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"Self and Other in Political Discourse.
A Comparison Between the Manifestos of the PVV and UKIP"

The 21st century is shaping into an era obsessed with national identity. What does it mean to be Dutch, British or German in an age of doubts about political integration and, above all, in an age of migration? How do societies that have long considered themselves homogeneous deal with the 'Other', the newcomer, who has become part of the culture, history and reality of European countries? How do we avoid that the Other is 'physically close whilst remaining spiritually remote?'[1]

In this age of globalisation and migration, the concept of a homogenous national culture and identity has come under pressure. Historically, populist national parties created an opposition between 'them' and 'us' and used the fear of the unknown to push their political ideas. Today in Europe we see a similar rise of that old-fashioned rhetoric. In this essay, I will analyse two of Europe's most controversial right-wing parties: the Dutch Partij Voor de Vrijheid and Britain's UKIP. I will compare their manifestos: PVV's 2012 manifesto and UKIP's 2015. I will look at how these parties construct national ideas of 'Self' through the exclusion of the 'Other'. Paying special attention to the use of language and imagery, it is my aim to reconstruct the implied 'story of the nation' as it emerges from these two manifestos.

Before engaging in a detailed analysis of the manifestos, it is important to understand what is meant by 'Self' and 'Other' and how the Other is considered a threat to the implied story of the nation. The continued story rests on the belief in shared cultural and historic values; values that a nation or community considers unique to them, something that should always remain part of their country's heritage and identity. The concept of 'otherness' threatens to dilute the purity of the nation as well as the supposed national bond. As Zygmunt Bauman quotes in his 1991 piece 'Modernity and Ambivalence', 'there are friends and there are enemies. And then there are strangers…those that stand on the outside are seen as a threat to the inside's positivity.'[2] Historically the stranger, the other, is culturally different, looks different and often believes in a different god. By looking into these manifestos, I want to explore to what extent the Other is segregated from the Self. In other words, according to the manifestos, who is the Other and who is the Self?

By looking into the PVV's manifesto, ideals of national purity are made clear in the use of language. They claim in their manifesto that 'onze vlag is rood-wit-blauw'- as if to say that the colours of Islam and the EU are not a part of their national colours.[3] By implying that 'andere partijen kiezen voor Islam; wij kiezen voor Nederland', they proclaim that other parties make choices that do not prioritise the preservation of the national identity-the PVV,

[1] Bauman, Z. (1991) *Modernity and Ambivalence.* Cornell University Press (pg.60)
[2] Ibid (pg. 143)
[3] Partij voor de Vrijheid (2012) 'Hún Brussels, óns Nederland: verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017' (pg. 14)

however, base their entire manifesto on preserving the Self.[4] They state that 'meer vrijheid betekent minder Islam', as though the collective safety of the nation is under threat by one group of people- as though freedom can only be achieved through the reduced presence of the Other.[5] Language is a powerful tool and is continuously activated to evoke emotion, especially in the political discourse of the far-right. In the case of the above quotations, it is used to showcase Islam as the foreign threat. Language has the power to evoke feelings of belonging and hatred, something that nationalist parties use to separate the Self from the Other to an even greater degree. It is the creation of a sense of belonging that is most obvious within both manifestos, especially in the PVV's. The PVV's manifesto creates an air of national collective belonging and addresses their readers as though there is already an established connection between the party and them. 'Beste vrienden van de vrijheid…laten we samen het onmogelijke waarmaken.'[6] This suggests that the reader is a lover of freedom and is in favour of the preservation of the national story. Consequently, it does not address those that 'oppose freedom'; those that are considered the Other- the Muslim, the unfree.

This sense of 'us' is further constructed through the use of personal pronouns: It is 'onze vrijheid, onze veiligheid, onze kwaliteit van leven' and, more importantly, 'óns Nederland' that is being threatened by 'de constante groei van Islam' and 'Hún Brussel.'[7] It is this desire to belong to the national collective that these parties play into in order to segregate 'home' from 'far from home' or, to put it in Dutch terms, autochtoon from allochtoon. G.H. Mead concludes from as early as 1935 that 'the individual feels dependent for his continuation or continued existence upon the rest of the members of the given social group to which he belongs.'[8] The PVV attempts to offer protection from the Islamic faith and its values, which receives wide-spread criticism for terrorism and for being a 'backwards culture.'[9] They wish to achieve this through reducing the presence of Islam within the Netherlands through having 'geen enkele moskee er meer bij' as well as 'geen stemrecht' for Muslims.[10] These policies can be found within the part of the manifesto that deals with 'ons immigratiebeleid.'The PVV thus uses language in their manifesto to incite hatred, by outlining the threat that Islam constitutes to the unity, well-being and, above all, the freedom of the nation. They aim to raise support from the electorate by offering solutions in order to maintain the rights that belong to 'us'-the Self.

