

Candidate Selection in a Multilevel State: the Case of Spain

Guillermo Cordero, Antonio M Jaime-Castillo, and Xavier Coller

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Following the [instructions of SAGE Publications](#), we warn that this is an Accepted Manuscript (AM) version of the article (version 2). This article has been accepted for publication appears in a revised form, subsequent to peer review and editorial input by the American Behavioral Scientist.

Details of the publication:

Cordero, G., Jaime-Castillo, A.M, and Coller, X. 2016. "Candidate Selection in a Multilevel State: the Case of Spain". **American Behavioral Scientist**. doi:10.1177/0002764216632823. [\[Link to the SAGE website address for the Article\]](#)

Candidate Selection in a Multilevel State: the Case of Spain¹

Guillermo Cordero¹, Antonio M Jaime-Castillo², and Xavier Coller³

Abstract

The intra-party mechanisms for MPs selection has been only partially analyzed by the literature. Most works focus on parties' written rules regarding the selection of candidates for the national chamber(s). However, party statutes hide these mainly informal procedures. In this paper we analyze how candidate selection is implemented in parties using survey data for a representative sample of 580 MPs, completed with 58 in-depth interviews of MPs and gatekeepers. With this data we analyze how the selection of candidates is implemented in a multi-level democracy such as Spain.

Keywords

candidate selection, multilevel states, elite selection, parliaments, Spain

The way candidates are selected for electoral lists have an impact on different aspects of the political process: representation and representativeness (Dalton, 1985; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995; Spies & Kaiser, 2014), party cohesion (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Bowler *et al.*, 1999; Carey, 2007; Cordero & Coller, 2015), electoral behavior (Cross & Blais, 2012; Kenig, 2008), and the stability of governments and institutions (Morlino, 1995; Gallagher *et al.*, 2001; Rahat & Hazan, 2010). Rahat and Hazan (2001) introduce a distinction between the

¹ Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain.

² Universidad de Málaga, Málaga, Spain.

³ Universidad Pablo Olavide, Sevilla, Spain.

Corresponding Author:

Guillermo Cordero, Department of Political Science, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Marie Curie 1, 28040 Madrid, Spain. Email: guillermo.cordero@uam.es

degree of centralization and inclusiveness in candidate selection depending on the number of people participating in decisions (party affiliates in one extreme and a qualified group of them in the other) and the territorial/organic level where decisions are taken. The extent to which this model holds needs to be empirically tested in different settings.

The combination of a widespread trend towards open ways of selecting party candidates since the beginning of the century (Hopkin, 2001)² and the continuous territorial devolution provide an adequate setting to test the model put forward by Rahat and Hazan. The problem is that while the literature dealing with candidate selection usually focus on party and electoral rules, few researchers attempt at finding out the informal mechanisms driving the selection process (Fujimura, 2012; Bermúdez & Cordero, 2014; Cordero & Coller, 2015). As Gallagher (1988a: 5) put it, “formal *de jure* rules may not reflect the *de facto* and informal process; there are likely to be multiple processes and therefore no individual or body may actually control the process”. Being one of the most important elements for democracy, the way candidates are internally selected is still ‘the secret garden of politics’ (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Cross & Blasis, 2012).

Following Ranney (1981: 75), candidate selection is “the predominantly extra-legal process by which a political party decides which of the persons legally eligible to hold an elective public office will be designated on the ballot”. With the information provided by a representative sample of 580 personal interviews carried out between 2009 and 2011³ among Spanish national and regional MPs, we describe how informal (and formal) selection processes take place in the Spanish parties, focusing on the relationship between decentralization and exclusiveness. Decentralization crystallizes in transferring power from the national party headquarters to the local affiliates and sympathizers (Detterbeck, 2013; Shomer, 2014). However, as argued by some previous works, decentralization in candidate selection in federal and quasi-federal countries may transfer the power from the national leaders to the regional or local leaders rather than to rank and file affiliates. Although this pattern has not been empirically demonstrated from a comparative perspective, some case studies point to a positive relationship between decentralization and exclusiveness in candidate selection (Cox, 1999; Hopkin, 2003; Hazan & Rahat, 2006). With this empirical

study, we take Spain as a case of a constellation of similar decentralized countries with a number of entry points in institutional politics. Findings in this case may be applicable to other similar cases and contrasted to different, centralized ones.

The article is organized as follows. In the next section we describe the case of Spain, focusing on its structural and contextual specificities affecting candidate selection. The arguments and hypotheses are shown in the third section. The fourth section describes the data used in this paper. The results are discussed in the fifth section, and in the last section the main findings and contributions are discussed.

The Case of Spain

Spain is a country that successfully completed the transition to democracy from an authoritarian regime (1939-77) and, at the same time, created a new territorial structure based on the decentralization of the State. The 1978 Constitution created a political arrangement called by experts a “quasi-federal State”, “asymmetrical federalism” or “imperfect federalism” based on the unequal transferring of powers to regional governments and the creation of regional structures of legislative, executive and judiciary power together with their respective bureaucracies (Linz, 1989; Moreno, 1997; Lijphart, 1999). As an institutional innovation of asymmetric federalism, the *Estado de las Autonomías* (the State of the autonomous communities) has had three major political effects with relevant consequences for candidate selection.

