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How do political parties deal with the “diversity gap”? Democratic deficits and party strategies

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ABSTRACT

This article is a theoretically oriented contribution seeking to review the existing literature directly or indirectly addressing the “diversity gap” in political parties. Within this particular field I identify two main areas to conduct research: participation and representation. The premise is that the particular features of political parties, given their role in the democratic system, implies that they cannot be neutral when they identify the diversity gap as a problem, and therefore have to follow some strategies to deal with it. Based on the literature review and by preparing the theoretical framework of the different case studies for this Special Issue, I propose an interpretative framework comprising four main channels of potential analysis. I will end by arguing that what all these studies highlight is that in dealing with the incorporation of immigrants into political parties, the utilitarian logic prevails over any argument based on equality and power sharing.


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Framing the theoretical debate: addressing the “diversity gap”

Political parties are designed to serve people, but are they representing people in diverse societies? Apparently, diversity and politics do not mix. Representativeness and participation are central to democracy, but they fail to pass the filter of immigration-related diversity. Where significant portions of the population living within a constituency are excluded from formal means of political expression and representation, this translates into a democratic governance deficit. Political parties’ own governance remains far from meeting this straightforward democratic principle.

Issues of immigration-related diversity are multi-faceted and very difficult to encapsulate when following a unique focus and approach. Among the various conceptions (Vertovec 2014), there is one that probably has most

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unanimity among scholars: the jaw-dropping distance between the representativeness of diversity in society and their presence in public organizations in general. This is the epicentre of what we call “diversity gap”, which is usually approached in terms of inequality and power relations, as we will see. The point of departure of all the country-specific studies of this special issue is this “diversity gap” in a particular public organization: political parties. The term is, of course, not new, and probably denotes the essence of the diversity studies in democratic societies.

“Diversity gap” is a critical focus that represents, in broad terms, the distance there is between social diversity dynamics, democratic values on equality and power sharing, and existing public organizations. When diversity becomes an explanatory variable for understanding inequalities or when diversity becomes the main dimension for understanding particular power relations, this is probably due to this “diversity gap” in the realm of society and politics, respectively. Most of the analysis we have found on diversity and political parties tends generally to approach these issues in terms of participation and representation, namely the building blocks of governance in democratic systems. Bird (2016) for instance, indirectly addresses this gap when comparing the political representation of women and ethnic minorities in established democracies, and more explicitly when she assesses the scope and causes of visible minority underrepresentation in municipal elections. She even advances an interesting hypothesis (we can only briefly mention it here without going into detail), which shows that the magnitude of the gap between candidates versus elected members is considerably larger for municipal politics, than for the provincial or federal levels (Bird 2016). Siemiatycki (2011) explicitly also use this focus, when analysing Ontario local politics and visible minority representation among political representatives and political parties. The author examines the wide diversity gap at every government level between the visible minority population share and share of elected positions.

The research focus that is centred on democratic deficits using this “gap hypothesis” is also well known in migration studies. In fact, migration studies develop most of their research by identifying the existing gaps between current dynamics and old structure and policy paradigms which they take as their main framework analysis (Hampshire 2013). In this light, a democratic challenge is posed if some groups are excluded from, or do not participate in, one of the most important components of our democratic arsenal: political parties.

To speak about the “diversity gap” is then to speak about an inclusion/exclusion divide, about democratic/undemocratic diversity-based behaviour. It is to speak about the representativeness/non-representativeness of public institutions (schools, police, public administration, trade unions, and, as is the case in this special issue, in political parties), about opportunities or not

in the already existing participatory channels in democracies. What the different contributions show is that political parties are aware that the diversity gap can be a democratic problem in the short or long run, but that each behaves differently when confronted with this challenge. Political parties have to admit that there is a problem before they can attempt to fix it and adopt some strategies, while also being aware that the kind of politics needed to reduce this gap would probably have to challenge some other external and internal factors either related to the political system or to some electoral interests as well as their own voters' behaviour. This is why, after reviewing in some length the existing literature addressing directly or indirectly this "diversity gap", I will try to underline from these findings what are the most important channels to analyse these strategies. This will also allow me to frame some of the analysis that will be presented in the different case studies of this Special Issue.

