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Policy congruence in a Competitive Authoritarian Regime: Learning from the Angolan Case¹

Abstract: Building on the theoretical proposition that congruence is as much of a property to be measured in authoritarian regimes as it is in democratic regimes, the aim of this article is to understand the phenomenon of ideological and political congruence in Angola. To carry out this analysis, we rely on two original surveys, conducted in 2012 with Members of Parliament (MPs) and college students (voters), covering equivalent policy issues. The results, to some extent exploratory, suggest moderate levels of congruence between MPs and voters. This article contributes to the existing scholarship through a case study that escapes a golden rule in this field, i.e., it is not a democracy. Moreover, it features congruence as a potentially relevant factor to understand dominant parties' persistence in authoritarian settings.

Key-words: policy congruence, authoritarian regimes, Angola, representatives, constituents.

Introduction

Miller and Stokes (1963) pioneering article opened a tradition of studies in representation in which the measurement of congruence between the preferences of the representatives and those of the constituents emerges as the cornerstone. In this view, ideological and policy congruence are a way of expressing the extent to which representation is actually achieved via elections (see, for instance: Powell, 2009). Subsequent research introduced the idea of regime congruence, signifying the extent to which there are shared patterns of authority² between the government and the social units of a polity (Almond and Verba, 1963; Eckstein, 1966).

More recent years have witnessed a rise in the number of studies focusing on these two aspects of congruence, predominantly in the context of

liberal or established democracies. On the one hand, many scholars have examined the extent to which there is policy correspondence between the citizens and their representatives and how this is ultimately related to the quality of democracy (Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996; Miller et al., 1999; Blais and Bodet, 2006; Powell, 2009; Golder and Stramski, 2010; Wlezien and Soroka, 2012; Spoon and Klüver, 2015). On the other hand, studies on “democratic congruence”, uphold that an institutionalized democracy results from an equation between the supply side and the demand side of the political regime, in which governments seek to respond to citizens’ democratic aspirations (Wezel and Inglehart, 2009).

Regardless of the account taken it seems clear, from these two branches of the literature, that congruence is intimately related to how democracies work, both in terms of the nature of representation and in terms of its legitimacy. However, congruence is far from being an exclusive property of democratic regimes. In earlier studies, it has been sustained that congruence was a factor of high government performance³ regardless of whether the regime was democratic or not (Eckstein, 1966; 1997)⁴. More important for our purposes, is the claim that regardless of the regime, governments would pursue some level decisional efficacy, that is, “make and carry out policies in response to political demands and ‘challenges’”, as means to endure (Eckstein, 1997: 8). In light of this, it becomes relevant to examine the level of congruence between representatives and constituents in any kind of regime.

It should be noted that representativeness and congruence are by no means equivalent concepts, and take different meanings for democratic and authoritarian regimes. A government may be representative without responding

to voters' preferences or, otherwise, follow their preferences even if lacking in representativeness. While in a democratic regime congruence can foster democratic representativeness (Przeworski et al., 1999), in an authoritarian regime it may not require mechanisms ensuring effective representation of the public. Therefore, studying elite-citizen congruence in non-democracies means gauging how far the regime converges with the public's preferences, supplying ideologies and policies that might also contribute to its durability. This is precisely the exercise we aim to carry out in this article, taking Angola as a case study.

Existing scholarship has put forth several explanations as to why authoritarian regimes persist. Beyond clientelism, presidentialism (van de Walle, 2003) and political institutions (Gandhi, 2008), recent studies call attention to non-material sources of support, in particular, ideologies and political beliefs forged during the colonial wars, as relevant resources when governments are limited in their capacity to maintain patron-client relationships (Levistky and Way, 2012). Within this literature little is known about congruence and how it operates in authoritarian settings. A study focused on Angola can, therefore, offer an opportunity to abridge this gap.

To the extent that competitive authoritarian regimes “ostensibly ‘play by the rules’ of democracy, while in practice [...] subvert and change its meaning” (Schubert, 2010: 671), Angola’s is best labelled as a regime of this kind. The main parties in the system are the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) and the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) who fought a war for nearly four decades. In 2002 the country finally transitioned to peace and multipartism after a failed attempt in 1992. However, it

remains authoritarian in shape (Chabal and Vidal, 2007; Schubert, 2010; Faria, 2013). Multiparty elections have been held, but with temporal gaps, questionable standards (Human Rights Watch, 2009; Brito, 2012), and mainly serve to legitimize the non-democratic nature of the regime (Schubert, 2010: 670-671). The study of congruence in this context is relevant as it allows examining the ways in which representatives connect to their constituencies beyond conventional terms (e.g. patronage and coercion) as means to acquire popular support.

The main goal of this study is thus to assess the levels of congruence between the representatives and the constituents of MPLA and UNITA in terms of ideology (left-right dimension) and policy issues (political options to overcome the country's difficulties and policy preferences). The analysis draws on two original surveys carried out in 2012 with MPs of those parties and college students.

This article is organized as follows. It first systematises the relevant literature on the linkage between parties and citizens in Africa, followed by a brief description of the Angolan party system. Then it presents our conceptualization of congruence and the results of the empirical analysis. Finally, we summarize the main findings of this study.

Parties and citizens in Africa: what do we know, what can we expect?

