

Spanish Political Parties and Europeanisation¹⁴¹

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Con la expansión de las competencias de la UE, el modelo de gobierno multi-nivel asociado al proceso de integración es probable que tenga un creciente impacto sobre las instituciones políticas nacionales. Para hacer referencia a este proceso se ha empleado el término europeización aunque su significado exacto diste de ser claro. Un autor (Olsen 2002: 923-24) identifica no menos de cinco significados, desde “changing national boundaries” (a través de la ampliación de la UE) a “a political unification project”. Un tercer significado implica “adapting national and sub-national systems of governance to a European political centre and European-wide norms”. Este es el concepto que emplearemos en este trabajo. La europeización se entiende como “a process by which domestic actors and institutions adapt to the institutional framework and logic of the EU” (Poguntke et al 2003: 2). En esta ponencia se aborda la posible europeización de los partidos políticos.

Nuestro objetivo es explorar el grado en el que la organización de los partidos en un país miembro de la UE ha sido influida por el proceso de integración europea. Es decir, analizar en qué medida la creciente importancia del sistema político de la UE ha cambiado las dinámicas internas y la formulación de los programas en los partidos españoles. El material empírico procede principalmente de las entrevistas realizadas durante 2004 a 24 informantes seleccionados por formar parte de los niveles superiores de las organizaciones partidistas.

Nuestras hipótesis básicas son que

1. las elites partidistas verán su poder e influencia favorecidos por la europeización porque el proceso de integración y la lógica de las negociaciones supranacionales privilegian a las elites que relacionadas con las políticas de la UE, facilitándoles un acceso privilegiado a recursos e informaciones;
2. los políticos partidistas especializados en UE (a partir de ahora *EU-specialists*) –definidos como (a) políticos con responsabilidades vinculadas a la política de la UE (eurodiputados, diputados vinculados a las comisiones parlamentarias de asuntos europeos) y (b) personal contratado por los partidos (staff de las secretarías de relaciones internacionales, asesores, etc.) verán igualmente realzada su influencia interna.

Es decir, las preguntas que guían esta investigación serían:

- ¿Cuál ha sido el impacto de la UE sobre las estructuras formales de los partidos políticos? (¿Ha crecido el poder de decisión formal de los EU-specialists? ¿Ha crecido su disposición de recursos?)
- ¿Ha aumentado la relevancia del los EU-specialists dentro de la vida interna de los partidos?
- ¿Ha aumentado el poder de las elites partidistas debido al proceso de europeización? (¿Existen y son efectivos los mecanismos destinados a garantizar la accountability de las elites cuando participan en actividades vinculadas a la UE?).

Esta ponencia se limita a analizar el caso español abordándolo de un modo básicamente descriptivo. En una fase posterior del proyecto de investigación que actualmente desarrollamos sobre esta materia, y con el análisis de otros casos de estudio, el propósito es describir y explicar la variación en la adaptación o cambio organizativo de los partidos¹⁴².

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¹⁴² El proyecto de investigación se compone de dos fases. En la primera se desarrollan 6 estudios de casos (en Gran Bretaña, Francia, Suecia, Alemania, España y Austria) que analizan en profundidad los partidos políticos más relevantes de cada país. Esta ponencia se sitúa en esta fase del desarrollo de la investigación. En la segunda fase se analizarán las respuestas de una encuesta a elites partidistas de las organizaciones más relevantes realizada en todos los países de la UE (UE-15).

In this paper we aim at analysing how the European integration has (or has not) exerted an impact on the internal life and organisation of the five main Spanish parties: PSOE, PP, IU, CDC and PNV. We examine to what extent these parties have transformed their organizations in order to incorporate the European level to their decision-making structures. Are the party actors more closely involved in EU-related affairs or issues gaining power within their parties? To what extent has European integration had a substantial impact on the internal party working of these five parties? We will examine the way in which the more relevant Spanish parties have changed their organizations trying to adapt to the process of European integration and we will check whether the party actors involved in the management of EU issues have gained power in the structures of the national parties. With this goal in mind, we first analyze the parties' structural adaptation.

STRUCTURAL ADAPTATION OF PARTIES TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Formal management. Party personnel with visible EU brief and funding of EU activities.

Party personnel.

The presence in the Spanish government of a minister devoted specifically to EU matters has been rare and it only happened in some of the Centrist UCD cabinets, soon after Spain had applied for EU membership. Apart from that brief experience, the management of EU matters has been mainly placed in the wider Foreign Affairs ministry, although the level of authority of the person responsible for European policies has been high and just under the level of the Minister.

Parties have mimetised this model in their internal structure and this subordinate position of EU matters to the general foreign affairs portfolio is also present when we analyse their internal structure. In all the parties we study the International Secretary is the one responsible for EU affairs, combining this domain with others world area. In any case, the international secretaries of the two bigger and governmental parties (PP and PSOE) remain practically in the shade when the party is in government, and the acting Foreign minister acts as the real party spokesperson for EU matters.

Therefore, in spite of the growing importance of EU politics, there is no position devoted exclusively to EU issues in the structure of parties in central office, and the person who represents the party in the transnational party federation usually shares this role with other party positions, for example, international secretary.

