

Master's Thesis:

Experiencing liberal political rhetoric as a second-generation migrant

**Exploring how perceptions of liberal rhetoric go hand in hand with political attitudes
and behaviour**



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Abstract

Migration and identity are salient topics in today's globalised and dynamic world. Politics draws on these themes, and political rhetoric targeting issues of migration and identity are ubiquitous. While such rhetoric is often targeted at people with a migration background, studies on how this target audience interprets and experiences it are scarce. Existing research often focuses on the extreme flanks of such rhetoric, while liberal rhetoric too is omnipresent and may shape the political attitudes of migrants. This exploratory study uses focus groups and photo-elicitation material to inquire into how second-generation migrants in the Netherlands experience liberal rhetoric that targets issues of migration and identity. This study discovers that liberal political rhetoric plays a role in shaping political attitudes and behaviour of second generation migrants in the Netherlands. Often, while liberal rhetoric is framed inclusively, it may encourage positive attitudes and increase political participation among second generation migrants. Liberal rhetoric that is shaped as a command triggers shock, but it also acts as a starting point for discussions about migration and identity. The immediate response to viewing liberal political rhetoric may not instigate change in voting behaviour straight away, but it does contribute to forming political attitudes. Often, second-generation migrants may view liberal ideology and rhetoric as 'Dutch' norms and values. Understanding how rhetoric may shape political attitudes and behaviours among migrants can allow policymakers to better shape and frame political rhetoric on issues of migration and identity, allowing for more inclusive policies, and approach the target audience more appropriately.

Introduction

From televised round table discussions to campaign posters plastered on street corners, political rhetoric about issues of migration and integration are ever-present in contemporary western societies like the Netherlands. Political rhetoric is persuasive speech or writing in the political domain, and is a visible means to present a view (Krebs & Jackson, 2007). There is a general consensus among academic scholars that political rhetoric is at the heart of political processes and outcomes, and sets the tone in discussions in the political domain and society. Its use goes beyond speeches behind closed doors in parliamentary sessions; political rhetoric is a "means of identifying with an audience" and also reaches into the realms of social life (Tileagă, 2013). Exposure to rhetoric may have different impacts on people, and may shape or guide their political and social experiences. The reaction to political rhetoric on issues of migration such as inclusion and diversity is often studied, however, as Simonsen writes, studies focused on "the object of this rhetoric", the 'non-native' population, is scarce (2021).

In the Netherlands, around a quarter of the population has a migration background, with 14.4% being distinguished as having a "non-western" migration background (Dossier: Asiel, Migratie en Integratie, 2022). People with a migration background are often exposed to political rhetoric on issues of belonging and integration as they are among the most salient features of today's political debate in Western European countries like the Netherlands (Van Spanje, 2010). From a vast body of academic literature studies political rhetoric on nationalism and belonging, it is evident that exposure to rhetoric prompts different responses and attitudes. Research that delves into the political outcomes of (populist) rhetoric has found that it can shape attitudes and voting intentions (Busby et al., 2019), create political apathy and lead to non-voting (Ardag et al., 2020), or cause increased participation and engagement (Moreno, 2018).

It is evident that interaction with political rhetoric can lead to different responses. Migrant populations often have to overcome barriers such as language and understanding of the political system (Terriquez & Kwon, 2015). However, responses and behaviour may be different for second generation migrants. A second-generation migrant experiences socialisation in different cultures including the local and parental cultures, which could mean that they have different lived experiences and perceptions of politics (ibid.). Second-generation migrants could pick up on different signals and cues, which could be translated into their political attitudes as well. Second-generation migrants experience socialisation in both the Dutch culture, as well as their parents' culture, and often experience more complex identity formation and behaviour (Oppedal et al., 2005).

Further, highly educated second-generation migrants with high cognitive capacity may have higher political competence and assess political rhetoric differently, so there may be varying interaction with political rhetoric (Van der Waal et al., 2010, p.351) In addition to ethnic and cultural backgrounds, education levels and cognitive abilities play a role in shaping attitudes and behaviour, and may impact how second-generation migrants experience liberal rhetoric (Szabo & Ward, 2015). Second-generation migrants with higher cognitive capacities may have different incentives to integrate and participate politically and in society because of higher awareness of social perceptions and the desire to fit in (Terriquez & Kwon, 2015). In this study, the focus will be specifically on highly educated second generation migrants and their interaction with political rhetoric.

This focus will be important to explore, as there are social implications of political rhetoric as well. Interaction with political rhetoric can create or justify division through 'othering' (Sakki et al., 2018; Simonsen, 2021), or it can influence social cohesion (Dekeyser, 2021). While it is clear that there are political and social effects of rhetoric, studies that look into how people experience them are limited. In particular, rhetoric on migration and belonging often targets those with a migration background, and the experiences of this group are less studied. Therefore, my research will focus on how citizens with a migration background experience political rhetoric.

Many academic studies on the political rhetoric surrounding migration and belonging focus particularly on experiences within the extreme right of the political spectrum. However, within such academic studies, there tends to be a particular focus on populism and extreme right-wing discourse, while studies on liberal rhetoric are lacking (Witteveen, 2017; Sloopman & Duyvendak, 2016; Sakki et al., 2017). Parties on the extreme right of the political

spectrum, such as populist parties, hold cultural issues like belonging and (anti-)immigration as pillars pivotal to their position and are emphasized in their political rhetoric (Aaldering, 2017). However, rhetoric doesn't only come from the political extremes, liberal rhetoric in the Netherlands is very present.

The most popular Dutch party, the VVD makes use of liberal phrases targeting issues of migration and diversity in their campaign posters (Kooyman, 2014). Liberal political ideology in the Netherlands advocates for individual freedom and rights, which have become a quintessential part of what the many see as Dutch identity. Parties underpinned by liberal ideology, such as the VVD and D66 which hold well over a third of the seats in parliament, also politicize and debate issues of migration and belonging. Liberal ideology is further also reflected in content produced by various governmental bodies, such as banners promoted by local municipalities governed by a liberal. Such rhetoric may be experienced differently by people with a migration background, which is why this study will focus on liberal rhetoric.

People with a migration background may thus experience liberal rhetoric differently, but there is very limited scholarship that looks at how this is perceived. Because of the lack of literature in migrants' perspectives on liberal political rhetoric, I will conduct an exploratory study about how this population group may experience this political rhetoric. This study is to gain insight into: how migrants experience liberal political rhetoric, and how it may inform their political attitudes and behaviour. As rhetoric may have an impact on political responses, it is an important second step that will be explored in this inductive study.

The research aims to provide insights vital to understanding political attitudes and behaviour and to contribute to the literature on how liberal political phrases shape behaviour from a migrants' perspective. This leads to the following research question:

What role does liberal political rhetoric that targets issues of migration and identity play in shaping the political attitudes and behaviours of higher educated citizens with a non-western migration background?

Gaining insight into how migrants experience political rhetoric around belonging and integration is socially relevant for policymakers and understanding political behaviour and civil society. Currently, there are limited insights from academic studies about responses to liberal phrases on nationalism and belonging, while liberal rhetoric from the dominant parties such as the VVD, D66 or local municipalities are visible, ubiquitous and have come to dominate political reality, and thus deserve greater attention. Political institutions make use of rhetoric for various reasons, which makes it important to explore the political and social consequences among different audiences, particularly those who are targeted by integration rhetoric. One of such applications may be in campaigns targeted at citizens with a migration background, aiming to foster inclusion and diversity. Understanding how political rhetoric is experienced by this target audience allows for a message to be better framed and formulated. Knowledge on how to improve or target political rhetoric may then foster social inclusion. Using my research, policymakers will gain insight into the political attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority population. Such insights could provide pointers to improve communication, social cohesion, and potentially political participation.

