

All that glitters is not gold: the democratization of top candidate and leadership selection methods in Spain

Oscar Barberà

Juan Rodríguez-Teruel

Universitat de València

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to discuss the reasons of the party primaries in Spain. The theoretical framework assesses the differences between the reasons of the very first party primary form the rest of the direct ballots. After describing the main features of party primaries in Spain, the paper examines in two different sections the factors involved in the introduction of party primaries and the reasons why the rest of direct votes are held. Finally, the conclusion discusses the relevance of the findings for future theory development.

Keywords

Political parties, Primaries, electoral systems, Spain

Introduction¹

A growing use of direct democratic procedures has been registered during the last decades in many Western political parties (e.g. Scarrow, Webb and Farrell, 2000; Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012). Since the late 1960's, more and more parties have opened their leadership and candidate procedures to all members and, eventually, members and voters. These changes have made quite an impact on the way parties organize and compete.

This trend has promoted several research avenues. On the one hand, some scholars have tried to explain this phenomenon linking it with the transformation of intra-party power relations and changing party models (e.g. Katz and Mair, 1995 and 2009, Scarrow, 1999). Without denying this relationship, other academics have also noted the importance of other phenomena at various levels: the political system, the party system and the intra-party system (e.g. LeDuc, 2001; Hopkin, 2001; Poguntke and Webb, 2005; Barnea and Rahat, 2007). On the other hand, another research avenue has been focusing in the internal and external consequences of these processes (e.g. LeDuc, 2001; Pennings and Hazan, 2001; Kenig, 2009, Rahat, Hazan, Katz, 2010; Hazan and Rahat, 2010, Rahat and Kenig, 2011; Sandri, and Seddone 2012). Growing convergence can be perceived on this last point between the concerns of the US literature and the European one.

However, the extent of this phenomenon is still contested and has not evolved in the same way in all parties or countries. In general terms, parties in the Anglo-Saxon parliamentary countries have been more prone to open their party selection mechanisms, while new European democracies have been more inclined to support representative procedures. In the same vein, although their conceptual and theoretical frameworks have evolved substantially in the last decades, this remains still an understudied research avenue.

The purpose of this paper is to assess the reasons of the introduction of the party primaries in Spain. The theoretical framework discusses the differences between reasons of the very first party primary form the rest of the ballots. The next section is then devoted to describe the main features of the party primaries in Spain. Then, the paper examines in two different sections the main factors involved in the introduction of the party primaries and the ones associated with the subsequent ballots. Finally, the conclusion discusses the relevance of the findings for future theory development.

The democratization of candidate and leadership selection methods.

Candidate and leadership selection are two different phenomena with their own features. The first one addresses the problems involved in the selection of people for public office at different levels be that local or supranational. The second one

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tackles the issues of selecting one person for the maximum executive internal post (generally) at the national level. Despite their differences, candidate and leadership selection methods can be analysed with a common analytical framework. This is because their two more salient dimensions, the inclusiveness of the selectorate and the candidacy are the same in the two processes (Rahat and Kenig, 2011). Nevertheless, there are substantially different analytical dimensions such as the degree of decentralization in candidate selection and the de-selection mechanisms in leadership selection that are hardly comparative. The decentralization issue may be easier to solve when the comparison is limited to party leaders and top candidates as only one person is elected in each process and this usually means that only one territorial level is involved. Still, a more controversial matter refers to whether both procedures can be labelled under the same concept. In order to do so many academics have used several conventions such as direct votes, one-member one-vote, direct selection methods or party primaries (Astudillo, 2012; Kenig and Rahat, 2012). In this paper we are considering party primaries as “the selection methods in which the weight of influence of party members and or voters is equal or large than any other more exclusive selectorate(s)” (Kenig and Rahat, 2012: 7).

So far, Barnea and Rahat (2007) have developed one of the most comprehensive analytical frameworks trying to explain democratizing reforms in candidate selection methods. This may as well be used to understand transformations in leadership selection methods (Kenig, 2009; Cross and Blais, 2012; Rahat and Kenig 2011; Kenig and Rahat, 2012). Their analytical framework is built by looking at three different levels of analysis: The first level links these reforms as epiphenomena of more general developments taking place in a political system. Therefore its main assumption is that changes in social norms and conventions are ultimately the ones that explain *the direction* of the reforms. The main factors associated to that level are those like the personalization of politics, changing ideas about representation and democracy, the Americanization of campaigns, etc. The second level explores transformations in the party system. Here changes are basically related to alterations in the environment and point out *the moment* when reforms occur: electoral setbacks, losses of government, scandals or damages to the party's public image. Finally, the third level focuses in the internal life of parties. Variations in the two previous levels (external factors) alter the balance of power between the different groups within the party producing *the outcome*, which in this case, entails reforms of the candidate or leadership selection process. In this layer, the basic factors involved are leadership competition and succession, party mergers or splits and, more generally, any process of intra-party struggle for power. It should be remarked that Barnea and Rahat's framework is, in essence, pointing out facilitators (necessary, not sufficient conditions) not determinants for the introduction of party primaries.

