This paper examines immigrants’ descriptive representation in 15 democracies. It uses a proportional measurement of representation, which takes the size of the immigrant population into account, to investigate how parties, electoral systems and immigrants’ integration policies affect immigrants’ representation in national legislatures. The study shows that while parties and electoral systems affect to some extent the representation of immigrants, integration policies play a key role. The findings provide further evidence that proves that some integration policies such as electoral rights, liberties and financial support enhance immigrants’ representation. In contrast, the study shows that strong consultative bodies contribute to immigrants’ political isolation and under-representation.

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1. Introduction

Although immigration is by far not a new phenomenon, in the last years international mobility has become easier as a result of political changes and the technological advancements in transport and communication, becoming the central dynamic of globalization (Castles & Miller 2009). A crucial characteristic of today’s international migration is the challenge that it poses to the sovereignty of states and the very notion of the nation, which are key features of modern politics. First, confronting the idea of a sovereign state constituting the authority which rules over a society, international migration defies the ability of states to regulate movements of people across borders and their integration (Guiraudon and Lahav 2000). Second, challenging the idea of a nation sharing a common ethnic and cultural heritage immigrants change the socio-demographic configuration of countries’ nation. This results in major challenges to the conception of national identities grounding on ethnic terms (Howard 2009). Furthermore, immigration contributes to the emergence of a structural conflict between the so-called “winners” and “losers” of globalization. While the winners of globalization benefit from globalization as the opening up of national boundaries enhances their life chances, for the losers of globalization the opening up of national boundaries represent a threat to their social status and security (Kriesi et al. 2008: 4-5). Thus, contemporary migration touches the vertebral bones of Western electoral democracies.

In the context of ethnically diverse democracies, descriptive representation refers to the "ability of groups to elect representatives with similar traits" (Welch and Hibbing 1988). And, it aims at assessing how well are societies’ groups politically represented. In the context of multicultural democracies characterized by mass immigration a major question that arises is whether institutional arrangements can foster immigrants’ representation in national legislatures. From this perspective, descriptive representatives are individuals who in their own
background and experiences mirror specific groups (Mansbridge, 1999:628). This approach also called “statistical” or “mirror” representation focuses on the demographic and social characteristics of elected officials.

The aim of this paper is then to study immigrants’ descriptive representation in 15 multicultural democracies. To that end, the extents to which party and institutional characteristics have an effect on immigrants’ representation in national legislatures are examined. The paper is organized as follows. First summarizes the main literature in the field. Second, it summarizes the research design that has been developed for this study. Third, I analyze how different factors influence immigrants’ representation. Finally the main findings are summarized and discussed.

2. Analytical Framework

2.1 Descriptive Representation

Descriptive representation refers to make something absent present by resemblance. Therefore, what is to be represented is a specific group. The rationale is that the legislature should resemble the nation and mirror the people, the public opinion, or the movement of social and economic forces of the nation (Pitkin, 1967:64). From this perspective the members of the legislature “supply” information about the groups that are in society: women, the working class, minorities, et cetera. Therefore, descriptive representation gives great emphasis to the composition of the legislature in terms of the characteristics of individual representatives.

The presence of minority representatives in legislative bodies is important in many ways. It can contribute to their representation in contexts of inter-group mistrust or in cases when immigrants’ interests have not been yet crystallized by dominant political actors such as political parties (Mansbridge, 1999). Also, some of the inequalities existent across groups can be traced down to the existent indifference that elites show vis-à-vis the interests of minority and under-represented groups. Therefore from this perspective, descriptive representation
can contribute to readjusting the unequal distribution of political values in society: power, participation and decision-making (Sapiro, 1981:712). Also, group representation increases political knowledge, fosters the contact between minority voters and their representatives and increases electoral participation (Banducci et al. 2004). Furthermore, descriptive representation has a potential symbolic value as it can contribute to inter-group trust building, and reinforce the feelings of inclusion (Mansbridge 1999). It is associated with more positive political attitudes (Banducci et al. 2004), and can play a role model with other members of that group (Bloemraad 2006:228-9).

A growing corpus of political literature has started investigating immigrants as political actors, both in “old” immigration countries like United States and Canada and in Europe (see for example Bird et al. 2011). From a comparative standpoint a crucial question that arises is to what extent institutional characteristics, such as electoral systems and integration policies, affect the political incorporation and representation of citizens with a migratory background.

So far, explanations about immigrants’ representation in national parliaments have centered single-country studies or small N comparisons and emphasized the role played by political parties and immigrant voters’ mobilization (see for example Saalfeld, Wust & Sanhueza 2011; Bird et al. 2011, Bloemraad 2013, Forest 2012, Banducci et al. 2004, Kittilson & Tate 2004). A lack of data has made larger comparative studies a challenge. Therefore in the aim of contributing to bridge this gap in this study I aim for examining the role of party and institutional variables in comparative perspectives.

