Political Elites in Federalized Countries: The Case of Spain (1980-2005)

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Introduction[1]

The Spanish 1978 Constitution created the State of Autonomies, a decentralized state based on the creation of 17 communities and two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla) reflecting the cultural and linguistic plurality of Spain. This "imperfect federalism" (Moreno 1997) or "semi-federalism" (Lijphart 1999: 189) is a de facto asymmetrical federal system in line with other multinational, multilingual federacies (i.e., Canada, Belgium, or India). Although asymmetries have been partly overcome over the years, there remain significant differences among two groups of communities –Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia (the "historic" regions) and Andalusia, and the rest.

The political and economic relevance of autonomous communities has grown since their creation thanks to the transferring of powers and responsibilities from the central government. Between 1980 and 2000 the regions consolidated a bureaucratic structure that employed around one million civil servants and multiplied their budget by a factor of five (López et al. 2006: 15). Put another way: When the federalization process had just started in 1981, the total expenditure of the State was that of a centralized polity: The central government accounted for 87.3% of the expenditure, whereas regional governments for three per cent and municipalities for 9.7%. More than twenty years later, in 2003, the distribution had changed and the central government's share of total expenditure was 54%, regional governments 31% and municipalities 15%[2].

Federalization implied the emergence and consolidation of a regional political elite occupying the new institutions of representation and government. The creation of the State of Autonomies meant the opening of 1,139 new seats in all 17 regional parliaments for each election. Taking into accounti differences in electoral cycles, the total number of regional seats opened to competition for the period 1980-2005 is 7,424. This number might seem small, but compare to the 3,906 seats for which politicians have competed for in national elections since 1979 for both Congress and Senate. In numerical terms, the regional political-institutional elite almost

doubles the national one. However, in terms of relevance and perceived importance there are still differences in favor of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Congress but not necessarily the Senate (Coller 2003b: 106).

More attention should be paid to this regional political elite given that we know little about them and certainly they are increasingly important for their fellow citizens in federalizing countries. They are at the core of federal democratic systems (Best and Cotta's (2000: 7). Regional politicians have an enormous impact on their respective societies –They have more power, control a larger budget, set the political agenda in their regions, have become a nursery for national politicians, are usually closer to citizens than national representatives, regulate increasingly more areas that affect citizen's lives, and, yet, we barely know who they are or what they do in their parliaments (Patzelt 2002: 96). It is certainly surprising that after 25 years of regional politics there is no study that focuses on the social profile of politicians or on their activities in parliaments.

The research in which this paper is based is focused on political elites holding a seat in regional parliaments during the period 1980-2005. This regional elite is composed of 4,354 individuals and their presence in regional institutions is the result of the policies of parties and their *selectorates*, who decide who should be in the electoral list and in what position, and consequently contribute to the final social outlook of parliaments after elections[3]. As with any political elite, regional politicians share many social features but also present some differences[4]. If we had to summarize the social features of the regional elite we would say the group is mainly composed of young men born in the region they serve, highly educated, mostly lawyers and educators, and with relevant social differences due to party and territory.

More women

Men have largely dominated regional politics between 1980 and 2005 to the point that women barely pass the 20% threshold in terms of participation in the political elite, as can be seen in Table 1. Over 25 years of federal democratic politics, the parliaments most open to women have

been those of Castile-La Mancha, Madrid, Cantabria, Andalusia, Valencia, and Baleares, while those where women's participation is minimal have been those of Murcia, Canary Islands, Aragon, and Catalonia.

Table 1
Proportion of women in each legislature

	Total 1980-2005		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Andalusia	24	410	5	109	7	109	13	109	24	109	30	109	36	109	38	109
Aragon	18	243	6	66	1	67	7	67	12	67	28	67	33	67	--	--
Asturias	23	154	9	45	13	45	22	45	18	45	33	45	31	45	--	--
Canary Isl.	16	220	2	60	2	60	7	60	10	60	28	60	35	60	--	--
Cantabria	25	138	9	35	8	39	3	39	15	39	38	39	44	39	--	--
Castilla-Leon	20	308	4	84	4	84	8	84	20	84	28	83	35	82	--	--
C-La Mancha	28	197	2	44	8	47	19	47	21	47	38	47	49	47	--	--
Catalonia	17	520	6	135	9	135	11	135	13	135	13	135	24	135	30	135
C. Valenciana	24	311	6	89	6	89	13	89	29	89	40	89	42	89	--	--
Extremadura	20	216	5	65	3	65	14	65	17	65	26	65	32	65	--	--
Galicia	18	302	4	71	1	71	9	75	11	75	21	75	33	75	33	75
Balearic Isl.	24	200	6	54	12	59	19	59	27	59	30	59	36	59	--	--
La Rioja	22	128	11	35	12	33	22	33	21	33	30	33	40	33	--	--
Madrid	26	357	13	94	17	96	21	101	26	103	32	102	40	111	--	--
Murcia	15	178	5	43	0	45	11	45	18	45	18	45	26	46	--	--
Navarra	20	198	4	50	8	50	12	50	24	50	22	50	32	50	--	--
Basque Count.	23	274	7	60	11	75	12	75	21	75	25	75	29	75	33	75
TOTAL	21	4,354	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: Our own based on official sources
Note: 1. Totals in each autonomous community for the period (N) does not equal the total number of seats because there are MPs who have been elected more than once. 2. Percentages rounded. 3. Because of different electoral cycles, legislatures in Andalusia, Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country do not coincide with the rest of regions. For instance, legislature III in the Basque Country begins in 1986, two years earlier than in Catalonia, four years earlier than in Andalusia, and five years earlier than in the rest of regions

