

PLSC 597: Modern Measurement

Item Response Theory, I

February 22, 2018

Item Response Theory (“IRT”)

- Origins in psychometrics / testing
- Measurement *model*
- *Unidimensional*
- *Discrete* responses **Y**
- Equally descriptive and inferential

Y^* = latent trait (“ability”)

Y = observed measures

- $i \in \{1, 2 \dots N\}$ indexes *subjects* / *units*, and
- $j \in \{1, 2, \dots J\}$ indexes *items* / *measures*.

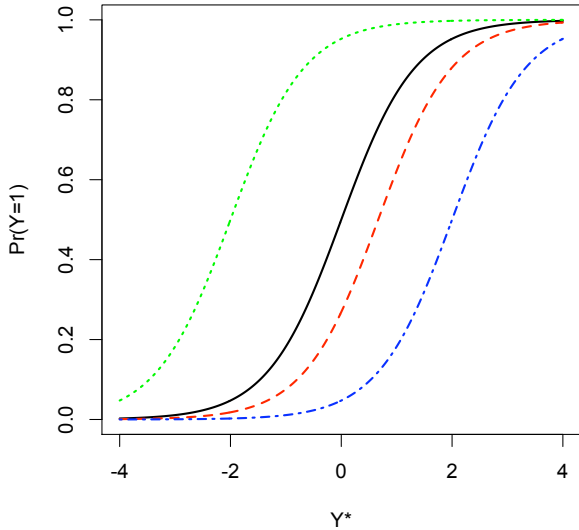
$$Y_{ij} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if subject } i \text{ gets item } j \text{ “incorrect,”} \\ 1 & \text{if subject } i \text{ gets item } j \text{ “correct.”} \end{cases}$$

One-Parameter Logistic Model (“1PLM”)

$$\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = \frac{\exp(\theta_i - \beta_j)}{1 + \exp(\theta_i - \beta_j)}$$

Here,

- θ_i = respondent i 's *ability*,
- β_j = item j 's *difficulty*.
- $\beta_j \equiv$ value of Y^* where $\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = 0.50$



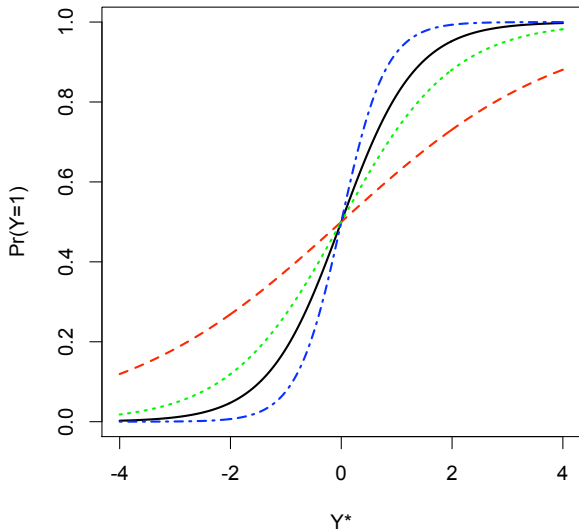
- a.k.a. “Rasch” model (Rasch 1960)
- Implicit “slope” = 1.0
- Implies items are equally “discriminating”
- If not...

Two-Parameter Logistic Model (“2PLM”)

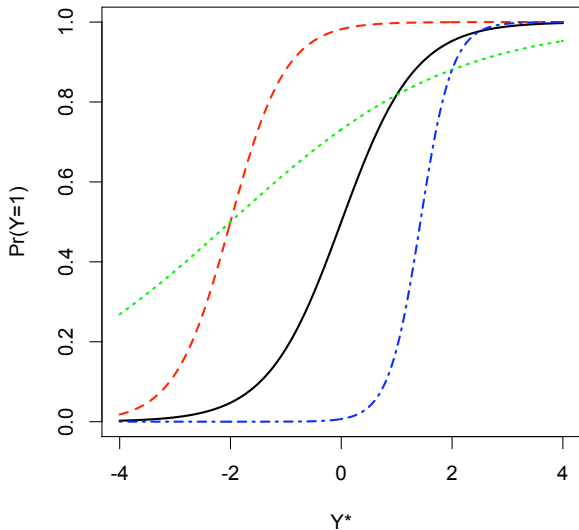
$$\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = \frac{\exp[\alpha_j(\theta_i - \beta_j)]}{1 + \exp[\alpha_j(\theta_i - \beta_j)]}$$

- θ_i = respondent i 's *ability*,
- β_j = item j 's *difficulty*,
- α_j = item j 's *discrimination*.

