



Argumentation and fallacy in Dutch populist discourse

A comparative analysis of right-wing and left-wing parties

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Abstract

Right-wing populist rhetoric is often considered as standard populist rhetoric, including the use of populist themes and informal fallacies. It has not been investigated yet whether left-wing populist rhetoric shares the same characteristics. The present study sheds new light on the way Dutch populist parties with different positions on the political left-to-right spectrum use persuasive language in election campaign discourse using a corpus-based comparative discourse analysis of the argumentation of two Dutch populist parties, the right-wing *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) and the left-wing *Socialistische Partij* (SP). The findings reveal that the two populist parties express their populist nature in a completely different way. PVV frequently uses multiple populist themes, and more informal fallacies when trying to persuade the public, while SP uses little populist themes and predominantly uses valid argumentation to persuade their audience. Since SP shows little populist characteristics in their rhetoric but an anti-elitist stance, it can be argued they should simply be considered anti-elitist. PVV can be considered prototypically populist while SP can be considered populist to a minimum. This suggests that two seemingly similar parties, in the sense they are both considered populist, can differ immensely in rhetorical style and ideology, and should therefore not be generalized.

Keywords: Populist rhetoric, persuasion, argumentation, fallacy, Dutch politics, election campaigns

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Introduction

In the last decennia, Dutch populism has increased (Otjes & Louwerse, 2013; Lucardie & Voerman, 2019; Vossen, 2012). This can be explained by the conservative and populist shifts that have influenced the Netherlands from 2000 to 2010. These shifts concentrated around distrust in the government or “usual politics”, and an intolerant attitude towards migrants (Boomkens, 2010) and led to a hardening of the Dutch political climate and a polarization in the direction of ideological extremes. This resulted in the growth of populist parties.

Although populism has been associated with right-wing politics mostly, it also presents itself in left-wing politics. The association with right-wing politics is due to the populist rhetoric of many illustrious conservative right-wing politicians, like Donald Trump (former US president), Boris Johnson (former UK prime minister), Jair Bolsonaro (former Brazil president), and Geert Wilders (Dutch politician) and to the notion that far-right politics and populist politics share many characteristics in ideology (Pelinka, 2017). Some of these characteristics are the construction of a seemingly evident ‘us’ and ‘them’, and national - and traditional tendencies (Pelinka, 2017). Left-wing politicians that have utilized populist rhetoric are Bernie Sanders (US Senator), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (US politician), and Lilian Marijnissen (Dutch politician). The politicians that have been mentioned are positioned far-right or far-left on the political spectrum. This confirms the idea that populism shows to be strongest at the “extremes of the political spectrum” (Engesser et al., 2017).

Across the political left-to-right spectrum, populism presents itself in different ways. Right-wing populist ideology can be defined as exclusionary, nationalist, chauvinist, and nativist. It depicts ‘the people’ as a nation or jeopardized middle class. The ideology can be

considered exclusionary in the sense that it considers ‘the people’ as an ethnically and culturally homogenous group, with no place for migrants and minorities (Filc, 2015; Markou, 2017). The ideology can be considered nationalist in the sense that it promotes the nation’s or ‘the people’s’ interests, their national identity, and their sovereignty over those of other groups of people or nations. The ideology can be considered chauvinist in the sense that this ideology depicts ‘the people’, their language, and their country as superior to others. The ideology can be considered nativist in the sense that it promotes the interests of native or established inhabitants over those of immigrants (Wodak, 2015b; Reisigl, 2022; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013, Pelinka, 2017).

Left-wing populist ideology can be defined as inclusionary, internationalist and post-nationalist. The ideology can be considered inclusionary in the sense that it considers ‘the people’ as an ethnically and culturally heterogenous group, including migrants and minorities. The ideology can be considered internationalist in the sense that it promotes the nation’s or ‘the people’s’ interests, their national identity, and their sovereignty and those of other groups, nations, their national identity and sovereignty equally and it advocates cooperation. The ideology can be considered post-nationalist in the sense that it regards nation states and national identities less important than cross-nation, self-organized, supranational, global, and local entities. It depicts the people as a socio-economic class of working people (Stavrakakis, 2017; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013) and it claims that ‘the elite’, that is, the current political establishment, neglects the working group and only takes interest in the business elite (Otjes & Louwse, 2015), that is, the powerful few in companies and enterprises. Whereas right-wing populist politicians consider ‘the other’ (the out-group, antagonist to ‘the people’) to consist of both the corrupt elite, that is, the untrustworthy, urban upper class, and the foreigner

or ethnic minority, left-wing populist politicians exclusively consider the other as the corrupt elite (Pelinka, 2017). This difference can also be observed in Dutch populist politics. The Dutch populist right-wing party PVV both criticizes the Muslim community and the current government and urban upper class repeatedly, while the Dutch populist left-wing party SP does not focus on an ethnic minority group, but solely criticizes the current government.

Populist actors are often accused of using populist rhetoric (Reisigl, 2002; Blassnig et al., 2019; Mudde, 2004; Hansen & Walton, 2013; Wodak, 2015a). Populist rhetoric is a form of persuasive language, which is characterized by the presence of rhetorical tools. Rhetorical tools are techniques that can be used to convince the opponent or the public and to consequently increase electorate. Rhetorical tools used in populist rhetoric are the strategical, and often implicit, use of prototypical populist themes, and the violation of rules and protocols which leads to the so-called informal fallacies (Reisigl, 2002; Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999; Wilson et al., 2012). An informal fallacy is an invalid argument that might deceive the hearer (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999; Bunnin & Yu, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019). The prototypical populist themes contain 'the people', 'a crisis', and 'the other' (Taggart, 2004; Mudde, 2004; Pelinka, 2017; Rooduijn, 2014; Stanley, 2008; Blassnig et al., 2019). In populist rhetoric, the populist rhetorical tools are supplemented with harsh, hostile expressions of unnuanced, abstracted exclusion and inclusion (Pelinka, 2017), aimed at satisfying the existent interests of the citizens or of a subgroup of the citizens. An example of populist rhetoric is the following fragment of a speech by Donald Trump, broadcasted on CNN (2015):

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems ...

They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some, I assume, are good people.

In this example, Trump criticizes 'the other' that is, the Mexicans immigrants. He makes biased generalizations about Mexicans, he connects negative connotations to Mexican immigrants, and he states that Mexicans are covertly deployed to the United States, accompanied by a diverse set of problems. He implies that Mexicans are causing 'a crisis' that impacts 'the people' that is, the United States of America. The public might be misled to believe this is true, since Trump states his claim like an objective truth. However, there is no evidence to back up his claims. Based on hasty generalizations, Donald Trump is jumping to conclusions. This kind of message is also known as a Hasty Generalization fallacy. That is a type of informal fallacy, based on incorrect induction and statistical reasoning. It unjustifiably bases a rule on very few examples.

Populist rhetoric is considered difficult to detect. This is because prototypical populist themes are often mentioned implicitly or hidden in fallacies (Macagno, 2022). Undetected populist rhetoric can have far reaching consequences (Blassnig et al., 2019). When strategically deployed rhetoric is not critically assessed and disseminated, it can lead to the public perceiving informal fallacies as sound arguments (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999; Wilson et al., 2012) and being misled. Improper perception could potentially influence a citizens' political preference and voting style.

In what follows, the concepts of argumentation, fallacy and populism will be elucidated in a theoretical framework. Next, a literature review will shed light on previous studies on argumentation and fallacy use in populist politics and on the relevance of political- and

cultural context. After briefly touching upon the Dutch political and cultural landscape and discussing the hiatus in previous research, the aims, research questions, and hypotheses of the present study will be explicated. This will be followed by a presentation of the method in use of this study. Then the findings will be displayed in detail. Last, the results will be discussed in light of previous research, followed by the implications and limitations of this study.

Theoretical framework

Argumentation

Argumentation is a rhetorical tool, used by people in every day conversations as well as by politicians in their communication with the public. It aims at convincing the interlocutor, opponent or public of supporting a certain opinion or standpoint, through verbal reasoning. It is commonly and deliberately used by politicians, in political discussion and in communication with the public (Wodak, 2015a). A famous example of an argument is the following by George Bush (2001): “*Every nation has a decision to make. Either they are with us or with the terrorists*”.

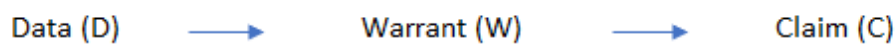
At the basis of an argument lies a fixed structure. An argument can be broken down into three essential components: the claim, the data (also referred to as ground or the minor premise), and the warrant (also referred to as the major premise). The *claim* is the conclusion of the argument; it is the main point, the message someone tries to convince the addressee of to be correct. The *data* is the justification for the belief; it contains assumed facts, explicitly given to the addressee to believe the claim. This is also called the proposition of the argument. The *warrants* are the assumptions that are required for the ground to support the claim; as such, they link the claim to the data. Since the warrants are often taken for granted, they are mostly unspoken and therefore implicit (Toulmin, 1958), but they are needed to make the

claim follow logically from the data. Figure 1 presents a simplified model of argumentation.

Figure 2 clarifies this model with a few examples.

Figure 1

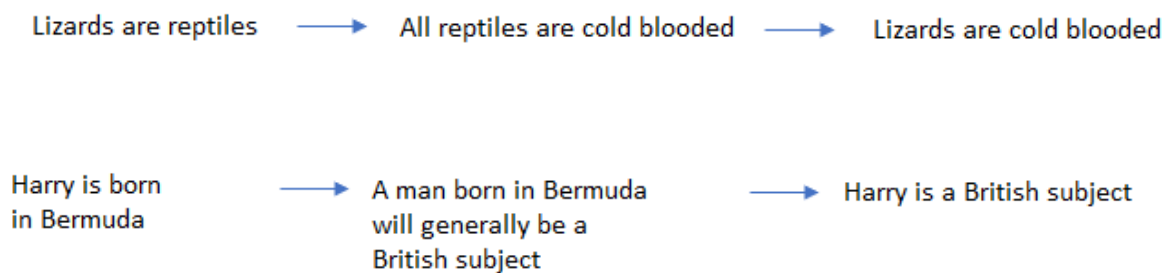
Basic argumentation model



Note. Based on Toulmin's argumentation model (Toulmin, 1958).

Figure 2

Argumentation model with examples



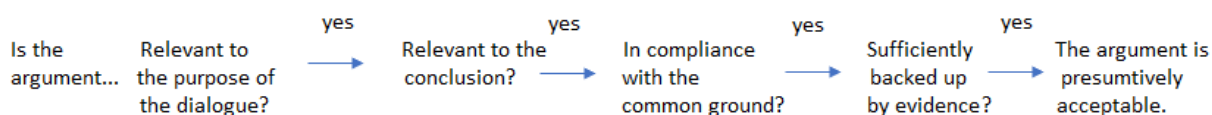
Validity of arguments

Arguments can be divided into valid arguments and invalid arguments. Valid arguments are arguments that are relevant to the situation they are applied to, and that contain premises (data and warrant) and a conclusion that are related to each other correctly. Whereas invalid arguments are not relevant and/or do not contain premises and conclusion that are linked to each other in a reasonable manner. For a valid argument, the truth of the premises logically guarantees the truth of the claim (Macagno, 2022), while for invalid arguments the premises

do not. An example of a valid argument is: “All humans are mortal. Since Sara is a human, she is mortal”. An example of an invalid argument is: “All humans are mortal, therefore all mortals are human.” The validity of an argument can be assessed through a set of critical questions (Macagno, 2022). Figure 3 shows these questions in a diagram. Appendix B offers a complete list of valid arguments with schemes and examples.

Figure 3

Assessment of argument acceptability through critical questions



Note. From Macagno (2022).

Fallacies. Invalid arguments are also called fallacies. A fallacy has a mistake in its reasoning, form, or application (Blassnig et al., 2019). Fallacies consist of persuasive claims, without sufficient evidence to back it up. Fallacies occur as either formal or informal. A formal fallacy is an argument with a mistake in its logical form, also called an illogical fallacy. This type of fallacy is observable in the following sample: “All dogs are animals, therefore, all animals are dogs”. An informal fallacy is an argument that is misapplied in a specific context or contains premises that are irrelevant or insufficient (Bunnin & Yu, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019). This type of fallacy is observable in the following sample: “I have never met a hardworking immigrant, therefore hardworking immigrant don’t exist” or “John spoke out against capitalism; therefore he must be a communist”.

Informal fallacies are more difficult to detect than formal fallacies. While formal

fallacies are clearly invalid and therefore not likely to deceive the addressee, informal fallacies are designed to manipulate the common ground or the context of reasoning (Walton, 1987). An informal fallacy does not contain a mistake in its logical form, and therefore, it can seem reasonable, trustworthy, and accurate; that is why they are also referred to as ‘logical fallacies’. This makes this type of fallacy harder to detect (Van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999; Wilson et al. 2012). As a result of being less observable, informal fallacies are more probable to be accepted as valid arguments, compared to the formal category. This may lead to the addressee being deceived, believing certain things to be accurate and correct which, in fact, are not so (Van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999; Wilson et al. 2012). Table 2 shows the schemes and examples of a formal and informal fallacy. A complete list of different types of informal fallacies with schemes and examples is presented in Appendix C.

Table 2

Fallacies

Formal fallacy (Affirming the consequent)	
Scheme	If event p happens, then event q happens Event q happens Therefore, event p happens (Bowles, 1996).
Example	If it rains (p), the grass is wet (q). The grass is wet (q). Therefore, it rains (p).
Informal fallacy (Ad hominem)	
Scheme	A is a person of bad character. Therefore, A’s arguments should not be accepted (Hansen & Walton, 2013).
Example	The president is a malicious liar. Therefore, his opinion on birth control should not be accepted.

Populism

Populism is considered as a “complex multidimensional phenomenon” (Reisigl, 2022, p. 1). It is perceived as complex in the sense that social researchers have not been able to agree on one single concept for populism. It is multidimensional in the sense that it is shaped through trends, reasoning, and practices, and in the sense that it – among others - contains political and ideological features (Reisigl, 2022).

Populism is often described as a thin-centred ideology (Mudde, 2004), since it is based on a narrow range of political concepts and stances (Freedon, 1998). These stances emphasize the idea of a good-natured ‘us’ juxtaposed to a malicious ‘other’ and an imagined past-derived construction of an ideal world, ‘the heartland’, projected onto the present as something that has been lost (Taggart, 2004). In contrast to ideologies like socialism and liberalism, populist ideology lacks core values. While socialism values social ownership of the means of production and liberalism values liberty and rights of the individual, populism derives its values from its conception of ‘the heartland’. The lack of core values and the different conceptions of ideas like ‘the heartland’ causes that populist values change depending on the context (Taggart, 2004). Therefore, populist ideology is not intellectually refined and consistent, and it is not equipped with a broad comprehensive set of answers to the issues society deals with, such as housing crises, and increased poverty rates (Mudde, 2004; Vossen, 2012). Considering the lack of core values, populism can be easily combined with other ideologies like nationalism or socialism (Mudde, 2004). A combination of populism and nationalism leads to national populism or right-wing populism, which consists of right-wing politics and populist rhetoric and themes. An example of this is the Dutch right-wing populist politician Geert Wilders, whose speech is famous for fiercely critiquing Islam and immigrants

and demanding to ban the Koran, Mosques and headscarves. Other politicians that combine nationalism with populism are former US president Donald Trump, whose speech is famous for scapegoating out-groups like Mexican immigrants for crises in the US, and personally attacking opponents instead of countering the contents of their arguments, and former Brazil president Jair Bolsonaro, whose speech is famous for critiquing the established politicians, containing offensive expressions and praising past dictatorships of Brazil. A combination of populism and socialism leads to social populism or left-wing populism, which consists of left-wing politics and populist rhetoric and themes. An example of this is Dutch left-wing populist politician Lilian Marijnissen, whose speech is famous for fiercely critiquing the elite and the capitalist system. Other politicians that combine socialism with populism are Bernie Sanders, whose speech is famous for opposing economic inequality and neoliberalism, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, whose speech is famous for supporting progressive policies, like healthcare and housing for all.

At the basis of populist ideology lies the idea that society is not a compound of different people with diverse principles and concerns, but that it consists of rather homogeneous groups. Through dividing society in homogeneous groups of people, identities in these groups are generalized and simplified (Pelinka, 2017). This can lead to the belief that all members of a group share the same principles and concerns (Mudde, 2004). These homogeneous groups are “neither real nor all-inclusive but are in fact a mythical and constructed subset of the whole population” (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). Certain themes have been found to be central to populist ideology. These include ‘the people’, ‘the other’, and ‘a crisis’ (Rooduijn, 2014; Pelinka, 2017; Blassnig et al., 2019; Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008; Otjes & Louwse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). Below, I explain these in more detail.

