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Responsiveness and models of representation

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Responsiveness and models of representation*

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Abstract

Research on the opinion-policy link has shown that there is a connection between public preferences and implemented policy, albeit biased towards the preferences of the affluent. We argue that we need to look not only the income bias, but also at the political content of the policies. Are there systematic biases against certain types of policies that cause such policies to be undersupplied relative to preferences? We combine survey data on a wide range of issues from over two million respondents with manually coded data on implemented policies in 43 countries over time. We find that there is a positive relationship between opinion and policy, but also find evidence of a responsiveness gap: in most countries, implemented policies are more economically conservative than what the public prefers, and too culturally liberal.

Word count: 9925.

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A central promise and justification of democracy is that it leads to the implementation of policies that citizens want. When this is the case, we say that democracy is responsive (Powell 2004). Political science research paints a mixed picture of empirical reality. On the one hand, there is, on average, a correspondence between public opinion and public policy. Studies, primarily from the US and Europe, show that popular policies are more likely to be implemented, and policies also seem to respond dynamically to changes in public opinion (Hakhverdian 2010; Binzer Hobolt and Klemmemsen 2005; Binzer Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008; Lax and Phillips 2012; Monroe 1979, 1998; Page and Shapiro 1983; Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019; Soroka and Wlezien 2010). On the other hand, governments also seem to be more responsive to the wealthy, both in terms of accommodating their preferences and implementing policies they support (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2005, 2012; Gilens and Page 2014; Lupu and Warner, forthcoming[a]; Soroka and Wlezien 2010; Rosset and Stecker 2019). But since there is often considerable overlap between the preferences of the rich and the poor, large segments of the citizenry often seem to get what they want.

While this line of research has broken new ground, most existing approaches focus on differences in responsiveness between groups, particularly between the wealthy and the less wealthy. This approach allows researchers to say whether one group is better represented than another, but says little about the extent to which people get the policies they demand in situations where all groups are poorly (or well) represented. To do so, we need to consider the characteristics of the policies themselves. In this paper, therefore, we examine not only the match between policy preferences and implemented policies, but also the level of supply of each type of policy.

To make the analysis meaningful, we group the policy proposals according to their content. We focus on the left/right and GAL/TAN divisions and categorize the implementation of each policy as promoting either a leftist versus a rightist agenda, and a "Green, Alternative and Libertarian" agenda versus a "Traditional, Authoritarian and Nationalist" (Marks et al. 2006).

To evaluate how well citizens' preferences are represented in implemented policies we

develop a theoretical framework where we present two idealized models of representation of preferences; majoritarian and continuous policy representation. Each of these two models put forward different ideas on how voters should be represented, either that the majority should win or to realize the equal satisfaction of all groups. The different ideals have important implications for which empirical analyses that should be applied to evaluate them. We present two sets of empirical models tailored to evaluate these ideals.

Combining survey data on attitudes toward policy proposals with hand-coded data on the implementation of those same proposals in 43 countries, we find that while there is indeed a positive correlation between public opinion and implemented policy, there is also a consistent undersupply of certain types of policies.

No matter if we depart from the majoritarian or continuous ideal model, in most countries, economically conservative and culturally liberal policies are implemented at a higher rate than desired by the public, i.e. there is a responsiveness gap.[1]

Affluent voters are more supportive of economically conservative and culturally liberal policies than less wealthy voters, which means they are better represented, as previous research has shown (Gilens 2012; Bartels 2008). However, implemented policies go beyond even what the most affluent quintile in our data wants. Thus, the discrepancy in responsiveness cannot be explained by unequal responsiveness to different groups of voters. Instead, it is possible that a systematic bias against certain types of policies is driven not from below, by citizens, but by the political establishment itself, a proposition that has been theorized but not systematically tested (cf. Bartels 2016; Mair 2009).

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. First, we address the theoretical arguments for why we should or should not expect correspondence between public opinion and policy, and what might explain possible biases. In the data and methods sections, we describe the surveys used and the process of coding policy implementation. The next section presents the results, and the final section discusses how the results suggest a new avenue of research.

1. Previous research has shown that while many parties are "left-authoritarian", few mainstream parties offer this type of platform (Brug and Van Spanje 2009; Lefkofridi, Wagner, and Willmann 2014). Our study reveals a similar mismatch, but between public opinion and implemented policies.

Previous research on responsiveness

Empirical research shows that policy seems to be affected by changes in public opinion, especially on matters that are salient to the public (Burstein 2003; Soroka and Wlezien 2010). Stimson, Mackuen, and Erickson (1995, 560) concluded that "government combines both short- and long-term considerations through both rational anticipation and compositional change to produce a strong and resilient link between public and policy." This conclusion was based on a study comparing public preference for more liberalism or conservatism with the behavior of all branches of government. When public sentiment changed, the political system followed.

Subsequent studies have also looked at spending levels (Soroka and Wlezien 2010), and increasingly at the implementation of specific policy proposals. Martin Gilens combined American survey data on attitudes toward a range of policy proposals with data on their implementation four years later and found a moderately strong overall relationship. The more Americans favored policy change, the more likely the change was to actually occur (Gilens 2012).

The main focus in the literature recently has been on whether governments seem to be more responsive to certain groups of voters than others. Gilens (2012, 1) stated that "the vast majority of Amcerians appear to have essentially no impact on which policies the government does or doesn't adopt" and has argued, in other work, that the American political system is more like an oligarchy than a democracy (Gilens and Page 2014).[2] Bartels (2016, 267) also find that "millions of Americans have no apparent influence on ... the fate of proposed policy changes". This pattern of income based unequal responsiveness has also been found in comparative studies looking at government spending (Peters and Ensink 2015), ideological congruence (Bernauer, Giger, and Rosset 2015; Giger, Rosset, and Bernauer 2012; Lupu and Warner, forthcoming[a]; Rosset, Giger, and Bernauer 2013; Schakel and Hakhverdian 2018) and policy implementation (Rasmussen, Reher,

2. Critiques suggest that group differences in preferences is too small to result in substantial differences in responsiveness (Bashir 2015; Branham, Soroka, and Wlezien 2017; Enns 2015; Soroka and Wlezien 2008; Ura and Ellis 2008). But Bowman (Bowman 2020) shows that when testing many different models specifications and definitions of policy change most results show that there is a bias towards the wealthy.

and Toshkov 2019). Moreover, individual country studies from the Netherlands (Schakel 2021; Schakel and Pas 2020), Germany (Elsässer, Hense, and Schäfer 2020), Denmark (Elkjær 2020), Sweden (Persson 2020), and EU-level institutions (Lefkofridi and Giger 2020) also show similar patterns of unequal responsiveness.[3]

According to this research, the reason for why policy appears to correspond to the preferences of the median voter turns out to be largely non-causal. Less affluent voters get what they want only when their preferences align with the affluent (Enns 2015). But even if that often is the case, the resulting "coincidental representation" is clearly problematic from a normative perspective, and there are many important issues on which the opinions of the different income groups diverge substantially (Bartels 2016; Gilens 2015).[4]

While the pattern of unequal responsiveness to more affluent voters is robust and widespread, there is no consensus on the underlying mechanisms. Because the field originally began with studies of the United States, initial explanations for this bias focused on the role of money in politics, given the importance of campaign finance and lobbying in the American context (Flavin 2015; Gilens 2012; Page and Gilens 2017). But as more and more studies from other contexts have shown a similar bias, this cannot be the only explanation. Unequal responsiveness must stem from factors that are not unique to the United States.

Economic affluence is the most obvious candidate to explain income bias. Even if campaign finance laws are strict, the wealthy have more channels through which to exert their will. It has also been argued that interest groups matter (Gilens 2012), but the issue is contested (Bevan and Rasmussen 2020; Klüver and Pickup 2019). Where corruption is widespread, economic resources can also be converted directly into political influence through bribes (Lupu and Warner, forthcoming[b]). But even in the absence of corruption, wealthy citizens tend to participate more in politics (Schlozman, Verba, and

3. Recent research has focused on other aspects than income based misrepresentation, and focused on factors such as gender (Homola 2019; Reher 2018) and political sophistication (Boonen, Pedersen, and Hooghe 2017).

4. Established parties were in a study shown to respond to the median voter while anti-establishment parties respond primarily to their voters (Ezrow et al. 2011).

Brady 2013). Members of parliament therefore have a greater incentive to cater to their interests.

Others have argued instead that the explanation is not so much that affluent citizens influence politics, but that elected politicians themselves are not representative of the population at large. It is common knowledge that MPs around the world are richer and more educated than their constituents (Carnes and Lupu 2016). If they implement policies they personally prefer, they will not be the same as those preferred by the average citizen (Carnes 2013; Rosset and Stecker 2019). A lack of descriptive representation is likely to lead to a deficit of substantive representation (Carnes 2012).

Yet another line of thought suggests that there is little connection between public opinion and policy at all. Peter Mair has argued that several trends serve to make the democratic system less responsive than it used to be. First, a trend towards professionalization, where politicians inreasingly see politics as a career, and where government office is the end goal, rather than implementation of policy. Second, internationalization, as governments are bound by international agreements such as the WTO or the EU, often entered into by their predecessors. And finally, judicialization, and a general a shrinking of the political sphere, with more and more policy areas cordoned off by law. Most notably, monetary policy has since the 1990s in many countries been the responsibility of independent central banks, taking an important policy tool out of the hands of governments (Mair 2009).