Identical Difficulty, Different Discrimination



Different Difficulty & Discrimination



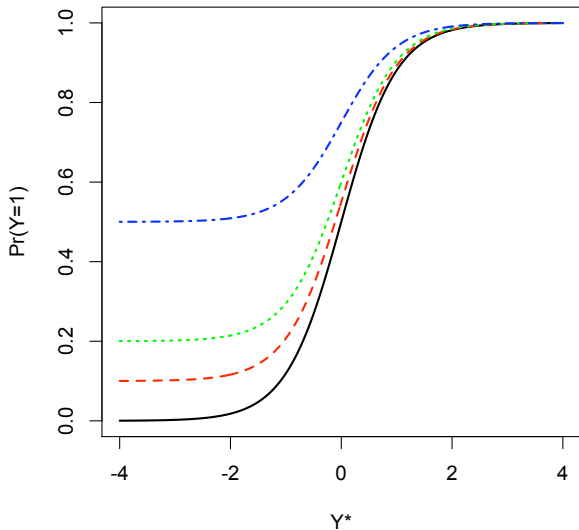
- Due to Birnbaum (1968)
- Similar to “typical” logit...
- Nests the 1PLM as a special case ($\alpha_j = 1 \forall j$)

Three-Parameter Logistic Model (“3PLM”)

$$\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = \delta_j + (1 - \delta_j) \left\{ \frac{\exp[\alpha_j(\theta_i - \beta_j)]}{1 + \exp[\alpha_j(\theta_i - \beta_j)]} \right\}$$

- θ_i = respondent i 's *ability*,
- β_j = item j 's *difficulty*,
- α_j = item j 's *discrimination*.
- δ_j = *lower asymptote* of $\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1)$ (incorrectly: “guessing” parameter).

3PLM, Constant α & β , Varying δ



The Two Big Assumptions

- *Unidimensionality*
- *Local Item Independence* (“No LID”):

$$\text{Cov}(Y_{ij}, Y_{ik} | \theta_i) = 0 \quad \forall j \neq k$$

Estimation: Notation

$$P_{ij} = \Pr(Y_{ij} = 1),$$

$$\begin{aligned} Q_{ij} &= \Pr(Y_{ij} = 0) \\ &= 1 - \Pr(Y_{ij} = 1), \end{aligned}$$

$$\Psi = \begin{pmatrix} \beta_1 \\ \vdots \\ \beta_J \\ \alpha_1 \\ \vdots \\ \alpha_J \\ \delta_1 \\ \vdots \\ \delta_J \end{pmatrix}.$$

Estimation: Likelihoods

Known $\Psi = \alpha, \beta, \delta$:

$$L(\mathbf{Y}|\Psi) = \prod_{j=1}^J P_{ij}^{Y_{ij}} Q_{ij}^{1-Y_{ij}}.$$

Known θ :

$$L(\mathbf{Y}|\theta) = \prod_{i=1}^N P_{ij}^{Y_{ij}} Q_{ij}^{1-Y_{ij}}.$$

Estimation: Likelihoods

$$L(\mathbf{Y}|\Psi, \theta) = \prod_{i=1}^N \prod_{j=1}^J P_{ij}^{Y_{ij}} Q_{ij}^{1-Y_{ij}}$$

$$\ln L(\mathbf{Y}|\Psi, \theta) = \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{j=1}^J Y_{ij} \ln P_{ij} + (1 - Y_{ij}) Q_{ij}.$$

Parameterization

- $N + J$ parameters in the 1PLM,
- $N + 2J$ parameters in the 2PLM,
- $N + 3J$ parameters in the 3PLM.

But...

- NJ observations,
- Asymptotics as $N \rightarrow \infty$, $J \rightarrow \infty$...

Estimation: Conditional Likelihood

Total score is:

$$T_i = \sum_{j=1}^J Y_{ij} \in \{0, 1, \dots, J\}$$

$$L = \prod_{i=1}^N \frac{\exp[\alpha_j(\theta_t - \beta_j)]}{1 + \exp[\alpha_j(\theta_t - \beta_j)]}$$

θ_t are “score-group” parameters corresponding to the $J + 1$ possible values of T .

Estimation: Conditional Likelihood

- Equivalent to fitting a conditional logit model:

$$\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = \frac{\exp(\mathbf{Z}_{ij}\gamma)}{\sum_{j=1}^J \exp(\mathbf{Z}_{ij}\gamma)}$$

with \mathbf{Z}_{ij} = “item dummies.”

- Useful only for 1PLM (since T_i is a sufficient statistic for θ_i).

Estimation: Marginal Likelihood

$$L(\mathbf{Y}|\Psi, \theta) = \prod_{i=1}^N \left[\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \prod_{j=1}^J P_{ij}^{Y_{ij}} Q_{ij}^{1-Y_{ij}} d\theta \right]$$

- Analogous to “random effects”...
- Eliminates inconsistency as $N \rightarrow \infty$, *but*
- Requires *strong* exogeneity of θ and Ψ .