Theoretical Framework

Nowadays, belonging, integration and nationalism are among the most salient issues in political debates (Van Spanje, 2010; Simonsen, 2019; Sakki et al., 2018). The discussions around belonging and identity are important in civil society as well. In this theoretical framework, I will outline issues of nationalism and belonging. Then, I will delve into the presence and discussion of such issues in political rhetoric, as studied in academic literature. Literature shows that citizens are impacted by rhetoric. Migrants, in particular, may experience different responses. For this inductive research, I will explore theories and various mechanisms performed by citizens as responses to political rhetoric. This theoretical framework will look into theories on political attitudes and behaviour that are relevant to understanding how migrants may respond to liberal rhetoric around migration and identity.

Nationalism and belonging in political rhetoric

To begin with, issues of nationalism and belonging. Nationalism and belonging have become highly salient issues in recent debates, influencing political debates and rhetoric. In today's globalised world, there are increasing opportunities for interaction between different groups of people. These interactions may give rise to more cohesion, as well as more division (Sakki et al., 2018). Such social responses may be the result of political meaning being ascribed to the ideas of nationhood and belonging. The questions of nationhood and belonging have long been debated, and provide a foundation to the communities that unite or divide people. Ideas and identities arise out of interaction and negotiation, and political rhetoric plays a role in these discussions (Gadjanova, 2013). This political rhetoric politicizes the issues of nationalism and integration, which makes that they have become salient issues and them recurring themes of the public debate (Hadler and Fleksen, 2018; Simonsen, 2021).

In the Netherlands, issues of migration and identity can be found in the political agendas of all major parties (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2015). On the (extreme) right, where issues of migration and identity often follow hard lines of anti-immigration, the political debate has taken a "pessimistic turn" since the death of the prominent politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 (ibid.). This has resulted in decreasing tolerance in multiculturalism and a more polarised political atmosphere (ibid.). This is important to recognize the social and political environment that second-generation migrants may face.

On the liberal side of the political spectrum, major parties position themselves slightly differently on issues of migration and diversity. The largest political party, VVD, labels itself as a liberal party. The issue of migration and identity is one of the central pillars presented in its party standpoints, aiming for controlled admission of migrants and "expects" newcomers to make an effort to integrate themselves, learning our language, culture and values" (VVD, 2022). The second biggest liberal party, D66, presents similar views on migration and integration, and explains the need to speak Dutch as "one will be able to better participate, find a job, and in short: you are freer" (D66, 2022). Such reasoning is in line with liberal ideology on individual freedoms and rights, which is reflected in their rhetoric. Within the party manifesto's, liberal parties promote individual rights and freedoms. However, their rhetoric may be shaped from an atmosphere where nationalism and xenophobia are increasing in mainstream political rhetoric (Witteveen, 2017).

Dirk Witteveen makes a case that nationalism and xenophobia are increasing in mainstream political rhetoric, where "traditional, centrist parties" are slowly adopting more extreme stances on belonging, forging a way for room for exclusion in their stances (2017). These political stances, which are also reflected in liberal rhetoric, could be because the Netherlands has relatively low "cultural polarisation", compared to other European countries (Slootman & Duyvendak, 2015). This setting serves as a foundation for politicians from across the political spectrum to use "this progressive, liberal consensus to demand the acculturation of those who are assumed to fall outside it" (ibid., p. 150). Especially around elections, Dekeyser and Freedman (2021) have found that political rhetoric around immigration turns more negative. Their study based on the European Social Survey shows that this is also reflected in the attitudes of the electorate, as the rhetoric turns more negative, so do the individual preferences on immigrants (ibid.) This is a

valuable insight, as it reflects how rhetoric may influence individuals' stances, and influence social cohesion as well as a result.

Interactions with political rhetoric

There is an interaction between citizens and the political rhetoric they are exposed to, such as rhetoric in the form of posters or debate discourse. In academic publications, there are no studies that specifically research how people with a migration background experience such political rhetoric and ideology in the Netherlands. Various studies, however, have shown how certain migrant groups experience rhetoric other than political rhetoric. A clear example is in the UK, where studies have looked into how migrants were affected by Brexit rhetoric. A study on how Polish migrants experienced the Brexit campaign shows that because of the rhetoric they interacted with such as posters and TV ads, Polish migrants felt increasingly targeted by racism (Rzepnikowska, 2019).

The study's participants indicated that political rhetoric changed and "shaped the relations between the Polish migrants and the local population" (ibid. p.61). This is explained by how political rhetoric and media can change perspectives, and draw attention to an issue, but also how it provides a foundation for legitimising such attitudes of anti-immigrant sentiments (Krzyżanowski, 2020). The language use around the Brexit referendum appeared to have legitimised media discourse about 'scroungers' (migrants seen as 'parasites'), in turn shaping the racism experience of the migrants (ibid.; Rzepnikowska, 2019). This shows an interplay between rhetoric and political experiences, however, many more of such studies are limited to examining rhetoric on the right or extremes of the migration debate. This demonstrates the importance of studying responses to political rhetoric representing different ideologies on migration and identity.

Migrants' perceptions and experiences

Perceptions of rhetoric may arise from different experiences. In this study, I look particularly at highly educated, non-western, second-generation migrants in the Netherlands. Second-generation migrants have different lived experiences than the majority population, which could lead to them having different perceptions of political rhetoric.

People's perception of their physical and cultural attributes may have an impact on how people form political attitudes. One reason why they may do so is because they have social markers that lead to different attitudes and standing. Second generation migrants of non-western origin tend to have physical markers, such as a darker skin colour, that set them apart from the majority population. A (migrant) group's social identity may be formed through social marking, which can shape their experiences in society, and understanding of politics and representation. "Social marking is a rigid, asymmetrical classification process that accents one side of contrast as unnatural thereby tacitly naturalizing the unmarked side" (Brekhus, 1996). A marked category may be viewed under a single stereotypical umbrella, creating a binary convergence between groups. Social marking leads to the legitimization of different or unequal treatment of the marked categories and further into social exclusion (ibid.). Such physical markers may affect social dynamics and political experiences.

Experiences such as social exclusion have political implications and trigger different political attitudes and behaviour, such as limited accessibility to democratic involvement, or participation in the social domain (Elling & Claringbound, 2005, p. 499-500). It may arise from perceived discrimination, whereby a group with marked characteristics, such as ethnic identity, experiences or perceives social exclusion and one of their responses may be political non-participation (Çelik, 2015). Another response to social exclusion for a 'marked community', is resistance to the dominant group when the immigrant's culture has been invalidated (Çelik, 2015). For this study, if the participants encounter political rhetoric they perceive as "excluding", they may respond with negative attitudes and decrease political participation.

An opposite response may also be triggered: When participants experience different types of political rhetoric, such as liberal rhetoric that encourages individual progress and freedom, migrants may be encouraged to integrate more

and work harder. A theory that describes this response is the ‘stereotype threat’ theory by Spencer et al. (2016). When a group with a mark such as a particular identity is a stigmatised group in society, they risk judgement, which has effects on their behaviour (Spencer et al., 2016). The response to the judgement can take two directions: the stigmatised individuals may overperform, surpass the stereotyped expectations of said group, or may succumb to underperformance (ibid.). The mechanisms underlying these responses are overperformance due to extra pressure and aim to integrate and belong with the majority population, or underperformance due to threats to self-integrity, belonging and priming of the stereotype (ibid.).

