

Electoral Rules and Citizen-Elite Ideological Congruence*

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ABSTRACT

Electoral rules play an important role in determining citizen-elite ideological congruence. This is because they influence each stage of the representation process as we move from citizen preferences to policy outcomes. Electoral rules directly affect ideological congruence due to the way they shape citizen preferences and the composition of party systems, legislatures, and governments. Electoral rules can also have an indirect effect on ideological congruence through the incentives they create for elite responsiveness and their impact on descriptive representation. In addition to reviewing the existing literature, we suggest new avenues for future research. In particular, we suggest that significant gains can be made by addressing ideological congruence and responsiveness in a unified theoretical framework and by having more interaction between scholars of ideological congruence and those interested in descriptive and substantive representation.

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1 Introduction

How do electoral rules affect the degree of congruence between political elites and the ideological preferences of the people? For many, ideological congruence is the key to good representation. Electoral rules are an important determinant of ideological congruence because of the way they shape citizen preferences and the composition of party systems, legislatures, and governments. Representation occurs in stages. Citizen preferences are translated into votes, votes are translated into legislative seats, legislative seats are translated into governments, and government proposals are translated into policies. After some preliminaries, we examine how electoral rules influence ideological congruence at each of these stages in the representation process. We finish by briefly looking at how electoral rules can indirectly affect ideological congruence by influencing elite responsiveness and descriptive representation. In addition to summarizing the existing literature, we suggest new avenues for future research.

2 Some Preliminaries

We begin by situating studies of ideological congruence in the more general literature on political representation, distinguishing between ideological *congruence* and ideological *responsiveness*, and highlighting the different ways that scholars have conceptualized ideological congruence.

2.1 Political Representation

Pitkin (1967) distinguishes between four different views of representation. Formalistic representation has to do with how representatives are authorized and held accountable. Symbolic representation addresses the symbolic ways in which representatives ‘stand for’ and seek acceptance from the people. Descriptive representation focuses on the extent to which representatives resemble and hence ‘stand for’ their constituents. Substantive representation emphasizes how representatives ‘act for’ the people and promote their interests. A close correspondence between the people and their representatives is emphasized in both the descriptive and substantive views of representation. Descriptive representation calls for representatives who share the same characteristics, such as race, gender, religion, and class, as those they represent. Substantive representation calls for representatives to take actions in line with the substantive or ideological interests of those they represent. Many democratic theorists have argued that substantive representation is the most important

form of representation as it focuses on what representatives do as opposed to who they are (Pitkin, 1967). Empirical scholars have typically thought of substantive representation in terms of ideological congruence (Huber and Powell, 1994) and responsiveness (Page and Shapiro, 1983).

A central debate in the political representation literature has to do with whether representatives should be independent trustees or mandated delegates (Pitkin, 1967). Trustees are generally understood as representatives who use their own independent judgement to promote the collective good. In contrast, delegates are typically viewed as representatives who are mandated to promote particular constituent-defined interests (Rehfeld, 2009, 215). By equating ‘good representation’ with a close correspondence between the actions of the representatives and the preferences of their constituents, empirical scholars of ideological congruence implicitly adopt a mandate or delegate view of representation (Rehfeld, 2009, 216). In doing so, they ignore the possibility that good representation may require representatives to deviate from their constituents’ preferences, perhaps because these preferences do “not conform to their [constituents’] true interests . . . or [because they] may be trumped by more important principles of justice” (Rehfeld, 2009, 214). That said, even those adopting a trustee view of representation accept that deviations from constituent preferences should be infrequent and congruence the norm (Pitkin, 1967, 209-210).

Several scholars have recently presented alternative views of representation that question the central importance of ideological congruence. Mansbridge (2003, 515), for example, discusses anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate representation, each of which emphasizes the “deliberative rather than aggregative” function of representation. With anticipatory representation, representatives act on what they think the interests of their constituents will be at the next election. With gyroscopic representation, representatives act in line with their own beliefs and principles rather than those of their constituents. With surrogate representation, representatives act for constituents who did not elect them. The normative concern in all of these forms of representation has nothing to do with “whether representatives accurately reflect the current opinions or even the underlying interests of the members of their constituencies” (Mansbridge, 2003, 524).

Saward (2006, 2014) goes so far as to suggest that substantive representation may not even be possible. This is because he challenges the idea that there are exogenous and knowable constituent interests for representatives to represent. Rather than view representatives as passive conveyors of constituent interests, Saward argues that representatives play an active role in ‘creating’ and ‘constructing’ citizen interests through the types of representation claims they make. These representation claims, if accepted by the people, help to define groups and interests that require representation, as well as the types of representatives that

are considered good. In this framework, “representation is not a passive procedure of receiving clear signals from below; rather it is dynamic, performative, and constitutive” (Celis et al., 2008, 101-102). Among other things, the constructivist turn in representation studies emphasizes the role played by non-electoral representatives in shaping representation (Saward, 2009; Disch, 2011; Näsström, 2015; Kuyper, 2016).

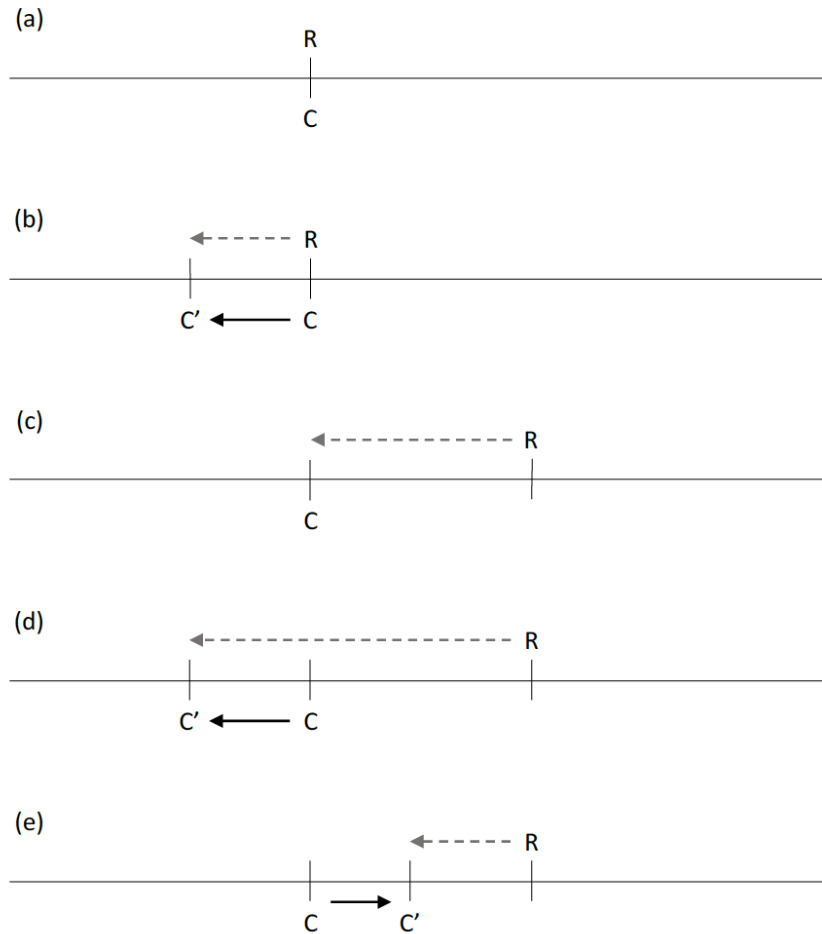
2.2 Ideological Congruence and Responsiveness

