Policy congruence beyond left-right: evidence from the Swiss 2007 election

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Abstract[1]

Studies on substantive representation usually compare voters and elites using a left-right scale. We know, however, that the use of left-right can be problematic for various reasons. The simultaneous survey among voters and elites (usually in the framework of the Comparative Candidate Survey project) in the framework of the Swiss electoral study (Selects), allows us to compare voters and elites in a much more systematic way in Switzerland for the 2007 national elections. In this paper we will focus on the policy congruence between voters and elites on a range of thirteen issue questions which were included in both a post-electoral voter and candidate survey. We can show, that left-right captures the relation between voters and elites only in a limited way. The pattern of issue congruence and the explanation of this pattern is much more diverse and also more complex than what we can detect from using the left-right scale.

Keywords: representation, issue congruence, left-right scale

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1 Introduction

In this article we focus on the congruence of voters and elites on different issues, using data from the Swiss election study of 2007. We will argue that the usual measure of substantive representation built on the left-right scale captures only part of the mechanism of substantive representation. This article is different from most other studies in the field, as it goes beyond the left-right scale and uses several policy issues to explore the representative link between voters and elites. First, we test policy congruence between voters and elites on a number of different policy issues. In this analysis, we do not only look at the absolute distance between voters and elites, but also at the direction of this bias. Second, we analyze the social and some structural determinants of the relationship between voters and elites, both in terms of distance and direction.

The meaning of representation has many different facets. While for a long time many scholars focussed on rather formal aspects on how voters are translated into seats (Rae 1967), the interest in different other forms of representation has considerably increased in previous years way beyond formal or procedural representation (Pitkin 1967; Urbinati and Warren 2008; Mansbridge 2003; Andweg and Thomassen 2005). Most attention has been paid to the so called substantive representation, which looks at the differences between policy preferences of voters and the policy preferences or policy outcomes of elites. This substantive dimension is so important because most scholars would agree, that irrespective of how well MPs are a mirror of the represented e.g. in the social composition, elite preferences should somehow mirror citizens preferences (Pierce 1999; Milller and Stokes 1963; Powell 2004).

The way to measure how well democracy works, is through exploring if and how policy preferences between elites and citizens match; this has been the subject of many studies. However, even if we compare voter and elite preferences, two theoretical issues occur: the first relates to how citizens´ opinions shape elite opinion and vice versa, and the second is how to examine this relationship.

One of the key difficulties of the study of representation is that the voter-elite relationship is a dynamic one (Steenbergen et al. 2007; Holmberg 1997; Stimson et al. 1995). Traditionally, the responsible party model of political representation assumes that parties present party programs with a set of policies that reflect voter preferences. There are a number of problems with this assumption. Since the number of parties is limited, probably not all citizens are able to find a party with a program that perfectly corresponds to their preferences. Elites may also not be aware of all policy preferences of voters (Milller and Stokes 1963) and not all issues may be equally relevant to the voters. Voters do by no means vote on the basis of policy positions only, other non-policy considerations mat-

ter a great deal, too (Adams and Merril 1999). The causality of preference formation is not so clear, either. Parties play an important role in the formation of citizen's opinions on many issues (Zaller 1992), so voters probably respond as much to parties (Hellström 2008) as the other way around and it is not an easy task to disentangle the causal mechanism of what was first, the egg or the chicken.

However, we can explore the relationship between voter's and elite's preferences, irrespective of the causal chain. What is still puzzling, is the question who should represent whom (Golder and Stramski 2010), hence the nature of the link between voters and elites. Departing from the US context, early studies have looked at the relationship between US MPs and their voters in each constituency (Milller and Stokes 1963). However, it became clear very quickly, that outside the US, in a PR context, this is not a very useful conceptualization of the elite-citizen link. In most constituencies voters are represented by different MPs from different parties.

In this article we consider how well citizens are represented so we use citizen's preferences as a starting point. These preferences are then compared to the preferences of the parties a voter has voted for, since parties are central ton ensure representation in the typical PR electoral context in European democracies (Ezrow 2007; Dalton 1985; Thomassen and Schmitt 1999).

Theoretically, voter and party preferences can have different forms (see figure 1). Ideally, elite and citizen preferences are congruent. It is also possible that voters of all parties are more to the left than their parties or more to the right. The last two models depict a situation where either voters or elites are in general more extreme than the other.