Apart from the international secretaries, some other party positions are mainly concerned with EU issues. EU membership has resulted in the creation of parliamentary committees related to this policy area. Consequently the MP who acts as the party spokesperson in the Parliamentary Committee on EU affairs frequently takes the role of party spokesperson on EU matters. However, in the Spanish case this role is also frequently played by the party spokesperson in the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign affairs. In any case, these two roles of party spokesperson by certain MPs are to a great degree unofficial or informal.

As the party spokespersons in other parliamentary committees, the party spokesperson in the Committee on EU affairs is selected by the leadership of the Parliamentary Groups. In the context of Spanish party politics, this means that this decision is made under the surveillance and scrutiny of the party in central office leadership. Even if in certain parties the scrutiny of these appointments is not formal or embedded in party rules, it nevertheless is in place due to the great overlap (particularly strong in nation-wide parties) between the party in central office and the parliamentary party. These appointments to the Parliamentary Committees are rarely controversial in Spanish politics –except for exceptional cases of factional struggle in which the party leadership would intervene- and it is neither so for the case of the EU affairs committee. Thus, these EU-specialist positions are under the control of party leadership and do not entail any official role of party EU spokesperson.

In addition, the parties analyzed have created some advisory groups that work on EU issues. However, it is interesting to remark that even these specialized advisory groups are integrated within a wider advisory group devoted to foreign and international affairs and relations. Thus, the PP formally created very recently (in 2004) a Foreign Policy Council in which the international secretary, the EP delegation leader, the spokesperson MP in the Parliamentary Committee on EU affairs, the general Secretary of the PPE and some other MEPs were included, but along with some generic foreign affairs specialists. In the case of the PSOE, the party has a long-established International Relations and Cooperation Council within which there is a workgroup that it is not even exclusively devoted to EU

affairs but also to transatlantic relations, and only within this latter workgroup has there emerged a less formal and top-politicians group on EU related issues. Similar situations are in place also in IU, PNV and CDC.¹⁴³

Resources.

The finance of Spanish parties heavily depends on State funding, and public subsidies are directly linked to the parties' electoral performance. Therefore, the financial and human resources that the parties devote to their different areas of activity can experiment variations according to the amount of subsidies received and the party's electoral evolution. Hence, when parties suffer significant electoral drawbacks some drastic cuts follow. Spanish EU membership and European Parliament (EP) politics has entailed an additional source of funding for Spanish parties. Very frequently they use EP funds for the organization of workshops or seminars (more or less closely) related with EU issues, for hiring personnel (in Spain and at the EP), and some parties (as IU) also retain part of their MEPs' salary. This pattern of funding usage has also implied that the main source of funds for EU-related party activity is not the national party organization, in spite of the extensive public subsidies received by the Spanish parties, but the funding and resources that come from the EP.

The national party organization funds the International Secretariat of the party and, as a general consequence, some of the resources of this Secretariat are directed towards EU-related topics, activities and staff. But the situation in the field of party resources resembles the one described in relation to party officials with an EU brief: the party resources for EU issues are included within the wider office for International Relations that is also busy with party policies towards other world areas. Therefore, the amount of resources devoted to EU issues within the International Secretariat is not very great. In any case, the resources of the international secretariats are modest and, although it is impossible to assert the amount of money the parties devote to this field in their budgets, the personnel in charge of it area in the parties' headquarters is easily quantifiable: it ranges from around five persons in the larger parties (PSOE and PP) to only two or even one in the smaller organizations (PNV and IU). Among this staff in charge of the parties' International policy issues there is no-one exclusively responsible for acting as the EU liaison nor exclusively devoted to EU policies. According to the party officials the scarcity of the resources available to the international secretariats of the party in central office impedes the exclusive dedication of party staff to EU matters.

Leaving aside the variation in personnel due to the changes in the parties' budgets based on their electoral performance, there is no clearly visible trend of evolution in the resources invested by parties in this field. In any case, party resources invested in this domain are judged very modest by the own party officials, and they seem not to have substantially changed in the past years. It should also be noted that the general party resources and the infrastructure of party headquarters have grown since the mid-1980s, and even if there has been a growth of infrastructure and human resources in the international secretariats its magnitude has not been remarkable and does not indicate that these secretariats are a high priority for the parties at all.

The situation is only slightly better in the case of national parliamentary groups. Not even the biggest parties (PSOE and PP) recruit among the staff of their national parliamentary groups a person exclusively devoted to EU policies. The parliamentary groups of PSOE and PP have a single assistant engaged with the work of several parliamentary committees related to international affairs (defense, international affairs, cooperation, and EU affairs) and this person is who -on a part-time basis- assists the MPs working on EU issues. In the case of the three smaller parties even this assistant for international policy issues is lacking, given that their parliamentary party staff is certainly small.

Therefore, in all five parties the main source of resources for EU activities is clearly the EP. The party Delegation in the EP, its infrastructure and its personnel are the predominant party structure for all EU-related party activity. The MEPs rely almost exclusively on the resources made available by the EP for their activity, and only in very rare cases do they ask for assistance to the party international secretariat in the party headquarters -for example, the possibility to use an office there. Finally, the liaising role between the EP delegation and other party structures and offices is done through the MEPs' own resources and assistants.

