

# Foreign Identity Documentation and Türkiye: Perspectives from the Turkish Grand National Assembly\*

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**Abstract:** Identity documentation is a strategy that enables migrants to access many rights in a manner befitting human dignity, and this process is strongly influenced by the political culture of a country, depending on its geostrategic position. In the case of Türkiye, due to its migratory position as a host, transit, and sending country, wide fluctuation in the migration position causes an effort to shape the identification practices for migrants. This study aims to examine the contexts in which the issue of migrant identification is addressed by politicians in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, where mainstream politics is produced. For this reason, a descriptive discourse analysis of the written parliamentary questions submitted on migrant identity documents between 2011 and 2025 in the Turkish Grand National Assembly was applied using the Discursive and Dispositive Analysis Approach conceptualized by Jäger. One of the main conclusions of the study is that foreign identity documents are addressed from security, legal, economic, human rights, and operational perspectives, that migrant identity cards focus more on bureaucratic, legal, and administrative processes rather than the social and daily lives of migrants, and that the discussions on migrant identity cards have a multi-layered structure.

**Keywords:** Identity Documentation, Migrant, Foreigner, Türkiye, Turkish Grand National Assembly, Political Parties

**Jel Codes:** F22, H75, D72, J68

## *Yabancı Kimlik Belgeleri ve Türkiye: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nden Pespektifler*

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**Öz:** Kimlik belgeleme, göçmenlerin insan onuruna yakışır bir şekilde birçok hakka erişimini sağlayan bir stratejidir ve bu süreç, jeostratejik konumuna bağlı olarak bir ülkenin siyasi kültüründen güçlü bir şekilde etkilenmektedir. Türkiye örneğinde, Türkiye'nin ev sahibi, transit ve göç veren bir ülke olarak göç pozisyonundaki geniş dalgalanma, göçmenlere yönelik kimlik belirleme pratiklerinin şekillendirilmeye çalışılmasına neden olmaktadır. Bu çalışma, ana akım siyasetin üretildiği Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde göçmen kimliği konusunun milletvekilleri tarafından hangi bağlamlarda ele alındığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, Jäger tarafından kavramsallaştırılan Söylemsel ve Dispozitif Analiz Yaklaşımı kullanılarak, 2011-2025 yılları arasında Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde yabancı kimlik belgelerine ilişkin verilen yazılı soru önergelerinin betimsel bir söylem analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışmanın temel sonuçlarından biri, göçmen kimlik belgelerinin güvenlik, hukuk, ekonomi, insan hakları ve operasyonel perspektiflerden ele alındığı, göçmen kimlik kartlarının göçmenlerin sosyal ve gündelik hayatlarından ziyade bürokratik, hukuki ve idari süreçlere odaklandığı ve göçmen kimlik kartlarına ilişkin tartışmaların çok katmanlı bir yapıya sahip olduğudur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kimlik Belgeleme, Göçmen, Yabancı, Türkiye, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Siyasi Partiler

**Jel Kodları:** F22, H75, D72, J68

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## 1. Introduction

Parliaments are considered to be the oldest and most established political institutions that existed prior to the emergence of modern politics (Loewenberg, 1971). While parliaments are predominantly distinguished by their legislative function, they also serve significant expressive and informative roles. In contemporary times, the informational function of the parliament has undergone a shift towards the media. Nevertheless, parliaments continue to fulfill an important role as a forum where representation and interests are expressed between Members of Parliament (MPs) and the electorate. Moreover, parliaments serve as a regulatory body in their relationship with the government (Von Beyme, 2000, p. 72). One of the instruments that contributes to the fulfillment of these functions is parliamentary questions (PQs). PQs frequently engender considerable media attention and public interest, thereby potentiating their impact and ensuring that significant issues are brought to the forefront of public discourse (Martin, 2011, p. 259). PQs are strategically employed by members of both the opposition and the government. Opposition parliamentarians frequently pose blame-oriented questions to challenge the government, while government ministers respond with positive or promising answers to solicit support or address constituency issues (Hazama et al., 2007, p. 540). Thus, PQs are a tool for parliamentarians to monitor public administration and raise issues of concern to the citizenry with the agenda.

The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye is the legislative body responsible for conducting the nation's mainstream politics. This mechanism is holistic in nature, encompassing a range of processes including the auditing of government, the dissemination of information to the public, and the formulation of legislative activities. It is evident that one of the subjects under discussion in this political discourse is the increasing mass migration movements that have been observed in Türkiye since 2011. As Türkiye has been subject to considerable migratory movements throughout its history, due to the civil war in Syria, the number of asylum-seekers reached millions, thus strengthening Türkiye's position as an important host, transit, and sending country, and bringing about radical changes in migration management. Migration statistics from 2011 to 2025 attest to this. The number of Syrians under temporary protection, which stood at 14,237 in 2012, increased to 2,375,909 as of 20 November 2025 (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025a). While the number of international protection applications was 8,932 people in 2010, this number was 9,009 people at the end of 2024 (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025b). While the number of foreigners holding residence permits in Türkiye was 234,262 in 2012, this number increased to 1,087,680 as of 20 November 2025, including student, family reunification, short-term, and other types of residence permits (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025c). These data demonstrate that Türkiye has a multi-layered migrant profile, with migration management conducted for each type of migration, including both regular and irregular manners. Thus, the administrative process is ensured by the creation of different foreign identity cards, reflecting the distinctions between these migration types.

