



Measuring the mass-elite preference congruence: findings from a meta-analysis and introduction to the symposium

Jaemin Shim^{1,2} · Sergiu Gherghina³

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Abstract

The extensive scholarship devoted to the congruence of mass-elite policy preferences lacks consensus about the meaning, comparison, and measurement across political settings. This makes comparisons difficult and raises obstacles to advancing the debates. This symposium aims to identify the diversity of methodological choices and to reflect systematically on several key choices of particular importance in understanding the congruence. The contributions to the symposium compare and contrast how several types of measurement fare in diverse political contexts in Eastern Europe, Latin America, North Africa, and East Asia, and what we can learn from those methodological choices.

Keywords Issue congruence · Measurement · Mass-elite · Policy preferences · Representation

Introduction

Congruence in policy preferences between voters and elected politicians has been an asset of representative democracy (Pitkin 1967; Dahl 1971; Thomassen et al. 1999). Policy incongruence is, ultimately, a less-than-ideal description of political representation and a phenomenon with a potentially detrimental effect to the existence of democracy. For instance, extensive empirical research has shown that mass-elite incongruence tends to lower voter turnout and political trust while increasing

✉ Jaemin Shim
jameshim83@gmail.com

Sergiu Gherghina
Sergiu.Gherghina@glasgow.ac.uk

¹ Institute of Korean Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

² German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies, Rothenbaumchaussee 32, 20148 Hamburg, Germany

³ Department of Politics, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK



dissatisfaction with democracy per se (Miller 1974; Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011; Curini et al. 2012). Indirectly, through its negative effects on representation, the absence of mass-elite congruence of policy preferences provided fertile soil for the growth of populism (Kriesi 2014). The mass-elite policy congruence lies at the core of the purpose of political representation through elections, which are “instruments of democracy to the degree that they give the people influence over policy making” (Powell and Powell 2000: 3).

Empirical research focusing on the comparison between mass and elite-level policy preferences has seen a dramatic increase in number and geographical coverage over time (Shim 2019). Starting with Miller and Stokes’ (1963) seminal work on comparing the US voters and legislators in the 1960s, key empirical studies have covered developed European democracies either in single- or multi-country form, such as Barnes on Italy (1971), Dalton on Western Europe (1985), Converse and Pierce on France (1986), Granberg and Holmberg on Sweden (1996), Thomassen on the European Union countries (2005), and Belchior on Portugal (2008). Moreover, since the turn of the millennium, there is a number of empirical works covering democracies in Central and Eastern Europe (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012) or Latin America, East Asia, and Africa (Bornschier 2019; Jou et al. 2017; Fossati 2019; Kotzé and Steenekamp 2009).

Echoing this growing salience and diversity, the existing scholarship diverges substantially in terms of how it defines, compares, and measures the masses and elites. This has significant implications for whether and to what degree countries display a convergent preference of mass-elite policy preferences (henceforth, mass-elite congruence) and to what extent we can compare the derived results over time and between countries.

This symposium aims to contribute to this debate by systematically mapping out the diversity of methodological choices and to reflect upon several key choices of particular importance in the global context. Each measurement covered in this symposium is informed by the existing literature and carefully contextualized in light of the political environment in which the students of mass-elite congruence scholarship conduct measurement. Furthermore, in line with the increasing geographical diversity in the scholarship, evidence was gathered from countries in Eastern Europe, Latin America, North Africa, and East Asia.

The four contributions to the symposium present the results which raise several questions about measuring policy preferences at mass and elite levels. In contexts where a large proportion of voters do not have a clear identification with a particular party, how should we compare mass-elite congruence? How can we select specific issue items to capture the key policy dimensions of interest in analysed countries? What alternative measures should we use if we do not have survey results at hand vis-à-vis either the mass or elite level? Although established European democracies were not included in this symposium, addressing questions like these will provide useful insights for them too. Many experience an increase in non-partisan voters, the emergence of new policy dimensions that tend to cut across the existing ones and mixed results in mass-elite congruence evaluations that often lead to an assumed “peaceful coexistence of research results and conclusions” (Müller et al. 2012: 170) without much reflection. In this sense, the special issue is a collective endeavour to



provide a springboard from which students of mass-elite congruence can reflect on and discuss the globally relevant methodological choices they make.