2.2 Parties: Political Recruitment Gatekeepers

By choosing the electoral candidates, parties are defining the pool of individuals that are eligible for government, and most importantly by this act they are determining the overall composition of national parliaments (Norris and Lovenduski 1995:2). In this way, parties play the role of the main gatekeepers in the recruitment process (Caul 1999, Norris and Lovenduski 1995, Norris 1997,
Costa and Kerrouche 2007, Strom 2003). As a result, the question of which candidates are included in the party lists is of central concern.

Political research has shown the existence of significant differences over candidates’ nomination across parties. Party-specific political opportunity structures influence the recruitment process resulting on representation bias of diverse nature. Via the nomination of candidates of immigrant origin, parties “try to attract new immigrant voters with the promise to enhance their representation in parliament” (Claro da Fonseca 2011:112). Migrants tend to concentrate in specific areas, which make them more visible (Bird 2003). Geographic concentration can influence the strategies followed by parties to mobilize these immigrant voters as a bloc (Bird 2005). For example, US-based empirical evidence shows that immigrants’ concentration in some specific electoral districts results in new political scenarios in which parties and candidates must address the immigrant voters in order to win (DeSipio & de la Garza 2002:398).

Nominating minority candidates on turnout and voting have been shown to have important effects on the turnout and voting of citizens of immigrant origin. For example, US-based evidence shows that when immigrant candidates are nominated immigrant voters are more likely to turnout to vote and support the candidate (Barreto et al. 2004). Also the effects of socio-economic status and group-specific characteristics on low turnout seem to decrease when immigrant candidates run for office. Empirical evidence demonstrates that urban Latino voters registering high levels of unemployment and living in constituencies with large shares of immigrant show high level of electoral participation (De la Garza & DeSipio 2004). Thus, who the leader is can be relevant for voters’ choice because candidates’ personal characteristics can provide necessary information on how they would behave with respect to unforeseen problems (Aarts et al. 2011:3). Also voters can make the assumption that immigrant representatives have a better understanding of the main concerns in these constituencies (Mansbridge 1999), especially regarding immigration and integration.

Of course, not all parties are equally keen to nominate ethnic minority candidates. Party-related characteristics influence to a great the proportions of
minority candidates that participate in legislative elections (Norris and Lovenduski 1995, Kittilson and Tate 2004, Caul 1999). Cross-country empirical evidence points at one crucial determinant of minority recruitment, and that is party ideology (Kittilson and Tate 2004, Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Left wing parties embrace ideals of equality and have traditionally offered more support to under-represented groups, therefore more immigrant candidates and representatives are found among these (Kittilson and Tate 2004). On the other hand, right-wing parties held more conservative stands vis-à-vis immigration and their integration. Likewise they appear less keen on recruiting minority candidates remaining rather unpopular within the immigrant electorate.

Furthermore, the nomination strategies followed by parties are to a great extent in response to the dynamics of electoral competition. Parties adopt different strategies to maximize their electoral gains (Downs 1957). In this framework the strategies they follow when recruiting candidates to be included in the party lists are perceived as means to these ends. In other words, candidates’ nomination is one of the means that parties have at hand to address the general electorate or certain parts of the electorate in the aims of winning a given election (Scarrow 2004).

From the literature, two key dynamics appear as crucial to understand parties’ nomination of candidates of immigrant origin. First, a corpus of literature has investigated the positions adopted by parties on immigration measured as liberal or restrictive border control policy positions. For instance, Meguid (2005) investigates how the behavior of mainstream parties influences the electoral success of anti-immigration parties. By adopting “accommodative”, “adversarial” or “dismissive” strategies single parties would influence the electoral fortune of anti-immigration parties. These electoral dynamics are also observed at the level of political recruitment, because electoral competition can encourage a “contagion effect” by which if one party selects a minority candidate in a given constituency other parties can feel pressure to name minority candidates as well (Bird 2007:13, Matland & Studlar 1996) and follow a more “accommodative strategy”. Second as Van Spanje (2010) has shown the success of anti-immigration parties shapes the
strategies adopted by other parties. The author shows that the electoral success of anti-immigration parties can result in a “contagion impact on other parties” altering not only the position of individual parties, including the left, and of entire party systems. Therefore, from this perspective it is expected that the success of anti-immigration parties will undermine immigrants’ representation.

2.3 Institutional Characteristics: Electoral Systems & Integration Policies

Electoral systems matter for representation, as these are “links in the chain connecting the preferences of citizens to the policy choices made by governments” (Gallagher and Mitchell, 2005:3). In representative democracies citizens delegate policy-making to a small number of representatives. And the way these representatives are elected is of crucial importance for representation. The concept of electoral system refers in general to “the set of rules that structure how votes are cast in elections for a representative assembly and how these votes are then converted into seats in that assembly” (idem: p.3). Therefore, the characteristics of electoral systems are of vital relevance for political representation as these influence representatives’ election, the number of parties, and voters’ turnout.

