Substantive Representation and Satisfaction with Democracy in the 2009 German Federal Elections: The Case for Issue-Salience Congruence

Stefanie Reher
Nuffield College
Department of Sociology, University of Oxford
stefanie.reher@nuffield.ox.ac.uk

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Abstract

In this paper it is argued that issue priorities are an essential part of citizens’ policy preferences. Consequently, citizens should feel well represented when political representatives emphasize those policy issues which they consider important. Previous studies have found an effect of congruence between voters’ and representatives’ policy positions, as an indicator of substantive political representation, on satisfaction with democracy. Employing data from the 2009 German Longitudinal Election Study, it is shown that this effect also exists for issue priorities: Citizens whose issue priorities are in agreement with representatives’ priorities, as measured both by a candidate survey and by a content analysis of the media’s election campaign coverage, are more satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. The paper further indicates that the relationship holds for collective and dyadic congruence as well as agreement on priorities with the government.
The study of political representation has been extremely popular in the last decades with many scholars focusing on policy congruence between citizens and representatives and examining its consequences for political attitudes and behavior, including satisfaction with democracy. The basic argument is that citizens should be positively affected in their support of and engagement with the political system when representatives take on policy position that are similar to theirs. This line of research goes back to Miller and Stokes’ (1963) study of policy congruence between voters and Congressmen and draws on Pitkin’s (1967) seminal work on representation from a theoretical perspective. While policy representation is most often conceptualized in terms of shared ideological or issue positions between representatives and citizens, more recently scholars have also started to focus on shared issue priorities as an indicator of representation: If citizens’ main issue concerns are addressed by political representatives, they should feel that they are listened to and adequately represented. However, scholars analyzing the effect of policy congruence on satisfaction with democracy have so far only considered agreement on policy positions. I set forth the hypothesis that issue-salience congruence (or “agenda correspondence” (Jones and Baumgartner 2004)), meaning agreement on policy priorities between citizens and representatives, should influence citizens’ satisfaction with democracy by affecting the quality of substantive representation. Using data from the 2009 German federal election, I show that it indeed does. Moreover, the results indicate that this effect is equally strong for both dyadic congruence, i.e., issue agreement between citizens and representatives of the parties they support, and collective congruence, i.e., issue agreement between citizens and candidates of government parties or all parties.

Another question that arises is whether voters compare their own issue priorities to those displayed in the political debate as they perceive it, which is strongly shaped by the mass media, or to the actual priorities of political candidates, about which they may not have
as much information. I introduce two ways of measuring issue-salience congruence: first, by matching voters’ issue priorities with those displayed in the media coverage of the German 2009 election campaign, and second, by comparing them with the issues which political candidates running for seats in the 2009 German election considered most important. While citizens’ congruence is much greater with candidates than the media, both forms of issue agreement exert similarly strong influences on satisfaction with democracy, indicating that their perceptions are probably shaped by both.

The Relevance of Issue-Salience Congruence for Representation

I hypothesize that issue-salience congruence affects the quality of substantive representation and citizens’ perception of it, which in turn should affect satisfaction with democracy. While the concept of representation is multidimensional (Pitkin 1967), substantive representation refers to the extent to which political representatives reflect and implement citizens’ policy preferences (Powell 2004: 274). It is thus not based on the trustee model of representation, according to which representatives should follow their own conscience and judgment when making policy decisions, as explained by Burke (1852), but on the delegate model, which sees representatives as reflecting and implementing their constituencies’ preferences (Doherty 2011; Pitkin 1967; Rehfeld 2009). This type of representation has been argued to affect satisfaction with democracy and other dimensions of political support. Based on the view that “policy congruence is […] the criterion for good representation” (Andeweg 2011: 50), substantive representation is usually conceptualized in terms of shared policy positions and ideological proximity (Andeweg 2011; Borre 2000; Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister 2011; Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson 2002; Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011; Holmberg 2000; Hurley and Hill 2003; Kim 2009; McDonald and Budge 2005; Miller 1974; Powell 2000, 2004; Rosema, Denters, and Aarts 2011; Wessels 2007). Kim (2009), following
Huber and Powell (1994), explains that “closeness or ‘congruence’ between a voter and a party position produces the feeling of a heightened responsiveness to his/her preference in policymaking processes” (2009: 53).

However, policy preferences comprise both policy priorities and policy positions, and thus citizens’ feeling of being represented should not only depend on whether their representatives take positions on issue dimensions close to their own but also, as an “unavoidable precondition” (Jones and Baumgartner 2004: 7), whether representatives address and care about the issues which citizens deem important. For “[h]ow representative is a legislative action that matches the policy preferences of the public on a low priority issue but ignores high priority issues?” (2004: 2). This view has increasingly been put forward in studies on policy responsiveness, many of which employ data collected in the framework of the Comparative Agendas Project (Bevan and Jennings 2010; Giger 2010; Hobolt and Klemmensen 2005, 2008; Jones and Baumgartner 2004; Jones, Larsen-Price, and Wilkerson 2009; Pennings 2005). Bevan and Jennings’s (2010) argument is similar to Jones and Baumgartner’s, yet their conceptualization of preferences differs from the spatial approach usually taken. Based on Wlezien’s (1995) “thermostatic” model, they understand preferences as demands for either more or less policy compared to the status quo. Issue salience among the public, which indicates issue priorities, is modeled as a function of the importance of an issue and the amount policy desired, i.e., the strength of the preference. Since responsive representatives, constrained by the scarcity of attention and institutional rules, focus on the issues that are most salient among the public, they do not necessarily address those where the public wants most drastic policy change but those given priority by the public, lending further support to the thesis that issue priorities constitute an important component of policy preferences.
An approach which conceptualizes preferences as equivalent to priorities is saliency theory, which Stokes (1963) developed as a criticism of Downs’ spatial voting theory. Saliency theory, or the valence theory of issue voting, posits that on many issue dimensions political competitors’ as well as voters’ views on policy aims do in fact not differ. Rather, the relative importance that is ascribed to different issues determines variation in policy preferences. Thus, when citizens agree with representatives on the relative salience of valence issues, they also hold common policy positions. Consequently, the theory posits that parties are judged in terms of issue competence and salience rather than position or direction (Enelow and Hinich 1984; Petrocik 1996). With regard to valence issues issue-salience congruence should therefore be the strongest indicator of substantive representation for it combines issue salience and issue position congruence. Some scholars argue that political competition centers around valence issues rather than position issues today, for a convergence of parties and voters on the left-right dimension has narrowed the ideological space. Political elites thus compete less based on different positions on policy dimensions and more on differences in issue competence and priorities (Green 2007). Consequently, in addition to issue attention rising due to alleged rising levels of issue voting (Franklin 1985), issue-salience congruence should be of increasing importance relative to positional policy congruence if these scholars are correct. In conclusion, even if this alleged predominance of valence over position issues was exaggerated, there is increasing agreement that “[t]he comparison of the relative ‘fit’ of the issue emphases of electors and elected is a necessary complement to the spatial approach” (Schmitt 2008: 5).