Figure 1 about here

What pattern we would expect is theoretically not so clear. Based on the median voter theorem, we would anticipate parties to converge towards the centre (Downs 1957) and as a consequence voters should be more extreme than parties. However, there are several studies, which argue for the opposite that parties tend to be similar but more extreme than their voters because voters tend to mix directional and proximity consideration when making a vote choice (Adams and Merril 1999; Iversen 1994; Kedar 2005; Dalton 1985). Party activists also tend to be more extreme than party voters (May 1973) and party elites have limited capabilities of shifting policy positions in a strategic way.

2 The limits of left-right

Most studies on representation rely on the left-right dimension (Powell 2009; Belchior 2010) to represent policy preferences. This may be a good choice, because in most countries left-right is indeed an important dimension in politics, and voters and elites are often able to place themselves on such a scale (Huber and Powell 1994; Knutsen 1997). Left-right also has a stable amount of explanatory power for electoral choice (van der Eijk et al. 2005; Knutsen 1998). Nevertheless, the main reason why the left-right "super issue" is so widely used is the comparability over time and across nations, while any other measure proved to be difficult because of the different meaning and salience those issues may have. There are, however, at least two problematic aspects of the strong focus on the left-right scale.

First, the political space is often not one-dimensional and as a consequence, the left-right scale may capture the pattern of political competition only in a limited way (Hix et al. 2006). Gabel and Anderson (2002) indicate that at the European level, there is one main dimension. However, this dimension does not correspond to the left-right scale. Other studies have shown, that in most countries, there are several policy dimensions (Kriesi et al. 2006). Very often, the political space can be captured by two dimensions, one being more on social and economic issues, one being more on cultural issues. Both dimensions may be correlated with the left-right dimension, though the correlation is not always strong nor linear (Lachat 2009; Kissau et al. 2009).

A *second problem* is of methodological nature. Even, if the left-right dimension may be a good indicator for where voters stand, the placement may not only capture a key issue dimension but also issue salience and cognitive political engagement. Voters that do not have a clear opinion or struggle to place themselves on the scale tend to place themselves in the middle of the scale instead of telling the interviewer that they "don't know".[2] As a consequence the distribution of left-right very often has a clear peak in the middle, "5" being by far the most frequent value. For somebody placing himself in the middle of the left-right scale, we don't really know if this is a "true" middle position, or if this is an indicator, that somebody doesn't care.

Figure 2 shows the left-right distribution of citizens and elites (candidates) in the Swiss national election of 2007. Citizens have a clear peak in the middle of the scale, while elites have a much more even distribution on the left-right scale.

[2] Some citizens also refuse to place themselves on the left-right scale. At the 2007 Swiss national elections 7% of citizens did not place themselves on the left-right scale.

Figure 2 about here

This does of course not mean yet, that this is problem. Nevertheless Milic (2008) has agued that left-right is likely not randomly distributed. In order to test this, we ran a logit regression, again using data from the 2007 Swiss electoral study (Selects), with a dummy variable for the position in the middle category (5) compared to all the other variables as the dependent variable. The analysis excludes non-voters. We tested age, gender, education, party identification and political interest as predictor variables in this model. In a second model, we also included vote choice of the different parties as control variables.

Table 1 about here

We can see in the results that Milic´s argument is correct and the position of citizens on the left-right scale is not randomly distributed. Instead, voters who position themselves in the middle category are more often women, they don't feel close to a party, they tend to be younger, less interested and have low levels of education. This result remains stable, once we control for party choice and clearly indicates the limitations when using the left-right scale, especially when distances between citizens and elites are to be evaluated.

3 Issue congruence on different issues

Given this constraint of the left-right scale, we expanded our focus beyond the left-right scale and included a number of different policy dimensions. It is of course possible that the same tendency of survey respondents to centrist answers exists as well when answering more specific issue questions. However, we assume that, because they are asked for their opinion on real issues and not on a rather abstract left-right scale, the problem is smaller.

Not many studies have used other measures than left-right. Thomassen and Schmitt (1999) have done so focussing on employment, border (voters in favour of building borders) or currency (voters more for national currency) issues at the European level. Pierce (1999) looked at international differences in five issue domains (ideology, economic, social and environmental, defence and foreign policy as well as participation) and recently Mattila and Raunio (2006) compared EU-attitudes between voters and elites in addition to the left-right

scale. Holmberg (1989) viewed preferences of citizens and elites on a large number of different issues in Sweden, while Valen and Narud (2007) looked at various dimensions in Norway.