Substantive representation has typically been studied either in terms of ideological congruence or responsiveness. Although ideological congruence and responsiveness are intimately connected, scholars who work in these two areas rarely talk to one another (Ferland, 2015). Congruence tells us the extent to which the actions of the representative are in line with the interests of the represented at a fixed point in time, whereas responsiveness refers to how representatives change their behavior to become more congruent with the interests of the represented over time. In this respect, congruence and responsiveness represent static and dynamic forms of representation. Ideological congruence is the ultimate goal. Responsiveness is important because it leads to greater congruence at times when the actions of the representative and the interests of the people are not in complete alignment. This suggests that scholars of ideological congruence and responsiveness should not work in isolation but should instead adopt a unified theoretical framework.

Figure 1 highlights the conceptual distinction between congruence and responsiveness. Each of the five scenarios depicts a representative R and a citizen C in some policy space. In some scenarios, the citizen changes his preferences from C to C'. This is indicated by the solid black arrows. The dashed gray arrows indicate how a fully responsive representative would move in each of the different scenarios. Scenario (a) indicates a situation of perfect congruence, where the representative holds the same position as the citizen. In this scenario, the representative does not have to be responsive. In some sense, scenario (b) captures ‘ideal’ representation. The representative starts off congruent. As the citizen changes his preferences, the representative moves to maintain her perfect congruence. The other scenarios capture instances of incongruence where the representative must move to establish congruence.

Many scholars argue that representatives are responsive when they move in the same direction as the citizen (Adams et al., 2006; Adams, Haupt and Stoll, 2009; Kang and Powell, 2010; McDonald and Budge, 2005). In other words, they claim that a responsive representative moves left when the citizen moves left, and right when the citizen moves right. However, this claim is problematic. As scenario (e) indicates, there are cases in which a representative can achieve greater congruence, and hence be more responsive, by

Figure 1: Ideological Congruence and Responsiveness



Note: Figure 1 shows a representative R and a citizen C located in a policy space. C' indicates a new policy position adopted by the citizen C. The solid black arrow indicates the movement of the citizen in the policy space. The dashed gray arrow indicates the movement of a fully responsive representative. Ideological congruence occurs when the representative takes the same position as the citizen in the policy space.

moving in the opposite direction to the citizen. Only if we start from a situation of perfect congruence will a responsive representative always move in the same direction as the citizen. If we start from a situation of incongruence, as will normally be the case, then whether a responsive representative will move in the same direction as the citizen depends on whether the citizen is located to her left or right (Ferland, 2015). As Figure 1 indicates, it is important to take account of ideological congruence when studying responsiveness.

Powell (2000) distinguishes between majoritarian and proportional visions of democracy. Both visions value responsiveness. However, they differ in terms of when responsiveness should occur. According to the majoritarian vision, representatives are mandated to implement the policies on which they cam-

paigned. As a result, ‘majoritarian’ representatives are expected to be responsive only at fixed points in time — when a new election is taking place. In contrast, ‘proportional’ representatives are expected to continuously respond to changes in citizens’ preferences. These normative standards have obvious implications for how we empirically evaluate the responsiveness of representatives in majoritarian and proportional systems.

2.3 Conceptualizing Ideological Congruence

Empirical scholars conceptualize ideological congruence in different ways. One traditional way to conceptualize congruence is in terms of either dyadic or collective representation. Dyadic representation concerns the congruence between a single representative and her geographic constituency (Miller and Stokes, 1963). Collective representation concerns the congruence between the representatives in a collective body, such as a legislature or government, and the citizens (Weissberg, 1978). Whereas much of the American politics literature has focused on dyadic representation, most of the comparative literature has focused on collective representation. One reason for this is that comparative scholars have typically examined more party-centered elections in which parties are strong and individual legislators have limited independence. Electoral rules, such as party lists and district magnitude, influence the strength of parties and the extent to which representatives seek to generate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart, 1995). As a result, they help to determine the appropriateness of adopting a dyadic or collective concept of representation.

Golder and Stramski (2010) argue that it is useful to distinguish between situations where there are many citizens and a single representative (a many-to-one relationship) and where there are many citizens and many representatives (a many-to-many relationship). Although we refer to a ‘single representative’ in the many-to-one relationship, we can just as easily think of the single representative as being the government’s policy position. Whereas American politics scholars typically ask how well a single legislator represents her constituents, comparative scholars typically ask how well a government represents its citizens. As Golder and Stramski (2010) highlight, there are many different ways to conceptualize many-to-one congruence. By far the most common way to conceptualize it is as the absolute distance between the representative’s policy position and the citizenry’s ‘most preferred’ position. The position of the median citizen is typically taken as the citizenry’s most preferred policy position, as this position minimizes the sum of absolute distances between the citizens (Huber and Powell, 1994). This is referred to as *absolute median citizen congruence*.

One criticism of this conceptualization of many-to-one congruence is that it ignores the diversity of citizens’ preferences. A way to incorporate information about the distribution of citizens’ preferences is by

conceptualizing congruence as the average absolute distance between *each* citizen and the representative, *absolute citizen congruence* (Achen, 1978; Blais and Bodet, 2006). A concern, though, is that representatives in homogeneous constituencies are automatically at an advantage when producing this type of congruence compared to representatives in more heterogeneous constituencies. This is problematic if one wants to compare the relative performance of representatives across constituencies. One way to address this issue is by conceptualizing congruence *relative* to the dispersion of citizen preferences, *relative citizen congruence*.

How one conceptualizes many-to-one congruence is important because it affects how one ranks a set of representatives in terms of their performance. As Golder and Stramski (2010, 95) point out, “the potential for these different rankings suggests that empirical claims regarding ideological congruence may depend critically on the particular conceptualization of congruence that is adopted.” They propose that the concept of relative citizen congruence is often the most appropriate given the goals of empirical scholars.

Rather than focus on determining how congruent a single representative or government is with the preferences of the citizenry (a many-to-one relationship), one might also be interested in how well the collective body of representatives or legislature reflects the ideological positions of citizens (a many-to-many relationship). This conceptualization fits with a long line of democratic theorists who have emphasized the importance of having a representative body whose preferences accurately correspond to those of the country as a whole (Pitkin, 1967). The few empirical scholars in this tradition usually compare the distance between the median legislator and the median citizen (Powell, 2000; McDonald, Mendes and Budge, 2004; Golder and Lloyd, 2014). However, this approach ignores the diversity of preferences among both the citizens and representatives. Golder and Stramski (2010, 95-96) argue that many-to-many congruence is more appropriately conceptualized in terms of the extent to which the distribution of preferences among the representatives overlap with the distribution of preferences among the citizenry.

