.2. <i>Integration: Assimilation</i>

Table 1: Coding Scheme

² For a full description of the codebook, see appendix 1.

Chapter 4. Domestic Structures

4.1 Preliminary Remarks

This chapter establishes and analyzes the domestic structures present in the Netherlands. Domestic structures – collective understandings constituting norms, values, culture and traditions – are expected to influence the ideas, identities and interests of VVD and PvdA. In turn, these ideas, identities and interests influence their attitude towards the EU. This research expects the financial crisis and refugee crisis to be related to different frames used by PvdA and VVD in domestic discourse. This chapter therefore identifies domestic structures regarding immigration, financial integration and European integration. It is first outlined how the Dutch national identity is typically portrayed by citizens and politicians. This is followed by an outline of developments in the debates on immigration, European integration and financial integration.

4.2 Tolerance and Equality: Norms and Values in Dutch Society

The Netherlands has traditionally been heavily reliant on international trade and cooperation (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (hereinafter: WRR) 2007a). During the 17th century, a liberal financial market, high degree of entrepreneurship and relative freedom of religion characterized the Netherlands (Prak 2005). These liberal norms translated into a great appreciation of freedom. The Dutch consider themselves to be open, tolerant and honest (Sleegers 2007). Such features are often emphasized by politicians. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalize gay marriage, for instance, and politicians often cite this as a prime example of Dutch tolerance and freedom (Niemantsverdriet & Kas 2016).

Contemporary political leaders generally agree on the substance of Dutch norms and values: freedom, equality, tolerance and democracy (Van Steenbergen & Niemantsverdriet 2016). Halbe Zijlstra, current VVD party leader, described the Netherlands as ‘a country where

you can be who you are and do what you want to do'. Diederik Samsom, former PvdA party leader, stated that the Netherlands is a country where there is room for everybody if you are willing to participate with 'this way of life' (Van Steenbergen & Niemantsverdriet 2016).

General attention for the Dutch national identity in the public debate has increased since 2000 (WRR 2007a). The debate on immigration has increasingly been conducted along 'us versus them' lines and the Dutch national identity has increasingly been presented as a vehicle for social cohesion that immigrants actively must choose to adhere to (WRR 2007a). Political discourse since the early 2000s has increasingly emphasized the positive aspects of Dutch culture and society, as opposed to negative aspects of non-Western, especially Islamic, cultures (Sleegers 2007).

4.3 The Netherlands and Immigration

Since the 1980s, the number of immigrants in the Netherlands as well as the number of countries of origin has greatly increased. Whereas in 1971 there were 28 different nationalities, in 1998 there were 110 and 1 January 2018 counted 200 (CBS 2018). The Dutch government policy until the late 1980s was to promote 'integration whilst maintaining one's own identity' and political parties focused on immigration nor multiculturalism (Fermin 1997).

In the early 1990s, VVD party leader Bolkestein became critical of this passive integration policy (Fermin 1997; Sleegers 2007). VVD's 1994 election program subsequently posited that the government should refrain from creating conditions for migrants to integrate whilst maintaining their own identity (Fermin 1997). The debate on multiculturalism gained in strength around the turn of the millennium (Sleegers 2007). The electoral victory of LPF in 2002 and PVV in 2006 was interpreted as a signal of growing dissatisfaction among the Dutch population towards the multicultural society (WRR 2007a).

As part of the solution to the integration challenge, politicians presented the Dutch identity as an example for immigrants to adhere to (WRR 2007a). VVD's 2006 election program presented 'fundamental Western norms' like gender equality and freedom of speech as characteristics of the Dutch national identity, to which migrants should be loyal (Slegers 2007). PvdA focused on the need to bridge the cultural differences between groups of people, but also identified 'certain external values' to be unfit for Dutch society and expressed concern for the loss of the Dutch identity (Fermin 1997; Slegers 2007).

In 2010, the immigration-critical PVV became the third-largest party in parliament and the political focus on immigration increased. In 2015, citizens identified immigration and integration as one of the main societal problems, 42% of respondents stated that the Netherlands would be a nicer place to live if there were less immigrants (SCP 2015). A significant part of the Dutch population furthermore feels that the Netherlands has changed 'unrecognizably', indicating feelings of loss of their identity and fear of losing control over the Netherlands (Smeeke & Mulder 2016).

4.4 The Netherlands and the European Union

As an open economy reliant on international trade, the Netherlands has consistently favored the removal of intra-European trade obstacles and the creation of the internal market (WRR 2007b). This preference for economic rather than political integration led to pragmatism, where European challenges were often treated as if of a purely technical nature (WRR 2007b; EC 2013). Support for European integration has been rather high among the Dutch population compared to the rest of Europe. In 2006, 73% of the Dutch population supported EU membership (WRR 2007b). In 2016, this was 66% (Alonso 2016).

VVD traditionally opposed political integration without a solid economic foundation and considered economic integration mainly necessary given the Dutch reliance on

international trade (Vollaard & Voerman 2017). The party became more 'Europragmatic' under the leadership of Bolkestein. VVD stated the creation of the Euro was in the Netherlands' best interest, but voted against enlargement of the EU to Central and Eastern Europe, arguing that the EU was not a federation but a 'pragmatic marriage' (Vollaard & Voerman 2017). Since then, VVD has recognized the need to transfer national responsibilities to the European level out of mainly pragmatic motives. The party repeatedly emphasizes the Dutch identity and the need to protect it in the integrative process (Pellikaan et al. 2007; Niemantsverdriet & Kas 2016).

PvdA has traditionally had a more supranational perspective towards the EU. It favored both economic and political integration, but also supported a bigger role for national parliaments and a clearer division of authority between the European and national levels of government (Vollaard & Voerman 2017). In the early 2000s, PvdA became more Europragmatic and described the EU as a cooperative effort to tackle transnational problems, but still foresaw a role for the EU in strengthening international law and development (Pellikaan et al. 2007).

4.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter established the relevant Dutch domestic structures. Tolerance, equality and freedom are denoted by citizens and politicians alike as norms and values characterizing Dutch society. PvdA and VVD agree on these substantive elements of the Dutch national identity. The debate on immigration has become increasingly strained, both parties identify problematic consequences of unrestrained immigration. VVD has emphasized the need for immigrants to express loyalty to the fundamental elements of the Dutch national identity, whereas PvdA focused more on the need to bridge cultural differences. Both the Dutch population and politicians have consistently supported European economic integration, resulting from its open,

internationally-oriented economy. VVD underlines the importance of economic integration from a pragmatic perspective, whereas PvdA maintains a more idealistic perspective on the potential influence and role of the EU. The influence of these established social structures is analyzed in the following chapters.

Chapter 5. Data Analysis

5.1 Preliminary Remarks

This chapter presents and analyzes the collected data. A total of 15 documents, four election programs and 11 campaign debates, are subjected to content analysis.³ Only those parts of the documents are coded that relate to one of the domains set out in the codebook: ‘External Relations’, ‘Economy’ and ‘Fabric of Society’. In the case of election programs, the selection of coded content is based on the programs’ chapters.⁴ Campaign debates are examined in full length, but only the parts relating to one of the domains are coded. This chapter first provides some numerical developments drawn from the data. Relevant parts of the content are subsequently examined in greater depth. For the 2012 documents, references to the financial crisis are discussed. Responses to the refugee crisis are highlighted for the 2017 documents.

