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Punishing voters, accountability, and congruence

MA Thesis

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Author's declaration:

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources, and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Abstract:

When voters ‘punish’ the incumbents, does it affect the ideological congruence between incumbent parties and their voters? This study is an examination of an underlying tension between democratic values of representation and accountability that elections are normatively expected to serve in a democracy. I examine this tension through the concept of ‘punishing voters’. Punishing voters are conceptualized as the subset of the electorate who have previously voted for the incumbents, and switch their votes later based on economic evaluations. Using the data for 35 countries between 2011–2016 from the fourth round of Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, I examine the hypothesis that ideological congruence between incumbent parties and their voters increases with rise in economic voting. This study is socially important as it implies that voters are forced to choose between retrospective evaluations and ideological congruence. The consequences of this argument are important for understanding the crises of democracies in the context of competing normative values that elections serve.

Keywords:

Punishing voters; economic voting; ideological congruence; accountability; representation; switching voters,

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INTRODUCTION

'As the old jokes goes, economists have predicted six of the last three recessions. Well, political scientists have predicted nine of the last three crises of democracy.' - Runicman (2011)

Do democracies have an inbuilt tension in their electoral institutions that get manifested periodically through 'crisis'? This thesis is an examination of the underlying tension between the dual democratic values of representation and accountability that elections are normatively expected to serve in a democracy. While the debate between accountability and representation is largely researched through the prism of the electoral systems, this thesis examines if voters are forced to choose between either retrospective evaluations or ideological preferences—irrespective of the design of the electoral system. This thesis thus seeks to contribute to the discourse on the crisis of democracy.

The scholarly debates on the crisis of democracy are not new to political science. Among the contemporary accounts, there are those who highlight the crisis of democracy (Merkel, 2018) and the danger of illiberal turn in democracies (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2019; Plattner, 2020; Foa and Mounk, 2017; Diamond, 2015; Zakaria, 2007), while there are others who highlight the tendency of democracies to self-correct by relying on *critical citizens* (Kriesi, 2020; Norris 1999) or through a *thermostatic* model of demand-supply (Claassen, 2019). One instance of this *crisis-ification* of democracy narrative can be gauged from the 2021 report of Freedom House titled self-evidently as *Democracy under siege* (Repucci and Slipowitz, 2021) which highlights the 15th consecutive year of decline in global freedoms. There are however multiple approaches to this *crisis-ification* narrative.

Another way to look at the crisis of the democracy is through the lens of the health of democracy. To gauge this health, 'satisfaction with democracy' is often used as one of the questions in large N survey-based comparative studies. While there are many disagreements over the measurement and interpretation of 'satisfaction with democracy' (Linde and Ekman, 2003; Anderson, 2002; Canache et. al 2001) the political science is rich with scholarship (Kostelka and Blais, 2018; Van der Meer, 2017; Wagner et al., 2009, Zmerli and Newton, 2008; Aarts and Thomassen, 2008; Anderson and Guillory, 1997) that explores the possible determinants and consequences of this satisfaction. However, if democracy is intended to serve competing democratic values, then the satisfaction with democracies will always be a work-in-progress.

The standard approach for explaining the tension between multiple normative democratic values has been to outline the different theoretical approaches to qualify democracy. For example, Landwehr and Steiner (2017) argue that the satisfaction with democracy is dependent upon the normative conception of democracy that citizens value. There have also been attempts to highlight and bridge the divide between the distinct approaches of political theorists and empirical political scientists (Sabl, 2015). Other studies have sought to arrive at a consensus on the empirical dimensions of democracy that can be used for a useful comparative analysis (Fishman, 2016). In contrast to such reconcillatory studies, the claim that this thesis seeks to theoretically advance and empirically examine is if there is an ‘irresolvable’ tension between the two fundamental democratic values of representation and accountability—irrespective of the electoral systems and the qualified democratic theories. There are many contemporary real-world examples of this tension between democratic values.

In the recently concluded USA Presidential elections, ex-president Donald Trump from Republican Party saw an increase in his popular vote share from 46.1% (2016 elections) to 46.9% (2020 elections). Based on this statistic alone, one would intuitively expect that the electorate has ‘rewarded’ the performance of president. More importantly, the argument that the ‘general will’ of the US electorate has changed as compared to 2016 Elections would be a tall proposition to verify. If it has not, this would imply that the final electoral results are independent of the ‘general will’ of the electorate in this instance. By ‘general will’, I imply the overall ideological preferences of the majority of the electorate (notwithstanding the distinction between popular vote and electoral college). The argument here is to examine if elections can be simultaneously seen as a reflection on the performance of President, and also as a mechanism to understand the general will of the electorate.

This could be dismissed as one of the rare cases (2016 US Presidential elections) where the presidential candidate with lower popular vote-share got majority of electoral votes. One could also choose to not generalize using a peculiar US electoral system along with its relatively unique two-party system that is entrenched in US political culture. However, one can also find similar examples from the old western democracies of UK, France, Germany or from the new democracies in central and eastern Europe. The composition of electoral system, party system, vote-to-seat formula varies across the Europe. However, the point of tension between democratic values

remains. When a conservative party voter in UK or a socialist party voter in France chose to punish their incumbent government in 2019 and 2017, did they have any alternate center-right or left party that would be ideologically closer to their preferences? In general terms, the question is when voters seek to punish the incumbent government, do they have any alternate political party that can represent their ideological preferences? This question is relevant for the scholarship on electoral studies—especially with respect to economic voting.

In the studies on economic voting, this tension between these values could be located in the ‘instability’ problem. This ‘instability’ of the relation (between economic conditions and vote-choice for incumbents) is often understood in the context of weakening clarity of responsibility or through increasing multi-level governance and economic inter-dependence (Duch and Stevenson, 2008). It is however *the clarity of available alternatives* (Anderson, 2000; Bellucci, 1984 cited in Freire and Santana-Pereira, 2009) that aptly demonstrates the claim of this thesis. This approach argues that economic evaluations are more visible, when there are clear alternatives that are not ideologically very distant. Can this be interpreted as tension between voting for retrospective evaluations or voting for ideologically proximate parties?

Taking this as starting point, this thesis examines the effect on ideological congruence between incumbent parties and their voters, when economic voters switch their votes from incumbents to non-incumbents. More specifically, the aim of the thesis is to scrutinize if voters are forced to choose between either punishing incumbents or voting for an ideologically congruent party. By ideological congruence, I imply the distance between ideological position of the parties and their voters. The study uses the integrated database from the multiple rounds of Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) to examine this proposition. There are three novel contribution of the thesis to the scholarship on electoral studies. First, it meaningfully uses the concept of ‘switching voters’ in economic voting scholarship. Second, it delineates ‘punishing voters’ as those who have switched their votes from incumbent to non-incumbent parties on economic evaluations. Lastly, the concept of ideological congruence is examined at a disaggregated level of incumbent parties. Most importantly, this thesis clearly outlines the mechanism by which electoral accountability can affect ideological congruence.

The thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter of thesis helps in understanding the tension between the normative functions of elections in different democratic theories from an empirical

perspective. The second chapter outlines a theoretical framework for a normative theory of democracy that is primarily concerned with accountability. The third chapter unpacks how economic voting can be seen in the framework of this normative theory of democracy. The fourth chapter highlights the research design, findings, and data analysis. This is followed by the final chapter that discusses its' substantial implications for studies on democracies and elections.

1 COMPARATIVE DEMOCRACIES

This chapter provides an overview of the empirical studies on understanding the role of elections in democracies. It first argues that in studies on comparative democracies, elections are an indispensable component in measurement and comparisons of democracies. The second section examines the theoretical frameworks that were developed for understanding the normative role of elections in a democracy. It particularly looks at the two broad normative functions of elections – accountability and representation and underlines the relation between them. It does this by evaluating the empirical studies on comparative democracies and comparative electoral systems. The third and final section try to examine this trade-off in the theories of voter behavior. It concludes by arguing that there is no theory of voter behavior that emphasizes the value of accountability. Further, when one compares the empirical studies on comparative democracies and comparative electoral systems, against studies on comparative voter behavior, there is no systematic investigation of trade-off between accountability and representation.

1.1 Elections and Democracy

This section outlines how democracies can be meaningfully compared on the basis of elections. To outline the starting point, ‘elections’ are an indispensable component for a polity to be qualified as democratic — irrespective of how ‘democracy’ is conceptualized. However, there are arguments over whether *government contestability* would be a more meaningful indicator than elections (Trantidis, 2017). The Democratic Electoral Dataset (DES) compiled by Matt Golder (2005) provides an overview of the electoral systems used across 199 countries between 1946 and 2000, hinting at its universal application across diverse polities. The dataset reveals that almost half of the elections in the observed period occurred under dictatorship, raising questions on the utility of elections in maintaining dictatorial rule. A more comprehensive comparison of electoral practices is offered through the indices of democracies.

Indices for comparing democracies such as Freedom House, Democracy Index, and V-Dem index often have multiple weighted components related to the practice of elections in the calculation of their index. Coppedge et al. (2011) discuss the weakness of these traditional measures of democracies by highlighting contestations over measuring democracy. These are related to *definition, precision, coverage and sources, coding, aggregation, and validity-reliability*’. They allude to the fundamental problem of *no consensus on what democracy at large means beyond the*

prosaic notion of rule by the people (2011, p. 253). They offer a way out by classifying six possible ways of conceptualizing democracies. These are electoral democracy, liberal democracy, majoritarian democracy, deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, and egalitarian democracy. Their key contribution for comparing democracies lies in defending the utility of a ‘disaggregated’ measure of democracy. For example, a majoritarian democracy theory would place a higher emphasis on the role of elections as a tool for accountability of government. To summarize their argument, comparison of democracies is widely contingent on the normative democratic values under consideration. These normative democratic values shape the role of elections in democracy.

So, what exactly are the possible roles that elections can serve in a democracy? One way to answer this question would be to examine the genealogy of elections and democracy. An examination of the political theories with respect to the intellectual history of ‘popular sovereignty’ or with respect to the intellectual history of ‘democratic’ rule might yield more comprehensive answers. However, this is not the focus of my study. My limited interest here is to probe the tension between two specific normative functions of elections over which there is a reasonable academic consensus — between representation and accountability. The next section looks at the dominant findings from empirical studies on comparative democracies and comparative electoral systems.

