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Representations of 'Other' Immigrants in the Agendas of Politicians of Immigrant Background: A Content Analysis on the Case of the Netherlands

Göçmen Kökenli Politikacıların 'Diğer' Göçmenleri Temsilleri: Hollanda Örneği Üzerine bir İçerik Analizi

Nermin AYDEMİR[a]

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ABSTRACT

A growing literature in Western Europe investigates the role of immigrant minority politicians in representing voters with whom they share similar backgrounds. However, not much has been said on the possible contributions of those minority representatives in framing other sorts of immigrants. This research examines how Members of the Parliament (MPs) of immigrant minority origin frame asylum related and other kinds of immigration in their parliamentary work. This is a significant research question as it sheds light upon immigration related policy perspectives constructed by those who themselves have immigrant backgrounds. To answer this question, the researcher conducted a content analysis on parliamentary questions posted by MPs with migratory backgrounds. The paper particularly focuses on differences between representatives with migratory backgrounds by considering party ideology, gender and ethnic identity starting from early 2000's. The qualitative nature of the research allows space to reveal unforeseen (intersections of) explanatory factors. The Dutch case has been particularly selected for its tradition of group representation under the notion of multiculturalism.

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ÖZ

Batı Avrupa özelinde göçmen kökenli milletvekillerinin kendileri ile benzer geçmişlere sahip seçmenleri temsil etmek noktasındaki rollerini araştıran çalışmalar giderek gelişen bir literatür oluşturmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, göçmen kökenli parlamenterlerin gerek iltica gerekse diğer sebeplerle yaşadıkları ülkelerden farklı ülkelere yönelen yeni göçmenleri hangi çerçeve içinde ele aldıkları henüz üzerinde çok fazla tartışılmamış bir sorun alanı olarak karşımızda durmaktadır. Kendileri göçmen kökenlere sahip milletvekillerinin yeni göçmenleri nasıl bir çerçevede ele aldıkları son derece önemli bir sorudur. Zira, bu sorunun cevaplanması göçmenliği tecrübe etmiş olan kişilerin göç ile ilgili siyasi perspektiflerine ışık tutacaktır. Bu çalışmada, göçmen kökenli milletvekillerinin yeni gelen göçmenlere dair siyasi tercihlerini araştırmak üzere parlamentoya sundukları soru önergeleri üzerinde bir içerik analizi gerçekleştirilmektedir. Makalede parti ideolojisi, cinsiyet ve etnik kimlik faktörlerinin göçmen kökenli milletvekillerinin ortaya koydukları siyasi tercihler üzerindeki etkileri incelenmektedir. Araştırmanın niteliksel doğası, alanın öngörülemeyen (kesişme noktaları) açıklayıcı faktörleri ortaya çıkarmasına izin vermektedir. Hollanda örneği, çok-kültürlülük kavramı altında grup temsil geleneği nedeniyle özellikle seçilmiştir.

1. Introduction

Political participatory mechanisms are peaceful arenas for voicing interests, needs and wishes. An exclusion from decision-making bodies, on the other hand, significantly undermines the process of democratic representation as well as alienating newcomers. That, the immigrant minorities are now becoming permanent members as full citizens further makes such participation important as a lot of issue areas emerge during the process of incorporating into the mainstream society (for example see: Morales and Giugni, 2011; Bird *et al*., 2011). Considering such core values of equality in representative democracies, students of political science have attributed significant importance to the political incorporation of less-represented constituencies – including immigrant minorities (Verba et. al., 1995; Pitkin, 1967; Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1995).

Increasing numbers of MPs with migratory backgrounds raise hopes for more inclusive democracies in Western Europe. A recently growing empirical literature, however, shows us that politicians with migratory backgrounds are

[a] Asst. Prof. Dr. Antalya Bilim University, School of Business and Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Antalya, **E-Posta:** nermin.aydemir@antalya.edu.tr, **ORCID:** https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4342-2329

⚠ Yazar bu çalışmanın tüm süreçlerinin araştırma ve yayın etiğine uygun olduğunu, etik kurallara ve bilimsel atıf gösterme ilkelerine uyduğunu beyan etmiştir. Aksi bir durumda Akdeniz İİBF Dergisi sorumlu değildir.

not always willing to support the ethnic and/or religious rights and freedoms of immigrant minorities. Critics argue that MPs siding with the established elite climb the career ladder rather than those aiming at group representation (Aydemir and Vliegenthart, 2016; Durose et. al. 2013; Garett, 2017; Murray, 2016). Another group of scholars question the issue of common interest among immigrant minority groups by highlighting differences within minority groups (Celis, 2013; Saward, 2006; Severes, 2010). The normative obligation put on representatives coming from migratory backgrounds to stay focused on ethnic and/or religious identities is another issue to be considered (Bloemraad, 2013). Taking the evolving discussions on political representation of immigrant minorities into consideration, one can claim that there is still a long way to representative practices going beyond the priorities set by the upper class white male. Still, recent developments increase hopes for a better articulation of immigrant minorities. Asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants, however, come forth as the most vulnerable others of politics as they lack the tiniest possibilities to explain themselves. Existing representative mechanisms rule out the participatory mechanisms for forced immigrants in particular. Hence, one of the greatest challenges to contemporary politics comes from the alienation of asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants.

