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From participation to confinement: challenges for immigrants' incorporation in political parties in Spain

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ABSTRACT

The question of the democratic participation of immigrants has been the object of an extensive, theoretical and empirical literature. Nevertheless, we still lack detailed information on those internal dynamics of political parties which shape patterns of participation and representation of immigrants and their descendants, especially in Spain. We focus on how immigrants incorporate political parties in Spain and how this mode of incorporation influences the opportunities for immigrants to access elite positions and candidacies. On the one hand we examine individual trajectories in accessing and evolving in parties and, on the other hand, party strategies to reach out and include immigrants. We acknowledge a persisting gap between the access and participation in political parties, which has been facilitated over recent years, and the many obstacles in accessing elite and candidate positions in Spain.

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Introduction

The question of participation and representation is at the heart of migration studies, and has been the object of an extensive theoretical and empirical literature (see Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013; Hochschild et al. 2013). Nevertheless, we still lack detailed information on those internal dynamics of political parties which shape patterns of participation and representation of immigrants and their descendants, especially in Spain.

Spain's immigration policy has suffered several structural and legal changes since its first law on foreigners in 1985. While policies have focused on the enforcement of border controls and temporary work programmes, reception policies have also been fully implemented since the end of the 1990s. Although Spain's financial crisis since 2008 has challenged the link between immigration and the labour market, leading to a reduction of flows, migrants are not perceived as political subjects yet. Their political

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participation and representation – as well as the one of their descendants – in political parties is still a challenge in Spain (Zapata-Barrero 2013, 129–165).

Two streams of the current research have explored the political incorporation of immigrants. One major set of research has focused on differences in the political opportunity structure and models of incorporation in European countries (Garbaye 2005; Ireland 2000; Koopmans et al. 2005; Morales and Giugni 2011; Oldmalm 2005). Immigrants' political incorporation has been explained by the openness or closure of the political structure in terms of access to citizenship. The opposition between countries with a predominant civic-territorial approach and countries with an ethnic conception of citizenship is shaping the possibilities of immigrants to be included in the political system. The country's electoral process and in particular party lists and multi-members constituencies also affect the political opportunity structure and notably the possibilities for minorities to be politically represented (Bird 2005; Bird, Saalfeld, and Wüst 2011; Garbaye 2005; Norris 2004). Besides, the extension of voting rights at local level to foreign residents in several countries, including Spain (Zapata-Barrero 2013), is an element that has come to further challenge the association between nationality and citizenship.

Another important stream of research explores the mobilization of immigrants in the public space. Jacobs and Tillie (2004) have stressed the importance of the activation of immigrant's social capital for their political incorporation. Civic organizations of the host country have had a major importance in facilitating the access of immigrants to the political system when State's institutions fail to provide space for these minorities (Fennema and Tillie 1999; Jacobs and Tillie 2004; Morales and Giugni 2011). They mostly show that the presence of dense networks of civic organizations in certain cities raise the political interest and the participation of immigrants. This political participation has manifested itself in Spain through associations (Aparicio and Tornos 2010) and social movements (Burchianti 2013; Laubenthal 2007). Through the establishment of advisory councils in many cities and regions of Spain public authorities have sought to encourage the participation of immigrants' organizations in public institutions (Zapata-Barrero and Gropas 2012). This extensive literature invites to take into consideration how institutional factors and group-related factors interact in granting access to immigrants to the political arena. In this regard, political parties are crucial actors to open or close the access to the political system (Michon and Vermeulen 2013). We need to understand how political parties act as gatekeepers and how they affect the political position of minorities.

Large *n* studies show that few respondents are engaged in political parties and that it is still an emerging phenomenon in Spain (Morales and Giugni 2011; Morales et al. 2010). A qualitative data study is necessary to understand better this emerging phenomenon. It allows studying political participation and candidate selection from the inside of political parties. It explores

dimensions which have not been addressed by large n studies, such as how political parties deal with ethnically diverse members and candidates, how political participation in parties is inserted in the personal trajectories of immigrants. It also allows exploring in details the reasons and representations of these ethnically diverse members.

In this framework, this article focuses on how immigrants incorporate political parties in Spain and how this mode of incorporation structures their opportunities to access elite positions. We find that the combination of both individual and party factors may result in greater difficulties or conversely, facilitate access to elite positions. However, we acknowledge a persisting gap between the access and participation in political parties, which has been facilitated over recent years, and the many obstacles in accessing elite and candidate positions in Spain.

After presenting the current “diversity gap” in mainstream Spanish political parties, we will examine individual trajectories in accessing and evolving in parties and looks at patterns of the political careers of immigrants. Finally, we will address the diversification strategies of parties and the main obstacles that immigrants face in accessing key positions in the parties.