Populist rhetoric

Although all politicians are known to strategically deploy persuasive language (rhetoric) in political communication (Wodak, 2015a), populism is characterized by its distinctive rhetorical tools (Reisigl, 2022). Populist rhetoric is based on two elements. First, populist politicians use themes from populist ideology as a foundation for their arguments. Second, they often use ‘informal fallacies’ that is, an argument that seems reasonable, trustworthy, and accurate, but is not (Reisigl, 2002; Blassnig et al., 2019).

Populist ideology can be represented through a few specific themes, or key messages; the first category of populist themes is *us, the (pure) people* (Taggart, 2004). This group, ‘us, the people’, is considered the population that belongs to the *heartland*, the latter being a past-derived construction of a so-called ideal world, the good life, as it was before ‘corruptions and distortions’ like immigration, globalisation, and taxation started happening. The heartland is something that is felt, rather than reasoned (Taggart, 2004). The notion the heartland implies that the concept of *the people* becomes historically and ethnically charged (Lucardie & Voerman, 2012) and culturally exclusive (Pelinka, 2017). The people belonging to the heartland are also called the *pure people*. Such exclusiveness has its roots partly in ‘nativism’, the idea that ‘immigrants, which are mostly from former colonies, do not belong to the nation (i.e., the people)’ (Filc, 2015). The people belonging to the heartland, are considered the in-group. Populists claim that they are aware of and that they are there to protect the values and interests of this in-group. An example of such values as supposed by the populists is the importance of putting the so-called ‘*pure people*’ in a *sovereign position* and making sure their general will is expressed and achieved through politics.

The second category of populist themes is *the other*. This group consists of everyone

who does not belong to the in-group, antagonistic to the so-called '*pure people*' (Mudde, 2004). Populism mobilizes *the pure people* as a front against *the other* (Pelinka, 2017). Examples of *the other* include the political establishment, the cosmopolitan upper class, and immigrants and foreigners. The so-called '*other*' can be depicted in two ways.

The so-called *other* can appear as *the other above* (or *them above*), that is *the corrupt elite*, meaning the powerful few and the dominant non-populist governing parties (Mudde, 2004). They are portrayed as a selfish and corrupt group of people, that only act in self-interest (Lucardie & Voerman, 2012) and fail to represent the people (Otjes & Louwse, 2015).

The so-called *other* can also appear as *the other below* (or *them below*). This constructed group consists of anybody who can be portrayed as 'foreign', such as migrants and ethnic minorities, especially migrants who seem to not fully assimilate to the Western cultural or religious mainstream (Wodak, 2015b; Pelinka, 2017). The populist ideology depicts this group as the stranger that should be excluded from the in-group, the so-called *good people*. According to populist ideology, the corrupt elite cooperates with this group and defends the interests of *them below* instead of *the people's* interests (Otjes & Louwse, 2015). It is noteworthy that the category *them below* is only included in right-wing populist ideology and not in left-wing populist ideology (Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2007).

The third category of populist themes is *a crisis*. This category consists of the notion that the so-called *pure people* are facing a *severe crisis*, now or in near future, often caused by *the other* (Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008; Blassnig et al., 2019). This is caused by populism considering transnational and transcontinental mobility (an unavoidable aspect of globalisation) as a danger to the target culture's original values that should be fought off

(Pelinka, 2017). Therefore, the *foreign other* is portrayed as a threat or enemy to *the people* or *the heartland* and blamed for the current issues or *crisis* in society or ‘decay of the nation’ (Wodak, 2015b). A charismatic and promising saviour is presented, which claims to be able to remove the *threat* and protect *the people* (Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008). The core ideas of populism are briefly summarized in Table 1 and Appendix A.

Table 1

Core themes in populist ideology

Themes	Explanation ¹
The people (<i>us</i>)	The people are a homogenous monolith (Rooduijn, 2014; Pelinka, 2017; Blassnig et al., 2019; Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008) of pure, good, hard-working people (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019; Vossen, 2008). They are the true citizens of the heartland (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004) or traditional nation (Pelinka, 2017; Wodak, 2015b) that have been suppressed in modern times (Vossen, 2008). The people should be in a sovereign position, and their general will should be expressed through politics (Rooduijn, 2014; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Vossen, 2008).
The other (<i>them</i>)	The other is the group that is antagonistic to the people (Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008; Blassnig et al., 2019). The people are mobilized against the other (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). The other is excluded from the people (Pelinka, 2017; Blassnig et al., 2019) and to blame for mayhem in society (Vossen, 2008).
Elite (<i>them above</i>)	This is one form of the other, them above. Idem to ‘the people’, this is considered a homogeneous group. This is the governing establishment, the powerful few, the corrupt elite (Rooduijn, 2014; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019).
Foreigners (<i>them below</i>)	This is the second form of the other, them below. Anybody who can be portrayed as foreign - in most cases migrants - fits this out-group (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008). This group favoured by the corrupt elite and seen as a threat, burden (Blassnig et al., 2019) or

¹ The expression of themes may diverge among populist actors and contexts. To be inclusive to different expressions of populism, a broad explanation is provided in the table.

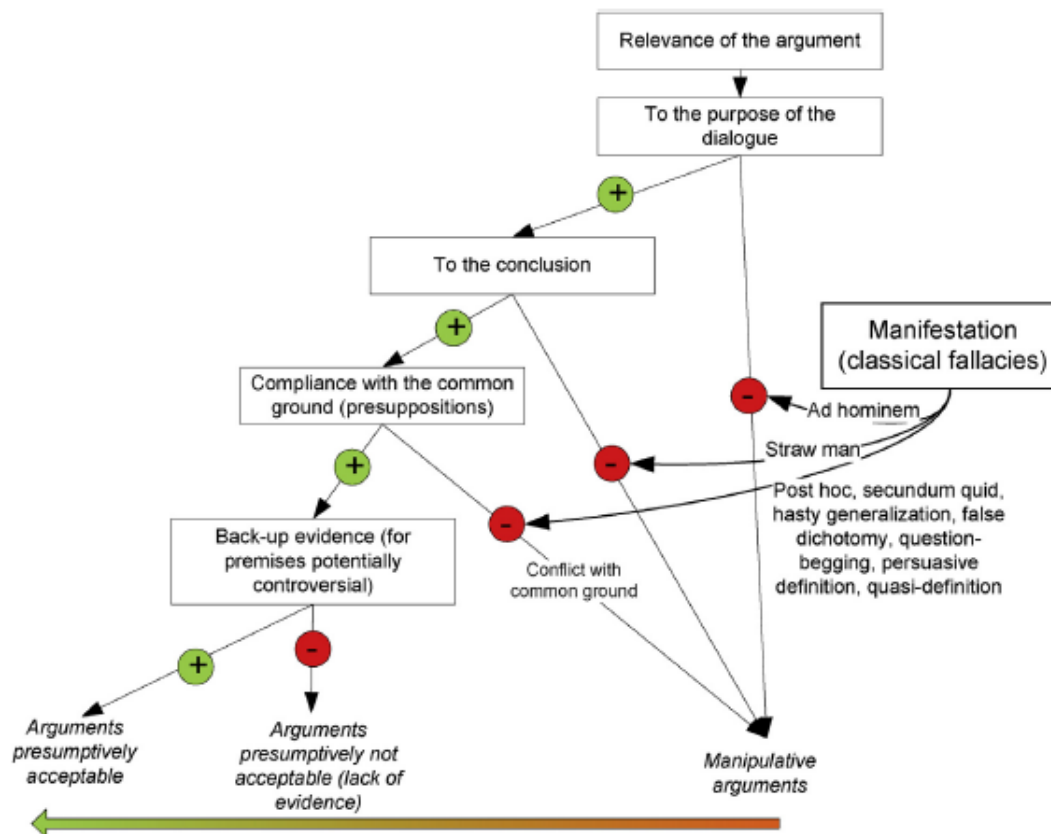
Severe crisis	<p>enemy to society. Often, they are held accountable (scapegoated) for the crisis at hand (Pelinka, 2017; Wodak, 2015b).²</p> <p>The people are facing a severe crisis in the near future (Rooduijn, 2014; Wodak, 2015b). A charismatic saviour is presented, to get the people out of this misery (Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008).</p>
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Literature review

Populist rhetoric on the political spectrum

Validity of arguments on the political spectrum. Argument use by populist- and non-populist politicians has shown to differ regarding the validity of the arguments used (Macagno, 2019). Macagno (2019) has investigated a corpus of argumentative tweets from populist politicians Matteo Salvini (Deputy Prime Minister of Italy), Donald Trump (former US president) and Jair Bolsonaro (former president of Brazil), and non-populist politician Joe Biden (US president). The included tweets are from six months from taking office. The arguments have been evaluated along a continuum, ranging from valid to fallacious, following Macagno's model (see Figure 4).

² The conflict with an ethnically selected out-group (and excluding them from 'the people') is considered a core characteristic of current day populism by some authors (Vossen, 2008), but other authors consider this theme only a core characteristic of right-wing populism in Western Europe (Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2007).

Figure 4*Assessment of argument acceptability**Note.* Macagno (2022).

The results of Macagno's study (2019) show populist politicians make more use of manipulative moves, like fallacies, attacks, and the use of emotive words, than non-populist politicians. The results show a big difference in the distribution of valid versus fallacious argumentation among the politicians. Seventy-nine percent of the arguments of the non-populist politician Biden are valid, and only 12% of Salvini's arguments, 20% of Trump's arguments and 28% of Bolsonaro's arguments are valid. This finding adheres to the presumption that populist politicians make more use of fallacies than non-populist politicians.

Valid argument types on the political spectrum. Argument use by non-populist politicians has shown to be specific regarding the type of valid arguments used (Macagno, 2019). Macagno (2019) has analysed the collected tweets for specific types of arguments and fallacies. The list of argument schemes used in this study is based on the work of Walton, Reed, and Macagno (2008) and consists of 13 argumentation types. Macagno's study (2019) shows that non-populist politicians mostly use the valid argument of Practical Reasoning, that is, a valid argument based on desirable ends that can be met by specific means.

Argument use by politicians and political parties along the political left-to-right spectrum has shown to be different regarding the type of the valid arguments used (Hansen & Walton, 2013). Hansen and Walton (2013) investigated printed newspaper texts with arguments attributed to candidates from Liberal- (centre), Conservative- (right-wing), and Democratic (left-wing) parties in the Ontario provincial elections of 2011. The collected arguments have been analysed and the analysts have attempted to fit all arguments into an argument scheme. Valid arguments most used in the Ontario provincial elections included the following types: Argument from Negative Consequences, the Argument from Practical Reasoning, Argument from Positive Consequences, Argument from Sign, Argument from Fairness, and Direct ad hominem. The Liberal Party (right-wing) mostly used the Arguments from Negative Consequences, Positive Consequences and Practical Reasoning. The Conservative Party (right-wing) mostly used the Arguments from Negative Consequences, Positive Consequences, Practical Reasoning and Sign. The Democratic party (left-wing) mostly used Arguments from Practical Reasoning, Fairness and Positive Consequences. These findings adhere to the idea that argumentation use by politicians differs depending on their placement on the political left-to-right spectrum. Regarding valid argument types, left wing

politicians seem to mostly use arguments of practical reasoning, fairness, analogy and authority, while right-wing politicians seem to mostly use arguments of appeal to practical reasoning, sign and fairness (Hansen & Walton, 2013).

Informal fallacy types on the political spectrum. Informal fallacy use by politicians along the political left-to-right spectrum has shown to be different regarding the types of the informal fallacies used (Zurloni & Anolli, 2013). Zurloni and Anolli (2013) examined the transcript of a debate on nuclear energy in Italy in 2011 on the presence of informal fallacies used to put forward strong positions. A qualitative discourse analysis of the transcript showed that few informal fallacies were consistently present throughout the debate: The fallacy based on a threat (Ad Baculum), the fallacy that counters an argument with a personal attack (Ad Hominem), the fallacy based on erroneous comparison (Faulty Analogy), and the fallacy that appeals to the positive or negative consequences of accepting an argument (Ad Consequentiam). This finding adheres to the assumption that politicians in general are prone to use these types of informal fallacies.

Informal fallacy use by populist and non-populist politicians has shown to differ regarding the informal fallacy types used (Macagno, 2019). Macagno (2019) analysed the fallacious arguments (fallacies) following a list of 9 fallacy types, based on argumentation schemes. The results of that analysis show that the argument of Popular Opinion, that is, an argument based on the asserted opinion of *the people*, is almost absent in the speech of the non-populist politician, while it is clearly present in the populist politicians' speech. The non-populist politician does make use of the fallacy based on consequences. The populist politicians make most use of Ad Hominem arguments, significantly more than the non-populist politician.

Right-wing populist politicians have shown to use a specific set of informal fallacies. The study of Blassnig et al. (2019) showed that the most used fallacies by right-wing populist politicians were those which appeal to the positive or negative consequences of accepting an argument (Ad Consequentiam), followed by those which counter an argument with a personal attack (Ad Hominem), those which base their argument on the asserted opinion of *the people* (Ad Populum) and those that occur when the argument is based on too little evidence (Hasty Generalization).

Fallacy use in texts has shown to differ regarding on the present populist key messages (Blassnig et al., 2019), or themes. Blassnig et al. (2019) has investigated the election campaign communication of the two biggest right-wing populist parties in Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Articles from newspapers and tabloid newspapers, published on their websites, were investigated for the presence of populist key messages and the presence of fallacies. First, the qualitative component of discovering populist key messages was performed by searching in four subdimensions: people-centrism, anti-elitism, restoring sovereignty, and exclusion. Second, the quantitative content analysis consisted of coding fallacies. The results of this study showed that fallacies are more likely to occur in texts that contain populist key messages too. This finding adheres to the assumption that populist ideology and fallacious argumentation are closely related, and that fallacies are a tool to defend or justify populist messages.

While persuasive language is a widely used tool in politics and right-wing populist rhetoric has been a popular topic of study in the last years, research on populist rhetoric has mostly focussed on right-wing politicians and parties. A comparison between right-wing - and left-wing populist rhetoric has not been taken before (Mudde, 2004; Otjes & Louwerse,

2015; Zurloni & Anolli, 2013; Jansen & Van Leeuwen, 2021; Blassnig et al., 2019). As a result, it remains unclear whether the strategical use of populist themes and informal fallacies are features of populist rhetoric in general, or whether they should be attributed solely to right-wing populist rhetoric (Reisigl, 2002; Blassnig et al., 2019; Mudde, 2004). Furthermore, previous studies on populist rhetoric have been limited in the sense they focussed largely on American culture (Macagno, 2022; Pérez, Román & Rodríguez, 2018; Kienpointner, 2013) or only focussed on populist themes without taking argumentation, its validity and the presence of specific types, into account (Van Leeuwen, 2015; Van Leeuwen & Van Vliet, 2019).

Communication, politics and argumentation, in cultural context: The case of the Dutch right-wing PVV and left-wing SP

Culture and communication are strongly related to one another. Culture is what defines a specific group of people or community in the form of language, communication, beliefs, practices and habits, and social attitude. It can refer to national culture, state culture, family culture, and even personal culture (Carbaugh, 2014). Culture is learned, performed, sent, created, and retained through the use of communication (Wang, Lin & Chu, 2011).

Communication, the basis of human contact, is the act of sharing ideas and feelings (Carbaugh, 2007).

Communication has shown to be embedded in cultural context. In a study focussed on differences in communication between North American and East Asian students (Yum & Bahk, 1994), East Asian students were more likely to be reserved, adjust their communication to their interlocutor, and avoid communication that could cause alienation than the North American students. The significantly higher levels of empathy and sensitivity in East Asian

student's communication were explained by their Confucianist cultural norms, which emphasizes harmonious social relationships and reciprocity, in contrast to the North American individualistic cultural norms.

Argumentation has also shown to be affected by culture (Stewart, Setlock & Fussell, 2007). Stewart, Setlock, and Fussell, (2007) investigated the cultural differences in collaborative decision-making. Two participants of different cultures, namely collectivistic (Chinese) culture and individualistic (American) culture, formed pairs to collaborate in decision making tasks. The findings showed, the Chinese participants were focussed on substantive and intersubjective communication, while the American participants showed a socio-egocentric goal-oriented argumentation style. For instance, Chinese participants showed more complex argumentation, stated few claims and spent more time on discussing with their interlocutor, while American participants produced more simple claims, and quickly turned to seemingly vacuous statements of agreements, which led less time spent on discussing with their interlocutor. This is in agreement with the idea that a collectivistic culture produces collectivistic, cooperative goals in argumentation, and an individualistic culture produces individualistic, instrumental goals in argumentation.

In what follows, I will elaborate on the cultural contexts considered in this study: Dutch societal culture, Dutch political culture, and Dutch party culture.

