

# **Rise of the populist vote in Zuidoost Friesland: result of perceived ‘place don’t matter’?**

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### **Summary**

The result of the Provinciale Statenverkiezingen 2019 shocked Friesland. The populist Forum voor Democratie party became the second largest party in the provincial government out of nowhere. Zuidoost Friesland was one of the regions where this party gathered a lot of votes. This is a region

faced decline over the years and will face decline and an ageing population in the future. Therefore, it is marked by the government as a so called 'anticipeerregio'. The result of the elections were the starting point of this research together with the article of Rodriguez-Pose (2018) because a vote for a populist party can be seen as a factor of a possible 'place that don't matter'. Such 'places that don't matter' can be described as "areas left behind, those having witnessed long periods of decline, migration and brain drain, those that have seen better times and remember them with nostalgia, those that have repeatedly told that the future lays elsewhere, have used the ballot box as their weapon to vent their anger against the establishment" (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018, p.200). I was curious to what extent this feeling was the reason of the rising populist vote in Zuidoost Friesland. As a result, no clear connection between such feeling and the vote for a populist party was found.

## **Introduction**

### Background

In the last ten years, the support for the anti-EU and anti-system parties has risen rapidly. This discontent in the EU is driven by factors like difference in age, income, education or demographic trajectories. A recent expression of this support for anti-system parties can be seen in de results of the

‘Provinciale Staten’ (Provincial Government) elections in 2019. In this election, the right-wing party ‘Forum voor Democratie’ (FvD) became the largest party in the senate and the second largest party in the province of Friesland (Trouw, 2019; Leeuwarder Courant, 2019). Zuidoost Friesland is one of the regions where this party gathered a lot of votes (Trouw, 2019). And that is not a surprise. This is a so-called ‘anticipeer-regio’ which means that the population decline until 2040 will be 2.5% or more (Rijksoverheid, 2020). And that is one of the factors that can make a region a ‘place that doesn’t matter’ (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). In this research I investigate to what extent the vote for FvD during the last elections in 2019 is an expression of discontent and a result of perceived ‘places that don’t matter’. More insight in this topic is needed for not more but better place-sensitive policies to find an answer on the recent populist wave in the Western world (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). The scientific relevance is that there is much research on the recent populist votes in the UK, USA and the EU and the geography of discontent in those countries, but less on regional level in those areas. I want to give more insight in this and investigate the discontent on smaller scale, such as Zuidoost Friesland.

### Research problem

The aim of the research is to have a better insight in the recent expression of discontent in Zuidoost Friesland and to what extent that they feel left behind and live in a ‘place that doesn’t matter’ and use those insights as a tool to contribute to more and better place-sensitive policies in the future. The central question will be:

- Are recent expressions of discontent in Zuidoost Friesland the result of perceived ‘places that don’t matter’?

The secondary questions that will be answered are:

- What are ‘places that don’t matter’?
- What are the reasons for inhabitants of Zuidoost Friesland to vote for a populist party during the elections in 2019?
- Which role play do other factors such as age, education and income play in the choice for a populist political party in Zuidoost Friesland?

### Structure

In the ‘Theoretical Framework’ several things like the rise of the populist vote, populism in The Netherlands and the concept of ‘places that don’t matter’ will be explained and discussed using relevant literature. There will also be an introduction to the region of Zuidoost Friesland. Then you will find in the ‘Methodology’ part the used methods, data analysis and ethical considerations. In the following ‘Results’ part the results of the quantitative research will be displayed in several tables with an explanation and discussion regarding the literature. In the ‘Conclusion’ part there will be an attempt to answer the research questions and a discussion on the results and further recommendations for future research.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### Rise of populist votes

As mentioned earlier the support for anti-EU and anti-system parties has risen rapidly in the last ten years. Main indicators for this rise of anti-system votes are Brexit, the election of Trump in 2016 and the rise of populist parties in Europe. Dijkstra et al. (2019) maps the geography of discontent in the EU in their article. A typical anti-system voter has been identified in their article by the definition used by Goodwin and Heath (2016) as ‘older, working class, white voters citizens with few qualifications who live on low incomes and lack the skills that are required to adapt and prosper amid the modern, post-industrial economy’ (Goodwin & Heath, 2016, p.325). The geography of discontent is often linked to crises, especially in the agricultural or industrial sectors. This leads in a specific region to outward migration, brain drain and, more importantly, to a feeling that there is no future or hope. The belief that therefore these places don’t matter comes from the inside as well as from the outside. The reaction to this is rather a political than an economical force: populism (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). Populism is an unclear kind of concept. Gordon (2018) notes that populism is neither a belief system nor simply an expression of individual discontent. It is more a phenomenon and the essence of this

phenomenon is that populism is rejection of the moral/intellectual authority of a socio-political establishment. He describes in his article two elements which the appearance of populism depends on:

- “a substantial body of potential supporters, belonging to an ‘imagined community’ though maybe only sharing a thin ideology, involving beliefs both in individuals/micro-communities as the most reliable judges of what should be done — as against elites who are out of touch and corruptly self-serving — and in need for a strong, orderly state” (Gordon, 2018, p.97/98)
- “entrepreneurial politicians who spot on an opportunity to mobilise this rejectionism, in order to secure power and pursue some ends of their own, by supplying the kind of leadership required in the absence of either established organisation or substantive political agenda — aggregating supports, securing access to finance/media and providing rhetorical/charismatic cover for gaps in manifestos” (Gordon, 2018, p.98)

Dijkstra et al. (2019) adds to this in their article that populist parties pitch the people against self-interested and distant elites. They also define the ‘people’ and ‘elites’ as ‘them’ against ‘us,’ identifying ‘them’ as the antagonist. On the other hand, Rodriguez-Pose (2018) does not give a clear definition of populism but he notes that it has been a factor since the 1940s but that the recent rise of populism in the West has caught the eye. He writes that the “rise of populism...is fuelled political resentment and has a distinct geography. Populist votes have been heavily concentrated in territories that have suffered long-term declines and reflect an increasing urban/regional divide.” (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018, p.198) Another article by Essletzbichler et al. (2018) defines three characteristics of these populist right wing parties. These parties are anti-establishment, nativist and authoritarian. Explanations for the rise of populist parties can be separated in demand for populist parties, supply of a populist program and the institutional context in which those parties operate. In their article they say that one demand-based explanation is that the recent developments and processes, such as globalisation, deindustrialisation and rising inequality created a new group of ‘losers of modernisation’ (Essletzbichler et al., 2018).

