

Between Sanctuary and Hostility: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Municipal Policies on BBB-services in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

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Abstract

The national government's decision to discontinue the National Alien Provision (LVV) pilot in the Netherlands left participating municipalities, including Amsterdam and Rotterdam, to decide whether to continue funding Bed, Bad, Brood (BBB) services with local resources. This study addresses how local political actors in Amsterdam and Rotterdam legitimize their decisions regarding the provision of these services to undocumented migrants. It examines their contrasting approaches within the broader context of sanctuary cities and the local turn in migration governance. Specifically, the research employs critical discourse analysis of municipal council meetings, motions, and amendments.

Findings reveal a clear difference in the framing of undocumented migrants. Amsterdam consistently used neutral language and humanitarian portrayals, aligning with its self-perception as a human-rights city. In contrast, Rotterdam increasingly employed negative and threat-based framings after a coalition change, reflecting its anti-sanctuary stance. Legitimization strategies also varied: Amsterdam emphasized human rights and legal obligations, while Rotterdam shifted towards economic, practical, and societal concerns. Interestingly, both supporting and opposing parties often utilized similar legitimization types but strategically reframed them to align with their political ideologies. This study demonstrates that the legitimacy of policy decisions is dynamically constructed through evolving framings and legitimization strategies, and heavily influenced by shifts in local political power. It contributes to understanding the strategic nature of local migration discourse and the factors driving divergent urban approaches to undocumented migrants.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, legitimization strategies, local governance, sanctuary cities, undocumented migrants.

Introduction

At the end of 2024, the Dutch cabinet announced that the National Alien Provision (LVV) would no longer receive funding as of January 2025. The decision to end the LVV is linked to the new asylum policy introduced by minister Faber, the minister of Asylum and Migration in the Netherlands, who has stated that the Netherlands cannot handle high migration levels due to overcrowded shelters, slow procedures, and rising costs (Rijksoverheid, 2024). The LVV was intended to provide shelter for migrants who no longer have the right to reside but have not returned to their country of origin, on the main condition that they cooperated with return plans (Rosenberger & Koppes, 2018). The intermediate evaluations showed an improved cooperation among involved parties and the final evaluation found that nearly 60% of participants who left the LVV had a solution (Mack, Buimer, Rog, & Witvliet, 2022). This was either a semi-permanent solution, such as a new asylum application or postponement of departure, or a permanent solution, such as a residence permit, voluntary departure, or onward migration. Additionally, it had broader social effects like improved well-being for migrants, fewer people living on the streets, and increased political attention to their issues (Mack et al., 2022).

Following the announcement, several major cities – including Utrecht, Amsterdam, Eindhoven, and Groningen – decided to continue providing so called Bed-Bad-Brood (BBB) services, such as food, clothing, and shelter. They have chosen to subsidize these services independently, using their own municipal funds. In doing so, these cities have diverged from national policy, emphasizing local autonomy in addressing irregular migration. However, Rotterdam stands out as the only one among five cities that participated in the LVV program to fully align with the national government's decision and stop funding for shelters. This position is consistent with the city's coalition agreement, *Eén Stad* (2022-2026), which explicitly states that financial support for undocumented migrants will not continue if national funding is withdrawn (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2022). Nevertheless, a recent lawsuit has temporarily obligated Rotterdam to continue providing shelter for 22 individuals, as the court ruled that the discontinuation of the LVV program cannot result in their homelessness.¹ Given that the other participating cities chose to maintain their support without interference from the court, a key question arises: why did Rotterdam choose a different approach?

Discontinuing the LVV program can have several harmful effects to society. Many undocumented migrants will end up on the streets, making them extremely vulnerable, especially those struggling with health issues or addiction (Kro-Ncrv, 2024). Besides providing housing, the LVV offered legal assistance, which occasionally granted migrants temporary residence permits. Without this support, many rejected asylum seekers are left with nothing to hope for. In Rotterdam, the Paulus Church was one of the organizations providing shelter. They recently launched the initiative *Recht op Rust* (Right to Rest) in response to the national government's decision. With this initiative, they advocated for the recognition of basic human rights for all homeless individuals, including undocumented migrants (Zoetmulder, 2024). They want local authorities – Rotterdam in particular – to take responsibility, and think the city should find a way to address local humanitarian concerns despite national restrictions.

Existing literature has frequently documented instances in which cities diverge from national migration policies. This phenomenon is known as the *local turn* in migration governance. Cities and regions have been shaped by immigration, leading to the development of local policies to advocate for local concerns (Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2009). As a

¹ Rb. Den Haag 19 december 2024, ECLI:NL:RBDHA:2024:21486.

result, cities have emerged as key mediators of migration policy, gaining a degree of relative autonomy in shaping their responses. These developments have even contributed to the rise of *sanctuary cities* – cities that prioritize migrant rights over exclusionary policies (Bauder, 2017). While substantial research has explained the local turn, less is known about the factors that determine why certain cities follow the national stance and others oppose (Kaufmann & Strebel, 2021). Comparative research on cities is therefore essential to explain differences in urban migration policies (Scholten, 2014).

In the Dutch context, Amsterdam is often perceived as a progressive, human-rights focused city, while Rotterdam is frequently characterized as more restrictive or even hostile in its approach to undocumented migrants (Roodenburg, 2019; Vasileiadi & Swerts, 2024). This research aims to explain how political actors in both cities justify their decisions on whether to continue funding BBB-services, after the termination of the LVV-pilot. This comparison contributes to existing literature, since it moves beyond sanctuary cities and addresses a gap in understanding why certain cities – such as Rotterdam – adopt an anti-sanctuary stance.

This leads to the following problem statement:

How do local political actors in Amsterdam and Rotterdam legitimize their decisions regarding the provision of Bed, Bad, Brood services?

To answer this problem statement, the following sub-questions were addressed:

How do local discourses and understandings regarding Bed, Bad, Brood services differ between political actors in Amsterdam and Rotterdam?

What underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions about undocumented migrants are reflected in these local discourses?

How is the legitimacy of policy decisions constructed through these discourses?

Theoretical Framework

THE LOCAL TURN

Traditionally, migration policies have predominantly been formulated and implemented at the national level, with central governments acting as the primary decision-makers in migration governance. However, scholars have identified a divergence away from this centralized approach, as migration is no longer dealt with exclusively at the national level, but also on the city level (Muhammad, 2023). This *local turn* can be explained by the fact that municipalities face challenges that differ from those faced at the national level (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). National governments often employ civic integration policies – emphasizing national norms, language acquisition, and individual responsibility – and implement exclusionary measures to discourage irregular migration (Goodman, 2012; Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008).

Yet, cities are the spaces where migration occurs and where problems become more concretely felt. As Weber (1958) argues, cities encourage social individuality and innovation and are an instrument of historical change and social transformations. According to Sassen (2013), this is why the *global city* has emerged. The effects of globalization need creative governance responses. Cities have become key actors in migration governance, because they experience the effects of migration firsthand. For example, undocumented migrants often cluster in urban areas in search of work, shelter, and community support. As a result, they face a higher risk of exploitation, poverty and lack of access to basic services, which can contribute to broader issues such as homelessness, crime, and social unrest (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). While national governments prioritize strict immigration enforcement through measures such as deportation and detention, cities often take a more humanitarian approach to maintain social cohesion (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008).