Although politics have been mainly managed by men, and mirroring changes in society, women tend to access regional parliaments increasingly over the years, even earlier than in the Congress of Deputies of Spain and other European parliaments[5]. For instance, according to data in Table 1, at the beginning of the 1980's, the proportion of women in regional parliaments barely reached 10% while by the beginning of the twenty-first century (sixth legislature) the proportion in most parliaments was over 30% and in some cases (like Castile-La Mancha) almost reached 50%. There is a case (Murcia in 1987) where no woman was present in the regional assembly. In twenty five years of regional politics, a growing

women's participation into politics brings chambers to a more balanced representation.

Regional parliaments can be grouped in four types according to the timing and strength of the incorporation of women. There are the *pioneers*, those in which women participate earlier and proportionally more (almost double) than in any other region –Asturias, Castile-La Mancha, Extremadura, Rioja, and the Basque Country. There are the *laggards*, those parliaments where women participate proportionally less and tend to be incorporated later than in other chambers. These are the cases of Murcia and, surprisingly, Catalonia. There are also the *slow starters* that catch up at the end of the period studied (like Galicia and Cantabria, but especially Valencia), and the *champions*, those which begin early and keep a steady growth of women's participation –Madrid and La Rioja.

This variety poses the following question: why are some political elites more reluctant than others to incorporate women to the electoral lists and thus to parliaments? There are reasons to explain the incorporation of women in politics[6], but there are not so obvious reasons to explain regional differences. Valiente et al. (2003) found that leftist parties incorporate more women and earlier than conservative ones, the difference being statistically relevant. Still, our findings suggest that in some regions, the ideological cleavage plays a secondary role. To demonstrate it, we offer an analysis of two opposed cases, a champion (Madrid) and a quite counterintuitive laggard (Catalonia), and we will add a third case (Basque Country) to find an explanation to the puzzle of Catalonia.

Madrid is a unique case in that it is a pioneer and the proportional participation of women shows a steady, high growth rate throughout the period. This evolution is common to conservative and leftist parties, as can be seen in Table 2. The evolution of the presence of women in the regional chamber is quite similar with two differences. With minor variations, PSOE and PP show similar proportions of women until the fourth legislature (1995), when the socialists' increment in the presence of women is higher than the populares', although the latter catch up in the sixth legislature. IU begins incorporating more women earlier and keeps a high level, although

the presence of women suffers a minor set back in the fourth legislature. It seems that in the case of Madrid, all three parties have made a similar effort to incorporate women onto the electoral list in winning positions and, consequently, have contributed to make this community both a “pioneer” and a “champion”.

Table 2
Proportion of women in each legislature in Madrid, Catalonia, and Basque Country

	Total 1980-2005		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Madrid																
PP	27	160	12	34	19	32	21	47	24	54	29	55	44	57	--	--
PSOE	27	134	14	51	17	40	21	34	31	32	36	39	38	45	--	--
IU	27	48	11	9	14	7	31	13	23	17	37	8	33	9	--	--
Catalonia																
CiU	14	182	7	43	8	72	10	69	13	70	13	60	14	56	19	46
ERC	14	50	0	14	0	5	0	6	0	11	0	13	8	12	30	23
PSC	23	138	6	33	12	41	14	42	15	40	18	34	33	52	38	42
IC	24	49	12	25	17	6	11	9	29	7	18	11	33	3	44	9
PP	17	47	0	0	0	11	17	6	14	7	12	17	42	12	27	15
Basque C.																
PNV-EA	27	110	12	25	16	32	17	30	22	31	30	30	30	27	50	22
HB	17	46	9	11	9	11	8	13	15	13	27	11	29	14	14	7
PSE	23	52	0	9	5	19	10	19	19	16	25	12	28	14	46	13
IU	18	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	6	0	2	33	3
PP	20	35	0	2	14	7	0	2	0	6	18	11	31	16	46	13

Source: Our own based on official sources
Notes: 1. Percentages rounded. 2. We have selected the largest parties present in most of the legislatures and neglected short lived parties. 3. In the Basque Country, we have collapsed PNV and EA since EA appeared in the second legislature (1984), created by PNV affiliates that abandoned the party. EA and PNV made an alliance for the seventh legislature (2001). 4. Total refers to the number of individuals holding a seat. Some MPs have been present in more than one legislature

Contrary to Madrid, Catalonia is a counterintuitive case. This is a region highly developed in economic and cultural terms and a high presence of women in the political elite can be expected to be the reflection of this development. However, contrary to the expectation, Catalonia becomes a “laggard” in terms of women’s incorporation into politics, as can be seen in Table 1. The reason is to be found in the different behavior towards women that parties have had over 25 years of regional politics.