3 Stages of Ideological Congruence

Ideological congruence ultimately requires that policies be in line with citizen preferences. The translation of preferences into policies occurs in stages. Electoral rules are important because they influence the accuracy with which preferences are translated across the various links in the chain of representation.

3.1 Citizen Preferences

The representation chain starts with citizen preferences. Ideological congruence scholars implicitly take citizen preferences as given and examine how well they are reflected in the actions of representative agents such as parties, legislatures, and governments. As previously mentioned, the fixed and exogenous nature of citizen preferences has been challenged by the ‘constructivist turn’ among representation theorists (Disch, 2011; Saward, 2006, 2009). These theorists highlight how representatives are able to strategically manipulate and shape citizen preferences through a repeated claims-making process with the people.

That preferences are constructed is consistent with Downs’ (1957, 124-125) suggestion that majoritarian electoral rules, by encouraging a two-party system in which parties converge in the policy space, may cause “voters’ tastes . . . [to] become relatively homogenous in the long run; whereas the opposite may occur in a proportional representation structure.” Downs suggests, in effect, that citizen preferences may be endogenous to electoral rules. Evidence for this comes from Golder and Stramski (2010, 101), who find that the dispersion of citizen preferences is smaller in majoritarian electoral systems than in proportional ones. As discussed earlier, this means that representatives in majoritarian systems will automatically find it easier than their counterparts in proportional systems to produce *absolute citizen congruence*. This is one reason why scholars might want to conceptualize congruence relative to the dispersion of citizen preferences.

Electoral rules also shape citizen preferences because of their impact on political identity formation (Chandra, 2004, 2006, 2012; Posner, 2005). The standard story is that each country has a set of latent cleavages, such as language, ethnicity, religion, and class, that could be mobilized by political entrepreneurs. Political entrepreneurs, though, only mobilize those cleavages that provide the most usefully-sized building blocks for constructing their ‘winning coalitions.’ Which differences become politicized and hence worthy of representation depends on the interaction between institutions like electoral rules and the distribution of latent social cleavages (Clark, Golder and Golder, 2017, 614-621). Electoral rules are important because they help to determine the necessary size of any winning coalition. Whereas proportional systems allow for the politicization of many ‘small’ cleavages, majoritarian systems require larger winning coalitions and encourage the politicization of a small number of ‘large’ cleavages. As an example, Posner (2004) employs this framework to explain why ethnicity is politicized in Malawi but not in Zambia.

3.2 Party System Congruence

Citizen preferences are first represented in the party system. Party system congruence has been studied from two distinct perspectives. Whereas the first involves examining the congruence between individual parties and their voters, the second involves examining the congruence between the party system as a whole and the citizenry. Those who adopt the second perspective emphasize either the importance of having parties that are congruent with the ‘typical’ citizen or having parties that are congruent with the diversity of citizen preferences. That a party system is unlikely to be able to produce both types of congruence illustrates the implicit conceptual and normative judgments underpinning analyses of ideological congruence.

A party system’s size and ideological makeup strongly influence party system congruence. Electoral rules are important as they influence both the number of parties in the system as well as the location of these parties in the policy space. The dominant explanation for party system size is Duverger’s (1963) theory. Duverger’s theory argues that party system size is determined by the interaction of social diversity and electoral rules. Social diversity creates the ‘demand’ for political parties. Demand is high when there are many cross-cutting cleavages. The extent to which demand is translated into parties depends on the permissiveness of the electoral system. Electoral rules matter because of their mechanical and strategic effects. The mechanical effect refers to how votes are translated into seats. The mechanical effect of disproportional systems hurts small parties and rewards large ones, as only large parties can win seats. This mechanical effect creates incentives for voters to engage in strategic voting and for elites to engage in strategic entry (Cox, 1997). These strategic effects again hurt small parties and reward large parties. According to Duverger’s theory, party system size will only be large when social diversity is high *and* electoral systems are proportional. Numerous empirical studies have supported Duverger’s theory (Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 1994; Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006).¹

Electoral rules have a direct and indirect effect on where parties locate in the policy space. In terms of a direct effect, majoritarian systems reward large parties. To the extent that voter density is highest in the center of the policy space, majoritarian systems create incentives for parties to adopt centrist positions. In contrast, parties in proportional systems compete in a more permissive environment and can win legislative seats even if they hold non-centrist positions (Dow, 2001, 2011). Matakos, Troumpounis and Xefteris

¹While Duverger’s theory focuses on the effect of electoral rules on the size of the party system, it is worth recognizing that electoral system choice is often endogenous to the preferences of elites within the party system (Benoit, 2007; Bawn, 1993; Boix, 1999).

(2016) reach a similar conclusion based on a spatial model that directly incorporates electoral system disproportionality. The indirect effect of electoral rules occurs via party system size. The median voter theorem predicts that two parties competing along one policy dimension will converge on the median voter's position (Downs, 1957). Cox (1990), as well as Merrill and Adams (2002), present spatial models showing that majoritarian systems with few parties create centripetal tendencies where parties adopt centrist positions, whereas proportional systems with many parties create centrifugal tendencies where parties disperse and carve out niche electorates. Agent-based models of multidimensional competition produce similar results. Kollman, Miller and Page (1992, 1998) find that two parties competing on multiple dimensions adopt centrist, but distinct, positions. Focusing on a multiparty setting, Laver and Sergenti (2012) demonstrate that party system dispersion increases with the number of parties.

Significantly, the ideological makeup of party systems is not driven solely by electoral incentives. The electoral incentives for parties to disperse in proportional systems are tempered by *government formation* incentives to remain centrist to increase the chances of entering a coalition cabinet (Schofield, 1993; Laver and Shepsle, 1996; Martin and Stevenson, 2001; Glasgow, Golder and Golder, 2011). Similarly, the electoral incentives for parties to adopt centrist positions in majoritarian systems are moderated by *valence* incentives that encourage low valence parties to differentiate themselves in terms of policy (Schofield, 2003; Schofield and Sened, 2005). According to Calvo and Hellwig (2011), the centripetal tendencies in majoritarian systems only apply to large parties that can expect to benefit from disproportional vote-seat transfers.

Exactly how these incentives play out is an empirical question. Most empirical studies indicate that electoral rules have a direct (Dow, 2011; Calvo and Hellwig, 2011), an indirect (Andrews and Money, 2009; Curini and Hino, 2012), or both a direct and indirect (Matakos, Troumpounis and Xefteris, 2016) effect on party system dispersion. Specifically, they find that majoritarian electoral rules generally produce 'compact' party systems where parties adopt centrist positions and that proportional electoral rules produce more ideologically diverse systems.² In line with the idea that the electoral incentives to disperse in proportional systems are tempered by government formation incentives to remain centrist, Curini and Hino (2012) find that the number of parties increases party system dispersion when coalition governments are rare but decreases it when coalition governments are common. These empirical results have obvious implications for

²A few studies find no relationship between electoral rules and party system dispersion (Ezrow, 2008; Dalton, 2008; Budge and McDonald, 2006). Ezrow (2011), though, later concurs with Dow (2011) that majoritarian electoral rules do, in fact, produce more compact party systems. Significantly, Dalton's (2008) analysis does not speak to questions of party system congruence per se as his measure of party system polarization is not calculated relative to voter preferences. The analysis conducted by Budge and McDonald (2006) is limited because it focuses only on the distance between the two most extreme parties in a system.

the different types of party system congruence. On the one hand, party system congruence with the ‘typical’ voter is usually greater in majoritarian systems. On the other hand, congruence between the party system as a whole and the diversity of citizen’s preferences is typically greater in proportional systems.