This shift towards urban governance reflects broader theoretical debates on transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. The loss of power at the national level creates new forms of subnational political agency (Sassen, 2013). Cities increasingly operate within transnational networks of political organization, mobilization, and practice (Smith, 1994). Beck's (2000) concept of *cosmopolitanism* further explains the idea that cultural identity and governance are not constrained by national borders anymore. Cities emerge as spaces where human rights take precedence over national sovereignty. As a result, cities often reject restrictive national migration policies, and create their own inclusive policies or collaborate with migrant organizations (Ambrosini, 2017). On the other hand, cities can also choose to adhere to restrictive national policies – as we see in Rotterdam – but this is often overlooked in literature.

THE RISE OF SANCTUARY CITIES

The tension between local and national governance approaches is particularly evident in the sanctuary city movement. *Sanctuary cities* are a direct outcome of the local turn because they demonstrate how municipalities create policies that contradict or soften national migration restrictions (Bauder, 2017). Sanctuary cities challenge dominant exclusionary discourses and offer a more inclusive approach to the protection and integration of undocumented migrants (Bazurli & De Graauw, 2023). In these cities, membership is simultaneously localized and transnational (Sassen, 2013). This aligns with the concept of *urban citizenship* (De Graauw, 2021), which contests the notion that citizenship rights are solely determined at the national level. Cities, as the new key actors in migration governance, can extend certain rights to undocumented migrants regardless of their official legal status. These rights may include access

to housing, healthcare, and education. Urban citizenship thus illustrates how municipalities can create alternative forms of belonging beyond formal state-based citizenship.

However, cities do not uniformly adopt these sanctuary policies, and factors influencing municipal decision-making remain underexplored (Kaufmann & Strebel, 2021). Bazurli and De Graauw (2023) categorize city sanctuary policies along two dimensions. The first being policy content, which ranges from symbolic to substantive protection for undocumented migrants. The second being policy harmony, which ranges from being either conformist or confrontational towards national immigration policies. This typology helps explain the variation in municipal responses to undocumented migrants. Symbolic-conformist policies include rhetorical initiatives that acknowledge migrants without challenging national laws, while symbolic-confrontational policies view undocumented migrants as part of the local community and critique national policies. Substantive-conformist policies extend services within the limits of national regulations, whereas substantive-confrontational policies actively ignore national restrictions by providing services beyond legal mandates. The way in which these policy choices are legitimized is however not elaborated on in the article.

Structural factors have frequently been linked to the adoption of sanctuary policies. Huang and Liu (2018) argue that cities with large, concentrated, or rapidly growing foreign-born populations are more likely to implement sanctuary measures. This raises an intriguing question: why does Rotterdam – one of the most diverse cities in the Netherlands – choose to stop providing BBB-services? A commonly cited explanation is political composition. Research suggests that left-leaning city governments are more inclined to implement pro-migrant policies (Bazurli, 2019). The political affiliation of elected representatives is a key factor in shaping whether a city adopts either exclusionary or inclusionary approaches regarding migration (De Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016). This may help explain the divergence between Amsterdam and Rotterdam, as they are led by different political coalitions. However, existing research tends to presume rather than demonstrate that decisions made by left- or right-leaning city governments are motivated by political ideology. Moreover, there may be conflicting views on appropriate legitimization strategies at the local level between political actors.

Rather than focusing on ideological motives, this research examines how political actors use language to support or oppose policy decisions. Through discourse analysis, it becomes possible to understand how these decisions are made sense of and legitimized in political communication. The analysis examines which actors are influential in liberal or illiberal approaches, and whether some actors are present in both contexts. By doing so, this research contributes to a better understanding of the way local political actors legitimize migration policy, especially when they adopt an anti-sanctuary approach.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGITIMIZATION IN MIGRATION POLICY

Since local governments have increasingly become central actors in migration governance, it is important to pay attention to the justification of liberal or illiberal urban migration policies. According to Beetham (1991), legitimacy is not merely about the correct legal authority or institutional procedures. It depends on shared beliefs, moral justifications, and public consent – all of which are constructed and communicated through discourse. Local political actors must not only follow established rules, but also justify their decisions by appealing to shared societal values and beliefs, and show these decisions are generally accepted by the public.

Justifications for sanctuary policies are constructed through public discourse by politicians and policy actors (Wilcox, 2019). Legitimacy is context-based and shaped by discourse, so focusing on the language and categories used to describe migrants can help explain policy decisions (Jørgensen, 2012). This study draws on Spencer and Delvino's work (2019), which examined how European cities frame the provision of welfare services to irregular migrants despite restrictive national policies. They identified six policy frames that local authorities use to justify inclusive approaches, focusing on the intended beneficiaries and policy objectives. Building on and expanding Caponio's (2014) earlier work, they outline six primary frames (see table below).

Table 1: Framing of welfare services to irregular migrants

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The security frame, which prioritizes law enforcement and excludes irregular migrants from society by policy measures; 2. The humanitarian frame, where the focus is on migrants' vulnerability, their welfare needs and deservingness of municipal support; 3. The human rights frame, which focuses on protecting vulnerable migrants' fundamental rights; 4. The deserving workers frame, where irregular migrants are seen as contributors to the labor market and deserving of a right to stay and work. 5. The socioeconomic frame, where irregular migrants are seen as the cause of economic and social harm to the municipality, justifying restrictive measures; 6. The efficiency frame, where policymakers relate including irregular migrants to a more efficient public administration process. |
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Source: Spencer and Delvino, 2019

These six frames highlight how municipal policies are shaped not only by practical concerns but also by the broader political and cultural narratives in which they are embedded. This research builds on these insights by examining how local political actors in two Dutch cities legitimize either liberal or illiberal approaches to migration policy through discourse.

The selection of Amsterdam and Rotterdam as case studies is purposeful. Both cities have a long history of political activism and involvement with migration policy, yet they are fundamentally different in political culture. Rotterdam is known for its populist and controlling nature, with a dominant role for parties like Leefbaar Rotterdam. This party emerged around the 2000s in a context of increasing worries about migration and integration and is an example of what Uitermark and Duyvendak (2008) describe as urban revanchism. Revanchism refers to a policy framework in which cities are 'won back' for the middle class and elite, at the expense of marginalized groups. These groups often get excluded, criminalized or driven away, in order to improve public order, safety and economic growth. When a municipality – like Rotterdam – stops funding BBB-services, this may be interpreted as a local form of revanchist policy; an attempt to discourage unwanted presence of undocumented migrants, and to clear the city of social problems that can be seen as a threat.

Amsterdam, however, has traditionally had a more progressive and left-leaning political composition, with parties like GroenLinks, PvdA and D66 playing dominant roles. These parties mostly take on a more human-centered approach to migration and make space for alternative forms of urban solidarity (Uitermark & Nicholls, 2014). Municipalities like Amsterdam that keep funding BBB-services, may be seen as resisters of revanchism and practitioners of an alternative form of legitimacy, based on human rights, humanitarian obligations, or practical considerations. By comparing these two cities, this research aims to

provide deeper insights into how local political actors legitimize their decisions regarding providing BBB-services.