The electoral formulas have major implications for representation as these determine how votes are counted and how seats are allocated. Different characteristics of electoral systems lead to different results in the representation of immigrant minorities. Majoritarian systems have been designed to create a majority in order to produce an effective working majority for the government. Given that majoritarian systems prioritize effective governance, the consequence is that minor parties are highly penalized and have a difficult path to government. On the other side, proportional systems have been designed to foster the inclusion of minority parties, in the aim of mirroring the composition of society in the parliament.

Studies on the relationship between electoral systems and the representation of minorities suggest that these institutional features matter for immigrants’
representation. The difference between majoritarian and proportional systems in these contexts resides specifically on the inner dynamics of both systems. In general, it is argued that majority systems have negative consequences for the representation of minority groups (Norris 1997:304). In majoritarian systems candidates’ selection is often decentralized, therefore at the local level there are smaller incentive to select a candidate that will produce a more representative legislature at the national level. Party leaders and party members would usually choose to support candidates that they consider able to get the votes required to win the election (Rule 1994:18). Thus, minority candidates and the representation of minority interests tend to suffer from these calculations. As Weaver (1997) puts it, majoritarian systems penalize the access of minorities to office and the representation of the interests of the minorities.

In contrast, in proportional systems candidates have greater visibility, therefore in such a system, there is greater incentive to present a list that “looks like the voters” (Bird 2003: 13). Minorities have less the need to join other groups to form larger parties and access the parliament (Shugart 1994). And PR is more favorable to the articulation of the interests of minorities. “What is important to realize regarding the electoral system is that only with proportional representation (…) can we see whether such a set of concerns is politically significant, PR, by not forcing minorities into larger political parties, allows minorities to express themselves through their own parties, if they so desire, without being penalized in the process of seat allocation” (Shugart 1994:35).

However, contrasting with the widespread assumption that electoral systems alone shape minority representation, recent research is shedding light on the limitations of the electoral rules framework (see for example Sanhueza Petrarca 2015, Bloemraad 2013, Forest 2012, Ruedin 2009). These conclusions are based on evidence that indicates that despite differences in the electoral architecture of industrialized democracies (PR or majority systems) immigrants are highly underrepresented in national parliaments (see Bloemraad 2013, Forest 2012). Indeed electoral characteristics have considerable effects on the representation of
women (Mateo Díaz 2005) yet their effects on the representation of immigrants are considerable smaller.

Immigrants often times form “ethnic groups” that seek integration into the larger society and to be accepted as full members of it. They seek recognition of their ethnic identity by demanding modifications of the institutions and laws of the majority group “to make them more accommodating of cultural differences” (Kymlicka 1995:11-12). In this context, the political incorporation of immigrants results from a process “of becoming a part of mainstream political debates, practices and decision-making (...) [which are] achieved when patterns of immigrant participation are comparable to those among the native born” (Bloemraad 2006: 6). Thus, integration policies are likely to play an important role in the integration of immigrant minorities and their representation in national legislatures.

Integration policies are designed to incorporate and foster the political participation of immigrants, and to accommodate their cultural differences (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010:4). They are a “set of mutually reinforcing approaches or methodologies concerning the incorporation and participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities, and their modes of cultural/religious differences” (idem: 4). In the context of multicultural democracies, new forms of multicultural citizenship have emerged which includes a combination policies aimed at promoting immigrants’ incorporation and participation, among which the following can be distinguished (see for example Kymlicka 2010): (1) institutional recognition of multiculturalism at the national or regional levels, (2) support of immigrant and ethnic organizations, and (3) affirmative action of disadvantaged immigrant groups, among others.

In the last years, an increasing convergence on integration policies has been observed across these countries (Koopmans 2005). Yet the effects that integration policies have on immigrants’ representation remains an under-explored field.
3. Research Design and Measurement

3.1 Case Selection

The objective of this paper is to contribute to our understanding of immigrants’ descriptive representation in a comparative perspective. The comparative method is used here to be able to establish more general empirical implications of the findings (Mill 1843, Lijphart 1971). The selection of the 15 cases examined here has been based on some baseline characteristics that these countries share in common (Przeworski and Teune 1970). I focus on countries having similar political traits. They have had stable democracies in the last half a century, which guarantees certain stability in their party systems and election cycles. Furthermore, democratic stability is related to the resolution of classic social cleavages in the sense of Stein and Rokkan (1967) giving room to the emergence of new issues such as immigration and the environment (Kreisi et al. 2008).

3.2 Data

Examining the composition of national assemblies raises questions about social categories, in particular when these are related to peoples’ race and ethnicity. As Fearon (2003) states it, the notion of ethnic group is complex as it is drawing the lines of an ethnic group. Yet, generally speaking, ethnic groups have the following characteristics: (1) membership in the group is reckoned by descendant, by both, members and non-members, (2) members are conscious of group membership, (3) members share some common cultural features such as language, religion and customs, (4) the group has a homeland, (5) the group has a shared history as a group and (6) it stands on its own as a group (Fearon 2003: 201).