In this study we match voters with the party they voted for in their constituency. The voter-party approach makes sense for at least two reasons. First, most issue oriented citizens will not vote based on a possible government position, but based on the party program, because the first considers a fair amount of strategic thinking. Second, in many cases the government program can not be determined by a single party anyway, but by a coalition of parties, which is especially true for Switzerland.

We are using constituency level data because voters vote parties in constituencies. Although we find a high degree of coherence in the position of parties across constituencies, there is some variation for example between linguistic regions and since we have constituency data for elites and voters available this is a better measure than using national party positions.

We can make use of 13 questions on different policies, which were posed in the Swiss 2007 voter and candidate surveys in an identical way.[3] Respondents were asked: "People hold different views on political issues. What do you think of the following?" The answers had a 5-point answering scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, neither, to disagree, and strongly disagree. These 13 questions cover a broad range of salient political issues in Switzerland. The following statements were included:

1. Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of Switzerland.
2. Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy.
3. Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment.
4. Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law.
5. People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences.
6. Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government.
7. Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people.
8. Our democracy needs serious reform.
9. Immigrants are good for the Swiss economy
10. Switzerland should provide military assistance to "the war on terror".
11. Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion.
12. Torturing a prisoner is never justified, even if it might prevent a terrorist attack
13. The ongoing opening of the economies is for the good of all

[3] For details on the survey see (Lutz 2008) and www.selects.ch

We recoded the scale for issues 1, 2 and 5, in order to have a positive correlation with the left-right dimension for those issues where there is a clear link. For the party score, we matched the mean candidate position of parties in each electoral district to the voter position. We used all candidates instead of just elected candidates, because we believe that most voters will not be able to make a distinction between the candidates with the most chances and the other candidates. In any case, the difference between elected and non-elected candidates does not vary systematically anyway.

In a first step we compared in a descriptive way the mean voter position and the mean candidate position of the party he has voted for, including the five major parties in Switzerland (Green party, Social democrats, Christian democrats, Liberal party and Peoples party). We used a graphical visualization in order to show the elite-voter congruence (figure 3) on the different issues.

Figure 3 about here

We see that the elites tend to be more extreme than the voters of the parties on the left (Green party and Social democrats) and the right (Peoples party) on many issues. There are, however, some differences. On the adaption of immigrants to Swiss customs and same sex marriage it is mainly the left elite which is clearly further left than their voters. On environmental protection the right wing peoples' party elite is clearly more often against more environmental protection than its voters. Rather large differences also exist on the possible reform of democracy and income redistribution. Here the voters are rather close together, while the elites are quite different.

On two issues voters are always more extreme than all parties. Elites agree much more that immigrants are good for the economy than voters. On the other hand, elites disagree more often that Switzerland should provide military assistance on the war on terror than the voters, although the difference is not that large.

In addition, two issues do not show such a clear left-right pattern where we find the Greens and the Social democrats on the left and the Peoples' party on the right: First, the Christian democrats and the Peoples party clearly disagree more often that women should be free to decide on abortion – the elite disagree even more distinctly than the voters. Second, regarding whether the opening of the economy is good for all, the Christian democrats and the liberal party elite is more in favour of free markets than the elite of the other parties.

4 Explaining representation

Most studies that focus on the citizen-party link contrast the average voter with the average party preference as we have done in our descriptive analysis before. In the next part of this paper we take a slightly different focus and compare individual voter preferences with the preferences of the party voted for on a number of different issues. It is our aim to explain the individual and contextual determinants of represention. We choose this approach as Pierce (1999) argues that using the average voter's position in such an analysis leads to a loss of information, since a distribution is reduced to a mean.

For this we constructed two sets of dependent variables for each issue. We were interested first of all in the absolute *distance between voters and elites:* What explains a greater or a smaller distance between the position of a voter and the party he has voted for. So the measure was calculated simply as

$$\text{Distance}_{ij} = \left| P_{pj} - P_{ij} \right|$$

Where p is the preference for each individual i and the party p on issue j. This measure can have a value between 0 and 4, where 0 means that a voter has the same opinion as the party and 4 means that a voter has a very different opinion of the party. From a theoretical (and empirical) perspective it is unrealistic to assume that voters and elites correspond perfectly. Thus a certain degree of distance is normal and does not hinder the functioning of a representative system. There are however two restrictions, one is that of the magnitude of the distance. If this is very high for all citizens-party links it is valid to assume that the political preferences of the citizens are no longer adhered to within the political system, which would have serious consequences for its legitimacy. Second, moderate distances between parties and their voters are acceptable, especially if the directions of the differences equal one another out. That is to say if party A is by tendency further to the left than their voters and party B is further to the right. Assuming rather equal sizes of the partisans, the compromise found between the two parties might well represent all citizens rather equally well. However, if there is a bias or systematic distortion in the position of all parties towards citizens, the consequences are again grave.