5.2 Development of Discourse

This research examines the way in which the political discourse of PvdA and VVD developed in relation to the European responses to the financial and refugee crisis. The tables below show the development in election programs of references to the EU and internationalism between 2012 and 2017.⁵ The allocated codes are presented as percentages of the domain ‘External Relations’ and as percentages of the total codes allotted to the document overall.

³ See appendix 2 for a full list of coded documents.

⁴ See appendix 3 for a full list of chapters in the election programs.

⁵ The tables do not include codes that were assigned zero times to both the 2012 and 2017 documents. See appendix 4 for the total allocation of codes.

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
101. Military: Positive	14,7	3,9	36,7	11,1
102. Military: Negative	0	0	0,4	0,1
104. Internationalism: Positive	15,3	4,1	36,3	11
105. European Integration: Positive	33,5	8,9	11,1	3,4
106. Internationalism: Negative	10	2,7	3,0	0,9
107. European Integration: Negative	26,5	7	12,6	3,8
Totals	100	26,6	100	30,3

Table 2: VVD Election Programs – External Relations

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
101. Military: Positive	10,5	2,8	8,3	2,0
102. Military: Negative	5,8	1,5	3,8	0,9
103. Peace	0,5	0,1	2,6	0,6
104. Internationalism: Positive	46,8	12,3	45,5	11,1
105. European Integration: Positive	33,7	8,9	28,8	7
106. Internationalism: Negative	0	0	5,1	1,3
107. European Integration: Negative	2,6	0,7	5,8	1,4
Totals	100	26,3	100	24,3

Table 3: PvdA Election Programs – External Relations

These tables show that VVD makes less positive references to the EU in 2017, but also less negative references. Its positive references to internationalism increase substantially. PvdA shows a slight decrease of positive references to the EU and internationalism, and a slight increase of negative references to the EU and internationalism. The following tables present the same development for the domain ‘Economy’ in the examined election programs. The codes are similarly expressed as percentages of the domain and as percentages of the total number of codes allocated to the document.

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
201. Free-Market Economy	47,3	15,1	35,4	6,9
202. Incentives	11,7	3,7	27,4	5,4
203. Market Regulation	4,9	1,6	1,7	0,3
205. Economic Goals	14,1	4,5	9,7	1,9
207. Economic Growth	7,8	2,5	9,1	1,8
209. Economic Orthodoxy	14,1	4,5	16,6	3,2
Totals	100	31,9	100	19,5

Table 4: VVD Election Programs – Economy

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
201. Free-Market Economy	17,3	6,5	7,7	2
202. Incentives	11,1	4,2	7	1,7
203. Market Regulation	28,8	10,8	19,6	5,2
204. Economic Planning	0,4	0,1	4,2	1,1
205. Economic Goals	8,5	3,2	22	5,8
206. Keynesian Demand Management	10,3	3,9	2,4	0,6
207. Economic Growth	11,4	4,3	7,7	2
208. Controlled Economy	4,4	1,7	25	6,6
209. Economic Orthodoxy	7,7	2,9	4,8	1,3
Totals	100	37,6	100	26,3

Table 5: PvdA Election Programs – Economy

Both PvdA and VVD make significantly less references to the economy in their 2017 election programs. VVD mainly shows a sharp decrease in references to the free-market economy. PvdA makes less references to the free-market economy and market regulation. It makes more references to a controlled economy and economic goals.

The following tables show the development of references to the ‘Fabric of Society’ between 2012 and 2017 in the election programs.

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
301.1 National Way of Life: Positive	3,8	1,6	32,8	16,5
301.2. Immigration: Negative	0,8	0,3	10	5
302.2. Immigration: Positive	1,9	0,8	0,4	0,2
303. Traditional Morality: Positive	3,0	1,2	0	0
304. Traditional Morality: Negative	2,6	1,1	0	0
305. Law and Order: Positive	63,5	26,7	42,3	21,2
306. Law and Order: Negative	0	0	0,9	0,4
307. Civic Mindedness	7,5	3,4	4,7	2,4
308.1. Multiculturalism: Positive	1,9	0,8	0	0
309.1. Multiculturalism: Negative	15,0	6,2	6,7	3,4
309.2. Immigrant Integration: Assimilation	0	0	2,2	1,1
Totals	100,0	41,8	100	50,2

Table 6: VVD Election Programs – Fabric of Society

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
301.1 National Way of Life: Positive	15	5,4	9,8	4,9
301.2. Immigration: Negative	0	0	1	0,5
302.2. Immigration: Positive	0	0	2,2	1,1
303. Traditional Morality: Positive	2,3	0,8	0	0
304. Traditional Morality: Negative	2,3	0,8	1	0,5
305. Law and Order: Positive	41,5	15	30,2	14,9
306. Law and Order: Negative	0	0	1	0,5
307. Civic Mindedness	20,8	7,5	43,5	21
308.1. Multiculturalism: Positive	9,2	3,3	1,9	0,9
308.2. Immigrant Integration: Diversity	0	0	1,3	0,6
309.1. Multiculturalism: Negative	8,5	3,1	7,9	3,9
309.2. Immigrant Integration: Assimilation	0,4	0,1	0,3	0,2
Totals	100	36	100	49,4

Table 7: PvdA Election Programs – Fabric of Society

These tables show that both parties make substantially increased references to the domain ‘Fabric of Society’. PvdA mainly makes more references to civic mindedness. The election

programs of VVD show a sharp increase in positive references to the national way of life and negative references to immigration. Based on these developments, the following paragraphs examine the discourse in greater depth.

5.3 VVD

5.3.1 DISCOURSE IN 2012

VVD's 2012 election program contains 97 references, over 15% of the total coded content, to the importance of free-market economy. References to economic orthodoxy, incentives and economic goals make up another 12,7% of the total content. Economic growth, entrepreneurship and the stability of the eurozone are presented as important measures to deal with the financial crisis: "It is in the Dutch best interest for other eurocountries to also have their government finances in order" and VVD therefore "supports the goals of the European Stability and Growth Pact" (VVD 2017, 11).

VVD argues that the financial crisis requires "strong supervision of the European Commission" (p. 11). The party considers this to be "the most important task of the EU: contribute to what makes the Europeans and Dutch more free, more wealthy and more secure" (p. 57). Positive references to the EU mainly concern the economic benefits provided by European cooperation (p. 57-59). This focus on economic growth, financial orthodoxy and the need to stabilize the Eurozone is also present in the 2012 campaign debates. Rutte states that "as Prime Minister I therefore fight in Europe to maintain a strong market and a strong currency".⁶ He claims that the Netherlands "demanded and obtained strict budgetary discipline, strict budgetary supervision, an enormous strengthening of the internal market."⁷ He further emphasizes specific tasks of European institutions, for instance by stating that "the ECB has a

⁶ VVD, debate nr. 2.