### Populism in The Netherlands

The rise of populism in The Netherlands started in the first years of this century. Before those years Dutch politics were known as dull because of the political stability and harmony in the country. That changed dramatically with the rise and assassination of Pim Fortuyn, politician for the new List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) party, in 2002 (Vossen, 2010). Since his death several parties tried to dive in the programmatic gap that was created by the disappearance of the LPF. This programmatic gap means a combination of pleas for democratic renewal, nationalism, economic liberalism and restrictive laws on immigration, integration and criminality (Vossen, 2010; Akkermans, 2005; Lucardie, 2008). The party which was the most successful in filling this gap was the PVV (Freedom Party) of Geert Wilders. This party was founded in 2006 and is since then the most important representative of Dutch populism (Wielenga et al., 2018). The PVV is a right-wing populist party according to the three characteristics by Essletzbichler et al. (2018). The party is anti-establishment, nativist and authoritarian since the party has no members. In the last few years the rise of populism has risen rapidly with the vote for Brexit and the election of Trump in 2016. But also, in The Netherlands right wing populism has risen in the form of a new party: Forum voor Democratie (FvD) founded by Thierry Baudet. This party has the same characteristics as the PVV because it is also anti-establishment and nativist. The only difference is that you can become a member of this party. Another important factor of the rise of FvD is that the party is led by an entrepreneurial politician who spotted an opportunity to mobilize the rejectionism which is described by Gordon (2018) as an element in which the appearance of populism depends on.

### Places that don't matter

As one of the factors of the rise of populism is the increasing urban/regional divide (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018) it is important to look at those areas and possible places that don't matter. For this research the following definition of these ‘places that don't matter’ is used:

- “Areas left behind, those having witnessed long periods of decline, migration and brain drain, those that have seen better times and remember them with nostalgia, those that have repeatedly told that the future lays elsewhere, have used the ballot box as their weapon to vent their anger against the establishment” (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018, p.200).

As example he used the Brexit. Most big cities in the UK voted for remain in the EU. This includes the cities in the southern part of the country and other cities that have performed well over the last decade

(Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). However, a lot of other large cities vote for Brexit. These cities are concentrated in the many industrial declining and disadvantaged rural areas of the northern- and eastern part of England. The places that don't matter are becoming tired of being told that they don't matter and looking for revenge (Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). Dijkstra et al. (2019) have also looked at those 'places that don't matter'. A lot of unhappiness is experienced by people who are living in a mix of stagnating and low-productivity regions — mainly rural areas and medium-sized and small cities. Several territorial factors have been highlighted by Dijkstra et al. (2019) for these 'places that don't matter' such as rurality and population density. As an example, they use the US. The feeling of the 'place doesn't matter' was associated with the perception rural voters were not getting their fair share of respect, attention and resources. Another important factor is population density. Anti-establishment voters have been found to cluster in low density areas, whereas pro establishment voters clustered in the big cities (Dijkstra et al., 2019). Those voters are part of a specific group with roughly three factors. First, they are older and therefore less capable at coping with economic changes (Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Goodwin & Heath, 2016). Second feature is formal education which is thought to be at the root of urban/regional divide that separates anti- and establishment voters (Gordon, 2018). Third one is income. This group is not only older and less educated but has also a lower income (Goodwin & Heath, 2016). Together these features form the holy trinity of a populist voter.

### Zuidoost-Friesland

Zuidoost Friesland contains the municipalities of Ooststellingwerf, Weststellingwerf, Heerenveen, Opsterland and Smallingerland. These areas combined have a total population of 187.255 inhabitants in 2019 (FSP, 2019). Dijkstra et al. (2019) said that one of the factors that make a 'place don't matter' is the population density. As you can see in Figure 2 the population density of Zuidoost Friesland is low. With this fact in combination with the relatively high percentage of people older than 65, which you can see in Figure 1, you can say that it is a possible 'place that don't matter' according to the definition of such place given by Rodriguez-Pose (2018) and the factors given by Dijkstra et al. (2019). Zuidoost Friesland will face a population decline of more than 2% and a rise in the amount of 65+ people to 30,3% in 2040 (FSP, 2019). This decline can make the region a possible 'place that doesn't matter' as defined by Rodriguez-Pose (2018). People in the region are in general lower educated than in the rest of The Netherlands and also have a lower income compared to the rest of the country (FSP, 2019). Income and education are factors that can influence the vote for a populist party (Gordon, 2018; Goodwin & Heath, 2016) since it is part of the 'holy trinity' of the populist voter which is explained in the part above.

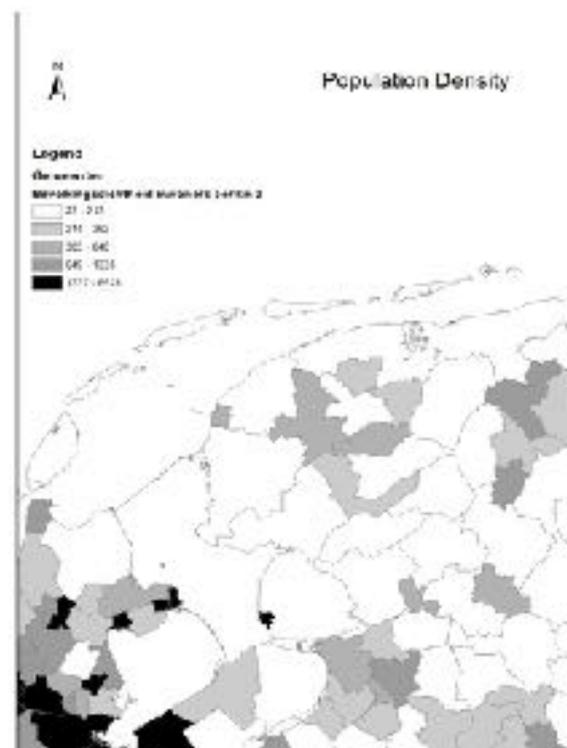
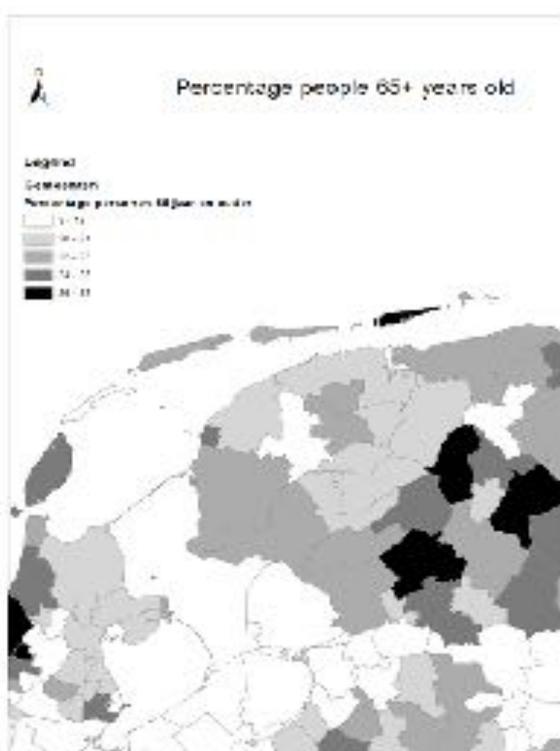


