

Looks Like Me, Thinks Like Me? Descriptive Representation and Opinion Congruence in Brazil*

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Abstract

Opinion congruence, or alignment in legislators' and citizens' policy preferences, facilitates democratic representation. Congruence may obtain because elites and masses share core interests and identities or because networks and organizations socialize both into a common worldview. Though political parties are traditionally considered the most important agent of mass and elite socialization, in new democracies clientelistic and catch-all parties foster limited congruence. Religious organizations and networks constitute an alternative socializing force, one reinforcing core identities and interests. In this analysis of Brazil, we draw on three legislative and fifteen mass surveys to analyze congruence across eight issue areas. Legislators and voters from underrepresented groups—women, Afro-Brazilians, evangelical Christians, and those of lower social class—are generally closer in their opinions than those sharing a party or electoral district. Evangelicals are often the most congruent. Analyzing original surveys of congregations and clergy, we argue this results from the socializing role of churches.

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1 Introduction

When legislators make decisions on behalf of citizens, whose interests do they represent? Different answers reflect the institutional diversity of democracies around the world. Territorial representation tends to prevail in single-member district (SMD) electoral systems, where legislators can identify and prioritize the concerns of a smaller number of constituents. By contrast, party representation is most common in countries with proportional representation (PR) systems. With larger districts, the interests of territorial constituencies are more diverse and difficult to defend, but citizens can seek representation from a broader menu of legislative parties. Party representation works best with high levels of party identification and an ideologically diverse array of programmatic political parties—characteristics associated with established European democracies (Bengtsson and Wass, 2012; Clarke and Price, 1981; Eulau et al., 1959; Thomassen and Andeweg, 2004).

How might representation work in the PR systems of newer democracies, where mass partisanship tends to be weak, parties may be programmatically ill-defined, legislators may exhibit little party loyalty, and elections are often candidate- rather than party-centered? We argue that under these circumstances, descriptive representation—demographic similarities between legislators and the public (Pitkin, 1967)—may provide a stronger basis for the substantive representation of policy preferences than does party representation. Where clientelistic and catch-all parties predominate, descriptive representation may produce greater elite-mass alignment on core issues of group interest and identity. Moreover, the networks and organizations associated with particular demographic categories—especially religious groups—may excel at a task that was traditionally the province of class-mass parties: socializing elites and masses into a common way of thinking.

We illustrate our argument using the case of Brazil. As in many new democracies, most of Brazil's political parties fall into the catch-all or clientelistic category, where supporters share few interests and identities and there is minimal capacity to impose a common worldview on masses and elites. In this context, demographic pairings between masses and elites generate stronger expectations for effective representation, especially on issues affecting group interests, such as racial or class-based preferences in university admissions. Beyond such core issues, Brazil's politically

underrepresented demographic groups vary in their ability to socialize masses and elites into a common way of thinking. While gender and race provide a weak basis for educating group members, evangelical Christians are well equipped to do so, given their comprehensive worldview, organizational capacity, vertical authority structure, and homogeneous social networks.

Examining a range of issues, we show that the highest levels of congruence, or alignment between the preferences of masses and elites, are almost always between legislators and citizens in specific demographic categories. By contrast, legislators are often *more* distant from territorial constituents and co-partisans than from the public as a whole. Among demographic categories, evangelicals generally achieve greater congruence than women, Afro-Brazilians, or those of lower social class—a product, we argue, of leadership from the pulpit. Drawing on original surveys of evangelical and Catholic clergy and congregations, we show that opinions cluster most tightly among evangelical churchgoers, but only on issues that pastors prioritize in their preaching.

Our research underscores that personalistic politics—often decried for weakening party systems, diluting ideology, and displacing programmatic appeals—need not mean that citizens are poorly represented by elected officials. Voting based on candidate characteristics rather than party program may indeed limit opinion congruence—and, by extension, substantive representation—along partisan lines. But personalistic voting does not necessarily imply electing the most charismatic candidate or the local political boss with a strong patronage network. For many voters, choosing someone who looks (and worships) like them may be a good way to elect someone who thinks similarly on major policy issues.

2 Opinion Congruence and Descriptive Representation

Opinion congruence, or elite-mass alignment in ideology and issue opinions, is an important factor in democratic representation. Politicians and the people need not think alike for substantive representation, or elected officials acting on behalf constituent interests, to obtain (Pitkin, 1967). Legislators' voting behavior may deviate from their own preferences for any number of reasons,

including party discipline, reelection incentives, and a sense of duty. Yet personal opinions also matter, especially for lower-visibility behavior such as bill sponsorship and voting within committees (Carnes and Lupu, 2015). Thus, opinion congruence facilitates substantive representation. When elections produce governments, legislatures, or parties in which representatives' preferences match those of voters, principals' monitoring costs and agents' temptations to shirk are both reduced. This is important even in advanced democracies, where policy outcomes may hew to the influence of money and corporate power, underrepresenting the median voter (Gilens and Page, 2014). It is particularly important in societies with substantial differences in education between the people and the political class, as well as for disadvantaged groups in any democracy.

The study of opinion congruence in older, wealthy liberal democracies has contributed a rich theoretical foundation, emphasizing propitious institutions such as PR electoral rules and direct democracy mechanisms (Bernauer, Giger and Rosset, 2015; Blais and Bodet, 2006; Golder and Stramski, 2011; Huber and Powell, 1994). Nonetheless, distinct challenges prevail in newer and less wealthy democracies, where volatile party systems, limited party identification, and non-programmatic mass-elite linkages may inhibit congruence along party lines. In Latin America, informal institutions, high levels of poverty, and severe class divides between politicians and the public constitute additional constraints (Corral, 2013; España Nájera and Martínez-Rosón, 2012; Luna and Zechmeister, 2005; Kitschelt et al., 2010; Otero Felipe and Rodríguez Zepeda, 2010).

Our research contributes to the study of congruence in old as well as new democracies via its focus on descriptive representation and opinion leadership. Few scholars have examined congruence along descriptive lines, and only in advanced democracies (Kissau, Lutz and Rosset, 2012; Reinhold and Harrell, 2010). Yet in countries that are stratified by race and class and have personalistic, non-programmatic party systems, electing members of underrepresented groups could potentially enhance congruence more than party voting. When civil society leaders of these groups effectively orient elite and mass opinion, congruence becomes even stronger.

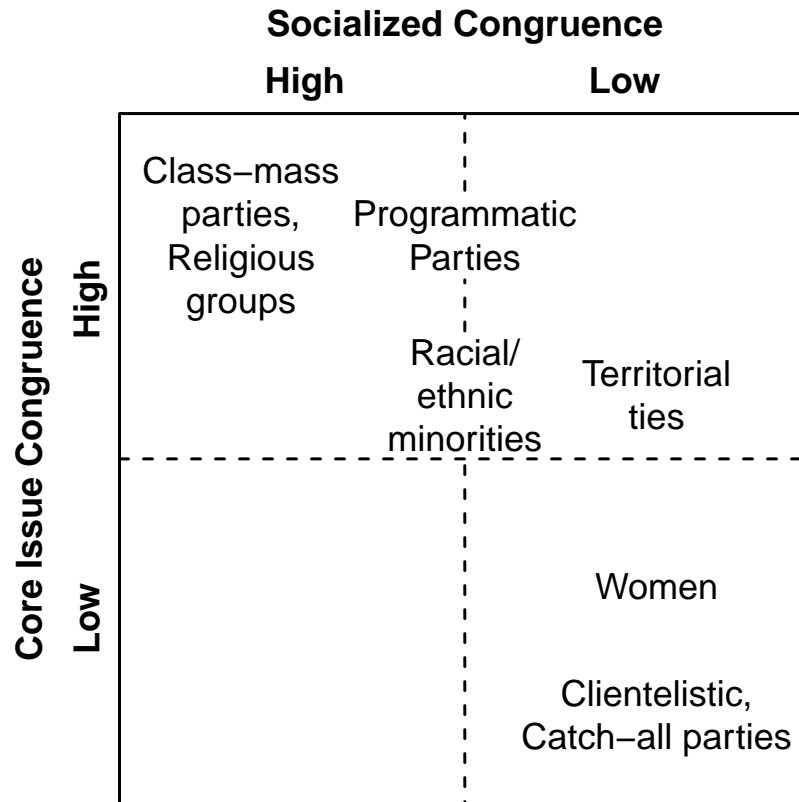
In comparing congruence along various lines, it is useful to distinguish between two dimensions (Figure 1): *core issue* congruence, in which mobilization is not necessary to align elite and

