

Polls and Principles

The Market for Political Leadership in 39 Countries

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Abstract

Political theorists have long debated whether elected officials should lead as *delegates* who represent constituents' wishes or as *trustees* who act autonomously in constituents' best interests. Empirical political scientists, however, usually avoid studying these leadership styles, and assume that leadership is an idiosyncratic trait that cannot be systematically studied. Using survey data using on party and voter ideology in thirty-seven countries, I examine the gap between parties' platforms and their supporters' views to demonstrate that this assumption is wrong.

Although leaders may have diverse goals, regression and analysis of variance modeling that their leadership styles vary between countries are systematically constrained by demands for political choice. When parties' voters are apathetic or disinterested, politicians can leave a large gap with supporters and act as principled trustees. When supporters are knowledgeable about politics, however, parties stay close to their supporters' opinions – even when electoral rules present voters with few good alternatives. Whether acting as delegates or trustees, leaders respond to public opinion by catering to supporters, rather than attempting to capture the electoral center.

These results paint complex picture of partisan behavior. Although it is normatively heartening that sophisticated voters can keep politicians in check, it is concerning there are few ways to hold politicians accountable to the polls in developing countries, or encourage principled leadership in the developed world. Above all, these results show that leadership is more than just idiosyncrasy – it is a vital subject in political science.

Contemporary democratic republics contain a virtually unlimited range of political interests and attitudes. Yet their parliaments represent only a handful of parties and perspectives. A republican party government allows millions of people to participate in politics, it provides them with an extremely restricted set of choices: voters are required to support a party or candidate at the ballot box even when none of the available options perfectly reflect their attitudes and interests. Conversely, political parties and candidates can only win power by catering to a broad range of supporters with diverse and sometimes conflicting views. Parties must present reasonably coherent platforms and act coherently in office, so they will inevitably take positions that privilege some supporter views at the expense of others.

Because many theorists consider it important that parties accurately represent their supporters, it matters how parties aggregate interests and take positions. Although parties cannot represent all supporters equally, some parties will marginalize more voices than others. Parties can adopt positions that are close to their median supporters and marginalize only a disparate minority. However, they can also take positions that diverge from the majority of their constituents and advance policies that are either more diluted and moderate or more radical and extreme.

Parties do not arbitrarily choose the positions they present to voters. Instead, they make strategic decisions driven by the goals of party leaders, the electoral rules that guide competition, and the structure of national public opinion. An extensive body of literature has shown that party leaders attempt to win support by moving towards the political center or extreme. Far less work, however, has considered how party leaders balance their strategic interest in converging with supporters against their sincere interests in certain

policy outcomes. Likewise, little work has examined how institutional incentives for centrism or extremism affect this relationship. Academics have accumulated surprisingly little knowledge of the crucial ideological relationship between parties and their own supporters.

This paper argues that parties will diverge from their bases when party leadership has few incentives to be responsive. Leaders are likely to prioritize principles over supporters' preferences when doing so will not heavily damage their personal position or electoral success. Party centralization, small district magnitude, and high economic performance party-supporter divergence: they insulate leaders from personal challenges, prevent new parties from attacking established competitors, and diminish the consequences of electoral loss. Rather than encouraging parties to take systematically more or less extreme positions, these factors encourage party leaders to prioritize personal preferences over popular ones.

To confirm this hypothesis, I analyze party positions in thirty-nine democracies using electoral survey data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. My results show that representation – in particular, the distance between party leaders supporters – varies substantially between countries and appears to emerge out of a market for representation. However, this market is lopsided. Institutional rules that drive the supply of electoral alternatives do little to determine the degree of divergence between parties and supporters, while socioeconomic forces that drive voters' political sophistication and demand for electoral alternatives have a powerful effect.

This paper is divided into six sections, including the introduction. Section 2 reviews existing research on the forces that drive party positioning and the elements that

determine the intensity of party competition, and develops a theory causally linking party vulnerability to ideological divergence between parties and supporters. Section 3 elaborates on this theoretical relationship. It articulates a theory about how the *supply* and *demand* for representation intersect to determine the ideological distance between party leaders and supporters. Section 4 develops a quantitative test for this argument, while Section 5 presents findings along with a discussion about their importance. Finally, Section 6 reviews key implications and discusses the need for further research on the topic.

Section 2: Literature Review

Partisan interest aggregation is a central component of modern mass democracy. Contemporary societies contain millions of citizens with an almost unlimited range of political interests, attitudes, and ideologies. As such, it would be impossible for government to hear these myriad diverse viewpoints and still reach timely agreement on pressing policy issues. Parties make democracy possible by aggregating these millions of voices into a handful of policy platforms that can feasibly deliberate, negotiate, and govern. They determine which myriad issues are taken up for debate, which arguments are aired within the halls of power, and which policies prevail at the end of the day. Democratic parties must respond to polls, but their leaders must also take proactive and principled stands to set the agenda that polls survey.

In setting the national agenda, parties inevitably suppress some voices and amplify others. In one country, party competition might hinge on a secularist left and a traditionalist right, while marginalizing citizens who support redistributive populism or secular neoliberalism; in another country, the opposite pattern might take hold. At a

particular point in time, the left might choose to emphasize legalizing gay marriage or reducing military spending. Given limited legislative capacity, their decision to advance some policy goals and relegate others to the back burner inevitably alienates some supporters while embracing others. In some cases, parties must negotiate between diametrically opposed positions as well as competing priorities: conservative parties often negotiate between business interests seeking open immigration policies and cultural nationalists opposing those policies. By taking certain positions, and aligning with certain interests at the expense of others, parties exert a tremendous influence over the political system. Parties' positions are as important as electoral results and constitutional rules both for understanding the positive policymaking outcomes and evaluating the normative democratic quality.

Political scientists have long realized the tremendous importance of party positioning, and for over half a century have extensively studied the way that parties and their leaders develop ideological positions. This research has focused on understanding how two sets of variables – institutional rules and the broad structure of public opinion – drive parties' positions and their distance from the electoral center. It has shown that parties in democratic regimes generally respond to polls and vary with the socioattitudinal traits of the electorate. Holding public opinion constant, however, electoral rules like district magnitude create centrifugal effects that incentivize centrism or extremism. These rules create strategic incentives and determine whether parties take principled positions close to the median citizen or distant from that median – in other words, when parties break from the polls. Taken together, the demonstrated effects of institutional rules and

attitudinal structures show that party elites respond to a complex set of incentives when developing ideological positions that bridge the gap between polls and principles.

Despite the vast body of research on this complex subject, important questions lie unanswered. Crucially, existing research has almost exclusively examined the relationship between parties and the median voter. This assumes that the critical relationship party leaders consider when setting positions is the relationship between the party and the national median voter; in other words, parties adjust their positions in response to *overall* national public opinion, and set their ideological position relative to the *overall* national ideology. But in some cases, this assumption may not completely hold. The leaders of major parties are likely somewhat responsive to overall national moods and concerned with the relationship between their parties and the entire electorate. But leaders may be more concerned by their relationship with partisan supporters. Party leaders may respond to supporters' and potential supporters' opinions even when these opinions are not held by other voters, and may be more concerned with hewing closely to these voters' demands than with staking out a position at the electoral center. Leaders may believe they have a responsibility to follow their supporters in polls, and believe that taking a more centrist stance entails breaking with these supporters on principle.

Despite anecdotal evidence that party leaders respond to their supporters, however, research on party positioning rarely considers the party-supporter relationship. Party systems across the world exhibit systematically different distances from the electoral center – in other words, varying *centrifugal* effects that incentivize parties to take extreme positions. But it is unclear whether parties also have systematically different distances from their own support bases – in other words, whether the *divergence* between

parties and supporters varies across social, attitudinal, and institutional characteristics. It is even less clear whether the same set of institutional rules and socioattitudinal structures that drive centrifugal distance between parties and citizens also drive divergence between parties and supporters: when party leaders make principled breaks with the polls, do they break with the median voter or the median supporter? After reviewing how socioattitudinal structures and institutional rules affect the distance between parties and the electoral mean, I explore tentative research on the connections between parties and their own supporters – and consider whether similar variables may drive these interactions.

Section 2.1: Socioattitudinal Structures and Citizen-Government Linkages

Political scientists working in a social-structural tradition have generally demonstrated that parties respond to the attitudes of the general electorate – to polls and public opinion – when setting ideological positions. This work has shown that the qualitative nature of partisan and ideological competition grows out of broad structural forces in society: the historical availability and distribution of key economic resources and the power of political and religious movements. These forces change slowly, but when they do change, parties and party systems adjust to reflect new balances of economic and ideological power and ensure that median voters are well-represented. At a smaller scale, parties also respond to quantitative shifts in the ideological and economic balance of society. When the median voter moves to the left or right, research shows that the party system follows the polls. Republican democracy does not perfectly represent all citizens' views, but it does appear to follow the general contours of public opinion.

Perhaps the most important work in this tradition was Anthony Downs, who in 1957 developed a simple model that showed how institutional rules and public sentiment interact to determine party positioning in a simplified mathematical model of reality. Downs assumed that parties seek to maximize their share of the vote and that voters always support the party the most ideologically proximate party. In a system with only two parties, parties need to win over half of the electorate to seize power and must move to the center to be appealing to as broad a range of voters as possible. Parties continue inching closer to the center in order to make their appeal broader than the other party, and when voters have perfect information about parties, these parties eventually converge upon an identical position at the median voter.

In reality, these results do not always hold because they depend on tenuous assumptions. When voters face imperfect information, parties are able to maintain distinct positions by capitalizing on ignorance (Downs 1957) – a situation that is particularly likely to happen when voters are poorly educated and lack access to reliable and transparent media outlets. In some cases, imperfect information means that voters do not base their vote choice on ideology at all – they are too poorly informed – but instead rely on factors like personal ties and patronage (Kitshelt and Wilkinson 2007, Keefer 2007). Although perfect mathematical modeling would predict no distance between parties and median voters, this result rarely if ever occurs in reality.