Barnea and Rahat's analytical framework has been extended and enriched by new comparative research. In the most extensive comparative study up to this point on the democratization of leadership selection, Cross and Blais (2012) have confirmed the importance of party system factors like electoral defeats or being in opposition. But they have also highlighted that leadership selection methods reforms are generally introduced by new and/or small parties and then adopted

by the mainstream parties in a sort of contagion effect (Cross and Blais, 2012). On the other hand, focusing on the Portuguese parties, Lisi pointed out that leadership selection reforms stemmed from strategic calculus of party leaders aiming at strengthening their position in the electoral arena or against internal opposition (Lisi, 2010).

The academic effort has essentially been focused so far on the introduction of party primaries either in the party statutes or on the implementation of the first ballot. However, some recent empirical works have pointed out a surprising trend: parties from third wave democracies have introduced them in their statutes, but have hardly implemented them beyond its first time (Linek and Lyons, 2009; Vargany and Ilionsky, 2011; Gherguina, 2013; Spac, 2012). As it will be mentioned below, this is also the case of some Spanish parties. This trend raises the need to slightly change the research question to examine not only the factors associated with the adoption of the first party primary, but of the subsequent primaries over time. This should not challenge the main conclusions reached so far by the literature. However, in order to grasp the importance of past experiences influencing the celebration of party primaries is fundamental to find path dependency related processes. In this sense, it may be assumed that one of the factors underpinning the continuous holding of party primaries over time is that most of these processes have not been particularly damaging for the party in the past. Nevertheless such an assumption is always hard to prove because it has a substantial subjective component and is prone to re-evaluation. Another path dependency related processes (in parliamentary democracies) it is the leadership selection method. If the leader gained his/her position through a primary election, he/she will have little incentives to change the electoral system in the near future, mainly because its party platform and support will be conditioned to the use of that method. Thus it may be stated that when the election of an enduring party leader is through party primaries, there are big chances that these procedures may be permanently assumed as a candidate selection method within the party².

On the other hand, the European research devoted to the study of primary elections has focused mainly on the national level (but see Detterbeck, 2011; Kenig and Rahat, 2012). To understand the introduction of primary elections at other levels such as the regional or local level one should take into account their multi-level dimension. This means, in essence, to include the interactions between the different levels of the political system as a potential factor, and most of all, the influence of the national institutions on the regional arena. This is particularly relevant when considering explanations related to the political or party system levels: the pressures to reform the electoral system, the political scandals or the poor performance or loss of the national government have certainly an impact on the regional party organizations. And yet, events at the regional level can also have some influence (though certainly more limited) at the national level. The less media coverage received by the regional level may allow State Wide parties a greater power for experimentation and innovation. If they work, these innovations can eventually be spread to the national arena (e.g. see Fabre, 2008). These

² The same cannot be stated for the candidates because they don't have the control of their selection methods as party leaders do. This seems particularly true when focusing on candidates at the regional level.

arguments allow us to hypothesize that in multi-level systems the introduction of party primaries would take place initially at the regional level and will then be implemented nationally.

The following sections are devoted to assess the influence of the above-mentioned factors in the introduction and evolution of party primaries in Spain. This paper will focus exclusively on the most relevant procedures, that is, the selection of the national and regional top candidates and their party leaders in Spain. It has to be noted that there have been other party primaries both in the local level and to select the top provincial candidates. However the information available on these processes it is still very difficult to collect and contrast. In addition, the paper will exclude the selection of party leaders held in party congresses open to all members. Although these procedures use the One Member One Vote (OMOV) system and are in the “primary zone” defined by Kenig and Rahat (2012), this paper will only consider elections held in more than one polling point³.

Top candidate and leadership primaries in Spain: formal features.

As stated above, although leadership and candidate selection methods share a common conceptual framework, there are some dimensions that may differ from each phenomenon (Rahat and Kenig, 2011). For one of the purposes of this paper is the comparison between them, it is worth clarifying in which way they have common features in the Spanish case.

Party leadership and top candidate selection methods have been characterized by their relative stability over time in Spain. Although it is possible to highlight some variations in some of their main dimensions, changes in the openness of the selectorate, one of their most relevant dimensions, have been scarce (Colomé and López-Nieto, 1989; Méndez et. alt. 2004; Verge, 2007; Rodríguez-Teruel et.al. 2010). In addition, it has to be pointed out that leadership and candidate selection procedures are formally unconnected to each other in both the national and the regional level in all Spanish parties. The selection of party leaders through party congresses has been the most common formal selection method since democracy was restored in the late 1970s. So far, national and regional top candidate selection has been formally confined to party agencies and, occasionally, to party congresses. However, the specific formal procedures of the top candidate selection may vary depending on each party. Interestingly, candidate selection in Spain is made through assorted methods in which national and regional top candidate are selected through a different selectorate from rest of the candidates (Verge, 2007; Pérez-Moneo, 2012)⁴.

On the other hand, top candidate and leadership selection methods are connected in an informal way because most of the Spanish party leaders usually become the top candidates at the national level. That is probably the reason why when political

³ This excludes party leaders elected in the Catalan ERC congresses from 1977 to 2008; the Galician BNG congresses form 1982 to 2006 and from 2012; and the PP in the de Balearic Islands. (2010-).