In this paper I follow one of the most used strategies in social research dealing with immigration. I categorize elected representatives by their birthplace or by the birthplace of their parents. One of the main advantages of this approach is that this strategy allows doing cross-country and longitudinal analyses (see
Following this strategy, I have identified citizens of immigrant origin of first and second-generation elected in national legislatures based on their place of birth and nationality at birth. The rationale behind is that individuals with a migratory background have experienced the administrative, linguistic, economic, social and cultural challenges of migration. The data has been gathered by multiple projects (see Appendix), and extracted from parliamentary and personal websites.

Furthermore, immigrant population data was gathered from the websites of the national statistics organizations of the respective countries, data on electoral results has been extracted from the national electoral bureaux. INTERNATIONAL IDEA provided the data related to the characteristics of electoral systems (http://www.idea.int/). Measurements of multicultural policies per country have been gathered from the Multiculturalism Policy Index - http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/ - (Accessed in August 2015.). And data on immigrants’ political participation policies has been retrieved from MIPEX - www.mipex.eu - (Accessed in August 2015.).

3.3 Dependent Variable

Traditionally, research on descriptive representation has focused on counting the numbers of members of representatives that have specific characteristics (homosexuals, women, ethnic minorities, etc.). Many recent studies however have highlighted the limits of this strategy (see for example Forrest 2012, Bloemraad 2013, Bird 2003). In reality it takes more than absolute numbers to understand descriptive representation therefore in the aim of expanding the study of immigrants’ descriptive representation in this paper I measure immigrants’ representation in national assemblies relative to their group size in society. Representation is measured as follows:

Equation 1
where representation is equal to the level of proportionality between the share of immigrant MPs in national parliaments that result from the division of the number of immigrant MPs by the total number of MPs, divided by the share of immigrants in the population, which is represented by the number of immigrants divided by the population. Measurements close to 1 indicate that immigrants are well represented in national assemblies while measurements approaching 0 indicate that they are underrepresented.

3.4 Independent Variables

In order to explain immigrants’ descriptive representation in national parliaments in this study, I examine how this is affected by three main variables: (i) parties, (ii) electoral systems, and (iii) integration policies.

First, I include three party-level variables. Left in past government (1) is a dummy variable that measures whether a left party has governed prior to the election. As left parties tend to be more open towards the integration of ethnic minorities, having a Left governing party may contribute to giving equal opportunities to ethnic minorities, including of running for office. Besides, as the electoral success of anti-immigration parties is likely to affect the strategies followed by parties at election time, the variable Anti-immigration success (2) measures the electoral success in vote share of anti-immigration parties in the previous election. Third, as left parties are more prone to nominate immigrant candidates the variable Left/right ratio (3) measures the ratio in seats of the two largest left and right parties. Given that we don’t have detailed data on the partisanship of individual deputies this variable is used as a proxy. When the ratio is larger than 1 it means than a left party won the majority of the seats, when it is
1 than both left and right parties have equal number of seats and when the scores are smaller than 1 that right parties have larger number of seats.

In relation to the electoral systems characteristics I include two dummy variables. The variable \textbf{Mixed (4)} includes all these democracies that have a mixed electoral system including proportional and majoritarian systems. The variable \textbf{Proportional (5)} includes all countries that have only a proportional system.

Furthermore, I include two variables that reflect the politics of immigrants' integration. The variable \textbf{Multiculturalism (6)} measures the countries' scores on the institutionalization of multicultural policies in 1980, 2000 and 2010. It measures affirmation of multiculturalism, policies, school curriculum, representation in the media, cultural exceptions, dual citizenship, funding given to immigrant groups, bilingual education, and affirmative actions. The scores of these policies areas are summed up and result in one final score that can range from 0 to 10. Countries with high scores have adopted more multicultural policies than countries with lower scores. Secondly, the variable \textbf{Immigrants' Political Representation} measures four policy areas including electoral rights, political liberties, consultative bodies and implementation policies (whether immigrants receive funding for their political activities). It is a 0 to 100 scale, where 0 means that immigrants have little possibilities to participate and 100 that they have great opportunities.

Finally, I include one control variable that measures the representation of women relative to their share in the population (\textbf{Women’s Proportionality}).