Whilst there would seem to be an increasing interest in minority representatives' role in making substantive contributions to the representations of voters with whom they share similar ethnic and/or religious backgrounds, not much has yet been said on minority MPs' part in framing other sorts of immigrants. Coming from a migrant group can bring a more supportive understanding to the asylum related and other immigrants whose voices are not heard in politics. Other than a principal support for other newcomers, MPs with migratory backgrounds can also provide additional insights into the problems, needs, and wishes of new immigrants. Research on possible contributions of those representatives' approach towards new immigrants can shed light on their potential in making political systems more inclusionary. Do MPs of minority origin open space for these unheard groups – new immigrants, who are becoming the new other in contemporary democracies? How do minority representatives frame new immigrants? Which topics do MPs with migratory backgrounds raise the most when they address newly arriving immigrants? What is problematized the most in their parliamentary work? What kind of causal explanations do these politicians come up with? Which moral principles shape their evaluations? What are minority MP's policy suggestions with regard to those newcomers (Entman, 1993)? Do MPs from different parties frame new-coming immigrants differently? Do framings on immigrants change across party membership and/or ethnic backgrounds?

To answer these questions, the researcher conducted a qualitative content analysis by following an analytical induction understanding. The qualitative approach of the research enables the revelation of unforeseen (intersections of) explanatory factors. Such data analysis, however, does not totally dismiss existing studies and departs from existing frames. The relevant data was coded into the two-fold victim-intruder category of Van Gorp (2005). No new codes were added since the victim-intruder frames largely covered the data analyzed for this study. Still, sub-codes were added under these main frames during the qualitative coding process with the aim of providing a more sophisticated discussion of existing patterns of addressing new immigrants. Parliamentary questions were particularly chosen as the data for this study for being the most independent activity under the roof of the parliament. This article particularly focuses on differences between minority representatives by considering party ideology, gender and ethnic identity. The time period covered is wide, starting from the very first appearance of minority representatives in the parliament in 1986 and ending in 2019. The Dutch case has been particularly selected for its tradition of group representation and the highest number of minority representatives in the national parliament when compared with other liberal democracies in the world.

2. Studies on Political Representation by MPs of Immigrant Minority Backgrounds

There is a growing interest in the presence of minority representatives as societies are becoming increasingly diverse. A long established-literature on descriptive representation has significantly contributed to understanding in this context by revealing reasons behind a minority presence in various different parliaments (for example see: Bloemraad, 2013; Michon and Vermeulen, 2013; Saggar and Geddes, 2000; Thrasher *et al.*, 2013; Schönwalder, 2013; Togeby, 2008). Proceeding from Pitkin's (1967) substantive representatation, another group of European academics question the convergence between the agendas of representatives and interests of minority constituencies. Initial content analyses on the parliamentary work of immigrant minority MPs (Saalfeld, 2011; Saalfeld and Bischof, 2013; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoullou, 2011; Wüst, 2014) show us that those representatives are more interested in issues concerning immigrant minorities than native ones.

More detailed content analyses, however, indicate a restrictive pattern in such content (Aydemir and Vliegenthart, 2016; Durose et. al. 2013; Garett, 2017; Murray, 2016). Politicians from immigrant minority backgrounds are oftentimes far closer to political elites than they are to immigrant minorities. In fact, the legitimacy of minority representatives is hardly based on a real mass support from immigrant minority groups or political activism from that side. Minority representatives are often well-assimilated individuals not willing to be associated with their ethnic and/or religious backgrounds (Bird, 2005: 440). Minority representatives in politics can survive in the game of politics as long as their difference remains within the limits of acceptability (Durose et al., 2012: 263). Assuming that minority representatives will support cultural and/or religious rights and liberties might be misleading, although descriptive representation provides an illusion of substantive contribution to group rights and liberties. When the historical process of political representation is examined, it is seen that the mechanism of representation in politics is based on the search for the protection of the interests of the upper class, white men rather than a democratic awakening (Bird, 2005; Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1995; Pitkin 1967).

3. Minority Representatives' Perspectives on New Immigrants

In the relevant literature, there is a consensus that political representation is generally structured in the interests of the upper class white male (Bird, 2005; Mansbridge, 1999; Mügge, 2016; Mügge and Erzeel, 2016, Phillips, 1995; Pitkin, 1967). This premise is also reflected in portrayals of new immigrants, especially those who have been forced to flee their countries. Recent political framings on asylum seekers and refugees are generally structured in the form of negative portrayals showing them as illegitimate actors who do not have the right of protection (Masocha 2015; Row and O'Brien, 2014). Politicians construct a racist discourse by portraying their own country as sympathetic whereas framing asylum seekers as fake, security threats or criminals in an era of securitization. Such narratives, in turn, bring very negative impacts on the lives of asylum seekers and other immigrants. The 'other' will not be allowed into the country in the first place. Even though immigrants find a way to enter the country and access the labor market, having a decent living in the new country will be very difficult when anti-immigrant content dominates political discussion.