 In terms of UKIP's use of language regarding Islam, contrasts can be made between both manifestos. UKIP 'believes in Britain', and also wishes to 'unify British culture, open to anyone who wishes to identify with British values.'[11] UKIP does not explicitly mention terms like Islam, Mosques or headscarves as much as the PVV does in their manifesto. As a consequence, the threat of otherness is made less noticeable, as UKIP wants to emphasise that

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[4] Ibid (pg.7)
[5] Ibid (pg 26)
[6] Ibid (pg 7)
[7] Ibid
[8] Mead, G.H. (1935) *'Conflict and Integration'*, in Mead *'Mind, Self and Society from the standpoint of a social behaviourist.* Chicago: University of Chicago. (pg. 306)
[9] De Jong, A. (2015) 'Pro-gay and anti-Islam: rise of the Dutch far-right'
[10] Partij voor de Vrijheid (2012) 'Hún Brussels, óns Nederland: verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017' (pg. 37)
[11] UKIP (2015) 'Believe in Britain' (pg. 61)

their immigration policy is more to do with the economic 'burden' that comes with rising immigration, rather than the worry that it is diluting the 'purity' of the national story. The manifesto claims that 'this unprecedented influx (of immigrants) has had significant consequences on our economy, our public services, our culture and our environment.'[12] The policy of economic security and 'space not race' is a key aspect of UKIP's ideology.[13] The sense of Self and Other is therefore not as obvious as it is with the PVV, although the desire for people to integrate does suggest that those integrating should desert the values of their own national story and replace them with those of the UK. It may, therefore, be of interest to compare the manifestos of the PVV and the BNP, a British national party that is considered even more extreme than UKIP in terms of racial identity. The BNP adopt an ideological standpoint that has been regarded as fascist and whose general belief is that all immigrants should be deported and those seeking asylum should be rejected; a growing multicultural society is Britain's greatest threat, according to the BNP. Although the construction of Self and Other may be more obvious within the BNP's policies, word limitations of this essay do not allow for such an analysis.

Emphasis on heritage and social homogeneity is vital to the reconstruction of the implied 'story of the nation.' It is this connection to national heritage with which we create a sense of collective Self and distinguish ourselves with those that do not share this common connection. The language used to incite hatred on the Other that has been analysed above helps to emphasise the message of the language that is used to evoke feelings of implied national belonging. As summarised by Bruner in 1996, 'we construct a life by creating an identity-conserving self who wakes up the next day still mostly the same…we impose coherence on the past, turning it into history.'[14] A large aspect of language used by both parties refers to the maintenance of their heritage and patriotism in order to preserve the story of the nation. A proud Dutch nationalist may ask themselves, 'is er nog een plek in Nederland te vinden waar geen windmolen staat?'[15] A British nationalist may feel a sense of pride when they remember that 'our Industrial Revolution transformed the world.'[16] This feeling of pride of national heritage is something that both parties attempt to evoke in order to construct the Self. The PVV uses the nation's liberal society in order to represent the Dutch heritage as modern and superior to that of the Other's. Summarised in ons immigratiebeleid, 'De Islam is geen godsdienst, maar een totalitaire politike ideologie…onze vrijheden en onze geschiedenis verplichten ons die ideologie te bestrijden…'[17] The Netherlands was the first country to legalise same-sex marriage in 2001 and abortion has been legal since 1981. Both have been considered to be an aspect of Dutch culture and freedom ever since. The party, therefore, uses the liberal history of the country's implied story as a way of emphasising the oppressive nature of Islam and how Islamic presence in the Netherlands should be combatted. As concluded by Jenkins and Sofos in 1996, 'the group identity is often reinforced by the

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[12] Ibid(pg 11)

[13] Ibid

[14] Whitebrook, M. (2001) *Identity, Narrative and Politics.* London, Routledge (pg.121)

[15] Partij voor de Vrijheid (2012) 'Hún Brussels, óns Nederland: verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017' (pg 50)

[16] UKIP (2015) 'Believe in Britain' (pg.61)

[17] Partij voor de Vrijheid (2012) 'Hún Brussels, óns Nederland: verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017' (pg.35)

stigmatisation of the 'Other'[18]. It is within this group identity that 'de minaretten, de boerka's en de hoofddoekjes' do not belong.[19] The PVV does not view the Other as advantageous to the national story: instead, it is threatening the continuation of what it means to be 'Dutch': liberal and progressive. Instead, they ask the reader to pose the question to the Other: 'wat doen jullie eigenlijk hier?,'[20] a quote linked to the infamous right-wing politician, Pim Fortuyn who was also an advocate for the removal of the Islamic faith in the Netherlands.

