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Public discourse on minorities: how discursive opportunities shape representative patterns in the Netherlands and the UK

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Recent literature on discursive opportunities shows broad consensus on the importance of media communication in determining the success of minority mobilization. However, the impact of media discourse on formal forms of political participation is less clear. This article examines to what extent, if any, media coverage on immigrant minorities shapes the parliamentary activities of "minority representatives" in the Netherlands and the UK. We investigate whether salience and tone on minorities have impact on how often and in what ways minority members of parliament address ethnic and/or religious constituencies. To study this relationship between media coverage and parliamentary activity, we conduct two separate content analyses of parliamentary questions and newspapers between 2002 and 2012 in the Netherlands and the UK. Multivariate analyses reveal that a more negative tone in newspaper coverage results in more suppressive framing in the Dutch parliament. Our findings for the British case indicate a negative effect of media salience and minority presence on parliamentary salience.

Keywords: discursive opportunities; minority; political representation; the Netherlands; the UK

Introduction

Recent literature has demonstrated the importance of discursive opportunities in explaining political mobilization and participation of immigrant minorities within Western Europe. The neo-institutionalist turn in this regard (Schmidt 2010) has shown that discourses that are prevalent in the public domain play a considerable role in shaping opportunities and constraints for political participation of ethnic and/or religious minorities. Relevant empirical studies provide valuable evidence on how public discourse facilitates or hinders immigrant minorities in terms of encouraging or discouraging involvement in political activity (Koopmans and Statham 1999a; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Koopmans et al. 2005; Giugni 2011; Cinalli and Giugni 2011, 2013).

Existing studies, however, are mostly limited to analyses of "claims making" in media coverage on the one hand and bypass the effects of media content on the success and failure of political mobilization and participation on other platforms on the other hand. In earlier studies, the tone of media coverage on minorities was expected to impact minority visibility

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(Koopmans et al. 2005; Giugni 2011) or the salience of minority-related issues in public discussions (Cinalli and Giugni 2013). This paper aims to widen the relevant research focus by studying the impact of media content characteristics on formal political representation of minorities in national parliaments. In our aim to contribute to the existing literature, we shift the emphasis towards the representative patterns of minority MPs (Members of Parliament). The possible influence of media coverage on how often, and in what ways, minority representatives address immigrant minorities is investigated. Here, we focus in particular on cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms.

This study is also innovative in terms of the use of elements of discursive opportunities as explanatory variables. The media visibility of minorities is studied as an independent rather than a dependent variable in the abovementioned endeavor to shed light upon the reasons behind sympathetic stances towards minority rights and freedoms in the formal mechanisms of representation in the political arena. To investigate the role of discursive opportunities on the representative patterns of MPs of minority origin, we first conducted two separate content analyses on parliamentary and media documents. Thereafter, we combined their results in an aggregate-level time series analysis. The study deliberately analyzed the 10 year time period between 2002 and 2012 in the Netherlands and the UK, as this period saw intense debates and politicization of the issue of migration and integration.

This paper first starts with a discussion of different forms of political representations with a particular focus on the latest developments in the relevant literature in the Western European context. After a brief overview of the studies on discursive opportunities, we explain how we operationalize the variables used in this study. Our findings challenge the primary role attributed to media as well as contesting the minority representatives' ability to swim against the tide. Counter-intuitively, Dutch MPs of minority origin address minority constituencies less and adopt more negative framings in their parliamentary discourse when media are more negative on minority constituencies. The British MPs of minority origin, on the other hand, show more interest in minority constituencies when media attention on minority-related issues decreases and when minorities are not visible in the media coverage. Still, there is no evidence that this results in a more supportive approach to the subject area.

Descriptive and substantive representations of immigrant minorities

Considering the core value of equality in representative democracies, students of political science have attributed significant importance to the political incorporation of less-represented constituencies. In such context, much attention has been paid to political engagement of guest-workers and their descendants in Western Europe (Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013, 565). Departing from Pitkin's formative work on the concept of representation (1967), relevant literature can be divided in those studies focusing on the descriptive presence of minorities in legislative mechanisms (descriptive representation) and those studies putting greater emphasis on possible contributions of such descriptive presence (substantive representation).