\textbf{3.5 Methods}

I run a linear regression to determine the relationship between the predictors and immigrants' representation.
4. Results

4.1 The Puzzle: Women & Immigrant Groups

In a previous comparative study on immigrants’ descriptive representation I observed that the proportional systems are not necessarily related to a greater representation of ethnic minorities (Sanhueza Petrarca 2015). Figure 1, which presents the box plots of women’s and ethnic representation in proportional and majority systems in the 15 countries included in this study, sheds light on this fact. The first box plot shows the representation of women. We observe that in proportional systems women tend to be on average better represented than in majority systems. There is however a great variation in the extent to which women are represented in national legislatures. For example, Norway (0.8), Denmark (0.76) and the Netherlands (0.74), which have proportional electoral systems, rank first in terms of women’s descriptive representation. They are followed by Germany (0.64) and New Zealand (0.6), which have mixed electoral systems including proportional and majority representation, or as Wessels and Klingemann (2001) would name it “the best of two worlds”. In other countries having proportional representation such as Belgium (0.47) and Switzerland (0.46) women are somehow represented and in Portugal (0.38), Ireland (0.27) and Italy (0.23) their representation is very poor. Despite these variations, overall, women tend to be better represented in democracies including proportional representation than majority representation. Because, in democracies with majority representation such as Australia (0.51), Canada (0.42), United Kingdom (0.4), France (0.37) and United States (0.3) women are on average less represented in national legislatures than in democracies including some type of proportionality in their electoral systems.

The evidence of the relationship between electoral systems and the representation of immigrants in national legislatures shows however more nuanced results. First, it is observed that overall the share of ethnic minority deputies is very low in all national legislatures (second boxplot). Also, on average
ethnic minorities are better represented in majority systems that they are in proportional systems. Ethnic minorities’ outstanding representation scores in the Netherlands (1.08) can be explained to a great extent by the characteristics of its electoral system. The Dutch territory is treated as a single constituency and as a result, the Netherlands has one of the most proportional systems in the world (Leenknegt and Van Der Schyff, 2007). Therefore the “perfect” representation that immigrants have in the Netherlands results from a system that facilitates the candidacy and election of immigrant representatives. The Netherlands is by far followed by Belgium (0.4) and Denmark (0.34). In Belgium a “power sharing” system has been implemented early on in response to the fact that it is a “divided society”. As Ljphart (2004) puts it, a potential disadvantage of the approach adopted in Belgium is that it stipulated the groups among which the power should be distributed, namely Dutch and French-speakers, which may result in the discrimination of particular minority groups, such as immigrants (Ljphart 2004:103). In Denmark where immigrant minorities are to some extent represented (score = 0.34), the electoral system is also proportional but of a different nature. Electors can cast either a “personal” vote for one candidate or vote for one of the party lists in a system with ten-multi member constituencies. And the combination of the proportional representation system with preferential vote has created the possibility for the collective mobilization of immigrant minority groups, facilitating ethnic minorities’ representation (Togeby 2008). In other countries including proportional representation immigrants are very under-represented. In Switzerland, voters cast a personal vote for a candidate of their choice and yet immigrant minorities are poorly represented (index = 0.17) as they are in Norway (0.11). Immigrant minorities are somehow represented in Germany and New Zealand, which include mixed electoral systems scoring 0.16 and 0.15 respectively. And they extremely under-represented in Italy (0.075), Portugal (0) and Ireland (0).

In majority systems also variations are observed in terms of minorities’ representation yet on average immigrant minorities are better represented than in proportional systems. Canada (0.54), which has the first-past-the-post system,
scores second in terms of the representation of ethnic minorities (immigrants). In
despite the fact that Canada scores very well in comparative perspective in terms
of the representation of ethnic minorities, visible minorities’ representation deficit
is a topic of discussion. For example a survey conducted among the 2004
legislative candidates revealed that visible-minority candidates unanimously found
the plurality system in place unacceptable, in contrast to 90% of the other
candidates (Black and Hicks 2006 - Canadian Candidate Survey 2004). In the
United States, a little more than one third of the immigrant minorities are
represented (0.39). The US uses single-member electoral district system, which
makes it difficult for minorities to achieve representation (Weaver 1997, McLean
2008). However, Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and a series of Supreme
Court decisions it has been established the “legal and constitutional boundaries for
drawing minority districts (…) In essence, states must draw districts with nonwhite
majorities wherever such groups reside in a geographically cohesive large enough”
(Forest 2012: 5-6). Furthermore, immigrant minorities are better represented in
other countries using majority system such as the United Kingdom (0.33), France
(0.27) and even Australia (0.12) than they are in many democracies with
proportional systems.
Summarizing, while proportional systems appear to have a strong effect on women’s representation they do not have a similar effect on the representation of ethnic minorities. The cases of the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark support the assumption that proportional systems facilitate the representation of immigrants yet the evidence on the relationship between immigrants’ representation and proportional systems is unclear if one takes into account the realities of Switzerland, Norway, Italy, Portugal and Ireland. Furthermore, while majority systems have been argued to encourage political parties to select candidates that are “white, middle-class [and] male” (Elgie 2005:131). Maybe the same systems can, as Bird (2007: 13) puts it, encourage a “contagion effect” by which if one party selects a minority candidate in a given constituency, other parties can feel pressure to name minority candidates as well. This last argument, directs us to the examination of the effects party and contextual dynamics, as I present in the next sections.
4.2 Do Political Parties have an effect on Immigrants’ Representation?