On the other hand, empirical studies have found little evidence that factors such as economic inequality (Guntermann 2021), political institutions (Rosset and Kurella 2021; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019; Toshkov, Mäder, and Rasmussen 2020), or the political behavior of citizens strongly moderate the degree of inequality in responsiveness (Lupu and Warner, forthcoming[b], forthcoming[a]). In short, the jury is still out on exactly why there is unequal responsiveness.[5]

5. But see (Griffin and Newman 2005) for a study showing that policy actually is indeed more responsive to voters than to non-voters.

Models of representation

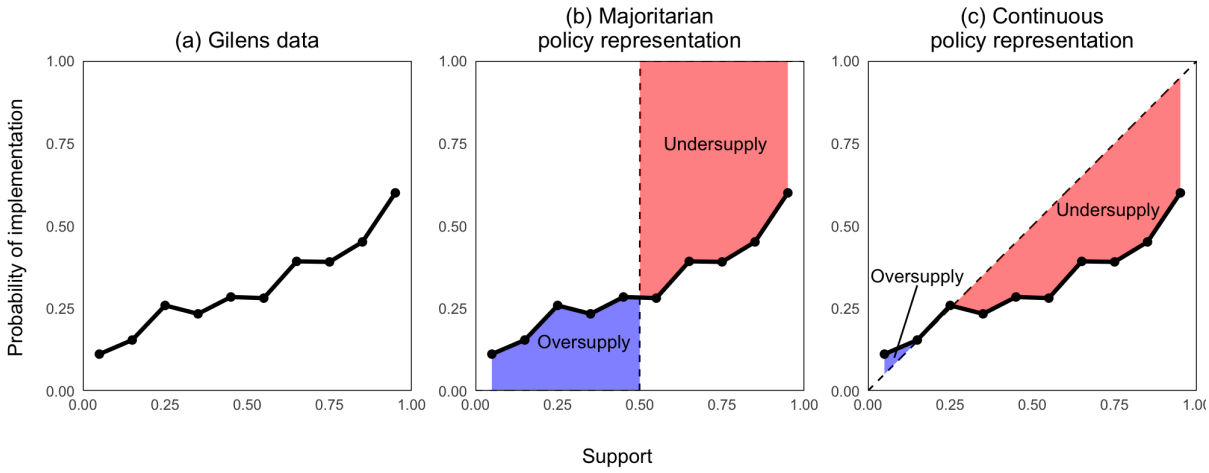
In order to determine whether democratic representation "works" or not, it is necessary to first establish a model of ideal representation. And the more claims the researcher wants to make, the more specified the model needs to be. Ideally, there should be a clear correspondence between the theoretical ideal and the empirical specification used to evaluate it.

Previous research has, as mentioned earlier, focused on the question of unequal influence between groups of voters, with the assumption that higher public support for a proposal should correspond to a higher probability of implementation of said proposal. The relevant point of comparison are then the slope coefficients from regression models with implementation as the dependent variable, and support for the proposal in the group as independent variable: the steeper the slope, the better the representation.

However, to evaluate whether some policies are over- or undersupplied, it is necessary to establish what the right levels are, which requires more detail in the specification of the shape of the ideal relationship between public opinion and policy. As an example, we can look at a graph from Martin Gilens (2012, 73), showing the proportion of 1779 proposals that saw policy change within a four-year period, depending on the level of public support for policy change (in deciles). The graph is reproduced in panel a of Figure 1. There is a clear positive relationship: the least popular proposals are seldom implemented, while the most popular are implemented in a majority of cases.

But while the relatively even slope of the curve might seem indicative of a representative process that works, our evaluation of the quality of the process rests on assumptions of what good representation should look like. More concretely, what is the decision rule for at which level of support a proposal should be implemented or not? The most apparent rule is the one Gilens (2012, 71) describes as "Perfectly responsive majoritarian" — only proposals that enjoy majority support should be implemented. It is probably the most intutive way to think about a democratic process (Dahl 1989). In panel b of Figure 1 the dashed line represents that ideal, and the shaded areas the deviations from the ideal.

Figure 1: The evaluation of policy representation depends on the normative ideal. Reproduction of Gilens (2012) graph.



The shaded area in the top right of the graph represents the "undersupply" of policy change — proposals that enjoy majority support, but are not implemented enough. This is described by Gilens as a "status quo bias". However, we can also observe the flipside, an oversupply of proposals that do not have majority support, described by the shaded area under the line. The fact that the probability of implementation is higher for proposals with 40-50 percent support than for proposals with 0-10 percent support is thus problematic for representation. Responsiveness would be improved if more of these proposals were rejected. Conversely, it makes no difference whether a proposal has 50-60 or 90-100 percent support — it should according to this ideal always be implemented, regardless.

There are however theoretical justifications for expecting, and desiring, a pattern that is more gradual than the step-shape of majoritarian policy representation. Basically, the issue comes down to whether proposals that have some support, but less then a majority, should ever be implemented. With a strict majoritarian idea of representation, implementing a proposal that has 49 percent approval is wrong, because there is a majority that does not approve. We will here discuss two arguments, one based on fairness, and the other on practical considerations, for why it sometimes might be reasonable to implement such proposals.

Despite the intuitive appeal of the majority principle, it might also lead to situations

where some citizens are seldom or never represented and thus find themselves in a stage of 'majority tyranny'. It is therefore generally assumed that cross-cutting cleavages are desirable in a democracy, so that no one is on the losing side in all issues. This leads us to the second model which we label 'continuous policy representation', which means that policies are continuously being more frequently implemented in relation to their level of support. There are proposed theoretical solutions that acknowledge the problem with majoritarian the voting rules, such as "lottery voting." All participants cast a vote for their preferred policy, and a policy is then selected at random, with a chance proportional to the number of votes (Saunders 2010). The principle ensures, in the long run, that some groups do not get consistently unrepresented and enables all citizens' preferences to be represented in a pluralistic way. The guiding principle for this pluralist ideal is somewhat different than that of majority representation, namely the *equal consideration of interests* (Christiano 1996).[6]

In the long run, this principle means that proposals with 20 percent support will be implemented 20 percent of the time, and proposals that have 40 percent support will be implemented 40 percent of the time, and so on. Perfect representation is thus in the context of the graphs in Figure 1 represented by a diagonal line. This might seem fair from the perspective of equal representation, but for a given proposal, lottery voting is bound to produce results that appear unfair. It would be hard to explain to a public of which 90 percent is against a proposal that it still must be implemented, if the lot happens to fall that way. It will of course also be difficult to get a coherent policy agenda when the fate of individual policies is decided at random.

Moreover, in practice, no legislature uses this system. We therefore turn to the second justification for continuous policy representation. Here, we instead assume that representatives should (and do) take other factors than public support into account when judging a proposal. We can call them the *external consequences* of a proposal, which can be

6. This ideal might appear different then the conventional majoritarian view of democracy, but does also have strong roots in democratic theory. For example, Ronald Dworkin's 'constitutional democracy' put the equal considerations of interests in favor of the majority principle (Dworkin 2002, 148), and Arend Lijphart argues in favor of consociational democracy which rejects the majority principle in favor of finding compromises that satisfies different groups (Lijphart 1969).

economical but also legal or diplomatic, for instance (cf. Gilens 2012). Let us refer to these external consequences as a random variable with uniform distribution in the range -0.5 to 0.5, $\lambda = [-0.5, 0.5]$. Representatives then take both public support and external consequences into account when deciding when to implement a proposal:

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } support_i + \lambda_i > 0.5 \\ 0 & \text{if } support_i + \lambda_i \leq 0.5 \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

The equation implies that when public support for a proposal is very low, say 10 percent, the external consequences of a proposal need to be very positive for it to be implemented. If λ is uniformly distributed (and uncorrelated with public support), that will only happen in 10 percent of the cases. But if opinion is close to equally split, the external consequences will decide the fate of the proposal in most cases.

This model is most likely a better approximation of the real world than the one in which only public opinion matters. But does it hold up as a normative benchmark? We believe that it does, as it gives some discretion to the representatives themselves, in deciding the 'cost' of each policy. In the majoritarian model, the perfect representative acts as a robot that only observes the level of support, but is in the continuous model allowed to take other factors into account. The differences between the two approaches thus parallels the distinction between direct and representative democracy.[7]

We have in this stylized example made three assumptions regarding the external consequences, namely that they (a) are given equal weight to public opinion, (b) uniformly distributed, and (c) uncorrelated with public opinion. The resulting probability of implementation as a function of opinion support will then, as in the case of lottery voting, be a straight line. Alterations to these assumptions produces lines with different shapes. The more weight given to external consequences, the flatter the line becomes. If they follow a

7. Since the empirical studies in this field is dominated of analyses of dichotomous implementation outcomes, we are referring to the probability of implementation, not the degree to which each issue is implemented. It is, however, possible to think of a modification of the continuous representation model where the right degree of implementation of each individual issue corresponds to public support. Soroka and Wlezien's thermostatic model can be seen as such an example. Such a model could not, however, deal with all political issues and decisions since many of these are dichotomous — such as joining organizations such as EU or NATO, or deciding which side of the roads to drive on.

normal distribution instead of a uniform, the line will follow a sigmodial curve. If external consequences are correlated with public opinion, the line will also change shape. Strong opinion support will then be an indicator that the external consequences of a proposal are beneficial. With perfect correlation the shape will revert back to a step-shape, as representatives do not need to take external consequences into account at all. But for the sake of simplicity we here assume that there is no such correlation.