⁷ VVD, debate nr. 3.

job to keep the euro stable, and the money they are willing to put in buying bonds is taken out of the market at the same time, so no extra money needs to be printed.”⁸

5.3.2 DISCOURSE IN 2017

Figure 1 shows the development of relevant references to the economy and fabric of society between 2012 and 2017 in the VVD election programs. The discourse is expressed as a percentage of the total codes allocated to the election program.

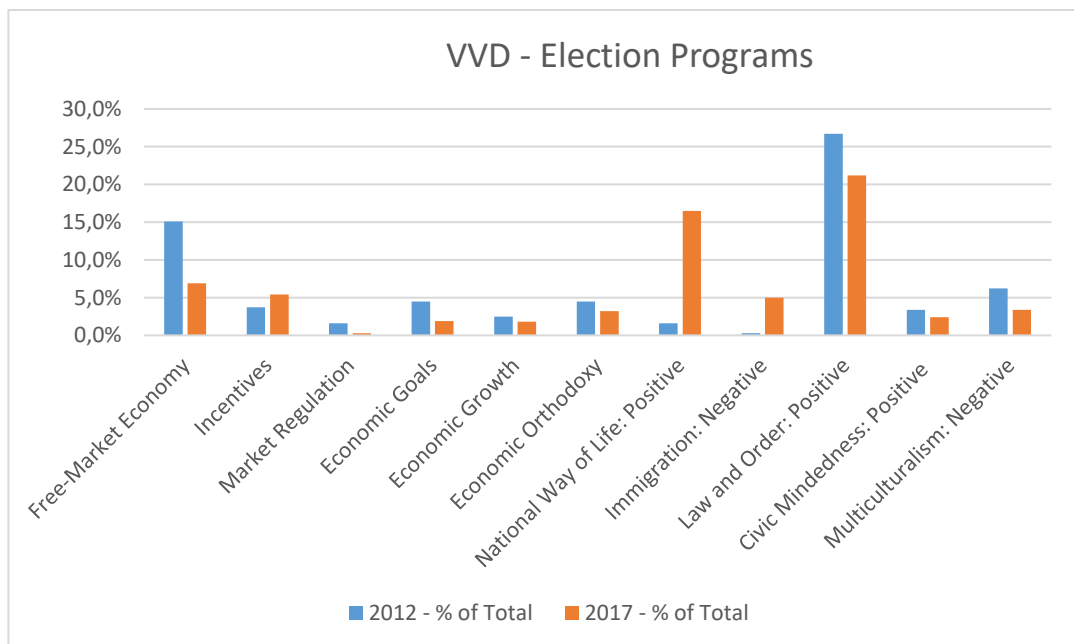


Figure 1: VVD Election Programs – 2012/2017

This shows the increase in positive references to the national way of life and negative references to immigration. VVD states that the numbers of migrants arriving are “untenable for Europe and for the Netherlands [...] Will the Netherlands remain the Netherlands?” (VVD 2017, 11). The program furthermore states that:

⁸ VVD, debate nr. 3.

“In the Netherlands we should clarify what we stand for and what we believe to be normal in this country. That it is normal for men and women to be equal, as for homo- and heterosexuals, believers and non-believers. That we stand for our values and our freedoms. And that these values are non-negotiable.”⁹

VVD states that the limit to the “capacity of our society is in sight” (p. 18). Although the party stresses the right of refugees to a safe haven, this does not necessarily have to be Europe. VVD advocates sufficient accommodation in local regions (p. 18). References to internationalism mainly concern the necessity of maintaining good relations with other countries to enable this accommodation. VVD stresses that “open internal borders only function well with well-guarded European external borders” (p. 24). The program does not refer to other European measures to be taken in relation to the refugee crisis.

In the 2017 campaign debates, party leader Zijlstra states that “if you look at large migration influxes, people wonder if this country, the Netherlands, will remain what it is.”¹⁰ PM Rutte likewise expresses his concern “that we stealthily hand in more and more of our culture.”¹¹ Rutte expresses support for European cooperation in countering large influxes of refugees, and refers to the Turkey agreement made during the EU-presidency of the Netherlands.¹² He also stresses the need to make similar agreements with other countries.¹³

5.4 PvdA

5.4.1 DISCOURSE IN 2012

Of PvdA’s 2012 election program, 10,8% of the coded content refers to the need for market regulation. References to the free-market economy, incentives and economic growth constitute another 15%. The program underlines the need for European cooperation: “A prosperous

⁹ VVD 2017, 11.

¹⁰ VVD, debate nr. 6.

¹¹ VVD, debate nr. 7.

¹² VVD, debates nr. 7 and 10.

¹³ VVD, debate nr. 11.

Holland can't do without our European surroundings" (PvdA 2012, 6). PvdA therefore advocates "a Europe that is much more than a market and a currency" (p. 6).

Various measures to stimulate economic recovery are presented, like tripling the budget of the Innovation Fund; establishing a National Investment Bank and reducing VAT tariffs; (p. 8-9). PvdA advocates a financial transaction tax, increased supervision of the 'Authority Financial Markets', and increased capital requirements for banks (p. 13). PvdA criticizes the fact that supervision of banks is primarily nationally regulated while the monetary union is European, and therefore supports the creation of European banking supervision (p. 14). The need for European cooperation to curb financial markets is also emphasized. Various European policy recommendations are made, including the establishment of a European Banking Union and deposit guarantee scheme, an emergency fund like the ESM, and a more active role for the ECB (p. 56-58).

Discourse in the 2012 debates also stresses the need for European cooperation, because "only a European course of action against international banks is possible".¹⁴ The need for governmental budget balance as well as the continuing need for economic investments is emphasized.¹⁵ Party leader Samsom further advocates the payment of "an extra bank and financial transaction tax" to reduce recklessness from banks.¹⁶

5.4.2 DISCOURSE IN 2017

Figure 2 shows the development of references to the economy and fabric of society between 2012 and 2017 in the PvdA election programs. The discourse is expressed as a percentage of the total codes allocated to the election program.

¹⁴ PvdA, debate nr. 2.

¹⁵ PvdA, debate nr. 1.

¹⁶ PvdA, debate nr. 4.

