Ideological Representation in Portugal: MPs-Electors Linkages in Terms of Left-Right Placement and Substantive Meaning

Abstract

In the literature elite-mass congruence is usually measured either in terms of issue preferences or in terms of left-right self-placement. The two forms of congruence are only occasionally used together and seldom were they used with the purpose of seeing if the levels of congruence were similar. With this intention we use Portugal as an extreme case (due to low level of clarity of party policy alternatives, and to relatively low levels of education, media exposure, and political interest). We found that in many situations the results for MPs-mass congruence were different depending on the use of left-right self-placement or substantive issue preferences.

Keywords: political representation; left-right; ideology; Portugal.

Introduction

The empirical study of representation in democratic regimes has relied extensively upon the "responsible party model" and its normative implications (Miller and Stokes, 1963; Powell, 2000 and 2004; Kitschelt et al, 1999; Miller et al, 1999; Thomassen, 1994; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999a; Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996; Wessels, 2007; Belchior, 2010; about the concept of representation, see Pitkin, 1976). This model points to some features about voters-parties' relations: 1) electors share various packages of issue positions; 2) electors compare their issue positions with the ones presented by the political competitors in each election; 3) electors vote for the party which presented the issue package which is closest to their own; finally, 4) once elected, the party officials in parliament, etc., remain united and trying harder to enact the issue package (they presented to the electorate) into public policy (Pierce, 1999: 9; Thomassen and Schmitt, 1999: 13-19).

Although some voters in at least some occasions do in fact compare their issue positions with the ones presented by the parties, in order to decide how to vote, the truth is that this task is very demanding in terms of data collection and processing, and the benefits of the act of voting are not very high.[1] Thus, most electors most of the time use shortcuts like the left-right divide to evaluate where the parties stand in terms of packages of issue positions, and also to evaluate how close the parties are to their (packages of) issue positions (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1992). Then they tend to vote in the party that is closest to their issue positions, although this is usually evaluated in terms of the appropriate short-cut: usually the left-right divide, in Europe, and the

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[1] Of course, this is only one theory about voting behaviour, which explains only a part of the variance in the vote and a part of the variance from country to country and from election to election. This is more likely to happen to more sophisticated voters and especially in occasions when the clarity of policy alternatives presented to voters by parties is higher.

liberal-conservative schema, in the US. Moreover, to communicate with the voters, parties often use the language of left and right: to inform where they stand in terms of issue positions (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Herrera, 1999). These are some of the reasons why Fuchs and KIingemann (1990) say that, at the macro-level, the left-right divide is a communication device between politicians, mass media and electors, and that, at the micro-level, it is an economizing information device helping voters to cope with the complexities of the political world and arrive to political decisions.

There is no doubt, namely if we follow "the responsible party model", that the study of the levels of left-right congruence between the electors and the representatives is crucial to understand the quality of political representation: the higher the level of left-right congruence between voters and MPs, the higher the probability that voters' issue preferences are well represented in parliament and well reflected in policy making, thus, the higher the probability of a well functioning representative process. And this is why many research papers in political science do indeed use the level of congruence between MPs and electors in terms of left-right as a proxy for congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences (Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999a; Wessels, 1999; Huber and Powell, 1994; Powell, 2000; Belchior, 2010; Golder and Stramski, 2010).

However, even if we find significant levels of MPs-mass congruence in terms of left-right self-placement, there are still several possibilities of a significant MPs-mass mismatch in terms of issue preferences (or the other way around). First, because there is always a significant level of ambiguity in the terms left and right and, thus, in the way these concepts are used between the representatives and the voters (Herrerra, 1999; Pierce, 1999: 13-15; Powell, 2000: 94). Second, because at least at the mass level there is only a partial match between issue positions and left-right self-placement (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; Huber, 1989; Knutsen, 1997; Freire, 2008). Third, because

sometimes there is a rather low level of clarity in terms of the policy alternatives presented by the parties to the electorate, especially in countries like Portugal (Freire, 2008), and the voters might have a rather difficult task in relating policy differences with the left-right divide. Fourth, because the match between issue positions and left-right self-placement might be dependent upon level of education, media exposure and political interest (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Freire and Belchior, 2011) and, if the later are low (like in Portugal), the likelihood of a mismatch is augmented. These are some of the reasons why significant levels of left-right elite-mass congruence can co-exist with a significant mismatch in terms of issue preferences, especially in countries (like Portugal) where the clarity of policy alternatives is low and the levels of education, media exposure and political interest are low (in a comparative perspective).