The identification of migrants constitutes a critical mechanism for the protection of their rights, facilitating access to services and enabling nation-states to exercise control and supervision. It is evident that migrants have the capacity to substantiate their foreign citizenship by virtue of the identity cards issued by the relevant authorities. In the hosting country, they are at liberty to access fundamental services, including residence and work permits, healthcare, and educational opportunities, by virtue of the foreign identity card they possess. Furthermore, identification is imperative for a state to effectively monitor migrants within its borders, to surveil them in the name of public security, and to ensure the effective follow-up of the services provided.

The subject of this study is the analysis of parliamentary questions on foreign identity cards in the Turkish Grand National Assembly from 2011 to 2025. The year 2011 was selected as a baseline due to the significant influx of Syrian asylum seekers into the country, both through regular and irregular channels. Furthermore, the study examines

which themes members of parliament have focused on regarding immigrant identity cards, applying descriptive discourse analysis within the framework of the Discursive and Dispositive Analysis Approach.

The study was designed as follows: In the first part of the study, the importance of identity cards and documentation is defined, and identity cards for foreigners in the case of Türkiye are interpreted from a legal perspective. Then, the method used in the study is explained, and the findings are interpreted and discussed with visuals. In the following sections of the study, identity cards will be briefly defined as ID cards, and the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye will be abbreviated as TBMM in accordance with its Turkish abbreviation.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Identity Documentation and Its Importance

Identity documents are tools that certify a person's affiliation with a country through citizenship or, if they are not a citizen, the rights, services, and freedoms they are entitled to within that country's borders. Particularly from the perspective of migrants, possessing an identity card is important in terms of access to basic services such as healthcare and education. For countries hosting migrants, it is also an important control mechanism in terms of managing migrant mobility and national security.

One of the importances of the possession of documents pertaining to immigrant status is of significance in the context of access to services. Usually, health or social service institutions request identity documents from immigrants to determine their status and entitlement (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 254). Consequently, the presentation of identification facilitates state security and migrants' access to services. Nevertheless, the ambiguity surrounding the legal status of migrants engenders complications regarding access to identification documentation and associated services. For instance, Bernstein et al. posit that the stipulation to present identification can, on occasion, engender trepidation among immigrants. The financial implications of healthcare expenditures and the psychological and physical ramifications of restricted access (Berinstein et al., 2006, p. 21) have been identified as substantial obstacles to access, particularly for immigrants without legal status. Furthermore, it has been asserted that undocumented immigrants exercise caution in relation to government services due to a perceived risk of being reported (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 254; Berinstein et al., 2006, p. 21).

Consequently, undocumented migrants, also known as insecure migrants, refugees, and victims of human trafficking, constitute heterogeneous groups that are difficult to reach and from which data is difficult to collect. The aforementioned individuals frequently encounter punishing living and working conditions, a dearth of information, and linguistic and cultural barriers (Fete et al., 2019, p. 2). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced among vulnerable groups, who often resort to low-paying or substandard employment due to their apprehension of being reported or deported by the authorities. This, in turn, significantly hinders their access to opportunities (Brabant and Raynault, 2012, pp. 474-475).

One such domain in which such difficulties in access arise due to a lack of identity is healthcare. One of the barriers to accessing healthcare is the lack of reliable and valid health data, including information that would enable the identification of migrants (Nielsen et al., 2009, p. 1). Considering these concerns, states have been known to implement specific measures aimed at allaying the fears of migrants stemming from their status, while also facilitating their access to essential services. For instance, Thailand, which hosts a significant number of irregular migrants, has implemented a system known as "national verification" to legalize these migrants, thereby facilitating undocumented migrants' access to legal residence, work permits, and healthcare services (Srisai, et al., 2020, p. 2228). As evidenced by the Thai example, two mechanisms have been developed for regular and irregular migrants in the country: the One Stop Service (OSS) and the

Management Center for Migrant Workers (MCMW). This mechanism provides services such as the registration of undocumented migrants and the regularization of their status, collaboration with health institutions for the provision of health checks for migrants, and the granting of legal residence and work permits (Kunpeuk et al., 2020, p. 2).