Empirical scholars have yet to fully leverage theoretical developments related to multidimensional spatial competition (Laver, 2005). Research on Voronoi diagrams shows that there is a maximum level of party system congruence that is possible for a given party system size and distribution of voter preferences (Laver and Sergenti, 2012). A Voronoi diagram splits any policy space into Voronoi regions such that each region is associated with a unique party and all voters in a region are closer to the party ‘generating’ that region than any other party. Party system congruence is maximized when each party is located at the centroid of their Voronoi region — the point that minimizes the sum of the squared distances between itself and all of the other points in the region (Du, Faber and Gunzberger, 1999). This situation is referred to as a centroidal Voronoi tessellation (CVT). If voters are more satisfied the closer their preferences to the policy position of their closest party, then a CVT maximizes voter satisfaction (Laver and Sergenti, 2012, 11). Empirical scholars might wish to use the CVT as a benchmark against which to examine the extent to which party system congruence is achieved in each country. Rather than evaluate congruence in some abstract sense, it may be better to evaluate it relative to what is possible.

The extent to which party system congruence is achieved may also depend on the types of parties in the system. In their agent-based model, Laver and Sergenti (2012) distinguish between three types of parties. ‘Stickers’ are ideological parties that locate at their ideal point and do not move. ‘Hunters’ are vote-seeking parties that repeat successful policy moves but try something different if their votes decline. ‘Aggregators’ are ‘democratic’ parties that adapt policy in line with the preferences of their current supporters. In their model, hunter parties adopt more centrist, but distinct, policy positions than other party types. More significant, though, is that a party system comprised of aggregators converges to a CVT and therefore maximizes congruence with respect to citizen preferences. This is despite the fact that aggregators only seek to maximize the representation *of their own supporters* (Laver and Sergenti, 2012). More research is required to determine whether electoral rules influence the propensity of these different party types to exist.

So far, we have focused on party system congruence as a whole. Many scholars, though, prefer to examine the congruence between individual parties and their voters. Much of this literature is descriptive and focuses on the extent to which congruence is achieved in different policy areas. Scholars generally find that parties are more congruent with their voters on the left-right and economic policy dimensions than they

are on more social or cultural dimensions (Mattila and Raunio, 2006; Costello, Thomassen and Rosema, 2012; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999; Klingemann and Fuchs, 1995; Dalton, Farrell and McAllister, 2011). Only a few studies actually examine the factors that influence the congruence between parties and their voters (Dalton, 1985, 2015; Belchior, 2012; Boonen, Pedersen and Hooghe, 2014).

In terms of electoral rules, most studies predict that party-voter congruence will be higher in proportional systems than in majoritarian ones. Drawing on the spatial models discussed earlier, scholars generally associate proportional systems with many parties that disperse throughout the policy space and majoritarian systems with two (or a few) parties that converge to the center of the voter distribution. Parties in majoritarian systems are expected to be large umbrella parties that represent a coalition of diverse voters, whereas parties in proportional systems are expected to be smaller parties that represent distinct constituencies and build coalitions only after elections have taken place.

There are reasons to believe, however, that the story is more complicated than this. It is important to recognize that most models of party competition assume that voters support the closest party in the policy space. Empirical evidence, though, suggests that many voters in countries with power-sharing institutions, such as proportional electoral rules, engage in directional compensatory voting (Kedar, 2009). With compensatory voting, individuals care less about having their preferences represented and more about the final policy outcome. A consequence is that many voters support parties whose policy positions differ from, and are often more extreme than, their own (Iversen, 1994; Rabinowitz, McDonald and Listhaug, 1994). Thus, even if the average distance between voters and their closest party is smaller in proportional systems, this may not be true for voters and the parties they actually support. In terms of empirical studies, results have been mixed. Although some studies find a positive relationship between proportional systems and party-voter congruence (Dalton, 1985), others do not (Belchior, 2012; Dalton, 2015).

3.3 Legislative Congruence

The next stage in the representation process involves translating votes into seats. This brings us to legislative congruence. One way to think about this is in terms of the congruence between the median legislative party and the median citizen/voter. This type of congruence is considered important as the median legislative party, irrespective of its size, enjoys a pivotal position in one-dimensional bargaining models and in models of parliamentary government formation (Laver and Schofield, 1990).

Theoretically, congruence between the median legislative party and median voter can be achieved

under different electoral systems. Majoritarian systems should produce small party systems with centripetal incentives to adopt centrist positions relative to the electorate. Proportional systems should produce large party systems with centrifugal incentives to carve out niche electorates. By dispersing throughout the policy space, at least one of the parties in a proportional system is likely to be located close to the median voter (Budge et al., 2012; Powell, 2009). Although this type of legislative congruence *can* be achieved under both types of electoral system, many claim that the necessary conditions to achieve congruence in majoritarian systems are more demanding, and thus less likely to be met, than those to achieve congruence in proportional ones (Pinto-Duschinsky et al., 1999; Powell, 2000, 2006, 2009; Grofman, 2004). In line with this reasoning, Golder and Lloyd (2014) find that legislative congruence is not only lower in majoritarian systems, but also that it is more variable. Other studies have also shown that congruence between the median legislative party and median voter is lower in majoritarian systems (Powell and Vanberg, 2000; McDonald, Mendes and Budge, 2004; McDonald and Budge, 2005; Powell, 2006).

Another potential reason why legislative congruence is lower in majoritarian systems has to do with the way that electoral rules influence the partisan composition of legislatures. Rodden (2006, 2010) argues that the geographic distribution of voters brought about by the Industrial Revolution means that majoritarian electoral rules hurt the legislative representation of leftwing voters. Leftwing parties tend to draw their support from concentrated pockets of voters in urban industrial and mining areas. Under majoritarian rules, this geographic concentration of leftwing votes means that leftwing parties win their districts by a large margin, but with a high number of wasted votes. In effect, leftwing support is not efficiently translated into legislative representation in majoritarian systems. The geographic concentration of leftwing voters is less consequential in proportional systems, as votes are more accurately translated into seats. That said, Kedar, Harsgor and Scheinerman (2016) show that proportional systems, to the extent that they have some constituencies with low district magnitudes, also overcompensate voters supporting rightwing parties. In effect, leftwing voters receive less legislative representation the more disproportional the electoral system.

A second way to think about legislative congruence is in terms of the extent to which the distribution of legislative seats corresponds to the ideological distribution of preferences in a country. Many democratic theorists have emphasized the importance of having a collective body of representatives that accurately corresponds to, and hence advocates for, the diversity of citizens' preferences. Proportional electoral rules should produce higher levels of this type of legislative congruence as they encourage a more diverse party system and they more accurately translate votes into seats. Golder and Stramski (2010) find empirical

evidence consistent with this claim.

