

Comparing Candidates and Citizens in the Ideological Space

A Descriptive Study Based on Ordinal Factor Analysis

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Abstract

Little is known about the ideological relationship between the Swiss political elite and the general public. Based on the SELECTS 2007 candidate and voter surveys, we compare the value orientations of both groups by applying ordinal factor analysis. First, we test whether political leaders or their supporters are more ideologically polarized. Second, we investigate whether ideological congruency between the electorate and representatives varies from party to party. Third, we examine whether winning candidates are ideologically more remote from their party supporters than unsuccessful candidates. We find that ideological polarization is larger within the political elite than within the general public. As a consequence, representatives of parties with rather extreme value orientations represent the moderate electorate rather poorly. Similarly, successful candidates are found to be more distant from their party supporters than unsuccessful candidates. These findings challenge traditional spatial voting theory but accord nicely with the directional model of voting behavior.

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Introduction¹

Political philosophers and political scientists alike have long been concerned with the nature of political representation in democracies. Early empirical analyses of the elite-mass relationship (cf. Converse 1964) revealed significant differences between the ideological reasoning of politicians and the public. By the mid 20th century, it became generally accepted that the elites and the general public simply think differently about politics (Kinder 1998). The traditional view of elite-mass divergence, however, is challenged in modern democracies. More than ever, politicians and citizens find themselves in a close and interdependent relationship. On the one hand, political leaders must follow public opinion because they aim to get reelected (Stimson 1991). On the other hand, political elites function as opinion leaders (Zaller 1992). This interdependency is assumed to bring politicians and voters closer to each other in terms of ideology and political attitudes.

Given the importance of the democratic ideal, a long tradition of empirical research exists on the elite-mass relationship. In the past decade, for instance, research has focused on two major topics in the field of representation: dynamic representation (Erikson et al. 2002, Stimson et al. 1995) and sub-constituency representation (Bartels 2009, Gilens 2005). These studies suggest that elites adjust their policies in response to shifts in mass political opinion, and that politicians are disproportionately responsive to electoral subgroups composed of highly educated and sophisticated citizens (Adams and Ezrow 2009).

Yet most empirical studies on political representation and the mass-elite relationship rely on different measures of ideology for the elite and for the general public. Whereas citizens' ideology and attitudes are measured by survey responses, the ideology of the political elite is most often estimated with their voting behavior in parliament, i.e., by roll call voting data.² Other strategies employed to measure value orientations of the political elite are expert interviews (c.f. Hug and Schulz 2007) and media content analysis (c.f. Lachat 2008). It is important to note, however, that all of these approaches to comparing the political views of

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² Cf. Kuklinski (1978), Page et al. (1984), Stimson et al. (1995). Poole and Rosenthal (1997), Clinton et al. (2004a).

citizens and politicians are limited in that they are derived from differing data sources (Powell 1982, Highton and Rocca 2005).

Roll call data, for instance, reflect the perceived preferences of MPs based on their voting behavior, but this is not the same as their actual preferences. Party pressure, constituency pressure and the strategic nature of voting may distort these ideological measures (e.g. Clinton et al. 2004b, Cox and McCubbins 2005). Similarly, media content analysis and expert interviews may also be prone to distortion, as they do not control for strategic positioning. Ultimately, if the ideological positions are derived with different methods and data, it is not even assured that the same ideological dimensions are analyzed for both subgroups (Lachat 2008).

One then wishes to compare mass and elite political views using identical data for each group. However, only rarely have researchers had the opportunity to analyze comparable survey data for both politicians and citizens.³ While the few studies that do this have strengths on an empirical level, their weaknesses lie in the realm of theory. The designs of these analyses are generally descriptive and are not aimed at testing any hypotheses about ideological relationship.⁴ In this respect, our analysis will be no exception. Although we embed our analysis in the broader literature on polarization, voting behavior and party and candidate strategies, our primary goal will not be to explain – or test – why Swiss politicians and voters differ ideologically. Rather, we will analyze whether these groups' political views do differ at all, and whether they do so systematically. We will then discuss whether our findings are in line with common theories and similar empirical evidence found in other countries, mainly from the United States and Australia. Hence, our study will not be explanatory, but rather descriptive and exploratory.

Our analysis benefits from the exceptional data gathered in the SELECTS 2007 Survey, where voters *and* candidates were asked identical questions about their political values.⁵ We

³ Thomassen and Schmitt (1997), McAllister (1991), Pierce et al. (1987), McClosky et al. (1960).

⁴ This criticism does not apply to analyses using survey responses of politicians and citizens which focus on ideological consistency (cf. Granberg and Holmberg 1996, Jennings 1992). However, ideological consistency is not of primary importance in our study.

⁵ Note that these answers do not reveal true preferences perfectly, but are certainly less prone to the above-mentioned distorting sources (party pressure, constituency pressure, and the strategic nature of voting). This makes our measures (derived by surveying MPs) superior to roll call data with regard to the mentioned distortion.

are thereby comfortably positioned to compare the ideological views of party elites and party supporters directly and without methodological bias. As we are primarily interested in the ideological positions of the individual candidate and voter, or the mean party candidate and mean party voter, we ignore the fact that electoral competition is based to a large extent on party manifestos and party communication. Along with the preliminary analyses of Lutz (2008) and Schwarz (2007), this study is the first systematic and comprehensive comparison of politicians' and voters' value orientations for Switzerland.

We will focus on three main aspects of the ideological mass-elite relationship that other studies comparing survey responses for both groups have highlighted. First, we will explore whether it is the general public or the political elite that is more polarized or extreme politically (McClosky et al. 1960, McAllister 1991, Lutz 2008). Second, we will analyze ideological congruency between parties, i.e., whether candidates of one party represent the views of their party supporters more closely than candidates of other parties (McAllister 1991, Lutz 2008). Third, we will investigate the phenomenon observed elsewhere wherein successful candidates are ideologically more remote from their party supporters than unsuccessful candidates (Achen 1978, McAllister 1991, Schwartz 2007).

Theory

Ideological Polarization

In his seminal work, Converse (1964, Converse and Pierce 1986) observes that the general public lacks ideological consistency. Recent scholarly research seems to agree that the elite is not only more ideologically consistent than the general public, but also more polarized. As Adams and Merrill (1999: 765) summarize, "One of the most discussed findings from the literature on political representation is that political parties and candidates typically present policy positions that are similar to, but more extreme than, the positions of their party supporters." Furthermore, several studies suggest that elite and mass polarization have been diverging in past decades. Studies consistently show an increasingly polarized US Congress, with party members clustering towards the ideological poles (Hetherington 2009). Evidence that ordinary American citizens have become similarly polarized is, in contrast, less clear. Fiorina et al. (2004) argue that voters only *appear* polarized because the political arena only offers polarized choices, but voters' preferences remain essentially moderate. As a result of increasing elite polarization, however, partisans in the general public are following what are

now clearer elite cues to sort themselves into the ‘correct’ party (Hetherington 2009). Fiorina and Levendusky (2006) term this process that is observed within the mass ‘party sorting,’ reserving the term ‘polarization’ exclusively for the political elite.

There are several explanations for the differing polarization levels between the general public and the elite. Rokeach (1973), for instance, posits that it is radicalism that drives an ordinary citizen to become a politician. Since ideologically radical individuals seek to have their views realized in politics, they become politically active and run for office. This self-selection process then results in an elite that is more ideologically polarized than the general public. Similarly, May (1973) argues that party activists tend to take extreme policy positions and, through intraparty nomination processes, these attitudes drive the parties towards the policy positions of activists and away from those of their mass supporters. Finally, Przeworski and Sprague (1987) identify strategic causes of differing polarization, proposing that party elites offer relatively extreme programs in order to change voters’ preferences.