Estimation: Bayesian Approaches

- Place priors on θ , Ψ ;
- Estimate via sampling from posteriors, via MCMC.
- Eliminates problems with $\hat{\alpha}$, $\hat{\beta}$, $\hat{\theta} = \infty$ (see below).
- Easily extensible to other circumstances (hierarchical/multilevel, etc.)

Two Issues:

- *Scale* invariance: $L(\hat{\Psi}) = L(\hat{\Psi} + c)$
- *Rotational* invariance: $L(\hat{\Psi}) = L(-\hat{\Psi})$

Fixes:

- Set one (arbitrary) $\beta_j = 0$, and another (arbitrary) $\beta_k > 0$, or
- Fix two θ_i s at specific values.

Further (Potential) Concerns

- $Y_{ij} = 0/1 \ \forall i \rightarrow \beta_j = \pm\infty$.
- $Y_{ij} = 0/1 \ \forall j \rightarrow \theta_i = \pm\infty$.
- Separation / “empty cells” $\rightarrow \alpha_j = \pm\infty$.
- Problematic for joint and conditional approaches; more easily dealt with in the Bayesian framework.

- Estimates of $\hat{\alpha}s$, $\hat{\beta}s$, and/or $\hat{\delta}s$, plus $\hat{\theta}s$
- Associated s.e.s / c.i.s
- “Scale-free” quantities of interest...

IRT Models in R

- Library `ltm` (marginal estimation)
 - `rasch` (1PLM)
 - `ltm` (2PLM)
 - `tp1` (3PLM)
- Library `MCMCpack` (Bayesian estimation)
 - 1 and 2PLM
 - Standard, hierarchical, dynamic, multidimensional
- `ideal` (in library `pscl`) (Bayesian estimation)
 - 1 and 2PLM
 - k -dimensional
 - takes a `rollcall` object
- Other packages: `eRm`, `irtoys`, `irtProb`, `MiscPsycho`, etc.

A Simulation: Rasch's Model

```
> N <- 1000
> K <- 10
> set.seed(7222009)
> Rasch1Data <- sim.irt(nvar=K,n=N,low=-3,high=3,
+                       a=1,c=0,d=NULL,mu=0,sd=1,
+                       mod="logistic")
> Rasch1<-rasch(Rasch1Data$items)
> summary(Rasch1)
```

Model Summary:

```
log.Lik  AIC  BIC
-4666 9354 9408
```

Coefficients:

	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffclt.V1	-3.073	0.180	-17.082
Dffclt.V2	-2.243	0.134	-16.678
Dffclt.V3	-1.628	0.109	-14.924
Dffclt.V4	-0.958	0.089	-10.744
Dffclt.V5	-0.349	0.079	-4.402
Dffclt.V6	0.465	0.081	5.766
Dffclt.V7	1.104	0.093	11.866
Dffclt.V8	1.671	0.111	15.075
Dffclt.V9	2.359	0.140	16.856
Dffclt.V10	3.080	0.180	17.126
Dscrmn	0.977	0.045	21.678

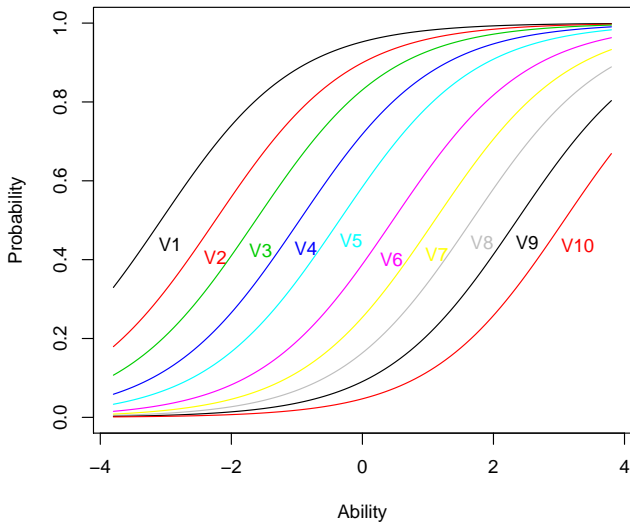
Integration:

```
method: Gauss-Hermite
quadrature points: 21
```

Optimization:

```
Convergence: 0
max(|grad|): 0.009
quasi-Newton: BFGS
```

Simulation: Estimated (Rasch) IRFs



Discrimination Parameter $\neq 1.0$

```
> set.seed(7222009)
> RaschAltData <- sim.irt(nvar=K,n=N,low=-3,high=3,
+                         a=2,c=0,d=NULL,mu=0,sd=1,
+                         mod="logistic")
> RaschAlt<-rasch(RaschAltData$items)
> summary(RaschAlt)
```