Overperformance could have different aspects

Second generation migrants may aim to integrate more with their majority-population, as already shown in educational performance. Such societal responses are relevant to political behaviour displayed by migrants as well. Röder & Mühlau found differences in political attitudes between first and second-generation migrants, due to differences in socialisation (2011). In their study on immigrants’ confidence in public institutions in Europe, the authors found that second-generation migrants exhibit lower levels of trust than their parents, and while discrimination plays a role in their perception of political institutions, it does appear to be less important than “expectations carried from the home country” (ibid.). Second-generation migrants present an interesting case because, in the field of education, some established views on immigrant integration find that “the second generation performs better than the first” and veer slowly towards the gap with their native peers (van Niekerk, 2007). While this applies to educational performance, political attitudes that are more liberal may thus be a way for second-generation migrants to perform and behave like their peers. The mechanisms that lead to better performance, such as parental pressure to perform and social pressure to fit in, may also be translated into political rhetoric.

In this study, the experiences of highly educated second generation migrants stand central. second-generation migrants that are more highly educated tend to have greater cognitive capacities, and may be highly aware of the clichés and stereotypes they are confronted with. Such barriers or social difficulties could mean that the second-generation migrants get frustrated and exhibit resistance or political apathy, but it could also mean that they are motivated to work harder to overcome such social barriers.

The ability to pick up on many social and political cues allows for more analysis of context, picking up more heuristic signals and various social dynamics. Such ability could lead to greater analyses of cultural contexts before forming political attitudes and behaviour. The dereification theory asserts that higher educated citizens have more cultural capital, and thus are able to have a more dereified world view - which means that they are able to understand that culture is not “fixed” or natural, and society is dynamic (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2015). When such abilities are used in the face of liberal rhetoric, the people could be able to position the purpose for such rhetoric on migration and identity in a wider context and have neither an extreme opposing attitude, nor one of complete agreement, but rather an understanding of such rhetoric in the face of a globalised world.

Extant studies on how liberal rhetoric evokes responses among migrants are scarce. Preexisting knowledge substantiates that political rhetoric plays a role in shaping political attitudes and behaviour, however, there is little in-depth understanding of how people may respond to it. The limited studies on the consequences of liberal rhetoric that can be used for reference, but alongside a potentially great variance in responses, make it difficult to set a framework and boundaries for the study. Thus, a good way to conduct this research is to take an exploratory approach, and gain insights from an inductive study.

Methodology

Participants

This study looks at how migrants experience liberal political rhetoric around identity and belonging. For this, I will select participants with a migration background, particularly those identifying as ‘second-generation’ migrants, with a “non-western” background. This, defined specifically, includes those who do not identify as white and see themselves as a person of colour, whose parents do not come from Western Europe. I found 13 participants for the focus groups, with most sessions having had 2 participants each. Please find an overview of all the participants in the appendix. The table includes all the basic information collected, and the names have been changed to anonymize the data.

Characteristics such as levels of education, age and gender are considered, and may also play a role in how the participants experience and interact with liberal political phrases. I also take into account their location of residence, with the aim of finding participants who live, work or study in Rotterdam. I have selected Rotterdam because of its multicultural nature, and because I make use of photo-elicitation in the study, with materials that refer to political rhetoric displayed in the city of Rotterdam.

Of all Dutch cities, Rotterdam has the highest share of residents with a non-western background according to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2022). Such a setting can be pervasive to different types of behaviour, such as in-group allegiance, agreement with rhetoric on belonging, or increased non-political participation, which remains to be explored in this thesis.

Focus Groups

In this thesis, the focus lies on whether- and how- liberal rhetoric may shape attitudes and behaviours of highly educated second-generation migrants. Actions and perspectives are developed through experiences and socialisation. In order to gain more insight into people’s experiences and attitudes, studying discussions and interactions allow for greater insight into behaviour and responses. This research will be conducted by means of focus groups, a methodology that I have selected because of its informal nature, which will allow for different avenues of conversation to be explored without priming and a set interview structure (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The study looks at how migrants interact with liberal rhetoric, and group dynamics, shared norms and interaction with peers may play a role in how second-generation migrants form political attitudes and behaviour, and focus groups provide a good setting to observe such dynamics and gain insight into how liberal rhetoric may target migrant groups.

In a focus group, discussion is facilitated by the researcher, however, it is the participants that can discuss among each other and guide the conversation (Bryman, 2014). The merit of choosing a focus group is that interaction occurs and importantly on the participants' own terms (Tonkiss, 2004). This research makes use of small focus groups of 2-3 participants each, so that each participant is able to share their views in-depth and have more time to speak and respond to open questions from the interviewer, while still being able to engage in discussions with the other participant(s). I allow participants to come to topics such as voting behaviour and pol attitudes by themselves, but I have added some questions at the end to allow for the key topics to be covered for to answer the research question, in case these key issues do not arise naturally in the conversation.

Priming the participants is a potential risk while conducting focus groups, which is why I will undertake the following steps during the focus group session, to allow for the session to be explored inductively. The focus groups are guided by a set interview structure that breaks the research question down into sub-parts.

The first section is to gain an impression of how the participants view politics in general, and starts with an open discussion and open-ended questions to gain insights into the perceptions and experiences of the participants. It allows for the participants to contemplate on social and political themes, as well as their own impressions of expectations, representation and behaviour. This section also further delves into impressions of political rhetoric, whether they recall encounters with political rhetoric, and what stands out. This is important to gather an impression of

whether the participants are actively aware of political rhetoric targeting issues of migration and identity, and how they regard such speech or writing.

Considering that this study selects the idea of belonging and nationalism as a focus, I use a photo-elicitation method to aid the width and depth of the participants' responses and discussions. I select posters that go into aspects of nationalism and identity such as group markers like language and acceptance of cultural values, that use slogans that fit within the liberal ideology of individual freedoms, and questions of group identity and language (Slootman & Duyvendak, 2015, p. 150).

The third section of the interview used in the focus groups specifically addresses liberal rhetoric and political attitudes and behaviour. If the participants are yet to naturally discuss liberal ideology and its manifestation in political rhetoric, at this point, I invite participants to touch upon the issue of liberal ideas. Further, the participants are asked to elaborate on their political attitudes on voting, non-voting, representation and other forms of political behaviour such as protests. Please find the interview outline in the appendix (Appendix subheading 3). This structure is maintained for all focus groups to create consistency and observe patterns or trends in what role liberal rhetoric targeting issues of migration and identity may play in shaping the political attitudes and behaviour of second-generation migrants in the Netherlands.

Photo elicitation

Within the focus groups, this study uses the photo-elicitation method to gain familiarity with how liberal rhetoric evokes a response from the participants, in addition to open questions. The photo-elicitation method is where a visual or a set of visuals, such as a photograph or poster, is presented as a stimulus during an interview (Meo, 2010). Earlier sociological research has made use of this method to examine attitudes (Gates, 1976) or understanding of discourse (Karlsson, 2001). Previous studies have demonstrated the advantages of using visual material, because it helps to create rapport and it activates “richer memories” and reflections (Meo, 2010, p150). In this study, it is important and relevant for the participants to be able to show responses and reflect on any links to political values and behaviour. The research question inquires into how liberal rhetoric may shape political attitudes or behaviour, which can be studied by looking at what responses liberal political posters evoke.

Visual material

The first visuals used in the photo-elicitation study is a series of four posters made by the municipality of Rotterdam in 2017, with the slogan “In the Netherlands, you choose your own partner” (*In Nederland kies je je partner zelf*) (Zelfgekozen, 2017). On the posters, couples with various ethnic backgrounds kiss in front of the Erasmus bridge, an easily recognizable and significant feature of the city of Rotterdam. Underneath the big slogan, another text is featured in a smaller box with the text “Voel jij je vrij om te kiezen?”.