Studies on congruence hardly focused on African countries. There is, however, a wider literature on the nature of political parties and party-citizen linkages in Africa that is useful for our purposes. It is well documented that neopatrimonial practices such as tribalism, clientelism and patronage constitute the general

framework within which post-transition political institutions have evolved in Africa (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; van de Walle, 2003). This is so the case that van de Walle argued that African political parties “do not really serve to aggregate interests – rather they serve a representation function in a context of clientelistic politics that are dominated by a disproportionately powerful executive and are only imperfectly democratic” (2003: 314).

Moreover, in Africa there seems to exist a “cohabitation” between neopatrimonial practices and some kind of territorial politics, resting upon ethnic, religious, linguistic and regional divides. This situation has contributed to the emergence of party systems from above, to the ethnicization of politics in varying degrees, and to an underlying lack of politicization, in which party systems are “invaded” by numerous ideologically weak and personalized political parties (Manning, 2005; Mozaffar and Scarritt, 2005) that frequently gravitate around dominant parties (Bogaards, 2004).

In this context political parties often “perceive state capture for the control of the resources and personnel of the state as a source of elite enrichment” and politics itself becomes (...) devoid of any idea of protecting public interests vis-à-vis private gains” (Salih and Nordlund, 2007: 21). Patron-client relationships based upon reward and exchanged favours are expected to prevail in these contexts, while programmatic linkages tend to be less dominant. Studies that looked at party-citizen linkages in Africa, demonstrate that this is, by and large, the case⁵. Furthermore, cross-regional evidence concurs that Africa houses the least programmatic party systems in the world. The reason being the “rapid consolidation in the post-independence period of one-party/hegemonic-party rule” mainly relying on clientelistic linkages rather than programmatic ones

(Cheeseman et al., 2014: 15). This does not mean that programmatic linkages are absent from competition; in fact a handful of contributions depict a more nuanced picture.

Elischer analysed the programmatic content of manifestos in Kenya, Ghana and Namibia and revealed that in general, African parties “do advance programmatic ideas”, even if the extent and variety of the supply is limited. Still, he finds cross-country and cross-party variation in the extent to which programmatic issues are supplied to the voters, and concludes that “programmatic ideas – as conventionally understood in terms of the left–right cleavage model – do feature in African party politics, albeit generally at a low level” and that “the majority of parties position themselves on the political Left” (2010: 22-23).

Danevad (1995) study on Botswana reveals that the electoral success of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) is partly due to its ability to carry out a successful *distributionist policy* to supply the demands of various segments of the society. Moreover, the fact that the BDP continuously benefits from stable majorities has allowed the party to be selective in its response to citizens.

In terms of congruence two studies merit highlight. The first is van Eerd’s (2011) comparative analysis of elite-mass congruence in Botswana and Lesotho. He finds higher levels of congruence in Botswana than in Lesotho and explains this by the fact that in the former the dominant party faces a stable opposition while in the latter the opposition is more fragmented. He furthermore shows that in Botswana, differently from Lesotho, partisan elites “coherently line up with their partisan voters” in terms of left-right policy preferences. The second is Rivero’s (2004) study of ideological congruence in four African

countries (Algeria, Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa) which – using survey data – shows that there are shared meanings of left-right ideology among the elites and the masses.

The studies here discussed suggest that party-citizen linkages in Africa are mainly based on rewards and that representation is mostly a function of clientelistic ties. However, they also show that parties advance programmatic ideas, and that the left-right divide is not completely absent from competition (Elischer, 2010; Rivero, 2004). Thus, despite its low salience, left-right remains an important concept to further analysis on parties' policies and strategic positioning in the political space (Langhanns, 2013).

In terms of congruence the literature points to differences contingent to the nature of the party systems. In the case of dominant party systems that have persisted through time the strategy for allocation of public policies is part of the explanation as to why they endure. This is the case in one of the most ancient democracies in Africa (Botswana); and can also be the case for dominant parties operating in non-democratic settings. Even if we consider that these governments frequently use repressive means to control opposition and that elections lack quality, the fact is that they are not devoid from a “distributive policy strategy”. In other words, they will seek to attain some level of decisional efficacy as means to endure, and to the extent that this happens it is possible to find in them varying degrees of congruence linking representatives to constituents.

The Angolan party system

The first wave of party formation in Angola dates back to the late colonial period during the 1950s-60s (Chabal and Vidal, 2007). Three relevant anti-colonial movements, matching different ethno-regional constituencies, formed in this period. Born in 1954 the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FNLA), drew its support from Kikongo-speaking provinces in the North; the MPLA, founded in 1956, had greater roots in central *mestiço* and Mbundu communities in the Luanda-Malanje area, and finally the UNITA, founded in 1966, had the backing of the Ovimbundu and was mostly based at the central and southern provinces (Chabal and Vidal, 2007).

The second wave started in 1990s, after the adoption of a new constitution that outlawed one-partyism and permitted the formation of new parties. Despite this amendment, the fact is that the historical parties formed during the colonial struggle – in particular, MPLA and UNITA – remain the most important political forces within the Angolan party system (Santana, 2006; Chabal and Vidal, 2007). In terms of ideology it is difficult to position these two parties in the left-right continuum considering the changes they have experienced over time. For instance, MPLA became Marxist-Leninist in 1977 but its acting today as governing party can hardly be considered left-wing⁶, while UNITA is known to be very eclectic and pragmatic in its ideological profiling⁷. Still, recent approaches place MPLA and UNITA at the centre-left and centre-right of the political spectrum, respectively⁸; hence suggesting low ideological polarisation and a centripetal mode of competition.