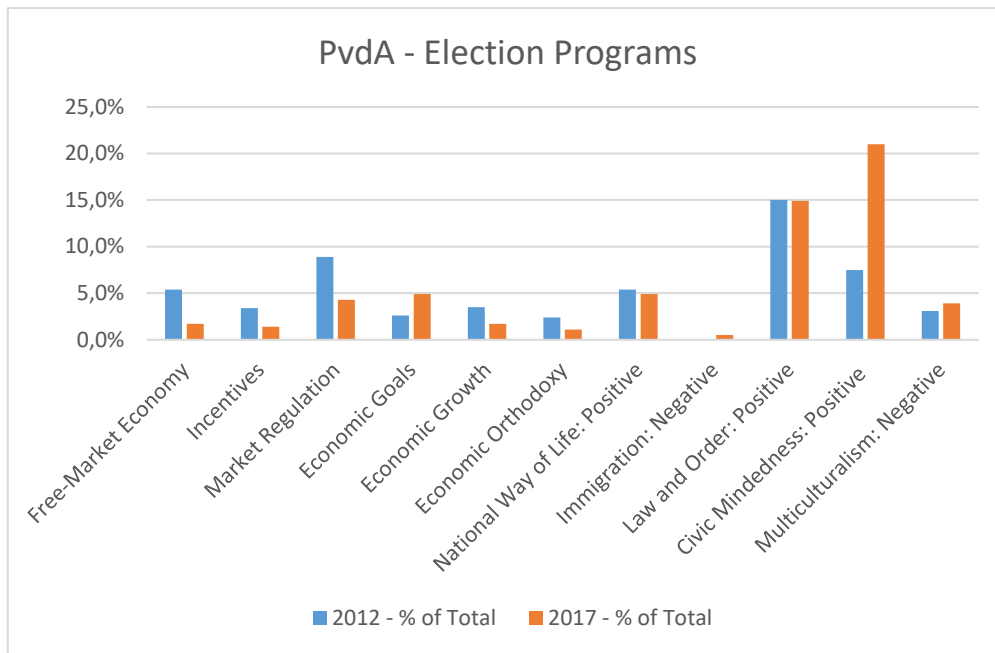


Figure 2: PvdA Election Programs – 2012/2017

This figure shows the stable references to multiculturalism and the national way of life, and the sharp increase in references to civic mindedness. This is reflected in the program’s emphasis on bridging cultural differences to resolve the tensions created by the refugee crisis. “Of course, there are differences, in cultural background, in world views and in perspectives. But for us the central question is always how and if these are to be bridged [...] The Netherlands has a long history of bridging opposites by looking for the mutual interest” (PvdA 2017, 11). PvdA does expect newcomers to make an “explicit choice for an existence in the Netherlands” (p. 12) and underlines the need for “newcomers to respect and endorse our values of tolerance, freedom, equality, solidarity and human rights” (p. 16).

PvdA states that “[t]he refugee problem is a European challenge that demands a common European solution” (p. 16). It furthermore advocates “the European Commission and the member states to take responsibility by supporting countries like Greece and Italy, by honoring their commitments about the relocation of refugees, and by ensuring that the fundamental rights of refugees are protected everywhere in Europe, including the right to a fair

and efficient asylum procedure” (p. 17). PvdA also supports the closing of international agreements to allow accommodation in the region (p. 17).

In the 2017 debates, party leader Asscher underlines the need to “defend very crucial values: the freedom of speech, the freedom to be judged on what you do, instead of where you come from”.¹⁷ He also claims that the Dutch identity “is not under pressure, except if we don’t defend it [...] if people come here from the Middle East, we have to tell them about freedom of religion, freedom of speech, respect for each other”.¹⁸

5.5 Summary of Findings

The presented data shows that VVD presented economic growth, economic orthodoxy and Eurozone-stability as important measures to the financial crisis. The party presented various European solutions as being “in the Dutch best interest” (VVD 2012, 11). PM Rutte referred in technical terms to European solutions to the crisis, evidenced by his reference to the job of the ECB in the crisis.¹⁹ He further emphasized the Dutch efforts in Brussels, leading to strengthened budgetary discipline, budgetary supervision and a strengthened internal market.²⁰

VVD’s response to the refugee crisis was linked to the Dutch national way of life. It emphasized the ‘untenable’ groups of migrants arriving and questioned whether the Netherlands would remain the Netherlands. The election program made limited references to the EU in relation to the refugee crisis. Rutte made some additional references to European solutions in the campaign debates, focusing on agreements made during the Dutch EU-presidency.

¹⁷ PvdA, debate nr. 6.

¹⁸ PvdA, debate nr. 8.

¹⁹ VVD, debate nr. 3.

²⁰ VVD, debate nr. 3.

PvdA presented the financial crisis as a European problem. It stressed the importance of economic growth, economic orthodoxy and market regulation and argued that it was time for the EU to tackle the financial sector. PvdA proposed multiple European regulatory measures like establishing a Banking Union and deposit guarantee scheme, creating a financial transaction tax and allowing a more active role for the ECB. Party leader Samsom confirmed the need for a desired European course of action in the 2012 debates.

PvdA's response to the refugee crisis was framed in terms of civic mindedness and, by extension, national identity. It emphasized that the ability to bridge cultural differences created by the crisis was inherent to the Dutch identity (PvdA 2017, 5, 11), but also stressed the importance of teaching newcomers about Dutch values. PvdA called on the European Commission and member states to honor their commitments in relation to the refugee crisis. In the 2017 debates, PvdA focused more on Dutch values and freedoms than European solutions.

The data thus shows that both VVD and PvdA presented the financial crisis as an issue requiring European cooperation. The financial crisis was not linked to issues of national identity in the parties' discourse but rather to regulatory measures. The refugee crisis was presented in terms of national identity and the national way of life. Solutions presented by the parties, although substantively different, were framed in a national context. PvdA made more references to the EU in relation to the refugee crisis than VVD, but these references mainly concerned stimulations to fulfill earlier made agreements. The implications of this data are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6. Discussion

This chapter discusses how the data relates to the theoretical argument and how this culminates in the final contribution of this research. The theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2 established the first hypotheses:

H1: The ideas, identities and interests of established political parties are influenced by domestic structures – i.e. norms, values, traditions and culture.

H2: The ideas, identities and interests of established political parties influence their attitude towards the European Union and European integration.

Chapter 4 established the domestic structures present in the Netherlands, focusing on structures related to immigration, financial integration and European integration. It is shown that tolerance, equality and freedom are often denoted as norms and values characterizing Dutch society (Sleegers 2007). The Netherlands is furthermore characterized by economic liberalism (Prak 2005; Sleegers 2007). Both PvdA and VVD agree on these substantive parts of the Dutch national identity (Van Steenberghe & Niemantsverdriet 2016). Immigration is regarded as one of the main societal problems by Dutch citizens (SCP 2015; Smeeke & Mulder 2016). VVD has largely focused on the need for immigrants to adhere to fundamental elements of the Dutch identity, whereas PvdA focuses on the need to bridge cultural differences. It was furthermore shown that the Netherlands has traditionally relied on international trade and consistently favored the strengthening of the European internal market (WRR 2007b). PvdA has traditionally been a proponent of economic and political integration, whereas VVD mainly supported economic integration from a pragmatic perspective (Vollaard & Voerman 2017).

These findings illustrate how Dutch domestic structures influence the interests and ideas of both PvdA and VVD, and in turn their attitudes towards the EU. Both parties frequently emphasize Dutch norms and values like tolerance, freedom and equality. Not only does the population consider themselves tolerant and egalitarian, this is also reflected in parties' discourse. The economic liberalism and reliance on international trade prevalent in the Netherlands impact both parties' attitude towards the EU, as both consistently supported the internal market and removal of trade obstacles. This is in line with White's argument that support for European institutions correlates with economic self-interest, and that European integration efforts should fit within the 'national narrative' to be supported by political elites (White 2010). PvdA and VVD's support for the EU and economic integration seamlessly fits into the national narrative of economic liberalism. Domestic structures are also reflected in their approach to immigration, where both stress the need for immigrants to adhere to Dutch values like equality and freedom. These findings thus illustrate how Dutch domestic structures impact the ideas and interests of PvdA and VVD, and in turn their attitude to European integration.

