

# **Why The Higher Educated Oppose the System**

*A Research into the Motives of Higher Educated Citizens to Vote for Populist Radical Right Parties*

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## **Abstract**

*Lower educated citizens are generally the larger part of the voting electorate of Populist Radical Right Parties. However, Forum voor Democratie and JA21 have succeeded in attracting higher educated voters to their electorate. Little scientific research has been performed into the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for these parties. The focus of this inquiry will, therefore, be on understanding the considerations of higher educated citizens and how these have incentivised them to vote for Populist Radical Right Parties. 12 semi-structured interviews were held with higher educated voters. The results show that cultural factors and political distrust were most relevant in higher educated citizens' considerations. Especially the latter seems to be important in relation to higher educated citizens' degree of political knowledge and political sophistication. This entails that these citizens know how politics and political actors operate, which enables them to accurately assess and evaluate political occurrences. As a result, they observe misconduct in politics and politicians, which negatively impacts on their political trust. This incentivises them to vote for Populist Radical Right Parties as they believe that these parties can foster political change.*

**Key words:** *Forum voor Democratie, Higher Educated Citizens, JA21, Motives, Populist Radical Right Parties*

# 1. Introduction

Several newspaper articles reported that the educational gap is of increasing significance in citizens' voting behaviour in the Netherlands (AD, 2016; de Volkskrant, 2017; Trouw, 2018). Although this is not a new phenomenon, structural changes – such as the increasing flows of immigration – have altered the nature of the conflict between higher and lower educated citizens by placing an increased emphasis on cultural issues (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). As a result, lower educated citizens may vote for Populist Radical Right Parties (PRRPs) for economic reasons – these parties would protect them from immigrants who would compete with them for jobs or social benefits – and for cultural reasons – these parties would protect the national culture and their restricted notion of Dutch citizenship (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Oesch, 2008; Van der Brug, 2003; Van der Waal & De Koster, 2015). Higher educated citizens, on the other hand, possess more cultural capital which enables them to understand the meaning of culture, whereby they perceive other cultures as distinct rather than deviant (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). In addition, higher educated citizens generally occupy a more advantageous labour market position, which means that they compete less with – lower educated – immigrants. Thus, higher educated citizens lack the obvious cultural and economic motives to vote for PRRPs.

The increasing emphasis on cultural motives has enabled PVV-leader Geert Wilders to draw lower educated citizens to the right side of the political spectrum (Aalberts, 2012; Vossen, 2011). In recent years, newer parties such as Forum voor Democratie (FvD) and JA21 originated, which may also be classified as PRRPs. However, these parties diverge from the PVV as they have also shown to be capable of attracting higher educated citizens to their electorate (NOS, 2019). Ezrow and Hellwig (2014) report that political parties are responsive to changes in voter's policy preferences to obtain a more advantageous position in coalition governments. Hence, political parties expand “their ideologies in an attempt to appeal to a broader spectrum of the electorate” (p. 817). Although the literature provides explanations for the proportion of lower educated citizens in the voting electorate of PRRPs and for the efforts of these parties to attract a broader segment of the voting electorate, it does not contribute to understanding the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for these parties. Scrutinising the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs, and how they might relate to the motives of the lower educated, therefore adds to the existing literature.

This research will shed light on the motives of higher educated citizens in the Netherlands to vote for ‘new’ PRRPs such as FvD and JA21. This results in the following

research question: *What are the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for 'new' Populist Radical Right Parties and how may these motives be understood?* This research will employ qualitative methods – conducting semi-structured interviews – to answer the research question. Moreover, this inquiry will include ideological voters and occasional voters to unravel the different motives higher educated citizens could have to vote for PRRPs.

Furthermore, this research is relevant from a societal viewpoint, because it contributes to understanding the narrowing educational gap regarding voting for PRRPs in the Netherlands. Ganzeboom and Arab (2019) argue that the differences between the political preferences of citizens with higher educational attainment and citizens with lower educational attainment have increased, and that political parties in the Netherlands have distinctly differentiated according to the educational level of their constituents. This may, in turn, further increase the educational gap in voting behaviour. However, as higher educated citizens become more inclined to vote for PRRPs, this educational gap may narrow. Consequently, lower and higher educated citizens could be sufficiently politically represented, as there is less political conflict based on one's educational attainment. This is of significance since an adequate level of political representation forms the foundation for a well-functioning democracy (Aaldering, 2017).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will explicate the theoretical background of the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs. First, I will illuminate the aspects that characterise PRRPs, as FvD and JA21 can be categorised as such. Thereafter, I will clarify the motives of lower educated citizens to vote for PRRPs, as these motives may also be relevant for higher educated citizens. What follows is a section on the possible motives of higher educated citizens to vote for ‘new’ PRRPs. Lastly, there will be a section on the emergence of ‘new’ PRRPs and their positions regarding COVID-19.

### 2.1 Populist Radical Right Parties

One may argue that FvD and JA21 can be classified as PRRP. The literature on PRRPs highlights three characteristics – nativism, populism, and authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007). Mudde (2007) suggests that nativism “holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state” (p. 22). This means that PRRPs’ constituencies seem to be rather reluctant in granting citizenship to non-natives (Oesch, 2008). PRRPs uphold this reluctant – or even exclusive – attitude by advocating that they will defend their constituency against ‘intruders’ who are already in the country or who are attempting to ‘invade’ the country (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Oesch, 2008; Van der Brug, 2003; Van der Waal & De Koster, 2015). Therefore, to convey the meaning of Dutch citizenship, it is of significance to make a distinction between ‘us’ versus ‘them’, whereby ‘us’ refers to Dutch native citizens and ‘them’ refers to (potential) ‘intruders’ (Mudde, 2007). This is in accordance with the views of FvD, which emphasise that the national identity of the Netherlands is subverted by the increasing flows of immigration (Baudet, 2013). In a similar vein, JA21 emphasises that immigrants should integrate properly to preserve the Dutch culture (JA21, n.d.a).

In addition to opposing ‘intruders’, PRRPs are often populist in nature (Mudde, 2007). Populism is an “ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the ... general will of the people” (Mudde, 2007, p. 23). Due to the general lack of trust in politics (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2017), advocates of populism frequently prefer direct democracy (Krouwel & Abts, 2007). Correspondingly,

establishing (some forms of) a direct democracy is a significant component of the election program of both FvD and JA21 (Forum voor Democratie, n.d.a; JA21, n.d.b).

The last element that characterises PRRPs is authoritarianism. According to De Koster and Van der Waal (2007), authoritarianism “implies aversion to cultural diversity and a rigid conception of social order” (p. 452). This means that people who have an authoritarian attitude have more culturally conservative values (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). Culturally conservative norms and values should ensure that the society is structured in a way that it can protect itself against internal and external threats (Mudde, 2007). FvD also advocates a law that prescribes certain fundamental values that should lay the foundation for protecting Dutch society (Forum voor Democratie, n.d.b). Likewise, JA21 advocates that Dutch laws and Western values should take precedence over Islamic laws or values (JA21, n.d.a).

