Ethnic Traitors: the Self-Presentation of Political Leaders with Migrant Roots

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ABSTRACT

As conflicts near the European border are seemingly growing rampant, the issue of immigration becomes an even more prevalent topic in political discourse. While the rhetoric surrounding immigration has been studied from many different angles, the unique positionality of the ethnic minority politician has been mostly neglected. More specifically, the perspective of politicians with migrant roots has not been investigated before. Therefore, this thesis examined the self-presentation of ethnic minority politicians, particularly looking at how they positioned themselves in an interview setting during their campaign periods. Narrative analysis was used to process the interviews, examining how the politicians narrated about themselves and relevant political issues, such as immigration. This thesis was specifically interested in immigration policies, border security, national identity, and connections with migrant past, exploring the narratives that minority politicians used to illustrate these subjects. The results indicated that ethnic minority politicians conducted themselves in a similar manner to ethnic majority leaders, in terms of dedication to the nation and an emphasis on improving societal conditions. Interestingly enough, the minority politicians mostly disregarded their migrant roots, and instead stressed their sense of belonging, and their interest to build a brighter future for citizens. While this thesis provided a foundation to examining ethnic minority politicians and their narratives on critical issues such as immigration, there are many questions yet unanswered.

KEYWORDS: *self-presentation, ethnic minority politicians, migrants, narrative analysis, interviews*

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1. Introduction

"I would love to have a front page of the Telegraph with a plane taking off to Rwanda, that's my dream, it's my obsession" (PoliticsJOE, 2022, 00:00:13–00:00:27). These were the crude words spoken by British politician Suella Braverman, exposing her fixation on deporting asylum seekers that were arriving to the UK's shore on small boats. Those words marked the beginning of her time as home secretary, and foreshadowed the intentions she had for her newly appointed position. While her abrasive and dehumanizing language about refugees was criticized by certain refugee groups, her self-proclaimed obsession with deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda was perfectly aligned with the soon to be Prime Minister Rishi Sunak (Casciani, 2023, para. 5). In the total 14 months that Braverman served as home secretary, she became known for her conspicuous remarks on migration, and actively lobbied for the expulsion of asylum seekers (Lawless, 2023, para. 7). Besides her blunt expressions about the unhoused and pro-Palestinian protesters, she was often confronted on her unyielding position on asylum seekers. This point was particularly contentious as her parents had faced the same situation in the 1960s, when her father, and later her mother, emigrated to the United Kingdom from Kenya and Mauritius respectively (Buruma, 2023, para. 4; Francis, 2023, para. 11). Nevertheless, Braverman does not stand alone in her seemingly hypocritical stance. Other ethnic minority politicians with a sanctimonious distaste for immigration have gained popularity in recent years, as presented shortly.

Even though the United Kingdom had received 13 asylum requests for every 10,000 citizens in 2022, the country scored below the continental average on the list of asylum requests per head (Sturge, 2024, para. 16). Reviewing the European context from 2020 onwards, the salience of immigration discussions becomes clear. With an alarming increase of conflict around the borders of Europe and the possibility of a third world war looming on the horizon, Europe was once again experiencing an influx of individuals seeking refuge. In November of 2023, the European Union received a record number of 118,000 asylum applications (Latest Asylum Trends, 2023, para. 1). Simultaneously, European politicians were capitalizing on populist rhetoric, using it to justify their stance on immigration (Martin, 2023, para. 2; Almazawi, 2023, para. 2). These populist ideologies are fueled by a blend of "neo-nationalism, euroscepticism, anti-immigration, and islamophobia", culminating in the creation of far-right parties such as the Dutch PVV, the French National Rally, or Hungary's Fidesz (Almazawi, 2023, para. 2; Vohra,

2024, para. 3). These political parties leverage the fear that citizens experience during turbulent periods of global conflict, where the increasing presence of immigrants provokes feelings of a loss of national and cultural identity (Almazawi, 2023, para. 2). With the pressures of an unstable economy that was still recovering from a pandemic, citizens turned to their political leaders in hopes of change. While the populist rhetoric of conservative party leaders has been extensively researched, the unique position that politicians with a migrant background have has been largely neglected (Schmidt, 2023, p. 2; Akbaba, 2018, p. 201). Understanding how the noteworthy positionalities of these politicians play a role in how they cater to the public, could clarify their growing success. Hence, this thesis aims to investigate how political leaders with a migrant background present themselves in interviews, specifically looking at the ways in which their minority status plays a role in their self-presentation.

1. 1. Societal relevance

In the past decade, Europe has experienced a steady growth in the popularity of far-right conservative parties, fuelled to a surprising degree by young voters (Henley, 2023, para. 3; Nogueira Pinto, 2023, para. 5). Countries like Italy, France, Spain, Finland, Austria, Sweden and the Netherlands are all trending towards an influx of far-right voters (Henley, 2023, para. 1-5). Simultaneous with this conservative trend is an increase in anti-immigration and border control discourses in the public sphere (Nogueira Pinto, 2023, para. 11). Interestingly, a lot of conservative political leaders that echo this rhetoric have migrant roots themselves. On the one hand there is Suella Braverman, daughter of two immigrants, who worked alongside Rishi Sunak to "stop the boats", mobilizing their plan to deport incoming migrants to Rwanda (Rushton, 2023, para. 2). The public was often astonished by her strong stance of migration, considering her background (Zaidi, 2023, para. 3). On the other hand, Humza Yousaf, the then-First Minister of Scotland, who praised his Pakistani grandfather for emigrating to the UK in the 1960's, found the proposed plan abhorrent (Garton-Crosbie, 2023, para. 8). Nikki Haley, who ran for president in the United States from February 14, 2023 until March 3, 2024, positioned herself in the press as anti illegal-immigration (Kessler, 2024, para. 2). She praised her Indian parents for legally migrating to the US, while advocating for the construction of a wall at the Mexican border to keep immigrants out (Kessler, 2024, para. 7). While some political leaders with a minority

background use their heritage to exemplify the successes of multiculturalism, others frame immigration as an economic and cultural crisis that needs to be contained.

1. 2. Academic relevance

In general, scholars have investigated the representation of minority politicians from many different angles, including looking at how the underrepresentation of minority identities in political parties has an impact on their political communication (Bloemraad & Schönwalder, 2013, p. 567). One way in which this topic has been discussed in literature is through the lens of populist discourse on immigration. This literature tends to focus on how politicians use populist rhetoric to paint a negative image of migrants, by dichotomizing the notion of "us" and "them", where migrants are seen as a threat to national values (Akbaba, 2018, p. 206). However, this narrative typically stems from individuals that are "native" to a country, and has not yet considered the intersection of populism and politicians with a migrant background. Alternatively, scholars have examined this topic from the perspective of intersectionality, where the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity on a politician's media representation was studied. For instance, a study on gender and a politician's news visibility uncovered a complex dynamic in which female politicians gained news coverage due to them campaigning for a role typically ascribed to a man, or because it was a novelty for a woman to win the race against a man (Trimble, 2007, p. 990).

The relationship between political representation and ethnicity has also been explored in the literature, concentrating on how the descriptive representation of minority identities influences the way that politicians discuss the issues of marginalized communities (Gershon, 2008, p. 120). While the descriptive representation of minorities added value to discourses on issues unique to marginalized communities of women, Latinos, and African American citizens, these discussions amounted to a small portion of their political discourse (p. 134). Another angle that has been relatively unexplored is the representation and self-presentation of ethnic minority politicians. Current literature covers the topic by examining how many politicians with a minority background deliver speeches related to minority-relevant topics in the German Bundestag (Bäck & Debus, 2020, p. 1674). It was discovered that migrant politicians gave more speeches pertaining to minority issues, often representing these issues for their affiliated political party (p. 1687). However, this study provided a more quantitative view on the topic, rather than an in-depth analysis of the content that politicians with a migrant background discuss. Another

study opted to investigate the political narratives used by ethnic minorities in maiden speeches, showcasing how they used their identities to counter stereotypical representation by sharing family narratives (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 594).

Nevertheless, the literature does not thoroughly explore how ethnic minority politicians publically position themselves within the political climate, particularly those that are renowned for their anti-immigration sentiment. Therefore, this thesis investigates how politicians with a migrant background present themselves in the press, specifically those that take a firm stance on immigration. To investigate this phenomenon, a comparative case study approach was taken, focusing on the self-presentation of Dutch VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) party leader Dilan Yeşilgöz, as well as British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. Their self-presentation was examined in the context of interviews that were recorded during their electoral campaign period, a crucial period in which politicians and their narratives become highly visible in the media. Thus, this thesis will be guided by the following research question: *How did ethnic minority politicians Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak present themselves during their electoral campaigns?* The objective of this thesis is to begin understanding the role that their minority background played in the way they positioned themselves during their campaign periods. Specifically, this thesis aims to find patterns with a particular emphasis on topics such as immigration policies, border security, national identity, and connections with migrant past. Both subjects were recently elected to their current positions. The Dutch general elections took place in November 2023, while Rishi Sunak was elected as Prime Minister in October 2022, after Liz Truss' resignation. Hence, the chosen case studies provided insight into the contemporary political landscape of Europe, and the relationship between being an ethnic minority and representing a nation.

1. 3. Thesis Outline

Following this chapter, the theoretical framework explores the self-presentation of politicians in various facets, including the representation of race, gender and migration, the interconnections of language and performance, as well as image-making strategies employed by politicians. Thereafter, the methodological approach of this thesis is clarified, detailing how the data was sampled and examined through the lens of narrative analysis. The fourth chapter discloses the results of the research, including the immigration, personal, societal and work

narratives that the politicians utilized. This is followed by the closing chapter, containing a conclusion on the implications of the results, the relevance of the positionalities of ethnic minority politicians, as well as a discussion of future research directions.

2. Theoretical framework

With the aim of understanding the self-presentation of ethnic minority politicians, this thesis was enriched by literature pertaining to language and representation, the presentation and performance of the self, as well as political communication strategies such as image-making and the personalization of politics.

2. 1. Representation

In order to begin understanding the language that ethnic minority politicians use to describe themselves and their political stances, it is imperative to examine how languages function. Languages work through systems of representation, where words, objects and icons are used to construct and ideally transmit meaning (Hall, 2013, p. 1). Representation is referred to as a system of meaning, as it depends on an organized system of the mental representations of concepts that each individual internalizes. Hence, representation is the link between ideas and language that allows the communicator to refer to tangible objects or fictional phenomena, such as people or events (p. 3). However, for the link to be understood by the receiver, there needs to be a shared understanding between the communicators' conceptual maps, which is facilitated through a shared language (p.3). According to Michel Foucault (1994, as cited in Ahearn, 2011, p. 264), power relations are profoundly integrated with linguistic abilities and the "production and exchange of signs". Specifically, Foucault explores discourses, which are practices and tools through which members of a society communicate about particular topics within a given historical period (p. 265).

Discourses allow societies to not only communicate about certain topics, but also shape and reconstruct their rhetoric (Ahearn, 2011, p. 265). By normalizing a certain way of talking about a subject, alternative ideologies are restricted in terms of how knowledge is constructed in relation to that subject (p. 265). Furthermore, someone's class, educational background, and ethnic identity can be reflected in their communicative practices (p. 271). According to Bourdieu (1991, as cited in Ahearn, 2011, p. 271), someone's ability to speak aptly in a given context is illustrative of their linguistic capital. However, the meaning of language can never truly be fixed (Rettberg, 2017). It is rather through the representational system of shared signs that meaning is constructed (Hall, 2013, p. 11). The media forms an influential tool by which the representations of social groups can be skewed and adjusted (Ahearn, 2011, p. 266). As control over media

production lies in the hands of a few, these media actors possess the power to dictate what symbolic resources shape the public's perception of our physical world (Freedman, 2014, p. 274). This systemically stratified access to resources is directly reflected in the representation of social groups in media (p. 274). Actors that have more influence in terms of accessibility and control over resources are able to establish cultural hegemony (Ahearn, 2011, p. 262). Through this process of the natural dominance of one social actor or group over another, select ideologies and cultural customs are made the norm (p. 263). This form of power is so seamlessly integrated in society that implications appear inevitable (Hall & Nixon, 2013, p. 250). These ideologies also manifest in media representations, leading to the higher visibility of certain social groups and the cultural norms they embody (Ahearn, 2011, p. 276).