Angola has held three multiparty elections since independence. The first happened in the framework of the Bicesse accords, which aimed at implementing a series of peace-building and political liberalisation measures,

ultimately leading to the realisation of general elections in 1992. In these elections the MPLA polled 53.7% and the majority seats (129 out of 220) while the UNITA came second with 34.1% of the vote cast and 70 parliamentary seats (see table 1). These results were contested by the then leader of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, under claims of fraud. The non-acceptance of the results eventually led to the restart of the armed conflict between the two parties and to the preclusion of peace and democracy. Intermediate attempts to resolve this conflict – such as the signature of the Lusaka Protocol in 1994 and the formation of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation (GURN) in 1997 – proved ineffective. It was only in 2002 after the death of Savimbi that peace negotiations restarted, leading to the signature of the Luena Memorandum of Understanding (LMU).

Table 1 – Parliamentary Elections Results (1992, 2008 and 2012) (ABOUT HERE)

The second multiparty elections were held in 2008, six years after the signature of the LMU. The MPLA won by landslide (81.6% of the votes) while UNITA suffered a dramatic lost, and after challenging the results it conceded defeat. In the 2012 elections, the MPLA won expressively again but UNITA's performance improved (seats rose from 16 to 32). These elections were marked by two important events. First, the emergence of a new parliamentary party, the *Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola – Coligação Eleitoral (Casa-CE)*, a splinter from UNITA and “debutant” in elections. Second, the dramatic rise in the abstention rates (from 12.6% in 2008 to 37.3% in 2012).

These results show that the MPLA has been able to secure power uninterruptedly, while its most direct competitor, the UNITA, has been systematically voted for opposition, via elections that fail to meet international standards, according to the reports of international observers⁹. However the increase in abstention rates and the appearance of the CASA-CE in 2012 suggest that the popular bases of support for the regime might be slowly eroding. The analysis has also shown that Angola has a dominant party system with relatively stable opposition, which tends to favour higher levels of congruence between MPs and constituents. Indeed if parties are stable from one election to the other, voters know what to expect and what parties stand for programmatically. This also means that parties have been able to put roots in society, and this enables learning and adaptation in terms of policy preferences over time (van Eerd, 2011: 1).

Measuring policy congruence: from concept to data and methods

Measures of ideological and political correspondence between representatives and constituents have been widely used to study representation in liberal democracies (Dalton, 1985; Converse and Pierce, 1986; Miller et al., 1999; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Manza et al., 2002; Blais and Bodet, 2006; Belchior, 2010). There are several plausible ways to operationalize congruence that can be organized in two main types: to simply assess it in terms of the distance between citizens and their representatives (absolute congruence), or to compare positions taking into account the dispersion in citizens' preferences (relative congruence). Absolute congruence has the advantage that calculations are simple and the interpretation of results is intuitive. Relative congruence is

generally better in terms of validity, since it takes into account voters' dispersion. The present research uses both measures in order to consolidate results, and assumes that congruence occurs if MPs share political positions that are similar to those carried by citizens who voted for them. Congruence is assessed for left-right self-placement and for a set of eight policy issues characterizing the left-right socio-economic dimension:

- Education should mainly be provided by the State
- Health care should mainly be provided by the State
- Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government
- Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people
- Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy
- Economic growth is more important than balancing the state budget
- The State must be modest in order to allow individual economic initiatives to develop
- To guarantee order and security should be the most important

Regarding absolute congruence, we use the percentage of distributions and differences between MPs and voters. We also use means and Holmberg's means difference measure (1989: 13-23), which represents the average divergence between MPs and voters positions on policy issues (MPs minus voters). This analysis aims at drawing a first and intuitive picture of MPs-voters' consonance regarding ideology and policy issues.

When considering congruence measurement problems, Achen (1978: 483-484, 487-488) – a reference in the study of this topic – devised forms of statistical measurement that cover different dimensions of the concept. Of these, centrism is the strongest measure for assessing how closely the opinions of party elites mirror the views of their average (or median) supporters (Golder and Stramski, 2010: 94). Centrism measures the extent to which representatives represent the political preferences of their median voter. It is measured as the difference between the proximity and the variance towards the position of the electorate. Proximity relates to the similarity of the party's position to that of its voters. That is:

$$\hat{S}_j = \sum (a_{ij} - r_j)^2 / n_j$$

where a_{ij} is the position of voter a_i in party j , r_j the mean position of the elite in that party, and n_j the size of the sample. And,

$$\hat{Y}_j^2 = \sum (a_{ij} - \bar{a}_j)^2 / (n_j - 1)$$

measures the variance for the electorate, where \bar{a}_j is the median position of the voters; and

$$\hat{C}_j = \hat{S}_j - \hat{Y}_j^2$$

is the measure of the centrism in party j . High values of centrism indicate a mismatch between the voters and the elite; low values indicate the reverse.

