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Has corruption changed candidate selection in Spanish political parties?

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According to the Spanish Sociological Investigation Centre (CIS) barometer, corruption is the second biggest problem for Spanish citizens after unemployment. Most corruption cases occurring in Spain in the last two decades concern to political corruption. As a result, political parties are perceived as the most corrupt collective by almost 90% of Spanish citizens. In order to change electors' perception, transparency initiatives have been promoted by the Spanish government and political parties. After the Electoral Law amendment in 2011, politicians who were involved in a criminal investigation due to corruption (referred as "imputed") had to be left out the electoral list of their political party. At the same time, however, the Criminal Offence Law was amended: politicians who were being imputed became instead labelled as "under investigation". This tiny difference in terminology had an enormous consequence: politicians were allowed to be on the electoral list despite being under investigation for corruption. Our research project, therefore, aims to analyse the impact of corruption on candidate selection in political parties during the Spanish regional elections from 2009 to 2015. More precisely, it compares mainstream political parties' behaviour on candidate selection to newborn political parties.

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