

## **Parties matter, right?**

### **Parties as actors for the substantive representation of ethnic minorities.**

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## **1. Introduction**

Parallel to the increasing number of ethnic minorities in Western polities, their underrepresentation has become politicized (Bird 2003: 10). Only few ethnic minority people populate the representative institutions and their issues and interests are not receiving equal consideration (see for instance Ruedin, 2010; Anwar, 2001; Bird, 2003; Kymlicka, 1996; Messina, 2007; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Saggar, 2000, Togeby, 2008). This is increasingly considered a democratic problem of justice, legitimacy, responsiveness and effectiveness (Phillips, 1995). Scholarly literature on the political representation of ethnic minorities has identified a wide variety of explanations for ethnic minorities' underrepresentation, including the political and institutional environment in which they operate and characteristics of the ethnic group they belong to (Ruedin, 2010; Bird, 2003; 2004; Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Jacobs and Tillie, 2004; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou, 2011; Togeby, 2008). Party structures and cultures in particular are said to be one of the key determinants (Bird, 2004; Saggar and Geddes, 2000).

The study of the role of political parties in the representation of ethnic minorities, mainly focusses on parties as selectors, i.e. on how parties determine the number of ethnic minority candidates on the list, the quality of their list positions and/or the districts in which they run for office (often electoral districts with a large ethnic minority population) (Saggar and Geddes 2000). Delivering political personnel is indeed one of the key functions of political parties (Lawson 1980) and as such they are important gatekeepers with regard to the descriptive representation of ethnic minorities. Political parties, however, also play an important role in the substantive representation of ethnic minority interests, which goes beyond selecting representatives for elected assemblies. Political parties have numerous opportunities to ensure the substantive representation of ethnic minorities, for instance when they negotiate coalition agreements and by coordinating and controlling legislative initiatives in which policies concerning ethnic minorities can be incorporated. Studies furthermore show that political parties also indirectly play an important role in the substantive representation of ethnic minorities in that they can stimulate or constrain individual (descriptive) representatives from defending ethnic minority interests (Saalfeld

and Kyriakopoulou, 2007). Political parties determine to what extent group representation actually occurs.

Research on substantive representation has largely focused on the role of individual representatives (e.g. Bird, 2011 ; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou, 2011 ; Saalfeld and Bischof, 2013). Representatives belonging to and identifying with ethnic minority groups are (potentially) key actors in the substantive representation (Phillips, 1995; Celis and Wauters, 2010; Childs and Krook, 2009; Bratton and Haynie, 1999; Baker and Cook, 2005; Hero and Tolbert, 1995). This article broadens the focus beyond individual representatives and investigates the extent to which political parties represent ethnic minority interests, and which factors explain variance in this substantive representation. We are especially interested in whether party-related or context-related variables lead to higher levels of substantive representation by parties. Our analysis is based on a broad scale survey among local party chairs in Belgium. The results show that parties from the left, active parties and parties in municipalities with a high share of foreigners in the population are more likely to defend ethnic minority interests. The presence of ethnic minority people in the party does not have a significant effect over and above these variables.

Before we discuss our findings in greater detail, we elaborate on the role of political parties in the substantive representation of groups, and of ethnic minorities more specifically, and discuss the way in which we have operationalized the key variables of our research.

## **2. Parties as actors for substantive representation**

Political parties can further the substantive representation of ethnic minorities in three important ways. First, political parties can play a direct role. To a great extent they are 'critical actors' that decide on the issues that are part of the electoral programmes and campaigns, political agendas, parliamentary deliberations and government agreements (Blondel, 2000; Woldendorp, Keman, & Budge, 2013). They have the power to include and prioritize certain issues of importance to societal groups, or marginalize and even ignore

them. When parties are directly involved in decision-making procedures, they can put forward ethnic minority interests without interference of other actors.

Second, the recent dynamic approaches of representative representation stress that it can also take place outside the classic political venues such as parliament and government (Saward, 2006 ; Celis et al, 2008). Non-elected actors including interest groups, NGO figures, local figures and rock stars come to the fore. They can further interests of social groups in a variety of arenas. Also parties could take up this role by furthering ethnic minority interests for instance in the media or in the general public debate. These representation strategies outside electoral institutions might be particularly interesting for social groups who have a limited presence in parliament (Strolovitch 2007). By engaging in these debates that take place independently from formal political institutions, parties have a second avenue at their disposal to defend ethnic minority interests.