The empirical analysis draws on two equivalent surveys which have been conducted between April 30 and June 21, in 2012, via face-to-face interviews. One survey targeted all MPs sitting at *Assembleia da República Angolana*

during the 2nd legislature (2008-2012): out of a universe of 220 MPs, 79 responses were validated (69.6% are male and 30.4% female; 75.9% belong to MPLA, 12.7% to UNITA, and 11.4% to other parties). The response rate (36%) is reasonable if we consider that these kinds of studies usually draw on small samples as the process of data collection is quite demanding. The other survey intended to cover the population of Angolan students that, at the time, were in the last year of their graduation in Political Science at the University Agostinho Neto. A total of 152 students, out of a universe of 183, were interviewed (67.8% are male and 31.6% female; 62.5% are MPLA supporters, 30% UNITA, and 7.6% other parties supporters). These surveys should be seen as a first tentative approach to the study of congruence in a non-democracy, and due to the nature and volume of the samples (especially that of voters), the findings should be taken as exploratory. Furthermore, the prevalence of a sample bias towards men and MPLA, although expected, contribute to limit the inferences that could be drawn from results.

The reasons for inquiring students as a proxies for voters' are two-fold: on one hand, the acute literacy problem that Angola still faces would make it difficult to reach valid answers if we consider the population in general; on the other hand, being a competitive authoritarian regime, Angola is still at odds with civic liberties and that might discourage people from expressing their political views openly, especially where the political control is potentially higher, such as the capital. Of course this option carries some limitations, such as the risk of gathering elite biased answers, since we can easily suppose that most of the people studying at the university mainly belong to the well-off social segment. Students are, however, generally more informed than the population in general

and, according to many (see Zaller, 1992), their interest and knowledge of political affairs make them a critical electorate, particularly if University students on Political Science are considered, as is the case. For these reasons, the case study of an Angolan university was considered more suitable for our research than the focus on the population in general. For simplicity, the students will be treated as voters throughout the empirical analysis.

Findings

Figure 1 shows how much agreement there is between MPs and voters on a number of political options aimed at overcoming Angola's political, economic and social difficulties¹⁰.

Figure 1 Most important political option for Angola for MPs and voters (ABOUT HERE)

The greatest divergence is mirrored in the option of giving citizens more power to intervene in important government decisions. While 75% of the voters considered this as the most important measure out of the 12 surveyed, only 6.7% of the MPs shared this opinion. This result is understandable given the authoritarian nature of the regime and the limitations imposed upon civic participation; it may also be interpreted as a sign of pressure on the system.

There is also substantial disagreement regarding controlling costs of essential goods and the reconstruction of transport networks: around 60% of the voters considered these measures a priority, while 0% and 28.6% of MPs, respectively, held this opinion. The voters also considered freedom of speech,

modernisation of the economy and, to a lesser extent, the eradication of illiteracy as more pressing than the MPs.

Peace and stability, and housing for everyone were the issues that the MPs considered most important and, to a lesser degree, economic growth. The discrepancy between MPs and voters was above 40 percentage points in the first issue and above 20 percentage points in the third. Housing was the most supported policy issue by both the people and the elite.

The observed disparity of positions between MPs and voters translate into different hierarchies of concerns for both groups: more everyday issues and freedom of speech for the voters and growth and stability for the MPs. The focus on political opening of the regime and greater public involvement was much higher among the voters. As sign of this, some scholars argued that the 2011 popular protests represented the awakening of a counter-public and the dawning of a citizenship revolution in their quest for change and political inclusion in Angola (Faria, 2013).

To assess whether MPs and voters share a similar structure of political preferences, and are therefore comparable, we conducted a factorial analysis on the basis of the eight issues that usually characterise the traditional left-right dimension¹¹ (table 2).

Table 2. MPs and voters' attitude structure in terms of policy preferences (PCA rotated component matrix) (ABOUT HERE)

In both cases, the analysis performed offers a good classification for the structure of policy preferences (explained variance is quite high). The first factor

is identical for both MPs and voters and points to the state's social role and redistributive policy. The second factor brings together the importance of the economy and the state's role in it and also order and security. Among voters however the same items originate two factors (factor 2 and 3). Overall, the factorial analysis depicts two shared dimensions among voters and MPs, which aggregate issues of 'redistribution and state's social roles' and 'state and economy, order and security'. This is relevant considering that we are analysing policy preferences in an authoritarian setting, where civic restrictions are higher. On the basis of this data we can argue that the political preferences of Angolan voters and MPs are organised in similar lines (although to a lesser degree than in established democracies), as found in other countries (Dalton, 1985: 273-275; McAllister, 1991: 246-252).

Having demonstrated the correspondence of policy preferences, we now conduct an analysis of the ideological congruence. The left-right dimension is often used to assess the dimensionality of the political space in western societies (Benoit and Laver, 2006). Not only does it represent a simplification of political language in those societies but also acts as a kind of super-issue, a summary of parties' stances across different policy issues. In this sense, it also provides the anchors for partisanship and overall political behaviour.