The makers of the campaign, the municipality of Rotterdam, advised by the group Femmes for Freedom (FFF) intend for the posters to “make it clear that it should be self-evident to choose your own partner”, and developed the idea of the campaign to draw attention to the emancipation of women, and that “women know that the government supports them if they want to stand up for their own rights” (Zelfgekozen, 2017). Thus, as the municipality has chosen to share this campaign, these posters can be interpreted to be in support of liberal rights and freedoms, where citizens have free choice and this is supported by the government. This visual material presents noticeable group markers by including the image of couples from various (non-western) ethnic backgrounds, as well as LGBT groups, which may allow for the participants to relate to the poster, or be provoked by it because of potential cultural differences. The written material on the poster refers to liberal values of individual freedoms and choices, and may intend to provoke the viewer with a statement to question their own freedoms, and can provide insight into how liberal rhetoric targeting identity may shape their attitudes and behaviour. (Please find the poster in the appendix, section 2a.)

The second poster has been selected to provide more insight into how participants may pick up different signals from liberal rhetoric and form attitudes. The material was made by the local Rotterdam division of the VVD,

the largest liberal political party in the Netherlands. On the poster from 2014, there is a simple text that says “In Rotterdam, we speak Dutch” (*In Rotterdam spreken we Nederlands - VVD*). Local party leader Jeannette Baljeu says “we have deliberately chosen a provocative statement to get the discussion going. That worked.” (Kooyman, 2014). The intentions behind the poster refer to the ‘Dutch’ (or Rotterdammer) identity, where Baljeu notes “if people stay here, they have to speak Dutch” (ibid.). Using this poster acts as a good conversation starter and allows for the discussion to be naturally moved to consideration of other slogans and rhetoric by the VVD, as well as for participants to share their thoughts on the liberal ideology and if it explicitly impacts their political attitudes and behaviour. (Please find the poster in the appendix, section 2b.)

Coding & Analysis

Initially, I collect and organise all the data. The qualitative data - all the interviews, are manually transcribed. I connect each transcription to the participants, marking the source and other data I have collected from the participants including their ethnic/parents’ backgrounds, age, education level and other relevant information that came up during the interviews. I also note down my own impressions of the participants during the focus groups, including what expressions they may have used in response to the posters, notable body language and emotions. Then, I explore and analyze the data.

The analysis involves coding the excerpts from the qualitative data. The first step is to find common and recurring subjects such as identity, political opinions and social actions. Then for a deeper analysis, the next step is to review the ideas, cluster issues and find key themes (Tonkiss, 2004; Bryman, 2014). Finally, the analysis will look at how certain experiences of liberal rhetoric may go hand in hand with political attitudes and behaviour, and connect the dots between insights from the focus groups and potential explanations from earlier explored theories.

Ethics

The focus group sessions took place in a neutral location such as a café, or public space, in order to allow the participants to feel safe and build rapport with them. Some sessions also took place at my house, where I created a neutral setting at the dining table and started with a casual chat to ensure the participants felt comfortable and build rapport. I was conscious of steering away from judgement and encouraging participation. At the end, I received positive feedback from the participants for having done so, as well as an appreciation for allowing the participants to lead the conversation.

An ethics check has been met in order to complete this research. The participants received an information sheet with the details of what the research is about and its purpose, as well as all the information that was collected from the participants, and the option to withdraw from the study. The participants provided their consent to be recorded, as well as for sensitive information such as their ethnic background and other personal information to be logged.

All traceable information about the participants has been anonymized and stored safely in locked folders. I changed the names of the participants in the transcripts and in the thesis, and the information that has been stored in locked folders will be deleted upon completion of this thesis. The signed consent forms will also be shredded upon completion of the thesis. For ethics and informed consent details, please see the ‘Ethics’ section in the appendix. I have attached my information sheet and consent form in the appendix.

Analysis and discussion

Coding and interpreting the transcripts of the focus groups led to many compelling patterns and trends. In general, a trend can be observed that the second-generation migrants are not highly consciously perceptive of liberal rhetoric despite most indicating a general interest in politics. To the participants, often only triggering or shocking rhetoric is recalled and memorable, such as extreme conservative rhetoric on migration. However, election campaigns with catchy slogans are also memorable and may lead to more positive perceptions of a party and their liberal rhetoric.

Liberal rhetoric targeting issues of migration and identity is experienced differently based on how it is framed (in an inclusive or exclusive way) and to what extent the participants are already in agreement with liberal ideology. When the participants interact with liberal rhetoric that is framed in an inclusive way, it can act as a confirmation of a positive impression of the political party. Alternatively, when participants perceive the rhetoric on migration and identity to be phrased as a directive, they tend to form a more pessimistic view of the political party. These results will be further explained in this analysis section.

This analysis follows the general themes of the research question, along the lines of the interview process. The research question explores how second-generation migrants' perceptions of liberal rhetoric goes hand in hand with political attitudes and behaviour. Two distinct themes can be drawn from this, in order to analyse and answer the research question: 'experiences of liberal rhetoric' and discussions about 'political attitudes and behaviour'.

Exposure to political rhetoric on migration and identity: The role of the migrant identity

Perceptions and awareness of the second-generation migrants' own identity is a prominent recurring theme in the data. Experiences of having a migration background and (self-)consciousness about the migrant identity play into perceptions of politics. Most of the interviewees express that their own migration background plays an important role in how they position themselves in society, and how they see political rhetoric.

Discerning how society may see them plays an important role in what political themes are of interest to the participants. Simon, whose mother is Sudanese, works at the national police force as a data analyst. He expresses how his ethnic background plays a role in how he interacts with society, and also plays a role in what political themes are important to him:

“I know how people see me. [...] There are always people who see me only as a black boy, and they always have judgements. I see that at my work a lot too, but that's just how it is. But that does mean I'm always conscious about it. [...] You can also see that in things like the [childcare] benefit scandal, that's also mostly about 'dark' people, so yeah it does always play a role.”¹

On a similar note, Manisha who is of Surinamese origin, talks about how her parents received a letter from the government, as her own family was directly affected by the Dutch childcare benefit scandal. The childcare benefits affair is a political scandal where parents were falsely alleged of committing fraud, and people with a migration background were disproportionately affected by this (Biedermann, 2022). This political issue made a deep impression on her and her brother, Adesh.

Political issues related to migration and identity, such as the childcare benefit scandal, influence the participants' perceptions of the government and political rhetoric. While this issue is often not posed as one being directly linked to migration and identity, the participants displayed a connection between this public issue and how their identity plays a role in politics. Adesh, whose family was affected by the childcare benefit scandal expresses how the political climate influences his perception of political rhetoric:

¹ Please find the original quotes used in Dutch in the appendix, section 4. The quotes are translations from Dutch. Omitted parts “[...]” have been included in the appendix quotes.

“The [childcare] benefit scandal does affect us. When you see how the government treats people with a migration background, you believe nothing anymore. All these messages from the government [...] are completely meaningless. I don’t believe it, they’ve really completely lost their credibility.”

Such a link between political issues and the government losing its credibility have been noted by multiple participants. The general trend here is that participants are able to link the government’s past performance with the rhetoric and “promises” made by the government. Many participants expressed that they find rhetoric from the government, as well as liberal parties, to be “untrustworthy” or “unreliable”. Further, participants have also noted that they are dismissive of political rhetoric because it has been made “only to appease to the white population”. Such a notion is shared among participants, and can be seen explicitly in a statement by Zeineb, whose parents are of Turkish origin, and expresses distrust of political rhetoric:

“Yeah I do come across [political rhetoric], but I just don't take it very seriously. I find that sort of posters and slogans unbelievable. They're not really made for us [...] Just the white people.”²²

Interestingly, this theme of identity plays a significant role for most of the participants when they interact with politics and political rhetoric. However, not all participants share an attitude of indifference or disdain towards political rhetoric on migration and identity. Identity can also be significant when participants feel that political rhetoric on issues of migration and diversity affect them personally, or targets their identity in an unpleasant manner.

