The 2015 European Immigration Crisis and Municipal Party Politics In The Netherlands

A Qualitative Comparative Case Study On Immigration and Asylum centres
In Rotterdam & Rijswijk

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Submitted: June 2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Politics, Identity, and Xenophobia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Media and the ‘Affective Turn’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The Relevance of Municipal Level Research</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Immigration Crisis &amp; The Dutch Policy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>The 21st century EU Immigration Crisis</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>The Dutch Asylum Policy and Involved Actors</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Method of Data Collection</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Methods of Data Analyses</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Introducing the Cities</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Historical Background of the 20th Century.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Contemporary Socio-Economic Status &amp; Diversity</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Top 5 Party Positions Rotterdam and Rijswijk</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>The Interviews Thematic Content</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Municipal Elections Rotterdam and Rijswijk (2014 &amp; 2018)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Provincial Elections South-Holland, Rotterdam and Rijswijk (2015 &amp; 2019)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>The Case of Rijswijk</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>The Case of Rotterdam</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Comparing the Cases</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References ................................................................................................................................................. 43

Appendix; Interview Transcriptions ........................................................................................................ 50
1. Introduction

The Syrian civil war caused for half if its population to be displaced from their homes. During 2015 this caused for an enormous influx (over 850,000 compared to less than 50,000 in 2014) of refugees from the region of Syria to enter the EU premises via Greece. At the same time the already existing stream of immigrants travelling in from North-Africa towards Italy continued (Clayton & Holland, 2015). The EU member-states had to respond by accepting large amounts of immigrants to be accepted within their own borders. Although the crisis was at hand several years later a strong and coherent common EU immigration and asylum policy still had not been developed (Ellyatt, 2018). Protests of many kinds were seen whilst refugee centres were opened all across the EU member states. The Netherlands is one of the states that opened its borders to immigrants and all across the Dutch provinces Asielzoekerscentra (Asylum Seekers’ Centres; AZC) were opened in order to provide for the needed housing. The opening of these centres did not occur without any struggles. In many cities protests were held by the public in fear of increased crime rates (Achbari & Leerkes, 2018). In Rotterdam, located in the province of South-Holland, one of the largest protests was held. The demonstrations even led to violent incidents between the police and the protestors (NOS, 2016). In Rijswijk, a city in the same province as Rotterdam, also protests were held. Although much smaller in scale (<30 people) and intensity (Omroepwest.nl, 2015). Research in 2017 has shown, contrary to expectations by the protesters, that during 2016 no increased crime rates could be allocated to the establishment of an AZC. The protesters perception was guided by fear, not facts (Achbari & Leerkes, 2018).

Regardless of the above mentioned research results several years later the AZC’s are still a source of problematics. This became explicitly shown in the amount of 4.600 AZC incidents with police involvement in the figures of 2018 (Den Hartog, 2019). Evidently the AZC environment changed with regards to the earlier findings. The national politics do not seem to have an answer to the problematics within existing AZCs whilst the existing party politics only lead to an increase in dividedness among the electorate. Identity politics appear to have taken the upper hand within the Netherlands (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007).

In this thesis I focuses on The Netherlands. The trend of identity politics and ongoing problematics with the AZC in combination withthe inability of Europe to come to a common asylum policy makes the Dutch state an interesting ground of research. Party politics, defined as the political activities, decisions, leadership, goals, and positioning that relate to a particular political party, is the main research focus. Party politics provides for a new approach to research on political issues such as immigration and whilst doing so an existing gap in the literature on
politics will be slightly decreased (Odalm, 2018), (Inoguchi & Blondel, 2012). As the national politics do not seem to bring the needed political grounds to work towards a coherent political environment and a well-functioning policy domain this thesis will focus on the municipal level politics. Further inspiration for the municipal level of research comes from the increasing amount of theories and research related to the political, social, environmental, and economical possibilities municipalities provide in opposition of the national level of governments (Barber, 2013), (Calzada, 2017), (Doomernik & Ardon, 2018).

A qualitative comparative case study has been used as the research strategy. The earlier mentioned party politics in the cities of Rijswijk and Rotterdam will be the units of analysis. The main subject with regards to each case is the reaction in party politics concerning the 2015 migration crisis and the following establishment of AZCs. Hereby the relation electorate-political parties, party positions and the populist leadership narrative will be examined as per the theory on party politics proposed by Professors Jean Blondel and Takashi Inoguchi (Inoguchi & Blondel, 2012). The main sources of information are compared election results, a directed content-analysis of party positions, and a thematic content-analysis of five interviews held with five high-ranking politicians from both cities. The expectation of the election results, of municipal and provincial elections in 2014-2018 and 2015-2019, is that anti-immigrant positioned parties have increased their voter percentage. With regards to both content analyses I expect to find a pragmatic and solution oriented form of party politics opposed to identity politics at the national level.

The units of Rotterdam and Rijswijk have been chosen as the cases of comparison due to the establishment of an AZC in both cities. Furthermore their position within the same province, whilst being very different in background, political preferences, demographic properties, citizen amount, diversity, and socio-economic rating, provides for significance to the results coming from comparison (Gerring, 2007). The province thus provides a focused demographic territory whilst both inner units of analysis are differing significantly. Due to this significant difference in units a comparison can be made which should points out significant positive and negative differences in both units. The outcome of this most-different form of comparison will therefore provide for empirically grounded conclusions (Barlet & Vavrus, 2017), (Gerring, 2007). Whether an AZC establishment is preferable in a small city as Rijswijk, or a large city as Rotterdam, is an example of what might be answered via the used research strategy. The generalization properties, as with all qualitative research, is limited within this research strategy as a different province, or even different cities within the same province, might provide for
different results. Yet the research is grounded in the factual top-down structure of the democratic system in The Netherlands. All cities are subjected to this structure and those cities with an AZC establishment might find useful information regardless of the scope and generalization properties of this research. I thus hope to find results useful to scholars, students, municipalities, national governments, migration institutions, international city networks, and the EU institutions regardless of the local research focus.

The first section of the thesis will focus on evaluation of the existing literature with regards to migration, politics, and the multicultural society. Theories on xenophobia, identity politics, right-wing populism, media, emotion in politics, and party politics will be examined. This section will also provide for in-depth information with regards to the municipal level governance and its possibilities. The second section will provide a brief examination of the 2015 migration crisis at the EU and the national level of The Netherlands. The Third part will briefly present the used methods within the comparative case study approach. The fourth section will briefly introduce both cases through which historical background and contemporary information of both units of analysis is provided. Following up the results obtained from the conducted analyses will be presented. In the fifth section these results will be thoroughly discussed in linkage to the reviewed literature. A conclusion, which will consist of an evaluation of this research, a summary of the results and its discussion, and recommendations to the field of research, will be the final section of this thesis.
2. Literature Review

The following section will examine the existing literature with regards to immigration, party politics, and the municipal level of politics.

2.1 Politics, Identity, and Xenophobia

The word xenophobia originates from the Greek word xénos, which means stranger, and the word phóbos, meaning fear. Combined they translate into the fear of strangers. In psychology xenophobia is seen as an irrational sense of fear towards or dislike towards strangers, especially concerning foreigners. Often the word xenophobia is used to describe feelings of hatred and acts of hostility toward immigrants and refugees originating from countries far away with their own, different, cultures (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Xenophobia is one of the most common types of phobia. A slight form of anxiety and increased awareness concerning foreigners is to be found in a large amount of people around the world and is seen as inherit to humanity within psychology and sociology. Preservation of the so-called self, meaning a person’s norms, values, religion, culture, economic status, and societal status is a natural state of mind (ScienceDirect, 2019). People with xenophobia, however, overly emphasize the negative influence of foreigners upon their statehood of self. Therefore their perceived threat of foreigners (strangers) becomes irrational and can become very influential within societies and their politics. The holocaust is a very prominent, yet catastrophic, example of what type of political environment xenophobia can be part of and contribute to (Brannigan, 1998).

In 1994 Professor Beate Winkler, whom was the Director of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and xenophobia and Director of the EU Agency for fundamental Rights, wrote in an alarming manner about the rise of xenophobic tendencies within the Federal Republic of Germany and other EU countries as France, The Netherlands, and Italy. She recognized an increase in fear and doubt with regards to foreign minorities. Among young people, in this case in the former German Democratic Republic, the reason for this increase was the uncertain prospect of the future with regards to (perceived) socio-economic status. In addition research conducted by Professor Van Klingeren recognizes the importance of so-called ‘soft’ (e.g. identity and social) versus ‘hard’ (e.g. economic) factors with regards to attitudes towards immigrants (Van Klingeren, 2014). For the former GDR as a whole factors contributing to xenophobic increase among citizens was the threat to welfare and housing benefits, and thus the ‘hard’ factors. The political environment takes its own part in the increase in xenophobia among citizens. Winkler shows an example of the German province Bavaria, where immigration and foreigners had been accepted and were part of society for many years after
WWII. Yet political leaders created a negative image of immigrants and foreigners, by stating that Bavaria is not a multi-cultural region, and thereby intensified xenophobia among native Germans (Winkler, 1994). On the other hand the inherit tendency of people to be cautious towards foreigners provides ground for these politicians to bring forth their anti-immigrant position and thus gaining votes. In this way a triangular relation between (perceived) socio-economic status, inherit caution of foreigners, and the political environment, can be recognized. Under the right conditions each aspect of this triangular relationship enforces one another and thereby leads to an increase in xenophobia. Xenophobia and migration are for the above mentioned reasons undetachable from one another.

In 2010 Jolle Demmers and Sameer Mehendale wrote their essay called Neo-liberal Xenophobia in the Netherlands. More than 15 years later the situation Winkler had been alarming about is still prominent and has taken a vast hold in every day’s politics throughout the whole of Europe as Demmers and Mehendale describe. The construction of an enemy, in which foreigners are being labelled as the enemy, is at the basis of these politics. Through highly developed neoliberal marketing systems the public had become a domain for politics to win votes with regards to minority groups, refugees, and immigration. The emphasis lies upon identity within these politics (Demmers & Mehendale, 2010). Regarding the identity type of politics group thinking, a much studied and all but natural phenomenon within psychology and sociology, is the working ground of political parties (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Belonging to a group is at the very centre of a person’s identity formation. Via identification with the ‘inner’ group a person derives information with regards to themselves by taking over norms, values, and beliefs of this group. Being part of a group at this point in part defines who a person is. At the same time not being part of a group provides a counter reaction, meaning that the ‘outer’ group defines what a person is not.

Most certainly there are always group overlaps and the described above is a simplification of reality, however we can agree that people from a very different background are subjected to and increased likelihood of being counted among an outer group. Therefore this phenomenon has a significant impact on refugees and migrants in general when seeking for asylum within a foreign country, as is the case within The Netherlands (Van Heelsum, 2017). A second part of group thinking is the manner in which people perceive their own group in comparison to other groups. A very common aspect within this comparison is the feeling of the inner group being superior to outer groups. In many cases this is harmless, and even is beneficial to society whence forms or competition are established among groups which lead to improvement for all. In right-
winged populist identity politics this might not be the case. Marketing strategies of these political parties overly emphasize the superiority of the inner group. At the same time an emphasis on the negative attributes of migrants is placed which forms an ‘enemy’ out of the migrant outer group (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). On the other hand the anti-immigrant populist discourse is not merely based on biased statements and claims in order to win votes. This discourse, similar to Liberal Conservatism, also finds grounds on factual occurrences within society. The negative practical sides of multiculturalism, for example long-lasting integration processes and linguistical problematics, are taken into consideration. Whilst during the 90s political consensus on a pro-multicultural society was prominent, now a highly complicated and much divided electorate and political landscape is of existence (Seegers, 2007).

As Beate winkler described, after the fall of the GDR, an identity crisis occurred. The socio-economic status was fragile as the whole bureaucracy and thus the very foundation of society was removed. According to her findings this identity crisis gave room for identity politics, especially in the Bavarian province. Here the formation of an outer group led to the re-establishment of an inner group which found one of its shared attitudes in being of an anti-immigrant nature (Winkler, 1994). This overlaps with findings by Demmers and Mehendale whom describe the quick rise of neoliberalism within the Netherlands and thereby the abolishment of many structures which were in place up until the 1990’s. This abolishment also led to a form of identity crisis, often referred to as the Dutch identity crisis within the social sciences. In both cases, xenophobia and right-wing populism enjoyed a significant increase in power over the years (Demmers & Mehendale, 2010). Many other researchers in the fields of social and political science, such as Dirk Witteveen and Anna Triandafyllidou, have found this direct relation with identity politics as part of the rise of xenophobia and vice-versa (Witteveen, 2017), (Triandafyllidou, 2003). Taking this into consideration the previously provided relational triangle could now be seen as four interconnected points; societal status, inherit caution of foreigners, party politics, and identity.

2.2 Media and the ‘Affective Turn’

Earlier on I briefly touched upon the media and politics. Within this section I will further elaborate on the significance of media, politics, and the refugee crisis. A great amount of research has been conducted in the area of the European migration crisis and its influence upon the contemporary EU structures, institutions, politics, public opinion, etcetera. Euroscepticism
among EU citizens is for that reason a significant dependent variable which has been used in several researches with regards to migration and politics (Abingdon, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, professor Van Klingeran noted before the migration crisis in 2014 that the influx of migration has an influence upon people their (perceived) position in soft; societal, cultural, identity, and hard; utilitarian, economic, aspects of society. This shift in people’s (perceived) position causes an increase in Euroscepticism. At the same time a positive relation has been found between increased inflow of migrants and increased media attention which leads to increased Euroscepticism (Van Klingeran, 2014). Similar findings came forth out of the research conducted by Harteveld et al. A positive relation between the two independent variables of, migration and media attention, upon the dependent variable of Euroscepticism. An increase in media attention leads to increased Euroscepticism. Important to note that the direct effects of this increase in Euroscepticism is most of all connected to national levels of government. This means that EU citizens are more distrustful to their own national governments than towards the EU itself as Euroscepticism increases. Germany is mentioned as country number one in which the electorate became increasingly distrustful of the settled government. Especially Germany’s Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel was the person to blame. This gave ground for the radical right to pick up, a similar trend found in the Netherlands and France although both allowed much lower numbers of refugees to enter their borders. Another important finding to note following from Harteveld et al. is the negative events related to asylum seekers cause an increase in media coverage, even when the influx of migrants is decreasing. A direct relation of this finding is seen in amount of media coverage and the 2015-2016 New Year’s Eve problematics in the city of Cologne, Germany (Harteveld, et al., 2017).

Another theoretical work of value to this research is the book Emotions, Media, and Politics, by author Karin Wahl-Jorgensen. She describes how the dominant liberal democratic theory in western society has shaped the relation between emotions, media, and politics. Within the perspective of liberal democracy the ‘emotional’ citizen is seen as a negative occurrence as its narrative is guided by a dispassionate form of rationality. Over the past few decades, however, a shift has started to occur of a significant increase in emotion. This shift is being referred to as “the affective turn”. Many science departments, such as politics, sociology and psychology, have in accordance with this societal trend seen an increase in research with regards to emotions. This affectional turn has now established itself in all spheres of society and thereby influences all aspects within society among which voter behaviour and attitudes towards political issues. “Rational decision-making is both inseparable from and inextricably linked to
emotion” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). The earlier described findings of media attention being influential upon Euroscepticism is therefore a possible outcome of this affective turn.