1.2 Representation Accountability trade-off

This section brings out the contrasts between few of the landmark studies on the classification of democracies. Arend Lijphart (1984, 2012) and Powell’s (2000) scholarship act as an anchor point for this classification. Both deploy a similar principle to classify democracies. This principle is about the way power is concentrated or dispersed across institutions. The democracies that concentrate power for decision-making are classified as majoritarian democracies, while those that disperse power are classified as consensual (Lijphart) or proportional democracies (Powell). This classification is then used to examine how these democracies perform on a range of conceptual categories (congruence, accountability, kindness, gentleness, etc.). While the major differences in their work have been already noted (Achen et al., 2011); from this thesis’s perspective, Powell’s studies depart from Lijphart’s work in another two ways. Powell advances the distinction between democracies by highlighting the centrality of the electoral system in the classification of democracies, as opposed to Lijphart’s work where elections are one of the many institutions.

Second, Powell makes a stronger and clearer case for associating majoritarian democracies with accountability. Both converge on their findings that majoritarian democracies are likely to perform better at accountability, while proportional democracies are likely to perform better at congruence. They however differ on their interpretations of the possible ‘trade-off’. Lijphart concludes *that there is no trade-off between governing effectiveness and high-quality democracy* (2012, p. 296). Powell (2000) however makes a clear case that there is a trade-off between accountability and representation. This idea of trade-off has subsequently been normalized to an extent that scholars have sought to identify *sweet spot* between the two values by tweaking some features of electoral systems (Carey and Hix, 2011). Katz (1997) who is otherwise critical of Lijphart’s narrow classification of democracies also states that there is an incompatibility in the normative democratic values and that one is compelled to make trade-offs in institutional design based upon given societal requirements. The idea of trade-off has been also explored from the perspective of how electoral rules might shape the voting behavior.

Norris (2004) and Thomassen (2014) examine if there are institutional and cultural factors that can affect the voter behavior. They borrow from Powell and Lijphart’s classification of democracies and the normative function of elections in these democracies. However, they too arrive at different findings. Thomassen (2014) argues against the more conventional findings of Lijphart and Powell. He finds no evidence for the proposition that retrospective voting is more common for majoritarian democracies or that policy voting is more common for consensus democracies. He argues that dimensions of party system such as clarity of responsibility and polarization are more important in shaping the voter behavior and their attitudes towards the political system. Norris, on the other hand, implicitly hints at the trade-off emerging from the impact of electoral rules on voter behavior. For example, she argues that *majoritarian elections are significantly associated with weak cleavage politics* (2004, p. 255). There are however another two academic positions that doubts the ability of elections to do both the things simultaneously or even separately.

Achen and Bartels (2016) underlined the inability of elections to serve function of either accountability or representation. They argue that the voting behavior in US is more likely to be explained by the social identities of the electorate. Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999) raise similar questions about voter behavior by providing a theoretical framework to examine if voters

can perform both these functions simultaneously. They conclude that elections are just not a sufficient instrument of control over politicians. They stress on the need for institutional creativity.

My study intends to bring out this need for institutional creativity. It does so by highlighting the mechanism that demonstrates the inability of elections to do both the tasks simultaneously. The use of elections for performing one democratic value (punishing) simultaneously undermines its ability to serve the other value (ideological congruence) as single vote cannot do both jobs simultaneously (Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes, 1999). In the next section, I outline the normative democratic values that the dominant theories of voter behavior work with. I intend to trace if the theories of voter behavior can be distinguished on the lines of representation and accountability.

1.3 Trade-off in voting behavior studies

This section examines few of the dominant theoretical approaches in explaining voter behavior. These different approaches reveal how the scholarship on voter behavior is still fragmented when it comes to competing democratic values of representation and accountability. Perhaps only Thomassen (2014) provides a systematic analysis on examining whether economic voting and policy voting are relatively stronger phenomenon in majoritarian and proportional democracies, respectively. As opposed to relatively rigid boundaries of a trade-off in democratic values between majoritarian and proportional democracies, there is no similar discussion of trade-off between the theories of voter behavior. One could argue that theories of voter behavior are not meant to answer such conceptual questions about democracy, and that they are primarily meant for explaining voter behavior with respect to party-vote or party-identification, or the ideological positions adopted by voters and parties, and the relations between them. However, in doing so, they inadvertently favor one conception of democracy over other. A closer look at these theories would substantiate this claim.

Some of the most prominent theoretical approaches for studying voter behavior are a) socio-structural theories b) cultural modernization theories c) spatial theories of direction or proximity d) rational choice theories. The explanations for party-vote using socio-structural theories or socio-psychological models typically indicate that vote-choice is largely an ‘inward’ function of voters, dependent upon voters’ position in a society. The ‘performance’ of the incumbents or the orientation of the voters towards representatives is at best treated as a short-term factor shaping the political preferences. This is generally accounted for by including such orientations in the

statistical models as one of the ‘control’ variables. On the other hand, spatial theories of democracy work with a very particular understanding of democracy. They are interested in unpacking the ‘general will’ of people or to map out the political space in a polity. In other words, they unpack the way entities (parties and voters) interact with each other on the ideological spectrum. This spectrum too is generally oblivious to performance of the incumbent government.

As stated earlier, these theories are not intended to answer the questions about the ways in which the voters can hold the government accountable. That is however precisely the point that I seek to underline. Apart from economic voting, the other approaches of voter-behavior (implicitly) rule out or underplay democratic value of ‘accountability’. The historical origins and the subsequent trajectory of these theoretical approaches provides further evidence for the aforementioned argument.

1.3.1 Socio-structural and Cultural modernization theories:

This section examines the conception of democracy that socio-structural and cultural modernization theories of voter behavior work with. The historical origins of socio-structural theories provide the first instance of how vote-choice was seen as an expression of political behavior of citizens. Evans (2004) outlining the importance of *Michigan model* with its socio-psychological explanations, characterized it as the first formalized model of voting behavior. The introduction of surveys by commercial polling companies arguably provided a major impetus in election studies, especially with what are also known as Columbia voting studies (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1968; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954). Achen and Bartel (2014) characterize their contribution as *pioneering*, and *pathbreaking*. They however reiterate the failings of the ‘populist ideal of democracy’ highlighted by these studies. The focus of these scholarship with respect to voter behavior has been ‘in-ward looking’ either at an individual or at a macro-level.

Subsequent sociology-driven developments in socio-structural theories and cultural modernization theories examined the consequences of the interaction between different social groups. These theories tried to account for the effects of macro-variables (age, class, region, gender, etc.) on the party identification. While the early studies were focused on understanding how partisan attachments are developed through socialization, the scholarship subsequently progressed to examine how the changes in social structures might help in understanding their political choices

and the emergent party systems from those choices. Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) work was useful in understanding the social cleavages that emerge in processes of societal transformation especially at their critical junctures. Such socio-structural explanations eventually elicited studies that emphasized agency-centered explanations, either by political elites or by citizens themselves. For example, Sartori (1969) outlined a political sociology approach (as opposed to sociology of politics approach) which underlined the agency of political elites to convert social cleavages into political cleavages.

Other scholars such as Dalton (2002), Inglehart (1977), Inglehart and Norris (2003) examined how political choices and political attitudes among citizens can be explained through the new value cleavages. The argument of these scholars of 'cultural modernization' theories is that there is a shift in the political culture as societies 'modernize' from agrarian to industrial to post-industrial modes of organization of the economy. The shift in political culture can be captured by changing value-orientations and attitudes of the citizens. Such explanations are often used to understand the changes in partisanship, voter turnout, and weakening of traditional social cleavages.

One of the related strands of scholarship to emerge from this arch of cultural modernization theories was to measure the trends in the stability of social and political cleavages. This had implications for development of concepts like electoral volatility, party system stability, party system polarization etc. Further, the scholarship has also examined the trends of 'de-alignment' and 're-alignment' of social cleavages in electoral politics. Scholars have also sought to apply these concepts in new democracies under different institutional settings. For example, stabilization of party-systems (seen as key to survival of democracies in western democracies) is often examined in these new democracies in the context of consolidation of democracy. There is thus an inherently normative appeal of democracy that is implicitly attached with the scholarship that emerges from socio-structural and cultural modernization theories.

Irrespective of whether the studies are macro or micro, agency driven, or structure driven, these theories seem to implicitly value a particular conceptualization about democracy. This conceptualization sees the vote (or voting intention) as the manifestation of the socio-political preferences of the citizens, where elections are 'primarily' a reflection of the socio-political space, and not an instrument of accountability. This overlooks the ability of voter to behave as an *appraiser of past events, past performance, and past actions* (Key 1966). The rational choice

theories especially in the mold of spatial theories of voting provide another lens to examine how voter behavior theories have examined the democratic value of accountability.

1.3.2: Spatial theories of voting

Anthony Downs' *Spatial theory of voting* (1957) grounds the voter behavior from the discipline of economics. Broadly an extension of the rational choice theories, studies anchored in this logic outline the utility of a decision for the given rational actor. The electoral market is seen as one of the spaces of interaction between these actors - voters and political parties. From this theoretical perspective, there is an attempt to understand the formations and transformations in the ideological positions of parties and voters. The political behavior of the actors is thus shaped by the demands and supplies on a particular ideological spectrum. The directional theories and proximity theories (Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989) that emerged as an offshoot from this perspective, are typically concerned in analyzing how the distance between parties and electorate can be mapped in the most accurate way to represent the political reality. However, these theories do not shed much light on how performance of the government can be mapped in political space.

Let me summarize the argument here. The tension between accountability and representation which is well researched in studies of comparative democracies and comparative electoral systems, goes relatively missing in theories of voter behavior. Socio-structural theories and rational choice theories (particularly spatial theories) are two broader paradigms to study voter behavior. However, they are almost indifferent to the aspect of the incumbents being accountable to the electorate.

Such questions are largely understood through the scholarship on economic voting. Economic voting can be seen as one application of the accountability theory of democracy. It is based on examining the performance of government on economic conditions through a matrix of reward and punishment. Economic voting thus can also be seen as a derivative of the rational choice theories – where the voters engage in a particular kind of rational behavior. However, these theories do not have a corresponding normative theory of democracy. The next chapter looks at outlining an accountability theory of democracy, that in turn can inform economic voting.