Contrary to Madrid and other regions, the divide in Catalonia is not found in the ideological cleavage, but in the nationalistic one.

Considering the whole period, the proportion of women present in Convergencia i Unió (CiU) is the same as in Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), as can be seen in Table 2. Both nationalist parties, however, show a different evolution. By the early eighties, the presence of women was minimal in both groups. ERC blocked women's presence until the sixth legislature (1999) when a single woman obtained a seat in the regional parliament. The turning point was 2003 (seventh legislature), when ERC incorporated almost a third of women into its parliamentary group following an earlier change in the leadership that impinged a mildly leftist outlook to the party. Contrary, there is no turning point for CiU, but a steady and slow evolution that brings the proportion of women from 7% to 19% in the seventh legislature. In any case, CiU has never placed more than ten women in its large parliamentary group.

A different picture emerges when we examine the behavior of the nominally non-nationalist parties concerning the presence of women in their parliamentary groups. According to data in Table 2, the socialist PSC and the former communist IC have similar proportions of women during the period considered (almost a fourth), and even the conservative PP has proportionally more women than the nationalist groups. The evolution of these three parties is similar. The PP has consistently had a lower proportion of women than the leftist parties until the sixth legislature (1999), when the five women elected made almost half of this group. A few years later and after a change in the leadership, the presence of women was reduced to a fourth in the seventh legislature. Leftist parties have proportionally incorporated more women than the *populares*, although they have also experienced a turning point in the sixth legislature, when a third of each parliamentary group was women. Then, in the seventh legislature the proportion grew within IC to 44% and to 38% among the socialists.

It seems that Catalonia being a laggard in regional politics is due more to the low presence of women in nationalist parties vis a vis non-nationalist ones. Is there anything among nationalist parties that prevent them from

incorporating women into their electoral lists or is it just a matter of the Catalan nationalist parties? A comparison between Catalonia and the Basque Country could help to answer the question. Both regions are economically advanced and women's participation in public life is usually a reflection of this development. Both regions, as well, have large, powerful, influential, and ruling conservative nationalist parties. However, their political behavior concerning women differs quite remarkably. Data in Table 2 indicates that the largest nationalist party in the Basque Country (PNV-EA) also has the largest proportion of women in its parliamentary group. To the contrary, the self-proclaimed leftist nationalist HB-EH (whose name has changed several times for legal problems related to its association with the terrorist group ETA), has the lowest proportion of women in its ranks at the regional chamber. In the middle we find the non-nationalist parties PSOE, PP, and IU (called there Ezkerda Batua). It is difficult to talk about a nationalist or even an ideological divide in the case of gender in the Basque Country. The evolution of the participation of women in parliamentary politics also shows relevant differences. In Catalonia, leftist parties and lately the PP, led the incorporation of women into the regional chamber. In the Basque Country, it seems that the largest nationalist parties have led this transformation.

Therefore, Catalonia being a counterintuitive case is largely the result of the policies of nationalist parties which do not place women in winning positions in the electoral list. Given the electoral system in Spain, the research question should focus the attention on to what is called the *selectorates*, those members of a party who decide the internal composition of the electoral list. Surprisingly (and regretfully), our empirical knowledge about these bodies is quite low.

Young politicians growing old

The age distribution of the political elite is an important component of their social background; age profile can be an indicator not only of human capital, but it also can show the openness of the political structure to newcomers. Following Inglehart (1990), young MPs can incorporate a good

deal of new values and priorities to the legislative process and the political debate that may seem alien to veteran politicians from older generations. However, young politicians may be more inexperienced, lack social ties with their rivals, be less pragmatic and consequently less inclined to consensus or to reach pacts with their political rivals (Coller 2002).

Regional parliaments are not the arena for gerontocrats. The average regional politician in Spain is 43.3 years old at the time of his/her first entrance, which sides these politicians with the age distribution of MPs of most Western European democracies, which are on the 40-49 age range, and certainly below the average age of MPs in the Congress of Deputies (Linz et al. 2000: 441). Although Blondel (1973: 77), indicated that "it is natural that legislators should be older than the 'average' citizen of a country", the fact is that in the case of Spain the average regional politician is younger than the average citizen of voting age, which was 44.5 in 1981 and 46.6 in 2001, according to census data collected by INE (1985, 2001). This is largely a young elite at the point of entry, but this is a quite common pattern in the similarly young Spanish democracy. Consider Adolfo Suárez (43), Felipe González (40), José María Aznar (43), and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (43), presidents of government that were not older than 43 when they took office.

The youth of regional politicians reflects the democratic pathways to the regional parliaments. Before the consolidation of democracy, the average age of politicians was 52 (Equipo Data 1969) and the average age of ministers during Francoism and the transition was 51 (Lewis 1972, Linz et al. 2003: 87). However, during the democratic period, both ministers and congresspersons were younger (average age around 44). These findings suggest that vis a vis authoritarian regimes, democratic institutions incorporate younger people to the political process and this has a reflection in the average age of politicians in regional parliaments.

