
Beyond Equal Rights: Equality of Opportunity in Political Participation

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Abstract

The stratification of political participation has occupied political scientists ever since the pervasive adoption of universal suffrage. In spite of an extensive body of research it is still poorly understood how these findings bear on our normative evaluation of the democratic process. In this paper we argue that the "Equality of Opportunity" (EOp) concept furnishes an attractive framework to close that gap. Drawing on the analytical tools developed by a flourishing empirical literature on EOp we investigate to what extent political participation is determined by factors that are beyond individual control ('circumstances') and thus 'unfairly' distributed. As a result this work extends the scope of current research on EOp to the political realm and proposes an analytical framework to address the yet under-researched question of political opportunity.

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