The theoretical framework further explicates how European integration influences domestic interests and discourse. This research expects European norms and structures to be internalized at the domestic level and thereby shape domestic discourse and identities (Checkel 1999; Risse 2004). Considering the different European responses to the financial and refugee crisis, this led to the following hypotheses:

H3: In reverse, European integration influences the ideas, identities and interests of established political parties through the socialization process.

H4: The diverging European responses to the financial crisis and refugee crisis are related to diverging frames used by established political parties in their domestic discourse.

The presented data shows that both VVD and PvdA presented the financial crisis as an issue requiring European cooperation. Both referred to economic growth, economic orthodoxy and the Eurozone-stability as important measures to the crisis, and both suggested various European measures like granting more authority to the European Commission, establishing a European Banking Union and developing the European Stability Mechanism. The crisis and proposed solutions were not linked to issues of national identity, but to technical and economic measures. These findings are consistent with other studies indicating economic and regulatory frames used by the European political elite in response to the financial crisis (Chang 2016; Kriesi & Grande 2016).

According to the third hypothesis, the parties' support for European measures can be explained by socialization. Subjection to social interaction and deliberation at the EU level potentially impacts interests and ideas (Checkel 1999). According to the ideational life-cycle thesis, a crisis leads to an ideational vacuum, where none of the old norms and ideas can deal with the present situation (Marcussen 2000). During the financial crisis, the EU presumably succeeded in providing a coherent and credible response to the crisis, which was agreed on and implemented by most member states. This acceptance of emerging norms enabled political parties to present the financial crisis as requiring European solutions and cooperation.

As for the refugee crisis, the data shows this coincided with a substantial increase in references to the national way of life for VVD and civic mindedness for PvdA. Both parties frequently referred to Dutch values like tolerance, freedom and equality. Thus, although the parties have substantively different ideas on how to handle the refugee crisis, they both frame their solutions in terms of what constitutes the Dutch national identity and how this is relevant in overcoming the crisis. References to the EU in relation to the crisis are made sparingly and without much detail, as opposed to the more technical and regulatory European solutions proposed during the financial crisis.

This can also be explained by the process of socialization. The refugee crisis did not result in a coherent European response and member states reverted to national measures. European measures were rejected or implemented slowly. The rejection of European policies by member states does not indicate agreement on and acceptance of an emerging norm, and thereby hinders internalization of European norms. This could explain the obstacle for political parties to present the refugee crisis as requiring European cooperation. Considering the life-cycle thesis, it might thus be argued that the EU failed to provide a coherent and credible response to fill the ideational vacuum created by the crisis. Unable to use an effective and internalized European frame, established political parties were thereby forced to rely on another frame in response to the crisis. The Dutch domestic structures related to immigration steered political discourse in the direction of presenting the Dutch national identity as a vehicle for national cohesion and Dutch norms and values as elements immigrants should adhere. This explains the increased focus on domestic structures like national identity by PvdA and VVD.

This research thus shows a correlation between the use of national identity in the discourse of PvdA and VVD and the diverging European responses to the financial crisis and refugee crisis. The financial crisis, resulting in increased European integration, was not framed in terms of national identity but in terms of technical European measures. The refugee crisis, not resulting in a coherent European response but in national measures instead, was framed in terms of the Dutch national identity. These results follow the expectations as set out in chapter 2 and 3. The findings on parties' discourse surrounding the financial crisis is consistent with other research on frames used by the European political elite during the financial crisis. The contribution of this research thus lies in the comparison of discourse of established political parties surrounding the two crises. Limitations of this research and how these findings could be substantiated further are identified in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

It was the purpose of this research to highlight the development of discourse of established political parties surrounding the financial crisis and refugee crisis, and establish to what extent this development is related to the diverging European responses to the crises. The financial crisis led to the increased transfer of authority to the European level and a substantial deepening of European integration, whereas the refugee crisis led to member states taking measures into their own hands. Although scholars have examined how established political parties framed the financial crisis and how populist parties framed both crises, the gap in the literature constituted the way the discourse of established political parties developed over the course of these two crises. This research aimed to bridge that gap.

Using insights from social constructivism as the theoretical basis, this research examined the discourse of two established political parties in the case study of the Netherlands. After having determined relevant social structures prevalent in the Netherlands, discourse gathered from election programs and campaign debates was subjected to content analysis. Although other qualitative research methods, like interviews or discourse analysis, would also be appropriate for studying social structures and identities as represented in discourse, this research was limited in time and scope. Interviews would need to be conducted with high-level elected officials, requiring significant time and access. Discourse analysis is mainly concerned with the relationship between language and power structures. This research was concerned with the construction of actual language and considered content analysis to be the appropriate research method.

Content analysis showed that both parties presented the financial crisis as an issue requiring European cooperation. Solutions to the crisis were presented in technical, regulatory

terms and often in a European context. More importantly, these solutions were not linked to national identity, findings consistent with other studies examining the discourse of the political elite surrounding the financial crisis.

It was furthermore shown that the refugee crisis was related to a sharp increase in references to national identity and the national way of life. Although PvdA and VVD had different ideas on how to handle the crisis, they both framed their solutions in terms of what constitutes the Dutch national identity and how this is relevant in overcoming the crisis. References to the EU were made sparingly and without much detail, as opposed to the more technical and regulatory European solutions proposed during the financial crisis.

The results of this research thus show a relationship between the increased focus on national identity in elite political discourse and the diverging European responses to the crises. Based on social constructivist assumptions, this development of discourse was explained by the socialization process. This research was limited in time and scope, and the relationship shown should therefore be considered as correlational rather than causal. The discourse examined was limited to election programs and campaign debates. In the case of the Netherlands, future research could incorporate governmental discourse, such as parliamentary debates, government statements and legislation. Another interesting angle would be the European level, including discourse from the Council of the EU, European Council and European Parliament. This has the potential to further substantiate the theory of socialization as explanation for the different frames in discourse used by established political parties. At this point, socialization can be used as an explanation for the relationship shown. Evidence from the European level would increase the potential of showing the way parties are actually subjected to socialization and how this impacts their discourse.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Coding Scheme

Domain 1: External Relations
<p>101. Military: Positive The importance of external security and defense. May include statements concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need to maintain or increase military expenditure;• The need to secure adequate manpower in the military;• The need to modernize armed forces and improve military strength;• The need for rearmament and self-defense;• The need to keep military treaty obligations.
<p>102. Military: Negative Negative references to the military or use of military power to solve conflicts. References to the ‘evils of war’. May include references to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreasing military expenditures;• Disarmament;• Reduced or abolished conscription.
<p>103. Peace Any declaration of belief in peace and peaceful means of solving crises – absent reference to the military. May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peace as a general goal;• Desirability of countries joining in negotiations with hostile countries;• Ending wars in order to establish peace.
<p>104. Internationalism: Positive Need for international cooperation. May include references to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for aid to developing countries;• Need for world planning of resources;• Support for global governance;• Need for international courts;• Support for the UN or other international organizations.
<p>105. European Integration: Positive Favorable mentions of the EU in general. May include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desirability of the Netherlands remaining a member;• Desirability of expanding the EU;• Desirability of increasing the EU’s competences;• Desirability of expanding the competences of the European Parliament.
<p>106. Internationalism: Negative Negative references to international cooperation. Favorable mentions of national independence and sovereignty with regard to the Netherlands’ foreign policy, isolation and/or unilateralism as opposed to internationalism.</p>
<p>107. European Integration: Negative Negative references to the EU. May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opposition to specific European policies preferred by European authorities;• Opposition to the net-contribution of the Netherlands to the EU budget;• Opposition to the Netherlands remaining a member;• Opposition to expanding or deepening the competences of the EU;• Opposition to expanding the competences of the European Parliament

Domain 2: Economy

201. Free-Market Economy: Positive

Favorable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model. May include favorable references to:

- Laissez-faire economy;
- Superiority of individual enterprise over state and control systems;
- Private property rights;
- Personal enterprise and initiative;
- Need for unhampered individual enterprises.