Model Summary:

log.Lik	AIC	BIC
-3147	6315	6369

Coefficients:

	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffc1t.V1	-2.938	0.165	-17.811
Dffc1t.V2	-2.267	0.111	-20.426
Dffc1t.V3	-1.679	0.083	-20.238
Dffc1t.V4	-0.988	0.063	-15.693
Dffc1t.V5	-0.331	0.054	-6.152
Dffc1t.V6	0.419	0.055	7.665
Dffc1t.V7	1.054	0.065	16.239
Dffc1t.V8	1.657	0.083	20.067
Dffc1t.V9	2.294	0.112	20.459
Dffc1t.V10	2.990	0.167	17.909
Dscrnn	1.948	0.079	24.764

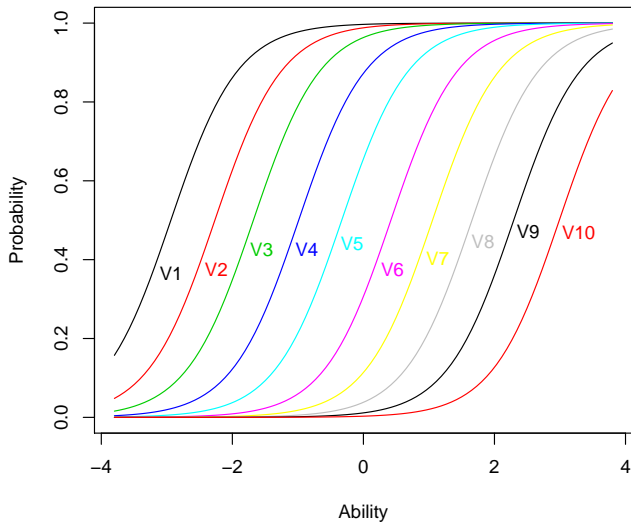
Integration:

method: Gauss-Hermite
quadrature points: 21

Optimization:

Convergence: 0
max(|grad|): 0.00073
quasi-Newton: BFGS

Simulation: Estimated IRFs



Simulation: 2PLM

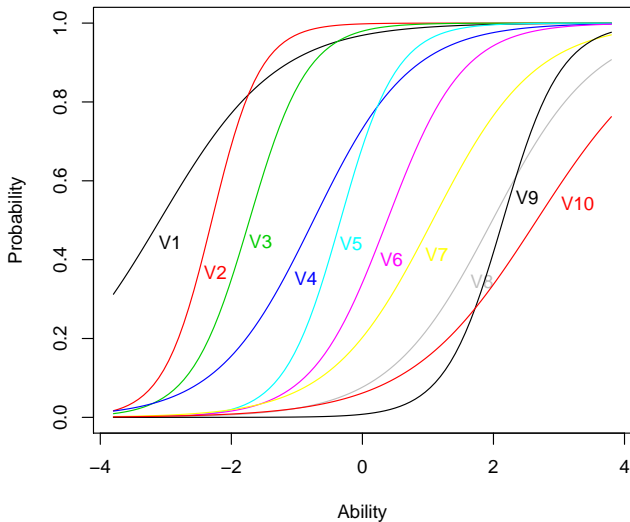
```
> set.seed(7222009)
> Discrims <- runif(K,0.5,3)
> Rasch2Data <- sim.irt(nvar=K,n=N,low=-3,high=3,
+                       a=Discrims,c=0,d=NULL,mu=0,sd=1,mod="logistic")
> Rasch2<-ltm(Rasch2Data$items~z1)
> summary(Rasch2)
```

Coefficients:

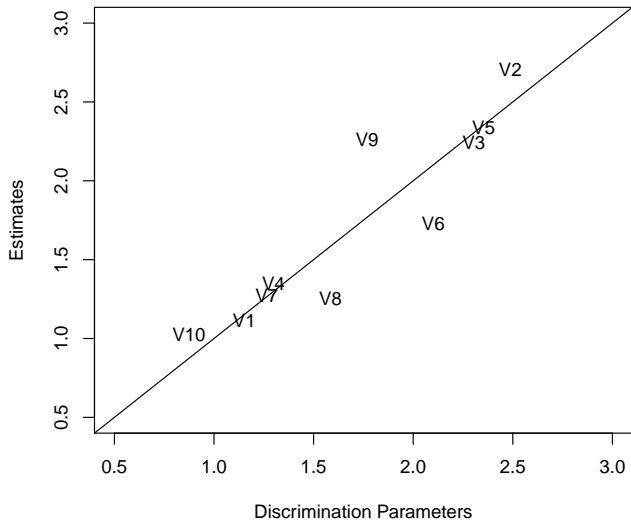
	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffclt.V1	-3.091	0.439	-7.037
Dffclt.V2	-2.297	0.203	-11.316
Dffclt.V3	-1.724	0.125	-13.775
Dffclt.V4	-0.746	0.081	-9.230
Dffclt.V5	-0.334	0.052	-6.432
Dffclt.V6	0.381	0.060	6.377
Dffclt.V7	1.073	0.103	10.457
Dffclt.V8	1.984	0.194	10.216
Dffclt.V9	2.145	0.185	11.627
Dffclt.V10	2.660	0.336	7.908
Dscrmn.V1	1.114	0.207	5.378
Dscrmn.V2	2.707	0.622	4.352
Dscrmn.V3	2.246	0.336	6.686
Dscrmn.V4	1.349	0.141	9.587
Dscrmn.V5	2.337	0.281	8.302
Dscrmn.V6	1.729	0.178	9.713
Dscrmn.V7	1.277	0.140	9.110
Dscrmn.V8	1.256	0.168	7.461
Dscrmn.V9	2.261	0.426	5.310
Dscrmn.V10	1.024	0.164	6.226

.
.
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Simulation: Estimated 2PLM IRFs



Estimation of Discrimination Parameters



Simulation: 3PLM

```
> N <- 10000
> set.seed(7222009)
> GuessThresh <- round(rbeta(K,1,8),digits=1)
> Rasch3Data <- sim.irt(nvar=K,n=N,low=-3,high=3,
+                       a=1,c=GuessThresh,d=NULL,mu=0,sd=1,mod="logistic")

> Rasch3 <- tpm(Rasch3Data$items)
Warning message:
In tpm(Rasch3Data$items) :
  Hessian matrix at convergence is not positive definite; unstable solution.

> summary(Rasch3)
```

Coefficients:

	value	std.err	z.vals
Gussng.V1	0.294	NaN	NaN
Gussng.V2	0.315	0.233	1.353
Gussng.V3	0.218	0.353	0.618
Gussng.V4	0.001	0.016	0.066
Gussng.V5	0.001	0.021	0.070
Gussng.V6	0.087	0.096	0.905
Gussng.V7	0.086	0.052	1.638
Gussng.V8	0.137	0.020	6.795
Gussng.V9	0.401	0.025	16.302
Gussng.V10	0.202	0.022	9.309

.
.
.

Simulation: 3PLM (continued)

```
.  
. .  
. .  
Dffclt.V1 -2.461      NaN      NaN  
Dffclt.V2 -1.665      0.591    -2.818  
Dffclt.V3 -1.740      0.899    -1.937  
Dffclt.V4 -1.181      0.061   -19.316  
Dffclt.V5 -0.326      0.056    -5.850  
Dffclt.V6  0.270      0.273     0.988  
Dffclt.V7  0.979      0.123     7.930  
Dffclt.V8  1.551      0.073    21.245  
Dffclt.V9  2.114      0.214     9.858  
Dffclt.V10 2.872      0.419     6.856  
Dscrmn.V1  1.093      NaN      NaN  
Dscrmn.V2  1.126      0.168     6.685  
Dscrmn.V3  0.948      0.173     5.462  
Dscrmn.V4  0.976      0.049    19.812  
Dscrmn.V5  1.046      0.055    18.969  
Dscrmn.V6  0.903      0.162     5.588  
Dscrmn.V7  0.941      0.158     5.957  
Dscrmn.V8  1.410      0.250     5.628  
Dscrmn.V9  1.218      0.432     2.819  
Dscrmn.V10 1.048      0.378     2.769
```

Integration:

method: Gauss-Hermite

quadrature points: 21

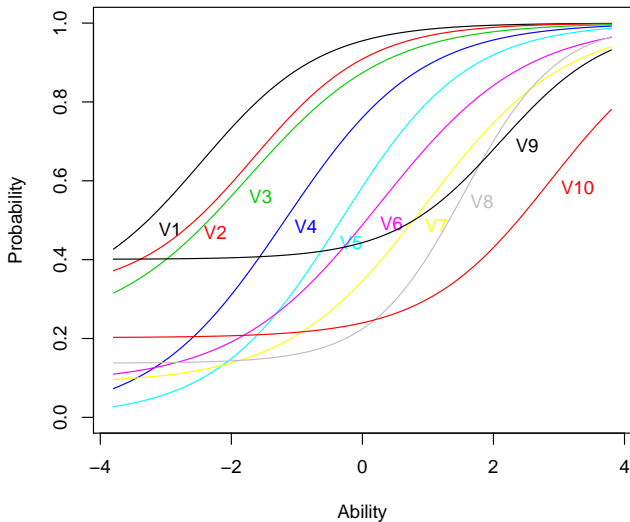
Optimization:

Optimizer: optim (BFGS)

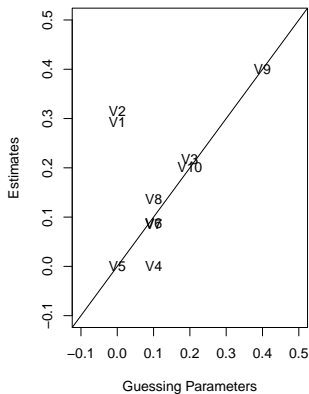
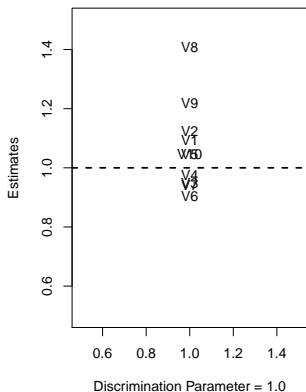
Convergence: 0

max(|grad|): 0.47

Simulation: Estimated 3PLM IRFs



Estimation of Discrimination Parameters



Example: SCOTUS Voting, 1994-2004

```
> summary(SCOTUS)
```

id	Rehnquist	Stevens	OConnor	Scalia
Min. : 1	Min. :0	Min. :0	Min. :0	Min. :0
1st Qu.: 377	1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0
Median : 753	Median :0	Median :1	Median :0	Median :0
Mean : 753	Mean :0	Mean :1	Mean :0	Mean :0
3rd Qu.:1129	3rd Qu.:1	3rd Qu.:1	3rd Qu.:1	3rd Qu.:1
Max. :1505	Max. :1	Max. :1	Max. :1	Max. :1
	NA's :49	NA's :51	NA's :55	NA's :41

Kennedy	Souter	Thomas	Ginsburg	Breyer
Min. :0	Min. :0	Min. :0	Min. :0	Min. :0
1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0	1st Qu.:0
Median :0	Median :1	Median :0	Median :1	Median :1
Mean :0	Mean :1	Mean :0	Mean :1	Mean :1
3rd Qu.:1	3rd Qu.:1	3rd Qu.:0	3rd Qu.:1	3rd Qu.:1
Max. :1	Max. :1	Max. :1	Max. :1	Max. :1
NA's :32	NA's :37	NA's :44	NA's :39	NA's :61

1PLM Using rasch

```
> # 1PLM / Rasch Model:  
> require(ltm)  
> OnePLM<-rasch(SCOTUS[c(2:10)])  
> summary(OnePLM)
```

Model Summary:

log.Lik	AIC	BIC
-5529	11079	11132

Coefficients:

	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffc1t.Rehnquist	0.46	0.040	11.5
Dffc1t.Stevens	-0.59	0.030	-19.8
Dffc1t.OConnor	0.14	0.030	4.6
Dffc1t.Scalia	0.52	0.041	12.5
Dffc1t.Kennedy	0.21	0.032	6.5
Dffc1t.Souter	-0.36	0.027	-13.1
Dffc1t.Thomas	0.60	0.043	13.8
Dffc1t.Ginsburg	-0.37	0.027	-13.4
Dffc1t.Breyer	-0.26	0.027	-9.9
Dscrmn	3.74	0.130	28.9

Integration:

method: Gauss-Hermite
quadrature points: 21

Optimization:

Convergence: 0
max(|grad|): 0.0027
quasi-Newton: BFGS

Converted to $\Pr(\widehat{Y_i} = 1 | \theta_i = 0)$

```
> # Convert to probabilities given theta=0  
>  
> coef(OnePLM, prob=TRUE, order=TRUE)
```

	Dffclt	Dscrmn	P(x=1 z=0)
Stevens	-0.59	3.7	0.900
Ginsburg	-0.37	3.7	0.797
Souter	-0.36	3.7	0.791
Breyer	-0.26	3.7	0.729
O'Connor	0.14	3.7	0.373
Kennedy	0.21	3.7	0.311
Rehnquist	0.46	3.7	0.151
Scalia	0.52	3.7	0.126
Thomas	0.60	3.7	0.096

Alternative Model Constraining $\alpha = 1.0$

```
> AltOnePLM<-rasch(IRTDData, constraint=cbind(length(IRTDData)+1,1))  
> summary(AltOnePLM)
```

Model Summary:

log.Lik	AIC	BIC
-6452	12923	12971

Coefficients:

	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffclt.Rehnquist	1.26	0.073	17.3
Dffclt.Stevens	-1.07	0.071	-15.1
Dffclt.OConnor	0.56	0.069	8.1
Dffclt.Scalia	1.37	0.074	18.6
Dffclt.Kennedy	0.72	0.069	10.4
Dffclt.Souter	-0.58	0.068	-8.6
Dffclt.Thomas	1.53	0.075	20.3
Dffclt.Ginsburg	-0.61	0.068	-8.9
Dffclt.Breyer	-0.40	0.068	-5.9
Dscrmn	1.00	NA	NA


```
> TwoPLM<-ltm(IRTData ~ z1)
> summary(TwoPLM)
```

Coefficients:

	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffclt.Rehnquist	0.44	0.035	12.3
Dffclt.Stevens	-0.63	0.038	-16.7
Dffclt.OConnor	0.14	0.026	5.6
Dffclt.Scalia	0.59	0.042	14.1
Dffclt.Kennedy	0.20	0.028	7.2
Dffclt.Souter	-0.27	0.025	-10.7
Dffclt.Thomas	0.68	0.044	15.2
Dffclt.Ginsburg	-0.29	0.025	-11.8
Dffclt.Breyer	-0.24	0.025	-9.6
Dscrmn.Rehnquist	4.77	0.377	12.7
Dscrmn.Stevens	2.46	0.165	14.9
Dscrmn.OConnor	4.14	0.341	12.1
Dscrmn.Scalia	2.82	0.188	15.0
Dscrmn.Kennedy	4.74	0.448	10.6
Dscrmn.Souter	6.69	0.535	12.5
Dscrmn.Thomas	2.84	0.190	14.9
Dscrmn.Ginsburg	5.83	0.439	13.3
Dscrmn.Breyer	3.76	0.253	14.9

2PLM: Probabilities and Testing

```
> coef(TwoPLM, prob=TRUE, order=TRUE)
```

	Dffc1t	Dscrmn	P(x=1 z=0)
Stevens	-0.63	2.5	0.82
Ginsburg	-0.29	5.8	0.85
Souter	-0.27	6.7	0.86
Breyer	-0.24	3.8	0.71
O'Connor	0.14	4.1	0.35
Kennedy	0.20	4.7	0.28
Rehnquist	0.44	4.8	0.11
Scalia	0.59	2.8	0.16
Thomas	0.68	2.8	0.13

```
> anova(OnePLM, TwoPLM)
```

Likelihood Ratio Table

	AIC	BIC	log.Lik	LRT	df	p.value
OnePLM	11079	11132	-5529			
TwoPLM	10882	10978	-5423	212.7	8	<0.001

```
> ThreePLM<-tpm(IRTData)
> summary(ThreePLM)
```

Coefficients:

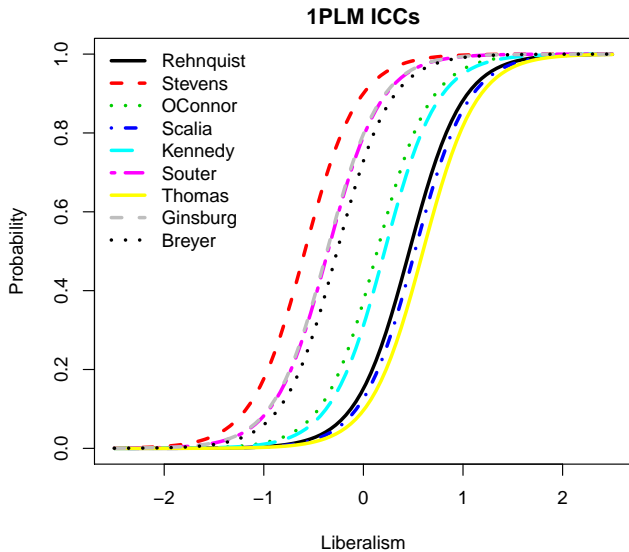
	value	std.err	z.vals
Gussng.Rehnquist	0.049	0.008	6.260
Gussng.Stevens	0.000	0.001	0.018
Gussng.OConnor	0.043	0.013	3.415
Gussng.Scalia	0.097	0.011	9.119
Gussng.Kennedy	0.071	0.014	5.162
Gussng.Souter	0.011	0.029	0.386
Gussng.Thomas	0.087	0.010	8.900
Gussng.Ginsburg	0.000	0.000	0.009
Gussng.Breyer	0.000	0.000	0.004
Dffclt.Rehnquist	0.716	0.030	23.511
Dffclt.Stevens	-0.630	0.038	-16.434
Dffclt.OConnor	0.340	0.040	8.537
Dffclt.Scalia	0.759	1.766	0.430
Dffclt.Kennedy	0.500	0.041	12.170
Dffclt.Souter	-0.294	0.063	-4.642
Dffclt.Thomas	0.808	10.610	0.076
Dffclt.Ginsburg	-0.329	0.030	-10.970
Dffclt.Breyer	-0.232	0.031	-7.439
Dscrmn.Rehnquist	8.735	4.259	2.051
Dscrmn.Stevens	2.577	0.181	14.214
Dscrmn.OConnor	3.979	0.439	9.068
Dscrmn.Scalia	26.537	578.889	0.046
Dscrmn.Kennedy	4.408	0.588	7.498
Dscrmn.Souter	6.698	1.416	4.731
Dscrmn.Thomas	34.074	2779.161	0.012
Dscrmn.Ginsburg	5.800	0.509	11.394
Dscrmn.Breyer	3.538	0.231	15.335

```
> anova(TwoPLM, ThreePLM)
```