mass opinions, and *socialized* congruence, which results from organized efforts to impose common attitudes on masses and/or elites. Core issue congruence concerns those policies that are particularly salient for a given individual, in terms of either political identity or material interest. Pre-existing attitudes might prompt voters and/or elites to self-select into a category—for example, an environmentalist joining the Green Party, or an opponent of redistribution joining an evangelical denomination embracing the prosperity gospel. Elites and masses may also be naturally aligned on interest-based issues offering the possibility of concrete benefits to all group members, such as affirmative action policies for racial minorities or “pork” provided to all members of a territorial constituency. In either case, alignment between elite and mass opinion occurs without any effort to impose congruence.

Congruence might also result from an organization’s efforts to socialize masses and/or elites with respect to *non*-core issues—those initially more tangential to individual identity or definitions of self-interest. For example, the evangelical convert attracted by a church’s prosperity gospel message might also find herself embracing conservative positions on abortion and same-sex marriage after exposure to sermons on these issues. Because socialized congruence requires organized effort, it is less common than core issue congruence. Effective socialization requires, first and foremost, that a group’s leadership embrace a comprehensive, and ideally Manichean, worldview defining “correct” positions on a variety of issues. Socialization is also more effective when group leaders are endowed with high levels of authority; when an organizational structure facilitates regular contact with group members; and when individuals’ social networks contain a high proportion of other group members, who implicitly and explicitly reinforce messages from authority figures. Socialization most often affects mass attitudes, but when a group’s primary opinion leaders are not elected officials, socialization can also influence group members in public office.

By arraying core issue and socialized congruence in two dimensions, we can identify theoretical expectations for particular bases of representation. The European class-mass party of the mid-twentieth century (Duverger, 1959) scores highly on both dimensions. Given its working class constituency, shared interests should lead elected officials and members to agree on numer-

Figure 1: Dimensions of Opinion Congruence



ous issues. The fact that joining requires an active decision, including paying party dues, allows for congruence via self-selection. Yet class-mass parties also extensively socialize members and leaders, imposing ideological congruence in areas beyond those core to working-class interests. Vertical authority structures, relatively homogeneous social networks (including those sponsored by the party), and regular contact through party organizations all facilitate socialization.

We expect lower levels of congruence in most contemporary political parties, as well as for territorial representation. Modern programmatic parties (Gunther and Diamond, 2001; Wolinetz, 1991), such as European Green parties, will likely have strong core issue congruence owing to self-selection and, for some members, material interests (Dalton, 1985). However, socialized congruence should be only moderate. Programmatic parties embrace a comprehensive worldview, yet they have less organizational capacity to socialize members through interpersonal interaction, especially outside of electoral periods. For their part, catch-all and clientelistic parties would

score low on both dimensions. Catch-all parties lack the well-defined worldview of programmatic parties, limiting both self-selection and socialization (Gunther and Diamond, 2001; Kirchheimer, 1966; Wolinetz, 1991). Elites from clientelistic parties have high levels of personal contact with voters and are often inserted into their networks (Szwarcberg, 2015), but they have ill-defined programs and typically do not seek to influence policy views. Finally, territorial ties between masses and elites provide little capacity for active socialization. When districts are small, core issue congruence may be moderately high, given the likelihood of shared interests and identities and the potential for self-selection through migration. As districts grow and district magnitude rises, our expectations for territorial congruence fall (Lau et al., 2014).

We can also identify expectations for demographic categories. While full-fledged class-mass parties are largely extinct in present-day democracies, religious organizations generate similarly strong expectations of congruence, especially in countries or among denominations that are highly observant. Core issue congruence should be high: conversion allows for self-selection, and religious elites and masses have shared interests in policies such as subsidies or religious freedom legislation. Socialization also has the potential to align elite and mass opinions. Religions embrace comprehensive, often Manichean worldviews, and clergy have the organizational capacity—including regular contact with worshippers—to communicate these views to both masses and elites. Leaders are often imbued with substantial authority, and homogeneous social networks should reinforce socialization.

We have somewhat weaker expectations of congruence among women or racial and ethnic minorities. Masses and elites may naturally align on core interest-related issues, such as gender- or race-based preferences. Racial or ethnic minorities may also be congruent on policies benefiting the lower class when their ranks substantially overlap. Yet core issue congruence also depends on the social construction of identities and interests. Especially in countries with more traditional social structures, women might not support gender-based preferences seen as prejudicial to husbands or sons. And in societies such as Brazil, where racial categorization is fluid and subjective (Telles, 2004), dark-skinned citizens might oppose racial preferences if they fail to identify as black or

brown. The other contributor to core issue congruence, self-selection, is less plausible; we expect that policy attitudes rarely affect gender and racial identity.

Levels of socialized congruence should be only moderate for racial and ethnic minorities, and they are typically low for women. Htun (2016, 12) notes that elites become effective representatives of mass interests only through “processes of group mobilization and deliberation in civil society.” Even when women’s and minority rights organizations effectively socialize in-group politicians, they will find socializing citizens more difficult. Unlike clergy, women’s rights activists do not regularly interact with large proportions of their group members. Civil society leaders are typically endowed with less vertical authority, and women are almost always embedded in mixed-gender networks, limiting the potential for group members to reinforce messages. For racial and ethnic minorities, these factors may be somewhat more propitious: more geographically concentrated populations generate homogeneous social networks and facilitate organization and contact with leaders, who may enjoy greater authority. However, we should expect less congruence among more dispersed groups that are assimilated into mainstream society. Moreover, to build support across other lines of cleavage, racial, ethnic, and women’s movements typically eschew comprehensive worldviews, focusing more narrowly on policies directly tied to their constituencies.

Opinion congruence along descriptive versus party and territorial lines should thus depend upon the nature of a country’s political institutions and the organization of demographic groups. In established European democracies, with numerous programmatic parties, a weaker capacity for religious socialization, and smaller non-white populations, party representation may provide the strongest basis for opinion congruence. In the United States, congruence may obtain from some combination of party and territorial representation, thanks to increasing ideological polarization of parties and an SMD system with smaller, more homogeneous electoral districts.

In many new democracies, expectations differ. Religious organizations often have more socializing capacity than in Europe, and racial and ethnic diversity is often greater. Proportional representation entails large, heterogeneous electoral districts. Finally, catch-all and clientelistic parties prevail, leading to low expectations of congruence along party lines. Descriptive represen-

tation may therefore provide a more propitious basis for congruence, particularly on core issues and when identity groups are well organized.