When asked whether the participants have come across political rhetoric targeting issues of migration and identity, a response other than apathy was quite the opposite, it was when participants feel directly targeted and offended. One particular group discussion led to the insight that often rhetoric is only ‘noticeable’ or ‘memorable’ when it is seen as particularly insulting or threatening. Fatima, whose parents are Moroccan, expressed clearly how right wing political parties create division with their rhetoric, and because of her identity of having a Moroccan background, she feels strongly targeted by anti-immigrant rhetoric. Such a connection between identity and rhetoric was also manifested by other participants, such as Meiyin who is from a so called “model-minority” (Thompson, Kiang & Witkow, 2016). Meiyin, whose parents moved to the Netherlands from China, expresses that political rhetoric is often most memorable when her personal identity is targeted, or she feels most invaded by such speech or writing. Similarly, Meiyin and Fatima link this to rhetoric that comes from extreme right or populist parties. Meiyin notes:

“Well what I do recall is all that screaming by Geert Wilders about ‘less less’ [Moroccans/’foreigners’]. Yes I do find that quite scary, actually.”

Identity could play a role in how the participants position themselves in society, how they perceive the credibility of political rhetoric on migration in general, as well as how they connect with political rhetoric. The participants were often not specifically aware of how liberal parties in particular approached the subject of migration and identity, but it also provides insight into how second-generation migrants may not perceive liberal rhetoric as particularly triggering or offensive, but neither as highly significant or notable. However, while many participants did not draw a direct line to liberal rhetoric when asked about political rhetoric on migration identity, many did touch upon liberal actors or political behaviour.

Many of the participants indicated disappointment in how the ruling coalition was handling the childcare benefit affair. Further, the participants connected the issue to Mark Rutte, a liberal political leader and prime minister and described him as “incapable”, “untrustworthy” and “unfair”. While the participants did not make an explicit link to liberal framing and rhetoric, they do display an implicit awareness of the role of identity in social and political issues. This can be interpreted as participants displaying awareness of social dynamics and understanding or forming attitudes based on how others may perceive them. Theories suggest that these mechanisms of marking, where ‘marks’ justify the categorization of people, play a role in both how second-generation migrants perceive themselves and their position in society, as well as affecting how they perceive political rhetoric in general (Brekhus, 1996).

² Zeineb made this statement before seeing the photo-elicitation material of posters aimed at a migrant population.

Experiences of liberal political rhetoric

The participants were often not consciously aware of liberal political rhetoric, however most seemed familiar with liberal ideology. While many participants were unable to recall specific political rhetoric from liberal parties, ideas such as working hard to make personal achievements, individual rights and freedom of speech were often mentioned in different contexts during the focus groups.

The notion that liberal rhetoric is in line with what they believe are ‘Dutch’ values was often shared by the participants. A common thought is that ideas such as ‘individual freedoms and rights’ are associated with a Dutch mindset, and matches typical attitudes displayed by the majority Dutch population. Elena, a process analyst whose parents moved to the Netherlands from Bulgaria, finds that the Netherlands is a country where freedom of speech is part of the ‘national culture’, and shares her thoughts on individual freedoms as typical Dutch values:

Elena: “It’s very normal that people can be themselves here. The Netherlands is a country that puts individual rights first, I find this a great atmosphere. You can talk about the American dream, but here people are also put first. You can express yourself, and there is no restrictive government to control your freedom of speech.”

Such experiences give insight into how liberal rhetoric may be experienced, and that the political and social contexts are conducive to allow for liberal ideology to be interpreted as “natural”, and part of mainstream discourse. Interestingly, participants who grew up in very mixed and multi-cultural neighbourhoods perceive liberal rhetoric differently. Meiyin, who grew up in Rotterdam-West, a neighbourhood with predominantly inhabitants from lower socio-economic strata, finds that liberal ideas are common in the Netherlands, but “don’t apply to her”. Other participants who grew up in areas such as Rotterdam Zuid also expressed a lack of access to opportunities as well as freedom of speech, which they perceive to be more for the ethnic majority population. These experiences provide insight into how access to opportunities and context play a role in how liberal rhetoric may be interpreted.

Liberal rhetoric phrased ‘inclusively’

There is a tendency for two divergent responses to liberal rhetoric. Liberal rhetoric that is phrased in a more ‘inclusive’ way tends to be responded to more positively, while liberal rhetoric phrased as a command tends to be received with more resistance.

When the participants were invited to share their thoughts on liberal political rhetoric, the most recent D66 campaign slogan often came to light: ‘allow everyone to be free, but don’t let anyone fall’³. This statement was often discussed in an enthusiastic tone, and participants indicated positive associations and agreement with the statement. This slogan conveys liberal ideology of individual rights and freedoms (let everyone be free), and connects it to inclusion and group security ‘let no one fall’. When prodded to explain why the participants experience the slogan positively, one respondent, Jennifer, whose parents are from Surinam, elaborated it could be associated with having a social safety net:

“The slogan does show that they take [individual freedoms and social support] seriously, you can do whatever you want, but there is also a social safety net. Then you have the freedom to choose, but you also have a reliable system. I think D66 is also a party for everyone, of course they are very much in the middle politically, but that means it is also for everyone.”

The perception of individual agency, along with an invitation to participate, is seen positively by the study’s participants. The key sentence from which the idea of inclusion can be derived from the above quotation is “it is for everyone”, while it also displays that importance is given to individual agency. Such a notion was also expressed when the participants interacted with the photo elicitation material.

The Gemeente Rotterdam poster is sub-titled “do you feel free to choose [your own partner]?”. This sentence evoked a mixed response among the participants. A key aspect that was often perceived positively was the element of

³ In Dutch: Laat iedereen vrij, maar niemand vallen

individual agency. The ability to make your own choice is seen as important, and linked to inclusion. The poster, which also presented pictures of couples of different backgrounds, was often received calmly and neutrally, to positively with enthusiasm. One such enthusiastic response was from Meiyin, who links the message of the poster with diversity and being inclusive:

“They have definitely thought [about making this poster]. I love seeing all the mixed couples. [...] It looks very inclusive, also because you can see that the poster asks whether you are able to make your own choice. That is a beautiful message.”

From this interpretation, a direct link between the framing of liberal political rhetoric, and how it is received can be made out. Rhetoric that gives the individual agency is generally perceived as inclusive. This is a trend that is shared among the participants. They pick up on different elements of the poster that point to diversity, inclusion, agency, which is perceived as inclusive and seen positively. The liberal rhetoric that is framed in an inclusive way including such elements thus evokes positivity and is seen as encouraging. This is an attitude and perception that is shared among many participants. When liberal rhetoric promotes individual agency, it can be translated into behaviour where participants are motivated to perform better and participate more politically. The attitudes and behaviours associated with such liberal rhetoric will be elaborated upon in a later section.

Liberal rhetoric phrased as a ‘command’

The phrasing and framing of liberal rhetoric has an effect on how the participants perceive it. When liberal rhetoric is framed as a command, the participants express difficulty with it. The first poster by Gemeente Rotterdam was often surveyed calmly and met with neutral to positive responses varying from "interesting" to "very good!". However, the initial emotion evoked by the second poster by VVD Rotterdam (with the message “In Rotterdam we speak Dutch”) was exasperation and expressions of shock. Sanjana, whose parents are Indian, frowned upon the poster, and reacted indignantly:

“Who are they to *command* this? Rotterdam is a multicultural city and this is just ridiculous.”