Within the field of media this has caused a shift in the manner in which information is being presented towards the public. Story selection is involved with an aim of informing the public in a manner which increases the likelihood of getting the public’s attention. It attempts to use the emotional reaction of the public to bring the story closer to the public and thereby educate the reader of the problem at hand. Within this sense image-selection, and thus the use of dramatic, sensitive, and many other forms of imagery and visual aids, is used to obtain the public’s (emotional) attention (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). Although this cannot be directly linked to one another, it is of importance to note hereby the 2015 research existing fear of the AZC establishment within Rotterdam which was irrational. Media might have had an impact on this irrational fear concerning the AZC when following research conducted in Germany. Here a relation was found showing that increased media attention at the height of the crisis imposed a negative impact on attitude towards migrants (Benesch, et al., 2018).

Most certainly in the post-modern era the media makes use of visual aids and attractive emotionally loaded headliners. These images, used by the media also show up within social media, along with many other forms of news from different sources than the regular media and influence the mindset of readers. Within the realm of social media today’s politicians, and the public, have found a direct communication link. This means that on a daily base politicians are now capable of bringing forth their position in attractive manners and thereby influence the public’s opinion. On the other hand the public’s pattern of participation in the field of politics is changing and is increasingly of an emotional nature. A form of individualized collective action has now become possible for both politicians and the individuals within society. “The group-based “identity politics” of the “new social movements” that arose after the 1960s still exist, but the recent period has seen more diverse mobilizations in which individuals are mobilized around personal lifestyle values to engage with multiple causes such as economic justice (fair trade, inequality, and development policies), environmental protection, and worker and human rights” (Bennett, 2012). Social media for this reason coincides with the already changing nature of the relation between politics and society found by Wahl-Jorgensen, being the personalization and increasingly emotional nature of politics.
2.3 Party Politics & Migration

The Doctor of politics and international relations Pontus Odmalm of the University of Edinburgh is specialized in the politics of immigration, citizenship, and political parties. His work called The Party Politics of Migration and Mobility recognizes an existing gap in research with regards to migration and politics. Most research is focused on the state, policy-makers, and the public opinion. Hereby a secondary and minor role is reserved for political parties, however the actors creating and shaping the (migration) policies are originating from a system of collaboration and opposition of political parties (Odmalm, 2018). This gap in existing literature might be explained due to the lack of a general theory on political parties due to problems of generalizability and complexity (Inoguchi & Blondel, 2012). The question of migration, which is a very prone subject within all of Europe, is part of the positioning strategy decisions which need to be made by these political parties. Odmalm describes hereby how difficult its becoming for ‘pro-migration’ parties to position themselves towards the increasingly powerful anti-migration positioned parties. Another part is the varying stances that political parties have towards the several migrant types. Hereby the classic divide between centre right and centre left is not applicable any longer. This is for example seen in centre left parties, who see low wage work migration as suppressing to the native workers wages. Centre-right on the other hand is in general supportive of labour migrants as these are beneficial to businesses and owners of capital. Concerning migrants in the categories of asylum and refugees the ‘classic’ left-right divide again occurs. Hereby the centre-left has an all-inclusive approach which is in line with the human rights and international solidarity agenda. The centre-right on the other hand is much ambivalent towards asylum and long-term residence, and thus family reunification, of migrants. This is mainly due to their non-beneficial position towards the labour market, and thus the economy (Odmalm, 2018). As the party positions thus are varying across left and right winged parties and various types of migrants this work will roughly divide political parties in pro- and anti-migrant categories.

The 21st century and the fast upcoming of right-winged populism also has shown its influence within the Netherlands. Not only has it brought the subject of migration at the top of political debate, it also has re-shaped the environment of internal party politics. The influential politician Pim Fortuyn was the one the address the problematics of political elites which in his view serve none but themselves and thereby neglect the electorate. As Fortuyn’s electoral support grew the established parties, such as VVD and PVDA, reformed their internal structures in order to counter Fortuyn his notions on the elitist structure of politics. Internal debate and increased
internal democratic structures would lead to serving the people again (Voerman, 2012). More than 15 years later similar dissatisfaction as in the beginning of the 20th century with the set order is found among the electorate. The current coalition led by Prime-Minister Mark Rutte, whom is serving his third term, is losing electoral support in the wake of the 2019 provincial elections. The notion of the disconnection between the politics in The Hague and the electorate seems to be accounting for this loss. The relationship between the citizens and the nation representatives in The Hague thus remains fragile (I&O Research, 2019). Opportunities might be found on the municipal level, as will be further elaborated upon in the next section.

2.4 The Relevance of Municipal Level Research

The decision for research at the municipal level of party politics and their response to the 2015 migration crisis is not at random. Increasing literature and research is being published in the political, sociology, and economic science fields with regards to the increasing importance of cities and their municipalities within the world. Doctor Benjamin R. Barber, famous American political theorist, was one of the scholars who recognized the significance of cities. His work, If Mayors Ruled The World, displays an optimistic perspective of cities their possible role in solving large worldwide problematics, such as climate change, urbanization leading to slums, poverty and migration. One of the central arguments within this work is concerning the ongoing problematics of collaboration between sovereign nation states when it comes to resolving international issues (Barber, 2013). An example of the relevance of cities is seen in one of the biggest challenges at this time, namely climate change. Whereas nations, e.g within the European Union, find it hard to reach consensus and common goals due to loss and benefit balances being made, cities are dealing directly with the consequences and causation of climate change. Cities covered in smog due to gas emissions are for that reason more prone to deal with problems as these than the nation state itself. The party political environment might for that reason also be more of a pragmatic nature than the parties at the national level.

Whilst nation states might have deviant points of interest on the agenda cities might find common grounds for collaboration and see the benefit of knowledge sharing. In perspective to this work this relevance of the city could be debated when it comes to finding consensus among all EU member with regards to the asylum and migration policy, which is evidently a long-term process where still little progress has been made. Being part of an economic and social union as nation states does not guarantee agreeance and collaboration. The cities on the other hand, which are directly dealing every day with the economic, social, and cultural problematics of the large migration influx, might be capable of finding common grounds of collaboration. Doctor
Jeroen Doomernik and researcher Djoekе Ardon used Barber its list of transnational city networks in their research with regards to cities as agents of migration. Their research shows that cities, and mainly these city networks, pursue an increased share in the migration and integration policies on national and EU level. On the EU level the transnational city network EUROCITIES advocates for an alteration in the Dublin III regulation. Cities find this regulation unfair and limiting as migrants have to apply for asylum in the country of entrance in the EU. This leads to the creation of hot-spots in countries such as Spain and Italy which will be described later on. At the same time these migrants are not able to move towards another country. This leads to a limitation in integration capabilities as some cities, in different countries, might be able to provide for better integration grounds. Currently the cities feel they are being neglected by their national governments when it comes to these issues. (Doomernik & Ardon, 2018). The trend of “devolution” coincides with these findings of cities in search of increased autonomy. Cities such as Glasgow and Barcelona are at the top of cities advocating for increased regional autonomy through finding collaborative grounds at the European Level. Thus, a trend of bottom-up metropolitan politics is present though still at a democratic experimentation phase for the current democratic westphalian setting is being challenged (Calzada, 2017). For this reason there is a specific focus on the relation between Rotterdam and Rijswijk and their link to the national set authority and the EU institutions within this work.

Cities have already become on many grounds international actors and might show on a long-term the pathway to methods of increased global and regional governance. Cities do show already that internationality and globalization fit in with cities their political, economic, and social agenda and therefore the role of nations states as the sole international actors is somewhat weakened (Herschell & Newman, 2017). The transnational networks, as presented by Barber, and the outreach by the European commission to local authorities are great examples of this phenomenon. This thesis is not focused on municipalities as international actors but focusses on the political reaction with regards to migration as shown by political parties on the municipal level. As described in the previous section, the role of party politics is of importance and influence upon the establishment of municipal government and policy making processes. Thus by focussing on the reaction in party politics I hope to be able to recognize opportunities, common grounds among parties, divergences which could be used to the benefit of the Dutch state and EU in the migration process. The recognized relevance of the view upon the city as an autonomous political actor is thereby guiding.
Within the Dutch municipal party system the large amount of local level parties is therefore of interest. First of all the electorate favours these local parties above national established parties due to their dissatisfaction with the national set parties. The political actors at the national level are being distrusted. As the local parties are extensions of the national level these are also distrusted and therefore the local party is favoured. In second the inability to vote for national set parties at the local level is of issue, and then mainly the absence of the Freedom Party was significant. This is an interesting fact as this party has a strong populist anti-immigrant, and anti-establishment, focus. Another although less significant reason for the popularity of local parties in the Netherlands is a support of increased regional autonomy as these local parties are solely locally oriented (Otjes, 2018). The dissatisfaction with the local and national represented parties is also found in the dependence of local parties upon their national set colleagues. The national agenda of these parties influences the agenda-setting process of the local parties which is at dissatisfaction of the electorate. Local parties on the other hand are capable of setting their own agenda whilst being completely focused on the regional problematics. “they enrich local politics with new political dividing lines between local and supra-local interests, between establishment and anti-establishment and between local geographic and demographic interests, smoothing the entry of new demands, themes, and issues on to the political agenda” (Boogers & Voerman, 2010).

Whilst this work does not have its focus on cities as international actors it does focus on the role cities currently have in migration and integration processes. Parties on the state level have agendas set on a more general ground of problematics due to their need of electoral support of different sorts which thus influences their positioning towards the electorate. Party politics on the municipal level on the other hand are concerned with a smaller electorate in a focus on the city alone and therefore the parties within might show a different approach to the migration problem than the state level of governance. The diverse setting, including the solely established local parties, therefore creates an interesting ground for research to be conducted within the Netherlands.
3. The Immigration Crisis & The Dutch Policy

The following section will elaborate on the problematics which occurred within the EU due to the 2015 immigration crisis. Following up a brief summary will be provided of Dutch crisis response, its policies concerning Immigrants, and involved actors.

3.1 The 21st century EU Immigration Crisis

Post-doctorate researcher Adina Maricut-Akbik conducted research concerning the consequences of the 2015 immigration crisis. She describes that usually issues of migration are being handled at the national level, but due to the Schengen treaty and thus the free movement of people, this large migration stream became an European issue. Countries such as those within the Balkans and Italy were unable to hold immigrants from crossing their borders with neighbouring countries and therefore all EU countries were faced with streams of people flowing in. The vast amount of immigrants and the lack of control and intelligence with regards to these people became a security threat, and thereby the Schengen treaty its existence was at stake. Many national governments, such as Hungary and the Czech Republic, became very doubtful to the Schengen arrangement (Maricut-Akbik, 2018).

In reaction the refugee crisis at hand on the 13th of May 2015 the EU setup an agenda in which immediate measures with regards to four policy areas were stated. The first of these was putting a hold to incentives for irregular immigration, which was one of the biggest challenges during the refugee crisis. The second was border management, which included the safety of refugees whilst at the same time the security of the external EU borders. The third point had the aim of a stronger common asylum policy, which was (and still is), not coherent at the start of the refugee crisis. The last point was with regards to the establishment of a new policy on regular immigration, mostly concerned with integration policies and their optimisation in order to increase the benefits for migrants and their countries of origin (Schmid-Drüner, 2018).

The influx of people into the EU caused the reaction as to be expected from the reviewed literature in the first section of this chapter. Immigration became one of the main concerns of European citizens which is shown in the Eurobarometer surveys. Even countries as Estonia and Hungary where no large amounts of refugees were to be found were troubled by this crisis. At the same time this gave pathway for right-wing populist politics to increase in their voter’s share in countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Greece, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, and Slovakia by the year of 2016 (Maricut-Akbik, 2018). At the same time the EU agenda on the management of the refugee crisis showed ongoing flaws within the EU.
Disagreement remained among EU member states with regards to border management, relocation of refugees, and the dealing with refugees present in so-called ‘hot-spots’ such as Greece and Italy (Ellyatt, 2018).

The disagreement in distribution of refugees came to the surface at the height of the crisis in the summer of 2015. A quota system was created which based a to be distributed amount of refugees per member state upon a country its number of inhabitants, national income, number of asylum applications and unemployment rates (Rijskoverheid NL, n.d.) During this year countries such as Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia rejected the quota system and three years later still no consensus had been reached upon this prominent issue. The EU has its basis in consensus by each member-state, and this showed its flaw in the management of the refugee crisis. In a broader sense, it showed the flaws of the EU system as a whole (Ellyatt, 2018).

Another aspect of the problem in dealing effectively with the crisis is the base of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) called the Dublin regulation. This regulation determines the responsibility of a country with regards to every asylum claim. Most of the time this means that the country where a refugee arrives becomes responsible for the asylum application. Under normal circumstances this does not lead to any problematics, but during the crisis this caused for the hot-spot problematics in countries of EU entrance as seen in Italy, Greece, and Spain (European Parliament, 2019). Along the way Italy has seen a shift in its politics in 2018 with an elected right-wing populist and anti-immigrant government which only increased the ongoing disagreement between EU member-states. Most notably, the refugee crisis and issues of immigration have had a direct influence on the election results in Italy. Among other scholars this was recognized by Professor James L. Newel whom is Professor of Politics in the School of Arts and Media at the University of Salford. Professor Newel is an expert in the field of Italian politics and argues that the immigration crisis and all the issues coming along with had provided the perfect grounds for the right-wing populist parties to come to power. Socio-economic, cultural, and security concerns were at the heart of the strategy of political entrepreneurs to increase their power in Italy (Newell, 2018). Hereby once more confirmation is given of the influence the immigration had on European and national politics.

3.2 The Dutch Asylum Policy and Involved Actors
Within the Netherlands refugees have the right to remain in provided asylums up until the moment a residence permit is given or a non-voluntary departure has to be made. Within the Dutch state the term used for non-western migrants is literally translated into migrants of a non-
Western background. Another important term within the Dutch politics and governance of migration are status holders. These are migrants that have been accepted after competition of their asylum procedure by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) of the Ministry of Justice and Security.

During the refugee crisis the most prominent way to get into the Netherlands was by being assigned to the Netherlands via the EU set distribution quota. In 2015 the amount of asylum applicants was at its height with an amount of 58.880 of which about 27.710 originated from Syria. During the next years application amounts decreased by little over 31.000 in 2016, 2017, and 2018 (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, 2018). In the period August 2016 – August 2017 about 40% of the applications came from Syrians, 10% Eritrea, 6% stateless, 5% Morocco, 4% Algeria, and the rest from countries such as Algeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Albania, and Iran. During 2018 the migration background started to change tremendously. This is reflected in the migration numbers of the first quarter of 2019 as a large increase in the amount of Nigerian (Over 400) and Iranian (over 200) applicants occurred compared to the first quarter of 2018 (Werkwijzer Vluchtelingen, 2019).