The pattern of age distribution shows some slight difference across the regions. In general, younger politicians can be found in the first legislatures (average age of 41), although the average age has grown over the years. Many young politicians (especially in the socialist party) began their careers

in the regional arena. Some remained there and others went to national politics. Also, young politicians are found when the majority in parliament changes. That means the party obtaining the largest plurality of seats has placed in the electoral list a number of politicians younger on average than their predecessors. While the older politicians, on average, come from Castile-Leon, Cantabria, the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia, the younger politicians are found in Andalusia, Asturias, Murcia, La Rioja, and Extremadura[7]. The small but significant age gap between the regional MPs belonging to the PSOE and to the PP (see Table 6) could explain such age profile differences among the regions. For example, the autonomous communities with the youngest politicians were often governed by the PSOE while the communities with the oldest politicians are strongholds of the PP. The exceptions are the Basque Country and Catalonia, mainly ruled by conservative nationalist parties enjoying large majorities of seats. Also, the regions holding the first regional elections (the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, and Andalusia) have on average more veteran MPs (43.7 years old) than the rest of the autonomous communities (40.8 years old), which might be due to the fact that, except in Andalusia, conservative parties obtained the largest plurality of seats. Thus, it might be the case that conservative parties tend to place older politicians in the electoral list than leftist parties, who may recruit future MPs from younger segments of the population.

Fewer internal migrants

The regional politician has been born in the region s/he serves in 84% of the cases, which, overall, has left little room for internal migrants to participate in the political elite of their host regions[8]. Furthermore, over the years, internal migrant's presence in regional chambers has diminished substantially, except in the case of Aragon (see Table 3). The scarcity of internal migrant participation in the political elite should not be surprising in some regions that have traditionally exported labor force to other areas within Spain. For instance, many inhabitants of Andalusia, Extremadura, Castile-Leon, Castile-La Mancha, and Galicia have traditionally nurtured

the industries and services of other regions (and Europe) and have attracted proportionally fewer individuals to live there. As a result, these regions, together with the Canary Islands, show the lowest proportion of internal migrants both in 1981 and 2001 according to data of the official census (INE 1985, 2001). To the contrary, Catalonia, Madrid, Basque Country, Balearic Islands, and Valencia have been a pole of attraction for Spaniards migrating to work from other regions. As a result, these regions have the largest (but decreasing) proportions of internal migrants in Spain both in 1981 and 2001.

Table 3
Proportion of internal migrants in each legislature

	Total 1980-2005		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Andalusia	4	402	5	105	4	106	4	109	4	107	1	107	1	109	8	109
Aragon	18	239	15	65	18	66	20	66	12	66	19	67	18	67	--	--
Asturias	12	68	17	12	13	15	11	27	11	45	4	27	4	27	--	--
Canary Isl.	7	201	5	60	5	56	5	60	9	58	2	48	7	55	--	--
Cantabria	17	137	23	35	18	38	18	38	18	38	10	39	10	39	--	--
Castilla-Leon	11	286	9	84	12	84	8	84	9	73	15	73	10	77	--	--
C-La Mancha	27	192	30	43	30	47	23	47	30	43	19	47	17	47	--	--
Catalonia	11	489	14	135	8	135	9	135	7	135	7	135	7	133	10	104
C. Valenciana	18	302	20	86	18	89	19	89	17	82	14	88	16	89	--	--
Extremadura	10	185	19	43	16	64	10	62	7	60	11	64	6	65	--	--
Galicia	7	284	1	68	3	69	11	72	11	74	9	70	3	68	4	75
Balearic Isl.	19	199	15	54	21	58	22	59	24	59	20	59	19	59	--	--
La Rioja	23	128	29	35	21	33	21	33	9	33	15	33	18	33	--	--
Madrid	43	334	50	91	40	95	41	95	35	64.9	36	99	38	105	--	--
Murcia	17	91	25	16	18	39	20	25	6	18	17	23	13	45	--	--
Navarra	16	197	12	50	16	50	12	50	16	50	12	49	16	50	--	--
Basque Count.	17	24	12	8	18	11	20	10	0	6	33	6	33	6	40	5
TOTAL	16	3,758	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: Our own based on official sources
Note: Totals in each autonomous community for the period (N) does not equal the total number of seats because there are MPs who have been elected more than once. Percentages rounded

It is expected that the presence of internal migrants in regional parliaments will reflect the these trends of migration. This is the case in most of the aforementioned regions. For example, Andalusia, Galicia, Extremadura, and Castile-Leon, “exporters” of labor force, reflect also low levels of internal migrants in their regional parliaments, as can be seen in Table 3. The political elite of the Canary Islands being in this group also

reflects the low rate of migrants going from the peninsula to the islands to work. The deviant case here is Castile-La Mancha, whose political elite seems to be more open to internal migrants than others.

Among the regions with the largest share of internal migrants, the expectations are met in most of the cases. For example, Madrid appears as one the regions whose parliament has been more open to internal migrants reflecting the high proportion of non-natives living in the region. To a lesser extent, the Basque Country (an unreliable case because of the lack of information), Balearic Islands, and Valencia show high levels of internal migrants in their regional parliaments as is reflective of their status as recipients of internal migrants. The counter case here is Catalonia for being in the group of parliaments with low levels of non-natives while having a large share of internal migrants in the population.