Figure 1: percentage 65+ years old in Friesland

Figure 2: population density in Friesland

### Conceptual model

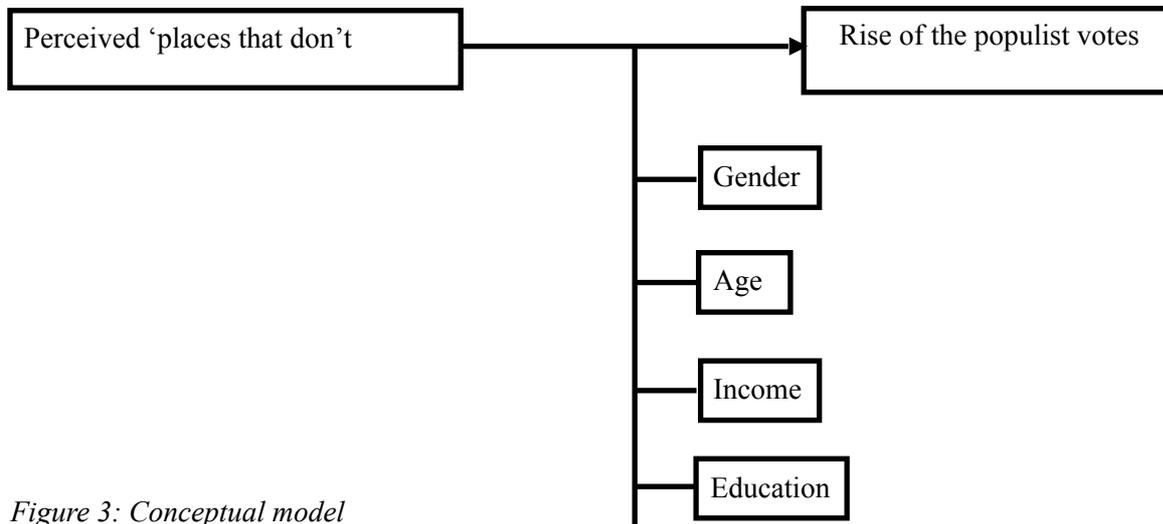


Figure 3: Conceptual model

This conceptual model clarifies the relationship between perceived 'places that don't matter' and the rise of populist votes as can be derived from the literature. There will be also a further look at the 'holy trinity' (age, income and education) of the populist voter (Dijkstra et al., 2019) and other factors such as gender and place and if these factors influence the rise of the populist vote in Zuidoost Friesland.

### Hypothesis

Regarding the literature there is a link between the feeling of a 'place doesn't matter' and the vote for a populist party. The definition of 'place that doesn't matter' that is used in this thesis is the definition of Rodriguez-Pose (2018) which is given in the first part of the Theoretical Framework. This definition is operationalized in questions 7 & 8 about their voting behavior and questions 9, 10 & 11 which ask the participant if they consider their place as a 'place that doesn't matter' to find a link. The exact questions can be found in the Appendix A. I expect to find a link however the hypothesis will be the following: I expect that in the tested population there is no connection between voting for a populist party and factors age, income, education and gender. Another hypothesis is that in the tested population there is no connection between a reason to vote for a certain party and the vote for a populist party.

## **Methodology**

In this part the methodology that is used is described. First there is some explanation about the dataset itself and gathering of the necessary data. Then the analysis of the gathered data will be described and at the end of this section there will be something about the ethical considerations and the impact of the corona crisis on this research.

### Data set

For this research a quantitative research method is used to investigate why people voted for a certain party during the elections in 2019 and to investigate to what extent factors such as age, income,

education play in the decision to vote for a certain party. In order to provide an answer on these topics and since there is no specific data available on this topic, a questionnaire has been spread among the inhabitants of Zuidoost Friesland by using social media like LinkedIn and Facebook and flyers in the village of Drachten. There has also been a pilot of this questionnaire to test it and see if there was any trouble in understanding the questions and if the URL worked. I designed this questionnaire by myself and will discuss the questions of this survey in the 'Data analysis' section. The English version of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix A of this thesis, but I used a Dutch version for the participants to avoid that the participant would not understand the questions. Larger samples generally provide more information addressing the research problem but also mean more time and effort that has to be spent on conducting the questionnaires (Clifford et al., 2010). The questionnaire is filled in by 65 persons and the region itself has 187.000 inhabitants (FSP, 2019). I realize that it is not a large number of respondents and that the outcomes therefore will not be representative, but as researcher I was limited in time and movement due to the corona crisis. The original idea for a sampling strategy was a quota sampling method. This is a strategy that aims to be more representative, because it gives you the opportunity to produce a sample that resembles the general structure of the population. There are predefined quotas, such as age and gender, but the choice of individual items within each quota group is subjective (Clifford et al., 2010). Because this was impossible due to the corona crisis the strategy was changed into a simple random sample. This means that there is an equal probability of selecting each unit in the sampling frame, in this case Zuidoost Friesland (Clifford et al., 2010).

### Data analysis

I will use the questionnaire to get an answer on the secondary questions and in the end the primary question. I will do that by asking general questions such as age, income and education. These variables will be used as covariates in the logistic regression. The second part of the questionnaire contains questions about voting behavior and the feeling of a 'place doesn't matter' and these variables will be used as dependent variables in the logistic regression. The results of these tests will be the basis of the conclusions and the answers on the secondary questions. First, I will use a Chi-Square test of contingencies for investigating a possible relation between the reason to vote for a certain party and the vote for a populist party. This sort of statistic test is most commonly used to assess whether two categorical (nominal) variables are related (Allen et al., 2014). With this Chi Square and Cross tables I am able to get an insight if some reasons to vote for a certain party are related to a vote for a populist party. For the second part of the 'Results' section I will use a logistic regression to examine the probability of correctly predicting category membership on a nominal criterion (dependent variable) based on more predictor (independent variables) (Allen et al., 2014). With the regression I am able to get an insight if factors like age, income and education can predict the probability of also a vote for a populist party.

A quantitative research method is more suitable for this research than qualitative because this research tries to answer the question to what extent people in Zuidoost Friesland have a feeling that their 'place doesn't matter' and if this feeling influences their voting behavior. To answer this question, I need a lot of respondents to get a representative image and answer and this is done by quantitative research using internet surveys. This kind of surveys have the advantage of being inexpensive, provide access to geographically dispersed populations and reach physically immobile groups (Madge & O'Connor, 2004). On the negative side it also raises a lot of questions (Clifford et al., 2010). Who are the participants? Where do they live? Do they represent the target population? To avoid these questions, I asked the participants about their living place.

### Ethical considerations

The conducted questionnaires are mostly filled in online and a few are filled in on paper. Before every respondent started to fill in this questionnaire, they were briefly informed about myself as researcher and the topic. Every filled in questionnaire is also conducted anonymously and cannot be related to a specific person. There has to be a certain form of secrecy on the vote of a participant so the fact that it is anonymous is considered very important. My positionality in the field will be the role of an insider. I lived in the area for 15 years and I am a native speaker of the Frisian language. This benefits the research, because people were more willing to help me when I talked their language during my time in the region to do research.