Dutch societal culture

The Netherlands has been described as a diverse country, known for its multiculturalism. Immigration, internationalization, and the grow of global economy has brought lots of cultural influences to the Netherlands. Roughly 17% of the Dutch citizens have an immigrant

background or a parent with an immigrant background. While this percentage is often deemed exceptionally high, it is similar to the percentage in the United States and not unusual by current West-European standards (Entzinger, 2003).

The Dutch government and society have reacted to the shift towards multiculturalism. In the early 1980s, the Dutch government started developing policies to promote immigrant integration. These policies were based on a static and conservative understanding of culture, rather than dynamic. Implicitly, the policies were aimed at protecting the Dutch traditional values from outside impulses and keeping them as they once were. Politicians have said to respect migrant's cultural diversity and they promised to facilitate emancipation, but the needs of newcomers were not met sufficiently. The policies led to more marginalization of migrants, unemployment among migrants and it made them dependent on public support (Entzinger, 2003). The large number of unemployed newcomers in the early 1980's led to tensions between the local population and the newcomers. The local population's attitude towards newcomers changed, which led to racism and discrimination.

From 2000 to 2010, multiculturalism has progressively been under attack in the Netherlands, both in government and society (Boomkens, 2010). Conservative and populist shifts led to polarization in politics and everyday life and an intolerant attitude towards migrants, characterized by xenophobia and cultural conservatism. This intolerance was aimed specifically at Muslims and Islam (Boomkens, 2010).

Dutch political culture

The Netherlands is considered a parliamentary democracy. This is a system in which citizens choose their representatives and where the group of people with executive power (legislature) is held accountable by the parliament (Zo Werkt De Kamer | De Nederlandse Democratie,

2018). The parliament consists of the Eerste Kamer and the Tweede Kamer. The Tweede Kamer can amend and make new laws, where the Eerste Kamer can approve or disprove those laws. The 150 members of the Tweede Kamer are chosen by Dutch voters once every four years (Zo Werkt De Kamer | Tweede Kamer Der Staten-Generaal, n.d.). The current composition consists of 20 separate fractions. The six biggest fractions (arranged from largest to smallest) in the Tweede Kamer present the parties: VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie³), D66 (Democraten 66⁴), PVV (Partij Voor de Vrijheid⁵), CDA (Christen-Democratisch Appèl⁶), SP (Socialistische Partij⁷), and PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid⁸) (Fracties | Tweede Kamer Der Staten-Generaal, 2021). The parties' ideologies vary from nationalist, Christian-democratic, (social-)liberal, and (social-)conservative to progressive and socialist.

In the present-day Dutch political landscape, PVV and SP are the two biggest populist parties in parliament. Seeing a left-wing populist party (SP) and a right-wing populist party (PVV) at the same time in a national parliament in Western Europe is uncommon (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). Therefore, it offers a unique opportunity for a comparative analysis. For this reason, they will be the focus of study in this thesis. In what follows, the origination, main interest and rhetoric of both parties will be discussed.

Dutch party culture

PVV. PVV was established in 2005 by party leader Geert Wilders and currently occupies 17 seats in parliament. PVV is not included in the cabinet, and is therefore

³ People's party for Freedom and Democracy

⁴ Democrats 66

⁵ Party for freedom

⁶ Christian Democratic Appeal

⁷ Socialist Party

⁸ Labour Party

considered an the opposition party, just like PvdA and SP and others. PVV is widely accepted as a prototypical populist party (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015) and is also considered a radical right-wing populist party (Stavrakakis et al., 2017) and a national populist party (Vossen, 2008; Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). Furthermore, PVV's ideology has been considered nationalist, conservative, economically center-left, and socially right oriented (Wikipedia contributors, 2022a), liberal, new right radical (Moors, et al., 2009, Links en rechts, 2022), and authoritarianist (Mudde, 2007).

The main interest of PVV, has always been their criticism on Islam in the Netherlands. The party also shows anti-immigration sentiments (Vossen, 2008), especially against migrants with an Islamic background. PVV claims that these Islamic migrants bring a threat towards the Netherlands. This perceived threat is the basis for their articulated interests for women's issues, free speech, and religious freedom (Oudenampsen, 2019). Based on the xenophobic, ethnically exclusive, and potentially racist character of the party, PVV has been qualified as right-wing extremist (Pelinka, 2017).

The rhetoric of PVV party leader Geert Wilders shows characteristics of populist speech. First, Geert Wilders frequently states to be the spokesperson for *the people*. He claims to know what *the people* think or believe, according to opinion polls or without mentioning the number of people (Jansen & Van Leeuwen, 2021; Jansen, Oswald & Maillat, 2018). When this rhetoric is used as a premise, an Ad populum fallacy will occur. For example, in 2016 he shared his view on Islam with Dutch tabloid 'De Limburger': "Importing Islam is a great danger. Many Dutch people are afraid of losing their individuality" (Gageldonk, 2016) and in 2019 he tweeted: "Europe in crisis. The people want national sovereignty back. Less immigration, less EU and own nation and people first!", and in 2020 he tweeted: "Give the

Netherlands back to the Dutch people! It's our country!!” (Geert Wilders, 2022). Second, Wilders is known for criticizing *the elite*. According to Wilders, the downtrodden *people* are abandoned by the *elite* (Vossen, 2008). “Not the political *elite*, but the *people* should be able to speak out; together the people know better than the leftist clique” (PVV Vision, 2010; Vossen, 2008). This example also shows Wilders wish to make democracy more direct, a common theme in populist ideology: *sovereignty*. Geert Wilders is known to personally insult his interlocutors or *the elite*. For example: In 2008 Wilders demonstrated a motion against a minister and called her “bonkers”. During the general considerations in 2008, Wilders stated that “the government budget is a dredge policy of the worst government ever” and that an old member of parliament had “a spine made of whipped cream”. These personal insults are considered Ad hominem fallacies. Third, Wilders focusses on *the other below* a lot in his rhetoric. For Geert Wilders, this group consists out of Muslims, Moroccans, and other non-Western immigrants. He has defined immigration as the “most dangerous *threat* against the West” (Wodak & Boukala, 2015). Multiple examples are to be found where Geert Wilders focusses on *the other below*: During the general considerations in 2008, Geert Wilders mentions that “Muslim colonists have come to take over”. In an accountability debate in 2008, he has called the Dutch Antilles “a crook’s nest” that should be sold on Marktplaats⁹ for one Euro. In the general considerations in 2009, Geert Wilders said head scarfs are “head rags” that should be taxed. In 2014, Geert Wilders compared the Quran to Hitler’s Mein Kampf in a tweet: “The Islamic Mein Kampf – The Quran – is even worse and contains more disgusting Jew-hatred” (Geert Wilders, 2014). In 2020, Geert Wilders tweeted about

⁹ A Dutch online selling website.

“Maroccan street terrorists” and “Marrocan scum” (Geert Wilders, 2022). When this kind of rhetoric is used as a premise, an Ad hominem fallacy will occur.

SP. SP (Socialist Party) was founded in 1971, is currently led by Lilian Marijnissen (Wikipedia contributors, 2022b) and currently occupies 9 seats in the parliament. SP is not included in the cabinet, and is therefore considered an the opposition party, just like PvdA and PVV and others. SP is considered a populist party, but they have gotten less populist in the last years (Rooduijn, 2014; Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). Furthermore, SP’s ideology has been described as socialist, left-wing (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012; Wikipedia contributors, 2022b), social democratic (Lucardie & Voerman, 2019), democratic socialist (Mudde, 2004), progressive and radical left (Links en rechts, 2022).

SP is different than PVV in their core values. The main interest of SP is their fundamental criticism on capitalism. Most pillars of SP are socio-economically related: advocating for higher minimum wages, protesting welfare state reforms like the raise of pension age, the restriction of unemployment benefits and the privatization of healthcare supplies.

Like PVV, SP’s rhetoric shows populist characteristics through strong populist discourse, presenting themselves as the voice of *the people* (Mudde, 2004). In 1994, SP presented themselves as a protest-, anti-establishment-, opposition party, with their slogan: “Vote against, vote SP”. Their populist rhetoric decreased gradually since 1994 (De Lange & Rooduijn, 2010), but can still be found in their communication to the public (Lucardie & Voerman, 2019). Although, unlike PVV, they stopped claiming *the people* is a homogeneous group and stopped proclaiming a *crisis* is coming, they still centralise *the people* and show anti-elitist rhetoric often (Rooduijn, 2014), just like PVV does. For example, in 2010, a surge

of populist rhetoric appeared in their manifesto: “Politicians have failed, now the choice is yours” and “We have never seen such a painful exposure of the political and economic elite” (Verkiezingsprogramma 2010: Een Beter Nederland Voor Minder Geld - SP, 2010, p. 5).

Unlike PVV, SP does not explicitly mention the *elite* anymore these days, but does criticize the ruling government for its vanity and claims *the people* hold little confidence in the political establishment (Van Kessel, 2015). For example: In 2016, Lilian Marijnissen tweeted about the “elite” being “more confused than the people” and she proposed a referendum. In 2020, Lilian Marijnissen tweeted: “It's unbelievable that this government is letting our healthcare providers down like this”. In 2021 she tweeted: “They've been making a mess of it for half a year now. A large majority of the Netherlands no longer has confidence in this caretaker cabinet” (Lilian Marijnissen, 2022). In 2022, Lilian Marijnissen tweeted that “so many people no longer have faith in the government”, because the government “keeps making false promises” (Lilian Marijnissen, 2022).

In summary, populism shows different manifestations in the two populist parties PVV and SP. PVV is considered a prototypical radical populist party (Stavrakakis et al., 2017; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015), while SP has been considered populist to a lesser extent in the last years (Rooduijn, 2014; Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). In the present day, Wilders mentions populist themes like *the people* and their *sovereign position, them above/the elite, them below/foreigners*, and a *severe crisis/threat*, while SP mentions themes like *the people* and their *sovereign position*, and *them above/the elite*. SP has never mentioned *them below*, and in the last years they also did not mention *a severe crisis* (Rooduijn, 2014). PVV and SP both show populist rhetoric, but since they are located opposite on the political left-to-right spectrum, they show little to no similarities in ideology and parliamentary behaviours. For

instance, SP and PVV stand diametrically opposed on the issue of immigration, and this shows in their voting behaviour. Where PVV shows strong anti-immigration sentiments, SP does not come close to this position (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). To PVV, populism has consistently been a defining core attribute, considering they have always blamed the ‘elites’ for societal issues, while to SP, populism is merely a helpful rhetorical device, as they like to portray themselves as the ‘ordinary people’s party’ (Van Kessel, 2015) but show limited presence of populist themes in their party programme (Rooduijn, 2014).

These two Dutch parties, PVV and SP, show a division that corresponds with the known differences between right-wing populism and left-wing populism (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012). While PVV (right-wing populist) is exclusionary, nationalist, and post-nationalist, SP (left-wing populist) is inclusionary and socialist. PVV sees *the people* as the jeopardized middle class, excluding ethnic minorities and foreigners. Therefore, their out-group consists of both the elite and the ethnic minority and foreigners. SP sees *the people* as the socio-economic class of working people, including ethnic minorities and foreigners. Their out-group solely consists of the corrupt elite.

Present study

This case study aims at scrutinizing the differences and similarities in rhetorical strategies used by two populist parties, located on opposite sides of the Dutch political spectrum. The parties PVV and SP are chosen for practical reasons; the parties’ corresponding populist ideology makes them comparable, whilst the parties’ opposite place on the political left-to-right spectrum, with inherent different ideas about a multitude of topics like economic and social issues, makes hypothesizing and analysing more reliable.

Following a comparative approach, the study aims at answering the question whether

populist persuasive strategies – specifically, the use of populist themes and informal fallacies – are present in both left- and right-wing Dutch populist parties SP and PVV, or if these aspects are solely attributed to right-wing Dutch populism. For this purpose, the populist rhetoric of both parties will be investigated following a content analysis approach. This means, the populist rhetoric of both parties will be searched for the presence of prototypical populist themes, valid argument types, informal fallacy types and the distribution of valid- versus invalid arguments will be exposed. Furthermore, this study aims at gaining an in depth understanding of populist persuasive strategies and their cultural contexts as complex social phenomena. For this purpose, the rhetoric will be examined considering its societal -, political -, and party culture. Following from these, the following research questions are proposed:

- *Research question 1:* To what extent are populist themes observed in the political discourse of PVV and SP?

- *Research question 2:* To what extent is argumentation observed in the political discourse of PVV and SP?

-*Research question 3:* What is the distribution of valid- and invalid arguments in the political discourse of PVV and SP?

- *Research question 4:* What is the distribution of valid- and invalid argument types in the political discourse of PVV and SP?

To answer the proposed research questions, the rhetoric of two Dutch populist parties PVV and SP is critically assessed, analysed, and compared. More specifically, the study will focus on a corpus of these parties' communication with citizens via Twitter, YouTube, and their parties' websites in two weeks before the elections of 2021. The similarities and

differences in persuasive strategies of the two parties will be analysed.

Previous research shows prototypical populist parties naturally make more use of populist themes than non-populist parties (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015; Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012). PVV is widely accepted as a prototypical populist party (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015), while SP is not considered prototypically populist (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012). Thus, it is expected that PVV will use more populist themes in their communication than SP.

Previous research shows that the use of populist themes differs among left- and right-wing parties and among non-populist and populist parties (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2014; Vossen, 2008; Jansen & Van Leeuwen, 2021; Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019; Wodak, 2013; Wodak, 2015b; Pelinka, 2017; Stavrakakis et al., 2017; Filc, 2015). Populist parties have shown to use the general populist themes *the people, corrupt elite (the other above)*, and *a severe crisis* (Rooduijn, 2014; Pelinka, 2017; Blassnig et al., 2019; Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008; Otjes & Louwse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). Right-wing populist parties have shown to additionally use the theme of *the foreigner (the other below)* (Pelinka, 2017; Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2007). Left-wing populist parties have shown to solely use the general populist themes and to not use the theme *the foreigner (the other below)*. Left-wing populists define *the people* as a heterogeneous group rather than a homogeneous group (Rooduijn, 2014). Also, they do not mention *the heartland* (Otjes & Louwse, 2015; Mudde, 2004) or *a traditional nation* (Pelinka, 2017; Wodak, 2015b). Thus, it is expected that PVV will use a different set of populist themes than SP. From PVV is expected they will use the themes *the people, corrupt elite (the other above)*, *a severe crisis*, and *the foreigner (the other below)*, while from SP it is expected they will use the themes *the*

people, corrupt elite, and a severe crisis and to not use the theme of *the foreigner (the other below)*. For SP it is expected they will not use the theme *the foreigner*, and they will not link *the people to the heartland or a traditional nation*.

Previous research shows that politicians are prone to use arguments in their communication to the public (Macagno, 2022; Hansen & Walton, 2013; Zurloni & Anolli, 2013; Blassnig et al., 2019). Thus, it is expected that PVV and SP will both use arguments in their thematic segments. Our pilot study showed PVV uses a higher number of arguments in their thematic segments than SP. Thus, it is possible that PVV will use a higher number of arguments in their thematic segments than SP.

Previous research shows that populist leaders use informal fallacies more often than non-populist leaders (Macagno, 2022). PVV is considered a prototypically populist party (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015), while SP is not considered a prototypically populist party by some authors (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012). Thus, it is expected that PVV's arguments contain more informal fallacies than SP's arguments.

Previous research shows that the valid argument types mostly used in political communication are the argument from sign, analogy, commitment, position to know, misplaced priorities, authority, classification, and cause to effect, while valid argumentation use differs among left- and right-wing parties regarding valid argument types (Hansen & Walton, 2013). Left-wing parties have shown to mostly use the argument from practical reasoning and argument from fairness, while right-wing parties mostly use the argument from practical reasoning (together with argument from sign) (Hansen & Walton, 2013). This is in agreement with the findings of our pilot study, which showed PVV only used the argument of practical reasoning, when using valid argumentation, while SP only used the arguments from

practical reasoning and argument from fairness. The argument from practical reasoning was used most by SP. Thus, it is expected that both parties will use the arguments from sign, analogy, commitment, position to know, misplaced priorities, authority, classification, and cause to effect. Furthermore, it is expected that PVV make use of the argument from practical reasoning most, while SP will make use of the arguments from practical reasoning most, followed by the argument from fairness.

Previous research shows that politicians in general are known to use the Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad hominem and Ad consequentiam fallacies often (Zurloni & Anolli, 2013) and that right-wing populist parties use the Ad populum, Ad consequentiam, and Ad hominem fallacies most (Blassnig et al., 2019). Thus, it is expected that PVV and SP both will make use of the Ad Baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad hominem and Ad consequentiam fallacies. It is expected PVV will also make use of the Ad populum fallacy. Since SP is also considered a populist party (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012), and the Ad populum fallacy is considered closely connected to populism (Blassnig et al., 2019), they are expected to use the Ad populum fallacy too. On the other hand, SP is not right-wing and has gotten less populist in the last years (Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). Therefore, the author expects them to use it to a lesser extent than PVV.