The remaining text of the introduction reviews the key measurement choices in the literature based on an original meta-analysis of the latter and situates the four contributions to this symposium within a particular set of those measurement choices.

A meta-analysis of the research on mass-elite congruence

To examine the prominent patterns of measurement choices in the current literature, we conducted a meta-analysis of 100 empirical works that compare the preferences of masses and elites. All these works use quantitative research methods and data sets. The meta-analysis shows how the existing literature has so far defined the masses and elites, compared their preferences in different policy areas using various points of comparison and methods of aggregation, and used different data sources too. Informed by the key patterns revealed through our meta-analysis, four subsequent contributions to the symposium compare and contrast how various types of measurement choice fare in diverse political contexts.

In an attempt to choose widely read and well-qualified empirical contributions to the mass-elite congruence literature, we used the keyword search function¹ from the Web of Science citation database—with the selection parameters confined to English-language academic works in Political Science published up to and including 2018 (for details about the selection process and the full list of empirical works chosen, see “Appendices 1 and 2”).² In view of our selection method, the 100 empirical works included here represent important and widely known ones in the extant literature; therefore, the diverse methodological choice patterns outlined in this introductory essay reflect the current state of the art regarding empirical works pertinent to mass-elite convergence.

Defining masses and elites

The most straightforward definition of elites and masses is those who have electoral mandates and those who have the right to give a mandate, respectively—elected legislators and eligible voters. Comparing the preferences of the electorate as a whole and of the parliament as a whole echo the notion that representative democracy should enable every section of society to produce itself in full light (Mill 1861). However, empirical evidence does not necessarily follow this definition. When it comes to defining the masses, 80 per cent of works label them rather loosely as citizen/public/voters without a clear specification demonstrating to what extent the

¹ The search was based on four keyword terms relevant to the mass-elite congruence literature, i.e. issue congruence, opinion congruence, issue representation and policy representation.

² Subsequent tables and figures included are based on authors' own compilation, and the total number often goes beyond 100 because some works include more than one category of interest.



Table 1 Definition of elites and masses in the literature (%)

Elites		Masses	
Parties	40	Citizen/public/voters	82
Candidates	22	Partisan voters	19
Legislators	37		
Ruling party legislators	9		
Government policies	3		

selected sample represent eligible voters, e.g. how research deals with eligible voters who are unlikely to be found in the sample such as overseas citizens (Table 1).

More importantly, the meta-analysis shows that 20 per cent of the analysed texts often confine the scope of masses to partisan voters and compares their preferences with those of the parties that they support. This approach can be problematic in numerous new democracies characterized by high numbers of voters without party identification. Even for old democracies, partisan de-alignment has been an ongoing trend as a consequence of social and political modernization (Dalton 2002); as a result, independent voters nowadays make up a non-negligible portion of eligible voters—ranging from 20 to 50 per cent in many advanced industrial societies (Dalton 2002).

The existing literature clearly shows more variation in how to define elites than how to define the mass. For instance, 40 per cent of works include parties as the point of elite-level preference aggregation (based on party manifestos or the party leader's revealed policy position) and often compare the aggregated value to that of either general or partisan voters. As for the analyses based on individual-level preference aggregation, the extant works select the scope of elites as candidates running for an upcoming election or alternatively as elected legislators. Moreover, the scholarship also suffers from the oft-noted problem arising from the representativeness of the sample. Respondents are not randomly selected, and the survey has very low response rates in most cases making all inferences tenuous (Costello et al. 2012). There is also unclear justification for why research focuses on either candidates or elected legislators. Overall, a specific definition of masses or elites requires more clear justification in light of the disparate contexts of covered countries.

Policy dimensions and issue items

In addition to how the literature defines masses and elites, another challenge that the literature faces—alongside the growing diversity of the measurement context—is which political dimensions to compare, based on which specific issue items. The meta-analysis results demonstrate that three quarters of the literature focus on mass-elite differences in specific policy dimensions, beyond just general left–right differences. This pattern indicates the diminishing ability of a broad left–right distinction to summarize meaningful policy stances between parties and electorates, with specific content often dependent on the country, time period, and respondent in question (Lachat 2018). Nonetheless, more than 80 per cent of the empirical



analyses included in this paper start mass-elite representation gap measurement with the three most well-known policy dimensions: economic (e.g. big vs. small government), sociocultural (e.g. materialist vs. post-materialist), and foreign policy issues (e.g. globalist vs. nationalist).