Third, political parties can increase the substantive representation of ethnic minorities indirectly by securing a supportive environment for individual party representatives that wish to take on such representation. Political parties can be friendly or hostile environments for individual party representatives wanting to substantively represent specific issues and interests. In order for individual party representatives to represent group issues they first of all need green light from the party leaders. In complex matters, they need logistic support and input from the parties' research unit (Webb & Kolodny, 2006). In highly polarized cases, they might need discursive and moral support from party leaders and fellow party representatives. Research has moreover shown that informal party norms about what a good party representative does and how (s)he behaves, also impacts upon individuals' substantive representation. If they are perceived as 'outsiders' when they represent the groups they share identity features with (i.e. women representing women; ethnic minority representatives representing ethnic minority interests), they become less willing to do so. In such instances descriptive representatives might refrain from substantive group representation out of fear that parties will grant them less interesting (or no) position at the next elections (Saggar and Geddes 2000; Celis and Wauters 2010; Saalfeld and Kyriakopoulou 2011).

### 3. Factors influencing substantive representation

Not all parties defend ethnic minority interests to the same extent. In this section, we point to five factors influencing the level of substantive representation. Some of these factors are party-based, others are related to the context in which parties operate.

First, political parties can enhance the substantive representation of groups by increasing the **presence of ethnic minorities in their ranks** and workings. They can reach out to groups and actively recruit them as members, invite them to participate in the parties' activities, include them in their party executive boards and even establish a formal internal party interest group. Parties' youth and women's organisations are amongst the most widespread examples of these group-based intra-party organisations (Hooghe et al, 2004; Kittilson, 2013), but some political parties have also established ethnic minority interest groups within their organisation (Celis et al 2013). Theorists argue that presence is an important venue for representation (Phillips, 1995; Kymlicka, 1995; Baker and Cook, 2005; Gay, 2002; Young, 2000). When people share certain personal characteristics or experiences they truly understand each other's needs and interests and give priority to these needs and interests. According to this 'politics of presence'-theory, the presence of ethnic minorities in the heart of political parties makes it more plausible that ethnic minority interests will be taken into account. If ethnic minorities are for instance present at key party positions or even in separate and specialized within-party interest groups, they have the power to increase the political will and sense of emergency for representing ethnic minority issues and interests. The scope of their influence might however depend on issues like their size. Until they reach a certain critical mass (Kanter, 1977) it is possible that their impact remains small.

Political parties can be interested in increasing the presence of groups in their organisation and workings for various reasons (Kittilson 2013). First, by including group members, they can become more electorally appealing to these groups. Second, they can be interesting venues for recruiting and selecting candidates that increase their electoral attractiveness amongst groups with which they have weaker ties. Third, they can be used as resources for defining policy issues and solutions that increase parties' responsiveness to specific groups in society, again increasing their electoral attractiveness for these groups. The potential gains

for the social groups concerned are also multiple: they can launch ideas and support candidates and representatives that take their interests to heart, they can function as a watchdog, and influence internal decision-making on the party platforms and government agreements. However, political parties can also include ethnic minorities in an instrumental way (Celis, Eelbode & Wauters, 2013): they can 'use' them to attract the so-called ethnic vote, but at the same time not providing ethnic minority representatives with the necessary means and power to substantively represent their group's interests. Hence, ethnic minorities' strategy to seek inclusion in parties as a venue towards better substantive representation is risky.

A second important factor influencing the extent to which local parties defend ethnic minority interests is **party ideology**. Leftist parties are believed to be more 'ethnic minority friendly' given their ideological stances with regard to egalitarian policies and social justice targeting the marginalized and powerless groups in society. Therefore, they are often found to be more inclined than other parties to substantively represent ethnic minority issues (Matland and Studlar, 1996; Ireland, 2004; Messina, 2007; Bratton and Haynie, 1999). Rightist parties, in contrast, are more individual-oriented and more reluctant when it comes to recognizing let alone encouraging group-based identities (Girvin, 1988; Hyde, 1995; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). In addition, as part of their traditionalism they often support restrictive migration policies (Anwar, 2001). Another element that could explain an effect of party ideology has to do with voting behavior. It has been demonstrated that in general ethnic minority voters are more likely to vote for leftist parties, even when controlling for other variables such as social class (Téney et al, 2010). This makes that ethnic minority people will look first and foremost to parties from the left (and social-democratic parties in particular) to defend their interests. Hence, given that expectations towards these parties tend to be higher, they risk to loose more (ethnic minority) voters than other parties when not taking ethnic minority interests into account.