A third way to examine legislative congruence is to look at how *individual* legislators represent citizens. On the whole, there is evidence of significant divergence between individual legislators and their district median voters (Gerber and Lewis, 2004; Stadelmann, Portmann and Eichenberger, 2012).³ Directly measuring congruence between individual legislators and voters can be difficult, as this requires identifying legislator and voter preferences with respect to particular policies. Some studies attempt to correlate legislator ‘ideology scores’ with constituency characteristics such as district ideology (Erikson, Wright and McIver, 1993). This is problematic, though, as legislator and voter preferences are measured on different scales, and a positive correlation does not necessarily indicate evidence of legislative congruence (Achen, 1977; Matsusaka, 2001, 2010). Some of these difficulties can be avoided by looking at specific policy choices rather than broad ideological dimensions such as the left-right scale (Lax and Phillips, 2009). If policy choices are dichotomous, scholars can examine congruence more directly by examining whether legislator roll-call votes are in line with the preferences of their district or national median voter.

Several recent studies have adopted this methodology to investigate how electoral rules affect legislator congruence. Portmann, Stadelmann and Eichenberger (2012) and Stadelmann, Portmann and Eichenberger (2013) match the voting record of Swiss members of parliament on legislative proposals with real referendum outcomes on the same issues. They argue that the centripetal incentives to align with the district median voter are strong when district magnitude is low. As political representation can be considered a public good, they also expect it to be underprovided as district magnitude increases. As predicted, they find that Swiss legislators are more likely to vote with their constituency (and national) median voter as district magnitude decreases.⁴ Reanalyzing the data, Carey and Hix (2013) suggest that the relationship between district magnitude and legislative congruence is nonmonotonic. They claim that districts with 4-8 legislative seats represent an ‘electoral sweet spot’ (Carey and Hix, 2011). This is because legislators in very small magnitude districts often fail to align with the district median voter due to ‘coordination failures’ and because voters in very large magnitude districts with many representatives suffer from cognitive overload that makes it difficult for them to identify congruent representatives and monitor legislative behavior.

³Much of the literature in this tradition focuses on the United States. Given the limited variation in electoral rules, Americanist scholars typically point to legislator ideology, party affiliation, interest groups, campaign contributions, party activists, and district-level heterogeneity to explain the ideological incongruence between legislators and their constituents (Gerber and Lewis, 2004).

⁴Stadelmann, Portmann and Eichenberger (2014) note that although the probability that an *individual* Swiss legislator votes with her district median voter decreases with district magnitude, the law of large numbers, combined with the fact that legislators typically vote with their district more than half the time, means that the probability that a *majority* of a district’s representatives votes with their district median voter actually *increases* with district magnitude.

Stadelmann, Portmann and Eichenberger (forthcoming) examine the interactive effect of electoral rules and party membership on legislator congruence. As multiparty systems create incentives for parties to disperse in the policy space, legislators in left and rightwing parties should be less likely to vote with their district than legislators in centrist parties. Left and rightwing legislators elected in ‘majoritarian’ constituencies, though, have incentives to deviate from their party to attract their district median voter. An implication is that party affiliation is more likely to be a source of legislator incongruence in proportional systems than majoritarian ones. Leveraging the fact that members of the Swiss National Council are elected using proportional representation but that members of the Swiss Council of States are elected using majoritarian electoral rules, Stadelmann, Portmann and Eichenberger show that left and rightwing legislators are more incongruent with their districts in both legislative houses than centrist legislators. Importantly, they also show that left and rightwing legislators in the majoritarian Council of States are significantly more congruent than their party counterparts in the proportional National Council.

3.4 Government Congruence

The next stage in the representation process involves translating legislative seats into governments. In practice, government congruence is almost always conceptualized as the correspondence between the government’s policy position and the preferences of the national median voter on the left-right dimension. However, one might also think of it as the correspondence between the government’s policy position and the preferences of *its* supporters. Government congruence is especially important, as governments, rather than legislatures, typically play the dominant role in the policy-making process.

The government formation process takes a distribution of legislative seats as its input and produces a government (Golder, Golder and Siegel, 2012). The median legislative party has significant power in parliamentary democracies as governments must enjoy legislative majority support (Laver and Schofield, 1998). According to Duverger’s theory, majoritarian systems produce few parties. As a result, there is a good chance the median party will control a legislative majority and be able to form a single-party government. Spatial models indicate that majoritarian systems encourage parties to adopt centrist positions. This means that any single-party government is likely to be fairly congruent with the national median voter. According to this causal story where the median legislative party forms a single-party government, there will be no change in congruence with respect to the median voter as we move from the legislature to the government.

Coalition governments are more likely in proportional electoral systems, as these systems typically

produce many parties, none of which are able to control a legislative majority. Although the median legislative party is likely to be in the government due to its pivotal position in the legislature, it will typically have to form a government with parties either to its left or right. This coalition-building process will often produce a government that is further from the median voter than the median legislative party is on its own (McDonald and Budge, 2005). This causal story suggests that congruence will decline in proportional systems as we move from the legislature to the government. It also suggests that government congruence will be more variable in proportional systems as much depends on the size and ideological location of potential coalition partners. Empirical evidence in support of these claims comes from Golder and Lloyd (2014).

Whether government congruence will be better in an absolute sense under one electoral system or another is unclear. Government congruence results from a two-step causal process (Powell, 2009). In the first step, party competition determines the size and ideological location of legislative parties. In the second step, these legislative parties form a government. As Cox (1997) notes, majoritarian systems are likely to experience coordination failures in the electoral stage – voters may not coordinate on the median legislative party and political elites may form too many parties. If this occurs, the median legislative party may not be the largest party and may not get to form the government. Such coordination failures help to explain why legislative congruence, as we have seen, tends to be lower in majoritarian systems than in proportional ones. Theory, though, suggests that this congruence advantage for proportional systems will decline, and may even disappear, during the government formation stage when parties form coalition governments.

Evidence that electoral rules influence the government's partisan composition further complicates the relationship between electoral systems and government congruence. Empirically, leftwing governments are more common than rightwing governments in proportional systems, whereas the opposite is true in majoritarian systems (Iversen and Soskice, 2006; Döring and Manow, forthcoming). One explanation for this, as previously discussed, is that proportional systems produce more leftwing legislatures due to the geographic distribution of leftwing support. Another explanation, though, is that differences in coalition bargaining across electoral systems also affects the government's partisan composition. Building on a model of redistribution, Iversen and Soskice (2006) argue that the middle class in the two-party systems produced by majoritarian electoral rules will vote for the right party, as the left party cannot credibly commit not to redistribute from both the rich *and* the middle class. In the multiparty systems produced by proportional electoral rules, though, the middle class will have its own centrist party, which will be the median legislative party. Given its pivotal position, the centrist party will be willing to form a coalition government with the left

party to redistribute only from the rich. Empirically, Iversen and Soskice (2006) find not only that leftwing governments form more often and introduce more redistributive policies under proportional systems, but that rightwing governments when they do form also implement more redistributive policies than they would in majoritarian systems. These results hold even when the partisan composition of the government is measured relative to the median voter.