## 2.2 Globalisation: Lower Educated Citizens and PRRPs

Due to the lack of academic literature on the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs, it seems relevant to first display the motives of lower educated citizens, as these motives may also apply to higher educated citizens. Spierings (2019) argues that the large proportion of less educated citizens in the electorate of PRRPs is mainly due to the influences of globalisation. Globalisation refers to processes of increasing global integration of social, cultural, political, and economic aspects, which entails far-reaching ramifications for countries (Scholte, 2008; Steiner, 2016). It is argued that higher levels of globalisation lead to growing interconnectedness and, consequently, growing interdependence between countries, which creates new divisions between the ‘winners’ and the ‘losers’ between and within countries (Bekkers, Fenger, & Scholten, 2017; Walter, 2010; Wes, 1996).

There are three ways in which processes of globalisation can make lower educated citizens more sensitive to the ideology of PRRPs (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2017). First, lower educated citizens experience more economic hardship. Globalisation leads to higher levels of economic inequality because there is more demand for higher skilled workers, whilst there is less demand for lower skilled workers. Secondly, lower educated citizens experience more cultural threat. The processes of globalisation “transcends national borders and cultural divides” which “affects and alters the cultural and national order” (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2017, p. 563), inducing feelings of uncertainty. This overlaps with the tendency of PRRPs to be nativistic – PRRPs want to protect natives from feeling insecure by excluding non-native elements or persons (Mudde, 2007). Thirdly, lower educated citizens have less political trust. They lack satisfaction with – or understanding of – how the political system operates (Oesch,

2008), and they even refer to “an unwarranted and unacceptable power differential between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’” (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2017, p. 564), which is also part of the populist ideology that characterises PRRPs (Mudde, 2007).

In sum, PRRPs promise to protect lower educated citizens from immigrants who would compete with them for jobs or social benefits, to protect the national culture and the restricted notion of Dutch citizenship, and to protect them from the ‘corrupt’ elites, which increases the propensity of lower educated citizens to vote for these parties.

### 2.3 Contemporary Cultural Debates: Higher Educated Citizens and ‘New’ PRRPs

The proportion of higher educated citizens in the voting electorate of PRRPs would principally be related to trends initiated by cultural modernisation (Spierings, 2019), which refers to “a transition from a society in which value orientations and identities that are considered highly legitimate are ‘pre-given’ by grand narratives to a late-modern society in which value orientations and identities lose their traditional legitimacy and meaning” (De Koster & Van der Waal, 2007, p. 460). The structural modification of fundamental values leads to disputing existing certainties in people’s worldview (Spierings, 2017), which culminates into fear and, therefore, curtails nuance and heterogeneity. However, this process of cultural modernisation does not affect the value orientations of citizens in the same way or to the same extent. Conflicts – mostly around themes such as the climate or gender – may, therefore, arise between citizens with conservative cultural views and citizens with progressive cultural views (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2015). These cultural conflicts lead political parties to distinguish themselves from other parties on these issues (Van der Brug & Van Spanje, 2009), whereby, as a result, the motives behind citizens’ voting behaviour are often cultural in nature. This means that higher educated citizens’ cultural motives to vote for PRRPs may diverge from lower educated citizens’ cultural motives, as the motives of the former emanate from the structural modification of fundamental values whilst the motives of the latter emanate from ethnic competition (with immigrants) for scarce goods.

De Koster and Van der Waal (2007) note that this process of cultural modernisation may culminate into anomie and alienation. They define these concepts in the following way: “anomie stands for discontent with the absence of a meaningful social order, alienation stands for the desire to free oneself from an overbearing, meaningless institutional order which is considered a hindrance” (De Koster & Van der Waal, 2007, p. 461). This entails that higher educated citizens may vote for PRRPs as form of opposition towards the political establishment or that traditional loyalties that connect these higher educated citizens to political parties have



been impaired, which impels them to vote for PRRPs as these parties “offer new possibilities of political expression and mobilisation” (Oesch, 2008, p. 353). This is comparable with the motives of lower educated citizens to vote for PRRPs due to a lack of political trust.

Ultimately, higher educated citizens could evade the consequences of globalisation since they generally have a more advantageous labour market position, more cultural capital, and more political trust (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Oesch, 2008; Van der Brug, 2003; Van der Waal & De Koster, 2015). However, these contemporary cultural trends are changing society and, thus, policy measures. As a result, higher educated citizens may experience restrictions regarding their entitlements – these groups are expected or even compelled to make alterations to their behaviour (Spierings, 2019). For instance, implementing quotas to enable the advancement of women to the executive layer of companies may be perceived as negative impact on the possibilities and opportunities for men. Thus, higher educated citizens may be incentivised to vote for PRRPs as they are increasingly experiencing constraints in their leeway due to contemporary cultural issues and these parties have a more conservative stance regarding these cultural debates (Van der Meer, Van Deth, & Scheepers, 2009). Concurrently, they may be incentivised to vote for PRRPs as they become increasingly critical of how incumbent parties deal with these issues and they believe that PRRPs are better equipped to do so.

#### 2.4 ‘New’ PRRPs: Emergence and Stances on COVID-19

FvD originated in 2013, when a group of Dutch citizens argued for a renewed referendum on the transfer of powers to the European Union (EU) (Forum voor Democratie, 2016). This group of citizens collected signatures, which led to a debate in the Second Chamber. During this debate, Thierry Baudet explained how the Chamber is on the verge of losing its core powers to the EU and that Dutch society is on the verge of losing its autonomy (EW Magazine, 2014; NOS, 2014). A larger part of the Chamber, however, voted against the proposal (Tweede Kamer Der Staten Generaal, 2014). Consequently, the group of citizens decided to establish a think tank (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, n.d.), which took part in the Dutch referendum on the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. In response to the alleged neglect of the referendum outcome, the think tank was converted into a political party to participate in the elections (NU.nl, 2018). The party achieved a significant victory in 2019 by becoming the largest party in the Provincial State elections (Kiesraad, 2020).

At the end of November 2020, WhatsApp conversations of FvD’s youth organisation were leaked, which sparked an escalation within the party. Baudet withdrew as party leader, but a day later he revised this decision and announced a leadership election. The majority of the

board members wanted to discharge Baudet from the board immediately – for which, however, a member vote was required. This member vote took place on December 3rd and 4th (de Volkskrant, 2020; Forum voor Democratie, n.d.c), where a convincing majority (76%) allowed Baudet to stay on as party leader. Consequently, the representatives of FvD in the European Parliament left the party. Shortly after this, some of these representatives that had left the party founded a new political party – JA21.

It is likely that the stances of parties on COVID-19 impact on citizens' voting behaviour. FvD is rather sceptic regarding the virus and the measures that the government has implemented. The way in which FvD positions itself regarding the virus reflects the characteristics of PRRPs – the party wants the Netherlands to take control of the production of protective equipment and medicines to be less dependent on 'Asian giants' (*nativism*), the party expresses its lack of trust towards the government regarding the reduction of the number of places in intensive care (*populism*), and the party indicates that it wants to establish a national pandemic centre so that the Netherlands is prepared for future outbreaks of viruses or other unexpected diseases (*authoritarianism*) (Forum voor Democratie, n.d.d). JA21, on the other hand, is also critical of current governmental measures, but advocates a more prudent approach (JA21 Hub, 2021).

