

Bend or Break? Experimental Evidence of Voters' Punishment for Striking Political Compromises

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Abstract

ADD Abstract

1 Introduction

2 Acceptance of Political Compromises

Gender hypothesis ($H1a$): Women politicians are evaluated lower when striking a political compromise compared to men politicians.

Gender hypothesis ($H1b$): Women politicians are evaluated lower when not striking a political compromise compared to men politicians.

Migration hypothesis ($H2$): Politicians with a migration background are evaluated lower when striking a political compromise compared to politicians without a migration background.

Intersection hypothesis ($H3a$): Women politician with a migration background are evaluated lower when striking a political compromise compared to men politicians without a migration background.

Intersection hypothesis ($H3b$): Women politician with a migration background are evaluated lower when not striking a political compromise compared to men politicians without a migration background.

3 Data, Measurement & Method

The survey experiment is conducted in the Netherlands between the 21st of April 2021 and the 4th of May 2021. **WHY NL**

3.1 Data

Participants were told that they are taking part in a survey to get an overview of how Dutch people form their views on politics. The sample, recruited through [KiesKompas](#), consists of 2,004 participants of 18 years and older.¹ Because Kieskompas works with non-random opt-in respondents, I have measured many demographic and political background variables (described in [Section 3.2](#) under *Covariates*). Balance checks are conducted to demonstrate whether certain categories are over represented in a certain experimental group (see [Section 3.3](#), Figure 2). The study has been approved by the [Research Ethics Review Committee](#) of the *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam* (see the approval [here](#)). To ensure good quality of our data, two attention checks (discussed in more detail in [Section 3.3 of the Pre-Analysis Plan](#)) are included. All respondents included in the analyses passed both attention checks.