Firstly, a new layer of legislative power has been created over the years. There are 17 regional chambers (one per each autonomous community) ranging in size from 33 seats (La Rioja) to 135 seats (Catalonia). Since the first regional elections in 1980 to the ones in 2015, there have been 10,160 seats open for electoral competition in the autonomies.⁴ This new level of power has become an incentive for statewide parties to regionalize over the years their internal structure and for the emergence of new regional parties seeing a window of opportunity for political action in regional chambers, although they are also present in the national ones.

Secondly, and as a consequence, there is no single party system in Spain, but a national one and some regional party systems with their own peculiarities (Gunther *et al.*, 2004; Lago and Montero, 2007). The combination of democratization and decentralization, and the constitutional provision (art. 6) indicating that parties are key elements for political participation, have fostered the emergence of strong national parties⁵ with a key role in regional chambers, and strong regional parties playing a relevant role both in regional and national politics. For instance, several national minority governments of PSOE and PP have relied repeatedly on regional parties (CiU, PNV and CC, mainly) to pass relevant legislation, while it is not unusual that regional branches of statewide parties support or participate in regional governments with regional parties (PNV, ERC, BNG, CC, UV, PAR).⁶ Regions with a special constitutional status like Galicia, Basque Country, Catalonia, and others like Navarre, have developed a fragmented multiparty party system with a higher Effective Number of Parties (ENP) than others.⁷

Thirdly, the provision of candidates to compete for European, national, regional and local elections has made the selection of candidates a major function of the political process. The combination of the electoral system and the institutional incentives for the regionalization of politics have given regional ‘selectorates’ (in both, regional and national parties) a leverage for the selection of candidates and the elaboration of electoral lists. The electoral system combines a threshold (between 3 and 5 per cent in most of the chambers), electoral districts based on the 52 provinces for national and regional elections (with few exceptions), closed and blocked electoral lists (except for the Senate), and the D’Hondt formula to convert votes into seats. The main effect of this electoral system is a low level of fragmentation producing stable governments most of the times (Montero, Lago & Torcal, 2006). Two elements should be highlighted in this regard. Firstly, closed and blocked electoral lists confer enormous power to the parties to select candidates and consequently decide who will seat in a representative chamber. Therefore, those having power and influence in the parties become gatekeepers for representative institutions. Secondly, since the province is the electoral district for national and regional elections, provincial and regional leaders are granted with some leverage for candidate selection. These are political

actors that emerge as crucial elements for the functioning of the electoral machinery and the selection of candidates, promoting the emergence of local or regional oligarchies that may have incentives to avoid control by the center.

Thus, Spain can be considered a case of a constellation of similar multilevel democracies where institutional incentives for decentralization combined with the electoral system has promoted the emergence of new actors playing a key role in the selection of politicians. Given the territorial cleavage, it is expected then that the selection of candidates will be decentralized but not necessarily inclusive. Becoming a centerpiece of the political system and having effects on the quality of democracy, is striking that we know so little about the selection of candidates and the lack of empirical research on this topic. To shed some light on the nature of the selection of candidates in Spain, we pay attention to how formal and informal mechanisms interact to produce electoral lists.

Inclusiveness and Decentralization

Our starting point is the distinction made in Rahat and Hazan (2001) and Hazan and Rahat (2010) between exclusiveness and centralization in candidate selection. While exclusiveness refers to the smaller -exclusive- or greater -inclusive- number of people involved in candidate selection in a given party,⁸ centrality refers to the territorial level where this decision is taken, commonly ranging from the local level -very decentralized- to the national level -very centralized.⁹ The main goal of this paper is to analyze the extent to which territorial decentralization has generated more or less decentralized practices and, in parallel, more or less exclusive ways of candidate selection in Spain. .

Different works have pointed out the relationships between territorial decentralization, party decentralization and decentralization in candidate selection (Hermens, 1972; Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Rahat & Hazan, 2001). In federal and quasi-federal countries the role of the national party organization is usually insignificant (Lundell, 2004: 34). Following this argument, we expect candidate selection in Spain to be decentralized, without a significant role for the national elites, especially in regional chambers (H1).

Although decentralization narrows the distance between the elite and the electorate, it does not necessarily generate more participative practices in candidate selection. In fact, as previous works have argued –although, to our knowledge, not yet empirically tested– centralization and exclusiveness in candidate selection do not go necessarily hand in hand (Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Bowler et al., 1999; van Houten, 2009). In the words of Rahat and Hazan, ‘decentralization could mean only that control of candidate selection has passed from the national to a local oligarchy’ (2010: 54). Therefore we expect that in multilevel States, regional leaders will play a decisive role in selecting candidates at the expense of both, national leaders and party affiliates. For these reasons, we expect more exclusive ways of candidate selection precisely in regional chambers and also in regionalist and nationalist parties (H2). Alternatively, it could be argued, following Katz and Mair (1995), that the empowerment of the heterogeneous regional party branches in candidate selection has, in return, given more power to the centralized and better organized national party elites (H2a).

