

Norman Schofield · Gonzalo Caballero · Daniel Kselman *Editors*

Advances in Political Economy

Institutions, Modelling and Empirical Analysis

This book presents latest research in the field of Political Economy, dealing with the integration of economics and politics and the way institutions affect social decisions. The focus is on innovative topics such as an institutional analysis based on case studies; the influence of activists on political decisions; new techniques for analyzing elections, involving game theory and empirical methods.

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Social Sciences / Political Science

ISBN 978-3-642-35238-6



9 783642 352386

► springer.com

 Springer

average. The analyzed dataset contains 10,603 entries with about 9 % of missing values, 364 parties, and 1493 experts. Our goal is to investigate whether a party's ambiguity on the issue of taxation and provision of public services is related to its ideological extremism and vote-share in the last elections.

In the survey, the experts were asked to place political parties on the 20 point scale with the end-points defined as follows:

[1] Party promotes raising taxes to increase public services.

[20] Party promotes cutting public services to cut taxes.

The posterior estimates of σ from the proposed model are very different from the naive sample standard deviation, with correlation of only 36 percent. The posterior mean of the missing data mechanism parameter α_1 is 0.245 with the standard deviation of 0.014 indicating that the missingness of the data is related to the ambiguity of party positions and the uncertainty of experts. Together this serves as the evidence that (1) the sample standard deviation would yield an incorrect measure of ideological ambiguity *if the assumed data generating model is valid* and that (2) the patterns in missing data do provide additional information about the ideological ambiguity and respondent uncertainty.

Using direct measures of ideological ambiguity and voters' uncertainty, the previous literature has found that ambiguity is related to voting behavior (Alvarez 1997; Tomz and van Houweling 2009). Therefore, ideological ambiguity should also be also related to a party's electoral performance. In case the model provides correct estimates of ideological ambiguity, one should observe a relationship between the posterior estimates of ideological ambiguity and vote-shares of political parties. Furthermore, if the sample standard deviation $\hat{\sigma}$ is not a valid measure of ideological ambiguity (as was suggested earlier), the correlation between $\hat{\sigma}$ and the parties' electoral performance should be low.

After computing the posterior distributions of σ_{jk} 's for all parties in the dataset, the following model is estimated:

$$T(v_{jk}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 |\mu_{jk} - \bar{\mu}| + \beta_2 \frac{1}{1 + \sigma_{jk}} + \epsilon_{jk}, \quad (17)$$

where v_{jk} is a vote-share of party j in country k , $T(\cdot)$ is a Box-Cox transformation, and $\bar{\mu}$ is the estimated empirical center of party platforms. The coefficients β_1 and β_2 represent the effect of ideological extremism and ideological precision (the inverse of the ideological ambiguity) respectively.

The model in (17) is estimated in three settings. In the first setting, I use the sample mean $\hat{\mu}$ and standard deviation $\hat{\sigma}$ in place of μ and σ in (17). In the second setting, the mean posterior estimates $\mathbb{E}(\mu|y)$ and $\mathbb{E}(\sigma|y)$ derived from the latent hierarchical model are used in place of $\hat{\mu}$ and $\hat{\sigma}$. Both of the above models do not take into account the fact that the covariates $(\hat{\mu}, \hat{\sigma})$ and $(\mathbb{E}(\mu|y), \mathbb{E}(\sigma|y))$ are only estimates that are measured with error, not fixed values. Ignoring, the presence of the measurement error in the covariates might lead to invalid inference about the regression parameters in model (17).

Table 2 Ideological ambiguity and electoral performance of parties

	No measurement error ^a		With measurement error ^b
	$\hat{\mu}, \hat{\sigma}$	$\mathbb{E}(\mu y), \mathbb{E}(\sigma y)$	$\mathbb{E}(\mu y), \mathbb{E}(\sigma y)$
Intercept	-2.32** (0.115)	-3.125*** (0.156)	-3.823 ^c [-4.393, -3.275] ^d
Extremism: $ \mu_{jk} - \bar{\mu} $	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.073* (0.042)	-0.049 [-0.137, 0.030]
Ideological precision: $1/(1 + \sigma_{jk})$	0.039 (0.612)	2.875*** (0.413)	3.860 [2.486, 5.126]
<i>RMSE</i>	1.126	1.057	
<i>R</i> ²	0.1-e4	0.12	
<i>AIC</i>	1124	1078	
<i>F</i> (2, 361)	0.062	24.5	
N	364	364	

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

^aFrequentist regression ignoring the measurement error in the covariates. Standard errors in the parentheses

^bBayesian regression with flat priors accounting for the measurement error

^cPosterior mean

^d95 % highest posterior density interval

Therefore, in the third setting, the linear regression with measurement error is fit to the data. This is accomplished easily by adding a step in the Gibbs sampling algorithm. Assuming uniform priors over the coefficients β and regression error $s^2 - \pi(\beta, s^2) \propto 1/s^2$ —one can sample β from the multivariate normal distribution with mean $(X'X)^{-1}X'T(\mathbf{v})$ and covariance matrix $s^2(X'X)^{-1}$, where X is the design matrix for model in (17) and \mathbf{v} is the vector of vote-shares. At each iteration, the columns of X representing μ and σ are replaced with a draw from the posterior $\pi(\mu|y)$ and $\pi(\sigma|y)$ respectively. Finally, s^2 is sampled from the inverse gamma distribution with shape $J/2$ (where J is the overall number of parties in the analysis) and scale $(T(\mathbf{v}) - X'\beta)'(T(\mathbf{v}) - X'\beta)/2$.