The few studies that use survey data for both candidates and voters – as we do – report evidence generally supporting the elitist polarization thesis. McClosky et al. (1960) find that leaders of the two main US parties diverged strongly, but that their followers differed only moderately in their political attitudes. Similarly, McAllister (1991) observes that in Australia, candidates showed considerably more polarization on various political issues than voters. In particular, the conflict between candidates and voters is more severe on the traditional left-right dimension than on the authoritarian-libertarian dimension.

For Switzerland, Lutz (2008) also reports greater polarization among the elite than among the general public. His analysis is based on self-placements of voters and candidates on the left-right continuum. He concludes that candidates from left parties are more leftist than their electorate, while the candidates from right parties are more rightist than their electorate. Lachat (2008), in contrast, compares voters’ positions as measured by survey responses with party elites’ positions as measured by media content analysis, finding more dispersion on the mass level than on the elite level in the 1999 general Swiss elections: “The CVP and the SP are much closer to one another than are their voters. The same can be said of the liberal parties and the SVP” (Lachat 2008: 151). In light of the findings reported in the studies described above and those of Lutz (2008) that all analyze survey data for both groups, we expect to find a more polarized elite than general public – notwithstanding the contradicting results reported by Lachat (2008).

Intra-party Congruency

The often-replicated finding that parties present policy positions which are more extreme than those of their supporters – i.e., that the political elite is more polarized than the general public – contradicts the implication of the basic proximity voting model (Iversen 1994; Adams and Merrill 1999, Adams et al. 2004). This traditional spatial theory predicts that, all else being equal, candidates and political parties gain electoral benefits when they moderate their policy positions, thereby approximating the median voter (Downs 1957, Enelow and Hinich 1984). Given the median voter theorem, why should radical or extreme parties compete in elections at all? Or, in other words, why should some parties represent their electorate more adequately than others, resulting in different levels of intra-party congruency?

Recent studies suggest that the logic of spatial theory applies differently to different types of parties (Meguid 2005). Specifically, it is suggested that *niche* parties⁶ – namely parties of the extreme left (Communists), the extreme right (radical nationalist parties) or distinct non-centrist parties (the Greens) – do not inevitably enhance their electoral support by presenting moderate programs. Ezrow (2008) argues that in multiparty systems, mainstream parties are generally rewarded for centrism, but that this does not hold for niche parties. On the contrary, as Ezrow demonstrates empirically, niche parties perform significantly better when representing rather radical value orientations.

Similarly, and particularly interestingly for the Swiss case, is the work by Kedar (2005a, 2005b) arguing that a consensual system benefits ideologically extreme parties. In a consensual system, a winning party faces, due to bargaining and compromise after the election, a “watering down” of their policy preferences. It follows then, that in a consensual setting – if voters are both concerned with policy outcomes and aware of these institutional mechanism – they are expected to vote for a party that holds similar but more extreme policy preferences. Kedar (2005b) finds empirical evidence that Swiss citizens do indeed apply such compensational voting strategies.

⁶ According to Meguid (2005: 347 pp.), niche parties differ from mainstream parties in three aspects. First, niche parties reject the traditional class-based orientation of politics, thereby politicizing sets of issues that were previously outside the dimensions of party competition. Second, as these issues do not coincide with existing lines of political division, niche parties appeal to voters that may cross-cut traditional party alignments. Third, niche parties limit their issue appeals, adopting positions only on a restricted set of issues.

This line of reasoning is similar to the directional model of voting behavior proposed by Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989). The directional thesis states that voters support parties that take relatively extreme positions on their side of the issue. A less severe version of this thesis is the representational policy leadership model advanced by Iversen (1994). His “mixed” model includes both proximity and directional components. He demonstrates convincingly that voters tend to prefer politicians who offer clear and intense policy alternatives over politicians who simply “mirror their attitudes.”

To summarize, both the strategic positioning of niche parties and voters’ intentions to support radical parties imply that ideologically extreme parties should have a lesser degree of intra-party congruency than moderate parties. Studies that compare value orientations of the political elite and the general public using identical survey items for both groups tend to support this expectation. McAllister (1991) finds that the Australian Labour Party of the 1980s and 1990s show a large ideological gap between its leaders and its supporters. Yet the Labour party was the most successful Australian party of the time, despite or – in line with the theoretical expectations outlined above – *because* of a low degree of intra-party congruency.

For Switzerland, Lutz (2008) also reports differing levels of intra-party congruency. By comparing left-right self-placements of voters and candidates, he finds the largest ideological gap between politicians and supporters among the parties of the left (the Greens and Social Democrats). Specifically, the candidates of these parties are found to be much more leftist than their supporters. Lutz (2008) does observe the mirror image phenomenon on the right side of the ideological spectrum, but to a lesser degree. Candidates of the SVP and the FDP are more rightist than their electorate. Only the centrist party, the CVP, has been found to show a high level of intra-party congruency.

These theories of niche party strategies (Ezrow 2008, Meguid 2005) and compensational voting (Kedar 2005) imply that we are likely to observe differing levels of party congruency in the Swiss multiparty system. Given the results reported by Lutz (2008), we expect to find the lowest degree of intra-party congruency among the Greens, as it is both ideologically more extreme and a niche party. The SVP and SP do not count as niche parties, but still may, due to compensational voting, have a significant degree of incongruence. Finally, the more centrist parties, the CVP and FDP, are expected to show more congruent value orientations.

The Remote But Successful Candidate

The pattern frequently observed at the party level seems to hold at the individual level as well: Candidates with deviant policy preferences are more likely to get elected than candidates who reflect the political views of their electorate more accurately (Hetherington 2009). Again, how can we explain this rather counter-intuitive phenomenon?

As Carey and Shugart (1995: 417) point out, seats not only have to be allocated to parties, but also to “specific candidates within parties.” Therefore, politicians running for office not only must defeat opponents from other parties but also those from their own party. This means that candidates must stand out during the electoral campaign and seek personal votes. The extent to which candidates have to develop personal reputations distinct from those of their party is considered to be shaped by electoral rules. For example, it is widely accepted that personal reputation is more valuable to legislative candidates in open list systems than in closed list systems (Carey and Shugart 1995). Open list systems, which allow personal votes, make parties less relevant and create incentives for individualism (Tavits 2009, Shugart et al. 2005).

One strategy for creating personal reputation is to take positions that differ from that of the party (Carey and Shugart 1995: 418). Although it is plausible that candidates, particularly in open list systems such as the Swiss electoral system, have incentives to cultivate and proclaim independent policy preferences, the question remains in which direction they should deviate from their party and electorate. Proximity voting theory implies that successful candidates who are contesting elections will locate themselves near the center of the voter distribution. Yet empirical evidence contradicts the median voter theorem (Merrill and Grofman 1999). Adams et al. (2004: 351) find that candidates for the US Senate benefit when they are perceived as presenting distinctly non-centrist positions that reflected the policy direction of their electorates. This finding supports, again, the directional voting model, which accounts for the relative extremism of candidates’ positions in elections.

Yet there may be an even more specific explanation for why successful candidates deviate more drastically from their electorate than unsuccessful candidates. According to Achen (1978), it is mainly incumbents that account for the observed effect. Incumbents are likely to be reelected but, at the same time, they differ more significantly from their supporters in their preferences than do first-time candidates. A study by Sullivan and Uslander (1978), based on US data, supports Achen’s reasoning, as incumbents are found to have a greater probability of

winning reelection than their challengers even when the latter are closer to constituency opinion.