Regarding Africa, left-right politics is acknowledged to be less salient (Manning, 2005; Elischer, 2010; Cheeseman et al., 2014), and there are hardly any studies of this dimension in Angola. However, such labels usually appear in parties' rhetoric when they seek to identify differences between their programmes (at least between the MPLA and UNITA). In our surveys, left and right are mostly used by the politicians and hardly ever by the voters. When

asked the meaning of 'left' and 'right' in an open-ended question¹², the MPs' answers were relatively efficient. The left was associated to the social state, to a centrally planned economy and to *democratic socialism*, while the right to capitalism and conservatism. Although MPs recognised the ideological dimension, they preferred not to use the policies that traditionally characterised it and referred to symbolic issues that still showed the two main parties' founding principles. We also found that there was considerable association of the left to the MPLA and of the right to the UNITA. Otherwise, voters' results reflect their difficulties in recognising the meaning of 'left' and 'right' as they essentially answered 'don't know' to that question.

Figure 2 presents MPs' and voters' self-placement in the left-right scale, and how voters' positioned the parties for which they voted for using the same scale¹³. As found in European (Dalton, 1985: 275; Converse and Pierce, 1986: 128; Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996: 92-95; Belchior, 2010: 125, 128-130) and also in some African countries (Rivero, 2004; Elischer, 2010), when considered globally, Angolan MPs tend to lean more to the left than the voters, who tend place themselves at the centre. This leftist orientation of Angolan MPs may probably be related to the country's recent political history.

Voters' perceptions of their party's position in Figure 2 were practically superposable to their own position on the left-right scale. However, as seen above, voters seem to find it hard to distinguishing the left from the right and even in identifying what each of these poles stand for. Given their difficult to identify programmatic differences between the political parties (potentially motivated by a real lack of differentiation between them), voters are likely to use their own position as a benchmark to position the party.

Figure 2. Voters' positions, MPs' positions and voters' perceptions of their parties' positions in the left-right scale (ABOUT HERE)

These results suggest that although Angola is experiencing something similar to established democracies in terms of the ideological positioning of MPs and voters, the reasons underlying these results seem to be completely different. Indeed, voters' party and self-positioning are more irregular (fluctuating more along the left-right continuum) in Angola than in other established democracies.

We now analyse ideological and policy congruence (considering eight political issues plus two indices resulting from the factorial analysis¹⁴) using two measurement strategies: means and centrism (Table 3).

Of the items analysed, left-right self-placement is the one featuring higher levels of incongruence. As argued before, MPs have better conceptualizations of left-right than voters. For the latter to associate left-right to politics there has to be plural party competition and unconstrained political discussion of political platforms, which is not yet the case in Angola.

Table 3. Measures of MPs-voters' congruence: means, differences of means and centrism (ABOUT HERE)

The differences in means show that while MPLA voters are further to the right than their MPs in seven out of eight policies, UNITA voters stand at the left of their MPs in five political issues which are related to matters of 'state and

economy, order and security'. These are traditional strongholds of rightists, as is defence of order and security or private enterprise. In the other policy issues the voters stand at the right of the MPs (as in MPLA). This trend of MPs taking more extreme and more left-wing ideological positions than their voters corroborates results in Figure 2. It is important to note that, in Angola, on the overall the positions of the MPLA and the UNITA on other political issues are not very different, thus reinforcing the idea of low differentiation and a centripetal competition as before mentioned. This centripetal pattern favours congruence with the voters, as their main positioning is in the centre (see prevalence of means around two, the median point of the scale, in Table 3).

The political issues generating largest discrepancies between voters and MPs were 'economic growth is more important than balancing the state budget' and 'politics should abstain from intervening in the economy'. The centrism values for the other issues were generally low (meaning high congruence), especially the defence of public health and education for the MPLA and a stable social security network, a small state apparatus to foster private enterprise and order and security for the UNITA. In general there is a reasonable level of congruence in the policies that best defined both parties' ideologies.

By and large, in both ideological and political terms, the MPLA is more congruent with its electorate than UNITA. The MPLA seems to have been able to offer a political discourse that is closer to the voters' policy priorities. Note however that we are not measuring substantive policies but rather survey answers, and that the voters correspond indeed to university students.

Finally, to better understand the levels of congruence observed we correlate proximity values¹⁵ for left-right placement, 'redistribution and social

role of the state' and 'state and economy, order and security' – with citizens' intervention (a proxy of public pressure on the regime), left-right self-placement, and party identification.

Table 4. Correlations (Pearsons' r) between proximity and supporting more citizens' intervention, left-right positioning and party identification (ABOUT HERE)

The results shown in Table 4 reveal that people who asked for more citizen involvement in political decisions were also those who showed higher congruence with the position of the party with which they identified. However, this was only the case for the 'state and economy, order and security' index (higher proximity values mean lower congruence, so that negative signs mean higher congruence). These results do not mean that there is no pressure on the regime, only that the prevalence of lower congruence of parties and their voters does not seem to explain greater pressure to open the regime up to participation of the people (note that the sample in this case is very small).

The self-positioning on the left-right scale shows that those leaning more to the right are less congruent with their party's MPs on the same scale (as we have seen, MPs tended to be to the left of the voters). Finally, in corroboration of the previous results, we find that voting for MPLA explains higher congruence (though only for the second index). The MPLA's policy preferences (as expressed by the MPs) seems to be congruent with the aspirations of the majority of the population and their voters. The problem seems to lie in the gap between government discourses and practices, and most probably in the

different aspirations of voters and MPLA MPs regarding the Angolan regime, which may be the real root of possible pressures on the regime.