It is evident that a further service encountering challenges in terms of accessibility is that of municipal services. This predicament arises as a consequence of the absence of pertinent documentation. Identification is a pivotal factor in facilitating access to any type of service. For instance, on 12 January 2015, the IDNYC card, or municipal card, issued by the state of New York to residents of New York City, was a valid and official form of identification that enabled access to a range of municipal services and opportunities for all immigrants, irrespective of their documentation status. These ID cards can be used to access municipal services such as libraries, enroll children in public schools, and for official identification purposes. The card is an official ID card issued by the state; as such, it is widely accepted and recognized, even by police departments. (Daley et al., 2016, p. 1). In a study conducted by Belyal et al., a survey of 119 people and interviews with 12 people in Canada revealed that having an identity card enabled immigrants to overcome certain systemic barriers that had previously been difficult to overcome. Examples of such activities that make immigrants happy and which were therefore deemed to be a priority for the study included borrowing books from the library, getting vaccinated during the COVID-19 pandemic, or accessing recreational activities. This situation also demonstrated that it had a positive impact on factors such as strengthening the sense of belonging, developing a sense of independence, and participation in social life, in addition to access to rights (Belval et al., 2023, pp. 345-347).

The possession of identification documents serves as a pivotal mechanism for control within the domain of national security, in addition to facilitating access to services. While ID cards may potentially facilitate surveillance, it is not a prerequisite for this to take place. These locations frequently serve as the initial point of surveillance due to their strategic importance in facilitating entry and access to a given area. These locations can be diverse, including but not limited to an internet cafe, a train, an airport, a hospital, or a shop. Identity cards can take various forms, including but not limited to driver's licenses, passports, credit cards, health cards, school reports, voter ID cards, and social security cards. In other words, they manifest in a multitude of forms and serve a variety of purposes. In addition to the state, banking institutions, employers, and various other institutions also issue them. Nevertheless, governments are characterized by a distinct relationship with identity identification (Prasad-Aleyamma, 2017, p. 191). In certain instances, the distribution of various state-issued identification documents is utilized as a means to regulate internal population mobility within a nation. These elements constitute an integral component of the identity determination regime, thereby establishing a nexus with social security systems and citizenship rights. Within India, a plethora of benevolent documents are in circulation, including but not limited to carnet, work cards, industry cards, and worker identity cards issued by state employers. Of particular significance is the Aadhaar document, a biometric identification card. Despite their initial purpose being to enhance welfare functions, these documents can also be utilized for surveillance purposes. (Prasad-Aleyamma, 2017, p. 192).

In the context of identity verification, the collection of biometric data and the verification of data through identities have assumed particular significance with the advent of the digital era. In Bangladesh, for instance, smart chip cards are utilized to facilitate access to a range of services, including law enforcement, banking, telecommunications, passport processing, driver's licenses, and other sectors (Hossain et al., 2025, p. 2). The findings of research conducted with immigrants in the context of digital applications, such as the biometric residence card issued by the United Kingdom, have been reported. While it was stated that this card would emphasize the perception of difference among immigrants, it was also stated that it is actually a control and surveillance mechanism. Furthermore, it was asserted that this card allows immigrants to

prove their legality and identity in certain areas and, in some cases, to take advantage of the flexibility in the system to move between employers. In other words, migrants have approach the situation pragmatically (Warren and Mavroudi, 2011, p. 1507).

## 2.2. Identity Documentation and Turkiye

Foreign ID card is a document issued by the host country to individuals who have migrated through regular or irregular means. The purpose of the card is to determine the immigrants' status and to regulate their access to rights and services. In the case of Turkiye, the issuance of foreign identity documents is the responsibility of the Directorate General of Migration Management. The types of identity cards issued vary depending on the foreigner's status.

According to Article 3 of Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, the term 'foreigner' is defined as an individual who does not possess citizenship ties with the Republic of Turkiye. The same article defines the foreign identity number provided to foreigners as the identity number given to foreigners in accordance with the Population Services Law No. 5490 dated 25/4/2006 (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, 2013, p. 3). Accordingly, Article 46 of the Population Services Law No. 5490 defines the identity number as "a numbering system intended to establish links between the population records of citizens of the Republic of Turkiye, to access individuals' records, and to establish links between records kept by public institutions," stating that it shall be assigned to an individual once and cannot be changed. Consequently, the provision stipulating that "foreigners whose records are kept in Turkiye shall also be assigned an identity number in accordance with the principles determined by the Ministry" has been declared within the scope of the relevant article (Nüfus Hizmetleri Kanunu, 2006, p.15). Accordingly, this identity number is issued by registering foreigners in the foreigner registry "upon request by foreigners who have been granted a residence permit for at least ninety days for any purpose or who are legally present" (Nüfus Hizmetleri Kanunu, 2006, p. 2). Consequently, all foreign nationals who migrate through regular or irregular channels are assigned an identification number and matters such as residence and access to services within the borders of the Republic of Turkiye are regulated through this identification number.

In the context of irregular migration, the documentation required to substantiate foreign identity varies. Consequently, a status held by foreigners arriving through irregular migration is that of statelessness. Statelessness is defined in Article 1 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, which came into force on 6 June 1960, by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as "a person who is not recognised as a national by any state under the operation of its law" (UNHCR, n.d., p. 6). A similar definition is found in Article 3 of Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, which defines statelessness as "a person who is not bound to any state by a citizenship bond and is considered a foreigner" (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, 2013, p. 2). Articles 50 and 51 of Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection stipulate that stateless persons may be granted the right to reside in Turkiye by the issuance of an identity card, provided that they do not constitute a threat to public security and public order (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, 2013, p.18). Article 16 of Law No. 6735 on International Labour Law governs the entitlement to obtain a work permit (Uluslararası İşgücü Kanunu, 2016, p. 8), and Article 18 of Law No. 5682 on Passports delineates the procedure for acquiring a passport bearing the stamp "for foreigners" that does not confer Turkish citizenship (Pasaport Kanunu, 1950, p. 8).