Ideology might be a key variable when explaining the internal practices of parties and yet, the effects of the ideology on candidate selection have been only partially studied Lundell (2004: 32). If a party relies on close connections with social organizations, trade unions and social movements a greater openness of candidate selection could be expected since some of these organizations can become avenues for participation in institutional politics (Rahat and Hazan, 2001). This is what usually happens in Spain with leftist parties (IU and PSOE), while center-right parties are less connected to social movements or organizations and closer to professional and business associations (Coller 2008), incorporating a more hierarchical organizational structure. Therefore, we expect ideology to have an impact on candidate selection in both the centralization and inclusiveness dimensions (H3).

Inclusive and decentralized mechanisms in candidate selection are formally articulated in parties’ statutes, which are the documents that have usually been the main resource in the analysis of the field.¹⁰ Parties regulate their selection mechanisms in a great detail, given its importance for the party life—for some authors, candidate selection is one of the major function of parties as institutions (Norris and Lovenduski, 1997; Spies and Kaiser, 2014). There is a widespread trend to open the candidate selection processes that has

an effect on the increasing social heterogeneity of parliaments (Bille, 2001; Norris, 2006; Best & Cotta, 2000; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006, Coller, 2008). In Spain, these trends are listed in every party's statute for both, the regional and national chambers (Coller, Cordero & Echavarren, 2016). Despite the process of internal democratization and inclusiveness, the most participative mechanisms of candidate selection are usually circumscribed to the head of the list, but do not apply to the remaining candidates (Méndez-Lago, 2000; Hopkin, 2001). Furthermore, although the largest parties in Spain select their representatives in a -more or less- inclusive way, the final word is the hands of the central and exclusive parties' leaderships.

The most exclusive and centralized party in selecting candidates is the center-right People's Party (Partido Popular, PP), which does not provide local mechanisms of participation. Its *National Electoral Committee* has the final say in the approval of the lists for the national and also the regional chambers. The United Left (Izquierda Unida, IU, articulated around the Communist Party) neither has mechanisms of participation at the local level and, as the case of the PP, the final say is on the national level, at the *Political Federal Council*. These central agencies in each party have veto power in the design of the lists to the regional and national chambers. On the contrary, the affiliates of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) are active members in the process of candidate selection, proposing candidates. Then, the *Provincial Executive Commission* (also at the local level) designs the lists. Despite the centralization of these mechanisms, the *National Executive Commission* and the *Federal Committee* (both at the national level) have also veto power in the approval of the lists. Lastly, nationalist parties also regulate their formal mechanisms of candidate selection with decentralized procedures, although these are always centrally controlled from specific party agencies.¹¹

Generally speaking, party rules place a high leverage in the hands of central bodies in most major parties in Spain, generating thus oligarchies with strong power over the selection process and, thus, having an impact on the quality of democracy. However, party rules do not necessarily reflect the informal practices behind candidate selection as different

authors have pointed out.⁴ Beneath formal structures, the informal and latent mechanisms and practices developed in these parties are realities that we try to –at least partially- unveil in this paper. For this, we will focus on data provided by a survey to a representative sample of MPs.

Data and Methods

In this work we use data from the Spanish *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS, Study 2827). The study was carried out between 2009 and 2011, with survey data for 580 regional and national Spanish MP’s (Coller *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, we use a set of 58 qualitative interviews conducted between 2014 and 2015 in which privileged observers—MPs and gatekeepers— were asked about the internal and subjective mechanisms of candidate selection.

Two sets of dependent variables have been selected to analyze to what extent MPs candidate selection mechanisms are decentralized and inclusive. Firstly, inclusiveness is measured as the extent to which MPs indicate a low (1) or a high (7) relevance of the party affiliates in the elaboration of the electoral lists for their chamber. The second set of dependent variables refers to the degree of centralization in candidate selection. The interviewees were asked about the relevance of the national, regional and local party leaders on the elaboration of the electoral lists for their chamber, ranging from 1 ‘No relevant’ to 7 ‘Very relevant’. With this information we are able to describe from first-hand informers how candidate selection is managed in the Spanish parties, from the most decentralized pole (local) to the most centralized one (national).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables Included in the Models

	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Relevance of the Party Affiliates (inclusive)	577	3.39	1.85	1	7

⁴ Gallagher & Marsh, 1988; Gallagher, 1988; Hopkin, 2001; Katz, 2001; Pilet & Cross, 2014; Cordero & Coller, 2016).

Relevance of the National elite (centralized)	518	4.02	2.17	1	7
Relevance of the Regional elite	572	5.91	1.36	1	7
Relevance of the Local elite (decentralized)	577	4.34	1.65	1	7
Male	580	0.60	0.49	0	1
Age	576	49.05	9.74	26	84
Relatives in politics	578	0.47	0.50	0	1
Number of legislatures in Chamber	580	2.09	1.31	1	8
National Chambers (vs. Regional Chambers)	580	0.23	0.42	0	1
State Wide Parties (vs. Regional Parties)	580	0.81	0.39	0	1
Average Party Ideology (1=Left; 10=right)	578	4.48	1.24	2	6

Source: CIS Database, Study 2827. Data available at www.cis.es

In order to test our hypotheses, two institutional independent variables have been selected. Firstly, the type of chamber, distinguishing between national (Congress and Senate) and regional (the chambers of the Autonomous Communities). According to our hypotheses, more exclusive and decentralized -specifically, at the regional level, given the process of devolution- candidate selection procedures should be found in the regional parliaments. Secondly, we will analyze to what extent State wide parties and regional parties have developed different strategies on candidate selection. We expect that regional parties have followed their own process of decentralization giving relevance to the local level (Coller, Cordero & Echavarren, 2016).