Meaning is communicated to media audiences mainly through the discourses of written languages and the discourse of photography (Hall & Nixon, 2013, p. 218). Although a single image can hold meaning on its own, it is the accumulation of meaning through inter-textual consumption that generates a regime of representation of a subject (p. 222). This framework through which an idea or object is understood becomes a guiding light to interpreting differences between people and cultural groups (pp. 218-222). There are several ways in which hegemonic beliefs are maintained by media actors, including through stereotyping and othering (Hall & Nixon, 2013, p. 247; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010, p. 695). Othering is a process of "differentiation and demarcation", where the "Other" is portrayed as powerless, useless and typically in a superficial sense (p. 695). This is contrasted against the "We", who are presented as capable and complex, creating a social distance between the two actors (p. 695). Minority groups are often portrayed as the "Other" in the media landscape. In order to see how hegemonic dynamics have an impact on a minority's self-presentation, it is important to investigate the manner in which minorities have historically been represented in the media. There are many lenses through which this can be investigated, including through the lens of race, gender and having a migrant background. These perspectives will be the focus of the following section of the thesis.

2. 1. 1. Race and Representation

Historically, non-Caucasian individuals have been frequently misrepresented and exploited by hegemonic media. Black people specifically have been victims of profound

stereotyping, frequently reduced to a restrictive character that is used to paint them as morally different from others (Hall & Nixon, 2013, pp. 247-250). Black men, for example, have been characterized as both "childlike" as well as "oversexed", creating a behavioral expectation of them and an inherent need to invalidate such claims (Hall & Nixon, 2013, p. 252; Pitcan et al., p. 164). In the same vein, Asian and Latina women are often fetishized as the exotic "Other", reduced to an object of sexual desire (Brooks & Hébert, 2006, p. 302). A pattern emerges in which the global "Other" is always portrayed in binary opposition to the West (p. 302). Racist notions have become common sense in contemporary society, and are disseminated through ideologies made possible by existing power structures (Hall, 2021, p. 101). There is a lurking "white eye" that is inconspicuously a part of media texts (p. 107). This imperial eye places a communicative framework on the content that caters to a specific, post-colonial attitude (Hall, 2021, p. 107; Shome & Hegde, 2002, pp. 264-265).

This Western imperial discourse is not a new phenomenon, and has been extensively researched in the past. For instance, Western characterizations of Orientalism in the media have long been criticized for their simplification of the Middle Eastern people (Prakash, 1995, p. 200). According to the influential work of Said (1979), the core of Orientalism is the distinction between "the Orient" and "the Occident" (p. 2). Essentially, the dichotomy found in media representations of Western and Oriental figures places "the Orient" in a subordinate role, a dynamic that has been reinforced by hegemonic media practices (Teo, 2013, p. 2). In turn, this discourse has acted as a justification for Europe's "colonial domination" of the region, especially in the late eighteenth century (Teo, 2013, p. 2; Said, 1979, p. 3). Said's (1979) work established a new lens through which to examine the deep-rooted "Othering" of non-Western cultures, including that of Muslims and Jews (Teo, 2013, p. 17).

Media as an institutional power have the capacity to set the agenda for all media consumers on topics such as race (Gordon et al., 2024, p. 45). Media actors have long prioritized the white ruling class, however the representational politics of Black and Asian identities are gradually changing (Saha, 2024, p. 3). The shift in the politics of representation is manifesting in media actors moving away from stereotypes and boxed classifications to a more intersectional representation of racial identities (p. 4). Hence, the black experience as a whole is exhibited, rather than focusing on specific, exaggerated elements (p. 4). The way in which these cultural identities continue to be framed is a deciding factor in whether cultural differences will be

celebrated or suppressed (p. 6). This promise of progress in cultural representation has manifested in our contemporary mediascape, but not to the extent that all minority groups are represented fairly and freely in the media (p. 13).

2. 1. 2. Gender and Representation

Gender identity and cultural representation are intrinsically linked, one gains understanding about themselves through their identifications with others as well as through cultural representations in media (Santoniccolo et al., 2023, p. 1). On the one hand, women have been characterized with stereotypical traits symbolizing community such as compassion, warmth and supportiveness (p. 2). On the other hand, men are often portrayed as agentive individuals, characterized by ambition, assertiveness and intelligence (p. 2). Even though there is currently a widespread movement advocating for equal gender rights, there is still a possibility for anyone to be criticized and punished for deviating from traditional conceptions of gender (p. 8).

Historically, the "absence, trivialization or condemnation" of women as represented in media has led to "symbolic annihilation" in which women are made invisible or when presented, misrepresented and characterized by the biases of those who have the power to portray them (Gallagher, 2013, p. 23). The tension that started the feminist movement in the 1970s, between media representations of women and their experiences, is still present today (p. 27). In this contemporary age, no country is yet to achieve gender equality in terms of human rights, fiscal opportunities or political empowerment (p. 27). In commercial contexts, women's empowerment has become a buzzword framed as sexual assertiveness and individual control, once again the female body the subject of the narrative (p. 29). This misrepresentation of women by the media manifests in various ways across different environments. In the context of political news, women are much less visible than their male counterparts (Thesen & Yildirim, 2023, p. 577). This could be due to the fact that men tend to be perceived as more credible sources, leading to a larger demand for male politicians (p. 577). Generally, stereotypical notions of men coincide with stereotypical characteristics of politics, including "leadership, ambition, aggression, independence, and self-confidence", making this career potentially more accessible to men (p. 577).

2. 1. 3. Migration and Representation

The last media representation framework covered in this thesis is done through the lens of migration. There are a few characteristic ways in which refugees and migrants are typically presented by the media. In some ways, migrants are framed as vulnerable and helpless victims to their circumstances who need to be helped by the powerful Global North (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1167). At other times refugees appear as "a threat to the nation-based order", dangerous individuals and that society must be protected from (p. 1164). By perpetually framing migrants within these categories and neglecting their humanity, the media maintain an ethnocentric perspective in which morality is equated with ethnicity (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1166; Georgiou, 2018, p. 50). Migrant depictions follow the hegemonic communicative order in which their stories are constructed by an outsider rather than being given the opportunity to speak for themselves (Georgiou, 2018, p. 46). Media coverage on migrants governed by institutions typically work with a means to an end mentality, where demarcation is performed in terms of assimilation expectations (p. 55). Essentially, migrants are expected to "lose their culture" to become part of the native land (p. 55). To minimize stereotypical portrayals of migrants it is necessary to platform their voices and depict them in an agentive manner, where their creativity, adaptability and intelligence are fairly represented (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1173). Nevertheless, politicians with a migrant background can use political narratives and their political status to reform and diversify the limited representation of migrants (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 593).

2. 2. Performance of the Self

While media representations and their interpretations can not be fixed, people can attempt to control their public perception through the way they perform their identity. Goffman (1956, as cited in Marshall, 2010, p. 39) articulated his thoughts on the gestures and mannerisms people employ when presenting themselves to others. Individuals that are constantly in the spotlight, such as high ranking politicians, are subject to a gaze that places their every act and spoken word to be potentially scrutinized (p. 39). These external pressures often lead the individual to perform an idealized version of themselves, rather than an authentic self, through a process of impression management (Hogan, 2010, p. 378). This process entails the "selective disclosure of personal details" with the audience, intended to construct the idealized version of the self (p. 379). New

media provide a stage on which this performance can be done on a larger scale. Social media exemplify a carefully orchestrated performance of one's everyday life, where celebrities and politicians tend to construct themselves in a thoughtful balance between professionalism and personal content *(*Marshall, 2010, p. 40).

Furthermore, self-governance is an iterative process in which behavior and communication are adjusted according to the response from the audience (Pitcan et al., 2018, p.166). The main aim of this process is to avoid humiliation and maintain one's reputation and status (p. 167). While a lot of self-governing behaviors occur consciously, such as in an interview context, it is a habit that people execute subconsciously in public settings (p. 166). Within the strategy of impression management, the main priority is presenting the politician as an individual, stressing the ordinariness of their daily life (Lilleker & Koc-Michalska, 2013, p. 194). Factors that can impact this self-presentation include the race, social status, gender and social ties of the individual one is speaking to (Pitcan et al., 2018, p. 167). This process is particularly difficult for members of subordinated groups, who have to navigate a "double consciousness" in which they have to balance their context-dependent self-presentation on top of adjusting to the normative Whiteness in Western societies (p. 167). It is therefore likely that politicians with an immigration background already have an established self-governance habit in regards to their ethnic minority status. In general, progressive politicians tended to recount their minority identities in public discourse, while politicians that were part of a conservative party were less inclined to narrate about this part of themselves (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 593). Furthermore, second-generation immigrants generally have more pronounced ethnic identities and political stances than the first generation of immigrants (Nandi & Platt, 2020, p. 975). However, it is mostly unexplored how this translates to politicians with migrant roots.

Besides impression management, there are also other political communication strategies, such as service-oriented homestyle communication and a participatory communication strategy, that would be beneficial to explore (Lilleker & Koc-Michalska, 2013, p. 192). Service-oriented homestyle communication is when politicians focus on presenting themselves as hardworking and committed to directly helping the community, frequently updating audiences on their politicking (p. 194). Furthermore, the participatory communication strategy is more focused on creating online engagement amongst audience members, where politicians create an environment that facilitates the dissemination of information (p. 198). These strategies can serve as a guiding

framework through which different political communication styles of the politicians at hand can be identified. Additionally, the self-presentational strategies by Jones & Pittman can be used to analyze the communication strategies of minority politicians (Whitehead & Smith, 1999, pp. 479-490). For instance, the strategies of ingratiation, exemplification, self-promotion, intimidation and supplication have been employed by female Nigerian politicians to represent the marginalized women of their country and become part of public decision making (Igwebuike & Chimuanya, 2023, p. 71). Self-promotion was the strategy employed most frequently, allowing the women to validate their political presence and highlight their proficiency (p. 86).

2. 2. 1. Language and Performance

An important factor in analyzing the identity performances of politicians is the language they choose to use when speaking in a public setting. When politicians were observed in courtroom and interview settings, they were found to master the art of using equivocal language (Gnisci & Bonaiuto, 2003, 409). By using ambiguous and indirect language, political leaders were able to evade responsibility in difficult situations, allowing them to "save face" and appear diplomatic instead (p. 386). Besides the use of ambivalent language to diminish admission in challenging situations, politicians can reflect their intentions through pronominal choices (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 3253). The pronouns that political leaders leverage in their public speaking, such the use of "us" in contrast to "them", can reflect their moral and ideological position (p. 3252). Pronominal choices are another technique employed by politicians to distance themselves from responsibility and the need to take political action (p. 3252).

Another language tactic leveraged by the Ghanese Minister of Education Opoku-Agyemang was the use of direct address, where she spoke directly to the target audience in her political speeches and debates (Frimpong, 2024, p. 151). Hereby, she was able to hold her power in the conversation, while simultaneously conveying a sense of urgency within her message (p. 151). Beyond this, her use of direct address becomes an instrument for communicating collective responsibility and emphasizing the need for collective action (p. 158). The politician emphasizes that her work's purpose is to foster the self-actualization of others, highlighting that her political goals are not to overshadow ordinary Ghanaians but rather let them represent themselves through her (p. 159). With both the strategies of pronouns and equivocal language use, the context in which a politician was speaking was an important factor in how they

applied this technique. The venue in which an interview was conducted, and whether it was a casual interview or formal debate, influenced their pronoun distribution (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 3265). Politicians were also found to elaborate more on tag questions in the courtroom setting than in an interview setting, implying that narrative answers are potentially less visible in interview settings (Gnisci & Bonaiuto, 2003, p. 407). Lastly, pronominal choice also reflects the strength of the candidate's relationship with their affiliated political party. If their pronominal choices reflect distance from the political party, it could have an adverse effect on their public perception (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 3265).

2. 2. 2. Personality and Performance

In recent years, as media became ubiquitous, politicians gained a novel infrastructure through which they could communicate with the public. Perception politics is a trend that has manifested in the last few decades in which the media have become more instrumental in political persuasion (Landtsheer, et al., 2008, p. 219). Due to the affordances of social networking sites and television formats, there is an increased focus on visuals that directs voters to create their opinions on political leaders based on intuitive impressions (p. 220). The public gathers this information through the "language style, appearance characteristics, and nonverbal behavior" of the politicians as opposed to their rhetoric and political goals (p. 220). Due to these changing expectations, citizens are no longer identified as voters, but rather political consumers. People desire engagement with a politician whose personality appeals to them (Harrison et al., 2023, p. 60). These expectations drive politicians to apply marketing techniques such as impression management where the politician's image is conceptualized as a product that needs to conform to the consumers' expectations (pp. 221-228). More and more often, politicians' personalities are equated to a political brand that is used to sell ideologies to the public (Harrison et al., 2023, p. 60). When candidates act as "brandidates", they become the physical embodiment of a political brand, representing themselves or their affiliated political party (p. 60). For instance, when Donald Trump was elected as president of the United States in 2016, a lot of the voters chose him based on his embodiment of anti-establishment beliefs (p. 59). Thus, it was not necessarily Trump's ideologies that motivated the voters, but rather his symbol of a political outsider who wanted to oppose the political elites (p. 60).