Moreover, when the party is in Government there is a certain use of governmental resources for EU-related party activity. Given that four of the parties we study have participated in national (PSOE and PP) or regional (PNV and CDC) governments this has been a quite general practice in almost all of our cases.

¹⁴³ For a certain time IU had a European Secretary not due to political priorities but to internal power equilibria.

This use of governmental resources has taken mainly the form of advise and exchange of information. Consultation of PSOE and PP MEPs with the Foreign Minister for tasks of policy analysis and positioning is certainly common when their party is in Government -but in contrast not so common with the parties headquarters. In the cases of PNV and CiU -and given their small organizational size, their comparatively lower number of MPs and MEPs, assistants and party staff- the use of regional government resources by the different types of party Eurospecialists is also very notable.

MEP candidate selection.

Candidate selection processes is far from being a transparent, open and strictly formalized process in all Spanish parties. When the time comes to decide the electoral lists for the legislative national elections, the territorial organizations –their provincial or regional committees- usually propose lists of candidates that in a later stage should be approved by a national committee in charge of designing the electoral lists or, alternatively, by the national executive.

This is the method commonly employed by the five parties we analyse, although always with some party-specific peculiarities. For example, in the case of PP the party organs that intervene are only the electoral lists committees at the different territorial levels. In the case of PSOE, there is (since 1997) a system of membership ballots to select the candidate to Prime Minister, but the rest of candidates are proposed by the territorial committees and approved by a federal electoral committee. In the case of IU and CDC the territorial organizations propose and the party council and national executive approve the final lists –although the process has been made more complicated in CDC since the formation of a party federation with the smaller Catalan Christian-Democratic party UDC; and IU has used in some instances membership ballots. Only the PNV presents a more diverse approach, and it is the executive committee to make a proposal –after receiving the suggestions of the territorial organizations- and the national committee to approve the electoral lists. In sum, in Spanish parties the national leadership remains frequently in full control of candidate selection and it has substantial veto power on the lists proposed for provincial constituencies. In addition, candidate proposals do not come from the rank-and-file through membership ballots but from the territorial (provincial or regional) leadership directly or indirectly (through electoral list committees).

Is the selection of MEP candidates any different? Certainly some departures from the general approach described previously could be clearly induced by the institutional and electoral rules that affect EP elections. The main procedural variations come from differences in the electoral system: instead of the 52 electoral districts in which the country is divided for national elections, EP elections are run in a single nation-wide electoral district; and instead of electing 350 MPs, only 64 MEPs (up until the 2004 EP elections) or 54 MEPs (since 2004) are elected.

Given this different institutional setting we would expect, on the one hand, a reduction of the influence of the lower-level territorial units of the party organization, due to the “nationalization” of the electoral process; and, on the other hand, and especially for the smaller parties, given the reduction of the number of candidates finally elected we would expect a greater intensity in the internal fights around the elaboration of the electoral lists, thus somewhat substracting the entire process from the control of the central leadership.

In the case of the PSOE, the EP electoral list is formally proposed by the national executive committee to the national executive/party council that is to approve the proposal. In practical terms, the proposal is basically engineered by the Organization Secretary of the party (who controls the electoral lists committee). Given that within the Socialist party the EP delegation is under the authority of, and belongs to, the national joint parliamentary group (along with the MPs of the lower and upper national chambers), the party spokesperson in the lower chamber has also an important role in the elaboration of the list. The EP delegation and its leader do also retain a certain say (and submit a report to the party leadership) but they are not key actors in the elaboration of the list, and they simply offer an evaluation of the EP delegation work.

In sharp contrast with this secondary role, the influence of the regional organizations of the party is very high. In line with the growing federalization of Spanish nation-wide parties –that have followed the paralell federalization of the Spanish political system- Socialist regional organizations have increased their influence on this process and they are capable of decisively affecting the proposal that the Organization Secretary prepares. As a result of this influence there is a distribution of candidates among the regional organizations and the larger regional parties have a number of reserved MEP positions to be filled by their members. Finally, the party national leader does also intervene, as in other processes of electoral list design, eespecially in regards to who should head the list.

The PP employs a very similar process for list elaboration, and it has not changed significantly in these years. There is an Electoral Committee that receives the proposals of the regional Electoral Committees but the former obviously also has certain stakes in the inclusion of specific candidates. As in the case of the Socialists, the power within these electoral committees is in the hands of the national organization secretary or general secretary -in the national electoral committee- and in the hands of the regional party leadership -in the regional electoral committees. The General Secretary or party leader not only plays a relevant role in the decision of the head of the list but also in the possible inclusion of national party leaders in the European list –something that also happens in the case of the Socialists.

In practical terms, the list is divided in two parts: candidates proposed by the regional parties and supported by the regional leaders, and candidates proposed and supported by the national leadership. After reaching a consensus between the proposals of the central and regional leaderships –in an asymmetrical relation in favour of the national leadership- the national electoral committee approves the electoral list. The influence of the EP delegation is clearly very secondary in these procedures.