202. Incentives: Positive

Favorable mentions of supply side oriented economic policies (assistance to businesses rather than consumers). May include:

- Financial and other incentives such as subsidies, tax breaks, etc;
- Wage and tax policies to induce enterprises;
- Encouragement to start enterprises.

203. Market Regulation: Positive

Support for policies designed to create a fair and open economic market. May include:

- Calls for increased consumer protection;
- Increasing economic competition by preventing monopolies and other actions disrupting the functioning of the market;
- Defense of small businesses against disruptive powers of big businesses;
- Social market economy.

204. Economic Planning: Positive

Favorable mentions of long-standing economic planning by the government. May be:

- Policy plans, strategies, policy patterns etc;
- Of a consultative or indicative nature.

205. Economic Goals

Broad and general economic goals that are not mentioned in relation to any other category. General economic statements that fail to include any specific goal.

206. Keynesian Demand Management

Favorable mentions of demand side oriented economic policies (assistance to consumers rather than businesses). Particularly includes increasing private demand through:

- Increasing public demand;
- Increasing social expenditures.

May also include:

- Stabilization in the face of depression;
- Government stimulus plans in the face of economic crises.

207. Economic Growth: Positive

The paradigm of economic growth. Includes:

- General need to encourage or facilitate greater production;
- Need for the government to take measures to aid economic growth.

208. Controlled Economy

Support for direct government control of economy. May include, for instance:

- Control over prices;
- Introduction of minimum wages.

209. Economic Orthodoxy

Need for economically healthy government policy making. May include calls for:

- Reduction of budget deficits;

- Retrenchment in crisis;
- Thrift and savings in the face of economic hardship;
- Support for traditional economic institutions such as stock market and banking system;
- Support for strong currency.

Domain 3: Fabric of Society

[301. National Way of Life: Positive, comprised of:]

301.1 General

Favorable mentions of the Netherlands' nation, history and general appeals. May include:

- Support for established national ideas;
- General appeals to pride of citizenship;
- Appeals to patriotism;
- Appeals to nationalism;
- Suspension of some freedoms in order to protect the state against subversion.

301.2 Immigration: Negative

Statement advocating the restriction of the process of immigration, i.e. accepting new immigrants. Might include statements regarding:

- Immigration being a threat to the national character of the Netherlands;
- 'The boat is full' argument;
- The introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions etc.

[302. National Way of Life: Negative, comprised of:]

302.1 General

Unfavorable mentions of the Netherlands' nation and history. May include:

- Opposition to patriotism;
- Opposition to nationalism;
- Opposition to the existing national state, national pride, and national ideas.

302.2 Immigration: Positive

Statements favoring new immigrants; against restrictions and quotas; rejection of 'the boat is full' argument. Includes allowing new immigrants for the benefit of the Netherlands' economy.

303. Traditional Morality: Positive

Favorable mentions of traditional and/or religious moral values. May include:

- Prohibition, censorship and suppression of immorality and unseemly behavior;
- Maintenance and stability of the traditional family as a value;
- Support for the role of religious institutions in state and society.

304. Traditional Morality: Negative

Opposition to traditional and/or religious moral values. May include:

- Support for divorce, abortion, etc;
- General support for modern family composition;
- Calls for the separation of church and state.

305. Law and Order: Positive

Favorable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime. Only refers to the enforcement of the status quo of the Netherlands' or European law code. May include:

- Increasing support and resources for the police;
- Tougher attitudes in courts;
- Importance of internal security.

306. Law and Order: Negative

Favorable mentions of less law enforcement or rejection of plans for stronger law enforcement. Only refers to the enforcement of the status quo of the Netherlands' or European law code. May include:

- Less resources for the police;
- Reducing penalties;
- Calls for abolishing the death penalty;
- Decriminalization of drugs, prostitution, etc.

307. Civic Mindedness: Positive

General appeals for national solidarity and the need for society to see itself as united. Calls for solidarity with and help for fellow people, familiar and unfamiliar. May include:

- Favorable mentions of the civil society and volunteering;
- Decrying anti-social attitudes in times of crisis;
- Appeals for public spiritedness;
- Support for the public interest.

[308. Multiculturalism: Positive, comprised of:]**308.1 General**

Favorable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies. May include the preservation of autonomy of religious, linguistic heritages within the Netherlands including special educational provisions.

308.2 Immigrant Integration: Diversity

Statements favoring the idea that immigrants keep their cultural traits; voluntary integration; state providing opportunities to integrate.

[309. Multiculturalism: Negative, comprised of:]**309.1 General**

The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration. Appeals for cultural homogeneity in society.

309.2 Immigrant Integration: Assimilation

Calls for immigrants that are in the Netherlands to adopt the Netherlands' culture and fully assimilate. Reinforce integration.

Appendix 2. List of Coded Documents

2.1 ELECTION PROGRAMS

PvdA. 2012. *Nederland Sterker & Socialer*. Election Program Parliamentary Elections 2012.

PvdA. 2017. *Een Verbonden Samenleving*. Election Program Parliamentary Elections 2017.

VVD. 2012. *Niet Doorschuiven maar Aanpakken*. Election Program Parliamentary Elections 2012.

VVD. 2017. *Zeker Nederland*. Election Program Parliamentary Elections 2017.