Results of the three analyses are reported in Table 2. First, let us compare the two frequentists regressions that use the naive sample estimates and the average posterior estimates from the proposed model. Evidently, there are stark differences: If the sample estimates of μ and σ are used, there is no statistically tractable relationship between the electoral performance of a party and its ideological ambiguity or extremism. None of the coefficients are significant at conventional levels and the overall fit of the model is extremely poor, as indicated by low R^2 and F statistics. Both of these results are counter-intuitive as existing theories and evidence would suggest that ideological extremism is rarely rewarded by voters and that ideological ambiguity *does* affect voters' behavior.

EDITOR'S PROOF

In contrast, if one uses the measures of μ and σ derived from the proposed latent hierarchical model, the model fit increases dramatically as indicated by lower root mean squared error (RMSE), higher R^2 and F statistics and substantially lower Aikake's Information Criterion (AIC). In this model, increasing ideological ambiguity and extremism are both statistically associated with worse electoral performance. Since this empirical pattern is closer to the theoretical expectations, this suggests that the measure σ derived from the latent hierarchical model does improve upon the naive estimator.

Finally, the third model which takes into account the measurement error in μ and σ , shows qualitatively similar results, albeit, with some important deviations. First, the effect of ideological extremism is now lower and the 95 % credible now covers zero (though 90 % credible interval does not cover zero, however). Second, the effect of ideological precision increases by about 1/3 when the measurement error is taken into account. Fitting the model with the measurement error is more appropriate given the nature of the problem and it is advisable to use this approach as a standard practice.

It is important to note that we do *not* claim to have found any causal effect of ideological ambiguity on the electoral performance. It might well be the case that smaller political parties have fewer means to communicate their policy positions and there is nothing in the design of our analysis that would allow us to circumvent this problem. Instead, the nature of this exercise was merely to show that these two quantities are associated—as we should expect them to be—and that the sample estimates of ideological ambiguity would (perhaps erroneously) lead us to believe otherwise.

6 Discussion

The goal of this study was to construct and evaluate a model that allows to estimate ideological ambiguity from survey data. The proposed model focused on synthesizing two distinct approaches previously used by political methodologists—one approach focused on disagreement among the respondents while another approach attempted to infer the degree of ideological ambiguity from the patterns of missing data. This study demonstrated how these two approaches can be synthesized into a single inferential framework yielding more accurate and more informative measures of ideological ambiguity than what is offered by focusing on naive sample standard deviations. The greater accuracy results from the fact that the latent hierarchical model exploits the rich informational structure of the survey data and allows to represent policy positions of parties in terms of probability distributions rather than points.

Although the proposed method of inferring ideological ambiguity is promising, there are several issues that should be further studied. First, the model relies heavily on the assumption that the patterns of data missingness are related to underlying ideological ambiguity. The estimates of the model will be biased to the extent that

553 this assumption is violated. A survey experiment where, in placing parties, some re-
554 spondents use the interval scales (e.g. Tomz and van Houweling 2009) while others
555 place them on the standard single-point scales could evaluate the empirical plau-
556 sibility of this assumption. Second, external validation analyses using direct mea-
557 sures of ideological ambiguity as benchmarks could also elicit potential strengths
558 and weaknesses of the proposed model.

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1 Biographies

1 Editors' Biographies

Norman Schofield was the Director of the Center in Political Economy at Washington University in Saint Louis from 1992 until 2012. He is currently the William R. Taussig Professor of Political Economy, and Professor in the Departments of Economics and Political Science. He has Ph.D.'s in both government and economics from Essex University, a LittD from Liverpool University and a doctorat d'etat from the University of Caen. He is currently working on topics in the theory of social choice, political economy, and democracy. He has written several books, including *Multiparty Government* (with Michael Laver, in 1990), *Social Choice and Democracy* (Springer, 1985), and edited or co-edited ten volumes, including *The Political Economy of Institutions, Democracy and Voting*, (co-edited with Gonzalo Caballero, Springer, 2011). His book, *Mathematical Methods in Economics and Social Choice*, was published by Springer in 2003. In 2006 he published *Architects of Political Change* as well as *Multiparty Democracy* (with Itai Sened) both with Cambridge University Press. His book, *The Spatial Model of Politics* was published by Routledge in 2008, followed by *The Political Economy of Democracy and Tyranny* in 2009 with Oldenbourg (Munich). He has just completed a book, *Leadership or Chaos* (co-authored with Maria Gallego, published by Springer in 2011). He has been the recipient of a number of NSF awards, most recently one on electoral politics and regime change. In 2003 he was the Fulbright distinguished professor at Humboldt University and, in 2007 and 2008, visiting fellow at ICER in Turin. In Spring 2008 he was the visiting Leitner Professor at Yale University and was a National Fellow at the Hoover Institution in summers 2009 and 2010. He was recipient of the Riker prize for contributions to political theory in 2002, and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2005.

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