Numerous empirical studies have examined the effect of electoral rules on government congruence. Early studies indicated that government congruence was greater in proportional systems. This was the conclusion from scholars who used voter surveys to identify the position of the median voter and expert surveys to identify the ideological location of the government (Huber and Powell, 1994; Lijphart, 1999; Powell, 2006; Powell and Vanberg, 2000). It was also the conclusion from scholars who used data from the Comparative Manifesto Project to identify the positions of the median voter and the government (Budge and McDonald, 2007; McDonald and Budge, 2005; McDonald, Mendes and Budge, 2004).

More recent studies, though, have called these early findings into question. On measurement grounds, concerns have been raised about how scholars use the comparative manifesto data to identify the median voter's position (Warwick and Zakharova, 2013). Concerns have also been raised about combining information from voter and expert surveys, as voters and experts do not seem to view the policy space in the same way (Golder and Stramski, 2010). Using survey data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) that sees voters place themselves and governments on the same left-right scale, Blais and Bodet (2006) and Golder and Stramski (2010) find no evidence that government congruence differs across majoritarian and proportional electoral systems. Powell (2009) suggests that these 'null' results might be due to the more recent time period (post-1995) covered by the CSES data. Using data that spans most of the post-war period, though, Golder and Lloyd (2014) and Ferland (2016) still find no evidence that government congruence differs across electoral systems. Significantly, this result holds whether one employs data from voter surveys or from the comparative manifesto project.

Most studies look at government congruence at a fixed point in time, typically after elections. However, one might also examine government congruence over time. According to Powell's (2000) visions of democracy, governments in majoritarian systems should not change their policy position between elections as they are 'mandated' to implement the policies on which they campaigned. In contrast, governments in proportional systems are supposed to continually adapt their policy positions to reflect changes in voter preferences. It follows that any changes in the median voter's preferences should lead to incongruence over

the course of a government's mandate in majoritarian systems but not in proportional ones. In a recent study, however, Ferland (2016) finds no evidence for this. Instead, he finds that congruence declines in both systems. Interestingly, he finds that congruence declines in majoritarian systems because governments move away from a 'static' median voter and that congruence declines in proportional systems because the median voter moves away from a 'static' government. His overall results show that there is no difference in government congruence across majoritarian and proportional electoral systems, either at the beginning or end of a government's term in office. Future research might wish to examine the robustness of these results.

To date, there has been almost no research on ideological congruence in presidential democracies. Scholars of government formation have historically focused on the parliamentary democracies of western Europe. In recent years, though, there has been an upsurge of interest in how governments form in presidential democracies, especially in Latin America (Kellam, 2015; Amorim Neto, 2006; Amorim Neto and Samuels, 2010; Samuels, 2007; Cheibub, Przeworski and Saiegh, 2004).⁵ This research offers an untapped resource for those interested in understanding government congruence in presidential democracies.

Most presidents are elected using an absolute majority electoral system (Bormann and Golder, 2013). This electoral system creates centripetal incentives, at least in the second round, as candidates seek out the support of the median voter. The result is that presidential congruence should be fairly high. Research on government formation in presidential democracies suggests that the extent to which presidential congruence is reflected in the government and in policy will depend on the size of the presidential party and the power of the president. If the president's party has a legislative majority, then presidential congruence should be maintained when it comes to the government and policy. However, if the president's party does not control a legislative majority, much will depend on the power of the president. If the president is powerful, he is expected to eschew forming a coalition government and instead use decree powers to achieve his policy objectives. In this scenario, congruence can be maintained. In contrast, if the president is weak, he will need to form a coalition to achieve his policy objectives, likely diminishing congruence in the process. The negative effect of coalition formation on congruence in presidential democracies should not be as strong as in parliamentary democracies, though, as presidents are not as generous in the allocation of ministerial portfolios to their coalition partners as their counterparts in parliamentary democracies (Golder and Thomas, 2014). To our knowledge, these types of theoretical claims have not been tested.

⁵A few studies have also begun to examine government formation in the presidential (and parliamentary) democracies of Africa (Arriola, 2009; Arriola and Johnson, 2014; Ariotti and Golder, 2016).

3.5 Policy Congruence

At the end of the representation chain is policy. Ultimately, ideological congruence requires that *policies* be in line with the preferences of the citizenry. Although scholars routinely examine party system congruence, legislative congruence, and government congruence, very few look at policy congruence. One reason for this is that it is difficult to get an overall measure of policy congruence. When looking at specific policies, it can be difficult to obtain citizen preferences, especially if the policy space is continuous. Even if one could obtain these preferences, it can be hard to place them on a common scale with the actual policy outcomes.

In the American context, scholars often seek to correlate policy outcomes with state ideology (Erikson, Wright and McIver, 1993). Are certain policies more likely to be adopted in conservative states than liberal ones? As Achen (1977) and Matsusaka (2001, 2010) point out, though, these studies do not actually address congruence. A strong positive correlation between policy adoption and state ideology says little about whether implemented policies are *congruent* with citizens' preferences because we do not know how broad measures of state ideology should be translated into preferences for actual policies.

Recently, some scholars have examined the extent to which dichotomous policies match up with majority opinion. Lax and Phillips (2012), for example, adopt this approach to examine policy congruence across a range of issue areas in the American states. They find that state governments translate majority opinion into policy only about half the time. To our knowledge, these types of studies have not examined the effect of electoral rules on policy congruence. What about continuous policies? Soroka and Wlezien (2010) suggest that one can examine continuous policies by looking at relative, as opposed to absolute, citizen preferences. Instead of asking citizens what the level of, say, education spending should be, we can ask them whether education spending should remain the same, be increased, or decreased. We can then see whether policy moves in the direction desired by the citizens. As Soroka and Wlezien (2010) recognize, though, this approach speaks more to policy *responsiveness* than policy *congruence*.

Of potential relevance is the small literature that examines whether government parties fulfill the policy pledges in their manifestos. This literature is useful as it helps to indicate whether government congruence is a good proxy for policy congruence. In one recent study, Thomson et al. (2014) find that single-party governments fulfill more of their pledges than coalition governments. There are limitations to these types of studies, though. One is that they do not address whether the policy pledges are congruent with voter preferences. Another is that they say nothing about policies that do not appear in the manifestos.

4 Indirect Effects on Ideological Congruence

So far we have looked at how electoral rules influence ideological congruence directly. However, electoral rules can indirectly influence ideological congruence by affecting elite responsiveness and levels of descriptive representation.

4.1 Responsiveness

A responsive representative is one who changes her behavior to become more congruent with the preferences of those she represents. Two conditions are necessary for responsiveness (Soroka and Wlezien, 2015; Ferland, 2015). The representative must want to become more congruent *and* she must be able to act on those desires. If there are weak incentives to be responsive, responsiveness will be low irrespective of whether or not the representative has the ability to respond. If there are strong incentives to be responsive but constraints on the ability to be responsive, responsiveness will also be low. Only if the representative has strong incentives and the ability to respond will responsiveness be high. This basic story is illustrated in Figure 2. To date, the existing literature has largely ignored the inherent interaction between demand-side (incentives) and supply-side (ability) factors affecting levels of responsiveness.

