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# 1. Introduction

Over the past thirty years, South Tyrol has seen significant changes in its demographic constellation due to the increased migration from European and non-European countries. Migration has brought demographic changes in the population, which now features second- and even third-generation migrants. Despite this, people with immigration background from countries other than Germany and Austria are still underrepresented within politics. The growth of a portion of the population with immigration background has highlighted the issue of their political representation, as people with immigration background, especially visible ones, are not particularly active in politics. In fact, throughout Italy, 57.2% of the naturalized immigrants are not politically active, both in terms of political interest and activities (Ortensi/Riniolo: 2019). The absence of political action and voices from people with immigration background limits the implementation of democracy, as all citizens should be able to participate and have an impact on the decisions of their community (Verba/Nie: 1991; Verba et al.: 1987; Lijphart: 1997; Dahl: 2006; Kaldur et al.: 2012; Zapata- Barrero/Gropas: 2012). Therefore, the rise in awareness and representation of people with an immigration background and has brought significant political challenges with it, as attention has shifted on how to include these minorities in political processes.

Studies on the issue of minority participation conducted in Sweden by Soininen (2011) and in Canada by Black/Hicks (2006) show how political candidates with immigration background have more difficulties entering politics. The issues raised ranged from a lack of support to a lack of resources such as internet platforms and exposure during elections. Based on this literature, I have assumed that this lack of support and resources for candidates with immigration background (IB) holds true also for South Tyrol. Evidence for barriers for immigrants trying to venture into politics can be found, for example, in the last municipal elections in Bolzano. Only four out of the 45, or just under 9%, of the representatives elected to the municipal council had immigration background (Gemeinde Bozen: 2020). However, the share of immigrants as a percentage of the entire population in Bolzano is at nearly twice that level (ASTAT: 2019), clearly indicating an issue of underrepresentation.

This Master's thesis takes the region of South Tyrol as a case study and aims to analyze the electoral support and resources political representatives with an immigration background received, and it will also cover their experiences in municipal politics. Furthermore, this research aims to identify potential differences in the experiences of representatives with a visible and non-visible immigration background. Scholars Black/Hicks (2006) argue that unlike the other more established, groups with immigration background coming from Europe, "*visible minorities have yet to complete the necessary period of adjustment and transition required for political action*" (ibid., p. 27). They forecast that after this adjustment, they will develop the resources needed to act in politics. The existing literature focuses primarily on the different experiences between candidates with visible and non-visible immigration backgrounds, so this thesis will explore any similarities between these two groups.

Based on the discussion of previous work on this topic, the following research question and four assumptions have been proposed. As such, the research question reads as follows: '*What are the mechanisms for accessing representative functions at the local political level for visible and non-visible minorities?*'. The first assumption reads '*Caucasian representatives enter easily into politics, experience less discrimination, prejudices and generally speaking less injustices than people from visible minorities do*'. The second one reads '*Caucasian political representatives receive more support when it comes to networks and political socialization from their party than those from visible minorities*'. The third assumption reads '*Visible minority representatives have more difficulties entering politics, experience more discrimination, prejudice and general speaking more injustices than people from Caucasian minorities do*', while the fourth reads '*Visible minority representatives receive less support when it comes to networks and political socialization from their party than their Caucasian counterparts*'.

As this thesis carries out an explorative research with 12 participants and attempts to understand the experiences of people with an immigration background, the assumptions will be discussed using '*semi-structured*' interviews. Two-way conversation is facilitated by such interviews, creating a less formal atmosphere in which the interviewee will feel more comfortable (Cohen et al.: 2007; Gavora: 2006). The decision to interview political representatives with immigration background Was

done in order to receive first-hand knowledge about this issue (Hitzler et. al: 1995). The interviews will then be analyzed with the help of different codes.

This thesis is structured as follows: The first chapter will start with defining what political participation is. I will then move on to the demographic and socio-economic factors that affect participation, concluding the first chapter with the importance of descriptive representation. The second chapter will look specifically at our case study, South Tyrol, and describe its migrant population and their political participation. This chapter will give key data on the minorities with an immigration background that exist within the political system of South Tyrol. In the third chapter, the methods used to analyze the empirical portion of this thesis will be explained. The key chapters consist of the analysis, where the issues and experiences of the political candidates will be presented and discussed, followed by the conclusion and insights for future research.

## 2. State of Research

Beginning with the general concept of political participation, the discussion espouses several factors such as age, gender, education, family, and background. In fact, these are reported in the literature as the key factors in understanding political participation. In addition, for people with immigration background, representation and political narratives play a role in explaining political participation. In the following sub-chapters, the current literature on factor in political participation will be discussed.

### 2.1 Political Participation

Van Deth (2014) defines political participation as '*the elixir of life for democracy*'. It is a voluntary action that citizens undertake with the goal of influencing decisions at the various levels of the political system (Brady: 1999; Kaase 1997; van Deth: 2014). These activities can look to resolve problems in the community or attempt to "*alter systematic patterns of social behaviour (...) influencing the collective life of the polity*" (van Deth: 2014, p. 16) or inducing important social reforms. Verba et al. (1993) define political participation as the process by which certain wishes and desires are conveyed to political decision-makers and through which pressure is placed to achieve equality. Brady (1999) and Verba/Nie (1991) both specify that political participation must be characterized by action and therefore, the mere interest in political issues through media consumption, visiting websites or discussing politics with friends does not fall under political participation. Political participation is also understood as an activity done by citizens of their own free will and not enforced by law nor being a paid action (van Deth: 2014). Therefore, state-ordered demonstrations or rallies are not to be understood as political participation (Brady: 1999; Verba/Nie: 1991).

Political participation expressed conventionally comprises voting, electoral candidacy, volunteering for political campaigns, signing petitions, being part of activist groups, and serving in public office. It can also be expressed informally through acts such as protests, strikes/boycotts, and through activities against the law (Cappiali:

2015; Zani/Barrett: 2012). Voting is the most common way in which citizens participate, and in terms of the aggregate effect of the electorate on legislative success it can be the single most significant act (Verba/Nie: 1991). Activities like working with a party or candidate, participating at events, donating money and attempting to influence others for whom they should vote, are all activities that vary from the actual voting process and depict ways in which a person may expand their control on the political process. Voting and campaigning are the two most used ways to participate in politics (ibid.) but Verba and Nie (1991) developed a third category of participation called '*citizen-initiated contact*', which involves citizens organizations to tackle political and social issues.

Furthermore, many studies have analyzed the demographic and socio-economic factors which influence the level of political participation. Bloemraad (2013), Chauchard (2014), Mansbridge (1999) and Phillips (1995) found that minority leaders can relieve the feeling of marginalization of minority groups and that descriptive representation may encourage the participation of minorities in the democratic system and the acceptance of diversity by the majority community. Moreover, socio-economic backgrounds seem to play a systemic role in the the political participation of minorities (Fennema/Tillie: 1999, Ramakrishnan: 2005, Strömblad/Adman: 2010). Academics take into consideration individual resources (education, participation in the labor market, professional position, income etc.) as well as gender, age and family involvement in politics as factors that influence political participation (Verba et al. 1995). Since both the opportunities for participation and individual resources are distributed differently between the population with and without immigration background, their political participation also differs (ibid.). These differences may explain the variation in the representation of different minority groups, as prior research on minorities finds that age, education, income, and employment are significant predictors of participation (Morales et al.: 2011; Ortensi et al.: 2019).

Regarding Italy, Ortensi et al. (2019) analyzed the political participation and representation of immigrant minorities in Italy and found that 57.2% of the naturalized immigrants in their sample were not active in politics. Foreign-born people fear of becoming passive onlookers of policies that impact their lives without the prospect of getting involved in such issues (Martiniello: 2005). The exclusion of a large proportion



of the population from basic political rights such as voting or being able to run for a political party presents a major challenge for modern society (Ortensi et al: 2019). The problem, however, is that direct political participation options for migrants are determined by their nationality. This is however not the case for EU citizens who are excluded from this restriction as a result of an amendment to the EU law in 1992. This amendment provided them with the right to vote, stand as a candidate in local elections and also take part in European elections in the country in which they reside.

Moreover, the underrepresentation of minorities in politics has mostly been analyzed in studies referring to Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden and France. Specific to the topic of candidate selection, the studies of Soininen (2011), Fonseca (2011) and Softic (2013) are particularly significant. Soininen (2011) has carried out research where the difficulties of people with immigration background as candidates in political parties is analyzed. Soininen's research has come up with interesting findings, such as: 1) formal and informal networks play an important role in the support for the candidate; 2) the prejudice among party members makes it difficult for minority candidates to gain trust within the party; 3) minority candidates have almost non-existent support platforms; 4) the committee chairpersons are reluctant to support minority candidates (ibid.).

Fonseca (2011) has analyzed the candidate selection and the mobilization of immigrant voters at the German national Parliament elections 1998-2009 with a focus on the 1999 citizenship reform. Fonseca focuses on the nomination of minority candidates and how this political participation helps mobilize immigrant voters. Furthermore, she hypothesized that *"all mainstream parties will compete for the immigrant vote if they have reasons to expect an advantageous outcome"* (ibid., p.110) and *"this means that, in German elections, all mainstream parties compete for the immigrant vote under similar conditions but translate these into different mobilization strategies"* (ibid., p.110) such as nominating candidates from ethnic minorities.

Softic (2013) has put the focus on Germany as well, with a similar study about *'Migrants in Politics and Federal MPs with a Migration Background'*. The investigation reconstructs the career paths of members of the *Bundestag* with a migration

background and researches the conditions under which immigrants gain access to the political elite in Germany (ibid.). Furthermore, he analyzes the adversities of political advancement and proves that migration experiences and social background influences political strategies, habitus and representation practices.

Between the 1960s and the 1990s the legislation of the United Kingdom focused on the *“adaptation of local public service delivery to specific ethnic minority requirements and anti-discriminatory policies”* (Garbaye: 2005, p.33). The government provided very strong incentives for minority groups to become more involved in their communities (Saalfeld: 2011). Sanders et al. (2007) conducted a study about the political participation of ethnic minorities based on the 2005 general British national election. This study revealed how minority groups are less politically active than Caucasian ethnic groups, with a percentage of 56 against 68 (ibid.). Purdam et al. (2002) state that *“the younger age profile of these communities, the higher levels of social and economic deprivations experienced among these groups, and the fact that they predominantly live in urban areas where turnout levels tend to be lower than average”* (ibid., p.7) are some of the reasons of the low political participation among young ethnic minority citizens in the UK. Additionally, ethnic minorities would be politically more active if there were more minority representatives in politics (Black/Hicks: 2006; Bloemraad: 2013; Chauchard: 2014; Mansbridge: 1999; Phillips: 1995). However, English scholars still cannot agree whether these disparities in the UK are created by socio-demographic or ‘*cultural*’ factors.

Analysis from Denmark and the Netherlands has found that higher levels of organizational density and community-based social capital are correlated with higher levels of migrant party involvement and political participation (Fennema/Tillie: 1999; Maxwell: 2010; Tillie: 2004; Togeby: 1999; van Heelsum: 2005). The capacity of ethnic and group integration to transcend socio-economic deficits has mostly been highlighted by literature on neighborhood effects (Maxwell: 2010). In particular, the relationship between the density of migrant communities and higher levels of participation indicate that in areas of socio-economic deprivation, turnout could be higher (ibid.).

Political participation is a key component of democracy and it can be expressed in various ways. Many scholars have analyzed the factors that can influence political participation (age, gender, education, environment they grow up in) and can explain the variation in the participation of different minority communities. Moreover, citizens are aware of these factors and how they affect their political engagement and would be more politically active if they were represented by candidates with a similar background.

## **2.2 Demographics and Participation**

Demographic factors are also important in influencing political participation. Demographic factors refer to the components that make up society and its different groups. In the last 20 years, the literature in this area has focused on the role that gender, age, immigration background and education have played in influencing participation.

### **2.2.1 Gender**

Gender differences in participation have been historically linked to a lack of political opportunities for women, as well as the different social norms and family responsibilities they experience compared to men (Coffé/Bolzendahl: 2010; Roth: 2018). These differences have also been interpreted as the political expression of gender-specific traits that distinguish men and women, especially men's greater aggressiveness and desire for confrontation (Carpini/Keeter: 2000; Baxter/Lansing: 1983; Greenstein: 1969). Women are marginally less involved than men in most modes of political action other than voting; a difference that is partly, though not entirely, explained by a deficit in terms of resources (money and civic skills) which are important in promoting political involvement (Burns et al.: 2001; Coffé/Bolzendahl: 2010; Schlozman et al.: 1994). This might be the reason why women engage at greater rates than men in events such as voting and participating in charitable organizations (Burns et al.: 2001; Coffé/Bolzendahl: 2010) and significantly less than men in activities such

as campaigning (Beauregard: 2013; Burns et al.: 2001; Dolan: 2006; Koch: 1997; Lawless: 2004; Reingold/Harrell: 2010; Verba et al.: 1997).