In summary, it is expected PVV and SP will differ in their use of populist themes. It is expected that PVV will make more use of populist themes in their communication than SP. From PVV it is expected they will use the themes *the people, corrupt elite (the other above)*, *a severe crisis*, and *the foreigner (the other below)*, while for SP it is expected they will use *the people, corrupt elite*, and *a severe crisis*. Regarding argumentation use, it is expected PVV and SP will both use arguments in their thematic segments. For PVV it is expected they

will make more use of informal fallacies than SP. Regarding valid argument types and informal fallacy types in use, it is expected PVV and SP will show similarities and differences.

Method

Corpus

The corpus of data consisted of election program documents, election videos and tweets from political parties SP and PVV. An election program document is a comprehensive document, describing a party's positions and plans for the upcoming term. The complete set of data can be subdivided in the following genres: policy documents, political campaign speeches, and public social media communication. To ensure the dataset would be rich, multiple genres were selected, and tweets were included. Dutch politicians are known to be active twitter users (Graham, Jackson & Broersma, 2016), which contributes to a rich dataset. Tweets, campaign videos and election program documents tend to contain - especially in the period close to the elections - persuasive language, and thus most probable also argumentation- and fallacy use. This makes for a high probability for useful results in this study. Since data in these three genres was available for both parties, the data was comparable.

The analysed data was retrieved from the Dutch political parties SP and PVV. The selection of the parties was based on the fact that they currently were the two biggest populist parties (PVV: 17 seats, SP: 9 seats) in the Dutch House of Representatives (*Fracties / Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, 2021) with an opposite position on the political left-to-right spectrum. While PVV is right-wing oriented, SP is left-wing oriented.

The analysed data was retrieved from SP's and PVV's party website and YouTube page, and Lilian Marijnissen's and Geert Wilders' personal twitter accounts. The election

program documents were gathered from the parties' websites (Verkiezingsprogramma SP, 2020; Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2021, z.d.). The election program documents were written for the elections of 2021. This resulted in an election program of 52 pages for PVV and 31 pages for SP.

The campaign videos, containing a speech from the party leader towards potential voters, were gathered from the parties' YouTube channels (PVVpers, z.d.; Socialistische Partij (SP), z.d.). Videos broadcasted within the time period of two weeks before the elections of 2021 were inspected, which means from March 3rd 2021 until March 17th 2021. This timeframe was chosen to select for the highest probability of persuasive language. Videos were included when they contained a presentation of the parties' ideas, and they requested for the public to vote. The videos should not be a compilation of the politicians' appearances in e.g. television programs, but the video had to be shot specifically for the purpose of explaining their ideas, views, and plans and to request for the public to vote. This led to the selection of one video for each party. This resulted in a campaign video of 2.19 minutes for PVV, with a length of speaking of 2.17 minutes, and a campaign video of 3.59 minutes for SP, with a length of speaking of 3.59 minutes. The campaign videos were transcribed and analysed only for their verbal discourse that is, what was said in the video.

The tweets were gathered and selected through visiting the personal twitter accounts of the party leaders, @MarijnissenL and @geertwilderspvv. Tweets shared within the time period of two weeks before the elections of 2021 were inspected, which means from March 3rd 2021 until March 17th 2021. This timeframe was chosen to select for the highest probability of persuasive language. Only direct tweets were included, which means replies to other twitter users were excluded. This was decided to ensure tweets that are solely responses

to a question or comment, and that do not contain a clear idea or message, were excluded.

This resulted in 98 tweets for PVV, and 70 tweets for SP.

In order to be able to order and code the corpus in a systematic manner, all the data were divided into thematic segments as units of coding¹⁰. For the election program, this usually meant one or two paragraphs surrounding one topic. For the campaign videos, this usually consisted of multiple sentences surrounding one topic. For tweets, this meant one message (with a maximum of 140 signs) is a thematic segment. A thematic segment can contain one or more arguments, but can also lack an argument. A thematic segment can lack an argument, since a message surrounding one central topic is not necessarily aimed at convincing someone and thus does not necessarily contain verbal reasoning.

Regarding the qualitative nature of this study, and the limited time reserved for this project, a randomized selection took place to select 50% of the thematic segments. To ensure each genre and each party was equally included, the author applied stratified random sampling. This resulted in a dataset (N=194) consisting of 52 thematic segments for PVV's election program and 50 thematic segments for SP's election program, 6 thematic segments for PVV's election video and 2 thematic segments for SP's election video, and 49 thematic segments for PVV's tweets and 35 thematic segments for SP's tweets.

Model of analysis and procedure

This study offers a corpus-based discourse analysis of the online communication of Dutch populist parties PVV and SP, just before the elections in 2021. This study is of a qualitative

¹⁰ In this study, the definition of Rafiee, Spooren and Sanders (2023) is used: "A thematic segment was defined as a number of sentences appearing together centered around a central topic which offers a manageable unit for coding" (p. 15).

nature, since it focusses on the meaning that can be attached to social phenomena (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003, in our case populist rhetoric. Nonetheless, numbers are also presented for the sake of clarity.

Following a discourse analytical approach, the analysis was performed in two phases: a textual and a contextual phase. In the first phase, a textual content analysis was performed. A content analysis is a systematic technique that compresses a text through identifying and categorizing specific characteristics of the text based on exclusive rules of coding (Holsti, 1968). In the current study, this meant, characteristics of persuasive language in populist left-wing and right-wing parties with specific attention to populist themes, arguments and informal fallacies were identified and categorized. In the second phase, findings from the textual analysis were discussed in the context of the party's political orientation.

Considering the focus of this study (see above) and following previous research (Hansen & Walton, 2013; Blassnig et al., 2019; Walton, 1995, 2008), the most relevant aspects of persuasive language were determined and relevant categories for analysis were listed. Relevant categories for this analysis include populist themes, valid argumentation types, and informal fallacy types. A list of the final categories can be found in Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C.

In order to analyse the data in a systemic way, the data were coded and analysed in an excel sheet following a codebook. This codebook consisted of a list of criteria that was followed for coding how each of the categories were present in the data. Specific criteria for populist themes, the validity of arguments, valid argument types, and informal fallacy types were the basis of the identification process. The first draft of the codebook was created before the analysis, based on categories in previous literature. This part of the study can be

considered deductive. The final version of the codebook was established during analysis. Changes were made in the codebook, because new categories were observed during analysis. This part of the study can be considered inductive. The codebook can be found in Appendix F. The coding scheme, as presented in Appendix F, was applied similarly to the collected data from all of the three genres.

Phase 1, Textual Analysis: Identifying characteristics of populist persuasive language

Step 1. Populist themes were detected in the assembled thematic segments. The prototypical populist themes investigated, based on the work of Rooduijn (2014), Mudde (2004), Stanley (2008), Blassnig et al. (2019), Wodak (2015b), and Pelinka (2017), were: *the people, the other, the other above, the other below, and a severe crisis* (Table 1)¹¹. Each of these themes had a subset of related words (Appendix F1). For instance, *a severe crisis* could also be described as threat, disaster, or catastrophe. The thematic segments that contained one of these words were marked for the possible presence of a populist theme. Each marked thematic segment was then inspected separately, to secure the presence of a typical populist theme or whether there was just a coincidental use of the word. For instance, the use of the word ‘catastrophe’ can be used in the context of an event in the past or in the context of a possible event in the future. In the first case it would not be considered a populist theme. The thematic segments were coded for the presence of 0-5 populist themes and for the specific populist themes. The presence of (one of) these themes signified underlying populist ideology in the data. The more populist themes were found, the more ideologically populist a segment was considered. The absence or presence of the theme *the other below* distinguishes left-wing

¹¹ As mentioned in the Introduction, these categories are chosen based on the conformity found in different studies.

populism from right-wing populism, since left-wing populist ideology only includes *the other above* and right-wing populist ideology includes both *the other below* and *the other above*.

Step 2. Identification of arguments was based on the argumentation model of Toulmin (1958). Following his theory, the data were analysed in the following way: When a segment contained Data, a Warrant, and a Claim, it was considered an argument. The warrants were often not explicitly stated but became clear when parsing out the text. Thematic segments were coded for the presence or absence of one or multiple arguments.

Step 3. The arguments were then divided into valid- and invalid arguments, and the distribution between the two was calculated. A set of critical questions (Macagno, 2022; Blassnig et al., 2019) determined the validity of the argument:

Is the argument (the premises including the data and the warrants) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground/backed up by evidence?

In case both questions were affirmed, the argument was considered valid. In the case one or both questions were rejected, the argument was considered invalid, a fallacy (Macagno, 2022). The distribution of valid versus invalid arguments was calculated in percentages for each party.

Step 4. The set of valid arguments was then searched for specific argument types. Since previous literature offers no clear expectations on valid argument types used by populist parties with opposite position on the political left-to-right spectrum, the argument types investigated in this study were based on the list of argumentation schemes of Hansen and Walton (2013). Argument types taken into consideration were the arguments of practical reasoning, sign, fairness, analogy, commitment, authority, misplaced priority, classification,

and cause to effect. The valid argument types, as used in the model of analysis with their corresponding schemes and examples, are visible in Appendix B and Appendix F3.

Step 5. The set of fallacious arguments was searched for specific informal fallacy types. Following a deductive approach, the subset of informal fallacies searched for were: Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad populum, Ad hominem and Ad consequentiam. Identification of the informal fallacy types was based on the typology and schemes of Blassnig et al. (2019), Walton (1995, 2008) and Hansen and Walton (2013). When a fallacious argument type was detected that did not fit the list based on the work of Blassnig et al. (2019), Walton (1995, 2008), and Hansen and Walton (2013), but has been described in other previous research, this new fallacious argument type was added to the list of informal fallacy types. The informal fallacies with their corresponding argumentation schemes and examples are visible in Appendix C and Appendix F4. If an informal fallacy from the subset fit an argumentation scheme of the preselected list of informal fallacy types, it was coded after this type.

Each thematic segment in the sample was examined following the above-mentioned steps. This process, which included coding and categorizing, was executed manually. Once this step was completed, the rhetoric of both parties got examined closely and portrayed in detail. The data of both parties was described considering the amount and types of populist themes, the distribution of valid versus invalid arguments, the specific types of valid arguments and the specific types of informal fallacies present in their rhetoric. An example analysis is presented in Appendix E.

Phase 2, Contextual Analysis: Interpreting findings in the context of SP and PVV

In this final phase, a contextual analysis was conducted, following an exploratory approach. This means, the findings of phase 1 were investigated and interpreted as social

phenomena including their context in the social world. This way, the author tried to capture the inherent nature of the social phenomena and the contexts in which they arose (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003). The effect the parties' rhetoric might have on the audience was described as well. This phase of analysis is discussed in the Discussion and Conclusion section since this phase consists of interpreting results and assigning meaning to them.

In order to gain an understanding of why and how the social phenomena manifest themselves and how they are experienced, the contexts of Dutch societal culture, Dutch political culture, and Dutch party culture, as presented in the Introduction (see section Dutch societal culture, Dutch political culture, and Dutch party culture) were taken into account. Regarding Dutch societal culture, the findings were interpreted considering multiculturalism, internationalization, growing polarization of society and intolerance against immigrants and Muslims, including xenophobia and cultural conservatism. Regarding Dutch political culture, the findings were interpreted considering the conservative and populist shifts that led to polarization in politics, the democratic voting system, and the ideologies that are present in Dutch politics, varying from nationalist, Christian-democratic, liberal, and conservative to progressive and socialist. Regarding Dutch party culture, the findings of PVV and SP were interpreted considering the fact they are the two biggest populist parties in parliament, the fact they form the opposition together with other parties, their placement on opposite sides of the political left-to-right spectrum, the differences in their ideologies, their main political topic, and the use of populist themes in their rhetoric (see Discussion and Conclusion).

Reliability

In a qualitative study, reliability should be checked for at different stages. In this study, multiple steps have been taken to check for reliability. First, an example analysis (Appendix

E) and pilot study were conducted before starting the main analysis. In this phase, the design of the study was improved, and coding and classification was confirmed by multiple assessment, more specifically, a codebook was established and improved to assure coding of data was balanced throughout the study and would be balanced among independent assessors, and to enable potential replication of this study. The codebook was enhanced throughout the coding phase, which means that other types of informal fallacies have been added in a later stage of the study.

The quality of this study was controlled through data triangulation and triangulation of analyses. The triangulation of data sources was achieved through combining different genres of data (twitter, video, and election program). This made for a broad and diverse data sample. The triangulation of analyses was achieved through combining different types of analyses. This study combined textual analysis, and contextual analysis, supplemented with a comparative approach. This made for a robust analysis of the collected data.

The comparative element of this study was controlled for its understanding quality. To control for this quality, the focus in this study has been on understanding, rather than measuring differences. Data of the two parties has been compared in context, to acquire insight in both similarities and particularities between the two and to understand the social phenomenon.

Throughout the data analysis, the quality of methodology and data have been checked. The methodology and data have been checked to ensure suitability for answering the research questions. Quality of methodology and data have been checked multiple times throughout analysis.

In order to check for coding reliability, three native Dutch speakers were asked to

inspect a randomized set of the data, which included ten thematic segments. The re-coders were linguistics students, familiar with this type of study. The three re-coders coded the segments independently, following the same steps as the author executed in phase 1. When coding was performed, the outcome of coding by the author and the second coders were compared and discussed with each person. In few cases, there were initial disagreements between the first and a second coder in the sense the coders did not reach immediate agreement on inherent themes or argument. The disagreements predominantly concerned subtle differences in interpretation of populist themes present in the data. However, upon close inspection and further explanation of interpretation by the 1st coder, the assessors were able to agree on the 1st coder's way of coding. This was decided on as the final way of coding.

Results

In what follows, the findings of phase 1 of the data analysis will be discussed in light of each individual research question.

Populist themes in PVV versus SP: Presence of themes

To answer research question 1: *To what extent are populist themes observed in the political discourse of PVV and SP?*, all thematic segments have been searched for the presence of populist themes. The findings are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3

Populist themes per thematic segment from PVV (total segments=107) and SP (total segments=87)

	Thematic segments with populist theme	Thematic segments without populist theme
Thematic segments of PVV (n=107)	70 (65.42%)	37 (34.58%)
Thematic segments of SP (n=87)	17 (19.54%)	70 (80.46%)

The majority (65.42%) of PVV's thematic segments contains a populist theme, while for SP it is the minority (19.54%). When PVV's thematic segments contain populist themes, they contain 1.87 populist theme on average, while for SP, they contain 1.05 populist theme on average.

The presence of populist themes across genres differed for both parties. PVV used populist themes in all of the thematic segments in their videos, as well as a remarkable amount in their tweets (56%) and election program (51.43%). When their thematic segment contained a populist theme, it contained more than one theme on average: 1.79 for tweets, 1.94 for the election program, and 1.83 for the video. SP uses populist themes in most thematic segments in their tweets (25.71%), less in their election program (16%) and none in their campaign video. When their thematic segment contained a populist theme, each thematic segments contained one populist theme on average for each genre.

Populist themes in PVV versus SP: Types of themes

All thematic segments that contain populist themes have been coded for the specific themes present. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Presence of specific populist themes

	Use of 'us, the people'(p)	Use of 'crisis' (c)(c)	Use of 'the other' (o)	Use of 'them above' (a)	Use of 'them below' (b)
Populist themes mentioned by PVV (n=131)	41 (32.03%)	17 (13.28%)	1 (0.78%)	40 (31.25%)	29 (22.66%)
Populist themes mentioned by SP (n=18)	4 (22.22%)	1 (5.55%)	0 (0%)	13 (72.22%)	0 (0%)

In PVV's thematic segments (n=107), populist themes have been mentioned 131 times. Out of these 131 mentions, the populist themes 'the people' and 'them above' are used most (32.03% and 31.25%, respectively) by PVV. The third theme, used most by PVV, was 'them below' (22.66%), and the fourth theme was 'crisis' (13.28%). Lastly, PVV makes use of the general 'other' (0.78%). In SP's thematic segments (n=78), populist themes have been mentioned 18 times. Out of these 18 mentions, the populist theme 'them above' is used the most (72.22%) by SP. Other populist themes mentioned by SP are 'the people' (22.22%), and 'crisis' (5.55%).