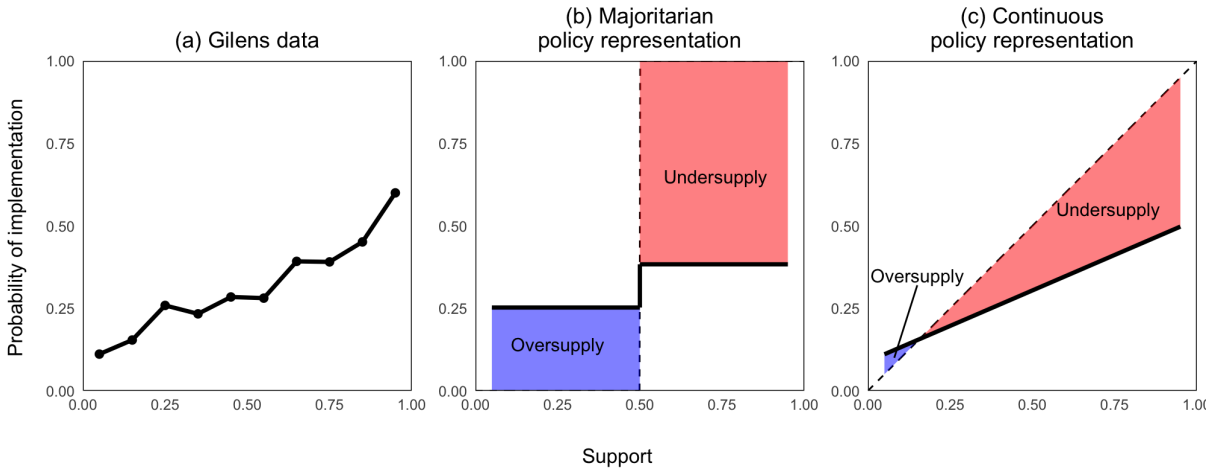
In panel c of Figure 1 we use the diagonal as the benchmark for how much policy that should be supplied. Measured against this ideal, there is very little oversupply of impopular policies; only undersupply of relatively popular policies. As the dependent variable in Gilens' case is policy change, this undersupply can be interpreted as a status quo bias. Had it been "implementation of conservative policy", for example, we could instead interpret it as a bias against conservative policy.

Bridging theory and empirics

The normative interpretation of how representation works depends on the benchmark used. But the benchmark should also be reflected in the empirical methods used. If the ideal is majoritarian policy representation, where implementation of a proposal with 49 percent support is as bad as implementation of a proposal with 1 percent support, our measures should be geared towards this comparison.

One way to express this type of relationship empirically is to look at 'majority win rates' — the higher the majority win rates, the better represented is the will of the people. While this way of studying the opinion-policy link is not the standard empirical analysis employed in this field, it has been applied by for example Branham, Soroka and Wlezien (2017) who use majority-win-rates in their study of responsiveness in the US. If we apply this approach to the Gilens data previously discussed, we get panel b of Figure 2, which simply shows the proportion of implemented proposals among those that have and do not have majority support. A big "step" at the 0.50 threshold is indicative of responsiveness, whereas the shaded areas tell us about to what extent policies are over- or undersupplied.

Figure 2: Fitting different functions adapted to different normative benchmarks on the Gilens (2012) data.



Fitting a straight line to the data is instead more appropriate if the relevant benchmark is continuous policy representation, as in panel c of Figure 2. Here, the undersupply of policy is even more pronounced. In Gilens' case, with the dependent variable being policy change, this is indicative of a status quo bias. The difference between panel b and panel c is due to the different treatment of proposals with about 40 percent support — with majoritarian policy representation, the ideal supply of such policy is zero, whereas the continuous ideal suggests that they should be implemented around 40 percent of the time, which they are not (as evident by panel a).

The theoretical patterns of representation described in this section thus serve as benchmarks to determine when there is "too little" and "too much" policy. They also guide the choice of functional form for the empirical models. Our research questions are therefore:

(1) *Is a there a relationship between public opinion and policy?*

(2) *Are some policies under- or oversupplied relative to the different benchmarks of perfect representation?*

Data and methods

We now turn to the question of how we should empirically evaluate how democratic systems conform to these theoretical ideals. Studies of responsiveness have used a variety of methodological approaches. They usually involve looking at public opinion as measured through surveys, but there is considerable variation on the response side: attitudes of representatives (either ideological self-placement or on specific issues (Lupu and Warner, forthcoming[a])), expert judgements of government positions (Rosset and Stecker 2019), spending levels (Wlezien and Soroka 2012), and implementation of policy (Gilens 2012; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019). The standard approach in the literature on policy responsiveness is to compare public support for policy proposals with data on the proposals' implementation in policy. In this paper, we adopt the same general strategy, and compare public opinion with corresponding data on implementation of specific policy proposals (including proposals to increase or decrease spending). We include 43 countries in the sample: the EU member and candidate countries, plus the remaining OECD member countries (except Costa Rica and Colombia). The countries and years in the data can be found in Table A.3. But within that broad framework, several choices need to be made.

In Gilens' (2012) seminal analysis, and the studies that have followed thereafter, the focus is on policy change. The independent variable is measured as the share of respondents who want to see policy changed from the status quo, and the dependent variable is whether change took place within a given time period, or not. While this approach allows us to gauge the overall level of responsiveness in a system, it is not well suited to measure over- and undersupply of policy, since there is no 'direction' to the policy. We do not know if change implies making policy more or less economically conservative, for instance.

One of the few existing studies that look at the contents of policy is the one by Jeffrey Lax and Justin Phillips (2012) on the connection between public opinion and policy in American states. They find that there is a connection: more popular policies are more likely to be implemented. However, by also classifying policies as liberal (for instance ban

assault weapons) or conservative (for instance allow concealed weapons), they are able to show that state governments tend to be over-representative: policy is too conservative in states with conservative public opinion, and too liberal in states with a more liberal public opinion.

Studies that only look at the relationship between support for proposals and their implementation cannot distinguish between these scenarios. To conduct an analysis of this type, proposals must be possible to place along a dimension. In our analysis, we will therefore assign a 'direction' to each policy, i.e. what type of policy agenda that is promoted by the policy's implementation.

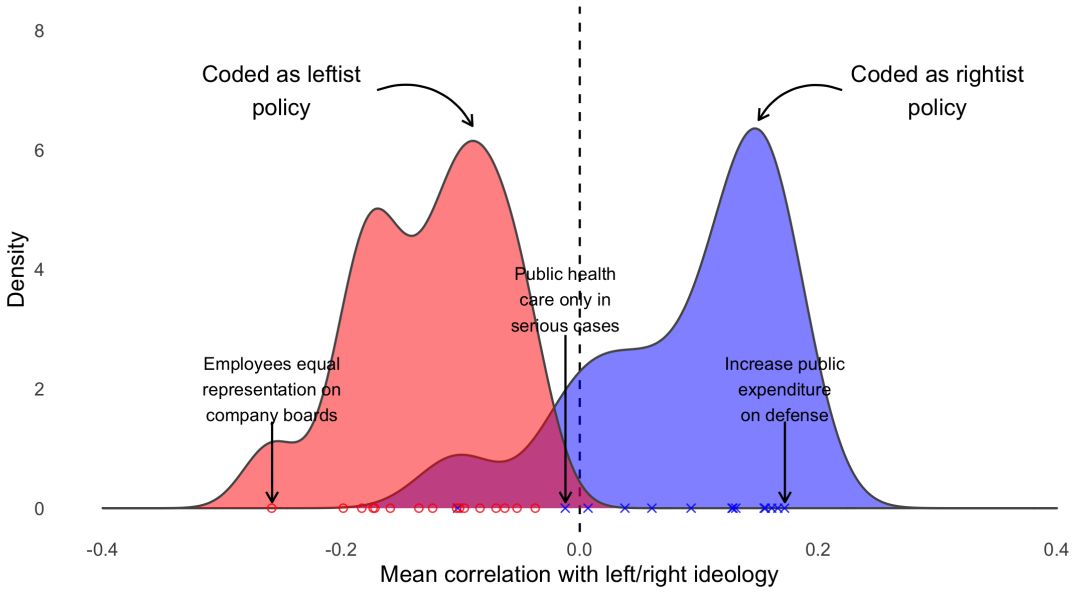
Support for policy proposals

Our main independent variable is support for specific policies among the surveyed respondents, standardized across response scales to range from 0 (no support) to 1 (complete support). Data is collected from a number of cross-country surveys: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), Eurobarometer (EB), European Social Survey (ESS), European Values Study (EVS), International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the World Values Survey (WVS). Most questions have been asked in several countries.

From the issues available in the surveys, we have selected those related to two main political dimensions: the economic left-right dimension, and the cultural GAL/TAN dimension. Issues on the economic dimension are coded as indicating support for a "leftist" position, meaning pro-state, pro-redistribution, pro-equality. A "rightist" position instead implies less regulation, less redistribution, more inequality. For some but not all issues, we are able to investigate the correspondence between our coding of the issue and support for the issue among respondents that self-identify as "left" or "right". For each question, we calculate the correlation between the respondents' ideological self-placement and their opinion towards the proposal. A positive value means that respondents who identify as "right" are more positive to the proposal. In Figure 3 we show the distribution of correlations for the questions included in this analysis, and how we have coded them.

In general, our coding corresponds well to the patterns in the data, with two excep-

Figure 3: Distribution of correlations between respondent's ideological self-placements and our coding of proposals. Red circles are coded as leftist policy, blue x:s as rightist.