Political parties, inclusion and exclusion of immigrants: the “diversity gap” in Spain

It is fact that immigrants are greatly under-represented in political institutions (see Zapata-Barrero, 2016; Martiniello 2005; Saggat 2000). Reflecting the composition of the population in political institutions, the “diversity gap” is seen as an essential democratic problem. If we stress the importance of combining systemic and group factors in the political participation and access to institutions for immigrants, political organizations thus become central actors in this process.

In terms of access and political participation, ideological factors may explain variations in how political parties reach out to immigrants. Several studies have shown that left-wing parties are more open to immigrants and receive more support from voters with immigrant background (Bird, Saalfeld, and Wüst 2011; Michon and Vermeulen 2013). This should lead to a higher incorporation of immigrants in these parties. Substantive representation of immigrant claims may lead to more involvement of immigrants. Bloemraad and Schönwälder (2013) also hypothesize that newer and smaller political parties are likewise more open to immigrants’ participation. Another factor which may have an influence on immigrants’ inclusion is the capacity of political parties to connect with civil society organizations and to maintain wide networks. Verge (2012) makes a difference, in the Spanish context, between three main party strategies: the creation of groups, the penetration strategy – which leads to co-option or infiltration and the collaboration strategy. As

scholars have shown the importance of group mobilization for the political incorporation of immigrants, the strategies of parties may have a major role in channelling not only the interests and claims but also easing the access of immigrants to political parties. Finally, descriptive representation may also have an influence in attracting immigrants. The under-representation of immigrants in the party elite and office holders would discourage further involvement of immigrants in the party (Norris and Lovenduski 1995).

Secondly, political parties are entitled to selecting candidates for offices, staff and executive boards, which are of major importance for their representation in political institutions. This dimension is reflected in the career opportunities for immigrants, and their selection as candidates and members of the party elite. This has not been extensively explored so far (with notable exceptions, e.g. Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Literature on women's presence and party selection offers very rich theoretical and empirical findings. The male domination over candidate selection processes, at national and local level, reproduces biases and consistently leads to the under-representation of minorities. Many studies on women report negative attitudes among selectors toward women. This has been highlighted as well for ethnic minorities (Fielding and Geddes 1998). Conversely, studies suggest that the presence of women among executive boards and selectors lead to a better representation of women among the candidates (Cheng and Tavits 2011; Verge 2010). The organizational patterns of parties, and especially the strength of inner-networks for minorities, such as ethnic minorities or women would conversely sustain the selection of candidates with immigrant-origin (Celis et al. 2014). The local level appears critical in this matter (Schönwälder 2013). The control of local elites over selection processes often lead to gender inequality (Verge 2010) and goes equally in detriment of ethnic minorities (Garbaye 2005). Soininen (2011) points out that the professionalization of political parties, the decrease in their connections to civil society and conservative selection processes lead to the under-representation of minorities among candidates, and primarily immigrants.

Scholars have also stressed differences of views between candidates with immigrant background and the party which selected them. In Ireland, Fanning, Howard, and O'Boyle (2010) stresses that while political parties seek to appoint immigrants in constituencies in order to attract immigrants votes, candidates are "uneasy about being perceived this way" and put forward the needs of their locality. Michon and Vermeulen (2013) also suggest that parties are more likely to promote persons with less links to ethnic constituency when context is negative toward immigration. We propose to examine further these dimensions (access and participation in parties; selection as candidates and representation) applied to the Spanish case.

Sources and methodology

The article is based on research carried out for the “Diversity in Political Parties Programmes, Organisation and Representation” (DIVPOL) project¹ which explores patterns of inclusion and exclusion of third-country nationals in political parties in seven European countries.

The article uses data collected between June 2013 and January 2014 in four major political parties in Spain, according to their representation in the national parliament. They are the People’s Party (PP), the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), Convergence and Union (CIU) and the United Left (IU). In addition, it examines two Catalan “sister” parties with representation at the national parliament, the Catalan Socialists party (PSC), distinct from but sharing the parliamentary group with PSOE and Initiative for Catalonia-Greens (ICV), distinct from but sharing the IU parliamentary group. We focused on Madrid and Catalonia. Madrid is the Autonomous Community (AC) with more Latin-American immigrants, whereas African immigrants are more present in Catalonia. The activism of immigrants in political parties is more developed in these two AC than in the rest of Spain.

Twenty-five interviews were carried out. We selected politicians and party staff with immigrant backgrounds and/or with responsibilities in integration and diversity sectors of the party. They had responsibilities at national level or at the level of the AC in Madrid and Catalonia. While we began to contact top leaders, they primarily felt they had little to say on the issue, and then automatically we were systematically reoriented towards sectors of the party designed to provide a participatory space for immigrants at national or regional levels and/or sectors dedicated to lead the party’s reflection on immigration, diversity and citizenship. This limits the generalization of our findings but it gives two important indications. Firstly, the inclusion of immigrants is still not perceived as a mainstreaming issue by political parties. Secondly, it means that inclusion of immigrants and diversity matters is undertaken primarily by inclusion sectors, which as we will see are either confined spaces with lobby functions inside the parties.