Party ideology is included as an additional explanatory variable in our models. It is measured as the average of the ideological position of their deputies. As discussed in the previous section, we expect more centralized and exclusive procedures of candidate selection in right-wing parties than in left-wing parties. Additionally, we control for basic sociodemographic characteristics of MPs: gender, age, experience (measured through the number of legislatures in the chamber) and having relatives in politics. Given the legal existence of gender quotas, we expect central selectorates to play a role in selecting women to create electoral lists. Also, since experience may be an issue to the elaboration of lists, experienced MPs will not be selected by central selectorates vis-à-vis regional or local ones. Since experience and age usually go together, we expect a similar behavior in this variable

We use Ordinary Least Squares in our four models. The standard errors are clustered at party level due to the hierarchical structure of our data (with information at individual and party level). We do not use a random effects specification for two different reasons. First, we have a very small number of parties, which leaves no room for using random intercept or random slopes models. Moreover, we have the whole population of Spanish political parties instead of a sample of them.

Findings and Discussion

In Figure 1 we report the distribution of answers to the questions about the relative relevance of party affiliates (inclusiveness), as well as the relevance of national, regional and local party leaders (centralization). In general, MPs understand that the affiliates are not decisive in the selection of the parliamentary elite. The average importance given to the affiliates (3.39, with a standard deviation of 1.85) is lower than the remaining variables (national, regional and local leaders). This result points to the exclusive nature of these processes, in which the influence of the rank-and-file members of the Spanish parties is rather weak. However, the emergence of social demands for greater participation in politics—endorsed by movements such as the 15-M, has also opened a debate about how parties select their candidates. These changes are very present in our additional 58 in-depth interviews to MPs and gatekeepers, conducted between 2014 and 2015. According to an MP of a left-wing party linked to social movements “[The social changes since 15M] will change the functioning of parties. To what extent and at what pace? That is the enigma. But obviously it will change things. At this point, it is a matter of changing or dying”. Parties such as Podemos and Ciudadanos have implemented extremely participative and innovative methods for candidate selection. However, as the literature demonstrates, horizontal mechanisms of selection reinforce the power of the party elite. Rank-and-file members have less capacity to coordinate an alternative, especially in parties with a strong and charismatic leadership. An MP of one of these new parties highlights the importance of visibility to gain support within the primary processes: “My inclusion in the list was possible (...) because I had been to several TV debates and different events.” These deputies argue that their newly established dynamics have not

generated mechanisms of power sharing between party families, sectorial interests or regional elites.

Regarding decentralization, regional party leaders are the most influential group in the selection process, which is in line with our expectations, because of the prevalence of the regional level in Spanish politics. The average relevance of regional party leaders on candidate selection is 5.91 with standard deviation 1.36; almost 70% of MPs give a relevance of 6 or 7 to regional leaders. Even more importantly, the local level of party governance is quite relevant in the selection of candidates with average 4.34 and standard deviation 1.65. In contrast, national party leaders are shown as the less relevant level in the selection process, which is in line with Lundell's findings (2004), who argues that national party leaders are expected to play a minor role in territorially decentralized countries. The average relevance of national leaders is 4.02 with standard deviation 2.17. Interestingly, the distribution of responses in this item is not single-picked, as it has two peaks at both ends of the scale. It means that opinions of MPs are polarized about the relevance of national leaders in the selection process, as 32.6% believe that national leaders are hardly relevant (1-2), while 31.7% believe that national party leaders are very relevant (6-7) and the other third lies somewhere in between.