According to studies such as those conducted by Burns et al. (2001); Hansen (1997); High-Pippert/Comer (1998); Koch (1997) and Sapiro/Johnston Conover (1997), women are more informed about politics, think more about politics, and talk more about politics when they see more women running for office or holding it. Furthermore, according to Burns et al. (2001), the gender disparity in citizen participation would nearly vanish if there was greater gender representation among political elites. Minority women have a different relationship with the state and access to citizenship rights, as these are obtained by interlocking mechanisms of dominance constructed by race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, and ethnicity (Brown: 2014; Collins: 1990). As many scholars have found (Jones-Correa: 1998; Junn: 1999; Kam/Palmer: 2008; Leighley: 2001; Manza/Brooks: 1998; Pantoja et al.: 2001; Tate: 1991; Verba et al.: 1995), political participation varies depending on gender, race, and ethnicity. The correlation between education and political participation does not completely explain why and how women from minority groups engage in politics (Brown: 2014). In early Latino literature, Latinas were represented as being marginalized on three levels: racism, sexism, and cultural practices (Melville: 1980; Mirandé/Enríquez: 1979). Latest research found that Latinas engage at the same pace as their male counterparts, but women have higher participation rates due to higher education and work environment (Brown: 2014). The most relevant predictors of Latinas political engagement are increased financial means, workplace skills, and mobilization by membership organizations (ibid.). Pardo (1998) found that due to the prevalence of bilingualism, Latinas with time, money, political interest, and communication skills do not need to speak English to engage in American politics. In fact, non-citizens who are bilingual and have access to groups that support civic participation are more likely to participate (Baker/Ruiz: 2000) whereas black women's political activity is primarily dictated by their age, frequency of religious observance, education level, and economic status (Simien: 2006). As reported by Cole/Steward (1996), black women engage more than white women in terms of political participation (Brown: 2014), probably due to Black women's experience of working outside of their household, where they gained the skills needed for political engagement (Burns et al.: 2001).

According to Lien et al. (2004), some ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean-born women, may face higher gender and patriarchal power structures within their own families than other ethnic communities. Overall, Asian American men and women have different levels of political participation (ibid.). As a result, minority women participate in politics in different ways depending on their origin. Their economic, social, cultural, and political status are reflected in these disparities (Brown: 2014; Jones-Correa: 1998; Junn: 1999; Kam/Palmer: 2008; Leighley: 2001; Manza/Brooks: 1998; Pantoja et al.: 2001; Tate: 1991; Verba et al.: 1995).

### **2.2.2 Age**

Another major problem during previous decades was the very low participation of young people. Dalton (2008); Forbrig (2005); O'Toole et al. (2003); Zukin et al. (2006) suggest that policymakers and government structures are often viewed by the younger generations as having no interest in their views and opinions, resulting in marginalization and exclusion from participation. As a result, young people search and partake in new modes of social and political participation. While younger generations are less likely to vote, join a political party, or lobby on behalf of political parties during elections in many countries, these trends are not representative of civic and political disengagement or apathy towards political issues (Cammaerts: 2014). Instead, they are the product of young people's perception that politicians and government structures are uninterested in and unresponsive to their issues and needs (Marsh et al.: 2007). This is the reason why they mostly take new approaches to politics, such as demonstrations or sharing posts on the internet, in order to promote the issues that are important to them.

Marsh, O'Toole, and Jones (2006) interviewed 16 to 25-year-old British teenagers and young adults. While the majority of these young people would not vote in a referendum, they were concerned about a variety of topics, including schooling, jobs, housing and the shortage of facilities for young people in their neighborhoods. Nevertheless, they

found that politicians lack of involvement in learning about and responding to young people's interests and concerns was the number one issue for their political inaction.

Weller (2007) looked at 13- to 16-year-olds in the United Kingdom and discovered that more than a third of the participants had already taken action in civic activities, such as joining political projects, planning local events, organizing local music concerts and vying for funds to better the local community. While these teenagers' involvement was mostly local, many of them also acknowledged the global aspects of participation and the prospect of making contacts with other youths around the world, especially via the internet (Bennett: 2012). Despite their eagerness to voice their views on matters that were pertinent to their lives, 81% of them said they had never been asked for their input on a local topic and had never had any opportunity to contribute to decision-making in the local council (Weller: 2007). Furthermore, when youths who had engaged in local consultations were polled, it was discovered that these consultations were considered as futile because they barely resulted in any real outcomes (ibid.). Because of their anger and disappointment, these adolescents found civic engagement and involvement in the society difficult, and they saw political activism as something that only adults were interested in. This frustration has decreased the involvement in traditional political activities, but at the same time increased non-traditional political and public participation. Voting, however, is still the most popular way for young people to participate.

In the United States, similar results have been collected. In a survey of 18- to 25-year-old American college students, Kiesa et al. (2007) discovered that the majority of students believed voting was ineffective in achieving reform and demonstrated mistrust and frustration with the electoral system which they saw as wasteful, dishonest, self-serving, unresponsive to citizens' interests, and contrary to the true welfare of citizens. Despite their frustration, many students still wanted to participate in public policy and did not ignore politics.

Sloam (2016) examined five different methods of participation, namely: voting in the previous national general election, wearing a badge or sticker, signing a petition, engaging in a boycott, and attending a demonstration. He found that voting is still the

most popular method of involvement among young Europeans between 15 and 24 years old after analyzing data obtained in 15 European countries. The reason for this might lie in voting being a low-cost and low-effort method of engagement. If a citizen is registered to vote, then voting in a national election normally only requires a few minutes of one's time every few years to attend a polling station. Therefore, the commitment required is comparable to that of signing a petition, which is indeed a very easy and uncomplicated action, whereas participating in a demonstration is much more difficult and necessitates more time, effort, and dedication to the issue.

Although there tends to be a small drop-off in involvement in the very elderly, older people have consistently been shown to be more politically engaged (Uhlener: 1989). Common definitions suggest that when people get older, they get more active in politics (ibid.). Simonson et al. (2017) found that German people from 30 to 64 are more politically active than the citizens in the age groups 14-29 and 65+. Furthermore, 11.7% of the 14-29 age group, as well as 12.8% of those aged 65+, have previously held elected office or accepted other political duties (ibid.).

### **2.2.3 Education, Environment and Social Background**

Education serves as a political instrument in a complex way: formal education itself encourages management and communication capabilities that are fundamental for political action and imparts behaviors that are relevant to political engagement, such as a sense of public responsibility or political effectiveness (Verba: 1993). Moreover, individuals with a high level of education are in a position to gain additional political resources: they are far more likely to have the kinds of occupations that offer high incomes and to have opportunities to build skill sets that are important to politics in many arenas (Brown: 2014).

Furthermore, Verba et al. (1995) showed that educational degrees are linked to a broad variety of civic and political metrics, including political literacy, political engagement, civic skills, and civic and political participation. Those with an undergraduate degree or higher, received the highest scores in all cases, and those

without a high school diploma received the lowest scores (ibid.). Both educational achievement and post-16 education are linked to political participation, political attentiveness, a lack of cynicism regarding politics among British 16- to 19-year-olds (Emler/Frazer: 1999). The participation in non-political secondary organizations such as the workplace, church or charitable organization gives several kinds of resources. These skills, which are related to political action, can be taught or practiced in these institutions (Verba: 1993). Moreover, those actively participating at the workplace, in church or in organizations are likely to be subjected to political messaging and dialogue that can promote political participation (Albanesi et al.: 2007; Quintelier: 2008). Religious affiliation seems to be particularly important also for young people. Youth who attend church and participate in religious activities are more likely to be civically and politically engaged (Crystal/DeBell: 2002; Youniss et al.: 1999). In addition, these secondary structures are the locus for attempts at political mobilization as *“in church and in voluntary associations people develop interpersonal networks that serve to bring them into politics”* (ibid.).

In Italy, 18-year-old students who are pursuing an advanced degree rather than a professional or vocational education have higher levels of political engagement, confidence in institutions, prospective voting plans, and social and political activity both online and offline (Cicognani et al.: 2012). Furthermore, students that attend schools that teach social skills are more likely to partake in extracurricular activities such as signing petitions, boycotting, following political coverage, fundraising for charities, and attending group meetings (Zukin et al.: 2006). Furthermore, if there is an open classroom environment at school that allows students to discuss and examine legal, social, cultural, and political concerns, as well as discuss their own and their peers' perspectives, they develop a higher degree of political engagement, confidence, and understanding (Hahn: 1998; Schulz et al.: 2017; Torney-Purta et al.: 2001).

Parental engagement in politics is also related to the social and political participation of young people (Davies: 1965; Verba et al.: 1995; de Rooij: 2011; Quintelier: 2015). Individuals whose parents volunteer in their community have higher public and electoral engagement, and are more aware of government and political issues, while those who have regular political conversations in the family are more likely to volunteer



and vote (Zukin et al.: 2006). Also, the political experience of parents predicts the political knowledge of their offspring (Jennings: 1996), and individuals whose parents participate in demonstrations are more likely to participate in protests (Jenkins: 1996), while the political partisanship of parents is the greatest indicator of political partisanship (Jennings/Niemi: 1968; Niemi/Jennings: 1991). Civic and political views are also linked to the growth of general family values. Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, and Sheblanova (1998) discovered a consistent relationship between a family ethic of social responsibility and youths' civic and political commitment: those youths from families who upheld this ethic were among the most prone to regard helping their community and doing something to help society as essential personal goals.

Among the factors influencing political participation there is also having an immigration background. In some cases, race forms the basis for activity, to the degree that the levels of activity represent various levels of ethnic group identity and mobilization (Verba/Nie: 1991). Some examples can be found in studies of POC (people of color) coming from the United States. These studies found that POC participate at levels very similar to Caucasian citizens (Verba/Nie: 1991; Olsen: 1970; Uhlaner: 1989; Fraga: 2018) and that overall, the mainly native-born groups, e.g., POC and Caucasian, are more politically involved than Latinos and Asians. For registration and voting, for example, the disparities between groups are especially striking, as less than two thirds of Latinos and Asians indicated that they were eligible to vote or that they voted (Uhlaner: 1989). Elected officials are almost as likely to be contacted by Latino and Asian people. Furthermore, Latino citizens use media at around the same pace, whereas Asians are as likely to work in groups as whites and more likely to express views to news media than others. Both ethnic minority groups communicate less with authorities than Caucasians. POC and Caucasians participate at the same pace with all of the other actions, while Latinos and Asians participate less (Fraga: 2018). Also, while Asians engage in certain activities as much as Caucasians (contacting media or donating money), they are less involved in general (ibid.). Evidently, there are variations in the level of political engagement among different minority communities. This shows how Latinos and Asians engage less in politics than Caucasians or POC do.

Moreover, immigrants and naturalized immigrants are politically underrepresented both on the local and national level (Siemiatycki: 2019; Danczynger et. al: 2015). The political participation of '*ethnic-minority-migrant-origin*' people (Haas et al.: 2009; Modood et al.: 1997) is of great relevance not only from a democratic perspective, but also with a view to various dimensions of integration (Sauer: 2013). Nevertheless, local politics are often regarded as the most accessible politics, especially for communities that have historically been excluded (Edwards: 2019). Bird (2004) found how local, and especially municipal elections, are preferred by people with immigration background as constituencies are much smaller than national ones, costs are much lower and there is a more versatile party structure.

Other studies have shown that there are other types of challenges for candidates with immigration background. Parties often seek to challenge candidates with immigration background, especially if they belong to a visible minority (Edwards: 2019). In addition, the importance of connections to get elected, the financial barriers that many '*new*' immigrants face, and discrimination form other problems that these minorities sometimes must overcome (ibid.). To include candidates with immigration background in politics, Penninx et. al (2004) offer a different insight into the local community's part in shaping the political and civic engagement of people with immigration background in European cities. Since the legal status of national citizenship in Europe is not open to many refugees and minority ethnic communities and thus exempting them from the formal political system, they suggest looking at local governments that provide alternatives for people with an immigration background (ibid.). To solve the problem of political inclusion, Penninx et al. (2004) focuses on the creation of '*alternative*' and parallel political institutions for people with migration background and migrants, introduced in addition to the traditional electoral structure. These parallel institutions are considered to be activating the political interest of these minority communities and consist of consultative bodies, working groups, coordinating groups, parliaments, forums for immigrant workers or ethnic minorities, councils and committees on immigrant and ethnic minority affairs. These all have the aim to create a system offering administrative operations, social programs and financing mechanisms to meet the needs of immigrants, sometimes also facilitating their involvement in public decision-making (Penninx/Martiniello: 2004; Vertovec: 2006). Work on this aspect

involves exploring ways in which city municipalities have adapted to immigration issues and built mechanisms that provide administrative operations, social services, and financing programs to meet the needs of immigrants, often also promoting their involvement in public decision-making (Cappiali: 2015).