2. 2. 3. Gender and Performance

Besides judging the competencies of politicians on their personality, stereotypical gender values were also found to be a deciding factor (Bast et al., 2022, p. 358). As political archetypes resonate more closely with the stereotypical man than the stereotypical woman, a lot of research has been conducted to understand how these social pressures have an impact on how female politicians present themselves. In general, female politicians are found to embody softer qualities that are typically ascribed to females such as egalitarianism and reliability, while male politicians tend to emphasize their "patriotism, competence, and self-confidence" (Diedkova, 2024, p. 86). Women in leadership positions experience a double bind dilemma (Bast et al., 2022, p. 357; Hankla et al., 2023, p. 1437). On the one hand, as leadership roles are stereotypically ascribed to men, they have the pressure of behaving in a "masculine" manner (p. 359). On the other hand, if they act too assertively they could be perceived as cold, which is not favorable for public opinion (Bast et al., 2022, p. 359; Santoniccolo et al., 2023, p. 1). Simultaneously, female politicians risk being regarded as incompetent if they lean too far into stereotypical feminine traits, hence they find themselves in the double bind (Bast et al., 2022, p. 359). Interestingly enough, women were found to apply their entrepreneurial skills more often than men (Diedkova, 2024, p. 86). Nevertheless, self-presentation was found to be an intentional strategy used to combat the gendered stereotypes that exist in the realm of politics (Devroe, 2020, p. 2). For instance, female politicians might represent outspoken right policies typically associated with male politicians, or male politicians might use words that are associated with female qualities (Hayes, 2011, as cited in Diedkova, 2024, p. 67). By making these intentional adjustments in their gendered self-presentation, these politicians are becoming contra-prototypical candidates (Devroe, 2020, p. 8).

In regards to being chosen to run for office, minority female politicians were found to have an advantageous position over non minority politicians due to the alleged bonus that political parties gain for electing a woman that is also a minority (Hankla et al., 2023, p. 1439). Nevertheless, minority women in elected positions were found to offer a unique perspective when discussing salient political issues, maintaining the importance of ethnicity in critical moments (Gershon, 2008, p. 121). Along the same lines, Latino and African-American representatives were found to represent the issues that minorities experienced better than their non-minority counterparts, however these topics made up a small portion of their politicking (p.

134). An overall conclusion that can be drawn here is that female politicians are not solely evaluated based on their gender, but rather in an intersectional manner that covers their personality, ethnicity and other factors.

Overall, politicians face different challenges at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, migrant status, age and class (Hankla et al., 2023, p. 1435). Due to these various circumstances, political leaders adopt linguistic and branding strategies in order to overcome their particular representational biases. Historically, Black women have learned to counter the gender and racial discrimination they face by adopting respectability politics, or self-presentation techniques that "downplayed sexuality and emphasized morality and dignity" to combat stereotypes (Pitcan et al., 2018, p. 164). In a digital context, Black men and women performed their identities using a "vanilla" face, which could be perceived as neutral across all contexts and audiences it could be observed in (p. 170). The aim with this thesis is to uncover what this dynamic looks like for politicians with a migrant background; how does the representation of migrants alter the way they present themselves in interview settings?

2. 3. Image-Making and Personalization

Image-making provides a complementary perspective on how politicians regulate their presentation to the public. Before the last media boom, politicians were thought of as faceless as long as they reflected electors' opinions, arguing that the appearance of political leaders is not important as long as their message aligns with the voters' needs (Phillips, 1995, as cited in Bloemraad, 2013, p. 652). This idea of "politics of ideas" was quickly contradicted by the "politics of presence", in which voters demanded their ethnic and gender identities to be represented in the faces of their political leaders (p. 652). As leaders become part of the political landscape, they inadvertently become part of the media, who portray them in a visual manner (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 889). Herefore, crafting a clear and cohesive image or brand of oneself is salient to the success of a politician in the digitized media sphere. A politician's image is made up of the "qualities, traits, attributes and views" that are presented to voters (Nimmo, 1976, p. 34). Image-making, in the political context, refers to the use of visual and verbal symbolic devices to create an identifying marker and connection with the audience (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 890).

The strategy of political image-making operates using the rhetoric of ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos is a persuasive technique in which the speaker highlights their credibility and authority (Zhiyong, 2016, p. 65). This aspect is directly related to the image that the political leader exudes, whether it is friendly, authoritative, or compassionate. Pathos is an approach used to appeal to the audience using emotion (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 916). Furthermore, the rhetoric of pathos is used to appeal to the emotions of the audience, and is a technique that can make the individual stand out from others (Zhiyong, 2016, p. 66). While humans are thought of as rational beings, emotional appeals have always been extremely effective in convincing people (p. 66). Politicians are able to persuade others through ethos by sharing details from their personal lives and drawing on shared emotions such as national pride (p. 73). Lastly, the appeal of logos targets the audience's logic side, using reason and evidence to justify one's opinion or decision (p. 66; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 891). As the political engagement of audiences grows increasingly more media-centric, the digital connectedness of politicians with voters becomes more imperative (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2021, p. 213).

2. 3. 1. Credibility and Image-Making

Image-making is a process that takes shape over time and is a long-term approach that aims to craft a politician's perception in the eyes of the public (Bast, 2024, p. 3). Factors such as "character traits, physical appearance, or nonverbal communication" all contribute to the politician's image, which is communicated through their visual media presence (p. 3; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 916). The process is multidimensional, as images do not simply function as a direct representation of the politician, but rather symbolically convey the values and beliefs of the politician as well as their attitude towards national issues (Bast, 2025, p. 4). An important visual cue is the social distance the politician takes in the image. When the politician is directly gazing into the camera, it can create a sense of closeness for the audience (Bast et al., 2024, p. 4). Additionally, the distance between the politician and the camera conveys a sense of intimacy, the closer the lens, the "friendlier the relationship" (p. 4). The overall aim through image-making is for the candidate to gain credibility with the public. There are two main factors that create credibility, the first being expertise and the second being trustworthiness (Page & Duffy, 2018, p. 14). Expertise can be translated through cues such as sophisticated events, status symbols, celebrities, clothing and positioning within an image (p. 15). Trustworthiness is communicated

through visual elements such as informal events, intimate conversations with others, family, informal attire and close-up photographs (p. 15). Voters tend to judge political candidates based on the credibility they perceive them to have (p. 8).

One way in which politicians aim to gain credibility is through affiliations with celebrities, who have already gained the public's trust (Bast, 2024, p. 4). This process of celebrification happens on an individual level and can take the form of taking photos with celebrities, celebrity endorsements as well as imitating the styles of popular culture (Grbeša et al., 2024, p. 14). The goal of this process is to replicate the attitude of admiration and trust that fans tend to have for celebrities (p. 15). A successful way by which celebrity populists were able to capture the attention of voters was through self-scandalization, in which populist politicians challenged normative political communication through the use of "slang, swearing and political correctness" (p. 18). This way, populists are able to perform in a way that disrupts the political scene and hereby grab the attention of audiences. However, not all populist leaders aim for an all-round disruptive political image. For instance, the conservative Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, adjusts his self-presentation tactics per platform (Sonnevend, 2024, p. 172). Despite his representation in Western media as a hostile man, Orbán's Instagram and Facebook profiles showcase a community-driven man (p. 172). His social media highlight both his masculinity and ordinariness, while his Facebook profile presents him as an elite politician, a part of monumental international negotiations (p. 173).

2. 3. 2. Nationalism and Image-Making

The overarching goal of political campaigns is to mobilize voters and convince them to vote for a particular political party or political candidate (Bil-Jaruzelka & Monzer, 2022, p. 181). One effective way to unite audiences is by stimulating a collective sense of pride in one's country (Bonikowski et al., 2022, p. 1722). It can be used as a tool to legitimize a country's political position, and portray a connection between the country's people and its leaders (Barker, 2001, as cited in Ko & Choi, 2022, p. 14). Politicians have been found to invoke feelings of patriotism, especially at times where the nation is facing international conflict, such as the United States during the Gulf War (Wolak & Dawkins, 2017, p. 393). Emphasizing this collective sense of patriotism highlights shared values, and a sense of unity (Osler, 2009, p. 88). Ethnic minority politicians were particularly inclined to emphasize their identification with the nation,

specifically by stating their feelings of belonging (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 594). Additionally, a correlation was found between nationalism and immigration control, where governments that push a nationalist agenda tend to advocate for restrictive immigration regulations, such as the construction of border walls (Ko & Choi, 2022, p. 22).

2. 3. 3. Personalization of Politics

In a postmaterialist landscape, audiences appear to appreciate a more "lifestyle-oriented" way of engaging with politics, which has turned the political scene into a performance of personalization or intimization for audiences (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2021, p. 213). It can be difficult for politicians to capture the attention of potential voters when only relying on the political content (Geise et al., 2024, p. 2). To captivate audiences, politicians have to perform in the "formal political arena", while also adopting a more personal approach in sharing details about their private lives in appropriate and relevant contexts (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2021, p. 214). This shift can be explained through the lens of individualization and privatization. On the one hand, individualization is understood as a trend towards the focus on individual politics rather than political parties in the media (Geise et al., 2024, p. 5; Larsson, 2019, p. 1098). On the other hand, privatization highlights the way in which politicians are starting to be portrayed as not just politicians or policymakers, but also as private citizens with a life beyond politics (Larsson, 2019, p. 1098). The consumer's desire for this new type of content is driven by the affordances of social networking sites, which structurally focus on the representations of individuals and lifestyles, as opposed to groups or political parties (Geise et al., 2024, p. 5).

Academic scholars mostly agree that personalization politics is a conscious marketing strategy that simplifies voting processes to choosing between "political personalities" rather than political ideologies (Raupp, 2021, as cited in Geise et al., 2024, p. 4). As the affordances of social media create an infrastructure in which individuals become the focus of digital content, individual politicians tend to be more successful when catering to this need through personalized content (Larsson, 2019, p. 1098). There are different types of personalization that political candidates take part in, including professional personalization, home and family personalization and personal preferences personalization (p. 1099). Professional personalization is displayed through a more intimate look at a candidate's professional life, such as through a selfie on the work commute (p. 1104). Home and family personalization occurs when the politician shares

more about their private relationships, mainly those related to a spouse or children (p. 1099). Lastly, personal preference personalization encapsulates the hobbies and personal taste of the candidate, communicated to audiences to establish the candidate as an individual rather than just a political figure (Larsson, 2019, p. 1099; Bast, 2024, p. 4).

Each individual politician has their unique approach to presenting themselves, choosing varying parts of their private lives to share with the public. These unique markers help voters identify with a candidate (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023, p. 177). Over time, the emphasis on these certain markers become the brand of the politician (p. 177). Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, U.S. representative for New York's 14th congressional district, is well versed in using personalization during her campaigns and in her general digital footprint. She has used a variety of platforms, ranging from her YouTube channel to the streaming platform Twitch, to engage and mobilize her audiences through personalization tactics (Maharani & Tambunan, 2020, p. 134). For instance, in a YouTube video she posted during a campaign period, she shared the economic and social challenges her family faced as a Puerto Rican family living in New York. Here, she used personalization as a strategy to create an identification with her target audience, minorities and underrepresented social groups (p. 134). In a similar fashion, Dutch ethnic minority politicians were found to capitalize on their humanizing family stories to counteract negative stereotypes about their ethnic group (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 594). Personalization can be applied through the act of being vulnerable with others. Hence, this approach does not necessarily have to entail a positive message in order to mobilize audiences. On the other hand, populist leaders, both men and women, were found to emphasize mostly their professional selves, rather than their personal lives (Bast et al., 2022, p. 374). The perceived competency of these populist leaders was not found to be impacted by their personalization, or lack thereof, implying that personalization might be effective for certain audiences and ineffective for others (p. 375).

Whilst the adoption of personalization strategies has been found to be successful for many popular politicians such as Justin Trudeau and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, this type of self-presentation also has its disadvantages (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 914). Firstly, content about the candidate's private life is thought to distract from politically meaningful discussions (Larsson, 2019, p. 1099). Additionally, catering to the audience's desire for more personalized content can risk individual politicians becoming more influential than the political

parties that represent (Pedersen & Rahat, 2021, p. 213). If political candidates deviate from the core message of the political party they are a part of, the politician's actions can become incongruent with their previous proclamations (p. 213). In turn, these discrepancies can create distrust with the public (Larsson, 2019, p. 1106).