Contrary to the cases of other developed regions, why there are so few non-native politicians in Catalonia if the population there has a large share of internal migrants? Similarly, why Castile-La Mancha has a larger proportion of non-native politicians than could be expected from their share of the population?

Table 4
Proportion of internal migrants in each legislature in Catalonia and Castile-La Mancha

	Total 1980-2005		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Catalonia																
CiU	5	195	0	43	1.4	72	3	69	4	70	7	60	7	54	9	28
ERC	0	48	0	14	0	5	0	6	0	11	0	13	0	12	0	21
PSC	20	137	33	33	22	41	14	42	12	40	6	34	10	52	19	41
IC	17	48	20	25	17	6	11	9	14	7	9	11	33	3	0	8
PP	10	38	0	--	0	11	33	6	0	7	12	17	0	12	0	6
Castile-LM																
PSOE	22	111	23	22	24	25	26	27	30	23	27	26	14	29	--	--
PP	33	76	38	21	39	18	21	19	32	19	9	21	22	18	--	--

Source: Our own based on official sources
Notes: 1. Percentages rounded. 2. We have selected the largest parties present in most of the legislatures and neglected short lived parties. 3. The total is not the sum of the Ns of the 7 legislatures since there have been some repetitions. The total is the number of MPs for whom we have information

According to census data, in 1981 there were 10% of internal migrants in Castile-La Mancha while in 2001 the proportion was 14%. It can be expected, thus, a similar proportion in the elite. However, data in Table 3 and Table 4 show that the political elite of this region has been consistently more open to non-natives than their fellow politicians from other autonomous communities. This is a region where internal migrants are overrepresented in the political elite. Certainly, the two major parties contribute to this situation in a similar way. PP supplies a larger share of internal migrants than the PSOE for the whole period, although over the years non-natives in the PP reduce their presence more strongly than in the PSOE. This reduction is similar across Spain. Why the selectorates of both parties have consistently placed a larger proportion of internal migrants in the electoral list over the years? Perhaps, for the political elite, place of birth is not relevant although our guess is that it might become more and more important insofar decentralization advances associated to the emergence and consolidation of regional identities.

Contrary, Catalonia has been a pole of attraction for many Spaniards since the nineteenth century. As a consequence, more than a third of the Catalan population in 1981 and a fourth in 2001 was born elsewhere in Spain. However, their share in the political elite for the period considered is only a tenth (11%) and over the years the presence of internal migrants in the regional chamber has been reduced at a faster and deeper rate than in the population. This evolution does not have a reflection in the composition of the political elite. To the contrary, Catalonia appears as one of the communities where the disparity between elite and social structure is among the largest. This makes Catalonia a counterintuitive case. The reason is to be found in the nationalist policies followed by *all* parties.

As data in Table 4 indicate, only the so-called non-nationalist parties (socialists and former communist IC in the left, and populares, in the center-right) present some relevant proportion of internal migrants in the political elite for the period under study. However, the difference between right and left is marked: non-nationalist leftist parties seem to be more open to society in what geographical origins is concerned by a margin of almost

2 to 1. Nationalist parties, nevertheless, are the least open to society and those who contribute the least to the presence of internal migrants in the regional chamber. The extreme case is ERC, whose parliamentary groups during the period have been composed of “Catalan natives only” while moderately conservative CiU has contributed with 5% of its MPs to the “diversity” of the regional chamber.

There are opposing trends. Over the years, CiU has incorporated more non-natives up to the 9% level reached during the seventh legislature. The PP seems to have an erratic path that could be due to changes in leadership and, consequently, changes in the composition of the electoral list. However, as data in Table 4 shows, leftist parties have steadily been closing the doors of the Catalan Parliament to non-natives, increasing thus the distance between society and parliamentary groups. IC goes from 20% in the early 1980s to 0% in 2003 with a pick of 33% (that is, one single MP) in the sixth legislature. This group has gone through a number of crises of identity whose outcome has been a more Catalanist approach to politics.

But the most dramatic closure to non-natives is the one experienced by the Catalan Socialist Party (PSC). Table 4 shows that the composition of its parliamentary group went from a third of internal migrants in 1980, mirroring the situation in society, to a steady diminishment of non-natives until the fifth legislature (6%), far from the Catalan society and especially the traditional socialist electorate composed largely of non-native workers. This showed that the Catalan socialists have increasingly placed natives in the electoral list showing a movement of the PSC towards a more nationalist outlook that has been very well studied by Miley (2006). A number of changes, including the rising of local leaders of immigrant origins to the leadership of the party, affected also the internal composition of the electoral list provoking a growth in the proportion of internal migrants in the sixth and seventh legislatures. It remains to be seen whether these changes will consolidate the opening of the electoral lists to wider segments of society.