A further category of identity document issued by the Republic of Turkiye to individuals entering the country through irregular migratory channels is the international protection applicant identity document. International protection is diversified under the Foreigners and International Protection Law No. 6458 into the categories of refugee (Article 61), conditional refugee (Article 62), and subsidiary protection (Article 63). The conditions for international protection status are defined in these articles. Article 76 of

Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection stipulates that an International Protection Applicant Identity Document, bearing a foreign identity number, shall be issued to the applicant and, if applicable, their family members. This document serves as proof of their application for international protection and functions as a residence permit (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, 2013, p. 30). The document remains valid for a period of one year, and it is stated that in the event that the application is not finalized, the individual's identity document will be renewed for one-year periods (Presidency of Migration Management, n.d.). Article 83 of the aforementioned Law refers to another type of identity card, namely the identity document for persons with international protection status. Accordingly, it is stated that an identity document containing a foreign identity number will be issued to refugees, conditional refugees, and those granted subsidiary protection status, and that this document will serve as a residence permit (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu, 2013, p. 33). It is stated that this identity document will be issued for a period of three years from the date of the decision and will be renewed for three-year periods until the foreigner's status expires or is revoked (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025d).

Another type of identity document issued by the Republic of Türkiye is the temporary protection identity document. The concept of temporary protection is defined in Article 91 of the Foreigners and International Protection Law No. 6458 and in Articles 1 and 7 of the 2014 Temporary Protection Regulation. Accordingly, the definition of temporary protection is as follows: As stated in Temporary Protection Regulation "Temporary protection may be provided to foreigners who have been compelled to leave their country of origin, are unable to return there, and have arrived at our borders en masse or crossed our borders with the aim of seeking urgent and temporary protection " (Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği, 2014). As demonstrated in the aforementioned definition, temporary protection is distinct from other forms of protection in that it encompasses a mass movement occurring at our borders. Syrian refugees who migrated en masse to Türkiye following the crisis in Syria in 2011 were granted temporary protection under this regulation. Syrian refugees were issued temporary protection identity documents containing a foreign identity number and were permitted to remain in Türkiye. The document under consideration confers upon Syrian citizens the right to remain in the country, access to the services provided, transition to a long-term residence permit, and the ability to enter into subscription agreements for electronic communication services. Also, this ID cards provide easy access to employment and education (Aydemir, 2020, p. 24). However, it should be noted that this does not automatically confer the right to apply for Turkish citizenship (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025d).

### 3. Methods

The present study employs descriptive discourse analysis, a qualitative research design, and utilizes the Discursive and Dispositive Analysis Approach conceptualized by Jäger. According to Jäger, discourse is defined as "what is said or what can/will be said in the present tense" and is further characterized as text fragments that address a specific theme (Jäger, 2001, p. 45). Jäger's approach is one that incorporates information that is valid in a specific place and time, the manner in which this information is accepted, and the manner in which it is disseminated. Its fundamental objective is to interrogate the information that is present in a particular location and era, with a view to unveiling the diverse contexts of knowledge and power that exist. The present study will utilise six distinct stages of analysis in order to address the aforementioned research questions. The following stages are such as determination of the thema, determination of the discourse plane, collection and archive of materials, conducting structural analysis of discourse sequences, conducting a detailed analysis of discourse fragments, and conducting a holistic analysis (Şah, 2020, pp. 225-228). So in this study, discourse is defined as online and written parliamentary questions posed by members of parliament in the Turkish Grand National Assembly between 2011 and 2025. Therefore, this study approaches

discursive and dispositive analysis within this framework. Therefore, in this study, the discourses of MPs of political parties in the TBMM regarding immigrant and foreigner ID cards during the legislative periods covering the years 2013-2025 were analyzed using descriptive discourse analysis (DDA), one of the qualitative research methods.

### 3.1. Research Questions

The main research questions of the study are designed as follows:

R.Q.1. What themes did members of parliament focus on regarding foreign identity cards between the 24th and 28th legislative terms?

R.Q.2. In the context of these themes, what issues were raised as political party priorities?

### 3.2. Collection and Elimination of the Data

Written question proposals were accessed via the "Written Question Proposals Query Form" on the Turkish Grand National Assembly's website at <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/denetim/yazili-soru-onergeleri>. All written question proposals from the 20th and 28th terms are available online on this page. The sample of this study consists of the period after 2011, when mass migration movements to Türkiye via regular and irregular channels began following the crisis in Syria. For this purpose, a search was conducted using the keywords "identity," "identity card," "foreign identity card," "Syrian," "migrant," "foreigner," and 'card' in the "search term" section of the query form screen. The written question proposals found as a result of the search were examined individually, and question proposals unrelated to immigrant identity cards were eliminated. In this context, 17 question proposals from 2011 and later were selected as the sample for the study because they directly addressed the issue of immigrant and foreigner ID cards, along with all the political parties that submitted these proposals. The table below shows the relevant legislative years selected as the sample and the number of questions submitted regarding immigrant identity cards during these periods.