#### **2.2.4 Obstacles to Participation**

Beside demographic and societal factors, political issues such as the political discourse on immigration are viewed to influence participation. The response of the public to immigration has been characterized by biased and stereotyped perceptions of immigrants reinforced by the media (King: 1993; Bruno: 2016; Eurobarometer: 2018; Rosenberger/Stöckl: 2016), which might have had negative implications for the participation of this group (Ortensi/Riniolo: 2019).

*“Immigration has been defined by the Italian media covering the presumed barbaric assault over the fragile Italian coasts in very negative terms: as a inundation in which migrants became the scapegoats of the public opinion”* (Benelli: 2013, p.1).

Furthermore, parts of the Italian mass media have depicted immigration as a ‘*biblical exodus*’ or a ‘*mass invasion*’ often referring to this group as criminals (Colombo/Sciortino: 2004). Public sentiment has reacted to immigrant flows in a variety of ways, from recognition to bigotry, discrimination, and crime. Indeed, as many cross-European surveys have shown, bigotry and discrimination against immigrants remain common across Europe (Eurobarometer: 2007). There has also been a change in the terminology used to refer to immigrants:

*“Migrants are not called ‘immigrants’ or ‘foreign workers’ anymore; but preference is given to a term that in Italian is a rather demeaning word: “extracomunitario”. This term identifies a person who is not part of the European community and is never employed to point out a Japanese tourist, an Australian*

*or an American one; but, often a visible minority and most of the time what is perceived to be a minority”* (Benelli: 2013, p.2).

In radical right-wing politics, immigrants and immigration have been the most critical topics of the recent years, implying the rejection of ‘*others*’ on all social, political, and economic levels (Rydgren: 2004). Extreme right-wing groups demand the right to defend their national and cultural identity against a variety of challenges, the most critical of which is the perceived ‘*invasion*’ of refugees (Colombo: 2013). Indeed, framing immigrants as a source of crime and civil instability has proven to be one of the most successful discursive tactics for gaining voter support for the far right (Rydgren: 2008).

Anti-immigration rhetoric can be seen in the platforms of conservative groups like ‘*the Right*’ (*La Destra*) and the ‘*Northern League*’ (*Lega Nord*)<sup>1</sup>, for example (Vintila/Morales: 2018). This rhetoric has grown over time, particularly in Italy, where the anti-immigration space is well-represented, leading one to believe that including immigrant candidates would be more ideologically expensive for the major center-right parties<sup>2</sup> (ibid.). The leading Italian center-left groups have taken more distinctly anti-restrictive positions (ibid.). Furthermore, some parties have introduced quotas for women's representation (ibid.), but none have done so for visible and non-visible minorities. The only attempt to do so was by the major Italian center-left party *PD* (*Partito Democratico*) who tried, but failed, to establish a law for the inclusion of immigrants in politics in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Cappiali: 2015).

Vintila/Morales (2018) found that the level of minority representation in the regions of Sardinia, Abruzzo, Marche and Umbria is strikingly lower than in the rest of Italy, causing people with an immigration background face much greater obstacles when accessing municipal parliaments than national ones. This assumption goes against scholars such as Bergh and Bjørklund (2003) and Dancynger et. al. (2015), who argue that minorities have greater difficulties entering national parliaments, rather than

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*La Destra*’ as a party does not exist anymore since 2017 and ‘*Lega Nord*’ has changed its name to ‘*Lega*’ in 2018.

<sup>2</sup> It might be ‘expensive’ for these parties to have candidates with immigration background, but they still do. In 2018 Toni Iwobi, member of the *Lega* party, was elected Senator to the Italian Parliament.

municipal ones. Moreover, minorities have a very low level of electoral participation, if we take into account that in 2016 only 2% of the population with immigration background was represented in the Italian Parliament (Lühiste/Kenny: 2016). Furthermore, the perception of minorities based on their country of origin is another factor linked to low political participation. As Banks (2008) and Solivetti (2005) argue, migrants are often associated with an increase in crime in almost all Western European countries. In most immigration destination countries, according to Bianchi et al. (2008), the crime–migration axis dominates the political discourse (Baker et al.: 2012). Migrants are also depicted in the media in a less favorable light than members of the white British community. According to a study of media portrayals of refugees, they are often presented as a threat (Rasinger: 2010). The media is increasingly speculating and commenting about crimes committed by immigrants (Mawby/Gisby: 2009), like the Daily Mail (Hickley: 2006), who claimed that Eastern European immigrants were responsible for one-tenth of all crimes in the UK, while the Telegraph (Harper/Leapman: 2007) claimed that ‘foreigners,’ mostly Polish immigrants, were responsible for nearly a fifth of all crimes in London. André and Dronkers (2017) analyzed the perception of discrimination that people with immigration background have in all 27 states of the European Union. Indeed, according to them, people coming from non-EU countries perceived higher levels of discrimination. Considering only the percentages of the countries the participants of this Master thesis originally come from, 36.1% of Albanian respondents admit feeling discriminated against in the country they live in, followed by 29.8% of Moroccans, 25.2% of Tunisians, 24.2% of Iraqis, 13.6% of Kosovars and 13% of Peruvians. Quite different numbers can be found for immigrants from other European countries, with 3.5% of Germans stating that they felt discriminated against and 2.9% for the British respondents. It's worth noting how the numbers fell sharply for EU countries, leaving non-EU countries with the highest levels of discrimination. According to André and Dronkers (2017), immigrants who have more ways to interact with natives are less likely to experience prejudice. Speaking a minority language at home, citizenship and having a foreign-born parent, were found to be the most important factors (ibid.). They also discovered that immigrants from wealthy economies were less likely to experience prejudice than immigrants from ‘disadvantaged’ countries (ibid.) Religions that differed further from the majority

religion(s) clarified some variation in perceived discrimination, but not as much as immigration factors (ibid.).

The underrepresentation of minorities in politics is also dictated by the candidate selection process and the role of local parties as gatekeepers (Black/Hicks: 2006). The sorts of decisions parties take makes a significant difference on how visible minorities can win access to candidacies or refuse to take them. Some local officials, for example, can simply proceed with practices that have the coincidental effect of excluding new candidates (ibid.). When it comes to candidate selection, visible minorities have been complaining from a long time that constituency groups appear to focus on networks of recruiting and connections that do not enter their communities or the environments where they are involved the most (ibid.). It is also possible that local leaders are motivated in not reaching visible minority candidates, therefore excluding them, in order to protect their grip on influence and reduce competition for already existing and well-known candidates (Fonseca: 2011; Black/Hicks: 2006.). In local parties, prominently positioned people can also erect barriers simply because they hold prejudice and are uncomfortable with the thought of visible minorities in their party (Black/Hicks: 2006; Soininen: 2011). Conversely, they may not actually be racist on their own, but they could assume that certain groups of people may be hesitant to vote for non-Caucasian candidates and therefore, often appoint visible minority members in positions that are electorally less desirable (Soininen: 2011). Some parties' tradition of supporting existing candidates for re-nomination has also been described as a barrier for minorities. In reverse, some local parties may also encourage minority candidates to run on the facilitative side, since they see an electoral advantage in doing so, probably in constituencies where minorities have an important presence to send the message to voters about the inclusiveness of the party. This strategy is mostly used to get a large number of voters with immigration background to vote for their party on the basis of their apparent inclusiveness, therefore, the inclusion of visible minorities in the electoral lists could be a mechanism by which the parties indicate to the electorate their concern for the processes of social change, thus demonstrating that they are inclusive and 'modern' (Vintila/Morales: 2018).

Furthermore, the nomination of visible minorities can also emerge as an electoral strategy to attract a new niche of voters, namely the immigrant electorate, whose party identifications remain quite malleable (ibid.). *“Minority representatives are then perceived to stand and act for as well as mobilize among the groups they ought to mirror”* (Rosenberger/Stöckl: 2016). However, having immigrant candidates on the lists may be a conflictual choice, since it can result in internal party tensions (Soininen: 2011; Vintila/Morales: 2018) and if the popular sentiment is not especially favorable to immigration, the nomination of minorities could result in a substantial loss of votes (Vintila/Morales: 2018). Parties' tactics play a significant role in channeling not only desires and demands, but also in facilitating immigrants' access to political parties. Pérez-Nievas et al. (2014) published a report on local Spanish election candidates of immigrant origins from Morocco, Latin America, Bulgaria, and Romania, in municipalities with more than 15% of each of these immigrant communities and found that most municipalities have a dramatic under-representation of candidates. Immigrants accounted for just 2% of candidates in these municipalities, with Latin Americans being the most represented (Burchianti/Zapata-Barrero: 2017). The most prominent feature of these local elections, though, was the advent of campaigns from political parties associated with making their candidates with immigrant origins more visible, especially through the organization of public hearings, as well as video materials to show the candidates (ibid.). This is indeed a very interesting aspect which has also come up through the interviews with the participants of this thesis and will be further discussed in the analysis.

## **2.3 Descriptive Representation**

The failure of concise descriptive representation persists even though minority groups have settled in developed economies for many decades and constitute well over 10 % of the population in many advanced industrialized democracies (Dancyger et al.: 2015). Descriptive representation promotes the incorporation of new points of view and a wider spectrum of arguments for political dialogue (Bird et al.: 2011), is *“an important point of access for marginalized groups, providing them with a less intimidating channel through which to engage with elected representatives, and to let their preferences be*

*known on a quotidian basis, outside of periodic elections” (ibid., p.5) and it is an “important symbolic value, signaling to both dominant and marginalized groups that its perspectives matter and rightfully belong in the public debate” (ibid., p.5).* Descriptive representation not only has a symbolic value to minority groups, but also gives ‘communication advantages’, as Mansbridge (1999) states. The premise is that some voters will not be able to interact and connect with their representative due to a lack of descriptive representation (Edwards: 2019). The advantage of having political representatives who somehow ‘resemble’ a section of the electorate could help to break down potential communication and contacts barriers (ibid.). Indeed, Shanton (2014) notes that African Americans seem more interested in elections and voting when represented by an African American politician. Furthermore, they also seem more likely to run for politics when there are other candidates with the same background as them (ibid.).



### 3. South Tyrol: Migration and Political Landscape

Immigration is a well-known phenomenon in South Tyrol since it became a popular destination for people coming from European and non-European countries in the early 1990's. Early immigration flow dates back before 1994. Until then, South Tyrol was the scene of immigration flows mainly from Germany and Austria (Medda-Windischer et. al: 2011). The province counted around 5,000 immigrants in the early 1990s. The second major phase of immigration is dated between 1994 and 2006, where during this period there were some significant historical events which were de facto the main cause of immigration, e.g., the fall of the Berlin Wall and the war in former Yugoslavia. Because of the wars and the communist regimes in the Balkans, numerous people were fleeing their home countries, especially from Albania (ibid.). The latter group settled in South Tyrol in different migratory waves up until 2002 (Medda-Windischer et. al: 2018). From the year 2000 onwards, immigration from all parts of the world also increased. On the one hand because of the eastern enlargement of the European Union, and on the other hand many non-EU citizens emerged from illegality due to the subsequent declaration of validity ('Sanatoria')<sup>3</sup> that came into force on the entire Italian national territory in 2003 (Medda-Windischer et. al: 2011). The third phase of immigration in South Tyrol started around 2007. From then on, the immigration rate has increased from countries like Romania and Slovakia and at the same time decreased from German-speaking areas. The latest statistics from 2018 on '*foreigners residing in South Tyrol by citizenship*' show that the top-three nationalities on the territory are composed of the Albanian minority, which is the biggest group with 11.1%, followed by the German minority with 9.1% and the Moroccan and Pakistani both at the third place with 7% (ASTAT: 2018).