McAllister (1991) also holds incumbents accountable for the observed phenomenon of remote but successful candidates. As incumbents often stand for safe seats, they need not rely heavily on their supporters and can better afford to deviate from their median preferences. But in contrast to Achen (1978), McAllister finds empirical support for Australian incumbents holding rather moderate views, i.e., they deviate from their party electorate and the non-incumbent counterparts because they in fact hold rather centrist values. McAllister (1991) hypothesizes that incumbents undergo a socialization process in parliament in which their views generally get moderated.

Results from Schwartz' (2007) study, however, tend to support the directional voting model in general and the incumbency effect as described by Achen (1978) in particular. Schwartz (2007) finds that winning candidates of the last general Swiss elections have distinctively accentuated value preferences. Only SVP candidates' electoral success is found to be independent from ideological positioning. Given the results reported by Schwarz (2007) and the theorized effects of Swiss electoral rules, namely the open list system, we expect to find significant differences between winning and losing candidates. More specifically, we expect to find winners to be distinctly more radical and remote from their party electorate.

The Political Space: The Economic and the Cultural Dimension

Traditionally, ideology has been conceptualized as a one-dimensional left-right continuum -- like the liberal-conservative continuum in the US -- (cf. Converse 1964, Fuchs and Klingemann 1989). This dimension, often also referred to as the socioeconomic dimension, reflects the economic conflicts within a modern democracy. Specific issues within this struggle are, among others, taxation, wealth redistribution, social security and free economic enterprise. More simply put, this is the conflict between socialist and capitalist ideology (Kitschelt 1994). Contestation on this dimension has predominated in most Western nations in the postwar period (Bartolini and Mair 1990).

With the rise of new challenges to modern democracies, however, a new political dimension has emerged (Flanagan 1987). Kitschelt (1994) has laid out the theoretical foundation for this emerging conflict, terming this additional dimension 'libertarian-authoritarian.' This

dimension reflects issues such as minority rights, authority, law and order, civic protests and tradition. Other scholars (Marks et al. 2006) have dubbed this political conflict the GAL-TAN dimension: green/alternative/libertarian (GAL) versus traditionalism/authority/nationalism (TAN). Kriesi and Trechsel (2008), finally, describe the inherent conflict as cultural liberalism versus conservatism.

For Western Europe it seems conventional to rely on such a two-dimensional space (see Kriesi et al. 2008), and it has been shown in several studies that the economic and the cultural dimensions accurately describe the political landscape of Switzerland. These broadly encompassing dimensions have been detected not only in analysis of party positioning in electoral campaigns (Lachat 2008), but also in analysis of the voting behavior of members of the Swiss parliament (Kriesi 2001, Leemann 2008) and in analysis of referendum votes (Hermann and Leuthold 2003).

Data and Method

Data

The data we use in our analysis come from the SELECTS Voter Survey 2007 and the SELECTS Candidate Survey 2007. In these surveys, voters and candidates in the Swiss general elections of 2007 were asked about their political values. As the number of cases is limited at the constituency (cantonal) level, namely the number of elected candidates, we restrict the analysis to the national level.⁷ The sample used for estimation consists of 1,128 unsophisticated, 1,144 sophisticated voters⁸ and 1,650 candidates, of which 125 were elected to office. Thirteen items, identical in each survey, are employed to measure the value orientations of voters and politicians (see Table A in the appendix for more details). We use these 13 items to create a two-dimensional political space with an economic and a cultural dimension and to locate voters and candidates within this political space. This procedure allows us to compare the political views of party elites and voters directly.

⁷ Possible distortions of this restriction are discussed in the concluding section.

⁸ Note that the number of unsophisticated voters in the full SELECTS Voter Survey is significantly larger than number of sophisticated voters (about 60% to 40%). But since we had to drop respondents with missing values on all thirteen value items, we lose a disproportionate number of unsophisticated voters.

Method

For the estimation of ideological positions we rely on Bayesian ordinal factor analysis. This is similar to polychoric factor analysis but instead of relying directly on the polychoric correlations, we first estimate the latent dimensions as in an ordered probit model, then connect the different items and finally create the two dimensions. Our measurement model has the usual IRT interpretation and therefore has the advantage of a direct connection to the spatial theory of political behavior (Clinton et al. 2004b). In addition, ordinal IRT elegantly deals with non-binary and non-continuous response data. Instead of working with the observed ordinal measurements, we can estimate the latent and presumably continuous underlying variable and then extract the underlying dimensions based on these latent variables. This produces an estimation procedure that is both fully efficient and—given the assumptions of the model (see section “Estimation”)—unbiased. Because of its closer connection to theory and more general applicability, we rely on Bayesian ordered IRT – despite the fact that it is less well known than polychoric factor analysis.

Identification

Identification is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for estimation and therefore should be the first concern in every quantitative endeavor. This is especially true for ordinal factor analysis with an ordinal item response model since those models are not identifiable by the data alone – additional constraints are needed. Which and how many of these constraints are necessary is a function the dimensionality of the model. In one dimension, the task is relatively simple: one must pick an origin, a metric and a direction. The classical Kennedy-Helms restriction achieves this by fixing the two U.S. legislators at -1 and +1, respectively, thereby choosing the origin (half way between Kennedy and Helms), a metric (the distance between Kennedy and Helms is two) and a direction (Helms is to the right of Kennedy), as in work by Rivers (2003:7).

A popular alternative is to fix a distribution of ideal points, such as standard normal, which results in two independent restrictions: mean equal to zero and standard deviation equal to one. One then must still choose which direction is to the right, but this is necessary only for global identification, not for local identification. However, with more than one dimension, the choice of constraints is more complicated. In a seminal paper, Rivers (2003) resolves this issue and proves both necessary and sufficient conditions for identification of spatial models

of arbitrary dimension. More concretely, he showed that in a d dimensional model, identification can be accomplished by either fixing $d+1$ points or vectors (i.e., legislators) or by imposing d ($d+1$) independent restrictions. In the following, for our $d=2$ dimensional model (economic left/right versus cultural left/right) for the elected members of the Nationalrat, we achieve *local* identification by applying the following 6 constraints:

- The average ideal points are assumed to be distributed standard normal in both dimensions, which results in 4 independent constraints.
- The item "Same sex marriages" is constrained to load only on the cultural dimension, which gives us one additional constraint.
- The item "Economic re-distribution" is constrained to load only on the economic dimension, which gives us the last constraint needed for local identification.

In addition, we make two additional assumptions to achieve not only local, but global identification:

- The item "Same sex marriages" is constrained to load positively on the social dimension, such that socially liberal legislators locate at the top of the ideological space.
- The item "Economic re-distribution" is constrained to load negatively on the economic dimension, such that economically leftish legislators locate to the left of the ideological space.

Again, these two additional assumptions have no effect on the absolute values of the factor loadings or ideal points; they simply specify which direction is to the left and to the bottom on the two dimensions.

Estimation

Having achieved global identification, we now turn to estimation. The ordinal measurement of our survey data makes it somewhat nonstandard both for item response theory models, which are usually based on binary indicators (yea or nay), and for normal theory factor analysis, which ordinarily uses continuous variables as input. An efficient but biased approach would be to treat the ordinal indicators as continuous, thereby assuming that the difference between 'agree totally' and 'agree somewhat' is the same as between 'indifferent' and 'disagree somewhat'. An unbiased but highly inefficient solution would be to dichotomize the

ordinal measurements and employ a binary item response model. We opt to use an ordered IRT model that also estimates latent dimensions and produces unbiased *and* efficient results. Furthermore, item response theory provides a statistical framework that can be shown to directly reflect the underlying spatial theory of politics.⁹

Results

In a first step, we consider the overall picture of the political orientations of Swiss voters and politicians. As can be seen in Figure 1, Swiss politicians are distributed in the political space as expected and as shown in previous scholarly work (Lachat 2008, Schwarz 2007, Kriesi et al. 2006). In the upper-left space we find the so-called left-libertarians, who are economically leftist and culturally liberal. These politicians consist mainly of Social Democrats (SPS) and the Greens (GPS). The center of the political sphere is occupied largely by representatives of the Christian Democrats (CVP), who are moderate on both dimensions. Candidates from the Liberal Party (FDP) are both economically and culturally liberal, whereas the representatives of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) are both economically and culturally rightist.