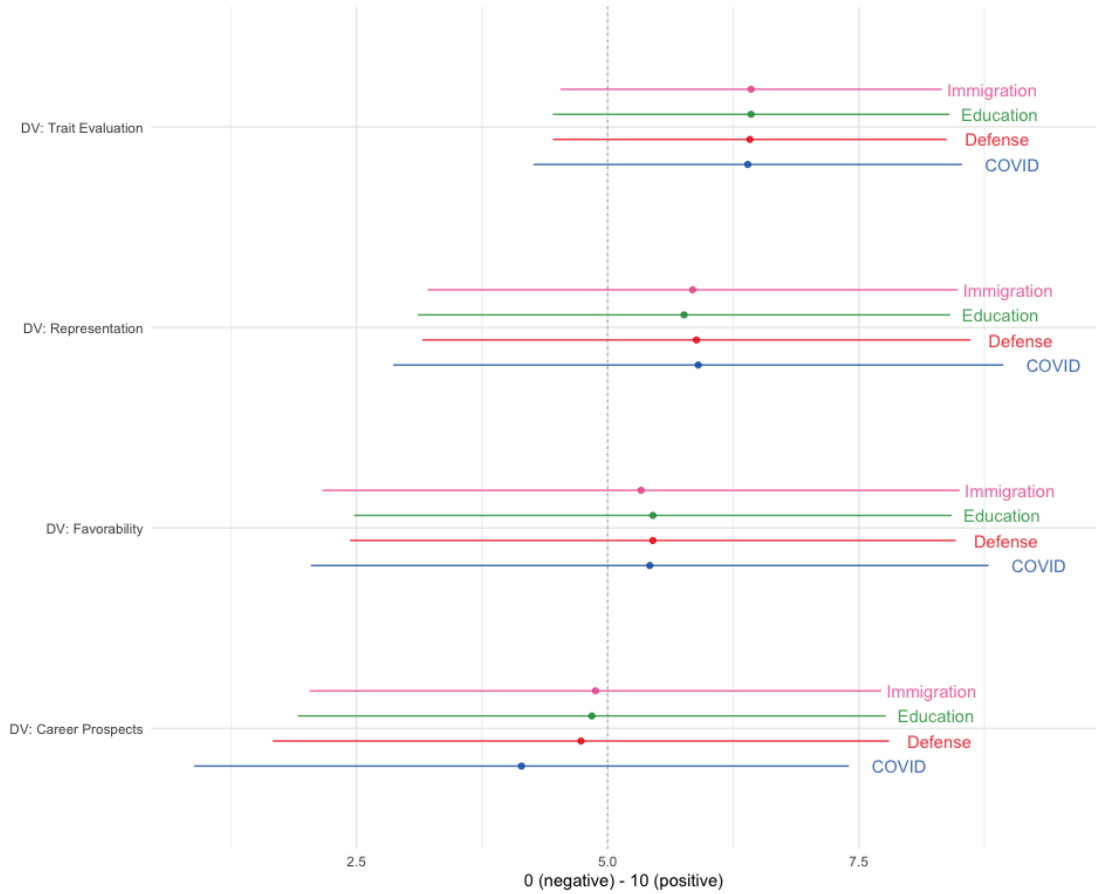
3.2 Measurement

Dependent Variables I rely on four measures reflecting different aspects of how people judge politicians. The evaluation of politicians' character traits are statements deriving from Aaldering and Vliegenthart (2016). The other three measures to evaluate the politician of the treatment are translated from Bauer, Yong, and Krupnikov (2017) – i.e. favorability, representation, and career perspectives. General favorability is shown to be related to vote choice (Elis, Hillygus, and Nie 2010), perceptions of representation are related to legislative compromise and cooperation (Doherty 2013), and career perspective is included because critiques of women are typically manifested in their leadership skills (Eagly 2007).

Experimental Conditions The stimuli in the experiment are news messages in the same style as the Dutch news website [nu.nl](#). In these news messages, we manipulate: a) the *gender* of the politician (male vs. female); b) the *migration background* of the politician (based on a Arabic sounding name (Rachid(a) Amezian) or a native Dutch sounding name (Karel/Karin van der Kleijn)); and c) whether the politician *struck a compromise or not*. This creates a full $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial experiment with four rounds (see Table 1). Every round, the news message covers a new issue. The issues are: “defense” (increase cooperation of the defense units), “immigration” (immigration stop in western countries), “education” (expansion creative elementary school activities), “COVID-19” (emergency legislation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic). For

¹The sample is calculated based on a power analysis presented in the [Pre-Analysis Plan](#).

Figure 1: Descriptive Overview Dependent Variable



every round, the politicians’ name, and thereby gender and immigration background, are manipulated in the text and in the picture, as well as the decision to strike a compromise.

Table 1: Experimental Conditions

	Name Politician	Gender	Migration Background	Compromise
1	Rachid Amezian	Men	Yes	Yes
2	Rachid Amezian	Men	Yes	No
3	Karel van der Kleijn	Men	No	Yes
4	Karel van der Kleijn	Men	No	No
5	Rachida Amezian	Women	Yes	Yes
6	Rachida Amezian	Women	Yes	No
7	Karin van der Kleijn	Women	No	Yes
8	Karin van der Kleijn	Women	No	No

The text of the treatment is a Dutch translation of the stimulus material developed by Bauer, Yong, and Krupnikov (2017). The authors have pre-tested the text of the stimuli material several times (see the [Web Appendix](#) of Bauer, Yong, and Krupnikov 2017). The photo’s of their stimuli material can unfortunately not be used, because a) Bauer, Yong, and Krupnikov (2017) only investigate the difference between men and women politicians, using solely photo’s of caucasians; and b) the American flag was present in their material. Instead, I have used photo’s from local politicians of the city of The Hague that are not know to the general public. The men politicians are in real life representatives of the [liberal-progressive party D66](#) (man with immigrant background) and of the [christian democratic party CDA](#) (man without immigrant background). The women politicians are in real life representatives of a [right-wing populist party Hart voor Den Haag/Groep de Mos](#) (woman with migration background) and of the [social democratic party PvdA](#) (woman without immigrant background). Thereby we have a spread over the ideological different parties present in Dutch politics. The names for the politicians without immigration background are *Karel* (man) and *Karin* (woman) *van der Kleijn*, which are typical native Dutch names. For the politicians with an immigration background, we picked *Rachid* (man) and *Rachida* (woman) *Amezian*. All stimulus material is developed by the [Network Institute of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#) and can be accessed [here](#).