Hence, solidarity among politically overlooked groups can make a significant contribution to our democracies as they progress toward being more inclusive. Contributions of politicians from immigrant minority backgrounds might go beyond their attachment to voters sharing similar backgrounds. Those newcomers to decision-making arenas can bring a more in-depth change into politics by making political arenas more open to the interests of others having difficulty in making their voices heard. At this point, minority representatives – with their own migratory backgrounds – may play a significant role in bringing a more in-depth discussion to the subject area. MPs with migratory backgrounds may help in developing a more sympathetic understanding of the needs and wishes (Philips, 1995: 2) of newly arrived immigrants – who are becoming the new others in the highly mobile yet institutionally traditional societies of today. Immigrant minority MPs can understand newcomers more as they may come from similar cultures. Being more familiar with cultural notions, those MPs might have a better understanding of immigrant practices in a wide range of private and public domains (Benhabib, 2002). Departing from Saward's (2006) understanding of political representation, one can claim that sharing similar national, local, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and class identities, immigrant minority representatives can understand new-coming immigrants better than others.

Minority representatives can also show more solidarity to those non-citizens, as being at the bottom of the social hierarchy would foster a greater understanding in their positions. There has been substantial criticism of group representation on the grounds that such differentiation in politics may bring deeper segregations in society. In fact, utilizing those experiences from representing one's own group to other disadvantaged groups might also answer such criticisms. A sympathetic understanding of another outgroup – might indeed be a reflection of positive impacts of the immigrant minority identity in creating a more inclusive political environment. In sum, it is a relevant question to ask how minority representatives frame new immigrants as they are among those elites shaping political preferences. Politicians of migratory backgrounds can have a significant say in opening or closing borders as well as accommodation strategies after settlement.

4. Explaining Variance in Framings on New Immigrants by MPs with Migratory Backgrounds

This study follows earlier works in associating left wing/progressive political parties with supportive and right wing/conservative parties with restrictive policy preferences on the subject area of immigration (Castles and Mair, 1984; Ireland 2004; Prooijen et al., 2017). Recent studies on the representation of immigrant minorities draw attention to pragmatic choices of party groups in preparing candidacy lists. Right wing and/or conservative parties divert from their traditions in allocating greater space for demographic diversity in their aim to catch the minority vote (Bird, 2012; Saggard, 2013: 87). Yet, such demographic changes in party groups do not always yield to substantial changes in the actual content offered by such groups (Geisser and Kelfaoui, 1998: 27–28). Gender will be another key dimension in explaining variance in the policy choices of MPs of migratory origin. Coming from another disadvantaged group might indeed create an additional empathy to those whose voices remain unheard in contemporary politics (Ceyhan, 2018). As is the case with regard to party identity, gender does not yield to more supportive policies when MPs from immigrant backgrounds address voters with whom they share similar backgrounds. Quite the contrary, female MPs from migratory backgrounds are more likely to follow restrictive policies on immigrant minority cultures and/or religions (Celis and Mügge, 2018; Ceyhan, 2018; Garett, 2017; Murray, 2016). However, we do not know whether gender identity leads to a difference in framing issues concerning asylum seekers, refugees and other new immigrants in today's era of migration. The country of origin, or the ethnic background, is another widely referenced factor in explaining group differences in political representation (see: Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Fennema and Tillie, 2001; Vermeulen, 2006). Immigrant minorities indeed show different patterns in their political participations as differences along ethnic lines influence the distribution of structural resources, such as educational qualifications, income and occupational status (Bloemraad and Schönwälder, 2013: 568). Taking all these into consideration, this research pays attention to party membership, gender identity and ethnic background in explaining variance in the framings of minority representatives on the subject matter of immigration. Still, the qualitative nature of the research opens room for discovering other possible factors which might have an impact on such variation.

5. Case Selection and Methodology

A content analysis was conducted to identify patterns, underlying connotations and implicit meanings of parliamentary questions. No time restrictions have been implemented on the data. Since the first MP of minority origin was elected in 1986, the data covers a time period between 1986 and 2019. The Dutch country is of significant importance in studying political representation for immigrant minorities for having hosted frequent discussions on migration and integration throughout the 2000s. The Netherlands has been a leading country in

shaping relevant debates with an active discussion between inclusionary and exclusionary positions on the subject matter of migration. Nonetheless, the Dutch case is of particular importance in the scope of this study for the importance given to proportionality in political representation. The country stands out with the significance of minority presence in politics with its tradition of multicultural politics (Mügge, 2016). Blooemrad (2013) places the Netherlands in a separate position in his study comparing Western democracies. According to the article on the second half of the 2000s, the Muslim population, which was 3.1% in German society after the 2009 elections, is represented by 0.8% in the parliament. After the 2010 elections, the parliamentary representation of ethnic populations in the UK, which was 12.1% in the UK, was 4.2%. At the time of the study, the representation of 10.5% (non-Western) minority population in the Dutch parliament is 11.3%. In Bloemraad's words, the Dutch political system goes beyond perfect representation, meaning that the share of minority representatives in the Dutch parliament is higher than the share of minorities in the society.