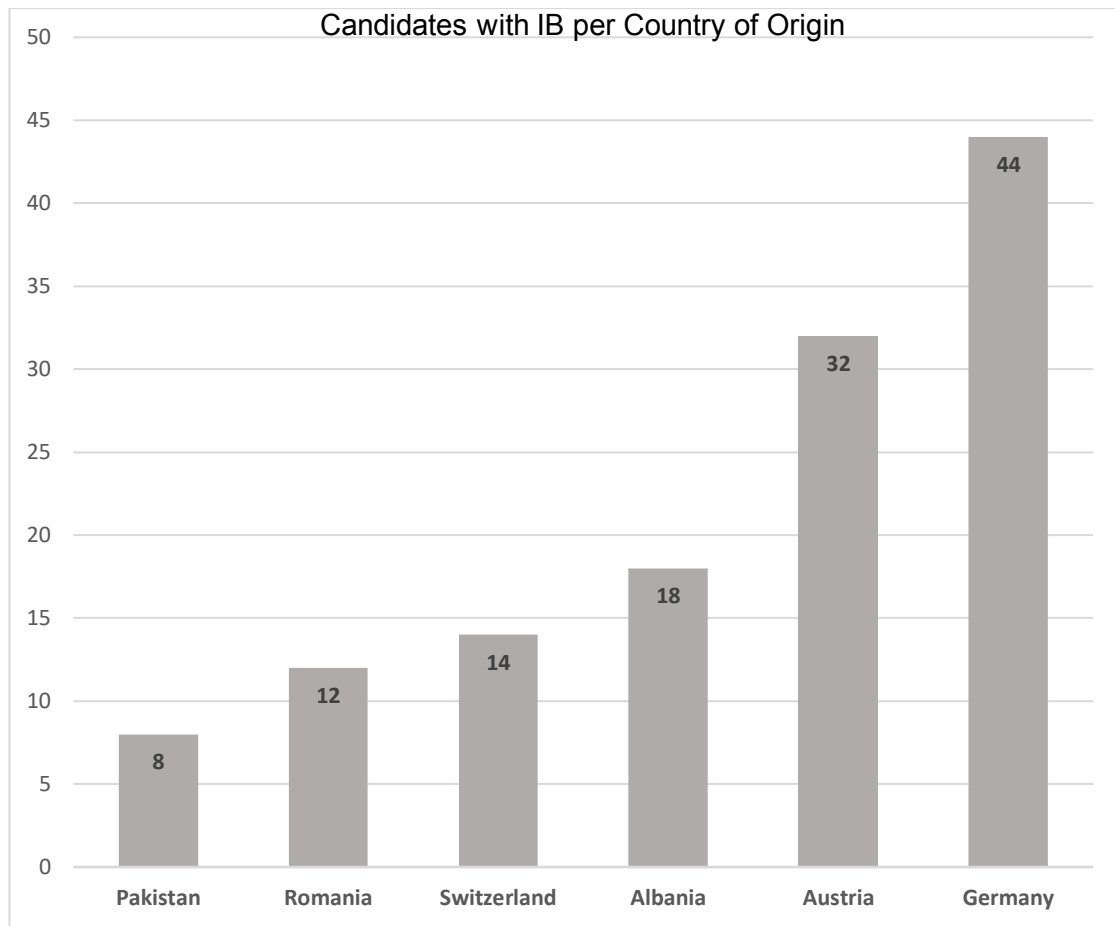
As the three autochthonous groups (Italian, German and Ladin) are still working towards a harmonious coexistence, the rising numbers of immigrants and therefore the rise of other minority groups that need to be represented might change the balance of the region's politics (Carlà et. al: 2015). It is argued that societies divided by ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious characteristics, can build boundaries excluding the new

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<sup>3</sup> The amnesties for the regularization of immigrant workers who arrived on the Italian territory irregularly were decreed between 1986 and 1998, again in 2002, in 2009 and in 2012.

migrant population (Wisthaler: 2012) as “*there is (...) the concern that migration will change the demographic balance between the traditional linguistic groups, and the topic of migration is used in discussions on the South Tyrol system to protect old minorities*” (Carlà et. al: 2015, p.2). In 2015 a study conducted in South Tyrol found out that immigrants arriving in the territory faced especially difficult challenges, as it is necessary to learn both the Italian and the German language in order to have better living opportunities (Medda-Windischer/Carlà: 2015). Over the past years, political parties in South Tyrol have always made a distinction between migrants and ‘*non-migrants*’. Most political parties, with the exception of *Verdi* (Greens) and *PD* (Democratic Party), always promoted a policy of inclusion of migrants (ibid.), whereas left-wing parties like *Verdi* and *PD* have always promoted equal treatment for all and “*favor an approach in which migrants are allowed to maintain and express their original culture and values while becoming full members of the host society*” (ibid., p.94). Parties like *SVP* (South Tyrolean People's Party) tried to create tolerance towards migrants and promote a mixture of cultures promoting “*the need to learn the local language and culture, [...] and having some assimilationist multicultural aspects*” (ibid., p.94). Right-wing parties like *Lega*, *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit*, *Die Freiheitlichen* and other small parties historically advocated different treatment for migrants and do not strive for equality (ibid.).

In the municipal elections of September 2020, 4403 people (3028 men and 1375 women) ran for a seat (Autonomous Province of South Tyrol: 2020). 200 people, 4% of the contestants, were born in a country other than Italy (Wisthaler et al.: 2021). The election of 4 candidates with immigration background in Bolzano caused controversy, as it had never happened before that this *many* candidates with an immigration background were elected in an election. The most common countries of birth of the candidates are shown in the graph below.



Graphic 1: *Candidates with IB per country of origin*

Source: Wisthaler et al.: 2021

According to the available data, 44 of the total candidates with an immigration background currently active in a political party come from Germany and 32 from Austria. The majority of non-EU candidates were born in Albania (18) and Switzerland (14). Switzerland is followed by Romania (12) and Pakistan (8). Citizens who were born outside of Italy were on the voting lists in 57 municipalities (Wisthaler et al.: 2021). Furthermore, urban cities are home to more than 60% of the international resident population and the majority of contestants (ASTAT: 2020). In the 2020 elections, 34 people with immigration background's managed to be elected to the city council, showing nearly a 50% rise since the 2016 elections, where only 18 candidates with immigration background were elected (Wisthaler: 2016, 2021). Finally, the party with the most foreign-born candidates was the *South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP)*, which had 44 people on its list, while the *Democratic Party (PD)* was the party with the

second-highest number of people born outside of Italy with 11 candidates coming from countries outside the EU and 5 from countries within the EU (Wisthaler et al.: 2021). The fact that *SVP* is the party with most candidates on its lists is very interesting, as it is a Christian-democratic and rather conservative party.

The participants of this thesis are divided among parties as depicted in the following table:

| PARTIES           | CANDIDATES |
|-------------------|------------|
| Verdi             | 3          |
| PD                | 2          |
| Team K            | 2          |
| Lista Civica      | 2          |
| Fratelli d'Italia | 1          |
| Lega              | 1          |
| SVP               | 1          |

Table 1: *Party-candidate ratio*

In order to better understand which parties (meaning values and ideology) were chosen by the respondents. A short summary of each is presented below.

**Fratelli d'Italia (Fdi):** is a right-wing nationalist political party, who's leader is the deputy Giorgia Meloni. The *Fdi* can be traced back to the Italian Social Movement and its successor, the National Alliance, and their traditions and values (Nordsieck: 2018). The party's key ideological themes are Italian nationalism, conservatism and Euroscepticism (ibid.). The first point of the party's code of ethics reads: "*Members*

*choose to join Fdl to promote the national identity and the value of the homeland”* (Fratelli d'Italia: 2020).

**Lega/Lega Nord:** is a right-wing, federalist, nationalist, and conservative political party led by Matteo Salvini and whose original name was *‘Northern League - for the Independence of Padania’*. As of today, the party still defines itself as *“a confederal political movement constituted in the form of an unrecognized association which aims to achieve the independence of Padania through democratic methods and its international recognition as an independent and sovereign Federal Republic”* (Lega Nord: 2021).

**Lista Civica:** is a party which is unaffiliated with any national political party and mostly advocates for local concerns. There are two different civic lists in this thesis. One called *‘I’m with Bolzano’* and the other one called *‘Civic List Gais’*. The latter stands for *“a transparent policy oriented towards the ideas and needs of all generations in our community. We are modern, honest and independent. Decisions are made within the group, without the influence of any parties, associations or lobbies”* (Bürgerliste Gais: 2021).

The *‘I’m with Bolzano’* list states it has made *“a commitment with our city, with new conditions and renewed energy we are ready to continue with our driving force towards innovation and change. Citizens and businesses must find an EFFICIENT partner in step with the times in the municipal administration. We are for a DIGITAL, TRANSPARENT and CITIZEN-FRIENDLY administration”* (Io sto con Bolzano: 2020).

**Partito Democratico (PD):** is a social democratic political party (Collin/Martin: 2012; Nordsieck: 2018) led by Enrico Letta. In its statute the party defines itself as *“an anti-fascist party that inspires its action to the full development of Art. 3<sup>4</sup> of the Constitution of the Italian Republic. (...) The party adheres to the Party of European*

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<sup>4</sup> Art. 3. *“All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions”*.

*Socialism (PSE) and the Progressive Alliance (...) and is a federal party that promotes and supports regional autonomies"* (PD: 2019).

**South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP):** is a regionalist and autonomist political party (Puzey: 2012) led by Philipp Achammer. In its program, the party described itself as the *"party of German and Ladin South Tyroleans of all social classes (...) its political objective is primarily to secure and promote the German and Ladin ethnic groups and to expand the country's independence within the framework of an autonomous administration"* (SVP: 2016).

**Team K:** is a South Tyrolean liberal, regionalist, pro-Europeanist and Environmentalist political party led by Paul Köllensperger, with the aspiration of becoming an inter-ethnic party (Corriere dell'AA: 2019). In its '*Manifesto*', Team K writes *"we work together with people for an honest, responsible and result-oriented policy, which pursues the interests of citizens, (...) Our territory is a treasure immersed in nature and as such it must be considered and preserved, (...) The meeting of languages and cultures is a strength to be valued more and more, consequently multilingualism and opportunities for exchange must be encouraged (...) We are different, but complementary"* (Team K: 2020).

**Verdi:** is an environmentalist, nationalist, and pacifist political party led by Angelo Bonelli. Some of its principles are *"all people, regardless of their origin and have the right to a dignified and self-determined life (...) Minorities, in majority democracies, have the right to be protected (...) The economy must be at the service of people and not vice versa (...) If we do not want to destroy our sources of subsistence forever, we must radically change our habits and our way of living, producing and consuming"* (Verdi: 2020).

## 4. Methods and Data

Using a qualitative method approach, this research seeks to obtain a better understanding of the candidates' experiences and problems and a more in-depth exploration of the issues on local political participation. The data consists of 12 interviews which have been conducted with people with immigration background who are active in South Tyrolean local politics. The candidates have been selected from the party lists of different political parties. The interviews were coded. The interviews were first read closely, and the most interesting passages were selected. Following that, all passages relevant to the research question and assumptions were screened. The final step was to determine whether these assertions could be linked to existing literature or if new factors affecting participation could be discovered.

### 4.1 Selection Process and Interviewing

Political candidates were chosen as interview partners because of their involvement with the topic, meaning they had first-hand knowledge of the problem (Hitzler et. al: 1995). The candidates have been selected from the party lists of different political parties. At the moment, the parties with the biggest share of candidates with an immigration background in South Tyrol are the *SVP (South Tyrolean's People Party)*, *Partito Democratico (Democratic Party)* and *Verdi (Greens)*. The following chapters show in detail how the research was carried out.

As specified in the title, this thesis aims to compare the experiences of political candidates with a visible immigration background with those of people with a non-visible immigration background. Therefore, this choice was very specific and aimed at having as many candidates from one side as from the other. In the end, five candidates with a visible immigration background and seven Caucasian candidates agreed to do the interviews.

The first phase of the selection of the candidates took place by consulting the lists of each party. After having consulted the lists, the contacts of suitable candidates were searched, which was not easy, since many have not given an email or telephone number in the general information on the party and/or municipality website. For this reason, many candidates were contacted via social media or through personal acquaintances with a snow-ball effect. In all, 30 people were contacted, of which 12 responded and agreed to participate. The choice of which parties to include in the thesis was therefore dictated by the will of the single participants, hence there is some disparity in the representation of the various parties. The parties with the highest response rate were *Verdi*, *PD*, *Team K* and the *Liste Civiche* (civic lists). From parties like *SVP*, *Lega* and *Fratelli d'Italia* it was harder to get a response from candidates. The majority *SVP* candidates with an immigration background come from Germany and Austria and, having already conducted two interviews with people with the same background, here was no significant information here as they stated that being an immigrant from the EU or German-speaking countries makes them '*First-class immigrants*'. After conducting these interviews and having collected little data from them, the focus shifted on people with an immigration background from non-German-speaking countries and therefore, most candidates with an immigration background of *SVP* have been cut out. Of the few political candidates from *Lega* only one responded and agreed to do the interview and the same happened with *Fratelli d'Italia*.