Traditionally, left parties have been the defenders of excluded groups ethnic and minorities (Tate and Kittilson 2004), while right wing parties have to a great extent opposed immigration (Alonso and Claro da Fonseca 2012). Existent evidence suggests that party ideology affects the openness of political parties to nominate candidates of immigrant origin for safe seats. In this paper three effects of political parties’ ideologies on immigrants’ representation are examined. First, I examine what effects do parties’ electoral outcomes have on the election of immigrant candidates. This approach is set to take into account the context in which the representation of immigrants occur, and takes into account two main aspects. On the one hand, the role that having a Left governing party prior to the election has on immigrants’ nomination and election. On the other, I examine the effects that the electoral success of anti-immigration parties has on the nomination and election of immigrant candidates. Furthermore, I analyze the relationship between party ideology and immigrants’ representation.

The Left in Previous Government

Examining the relationship between having a major Left party in the previous government (t-1) and the election of immigrant candidates (t0) one observes that these are positively correlated (Pearson’s r= 0.009). This means that having a governing party embracing Liberal ideas in relation to minorities has an affect on the openness that parties show to select and nominate immigrant candidates, as voters have to support these candidates. As we see in the box plot besides (Figure 2) however the relationship between the variables is weak. Many immigrant representatives have been elected when Left parties have not been in the government and vice-versa, few have been elected when the left has been in government which discards the assumption that governing Left parties will facilitate the representation of immigrants. In order to understand these electoral dynamics we turn now to examining the role of anti-immigration parties.
Anti-immigration Parties

The scatter plot presented in Figure 3 shows a negative relationship between the electoral success of anti-immigration parties in the previous election and the nomination and election of minority representatives in the subsequent election (Pearson’s $r$ -0.006). That means that for every 1 percent additional that anti-immigration party scores in an election, the proportion of elected minority candidates drops by 0.006. This results support the findings of Van Spanje (2010) that anti-immigration parties success affects the strategies followed by all parties.
Nonetheless, given that the electoral success of left and anti-immigration parties as measured here happen at the same time it is relevant to examine simultaneously their effect. Using minority representation as our response variable, we observe that when both variables Left in Previous Government and Success of Anti-immigration parties are introduced their effects are clearer. Having a Left party in government has a positive effect on immigrants’ representation while the electoral success of Anti-immigration parties has a negative.

**Seats: Left and Right**

Finally based on the data that was available I have calculated the Left-Right seat ratio, which divides the share of seats held by the major left party and divides it by the share of seats won by the major/s right wing party/ies. A ratio >1 means that larger
proportions of seats are held by the major left party, =1 than left and right major parties have a similar share of seats, and >1 that right parties have more seats than left parties.

The scatterplot here presented shows the relationship between the left-right seat ratio and the representation of minorities in national legislatures. As it can be seen, the relationship is negative (Pearson’s r -0.07). Which means that a more seats for the larger party does not translate into better minority representation. Although the results appear as contradicting what single-case studies have extensively shown relative to the role of left parties on minority representation (see for example Bird et al. 2011), the surprising finding has to be consider with care as the measurement presents numerous limitations. For example it excludes other left parties like Greens and the Left, which we know play a significant role in the candidacy and representation of minorities (see for example Saalfeld, Wuest & Sanhueza Petrarca 2011).

Figure 4

**Left - Right**
Concluding, the above-presented evidence supports to some extent the claims that there is a dividing line between left and right wing parties and immigrants’ representation. Having a major Left party in government enhances the nomination of immigrant candidates while the electoral success of anti-immigration parties has a negative effect on their representation. Finally, regarding the relationship between party ideology and immigrants’ representation it contradicts previous findings, yet this finding may be linked to the limitations of the measurement.

4.3 Multiculturalism and Integration Policies

Previous to World War II, illiberal and undemocratic relations dominated cultural diversity. These were based on ideas of hierarchy and justified by racialist ideologies promoting the superiority of some cultures and their right to rule over others (e.g. colonizer-colonized, settler and indigenous, normalized and deviant etc.). In the aftermath of the war members of the United Nation Organization actively promoted a new ideology based on ideals of equality of races and people. In this way, the new wave of multiculturalism appeared as a mean helpful for overcoming the “legacies of earlier hierarchies, and to help build fairer and more inclusive democratic societies” based on new models of democratic citizenship aimed at overcoming the “deeply-entrenched inequalities that have persisted after the abolition of formal discrimination” (Kymlicka 2010: 37-39). Therefore a significant part of multicultural policies are today devoted to identifying and changing “rooted traditions, customs, and symbols that have historically excluded or stigmatized minorities” and which are present in institutions and in every day life (ibid).