Figure 2: Conditions for Responsiveness

		Ability to Respond	
		Low	High
Incentive to Respond	High	Not Responsive	Responsive
	Low	Not Responsive	Not Responsive

Scholars of ideological congruence generally share a common theoretical foundation built on spatial models of party competition and Duverger's theory of party system size (Powell, 2009; Golder and Lloyd, 2014). This is less the case with scholars of ideological responsiveness. Electoral rules are widely recognized as a key determinant of ideological congruence because of the way they create incentives for parties to converge or disperse in the policy space. These centripetal and centrifugal pressures determine elite incentives to be responsive to particular citizens, thereby influencing the level of ideological congruence. Despite this, relatively few studies of ideological responsiveness address the impact of electoral rules, preferring instead to focus on things like issue salience (Page and Shapiro, 1983; Burstein, 2003), different policy domains (Miller and Stokes, 1963; Jacobs and Page, 2005) and unequal representation in the policy-making process (Bartels, 2008; Gilens, 2012; Wlezien and Soroka, 2011). We believe that considerable progress can be made if scholars of congruence and responsiveness were to adopt a more unified theoretical framework.

Spatial models suggest that the incentives for governments to be responsive to the median voter's preferences will be higher in majoritarian electoral systems than proportional ones. Single-party governments, which typically form in majoritarian systems, have incentives to closely follow the preferences of the median voter.⁶ Things are more complicated for the coalition governments that usually form in proportional systems. The centrifugal pressures created by proportional systems mean that not all government parties will want to be responsive to the median voter's preferences. In particular, those parties holding non-centrist positions are likely to be more responsive to the preferences of their own supporters. Studies of party responsiveness find that niche parties are more responsive to changes in the position of their supporters but that mainstream parties are more responsive to changes in the position of the median voter (Adams et al., 2006; Ezrow et al., 2010; Schumacher, De Vries and Vis, 2013). Although these studies do not directly address the impact of electoral rules, their results are in line with the idea that the parties in coalition governments face conflicting incentives about who they should be responsive to.

At least two other reasons have been proposed for why majoritarian systems create stronger incentives to be responsive than proportional ones. Some scholars argue that the greater vote-seat elasticity experienced in majoritarian systems encourages parties to respond more strongly to changes in public opinion (Wlezien and Soroka, 2012; Soroka and Wlezien, 2015). Others argue that the incentives to be responsive depend on the ability of voters to punish unresponsive elites (Ferland, 2015). As coalition governments reduce clarity

⁶There is some debate as to whether governments in majoritarian systems will respond to the national median voter or the median voter in the pivotal district (Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2008).

of responsibility (Powell and Whitten, 1993; Fisher and Hobolt, 2010), we should expect that single-party governments in majoritarian systems face stronger incentives to be responsive.

Although elites may have incentives to be responsive, institutions, such as electoral rules, can inhibit their ability to act on those incentives. Veto player theory, for example, indicates that the ability of elites to be responsive will be low if there is a large number of ideologically diverse veto players (Tsebelis, 2002). By encouraging larger and more diverse party systems that result in coalition governments, proportional systems lower the ability of political elites to respond to changes in citizen preferences compared to their counterparts in majoritarian systems. Putting this altogether suggests that responsiveness will be greater under majoritarian systems because both the incentives and ability to respond are higher under these systems.

On the whole, empirical results generally show that government responsiveness is higher in majoritarian systems. Although Hobolt and Klemmensen (2008, 2005) find that governments are more responsive in Denmark (proportional system) than in Britain (majoritarian system), most studies that examine a wider range of countries find the opposite (Coman, 2015; Wlezien and Soroka, 2012; Soroka and Wlezien, 2015; Ferland, 2015). In line with the idea that the ability to respond is important, Ferland (2015) and Coman (2015) find that government responsiveness declines with the number of parties in the cabinet. Similarly, Klüver and Spoon (2016) show that parties in coalition governments are less responsive to voters' issue priorities when the coalition is more ideologically divided. None of these empirical studies explicitly examine the inherent interaction between the incentives and ability to be responsive shown in Figure 2.

4.2 Descriptive and Substantive Representation

There is a large literature that looks at descriptive and substantive representation with respect to gender and race. This literature has developed in almost complete isolation from the research on citizen-elite ideological congruence.⁷ Significant gains can, again, be made if scholars from these two literatures interact more often.

Descriptive representation is often viewed as inferior to substantive representation (Pitkin, 1967). One reason for this is that representatives can only be held accountable for what they do, not who they are (Celis et al., 2008). Many scholars, though, have argued that descriptive representation is important, particularly when there is widespread mistrust or 'uncrystallized interests' (Mansbridge, 1999; Phillips, 1998). Some claim that descriptive representation is important in its own right because it signals a politics of recognition and acceptance, and enhances a sense of fairness and legitimacy. More significant for the current discussion,

⁷For an exception, see Kernell (2012).

though, some claim that descriptive representation is also important because it promotes substantive representation. The underlying idea is that individuals who share similar descriptive characteristics are likely to have shared experiences and developed a sense of linked fate that generate a common set of perspectives and substantive interests (Phillips, 1998; Dawson, 1995; Tate, 1994; Young, 2002). By promoting descriptive representation, one can therefore promote substantive representation.

To the extent that this is true, electoral rules can influence substantive representation and ideological congruence by affecting levels of descriptive representation.⁸ A common claim is that proportional representation with large district magnitudes produces greater descriptive representation of women than majoritarian systems (Matland and Studlar, 1996; Paxton, 1997; Caul, 1999; Reynolds, 1999; Tremblay, 2008; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer, 2010).⁹ Several stories have been proposed to support this claim. One story is that the incumbency advantage is larger in majoritarian systems and that incumbents are typically men (Fréchette, Maniquet and Morelli, 2008). Another story is that majoritarian systems are more competitive and that parties think voters are less likely to support women candidates in these circumstances (Roberts, Seawright and Cyr, 2013). A third story builds on the idea that leftwing parties fare better under proportional representation. This is important, as women tend to hold more leftwing attitudes (Wängnerud, 2009) and leftwing parties, especially of the new left variety (Kittilson, 2006), have more women representatives.

Some studies have called into the question the strength of the relationship between proportional representation and descriptive representation on methodological grounds (Salmond, 2006; Roberts, Seawright and Cyr, 2013). Others have questioned the causal stories linking proportional representation to greater descriptive representation. It is not clear, for example, that women candidates always do worse in majoritarian systems and better in proportional ones (Lawless and Pearson, 2008; Schwindt-Bayer, Malecki and Crisp, 2010; Fulton, 2014), or that majoritarian systems are necessarily more competitive. Schmidt (2009) also notes that large district magnitudes tend to occur in wealthy urban areas where cultural attitudes are more amenable to women candidates irrespective of the electoral system.

With the apparent consensus that proportional representation promotes descriptive representation, many scholars have focused on whether open or closed list systems perform best (Jones and Navia, 1999; Wauters, Weekers and Maddens, 2010; Thames and Williams, 2010; Luhiste, 2015; Golder et al., forthcoming).