The heavy weight of migration upon the Dutch state and its municipalities has been recognized. Therefore an integral package of 6 bullet points was setup by the Dutch government in order to lower pressures with regards to immigration problematics. The first of these points is the prevention of irregular immigration. As long-term measures the Dutch government hereby attempts to increase the safety and stability in countries of origin. An increase in welfare by providing more (economic) possibilities for youth is hereby described as the most significant. On the short-term there is an attempt to increase border control in countries in North-Africa and increased controls on the European and Dutch border. The second point in the integral package is concerned with the enforcement of asylum and protection in regions surrounding countries at conflict in order to provide refuge near the country of origin. Hereby a reference is made to the UN Refugee Convention 1951 as guiding principle. The third point strives for solidarity and a solid asylum framework within the EU and the Netherlands. As earlier on shown, the EU members do not find consensus among one another with regards to migration challenges. Hereby finding a common asylum and immigration policy, also with regards to protection of refugees, is described as highly important. This single framework and increase in solidarity and cooperation should decrease the number of migrants being able, and needing, to travel on deep across the EU internal border. The fourth point strives for less illegality and fast return of illegal migrants. In order to provide residence for illegals whom need to be sent back to their country
of origin a new form of shelters (Landelijke Vreemdelingen Voorziening, LVV) is being developed with the municipalities. The fifth point aims at legal migration routes which need to be used for highly skilled immigrants whom are at benefit of the Dutch society and economy. The sixth and lost point of the integral package is the stimulation of integration and participation. This section is currently being revised by the Dutch government in order to improve cooperation between the Dutch State, the municipalities, social services, and businesses (Rijksoverheid, 2019). Due to lack of consensus on available budget, however, the negotiations between state and municipalities have been interrupted. The new integration policy should become active in 2020 and municipalities already are moving towards increased focus on integration in order to establish a fast pathway for status holders in an AZC to start with participation in society (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, 2019).

In November 2015, after the biggest height of the migration crisis was over, the Dutch government responded with an agreement which provided the basis of the next step in the crisis response and the long-term procedures after. The basis of this agreement was the re-affirmation of the responsibility of municipalities to provide residence, and therefore a large increase in temporary, long-term, and flexible housing areas had to be established. 2,500 available places per province needed to be created. Other important aspects in this agreement was the need for fast asylum procedures with the IND. In these procedures immigrants were supposed to go in quick succession through the so-called asylum chain. This would enable accepted applications to find their way to the municipal domain as soon as possible. On the other hand it would ensure for denied migration applicants to be sent home as soon as possible (Rijksoverheid, 2015).

With regards to the distribution, housing and safekeeping of migration applicants in the Netherlands the Central Organ Asylum seekers (COA) is the responsible actor. Their main task is the distribution of migrants over the municipalities in the Netherlands. The distribution quota set in place is based on the amount of inhabitants per province. Therefore the province of South-Holland has a significantly higher amount of migrants to provide with asylum than rural provinces in the East of The Netherlands. The COA explores possible AZC destinations and then takes up contact with the municipalities after which a decision-making process starts. Hereby aspects such as the by law set responsibility of municipalities to provide residence for status-holders, the opinion of the municipal council, the municipal government and mayor (B&W), the situation within the municipality, and other involved parties, are being taken into consideration.
So-called National Direction Tables have been created in 2015 in order to provide a basis for communication between many of the involved parties concerning migration and integration. Every quarter of the year this meeting is being held and parties such as the Ministry of Social affairs and employment, the chairman of the board COA, the Ministry of Justice and Security, and the directors of the Dutch Municipality Association are present. At this table the most prominent problematics and challenges are discussed. Tables as these are also organized with the most prominent actors in provincial regions.

4. Methods
The following section will present the used methods of data collection and analyses within the used comparative case study approach as shown within the introduction to this work.

4.1 Method of Data Collection
Secondary data sources are the foundation of this work. Each source has been thoroughly reviewed upon, including its author in order to maintain a science worthy value of validity and reliability. In order to further increase the scientific value of this work several sources, from different backgrounds and different points of view, have been compared and critically discussed. For that reason prominent authors and peer-reviewed journals and books in the field of social, economic, and political science have been used in order to obtain the basis of this work. Quantitative data and information with regards to election results, policies and procedures (i.e. refugee amounts & asylum policy) have been derived from official websites such as www.rijksoverheid.nl. Information on these official websites is published by official state institutions and advisory bureaus to the Dutch state, and are therefore assumed to be reliable.

Research conducted by Inoguchi and Blondel has provided a guiding framework through which party politics in a general sense can be examined. They recognize four points that need to be explored in order to obtain a general view of party politics; the relation between party and society, structure of the party, goal of the party, and leadership (Inoguchi & Blondel, 2012). This work focuses on a reaction in party politics, and therefore most of all its positioning strategy towards the 2015 migration crisis. For that reason the structure of parties is not examined as this is part of a general theory of party politics and no structural party changes are expected in focus of the research question. The goal of the party is being examined through interviews and the party positions on the parties their official website. The relation between parties and society, similar to Inoguchi and Blondel, is being examined through election results.
Leadership, and thereby the party its directive narrative, is in focus of the right-wing populist and anti-immigration discourse, again similar to Inoguchi and Blondel. Hereby the reaction in politics is obtained via the election results, party positions as displayed on their websites, and the conducted interviews.

Five highly ranked local party politicians on the municipal level of Rotterdam and Rijswijk have been interviewed. Due to their high positions their view is considered to be in line with the directive narrative of leadership in the party. The interviewees were picked in an as much as possible evenly distributed manner over political parties and their political point of view with regards to being pro or anti-migration. In Rijswijk and Rotterdam the same two parties were interviewed, one of pro-immigrant nature and the other anti-immigrant in nature. In Rotterdam an additional third party was interviewed which is of highly anti-immigrant and populist nature. By interviewing different parties within each municipality different views and answers upon the problems presented have been obtained. The findings will be critically reflected upon the information presented in the literature review and the outcome of the election results. The interviews should provide insights of explanatory and exploratory value towards the currently existing research and the obtained statistical data (King, et al., 1994) The interviews were setup semi-structural as this type of open-questioned interview serves best when information lacking in theory needs to be obtained from interviews (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Main themes derived from the existing literature led to the establishment of general interview questions which formulated into the interview guide. During the interview new questions were derived from interesting subjects coming forth out of the presented information by the interviewees. This could lead to useful insights outside of the preliminary structure of the interviews which thereby adds to the explorative value of this work. Issues of generalization and long-term relevance are at stake whilst using this method due to the interviews being held at a certain moment in time with a limited amount of people. The interviews, however, serve as in-depth explanatory information sources as they are not the sole information source which therefore limits generalization errors (Adams, 2015).

With regards to parties not partaking in the interview section a directive content analysis of the party top five political parties their position on migration, as displayed on their website, was made. Although this has not provided the open ended information coming forth from the interviews it does provide a general idea of how these parties would position themselves (according to party goals and the leadership narrative) in perspective of the research question.
4.2 Methods of Data Analyses

With regards to the conducted interviews a thematic content analysis has been used. As the interviews are explorative in nature this type of analysis allows for the data to flow from the obtained information as no predetermined categories of analysis are used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The interviews have been transcribed in an extra literal format. This allows for (if any) displays of emotion, such as laughter, to be taken into consideration during the data analysis. This could punctuate certain notions being made by the interviewee and therefore might be useful. Hereby self-reflection for me as the interviewer is important due to personal assumptions that could be made (Oliver, et al., 2005).

First of all a reading and re-reading period was used in order to become familiar with the information presented. After this period coding was used to obtain patterns of re-occurring words in the text. Following up these words were placed into perspective within labels of single sentences or sections within the information. These labels were set in place in order to identify the converging and diverging aspects within the obtained information. Via these labels several themes were recognized which coincided, but also diverged, from themes and theories which became prominent from the existing literature as described earlier. Only during this last part of the process the basic themes were established in constant comparison and re-comparison with the relevant secondary sources as this puts the at first uninfluenced organization of information in focus of the research objectives (Kohlbacher, 2005).

A directed content analysis was made with regards to the party positioning web-pages. The top-five political parties of both cities has been used as these consist of over 60% of the electoral vote. Therefore I assume that these parties are most representative of the contemporary party political setting in relation with the electoral opinion. This is in line with the focus on party politics, opposed to looking at the existing coalition and government its decisions (Odmalm, 2018). To obtain information in focus of the research question directive themes of analysis were needed to pre-filter the large amount of information (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This means I first of all setup three themes; the AZC, Migration, And Identity/Diversity. I expect that with regards to the research question these general categories should include all information with regards to codes and labels, which are needed to answer the research question.

Mainly excel has been used in order to create figures and equations of percentage growth or decline with regards to election results. Tables with the election results will be presented similar to the presented information in the research by Inoguchi and Blondel. In addition to the hypothesized growth of anti-immigrant parties also local orientation and thus the popularity of
local parties will be tested by presenting their percentage of the total vote (Otjes, 2018). During the discussion section the results will be brought into perspective of both cases and then be analysed in comparison to both cases and the existing literature which will provide for the most valuable information as per the comparative case study approach.

5. Introducing the Cities

Rijswijk and Rotterdam have been chosen as subjects of research due to the large differences in both cities. First of all the there is a difference in the amount of citizens of both cities. Within the municipality of Rijswijk the amount of citizens was 52,208 in the year 2018 (AlleCijfers.nl, 2019). Rotterdam had an amount of 638,712 citizens within its municipal boundaries which is a more than 12 times larger amount than Rijswijk (AlleCijfers.nl, 2019). More important information, such as both cities historical background, socio-economic status and diversity rates will be provided in the following sections.

5.1 Historical Background of the 20th Century.

Rotterdam is a city of labour due to its enormous harbour which served, and still does, as one of the main the basis for trade between Europe, England, and the Americas. Especially the industrialization in the Ruhr district of Germany caused for great prosperity of Rotterdam and its harbour during the first half of the 20th century. During WWII the inner city of Rotterdam was ravaged by German bombings. After the war the city had to rebuilt which is clearly visible in the modern style buildings based upon functionality. As the city started to rebuilt itself the economy started to grow massively during the years of 1965 and 1973. The growth caused for an enormous amount of demand in workers, whom were not available within the Netherlands itself (ERFGOEDHUIS-ZH, 2019). The first large stream of immigration (mainly from Turkey and Morocco) towards Rotterdam therefore resulted directly from this demand in labourers. The continuing growth of the harbour and prosperity of the city, especially during the 1990s of the city and its harbour, led to an even larger increase of migration towards Rotterdam which is at the base of the currently multicultural city of Rotterdam. As labour was at centre of Rotterdam its place within the Netherlands, and the whole world, the social-democratic labour party PVDA had been the top local party within Rotterdam since the 1970’s. This changed in 2002 when the newly established local party Leefbaar Rotterdam, based upon the right populistic positions famous politician Pim Fortuyn, obtained a massive 34,7% of the votes.
against 22.4% by PVDA (KIESRAAD, 2019). The political field of Rotterdam started to change at this point in time after decades of social-democratic supremacy.

The history of Rijswijk during the 1900’s looks quite different. At its foundation are the still visible castles and large houses which belonged to the elite and rich merchants from The Hague. Due to the close distance The Hague often tried to annex the municipality of Rijswijk during the 1900’s but never succeeded. Surrounding the peripheric properties the agricultural sector, which made Rijswijk an agricultural village, was dominant until the 1950’s. During the 1920’s and 30’s the municipality of Rijswijk decided to increase its citizen numbers by expansion and the building of houses. The preservation of ‘green’ areas had always been of importance to the municipality and Rijswijk still is one of the greenest cities in the Netherlands. Especially after WWII, due to the baby boom and focus on the industry and business sector, Rijswijk completely lost its agricultural identity. Hereby Rijswijk became part of the metropolitan Randstad area as a business and industrial oriented city (ERFGOEDHUIS-ZH, 2019). The main parties during the 1980’s and 1990’s were the Christian-democratic party CDA and the liberal-conservative VVD. In 1994 a local green party Onafhankelijk Rijswijk (independent Rijswijk) obtained over 30% of the votes, mainly due to increasing worry of municipal annexation by The Hague. During the first decade of the 21st century Onafhankelijk Rijswijk remained the largest party with VVD on the second place (KIESRAAD, 2019).

5.2 Contemporary Socio-Economic Status & Diversity

With regards to the socio-economic status of Rotterdam and Rijswijk the data resulting from research conducted by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) will be described and displayed below in figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2017).

The socioeconomic status scores are consistent of four figures: the average income per district, the percentage of people with a low income, the percentage of people with a low level education, and the percentage of people without a job. A score of 1 is defined as very good, whilst in opposite direction a score of -1 is very bad. All scores in the dataset are presented in comparison to the Dutch average, which is displayed as 0. In the displayed figure the results show that the socio-economic status of Rijswijk in 2014 is 0.38 and increases to 0.66 in 2018 which is significantly above the Dutch average. Rotterdam on the other hand shows a below average score with
an amount of -0.8 in 2014 and -0.66 below the Dutch average in 2018. The prosperous for all position of Rotterdam during the 1980’s and 1990’s is no longer visible within these statistics. The average difference between both cities, with measure points 2014, 2016, and 2018 is 1.29. Important to note is the large differences within the city of Rotterdam concerning the inner districts and their status which is displayed in figure 2. The Status is ranked from low status (dark grey color) to high status (light grey). The large differences in districts can also be seen in the standard deviation, taken from the mean socio-economic status of all districts in Rotterdam 2014, which is 1.74. Rijswijk on the other hand shows a significantly smaller standard deviation in the same year of 1.07 which shows that there are significantly smaller differences in socio-economic status of the districts and thus of its citizens.

Other important factual differences concerning Rotterdam and Rijswijk are their diversity rates. Rotterdam shows a large amount of non-western migration background citizens in comparison to Rijswijk. The amount in Rotterdam is 28.2% which is almost double of the 19.7% in Rijswijk. Rijswijk on the other hand has 2.5% more migrants with a Western background. Interesting to note is the amount of native Dutch citizens in Rotterdam, which is now 49.1%. In Rijswijk this amount is 65.1% and thus significantly higher by 20%.
6. Results

Within this section the results obtained from the directed content analysis on party positions, the thematic content analysis of the interviews, and the comparison of the municipal and provincial election results of 2014-2018 and 2015-2019.

6.1 Top 5 Party Positions Rotterdam and Rijswijk

The following section focuses on the content within the party positions of the five biggest political parties within Rotterdam and Rijswijk. In both cities the top-five takes more than 60% of the votes and is therefore assumed to be representative of the leading party politics. The focus is on their position towards the AZC’s, migration, identity, and diversity as provided on their websites. Codes sought for during the analysis consist of diversity, migration, immigration, immigrants, inclusivity, asylum, refugees, identity, AZC, and crisis. First a summary of the positions in Rijswijk’s top five will be provided, second those of Rotterdam. The presentational order of the parties is from largest voters percentage to lowest as per the 2018 municipal elections. Within each party its presentation first the results on AZC, then on Migration, and at last on Identity/Diversity will be presented.