We therefore also focus on the *general direction* of the difference, more specifically if the preferred party's position is more positive or negative for each issue. In this case the indicator can go from -5 to + 5, where +5 means, that the party agrees less with the policy statement than their voter and -5 means that the party agree much more than their voter.[4]

[4] For the issues 1, 2 and 5, this has the opposite meaning.

$$\text{Direction}_{ij} = P_{pj} - P_{ij}$$

A positive sign of one of the independent variables means, that a voter agrees more with the statement than the party he/she voted for, a negative sign means that a voter disagrees more with the statement compared to the party voted for.

For comparison, we also calculated the same distance and difference measure for the left-right position of the voters and the party he has voted for. As left-right positions are measured on an 11-point scale, the measure has a larger range for both the distance and the direction.

We ran separate models with distance and direction between a voter´s position and his party´s position for each of the different issues and for the left-right dimension. We also included a number of independent variables, where we would expect differences between voters and elites .

- *Age*: In general we expect a positive effect that older peole are better represented than younger people, due to their higher political interest, more moderate preferences, closer affiliation to parties and higher electoral participation (Goerres 2009). We also expect that older people are slightly more to the right of the party itself, so there we would expect a negative sign, too.
- *Gender*: Based on previous studies documenting a representation gap between men and women and the gendered diffrences in terms of policy prefererences (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986) we anticipate that men are usally better represented than women and men are more to the right than women.
- *Education*: Because of the higher probability for more aware citizens to vote on the basis of their policy preferences (Bartels 1996; Lau and Redlawsk 1997) but also the propensity of informed citizens to hold ideological views, that mirror more precisely the pattern of preferences of elites (Bishop 1976), we expect highly educted to be better represented but do not have any idea about the direction of the relationship.
- *Political interest:* For similar reasons than for the more educated, we hypothesise that politically interested citizens should be better represented than the not so interested.
- *Party identification:* Again, we expect that those close to a party, are also better represented, but we don't have any expections regarding the direction of the measure.
- We also included party choice for the five main parties as control variables, in order to account for the specific patterns above. Since we included five dummy variables, the reference category are voters from other parties.

In addition to the individual level variables, we included a number of contextual variables.

- *District magnitude*: Most studies found, that in PR electoral systems representatives are closer to the citizens (Huber and Powell 1994). However, some recent analyses were more sceptical about this as they observed that SMD and PR are not very different (Powell 2009; Holmberg 1989; Blais and Bodet 2006; Golder and Stramski 2010). All Swiss cantons have a PR electoral system, so we can´t distinguish between the two systems. However, in Switzerland the district magnitude varies a lot, ranging from 2 to 34 and we can test whether district magitude has an influence on the distance between voters and the elites.
- *Rural-urban:* We included the rural-urban divide as an additional control because this cleavage is relevant for many party organisations with differences among cantonal sections of these parties.
- *Linguistic region*: Switzerland is segmented in two different language groups, which have often been shown also to mark a cleavage in the political culture (Trechsel 1995). We included a dummy variable for living in the Swiss German part of Switzerland.

For all issues as well as the left-right dimension we ran multi-level regression models with electoral districts as the upper level and individual voters at the lower level. We only included voters (and excluded non-voters) in the different models. Since this means that we calculated 28 different models, we do not present all the detailed parameters here but rather choose to report the sign of the relationship.

Explaining distance between voters and elites

In a first step, we looked at the distance between voters and elites (table 2). If the sign is positive, this means that voters are further away from the party they have voted for, if it is negative, it means that voters are significantly closer to the party they voted for.

Table 2 about here

For the left-right dimension we can see that the Social democrat voters, Green voters and People's party voters are further away from their party than the voters of the other parties. There we see the same pattern as in our descriptive analysis above that parties are more extreme than the voters. Generally, voters with a party ID are better represented than those without a party ID. Interesting is the positive relationship of age, indicating that older people are more dis-

tant than younger people. That is counter to what we would have expected. People with low education are also further away from their party than people with higher education, which is what we had anticipated. We also find the expected relationship with respect to political interest; interested voters are better represented than uninterested voters. On the district level we found that voters living on the country side are better represented than those living in cities. No influence on the left-right distance between voters and their preferred party was found for district magnitude, gender or linguistic region.

