

Section 3 – Politica comparata

Panel 6. Parliamentary activities, behaviour, and effectiveness of individual legislators: causes and effects.

Chair: Francesco Marangoni

The quest for re-election is an important piece of the democratic puzzle because it keeps governments and parliamentarians responsive and accountable. This basic accountability mechanism is well documented at the government level, but less is known on the relation between "performance", "electoral success" and, more in general, career patterns, at the individual parliamentarian level.

The topic of the individual accountability link has indeed received scarce attention. Recent studies, however, have started to investigate the relationship and the interactions between legislative behaviours and incumbent MPs' career tracks, providing first provisional, but extremely promising results.

The goal of this panel is to inquire into the behaviour and parliamentary activities of individual legislators, both, so to say, as cause and as effect. We are interested in analysing the structure of incentives and opportunities explaining the attitudes of individual representatives to engage in specific parliamentary activities. We are interested in investigating the systemic, institutional and individual factors influencing the performance and effectiveness of individual legislators. But we are also interested in the impact of legislative activities and parliamentary performance of individual legislators on their chances of being reselected and re-elected, and into the connection between parliamentarians' conduct in the legislative arena and political career patterns. We are interested in identifying what dimensions of parliamentary activities (ideological or partisan orientation, representative role, legislative effectiveness and efficiency) matter the most. We are interested in establishing whether parliamentarians' electoral fate actually reflect their past performance and, if so, what type of activity is the most rewarding and under what "circumstances" (electoral rule, district size, party system, parties internal organization, etc.). We are interested in inquiring the impact of specific features and dimensions of the representatives' work (such as the representation of special, territorial or functional, interests). We are interested in case studies as well as in truly (across time and space) comparative contributes. We are also interested in more methodologically oriented papers, dealing with critical questions such as how to define and measure individual parliamentary activity, productivity and effectiveness.