2.2 CAMPAIGN DEBATES

1. NOS, 'Nederland Kiest: Campagnestart 2012', Party Leader Debate. 22 August 2012. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hef3fWXmTyU&t=10s> [accessed 4 June 2018].
2. RTL, 'Premiersdebat', Party Leader Debate. 26 August 2012. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrYC8GDc54M> [accessed 4 June 2018].
3. EO, 'Knevel & Van Den Brink Verkiezingsdebat 2012', Party Leader Debate, 30 August 2012. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA8aJ_E_60Q&t=29s [accessed 4 June 2018].
4. EenVandaag, 'Erasmus University Debate.' 6 September 2012. Available at https://www.npo.nl/erasmus-debat/06-09-2012/AVRO_1561243 [accessed 4 June 2018].
5. NOS, 'Nederland Kiest: Verkiezingsdebat 2012', Party Leader Debate. 11 September 2012. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gt29db0c3hw&t=8s> [accessed 4 June 2018].
6. RTV Noord, 'Debat van het Noorden', Party Leader Debate. 8 February 2017. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAsZ-yI4h9I> [accessed 4 June 2018].
7. RTL, 'Carré Debate', Party Leader Debate. 5 March 2017. Available at <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5e0pho> [accessed 4 June 2018].
8. EenVandaag, 'Lodewijk Asscher vs. Emile Roemer', Party Leader Debate. 10 March 2017. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRAw27fd71Y> [accessed 4 June 2018].
9. Omroep Brabant, 'Debat van het Zuiden', Party Leader Debate. 11 March 2017. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtQ1GKKqdag&t=1s> [accessed 4 June 2018].
10. EenVandaag, 'Mark Rutte vs. Geert Wilders', Party Leader Debate. 13 March 2017. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOB08lo3qEA&t=3s> [accessed 4 June 2018].
11. NOS, 'Slotdebat', Party Leader Debate. 14 March 2017. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYgyrUR0ob8&t=2s> [accessed 4 June 2018].

Appendix 3. Election Programs – List of Chapters²¹

PvdA Election Programs 2012-2017

<i>2012: The Netherlands Stronger & More Social</i>		<i>2017: A Connected Society</i>
	Introduction	Introduction
1	Our choices for a strong economy	Open and diverse society
2	Our choices for proper education	Solidary society: helping refugees and letting them participate
3	Our choices for labor	Safe society: just and strict if necessary
4	Our choices for participation	Prosperous society: sustainable, strong and social economy
5	Our choices for a safe Holland	Laborious society: decent work and fair income
6	Our choices for housing	Developed society: proper and connecting education for everyone
7	Our choices for health care	A creative and representative society
8	Our choices for sustainability	Healthy and caring society
9	Our choices for Europe	Livable and sustainable society
10	Our choices for a solidary world	International society
11	Our choices for democracy and governance	Financial framework
12	Our choices for culture and sports	
13	Our choices for finance	

VVD Election Programs 2012-2017

<i>2012: Not shoving up but taking on</i>		<i>2017: Especially the Netherlands</i>
	Foreword	Foreword
	Introduction	Introduction
1	Economy	Safety and freedom
2	Education, health care and development	Security and income
3	Environment	Education and culture
4	Government	Health and health care
5	International affairs and promotion of the international rule of law	Mobility and space
6		Energy and climate
7		Government and money

²¹ Chapters in bold are the chapters coded for the data analysis.

Appendix 4. Table of Allocated Codes

	2012		2017	
	Codes Assigned	% of Total	Codes Assigned	% of Total
101. Military: Positive	45	2,7	124	7
102. Military: Negative	12	0,7	7	0,4
103. Peace: Positive	1	0,1	4	0,2
104. Internationalism: Positive	115	6,9	191	10,8
105. European Integration: Positive	198	11,8	90	5,1
106. Internationalism: Negative	20	1,2	17	1
107. European Integration: Negative	61	3,6	45	2,5
201. Free-Market Economy	161	9,6	78	4,4
202. Incentives: Positive	56	3,3	59	3,3
203. Market Regulation: Positive	100	6	39	2,2
204. Economic Planning: Positive	1	0,1	7	0,4
205. Economic Goals	111	6,6	74	4,2
206. Keynesian Demand Management	33	2	4	0,2
207. Economic Growth: Positive	74	4,4	47	2,6
208. Controlled Economy	14	0,8	43	2,4
209. Economic Orthodoxy	108	6,4	46	2,6
301.1 National Way of Life: Positive	55	3,3	212	12
301.2. Immigration: Negative	4	0,2	92	5,2
302.1. National Way of Life: Negative	0	0	0	0
302.2. Immigration: Positive	6	0,4	9	0,5
303. Traditional Morality: Positive	14	0,8	2	0,1
304. Traditional Morality: Negative	13	0,8	7	0,4
305. Law and Order: Positive	287	17,1	304	17,1
306. Law and Order: Negative	0	0	7	0,4
307. Civic Mindedness	89	5,3	178	10
308.1. Multiculturalism: Positive	30	1,8	6	0,3
308.2. Immigrant Integration: Diversity	0	0	4	0,2
309.1. Multiculturalism: Negative	66	3,9	67	3,8
309.2. Immigrant Integration: Assimilation	1	0,1	11	0,6
Totals	1675	100	1774	100

Appendix 5: Tables & Figures Presented in Thesis

Domain 1: External Relations	Domain 2: Economy	Domain 3: Fabric of Society
101. Military: Positive 102. Military: Negative 103. Peace 104. Internationalism: Positive 105. European Integration: Positive 106. Internationalism: Negative 107. European Integration: Negative	201. Free-Market Economy 202. Incentives 203. Market Regulation 204. Economic Planning 205. Economic Goals 206. Keynesian Demand Management 207. Economic Growth 208. Controlled Economy 209. Economic Orthodoxy	301. National Way of Life: Positive - 301.1. <i>General</i> - 301.2. <i>Immigration: Negative</i> 302. National Way of Life: Negative - 302.1. <i>General</i> - 302.2. <i>Immigration: Positive</i> 303. Traditional Morality: Positive 304. Traditional Morality: Negative 305. Law and Order: Positive 306. Law and Order: Negative 307. Civic Mindedness 308. Multiculturalism: Positive - 308.1. <i>General</i> - 308.2. <i>Integration: Diversity</i> 309. Multiculturalism: Negative - 309.1. <i>General</i> - 309.2. <i>Integration: Assimilation</i>

Table 1: Coding Scheme

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
101. Military: Positive	14,7	3,9	36,7	11,1
102. Military: Negative	0	0	0,4	0,1
104. Internationalism: Positive	15,3	4,1	36,3	11
105. European Integration: Positive	33,5	8,9	11,1	3,4
106. Internationalism: Negative	10	2,7	3,0	0,9
107. European Integration: Negative	26,5	7	12,6	3,8
Totals	100	26,6	100	30,3

Table 2: VVD Election Programs – External Relations

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
101. Military: Positive	10,5	2,8	8,3	2,0
102. Military: Negative	5,8	1,5	3,8	0,9
103. Peace	0,5	0,1	2,6	0,6
104. Internationalism: Positive	46,8	12,3	45,5	11,1
105. European Integration: Positive	33,7	8,9	28,8	7
106. Internationalism: Negative	0	0	5,1	1,3
107. European Integration: Negative	2,6	0,7	5,8	1,4
Totals	100	26,3	100	24,3

Table 3: PvdA Election Programs – External Relations

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
201. Free-Market Economy	47,3	15,1	35,4	6,9
202. Incentives	11,7	3,7	27,4	5,4
203. Market Regulation	4,9	1,6	1,7	0,3
205. Economic Goals	14,1	4,5	9,7	1,9
207. Economic Growth	7,8	2,5	9,1	1,8
209. Economic Orthodoxy	14,1	4,5	16,6	3,2
Totals	100	31,9	100	19,5