Research Design

To answer the research questions, this study employed a comparative case study focused on the analysis of policy documents from the municipal councils of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The primary objective was to examine the discourse used in these documents concerning the implementation of BBB-services. This was done by *critical discourse analysis* (CDA). As Van Dijk (1997) explains, CDA studies the way social power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimized, and resisted through text and talk in the social and political context. This approach has thus helped uncover the ways in which political discourses and understandings shaped policy decisions regarding undocumented migrants.

CDA often chooses the perspective of marginalized groups – in this case, undocumented migrants – and critically analyzes the language of those in power, as this language may contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities. CDA scholars argue that these power holders not only influence dominant discourse, but also have the means to shape social conditions (Wodak, 2002). This research focused on municipalities, as they were able to influence the situation of undocumented migrants in the Netherlands by providing BBB-services, despite national funding being withdrawn. Their discourse was critically analyzed to understand what drove the municipalities' decision on the topic. To properly investigate the role of discourse, a comparison was made between Amsterdam, which continued to provide these services, and Rotterdam, which did not. This comparison served to explore whether and how their problem definitions and legitimization strategies differed.

By analyzing policy documents from the municipal councils of both cities, this study aims to explain how language is used to frame, justify, or challenge policies related to undocumented migrants. Political discourse, as a central focus of CDA, provides insights into the ideological effects of discursive practices (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). These practices can reinforce or challenge power dynamics, for instance, between ethnic and cultural majorities and minorities. Since language itself is not inherently powerful but gains power by the use powerful people make of it (Wodak, 2002), this study critically analyzed the language employed by politicians, political parties and other municipal actors. It also questioned the narrative which was presented within the policy documents. Since politics cannot be conducted without language (Chilton & Schaffner, 2011), examining how policymakers discuss undocumented migrants provides critical insights into the relationship between discourse and policy outcomes. The language used by local political actors reveals underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions about undocumented migrants, which shape how decisions on BBB-services are legitimized.

The empirical analysis covered policy documents produced between the start of the debates concerning LVV (mid 2018) and the end of the national funding (January 1, 2025). The data collection was limited to publicly available policy documents and municipal council meetings accessed through the following platforms:

- Gemeenteraad Rotterdam (± 64 relevant documents)
- Amsterdam Raadsinformatie (± 66 relevant documents)

The documents mostly included motions and amendments, written questions and transcripts of municipal council meetings. The selection process focused on texts explicitly addressing the provision of BBB-services to undocumented migrants, or parts of the council meetings that discussed this topic.

Given that this research relied on publicly available documents, direct access to policymakers or restricted government archives was not required. As these materials are produced for public use and transparency, analyzing them did not raise ethical problems related to privacy or consent.

To analyze the data, a combination of *deductive* and *inductive coding* was used. A general coding framework was developed prior to the analysis, based on theoretical expectations and insights from the literature (see Appendix B). This framework categorized discourse elements such as:

- Framing of undocumented migrants (e.g. humanitarian perspective vs. security concern)
- Legitimization of policy choices (e.g. references to human- and immigrant rights vs. economic or legal concerns)
- Ideological positioning of political actors (e.g. references to party politics, left-leaning or right-leaning ideology)
- Power dynamics in discourse (e.g. political actors framed as controlling vs. political actors framed as supportive)

During the coding process, open coding was also conducted. This allowed additional themes to emerge naturally from the data, aligning with the exploratory nature of CDA (Thomas, 2006). Since this research sought to uncover how political discourses and understandings shaped municipal decision-making and reveal underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions about undocumented migrants, inductive coding ensured that findings were grounded in the actual language used in policy documents.

The software ATLAS.ti (2024) was used to support the qualitative data analysis. First, all relevant documents and transcripts were uploaded into the software for analysis. Then, the predetermined codes derived from the coding framework were imported into the software. All relevant text segments were given either theoretical or open codes, that most seemed fit. Additionally, these texts were given codes that identified which political actor it was from. Also, analytical memos were kept, to note preliminary observations, such as recurring language patterns used by specific political actors.

The findings are presented both qualitatively and quantitatively. Since this study aims to explore the legitimizations behind decisions regarding BBB-services, the quantitative analysis primarily focuses on the leading coalition parties, since they are ultimately responsible for implemented policy. Including all parties in the quantitative analysis (e.g. in figures) would not provide meaningful distinctions, since coalition and opposition parties typically present opposing justifications. The qualitative analysis, however, does take these differences into account. It examines both the dominant legitimizations of coalition parties and the criticism voiced by opposition parties. In doing so, it adds to the quantitative analysis by highlighting the legitimization of alternative policy stances regarding provisions for undocumented migrants.

This type of research can bring about a few challenges. One example is the risk of reinforcing stigmatizing discourse. Since policy documents may contain language that frames undocumented migrants in a negative way, there is a danger of unintentionally reproducing these narratives (Van Dijk, 1993). To avoid reinforcing harmful rhetoric, the analysis critically examined its context and purpose, rather than just repeating it. Another challenge is researcher bias, since CDA is inherently interpretive and shaped by the researcher's positionality (Wodak

& Meyer, 2009). To improve reliability, coding was applied systematically, and reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process by documenting analytical choices through memos.

Findings

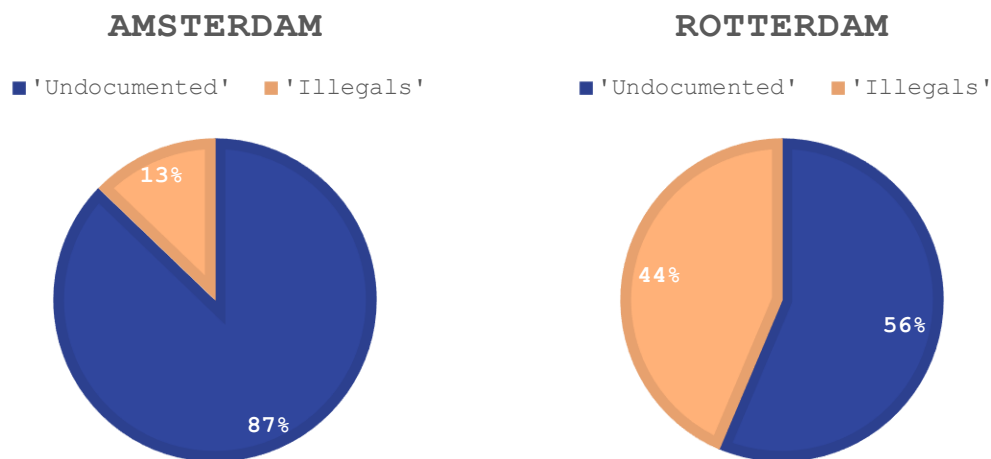
This section presents the findings on how local political actors use discourse to legitimize their decisions regarding the provision of Bed, Bad and Brood services. The analysis is organized around key themes that emerged during the coding process: framing, problem definition and legitimization. In each paragraph, differences and similarities between Amsterdam and Rotterdam are addressed. Finally, the section concludes with a reflection on how discourse may have ultimately influenced policy decisions.