The focus: why should immigrants be incorporated into political parties?

In several European countries, the share of the population made up of migrants and of citizens of migrant origin (both categorized as ethnic minorities or immigrants) is continually rising, but in most cases, political parties still show decreasing support for ethnic politics and group-based strategies representing immigrant groups (Deschouwer and Depauw 2014; Foner et al. 2014). This issue raises important theoretical questions about the democratic legitimacy of European political party systems. In migration studies, there is already a research focus on political parties. There is a large and deep exploration on xenophobic and anti-immigrant discourses, and their place within the mainstream political system, as well as research on electoral and voting behaviour.¹ From a strategic political viewpoint, although anti-immigrant rhetoric (and especially anti-Muslim) continues to be prominent in public debates, political parties are gradually recognizing that they need to broaden their appeal to reach out to residents of migrant origin and to represent this new diversity in their membership and leadership. There is however an under-explored question about the set of reasons that political parties have for incorporating immigrants. Evidence shows that this question is far from being neutral, but rather responds to different political parties' strategies. From a theoretical point of view, most of the time the arguments are compared to concerns for gender equality, and assumes that immigrants, conceived as visible minorities, are comparable in criteria and arguments to the already longstanding discussion on the presence/absence of women in public life.² In this part of the debate, what is clear is that the increasing immigrant-related diversity resulting in the formation of social cleavages (such as gender and religion) alongside existing ones (e.g. social class and centre-

periphery, etc.) may not only lead to the mobilization of new collective interests and political partisanship to new social movements, but they may also demand a more direct political articulation, through existing mainstream political parties. In this framework, the seminal foundational question that we should address is “Why should immigrants be incorporated into political parties?”

As a multi-faceted process, this theoretical debate can be placed within a broader discussion of the incorporation of immigrants into public organizations (administrations and sectors such as education, police, and health services), trade unions (Penninx and Roosblad 2000), and political bodies (such as parliaments, as articulated by Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013). However political parties in the democratic system have their own distinctive features, which probably frame their own differentiated policy towards immigrants’ incorporation. It is within this particular focus that I would like to enter into greater detail.

The starting premise here is that incorporating immigrants into political parties also carries theoretical implications related to the democratic legitimacy of political parties and even to the entire political system of the state (Goodin Robert 2007; Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013, 565). After reviewing the recent literature, my general aim is to develop this premise by proposing an interpretative framework, which allows us to map out some political parties’ strategies. The current literature is so concentrated on identifying patterns and institutional mechanisms that there is an underestimated concern that this incorporation cannot be considered neutral: it, in fact, responds to certain political parties’ motivations. The theoretical problem lies in how to identify these strategies. It is at this point that I will propose four potential channels of analysis based on contrasting different actions and narratives.

But before going into detail, let me briefly draw out the premises I propose for the theoretical analysis, by conceptualizing the population I have in mind and the particular features of political parties that will help to anchor my arguments.

Premises: active immigrants and particular features of political parties

Immigrants, as newcomers, are outsiders to the political system. Among the wide range of possibilities for immigrants to be politically active, their involvement in political parties has received little theoretical attention. In order to conceptualize the given population we have in mind, I will use the notion of “active immigrants” (Zapata-Barrero and Gropas 2012). This concept emphasizes that immigrants should not be considered as passive individuals, as mere recipients of social services, or as *homo economicus* or workers, but rather as agents that participate in the country where they live. Active