Thanks to the increase of globalisation and the growth of multiculturalism, patriotism has become a 'taboo' subject. At least, in the eyes of nationalists. The PVV believes that 'het Nederlandse volk betaalt een gruwelijke prijs voor het gebrek aan patriottisme van een generatie politiek-correcte politici.'[21] UKIP believes that 'we need to take pride in our country and claim back our heritage.'[22] Both believe that their nation's story is something to embrace as a part of our collective identity. Yet, whilst the PVV believes that this over-use of political correctness has been caused by the rise of otherness, UKIP believes that this taboo is a result of politics and society: the 'chattering classes.'[23] Once again, UKIP does not blame this issue on those of a different race or identity, but on those in society who are considered to be a political enemy-i.e. the middle classes who highlight the failings of the country, rather than celebrate the successes. UKIP, to an extent, suggests that the danger to the continuation of the story lies not with the Other, but within the Self; especially as they claim to be in favour of the integration of non-natives. UKIP uses language to suggest the greatness of Britain and how this needs to be preserved: 'heritage was a dirty word…our history is the envy of the world. UKIP will keep it that way.'[24] UKIP therefore uses the implied 'greatness' of the UK to create a sense of national 'us'. Alongside the economic worries that UKIP presents, the Self may view the rise of otherness as a threat to what they perceive as belonging to them: the superiority of their national heritage.

As well as language, imagery is also used to construct the Self from the Other. As Sebastian Guerrini suggests, 'Images tell stories. Stories with which we identify and hold on because of our structural anxiety for seeking certainties.'[25] The parties not only recognise this anxiety for seeking certainties in their use of language, but also in the use of imagery found in their manifestos. The parties' national ideologies can, first and foremost, be found in their logos. The PVV's symbol of a bird of prey in the colours of the Dutch flag indicates a nation that is strong, free and independent –perhaps even of one that can showcase brutality if under threat. UKIP's showcases their more economic national stance, as the symbol of the pound hints at their intentions to preserve the British economy, as well as acting as a rejection of the Euro, and therefore Europe as a whole entity. Although these logos present both of the parties as supporting freedom from otherness, they both differ in terms of how they view themselves

[18] Jenkins, B. and Sofos, S.A. (eds.) (1996) *Nation and Identity in contemporary Europe*. 1st edn. Routledge (pg2)
[19] Partij voor de Vrijheid (2012) 'Hún Brussels, óns Nederland: verkiezingsprogramma 2012-2017' (pg. 26)
[20] Ibid (pg. 34)
[21] Ibid
[22] UKIP (2015) 'Believe in Britain' (pg.61)
[23] Ibid
[24] Ibid (pg. 51)
[25] Guerrini, S. (2014) 'Rethinking Image, Identity and Design'

and the Other: like a bird of prey, the PVV does not take prisoners when it comes to those that threaten the implied story of the nation. UKIP claim that they simply wish to release themselves from 'the interfering shackles of the EU,' an otherness that poses more of a threat

to the British identity than the racial and ethnic Other; the pound logo, therefore, acts as a statement against that which is associated with the European Union and its restrictions.[26]

UKIP uses imagery to assist in emphasising their nation's heritage. Images of the countryside and historic buildings all construct the story of the nation in a more obvious way than the PVV. PVV does not use images of typical Dutch landmarks, instead they use images of mosques and barbed wire to evoke a sense of threat from those who these images are associated with. This is a devious way of constructing the implied story of the Netherlands. PVV also uses maps of the concentration of 'niet westerste allochtonen' between the years of 2010 -2040. These images represent the growth of the Other as a virus, which will not stop spreading until somebody stops it. Whereas UKIP uses imagery to show Britain's cultural greatness, PVV uses imagery to show how the Other poses a threat to the identity of 'ons Nederland.'

The PVV and UKIP are merely two examples of the consequence that globalisation has had on a society that has had to adapt to growing multiculturalism. The growing fear regarding national identity has led to the growth of these populist right-wing parties, who claim to offer a solution to the issue of the growth of otherness within a society that previously considered itself homogeneous. These solutions are outlined within the political discourse of manifestos, in which language and imagery are cleverly interwoven to construct a sense of Self; a collective belonging. By analysing the manifestos of UKIP and the PVV, it can be concluded that both construct this sense of Self and Other to differing extents and for different contextual reasons. Whilst PVV focuses on the threat to national 'purity' and its implications on the continuation of the national implied story, UKIP constructs the Self on an economic and 'practical' basis.

It cannot be denied that both parties manipulate the individual's desire to belong to a collective to help push their political ideas. They achieve this by constructing the Other. Sociologist Dr. Zuleyka Zevallos concludes that 'groups typically define themselves in relation to others. This is because identity has little meaning without the 'other.''[27] By constructing what is meant by the Self, the Other is constructed as a consequence. The Other is the different, the Other is foreign and the Other has a culture that is oppressive and 'backwards.' It is through the medium of the manifesto with which these parties promise to retain the national heritage and combat the threat of otherness. These parties will segregate the Self from the Other and, in their words, to achieve this, 'all you have to do is vote for it.'[28]

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[26] UKIP (2015) 'Believe in Britain' (pg. 5)
[27] Zevallos, D.Z. (2011) 'What is Otherness?' The Other Sociologist
[28] UKIP (2015) 'Believe in Britain' (pg.5)

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