However, the left-right dimension has a number of restrictions as we argued above and is therefore only to a limited degree representative for the other policy issues, which we illustrate below.

Looking at party platforms, voters of the People's party (SVP) are clearly more often distant from their party. Only on two issues (immigration and stiffer sentences) are the voters and elites of the People's party significantly closer together. The voters of the Greens and the Social democrats are in 5, respectively 3 cases significantly more distant from the party. For both parties this includes migration and law and order and for the Social democrats also reform of the democracy and whether immigrants are good for the economy. On the other hand, on some issues both parties are closer to their voters; this is the case for the Social democrats on the issues of abortion and environmental protection and for the Greens in addition to those two on same sex marriage as well as the provision of a social security through the state.

The CVP and the FDP voters are often not better or worse represented than the voters of other parties. CVP voters, if at all significant, are closer to the party, for the few cases where FDP voters have significant effect, the picture is mixed.

Voters, identifying with a party are closer to the party than those not identifying with a party in all cases where there is a significant effect. Different interpretations can be given to this observation. Possibly voters know party positions better and report those positions rather than any just position or adapt their own position towards that of the party. Parties might also respond better to their supporters than to independent voters.

As in the case of the left-right scale, there is hardly ever a gender effect on the distance between the policy preferences of voters and the party they voted for. When there is one, the direction is mixed. On abortion and economic intervention, women are closer to the representatives than men, on environmental protection and same sex marriage it is the other way around.

With respect to age, we find the reverse of what we would have expected: the older the voter, the worse do his or her opinions match with those of the elites. There is however one exception, the statement: "immigrants are good for the

economy" on which older voters are significantly closer to the party they voted for.

Education and political interest usually have no effect. If there is an effect, it goes in the expected direction. Lower educated voters have opinions that are further away from their party than more educated ones.

At the contextual level we find a clear effect of district magnitude, which contrasts the lack of effect we reported for the left-right scale. The larger the district/cantonal magnitude the smaller the distance between a voter and the party he/she has voted for. There can be different explanations for this clear pattern. In larger districts there are more parties and as a consequence also a greater chance that issue preferences between a voter and the party voted for match. Because there are more parties, the incentives and necessity to vote strategically are also lower in small districts than in large districts.

We also confirm the clear rural-urban divide in our data which we have seen from the left-right distance. Rural voters in Switzerland are clearly better represented than urban voters on all issues where there is a significant effect. We have, however, to keep in mind that congruence is measured at the district/cantonal level. Thus the results indicate that citizens in rural cantons are closer to their cantonal candidates and not necessarily to all candidates of their preferred party on the national level. This result of better represented rural areas is not surprising and may be explained by the usually broader spectrum of political opinions that can be found in cities as compared to rural areas

In a few cases, we have a significant effect of our linguistic dummy variable. Voters living in the German speaking part tend to be not so well represented compared to the voters of the French/Italian speaking part. Here again, we should abstain from drawing any conclusion at the national level.

Explaining direction between voters and elites

All in all we find a number of cases where there is a distance between elites and various groups of citizens. However, as we have argued above, it may be more the bias or slant that is significant for the quality of representation than just the distance. Therefore we repeat this analysis with a focus on the direction of the difference. We again don't provide the models in detail, focussing instead on significant positive or negative relationships to the dependant variable. The signs, however, have different meanings than above. A positive sign of one of the independent variables means, that a voter is more to the left (or more in favour) than the party he/she voted for, a negative sign represents voters who are more to the right (or more against) and issue than the party voted for.

Table 3 about here

For the parties, the table confirms the pattern we saw from the descriptive part of this paper. On the left-right scale, the voters of the Social democrats and the Greens are clearly to the right of their party, while the SVP voters are left of their party. This is also true on most issues, where elites tend to be more extreme than their voters. The only clear exception is the involvement on the war on terror, where the voters more often than the elites share the view that Switzerland should get involved.

Party identification, which had a clear effect on the distance, is hardly significant anymore. However, in a few cases there are gender differences. Men more often share more conservative views than the party they have voted for than women. They are also less concerned about the environment and they are more conservative (meaning critical) on same sex marriage and free choice on abortion. They significantly see torture as acceptable to prevent terrorist attacks.