### **3. Methodological Reflection**

#### 3.1 Research Population

The population of interest for this inquiry are higher educated citizens who voted for ‘new’ PRRPs in the past or who voted for one of these parties in the most recent election. This means that I have included ideological voters and occasional voters to unravel the different motives higher educated citizens could have to vote for PRRPs. Occasional voters may support the ideology of FvD, but no longer subscribe to its current course. The accessible population, thus, consists of higher educated (formerly) FvD and JA21-voters who wanted to participate. I have acquired some respondents through a message on my social media channels. These initial respondents yielded me more respondents as they had people in their network who also belonged to the research population, which is referred to as the snowball method (Bryman, 2012).

#### 3.2 Methods

This research is explorative and inductive in nature since there is a lack of literature available on this topic. This inquiry, therefore, consists of qualitative research methods. These methods are in line with the research question since it enabled me to gain in-depth understanding of the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs. Conducting semi-structured interviews was an appropriate research method that allowed me to let the respondents assign value to the various sub-topics (Davies & Francis, 2018). However, the COVID-19 virus was still prominently present when this research was conducted, so the interviews were conducted by telephone. The questions that were posed during the interview were based on topics and subtopics that were derived from the literature. I chose to only write down topics, so the interview would be open enough to discuss other elements that were not included in the topic list.

The topics that were discussed during the interviews were structured in a specific sequence. I started the interview with a lighter topic to make the respondents feel more comfortable – I discussed how the respondents perceived the most recent election. Subsequently, I built up to more impactful topics. I asked about their perceptions of and their trust in the government and incumbent politicians, and the extent to which they perceive these actors as responsive to citizens’ preferences – elements which may signal political distrust. Thereafter, I delved deeper into the respondents’ motives to vote for PRRPs and which aspects they considered important in their voting behaviour. By structuring the interview in this manner,

I attempted to build trust to ensure that the respondents would more openly discuss their motives to vote for PRRPs. However, if a respondent raised a topic, we first discussed all elements associated with that topic. Subsequently, we returned to the structure of the topic list to ensure that all elements were covered. In this way, I obtained comparable data from the interviews, enabling me to identify patterns amongst the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs. See appendix 2 for an overview of the topic list.

Prior to the interview, I ascertained the educational attainment of the respondents, so I was sure they were part of the research population. I have also attempted to vary on age, gender, and the province in which the respondents reside to get a sample that is as varied as possible. See appendix 3 for an overview of the respondents. Accessing higher educated citizens who voted for 'new' PRRPs was rather difficult as voting for these parties is still seen as taboo by many, which limited the willingness to participate. Some respondents explicitly mentioned that they were initially hesitant to participate in the research due to my educational background or because they had previous experiences with a biased interviewer. After the interview was conducted, they indicated to be relieved – they emphasised that I had a neutral attitude and asked open questions, which encouraged them to share what incentivised them to vote for a PRRP.

### 3.3 Ethical and Methodological Issues

In this inquiry, preserving the anonymity of the respondents was of the utmost importance. Many citizens solely concurred to conduct an interview if anonymity was assured, due to the sensitive content that was discussed during the interviews. I preserved the anonymity of the respondents by using a codename in my research and deleting the recording after I transcribed it.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data comprised of several steps. The interviews were transcribed as soon as they were conducted. After the interviews were transcribed, the data was structured according to the themes derived from the topic list – and, thus, the literature on this topic. This meant a subdivision between cultural motives and motives related to political distrust, because the respondents cited these as their main motives to vote for PRRPs. Subsequently, I employed open, axial, and selective coding to find out which aspects and considerations were important in these cultural motives and motives related to political distrust. An element related to the

motives was considered important if it was mentioned in several interviews. In this way, patterns could be uncovered about the motives of the respondents to vote for PRRPs.

## 4. A Glance Behind the Vote

This chapter explicates the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs. There were many differences between the higher educated as far as their motives for voting for PRRPs were concerned. Nonetheless, there are a myriad of patterns and overlapping elements discernible. In this section, I will predominantly focus on the motives related to cultural issues and political trust, as these were the most discussed by the respondents.

### 4.1.1 Traditional Cultural Motives

#### *Migration Policy and Ethnic Minorities*

When asked about their most important motives to vote for either FvD or JA21, nine out of twelve respondents answered that this was related to the Dutch migration policy. On this issue, the respondents cited two motives that incentivised them to vote for PRRPs. First, the Australian model of immigration suggested by FvD – and taken over by JA21 – played a considerable role in the respondents' voting behaviour. The respondents report that they have no dismissive attitude towards immigrants if they are committed and willing to contribute to Dutch society. They, therefore, agree that the Netherlands should adopt the Australian model of immigration, which entails that you can 'select' which immigrants to welcome to your country. According to the respondents, only the immigrants who are willing to make a real contribution to the Netherlands should be welcomed into the country. Daniel (April 2021) describes this as follows: "You must support the people who want to come here and achieve something, because then – indirectly – they will make money. ... If you do not want to contribute, then you do not deserve to get it [support]."

Nevertheless, the respondents are more than willing to make an exception for the refugees who come from war zones. These people should be temporarily welcomed into the country, and they should return to the country of origin as soon as the war is over. As Rick (April 2021) describes:

"You must take a critical look at who you do and who you do not let in. I think there should always be room for people who have really fled and cannot make anything of their lives in their own country because of a war or oppression or something like that. But a wise man once said: 'We cannot bear the burden of the whole world on our shoulders'."

However, the respondents prefer that the refugees would be received in their own region. They argue that it would be more useful and practical to contribute (financially) to the reception of these refugees closer to home. This would be better for the people themselves and for the Netherlands. They report to be inclined to vote for either FvD or JA21 as they believe that these parties have more efficient and logical solutions for these issues than incumbent parties. This contrasts with the literature, which argues that those who vote for PRRPs view immigrants as ‘intruders’ (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006; Oesch, 2008; Van der Brug, 2003; Van der Waal & De Koster, 2015). The respondents who voted for these parties seem to look at the bigger picture rather than individual immigrants and the threats they may pose to them.

Secondly, the respondents report that the Netherlands has not dealt well with immigration in the past, which means that many people are not properly integrated into Dutch society. Mike (April 2021) utters this in the following way:

“I think that if they want to stay here that integration should be improved. I do not think it is possible to send them back to where they originally came from. You want them to get a better life here, but how do you do that? Those people often end up together [in a separate neighbourhood] and it usually takes one to two generations before the children are well integrated, can speak Dutch, and (want) to get to know the culture.”

This means that the respondents believe that many immigrants who have come to live in the Netherlands end up in segregated neighbourhoods where they live isolated from Dutch society, resulting in lower feelings of connectedness with the Netherlands. As a result, they would be less committed to contribute to Dutch society – something that the respondents do not find desirable, as this may lead to several issues.