Our analysis of opinion congruence in new democracies focuses on Brazil. This case is particularly advantageous in terms of the quality of data on elite opinion, as the Brazilian Legislative Surveys have interviewed members of every legislature since the transition to democracy in 1986. Beyond practical concerns, Brazil is important for both substantive and theoretical reasons. It has been identified as a sustainable but low-quality democracy due to persistent inequality in the face of popular demands for redistribution (Weyland, 2005). Opinion congruence bears directly on this question of representation in Latin America's most populous country. Looking beyond the region, many of the features of Brazil that we identify below are replicated in other new democracies and electoral authoritarian regimes, such as Russia and South Africa. Hence, our conclusions have implications beyond this particular case.

3 Opinion Congruence in Brazil

Brazil is a case where we would expect little core issue congruence along party lines. First, with the partial exception of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT), no major party has a cleavage-based core constituency, limiting the potential for elite-mass alignment due to shared interests. Second, while masses and elites regularly self-select into parties, ideology and issues play a minor role in this process. Politicians tend to choose parties based on career ambition and stance vis-a-vis the current government rather than policy positions (Desposato, 2009; Samuels, 2008). At the mass level, party identification is comparatively low and is not strongly related to ideology, but rather responds to government performance, scandals, and current events (Baker et al., 2016; Samuels, 2006; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2014).

We also expect that Brazilian parties will do little to impose congruence on non-core issues. Most parties have little capacity to socialize members into a comprehensive worldview (Mainwaring, 1999). In particular, the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (Partido do Movimento

Democrático Brasileiro, PMDB), the largest in Congress, is a collection of state-level political machines that has only a vague ideological profile (Hagopian, 1996; Samuels and Zucco, 2015). The Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira, PSDB), which has led the opposition since 2003, is loosely organized with few ties to its membership base (Roma, 2002). Though recent survey experiments show that the PT and PSDB party labels can cue shifts in public opinion (Samuels and Zucco, 2014), this effect is quite distinct from real-life socialization.

We also do not expect strong congruence for the PT, which is often considered an exception. Despite its shift to the center, the PT is still best classified as a programmatic party. Nonetheless, core interests diverge within its broad array of civil society allies, including labor unions, progressive Catholics, environmentalists, and women's, Afro-Brazilian, and landless peasant movements (Amaral, 2011; Samuels and Zucco, 2015). Environmentalists, for example, have chafed at the PT government's prioritizing state-led economic development over conservation (Nunes and Peña, 2015). Moreover, the substantial numbers of new PT identifiers over the past two decades—many drawn in by personal support for President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Baker et al., 2016)—have few ties to organized interests. In the 2007–2012 AmericasBarometer surveys, between 81 and 88 percent of *petistas* reported that they never attend meetings of labor unions, community or professional associations, or women's groups. New partisans might exhibit core issue congruence on redistribution—arguably the policy most identified with Lula—but not necessarily on a broader agenda. Finally, though the PT continues to socialize elites into its governing vision, even expelling deviating legislators (Samuels and Zucco, 2015), it has much less capacity to socialize partisans. The “base nuclei” originally charged with political education have long since withered, and today's municipal directorates do not maintain the same educational mission or intensity of contact (Amaral, 2013; Ribeiro, 2010). In the 2007–2012 AmericasBarometer surveys, 87% of *petistas* never attended party meetings, and 10% did so only once or twice a year.¹

Given Brazil's legislative electoral system, we also do not expect high territorial congruence. Entire states serve as districts, with magnitude for the lower house ranging from 8 to 70. Only the three smallest states have populations approximately equal to that of a U.S. congressional

district. Most Brazilian states combine large urban centers with vast rural areas. Apart from supporting regional development and broadly-targeted pork (e.g., a federal highway through the state), masses and elites from the same state should not automatically share interests and identities. With respect to self-selection, in a middle-income country, migration is much more likely to be driven by economic concerns than issue attitudes.

In contrast, we expect that descriptive representation will provide a stronger basis for the alignment of elite and mass opinions. We examine congruence among four demographic groups underrepresented in the Brazilian Congress: women, Afro-Brazilians, evangelical Christians, and those of lower social class (which we operationalize in terms of a high school education or less).² While women and Afro-Brazilians each account for 51% of the population, and 89% of Brazilians 25 or older lack a college degree, these categories constitute only 8–19% of elected legislators (see Appendix). Evangelicals have done better in numerical terms but are still underrepresented; they made up 15–22% of the population during the period under study, and 6–12% of the Congress.

Each of these demographic groups has at least one core interest-related issue on which we might expect high congruence. Women, Afro-Brazilians, and those of lower social class all have a potential interest in supporting nondiscrimination or affirmative action policies—though, as argued above, the social construction of group identity may complicate the recognition of these interests. For their part, evangelical elites and masses should both support religious equality laws that grant rights and privileges on par with those of the Catholic Church.

Beyond core interests, congruence will depend upon potential for self-selection and civil society leaders' capacity for socialization. Self-selection into gender, race, or class categories is uncommon and unlikely to be based on policy attitudes, especially when class is operationalized in terms of education. As argued above, women's organizations have only limited capacity for socialization in most societies. Given their geographic dispersion, as well as national myths of racial democracy that inhibit organizing (Telles, 2004), we also expect Afro-Brazilians to have limited socialization capacities. Women's and Afro-Brazilian organizations do exist, but they have contact with only a small share of the population and few ties to in-group legislators (Htun, 2016). And while labor

unions have long sought to generate class consciousness and socialize workers, their organizational reach pales in comparison to the 89% of Brazilians who lack a college degree.

By contrast, both self-selection and socialization are more likely among evangelicals. Evangelicals' share of the Brazilian population has risen from a few percentage points in 1970 to 22% in the 2010 census, largely through conversion. Though most conversions are probably unrelated to politics, some newcomers might be inspired by denominations' issue stances.

Evangelical churches are also particularly well-equipped to generate socialized opinion congruence. Evangelical pastors in Brazil are not shy about discussing politics (Smith, 2016). Sermons routinely touch upon homosexuality, abortion, and other issues in the legislative limelight. Worshipers who start out with more liberal attitudes tend to move closer to the dominant conservative position. Socialization likely affects evangelicals in public office as well as their non-elected coreligionists. Moreover, some prominent denominations exert direct influence over "their" politicians. Most notably, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God routinely select members to run for office, support their campaigns, and instruct church members on how to vote (Machado, 2006; Oro, 2003; Reich and Santos, 2013). Once elected, such politicians tend to consider themselves church rather than party delegates (Machado, 2006, 38–39).

In sum, Brazil generates low expectations of congruence along party and territorial lines and somewhat higher expectations for descriptive representation. We expect the greatest congruence among evangelicals, given the potential for self-selection and a strong capacity for elite and mass socialization. Yet evangelical congruence may also vary by policy area, depending on the issues pastors prioritize in their preaching.

4 Data and Indicators

In comparison to existing literature, our research exploits an unusually wide array of data sources to highlight congruence across a large number of policy domains. We draw on three waves of the Brazilian Legislative Surveys (BLS) and fifteen distinct surveys from Latinobarómetro (LB),

AmericasBarometer (AB), and the 2010 Brazilian Electoral Panel Study (BEPS).³ We focus on the period 2002–2013, since earlier mass surveys from Latinobarómetro were not nationally representative. Each wave of the BLS during this period (2005, 2009, and 2013) is matched to public opinion surveys from the same year and the three previous ones. Hence, we measure mass opinion when these legislators were elected as well as each year that they served in office (excepting senators, who serve eight-year terms). The BLS is an opt-in rather than random sample of legislators, but its composition is quite similar to that of the entire Congress, as shown in the Appendix.