European studies on political representation of minorities (see for example: Saggar and Geddes 2000; Togeby 2008; Bloemraad 2013; Michon and Vermeulen 2013; Thrasher et al. 2013; Schönwälder 2013; Wüst 2014) mostly focus on the descriptive presence of immigrant minorities in decision-making bodies. These studies made significant contributions to the reflection of the diverse composition of European societies with their comparative analyses across countries, time periods, parties with different ideologies, and ethnic groups. The presence of minority representatives in decision-making bodies carries significant weight as their

absence certainly points to the fact that something is amiss. However, their inclusion does not necessarily guarantee policies that are more sensitive to minority interests (Pitkin 1967, 60–92; Bird 2005, 455; Celis et al. 2008, 104; Saggar 2013).

A recently emerging trend within the Western European context is an increased focus on more comprehensive explanations with regard to the "substantive contributions" minority representatives make. Although few in number, recent content analyses (see for example: Saalfeld 2011; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou 2011; Saalfeld and Bischof 2013) investigate the parliamentary activity of minority representatives within the European context. Those studies add to our knowledge on the subject area by showing when, to what extent, and under which conditions minority representatives address constituencies sharing similar backgrounds with them by departing from the claims-making approach. However, the existing literature has so far not systematically addressed the question of how minority representatives approach the cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms of minority representatives. The very few extant studies on the issue take a favorable stance on minority-related issues for granted and operationalize any reference to ethnic and/or religious groups as substantive representation (Bird 2005; Saalfeld 2011; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou 2011; Saalfeld and Bischof 2013).

By departing from the representative model of Aydemir and Vliegenthart (2016), we question the notion of considering all references to minority constituencies by minority representatives as having a favorable content. It can be anticipated that minority representatives will address the rights and freedoms of minority constituencies using different frames. In other words, minority representatives may not always act in favor of cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms when they address those. On the contrary, representatives who themselves have migrant backgrounds may be suppressing the cultural and/or religious freedoms of groups with which they share similar ethnic and/or religious backgrounds. MPs with ethnic and religious backgrounds may advocate a restrictive policy stance especially when it comes to the exercise of group-based cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms.

Studies on the role of discursive opportunities

Existing research has already shown us that discourse plays a considerable role in building opportunities and constraints for social movements by shaping patterns of human interaction and cultural notions (Schmidt 2010). This is also the case for the claims pursued for the rights and freedoms of immigrant minorities. How the public communicates about immigrant minorities has a considerable influence by outlining norms and values for related policies and practices by setting what is acceptable and what is not (Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Ferree 2002, 309). Discursive opportunities and constraints are of crucial importance in determining the success and/or failure of political endeavors of those "latecomers" to the political arena.

Considering mass media as an opportunity structure, relevant literature analyzes how immigrant minorities are covered in the relevant discourse (see for example: Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Koopmans and Statham 1999a, 1999b; Koopmans et al. 2005; Cinalli and Giugni 2013). All those studies agree on prioritizing media as a source of primary data, for being the most immediate source of information for society as a whole. Existing literature, however, seems to have little agreement on conceptualizing discursive opportunities mostly because the discursive equivalents to institutional opportunities are much more complex, fluctuating, open, and dynamic and imbued with power (Ferree 2002, 86–89).

Visibility

At this point, the work of Koopmans and Olzak (2004) can be seen as of significant importance for prioritizing media visibility of political movements and members within these movements in their endeavor to provide straightforward answers to what the discursive opportunities are and how to measure them. Koopmans (2001) attributes significant importance to visibility as a necessary condition for a message to influence the public discourse since, all things being equal; the amount of visibility that gatekeepers allocate to a message increases its potential to diffuse further in the public sphere (Koopmans 2001, 3–7). Other studies also put similar emphasis on the importance of "visibility" for the success/failure of the political endeavors of immigrant minorities. Media visibility is seen as a consequence of passing through the gates of public communication, which is already a success in itself on the one hand (Koopmans and Statham 1999b) and empowering the players of such political mobilization in other arenas on the other hand (Ferree 2002).