Thus, to make the multicultural society succeed – and to narrow the gap between the native-born and the immigrant population, the respondents believe that the number of immigrants must decrease and the immigrants who are admitted must integrate better. They agree with the reasoning of the parties they voted for: “You must make sure that everything is in order for your own people in your own country. You can only take care of someone else if you take care of yourself” (Mike, April 2021). Milan (May 2021) summarises this in the following way:

“You have to take in [a number of immigrants] what you can deal with, something that does not drive our multicultural society further apart. Because, if you ask me, that [integration] just did not go well. There has been too much segregated living, so that should be paramount [for the government]. There must be more mixing of ethnic minorities in Dutch neighbourhoods. More efforts must be made to make the multicultural society succeed.”

Ultimately, the respondents argue that due to the Dutch migration policy, the number of immigrants has only increased over the years without being adequately dealt with, which creates a myriad of problems. The respondents, therefore, advocate a temporary stop on immigration – apart from refugees who need help – to first solve the problems in the Netherlands. Once this has been resolved, they would like to see the Australian migration model implemented so that a selection can be made as to which immigrants will be allowed into the country to avoid further issues surrounding immigration and integration. These were important reasons for them to vote for either FvD or JA21, as these parties – according to them – propose these solutions.

### ***European Union***

As far as the EU is concerned, there are several motivations that prompted the respondents to vote for PRRPs. In view of the considerable financial contribution that the Netherlands makes to the EU, it has little control in the EU decision-making process and there is much EU interference in internal affairs. However, the respondents disagree on the solution that would be adequate. Some respondents indicate that it would be better for the Netherlands to leave the EU (Nexit), others are quite content with how the EU functions now and would, therefore, not change much, but by far the largest group argues that the EU should be reduced to a purely economic cooperation.

Here, JA21-voters seem to distinguish themselves from FvD-voters. In the Provincial Council Elections – where many of the respondents voted for FvD, FvD was in favour of reducing the EU to a purely economic cooperation. However, in the most recent House of Representatives elections, FvD was in favour of a Nexit, whilst JA21 held on to the former position. This was one of the reasons that six respondents switched from FvD to JA21 (or another party). Those who still voted for FvD in the most recent election had a strong opinion about the EU and how the Netherlands should deal with it:



“We must leave right away. You lose control about what you can or cannot do. ... Some things are cross-border, so you must approach them in such a way, but let us be critical of what we do and do not want. So, that you will not get things imposed by a non-democratically elected body somewhere in Brussels. I think that is wrong” (Rick, April 2021).

The JA21-voters, on the other hand, do not see Nexit as a proper solution. As Floris (April 2021) explains:

“I do not believe we should leave the EU, but I think that we should move towards a purely economic cooperation. Now it costs a great deal of money, because a much money goes from us to the countries in the south and we get relatively little in return. (...) Until 1993 it was a purely economic cooperation which went very well. It did not cost much money, so it only had benefits. But now it is becoming a kind of super state-like something in which especially Germany and France have a lot to say.”

These respondents point out that the main reason that the EU should be reduced to a purely economic cooperation is the lack of control over one’s own policies and the fact that the Netherlands gives more to the EU than it gets back. This is comparable with the literature on authoritarianism – a society should be able to protect itself against internal and external threats (Mudde, 2007). In this context, the EU can be perceived as external threat that the Netherlands should protect itself from.

The respondents’ criticism of the EU’s involvement in the Netherlands is exacerbated by countries that become part of the EU. “There are too many countries in the EU that are not financially strong enough. As the Netherlands, we bring a great deal of money into the EU and we see very little of it in return” (Stijn, May 2021). In addition, “these [poor] countries get an equally big vote, which in itself makes sense, but Western European countries pay for everything” (Victor, May 2021). Several respondents, thus, believe that incorporating ‘poor’ countries into the EU increases the costs whilst decreasing control. The respondents, therefore, advocate a more powerful position for the Netherlands, which is more in proportion to the financial contribution that is made. Moreover, as the Netherlands is one of the largest net contributors, the respondents are especially critical of the EU’s interference in internal – mostly

cultural – issues. The example that is often used here is the criticism of Black Pete by EU bodies. As Victor (May 2021) utters his critique:

“Do not interfere in internal affairs in a country. The EU is for the bigger picture and supporting each other. When we are just giving money to the EU, I do not think that they can say that we should stop doing something, whilst other countries to which we give a great deal of money are treated the same. That is a bit unfair.”

Ultimately, what the respondents’ criticism mainly boils down to is that the (financial) contribution of the Netherlands is disproportionate to the limited power in EU decision-making process and the level of EU interference in internal affairs. As a result, some have voted for FvD since they want the Netherlands to leave the EU, whilst others have voted for JA21 to reduce the EU to a purely economic cooperation.

### ***Dutch identity***

In addition to the fact that these perspectives on migration policy, ethnic minorities, and the EU seem to be independent motives to vote for PRRPs, in conjunction, they also seem to touch upon a deeper layer – namely how the respondents perceive the Dutch identity, which is a focal point for both FvD and JA21.

Many respondents argue that expressing your opinion or your voting behaviour rapidly leads to receiving (often negative) labels. Consequently, many respondents feel that the Dutch must always adapt to the people who have come to live here. Several examples are employed here, from the number of words that you are no longer allowed to use because they are seen as discriminatory to the pressure – for instance from the EU – to abolish Black Pete. Yasmin (May 2021) explains this in the following way:

“Only look at if you are going to school. English is already being taught at primary school, so they can manage themselves. French is offered, German. When people come here, we Dutch always adapt – we start talking in English, we try to make ourselves understandable with hands and feet. ... We are becoming too tolerant, we are going along with everything, and I think that is a shame.”

Yasmin and other respondents believe that, by going along with everything, the Dutch culture is becoming obscured. This would be reflected in, for example, the attempts to erase history – changing history books, changing street names, or removing statues – and the excuses that some think should be made for the slavery past. However, the respondents believe that these elements are part of the Dutch history and, thus, form the foundation of Dutch society. Floris (April 2021) exemplifies this in the following way:

“VOC people were not all equally good, of course, but that has ensured that we as a country could evolve. Therefore, I think it is a bit nonsense to suppress all that because some people feel attacked about something that happened 500 years ago.”

Milan (May 2021) argues that many people disregard the utility of these parts of Dutch history:

“Something like the slavery past needs to be emphasised more in history books because it is very bad what happened. Precisely for that reason I think it is incomprehensible that discussions arise around the removal of certain street names, because that makes you forget the past. ... It must be assumed what makes sense and what is better for society. As far as I am concerned, that is to keep that name, because then we can be reminded that what happened was bad, instead of disguising it.”

The way in which the respondents perceive and describe the Dutch identity seems to be a convergence of the three elements that characterise PRRPs (Mudde, 2007). The respondents do not believe that the Netherlands should only be inhabited by natives, but they are fearful for the obscuring of the Dutch culture with the arrival of ever more immigrants who all have their own culture (*nativism*). In addition, they disagree with how the government manages these issues. They believe that incumbent parties act too much out of social desirability rather than looking at what is good for the country (*populism*). Finally, what encompasses the former points, the Netherlands should ameliorate its defence against external threats. For the respondents, these are not necessarily immigrants, but the way the government handles these predominantly cultural issues initiated by abundant immigration (*authoritarianism*).