In the case of the left-wing IU the process of list design takes place directly in the party Council without any formal intervention from any Electoral or Lists Committee. The party Council is to decide on a final list based on a proposal of the Executive Committee with the candidates proposed, in turn, by the regional parties.

There are no relevant variations with respect to all other parties in the cases of the peripheral nationalist PNV and CDC. In both cases the number of MEPs these two parties expect to gain is really low (from one to two, or at the most three). According to the party leaders interviewed, this small number of candidates that are going to be elected has favoured a more centralized candidate selection process. In both cases the selection of the head of the list –traditionally in the hands of the party leadership inner circle- is almost equivalent to the selection of the party MEP. Therefore, in PNV and in CDC, the party Council approves the list of candidates proposed by the Executive Committee.

In summary, MEP candidate selection process imply no involvement whatsoever of the rank and file. In four out of five of the parties analysed the final decision is made by the party Council -with a very similar composition to the traditional national executives- with some minor variations across parties in the proposal process. In all cases the central party leadership and the executive committee play a crucial role, and they dominate the selection committee that prepares the proposed list of candidates. In the cases of the nation-wide parties (PP, PSOE, and IU), accommodating the claims of the regional parties (see Table 3) is also a relevant part of the MEPs selection process. Therefore, there are no dramatic differences in the openness and inclusiveness of the selection procedures for national and EP elections, except for the fact that the EP selection process is even more elite-centred and guided by the party leadership and the party in central office than the national legislative one. The nationalization or centralization of the process is higher, the influence of the EP delegation is low and the conflicts (except for personal rivalries) are less relevant.

Table 1. Candidate selection in the main Spanish parties for the European Parliament, 2004

	IU	PSOE	PNV	CDC	PP
Who chose the selection committee?	Party council	Congress	Party council	Congress	Executive Committee*
Who could be nominated?	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone
Primary vote?	No	No	No	No	No
Who could vote in the primary /membership ballot?	-	-	-	-	-
Was another body involved?	Regional parties	Regional parties	No	No	Regional Electoral Committees
Which body took final decision?	Party council	Party council	Party council	Party Council	Electoral Committee

* Especially in PSOE and PP the national executive membership is very numerous and is a kind of mix between an executive committee and a national executive.

Are the criteria for candidate selection different to the ones considered for the national elections? Not really. The Socialist party takes into consideration the need for renewal of the delegation, but also the need of some expertise, to avoid that the replacement of the more experienced MEPs will result in a lack of activity in the future EP delegation. Besides this, the electoral list should respect two other quotas: the

gender one, and the regional one. The PSOE has introduced not only a gender quota but also the will to advance towards parity, but the delegation should simultaneously respect the desire for representation of the larger regional party federations. In this regard, the behaviour of the PP is similar, and takes into consideration expertise, the need to include a few national leaders in the list, and the regional quotas. In IU, the most internally divided and factionalized Spanish party, and given the low numbers of MEPs that IU normally gets elected, the leadership must negotiate with the regional party leaderships the elaboration of the list upon the bases of the need to include national (or factional) leaders. In addition, some candidates (at least some!) need to have a certain degree of expertise, and the representation of the strongest regional parties should be guaranteed –something extremely difficult to achieve due to the low number of MEPs eventually elected. The same combination of factors (except for the territorial one) works in the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties.

ACTING INTERNALLY

The hypotheses presented in the theoretical framework state that the influence of EU-specialists in their parties is expected to grow. The increasing influence is expected to affect not only the definition of party positions on EU issues but also the day-to-day functioning of the national structure of the party. In this section we will examine this possible influence of EU-specialists on national party functioning.

Elite selection.

According to the research hypotheses there are several aspects in which the expected increasing role of EU-specialist in the national party arena could be detected. One of them is certainly elite selection. According to the scarce use within Spanish parties of participatory organizational devices, as primaries or membership ballots, the party leading bodies have a especially influential position in this field. Therefore, one of the main channels to exert influence in elite selection is through membership of the party leading bodies. Which is the presence of EU-specialists in the leading bodies of the party organizations? Have EU-specialists, or at least some of them (EP delegation leader, MEPs), *ex officio* positions in the leading bodies of their parties?

From the rulings of party statutes we should conclude that the record of EU-specialists in this aspect is not very remarkable. Only in the conservative PP has the EP delegation leader or spokesperson MEP an ex officio position in the very numerous party executive committee. Besides this, all the conservative MEPs also have ex officio positions in the party council/national executive and in the party congress. None of the other Spanish parties reserves a more relevant formal positions to their MEPs than the PP. However, we should stress that these formal leading bodies, all of them with remarkable big membership, are not very relevant in terms of their internal leverage or power –that is exerted by the party leader’s own inner circle within the executive committee. Next to the PP, the Center-right Catalan nationalist CDC does also guarantee a more visible position to its MEPs. CDC attributes their MEPs (from 1 to 3, depending on the elections) ex officio positions in the congress and party council, and a representative of the EP delegation is a member of the national executive. In the PSOE the MEP delegation leader is just an ex officio member of the highly populated party Council. In the Basque nationalist PNV the MEP may be a member of the Congress and of the party Council (along with other MPs and local councillors), but his presence is formally incompatible with membership of other leading bodies. And finally, in the left-wing IU the MEPs or the EP delegation leader do not have any formally reserved position in the leading party bodies.