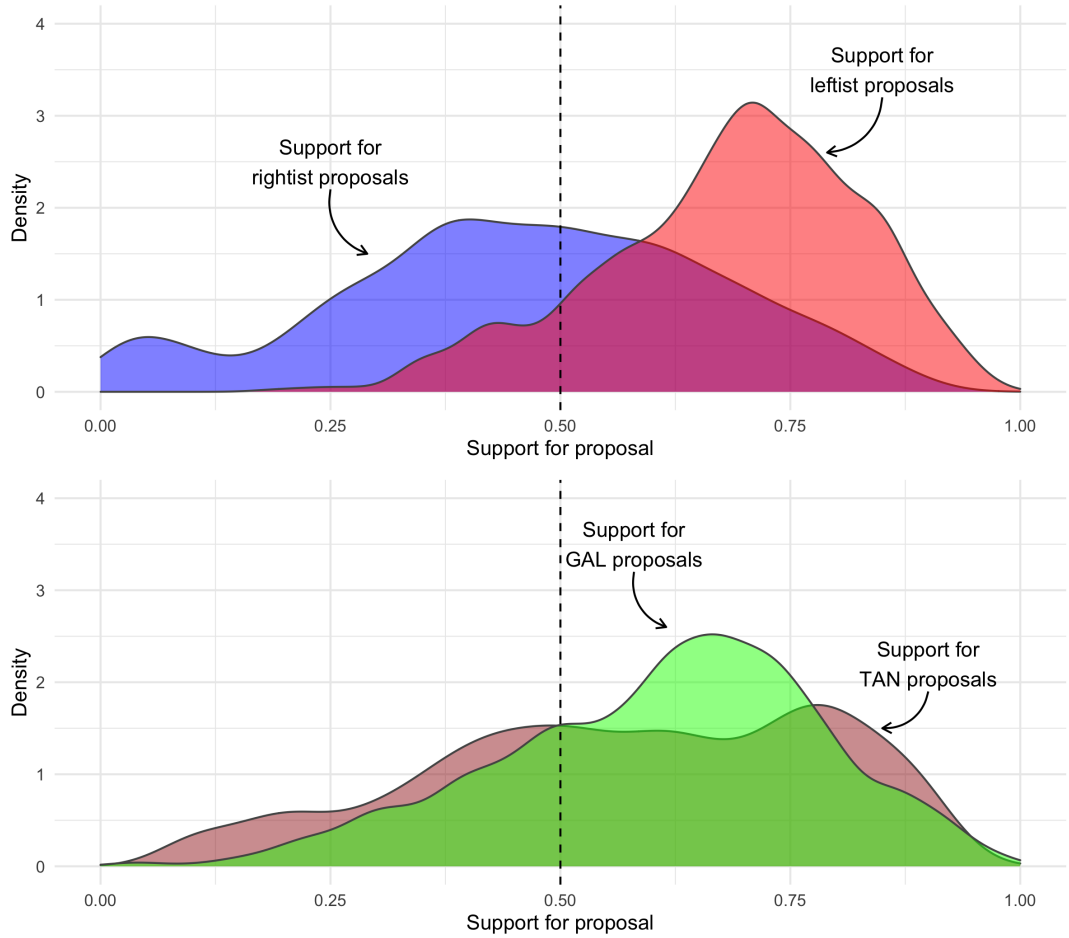
tions. The proposals that "Public health care should only be provided in serious cases" and "Unemployed should take any job or lose their benefits" are on average more popular among respondents who identify as left, while we code them as right. However, we cannot do this correspondence check on all questions, nor do we have self-reported placement on the GAL/TAN scale. A full list of the included questions, and how they have been coded, can be found in the Appendix A.

Another important methodological choice concerns policies that are already in place, for instance support for progressive taxation or abortion, in countries that already practice these. We believe that this is mostly an issue of question wording, as questions also can be framed as removing a policy. Restricting responsiveness to a question of policy change skews the analysis theoretically, since some groups might benefit more from the status quo than others. Keeping the status quo can be just as much an expression of a political agenda as is changing it.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of support for the four kinds of proposals included in the data. The top panel shows that leftist proposals in general are considerably more popular than rightist proposals, although there is overlap. For instance, the least popular proposal in the data, "Increase the retirement age", is coded as a rightist proposal. In

the bottom panel, which shows support for GAL and TAN proposals, the distributions are much more similar.

Figure 4: Distribution of support for left/right and GAL/TAN proposals.



Policy implementation

The main dependent variable is policy implementation after five years, 0 or 1. 1 indicates that the policy was implemented (or kept in place), whereas 0 indicates that the policy was not implemented at the end of the period. Hence, policy implementation is always coded as a zero or one. In the context of continuous representation, we are thus talking about a probability of implementation, not the degree.

The mean value of this variable is 0.59, meaning that 59 percent of the policies asked about were implemented five years after the question was asked.[8]

8. For questions that asked about changes in levels, such as spending, retirement age, number of immi-

In our analyses, we will weight all issues equally, despite the fact that voters care more about some policies than others. But in order to take this factor into account, we would need detailed saliency measures for each survey that go beyond broad categorization such as "redistribution" or "the economy", which we do not have.

Measures and analysis

The analysis is straightforward, since the main questions in this paper are descriptive — we are trying to evaluate the extent and limitations of representation, not explain it, primarily. We construct two measures that show the level of over- respective undersupply of policy, both for majoritarian and continuous policy representation.

The majoritarian policy representation measure has a value of zero when the public supports a proposal and it is implemented, or when the public not supports a proposal, and it is not implemented. If the public is supportive, but the proposal not is implemented, the measure takes a value of -1, indicating undersupply. And conversely, when the proposal is implemented despite lack of public support, the measure takes a value of +1, indicating oversupply.

The mean value of this measure across a range of issues thus gives an indication of whether the type of policy in the issues generally is over- or undersupplied. However, a value of zero might still hide substnatial disconnects between opinion and policy, if there is oversupply of unpopular policies, and undersupply of popular policies. It is therefore important to plot the values (as in Figure 2), or to combine it with a measure of majority congruence, that takes the value of one when implementation and majority support agrees, and zero otherwise.

Perfect congruence necessitates that there is no over- or undersupply, but moderate congruence can coexist with both oversupply, balance, and undersupply, which is why it is important to take both aspects into account.

To measure continuous policy representation, we can use the same approach as for

grants, and so on, we did not use any thresholds for what constitutes a substantial change. Any change was registered as implementation of the policy, due to the difficulty in determining what constitutes an important or substantial change. The only exception is that spending was counted relative to GDP. Spending that increased in absolute terms, but decreased in relation to GDP were counted as decreases.

majority policy representation, but instead of only looking at whether there is majority support or not, we use a continuous support variable:

$$contsupply_i = implementation_i - contsupport_i \tag{2}$$

The formula implies that all implemented issues that enjoy less than unanimous support are oversupplied, in one sense. A proposal that has 75 percent support, and is implemented gives a value of +0.25, and would give a value of -0.75 if it was not implemented. To measure congruence here we use a similar modification of the formula:

$$contcongruence_i = 1 - abs(implementation_i - contsupport_i) \tag{3}$$

We will also fit regression models to produce lines that are comparable to the theoretical figures discussed above.

Results

Left/right issues

We begin by looking at policy representation of left/right issues. In Table 1 we divide these issues according to whether they entail a policy shift to the left or right, and whether they enjoy majority support or not. Each cell in the two leftmost columns shows the percentage of these proposals that were implemented after five years. Ideally, from a majoritarian representation standpoint, proposals in the left column should have a zero percent implementation rate, and proposals in the right column a universal implementation rate. With a continuous policy representation perspective, the figures should be closer to 0.25 and 0.75, respectively.

In the columns to the right, we present five other measures that all say something about the policy. The difference column shows the difference in implementation rate between proposals with majority support and proposals without. We then present congruence and balance measures for both the majoritarian and continuous perspectives. In

general, a high value in the difference column should correspond to higher values in the congruence columns, but it is possible to have high congruence despite a low difference number, for instance if most proposals are implemented and supported. And finally, in the balance columns we show how much of the type of policy is supplied, relative to preferences. Positive numbers mean that there is oversupply of the policy, and negative values undersupply.

Table 1: Descriptives on left/right issues. Mean values, number of observations in parentheses.

	Mean imp. Unsupported	Mean imp. Supported	Diff.	Congruence maj.	Balance maj.	Congruence cont.	Balance cont.
All	0.466 (309)	0.531 (799)	+0.065	0.532	-0.210	0.529	-0.132
Right	0.537 (229)	0.527 (186)	-0.010	0.492	+0.084	0.508	+0.072
Left	0.262 (80)	0.532 (613)	+0.270	0.556	-0.384	0.542	-0.169

The first row of the table corroborates findings from previous research: Proposals with majority support are more likely (0.065) to be implemented than those without, and the majority of policy implementation (0.53) is in alignment with majority opinion. The oversupply column tells us that in general there is an undersupply of policy — more popular proposals are not being implemented to the same extent that impopular proposals are not. But without knowing the content of policy, the oversupply measure is irrelevant.

In the second row we look at rightist proposals. There is little responsiveness — popular proposals are actually less likely to be implemented. Congruence remains relatively high, but is less than 0.5, and there is oversupply of rightist policy. Examples of impopular but implemented proposals is one to require unemployed people to take any job or lose their benefits, to increase the retirement age, and to spend less on benefits for the poor. The proposal to increase the retirement age has the distinction of being the on average least popular proposal in the dataset, but is still implemented in around half the cases. If we instead use continuous measures, congruence creeps over the 0.5 line.