Other comparative research on the ideological connection between parties and citizens focused on the emergence of social cleavages and the process by which parties replicate these cleavages in the halls of government. In their seminal work on the subject, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) focus almost exclusively on the relative strength and strategic

decisions of important players, and the timing of key junctions at which they had to act, to explain the qualitative nature of divides that parties represent. Political elites built alliances to jockey for power during state consolidation and the industrial revolution, and extended the alliances to mass political parties during the nineteenth century. These movements created an electoral system that preserved representation for their interests, and with suffrage fully extended, these movements' elites were able to "freeze" this cleavage structure even in the face of institutional change.

Subsequent authors have generally followed this structural understanding of cleavages. The debate between scholars has largely centered on whether the European cleavage structure is changing (Inglehart 1997) or highly stable (Bartolini and Mair 1990, Mair 1997)) and assumes that the broad contours of socioattitudinal structure drive politics. Bartolini and Mair tend to follow Lipset and Rokkan (1967) in arguing that cleavages are mostly "frozen," and that old institutions and parties are weathering social change, while Inglehart argues that, among some population segments, rising affluence and education have replaced traditional concerns over economic security with concerns about quality of life and self-expression; the divide between "postmaterialist" voters more traditional "materialists" voters has supplemented the old divide between left and right. Knutsen (1988) argues that the postmaterial cleavage discussed by Inglehart is part of a broader shift in cleavage structure, from preindustrial and industrial social cleavages based on "objective" socioeconomic factors to contemporary conflicts based around subjective and less rooted in objective socioeconomic conditions.

This debate carries key implications for the relationship between parties and their supporters. If Bartolini and Mair are right, and the organizing cleavages of the party

system have gone largely unchanged for decades, then the distance between party leaders and supporters has largely gone unchanged as well. Because these cleavages reflect key social divisions, parties are generally ideologically close to followers – representation works. By contrast, Inglehart and Knutsen’s claims that voters’ values and demands have changed implies that parties may be out of touch with voters. Inglehart and his successors note that voters’ ideological and postmaterial demands have found various expressions in organized politics. In some cases, they have driven the emergence of “new left” and later “new right” parties that emphasize social and values-based issues over traditional concerns, such as the National Front in France and the Green Party in Germany. In some cases, existing major parties have adapted to the concerns of ideologically- and postmaterially- oriented voters, sometimes in response to pressure from new parties. But in some cases, the changing demands of voters have gone largely ignored by parties

Although Inglehart, Mair, and Knutsen differ in important ways, they share similar conceptual understanding of parties’ interest aggregation function and the broad forces behind its evolution.. All agree that the divisions in contemporary politics derive from the historical and contemporary socioattitudinal traits of society, and the economic and military resources available to various groups. For Inglehart and Knutsen, prosperity and education are driving cleavage change, while for Mair the stable division of labor and capital is a source of cleavage continuity. All three authors, complemented by Anthony Downs, view socioattitudinal structure as critical because it determines the *demand* for representation. In other words, socioattitudinal perspectives emphasize that representation changes when the *demand* for representation changes. Although Inglehart, Knutsen, and Downs all acknowledge in various ways that parties may not meet demand for

representation in equal and identical ways at all points in time, they still view *supply* – the way in which parties meet demand – as secondary to demand itself in determining the shape of representation.

Section 2.2: Institutional Rules and Citizen-Government Linkages

In focusing on social structure and contingency, the authors tend to ignore the potential impact of institutional rules on cleavage structure. Even Lipset and Rokkan, who do emphasize the varying ways in which political actors supply representation to meet demand, argue that these rules are irrelevant, because dominant social actors get to craft the rules. Mair, in a similar line of reasoning, argues that institutional rules play an important role in hardening cleavages – but ignores the role that these rules might play in shaping cleavages as they harden.

Fortunately, a complementary and equally important vein of research in comparative politics has focused on the relationship between institutional rules and citizen-government linkages. This research does not show that parties are necessarily unresponsive to the attitudes of the electoral median, but does show that the *supply* of representation parties provide is conditioned on institutional rules. Party leaders want to win office, and need to pay attention to polls to do so. But while greater public support generally translates to greater political power in all democracies, the precise conditions under which parties gain power vary with electoral rules. In some democracies, these rules require parties to move to the center to win power, while in other democracies parties may win more power by attracting support from the extremes.

Although Downs (1957) mostly emphasized how the contours of public opinion affected the distance between parties and their supporters, his revolutionary approach to political science spurred discussion of the ways in which institutions drive the connection between parties and their supporters. Downs worked in an American tradition where institutions – such as the American two-party system – were constant and could not truly be seen as independent. Sartori (1976), following Downs, showed that his outcomes were only valid in a two-party system; in a multiparty system parties do not necessarily converge on the electoral center even when information is perfect. When institutional rules like large district magnitudes and second-choice votes make it easy for parties to win seats and encourage multiparty competition, capturing an electoral majority is no longer the only route to power. Instead, parties can capture a smaller share of the vote and govern as coalition partners. Especially when district magnitudes are large and societies are ideologically and sociodemographically polarized, parties no longer have a strategic incentive to converge on the electoral median. They maximize votes by taking extreme positions, distant from the electoral center, that mobilize their base and favor principles over public opinion.

This comparative research on the connection between institutional rules and party positioning has spurred more recent research on evolving party positioning and partisan polarization in the United States. In general, this research shows that informal institutional practices – as well as formal institutional rules – drive the relationship between party positions and public opinion. Although policy attitudes are not necessarily growing more disparate or bimodal among the American public, there are fewer conservative Democrats and fewer liberal Republicans, so there is less room for

legislative bipartisanship and more electoral pressure from relatively extreme party bases (Hetherington 2001; Fleisher and Bond 2004; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Baldassari and Gelman 2008). Self-sorting began among legislators and other political officials as a result of the civil rights movement: the Democratic Party aligned behind civil rights and attempted to add African-American voters to its coalition while the Republicans sought to win the support of poor Southern whites. As liberal elites increasingly flocked to the Democratic Party and conservative elites to the Republican Party during the 1970s and 1980s, politically aware voters received signals about which party their own views should lead them towards. As a result, these voters self-segregated by party (Hetherington 2001, Fleisher and Bond 2004). The increased homogeneity of political parties may also have reinforced the concept of unidimensional, bipolar partisanship among these voters and encouraged the emergence of more cohesive left-right attitudes (Layman and Carsey 2002, Baldassari and Gelman 2008).

Party polarization, academic research shows, preceded social polarization in the United States. This implies that American legislators have some autonomy to take more or less extreme positions than their constituents, even though they did not enjoy the autonomy to dictate which issues were up for debate. Constituents, given limited electoral options, will vote for a candidate whose policy platforms differs somewhat from their own (Hetherington 2001). Parties can and will nominate more and less extreme candidates, and will not necessarily converge on the policy attitudes of the median voters as Downs (1957) would predict.

Unfortunately, the American case study literature has done far less to explore the ultimate causes of party polarization. There is very little discussion of why elites became

polarized when they did, how elites signaled to politically active followers, or why elites were able to take positions that were initially more extreme than their followers. The alliance between the Democratic Party and the Civil Rights movement may have instigated the process of polarization by undermining conservative Southern Democrats and causing a reaction among liberal Northern Republicans, but this explanation is too shallow – it does not explain why this particular event triggered the process of polarization or provide guidance for predicting patterns of polarization into the future.

Although there is an extremely rich body of literature on party positioning in comparative politics, scholars of comparative politics appear to have dropped interest in the question without fully exploring it. Very little is known about how institutional characteristics beyond number of parties affect the spatial relationship between parties and voters. The most notable attempt to date is by Reuven Hazan (1997), who revisits and tests Sartori's hypothesis about the role of center parties in creating centrifugal and centripetal party systems. Following Sartori, Hazan hypothesizes that a strong centrist party creates centrifugal forces in party politics. Parties do not compete over centrist voters, because these voters are committed to a party, and they do not attempt to build coalitions across the center; instead, they try to attract extremist voters and coalition allies to build a coalition that does not include the center. When parties of both the left and the right do this, polarization increases, and centrist voters and parties are given a stark choice between the partisan left and partisan right if they wish to join government.

Hazan opens up a promising new vein of research. Although game-theoretical researchers frequently tinker with Downs' formula under a variety of different system-wide rules, there is little empirical research testing the validity of these deduced claims –

for example, about how transferable voting systems such as (multimember) single transferable vote and (single member) alternative vote affect party positioning, or about how campaign finance laws drive parties' relationships with voters. And there is even less research that moves from the level of the party *system* to the level of the party, and examines how *intraparty* institutional rules on candidate selection, platform development, and fundraising – and informal practices on patronage and corruption – might impact parties' relationships with the electorate.

In short institutions as well as socioattitudinal structures matter. Existing research shows that the demand for representation powerfully shapes the relationship between parties and voters – whether voter demands are relatively constant or shifting. But it also shows that parties' responses to demand can vary across time and place, driven by institutional rules that provide powerful incentives to strategic elites. Key electoral and party rules appear to have a particularly important effect in determining how parties respond to voter demands: district magnitudes, electoral thresholds, party centralization, campaign finance, and vote transferability, for example, structure the way in which parties translate polls and public sentiment into seats, and the ways in which elites realize their ultimate goals for public policy and political power. An accurate picture of the distance between parties and their supporters cannot be one-sided. Like any good, political representation exists in a marketplace where outcomes are determined by rules, demographics, and attitudes – by both supply and demand.

