

Movement Building Evaluation Factors for Candidates

Far too often, engagement with candidates is filled with disappointment. They make promises to a certain set of values, policies, and platforms, and then once elected they renege on those promises. Part of this is the nature of electoral politics. But a large part is deficiencies in our evaluations of candidates, which make superficial assessments based on candidates words, without delving deeper into their past record or practice. Another part is that we do not account for the multitude of pressures and pulls that electeds encounter once in office that derail them from their commitments, and expect that they will be able to navigate them alone as individuals.

The analogy is to a tree. If we want to know how well a tree will weather through storms and through difficulty, we would look at its roots. The deeper the roots, the stronger the tree. But the deeper roots of a tree are not easily visible. They require digging, exploration, and investigation. Similarly candidates' identities, their work and personal relationships, and even their platforms and policy proposal can be finely manicured to make presentable, but are superficial indicators that can be easily uprooted. To know the depth of candidates' roots, we have to dig into their past records, their actual political practices, and their commitment to collective leadership.



Identity

Work & Personal Relationships

Platform & Policies

Past Record

Political Relationships

Political Practice

Collective Leadership

Identity

- 👉 What identities do they hold, and how have they shaped their experiences and approach?
- 👉 What kind of work & class background do their families come from?
- 👉 Do they use their identity to make claims about representation, or about substance?
- 👉 Identity may shape lived experiences but doesn't indicate any of the below.

Work & Personal Relationships

- 👉 Who are their friendships with, and who supports because of personal affinities?
- 👉 What are the relationships they built simply as a result of their work?
- 👉 What are the accomplishments they claim that would be a standard part of their work expectations?

Platform & Policies

- 👉 What are the platforms and policies they are claiming to uphold?
- 👉 What are the minimum and maximum extents of their platforms?
- 👉 What are the issues they do not pay attention to?
- 👉 Are their proposals detailed out, or ambiguous, or grounded in ongoing collaboration with movements?
- 👉 Gives no indication of genuine commitments because it is easy to renege later

Past Record

- 👉 Do they have a consistent record of standing for positions that they now claim in their platforms?
- 👉 Did they take contradictory or expedient positions compared to their platform?
- 👉 How do they explain, or evade, questions about these discrepancies?

Political Relationships

- 👉 Beyond relationships arising from the nature of their jobs, what political relationships did choose to develop and invest in?
- 👉 Were these relationships for purposes of a political career, or for genuine political commitments?
- 👉 How do they relate to people and forces that would be important for a political career versus those that may not serve their goals?

Political Practice

- 👉 How do they actually practice their stated politics?
- 👉 How willing have they been to take risks for the sake of principles?
- 👉 How willing are they to admit mistakes and shortcomings, and how do they account for them?
- 👉 How do they manage conflict or differences?
- 👉 How do they treat or support workers and colleagues, especially during differences?
- 👉 Are they skilled and capable of organizing other electeds?
- 👉 What is their plan and effort to make their campaign viable?

Collective Leadership

- 👉 What is their practice of collective accountability and decision-making?
- 👉 Have they and will they be accountable to collective processes and demands, even if they personally disagree?
- 👉 What is their theory on the role of electeds, the role of movements, and the relationship between the two?
- 👉 In what ways are they committed to using their platform to advance movement building?
- 👉 Are they willing to bind their political relationships and political practice into formal structures of co-governance? Or is it just vague claims?



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