The story is rather different for the leftist proposals in the third row. Here there is high responsiveness — popular proposals are much more likely to be implemented (0.27 difference), and congruence is also high, with implementation being congruent with majority preferences in 55.6 percent of the cases. However, there is also substantial undersupply of leftist policy in general (-0.384). Common examples of popular leftist policy proposals that do not get implemented are to introduce a tax on financial transactions, to increase unemployment benefits, and to increase public expenditure on education. If we use the continuous measure, the balance measure decreases, meaning that there is less — but still substantial — undersupply of leftist policy. The reason for the discrepancy is that there are many leftist proposals that enjoy majority support. With a majoritarian view of representation, they should be implemented all the time, causing a big under-delivery of such policy. But with a continuous view of policy representation, they should only be implemented all the time if they enjoy total support.

In order to test whether public support for a proposal is associated with implementation in a statistically significant way we apply regression analysis. The dependent variable is implementation, and independent variables are majority support (models 1-3) and continuous support (models 4-6). Coefficients of the majority support correspond to the 'Difference' column in Table 1, meaning the difference in implementation rate between proposals that were and were not supported by a majority. Coefficients of the continuous support variable instead correspond to the slope of the continuous support variable. Results are presented in Table 2.

Evidence for responsiveness are predominantely found for leftist proposals. The association between public opinion and implementation is not statistically significant for rightist proposals, regardless if we look at majority support or continuous support. However, and this is one of the main points of this paper, it is not enough to only look at slope coefficients to determine the nature of representation. The slope coefficients of Table 2 tell us that yes, there is more covariation between opinion and implementation of leftist policy than rightist policy. But the balance measures in Table 1 also show that there is large undersupply of leftist policy, relative to preferences. To make things clearer,

Table 2: Regression analysis: Left/right issues

	Dependent variable:					
	Implementation					
	All	Right	Left	All	Right	Left
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority support	0.065	−0.010	0.269***			
	(0.033)	(0.049)	(0.053)			
Cont. support				0.349***	0.118	1.117***
				(0.077)	(0.116)	(0.125)
Constant	0.466***	0.537***	0.263***	0.306***	0.478***	−0.247**
	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.059)	(0.084)
Observations	1,108	415	693	1,108	415	693
R^2	0.003	0.0001	0.030	0.019	0.002	0.093
Adjusted R^2	0.002	−0.002	0.028	0.018	0.00005	0.091

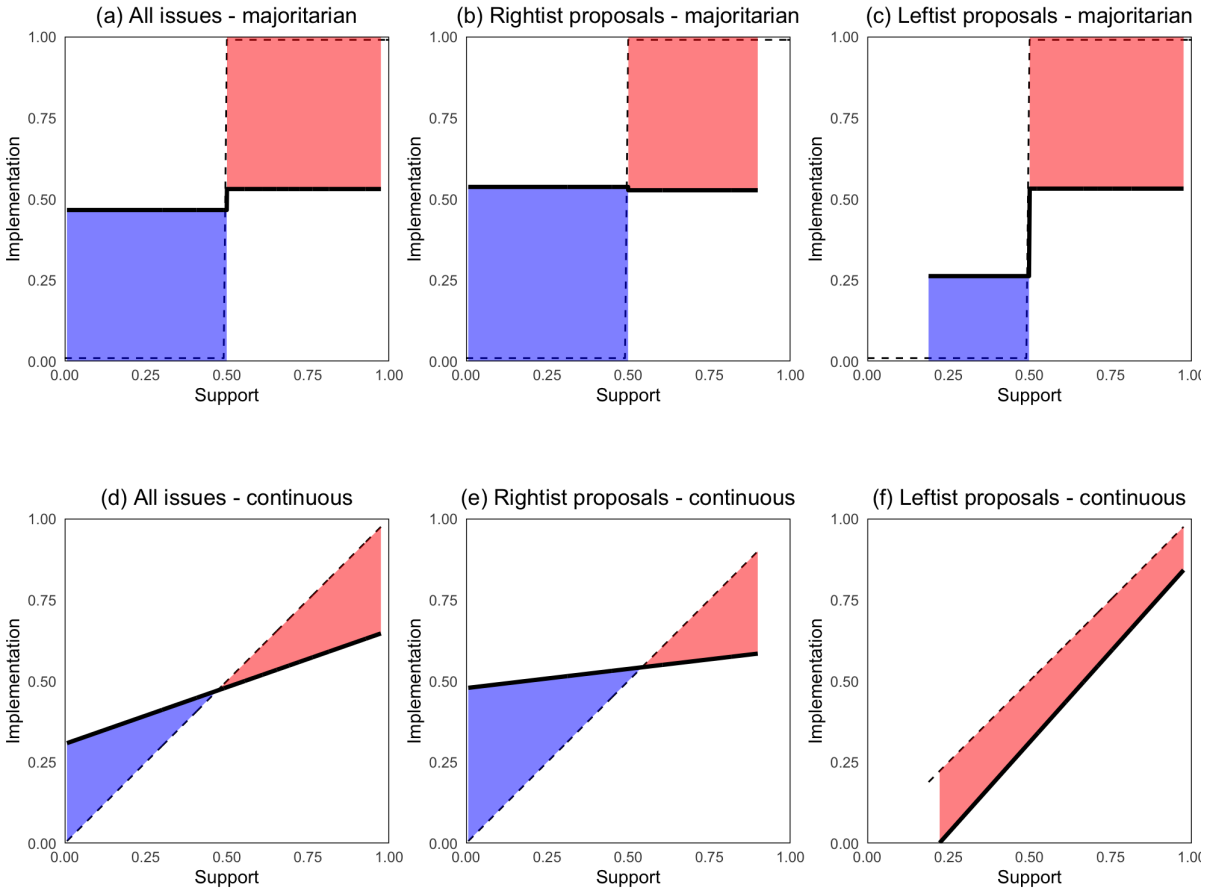
Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Figure 5 plots the predicted values of implementation from the six models.

The graphs tell very different stories. Panel a and d contain both rightist and leftist proposals, and here we see patterns of imperfect responsiveness. Implementation is higher for more popular proposals, but the difference (panel a) or slope (panel d) are quite small. For rightist proposals, the main takeaway is one of lacking responsiveness — there is little difference in chance of implementation, depending on public support. As a consequence, popular policies are not supplied to the extent people want, and impopular policies are oversupplied. For leftist proposals there is a much stronger relationship. The pattern is consistent with biased responsiveness. In panel c we can see that the red area is larger than the blue. And in panel f, the fitted line is at all times below the diagonal.

Panels c and f thus offer an interesting comparison, that highlights the different perspectives on representation we have discussed. Leftist proposals with between 25 and 50 percent support are implemented about 25 percent of the time. With the majoritarian approach to representation, that is still too much. But with the continuous perspective,

Figure 5: Predicted implementation of policies with different levels of support. Top row: Majoritarian representation. Bottom row: Continuous representation. Bold line is predicted value, dashed line is reference for optimal representation.



it is too little. Proposals that enjoy 40 percent suport should be implemented around 40 percent of the time, and are thus undersupplied.

To determine the quality of representation, we thus need first to decide what ideal we subscribe to. But we then also need to evaluate the covariance of implementation and support, but also whether there are systematic biases against some types of policy. Even though democratic theory does not speak to the quality of one type of policy over the other, it is still desirable that there should be no bias.

Based on these graphs, policy responsiveness can be improved in different ways, primarily by higher implementation of proposals that are supported by a majority. For both rightist and leftist proposals, the average implementation rate of those proposals is just above 50 percent. But for rightist policy, another way would be to lower implementation

of impopular proposals.

GAL/TAN issues

We now turn to proposals related to the GAL/TAN scale. These concern immigration, minority rights, law and order, and the environment. We proceed in the same way as above, and first show the summary measures in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptives on GAL/TAN issues

	Mean imp. Unsupported	Mean imp. Supported	Diff.	Congruence maj.	Balance maj.	Congruence cont.	Balance cont.
All	0.439 (581)	0.592 (1398)	+0.153	0.583	-0.159	0.547	-0.052
GAL	0.611 (332)	0.648 (1001)	+0.037	0.584	-0.112	0.549	+0.026
TAN	0.209 (249)	0.451 (397)	+0.242	0.582	-0.257	0.545	-0.213

In several ways, the table tells a similar story as for left/right issues. GAL proposals, regardless of their support, are implemented to a high degree: 61 percent of the time when they do not have majority support, and 65 percent of the time when they do. Since the GAL proposals also tend to be quite popular (many more are supported than not), this leads to a high degree of congruence, 58 percent with the majoritarian measure, and 55 percent with the continuous measure. Here we thus have high congruence, but the variation in implementation is only very partially explained by public opinion.

For TAN proposals, just as with leftist proposals, the difference in implementation between unsupported and supported proposals is much larger, but the overall rate of implementation is lower. Supported proposals are actually implemented less than half of the time. The congruence scores are however still high, driven by the low implementation of unsupported proposals. But on average, there is less TAN policy supplied than what the public wants, as shown in the balance measures. Popular TAN proposals that are not implemented to the extent warranted by their level of support are for example harsher penalties for terrorism and crime. Figure B.2 in the appendix displays the mean level of implementation for individual GAL and TAN proposals.