Section 2.3: Towards a Theory of Party-Citizen Linkages

Yet while recent research has made great gains in understanding how the supply and demand of representation of representation intersect to determine the relationship between party leaders and supporters, even recent research like Hazan leaves important questions unanswered. In some cases, contemporary scholars seem blinded by the strong traditions they inherit: they are unable to break free of the paradigms in which authors like Downs, Sartori, and Powell worked. The authors made great contributions to the field by pointing the dual, complementary effects of institutional rules and socioattitudinal structure, but were less comprehensive in considering their dependent measures of party positioning. Subsequent authors, by following these measures, have ignored potentially important – even vital – facets of the ideological relationship between parties and their supporters.

Authors from Downs (1957) on have concentrated on *centrifugal effects* as measures of the relationship between parties and their supporters. The great bulk of political science research on this topic assumes a single key difference between party systems' citizen-party relationships: in some countries, parties take relatively centrist positions, whereas in other countries parties are more extreme. *The distance between parties and the electoral center* is taken as the key measure of the relationship between parties and the electorate. Institutional rules and socioattitudinal structures matter because they either incentivize parties to distance themselves from the center of the electorate or draw themselves close to that center.

But while distance between parties and the electoral center is an undeniably important feature of political systems with profound consequences for democratic governance and political outputs, it is *not* the only characteristic of the link between

citizens and the party system, or the only important of party-voter relationships. Centrifugal effects are not the only effects through which institutional rules and socioattitudinal structures drive the link between government to determine when parties embrace principles and when they adhere to polls. This measure is fundamentally limited because it assumes that the only meaningful important relationship between parties and citizens is the ideological distance between parties and the mean voter. It ignores a second component of the party-voter relationship that is arguably of equal or greater importance: *the distance between parties and their own supporters*.

Both normatively and positively, the ideological relationship between parties and their supporters is crucial. Normatively, the literature's unbroken emphasis on *centrifugal effects* assumes that, because democratic government should reach majoritarian solutions favored by the median voter, parties should take centrist positions to provide this representation. Yet this argument is flawed. First, it relies on a delegative concept of leadership in which parties' first responsibilities are to ensure that popular demands are implemented, even when this comes at the cost of visionary, ideologically coherent leadership that may alienate voters – in other words, it ignores the debatably valuable nature of leaders who serve as trustees. Second, it ignores the *expressive* function of voting. Many citizens would likely find a dictatorship of polls and popular ideas as repressive as a dictatorship of principles and unpopular ideas, because many citizens hold minority views on at least some issues. Voting for an ideologically likeminded party, and knowing that this party has a chance of winning power, can give voters a sense of efficacy and satisfaction; if parties converge on the center instead of being well-

distributed throughout the ideological spectrum, few voters will be able to enjoy this expressive satisfaction.

The literature's exclusive emphasis on centrifugal effects is equally bankrupt from an empirical perspective. Parties do not always respond equally to the entire electorate, but demonstrate a peculiar sensitivity to the demands of their existing supporters. Parties in a two-party system do not always converge on the center as Downs would predict, nor do parties in a multiparty system necessarily take irresponsibly extreme positions to win marginal voters at the fringe. In Sweden and the Netherlands, some parties take extremist positions – but many parties take moderate stances that hew to their constituents' demands for reasoned, sensible government. In the contemporary United States, by contrast, parties reject popular compromises in order to satisfy core supporters – even if these supporters comprise a distinct minority of the electorate. When viewed from the trenches of partisan politics, these phenomena are not surprising. Partisan loyalties tend to be reasonably durable, and stem from social identity and retrospective evaluation well as rational evaluations of policy platforms. Voters also desire credible and consistent parties, and tend to view partisan position changes with suspicion. This means that parties' abilities to lure voters from other parties is usually limited. Elections are often fought over turnout, and policy shifts must carefully balance winning new and appealing portions of the electorate with alienating existing supporters.

Ties to the center of the electorate are not irrelevant, and most political parties do stretch for broad popular appeal. Centrifugal effects that drive these ties matter. But these ties are balanced by ties to supporters. Existing research has failed to consider how party-supporter relationships balance against party-electorate relationships, or to understand

when parties are strongly tied to supporters and when they are not. Centrifugal effects that measure distance between parties and median voters must be matched by *divergence effects* that measure the distance between parties and their median supporters. These divergence effects have rarely been explored in the literature. Although they may be driven by the same variables associated with centrifugal effects, divergence effects may not operate identically. If divergence between parties and their supporters does indeed vary between parties in a systematic way, at least part of this variation may be driven by unique institutional and socioattitudinal forces that intersect to produce a market for representation.

Section 3: Theory

Party leaders are able to win support with positions that diverge from their supporters when doing so will not expose them to electoral pressures. Social structure, electoral rules, and idiosyncratic desires and beliefs all drive the strategies and goals that these leaders pursue. They determine whether leaders desire relatively moderate or extreme policy positions, exerting a positive *centrifugal effect* towards the ideological extremes or a negative centrifugal effect towards the center. These centrifugal effects have been a key topic in comparative political research for half a century since Anthony Downs (1957) first identified strategic incentives for centrism in two-party systems.

No matter how strong leaders' principled or strategic desires to take certain parties are, however, their impact on party positioning is limited. Party leaders are constrained by the need to win elections by attracting and mobilizing supporters, and must hew somewhat to the convictions of these supporters. Most leaders pursue some combination of political power and public policy that can best be pursued by winning

support at the ballot box, and are unlikely to prioritize their personal goals when it will cost support in intraparty leadership struggles or general elections. They cannot and will not take sharp turns towards the political center or extremes, regardless of centrifugal effects, because party voters and members hold them on a leash. In some cases this leash precludes almost any maneuvering away from the median supporter, while in other cases it prevents only the most radical breaks with supporter attitudes.

The platforms parties adopt are determined not only by party leaders' goals, but also by the length of the leash that leaders are held on. Leaders able to diverge from supporters and retain political support only when the electoral costs of divergence are low, although they may not always diverge from supporters when given the chance. In other words, party positioning is driven by a combination of *centrifugal effects* discussed by Anthony Downs and successors, and rarely discussed *divergence effects* that determine the amount of autonomy party leaders enjoy in setting positions. These factors must be considered together to understand the platforms that parties adopt and the policies they ultimately enact.

Section 3.1: Determinants of Party Divergence

Political leaders are rational actors who diverge from their bases when the cost of doing so is relatively lower. Most people who enter politics in the developed world do so because they have a keen interest in public policy and strongly held political views. However, politicians usually succeed through calculating gamesmanship and skill at cutting deals. They are rational actors capable of thinking marginally and making sacrifices to achieve some combination of political power and public policy. Politicians

cannot impose their personal preferences on unenthusiastic supporters when doing so will cause voters to defect to another party, abstain, or force a change in party leadership. However, they may take divergence positions when supporters are unlikely to embrace an alternative to the present party. Conditions that make alternatives more appealing reduce the maneuvering room that party leaders enjoy and diminish the divergence between parties and their supporters.

Although an almost unlimited catalog of variables and idiosyncracies can affect the electoral appeal of party alternatives, they can be collapsed into two broad elements that determine the divergence between parties and voters. The *supply* of electoral alternatives including interparty defection, intraparty revolt, and abstention, varies dramatically across political systems. Electoral rules that give voters better alternatives reduce the cost of withholding support from a party, encourage defection, and penalize parties that diverge from supporter preferences. However, even given equal opportunities to defect, the *demand* for party alternatives will be higher when voters are relatively prosperous and educated and can base their voting decisions on informed evaluations of policy.

Section 3.2: Supply of Alternatives

The alternatives available to citizens determine whether they accept a divergent party or withdraw support. When citizens only have a single viable option, they will accept more divergence than if there are several appealing alternatives. Although the idiosyncratic history of any country affects available alternatives and the ideological

packages presented to citizens (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) electoral rules also exert both direct and indirect pressures on party alternatives.

When electoral rules encourage a large number of ideologically proximate parties and ease new party formation, citizens can easily switch their allegiance to another existing party or form their own party. By contrast, when electoral rules encourage a small number of ideologically distinct parties, citizens lack appealing second-choice votes. For example, a German Social Democrat dissatisfied with a turn to the center could defect to the Green or the Left, while an American Democrat would only be able to abstain or support an electorally insignificant party. Much of this difference stems from electoral rules, which affect whether small parties can win representation. Most voters want to support parties that win representation in parliament; because voters are unlikely to know how successful a new party will be, they will be reluctant to support this party if it must pass a high hurdle to win representation. A high effective parliamentary threshold – in other words, the proportion of the vote that a candidate must receive in a single electoral district in order to win a seat – prevents small parties from winning representation. Transferable voting systems, which let voters list a “second choice” if their favored candidate receives too few votes, remove the risk from supporting small parties and remove barriers to entry. Other electoral features may work more indirectly to affect the availability of party alternatives: campaign finance rules and media laws, for example, determine whether challenger parties can amass resources and publicity. These indirect features, however, are far more difficult to measure systematically.

Meanwhile, citizens can also attempt to change parties from within. Decentralization will allow citizens to mount viable leadership challenges within a party.

A decentralized system is less likely to be swayed by the whims of a single party leader or to evolve a distinctively elitist culture and worldview; it will also groom a larger number of activists who can act as capable challengers. Although intraparty competition has received far less comparative scrutiny than interparty competition, it is still a product of institutional rules that can be easily be viewed in comparative context. Most notably, ballot systems determine how centralized parties are. In closed list proportional systems, where voters choose a party rather than candidate at the ballot box, voters can have few real options for influencing the composition of party leadership; in most cases, lists are develop by a relatively insular party committee with little public input, so these systems are the most centralized. Open list proportional systems are more decentralized: they allow voters to determine which candidates are elected from the party list, and cast judgment on established party leadership. Majoritarian systems, in which only a single candidate is elected from each district, tend to be more diverse. In some, such as the United States, candidate selection is conducted by local district offices or party primaries that are even more decentralized than open list systems. In others, such as the United Kingdom, candidates are appointed by a centralized body that brooks little room for dissent.