In the literature about representation elite-citizens congruence is usually measured either in terms of issue preferences (Pierce, 1999; Holmberg, 1999) or in terms of left-right self-placement (Converse and Pierce, 1986; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999b; Herrera, 1999), or the latter is used as a proxy of the former (Thomassen and Schmitt, 1997; Huber and Powell, 1994; Powell, 2000; Golder and Stramski, 2010). The two forms of congruence are seldom used together (see e.g. Dalton, 1985; Belchior, 2008) and, when they are, hardly ever they are with the purpose we have here: to see if the levels of congruence (or lack of it) are similar even if we use different measures for evaluating congruence. We use Portugal as an extreme case: the party system offers low level of clarity of policy alternatives; and the Portuguese have relatively low levels of education, media exposure, and political interest. Thus, due to its extreme characteristics, this case will tell us to what extent we can use congruence in terms of left-right self-placement as a good proxy of congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences.

We first present the data sources; discuss the theory, the measures and the hypotheses that will be tested. Then, in the next sections of the paper, we apply different measures to evaluate congruence (left-right self-placement and substantive issue preferences). Using two surveys (mass and MPs), we compare the social, value and partisan correlates for left-right self-placement among Portuguese citizens and MPs. Finally, we used a set of two open-ended questions about the meaning of left and right for both MPs and electors. This will be the final step to help us to see if there is a significant mismatch in the "language of politics" (Herrera, 1999) between citizens and politicians.

Data

For the present paper we use mainly two surveys conducted in Portugal and fielded in 2008 (Spring-Summer). The mass survey relied on a multi-stage probabilistic sample of the Portuguese citizens living in the mainland and aged 18 or more (N=1350). Some weighting in terms of age, sex and education was done to have the sample even closer to the population profile. The field work was conducted by TNS – Portugal, under the scientific guidance of the team in charge of the project "The Portuguese MPs in comparative perspective: elections, leadership, and representation". Basically the same questionnaire was used to inquire the Portuguese MPs. The field work was done by post graduate students of social sciences, under the guidance of the coordinators of the above mentioned research project.

Both questionnaires relied heavily in the comparative questionnaires of the research networks to which the project is related (The Comparative Candidate Survey and PARENEL – Parliamentary Representation at the European and National Levels). Since the response rate to the MPs survey (143/230 = 62,2%) resulted in some

deviances vis-à-vis the Parliament's composition, we weighted the sample by party and sex to have a closer profile to the population.

Theory, Measures and Hypotheses

To evaluate the level of congruence between MPs and electors we used questions about left-right self-placement[2] and two batteries of issue positions that can be said to tap substantive issue preferences in terms of both the economic left-right divide and the libertarian-authoritarian divide[3]. To analyze the level of congruence between MPs and electors, we will consider the average values by party (party dyads), the complete distributions (MPs vs. voters), and statistical testing.

Why should we expect to find significant mismatches between voters and MPs in terms of the different distribution of preferences (left-right scale versus substantive issues)? And why should we expect to find significant differences between voters and MPs in terms of the structure of determination of left-right placement and the meaning of left and right? First of all, because left-right identities have at least three types of anchors (social factors, issue/value preferences and partisan identities) and for some groups some anchor(s) might weight more than others: for example, for elites (more educated and politically informed) substantive policy preferences might weight more than for voters; on the contrary, social and partisan factors might weigh more for the latter: the use of (social and/or political) shortcuts, instead of substantive policy preferences, is more likely among less sophisticated and politically engaged citizens (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976; Fuch and Klingemann, 1990; Knutsen, 1997; Freire and Belchior, 2011). Second, even in terms of issues/values, the left-right divide is

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[2] "In politics, people sometimes talk about the 'left' and the 'right'. If you can, where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the most left and 10 means the most right?"