FRAMING OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

Terminology

Proportionally, political actors in Rotterdam used the word ‘illegals’ more often than those in Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, local political actors referred to undocumented migrants as ‘undocumented’ or ‘undocumented migrants’ 87% of the time, next to ‘illegals’ or ‘illegal migrants’ 13% of the time (see Figure 1). In Rotterdam, these proportions were notably different, with 56% referring to ‘undocumented’ terms and 44% to illegalizing terms.

Figure 1. Distribution of terminology in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.



In Amsterdam, the word ‘undocumented’ was used approximately 68 times in the analyzed municipal council meetings, whereas the word ‘illegals’ was only used approximately 10 times (see Table 2). In Amsterdam, this rhetoric stayed quite consistent throughout the years. This may be explained by the fact that their coalition stayed pretty much the same. In 2018-2022, it consisted of GroenLinks, D66, PvdA, and SP. From 2022 on, only SP was excluded from this list. All these parties uniformly adopted this rhetoric when referring to undocumented migrants. Occasionally, however, opposition parties used the term ‘illegals’. JA21 did so most frequently, though often interchangeably with ‘undocumented’.

Table 2. Frequencies of ‘illegals’ and ‘undocumented’ in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Term	Amsterdam (n=171)	Rotterdam (n=174)
Illegals (n=34)	10	24
Undocumented (n=99)	68	31

In Rotterdam, a more noticeable shift in leading rhetoric was present. In the coalition of 2018-2022, not one party referred to undocumented migrants as ‘illegals’. This coalition consisted of VVD, PvdA, D66, GroenLinks, CDA, and CU-SGP. In 2022, its composition changed when Leefbaar Rotterdam joined, alongside VVD, D66, and DENK. In this new coalition, the terms ‘illegals’ or ‘illegal migrants’ appeared 22 times (see Table 3).

Table 3. Frequencies of ‘illegals’ and ‘undocumented’ in Rotterdam coalitions.

Term	Rotterdam coalition 2018-2022	Rotterdam coalition 2022-2026
Illegals (n=34)	-	22
Undocumented (n=99)	16	6

This terminology was almost exclusively used by Leefbaar Rotterdam. Next to the term ‘illegals’, they often referred to undocumented migrants as ‘hopeless’ asylum seekers – a label that suggests they are beyond support or integration, and carries a deliberately exclusionary connotation. Additionally, FvD Rotterdam once commented on parties using ‘undocumented’, stating that it distracts from the fact that these people are in the country illegally:

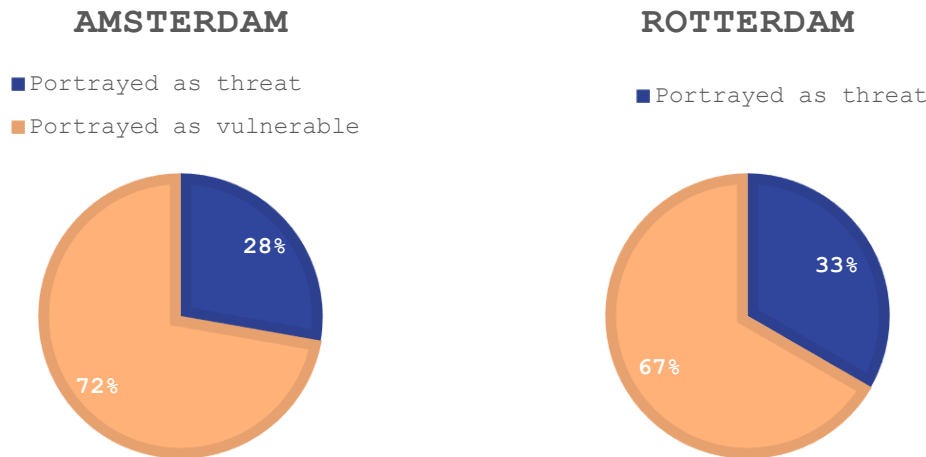
“Wat we echter niet uit het oog moeten verliezen is dat de term ongedocumenteerd een veelomvattend begrip kan zijn, maar altijd neerkomt op een persoon die om wat voor reden dan ook niet gerechtigd is om in Nederland te verblijven.” (FvD Rotterdam, 12-01-2022)

They later started using the term ‘illegal migrants’, which shows they view language as crucial to political decision-making; by choosing more explicit terminology, they emphasize the illegality of these individuals and justify their political stance against providing BBB-services. This careful consideration of terminology allows them to present their political position as well-considered and legitimate. All other parties in Rotterdam, both coalition and opposition, used the word ‘undocumented’ in their discourse, which accounts for its more frequent use compared to ‘illegals’.

Portrayal

In comparison to framings, portrayals of undocumented migrants showed more similarity between Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In Amsterdam, migrants were portrayed as vulnerable 72% of the time, and portrayed as a threat 28% of the time (see Figure 2). Rotterdam exhibited a similar pattern, with vulnerability at 67% and threat at 33%.

Figure 2. Distribution of portrayals in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.



However, a closer look at the coalitions reveals distinct differences in the consistency of portrayals. Amsterdam’s coalitions remained consistent, exclusively using the vulnerability portrayal. This aligns with the relatively stable composition of their governing coalition. In contrast, Rotterdam’s approach evolved significantly. While parties in the first coalition employed a similar vulnerability portrayal, parties in the second coalition dominantly employed a threatening portrayal in their discourse, appearing 12 times compared to only 4 instances of the vulnerability portrayal (see Table 4).

These findings suggest a clear link between political stance and migrant portrayal. Supporters of the LVV tend to view undocumented migrants as vulnerable individuals in need of protection. On the other hand, opponents primarily frame them as a threat, portraying the LVV as ineffective in addressing associated risks. The shift in discourse following a coalition change in Rotterdam highlights how political power influences the representation of undocumented migrants. This demonstrates that discourse is not static; rather, it evolves with political shifts, underlining the importance of examining both power dynamics and discursive changes over time.

Table 4. Frequencies of portrayals in Rotterdam coalitions.

Portrayal	Rotterdam coalition 2018-2022	Rotterdam coalition 2022-2026
Threatening (n=24)	-	12
Vulnerable (n=60)	11	4

In both cities, the vulnerability portrayal was often paired with the term ‘undocumented’ by parties like GroenLinks and Volt. In these cases, migrants were portrayed as people in need or whose fundamental rights got taken away. Sometimes, politicians even cited individual stories of migrants forced to sleep on the streets in precarious situations. GroenLinks Amsterdam also once referred to the eleven-year-old Mikael – a boy who was born in Amsterdam, but threatened to be deported to Armenia. They argued that he had never had the opportunity to dream about a future, since he had always been living in uncertainty of being able to stay.