However, the three policy dimensions draw closely from the experiences of old democracies. Once we step beyond existing boundaries to include also new democracies, the potential number of key policy areas, where mass-elite discrepancies exist, expands dramatically. For instance, a survey of the existing party politics literature (Deegan-Krause 2007; Shim 2019) points out that a major axis of party competition revolves, for instance, around democracy in Latin America, ethnicity and regionalism in many African countries, religion and identity in Middle Eastern states, religion, ethnicity, and caste in Southeast and South Asia, or self-determination, defence, and security issues in Northeast Asia.

For countries lacking either sufficient democratic experiences and/or devoid of an institutionalized party system and programmatic party-voter linkages, it is challenging to identify what “key policy dimensions” are to begin with. How do we define which policy dimension is “key” in a specific country at a particular time? Furthermore, should we focus on key policy dimensions at the mass level and examine if a discrepancy exists in the same dimension at the elite one? Or should we instead reverse this sequence? Based on the Tunisian case, Farag’s contribution in this symposium suggests using the degree of divisiveness to determine the “key-ness” of a given policy dimension. He also recommends that research should start from the mass level, in view of an established democratic representation theory.

To complicate matters further, even if one does identify which policy dimensions to compare between masses and elites, choosing specific issue items that can meaningfully capture the pertinent policy dimensions requires careful attention being paid by the researcher. For instance, although the most prominent foreign policy dimension across EU countries is one’s attitude towards the role of the European Union, the meta-analysis shows that specific issue items employed in given research vary quite substantially concerning currency (to keep one’s own or not), borders (to remove national borders or not), social security (to have an EU-wide massive employment program or not), defence (creating an EU-wide army or not), and immigration (responsible entity for hosting immigrants: EU or the nation-state?). Which specific issue items are more salient and relevant might depend on a member state’s level of EU integration issues faced at the time of measurement.

Various comparisons: issue saliency, relative congruence, and indirect measurement

The most common empirical approach has been to compare the absolute difference between the masses and elites on their self-identified policy positions. However, as is clear from the meta-analysis patterns shown in Table 2, a non-negligible portion of empirical works focuses on issue-saliency differences, compare relative congruence, and often use indirect methods to estimate mass- or elite-level policy preferences. First, if the issue-position approach asks respondents whether or to what



Table 2 Issue saliency, relative congruence, and indirect measurement (%)

Issue position or saliency	%	Absolute or relative	%	Direct or indirect	%
Issue position	88	Absolute	82	Direct	84
Issue saliency	8	Relative	17	Indirect	16
Both	4	Both	1		

extent they agree/disagree with a particular policy issue, we can characterize the issue-saliency one by its attempt to gauge respondents' priority in particular policy domains (among many others). Comparing mass-elite issue-saliency congruence is becoming increasingly common in the party competition literature, since it is a complementary approach to spatial theories (Alonso 2012)—in addition to its own significant effect on voter turnout or levels of satisfaction with democracy (Reher 2014).

Reflecting this trend, in this symposium McElwain's contribution and Farag's contribution both approach their analyses from both issue-position and issue-saliency perspectives and demonstrate that the representation gap differs substantially between the two. Moreover, by distinguishing incumbent candidates from challengers, McElwain adds important nuance, showing that challengers, in particular, are more likely to strategically prioritize issue saliency or change issue positions vis-à-vis their constituencies due to their electoral insecurity.

Second, while we can define absolute congruence as the policy position distance between the masses and elites on a continuous scale, relative congruence—often labelled as “responsiveness” (Wlezien 2017)—frequently takes the form of regressing elites' policy stances over their supporters/constituencies in single or multiple time periods.

Finally, in contrast to “direct” comparisons based on the self-placement of one's policy position, the “indirect” comparison indicates that masses and elites' policy positions are the result of perceptions or assessments. For example, the elites judge voters' policy positions or the voters assess elites' preferences. Alternatively, a third party, i.e. experts, can make an assessment. The meta-analysis reveals that the most common indirect approach in the existing literature has been partisan voters deciding the policy positions of the parties that they support.