Rijswijk:

1. Beter Voor Rijswijk

1. AZC: the AZC needs to close as soon as its five years term has ended. This is mentioned in the party its position with regards to public order and security and with regards to measures of housing that are needed within the municipality. After closing of the asylum the current AZC space should become available for students; 2. Migration; not specified; 3. Identity/diversity: Beter Voor Rijswijk wants to keep the city its historical value. Within this perspective the party does not wish for a mosque to be built. No further specifications are provided with regards to this subject (Beter voor Rijswijk, 2019).

2. GROENLINKS

1. AZC: the AZC is there for refugees in need of help and this party wishes to provide that for the length of every asylum application procedure. If needed the AZC its term can be prolonged; 2. Migration: this party wishes for Rijswijk to be open and tolerant to all and especially with regards to status holders to be of significance in their integration and participation process. Voluntary work of citizens is hereby of great importance; 3. Identity/diversity: the first position of GROENLINKS displayed on their website is called ‘a city for all citizens’. Within that
section the party mentions increasing diversity and inequality within the city. Via special setup projects they wish to increase participation of all citizens and invest in language and integration (GROENLINKS Rijswijk, 2019).

3. VVD

1. AZC: No extension of the AZC term and if possible a decline in its scope. Security is hereby the main reason; 2. Migration: this party does not wish to facilitate residence for declined asylum applicants and illegals and cooperates with the Dutch state in the sending home process. Cooperation for equal distribution of refugees over the Rijswijk and its neighbouring municipalities; 3. Identity/diversity: Although not specifically mentioned the VVD does show its conservative nature within its position towards the AZC and migrants previously mentioned (VVD Rijswijk, 2019).

4. D66

1. AZC; as long as the AZC is of benefit to the residence of refugees it should stay within the D66 point of view; 2. Migration: migrants, such as refugees and labour migrants, are all welcome within Rijswijk. The D66 wishes to facilitate quick integration via education and voluntary work; 3. Identity/diversity: an all-inclusive position to all whom reside within Rijswijk. ‘Everyone is part of our city’ is their slogan within this section (D66 Rijswijk, 2019).

5. WIJ.

1. AZC: not specified; 2. Migration: not specified; 3. Identity/diversity: an all-inclusive position to all whom reside within Rijswijk. District initiatives with a multi-cultural load are being supported by this party (Wij. Rijswijk, 2019).

Rotterdam:

1. Leefbaar Rotterdam

1. AZC: The AZC needs to close as soon as its five years term has ended; 2. Migration: The borders of the Netherlands need to be closed in order to stop the attack upon the social welfare state of The Netherlands. Those entering the integration process need to adjust to ‘our’ norms and values; 3. Identity/diversity: The identity of the citizens of Rotterdam needs to be protected from influences of islamization, radicalisation, and antisemitism. ‘Our’ values take the first place. A Neutral government is part of this, no religious spaces in governmental buildings, no
advantageous policies for immigrants, and no headscarf for civil servants (Leefbaar Rotterdam, 2019).

2. VVD

1. AZC: Not Specified; 2. Migration: No residence for declined migration applicants and illegals. Those that are here need to work in order to earn their place. Migrants in Rotterdam are accepted through their participation in society. Their individual development as a citizen of Rotterdam is supported. They are critic of the slow integration process by non-Western immigrants; 3. Identity/diversity: A clear divide between church and state is being made as this is the foundation of our freedom. Everyone is equal, those who are supportive of this freedom are welcome and discrimination will be punished (VVD Rotterdam, 2019).

3. D66

1. AZC: not specified; 2. Migration: no specific bullet point. The D66 is supportive of an all-inclusive and creative society; 3. Identity/diversity: the D66 is supportive of the differences in people and wants the governmental institutions to be open towards all of these differences. The citizens of Rotterdam should be capable of making their own choices and develop in their own manner whilst respecting the existing fundamental laws (D66 Rotterdam, 2019).

4. GROENLINKS

1. AZC: not specified; 2. Migration: no specific bullet point. GROENLINKS is supportive of an all-inclusive and creative society; 3. Identity/diversity: diversity is a specific bullet point. Differences in culture, background or religion do not matter in their point of view. The power of the city is found in diversity and the space for everyone to find their own identity (GROENLINKS Rotterdam, 2019).

5. PvdA

1. AZC: not specified; 2. Migration: no specific bullet point. PvdA refers to happenings in the world being reflected within the city of Rotterdam on their point of participation and cohesion. Emancipation and integration is highly supported; 3. Identity/diversity: participation and cohesion is a specific point. PvdA is supportive of everyone’s freedom. The citizens of Rotterdam are supposed to participate in dialogues with one another. Much against discrimination of any kind (PvdA Rotterdam, 2019).
6.2 The Interviews Thematic Content

The following section will present the interview results. The interviewees are high positioned politicians within both cities and have spoken from the point of view of their (local) political party. Therefore it is of importance to note that the results are not merely a personal point of view of the interviewee.

**Hierarchy & Municipal Freedom**

The first theme derived from the conducted interviews is the notion of limited municipal freedom. After having analysed the interviews several times hierarchy, thus the Dutch state its sovereignty, is prominently visible throughout each interview. An example of this hierarchy is given by the representative of Leefbaar Rotterdam in reaction to what changes with regards to the immigration and asylum policy within the province of South-Holland might occur after the provincial elections 2019. His response relates to the nationally set distribution quota of migrants and refugees which determines the amount of their migrant intake per province by amount of inhabitants within that province. In his own words “the nationally set distribution quota, being solely determined upon the amount of civilians per province, is completely obsolete and does not look at the existing problematics”.

Another example of this hierarchic relationship is given by the representative of VVD Rijswijk in reaction to how the cooperation between the Dutch State, the COA, and the municipality of Rijswijk is functioning. He reacts in a negative way as the AZC Rijswijk has an increasing rate of problematics with asylum seekers who’s asylum application has been declined by the IND. The representative’s own words are firm; “the relationship is now bad, the COA does not wish to guarantee that declined asylum applicants will not be settled in the AZC of Rijswijk”.

Another example of the problems with regards to the hierarchic relation between state and municipality is given by the VVD Rotterdam interviewee. With regards to a possible direct relation between the EU institutions and the Municipality of Rotterdam on the subject of migration and refugees the interviewee reacts negatively. This is in line with all other conducted interviews, there is no direct political connection between EU institutions and the municipalities. The VVD points at how the problematics of the refugee crisis are a problem on three existing levels of government, namely the EU, the Dutch State, and the Municipalities. Hereby he describes how the problem starts at the EU level with the current European Convention on Human Rights, Dublin III accord, and the EU Immigration and Asylum Law.
and Policy. In his own words “The EU also has a very prominent role in our problems, in order to reduce migration as much as possible the alteration of EU policy is most important”.

The interviewee of the D66 is, with regards to hierarchy and municipal freedom, aimed at integration of the refugees whom have had their asylum application accepted by the IND. The D66 refers to the current Dutch Integration Law which she calls “bankrupt”. The D66 mentions that the problematics with this law are recognized at the state level and are therefore being adjusted. According to the representative the new law is going to increase the already important role municipalities can play concerning issues of migration and integration. Furthermore a description is given of how increased municipal management of integration can lead to increased results of refugees and their performance on the labour market, language proficiency, understanding of Dutch bureaucracy, and many other subjects. In the representative its own words, “Concerning migrants whom are allowed to stay we know that leaving the integration responsibility solely with the migrant doesn’t work and therefore the municipality needs to have an increased share in the integration process”.

Migrant Status

The next recognized theme comes forth out of labels related to the several types of migrants mentioned during the interviews. The most definite distinction made between migrants are the status holders (accepted asylum applicants), refugees from countries subjected to conflict, nationals of safe countries, and rejected asylum applicants. The direct political response to each of these three categories is different and the explanations for this are made by each politician in direct connection to the political, bureaucratic, social, and economic environment. Important to note is the finding that the political orientation of each party, being pro or anti-immigrant, does not show large differences in the response towards the distinct categories.

An example of this convergence in pro and anti-immigrant party politics comes forth out of the interviews with D66 and Leefbaar Rotterdam. In response to the current biggest political challenge with regards to immigrants and the present AZC in Rotterdam both reacted in very similar fashion. D66 directs her answer towards the nationals from safe countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. She explains how these migrants do not have any chance of obtaining any status within the Netherlands and therefore should not remain for long periods within asylum centres such as the AZC Beverwaard. Hereby she also points at the AZC incidents reports published the previous day (14/5/2019) which show a large influx in incidents of all sorts as the number of safe nationals within the AZC premises increases. “It is this group
of people that does not have much to lose as they themselves know there is no chance of enduring asylum”, is what D66 hereby mentions. This converges with statements made by Leefbaar Rotterdam. He explains how in 2018 problematics with safe nationals in AZC Beverwaard already led to steps taken by the mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb of Rotterdam. “I am satisfied with the reaction by the mayor as he clearly communicated, with regards to the problematics with safe nationals last year, that we as a city cannot be dealing with this and we want these people out”.

In Rijswijk the D66 mentions that a challenge at this point is not just the safe nationals but also the present status holders and those still with the possibility of asylum being granted. “One of the challenges is to preserve the political and electoral support in order to keep the AZC Rijswijk opened, the incidents that took place were just a few safe nationals”. The VVD in Rijswijk does not wish to keep the AZC opened due to the issues of citizen safety caused by these incidents. The VVD does mention that before the coming of the safe nationals at the end of 2017, beginning 2018, no problems had occurred and everyone was positive towards the asylum. In response to the responsibility of the city of Rijswijk with regards to immigrants he answers; “partaking in a suiting manner as the city of Rijswijk by providing residence in the AZC of ‘true’ refugees from countries in conflict whom are coming to the Netherlands”.

*Municipal Pragmatism*

Another prominent theme obtained is the practical nature of the municipality. Examples of this practicality can be seen in the labels derived from the content analyses. These labels are; Citizen safety, Welfare, Health-care, housing, participation, integration, and demographic positioning AZC.

The problematics are diverse according to the VVD interviewee. Some of the problems mentioned are housing, socio-economic welfare, physical and mental health-care, and security issues. The VVD hereby mentions that these problematics are already at a way too high level and therefore taking up any further problems, such as an AZC, is not something the VVD wants for the city of Rotterdam. “The previous VVD fraction has been very critic towards the residence of asylum seekers in the AZC Beverwaard and the current VVD fraction remains firmly against the AZC. Therefore it should close after its term of five years has ended”. Hereby the VVD also notes that the positioning of the AZC in the Beverwaard district was not a convenient decision as this district already suffers from several problematics. In his own word; “this is just not the right place”. Leefbaar Rotterdam shows similar aspirations towards the
problematics of the city; “on one side of the spectrum there are budget cut backs which effect the chronically ill and handicapped, and it causes for elderly and nursing homes, and nursing restaurants to be closed. On the other side were obtaining new, expensive, problems by letting large groups of immigrants in”.

In Rijswijk the D66 aims its practical nature at the part the city of Rijswijk can play in the integrations of status holders. “Status holders must swiftly obtain their place in the society of Rijswijk through education and voluntary work, and local organizations have to show beneficial cooperation, also in combination with our volunteers”, is what Dolmans mentions. The D66 in Rotterdam reacts in a similar way and, as previously shown, sees a more prominent possible role of the municipalities in the process of integration.

Identity and Diversity

During all of the interviews I noticed how immigrants and the AZC mentioned in direct connection to bigger issues within Rotterdam. According to the interviewees, also in all of South-Holland and the Netherlands the identity problematics are of daily concern. This finding comes forth out of the questions with regards to the importance of AZC’s and refugees during the 2018 municipal elections and the expected influence of the 2019 provincial election results.

Both VVD and D66 Rijswijk see no influence of the province elections upon the situation with the AZC in Rijswijk, as there is an agreed upon end term in 2021 and the province does not have direct tasks towards asylum and migration. Also both parties show that during the municipal elections 2018 the AZC was not an issue. It did become an issue when the safe nationals came increasingly into picture after the municipal elections according to the VVD.

In Rotterdam the subject of the AZC Beverwaard and immigrants seems to be part of larger existing issues of identity and diversity. All parties deny that the AZC was a big issue or big part of the campaigns during the 2018 municipal elections, but as in Rijswijk, the term was already set and therefore non-negotiable. Hereby the VVD mentions; “the coming of the AZC was already agreed upon with a term of five years and to stop this agreement at two-third of the term would not show the municipality to be a trustworthy partner to the COA and the Dutch State”. Before the 2018 municipal elections, in 2016, the coming of the AZC was a big issue the D66 confirms. Leefbaar Rotterdam and the VVD are also both confirmative of the AZC being a big issue in 2016.
The AZC not being an issue in the 2018 municipal elections is in direct connection to the set five year term in 2016. Migration, refugees, foreigners, and many other similar subjects on the other hand did come up in all of the campaigns under the banner of diversity and identity. The D66, for example, shows a support of an all-inclusive and diverse city of Rotterdam, and hereby relates the very identity of the Rotterdam citizens to being diverse. “The AZC in specific was not a big issue during the campaign in 2018, integration and all of the identity discussions taking place on the other hand were one of the main issues”. The VVD and Leefbaar Rotterdam also confirm the importance of the identity and diversity subject during their campaigns and within the politics of Rotterdam. The VVD focuses here on the differentiation between ‘those’ coming to the Netherlands and Rotterdam and the citizens. “Many of the migrants do not share much of our norms, values, laws, and liberty and thus are at a far distance from our Western world”.

The VVD also shows its anti-immigrant political nature by supporting the right-wing vote results within the provincial elections. The interviewee mentions the non-direct influence which these elections will show; “the province does not have a direct role concerning migration and refugees, this takes place at state level and with the COA, but it will show indirect influence via the elections of a new first chamber of a ‘just’ character”. Hereby the just character is thus consistent of an anti-immigrant nature.


Within the following section the municipal election results within Rotterdam and Rijswijk will be presented. The focus of the results is regarding the hypothesized expected growth of anti-immigrant parties on both municipal and provincial election level. Within the overviews of the total election results parties without any seats have been left out as they are not relevant with regards to this research.

The municipal elections in Rotterdam show that the right-winged anti-immigrant party Leefbaar Rotterdam has obtained a total of 20,4% of the votes in 2018 which is a loss of 7% compared to 2014 (see below table 6.3.1.). The centre-right and anti-immigrant party VVD took the second place in 2018 with 10,6% of the votes which is a 3,2% gain compared to 2014.
The PVV, as a far-right anti-immigrant party in the municipality of Rotterdam, obtained 3.2% of the votes. Taking all of the anti-immigrant positioned parties into the equation this provides the following result: 2018 (20.4 + 10.6 + 3.5) - 2014 (27.4 + 7.4 + 0.0) = 0.3%. This result shows a very minor increase in anti-immigrant party support. Hereby hypothesis of increased anti-immigrant votes is rejected on the municipal level of Rotterdam.

With regards to the popularity of local parties NIDA Rotterdam and Leefbaar Rotterdam obtained a combined 25.7% of the total amount of votes.