In addition, a focus group has been conducted with representatives from immigrant organizations. Several events have been organized during the study, which brought together around sixty politicians and party or NGO representatives to present initiatives and debate on the inclusion of ethnic diversity in political organizations.²

By the exploration of qualitative data, this study provides an understanding of the personal motivations and representations of the actors as well as systemic changes in regard to diversity challenges in political parties.

The descriptive representation of immigrants: institutions and political parties

The descriptive representation, which refers to the presence of immigrants and citizens with immigrant backgrounds in political institutions, is an important indicator of their recognition by society and of their impact on policies that affect them. In parallel, political parties are instrumental in including immigrants in their staff and executive on the one hand, and in selecting representatives in political institutions on the other hand. Other studies conducted with large *N* have found that immigrants are fewer to join political parties compared to nationals. Morales et al. (2010) show that context can play not only an important role in the levels of affiliation and political activity of immigrants but also in their loyalty and preference for a political party. We focus on the representation in political institutions and elite positions in political parties, in order to understand the degree of under-representation of immigrants in elite positions in different contexts.

Descriptive representation in political institutions

At national and regional levels, non-nationals from third-countries in Spain do not have the right to passive or active suffrage. The only possibility for non-EU immigrants to be candidates for national and autonomous elections is to acquire Spanish citizenship. Data on persons with immigrant backgrounds in the national Parliament are not recorded. Nevertheless, research on the place of birth of politicians shows that there are very few people with immigrant backgrounds among them. In 2014, only one senator with dual citizenship of Colombia and Spain was in office. A non-exhaustive foray into candidates for the 2012 general election also shows that there were less than ten candidates with non-European backgrounds who figured on party lists.³

In the assemblies of the AC there are also very few representatives with non-European backgrounds. In 2014, there were two representatives with a Latin-American background in the Assembly of Madrid and there was no representatives whatsoever with immigrant backgrounds in the Catalan Parliament. During previous legislatures dating from 2003, the Parliament of Catalonia had two members with immigrant backgrounds (Morocco and Uruguay) between 2003 and 2010, and one other MP with Colombian origin in the Assembly of Madrid (from 2007 to 2011). This shows clearly the under-representation of people with immigrant backgrounds in national and regional institutions. This has to be put into context with data collected by Collier, Santana, and Jaime (2012), which show that the vast majority of the representatives were born in the same AC (85.5 per cent). Thus, mobility in general is not a favourable factor for being elected.

At local level, non-nationals do not have the right to passive suffrage except for EU nationals. For the first time in the 2011 local elections, immigrants from countries with reciprocity agreements could vote. It concerns mainly voters who originate from Latin America⁴ and has resulted in political parties developing strategies aiming at those new voters and EU residents. The PSOE announced that it presented 586 foreigners on its lists, with seven of them in the first position. The PP also said it presented almost 500 foreign candidates in twenty-six provinces (*El Dia*, 14.05.2011). Both these figures included EU nationals, but the PSOE specified the origin of the candidates: 55 per cent were EU nationals, 34 per cent Latin Americans and 11 per cent from Africa or Asia (www.psoe.es, 11.05.2011). Data from the Ministry of Public Administration showed that, based on the declarations of 70 per cent of the local councillors in Spain, seventeen of them held dual citizenship with a third-country, mostly from Latin-American countries.

A recent study on candidates for local elections with migrant backgrounds from Morocco, Latin America, Bulgaria and Romania, and in municipalities with more than 15 per cent of one of these immigrant groups, highlighted the dramatic under-representation of candidates in most municipalities (Pérez-Nievas et al. 2014). Citizens with immigrant backgrounds accounted for only 2 per cent of candidates in these municipalities, with Latin Americans being the most represented among these candidates. However, the most noticeable aspect of the 2011 local elections is undoubtedly the emergence of campaigns from political parties concerned with making their candidates with immigrant backgrounds more visible, especially by organizing rallies and public meetings as well as video materials to present the candidates.

During its thirty-eighth congress in 2011, PSOE committed for increasing the representation of persons with immigrant background, fight discrimination and facilitate their access to vote and representation. The diversity of electoral lists is mentioned as a goal, but it has not been quantified contrary to the gender repartition (no less than 40 per cent and no more than 60 per cent of candidates of a list can be of the same sex). The conclusions of the political conference of the party in November 2013 also mention the importance of integrating persons with immigrant background in the electoral lists at local level.

