

Between Parties and Voters: Representation among Candidates

Panel Chairs:

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Abstract

For Section 54: Representation Beyond Parties: The Role of Political Elites in Weakening and Strengthening Contemporary Democracy.

Descriptive representation within elected assemblies has been extensively discussed, and it remains one of the main criteria to define legislative assemblies as 'representative'. Research tends to focus on the selection process and on the representativeness of parliaments, putting light either on the role of political parties or on elected representatives. However, by focusing on the selection process or on the outcome of the elections, an important piece of the puzzle is missing: the candidates themselves. Candidates play a crucial role in the political linkage and have become the faces of political parties. Hence, candidates can have a direct impact on voters' satisfaction.

The composition of a parliament depends directly on the composition of the pool of candidates. While we know that parties act as 'gatekeepers' by restraining or enhancing access to politics, we do not know much about the representativeness of the pool of candidates and how it varies according to the institutional, political, or socio-demographic context. Moreover, party strategies in list composition might also generate a distortion between the representativeness of the pool of candidates and representativeness of the elected assemblies.

The panel welcomes papers dealing with the issues discussed above, notably the question of descriptive representation among candidates (specifically gender and minority groups representation, and intersectional perspectives). We are also interested in other aspects of representation that are often overlooked by theoretical and empirical scholarship, such as local or geographical representation. Finally, papers focusing on the demand side, such as voters' satisfaction with the candidates supply or analyses of preferential voting, are also welcomed.

To submit a proposal, you will need to provide:

- your name, academic affiliation and email address
- a title for your paper
- an abstract of up to 500 words.

For further information or to submit a proposal, please contact Chloé Janssen (<mailto:c.janssen@vub.be>) or Maximilien Cogels (<mailto:maximilien.cogels@uclouvain.be>).