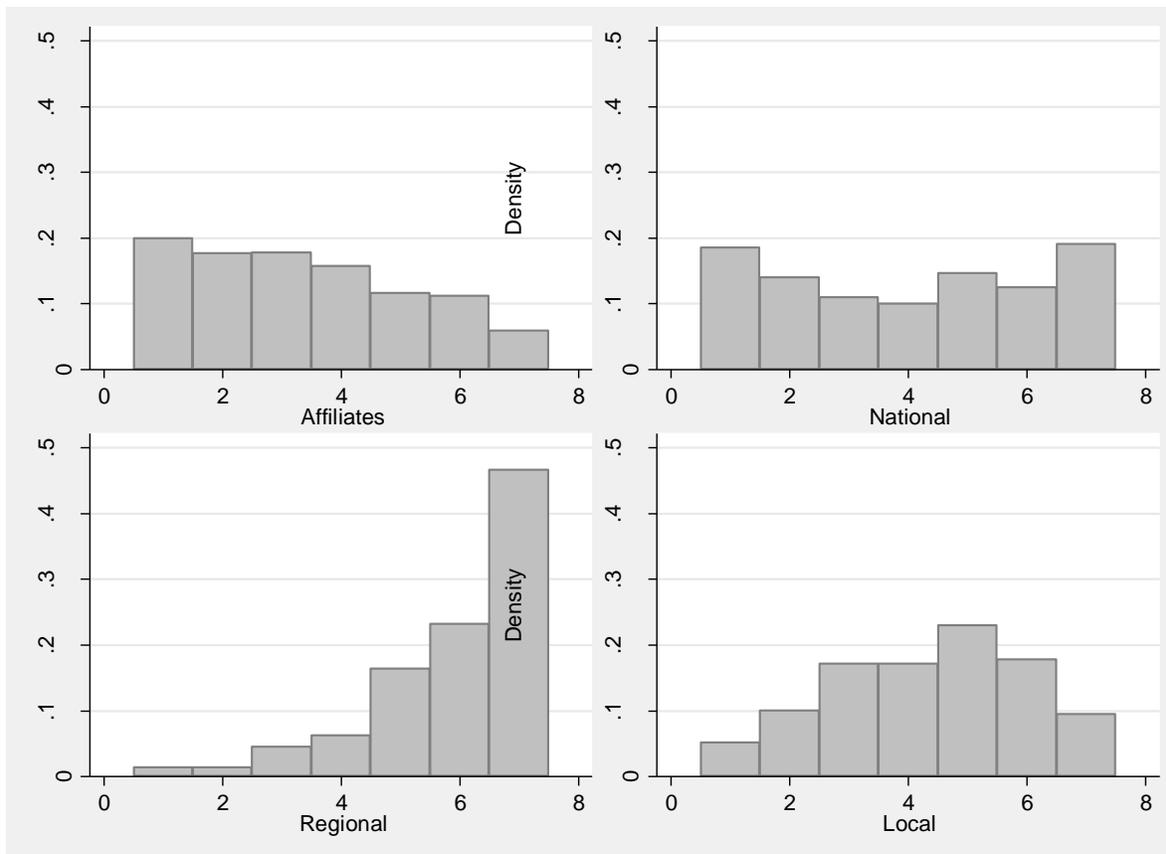


Figure 1. Importance of the National, Regional, Local Elites and the Affiliates in Candidate Selection.
 Source: CIS Database, Study 2827. Data available at www.cis.es

Beyond the overall picture, there are significant differences in the relevance of different actors, especially in the case of the national and regional level. To further explore these differences, in Table 2 we report the average relevance of the party affiliates and the national, regional and local party leaders, by chamber and territorial presence of the party. On average, the average relevance of affiliates is 3.16 in state-wide parties, while it is 4.40 on average for regional-wide parties. Regarding centralization, although the regional level is the most relevant in every chamber and party, the relevance of regional party leaders from state-wide parties is 6.01 on average, while the average for regional parties is 5.47. Similarly, MPs serving at regional chambers rank the influence of regional party leaders on average at 5.99, while the average for MPs at national chambers is 5.65. In a similar way, the latter rank the relevance of national party leaders on average at 4.93, while the average for the former is 3.73, although no significant differences have been found between MPs belonging to

national and regional parties regarding the influence of national party leaders. Differences in the influence of local party leaders are very small. All in all, results indicate that the selection process in regional chambers is more decentralized, while the selection process is more inclusive.

Table 2. Average Importance of the Affiliates and the National, Regional and Local Elites in Candidate Selection, by Chamber (National vs. Regional) and party (State vs. Regional)

	Affiliates (inclusive)	National (centralized)	Regional	Local (decentralized)
Type of chamber:				
National Chambers	3.28	4.93	5.65	4.32
Regional Chambers	3.42	3.73	5.99	4.35
Type of party:				
State wide parties	3.16	4.03	6.01	4.35
Regional wide parties	4.40	-	5.47	4.33
Total	3.39	4.02	5.91	4.34
N	577	518	572	577

Source: CIS Database, Study 2827. Data available at www.cis.es

The relevant question, however, is whether inclusiveness and centralization in the selection process can be explained by our key explanatory variables. Therefore, we analyze the determinants of inclusiveness and centralization in candidate selection. In Table 3 we report estimates from a regression in which the dependent variable is inclusiveness in candidate selection, measured by the power of affiliates. Our key explanatory variables include chamber (national vs. regional), territorial dimension of the party (state-wide parties vs. regional-wide parties) and party ideology. In addition, we control for gender, age, family participation in politics (having relatives in politics) and political experience (number of legislatures in parliament). Overall, findings are in line with our hypotheses. Party ideology has a highly significant and negative effect on inclusiveness in candidate selection. That means that the process of candidate selection is less inclusive in right-wing parties than in left-wing parties. Moreover, the process is less inclusive in national parties than in regional parties. This finding indicates that affiliates play a more limited role in national parties than in regional parties, which suggest that in the case of Spain there is a connection between inclusiveness and decentralization.

Control variables have no significant effect on inclusiveness except in the case of political experience. Contrary to our expectations, gender has no significant effect on inclusiveness, as the selection process for women is not more exclusive. In a similar way, the selection process is not more inclusive for older MPs. Interestingly, however, affiliates have less power in the process of candidate selection for those who have been in Parliament for a longer period. This finding is consistent with our expectations in the sense that the more experienced MPs are expected to be selected by higher levels in party hierarchy, while less experienced candidates are expected to be selected by lower levels.