Conclusion

This article relied on unique survey data from Angolan representatives (MPs) and voters (college students) to analyse the level of ideological and policy congruence between them. Overall, our findings suggest that Angolan MPs and voters are moderately congruent (except for left-right positioning) and point to patterns of correspondence close to those found in democratic countries. Even though these results are exploratory, we can advance two reasons as to why they emerge. The first is the low ideological polarisation of Angolan parties, which brings them closer to an electorate that might face difficulties in placing them in the left-right continuum, and therefore predominantly converge at the centre. Of course that in this interpretation the drawback of the low saliency of left-right politics in the Angolan context must be considered. The second is the nature of the party system itself: where dominant parties face more fragmented opposition parties the level of congruence tends to be higher. Angola's parties formed during the colonial struggle, whose violent and polarised character forged endured political values and identities that contribute to the long term stabilisation of the electorates, thus creating an institutionalized dominant and opposition party.

In terms of MPs' ideological and political preferences, they tend to lean to the left, what is consistent with the literature on this topic. Moreover, we find that MPLA's elites are more congruent with their voters than UNITA's. This can be seen as a result of an incumbent advantage, as MPLA has enjoyed comfortable

majorities to elaborate and implement policies to tackle the country's political, social and economic challenges.

This study additionally shows a symbolic recognition of the left-right dimension by MPs in abstract terms (to a much lesser degree among voters) and a similar structure of political preferences between MPs and voters. However, our data does not indicate convergence on the issue of regime change. While the majority of voters in our sample suggest this to be a major priority for the country (more than 70% consider “more citizens’ intervention” the most important political goal for the country; and more than 40% mention “free of speech”), only a minority of MPs share this view. We should note that particularly since 2011 there has been an increased contestation of the regime by the people, often catalysed by the opposition parties. Moreover, the rise of abstention rates from 13% in 2008 to 37% in 2012 can be perceived, among others, as symptom of the erosion of support/legitimacy of the regime.

Granted Angola’s competitive authoritarian regime, dominant party system and low ideological differentiation between the main parties, our results allow some degree of comparison, even if limited. Where ideological congruence is concerned, Angolan voters are also more oriented towards the centre than MPs are, thus promoting congruence regarding centre-oriented political parties. In the case of Angola, while the tendency for voters to be centre-oriented can derive from difficulties in distinguishing party platforms, congruence is achieved notwithstanding the absence of democratic institutions and elections. In this case, we do not expect congruence to express a sense of representativeness as full political rights are absent. This outcome is otherwise

a supplementary mechanism for the regime to achieve popular support, even if minimal and sectorial.

This case study raises important implications for future research because it tests general theoretical propositions within the literature of congruence. On the one hand it enables putting Angola in a broader comparative context, on the other hand it sheds lights on mechanisms of government durability beyond the conventional resources used in authoritarian regimes (e.g. coercion, patronage etc.), and this can encourage more theorization on the basis of popular support in authoritarian regimes. In this perspective studies focusing on similar cases, with broader and representative samples, are necessary in order to consolidate our findings. In addition, a study of congruence such as this one necessarily encompasses strategies of policy distribution and aspects of political socialization that are not explored in this article but which underlie the outcome of congruence in authoritarian regimes. This is in our view, an important avenue of research to be pursued in future studies.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Parliamentary Elections Results (1992, 2008 and 2012)

Party/coalition	1992		2008		2012	
	% of votes	No. of seats	% of votes	No. of seats	% of votes	No. of seats
MPLA	53.7	129	81.6	191	71.8	175
UNITA	34.1	70	10.4	16	18.7	32
PRS	2.3	6	3.2	8	1.7	3
ND	-	-	1.3	2	0.2	0
FNLA	2.4	5	1.1	3	1.1	2
Casa-CE	-	-	-	-	6.0	8
Other parties	7.5	10	2.4	0	0.4	0
Total	100	220	100	220	100	220
Abstention	7.8	-	12.6	-	37.3	-

Source: Adapted from African Election Database (<http://africanelections.tripod.com/ao.html>); *Comissão Nacional Eleitoral de Angola* (www.cne.ao).

