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Pathways Project Workshop

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*Substantive representation and IO MPs:
first content of legislative floor activities*

Lucas Geese

(University of Bamberg)



DFG Deutsche
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NWO
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research



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Motivation

- European democracies have grown ethnically diverse as a consequence of large-scale immigration
- Parliaments increasingly reflect this diversity descriptively
- What are the consequences of immigrant-origin MPs' presence in parliament?
- Are citizens of immigrant-origin “better” represented by the floor activities of immigrant-origin MPs?
- Do MPs of immigrant-origin add something “new” to parliamentary representation?
- Today: Does an immigrant-origin MPs' status “trump” party affiliation in the framing of immigration-related issues?



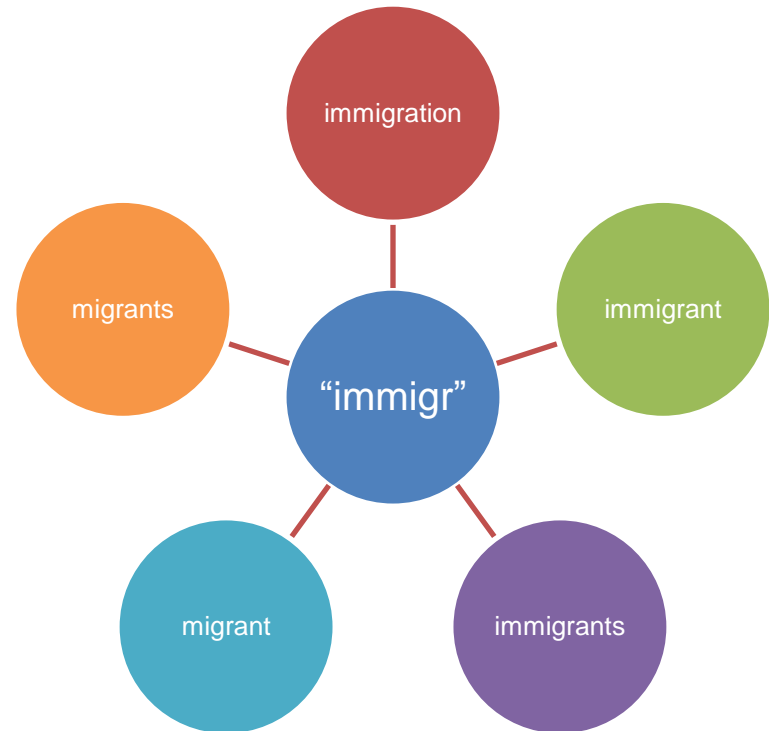
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Today's focus

- **Parliamentary questions (PQs)** for written answers in the UK House of Commons 2010-2015
- PQs are...
 - ... individual instruments to gather information, to control the government and inform the public
 - ... used as signals to constituents.
- **Examples:**
 - To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, how many and what proportion of those eligible to receive university maintenance grants were (a) women, (b) men, (c) black and minority ethnic, (d) white British and (e) disabled in the last financial year.
 - To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her department intends to reply to the letter to the immigration and security minister dated 16 december 2014 from the right hon. member for manchester, gorton with regard to mr m ilyas.

Today's focus

- PQs related to matters of immigrants and immigration
- Visualise the lexical environment of the wordstem “immigr” using text mining methods





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Frequencies of PQs¹

	MPs without immigrant-origin	MPs with immigrant-origin	Conservative with immigrant- origin	Labour with immigrant-origin	All MPs
PQs 2010-2015					
~ absolute	158,192	33,361	8,638	22,173	191,553
~ percentage	83%	17%	5%	12%	100%
~ per MP	266	445	309	527	286
~ immigration- related PQs per MP	1.5	4.8	3.5	5.1	1.8

¹ Source: Extracted from www.theyworkforyou.com



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Lexical environment of immigrant-related PQs

MPs without
immigrant-origin

vs.

MPs with immigrant-
origin



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Lexical environment of immigrant-related PQs

Conservative with
immigrant-origin

vs.

Labour with
immigrant-origin



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Lexical environment of immigrant-related PQs

Conservative with
immigrant-origin

vs.

Conservative
without immigrant-
origin



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Lexical environment of immigrant-related PQs

Labour with
immigrant-origin

vs.

Labour without
immigrant-origin



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Key findings

- Immigrant-origin MPs are more active as authors of parliamentary questions
- Immigrant origin is not the most important factor explaining differences in framing parliamentary questions on immigration
- Clear inter-party differences
- Within-party differences between MPs with and without immigrant origin are small
- Conservatives of immigrant-origin emphasize the costs and risks of immigrants/immigration more than their Conservative colleagues
- MPs of immigrant-origin contribute “more” representative activity but are “not substantially different” from their fellow party members



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Outlook

- Extend research to other themes, e.g.
 - Integration of immigrants
 - Focus on immigrants' homelands
- Extend research to more PATHWAYS countries
- Extend research to parliamentary debates (speeches)
- Include more explanatory variables
 - Electoral incentives
 - Institutional constraints
 - Immigrant-origins
 - „Visibility“
 - ...
- More sophisticated text analysis (Topic models, Sentiment analysis, Scaling procedures...)



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Thanks for your attention

- Find out more on our website:
<http://pathways.eu/>
- Follow us on Twitter: [@PATHWAYS14](#) and [@PathwaysProjUK](#)