

Section 3 – Politica Comparata

Chairs: Gianfranco Baldini, Elisabetta de Giorgi

Panel 3.4 The study of political parties between continuity and innovation

The empirical analysis of party organisation is fundamental to raise reliable knowledge about parties' different ways to conceive and structure political participation and democratic representation. At the same time, different forms of party organisations are expected to be associated with changing institutional environment and societal circumstances. In fact, despite their perceived decline and the rise of nonpartisan protest movements, political parties are still the key actors in legislatures and governments. The study of the ways in which they build the relationships between citizens, groups and the elected personnel is crucial to understand their vision of democratic legitimacy. Furthermore, different organisational templates may help explaining differences and similarities in parties' capacity to perform crucial external and internal functions, such as electoral mobilisation, membership involvement, leadership selection, political communication and policy formulation.

More specifically, the Panel will be a forum opened to scholars interested in the changing relationships between parties, public administration and civil society, in order to answer the following questions: 1) how parties organize? 2) what is the current role played by party members and volunteer activists? 3) what are the mechanisms of representation within party organisations? 4) what is the role of party leaders and the procedures set for their selection? 5) which actors are involved in drafting political and electoral platforms? 6) which are the main funding sources of parties?

This Panel welcomes both theoretical and empirical contributions, which address the major research areas related to political parties. Particular attention will be given to comparative studies and analyses based on innovative methodological approaches to address the roles, functions, programs and organisations of political parties, in line with the latest international research projects (see in this regard: <http://www.politicalpartydb.org>).

Chairs: Enrico Calossi, Eugenio Pizzimenti