John Lilipaly, with his Molucan background, was the first minority MP to enter the Dutch Parliament from the list of the labor party in 1986. Thereafter, the number of immigrant minority MPs has increased gradually. First, immigrant descendants from (former) colonies such Surinam and Antilles entered into the national parliament. Thereafter, the numbers of members from Moroccan or Turkish backgrounds increased.[1] A milestone was reached in the national elections in 2010 when the proportion of immigrant members of the Dutch Parliament reached the share of Non-Western minorities in the Dutch population.[2][3] This trend in mirroring diversity in the general population has been continuing with the elections after 2017 (10.7%) after a rather 'tolerable deviation' in 2012, when the share of minority representatives decreased from 11.3 % to 7.3%. Currently, there are 15 members with a non-Dutch background after the elections in 2019. The Dutch Labor Party has been traditionally associated with being the most open party towards diversity in the parliament. The highest number of minorities have indeed been from this party throughout the years. Nevertheless, the laborers lost such issue ownership when other parties from different ideologies in the political spectrum allocated seats for minority representatives. Today, even conservative parties with restrictive policy perspectives on the subject matter of migration, open space for minority representatives. Minority politicians are spread across a wide range of political parties from left to right and from progressive to conservative in the case of the Netherlands. When it comes to ethnic composition, the largest group is that of Turkish background especially after the gradual increase in the recent years.

In this research, parliamentary questions are examined to investigate the framings of minority representatives on other immigrants. In fact, there are also other alternative arenas to voice political preferences such as parliamentary debates, official reports or more informal activities outside legislative mechanisms. Parliamentary questions are chosen for being an individual activity where minority representatives can reflect their own standpoints with greater freedom when compared with other activities under the roof of the parliament. Those questions also provide opportunities to conduct systematic analysis when compared with ad hoc activities outside the parliament. Moreover, the nature of the Dutch political system makes parliamentary questions highly relevant to understand the stances of individual MPs. Coalition cabinets and traditions of constructive criticism open space for individual MPs to express their own viewpoints even when their party is in the government. 339 parliamentary questions were analyzed in total. As MPs have the possibility to ask questions together with other parliamentarians, such questions asked by more than one MP of immigrant minority origin were counted by taking the number of MPs from migratory backgrounds asking these questions. Other than that, multiple coding was also possible to capture elements of more than one (sub) codes if a single question was referring to more than one (sub) codes.

This research utilizes a directed kind of qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Directed by earlier scholarly literature on migration (Van Gorp 2005; Kroon et al., 2016), initial coding started with the victim-intruder/perpetrator distinction. Thereafter, additional codes were added when necessary. As the data largely fit the inclusive categorization of victim/intruder distinction, no major changes were made other than a tiny additional category of neutral. Yet, underneath victim and intruder frames, many sub-codes were added to illustrate the sophistication of arguments favoring each of these codes. These sub-codes were utilized in deducing the underlying reasons for variances in framing new migrants. During this process, an analytical induction has been followed. Preliminary explanations of contributing factors were outlined by taking the prevailing patterns in the analyzed data into account. Those preliminary explanations were revised or completely changed when compared with cases which refuted the first explanation (Berg, 2004, pp. 358–363). Being based on a qualitative inquiry, this study does not claim generalizable conclusions. Still, a systematic qualitative analysis reveals the conditions leading to different framings.

6. Framings on (Asylum Related) Immigrants and Their Explanations

Politicians with migratory backgrounds discussed a wide range of issues in their parliamentary work on the subject matter. Relevant questions referred to several different issue areas such as asylum application procedures, detention centers, family reunion, healthcare services, educational needs, exploitation of immigrants in undocumented labor market, inter-group relations, integration, discrimination, foreign relations, and deportation procedures. The data analysis for this research challenges earlier studies saying that immigrant minority politicians adopt restrictive policies rather than making democracies more inclusive (Aydemir and Vligenthart, 2016; Durose et al., 2013;

[1] https://www.parlement.com/id/vk6gbgxlvuxs/afkomst_tweede_kamerleden (Date of accession: 05.01.2021).

[2] Prodemos, https://www.prodemos.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/DossierAllochtonenindepolitiek-herzieneversie07072010.pdf (Date of accession: 05.01.2021).

Garett, 2017; Murray, 2016). As discussed above, recent studies on the representative patterns of MPs from immigrant minorities do not bring significant differences in reflecting the viewpoints of voters with whom they share similar backgrounds. Quite the contrary, those newcomers to politics oftentimes side with the established elite as their political careers are more dependent on their relations with party leadership, rather than grassroots support coming from immigrant minorities. Yet, this research offers a different picture.