2 ACCOUNTABILITY THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for grounding the central claim of thesis — examining the effects of economic voting on ideological congruence. The chapter is structured as follows. The first section argues that there is a need for a normative theory of democracy that primarily values accountability, where the ability of electorate to ‘punish’ the incumbents based on retrospective evaluations is the central concern. The second section examines how accountability can be theorized for a normative theory of democracy. It makes a case for how electoral accountability (through economic voting) can be seen as one of the simple and direct applications of this theory of democracy. The third and final section discusses the problems with electoral accountability, providing a framework for examining the consequences of economic voting.

2.1 Accountability in normative theories of democracy

This section argues that accountability is relatively an under-theorized value in most of the normative theories of democracy. It then proposes to examine what an accountability theory of democracy would imply for the role of elections. Dahl (1956, p.1) famously argued that *There is no democratic theory—there are only democratic theories*. Providing an inventory for research on political participation, Teorell (2006) identifies responsive (or populist) theories, deliberative theories, and participatory theories as the three major conceptualizations of democracy to explore the determinants and consequences of political participation. However, accountability or evaluation of the incumbents is not a primary concern of any of these theories. Let me briefly underline the primary features of these normative theories of democracy.

Populist theories or responsive theories are concerned with the normative value of responsiveness of the system to the preferences of the people (Dahl, 1956; Verba, 1996; Verba and Nie, 1972). Participatory theories (Aragones and Sanchez-Pages, 2009; Bherer, Dufour, and Montambeault, 2016; Pateman, 2012; Schiller, 2007; Wolfe, 1985) unpack the ways through which citizens can be involved in the decision-making. Deliberative theories (Gutmann and Thompson, 2009; Parkinson and Mansbridge, 2012; Cohen, 2007; Fishkin and Laslett, 2008; Bohman, 1988) on the other hand, are concerned in unpacking how the preferences of the citizens are formed. At their core, all these theories of democracy are concerned about the processes of decision-making in a polity. What distinguishes the accountability theory of democracy from these conventional

theories is the high premium it places on ensuring that decision-makers are hold accountable to those affected by these decisions. Let me now underline how accountability can be understood. This will be useful in examining the accountability mechanism that can be situated with respect to economic voting.

2.2 Theorizing accountability for economic voting

At the outset, it is important to note that there are various dimensions of accountability in a democratic political system. For example, Bovens (2007) in **Table 2. 1** provides an overview of these dimensions.

Table 2.1: Dimensions of accountability (Source: Bovens 2007, p. 461)

Based on the nature of forum	Political accountability Legal accountability Administrative accountability Professional accountability Social accountability
Based on the nature of the actor	Corporate accountability Hierarchical accountability Collective accountability Individual accountability
Based on the nature of the conduct	Financial accountability Procedural accountability Product accountability
Based on the nature of obligation	Vertical accountability Horizontal accountability Diagonal accountability

The focus of my thesis is however limited to examine the effects of only one type of political accountability, which is shaped by elections. This political accountability through elections is probably the oldest dimension of accountability. One could argue that the roots of the accountability theory of democracy are associated with the failings of ‘populist’ theories of democracy. Walter Lipmann (1946) outlined the inability of the electorate to live up to the classical

populist doctrine of influencing policymaking. He highlights the inability of an average voter to know enough about political matters for political participation. This critique of populist democracy was further solidified by Joseph Schumpeter (1942). He conceptualized democracy by limiting it to an *institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals' acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.* (1942, p. 269). This limited view of democracy would fit well with the accountability theory, where voters are engaged in retrospective evaluations of the incumbents. Achen and Barelis (2016) call this a theory of *leadership model* where *election outcomes hinge not on ideas but on public approval or disapproval of the actual performance of incumbent political leaders* (p. 4). This retrospective theory provided an alternative theory of democracy, without expecting political acumen from the voters about the political parties or ideologies or political system. However, what would then such an accountability imply?

In the broadest term, accountability is a 'retrospective' and 'relational' concept of providing answers. (Bovens, Goodin, Schillemans, 2014). Although there are other ways to characterize this relational concept (accountors and accountees, or actors and forums, or agents and forum), the conventional framework to study accountability in political science is through an economic lens of 'agent-principal', where agents (incumbent government or elected representatives) are entrusted power on behalf of principal (democrats or citizens or electorate) for decision-making. Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999) offer an account of how elections can be utilized to serve a pure accountability approach. They outline what Mansbridge (2014) terms as a 'sanctioning' mechanism—*where citizens control government so that those incumbents who act in the best interests of citizens win re-elections and those who do not lose them* (pp 38). Mansbridge (2014) on the other hand offers a more positive, *trust-based accountability* outlining a *selection model*. This model is useful when agents are intrinsically self-motivated and aligned with the interest of the principal and especially when the monitoring of agents is not only difficult but also has adverse effects on the actions of agents. She argues that this selection model allows the agents 'autonomy' to respond flexibly to unforeseen situations. These two approaches offer two competing perspectives on conceptualizing elections as a tool of accountability.

Electoral accountability thus can be seen as one specific manifestation of accountability theory of democracy. It can be conceptualized in conventional agent-principal framework as one of the

simplest and most direct forms of vertical democratic accountability between citizens and incumbents. However, there are multiple issues with this framework of electoral accountability.

2.3 Problems with electoral accountability

There are many problems though if one relies on elections alone to ensure accountability. Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999) highlight the institutional features that are required for citizens to have an effective control over politicians. They highlight the problem of *targeting thousand targets with a single arrow*. Analogously, an economic voter has only one aggregated vote to convey his approval or disapproval of the incumbent's performance on the economy. 'Information asymmetry' emerges as one of the factors that especially hinders the accountability model, especially if voters are not aware of the incentives that elected representatives have. This concern is also reiterated by the scholarship on economic voting, when it highlights the possible differences between the objective economic conditions and the subjective economic conditions. Further, there are limitations on the applications of the principal-agent approach for understanding accountability, especially with the normative values associated with it.

Olsen (2013) argues against the lack of applicability of a principal-agent model, especially in 'non-settled' polities with 'contested' institutions such as European Union (EU). These limitations of principal-agent approach could be seen in southern European democracies during economic crisis, where there were at least two principals, the domestic citizens and the EU. Philip (2009) on the other hand warns against the normative overload associated with a principal-agent model and highlights the ways accountability can reduce the scope of discretion or independent agency for politicians. This concern might affect the decision-makers to be concerned about the economy primarily during the final phase before elections, in order to cater to the voters, irrespective of the voters' best interests. Further, as highlighted by Lewis-beck and Paldam (2000), there is evidence to suggest that economic evaluations are often myopic, especially in the run up to the elections.

Irrespective of these concerns, the ability of voters to punish the incumbents is nonetheless crucial for any theory of democracy. This normative position stems from the value judgement attached with the sentiment that voters who are dissatisfied with incumbents should have an ability to *'throw the rascals out'* (Vowles, 1999). This is precisely what the conventional normative theories of democracies miss out, and why an accountability theory of democracy is needed. However, the central problem with electoral accountability—that this thesis is focused on—is the way it affects

the performance of a polity to achieve other normative value of ‘congruence’. If voters (especially those who voted for incumbents) seek to punish the incumbents, do they have to compromise on ideological congruence?

To summarize the chapter, the conventional normative theories of democracy do not have an explicit appeal to value of accountability. An accountability theory of democracy that encompasses different types of accountabilities could emerge as an alternative theory. Electoral accountability (through economic voting) could be one of the direct applications of such theory of democracy. However, there are multiple issues with such electoral accountability. This thesis is interested in the consequences of economic voting on other democratic value – congruence. The next chapter provides an overview on how economic voting has been examined, and the impact of economic voting on the ideological congruence.

3 ECONOMIC VOTING

This chapter underlines the central hypothesis examining the impact of economic voting on the ideological congruence. It starts with a brief historical overview on how economic voting emerged as the first sub-field in studies on electoral accountability. The second section outlines the broad contours of the studies on economic voting, followed by the gaps in the scholarship on economic voting. The final section outlines the reasoning for my hypothesis by examining the consequences of economic voting on other normative democratic value of representation.

3.1 History of economic voting as electoral accountability

This section outlines the origins of how economic conditions emerged as the parameters on which the voters could hold the incumbents accountable. The history of economic voting can be arguably located with the USA-centric works of scholars like Gosnell and Colman (1940), Kramer (1971), Fiorina (1981) and Key (1966) on understanding the role of national economic conditions in US presidential and legislative elections. Harold Gosnell through his multiple studies— Gosnell and Gill, 1935; Gosnell and Schimdt, 1936; Gosnell and Pearson, 1939; Gosnell and Cohen, 1940; Gosnell and Coleman 1940; Gosnell, 1942 (cited in Achen and Bartels (2016, p. 96) —arguably laid the foundation for the retrospective theory of voting. He examined the impact of personal economic conditions of the electorate on the final electoral outcomes. Similar studies were later undertaken by Gerald Kramer (1971) where he analyzed the relationship between natural economic conditions and the national congressional vote for 34 biennial elections from 1896–1934. He found strong correlation between the economic conditions and the electoral outcomes in congressional elections.

V. O. Key (1966) examined the changes in various parameters such as support for compulsory old-age insurance in 1936, Labor act of 1956, Korean war of 1952, etc. to gauge the shift in support for the incumbent government. This alternate view also termed as ‘retrospective theory of voting’ was given further boost when Fiorina Morris (1981, p.5) argued that retrospective voters *need not know the precise economic or foreign policies... citizens need only calculate the changes in their own welfare*. Fiorina analyzed the presidential and congressional elections by conducting panel surveys to understand the shift in voter support for incumbents, using distinct socio-political and economic parameters like opinion on war, satisfaction with president’s performance, and personal economic conditions. This retrospective theory of voting reduced the burden off the citizens to act

as ‘well-informed’ electorate, which the folk theory of democracy advocates. It is roughly at this stage that the link between economic conditions and support for incumbents through a chain of electoral accountability was established. The scholarship on economic voting has subsequently quite broadened with a considerable academic consensus over its features. For example, Lewis Beck and Paldam (2000) in their review of studies on economic voting identify nine broad characteristics of the vote-popularity function of the economy, as summarized in the **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Features of vote-popularity function (Source: Lewis-Beck and Paldam, 2000)

1	Vote and popularity functions are basically similar, but the fit of popularity functions is better.
2	E-fraction: economic changes explain about one-third of the change in vote.
3	The big two: The voters reacts to few macroeconomic variables—mainly unemployment, growth and inflation.
4	Voters are myopic and so have a short time horizon for evaluations.
5	Socio-tropic/ego-tropic controversy: Socio-tropic (national) economic voting is stronger than ego-tropic(personal) voting.
6	Retrospective/Prospective controversy: Voters react to past events more than to expected events.
7	Grievance asymmetry: Voters may react more to negative changes than the corresponding positive ones.
8	Little is known about the macroeconomic knowledge of voters.
9	Instability problem: The main problem in the v-p function literature is that it lacks stability, both in cross-country studies as well as in same country over a period of time.