⁴ Actually, the rest of the list is usually elected through a multi-stage method including a first provincial selectorate and a national one.

parties faced the regulation of party primaries did not really established different formal criteria for one or other type of post. In other words, the selectorate, the candidacy, the electoral formula and the polling system have been fundamentally the same for party leaders and national top candidates primaries (Tables 1 and 2). In addition, since in both cases just has to be filled a unique position, the degree of decentralization of the election is not a relevant dimension⁵. Likewise, neither the de-selection criteria have been substantially different: on the one hand, there are not party leader de-selection methods established in most of the Spanish parties⁶; on the other one, de-selection makes little sense referred to top candidates because they are selected for a one day event.

Table 1. Party primaries in Spain: formal characteristics at the National level

Party	Selectorate	Candidacy	Formula	Polling system	Type of post
IU	Members	- Candidate is party member - 25% main national representative agency (Consejo Político Federal) or 10% members ¹	Plurality	Postal mail ¹	Top Candidate
PSOE	Members	-The majority of the national party board (Comité Ejecutivo Federal) - The majority of the main representative agency (Comité Federal), - The majority of the Territorial Council (regional party leaders) - 10% members ²	Plurality	Local	Top Candidate
UPYD	Members	- Candidate is party member	Plurality	Provincial or Electronic voting	Leader ³ Top Candidate

Source: Authors' own from Méndez, et. alt. (2008), Verge (2008), press and party statutes.

List of acronyms: SWP: State-wide parties; NSWP: Non State-wide parties; PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español; IU: Izquierda Unida; UPyD: Unión Progreso and Democracia; PP: Partido Popular; ICV: Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds; Cs: Ciutadans-Partido de la Ciudadanía; ERC: Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya; PSC: Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya; EUiA: Esquerra Unida i Alternativa.

1. El País 2-10-2007

2. In 1998: 7% of the members and 15% of the Comité Federal (El Mundo 14-2-1998)

3. The leader is elected along with the rest of the party board in the same list.

Furthermore, there are no substantial differences between party primaries regulation at national and regional levels (Tables 1 and 2). In the PSOE's case, it should be pointed out that the candidacy requirements are slightly higher at the regional level than at the national one. However, it is difficult to establish a general pattern as the requirements may vary according to each regional party branch. In IU, the candidacy requirements at the regional level are slightly lower than at the national level as regards the support within the main representative party agency. The main change in this party can be found in the polling system as at the national level the votes are cast by postal mail and at the regional level local ballot boxes

⁵ Although in ERC and UPyD the party leader is elected along with its deputies (see Table 1 and 2) this does not change the centralized nature of the method.

⁶ Apart from trying to force his resignation, the only formal way to de-select a party leader is reconvening a party congress or to expel him as party member. As far as we know, C's is the only one that has set up a de-selection system (Art. 4.6 Cs Statutes 2011).

are used. On the other hand, UPyD has not introduced any changes between the two levels.

Some variations can be found when the comparison is made between the different parties, but many features remain substantially the same (Tables 1 and 2). The bulk of them have limited the selectorate to party members (closed primaries). There are two main exceptions, though: the PSC and, above all, the ICV. As a sign of party reform (mainly to boost the electoral prospects of the candidate), the PSC organized in 1999 a primary election with just one candidate, but opened to all voters. Following the PSC's way, ICV decided to open its primaries to their registered sympathisers (but not to all voters). Members and sympathisers vote in polls apart, but their votes are counted all the same⁷.

All parties have established party membership as a formal candidacy requirement to their candidates. The only exception is the one of the PSOE (Salazar, 2000: 147). Beyond that, the most relevant variations between parties are found in the amount of party members' support needed by the party leaders or top candidates. Many of the Spanish parties have been requiring the support of 5% -10% of the party members to allow the prospect candidates to enter into the process. In other parties, such as the PSOE and IU, prospect candidates have been offered more costly alternatives like the support of (part of) the main national or regional governing bodies of the party. However, there are some exceptions to this pattern: ICV's requisites have been clearly below 5% of the membership⁸; on the other hand, UPyD does not require any party members support at all. As it will be pointed out below, candidacy is one of the main requirements introduced by the Spanish party boards to control and restrict the competitiveness of their primaries.

Since elections are just to fill a unique position (but see footnote 5), all parties have used the plurality formula in their primary elections. In the event of holding a primary election with just a single candidate, UPyD provides that the aforementioned candidate must obtain more than half of the valid votes in favour, otherwise its candidacy will be rejected (Art. 8.3. Primary elections regulations, UPyD, 2009). Finally, there are some differences in the way the Spanish parties organise the voting stations. Some parties (ERC, PSOE, PSC, ICV) have established that the ballot points have to be distributed locally. On the other hand, UPyD, has established a voting station in each of the (51) general election districts, probably due to organizational limitations. Finally, it is worth mentioning that other parties like IU, ICV or UPyD have experimented with postal mail or electronic voting methods.

Table 2. Party primaries in Spain: formal characteristics at the Regional level

Party	Selectorate	Candidacy	Formula	Polling system	Type of post
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⁷ This caused a paradoxical situation in the first primary election ever held in ICV: the losing candidate won the majority of votes among the sympathisers, but lost the overall election for the lack of support of the party members (El País 1-18-2000).

⁸ This can be applied too to the PP in the Balearic Islands.