Visibility is operationalized as the number of communicative channels in which a message is included and the prominence of such inclusion. This ranges from "invisible" messages that are not included in any channel at all, via messages with "limited visibility" which receive minimal coverage, to "obtrusive" messages that are displayed prominently by most channels (Koopmans and Statham 1999b; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Koopmans 2004a, 2004b; Cinalli and Giugni 2013). Yet, available literature on the political participation of immigrant minorities mostly focuses on how different institutional opportunity structures, especially citizenship regimes, shape discursive opportunities rather than examining the impact of discursive opportunities on the success of minority political movements (Snow 2008).

At this point, studies in the field of feminist movements are useful for students of minority political representation. Ferree (2002), for instance, conceptualize visibility as a form of political activism, which strengthens the influence of the pro/antiabortion activists within the decision-making mechanisms (Ferree 2002, 86–89). Other conceptualizations of minority success in political participation such as advocating cultural and/or religious rights and/or freedoms in legislative mechanisms have so far been neglected in this strand of literature.

Tone towards minorities

The way media cover issues and actors carries significant weight in determining the success or failure of the minority voice in politics (Koopmans and Olzak 2004) as it is very often the primary mediating actor between the owners of a political movement and broader opportunity structures. Media can provide more encouraging environments for immigrant minorities by framing their political engagements in a more favorable tone. Considering such role, studies focusing on discursive opportunities mostly approach the tone towards immigrant minorities as a main factor behind variation in minority visibility in media coverage, the latter of which is measured as the indicator of the success of minority political movements (Koopmans and Statham 1999b; Koopmans 2004a; De Wit and Koopmans 2005). In this respect, we depart from Entman's definition and pay attention to which aspects of related stories are highlighted; in what manners problems are defined, how are causal interpretations formulated, which kinds of moral evaluations are formulated, and which treatment recommendations are proposed in matters concerning immigrant minorities (Entman 1993).

Salience of minority-related issues

According to the classical agenda setting theories (McCombs and Shaw 1972), media have a significant power in determining what is perceived as important in public opinion by

addressing some issues more than others in their coverage. Empirical work has shown that similar salience effects also transfer from media to politics, with increased media salience of issues resulting in increasing parliamentary attention as well (Vliegenthart et al. 2016) and shaping the host country approach with respect to Muslim immigrant minorities (Cinalli and Giugni 2013). According to Cinalli and Giugni, the salience of specific issues related to Islam has a significant impact in appraising whether the receiving countries are turning into main hosts for Muslim minorities or not. Henceforth, the media visibility of minority-related *issues* can be seen as a significant factor that might strengthen the hands of minority representatives in representing constituencies sharing similar backgrounds with them.

Understanding the relationship between discursive opportunities and political representation

All in all, this research will follow a three-dimensional path in operationalizing discursive opportunities. We will consider the media visibility of immigrant minorities, a positive media tone on them and a higher media salience of these minority constituencies as factors strengthening the possibilities for minority representatives as actors advocating cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms as discussed above. In line with the claims-making approach, we conceptualize visibility of minorities as the amount of voice that is given to them – i.e. whether they are offered the space to present their views on the issue at hand. We expect that increased visibility strengthens both MPs' opportunities, but might in some cases also force them, to address minority issues in the more formal political realm. A more positive tone might have the same encouraging effect on parliamentary activity. Following the classical agenda setting theories, we hypothesize that there will be a greater space opened to advocate minority rights and freedoms when there is a greater newspaper salience on ethnic and cultural minorities. Other than that, by departing from the existing literature on substantive representation of immigrant minorities (Saalfeld 2011; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou 2011; Saalfeld and Bischof 2013), we conceptualize substantive representation as the total number of references made to them. Overall, this results in the following three hypotheses regarding salience:

> H 1: Minority representatives are more inclined to address constituencies with which they share similar backgrounds when there is a greater media visibility of these ethnic and/or religious groups.
> H 2: Minority representatives are more inclined to address constituencies with which they share similar backgrounds when the media adopt a positive tone in respect of these ethnic and/or religious groups.
> H 3: Minority representatives are more inclined to address constituencies with which they share similar backgrounds when there is a greater salience of minority related issues in media coverage.

As previously noted, we see the salience of minority-related issues only as one aspect of examining the substantive contributions to minority representation. The claim-making approach (Koopmans and Statham 1999b; Saward 2006; Celis et al. 2008) illustrates whether MPs of minority origin address minorities or not, but this content blind approach does not look into what those representatives say when they address ethnic and/or religious constituencies.