Measures of partisanship are taken directly from each survey. For elites, we use party affiliation at the time of election. Our mass surveys measure partisanship somewhat differently from one another: LB asks what party the respondent would vote for in a hypothetical election, whereas AB and BEPS ask what party he or she sympathizes with. In the Appendix, we show that, for policy issues that draw substantially from both data sources, we obtain similar estimates of party congruence when using only LB or AB/BEPS.

To operationalize descriptive representation, we combine variables from the mass surveys with data external to the BLS. Lists of evangelical legislators were drawn from a variety of secondary sources (Agência DIAP, 2010; Folha de São Paulo, 2006; Gonçalves, 2011; Pereira, 2010; Prisco, 2010) as well as the website of the evangelical caucus, or Frente Parlamentar Evangélica.⁴ For mass survey respondents, our evangelical category includes self-identification as evangelical, Pentecostal, Protestant, or any non-Catholic Christian denomination other than Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, and Seventh Day Adventist. We code legislators' gender and education—the latter used to operationalize social class—based on candidate registration data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE). Though some scholars (e.g., Carnes and Lupu, 2015) argue strongly for occupational measures of class, education strongly predicts many public opinion measures in Brazil and better reflects politicians' childhood socialization than does adult occupation. Moreover, we lack data on politicians' prior occupations, and other ways of operationalizing class—such as assets—are not measured in comparable ways across data sources. In terms of politicians' race, the TSE began collecting data only in 2014, so for legislators who ran in that election, we use self-classification

as black (*preto*) or mixed-race (*pardo*) to identify Afro-Brazilians. The minority who did not run in 2014 are classified as Afro-Brazilian if they appear on the lists contained in Santos (2010) and UNEGRO (2011), both of which also appear to code race based on self-identification. For the mass surveys, we classify as Afro-Brazilian those who describe themselves as black or mixed-race.

To measure congruence, we focus on eight areas of overlap between the elite and mass surveys: economic regime preference (statist versus free market), political regime preference (democratic versus authoritarian), ideological self-placement, abortion, gay marriage, environmentalism, and university quotas for Afro-Brazilians and those of lower income.⁵ Question wordings are contained in the Appendix. For most issue areas, we use a single question from each applicable survey. For economic regime preference, we pair a single question from the BLS to a variety of mass survey questions measuring free market attitudes. For any survey with three or more such questions, we extract scores on a single factor; when there are two, we sum them to create an index. For a mass measure of political regime preference, we sum two items measuring normative support for democracy; for an elite measure, we create an index from two questions about which regime type best promotes economic development and maintains social order. All measures are scaled from zero to one, with higher numbers indicating rightist positions. A figure in the Appendix plots the mean differences in elite and mass positions on each measure for the various groups we examine.

Since our analysis focuses on the distance between elite and mass attitudes, it is potentially sensitive to differential item functioning (DIF) (Golder and Stramski, 2011). We effectively assume that a score of 0.5 denotes the same centrist position on both mass and elite surveys, which might not always be the case. DIF is partly a function of question wording. For the two items on university quotas, wording is identical for elites and masses; for abortion, gay marriage, ideological self-placement, and environmentalism, it is quite similar. Question wording differs to a greater extent for economic and political regime preference. However, aggregating across multiple survey questions and years of mass-level opinion ought to mitigate the DIF concern for these items. We also made several operationalization decisions with an eye to reducing DIF. We exclude from our mass measure of economic regime preference a battery of AB questions (ROS1, ROS2, and

ROS3) for which acquiescence bias might lead to more statist positions (the opposite direction from the questions we use). Following Power and Zucco (2012), we also recode the BLS question on economic regime preference to collapse the two most statist categories, such that a score of 0.5 corresponds to equal state and private sector participation in the economy.

For our multivariate analysis of congruence, we merge into the mass and elite data several variables from other sources. For legislators, these include age (from the TSE candidate declarations), total years of experience in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies (scraped from the legislative biography pages), and the log of each candidate’s corporate donations as a percentage of total corporate donations per seat (federal deputy or senator) in that state and election year.⁶ For the mass data, we merge in the log of the population of the respondent’s municipality in the 2010 census.

Our analysis focuses on legislators’ issue attitudes, which are most readily comparable to public opinion, but it is worth considering how stated preferences correspond to legislative activity. We focus on two bills in the 2011–2014 legislature that can be matched to issue attitudes we measure: the 2012 Forest Code (Law 12.651/2012), which establishes conservation areas (Gatto and Power, 2016), and a 2014 law for race-based affirmative action in public sector hiring (Law 12.990/2014).⁷ In both instances, a “yes” vote corresponds to the more left-wing position. As shown in the Appendix, supporters of each bill expressed more left-leaning attitudes on the respective issues. The difference is not statistically significant for the Forest Code ($p = 0.292$), but it is for the affirmative action bill ($p = 0.005$). These results suggest that legislators’ preferences do indeed affect their behavior, alongside other commonly-cited factors such as party discipline. We expect preferences to matter even more for less constrained, lower visibility behavior related to democratic representation, such as bill sponsorship (Carnes and Lupu, 2015).

5 Analysis of Elite-Mass Congruence

Operationalizing opinion congruence calls for important decisions about the level of aggregation at which mass and elite opinion are measured. Most existing studies examine what Golder and

Stramski (2011) term “one-to-many” congruence—comparing, for example, the position of a single legislator to the distribution of attitudes among constituents. This approach corresponds well to the delegate model of territorial representation in SMD systems. Yet in the case of descriptive or party representation, or of territorial representation in a PR system, citizens almost always have more than one representative. If the female public is well represented by women legislators, for example, the entire distribution of women’s opinion on a given policy issue should be similar for both masses and elites.

Given Brazil’s PR system and our focus on descriptive representation, this study examines “many-to-many” congruence, comparing the full distribution of attitudes at the elite and mass levels. Yet we move beyond existing studies of many-to-many congruence (Golder and Stramski, 2011; Bengtsson and Wass, 2012; Andeweg, 2011; España Nájera and Martínez-Rosón, 2012; Corral, 2013) by also examining legislator-voter dyads. Though the dyadic approach is most commonly associated with one-to-many congruence (Hill and Hurley, 1999), it can also be adapted to the many-to-many context by examining all possible pairings of elites and masses from a particular category. By shifting the analysis to the dyadic level, we examine how congruence depends on shared partisanship, state of residence, or demographics while also controlling for characteristics of individual legislators or citizens, such as age and political experience.

5.1 Raw Distributions

As a first step toward analyzing many-to-many opinion congruence, we calculate the area between the cumulative distribution functions (CDFs) for elites and masses, as recommended by Golder and Stramski (2011).⁸ Mathematically, this quantity can be expressed as

$$\int_0^1 |F_e(x) - F_m(x)| dx$$

where $F_e(x)$ and $F_m(x)$ are the CDFs for elites and masses, respectively. It has a theoretical range from 0, when the distribution of mass and elite opinions are identical, to 1, when masses and elites

are all located at separate ends of the scale. For economic regime preference and ideology, which span more than one wave of the BLS, we apply weights to correct for cross-wave differences in BLS response rates and in the number of mass respondents paired to each BLS wave (discussed further in the Appendix). In addition to descriptive categories, we calculate this measure of congruence for elites and masses from the three largest parties (PT, PSDB, and PMDB) and two largest states (São Paulo and Minas Gerais).