Analyzing the relationship between support and implementation with regression analysis, we can see that the choice of modelling strategy in one case has implications for the conclusions drawn: Majority support does not have a statistically significant association with implementation for GAL proposals, but continuous support has. That means that there is variation within the groups on either side of the majority cutoff. And again, whether that variation is meaningful or not depends on the theoretical ideal subscribed to. Otherwise, all associations are statistically significant.

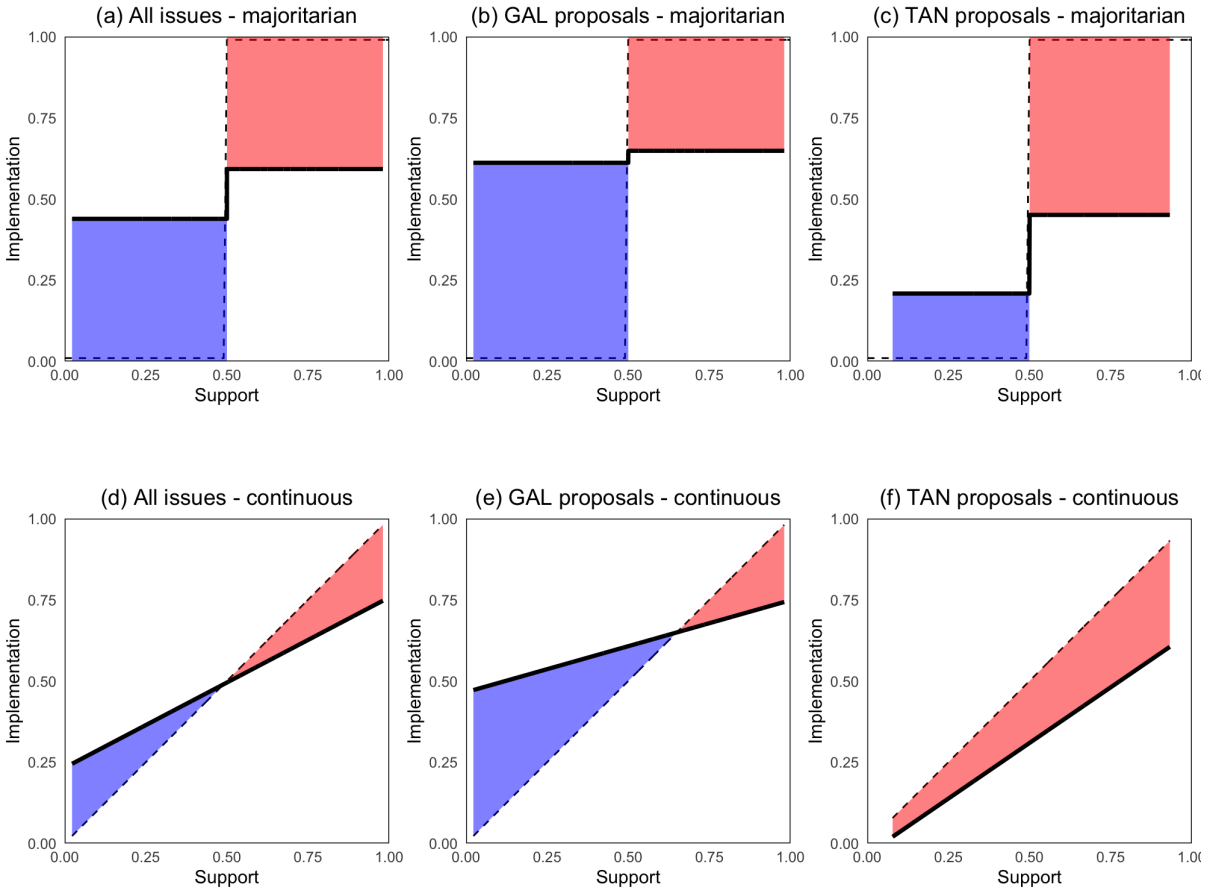
Table 4: Regression analysis: GAL/TAN issues

	Dependent variable:					
	Implementation					
	All	GAL	TAN	All	GAL	TAN
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority support	0.153***	0.037	0.242***			
	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.036)			
Cont. support				0.524***	0.283***	0.685***
				(0.054)	(0.074)	(0.074)
Constant	0.439***	0.611***	0.209***	0.233***	0.466***	−0.033
	(0.021)	(0.027)	(0.026)	(0.034)	(0.048)	(0.041)
Observations	1,979	1,333	646	1,979	1,333	646
R^2	0.020	0.001	0.060	0.040	0.011	0.097
Adjusted R^2	0.019	0.0004	0.059	0.040	0.010	0.096

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Displaying the results graphically in Figure 6, a pattern of imperfect responsiveness with slight bias towards GAL policy and bias against TAN emerges. The results again demonstrate that three distinct issues — the correlation between implementation and opinion support, congruence, and balance of policy, need not be entirely related. GAL proposals show little correlation, but reasonable bias, and high congruence. TAN proposals have high correlation, lower congruence, and bias against.

Figure 6: Predicted implementation of policies with different levels of support. Top row: Majoritarian representation. Bottom row: Continuous representation. Bold line is predicted value, dashed line is reference.



Taken together, our results are in line with findings from previous research that has shown that representatives tend to be less in favor of redistribution and more economically conservative than their voters (Rosset and Stecker 2019; Lupu and Warner, forthcoming[a]). Given the oversupply of impopular rightist policy, and undersupply of popular leftist policy, that discrepancy seems to be reflected in policy. We also see undersupply of TAN policy.

The results give a new perspective of the results from voter research, which has found large groups of "left-authoritarians," who combine leftist economic views with conservative cultural attitudes (Lefkofridi, Wagner, and Willmann 2014; Brug and Van Spanje 2009). Scholars have noted that this combination is more common among voters than among parties, where progressivism/conservatism on economics and culture tend to be

correlated. We can add that there is a similar gap between public opinion and policy. A possible explanation for our result could possibly be the lack of parties offering that particular combination of policies.

Additional information on implementation of specific issues can be found in the Appendix B.

Can the oversupply of right-leaning and GAL policy be explained by the preferences of the affluent?

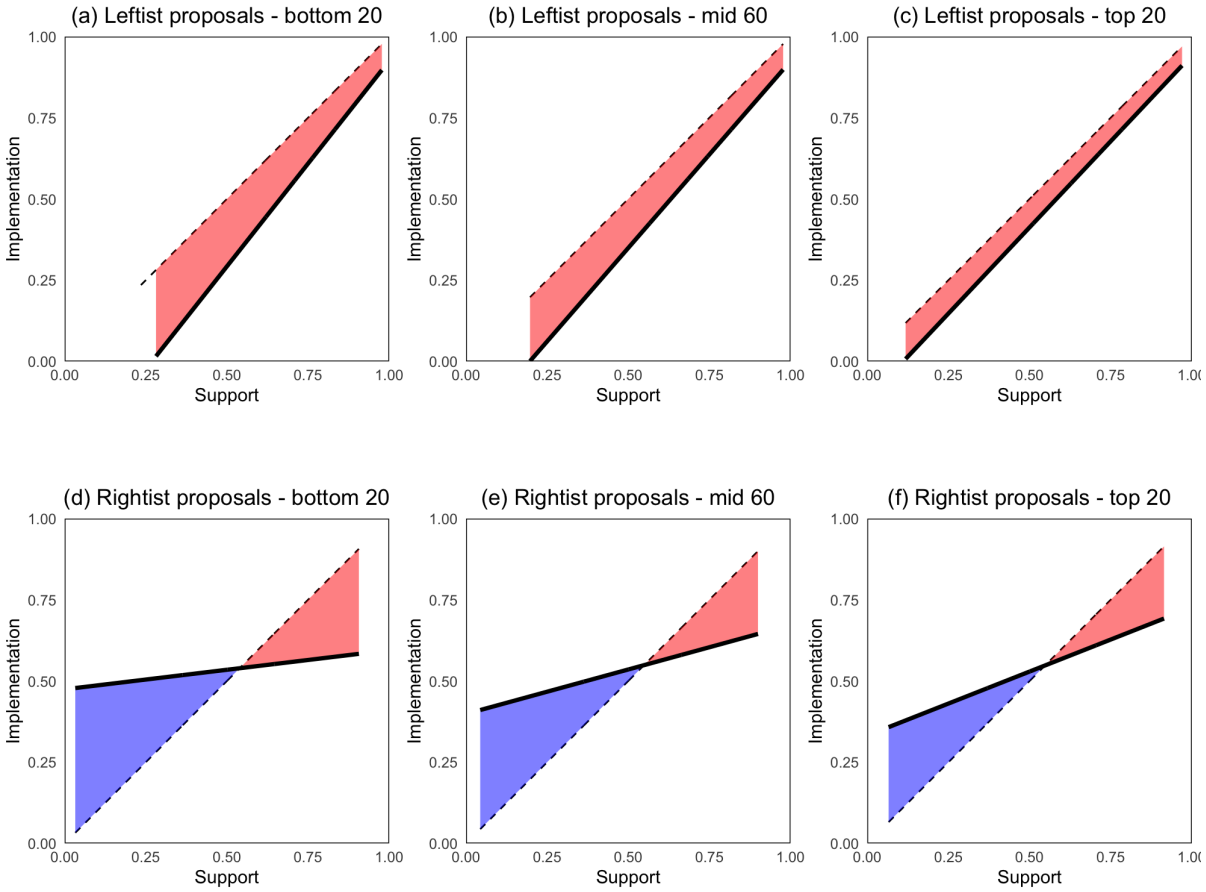
We have seen that implemented policies tend to be too conservative economically and too liberal culturally. These attitudes are more prevalent among the affluent and educated, and their preferences generally correlate better with policy outcomes. Previous research as shown that responsiveness is higher towards wealthier voters. Can their influence explain the oversupply of certain types of politics? If so, we should expect less or no policy bias toward the preferences of the affluent.