Multicultural Policies

In the contexts of ethnic and cultural diversity resulting from international migration, the concept of multiculturalism narrows down to a “set of mutually reinforcing approaches or methodologies concerning the incorporation and participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities, and their modes of cultural/religious differences” (Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010: 4). While, immigration democracies are increasingly in favor of the recognition of rights to national
minorities, multicultural policies related to accommodation of international migrants remain very controversial and subject to political debate. As Kymlicka puts it “[t]here has been a backlash against multiculturalism policies relating to postwar migrants in several Western democracies” (2010). As shown above, multicultural polices include various types of welfare policies, which also tend to be defined along class lines. From this perspective, “[i]ssues that involve “haves versus havenots” are more likely to gain quick access to the docket because large numbers of people are involved” (quotation marks in original, Elder and Cobb 1983: 95). Yet also, many of these are based on the arguments that point to “insurmountable” cultural conflicts. Fears that a clash of civilization - due mainly to the presence of Muslim - will “fracture Europe’s cities” (Dancygier 2010:14).

The countries included in this study present different levels of institutionalization of multicultural policies. Figure 5 shows the relationship between multicultural policies and the representation of minorities in national parliaments. First of all we observe that Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, France, the Netherlands and France all present very low levels of institutionalization of these policies. Germany, Belgium, United States, Ireland, Norway and Portugal are more moderate and have implemented some. And these policies have been better adopted and developed in countries having a rather long immigration and multicultural trajectory, including New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. In terms of whether multicultural policies are related to the representation of immigrant minorities, the data suggests that there is rather not relationship. Basically, Denmark which scores 0 in the Multicultural Policies measurement, has similar levels of representation than the United Kingdom, which has implemented several multicultural policies, and doubles the representation of immigrants in Australia, which is based on the present scale appears as the country that has institutionalized more multicultural policies.
Political Participation Policies

Although the institutionalization of multicultural policies doesn’t appear to have an effect on immigrants’ representation the policy dimension integration policies, does. Policies designed to promote immigrants’ political participation do. The indicator results from measurements 4 policy dimensions that examine whether immigrants have comparable rights and opportunities to participate in political live than native citizens. These include (1) electoral rights, (2) political liberties, (3) consultative bodies, and (4) implementation policies, which include funding for their political activities. Yet as Figure 6 shows, it is surprising to observe that the promotion and implementation of policies that have been designed to foster immigrants’ participation have the opposite result on their representation in national legislatures. As a matter of fact, in Norway for example where participation policies are widely
developed immigrants are less represented in its national legislatures than they are in the United States or Canada, where participation is less promoted.

Figure 6

Given that some of the descriptive analyses support previous research and other show surprising effects, in the next section I include the results of the multiple regressions, which shed further light on what factors influence immigrants' representation.
4.4 Descriptive Representation: Comprehensive Model

Let us now turn to the examination of descriptive representation of minorities taking into account all the dimensions that I have presented earlier. Multiple linear regression analyses has been used to predict the descriptive representation of immigrants in national legislatures, expressed in levels of proportionality. Basic regression coefficients are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 53</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
<th>Model 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.868</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(0.2003)</td>
<td>(0.231)</td>
<td>(0.243)</td>
<td>(0.327)</td>
<td>(0.294)</td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left in Past</td>
<td>-0.115</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>-0.065</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>(0.147)</td>
<td>(0.184)</td>
<td>(0.188)</td>
<td>(0.197)</td>
<td>(0.125)</td>
<td>(0.195)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Immigration Party Success</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>-0.016 (0.01)</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left - Right Seat Ratio</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.148)</td>
<td>(0.151)</td>
<td>(0.155)</td>
<td>(0.099)</td>
<td>(0.134)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electoral Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
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<td>-0.401</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>-0.408</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.243)</td>
<td>(0.238)</td>
<td>(0.214)</td>
<td>(0.294)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportional</td>
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<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.167)</td>
<td>(0.214)</td>
<td>(0.196)</td>
<td>(0.289)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Policies</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.044)</td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
<td>(0.059)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Integration</td>
<td>-0.021**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Rights, Liberties + Implementation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultative Bodies</td>
<td>-0.011*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Proportionality</td>
<td>0.506</td>
<td>0.908*</td>
<td>0.885*</td>
<td>1.161*</td>
<td>1.19597*</td>
<td>1.131**</td>
<td>1.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.391)</td>
<td>(0.461)</td>
<td>(0.478)</td>
<td>(0.514)</td>
<td>(0.527)</td>
<td>(0.333)</td>
<td>(0.467)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-Squared</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>0.309</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-Squared</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