Covariates

3.3 Method

4 Bend or Break?

4.1 Pre-Registered Hypotheses

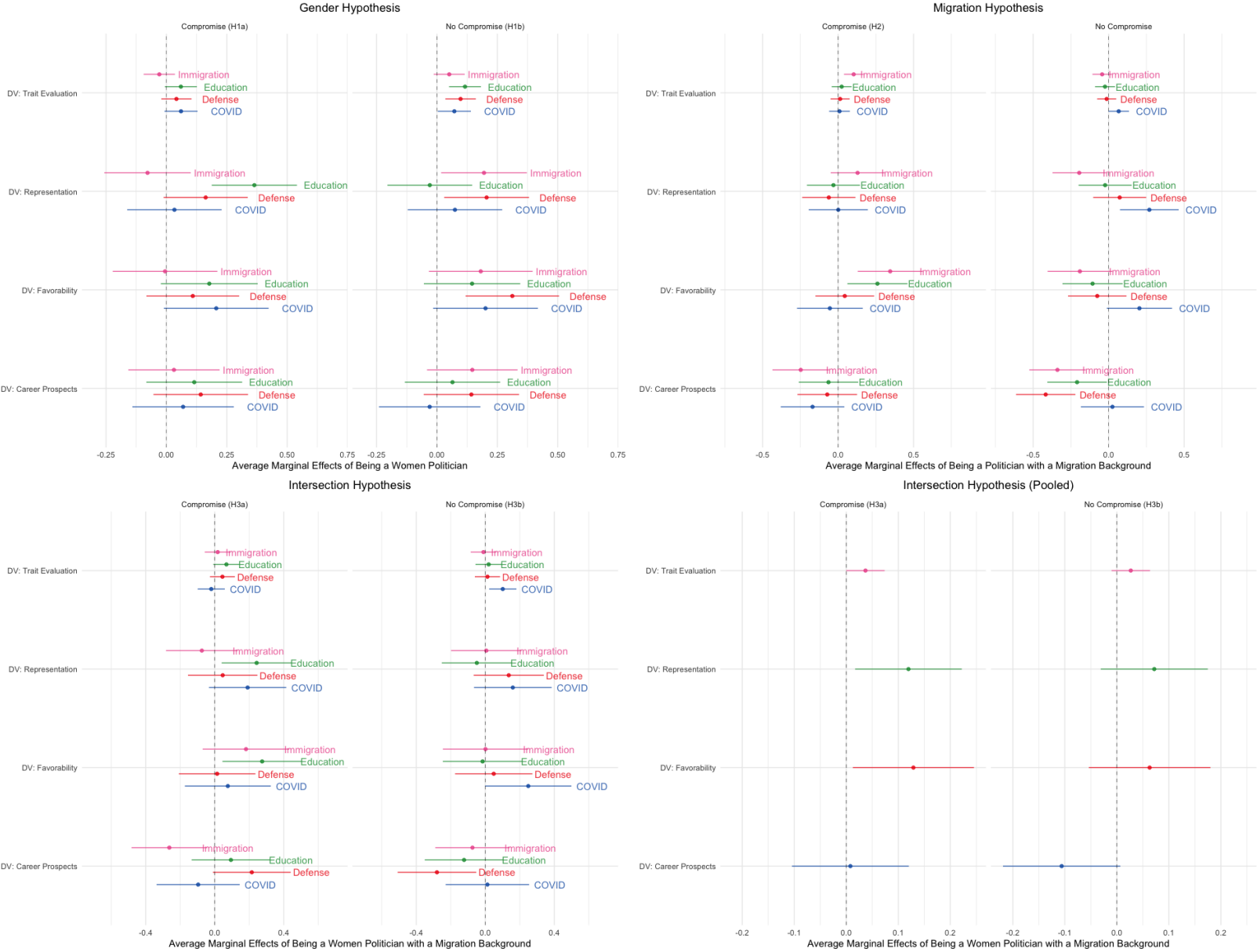
Figure 2: Balance Checks



Table 2: Descriptive Information

Variables	Mean Value	St. Dev	Min. Value	Max. Value
Treatment: Striking Compromise	0.50	0.50	0	1
Gender	0.38	0.49	0	1
Age	33.80	16.34	0	72
Region	2.92	1.39	1	5
Urbanness	2.27	1.45	1	5
Migration Background	1.30	0.90	1	5
Employment	3.35	2.62	1	8
Income	9.76	2.68	1	14
Education	1.28	0.54	1	3
Treatment: Gender Politician	0.50	0.50	0	1
Treatment: Immigration Background Politician	0.50	0.50	0	1
Treatment: Women Politician with Immigration Background	0.25	0.43	0	1
Immigration (%)	22.82	12.82	1	100
Position: Immigration	5.91	2.03	0	10
Position: Defense	2.50	1.05	0	4
Position: Education	3.12	0.83	0	4
Attitude: Women in Politics	3.41	0.92	1	5
Ideology	4.48	2.20	0	10
Political Efficacy (1)	3.13	1.03	1	5
Political Efficacy (2)	2.06	0.85	1	5
Political Efficacy (3)	3.15	0.95	1	5
Political Efficacy (4)	2.86	0.97	1	5
Political Efficacy (5)	2.83	1.00	1	5
Political Efficacy (6)	3.60	1.05	1	5
Political Efficacy (7)	3.26	1.19	1	5
Position: COVID-19	2.88	1.18	1	5
DV: Trait Evaluation	3.21	0.64	1	5
DV: Favorability	5.41	2.01	0	10
DV: Representation	5.85	1.78	0	10
DV: Career Prospects	4.64	1.97	0	10

Figure 3: Results



4.2 Exploration

5 Discussion

References

- Aaldering, Loes, and Rens Vliegthart. 2016. "Political Leaders and the Media. Can We Measure Political Leadership Images in Newspapers Using Computer-Assisted Content Analysis?" *Quality & Quantity* 50 (5). Springer: 1871–1905. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-015-0242-9>.
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