

## Ideological Representation: Achieved and Astray

Ideological congruence is the term generally used in comparative politics for the representative relationship between the general preferences of citizens and the perceived and stated position of government. This study provides a systematic comparative assessment of success and failure in achieving ideological congruence in nineteen developed parliamentary democracies from 1996 through 2017. It then deconstructs the processes through which elections can connect citizens and governments into the three major stages: citizens' votes in parliamentary elections; the conversion of those votes into legislative representation; the election of prime ministers by their parliaments and the appointment of cabinet ministers. Analyzing these three stages shows that average distance from the median citizen increases at each stage, with only a few remarkable recoveries once congruence begins to go astray.

G. Bingham Powell, Jr. is the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Professor of Political Science at the University of Rochester. He served as President of the American Political Science Association from 2011 to 2012 and as Managing Editor of the *American Political Science Review* from 1991 to 1995. He is the co-author and co-editor of the leading undergraduate comparative politics text, *Comparative Politics Today*, now in its 12th edition.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-48214-1 — Ideological Representation: Achieved and Astray  
G. Bingham Powell, Jr.  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

# Ideological Representation: Achieved and Astray

*Elections, Institutions, and the Breakdown of  
Ideological Congruence in Parliamentary  
Democracies*

G. BINGHAM POWELL, JR.  
*University of Rochester*



Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-108-48214-1 — Ideological Representation: Achieved and Astray  
 G. Bingham Powell, Jr.  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
 New Delhi – 110025, India  
 79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108482141](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108482141)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108699785

© G. Bingham Powell, Jr. 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

NAMES: Powell, G. Bingham, author.

TITLE: Representation, achieved and astray : elections, institutions and ideological congruence in parliamentary democracies / G. Bingham Powell, Jr.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2018048306 | ISBN 9781108482141 (hardback)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Representative government and representation. | Democracy. | Proportional representation. | Political parties – Platforms. | Right and left (Political science) | BISAC: POLITICAL SCIENCE / General.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC JF1051 .P65 2019 | DDC 321.8–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018051984>

ISBN 978-1-108-48214-1 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-74213-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page vi
<i>List of Tables</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	x
1 Elections and Ideological Congruence in Parliamentary Democracies	I
2 The (Rocky) Paths to Government Congruence: Three Stages	31
3 Party Systems as Contexts	55
4 Going Astray at Stage I: Starting On – or Off – the Path to Congruence	74
5 Going Astray at Stage II: Legislative Representation	92
6 Going Astray at Stage III: Forming Governments	113
7 A Special Analysis Problem at Stage III: Minority Governments	143
8 The Costs of Ideological Congruence: Achieving and Achieved	177
9 Representation in Parliamentary Democracies: When Does Congruence Go Astray?	203
<i>References</i>	228
<i>Appendix: Replication and Expansion</i>	237
<i>Index</i>	246

## Figures

1.1	A stylized sequential model of elections inducing ideological congruence between citizens and policy makers in parliamentary democracies	<i>page</i> 12
1.2	Inducing ideological congruence: exemplifying the general model and its benchmarks with 1998 election in the Netherlands	15
1.3	Inducing ideological congruence: stylized majoritarian model	19
1.4	How congruence goes astray: example at Stage I – systematic defection from closest party	22
1.5	How congruence goes astray: example at Stage II – median legislative party distant from median citizen	24
1.6	How congruence goes astray: example at Stage III – government formation distant from median citizen	25
2.1	Increased distances from the median citizen at each stage: OLS regression results by various measures	37
2.2	Distances of median voted party and plurality voted party	50
2.3	Ideological congruence of citizens, MVP, and government in Denmark 1998	51
3.1	Party system polarization: Canada 1997 and Greece 2012 – opposite extremes	57
3.2	Distribution of perceived party system vote polarization	61
3.3	Robustness of size and significance of polarization effects on distance from median citizen at Stage I and Stage III: OLS regression results by various measures	67
4.1	Ideological congruence of citizens and MVP in Denmark 2001	75
4.2	Distances of closest party and median voted party	82
5.1	Switches in control of the median	93
5.2	Effects of vote size and disproportionality on MVP	105

*List of Figures*

vii

5.3	Effects of MVP size on control of the legislative median	106
5.4	From election rules to MVP to switches and legislative distance	111
6.1	Additional congruence distance at Stage III	114
6.2	Congruence change at Stage III without a seat-advantaged party	128
7.1	Elections and government formation in Netherlands 1998 and 2010	145
7.2	Changes in congruence at Stage III in 36 advantaged-party contexts: benign minority governments (CSES data)	151
8.1	Executive concentration and distorted legislative voice	195
8.2	Executive concentration and government distance	196
9.1	The stylized sequential model of elections inducing ideological congruence in parliamentary elections	205
9.2	Austria election of October 2017	222
A.1	Party system in three dimensions	238
A.2	Seventy-one elections 1996–2015; 12 European elections 2015–2017	241

## Tables

1.1	Elections and Congruence: Successful – but Not as Successful as They Might Be	<i>page 9</i>
2.1	Stages at Which Congruence Goes Astray: Alternative Cutting Points for “Failure”	34
2.2	Regression Models of Congruence Failure by Stage and Sequence	38
2.3	Manifesto-Based (RILE-D) Description of Sequential and Cumulative Congruence Failures in 389 Parliamentary Elections in 21 Countries, 1945–2013	47
2.4	Going Astray by Stages – in Contexts of a Vote-Advantaged Political Party and Contexts with Separate Median and Plurality Parties	53
3.1	Stages at Which Congruence Goes Astray under Low Polarization and Medium/High Polarization Elections: Alternative Measures in 57 Elections, 17 Countries	66
3.2	Regression Models of Polarization and Government Distance from Median Citizen (Congruence Failure) by Stages and Sequence	69
3.3	Polarization, Advantaged Parties, and Congruence Failures	71
4.1	Party System Features and Contributions of Opportunity and Defection to MVP Distance	79
5.1	Election Rules and Aggregate Vote-Seat Disproportionality: 19 Countries and 71 Elections	99
5.2	Vote-Seat Disproportionality and Relative Party Advantage	101
5.3	MVP Distance, Disproportionality, and Stage II Party Switches: Regression Analyses of MLP Distance	109