In Amsterdam, a few exceptions were present. The negative portrayals mostly stemmed from VVD, an opposition party. For example, VVD said in 2018 that a 24-hour shelter for

undocumented migrants would act as a ‘magnet’ – implying that it would likely attract even more migrants to the Netherlands. One member of VVD Amsterdam also compared rejected asylum seekers to hooligans, claiming that they do not adhere to national rules and often create a mess. This indicates the party considers undocumented migrants to be a threat. In a 2024 meeting, several parties criticized the VVD’s negative discourse on undocumented migrants, revealing internal tensions within the municipal council:

“Ja voorzitter, de neerbuigendheid waarmee de VVD praat over een kwetsbare groep en ze luistert nu niet, ongedocumenteerde mensen, is echt schaamteloos. Het is verschrikkelijk. (...) Dus ik werp echt verre van mij de manier waarop de VVD praat over een kwetsbare groep hier in de stad.” (VOLT Amsterdam, 07-11-2024)

“Nou ja, eigenlijk wilde ik opmerken, maar het momentum is nu weg, de minachting die de VVD gebruikt voor die groep ongedocumenteerden, met 'die paar ongedocumenteerden' vind ik totaal niet passend voor de doelgroep waar het om gaat en het leed dat hun straks te wachten staat als dit komt te sluiten.” (BIJ1 Amsterdam, 07-11-2024)

In the case of Rotterdam, mostly Leefbaar Rotterdam used negative portrayals. The party consistently employed rhetoric that is similar to that of radical or extreme-right wing parties at the national level. Next to the consistent usage of the term ‘illegals’, they deliberately tried to incite fear by linking undocumented migrants to security risks, violence, or public nuisance – often without concrete evidence; thus posing them as a threat. Additionally, they used suggestive or factually incorrect claims regarding the ‘pull factor’ of BBB-services and the idea of ‘illegality as a choice’. Leefbaar Rotterdam’s contributions therefore stand out not only in terms of their position, but also in rhetoric used. Their debates, motions, and written questions were often combined with emotionally charged language, including phrases like ‘we despise’, ‘with astonishment and indignation’, ‘shocking’, and ‘we are outraged’.

This didn’t go unnoticed by other parties. CDA Rotterdam criticized the party for their claims in a municipal council meeting of 2022, stating that the claims they make about undocumented people are incorrect. In a 2018 debate, CU-SGP asked Leefbaar whether they acknowledge the existence of people who do not choose illegality, as proven by research from the WODC, for example. Leefbaar responded by rejecting these (scientific) findings. During the same debate, both GroenLinks and DENK also commented on Leefbaar’s incorrectness:

“Ik hoor de heer Van Elck zeggen dat ze veilig zijn in het land waar ze naartoe moeten. Hoe kunt u dat beweren? Als mensen terug moeten naar Syrië, Afghanistan, noem het maar op, zijn dat hartstikke onveilige landen. Als u een vent bent, gaat u zelf naar dat soort landen. U durft daar niet eens heen voor een werkbezoek, denk ik.” (DENK Rotterdam, 06-12-2018)

“Dan wil ik aan de heer Van Elck vragen waarop hij dit baseert. Volgens mij heeft Amsterdam een vele malen ruimhartiger regeling dan Rotterdam. Als die aanzuigende werking zo zou werken als u denkt dat die werkt, zou iedereen in Amsterdam moeten zitten volgens mij.” (GroenLinks Rotterdam, 06-12-2018)

This shows that there is a clear discursive polarization between parties: where VVD and Leefbaar employ a rhetoric that constructs undocumented migrants as a threat or even a social burden, other parties actively contest this framing and emphasize their vulnerability. This

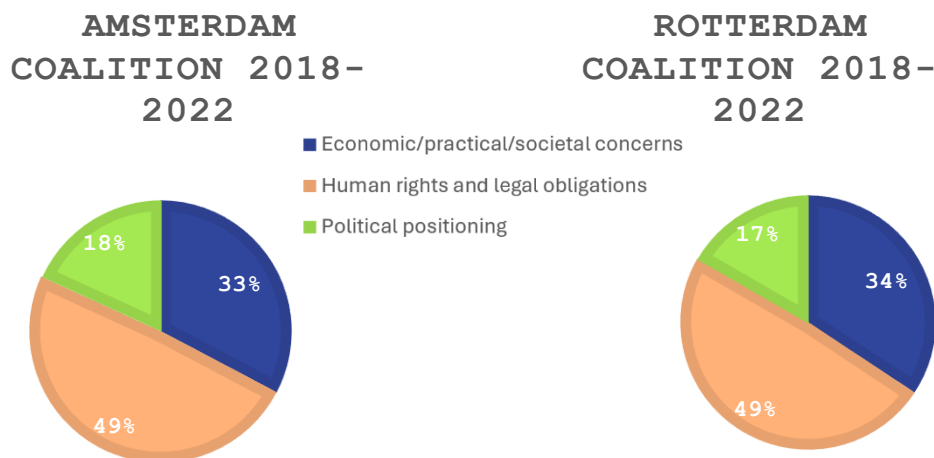
conflict reflects competing narratives that influence how BBB-services are legitimized and contested in local politics.

PROBLEM DEFINITION AND LEGITIMIZATION

Besides their framing of undocumented migrants, political actors in Amsterdam and Rotterdam also differed in how they defined the broader policy issue at stake. Parties portraying undocumented migrants as vulnerable tended to emphasize that their fundamental rights are at risk, arguing that the city should provide BBB-services to ensure a dignified stay for these individuals, despite their lack of official papers. In contrast, parties who used negative portrayals often framed these migrants as undesirable, pointing to their alleged negative impact on the local or Dutch economy and society. These differing problem definitions shape the legitimization strategies used during municipal debates, as parties advocate for the policy choice that they believe best address the issues.

In the early years of the LVV and preceding debates, the distribution of legitimizations was very similar in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In both cities, 49% of the justifications focused on human rights and legal obligations (see Figure 3), followed by economic, practical or societal concerns (33% in Amsterdam, 34% in Rotterdam), and ideological positioning of policy actors (18% in Amsterdam, 17% in Rotterdam).

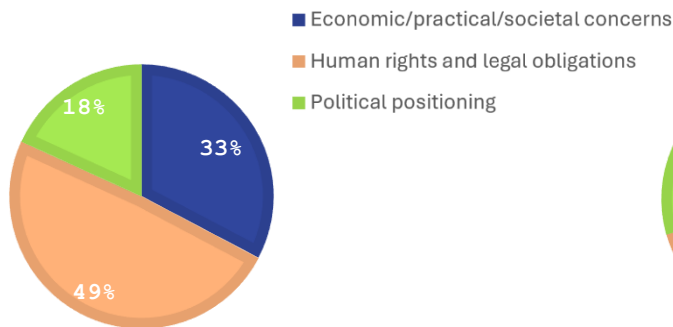
Figure 3. Distribution of legitimizations addressed in previous coalitions.



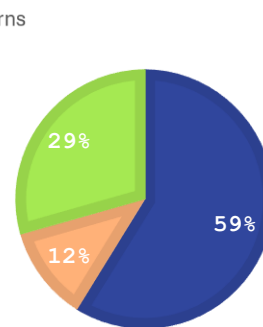
When the coalitions changed in 2022, so did the distribution of legitimizations. In Amsterdam, it remained almost identical – which is unsurprising, since their coalition stayed largely the same except for one party. In Rotterdam, however, a significant change was noticeable. References to human rights and legal obligations dropped sharply to 12% (see Figure 4), while mentions of economic, practical and societal concerns rose to 59%. Additionally, the amount of times ideological positioning was discussed increased to 29%. During this period, the city of Rotterdam also decided to stop funding BBB-services with municipal money.