Cs	Members	- Candidate is party member - 10% party members ¹	Plurality	No data	Top Candidate
ERC	Members	- Candidate is party member - Support of 5% members	Plurality	Local	Leader ⁴ Top Candidate
EUiA	Members	- Candidate is party member - 20% members or 10% of the main representative agency	Plurality	No data	Top Candidate
ICV	Members & Sympath.	- Candidate is party member - 50 Members	Plurality	Local or Electronic voting	Leader Top Candidate
IU	Members	- Candidate is party member - Madrid (1998): 10% Members, 10 local branches, 2 sub-regional branches, 10% main regional representative agency (Consejo Político Regional) ²	Plurality	Local	Top Candidate
PSC	Voters	- No data.	Plurality	Local	Top Candidate
PSOE	Members	Support of the majority of the regional party board (Comité Ejecutivo Regional) and the main regional representative agency (Comité Regional), or 15% members ³	Plurality	Local	Top Candidate
UPyD	Members	- Candidate is party member	Plurality	Provincial or Electronic voting	Leader ⁴ Candidate

Source: Authors' own from Méndez, et. alt. (2008), Verge (2008), press and party statutes.

List of acronyms: See table 1.

1. In 2008 it was required the support of 290 members, the 10% of the party members (Agencia EFE, 7-1-2008).

2. Cinco Días, 3-6-1998

3. In 1998 each region followed its own path. In the Basque Country, for example, it was required the 10% of the members, the 20% of the main regional representative agency or the majority of the regional party board (El País 22-02-1998).

3. At UPyD leader is elected along with the rest of the party board. In 2011 ERC leader was elected along with its deputy.

General features of the evolution of party primaries in Spanish politics

The introduction of party primaries in Spain started several decades after the transition to democracy was completed⁹. IU was the first party introducing primaries as a selection method for some of the candidates in Madrid during the 1993 general elections. However, IU primaries were not binding and did not include the selection of the top candidate (Mendez et. alt., 2004: 197; Verge, 2008: 330)¹⁰. Since that time, several left parties have begun to trial with the primary elections as mechanism for candidates and party leaders' selection (Méndez et. alt., 2004: 196 and ss; Verge, 2008: 321 and ss).

The number of party primaries held in Spain since the late 1990s remains substantially low (Table 3). At its best, party primaries have been used as a

⁹ However, the PSOE held party primaries in the 1930s (Juliá, 1998).

¹⁰ The same process was repeated in the 1996 general elections (Méndez et alt. 2004).

selection method in no more than a quarter of the overall top candidates and/or party leaders. Their evolution over time shows its sudden and enthusiastic introduction in the late 1990s, but then and a very sharp decline in the early 2000s, just to steadily increase ever since. Contrary to the findings from the Westminster countries (Cross and Blais, 2012), party primaries in Spain have been introduced by the main State-Wide parties. After IU's first attempts, the Socialist Party (PSOE) was the main responsible for taking the primaries into the public agenda in the late 1990s. PSOE's primaries were first introduced at the regional level and then implemented both at the national and the regional levels. So far, the PSOE has limited their use to national and regional top candidate selection. Nonetheless, the PSOE crisis of the 1998-2000 period discredited this selection method because its side effects. Hence, in the following elections the PSOE started the formal process calling for primaries, but the ballot was never held because only one candidate stood up for each post.

In the following years, only two small left opposition parties from Catalonia, Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (ICV) and Esquerra Unida i Alternativa (EUiA), kept the primaries as a selection method. During the rest of the decade, party primaries slightly increased because they were adopted by more left parties at the Catalan political arena (ERC and Cs), and by the liberal radical Unió Progreso y Democracia (UPyD) at the national level. In some cases primaries were used as a sort of experiment: they were introduced in the party statutes and tested in one type of election, but then hardly held more than one time. Up to now this has been the case of the PSC, C's and EUiA (and to some extent the PSOE between 1998 and 2011 and IU between 1998 and 2007). However, in other cases like ICV, ERC or UPyD they have been used several times (Table 4). By the beginning of the 2010's, the expansion of UPyD to the regional level, and a new implementation of party primaries from the PSOE have raised their number to the same levels of the early 2000s.

Table 3. Share of national and regional party primaries out of the selection processes held in Spain.

	1998-01		2002-05		2006-09		2010-12	
	%	S.P.	%	S.P.	%	S.P.	%	S.P.
	Primaries	(n)	Primaries	(n)	Primaries	(n)	Primaries	(n)
Top National Candidates	18,2%	11	0%	11	23,1%	13	23,1%	13
Top Regional Candidates	18,6%	59	1,7%	58	1,7%	60	23,4%	77
Party Leaders	9,1%	11	9,1%	11	23,1%	13	11,1%*	9*
All	17,3%	81	2,5%	80	4,8%	83	21,4%	98

Source: Author's own based on press and parties official figures.

S.P: Overall selection processes (primaries + other methods) held in Spain during that period.

* Not all parties have finished their leadership selection processes.

Parties considered: PP, PSOE, IU, EUiA, ERC, ICV, Cs (since 2006), UPyD (since 2008) y CIU, PNV, BNG, CC.

Notes: Two primaries in Madrid and Valencia held by IU have been excluded because they were declared void. The selection of the PP regional party leader in the Balearic Islands in 2010 and 2012 has not been included either.