We use a framing approach from communication studies for our second set of hypotheses. The framing approach facilitates the detection of salient aspects within the perceived

realities of minority representatives, as well as enabling investigation into how those MPs define problems, formulate causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and/or treatment recommendations in the context of cultural and/or religious right and freedoms (Entman 1993). Following Aydemir and Vliegenthart (2016), we coded all parliamentary activities as supportive framing when minority representatives supported the exercise of cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms of minority constituencies and suppressive framing when those politicians took a restrictive stance.

Following the same logic applied to the formulation of the first group of hypotheses, we expect a more supportive framing in the parliamentary questions of minority representatives when minorities are more visible in the relevant discourse and when there is a positive media tone on minorities. After all, if discursive opportunities increase, it is likely that minority representatives will use this space to emphasize the rights of minorities. Yet, as it is hard to anticipate the direction of the effect of media salience on parliamentary framing, we refrain from formulating a hypothesis on this relationship.

Hence we formulated our content related hypotheses as:

> H 4: Minority representatives are more inclined to use suppressive representation framing when there is less media visibility of these ethnic and/or religious groups.
>
> H 5: Minority representatives are more inclined to use suppressive representation framing when there is a negative tone in the media on ethnic and/or religious groups.

Methods

The findings are based on a regression analysis of two different content analyses, namely on parliamentary and media inquiries. The first dataset consists of parliamentary questions posed by minority legislatures during the time period analyzed for this study. Parliamentary questions were deliberately chosen as the base data for this study as it is believed that they give members of parliament greater freedom to articulate their viewpoints (for a similar approach see: Franklin and Norton 1993; Bird 2005; Vliegenthart and Roggeband 2007; Russo and Wiberg 2010; Saalfeld 2011). Legislative data were collected in a two-step procedure. Firstly, all the parliamentary questions of MPs of minority origin were downloaded by entering the names of those MPs to obtain a total number of such inquiries.

The minority identity of the MPs were defined by departing from the official definitions in both countries. According to the Central Bureau for Statistics of the Netherlands, minorities are those people of whom at least one (grand) parent was born outside the Netherlands.[1] The British official language, on the other hand, mostly leans towards ethnic background and takes anyone with an ethnic background other than White British as minority.[2] We identified the minority background of the relevant MPs through a combined analysis of birthplace information, physical clues from published photographs, and names.[3] In the Netherlands, there were 35 MPs of minority origin serving between 2002 and 2012. Most of them belonged to the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA), followed by the Green Left. Other parties have allocated less space to MPs coming from ethnic and religious minorities. In the British case, the total number of minority representatives within the same time period was 38. Unsurprisingly, the Labour Party accounted for the largest number of minority representatives with 24 seats. Those minorities from Morocco and Turkey were dominant in the Netherlands, while Indians and Pakistanis had the majority in the UK. The ratio of female representatives of minority origin in the British parliament was lower than its equivalent in the Netherlands with 11 out of 38 and 21 out of 35, respectively.

After collecting all the questions posed by minority representatives, only those documents specifically related to immigrant minorities were selected through a second key word search. This was done through a second set of search terms, selected through a preliminary analysis on the most frequent words used in the discourse of immigrant/ ethnic and/or religious minorities in the countries analyzed.[4] The total number of parliamentary questions requiring analysis was 252 for the Netherlands and 214 for the UK, respectively.[5]

At this point, it is important to underline the stylistic differences between the Dutch and British parliamentary data. The Dutch parliamentary questions are composed of single texts with introductory, main, and conclusion paragraphs and are written to address different dimensions of the issue under consideration. British parliamentary questions, on the other hand, are composed of single or few sentences in short paragraphs, each listed as an individual question even if they address the same issue, asked in a row to the same office on the same date by the same MP. To make our data more comparable, we merged those questions when they were asked by the same MP, on the same date, on the same subject matter, addressing the same office in a sequence. Our decisions on operationalizing salience are explained more in detail in the later parts of this section but those stylistic differences also led us to use absolute scores rather than relative measures, since it is debatable how one should compose a relative measure.