Policy preference aggregation methods: averages, distributions, and directions

The meta-analysis informs us that 20 per cent of the research employs a simple uni-scale measurement in evaluating the mass-elite policy preference gap, for example by comparing “yes” or “no” answer percentages for questions such as “Do you agree with Brexit?” or “Should the USA take an active role in world affairs rather than stay out?” However, the remaining 80 per cent of empirical works utilize a multi-scale measurement scheme where respondents answer given policy preference questions—whose scales often range from 0 to 5, or 0 to 10. On this, the existing literature notes three major factors worth considering: averages, distributions, and



Table 3 Different types of preference aggregation methods (%)

Aggregation method types	%
Uni-scale measure	21
Multi-scale measure (mean or median)	75
Multi-scale measure (distribution)	4
Multi-scale measure (direction)	1

directions. First, we can base the degree of discrepancy between the masses and elites on the average (either mean or median) placement of voters and of elites' preferences in a particular policy dimension—such as the two-point gap between elites and masses on a 0-to-10 scale range vis-à-vis the abortion issue. As is clear from Table 3, this method is dominant in measuring the mass-elite representation gap; at the same time, it is easy to interpret too.

However, despite the same mean/median placement, the preference of one side can be scattered while the other one can be centred on the mean placement. To address this problem, there have been several systematic attempts to bring both the mass- and elite-level preference distributions into the measuring of the mass-elite representation gap. The methodological innovation of Golder and Stramski's (2010) measure on cumulative–distribution function forms the basis for further advancement in the field. Other measurements exemplify this technique such as the earth mover's distance by Lupu et al. (2017) or the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test by Stavrakakis et al. (2017). Finally, the direction of discrepancy examines to what extent the masses and elite agree, either taking positive or negative views on particular policy dimensions (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2017). This is an under-recognized (but crucial) aspect of convergence since, in the real-world setting, many important issues take binary form at the actual decision stage. Because there can be cases where the mean placement and distribution discrepancy between the masses and elites are the same but differ in terms of alignment in direction, we need to treat this as a separate aspect of any mass-elite discrepancy. The existing literature often calculates alignment of mass-elite direction by comparing “majorities”, which is derived by dichotomizing scales and computing the proportion of opinion on each side.

Varieties of data sources and setting analytical equivalence

The meta-analysis results clearly reflect the oft-noted problem of using different data sets and metrics in measuring convergence (Reher 2014). The 100 empirical works approximately cover 60 different data sets at the mass level and 80 at the elite one. Even if we narrow down our focus to 21 empirical works measuring the representation gap related to the EU integration issue across member countries, substantial diversity still exists: six and 12 different data sets cover the mass and elite level, respectively. If we divide the data sources by type, we can observe greater variety at the elite level—ranging from roll-call votes and bill sponsorship, to party



Table 4 Different types of preference aggregation method (%)

	Elites	Masses
Behaviour	5	2
Opinion	66	97
Perception/judgement	14	2
Policy output	16	0

manifestos and government policy outputs, to expert judgements and opinion polls (see Table 4).

Considering the increasingly global orientation of the literature, students of mass-elite congruence use a wide range of diverse data sources. In itself, it is not a problem. This is especially true since new democracies or transition countries often lack reliable and valid cross-national data to measure mass-elite congruence on various policy areas. Country-specific data sources are relevant in such a context. However, not all data sources are equal in terms of the motivations behind data generation, the extent of coverage (e.g. to what extent particular data sets include various issues and diverse political actors), or the measured latent dimensions (e.g. whether the data captures issue positions or issue saliency). In view of the current state of the literature, which witnesses the peaceful coexistence of the research results and conclusions based on different data sources (Müller et al. 2012), what we need is careful scrutiny of the reliability of findings based on various robustness tests—and clear justifications for chosen data.

Content and structure of this symposium

McElwain's contribution to this symposium focuses on surveys of Japanese election candidates and voters on identical policy questions related to one of the key political issues in post-war Japan: constitutional revision. Based on remarkably high levels of elite-level response data, McElwain's findings make clear that, candidates, incumbents, and challengers have different policy priorities and positions on Japan's constitutional revision issue. The author notes that challengers are particularly vulnerable to voter preferences due to their electoral insecurity. The article explains the necessity to differentiate among elites and the masses as well as between policy preference and salience. It calls for a more granular approach in the literature to provide more accurate insights into the nature of democratic representation.