The research on economic voting has subsequently been picked up in different countries. There are studies that now engage in unpacking relatively complex and sophisticated mechanisms of accountability. Perhaps with the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn, it is important to outline the studies that have also examined how contextual conditions such as economic crisis in Europe can accentuate the economic vote (Rattinger and Steinbrecher, 2011; Lewis-Beck and Nadeau, 2012; Hernandez and Kriesi, 2015; Talving, 2018). I will now summarize the more traditional studies on economic voting.

3.2 Conventional economic voting studies

Lewis Beck and Stegmaier (2019) providing the most contemporary account of the scholarship on economic voting estimate that there are more than 600 studies in this sub-field. The various branches of this scholarship examine specific characteristics of this voting behavior. For example, there are studies that unpack if the economic vote is prospective or retrospective, ego-tropic or socio-tropic (Sigelman et al. 1991, Michelitch et al. 2012). Further, there are studies that examine its stability over a period of time and across countries as varied as Sweden (Martinsson, 2013), Argentina (Remmer and Gelineau, 2003), Canada (Anderson, 2006). The recent scholarship has also examined the sub-national and local elections for economic voting (Kukolowiz and Gorecki, 2017; Hopkins and Pettingil, 2015). The relatively non-conventional scholarship has also looked at the socio-economic profile of voters such as gender (Kam, 2009) and voters employed in informal sector (Singer, 2016). Contextual factors such as party system, clarity of responsibility, global economic integration are most widely studied to understand the strength of economic voting. For example, Duch and Stevenson (2008) examine the prevalence and nature of economic voting in 18 western European countries from 1979-2001 and conclude that economic voting is indeed pervasive, although with varied strength depending upon institutional variations. They identify extent of political control over the economy, concentration of policy making responsibility, and the pattern of contestation among parties for policy making as the three factors that shape economic vote (2008, p. 358). To provide a systemic account, the studies on economic voting can be broadly approached from following five distinct (although overlapping) vantage points.

- a) Concept oriented: These studies are typically concerned with the right way for breaking down the phenomenon of the ‘incumbent support’ and the ‘economy’ into appropriate concepts. Some of the ways in which incumbent support can be conceptualized are vote-share for the prime-minister or president’s party, vote-share for the incumbent government, vote-share for the incumbent party that holds the finance ministry, vote-share for the incumbent coalition, popularity of the incumbent party, and the voting intention of citizens. Economy on the other hand is typically conceptualized through macroeconomic concepts of inflation, unemployment rate, and GDP growth rate. For example, Bengtsson (2004)

analyzed the elections in 21 western parliamentary democracies between 1950–1997 using unemployment and inflation as the independent variables, and the change in ‘electoral results for all the parties in the government’ to capture the support for incumbents. On the other hand, Whitten and Palmer (1999) building on Powell and Whitten (1993)’s work examined economic voting by emphasizing on importance of ‘relative economic growth’ as an independent variable.

- b)* Operationalization oriented: Having broadly identified the concepts, these studies are focused on the operationalizations of these concepts. Distinction between macro level (such as aggregate vote-share or GDP) and micro level (individual vote or intention to vote, and economic perceptions at an individual level) are one of the major fault lines in economic voting. The other dominant dimensions that are typically examined in such studies are whether the voting is prospective or retrospective, and whether the voting is socio-tropic or egocentric. A comprehensive summary of such characteristics of the relation is provided by Nannestad and Paldam (1994) in their review of studies on economic voting. It was later followed up in Lewis-Beck and Paldam (2000) and Lewis-Beck and Stegamer (2013).
- c)* Space-time oriented: These are the studies that measure the strength of relation during selected epochs or countries. Along with country-specific works such as United States (Kramer, 1971; Fiorina, 1978; Tufte 1978; Kiewiet, 1983), Portugal (Friere and Santana-Pereira, 2012), France (Belanger and Lewis Beck 2004; Nadeau, Foucault, and Lewis-Beck, 2010), there have also been comparative studies such as Roberts (2008) for central and eastern Europe, Lewis-Beck (1986), Powell and Whitten (1993), Duch and Stevenson (2010) for countries of western Europe, and Wilkin, Haller and Northpoth (1997) for a relatively heterogenous pool of countries.
- d)* Third/intervening variables-oriented: These are studies that tend to examine the possible indirect effects of intervening variables on the economic vote. Some of the most common variables that are explored are existence of clarity of responsibility (Powell and Whitten, 1993; Royed, Leden and Borreli, 2000; Anderson 2000), political context such as

multilevel governance (Anderson 2006), international economic integration (Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012; Hellwig 2011), welfare protection (Pacek and Radcliffe, 1995; Park and Shin, 2019), age of democracy (Bochsler and Hanni, 2018), recession (Talving, 2018; Giuliani and Massari, 2017) and impact of crisis (Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2011) .

- e) Explanation oriented: These studies try to unpack the causal mechanism behind economic voting. Examining the role of voter as a rational (or non-rational) actor, these studies (Suzuki, 1991; Suzuki and Chappell, 1996) examine the voters' awareness of economic constraints. Studies like Aidt (2000) also examines the extent of ignorance about the economy among average voters and elite voters.

3.3 Gaps in scholarship on economic voting

One of the common themes across the aforementioned types of studies is that economic vote is often studied in explanatory or descriptive fashion to examine prevalence, strength, stability, and intervening factors. This thesis takes a distinct and novel approach by taking economic voting as the starting point and explains the impact of economic voting on the ideological congruence. The contribution of the thesis to the literature is that it subverts the classical trope of studying economic vote and conceptualizes it as an independent variable. There are few studies though that have guided my approach.

Steirs (2019) provides an initial pathway in expanding the horizon of retrospective voting beyond government. He argues that retrospective voting could work on the level of political parties, and that voters not only evaluate the performance of the government but also of the political party that they voted for. Further, Steirs and Dassoneville (2020) examine the effect of ideological polarization on the economic vote. They evaluate competing hypotheses of whether ideological polarization between parties strengthens retrospective voting (clarity of responsibility framework) or whether the ideological closeness strengthens retrospective voting (valence voting framework). My thesis subverts this argument partially and examines the 'effect' of retrospective voting instead of its 'causes'. Rather than the focusing on how economic vote is affected by ideological distance between parties, I examine how economic vote affects ideological congruence between parties and voters. Let me look at the dependent variable –ideological congruence– more carefully now.

With respect to the party-voter congruence and economic voting, Traber et al. (2017) examine the effect of the economic crisis on the ‘issue salience’ between parties and voter. They argue that issue salience rather than ideological congruence is more informative in understanding the voter behavior. Further, they also differentiate between the incumbent and opposition parties, by arguing that they have different incentives to appeal on economic issues. This also informs my thesis’s point of differentiating between levels of ideological congruence between incumbent parties and non-incumbent (opposition) parties. However, while Traber et al. (2017) examine the ‘issue salience’ between parties and voters during economic crisis, this thesis focusses on ‘ideological congruence’ during economic vote. Let me now outline the rationale behind examining the impact of economic voting on ideological congruence.

3.4 Rationale and Hypothesis:

The literature on economic voting posits that the punishment for incumbents for worsening economic conditions is typically understood through a decrease in popularity or vote-share of the incumbent political party. If the ‘punishment’ is assumed as decrease in vote-share of the incumbent parties, it would imply that there is an increase in vote-share of the non-incumbent parties. However, the ideological preferences of the voters who have shifted their vote from the incumbent to non-incumbents might not necessarily match with the ideological positions of the non-incumbent parties they have voted for. If the voters are indeed punishing the incumbents for the worsening economic conditions, it would be logical to expect that they are voting for the party that is better suited for improving the economic conditions. This might imply that ideological congruence takes a backseat for these voters and that economic conditions are the primary rationale for vote-shift. This leads to my hypothesis that—*When voters punish the incumbents for worsening economic conditions, the ideological congruence for incumbent parties increases as compared to their congruence in the previous elections.* This hypothesis is based on two core assumptions, a) that the parties and the voters that are punishing do not substantially change their own ideological preferences over period of subsequent elections, b) that voters are not abstaining from elections as a punishment.

An immediate objection to this argument would be on grounds of endogeneity. To expand, it could be that the economic voting is high when voters are less ideologically attached to their parties.

However, it might be far-fetched to argue that all the punishing voters (as operationalized by this research design) are ideologically distant from incumbent parties. To address this concern however, closeness to parties can be hold as a control variable to check for the possible effects of partisanship on vote-switching. In other words, if my hypothesis holds true, both punishing voters who were ideologically closer to incumbent parties as well as punishing voters who were not ideologically closer to the incumbent parties will have to compromise on their attachment with incumbent party in order ‘to punish’ the incumbents. In the next chapter, we examine how congruence, and punishment can be operationalized to examine my hypothesis.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA

This chapter outlines the research design used to examine my hypothesis. It starts with an overview of the data that was used for testing the hypothesis. It then describes the way in which the key concepts –punishing voters and ideological congruence—are operationalized. There are two arguments that are being examined through these concepts. I start from the argument that the economy drives support for incumbents. The second argument is that the ideological congruence between the incumbent parties and their voters is affected by the strength of this relation between the economy and vote. I conceptualize economic voting through the category of ‘punishing’ voters. This allows me to link these two arguments. The final section of this chapter highlights the emergent findings from the data analysis.

4.1 Description of data

The data from integrated module dataset (IMD) and the previous modules (3rd and 4th) collected by Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) was used to test my hypothesis. CSES is a research project that is jointly administered by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and the GESIS – Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences in Germany. This project seeks to create transnational datasets of voter behavior by compiling national election studies of countries across the world. While there are valuable alternate data sources with cross-national electoral studies such as European Values Survey, European Social Survey, World Values Survey, Euro/Asian/American/Afro barometers, etc.; CSES dataset offered two advantages with the research question at hand. It first provided me pre-coded variables on vote-switching and voting for incumbents. Second, it allowed me to compare electoral systems beyond Europe. The CSES integrated module dataset covers 174 elections in 55 polities from 1996–2016. The fourth round of the CSES collected data for 45 elections in 39 polities between 2011–2016, with a total of 75,558 observations. While the third round of CSES collected data for 50 elections in 41 polities between 2006–2011 with a total of 80,163 observations. Apart from Peru, the surveys for the rest of the countries were conducted as post poll or pre-election studies. This reduced the probability of shift in the vote choice of the respondents at the time of elections. This is also reflected when we compare the CSES data with the actual vote share. As seen from the **Table 4.1**, the vote share for the incumbents during the fourth round of the CSES study was often below the actual vote share of the incumbent governed.

