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MASS-ELITE  
REPRESENTATION  
GAP IN OLD  
AND NEW  
DEMOCRACIES

CRITICAL JUNCTURES and ELITE AGENCY

EDITED BY  
JAEMIN SHIM

NEW COMPARATIVE POLITICS

# MASS-ELITE REPRESENTATION GAP IN OLD AND NEW DEMOCRACIES

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*New Comparative Politics Series*

The alignment of voter preferences and the preferences of their parliamentary representatives has long been understood as a vital part of representative democracy. However, recent decades have seen a considerable increase in such gaps between mass (the public) and elite (the representatives) policy preferences, appearing not just as isolated or single-topic issues, but rather across the spectrum of political dimensions. The negative effects can include decreased trust and voter engagement, dissatisfaction with democratic ideals and process, and even democratic backsliding.

Mass-Elite Representation Gap in Old and New Democracies brings together a global array of scholars to examine the issue from new angles, drawing on evidence from North Africa, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South America, and Europe. This global-level analysis of different representation gaps demonstrates that these gaps vary in content, structure, and the timing of formation. Moreover, recognizing the socially, culturally, and internationally embedded nature of party politics, the contributors in the volume trace the historical origin of gaps observed in different world regions. The findings show that earlier choices made by political elites during historical-critical junctures lead to preference mismatch, undermining the quality of democratic representation.

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