immigrants have channels for influencing policy decisions and for becoming members of the political community, in spite of not yet possessing full voting or citizenship rights, and if they hold citizenship, still suffering some discrimination related to their identity and origin.³ Of course, the extent of their “active” dimension depends on several external factors that some studies examining patterns have already signalled following different theoretical frameworks, such as political opportunities structures and even features of the electoral system influencing immigrants’ participation in the political process (Michon and Vermeulen 2013). We can also here argue that parties’ strategies would also very much depend on the electoral system in the country, that is, proportional representation or majoritarian systems. It is already assumed that political opportunity structures (Koopmans et al. 2005) explain different levels of immigrants’ political participation by referring to the degree to which equal citizenship is accessible to them. To conduct theoretical considerations, we first need to foreground the particularities of political parties as public institutions within a democratic system. It is from these distinctive features that the theoretical analysis should be focused.

Political parties are crucial actors in this process. They can open or close access, use formal or/and informal routes, and even channel movement inside the organization. Current theoretical research on political partnerships also shows that political parties in Western democracies struggle with the problem of shrinking membership (White and Ypi 2011; Bader and Bonotti 2014). Their “on-the-ground” role has declined, with lower levels of trust and weaker party identifications (Wauters 2010). The question is what consequences this development has for ethnic minorities, who have weaker ties with the social and political networks of the host society. Studies also show that the pragmatic party organizations struggling with declining affiliations opt for granting more power to memberships in matters such as selection and nomination of candidates, since internal democracy is used to keep existing members or attract new ones (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010, 839). In this context, the incorporation of immigrants can be seen as having the initial potential to promote new ways of focusing diversity issues for political parties. However, this might have a backlash on the side of native party members making it a potential double-edged sword (see other contributions in this special issue).

Concerning political parties’ influence on immigrants’ political participation, party elites act as gatekeepers and facilitators (Michon and Vermeulen 2013). They frame policy discussions on accommodation of immigrants and not only reflect, but also influence public perceptions and behaviours towards them (Zapata-Barrero 2009a; Helbling 2013). Recent research has suggested that immigration is a topic that is not the preserve of extreme right-wing parties’ discourses (Alonso and Claro da Fonseca 2012). Moreover, the identification with left and right does not always explain party positions

towards ethnic minorities (Odmalm 2011). In this sense, it is difficult to argue that one given ideology is significantly more open to immigrant incorporation than another. We can even say that some political parties promote immigrant mobilization without being themselves diverse in their composition. The left does not necessarily invoke a pro-active discourse or act as a more functional facilitator of diversity incorporation. Based on empirical studies in this same Special Issue (for instance the German and Spanish case studies), we know that a pro-active narrative does not entail a more open incorporation of diversity. Ideology might explain diversity discourses and probably also accounts for differences in diversity incorporation, but not the position of political parties towards immigrant's incorporation by itself. This differentiation is connected to the usual variables of social classes and education, related to citizens' ideological preferences. We may even say how this "ideology hypothesis" can work, since we assume that the contrast between discourse and action would be different for left and right-wing parties. Probably the contrast might be narrower for the right, since considering the share of their native electorate, they can have anti-immigrant narratives both in their discourse and action. On the other hand, the left wing would pay a form of lip service to immigrant rights, but does not take concrete actions. If we take into account the differences between the mainstream left/right with the broader constituency and new left parties, it is probable that ideology and gaps between discourse and action would be also confirmed. Ideology can also work as a hypothesis in entering into the gap between leaders and party members' motivations to incorporate immigrants. To complete the picture, the current economic crisis can affect parties' stances towards active immigrants by becoming more exclusionary, as has been shown in relation to individual perceptions of the political system (Arzheimer 2009).

Political parties potentially provide a central venue for promoting active immigrants by offering a path to elected office. Necessary steps usually include becoming a member of a party organization and actively participating in the internal party work platforms in order to gain support. Since immigrants are rather seldom members of political parties, they have few opportunities to influence internal deliberations and the drafting of policies. The contrast between political discourse and internal action drives an instrumental logic that tries to deal with immigrants' incorporation without losing potential voters and that even tries to reach more voters through a pro-active discourse. Political parties following this approach are aware that the politics of making differences visible can have a direct effect on voting preferences.

