B1.4 Migrants as Political Actors

Director/ Andreas M. Wüst
Funding/ Volkswagen Foundation

Research Questions

The research project aims at both a broader and deeper understanding of the parliamentary representation of immigrant-origin citizens. The main research questions are:

- How well are citizens of immigrant background represented in parliaments?
- What are the factors determining the parliamentary representation of immigrant-origin politicians?
- Do members of parliament of immigrant background make a difference in the policy-making process and with respect to policies?

These research questions on descriptive and substantive parliamentary representation are treated in **country-specific, cross-national, cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses** including various political levels (national, regional, local). It combines quantitative with qualitative approaches.

Differences in descriptive and substantive representation of immigrants and migration-related issues are expected to being explained by

- **personal background** (e.g. visibility of background, immigrant generation, socio-structural factors)
- **opportunities** (esp. openness and strategic considerations of parties and their leaders, stage of parliamentary career) and
- **context** (e.g. immigrant-origin population in constituencies).

Note: Since the VW grant holder and researcher has been visiting professor in Mannheim (2009/10) and Heidelberg (2010/11) and is now working in a state ministry, the project could only been carried on part-time since September 2009.
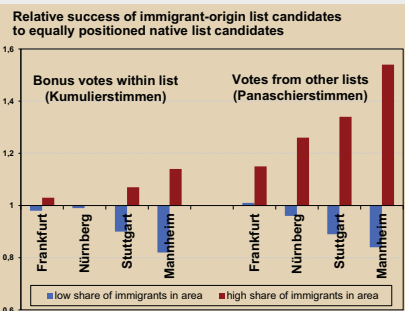
Selected Publications

- Bird, Karen, Thomas Saalfeld and Andreas M. Wüst (eds.) (2011): *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities: Voters, Parties and Parliaments in Liberal Democracies*. London: Routledge. [Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science; 70]

- Wüst, Andreas M. (2014): A lasting impact? On the legislative activities of immigrant-origin parliamentarians in Germany. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 20, issue 4 (accepted for publication).

- Herbolsheimer, Florian W. and Andreas M. Wüst (2012): Migrationshintergrund: Fluch oder Segen bei der Ratswahl?, *Stadtforschung und Statistik*, 2/2012, 8-12.

- Schmitz, Constanze, and Andreas M. Wüst (2011): Was bewegt Politiker mit Migrationshintergrund? Befunde aus deutschen Großstädten. *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen*, 42, issue 4, p. 822-834.

- Wüst, Andreas M. and Thomas Saalfeld (2011): Abgeordnete mit Migrationshintergrund im Vereinigten Königreich, Frankreich, Deutschland und Schweden: Opportunitäten und Politikschwerpunkte. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift Sonderheft 44* "Politik als Beruf" (eds. Michael Edinger und Werner J. Patzelt), 2010, 312-333.

- Wüst, Andreas M. and Dominic Heinz (2009): Die politische Repräsentation von Migranten in Deutschland, in: Markus Linden und Winfried Thaa (eds.): *Die politische Repräsentation von Fremden und Armen*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009, 201-218.

Some Findings

- Over the last decades, most European parliaments have seen an increase in the descriptive representation of immigrant-origin MPs. While the rise is primarily due to parties of the political left, center-right parties have also increased their number of immigrant-origin parliamentarians.

- Cross-sectional data from the national parliaments of France, Britain, Sweden and Germany show that the share of the immigrant-origin or foreign population among the electorate does increase the likelihood for immigrant-origin politicians to represent a constituency (see right).

- However, especially Germany's mixed-member electoral systems indicate that more immigrant-origin politicians are elected via list than in a single-member constituency. This finding supports the hypothesis that national and regional party leaders are influential in nominating immigrant-origin candidates for party lists. In 24 personal interviews, especially the female representatives mentioned mentoring as an important factor for their career.

Contextual factors for the parliamentary representation of immigrant-origin MPs across countries (UK, France, Germany and Sweden combined)

	SMCs only (model 1)		total (model 2a)		total (model 2b)	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
non-native population (share) [a]	,472	***1,606	,482	***1,619	,471	***1,601
MMC (dummy)			2,410	***11,130	2,230	*9,296
size of MMC			,059	*1,060	,082	*1,086
Germany (dummy)	-1,369	*,254			-1,369	*,254
France (dummy)	-,287	,750			-,288	,750
Sweden (dummy)					-,036	,965
constant	-3,352	***,035	-3,655	***,026	-3,350	***,035
N	1420 [b]		1465 [b]		1465 [b]	
-2 Log likelihood	349,490		409,181		399,832	
model χ²	***21,992		***85,435		***94,784	
Nagelkerke's pseudo R²	6,7 %		19,8 %		21,9 %	

+ p < 0,1; * p < 0,05; ** p < 0,01; *** p < 0,001.
[a] equivalent indicators used: non-white population (UK); foreigners (F, D); foreign-born population (S); standardization (z-scores) within countries.
[b] The following constituencies have been excluded from the analysis: In France all constituencies outside the European continent (22); in the UK the Scottish (59) and Northern Irish constituencies (18) since reliable population data were not available.