University trained MPs, educators and lawyers

Regional politicians are well educated with 85% holding a university degree. Around a tenth (11%) finished their studies at high school and 3% finished only primary school or have no education. Few hold a PhD degree (8%), while the vast majority (60%) has a *licenciatura*. The remaining 17% obtained a university degree after three years of education. This group of regional politicians is more educated than local councilors in Spain, and certainly, university training is as common for them as it is for national representatives and even proportionally more common than for European parliamentarians[9]. It seems that Keller (1963: 121) was right indicating that "education is the single most important entrance requirement into the higher circles". It should not surprise, then, that the most common professions in the regional parliaments are those that require university degrees –educators and liberal professions, especially lawyers.

Blondel (1973: 81) indicated that there were three models of parliaments according to the predominance of the professions. The "lawyers' paradise" was characteristic of the industrialized world. Parliaments in the communist countries were dominated by workers, peasants, and the intelligentsia, while parliaments in developing countries saw the emergence of civil servants, teachers, and managers as the dominant professional groups. Spanish regional parliaments are a combination of the first and third model with clear tendencies aligned with the normal development of modern parliaments –The opening of seats to a variety of professional groups.

The profession of politicians for the period considered is in line with what is expected. Liberal professions are the largest group and, among them, law related professionals are the most common (19%). Although relevant professional groups, physicians (6%), architects (1%), engineers (4%) or economists (4%) are not as frequent among politicians as those professions related to the legal system. The largest group is that of educators (21%), with workers (11%), and managers and owners (13%) receiving a good share of power. Civil servants (excluding professors) comprise a 4% of the elite. This elite is distinctively different from the one

composed of municipal politicians in which the largest professional groups are farmers (34%) and industrial workers (18%) (Botella 1992: 155). It is also slightly different from politicians of the Congress of Deputies, whose proportion of educators and civil servants tend to be higher and that of managers and entrepreneurs, and workers lower (Linz et al. 2000: 442).

Table 5
Law Related Professionals and Educators (1980-2005)

	Law related professionals		Educators	
	%	N	%	N
Andalusia	16	328	36	328
Aragon	8	233	15	233
Asturias	16	64	28	64
Canary Isl.	26	197	23	197
Cantabria	11	120	20	120
Castilla y Leon	14	279	23	279
C-La Mancha	21	186	26	186
Catalonia	17	441	18	441
C. Valenciana	18	258	26	258
Extremadura	15	179	23	179
Galicia	29	227	21	227
Balearic Isl.	19	16	12	16
La Rioja	13	126	15	126
Madrid	27	306	14	306
Murcia	8	89	28	89
Navarra	19	189	14	189
Basque Count.	39	103	15	103
TOTAL	19	3,341	21	3,341

Source: Our own based on official sources
Note: Totals in each autonomous community for the period (N) does not equal the total number of seats because there are MPs who have been elected more than once. Percentages rounded

Lawyers seem to be the cradle for many representative and executive jobs in politics, as a number of studies have demonstrated[10]. In the regional political elite, lawyers get a good share of power as well (a fifth of the total, as can be seen in Table 5). The Basque Country, Galicia, Madrid and the Canary Islands are those regions whose parliaments have a larger proportion of law related professionals in the whole period considered[11]. To the contrary, Aragon, Murcia and Cantabria are those whose regional assemblies have a lower proportion of lawyers and related professions.

For most autonomous communities, the proportion of lawyers in the first legislature is slightly higher than in the second. The first legislature is crucial since regional institutions are built and developed. Law related professionals have a say in this process (perhaps they are the most qualified ones) and this might be the reason that their presence in the first legislature is higher. However, in the second legislature the institutional building is complete and largely developed, making the role of the lawyer more dispensable in Parliaments. Generally speaking, contrary to what has happened historically in the majority of chambers (Best and Cotta 2000, Uriarte 2000: 118, Jerez 1997), our data suggest a growing presence of law related professionals in regional parliaments, although there are differences among regions.

The presence of lawyers is still quite high compared to other professions. This occurs in most countries. Why are there consistently so many lawyers in the political elite? There are three explanations –elective affinity, dispensability, and professional benefits. Already Weber (1946: 94) had pointed out that there is an elective affinity between lawyers and politicians emphasizing that since the French Revolution, lawyers and democracy go together, initiating a common and spread trend (Eulau and Sprague 1964). This should not be much of a surprise. Usually lawyers are familiar with the legislative process (making laws, debating, arguing, negotiating) so they bring some sort of know-how to parliaments.

Unlike other professionals, lawyers are quite dispensable, and dispensability is crucial to understand modern politics (Weber 1946: 85). Lawyers are more dispensable than other groups like doctors, journalists, or workers largely because their professional practice can be easily taken over by some partner that keeps the business running while in parliament. Furthermore, contrary to the experiences of other liberal professionals returning to their professional practice after serving in parliament, the lawyer may benefit from contacts and specialized knowledge acquired during his political career. It is not only less costly but it can even be beneficial for lawyers to return to their profession after some years of service in parliament or the executive.