2. 3. 4. Personalization in Traditional Settings

While most personalization research is focused on the platforms that first enabled this type of content, it is also important to consider platforms other than social networking sites. Offline based mass media platforms, such as television and newspapers, that are deemed traditional media, have set a norm in which politicians maintain a certain distance between exhibiting their professional and personal selves (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023, p. 170). Conversely, online media present the need for a hybrid personalization approach, where candidates present a balanced image of dedicated politician as well as personable and entertaining individual (p. 171). Perhaps interview conditions provide a similar context as traditional offline media platforms, in which a more formal setting triggers a sense of formality from the candidate, making them distance themselves from presenting their private selves. Previous research has investigated personalization tactics of political candidates in an interview setting. In this context, personalization tactics include any instance in which an interviewee diverts the direction of the conversation and attempts to neglect the topical agenda (Waddle & Bull, 2016, p. 415). Personalization tactics employed by candidates when asked difficult questions in broadcast interviews include flattery, the use of humor to disarm the interviewee, equivocal language as well as a more aggressive tactic in which the candidate directly questions the integrity of the interviewee (pp. 428-429). While these mechanisms of avoidance convey the candidate's personality, it will be more fruitful to research how personalization occurs within an interview context when a candidate is not averting challenging questions.

3. Methodology

3. 1. General Research Approach

In order to understand how having a migrant background could play a role in the self-presentation of conservative politicians, this thesis took a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research was chosen due to the anthropological nature of the approach, and its goal to deconstruct and understand the natural world (Steckler et al., 1992, p. 2). This type of research investigates communication practices and behaviors in the setting that they naturally occur in (Flick, 2018, p. 5). Considering that this study focused on two specific political leaders, qualitative research fulfilled the research goals as it allowed me to immerse myself in the political environment and observe the subjects in their natural working habitat.

Previous studies that use politicians as case studies tended to focus on elements such as gender, the use of rhetorical devices or personality traits (Devroe, 2020; Harrison et al., 2023; Zhiyong, 2016). Instead, this thesis focused on uncovering the complicated dynamic of politicians that politically represent a nation, while simultaneously being ethnic minorities in that nation. This particular lens is mostly absent in previous literature on the self-presentation of politicians, and therefore required a qualitative approach to document how this specific type of self-presentation occurs in a political environment (Flick, 2018, p. 5). Additionally, qualitative research helped me garner an "insider's view" by observing these politicians and their communicative mannerisms within a working context that is familiar to them, in which they have been trained to present themselves in a particular manner (Steckler et al., 1992, p. 2).

3. 2. Data Collection Method

Qualitative content analysis was employed to examine the communication and self-presentation strategies of minority political leaders in interview settings. Qualitative content analysis is a versatile data collection method that can be used to study both textual and visual material (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1277; Schreier, 2013, p. 180). The approach is particularly useful in minimizing a vast amount of data and can be applied to a variety of content types, including newspapers, magazines, and social media posts (Schreier, 2013, p. 180). Within the process of content analysis, the data is systematically analyzed to identify major themes and patterns across the collected information (p. 171). The patterns found in the data are eventually used to generate a coding frame. This coding frame will be adjusted throughout the coding

process to reflect the data accurately, and can be employed in future studies that investigate similar subject areas (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 171). As interviews are inherently a vast amount of data to analyze, content analysis provided a methodical strategy to uncover the themes and connections within these texts (Schreier, 2013, p. 170). Furthermore, content analysis is also a flexible approach that can rely on data-driven concepts, which allows the data to speak for itself (p. 171). An in-depth comparison between the two case studies at hand garnered insights to the unique positionality of the politicians, as well as the current political contexts of each respective country (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285).

3. 3. Case Study & Sampling

The overarching data collection method of using case studies was relevant for this research project due to its interest in distinct people and their unique positionalities. Case studies are a research strategy in which extensive information is collected about a subject and is reorganized into a narrative form (Marrelli, 2007, p. 39). This was a valuable and appropriate strategy for this research as it allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific context I was interested in (p. 40). The subject of a case study could be an individual, an event, an organization, or any other entity that can be studied to make sense of a broader phenomenon (Marrelli, 2007, p. 39; Flick, 2018, p. 6). In this case, the phenomenon of interest was minority political leaders that were increasingly catering towards populist rhetoric, thereby reaffirming anti-immigrant sentiments. In order to uncover the complicated dynamic of minority politicians who put forth these ideologies, it was essential to take a closer look at exemplary case studies. The findings that resulted provide a starting point to further explore the unique positionality of ethnic minority politicians in future research studies.

Due to the particular nature of the research, it was beneficial to use case studies as a means to understand the context in which minority politicians present themselves (Flick, 2018, p. 6). Specifically, I aimed to understand the ways in which minority political leaders narrated their stories in political rhetoric in press interviews. Additionally, this type of a data collection approach allowed for the investigation of the relationship between the self-presentation of minority political leaders and the relevance of variables such as immigration policies and national identity (p. 39). Hence, employing a case study approach gave me the option to thoroughly examine this niche context and the themes that are relevant to it.

This thesis took a comparative approach using two relevant minority background political leaders as case studies. Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak were chosen as appropriate research subjects due to their status as important political leaders who both have migration backgrounds ("Yesilgöz: van gammel vluchtbootje", 2023, para. 2; "Rishi Sunak", 2024, para. 2). At the time this research was conducted and as I complete this thesis,, Dilan Yeşilgöz is the Leader of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) and Minister of Justice in the Netherlands ("Wie is Dilan Yesilgöz", 2023, para. 1). Moreover, as I finalize this thesis, Rishi Sunak is the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and has been the Leader of the Conservative Party since 2022 ("Rishi Sunak", 2024, para. 1). On top of this, both leaders hold political views that are considered to be quite conservative. This is especially interesting as conservative political parties tend to discuss immigrants in terms of deportation and border security issues, highlighting their general opposition to immigration (Oliphant & Cerda, 2022, para. 1). Additionally, both politicians were deemed appropriate for this research design as they both actively engaged with the press, through both oral and written interviews. The countries in which Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak govern, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom respectively, were deemed relevant contexts due to the noticeable growing wave of populism that both countries have been experiencing in the past decade (Martin, 2023, para. 1; Almazawi, 2023, para. 3). As populist rhetoric often portrays the immigrant as an evil infiltrator, this further complicates the political positions of Sunak and Yeşilgöz, who both take a stance against immigration, while simultaneously having first-hand experience being an immigrant themselves (Akbaba, 2018, p. 202).

3. 3. 1. Case study 1: Dilan Yeşilgöz

Dilan Yeşilgöz arrived in the Netherlands in 1984 as a seven-year-old girl, seeking asylum alongside her Turkish-Kurdish family ("Yesilgöz: van gammel vluchtbootje", 2023, para. 2). Her family was forced to move from Türkiye due to her father's status as a unionist, which was deemed controversial after the 1980 coup that turned the country's democracy into a military dictatorship ("Yesilgöz: van gammel vluchtbootje", 2023, para. 2; Bekaroğlu & Barnes, 2021, p. 1). Eventually, this led the family to seek refuge in the Netherlands ("Wie is Dilan Yesilgöz", 2023, para. 2). Yeşilgöz' mother, Fatma Özgümüş, is currently the director of an NGO helping refugees named Vluchtelingen Organisaties Nederland (VVD Amsterdam, 2014, para. 2).

Yeşilgöz began her political career in 2004, and was affiliated with various political parties, including the Social Party, GroenLinks, and the Labour Party (Pellikaan, 2023, para. 11-12). However, in 2014 she switched gears when she became a board member for the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) in Amsterdam, a more right-leaning political party ("Yesilgöz: van gammel vluchtbootje", 2023, para. 5). Since then, she has been a diligent member of the VVD, fighting against street harassment and on notions related to climate and justice (para. 8).

Since 2022, political parties in the Netherlands have been discussing a potential new bill named the Spreidingswet (Eerste Kamer, n.d., para. 2). This law would mandate ministries across the country to make asylum facilities available to immigrants and ideally prevent the overcrowding of refugees in concentrated areas such as Ter Apel ("Aannemen Spreidingswet is essentieel", 2023, para. 1). Within this conversation, Yeşilgöz positioned herself in favor of rejecting new migrants into the country and therefore approached this new bill with caution ("VVD wil pas op de plaats", 2023, para. 3). Her stance on this issue has proven to be controversial due to Yeşilgöz being an immigrant herself, particularly one that was able to establish a successful life and career in the Netherlands (van der Groot, 2023, para. 30). However, she maintained the perspective that being an immigrant is hard work that can eventually be profitable, through persistence and dedication (para. 29). The contrast between Yeşilgöz own background and her indirect yet obvious opposition to immigration made her an intriguing case study.

3. 3. 2. Case study 2: Rishi Sunak

Sunak is a third-generation immigrant whose Indian-Punjabi grandparents met and got married in the British Colony of Tanganyika, now known as Tanzania (Goddard, 2022 , para. 11). His maternal grandmother emigrated to Leicester, the United Kingdom, after which her husband soon followed (para. 15). In May of 1980, Rishi Sunak was born in Southampton, to his parents Yashvir and Usha Sunak ("Rishi Sunak", 2024, para. 3). His mother was Kenyan born and his father was born in Tanzania, however both his parents are of Indian descent (para. 2). As Sunak's parents both worked in the medical field and were well-off, they were able to send Rishi to Winchester College, a private boarding school ("Rishi Sunak", n.d., para. 4). Sunak became interested in working in politics at a young age, even interning at the Conservative Party that he

would later become the leader of during his university years (para. 5). While studying for his Masters in Business Administration at Stanford University, he met his wife-to-be, Akshata Murthy (para. 6). Together, their net worth is approximated to be 730 million pounds, or more than 850 million euros (para. 8).

From 2010 onwards, Sunak resumed his work with the Conservative Party, fulfilling roles such as Parliamentary Private Secretary and Chief Secretary to the Treasury under Boris Johnson's administration ("Rishi Sunak", n.d., para. 12). Eventually, Rishi Sunak landed the role of prime minister in October of 2022, becoming the fifth prime minister of the United Kingdom in the span of seven years. Previous Prime Minister Liz Truss was forced to resign from the position after less than two months, due to the country's growing economic decline under her rule (Flinders, 2022, para. 1). Besides his dedication to restoring the economy, Sunak has been heavily involved in the recent movement to suppress illegal immigration into the UK ("PM's remarks on illegal migration", 2023, para. 1). In a speech on December 7, 2023, he broadcasted his political intentions to the public. Sunak justified his decision to deport immigrants to Rwanda by juxtaposing his family's legal integration into the country to the "illegal immigration" happening in the UK (para. 13). Sunak has ostensibly committed himself to "stop[ping] the boats", illustrating his sentiments with no apparent empathy (para. 19). With their multicultural minority backgrounds and robust political opinions, Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak were found to be interesting and suitable case studies to explore the interplay between minority politicians and self-presentation.

3. 3. 3. Sampling strategy

To explore the self-presentation of minority politicians, the data that was collected was sourced from platforms that politicians commonly use to interface with the public, and present themselves in a personal manner. Therefore, the chosen unit of analysis was press coverage, specifically in the form of interviews with the two case studies at hand. Additionally, interviews were deemed an appropriate choice as they construct a setting in which the interviewer is leading the conversation, rather than the politicians themselves. In this scenario, the politicians must improvise, making their self-presentation more circumstantial and less orchestrated. Purposive sampling was used as the sampling technique to choose interviews that are relevant to the research. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique where a sample is determined

based on unique, relevant qualities (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2). The criterion used to sample the content was the relevance of the subject matter discussed in the interview. This was understood from the title of the interview, as well as any visible clues, such as the thumbnail and description of the video. I aimed to include interviews from both left and right leaning broadcasters to avoid a political bias in the coverage. Topics discussed in the interviewers that were particularly interesting included political views, especially those related to immigration policies, national identity, migrant background as well as personal anecdotes.

Table 1. Overview of Samples.

Yeşilgöz Sample (10 interviews)	Total Clips	Sunak Sample (12 interviews)	Total Clips
NOS	1	*Sky News*	*4*
De Correspondent	1	*Bloomberg Television*	*1*
Nieuwsuur	1	*Jimmy's Jobs of the Future*	*1*
NPO Radio 1	1	*Rishi Sunak YouTube Channel*	*1*
AT5	1	*The Guardian*	*1*
Shownieuws	1	*This Morning*	*1*
BNR	2	*Mumsnet*	*1*
		LBC	*1*
WNL	2	*Good Morning Britain*	*1*

During this sampling phase, the aim was to collect long-form, sit-down interviews in which the subjects spoke for extended periods of time. This includes interviews occurring in

debate settings, podcasts, or talk shows. The interviews were sampled using Google's search engine, by searching for the name of the political leader alongside the keyword "interview". From this Google search, I transferred to the sub tab titled "Videos" to begin the sampling process. To find interviews with Yeşilgöz, the Dutch word for conversation ("*in gesprek*") as well as interview were used as a search word next to her name, while "conversation" and "interview" were used alongside Sunak's name. All content was briefly scanned and evaluated based on the relevance of the subject matter discussed. The interviews included in the data were preferably video or radio interviews or podcasts. A total of 3.9 hours worth of interview footage was collected per case study. Subsequently, the collected interviews were transcribed, all of which can be found in the external appendix, and the textual data that resulted was coded. Hence, the transcribed speech was the center of the data analysis, while the visual aspects of the interviews were not taken into account. Yeşilgöz's interviews were sampled within the time frame of her general elections electoral campaign period, which occurred between June 1, 2023 and November 22, 2023. Sunak's interviews were sampled from the time period of the Conservative Party leadership elections, occurring between May 1, 2022 and September 5, 2022.