Table 4: VVD Election Programs – Economy

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
201. Free-Market Economy	17,3	6,5	7,7	2
202. Incentives	11,1	4,2	7	1,7
203. Market Regulation	28,8	10,8	19,6	5,2
204. Economic Planning	0,4	0,1	4,2	1,1
205. Economic Goals	8,5	3,2	22	5,8
206. Keynesian Demand Management	10,3	3,9	2,4	0,6
207. Economic Growth	11,4	4,3	7,7	2
208. Controlled Economy	4,4	1,7	25	6,6
209. Economic Orthodoxy	7,7	2,9	4,8	1,3
Totals	100	37,6	100	26,3

Table 5: PvdA Election Programs – Economy

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
301.1 National Way of Life: Positive	3,8	1,6	32,8	16,5
301.2. Immigration: Negative	0,8	0,3	10	5
302.2. Immigration: Positive	1,9	0,8	0,4	0,2
303. Traditional Morality: Positive	3,0	1,2	0	0
304. Traditional Morality: Negative	2,6	1,1	0	0
305. Law and Order: Positive	63,5	26,7	42,3	21,2
306. Law and Order: Negative	0	0	0,9	0,4
307. Civic Mindedness	7,5	3,4	4,7	2,4
308.1. Multiculturalism: Positive	1,9	0,8	0	0
309.1. Multiculturalism: Negative	15,0	6,2	6,7	3,4
309.2. Immigrant Integration: Assimilation	0	0	2,2	1,1
Totals	100,0	41,8	100	50,2

Table 6: VVD Election Programs – Fabric of Society

	2012		2017	
	% of Domain	% of Total	% of Domain	% of Total
301.1 National Way of Life: Positive	15	5,4	9,8	4,9
301.2. Immigration: Negative	0	0	1	0,5
302.2. Immigration: Positive	0	0	2,2	1,1
303. Traditional Morality: Positive	2,3	0,8	0	0
304. Traditional Morality: Negative	2,3	0,8	1	0,5
305. Law and Order: Positive	41,5	15	30,2	14,9
306. Law and Order: Negative	0	0	1	0,5
307. Civic Mindedness	20,8	7,5	43,5	21
308.1. Multiculturalism: Positive	9,2	3,3	1,9	0,9
308.2. Immigrant Integration: Diversity	0	0	1,3	0,6
309.1. Multiculturalism: Negative	8,5	3,1	7,9	3,9
309.2. Immigrant Integration: Assimilation	0,4	0,1	0,3	0,2
Totals	100	36	100	49,4

Table 7: PvdA Election Programs – Fabric of Society

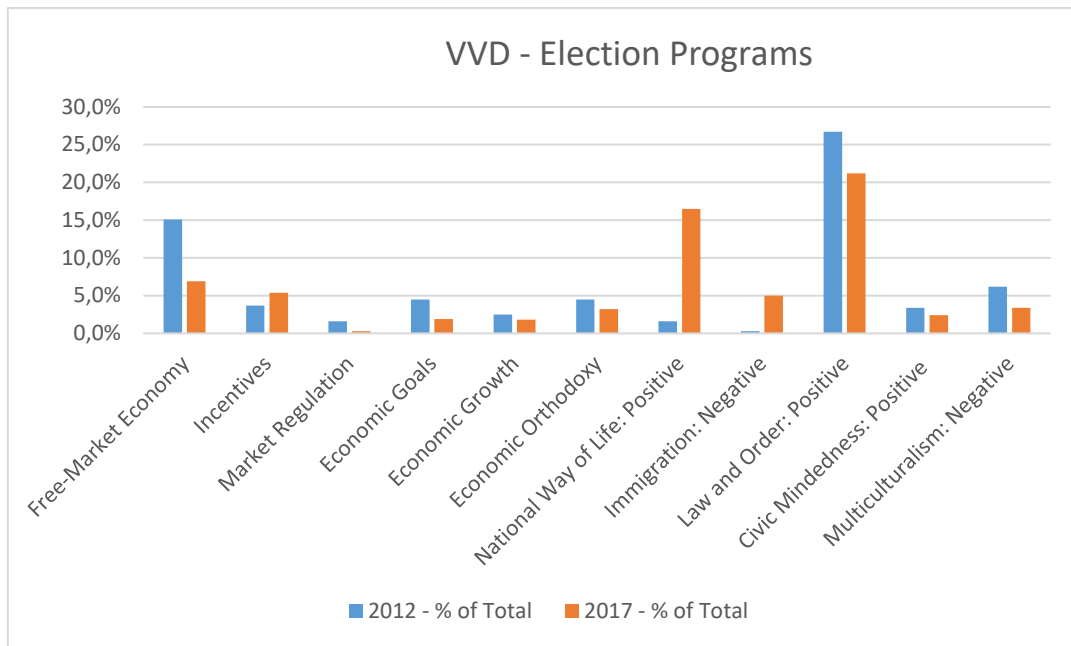


Figure 1: Comparison of VVD election programs of 2012 and 2017

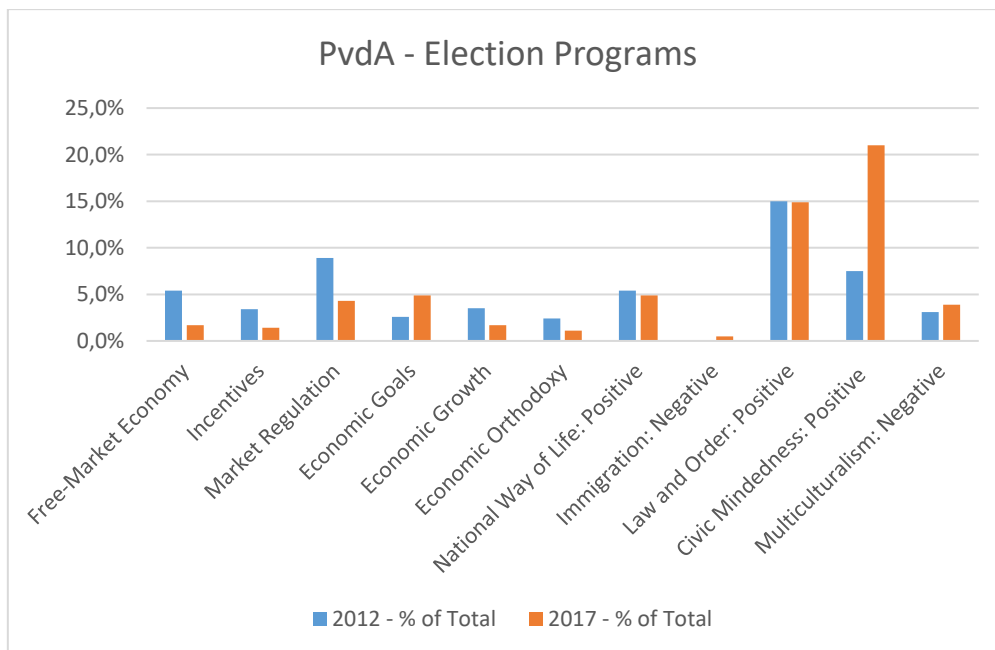


Figure 2: Comparison of PvdA election programs of 2012 and 2017