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Party Transformation in Congressional Primaries

Dr. Mike Cowburn

European University Viadrina

Rabinstr. 8, SR 6



Primary elections are commonly said to contribute to partisan polarization in Congress, yet those who vote in them have been shown to be non-ideological. This talk explains how the process through which candidates run for Congress fundamentally changed in the twenty-first century. These changes contributed to party transformation in Congress. Primaries are commonly said to drive polarization because of the people who vote in them. Dr. Cowburn shows instead that the nomination process exacerbates polarization through the influence of elite party actors incentivizing candidates to adopt more ideological behavior.

Mike Cowburn is a Postdoctoral Researcher of Digital Democracy at the European University Viadrina. His research interests include intra-party factions, candidate nomination systems, and political communication. His forthcoming book, *Party Transformation in Congressional Primaries: Faction and Ideology in the Twenty-First Century*, will be published in 2024 by Cambridge University Press. For more information see www.mikecowburn.com