[3] The full text for these questions will be presented in the relevant section below.

correlated with multiple dimensions, namely with economic and authoritarian-libertarian issues, and these correlates might be different for voters and MPs contributing to some significant mismatches between the two groups both in terms of the distribution of preferences and in terms of the meanings attributed to the left-right divide. Finally, MPs are usually politically more sophisticated and engaged than voters and this might contribute to some mismatches between the two groups both in terms of the distributions of preferences across different scales, in terms of correlates of left-right self-placement and, finally, in terms of the meanings of left and right. For example, MPs should be more aware of the differences between the two camps, and use more abstract concepts to describe them; voters should be less aware of those differences and use more social and political groupings to describe them.

Considering the fact that economic left-right issues are traditionally related to the left-right divide, and that the authoritarian-libertarian divide is more orthogonal to the left-right divide, we expect to find (first hypothesis)

H1: More similar results (regarding MP-voter's congruence) between left-right self-placement and economic left-right issues than between left-right self-placement and authoritarian-libertarian issues.

To compare the structure of determination of left-right self-placement across electors and MPs we will use a set of survey items (measuring social factors, issues, and voters' party identification / party list within which the MP was elected), and use OLS regressions to explain ideological self-placement. Here we have two hypotheses: due to higher political engagement and cognitive mobilization of MPs, as compared to electors, we expect to find

H2: Left-right self-placement of MPs more anchored in issue preferences than left-right self-placement of the individual citizens, and

H3: Left-right self-placement of MPs less anchored on social cleavages and partisan identities than the individual citizens.

Finally, to understand the meaning that both electors and MPs attribute to "left" and "right" we used two open-ended questions included in both surveys[4]. The three final hypotheses are the following: due to higher political engagement and cognitive mobilization of MPs, vis-à-vis electors, we expect

H4: MPs' to use more abstract concepts and issues to refer to either left or right, than individual citizens,

H5: Individual citizens to use more social and political groups' issues to refer to either left or right, than MPs, and

H6: Individual citizens to have a less clear picture about the meaning of left and right (more: "no difference" and "don't know"), than MPs.

MPs-electors congruence in terms of left-right self-placement

First we analyze the levels of MPs-electors congruence both overall and across parties. At the MPs level, we have used the party list within which the MP was elected to split the parliamentarians. For the electorate, we have used party identification to segment the population by parties. This was due to an increase in the number of cases vis-à-vis voting intention (2008), but we have cross-checked the results.

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[4] «Can you please, very briefly, indicate what "left" and "right" means in politics to you nowadays? «Left» means:_____; «Right» means:_____".

Insert Graph 1 around here

Insert Graph 2 around here

Overall, and converging with the mainstream literature on this subject, the Portuguese electors are slightly more to the right when compared to MPs, i.e., the later are located to the left of their constituents (see Graph 1). Using the T-test for two population means (variances unknown and unequal) (Kanji, 1999: 29), we found that these differences are statistically significant. This characteristic has been largely supported by other European studies (Converse and Pierce, 1986; Schmitt and Thomassen, 1999a; Belchior, 2010), and specifically in previous studies relying on the Portuguese case (Belchior, 2008).

Using the party dyads (average position by party), we can see in Graph 2 that the CDS-PP (conservative, rightwing) and the PS (Portuguese Socialist party, centre left) are the more congruent parties. In fact, using the appropriate statistical test (see above) we found that only in the case of these two parties the differences between MPs and voters are not significant; in the case of the other three parties (BE, PCP-CDU and PSD) those differences are always significant. On the radical left we find the less congruent parties: both BE's (Left Bloc, a left libertarian party) and CDU's (the Portuguese Communist Party - PCP - in coalition with the Greens) MPs are significantly to the left of their constituents, especially the latter. In the case of the centre-right liberal party, PSD, MPs are also significantly to the left of their voters, but in a lower extent vis-à-vis the radical left. Although using a set of other measures, similar results were already obtained for the Portuguese parties (Belchior, 2008: 463-465).