(Figure 1 about here)

In contrast to the pattern found among candidates, the spatial distribution of voters is rather ambiguous (see Figure 2). Although voters for the SPS and the Greens are found predominantly in the upper-left and voters for the SVP in the lower half, the observed pattern is not clear-cut. What can be said about the distribution of all voters, however, is that it concentrates heavily in the center of the political space.

(Figure 2 about here)

One can conclude, therefore, that the political values of the elite tend to be more extreme than those of the general public. Furthermore, as the spaces in the lower-left and the upper-right are rather empty, the allocation of the elite's values closely represents the conflict line suggested by Kitschelt (1994), namely the diagonal reaching from the left-libertarian extreme to the right-authoritarian. This finding is in line with results presented by Lachat (2008). He finds that the political space of Swiss party elites in the 1990s tends to converge to one

⁹ For further elaboration on this point see the technical appendix and Clinton et al. (2004b: 358pp.).

dimension, whereas the values of voters are adequately described only by two dimensions: an economic and a cultural dimension.

Of more substantial interest here, however, is variation in the degree of political polarization between politicians and the general public. We measure polarization as the statistical variance of the estimated ideal points separately for each dimension. We find the elite to be more polarized than the electorate on both dimensions (see Table 1). Yet while the difference on the cultural dimension is rather minimal, it is substantial on the economic dimension. On the latter dimension, the variance of political values held by candidates is three times higher than that held by voters. As can be seen in Figure 3, this result is particularly due to the distinct socialist ideology of the representatives of the Social Democrats on the one extreme and the capitalist ideology of SVP politicians on the other. This finding is in line with McAllister (1991), who observes a larger dispersion on the left-right dimension than on authority issues among Australian politicians and citizens.

(Table 1 about here)

However, as Hetherington (2009: 433) and others (cf. Zaller 1992, Converse 1964) note, we would expect that mass preferences will tend to bunch closer to the center than those of elites because of the substantial differences in ideological sophistication between the two groups. To test this expectation, we split up the voters into “sophisticated” and “unsophisticated” voters. As the estimates in Table 1 show, such a distinction does not make any significant difference. On the cultural dimension, the dispersion of sophisticated and unsophisticated voters is equal. On the economic dimension, politically sophisticated citizens are marginally more polarized, but their representatives remain much more dispersed.

The empirical pattern of polarization presented here thus reflects Fiorina’s (2004) view of an increasingly polarized elite and a moderate general populace. It also confirms results from previous research that compared ideological polarization by employing survey data for both groups (McClosky et al. 1960, McAllister 1991, Lutz 2008).

The second subject we highlight is whether intra-party congruency varies from party to party. We expect to find the lowest degree of intra-party congruency within the Greens, as it is both an ideologically extreme and a niche party. The SVP and SPS are not niche parties, but still may, due to their distinct policy preferences, show a significant degree of incongruency.

Indeed, we do find such varying intra-party congruency levels. As can be seen in Figure 3 (see also Table 2), all parties but the CVP show substantial divergence in ideological dispersion between their leaders and their supporters. The largest gaps are found within the SPS (.71) and the SVP (.61). Their discrepancies are even higher than that of the Greens (.43), which can be regarded as a niche party. In particular, ideological differences between the electorate and their party leaders are mainly attributable to diverging values on the economic dimension. Representatives of both the left and the right are much more extreme in their socioeconomic views than is their electorate (see Figure 3). These results confirm Lutz's (2008) finding that representatives of both the Swiss left and right are far more radical than their supporters and are thereby misrepresenting the latter.

It must be noted, however, that the relatively high degree of ideological congruency within the CVP may simply be a result of its location in the center. Since not only CVP voters, but all voters generally tend to be located around the center, the CVP elite is much more likely to represent their voters adequately. Party elites from both the left and the right, on the other hand, are more extreme and thereby run risk of deviating from their moderate party electorates. Remarkably, this pattern also holds when only sophisticated voters are considered. Although sophisticated voters are consistently closer to their candidates than unsophisticated across all five major parties (see Table 2), the gap between elites and the general populace remains smaller among the parties of the center, notably smallest within the CVP.

(Figure 3 about here)

The results concerning intra-party congruency are interesting insofar as they both confirm and contradict previous findings from Australia derived by similar data. In contrast to McAllister (1991), we find no evidence that misrepresentation is characteristic of the left in particular. Rather, all parties with distinct value orientations are prone to ideological incongruency. In line with McAllister (1991), however, we ascertain that the degree of congruency does not correlate with electoral success. On the one hand, the ideological distance between voters for and candidates from the SVP and the Greens are substantial, but these two parties performed well in elections. On the other hand, the SPS underperformed in elections but show a similar voter-candidate gap.

These results challenge traditional spatial voting theory, as parties relatively distant from the preferred position of the electorate are not penalized. On the contrary, and in line with Ezrow

(2008), the Greens, as a niche party, are doing well by presenting non-centrist policy preferences. Similarly, the electoral success of the SVP might be explained by their distinct rightist value orientation. Swiss voters may actually vote for an extreme party on their side of the ideological continuum, as they may fear their preferences will be watered down in the Swiss consensual system (Kedar 2005b). We can conclude that the pattern of intraparty congruency found contests the median voter theorem but accords nicely with “mixed” models that include both proximity and directional components (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989, Iversen 1994).

(Table 2 about here)

Finally, we analyze whether successful candidates’ positions differ systematically from the positions held by unsuccessful candidates. More precisely, we examine whether winners are more distant from their electorate than losers, as has been found previously (Achen 1978). It is widely accepted that in open list systems such as the Swiss electoral system, politicians are urged to seek the personal vote (see Carey and Shugart 1995) and benefit from presenting non-centrist policy preferences (Adams et al. 2004). For the Swiss general elections in 2007, Schwarz (2007) finds that, save the SVP, candidates who won their election hold more accentuated value orientations than candidates who did not.

Our analysis replicates Schwarz’ (2007) results (see Figure 4). Across all major parties, winning candidates are found to be more distant from their party electorate than losing candidates. Only within the SVP does electoral success seem to be largely independent of politicians’ ideological positioning. In regard to the SPS, FDP and the Greens, the parties with the largest gaps, we note that most of the difference can be attributed to the cultural dimension. Successful candidates from these parties are distinctively culturally liberal. Taking the sophistication level of voters into account does not change the overall pattern (see Table 2). However, we consistently find the closest relationship between sophisticated voters and unsuccessful candidates. This may be explained by the fact that many candidates do not run for elections with serious expectations and often do not even campaign. Rather, they are asked by party officials to place themselves at the disposal of the party in order to complete the party list. Such candidates may not differentiate themselves significantly from politically sophisticated citizens.

(Figure 4 about here)

Our data also confirm the expectation that successful candidates are more remote from their electorate because they hold distinct non-centrist values. This may be due to incumbent effects (Achen 1978, Sullivan and Uslander 1978), but our results specifically contest McAllister's (1991) socialization hypothesis. McAllister assumes that incumbents' preferences are moderated in a parliamentary setting, but that they will not be penalized for such a deviation by their electorate. Although we do not test specifically for incumbent effects, our data suggest that successful candidates, and hence very likely incumbents, gain votes by presenting non-centrist preferences (see Adams et al. 2004).