A total of 12 political candidates with an immigration background were interviewed. Respondents are active within politics in several ways. Two respondents are currently active in the Immigrant Advisory Council of the city of Bolzano. One of these was a elected candidate in the municipal elections in 2015, while the remaining candidates participated in the municipal elections of September 2020. The names of the interviewees have been anonymized, as displayed in Table 2. The table gives some insights about the interviewee's general information.



|                       | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Country of origin</b> | <b>Education</b> | <b>Party</b>      |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Interviewee 1</i>  | M             | 53         | ALB                      | University       | Fratelli d'Italia |
| <i>Interviewee 2</i>  | F             | 50         | ALB                      | University       | Verdi             |
| <i>Interviewee 3</i>  | F             | 50         | IRQ                      | University       | Lega              |
| <i>Interviewee 4</i>  | M             | 45         | MAR                      | -                | PD                |
| <i>Interviewee 5</i>  | M             | 47         | ALB                      | University       | PD                |
| <i>Interviewee 6</i>  | M             | 50         | GER                      | University       | Verdi             |
| <i>Interviewee 7</i>  | M             | 24         | MAR                      | University       | Lista Civica      |
| <i>Interviewee 8</i>  | M             | 62         | PER                      | University       | Team K            |
| <i>Interviewee 9</i>  | M             | 56         | GER                      | -                | Lista Civica      |
| <i>Interviewee 10</i> | F             | 27         | GBR                      | University       | Team K            |
| <i>Interviewee 11</i> | M             | 33         | RKS                      | University       | SVP               |
| <i>Interviewee 12</i> | M             | 51         | TUN                      | -                | Verdi             |

Table 2: *Interviewee's general information*

As Table 2 shows, seven of the ten respondents are men, while three are women. This ratio evolved spontaneously based on the response of the participants. The age of the participants varied between 24 and 62 years, with the mean age line at 46. In fact, only two candidates are between 20 and 30 years old, no candidate is between 30 and 40 years old, four are between 40 and 50 years old, one is between 50 and 60 years old and one over 60. Three interviewees have Albania as their country of origin, two

Morocco, two Germany, one Iraq, one Peru and one Great Britain. There are three candidates in the *Verdi* list, two in the *PD* list, two in the *Team K* list, one in the *Lega* list, one in the *Civic List I am with Bolzano*, one in the *Civic List Gais* and one in the *Fratelli d'Italia* list. Moreover, nine out of the 12 candidates reported having a higher-education degree and three did not specify their levels of education.

The interviews were conducted between October and December 2020. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to carry out the interviews in person, so these were done by telephone or video call. Semi-guided interviews were chosen as the most effective way to conduct the survey, as they facilitate free conversation and at the same time create a less formal atmosphere in which the interviewee can express their opinions freely (Cohen et al.: 2007; Gavora: 2006). The interviews had variable durations, from ten minutes up to an hour and a half. The structure of the interviews was divided as follows: in the first phase, general questions were asked about the person, the country of origin, the job and why they came to South Tyrol.

## **4.2 Questionnaire and Coding**

The participants were asked a total of 16 questions, which have been summarized into three categories: 1. Biographical & Professional, 2. Entry into Politics, 3. Obstacles and Support.

### **Biographical & Professional:**

1. Tell me a little about who you are and where you come from.
2. Why did you come to South Tyrol?
3. What do you do for a living?

### **Entry in Politics:**

1. How long have you been in politics?
2. Is there a specific group of people you are particularly committed to?
3. Why exactly did you choose your party?
4. What prompted you to get into politics? (Do you have a political background?)

**Obstacles and Support:**

1. How was your entry into politics favored by your party?
2. Were you supported with networks and other resources?
3. Did you have trouble getting into politics?
4. In your opinion, why are there so few young people in politics, and why fewer women than men?
5. Have you ever had the impression that your immigration background could be a challenge in your career?
6. Do you feel that you are respected by voters and colleagues in your role as a political representative, or have you had different experiences?
7. Is your voice heard in your party? Are your needs prioritized in the program?
8. Have you ever had the impression of being a "magnet" for votes?
9. Have you ever felt discriminated against?

Ten of the 12 interviews were conducted in Italian, while the other two were conducted in German. The transcription of the interviews was done in the original language, but for the chapter concerning the analysis, the most significant parts of the interviews will be translated by the author into English. For the aim of this work two different coding approaches were used. Deductive and inductive coding have been combined because having already some knowledge on the topic, deductive coding allows one to create a codebook as a guideline before the data collection begins (Christians/Carey: 1989). However, inductive coding is usually helpful in exploratory research as it allows one to begin from scratch with categories which were not foreseen in the beginning of the research (ibid.). With the help of coding the most interesting topics that arose from the interviews have been labelled and categorized (Mayring: 2010).

The initial process consisted of reading through all of the interviews, searching for common ground, then the line-by-line coding (Christians/Carey: 1989) process began. In this phase the codes became much more specific and even greater in number, because almost every part of the interviews was coded. In the last part of the coding process similar codes were placed in the same categories. By analyzing and ordering the codes into categories, the topics for research analysis came together. The first codes were divided into topics, keywords were identified and systematized in the next

stage to form categories and sub-categories with the aid of different colors to help with the visualization (ibid.). Coding enabled me to analyze whether the entry into politics of minority representatives relied on structural incentives mechanisms such as public policy, electoral rules and the minority group's size (Dancygier et. al: 2015; Morales et. al: 2011).

## 5. Analysis

The scholarly literature on the topic of political participation of people with an immigration background has focused mainly on how these groups participate and not on the mechanisms and resources that enabled their political activities.

One of the few studies on the experiences of people with an immigration background in politics carried out, as previously noted, by Maritta Soininen in Sweden concluded multiple findings. They found out that formal and informal networks play an important role in the support of the candidates; prejudice among party members made it difficult for minority candidates to gain trust within the party; minority candidates had almost non-existent support platforms and the committee chairpersons were reluctant towards the candidates (Soininen: 2011). Based on the state of the art literature, I will analyze whether factors such as age, gender, education, environment, visible or non-visible minority status, party support and resources play a role in the political participation.

### 5.1 Motivations for Participating in the Municipal Politics

Three of the interviewed candidates stated that they had already been politically active in their own country of origin, so that the desire to get involved in South Tyrol was the main reason for entering.

*"I got involved in the Labor Party in England and even went back last year to campaign. It was the first time I campaigned there, and I really enjoyed it, it gives me a lot of energy. That's why I tried it here too."* - Interviewee 10 (translated from Italian).

For interviewee 10, entering South Tyrolean's politics was clearly dictated by the positive experience of campaigning in her home country. The same cannot be said about Interviewees 1 and 2, both Albanians, who described having negative experiences in the politics of their home country in the time of Communism. This lack

of free of speech prompted them to participate and exercise their right to run for office in South Tyrol. They had already taken part in anti-government demonstrations during their studies, and one of them had fled due to the consequences of this. These negative encounters with a lack of political diversity and opinion, as well as harassment of minorities, has motivated these participants to get involved in community politics. For these reasons, Interviewee 1 especially said that coming to South Tyrol was a very good experience for him, because he had not known minority protection before and had never lived in an atmosphere of acceptance and respect between majority and minority.

*“I knew I was going to an area where there was an ethnic minority that was being respected. As I come from the Balkans, where minorities are mistreated, South Tyrol was inspiring to me”- Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).*

Furthermore, Interviewee 1 said that his political career, on a voluntary basis, began immediately upon arriving in Italy, as he put himself at the service of his compatriots to act as a representative for justice in the legal system. His involvement in ‘real’ politics began in 2005, when he joined the political party *Alleanza Nazionale (National Alliance)* and then, when it was dissolved, he moved to the party *Popolo della Libertà (People of Freedom)* founded by Silvio Berlusconi and finally to the current party *Fratelli d’Italia (Brothers of Italy)*.

Other participants entered politics as they had already been involved in helping migrants in Italy in the past, for example by teaching the Italian language or helping with the processing of official documents and bureaucracy in general. A formal entry into politics was thus the next step in order to expand their commitment to others.

*“I have been teaching Italian to immigrants for many years and I also teach courses in schools for young people, but my collaboration goes beyond the classroom. Now there is the electronic class register and many parents call me because they don’t know how it works so I explain it to them” – Interviewee 3 (translated from Italian).*

In addition to the social commitment that she has been carrying out for many years now, namely teaching Italian to immigrants, she said that she entered politics mainly for two reasons. First, because in her municipality no one helped people with immigration background but also as a challenge. When she said *‘because nobody helped immigrants’*, she meant that in the City Council of her Municipality nobody had ever put forward proposals for the integration of immigrants in the community and she was very disappointed by this. Secondly, she did it as a challenge. In fact, this candidate stood with the *Lega*, a party who is historically against immigrants and that has always favored the Italian anti-immigration cause.

*“I said to myself “even if I ran with Lega, I would win the election!” It was a provocation and a challenge. In fact, everyone criticized my choice, but it all started by accident. I am neither politically right nor left nor in the middle. I mean, I can't even classify myself politically. And so, it was a challenge for me at the time to join a right-wing party as a migrant”- Interviewee 3 (translated from Italian).*

Interviewee 5, as well, entered the political arena because as a cultural mediator he could only reach a limited number of people at a time, whereas by entering politics he would be able to reach more people at once.

*“Helping people to overcome these difficulties was my motivation for it (entering politics). In the beginning I decided to become a mediator. But it's a bit limited because I was only able to help a certain number of people. I was wondering how I could do something so that my desire to be useful to other people could have a greater impact. ”- Interviewee 5 (translated from Italian).*

Interviewee 8, on the other hand, was and still is active in various social spheres. He is one of the founders of the international children's choir of Bolzano, where they sing popular songs from different nations, he is active in the CGIL trade union and was the key element in the modification of the law on language declaration for foreigners.

Before going on, it is important to explain what a language declaration is. Every citizen of South Tyrol must go to court on reaching the age of 18 and fill out a form declaring that he or she belongs to the Italian, German, or Ladin language group. Unfortunately, this is not the place to open a debate on the correctness or otherwise of this practice, since many South Tyroleans grow up bilingual and then have to decide for one language group, but it is a very interesting topic for future research. The fact is, that until 2014 non-EU immigrants could not apply for jobs in public institutions (such as nurses or carers in retirement homes), since these jobs require this declaration. Until then, this declaration did not permit non-Italian citizens to compete for public positions.

*“I'm very proud of this as it's something that I've been able to do, regarding the possibility of immigrant citizens from other countries, who are not Italian or from the European community, to have the certificate of belonging a linguistic group. And this could not be done before, could it?! (...) Before, a non-EU citizen could not. (...) I didn't do this with the help of the trade union or politics, I did it on my own” – Interviewee 8 (translated from Italian).*

He is from the Peruvian community, and since so many Peruvians work in the health sector (nurses, social and health workers) it happened that in 2012 there was a competition for health workers and several non-EU citizens applied and got on the list for the job, but upon signing the contract they were asked for the language declaration. Once they went to court, however, they were told that they could not access that type of work, because non-EU citizens could not make the language declaration and were not entitled to it. In 2013 a lawyer took over the case but couldn't do anything. Until the end of 2013 the situation was stalled, until a group of people with immigration background invited Interviewee 5 to a demonstration against the exclusion of people with an immigration background from the public sector, where they asked Interviewee 5 to help them with their cause. At first, he tried to get help from the trade union, but they could do nothing either. Then he talked to the vice prefect of Bolzano, but she couldn't do anything either.

*“So, I thought that, since it was a political issue, it should be solved in the political forums. So, I asked for an appointment with the president of the province and I*



*had an appointment with the councilor for health and the councilor for immigration. Most of all, the councilor \*\*\*\* was fundamental. After much insistence, they managed to solve the situation. In February 2014 they made a resolution that they were in favor of third country nationals being able to access the language declaration system” – Interviewee 8 (translated from Italian).*

Other reasons for entering politics were, for example, the interest in gender equality and equal opportunities. Interviewee 2 called herself an avid feminist and when she was first elected in 2015, she took her feminist ideas to the city council together with her fellow feminist colleagues from the *Verdi* party. Furthermore, it turned out that candidates with immigration background do not only want to be a point of reference for their own compatriots or for people with an immigration background, but also for all marginalized groups and weaker groups of society.

*“There has to be someone who interprets this dynamic for these people. The people who came here need this person who builds relationships and stands for their ideas because many are culturally distant”- Interviewee 7 (translated from Italian).*

*“What worries me is the risk that in the suburbs where most citizens live are often forgotten. It is right to develop the city, but without forgetting the neighborhoods to which we need to pay proper attention in order to empower young people also” - Interviewee 7 (translated from Italian).*

In addition to the will to stand up for others and to give people with immigration background a voice, the desire for personal self-fulfillment and party-political calculations were decisive factors in the candidacy of people with an immigration background. As most of the people stated, personal self-fulfillment as a reason for entering politics was shaped by their own experiences and, above all, by their own immigration background.

*"I tried (...) to do some kind of study, so I started playing the guinea pig in terms of politics because it was also the subject of my thesis in which I tried to deal*

*with the political participation of immigrants"* - interviewee 5 (translated from Italian).

*"(I entered politics) a little out of interest and a little because there is often that one friend who says 'try it'. In fact, a friend I remember fondly said to me: Listen, you should try!"* - Interviewee 7 (translated from Italian).

## **5.2 The Question of Representation**

Along with the reasons why they decided to enter politics, one of the of the topics that came up during the interviews was about who they intended to represent once they entered politics. The answers were disparate and diverse, as some candidates said they wanted to represent their minority, others said they wanted to represent minorities in general, another was very active in gender equality, and others said they were not running to represent a specific category of people. The youngest of the respondents, Interviewee 7, stated that for now he is labeled as representing youth and minorities because of his young age and immigrant background, but also that with time and experience the targeted group changes, also based on needs.

