

Dynamic Comparative Public Opinion

Frederick Solt
University of Iowa

February 5, 2016

A Lack of Dynamism

- ▶ Dynamics—change over time—is important to many questions
- ▶ Current practice
 - ▶ One (or a few) cross-sections
 - ▶ One (or a few) time series
- ▶ Need: Comparable data for many countries and years
- ▶ Issue: Most of the available data is incomparable

A Lack of Dynamism

- ▶ Dynamics—change over time—is important to many questions
- ▶ Current practice
 - ▶ One (or a few) cross-sections
 - ▶ One (or a few) time series
- ▶ Need: Comparable data for many countries and years
- ▶ Issue: Most of the available data is incomparable

A Lack of Dynamism

- ▶ Dynamics—change over time—is important to many questions
- ▶ Current practice
 - ▶ One (or a few) cross-sections
 - ▶ One (or a few) time series
- ▶ Need: Comparable data for many countries and years
- ▶ Issue: Most of the available data is incomparable

A Lack of Dynamism

- ▶ Dynamics—change over time—is important to many questions
- ▶ Current practice
 - ▶ One (or a few) cross-sections
 - ▶ One (or a few) time series
- ▶ Need: Comparable data for many countries and years
- ▶ Issue: Most of the available data is incomparable

Dynamic Comparative Public Opinion

Two Forerunning Literatures:

1. Estimate a dynamic latent variable using available opinion data (e.g., Stimson 1991)
2. Estimate a TSCS latent variable from multiple cross-national time-series indicators
 - ▶ Democracy (Treier and Jackman 2008; Pemstein, Meserve, and Melton 2010)
 - ▶ Judicial Independence (Linzer and Staton 2013)

Dynamic Comparative Public Opinion

Two Forerunning Literatures:

1. Estimate a dynamic latent variable using available opinion data (e.g., Stimson 1991)
2. Estimate a TSCS latent variable from multiple cross-national time-series indicators
 - ▶ Democracy (Treier and Jackman 2008; Pemstein, Meserve, and Melton 2010)
 - ▶ Judicial Independence (Linzer and Staton 2013)

Dynamic Comparative Public Opinion

- ▶ Latent public opinion x in country k and year t , given responses y to item r , is modeled as:
- ▶ Estimated in Stan with weakly informative priors and a random walk adjustment process.

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it ...” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it ...” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it ...” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it ...” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874

An Example: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

- ▶ Q: Does extending legal recognition to same-sex couples trigger a backlash in public opinion?
- ▶ 21 datasets: WVS, EVS, EB, ESS, ISSP, LB, AmB, GSS
- ▶ 1397 country-year-items:
 - ▶ “Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Homosexuality” (412 country-years)
 - ▶ “Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors? Homosexuals” (348 country-years)
 - ▶ “Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish ” Agree-disagree (152 country-years)
 - ▶ “And what about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it ...” (141 country-years)
- ▶ 118 countries by 34 years: 4012; unbalanced, 1874