The municipal elections within Rijswijk show that the local anti-immigrant party Better for Rijswijk (Beter voor Rijswijk) obtained most of the votes both in 2014 and 2018 with an amount of 16% and 15.6% (see table 6.3.2.). The VVD obtained the third place with an amount of 11.6% in 2018 which is a slight increase of 0.5% compared to 2014. Gemeentebelangen Rijswijk lost 8.4% of the votes in 2018. RijswijksBelang as a new party obtained 5.6% of the votes. With regards to all of the anti-immigrant/AZC positioned parties within Rijswijk this provides the following equation: 2018 (15.6 + 11.6 + 7.9 + 5.6) – 2014 (16.0 + 11.1 + 16.3 + 0.0) = -2.6%. This mean that with a vote loss of 2.6% the 2018 results disfavour the hypothesized increase in anti-immigrant party voter share. The local parties enjoy high electoral support by 45.1% of the total amount of votes.

**PARTY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>2018 seats</th>
<th>votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2014 seats</th>
<th>votes</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>20.4%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>59.505</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24.641</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.120</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.920</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.433</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROENLINKS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.721</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10.631</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij van de Arbeid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.275</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.193</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.955</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIDA Rotterdam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.389</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.322</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.389</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.685</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.756</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.753</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij voor de Vrijheid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.149</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij voor de Dieren</td>
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<td>8.091</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.389</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50PLUS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.359</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChristenUnie/SGP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.956</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.902</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
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Table 6.3.1. Municipal elections Rotterdam (Nederlands Dagblad, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>2018 seats</th>
<th>votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2014 seats</th>
<th>votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beter Voor Rijswijk</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.337</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.282</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROENLINKS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.218</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.497</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.476</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.280</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.307</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.355</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
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<td>WIJ</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.883</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.008</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemeentebelangen Rijswijk</td>
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<td>1.691</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.335</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij van de Arbeid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.338</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.931</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
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<td>RijswijksBelang</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onafhankelijk Rijswijk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.106</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.881</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
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</table>

Table 6.3.2. Municipal elections Rijswijk (Nederlands Dagblad, 2019)
6.4 Provincial Elections South-Holland, Rotterdam and Rijswijk (2015 & 2019)

The results of the province of South-Holland and both municipalities Rotterdam and Rijswijk with regards to the provincial elections of March 2019 will be provided within the following section (see table 6.3.3.).

The Forum voor Democratie (translates to Forum for Democracy (FvD)) obtained the largest amount of votes with 17,4%. The VVD follows with 15,7% which is a 1,9% loss in comparison with the 2015 elections. The Freedom party (PVV) has lost 7,3% of their votes in the 2019 elections. By extracting the amount of anti-immigrant parties voter share of 2015 from the voter share in 2019 we obtain the amount of; 2019 (17,4 + 15,7 + 7,0) – 2015 (0,0 + 17,6 + 14,3) = 8,2%. This is much significant increase in anti-immigrant support. Thereby this result is in support of the hypothesis that within the province of South-Holland in general the 2015 refugee crisis has increased political anti-immigrant support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTIJ</th>
<th>2019 votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2015 votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forum voor Democratie</td>
<td>253.743</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>227.987</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>212.470</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROENLINKS</td>
<td>131.878</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>57.296</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>124.154</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>155.252</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVDA</td>
<td>113.859</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>120.203</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>112.681</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>146.488</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVV</td>
<td>101.858</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>172.178</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChristenUnie</td>
<td>81.160</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>57.899</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50PLUS</td>
<td>64.727</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>45.006</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij voor de Dieren</td>
<td>63.690</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>49.150</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>59.956</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>112.832</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>56.742</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>59.753</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENK</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIDA</td>
<td>6.732</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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Table 6.3.3. provincial elections South-Holland (KIESRAAD, 2019)
Within the municipality of Rotterdam the provincial elections have shown that the FvD has obtained the first place with an amount of 15.7% of the votes (see table 6.3.4). The FvD, as a new party, therefore has a very large increase in votes. The VVD has lost 1.5% of its votes and the PVV lost 8.8% of the votes. These parties provide the following combined amount of voter share:

\[
(2019: \ 15.7 + 12.8 + 7.8 = 36.3) - (2015: \ 0 + 14.3 + 16.6 = 30.9) = 5.4.
\]

This result shows an increase of 5.4% voter share and thus shows significance with regards to the hypothesis of the 2015 migration having increased votes for anti-immigrant parties.

In the municipality of Rijswijk the FvD as a new political party also obtained the first position with an amount of 17.6% of the votes (6.3.5). The VVD lost 1.5% in 2019 compared to 2014 and the PVV lost 8.8% of its voter percentage. By again combining these results this comes down to the equation: 2019: \(17.6 + 16.9 + 9.1 = 43.6\) – 2015: \(0 + 18.4 + 17.9 = 36.3\) = 7.3. This result, similar to the result in Rotterdam, shows that there is an increase of 7.3% in anti-immigrant parties voter percentage within the provincial election results of Rijswijk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>2019 votes</th>
<th>2019 %</th>
<th>2015 votes</th>
<th>2015 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forum voor Democratie</td>
<td>3.796</td>
<td>17.6 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>3.634</td>
<td>16.9 %</td>
<td>3.276</td>
<td>18.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROENLINKS</td>
<td>2.228</td>
<td>10.4 %</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>5.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>2.015</td>
<td>9.4 %</td>
<td>2.488</td>
<td>14.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVV</td>
<td>1.967</td>
<td>9.1 %</td>
<td>3.201</td>
<td>17.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVDA</td>
<td>1.833</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
<td>1.790</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>1.451</td>
<td>6.7 %</td>
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<td>10.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50PLUS</td>
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<td>4.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij voor de Dieren</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>4.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>3.9 %</td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>9.8 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>ChristenUnie</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>3.1 %</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>2.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENK</td>
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Table 6.3.4 Provincial elections Rotterdam (Nederlands Dagblad, 2019)

<table>
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<th>PARTY</th>
<th>2019 votes</th>
<th>2019 %</th>
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<th>2015 %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Forum voor Democratie</td>
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<td>17.6 %</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>3.634</td>
<td>16.9 %</td>
<td>3.276</td>
<td>18.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>GROENLINKS</td>
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<td>10.4 %</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>5.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>2.015</td>
<td>9.4 %</td>
<td>2.488</td>
<td>14.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVV</td>
<td>1.967</td>
<td>9.1 %</td>
<td>3.201</td>
<td>17.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVDA</td>
<td>1.833</td>
<td>8.5 %</td>
<td>1.790</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>1.451</td>
<td>6.7 %</td>
<td>1.929</td>
<td>10.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50PLUS</td>
<td>1.152</td>
<td>5.4 %</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>4.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partij voor de Dieren</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>4.6 %</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>4.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>3.9 %</td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>9.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ChristenUnie</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>3.1 %</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>2.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENK</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>1.4 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3.5 Provincial elections Rijswijk (Nederlands Dagblad, 2019)
7. Discussion

The following section will critically examine the obtained research results in relation to the existing literature. First of all the case of Rijswijk will be examined, then the case of Rotterdam and at last a comparison between both cases will be presented.

7.1 The Case of Rijswijk

The goals and the leadership narrative of the parties show that the anti-immigrant positioned parties VVD and Beter voor Rijswijk are against extension of the decided AZC term. According to both parties the AZC its main problematic is the risk of citizen security. This position found on their websites coincides with the findings within the Migrant Status theme where the VVD interviewee mentions the coming of safe nationals during 2018 to the AZC leading to increased security problematics. For that reason the VVD, and its Chairman Coen Sleddering, attempted to find support for the closing of the AZC or at least the guarantee of the COA to stop bringing in safe nationals to the AZC in Rijswijk. No guarantee of the COA was given to the municipality of Rijswijk of a stop in safe nationals placement in May 2019, which was at the same time when the amounts of incidents concerning AZC refugees were published. For the local and biggest party Better for Rijswijk the enduring allowance of safe national is a significant contradiction to their party position and goal. The party finds it origins in the Freedom Party and the party its chairman and founder Ed Braam is member of the Provincial Council for the PVV. From the populist narrative of leadership, especially as the largest party in government, the acceptance is remarkable according to VVD statements (Loof, 2019). Whilst looking at the directed content analysis no popular positions nor explicit statements on Migration and Identity/diversity were found. Due to this finding the intensity of the relation with the Freedom Party is questionable.

D66 and Groenlinks show in the AZC theme of the directed content-analysis and the interview with D66 support of migrants being provided with residence for the length of their asylum application procedure. Both parties are also supportive of extending the current AZC term as long as it is beneficial to the position of refugees. This does impose a difference in positioning towards the AZC as the social-liberals and social democrats remain supportive, also after the incident problematics. Wij. Rijswijk, which did not specify their position on the AZC is assumed to be supportive of the AZC due to their all-inclusive position towards the multicultural society. Evidently, The AZC did not bring up much political friction until the coming of safe nationals. The main party political problems in Rijswijk therefore appear to be related to the slow process of asylum applications of the IND.
From the Municipal election results in 2014 and 2018 no increase in relation between electorate and anti-immigrant party politics can be recognized. No increase in anti-immigrant votes has been found and the most appealing fact of the elections is the more than double amount of voter share GROENLINKS received. Also the upcoming of the in 2014 non-existing party WIJ., which obtained 10,8% of the votes in 2018, needs to be mentioned. Both these parties are supportive of the AZC. Due to the well-functioning of the AZC before the 2018 elections both interviewed parties informed that the AZC was no issue during the election campaigns. Within perspective of that finding no increase in the relation between anti-immigrant electorate and political parties can be explained. The results, if elections were held at this moment, might prove to be different when evaluating the provincial election votes of March 2019. These results show a different perspective towards the acceptance of immigration. The FvD won 17,4% of the votes and the total voter percentage of anti-immigrant parties increased by 8,2%. Evidently, a new anti-elite and anti-immigrant party, has become very popular in Rijswijk. The distrust in Premier’s Rutte party VVD, losing 1,5% of its 2014 voter percentage, hereby becomes visible. With a Freedom Party oriented, yet flexible, local party at the top of Rijswijk’s 2014 and 2018 municipal elections now much increased anti-immigrant support is shown at the municipal level. Fortuyn’s anti-elite and anti-immigrant position again proves to be successful. The mass win of the anti-elite FvD, and thus distrust in the settled party politics at the national level, converges with the popularity of the local parties in Rijswijk. The earlier discussed findings in research with regards to the popularity of local parties in the Netherlands also aligns (Boogers & Voerman, 2010), (Otjes, 2018).

On a more general notion of migration, integration, identity, and diversity, no big issues seem to be at hand. In Rijswijk local pragmatism seems to be the guiding principle of party politics. The VVD interviewee puts its focus on citizen safety with regards to the AZC. On the other hand concerning integration and acceptance the VVD, similar to D66 and the social-democrats, wishes to find a smooth and fast working system via volunteers and education. As no connection between the EU and Rijswijk exists according to the interviews, the top-down nature of the system is in the case of Rijswijk a both empowering and oppressing factor in the immigration and integration process. The state imposed responsibility of the municipalities, leading to AZC establishment requests of the COA, forced and enabled the party politics within Rijswijk to find common grounds. The organization and establishment of the AZC in 2016 went without a significant amount of party political struggles according to the interviews. The incident
problematics of 2018, also resulting from (flaws in) the top-down governing structure, do impose a problem and discontent within party politics.

7.2 The Case of Rotterdam

The election results in Rotterdam show that the largest party Liveable Rotterdam is firmly against the AZC in the Beverwaard district which coincides with their anti-immigrant position and populist grounded narrative. Interesting to note is their alliance with the FvD during the 2018 municipal elections and the 2019 municipal elections. A local party, yet directly connected to the national politics. This connection was particularly visible during the interview with Liveable Rotterdam as the interviewee repeated a statement which FvD leader Thierry Baudet had mentioned during the provincial election campaign; “to spend billions and billions on countering climate change effects by 0,0000.. percent is useless”. During the formation of the municipal government in 2018 the D66 strongly opposed the alliance. The D66, among other subjects, blames the FvD of having aspirations of unequal treatment towards people with an immigration background. Therefore no collaboration with Liveable Rotterdam was possible (D66, 2019). As per the focus on party politics the most interesting hereby is the coming of national party politics into the premises of the political field of Rotterdam. The total of 25,7% of local party votes is hereby tainted and thus shows lesser significance to the relevance of local parties as found in research on the relevance of local parties.

Also the VVD, the second largest party, is of anti-immigrant nature. Both parties combined took 31% of the votes. An AZC establishment and its term was set after immense debates according to the interviewees in reaction to the crisis, and thus the subject was non-negotiable during the 2018 elections. Leefbaar Rotterdam, being the biggest coalition party during 2014-2018, collaborated in the end on the topic of the AZC with its partners CDA and D66. Leefbaar Rotterdam its interviewee states; “if not for Leefbaar Rotterdam now the city of Rotterdam would be filled with refugee centres”. The already existing problematics of the city are hereby the main drive for positioning against the AZC by Leefbaar Rotterdam according to the interviewee. On the other had also more general notions on immigration were made as will be shown later on.

A similar situation as in Rijswijk occurred, after several incidents the AZC became troublesome. The situation got so far out of hands that during 2018 the pro AZC positioned Mayor Aboutaleb decided to stop safe nationals from being stationed at the AZC (Wassens, 2018). A familiar trend occurred; an increase in safe nationals caused for an increase in incidents. This move by the mayor was highly supported by the VVD and Leefbaar Rotterdam.
Both parties were very critical of the AZC and used their political pressure on the mayor. The D66 does not show a different position, as these type of problematics should not be added to the already existing problematics in Rotterdam, according to the interviewee. Thus, for a party formed out of Fortuyn’s legacy, a conservative liberal, and a social-democratic the position on safe nationals is the same. Another general consensus was found among the party politics concerning integration. All parties, regardless of motive, wish to guide status holders in a quick rate to participation within society.

It is of interest to conclude that the VVD, having clearly shown its anti AZC position throughout the interviews, does not include this subject on their website its party position. The same counts for all other top-five parties beside Leefbaar Rotterdam, which states that the AZC needs to close as soon as its five year term has ended. A more generic notion by the Liveable Rotterdam interviewee follows up within the interview; “the allowance of all the migrants on our soil is an attack on our social welfare state”. The main explanation for few attention to the AZC during the 2018 municipal elections as mentioned earlier is to be found in the already set five year term. There is little political ground to work on which is the explanation given by the interviewees. The theme of identity and diversity on the other hand was very prominent throughout the 2018 elections. All parties prominently state their position on inclusivity and diversity which is also the finding within the interviews.