⁸In what follows, we focus on the literature dealing with women's representation. Similar arguments, though, can be made with respect to the literature dealing with the representation of minority groups.

⁹There is some evidence that cumulative voting can increase the descriptive representation of minority groups, as minorities can cumulate their vote on minority candidates (Gerber, Morton and Rietz, 1998). Golder et al. (forthcoming) find that support for women candidates is also higher with cumulative voting, especially among women voters.

ing). Empirical results are mixed. One reason for this is that scholars have generally ignored the interaction between demand-side and supply-side factors affecting descriptive representation (Dhima, 2016).¹⁰ Demand for descriptive representation can come from voters or elites. Whereas demand from elites is sufficient to produce high descriptive representation, demand from voters is neither necessary nor sufficient. If demand is low among both voters and elites, then descriptive representation will be low irrespective of the type of party list system. If demand is high among both voters and elites, then descriptive representation will be high irrespective of the list system. If demand from voters is low but high from elites, then elites can use closed lists with quotas and placement mandates to ensure a high level of descriptive representation. And if demand is high from voters but low from party elites, then party elites can use closed list systems to ensure that descriptive representation remains low. In this framework, electoral rules and the level of descriptive representation are primarily determined by the preferences of party elites.

The claim that descriptive representation promotes substantive representation has been challenged on a number of grounds. One criticism is that scholars who make this claim are essentializing women, ignoring the diversity that exists among women, and failing to recognize that men can also act on behalf of women (Celis, 2009; Childs and Krook, 2006). One response to this criticism has been the increased focus on the representation of intersectional identities (Hughes, 2011; Hancock, 2007; Weldon, 2006). A parallel development in the ideological congruence literature would be to focus on the diversity of citizen preferences rather than just those of the median voter. A second criticism is that too much attention is being paid to women's representation in formal political institutions such as legislatures rather than in other settings such as women's movements or policy agencies (Weldon, 2002; Celis et al., 2008; Celis and Childs, 2008). This is a criticism that can also be made of the ideological congruence literature, and harkens back to our earlier discussion of alternative views of representation. A third criticism is that scholars have taken a narrow and top-down approach to identifying women's substantive interests (Wängnerud, 2009; Celis et al., 2008; Celis, 2009). This often results in women's substantive interests being associated with a particular version of feminism and a failure to recognize the diverse and contested nature of women's interests.

The strength of the empirical evidence linking descriptive representation to substantive representation is also contested. For example, there is little compelling evidence for critical mass theory (Childs and Krook, 2006), the idea that the substantive representation of women increases once the percentage of women

¹⁰Although scholars have long recognized that demand-side factors, such as cultural attitudes, and supply-side factors, such as electoral rules, influence descriptive representation (Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes, 2007), they almost always address these factors separately or include them only additively in their empirical analyses (Dhima, 2016).

representatives breaks some threshold (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988). Htun (2016) refers to evidence of increased descriptive representation but low substantive representation as ‘inclusion without representation.’ The low substantive representation of women is often attributed to the fact that women representatives are constrained by their limited legislative experience, their party affiliations, institutional rules, and their limited access to powerful positions (Beckwith, 2007; Celis et al., 2008; Celis, 2009). Rather than simply focus on the number of women representatives for substantive representation, scholars have increasingly highlighted the important role that critical actors, both men and women, play in initiating women-friendly policy and encouraging others to take up particular causes (Celis et al., 2008; Childs and Krook, 2006; Htun, 2016).

We believe that the gender literature dealing with descriptive and substantive representation can benefit from incorporating ideas from the ideological congruence literature. Although congruence scholars focus on the ideological correspondence between representatives and voters, it would be easy to apply existing concepts, measures, theories, and methods to examine the representation of *women* voters. Doing so has the potential to address some of the criticisms made of existing studies of women’s substantive representation.

5 Conclusion

Electoral rules play an important role in determining citizen-elite ideological congruence. This is because they affect each stage of the representation process as we move from citizen preferences to policy outcomes. Indeed, electoral rules can shape the very preferences that citizens hold in the first place through the incentives they create for political entrepreneurs to politicize and mobilize some societal cleavages as opposed to others.

Whether majoritarian or proportional electoral rules produce greater citizen-elite ideological congruence depends on how we conceptualize congruence. As an example, consider ideological congruence in the party system. Majoritarian rules are associated with more compact party systems where parties tend to adopt centrist positions, whereas proportional rules are associated with more ideologically diverse party systems. A consequence is that majoritarian systems tend to produce greater party system congruence with the ‘typical’ voter, whereas proportional systems tend to produce greater congruence with the preferences of the citizenry as a whole. A similar situation arises when we consider ideological congruence in the legislature. Proportional rules produce legislatures that are more reflective of the diversity of citizen preferences in society, but majoritarian rules encourage legislators to be more congruent with the preferences of the ‘typical’

voter in their districts. Whether one prefers majoritarian or proportional electoral rules in these contexts is implicitly tied up with normative issues related to how we value different conceptualizations of ideological congruence and political representation more broadly.

Whether majoritarian or proportional electoral rules produce greater citizen-elite ideological congruence also depends on where we are in the representation process. Electoral rules and other institutions can cause deviations in citizen-elite ideological congruence to emerge and disappear as we move from citizen preferences to policy outcomes. As an example, proportional systems seem to have an empirical advantage over majoritarian systems when it comes to legislative congruence (the distance between the median legislative party and the median voter), but this advantage seems to disappear when it comes to government congruence (the distance between the government and the median voter). Thus, preferences for majoritarian or proportional electoral systems with respect to ideological congruence necessarily imply specifying which stage of the representation process is most important.

Electoral rules affect citizen-elite ideological congruence in both direct and indirect ways. Their direct effect is typically felt through their impact on party system size and the ideological location of parties in the policy space. Most existing studies have focused on these direct ways in which electoral rules influence ideological congruence. Importantly, though, electoral rules can also affect ideological congruence indirectly through their impact on elite responsiveness and descriptive representation. Elite responsiveness leads to improved congruence. Electoral rules are important here because they influence both the incentive and ability of elites to respond to citizen preferences. It is well-known that electoral rules can have a strong impact on descriptive representation. To the extent that descriptive representation improves substantive representation, electoral rules will therefore have an indirect impact on citizen-elite ideological congruence.

Although research on citizen-elite ideological congruence is quite extensive, our review of the literature suggests that there are several lines of inquiry worth pursuing. We finish by highlighting just a few of them. Existing studies have focused primarily on the United States and the parliamentary democracies of Western Europe. Scholars might fruitfully examine ideological congruence in parliamentary and *presidential* regimes in other regions of the world. We believe that there are significant opportunities to be exploited by combining theoretical, empirical, and methodological insights from the ideological congruence literature and the descriptive and substantive representation literature as it relates to gender and race. For too long, these literatures have developed in relative isolation from each other even though they address the same fundamental issues. Similarly, we believe that much can be gained from a greater interaction between scholars

interested in ideological congruence and those interested in ideological responsiveness.

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