

# Comparative Politics Speaker Series and the Life Long Learning Program of the EU

presents

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### **“Religious Parity or Gender Parity? Muslim Political Representation and Questions of Inclusion in Europe”**

A central question in debates about Muslim integration in advanced democracies has centered around matters related to gender equality. Existing arguments have focused on how multicultural recognition could hurt the status of women in Muslim communities, but much less attention has been paid to the ways in which the electoral process can disadvantage women. This paper examines whether and how the inclusion of Muslim candidates by political parties influences gender parity. I argue that when political parties pursue symbolic inclusion, they select only a few Muslim candidates and, among these, a relatively high number of female candidates. By contrast, when parties engage in vote-based inclusion, they select a substantial number of Muslim candidates, and these candidates are predominantly male. Parties also place Muslim men on favorable list positions when compared to women, Muslim and non-Muslim. Muslim voters, in turn, are more likely to award votes to Muslim men than they are to Muslim women. Together, both party and voter mechanisms can discriminate against women and lead to a tradeoff between gender parity and religious parity: as religious parity rises, gender parity decreases. Making use of original municipal-level election data, I test these arguments across nearly 300 municipalities in four countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, and Britain) as well within 69 municipalities in Belgium over time. The results contribute to our understanding of minority representation, political discrimination, and the integration of Muslims in advanced democracies.



**Thursday, March 12th, 2015  
SSB 107 at 12:30 p.m.  
Lunch provided**