MPs-electors congruence in terms of issue preferences

Are the previous results for MPs-electors congruence based on left-right self-placement also true in terms of substantive issue preferences? At least at the mass level, left-right was found to be significantly correlated with major issue conflicts in either advanced industrial democracies and new democracies, namely with the classical economic issues associated with the class cleavage, but also with new politics issues (Inglehart and Klingeman, 1976; Inglehart, 1984; Knutsen, 1997; Flanagan and Lee, 2003; Freire, 2008). Some have even described left-right as a kind of "super-issue" summarizing preferences in terms of several packages of issues (Inglehart and Klingeman, 1976; see also Downs, 1957).

But can we really use left-right placement as a good proxy for measuring elite-electors congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences? As we have said before, we use Portugal as an extreme case where the conditions for this to happen are least likely: low levels of education, media exposure, and political interest, which are related with lower levels of ideological sophistication (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Freire and Belchior, 2011); low clarity of the policy alternatives presented by the parties to the electorate (Freire, 2008); low level of anchoring of left-right self-placement in issue positions (Freire, 2008). Thus, if we find that left-right placement is really a good proxy for measuring elite-electors congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences in such a case we can reasonably extend the conclusions to other (less extreme) cases.

To measure issue preferences we asked both MPs and electors to state their level of agreement or disagreement (scale form 1 to 5) to eighteen issue statements. These issue statements were arranged in two subsets that can be said to measure "economic left-right" and the "libertarian-authoritarian divide" – all the questions were recoded so that higher values mean either economic right or authoritarian positions. After applying

the Cronbach Alpha to each battery of issues, we have arrived at two additive indexes (issues summed up and divided by the relevant number of questions) which are present in Tables 1 and 2.

We can see in both Table 1 and 2 that the variables that entered in each index of issue positions preferences are basically the same, except for one variable in each index (the exclusion of variables in each case was due to the results of the Cronbach Alpha). But since we are more concerned with the subjacent variable ("economic left-right" issue preferences and "authoritarian-libertarian" issue preferences), we can be sure we are comparing the same underlying preferences (not to mention that the differences are negligible).[5]

Insert Table 1 around here

Insert Table 2 around here

Insert Graph 3 around here

Insert Graph 4 around here

In terms of the "economic left-right" index, overall, there seems to be a higher level of congruence between Portuguese MPs and electors (Graph 3) as compared to a similar exercise in terms of left-right self-placement (Graph 1, above). In fact, appropriate statistical tests do reveal that in the case of socioeconomic issues there are

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[5] Instead of using theoretical guidance and scaling, as mentioned above, we also used alternatively Principal Component Analysis (PCA): constraining the results to two factors only, we found the following (data not shown due to spatial limitations but that can be furnished upon request). First, both for voters and MPs the first factor is basically similar: it includes both indicators of classic socioeconomic left-right issues and items related with authoritarian issues (in the case of MPs all the items have positive loadings; in the case of voters some items have negative loadings). Second, factor two is slightly different across voters and MPs: it includes both socioeconomic issues (for both groups) and items about globalization (voters) or about immigration and democratic reform (MPs). Nevertheless, we will maintain the original indices: the PCA also revealed the major importance of socioeconomic and libertarian-authoritarian issues, for both voters and MPs, and besides that we need to compare the same dimensions across the two groups. Moreover, the indices we have built are both theoretically anchored and, in most of the cases, have good (or reasonable) Cronbach Alphas.

no statistical differences between the two groups; the opposite was true for left-right self-placement. Moreover, where in terms of left-right self-placement there seemed to exist a more pronounced cleavage because there is a bimodal distribution (both at the mass and elite levels), although the highest mode is located on the left, in terms of economic issues the distribution is clearly unimodal (and located exclusively on the left). Thus, although in terms of economic issue preferences both voters and MPs seemed mostly aligned to the left, in terms of left and right the polarization is much clearer, especially at the MPs level: voters tend be more located on the centre (although with a bimodal distribution); MPs are more differentiated (bimodal distribution) although leaning more towards the left than voters.