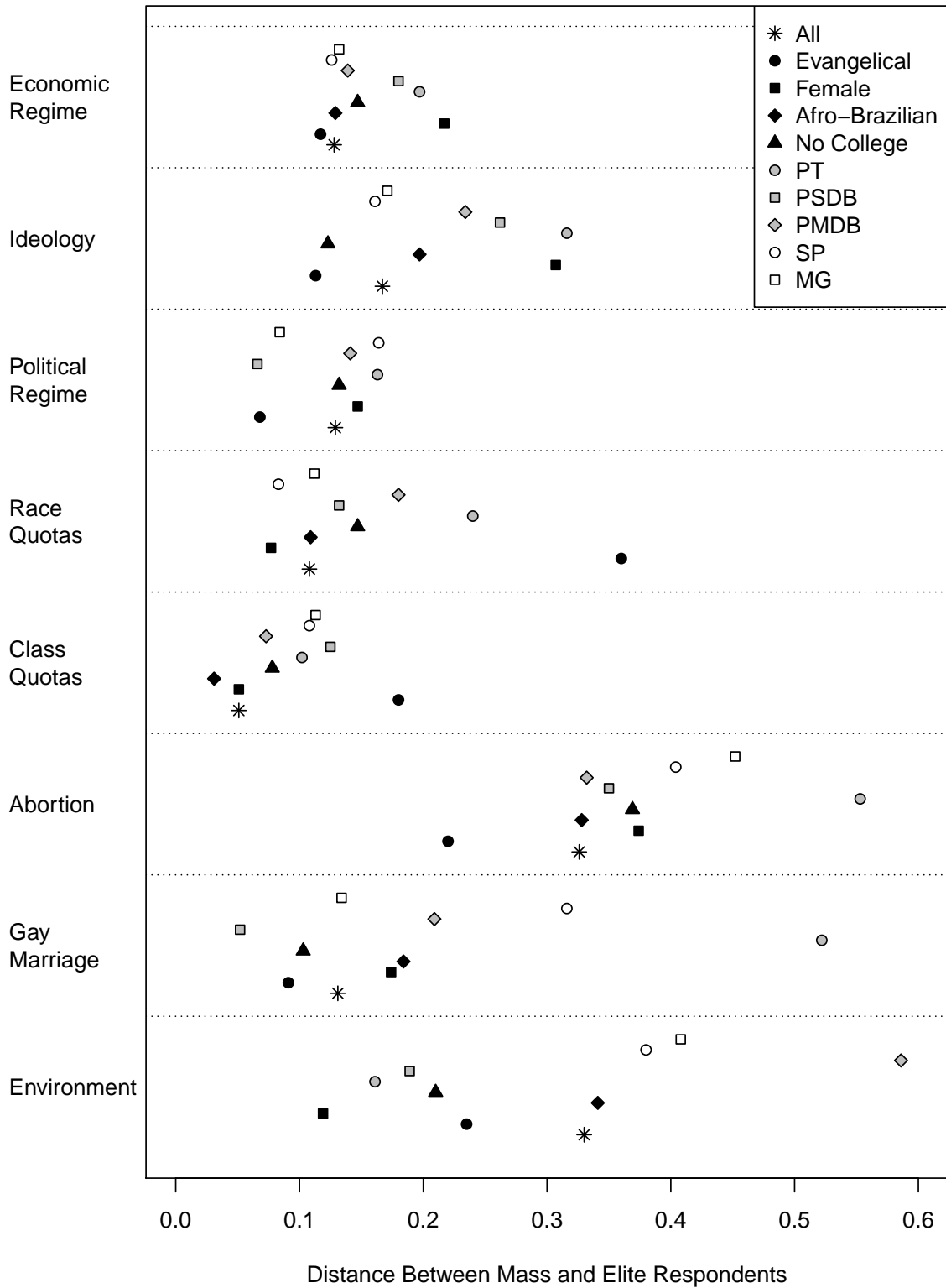
A first conclusion from examining differences in attitude distribution is that legislators are generally further from their partisan and territorial constituents than they are from their descriptive constituents. Figure 2 plots the elite-mass differences in distributions for each group and issue area. In the majority of cases, the most congruent category—that is, the one with the smallest area between CDFs—is a demographic one. The exceptions are gay marriage, where PSDB partisans and legislators are closer than any demographic category, and political regime, where the PSDB is essentially tied with evangelicals. These particular issues notwithstanding, the least congruent category is most often territorial or partisan. Among political parties, the PT stands out as the least congruent on most issues. In several areas, including abortion, gay marriage, and ideological self-placement, *petistas* in the legislature cluster on the left, while the opinion of their partisans is either fairly diffuse (ideology) or leans toward the right (abortion and gay marriage).

Among descriptive representation categories, evangelicals stand out in terms of congruence. In five issue areas—economic regime preference, ideological self-placement, political regime preference, abortion, and gay marriage—evangelicals are the closest to their descriptive constituents. The exceptions concern environmentalism, where evangelicals lie in the middle, and both forms of affirmative action, where they are the most distant group.

5.2 Elite-Mass Dyads

To formally test for differences in congruence along demographic versus partisan and territorial lines, we disaggregate our data into elite-mass dyads. We analyze these dyadic data using weighted least squares (WLS) regression, applying weights to correct for disproportionality in the number

Figure 2: Opinion Congruence: Differences in Distributions



of mass respondents paired to each BLS wave and in the partisan affiliation of our elite sample (discussed further in the Appendix). We use two-way cluster-robust standard errors to account for the same mass respondent being paired to multiple elites and the same elite respondent being paired to multiple mass respondents. The dependent variable is the absolute value of the difference in opinion for each elite-mass dyad.

Our regressions use the following specification (with i indexing masses and j indexing elites):

$$|DIFF_{ij}| = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Evangelical_{ij} + \beta_2 Female_{ij} + \beta_3 NoCollege_{ij} + \beta_4 AfroBrazilian_{ij} + \beta_5 SameParty_{ij} + \beta_6 SameState_{ij} + \beta_{7-9} Controls_i + \beta_{10-12} Controls_j + \epsilon_{ij}$$

The first four variables in the equation are indicators for elite and mass respondents belonging to the corresponding category, so the reference group includes all other combinations. For economic regime preference and ideological self-placement, which span years in which respondent race was and was not asked, we estimate one specification that includes the indicator for Afro-Brazilian descriptive representation (analyzing years 2007–2013) and another that drops it (analyzing years 2002–2013). The fifth and sixth variables in the equation are indicators for elites and masses being from the same party and state, respectively. At the dyadic level we are able to group together all partisan and all territorial pairings—something that was not possible when examining differences in distributions, where we were limited to categories with sufficient numbers of elite respondents. Hence, these regressions allow us to compare each form of descriptive representation to partisan and territorial representation as a whole, rather than to particular parties and states that, while large, might also be unusual.

