



The Strain of Representation: How Parties Represent Diverse Voters in Western and Eastern Europe (Comparative Politics)

Robert Rohrschneider, Stephen Whitefield

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The Strain of Representation assesses and explains the extent to which political parties across Europe as a whole have succeeded in representing diverse voters. The authors note two important features of the European political landscape that complicate the task of assessing party representation and that require its reassessment: First, the emergence of new democracies in post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe point to the possibility that representation is not only differentially achieved in West and East but may also be attained by different mechanisms. Second, parties in both West and East must now seek to represent voters that are increasingly diverse, specifically between partisan and independent supporters. The book refers to the challenges of representation of diverse voters as 'the strain of representation'. The evidential basis for the empirical analysis are expert surveys conducted in 24 European countries on party positions that have been merged with other available data on voters, party characteristics, and country conditions. The results point to both the representational capacities of parties in West and East and to the strain that parties face in representing diverse voters.

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