*"Of course, yes (for young people), because I come from that background, I mean not being an established politician you don't have...I'm still a targeted politician, so I get by because of the knowledge I have in my world, in my target audience, right! And of course, for all those people with immigrant backgrounds and immigrants themselves who have been settled for 20/30 years like my parents. So, we could say these two groups"* – Interviewee 7 /translated from Italian).

Interviewee 8 stated that in his role as a politician he would represent his community more, as most of the candidates answered. Interviewee 3 for example, said that she wanted to help immigrants and people with immigration background in her municipality more. Whereas Interviewee 2 stated that she wanted to represent women and do more

for gender equality and Interviewee 11 has decided to join politics, because he was concerned with the environmental pollution of his municipality.

An interesting response came from Interviewee 1, who said that he wanted to represent the people of his community but also the Italian minority in South Tyrol.

*“The minority to be defended has slowly become the Italian one and instinctively I took the side of that minority. Let's say that I think it's at a bit disadvantaged (...) because the Italian minority outside of South Tyrol is a majority, so it's a second-rate minority”* – Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).

In his opinion, a German-speaking political party of South Tyrol, the name of which he does not specify, has taken control of politics in the region, thereby worsening the situation of the Italian-speaking community, which is a minority in South Tyrol. In fact, he recounts that slowly as he began to understand the political mechanism of South Tyrol and to understand Italian politics in general, he understood how, according to him, this linguistic group is disadvantaged with respect to others and for this reason, in addition to acting as a point of reference for the Albanian community, he decided to become active for the Italian community as well.

The analysis of the motivations why respondents decided to enter politics reveals that some chose to enter politics to help others, some as a sort of challenge and others because of members of the parties. Most however entered politics because they were asked to by active members of their current party. Obviously personal reasons such as wanting to help people, come into play, but primarily their entry to the party has been thanks to acquaintances within it.

### **5.3 Previous Political Engagement: The Immigrant Council**

Penninx et. al (2004) have suggested a way to solve the problem of political participation among people with immigration background. This would be with the

support of '*alternative*' and parallel political institutions developed by local governments alongside the formal political structure for people with immigration background and migrants. These parallel institutions, which include consultative bodies, working groups, coordinating groups, parliaments, forums for immigrant workers or ethnic minorities, councils and committees on immigrant and ethnic minority affairs, are thought to be activating the political interests of minorities (Penninx/Martiniello: 2004; Vertovec: 2006).

South Tyrol has implemented this idea of alternative institutions for people with immigration background, with the *Consulta Immigrati (Immigrant Council)*. These Councils are to be found in municipalities such as Bolzano, Bressanone, Merano and Brunico. Each Council is a local advisory body composed of residents from non-EU countries or stateless people who live in the municipality. In Bolzano, the first elections to elect the municipal council of non-EU and stateless people living in Bolzano were held on May 24, 2004 (Comune di Bolzano: 2021). The city administration wished to provide an official form of representation for foreign citizens residing in the Municipality of Bolzano and holding a valid residence permit, to encourage democratic participation in the municipal administration, and to establish dialogue, in recognized and constructive forms, that would serve as a link between the needs and expectations of foreign citizens and the needs and expectations of the local population (ibid.). The Council informs the institutions that govern the city of Bolzano about the living conditions and integration problems of foreign residents; it serves as a point of contact for those who govern the city in receiving information and dealing with the problems of foreigners in Bolzano; and it promotes projects, activities, and initiatives that encourage dialogue and integration between different cultural groups (ibid.). Every Council is made up of a minimum of five members and a maximum of twenty, and it may form working committees on particular issues with experts and representatives from public and private institutions (ibid.). Furthermore, these Councils elect a President and Vice-President who act as the Council's representatives to the municipality and the public.

Interviewee 5 was directly linked to the creation of the Immigrant Council in Bolzano and explained that the council is linked to the time cycle of the Provincial Council, so

once the Provincial Council's term expires, new elections are held also for the Immigrant Council. Furthermore, during the interviews it emerged that many of the participants, before gaining their Italian citizenship, were part of the immigrant council. Interviewee 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 11 joined different immigrant councils throughout the years, with Interviewee 11 being the only one who participated in an Immigrant Council outside of Bolzano. Overall, the impression given of the candidates' opinion of the Immigrant Council was very positive. Most of the participants proudly recounted that they had been part of it. However, the exception is made by two participants. On the one hand, Interviewee 4, does not actively participate in politics, i.e., he has never been a candidate in politics but is a member of the immigrant council, and on the other hand Interviewee 8, who has not found support for his projects and ideas within the council. They both wonder about the functionality of it.

Interviewee 8 recounted that when, in 2013, he had tried to solve the problem of access of people with immigration background to the declaration of belonging to a language group, he had not found support in the Immigrant Council and his request to bring this problem 'to the upper floors' had gone unheard.

On the other hand, Interviewee 4 tells in great detail what he thinks the council lacks.

*"The Council is supposed to present an annual program. Until today, 1 year has passed, we have not created an annual program. (...) Our work is completely passive; we only do what others tell us. The advisory board, the president, only uses the Council, so to speak, as a test. That is, if something could be controversial in the field of immigration he comes personally, introduces the topic, looks at whether it generates resistance and if not, then it fits" – Interviewee 4 (translated from Italian).*

Furthermore, according to Interviewee 4, this council is almost a facade, since in practice it does not decide, does not propose and does not discuss issues of relevance and moreover, it does not effectively integrate people with an immigration background.

*"Not a single legislative proposal, project or anything else has been submitted to the Council for consideration. (...) So there is a lack of proper rules of*

*procedure and it is a body that is incapable of its work. (...) It is anti-democratic. (...) It has no real function and it doesn't seem to be wanted. It is good that it exists, then no one can say that it does not exist. But that's it. There is not the goal to integrate migrants” – Interviewee 4 (translated from Italian).*

It can be seen, therefore, that six out of 12 candidates were active in politics and specifically in the Immigrant Council when they were not yet in possession of Italian citizenship. This shows how half of the people interviewed were actively interested in politics even before being *drawn* into political parties and that they sought to participate in representing immigrant communities in alternative political bodies. Whether this alternative route really works remains unconfirmed, as opinions on the immigrant council varied.

#### **5.4 Party Choice: Between Ideology and Challenge**

Interestingly, only few told us that they joined their party because of an ideological motive. Only Interviewees 9, 2 and 1 explained that their party affiliation was because of the party's consistency with their own thinking.

*“Last year the scandal with the gravel pit happened, that was a hot topic, because a gravel pit also has to do with environmental pollution (...) And this gravel pit was planned in the immediate vicinity of our residential area (...) and a citizens' initiative was founded that wanted to prevent that (...) and I was there a bit as a press spokesman (...) and positioned myself quite a bit (...). And then, at the same time, there was the discussion about the local council elections and the question of 'what do we do now?' So we founded a civic list and got almost half of the seats in the municipal council” – Interviewee 9 (translated from Italian).*

*“Well...they (Verdi) represent me so much because I am an environmentalist, it was natural for me, there is no doubt in my mind that this was my party. In fact,*

*at the beginning, my backers for research in Albania were WWF, the World Bank, the USA etc...” – Interviewee 2 (translated from Italian).*

*“I come from a family that had deaths because of Communism, so for prejudice, but for a well-founded prejudice, I could never join a left-wing party... that is, my beliefs are not those of the left” – Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).*

Interviewee 7 made clear that his non-ideological choice was dictated by his young age at the time of his entry in politics.

*“I chose this party because it is a civic list and it was a healthy environment in which to grow up and learn about institutions. At 18 years old you do not have clear ideas about, or at least I did not have clear ideas, about an ideological placement” – Interviewee 7 (translated from Italian).*

The common denominator among six of the 12 interviews, however, is the fact that these people were actively asked to join political parties by third party and therefore their political ideology was not the primary cause of their participation. Interviewee 7, as mentioned in the previous chapter, got involved in politics because of something a friend told him when he was 18 years old. Nevertheless, he was not the only one who got involved because of people that were already active in the parties:-

*“When there were local elections here, I had a friend \*\*\*\* (...) from Team K and he asked me to run for office. I was getting interested in local politics and I wanted to understand more about it and it was just a coincidence that he, at the right time, asked me to join the party” – Interviewee 10 (translated from Italian).*

*“I first joined the 5 Star Movement, and \*\*\*\* was already the leader of the party. But I didn't like the party line very much before (...) because I didn't like the tone they used. So when \*\*\*\* invited me in his movement, I didn't go to the first invitation, but then I went to several meetings before eventually deciding to join. The feeling then was that there were several people who really wanted to do*

*something good for the city, for the citizens. So, I closed my eyes to the things I didn't like*" – Interviewee 5 (translated from Italian).

Despite saying that the Green Party was her ideal party because of her previous study and work, Interviewee 2 also entered politics because a political figure asked her to.

*"I was involved in gender projects and \*\*\*\* called me and asked me to join the party, because she was a municipal councilor at the time and knew me and my work because I used to present my projects to her"* – Interviewee 2 (translated from Italian).

The same thing occurred with Interviewee 11, who chose to enter politics mostly because he had been asked from different personalities.

*"It was more about the people. From the mayor to everyone a little bit. I've been asked for many years, even regional politicians asked me. And then I mostly joined to support some people I cared about"* – Interviewee 11 (translated from Italian).

Furthermore, he chose *SVP* because they were the ones who most helped him during his work in the municipality. Regrettably, the other parties did not. He was greatly aided by one woman in particular, who is much more left-wing than the *SVP*, and he decided to show his gratitude by supporting her in joining the party. In fact, he didn't have many ideological reasons, but rather practical ones. He stated he knew he could make a difference by joining this party and now that *"he's in there on one foot, he's got even more to say"* (Interviewee 11).

In terms of what concerns Interviewee 3, she stated the reason why she entered politics and why she chose a party such as *Lega*, was that it was a personal challenge and a provocation to become a candidate for a party commonly known for its anti-immigration speeches, whereas Interviewee 12 entered politics to help change the citizens' mentality about people with immigration background.



*“Since in this area the left no longer exists, and not only here, also in Italy in general, more or less, it no longer exists, seeing foreign names on that list makes me happy. In the future it will be useful, it will change the mentality” – Interviewee 12 (translated from Italian).*

As the analysis shows, the majority of respondents did not choose the party solely on the basis of their political ideology. Some respondents said they chose it *also* for this reason, but not primarily. Obviously, it is not expected that a person would affiliate with a party without having the same ideology, however, the main reason most candidates gave was that they joined the party because people they care about were active in it.

## **5.5 Reception within Parties and Electoral Strategy**

Most of the interviewed people stated that they felt valued and accepted by the parties and the other party members. They stressed that they never felt any discrimination because of their background, nor ever felt cornered when it came to talking about important issues. This same thesis is supported by the following citations from the interviews with Interviewee 2 and 3. Their role within the party, they said, was always very active and, according to them, their opinion was always of great value for the comrades. They always felt that their ideas were important and that they were not just filling a quota in the party. Here, as well, no differences between visible and non-visible minorities were detected.

*“They love me, they respect me very much (the party). Those of the party who learned that an Iraqi woman had stood as a candidate with Lega came to meet me from Verona, Rovereto, Trento and Bolzano”- Interviewee 3 (translated from Italian).*

*“I was really well received, in fact, since I didn't know German very well, the party and the Verdi coordination in general, spoke in Italian for a while. Since it was customary to speak in German in this party, many made an effort to speak Italian and German, half and half or only in Italian. (...) They paved the way for*

*me on everything. The fact that I was an immigrant and a woman was an added bonus, because they always listened. They (the male politicians) were not like those politicians you see on tv” – Interviewee 2 (translated from Italian).*

Many of the candidates said they had been warmly welcomed into the party, however some mentioned that this could have been simply to improve the image of the party. In fact, a couple of interviewees said that, in their opinion, many parties would put candidates with immigration background on their lists just to attract the votes of other people with the same backgrounds, or to send a signal to the citizenship along the lines of *‘look how open and inclusive we are’*.

*“I had the impression that I was put a little forward because I am a foreigner and because the party could say ‘we are very inclusive’ - Interviewee 10 (translated from Italian).*

*"I believe that they are interested in attracting diverse candidates. (...) then they have candidates who attract votes, right? (...) At that time, I only served as a vote magnet, nobody wanted to talk to me about the election program" – Interviewee 5 (translated from Italian).*

*"The moralistic left-wing parties are the ones who pretend to be pro-immigrants, but in the end, they put migrants on the list to get more votes. Once the elections are over, they forget about these candidates" - Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).*

*“Here in South Tyrol everyone does that. (...) All parties do it (...) even the SVP put three Peruvian women in the candidates and yet I see it as a false thing, what can I tell you?”- Interviewee 12 (translated from Italian).*

While some candidates said they felt very comfortable within the party right away and never had the feeling of being *‘used’* for the purpose of attracting more votes, some candidates said they had a completely different feeling. Two candidates specifically

reported feeling like '*vote magnets*' or being put in the spotlight so that voters could see the party's inclusiveness.

