APSA panel Committee for Political Sociology

Panel title: Migrants' representation. The role of parties, electoral systems and mobilization.

Session description: This panel examines the drivers of migrant's political representation in Europe from a Political Sociology perspective. With novel data on all national MPs coming from the Pathways project (http://www.pathways.eu/) for eight European countries – Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom – for the period since the early 1990s, the four papers examine how political parties, electoral systems and mobilization from various groups shape the levels of political representation gained by citizens of immigrant origin (CIOs) – migrants and their descendants – across Europe.

Chair: Luis Ramiro

Discussant: Silvia Erzeel

Mobilization, Counter-Mobilization and Access to Power: Does descriptive Representation follow the anti-immigration mood?
Maria Sobolewska, Patrick English, Laura Morales, Marc van de Wardt, and Steven van Hauwaert

Are the anti-immigrant public moods preventing politicians of immigrant background from being successful at the stages of selection and election to national office? We argue there are three distinct possibilities. First, in response to rising anti-immigrant sentiment among the electorate, political parties may seek to limit the numbers of CIO politicians. Specifically, this will especially affect those of the more visible origins and those from groups that are deemed more problematic. Second, we think that this relationship may be more complex and depend on political opportunity structure in each country. This paper argues that whether anti-immigrant sentiment leads to counter-mobilisation of immigrants into elected office depends on the electoral power given to these communities and the degree to which the anti-immigrant politics has been institutionalised in each country. We hypothesise that anti-immigrant sentiment will create an obstacle for selection and election of immigrant-origin politicians in countries with strong anti-immigrant institutionalisation and poor access to power for CIOs, but in countries where immigrants have electoral power and the mobilisation of anti-immigrant sentiment is not institutionalised, there will not be a straight-forward relationship as immigrants themselves may be able to mobilise more electoral influence than they lose through prejudicial voting patterns from anti-immigrant voters.

Descriptive Representation of Constituency Interests: The Role of Institutional Variables and District Composition
Lucas Geese, Chloé Janssen, Constanza Sanhueza Petrarca, and Diana Schacht

This paper seeks to study how the ethnic composition of electoral districts relates to the descriptive representation of citizens of immigrant origin (CIOs) at the district level in national elections. In theoretical terms, special attention is paid to political parties' roles as gatekeepers and their electoral incentives to open up pathways for immigrant-origin representatives to parliament as well as the institutional opportunities for CIO

communities to influence this process. Thus, we consider the concurrent effects of electoral districts' ethnic composition, electoral systems and methods of candidate selection. The study uses electoral districts as the main unit of analysis to explain the descriptive representation of CIO. Thereby, we uncover patterns linking immigrant constituencies and immigrants' descriptive representation in national parliament. Hence, this paper is an important contribution to the study of electoral system effects as well as to our knowledge about the dynamics of descriptive representation of CIOs in the European context.

Matching candidate nomination, ethnic voting, and ethnic representation
Constanza Petrarca, Chloé Janssen, Lucas Geese, Diana Schacht, and Pierre Baudewyns

Do parties' decisions to select candidates of immigrant-origin have an effect on ethnic voting? We offer a cross-sectional and cross-time analysis of electoral systems and candidate selection procedures using parties as the unit of analysis. This paper focuses on two related dimensions. First, we determine which factors influence the selection of immigrant-origin candidates within each party. By preferring certain aspirants over others and by providing a list of candidates who are supposed to represent different dimensions (socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic) of the electoral districts, parties may try to maximize their own vote shares. Among all those dimensions, the ethnic dimension is an important one. Electoral districts differ in terms of varieties (different ethnic groups) and amplitude (proportion of those ethnic groups). Second, we address the link between the dynamics of candidate selection and the vote share for parties. We will mainly focus on the relation between the proportion of selected CIO candidates on lists and vote share for parties.

The effects of party organizational procedures on the representation of immigrant origin citizens
Luis Ramiro, Angeliki Konstantinidou, and Daniela Vintila

In this paper, we focus on the influence of two sets of variables for CIO representation. First, we deal with parties' internal organization and procedures. Second, we address party system components and dynamics. Party internal organization matters are related with the existence of specific organizational (sectorial bodies) for the representation of groups of immigrant origin, and the existence of quotas (both in partisan bodies and in electoral lists) to foster the inclusion of CIOs. The rules of candidate selection will also be addressed. Specifically, we focus on who can be selected, the inclusiveness of the selectorate, and the degree of decentralization of the candidate selection process, and the inclusiveness of the processes for leader and national executive committee selections. Last but not least, the parliamentary group size and turnover for the parties under analysis will also be analysed. Regarding the impact of party system factors on the access of CIOs to elected office, variables such as the disproportionality of the electoral system, the effective number of parties, the level of party system fragmentation, and the share of the vote for radical right parties will be studied.