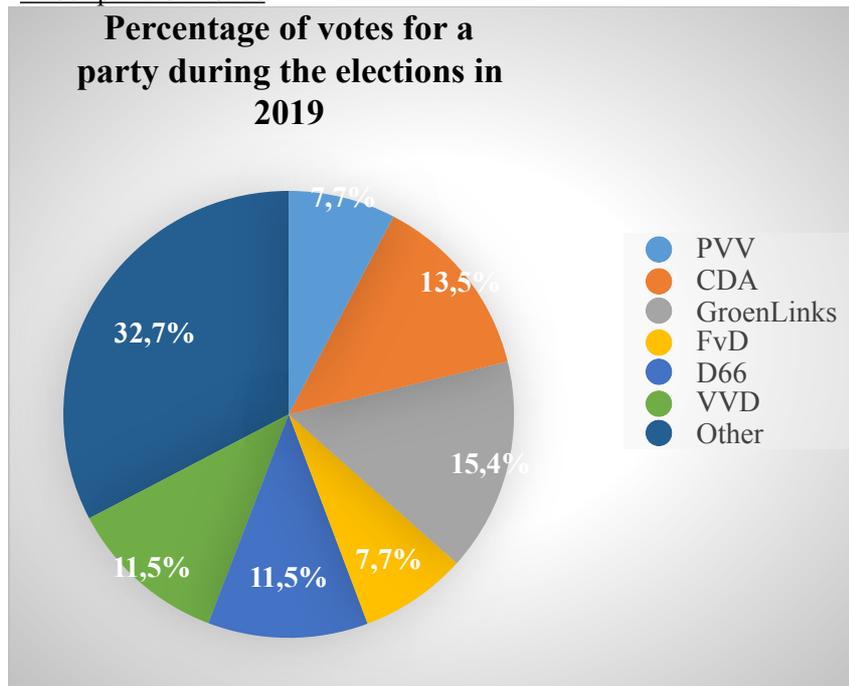
## Corona crisis

As mentioned in the first part of this section the corona crisis had a big impact on this research. The first plan was to go to the area and have a quota sampling method which aims to be more representative, because it gives you the opportunity to produce a sample that resembles the general structure of the population. Because of conducting all questionnaires online, I was not able to follow this strategy so now almost everything is randomly conducted online. This will have an impact on the results and conclusions because with the amount of collected data there cannot be given a representative answer.

## **Results**

The rise of the populist vote in the world and the concept of 'places that don't matter' have been described in the 'Theoretical Framework'. Now the results of the conducted questionnaire will be described and linked to the discussed literature. First there will be some descriptive statistics of the dataset compared with other sources from the FSP (2019) and Databank Verkiezingsuitslag (2019). In the next part the outcomes of why people voted for a certain party will be shown. This will be done by using quotes that are given in the questionnaire and by finding some contingencies between several variables. In the last part there will be discussed to what extent factors such as age, education and income have an impact on voting behavior in Zuidoost Friesland. This will be done by the outcomes of the logistic regression and comparing the results to the literature.

### Descriptive statistics



*Figure 4: results of the questionnaire*

From the 65 participants in total that contributed to the questionnaire 13 of them did not vote. So, Figure 4 is based on 52 people. For both Figure 4 and 5 I have chosen for the parties which were the largest in the outcomes of the questionnaire. Most of the people in the questionnaire voted for the left GroenLinks party (15,4%) and also the center left D66 party got a lot of votes (11,5%). This is a big difference with the mean outcomes of the elections in the region. In the mean outcome those parties got a smaller percentage of the votes (resp. 7,9% and 4,6%). A possible explanation of this is that most of the questionnaires were conducted in Drachten (47,7%) and Oosterwolde (18,5%). These villages are two of the three largest villages in the region. Dijkstra et al. (2019) said that the anti-establishment voters are more likely to cluster in the low-density areas and the pro-establishment voters do the same in more dense areas. Another explanation for this is the large group of participants in the age group

18-25 as you can see in Figure 6. Age is one of the factors of the ‘holy trinity’ of the populist voter (Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Goodwin & Heath, 2016). They mention that older voters in the region are less likely to cope with the economic changes, multiculturalism or immigration. In Zuidoost Friesland the age group of 18-25 is the smallest group and also the group that suffers the most from the population decline as the amount of 65+ people is growing and will be the largest group in 2040 (FSP, 2019). In the survey the population is very young and that could be one of the reasons that establishment parties like GroenLinks and D66 are doing very well compared to the anti-establishment parties in the results of the elections. Another outcome of the questionnaire that could explain the high number of votes for establishment parties is the level of education of the participants in comparison to Zuidoost Friesland. Gordon (2018) mentioned that formal education is at the root of the urban-regional divide that separate anti-establishment and mainstream party voters. According to the Frisian Institute for Social Research (FSP) (2019) only 25% of the inhabitants of Zuidoost Friesland is highly educated. That is a lower percentage than in the province (26%) itself or in The Netherlands (31%). However, in this research 67,6% percent of the participants is highly educated. This is a huge difference with the numbers of the FSP (2019) and possibly explain the difference in outcomes of the questionnaire on one hand and the real results of the election on the other hand. The last factor of this holy trinity is income (Goodwin & Heath, 2018). For the questionnaire the mean income of Ooststellingwerf has been used. That is why the question in the questionnaire is whether they earn more less than €22.400. Out of the participants 56,9% said that they earn less than this number. That is also a different outcome than you would expect because according to the FSP (2019) the mean income of Zuidoost Friesland is €27.000. A possible explanation for this is that most of the participants are aged between 18-25 years old. This group of people still goes to school or haven’t made a career yet.

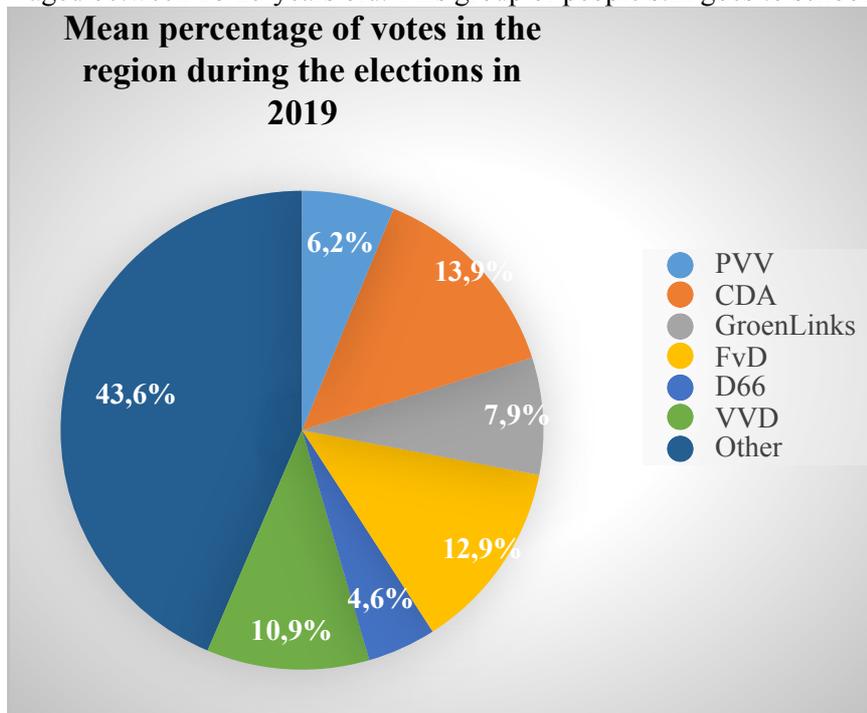


Figure 5. mean percentage of votes in the region during the elections in 2019 (source: Databank Verkiezingsuitslagen, 2019)