Analyzing the party dyads (Graph 4), we also arrive to a similar conclusion: higher congruence in terms of economic issue positions than in terms of ideological self-placement. In the former case, statistically significant differences occurred in three parties (BE, PCP, and PSD); in the latter this only happens in the case of BE. But in any case the differences are not very large. In terms of direction, the parliamentarians of the radical left are more to the left than their constituents. The additional novelties are that PS is now the more congruent party (before was to the left of their constituents) and the rightwing parliamentarians are to the right of their constituents (in terms of left-right self-placement they were to the left of their electorate, except for the overlap of the then more congruent party: CDS-PP).

Insert Graph 5 around here

Insert Graph 6 around here

13

Passing now to the analysis of MPs-electors congruence in terms of the issues concerning the "authoritarian-libertarian" index, we can see that overall MPs are much more close to the libertarian/new left pole than the electors (Graph 5). Moreover, although the incongruence is in the same direction (MPs to the left of the electorate), the difference is now more pronounced that in terms of left-right self-placement (review Graph 1 above). Moreover, where in terms of left-right self-placement there seemed to exist a more pronounced cleavage, in terms of authoritarian-libertarian issues the distribution is clearly unimodal (and located on the new left/libertarian pole, for the MPs, and on the centre, for the electors). Nevertheless, and although the value for the T test is much higher now than in the case of left-right self-placement (for the same critical value), the truth is that in both cases (left-right self-placement and authoritarian-libertarian issues) we reject the null hypothesis that states that mass and MPs distributions are equivalent.

Analyzing the party dyads, we can see that all the left-wing parties' MPs are more distant (to the new left) of their constituents than the right-wing parties, which are more congruent with their electorates. Additionally, the CDS-PP is now the only party that is to the right of their electorate, although rather slightly. Statistical tests (for different population means) do reveal for all parties except the CDS-PP, that the distributions of MPs' issue preferences are significantly different from those of their voters. Recall that in the case of left-right self-placement the significant differences included both the radical left and the PSD.

Thus, overall, we can say that H1 is only partially confirmed: at the descriptive level more similar results seem to hold when we compared MPs-citizens' left-right self-placement with MPs-citizens' positions on economic left-right issues than when we compare the former with MPs-citizens' positions on authoritarian-libertarian issues.

However, we also found some mismatches when we compared MPs-citizens' left-right self-placement with MPs-citizens' positions on economic left-right issues. Moreover, in terms of statistical testing, we found that the distribution of both voters' and MPs' economic issue preferences are basically similar; the opposite was true in terms of both left-right self-placement and authoritarian-libertarian issues.

The structure of determination of left-right self-placement

In the present section we want to see if the correlates of left-right self-placement are the same across MPs and electors. This is yet another indicator to see if we can use left-right self-placement as a good proxy to measure the level of congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences across MPs and electors.

Insert Table 3 around here

Insert Table 4 around here

Ever since Inglehart and Klingemann's seminal paper (1976: 244-245), there has been a consensus that individuals' self-placement on the left-right axis has had three major components: social, issue/value and partisan (1976: 244; Huber, 1989; Knutsen, 1995 and 1997; Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990: 207; Freire, 2008). Bearing in mind this literature, in Table 3 (electors) and Table 4 (MPs) we compare the structure of determination of ideological self-placement across the voters and their parliamentary representatives. In each case we have three sets of variables introduced by blocs in the OLS regressions: one for social factors, another for issue preferences and a final one for partisan orientations.

Looking carefully at Tables 3 and 4, we can concluded that basically we confirm our second (H2) and (partially) third (H3) hypotheses: MPs' left-right self-placement is indeed more anchored in issue preferences than left-right self-placement of the individual citizens (H2). Thus, at the elite level left-right is more strongly and also more multi-dimensionally correlated with substantive issue preferences, which can be said to be a result of higher political engagement (Converse and Pierce, 1986: 135-140; Freire and Belchior, 2011).[6] However, the results concerning H3 are more complex: we expected to find left-right self-placement of elites less anchored on social cleavages and political identities than the individual citizens. In the case of social factors, the evidence runs against H3: the level of variance explained is more important in the case of MPs than voters (and the type of factors is also different). Concerning party loyalties, they seem indeed to be more important in the case of citizens than in the case of MPs: thus confirming H3.

