

## 2 Approaching Political Recruitment and Representation

### Introduction

Traditional studies on the political representation, recruitment, and political participation of minorities/migrants have concentrated either on environmental structures, such as candidate selection processes and level of discrimination during the recruitment, or on the nature of representation; that is, “whose interests are represented.” The latter includes questions about the degree of affiliation between the representative and groups from the homeland, and even whether he/she uses the post to advance a “hidden agenda” on issues relating to the homeland (see Swain 1993, Lublin 1997, Wong et al. 2005, Lien et al. 2004). Emerging studies over the last decade have either neglected possible ways to be active in formal/electoral political pathways or have limited their attention to the passive political participation of voters instead of candidates. Still, “the study of political behaviour among immigrants is still in relative infancy” (Ramakrishnan 2005: 14, de la Garza 2004: 91) in Germany as well.

As one might guess, there is a longer and richer history of studies in the U.S.A. on political participation among migrants, blacks, Latinos, and recently Asian Americans, among other minority ethnic groups. In Europe, interest in candidates and mandate holders with migration backgrounds has grown recently; the pioneer in this trend has been Britain (Anwar 2001; Le Lohe 1998; Saggar 1998, 2000; Solomos and Back 1995), followed by studies about the situation in Belgium (Jacobs et al. 2006), France, and the Netherlands (Wihtol de Wenden 1999). Of course, the connection between these research fields does not mean that migration background should be conflated with ethnicity. While a migration back-

ground is generally considered to enable a politician to take into account various heterogeneities: ethnicity, race, gender, age, class, etc., it is not meant to suggest a hierarchy among categories of heterogeneity; namely, race, gender, or ethnicity or, as in the present study, migration background. Still, ethnic background serves as the point of departure in the United States in analysis of political representation, while in continental Europe migration background<sup>7</sup> serves a similar but not identical function. However, this research interest arguably remains embryonic, appearing to lack an approach that might contribute to an understanding of agency among politicians from specific categories of heterogeneity. So there are notable gaps in the two bodies of literature; that is, migration research and political science research with particular reference to political sociology and political recruitment, which can be to some extent addressed through the analysis of experiences by politicians with migration backgrounds.

The missing approach, as it will be pursued in this study, relates to the perspectives of the agents involved in politics with regard to their backgrounds. To put it bluntly, through the narrations of the interviewees, this study examines the meaning and role of migration background in German politics. Particular focus is granted to the meaning(s) these politicians give to their professional experiences and careers, with respect to being designated a person of migration background. By positioning the study from the standpoint of politicians the aim is to gain an understanding of what kind of a role the notion *being of migration background* plays in the political realm, and to uncover the weight of the attribution *having a migrant background* to each interviewee. Equally important then, according to what has been outlined in the interviews, is to find out in which realms of experience having a migration background is neglected.

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7 A detailed operationalisation of the term in its diverse forms in German will be laid out in another chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, *migrant origin* and *person of migration background* are used interchangeably to refer to the examined group of politicians, whereas it is commonly acknowledged that the former refers to first generation migrants while the latter is used to refer to their offspring born in receiving countries.

The main research question is complemented by other minor research interests, such as: i) when and how the marker comes up in the narratives on their experiences as politicians, ii) under what conditions the marker is neutralised or even converted into a resource, iii) whether it is possible to come up with a repertoire of narratives or even a typology among the informants, and iv) as a result, what the respective narratives mean in relation to the central question for management of diversity.