Relative success of immigrant-origin list candidates to equally positioned native list candidates

- A comparative analysis of immigrant-origin candidates' success on open lists with preferential voting in four German cities further implies that immigrant-origin candidates tend to lose votes compared to equally positioned native candidates, even though they seem to be more strongly supported by immigrant-origin voters (see left).

- In an experiment in Heidelberg, the electorate of a conservative party (CDU) proved more reluctant to support a fictitious immigrant CDU candidate than to support a fictitious native CDU candidate. The social-democratic electorate did not show this tendency to the same extent. This pattern might make the nomination of immigrant-origin politicians for the center-right parties more difficult.

- Pertaining to substantive representation, various parliamentary activities can be analyzed. Project research has shown that immigrant-origin MPs are more frequently members of migration-related or transnational parliamentary committees (domestic, justice, social, foreign, EU) than native parliamentarians.

- Since the instrument of individual parliamentary questions (PQ) is frequently used by MPs, available in most parliaments and least restricted by parliamentary groups or parties, analyses of PQ content were promising concerning the measurement of substantive representation.

- A cross-sectional analysis of PQ for the UK, France and Germany with a contrast group of non-immigrant-origin MPs shows that only a ,visible' immigration background and not an immigration background per se is a significant and stable factor for such MPs asking more migration-related PQs.

- While contextual and parliamentary factors (e.g. MP's party in government or opposition) influence both the number and the content of PQs, an immigration background is a significant predictor for the share of migration-related content.

- A longitudinal analysis of Germany (federal and state parliaments since 1987) corroborates the findings of the aforementioned cross-country comparisons and proves that the effect for MPs who visibly have an immigration background is stable over time (see right). There also is no significant decrease of the share of migration-related PQs over generation. A parliamentary position role and belonging to a center-right party do however significantly reduce the share of migration-related PQs asked.

Table 2: Hierarchical regressions: number of questions and number of migration-related questions regressed on time-invariant (personal) and time-variant (mandate-specific) characteristics (over-dispersed Poisson distribution)

	model I number of individual questions		model II number of migration-related questions		model III model II plus cross-level interaction	
	b	T	b	T	B	T
intercept level 1						
intercept level 2	***2.53	10.02	**1.35	4.14	**1.35	4.28
level 2 (65+2 persons)						
visible minority *term (level 1)	-.01	-.03	***1.02	3.94	***1.02 .00	4.22 .01
generation (0=first, 1=second, 2=third)	-.02	-.10	-.39	-1.72	-.38	-1.71
Volkspartei	*-.54	-2.47	***-1.06	-4.50	***-1.06	-4.58
bourgeois party *visible minority	.10	.31	.64 *-1.71	1.48 -2.33	.63 *-1.70	1.49 -2.32
gender	.21	.99	-.26	-1.18	-.25	-1.04
national MP	.49	1.93	.32	1.04	.32	1.04
MP in city state	***1.52	5.74	**1.11	3.26	**1.11	3.26
year of first election (0=1987, centered)	.04	.02	.04	1.81	.04	1.81
level 1 (123 mandates)						
term (0=first, 1=second, etc.)	*.21	2.64	.13	1.25	.13	.63
position role	-.07	-.42	**-.42	-2.96	**-.42	-3.09
party in government	***-1.93	10.50	***-1.05	-4.27	***-1.05	-4.21
length of mandate (centered)	***.03	6.45	*0.01	2.15	*0.01	2.13
Number of questions (centered)			***0.01	4.79	***0.01	4.71

* p< 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

[1] The only possible exception is DieLinke in the state of Saxony (where Peter Porsch is an immigrant-origin MP 1990-2009): Since 1999, the party's vote share is higher than the one of the SPD.
[2] For the Bundestag, data is only included until the end of the 16th legislative period (September 2009).
[3] The share of migration-related questions could not be used as the dependent variable, since there is no normal distribution of the count data. Consequently, regression models for an overdispersed Poisson distribution were applied.