Our findings on the candidate level are similar to those on the party level: radical politicians are more likely to get elected than moderate candidates. This again challenges the median voter theorem (Merrill and Grofman 1999). It appears that in Switzerland, arguably because of its open list system, candidates gain personal votes when presenting distinct positions. Again, in line with the directional voting model, the electorate favors more extreme politicians of their ideological family.

Conclusion

In this descriptive study we analyze whether (1) the Swiss elite or the general public is more ideologically polarized, (2) whether there are varying levels of intra-party congruency, and (3) whether successful candidates are more ideologically remote from their party supporters than unsuccessful candidates. We find that the two-dimensional space (represented by an economic and a cultural dimension) applied in our study closely represents the value orientations of the Swiss electorate and its representatives.

While the Swiss elite shows a clear distributional pattern reaching from the left-libertarian pole to the right-authoritarian (Kitschelt 1994), the picture of the electorate is rather ambiguous. Swiss voters are generally clustered around the center, resulting in much less polarization than among candidates. It has been observed for the United States that this ideological disconnect is largely driven by the growing polarization of representatives. Lacking time series data, we can only speculate on whether this holds true for the Swiss case. However, given the decline of the two centrist parties, the CVP and FDP, in the most recent elections, the divergence in ideological dispersion may well be explained by growing polarization on the elite level rather than by concentration on the voter level.

These diverging levels of polarization are found even when voters' levels of sophistication are taken into account – contrary to our expectations. This undermines the hypothesis that lesser polarization within the electorate can be attributed to ideological inconsistency or indifference (Zaller 1992, Converse 1964). Rather, our data suggest that candidates are more diverse due to the self-selection process of politically radical citizens becoming politicians (Rokeach 1973) or to intra-party socialization and nomination processes (May 1973).

The finding of a moderate general public but polarized elite has direct consequences for intra-party congruence. It follows logically that parties from the left and right, each presenting policy programs of the ideological poles, are likely to represent their electorates relatively poorly. Representatives of the centrist party, the CVP, in contrast, are close to their supporters, mainly because they themselves are located near the center, with the majority of voters. That non-centrist parties are not penalized for such deviances from their electorate can be explained by voting models that include both proximity and directional components (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989, Iversen 1994).

The directional model also helps us explain the rather counter-intuitive phenomenon of remote but successful candidates. Apparently, Swiss voters favor candidates who are on the same side of the ideological spectrum but who are also more extreme. The pattern found at both the candidate and party levels contradicts the implication of the basic proximity voting model (see also Iversen 1994, Adams and Merrill 1999, Merrill and Grofman 1999). This traditional spatial theory predicts that, all else being equal, candidates and political parties receive electoral benefits when they moderate their policy positions and thereby approximate the median voter (Downs 1957, Enelow and Hinich 1984). This is clearly not the case in our analysis.

Although the patterns observed accord nicely with the directional model, it must be noted that our study is not a proper test of this model. Nevertheless, we believe that in this case the theory of directional voting behavior is more compelling than theories of strategic behavior, as the former focuses on voters while the latter focus on the strategies of parties and candidates. As we employ anonymous survey data for both the general public and the elite, we doubt the existence of any party or personal strategy behind candidates' responses in the survey. Hence, our results are better explained by directional voting than by strategic positioning of niche parties (Ezrow 2008) or personal vote seeking (Carey and Shugart 1995).

Furthermore, our results on all three aspects generally confirm previous findings from international and Swiss studies alike. But we observe, in contrast to Lachat (2008), that the Swiss elite is more polarized than the electorate. To be fair, Lachat (2008) finds this pattern only for the 1995 elections and not for the 1999 elections, so the difference may merely constitute a period effect. However, there may be also methodological reasons for the contradictory results, as Lachat derived party elite preferences from media content analysis. As our data are derived from surveys for both groups, we can notably preclude biases from party pressure or strategic voting behavior – biases that are known to be found in other sources, specifically in roll call data (Clinton et al. 2004b, Cox and McCubbins 2005).

In order to derive theory-based expectations for the empirical part of our study, we also discuss some institutional factors peculiar to the Swiss electoral system. For instance, we argue that the multi-party and consensual system (Ezrow 2008, Kedar 2005b) in Switzerland may benefit parties at the ideological poles, resulting in a lower level of congruency within the parties on the left and the right. Likewise, we hypothesize that in the Swiss open-list system, candidates are expected to represent positions that are independent of the party position in order to seek personal votes (Carey and Shugart 1995, Tavits 2009). Indeed, we find empirical evidence for these lines of reasoning. However, the same results have been found in other countries with different institutional settings (Achen 1978, McAllister 1991). Although these studies are not directly comparable with our analysis, we find no evidence that the mass-elite relationship is shaped by country-specific institutional factors. For instance, ideologically deviant candidates in the Swiss proportional voting system are also more likely to get elected as deviant candidates running for US Congress in that first-past-the-post system. And in regard to ideological polarization, we find a considerable elite-mass gap as observed in other countries, despite the presence of considered egalitarian institutions such as the “semi-professional” parliament (*Milizsystem*) and direct-democratic instruments.

Finally, we point out a limitation of our study. Due to the small number of cases at the constituency (cantonal) level, namely that of the elected candidates, we have restricted our analysis to the national level. However, as many scholars have noted (cf. Miller and Stokes 1963, Herrera et al. 1992), it may be crucial to analyze voters’ and politicians’ preferences on the constituency level. First, it may be particularly true for the Swiss federal system that national parties vary substantially from constituency to constituency. Second, candidates seek not only to gain votes from their party supporters, but from all voters in their constituency. As we cannot control for such constituency effects, we cannot preclude bias concerning our

findings. For example, it may be possible that the differing levels of ideological polarization between the elite and the general public may be smaller on the cantonal level than on the national level. Similarly, a successful candidate may significantly deviate from the voter mean of the national sample but only marginally from the voter mean of her or his constituency. Taking constituency effects into account when comparing value orientations of the elites and the general public is an important challenge left for future research.

Table 1. Polarization among Swiss Voters and Candidates Measured by their Variance