Table 4.1 CSES vote share and actual electoral results for incumbents.

S. No	Countries	CSES vote for outgoing govt	CSES (don't know/can't say)	Actual vote share	Incumbent government
1	Argentina (2015)	45	14	49	Front for the victory
2	Australia (2013)	32	2	32	Labor party
3	Austria (2013)	42	24	51	Social Democratic party + Austrian People Party
4	Brazil (2014)	41	11	52	Workers Party
5	Bulgaria (2014)	21	39	33	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
6	Canada (2015)	17	40	32	Conservative Party
7	Czech Republic (2013)	4	40	7	Christian Democratic Union - Czech People's Party
8	Finland (2015)	30	25	44	National Coalition Party
9	France (2012)	18	13	27	UPM
10	Germany (2013)	33	22	42	Christian Democratic Union
11	Great Britain (2015)	56	21	45	Conservative + Liberal Democrats
12	Greece (2015)	10	24	28	New Democracy
13	Iceland (2013)	23	17	24	Social Democratic Alliance
14	Ireland (2011)	14	14	36	Fianna Fail
15	Israel (2013)	32	30	41	Israel forward
16	Japan (2013)	39	24	49	Liberal Democratic Party + New Komeito Party
17	Latvia (2011/14)	32	27	38	LVA Unity
18	Mexico (2012/15)	23	18	34	National action party, IRP
19	Montenegro (2012)	39	32	46	MNE-Coalition for Eu Montenegro
20	New Zealand (2014)	35	26	47	National party
21	Norway (2013)	35	14	41	Labor Party
22	Philippines (2016)	11	17	23	Liberal party
23	Poland (2011)	29	45	47	Civic Platform
24	Portugal (2015)	22	42	37	Portugal ahead
25	R. Korea (2012)	35	26	43	New frontier party
26	Romania (2014)	NA	NA	NA	PSD+UNPR+PC alliance
27	Serbia (2012)	20	45	36	Democratic Party+ SPS-PUPS-JS
28	Slovakia (2016)	24	35	29	Direction Social Democracy
29	Slovenia (2011)	9	45	19	Social Democrats + Zares + LDS+ deSUS
30	South Africa (2014)	42	37	62	African National Congress
31	Sweden (2014)	38	5	39	Moderates
32	Taiwan (2012)	46	21	52	Kuomintang
33	Thailand (2011)	32	12	35	Democrat party
34	Turkey (2015)	35	37	50	Justice and Development party
35	USA (2012)	48	30	51	Democratic party

Most of the variance can however be explained by considering the proportion of those whose vote-choice could not be identified. I make an assumption here that half of the ‘don’t know’/‘can’t say’ could go to the incumbent. In such a case, the discrepancy between CSES vote-share for incumbent and the actual vote share falls within a reasonable 5 percent margin. It is only in case of the United Kingdom’s election in 2015, that the CSES vote share exceeds the actual vote share by about ten points.

However, the discrepancy could affect the ideological congruence between parties and voter. Thus, I examine if the mystery voters—whose vote could not be ascertained—are closer to any party as compared to those who revealed their vote for or against incumbents. From **Table 4.2**, it can be seen that for the 39 countries in the fourth round, the mystery voters are almost half as likely to be close to any party as compared to those who have revealed their vote-choice. Further, their self-positioning on average is similar to those who voted against incumbents and is 0.4 points to the left of the mean incumbent voter. This tilt of self-positioning towards anti-incumbent voters could affect my interpretations of changes in ideological congruence due to punishing voters. However, a similar ideological profile of voters was also seen in third round of CSES (**Table 4.3**). The proportion of these mystery voters in both the rounds was similar with 9.8 percent in 3rd round and 9.8 percent in 4th round. Thus, I ignore the aggregate effect of these mystery voters on the ideological congruence between incumbent parties and voters.

Table 4.2: Profile of Mystery voters in 4th round of CSES

	<i>Are you close to any party?</i>		<i>self-position on L–R scale</i>	
	No (%)	Yes (%)	Mean	Std
Voted against incumbents	47	46	5.4	2.5
Voted for incumbents	39	53	5.9	2.5
Don’t know/can’t say	62	24	5.5	2.4

Table 4.3: Profile of Mystery voters in 3rd round of CSES

	<i>Are you close to any party?</i>		<i>self-position on L–R scale</i>	
	No (%)	Yes (%)	Mean	Std
Voted against incumbents	20	20	5.4	2.6
Voted for incumbents	18	17	5.8	2.5
Don’t know/can’t say	41	13	5.4	2.2

The choice of polities is limited by including those countries that have been covered in both rounds. Further, I choose only those countries for which the disaggregated data of voters on their preference for incumbents or anti-incumbents is readily available. This removed Hongkong, Peru, Switzerland, and Kenya from my sample set, reducing the polities to 35. In most of these 35 countries, the incumbents lost the office of PM (or president) in the fourth round, as evident from the data in the **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: Party of PM (or President, where presidential/semi-presidential system) during fourth round of CSES

S. No.	Country	Before fourth round	After fourth round
1	Argentina (2015)	Front for the victory	Let's change
2	Australia (2013)	Labor party	Liberal party
3	Austria (2013) *	Social Democratic party	Social Democratic party
4	Brazil (2014) *	Workers Party	Workers Party
5	Bulgaria* (2014)	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria
6	Canada (2015)	Conservative Party	Conservative Party, Liberal Party
7	Czech Republic* (2013)	Party of citizens' rights Zemanites	Party of citizens' rights
8	Finland (2015)	National Coalition Party	Centre party
9	France (2012)	UPM	Socialist Party
10	Germany (2013) *	Christian Democratic Union	Christian Democratic Union
11	Great Britain (2015)	Conservative	Conservative
12	Greece (2012, 2015)	New Democracy	Coalition of the radical left (2)
13	Iceland (2013)	Social Democratic Alliance	the consolidation
14	Ireland (2011)	Fianna Fail	fine gael
15	Israel (2013) *	Israel forward	Israel forward
16	Japan (2013) *	Liberal Democratic Party	Liberal Democratic Party
17	Latvia (2011, 2014) *	Unity	unity (2)
18	Mexico (2012, 2015) *	National action party, Institutional Revolutionary Party,	Institutional Revolutionary Party (2)
19	Montenegro (2012)	Coalition for Eu Mon	Coalition for Eu Mon
20	New Zealand (2011, 2014) *	National party	National party (2)
21	Norway (2013)	Labor Party	Conservative party
22	Philippines (2016)	Liberal party	Filipino Democratic party
23	Poland (2011) *	Civic Platform	Civic platform
24	Portugal (2015)	Portugal ahead	Socialist party
25	Republic of Korea (2012) *	New frontier party	New frontier Party
26	Romania (2012, 2014)	PSD+UNPR+PC alliance	Social Liberal Union, PSD+UNPR+PC alliance
27	Serbia (2012)	Democratic Party	Socialist party of Serbia

28	Slovakia (2016) *	SVK Direction Social Democracy	SVK Direction Social Democracy
29	Slovenia (2011)	Social Democrats	Slovenian Democratic party
30	South Africa (2014) *	African National Congress	African National Congress
31	Sweden (2014)	Moderates	Social Democratic workers party
32	Taiwan (2012) *	Kuomintang	Kuomintang
33	Thailand (2011)	Democrat party	For Thais Party
34	Turkey (2015) *	Justice and Development party	Justice and Development party
35	USA (2012) *	Democratic party	Democratic party

*Note: * represents countries, where incumbents have retained power.*

There are 18 countries where the incumbents have managed to stay in power. These are Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, South Africa, Turkey, Taiwan, and USA. Thus, I evaluate my claims of changes in ideological congruence primarily using these 18 countries. For the countries, where incumbents have lost power, the disaggregated data of vote choice within the anti-incumbents (who are now in opposition) is not readily available, and hence I focus only on the congruence levels between the incumbent parties and their voters. This underlines the point that I am not treating incumbents and anti-incumbents as a two-party model, as many countries have multi-party systems (**Appendix 1**).

4.2 Punishing voters

This thesis focusses on economic voting from a specific perspective of punishing voters. Despite considering Mansbridge's (2014) approach against using punishing as accountability, this thesis precisely does the reverse. This is because I am primarily interested in exploring the effects on ideological congruence when voters punish the incumbents by switching their votes.

I define 'punishing voters' as the subset of electorate who have previously voted for incumbent parties. They are dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbents for worsening economic conditions and would punish the incumbents by switching their votes from incumbents to non-incumbents. 'Punishing voters' in other words, are the first manifestation of the economic voting. Since I am interested in exploring the consequences of the economic voting, there are two relations that I wish to examine. First is the effect of the economy on voting for incumbents, that I call economic vote. The second is the effect of this economic vote on the ideological congruence between parties and voters.

This way of operationalization effectively implies that ‘punishing’ of the incumbents can only happen by those who have previously voted for incumbents. This approach does not consider the ‘punishing’ ability of the voters of non-incumbent parties, as they did not vote for the incumbent parties in the first place. So even, if they do continue to vote against incumbents, it would not be reasonable to classify them as ‘punishing’. In this sense, the idea of ‘punishing’ voters is intrinsically tied to the idea of switching voters—those who are switching their votes from incumbents to non-incumbents. Similar logic can be applied for the concept of ‘rewarding’ voters. However, I do not explore the ‘rewarding voters’, as the proportion of such voters is relatively very less.