**Table 1.** Number of parliamentary questions by legislative year

Legislative Term	Legislative Dates	Number of PQs
24	28.06. 2011 – 23.04.2015	4
25	23.04 2015 – 01.10.2015	0
26	17.11.2015 – 16.05. 2018	3
27	07.07. 2018-07.04.2023	4
28	02.06.2023-present	6

As shown in the table above, a total of seventeen parliamentary questions were submitted regarding foreign identity cards between 2011 and 2025. It was also noted that no parliamentary questions were submitted regarding ID cards during the 25<sup>th</sup> legislative term.

The distribution of these parliamentary questions by legislative year and political party is as follows:

**Table 2.** Number of parliamentary questions by political parties and legislative terms

Political Party	Number of PQs	Legislative Term
Republican Peoples Party (RPP)	8	24,26,27,28
Nationalist Movement Party (NMP)	3	24,26
Victory Party	1	27
IYI Party	2	27
Democracy and Progress Party (DPP)	1	28
Party of Democratic People (PDP)	2	28

### 3.3. Analysis of The Data

These parliamentary questions, accessible online via the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye website, have been classified by legislative year and party group and transferred to the MAXQDA24 qualitative software program. Open coding was performed during the data coding phase. In the context of open coding, the texts in the data set were examined line by line without relying on a predefined coding system. Expressions that carried meaning within the text and were appropriate for the purpose of the research were identified, i.e., the first codes were derived from the text and assigned free codes. During the text review, codes that expressed similar meanings or emphasized the same phenomenon and were related to each other were combined to create more inclusive super codes. These initial codes obtained during open coding were classified under themes. The table below presents sample open-ended code representations associated with each research question.

**Table 3.** Representative code list

Code	Related Thema
fraud	Security Perspective
ID information security	Security Perspective
violence	Human Rights Perspective
illegal access to temporary ID cards	Legal Perspective
easiness to obtain tax ID	Economic Perspective
Number of non-ID holders	Operational Perspective

After the coding stage, analysis and visualization were performed for each theme using the analysis tools available in the MAXQDA24 software, such as word frequency, code matrix, and code map (combination of codes). Word frequency was used to determine the general word frequencies in the political parties' question proposals, and a code matrix was created to compare the political parties' discourses on immigrant identities and for each theme. Code co-occurrence map analysis tools were used to determine the other codes that co-occur with each type of immigrant identity card and to understand the relationship between them. The results are visualized in the findings section, the data relationship for each visual is explained, and the data is supported by excerpts from the PQs.

### 4. Findings

This section reflects the results of a two-stage analysis. In the first section, the frequency of words related to the parliamentary questions, the code relationships, and the manner in which immigrant ID cards and types were addressed are interpreted. In the second subsection, foreign identity cards are analyzed individually in the context of themes, and the themes are interpreted for each party.

**Table 4.** Word frequency table

Most Commonly Used Words	Frequency	Percentage	The Least Used Words	Frequency	Percentage
Kimlik (identity)	18	1.28	Sığınmacı (asylum seeker)	3	0.21
Koruma (protection)	14	1.00	Sağlık (health)	3	0.21
İçişleri (interior affairs)	12	0.86	Güvenlik (security)	3	0.21
Suriyeli (Syrian)	11	0.79	Göçmen (migrant)	3	0.21
Geçici (temporary)	10	0.71	Çocuk (child)	3	0.21

Within the scope of the study, the parliamentary questions of each Member of Parliament were collected and analyzed in terms of word frequency across a total of 17 documents and 1,401 words. It was found that the terms identity, protection, and interior

affairs were most frequently used in parliamentary discourse on migrant identity cards, while terms such as migrant, child, and security were used less frequently. The words identity, protection, and interior affairs indicate that political parties focused on the legal status of immigrants when discussing immigrant identity cards, addressing the issue in the context of the functioning and processes of state institutions. Identity refers to legal status, home affairs refer to questioning how the issue of identity is addressed at the ministerial level as a state institution and the bureaucratic aspect of the issue, while protection refers to security and legal status. The less frequent use of words such as child, health, and security shows that migrant identities are reflected in parliamentary questions as an administrative and legal issue rather than a social and cultural one. The frequent use of the word “Syrian” in the context of migrant identities shows that the motions on the agenda of the Grand National Assembly of Turkiye focus on a specific identity, namely Syrians, and that Syrians occupy an important place on the migration agenda.