The article written by Bornschieer covers four Latin American countries and addresses the context-specific nature of issue items capturing particular policy dimension. He warns against applying a predefined set of issue items—since their saliency and relevance can vary between countries, and over time. Alternatively, he suggests an inductive yet systematic approach—Linear Canonical Discriminant Analysis—that we can utilize to capture mass-elite congruence on key policy dimensions in a scale-free manner. Moreover, the analysis suggests a scale-free relative congruence method that compares to what extent policy positions correlate between



partisan supporters and their parties. Considering that the degree to which voters are able to link specific issue items to germane policy dimensions exhibits greater cross-sectional variation outside established democracies (Harbers et al. 2013), this relative congruence method represents a much-awaited toolkit for issue-congruence scholars covering new democracies.

Farag's contribution focuses on a new and the only Arab democracy—Tunisia—and measures mass-elite congruence using mass survey, party manifestos, and roll-call votes. The paper takes a systematic approach to derive two key policy dimensions relevant in the Tunisian society since the Arab Spring—democratic-authoritarian and secular-Islamist—and demonstrates that the evolving centrist positions of the two largest Tunisian political parties on both dimensions paves the way to mass-elite incongruence. However, from an issue salience perspective, the article shows that there is congruence between masses and elites about economy being the main policy dimension. The distinction between the level of analysis (mass vs. elite) and the policy perspective (position vs. salience) yields theoretically important insights for the study of mass-elite differences in new democracies.

The article co-authored by Bankov and Gherghina shows how we can measure the mass-elite representation gap with a qualitative data source, i.e. speeches of political leaders. Their analysis on Bulgaria and Romania carefully demonstrates the implications of measurement involving both qualitative and quantitative types of data. Faced with the lack of elite-level surveys and other reliable sources of data on the EU integration issues, they tap into the best possible alternative data source in the two countries. In a transparent step-by-step process, the authors show how we can use qualitative data source to measure representative elite-level policy preferences in a reliable manner. Although the method requires extensive case knowledge and linguistic ability, it demonstrates its potential as an additional methodological toolkit for scholars facing data shortage problems regarding new democracies.

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Appendix 1: The selection procedure

- 1 Data source: we selected empirical works based on an established science search engines—Web of Science on December 15, 2018.
- 2 We used four relevant key terms: “issue congruence”; “opinion congruence”; “issue representation”; and “policy representation.” The publication format includes book chapters, articles, and conference papers, and the search parameters included all time periods—but were confined to English-language academic works in Political Science.
- 3 We listed the search results in order of “relevance” and then manually winnowed out empirical works concerning mass-elite representation gap measurement. Here, empirical works are defined as quantitative ones comparing the preferences of elites and masses on the basis of particular data sets.
- 4 Since the number of relevant empirical works obtained through the search engine results was only 42, far below the intended target of 100, we employed the snowballing method for the reference lists of the 42 obtained works so as to secure the other 58.
- 5 To maintain the diversity of the sample, we chose maximum two works from the reference list of each of the 42 empirical works.
- 6 Limitations: (1) key terms-based selection reliant on “web-built search algorithms” and narrowing down empirical works to those published in English inevitably excludes important parts of the mass-elite congruence literature which does not include four keywords or/and written in languages other than English, for example specific area-based journals; (2) manually winnowing out relevant empirical works and the subsequent application of the snowballing method might have introduced potential bias.

Appendix 2: Full list of selected sample

Nos.	Authors	Year	Title	Publisher
1	Page, Benjamin I, and Marshall M Bouton	2008	A Disconnect between Policy Makers and the Public?	The foreign policy disconnect: What Americans want from our leaders but don't get: 201–226
2	Jou, Willy, Masahisa Endo, and Yoshihiko Takenaka	2017	An Appraisal of Japan's "Right Turn": Citizen–Government Congruence and Ideological Understanding	Asian Survey 57 (5):910–932
3	Andeweg, R. B	2011	Approaching perfect policy congruence: measurement, development, and relevance for political representation	How democracy works: Political representation and policy congruence in modern societies, 39–52