The data from integrated module of CSES allows me to locate the voters who had voted for incumbents in past. I compute this data by using the overlap between the categories of voters who have switched their votes, and voters who have voted for incumbents in the current elections. This is better explained through the following equation. Let those who have voted for incumbents in previous elections be classified as I1 and those who have voted for incumbents in the current elections be I2, while anti-incumbent voters of the previous elections are A1, and anti-incumbent voters in the current elections are A2. Switch is captured by S1, while non-switch is S0. I1 is then calculated using,

$$I1 = I2 * S0 + A2*S1$$

$$(I2*S0 = I1' \text{ and } A2*S1= A1)$$

I1’ is the voters who have stayed with the incumbents in both previous and current elections. A1 are the punishing voters, who have switched from incumbents to non-incumbent parties in the current elections. It is due to the switching of these voters that I expect a change in ideological congruence levels for the incumbent and non-incumbent parties and their voters. **Table 4.5** provides country-wide overview of the proportion of the switching voters and the voters for the incumbent government.

Table 4.5 Proportion of switching voters and voters of incumbent parties

S. No	Countries	Not switched their votes	Switched their votes	CSES vote for incumbent govt	CSES vote against incumbent govt
1	Argentina (2015)	36	20	45	41
2	Australia (2013)	66	18	32	66
3	Austria (2013)	49	17	42	34
4	Brazil (2014)	40	21	41	47
5	Bulgaria (2014)	40	11	21	40
6	Canada (2011/15)	34	16	20	40
7	Czech Republic (2013)	25	19	4	56
8	Finland (2015)	46	18	30	43
9	France (2012)	40	32	18	63
10	Germany (2013)	50	18	33	45
11	Great Britain (2015)	47	20	56	23
12	Greece (2015)	31	26	10	26
13	Iceland (2013)	35	31	23	60
14	Ireland (2011)	38	22	14	69
15	Israel (2013)	27	26	32	37
16	Japan (2013)	NA	NA	39	37
17	Latvia (2011/14)	32	21	32	38
18	Mexico (2012/15)	NA	NA	23	61
19	Montenegro (2012)	44	14	39	29
20	New Zealand (2014)	46	15	44	40
21	Norway (2013)	50	24	35	51
22	Philippines (2016)	NA	NA	11	71
23	Poland (2011)	32	10	29	26
24	Portugal (2015)	37	6	22	36
25	R. Korea (2012)	37	12	35	39
26	Romania (2014)	25	10	30	15
27	Serbia (2012)	16	28	20	37
28	Slovakia (2016)	32	15	24	40
29	Slovenia (2011)	20	20	9	46
30	South Africa (2014)	44	5	42	21
31	Sweden (2014)	52	28	38	57
32	Taiwan (2012)	NA	NA	46	33
33	Thailand (2011)	24	46	32	56
34	Turkey (2015)	57	6	35	46
35	USA (2012)	52	4	48	23

Table 4.6 provides an overview of those voters who had previously voted for incumbents. Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, and South Africa stand out, with more than three fourths of the previous incumbent voters switching their votes. Apart from these four countries, there is a considerable variation in the proportion of punishing voters to examine my arguments reasonably.

Table 4.6 Proportion of potential punishing voters

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Voters who continued to vote for incumbents (percent)</i>	<i>Punishing voters - who switched from incumbents to non-incumbents. (percent)</i>	<i>N</i>
1	Argentina (2015)	64	36	704
2	Australia (2013)	64	36	1598
3	Austria (2013)	72	28	484
4	Brazil (2014)	39	61	1525
5	Bulgaria (2014)	64	36	283
6	Canada (2011, 2015)	52	48	2240
7	Czech Republic (2013)	11	89	334
8	Finland (2015)	64	36	586
9	France (2012)	37	63	943
10	Germany (2013)	66	34	661
11	Great Britain (2015)	79	21	778
12	Greece (2015)	48	52	403
13	Iceland (2013)	37	63	614
14	Ireland (2011)	39	61	621
15	Israel (2013)	49	51	375
16	Japan (2013)	NA	NA	NA
17	Latvia (2011, 2014)	56	44	640
18	Mexico (2012, 2015)	NA	NA	NA
19	Montenegro (2012)	75	25	422
20	New Zealand (2014)	72	28	896
21	Norway (2013)	58	42	754
22	Philippines (2016)	NA	NA	NA
23	Poland (2011)	24	76	481
24	Portugal (2015)	79	21	323
25	R. Korea (2012)	71	28	323
26	Romania (2014)	82	18	545
27	Serbia (2012)	36	64	640
28	Slovakia (2016)	58	42	381
29	Slovenia (2011)	26	74	276
30	South Africa (2014)	13	86	504
31	Sweden (2014)	45	55	363
32	Taiwan (2012)	NA	NA	NA
33	Thailand (2011)	36	64	995
34	Turkey (2015)	86	14	375
35	USA (2012)	94	6	760
	<i>Average</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>20826</i>

The ideological congruence between the incumbent government and voters is also affected by voters who have switched from non-incumbents to incumbents. However, in only 5 out of the total 35 countries, the proportion of voters with positive evaluations exceed those with negative evaluations. If the economic conditions indeed drive support for incumbents, then the ideological congruence affected by this support would be marginal as compared to the congruence affected by the shift away from incumbents. As seen from **Table 4.7**, in almost 20 countries, the proportion of voters who shifted their voters from non-incumbents to incumbents is below ten percent. The average shift towards incumbents is 16 percent, while the average shift away from incumbents is 41 percent. Hence, I expect ideological congruence between the incumbent parties and voters to be driven more by the voters who shift away from incumbents.

Table 4.7 Proportion of potential rewarding voters

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Voters who continued to vote for non-incumbents (percent)</i>	<i>Rewarding voters - who switched from non-incumbents to incumbents. (percent)</i>	<i>N</i>
1	Argentina (2015)	79	21	733
2	Australia (2013)	96	3	2721
3	Austria (2013)	89	11	381
4	Brazil (2014)	82	17	1791
5	Bulgaria (2014)	94	6	424
6	Canada (2011, 2015)	93/96	7/4	1354/1894
7	Czech Republic (2013)	99	1	933
8	Finland (2015)	91	9	736
9	France (2012)	97	3	1312
10	Germany (2013)	92	7	926
11	Great Britain (2015)	77	23	465
12	Greece (2015)	96	4	556
13	Iceland (2013)	95	5	936
14	Ireland (2011)	97	3	1321
15	Israel (2013)	83	17	456
16	Japan (2013)	48	52	1473
17	Latvia (2011/14)	91/72	9/28	449
18	Mexico (2012/15)	78/60	22/40	2054/976
19	Montenegro (2012)	92	8	303
20	New Zealand (2011/14)	86/85	14/15	661/565
21	Norway (2013)	93	7	945
22	Philippines (2016)	86	14	994
23	Poland (2011)	81	19	611
24	Portugal (2015)	90	10	595
25	R. Korea (2012)	82	18	481

26	Romania (2014)	64	35	792
27	Serbia (2012)	91	9	642
28	Slovakia (2016)	91	9	504
29	Slovenia (2011)	97	3	490
30	South Africa (2014)	276	105	381
31	Sweden (2014)	92	8	516
32	Taiwan (2012)	41	58	1435
33	Thailand (2011)	92	7	909
34	Turkey (2015)	91	9	544
35	USA (2012)	71	29	618
	<i>Average</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>34834</i>

Let me now examine the effect of economic evaluations on these punishing voters. The question on the state of the economy used in the CSES data provides subjective retrospective evaluations of the economy in the past year (**Table 4.8**). The scale of the economy that goes from good to worse is unchanged in my analysis. The dependent variable of punishing voters is binary with 1 representing a switch in vote choice from incumbents to non-incumbents.

Table 4.8 Economic evaluations

S. No	Countries	Economy got better	Economy stayed the same	Economy got worse
1	Argentina (2015)	15	36	49
2	Australia (2013)	27	44	27
3	Austria (2013)	13	52	32
4	Brazil (2014)	23	47	28
5	Bulgaria (2014)	7	49	42
6	Canada (2011/15)	18	40	38
7	Czech Republic (2013)	6	43	45
8	Finland (2015)	4	30	64
9	France (2012)	3	15	80
10	Germany (2013)	20	62	14
11	Great Britain (2015)	40	30	27
12	Greece (2015)	4	14	81
13	Iceland (2013)	38	43	12
14	Ireland (2011)	4	14	72
15	Israel (2013)	13	29	55
16	Japan (2013)	15	67	17
17	Latvia (2011, 2014)	16	50	31
18	Mexico (2012, 2015)	21	34	43
19	Montenegro (2012)			

20	New Zealand (2011/14)	28	25	39
21	Norway (2013)	16	75	7
22	Philippines	24	68	6
23	Poland (2011)	17	42	36
24	Portugal (2015)	13	34	51
25	R. Korea (2012)	4	36	56
26	Romania (2014)	8	58	30
27	Serbia (2012)	6	38	55
28	Slovakia (2016)	12	62	23
29	Slovenia (2011)	3	11	83
30	South Africa (2014)	21	34	39
31	Sweden (2014)	25	50	16
32	Taiwan (2012)	17	37	43
33	Thailand (2011)	15	28	47
34	Turkey (2015)	12	32	53
35	USA (2012)	32	40	28

Table 4.9 represents the binary logistic regression models to explain the proportion of punishing vote across all the 35 countries. First, I use a bi-variate model to examine the relation between economic evaluations and the propensity to punish. This demonstrates that the relation between economic evaluations and vote switching is statistically significant and in positive direction. Further, the disaggregated way of asking the question on state of the economy allows me to check the variations in symmetry of the economic voting. It turns out that there is an asymmetry with the rise in negative evaluations of the economy having a relatively stronger impact than the decline in positive evaluations. Further, even after accounting for party attachment, the relation between economic evaluations and vote switch remains strong and statistically significant.

Table 4.9 Regression models for economic vote

	Bi- variate model	Model with controls	Party attachment control
Economic voting (general)	0.304***	0.249***	0.238***
Economic voting (better)	0.311***	—	—
Economic voting (worse)	0.394***	—	—
Age		-0.146***	-0.127***
Gender		-0.061	-0.073
Household income		-0.045***	-0.042***
Religiosity		-0.343***	-0.324***
Education		0.078***	0.084***
Self-ideological position		-0.129***	-0.128***
Closeness to any party			-0.723***

For economic voting general

Cox and Snell R ²	0.047	0.096	0.121
Log likelihood	26447	10373.10	9977.57
N	20569	8248	8110

*Note: *** implies $p < 0.01$*

If we look at the strength of economic voting in the 18 countries where the incumbents have stayed in power, we find that retrospective socio-tropic economic evaluations do affect the inclination to switch votes from incumbent to anti-incumbents. In other words, when voters of the incumbent parties are dissatisfied with the national economic conditions, they are likely to switch their votes to non-incumbent parties. This demonstrates that the phenomenon of economic voting can also be observed through the concept of punishing voters. As seen from **Table 4.10**, this relation holds even after controlling for party attachment, and ideological preferences of the incumbent voters.