3. 4. Data Analysis Method

　　After data collection was completed, the acquired interviews were analyzed using a grounded-theory approach. A grounded theory approach is an inductive process where specific scenarios or case studies are examined and developed into "abstract" concepts and patterns that embody the patterns found (Charmaz, 1996, p. 28). This method of analysis does not begin with a conceptual framework, but rather relies on an iterative process of identifying recurring codes which eventually form the conceptual framework (Chun Tie et al., 2019, p. 3). Hence, an inductive approach was deemed the most suitable option due to the unexplored and open-ended nature of the data. Additionally, there were no pre-existing frameworks that were applicable to the precise context of this study, and therefore an inductive approach was the best option. Specifically, narrative analysis was employed to analyze the data. Narrative analysis is a technique used to examine the narratives found in textual and visual materials (Lieblich et al., 1998). As the main goal of this thesis was to understand the existing dynamic between the ethnic backgrounds of politicians and their political stance, this approach aided in uncovering the

narratives by which Sunak and Yeşilgöz rationalize themselves in the public eye (Earthy & Cronin, 2008, p. 2).

Instead of analyzing the data at face value, the narrative analysis approach focuses on the way in which a subject constructs a story and "the role they play in the social construction of identity" (p. 3). Within this approach, there are several different analytical strategies, including a focus on either the content of the narrative or the form in which it is presented (p. 13). While form prioritizes the structure and language of the story, I chose to concentrate on the recurring themes found within the narratives, as well as the underlying motivations, symbols and significance of those to the storyteller (p. 13). Considering the research objectives of this study, my analysis was guided by the following questions: How do the politicians position themselves in their work? What are the politicians' attitudes towards the country and society? What policies and work aspects do they focus on? In what terms do the politicians discuss immigration? How do the politicians reflect on their own migration history?

As a grounded-theory approach does not rely on an existing conceptual framework, the coding process began without preconceived notions or expectations for the data (Charmaz, 1996, p. 37). The first phase of the inductive analysis approach was the initial coding phase, also known as line-by-line coding. To expedite the process, half of the units of analysis were coded manually, while the coding of the other half of the data was supplemented with AI coding. To prepare the data for AI coding, I removed the interviewer's questions from the transcripts. Subsequently, all of the units of analysis were placed in a qualitative data analysis software, namely ATLAS.ti, in which they were coded using the AI coding feature. To ensure an even division of the data for the manual coding phase, the total interview time per case study was divided by two. For each case study, approximately half of the data, or 118 minutes of interview footage, was allocated for the manual line-by-line coding phase. The other half was manually analyzed. During this stage, each line was assigned a code that encapsulated what was specifically being communicated, typically in the form of an action. Some questions that guided this process include: what is going on?, what is the person saying? (p. 38). This meticulous line-by-line phase ensured that the codes remained close to the data, and diminished the risk of adding personal interpretations (p. 37). Upon completion of the initial coding phase, the 1,430 unique codes that resulted were examined. The recurring codes were noted down and condensed to a list of 112 codes, which contained codes that appeared frequently and codes that were related

to the research objectives. Subsequently, the 1,080 codes that resulted from the AI coding process were analyzed. Specifically, the recurring codes were analyzed next to the list of manual initial codes. I evaluated the AI codes based on relevance and found that a lot of the codes were similar or in the same vein as the manual codes. Upon inspection, I was able to integrate some of the AI generated codes, such as goal-oriented and leadership, which articulated my manual codes in a more succinct manner. In some cases, I combined AI codes with manual codes to create a more comprehensive code. For instance, I used the patriotism code that emerged from AI coding and coupled it with the emphasizing national power/superiority code that I had manually retrieved. After integrating the relevant AI codes, the final list of condensed codes amounted to 122 codes.

The second stage of coding was the axial or focused coding phase. At this point, the second batch of interviews that had not yet been analyzed during manual initial coding were coded in a more selective and guided manner, using the condensed list of codes (Charmaz, 1996, p. 40). This phase of coding was more selective in terms of what was being coded, as I focused on data relevant to the research objectives (p. 40). As this was the first time I manually investigated the second batch of interviews, certain codes that were not part of the condensed list had to be added or adjusted to accommodate the data. For instance, it became apparent that the code "being confident" was a recurring theme in the interviews, and was eventually combined with "being competent". Overall, this was an iterative process in which the codes were adjusted until all relevant information was represented (p. 40). When the coding of the second half of the interviews was complete, I reviewed which codes were used most frequently and began compiling them in a list, grouping the codes that pertained to the same theme or topic. These groups naturally became part of different categories, forming the final coding framework (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). Using this framework, the final stage of coding, known as selective coding, was completed. Throughout the coding process, minor adjustments were made to the phrasing of the final codes, until they were as comprehensive of the data as possible.

The finalized coding framework that resulted from this inductive approach contained the following four categories: "Immigration Narratives", "Self Narratives", "Societal Narratives" and "Work Narratives", which coincided with the research objectives at hand.

Table 2. Coding Scheme.

Immigration Narratives	Self Narratives	Societal Narratives	Work Narratives
Abandoning/ supporting real refugees	Parental impact/influence	Helping those in need/minorities/the vulnerable	Making a difference/radical changes
Decreasing/ controlling immigration	Being self reflective/critical	Building brighter future/helping future generations	Representing party/identifying with party values
Categorizing/ differentiating immigrants	Being confident/competent	Listening to/speaking with the public	Comparing to other countries
Prioritizing certain immigrants	Being innovative/ progressive	Supporting deserving citizens	Acknowledging political shortcomings
Being a refugee/reflecting on migrant past	Being authentic/honest/ trustworthy	Patriotism/ emphasizing national power	Criticizing opponent/ opposition's rhetoric
	Being goal-oriented/ solution focused		
	Being committed/ hardworking/taking charge		

In the first category, titled "Immigration Narratives", all quotations related to policies or general attitudes about immigration were included. The final five codes under this category were

as follows: abandoning/supporting real refugees, decreasing/controlling immigration, categorizing/differentiating immigrants, prioritizing certain immigrants, and reflecting on migrant past. The second category of "Self Narratives" contained all information pertaining to the politicians themselves, and ways in which they characterized and spoke about themselves. This category comprised of seven final categories including: parental influence/impact, being self reflective/critical, being confident/competent, being innovative/progressive, being authentic/honest/trustworthy, being goal-oriented/solution focused, and being committed/hardworking/taking charge. The third category, titled "Societal Narratives", encompassed all data that reflected on citizens, the country and society in general. This category's five final codes were as follows: helping those in need/minorities/the vulnerable, building brighter future/helping future generations, listening to/speaking with the public, supporting deserving citizens, and patriotism/emphasizing national power. The fourth and final category, "Work Narratives", consisted of all the ways in which the politicians positioned themselves in their work lives and career. The following seven codes made up the final category: making a difference/radical changes, representing party/identifying with party values, comparison to other countries, acknowledging political shortcomings, criticizing opponent/opposition's rhetoric, and agreeing with/supporting colleagues. During the selective coding phase, the codes of "decreasing migrant inflow" and "controlling immigration/borders" were separate codes. However, when all units of analysis were coded holistically using the final coding framework, it became apparent that the codes coincided frequently, and did not necessarily have to be separate narratives.

4. Results

This chapter details the main findings that emerged after data analysis was completed. The most prominent narratives that emerged from the final categories of immigration narratives, self narratives, societal narratives and work narratives will be discussed. I translated all quotations taken from Dilan Yeşilgöz's interviews from the original Dutch to English.

4. 1. Immigration Narratives

Overall, Yeşilgöz employed narratives related to migrants, illegal immigration, and supporting refugees to a greater extent in interviews than Rishi Sunak did. In Yeşilgöz's interviews, decreasing and controlling immigration emerged as the most dominant narrative, appearing 46 times in 7 of the 10 sampled interviews. When the interview was guided to the topic of immigration, Yeşilgöz most commonly presented the subject matter in an unfavorable light. She made a recurring statement on this topic throughout her interviews, urging that "the inflow must be reduced" (NOS, 2023, 00:13:35–00:13:37). Hence, she highlighted immigration as a systemic problem and heavily advocated for a decrease in the amount of people being let into the country. Besides using this phrase repeatedly, Yeşilgöz expanded on her remark with the following: "But if you look at the number of people who come to our country for asylum, work and for study, that number is too high, that number must be reduced" (AT5, 2023, 00:07:43–00:07:48). Yeşilgöz also expressed her frustration with the issue, and framed the lack of border control as the root of the problem: "because we do not make those decisions at the front, we do not protect our external borders of Europe" (AT5, 2023, 00:23:41–00:23:47). In general, the Dutch politician approached immigration as a systemic problem that could be mended by reducing refugee admissions.

When observing Rishi Sunak's self-presentation style, he employed considerably less immigration-related narratives in his interviews. Similar to Yeşilgöz, he most frequently depended on the decreasing and controlling immigration narrative, which was found 11 times within 4 of the 12 studied interviews. When discussing the issue, Sunak often denounced the illegal means of immigration. When sharing his opinion, Sunak shared that it "has to be done legally, has to be done fairly, and when it's not and when we turn on our TV screens and see what's happening and people coming in small boats, it undermines trust in the system" (Rishi Sunak, 2022, 00:21:07–00:21:17). In another interview, Sunak showcased how important the

issue of immigration was to him, stating that "I voted for Brexit for many reasons, but in part because it gave us the ability to control our borders" (LBC, 2022, 00:22:04–00:22:08). Besides this, Sunak also reiterated his commitment to transforming the judicial system, if necessary, to take control of the borders. He stated: "We have to make the Rwanda policy work. I will do whatever it takes, including legal changes if required, to make it work so we get control of our borders" (Sky News, 2022b, 00:15:08–00:15:15).

Table 3. Immigration Narratives Code Frequency in Interviews with Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak.

Immigration Narratives	Total for Yeşilgöz (10 interviews)	Total for Sunak (12 interviews)
Abandoning/supporting real refugees	21	0
Decreasing/controlling immigration	46	11
Categorizing/differentiating immigrants	28	0
Prioritizing certain immigrants	19	5
Reflecting on migrant past	10	7

The second most dominant narrative that Yeşilgöz underscored was categorizing and differentiating immigrants, which appeared 28 times throughout her interviews. When discussing the high inflow of migrants in the Netherlands, Yeşilgöz frequently highlighted the diverse types of migrants that enter the country. She states that "there's actually three flows, if you build it up like that. Asylum, labor and international students" (De Correspondent, 2023, 00:03:30–00:03:35). Besides advocating for a more systematic division of the incoming migrants during the asylum process, she also exemplified the narrative by explaining that "if you want to keep room for people who flee because of real unsafety, then you also have to be able to make that distinction" (De Correspondent, 2023, 00:14:33–00:14:39). Conversely, Sunak never employed the narrative of differentiating types of immigrants in his interviews. Instead, the

second most common narrative he used was reflecting on his family's migrant past, which occurred 7 times across the 12 studied interviews. On the topic of immigration, Sunak would recall his family's migrant history, explaining that his "grandparents emigrated to this country decades ago with very little and built a life for themselves" (Mumsnet, 2022, 00:01:13–00:01:19). When retelling this history, Sunak often emphasized that his family emigrated to the United Kingdom legally. Furthermore, when questioned about his opinions on the topic, he responded with statements such as: "it's because my family and millions like them were welcomed here legally" (Guardian News, 2022, 00:00:19–00:00:23).

Upon inspecting Table 3, it is interesting to note that the second most dominant narrative used by Sunak of reflecting on his migrant past is the least recurring narrative of Yeşilgöz's. Perhaps because her migrant status is more recent than that of Sunak's, she attempts to create more distance with her past, not letting it define her in the eyes of others. Furthermore, unlike Yeşilgöz, Sunak did not partake in addressing real refugees or differentiating types of refugees. Instead, he justified the need to control immigration by emphasizing the international demand and appeal of living in the United Kingdom. A co-occurrence was found in Sunak's interviews between the narrative of controlling immigration and that of patriotism and emphasizing national power. When questioned about the act of rejecting legal asylum seekers, Sunak explained that "Of course, at any moment in time, Andrew, there are probably a billion people that would love to move to the UK because this is an amazing country but we clearly can't accept all of those" (Guardian News, 2022, 00:00:48–00:00:57). Hence, Sunak justified the need to control immigration by the alleged quantity of people wanting to emigrate to the United Kingdom.