**The Relevance of Representation for Satisfaction with Democracy**

What is the link between substantive representation and satisfaction with democracy? Satisfaction with democracy is one of several forms of political support which were first
systematically conceptualized by Easton (1965, 1975) and later extended by Norris and colleagues (1999). Their framework of political support includes five objects of support, ranging from diffuse to specific: the political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors. Satisfaction with democracy corresponds to support of regime performance – however, it is not interpreted in a coherent manner by social scientists or survey respondents and thus often considered a problematic concept in empirical research (Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001; Linde and Ekman 2003; Norris 1999: 11). Canache, Mondak and Seligson (2001) argue that, since the survey question ‘On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?’ “omits reference to any basis of comparison” (2001: 511), it is unclear whether respondents evaluate their political system by comparing it to their ideal of democracy or to a different regime, or whether it is at all the “constitutional reality” (Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995: 322) in their country, i.e., the informal rules that have emerged within the formal political framework, which they evaluate rather than specific political authorities (see also Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998).

Yet, a substantive part of the resulting heterogeneity in the way how individuals process and answer the survey question can be modeled and thus taken into account. At least in established democracies, respondents’ satisfaction with democracy should depend on their perception of the “constitutional reality” in their country compared to their expectations about how it could or should work (Fuchs, Guidorossi, and Svensson 1995; Thomassen 1995). The smaller the discrepancy between what an individual expects democracy to be and perceives it to be, the higher his or her satisfaction with democracy (cf. Anderson and Sullivan 1993).

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1 While I agree with Thomassen’s (1995: 383) view that, generally, “‘satisfaction with democracy’ measures a felt discrepancy between democratic norms and the actual democratic process”, the standard against which democracy is evaluated might be the previous regime in newer democracies.
Individual-level variation in satisfaction with democracy is thus rooted in different expectations and perceptions with regard to different criteria considered to be elements of democracy, as well as in the composition of the set of criteria including different weights given to the different criteria.

Representation should be a particularly important criterion influencing satisfaction with democracy because it is undoubtedly one of the key elements and a necessary requirement of representative democratic systems (Muller 1970; Rosema, Aarts, and Denters 2011: 12; Wessels 2007). It realizes the rule by the people in settings where direct self-rule is not feasible (Powell 2000). Whereas other criteria, such as political rights and civil liberties, are equally or arguably more crucial for democracy, substantive representation should be a particularly important criterion in advanced democracies where such basic components of democracy as equal participation rights are more or less given. As Dennis and Owen (2011: 401) put it,

[...] public dissatisfaction with politics and government is connected fundamentally to popular perceptions about the political process and representation. In a fully operative democracy, people are likely to have developed the firm expectation that they have the right to be heard, and that officials should be responsible to their needs and take action. If people have come to feel that their own needs, wants, interests, concerns, values, or demands are not being effectively represented in the policy process, then no matter how felicitous the nature of system outputs is perceived to be, popular resentment likely will result.

Few studies conducted to examine the link between representation and satisfaction with democracy actually include a direct measure of perceptions of representation, for it is not included in most social attitude and election surveys. This study is subjected to this restriction
as well. Yet, Aarts and Thomassen (2008) did analyse the causal mechanism in more detail and show that perceptions of the quality of democratic representativeness, which is closely related to substantive representation, influence satisfaction with democracy, even more so than perceptions of accountability, which is more related to procedural representation (cf. Aarts and Thomassen 2008: 7; Powell 2004).

The Locus of Representation

A crucial question facing every scholar seeking to measure policy congruence is: By which representatives should citizens be represented (cf. Eulau et al. 1959)? In previous studies of policy congruence, ideological and policy positions among political representatives have been observed either at the collective level, e.g. by looking at the mean or median position of all parties (e.g. Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson 2002; McDonald and Budge 2005; Powell 2000) or at the distribution of all representatives’ positions (e.g. Andeweg 2011; Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011) (either all candidates or those voted into the legislature), or among subunits of representatives such as the government (e.g. Blais and Bodet 2006; Huber and Powell 1994), political parties (e.g. Andeweg 2011; Esiasson and Holmberg 1996; Holmberg 2011; Miller 1974) or individual representatives (Miller and Stokes 1963). The reasons for the choice of level at which congruence is conceptualized and operationalized are usually not sufficiently explained and the theoretical and normative motivations remain unclear (cf. Golder and Stramski 2010). This convention is highly undesirable, for the different ways of measuring congruence reflect diverging normative ideas about representative democracy. Moreover, when looking at the effects of representation on citizens’ attitudes and behavior, a crucial aspect is the question of how citizens themselves understand representation and, thus, where the focus (Eulau et al. 1959) or locus (Doherty 2011) lies in their view (Muller 1970). Theoretical accounts and empirical studies on this
question have yielded diverging claims and findings (Barker and Carman 2010; Carman 2006, 2007; Doherty 2011; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995; Mendez-Lago and Martinez 2002).

One option is to see representatives as delegates of their constituencies, following a *dyadic* conceptualization of representation (Hurley 1982; Miller and Stokes 1963; Weissberg 1978). The first studies of policy congruence conducted in the US conceptualized dyadic representation on the electoral district level, whereas later studies in the European context, particularly in countries with proportional representation systems where the link between individual representatives and their constituencies is lower, predominantly looked at representational ties between party representatives and party voters (see Powell (2004: 284) for a discussion and examples of these studies). Alternatively, representatives can be understood as forming a *collective* body which represents society as a whole. In the latter view, each individual representative, as part of the representative institutions (either the entire legislature or the government), aims at furthering the common good rather than the interests or preferences of a particular constituency (Andeweg 2011; Hurley 1982; Pitkin 1967: 168-225; Weissberg 1978).