Table 4.10: Economic vote where incumbents have stayed in power.

	Bi- variate model	Basic model	Party attachment control
Economic voting (general)	-0.302***	-0.351***	-0.305***
Economic voting (worse)	-0.628	—	—
Age	—	0.004	-0.002
Gender	—	0.220***	0.212***
Household income	—	-0.101***	-0.101***
Religiosity	—	0.007	-0.001
Education	—	-0.001***	0.084
Self-ideological position	—	0.137***	0.141***
Closeness to any party	—	—	0.008***

Cox and Snell R ²	0.03	0.055	0.055
Log likelihood	16407	5802.90	5610.03
N	16719	6528	6360

Note: *** implies $p < 0.01$

This establishes my argument, that the economic evaluations are one of the key factors that drive vote against incumbents among the voters of the incumbent government. This argument holds true even after accounting for the endogeneity argument. In other words, economic evaluations drive both partisan and non-partisan voters of the incumbent parties to non-incumbent parties. The second part of the argument concerns examining the effects of this punishing voters on the ideological congruence between incumbent parties and their voters, which will be examined next.

4.3 Ideological congruence

Ideological congruence from the perspective of my research question is understood as the distance between the ideological position of the parties and the ideological position of the voters. Let me state at the outset, that ideological congruence here is taken as a simplistic proxy measure of democratic value of ‘representation’. In other words, a lower incongruence between the ideological preferences of government with ideological preference of the median citizen is seen as ‘normative’ feature. There are many debates on the right way to measure the ideological congruence (see e.g., Powell, 2018; Warwick, 2016; Ferland, 2016; Powell 2009). These debates are largely about whether the proportional systems have performed better than majoritarian systems at congruence between government and median citizen. However, this is irrelevant from the perspective of my research question.

Further, as Golder and Stramski (2010) highlight there are multiple ways to measure congruence depending upon a) whether the congruence is sought between a) one citizen or multiple citizens and b) one representative or multiple representatives. The most widely used approach is a 1:1 approach, where the mean ideological position of one entity (cabinet/government/parliament) is plotted against the ideological position of one entity (median citizen). The other approach (many-many) is where the distribution of ideological positions of the elected representatives are plotted against distribution of the ideological positions of the voters.

Taking the former approach, I operationalize ideological congruence as the distance between mean ideological position of the incumbent parties and the self-reported ideological position of their voters. Further, since I am interested in the changes in ideological congruence, I look at the ideological congruence of the incumbent parties at the previous elections and at the current elections. **Table 4.11** represents the ideological congruence between the incumbent parties and their voters for the countries included in the fourth round of CSES. The difference between the self-positioning of incumbent voter, and the ideological positioning of the incumbent party-choice by CSES experts is squared. The mean of this squares is captured by ideological incongruence. As the values for this incongruence rises, the voter of incumbent party is further away from the party on ideological scale.

Table 4.11 Ideological incongruence between incumbent parties and their voters

S. No	Countries	Ideological incongruence
1	Argentina (2015)	7.70
2	Australia (2013)	4.08
3	Austria (2013)	4.19
4	Brazil (2014)	19.35
5	Bulgaria (2014)	5.10
6	Canada (2011, 2015)	3.21
7	Czech Republic (2013)	3
8	Finland (2015)	3.62
9	France (2012)	2.2
10	Germany (2013)	3.38
11	Great Britain (2015)	2.85
12	Greece (2015)	3.79
13	Iceland (2013)	3.85
14	Ireland (2011)	3.56
15	Israel (2013)	4.02
16	Japan (2013)	5.94
17	Latvia (2011, 2014)	4.90
18	Mexico (2012, 2015)	9.2
19	Montenegro (2012)	15.62
20	New Zealand (2011, 2014)	3.96
21	Norway (2013)	3.80
22	Philippines	16.91
23	Poland (2011)	5.03
24	Portugal (2015)	4.93
25	Republic of Korea (2012)	5.81
26	Romania (2014)	10.62
27	Serbia (2012)	8.27
28	Slovakia (2016)	7.27
29	Slovenia (2011)	6.58
30	South Africa (2014)	20.02
31	Sweden (2014*)	1.95
32	Taiwan (2012)	—
33	Thailand (2011)	—
34	Turkey (2015)	3.48
35	USA (2012)	18.02

One of the common counterarguments to the economic voting theory suggests that the partisan support shape the economic perceptions (Kayser and Welzein, 2011). In other words, the direction of the causal relation between the economy and support for incumbent could be reverse. This would imply that those who support the incumbents would have a positive evaluation of the economic conditions. It is thus the partisan attachment that shapes the economic perceptions. In order to control for this, I first examine whether the punishing voters (as defined earlier) identify themselves as close to any party as compared to the non-punishing voters of incumbent government. This is my first hypothesis H1. On the other hand, my second hypothesis H2 would be that the punishing voters are just as close any party as the non-punishing voters of incumbent government.

H1: *Punishing voters are less likely to be close to any political party compared to non-punishing incumbents' voters.*

H2: *Punishing voters are as likely to be close to any political party as non-punishing voters of incumbent parties.*

From **table 4.12**, it can be observed that punishing voters are generally less attached to any party as compared to non-punishing voters of the incumbent government. This difference is highest in Turkey, Norway, and Slovakia and almost null in Romania, Serbia, and Thailand. Thus, I fail to find support for the hypothesis H1, while the hypothesis H2 can be safely rejected.

Table 4.12: Party attachment of punishing voters

S. No	Countries	Attached to any party		
		non-punishing voters of incumbent govt (%)	Punishing voters of incumbent govt (%)	Difference (%)
1	Argentina (2015)	57	35	22
2	Australia (2013)	92	80	12
3	Austria (2013)	57	24	23
4	Brazil (2014)	34	25	11
5	Bulgaria (2014)	69	41	28
6	Canada (2015)	25	16	9
7	Czech Republic (2013)	66	30	36

8	Finland (2015)	70	46	26
9	France (2012)	67	57	10
10	Germany (2013)	61	37	24
11	Great Britain (2015)	69	47	22
12	Greece (2015)	56	34	32
13	Iceland (2013)	66	33	33
14	Ireland (2011)	41	13	28
15	Israel (2013)	58	38	20
16	Japan (2013)	NA		
17	Latvia (2011, 2014)	66	58	4
18	Mexico (2015)			
19	Montenegro (2012)	65	58	7
20	New Zealand (2014)	65	57	8
21	Norway (2013)	68	30	38
22	Philippines (2016)	NA		
23	Poland (2011)	54	41	13
24	Portugal (2015)	NA		
25	R. Korea (2012)	66	43	23
26	Romania (2014)	45	46	-1
27	Serbia (2012)	42	49	-7
28	Slovakia (2016)	78	46	38
29	Slovenia (2011)	23	17	6
30	South Africa (2014)	80	68	12
31	Sweden (2014)	62	43	19
32	Taiwan (2012)	NA		
33	Thailand (2011)	10	13	-3
34	Turkey (2015)	87	47	40
35	USA* (2012)	77	50	27
	Average	59	37	22

As we saw, punishing voters are less likely to be attached to any party as compared to non-punishing old incumbent voters. However, their self-positioning on left-right scale might be different from the left-right positioning of the non-punishing incumbent voters. This gives me my third and fourth hypothesis.

H3: *The self-positioning of punishing voters on left-right scale is different from the self-positioning of non-punishing old incumbent voters on left-right scale.*

H4: *The self-positioning of punishing voters on left-right scale is same as the self-positioning of non-punishing old incumbent voters on left-right scale.*

If H3 is true, it would imply that had punishing voters not switched their votes, the incongruence of the incumbents would still be affected. Moreover, the proposition that it is their self-positioning on the left-right scale that drove their votes away cannot be discarded. However, if H4 is true, it would imply that the left-right scale might have a less role in punishing of the incumbents, and that punishing voters were forced to choose between retrospective evaluations or ideological congruence.

Table 4.13: self-positioning of punishing vs non-punishing voters

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Self-position of incumbent voters on left-right scale</i>	<i>Self-position of punishing voters on left-right scale</i>
1	Argentina (2015)	5.47	5.80
2	Australia (2013)	4.14	4.77
3	Austria (2013)	4.94	4.58
4	Brazil (2014)	4.94	4.58
5	Bulgaria (2014)	NA	
6	Canada (2015)	6.59	4.50
7	Czech Republic (2013)	5.38	5.71
8	Finland (2015)	6.44	5.40
9	France (2012)	7.16	4.38
10	Germany (2013)	5.51	4.2
11	Great Britain (2015)	5.35	5.01
12	Greece (2015)	6.61	4.37
13	Iceland (2013)	3.72	5.55
14	Ireland (2011)	6.64	5.91
15	Israel (2013)	7.76	5.21
16	Japan (2013)	NA	
17	Latvia (2011, 2014)	6.99	6.64
18	Mexico (2015)	NA	
19	Montenegro (2012)	6.59	4.8
20	New Zealand (2014)	7.22	4.11
21	Norway (2013)	4.06	6.28
22	Philippines (2016)	NA	
23	Poland (2011)	6.29	5.20
24	Portugal (2015)	7.64	3.41
25	R. Korea (2012)	7.26	4.27
26	Romania (2014)	3.99	5.51
27	Serbia (2012)	5.17	5.96
28	Slovakia (2016)	3.02	6.02
29	Slovenia (2011)	3.25	4.01
30	South Africa (2014)	6.75	6.36
31	Sweden (2014)	7.21	4.31

32	Taiwan (2012)	NA	
33	Thailand (2011)	NA	
34	Turkey (2015)	8.09	5.17
35	USA* (2012)	6.14	6.15
Total		5.81	5.22

As seen from the **Table 4.13**, there is a substantial difference of 0.6 points on average between the self-ideological positioning of non-punishing voters and punishing voters of the incumbent parties. Thus, I fail to find support for Hypothesis H4. On the other hand, I find evidence in support for the hypothesis H3. If the self-ideological positioning of punishing voters is different from non-punishing voters, then the ideological incongruence between incumbent parties and voters could be affected by it.

To summarize my argument, I tested one proposition and four hypotheses:

Proposition 1: As the economic evaluations worsen, the proportion to punish the incumbents by switching the votes from incumbent to non-incumbent rises.