Section 3.3: Demand for Alternatives

Holding constant the supply of electoral alternatives, politicians will enjoy greater latitude in maneuvering away from their supporters when voters are uninterested in ideology and have relatively modest demands for ideological congruence. Conversely, voters who place great weight on ideological congruence are more likely to demand

electoral alternatives that provide perfect representation, and to punish divergent parties at the ballot box. Although voter motives are complex and varied, two broad factors may drive the demand for ideological electoral alternatives.

First, prosperous and politically sophisticated electorates will place greater weight on ideology when voting. Acquiring and processing information about parties' ideologies entails making a costly effort to acquire information about parties. Voters who are literate, educated, urbanized, and connected to the national and global media can acquire this information almost effortlessly and will rely on it heavily when casting ballots. By contrast, underprivileged and isolated voters may have only limited information about parties' positions and ideologies. They may balance ideology against criteria like patronage or kinship ties when voting, and find other grounds to support ideologically divergent parties. The range of indicators that may describe this sophistication is broad, and covers education (voters are likely to understand policy better and place greater weight on policy and ideology in voting decisions), prosperity (voters are able to spend time learning about candidates and issue, and will think about policy in terms of broad ideology rather than immediate benefit), and health (voters are materially secure and can concern themselves with higher-order national issues). Together, they constitute a powerful behind the voting criteria that party supporters use.

Conversely, voters are also more likely to tolerate divergence when the quality of life is *too* high. Although electorates may place a greater weight on ideology when they enjoy relatively high absolute levels economic, educational, and health development, they will also punish ideological divergence more heavily when they are dissatisfied – in other words, when government policy seems to be severely. In most cases, it is economic

policy that touches voters most consistently and heavily. Inescapable unemployment and inflation can cripple communities and cause widespread, severe hardship in a way that most other aspects of government policy cannot. In good economic times, parties can often win support by advertising managerial competence rather than policy positions and worldviews. The impact of ideological differences is relatively low. But when inflation and unemployment are rampant, voters are likely to demand radical change and embrace ideologically-based alternatives to the status quo; fewer votes will accept technocratic solutions. In short, party leaders will be on the tightest ideological leashes in countries that are relatively developed, but are plagued by economic malaise that creates widespread resentment among sophisticated, ideologically-oriented voters.

Together, development and economic conditions drive voters' demands for party alternatives. Whereas the supply of party alternatives is driven mostly by malleable institutional rules, demand is determined by macrostructural variables. Long-term development creates sophisticated voters who emphasize ideology in their decision-making and punish divergence, while short-term prosperity encourages voters to accept the current course and evaluate parties based on managerial and technocratic competence rather than ideological vision. It is this blend of long social structure, short term societal conditions, and formal institutions that determines the strength of the ideological bond between supporters and politicians, and the fundamental dynamics of statesmanship and leadership in party politics. The positions parties take are not merely driven by the idiosyncratic whims of parties leaders and other elites or by the coincidence of current events. Although leaders and events matter, the extent to which they shift party

positioning depends on a broad range of structural and institutional characteristics that *can* be systematically measured and analyzed.

Section 4: Methodology

If a market for representation drives the ideological relationship between parties and their supporters, three hypotheses will prove true. These hypotheses center around *divergence*, or the ideological distance between a party and its median supporter on a left-right scale. When divergence is high, parties are ideologically different from their supporters: leaders act as trustees, and pursue their own vision of good policy regardless of voter demands. When divergence is low, by contrast, parties are ideologically similar to their supporters: leaders act as delegates and represent the median attitude of supporters in the halls of government.

Section 4.1: Hypotheses

First, I hypothesize that in comparing parties, there will be differences in divergence levels between countries as well as differences in divergence levels within countries. Because countries have different institutional electoral rules and different socioeconomic climates, politicians in some countries will have stronger incentives to adhere to supporter views than politicians in other countries will. Within the structural constraints imposed by economic conditions and electoral rules, however, party leaders still make important and meaningful choices about messages and policies. Even though some of the variables that affect divergence may be impossible to detect statistically, they can still be identified as country-level or individual-level factors. Mathematically, this hypotheses can be modeled as

$$H_{10}: \mu(d) \neq \mu(d_j)$$

$$H_{1A}: \mu(d) = \mu(d_j)$$

Where d represent divergence by party i in country j . In other words, the mean divergence in at least one country differs from the mean overall divergence, and the divergence for at least one party in each country differs from the mean of all parties in that country.

Although it may not be possible to systematically identify every variable that drives divergence, I argue that a range of electoral rules and developmental conditions will have a substantial and measurable impact. My second hypothesis is that in comparing parties, divergence will be higher for larger parties with a low level of human development and strong economic performance (demand factors) and with high effective electoral thresholds, a high degree of centralization, and transferable voting (supply factors). I expect that both supply factors and demand factors, as discussed in Section 3 and listed below will have substantial power in explaining the relationship between leader and support attitudes.

Variable Name	Explanation	Category	Direction
Threshold	Effective threshold for new parties to enter parliament	Supply	Positive
Centralization	Closed list, open list, or majoritarian electoral system	Supply	Positive
Transferable	Whether voting is transferable	Supply	Negative
Development	Level of education, health, and income	Demand	Negative
PartySize	Number of voters supporting party	Demand	Positive

Table 1: Independent variables in model

Among *supply* variables, the effective electoral threshold, degree of party system centralization, and presence of transferable ballots will determine whether new representational alternatives emerge – in other words, whether party leaders are constrained by competitive pressure from diverging from followers. These variables, which are operationalized in Section 4.3 below, determine whether small new parties can easily enter the electoral system (effective threshold and transferability) and whether incumbent leaders can easily be dislodged (centralization). Development, my sole *demand* variable in the model, is likewise operationalized in Section 4.3 and represents a broad measure of voter sophistication .

Although this relationship is causally complex, it is a mathematically straightforward model comprising the seven variables, each of which will contain a non-zero slope m that determines the effect on divergence d .

$$d_{ij} = m_1[\text{Threshold}_j] + m_2[\text{Centralization}_j] + m_3[\text{Transferability}_j] \\ m_4[\text{Development}_i] + m_5[\text{PartySize}_i] + c$$

I seek to test whether these five variables have significant and substantial effects on the degree of ideological divergence between parties and their supporters, and hypothesize that all seven variables will have discernible effects. My second hypothesis is therefore:

$$H_{20}: m_k \neq 0 \quad \forall k \\ H_{2A}: (m_k = 0) \quad \forall k$$

In other words, the null hypothesis states that the slope m_k ($k = 1$ to 5) does not equal zero for all variables, while the alternative hypothesis states that the slope m_k

equals zero for at least one variable. A nonzero slope will indicate that the independent and dependent variables are associated, and validate the causal path I have highlighted from electoral rules and economic conditions to the relationship between parties and voters.

Finally, although I argue that these independent variables will be associated with the distance between a party and its supporters, my third hypothesis is that they may also be more weakly related to the distance between a party and the center of the electorate. In other words, these variables may exert both a divergence effect that pulls parties towards or away from their voters, and a centripetal effect that pulls parties towards or away from the center of the electorate. Factors like party threshold and economic conditions constrain leaders' ability to shift away from their electorate may, but they may also give leaders electoral incentives to adopt certain positions – high electoral thresholds have a well-documented effect of incentivizing centrism (Downs 1957), while economic downturn has often given leaders incentives to exploit dissatisfaction and polarize their voters with extreme rhetoric. However, because I expect party leaders to be concerned more with placating their base than with maximizing votes, I expect a model of centrifugal effects to explain less of the variation in party positioning than a model based on divergence effects.

To measure the relative strength of divergence and centrifugal effects on party positioning, I compare models of the two effects. My model of divergence effects will include the independent variables identified as significant while testing hypothesis 2 and use divergence as a dependent variable. My model of centrifugal effects will include the same set of independent variables, but will calculate a new dependent measure. This

variable, c , measures the relative distance of a party and its supporters to the median national voters. When supporters are closer to the political center than parties, c takes on a positive value, indicating the presence of *centrifugal* forces that push political parties to the fringes relative to voters. When supporters are further from the political center than parties, c takes on a negative value indicating that *centripetal* forces pull parties towards the center relative to their voters.

I predict that both models will be statistically significant. However, party leaders will likely be more responsive to the demands of their own voters than to those of reach groups. Even when parties might gain strategic advantage by moving to the center or extremes of the electorate, they are usually constrained in seizing this advantage by the need to preserve credibility; party leaders can only seize a strategic advantage when doing so will not trigger a revolt among their existing base. I hypothesize that my set of variables will explain a substantially higher proportion of the variance in divergence than the variance in centrifugality. In mathematical terms:

$$\begin{aligned} H_{30}: R^2(d) &< R^2(c) \\ H_{3A}: R^2(d) &\geq R^2(c) \end{aligned}$$

Section 4.2: Measurement of Dependent Variable

Divergence refers to the degree to which party positions – based on electoral platforms and policy initiatives – differs from the median position of party supporters. Because this paper is concerned with whether leaders can diverge from supporters and still maintain their loyalty, citizens are considered supporters if and only if they vote for a party. Because supporter and party ideology are difficult to measure objectively, I rely on citizens' judgments of these ideologies – particularly, on how a given voter places herself

and her chosen party on a left-right ideological spectrum. Ultimately, it is irrelevant whether parties and supporters diverge by some objective outside measure; after all, the demands of politics require that politicians' positions will *inevitably* differ from voters on some issues and will be more complex. Quality democracy merely requires that voters endorse the positions taken by their parties.