Figure 1 Most important political option for Angola for MPs and voters

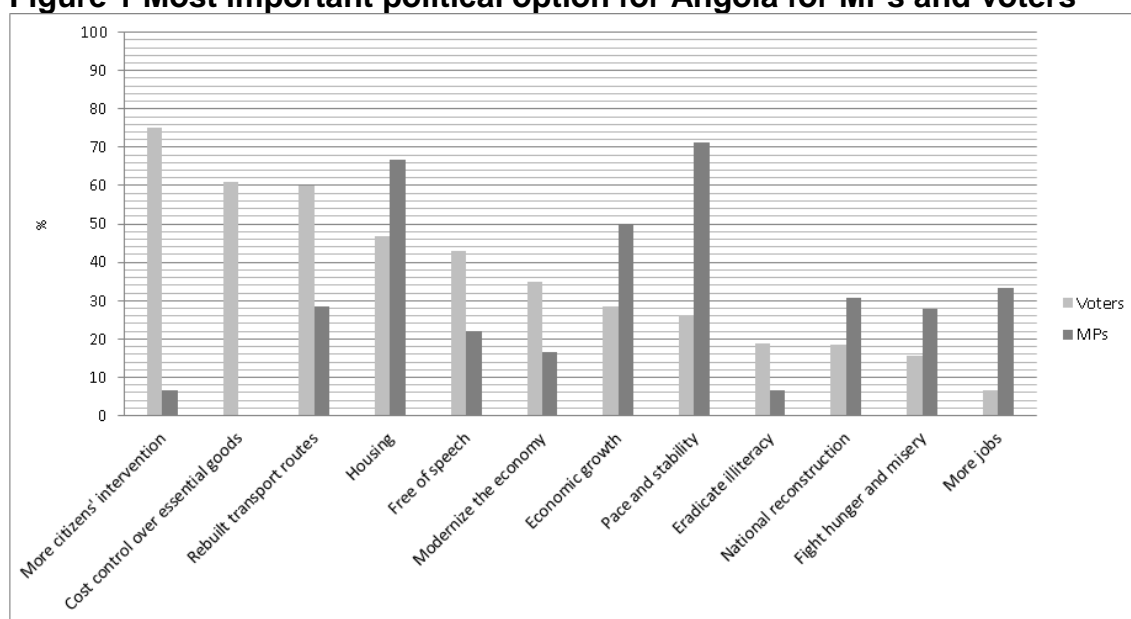


Table 2. MPs and voters' attitude structure in terms of policy preferences (PCA rotated component matrix)

	MPs		Voters		
	F1	F2	F1	F2	F3
Education should mainly be provided by the State	0,895		0,815		
Health care should mainly be provided by the State	0,803		0,860		
Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government	0,506		0,449		
Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people	0,706		0,698		
Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy		0,792		0,754	
Economic growth is more important than balancing the state budget		-0,557		-0,528	
The State must be modest in order to allow individual economic initiatives to develop		0,712			0,557
To guarantee order and security should be the most important	0,301	-0,331			0,792
% of Variance	32,8%	21,2	27,5	16,4	13,3
Total % of Variance		54,0%		57,2%	

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations for MPs and 6 iterations for voters. MPs: KMO: 0,544. Bartlett's test: approx. Chi-Square 150,463; df 28; Sig. 0,000. Voters: KMO: 0,588. Bartlett's test: approx. Chi-Square 130,067; df 28; Sig. 0,000.

All variables were coded in such a way that higher values mean more right-wing attitudes.

Figure 2. Voters' positions, MPs' positions and voters' perceptions of their parties' positions in the left-right scale

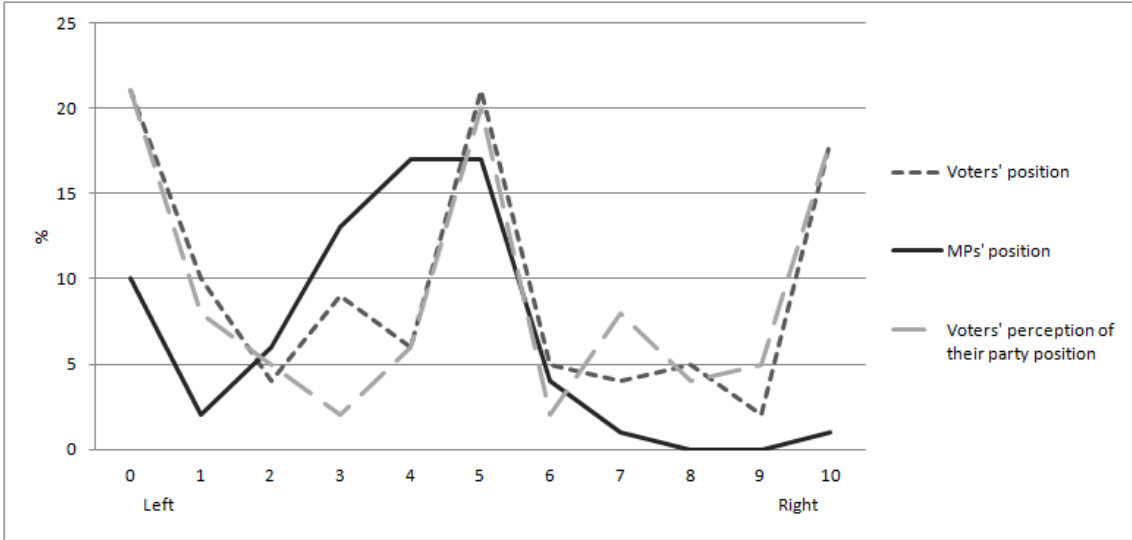


Table 3. Measures of MPs-voters' congruence: means, differences of means and centrism