Figure 4. Distribution of legitimizations addressed in current coalitions.

**AMSTERDAM
COALITION 2022–
2026**



**ROTTERDAM
COALITION 2022–
2026**



Economic, practical and societal concerns

Economic, practical and societal concerns are often used to either support or oppose the provision of Bed, Bad, Brood (BBB) services. Economic arguments, in particular, frequently appeared as a way to delegitimize such services, especially by opposition parties. Such arguments were usually linked to opinions on values and priorities. For example, in 2019, VVD Amsterdam repeatedly argued that the money could have been spent in a much better way, such as on enforcement. This framing constructs the provision of BBB-services as a misallocation of public money, implicitly prioritizing public order over humanitarian concerns. This was later contested by PvdA, which emphasized the ‘cost’ to society of not spending on these services. This reflects a discursive shift, where economic language is re-appropriated to support inclusivity rather than restriction.

In Rotterdam, similar disagreements emerged. Leefbaar Rotterdam repeatedly criticized the costs of the LVV. They argued that it had been agreed the national government would pay for it, but annual accounts revealed the municipality had also spent seven hundred thousand euros. They also claimed the program was unsuccessful and did not improve return rates. Here, economic concerns are combined with a performance-based legitimization – questioning not just the cost, but the value and effectiveness of the program itself. Practicality and efficiency were central to their argument. Conversely, some parties advocated for the undocumented and criticized the economic priorities of the city:

“We kunnen kijken of er nog wel genoeg geld is om menselijk om te gaan met ongedocumenteerden in deze stad of dat het belangrijk is om €18 miljoen naar een dierentuin te pompen. Kijk, het zijn keuzes die gemaakt zijn he.” (BIJ1 Rotterdam, 23-06-2022)

Practical concerns can be divided into two subcategories. First, parties tended to discuss feasibility, capacity and logistics of providing BBB-services. It was often argued that there is insufficient shelter space for everyone in the Netherlands, even if morally and ideally they would like to accommodate all undocumented migrants. This capacity issue was mostly used by parties opposing LVV, but supporting parties such as GroenLinks and Volt Amsterdam also acknowledged it. This framing implicitly poses undocumented migrants as pressuring on facilities. Amsterdam parties, including VVD and CDA, most often used this argument, stating that while everyone should ideally be helped, it is practically impossible.

Second, parties debated about the results of the LVV program. Most agreed the goal is to provide a ‘durable solution’ for undocumented migrants – either by facilitating return to countries of origin or eventual naturalization. Both supporting and opposing parties used this argument, but in different ways. Opposing parties, like FvD, CDA, and VVD Rotterdam discussed the disappointing results of the LVV, claiming return rates have not improved significantly. This implies they believe LVV should only continue if it proves to be efficient. JA21 Amsterdam referred to the 500 shelter locations as a ‘drop in the ocean’, arguing that the shelter provision does little given the estimated 15,000-30,000 undocumented migrants in the city, and that alternative solutions are needed. This argument was mostly present in debates in Rotterdam. Supporters, meanwhile, argued that the LVV has been effective, but could improve with more intensive personal assistance. References to the evaluation of 2022 were made, highlighting personal assistance as key to better outcomes. Once again, the term ‘durable solution’ or ‘durable perspective’ was used to describe the goals of the LVV. Both sides thus agreed on the importance of effectiveness, but differ on whether the LVV currently delivers it.

Regarding societal concerns, a similar division exists. Supporters viewed LVV positively, arguing it reduces nuisance, unsafe situations, and homelessness among undocumented migrants. In Amsterdam, parties like GroenLinks and PvdA, who often portray undocumented migrants as vulnerable, paradoxically argued that neighborhoods have become safer since the introduction of the LVV, and that undocumented migrants were causing nuisance. Amsterdam’s alderman and mayor have also occasionally acknowledged problems caused by this group. In Rotterdam, left-leaning parties tended to focus more on homelessness and its risk for public order and health. This aligns more with the parties’ general political stances on undocumented migrants. For example, a 2024 motion titled ‘Undocumented people deserve human dignity’, submitted by GroenLinks, PvdA, Volt, and CU, warned that ending LVV would increase homelessness, threatening the safety and health of undocumented migrants.

Opposing parties in both cities also claimed that undocumented migrants cause nuisance and disturb local public order. However, they argued that these problems occur even within shelter locations. They cited specific incidents, police reports, and complaints by surrounding residents. As a result, PVV Rotterdam concluded that this group is often involved in crime, implying that LVV does not make society more safe. Similarly, VVD Amsterdam pleaded for detention and deportation as a superior solution, since they considered LVV to be inadequate.

These differences show how similar concerns – economic, practical, and societal – are framed differently across parties and between cities. While it would be expected that opposing parties would use different, conflicting arguments, there is a surprising amount of similarity in their discursive legitimization strategies. They often rely on the same core arguments in order to either support or oppose BBB-services, but tactically adjust their framing to align with their political stance. This underlines the importance of discourse not just as a means of communication, but as a tool for shaping public perception and justifying political decisions.

References to human rights and legal obligations

Unlike economic or societal concerns, references to human rights were almost exclusively used to support the provision of BBB-services. Terms such as ‘humane policy’, ‘humanitarian threshold’, and ‘moral duty’ often appeared in this discourse. According to supporting parties, BBB-services – especially shelter – are the minimum for a humane existence. They believe it

keeps people from the streets and from dying, and that it is ‘morally just’. Furthermore, it is seen as a legal and ethical obligation of local authorities.

In Amsterdam, this was seen as an integral part of the city's identity. A 2024 motion described Amsterdam as a ‘human rights city’, citing the city's proactive role in safeguarding human rights – such as providing extra shelter beds in 2020 – as central to its character. In Rotterdam, similar arguments were used, particularly by progressive parties. However, there was more debate. Human rights references were often paired with criticism towards the coalition. Especially in 2024, when word got out that the municipality would not fund the LVV locations.

Legal obligations were also invoked to legitimize BBB-services. Arguments ranged from general references to human rights treaties or European norms, to specific laws and judicial decisions, including:

- A ruling of the European Court of Human Rights that obligated governments to prevent undocumented individuals from ending up in inhumane or degrading conditions²;
- The 2014 finding of the European Committee of Social Rights that the Netherlands had violated the European Social Charter by denying shelter to undocumented migrants³;
- The ruling of September 2024 of the Court of Justice of the European Union, stating that human dignity is at risk when an undocumented person is left on the street without access to basic needs like shelter, hygiene and food. Such individuals can invoke rights protected by the European Social Charter and Article 14(1) of Directive 2008/115/EC⁴;
- Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, housing, and medical care.