To measure party and supporter ideology, I use data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) compiled by the University of Michigan Center for Political Studies and Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences. The CSES is an extensive international project that has surveyed citizens in 43 countries on their political behavior and attitudes. Like many political surveys, it asks respondents to place themselves on a ten-point scale ranging from left to right, and asks them to report the party they voted for in the most recent elections. However, the CSES also asks respondents to evaluate the position of major parties in their country (as determined by CSES researchers) on the same ten-point scale. This rarer question enables me to rely on the same data source for party and voter ideology, and avoid the measurement error introduced by comparing voters' self-assessments against expert assessments of ideology. A research assistant in Germany, for example, might locate the Republican party differently on the left-right spectrum than a voter in Alabama would. Content procedures, like the Comparative Manifesto Project, exacerbate this problem. The center in some countries may be further to the left or right in some countries than others, but content analysis compares parties against a global center instead of a local perception against "center." The CSES is the only dataset to provide data on supporters' perceptions of party ideology across multiple regions and a large number of countries, making it an ideal data choice.

For every party, I calculate the mean ideology of voters and the mean ideological perception of the party among its voters. This can be modeled as:

$$d_{ij} = \mu(i_{ik}) - x_k$$

when d_{ij} is the divergence of party i in country j from its supporters, i_{ik} is the perceived ideology of party i by the voter k who supported party i , and x_k is the ideology of voter k .

Using voters' perceptions of both measurement allows me to compare voters' own convictions against their own perceptions of parties, and avoids introducing variability by comparing voters' beliefs against an outside measurement. Theoretically, if party supporters do not perceive a gap between their own beliefs and their parties', they will not push the party leadership to change regardless of whether outsiders see a gap between the party and its followers. This study is concerned with subjective awareness – the ultimate measure of democratic quality – rather than any “objective” reality about party positioning.

CSES surveys are available in 43 countries, including 20 advanced Western European and Anglo-Saxon democracies, 13 new Eastern European and Soviet states, 4 Latin American countries, and 5 South and Southeast Asian states. However, I exclude Belarus, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan from my analysis because they are insufficiently democratic: there is little reason for parties to respond to popular sentiment regardless of institutional rules and structural incentives. Japan is excluded because, during the survey period, it only held upper-house parliamentary elections. Because these elections do not choose the head-of-state or primary lawmaking body, they may not follow the same patterns as elections for the lower house of parliament. If a country was surveyed more

than once in the CSES, I only use the most recent survey results. Calculating scores for the same parties twice would give these parties disproportionate weight in influencing the final model results; because idiosyncratic party characteristics may affect the ideological relationship between leaders and followers, this will interfere with the data.

Section 4.3: Measurement of Independent Variables

The analysis includes seven independent variables, including both structural forces and electoral rules. In many cases, my argument involves broad conceptual forces that can be modeled only imperfectly. I draw on data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems as well as publicly accessible World Bank and United Nations data in an attempt to capture the key concepts underlying my argument as effectively as possible.

Although some of the barriers to entry that parties face are difficult to measure comparatively because they are unique to one country or qualitatively different, electoral thresholds and vote transferability can be easily standardized. I measure electoral thresholds using Lijphart's (1994) concept of an "effective threshold," which calculates the proportion of the vote necessary to win seats in a district based electoral system, the *de jure* threshold restrictions, the minimum vote share that can win a seat, and the maximum vote share that can fail to win a seat. The effective threshold, as a share of the vote, is therefore:

$$\text{Threshold} = \max(0.5 [m + 1] + 0.5 [2m]; \text{legal threshold})$$

where m is the average magnitude. In the case where $m=1$ (representatives are elected from single-member constituencies), this produces an effective threshold of 0.5, meaning that a party is not electorally viable unless it can win 50 percent of the vote. At a national level, however, a party can win representation with substantially less than 50 percent of the vote if its support is distributed properly. I follow Lijphart (1994) and Powell and Vanberg (2000) in revising this figure downward to 35 percent to reflect a more reasonable constraint on parties' ability to win national representation. District magnitude was calculated from information provided in the CSES survey. In mixed electoral systems, overall effective threshold was calculated as the weighted average of all electoral segments. Vote transferability was measured as a binary variable, using information from CSES.

Because there is no comprehensive comparative information on party structure and centralization, I use ballot structure as a proxy, as noted above. Based on questions in the CSES survey, I coded parties into three categories based on party system: open list, closed list, and single-member district. Bloc voting systems, in which voters choose to cast a single vote for a party, were coded as closed list systems.

Macrostructural demand variables are perhaps even more nebulous. The concept of "political sophistication" is impossible to measure with a single comparative statistic. I use development as a proxy for political sophistication, and incorporate the United Nations Human Development Index. HDI is a broad measure of national well-being that, because it includes a range of income, health, and education measures, is resistant to idiosyncratic differences between countries. I obtained HDI data from the United Nations

Development Programme, incorporating data for the available year nearest the survey date in each country.

Although short-term demand and economic conditions might also be key to understanding divergence, they are even more difficult to measure the constraints of my data.. Inflation and unemployment, the economic variables that have been shown to most affect voting behavior, are available, but inflation is extremely problematic because it only matters at the extreme. Voters are unlikely to punish a party more heavily when inflation lies at 6 percent than at 3 percent. It is only in extreme circumstances, when daily life becomes unlivable, that inflation is problematic – and there were too few cases of hyperinflation in this sample to model reliable data. Although I was able to run preliminary tests on unemployment, another key economic variable, it too proved theoretically problematic and was ultimately excluded from the analysis. Because the CSES data used was collected over a ten-year period, unemployment statistics corresponding with elections in each country conflate two separate effects: intercountry variation in unemployment rate and time-series variation. This introduces unacceptable variance into the variable, and makes a reliable comparison too difficult. Given that preliminary results did not indicate statistical significance, I elected to drop this variable.

Finally, as a control variable I incorporate party size. Party size is neither a clear demand or supply factor.. However, it is possible that small parties relate to their voters in a way different than large parties. Voters who support small parties with weak electoral prospects are likely to be extremely committed to the ideology of the party; if they were not, they would vote for a bigger party that could win representation in parliament and more effectively represent their interests. By contrast, big parties must

build coalitions across diverse groups with competing interests and perhaps competing ideologies. By measuring party size as the number of survey respondents voting for a party, I incorporate party size as a control variable with an expected positive association with divergence. Measuring party size furthermore allows me to throw out parties with fewer than twenty voters in the sample – extremely small samples that would not reliably represent the distribution of party voter attitudes.

Variable Name	Measure	Source	Formula
Threshold	Lijphart EffT	CSES	Effective threshold for new parties to enter parliament
Centralization	Ballot structure	CSES	Closed list, open list, or majoritarian electoral system
Mandatory		CSES	
Transferable		CSES	
Development		UNDP	
PartySize	Proportion of Respondents	CSES	

Section 4.4: Methods of Analysis

To explore my hypotheses, I conduct several statistical analyses. To demonstrate that there are between-country differences in divergence and leadership, I use a one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) test. ANOVA evaluates the structure of variance among cases to determine what proportion of that variance occurs within categories of a variable, and what proportion of variance occurs between categories. Finding a significant amount of between-category variance will confirm my first hypothesis. My second and third hypotheses utilize multiple linear regression tests, as discussed above. To confirm my

second hypothesis, I primarily examine the significance of the variable coefficients in my model: statistical significance means that the variables are meaningfully associated. To confirm my third hypothesis, I examine the R^2 values of my two models. I hypothesize that the divergence model will have a higher R^2 than the centrifugal model, indicating that it has greater predictive power in understanding the positions parties take. As a secondary measure of the two models' strength, I will conduct simulations to assess how party positions change as the dependent variables shift from their minimum through mean values to their maximum.

Section 5: Analysis

Although it is impossible to understand all the variance between countries and parties, my analysis shows that the impact of structural demand for electoral choice overshadows the impact of electoral rules that constrain the supply of electoral choices. Divergence does vary systematically between countries. Furthermore, some of this variance can be explained by identifiable factors: when sophisticated voters care about their parties' ideologies, divergence is low even when institutional rules shelter leaders from accountability. But when voters are unsophisticated and put less emphasis on ideology, divergence is high even when institutions promote accountability. Almost universally, parties respond to the demands of their existing supporters, rather than the desires of the electorate at large. Parties do not converge towards the center of the electorate, but towards the center of their base.

In other words, I am able to partially confirm all three hypotheses. ANOVA testing shows that H_1 holds true and divergence varies systematically between countries.

My regression model shows a significant and fairly strong relationship between human development, suggesting that voter sophistication appears to drive the demand for representational congruence and partially confirming H₂. However, three of the four supply-side variables I discuss in my model – vote transferability, party centralization, and mandatory – failed to achieve statistical significance, while electoral threshold was statistically significant but insubstantial. Representation appears to emerge out of a political market in which supply and demand have uneven effects. Finally, H₃ also proves correct: my model in which party leaders set positions relative to their base explains more of the variance in party positioning than an alternative Downsian model in which leaders set positions relative to the electorate at large. Taken together, these findings show that party leaders' decisionmaking is driven by structural constraints: leaders act as delegates and follow the polls in some circumstances, but diverge from their followers to act as principled trustees in others.