In terms of controls, we include several variables at the elite or mass levels that ought to affect congruence.⁹ To the extent that citizens support politicians because of clientelistic ties, they might rely less on programmatic linkages and, hence, be less congruent on policy attitudes (Kitschelt et al., 2010). Thus, we include a BLS variable measuring the degree to which legislators think that voters demand clientelism.¹⁰ In addition, legislators who rely heavily on corporate campaign donations may deviate from public opinion because of their commitment to these particularistic

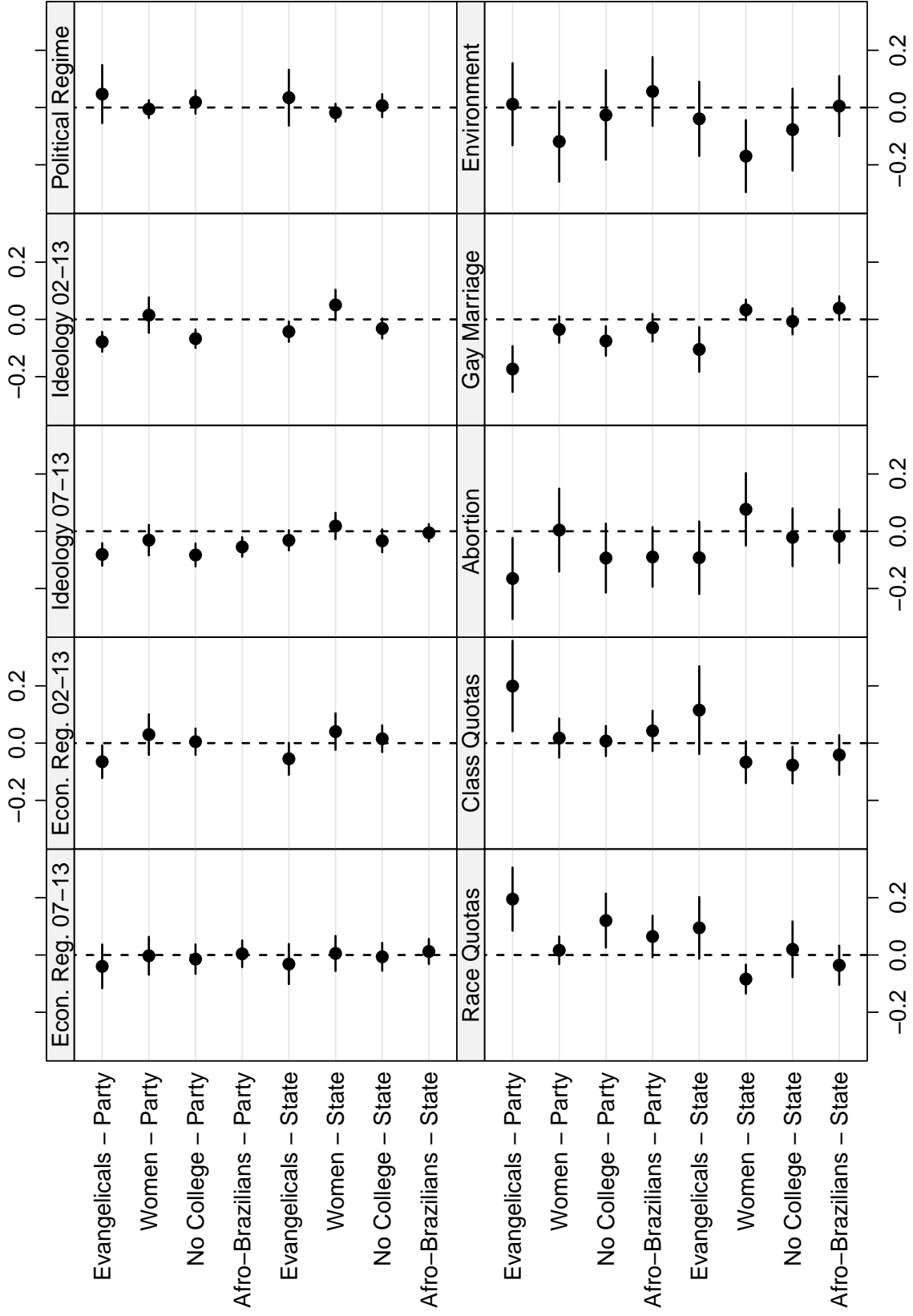
interests (Boas, Hidalgo and Richardson, 2014; Gilens and Page, 2014). Hence, we control for normalized corporate campaign contributions, as defined above. Finally, political experience may lead elites to adopt positions more in line with the median voter, increasing congruence, so we also control for years in office.

At the mass level, a variety of factors should affect congruence. We expect greater congruence among citizens who are more interested in politics, as they should be more likely to voice their opinions, vote based on programmatic criteria, and follow elite cues (Zaller, 1992). Political interest was asked inconsistently across our mass surveys, so we substitute news consumption (self-reported frequency from all available media sources, including television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet). We also includes controls for age and for population (logged) of the respondent's municipality. Older citizens should be less congruent, given Brazil's bottom-heavy age pyramid. Residents of smaller towns should also be less congruent; legislators are more likely than the public to have a cosmopolitan outlook, and they should pay more attention to public opinion in urban areas where votes are concentrated and polls are conducted. Finally, for issue areas that draw from more than one mass survey, we employ survey fixed effects.

In interpreting the results of these regressions, we focus on the difference in coefficients between each descriptive representation category and the indicators for elites and masses being from the same party or same state. Figure 3 plots point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for these differences (a full table of coefficients can be found in the Appendix). A negative value indicates that elites and masses in the descriptive representation category are less distant from one another—hence, more congruent—than those from the same party or state.

Results from these regressions largely are consistent with our theoretical expectations. First, descriptive representation generally leads to greater levels of congruence than does party or territorial representation. For most issues, significant differences in coefficients are negative, meaning that the demographic pairing generates more congruence than a party or territorial match. The exceptions involve race- and class-based quotas in higher education, where party representation fares comparatively well. Second, evangelicals stand out most frequently among the descriptive

Figure 3: Opinion Congruence: Effect Comparisons



Difference in $\hat{\beta}$ (point estimates and 95% confidence intervals)

Negative values mean that the first group is more congruent than the second.

categories. They are significantly more congruent than state and/or party matches with respect to economic regime preference (2002–2013), ideology, abortion, and gay marriage, though they are significantly less congruent on the two affirmative action issues. Women, Afro-Brazilians, and those of lower education are significantly more congruent than party or state matches on a smaller number of issues.

5.3 Mechanisms of Evangelical Congruence: Conversion or Socialization?

We hypothesized that evangelicals would be the most congruent category of descriptive representation for two key reasons: the potential for self-selection via conversion, which should enhance core issue congruence, and churches' ability to socialize masses and elites, which should align opinions on other issues. In this section, we examine both mechanisms. We argue that socialization plays a major role in evangelical congruence, whereas there is no evidence for self-selection.

If evangelicals are more congruent than other demographic categories because issue attitudes lead people to self-select into this group, we would expect significant differences in opinion between those who converted to evangelicalism and those who were raised in this tradition. Religious affiliation is somewhat “sticky,” so lifelong evangelicals who found themselves differing from church leaders on present-day policy issues would not necessarily switch faiths, or become nonbelievers, as a result. Rather, many would remain evangelical and retain their incongruent attitudes, while new recruits fell more in line with church leaders.

To test this hypothesis, we examine surveys conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in 2006 and 2014 that allow us to distinguish between lifelong Brazilian evangelicals and more recent converts. As shown in Table 1, across all of the relevant issue areas covered by these surveys—political regime preference, economic regime preference, ideology, abortion, and gay marriage—we find no significant differences in the attitudes of these two groups. Consequently, elite-mass congruence, operationalized through our difference in distributions measures, is nearly identical, as shown in the Appendix.