Again, these references mostly originated from political actors in Rotterdam during the 2024 debates. Interestingly, these arguments came not only from opposition parties like GroenLinks, BIJ1, and CDA, but also from coalition members such as DENK, reflecting that they too desire a humane approach.

Occasionally, human rights and legal obligations were used to contest BBB-services. For example, JA21 Amsterdam argued that the LVV was ‘inhumane’ because it gave undocumented migrants false hope – such as access to education – despite their lack of legal status. According to the party, individuals should just go back to their origin country. Similarly, Leefbaar Rotterdam grounded its objections in Dutch immigration law, insisting that people whose asylum requests were rejected must leave the country. According to this logic, shelter and other provisions to undocumented migrants encourage overstaying and may even act as a pull factor for further immigration. This shows again that similar arguments – in this case references to human rights and legal obligations – are used by both supporting and opposing parties, but are framed in different ways to fit their political conviction.

Political positioning

Beyond problem definitions and pragmatic reasoning, some arguments were rooted in broader political or ideological beliefs – either from the municipality as a whole, or from specific parties. These narratives show clear differences between Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

² *Chahal t. Verenigd Koninkrijk*, EHRM 15 november 1996, nr. 22414/93.

³ *Conference of European Churches (CEC) t. Nederland*, ECSR 1 juli 2014, klacht nr. 90/2013.

⁴ *LF t. Zamestnik-predsdatel na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite*, HvJ-EU 12 september 2024, ECLI:EU:C:2024:748.

On numerous occasions, political actors in Amsterdam referred to the city as historically inclusive, hospitable, and ‘barmhartig’ (merciful). This self-image serves as a powerful justification for supporting BBB-services. Parties like D66 even referred to Amsterdam’s migrant history, portraying it as a long-standing city of sanctuary:

“Amsterdam is een migratiestad en of het nu gaat om de Franse hugenoten, de Portugese Joden of de Vlamingen die tijdens de Tachtigjarige Oorlog hier naartoe trokken, Amsterdam is door de eeuwen een gastvrije stad en een veilige haven. Dat zijn we altijd geweest en dat zullen we altijd blijven.” (D66 Amsterdam, 10-10-2024)

Providing food, shelter and support for undocumented migrants is thus framed not just as a political choice, but as an intrinsic part of the city’s identity. Parties often explicitly positioned Amsterdam against the national government. With statements like ‘faal-minister Faber’ (D66) and ‘falend rijksbeleid’ (De Vonk) they drew a clear distinction between Amsterdam’s moral stance and what they see as a failing national asylum policy.

In Rotterdam, there was less referral to a shared local identity. Instead, the LVV was often framed as a national government decision, not something the municipality can fully control. Coalition parties – especially VVD – emphasized their obligation to follow national decisions as well as their own coalition agreement (2022-2026), which states that LVV will end if national funding ends. Leefbaar Rotterdam consistently rejected the LVV, calling it a symptom of ‘falend asielbeleid’, while VVD argued that it is financially unsustainable and not the city’s responsibility. This suggests that for some parties, the decision stems from political obligation, while for others – like Leefbaar – it reflects a clear ideological stance on asylum and migration.

In contrast, even D66 Rotterdam – though ideologically closer to its Amsterdam counterpart – followed this logic. While they expressed disappointment about the loss of national support, they ultimately voted to end the program, citing the binding nature of coalition agreements:

“Ik kan heel vaak zeggen dat D66 het anders had gewild, maar we kiezen ervoor om ons aan de coalitieafspraken te houden en dat betekent, hoe hard ook, dat D66 de politieke keuze maakt om de LVV te sluiten.” (D66 Rotterdam, 12-11-2024)

This reveals a key difference: where Amsterdam actors invoked local identity and moral leadership to justify municipal autonomy, Rotterdam actors tended to go along with national rules and coalition agreements – even if it conflicts with personal or party values. In this way, political positioning both enables and constrains policy legitimacy, depending on the city’s political culture and institutional context.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY DECISIONS

This section summarizes the main legitimizations for providing BBB-services, linking them to eventual policy decisions and showing how they evolved over time.

In 2018, the Amsterdam coalition was composed mainly of progressive parties: GroenLinks, D66, PvdA, and SP. This political alignment created a favorable environment for the launch of the LVV pilot. While there was some debate – concerning feasibility and societal concerns – most parties supported the initiative, primarily referencing human rights and legal obligations as justification. In contrast, the Rotterdam coalition was more ideologically diverse, including both progressive and conservative parties. It consisted of VVD, PvdA, D66, GroenLinks, CDA

and CU-SGP. Still, the coalition generally aligned on the issue, using human rights and legal responsibilities as key legitimizing arguments. In both Amsterdam and Rotterdam, undocumented migrants were generally referred to as ‘undocumented’ – a relatively neutral term – combined with a vulnerability portrayal. This framing reinforced the humanitarian narrative and helped legitimize support for the LVV pilot. It is important to note, however, that Leefbaar Rotterdam was not part of the Rotterdam coalition in this period, despite being the largest party after the elections. This is because other parties refused to cooperate with them due to ideological differences. Nonetheless, Leefbaar extensively expressed their disapproval of the LVV through motions and repeated criticism during municipal council meetings.

Between 2018 and 2024, both national policy shifts and changing local coalitions affected how BBB-services were justified. By 2024, the national government decided to end funding for BBB-services as part of their new, stricter asylum policy. This left municipalities to decide whether to continue the programs independently. In Amsterdam, the governing coalition (GroenLinks, D66 and PvdA) reaffirmed their commitment, once again justifying BBB-services primarily through references to human rights and legal obligations. The framing of migrants also remained largely consistent, with continued use of the term ‘undocumented’, and an emphasis on their vulnerability. These arguments and discourses were strongly tied to Amsterdam’s self-image and political identity. Rotterdam, however, experienced a shift in both political composition and discourse. The new coalition – consisting of Leefbaar Rotterdam, VVD, D66 and DENK – began emphasizing economic, practical and societal concerns. Additionally, undocumented migrants were increasingly framed as a threat, and the legitimization of policy decisions reflected a stronger focus on coalition agreements and adherence to national rules. This shift illustrates how changes in power dynamics within the local government influenced the discourse, and how policies ultimately got justified and implemented.

Conclusion and discussion

This study used critical discourse analysis to explore how different local political actors legitimized decisions regarding the provision of Bed, Bad, Brood (BBB) services in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Local discourses and understandings of BBB-services varied between political actors in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. This was particularly evident in how undocumented migrants were framed. In Amsterdam, neutral terms such as ‘undocumented’ were used almost exclusively. During the initial years of the LVV program, this was also the case in Rotterdam. However, after a shift in the governing coalition, the terminology changed. Negative labels such as ‘illegals’ became more common in their political discourse. Furthermore, migrants were depicted as vulnerable by both coalitions in Amsterdam and by parties of the first coalition in Rotterdam. In contrast, the parties of the second coalition increasingly framed them as a threat to society.