Figure 7 shows predicted values of policy implementation of left and right proposals over different levels of support among three income groups — the 20 percent with lowest incomes (in each country), the middle 60 percent, and the 20 percent with highest incomes. For brevity we only show the continuous graphs here. As expected, the shaded areas are smaller for the top income quintile than the lower. For rightist proposals, the slope is also steeper. The findings are thus in line with the large body of research that has found unequal responsiveness to the affluent (Gilens 2012).

But an interesting finding here is that there is underuspply of leftist policy, even relative to the preferences of the top 20 percent. The conventional story of unequal influence suggests that the affluent bend policy to their will, and as they prefer more economically conservative policy, that is what is implemented. But this oversupply indicates that there could be other drivers as well.

Finally, in Figure 8 we do the same for GAL/TAN proposals, and see the pattern repeated — policy corresponds better to the preferences of the affluent, but there still

Figure 7: Predicted implementation of left/right policies with different levels of support among different income segments: bottom 20 percent, middle 60 percent, and top 20 percent. Bold line is predicted value, dashed line is reference.

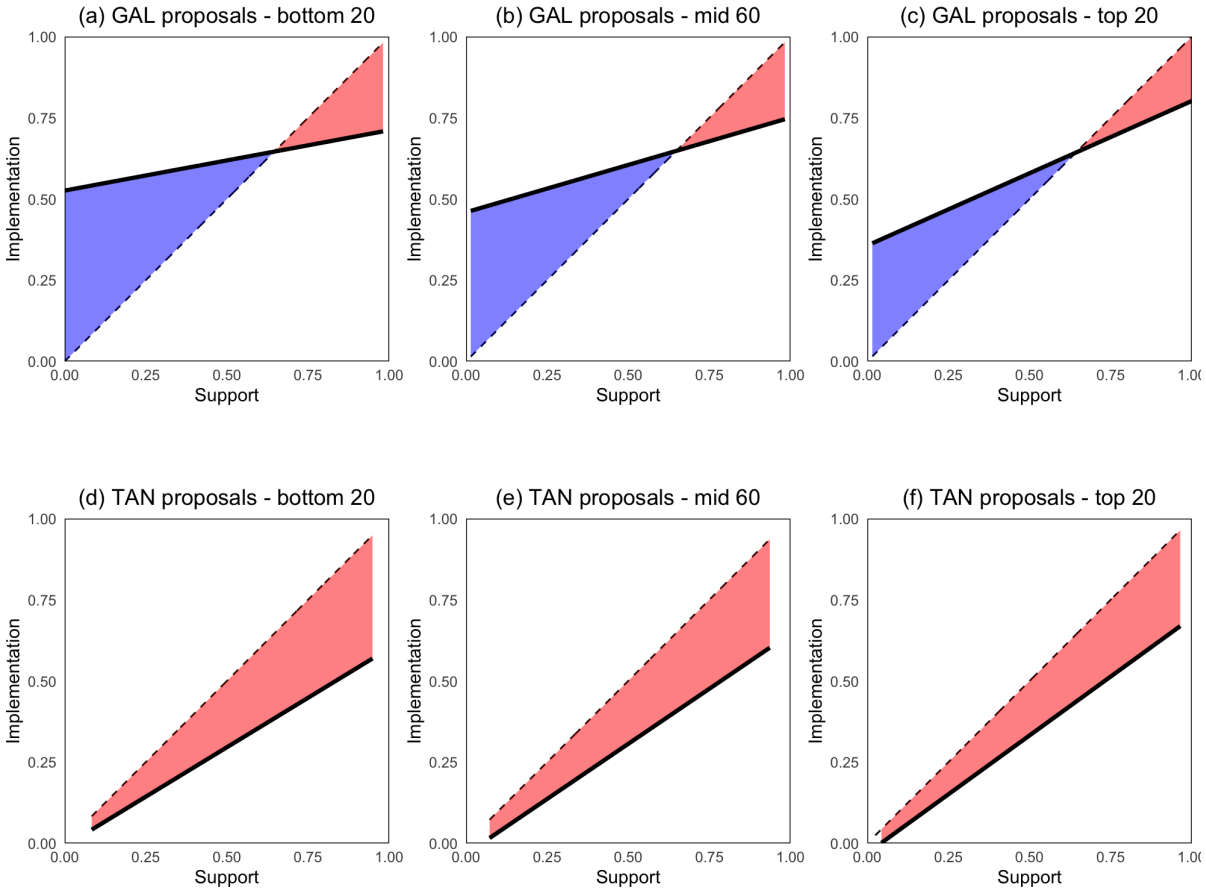


seems to be a bias against TAN policy. And even though the bias is less pronounced, there is some oversupply of GAL policy — the shaded area over the reference lines are larger than those below.

Conclusions

In this paper we have demonstrated that in a large sample of democracies, there is in general a relationship between public opinion and public policy. The more a policy is preferred, the higher likelihood it has of being in place, but also of being adopted, if it was not already in place. There is thus both congruence and responsiveness. Our results corroborate those of similar studies, both comparative and single case studies

Figure 8: Predicted implementation of GAL/TAN) policies with different levels of support among different income segments: bottom 20 percent, middle 60 percent, and top 20 percent. Bold line is predicted value, dashed line is reference.



(Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019; Schakel, Burgoon, and Hakhverdian 2020; Gilens 2012).

However, we also highlight a representational deficit. While previous studies often has pointed out that there is unequal responsiveness, meaning that the affluent see their preferences realized more often than the poor, we show that certain policy tends to be undersupplied, and some oversupplied, relative to public opinion. Specifically, we see "too little" leftist policy, and "too much" GAL policy. We are able to do so by 1) specifying the desired shape of representation and 2) coding the 'direction' of implemented policy, not simply whether there has been policy change or not.

What would policy look like if it followed public opinion more closely? It would have more redistribution, and more worker protection. Looking at the five left/right proposals

with the lowest level of congruence (meaning that implementation status and majority opinion differ in most countries) we can see that the public would want employees to have equal representation on company boards, that unemployed not should be forced to take any job or lose benefits, that people should be forced to retire when jobs are scarce, and that social protection for part time workers should be improved. However, paradoxically, majorities also tend to be in favor of less government regulation of business, which probably clashes with several of the other mentioned proposals. In contrast to governments, survey respondents need not have a coherent policy package. On the GAL/TAN dimension, the largest discrepancies are found concerning immigration.

While the affluent tend to be more economically conservative and culturally progressive than people in general, our analyses show that this discrepancy is unable to fully account for the gap between opinion and policy — at least when defining the affluent as the quintile with the highest incomes.

This leads us to question whether the story really is about unequal responsiveness, as most existing literature would have it, or about a general lack of responsiveness on behalf of the political system. The idea of unequal responsiveness implies that there is a causal effect of the attitudes of the affluent on policy. But our results show that alternative explanation is that some other factor cause policy to be more economically conservative and culturally liberal. While that in practice means that the affluent are better represented, it could be coincidental, if the true causal mechanism is related to factors internal to the political system. In his analysis of the United States, Bartels contends that there is little evidence that differences in political participation accounts for unequal responsiveness, but neither is there direct evidence for unequal influence through campaign financing. Instead, the picture that emerges is one where parties have considerable leeway to pursue policies preferred by leadership and core activists, and sometimes do, even in the face of a hostile public opinion (Bartels 2016, 253).

A political implication of the findings in this paper concerns the market for parties that can meet the undersupply of policy. Given that our empirical data stretches back in time, it provides a potential explanation for the rise of populist parties and politicians

that has been evident in many western democracies the last decades. Recent studies have shown that representation matters for citizens' satisfaction with democracy (Ferland 2020), future research should investigate whether there has been more fertile ground for populist parties where the discrepancy between opinion and policy has been especially grave.