Table 3. Inclusiveness on Candidate Selection. Coefficients of Linear Regressions on the Relevance of the Affiliates

	Power of affiliates (Inclusiveness)
Male	0.11 (0.11)
Age	-0.01 (0.01)
Relatives on politics	-0.21 (0.15)
Number of legislatures	-0.09** (0.03)
National Chambers	-0.10 (0.12)
State Wide Parties	-1.09*** (0.28)
Party Ideology	-0.37*** (0.07)
Constant	6.58*** (0.54)
N	569
R ²	0.144

Source: CIS Database, Study 2827. Data available at www.cis.es

Clustered by party. Standard errors in parentheses.

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

We now turn to the determinants of centralization in candidate selection. In Table 4 we report estimates from three models in which the dependent variables are the power of the three levels (national, regional and local) of party governance. Overall, the selection process is more centralized for men than for women. However, at the same time, both national and local party leaders are less relevant in the selection process for men. Age has a positive effect

on the relevance of national elites, which indicates that national party leaders could be more influential in selecting well-established candidates. This is in line with the fact that regional party leaders are less relevant for more experienced MPs (as measured by number of legislatures), as argued by Field (2006) and her analyses of candidate selection in the eighties and nineties in Spain. Finally, regional party leaders are more relevant for those who have relatives in politics than for those who do not. This is in line with Rahat and Hazan (2010), who argue that decentralization might open some room for regional oligarchies to rule the parties.

Table 4. Centralization in Candidate Selection. Coefficients of Linear Regressions on the Relevance of the National, Regional and Local Elites

	(1) National elite (Centralized)	(2) Regional elite	(3) Local elite (Decentralized)
Male	-0.42*** (0.06)	-0.05 (0.10)	-0.54*** (0.08)
Age	0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Relatives on politics	0.02 (0.19)	0.20* (0.08)	0.02 (0.06)
Number of legislatures	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.04 (0.04)
National Chambers	1.20** (0.35)	-0.35* (0.15)	0.02 (0.18)
State Wide Parties	0.09 (0.68)	0.48* (0.22)	-0.01 (0.26)
Party Ideology	0.44*** (0.09)	0.28*** (0.07)	-0.04 (0.04)
Constant	0.83 (0.81)	4.13*** (0.49)	4.89*** (0.53)
	N 511	564	569
	R ² 0.137	0.112	0.029

Source: CIS Database, Study 2827. Data available at www.cis.es

Standard errors clustered by party in parentheses.

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Control variables have a limited impact on the centralization in the selection process. First, chamber has a significant effect on the relevance of national and regional elites. National party elite is more relevant when selecting candidates for Congress and Senate than for regional chambers, while regional party elite is more relevant to select candidates for regional chambers. Interestingly, however, regional elites are more important in the selection

process in national parties than in regional parties. As shown in the bivariate analyses in table 2, the role of the local leaders is more relevant for national candidates, despite the fact that multivariate analyses in table 4 do not show significant differences.

The previous findings are consistent with a large strand of literature arguing that decentralization in party structures is connected with decentralization in candidate selection (Hermens 1972, Gallagher and Marsh 1988; Rahat and Hazan, 2001). At the same time, party ideology has a strong and significant effect on centralization. National and regional party leaders are more relevant in the selection process for MPs from right-wing parties. These findings are consistent with the higher inclusiveness found in left-wing parties (see Table 3).

Conclusion

There is an overall trend around the world toward higher levels of democratization in candidate selection. In addition, political decentralization in Spain has opened new avenues for political positions and has helped to configure some sub-national party systems (Field, 2006; Cordero and Coller, 2015). The conjunction of these two trends explains some of the findings of this paper in which we make a methodological contribution: rather than studying the written party rules regulating candidate selection, as it is the common practice in the field, we analyze the selection of candidates in Spain using data from a survey of 580 national and regional MPs as well as 58 in-depth interviews to a sample of key political actors.

According to our hypothesis, we expect more decentralized practices in the regional chambers than in the national chambers. Our findings support this expectation, being the regional MPs those who think that regional leaders are the most relevant actors when selecting leaders. We also hypothesized that decentralization in candidate selection would be more intensive in regional parties. Overall, findings are also in line with this expectation. The Spanish process of devolution might be in the origin of the decentralization in candidate selection shown in the empirical results. Furthermore, leftwing parties and regional parties seem to implement more inclusive mechanisms of candidate selection than rightwing parties and state-wide parties. Generally speaking, it seems that rank-and-file members are more

relevant for candidate selection in regional and leftwing parties. This conclusion does not apply when we deal with experimented MPs (a group that usually concentrates the leadership of parties), for whom their selection lies in the higher levels of the hierarchy.