So far, there have been 45 party primaries held by the Spanish political parties at both the national and regional level (Table 4). They have been quite unequally

distributed according to the posts to cover. More than two thirds of them have been used to select regional top candidates. On the other hand, party primaries to select national top candidates (17,4%) and party leaders (15,2%) have been much more limited. Similarly, over the 40% of these processes have been driven by new parties, mainly UPyD. That is why UPyD (16) has become the party who has held more party primaries, ahead of the PSOE (13) or ICV (8). In addition, UPyD's leader, Rosa Díez, has become the first woman ever elected through primaries as party leader (2009) and national top candidate (2011)¹¹. The other two thirds of the contests have been held in a similar vein by State-wide parties (SWP) and Non State-wide parties (NSWP). Both of the main Spanish parties, Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and the new left Izquierda Unida (IU) have promoted the use of primaries. The PP, the main centre-right Spanish party has been very reluctant to change its selection procedures¹². Interestingly, so far all the NSWP holding primaries are leftist parties from Catalonia. Apparently, there has been a sort of contagion effect that has involved at one or other moment all of the left parties of that region. Moreover, other new parties like the leftist EUiA and the liberal radical C's can also be added to that list because they are as well regional parties from Catalonia.

Table 4. Party primaries in Spain: party types and types of contests (since 2012).

	National Top Candidate (n)	Regional Top Candidate (n)	Party Leader (n)	% (n)
SWP	PSOE, 1998 (1) IU, 2007(1)	PSOE, 1998 (8) IU, 1998 (1) PSOE, 2011 (3)	1	31,1 (14)
NSWP	ICV, 2000 (1) ICV, 2007 (1) ERC, 2011 (1) ICV, 2011 (1)	PSC, 1999 (1) ICV, 2006 (1) ICV, 2010 (1)	ICV, 2000 (1) ICV, 2004 (1) ICV, 2008 (1) ERC, 2008 (1) ERC, 2011 (1)	26,7 (12)
New parties	UPyD, 2011 (1) Cs, 2008 (1)	UPyD, 2011 (14) EUiA, 1999 (1) EUiA, 2002 (1)	UPyD, 2009 (1)	42,2 (19)
% (n)	17,8 (8)	68,9 (31)	13,3 (6)	100 (45)

Source: Author's own based on press and parties official figures.

List of acronyms: See table 1.

1. In 2010 and 2012 the party leader of the regional branch of the PP in the Balearic Islands was elected trough a direct vote of the party members.

Table 4 also provides an insight of the different paths followed by the introduction of party primaries to the different types of posts. Except UPyD, ERC and ICV, the rest of the parties have not implemented yet party primaries for all posts. The two main State-Wide parties held first some regional or provincial primaries (the PSOE in 1998, IU in 1993, 1996 and 1998) before introducing the method to select the national top candidate (PSOE, 1998) or the party leader (IU, 2007). Although the

¹¹ In 1998, Antonia Martinez (PSOE-Murcia) was the first woman to be elected through a primary as regional top candidate.

¹² Nevertheless, in 2010, during the midst of a regional scandal, the regional branch of the party in the Balearic Islands held a primary to select the regional party leader. The same procedure was repeated in 2012 after winning the regional government in the 2011 elections.

PP has not held party primaries, the selection of the PP regional leader in the Balearic Islands through a congress open to all members in 2010 and 2012 may seem as well a first regional test before implementing it to other levels or types of posts. On the other hand, the new State-Wide party UPyD started using primaries to select its key position, the party leader, and then came the implementation to the regional and national top candidates. Hence, the hypotheses that in multi-level systems party primaries will be implemented first in the regional level fits quite well in Spain. However, this is not true for UPyD maybe due to its character of new party.

The Catalan Non State-Wide parties have followed quite different paths, though. ICV and C's implemented its first party primaries selecting the national top candidate. Then ICV have extended the method to select the party leader and the regional top candidate while C's has never implemented them any more. EUiA and the PSC started selecting the regional top candidate in the early 2000s, but have not extended the procedure to other types of posts. Actually, they have stopped using the method. Finally, ERC introduced party primaries to select first its party leader and has also implemented them to select the national top candidate.

Factors influencing the first primary elections

The previous sections have pointed out the main formal features of the Spanish primary elections and their evolution over time. This section and the next one will try to analyse the influence played by several factors discussed in the analytical framework in the regulation and implementation of party primaries in Spain. Process-tracing techniques will be used to briefly describe the circumstances in which party primaries were held for the first time in each party. The next section will try to address the factors involved in the following party primaries.