Recent research, however, could not always confirm this general picture. Purdam (2001) for instance noted that many ethnic minorities in the British Labour party believe that this party fails to represent the interests of Muslims. In addition, Bird (2011) found that in Canada,

sometimes members of rightist parties are more likely to bring up ethnic minority related issues.

Thirdly, also whether or not a party is part of the **local government** is found to be a determinant for the substantive representation of ethnic minorities. Through being the party in power, they have more contacts with ethnic communities in their municipality, and they have more opportunities to achieve policy change for them. (Eelbode et al, 2013). For these reasons, parties in power tend to be more attractive to ethnic voters and candidates (Téney et al, 2010). We test whether this kind of parties also performs better in terms of substantive representation.

**Activity rate** of a party could be a stimulating factor. In an era in which parties are less active in between elections than before (Whiteley 2011), it is hard to imagine how parties that are almost completely inactive during the legislative term can further ethnic minority interests. The more active a local political party is, the more they can engage with ethnic minorities. Vice versa, it seems unlikely that parties with little or no activities will include ethnic minority issues on their list of high priorities.

Apart from party-based factors, also the political context matters. The substantive representation of ethnic minorities is not always interesting for all parties at all times. As discussed, many of the reasons why political parties are incentivized to represent ethnic minorities are related to the **presence of an ethnic minority electorate**. Unlike women, ethnic minorities are unevenly spread across the country (Anwar, 2001; Togeby, 2008). In general, they tend to be overrepresented in urban areas. Therefore, the substantive representation of their interests is most prominent and outspoken there, because it is electorally more advantageous to represent them and more dangerous to neglect them (Bird, 2003; Bird, 2011; Ruedin, 2010).

Also the **opinions of the electorate** are an important element of the political context. If the environment is open towards ethnic minorities and diversity, political parties are more likely to enhance their substantive representation. An important factor influencing the political environment is the presence (and strength) of an extreme-right party. The presence of an

extreme-right party hinders substantive representation by other parties, since these other parties, wary of losing (even more) votes to the extreme-right, will be more reluctant to defend ethnic minority interests (Winkler and Schuman, 1998; Williams, 2006; Koopmans and Statham, 1999; Eatwell, 2000; Hainsworth and Mitchell, 2000; Bird, 2003). In France for instance, the mainstream right parties adopted policies similar to the anti-immigrant policies of the National Front in order to secure its own political position (Williams, 2006). Other studies, however, argue that not all extreme right parties are evenly successful in this respect. Sometimes, large extreme right parties are present, but fail to influence the behavior of other parties (Koopmans and Statham, 1999; Williams, 2006). Other times, the presence of an extreme-right party even encourages other parties to take ethnic minority interests even more into account as a reaction to the success of the extreme-right (e.g. Meyer and Rosenberg, 2011).

#### **4. Research Design & Methodology**

The aim of this paper is to detect factors that have an influence on the substantive representation of ethnic minorities by political parties. To achieve these ends, we rely on a broad scale survey among local party leaders in Flanders (Belgium).

About 27,5% of the Belgian population is of foreign origin. Especially the composition of the Brussels region is very diverse (68%). In Flanders, about 18% of the population is of foreign origin. Moreover, about 11% of the population does not have the Belgian nationality (34% in Brussels, 8% in Flanders). Besides the presence of foreigners from EU countries (about 46% of the foreign population), the largest ethnic groups come from Maghreb countries (15%) and Turkey (11%). Ethnic minorities predominantly live in cities like Brussels, Antwerp, Luik, Ghent, Leuven and Mechelen (VRIND, 2015).

Ethnic minorities with the Belgian nationality can vote in all elections and stand as a candidate. Since 2004 also ethnic minorities who do not have the Belgian nationality are allowed to vote at the local elections. They are, however, not allowed to stand as a candidate.