MPs of minority origin have asked 6253 questions in total. 339 of these questions, namely 18.5 % of the data, addressed issues concerning immigrants. Minority representatives are not solely interested in the issue areas on immigration, still they show a substantial amount of issues concernıng immigration. With regard to the question of standing for new coming immigrants, a supportive perspective is the case in general. MPs from immigrant backgrounds in the Netherlands come forth with rather inclusionary framings when they address those newcomers. 82.2% of all the coded data was coded as inclusionary. Only 13.7 % of all the parliamentary questions analyzed included exclusionary elements. Party ideology plays a significant role in explaining variation among minority representatives' framings. This research confirms the impact of gender identity and ethnic background as other relevant factors shaping framings on new coming immigrants. Other than those factors related to individual and group identities of MPs of immigrant backgrounds, the substance of the content comes out as another factor determining the direction in how new-coming immigrants are to be framed. MPs coming from migratory backgrounds are more supportive when it comes to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable members of immigrant groups, becoming more restrictive when it comes to further migration.

6.1. Party Membership

Party membership comes out as a significant factor shaping a minority MP's stance on new immigrants. In line with the existing literature, MPs from left wing and/or progressive parties address new immigrants the most and are almost always supportive when they do so. Green Left Members ask the highest number of questions on immigrants with few negative connotations. The Labor Party follows the Green Left. Minority representatives from the Dutch Socialist Party show less interest than the other two leftist parties. Yet, this can also be traced to a fewer number of members in the parliament throughout the time period analyzed. In fact, minority MPs from the Dutch Socialist Party adopt bold framings when countering restrictive policies on immigration in general and asylum related movements in particular. The liberal D66 and ethnically oriented DENK are not as interested as Laborers and Greens. Yet, they are also positive when those new-coming migrants are on their agenda.

Immigrant minority MPs adopt inclusionary framings in many different respects in their references to asylum related and other kinds of new-coming immigrants. Representatives of migrant origin open space to criticize procedural flaws in their references to asylum related migrants. Institutional shortcomings in providing necessary care and support for asylum seekers such as issues with detention centers' conditions, high application fees to apply for asylum and the lateness in answering these applications, violations with regard to the right of asylum, allegations of mishandling asylum related migrants in detention centers are frequently addressed subject matters. Suggestions for improving the institutional structure is a widely addressed policy formulation in the works of minority MPs. MPs of minority origin very often criticize the Netherlands for not obeying the norms and law and underline the obligation to create a supportive system for asylum applications.

The content analysis challenges those studies claiming that a higher position in a party would bring a more silent approach to the representation of side-lined groups. Albayrak, who has been a high profile figure in the Dutch Labor Party: being placed in second position right after the party leader in the candidacy list and filling the role of deputy justice minister; is one of the forerunners in voicing these issues in the implementation of laws to provide necessary care for those who have entered the country. The necessity to provide a facilitating environment in the process of asylum application is another item on Albayrak's agenda.

This research contradicts a straightforward match of restrictive policies with right wing and/or conservative ideologies. New-coming immigrants are not salient in the agendas of minority MPs from the Dutch Christian Democrat Party. Still, they are rather inclusionary when new-coming immigrants do appear on their agenda. The differences between left-right wing or progressive-conservative ideologies are more about the content. There are important differences in the subject matters raised by members of political parties from different places in the political spectrum. Members from more leftist parties criticize the Dutch state for failing to meet the moral and legal obligations on asylum related migration. Members from the Christian Democratic Appeal, on the other hand, usually address violations or procedural issues happening in other countries.

Azmani, from the Dutch Liberal VVD, is the only name showing a clear pattern of exclusive policies in all the questions he asks on new immigrants. MPs of minority origin usually adopt positive framings when they address the issue area of migration. MPs also have inclusionary tendencies when they support more restrictive policies in certain instances. Azmani, from the VVD, is the only name who supports a complete communitarian approach. Azmani fulfills all the criteria of being a communitarian actor adopting exclusionary stances in the field of migration. In many different questions posted by this VVD member, the MP fits the communitarian criteria on priority in-group members in distributing welfare, protection of 'national culture' against outsiders, and emphasis on public order and security. Immigrants coming from different origins are portrayed as those who are engaged in fraud actions to receive benefits. However, another MP from the VVD - Griffith - adopts a different perspective from Azmani on asylum seekers. In a question in 2003, she criticizes the relevant ministry for rejecting an asylum seeker from Iraq. She refers to the statements of the European Court of Human Rights at this point and frames the subject matter in

humanitarian terms rather than prioritizing communitarian concerns. [4]