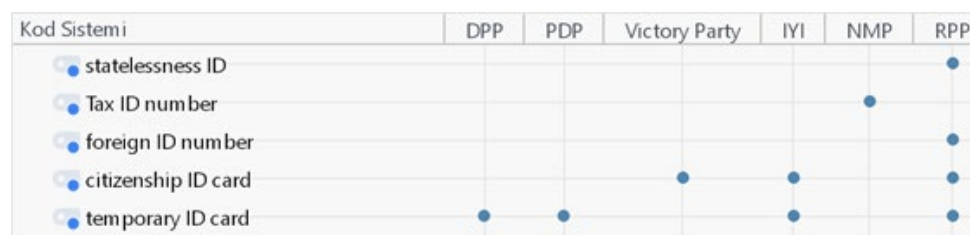


Figure 1. Code matrix for foreigner IDs

Figure 1 visualize and categorize the statements regarding immigrant cards in parliamentary questions and results are listed in five subcategories as shown in the figure. Accordingly, between 2011 and 2025, immigrant identity cards were addressed in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in five separate contexts: stateless identity cards, tax identification numbers, foreign identification numbers, citizenship identity cards, and temporary identity cards. The majority of the parliamentary questions brought up the issues of temporary identity cards, citizenship identity cards, and foreign identity cards, and the types of identity that affect the legal status of immigrants were discussed. The inclusion of the citizenship identity card in the agenda, when considered alongside concerns about the transition from temporary to permanent status, shows that identity is debated as a means of status change and that legal and bureaucratic concerns, rather than the social integration of migrants, are at the center of politics.

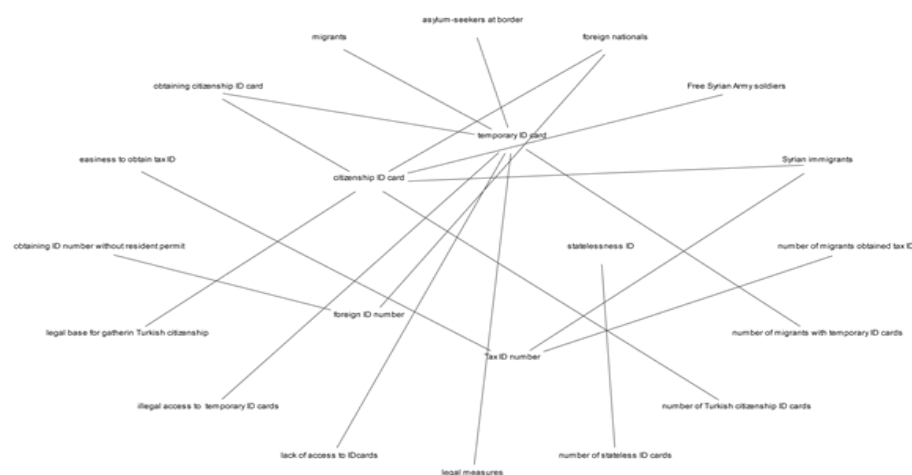


Figure 2. Code co-occurrence for ID cards

Figure 2 visualizes the context in which different types of migrant cards are addressed and overlap. The above visual confirms the migrant card code matrix, showing that temporary identity cards, citizenship identity cards, and foreign identity cards are concentrated in the legal, administrative, and service access contexts. In the context of ID card types, it is seen that Syrian migrants are the main focus, linked to areas such as citizenship processes, legal status, card distribution services, and disruptions in the card access process. Therefore, it is seen that parliamentary questions regarding immigrant identity cards are discussed more in terms of the legal and administrative status of immigrants rather than their social and daily lives. The temporary identity card is at the center of the visual and is linked to areas such as health, registration, work, and legal procedures. This situation shows that the temporary identity card is considered the fundamental determinant of migrants' rights and services. The other type of card that is as widespread as the temporary identity card is the citizenship identity card, which focuses on legal processes in the context of obtaining citizenship. In summary, the temporary identity card has the highest level of impact associated with the theme, while the citizenship and foreigner identity cards have a medium level of impact, and other identity cards are card types that show limited relationships and are considered to have limited impact.

In the context of the analysis, it was examined which themes political parties prioritized for each type of card. In this context, it was concluded that immigrant identity cards were addressed in the context of security, human rights, economic, legal, and operational concerns. Each theme was analyzed in detail as follows.

#### 4.1. Thema 1: Security Perspective

Kod Sistemi	DPP	PDP	Victory Party	IYI	NMP	RPP
fraud						■
ID information security	■					■
illegal access to temporary ID cards				■		
obtaining ID number without resident permit						■
governmental support for recognition of the ID						■
obtaining privileged status						■

Figure 3. Code matrix for security perspective

Within the scope of the security theme, concepts such as irregularities in the identification process of political parties, information security, unauthorized access, and granting privileges have come to the fore. There has been no equal distribution among parties on security issues. The RPP, which has the highest number of codes, has included all security-related themes in its parliamentary questions, except for unauthorized access, and has produced discourse on five different themes. This shows that the RPP has highlighted administrative capacity, the need for audit, and transparency in its discourse. While the DPP focused on information security, the IYI Party focused on unauthorized access to temporary ID cards. This shows that neither party transformed their discourse on immigrant identity into a broad policy debate on security, but neither did they exclude the issue. Illegal access to cards, irregularities, and recognition of identity and special status through state support indicate that discourse has been limited.