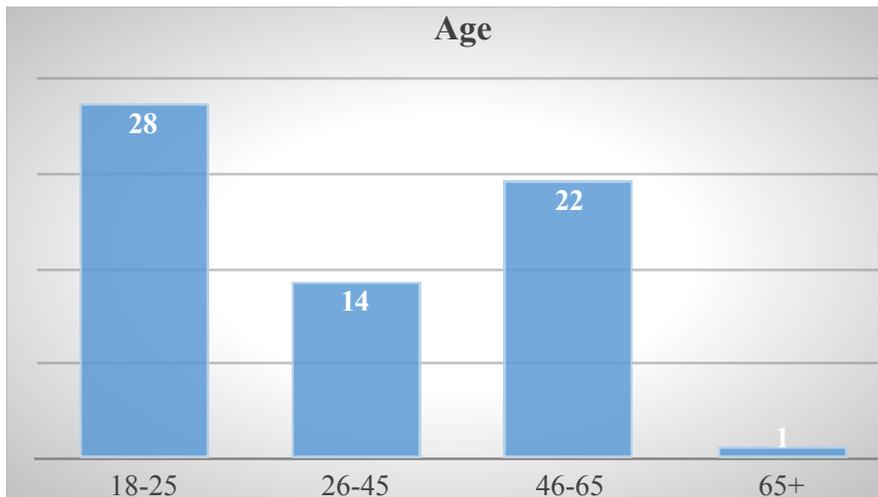


Figure 6: different age groups in the dataset.

### Reasons to vote for a certain party

Another important aspect in this research is to find out why people voted for a certain party. In the survey this was an open question so to formulate an answer on this question I will value these answers with labels and use some quotes to look behind the numbers in Figure 7.

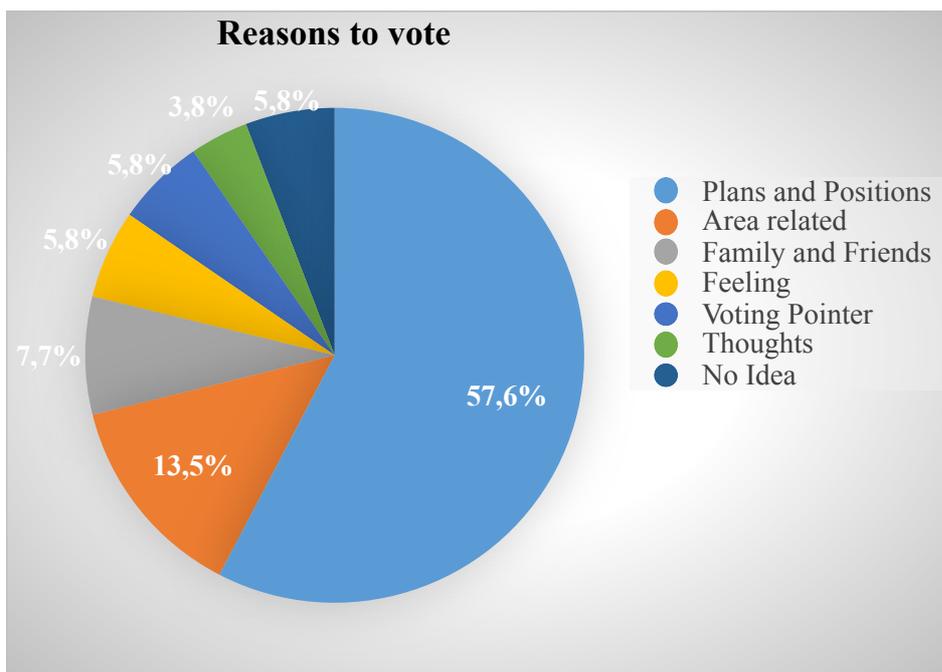


Figure 7: reasons to vote for a certain party

First, I selected the ones who voted during the elections in 2019. Then I valued the given answers and labeled them into seven categories. In the first category ‘Plans and Positions’ are the participants that gave an answer that the party connects the best to their own ideas and believes. An example of this is the following participant:

*“It is time for another management culture. I prefer more business-like and it seems that FvD can accomplish this”* (Male, 35 years, Drachten, Forum voor Democratie).

The other category is ‘Area related’. In this category is everyone who provided the survey question with an answer that can be related to the region or the specific place where the participant lives. An example of this is the following:

*“The closer the elections are, the ‘greener’ I vote. Environment”* (Female, 61 years, Drachten, GroenLinks)

More or less the same argument is also given by the following participant who voted for a local party:

*“When it is the Provinciale Staten election I always vote for a provincial party”*. (Female, 48 years, Rottevalle, Fryske Nasjonale Partij)

The next category is ‘Family and Friends’. This category contains participants who know somebody from the party, they are member of a certain party or just voted for the same party as their friends did. The next categories I will discuss are ‘Thoughts’ and ‘Feeling’. These categories look the same but with different quotes I want to explain why I made a difference between these categories. The first quote is from someone whose answer is labelled as ‘Thoughts’ and the second one is from someone who’s answer is labelled as ‘Feeling’

1. *“Agreed the most to my line of thought”* (Female, 60, Olderberkoop, Partij voor de Dieren)

2. *“Social feeling”* (Male, 62 years, Wolvega, PvdA)

In the category ‘Voting Pointer’ you can find the participants who said that they have used a voting pointer online to find the most suitable party to vote on. In the last category ‘No idea’ are people who filled in that they had no idea why they voted for a certain party or did not fill in the question at all.

#### Chi-Square test of contingencies between reasons and the vote for a populist party

To find a link why people voted for a certain party and the vote for a populist party in 2019 a Pearson’s chi-square test of contingencies (with  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) was used. Terms of this test are that the cases are independent and for a maximum of 20% the expected count is lower than 5 and for no cells the expected count is lower than 1. With this test I want to evaluate whether a certain reason is related to whether or not participants voted for a populist party. First, I made a dummy variable for every reason that is discussed in the first part of this section. I will discuss the results here and the tables with the results of this tests can be found Appendix B. For every test that has been done the hypothesis is that there is no connection between the variable of voted for a populist party or not and the specific reason to vote for a party.

When looking at the outcomes I want to highlight one and that is whether the reason for voting was area related or not and whether the vote was for a populist party or not (Table 1 in Appendix B). The Chi-Square test was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 52) = 4,69$ ,  $p = 0,03$  and the association between the reason was area related or not and a vote for a populist party or not can be considered as a medium effect,  $\phi = 0,30$ . As illustrated in Figure 8, the people who gave an area related reason were significantly more likely to vote for a populist party.

