

PhD Position (4 years) - Political Science

Co-Designing Inclusive Political Representation

Joint UCLouvain – Vrije Universiteit Brussel Project

Application deadline: 30 August 2026

Preferred start date: 1 October 2026

Project Overview

Political representation remains one of the central challenges facing contemporary democracies. This PhD position is part of the FNRS- and FWO-funded WEAVE project, *Co-Designing Inclusive Political Representation*, a bottom-up European research collaboration jointly conducted by UCLouvain and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The project explores how political representation can be reimagined and redesigned from the perspective of people experiencing socio-economic precarity in Brussels.

The project combines democratic theory, qualitative longitudinal fieldwork, participatory co-design and community-engaged research in Brussels. Participants from structurally underrepresented groups collaborate with researchers throughout the research process to analyze experiences of representation and co-develop proposals for democratic reform. The research follows an iterative abductive design, characterized by a continuous dialogue between empirical fieldwork and theoretical development. Within this broader project framework, the successful candidate will develop an original doctoral dissertation while contributing to an innovative and internationally connected research programme with both academic and societal relevance.

Position Details

- Supervision: Prof. Virginie Van Ingelgom, Prof. Karen Celis, and Dr. Kenza Amara Hammou.
- Duration: 4-year fixed-term doctoral scholarship (48 months).
- Start date: 1 October 2026.
- Funding: doctoral scholarship in accordance with FNRS and FWO regulations; dedicated budget for fieldwork, conferences, training and dissemination.
- Environment: enrolment in a collaborative UCLouvain-Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) doctoral programme leading to a joint doctoral degree; supervision by the UCLouvain and VUB supervisors; the first two years will be based at UCLouvain and the final two years at VUB; access to seminars, doctoral training and international research networks at both institutions.

Candidate Profile

- Master's degree in Political Science or a related social science discipline (final-year students may apply).
- Strong interest in political representation, democracy and qualitative research.
- Interest in participatory, co-constructive and community-engaged research.
- Excellent oral proficiency in French; Excellent English writing and speaking skills; Dutch is an asset.
- Willingness to conduct extensive qualitative fieldwork in Brussels.
- Intellectual curiosity, initiative and ability to work independently and collaboratively.

Main Responsibilities

- Develop an original doctoral dissertation.
- Conduct participatory qualitative fieldwork and facilitate panel discussions and co-design sessions.
- Collaborate with local NGOs and community organizations.
- Analyze qualitative data and contribute to academic publications.
- Present research at national and international conferences
- Contribute to societal outreach and dissemination activities, including engagement with local partners, policy stakeholders and broader public audiences, as well as the co-development of community-oriented and policy-relevant outputs.

Application Requirements

Submit your application by 30 August 2026 (23:59 CET) to Chantal Herman (chantal.herman@uclouvain.be) and Marina Kyndt (marina.kyndt@uclouvain.be).

Applicants are kindly requested to combine all application documents into a single PDF file where possible. Applications submitted as separate documents will also be accepted.

Please use the subject line: PhD Position (4 years) in Political Science - *Co-Designing Inclusive Political Representation*.

- Cover letter (max. 2 pages).
- Curriculum vitae.
- Short statement of research interests and project ideas (max. 1 page).
- Master's thesis or writing sample.
- Diploma
- Contact details of two academic referees (letters not required).

Applications submitted without the subject line mentioned above and/or submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Shortlisted candidates will be informed during early September 2026. Interviews are expected to take place during the second half of September 2026. Preferred start date: 1 October 2026.

Additional Information

Project enquiries and questions: Dr. Kenza Amara Hammou (Kenza.Amara-Hammou@uclouvain.be ; Kenza.Amara.Hammou@vub.be)