Moreover, if the hypothesis that preference congruence with representatives beyond those of their preferred party matters to citizens’ satisfaction with democracy holds true, a further question that arises is whether this includes representatives of all parties competing in elections or only those forming the government. Theoretically, this question is related to citizens’ views of and attitudes towards democracy and representation. In particular, it depends on whether citizens wish for their preferences to be represented in advocated or in enacted policy (Cox 1997: 226-227; see also Sartori 1976: 27). If the former is the case, their understanding of representation will be of an expressive rather than a utilitarian or instrumental nature and their perception of being represented would be based on preference
congruence with all political representatives rather than only those of the government parties. This idea of representation is rather implicitly put forward in studies on policy congruence focusing on the supply of policy choices, which look at the legislature as a collective representative body or the entire range of parties rather than the government (e.g. Anderson 2010: 219; Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011). On the other hand, the findings of studies analyzing the effect of supporting the winning party of an election on political support suggest that feeling represented by the government does matter for voters’ democratic satisfaction (Anderson et al. 2005), and Curini and colleagues (2012) find that, in addition, policy congruence with the government matters. Moreover, several studies of representation outside the framework of political support, such as Huber and Powell’s (1994), consider congruence with the government as crucial.

Secondly, if citizens do hold a more instrumental view and consider themselves represented if their policy preferences are enacted rather than merely advocated, the importance of preference congruence with the government relative to that with all representatives or all of those included in the legislature will depend on the political system and citizens’ understanding of the political process. Specifically, it should depend on the degree to which parties outside of the government are able to influence policy outcomes and on citizens’ perceptions of their power. While the one-case approach of this paper does not allow for testing comparative hypotheses, it can be expected for the case of Germany, which is a proportional representation system and where all major parties are thus usually present in the legislature, that the opposition is perceived to have a certain amount of influence on the policy-making process and that congruence with all representatives as well as with those of the government parties can thus be expected to influence satisfaction with democracy.

In order to shed further light on the question of where citizens perceive the locus of representation to be located and to avoid missing important findings about the relationship
between representation and satisfaction with democracy, it is sensible to include variables pertaining to the different potential loci of representation. I therefore include several measures of issue-salience congruence, corresponding to the different loci of representation, in the analysis.

**Measuring the Political Elite’ Issue Priorities**

Moving from the theoretical discussion of issue-salience congruence and its influence on satisfaction with democracy to the empirical analysis raises the question of how to measure issue salience at the level of representatives. Previous studies of policy congruence have mostly analyzed roll-call behavior (Miller and Stokes 1963), party manifestos (e.g. Ezrow and Xezonakis 2011), expert surveys (e.g. Huber and Powell 1994), and candidate surveys (e.g. Andeweg 2011; Holmberg 2011). Recently, a few scholars have turned to analyzing media coverage of parties’ campaigns (Kriesi 2007; Statham et al. 2010) – an approach that is “still quite unusual” (Kriesi 2007: 91) and bound to raise criticism, since the media does not merely mirror the debates among political elites but selectively emphasize certain aspects of them, which can give a distorted image of the relative salience of issues among political representatives in particular (Kosicki 1993: 113; McCombs and Shaw 1972; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003/2004). However, citizens’ *perceptions* of political elites’ issue priorities, which are of primary importance here, should be strongly shaped by the media, for very few voters actually read party manifestos or have direct contact with party candidates (Bachl and Brettschneider 2011: 53; Kriesi et al. 2008: 66-67). Moreover, Statham and colleagues prefer analyzing media over manifesto or expert survey data because it captures changes in parties’ positions and priorities resulting from their responses to more short-term events and political competitors’ actions, for instance during the election campaign. Furthermore, the media give a better indication of the “intensity with which a party campaigns on an issue” (Statham et al.
2010: 247), which is crucial to citizens’ perception of issue salience. The strategy pursued here is to employ data from both candidate surveys and content analysis of news media campaign coverage to measure issue salience in the political debate and to compare the two measures with respect to the influence of issue-salience congruence on satisfaction with democracy. While this will not directly show which indicator of issue salience in the political debate is closer to voters’ perception of it, their impacts on satisfaction with democracy will indicate the relevance of each of them for citizens’ perceptions of how well democracy is working.

**Data and Method**

This paper represents the first exploration into the role of issue-salience congruence in satisfaction with democracy. The analysis is thus limited to one country, Germany, around the 2009 federal elections. The German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES), which was launched in 2009, provides very suitable data for the purposes of this study, as it comprises several voter surveys, a candidate survey, and a campaign media content analysis. Crucially, all components of the study utilize the same coding scheme for the measurement of policy issues, which allows for combining them in the analysis. The post-election cross-sectional voter survey was conducted within eight weeks after the election and comprises data from over 2,100 respondents across Germany. The campaign media content analysis is a quantitative content analysis of the evening newscasts of the main German television broadcasters, ARD/Das Erste, ZDF, RTL, and Sat.1, during the ten weeks leading up to the election, which covers only news stories referring to German politics or German political actors. The cases are individual news reports in newscasts. The candidate study is a survey conducted among political candidates from the five major political parties – the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), the Social Democrats (SPD), the Liberals (FDP), the Greens, and the
Linke – after the election, with online and postal questionnaires returned between November 2009 and May 2010. The sample consists of 790 candidates and includes both constituency candidates, among whom one in each constituency is directly elected into the Bundestag, and list candidates.

Germany was, however, not only selected as a case because of the available data. The hypothesis that issue-salience congruence should affect satisfaction with democracy should apply predominantly to advanced and affluent democracies such as Germany, for only if the basic principles of democracy, such as civil rights and political freedoms, are in place should citizens judge the state of their democracy more strongly based on criteria such as representation. Moreover, as suggested by theories of value change and particularly postmaterialism (Inglehart 1990), citizens in poorer countries should tend to judge the performance of their political regime more based on material outcomes than the quality of political processes. Germany also lends itself as a case because it essentially has a proportional representation electoral system, where representation should play a larger role than in majoritarian systems (Aarts and Thomassen 2008). For these reasons, if issue-salience congruence as an indicator of substantive representativeness does influence satisfaction with democracy anywhere, it should do so among German citizens.