Table 2. Ex officio positions of MEPs in the party organs, 2005.

	<i>Executive Committee</i>	<i>National Executive*</i>	<i>Party Council</i>	<i>Congress</i>
<i>IU</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>PSOE</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>EP delegation leader</i>		<i>No</i>
<i>PNV</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>May be part of a representation of MPs and LCs</i>		<i>May be part of a representation of MPs and LCs</i>
<i>CDC</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>EP delegation leader</i>	<i>All MEPs</i>	<i>All MEPs</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>EP delegation leader</i>	<i>All MEPs</i>		<i>All MEPs</i>

** In some Spanish parties the National Executive and the Party Council form a unique party organ.*

This very restricted presence of the MEPs or of the EP delegation leaders in the most influential party bodies is sometimes increased in practice –aside from formal rules- but then the presence of EU-specialists in such organs seem to be dependent on their personal networking, internal prestige or influence more than upon their expertise or EU-specialization. With some few exceptions in which the inclusion of certain MEPs in the national executive is directly related to the consideration of their EU-specialization, in most cases of incorporation of EU-specialist to top party organs the criteria followed are related to internal party dynamics.

This impression of the lack of formal influence is also multiplied by the fact that few elite interviewees thought that specialisation in EU affairs was a useful way to speed-up the career of an activist within the party hierarchy. However, the elites interviewed all argued that EU policy has an increasing importance and that it is already widely recognised as a relevant portfolio –irrespective of their influence as EU-specialists within the party organs. At the same time, even if our data are still impressionistic –in need of a more detailed biographical analysis of party elites-, it is increasingly more common to find young party elites with a EU or EP brief. To a certain degree, the image of the EP as a retirement house for senior politicians –which could still apply in some cases- is also compatible with the image of the EP as an increasingly relevant training arena for junior party politicians. In this regard, the relevance of EU politics has been stress in party discourses, although the factual and practical relevance of EU-specialists within party structures does not seem to be very high.

In this context of limited power by MEPs, the EP delegation leader is clearly the relatively most influential position. How is this position selected and what role do the MEPs and EU-specialists play in this process?

In the case of the PP the MEPs play a very minor role because the leader of the delegation is – except for very exceptional cases- the head of the electoral list and, as we mentioned previously, MEPs are not relevant actors in the selection of the head of the list. Therefore, the key actors in the selection of the delegation leader are, again, those who select the head of the list and, in the case of the PP, it is the top party leadership and the General Secretary who have a greater say in this process.

In the case of the PSOE it is the Executive Committee who in practical terms appoints the delegation leader: the Executive Committee makes a proposal, then voted by the EP delegation, but expected to be passed without contestation. However, as in the case of the PP, the head of the list is meant to be also the delegation leader and is, thus, chosen (proposed in formal terms) beforehand by the same Executive Committee during the process of list elaboration.

We find the same selection process in the case of IU: the head of the list proposed by the executive committee will become the delegation leader, although there is formally a vote among the MEPs. In the other two cases (PNV and CDC) this issue is less relevant because the PNV only obtains one MEP and CDC has normally obtained two, but they follow the same logic than the other parties. Therefore, in Spanish parties the EP delegation leader is chosen by the party leadership without any determining say by MEPs.

Finally, the most visible power EU-specialists retain, and more specifically the MEPs, is their role in the appointment of party staff. However, the influence of MEPs in this area is reduced to the appointment of the jobs related to the work in the EP delegation and, even in this case, they formally share this responsibility with the party central headquarters and the Organization Secretariat.¹⁴⁴

Formulating manifestoes.

Once we have examined the influence of EU-specialists and, particularly, of the MEPs in the elite selection within the national party, we move now to the analysis of other relevant domains of decision-making within the national party: the formulation of party manifestoes. Is the role of the MEPs and other

¹⁴⁴ This is the formal procedure but obviously there are exceptional cases in which the decision relies basically in the hands of the MEPs. In the case of PP their MEPs seem to be more autonomous in the hiring of their assistants. Apart from this, given that there is no party structure devoted exclusively to EU matters and that this issue falls into the more general International Relations or International Policy offices, the role played by EU-specialists in the appointment of the scarce number of personnel working in these offices for the party area is certainly minor.

EU-specialists relevant in this field? Has the influence of EU-specialists grown in the formulation of party manifestoes?

Spanish parties elaborate and approve their electoral manifestoes following all of them similar procedures. Platforms are elaborated by formal workgroups or informal teams of specialists (MEPs, MPs, party staff, party secretaries, professionals, experts, etc.) appointed by the executive committees. These groups prepare drafts that are finally approved by the party councils (IU, PSOE, and CDC) or by the executive committees (PP and PNV). This is the common procedure both for the national elections manifesto and for the EP elections manifesto. However, there are very relevant differences in the involvement of EU-specialists in each one of these electoral programmes.