The introduction of party primaries in the PSOE was a mixture between the will to renew and change the party coming from the grassroots with a leadership crisis in the apex of the organization. In government since 1982, in the early nineties the PSOE's evolution was marked by scandals and an open factional struggle. The factional conflict opposed the party leader, Felipe Gonzalez, against his former deputy. After the electoral setback and the government loss of 1996, things started to change. In its 1997 congress the PSOE copied an innovation coming from the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC, PSOE's ally in Catalonia): the introduction of primary elections as one of the top candidate selection procedures (Salazar, 2000: 144). In the same event, Gonzalez decided by surprise to step down as party leader. That opened up a negotiation between Gonzalez and some key regional party leaders (the so called "*barones*") in order to designate a new successor: Joaquín Almunia. Lacking charisma, Almunia decided to hold a primary election in order to be ratified as the national top candidate (El País, 11/29/1997). By then, this move overlapped with another primary process initiated by the PSOE's regional branch in the Basque country to choose its regional top candidate. Hence, the Basque primaries were a kind of test that resulted in favour of the candidate supported by the party elite. Once successfully completed the primaries in the Basque Country, the PSOE definitely opened the process at the national level. However, in the meantime another candidate, the former cabinet minister José

Borrell, decided to run as well. The competition between the two contesters aroused an unprecedented media interest and reinforced the PSOE's electoral expectations. But to everyone's surprise, Borrell won. In the short term everything went fine, but eventually the PSOE's elites failed to properly manage the new situation and tensions grew between the national top candidate and the party leader. Their struggle for power ended in mid 1999 when a scandal forced the resignation of Borrell. Nevertheless, in the 2000 general elections Almunia suffered a considerable electoral setback and resigned as party leader (Boix, 1998; Hopkin, 2001; Méndez, Morales, Ramiro, 2004).

Meanwhile, in 1998 the PSOE held primaries to select some of its regional top candidates for the 1999 regional elections. In order to avoid the opposition of the *barones*, a first and important amendment was introduced by then to the party regulations: regional prime ministers were excluded of that process (Salzar, 2000: 149). Hence, regional party primaries were called only where the PSOE was in opposition. In addition, as was established by party regulations, primaries were not held in those regions where only one candidate stood up. After all, in the 1999 regional elections the PSOE held party primaries in 8 out of 17 regions¹³. In 5 of these regions the PSOE had previously lost government in the 1995 regional elections, and thus their party leaders had been seriously questioned. Holding primary elections was a mean to favour the replacement of the old regional party leaders.

The evolution of the State wide left radical Izquierda Unida in the late 1990s was deeply marked by factional struggles and splits. In 1997 some MPs belonging to a minor faction split up the party and promoted an electoral coalition with the PSOE. That very same year IU and Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds (ICV, IU's ally in Catalonia) break down their long-standing alliance. Shortly after, in 1998, one of the former IU's MP became the PSOE's regional top candidate for the 1999 election in Madrid. In that context, IU decided to hold party primaries to select its local and regional top candidates in Madrid. Although the aim of the primaries was to boost its poor electoral prospects, there was also a hidden challenge to replace IU's local leader. Surprisingly, party primaries were held without being explicitly introduced in IU's statutes (Méndez, Morales, Ramiro, 2004: 198).

From 1999 on the use of primaries was also extended to other parties, particularly in Catalonia. As previously mentioned, by 1996 the Catalan PSC introduced the party primaries in its party regulations. By 1999, the party also held a primary election, with just one candidate, to boost its electoral prospects after 19 years as the main opposition party. The new candidate, Pascual Maragall, was benefited from that initiative, but the party did not achieve office in that election.

The small left radical party ICV had been for a very long time IU's ally in Catalonia. As stated above, in 1997 several differences between IU and ICV led to the end of that alliance. Then, ICV underwent through a split from which emerged the new Esquerra Unida i Aternativa (EUiA, IU's ally in Catalonia). By 1999 the newly formed party held a primary election to select its top regional candidate. Although

¹³ Aragón, Baleares, Canarias, Cantabria, Murcia, Navarra, Comunidad Valenciana and the previously mentioned, Euskadi.

at the beginning there were two candidates, one of them stood down some days before the election. Although the EUiA primary had almost no media coverage, it may have probably challenged ICV, its main rival. In fact, the breaking of its alliance caused ICV an electoral setback in the 1999 regional elections that seriously discredited its party leader and regional top candidate. By 2000, ICV decided to hold its first primary election to select its new national top candidate for the 2000 elections. Like in the IU case, by then party primaries were not formally mentioned in ICV's party statutes. Shortly after the general elections, the new national top candidate challenged the old party leader by calling for a primary election in order to select the future party leader. Although the old party leader decided to step down, ICV became the first party ever to hold this kind of primaries in Spain. Primaries were formally introduced in ICV's party statutes by 2004 and have been regularly held ever since.

In the 2003 regional elections, the pro-independence ERC doubled its share of votes from 8% to 16% and joined the new left coalition government in Catalonia. However, shortly after the formation of the regional government a scandal led to the resignation of its party leader. In a bold tactic, ERC's party leader decided to run for the 2004 general elections and achieved the best results for the party since the 1930's. However, with that move several analysts accused ERC of being mainly an opposition party and not a reliable government partner. To change those views, in the 2004 congress the ERC party elites tried to carry out some major organizational reforms that included the introduction of party primaries¹⁴. Party primaries were first implemented in 2008 in a context of deep factionalism caused by serious disagreements on whether ERC had to continue in the new left regional government formed after the 2006 regional elections. Minority factions saw in the party primaries an opportunity to bypass the party elites and decided to run. In turn, by then emerged a fratricidal struggle for power between the discredited party leader and its deputy. The 2008 primary elections were the first ever held by ERC. Four teams of candidates run for the post of party leader and its deputy. The deputy party leader won the challenge, ERC stayed in government and the minority factions decided to split.