Our findings open new avenues for further research. The crisis of political trust in Southern Europe (Zamora & Coller, 2015) and the emergence of new political parties (such as Podemos and Ciudadanos) posit the question of how these findings apply to the new political actors. This is especially more relevant with Podemos, a party that originally based its functioning in a highly decentralized structure that is becoming more classical in Michelsian terms (Michels, 1915). Moreover, the established political parties (mainly PP and PSOE) are expected to react to the innovations of these new political actors to meet the increasing demands for more participation in the political process, by adapting their selection mechanisms. Will classical parties emulate new actors and incorporate organizational innovations to select candidates in a more open and decentralized way? Thus, more longitudinal research is needed to understand how these changes might affect our findings and how selection mechanisms evolve over time.

Notes:

¹ This research has been partially made possible thanks to the funds provided by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness to the project “Parliamentarians and Society” (CSO2012-32564).

² Not every country and party develops more inclusive ways of candidate selection. As Cross and Blais (2014) argue, the main variable explaining this (lack of) openness is electoral defeat.

³ Interviews were carried out before the dealignment of the Spanish party system (that started in 2014), so the effects of this important political change are not covered by this survey. However, the information of this valuable dataset (our main resource for analysis) is complemented and updated by 58 in-depth interviews to MPs and gatekeepers also at national and regional levels. These interviews took place in 2015, and the changes produced in the Spanish party competition and party habits are gathered.

⁴ Congress (3,500), Senate (1,872), and the European Parliament (420), with a total of 15,934 positions open for electoral competition between 1979 and April 2015.

⁵ PSOE and PP, but also IU and recently UPyD, Ciudadanos, and Podemos.

⁶ PP (Partido Popular-People's Party), PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español-Spanish Socialist Workers' Party), CiU (Convergència i Unió-Convergence and Union), PNV (Partido Nacionalista Vasco-Basque Nationalist Party), CC (Coalición Canaria-Canarian Coalition), BNG (Bloque Nacionalista Galego-Nationalist

Galician Block), ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya -Republican Left of Catalonia), UV (Unió Valenciana-Valencian Union), PAR (Partido Aragonés Regionalista-Regionalist Aragonese Party).

⁷ For instance, in April 2015 the ENP in the National Congress was 3.14 (14 parties present), while in Catalonia it was 4.6 (8 parties), in Navarre 4.3 (6 parties), and in the Basque Country was 3.6 (5 parties).

⁸ Rahat and Hazan also refers to the scope of eligibles.

⁹ Also refers to “corporate delegation” (as the role of Trade Unions) and the distinction between “voting” and “appointment”.

¹⁰ See Coller, Cordero and Echavarren (2016) for an analysis of the charts of the parties.

¹¹ For instance, the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya, CDC) at the *National Council*; Catalanian Republican Left (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC) at the *National Executive*; the Nationalist Basque Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco, PNV) at the *National Assembly*; and the Democratic Union of Catalonia (Unió Democràtica de Catalunya, UDC) at the *Government Commission* and the *National Council*.

References

Bermúdez, S. & Cordero, G. (2014). Who is Recruiting Our Crew? Contextual Determinants of MPs' Selection. *Unpublished*.

Best, M. & Cotta, M. (2000). (eds), *Legislative Recruitments and Careers in Eleven European Countries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bille, L. (2001). Democratizing a Democratic Procedure: Myth or Reality? Candidate Selection in Western European Parties, 1960-1990, *Party Politics* 7: 363–380.

Bowler, S., Farrell, D.M., & Katz R.S. (1999). *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Carey, J.M. (2007). Competing Principals, Political Institutions, and Party Unity in Legislative Voting, *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 92–107.

Coller, X., Jaime-Castillo, A.M., & Mota, F. (2016). *El poder político en España: Parlamentarios y ciudadanía*. Madrid: CIS. Forthcoming.

Coller, X., Cordero, G. & Echavarren, J.M. (2016). Reclutamiento y selección. In *El poder político en España: Parlamentarios y ciudadanía*. Madrid: CIS. Forthcoming.

Coller, X. (2008), “El sesgo social de las elites políticas. El caso de la España de las autonomías (1980-2005)”, *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, nº 141, pp: 133-59.

- Cordero, G. & X. Collier (2015), "Candidate Selection and Party discipline", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 68 (3): 592-615.
- Cox, G. (1999). Electoral Rules and Electoral Coordination, *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 145–61.
- Cross, W.P & Blais, A. (2012). *Politics at the Centre. The Selection and Removal of Party Leaders in the Anglo Parliamentary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cross, W.P & Blais, A. (2012). Who Selects the Party Leader?, *Party Politics*, 18 (2): 127-150.
- Dalton R. (1985). Political parties and political representation. *Comparative Political Studies* 18(3): 267–299.
- Detterbeck, K. (2013). The Rare Event of Choice: Party Primaries in German Land Parties. *German Politics*, 22(3): 270-287.
- Field, B.N. (2006). "Transitions to Democracy and Internal Party Rules: Spain in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, 39 (1): 83-102
- Fujimura, N. (2012). Electoral Incentives, Party Discipline, and Legislative Organization: Manipulating Legislative Committees to Win Elections and Maintain Party Unity, *European Political Science Review* 4 (2): 147-175.
- Gallagher, M., Laver, M., & Mari, P. (2001). *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Gallagher, M., & Marsh, M. (1988). *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*. London: Sage.
- Gunther, R. Montero, J.R., and Botella, J. (2004). *Democracy in Modern Spain*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hazan, R.Y. & Rahat, G. (2006). Candidate Selection: Methods and Consequences, in Katz, R.S. and Crotty, W.J. eds., *Handbook of Party Politics*, pp 109-121. London: Sage.
- Hermens, F.A. (1972). *Democracy or Anarchy? A Study of Proportional Representation*. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp.
- Hopkin, J. (2001). Bringing the Members Back in? Democratizing Candidate Selection in Britain and Spain, *Party Politics* 7: 343–361.
- Hopkin, J. (2003). Political Decentralization, Electoral Change and Party Organizational Adaptation. A Framework for Analysis, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 10: 227-237.