No matter how important the group of law related professionals in the political elite, it is outnumbered by that of educators –21% are university professors or teachers. The growing presence of educators in parliaments over time has already been emphasized in other studies. In the case of the regions of Spain, the relative weight of this group has increased like that of lawyers, going from 19% in the first legislature (early eighties in all cases) to 23% in the sixth legislature (early 2000s in all cases). Data in Table 5 indicates that Andalusia is the region with the highest proportion of educators followed by Murcia, Asturias and Valencia. To the contrary, Balearic Islands, Madrid, Navarre, Rioja and Aragon are the regions whose parliaments have the lowest proportions of educators[12]. Those regions where leftist parties have enjoyed large majorities of seats show as well a large proportion of educators. This is consistent with the fact that for the whole period considered, the presence of educators in the socialist party almost doubles (28%) that of the PP (16%), as will be seen shortly.

Why are there so many educators in the political elite? Uriarte (1997: 269), following Norris and Lovenduski (1995), suggests that educators, like lawyers and journalists, are part of the "talking professions" who master the use of words both in speeches and in writing. These skills are relevant for parliamentary duties: debate, argue, convince, negotiate, and write laws. However, if Norris and Lovenduski are fully right, how can we explain the relevant absence of journalists in the regional elite? Although the "mastering of words" is an important explanation for the presence of educators, it can be complemented with another factor. In our opinion, the important proportion of educators in the political elite can also be accounted for their dispensability. A large majority of educators in Spain are civil servants and as such, they have some privileges in terms of tenureship. Unlike other professionals, their jobs are secure. Consequently, they can easily begin a career in politics and come back to the university or the school if the political career fails or is interrupted. The costs they may face when they come back to the school or the university are low in comparison with that of, say, workers or architects. The relatively secure professional future helps professors (and also civil servants) to participate

in the political elite, but more often in leftist parties than in conservative ones, as will be seen shortly.

Party differences

Does it make any difference for the social profile of the political elite the party to which the politician belongs? Let us not forget that political elites follow the "law of increasing disproportion" (Putnam 1976: 33) and the "rule of distance" (Sartori et al. 1963: 317), meaning that people from more underprivileged backgrounds usually have to "travel" a longer social distance to be part of the elite and thus tend to be underrepresented after a self-selective process. However, the type of party makes a difference. According to Putnam (1976: 37), "the degree to which an elite diverges from the independence model of statistically perfect representation is closely related to its ideological orientation. The more conservative a party or regime, the greater the overrepresentation of upper-status social groups within its leadership". Certainly in the case of the regional political elite, it seems that the social profile of MPs varies with party membership, showing that there are traditional of recruitment that are barely shared.

Rather than focusing on the 30 parties present in the 17 chambers between 1980 and 2005, we will focus our analysis on the two national parties with representatives in all regional parliaments: the socialist party (PSOE) and the popular party (PP, center to right). Both are the major contenders in national and most regional elections gathering 70% of the 4,354 regional MPs.

As can be seen in Table 6, the socialist party has been traditionally more open to women than the conservative party. The PP incorporated women to the electoral lists much later than the PSOE, whose leaders followed a policy of affirmative action for women reserving quotas in the electoral list. Later, some socialist regional leaders introduced the "zipper list" consisting on alternating men and women in the electoral list. These measures promoted a larger presence of socialist women in regional parliaments. Soon, the conservative party followed and began placing women in the electoral list, but without a formal policy of affirmative action.

Table 6
Party differences in the regional political elite in Spain, 1980-2005 (in %)

	PSOE	PP	Total elite
Women	25	21	21
Age	43.1	45.6	44
Immigrants	17	16	16
University graduates	52	67	85
Average education	3.52	3.66	3.57
Lawyers	13	25	19
Educators	28	16	21
Workers	18	5	11
Owners	4	12	13
Managers	2	6	

Source: Our own based on official sources

The average conservative MP is slightly older than the socialist one across all legislatures. The difference is stronger in the earliest legislatures when a generation of young politicians in the PSOE controlled a large part of regional parliaments. For instance, in the early eighties, the average socialist MP was 38.4 years old while the average conservative politician was 45.4 years old. However, twenty years later, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, both socialist and conservative MPs are 45 years old on average. In the case of the PP, a group of young politicians led first by Antonio Hernández Mancha and more successfully later by José María Aznar, took power in the party by the early 1990s initiating a generational renovation, accounting for the reduction in the age gap. Conversely, because of their early majorities in regional chambers socialists MPs tend to stay longer in parliaments (Coller 2002), contributing to the aging process of MPs.

Both parties are equally open to immigrants, although the major differences are related to education and professions, as can be seen in Table 6. As it happens in other countries (Norris and Lovenduski 1995: 101), conservative MPs are more educated than leftist ones showing also a higher proportion of university training. This might have a consequence on the quality of the legislative work of the regional parliaments, an issue that should deserve more attention by researchers of the quality of democracy.

The only element that is common in both parties is the liberal professionals (architects, engineers, doctors, economists, etc.), a large group whose presence in the regional political elite seems to be independent of party. The exception seems to be the law related professions: The conservative party doubles the proportion of lawyers in the socialist party, showing a clear difference in the sources of recruitment. Conversely, the socialist side is professionally dominated by educators. The difference with the conservative field is significant and might be explained by the fact that educators are usually civil servants and consequently have more chances of initiating a political career. Usually, leftist parties nurture a good portion of their ranks in parliaments with dispensable professionals employed by the State more often that conservative parties, whose politicians' dispensability usually stems from their professional status as liberal professionals, owners, managers, and entrepreneurs.