Nos.	Authors	Year	Title	Publisher
4	Pellegata, Alessandro	2016	Assessing the complex relationship between government alternation and ideological congruence	International Political Science Review 37 (1):51–65
5	Granberg, Donald, and Sören Holmberg	1996	Attitude constraint and stability among elite and mass in Sweden	European Journal of Political Research 29 (1):59–72
6	Freire, André, Eftichia Teperoglou, and Catherine Moury	2014	Awakening the sleeping giant in Greece and Portugal? Elites' and voters' attitudes towards EU integration in difficult economic times	South European Society and Politics 19 (4):477–499
7	Von Schoultz, Åsa, and Hanna Wass	2015	Beating issue agreement: Congruence in the representational preferences of candidates and voters	Parliamentary Affairs 69 (1):136–158
8	Mattila, Mikko, and Tapio Raunio	2006	Cautious voters-supportive parties: Opinion congruence between voters and parties on the EU dimension	European Union Politics 7 (4):427–449
9	Dalton, Russell J	1988	Citizen politics in Western democracies: Public opinion and political parties in the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, and France	Chatom House
10	Holmberg, Sören	1999	Collective policy congruence compared	Policy representation in Western democracies:87–109
11	Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, Andrea Volkens, Michael D McDonald, Ian Budge, and Judith Bara	2006	Common Space for Electoral Communication? Comparing Party and Voter Placements on a Left-Right Continuum in Western Europe and CEE	Mapping policy preferences II: estimates for parties, electors, and governments in Eastern Europe, European Union, and OECD 1990–2003: 51–63
12	Leimgruber, Philipp, Dominik Hangartner, and Lucas Leemann	2010	Comparing candidates and citizens in the ideological space	Swiss Political Science Review 16 (3):499–531
13	Moury, Catherine, and Luis de Sousa	2011	Comparing deputies' and voters' support for Europe: The case of Portugal	Portuguese Journal of Social Science 10 (1):23–41
14	Backstrom, Charles H	1977	Congress and the Public: How Representative is the One of the Other?	American Politics Quarterly 5 (4):411–435
15	Huber, John D, and G Bingham Powell	1994	Congruence between citizens and policymakers in two visions of liberal democracy	World Politics 46 (3):291–326



Nos.	Authors	Year	Title	Publisher
16	Bengtsson, Asa, and Hanna Wass	2012	Congruence between MPs', Non-elected Candidates' and Citizens' Preferences for Representational Roles	APSA 2012 Annual Meeting Paper
17	Miller, Warren E, and Donald E Stokes	1963	Constituency influence in Congress	American Political Science Review 57 (1):45–56
18	Snyder Jr, James M	1996	Constituency preferences: California ballot propositions, 1974–90	Legislative Studies Quarterly:463–488
19	Borre, Ole	2000	Critical issues and political alienation in Denmark	Scandinavian Political Studies 23 (4):285–309
20	Fiorina, Morris P, and Matthew S Levendusky	2006	Disconnected: The political class versus the people	Red and blue nation 1:49–71
21	Blais, André, and Marc André Bodet	2006	Does proportional representation foster closer congruence between citizens and policy makers?	Comparative Political Studies 39 (10):1243–1262
22	Mattila, Mikko, and Tapio Raunio	2012	Drifting further apart: National parties and their electorates on the EU dimension	West European Politics 35 (3):589–606
23	Holmberg, Sören	2011	Dynamic representation from above	How Democracy Works: 53–77
24	Bartels, Larry M	2009	Economic inequality and political representation	The unsustainable American state:167–196
25	Rogers, Steven	2017	Electoral accountability for state legislative roll calls and ideological representation	American Political Science Review 111 (3):555–571
26	Hooghe, Liesbet	2003	Europe divided? Elites vs public opinion on European integration	European Union Politics 4 (3):281–304
27	Costello, Rory, Jacques Thomassen, and Martin Rosema	2012	European parliament elections and political representation: policy congruence between voters and parties	West European Politics 35 (6):1226–1248
28	Lewis, Daniel C, and Matthew L Jacobsmeier	2017	Evaluating Policy Representation with Dynamic MRP Estimates: Direct Democracy and Same-Sex Relationship Policies in the United States	State Politics & Policy Quarterly 17 (4):441–464
29	Somer-Topcu, Zeynep	2015	Everything to everyone: The electoral consequences of the broad-appeal strategy in Europe	American Journal of Political Science 59 (4):841–854