In Belgium, there exists a tradition to survey local party leaders about the functioning of their party section in the run-up of the local elections, which are held every 6 years. A team of researchers sent a questionnaire in 1994, 2000, 2006 and 2012. For our analysis we use the data collected in 2012, when the questionnaire for the first time also contained items about the ethnicization of the local party. The chairs of the local party sections of all national parties received a questionnaire. Lists of local parties were excluded from the data-collection, as well as very small national parties who have no or only one seat in the national parliament (such as LDD). The 2012 survey was conducted within the PARTIREP research framework in which several universities collaborate.<sup>1</sup>

National political parties were asked to share the contact details of their local chairs with the researchers. These local chairs received a letter in June 2012 announcing that they would receive an electronic invitation to participate in a web-based survey. In this letter, the opportunity was offered to indicate a preference for obtaining a paper version of the questionnaire. People who made use of this opportunity received a paper version, as well as the local section chairs for which the national party only had a postal address. The other chairs received an electronic invitation linking them to an online questionnaire in which they could fill in their answers. The electronic invitations were sent on 22 June 2012. Chairs who had not responded by then, received a reminder one week later and another one by the end of August. Chairs who had not filled in the questionnaire by mid-September, received a new paper version of the questionnaire by post.

This approach has been successful, as the response rate was with 55% (for all Flemish parties), much higher than in comparable surveys on previous local elections.

We restrict our analysis to the Flemish parties. There are two reasons for this choice. Belgium has in fact two different party systems (a Flemish one and a French-speaking one) that function quite autonomously from each other (Verleden, 2009). By not mixing up parties from these two party systems, the electoral and societal context in which local party sections operate is held constant.

Secondly, due to several problems, the response rate of the social-democratic party PS, which is the largest party in French-speaking Belgium, was only 9%. As a consequence, the representativeness of our data for the Francophone local parties is problematic. Green party

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<sup>1</sup> See: [www.partirep.eu](http://www.partirep.eu)

chairs for instance constitute almost one third of all respondents in French-speaking Belgium, causing bias in the results of the analysis.

The substantive representation of ethnic minority interests is the **dependent variable** in our analysis. More in particular, respondents were asked to what extent their local party section had attention for the interests of ethnic minorities. We are fully aware that by using this question we are not measuring the actual situation, but rather a self-evaluation by the local chairs. We adopted two control measures to avoid bias in the responses due to socially desirable answers. First, a number of social groups (and their interests) were presented in the question on substantive representation, permitting respondents to indicate which groups were more important for them, and which less important. As becomes clear from Table 1, ethnic minorities obtain on average the lowest score from all social groups on a scale from 0 to 10, and the highest standard deviation. This implies that not all local chairs give high scores to ethnic minority interests, and that there exists a lot of variation between the different local chairs on this topic. These two elements indicate that this variable is highly suitable for a comparative analysis between different local sections.

Table 1: Average score of the attention the interests of a number of social groups enjoy in local party sections (0-10-scale) (N = 670)<sup>2</sup>

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Young people	7,9	1,7
Elderly people	7,8	1,6
Women	7,5	1,9
Self-employed	7,3	2,1
Workers	7,2	2,1
LGBT	5,9	2,9
<b>Ethnic minorities</b>	<b>5,5</b>	<b>3,0</b>

<sup>2</sup> The same question was also posed for the interests of trade unions. Since trade unions do not constitute a social group, but an organization defending the interests of several social groups (workers, but also white-collar workers, the unemployed, etc), their results are not presented in the table.

Secondly, respondents who gave the maximum score of 10 for all groups were excluded from the analysis. We suspect that the answers of respondents that have given the maximum score for all the very diverse groups at stake here, do not match with reality. Such a response might furthermore be interpreted that parties think they should represent all people equally, notwithstanding their group-affiliation, which implies a rejection of a group-based approach all together.

Based on the theoretical insights developed in the previous section, we select six **explanatory variables**. Some of them are measured on the level of the party, others are measured on the level of the municipality in which parties function. We test the effect of four party-related variables: the presence of ethnic minorities in the party, the party ideology, the participation to the local government, and the general activity rate of the party. And we also include three variables at the municipality level: population density, share of foreigners in the population, and the score of the extreme right in the municipality. We start with discussing the party-related variables.