**Measuring Issue-Salience Congruence**

The set of *issue-salience congruence* variables measures the extent to which the issues that a survey respondent mentions as most important for the Germany at the moment are stated as most important by candidates in the candidate survey and addressed in the news media campaign coverage. Only issues relating to policy are included in the analysis – those relating to politicians or the polity have been excluded. In case of the media campaign coverage, the relative frequency with which different policy issues are mentioned in television news reports
concerned with German politics is taken as a measure of issue salience. The candidate study-based variable measures the relative aggregate frequency with which an issue is mentioned by the candidates as an answer to the question “What are in your opinion the three most important problems with which Germany is confronted at the moment?” The issue frequencies are weighted according to their rank (the most important issues count three times and second most important issues count twice as much as the third most important issues). Each reply was coded three times in order to account for multiple issues mentioned within one answer, meaning that up to nine issues are coded for each representative, which are all included in the aggregate frequencies.

The election survey asked respondents about the first, second, and third most important issue facing Germany at the moment, and each answer was coded five times, allowing for up to fifteen issues per respondent to be included. The respondents are assigned congruence scores based on the salience of the issues which they state as most important among candidates and the media, respectively. In the case of multiple issues mentioned in one response, the salience scores for the different issues were averaged. The three resulting salience scores were then combined into a weighted average for each respondent based on the formula

\[ ISC = \frac{3 \times SC_1 + 2 \times SC_2 + SC_3}{6} \]

where \( SC_{1,3} \) denote the salience among the candidates or the media of the issues that are first, second, and third most important to the voter, respectively. Thus, for instance, if a respondent mentions an issue as most important which accounted for 20% of the media campaign coverage, another issue as second most important which accounted for 5% of the media coverage, and a third most important one which accounted for 10% of the coverage, his or her issue-salience congruence score will be \((3(.20) + 2(.05) + .10)/6 = 0.13\).
In contrast to the media data, which only provides information on issue salience in the overall political debate, the candidate study allows for identifying issue salience among subgroups of candidates. Besides the congruence measure between respondents and all candidates included in the survey, I also measure the level of congruence between respondents and candidates from the two governing parties, CDU/CSU and FDP, weighted according to the parties’ seat shares. In order to compare these measures of representation, which can be considered collective, to dyadic ones, I further include measures of issue-salience congruence between voters and candidates of the parties they voted for in the 2009 federal election with their second vote (i.e., the list vote) and between party identifiers and the candidates of their parties. For all other variables, detailed information on variable construction and coding can be found in the Appendix.

**Issue Priorities in the 2009 German Federal Election**

The 2009 German federal elections saw the Christian Democrats and its Great Coalition partner at the time, the Social Democrats, compete against each other for a majority in the Bundestag together with a smaller coalition partner. The election campaign has been referred to as “boring” due to its lack of fierce competition and controversial policy proposals on the side of the two major competitors (Krewel, Schmitt-Beck, and Wolsing 2011; Saalfeld 2011), which was at least partly due to the fact that they previously governed together and could thus not blame the other party for bad political decisions (Bachl and Brettschneider 2011: 55). The CDU/CSU’s campaign strategy thus built on Chancellor Merkel’s popularity while downplaying policies and issues. The German voters rewarded Merkel for her successful handling of the crisis and her establishment of a “moderate, centrist” (Saalfeld 2011: 2) CDU/CSU with a share of the vote of 33.8%, which enabled her to form a coalition with the Liberals and remain Chancellor. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, suffered a historic
loss of more than 11% of the votes, leaving them with 23%, while the three small parties (FDP, Greens, and Linke) each gained over 10% of the list votes.

The elections took place one year after the global financial crisis began to unfold. While the election campaigns gave some observers the impression that the crisis was stressed surprisingly little by the parties (Bruns 2009; Saalfeld 2011: 3), the candidate and media data analyzed here give a different picture (Figure 1): Issues related to the economy including the economic/financial/banking crisis were by far the most salient issues in the political debate surrounding the election. Voters considered the labour market and unemployment as most important and other economic issues as second most important. Labour market issues came second in importance among the candidates, followed by distributional justice, the environment, and financial policy including tax and the federal budget. As the figure shows, candidates’ issue emphases were generally more congruent than the media’s with voters’ on the aggregate level, although for instance the environment was not nearly as salient among voters as among candidates. In the media coverage of the election campaign, domestic security and foreign affairs emerged as most salient after the economy, followed by military and defense. Issues related to the labor market, such as unemployment, were largely ignored by the media. The observation that voters’ issue concerns were in general much more similar to candidates’ than to the media’s suggests that the media might not control voters’ issue agenda as strongly as is often claimed.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The discrepancy in issue focus between candidates and the media seems striking (despite the lack of a base of comparison). It might be caused by the fact that both the candidate and the voter survey were conducted after the election, while the media data was
collected during the election campaign. However, it may also be due to “the rather issue-less and dull electoral campaign” (Schoen 2011: 103) described above, which may have enticed the media – even more than usually – to determine which issues to stress rather than mirror the political elite’s issue priorities. If Schoen is indeed right in arguing that issue voting was consequently not as important as candidate-based voting in the 2009 election, this may mean that voters paid rather little attention to issues and thus issue-salience congruence was not very important to them. While this may make it more difficult to detect an effect of issue-salience congruence on satisfaction with democracy, it may also mean that any effects I do find represent fairly robust support for my hypothesis. Moreover, since salience congruence varies quite substantially depending on whether it is based on media data or candidate survey data, the two indicators can be compared in a meaningful way with regard to their relationships with satisfaction with democracy.