To test for evidence that churches' socialization efforts impose congruence on the evangelical

Table 1: Issue Opinion: Lifelong Evangelicals versus Converts

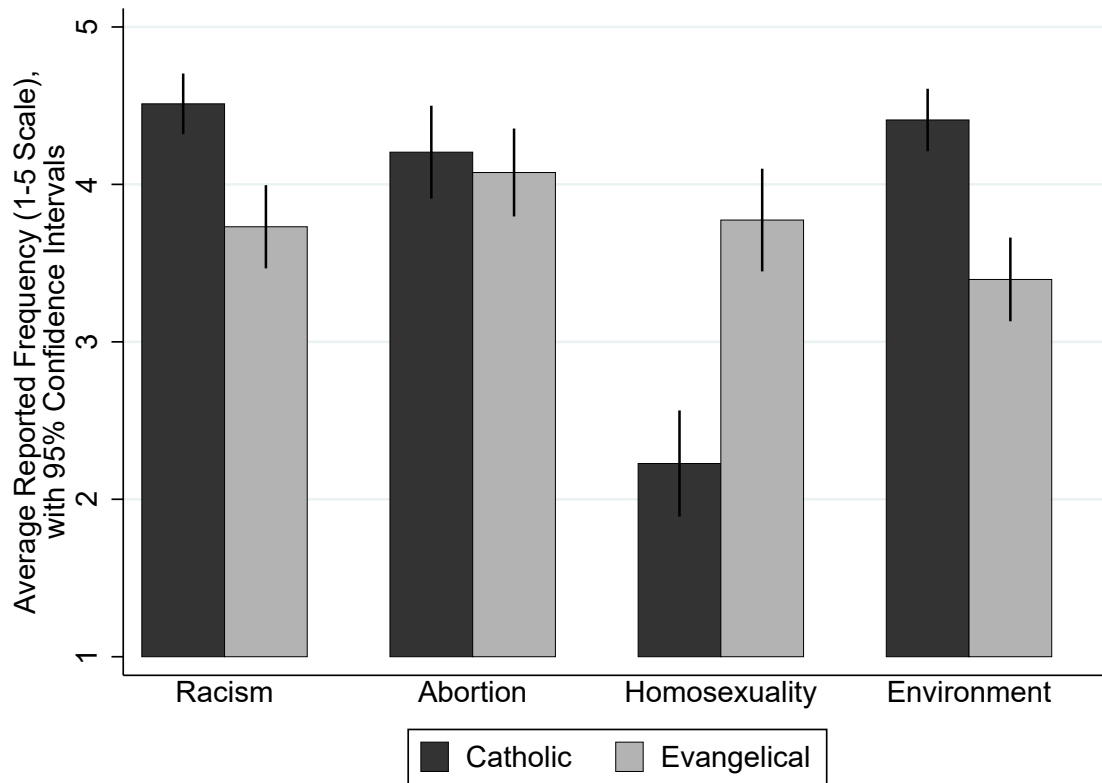
	2006			2014		
	Lifelong	Convert	P-value	Lifelong	Convert	P-value
Political Regime	0.33	0.24	0.09	0.39	0.45	0.26
Economic Regime	0.73	0.68	0.18	0.75	0.73	0.54
Ideology	0.51	0.49	0.44	0.54	0.58	0.36
Abortion	0.56	0.57	0.94	0.77	0.80	0.25
Gay Marriage				0.66	0.71	0.09

NOTE: All variables scaled 0 (left) to 1 (right). P-values are from two-sided difference-in-means t-tests assuming equal variances. Data are from surveys by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life: “Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals” (2006) and “Religion in Latin America” (2014).

public, we turn to surveys of Catholic and evangelical clergy and congregations conducted as part of the 2014 Churches North and South Project. The primary location of the project was Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais, a medium-sized Brazilian city with a religious composition essentially identical to that of the country as a whole. The congregation-level study surveyed attendees at the worship services of eight Catholic and evangelical churches, as well as members of the general public at nearby health centers and a shopping mall. The survey of clergy interviewed 97 evangelical and Catholic priests. More details on the sampling and interview procedures for both surveys are contained in the Appendix.

If churches’ socialization efforts explain evangelicals’ higher-than-average levels of congruence, we have several expectations. First, evangelical pastors should place more emphasis in their preaching on issues where congruence is high and less emphasis on issues where congruence is low. Second, if evangelical pastors are successfully orienting the flock, we should see less variance on prioritized issue attitudes within particular evangelical congregations than within comparable Catholic congregations or groups drawn from the general public. On issues that are not the focus of socialization efforts, we would not expect evangelical opinion to vary less than that of other groups.

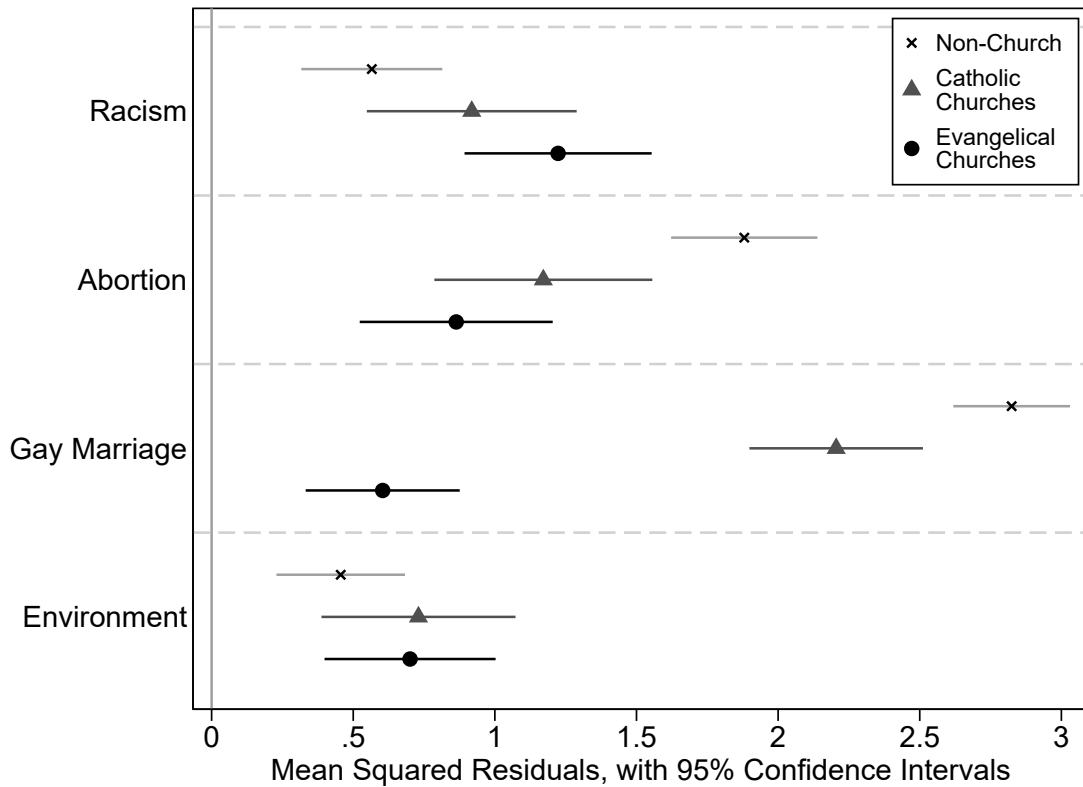
Figure 4: Frequency of Discussion of Selected Topics among Juiz de Fora Clergy



As expected, the clergy survey shows that evangelicals’ preaching emphasizes condemnation of homosexuality and abortion over protecting the environment and combatting racism (Figure 4). Evangelical clergy report discussing the first two topics more frequently than the latter two. Especially with respect to homosexuality, evangelical churchgoers receive much more socialization than Catholics. Meanwhile, they hear significantly less about racism and the environment than their Catholic counterparts.