## 5.6 Women and Young People

Of the 12 interviewees only three were women, i.e., women make up 25% of the interviewees. Returning to a figure mentioned earlier, women in politics in South Tyrol are only 1/3 of the total candidates. Other female candidates were contacted for this research, but only three responded, so there are many more male candidates due to a combination of numbers and readiness to participate in the interviews. For this reason, the interviewees were questioned about women and politics. The most interesting points came from three interviews.

Interviewee 7 made a very interesting reflection on the new ways of doing politics we find nowadays.

*"A political career does not start from one moment to the next, and therefore must be cultivated over the years, like a second job. Generally, one approaches politics in the first youthful experiences that concern one's own municipal or provincial territory in order to observe politics from close up and to mature the first experiences. Women, therefore, struggle to carve out a space for themselves in this world because, in addition to their work, they play a fundamental role - often - as mothers who 'look after the family'. An ugly expression. It therefore becomes difficult for women to find the time to gain experiences outside of work, since politics is not well paid if you occupy small roles"* – Interviewee 7 (translated from Italian).

Interviewee 7 makes it clear that this is not the only problem, and it would also be surmountable if we lived in a less male-oriented society that partially seems to see women as '*stay-at-home moms*'. Another fundamental topic he referred to was to examine politics in its many nuances. According to him, nowadays when we talk about politics, we refer to all those people who hold elective offices, from their own

municipality (small or big as it may be) to the high institutional offices of the state (Parliament, Government) ignoring, however, that politics is an everyday act. In fact, every day, regardless of gender, we do politics. According to him, every day we make ordinary decisions, make purchases, or show concern for others. Clearly, the sphere of influence changes depending on the person involved. He then made a very interesting reference to Chiara Ferragni, a well-known Italian influencer. According to him, Chiara makes politics every day, because she gives directions, influences lifestyles and above all is a role model. The substantial and fundamental difference between Ferragni and a 'normal' politician is the power to use the law to make provisions that concern citizens.

*"Every day she (Chiara Ferragni) influences people's lives, advises and creates new canons, it's just that the real politician does it through the means at his disposal (laws, decrees, ordinances) because he is legitimated to do so. It was important to make this example to understand that women must enjoy greater representation in general, not only in the political world, but in the business, social, and economic world"* – Interviewee 7 (translated from Italian).

Furthermore, Interviewee 1 sees the underrepresentation of women in politics as a historical result.

*"I think that politics, like every area of life where decisions are made and where it is important to be there, suffers from the lack of female presence. The world of decision-making for centuries has been a male exclusivity, and this cannot be changed in a day. Even though great strides have been made in the world of work and other areas of life, making your way to where you are in charge is even more difficult"* – Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).

Interviewee 1, however, emphasizes that making decisions that affect the life of a community or a country is a big responsibility that cannot be done lightly, so between young people, women and meritocracy, he would prefer the latter.

*“You have to make good policies for selecting the ruling class where you give equal opportunities to all women and men young and old. It is not necessarily true that if you are young or a woman that you are also good” - Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).*

To him, the most correct expression is the one used several times in the Italian Constitution: *‘remove obstacles’*. In his opinion, the state and society must remove the obstacles that prevent certain people from having the same opportunities. Once everyone starts from the same starting line: may the best man win.

Regarding the issue of low youth political participation, Interviewee 1 and 2 expressed a very similar concept. Since these concepts are very interesting, the parts of the interviews are mentioned below.

*“I think that everything that has been happening in politics for more than two decades has a bad influence on young people. In general, there is less trust and less respect for those who do politics regardless of their orientation. Young people by nature are purer and it's a bit like ‘getting dirty’... and it's hard to get into their heads the fact that we do politics everywhere and with any attitude! Taking sides and putting one's face to it is a step of great responsibility and as such one must first believe in it and then put one's efforts into it...” – Interviewee 2 (translated from Italian)*

*“In order to do politics properly you need a good general culture that you acquire over time. In return, thanks to the experience, you can do politics even at the age of 80. Then, being a politician doesn't only mean being elected, there are many young people working in the social field. A little less so in the ‘control rooms’. Since the beginning of the 90's, politics has always been described as an activity, in the best case for smart people, and in the worst case as an affair of profiteers, thieves and cheaters. It is obvious that a young man who is the symbol of purity of soul, full of ideals and good intentions to change the world, does not approach such a world” – Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian).*

It is interesting that they both find that young people are reluctant to participate in politics because this is seen as an environment where you could '*get dirty*' and one that is historically linked with characters of dubious intentions. Furthermore, both define young people as pure beings, which is also an interesting way of seeing young adults. In a sense, the two respondents seem to say to say that young people still have innocence and ingenuity, something not practical in politics where everyone tries to look out for the interests only of themselves and their party. The same Interviewee 7 said that he joined a civic list because at 18 years old he did not yet have the experience and skills to choose to which political grouping and ideology he wanted to belong to.

## **5.7 Education and Work**

As has been described extensively in the chapters on theory preceding this one, the educational level of citizens plays a very important role in their interest and participation in political issues. Since the educational level is reported in all studies on the topic of political participation of people with immigration background, this factor has also been analyzed in this thesis. Nine of the 12 people with whom this research was conducted recounted attending university. The other three candidates did not specify their academic degree and/or what type of schools they attended.

Interviewee 1 did not mention what he studied, but while he was recounting how and why he had come to Italy, he mentioned that he had participated in a student hunger strike against the regime to remove the latter's name from the university.

*"Before I left, I had participated in a hunger strike against the regime. We were 400 students demanding the dictator's name to be removed from the university"*  
– Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian)

Moreover, he said that when he arrived in Italy, he already spoke Italian, as his grandfather had studied in Italy and had taught him the language. Therefore, in the first months he helped other compatriots who had difficulties with the language. This

experience then directed him towards the work and career that he still has today, parallel to his political activity. Interviewee 1 is a social worker and works with immigrants and homeless people in Bolzano.

*“I am a social worker. Practically I started working immediately because I already knew Italian as my grandfather had taught me it because he had studied in Italy, before the Second World War he had stayed here, also because as an anti-fascist he had been imprisoned. So, when I arrived here, I already knew Italian, and I was helping at the center in the refugee camp. Let's say that I helped with the paperwork because they couldn't do it by themselves since they needed help in communicating” – Interviewee 1 (translated from Italian)*

Similarly, Interviewee 2 graduated from university in Albania, where she studied Biology and was among those students who protested against the communist regime. But unlike Interviewee 1 who left Albania for fear of repercussions for his participation in the protests, Interviewee 2 arrived in Italy in 1998 through a United Nations-funded work project in the geological field, which involved the microbiological protection of a lake.

*“I came to Italy years after the last demonstrations. I was one of the young people who was looking for the revolution (...) I was working as a project coordinator for a project that was connected with the United Nations, so I was writing projects on environmental protection and how to protect a natural site like a lake” - Interviewed 2 (translated from Italian)*

Interviewee 3 stated that she studied economics and business in her homeland, Iraq, before coming to Italy after experiencing three wars. When she got to Italy, she began various language courses in order to find work and and began the process of the Italian state recognizing her university degree.

*“I graduated in economics and commerce with a thesis on business management, then I arrived in Italy at 28 years old and I began the process of*

*completing language courses and gaining recognition for my studies” – Interviewee 3 (translated from Italian)*

Interviewee 5 studied law in Italy after arriving from Albania when he was around 21 years old. Unlike his Albanian compatriots, Interviewee 5 did not come to Italy for reasons related to protests or revolutions, but rather for sentimental reasons. As for the language, it was not mentioned whether he had already learned it before coming to Italy or not. And like Interviewee 1, he also served as a mediator and helped people from his own background in conflicts and situations of need.

*“I studied law in Trento and after that I have been involved in various activities. In the last 20 years, I have been involved in projects for the integration of immigrants and emigrants in general and those in particular groups in order to train them and help them access work. My function was initially that of mediation. Then, as time went by, I moved on to coordination, organization and planning of interventions, and then, throughout this period, I did a lot of teaching and training activities related to conflict mediation and intercultural mediation” – Interviewee 5 (translated from Italian)*

Interviewee 6 studied law in Germany and travelled across as visiting student and trainee. Afterwards, he joined a similar path to the that of the previous candidate and started to work with refugees and immigrants.

*“I studied law in Germany and then continued my studies abroad in Paris, one year in Brussels, one year in Sweden, and then I went to work in Spain - an internship, so to speak (...) Then I went to Caritas as a legal advisor and then to the refugee counseling service” – Interviewee 6 (translated from Italian)*

Interviewee 7 is the youngest participant and also the youngest political candidate in the lists of Bolzano. As he is only 24 years old, he is currently completing his studies in political science. Interviewee 8 studied economics in his homeland and is currently a factory worker, while Interviewee 10 sees politics as a personal interest, as she did not do her studies in this specific area.



*“I studied cultural heritage in the UK (...) and for working reasons I arrived here in Bolzano two years ago to do an internship and then at the end I wrote my thesis and they hired me as a researcher. Politics is a personal interest of mine”*  
– Interviewee 6 (translated from Italian)

Lastly, Interviewee 11 studied sociology and is currently studying philosophy.

*“I studied sociology, so professionally I am a sociologist. I'm studying philosophy remotely in Germany, but it's a bit difficult right now. As a job I am a teacher in a vocational school”* Interviewee 11 (translated from Italian)

As for the other three people interviewed, information about their educational background was not provided, however, they specified the work they do on a daily basis. Interviewee 4 works for a well-known Italian transport vehicle manufacturing company and besides that he is a youth athletics teacher in a small town near Bolzano. Interviewee 9 works in a bank and Interviewee 12 in a social cooperative. 75% of respondents said they attended university. This is a very high figure, considering that out of 12 people, only three do not have (as far as we know) a university degree. This finding therefore supports the claim made by several studies, which say that those who are active in politics are usually highly educated.

The analysis showed that more or less the same reasons prompted Interviewees to get involved in politics. One finding that comes out prominently is that a good portion of the respondents entered politics primarily because they were sought to do so by already politically active friends. From what they disclosed, they were all chosen because of their skills and activities in the social-work sphere, in which most participants also work.

One participant said she entered politics somewhat as a personal challenge, as she affiliated with a right-wing party with a very strong anti-immigrant discourse. Another candidate chose to enter politics to see a foreign candidate's name on the list, hoping that this would raise awareness and create a base to work from in the future. While yet another entered politics to try to preserve the environment in his municipality. From

these motivations, we can see how people with similar backgrounds choose to enter politics for a wide variety of personal reasons. But on the other hand, few candidates chose to run with their party because of ideological motivation. A couple, such as Interviewee 1 and 2, said that in addition to being explicitly urged to join the party, they entered the party also driven by ideological motives, dictated by their previous political experiences in Albania. Interviewee 7 even said that he chose his party, since he was only 18 years old when he started doing politics and had not yet found his own political identity.

These findings give a clear answer to the research question of this thesis, '*What are the mechanisms for accessing representative functions at the local political level for visible and non-visible minorities?*'. The analysis shows that the mechanisms by which people with visible and non-visible immigration backgrounds are very often similar, for example that they were sought out by other, already active, members of the party. However, the mechanisms can also be different, as some interviewee's entered politics for personal fulfillment and interest.

Since six candidates were '*attracted*' in politics by third parties, it was legitimate to wonder if this interest in people with immigration background was a strategy implemented by the parties to grab more votes and use candidates with immigration background as '*votes magnets*'. And since Vintila/Morales (2018) and Fonseca (2011), among others, state that the nomination of minorities can also be seen as a political tactic to appeal to new groups of the population, the responses to this question were interesting, as a couple of candidates admitted having felt this way. One candidate recounted feeling '*privileged*' since she was from the UK and very much in the spotlight of the party. Once the election campaign was over, however, she was no longer as much involved as she was before. Interviewee 5 also recounted that he was well received in the party, but that his participation was more of a '*show*', since (according to him) no one within the party ever approached him and asked his opinion on the party program. Interviewees 5 and 1 gave some explanations for this phenomenon, which coincide with the already existing literature. Political parties have an interest in attracting more votes and since people with immigration background are growing more and more in the population, putting candidates from different minorities on the list gives

them even more chances to gain votes on election day. Of course, this strategy does not always work, as recalled by Interviewee 8, who was given as a favorite within his party because of his background in social work and within his community, but then, on election day, he received less than 60 votes.