When mentioning 'the people', PVV refers to the 'true citizens', the so-called 'good people' and they mention the need to stick to the old, 'the homeland', and to avoid change. When SP mentions 'the people', they refer to workers and to "our free and democratic country". When mentioning 'them above', PVV refers to the political establishment of the Netherlands and Europe, and often to individual politicians, 'the elite'. When SP mentions 'them above', they refer to the political establishment of the Netherlands and Europe, the state authorities, and big companies, 'the elite' or 'the business elite'. When mentioning 'them

below', PVV refers to 'the foreigner', the 'alien outsider'. This theme shows up in multiple different ways. Geert Wilders is often inclined to generalize all foreign entities (including; Muslims, Moroccans, Surinamese, asylum seekers, and others) to one big malicious group that poses a threat to the Netherlands, the Dutch people and Dutch culture. Wilders claims that this group tries to take the Netherlands away from the 'real Dutch people'. He often claims that the foreigners are to blame for crises like the housing problem and increasing unsafety in the streets. He then claims that "The Netherlands belongs to us!" and the 'real Dutch people' should not let this develop any further. He bases this on ideas that 'real Dutch people' are treated worse than foreigners, and that this should never happen. When mentioning 'crisis', PVV refers to housing problems or increased unsafety in the streets. Wilders claims these crises are caused by immigrants and Muslims. When SP mentions 'crisis', they refer to socio-economic inequality. When mentioning the general 'other', PVV refers to an alien 'other', antagonistic to 'the people', but it is unclear whether they should be considered part of 'them above' or 'them below'.

The presence of specific populist themes differed per genre. In tweets, PVV uses the 'other below'/'the foreigner' most (40.43%), in the election program, they use 'the good people' (31.43%) and the 'other below'/'foreigner' (27.14%) most, and in the video, they use 'the other below'/'foreigner' (36.36%) and 'the other above'/'elite' (27.27%), followed by 'the people' (18.18%) and 'a crisis' (18.18%). In SP's thematic segments (n=87), populist themes have been mentioned 18 times. Those mentions consider the populist theme 'them above' most, both in tweets (80%), as in the election program (62.5%).

Argumentation in PVV versus SP: Presence of arguments

To answer research question 2: *To what extent is argumentation observed in the political discourse of PVV and SP?*, all thematic segments have been searched for the presence of arguments. The number of arguments in the thematic segments was calculated. The findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Arguments per thematic segment from PVV (total segments=107) and SP (total segments=87)

	Arguments in thematic segments	Thematic segments with argument(s)	Average amount of arguments per thematic segment	Average amount of arguments per argument-containing segment
Thematic segments of PVV (n=107)	85 in 107	73 (68.22%)	0.80	1.18
Thematic segments of SP (n=87)	58 in 87	50 (57.47%)	0.70	1.16

Of the total amount of thematic segments that has been analysed for PVV (n=107) and SP (n=87), a higher percentage of arguments has been detected for PVV (68.22%) than for SP (57.47%). When PVV's and SP's thematic segments contained an argument, they contained a similar number of arguments on average. In the thematic segments without an argument, which SP showed more of, the parties communicated with the public on a more personal level, through showing parts of their everyday life. Both parties also show thematic segments without arguments in which they link to a certain video or interview, in which they solely make claims or promises without backup and in which they simple urge the public to vote for them.

Observation of PVV's party leader Geert Wilders, showed that his tweets often contain many different topics together with many different partial arguments. Multiple claims are made, but they lack the Data that is needed to form an argument. This includes criticism on political parties, leaders, or other entities, or simply exclamations of appal on certain developments or actions.

The number of arguments per thematic segments differed per genre. PVV shows an argument in least thematic segments in their tweets (48.98%), but more in their video (66.67%), and most in their election program (86.54%). When their thematic segment contained an argument, it was 1.25 on average for tweets, 1.11 on average for election program and 1.5 on average for their video. SP shows an argument in least thematic segments in their tweets (48.57%), but in more thematic segments in their election program (62%) and in all thematic segments in their video (100%). When their thematic segment contained an argument, it was 0.54 on average for tweets, 0.7 on average for election program and 2 on average for their video.

Argumentation in PVV versus SP: Distribution of valid versus invalid arguments

To answer research question 3: *What is the distribution of valid- and invalid arguments in the political discourse of PVV and SP?*, all thematic segments have been analysed for the distribution of valid- and invalid arguments (or informal fallacies). The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Distribution of valid versus invalid arguments

	Valid arguments	Invalid arguments
Total amount of arguments of PVV (n=85)	11 (12.94%)	74 (87.06%)
Total amount of arguments of SP (n=57)	40 (70.17%)	17 (29.83%)

The majority of PVV's arguments (n=85) is invalid (87%), while the majority of SP's arguments (n=57) is valid (70%). 13% of PVV's arguments is valid and 30% of SP's arguments is invalid.

The distribution of valid - versus invalid arguments differed per genre. For PVV, the distribution of valid versus invalid arguments was similar for the tweets (97% invalid) and the video (100% invalid): almost all the arguments were invalid. In the election program of PVV the majority of arguments was invalid (80%). For SP, the distribution of valid - versus invalid arguments was very diverse for each genre. In the tweets the arguments were mostly invalid (67%). In the election program, the majority of arguments were valid (86%). In the video, all the arguments were valid (100%).

Argumentation in PVV versus SP: Types of valid arguments

To answer research question 4: *What is the distribution of valid- and invalid argument types in the political discourse of PVV and SP?*, all thematic segments have been analysed for the presence of valid argumentation types and informal fallacy types. The findings are presented in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7

Presence of valid argument types

	Practical Reasoning	Appeal to Fairness	Cause to effect	Unidentified valid argument	Misplaced priorities	Analogy	Sign	Classification
Valid arguments of PVV (n=11)	10 (90.91%)					1 (9.09%)		
Valid arguments of SP (n=40)	25 (60.98%)	7 (17.07%)	2 (4.88%)	2 (4.88%)	2 (4.88%)	1 (2.44%)	1 (2.44%)	1 (2.44%)

Most valid arguments could be categorized using the compiled list of valid arguments. Both parties made use of the argument that appeals to practical reasoning most in their valid arguments. PVV uses practical reasoning in almost all their valid arguments (91%). SP uses this type of argument in 61% of their valid arguments. SP also bases arguments on the appeal to fairness. They use this type in 17% of their valid arguments.

Presence of valid argument types differed per genre. PVV only showed one valid argument in their tweets, which is the argument of analogy. In their party program they showed multiple valid arguments, which were all categorized as arguments of practical reasoning (100%). SP used the argument of misplaced priorities and cause to effect the most in their tweets (both 29%), while in their election program, they used the argument of practical reasoning most (73%), followed by the appeal to fairness (17%). In the campaign video, they showed an equal distribution of arguments of practical reasoning and arguments of appeal to fairness (both 50%).

Argumentation in PVV versus SP: Types of informal fallacies

Table 8

Presence of invalid argument (informal fallacy) types

	Ad Consequen- tiam	Ad Baculum	Ad Hominem Direct	Ad Hominem Circumstan- tial	Ad Hominem Imparti- al	Unknow- n informal fallacy type	Faulty Analog- y	False dilem- ma fallac- y	Cum Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc/ False cause	Ad Popul- um
Invalid argu- ments of PVV (n=76)	40 (52.63 %)	2 (2.63 %)	4 (5.26 %)	3 (3.95 %)	4 (5.26 %)	18 (23.68%)	1 (1.32 %)	1 (1.32 %)	1 (1.32%)	2 (2.63 %)
Invalid argu- ments of SP (n=17)	17 (100%)									

The majority of PVV's informal fallacies appealed to consequences (53%), just like SP's informal fallacies (100%). This fallacy often shows up like a call to vote for their parties or to support a change in policy, because that would result in good consequences. A part of PVV's fallacies did not fit an informal fallacy type from the compiled list (24%). Two of PVV's fallacies fitted schemes familiar to the author, but which were not yet included in the curated list: the fallacy based on a false dilemma and the fallacy that interprets correlation as causation. The fallacies that are based on attacking a person or entity rather than their argument together cover 15% of the informal fallacies by PVV.

The presence of informal fallacy types did not differ per genre. PVV uses the invalid argument (informal fallacy) of consequences most in each genre. Since SP has only used the informal fallacy Ad Consequentiam, they were no differences found among the genres.

To summarize, the findings show multiple similarities and differences in rhetoric of PVV and SP discourse. In general, PVV used populist themes in their thematic segments more

frequently (65%) than SP (20%). Regarding the presence of specific populist themes, PVV repeatedly blames the corrupt elite and the foreigner or refugee for the crisis that is current or near for the ‘true people of the homeland’. SP mostly refers to and criticizes the corrupt elite. While the arguments of SP were predominantly valid (70%), the valid arguments made by PVV made only 13% of all arguments by this party. When the parties used valid arguments, they both used the argument based on executing specific means to reach desired ends, mostly using argument of practical reasoning. SP has also used valid arguments based on the idea that people with similar needs should be treated equally, thus using argument of Fairness. When the parties used invalid arguments, PVV and SP used a different set of fallacies. Both parties used the informal fallacy based on the desirability of consequences of a certain action or policy, the so-called Ad Consequentiam, most. SP solely used this type of informal fallacy, while PVV combined it with a variety of other informal fallacies, including attacking their opponent instead of their argument and basing their argument on a threat or the assumed opinion of ‘the people’.

Discussion and Conclusion

Research on populist rhetoric has mostly focused on populist rhetoric as produced by right-wing populists (like “Populism and Informal Fallacies: An Analysis of Right-Wing Populist Rhetoric in Election Campaigns” by Blassnig et al. (2019), and “The presentational dimension of Geert Wilders’s populist argumentative style” by Jansen and Van Leeuwen (2021)). Meanwhile, the rhetoric of left-wing populists has not been taken into account. As a result, it is unclear whether the two types of populist rhetoric are similar or whether they show differences. Contextual factors like culture and position on the political left-to-right spectrum

might be of impact on populist rhetoric. In the present study, the rhetoric of two Dutch populist parties, with different places on the political left-to-right spectrum, was compared. As suggested by Pelinka (2017), and Hansen and Walton (2013), the current study shows that populist rhetorical expressions differ depending on their placement on the political spectrum.

PVV and SP show similarities and differences in the use of populist themes in their rhetoric. Findings show that PVV uses a larger number of populist themes than SP. These findings are in line with previous researchers' findings that show that prototypical populist parties, and right-wing populist parties (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015; Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012) use more populist themes than a non-prototypical populist parties and non-right-wing populist parties. Regarding specific types of populist themes, both parties have shown criticize the elite frequently through using the matching anti-elitist theme. This confirms the finding of Mudde (2004), that shows populism in general is focused on criticizing the established government or elite. Findings show that PVV focusses on 'them below', while SP does not. The finding is in line with the idea that this theme is only present in right-wing populism (Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2007), because right-wing populist parties use an exclusionary form of populism (Pelinka, 2017). This exclusionary form of populism is characterized by the identification of 'them below', and excluding them from 'the people' (Wodak, 2013). PVV explicitly excludes the Muslim community and immigrants with xenophobic language and posing them as a threat, which might induce fear in the public. PVV can thus be considered exclusionary populist. In contrast, SP should be considered inclusionary populist, since this form of populism does not exclude ethnic minorities from 'the people' (Pelinka, 2017).

Similarity is found concerning the presence of argumentation in their rhetoric. The

findings show, there is a similar presence of arguments in the thematic segments for both parties. This is in line with the idea that politicians in general are prone to use arguments in their communication to the public (Macagno, 2022; Hansen & Walton, 2013; Zurloni & Anolli, 2013; Blassnig et al., 2019). Findings also show a variation in frequency of arguments among genres, with lesser arguments present in tweets, for both SP and PVV. The smaller presence of argumentation and the higher presence of casual communication with the public in tweets, in contrast to the high presence of argumentation in the election program and campaign video adheres to the idea that twitter is used as a tool for personal interaction with the public, while the election program and campaign video are mostly used to communicate their political views and plans, using arguments.

PVV and SP show a difference in distribution of valid- versus invalid arguments. The findings show, the majority of PVV's arguments is invalid, while the majority of SP's arguments is valid. This is in line with the idea that more populist parties show more prototypical populist characteristics like the use of informal fallacies (Macagno, 2022). Therefore, PVV can be considered populist to a greater extent than SP (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015; Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012). PVV seems to use manipulative, deceiving rhetorical tools more often than SP does. SP is more prone to validly argue a certain point of view.

PVV and SP show similarities and differences in their use of valid- and invalid argument types. Findings show that SP uses a variety of valid argument types, while PVV only uses two types of valid argumentation. The findings of SP are in line with previous findings, while the findings of PVV are not, since politicians in general have shown to use multiple types of valid arguments in their rhetoric (Hansen & Walton, 2013). Findings show that both parties predominantly use the valid argument based on desirable ends that can be

met by specific means (argument of Practical Reasoning), which is in line with previous findings, that shows both right- and left-wing parties use this type of valid argumentation the most (Hansen & Walton, 2013). Regarding invalid argument types, findings show that PVV uses a variety of informal fallacy types, while SP only uses one type of informal fallacy. The findings of PVV are in line with previous findings, while the findings of SP are not, since politicians in general have shown to use several types of fallacies in political communication (Blassnig et al., 2019; Zurloni & Anolli, 2013). Findings show that both parties predominantly use the informal fallacy based on (un)desirable consequences. This is in line with the previous finding that shows, all politicians use this type of fallacy frequently (Zurloni & Anolli, 2013). The fallacy is often used to persuade the public to vote for a specific party, because voting for them will have good consequences: “If you vote for us, we will make sure everybody can get housing/everybody can get healthcare”. Therefore, this fallacy might not be typically populist, but generally used by all politicians. Other findings show that PVV makes use of fallacies based on a personal attack (Ad Hominem Direct, Circumstantial, and Impartial), the fallacy based on the opinion of ‘the people’ (Ad Populum), the fallacy based on a threat (Ad Baculum), the fallacy based on erroneous comparison (Faulty Analogy), the fallacy that poses a fake predicament (False Dilemma), and the fallacy that concludes causation when there has only proven to be correlation (Cum Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc). The finding of the four first fallacies is in line with previous research that shows right-wing populists (Blassnig et al., 2019) and politicians in general (Zurloni & Anolli, 2013) are known to use these types of fallacies. The finding of the last two fallacies is not in line with previous research, since these fallacies has not been shown to be used frequently by politicians in general (Zurloni & Anolli, 2013) or populist politicians (Blassnig et al., 2019).

Summed up, SP and PVV are both considered populist parties, but in reality, their populist expression seems to be remarkably different. The parties' rhetoric shows to correspond to their form of populism: PVV's rhetoric shows characteristics of right-wing exclusionary populism, while SP shows characteristics of left-wing inclusionary populism. Also, PVV shows a higher number of populist rhetorical tools in their rhetoric, which corresponds to the idea that they are to be considered populist to a higher extent. In contrast, SP barely shows other populist rhetorical tools than anti-elitist themes. It could be debated whether SP should be considered populist, or whether the description anti-elitist is more appropriate. This would have implications when comparing them to a prototypically populist party like PVV.

This study has shown that left-wing populist rhetoric does not seem to fit the framework of 'standard' populist rhetoric, as proposed by previous research. Most populist rhetorical tools don't seem to be features of populist rhetoric in general, but solely features of right-wing populist rhetoric. Therefore, future research on populist rhetoric should be critical on which types of populism are being investigated and cautious not to generalize the results from one form of populism to all forms of populism.

This study had strengths and weaknesses. The exploratory interpretivist nature of this qualitative study and the comparative approach provides a unique kind of understanding of the social phenomenon that populist rhetoric is, in different political contexts. A description of the two populist parties made it possible to make both similarities and differences apparent. Comparing two populist actors in the same political playing field gives opportunity to control for cultural and political variables, which would be more challenging in, for instance, a cross-national or -continental comparison. The qualitative nature of this study allowed for two

Dutch populist parties and a restricted corpus of data to be studied in depth. Future research could focus on other populist actors, other cultural contexts a more extensive corpus of data, to discover differences and similarities and to be able to generalize results. This study offers the novel insight into precisely what type of themes and arguments the two parties use. Since the curated list of this study was not sufficient for all argument types in use, a more extensive list of informal fallacies and valid argument types could contribute to a more comprehensive and precise set of results. Finally, this study raised questions about how the populist rhetoric is perceived by the public. This could be an interesting topic for future research.

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Appendix A

Appendix A presents the themes used in populist rhetoric and their explanations.

Themes	Explanation ¹²
The people/us	The people are a homogenous monolith (Rooduijn, 2014; Pelinka, 2017; Blassnig et al., 2019; Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008) of pure, good, hard-working people (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019; Vossen, 2008). They are the true citizens of the heartland (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004) or traditional nation (Pelinka, 2017; Wodak, 2015b) that have been suppressed in modern times (Vossen, 2008). The people should be in a sovereign position, and their general will should be expressed through politics (Rooduijn, 2014; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Vossen, 2008).
Severe crisis	The people are facing a severe crisis in the near future (Rooduijn, 2014; Wodak, 2015b). A charismatic saviour is presented, to get the people out of this misery (Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008).
The other/them	The other is the group that is antagonistic to the people (Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008; Blassnig et al., 2019). The people are mobilized against the other (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). The other is excluded from the people (Pelinka, 2017; Blassnig et al., 2019) and to blame for mayhem in society (Vossen, 2008).
Elite	This is one form of the other, them above. Idem to ‘the people’, this is considered a homogeneous group. This is the governing establishment, the powerful few, the corrupt elite (Rooduijn, 2014; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Mudde, 2004; Blassnig et al., 2019).
Foreigners	The is the second form of the other, them below. Anybody who can be portrayed as foreign - in most cases migrants - fits this out-group (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Wodak, 2015b; Vossen, 2008). This group favoured by the corrupt elite and seen as a threat, burden (Blassnig et al., 2019) or enemy to society. Often, they are held accountable (scapegoated) for the crisis at hand (Pelinka, 2017; Wodak, 2015b). ¹³

Appendix A.