Figure 2 shows the means of issue-salience congruence based on candidate and media salience scores, both for all respondents and only for party identifiers. As expected from Figure 1, congruence between voters and the media campaign coverage is much lower than between voters and candidates. Among the candidate-based measures, congruence is highest between voters and government candidates, which is surprising for one might have expected it to be higher between voters and candidates of the respective parties voters voted for or identify with. It is most likely due to the CDU/CSU’s and FDP’s strong focus on economic and labour market issues. On the other hand, the government’s agenda might have disproportionately influenced the public agenda after the election, which is when issue salience among citizens and party candidates was measured. Furthermore, congruence is higher between voters and the candidates of the parties they voted for than among citizens and all candidates. This is true both among all respondents and among only party identifiers.
In addition, among party identifiers, issue-salience congruence is slightly higher with the candidates of the party with which they identify than with those of the party they voted for.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

**Predicting Satisfaction with Democracy**

The effects of the different measures of issue-salience congruence on satisfaction with democracy are tested with ordinal logit regression analysis, for the dependent variable is measured on a ordinal five-point scale, controlling for variables that have been hypothesized and found to influence satisfaction with democracy. The first model in Table 1 tests only the relationships between socio-demographic and socio-economic control variables and *satisfaction with democracy*, which is measured by the survey item “On the whole, how satisfied or not are you with the way democracy works in Germany? Are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, neither/nor, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?” *Age* has a significant positive effect on satisfaction with democracy, as does *social class*, measured by a subjective classification into five categories, while the monthly net *income* has a negative effect. *Sex* and *education*, measured by respondents’ highest school degree (not measuring tertiary education), do not have significant effects. Models 1-2 and 1-3 measure the effect of media-based issue-salience congruence, controlling for the socio-demographic variables and all control variables, respectively. In both models, issue-salience congruence between voters and the political debate as shown in the news media significantly affects satisfaction with democracy: as congruence increases, so does satisfaction with democracy. The likelihood-ratio ratio test comparing Model 1-2 with the model only containing the socio-demographic
and socio-economic control variables indicates that the two are significantly different, thus the inclusion of issue-salience congruence improves the model fit.

In both models, the effects of the socio-demographic variables remain similar to those in the base model. The income measure is excluded in Model 1-3, as well as in the following models that include all controls, because the low response rate on this variable would cause the number of cases included in the analysis to drop substantially (to 770), potentially leading to biased results (for instance by excluding low-income respondents who might be less willing to disclose their income level). The effect of issue-salience congruence remains strongly significant, however, when including income in the full model. The positive effect of the strength of party identification (PID strength) in Model 1-3 confirms that “[p]eople who identify strongly with a party tend to be much more supportive of the idea that the political system functions properly than people without strong party attachment” (Anderson et al. 2005: 76; see also Dennis 1966; Holmberg 2003; Miller and Listhaug 1990). Anderson and colleagues’ (2005) theory that voters who support the parties that won the election, i.e., the winners, are more satisfied with democracy is also confirmed in Model 1-3.

Moreover, several variables measuring positional congruence are included as controls. Ideological distance is operationalized in two ways. First, the distance between respondents’ self-placement on the left-right dimension and the mean of the positions they assign to parties has a significant negative effect, supporting the thesis that ideological congruence affects perceptions of representation and thus on satisfaction with democracy, as claimed and shown in previous works. The second indicator measures the distance between respondents’ left-right position and that of the party they place most proximate to their own position, following
Lefkofridi, Gallego and Giger (2011). This variable shows no significant effect (although it does when excluding the mean left-right distance variable from the model, with which it is quite strongly and significantly correlated (results not shown here)).

The next three variables measure the distance between respondents’ positions on three issue dimensions – redistribution, i.e., the trade-off between the welfare state and lower taxes, immigration, and nuclear energy – and the mean of the positions at which they perceive the parties. The results show that issue position congruence does not influence satisfaction with democracy when controlling for other predictors, suggesting that shared issue priorities may indeed be a better indicator of substantive representation than shared issue positions.

The evaluation of the current economic situation, which is measured on a three-point scale from bad to good, has been found to be a strong predictor of satisfaction with democracy in previous studies (Borre 2000; Dalton 2004; Kim 2009), even though it is not a defining element of democracy. A significant positive effect is also found here. Another variable measuring government performance is the perceived performance of the government

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2 Anderson suggests an additional measure of left-right congruence: Despite their generally high levels of left-right congruence with the average representative or party, voters at the median position of the left-right dimension may feel less represented and thus be less satisfied with democracy, for the median position is usually not represented by any party. While this variable is not included in the models presented here because of multicollinearity with the left-right distance variables, its effect has been tested and found to be insignificant when controlling for the other variables. This may be the case because in a proportional representation system like Germany’s, party positions tend to be less polarized and thus less distant from the centre between left and right as compared to majoritarian systems (Anderson 2010).

3 The same model was estimated with variables measuring the distance between respondents’ positions and those of the most proximate parties rather than the party mean on the three issue dimensions, which yielded similar results.
over the previous four years. While it may be considered an output variable, like economic performance, it is not necessarily interpreted as such by respondents, for it may also refer to a government’ performance with regard to democratic principles such as accountability. As expected, the variable shows a significant positive effect on satisfaction with democracy. One should interpret this effect with caution, however, since it is possible that “some respondents may have taken [the satisfaction with democracy survey question] to be a question about how well the government is currently performing” (Miller and Listhaug 1999: 205).

Lastly, the model includes two elements of political culture: authoritarianism as a measure of value orientations and interpersonal trust as an indicator of social capital. According to Inglehart, “postmodernization erodes respect for authority, but increases support for democracy” (Inglehart 1999). Put in terms of the model set out in this paper, postmaterialist values should increase the expectations which individuals have towards the quality of democracy and at the same time lower the perceptions of how well democracy actually works, for postmaterialist citizens are more critical of political elites and institutions (Borre and Andersen 1997; Dalton 2004; Gabriel 1995; Nevitte 1996). The variable authoritarianism, measuring the extent to which respondents would like to live in a society where everyone adheres to the rules (i.e., the opposite of a postmaterialist society), does, however, not show a significant effect on satisfaction with democracy, supporting the critics of this thesis (Dennis and Owen 2011). The importance of social capital and its components – social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity – for the functioning of democracy has been much discussed and analyzed by scholars from Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) to Robert Putnam (1993). Whether an association between social trust and confidence in political institutions exists, however, has been less clear in the literature (Newton 2006; Zmerli, Newton, and Montero 2006). The thesis is not supported in Model 1-3, where interpersonal trust does not affect satisfaction with democracy.
With regard to the candidate-based measure of issue-salience congruence, the results look very similar. In both the model including only the socio-demographic and socio-economic controls (1-4) and the one containing the other controls (1-5), issue-salience congruence shows a highly significant positive effect on satisfaction with democracy. The effects of the controls are very similar. Again, the likelihood-ratio test is significant. The same is the case for Model 1-6 (Table 1b), which includes the socio-demographic variables and the congruence indicator measuring the degree of shared issue priorities between voters and candidates of the two governing parties, CDU/CDU and FDP. Again, it shows a positive effect on satisfaction with democracy, which remains highly significant when controlling for the other predictors (Model 1-7), whose effects are very similar to those in Model 1-5, except that the ideological distance to the closest party now has a significant negative effect (at the .05-level). The results for this model indicate that individuals’ satisfaction with democracy does not only depend on the representation of their issue priorities by representatives in general but also in particular by those representatives whose priorities have a higher chance of affecting the policy-making process. Again, the model fit increases significantly when including the congruence measure.