The meaning of left-right among MPs and electors

In this final section we analyze the answers of both electors and MPs to two open-ended questions included in the two surveys: one about the meaning of the "left" and the other about the meaning of the "right". The answers were coded in around 19-23 categories for each camp. However, following previous academic practices in the study of the meaning of left and right with open-ended questions (Campbell et al, 1960; Converse, 1964; Converse and Pierce, 1986; Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Herrera, 1999), we

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[6] To have a better evaluation of the role of political sophistication, we segmented the voters sample to include only people with either intermediary secondary education or media exposure above average (in a recent paper about Portugal, it was found that these two variables account for most of the level of political sophistication at the mass level: Freire and Belchior, 2011), and replicated the OLS regressions in Table 3 (data not shown due to spatial limitations but that can be furnished upon request). The results do show that more sophisticated voters are indeed a bit more like the MPs than unsophisticated voters, but the changes are pretty small. Thus, it is fair to conclude that political socialization is much more important than political sophistication in terms of media exposure and education.

further recoded the answers in 7 and 5 categories for the "right" and the "left", respectively.

One of the categories refers to the use of *abstract concepts* describing either the "right" or the "left" (see the notes of Tables 5 and 6). The second category refers to the use of *issues* to describe "right" and "left". Two other categories result from the association of the "right" or the "left" with either *social* or *political groups*. Two final categories refer to *No difference between left and right/don't know* and *other* answers.

Insert Table 5 around here

Insert Table 6 around here

In Tables 5 and 6 we compare the meanings attributed to each ideological camp by partisans belonging to each camp (electors and MPs from both leftwing and rightwing parties). In Table 5 we consider the meanings attributed to the "right". In terms of the leftwing and rightwing partisans, we can see that the electors consider much more that there is *no difference between left and right/don't know* than the MPs, thus confirming H6. On the contrary, the MPs refer to the "right" much more with either *abstract concepts* or *issues* than the electors, thus confirming H4. Summing up, in terms of the meaning of the "right" we can see that there are important mismatches between MPs and electors: the latter have a less clear picture about the meaning of this ideological camp and use less *abstract concepts* and/or *issues* to refer to it than the MPs. Neither feature is really a novelty in comparative terms (Converse, 1964; Converse and Pierce, 1986; Herrera, 1999).

Additionally, we can also see that MPs associate more often than electors *political groups* to the "right". In terms of the association of *social groups* to the "right"

17

the incongruence is different according to which partisan groups we are talking about (left: more electors than MPs; right: the other way around). Thus, concerning H5 the evidence is mixed: sometimes confirming it, other times running against what was expected.

About the meaning of the "left" (Table 6), on the one hand, a first remarkable element is that the category social groups is absent either for the electors or the MPs. On the other hand, we can see that we found similar mismatches between electors and MPs as compared to the ones found for the meaning of the "right", thus confirming our hypotheses (namely H4 and H6). In the case of the category issues, the direction of incongruence is different for left-wing (more electors than MPs) and rightwing parties (more MPs than electors). This latter element partially disconfirms H4. MPs use more often *political groups* to refer to the "left" than the electors: this also partially disconfirms H5.

Conclusions

In the empirical study about representation in democratic systems MPs-voters congruence has usually been evaluated either in terms of issue preferences or in terms of left-right self-placement. Even when the types of measures for political representation are used jointly, they seldom are used with the purpose to see if the levels of congruence are similar even if we use either left-right self-placement or substantive issue preferences. Due to the usual low levels of clarity of the policy alternatives presented by the parties, and to the relatively low levels of mass education, media exposure, and political interest found in Portugal, we used this country as an extreme case where it is likely to find significant differences in the levels of congruence in terms of left-right self-placement vis-à-vis congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences. Thus, due

to its extreme characteristics, this case was supposed to tell us to what extent we can, or cannot, use the congruence in terms of left-right self-placement as a good proxy of congruence in terms of substantive issue preferences.

