

Réka Várnagy

PhD student in Political Sciences

Corvinus University of Budapest

The role of local politics in the carrier path of political elites

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to shed light on the role of local politics in the carrier paths of political elites. The local level offers many possibilities for participation in politics from local NGOs to formal political organizations. Entering the political arena has thus lower costs while these local political positions offer professional, financial and personal resources and experiences and thus can serve as a springboard for launching a professional political carrier. However, the importance of local politics seems to exceed the initial phase of carrier-building, since professional politicians and the members of the political elite seem to hold onto their local roles in order to have access to the accumulated resources there.

While the local level can be a springboard for individuals, it also serves as a recruitment base for political parties. Recruiting aspirants offers the possibility of reaching out to the local level as well as of training and socializing professional politicians at an early phase. For the candidates party positions are important assets since parties can offer solid financial and institutional support as well as a gateway to higher-level politics.

According to my hypothesis political carriers follow similar patterns among which we can find carriers starting at the local level. The aim of this paper is first, to discover the characteristics of the carrier-path leading from the local level to the political elite; and second, to investigate the interaction of climbing the party ladder and building a successful political carrier.