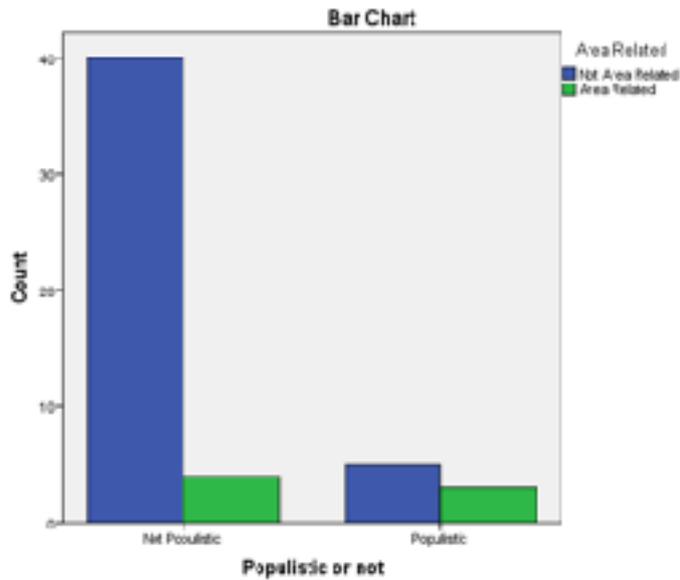


Figure 8: clustered bar chart illustrating the number of people with an 'Area Related' reason who voted for a populist party

This outcome is in line with the discussed literature. Rodriguez-Pose (2018) said that populist voters are heavily concentrated in areas suffered from long term decline and with an increasing urban-regional divide. In the presented outcomes of the questionnaire you can see that area related reasons have indeed a medium effect on for voting a populist party. Note that those reasons can differ from each other and further research on these reasons is necessary.

When we look at the other tables Appendix B, we can see that for the other variables the terms for doing a Chi-Square test could not be reached. Those tables have more than 20% of the cells with an expected count lower than 5 and some cells with an expected count lower than 1. Possible explanation of this is that the sample size is too little and therefore nothing can be said on this topic.

### Logistic regression

In order to estimate the probability of voting for a populist party, a binary logistic regression analysis was conducted. The probability of voting for a populist party was estimated using the outcomes of the questions about age, income and education in the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The hypothesis is that there is no relation in the tested population between the vote for a populist party or age, income and education.

### **Variables in the Equation**

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup> EDUCATION			,238	3	,971	
EDUCATION(1)	-20,069	40192,970	,000	1	1,000	,000
EDUCATION(2)	-,416	1,185	,123	1	,726	,660
EDUCATION(3)	-,511	1,056	,234	1	,629	,600
INCOME	,787	,853	,852	1	,356	2,197

AgeGroup	-,684	,517	1,748	1	,186	,505
Constant	-,450	1,241	,131	1	,717	,638

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: EDUCATION, INCOME, AgeGroup.

Table 1: Predictor Coefficients for the Model Predicting voting for a populist party

The omnibus model for the logistic regression analysis was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (df = 5, N = 65) = 3,675, p = 0,597$ , Cox and Snell  $R^2 = 0,068$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0,118$ . The model is 84,6% accurate in its predictions of voting for a populist party. Coefficients for the model's predictors are presented in Table 1. As demonstrated in Table 1 none of the predictors significantly influence the probability of a vote for a populist party. And that is an unexpected outcome. As mentioned earlier age, income and education form the holy trinity of the populist voter (Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Gordon, 2018; Goodwin & Heath, 2016). In the tested population of Zuidoost Friesland this holy trinity seems to have no impact in the probability for a populist vote. However, the tested population in this dataset is very small compared to the total population so therefore it misses statistical power and cannot be taken as representative.

The probability of voting for a populist party and the feeling of a 'place that doesn't matter' is also interesting to investigate. In order to estimate this probability again a binary logistic regression analysis was conducted. The probability of voting for a populist party was estimated using the outcomes of the questions about a government that neglects the area (question 9, see Appendix A), the feeling that policy makers think the place is a 'place that doesn't matter' (question 10, see Appendix A) and the feeling if the participant self has the feeling that it is a 'place that doesn't matter' (question 11, see Appendix A). The hypothesis is that there is no relation between the vote for a populist party or the predictors is question 9, 10 and 11.

The omnibus model for this logistic regression analysis was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 (df = 3, N = 65) = 6,035, p = 0,110$ , Cox and Snell  $R^2 = 0,110$  and Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0,190$ . The model was 84,6% accurate in its predictions of voting for a populist party. Coefficients for the model's predictors are presented in Table 2:

#### Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup> Neglect_by_PM(1)	,380	1,437	,070	1	,792	1,462
PM_considers(1)	-2,090	1,435	2,123	1	,145	,124
PART_considers(1)	-,324	,928	,122	1	,727	,724
Constant	-,662	,615	1,157	1	,282	,516

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Neglect\_by\_PM, PM\_considers, PART\_considers.

Table 2: Predictor Coefficients for the Model Predicting voting for a populist party

As demonstrated in Table 2 none of the predictors significantly improved the model's predictive capability and none of the predictors seem to influence the probability of voting for a populist party. That's is why the hypothesis is accepted.

It is another unexpected outcome of the test. Several authors mentioned a relationship between the feeling of a place that doesn't matter and the vote for a populist party. With the definition of

Rodriguez-Pose (2018) that places that don't matter are regions which have seen population and economic decline over the years, face migration and brain drain and uses the ballot box to take revenge and after identifying Zuidoost Friesland as such 'place that doesn't matter' by looking at population developments until 2040, the level of education and an ageing population (FSP, 2019) you should expect that they feel left behind. Especially the outcome of the elections in 2019 can be seen as a sort of revenge of the region. But in this research no relation was found between this feeling and the vote for a populist party. As already said in the part about the first logistic regression the tested population in this dataset is very small compared to the total population so therefore it misses statistical power and cannot be taken as representative.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

During the elections in 2019 the new FvD party became the largest party in the senate and the second party in Friesland. The rise of this new populist party in especially Zuidoost Friesland could be a result of the feeling that this place doesn't matter when you look at similar events in the last ten years according to Rodriguez-Pose (2018). In this research there is tried to find this link between this feeling and the results of the election in 2019.

Most of the participants (57,7%) voted for a certain political party because of the 'Plans and Positions' and only 13,5% of the participants voted with 'Area Related' motives. The 'Area Related' motives are widespread and not only because they think their place is a 'place that don't matter'. But the participants with 'Area Related' motives are more likely to vote for a populist party (FvD or PVV). For further research it is necessary to do qualitative research to dig deeper in the motivations why they voted for a populist party. Rodriguez-Pose (2018) mentioned that the fact that places who are being told that their 'places don't matter' look for revenge and they normally do so during elections by voting for a populist party. In the results we could not see that in this research there is a relation between the fact that participants think that their 'place doesn't matter' and the vote for a populist party. However, it cannot be said if this is really the case in Zuidoost Friesland because of the small dataset so further research on this topic is needed because Rodriguez-Pose (2018) said it is important that there are not more, but better place-sensitive policies needed.