In order to position this puzzle, this chapter seeks to demarcate it from previous approaches. It seems beneficial to cast a closer glance on related literature about the political recruitment and political representation of disadvantaged groups (e.g., women, black Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, British minorities, etc.); the main thrusts of these will be presented in order to single out aspects that shed light on the pursued study. In this way, their contributions, as well as their points of divergence from the projected study may be clarified. Through this review, it should become clear that studies dealing with categories of heterogeneity/diversity in politics generally approach this, taking into account the capacities of the opportunity structures from which these groups can benefit. Another approach examines factors that affect successful entry into politics by such groups in a variable-oriented manner, while a third approach considers to what extent their roles in shaping politics may correspond to the needs and interests of the populations with which the public associates them. In the first two kinds of approaches, the pathways into politics are overrated, while the stages after entry are neglected, as if recruitment and nomination considerations were predictive of how aspects of difference would impact performance within political posts. The third approach under scrutiny, representation theory as proffered by Pitkin, goes beyond selection and nomination to shed light on the nature of political activity in theory, yet as a variety of studies by others demonstrates, the empirical implementation fails to go beyond tracing the number of policy initiatives proposed by the selected politicians on behalf of their constituency. There are two sorts of limitations in representation theory: first of all, the constituency examined is reduced to those belonging to the given category of diversity; as a second point, the representa-

tiveness of the politician is measured only by roll calls at policy initiatives or bills filed. The latter blurs the distinction between the political acts of elected representatives and those of lobbyists; empirical evidence collected for the purpose of this study reveals that such a formula is untenable and should be pre-empted in analysis of the performance of politicians with migration backgrounds. All in all, despite differences in research method and specific area of interest, what these studies have in common is that they lack the perspectives of the politicians involved.

In the following sections, after a short definition of political recruitment, traditional approaches to party and recruitment studies, with an overwhelming focus on political elites, will be revised. The second section, then, will narrow the focus and concentrate mainly on 'supply- and demand-side' recruitment theory proposed by Norris (1995), which divides recruitment patterns into two categories comprised of individual characteristics and gatekeepers' expectations.

In the third and last section, on the other hand, a shift from recruitment to political representation occurs with the objective of providing an overview of representation theory, first through a specific focus on the representation model proposed by Pitkin (1967) and then via empirical studies, following the categories proffered in Pitkin's model. This section aims to compensate for what was left open in recruitment theories in the previous section, namely the examination of political activity in the aftermath of elections. In this respect, representation theory diverges from the variable- and factor-oriented approaches in its focus on how the politician performs his/her post with respect to the interests voiced by the associated constituency. This section considers particularly the roles of race, ethnicity, and gender in politics in order to compare and contrast thematically similar studies, thus helping to demarcate the area of interest with respect to the role of migration background.

## 2.1 Political Recruitment and Political Elite Studies

Recruitment studies stand at the intersection of studies on mass political participation, voting behaviours, the role of the elite, party organisation, careers, interest groups, and more recently, studies on racial and gender politics. This diversity of related intellectual interest leads on the one hand to centrifugal pressures that tend to fragment recruitment studies, since each function within a different theoretical framework, asks different key questions, and takes different methodological approaches. This section of the study aims to provide an overview of these studies in order to set the perimeter for the research question pursued here. On the other hand, the plethora of studies available provides options and lends intellectual strength, making it possible to draw on many subfields and/or enhance an argument. To that end, the following is a brief overview on the main trends in recruitment and political elite studies.

In democracies, the people participate on various platforms and at various levels of interest, such as formulation, advocacy and, at the highest level, in law-making processes. The variety of channels for political participation, from joining interest groups, becoming community activists, and lobbying, to becoming campaign donors or grassroots party members, all have regulating norms and procedures for selecting those who can and cannot join. Recruitment takes place at all levels of office. Yet these rules are rarely as selective as the processes of political recruitment for posts in which only a few of the eligible candidates may manage to run a campaign and secure range of support from within the party, much less gets elected to office. Political recruitment refers specifically to the critical step as individuals move from lower levels of party politics into parliamentary careers. Throughout a political career, politicians may transfer laterally, skip a step or more along the way, or move up and down between the levels. In an early writing on political recruitment in the U.S.A., Jacob (1962: 708) defines it as “a process by which individuals are screened by political institutions for elective office.” A similar view is also put forward by Brady, Scholzman, and Verba (1999:153), who refer to the term ‘political recruitment’ to denote the process by which “individu-

als are selected for inclusion among political elites." It differs from regular party membership or delegacy in the councils of the party in process and implications.