Presence in political parties' staff and executives

There is no formal barrier to membership of Spanish political parties for third-country nationals or to be part of the staff of the party. However, political parties are far from reflecting quantitatively the ethnic diversity which exists in Spanish society. In particular, very few immigrants are represented

among party staff and politicians. Party structures are nevertheless opening themselves up progressively to immigrants, though only in certain sectors. Officers born in Latin America are the ones who occupy most of these positions, and this is surely because the Spanish legal framework facilitates their access to naturalization and to vote at local level. Sharing the language also facilitates their access to elite positions. We find most party representatives with an immigrant background at the head of internal structures in charge of immigration, integration and diversity issues. This is the case for the PP in Madrid and Catalonia, with staff with a Latin-American background. In addition, in 2008, the PP executive in Madrid included four officers with an immigrant background, three of them of Latin-American origin. In the PSOE in 2008, the sector in charge of Participation and Social Movements and the one on Integration were led by two officers with an immigrant background, both born in Latin America. Currently though, there is no immigrant at the head of these structures. In 2014, staff in the New Citizenship sector of the PSC and the two coordinators of Immigration and Citizenship for ICV also originate from Latin America. Apart from ICV though, these officers are not part of the executive board of the parties. Except in the sectors in charge of diversity, migration and integration, and sometimes of participation, the presence of officers and party staff with immigrant backgrounds is anecdotal. In particular, their presence on executive boards of the parties, at national and regional level is scarce. This raises questions about the possibilities for ethnic diversification to be put on the political parties' agenda.

Patterns of participation and careers of members with immigrant background in Spanish political parties

An increasing awareness among political parties of the political role of immigrants and their descendants has led them to develop ways to enable access and participation within the organization. Outreach activities have been developed in political parties as well as spaces of participation. Nevertheless, while in the political parties, immigrants still face many obstacles in their careers and especially on the road to being candidates and occupying offices. Executive and candidate positions in political parties have not really opened up to immigrants. We explore how the modes of incorporation of immigrants in political parties in Spain create different opportunities to reach elite positions in the party and as candidates.

Social activism and accession to political parties

Both accesses to political parties and the development of a career in the organization of politicians and party officers with immigrant background present similarities. Most of them have had a long experience of activism in

associations or social organizations before entering the party, either as active members or as leaders of organizations. In their words, activism in political parties is often presented as a second step of initial political activism. The most common pattern, especially among those who joined left-wing political parties, is the leadership of organizations and social movements in favour of immigrants' rights. Others were involved in immigrant cultural organizations, organizing intercultural encounters, festivities or sports events. The interviewees who are members and representatives of right-wing parties were more involved in this kind of cultural and leisure organizations and not in those who advocate for immigrants' rights.

A minority of them were also involved in advocacy organizations which were not specifically targeted at immigrants. In particular, several women politicians and party officers were involved in women's organizations and are still active in these movements. These women's organizations often give support to the careers of women members and offer networks that immigrants often lack in the political party. Conversely, very few of them, even those who were born or raised in the country were involved in youth organizations of the party. Yet, a representative with an immigrant background of the PSOE in Madrid, who was born in Spain, stressed the importance for his career of his involvement in the youth organization of the party.

Early political socialization is also a common feature of these politicians and party officers. Many of them mention the involvement of members of their families in politics, in general in the country of origin. Previous activism in the country of origin is also frequent, either in established political parties or in radical-left organizations. This was mostly the case of those originating from Latin America.

For many, being involved in a political party was a logical outcome of their social commitment. However their entry in political parties differs. Some considered the membership of a political party as a side aspect to their social activism. Becoming a member was a way for them to show their recognition to the parties that were more supportive to their cause. Their activity was reduced at first and mainly to the local branch. In spite of this priority given to the social commitment, this type of trajectory in the party is not uncommon among the few who have been office holders. They were often chosen for being public figures of immigrant activism through the "patronage" of a party leader. For others, the affiliation was driven by friends, mentors or "head hunters" who spotted them for their activism and leadership in civic organizations. Personal contacts formed during social or cultural activism represent a strong incentive for immigrants to affiliate. For party officers in charge of outreach activities and gatekeepers, networking activities are a way to attract new skilled members who will be promoted in the party.

Local barriers to party activism and preference for sectoral branches

All political parties have a dual organization, on a thematic or sectoral basis on the one side, and on a territorial basis on the other side. In general, the territorial branches are meant to be spaces for the involvement of new members. They are also spaces where candidates for offices are selected. However, we found that members and politicians with immigrant backgrounds were primarily active in the thematic or sectoral branches of their party. They joined primarily diversity and immigration branches, as well as youth and women sectors to a lesser extent. For most of them, involvement in local branches was a disappointing experience as they stress the lack of a “welcoming” culture in these branches.