4. 2. Self Narratives

When it came to positioning herself in interview settings, Yeşilgöz most commonly opted to present herself as a committed, hardworking politician who was willing to take charge in her political surroundings. This type of narrative was employed 26 times throughout 8 of the 10 interviews. When Yeşilgöz discussed ongoing societal issues or themes that she was passionate about, such as migration or public safety, she indicated her commitment to the topics by highlighting her hands-on attitude. When reflecting on the party's past mistakes and her attitude towards their future governing, she explains that she wants to: "grab the opportunity with both hands. And give it our everything" (NOS, 2023, 00:15:23–00:15:38). Moreover, Yeşilgöz often

emphasized how she was willing and able to take the responsibility of leading the country. When speaking about the pressure of working in politics, she stated that "These are very exciting times as a party leader with the campaign and elections. That's all part of it, but I have always felt that responsibility from the very first day in Amsterdam" (AT5, 2023, 00:04:29–00:04:38). Besides expressing her dedication for her work, Yeşilgöz also shared her passion for her work when explaining her general work approach: "My motto is get involved, always. So I will continue to do that" (Shownieuws, 2023, 00:14:02–00:14:06). In this interview, she discussed her potential role as Prime Minister, and envisioned herself continuing her existing work against antisemitism, in addition to the responsibilities of her new position.

For Rishi Sunak, being confident and competent was used most frequently to position himself in the interviews. This narrative was employed a total of 45 times in 9 of the 12 studied interviews. One way that Sunak detailed his self-confidence and competence was by referencing his past track record. For instance, he recalled the following: "I was the Chancellor who oversaw the largest increase in the defense budget since the end of the Cold War. That's my track record" (Sky News, 2022c, 00:06:09–00:06:17). Furthermore, when discussing his plans for the future, Sunak tended to make absolute statements about what he was going to do as Prime Minister. When speaking about his conservative values, he states the following: "I will deliver those in government to make our country the best place in the world to work, to live, to raise a family. But I will also go and deliver that general election victory for us" (LBC, 2022, 00:06:37–00:06:46). The confidence narrative is further present in Sunak's interview through the certainty with which he conveys his own skills and capabilities. While being questioned about his unconventional Rwanda policy, he positions himself as being a politician that does not simply speak about his ideas, but also delivers them successfully. He states: "I actually delivered policies that worked and made a difference, which by the way were done in record time and were radical and I will bring that same sense of grip and urgency and competence to all these other challenges" (Sky News, 2022b, 00:08:47–00:08:57).

The second most dominant self narrative that Yeşilgöz depended on was being goal-oriented and solution-focused. When discussing which other political parties the VVD would be willing to work with, Yeşilgöz consistently answered "in the end it really comes down to with which parties can we find really good solutions for this country" (NPO Radio 1, 2023, 00:18:11–00:18:16). She made it clear that she did not have preferences about which parties she

wanted to work with, but rather wanted to focus on being able to solve people's problems. In fact, Yeşilgöz even shared that her priority was the following: "I want to focus this campaign mainly on the problems that people experience and how we can solve them" (NPO Radio 1, 2023, 00:02:16–00:02:22). Interestingly enough, Sunak used the goal-oriented narrative less frequently than any other self narratives. Instead, Sunak's second most prominent self narrative was that of the hardworking, committed politician. When speaking candidly about some of the challenges he was facing regarding his busy work schedule, he emphasized that "I want to be the best possible person I can in this job because a lot of people are counting on me to do a really good job" (Sky News, 2022a, 00:12:35–00:12:43). On top of that, he illustrated his commitment to the job when explaining what he would do if he was to become Prime Minister: "I'm going to invest whatever it takes to keep you, your families, and our country safe because that's the first duty of a Prime Minister" (Rishi Sunak, 2022, 00:07:35–00:07:42).

Table 4. Self Narratives Code Frequency in Interviews with Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak.

Self Narratives	Total for Yeşilgöz (10 interviews)	Total for Sunak (12 interviews)
Parental impact/influence	5	16
Being self reflective/critical	19	3
Being confident/competent	9	45
Being innovative/progressive	6	12
Being authentic/honest/trustworthy	14	17
Being goal-oriented/solution focused	21	2
Being committed/hardworking/taking charge	26	36

There was a correlation found between the narrative of making a difference or radical change, and that of being confident and competent. For Sunak, these motifs were quite interrelated as he relied on his past political successes to justify his ability to successfully implement radical changes in government. The biggest disparity between Yeşilgöz and Sunak's sense of self narration was that Sunak relied heavily on the narrative of being confident and competent, while Yeşilgöz barely did. Instead, she positioned herself as self-reflective and critical of the past mistakes her political party had made. The reason Sunak employed the competent narrative so often could be due to him being less well known to the public. While both politicians have worked in the field for many years, Yeşilgöz has been present in the media and known by the public for a longer period of time. Hence, this emphasis on Sunak's competency could be to overcompensate for the deficient relationship he had with the public up until that moment.

4. 3. Societal Narratives

In the realm of societal narratives, Yeşilgöz relied most heavily on one particular motif, which was that of supporting deserving citizens. In this narrative, which was featured 39 times in 9 of the 10 interviews, Yeşilgöz indicated her loyalty to serving the public. For instance, when asked if she would be willing to work with a political leader who was known to discriminate against Muslims, she replied "No, I think this country deserves a leader who is there for everyone" (WNL, 2023, 00:00:39–00:00:41). Overall, Yeşilgöz positioned herself as empathetic to all, particularly focusing on supporting the middle working class. She made it clear that she was an opponent of increasing taxes any further, stating that "Ordinary people with ordinary jobs, with an excellent income are already lying awake thinking, can I still send my child on a school trip?" (AT5, 2023, 00:15:39–00:15:45). On top of this, she also repeated throughout her interviews that she believes that everyone deserves to live in a society that is respectful of people's differences. She shared the following: "I want children to grow up in a society or in a family where they know what that society looks like. That everyone has the same rights as you" (De Correspondent, 2023, 00:38:57–00:39:02).

Similarly to Yeşilgöz, Sunak frequented the narrative of supporting deserving citizens, which appeared a total of 45 times across all of the 12 studied interviews. Just as Yeşilgöz emphasized her support for the average citizen through tax reductions, Rishi shared a similar

sentiment. When speaking of his proposed tax schemes, he stated that "I actually chose to target them specifically in a way that is beneficial for those on low and middle incomes" (Sky News, 2022a, 00:05:24–00:05:30). While Yeşilgöz verbalized her worry by sympathizing with the middle class, Sunak exhibited his support for deserving citizens through an economic lens. After discussing the economic benefits he introduced during the pandemic, he continued by stating that "I'd go further as Prime Minister to make sure that those people do not face the risk of destitution this winter. That wouldn't be right, it wouldn't be moral" (Rishi Sunak, 2022, 00:11:08–00:11:15). He continued this trend of offering fiscal aid to alleviate inflationary pressures, promising the following plan: "I want to step in and help people more. I announced enormous support as Chancellor, as Prime Minister I'll go further because the situation has deteriorated" (Sky News, 2022b, 00:04:26–00:04:32).

Table 5. Societal Narratives Code Frequency in Interviews with Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak.

Societal Narratives	Total for Yeşilgöz (10 interviews)	Total for Sunak (12 interviews)
Helping those in need/minorities/the vulnerable	20	35
Building brighter future/helping future generations	8	36
Listening to/speaking with the public	22	13
Supporting deserving citizens	39	45
Patriotism/emphasizing national power	5	35

Besides supporting deserving citizens, Yeşilgöz operated using two other prominent narratives. The first of the two was listening to or speaking with the public, which appeared 22 times. A phrase that was repeated often was "Let's let the voter speak first", which she used

whenever there were questions about which political parties Yeşilgöz and the VVD would be willing to collaborate with (NPO Radio 1, 2023, 00:01:37–00:01:40). On one specific occasion when Yeşilgöz's political party was accused of accepting substantial donations in return for political power, she adamantly rejected the claim. She validated her position by emphasizing her availability to the public, stating that "Every police officer can contact me on the street every day, via my DMs on Twitter, and half of them also have my mobile number. That applies to an incredible number of people" (BNR, 2023, 00:04:03–00:04:11). The second prevalent narrative for Yeşilgöz was that of helping people in need, which presented itself 20 times across the interviews. Within this narrative, Yeşilgöz highlighted VVD's philosophy of taking care of the people who needed their support. She shared: "We help you when you need it, and we go out of your way when you no longer need us" (NOS, 2023, 00:07:52–00:07:55).

Besides the dominant narrative, Sunak also scored high in the other categories of helping those in need, building a brighter future and helping future generations, as well as patriotism and emphasizing national power. With a frequency of 36, building a brighter future and helping future generations was a narrative that the British Chancellor often relied on. As he was constantly challenged on his proposed measures against the rising rates of inflation, he relied on painting an optimistic vision of the future. He explained his outlook with the following: "we are very committed to leveling up, you know, what does it mean to me, it means making sure people, wherever they happen to grow up and live in the UK, feel that they've got fantastic opportunity ahead of them" (Bloomberg Television, 2022, 00:12:29–00:12:40). There was also a co-occurrence found with this code and that of being innovative, as Sunak often justified his future vision through the innovative solutions he was introducing, such as freeports. Furthermore, Sunak stressed his desire to help those in need in the winter months a total of 35 times, mentioning specifically the elderly, pensioners and families with lower income. When questioned about whether his economic decisions were beneficial for citizens with lower incomes, Sunak was quick to share that "the actions I've taken over the past couple of years have ensured that we have protected those on the lowest incomes the most" (Sky News, 2022a, 00:04:40–00:04:45). Another code appeared frequently, namely the patriotism and emphasizing national power narrative. When Sunak praised his country, this often coincided with him highlighting his migrant history:

Look, I'm the product of this country's extraordinarily compassionate approach to welcoming immigrants to our shores. My family are beneficiaries of that, probably others in the audience, and it's something that we should all feel really proud of. It's something that Britain is amazing at, and even most recently, Ukraine, Hong Kong, Syria, Afghanistan, we showed our compassion (Sky News, 2022c, 00:13:30–00:04:48).

Overall, Sunak acknowledged the compassion that the United Kingdom showed his family and praised the country for the reception they experienced. At the same time, however, he reiterated that his family entered the country legally, and that the illegal "small boat crossings are wrong, and they need to stop" (Sky News, 2022c, 00:14:03–00:14:06). Furthermore, two correlations were found with the supporting deserving citizens code, firstly with the narrative of making a difference or radical change, and secondly with the narrative of building a brighter future or helping future generations. These three narratives were particularly interrelated in Sunak's rhetoric, as he followed the logic of wanting to help those in need, through the means of radical change, in order to construct a prosperous future for the coming generations.

4. 4. Work Narratives

In the final category containing narratives related to work attitudes, Yeşilgöz engaged with a combination of narratives, while Sunak relied more heavily on a specific one. Yeşilgöz's most used narrative was a tie between representing her political party and criticizing the opposition's rhetoric, which both appeared 25 times. She often acted as a spokesperson for her affiliated political party, the VVD, highlighting situations in which their political party worked hard or succeeded. This occurred in 8 of the 10 total interviews. For instance, when questioned about their support for entrepreneurs, she stated that "I think that as VVD we have really done our best in this regard" (NPO Radio 1, 2023, 00:26:22–00:26:25). Besides this, she also frequently identified as part of the VVD, embodying their attitude and way of being: "And as a VVD member, I obviously do this in VVD style" (AT5, 2023, 00:26:22–00:26:25). Yeşilgöz also tended to criticize her opposition, which happened in 6 of the 10 interviews. She directly called out the names of the candidates she criticized, denouncing their propositions and political measures. For instance, when addressing her rival candidates, she stated: "Look, whether you

have Timmermans or Wilders, both have plans for this country that are really bad" (WNL, 2023, 00:01:52–00:01:58). Yeşilgöz was also very candid about her distaste for the leftist approach to politics: "But that whole reflex, almost fetishism, that you see on the left of only increasing and increasing taxes. I think that has reached its limits" (De Correspondent, 2023, 00:44:48–00:44:57).

Table 6. Work Narratives Code Frequency in Interviews with Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak.