¹² Explanation of themes will diverge among populist acts of expression. To be inclusive to different expressions of populism, a broad explanation has been given.

¹³ The conflict with an out-group (and excluding them from ‘the people’) is a core characteristic of current day populism to some authors (Vossen, 2008), but other authors consider this theme only a core characteristic of right-wing populism in Western Europe (Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2007).

Appendix B

Appendix B presents the valid argument types used in politics, searched for in this study.

Argument type	Argumentation scheme
Argument from practical reasoning	
Scheme	A's goal is to bring about (prevent) p. Bringing about q is the way to bring about (prevent) p. So, A should bring about q (Hansen & Walton, 2013).
Example	Sophie (A)'s goal is to pass her exam (p) Studying for her exam (q) is the way to pass her exam (p) So, Sophie (A) should study for her exam (q)
Argument from sign	
Scheme	X is true in this situation. Y is generally indicated as true when its sign X, is true. So, Y is true in this situation (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).
Example	The roof of the house is leaking (X). When it is raining heavily outside (Y), the roof of the house is leaking (X). So, it's raining heavily outside (Y).
Argument from fairness	
Scheme	Group A and B contain persons that all have the same needs. If ϕ treats A and B unequally then ϕ is unfair (unjust). Action (policy) ϕ treats A and B unequally.
Example	So, ϕ should not be carried out (Hansen & Walton, 2013). ϕ : Tax authorities check people with a migration background for fraud stricter and more frequently than people without migration background. A: Dutch people with a migration background. B: Dutch people without a migration background.
Argument from analogy	
Scheme	Generally Case 1 is similar to Case 2. p is true in Case 1. So, p is true in Case 2 (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).
Example	Just like on earth (Case 1), there is oxygen on planet Y (Case 2). Life (p) is possible on earth (Case 1). So there could be life on planet Y.
Argument from commitment	
Scheme	A is committed to p according to what A said or did. Generally, when someone is committed to p then they are also committed to q. So, A is committed to q (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 256).

Example	<p>Thomas (A) is committed to an overall healthy diet according to what he eats every day.</p> <p>Generally, when someone is committed to a healthy diet (p), they are also committed to an overall healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>So, Thomas (A) is committed to an overall healthy lifestyle.</p>
Argument of authority	
Scheme	<p>A is an expert in subject domain S</p> <p>p is part of domain S</p> <p>A asserts that p is true</p> <p>So, p is plausibly true (Hansen & Walton, 2013).</p>
Example	<p>The dermatologist (A) is an expert in skin conditions (S)</p> <p>The dermatologists (A) asserts that the patient is suffering from Psoriasis (p)</p> <p>So, it is plausibly true the patient is suffering from Psoriasis (p)</p>
Argument from misplaced priorities	
Scheme	<p>There is some prior argument or position π that shows evidence of a priority ranking $P2 > P1$.</p> <p>The ordering of the priorities should be that $P1 > P2$.</p> <p>π shows misplaced priorities. Therefore, π should be rejected (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 88).</p>
Example	<p>The right to security for our children should come ahead of the right to privacy for sex offenders; [McGuinty puts the rights of sex offenders ahead of the rights of the children]; So, McGuinty's approach should be rejected.</p>
Argument of classification (counter fallacy: hasty generalization)	
Scheme	<p>A has property f.</p> <p>Whatever has f, also has property g.</p> <p>A has g (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).</p>
Example	<p>A sweater (A) keeps the body warm (f).</p> <p>Whatever keeps the body warm (f), is suitable to wear in winter (g).</p> <p>A sweater (A) is suitable to wear in winter (g).</p>
Argument of cause to Effect (causal argument)	
Scheme	<p>Phenomenon X is responsible for the happening of phenomenon Y.</p>
Example	<p>A passenger insults the busdriver (X).</p> <p>The busdriver gets angry (Y).</p>

Appendix B. Argumentation lists are altered to only include valid argument types (excluding fallacy types).

Appendix C

Appendix C contains the informal fallacy types used in politics, searched for in this study.

Fallacy type	Explanation, argumentation scheme and example
Petition principii	<p>Circular reasoning. The premise, leading to the conclusion is based on the conclusion. (just phrased differently). A is true because B is true, and B is true because A is true.</p> <p><i>“There are many criminal immigrants, because immigrant break the law. They do that because of their criminal nature”</i> (Blassnig et al., 2019, p. 117).</p>
Ad hominem	<p>Attack on person rather than their argument.</p>
a) abusive	<p>a) try to damage the integrity of a person or capitalize on flawed character.</p> <p>A is a person of bad character. So, A’s argument should not be accepted (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).</p> <p><i>“president doesn’t tell truth, because he is a notorious liar”</i></p>
b) circumstantial	<p>b) focus on inconsistency of action and position of opponent. A’s position is inconsistent (A does not practice what they preach). Therefore, A’s argument should be rejected (Van Laar, 2007).</p> <p><i>“You only claim oil production is in the interest of the country’s economy, because you would benefit from it yourself”</i></p>
c) impartiality	<p>c) stress bias on their side, that makes them unable to be objective.</p> <p>A is biased about situation x. When you’re biased, you’re not objective. Therefore, A is not objective and their argument should be rejected.</p> <p><i>“government does not tell truth about amount of unemployment, since it fears for its re-election”</i> (Blassnig et al., 2019, p. 117).</p>
Ad consequentiam	<p>Conclusion reached solely based on (un)desirability of consequence (argument from consequences). Foreseeable consequences are cited as premise.</p> <p>If A is brought about, good/bad consequences will occur. So, A should/should not be brought about (Hansen & Walton, 2013,</p>

p. 257).

“We can’t talk about colour, because that makes racism worse”.

Slippery slope

Argumentation scheme that includes arguments that consist of sequence of steps or a chain argument that rationalizes small differences. It says one small step will cause a whole series of steps that cannot be stopped and have negative consequence.

Bringing about the first step S1 plausibly leads to the next step, S2, and so forth to S_n .

S_n is an undesirable outcome.

So, S1 should not be brought about (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).

“Abortion should not be legalized, because such a step would lead to a loss of human life, which will lead to concentration camps to eliminate people who are not useful for the economy”.

Ad baculum

Consequences packaged as threats (appeal to force/emotion). When a politician uses an open or implicit threat targeted at respondent as premise for a conclusion (Blassnig et al., 2019).

If A (statement/argument/action) will be accepted/done, logically irrelevant event x will happen.

Event x is unwanted, because it is threatening, harmful or dangerous.

A should be rejected.

“You will certainly support our plan right, because otherwise, your job is on the line.”

False cause/ Cum hoc, ergo propter hoc/ Post hoc ergo propter hoc/Correlation to cause/Causality

Politician tries to establish causal link between events that happen sequentially or at the same time. Wrongly interprets weak statistical correlation or co-occurrence as strict causal connection, without the evidence.

Event A occurred before/at the same time as event B.

Therefore, event A caused event B (Pinto, 2001).

or

There is a positive correlation between X and Y.

So, X causes Y (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).

“Decline in stork population and drop in human birth rates happened at the same time, because storks bring babies.”

Ad misericordiam

Attempts sympathy or pity (emotion) from the public. No response to the argument but positioning in a way that generates these emotions from the audience. Distracts from the real issue, prevents discussion, or obtains approval for their own position. Mentioning human suffering or focussing on fate of individuals.

	<p>Arguer A asks of arguer B to have sympathy or pity for A's unfortunate situation. Sympathy can be shown by accepting A's conclusion. B should accept A's conclusion (Walton, 2016).</p>
Ad ignorantiam	<p><i>Student that didn't study and fails to teacher: "Please let me pass, because otherwise I have to join the army"</i> Lack of evidence (wrong premises). Argumentation based on absence of proof rather than evidence. Proposition p is not known to be true (false). If p were true (false), p would be known to be true (false). Therefore, p is false (true) (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).</p>
False dilemma	<p><i>"God must exist because no one ever proved he didn't exist."</i> Fake predicament. Few options are presented as the only options.</p> <p>There are only two options to choose from. You can either choose option A or option B</p>
Faulty analogy	<p><i>"You are either with them or with us"</i> (Tomić, 2013). Problematic comparison. Apples and oranges. a) weak actual analogy between the two compared things b) Politicians figure that two objects that share one characteristic, must share more properties too, but these are not evident. c) Neglecting important differences between compared objects.</p> <p>Generally, case 1 is similar to case 2. A is true/false in case 1. Therefore, A is true/false in case 2 (Hansen & Walton, 2013, p. 257).</p>
Hasty generalization	<p><i>"Smoking cigarettes is like taking arsenic, both related to death. If you don't want to take arsenic, you should also not smoke."</i> Jumping to conclusions, based on incorrect induction/statistical reasoning. F.e. Too few examples (insufficient sample sizes), neglecting context information or peculiarities. Also, insisting a given rule should be applied to all cases, no room for exceptions (Walton, 1990).</p>
Straw man	<p>A part of population x has attribute A. Therefore, the whole population x has attribute A.</p> <p><i>"A poll of eight people in a pub can draw conclusions about public opinion regarding specific topics"</i> no. Depicting opponents position in abusive way, to make it look preposterous or hazardous. Also counts, when politician outlines only a part of the opposing argument, concluding the whole argument has</p>

	<p>been disproved. Also counts, when argument is outlined wrongly, when a correction is made on argument (Blassnig et al., 2019). Person A represents Person B's position in an inaccurate way which facilitates or strengthens A's case against B (Talissee & Aikin, 2006). <i>"Person A states that the students should get better study guides. Person B says he doesn't support person A's idea of giving all the students high marks that easily."</i></p>
Ad populum	<p>Reinforcement of political claim, by referring to the popularity or the will of the people (Blassnig et al., 2019). When everybody accepts A is true, A must be true. Everybody accepts A to be true. Therefore, A is true (Blassnig et al., 2019).</p>
	<p><i>"Everybody believes the cabinet should go (A), Therefore, the cabinet should go (A)."</i></p> <p><i>"The people believe the country is full (p). If the people believe the country is full (p), then it must be true the country is probably full (p). So, it is probably true that the country is full (p)."</i></p>
Ad verecundiam	<p>Appeal to authority or wrongful use of expert opinion. either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there is a doubt that the quoted expert really is an expert in the respective subject or field b) the experts opinion is quoted wrongly or partially, so distorted c) there is no evidence who the quoted expert is (figures without source) (Walton, 2006).
	<p>Person A is of expertise. Therefore, the claim person A makes, is true. <i>"My professor says this rash is contagious. The professor should be trusted because he is an expert."</i></p>
Many questions	<p>The professor is an expert in physics, and not in dermatology. Question that contains assumptions about the respondent (if they directly respond). The premise in the question is presented as a given/confirmed matter (wrong premise), and clearly to the disadvantage of the politician's opponent (Walton, 1999).</p>
Argument from Alternatives	<p><i>"Have you stopped abusing your spouse?"</i> No matter whether the answer is yes or no, it confirms the assumption. Multiple competing arguments are conquered together, to prevent objection from the interlocutor (Hansen & Walton, 2013; Blassnig et al., 2019).</p>
	<p>A is true, but if A is not true then B is true. <i>"Person 1 states he is not guilty of charges:"</i></p>

Red herring

I was not on the delict site, but if I was there, I could have never reached the gun.”

Deviation from the topic. Rhetorical diversionary tactic (smoke screen). When politicians switch the subject without clear link to original topic. Dodging questions without a reason (Blassnig et al., 2019).

Person 1 states argument A.

Person 2 introduces argument B.

Argument B takes over the conversation and argument A is abandoned.

Employee asks employer about pay raises.

Employer stresses how hard he works to make an outstanding product.

The question about pay raises is abandoned.

Appendix C. Informal fallacy types with argumentation schemes and examples.

Appendix D

Appendix D contains a clarification of the steps of Phase 1 of the method through examples.

Step 1

To clarify the process of step 1, detecting populist themes, an extract of the campaign program document of PVV is used as an example:

“It is unforgivable that the political elite of Europe and of the Netherlands have received this terrible Islam with open arms. All around us now the most horrific terrorist attacks are taking place; in our own country, the brutal murder of Theo van Gogh and the tram attack in Utrecht are examples of this.”

In this example the noun phrase “the political elite of Europe and of the Netherlands” is connected to the prototypical populist theme *the other above*, with the literal mention of the word *elite*. The noun phrase “this terrible Islam” is connected to *the other below*, the foreign other that is unwanted. The noun phrases “the most horrific terrorist attacks”, “the brutal murder” and “the tram attack” are connected to *a severe crisis*. It is not explicitly stated but implied, that “the most horrific terrorist attacks” are caused by *the other below*, “this terrible Islam”, since the culprits of the two specific events have an Islamic background. This whole group is scapegoated for all events like this.

Step 2

To clarify the process of step 2, detecting an argument, an extract of the election program document of SP is used as an example. The original text is included in Appendix G.

“The government is there for the people – and not the other way around. That is why we work together with, among other things, the victims of the Tax and Customs

Administration, who have been wrongly accused of fraud. We never accept discrimination, especially not by the government. As far as we are concerned, people should always have the last word and be able to intervene in politics. That is why we have taken the initiative for a binding referendum, in which people can blow the whistle on politics and undo laws. We also support all whistleblowers who report abuses” (SP, 2021).¹⁴

Data: The government has discriminated people and wrongly labeled them as fraudulent.

Warrant 1: Discriminating and wrongly accusing people is unwanted.

Warrant 2: This would not have happened if the people are able to intervene in politics and have their voices heard by the government.

Warrant 3: The government should be helping the people.

Claim: Creating binding referenda and taking whistle blowers seriously is necessary in government.

The first two warrants are not explicitly written in the extract but become clear when decomposing the argument. All detected arguments together, including content that is referred to, form the dataset.

Step 3

To clarify the process of step 3, detecting whether an argument is valid or invalid, the example of SP used in step 1 is used again.

Data: The government has discriminated people and wrongly labeled them as fraudulent.

Warrant 1: Discriminating and wrongly accusing people is unwanted.

¹⁴ All original texts can be found in Appendix G.

Warrant 2: This would not have happened if the people are able to intervene in politics and have their voices heard by the government.

Warrant 3: The government should be helping the people.

Claim: Creating binding referenda and taking whistle blowers seriously is necessary in government.

Questions asked:

Is the argument (the premises including data and warrants) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground/backed up by evidence?

The claim follows logically from the warrants, the argument is in compliance with the common ground and the data is sufficient evidence for the argument. This makes this argument a valid argument.

Step 4

To clarify the process of step 4, detecting valid argumentation types, a tweet of Lilian Marijnissen from SP is used as an example:

“Homelessness has doubled under the Rutte cabinets. People live in poverty and can no longer pay their rent. The result of making the same choices time and time again: not for people, but for the market. So, it's high time for more SP” (Marijnissen, 2021).

Data (D): Homelessness has doubled under the Rutte cabinets. People live in poverty and can no longer pay their rent. The results of making the same choices time and time again: not for

people but for the market.

Claim (C): It's high time for more SP.

Implicit warrant (W): homelessness is an unwanted phenomenon and should not increase. SP will make choices that help decrease homelessness and poverty.

This argument fits the scheme of Argument of cause to effect.

Original scheme: Phenomenon X is responsible for the happening of phenomenon Y.

Example fitted in the scheme: The policy of Rutte, choosing the market instead of the people (X), has led to an increase of homelessness (Y).

Step 5

To clarify the process of step 6, detecting informal fallacy types, a tweet by Geert Wilders from PVV is used as an example:

“Many Dutch people fervently hope for prosecution, conviction and long-term water and bread. #akwasi” (Geert Wilders, 2021).

This tweet solely contains data (D): Many Dutch people hope Akwasi gets prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned.

Implicit warrant (W): If many Dutch people think he should be persecuted, convicted and imprisoned, he should be.

Implicit claim (C): Akwasi should be persecuted, convicted and imprisoned.

This argument fits the scheme of the Ad populum fallacy.

Original scheme: When everybody accepts A is true, A must be true. Everybody accepts A to be true. Therefore, A is true (Blassnig et al., 2019).