*List of Tables*

ix

6.1	Stage III: Ideological Distance from Median Citizen with No Seat-Advantaged Party in the Legislature	129
6.2	Stage III: Party System Polarization and Ideological Distance from the Median Citizen with No Seat-Advantaged Party in Legislature	134
7.1	Median Party or Plurality Party: Which Party Is Closer to the Estimated Government Position? (Manifesto Estimates)	153
7.2	The Role of Explicit Outside Support Parties in Formal Minority Governments (Manifesto Data)	167
7.3	Polarization, Advantaged-Party Situations, Minority Government, and Congruence: Distance between Government and Median Voter	170
8.1	Paths to Parliamentary Government: Implications for Democratic Representation Values	181
8.2	Paths to Parliamentary Government: Performance in Democratic Representation Values	192
8.3	Getting to the Paths: Regression Analysis Explaining Different Values in Democratic Representation	200
9.1	Electoral Contexts and Stages of Representative Congruence	210
9.2	Parties, Distances, and Government Congruence	213
9.3	Elections and Congruence: Successful – but Not as Successful as They Might Be	215
A.1	Using the Manifesto Data to Predict the Ideological Position of the Parliamentary Government with No Seat-Advantaged Party – Excluding PEC-Winning Elections	239
A.2	Context Combinations and Paths to Government	240
A.3	Parties, Distances, and Government Congruence as Measured by Party Manifesto Data (RILE-D) and KF Method 1945–2013 389 Elections in 20 Countries	241
A.4	Data for the “Out of Sample” Elections: June 2015–2017	242

## Acknowledgments

As will be apparent, the empirical analyses in this book are primarily based on the comparative citizen surveys in nineteen countries that were carried out and made available by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) project. I am deeply grateful to all those associated with CSES, whose website I encourage everyone to consult. I also make extensive and essential use at many stages of the comparative data on party manifestos, coded and made available by the Comparative Manifesto Group. These two collaborative scholarly enterprises provided inspiration as well as data. My debt to them is immense.

In my long work on ideological congruence, and in the development of this book in particular, I have been extraordinarily fortunate to receive many insights, comments, and suggestions at many levels from Lynda W. Powell; she simply saw some things that I did not see, and her understanding of the issues involved in studying political representation is unsurpassed. As I moved from papers to book manuscript, I also benefited from several kinds of thoughtful advice from Eleanor Powell, on whom I have come to rely with complete confidence.

A late version of the book manuscript also received helpful and encouraging comments from the anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press, from Gretchen Helmke, and from Jane Mansbridge.

I also owe a special debt to several scholars who provided and/or helped me work with particular data and issues. Among these are Russ Dalton, who introduced me to the CSES data and insisted that I explore it; Paul Warwick, who commented on various papers and generously provided his original data on support parties in coalition governments; HeeMin Kim and Richard Fording, in our work on polarization using the Manifesto

*Acknowledgments*

xi

data; and Simon Franzmann, who made available his election-specific recodes of the Manifesto data. Participants in the APSA Presidential Task Force on Electoral Rules and Democratic Governance, especially John Carey, Karen Ferree, Mala Htun, and Ethan Scheiner, also provided insights from different perspectives.

My empirical study of representation in this general form began in the late 1980s and culminated in my book *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Vision* (2000.) Four then University of Rochester graduate students, who are now established professors at other institutions, played vital roles in that book: John Huber, Guy Whitten, Geog Vanberg, and Gail McElroy. That work continues to influence me. Since then, I have had essential help of various kinds from a succession of University of Rochester PhD students, especially Shin-Goo Kang and Sergio Ascencio, and also Chit Basu, Barbara Piotrowska, Jacque Gao, Tom McCauley, and Allesio Albarello.

I have also drawn on a number of undergraduate students at the University of Rochester, beginning with Scott Trufan, who proved how valuable careful undergraduate research assistance could be. Various updating of the CSES data, as well as other research, were provided by Deema Abdo, Xin Chen, and Sofiya Shmyhlyk. In the fall of 2017, students in my new undergraduate class on Comparative Political Representation were subjected to an earlier version of the manuscript; their reactions to it and to various representation topics pushed me toward both greater accessibility and deeper understanding.

Finally, I have benefited greatly, as scholars do, from presenting papers on these and related issues on panels at scholarly conferences. Some of these papers are specified in the notes and references; most are not. But the panel participants, especially the discussants, whose specific comments are now too blurred in my memory to mention individually, shaped the development of this book in various significant ways. I presented such papers at many of the annual conferences of the American Political Science Association and the Midwest Political Science Association. Special conferences at Cornell University, Florida State University, Vanderbilt University, and Washington University in St. Louis (at least twice); speaker series at the University of Michigan and Princeton University; and the Comparative Politics Group at the University of Rochester

(especially Bonnie Meguid and Tasos Kalandarakis) provided further venues and insights.

Other scholars are acknowledged in various notes in the book. But my gratitude for the help and encouragement of all of the above does not diminish my acceptance of final responsibility for the (no doubt numerous) errors and misconceptions contained herein.