Many different perspectives within political science and feminist research provide insight into common concerns (see Czudnowski 1975; Fowler 1993; Gallagher and Marsh 1988; Mansbridge 1999; Norris 1996, and Norris and Lovenduski 1995); namely, political inclusion or recruitment of members of disadvantaged groups into mainstream politics. Among the most traditional approaches, a rich biographical and historical literature examines the career paths of political leaders through memoirs, letters, and public records. Earlier sociological studies, such as those by Mosca and Pareto (cited in Meisel 1965) and Michels (1959) were concerned with how recruitment procedures could restrict individuals from certain class backgrounds and thereby result in elite classes dominating decision-making. These studies laid the groundwork for party studies, with a specific focus on cadres, functions, and decision-making procedures from a sociological perspective, yet with clear-cut differentiations between the classes, which takes for granted that groups in power are the elites. These studies are still well-cited in political sociology and party studies, with good reason; however, for the sake of the question posed here, they leave little room for the analysis of experiences of individual actors in politics by constructing a clear-cut divide between party officials and others; this in turn homogenises interests within social groups. While some of those studies strive to outline the political mechanisms by which recruitment occurs, what this study aims to do is to fill the gap by examining these processes from the perspectives of politicians with migration backgrounds.

Other studies (see Jones et. al. 2002, for instance) similarly portray pathways to the parliament in Argentina, with a focus on lobby groups and interest stakeholders. In all these examples, electoral rules used to elect members, including socio-demographic characteristics, attitudes among political elite, and the structure and functioning of the legislative party system, are at the core of the study. While studies of political elites have been focused on the social composition of the parliament and

the career patterns of elites within party organisations, studies of political parties have focused on how processes within the parties operate, what the selection procedures tell us about the parties, and what sorts of differences exist between the parties. The contribution of both lines of studies, for the sake of the present work, has been in their approaches to the range of socio-demographic traits as an initial point in explanation of political behaviour and career evolution.

Having laid the groundwork for general approaches to examining the political elite and their political recruitments, scholars may more finely tune their focus on two characteristics among political aspirants to pinpoint the role of these in recruitment processes. The first of these are the individual capacities and competences that lead to a successful recruitment process, and the second concentrates on so-called 'demand-side factors,' which cover expectations from the political parties, or their gatekeepers from political aspirants. To guide this trend in recruitment theory, a theory developed by Pippa Norris (1995) will be used, since the authors pay specific attention to so-called disadvantaged groups in their work; namely women and ethnic or racial minorities. Scholarly work focusing on disadvantaged groups in politics argues that there exist glass-ceiling barriers in party and political structure that prevent women and racial and ethnic minorities from wider participation in political processes. This branch of recruitment studies embraces the group of politicians examined in this study to some extent, and deserves particular attention in this regard. One must therefore tentatively note that most of the time this line of argument comes from a strong variable-oriented perspective, which leaves little room for personal perspectives like those portrayed in the present study. By overestimating the influence of an assemblage of factors that facilitate or prevent political aspirants along the pathway to political posts, such an approach assumes that markers of heterogeneity will have been leveled by the time aspirants succeed in passing the gatekeepers. In this respect, it remains a question how and whether markers of heterogeneity come to the fore during the practice of politics. In the following section this question will be more deeply examined.

## 2.2 The Rocky Road to Power: Supply-Demand Side Theory for Recruitment

### 2.2.1 *'It's me you are looking for': Supply-Side Factors*

A second element in the defining of political recruitment is the fact that certain 'individuals' are elected from a wide range of aspirants to become part of the political elite. This is what Norris et al. (1995) refer to as the 'supply-side explanation of political recruitment.' This model also brings one of the biggest anomalies between democratic theory and practice into play. According to the former, every individual who meets given legal criteria—age, citizenship, and criminal record, etc.—is eligible to run for elective office. Moreover, certain theories of democracy emphasise 'representation' as a quintessential element of liberal democracy. A parliament or local council should be a representative "sample," so to speak, of the society. Yet only a brief look at the international literature on the background and profile of the political elite at various levels of representation undermines this aspect of democracy. In this respect, supply-side explanations of recruitment concentrate on the fundamental mystery as to what kinds of persons are recruited into politics and why? In other words, supply-side factors in recruitment seek qualities that turn a qualified political aspirant into a successful candidate or even a Member of Parliament. Regarding the research goals of this study, although characteristics by elected politicians with migration backgrounds are not the centre of interest per se, this characteristic was frequently articulated in interviewee narratives, in combination with many of their assets. Collected empirical evidence for the purpose of this study demonstrates that, as in Norris' approach, politicians of various backgrounds and party alignments put an emphasis on their personal competences in discussion of their qualifications to be in politics.