Media data for this research were collected through another keyword search by using the same search terms that were used on the parliamentary data on the same time frame. Three widely read newspapers, representing different political ideologies, from each country were analyzed. *Volkskrant, De Telegraaf,* and *NRC Handelsblad* for the Netherlands, and the *Guardian, Daily Mail* and the *Times* were chosen for the UK. The entire document was searched for the parliamentary data. For newspapers, however, only keywords in the headlines of newspaper articles were sought to ensure relevance of the selected articles. All the relevant data were retrieved from Lexis Nexis and Factiva databases as printed in the native languages. After an initial examination, those articles which were unrelated to minorities in the countries analyzed were removed via manual inspection of the articles for both parliamentary and media data. Following this elimination, a total number of 731 media documents were analyzed for the Dutch case and 469 for the UK, a total of 1200 items.

Two separate codebooks for parliamentary and media analyses were composed. In this analysis, we used the following variables:

  i. *Media salience of minorities:* operationalized as the number of articles on immigrant minorities per month.

 ii. *Media tone on minorities:* operationalized as the average ratio of positive and negative framings used in articles on immigrant minorities per month.

iii. *Media presence of minorities*: operationalized as the share of articles in which immigrant minorities appear as active actors, covering matters concerning them.

 iv. *Salience of minorities in parliamentary discourse:* operationalized as the number of references in which minority representatives address ethnic and/or religious constituencies per month. As stated above, we measured salience with the absolute scores rather than with relative measures, such as the share of all questions that minority MPs ask. In addition to the reason outlined above, we also contend the absolute number of questions the most precise measure to capture the responsiveness to media coverage. There are no formal limits to the questions MPs can ask,

next to minority issues, minority MPs will also address other issues. If increases in the number of questions on minority issues coincide with increases in the number of questions for other issues, the relative score will not reflect increased attention for minority issues that are present.

v. *Framing of minorities in parliamentary discourse:* operationalized as the share of parliamentary questions by minority representatives addressing ethnic and/ or religious constituencies that use supportive/suppressive/neutral framings per month.

As stated above, a total number of 252 parliamentary questions were analyzed for the Dutch case and 214 for British case. Thirty-nine percent of those questions had a supportive and 41% of them had a suppressive framing for the case of the Netherlands. The British parliamentary data had a more supportive framing with only 8% of the questions having a negative connotation against the minority rights and freedoms in this country. Seventy-six percent of the British parliamentary data was coded as having a supportive frame, whereas only 4% contained suppressive elements. With regard to the media data, 731 articles were analyzed for the case of the Netherlands and 469 for the case of the UK. Forty-six percent of the media data were coded as having a positive tone for the Dutch, and 57% for the British dataset. Immigrant minorities were coded as visible in 26% and 36% of media articles analyzed for the Netherlands and the UK, respectively (Tables 1 and 2).

An inter-coder reliability check was conducted on 10% (35) of the parliamentary texts and 5% (60) of the media documents. Inter-coder reliability for representation (based on differentiation between "supportive," "suppressive," "neutral," and "other") was satisfactory, with pairwise agreements of 74% for the Dutch case and 80% for the British case. Inter-coder reliability for the media-related variables could be assessed by Krippendorff's alpha as there was greater diversification in the coded data. The results for the tone on variables were 0.76 and 0.81 for the Netherlands and the UK, respectively. The inter-coder reliability check for minority visibility in media coverage on minority-related issues was 0.92 for the Netherlands and 0.80 for the UK.

Finally, we conducted a regression analysis to examine the influence of the media tone on minorities on the performance of minority legislatures in politics. For this analysis, a time series design was employed. We aggregated our data to monthly levels (see Vliegenthart and Roggeband 2007; Walgrave et al. 2008 for a similar approach) and investigated to what extent visibility (number of articles), tone and presence of minority voices (both mean scores) in newspaper coverage influenced subsequent parliamentary activity, in terms of both visibility of the topic (number of questions) and the degree of suppressive framing (share of all questions posed in one month that included suppressive framing). In order to ensure causality and correct temporal ordering, we used lagged values of media in the models. More specifically, we included the average of lagged values of three months,

Table 1. Percentages on parliamentary data analysis.

Countries	The Netherlands	The UK
salience of minorities in parliamentary discourse	252	214
supportive framing of minorities in parliamentary discourse	39%	76%
suppressive framing of minorities in parliamentary discourse	41%	4%

Table 2. Values and percentages on media data analysis.