By 2008/9 two newly formed liberal-radical parties decided to hold party primaries. The first one was C's, a small party that just few months after its creation achieved representation in the 2006 Catalan regional parliament. Despite the success, factionalism emerged and Cs party leadership was challenged in the 2007 party congress. In that congress some organizational reforms were also adopted including the introduction of party primaries for the top candidates if two or more candidates were able to contest. For the 2008 general elections Cs tried to form an electoral coalition with the also newly formed UPyD, but they didn't reach an agreement. To boost its poor electoral prospects, the party leader then decided to run in the primaries for the national top candidate. Although he was the only member fulfilling all the candidacy requirements, the primaries were implemented anyway. In 2009, after achieving representation in the national parliament, UPyD

¹⁴ ERC introduced closed primaries to choose the two top party leadership positions and the top candidates (in the latter, when two candidates were able to contest). In exchange, ERC party elites wanted to change the open-to-all-members composition of their party congresses, but they failed (Argelaguet, 2009).

called its first party congress. Likewise C's, its early success didn't stop internal dissent. Although the party board wanted to introduce primary elections, some of the middle level elites wanted even more radical measures to be implemented. Finally, in the 2009 party congress UPyD decided to introduce the primaries in its party statutes as the default selection method for all candidate and leadership posts. In that congress the national top candidate was challenged by another candidate, but won the ballot. As stated by the party statutes, UPyD has implemented party primaries ever since.

Table 5 shows a brief summary of the findings provided by the description of the different cases. As has already been pointed out by the literature, being a left party in the opposition seem to be the most common factors associated with the introduction of party primaries in Spain. The contestation of the party leader or the top candidate other one is also present in a good deal of cases. The other influencing factors seem to play a less relevant role. In all parties several circumstances are present at the same time, which could suggest different paths involved in the process. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that none of these factors have to be considered as determinants, but as facilitators for the introduction of party primaries in Spain. A proper explanation of the reasons should also account for cases where primaries have not been held.

Table 5. Factors influencing first time party primaries held in Spain.

	Pressure for elect. reform	Scandal	Elect. Setback	Opposit.	Govmnt. Loss	Leader/candidate contested	Party Split	New party	Left Party
PSOE (1998)		X	X	X	X	X			X
IU (1998)				X			X		X
PSC (1999)			X	X		X			X
EUiA (1999)				X			X	X	X
ICV (2000)			X	X		X	X		X
ERC (2008)						X			X
Cs (2008)				X		X		X	
UPyD (2009)				X		X		X	

Source: Author's own based on press coverage.

List of acronyms: See table 1.

Beyond the first time: assessing the influencing factors of subsequent party primaries.

As it has been stated in the theoretical framework, one of the striking features of party primaries in some Third Wave countries is that they are introduced in party statutes but are hardly implemented beyond the first time. We have already pointed out in previous sections that this can also be applied to Spain. This is indeed the case of C's that just implemented them once. But this can also be extended to other parties like EUiA (has not held any primary election since 2002), or to the PSOE (between 1998 and 2011), the PSC (between 1999 and 2013) and IU (between 1998 and 2007). In other words, 5 out of 8 Spanish parties have held party primaries at a given time and then decided to avoid this procedure for a very long period. This pattern poses several questions such as why this has happened

or what are the (new) conditions under which party primaries are held beyond the first moment.

Assessing the reasons of this low implementation rates is beyond the purpose of this paper. However, some elements drawn from the Spanish experience may help to better comprehend this phenomenon in further research. The introduction of party primaries was mainly used to either set party candidates or party leaders in new parties, or to replace retired ones through competitive processes (see Table 6). In many cases such as IU, ICV and UPyD this mechanism worked well, and one of the would-be candidates won by large. Nevertheless, in others such as the PSOE in 1998 it didn't. The 1998 PSOE fiasco caused a sort of *vaccine effect* by which party primaries were for some time synonym of lack of cohesion and confrontation, a democratic burden for the party that damaged its electoral competitiveness (e.g. see Maravall, 2003). In the PSC (where only one candidate stood) the cost of organizing the process was seen as a liability too. Although the intra-party regulation didn't change, since 1998 most of the parties avoid them by limiting the would-be candidates to one, so the processes were not carried out.

Table 6. Main features of the first party primaries held in Spain.

	Type of post	Media Attention	Candidates	Incumbent	Winner	Margin between 2 first candidates
PSOE (1998)	NTC	Very high	2	González (R)	Borrell	10%
IU (1998)	RTC	Moderate	2	Pérez	Pérez	40%
PSC (1999)	RTC	High	1	Nadal (R)	Maragall	-
EUiA (1999)	RTC	Very low	2 ¹	-	Miralles	-
ICV (2000)	NTC	Low	2	Ribó (R)	Saura	39%
ERC (2008)	PL	Very high	4	Carod	Puigcercós	9%
Cs (2008)	NTC	Very low	1	-	Ribera	-
UPyD (2009)	PL	High	2	-	Díez	60%

Source: Author's own based on press coverage.

List of acronyms: See table 1. NTC: National Top Candidate; PL: Party Leader; RTC: Regional Top Candidate. (R) Retired.