A final major difference concerning professional groups is related to the traditional sources of recruitment of politicians for leftist and conservative parties. Data in Table 6 shows that the socialist party tends to recruit regional politicians from workers more often that the conservative party. Conversely, the conservative party tends to recruit from owners and managers for a good deal of their politicians and certainly more often than the socialists. According to the odds ratio, it is 10.8 times more likely that the conservative party places an owner or manager in parliament than the socialist party. The odds of a worker entering parliament through the PP are 0.09. Thus, considering the four major professional groups, workers and educators tend to be present in the socialist party more often than in the PP, a party whose sources of recruitment are more associated to the legal system and to owners, managers and entrepreneurs.

Conclusions

This research provides a longitudinal assessment of the background of the regional political elites while shedding light into the pattern of elite recruitment and embeddedness with society. The overall research findings

are uncontroversial: Being a young man born in the region, well educated and working as educator or in the legal system is the most frequent avenue to become part of the regional political elite in Spain. Despite these general trends, over the years, women have seen a rise in their chances of entering the regional political elite, while it has gotten harder for internal migrants. As Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (2006) detect for the US case, despite a somewhat growing diversity, there are some common features among regional politicians.

There are relevant differences, though. Comparing regions, we found that political elites in Catalonia follow a quite unexpected behavior concerning recruitment of women and non-natives which is rooted in the nationalist ideology. Contrary, but also unexpectedly, Castile-La Mancha's selectorates seem more open to women and internal migrants than Catalonia. We think we have showed the relevance of the ideological and nationalist divide in some communities. Furthermore, party also makes a difference in some respects. Apart from the presence of liberal professionals in both major parties, the traditional sources of recruitment become almost exclusive and are only minimally shared. For workers and educators is easier to enter the elite through the socialist party while for managers, owners and entrepreneurs, and certainly lawyers, it is easier to become politicians through the conservative side. However, the professional variety of the elite is quite high, pointing towards the professionalization of the political elites, which is a process that may reflect the engagement of politicians on area-specific issues and activities (Best and Edinger, 2005: 501).

Contrary to the heterogeneity of the population, social similarities in the political elite are the outcome of the recruitment of politicians privileging some social features and discriminating against others. Thus, women, internal migrants, lesser educated, very young and very old people seem to be more absent from the elite than other social groups, which makes the elite's social profile a highly similar one with some tendency towards diversity in some respects, which is also the outcome of the different contribution of parties.

Notes

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2. For the transition to democracy and the federalization process, see Maravall and Santamaría (1986), Linz (1989), Linz and Stepan (1996), and Powell (2001). For the process of transferring powers to the regions and the building of the Estado de las Autonomías, see Linz (1989), Subirats and Gallego (2002), and Agranoff and Ramos (1998). See Merry del Val (2005) and Toboso (2005) for the evolution of the economic resources transferred to the regions. For the growth of the regional bureaucracy, see Ramió and Salvador (2002).

3. All the information on which this paper is built comes from official sources obtained from regional parliaments, Senate or Congress of Deputies. The information we have gathered is unequal. We have 100% of information for the gender variable, 86% for age and place of birth, 72% for education, and 77% for profession. We have omitted from our analysis parties that were shortlived, although their MPs were counted for the total.

4. See, for instance, Norris (1999), Best and Cotta (2000), Norris and Lovenduski (1995), Putnam (1976), Aberback et al. (1981) Valiente et al. (2003), Martínez (2000), Genieys (2004), Uriarte (1997), Coller (2003a).

5. See Uriarte and Ruiz (1999), Valiente et al. (2003), and the study of European parliaments carried out by Mateo Díaz (2005). There were 6% of women in the Congress of Deputies in 1977 and 28% in the eighth legislature (2000-04) (Valiente et al. 2003: 185). In 1986, 8% of the Spanish representatives in the European Parliament were women while in 1999 there were already 34% (Martínez 2000: 271).

6. See Uriarte and Ruiz (1999: 212), Valiente et al. (2003: 197-203), Mateo Díaz (2005: 224), and (Verge 2006).

7. Lack of information for the Basque Country, Asturias, and Murcia renders the average age unreliable.

8. Internal migrants refer here to those individuals that have been born in Spain but not in the region where they live.

9. See Linz et al. (2003: 92), Norris (1999: 97), Capo (1992: 140), Martínez (2000), Valiente et al. (2003: 191), Uriarte and Ruiz (1999: 215).

10. See Norris and Lovenduski (1995), Norris (1999:93), Martínez (2000: 274), Del Campo et al. (1982: 143), Uriarte (2000: 118), Jerez (1997), Linz et al (2000), Cuenca and Miranda (1987: 139), Lewis (1972), Linz et al. (2003: 97). For an overall historic appraisal of the profession of politicians, see Best and Cotta (2000).

11. Missing information in the Basque Country renders this proportion unreliable.

12. Missing information in the Balearic Islands and Murcia for some legislatures renders this proportion unreliable.

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