Age is negatively correlated which means that older people tend to lean more to the conservative than younger people on many issues such as immigration, environment, same sex marriage, stiffer sentences for people who break the law. However on the issue that the state should provide a stable network of social security they agree more often. They also more often share the view, that immigrants are good for the economy and they have a clearer view, that torture should never be allowed.

Low educated voters are usually not different from highly educated voters, however they more often share the view that immigrants should adjust to Swiss customs, people who break the law should get a stiffer sentence and they believe more often, that the state should intervene into the economy.

The relationship between political interest and the direction of the vote is not very clear cut, but in most cases follows the line of education. The exception is the issue of environmental protection. Here the non-interested are more often in favour of protection, while education has no significant effect.

The structural variables are in most cases not significant. Foremost there is no effect of district magnitude, which means that although district magnitude is related to the distance between voters and elites, district magnitude is not related to the direction of this distance. However, some rural voters tend to be more conservative than their representatives.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we showed different things. First, there are some problems with the left-right scale which may explain some of the elite-voter differences in various countries observed by other researchers. Voters placing themselves in the middle are – after controlling for party choice – less educated and uninterested voters, women, younger voters and voters without a party identification. This may be a problem of many studies, which use the left-right scale as an indicator for policy congruence.

We then described the policy congruence on different issues and found that indeed the left-right scale could be misleading because the pattern between the different issues is much more diverse than just a confirmation of the pattern on the left-right. As with left-right, the elites tend to be more extreme than the voters or voters more moderate than the elites in many cases. This pattern is, however not so clear cut. There are cases where it is mainly the left parties that are more extreme than their voters and in some cases the right party that is more extreme than their voters. There are also some issue where all parties are more in favour or more against a certain policy than all the voters.

When we looked at explanations for the distance, we observed very mixed patterns again. Very often we find that older people are more distant to the party they have voted for and voters identifying with a party are closer to the party they voted for. Opposed to the left-right distance is the result that district magnitude is clearly related to policy congruence: the larger the district, the smaller the distance on very many policy issues.

The picture became even more complex when we analyzed the direction of the distance between voters and elites. On two issues (war on terror and abortion), if there is a significant effect, voters of different parties and with different social characteristics tend to be more for or against a certain position than their party, so there is a clear voter-elite bias in a single direction. On most issues, however, the bias is not so obvious, and some of the effects are negative, some positive.

We can conclude that the picture of policy congruence is much more complex and diverse from what we get when we only concentrate on an analysis using the left-right scale. However, we are aware of the fact that the interpretation of the analysis above is to a large degree descriptive. Prospective work on this topic will have to aim at structuring the patterns observed as well as finding concepts to explain why congruence between parties and citizens differs on some issues while it is similar on others. Additionally, the relationship between congruence and representation needs to be addressed. It should also be attempted to go beyond the left-right scale (which we criticise) when analysing issue-congruence.

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Figure 1: Possible relationship between voters and elites