	MPs			Voters			Difference (a) – (b)	Centrism
	Mean (a)	Standard deviation	N	Mean (b)	Standard deviation	N		
Left-right self-positioning								
MPLA	3,02	2,03	54	5,28	3,70	36	-2,26	170,00
UNITA	5,00	0,82	10	3,75	3,75	16	1,25	206,00
Education should mainly be provided by the State								
MPLA	1,55	1,03	58	1,91	1,07	46	-0,36	0,08
UNITA	1,20	0,42	10	2,04	1,07	23	-0,84	0,51
Health care should mainly be provided by the State								
MPLA	1,36	0,80	59	1,80	0,99	45	-0,44	0,11
UNITA	1,20	0,42	10	2,05	1,32	24	-0,85	0,58
Providing a stable network of social security should be the prime goal of government								
MPLA	1,40	0,53	57	1,80	0,79	44	-0,40	0,32
UNITA	1,50	0,53	10	1,61	0,50	23	-0,11	0,08
Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people								
MPLA	1,93	1,07	57	1,98	0,80	46	-0,05	0,22
UNITA	1,80	0,42	10	1,55	0,60	22	0,25	0,28
Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy								
MPLA	2,07	0,63	56	2,71	1,32	42	-0,64	1,49
UNITA	2,80	1,14	10	2,77	1,31	22	0,03	1,56
Economic growth is more important than balancing the state budget								
MPLA	2,54	1,15	57	2,68	1,44	40	-0,14	4,41
UNITA	2,30	1,06	10	1,77	1,19	22	0,53	2,56
The State must be modest in order to allow individual economic initiatives to develop								
MPLA	2,51	0,97	53	2,56	1,00	43	-0,05	0,78
UNITA	3,63	0,92	8	2,25	1,37	20	1,38	0,10
To guarantee order and security should be the most important								
MPLA	4,21	0,59	57	3,95	0,68	44	0,26	0,30
UNITA	3,80	0,79	10	3,67	0,91	21	0,13	0,09
Redistribution and state's social role index								
MPLA	1.50	0.56	55	1.90	0.68	39	-0.40	0.06
UNITA	1.43	0.35	10	1.82	0.69	22	-0.39	0.27
State and economy, order and security index								
MPLA	2.80	0.44	50	2.91	0.53	32	-0.11	0.20
UNITA	3.00	0.47	8	2.58	0.52	18	0.42	0.35

Note: All the variables were recoded so that, for the mean, lower figures signify a position more to the left and higher figures more to the right (meaning they agree with the first, second, fourth and eighth policies and disagreed with the rest). The higher the values are for centrism, the lower the congruence.

Table 4. Correlations (Pearsons' r) between proximity and supporting more citizens' intervention, left-right positioning and party identification

	Left-right	Redistribution and social role of the state	State and economy, order and security	<i>N</i>
More citizens' intervention	ns	ns	-0,69*	10
Left-right self-positioning	0,41**	ns	ns	52
Political party (1=MPLA)	ns	-0,20#	-0,39**	73

Notes: # $p < 0,1$, * $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$, *** $p < 0,001$ (ns – non significant).

¹ We thank the editors and two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments, which helped us to improve the manuscript.

² Patterns of authority, regard “the structures and processes by which social units are directed, or, put otherwise, their structures and processes of governance” (Eckstein, 1997: 2).

³ High government performance implies durability, civil order, legitimacy and decisional efficacy (Eckstein, 1997: 8).

⁴ For similar perspective see Almond and Verba (1963).

⁵ See Tobolka (2014), for the cases of Zambia, Togo and Burundi; Osei (2012) for the cases of Ghana and Senegal; Sanches (2014) for the cases of Mozambique and Zambia.

⁶ Soares de Oliveira (2014) explains that MPLA’s ideological appeals are inseparable from its position of incumbency and capacity to accumulate extraordinary economic resources.

⁷ Marcum (1983: 4) notes that though “Savimbi has consistently declared himself an exponent of African socialism”, “UNITA’s economics might be more safely described as nationalist and pragmatic than as socialist”. Pearce (2015: 14) contrasted “MPLA’s ideas of socialist internationalism” to “UNITA’s eclectic invocation of African traditionalism, Maoist peasant revolution, Christianity, conservative anticommunism and liberal democracy”.

⁸ In the framework of the Democratic Accountability and Citizen-Politician Linkages project MPLA was scored 6.57 and UNITA 5.71 in terms of overall left-right placement (variable *dw*). Scores are assigned by country experts applying a scale where 1= Party advocates full individual freedom from state interference into any issues related to religion, marriage, sexuality, occupation, family life, and social conduct in general, and 10 = Party advocates state-enforced compliance of individuals with traditional authorities and values on issues related to religion, marriage, sexuality, occupation, family life and social conduct in general. More online: <http://sites.duke.edu/democracylinkage/>.

⁹ See [Human Rights Watch](#) (2009) and Brito (2012).

¹⁰ Question wording: “Of the measures below, please indicate the one that you consider the most important for the country”.

¹¹ Question wording: “Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each sentence' on a scale of 1, totally disagree, and 5, totally agree”.

¹² Question wording: "Please indicate the three political positions that best represent "left" and "right" (open-ended question).

¹³ Question wording: "In politics we usually talk about "left" and "right". How would you position yourself on a scale in which 0 is most to the left and 10 is most to the right?' on a scale of 0, left, to 10, right".

Question wording for voters' perceptions: "Using the same scale, how you would position the political party to which you feel closest?' measured on the same scale".

¹⁴ A mean index was calculated, for each set of four issues regarding factor 1 and factor 2 (which was added to factor 3 for the voters) for deputies and voters. Question used to identify the party supported by the voters: "Is there a political party to which you feel closer than the others? If so, which one?" The deputies were identified on the basis of the parliamentary group to which they belonged.

¹⁵ Measured on the basis of the calculation of centrism. See under 'Data and Methods'.