The interpretation of the poster being framed as a directive was shared with some other participants, even though they did not explicitly name it so. They referred to the framing of liberal rhetoric as controlling or demanding. Such an interpretation, of liberal rhetoric seen as a command, was also named by another participant with a different example. Jennifer recalls VVD posters as an example of liberal rhetoric. A commonly used phrase in VVD campaigns is “Behave normally” (“Doe normaal”), which she sees as divisive.

Jennifer: “I can remember some time ago, the VVD had a series of posters with “normaal. [...] This use of ‘normal’ or ‘not normal’ to describe behaviour is so divisive. It just sounds like an order. The VVD are always deciding how people should behave, but not everyone is a VVD ‘prude’ and fits in their boxes.”

In line with mechanisms explained in the dereification theory, many participants placed the rhetoric within a cultural context, such as Rotterdam being a multicultural city and the need for a common language where people can be mutually understood. The highly educated second-generation migrants displayed empathy and understanding that culture is not fixed, but language can act as a bridge to connect people. Using this as underlying reasoning, some participants displayed understanding for liberal rhetoric phrased as a command.

However, not all the participants had an explicitly negative response to such rhetoric. Curiously, the male respondents had less strong responses to the liberal rhetoric that is phrased as a command, which evoked emotional responses from the female participants. The male respondents, particularly Joao and Gilberto, approached the second poster, and other forms of liberal rhetoric, more analytically. Joao’s initial response was that the message does not come across well, which may be interpreted as a dislike of the framing as a command. However, he displayed great empathy and understanding for the existence of such liberal rhetoric, which he explained as follows:

“Well, of course, we are in the Netherlands. Here you have to follow the local customs and adapt to the local language. I also teach my kids to speak ‘ABN’ Dutch at home, they are going to be bullied if they speak like *this* (with heavy foreign accent). That just does not fit.”

This type of response provides insight into how liberal rhetoric translates into political attitudes and behaviour. While differently framed liberal rhetoric may stem from the same liberal ideology, the way the rhetoric on the posters is framed leads to different interpretations and appeal, as well as different attitudes and responses.

Responses to liberal rhetoric: Political attitudes and behaviour

The second generation migrants have different responses to liberal rhetoric on migration and identity. Different types of rhetoric trigger different opinions and translate into various attitudes. Interaction with liberal rhetoric can act to confirm a political attitude, such as often in the case of inclusively framed liberal rhetoric. Manisha, a D66 voter, finds that slogans and posters expressing liberal ideas on migration reaffirm her allegiance to the party. She says:

“When I see their message expressed like this [laat iedereen vrij maar niemand vallen], it does show me that they stand for equal opportunities and that is exactly the stance I believe in.”

Liberal rhetoric that is framed positively tends to evoke a positive response, however, liberal rhetoric that is phrased as a command draws out stronger emotions and longer discussions among the participants. There is friction in the interaction between the participants and liberal rhetoric phrased as a command, the participants have trouble with the tone, and express resistance. Resistance to a specific form of rhetoric, as guided by mechanisms explained in the stereotype threat theory, only occur in the case of rhetoric framed as a command. It is interesting that this behaviour is only displayed in this case. The participants could have been expected to express more resistance against the barriers and clichés they face. When the studies’ participants deliberate on liberal rhetoric targeting migration and identity, many describe feeling social pressures to comply with working hard and performing well within society. Such social pressures could lead to underperformance, as the participants believe social expectations of migrants are low, and they stop trying because of the many barriers they face.

In spite of that, liberal rhetoric, regardless of how it is framed, tends to trigger overperformance behaviour. While viewing a poster by itself may not trigger an immediate change in behaviour, liberal ideology tends to draw out an increased work ethic and motivation to overperform in society. This can be both because of an encouraging interpretation of liberal rhetoric, as well as participants experiencing the need to work harder to achieve similar recognition to their peers without a migration background. Jennifer notes:

“I did a bachelor study and two master degrees and intentionally worked harder to perfect my resume. I’m Black, so I know that I can’t leave any gaps or leave anything to luck or interpretation”.

This displays an awareness of how society may perceive her and her motivation to overperform. The participant links this attitude to liberal politics:

“You have to work hard for personal achievements, and it is up to you to make it. In a way, that seems to be the Dutch way: you have to work hard, and it is encouraging to see support from the government to help you achieve your goals”.

This shows a potential internalization of liberal rhetoric on individual rights and achievements and it is translated in the participants’ political attitudes and behaviour. Liberal rhetoric that encourages individual agency and participation is interpreted as motivating, and in turn translates into motivation for greater performance socially and politically. Simon explains his overperforming behaviour, linking it to liberal ideology:

“People get chances here. When you participate with your peers, you get credit for it. I work really hard to be where I am in my career right now, and I know that I have had some disadvantages because of my skin colour. But I do believe that the Netherlands is a place where individuals have rights and freedoms, so I make use of it.”

Similarly, other participants also used liberal ideology as normative statements (“individuals have to act upon their freedoms”), where they display signs of the internalisation of liberal ideology. This may come from interaction with political rhetoric in the form of posters, where participants sub-consciously take over their ideas and pick up on the signals and cues, as well as explicit discussions about politics, and interaction with peers. The lived experience as a second-generation migrant shows that the migrant identity plays an important role in how liberal rhetoric is interpreted. Further, the way liberal rhetoric is phrased also plays in to what attitudes are formed about the rhetoric. These attitudes go hand in hand with political behaviour, such as when inclusively framed political rhetoric is perceived as encouraging, this is translated as behaviour where second-generation migrants are motivated to work hard and be recognised as valuable members in society.

Conclusion

Existing research often focuses on the extreme flanks of such rhetoric, while liberal rhetoric too is omnipresent and has an effect on the political attitudes of migrants. This study discovers that liberal political rhetoric plays a role in shaping political attitudes and behaviour of second generation migrants in the Netherlands. Second-generation migrants have interesting lived experiences, where they are influenced by socialisation in different cultures, and often perceive numerous social barriers such as cultural and linguistic differences with the ethnic majority population. Such experiences of having a migration background play into how second-generation migrants perceive political rhetoric, including liberal rhetoric. Further, the migrants' experiences and perceptions shape how they interact with political rhetoric, such as responses where political rhetoric is often simply ignored, or on the other hand, experiences draw the second-generation migrants into more fervent political discussions.

Deliberation on political rhetoric and issues of migration and identity were keen and animated, and the participants displayed an awareness of social and political dynamics. The participants in this study mostly express a keen interest in politics, or at the very least an awareness of political rhetoric. However, it is interesting that most participants could not quote liberal rhetoric, but were aware of the general ideas that liberal rhetoric stems from. The participants interacted with liberal rhetoric, and this led to some interesting outcomes.

This study finds inductively that often, liberal rhetoric is phrased in an 'inclusive' way, promoting individual agency, or that it tends to be phrased as a command. Commonly, when rhetoric is phrased inclusively, it may encourage second generation migrants towards greater social participation, while rhetoric that is shaped as a command triggers shock. The immediate response to viewing liberal political rhetoric may not instigate change in voting behaviour, it does evoke various opinions and emotions, and it shapes political attitudes and perceptions. An interaction with liberal political rhetoric does not lead to immediate change in behaviour, or a sudden change in an attitude to vote or protest, but liberal rhetoric on identity contributes to how participants interpret the Dutch identity. Liberal ideology has been seen as motivation and justification for the participants to work hard, achieve personal goals, and overperform to fit in and be acknowledged as a valuable member of society.