Given these premises, the context is also an important factor to take into account, since political parties know also that immigrant incorporation is not without effects on electoral outcomes. The motivation to "seduce" immigrants by incorporating them into the party organizations is never without a political calculation. Moreover, what happens before and after elections may

affect the political position towards ethnic minorities even more than the actual election results. Political parties face distinct choices over the strategies they could pursue to increase the number of immigrants in their ranks.

Review: Two closely related challenges for political parties: political participation and representation

In this section, I identify two main drivers within this particular debate: participation and representation. The initial argument is this: offering opportunities for participation and representation to immigrants and to citizens with migrant backgrounds in party politics is an essential element for making them active in the democratic system. Even though these two topics are intertwined, they tend to have a separate set of debates within migration studies.

We point out two main reasons why *participation* is central. First, political participation offers immigrants the opportunity to influence the outcomes of the decision-making processes and thereby to defend their particular interests as immigrants in general or as members of a specific national group. Second, participation in commonly binding decisions may have a “socializing” function, in terms of enriching immigrants’ feelings of belonging and of shared identity. Research in European cities has found that the political participation of individual immigrants seems to depend largely on the involvement of immigrants in ethnic and/or cross-ethnic organizations (the so called group-resource based approach), which is usually replaced in the debates that come from the initial class-based perspectives (Yalaz 2015).

There is an emerging debate around institutional mechanisms and patterns of immigrant incorporation,⁴ which illustrates that there is not one unique factor explaining incorporation, but that the reality is multidimensional and sometimes quite paradoxical and problematic, as has been demonstrated by Vermeulen, Michon, and Tillie (2014) in their Amsterdam case study. They illustrate, for instance, that groups with a high organizational density may explain incorporation but this does not mean that they are always those who are the most influential.

One of the main questions guiding the literature concerns the relationship between effective political participation and the integration process, which can be assumed when immigrants decide to join political parties. Today, it is widely recognized that immigrants have become important political stakeholders.⁵ They can tip the balance in favour of a political party or of a specific policy, as has happened with Cubans or Hispanics in the US, for example. There are also some works on the voting behaviour of ethnic minorities, which show that sometimes immigrants go from block voting to social voting (that is, all immigrants voting the same as their community does, and then immigrants spreading across the existing society’s cleavages, normally left-right).⁶

There are other arguments as well, including that put forward by Bloemraad and Schönwälder (2013, 565). Selecting ethnic minorities might increase a party's attraction, in the eyes of potential citizen voters with immigrant backgrounds, or it might even encourage them to vote for the first time, since we know that active immigrant candidates tend to increase voter turnout (Voicu and Comşa 2014). At the parliamentary level, for example, there is evidence supporting an effect of "empowerment": as the percentage of state legislators with minority backgrounds grew, voting in U.S.A. among African Americans and Latinos increased between 10 per cent and 40 per cent (Rocha et al. 2010).

If we continue with explanatory factors that are "immigrant-specific", Martiniello (2005) points out that rational choice or self-identification and a feeling of belonging in the host country are primary reasons given as to why an immigrant participates in the political sphere. Furthermore, socio-economic theories confirm that participation also depends on issues such as income and education (Portes and Rumbaut 2006), together with knowledge of the political system, political socialization and re-socialization, previous involvement in politics, social capital, and density of social networks (Jones-Correa 1998; White et al. 2008; De Rooij 2012), and these factors are probably shared with the citizen population. Some authors have identified language competencies and access to reliable information as additional variables (Rumbaut 1999), while other scholars particularly emphasize the mode of migration, the length of stay, and their "structural" (or socio-economic) position in the receiving country (Landolt 2008). Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009, 16) illustrate that political incorporation is a non-linear process involving at least three distinctive stages: entry into political arena, involvement in political parties, and responsiveness of the political system. It is also relevant to consider immigrants' participation in voluntary and self-organized associations, as well as political consultation and structures of representation. These have been set up as compensatory systems in situations where formal political rights are not granted, in order to channel immigrant claims through consultative and advisory bodies (Zapata-Barrero et al. 2013).