Countries	The Netherlands	The UK
media salience of minorities	731	469
media tone on minorities (on a −1 to 1 scale)	.09	.22
media presence of minorities	26%	36%

since previous research has shown that this type of modeling most adequately reflects the way in which the media exert an influence on politics (see Walgrave et al. 2008). To deal with auto-correlation in parliamentary data, we included a lagged dependent variable and tested in all cases for the absence of auto-correlation in the residuals and the squared residuals (to test for the absence of autoregressive conditional heteroscedasticity), both using Ljung-Box Q statistics (see Tables 3 and 4). Indeed, in none of the analyses, auto-correlation was detected. If the lagged dependent variable is excluded from the analyses, results are substantially similar.

This study focuses on the cases of the Netherlands and the UK in its aim to analyze the role of discursive opportunities in shaping how often and in what respects minority representatives address minority constituencies. Both countries have been regarded as representatives of a multicultural approach within citizenship (Koopmans and Statham 2000), even though this traditional approach on diversity has been challenged recently, and the outcomes depend on the political context in which actual policy-making takes place (Bonjour and Lettinga 2012). As is already well known, the Netherlands in particular has been oriented more to an integrative approach (Entzinger 2003; Meer and Modood 2009) since the early 2000s. Indeed, available cross-national research shows a shift away from the traditional understanding of multiculturalism in the Netherlands (Koopmans 2004a; Cinalli and Giugni 2013). Cinalli and Giugni (2013), for instance, report the Netherlands as being behind the UK – and even France – in opening space for Muslim claims in its public discourse. The Dutch, however, would still appear to be more open than Germany, which is known as having an exclusionary understanding of migration and integration.

That the approach on diversity is rooted in established policies and procedures, which have been built on pre-existing church–state relations, ideologies, and citizenship regimes

Table 3. Predicting salience and content of parliamentary questions in the Netherlands.

	salience		suppressive framing	
	B	SE	*B*	SE
suppressive framing $(t-1)$			−0.080	0.089
parliamentary salience $(t-1)$	0.018	0.088		
minority visibility	0.726	1.295	−0.346	0.262
tone	−1.614**	0.550	−0.215+	0.112
media salience	−0.144	0.089	0.022	0.018
constant	2.487**	0.632	0.382**	0.124
r^2	0.095		0.062	
Q (20 lags)	21.60		17.46	
Q^2 (20 lags)	30.24		7.95	
N	129		129	

Note: All independent variables are the mean scores for the three previous months. For the dependent variable a lag $(t-1)$ is included; $+p < .10$; $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$.

Table 4. Predicting salience and content of parliamentary questions in the UK.

	salience		suppressive framing	
	B	SE	*B*	SE
suppressive framing ($t-1$)			0.017	0.028
parliamentary salience ($t-1$)	0.144	0.096		
minority visibility	−2.430**	0.853	0.001	0.005
media salience	−0.231*	0.110	0.001	0.006
tone	−0.105	0.494	−0.000	0.027
Constant	2.933***	0.596	0.017	0.028
r^2	0.149		0.001	
Q (20 lags)	21.12		16.66	
Q^2 (20 lags)	18.79		7.18	
N	129		129	

Note: All independent variables are the mean scores for the three previous months. For the dependent variable a lag ($t-1$) is included; $+p<.10$; $*p<.05$; $**p<.01$; $***p<.001$.

across centuries, further adds to the validity of a comparison between the Netherlands and the UK. The work of Carol and Koopmans (2013) is of particular importance at this point for revealing the "survival of pluralist policies." Given the complexity of the dynamics of how media influences the representation patterns of MPs of minorities with regard to minority constituencies, we refrained from formulating specific hypotheses on cross-national differences. However, we do consider it an interesting question as to how the Netherlands and the UK differ with respect to the functioning of discursive opportunities. As stated above, the former is argued to be moving towards a more integrative understanding of citizenship, whereas the latter is still claimed to be closer to the concept of multiculturalism.

Our research deliberately narrows its focus to the time period between 2002 and 2012 as the issues of immigration and integration of minorities became central to political and public debates within this period. Both countries received large numbers of migrants from their former colonies together with guest-workers from Mediterranean countries between the 1950s and the 1980s. However, economic stagnation and terrorist attacks in the 2000s led to profound policy changes, which resulted in seemingly endless discussions on migration and integration (Roodenburg et al. 2003; Roggeband and Vliegenthart 2007).

