

Competition within parties under open- and flexible-list PR systems – the perspective of candidates and voters

Panel proposal for Section 54: Representation Beyond Parties: The Role of Political Elites in Weakening and Strengthening Contemporary Democracy

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Abstract

Research on electoral competition and vote choice has largely focused on the interplay between parties and voters. In proportional electoral systems using open or flexible lists, elections are however not only played out as a choice between parties, but also as a choice between candidates competing for personal votes within the same party. In light of the trend towards a more personalized political arena, this intraparty dimension of electoral competition is becoming increasingly relevant.

While there is a growing literature on the topic, we still know fairly little about the individual, and contextual level determinants of candidate success, and about the strategies candidates use when competing against their co-partisans. We also lack systematic knowledge on the strategies applied by voters when confronted with the choice between large numbers of candidates running for the same party. Further, we need more information regarding potential temporal patterns in intraparty competition; has for example the level of competition within parties become more intense over time?

The panel invites papers that address different aspects of intraparty competition under proportional electoral systems, from the perspective of voters and/or candidates. Papers can target questions such as: Which type of cues to voters apply when deciding for which candidate to vote? How do candidates pursue competitive campaigns? Which type of candidates are successful in attracting personal votes and under which conditions? Are temporal patterns in intraparty competition related to broader trend of personalization of politics?

We are primarily interested in empirical papers based on experimental designs or on survey or register data, but we do not exclude novel theoretical contributions. Case studies and comparative works are equally welcome.

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 the Panel Chair above.