## **5.8 Discussion of Findings: Differences between Visible and Non-visible Minorities?**

In the beginning, the idea of emphasizing this difference came from the literature, which extolled the fact that there is a variation in the political entry and therefore experiences of people of visible and non-visible minorities. Through the interviews, however, no difference was found in the experiences of visible and non-visible minority candidates. They all recounted never feeling discriminated against because of their background and/or visible minority status. On the contrary, many recounted anecdotes, even from their private lives, such as the reception of neighbors or work colleagues, who were always very friendly and welcoming. Five of the 12 candidates belong to the category that was referred to in this thesis as a '*visible minority*' and they were explicitly asked if they had ever felt discriminated against or had any negative experiences related to their immigration background. A likely factor for this non-discrimination could be the very small political landscape, as the reality of South Tyrol and individual municipalities is very different from the landscape that previous studies have analyzed. It would also be interesting to find out whether at the national level, and thus also in other regions, candidates of immigrant backgrounds, whether visible or not, have had the same experiences as the South Tyrolean interviewees. One of the best examples regarding the topic of non-discrimination is the example of Interviewee 2, who told how the party spoke Italian for a while, since she did not speak nor understand German well. Adding to this is the account of Interviewee 3 who recounted how party representatives from other regions went all the way to her municipality to meet her when they found out that a person with immigration background (and a visible minority) had decided to run for office within their party. The other candidates did not talk about such specific episodes but said that they always felt heard and had never the feeling that their background could be an issue within politics. The fact that all the candidates

did not recall negative experiences is very interesting because it does not fit with the existing literature on the topic.

This thesis also looked at educational background being a potential factor for political participation of people with an immigration background. However, no differences were found among sample candidates in education level. Aside from three candidates who did not specify their education level, all others (visible minority and non-visible) had very similar educational backgrounds. This goes to show, at least in this sample, that candidates with an immigration background are similarly educated, no matter whether of visible or non-visible minority.

## 6. Conclusions

What are the mechanisms for accessing representative functions at the local political level for visible and non-visible minorities in South Tyrol? This was the question of this thesis, which had at its center the goal to understand what experiences representatives with an immigration background had made upon entering politics. Existing literature on this topic had primarily focused on the numbers and percentages of people with an immigration background within politics and what factors made these people become active in politics. This thesis tried to go deeper into the topic of political participation by looking at individual experiences. To accomplish this, the research was conducted in a deductive way. Starting from the literature on political participation, over the factors by which it is influenced, then shifting to the importance of descriptive representation and ending with empirical research in the field. It was assumed that people with an immigration background of Caucasian origin had less difficulty entering politics and encountered less discrimination and prejudice than people from visible minorities. It was also hypothesized that interviewees of Caucasian origin received more support when it came to political networking and socialization than those from visible minorities. Likewise, it was assumed that people from visible immigrant backgrounds had more problems entering politics, encountered more discrimination and prejudice, and were given fewer resources by the party to make themselves known to voters. What emerged was that Caucasian candidates and visible minority candidates had the same experiences when entering politics, neither experienced discrimination and prejudice nor less support from the parties and colleagues. All candidates, without distinction, said that they had only ever had positive experiences within parties and politics in general. They had no problems getting into the various parties or even socializing with other members. The same number of resources were put at their disposal and their ideas and opinions were always heard and respected in every situation.

Furthermore, the mechanisms for entering into politics for people with immigration background, visible and non-visible, were very similar. Most candidates entered politics because they were urged to do so by people already politically active. As such, also here, the difference between people with visible and non-visible immigration backgrounds appears to be irrelevant, as the majority got into politics in the same way.

What also emerged from the analysis was that almost all the participants were politically active before affiliating with a party. Some were already active in their country of origin, while many were part of the Immigrant Council before gaining Italian citizenship. In fact, seven out of 12 candidates talked about their experience or participation in the Council. This shows how, in accordance with the literature, people who run for office in politics are politically active even before they join a party. In the literature, this is explained by the high level of education of the people who run for political offices (e.g., Verba: 1995; Morales et al.: 2011; Ortensi et al.: 2019). Indeed, particularly active people usually have attended university and come from affluent families (e.g., Simien: 2006; Quintelier: 2008; Brown: 2014). Regarding the participants of this thesis, out of 12 people, nine attended university. Despite acknowledging the sample of this study being only of explorative size, this is a very high percentage (75%) and consistent with the literature and previous studies done on the subject.

What also emerged from talking to the candidates was the low involvement of women within politics. This might be due in part to the historical construct of women's role in society, which the candidates mentioned in their explanations of why only 1/3 of the candidates are women. This result is in line with previous research, which exhorted the fact that women are less engaged in parties and conventional forms of politics although they are quite educated about it (e.g., Burns et al.: 2001; Hansen: 1997; High-Pippert/Comer: 1998; Koch: 1997; Sapiro/Johnston Conover: 1997). The literature on this topic puts the focus on the role of women in society as the key factor for their inactivity (e.g., Coffé/Bolzendahl: 2010; Roth: 2018). These same reasons were also highlighted by the three interviewees.

It is also worth mentioning that only two candidates are under the age of 30. The explanation that the candidates gave for the lack of involvement of young people in politics was mostly because at a young age one does not yet have a clear political ideology or know what issues are closest to one's heart. The literature on youth political participation explains that young people engage in politics, but not in the same way elderly citizens do. The latter prefer conventional forms of engagement, whereas young people prefer to engage in politics through the internet, demonstrations, or

protests (e.g., Dalton: 2008; Forbrig: 2005; O'Toole et al.: 2003; Zukin et al.: 2006). While the reasons for a relatively smaller active participation of younger generations were not key focus of this research, the indication from the interviews confirms previous literature in the field.

Regarding the political party choice of the interviewees, nine candidates (75%) affiliated with a party belonging to the left spectrum. This leftist tendency is explained in literature by Tiberj (2011), who found that 80% of Maghrebin- and African French citizens supported Sarkozy's socialist rival and explained it on a religious and social class level, since many citizens with immigration background come from working-class families. Therefore, it is possible that they tend to support working-class parties more than others. Moreover, Tiberj and Brouard (2011) state that the leftist shift of ethnic minorities in voting preferences can be explained by racist experiences, education, employment and the ability of parties to defend minorities. Similar results can be seen in The Netherlands, where studies on the municipal level show that people with immigration background prefer left-wing parties and, in particular, the Social Democratic Party (Buijs/Rath: 1986). In Belgium, data shows how people with immigration background tend to support the Socialist Party more than people with no immigration background (Jacobs et al.: 2002). Since this data was not analyzed in this thesis, i.e., no questions were asked about the social class of the interviewees, no definite claims can be made regarding class background and connection to party choice. However, it is an interesting insight that people with an immigration background not only tend to vote left, as indicated by literature, but also would rather run for a leftist party if choosing to become politically active.

The research made apparent that a person with an immigration background would primarily aim to serve the interests of their fellow people with an immigration background. However, as an exception to the rule, Interviewee 11, being from Germany, reported that he never really thought of his background as migratory, since the language adjustment from Germany to South Tyrol was not that big. No one in the municipality where he now lives would ever know that he is a German citizen. Therefore, he put his focus on other issues than raising a flag for the interests of people with an immigration background.

The fact that Interviewee 11 has never thought of himself as a migrant might be connected to a phenomenon that Interviewee 6 mentioned during his interview. In his opinion, there are first- and second-class immigrants. Particularly in South Tyrol, it is possible that the immigration of people from Austria and Germany is not seen as '*true*' immigration, since it has been going on since World War II, and the linguistic proximity also facilitates integration. This '*facilitated*' integration is also reported in the study of André and Dronkers (2018), who analyzed the percentage of those immigrants who perceive discrimination per country or region of origin in 27 EU countries. While a comparatively large part of people with Albanian or Tunisian origin experiencing some sort of discrimination, only 3.5% of the German community experiences the same. In fact, this correlates with what Interviewee 11 said about his German background, as the percentage of discrimination for German citizens is one of the lowest.

As shown first by the literature and then by the analysis, demographic and socio-economic factors seem to play a role in the political involvement of people with an immigration background. It was found that most candidates attended university, were male and were between 30-55 years old. In conclusion, this thesis shows that demographic and socio-economic factors such as education, gender and age play a leading role in the political engagement of immigrants. However, contrary to the literature research and the initial hypothesis of this exploratory study, the actual mechanisms that draw candidate with an immigration background into politics do not depend on their visible or non-visible minority status.



## **7. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

This thesis had 12 exploratory interviews at its core. Because of precisely this exploratory character and the small sample of people, the results are not fully reliable and cannot be generalized without further precautions. Hence, for future research, a bigger sample of candidates with an immigration background could be analyzed and a deeper analysis could be carried out, in order to understand whether this non-discrimination phenomenon is unique to South Tyrol or if it is due to the sample fully being in a local context. It would be interesting to see if, on the national level (e.g., by making comparisons to other regions), candidates share the same experiences as those shown in this thesis. Additionally, this would investigate if the political climate in Italy were favorable to people with an immigration background or not, given that there are very few elected officials with immigration background in Italian politics. On the other hand, regarding the mechanisms for people with immigration background to become active in politics, future research could focus on the alternative organizations that each region or municipality makes available to its citizens. As we have seen from the example of South Tyrol, there are various Immigrant Councils on the territory that have been mentioned as a gateway into politics by interviewees. It would be interesting to determine, whether those institutions increasing political participation of people with an immigration background in South Tyrol, are also an important mechanism that draws people into politics in other Italian regions.

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## **9. Appendix**

### **9.1 Abstract in English**

The phenomenon of immigration has brought demographic changes to the population of South Tyrol, with second-generation immigrants now being present in the electorate. Despite this, people with immigration background from countries other than Germany and Austria are still underrepresented in active roles in South Tyrolean politics. This thesis seeks to analyze the mechanisms by which people from visible and non-visible minorities manage to enter local politics. First, different demographic and socioeconomic factors were analyzed to determine their role in political participation. Indeed, factors such as age, gender, education, family, background, and descriptive representation are among those factors that seem to determine political activity the most. Second, it was analyzed whether candidates from visible and non-visible minorities made different experiences. Deviations in experiences were found to be marginal only. Third, it was analyzed whether people with immigration background enter politics mainly because they want to give minorities a voice or whether they are driven by personal interests. Results indicate that most candidates were already active in political or social roles even before formally affiliating with a party and that a majority was drawn into local politics by acquaintances. Some candidates mentioned their belief that parties put candidates with immigrant backgrounds on the lists to attract more votes from the electorate of the same background. In summary, this thesis provides evidence of demographic and socio-economic factors playing a leading role in the political representation of immigrants in South Tyrol, whereas the mechanisms that draw people into politics do not depend on whether they are from visible or non-visible minorities.



## 9.2 Abstract in German

Das Phänomen der Zuwanderung hat demografische Veränderungen in der Südtiroler Bevölkerung mit sich gebracht, wobei mittlerweile Zuwanderer der zweiten Generation in der Wählerschaft vertreten sind. Trotzdem sind Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund aus anderen Ländern als Deutschland und Österreich in aktiven Rollen in der Südtiroler Politik immer noch unterrepräsentiert. Diese Arbeit analysiert Mechanismen, die es Menschen aus sichtbaren und nicht sichtbaren Minderheiten ermöglichen in die lokale Politik zu gelangen. Zunächst wurden verschiedene demographische und sozioökonomische Faktoren analysiert, um ihre Rolle bei der politischen Partizipation zu bestimmen. Alter, Geschlecht, Bildung, Familie, Herkunft und deskriptive Repräsentation gehören zu den Faktoren, die die politische Aktivität am meisten zu bestimmen scheinen. Zweitens wurde analysiert, ob Kandidaten aus sichtbaren und nicht sichtbaren Minderheiten unterschiedliche Erfahrungen gemacht haben. Dabei wurde festgestellt, dass die Unterschiede in den Erfahrungen nur marginal sind. Drittens wurde analysiert, ob Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund vor allem deshalb in die Politik gehen, weil sie Minderheiten eine Stimme geben wollen, oder ob sie von persönlichen Interessen getrieben sind. Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass viele Kandidaten bereits in politischen oder sozialen Funktionen aktiv waren, bevor sie sich formell einer Partei anschlossen, und dass eine Mehrheit durch Bekannte in die Kommunalpolitik gezogen wurde. Einige Kandidaten erwähnten, dass Parteien Kandidaten mit Migrationshintergrund auf Listen setzen, um mehr Stimmen aus der Wählerschaft mit demselben Hintergrund anzuziehen. Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass diese Arbeit Beweise dafür liefert, dass demografische und sozioökonomische Faktoren eine führende Rolle bei der politischen Repräsentation von Zuwanderern in Südtirol spielen, während die Mechanismen, die Menschen in die Politik ziehen, nicht davon abhängen, ob sie einer sichtbaren oder nicht sichtbaren Minderheit angehören.

### 9.3 Graphics and Tables

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### 9.4 Eidesstaatliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre eidesstattlich, dass ich die Arbeit selbständig angefertigt, keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt und alle aus ungedruckten Quellen, gedruckter Literatur oder aus dem Internet im Wortlaut oder im wesentlichen Inhalt übernommenen Formulierungen und Konzepte gemäß den Richtlinien wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten zitiert, durch Fußnoten gekennzeichnet bzw. mit genauer Quellenangabe kenntlich gemacht habe.

Wien, 18.05.2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to read 'G. J. S.' or similar.