Example fitted in the scheme: Many Dutch people think Akwasi should be persecuted,

convicted and imprisoned (A). Therefore, Akwasi should be persecuted, convicted and imprisoned (A).

Appendix E

Appendix E contains the example analysis that has been conducted at the start of this study.

A randomized selection of thematic segments is selected from the dataset. For PVV, paragraph 2.4 is selected from the election program document, tweet number 61 from all tweets, and segment 16 from the campaign video. For SP, paragraph 2.9 is selected from the election program document, tweet 47 from all tweets, and sentence group 17 from the campaign video.

Selection

PVV		
Genre	Segment	Content
Election program	PP2.4	These radical clubs ¹⁵ label autochthonous Dutch people as racists and they ensure that the tradition of Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet is thrown away. The nauseating threat of violence is hereby ignored for the sake of convenience. The extremist Akwasi who said he wanted to “kick Zwarte Piet in the face” was called a “word artist” by Jesse Klaver.
Tweets	PT61	I'm a boy from the south with a southern heart. I love Brabant and my own Limburg. It is the bureaucrats in The Hague who are ruining everything with their Randstad problems! #debatesouth #Wilders #PVV #VotePVV
Campaign video	PV16	He chooses to give the Netherlands away to even more immigration, to give the money even more to other people instead of you, to us, our pensions, our care that has to become top priority again.
SP		

¹⁵ Radical clubs refer to action groups Black Lives Matter and Kick Out Zwarte Piet. These are mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Election program	SP2.9	Personal data is a revenue model for tech companies. Because people pay with their own data, that 'data' has also become a means of payment. We will give this personal data the same protection as when consumers pay for services with money. To better protect the privacy and security of people, it is necessary that the big tech companies become split.
Tweets	ST47	Bob Fosko, We miss you. Vote for, #VoteSP!
Campaign video	SV17	We have already managed to ensure that the rents of people in social housing will not rise this year.

Appendix E1. The original texts in Dutch are visible in Appendix E2

Example analysis format

Name of thematic segment (thematic segment code)

“quote”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting arguments.

In this example, ... distinct arguments are found.

Claim:

Data:

Warrant:

Step 2: detecting populist themes

Literal words = themes

Any words connected to the concepts: the people/us, severe crisis, the other/them, them above/elite, them below/foreigners?

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments (fallacies).

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

Argument x is considered (in)valid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

Argument from practical reasoning, Argument from sign, Argument from fairness, Argument from analogy, Argument from commitment, Argument of authority, Argument from misplaced priorities, Argument of classification and Argument of cause to Effect.

After comparing the argument to the valid argument types, argument x does not fit a scheme of the selected list of valid argument types/ argument x fits into the scheme of ..., because ...

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types.

Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad populum, Ad hominem or Ad consequentiam.

After comparing the argument to the informal fallacies, argument x does not fit a scheme of the selected list of informal fallacies/ argument x fits into the scheme of ..., because ...

PVV Election program, part 2.4 (PP2.4)

“These radical clubs label autochthonous Dutch people as racists and they ensure that the tradition of Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet is thrown away. The nauseating threat of violence is hereby ignored for the sake of convenience. The extremist Akwasi who said he wanted to “kick Zwarte Piet in the face” was called a “word artist” by Jesse Klaver.”

To fully understand the text, co-text (PP2.3 and PP2.5) should be taken into account.

PP2.3 De PVV gaat niet mee in deze zelfhaat. De PVV gaat ook niet mee in het standpunt dat alle culturen gelijk zijn. Wij spreken uit dat onze eigen cultuur de beste is. En daar zijn we trots op! Helaas is de aanval op de Nederlandse cultuur vorig jaar in een stroomversnelling gekomen door de verheerlijking van gevaarlijke actiegroepen als Black Lives Matter en Kick Out Zwarte Piet.

PP2.4 Deze radicale clubs bestempelen autochtone Nederlanders als racisten en zorgen ervoor dat de traditie van Sinterklaas en Zwarte Piet bij het grofvuil wordt gezet. Misselijkmakende geweldsdreiging wordt hierbij voor het gemak maar door de vingers gezien. De extremist Akwasi die zei “Zwarte Piet in het gezicht te willen trappen” werd door Jesse Klaver een ‘woordkunstenaar’ genoemd.

PP2.5 Uit alles blijkt dat de politiek-correcte elite partij heeft gekozen tegen Nederland. Waarom probeert men de Sinterklaastraditie met Zwarte Piet om zeep te helpen, maar mag halal-slachten wel blijven bestaan? Waarom moeten Nederlanders zich wel schamen voor de slavernijgeschiedenis, maar wordt onbesproken gelaten dat slavernij in de islamitische wereld een groot probleem was en nog steeds is? Waarom liggen de kerstboom en het paasfeest onder vuur, terwijl we wel hele tv-uitzendingen zien over de ramadan? Het is de wereld op zijn kop.

Appendix E2 (PVV, 2021).

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting arguments.

In this example, two distinct arguments are found.

Argument 1

Claim: Dutch culture should not be attacked and threatened, but respected, protected, and praised.

Data: Dutch culture is superior to other cultures.

Warrant: What's superior should be respected.

Argument 2

Claim: We should not accept the action groups like Kick Out Zwarte Piet (KOZP) and Black Lives Matter (BLM).

Data: KOZP and BLM protest Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet.

Data: They are dangerous, radical, extremist clubs.

Warrant: When you protest against Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet, you are protesting Dutch culture. Criticising Dutch culture means endangering Dutch culture. Change is unwanted.

Step 2: detecting populist themes

Our own culture is the best = us, the people, the true people, nationalism

Attack on Dutch culture = threat, the true people

Dangerous action groups: threat

Radical clubs = threat

Dutch people = us, the people

Tradition thrown away = threat, attacking Dutch identity/values/tradition

Threat of violence = threat

Extremist Akwasi = threat

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments.

Argument 1

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant to the conclusion (claim)?

Yes, the claim logically follows from the data and the warrant.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

The data and warrant are probably shared by PVV-voters, but not by SP-voters for example.

Many would not agree any culture should be seen as superior to other cultures or something superior should be respected more.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

No, because the evidence is not considered common ground and cannot be proven to be true.

Argument 1 is considered invalid.

Argument 2

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant to the conclusion (claim)?

No, they are insufficient.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

The data and warrant are probably shared by PVV-voters, but not by SP-voters for example.

Many would not agree culture should be static and change should be fought.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

No, because the warrant connecting the data to the argument is not considered common ground or relevant.

Argument 1 is considered invalid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

The argument is not valid, so no valid argument types can be detected.

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types.

Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad populum, Ad hominem or Ad consequentiam.

After comparing the arguments to the informal fallacies, argument 1 does not fit a scheme of the selected list of informal fallacies. Argument 2 fit into the scheme of Ad baculum. If the actions of the action groups are accepted, it will threaten and endanger Dutch culture and traditions.

PVV Tweet 61 (PP2.4)

“I’m a boy from the south with a southern heart. I love Brabant and my own Limburg. It is the bureaucrats in The Hague who are ruining everything with their Randstad problems!

#debatesouth #Wilders #PVV #VotePVV”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting arguments.

In this example, one distinct argument is found.

Claim: If you vote for me (PVV), the people from the south (Brabant and Limburg) will be cared for.

Data: I’m a boy from the south with a southern heart, that loves Brabant and Limburg, and the current bureaucrats only care about the Randstad.

Warrant: The current bureaucrats don’t care about the south. Because I’m from the south, I would make sure the south is cared for. Because I’m from the south, I am like you.

Step 2: detecting populist themes

I love Brabant and my own Limburg = the common people, the opposite from the Randstad.

bureaucrats in The Hague = elite

ruining everything = problem, threat

Randstad problems = elite problems

bureaucrats in The Hague ruin everything with their Randstad problems: criticism on the current government, establishment, institution of government

Vote PVV = insinuates PVV can save this, saviour.

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments.

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant to the conclusion (claim)?

No, the data are not evidence based and the warrants are not sufficient.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes. The politician tries to convince people to vote for his party.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

It's not common ground, that the government does not care about the south of the Netherlands. It's also not common ground that PVV will take care of the south, just because Geert Wilders is originally from Limburg.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

No, the data are not evidence based.

Argument x is considered invalid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

The argument is not valid, so no valid argument types can be detected.

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types.

Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad populum, Ad hominem or Ad consequentiam.

After comparing the arguments to the informal fallacies, the argument fits the scheme of the Ad consequentiam fallacy. The implication that if you vote PVV, they will take care of the south, is in itself an Ad consequentiam fallacy: if voting for PVV is brought about, good consequences will occur.

PVV Campaign video, utterance 16

“He chooses to give the Netherlands away to even more immigration, to give the money even more to other people instead of you, to us, our pensions, our care that has to become top priority again.”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting arguments.

In this example, the following distinct argument is found:

Claim: Rutte is not a good leader.

Data: Rutte gives the Netherlands away to immigration. Rutte spends more money on other people (the immigrants) than on the you, us, our pension, our care. Care should be top priority.

Warrant: A good leader cares most about the common people, the ingroup, and not about the immigrants.

Step 2: detecting populist themes

He (Mark Rutte) = criticizing the current political leader, the establishment, the elite.

Immigration = the other below, the foreigner

other people = the other

you, us, the Netherlands = the pure hardworking people, the homeland

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments (fallacies).

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

No.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

No. The definition of a good leader is subjective.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

No. It is not clear whether Rutte really gives more to immigration and less to ‘the people’, their pension and their care.

Therefore, this argument is considered invalid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

The argument is not valid, so no valid argument types can be detected.

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types.

Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad populum, Ad hominem or Ad consequentiam.

After comparing the argument to the informal fallacies, argument x does not fit a scheme of the selected list of informal fallacies.

SP Campaign program, part 2.9 (SP2.9)

“Personal data is a revenue model for tech companies. Because people pay with their own data, that 'data' has also become a means of payment. We will give this personal data the same protection as when consumers pay for services with money. To better protect the privacy and security of people, it is necessary that the big tech companies become split.”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting arguments.

In this example, one distinct argument is found.

Claim: Big tech companies should become split.

Data: Tech companies are not protecting the privacy and security of the people, when using their personal data.

Warrant: Violating people’s privacy and security is undesirable.

Breaking tech companies apart will make sure, they don’t violate people’s privacy and security.

Step 2: detecting populist themes

No populist themes were found in this fragment.

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments (fallacies).

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Yes, it’s both relevant and sufficient.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

Yes.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

Yes.

The argument is considered valid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

Argument from practical reasoning, Argument from sign, Argument from fairness, Argument from analogy, Argument from commitment, Argument of authority, Argument from misplaced priorities, Argument of classification and Argument of cause to Effect.

After comparing the argument to the valid argument types, argument x fits into the scheme of practical reasoning, because SP's goal is to bring back security and privacy to the people that share personal data. Splitting tech companies brings back security and privacy. So SP thinks tech companies should be split.

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types.

The argument is not fallacious, so no informal fallacy types can be detected.

SP Tweet 47 (ST47)

“Bob Fosko We miss you. Vote for, #VoteSP!”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)**Step 1: detecting arguments.**

In this example, zero distinct arguments are found. This means, the following steps cannot be conducted.

SP Campaign video, utterance 17 (SV17)

“We have already managed to ensure that the rents of people in social housing will not rise this year.”

The co-text of this utterance should be taken into account, to be able to detect arguments.

“The SP wants fair housing for everyone. An affordable house is not a luxury but a right, which is why we are tackling investor power and making housing more affordable.

Throughout the country and in the House of Representatives, the SP fights against rent increases. We have already managed to ensure that the rents of people in social housing do not rise this year. And that is a nice first step, but we must of course lower the rents for all tenants.”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting arguments.

In this example, two distinct arguments are found.

Argument 1:

Claim: Rents should be lowered for all tenants.

Data: Housing is not affordable for everyone.

Warrant: Housing is not a luxury but a right.

If housing is a right, everybody should have access to it.

Lowering rents, makes housing affordable and fair.

Argument 2:

Claim: SP wants fair housing for everyone.

Data: SP is already fighting against rent increases, tackling investor power, and making housing more affordable. SP has already managed to ensure the rents of social housing don't

rise this year and they want to lower the rents for all tenants.

Warrant: The way SP acts now, shows what they want (for the future).

Step 2: detecting populist themes

Any words connected to the concepts: the people/us, severe crisis, the other/them, them above/elite, them below/foreigners?

Argument 1:

no.

Argument 2:

no.

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments (fallacies).

Argument 1:

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Yes, it is relevant and sufficient.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

Yes.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

Yes.

Argument 1 is considered valid.

Argument 2:

Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Yes, it is relevant and sufficient.

Is the argument relevant to the situation applied to?

Yes.

Is the argument in compliance with the common ground?

Yes.

Is the argument sufficiently backed up by evidence?

Yes.

Argument 2 is considered valid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

Argument from practical reasoning, Argument from sign, Argument from fairness, Argument from analogy, Argument from commitment, Argument of authority, Argument from misplaced priorities, Argument of classification and Argument of cause to Effect.

After comparing the arguments to the valid argument types, argument 1 fits into the scheme of argument of practical reasoning, since lowering rents, would make fair and affordable housing possible. Argument 2 fits into the scheme of argument of commitment, since SP has shown to be committed to stop the increase for social housing. Therefore, they will also try to stop the increase of rent for other tenants.

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types.

The argument is not fallacious, so no informal fallacy types can be detected.

PVV		
Genre	Segment	Content
Election program	PP2.4	Deze radicale clubs bestempelen autochtone Nederlanders als racisten en zorgen ervoor dat de traditie van Sinterklaas en Zwarte Piet bij het grofvuil wordt gezet. Misselijkmakende geweldsdreiging wordt hierbij voor het gemak maar door de vingers gezien. De extremist Akwasi die zei “Zwarte Piet in het gezicht te willen trappen” werd door Jesse Klaver een ‘woordkunstenaar’ genoemd.
Tweets	PT61	Ik ben een jongen uit het zuiden met een zuidelijk hart. Ik hou van Brabant en mijn eigen Limburg. Het zijn de Haagse bureaucraten die met hun Randstedelijke problemen de boel verpesten! #debatzuiden #Wilders #PVV #StemPVV
Campaign video	PV16	Hij kiest ervoor om Nederland weer weg te geven naar nog meer immigratie, het geld nog meer aan andere mensen te geven in plaats van u, naar ons, onze pensioenen, onze zorg die weer topprioriteit moet worden.
SP		
Election program	SP2.9	Persoonlijke gegevens zijn voor techbedrijven een verdienmodel. Omdat mensen met hun eigen gegevens betalen zijn die ‘data’ ook een betaalmiddel geworden. Deze persoonlijke data gaan we dezelfde bescherming geven als wanneer consumenten voor diensten betalen met geld. Om de privacy en de veiligheid van mensen beter te beschermen is het nodig dat de grote techbedrijven worden opgesplitst.
Tweets	ST47	Bob Fosko We missen je. Stem voor, #StemSP!
Campaign video	V17	We hebben het al voor elkaar gekregen dat de huren van mensen in een sociale huurwoning dit jaar niet stijgen.

Appendix D2. Original Dutch texts of example analysis.

Appendix F

Appendix F contains the codebook that has been used for the analysis of this study.

The text should first be divided into thematic segments. A thematic segment is one sentence or a group of sentences centred around a central topic which possibly contains an argument. These segments should be named with codes for clarity, before they are put into an excel document. The codes of thematic segments contain information about the party, the genre and the specific segment in that subset. In the first position, S means SP and P means PVV. In the second position V means Campaign video, T means Tweet, and P means Election Program. In the third position the number indicates the thematic segment in the subset. A thematic segment is one individual tweet, a group of utterances from the campaign video with the same core idea or a group of sentences from the election program with the same core idea. For example, SV12 refers to SP, Campaign video, segment 12.

Step 1. For each of the populist themes, multiple indicators are defined to measure whether this theme is present in the text, according to the method of Blassnig et al. (2019). During the example analysis and the main analysis, other words and concepts connected to the themes should be added to the table. Detecting populist themes, is conducted through searching for the following words and concepts in Appendix F1. The thematic segments should then get coded on whether they contain 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 themes (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Themes	Explanation	Related words and concepts
The people/us (p)	These are the pure, good, hard-working people. They are the true citizens of the homeland/traditional nation. The political actor claims to speak in the name of the people and claims to defend	Pure people, good people, hardworking people, true citizens, common people, homeland, traditional nation, sovereign position, tradition, values, our elderly people, advocacy,

	the people's will, or to be obligated to the people. The political actor also refers to the importance of answering to what is presented as the people's will: the people should be in a sovereign position. They demand the sovereignty should be restored, by pressing for direct democratic elements like referenda.	accountability, referendum, referring to popular initiatives as justification for argument.
Severe crisis (c)	The people are facing a severe crisis in the near future. A saviour is presented, to get the people out of this misery.	threat, catastrophe, dangerous, saviour, only one way out, disaster
The other/them (o)	The other is the group that is antagonistic to the people. The people are mobilized against the other. The other is criticized and excluded from the people.	exclusion, against
Them above/ elite (a)	This is called anti-elitism, the criticism of the other above. This is the governing political establishment, the powerful few, the corrupt elite, the political system, the media, or the state.	Any criticism on: the government, establishment, powerful few, corrupt elite, names of governing politicians, political establishment, the state as an institution, political system, the media, specific names of politicians.
Them below/ foreigners (b)	The is the second form of the other, them below. Anybody who can be portrayed as foreign or another social group that doesn't belong to the homogenous 'people', fits this group. This group is seen as a threat or enemy to society and they are often held accountable (scapegoated) for the crisis at hand, and (therefore) they should be excluded.	enemy, the one to blame, any social group that does not belong to the homogenous 'people', minority group members, Islam, Muslim, fortune seeker, threat.