Political representation of immigrants has been an underdeveloped subject in migration studies. The starting premise here is that even if immigrants' concerns do not necessarily need to be represented within politics, the lack of immigrant-related diversity in political parties is by itself a policy narrative of exclusion. The literature on representation needs to take the case of ethnic minorities more seriously, not only because of their numerical presence, but also because their experiences require amendments to existing analytical frameworks. The core notion of representation denotes the act of "speaking up" and of acting in the best interests of the constituents who voted for a specific political party. From this core meaning, we can here use analytically the well-known distinction between descriptive and substantive representation (Pitkin 1967), and the so-called "politics of presence" (Phillips

1995), which has been mainly developed within gender studies (Wängnerud 2009). Of course, the fact that representatives have a certain ethnic background does not necessarily mean that they represent this particular group. They may have other political identities that are more important for their political activities. People often vote for a representative based on their principles, ideals, and/or action plans in the community. However, citizens also tend to vote for a representative based on personal traits, such as charisma, physical appearance and even ethnicity, and religious beliefs.⁷ This is where the analytical function of descriptive versus substantive representation enters into the discussion's forum. *Descriptive representation* means that elected members mirror the composition of the society, regardless of the objectives and ideals they pursue. For our case, that would mean that members from a migrant background are (proportionally) present in institutions. *Substantive representation* would be the tendency to vote, through an informed process, for someone who defends the thoughts, ideals, and principles that you, as a citizen, want to see safeguarded. For example, even though I am not an immigrant or religious person, I am very concerned as a citizen that the cultural and religious rights of individuals are respected, and I want to ensure that they are safe, regardless of my different background. Hence, I would vote for a candidate with ideas similar to mine to ensure that this happens, even if I am an atheist or from another religious belief.

From a theoretical point of view, we can argue that this lack of descriptive and substantive representation could actually increase political alienation among immigrants (Pantoja and Segura 2003). Therefore, it has been stated that for active immigrants to be able to channel their claims, they would need to organize themselves within collective bodies (associations), as this would lead to the development of a larger pool of representatives. Such bodies would thereby create a sufficient critical mass to be invited to regular meetings with relevant political committees (Morales and Giugni 2010).

In addition to these first considerations, it is true there is an emerging conceptual and empirical field addressing the representation of ethnic minorities in Europe, mostly in primary political institutions (mainly in parliaments: Bird, Saalfeld, and Wüst 2011; Bloemraad 2013). From this particular approach, there is a shared concern that existing research on representation should be extended to accommodate the needs of active immigrants (Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013). The inclusion of politicians with migrant backgrounds as visible representatives or "spokespersons" on immigration issues does not necessarily mean that their experience as immigrants – which might differ from the mainstream of the party's members – will also be included at an equal level. An inclusion beyond mere symbolism means to challenge dominant discourses and to establish power relations within parties, along with the inclusion of different voices and experiences into parties' discourses (e.g.

experiences of being a refugee or of discrimination). In this framework, Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009, 22) say that politicians from migrant backgrounds face a classic dilemma. Must the elected representatives work on behalf of what they supposedly represent or not, or should they show favouritism towards their group and work for other political parties' interests? Quota systems, party lists, and multi-member constituencies have been identified as important factors in explaining variation in a minority's political representation, especially for women (Norris 1997); these systems are posited to provide more opportunities for ethnic minorities to participate in, and gain access to, the system by getting representatives of their group elected relatively easily.⁸

Interpretative framework mapping out different political parties' strategies

One of the first substantial questions we need to address before entering into the theoretical discussion is probably, "How to identify the different political parties' strategies to incorporate immigrants and running them for office?" Based on the literature review, I propose an interpretative framework comprising four channels of analysis.