Results

The results reveal different outcomes for the two countries analyzed. According to the data analysis, media coverage on minorities has a limited impact on the representative patterns in the Netherlands (Table 3), while there was only one (marginally) significant effect in the case of the UK (Table 4). In general, our models have relatively low explanatory value, with R^2 scores ranging from .146 (salience in the UK) to very close to zero (framing in the UK).

Our data analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship for only two hypotheses (H2 and H5) formulated for the Dutch case. Minority constituencies are more salient in the agendas of minority representatives only when there is positive media coverage on those groups (H2). Similar to this, minority representatives only adopt a supportive approach when the media is more positive in terms of immigrant-related coverage (H5). While not all the separate coefficients are significant, the tone of coverage significantly influences both the visibility of parliamentary questions asked by Dutch MPs with a migrant

background and the representative patterns in those questions. Substantially, the results show that the more positive media coverage there is, the more questions will be asked and the more supportive representation will be used by the minority MPs of minority origin in the Netherlands. A more negative tone in the media results in more negative parliamentary questions asked by minority representatives on minority issues. If, for example, the mean tone changes from neutral (0) to completely negative (−1) in the three previous months, this results in an additional 21.5% of questions that include suppressive framing.

Media variables do not have a strong role in the variance of salience and framings of cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms on the agendas of British minority representatives. Media variables only appear to have a significant impact with regard to the salience of minority-related issues. Surprisingly, our findings reveal that British MPs of minority origin address "minority constituencies" slightly more when there is less media coverage on these minorities. The same goes for minority visibility: the more present minority voices are in media coverage, the less questions MPs ask in parliament. In this regard, there seems to be a different mechanism present: British MPs only ask questions when they have the feeling that the issue is not addressed enough in media content, or when they witness low presence of minority voices. This might be a strategic consideration and deliberative attempt to keep an issue on the media agenda when it seems to be less present. For framing, it might well be that the low levels and variation in suppressive framing accounts for the absence of effects.

Discussion and conclusions

This study has endeavored to investigate variance of representative patterns of minority representatives with regard to ethnic and/religious constituencies in the Netherlands and the UK. Our findings challenge the existing literature with regard to the role attributed to the media coverage on immigrant minorities in shaping their political success. The data analysis did not confirm earlier findings attributing significance to the media visibility of minorities (H1 and H4) for either of the countries. According to the claims-making approach (Koopmans and Statham 1999b), one would expect a greater inclination to use the representative role to address cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms on the one hand, and promote these rights and freedoms more on the other hand, when "immigrant minorities" are more visible in the public domain. In this regard, our study questions the emphasis given to media visibility of minorities as a political success, which is supposed to strengthen the hand of minorities in other dimensions of political participation.

As stated above, our data analysis confirmed H2 and H5 for the Dutch case. According to our data analysis, Dutch MPs with migratory backgrounds are more inclined to address immigrant minorities and adopt a more supportive framing only when there is a more positive tone in the media. Media tone on "immigrant minorities," however, has no statistically significant influence in the British case. This can be interpreted as reluctance on the part of Dutch MPs of minority origin to stand for minorities, when there is an overall negativity on ethnic and/or religious groups in this country, which is seen as less multicultural than the UK. Our findings are in line with earlier studies expecting a more "integrative," if not restrictive, approach with the demise of a traditional "group rights" understanding in the Netherlands (Entzinger 2003; Koopmans 2006; Vink 2007).

The falsification of H3 for the case of the Netherlands challenges the salience effect, which would expect minority representatives to advocate minority rights and freedoms more when there is a larger public discussion, taking place on the subject area. The lack

of such an impact challenges the role attributed to minority representatives as advocates of minority constituencies in promoting ethnic and/or religious freedoms, or at least addressing issues concerning immigrant groups when there is a significant public debate taking place. Unlike their Dutch counterparts, functioning under a relatively less "multicultural" political environment, British MPs of minority origin address minority constituencies more when media allocates less space for minority-related issues and when minorities are less visible in media. The British case shows a higher number of minority-related questions in the parliamentary data when there is less media coverage of minorities. Instead of the anticipated spill-over effect of discursive opportunities from media to parliament (H1), we witness the reverse effect. The same applies to the effect of minority voices (H3). It might well indicate that British MPs, or at least those from minority origin, operate more independently from media.