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Online Appendix—Not Intended for Publication

Contents

A Additional Information on the Data

Table A.1: Left/right proposals in the data

Proposal	*Left (1) or Right (-1)*
Increase retirement age	-1
Spend less on benefits for poor	-1
Higher earners get higher pensions	-1
Higher earners better unemployment benefits	-1
Social benefits only for lowest incomes	-1
Public health care only in serious cases	-1
Unemployed must take any job or lose benefits	-1
Cut government spending	-1
Cuts in government spending	-1
Mainly private ownership of hospitals	-1
Mainly private ownership of banks	-1
Mainly private ownership of electricity	-1
Increase public expenditure on business	-1
Less government regulation of business	-1
Increase public expenditure on defense	-1
Public funding of job creation programs	1
Support progressive taxation	1
Sick leave for caring for family	1
Reduce working week	1
Increase unemployment benefits	1
Support basic income scheme	1
Tax on financial transactions	1
Incrase public expenditure on welfare benefits	1
Increase old-age pensions	1
Increase public expenditure on education	1
Increase public expenditure on health	1
Public job training guarantee	1
Improve social protection for part time workers	1
More public ownership of industry	1
Employees equal representation on company boards	1
Tougher rules on tax avoidance	1

Table A.2: GAL/TAN proposals in the data

Proposal	*GAL (1) or TAN (-1)*
Support foreign aid	1
Economic aid to poor countries	1
Increase foreign aid	1
Reduce military expenditures	1
More regional independence	1
Childrens born abroad become citizens if one parent is citizen	1
Legal immigrants access to public education	1
Ethnic discrimination in the workplace law	1
Race discrimination law	1
Increase number of immigrants	1
Ethnic hatred law	1
Allow political refugees to stay	1
Allow separate schools for immigrants if they wish	1
Non-citizen EU immigrant right to vote in local elections	1
Legal established immigrants easy naturalized	1
Support immigrant applicants financially	1
Refugees allowed to bring family	1

Proposal	*GAL (1) or TAN (-1)*
Long-term resident non-citizens can vote	1
Non-citizen EU immigrant right to run for office in local elections	1
Legal immigrants same rights	1
Legal established immigrants bring family	1
Immigrant applicants allowed to work	1
Legal established immigrants same rights as citizens	1
Support culture of ethnic minorities	1
Ban tobacco advertising	1
Non-citizen EU immigrant right to vote in European elections	1
Non-citizen children born in country have the right to become citizens	1
Allow abortion: Mother health risk	1
Allow abortion: Serious birth defect	1
Seat belt law	1
Homosexual adoption	1
All religious groups equal rights	1
Allow abortion: Not want more kids	1
Abortion: Women decide themselves	1
Liberalize abortion	1
Ban antidemocratic parties	1
Prohibit smoking in public places	1
Allow abortion: Can not afford	1
Ban fascists	1
Prohibit smoking in public places	1
Ban fascists from running for office	1
AIDS: Look after them	1
Compulsory vaccination	1
Ration petrol	1
Increase eco-taxes	1
Public grants of better household insulation	1
Fossil fuel tax	1
Ration energy	1
Strict environmental laws	1
Increase green taxes continously	1
Household pay for own rubbish collection	1
Public funding of consumers for energy saving equipment	1
Public funding of campaigns for environment	1
Increase energy taxes	1
Law against less energy efficient household appliances	1
Public funding of campaigns for less household waste	1
Public funding of campaigns for less driving	1
Increase petrol tax continously	1
Increase energy taxes continously	1
Increase public expenditure on environment	1
Increase packaging tax	1
Tax on packaging	1
Age discrimination law	1
Public funding of health care for non-citizens	1
Public subsidies of wind and solar power	1
Public funding on energy research	1
Increase public expenditure on defense	-1
Prevent regional independence	-1
Send back non-EU immigrants	-1
Send back all immigrants	-1
Send back legal immigrants if unemployed	-1
Prohibit foreigners to buy land	-1

Proposal	*GAL (1) or TAN (-1)*
Keep immigrant applicants in detention centers	-1
Immigrants made to leave for unemployment	-1
Send back all illegal immigrants	-1
Requirment for citizenship: Ancestors from country	-1
Prioritize jobs for nationals over immigrants	-1
Stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants	-1
More punishment for employers of illegal workers	-1
AIDS: Forced to make themselves known	-1
Put AIDS infected in institutions	-1
AIDS: Identification papers enable checks	-1
Limit foreign imports	-1
Support nuclear power	-1
Develop nuclear energy	-1
Send back legal immigrants if convicted of serious offence	-1
Immigrants made to leaver for serious crime	-1
Immigrants made to leave for any crime	-1
Keep suspected terrorists in prison	-1
Harder penalties for terrorism	-1

Table A.3: Countries and years in the data

Australia	1986, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2012
Austria	1990, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011
Belgium	1984, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014,
Bulgaria	1995, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011,
Canada	1990, 1992, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2011, 2015,
Croatia	2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014,
Cyprus	1996, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011,
Czech R.	1995, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014,
Denmark	1981, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013
Estonia	1999, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014
Finland	1990, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014
France	1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2017
Germany	1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014
Greece	1982, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012
Hungary	1995, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015
Iceland	1999, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2014
Ireland	1978, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013
Italy	1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2013
Japan	1995, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014
Latvia	1999, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013
Lithuania	1997, 1999, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013
Luxembourg	1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008
Malta	2008
Netherlands	1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014
N. Zealand	1991, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012
Norway	1982, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014
Poland	1996, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
Portugal	1987, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013
Romania	2006, 2008, 2012, 2013
Slovakia	1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014
Slovenia	1995, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017
Spain	1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015
Sweden	1982, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014
Switzerland	1996, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013
UK	1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013
US	1985, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1996

B Additional Illustrations of the Data

Looking at the average support and implementation across countries and years for each issue in Figure B.1 we generally find left-leaning proposals (in red) below the diagonal. Notable proposals that are far from the diagonal are the proposal to force people into retirement when jobs are scarce, support of a basic income scheme, which are moderately popular but virtually never implemented. The proposals to have a public job training guarantee and improve protection for part time workers are implemented to a higher degree, but are also much more popular. In contrast, the proposal to increase the retirement age is extremely impopular, but still implemented to quite some degree.

In Figure B.2 we look at averages for each question. We find the green GAL proposals both above and below the diagonal, whereas the brown TAN proposals mostly are below the diagonal, indicating less implementation than support. There is generally very high support for harsher measures against terrorism, but implementation has been lagging behind. Conversely, there is little support for the liberties of groups that espouse extreme views. Depsite being allowed in most countries, only a minority tend to be in favor of allowing racists, religious extremists and those who wish to overthrow democracies to hold public meetings. But we can also see in the lower right corner that there tends to be large support for a packaging tax, and more restrictions on smoking.

Figure B.1: Mean implementation and support for left/right issues with at least 10 observations.

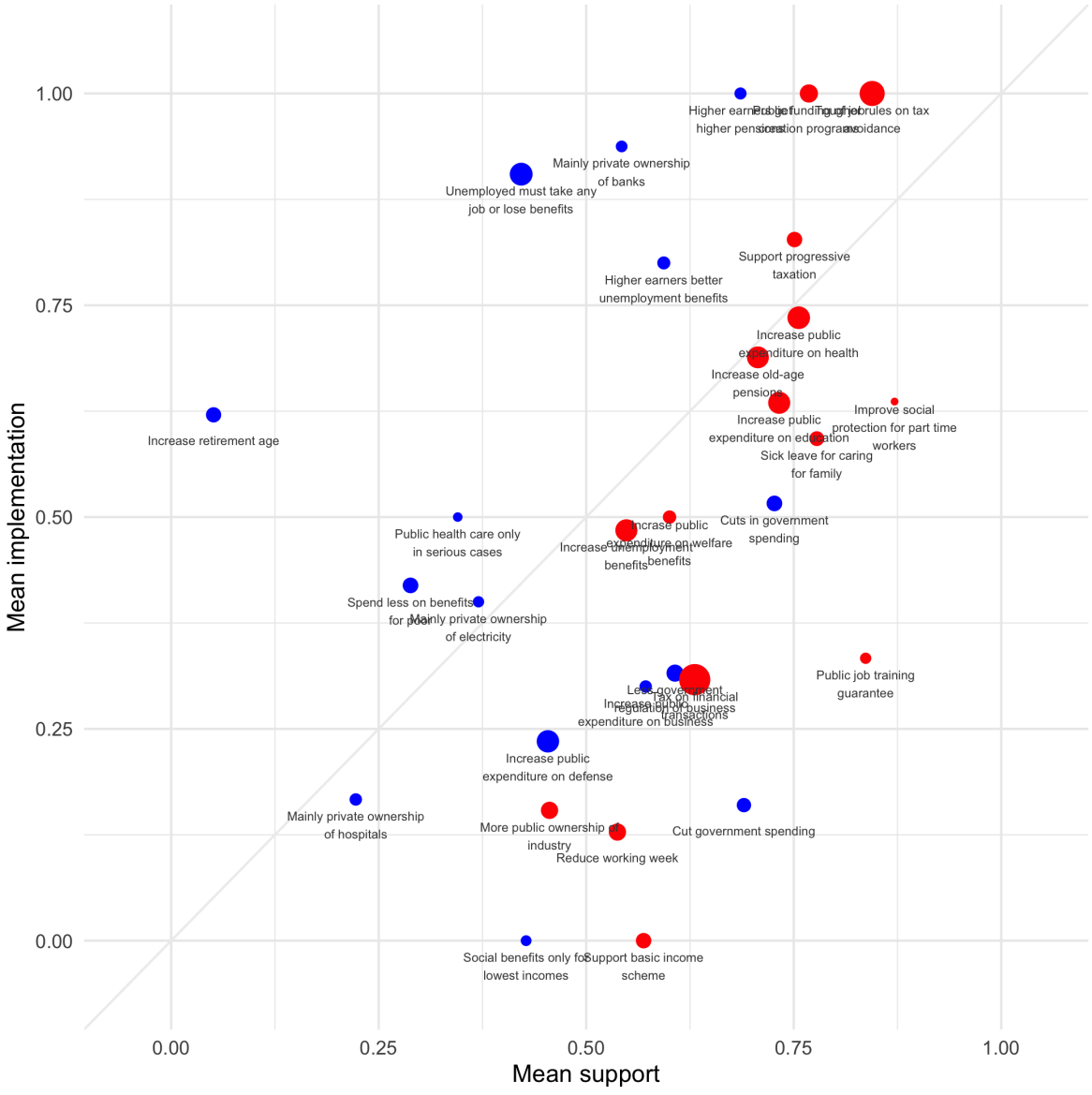

Figure B.2: Mean implementation and support for GAL/TAN issues with at least 10 observations