Ultimately, to protect the Dutch culture from blurring, the Netherlands must welcome less immigrants, it must ensure that ethnic minorities integrate properly into Dutch society, and

it must reduce the level of interference from the EU. The respondents, therefore, voted for either FvD or JA21, because they believe that these parties want to protect the Dutch identity and corresponding values.

#### 4.1.2 Contemporary Cultural Motives

In addition to the more traditional cultural motives that incentivised the respondents to vote for PRRPs, it is also examined whether contemporary cultural developments played a role in the respondents' voting behaviour. This mainly concerns debates related to inclusive government measures and the climate.

The respondents are unanimously against inclusive government measures such as quotas. They put forward several reasons for being against quotas – it has not yet been scientifically researched that quotas lead to an improvement, quotas are often designed with the wrong intentions, and it will more likely lead to inequality rather than equality. Many respondents believe that quotas lead to a loss of quality, because more emphasis is placed on a person's personal background instead of a person's qualities. This is in accordance with the stances of the parties they voted for. However, the respondents did not explicitly report this as a motive to vote for a PRRP.

Likewise, the respondents did not explicitly mention the climate as motive to vote for PRRPs. Many respondents believe that climate change is at least partly caused by humans and that measures must be taken to deal with it. However, the measures taken would be too far-reaching, as they are inefficient, expensive, and the bill would always end up with the 'ordinary citizen'. There does seem to emerge a dichotomy between FvD-voters and JA21-voters. Whilst JA21-voters adhere to the reasoning mentioned above, FvD-voters doubt whether humans have a role in climate change at all: "Climate change is almost like a kind of religious fanaticism that you see in certain people or parties. I do not really know how much influence humans have on the climate. Especially a small country like the Netherlands" (Rick, April 2021). Ultimately, although the opinions of the respondents seem to be in line with the positions of the parties they voted for, no respondent explicitly indicates that this had a role in their voting behaviour.

#### 4.2 Motives Related to Political Distrust

##### ***Dutch Politics***

When asked about their most important motives to vote for either FvD or JA21, ten out of twelve respondents answered that this was related to their view on Dutch politics or their level

of political trust. The respondents employed several (notable) terms when describing their perception of Dutch politics – for instance, job carousel, favouritism, and backroom politics – that provided insight into their distrust of incumbent politicians. However, it went beyond implied references. The respondents explicitly report that they have trust in the democratic system, but not in incumbent politicians. They indicate that many issues and information are withheld from the public, which negatively affects their levels of political trust. For instance, Daniel (April 2021) indicates how startled he was by how incumbent parties handled the recent allowance affair: “I always assumed that there was something of backroom politics, but up to this level – that when something really goes wrong with that allowance affair that it is smothered in such a way, I did not expect that.” This makes him and other respondents suspect that there are many more issues and information held back.

This corresponds with the literature on populism and political (dis)trust (Mudde, 2007; Van der Waal & De Koster, 2017). The respondents believe that incumbent politicians are mainly concerned with themselves and consolidating their own position. They, therefore, believe that politicians are not (sufficiently) concerned with the ‘general will of the people’ (Mudde, 2007). Ultimately, the respondents’ perceptions on Dutch politics and their degree of political trust have incentivised them to vote for PRRPs. The respondents indicate that they oppose the current political establishment. They voted for PRRPs to have a ‘breath of fresh air’ that can foster change in Dutch politics and the current political culture – something they believe is always necessary to remain critical. In the words of Milan (May 2021): “I am aware that we have it very well in the Netherlands, but it is about staying ahead. You want us to remain at the forefront, so things have to get continuously better.”

### ***Responsiveness***

Another element that incentivised the respondents to vote for PRRPs is the degree to which they perceive politics as being responsive. The respondents perceive that Dutch politics is not sufficiently responsive towards its citizens. This lack of responsiveness would, according to the respondents, not be harmful if incumbent politicians would act in the interest of the public – politicians cannot be responsive to everything as it is their job to connect smaller elements together to be responsive to overarching issues. However, the respondents argue that politicians are not aware of what is going on in society, which would explain their lack of responsiveness. The responsiveness of Dutch politics could be improved, as the respondents argue, when new parties make an entrance. New parties are supposed to have fewer political ties, whereby they are assumed to be more responsive than coalition parties – “New parties are mainly there for

their positions and their ideology” (Willem, May 2021). Thus, in a broader sense, new parties would be a signal to incumbent parties that they are not sufficiently responsive.

However, the respondents believe that incumbent parties are not necessarily bothered by this signal. They report that incumbent parties have too much influence, which manifests itself in three ways. First, these parties would have much influence on how other parties act. Rick (April 2021) indicates that he was a member of the VVD and has, therefore, seen how certain things work. He indicates that many politicians are “like the stamping machines of the incumbent power. So, instead of asking critical questions, they showed up once a week to check off a box that has been discussed in advance” (Rick, April 2021). Secondly, these parties would make sure that new ideas that go against established parties are quickly discarded. Thirdly, these parties can exclude other parties, which oftentimes results in a cabinet that does not represent the will of the people. As Yasmin (May 2021) explains: “Incumbent parties seem to have so much power that they can impede a right-wing party from taking office. Excluding a certain right-wing party, ... means that you exclude an entire group of people who clearly want this.”

Consequently, and in accordance with the literature (Krouwel & Abts, 2007), many respondents are in favour of more direct forms of democracy such as a referendum. These respondents believe that they can exert more influence on politics through a referendum. However, they argue that citizens should properly prepare themselves on the issues presented, so they can make an informed choice. This last point is the reason that other respondents are not in favour of more direct forms of democracy. They believe that the average citizen cannot oversee the overarching issue. In addition, as Milan (May 2021) utters: “You choose a representative who should broadly represent your ideology and I do not think the people have knowledge about very specific issues.”

Ultimately, the respondents believe that incumbent parties have too much influence on politics and are not sufficiently responsive towards Dutch citizens. Newer parties and opposition parties are presumed to be more responsive, which has incentivised the respondents to vote for PRRPs and – for most respondents – to be in favour of more direct forms of democracy. The respondents do not necessarily believe that newer parties or opposition parties will perform differently in cabinet, as they will have to deal with similar issues. However, most respondents have lost trust in incumbent parties because they have no insight into what these parties are doing and whether these parties are acting in the interest of the citizens. Thus, a vote for a PRRP reflects the respondents’ desire for a renewal of the political culture.