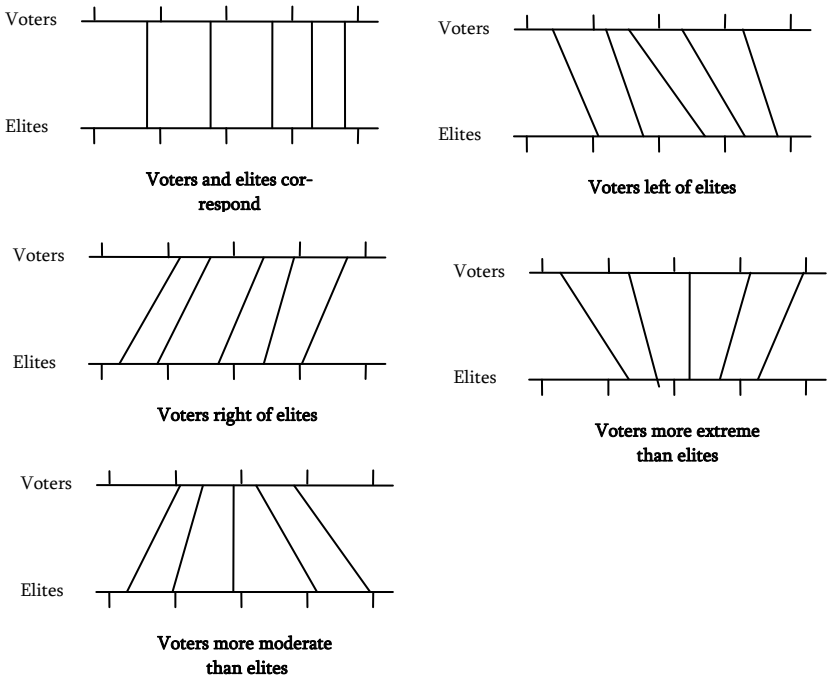

Figure 2: Frequency of placement on the left-right scale of voters and elites

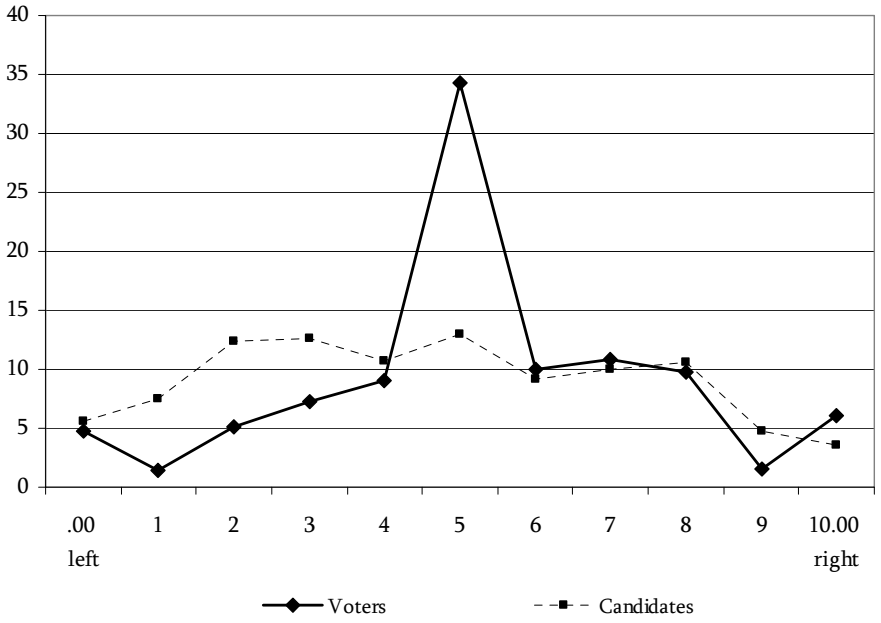

Figure 3: Policy congruence between voters and elites on different issues

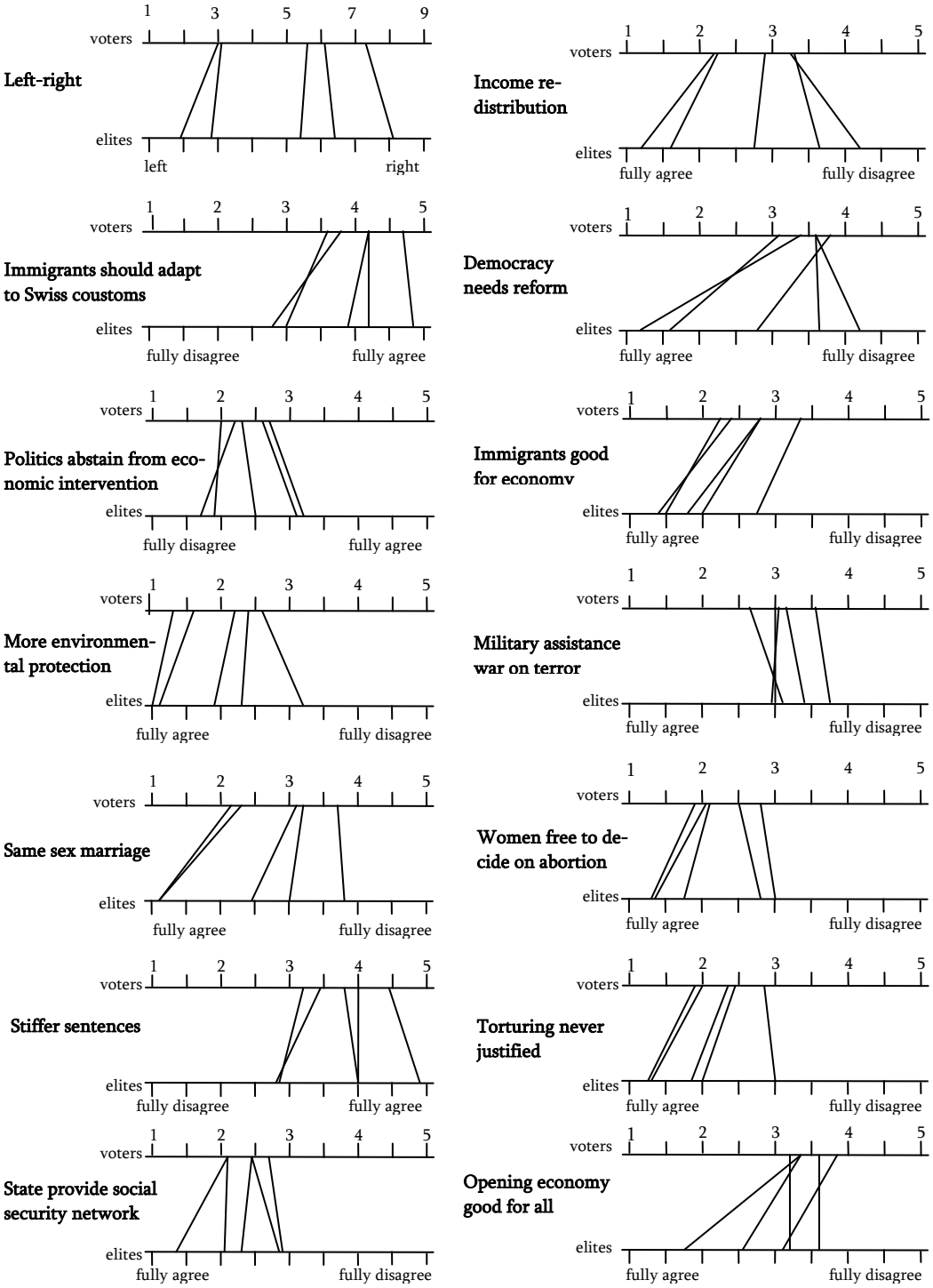

Table 1: Logit regression explaining positioning on point 5 on a 11-point left-right scale.

	Coef.	SE		Coef.	SE	
Constant	-2.317	0.213	***	-1.906	0.236	***
Party Identifier	-0.688	0.090	***	-0.674	0.093	***
Gender (male)	-0.324	0.088	***	-0.325	0.091	***
Age	0.022	0.003	***	0.021	0.003	***
Education low	0.385	0.089	***	0.424	0.093	***
Political interest	0.168	0.062	***	0.125	0.063	**
Vote FDP				0.066	0.144	
Vote CVP				0.306	0.142	**
Vote SP				-0.989	0.157	***
Vote SVP				-0.727	0.139	***
Vote Green party				-0.590	0.188	***
Pseudo R^2	0.06			0.10		
N	3019			3019		

**** sig at .01 level, ** sig at .05 level, * sig at .1 level.*

Table 2: Significant effects on absolute distance between voters´ and elites´ positions on left-right and different issues, multi-level model.

	left-right	Immigrants should be required to adjust to the customs of Switzerland	Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy	Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment	Same sex marriages should be approved by law	People who break the law should£ be given stiffer sentences	Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards poorer people	Our democracy needs serious reform	Immigrants are good for the Swiss economy	Switzerland should get more involved in the "war" on terror	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion	Torturing a prisoner is never justified even if it might prevent a terrorist attack	The ongoing opening of the economies is for the good of all
SP	+	+		-		+			+	+	+	-		
Green	+	+		-	-	+	-				+	-		
CVP		-	-	-					-					
FDP		-			+		+					-		
SVP	+	-		+	+	-	+	+		+	+	+	+	
Party identifiers	-	-		-	-			-				-		-
Gender (male)			-	+	+							-		
Age	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		-	+			
Education low	+				+			+		+				
Political interest (1=very, 4 = no)	+							+		+				
District magnitude		-	-	-	-	-		-	-			-	-	-
Urban-rural (1=rural)	-		-		-	-		-		-	-	-		
Linguistic region (1=German)				+				+	+		+		+	

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SP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
Green	-	-			-	-		-	-		+	-		+
CVP			+											
FDP		+	+					+	+			-		-
SVP	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	
Party identifiers						+	-							
Gender (male)	-			-	-				+			-	-	
Age	-	-	-		-	-	+		+	+	+		+	+
Education low		-	-			-	+	+		-	+		-	
Political interest (1=very, 4 = no)		-	-	+	-	-	+	+		-	+	-		
District magnitude				-										+
Urban-rural (1=rural)	+			+	+				+	+				
Linguistic region (1=German)						-								