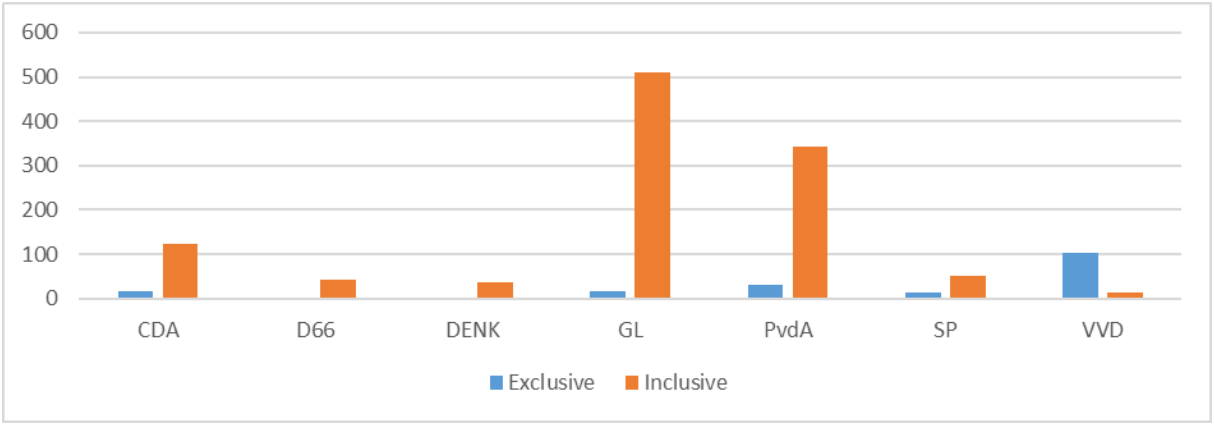


Table 1. Inclusionary-exclusionary coding across political parties in the Netherlands.[5]

The data analysis reveals an overall positivity in the content on migration – especially from left wing and/or progressive parties. More right wing/conservative MPs from migratory backgrounds, however, are not negative on the subject matter. MPs with their own migratory backgrounds propose policies to treat migrants as well as possible. Minority MPs from left wing and/or progressive and right wing and/or conservative political parties come together in adopting a selective cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, this does not mean an unconditional approval of cosmopolitanism. Such welcome is limited to those immigrants who were able to put their feet on European or Dutch territories, especially in the case of asylum. MPs of minority origin become more restrictive when it comes to new immigrants when those newcomers are not in a position to contribute to the Dutch economy. Even Klaver, one of the biggest supporters of pro-migrant policies as the leader of the Green Left, turns restrictive when it comes to more migration from conflict zones. His question, posed together with members from CDA and D66, asked for the situation to be controlled.[6]

Other than that, left wing and/or progressive party members also come closer to more restrictive policies associated with right wing and/or conservative parties when it comes to undocumented stay. Almost all the MPs studied use the term illegal when it comes to those migrants who stay without proper documentation, even though there are alternative ways to name them without criminalizing. Even the biggest supporters of asylum seekers associate undocumented stay with criminality.[7] In line with the preference for a fully capable state having total control over its residents within territorial borders, a constant emphasis is on the necessity of having full depiction of the situation. In such a context, the blurred status and the unknown numbers are very much under focus. The question asked by the Labor Party member Marcouch in 2012, is one of the very rare exceptions questioning the criminalization of undocumented migrants. Marcouch criticizes the Ministries of Defense, Justice and Immigration and Integration for their decision to "strongly tackle foreign criminals" emanating from Eastern-Europe.[8] There is a general tendency to portray uncontrolled migration as a threat to public order and social stability.

At this point, it is important to note that lower ranking Green Left MPs with migratory backgrounds divert from the general pattern of exclusive policies – which is shared by their party leadership. In several different questions, minority MPs from the Green Left ask for possible contributions from the Netherlands in providing support for other countries supporting high number of asylum related migrants. The same MPs also criticize the Dutch government for leaving Greece alone and call for an EU-level action.[9] Younger Green members of migratory backgrounds problematize the EU and the Netherlands rather than framing asylum seekers, refugees and other kinds of migrants as threats to Dutch economy and society. There is also a single voice emerging from the Socialist Party. A female Socialist MP, Karabulut, diverts from this almost consensually approved selective cosmopolitanism with her intense criticism against the idea of *Fortress Europe*.[10]

6.2. Gender Effect

This research shows that female representatives with migratory backgrounds are more interested in issues concerning new immigrants. Female MPs are also more generally positive on new-coming immigrants, especially those female MPs from leftwing and/or progressive backgrounds. Politicians adopt critical framings against communitarian practices prioritizing community members. Yet, it is not only the gender of the representative, herself, but also the gender of the immigrant which determines the stance on new sorts of migration. Female MPs of minority origin are especially interested in issues concerning female immigrants and children. Medical care, education, and accommodation appear as salient topics addressed in relevant content. Female MPs from many different political backgrounds come together in building a supportive discourse on vulnerable members of newly arriving migrant groups. The vulnerability of children is frequently

[4]Griffith, L., Question Number: 2020308900, 17 March 2003.
[5]Please note that the number of coding is more than the number of questions as multiple coding was possible during the data analysis.
[6] Klaver, J., Question Number: 2016Z04252, 2 March 2016.
[7] Albayrak, N. Question Number: 2000106480, 14.02.2001.
[8] Marcouch, A., Question Number: 2012Z06576, 30 March 2012.
[9] Dibi, T., Question Number:2010Z18554, 6 December 2010.
[10] Karabulut, S., Question Number: 2017Z15197, 13 November 2017.