Spencer and Delvino (2019) identified similar frames, including the humanitarian frame, which emphasizes migrants’ vulnerability and their deservingness of municipal support, and the socioeconomic frame, where irregular migrants are seen as causing economic and social harm to the municipality, justifying restrictive measures. However, their analysis did not address whether and why particular frames are dominant at different times. In this study, the humanitarian framing of migrants as vulnerable was dominant during the initial years of the LVV in both Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Toward the end of the program, a shift in Rotterdam’s governing coalition coincided with a change in framing – migrants were increasingly portrayed as a threat. The shift can be understood through the lens of power dynamics. Local political actors strategically used framing to justify their restrictive policy agendas, as they had the institutional power to amplify threat-based narratives. This portrayal reflects the municipality’s anti-sanctuary stance, providing a basis for limiting support and protection.

These local discourses and understandings already reveal certain values, beliefs and assumptions about undocumented migrants. The problem definitions and legitimizations used by local political actors further reveal their underlying ideologies. These can be categorized into three main types: references to human rights and legal obligations; economic, practical and societal concerns; and political positioning. Regarding the latter, the results were in line with expectations drawn from previous research. Amsterdam views itself as a human rights city that, despite national anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric, feels responsible for undocumented migrants and therefore supports BBB-services. This aligns with Bazurli and De Graauw’s (2023) concept of a ‘sanctuary city’ – one that challenges dominant exclusionary discourses and offers a more inclusive approach to the protection and integration of undocumented migrants. In Rotterdam, responsibility is seen more as belonging to the state, and some parties openly express their skepticism about undocumented migrants. This fits within Rotterdam’s well-known, more hostile approach, as described by Vasileiadi and Swerts (2024).

While the category of political positioning largely confirmed earlier studies, the remaining two categories— appeals to human rights and legal obligations, and references to economic, practical, and societal concerns –revealed a more unexpected pattern. Both supporting and opposing parties often draw on the same core arguments but strategically reframe them to align with their political convictions. Thus, despite their opposing positions, parties often rely on similar discursive strategies, suggesting more overlap in legitimization than one might initially expect. This shows that discourse functions not just as a reflection of opinions, but as a flexible

tool used by local political actors to shape public perception and justify their decisions on providing BBB-services.

Now, how is the legitimacy of policy decisions ultimately constructed through these discourses? This section once again demonstrates a shift in dominant framings and problem definitions of undocumented migrants over time, which influenced legitimization strategies. In both cities, significant internal struggle between supporting and opposing parties was observed. However, a clear evolution in legitimization strategies occurred in Rotterdam, driven by a major coalition change. During the first years of the LVV, nearly half of the legitimizations relied on references to human rights and legal obligations, whereas after 2022 these decreased notably, with economic, practical, and societal concerns becoming the dominant legitimizing arguments. This change in coalition altered local power dynamics, contributing to the emergence of a more anti-sanctuary stance in Rotterdam. The shift away from human rights-based legitimizations towards economic, practical and societal concerns reflects a stricter approach to undocumented migrants. In contrast, Amsterdam's legitimization strategies remained relatively consistent throughout the LVV period. The majority of the legitimizations referred to human rights and legal obligations. Economic, practical, and societal concerns were voiced a third of the time and on top of that, political positioning was used to emphasize the city's self-perception as a human rights city. This stability in legitimization reinforces Amsterdam's more inclusive 'sanctuary city' discourse and its continued support for BBB-services.

A key limitation of this study is that the coding process did not explicitly differentiate between legitimizations used in support of, or in opposition to BBB-services. As a result, while the quantitative data shows shifts in the types of legitimizations used over time, it does not reveal whether these arguments were employed positively or negatively towards BBB-services. This limits the ability to quantitatively assess how legitimizations correlate with political stances.

Nevertheless, a qualitative reading of the quotes and discourse suggests that the more right-leaning coalition in Rotterdam used economic, practical, and societal arguments – which had become their dominant legitimization – to oppose BBB-services. Politicians argued that migrants caused nuisance, pressured facilities, and that the LVV was unsuccessful due to high costs and no improvement in return rates. It was, after all, this coalition that decided the municipality would no longer fund these services if national funding were to cease. This finding seems plausible, given that the same coalition primarily framed undocumented migrants as a threat rather than as vulnerable, as discussed earlier.

In Amsterdam's coalitions, these legitimizations seemed to be used more positively. The LVV was seen as a pilot with positive results for the economy, society and the undocumented migrants themselves. Their dominant legitimization, referring to human rights and legal obligations, was also consistently used in a positive way, emphasizing the legal requirements of providing shelter and humane treatment. Furthermore, this city and its coalition chose to continue funding BBB-services, despite the government's decision to stop. Future research could benefit from coding legitimizations not only by type, but also on whether they are used in favor of or against the policy. This would facilitate a more systemic, quantitative analysis of supportive and oppositional legitimization strategies. In doing so, it would enhance the qualitative analysis by specifying both the proportion and direction of these contrasting strategies.

Furthermore, the data sources used were limited to municipal council meetings and a selection of motions and amendments. While these provide valuable insight into official discourse, they

may not fully capture the complexity of internal decision-making processes. Future studies could benefit from interviews or ethnographic research with local political actors to gain deeper understanding of the motivations and dynamics behind policy decisions. Additional research on other cities involved in the LVV pilot – such as Utrecht, Eindhoven, and Groningen – could also provide a more comprehensive picture of local variations in discourse and policy approaches toward BBB-services and undocumented migrants.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insight into the dynamic and strategic nature of local political discourse regarding BBB-services in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. By revealing how framing and legitimizations shift in response to changes in local power structures, and that both supporting and opposing parties often draw on similar core legitimizations, it contributes to a deeper understanding of local migration politics.

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APPENDIX A



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Between Sanctuary and Hostility: A Critical Discourse
Analysis of Municipal Policies on BBB-services in Amsterdam
and Rotterdam

Name, email of student: Lisa Doomen, 528511ld@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Thomas Swerts, swerts@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: 30-01-2025 t/m 23-06-2025

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES - NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations
that will not involve identification of participants. YES - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary
data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

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

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

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

Data will be stored on a laptop with password protection.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

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

I will be responsible for this.

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

Biweekly.

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

Not applicable.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

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

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

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

Name student: Lisa Doomen

Name (EUR) supervisor: Thomas Swerts

Date: 23-03-2025

Date: 23-03-2025

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Thomas Swerts', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

APPENDIX B

Code framework

Framing of migrants

- **Name_Illegal**
Use of terms like ‘illegals’.
- **Name_Undoc**
Use of terms like ‘irregular’ and ‘undocumented’.
- **Percep_Threat**
Migrants framed as a threat/burden/problem.
- **Percep_Vuln**
Migrants framed as vulnerable.

Policy justifications

- **Just_Econ**
Economic or financial arguments.
- **Just_HR**
References to human rights or ethics.
- **Just_Legal**
References to legal obligations or court rulings.
- **Just_Political**
Party positions, politics, voters.
- **Just_Practical**
Feasibility, capacity, logistics.
- **Just_Societal**
Safety, public order, cohesion.

Power & inclusion

- **Actor_Control**
Political actors framed as controlling or enforcing.
- **Actor_Positive**
Political actors framed as supportive.
- **Voice_Exc**
Migrant voices not included.
- **Voice_Inc**
Migrant voices included.