Work Narratives	Total for Yeşilgöz (10 interviews)	Total for Sunak (12 interviews)
Making a difference/radical changes	19	52
Representing political party/identifying with party values	25	12
Comparing to other countries	15	17
Acknowledging political shortcoming	23	3
Criticizing opponent/opposition's rhetoric	25	9
Agreeing with/supporting colleagues	10	13

Whilst Yeşilgöz focused on representing and defending her party against the critique they faced during the campaign period, Sunak poured his efforts into underscoring the impact that he had made throughout his political career. The narrative of making a difference or radical changes was featured 52 times across 11 of the 12 studied interviews. Typically, Sunak did this in the style of an economist, using the persuasiveness of numbers to convince and impress viewers. For instance, he reminded the public in one of the interviews that "there's a very significant tax cut coming in for 30 million people in work that's worth six billion pounds" (Bloomberg Television, 2022, 00:07:51–00:07:57). He continued to explain such measures by illustrating their impact on the economy and people's lives:

The financial service reforms that we're doing are going to have a real impact on people. I'll give you an example. By reforming the rules on our insurance companies, we can unlock tens of billions of pounds of capital out of those companies that can then be invested around the UK in real businesses. And that's going to support people's jobs, it's going to support their livelihoods. So these are some pretty big things (LBC, 2022, 00:16:44–00:17:06).

Furthermore, Sunak frequently highlighted how radical the change he was willing to make was, using past accomplishments as an example: "I stepped up at that moment to act boldly and radically to design things that had never been done before in this country" (Sky News, 2022b, 00:00:45–00:00:51). Whenever Sunak was challenged by an interviewer, he utilized impressive numbers and hypothetical futures to stand his ground.

The second most dominant code that Yeşilgöz capitalized on in her interviews was acknowledging political shortcomings, which presented itself 23 times. While Yeşilgöz loyally represented her party and actively identified as a member of the VVD, she also frequently took accountability and reflected on past mistakes. She often took responsibility for shortcomings on behalf of the VVD: "I also thought to myself, how could we let it get to this point? And that happens when you don't listen on time. And we were there ourselves, so I take that responsibility" (Nieuwsuur, 2023, 00:05:16–00:05:24). Yeşilgöz also framed these moments as a learning experience, stating things like: "I think we could have organized this much better and should now take those lessons with us for the next ten, twenty, thirty years" (WNL, 2023, 00:18:51–00:18:57). Contrarily, Sunak employed the narrative of acknowledging his political shortcomings a mere three times. Instead, he enlisted the comparison to other countries as his second most prominent narrative, appearing 17 times. This type of narrative served to reassure the public and normalize certain precautionary measures. When discussing increasing corporation taxes, he comforts the public by sharing that "of all the big economies that we compete with, it will still be the lowest rate. France, Germany, Italy, America, Canada, Japan. We'll have the lowest rate" (LBC, 2022, 00:13:11–00:13:20). Besides using other countries to put economic situations into perspective, Sunak also used the comparison as an opportunity triumph over the country's successes:

Other economies and other countries are also now fulfilling or planning to fulfill

their NATO obligations of spending 2% of their GDP on defense. That's

something that we've done for years, when the vast majority of other countries

have not. So actually, it's a good thing for our collective security that other

countries are catching up to where we have been and continue to lead (Bloomberg

Television, 2022, 00:04:55–00:05:15).

There was a co-occurrence found between comparing to other countries and the narrative of patriotism and emphasizing national power. As presented above, Sunak used other countries to position the United Kingdom as the superior nation.

5. Conclusion & Discussion

This thesis aimed to investigate the self-presentation of minority politicians in an interview setting during their electoral campaigns. Considering their migrant backgrounds and their work being the representation of the nations they emigrated to, I was particularly interested in the way the politicians positioned themselves in relation to topics such as immigration, national identity, and identification with their migrant pasts. This thesis took a comparative approach between two politicians who maintained similar attitudes towards immigration, and were often challenged on their positions considering their migrant backgrounds. At the same time, Yeşilgöz and Sunak presented interesting differences, such as their gender and their migrant histories. With these contextual similarities and disparities in mind, many differences were found in the way that Dilan Yeşilgöz and Rishi Sunak presented themselves in electoral campaign interviews in terms of how they spoke about immigration, themselves, society and their work attitudes.

5. 1. The Immigration Narratives of Ethnic Minority Politicians

Overall, ethnic minority politicians led their discussions on immigration by focusing on a need to decrease immigration, and a desire to increase border control. Nevertheless, Yeşilgöz and Sunak were found to narrate immigration related topics such as immigration policies, asylum seekers, and border control in quite a different way. In general, Yeşilgöz spoke about immigration issues more frequently and in a more diverse manner than Sunak did. She most commonly spoke about immigration in relation to needing to control the amount of refugees being accepted into the country. According to her, a decrease in the inflow of migrants was the most effective solution to improving domestic issues, such as the housing crisis. Additionally, Yeşilgöz placed emphasis on real refugees, or people who were fleeing their countries of origin due to threats to safety. She positioned herself as a helper to these asylum seekers, such as the Ukrainians that were mass accepted into the Netherlands, and established that the only moral choice would be prioritizing these refugees. Sunak positioned himself as a fighter for the nation, protecting the borders of the country against the rampant illegal immigration that the borders of the United Kingdom were allegedly experiencing. He rationalized his extensive anti-immigration plan by blaming the country for being too appealing to foreigners. He narrated his migrant past by expressing gratitude for the privileged position his family was in when they were accepted

into the country, decades earlier. Additionally, Sunak placed emphasis on the fact that his reality of emigration was an achievable goal for other migrants. However, he underscored that migrants would only be accepted legally, and that the country was looking for innovative thinkers that added value to society.

Yeşilgöz's tendency to differentiate between types of asylum seekers and her inclination to prioritize war-time refugees could be explained by her own past as an asylum seeker. As she herself has experienced the need to flee her country of origin to avoid a threatening situation, she might feel an affinity with immigrants in a similar situation. Furthermore, Yeşilgöz's dependency on the narrative of needing to decrease the inflow of migrants could be due to it being a logical argument. Considering that the Netherlands is a densely populated country that is experiencing a housing crisis in which citizens with varying financial situations are struggling to find affordable housing, decreasing the amount of immigrants that are accepted becomes a logical and timely solution that could sound appealing to an affected audience (Henley, 2024, para. 6-9). Although Sunak embraced his family's migration background when challenged on the topic, he always matched this narrative by praising the United Kingdom, highlighting how fortunate his family has been to be able to capitalize on the opportunity.

This is reminiscent of the narrative that many other minority background politicians use. For instance, British conservative Priti Patel, whose family is of Indian descent, validated her immigration stance by expressing gratitude to the United Kingdom for accepting her family decades before (Home Secretary Priti Patel speech, 2021, para. 28-33). On top of this, she stressed the need to take legal control of the situation, organizing the Rwanda relocation scheme that would deport refugees to Rwanda (Mughal, 2022, para. 7). Hence, the combination of stressing the need to control immigration while simultaneously complimenting the nation is a recurring strategy for ethnic minority politicians. Sunak's seeming borderline disdain for illegal immigrants and his inability to sympathize with their condition could be due to him being a third-generation immigrant, who has never experienced the financial struggles that most immigrants do. His confidence in making illegal immigrants the scapegoat could be explained by his family having legally emigrated to the United Kingdom, making this judicial factor the only difference he can use to rationalize his stance.

One of the political image-making techniques that politicians rely on to craft their image to the public is the appeal of logos. This type of self-presentation approach attempts to appeal to

the audience's logical side, which is precisely what Yeşilgöz was found to do in her narration on immigration policies. As her persistent stance on immigration may appear illogical due to her own migrant past, she relies more heavily on the appeal of logos to justify her narratives surrounding immigration. In order to better understand the relationship between immigration ideologies and politicians with a migrant background, future studies could increase the scope of this thesis to include more case studies with varying types of immigrants. As this thesis could only compare a first and third-generation migrant, it is difficult to determine whether there is a correlation between a politician's immigration rhetoric and the amount of time that has passed since the migrant or their family emigrated.

These findings connect to the literature in many different areas. The tendency of Sunak to praise the United Kingdom when speaking of his migrant roots highlights his usage of the rhetoric of pathos. He appeals to the emotions of the public to entice the audience through the shared emotion of national pride (Zhiyong, 2016, p. 66-73). Furthermore, while the literature presented ethnic minority politicians that used their background to counter negative stereotypes about their countries of origin, this thesis found that the politicians only spoke about their backgrounds in a superficial manner (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 594). However, in line with the literature, minority politicians emphasized their sense of belonging to the countries they or their families had emigrated to, illustrating how their immigration stories were part of the history of the country (p. 594).

In line with the literature on the representation of migrants, Sunak maintained the same stereotypical characterization of migrants as a threat to the nation state (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1164). Ironically, he was not deterred by his family's past emigration from Tanzania, in fact his proposed solution to the alleged refugee crisis was to deport illegal immigrants to another East African country, namely Rwanda. Evidently, Sunak echoed the ethnocentric rhetoric of Western hegemonic discourses (Georgiou, 2018, p. 50). This further confirms that even when a political representative historically identifies as a migrant and physically appears to be an ethnic minority, they can still disregard the agency of migrants and reproduce limiting narratives about them from an outsider's perspective. Additionally, the simplicity of Sunak's solution to deport all refugees to a non-Western country highlights the binary portrayal of the non-Western "Other" in relation to the righteous Western (Hall, 2021, p. 101). He himself embodies "the Occident", sending "the Orient" back to where they belong (Said, 1979, p. 2). Even though

Yeşilgöz and Sunak both primarily relied on the decreasing and controlling immigration narrative, future research should thoroughly analyze the rhetorical differences that exist between different generations of immigrants.

5. 2. The Self Narratives of Ethnic Minority Politicians

In general, ethnic minority politicians presented themselves in terms of their commitment to improving the living conditions of civilians, stressing their willingness to devote their careers and lives to that mission. Besides their shared propensity to portray themselves as hardworking politicians, Yeşilgöz and Sunak spoke about themselves in unique ways. Yeşilgöz positioned herself as an active, inspired and dedicated politician who was willing to do whatever it takes to help the public and improve the societal state, wherever it was needed. As the Dutch government system operates on a coalition system, political parties must work together to pass laws. Therefore, Yeşilgöz strategically positioned herself as open to cooperating with other political parties, portraying herself as a self-aware and reflective individual who was able to learn from past mistakes. Conversely, Sunak carried a more pompous energy. He frequently referenced his past successes, such as his introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and new freeports, to legitimize his competency to be Prime Minister. He expressed confidence in his ability to save the country from its escalating inflationary pressures, and ensured a brighter future for British citizens.

Sunak might have placed extra stress on this competence narrative due to him being less accredited in the public eye than his Dutch counterpart. Whenever interviewers raised their doubts about his economic approaches, he referenced his first public appearance, during which he introduced his furlough scheme. As this proposal eventually protected the jobs of millions of working citizens during the pandemic, he depended on this accomplishment to convince the public of his dependability in times of need (Plummer & Palumbo, 2021, para. 3). Yeşilgöz's more timid and forward-looking attitude could be explained by the history of the political party she represents, and the criticism they have faced in not delivering policies on subjects such as the nitrogen crisis (Den Hartog, 2022, para. 1). Besides taking responsibility for the role she played, she reiterated her vision for an improved society, including the concrete measures needed to accomplish this future societal state. Moreover, Yeşilgöz's consistent manner of expressing her commitment to the public and the country in general could be an overcompensation for her not

being native to the country. As her distinctly foreign-sounding name and appearance indicate that she is not of Dutch descent, she might subconsciously feel the need to magnify her identification with the country. This is similar to American conservative politician Nikki Haley, who besides overemphasizing her dedication to the United States, made a conscious decision to go by her inconspicuous middle name, as opposed to her legal Indian name, Nimarata (Shah, 2023, para. 19).

In general, the physical and personified indicators that reveal politicians as ethnic minorities could consciously or subconsciously motivate them to overemphasize their dedication to the nation and their devotion to their work. By doing so, they attempt to prove their loyalty to the country, and persuade citizens that might feel apprehensive in supporting them due to their heritage. However, it is unknown whether this societal pressure applies to all ethnic minority politicians, or just to those that maintain conservative-leaning immigration views. Therefore, future research could perform a comparison between anti-immigration politicians, such as Suella Braverman and Nikki Haley, and politicians that celebrate immigration, such as Barack Obama or Kauthar Bouchallikht.

The way in which both politicians presented themselves is observed to be directly in line with the literature on political communication methods, specifically the communication strategy of service-oriented homestyle communication. This communication strategy occurs when politicians are found to stress their hardworking nature and the responsibility they feel in their politicking, which is precisely what both Yeşilgöz and Sunak were found to do (Lilleker, Koc-Michalska, 2013, p. 194). Further alignment with the literature was found in the manner that Nigerian politicians represented the marginalized women of the nation, which occurred most commonly through the self-presentational strategy of self-promotion (Igwebuike & Chimuanya, 2023, p. 86). This is similar to the way in which Sunak foregrounded his political competencies, and promoted himself in a qualified light in order to validate his political position. Hence, this thesis expanded on the literature by identifying that minority politicians also capitalize on the strategy of self-promotion to legitimize themselves in the public eye. Furthermore, the politicians at hand mostly followed gender stereotypical self-expressions. Yeşilgöz presented herself as reliable and committed to making the lives of all citizens better, while Sunak presented himself as competent and self-confident (Diedkova, 2024, p. 86). Lastly, in line with the literature, Yeşilgöz and Sunak mirrored the behavior of populist leaders who focused more on presenting

their professional selves, and refrained from sharing too much of their personal lives (Bast et al., 2022, p. 374). However, their inclination to present more formally could also be attributed to the nature of the interview setting.