Firstly, we found that in terms of "economic left-right" issue positions there is a higher level of congruence between MPs and electors, as compared to MPs-electors congruence in terms of left-right self-placement. Additionally, in terms of left-right self-placement a more pronounced cleavage seems to exist: there is a bimodal distribution at both the electors and MPs levels, although the highest mode is located on the left. The same was not found in terms of economic issues: the distributions of both MPs' and citizens' preferences were clearly unimodal and the mode was located exclusively on the left. Analyzing the party dyads, we also arrive to similar conclusions: higher congruence in terms of economic issue positions than in terms of ideological self-placement.

Secondly, comparing MPs-electors congruence in terms of left-right self-placement with the same phenomena in terms of "authoritarian-libertarian" issues, we have seen that overall MPs are much closer to the libertarian pole than electors. Moreover, although this incongruence is in the same direction as it was in terms of left-right self-placement (MPs to the left of the electorate), the difference is now more pronounced. Moreover, in terms of authoritarian-libertarian issues the distribution is clearly unimodal and the mode is located on the libertarian pole for the MPs, and on the centre for the electors.

In parenthesis, we could ask what are the reasons for the low levels of congruence on authoritarian-libertarian (according to expectations) and the very high levels of congruence on economic left-right (differing from expectations)? It is not easy to answer this question with the available data. However, we can suggest some

explanations. From several surveys across decades, we know that the Portuguese are somehow conservatives in terms of life-styles. However, urban educated elites are more liberal, and this might account for the mismatch in the libertarian-authoritarian divide. On the contrary, also from past evidence, we know that the Portuguese are somehow more progressive in terms of economic issues (pro-state and pro-welfare state, etc.). The curious thing is that MPs (from both left and right parties) also seem aligned with this tendency. Of course, this might be due to several reasons: a temptation to adjust to the median voter; a tendency to give socially desirable answers; some problems of internal validity with at least some of the questions asked about this subject in the questionnaires. Moreover, we should bear in mind that we are using statements and not actual behavior.

Thirdly, we have also found that there are significant differences in left-right correlates at the citizens and MPs levels: for the former they are mainly partisan loyalties; for the latter they are social factors (religion), issues positions and partisan loyalties.

Finally, also the substantive meaning attributed to either "right" or "left" seems to be different across MPs and voters. Using the answers to the open-ended questions about the meaning of "right" and "left", we found that the electors consider much more that there is *no difference between left and right/don't know*, than the MPs. On the contrary, the MPs refer to either the "right" of the "left" much more with either *abstract concepts* or *issues* (and also with *political groups*) than the electors. Thus, in terms of the meaning of the "right" and the "left" we can say that there are important mismatches between MPs and electors. Neither feature is really a novelty in comparative terms, but can produce problems in political communication and in using left-right self-placement as an indicator to measure issue congruence.

Thus, we have found that in many situations the results for MPs-electors congruence are different whether we use left-right self-placement or substantive issue preferences (especially for economic left-right issues). In terms of economic issues, both voters and MPs seem to be more aligned to the left. But in terms of libertarian-authoritarian issues, MPs are usually much more to the left-libertarian pole than their voters. And in terms of left-right self-placement MPs are also to the left of their voters, especially for leftwing parties, although this mismatch is smaller than in the case of the authoritarian-libertarian divide. These results might be accounted by the multidimensionality of the left-right dimension: it is both a reflection of economic issues and social issues (like the ones included in the authoritarian-libertarian dimension), and that is perhaps why the mismatch in terms of left-right self-placement is half-way between what we found for economic issues (almost no mismatch) and authoritarian-libertarian issues (a much larger mismatch).

All these mismatches not only mean that some problems in political communications might arrive with the left-right language but also that left and right might not be a well suited indicator to measure issue congruence. Of course, Portugal is an extreme case and the results might be due to it (and the evidence we have found might be only applicable for cases in the same conditions). So more comparative research is clearly need about this topic, namely to see if this results also apply in countries with higher levels or party system polarization and/or higher levels of mass education, media exposure, and political interest.

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