Nos.	Authors	Year	Title	Publisher
30	Reher, Stefanie	2015	Explaining cross-national variation in the relationship between priority congruence and satisfaction with democracy	European Journal of Political Research 54 (1):160–181
31	Belchior, Ana Maria	2013	Explaining left–right party congruence across European party systems: a test of micro-, meso-, and macro-level models	Comparative Political Studies 46 (3):352–386
32	Thomassen, Jacques, and Carolien Van Ham	2014	Failing political representation or a change in kind? Models of representation and empirical trends in Europe	West European Politics 37 (2):400–419
33	Lesschaeve, Christophe	2017	Finding inequality in an unlikely place: Differences in policy congruence between social groups in Belgium	Acta Politica 52 (3):361–383
34	Page, Benjamin I, and Jason Barabas	2000	Foreign policy gaps between citizens and leaders	International Studies Quarterly 44 (3):339–364
35	Deschouwer, Kris, Sam Depauw, and Audrey André	2014	From Agency to Institutions and Back: Comparing Legislators' Acting on Behalf of Women in Parliamentary Democracies	Representing the people: A survey among members of statewide and substate parliaments: 66–86
36	Reher, Stefanie	2018	Gender and opinion–policy congruence in Europe	European Political Science Review 10 (4):613–635
37	Traber, Denise, Nathalie Giger, and Silja Häusermann	2018	How economic crises affect political representation: declining party–voter congruence in times of constrained government	West European Politics 41 (5):1100–1124
38	Rohrschneider, Robert, and Stephen Whitefield	2012	Ideological Congruence	The strain of representation: How parties represent diverse voters in Western and Eastern Europe: 86–115
39	Belchior, Ana Maria	2010	Ideological congruence among European political parties	The Journal of Legislative Studies 16 (1):121–142
40	Golder, Matt, and Jacek Stramski	2010	Ideological congruence and electoral institutions	American Journal of Political Science 54 (1):90–106
41	Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, Darina Gancheva, and Bernhard Weißels	2017	Ideological congruence: Choice, visibility and clarity	In Parties, governments and elites: Springer:53–72
42	Freire, André, and Ana Belchior	2013	Ideological representation in Portugal: MPs'–Electors' linkages in terms of Left–Right placement and substantive meaning	The Journal of Legislative Studies 19 (1):1–21



Nos.	Authors	Year	Title	Publisher
43	Walgrave, Stefaan, and Jonas Lefevere	2013	Ideology, salience, and complexity: determinants of policy issue incongruence between voters and parties	Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties 23 (4):456–483
44	Flavin, Patrick	2012	Income inequality and policy representation in the American states	American Politics Research 40 (1):29–59
45	Gilens, Martin	2005	Inequality and democratic responsiveness	Public Opinion Quarterly 69 (5):778–796
46	Rohrschneider, Robert, and Stephen Whitefield	2012	Institutional context and representational strain in party–voter agreement in Western and Eastern Europe	West European Politics 35 (6):1320–1340
47	Burden, Barry C	2005	Institutions and policy representation in the states	State Politics & Policy Quarterly 5 (4):373–393
48	Belchior, Ana Maria, and André Freire	2013	Is party type relevant to an explanation of policy congruence? Catchall versus ideological parties in the Portuguese case	International Political Science Review 34 (3):273–288
49	Rohrschneider, Robert	2015	Is There a Regional Cleavage in Germany's Party System? Unequal Representation and Ideological Congruence in Germany 1980–2013	German Politics 24 (3):354–376
50	Holmberg, Sören	2000	Issue Agreement	Beyond Westminster and Congress: The Nordic Experience: 155–182
51	McClosky, Herbert, Paul J Hoffmann, and Rosemary O'hara	1960	Issue Conflict and Consensus among Party Leaders and Followers I	American Political Science Review 54 (2):406–427
52	Thomassen, Jacques, and Hermann Schmitt	1999	Issue congruence	Political representation and legitimacy in the European Union:186–208
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Jaemin Shim is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Korean Studies (Freie Universität Berlin) and an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Asian Studies (German Institute of Global and Area Studies). His primary research interests lie in comparative welfare states, political institutions, gender politics, legislative politics, and mass-elite representation gap.

Sergiu Gherghina is a Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the Department of Politics, University of Glasgow. His research interests lie in party politics, legislative and voting behaviour, democratization, and the use of direct democracy.