A party officer juxtaposes his positive experience in the youth organization to his initial participation in the territorial branch of the party, which in his opinion, was much more closed to people with his profile. After a rapid evolution in the youth organization of the party, paralleled by his activism in organizations for immigrant women and the descendants of immigrants and a degree in intercultural relations, he relates how he decided to get more involved in the local branch of his party: “It was difficult. I was a nobody but very active and with a lot of desires to change things. And then they thought, ‘What does he want? Does he want to be councillor or what?’” [Interview with male party officer with foreign background, PSOE, Madrid]. He stresses that social activism and involvement in party sectors is often seen as a threat by the members and directors of territorial branches.

This was cited as a reason for the difficulties of making changes in groups marked by their inertia and, sometimes, they reported practices of discrimination at local level. A politician in Madrid, for example, denounced the existence of exclusionary practices in branches situated in a neighbourhood where many immigrants live. The reduced number of affiliates and the will to preserve the status quo in terms of leadership led to the development of practices which discourage the affiliation of immigrants, such as important delays in delivering the membership card, “lost” applications of new affiliates and the spreading of false information. More generally, those with immigrant backgrounds, especially those with a long trajectory of social activism, feel that territorial branches do not offer them the possibility to impact on party decisions. They also report the difficulty to understand power relations, to cope with internal streams and “families” which form the basis of the territorial dynamics in several parties.

This brings an explanation to the fact that most of the politicians and party members with immigrant backgrounds chose to develop their career in the inclusion sectors of the party and not in their local branch and have had similar disappointing experiences in the latter.

Topics of interest and substantive representation

The engagement in thematic branches of the party is also an outcome of the topics of interest for most politicians and party officers with immigrant backgrounds. For most of them, the desire to have an impact on immigration policies motivates their decision to affiliate. As a representative of the PSOE in Madrid recalls: "I had the feeling that the discourses of social organizations was important and that it needed to be passed to more people. I thought that it would be the right thing that political parties knew of this" [Interview with male party officer with foreign background, PSOE, Madrid]. For a member of PSC, it came along with the idea that "in the end, only politics and politicians can really change the situation" [Interview with male party officer with foreign background, PSC, Catalonia]. Affiliation is then the way to enter directly into the political process. Yet, this position leads frequently to "frustration", either because these members are blocked in the candidates' selection process, because they feel that they are not heard inside the party, or because they feel they cannot contribute to structural changes, even as politicians.

For a minority of respondents, especially in right-wing parties, other topics of interest decided them to affiliate, such as women's rights or economic development. Nevertheless, they usually began to be in charge of migration issues, which they perceive as a normal development of their career due to their identification as persons with an immigrant background. But they also project themselves in other positions in the future, more in line with their initial interests. As a party officer and representative of the PP in Madrid highlights:

That the party asked me for my collaboration on immigration issues, well it is perfect. But I don't like to be put in a category. In fact I think it is a very positive thing that they thought about me, not only for being an immigrant, but because they thought about me because I was a Spanish citizen, with more than 4 years of working experience as an economist and they thought I could manage the district. [Interview with male party officer/politician with foreign background, PP, Madrid]

Networks and mentors

In general, contacts and networking quickly appear as crucial issues for their career development. Party officers and politicians often refer to mentors who had a direct impact on their career development. As mentioned, previous experience in social activism led most of them to make contacts with politicians and party officers who were engaged in their recruitment in the party. They all underline that the internal life of political organizations and the relations of power can be very problematic to handle for new members. In turn, they often value very positively those politicians who have been mentoring them or acted as intermediaries. Furthermore, the experience of political organization is greatly personalized. Career

opportunities, such as candidate selection, being recruited as party staff, branch responsibilities and membership of executives, seem to happen frequently through personal contacts with party leaders, or thanks to intermediaries, and less as part of collective decisions. The commitment of mentors to ideas of diversity and interculturalism are often stressed in contrast to the political organization which is seen as a complex and static “machinery”. The leadership is thus seen as essential for allowing the inclusion of immigrants. Career paths depend also on the ability to navigate between opposing streams inside the party. Several politicians referred to how they were caught between opposing political “families” inside the party. A party officer makes fun of his choice to belong to the opposition in the party:

I did not understand this system, and I did not like it either [...] But I decided to be with those who were in general in opposition to the ones who governed the party ... Again in the minority! What can I do? [Interview with male party officer with foreign background, PSOE, Madrid]

Through the system of mentors and families, the careers of these politicians are then tied to the power that the mentors or families have in the party. Mentoring allows for a rapid ascension in the party, being chosen for the first-hand expertise that they have as regards immigration issues. However, for many of those who have held elected positions, it means that their career has been tied to the position of the party leaders who supported them. One of them recalls how a change in the power configuration in the party led to her eviction at the time of the renewal of her mandate:

Everything is driven from above. For example, more than 50 organizations sent letters to support my position on the candidate list [...] and my name was in all the results of the local consultations of members. But as I was friend with [the former party leader] and his friends, who had been isolated, [the new party leader] thought I was against him. I could not be friends with him [...] he was never and never would be committed to immigrants. [Interview with female migrant organisation leader, former office holder, PSOE, Madrid]

The importance of networks also explains why many party members choose to develop their careers in thematic branches and not in the territorial constituencies. These patterns of career inside the party are greatly shaped by the organization of political parties themselves. Even if most of them have open spaces for immigrants, there are still many obstacles to the diversification of these organizations.