No significant change in the relation between electorate and the total electoral support of anti-immigrant parties has been found in the comparison between the 2014-2018 municipal election results. Concerning the populist Leefbaar Rotterdam the results reflect a negative relation due to the loss of 7% in votes. Although this party remains the largest in Rotterdam the results show the divided nature of Rotterdam in the rest of the top-five parties. VVD, D66, GROENLINKS, and PvdA are all within a single percent range from one another. Hereby the finding throughout the interviews that the theme identity and diversity was one of the hot-topics during the 2018 elections shows the divided relation between party politics and electorate. Looking at the provincial elections the FvD is the electoral favourite. Furthermore it is of interest to see, when portraying the FvD and Liveable Rotterdam in a single unit, that the top five of the provincial elections is consistent of four of the largest parties in Rotterdam. The only difference is the Freedom party which still finds support in Rotterdam on the provincial level. The high diversity rates and the low socio-economic welfare, formulated in city problematics throughout the interviews, provide for a highly versatile and complicated political environment. Yet the top-
down structure and the municipal responsibility towards status holders forced and enabled the much diverging party politics to come to terms.

### 7.3 Comparing the Cases

The notion of nation-state and international politics is of relevance to both cases. In Rijswijk the party politics show increased common grounds to work on compared to Rotterdam. Rotterdam shows prevailing identity party politics in an increased connection to the national level parties compared to Rijswijk’s party politics. The soft aspects of anti-immigrant attitudes among the electorate are interconnected to identity politics according to the existing literature and thereby empowers political and electoral divide. Rijswijk on the other hand shows a more local and case oriented focus in its goals, also regarding the AZC, and thereby increases pragmatism in its party politics. For that reason the electoral and political divide seem to cause for lesser political friction with regards to an AZC. The hard aspects of anti-immigrant attitudes also show a significant role within the party politics of Rotterdam. The anti-immigrant parties are placing the AZC in perspective of the already existing problematics with regards to socio-economic status. Hereby goals of re-solving city problematics enforce the AZC opposition of the anti-immigrant parties. The indeed fragile socio-economic status of Rotterdam consequently decreases the possibilities of party political consensus on an AZC. The significantly above nominal socio-economic status opposed to the low socio-economic status seems to cause for lesser party political tensions in Rijswijk. A clear example of Rijswijk’s party politics being better equipped in dealing with an AZC is seen in the 2018 incidents rise. In Rijswijk this did not cause the similar amount of disturbances as in Rotterdam where the mayor after large political debate needed to stop safe nationals from being stationed in the Beverwaard. Additionally the minor electoral protest in Rijswijk compared to Rotterdam, and the lesser party political struggle in the debate on the establishment of the AZC, favours an AZC in Rijswijk. In short, the neoliberal xenophobic trend, the affective turn, and problems of multiculturalism are more prominently visible in Rotterdam according to the findings. This makes for the smaller, more stable, less diverse, and better socio-economically equipped city of Rijswijk for a better sight of AZC placement from a party political point of view.

In perspective of integration Rijswijk also appears to provide better working ground due to the above mentioned differences. Political stability and practical focused politics is needed to reduce the problematics of integration and discrimination (Van Heelsum, 2017). This does not mean, however, that Rotterdam is not equipped with the party political motives for quick and decent integration as seen in the consensus on the subject by all the parties of Rotterdam. An
increased autonomous position of the municipality, as recognized by the state, is hereby needed. The problematics of integration, due to the urge of both cities to integrate immigrants, will thereby be of value (Doomernik & Ardon, 2018). A similar convergence in the practical need of both cities is with regards to safe nationals. The slow IND process of asylum applications, in combination with the top-down structure of the nation-state, imposes problems on both cities party politics. Reasoning forth from this practical need of both cities it might be relevant to implement municipal processing of immigration applications at the municipal level, where the need is dire. The practical and more adoptive nature of party politics, and municipalities in general could thereby show its potencies. Especially perspective of crisis response, which evidently the EU and the Dutch state were unable to organize in quick succession, this might prove beneficial.

Another prominent finding during the comparison of both cities is the current flaw in democracy concerning the intake of immigrants. Whilst the party politics at the local level, especially in Rotterdam, are involved with Immigration and the coming of and AZC there is little political ground to alter this position. Most of all the anti-immigrant positioned parties at the local level seem to be suffering from this as there is political support for decreasing immigrant amounts, yet the immigration figures show the opposite. The case of the VVD on its own shows this flaw most prominently. By reasoning from a top-down position the VVD shows a significant anti-immigrant position on the municipal level and finds significant amounts of electoral support. This municipal position is grounded in the National leading VVD, which throughout the crisis has not been able to stop the influx of Immigration at the national level. The EU values and accords, such as Dublin III, thereby prove to be catastrophic to the large percentage of anti-immigrant voters in both cities. The recognized distrust in Rutte’s government and the immense support of the FvD on the provincial level in both cities can therefore be seen as a logic consequence with regards to both cities.
8. Conclusion

Throughout this research I have focused on the reaction in party politics of Rotterdam and Rijswijk with regards to the 2015 immigration crisis and AZC establishment. Both cities have shown the advantage of municipal governance due to increased pragmatism. This is in line with the reviewed literature on the relevance of municipalities in opposition to the nation-state level of governance. Via comparison of both cities I must conclude that Rijswijk, from a party political point of view, is better equipped for dealing with an AZC. Both cities have been placed in perspective of the existing theories of neoliberal xenophobic trends, the affective turn, identity politics, top-down structure of EU and national politics, and problems of multiculturalism. Rijswijk shows the more manageable party politics with regards to the researched party goals, populist leadership narrative, and electorate-party relationship. This is most of all grounded in Rijswijk its pragmatic party politics opposed to electoral dividing identity politics of Rotterdam. Additionally the significantly better socio-economic position, which causes for lesser city problematics, is beneficial to party politics with regards to the establishment of an AZC.

In reflection to the conducted research I must note the influence of the interviews upon the research results as no parties of ‘classic left-wing orientation have been interviewed. I have attempted to fill this gap within the presented thesis as much as possible via the directed content-analysis of party position forms. The obtained exploratory and in-depth information from the interviews is however much involved in the conclusions made. At the same time this qualitative comparative case study finds its value within the in-depth and explorative findings. The specific found attributes of party politics in relation to both cities have consequently filled a (minor) part of the existing gap in party political research.

At last I would like to make a few research recommendations following up on the results of this thesis. The research results show that there is no existing direct connection between both cities and the EU institutions. As I proposed, increased autonomy of the city by enabling asylum applications to be assessed at the city level might be beneficial to varying situations of immigration influx. Hereby the possibilities of direct municipal-EU communication would have to be thoroughly researched upon and thus provides for new political and governmental grounds to be explored.
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Appendix; Interview Transcriptions.

Interview VVD Rotterdam, 3/5/2019, ROTTERDAM.

Interviewer: Hoe omschrijft u de verantwoordelijkheid van de stad Rotterdam met betrekking tot immigratie en de opvang van asielzoeker?

Interviewee: Dat vind ik echt twee verschillende dingen. Elk land heeft zowel emigratie als immigratie, dat is van alle tijden. Mensen kunnen er gewoon voor kiezen om in alle vrijheid zich in een ander land te gaan vestigen. Als het land waar ze dat willen doen daarmee akkoord gaat dan kun je dat gewoon doen. En als je dan eenmaal toestemming hebt in Nederland dan kun je gaan wonen waar je dat wil en dan is er geen bijzondere verantwoordelijkheid in vergelijking met andere gemeenten, dan is Rotterdam ook gewoon een plek in Nederland. Als het gaat om vluchtelingen dan is dat natuurlijk een ander verhaal. Eentje waar veel discussie is geweest, dat weet je als geen ander aangezien je scriptie onderwerp. Uuhm, Er is een politiek besluit genomen, uh, om uh, om een grote hoeveelheid vluchtelingen op te vangen gedurende die grote vluchtelingen crisis 2015, 2016. En uh, de organen die daar voor zijn, dus het COA, had onvoldoende bestaande huisvestingplaatsen om al die mensen op te kunnen vangen. Toen is er vanuit het rijk, de staatssecretaris, een beroep gedaan op gemeente om meer ruimtes beschikbaar te maken. Toen is er, en dan is er dus als stad de vraag hoe moet je dat doen? Dan is er dus wel degelijk verschil tussen normale migratie en vluchtelingen. Als je als reguliere migrant toestemming krijgt om naar Nederland te komen en hier te blijven moet je aan een aantal voorwaarden voldoen, waaronder die daartoe optellen dat je hier geacht zou moeten kunnen worden om voor jezelf te kunnen zorgen. Voor die vluchtelingen geldt dit dus expliciet niet. Die mensen zijn volledig afhankelijk en zeker in het geval van de vluchtelingenstroom die we hebben gezien en we deels nog steeds hebben weten we ook dat voor een deel van die vluchtelingen reële zorgen zijn hoe ze zich zullen gedragen als ze eenmaal hier zijn. En, dat wetende, moet je je als stad afvragen, zijn wij nou de eerst aangewezen plek om uhh, die vluchtelingen te huis vestigen.

Interviewer: Precies.

Interviewee: En daarbij speelt dus de vraag, van ja, hoe, in welke maten hebben wij al sociale problemen. Uuh. En in welke maten hebben wij dus ook, en nemen wij dus al, een bovengemiddeld grote verantwoordelijkheid. De vorige VVD fractie is om deze reden ook
kritisch geweest op het huisvesten van die, van het AZC in de Beverwaard, en deze VVD fractie is daar dan ook uitgesproken tegen. Hij moet dus wat ons betreft ook dicht nadat het termijn van vijf jaar verlopen is. Bijvoorbeeld omdat Rotterdam een zogezegd centrum gemeente is. Dus met alle omliggende gemeentes vormen wij een zorgregio. Dat betekent dat voor bijvoorbeeld mensen met allerlei problematieken, bijvoorbeeld dak en thuisloosheid en allerlei anderen problemen, die mensen komen naar Rotterdam om hier geholpen te worden en hier te worden opgevangen. Dus Rotterdam neemt in dat opzicht al een bovengemiddeld sociale verantwoordelijkheid op zich. Ook als het gaat om het huisvesten van statushouders. En de Beverwaard bijvoorbeeld is ook al een wijk met best al wat problemen. Dat is gewoon echt niet een goede plek om dit te doen.

**Interviewer:** Okee dat is duidelijk. Is dit dan ook bijvoorbeeld, het sluiten van het AZC, de grootste uitdaging voor de VVD op dit moment?

**Interviewee:** Nou het AZC is er gekomen voor een periode van vijf jaar. Dat is het besluit dat toen is gekomen. Wij zijn niet van plan om dat nu op 2/3 op te zeggen. We moeten ook een betrouwbare partij naar het Rijk en het COA zijn, maar het houdt dus wel op na de termijn van vijf jaar wat ons betreft.

**Interviewer:** Verwacht u veranderingen naar aanleiding van de verkiezingen op provinciaal gebied in Zuid-Holland, met de kijk op de te verwachten coalitie met het FvD, als het gaat om deze vluchtelingen en het AZC?

**Interviewee:** Nou eigenlijk alleen indirect. Kijk, de provincie heeft in principe geen rol bij het verdelen van migranten of van vluchtelingen. Dus dat is echt iets wat plaatsvind bij het Rijk en de gemeente en het COA dus. Maar indirect wel omdat er een nieuwe eerste kamer wordt verkozen, terecht met een bepaald karakter, en je kan je voorstellen dat dit indirect invloed kan hebben op toekomstige besluiten als het gaat om accepteren van toekomstige vluchtelingen.

**Interviewer:** U kwam er zelf al aardig mee het is dus een besluit als het gaat om de opvang van vluchtelingen tussen het Rijk en de gemeentes.

**Interviewee:** Ja.

**Interviewer:** Is er ook een connectie tussen de gemeente en de Europese Unie zelf?

**Interviewee:** Ja, ja dat is trouwens een goeie opmerking die u maakt, want het is eigenlijk een probleem over drie bestuurslagen, want natuurlijk speelt inderdaad de Europese Unie een ook een heel belangrijke rol. En eigenlijk als je zo omgeving migratie zoveel mogelijk wil
terugbrengen is het allerbelangrijkste, want we hebben te maken met het Europese verdrag voor de rechten van de mens en het vluchtelingenverdrag.

**Interviewer:** Ja

**Interviewee:** en die twee bijelkaar hebben als juridische uitkomst dat zodra iemand voet op Europese bodem heeft gezet we met z’n allen verplicht zijn om diegene in procedure te nemen en ook vervolgens als het gaat om de weer uitzetting als blijkt dat geen recht op asiel is, levert dat heel veel beperkingen op.

**Interviewer:** Ja precies.

**Interviewee:** en dat zorgt dus voor dat die etnische veilige landers, die je ongetwijfeld kent, die komen binnen, en door die poreuze buitengrens, en die krijg je er vervolgens dan nooit meer uit. En dat is echt gewoon een enorm probleem wat alleen maar op Europees niveau kan worden aangepakt, namelijk door die buitengrens te sluiten en te zorgen dat je, en door het strafrechtelijk ook dusdanig te veranderen, dat je alleen nog maar buiten de Europese Unie asiel kunt aanvragen en niet meer erin. Dat je doordat mensen de Europese Unie inkomen al een schifting kunt maken op mensen die kans maken en die veilige landers die alleen maar voor trammelant zorgen.

**Interviewer:** ja, duidelijk. Is hier ook direct communicatie over met de Europese Unie vanuit de gemeente zelf?

**Interviewee:** Nou niet met de Europese instellingen, maar we hebben daar natuurlijk wel contact ook over met onze leden van het Europees parlement.

**Interviewer:** Ja precies, precies.

**Interviewee:** Dus zei zijn zich er ook heel goed van doordrongen welke uitdaging zei wat ons betreft hebben, ja absoluut.

**Interviewer:** Ok, ja dat is duidelijk. Dus via het Europees Parlement wordt daar naar gestreefd.

**Interviewee:** Ja en overigens ook natuurlijk via het kabinet, dus Mark Harbers, overigens een Rotterdammer, de staatssecretaris van Asiel en Migratie, daar hebben we ook contact mee, maar het is goed dat hij van ons hoeft te horen dan hij moet zorgen dat de europese migratiebeleid ...... 9.29 wordt, dat weet ie al.

**Interviewer:** Precies. Dus ook met Den Haag is er continu....
Interviewer: We hadden het al lichtelijk over dat Beverwaard een problematische situatie is rond het AZC. Ik vraag mij af hoe heeft zich dat geuit, mocht u dat nog weten, en is al weer een jaar geleden dat tijdens gemeenteraad verkiezingen in 2018 hoe gaat de situatie dan in de Rotterdamse politiek, en voornamelijk ook wat is de mening van de burgers en hoe wordt daar naar gekeken?

Interviewee: ja, nou dat is een goeie vraag. Kijk t heeft in mijn ogen een niet heel grote rol gespeeld echt in de campagnestrijd. Ik denk wel dat Leefbaar Rotterdam had natuurlijk een lastige positie omdat toen het besluit tot een AZC werd genomen zaten zij in het stadsbestuur en hun raadsfractie was er tegen, maar de wethouder we hebben het wel zeg maar toegestaan, die zaten in het college toen ertoe is besloten. Maar ze hebben, kijk er wonen daar natuurlijk veel Leefbaar kiezers, en ze hebben volgens mij wel in het programma ook gehad dat dat AZC weer zou moeten sluiten. Dat zal daar ongetwijfeld tot discussie hebben geleid, maar het dus uiteindelijk niet echt zeg maar een centraal onderdeel van de campagnes geworden.