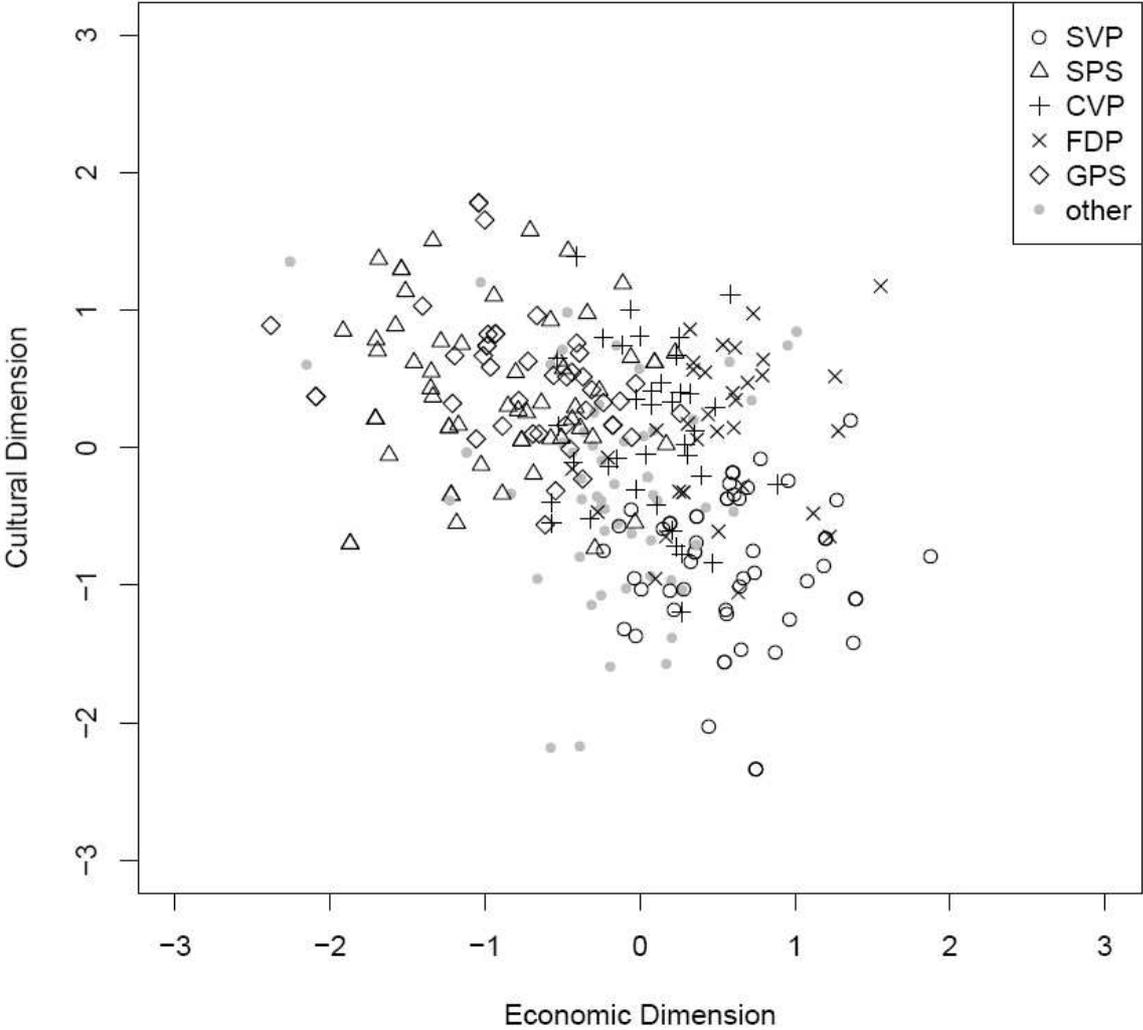
Variance	All voters	Sophisticated Voters	Unsophisticated Voters	All candidates
Economic Dimension	0.20	0.23	0.18	0.58
Cultural Dimension	0.39	0.39	0.40	0.52
Number of observations	2,272	1,144	1,128	1,650

Note: 125 of the 1,650 candidates won the election.

Table 2. The Euclidean Distances between Voters and Candidates by Party

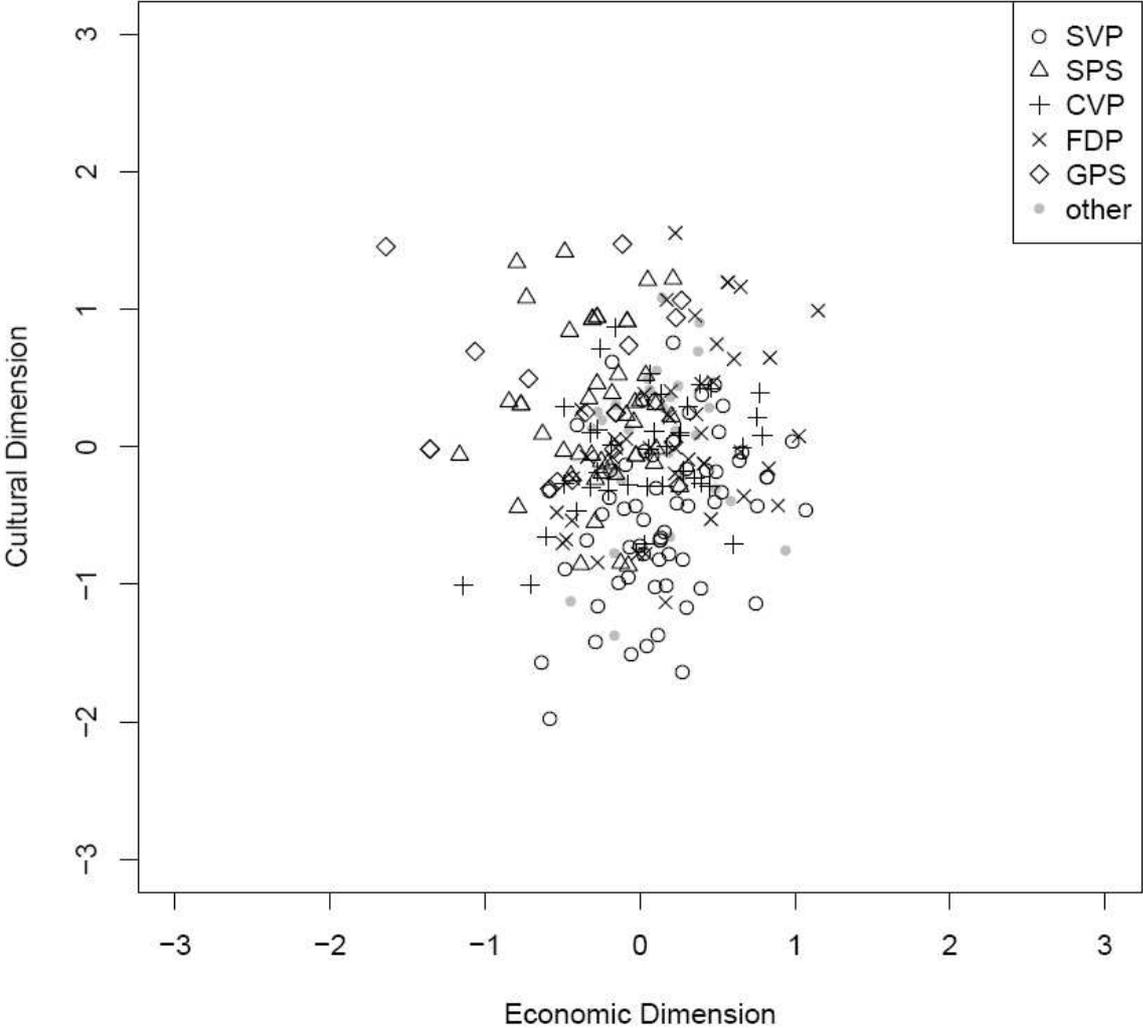
Euclidean distance	FDP	CVP	SP	SVP	Greens
Voters – candidates	0.35	0.05	0.71	0.61	0.43
Sophistic. v. - candidates	0.29	0.04	0.66	0.57	0.39
Unsophistic. v. – candidates	0.45	0.09	0.77	0.64	0.48
Voters - elected candidates	0.48	0.16	0.93	0.67	0.70
Sophistic. v. - elected cand.	0.44	0.15	0.88	0.63	0.69
Unsophistic. v. - elected cand.	0.57	0.19	0.98	0.70	0.72
Voters - not elected cand.	0.34	0.05	0.69	0.60	0.42
Sophistic. v. - not elected cand.	0.28	0.04	0.64	0.56	0.38
Unsophistic. v. - not elected c.	0.44	0.09	0.75	0.63	0.47

Figure 1. The Political Value Orientations of Candidates by Party



Note: For visual clarity, only 300 candidates (drawn by chance) are displayed.

Figure 2. The Political Value Orientations of Voters by Party



Note: For visual clarity, only 300 voters (drawn by chance) are displayed.