[TABLE 1b ABOUT HERE]

The models including the measures of congruence with the representatives of one’s preferred party (1-8 to 1-11) yield similar results. Issue-salience congruence between voters and the candidates of the parties for which they voted shows a significant positive effect on satisfaction with democracy (Models 1-8 and 1-9). The socio-demographic base model improves significantly when including the issue-salience congruence variable, indicated by the likelihood-ratio test. Among the control variables, it is notable that the effect of the
winner measure is insignificant. The models testing issue-salience congruence between party identifiers and the candidates of the parties with which they identify (1-10 and 1-11) also show similar results as all previous models. Issue-salience congruence again has a significant positive effect on satisfaction with democracy when controlling for socio-economic and socio-demographic variables and retains it when including additional controls. The control variables show similar effects among the sample of party identifiers to those among the samples used in the other models, expect that the effect of age becomes insignificant. Moreover, the effect of perceptions of the economic situation is significant only at the .05-level among party identifiers. Again, the likelihood-ratio test indicates that the socio-demographic base model improves significantly when including issue salience.

In conclusion, all models testing the effects of different congruence variables yield very similar results: most importantly, all congruence indicators significantly affect satisfaction with democracy.\(^4\) This similarity is fairly remarkable considering the differences in salience congruence between voters and candidates, on the one hand, and the political debate as portrayed by the media, on the other, as well as the different samples on which the analyses are based. However, due to the different samples and sample sizes the results are not directly comparable and thus do not tell us, first, whether voters’ satisfaction with democracy

\(^4\) Some of the issue categories used to construct the issue-salience congruence measure, as seen in Figure 1, may be argued to be closely related with each other in voters’ eyes, in particular economic, financial, and unemployment and labour market issues. This could have the effect that representatives’ emphasizing of, for instance, the economic crisis may lead to the perception of congruence among voters concerned with unemployment, which could decrease the validity of the results. I therefore constructed measures of issue-salience congruence where these three issue categories form one category and tested their effects on satisfaction with democracy, which are very similar in strength and significance to the resulted presented here.
depends more on the extent to which their issue priorities are reflected in the political debate as shown by the media or by political candidates themselves and, second, whether democracy is evaluated more strongly based on dyadic or collective issue-salience congruence.

**Comparing the Effects of Issue-Salience Congruence Measures**

Table 2 shows the probabilities predicted by the ordinal logit model of being at different levels of satisfaction with democracy with issue-salience congruence values of half a standard deviation below and above the mean, respectively, for the various congruence measures. All control variables are held at the mean, except the *winner* measure, which is held at 0.5.\(^5\) The table also summarizes the change in probability for each level of satisfaction when moving up one standard deviation around the mean of congruence, which indicates the strength of the effects of the salience congruence indicators. The results show that, in all cases, the probabilities of being very or quite dissatisfied and neither satisfied nor dissatisfied decline with increasing congruence, whereas the probabilities of being quite or very satisfied increase. The magnitude of change shown in the far-right column indicates the change in the probability of being satisfied as opposed to dissatisfied or neither nor when moving up one standard deviation in congruence. In general, the probability of being either very satisfied or very dissatisfied is quite low, between .01 and .06. It is around three to four times more likely to be quite satisfied than quite dissatisfied (around .40 compared to around .15), while the probability of being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied is between .30 and .36. Moreover, the results indicate that the differences in satisfaction between individuals with lower and higher congruence levels are not enormous. Nevertheless, we can see substantial effects.

\(^5\) The predicted probabilities among winners and losers differ quite substantially in some cases, thus taking a value between the two categories of *winner* and *loser* gives a better overall picture of the effect even though it is not substantively meaningful.
The most striking result is the similarity in the strength of the effects of collective issue-salience congruence measured based on media and candidate-survey data, of government congruence, and of dyadic congruence between voters and the party they would vote for. The probability of an individual at half a standard deviation above the mean of issue-salience congruence based on media data to be satisfied rather than dissatisfied or neither nor is .058 higher than that of an individual at a congruence level that is one standard deviation lower. The effect of the candidate-based measure is only slightly weaker: here, the difference in probability is .053. In the case of congruence with the governing parties, the change in probability is .061, suggesting that it matters for individuals whether their priorities are reflected by the government, which ultimately determines which policies are enacted. German voters’ satisfaction with democracy is equally strongly affected by their level of congruence with the party for which they voted, with a change in the probability to be satisfied of .061 with rising congruence.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Surprisingly, the magnitude of change is slightly but nevertheless clearly lower at .045 in the case of congruence between party identifiers and their party’s candidates. On the basis of both the dyadic view of representation and intuition, we might have expected party identifiers to anchor their evaluation of democracy in their perception of how well their party represents them rather than representatives from all parties. Yet, in order to draw a comparison between the measures, we need to look at the effect of the other congruence indicators among the same sample of individuals. Doing so reveals that congruence based on media data as well as on all candidates’ issue priorities also shows smaller effects among party identifiers than among all respondents: the magnitude of change is only .034 for the
media-based indicator and .047 for the candidate-based one. These results indicate a potential moderation effect of partisanship on the relationship between issue-salience congruence and satisfaction with democracy, as well as on the relevance of media-based perceptions of congruence, for the effect of the media-based measure is remarkably small among identifiers. These potential interaction should be pursued in further research. In conclusion, only small differences can be found in the effect strengths of the different congruence indicators. The results do not show systematic or substantial differences between, first, the media-based measure and the candidate-based ones and, second, between measures of collective and dyadic congruence.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to explore whether the extent to which political representatives share voters’ issue priorities, i.e., *issue-salience congruence*, affects voters’ satisfaction with democracy. The results of the analysis with data from the 2009 German Longitudinal Election Study suggest that it is unjustified that this potential link has been mostly ignored in the literature on policy congruence so far: Congruence between voters and candidates of all parties, of the governing parties, and of the parties preferred by voters significantly and substantively affect satisfaction with democracy. So does congruence between voters’ priorities and the issues emphasized in the media coverage of the political debate. These effects hold even when controlling for other potential predictors of satisfaction with democracy, including measures of ideological congruence, which also showed a significant impact, and congruence of issue positions. The latter showed no effect on satisfaction with democracy, indicating that issue-salience congruence may be more relevant, although this claim needs further empirical support based on better comparable measures of issue priorities and issue preferences.
Besides establishing the general link between shared issue priorities and satisfaction with democracy, this paper enriches our understanding of political representation by showing that voters’ issue priorities are not necessarily represented better by politicians of the parties they prefer as compared to candidates from all relevant parties. Moreover, congruence in issue salience with one’s party does not lead to higher levels of satisfaction with democracy than congruence with the political elite in general. Neither the collective nor the dyadic model of representation thus appears to be more applicable to representation in terms of issue priorities. Interestingly, congruence with the governing parties has an equally strong effect as the other congruence variables.