Diversification strategies in political parties: support and confinement of immigrants’ participation

The interest of political parties in reaching immigrants has risen over the last ten years. The majority of political parties have created or strengthened their

internal structures in charge of immigration issues to also facilitate the inclusion of immigrants. But this openness remains limited in Spain. Outreach activities are not seconded by organizational changes in the parties which would facilitate the inclusion of minorities. The spaces of participation often fail in bridging immigrant communities and organizations, and the inner structures of the parties. As a result, the pathways to candidatures and representation are still largely blocked for immigrants.

Membership practices and outreach activities of political parties

The strategies of political parties to reach persons with immigrant backgrounds are diverse, depending of party's culture and type of organization. Nevertheless, one common feature is the absence of outreach activities specifically aimed at the affiliation of immigrants or immigrant groups. Once someone becomes a member of the party, there is no specific programme to welcome or train politicians with immigrant backgrounds. Conversely, parties are keen on maintaining relations with civic and social immigrants or pro-immigrants organizations.

Party officers are aware of the differences of perception among immigrants on their organizations. Left-wing parties picture themselves as being closer to the interest of immigrants. In turn, the discourse of right-wing party representatives tries to oppose the idea that advocating for a restrictive policy on immigration means that they are less inclined to include immigrants in their ranks. For officials of the PP, the inclusion of immigrants in visible positions is often put forward as a demonstration of their commitment to this issue. Parties have nevertheless different strategies for reaching immigrant groups. For the PP, for example, Latin Americans are the group they prioritize because they feel that they are closer culturally to the party, in terms of religion, language or democratic habits. We can guess that institutional factors of participation, which are as we have seen, more favourable for Europeans and Latin Americans are also reinforcing the priority of reaching these groups. The PP is not in favour of changing the rules on political rights to facilitate the access to other groups to the naturalization process or to being able to vote at local elections. Networking with immigrant organizations is consequently made with Latin American – and European – cultural organizations. This focus on Latin Americans and Europeans is not the focus of all right-wing parties. For example, the CIU, the Catalan centre-right party, has developed ties and outreach activities with immigrant organizations and groups throughout the world. This is due in part to the political situation in Catalonia in terms of language and separatist claims. Latin Americans, with exceptions, tend to identify with Spanish political parties more than Catalan parties. As we will see, this intention to reach all communities without exception is reflected in the organization of the party. The CIU does not have outreach campaigns

but some party officers are active in reaching leaders of immigrant associations and, as it is the head of the Catalan administration, this party has also had the opportunity to strengthen ties – and clients – with immigrant organizations.

Left-wing parties also reach immigrants without exception in terms of nationality. The PSOE has traditionally been close to major immigrant and pro-immigrant organizations, such as those which are sitting in the National Forum for the Integration of Immigrants. These organizations oriented mainly toward advocacy have been important in the definition of this party's position on immigration and have, at the same time, been pressing for more open and integrative policies, especially during the Socialist-led governments between 2004 and 2012. Many of the party members interviewed belong to multiple groups, that is, several associations and social movements in addition to the party. Yet, these traditional links and relationships have loosened since 2009. The immigration policies of the Socialist government have been more restrictive and were opposed by many organizations. These organizations have also been in turmoil since the beginning of the economic crisis due to the cuts that have been made in integration policies. The PSOE and the PSC themselves have also been less keen on maintaining strong relationships with immigrant organizations, even though these parties had been perceived as at the avant-garde of immigrant's participation. Instead, the parties have developed internal structures, such as the federal groups in the PSOE and the "*Nou gresol*" (New melting pot) group in the PSC, to organize the participation of members with immigrant backgrounds.

Other leftist parties, such as the IU and ICV, are also traditionally more connected to immigrant organizations, especially as they have participated in social movements in favour of immigrants' rights. Nevertheless, apart from the connections made through these movements and through connections with political parties of other countries (in Latin America in particular), the IU has not sought to specifically reach immigrants to allow them to participate in the party. While lamenting the reduced affiliation of immigrants, the openness of the party and its assemblies, is in turn highlighted as a facilitator for the participation of immigrants. The ICV for its part has had a more proactive policy for reaching immigrants. Leaders of the thematic sector on Citizenship and Immigration have engaged with contacts and created denser networks with leaders of immigrant organizations and younger immigrants.