Figure 3. The Median Voter and the Median Candidate by Party

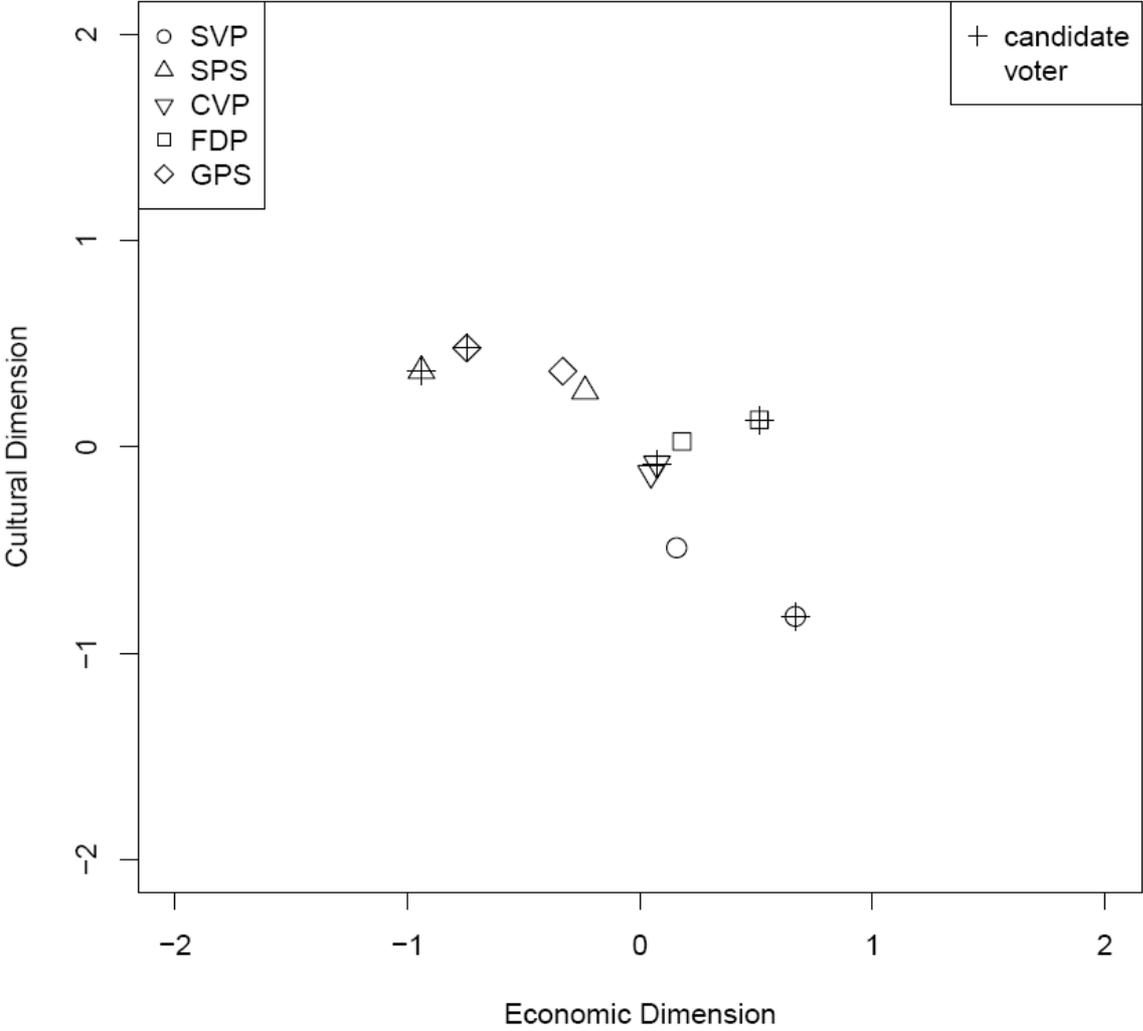
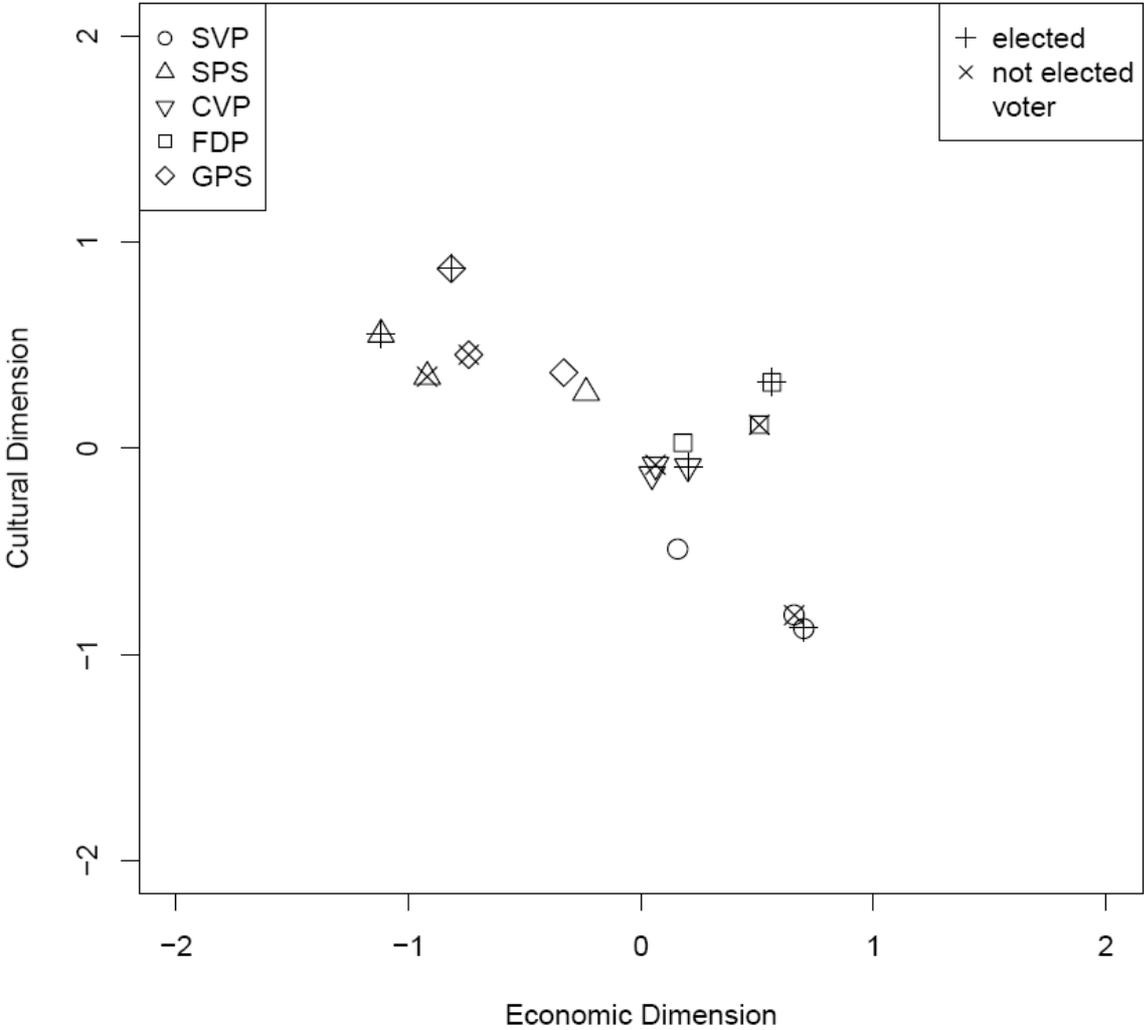


Figure 4. The Median Voter, the Median Elected, and the Median Not-Elected Candidate by Party