### *The Media*

There are several elements that stand out when looking at the respondents' view on the media. The first element that stands out is that many respondents describe the media as predominantly left-wing, which would (partly) be at the expense of the media's objectivity. For instance, many media channels would be guilty of selective reporting. This entails that more high-profile individuals such as Thierry Baudet would receive more (negative) media attention than VVD-leader Mark Rutte. Willem (May 2021) says the following about this: "On the one hand that is positive, because the more attention the better for the entire spectrum. On the other hand, you can see that most people think it only concerns strange people and that FvD is not a serious party." Willem and other respondents emphasise that the media has double standards which, in combination with the framing of PRRPs, has many adverse consequences. As Yasmin (May 2021) explains:

"The media may not influence politics itself, but it does influence the public. The media prints certain images or statements that people have made, or they show what went well for certain parties but did not go well for other parties. Unnoticed, you are influenced by the media, whether you like it or not. Certain matters are put under a magnifier, which influences you and contributes to the constitution of your opinion."

This means that people base their opinions on media reports, which – due to the left ideology of the media – results in a negative attitude towards PRRPs and the people who vote for these parties. The respondents, therefore, believe that the media is (partly) responsible for the taboo on voting for PRRPs. On a small scale, this may ensure that people condemn PRRPs or the people who vote for them. On a larger scale, however, this can lead to PRRPs being excluded from coalitions, which results in cabinets that do not reflect the will of the citizens. Thus, the respondents emphasise that it is essential to continue to think for yourself and to take a critical look at the messages in the media.

Ultimately, the respondents' perception of the media played a role in their voting behaviour. PRRPs are populist in nature (Mudde, 2007), meaning that they uphold an anti-institutionalist attitude. This attitude is often extended to the media. Rick (April 2021) explains this in the following way: "Normally, the media should be controlling the government, but now the media has kind of become the speaking-tube of the government." In this way, the distrust of the government is extended to the media, which has incentivised some respondents to vote for a PRRP.

### *Political efficacy*

In terms of political efficacy, a dividing line appears to be discernible between respondents who voted for FvD and respondents who voted for JA21. The latter believe that voting is important and meaningful, whereby they seem to look beyond their own vote. As Mike (April 2021) describes: “One vote in itself is in absolute terms small, but if we *en masse* would think that it would not count, then nothing will happen.” In addition, according to Stijn (May 2021), “if you do not vote, you cannot criticise how things are going.” These respondents, therefore, believe that voting can foster change and that it is a necessary tool to maintain democracy. However, there seem to be two caveats to this. First, they believe that people who vote must have a certain degree of political knowledge or at least have prepared themselves properly to make an informed choice. “The moment you have no idea what you are voting for, it is better not to vote, because otherwise you will vote for something you completely disagree with, and that is not the idea of voting” (Victor, May 2021). Secondly, they indicate that the political system is cumbersome and that it can, therefore, take time before change can be attained.

The respondents who have voted for FvD, on the other hand, believe that voting is not meaningful. They feel that voting is only for show and that it, therefore, fosters little to no change. As Rick (April 2021) explains: “It is the only way you kind of feel like you have influence, so you just do it. That is actually for the stage again.” Their distrust of these political practices does not positively contribute to this. For instance, Rick (April 2021) implicitly accuses the polling stations of fraud:

“I voted for a candidate for Forum. I checked the official report of the polling station where you can see how many votes have been casted and for which parties. My vote just disappeared. The guy I voted for got zero votes there.”

This does, however, not discourage Rick and other respondents to cast a vote. They see voting as the last resort. “They have already taken the referendum from us. This is the only way in which you can still give some sort of direction” (Rick, April 2021).

Ultimately, although the respondents are in dispute over whether voting is meaningful or not, they are convinced that voting is important, because one can (attempt to) foster change in the political system. This means that the respondents’ political efficacy has incentivised them to vote for a PRRP, as they believe that such a party may foster change.



### 4.3 Motives Related to COVID-19

The respondents' perception of COVID-19 and the measures taken by the government also incentivised them to vote for PRRPs. Many respondents indicate that COVID-19 is a serious virus for which measures must be taken. In general, the respondents agree that Prime Minister Mark Rutte acted in good conscience and that no party would have done it perfectly. This does, however, not mean that the respondents did not have any critical remarks regarding the measures taken. Many respondents feel that more attention should be paid to the possibilities of taking care of the elderly in such a way that the young can indulge more freedom. "From the base, everything is simple. Hospitals have a maximum capacity which you do not want to exceed. But I think you should look at the things you can do to open it up as much as possible within bounds" (Daniel, April 2021). Concurrently, many respondents report that the measures taken appear to be very selective.

"You can go to the supermarket, but you cannot go to the Blokker. You are not allowed to go out after nine and then suddenly it is an hour later. You can order things from a store, but you must wait four hours before picking them up. Why is that not two hours? Why is that not five hours? It all seems a little made up" (Rick, April 2021).

However, it seems that older respondents are less critical of the measures than younger respondents. "I think that certain measures were simply necessary. No one could do anything about this, no one chose this. So, you must perform as well as possible and I think they have done that reasonably well" (Bryan, May 2021). They also seem to insist relatively more on the measures set by the Dutch government:

"Whether you believe it or not, you see that people get sick and – whether it is called corona, the flu or give it a name – the moment you see that hospital admissions are rising, the ICs fill up and people pass away, the least you can do is adhere to the measures" (Yasmin, May 2021).

Given that most respondents – in their own words – understood the seriousness of COVID-19, they were very critical of the way FvD handled the measures. For instance, they perceived FvD as unstable as the party kept changing its position regarding COVID-19, and they believed that

FvD did no longer base their positions on the truth. Daniel (April 2021) says the following about this:

“FvD no longer bases itself on facts, and I think that is just moronic. When the scientists say something, you cannot say it is not convenient for you that the facts are like that and that you are, therefore, going to ignore them. ... That corona is dangerous and that it can cause harm, you can see that in Brazil or India, that is a fact. You can see that. It can be measured. And the moment you go against that, you immediately lose my vote.”

Thus, the critical remarks incentivised Daniel and other respondents to switch to JA21 or another party – mainly VVD or PVV. Those who remained voting for FvD have a different view on COVID-19:

“I am not that afraid of corona. I understand that it is tensive for some people, but why do I have to be locked up because it is tensive for some fat boomer<sup>1</sup> in his paid-for home? There is no solidarity from that generation at all, so why should they expect it from me” (Rick, April 2021).

Ultimately, the respondents who remained voting for FvD were incentivised by their distrust towards COVID-19, the vaccine, and the role of different actors, whilst the respondents who perceived COVID-19 as serious virus for which measures must be taken were incentivised to vote for JA21 (or another party).

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘boomer’ is often used to refer to a person who is born during the baby boom – the period after the Second World War.

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to further the understanding of the motives of higher educated citizens to vote for ‘new’ PRRPs such as FvD or JA21. This inquiry has, therefore, highlighted the aspects that incentivised these citizens to vote for PRRPs. These aspects – which were mainly derived from previous research on the motives of lower educated citizens to vote for PRRPs – concerned (contemporary) cultural motives and motives related to political distrust. Qualitative research methods have been employed to illuminate these elements.

Essentially, the respondents’ motives for voting for PRRPs can be subdivided into cultural motives and motives related to political distrust. The latter seems to be the most influential factor for higher educated citizens in voting for PRRPs. Higher educated citizens have a certain degree of political knowledge and political sophistication – they know how politics and political actors operate, which enables them to accurately assess and evaluate political occurrences. Consequently, they observe political misconduct, which negatively impacts on their political trust. This incentivises them to vote for PRRPs as they believe that these parties can foster political change. Cultural motives also appear to have had a significant role in the voting behaviour of the respondents. However, this role appeared smaller than the role of political distrust.