What sets this study apart is the use of an exploratory approach, and allowing the participants to take the lead in the conversations, as well as have discussions among themselves. The study uses photo-elicitation material to prompt responses and allow the participants to discuss posters with liberal rhetoric targeting issues of migration and identity. This allowed for insights into what themes are of importance to the participants, as well as to see how participants interact with rhetoric directly. The photo elicitation material started discussions about liberal political rhetoric, and participants talked about their opinions, which allowed for a natural discussion of political attitudes that arose from interactions with liberal rhetoric. Such a methodology can be used in further studies to understand more in-depth how political attitudes are formed, and what specific signals may attract or repel second-generation migrants.

The photo elicitation material shows that more research needs to be done on how posters and ideas are to be presented, in order to achieve their expected effect. The participants found the posters to be inconsiderate, and while they displayed understanding or even agreement to the messages, often they agreed that they could have been executed better: especially for citizens who are less educated.

Studying the attitudes and behaviour of higher educated citizens may also provide insight into how different groups in society experience the same. The higher educated citizens have high cognitive capacities, and can empathise with the experience of their families and lower educated peers, however, future studies should include the experiences of members with different educational backgrounds. These are valuable academic and social insights, because they can provide greater understanding about how to promote diversity effectively, and allow members of society to be motivated to integrate and participate socially and politically.

Theoretically, this study provides insight into the effects of a commonly presented political rhetoric: liberal values of individual rights and freedoms, and its normative manifestations as rhetoric on migration and identity. It may be relevant for research to be done in more specific contexts, such as grouping participants by specific characteristics of youth socialisation. How migrants experience liberal rhetoric in society often depends on how difficult it was for

them to reach their current achievements, thus allowing them to believe and trust in the free society where opportunity is present for all, and liberal rhetoric is convincing. This can have many implications for policy, such as how to integrate people, but also how to provide more inclusive opportunities. Understanding how rhetoric may shape political attitudes and behaviours among migrants can allow policymakers to better shape and frame political rhetoric on issues of migration and identity, allowing for more inclusive policies, and greater social cohesion.

This study shows that second-generation migrants are perceptive of political rhetoric, and there are potential implications on their political interactions and attitudes. All in all, in response to the research question: Liberal political rhetoric that targets issues of migration and identity plays a role in shaping the political attitudes of the higher educated citizens with a non-western migration background. Often, when the liberal political rhetoric encourages individual agency, the second-generation migrants form positive associations and attitudes. Liberal political rhetoric framed as a command is received more often with resistance, but it also promotes discussions about issues of migration and identity. Finally, regardless of the framing, liberal political rhetoric plays a role in the behaviour of the higher educated citizens. Liberal ideas such as individual prowess tend to promote political and social participation among highly educated citizens with a non-western migration background.

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Appendix

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

The names have been changed. I have selected popular names from the country similar to the participants' actual names to anonymize the participants information, and last names have been left out.

	Name	Parents' origin	Age	Gender	Highest completed education	Other
1	João	Cape Verde	49	M	HBO (University of Applied Sciences)	From/lives in: Rotterdam Zuid, identifies as Black-Dutch
2	Simon	(half) South Sudan	26	M	Master's degree	Grew up in Leiden, identifies as mixed
3	Gilberto	(Dutch) Antilles	29	M	Master's degree	From: Rotterdam Zuid, identifies as Black, Dutch
4	Manisha	Surinam	26	F	2 Master's degrees	From/lives in: Rotterdam West, identifies as Hindustani-Dutch
5	Adesh	Surinam	31	M	Master's degree	From/lives in: Rotterdam West, identifies as Hindustani
6	Jennifer	Surinam	26	F	2 Master's degrees	From: Rotterdam West, identifies as Black
7	Meiyin	China	24	F	Bachelor's degree	From: Rotterdam West, identifies as Chinese-Dutch
8	Sanjana	India	25	F	Master's degree	From: The Hague (Moerwijk), identifies as Indian, brown
9	Elena	Bulgaria	28	F	Master's degree	Grew up in Utrecht, lives in Noord, identifies as 'Eastern European'
10	Stefan	Bulgaria	26	M	Bachelor's degree	Grew up- and lives in Utrecht, identifies as 'white'
11	Desta	Ethiopia	32	F	HBO (University of Applied Sciences)	Grew up in Belgium and Rotterdam Zuid, identifies as Black-European
12	Zeineb	Turkey	27	F	Master's degree	Grew up in Capelle a/d IJssel, identifies as ' <i>getint</i> '
13	Fatima	Morocco	36	F	Master's degree	Grew up in Schilderswijk, The Hague

SECTION 2: VISUAL MATERIAL FOR PHOTO-ELICITATION

a. Poster 1: gemeente Rotterdam

This campaign was printed on a large A3 sheet, with all four individual posters displayed on it.



(Zelfgekozen, 2017)

b. Poster 2: VVD Rotterdam



(Kooyman, 2014)

SECTION 3: INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Prompts and questions such as:

Part 1: open discussion

- Volg je de politiek?
- Hoe denk je over de Nederlandse politiek?
- Kom je weleens vraagstukken over migratie en identiteit tegen in de Nederlandse politiek? Wat vind je ervan?
- Welke politieke boodschappen spreken je wel/niet aan?

Part 2: photo elicitation method

Wat is je eerste reactie als je deze poster ziet?

- Wat vind je van de boodschap die in de poster wordt overgebracht?
- Denk je dat de poster over jou gaat?
- Hoe komt het bij jou over?
- Hoe ervaar je liberale berichten? (ideeën zoals individuele vrijheden en rechten)

Part 3: political attitudes and behaviour

- Hoe doe je mee met de politiek?
- Heb je het idee dat er verwachtingen van je zijn in de samenleving? Hoe ga je ermee om?
- Herken je jezelf in de politiek?

SECTION 4: QUOTES

Original transcripts in Dutch:

Simon: "Ja ik ben getint, dat is ook wel zo en ja ik weet ook wel hoe mensen mij zien. Gewoon als een zwarte jongen. Er zijn ook altijd mensen die me alleen als een getint iemand zien, en daar hebben ze ook wel altijd iets over te zeggen. Dat zie ik op mijn werk ook wel vaak, maar ja, dat is nou eenmaal zo. Maar daar ben ik ...ik ben er me ook wel altijd bewust. En ja het speelt wel altijd een rol. Dat zie je ook wel terug in de toeslageaffaire enzo, daar gaat het ook vrijwel altijd over donkere mensen, ja het speelt wel altijd he."

Adesh: "De toelagenaffaire heeft ons wel echt geraakt. Als je ziet hoe de overheid om gaat met mensen met een migratieachtergrond, dan begin je alles wel ongeloofwaardig te vinden. En dan heb je ook steeds al die berichten en nieuws vanuit de overheid over hoe ze er iets aan gaan doen, maar er gebeurt niets. Ik geloof er helemaal niet meer in, ze hebben al hun geloofwaardigheid verloren."

Zeineb: "Ja ik kom dat soort posters enzo wel af en toe tegen, maar ik neem het gewoon niet erg serieus. Ik vind dat soort posters niet erg geloofwaardig. Ze zijn volgens mij ook niet echt voor ons bedoeld. Posters over migratie zijn toch wel voor de witte mensen. Om ons weg te jagen (haha) Maar goed, ik let er gewoon niet op, nee ik vind de meeste politieke posters ongeloofwaardig"

Meiyin: "Hm nou ja, wat me opvalt is denk ik het geschreeuw van Geert Wilders. Weet je, al dat 'minder minder' geschreeuw. Echt gestoord, ik vind het vooral heel eng."