addressed in the speeches of female MPs from different parties and it would seem there are a significant number of references to the particular needs of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. Issues regarding treatment in the detention centers and medical care for asylum seekers are subject areas uniting MPs from different parties in inclusionary framings. Left wing and/or progressive parties are the forerunners in this subject area. Still, educational needs and medical care of undocumented migrant children are issues where we can speak about a consensus preferring inclusionary policies over exclusionary ones.[11] Coruz, a male MP from CDA, is one of the very few that have a communitarian policy preference on those subject matters. In his exclusionary stance, Coruz addresses the costs of providing education to the children within the group of asylum related migrants.[12]

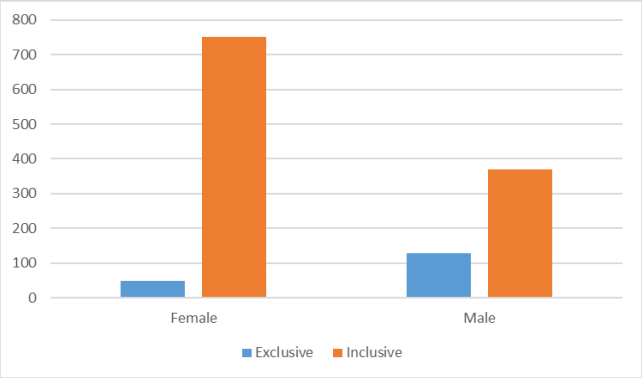


Table 2. Inclusionary – exclusionary coding across gender in the Netherlands.[13]

In addition to females and children, there is also a tendency to protect other members who are at risk because of disagreeing with traditional norms and values – especially in the view of female MPs. A lot of attention is paid to homosexuals and ex-Muslims. MPs with migratory backgrounds emphasize cultural differences and show a clear preference towards Dutch values and culture in their questions addressing the vulnerabilities of homosexuals and ex-Muslims. On such account, female MPs with migratory backgrounds put forward the necessity of protecting those vulnerable members within their own groups. A female MP of Turkish origin, Karabulut from the SP, for instance, stands out with her criticism against practices in the countries of origin. She also underlines protecting females from domestic violence, marriage at earlier ages, and polygamy. [14]

6.3. Ethnic Background

The widespread support for asylum seekers and other kinds of new immigrants is largely framed along the lines of individual rights and liberties. A more reserved approach is the case when it comes to group-based rights and/or freedoms. MPs of minority origin show a pattern of supporting migrants on the base of their legal status or individual identities with no references to countries of origin in supportive frames. Countries of origin are usually ascribed negative connotations when there is a reference to them. Institutions and actors of sending countries are usually addressed in communitarian undertones. A Socialist MP of Turkish origin, Karabulut, for instance is very critical with the claim that transnationally operating institutions based in sending countries hinder integration into the country of settlement. Such criticisms are mostly related to religious institutions. One of the two exceptions comes from a high ranking laborer of Turkish origin, Albayrak. In her question in 2005, Albayrak provides one of the very few messages favoring the country of origin by making clear references to earlier international agreements on Turkish citizens' rights with regard to free movement.[15]

Generally speaking, asylum related and other kinds of immigrants are portrayed as victims to be protected/kept distant from, on their way towards emancipation in their host societies. That a great number of the minority MPs come from Muslim countries can be an underlying factor of a lack of enthusiasm in highlighting minority identities. The Muslim identity in an era of clash of civilizations would appear to make MPs of minority origin in general, and MPs from Islamic countries in particular, stay distant from their own countries. Yet, such negative contextualization by MPs coming from Muslim countries is not only directed against Muslim countries. In another question from Karabulut in 2016, she addresses an allegation of forced sex of females of Eritrean origin and the impact of the Eritrean churches in the Netherlands on this issue. She also relates the poor integration of many Eritreans to the abusive understanding prevalent in the church.[16] Within this context, Ferrier – a Christian Democrat MP of Surinamese background – is one of the very few actors putting forward the idea of possible contributions that can be made by the sending country. In a question she posted in 2005, the Christian Democrat MP indicates possible accommodations that the migrant church can provide in fostering integration into Dutch society.[17] Kuzu, can be seen as exhibiting another rare pattern with his party's position on conservative Muslim identity on the one hand and progressive in terms of immigration on the other. Azough's, a Green Left MP of Moroccan origin, question in 2007 which criticized the Dutch police for deporting undocumented migrants seeking shelter in a Portuguese Church, is also one of the very few exceptions.[18]

[11] Klaver, J., Question Number: 2010Z18863, 8 December 2010; Arib, K., Question Number: 2050614220, 30 May 2006.
[12] Coruz, C., Question Number: 2010209460, 22 April 2004.
[13] Please note that the number of coding is more than the number of questions as multiple coding was possible during the data analysis.
[14] Karabulut, S. 2015Z17932, 1 October 2015.
[15] Albayrak, N., Question Number: 2040509140, 23 February 2005.
[16] Karabulut, S., Question Number: 2016Z00742, 18 January 2016.
[17] Ferrier, K., Question Number: 2050614100, 30 May 2006.
[18] Azough, N., Question Number: 2060706630, 30 January 2007.