The third sub question was about the 'holy trinity' (age, income and education) of the populist voter and what role this 'holy trinity' plays in the vote for a populist party in Zuidoost Friesland. The logistic regression that was conducted showed neither one of these factors has a relation in the chance to vote for a populist party and that is surprising as it is common thing in the literature that these factors have an influence on the vote for a populist party (Essletzbichler et al., 2018; Goodwin & Heath, 2016; Gordon, 2018). Reasons for the surprising outcomes of this research are that the dataset is really small and has a young and high educated population. For further research it is necessary to create a more representative population in the dataset to find those relations.

The biggest stumbling point was to find participants. Due to the corona crisis it was not appropriate to go somewhere when it is not very necessary to go there. This has led that the region has been broadened from two small villages in Ooststellingwerf to Zuidoost Friesland. The statistical power of the created data set is therefore not very high. A higher number of respondents would have drawn a more realistic picture of the situation in Zuidoost Friesland. Another issue was that most of the surveys are conducted online via social media. This means that a lot of the participants are from my personal set as researcher what have created a more distorted picture of the population of Zuidoost Friesland.

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## **Appendix A**

### Survey

Hello, my name is Ype Breman and I am 23 years old. I am studying Human Geography and Spatial Planning at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, which means that I am concerned with liveability, spatial planning and, in this case, happiness at a certain place. I lived my whole life in Drachten except from the last five years because I have moved to Groningen to study. I am at the end of the programme so that means that I have to do research. The subject of the research is:

- To what extent the results of the Provincial Statenverkiezingen 2019 are an expression of the feeling that the place where you live 'don't matter'.

The plan is to do this research in your village because of the results of the last election in Ooststellingwerf and the fact that your village is relatively small in this municipality. Due to the

corona crisis I am not able to come to your village in person so it would help me a lot if you would take the time to fill in this questionnaire. The goal of the research will be to get more insight of the feeling of a 'place don't matter' which will lead to policies which are much more place sensitive. So that is why I ask you to fill in this questionnaire. It has 10 questions and will take 1 minute to fill in. The results will be anonymous so the answers cannot be related to a certain person. Only I and my supervisor can see the results of the questionnaire. If you have any questions, remarks or do you want to be kept up to date about the research? You can contact me on:  
[y.h.breman@student.rug.nl](mailto:y.h.breman@student.rug.nl)

Thank you very much and your help is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ype Breman

**1. Gender**

- a. Male
- b. Female

**2. Age**

.....

**3. Education**

- a. None
- b. Primary school
- c. Secondary school
- d. MBO
- e. HBO
- f. WO

**4. Living Place**

.....

**5. Income\***

- a. <€22.400
- b. >€22.400

**6. Did you vote during the Provinciale Statenverkiezingen last year? (When 'no', proceed to question 9)**

Yes/No

**7. Which party did you vote?\***

- a. Forum voor Democratie
- b. CDA
- c. PvdA
- d. VVD
- e. PVV
- f. GroenLinks
- g. ChristenUnie
- h. SP
- i. Partij voor de Dieren
- j. D66

- k. Provinciaal Belang Fryslan
- l. 50Plus
- m. Fryske Nasjonale Partij (FNP)
- n. Natuurlijk Fryslan
- o. SGP

**8. Why did you vote for this party?**

.....

**9. Do you feel that the government neglects your area in terms of health services, education, infrastructure, etc.?**

Yes/No

**10. Do you feel that national policy makers considers your area as a ‘place that don’t matter’?**

Yes/No

**11. Do you ever had the feeling that the place where you live doesn’t matter?**

Yes/No

**12. Did this feeling influence your choice for a certain party?**

Yes/No

## Appendix B

### Chi Square test of contingencies

Table 1: ‘Area Related’

#### Populistic or not \* Area Related Crosstabulation

			Area Related		Total
			Not Area Related	Area Related	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	40	4	44
		Expected Count	38,1	5,9	44,0

	% within Populistic or not	90,9%	9,1%	100,0%
	% within Area Related	88,9%	57,1%	84,6%
	% of Total	76,9%	7,7%	84,6%
Populistic	Count	5	3	8
	Expected Count	6,9	1,1	8,0
	% within Populistic or not	62,5%	37,5%	100,0%
	% within Area Related	11,1%	42,9%	15,4%
	% of Total	9,6%	5,8%	15,4%
Total	Count	45	7	52
	Expected Count	45,0	7,0	52,0
	% within Populistic or not	86,5%	13,5%	100,0%
	% within Area Related	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	% of Total	86,5%	13,5%	100,0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,690 <sup>a</sup>	1	,030		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	2,568	1	,109		
Likelihood Ratio	3,694	1	,055		
Fisher's Exact Test				,064	,064
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,600	1	,032		
N of Valid Cases	52				

a. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,08.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,300	,030
	Cramer's V	,300	,030
N of Valid Cases		52	

Table 2: 'Plan and Positions'

### Populistic or not \* Plans and Positions or not Crosstabulation

			Plans and Positions or not		Total
			Not Plans and Positions	Plans and Positions	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	18	26	44
		Expected Count	18,6	25,4	44,0
		% within Populistic or not	40,9%	59,1%	100,0%
		% within Plans and Positions or not	81,8%	86,7%	84,6%
		% of Total	34,6%	50,0%	84,6%
	Populistic	Count	4	4	8
		Expected Count	3,4	4,6	8,0
		% within Populistic or not	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%
		% within Plans and Positions or not	18,2%	13,3%	15,4%
		% of Total	7,7%	7,7%	15,4%
Total	Count	22	30	52	
	Expected Count	22,0	30,0	52,0	
	% within Populistic or not	42,3%	57,7%	100,0%	
	% within Plans and Positions or not	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	42,3%	57,7%	100,0%	

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,229 <sup>a</sup>	1	,632		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	,008	1	,928		
Likelihood Ratio	,227	1	,634		
Fisher's Exact Test				,708	,459
Linear-by-Linear Association	,225	1	,635		
N of Valid Cases	52				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,38.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-,066	,632
	Cramer's V	,066	,632
N of Valid Cases		52	

Table 3: 'Feeling'

### Populistic or not \* Feeling or not Crosstabulation

			Feeling or not		Total
			Not Feeling	Feeling	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	41	3	44
		Expected Count	41,5	2,5	44,0
		% within Populistic or not	93,2%	6,8%	100,0%
		% within Feeling or not	83,7%	100,0%	84,6%
		% of Total	78,8%	5,8%	84,6%
	Populistic	Count	8	0	8
		Expected Count	7,5	,5	8,0