It is remarkable that the framing in the UK is so much more homogenous when compared to the Netherlands. While the cross-national differences in framing might as such not come as a surprise, the null findings in the explanatory analysis for the UK might be at least partly due to a lack of variation in framing. Future research needs to go into more detail in laying out the different ways minority representatives address minority rights. Still, considering the low explanatory value especially for the British case, we can put forward the necessity of searching for other explanatory variables. One could imagine that the majoritarian political system, with elections that follow the "first-past-the-post" principle can (partly) account for the British result. In such a system, an MP represents a more clearly defined constituency, and if that constituency is largely made up of a specific group of ethnic minority, univocal representation of this group is more likely. Future research should include additional countries, which differ in their electoral systems, to further unravel the varying impacts of citizenship, gender, ethnicity, and party membership on the MPs' framing of cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms. For any such future research, we propose larger N studies.

Our study is not without shortcomings. First of all, we focused on the questions asked by MPs. This is only one of the many activities in which parliamentarians are engaged, and one that is argued to be mainly symbolic in nature and most often without any policy consequences (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). Differences between the countries analyzed such as the electoral systems, the recent transition towards a more integrative understanding of citizenship in the Dutch case, and stylistic differences in writing parliamentary questions complicate our comparisons. As stated above, we propose larger N studies to shed further light on the role of discursive opportunities in all the aspects that are reported in this paper.

All in all, this content analysis does not confirm the significance attributed to discursive opportunities as playing a determining role in the political mobilization of minorities. This can be interpreted as another indication of the weak influence of the prevailing media discourse on minorities in the salience and framing of questions asked by minority MPs. In our study on the official representations of immigrant minorities in legislative bodies by representatives sharing similar backgrounds with them, we find a minor influence of the relevant media coverage. Agenda setting and minority claims in media effects – although in the opposite direction than the relevant theories would predict – are present for the case of the UK but not for the case of the Netherlands. The tone of media coverage of minorities leads to a more supportive representation and less salience within the Dutch context, and has no impact in the case of the UK. All in all, our study adds to our knowledge on the impacts of discursive opportunities on minority representation in official political bodies and reveals interesting cross-national differences that offer a good starting point for future studies.

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Notes

1. Accessed at: http://www.cbs.nl/nlNL/menu/themas/dossiers/allochtonen/methoden/begrippen/default.htm?ConceptID=37.
2. Accessed at: Gardener and Connolly (2005), (date of access June 27, 2016).
3. For a more detailed discussion on identifying MPs of minority origin, see: Bloemraad 2013. The minority background of relevant MPs was further checked from news reports and websites of relevant organizations in both countries. These organizations are the Institute for Public and Politics (*Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek*) in the Netherlands and Operation Black Vote in the UK.
4. Questions posed by Dutch MPs in the Dutch National Parliament (Tweede Kamer) are available on the following website: https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/zoeken/parlementaire_documenten. The data for the case of the Netherlands was collected between August 1, 2013 and August 20, 2013; search terms for the Dutch case: Migrant* OR immigrant* OR minderheden OR niet-Westers* OR allochto* OR Meisjesbesnijdenis OR Imam OR integratie OR moskee OR gezinsher! OR inburgering OR Islamitisch OR Moslim* OR Turk* OR Marokka* OR Surina* OR Antillia* Questions posed by British MPs in the British National Parliament (Lower House) are available on the following website: http://search-material.parliament.uk/search. The data for the case of the UK was collected between July 11, 2016 and July 30, 2016; Search terms for the British case: Migrant OR Immigrant OR minority OR Muslim OR non-Western OR Indian OR Pakistani OR Caribbean OR Bangladeshi OR Chinese OR Asian OR African OR Ethnic OR imam OR cleric OR Sheik OR multicultural OR multiracial OR racial OR Afro OR coloured OR mosque OR Headscarf OR hijab OR Islamic.
5. Fifteen of those documents are counted twice as MPs of minority origin posed them collaboratively.

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