In spite of the growing influence of EU politics on domestic ones, national manifestoes – according to the interviewees themselves- devote little attention to UE matters; and the involvement of EU-specialists in the drafting of national manifestoes is fairly limited in all the parties considered. The participation of EU-specialist in the national manifesto formulation is mainly restricted to the International Relations or EU sections of the programmes. Their involvement in other parts referred to domestic policies is clearly much less relevant. However, the growing europeanization of some policies has increased the chances of participation in the manifesto formulation of EU-specialists. Their involvement is greater in the most europeanized policies. But this involvement of EU-specialists in domestic but europeanized policies takes place in a rather subordinate position. Their involvement depends on the sensitiveness of the persons leading the working group responsible for the drafting in that field, and they take a secondary role, with MPs or the party secretaries adopting the steering role in the drafting of those policy sections.¹⁴⁵

In the case of the EP elections manifestoes the involvement of EU-specialists is massive, and some particularly relevant MEPs are usually major components of the drafting committees. In the PP, EU-specialists play a very important role in the committee in charge of the EP elections manifesto –which usually includes the head of the delegation, although this is not mandatory- but this committee also incorporates some area specialists and not necessarily strictly speaking EU-specialist. This Committee receives suggestions and ideas from other party officials (EU and non EU-specialists). The process is not very different in the Socialist case. The elaboration of the EP elections Socialist manifesto is done by a group of specialists appointed by the Executive Committee. In this group EU-specialists (MEPs, MPs involved in EU-related parliamentary committees, party staff, etc.) play a prominent role, but other party elites not specialized in EU affairs with portfolios where EU policies have important implications are also involved (e.g. different policy area secretaries of the party and party spokespersons in diverse national parliamentary committees).

This same pattern is to be found in the cases of the smaller IU, PNV and CDC. The role of EU-specialists (MEPs, MPs, staff) is central. In these cases the manifesto formulation is also characterized by the involvement of a lower number of people. The persons really engaged in the drafting can frequently be less than ten. In IU there have been EP elections in which the manifesto has been practically and exclusively elaborated by the MEPs, who were at the same time party secretaries, in a clear overlap between the executive committee and the EP delegation.

Another relevant aspect is that when PP and PSOE have been in Government an important part of the materials, reports and information for the manifesto formulation have come from governmental departments; for example, from the assistants to the ministers. This has happened also in the case of PNV and CDC when they have been in the Basque and Catalan regional governments, respectively. In all cases, this kind of Government-guided manifesto formulation was reinforced by the fact that governmental personnel linked to the party (ministerial staff, high level civil servants, public administration general directors, etc.) took part in the working groups that elaborated the platforms. In the case of PP the Foreign Affairs Ministry had the opportunity in some occasions to supervise the final result of this programmatic elaboration (interview X).

All these features result in the EP elections manifesto formulation process being a more restrictive process when compared to the formulation of the national elections manifesto. The drafting of the programme involves a smaller number of party officials and party structures, and a smaller number of

¹⁴⁵ IU would represent a sort of exception to this general rule, since for a long time there has been an overlap between an important part of its EP delegation and the party executive committee that coordinated the manifesto formulation. This overlap meant that the MEPs, who were also party secretaries, exerted a leading role in the formulation of certain sections of the manifesto that made reference to domestic issues.

working groups composed by less people. Several interviewees from PSOE and IU defined the EP elections manifesto formulation as less participatory and as a mostly technocratic process.

ACTING SUPRANATIONALLY

The changes in the parties' internal distribution of power due to the process of European integration and to the possibly increasing influence of EU-specialists within them are expected to produce structural adaptations of the parties, as well as higher degrees of involvement of EU-specialists in domestic party politics. We have already examined these possible effects in the case of Spanish parties and we will turn now our attention towards a third possible area of change in the internal balance of power.

The process of European integration is expected to produce an increase in the power of party elites and EU-specialists within their organizations due to their participation in European institutions of decision-making. We can distinguish three main potential consequences: (1) the internal power that MEPs may gain due to their participation in EP decision-making processes; (2) the influence that national party elites may derive from their participation in the Council of Ministers and the European Council; and (3) the power that the party officials involved in the Europarty could gain within their national organization. We will analyze each of these three aspects in the next paragraphs, and we will take into consideration the degree of autonomy/discretion and accountability of the different party actors in order to define their position in the internal balance of power.

Parties and their MEPs

The relationship between the MEPs of all the parties analyzed and their respective national parties is characterized by the high level of autonomy enjoyed by the MEPs in their activities. Besides this, the level of accountability of the MEPs is remarkably low or even inexistent in practice. And contrary to what we could expect, this situation has not drastically changed with the increasing importance of EU issues and the empowerment of the EP. The growing relevance of the EU and the EP has provided incentives for an increase in the exchange of opinions and information between the MEPs and other party and government officials, but this has not entailed a closer or more strict monitoring of the formers' activities. In fact, the MEPs can decide whether they will consult and report more or less frequently to the national party; and, in any case, the communications are more frequently established by the MEPs than by the national party.¹⁴⁶ Some MEPs we interviewed mentioned that, although the exchanges with national party officials are more frequent nowadays, they still have the impression to act independently and in the margins of the national party.