How to identify strategies? Four potential channels of analysis

There are at least four potential channels allowing us to identify political parties' strategies for incorporating immigrants. These channels are used in different degrees both in most of the research we have already reviewed and in the different case studies of this Special Issue. I will follow a *contrast-based approach* to describe each channel. By "contrasts" I mean differences and contradictions among determinate ways of dealing with immigration-related diversity by the same political party. Assuming the premise that the incorporation of immigrants is always a motivated decision, the way to identify these strategies becomes a theoretical challenge before conducting empirical research. The argument is that each "contrast" can ground a focus capable of generating an understanding of political parties' strategies for incorporating immigrants.

Channel of analysis 1: Contrasting the discourse and the action of political parties: We can first argue that political parties already know a lot about why it is important to incorporate immigrants into their organizations. The challenge remains to find out the surprising variety of reasons usually invoked, by both the left and the right, to justify the general mismatch between their discourses and their actual practices. Given the distinctive features of political parties as democratic institutions, they can be analysed by what they say (political discourse) and by what they do (political action); or,

to cultivate theoretical thinking, they can be analysed by comparing the coherence between their own narrative on immigration and their own action towards immigrant incorporation into their ranks. Immigration can be seen instrumentally as a topic framing the politics of building a narrative (Zapata-Barrero 2009b), but there is not necessarily a correlation between the pro-active discourse of immigrants and immigration incorporation. We may also ask how does incorporation of diversity influence programming and policy change? As we have already separated discourse from action, we need now to separate action from discourse. As is shown in the other contributions of this Special Issue, the fact that political parties make explicit the incorporation of immigrants does not guarantee that they will automatically incorporate more inclusive policies into their integration and citizenship programmes, not even on “hot” issues related to border management and migration policies.

Channel of analysis 2: Contrasting actors’ motivations. Theoretical thinking can also be anchored in the comparison of several sets of motivations, according first to two main actors: *political parties* and *immigrants*. From a game theory perspective, which analyses motivations in terms of individual-based or group-based interests, we can say that the reasons for political parties differ from the reasons for immigrants seeking/accepting incorporation. Immigrants can have individual objectives (such as individual promotion and recognition) or group-based ones (such as the representation of the diversity of immigrants, in general, or a unified self-perception of their community of origin). As we know, the strategic logic of action of political parties forces them to take into account the likely effects on their current voters’ preferences. This is why we also need to consider that there are at least three potential differentiated motivations within political parties – we may distinguish between the motivations of leaders, members, and voters. Immigrant benefits could include visibility, both within political parties, towards their own members, and externally, towards voters. These three sets of motivations might also contrast within the same party structure. Then we may also argue that the structure of the political party (hierarchical and leader-based versus democratic and consensual-based) would matter in terms of whether they are opening the doors for immigrants. Has immigrant incorporation had a positive or a negative effect on keeping current followers? Has it increased or changed voters’ preferences? Strategic analysis must take into account these sets of motivations and should generate arguments from the fact that, despite certain differences in motives, there is an objective coincidence in the actions of both set of actors that deserves empirical analysis.

Channel of analysis 3: Contrasting diversity categories. This involves a justification of differentiated treatment of diversity categories. The focus combines here migration and diversity studies, as we have seen in some research in the previous review. In migration studies, the social construction of the category

of “immigrant” is currently debated under the paradigm of super-diversity, indicating the complexity of these modes of differentiation in a single person (Vertovec 2007). Given the scope of the analysis, the importance of justifying why “immigrant” or “ethnic minority” is a relevant category within diversity studies perhaps warrants greater discussion.

In traditional diversity debates, there are many alternative modes of differentiation, such as gender, skin colour or race, class, income, educational background, (dis)ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, and more.⁹ In specific institutions or organizations, choices are always made by focusing on certain modes of differentiation and not on others. For example, current European Union thinking focuses on sex (gender), race and ethnicity, disability, age, religion, and sexual orientation (Phillips 2008). Without wishing to enter into the details on how diversity categories are socially and politically constructed, the basic argument here is that there are meaningful, group-based categories (Brubaker 2002) that can have a descriptive and an explanatory function in terms of the “diversity gap”.