With regard to the debate about whether the media’s portraying of the political debate gives a valid image of how voters perceive it, the data used here shows that the media emphasized issues quite differently compared to candidates in the 2009 election campaign in Germany, in a way that was less congruent with voters’ priorities. Nevertheless, congruence between voters’ issue priorities and those emphasized in the media showed a significant impact on satisfaction with democracy of about the same strength as voters’ congruence with candidate’s priorities. Further research is needed in order to determine to what extent the media influences citizens’ perceptions of issue salience in the political debate and whether this differs between individuals. Lastly, the results suggest that the effect of issue-salience congruence on satisfaction with democracy may be moderated by party identification. This possibility deserves further attention in conjunction with an exploration of other potential individual-level moderating effects, which have not been given sufficient attention in the research on policy congruence and satisfaction with democracy.
References


Doherty, David. 2011. "Who Do People Think Representatives Should Respond To: Their District or the Country?". Loyola University Chicago.


### Variable Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Survey question and variable construction</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Satisfaction with democracy         | On the whole, how satisfied or not are you with the way democracy works in Germany? Are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, neither/nor, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?                                                                 | 1 = Very dissatisfied  
2 = Quite dissatisfied  
3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
4 = Quite satisfied  
5 = Very satisfied                                         |
| Strength of party identification    | “All in all, how strongly or weakly are you inclined to support this party: very strongly, fairly strongly, moderately, fairly weakly or very weakly?”                                                                                                                                  | 1 = no ID  
2 = very weak  
3 = quite weak  
4 = moderate  
5 = quite strong  
6 = very strong                                          |
| Winner / loser status                | “Voted for winning party” if respondent reported to have voted for CDU/CSU or FDP with either first or second vote or both votes reported to had done so hypothetically in the case of respondents not eligible to vote                                                                 | 0 = voted for losing party  
1 = voted for winning party                                                                                           |
| Left-right distance to party mean   | Variable measures the distance between the mean of the positions on the left-right dimension which a respondent assigns to each of the five major parties and the respondents’ own position, measured on a scale from 1 to 11.                                                                 | 0 = no distance  
…  
10 = largest distance / at opposite ends of the spectrum                                                                 |
| Left-right distance to most proximate party | Measures the distance between the position on the left-right dimension of the party which a respondent places most proximate to his or her own position and his or her own position, measured on a scale from 1 to 11.                               | 0 = no distance  
…  
10 = largest distance / at opposite ends of the spectrum                                                                 |
| Distance on issue positions to party mean | Measures the distance between the mean of the positions which a respondent assigns to each of the five major parties and the respondents’ own position on the respective issue dimension, measured on a scale from 1 to 11. | 0 = no distance  
…  
10 = largest distance / at opposite ends of the spectrum                                                                 |
| Redistribution                      | “Some people would like to see lower taxes even if that means some reduction in health, education and social benefits; others would like to see more government spending on health, education and social benefits even if it means some increases in taxes.”  
1 = “Lower taxes/Less government spending on health, education and social benefits”  
11 = “More government spending on health, education and social benefits/Higher taxes”  |                                                                                               |
| Immigration                         | “Should laws on immigration be relaxed or be made tougher?”                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                               |
| **Nuclear energy** | “And what positions do the political parties hold on nuclear power? Should more nuclear power stations be built or should all nuclear power stations be closed down today?”

1 = “More nuclear power stations should be built”
11 = “All nuclear power stations should be closed down today” |
| **Evaluation of the current economic situation** | “Now we come to the economic situation in Germany. How in general terms would you rate the current economic situation in Germany? Please use this list to answer.”

1 = bad
2 = neither good nor bad
3 = good
(Originally five-point scale, summarized due to small case numbers in some categories) |
| **Perceived performance of the current government** | “Now thinking about the performance of the government in general, how good or bad a job do you think the government has done over the past four years? Has it done a very good job? A good job? A bad job? A very bad job?”

1 = very bad job
2 = bad job
3 = good job
4 = very good job |
| **Authoritarianism** | “I will now read you a few descriptions of different types of societies. Please answer on a scale of 1 to 7 to tell me how much you would like to live in one of these kinds of society. In a society in which people stick to the rules.”

1 = I would definitely not like living in this society …
5 = I would definitely like living in that society |
| **Interpersonal trust** | “In general terms, do you think most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealings with other people? Please tell me what you think using this scale from 1 to 11. 1 means that you can't be too careful and 11 means that most people can be trusted. You can use the numbers in between to state your opinion more precisely.”

1 = You can’t be too careful …
11 = Most people can be trusted |
| **Age** | Age in years (between 16 and 94) |
| **Sex** | 0 = male
1 = female |
| **Education** | “What general school leaving certificate do you have?”