An important variable in our study is the presence of ethnic minority party members. As explained above, integration in a political party might well be a fruitful track towards substantive representation, but their presence can also be purely symbolic and serving party goals more than groups' concerns. Based on the 'politics of presence'-theory we nonetheless expect that when ethnic minorities are present in a party, political parties take their substantive representation into account. In order to capture this variable, we could have relied on the percentage of ethnic minorities as party member or on the percentage as member of a selected party organ (the party executive board more in particular). Questions about both percentages were included in the questionnaire. The results show, however, that only 55 % of the respondents gave an answer on the question about the percentage of ethnic minorities in the local membership file. This is not so remarkable as party members can join the party without being involved in local party affairs: many passive party members exist in each party (Whiteley et al, 1993). This results in local chairs having only a limited view on the actual composition of their membership file. Moreover, the share of ethnic minorities as local party member is not something that parties monitor. Consequently, ethnic background is not catalogued in membership files to the same extent as other

features such as sex and age (Celis et al, 2013). Party executive boards are more visible and hence it is easier to assess the share of ethnic minorities: almost 91 % of the respondents managed to give an indication of the share of ethnic minorities at that particular party level. Given the much higher response rate for the question about the party executive board, we use only this variable in the analysis.<sup>3</sup>

H1: Parties with a large share of ethnic minorities in their executive board score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

A second party characteristic is party ideology. Given their general attention to egalitarian policies targeting marginalized groups in society, we expect leftist parties to care more about ethnic minorities' substantive representation. In order to capture this variable, local chairs were asked to position their (local) party on a left-right scale ranging from 0 to 10.

H2: Leftist parties situated at the left score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

Thirdly, we take the participation in local government into account: we assume that local government parties are more sensitive for the substantive representation of ethnic minority demands, and have more instruments at their disposal to realize these demands. The government status in the legislative term (2006-2012) that was coming to an end at the moment of the survey (2012) is taken as reference.

H3: Local government parties score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

We add a final party characteristic to the analysis: activity rate of a party. We measure this by looking at the number of activities that the local party has organized the last six months (excluding regular meetings): either no activity; 1 or 2 activities; 3 or 4 activities; or 5 or

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<sup>3</sup> There is a strong correlation between the presence of ethnic minority party members in the local party and their presence in the party executive board (Pearson correlation is 0.513, which is statistically significant at 0.001 level)

more activities. We expect active parties to be active on all kinds of activities including also the substantive representation of ethnic minority interests.

H4: Active parties score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

We now turn to variables at the municipality level. First, we look at the composition of the population. We include two variables: one general variable (population density) giving an indication of the urban character of a municipality, and a more specific variable (the percentage of foreigners per municipality). The latter variable gives a more exact indication of the size of the group (ethnic minorities) seeking substantive representation. A weakness of this variable is that it excludes people who acquired the Belgian nationality. Given the electoral attractiveness, we expect that in cities and in municipalities with a large proportion of ethnic minorities in the population, political parties will take more efforts to ensure ethnic minorities' substantive representation.

H5: Parties in cities score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

H6: Parties in municipalities with a high share of ethnic minorities score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

Finally, we look at political environment in which parties operate. We take the vote percentage of *Vlaams Belang*, the Flemish extreme-right party, into account. On average, this party presented lists in three out of five Flemish municipalities in 2012 and obtained 6,8 % of the votes, which is a decline compared to previous local elections (Steyvers & De Ceuninck, 2013). We grope a bit in the dark about the expected effect of the presence and strength of the extreme-right on the efforts other parties undertake for ethnic minority interests: either a negative, a positive or no effect at all are possible. We formulate a positive effect in H7 and analyze whether this will be confirmed or not.

H7: Parties in municipalities with a high vote percentage for the extreme right score higher on substantive representation for ethnic minorities.

## 5. Results

We conducted a multiple linear regression with the score on the substantive representation of ethnic minority interests (on a scale from 0 to 10) as dependent variable. We estimate three models: one with only party-related variables (Party model), one with only context variables (Context model) and one with both party-related and context variables (Full model).