1. One of the candidates withdrew the competition before the ballot.

Table 7 shows all the national and regional subsequent primaries held in Spain. Till 2010 most of the following primary processes were realized by ICV (6 out of 10), although the PSOE could be counted first if the 1998 regional primaries were to be included. Since 2010 ERC and UPyD have also joined this pattern electing both their candidates and party leaders. The table also considers several factors influencing the following party primaries in the Spanish case. As has been shown in the previous section, being a left party (13 out of 16 cases), in the opposition (10 out of 16 cases) and being the leader/candidate challenged (8 out 16 cases) still are relevant factors. But, unlike the previous section, here new path dependent or contextual factors appear to be relevant as well.

ICV, UPyD and ERC are good examples of a certain path dependency in the use of party primaries. ERC and UPyD introduced this method to select its party leader (Table 6), and then extended it to candidate selection (Table 7). In ICV, the first national candidate to be elected by party primaries (Table 6) became thereafter the party leader and, again, extend the process to both candidate and leadership

selection (Table 7). Although, ICV and ERC have not always used this method¹⁵, the leader being elected with party primaries becomes an important factor to understand why they are used in the near future: 10 out of 16 following party primaries have been held by parties with party leaders selected with this type of procedure.

Interestingly, 8 out of 16 of the following party primaries have been held since 2010 (Table 7). This is by far the largest amount of primary elections ever held in Spain. Party system factors and internal factors indeed may be considered as key influencing elements. However, to better comprehend why this has happened in recent years and not in other electoral cycles there is an added factor that has to be taken in to account: the aggravation of the economic crisis has promoted in the last couple of years a sense of institutional exhaustion and strong demands for institutional reform (such as the *indignant* movement). Holding party primaries may be the indirect answer of the left party elites to those pressures for reform. IU is so far the only left party not holding primaries since 2010.

Discussion and conclusions

Party primaries are quite a recent phenomenon in Spain. As this paper has shown, there have been two big waves of implementation: the first one was at the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, the second one started in the late 2000s and is still going on. So far, party primaries have been mainly held to select the regional top candidates and their use has been fairly extended to left and/or new State-wide or Non State-wide parties.

The evidence provided in this paper suggests that the Spanish case is relevant for theory building purposes at least in several ways. On the one hand, the paper underpins the theoretical framework proposed by Barnea and Rahat (2007), although proposing minor extensions such as the novelty of the party. As stated by Barnea and Rahat understanding the implementation of party primaries can only be truly comprehended if political system, party system and intra-party levels factors are considered.

On the other hand, our paper has tried to untangle a puzzling trend pointed out from third wave parties: some of them introduced party primaries but hardly implement them beyond the first time. To help solving this paradox the paper has analysed the main factors influencing the following party primaries. As well as the main indicators suggested by the literature, this paper has also tried to assess the impact of the previous selection of the party leader through party primaries on the subsequent ones. This has proved to play a part in 10 out the 16 processes. However, it is important to note that this factor has not been relevant in all cases because both the PSOE and the IU implemented following primaries without changing their leadership selection methods. Instead, the evidences from the Spanish case also point out the importance of contextual factors (i.e. pressures for

¹⁵ ICV didn't select its national (2004) and regional (2003) top candidates through primaries; and ERC didn't do the same with some of its national (2008) and regional (2010) top regional candidates.

electoral reform) on their subsequent implementation. All party primaries organized since 2010 (8 out of 16 processes) have been to some extent influenced by the deterioration of the economic crisis and its effects on the performance of many political institutions. Although contextual factors cannot explain by themselves why subsequent primaries are implemented, the Spanish evidence certainly shows that their influence grows when there is bad economic and institutional performance.

This paper has focused on the introduction and subsequent implementation of party primaries in Spain. Further research will have to assess whether our evidence is consistent in comparative perspective. Similarly, more comparative studies are required in order to better understand why some parties go on with the primaries while others don't.

Table 7. Factors influencing subsequent national and regional primaries held in Spain (by date).

	Type of post	Pressures for Electoral Reform	Scandal	Electoral Setback	Opposition	Government Loss	Leader / Candidate Contested	Party Split	New party	Left party	National Leader elected with Primaries
PSOE (1998) ¹	RTC				X (8)	X (5)	X (5)			X	
ICV (2000)	PL				X		X	X		X	
EUiA (2002)	RTC			X	X		X	X	X	X	
ICV (2004)	PL									X	X
ICV (2006)	RTC									X	X
ICV (2007)	NTC									X	X
IU (2007)	NTC			X	X		X			X	
ICV (2008)	PL						X			X	X
ICV (2010)	RTC	X								X	X
PSOE (2011) ²	RTC	X			X (3)	X (2)	X (2)			X	
UPyD (2011) ³	RTC	X			X (14)				X (14)		X
ICV (2011)	NTC	X		X	X	X					X
ERC (2011)	NTC	X		X	X	X	X			X	X
UPyD (2011)	NTC	X			X				X		X
ERC (2011)	PL	X		X	X	X	X			X	X
ICV (2013)	PL	X		X	X	X				X	X

Source: Author's own based on press coverage.

List of acronyms: See table 1. NTC: National Top Candidate; PL: Party Leader; RTC: Regional Top Candidate.

1) 8 regional branches held primaries. 2) 3 regional branches held primaries. 3) 14 regional branches held primaries.

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