1 = no degree
2 = secondary modern school (*Hauptschulabschluss*)
3 = intermediate school certificate (*Realschulabschluss/Mittlere Reife*)
4 = National Vocational Qualification (*Fachhochschulab-*)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schluss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 = Abitur (highest secondary school degree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>“How high is your household’s total net monthly income? By this I mean the amount remaining after tax and other deductions.”</th>
<th>Income in Euros per month divided by 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>“There is a lot of talk about social class these days. Which of these social classes do you consider you belong to?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = underclass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = lower middle class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = middle class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = upper middle class or upper class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


FIGURES AND TABLES

**FIGURE 1.** Relative Salience of Issues among Voters, Candidates, and the Media Campaign Coverage in the 2009 German Federal Elections

**FIGURE 2.** Mean Issue-Salience Congruence between Citizens and Candidates and between Citizens and the Media Campaign Coverage
### TABLE 1a. Effects of Issue-Salience Congruence on Satisfaction with Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>All Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.01 (.00)</td>
<td>.01 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.21 (.13)</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.04 (.08)</td>
<td>.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-.02 (.01)</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>.68 (.09)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue-salience congruence</td>
<td>.04 (.01)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PID strength</td>
<td>.29 (.05)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winner</td>
<td>.37 (.13)</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological distance (mean)</td>
<td>-.19 (.06)</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological distance (prox.)</td>
<td>-.16 (.08)</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance on redistribution</td>
<td>-.06 (.04)</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance on immigration</td>
<td>-.03 (.03)</td>
<td>.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance on nuclear energy</td>
<td>-.01 (.04)</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic situation</td>
<td>.35 (.10)</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government performance</td>
<td>.57 (.11)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>.03 (.06)</td>
<td>.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal trust</td>
<td>-.03 (.02)</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald chi²</td>
<td>85.73</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR test</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Values are coefficients of ordinal logit regression, conducted with STATA 12, with robust standard errors in parentheses. The Likelihood-ratio test compares the fit of the models including the socio-demographic and socio-economic controls and the issue-salience congruence measure to that of the model only containing the controls (sample not weighted).
### TABLE 1b. Effects of Issue-Salience Congruence on Satisfaction with Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Candidates of Governing Parties</th>
<th>Candidates of Party Voted for</th>
<th>Candidates of Party Identified with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.01 (.00)</td>
<td>.01 (.00)</td>
<td>.01 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.16 (.13)</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>-.22 (.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.05 (.08)</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>-.05 (.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>.68 (.09)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.32 (.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue-salience congruence</td>
<td>.03 (.01)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.03 (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PID strength</td>
<td>.29 (.05)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.29 (.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winner</td>
<td>.37 (.13)</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.27 (.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological distance (mean)</td>
<td>-.19 (.06)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.16 (.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological distance (prox.)</td>
<td>-.17 (.08)</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>-.10 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance on redistribution</td>
<td>-.06 (.04)</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>-.07 (.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance on immigration</td>
<td>-.03 (.03)</td>
<td>.372</td>
<td>-.02 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance on nuclear energy</td>
<td>-.01 (.04)</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>-.02 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic situation</td>
<td>.36 (.10)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.41 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government performance</td>
<td>.56 (.11)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.55 (.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>.04 (.06)</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>.02 (.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal trust</td>
<td>-.03 (.02)</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>-.04 (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald chi²</td>
<td>101.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>244.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR test</td>
<td>16.37</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>22.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>700</td>
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</table>

Notes: see Table 1a.
### TABLE 2. Predicted Probabilities of Satisfaction with Democracy Based on Different Issue-Salience Congruence Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measure of issue salience in political debate</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Quite dissatisfied</th>
<th>Neither nor</th>
<th>Quite satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Magnitude of change¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All voters</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>½ std. dev. below mean</td>
<td>.034 (.025-.043)</td>
<td>.182 (.159-.205)</td>
<td>.352 (.321-.382)</td>
<td>.398 (.367-.429)</td>
<td>.034 (.025-.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>½ std. dev. above mean</td>
<td>.027 (.020-.035)</td>
<td>.152 (.131-.173)</td>
<td>.331 (.301-.361)</td>
<td>.447 (.413-.481)</td>
<td>.043 (.032-.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>+.049</td>
<td>+.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All voters</td>
<td>Candidates</td>
<td>½ std. dev. below mean</td>
<td>.034 (.025-.043)</td>
<td>.180 (.158-.203)</td>
<td>.350 (.320-.380)</td>
<td>.401 (.370-.432)</td>
<td>.035 (.026-.044)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>½ std. dev. above mean</td>
<td>.028 (.020-.035)</td>
<td>.153 (.132-.175)</td>
<td>.331 (.301-.361)</td>
<td>.446 (.412-.480)</td>
<td>.043 (.032-.053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>+.045</td>
<td>+.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All voters</td>
<td>Candidates of governing parties</td>
<td>½ std. dev. below mean</td>
<td>.034 (.026-.043)</td>
<td>.182 (.160-.206)</td>
<td>.352 (.322-.382)</td>
<td>.397 (.367-.428)</td>
<td>.034 (.025-.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>½ std. dev. above mean</td>
<td>.027 (.020-.035)</td>
<td>.151 (.130-.172)</td>
<td>.330 (.301-.360)</td>
<td>.449 (.415-.483)</td>
<td>.043 (.032-.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>+.052</td>
<td>+.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters who voted in 2009 election</td>
<td>Candidates of party voted for</td>
<td>½ std. dev. below mean</td>
<td>.030 (.020-.040)</td>
<td>.164 (.140-.188)</td>
<td>.332 (.299-.366)</td>
<td>.429 (.395-.464)</td>
<td>.044 (.032-.056)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>½ std. dev. above mean</td>
<td>.024 (.016-.032)</td>
<td>.135 (.113-.157)</td>
<td>.307 (.274-.339)</td>
<td>.479 (.442-.517)</td>
<td>.056 (.041-.070)</td>
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<td>.143 (.118-.168)</td>
<td>.320 (.284-.356)</td>
<td>.475 (.436-.513)</td>
<td>.046 (.033-.060)</td>
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<td>.298 (.264-.333)</td>
<td>.511 (.471-.551)</td>
<td>.055 (.040-.070)</td>
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</table>

¹Magnitude of change in probabilities between lower three levels of satisfaction and upper two levels.

Notes: Entries are predicted probabilities for each level of satisfaction with democracy, 95% confidence interval in parentheses. Probabilities are based on ordinal logit regression estimates with control variables age, social class, PID strength, winner, left-right distance to party mean, economic situation, and government performance.