Table 2: Multiple regression with attention paid to ethnic minorities as dependent variable (beta's)<sup>4</sup>

	Party Model	Context Model	Full Model
Ethnic presence in a party	,116***		,068
Left-right orientation	-,272***		-,280***
Local government	,014		,004
Party activities (ref = no)			
1 or 2 activities	,174		,174
3 or 4 activities	,267***		,258**
5 or more activities	,151*		,157*
Foreigners in population		,132***	,116**
Population density		,017	,007
Votes for extreme right		,089**	,074
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,10	0,03	0,12

\* p < 0.1 \*\* p < 0.05 \*\*\* p < 0.01

From the Party Model, it appears that several party-related factors have an impact on the substantive representation of ethnic minority interests. Parties who position themselves on the left side of the political spectrum have significantly higher scores on the substantive representation indicator than parties of the right. Also more active parties are more likely to take ethnic minority interests into account. Especially the last two categories, i.e. parties who have organized 3 or more activities the last six months, are more sensitive to ethnic minority interests than passive parties. Participation to the local government coalition, however, does not have a significant effect. Finally, the presence of ethnic minority people in the party structures has a clear positive effect on the representation of ethnic minority

<sup>4</sup> For each model, we checked for multicollinearity. Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are never higher than 1,500.

interests. Apparently, the politics of presence provides an added value here, as parties with more ethnic minority people in their ranks, pay more attention to ethnic minority interests.

In the Context model, we only take context variables into account. The fit of this model is much weaker than that of the Party model ( $R^2$  of 0,03 versus 0,10), which suggests that the main explanations for substantive representation is not to be found in the context, but in the parties themselves. The share of foreigners in the population has a significant positive effect, while the general population density could not provide extra explanatory power. Parties valuing representation of ethnic minority interests operate not so much in urban areas, but in municipalities with many foreign people. The results of this model also demonstrate that there is a positive effect from the percentage of votes obtained by the extreme right. Rather than copying their anti-migrant points of view, parties react against the (success of the) extreme right by incorporating ethnic minority interests in their party platforms.

In the Full model, where both party-related and context-related variables are entered, the same effects appear, but two variables lose their significance: the ethnic presence in the party, and the score of the extreme right. Apparently, active parties of the left that function in municipalities with a considerable share of foreigners in the population take the interests of ethnic minorities into account, regardless of how many ethnic minority people are member of the party's executive board and of the electoral score of the extreme right.

## **6. Conclusion**

Parties are crucial actors for the political representation of ethnic minority people. Much scholarly attention has been directed towards the recruitment and selection by parties, and towards how parties enable or constrain their MPs to undertake substantive representation. In this paper, we shift the focus towards parties as actors for the substantive representation of ethnic minority interests. Parties could further these interests directly (for instance in government negotiations), but also indirectly by influencing the public debate or by encouraging their parliamentarians or government ministers to defend these interests.

We have put forward two groups of explanatory variables for the substantive representation of ethnic minority interests at the local level in Flanders (Belgium): factors on the party level

and factors about the municipal context in which parties operate. The results of our analysis demonstrate that party-related variables provide a greater explanatory power than context-related factors. More in particular, it has been shown that parties from the left and active parties tend to take ethnic minority interests more into account. The only context variable that proves to have a significant effect is constituted by the share of foreigners in the population.

All this demonstrates that parties are both driven by ideological motives to represent the interests of ethnic minorities as well as by electoral motives. The fact that parties from the left defend ethnic minority interests more than others could be explained by their party ideology, which focusses on the emancipation of subordinated groups, but also by electoral motives, as the risk to lose ethnic votes is highest for them. The same applies to the finding that in municipalities with a high share of foreigners in the population parties are more likely to attach importance to ethnic minority interests. There are substantive reasons for this phenomenon (substantive representation should take the composition of the group of represented into account), but also electoral reasons (substantive representation is a means to attract a large number of voters there).

About the politics of presence thesis, evidence is mixed. We found an effect of descriptive representation (presence of ethnic minorities in the party executive) on their substantive representation, but this effect is no longer significant when we enter the share of foreigners in the population to the model. This suggests that the presence of ethnic minorities in parties matters primarily in municipalities with a low number of ethnic minorities in the population. The lack of significant effect in the Full model does, however, not eliminate all together the relevance of presence in the party as an explanatory factor. Perhaps, the number of ethnic minorities in a party is too low and they will need a certain 'critical mass' in the party to really weigh on the representational strategies of the party. Another objection refers to the representativeness of the ethnic party members. It might be that they are not representative for the population they are supposed to represent. One can for instance doubt whether highly educated ethnic minority people are well placed to defend the interests of lower educated citizens. Finally, it might be that not the mere presence of ethnic minority people has an impact. It could be argued that intra-party organization, by means of specific subsections for instance, is needed to influence the substantive representation.



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