- Katz, R.S. (2001). The Problem of Candidate Selection and Models of Party Democracy, *Party Politics* 7: 277–296.
- Katz, R.S. & Mair, P. (1995) Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party. *Party Politics*, 1(1): 5-28.
- Kenig O. (2008), Democratization of party leadership Selection: do wider selectorates produce more competitive contests?, *Electoral Studies*, 28: 240-247.
- Lago, I. & Montero J. R. (2007). "The Electoral Systems of the Spanish Democracies". In Joan Marcel and José Ramón Montero (eds.). *Roads to Democracy. A Tribute to Juan J. Linz*. Barcelona: ICPS.
- Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Linz, J. (1989). 'Spanish Democracy and the Estado de los Autonomías'. In Goldwin, R. A., Kaufman, A. and Schambra, W. A. (eds) *Forging Unity Out of Diversity*, Washington, DC, American Enterprise Institute, pp. 260–326.
- Méndez-Lago, M. (2000). *La Estrategia Organizativa del Partido Socialista Obrero Español*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
- Michels, R. (1915). *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. New York: Dover.
- Montero, J.R., Lago, I. & Torcal, M. (2007). *Elecciones Generales 2004*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
- Moreno, L. (1997). *La federalización de España*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- Morlino, L. (1995). Consolidation and Party Government in Southern Europe. *International Political Science Review*. 16(2): 145-167.
- Norris, P. (2006). Recruitment, in Richard S. Katz and William Crotty (eds) *Handbook of Party Politics*, pp. 89-108. London: Sage.
- Norris, P. & Lovenduski, J., (1995). *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pilet, J.B. & Cross, W. (2014). *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies. A Comparative Study*. London: Routledge.
- Rahat, G. & Hazan, R.Y., (2001). Candidate Selection Methods: An Analytical Framework, *Party Politics* 7: 297–322. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Rahat, G., & Hazan, R.Y. (2010). *Democracy within Parties: Candidate Selection Methods*

and Their Political Consequences. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ranney, A. (1981). "Candidate Selection". In Butler, D., Howard R.P. & Austin R. Ed. *Democracy at the Polls: A Comparative Study of Competitive National Elections*. Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. PP. 75-106.

Shomer, Y. (2014). What Affects Candidate Selection Processes? A Cross-national Examination. *Party Politics*, 20(4): 533-546.

Spies, D. & Kaiser, A. (2014). Does the Mode of Candidate Selection Affect the Representativeness of Parties? *Party Politics*, 20(4): 576-590

Van Houten, P. (2009). Multi-level Relations in Political Parties. A Delegation Approach, *Party Politics* 15: 137-156.

Zamora, A. and Coller, X. (eds) (2014), "The Economic Crisis from Within: Evidence from Southern Europe. Special Issue", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 58, n° 12.

Zweigenhaft, R. & Domhoff, W. (2006). *Diversity in the Power Elite. How it happened. Why it Matters*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Author Biographies:

Xavier Coller is professor of sociology at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide (Seville, Spain) and holds a PhD in Sociology (Yale University). He has taught in several universities in Europe and the US and has been visiting fellow at Warwick University (UK), University of California (Berkeley), Yale, Harvard, Georgetown, and Université de Montpellier 1. He was the Seventh Prince of Asturias Chair, Georgetown University (2005-07). He has authored over seventy works on social theories, research methods, collective identities, political elites, and complex organizations. He is the winner of several international awards, among them the 2003 Sussman Dissertation Award (Yale University), and an honorable mention in the 2003 Seymour Martin Lipset Award (Princeton University).

Guillermo Cordero is Visiting Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relationships at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Madrid, Spain). Previously he worked in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain) and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (CEACS, Fundación Juan March). He holds a PhD in Political Science and a MA in Democracy and Governance from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, as well as a Degree in Sociology. His main areas of interest are electoral behaviour and the selection of political elites in Europe. His most recent research on these topics appears in the *South European Society and Politics*, *Parliamentary Affairs* and *West European Politics*.

Antonio M. Jaime-Castillo is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Universidad de Málaga (Spain). He has been Visiting Scholar at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (University of Bergen), the Zentral Archiv (University of Cologne), the ICPSR (University of Michigan) and the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis (University of Indiana). His research interests include welfare attitudes, inequality, political sociology and quantitative methods of comparative research. His work has been published in journals such as *European Sociological Review*, *Journal of European Social Policy*, *International Political Science Review*, *International Sociology*, *Social Indicators Research* and *Southern Economic Journal*.