Additionally, national parties do not strictly define the priorities for the delegations' action in the EP. For this reason, all that MEPs are expected to do is to follow the party electoral manifesto, and to observe the priorities of the parliamentary group to which they belong. The goals defined by the national party for delegation action are slack. As a general rule, then, the common behaviour by Spanish MEPs is to follow the party's common understanding of EU affairs, mainly based on its ideology and views of EU development. Hence, they benefit from a wide discretion, unless they make any important mistake that provokes a closer scrutiny from the national party.

In IU, due to the existence of party conflicts on EU politics during certain periods, the surveillance of the MEPs by the national leadership was higher if factional division was also extended to the EP delegation.

In any case, in the different parties we analyse, the MEPs' autonomy is mainly referred to their relation with the national party and not so obvious with respect to the EP delegation. In the cases of the bigger parties, the delegation meets frequently and defines the collective priorities, and the MEPs have the opportunity to exchange their opinions and views. In this same vein, even if the mechanisms that could hold the MEPs accountable to their parties are non-existent or are not put into practice, the MEPs are more easily accountable within their own EP party delegation. Other mechanisms that the parties can use to bind the behaviour of their MEPs –such as the party workgroups on EU issues that are devoted to policy formulation- are characterized by the control that other EU-specialists exert on them. Even if the party executive committee and the international secretary can use these groups to establish and enforce

¹⁴⁶ As an interviewee declared, this partially depends on the knowledge and expertise of the MEP, with less expert MEPs consulting and asking the national party more frequently in order to be sure to adopt the correct stances. In this case, the reduction of the MEP autonomy would be chosen by the own MEP.

the party line on EU issues, they do not patronise these groups, that are controlled in practical terms by the EU experts.

As confirmed by the elite interviews, there are several reasons for this remarkably wide autonomy and very low real accountability. One of the most important is that, although the relevance of EU politics is increasing and the party leadership clearly recognises this, the practical importance that the party leading bodies give to the daily EP decision-making processes is small. This is the general rule and the only exceptions are the very specific moments in which an issue with clear and potentially controversial domestic implications is dealt with in the EP. In this case the issue is discussed by the party executive committee or by the national executive, the MEPs start consultations, and the party defines its overall position. But these are somewhat exceptional cases. Another reason that favours the high autonomy and the low accountability of the MEPs is the complexity of EU policies. The need of a certain expertise to manage EU issues enables the autonomy of the MEPs and of the party officials in charge of these policies. Parties trust their MEPs and EU-specialists because they are the ones who have the needed expertise. In addition, as one interviewee declared, “the amount of work needed to make MEPs really accountable would be so huge and would need such an involvement and interest by the executive committee that it is not possible to be implemented in practice.”

One last factor that impinges on this situation is that, with the exception of IU, there have been no divisions on EU politics in the Spanish parties and in this context the perceived need for monitoring or to create binding mechanisms is small.

However, there is an important nuance to be introduced in this general picture. When the party is in national government the role of the MEPs is, to a certain extent more limited or restricted, because the need of consultation with the ministers increases and the plan of action of the government should be considered as part of the political agenda for the party MEPs. As a Socialist interviewee stated, in these cases the MEPs are almost “transmission belts” of the Government.

Nevertheless, the autonomy of the MEPs -which could unbalance the internal distribution of power in their favour- has not entailed a more influential position for them in their national parties. They are autonomous and exert their expertise in a field that is not considered crucial by party elites. If we disregard the overlap between party executive positions and MEPs or EU-specialist positions, frequent in the smaller parties, the influence of EU-specialists and MEPs in the ordinary or day-to-day policy formulation of their parties seems to be weak.

In the PSOE it seems to be reduced, except for the debates at the national Parliament on EU issues, and on certain very specific areas, the most relevant of which is agriculture. Every year there are several debates at the national parliament focusing on European matters, which allows EU-specialists to exert a certain degree of influence. This uninfluential situation is worsened when the party is in Government, given that in those situations the influence of the “party in government” (the ministers and their assistants) is decisive also in this regard. Additionally, we should note that, as we mentioned earlier, the presence of MEPs in the Socialist leading bodies is reduced.

In the case of the PP the predominant role of Government officials in policy formulation when the party is in government also applies. There is a frequent flux of contacts, talks and exchanges, certain periodic meetings of MPs and EMPs, and meetings between party officials responsible for certain areas – including the Minister- and EU-specialists; and all this certainly makes some room for a certain degree of influence. Moreover, EU-specialists join different workgroups created for programmatic and policy elaboration, and this facilitates this exchange. But their internal influence should not be regarded high.

Parties and their ministers

The relation between parties and their ministers resembles, in some important features, the relationship already described between parties and their MEPs. The autonomy of the Prime Minister and the ministers of the national government in their relationship with their national parties when they are involved in EU policies is very high both for the PP and the PSOE. Their accountability, in what regards their national party, is really weak or even inexistent at all. In any case, the accountability takes place within the Government itself, where the ministers are held accountable by the PM, but never in the national party leading bodies.