Standard Errors in Parentheses. *, **, *** indicate significance at the 90%, 95%, and 99% levels respectively.
Model 1 includes only the control variable women’s proportionality, which shows a positive, yet not significant relationship between immigrants and women’s representation. In Model 2 the party-level variables related to the electoral outcomes in the previous election have been included. The analysis shows that having a Left party in Government prior to the election did not significantly predict immigrants’ representation. Similarly, the electoral success of far right parties does not have a significantly affect on immigrants’ representation. Model 3 takes into account the seat shares of left and right wing parties. The results of the analysis show that party ideology does not have a significant effect on immigrants’ representation. In Model 4 the electoral system variables have been included. The results suggest that mixed and proportional electoral systems have a negative effect on immigrants’ representation, however these effects are not significant. Furthermore in Model 5 I include the variable Multicultural Policies, to examine whether institutional arraignment designed to accommodate immigrants has any effect. The results of the regression show that multiculturalism is negatively related with immigrants’ representation. Nonetheless the effects are not significant. That is why Model 6 expands the joint examination of parties, electoral systems and integration policies and includes policies designed to promote the political participation of immigrants. The results of the analysis show that political integration policies have a negative and significant effect on immigrants’ representation (Beta= -0.021, sig. <0.01).

As these results shown in Model 6 contradict to some extent the purposes of these policies and our expectations, in Model 7 I further examine the effects of participation policies. I distinguish between electoral rights, liberties and implementation policies on the one hand, and policies deigned to strengthen consultative bodies on the other. Consultative bodies are “a form of limited but guaranteed access to the political process” (Anderson 1990:113). These are: “similar to voting rights in the sense that [immigrants and ethnic minorities] may be able to elect representatives to a formally constituted body which can then press their views on policy-makers. However, they are not part of the normal democratic process, and while they have some legitimacy they have no power” (1990:113). Yet it appears to many, as a venue for immigrants’ consultation and integration (Gsir and Martiniello 2004). Controversies around whether consultative bodies help the representation of
immigrants or contribute to their isolation have existed for many decades. In fact, many political scientists have criticized the idea, advancing the argument that they lead to further marginalization of immigrant groups, while giving the illusion that they have access to direct participation. The analysis here presented provides some empirical evidence to these critics. As the model 7 shows, it appears that electoral rights, civic freedoms and resources to implement policies are positively associated (yet not significant) with immigrants’ political representation. However a key finding is that having strong consultative bodies at the national, regional and local levels has a negative effect on immigrants’ representation in national legislatures (Beta= -0.011, sig. <0.05). This last model was able to account for 73% of the variance in immigrants’ representation.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In this paper I examine the descriptive representation of immigrants in national parliaments from a comparative perspective in 15 Western Democracies. This strategy allowed extending our understanding about the extent to which institutional variables, namely electoral systems and integration policies, influence immigrants’ representation while also assessing the influence that parties have. And an important feature of the analysis is that it uses in all the analyses a proportional measurement of immigrants’ representation that takes into account the share of immigrants in the population (Bloemraad 2012, Forest 2012, Bird 2003).

The starting point of this paper is the observation that while proportional electoral systems foster the representation of women, the same relationship is not observed with immigrant minorities. That is why, I turn to what many single-country and small N studies have highlighted as the main gatekeepers of immigrants’ representation: political parties. I include three different variables related to parties in the analyses. The first one examines whether having the Left in the government prior to the election enhances the electoral success of immigrant candidates. The second explores whether the electoral success of anti-immigration parties has a negative effect on the electoral strategies followed by parties and results is even poorer immigrants’ representation. And the third, investigates whether there is any relationship between the Left and Right seat share and immigrants’ representation. Based on the analyses
here presented, we observe that any of these three party-level explanations has a significant effect on immigrants’ representation.

Looking to the effects that institutional characteristics have on immigrants’ political representation the analyses show that immigrants’ representation is less related to the characteristics of electoral systems because proportional systems do not necessarily enhance the descriptive representation of this group suggesting that cross-country variations are in reality related to other factors. The analysis of the effects of integration policies reveals that while multicultural policies do not have any significant effect on immigrants’ representation, the promotion of immigrants’ participation has. The main finding is that in democracies where participation policies include strong consultative bodies for immigrants, their representation in national legislatures is highly penalized. A possible explanation for this finding is that these consultative bodies, designed to consult immigrant communities, appear to immigrant political actors as the main bodies where immigration issues are discussed. However, this finding can also indicate some isolation of the immigrant community as result of the perceptions of key actors such as political parties, that knowing that these consultative bodies exist, do not nominate immigrant candidates for office. Summing up, this paper shows that in order to understand more about immigrants’ political participation and representation in national legislatures we need to further explore the effects of multicultural and integration policies.
6. References


Table 2.
Descriptive Representation & Electoral Systems per Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Proportionality (Representation)</th>
<th>Electoral System</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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Table 3.
Data per Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Bird 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Bird 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Forest 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Bloemraad 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Sanhueza Petrarca 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Saalfeld, Wust, Sanhueza Petrarca 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Bird 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2006</td>
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