Based on this proposition, I examined following hypotheses—

H1: *Punishing voters are less likely to be close to any political party as compared to non-punishing incumbents' voters.*

H2: *Punishing voters are as likely to be close to any political party as compared to non-punishing voters of incumbent government.*

H3: *The self-positioning of punishing voters on left-right scale is different from the self-positioning of non-punishing old incumbent voters on left-right scale.*

H4: *The self-positioning of punishing voters on left-right scale is same as the self-positioning of non-punishing old incumbent voters on left-right scale.*

I reject hypothesis H2 and hypothesis H4. The difference in party attachment and left-right placement of the punishing voters as compared to the non-punishing voters of the incumbent parties is the mechanism through which I expect the punishing voters to affect the ideological congruence between incumbent parties and its voters. In other words, I argue that if there is a

stronger switch of punishing voters from incumbent to non-incumbent parties, then ideological incongruence of incumbent parties decreases. This is my fifth and final hypothesis.

H5: *Ideological incongruence between incumbent parties and their voters decreases with rise in economic voting.*

As denoted by the linear regression models in **Table 4.14**, I do find economic conditions to have an impact on the ideological incongruence between incumbent parties and their voters in the predicted direction. Further, the inclusion of self-ideological position and party attachment increase the model fit to up to 70%. However, even after including these parameters in the model, the economic conditions have a statistically significant effect on the ideological incongruence. Thus, the hypothesis H5 holds true.

Table 4.14: Linear regression for incongruence between incumbent parties and voters

	<i>Basic model</i>	<i>Party attachment control</i>
Strength of Economic vote (general)	-0.507***	-0.219***
Age	-1.521***	-0.840***
Gender	-0.320	-0.148
Household income	-0.194***	-0.431***
Religiosity	2.776***	0.994***
Education	-2.012***	-1.732***
Self-ideological position		6.265***
Closeness to any party		1.018***
R ²	0.054	0.713

Note: *** implies $p < 0.01$

4.4 Findings:

As seen from the **Table 4.14**, economic voting conceptualized through ‘punishing voters’ affects the ideological congruence between the incumbent parties and their voters. In other words, as the punishing rises, there is also an increase in congruence between the incumbent parties and their voters. This implies that the congruence between incumbent parties and their voters is affected by the retrospective evaluations of the economic conditions. As the evaluations of the economic conditions worsens, the incumbent parties are likely to be more ideologically congruent with the ideological positions of the voters. I started my argument with the premise that economic voting can be conceptualized as vote-switching by voters from incumbent parties. Qualifying such economic voters as ‘punishing voters’, I found that these punishing voters are less likely to be attached to the incumbent party as compared to the non-punishing voters of the incumbent parties. Further, they are ideologically different from non-punishing voters. This is the mechanism through which the congruence between incumbent parties and their voters is ‘filtered’.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter starts by summarizing the claims made in this thesis. It highlights the way my arguments can be situated in the wider scholarship on electoral studies. It then proceeds to examine the limitations of this study. The final section examines the consequences of my arguments for electoral studies, and the emerging questions that this thesis poses.

5.1 Summing up

Elections are designed to serve multiple normative values in a democracy. As seen from the empirical studies on comparative democracies, there is consensus over at least two broad values – accountability and representation. Most of the empirical studies differentiate between electoral systems (and other democratic institutions) based on the expected normative value that they serve. Thus, majoritarian democracies are widely associated with stability, clarity, and a stronger link between government and voters. Proportional democracies on the other hand are associated with better ideological congruence and representation between parties and their voters. However, these empirical studies on comparative electoral systems and comparative democracies associate the features of the institutional design (Single Member Plurality District, Proportional Representation, etc.) with the normative democratic values. They do not investigate whether a single electoral institution (irrespective of the design) can serve both these normative values simultaneously. In other words, these studies argue that the trade-off between accountability and representation is a feature of institutional design. I however argue that it is rather an irresolvable tension that is an outcome of relying on one vote to achieve multiple targets.

There are different normative theories of democracies based upon the normative democratic values. However, the normative value of accountability is not an explicit focus of most of these theories. I attempt to fill this gap by providing a rough sketch of an accountability theory of democracy. I also find that most theories of voter behavior end up neglecting the democratic value of ‘accountability’. Further, there are very few studies on comparative voter behavior as compared to studies on electoral systems or democracies, that systematically investigate the trade-off between accountability and representation. Situating ‘economic voting’ as an application of the accountability theory of democracy, I then examine the fallacies of such accountability model. There are multiple limitations of relying excessively on a principal-agent model to study economic

voting. I particularly focus on its impact on ideological congruence. I use the data from CSES to examine my arguments,

Focusing on the 35 countries covered in the fourth round of CSES during 2011–2016, I find that punishing is associated with congruence between incumbent parties and their voters. Punishing is a peculiar way of conceptualizing economic voting. The mainstream studies on economic voting do not filter the support for incumbents by their previous vote-choice. In other words, voters of non-incumbent parties that continue to vote against the incumbent parties are treated at par with the voters of incumbent parties who switch their votes. The effects of economic evaluations on support for incumbents are thus blind to the previous vote-choice. I argue that the economic voting can be better understood through the lens of punishing voters. This lens primarily implies that the vote-switching from incumbent to non-incumbent parties can be seen as a way to represent economic voting. When the economic evaluations worsen, the punishing (switching from incumbent to non-incumbents) rises. However, this has an affect on the ideological congruence between the incumbent parties and their voters. As the punishing increases, the congruence between incumbent parties and their voters increases. This could be on the grounds that punishing voters are neither as attached to the incumbent parties as the non-punishing voters, nor do they have similar ideological positions as compared to non-punishing voters of the incumbent parties.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This study is limited by the countries included in the fourth round of CSES. Second, although the CSES data was used to calculate the proportion of voters who have previously voted for incumbent, this might not be an accurate representation of their sample universe. In other words, the sample of voters who have previously voted for incumbents in my study might not be representative of the voters who have previously voted for incumbent parties. A panel survey might perhaps be better suited to examine the trade-off between retrospective evaluations and the ideological congruence between incumbent parties and voters.

The inclusion of 35 countries across the world controls for the country-specific contextual factors. However, this also masks the internal variations. In other words, both the concepts of punishing and its impact on congruence might vary across countries. This could be examined by classifying countries on the basis of consolidated party systems. Further, although the CSES data accounts for the different inter-countries' interpretations of left-right scale, there might also be an intra-country

divergence in the interpretations of this scale by experts and voters. This weakens my arguments as I rely on self-positioning of voters to determine their ideological positions, while relying on experts from CSES to classify the incumbent parties.

Finally, the mechanism through which I expect punishing to affect the ideological congruence is not insightful on the ‘causality’ issue. In other words, it is unclear if poor economic evaluations cause weak attachment between punishing voters and incumbent parties; or if the weak attachment between incumbent parties and voters causes the voters to have poor economic evaluations. However, economic evaluations still have a statistically significant relationship with vote switching, even after controlling for party attachment.

5.3 Way forward

There are multiple studies that highlight that liberal democracies are at a pivotal point (Levitsky & Ziblatt 2018; Foa and Mounk, 2017). Further, there is considerable scholarship (Van der Meer, 2010; Roleff, 2006; Holmberg et al., 2017) that cites the decline of public trust in the parliament and the political parties over the past few decades. The rise of anti-systemic parties poses a threat to the stability of democracy being the ‘only game in town’ (Linz and Stepan, 1996). It is hence crucial to examine if there is any space for institutional creativity that could address the dissatisfaction of voters with democracy on counts of accountability and representation.

My argument denotes that the congruence of the incumbent parties and voters increases as there is a rise in punishing. In the countries where incumbents stayed in power during the fourth round of CSES, this would imply that the congruence between the incumbent parties and their voters became stronger at the cost of worsening economic conditions. In other words, the voters of the incumbent parties had the option of either punishing the incumbent parties or to focus on ideological congruence. This raises a more interesting question about the profile of the voters who stayed with incumbents despite being dissatisfied with the economic performance of the incumbents. Subsequent studies could explore if there is any association of these non-punishing voters and dissatisfaction with democracy. In a similar way, it would be interesting to examine the satisfaction with democracy of the punishing voters. Analogously, similar studies could also be undertaken for the rewarding voters during the time of improving economic conditions to examine the argument of trade-off. Overall, the voters seem to be caught between retrospective evaluations and ideological congruence and this does not fare well for any conceptualization of democracy!

Appendix 1: Effective number of parliamentary and electoral parties

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Effective number of Electoral Parties</i>	<i>Effective number of Parliamentary Parties</i>
1	Argentina (2015)	3.4	3.52
2	Australia (2013)	3.42	2.36
3	Austria (2013)	5.15	5.06
4	Brazil (2014)	7.58	13.33
5	Bulgaria (2014)	5.78	5.06
6	Canada (2011, 2015)	3.43, 3.34	2.41, 2.5
7	Czech republic (2013)	7.61	5.62
8	Finland (2015)	6.57	5.84
9	France (2012)	NA	NA
10	Germany (2013)	4.81	3.5
11	Great Britain (2015)	3.75	2.4
12	Greece (2012, 2015)	5.2, 4.43	3.76, 3.09
13	Iceland (2013)	5.83	4.43
14	Ireland (2011)	4.44	3.44
15	Israel (2013)	8.68	7.28
16	Japan (2013)	4.25	2.26
17	Latvia (2011, 2014)	5.06, 5.69	4.53
18	Mexico (2012, 2015)	4.72, 6.23	3.57, 4.28
19	Montenegro (2012)	3.44	3.18
20	New Zealand (2011, 2014)	3.15, 3.28	2.96, 2.98
21	Norway (2013)	4.87	4.39
22	Philippines (2016)	4.41	5.43
23	Poland (2011)	3.42	3
24	Portugal (2015)	3.42	
25	Republic of Korea (2012)	3.05	2.28
26	Romania (2012, 2014)	2.55 (2)	2.12 (2)
27	Serbia (2012)	6.32	4.87
28	Slovakia (2016)	7.31	5.67
29	Slovenia (2011)	5.53	4.73
30	South Africa (2014)	2.27	2.26
31	Sweden (2014)	5.42	4.99
32	Taiwan (2012)	2.33	2
33	Thailand (2011)	2.76	2.57
34	Turkey (2015)	3.66	3.13
35	USA (2012)	2.19	2

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