Appendix F1. Detecting populist themes.

Each thematic segment should be coded for the presence of specific populist themes *the people*, *severe crisis*, generally *the other*, and/or specifically *the other above* and/or *the*

other below (p, c, o, a, b). The coding of *the other* is only chosen when the type is unclear.

When uncertain whether a theme is present, the theme is mentioned in italic.

Step 2. The detection of an argument contains multiple steps. First one separate thematic segment is searched for Data (D), a Warrant (W), and a Claim (C), using Appendix F2. When an extract contains all three, it is considered an argument. The warrants are often not explicitly stated, but become clear when parsing out the text. The thematic segment will then be coded on whether it contains 0, 1, 2 or 3 arguments (0,1,2,3). Then, each of the arguments will be separately analysed, and the claim (c), data (d) and warrant(s) (w) will be described.

Element	Explanation	Question to ask
Claim	The conclusion of the argument, the belief. It is the main point, the thing someone tries to convince the addressee to believe to be correct.	What is the person trying to make me believe?
Data, ground of minor premise	The justification for the belief. It contains facts, explicitly given to the addressee to believe the claim. This is also called the proposition of the argument.	How does the person try to make me believe that?
Warrant or major premise	The assumptions that are required for the ground to support the claim. They link the claim to the grounds. The warrants are unspoken and therefore implicit.	What is not stated explicit, but still important in this argument? Why is the data important to the claim?

Appendix F2. Detecting an argument.

Step 3. The process of detecting valid arguments (v) versus invalid arguments (i) (fallacies) consists of answering the following questions:

- Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

- Is the argument in compliance with the common ground/backed up by evidence?

Argument x is considered (in)valid.

If all questions are confirmed, the argument is considered and coded valid (v).

If one or more questions are rejected, the argument is considered and coded invalid (i).

If the questions can't be answered with certainty, the argument will be coded unclear (uncl).

Step 4. The process of detecting valid argument types, contains the following steps:

Compare the argument scheme of the valid argument in our data to the argument schemes of the valid arguments; Argument from practical reasoning (PR), Argument from sign (AS), Argument from fairness (AF), Argument from analogy (AA), Argument from commitment (AC), Argument of authority (AAU), Argument from misplaced priorities (AMP), Argument of classification (ACL), and Argument of cause to Effect (ACE).

If the argument scheme matches one of the suggested schemes (see Appendix F3), the argument will be coded accordingly. If the argument scheme does not match one of the suggested schemes and is unfamiliar to the author, the argument will be coded with unknown valid argument (unva). If the argument scheme matches another fallacy type that is not yet included, this type should be added to the list. If the argument is invalid, the thematic segment will be coded with a dash (-), to indicate the absence of a valid argument.

Argument type	Argumentation scheme
Argument from practical reasoning	
Scheme	A's goal is to bring about (prevent) p. Bringing about q is the way to bring about (prevent) p. So, A should bring about q.
Argument from sign	
Scheme	X is true in this situation. Y is generally indicated as true when its sign X, is true. So, Y is true in this situation.
Argument from fairness	

Scheme	Group A and B contain persons that all have the same needs. If ϕ treats A and B unequally then ϕ is unfair (unjust). Action (policy) ϕ treats A and B unequally. So, ϕ should not be carried out.
Argument from analogy Scheme	Generally Case 1 is similar to Case 2. p is true in Case 1. So, p is true in Case 2.
Argument from commitment Scheme	A is committed to p according to what A said or did. Generally, when someone is committed to p then they are also committed to q . So, A is committed to q .
Argument of authority Scheme	A is an expert in subject domain S p is part of domain S A asserts that p is true So, p is plausibly true.
Argument from misplaced priorities Scheme	There is some prior argument or position π that shows evidence of a priority ranking $P2 > P1$. The ordering of the priorities should be that $P1 > P2$. π shows misplaced priorities. Therefore, π should be rejected.
Argument of classification (counter fallacy: hasty generalization) Scheme	A has property f. Whatever has f, also has property g. A has g.
Argument of cause to Effect (causal argument) Scheme	Phenomenon X is responsible for the happening of phenomenon Y.

Appendix F3. Detecting valid argument types.

Step 5. The process of detecting informal fallacy types, contains the following steps:

Compare the argument scheme of the informal fallacy in our data to the argument schemes of the fallacies; Ad baculum (AB), Faulty analogy (FA), Ad populum (AP), Ad hominem direct (AHD), Ad hominem circumstantial (AHC), Ad hominem impartial (AHI), and Ad consequentiam (AC).

If the argument scheme matches on of the suggested schemes (see Appendix F4), the argument will be coded accordingly. If the argument scheme does not match one of the

suggested schemes, the argument will be coded with unknown informal fallacy (unif). If the argument is valid, the thematic segment will be coded with a dash (-), to indicate the absence of a fallacy.

Informal fallacy type	Scheme
Ad baculum	If A (statement/argument/action) will be accepted/done, logically irrelevant event x will happen. Event x is unwanted, because it is threatening, harmful or dangerous. A should be rejected.
Faulty analogy	Generally, case 1 is similar to case 2. A is true/false in case 1. Therefore, A is true/false in case 2
Ad populum	When everybody accepts A is true, A must be true. Everybody accepts A to be true. Therefore, A is true
Ad hominem direct/abusive	A is a person of bad character. So, A's argument should not be accepted.
Ad hominem circumstantial	A's position is inconsistent (A does not practice what they preach). Therefore, A's argument should be rejected.
Ad hominem impartial	A is biased about situation x. When you're biased you're not objective. Therefore, A is not objective and their argument should be rejected.
Ad consequentiam	If A is brought about, good/bad consequences will occur. So, A should/should not be brought about.
False dilemma	There are only two options to choose from. You can either choose option A or option B
False cause/Cum hoc ergo propter hoc	Event A occurred before/at the same time as event B. Therefore, event A caused event B. or There is a positive correlation between X and Y. So, X causes Y

Appendix F4. Detecting informal fallacy types.

Format analysis thematic segments:

Thematic segment code

“translated text”

“original text”

Phase 1: Content analysis (textual)

Step 1: detecting the presence of populist themes

Any words connected to the concepts: the people/us, severe crisis, the other/them, them above/elite, them below/foreigners?

0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 populist themes are detected.

Which themes of the people/us (p), severe crisis (c), the other/them (o), them above/elite (a), them below/foreigners (b) were detected? (The other (o) is only chosen when it's unclear which type of the other is meant).

p/c/o/a/b

Step 2: detecting arguments

In this thematic segment, 0, 1, 2, 3 distinct argument(s) is/are found.

Claim:

Data:

Warrant:

Step 3: detecting valid versus invalid arguments (fallacies)

- Is the argument (data + warrant) relevant and sufficient to the conclusion (claim)?

Yes. The data and warrant together make a logical base for the claim.

No.

- Is the argument in compliance with the common ground/backed up by evidence?

Yes. The data is backed up with evidence/the data is common ground.

No. ...

The argument is considered (in)valid.

Step 4: detecting valid argument types

Argument from practical reasoning (PR), Argument from sign (AS), Argument from fairness (AF), Argument from analogy (AA), Argument from commitment (AC), Argument of authority (AAU), Argument from misplaced priorities (AMP), Argument of classification (ACL) and Argument of cause to Effect (ACE), unknown valid argument (unva).

After comparing the argument to the valid argument types, the argument does not fit a scheme of the selected list of valid argument types/ the argument fits into the scheme of ..., because .../ The argument is not valid, so no valid argument type can be detected.

The scheme of ... sounds:

....

Our argument fits in this scheme in this form:

....

Step 5: detecting informal fallacy types

Ad baculum (AB), Faulty analogy (FA), Ad populum (AP), Ad hominem direct (AHD), Ad hominem circumstantial (AHC), Ad hominem impartial (AHI) or Ad consequentiam (AC), unknown informal fallacy (unif).

After comparing the argument to the informal fallacies, the argument does fit a scheme of the selected list of informal fallacies/ the argument fits into the scheme of ..., because .../ The argument is valid, so no fallacy type can be detected.

The scheme of ... sounds:

....

Our argument fits in this scheme in this form:

....

Appendix G

Appendix G contains the original texts of example rhetoric as mentioned in the Introduction and Appendix D, before translation.

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“Het importeren van de islam is wel een groot gevaar. Veel Nederlanders zijn bang om hun eigenheid te verliezen.” (Wilders, 2016)

“Europa in Crisis. Het volk wil de nationale soevereiniteit terug. Minder immigratie, minder EU en eigen natie en volk eerst!” (Wilders, 2020)

“Geef Nederland terug aan de Nederlanders! Het is ons land!! (Wilders, 2022)

“Niet de politieke elite, maar het volk is de baas; samen weten de mensen het beter dan de linkse clique.”

“knettergek” (Wilders, 2008)

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“Het overheidsbudget is een baggerbeleid van de slechtste overheid ooit” (Wilders, 2008)

“een ruggegraat van slagroom” (Wilders, 2008)

“Moslim kolonisten zijn gekomen om het over te nemen” (Wilders, 2008)

“Een boevennest” (Wilders, 2008)

“kopvodden” (Wilders, 2009)

“ De islamitische Mein Kampf – de Koran – is nog erger en bevat nog meer walgelijke

jodenhaat.” (Wilders, 2014)

“Marokkaanse straat terroristen” en “Marokkaans tuig” (Wilders, 2022)

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“Stem tegen, stem SP” (SP, 1994).

“Politici hebben gefaald, de keuze is nu aan u” (SP, 2010).

“We hebben nog nooit zo’n pijnlijke ontmaskering van de politieke en economische elite gezien” (SP, 2010).

“elite” being “verwarder dan de mensen” (Marijnissen, 2016)

“Het is ongelooflijk dat deze regering onze zorgverleners zo in de steek laat” (Marijnissen, 2020)

“Ze maken er al een half jaar een puinhoop van. Een grote meerderheid van Nederland heeft geen vertrouwen meer in dit demissionair kabinet ” (Marijnissen, 2022).

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“zoveel mensen hebben geen vertrouwen meer in de overheid” (Marijnissen, 2022)

“De overheid blijft valse beloften doen” (Marijnissen, 2022)

“Schandalig! Dit kabinet beschermt Marokkaanse straatterroristen en onze eigen mensen moeten vluchten! Zet dat Marokkaanse tuig het land uit en geef Nederland terug aan de Nederlanders! Het is ons land!!” (Wilders, 2022)

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“De overheid is er voor de mensen – en niet andersom (W). Daarom trekken wij onder andere samen op met de slachtoffers van de Belastingdienst, die ten onrechte van fraude zijn

beschuldigd. Discriminatie accepteren wij nooit en al helemaal niet door de overheid (D). Mensen moeten wat ons betreft altijd het laatste woord hebben en kunnen ingrijpen in de politiek. Daarom hebben we het initiatief genomen voor een bindend referendum, waarin mensen de politiek kunnen terugfluiten en wetten ongedaan kunnen maken. Ook steunen we alle klokkenluiders die misstanden melden (C)” (SP, 2021).

“Het is onvergeeflijk dat de politieke elite van Europa en van Nederland die verschrikkelijke islam met open armen heeft ontvangen. Overal om ons heen vinden nu de meest afschuwelijke terroristische aanslagen plaats; in eigen land zijn de brute moord op Theo van Gogh en de tramaanslag te Utrecht daar voorbeelden van” (Wilders, 2021).

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“De dakloosheid is onder de kabinetten Rutte verdubbeld (D). Mensen leven in armoede en kunnen hun huur niet meer betalen (D). Het gevolg van keer op keer dezelfde keuzes: niet voor mensen maar voor de markt (D). Hoog tijd voor meer SP dus (C)” (Marijnissen, 2021).

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“Veel Nederlanders hopen vurig op vervolging, veroordeling en langduring water en brood. #akwasi” (Wilders, 2021).

seen as the other (Wodak, 2013). Anybody who can be portrayed as foreign, fits this group (Wodak, 2015b): the foreigner, or them below. This is often based in nativism: immigrants (most from former colonies) do not belong to the nation/people (Filc, 2015). This generalized group in society is seen as culprit responsible for the decay of the nation or the crisis at hand (Wodak, 2015b; Pelinka, 2017) and a threat to the people (Blassnig et al., 2019).

SP: will use the general populist themes: *the people, the corrupt elite (them above)* and possibly also *a severe crisis*. They will not use the theme of them below.

As a populist party, SP will use the general populist themes: the people, the corrupt elite, a severe crisis (Vossen, 2008; Jansen & Van Leeuwen, 2021; Rooduijn, 2014; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008; Blassnig et al., 2019; Wodak, 2015b; Pelinka, 2017).

They will not use the exclusionary right-wing theme of the foreigner (them below), because they are not right-wing, but left-wing (Links en rechts, 2022). Since they don't exclude a certain group of the population, they are considered inclusionary populist (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013).

Research question 2: To what extent is argumentation

It is expected both PVV and SP use arguments in their thematic segments as well as

This is based on the experience of the author with before mentioned

observed in the political discourse of PVV and SP?	messages that do not contain an argument. For SP it is expected their thematic segments contain less arguments.	parties. The author has observed SP sharing politically unmotivated tweets more than PVV. These politically unmotivated tweets do not contain arguments.
<i>Research question 3:</i> What is the distribution of valid- and invalid arguments in the political discourse of PVV and SP?	PVV: it can be expected that the quality of argumentation is predominantly invalid (fallacious) for PVV and predominantly valid for SP.	This hypothesis is based on the widespread conception that PVV is a prototypical populist party (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015), while SP is not considered a prototypical populist party (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012). Since populist leaders have shown to be prone to use informal fallacies, more than non-populist leaders (Macagno, 2022), the more populist a party is considered, the more informal fallacies can be expected of this party.
<i>Research question 4:</i> What is the distribution of valid- and invalid argument types in political discourse of PVV and SP.	It is expected that both PVV and SP will make use of the following valid argument types: practical reasoning, sign, fairness, analogy, commitment, position to know/authority, misplaced priorities, authority, classification, and cause to effect (Hansen & Walton, 2013).	According to a study of Hansen and Walton (2013) these valid argument types appear most in political communication.
	For PVV it's expected they will make most use of the argument from practical reasoning when they use valid argumentation.	The results of the pilot study of this paper show that PVV only used the argument of practical reasoning, when using valid argumentation. The study of Hansen and Walton (2013) also claims right-wing parties use this type of valid argument

<p>For SP it is expected they will make most use of the argument from practical reasoning, and after that they use the argument from fairness most.</p>	<p>frequently (together with argument from sign). The results of our pilot study show SP uses the argument from practical reasoning and argument from fairness. The argument from practical reasoning is used most. These results are in agreement with the study of Hansen and Walton (2013): they found the left-wing party mostly used argument from practical reasoning and argument from fairness.</p>
<p>PVV will make use of the informal fallacies Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad hominem and Ad consequentiam. They will also make use of the Ad populum fallacy, and to a greater extent than SP. Furthermore, the ad hominem and ad consequentiam will be used to a greater extent than SP.</p>	<p>Politicians in general are known to use the fallacies: Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad hominem and Ad consequentiam (Zurloni & Anolli, 2013). The following informal fallacies have shown to be used most by right-wing populist politicians: populum, ad consequentiam, ad hominem (Blassnig et al., 2019). Because PVV is considered a prototypical right wing populist party (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015), they are expected to make more use of these fallacies than SP.</p>
<p>SP will make use of the informal fallacies Ad baculum, Faulty analogy, Ad hominem and Ad consequentiam. They will make use of the ad populum fallacy too, but to a lesser extent than PVV.</p>	<p>Since SP is also considered a populist party by some (Rooduijn, 2014; Vossen, 2012), they are expected to use the ad populum fallacy too. On the other hand, SP is not right-wing and has gotten less populist in the last years (Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). Therefore, the author expects them to</p>

use it to a lesser extent than
PVV.

Appendix H. Research questions, hypotheses and substantiation.