However, there seem to be differences between FvD’s ideological voters and occasional voters. Whilst the ideological voters agree with the party’s positions in substance, the occasional voters only agree with the broader outline of the party and the change that the party can foster in current politics. For instance, ideological voters believe that the Netherlands should leave the EU, whilst occasional voters want to change the relationship between the EU and the Netherlands by reducing the EU to an economic cooperation. There are also differences in terms of the climate – ideological voters question whether humans negatively impact on the climate, whilst occasional voters acknowledge that humans negatively impact on the climate, but that the measures taken are too far-reaching. Therefore, as many respondents found that the positions of FvD were becoming ever more radical, most occasional voters switched to JA21 (or another party) in the most recent elections.

Moreover, it appears that – with the emergence of FvD and JA21 – there is more room for higher educated citizens on the right side of the political spectrum. Many higher educated citizens seem to experience a breach with the so-called ‘progressive consensus’ (Osmond, 2008), which entails that higher educated citizens are increasingly critical towards the political establishment as they no longer believe that the government is most able to attain social

improvement. As a result, they have lower levels of political trust, and they are turning away from the established political parties. This has incentivised the respondents to vote for PRRPs, as they believe that these parties can foster change to Dutch politics and the prevailing political culture.

Nonetheless, this inquiry also contains some limitations. Because this inquiry employed the snowball method, the sample was not as varied as planned. In terms of generalisation, it would have been better if there was more variation amongst the respondents in terms of age or the province in which they reside. In addition, the research population was difficult to reach because many higher educated who belonged to the research population were initially hesitant to participate in the research either due to my educational background or because they had previous experiences with a biased interviewer. This made it difficult to acquire respondents in the beginning. With some respondents I was able to refute this tentativeness during the interview by means of my neutral attitude, and other respondents were willing to conduct an interview because they had been approached by respondents I already interviewed. Thus, it is necessary for researchers who inquire such a subject to adopt a neutral and sincere attitude towards the respondents and the resulting data. For instance, it is important to let the respondents structure the interview with their answers rather than steering the interview into a certain direction with the way of asking or the introduction of assumed important topics – this does not have to be important for the respondents.

Furthermore, this inquiry illuminates elements that contrast with the existing literature on this subject. Higher educated citizens generally have a more advantageous labour market position, more cultural capital, and higher levels of political trust, which would make them less inclined to vote for PRRPs. However, this inquiry shows that higher educated citizens do have cultural motives and motives related to political distrust that incentivise them to vote for a PRRP. Yet, it can be argued that some of the respondents' cultural motives can be explained by their lack of political trust. The respondents, for instance, indicate that the government did not properly deal with the immigration flow, which negatively impacted upon Dutch society. In this sense, their cultural motives to vote for PRRPs can be traced back to their perception of Dutch politics. In addition, the respondents presented their various motives in a nuanced way. They attempted to illuminate the entire issue, not just the elements that suited them or their position. This observation has not yet been found in the literature, because the focus has predominantly been on the lower educated. This is, therefore, an innovative perspective, which further research can employ to compare the motives of higher and lower educated citizens in voting for PRRPs.

Although the increasing inclination of higher educated citizens to vote for PRRPs signifies that the educational gap in voting for PRRPs is narrowing, this does not necessarily lead to less polarisation in society. There are still plenty of topics or opinions that structure dividing lines within society. This study, for instance, shows that political distrust can be such an emerging dividing line that does not necessarily coincide with one's educational attainment as this study shows. Further research is, therefore, necessary to map the consequences of these divisions for politics and society at large. Ultimately, magnifying the knowledge and understanding on this issue could contribute to more understanding beyond the boundaries of either left-wing or right-wing ideology, in a way that the levels of polarisation may decrease. In addition, it can contribute to the understanding of increasing feelings of alienation of Dutch citizens regarding politics.

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# Appendix 1 Informed Consent

## **Naam van het onderzoeksproject**

Motieven voor hoger opgeleiden om te stemmen op rechts-populistische partijen.

## **Doel van het onderzoek**

Dit onderzoek heeft als doel om de motieven van hoger opgeleiden om te stemmen voor rechts-populistische partijen in kaart te brengen en te begrijpen.

## **Gang van zaken tijdens het onderzoek**

U zult deelnemen aan een interview. Tijdens dit interview zal, aan de hand van een topiclijst, nader ingegaan worden op uw motieven om op Forum voor Democratie en/of JA21 te stemmen. Hierbij zullen onder andere de afgelopen verkiezingen, uw visie op de Nederlandse politiek en de mogelijke rol die uw omgeving bij uw stemgedrag heeft gespeeld aan bod komen.

Om deel te mogen nemen aan het onderzoek dient u tenminste 18 jaar te zijn. Het interview zal worden opgenomen zodat dit naderhand uitgewerkt kan worden. Na het uitwerken van het interview zal de opname verwijderd worden. Dit transcript zal gebruikt worden in het verdere onderzoek. Nadat het onderzoek is afgerond, zal het transcript worden verwijderd.

## **Potentiële risico's**

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek leveren geen juridische, fysieke of economische risico's op.

## **Vertrouwelijkheid van gegevens**

Uw privacy zal gedurende het hele onderzoek gewaarborgd blijven. Er zullen op geen enkele manier persoonlijke of vertrouwelijke gegevens van of over u naar buiten worden gebracht waardoor u herkent zou kunnen worden. Voorafgaand aan het naar buiten brengen van de onderzoeksgegevens zullen uw gegevens anoniem worden gemaakt. Zo zal bijvoorbeeld uw naam worden vervangen door een pseudoniem, uw leeftijd zal in een categorie worden geplaatst (18-25 jaar, 25-35 jaar, etc.) en uw woonplaats zal niet worden genoemd (enkel de provincie waarin u woonachtig bent).

De audio-opnamen, instemmingsformulieren en andere documenten die in het kader van dit onderzoek worden gemaakt of verzameld, worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie bij de Erasmus Universiteit te Rotterdam en op de beveiligde computer van de onderzoeker.

## **Vrijwilligheid**

U hoeft geen vragen te beantwoorden die u niet wilt beantwoorden. Daarnaast is uw deelname geheel vrijwillig en het is mogelijk uw deelname op elk gewenst moment te stoppen. Het (vroegtijdig) stoppen van de deelname heeft geen nadelige gevolgen voor u. De gegevens die u hebt verstrekt tot aan het moment waarop u uw deelname stopt, zal (zoals hierboven beschreven) in het onderzoek gebruikt worden.

## **Toestemmingsverklaring**

Door dit document te ondertekenen geeft u aan tenminste 18 jaar te zijn. Daarnaast geeft u hiermee aan voldoende geïnformeerd te zijn over het onderzoek, de manier waarop de onderzoeksgegevens worden verzameld, gebruikt en behandeld.