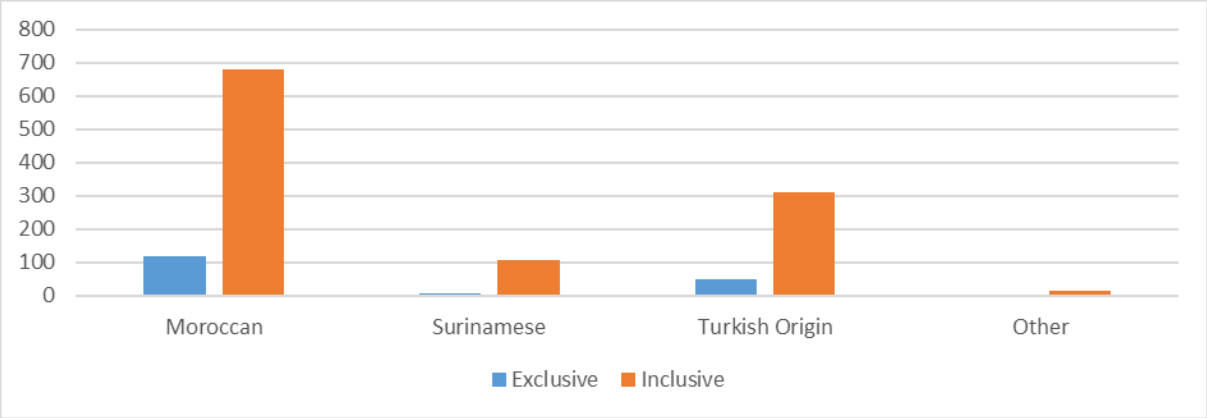


Table 3. Inclusionary- exclusionary coding across ethnic backgrounds in the Netherlands.[19]

7. Conclusion

This article examined how MPs with migratory backgrounds approached new immigrants and why they did so. The findings show a rather supportive approach in policies towards newcomers. Institutional capacity in the Netherlands, legal arrangements, and violations of legal liabilities, working conditions, and issues during deportation procedures are widely addressed issue areas. This research challenges a newly emerging literature in political representation by minority representatives. Despite a significant pattern of suppressive representative patterns with regard to minority rights and freedoms in earlier literature, this study reveals rather supportive policies.

Party ideologies are the most significant factors determining framings of MPs of minority origin when addressing asylum related migrants. Minority representatives from the Dutch Labor Party and Green Left are forerunners in standing up for new immigrants. Again, at this point the data analysis conducted for this research portrays a different picture from earlier works (Aydemir and Vliegenthart, 2016) which claim that Dutch Labor does not actually differ from Christian Democrats in terms of minority representation. Those from progressive parties are also more likely to address asylum seekers and refugees in the Netherlands and the problems they face in this country. Yet, members from CDA also support immigrants, especially when vulnerable members within immigrant groups have specific humanitarian needs, when there is labor migration and when asylum takes place in another country.

The content analysis conducted for this research verifies those expectations on more inclusionary policy preferences coming from female MPs. Female MPs of immigrant backgrounds are more attentive and more supportive to the needs, wishes, and interests of new coming immigrants. Yet, it is not only the gender identity of the representative but also the gender identity of the immigrants that changes relevant framings. There is an emphasis put on females, children, and homosexuals and their specific needs. In a similar vein, vulnerability of ex-Muslims is another issue highlighted in the relevant data. At this point, future research can address which diverse identities minority representatives are representing rather than a general approach on minority rights and liberties. Minority representatives might be representing micro minority groups with specific characteristics in minority societies such as females, children, homosexuals, and ex-Muslims.

Even though MPs of Moroccan origin stand out with their inclusionary framings, countries of origin are rarely addressed positively in their parliamentary content. Minority MPs rarely refer to the group identities of those new others and prefer to structure their supportive messages at the individual level. Asylum seekers and individuals are portrayed in terms of legal status, occupation, gender or other individual features. A selective kind of cosmopolitanism is the case when welcoming these immigrants detached from their countries of origin. Even members of the Green Left, who are the most inclusionary on newcomers, adopt a communitarian language when it comes to newcomers.

Further studies can investigate whether politicians adopt different stances in different arenas such as parliamentary debates, more binding kinds of parliamentary gatherings, and informal activities. Moreover, analyzing minority politicians' approaches towards asylum seekers in other democracies should reveal whether such sympathy is peculiar to the Netherlands or not. Another very important contribution might be comparing relevant framings of minority representatives with those representatives from native backgrounds.

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[19]Please note that the number of coding is more than the number of questions as multiple coding was possible during the data analysis.

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