Norris points to two foundational factors influencing the supply-side explanation of her model at the individual level: (i) political capital and (ii) political motivation. Insofar as the former is concerned, every advantage an aspirant brings into politics and to the party specifically is



examined. This does not only refer to high financial status, although that is essential to sustain a political campaign, but also to a long list of qualifications that includes professional skills, political connections and networks, party experience, career flexibility, educational qualifications, and legislative skills just to name a few. The second major factor, according to Norris, refers to the drive, the ambition and the political engagement that make aspirants willing to run for office (see also Norris 1995, 1997; Verba 1995). These are largely influenced and shaped by the political backgrounds of individuals who enter the political arena, as the literature on and preliminary analysis of this study's target group suggests. Nevertheless, capital and motivation do not move in linear and deterministic ways. They rather map out the scene for the formation of resources useful in political life.

An abundance of studies focus on the background characteristics of political elites to explain their recruitment. Budge and Farlie (1975) quantitatively examined the political recruitment and dropout rates of politicians in Britain to determine the predictive success of background characteristics that influence the supply of candidates to elective office. They point at a variety of such characteristics ranging from party identification, professional status, religion, and educational level, to residential factors and previous involvement in associational activities, and revealed a clear pattern of favourable background factors in recruitment processes. Despite some differences in the studied localities, the factors that had the highest predictive value in distinguishing the elected from the electorate were profession (of the candidate compared to that of his/her father), gender, educational status, and associational involvement. An adjusted version of their model applied to the Netherlands and United States showed the highly stable and general nature of the initial findings, i.e., candidates belonging to superior social statuses (e.g., male, better educated, and of higher professional status) are more likely to be recruited.

In some recent studies (Borchert and Stolz 2003; Gruber 2009; Trampusch 2005) it is argued that both political and social background have a decisive influence on party careers leading to the legislative bodies which, together with other factors, creates a standardised vision of a po-

litical career pattern. The observable pattern in recent studies on political careers is the argument that professionalisation has acquired a robust salience. In other words, political backgrounds referring to previous party office (mandate or active member), together with other factors like having a university degree, have become key indicators of legislative recruitment. A comparison of parliamentary recruitment in Britain and Germany by Best et al. (2000) concludes that these countries have become very similar despite differences in their institutional frameworks, and that both parliaments are dominated by MPs drawn from the highly educated middle classes, who are often personally linked to their constituencies and closely involved in local politics. A study by Verzichelli (2007) specifically on Christian Democratic parties in Europe reflects similar patterns and suggests that in the German Christian Democratic Party, like others, recruitment patterns demonstrate that local political involvement, party background, and a university degree (especially a degree in law) are key to recruitment. In her study on the legislative elite with respect to German social policy, Trampusch (2005: 25) asserts that both in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) the “share of occupational crossovers between the social policy and the Bundestag has decreased,” and that the degree of professionalisation shows an upward trend in the share of politicians with party backgrounds (mandate or member) prior to taking office in the Bundestag.

The findings in the literature—for instance, that all but two interviewees and potential interviewees in the target group held university or graduate degrees and had either a career in, or were in close contact with the party before their candidacy—were not surprising. Only in exceptional cases had interviewees entered politics as wild cards, meaning, in the jargon, that they entered at the invitation of higher-level party officials. Along with the data pinpointed in this analysis, these lateral recruits were more concerned about the degree to which their migration backgrounds would be “instrumentalised” than their counterparts. In fact, this concern was a common denominator among all interviewees. Consequently, the findings indicated that, as opposed to the patterns of political career development themselves, the main theme in the study

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