A permanent element of the Spanish political system since the first 1980s has been the clear primacy of the Government in the party-government relations.¹⁴⁷ It is for the Government to design and define the policy priorities, and the party is just expected to support them and contribute to spreading the word and give publicity to governmental actions. This subordination of the party to the government finds in foreign relations and EU issues one of the most pure examples: the discretion of Government is total, and the cases in which it is held accountable by the party are extremely rare. The EU policies (and the foreign relations) are characterized by a very relevant role of the Prime Minister himself, and this reinforces the whole dynamic of autonomy. But in addition, it is important to highlight that in the cases of PSOE and PP the PM has always been simultaneously the party leader. This also fosters his political primacy and the disciplined subordination of already very cohesive parties.

In their involvement in EU politics, the PM and the ministers basically follow the policies defined by their advisory teams in the government (not in the national party), although they obviously also have the capacity to drive governmental action towards their personal agenda or political priorities. In this regard, the ministers take advantage of the not very specific nature of party platforms –or, to be more accurate, from their perception that these documents are generalistic- to accommodate their behaviour in EU politics within a wide margin of manoeuvre. Although the accountability mechanisms are not in place, as we have already mentioned, when the party is in government the communication flux between the ministerial staff (including the minister himself and the general directors) and some party EU-specialist is very frequent, most especially with the spokesperson MP for EU affairs, the leader of the EP delegation, and some others MEPs.

The Europarty

With regard to the Europarty our analysis will have to be restricted to the two bigger nation-wide parties (PSOE and PP) because the experiences of the other three smaller organizations are in this regard limited and very recent. In any case, both the PP and PSOE party officials interviewed considered the Europarty as an unimportant or clearly minor actor. This is particularly revealing because PP and PSOE representatives have occupied very relevant positions in the structure of the ESP and EPP, given the importance and size of their national parties. As in the two previous aspects analyzed in this section, the autonomy of the party representatives in the Europarty meetings -the party leader or the international secretary, sometimes accompanied by some MEPs or the EP delegation leader- is wide and their accountability is extremely low.

In the case of the PP one interviewee recalled that in a particular Europarty session the national party position was decided in a previous meeting of the Spanish representatives that took place just before the EPP meeting. In the case of the PSOE several interviewees did not even remember if there had been *ex-ante* or *ex-post* information on PSE developments in the national party executive committee. In some cases there are, obviously, some reporting on ESP matters but the interviewees did not remember any ESP issue that required a specific debate in the executive committee. These situations clearly reflect the minor relevance of the Europarty matters, and stress the unlikelihood that involvement in their activities would be considered as an asset in the distribution of power within the national party.

CONCLUSIONS (first draft only)

Spanish parties do not show a remarkable degree of structural adaptation to the growing relevance of EU politics. They have not created specific party secretariats devoted to these issues, there are no official spokespersons on EU issues (apart from the international secretary), and the policy workgroups on EU generally remain in an informal or subordinate position.

Moreover, they have not invested their own party resources in the creation of a party staff solely involved in EU issues neither in the party headquarters nor in their national parliamentary groups. The main source of resources for EU related activity is the EP and the resources available to the MEPs. But the parties also take advantage of the Government resources when the party is in government, both for their parliamentary and political activity (advise and information).

¹⁴⁷ González (1982-1996) very soon and forcefully imposed this model in order to confront some moderate distrust and protests within the Socialist party for his governmental line. The subordination of the party to the government in the Aznar and PP period (1996-2004) was probably even more intense.

In the selection of one of the most relevant EU-specialists group, the MEPs, the process is not dramatically different to the one followed for the national elections, although is more elite-driven, and the EP delegation is not a crucially important actor in the process.

Therefore, the structural adaptation of Spanish parties is limited, and the importance of EU-specialists in the national party is equally reduced. Their presence in the party leading bodies is very limited and their possibilities to affect elite selection are minor. They do not play a relevant role in the selection of the EP delegation leader because this position is attributed to the head of the EP electoral list, who is in turn selected by the top party organs. In the manifesto formulation their participation is mainly restricted to the sections devoted to EU issues, and they only have a crucial role to play in the elaboration of the EP programme. Thus, the influence of EU-specialist is certainly low within the national party.

Finally the internal influence of the EU-specialists in their national parties due to their involvement in the EU political arena is also very limited. Although they are highly autonomous and are not held accountable by the national party, their activities are not considered crucially important by party elites. This obviously limits their possible power within the national party due to their supranational activities. In the case of party ministers and PMs, their involvement in EU institutions is exerted within this same context of wide autonomy and inexistent party accountability. In this sense, the EU has become yet another arena in which certain party elites enjoy a big room for manoeuvre without the constraints sometimes imposed by their party membership and leading bodies. In the case of the Europarty, the party leadership and the international secretariat also exert wide discretion, but in this case this activity is considered an extremely minor one.

Therefore, only the hypothesis that states that party elites are expected to gain power thanks to the process of European integration has found empirical support. However, even in this case our conclusions should be put in the context of the pre-existent organizational traditions and models of Spanish parties and of wider general developments in western parties. These factors can also –at least to a certain extent– account for party elite and leadership empowerment and increasing autonomy. In this sense European integration can be regarded fundamentally as a new arena to which Spanish party leaders extend their internal power, already very uncontested within their party organizations.