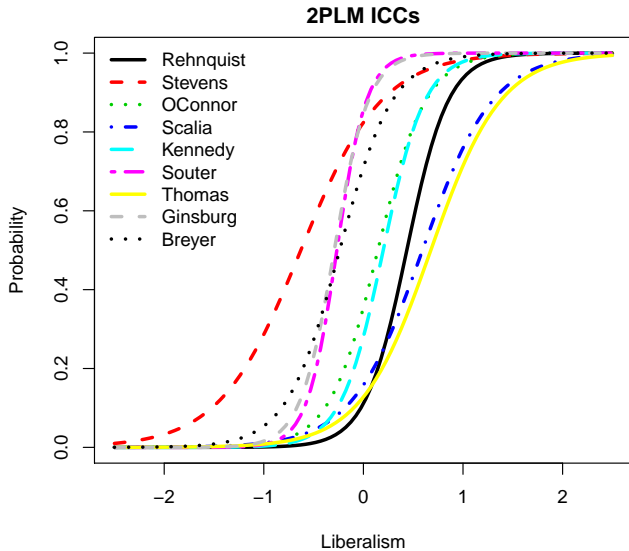
Likelihood Ratio Table

	AIC	BIC	log.Lik	LRT	df	p.value
TwoPLM	10882	10978	-5423			
ThreePLM	10737	10881	-5342	162.94	9	<0.001

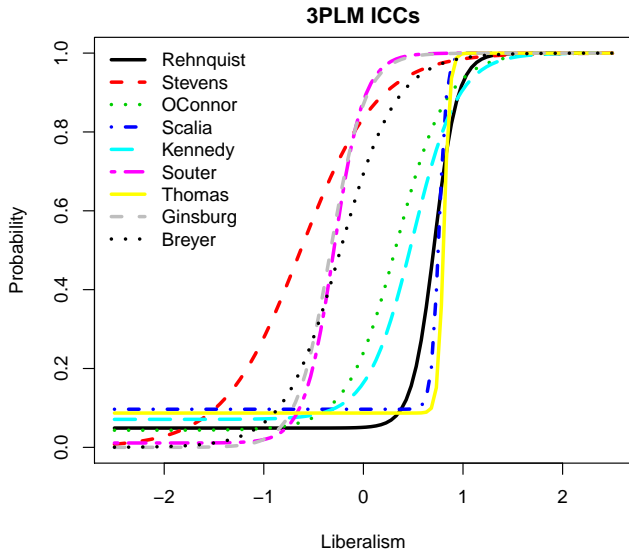
Cool Plots, I



Cool Plots, II



Cool Plots, III



Miscellaneous Things, I: Dimensionality

- Usually, *unidimensional*
- Sometimes, *two-dimensional*
- Tests:
 - Tetrachoric correlations among items
 - DIMTEST (Stout & Zhang, etc.)
 - Yen's Q_3
 - 1-D vs. 2-D comparisons (LR tests, etc.)

Miscellaneous Things, II: “DIF”

- *Differential item functioning*
- Formally,

$$\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1) = \Lambda[\alpha_j(\theta_i - \mathbf{X}_i\beta_j)].$$

- \rightarrow violates *local item independence*

- Nominal/Multinomial Y
- Ordinal Y :
 - *Graded response model* (“GRM”) (Samejima 1969)
 - *Partial credit model* (Masters 1982)
 - *Generalized partial credit model* (Muraki 1992)
- Models for mixed response types (Thissen and Wainer 2001, 2003)
- Hierarchical IRT models (e.g. Bolt and Kim 2005)
- Models with covariates (e.g., DeBoeck and Wilson 2004)

Further Reading / Useful References

Hambleton, Ronald K., H. Swaminathan, and H. Jane Rogers. 1991. *Fundamentals of Item Response Theory*. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

de Ayala, R. J. 2008. *The Theory and Practice of Item Response Theory*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Fahrmeier, L., and G. Tutz. 2000. *Multivariate Statistical Modelling Based on Generalized Linear Models*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

De Boeck, Paul, and Mark Wilson, Eds. 2004. *Explanatory Item Response Models: A Generalized Linear and Nonlinear Approach*. New York: Springer.