To analyze the variance of attitudes among congregations, we conduct a variance function regression (Western and Bloome, 2009). For each issue area, we first regress opinion (scaled 0–1) on indicators for each church or community site. We expect congregations to follow their pastors, but pastors themselves may convey different messages from one another. We then regress the squared residuals from this first model on indicators for type of site—Catholic church and general community, with evangelical as the excluded category.¹¹

Figure 5: Variance in Support for Policy Issues, by Type of Community Site



Based on these models, we can calculate the mean predicted squared residual for each group and policy area. Figure 5 plots point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for these quantities; full tables are in the Appendix. As expected, the variance of attitudes on gay marriage is much lower in evangelical congregations than within Catholic congregations or the general public. Evangelicals also have the lowest variance on abortion attitudes, though the difference is only significant with respect to the general public. Meanwhile, there are no differences in the variance of attitudes on the environment, and for racism, evangelical attitudes are significantly *more* dispersed than those of the general public.¹²

Taken together, our analysis of the clergy and congregation surveys suggests that evangelical churches achieve congruence through socialization on issues they prioritize in their preaching. We find no evidence that congruence is merely an artifact of particular issue opinions influencing the decision to convert.

6 Conclusion

As established parties throughout Latin America entered into decline or lost citizens' confidence in the 1990s–2000s, a number of observers lamented a “crisis of representation” in the region (Hagopian, 1998; Mainwaring, Bejerano and Pizarro Leongómez, 2006; Roberts, 2013). The rise of outsider politicians and the mushrooming of new parties were considered both a symptom of and a contributor to this trend. Freed from their traditional partisan moorings, Latin American politicians were seen as liable to deviate from electoral mandates and public opinion, implementing whatever policies they saw fit during their time in office (O'Donnell, 1994; Stokes, 2001). “Crisis of representation” arguments have been advanced in other parts of the world as well, even where the fate of established parties was much less dire (Chandhoke, 2005; Grunberg, 2006; Hayward, 1995).

Without disputing the notion that a crisis of traditional parties poses challenges for democratic representation, we echo Hochstetler and Friedman (2008) in arguing that other forms of interconnection between citizens and political elites can foster effective representation even when parties do not. In particular, the increasing demographic diversity of the political class in Latin America has the potential to give voice to the concerns of marginalized groups who may not have been well served by old forms of partisan representation, even when they functioned most effectively (Htun, 2016). The political mobilization of previously excluded constituencies, new laws establishing quotas and reservations, and party leaders' incentives to win identity-based votes by diversifying candidate lists have all contributed to legislatures that are less dominated by the prototypical Latin American politician—white, male, upper- or middle-class, and Catholic—than ever before.

Yet mere demographic similarities between citizens and elected officials do not ensure that the interests of marginalized groups will be effectively represented in the policy-making process (Htun, 2016), or even that minority citizens and legislators will hold similar opinions. When party-based representation works well, it does so not only because party members and elected officials share interests and identities, but also because parties socialize masses and elites into a common world-view and provide channels for citizens to hold elected officials accountable. If alternative forms

of representation are to take up the slack for political parties, they will need to replicate these functions.

We evaluate representation by focusing on congruence in preferences between legislators and the public, which reduces citizens' monitoring costs and makes it more likely that elected officials will act in their interests. We identify theoretical expectations of both *core issue* and *socialized* congruence in various categories of representation. Our analysis of mass and elite survey data from Brazil shows that, across a variety of issue areas, congruence is almost always highest for legislators and citizens from a particular demographic group rather than the same state or party. In some cases, core interests may be at play, as with class- or race-based preferences in university admission. Yet socialization matters for congruence across a broader array of issues—an area in which evangelical Christians stand out from other demographic groups. Examining original surveys of clergy and congregations, we argue that evangelical congruence depends on whether pastors prioritize an issue in their preaching, which effectively orients the masses, or discuss it less often, which allows heterogeneous opinions to persist.

Our analysis also suggests that when ideologically-focused, programmatic parties shift to the center and gain supporters over time, they may become substantially less congruent with their partisans. Though we lack the historical survey data to test this hypothesis, it seems likely that PT legislators were more congruent with their voters and identifiers in the 1980s than they are with the much larger partisan base of today. For several issue-areas, particularly abortion, gay marriage, and ideological self-placement, *petistas* in Congress cluster on the left while the opinion of their partisans is more highly dispersed. Meanwhile, the PSDB and PMDB exhibit greater congruence because legislators' opinions are better distributed across the ideological spectrum. When parties like the PT move in a catch-all direction, congruence may actually be lower than for parties with a more longstanding catch-all profile, precisely because elites are likely to retain strong non-centrist attitudes on many issues. The same might be true of the moderate Left elsewhere in the region, such as Uruguay's Frente Amplio and Chile's Socialist Party, as well as with right-wing parties that have shifted in a catch-all direction in recent years, including Mexico's National Action Party

(PAN) and Chile's National Renewal (RN).

In Brazil, however, partisan representation takes a backseat to descriptive representation and to civil society groups such as churches in aligning elite and mass attitudes. Given the country's fragmented party system, low levels of party identification, and an electoral system that encourages personal voting and individual campaigning, electing a legislator from one's preferred party may mean little in terms of substantive representation. For voters in such a system, choosing someone who looks like them—and, especially, who worships like them—may actually be the best way to ensure one's concerns are substantively represented in the legislative process.

A question remains for future research: if voting for minority candidates is good for substantive representation, why do they remain underrepresented within the legislature? We suggest that persistent disparities in Brazilian society give significant campaign advantages to the types of politicians—white, male, well-educated, and Catholic—that have long dominated. As Bueno and Dunning (2016) argue, the underrepresentation of Afro-Brazilians in elected office is in large part due to disparities in personal assets and campaign contributions. Politicians with money are best equipped to maintain the clientelistic networks and run the types of campaigns that will put them in office. Our research thus underscores the importance of reforms, such as the recent ban on corporate campaign contributions, that help to level the electoral playing field. When all candidates can make their case on equal terms, voters have the best chance of electing someone who represents them well.

Notes

¹Figures cited in this paragraph rarely differ significantly for the PSDB or PMDB (Appendix).

²Following Brazilian usage, we apply the term “evangelical” to all Protestants, in contrast to its narrower meaning in the United States. In practice, even historical/mainline Protestant denominations in Brazil fulfill commonly cited attributes of evangelicalism, such as strict Biblical interpretation and emphasis on personal salvation.

³The 2010 BEPS is a three-wave panel study whose first wave was the 2010 AmericasBarometer. When the same question was asked in multiple waves, we use the earliest valid response.

⁴<http://www.fpebrasil.com.br>, consulted November 13, 2013.

⁵Political regime preference is a relevant policy question in Brazil, given calls for military intervention in response to frequent political scandals.

⁶Campaign finance data were obtained from the TSE’s Repositório de Dados Eleitorais and, for 1998, from David Samuels.

⁷Roll-call votes were obtained from <http://www.camara.leg.br/internet/votacao>.

⁸We obtain similar results using the KS statistic (see Appendix).

⁹Most of these controls can be considered “post-treatment,” so we also estimate a version of the models that excludes them. Results, reported in the Appendix, are essentially unchanged.

¹⁰Thinking voters demand clientelism is not the same as relying on clientelistic linkages. However, party averages for this clientelism variable correspond closely to a measure of clientelism from the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP), as shown in the Appendix.

¹¹We use OLS, but results are nearly identical using the iterative maximum likelihood approach with gamma regression recommended by Western and Bloome (2009), as shown in the Appendix.

¹²Given these results, it might be attractive also to examine observant Catholics. Unfortunately, the organized presence of Catholics in Congress (via the Pastoral Parlamentar Católica) is smaller than that of evangelicals (Vital and Lopes, 2013), and there are few lists of members.

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