What is interesting from these debates is how to understand the ranking among categories. From this perspective, some key questions arise: Can the challenge of the underrepresentation of immigrants in political parties be understood in a similar way to the underrepresentation of women?¹⁰ And if so, why? What criteria should be considered for selecting potential immigrant candidates? And how many? Are quotas justified in the case of immigrants? Can the classification of candidates along the lines of nationality, language or religion be accepted without being treated as racist? Why do other categories of diversity (such as ability, sexuality, social class categories, or sector-oriented profiles) not receive special attention to engage them in the activities of a party?

Statistics show that “immigrant”, as such, is a category of discrimination and of negative perception. It can thus help to make some inequalities in society visible (Simon and Victor 2012). It is not a status one has by birth (i.e. it is not a primary mode of differentiation), but it is a juridical and a political category that becomes, through its use, a social one. To put it simply, it is our own political institutions that define who is an immigrant, and it is our own political body that decides who becomes citizens or deserve this status. But the immigrant category does not disappear from citizenship rank and can follow the life of the person for perhaps several generations or even forever, if the political distinction tends to naturalize differences (Modood 1998). At this stage some countries, such as Canada and Québec, use the notion of “visible minorities” (Labelle and Rocher 2009). This attempt to align whatever personal differences with genetics, as though it were hereditary, is one of the features of the immigrant category that needs to be addressed.

Channel of analysis 4: Contrasting mobilization and incorporation. Theoretically, the incorporation of immigrants into political parties can be a logical consequence of immigrants' claims for justice and equality.¹¹ I would even say it is consubstantial with the claims by immigrant social movements. As we know from the literature on political participation, immigrants can use different formal and informal channels to formulate their claims. The incorporation into political parties can be interpreted as an unexplored channel in this trend of debate. Following this particular focus, the theoretical question concerns why incorporation would benefit third-country nationals. Why is this argument legitimate, and can it be a request or even a claim for social movement? To answer this question, let me differentiate between political parties' mobilization and incorporation of immigrants. There can be political parties that have strategies to mobilize immigrants and immigrant associations, but this does not entail that they would necessarily incorporate them. There can be, then, a particular gap between political party mobilization-promotion and immigrant incorporation that deserves empirical thinking and help to analyse their strategies. Most political parties could reproduce the same structural difficulties existing in society for social mobility in the promotion of immigrants, once incorporated. We will situate ourselves in relation to both immigrant-incorporation policies coming from political parties, and to particular or group intentions coming from immigrants alone or as group representatives. We are, then, addressing how to justify intentional diversity policies and actions to attract immigrants into political parties.

One argument that political parties often make is that immigrant communities who can access political rights do not use them, which is empirically confirmed by the low rates of electoral registration (see for instance Xu 2005). They use this to argue that political rights might present an overvalued issue by certain political and academic elites, without actually corresponding to people's interests. Along similar lines, political parties tend to argue that immigrants who are able to access political rights do not actually make full usage of such rights. This would prove that what really interests immigrants is the effective access to social and economic rights, since these have the greatest impact on their daily lives.

This channel of analysis also assumes that political parties are more concerned about mobilization rather than incorporation; it is more about the discourse and narrative, rather than giving immigrants enough room for internal promotion and mobility to reach decision-making power. Indeed, this is one of the first lines of research that looks at the mobilizing capacity of disadvantaged groups, notably their social capital and the existing civic infrastructures.¹² Currently, there are already several seminal empirical analyses contrasting incorporation and influence within the political parties. That is, political presence (access to political parties and political system, ability to participate in the political process and to be represented) and political weight

(power and influence in political system, rank with political hierarchy and ability to make political decisions), does not necessarily coincide, as has been shown by Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008, 21) and some of the contributions in this Special Issue.

