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Between party member and voter: Party-political incorporation of immigrants within the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Socialist Party of France (PS) (*original title of the dissertation*)

Parties and immigrants – processes of incorporation within the SPD and French PS (*title of publication*)

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4. Summary

Civic and political organisations in democratic societies are confronted with immigration for several decades. This leads to different challenges. One of these challenges is the political incorporation, i.e. the participation and representation, of immigrants. Political parties are in

in this regard especially challenged as they function as intermediary institutions between the civic society and the state. Furthermore, they have a central role in recruiting the political personal. At the same time, parties are confronted with a deep crisis of representation.

Using the example of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the French Socialist Party (PS), the present work asks in how far and why does it come to processes of party-political incorporation of immigrants. The analysis is focused on intraparty debates on and measures of the recruitment of migrants as potential voters, party members and political personal. Moreover, local party sections in Berlin and Paris will be analysed beneath the national party level in order to contrast the influence of the local context with national immigration and integration patterns.

The theoretical-conceptual framework is based on an party-organisational perspective which conceptualises parties as highly complex organisations. They are characterised by a heterogeneity of aims and actors which are influenced by intraparty formal structures, norms and values as well as the party external environment. A detailed analysis of the interaction between these different elements is needed to analyse processes of incorporation and exclusion of immigrants on different levels within the parties.

Considering the organisational complexity of parties, different methods will be used in order to get a comprehensive and accurate ‘picture’ of intraparty processes. A combination of document analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation will be chosen.

Overall the work shows that both parties incorporated immigrants in a variety of ways over time. Whereas the SPD concentrated their early activities on winning immigrants as new party members, the PS focussed on winning the votes of the migrants. With the turn of the millennium a convergence of the debates and measures within both parties can be observed. The political representations of immigrants as well as immigrant votes are becoming more important. A combination of changing national path dependencies, intraparty norms and values as well as different settings of party competition is responsible for this change. Furthermore, the case of the SPD in Berlin shows that the loosely coupled intraparty structures and the willingness to cooperate with local migrant organisations are much more effective for incorporation processes than stimuli from national level. Finally the work shows that in both parties local elites are important gate keepers which can facilitate or hamper the political incorporation of immigrants at the local level. They have a decisive influence on the party internal evaluation of the need for immigrant representation and immigrant votes, as well on the intraparty willingness to promote immigrants.