Ik ga akkoord met deelname aan het onderzoeksproject. Het doel van dit document is om de voorwaarden van mijn deelname aan het project vast te leggen.

1. Ik kreeg voldoende informatie over dit onderzoeksproject. Het doel van mijn deelname als geïnterviewde in dit project is voor mij helder uitgelegd en ik weet wat dit voor mij betekent.
2. Mijn deelname als geïnterviewde in dit project is vrijwillig. Er is geen expliciete of impliciete dwang voor mij om aan dit onderzoek deel te nemen.
3. Mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek houdt in dat ik word geïnterviewd door een masterstudent van de Erasmus Universiteit te Rotterdam. De interviews zullen variëren in tijd. Ik geef de onderzoeker toestemming om tijdens het interview een audio-opname te maken en schriftelijke notities te nemen.
4. Het is mij duidelijk dat, als ik toch bezwaar heb met een of meer punten zoals hierboven beschreven, ik op elk gewenst moment mijn deelname kan stoppen.

## Appendix 2 Topic List

1. **Algemeen:** *Zou je me iets over jezelf kunnen vertellen?*
  - Leeftijd
  - Opleiding / beroep
  - Provincie woonachtig
  
2. **Afgelopen verkiezing:** *Heb je het idee dat alle politieke partijen in verkiezingsdebatten evenveel kansen hebben gehad hun verhaal te doen om zodoende kiezers voor zich te winnen?*
  - Rol media
  - Bijzonderheden in aanloop naar verkiezing
  - Uitslag / (mogelijke) coalitie
  
3. **Verkiezingen:** *Vind jij dat stemmen zinvol is en/of veranderingen teweeg kan brengen?*
  - Visie op de overheid / politici / de Nederlandse politiek
    - i. Vertrouwen
    - ii. Responsiveness
    - iii. Political efficacy
    - iv. Directe democratie
    - v. Verschillen tussen partijen
  - Visie op EU / lobbyisten
  - Visie op media
  
4. **Stemgedrag:** *Wat is voor jou de belangrijkste reden geweest om op Forum voor Democratie / JA21 te stemmen?*
  - Motieven
    - i. Andere motieven
    - ii. Doorslaggevende factor
    - iii. Tegenstrijdige standpunten
  - Verwachtingen
  - Sociale omgeving
    - i. Bespreken van / invloed op stemgedrag
    - ii. Taboe
    - iii. (Omgaan met) negatieve reacties
  - COVID-19
    - i. Eigen visie
    - ii. Rol in stemgedrag
  - Verschuiving culturele waarden
    - i. Visie op inclusieve overheidsmaatregelen (vb. quota's)
    - ii. Visie op etnische minderheden / migratiebeleid
    - iii. Visie op klimaat
  
5. **Toekomst:** *In hoeverre verwacht je bij de volgende (Tweede Kamer) verkiezingen weer op deze partij te stemmen?*
  - Voorwaarden

## Appendix 3 Overview of Respondents

<b>Pseudonym<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Date of the interview</b>	<b>Type of interview</b>	<b>Duration of the interview</b>	<b>Province</b>
Floris	Male	18-24	April 2021	Telephone	1h 3m	Utrecht
Violet	Female	18-24	April 2021	Telephone	1h 15m	South-Holland
Rick	Male	25-34	April 2021	Telephone	1h 21m	South-Holland
Mike	Male	18-24	April 2021	Telephone	1h 30m	South-Holland
Daniel	Male	18-24	April 2021	Telephone	1h 15m	Gelderland
Yasmin	Female	45-54	May 2021	Telephone	1h 11m	South-Holland
Thijs	Male	18-24	May 2021	Telephone	1h 22m	South-Holland
Stijn	Male	25-34	May 2021	Telephone	57m	South-Holland
Milan	Male	18-24	May 2021	Telephone	1u 6m	South-Holland
Victor	Male	18-24	May 2021	Telephone	1u 50m	South-Holland
Willem	Male	25-34	May 2021	Telephone	1u 12m	South-Holland
Bryan	Male	45-54	May 2021	Telephone	1u 1m	South-Holland

<sup>2</sup> To guarantee the anonymity of the respondents, a pseudonym has been devised that is in no way related to the names of the respondents.

## Appendix 4 Privacy and Ethics Checklist

### Part I: General Information

Project title:	<b>Motives of higher educated citizens to vote for right-wing populist parties</b>
Name, email of student:	<b>Lisa Schouten (454849ls@eur.nl)</b>
Name, email of supervisor:	<b>Gijs Custers (custers@essb.eur.nl)</b>
Start date and duration:	<b>12 April 2021 – 20 June 2021</b>
Is the research study conducted within DPAS?	<b>YES - NO</b>

### Part II: Human Subjects

1. Does your research involve human participants? **YES – NO**  
If ‘YES’: does the study involve medical or physical research? **YES - NO**
2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. **YES - NO**
3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). **YES - NO**

### Part III: Participants

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? **YES - NO**
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written ‘informed consent,’ whereby they agree to participate in the study? **YES - NO**
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? **YES - NO**
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? **YES - NO**  
Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? **YES - NO**
5. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person’s sex life or sexual orientation)? **YES - NO**
6. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? **YES - NO**
7. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? **YES - NO**
8. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants’ identity not be ensured? **YES - NO**
9. Are there any other possible ethical issues regarding this study? **YES - NO**

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

**It is unavoidable in this inquiry to ask the respondents about their political attitudes and behaviour since the aim of this research is to investigate the motives of citizens to vote for certain political parties. There are, however, several measures in place that will ensure the anonymity of the respondents.**

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

**I will preserve the anonymity of all my respondents by using an alias in my research and I will delete the recording of the interview after I have transcribed it. If the respondent prefers not to be recorded, I can solely make notes during the interview.**

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

**There are no unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants.**

#### Part IV: Sample

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

**I will collect/obtain my data through semi-structured interviews. After every interview I will ask the respondent whether they have other people in their personal networks that may be willing to conduct an interview about the subject.**

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

**I expect to interview about ten people since the research population is relatively small and there is a taboo on the topic.**

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

**That depends on the number of votes that Forum voor Democratie will obtain during the past election. Based on the number of seats the party now has in the Second Chamber (due to the elections of 2017), I estimate that the size of the population includes approximately 140,000 citizens.**

#### Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

**The obtained data will be stored on Microsoft OneDrive in the short term. The data will be preserved until the inquiry is fully completed and graded.**

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

**I am personally responsible for the direct day-to-day management, storage, and backup of the data related to my research.**

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

**All adjustments are made in OneDrive. Therefore, no unnecessary copies will be made for short term security reasons.**

In case of collecting personal data, how will you anonymise the data?

**The collected personal data will be made anonymous before it will be included in the inquiry by using an alias in my research, deleting the recording after I have transcribed it, or solely make notes during the interview. As a result, the data cannot be (directly or indirectly) traced back to the identity of the respondents.**

#### Part VI: Signature

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student:

**Lisa Schouten**

Name (EUR) supervisor:

**Gijs Custers**

Date:

**17 March 2021**



Date:

**19 March 2021**