5. 3. The Societal Narratives of Ethnic Minority Politicians

In general, ethnic minority politicians were found to reflect on society and the public through the perspective of supporting deserving citizens. When speaking on societal matters or the politician's relationship with the public, they tended to emphasize their desire to support and reward the public, and characterized them as deserving of this attention and care. For Yeşilgöz, this support was specifically focused on the proletariat, in which she empathized with the ordinary working citizen, their undeserving financial struggles, and expressed an urge to fix them. Her ultimate goal was to gradually shape a society in which everyone has the right and ability to be themselves, and be respected by others. Sunak shared the sentiment of helping deserving citizens, often reiterating his intention to aid the most vulnerable in society, including the elderly, pensioners, and families with lower incomes. Due to his privileged upbringing and his accumulated wealth, he was often challenged on his ability to empathize with people with different socioeconomic statuses. This topic was particularly relevant as a video clip had resurfaced from a decades old documentary in which he mentioned not having any working-class friends. Perhaps in an attempt to counter this characterization and reform his reputation, he stressed his desire to help the less fortunate, often emphasizing how his proposed measures aided economically vulnerable groups.

While the overarching focus for both politicians was on improving the living conditions of citizens, Yeşilgöz was also unwavering in her availability to listen and engage with the public at all times. She underscored her consistent communication with the citizens and stakeholders she met through her politicking. Potentially, this could be a way for her to demonstrate her modesty, showcasing that she is not superior to other citizens and has their interests at heart. Sunak presented his utility to the public through the lens of economics, the field he is most knowledgeable and comfortable in. Interestingly enough, when speaking on his ambitions to fiscally aid those in need over the winter months, he mentioned his motivations to do so were related to it being the only moral decision, rather than sincerely wanting to make a difference. Hence, while the political leaders used similar narratives, the underlying motifs and discourses

that emerged were different. Additionally, Sunak's propensity to praise the United Kingdom while reflecting on his family's migration past highlights his self-awareness of the contentious situation he is in. As a third-generation immigrant who is actively working to deport asylum seekers, he strategically compliments the country's past generosity towards immigrants when asked about his family's immigration story. Hereby, he reminds the public of how charitable the country has been towards immigrants in the past, further validating his position in enforcing more severe measures against immigration. Furthermore, this tendency to praise and idealize their country of destination could be an attempt to stress the politician's identification with the nation, while simultaneously distancing themselves from their country of origin. Sunak's narrative mimics that of American politician Nikki Haley, who frames the United States as "the best country in the world", downplaying certain societal issues, such as racism, in order to provoke a collective sense of patriotism amongst the public (Kinnard & Brown, 2024, para. 25).

In line with literature, politicians conjure feelings of patriotism with the public in times of war or uncertainty, such as the post-pandemic political climate, in order to create a sense of national unity (Osler, 2009, p. 88). Hence, ethnic minority politicians also utilize this strategy, potentially even more than non-minority politicians, to affirm their identification with the nation and strengthen their bond with the public. Another connection to the literature was found in the correlation between nationalism and immigration control, as countries with nationalist agendas were found to have stricter immigration views (Ko & Choi, 2022, p. 22). This thesis further confirms this trend, and presents that ethnic minority politicians play a role in this national sentiment. Additionally, politicians have been previously found to use the rhetoric of ethos to portray themselves as a trustworthy character, intentionally crafting their political image. One way in which politicians create an image of an authentic individual is by capitalizing on shared collective sentiments, such as national pride (Zhiyong, 2016, p. 73). Evidently, ethnic minority politicians, particularly Sunak, found this narrative to be an effective way to persuade the public. Past research on ethnic minorities showcased that parliamentary members used political narratives to platform silenced cultures and overturn prevailing stereotypes. However, this thesis found that politicians used societal narratives that focused on helping vulnerable groups, yet never made a specific effort to aid ethnic minority groups (Mügge & Runderkamp, 2024, p. 594).

As this thesis focused more on the thematic content of the interviews, linguistic devices or rhetoric that was used to construct the politician's image could have fallen outside of the scope

of the research. Therefore, future research on this subject could use discourse analysis to deconstruct the schools of meaning that shape the rhetoric of the politicians, focusing on the way they use this discourse to justify their political activities. This data analysis method will aid in pinpointing the differences and similarities between politicians who utilize similar narratives, such as Yeşilgöz and Sunak with the deserving citizen narrative, while building their arguments in diverging ways. This research approach would supplement this thesis, gaining further insight on how minority politicians construct their world view, and consequently their political narratives. Another limitation of the chosen methodology is that the research design lacks a framework to compare to ethnic majority politicians. Future research could compare ethnic minority and ethnic majority politicians, investigating their use of patriotic and nationalistic narratives. This would allow for a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between minority politicians and nationalism, and whether this narrative is more prevalent in their self-presentation to compensate for their ethnic identities.

5. 4. The Work Narratives of Ethnic Minority Politicians

Overall, ethnic minority politicians were found to narrate their work life in terms of making radical changes, criticizing opponents, and representing their party values. However, Yeşilgöz and Sunak were not aligned on which work narratives they found important. Yeşilgöz pulled from a diverse set of narratives. As she campaigned not only for herself but also on behalf of her affiliated political party, Yeşilgöz focused on setting herself and the VVD apart from the opposition. This was done by making their party appear as a united front, and by pinpointing the weaknesses of the opposition. While Yeşilgöz did not necessarily reveal her nationalism by emphasizing her country's superiority like Sunak did, she did underscore her affiliation with her political party. The importance she placed on embodying the VVD spirit through her politicking could be a way for her to solidify her identity within the Netherlands, affirming her membership with an in-group that represents the country. Potentially, her emphasis on identifying with her political party could be a compensation for the fact that external factors, such as her name and physical appearance, do not mimic that of the typical Dutch politician. Another reason for her strong commitment to the VVD could be explained by her past affiliation with left-wing parties, such as the SP and Groen-Links, which Yeşilgöz previously worked for.

Sunak was overwhelmingly focused on the narrative of making radical changes, which he utilized as often as possible to communicate his dedication to reforming political and economic systems. He often narrated his ambitions in terms of making profound economic reforms and interventions related to topics such as immigration. He also candidly spoke about his willingness to take risks throughout this process, often disregarding the potential detrimental impact this could have on the vulnerable social groups that he claimed to want to help. Sunak's attempt to captivate the public in this manner could be a consequence of him being the underdog in the electoral race against Liz Truss. In this position, he might have felt the need to promise transformational change in order to stand out from his opponent. Additionally, as one of the main concerns for the public at the time of the elections was the increasing inflation that citizens were experiencing, Sunak was able to use his economic expertise to validate his economic plans. Narratives urging for radical change in areas like immigration are reminiscent of the growing populist rhetoric that is present in the discourse of European political leaders. For instance, the Dutch Geert Wilders and the French Marine Le Pen both advocate for strict immigration laws, urging for radical change in European Union arrangements (Nowak & Brandford, 2024, para. 34-35). This indicates that, besides ethnic majority politicians, ethnic minority politicians are also found to utilize populist rhetoric to entice the public.

As Yeşilgöz did not commit to populist rhetoric to the same extent as Sunak did in terms of her work approach, views on immigration, and national pride, this raises the question of whether gender is a mediating factor in how ethnic minority politicians present themselves. Future research on the topic could explore gender-based differences in the self-presentation of minority politicians, providing further insights beyond the scope of this thesis. In line with the literature on candidates and their affiliation with their political party, Yeşilgöz's pronominal choices often reflected her membership with the party (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 3265). She was passionate about her belonging to the VVD, and did not only communicate this through her language, but also frequently attributed her work approach and outlook on life to the political party. In this sense, Yeşilgöz became a "brandidate" who persistently embodied the ideologies of the VVD through her politicking (Harrison et al., 2023, p. 60). However, contrary to the literature, this did not make her a symbol for ethnic minority politicians, but rather affirmed her belonging to the VVD and consequently, her identification with the Netherlands (p. 59).

After investigating minority politicians with migrant roots through the lens of immigration, personal narratives, societal perspectives, and work approach, several things are evident. Due to their hypocritical stances, ethnic minority politicians can appear slightly sanctimonious, walking a fine line between accommodating war-time refugees and embodying imperialist attitudes. While they position themselves in a similar manner to ethnic majority leaders by emphasizing their dedication to improving societal conditions, they mostly neglect their own migration histories, and instead focus on building a brighter future for citizens. Whether they position themselves in a humble or self-assured manner, they are relentless about their ambitions to make a profound impact, and tend to emphasize their national belonging. Nevertheless, a lot is still unknown about the self-presentation and rhetoric used by ethnic minority politicians, especially those who hold controversial immigration ideologies. With the growing right-wing populist wave and the relevance of immigration as conflicts continue to escalate in Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Ukraine and more, the narratives of these political leaders are more critical than ever. By embodying a strong anti-immigration stance, these minority politicians are not only condoning the mistreatment of asylum seekers, but inevitably become the new face of white supremacy.

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Appendix A

Selective Coding Codebook

Code	Code Group 1	Code Group 2	Code Group 3	Code Group 4
Abandoning/supporting real refugees	Immigration Narratives			
Acknowledging political shortcomings		Work/Political Narratives		
Agreeing with/supporting colleagues		Work/Political Narratives		
Being a refugee/reflecting on migrant past	Immigration Narratives			
Being authentic/honest/trustworthy			Self Narratives	
Being committed/hardworking/taking charge			Self Narratives	
Being confident/competent			Self Narratives	
Being goal-oriented/solution focused			Self Narratives	
Being innovative/progressive			Self Narratives	
Being self reflective/critical			Self Narratives	
Building brighter future/helping future generations				Societal Narratives
Categorizing/differentiating immigrants	Immigration Narratives			
Celebrating/encouraging diversity				Societal Narratives

Comparing to other countries/politicians/parties		Work/Political Narratives	
Controlling immigration/borders	Immigration Narratives		
Criticizing opponent/opposition's rhetoric		Work/Political Narratives	
Decreasing migrant inflow	Immigration Narratives		
Helping those in need/minorities/the vulnerable			Societal Narratives
Listening to/speaking with the public			Societal Narratives
Making a difference/radical changes		Work/Political Narratives	
Making difficult decisions		Work/Political Narratives	
Parental impact/influence		Self Narratives	
Patriotism/emphasizing national power			Societal Narratives
Prioritizing certain immigrants	Immigration Narratives		
Representing party/conservative values		Work/Political Narratives	
Supporting deserving citizens			Societal Narratives

Appendix B

Manual Initial Coding Codebook (Extract)

Code
a warm feeling
abandoning real refugees
abuse of system
accepting failure
accepting legal immigrants
accepting mistakes
accepting new position
accepting police conclusion
accepting smart immigrants
accepting some immigrants
access to capital
accumulative aid
acknowledging context
acknowledging flaws in system
acknowledging others' efforts
acknowledging struggle
acknowledging wrongdoings
acting quickly
acting reasonably
acting responsively
acting urgently
acting within rules
actively working

Appendix C

AI Initial Coding Codebook (Extract)

Code
Accountability
Achievement
Acknowledgement
Acknowledgment
Acknowledgment (2)
Acknowledgment (2): Acknowledgement of difficulty
Acknowledgment (2): Acknowledgment of trade-offs
Actie
Actie: Praktisch handelen
Actie: Wens
Action-oriented
Actions
Activism
Adaptability
Adaptation
Advocacy
Altruism
Altruïsme
Ambiguity
Ambitie
Ambition
Amsterdam
Angst

Appendix D

Axial Coding Codebook (Extract)

Code
Abandoning/neglecting real refugees
Accepting critique
Accepting smart immigrants/only accepting certain immigrants
Accepting too many refugees
Acknowledging parental sacrifices/privilege/hard work
Acknowledging societal issue/political shortcomings
Acknowledging struggle of others
Acknowledging wrongdoings/admitting past mistakes/avoiding remaking mistakes
Adding progressiveness/being innovative
Agreeing with/supporting colleagues
Analyzing economic state/economic progress
Analyzing/criticizing opponent
Analyzing/reflecting on societal state
Appreciating/supporting entrepreneurs
Bad migrant conditions/empathizing with migrant conditions
Being a good person/parent/partner
Being a refugee/reflecting on migrant past
Being ahead of others (being a pioneer)
Being authentic/ honest/trustworthy
Being available/flexible/adaptable
Being big spender/investor
Being busy