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Technical Appendix

This appendix specifies the exact statistical model used in this paper. Readers familiar with the two-parameter item response model will find many similarities between that model and the model we employ. To fix ideas, we must introduce some notation (partly following Quinn 2004). Let $j=1, \dots, J$ index response variables and $i=1, \dots, N$ index observations. Let \mathbf{X} denote the $N \times J$ matrix of observed responses. The observed variable x_{ij} is ordinal with $c = 1, \dots, 5$ categories for all variables in \mathbf{X} . The values of the elements of \mathbf{X} are assumed to be determined by a $N \times J$ matrix \mathbf{X}^* of latent variables and a series of cutpoints γ_{cj} , where the first element γ_{1j} is normalized to zero for all j . The latent variables \mathbf{X}^* are assumed to be generated by the following normal-linear model:

$$x_i^* = \Lambda \phi_i + \alpha + \varepsilon_i \text{ where } \varepsilon_i \sim N(0,1)$$

where x_i^* is the J -vector of latent variables specific to observation i , Λ is the $J \times d$ matrix of factor loadings, and ϕ_i is the d -vector of latent ideal points, and α is the J -vector of item difficulty parameters. The probability that the j th variable in observation i takes the value c is therefore the difference:

$$\Phi(\gamma_{ic} - \Lambda_j' \phi_i - \alpha_j) - \Phi(\gamma_{i(c-1)} - \Lambda_j' \phi_i - \alpha_j)$$

where $\Phi(\bullet)$ is the standard normal CDF. Hence, this model is similar to the standard ordinal probit model in the same way that the two-parameter IRT model can be thought of as a special case of the binary logit model.

Our mode of inference is Bayesian. To complete our model specification, we must choose priors for all the unknown parameters. Following Martin and Quinn (2005), we assume independent and conjugate priors for each element of Λ and each ϕ_i . More specifically, we use the following fairly non-informative priors:

$$\Lambda_{jd} \sim N(0,2) \quad j=1, \dots, J, \quad d=1,2$$

$$\phi_{id} \sim N(0,1) \quad i=1, \dots, N, \quad d=1,2$$

$$\alpha_j \sim N(0,2) \quad j=1, \dots, J$$

where $N(\bullet,2)$ indicates a variance of 2, not precision, as more commonly used in Bayesian notation. The program we use for estimation is part of the freely available *R* package

MCMCpack (Martin and Quinn 2005) that implements the Metropolis-Hastings within Gibbs algorithm by Cowles (1996). The Cowles algorithm is well suited for ordinal probit models because the Metropolis-Hastings step protects the variance of the γ s to shrink towards zero, thereby leading to slow mixing of the chain (see e.g. Lynch 2007 for a gentle introduction). We run a single chain for 100'000 iterations, discarding the first 50'000 as burn-in. Thinning by a factor of 100 to save memory space, we end up with 500 posterior draws for each parameter. None of the usual tests - Geweke, Raftery and Lewis, Heidelberger and Welch, and graphical diagnostics - showed any signs of non-convergence

The interest of this paper lies in the ideal point of political candidates and their constituency. However, we do omit the discussion of the estimates for the item difficulty parameter, item discrimination parameters and factor loadings for the economic and cultural dimension, which are not of primary relevance here, but simply refer the interested reader to Table B in the appendix.

Although the assumption that the ideological space for both voters and candidates is two-dimensional is primarily theoretically motivated, we check its empirical appropriateness extensively. We use maximum-likelihood based factor analysis for continuous variables as a quick approximation and obtain the following (rotated) eigenvalues for the first six dimensions. Elected candidates: 2.6, 2.2, 1.2, 0.9, .2, .1.; unsuccessful candidates: 1.9, 1.4, 1.3, .9, .03, .03; voters: 1.3, 1.2, .8, .6, .08. This generally indicates an elbow-shaped drop after the second eigenvalue, thereby confirming the theoretical assumption of a two-dimensional space for both voters and candidates.

Appendix

Table A. Question Wording of the Items

Item	Wording
Immigrant customs	Immigrants should be required to adjust to the customs of Switzerland
Free economy	Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy
Environment protection	Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment
Same sex marriages	Same sex marriages should be approved by law
Stiff sentences	People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences
Social security	Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of govern
Economic re-distribution	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people
Democracy reform	Our democracy needs serious reform
Immigrants for economy	Immigrants are good for the Swiss economy
Abortion	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion
War on terror	Switzerland should provide military assistance to the "war" on terror
Torturing prisoners	Torturing a prisoner is never justified even if it might prevent a terrorist attack
Open economy	The ongoing opening of the economies is for the good of all

Table B. Results of the Factor Analysis / Item Response Model

Item	Negative item difficulty	Factor loading economic dimension	Factor loading cultural dimension
Immigrant customs	2.63	0.75	-1.12
Free economy	0.77	1.15	0.14
Environment protection	3.85	-1.96	0.95
Same sex marriages	0.86	0.00	0.99
Stiff sentences	2.81	0.83	-1.46
Social security	2.15	-1.20	-0.29
Economic re-distribution	1.44	-2.13	0.00
Democracy reform	1.03	-0.20	0.56
Immigrants for economy	2.84	-0.64	0.78
Abortion	1.30	-0.74	0.45
War on terror	1.09	0.29	-0.07
Torturing prisoners	2.11	-0.06	1.04
Open economy	1.56	0.60	0.62

The first row of parameters can be interpreted as (negative) item difficulty similar to standard IRT models. The second row shows the factor loadings / item discrimination parameters on the economic dimension, the third row

the factor loadings / item discrimination parameters on the cultural dimension. The fourth coefficient of the second row and the seventh row of the third coefficient are set to zero by assumption.

Abstract German

Wenig ist bekannt über die ideologische Beziehung zwischen Schweizer Politikern und Wählern. Mit Daten aus den SELECTS 2007 Kandidaten- und Wählerbefragungen werden anhand einer ordinalen Faktoranalyse die Wertorientierungen der beiden Gruppen verglichen. Erstens wird untersucht, ob die politische Elite oder die Bürger ideologisch polarisierter sind. Zweitens wird ermittelt, ob die ideologische Kongruenz zwischen Politikern und deren Wählerschaft von Partei zu Partei verschieden ist. Drittens wird analysiert, ob gewählte Kandidaten ideologisch distanzierter von ihrem Elektorat sind als nicht gewählte Kandidaten. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Elite polarisierter ist als das Elektorat. Konsequenterweise repräsentieren die Politiker der ideologisch prononcierten Parteien ihre Wähler vergleichsweise schlecht. Schliesslich zeigt sich auch, dass erfolgreiche Kandidaten ideologisch weiter entfernt sind von ihrer Parteiwählerschaft als nicht erfolgreiche Kandidaten. Während diese Resultate das klassische räumliche Wahltheorem (*proximity voting*) in Frage stellen, stützen sie die Theorie des *directional voting*.

Abstract French

La relation idéologique existant entre l'élite politique suisse et le grand public demeure méconnue. Sur la base de l'étude SELECTS 2007, portant sur les électeurs comme sur les candidats, nous procédons à une comparaison des deux groupes du point de vue de leur orientation en terme de valeur en pratiquant une *ordinal factor analysis*. Dans un premier temps, nous investiguons et comparons le degré de polarisation idéologique de chacun des deux groupes. Dans un deuxième temps, nous analysons dans quelle mesure la variation de la congruence idéologique entre les élus et les votants diffère de parti en parti. Troisièmement, nous nous demandons si les candidats élus, en contraste avec les candidats non élus, sont tendanciellement plus éloignés idéologiquement des électeurs de leur parti. Nous concluons que la polarisation idéologique de l'élite politique est plus forte que celle du public. En conséquence, l'électorat, relativement modéré dans ses orientations, se voit représenté par des élus ayant une orientation plus extrême du point des vues des valeurs défendues. De façon similaire, les candidats élus se trouvent être plus distants de leur électorat que les candidats non élus. Ces conclusions remettent en question les présupposés classiques de la théorie spatiale du vote (*proximity voting*) en allant dans le sens du modèle d'explication directionnelle des comportements électoraux (*directional voting*).

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