My results also point to the complexities and seeming contradictions of democratic government, and highlight the need for further dialog between empirical political science and normative theory. On the one hand, there are few ways for parties in consolidated, developed democracies to eschew public opinion, and opportunities for leadership in the undeveloped and politically tumultuous countries that need it most. On the other hand, there are few ways to force leaders to become accountable in the developing world, or to promote visionary policy shifts once countries pass a threshold of sophistication. And while leaders may be responsive, they are rarely responsive to the needs of the citizenry as a whole. In countries without a natural center party, governments that genuinely represent the people may be rare indeed. Representation and leadership are

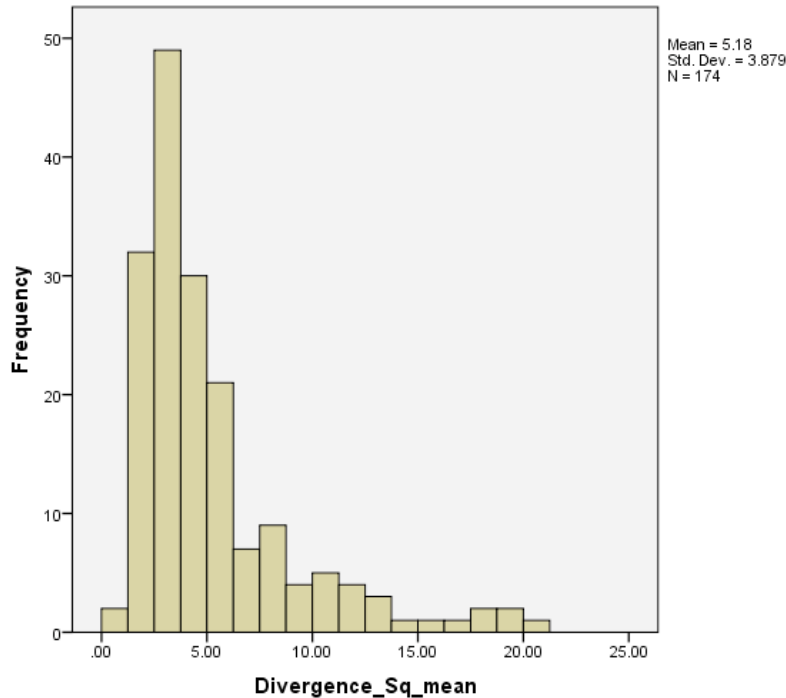
nuanced concepts, and additional work must explore the normative implications of democratic divergence.

Section 5.1: Descriptive Analysis

Informal data analysis shows that, generally speaking, differences between parties and supporters are moderate. There are few parties that match their supporters' ideologies almost exactly, but even fewer parties that draw supporters with ideologies radically different from the parties'. The mean squared distance between a party and its supporters was 5.18, although squared distances varied between .68 – nearly no divergence – to 20.94 – nearly half the distance of the left-right scale. The divergence between parties and their supporters takes on a distinctively left-skewed shape: a few parties deviate sharply from their supporters, but most appear to maintain relatively close proximity. The median appears to be substantially less than the mean – between 3.5 and 4.0

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Divergence_Sq_mean	174	.68	20.94	5.1769	3.87861
Valid N (listwise)	174				



Comparing countries, the positions parties take vary more than the beliefs that voters hold. Across the world, most voters tend to place themselves near the electoral center, and the distribution of ideologies is unimodal with a sharp peak in the middle. A large plurality of voters in every country placed themselves as a 5, at the halfway point on the ideological scale. Ideologies are not necessarily distributed evenly around the center, however: voters in many countries seem to skew slightly to the right, and voters in a smaller but still substantial number of countries skew to the left. National political cultures do appear to vary, and change peoples' political attitudes or the labels they put on these attitudes.

Two countries appeared to be clear outliers in the initial descriptive analysis. Mexican voters, unlike voters in any other country, skew sharply to the right. Far more voters in Mexico classified themselves as extreme right (an eight through ten on the ideological scale) than anywhere else in the survey, and extremely few voters classified

themselves as belonging to the left. This differs with anecdotal surveys of Mexico – although Mexican voters tend to be fairly conservative, both the currently governing PAN or the previously dominant PRI are center- to center-right parties. The extreme right enjoys very little political strength in Mexico, while the left is represented through a robust leftist party, the PRD. However, the authors of the CSES defend the results of the survey and note they have verified the results. As such, I chose to keep Mexico in the analysis. In a second Latin American case, Chile, the voters position themselves almost uniformly on the left. After investigation, I determined that this was due to corruption in the data file; there were *no* voters in the sample of over a thousand voters who positioned themselves to the right of center, and no mention of this anomaly in the CSES documentation. Because the voters' shift to the left created extremely high divergence – some of these voters supported conservative parties – I excluded Chile from my final analysis. Excluding this case did not alter the significance of any results, but did strengthen some of the R^2 statistics.

Section 5.2: Intercountry Differences in Divergence (H_1)

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test for intercountry variations in divergence supports Hypothesis 1, my argument that divergence varies meaningfully between countries. This suggests that divergence is not merely a consequence of the idiosyncratic positions that party leaders take. To the contrary, there are underlying systemic variables that differ between countries and drive party-supporter divergence. The findings show that approximately 80 percent of the variation in divergence occurs between countries, rather than among parties within a single country. This is not only statistically significant

at any common threshold, but is extremely substantial: the R^2 value shows that parties within a single country tend to exhibit relatively similar levels of divergence.

ANOVA

ANOVA between countries

Divergence_Sq_mean

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4760.348	36	132.232	4.173	.000
Within Groups	4499.616	142	31.687		
Total	9259.965	178			

The incredibly high intercountry variation in divergence, relative to the intracountry variation between parties, suggests that divergence is *not* primarily a function of individual party leaders' decisions. Although party positions are ultimately set by leaders acting on complex and varied motivations, leaders in the same country tend to make similar decisions about how far from their supporters their positions can be. Leaders seem cognizant of limits on the distant from the supporters they can enjoy – in other words, the extent to which they can act as trustees and put principle (deeply committed beliefs, strategic visions, or personal advantage) ahead of polls and supporters' desires.

Section 5.2: – Supply of Electoral Choice (H_{2a})

Although a large percentage of the variance of divergence stems from differences between countries, not all of this difference can be attributed to the structural variables I hypothesized about. In particular, the four institutional variables that I predicted would drive the supply of electoral choice, and the resulting levels of divergence, failed to prove statistically significant. Among these variables, only the effective political threshold even

approached significance. Yet this variable, which scholars from Downs to Lijphart attribute with extreme explanatory power, promised to explain less than ten percent of the variance in divergence. The results of both single and multiple regression analyses do little confirm Hypothesis 2 – that institutional rules and socioattitudinal structure drive the supply and demand for representation and determine the level of divergence between parties and their supporters. The available supply of electoral alternatives does little to determine whether leaders can act as trustees and embrace principles over polls.

In single regression modeling of continuous independent variables and ANOVA modeling of ordinal independent variables, few differences approach significance. The differences between transferable and nontransferable ballot systems yield a p-value of .35, meaning that observed differences are likely the result of sampling instead of population differences. Likewise, I hypothesized that differences in ballot systems between closed-list, open-list, and majoritarian countries should drive the degree of party centralization and determine whether party leaders follow their supporters to avoid intraparty challenges. Yet an ANOVA to test for differences between these three systems shows that there is a 12-percent chance differences in Tier 1 voting method were due to chance, rather than population characteristics, and produce an utterly insubstantial R^2 value of 0.03. The relationship fails to explain any meaningful of variation in the dependent variable, and ballot type can be effectively discarded as a force behind divergence.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.056 ^a	.003	-.003	3.88387

ANOVA

ANOVA: difference between open and closed lists (Tier 1) on Divergence_Sq_mean

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	299.962	3	99.987	1.953	.123
Within Groups	8960.003	175	51.200		
Total	9259.965	178			

T

he relationship between transferable ballots and divergence is similarly weak: the vast majority of the variance in divergence between cases occurs within categories, rather than between categories, and it is likely that the between-category sample variance is a statistical artifact rather than a result of population differences. However, this result must be taken with caution: because there were a very limited number of countries and parties in the sample that use transferable voting, obtaining statistical significance may be a difficult task – case study research comparing most-similar cases could help confirm these results or cast doubt on them.

ANOVA

Anova: difference between transferable and nontransferable ballot on Divergence_Sq_mean

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	111.664	2	55.832	1.074	.344
Within Groups	9148.301	176	51.979		
Total	9259.965	178			

My single-variable model for effective threshold does not remotely approach approaches statistical significance: with a p-value of .812, it is unlikely that effective threshold is linked with divergence.

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	5.098	.443		11.496
	EffT_mean	.005	.021	.018	.238
					.812

a. Dependent Variable: Divergence_Sq_mean

In many ways, these findings are surprising. Many of the greatest figures in comparative politics, from Sartori to Lijphart, have argued that institutions exert a powerful influence on the positions that parties take. Although I consider many of the same institutions – electoral threshold and ballot system – my results are contradictory. Although these institutions may explain parties' relationships with the electoral center, they do not explain parties' relationships with their own supporters.

There are two possible explanations for this counterintuitive phenomenon. It might be interpreted as a validation of Downs' argument. This interpretation means that parties are concerned with maximizing vote share, so they disregard existing supporters' attitudes and follow strategic incentives to capture new votes; in other words, divergence from supporters is only a random by-product of other tactical incentives. However, the results can also be interpreted as a resounding rejection of Downs' work: they may say that institutions do not matter. Parties may respond to incentives, but these incentives

come from sources other than formal rules. In other words, demand rather than supply may drive leadership and party strategy.