In addition, the connections of left-wing parties with trade unions (Unión General de Trabajadores with the PSOE and PSC and *Comisiones Obreras* with IU and ICV), who have had in Spain a role as pioneers for immigrants' participation, have also contributed to the affiliation of immigrants.

Inner-party networks and organization: support for advocacy or confinement of ethnic and immigrant members?

Political parties have adopted different strategies to organize the involvement of members with immigrant backgrounds. It results on the one hand from the organizational culture of the party and its views on the participation of under-represented groups and, on the other hand, from claims and strategies of immigrant members themselves.

Inner-networks of immigrants: advocacy and career support

The major Spanish parties present a range of inner-party structures which are interesting to examine. As mentioned, leadership and mentoring have thus far been more successful in diversifying political offices than self-organization and the development of inner-party networks. Conversely, the formalization of spaces for the participation of under-represented collectives in party structures may have a more durable impact on the effective diversification of the party and public offices if they are able to successfully channel claims for a fair representation of diversity. Not all the political parties agree on the formalization of spaces of participation for immigrants. Even if most of them have developed such spaces, they are perceived in certain political parties as contrary to the equality between members or as segregated spaces.

In the words of a representative from the PP in Madrid:

[The Socialists] place above the collective and we put above the person. They think that the most important thing is that you are black or gypsy and we believe that the most important thing is that you are a person, independently from your origin.

Even if,

there is a will to attend specifically to people with diverse origins in electoral processes. This does not mean that there is a need for internal communities; let's say on a racial basis. We never did this and, in addition, we never even think about doing it. [Interview with male party officer with native background, PP, National]

On the other side of the ideological spectrum, IU also criticizes the organization along ethnic lines or of immigrants in the party. Even if the party wants to involve immigrants and social activists in designing party orientations, affiliation is not sought at all cost. As a party officer says: "I believe that the fundamental element is that people with immigrant backgrounds participate naturally, because they think that through their participation in IU that their interests will be defended and will be in line with their principles" [Interview with female party officer with native background, IU, National]. The collaboration strategy of the party with civil society allows exchanges on equal footing (Verge 2012) but, in reason of the loosened links of the party

with social movements, immigrants remain outside of the party and, consequently, of candidatures.

Other parties, conversely, have sought to create spaces for the participation of immigrants. These structures are conceived for most of them as bridges between immigrants and the inner structures of the party. Generally, they are spaces not only of socialization between members, but also contribute to the party's orientations in terms of immigration policies. Nevertheless, this definition of the party policies is often devolved to another thematic branch and only a few members of the participative space also contribute to the definition of party orientations. The current organization of the PSOE originates from 2010 with the decision to form "federal groups" under the umbrella of the Sectoral organization of Social Movements and Participation whose aim is to foster the collaboration with civic and social organizations and to recruit social activists. There are various groups which draw together members according to their origin or their ethnicity (such as Afro-descendants, Arabs or Latinos). They have the same status as other issue or identity groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT), drug addiction or secular groups. These groups have mainly a role of advocacy to strengthen the representation of under-represented minorities. For one of the coordinators of the groups: "What we do is participate and move in order to be visible. We look for allies in the party, because they exist. (...) I talk as the representative of my group but the diversity is us all" [Interview with female party officer with foreign background, PSOE, National/Madrid]. The groups are seen as temporary structures, necessary to improve the visibility of under-represented groups and of their claims and gave them support for self-organization in the party, to reach a "normalized" representation of immigrants.

Nevertheless, the difficulties to transform this participation into an effective representation of immigrants in internal structures and candidacies are underlined by the coordinators:

There is structural discrimination as well as among the ones who monopolize the power. It has also to do with our capacity to organize, to be stronger and influence things. But I think we lacked collective intelligence and organization to be more powerful. [Interview with male party officer with native background, PSOE, National]

To him, training and alliances are the way to gain power in the party. These groups are involved more generally in claims for the democratization of party structures. Several of them have been leading the "More participation, More diversity" campaign which involved activists from the Madrid federation and pushed for the adoption of democratic measures at the Congress of the Party in 2012. Nevertheless, the possibilities of being put on a party list are scarce and the federal groups are in direct competition with each other to

secure candidatures and seats. Some immigrant leaders lament the fact that better organized and more established groups – such as LGBT for example – compete with them for the diversification of electoral lists and party offices.

PSC and CIU also have structures of participation along ethnic/origin lines. In 2010, CIU created the *Fundació Nous Catalans (New Catalans Foundation)*. As opposed to other party structures, the Foundation's first goal has not been to offer channels for participation to party members but to be the instrument for attracting new members. The underlying idea is that a structure connected to but not organically part of the party is more able to promote immigrants' participation. Even if the adhesion to the party is not a condition, the immigrant leaders and regular attendants to its meetings have become party members. The Foundation uses online channels and social networks extensively to maintain the connection with immigrant organizations. As for the PSC branch of New Citizenship, it is composed of two spaces, with one of them – the New Melting Pot – being dedicated to the participation of immigrants. Answering to those who criticize it for being "less political" or "NGO-oriented", the coordinator states that this feature is "what we claim to be, to offer a space of participation, simply open to make people come" [Interview with male party officer with foreign background, PSC, Catalonia].