Interviewer: ok

Interviewee: het is toch wel ook aan migratie gerelateerde onderwerpen natuurlijk als integratie en identiteit en zo, maar niet specifiek over dat AZC.

Interviewer: ok

Interviewee: en als het gaat om eigenlijk hoe het voor ons gaat als VVD set... is dat wij, dat ik vrij kort na de verkiezingen samen met onze fractievoorzitter Wil Karremans, zijn we daar gaan kijken, om gewoon ook eens met mensen in de buurt te praten over hoe dat nou gaat, en gewoon eens te kijken, gewoon eens even zelf echt te zien en te vragen hoe daar de sfeer is. En we zijn op werkbezoek geweest in het AZC zelf en hebben daar met medewerkers en vluchtelingen gesproken en onze conclusie is dat je dit eigenlijk gwoon niet op die plek moet doen. En dat het dus echt klaar moet zijn als dit eenmaal voorbij is. Kijk je kunt echt vinden dat je als stad een rol kunt spelen, nou dat vinden wij klein, tenzij je echt een situatie hebt met een heel groot noodgeval, dat je als België wordt aangevallen, ja gaan we hier dan 100.000 Belgen opvangen? Tuurlijk als het moet, maar niet in een situatie zoals we die nu hebben gehad. Dus daarom ook vrij stellig hier na deze vijf jaar moet het gewoon klaar zijn. Als we dat al als stad doen dan zeker niet daar.
**Interviewer:** Precies, dus dan zou meer in de oostelijke provincies waar meer ruimte is of iets dergelijks de oplossing zijn voor opvang?

**Interviewee:** Ja nou ja zeker of in ieder geval in gebieden waar ze iets minder bestaande sociale problemen hebben dan wij hier, want we hebben gewoon echt al een behoorlijke portie.

**Interviewer:** Ja precies, dat klopt daar heb ik mezelf, nou ik woon ook al mijn hele leven in Rotterdam dus ik weet er genoeg van op dat gebied.

**Interviewee:** Nou precies.

**Interviewer:** Als allerlaatste, zou u iets willen veranderen aan de communicatie tussen de gemeente, als VVD zijnde dan, tussen de gemeente en Den Haag als het gaat om asielbeleid en vluchtelingenopvang?

**Interviewee:** Nou kijk ik vind dat Aboutaleb is natuurlijk heel erg belangrijk geweest in de komst van dit AZC dus in die zin ja vind ik dat ie daar een verkeerde rol heeft gespeeld, maar met terugwerkende kracht dus, maar ik vind dat hij heel goed en duidelijk heeft gecommuniceerd toen bijvoorbeeld vorig jaar die problematiek met die veilige landers duidelijk werd en dat hij toen heel duidelijk heeft gezegd van wij kunnen dit niet hebben en we willen die lui hier weg en dat heeft wel heel even geduurd, maar dat is uiteindelijk gelukt. En ik vind dat ie daarin heel stellig en heel duidelijk voor de stad heeft opgenomen. En nu, er ligt geen verzoek voor zover ik weet vanuit de COA als vanuit het ministerie, om dit AZC open te houden. Kijk het is natuurlijk wel belangrijk dat zodra zo een verzoek er zou komen of als vanuit die organisatie wordt afgetast voor zo een verzoek hier zou landen, dat er dan gelijk heel duidelijk in wordt gecommuniceerd dat dat niet zo is, dus dat ze dat niet hoeven te doen.

**Interviewer:** ja precies. Ok dat is duidelijk. Ik heb geloof ik voorzover ik op dit moment kan bedenken alle vragen gehad en de antwoorden zijn hartstikke duidelijk geweest. Hartstikke bedankt daarvoor.

**Interviewee:** Mooi, ja nee geen dank. Als je nog iets te binnen schiet dan bel even of mail even.

**Interviewer:** Ja zal ik zeker doen. Ik zal naar u nog het formulier opsturen.

**Interviewee:** Ja dat is goed.

**Interviewer:** Hartstikke bedankt

**Interviewee:** Groeten
Interview Leefbaar Rotterdam, 16/5/219, ROTTERDAM.

Interviewer: Hoe omschrijft u de verantwoordelijkheid van de stad Rotterdam met betrekking tot asielzoekers?

Interviewee: Als je het aan mij vraagt, aan Leefbaar Rotterdam, vinden wij dat Rotterdam problemen heeft. We hebben heel veel mensen in de bijstand zitten, we hebben heel veel mensen met andere problematiek. We hebben de hoogste uitstroom uit detentie. Dus eigenlijk voor een stad heel veel problemen. Ook als je naar het integratie verhaal kijkt, er is nog zo veel te doen. Er is dus nog zat te doen met de mensen die er op dit moment al zijn. Dus ten tijden van de asielcrisis toen het AZC te Beverwaard te spraken kwam, hadden wij zoiets van, dat moet je gewoon niet doen. Rotterdam heeft inderdaad problemen genoeg. Laten we die eerst nou eens oplossen voor wij inderdaad nog meer mensen erbij zetten. Dat was dan ook de reden dat wij tegen de komst van het AZC waren. Als je naar statushouders gaat kijken. Dus de mensen die opgenomen moeten worden op basis van de landelijke verdeelsleutel. Daar vinden wij van, daar hebben we ook voorstellen over ingediend, dat die verdeelsleutel puur op basis van inwoners van een land en van een stad dat dat geheel achterhaald is en dat je dan dus niet naar de problematiek kijkt. Rotterdam heeft de laatste jaren dus duizenden statushouders opgevangen, 600 asielzoekers in de Beverwaard. Daarnaast is Rotterdam ook nog eens een van de vijf steden, straks een van de acht, die opvang geeft aan uitgeprocedeerde asielzoekers. Uuhm, he dus het zogezegde bed, bad, en brood. he, ja, dus dat is dan zogezegd een aanslag op de verzorgingsstaat in Nederland, en uiteindelijk ook in Rotterdam.

Interviewer: Okee duidelijk, ziet u dit dan ook als de grootste uitdaging op dit moment voor de politiek in Rotterdam?

Interviewee: Nou, integratie, veiligheid, dat zijn ook zorgen, he, dus het behoud van de verzorgingsstaat. uhhh, energie en transitie, en dan niet in de waanzin waarin Nederland zich daarmee nu bevind. He, niemand is tegen schone lucht, waar staan daar ook achter, maar om daar miljarden en miljarden voor gaan te spenderen uhh, voor 0,0000 x procent om dat verbetert te krijgen,m ja dan kunnen we ons geld veel beter besteden. Dus integratie, asiel, uitgeproceederde asielzoekers is zeker een van de grote problemen naast het andere punt wat ik benoemt heb.
Interviewer: okee duidelijk. ziet u dan ook aangaande asielzoekers en vluchtelingenopvang binnen Rotterdam waaronder het AZC Beverwaard problemen binnen de huidige coalitie van Rotterdam.

Interviewee: Nja kijk, Leefbaar Rotterdam is uit het stadsbestuur. Het AZC was de vorige periode. Wij hebben daar als partij dus ook als Leefbaar wethouders gezegd van dat willen we niet. Alleen alle andere partijen wilden het wel, en zo is de verhouding op dit moment ook nog. De PVV is sinds 2018 in de gemeenteraad gekomen met 1 zetel. Die zal ongetwijfeld dezelfde standpunten hierin hebben.

Interviewer: Okee, zou het onderwerp van migratie er dan ook toe geleid kunnen hebben dat Leefbaar Rotterdam niet in de huidige coalitie zit.

Interviewee: Nou dat niet. Leefbaar Rotterdam is ver uit de grootste partij geworden in deze stad met 11 zetels. Meer dan de helft meer dan nr. 2. Wat dat betreft hebben we denk ik gewoon een hele goede verkiezingsuitslag neergezet. Maar dat heeft inderdaad helaas niet tot besturen geleid. Ik denk dat hoe t dan ook zit, veel partijen hebben opmerkingen gemaakt dat ze niet met Leefbaar Rotterdam wilden samenwerken. Dat is ook democratie, laat ik het zo even zeggen, maar het is natuurlijk absurd dat verre uit de grootste partij in deze stad niet in het stadsbestuur zit zonder dat er ook maar 1 keer een inhoudelijk gesprek is gehouden met Leefbaar gevoerd is.

Interviewer: Okee, dat is inderdaad opmerkelijk aan de gemeenteraadsverkiezingen 2018 en wat daar uit is voortgekomen. Opvolgend, ook aangaande de internationale betrekkingen waar ik zelf mee bezig ben, in uw mening, of uw beleving, is er enige vorm van communicatie tussen de gemeente en de EU instellingen zelf? Dus een directe communicatie zonder dat het COA of de Nederlandse overheid daar tussen zit?

Interviewee: Nee, niet. Nee. We hebben hier wel problematieken in Hoek van Holland met betrekking tot die inklimmers, voornamelijk vanuit Albanie. Daarvan hebben wij wel gezegd van joh burgemeester, ga eens naar Albanie toe om de mensen duidelijker te maken dat in zo'n vrachtwagen klimmen, dat ze eruit gehaald worden door de marechaussee en dat ze weer terug moeten. he, dus daar spelen natuurlijk wel zaken in. Maar procentueel gezien niet.
Interviewer: Okee, dan doorgaand op de communicatie die er wel is tussen de Nederlandse overheid en het COA orgaan. hoe vindt u dat de samenwerking tussen het COA, de overheid en de gemeente verloopt?

M. Van Elek: Ja, uhhm, ten tijden van de asielcrisis moesten we natuurlijk van stel en sprong allerlei centra geopend worden. nou he, allerlei wachtlijsten etcetera tot gevolg. Ja, het is nou niet dat dat fantastisch allemaal verlopen is. Ik kan me nog herinneren dat de toenmalige directeur van het COA zei dat uh, nou dit een verreiking voor Nederland zou worden. Dat het allemaal hoogopgeleide asielzoekers waren. Dat het allemaal tandartsen en apothekers uit Aleppo zouden zijn. Nou de praktijk is inderdaad heel anders. Als je bijvoorbeeld naar Rotterdam kijkt is 50% gewoon analfabeet. Dus, nou dat is ook waar Leefbaar Rotterdam destijds voor gewaarschuwd heeft. He dus dat je eigenlijk gewoon nog meer problemen binnen haalt. En natuurlijk niemand is tegen het opvangen van oorlogsvluchtelingen. Leefbaar Rotterdam ook niet. Het is een van de aller ergste dingen die er is dat mensen moeten vluchten voor oorlog. Maar wat mij betreft ben je een oorlogsvluchteling tot je een grens over bent waarbij je niet meer hoeft te vrezen voor je leven. En ja, dit zijn mensen die tich landen hebben moeten doorkruisen om uiteindelijk in Nederland terecht te komen. En dan ben je voor mij een economische vluchteling.

Interviewer: Okee duidelijk. Wat zou wel een oplossing kunnen zijn, ook zeker met betrekking tot het AZC Beverwaard. He, dus niet opvangen binnen Rotterdam dat mag duidelijk zijn, maar moet dit dan in de provincie plaatsvinden of ergens anders?

Interviewee: Ja, als je het aan mij vraagt zou Nederland de grenzen moeten sluiten. Dus geen opvang meer van asielzoekers. Nederland heeft de laatste jaren enorm veel asielzoekers opgevangen en de problematiek die ik in Rotterdam schets die is breder wat dat betreft. Als je bijvoorbeeld gaat kijken naar het aantal incidenten dat gisteren in het nieuws was, van 4.600 incidenten rondom het, rondom AZC's. Problemen met integratie, uuh, verdringen van bewoners in het kader van huurhuizen. Ja uhm, het is eigenlijk gewoon een aanslag op onze verzorgingsstaat. Plus dat er natuurlijk ook gewoon heel veel mensen bij zitten die niet heel veel van doen hebben met onze normen, waarden, wetten en vrijheden. Eigenlijk ver weg staan van de Westerse wereld.
Interviewer: Duidelijk, okee. uhm. Nou we hebben het al eerder over gehad, maar had u het idee dat gedurende de gemeenteraadsverkiezingen van 2018 het AZC op zich nog een enorm onderwerp van gesprek was?

Interviewee: Nee, het is wel naar voren gekomen, maar het is geen hot issue geweest wat dat betreft. nee, natuurlijk hebben wij daar wel aanvallen over gehad van andere partijen, he, bijvoorbeeld van de PVV. Maar uh, en ook ja in de gemeenteraad hoor je dat nog veel, van het is een Leefbare geweest die er voor gezorgd heeft dat het AZC er kwam onder hun leiding in het stadsbestuur. Maar ja, wij waren de enige partij die tegen waren, de wethouders waren er tegen. Dus hoe dan ook was het AZC er gekomen en ja zonder Leefbaar Rotterdam in het stadsbestuur had ten tijde van het asielcrisis denk ik op elke hoek van de straat een AZC gezeten. Dus dat is ook de reden dat wij in dat stadsbestuur zijn blijven zitten.

Interviewer: Op dit moment, merkt u dat er nog relevante gesprekken, onder het mom van 'hot topics', gevoerd worden rondom het AZC en asielzoekers?

Interviewee: Ja zeker, er wordt geregeld over gesproken. We hebben natuurlijk een probleem gehad in het AZC waar Leefbaar Rotterdam ook steeds gevraagd heeft om openbaarheid van incidenten en eigenlijk op een basis daar van is Aboutaleb eindelijk ook gaan acteren door die mensen in ieder geval, de mensen uit veilige landen die overlast veroorzaken, niet meer toe te laten in het AZC. Terwijl bij het komst van het AZC er toch nog gepleit werd voor, betoogd werd door de burgemeester, dat dit allemaal geen problemen op zou leveren. Dat al die mensen aan het werk zouden gaan en nogmaals dat ze allemaal hoogopgeleid waren. Nou dat blijkt dus inderdaad heel anders te zijn. Dus dat speelt nog. Nou, het bed, bad, brood verhaal speelt nog he waar jullie in Amsterdam ook zien dat daar allerlei locaties voor geopend gaan worden. Nou Rotterdam moet daar ook invulling aan gaan geven. We hebben de problemen in het detentiecentrum gehad, he dat bij het Rotterdam/The Hague airport staat, waar ook bewakers en personeel lastig gevallen zijn. En ook gewoon nog steeds het verhaal met betrekking tot statushouders die een huis moeten krijgen en die moeten integreren. En ja daar is Rotterdam dus volop mee bezig en heeft daar de handen vol aan. En nogmaals, daar is nu niet een keuze van Leefbaar Rotterdam daarin. Ja, en kijk, natuurlijk, de mensen die er op dit moment zitten, ja daar moet je natuurlijk ook wel gewoon zo goed mogelijk voor doen. He, dus dat die mensen de taal gaan spreken, dat die mensen intergreren, dat je daar op aanjaagt en daarop faciliteert naast de eigen verantwoordelijkheid van die mensen.
Interviewer: Precies, en zou de gemeente daar op dit moment een grotere rol in kunnen spelen?

