

Dubrow, Joshua Kjerulf. 2012. "Do Political Parties Represent Women, the Poor, and the Elderly?" *International Journal of Sociology* 42(1):78-86.

Abstract:

In the course of their political lives, parties acquire policy reputations. These reputations consist of subjective evaluations of a party's position on the issues of the day, the totality of which is called "party image." I use a subsample of POLPAN 2008 to examine the party images of ten Polish political parties on the extent to which they represent women, the poor, and the elderly, and these images' relationships with attitude toward democracy and democratic engagement. I equate individuals' evaluation of all parties as their subjective evaluation of the entire party system. I measure evaluation of the party system by whether an individual believes that at least one of the ten parties represents the disadvantaged to either a high or moderate degree. I find that the significant few who have a nonpositive evaluation of the party system are less likely to think that democracy is always the best form of government and are less likely to want to vote. The effect of nonpositive evaluations is not specific to disadvantaged groups' evaluation of their own representation; rather, it is a general condition that strikes a sizable portion of the entire social structure.