This situation regarding the first theme is presented with the following examples, taking into account party and period distributions:

*“At the border, refugees requiring urgent medical attention are referred to hospitals without identification. These refugees are issued temporary IDs by immigration officials between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and by doctors outside of working hours and on weekends. According to the information we have obtained, temporary identity documents are not issued by e-government or any immigration administration e-environment, but are issued by hand according to the register records” (Feridun Bahşi, IYI Party, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term).*

“...While the events were ongoing, the identity information of Syrian refugees under Temporary Protection was disseminated by certain individuals via the Telegram mobile messaging channel, and a call to revolt was made” (Yüksel Mansur Kılınç, RPP, 28th Legislative Term)

“How many foreigners without residence permits have been issued identity numbers?” (Ömer Fethi Gürer, RPP, 26<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

**4.2. Thema 2: Human Rights Perspective**

Kod Sistemi	DPP	PDP	Victory Party	IYI	NMP	RPP
violence		■		■		
right to work						■

**Figure 4.** Code matrix for human rights perspective

Within the context of human rights, the issues of violence against migrants and the right to work have been brought to the agenda. While the issue of violence is on the agenda of the PDP and IYI Party, the RPP has addressed the impact of migrant cards in the context of the right to work. Therefore, it can be said that migrant identity cards have become part of the political discourse as a means of accessing rights and as a fundamental human right.

“The message sent to me states: “I went to the immigration office to obtain a temporary protection ID for my spouse, but they turned me away at the door.” Are the above claims true? If these claims are true, what is the reason for not issuing a temporary protection ID?” (Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, PDP, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative Year)

“...It has been revealed that refugees waiting in line until morning in front of the Additional Service Building of the Mersin Migration Administration Directorate in the Akdeniz district to obtain temporary identity cards were subjected to violence and insults by guards and police officers...” (Fatma Kurtulan, IYI Party, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

“At your press conference regarding the Medium-Term Program, you shared with the public that Syrians in Türkiye would be given identity cards identifying themselves and that they would be offered the opportunity to work in open jobs. What are the open jobs in question? Are temporary jobs meant? Are they planned to be employed in the private sector or in the public sector?” (Kadir Gökmen Ögüt, RPP, 24<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

**4.3. Thema 3: Legal Perspective**

Kod Sistemi	DPP	PDP	Victory Party	IYI	NMP	RPP
legal measures						■
child protection procedure for non-ID holders						■
child protection system for stateless ID card holders						■
illegal access to temporary ID cards				■		
legal base for gathering Turkish citizenship			■			
right to vote						■
obtaining citizenship ID card			■	■		■

**Figure 5.** Code matrix for legal perspective

The legal dimension of foreign ID cards has been addressed in terms of legal measures, the protection of children with and without identity, illegal access to cards, the right to renounce Turkish citizenship, the right to vote, and the context of possessing a citizenship identity card. This situation demonstrates that the identification process is not addressed within a single framework but under various subheadings, meaning that the legal perspective exhibits a multi-layered structure. The distribution of codes by party was Victory Party, IYI Party, and RPP. The Victory Party mainly brought up legal perspectives related to Turkish citizenship, thus evaluating the identity card in the context of access to citizenship and political rights. The IYI Party preferred to establish a legal basis regarding

the perspectives of citizenship and control over immigrant identity cards by addressing illegal access to temporary identity cards and the issue of obtaining Turkish citizenship identity cards. The RPP is the political party that addresses the issue within the broadest legal spectrum and has submitted parliamentary questions in the context of all legal perspectives except for illegal access to temporary identity cards and obtaining Turkish citizenship. Therefore, the RPP addresses the issue of immigrant identity cards in a multidimensional manner in terms of administrative and legal regulations. The fact that other parties have not produced discourse on the legal perspective may be related to these parties addressing the issue from other angles.

*“What child protection procedures are in place for children granted stateless status? What child protection procedures are in place for children without identity documents?”* (Turan Taşkın Özer, RPP, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

*“Are Turkish ID cards being issued with a temporary Turkish citizenship registration to the 1,050,620 children born to Syrian parents under temporary protection in our country? If so, under which article of the Turkish Citizenship Law No. 5901 was this administrative procedure carried out?”* (Ümit Özdağ, Victory Party, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative Year)

#### 4.4. Thema 4: Economic Perspective

Kod Sistemi	DPP	PDP	Victory Party	IYI	NMP	RPP
right to work						■
easiness to obtain tax ID					■	

**Figure 6.** Code matrix for economic perspective

From an economic perspective, the issue of migrants' easy access to tax identification numbers and their right to work has been raised. The right to work has been defined as a common code related to both human rights and economic perspectives. Looking at the party distribution in Figure 6, it can be seen that the RPP addressed the issue from the perspective of the right to work, while the NMP addressed it in the context of easy access to tax identification numbers.