Interviewee: Nja, het is en en he. Dus ik denk dat wat er op dit moment gebeurt op het gebied van integratie, ja uuhh, je hebt hier een stichting de Verre Bergen in Rotterdam die huizen opkoopt en daar Syrische asielzoekers inzet. Uhm ja dus volgens mij gebeurt er op dit moment meer dan voldoende laat ik het zo even zeggen en het is natuurlijk vooral moeilijk om te constateren dat voor asielzoekers wel heel veel kan en aan de andere kant verzorgingstehuizen worden gesloten en dat de zorgrestaurants in deze stad hun deuren moeten sluiten. Dat er bezuinigd wordt op chronisch zieke en gehandicapten. Nou dat zou niet de keus zijn die ik zou gaan maken.

Interviewer: Okee, dan ben ik al bij mijn laatste vraag aangekomen. Nu de provinciale staten verkozen zijn en natuurlijk duidelijk in de uitslagen te zien is dat het Forum voor Democratie de grote winnaar is geworden. Verwacht u naar aanleiding van deze uitslagen dan ook een verandering in het asielbeleid van heel Zuid-Holland, en daarmede dan ook dat van Rotterdam.

Interviewee: Nou, dat is lastig, want uh, ik had het al over die verdeelsleutel he, die verdeelsleutel is dus gewoon een landelijke verdeelsleutel waar niet de provincie over gaat, het aantal asielzoekers is gebaseerd op het aantal inwoners. Ik denk dat de provincie zolang dit kabinet van Rutte er zit het ook niet voor elkaar gaat krijgen dat de grenzen gaan sluiten in dit land. Dus dat betekent ook nog steeds dat er een toestroom is van asielzoekers, ongeveer 600 per week op dit moment. Uhh, ja, de VVD, maar dat zeggen ze natuurlijk al tig jaar, wil uitgeprocedeerd asielzoekers eerder het land uit zetten. Nou, daar zijn weer allerlei commissies voor ingericht. Nou ik denk ook niet dat de provincie daar nog een rol in heeft en in kan spelen. Dus het is goed dat er een uh, nou andere keuze aan het komen is in Nederland. En dat die trend zich dan ook maar mag doorzetten naar de tweede kamer verkiezingen, dat dezelfde soort uitslagen daar zullen gaan plaatsvinden. Want dan kunnen we ook dit soort dingen op het gebied van asiel aanpassen.

Interview D66, 15/05/2019, ROTTERDAM

Interviewer: Hoe omschrijft u de verantwoordelijk van de stad Rotterdam met betrekking tot de opvang van asielzoekers?
Interviewee: Nou de stad Rotterdam heeft natuurlijk eigenlijk, tenminste gemeenten hebben niet een verantwoordelijkheid voor het opvangen van asielzoekers op zo’n manier want die verantwoordelijkheid ligt bij het COA. Maar het is wel zo natuurlijk dat in overleg met de gemeente er asielzoekerscentra tot stand komen in die gemeente. Dus daarin laten ze dan hun verantwoordelijkheid zien. Maar ja, het is eigenlijk wel zo dat de gemeente dat ook kan weigeren, dus in die zin hebben ze niet een verantwoordelijkheid waar ze zich aan dienen te houden of iets dergelijks voor de opvang van asielzoekers.

Interviewer: Okee, duidelijk. Wat is in uw opvatting op dit moment de grootste uitdaging voor de politiek van Rotterdam aangaande asielzoekers en dan ook het aanwezige AZC Beverwaard?

Interviewee: Uuhm, ja ik denk twee dingen. Aan de ene kant, ik weet niet of je de krant vandaag hebt gelezen, maar aan de ene kant hebben we natuurlijk veel veilige landers op dit moment op het AZC zitten. Ja en die worden dan zo genoemd, mensen uit een veilig land van herkomst, met name Marokko, Algerije, Libië, Tunesië, zijn de landen een beetje. En die mensen hebben geen kans op asiel, maar zouden dus eigenlijk niet op die manier zolang op asielzoekerscentra moeten blijven. Maar omdat er onvoldoende snelheid op dit moment zit in de asielprocedure, of capaciteit zit, bij het IND met name, moeten mensen heel lang wachten op hun start van asielprocedure waardoor mensen dus ook niet afgewezen kunnen worden. En om die reden worden zei dus wel op een asielzoekerscentrum geplaatst want ja, we moeten mensen wel opvangen. Dus het lastige is dat mensen die eigenlijk geen recht hebben, of laten we zeggen geen aanspraak kunnen maken op asiel, nu heel lang in Nederland verblijven. Dat is wel een probleem. Want het is deze groep die over het algemeen niet zo heel veel te verliezen heeft omdat ze ook zelf wel weten dat ze geen kans maken op asiel. En dan zijn er allerlei redenen om naar Nederland te komen, maar soms is het ook om tijdelijk in Nederland te verblijven. Gewoon omdat het kan, misschien omdat je hier dan ook vrijwillig en bepaalt werk kan doen, soms ook omdat je hier dan in de criminaliteit geld kan verdienen. Dus er is wel wat overlast, laten we zeggen op dit moment, van groepen op AZC's die eigenlijk niet in Nederland zouden moeten zijn. Dat is wel een probleem.

Interviewer: Okee, veroorzaakt dit ook enige problemen binnen de huidige coalitie in Rotterdam?
Interviewee: Nou binnen de huidige coalitie niet en de Rotterdamse burgemeester heeft eigenlijk ook al uitgedragen dat wij geen veilige landers meer opvangen in Rotterdam. Dus die weigert dat nu. Uuhh, ja, om dat soort ellende natuurlijk te voorkomen. Maar het is een landelijk probleem. Je kan er als gemeente afzonderlijk, als alle burgemeesters, dit zouden zeggen, dan zou het helemaal grappig worden want waar moeten die mensen dan vervolgens worden opgevangen. Maar dit is typisch een discussie die volgens mij in de tweede kamer moet worden gevoerd uhhm wat je hier op korte termijn aan kan doen. Het is natuurlijk wel, het veroorzaakt natuurlijk wel overlast. En het veroorzaakt ook dat mensen een slecht beeld krijgen eigenlijk van asielzoekers. En wat in Rotterdam natuurlijk ook een uitdaging is, want die overlast gevers dat is een landelijke discussie, maar wat ook in Rotterdam een uitdaging is zijn de statushouders die hier de afgelopen jaren zijn komen wonen. Uuhm, in hoeverre ze nu al hun inburgering, hoe ze daar in slagen en of ze ook wel echt stappen kunnen zetten richting de arbeidsmarkt dat is natuurlijk wel iets waar we met ze alle wel op hopen en waar we ook nu allerlei stappen in het kader van aanpak statushouders enzovoort op aan het zetten zijn om daar ook gewoon meer maatwerk en begeleiding aan te bieden, om dat mogelijk te maken.

Interviewer: Ja precies, okee. Is er een samenwerking tussen de EU en Rotterdam in directe vorm? dus zonder dat Den Haag of het COA daar nog tussen zit?

Interviewee: Uhm. Ik denk niet met de EU zo breed maar we hebben natuurlijk wel, kijk we hebben natuurlijk ook mensen die in vrachtwagens klimmen enzo. Dus er is wel een samenwerking tussen bijvoorbeeld de marechaussee en ja uhm, Groot-Brittanie of met Belgie. Dat soort veiligheidssamenwerkingen zijn er wel. Maar dat is dus meer op politie vlak.

Interviewer: Okee dus enkel omtrent veiligheid.

Interviewee: Ja

Interviewer: Okee duidelijk, uhhm, dus zoals ik het begrijp is er alleen een samenwerking van de Nederlandse overheid en de gemeentes. Hoe verloopt deze naar uw mening?

Interviewee: Ja daar heb ik niet helemaal het zicht op natuurlijk. Kijk naar mijn idee is het zo dat er allerlei, er is een kader, maar dat kader voldoet eigenlijk niet heel erg goed. Tenminste,
dat is mijn opvatting. Uhh, want de wet inburgering is eigenlijk gewoon ja failliet. Dus daarom krijgen we ook een nieuwe wet inburgering. Dus als het gaat om de mensen die mogen blijven dan weten we eigenlijk dat de verantwoordelijkheid helemaal alleen bij de inburgeraar neerleggen niet werkt. En dat de gemeente daarin een veel grotere rol zouden moeten hebben. Omdat het ook, ja, de gemeente is die begeleiding vervolgens bekostigt en dat is gewoon nodig anders kunnen mensen, mensen gaan niet ineens zichzelf, weet je wel, aanmelden bij een taalbureau. Ze weten niet precies wat ze moeten doen. Ze halen ook niet met vlag en wimpel hun inburgeringscursus. In de praktijk zijn deze stappen gewoon erg lastig. Dat weten we allemaal wel. En er is ook vaak veel meer voor nodig omdat diploma's van land van herkomst niet aansluiten op onze arbeidsmarkt hier, omdat er vaak bijscholing nodig is omdat mensen de taal echt nog niet vloeiend spreken als ze op a2 niveau een inburgeringsexamen hebben gehaald. Ja, allemaal redenen zeg maar om wel tot meer, om daar als gemeente meer regie op te hebben omdat mensen anders in een uitkerings situatie terecht zullen komen. Dus dat is wat denk ik, het nieuwe inburgeringsstelsel wel mogelijk maakt. En in Rotterdam zijn we nu allemaal stapjes aan het zetten om daar ook al op vooruit te lopen en om dus juist in het kader van het kiezen van taalaanbieders en de begeleiding bij inburgering en ook het zorgen voor maatwerk trajecten, waarbij je inburgering, werk en onderwijs met elkaar combineert. Dus eigenlijk vooral door de connectie te maken tussen ROC's en werkgevers en nou ja begeleiding vanuit de gemeente. Daarmee denk ik dat daarmee een veel beter resultaat mee kunt bereiken omdat de gemeente daar dan ook een actieve rol in vervult. Dus dat is volgens mij heel goed en daarin is het nu ook aan het verbeteren omdat de gemeenten meer in stelling worden gebracht. En dat heeft dus te maken met landelijke wetgeving, dus ja dat sluit wel aan bij jouw vraag de binding tussen landelijke regels en gemeentelijke overheden die dar dan iets mee moeten doen. Dat verbetert nu dus.

Interviewer: Okee dat is duidelijk. Naar uw mening, gedurende de gemeenteraadsverkiezingen in 2018, was immigratie, vluchtelingen, en dan ook met name het AZC Beverwaard een onderwerp van gesprek.

Interviewee: Ja. Nou, 2018 niet. Niet echt nee. Het is daarvoor wel echt een thema geweest. Dan wel enkelt gericht op het AZC. Het AZC is vorig jaar niet echt in de campagne naar voren gekomen, dat heb ik niet gehoord. Het is wel zo, ja, bedoel, van allerlei onderwerpen worden natuurlijk besproken, maar het was niet een thema wat echt prominent steeds op de agenda stond ofzo. Het AZC was er natuurlijk toen ook al, dus het was een beetje een gelopen race.
Dus de gemeenteraadsverkiezingen van 2018 hebben daar niet meer echt een rol bij gespeeld. Ik denk wel dat het thema diversiteit, en dat gaat natuurlijk ook over immigratie, dat dat wel een kern van de campagne is geweest. En dan gaat het meer om de tegenstelling tussen aan de ene kant laten we zeggen autochtone Nederlanders en aan de andere kant alle nieuwkomers die dan ja, voor sommige partijen, ja, zogenaamd profiteren van alle mogelijkheden in Nederland. Dat soort discussies hebben wel in de campagne een rol gespeeld in 2018.

**Interviewer:** Okee dus in zijn algemene vorm van immigratie dus wel.

**Interviewee:** Ja ja, zeker als het gaat om identiteit, eigenlijk alle identiteitsdiscussies, dan heeft dat absoluut wel een deel uitgemaakt van de campagne van 2018 ja.

**Interviewer:** Okee, dan ben ik al bij mijn laatste vraag aangekomen. Gaat ergens ook in dezelfde richting als de gemeenteraadsverkiezingen van 2018. Nu met betrekking tot de Provinciale Kamer verkiezingen, die zijn geweest, verwacht u veranderingen binnen het asielbeleid van Zuid-Holland, en daarmede dan ook dat van Rotterdam?

**Interviewee:** Uhhm. Ja ik denk op zich wel dat er wat verandert. Want ik denk zelf, kijk we hebben in Rotterdam best wel een taakstelling, en als je kijkt naar percentage van taakstelling verdeeld over het hele land is dat natuurlijk ook logisch omdat Rotterdam de tweede stad is van Nederland kijkende naar aantal inwoners. Dus eigenlijk zou je meer AZC plekken moeten hebben in deze omgeving omdat je, als je het regeerakkoord wil uitvoeren, en je dus zou willen dat mensen die uiteindelijk blijven in Nederland ook in de buurt van de gemeente zitten waar ze zeg maar worden gehuisvest dan zou je dus, mischien, toe moeten naar regionale centra of wat dan ook. Maar in ieder geval meer dan wat er nu is want de regio Zuid-Holland heeft heel weinig AZC plekken. En ik kan me voorstellen dat in de nabije toekomst, ik weet niet precies op wat voor termijn, maar ik kan me voorstellen dat die discussie wel gevoerd zal gaan worden.

**Interviewer:** Is het dan ook mogelijk dat doordat er weinig AZC plekken zijn binnen Zuid-Holland dat er extra druk ligt op de AZC plekken die er wel bestaan.

**Interviewee:** Ja, nou delen van Nederland, bijvoorbeeld helemaal in het Noorden in Groningen en Drenthe, waar dus juist heel veel AZC plekken zijn vergeleken met hele lage taakstellingen die daar zijn. Dus in dunbevolkte gebieden hebben we best wel veel AZC’s en juist in de
dichtbevolkte gebieden hebben we er minder waardoor je mensen uiteindelijk dus moet verdelen over Nederland op een manier die uiteindelijk natuurlijk niet aansluit bij het regeerakkoord. En dat heeft puur te maken met de spreiding van de AZC's die ongelijk is. En dat is niet handig voor integratie want dan kun je wel willen dat je in Rotterdam bijvoorbeeld begint met integratie vanaf dag 1 en op het moment dat mensen hier dan direct al aan de slag gaan. Maar ja, als iemand op een AZC verblijft helemaal aan de andere kant van het land, dan ja, komen ze misschien pas een keer bij de gemeente aan als ze daadwerkelijk huisvesting krijgen. Voor die tijd kunnen ze dus ook niet heel makkelijk al dan stapjes zetten in het kader van integratie. De huidige situatie creëert dus allemaal afstanden en ja logistiek gezien is dat best wel een puzzel dus ik denk dat die discussie wel een keer gevoerd gaat worden ja. Maar het is dus heel moeilijk want juist in dichtbevolkte gebieden zoals de randstad heb je nog veel meer aanvaringen met mensen die geen AZC's in hun achtertuin willen. Dus ja, het is daar ook moeilijker om AZC's te openen. En dat is waarschijnlijk de reden waarom er sowieso al heel lang te weinig AZC plekken zijn in Zuid-Holland.