Elena: "Het is heel normaal dat mensen hier zichzelf kunnen zijn. Nederland is een land waar individuele rechten voorop staan, dat vind ik een fijne sfeer. Je kunt praten over de Amerikaanse droom, maar ook hier worden mensen op de eerste plaats gezet. Je kunt jezelf uiten, en er is geen dictatuur of crazy overheid om je vrijheid van meningsuiting te controleren. Je gaat niet alleen naar de gevangenis omdat je homo bent of wat dan ook, je kunt gewoon jezelf zijn"

Jennifer: "De slogan laat wel zien dat ze beide dingen serieus nemen, je mag doen wat je wil, maar er is ook wel een sociaal vangnet. Dan heb je wel vrijheid om te kiezen, maar je hebt ook wel een betrouwbaar systeem. Ik denk dat D66 ook wel een partij is voor iedereen, ze zitten natuurlijk politiek gezien heel erg in het midden, maar dat betekent dat het ook voor iedereen is."

Meiyin: "Ze hebben hier zeker over nagedacht. Ik vind het super leuk dat er allemaal gemengde stelletjes op de foto staan. Ik zie ook een LHBTI koppel, dat is ook wel leuk. Het ziet er wel echt inclusief uit, ook omdat je ziet dat de poster je vraagt of je zelf wel een keuze kan maken. Dat is wel een mooi bericht. Dit is ook niet anti-immigranten propaganda, dit is waarschijnlijk wel juist om te laten zien waar Nederland voor staat"

Jennifer: "Ik kan me herinneren dat de VVD enige tijd geleden een serie posters had met "normaal" doen ofzo. Ja ik kan me niet echt meer herinneren waar dat precies over ging, maar goed.. Dit soort taal van..je weet wel 'normaal' of 'niet normaal' om gedrag te beschrijven is.. ja zaait verdeeldheid. Het klinkt wel als een bevel. De VVD bepaalt altijd hoe mensen zich moeten gedragen, en jij moet je er aan houden...maar niet iedereen is een VVD kakker en past dan ook in dat soort hokjes."

Joao: "Nou, natuurlijk, we zijn toch in Nederland. Hier moet je de lokale regels volgen en je aanpassen aan de lokale taal. Ik leer mijn kinderen ook thuis 'ABN' Nederlands te spreken, ze worden anders gewoon gepest op school als ze 'zo spreken' (met zwaar buitenlands accent). Dat is gewoon ongepast."

Manisha: "Als ik hun boodschap zo zie verwoord [laat iedereen vrij maar niemand vallen], laat het me zien dat ze staan voor gelijke kansen en dat is precies de houding waarin ik geloof. Ik ben het er helemaal mee eens"

Simon: "Mensen krijgen hier kansen. Als je samen met je leeftijdsgenoten deelneemt en gewoon goed je best doet, krijg je daarvoor erkenning. Ik werk heel hard om te zijn waar ik nu in mijn carrière ben, en ik weet dat ik een aantal nadelen heb gehad vanwege mijn huidskleur. Maar ik geloof wel dat Nederland een plek is waar individuen rechten en vrijheden hebben, dus daar maak ik zeker ook wel gebruik van. Soort van, grab your chances, toch?"

SECTION 5: ETHICS



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Experiencing liberal political rhetoric as a second-generation migrant:
Exploring how perceptions of liberal rhetoric go hand in hand with political behaviour

Name, email of student: Shivaani Harmsen, 414678sh@student.eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Kjell Noordzij, k.noordzij@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 1 April – 7 August

Is the research study conducted within DPAS **YES**

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. **YES**

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? **NO**
2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. **NO**
It is conducted by means of interactive focus groups.
3. Research involving completely anonymous data files. **NO**

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? **YES**
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? **NO**
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? **NO**

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| 4. | Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? | NO |
| 5. | Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? | NO |
| 6. | Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR? | YES |
| 7. | Will the study involve the participation of minors or other groups that cannot give consent? | NO |
| 8. | Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? | NO |
| 9. | Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? | NO |
| 10. | Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? | NO |

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Snowball sampling through personal network, posters.

What is the size of your sample?

13 participants.

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

*According to the Dutch Bureau of Statistics (CBS), as of 1 February 2022, 25,3% of the inhabitants of the Netherlands have a migration background. This data includes both first and second generation migrants. I am looking particularly at migrants with a 'non-western' migration background, which is approximately **14%** of the Dutch population.*

Part V: Data storage and backup

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

I store the data (digital files including recordings and transcripts) in a password protected folder on my computer.

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

I am personally responsible.

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

I will back up all the data weekly on a password protected USB drive, stored in a secure location at home.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

I will collect names or phone numbers of the participants that will be stored in a separate file. The participants will be controlled for their ethnic identification, education, age and gender because they may influence the participants' interaction with political rhetoric, however this will be matched with anonymised names.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

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

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

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

Name student:

Shivaani Abhaya Harmsen

Name (EUR) supervisor: Kjell Noordzij

Date: 18.03.2022

Date: 19-03-2022

Shivaani



Toestemmingsverklaring

Ik heb het informatie- en toestemmingsformulier gelezen en ik begrijp wat het doel van het onderzoek is en dat er gegevens van mij zullen worden verzameld. Het onderzoek is duidelijk aan mij uitgelegd en ik kreeg de gelegenheid vragen te stellen.

Door dit formulier te ondertekenen

1. geef ik toestemming voor deelname aan dit onderzoek;
2. bevestig ik dat ik ten minste 18 jaar oud ben¹;
3. geef ik aan dat ik begrijp dat deelname aan dit onderzoek geheel vrijwillig is; en
4. geef ik aan dat ik begrijp dat mijn gegevens zullen worden geanonimiseerd.

Toestemming

Bijzondere persoonsgegevens

Ik geef toestemming voor het verzamelen, verwerken, gebruiken en opslaan van mijn persoonsgegevens ten behoeve van de doelen van dit onderzoek, namelijk ethnische afkomst en politieke opvattingen.

Geluid

Hierbij geef ik toestemming voor het maken van geluidsopnamen tijdens het onderzoek en voor het omzetten van mijn antwoorden in geschreven tekst.

Naam van de deelnemer:

Handtekening van de deelnemer:

Datum:

U ontvangt een exemplaar van het volledige informatie- en toestemmingsformulier.

SECTION 6: POSTERS TO FIND PARTICIPANTS

In addition to the snowballing method to find participants, I used the following poster) to find participants. It was spread across the Erasmus University campus, this led to one participant.



ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM
MASTERSCRIPTIE ONDERZOEK

Deelnemers Gezocht

Gesprekken over erbij horen en politiek

Wat?
In Nederland is identiteit en erbij horen een belangrijk onderwerp in discussies. Wilt u uw mening delen in een kleinschalige groepsgebesprek?

Wie?
Zijn uw ouders geboren buiten Europa, kunt u stemmen en bent u woonachtig in regio Rotterdam? Dit masteronderzoek gaat na hoe mensen met een **migratieachtergrond** politieke discussies ervaren. Kunt u mij hiermee helpen?

Waar en wanneer?
De interviews vinden plaats in april en mei, in De Esch, Rotterdam, onder het genot van een (gratis!) brunch! Andere dagen of locatie zijn ook bespreekbaar. Het gesprek duurt ongeveer een uur.

Geïnteresseerd?
Help mij afstuderen! U wordt uitgenodigd om aan dit onderzoek deel te nemen omdat uw ervaring veel kan bijdragen aan de kennis over interactie met politiek.

Contact:
414678sheer.nl
of via Whatsapp:
wa.link/guxnzn