Section 5.3: Demand for Electoral Choice (H_{2b})

Linear regression on modeling on demand-side variables suggests the second alternative: parties respond more to social structural forces than to formal electoral rules when crafting positions and messages. Long-term development explains a substantial and statistically significant portion of the variance in divergence. Parties in more developed countries are ideologically closer to their supporters, suggesting that the citizens of developed countries demand more out of their representatives.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.657 ^a	.432	.428	2.95302

a. Predictors: (Constant), HDI

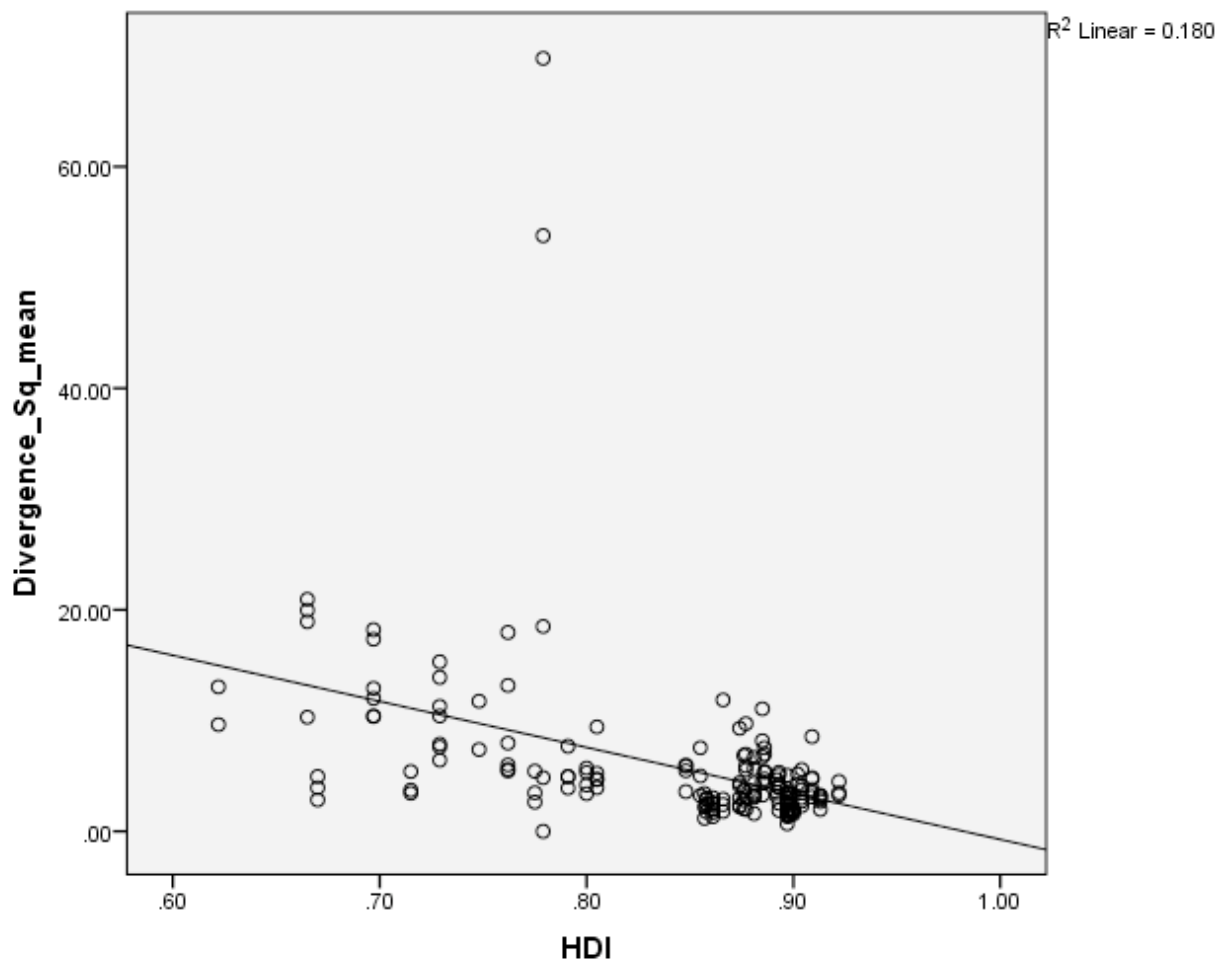
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	34.199	2.572		13.298	.000
	HDI	-34.427	3.038	-.657	-11.333	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Divergence_Sq_mean

In a simple linear regression, treating the Human Development Index as a variable to explain divergence yields a p-value of less than .001. In other words, it is extremely unlikely that the sampled differences between high- and low-HDI countries are due to

chance. The regression model has moderate explanatory power: an R^2 of .432 means that human development can be responsible for up to 43.2 percent of the variance in divergence. The strength of the relationship is strong, and a visual analysis confirms an evident trend relating human development and divergence.



Even though institutions do little to drive leadership strategy and party positioning, the underlying traits of the electorate do matter. As a broad composite index, human development can be interpreted in many ways. And because development is so broadly correlated with many political features, it is difficult to identify the precise causal pathways that link development and divergence. There are a wide range of intervening

variables – democratic consolidation and media system come to mind – that might explain some of this relationship. However, voter sophistication seems likely to explain at least part of the significant link between social conditions and party leadership strategies. Educated voters are likely to place a greater weight on ideology, relative to patronage and kinship. Wealthy voters, because they are materially secure, might also be able to put greater emphasis on ideology – and will be less likely to support a party simply because it provides basic services. Health seems less related to political behavior than the other components of human development, but may serve as an effective proxy for social welfare. When citizens can depend on an effective safety net to provide basic services they can comfortably articulate higher-order demands, and when they come into regular contact with the state through an education and medical bureaucracy, they have more direct reason to hold governments accountable.

For policymakers, the dominant role that development plays in linking leaders with constituents is concerning. At least among the relatively high-income, democratically stable sample of countries surveyed, the role of development is overwhelming. There is little room for well-designed institutions to encourage either autonomous, visionary trusteeship or humble, accountable delegative leadership. Developed countries seem almost destined to muddle through leadership by committee, while developing countries must hold their breath for a leader with the vision and integrity to put principles ahead of polls and use their autonomy to reshape a nation for the better.

Section 5.4: Comparing Divergence and Centrifugal Effects (H₃)

While social structure rather than electoral institutions appears to drive parties' relationship with voters, the relationship between parties and national electorates is far weaker. Although party systems systematically differ in the strength of their centrifugal forces, my analysis does not find strong relationships between centrifugality and any of the independent variables identified in the literature. This suggests that leaders' calculations to take positions and craft electoral appeals are relatively complex, and that leaders usually attempt to maintain relationships with existing followers instead of seizing strategic incentives to move to the center or extremes to win new voters. Parties, it seems, are strongly tied to their existing bases.

By modeling the extent to which parties break from followers to diverge either *towards the extremes* (at positive values) or *towards the center* (at negative values), I am able to measure the centrifugal force that separates from voters. In other words, I can map out both the nondirectional *divergence effects* and directional *centrifugal effects* that separate parties from their supporters, and consider whether the commonly identified supply and demand variables identified above – institutional rules and socioeconomics – drive centrifugal effects. Although this does not *necessarily* demonstrate the relative importance of the two effects, it can provide suggestive evidence about whether party leaders respond to changing circumstance by adjusting their relationship with the electoral center or with their base.

The strength of centrifugal effects, like the strength of divergence effects, varies substantially and significantly between countries. A one-way analysis of variance to assess the significance of intercountry differences yields a p-value of less than .001,

suggesting it is extremely likely that there are meaningful and systematic differences between countries. Around 37.5 percent of the total variance in centrifugal effects occurs between countries, rather than between parties within the same country, which shows that the variation between countries is important as well as statistically significant: differences between countries are a powerful force in determining whether parties take more extreme positions than their supporters.

ANOVA

Divergence_ToCenter_Sq_mean

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	129.224	35	3.692	2.554	.000
Within Groups	199.468	138	1.445		
Total	328.693	173			

Although the analysis of variance suggests that parties in some countries stray further away from their voters and towards the extreme, my regression models fail to provide meaningful insight into the ultimate causes of these differences. Neither ballot transferability, effective threshold, or ballot type substantially explain the strength of centrifugal tendencies among parties and party systems— in other words, the amount which institutions pull parties towards or away from the center, as in Downs' 1957 model. With respective significance levels of .216, .905, and .266 the differences between groups are likely a function of random sampling rather than population differences. This strongly contradicts existing research in the tradition of Downs (1957) and Sartori (1976): if institutional rules push parties to take more extremist position relative to the electoral center, as these authors have shown, then some electoral rules should create divergence with supporters by encouraging parties to be more extreme (or less extreme) than

supporters. Assuming that Downs, Sartori, and other luminaries in the field are not wrong, it may be that centrifugal effects have an equal effect on parties and voters. Political scientists working on the United States have shown that voters tend to take ideological cues from elites, and that greater extremism among elites will create greater extremism among citizens. Anecdotal evidence from Powell's (1970) study of political polarization in Hallein, Austria similarly suggests the ways in which polarized elites can polarize their citizenry, while Lijphart's (1968) case study of the Netherlands suggests that the opposite effect can also hold. The missing relationship between institutional rules and divergence towards the center is puzzling, and warrants further study at length.

Regression of EffT on Divergence to Center

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.072	.584		1.837	.068
EffT_mean	.034	.027	.093	1.242	.216

a. Dependent Variable: Divergence_ToCenter_Sq_mean

ANOVA: Difference Between Transferable and Non-Transferable Ballot on Divergence to Center

Divergence_ToCenter_Sq_mean

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.331	2	2.665	.100	.905
Within Groups	4672.724	176	26.550		
Total	4678.054	178			

Just as surprising as the insignificance of institutional rules is the insignificance of socioattitudinal structure, which proved a fairly powerful predictor of parties'

relationships with their supports. Regressing development on centrifugal effects yields a p-value of .27; there is more than a 25 percent chance that detected association between human development and divergence to the center. It appears that the two variables are unrelated.