The confinement and non-selection of members with immigrant background

Inclusion sectors act in support of the careers of ethnically diverse members. Their selection for electoral tickets is still more related to their activity in the area of migration or diversity (which secretary or coordinator is represented at the executive board) than their activity in the local branches where they face more barriers. Nevertheless, inclusion sectors are also perceived as obstructing the participation of immigrants in decision spaces of the party and are accused to maintaining them in position of "outsiders". As a former politician underlines:

Parties are now organised by groups, of Latin Americans for example, and they did not work toward the inclusion of people in their neighbourhoods or in their natural space, of students or workers [...]. This does not allow knowing if in an executive board, in municipalities, in local, regional or federal executives, there is a presence – or an increase in the presence – of immigrants, because the vast majority are organized to represent their own community. [Interview with female politician with native background, PSC, Catalonia]

Linking one's career to immigration issues and to be segregated in spaces of participation that cater for immigrants is perceived as a danger by the vast majority of the members and politicians who were interviewed. Even if they value positively these spaces as "safe spaces" (Gamson 1996) for immigrants in the party, they also highlight that these spaces are, to a large extent,

powerless. They fail to act as a go-between between immigrants and spaces of power and elite positions in the party. The absence of ethnic minorities among party executives leads selection committees and gatekeepers to overlook this issue.

In addition, the suspicions surrounding the confining role of these spaces of participation can be related to emerging concerns among some party members about “ethnic entryism” (Fielding and Geddes 1998). This suspicion that the immigrants could enter or participate in political parties mainly to influence candidate selection and party orientations not necessarily in line with the principles of the party has had a few manifestations.⁵

While participative spaces for immigrants undoubtedly allow the development of immigrant participation, there is little evidence that they contribute to opening the path toward representation in party structures and in political institutions, as exemplified by the scarcity of immigrants among office holders.

Conclusion

We have examined how the modes of incorporation of immigrants in political parties influence their possibilities for accessing elite positions. While Spanish political parties seem to have strengthened their approach to immigrant political participation, they still create an environment in which the access to elite positions is deeply restrictive. Institutional factors play a role in parties’ strategies. The greater access of Latin Americans to citizenship as well as the right to vote at local level for most of them allows some parties, especially the PP, co-opting mainly these ones. As for individual factors, social activism and involvement in civic and immigrants’ organization remains the main pathway to activism in political parties. Office holders with immigrant background were often spotted by party gatekeepers and recruited for party lists. However, there are often divergences between the conceptions of these politicians and their party about the role of immigrants. We also notice that immigrants’ difficulties to access local branches of parties generated often a feeling of being unwanted or marginalized. The role of party factors in shaping the careers of immigrants and internal organization of the parties plays also a fundamental role. Many of them have internalized the participation of immigrants in specific areas, but these areas tend to confine immigrants to subordinated positions in the party in the absence of powerful allies in the elite. In this context, the diversification of executive committees, at national, regional or local levels is strategic in order to diversify candidates, representatives and appointments. In the absence of these positions, members with immigrant backgrounds have to count primarily on mentors positioned in party executives to access positions of power or party lists. In turn, an effective empowerment of immigrants in “safe spaces” of the

parties (inner networks or participation spaces) through advocacy and the representation of their interests could push for the designation of candidates with immigrant background, especially in parties that grant positions on executive boards to representatives of sectors or areas.

Notes

1. Project co-financed by the European Commission (EC), European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF) between the 15th December 2012 and the 15th June 2014.
2. Detailed information on the methodology and data collection and analysis, including interview guides and list of interviewees, can be found in the project's final report at : http://www.cjd-eutin.eu/fileadmin/content/DIVPOL_Final_Report_ES.pdf.
3. These data were collected in newspapers articles, party data and a comparison with candidate lists for the 2012 general elections in Catalonia and Madrid. This result is thus biased in favor of the candidates who have stated publicly their migrant origin during the campaign, who are made "visible" by their party or the ones in Madrid and Catalonia.
4. As of 2014, reciprocity agreements have been signed with: Norway, Ecuador, New Zealand, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, Iceland, Bolivia, Cape Verde, South Korea, Trinidad and Tobago.
5. Such as the exclusionary practices mentioned at local level in districts populated with many immigrants and where local branches are weak. There was also a controversy around the vote of Pakistanis at primaries of PSC to designate the candidate for mayor in Barcelona in 2014.

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