Concluding remarks: diversity incorporation diversity-incorporation and political parties' utilitarianism

What has been assumed in this review article, and will also be supposed in the different contributions of this Special Issue, is that the utilitarian logic prevails over any argument based on democratic equality and power sharing. The main theoretical challenge is to detect the presence and the degree of utilitarianism through different channels of analysis. We have here proposed four potential routes.

The interpretative framework offered in the previous sections may obviously require deeper elaboration, but this is a first step in motivating further empirical research. This is a way to attest that the framework of analysis based on the "diversity gap" in political parties could be a fruitful particular field of research within migration studies. The different case studies of this Special Issue show that the "diversity gap" generates a multiform web of political calculations. All the contributions try to identify patterns, through a comparative perspective of the political system of the country and structural restraints, to understand what the factors that contribute to narrowing this gap are and what others contribute to widening it. All these issues will be approached in different degrees in the following case studies.

Notes

1. There is, of course, an immense amount of literature on this field of research, which will be cited in various places throughout this article. See also: Lahav (1997), Bäck and Soininen (1998), Koopmans and Statham (2000), Fennema and Tillie (1999, 2001), Triandafyllidou (2000), Wodak and van Dijk (2000), González-Ferrer (2010), Morales and Giugni (2010), Zapata-Barrero and Triandafyllidou (2012), Ramiro and Morales (2014), Korkut et al. (2013) and Helbling (2013).
2. Seminal works within gender studies are following this particular focus and some even do comparisons by applying gender arguments to ethnic minorities. These belong to the new politics of equality/presence following the focus on the need to recognise differences. On gender studies, among the most influential, see: Phillips (1995), (1998, 2008), Young (1990, 2002), Gould (1996), Mansbridge (1999, 2003), Krook and O'Brien (2010) and Squires (2013). Comparing gender and immigration, see some interesting empirical works written by Norris and Joni (1995), Jones-Correa (1998), Dovi (2002), Htun (2004), Celis and Erzeel (2013), Hardy-Fanta (2013) and Celis et al. (2014).
3. We will consider a wide concept of immigrant, including naturalised and non-naturalised migrants.

4. See, among the seminal works, Jacobs, Phalet, and Swyngedouw (2004), Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008), Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009) and Michon and Vermeulen (2013).
5. However with gradual terms depending on the inclusive citizenship laws of the country. It has been shown that as countries liberalize their citizenship regimes, immigrants increasingly become important political stakeholders (González-Ferrer and Morales 2013; Hochschild et al. 2013).
6. See Mollenkopf and Hochschild (2010), Sobolewska (2013) and Zapata-Barrero et al. (2013).
7. On voting behaviour and immigration patterns, see Bird, Saalfeld, and Wüst (2011). An interesting analysis in Brussels can be found in Teney et al. (2010)
8. See, among others, Banducci, Donovan, and Karp Jeffrey (2004), Bird (2005) and Bird, Saalfeld, and Wüst (2011).
9. See, for instance, Young (1990), Griggs (1995), Litvin (1997), Anthias (2002), Vertovec and Wessendorf (2006) and Faist (2009).
10. Recent studies include Krook and O'Brien (2010), Celis (2013) and Celis et al. (2014). See also references in note 2.
11. Of course, as we have seen and has also been addressed, this causality might not be so straightforward. It might also show the willingness of political parties to represent themselves as diverse bodies or they might engage in “window dressing” by including some immigrants in their membership (Hochschild et al. 2013). In this case, we also consider incorporation as a process rather than an outcome (Martiniello 2005; Zapata-Barrero et al. 2013)
12. See, for instance, Fennema and Tillie (2001), Jacobs and Tillie (2004), Jacobs, Phalet, and Swyngedouw (2004), Morales and Giugni (2010), Tillie (2004) and Vermeulen (2006).

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