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	6.566	4.442		1.478	.141
HDI	-5.866	5.258	-.084	-1.116	.266

a. Dependent Variable: Divergence_ToCenter_Sq_mean

The failure to detect a relationship between institutional rules and centrifugal effects suggests a problem with the measure of centrifugal effects or the presence of a lurking variable – change in popular attitudes. By contrast, the failure to detect a relationship between socioattitudinal structure and centrifugal effects suggests that these effects are relatively weak. Party leaders do not seem to respond to either rules or structures in a systematic way by adjusting their ideology towards or away from center, but *do* respond to social structure by adjusting their ideology towards or away from their median supporter. When social conditions promote education and prosperity, party leaders generally shift their parties towards supporters, rather than systematically shifting towards the center of the electorate. The median party supporter, rather than the median voter, appears to be the critical consideration for party leaders.

This does not show that the mechanics of party positioning presented by Anthony Downs and Giovanni Sartori are not necessarily wrong, but it does reveal that they are

not the entire story. Party leaders might systematically shift towards the extremes when the number of political competitors is low, but bring their followers with them. Because most voters are relatively ideologically unsophisticated, their ideologies may not be set. Because voters in many countries are strongly tied to parties via partisan or class identity or participation in patronage or party activities, they may (within limits) adopt the ideology that their preferred party takes. But even if invisible effects drive party positioning, this does not detract from the powerful role of divergence effects and the socioeconomic factors that drive them. First, the visible ideological distance between parties and supporters varies substantially: parties are virtually identical to supporters in some cases, but lie halfway across the ideological scale in others. Development strongly drives the divergence between voters and parties and therefore exerts a strong effect on the positions parties ultimately take. Second, even if parties do lead supporters to take new ideological, they can only shift supporters' positions over times; a party that overnight rebranded itself from center-left to center-right, for example, would lose all credibility with the electorate. If development constrains the degree to which parties may diverge from supporters, it likely also constrains the rate at which parties may shift positions and bring their followers along.

These results paint a nuanced picture of the interaction between social structure and institutional rules, and the way in which the two combine forces to structure leadership. Within the broad constraints of development and citizen sophistication, party leaders may or may not have room for ideologically maneuvering. Even when they do have room, their messaging and policy decisions are complex. Leaders must factor in a myriad of strategic institutional incentives, combined with their own personal goal and

principles, to determine whether they take advantage autonomy. But in the end, only leaders themselves can determine whether they use this autonomy for principled public goals or follow polls. Leadership is a complex social phenomenon, driven in part by idiosyncrasy but also by concentric circles of institutional and social structural context.

Section 6: Conclusions

Divergence has important implications for democracy, but it cannot be simply classified as a good or bad phenomenon for democracy. Instead, divergence represents opportunity – the opportunity for leaders to break away from the masses and articulate a revolutionary vision of society for better or for worse. Many of the greatest statesmen of the century took actions that were deeply controversial or unpopular in order to remake their societies – Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson in the United States, Winston Churchill and Charles DeGaulle in Europe, and Mustafa Kemal and Jawaharlal Nehru in the developing world. But many of the most tyrannical figures in the history of the modern have similarly broken with their followers to make unaccountable shifts in society. From Stalin and Mao to Robert Mugabe and Vladimir Putin, these leaders have also articulated visionary policies that would be impossible if they were forced to abandon principles and respond to the minute vagaries of public opinion.

Just as understanding the relationship between leaders and followers requires going beyond “centrism” and “extremism,” understanding the implications of divergence requires going beyond a filter of good and bad to think in terms of opportunities and constraints. Viewed through a simple prism, the findings of this project are even seemingly contradictory. From one perspective, the close relationship between

development and divergence is heartening. Democracy is a much more powerful and enduring concept if the link between supporters and followers is driven by deep, structural forces in society (in other words, socioattitudinal forces) than if it depends on the minutiae of institutional rules. If the distance between leaders and followers is to vary, it may be normatively desirable that this variation is based on the fundamental needs and experiences of society. Democratic linkages themselves are determined by the distribution of resources and balance of attitudes in society – a democratic process. Under the right conditions, voters *can* hold party leaders accountable for the performance, regardless of the institutional rules that voters and leaders alike act under.

Yet viewed from another perspective, the close link between socioeconomic structure and divergence is a cause for deep concern. Equality and participation are core concepts in a democracy, and the strength of the relationship between socioeconomics and party-supporter linkage seems to undermine both principles. Structurally deterministic links between parties and their supporters question the power that individuals – even great leaders – can truly have in a democracy. If institutional rules play little role in holding leaders accountable to their followers, then the people of a country can do little to change that relationship. Referendums and amendments on the fate of a nation can do little to bring leaders to heel or give them greater room for leadership. People have little efficacy in setting the fate of their nation.

Likewise, if economic development and voter education are key to promoting party accountability, then voters can never really be equal – an outcome that violates a core premise of liberal democracy. If parties in more developed countries respond more to supporters' demands, it seems likely that parties will respond more to educated and

wealthy supporters' demands than relatively poor and uneducated supporters' desires. In contemporary popular discourse, the role of money in politics is often attributed to campaign finance rules – but these results suggest that there is a deeper structural connection between influence and money that violates the principle of democratic equality.

Although the normative implications of these results may be difficult to untangle, the competing implications do suggest a compelling perspective on party competition. Because structural constraints allow leaders room to maneuver when voters are unsophisticated and poor, but largely constrain and hold them accountable when voters are sophisticated and wealthy, leadership seems likely to systematically vary as a country develops. At low levels of development, leaders have great autonomy to follow their principles for better or for worse. This can create visionary statesmen – Nehru, Atatürk, and Mandela, not to mention the truly remarkable cast of founding fathers in the United States. Yet it can also lead to years or even decades of disastrous misrule by self-interested or incompetent leaders. The development of modern Pakistan and Iran provide sobering stories in mismanagement to counterbalance the great (although not unqualified) successes in India and Turkey, while protracted failure of many regimes in Latin America throughout the nineteenth-century serves as a counterpoint to the success of early government in the United States.

As countries mature and voters grow in education and affluence, greater accountability may promote a regression to the mean in leadership. It is difficult to objectively assess the record of modern leaders without the benefit of history, but affluent democracies have rarely witnessed the kind of catastrophic misrule witnessed in Peron's

Argentina or Mugabe's Zimbabwe. Conversely, many modern commentators would commiserate on the lack of visionary, principled leadership – going beyond the polls – in the United States and most of Western Europe. Few would argue that Barack Obama, David Cameron, or Angela Merkel are great statesmen on par with Helmut Kohl, Franklin Roosevelt, or Winston Churchill. As countries develop, sociodemographic constraints on leadership seem to encourage governments to muddle through with middling outcomes and half-measures, rather than stretch for the kind of uncompromising successes or catastrophic failures that are possible when voters demand little of their parties.

If this is the case, then the development of states may bear an uncanny resemblance to the development of humans. In both cases, there may be a “critical period” in which outside forces – national leaders or parents – leave an irreversible imprint. In children, language skills acquired during the critical period are more powerful than learned languages acquired later in life. In nation-states, cultural and institutional patterns developed under the leadership of early statesmen – with relatively little pressure from unsophisticated voters – may endure into national maturity and prove extremely difficult to change. The patterns acquired during the critical period may prove either great benefits or disastrous curses. A great benefit during certain periods may even prove a great curse during others: American skepticism towards government involvement, for example, is both a tremendous asset and an enormous stumbling block. For better or worse, as nations mature their leaders may find sweeping reform necessary to change these patterns increasingly beyond reach.

Although the broad cross-sectional evidence presented in this paper provides a starting point for such speculation, further research is needed to transform speculation into knowledge. Moving forward, scholars should attempt to break away from viewing party-citizen relationships exclusively through Anthony Down's prism of centripetal and centrifugal party systems. Although this perspective has yielded great dividends for political science, my results show that it does not represent the only important connections between the party system and the populace. Three important research directions can flesh out scholarly understanding of party-voter relationships beyond Anthony Downs. First, more extensive, rigorous, and comprehensive work is needed to compare divergence and centrifugal effects that link parties and voters. Given the great body of research that has accumulated around centrifugal effects, it seems difficult to take this study's findings that party leaders do not systematically respond to centrifugal effects at face value. More sophisticated ways of capturing leader and follower movement over time can more accurately measure the forces that cause party leaders to change positions, and understand the true relative powers of parties' links with supporters and the electorate at large.

This direction points towards another needed body of research on party-voter divergence: time-series studies. Although cross-sectional data, as used in this study, can provide a valuable portrait of intercountry differences, it can do relatively little to demonstrate causality. Although we see that party leaders are closer to followers when development is high, we cannot precisely evaluate whether party leaders move closer to their followers when development increases. Time-series research, which would most

likely require new data, can help establish causality and better understand the mechanisms which link parties with electorates.

Finally, research must emphasize micro-level case studies as well as ever-larger time-series data. A study on leadership ultimately depends on the actions of individual leaders – actions that are sometimes idiosyncratic but may fall into a broad pattern. The processes leaders used to develop policy platforms and make pitch visionary proposals to voters, coupled with a broad time-series perspective, can show whether my proposed causal pathway consciously sways the decisions of leaders. Likewise, a comparative historical study on voters' responses to visionary but divisive proposals might help assess whether voters give leaders greater latitude in relatively poor countries.

The way in which voter demands translate into the seats of power will always remain critical for quality democratic governance. As such, the ideological connections between parties and citizens are unlikely to disappear from the research agenda in political science. And given the sweeping scope of the question – it has engaged some of the most brilliant minds in political science for the greater part of the past century – it is unlikely to yield definitive answers soon. But this does not mean that scholarship cannot make real progress towards better understanding these linkages. For the past decades, researchers working under the shadow of Downs and Sartori have made great strides in understanding the choices made by party leaders. This vein of research should not be abandoned. But research also must move beyond this framework, and think about new dimensions of the connection between leaders and followers – a connection that drives the omnipresent balance between principles and polls, between delegates and trustees, throughout the world.

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