*“It is stated that Syrian citizens who have sought refuge in our country can obtain a tax identification number in a very short time by applying to any tax office with their passports or residence permits for those with refugee status. Accordingly, how many Syrian citizens who have sought refuge in our country from Syria have obtained a tax identification number? How many foreign nationals in our country have a tax identification number? What is the distribution of these individuals according to their nationality?”* (Erkan Akçay, NMP, 24<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

#### 4.5. Thema 5: Operational Perspective

Kod Sistemi	DPP	PDP	Victory Party	IYI	NMP	RPP
distribution of ID cards						
number of migrants obtained tax ID					■	
number of migrants with temporary ID cards		■		■		
number of Turkish citizenship ID cards						■
number of stateless ID cards						■
number of non-ID holder children sent to removal centre						■
number of non-ID holders						■
lack of access to IDcards		■				■

**Figure 7.** Code matrix for operational perspective

In terms of operational concerns, the distribution of immigrant ID card is the main topic on the agenda. That is, it involves requests for statistical information in the context of quantitative data and geographical distribution information, such as which provinces they were distributed to, how many foreigners received them, and the number of foreigners without ID cards. In this regard, the focus has been on the number of

immigrants with temporary ID cards and the lack of access to ID cards. Again, the party that submitted the most PQ on this issue is the RPP.

*“From 2019 until the date the PQ was answered, how many children (under the age of 18) were taken to General Dispatch Centers on the grounds of being ‘without identity,’ specified separately by year?”* (Turan Taşkın Özer, RPP, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

*“From January 2022 until the date the PQ was published, how many Turkish citizenship IDs did the Post and Telegraph Organization (PTT) deliver to foreign nationals?”* (Alpay Antmen, RPP, 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

*“...If these claims are true, what is the reason for not issuing an identity card to Yasemin Abdulaal?”* (Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, PDP, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative Term)

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines political party discourse on immigrant ID cards and analyzes this discourse under five themes. The findings reveal that political parties present different perspectives on immigrant ID cards and develop discourse in the contexts of legal, economics, operational, human rights, and security, indicating that sensitivities regarding the issue vary significantly among parties.

The analysis indicated that the discourse was predominantly shaped by legal and security issues rather than by the social, cultural, and daily lives of migrants. Furthermore, it was observed that political parties placed a higher priority on issues such as administrative processes, legality, and access to services.

A second noteworthy element in the analysis pertains to the wide range of types of immigrant ID cards that are discussed. As indicated by the aforementioned findings, disparate political parties adopt divergent stances on a range of issues, including but not limited to temporary identity cards, Turkish citizenship identity, foreign tax numbers, and the identification of stateless children, with varying degrees of intensity. This situation demonstrates that immigrant identification practices in Türkiye are a multi-layered area of debate.

The findings reveal that since the 24<sup>th</sup> legislative period, the RPP has addressed immigrant ID cards in a wide range of contexts. Therefore, it is found that RPP approaches the identification processes as a multifaceted administrative and political issue involving legal, security, and operational aspects. Similarly, the fact that identity debates are conducted through vulnerable groups such as stateless people and children shows that it prioritizes a human rights-based approach and a rights-based framework. It has been observed that other political parties also focus on the issue of identification, but approach the subject from a more limited perspective. The NMP and İYİ Party converge on security and order-oriented categories, focusing on codes such as violence, foreign identity numbers, and illegal access. In other words, both parties position the issue of migration as a security issue through identity cards. Consequently, this political party interprets the issue through the lens of the misuse of the identification system rather than the theme of citizenship, bringing with it more technical discussions regarding identity cards. The Victory Party, on the other hand, focuses on more limited and specific codes. Thus, it can be said that this political party's focus is on the transformation of immigrant status.

In this context, identity cards are seen as the legal basis for acquiring citizenship and accessing political rights such as voting. The DPP and PDP, on the other hand, are represented by more limited codes. They have focused on more technical and administrative issues, such as identity information security, temporary identity, and children without identity. The DPP, PDP, and NMP did not address the legal perspective on immigrant identity cards during the relevant legislative periods. Therefore, it can be seen that these parties addressed the issue with more general political rhetoric outside of a legal focus.

In general, when you look at it, social policy issues related to social integration, such as lack of access to identity, child protection procedures, and statelessness, are mainly raised by center-left parties, while security-focused themes, such as security, violence, and

misuse of temporary identity cards, are concentrated among right-wing parties. This situation may indicate a relationship between ideological position and discourse on migration. Overall, an examination of the data reveals that the issue of migrants' identities is not addressed within a common framework among political parties; rather, it is incorporated into party discourse through themes such as rights, protection, and administrative capacity on the one hand, and control and security on the other. This differentiation may also indicate that the issue of migrant cards is positioned as an ideological discursive tool.

As a result, immigrant identity cards are emerging as a multidimensional field in Türkiye and are being embraced at different levels. From the perspective of political parties, it shows that the focus is on identity rights, security, and citizenship. Among the parties included in the analysis, it can be said that the Victory Party predominantly conducts discussions on the citizenship axis. This result also provides important clues about how parties perceive migration and migrants. Thus, migrant identities are not merely a bureaucratic issue but appear as a policy area intersecting with different fields such as security, distribution of public resources, children's rights, and state capacity.

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