Total	% within Populistic or not	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	% within Feeling or not	16,3%	0,0%	15,4%
	% of Total	15,4%	0,0%	15,4%
	Count	49	3	52
	Expected Count	49,0	3,0	52,0
	% within Populistic or not	94,2%	5,8%	100,0%
	% within Feeling or not	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	% of Total	94,2%	5,8%	100,0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,579 <sup>a</sup>	1	,447		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	1,035	1	,309		
Fisher's Exact Test				1,000	,599
Linear-by-Linear Association	,568	1	,451		
N of Valid Cases	52				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,46.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-,106	,447
	Cramer's V	,106	,447
N of Valid Cases		52	

Table 4: 'Thoughts'

**Populistic or not \* Thoughts or not Crosstabulation**

			Thoughts or not		Total
			Not thoughts	Thoughts	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	42	2	44
		Expected Count	42,3	1,7	44,0
		% within Populistic or not	95,5%	4,5%	100,0%
		% within Thoughts or not	84,0%	100,0%	84,6%
		% of Total	80,8%	3,8%	84,6%
	Populistic	Count	8	0	8
		Expected Count	7,7	,3	8,0
		% within Populistic or not	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within Thoughts or not	16,0%	0,0%	15,4%
		% of Total	15,4%	0,0%	15,4%
Total	Count	50	2	52	
	Expected Count	50,0	2,0	52,0	
	% within Populistic or not	96,2%	3,8%	100,0%	
	% within Thoughts or not	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	96,2%	3,8%	100,0%	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,378 <sup>a</sup>	1	,539		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	,683	1	,409		
Fisher's Exact Test				1,000	,713
Linear-by-Linear Association	,371	1	,543		

N of Valid Cases	52				
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a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-,085	,539
	Cramer's V	,085	,539
N of Valid Cases		52	

Table 5: 'Voting Pointer'

### Populistic or not \* Voting pointer or else Crosstabulation

			Voting pointer or else		Total
			Not Voting Pointer	Voting Pointer	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	41	3	44
		Expected Count	41,5	2,5	44,0
		% within Populistic or not	93,2%	6,8%	100,0%
		% within Voting pointer or else	83,7%	100,0%	84,6%
		% of Total	78,8%	5,8%	84,6%
	Populistic	Count	8	0	8
		Expected Count	7,5	,5	8,0
		% within Populistic or not	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within Voting pointer or else	16,3%	0,0%	15,4%
		% of Total	15,4%	0,0%	15,4%
Total	Count	49	3	52	
	Expected Count	49,0	3,0	52,0	
	% within Populistic or not	94,2%	5,8%	100,0%	
	% within Voting pointer or else	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

% of Total	94,2%	5,8%	100,0%
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### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,579 <sup>a</sup>	1	,447		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	1,035	1	,309		
Fisher's Exact Test				1,000	,599
Linear-by-Linear Association	,568	1	,451		
N of Valid Cases	52				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,46.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-,106	,447
	Cramer's V	,106	,447
N of Valid Cases		52	

Table 6: 'No Idea'

### Populistic or not \* No idea Crosstabulation

			No idea		Total
			Not No Idea	No Idea	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	41	3	44
		Expected Count	41,5	2,5	44,0
		% within Populistic or not	93,2%	6,8%	100,0%
		% within No idea	83,7%	100,0%	84,6%
		% of Total	78,8%	5,8%	84,6%

	Populistic	Count	8	0	8
		Expected Count	7,5	,5	8,0
		% within Populistic or not	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within No idea	16,3%	0,0%	15,4%
		% of Total	15,4%	0,0%	15,4%
Total		Count	49	3	52
		Expected Count	49,0	3,0	52,0
		% within Populistic or not	94,2%	5,8%	100,0%
		% within No idea	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	94,2%	5,8%	100,0%

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,579 <sup>a</sup>	1	,447		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	1,035	1	,309		
Fisher's Exact Test				1,000	,599
Linear-by-Linear Association	,568	1	,451		
N of Valid Cases	52				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,46.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-,106	,447
	Cramer's V	,106	,447
N of Valid Cases		52	

Table 7: 'Family and Friends'

**Populistic or not \* Family and Friends Crosstabulation**

			Family and Friends		Total
			Not Family and Friends	Family and Friends	
Populistic or not	Not Populistic	Count	41	3	44
		Expected Count	40,6	3,4	44,0
		% within Populistic or not	93,2%	6,8%	100,0%
		% within Family and Friends	85,4%	75,0%	84,6%
		% of Total	78,8%	5,8%	84,6%
	Populistic	Count	7	1	8
		Expected Count	7,4	,6	8,0
		% within Populistic or not	87,5%	12,5%	100,0%
		% within Family and Friends	14,6%	25,0%	15,4%
		% of Total	13,5%	1,9%	15,4%
Total	Count	48	4	52	
	Expected Count	48,0	4,0	52,0	
	% within Populistic or not	92,3%	7,7%	100,0%	
	% within Family and Friends	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	92,3%	7,7%	100,0%	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,308 <sup>a</sup>	1	,579		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	,000	1	1,000		
Likelihood Ratio	,271	1	,602		
Fisher's Exact Test				,499	,499

Linear-by-Linear Association	,302	1	,583		
N of Valid Cases	52				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,62.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,077	,579
	Cramer's V	,077	,579
N of Valid Cases		52	

## Appendix C

### Logistic Regression Table 1

#### Correlations

		Age Groups	Income	High educated or not
Age Groups	Pearson Correlation	1	,230	-,011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,066	,933
	N	65	65	65
Income	Pearson Correlation	,230	1	,136
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,066		,280
	N	65	65	65
High educated or not	Pearson Correlation	-,011	,136	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,933	,280	
	N	65	65	65

#### Categorical Variables Codings

	Parameter coding
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	Frequency	(1)	(2)	(3)
Education Secondary School	1	1,000	,000	,000
MBO	13	,000	1,000	,000
HBO	31	,000	,000	1,000
WO	7	,000	,000	,000

**Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup>**

			Predicted		
			Populistic or not		Percentage Correct
Observed			Not Populistic	Populistic	
Step 0	Populistic or not	Not Populistic	44	0	100,0
		Populistic	8	0	,0
	Overall Percentage				84,6

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is ,500

**Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients**

	Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1 Step	3,675	5	,597
Block	3,675	5	,597
Model	3,675	5	,597

**Model Summary**

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	40,974 <sup>a</sup>	,068	,118

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 20 because maximum iterations has been reached. Final solution cannot be found.

Logistic Regression Table 2

**Categorical Variables Codings**

	Parameter coding
Frequency	(1)

Participant consider it 'place don't matter'	No	38	1,000
	Yes	14	,000
Policy makers consider it 'place don't matter'	No	33	1,000
	Yes	19	,000
Feeling that it the area is neglected by policy makers	No	26	1,000
	Yes	26	,000

**Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup>**

			Predicted		
			Populistic or not		Percentage Correct
			Not Populistic	Populistic	
	Observed				
Step 0	Populistic or not	Not Populistic	44	0	100,0
		Populistic	8	0	,0
	Overall Percentage				84,6

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is ,500

**Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients**

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	6,035	3	,110
	Block	6,035	3	,110
	Model	6,035	3	,110

**Model Summary**

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	38,614 <sup>a</sup>	,110	,190

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than ,001.