



## Outlook

## FW: [External] Research and Politics - Decision on Manuscript ID RAP-24-0058.R1

**From** Solt, Frederick <frederick-solt@uiowa.edu>

**Date** Wed 2024-12-04 03:31

To Tai, Yuehong Cassandra <yhcasstai@psu.edu>; Ko, Hyein <hyeink@illinois.edu>; yuehu <yuehu@tsinghua.edu.cn>; byungdeukwoo <byungdeukwoo@inu.ac.kr>

FYI, another round. --Fred

—

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**From:** Research and Politics <onbehalfof@manuscriptcentral.com>  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at 11:43 AM  
**To:** Solt, Frederick <frederick-solt@uiowa.edu>  
**Subject:** [External] Research and Politics - Decision on Manuscript ID RAP-24-0058.R1

03-Dec-2024

Dear Dr. Solt:

I have now received the reviews for Manuscript ID RAP-24-0058.R1 entitled "An Incomplete Recipe: Unidimensional Latent Variables Do Not Capture the Full Flavor of Democratic Support" which you submitted to Research and Politics. The excellent comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

While reviewer 2 thinks the revisions have been sufficient to warrant publication, reviewer 1 and the associate editor (AE) note several areas where the revisions have introduced problems in the manuscript. While they still overall recommend publication, they suggest that you take one more swing and editing and revising so that your manuscript is more effective (and would likely have a larger impact). Therefore, I would like to invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and submit a revised version of your manuscript within 4 to 6 weeks.

To revise your manuscript, log into <https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmc.manuscriptcentral.com%2Frap&data=05%7C02%7Cfrederick-solt%40uiowa.edu%7C885ca80d925c4e05883a08dd13c2015f%7C1bc445959aba4fc3b8ec7b94a5586fdc%7C1%7C0%7C638688446194794881%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjIuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMilscikFOljoIjWTFpbGlldUljoiYQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jD0tty6K0DPy7VZJvg2I%2F0fs08b5q5Rj1bqYVBbqIYY%3D&reserved=0> and enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

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Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to Research and Politics, your revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Research and Politics and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Ryan Kennedy  
Editor in Chief, Research and Politics  
kennedy.310@osu.edu

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author

The authors have taken the comments of the reviewers on board, and the paper has improved somewhat as a result. The main point of the paper is now somewhat clearer. However, the paper is still not yet ready for publication, and the some of the changes have resulted in new problems.

The new problems begin around lines 47-50 of page 1 (paper numbering, not proof numbers). The paper

dives too deep into weeds of two papers (Hu, Tai and Solt 2022 and Claassen 2020a) without explaining why. Take this sentence: “Hu, Tai, and Solt (2022) reveals that the latent variable measure of democratic support used in several of these studies is compromised by errors in the coding of survey questions employed as indicators; a replication of Claassen (2020a) correcting these errors finds no support for its conclusions.” We don’t know anything about the Claassen paper yet, or what its conclusions even are. The next sentence about Tannenberg is also not clearly explained.

In the next paragraph (page 2, line 11) “Why doesn’t this well-developed method yield a stable...” it is not totally clear what the “well-developed method” is. I think it is extracting a principle dimension from multidimensional data (survey questions) using some form of dimension reduction technique (e.g., some form of scaling or item-response model), however, this needs to be made clearer (it is also probably better described as a general approach or class of methods, rather than a single method). Clarifying this is especially important because the rest of the paragraph discusses a single “general question” and then goes on to discuss “Churchill-style questions” without actually discussing what is meant by this. I only know what is meant by “Churchill-style question” because I already read the earlier version of the paper. The term cannot go undefined here. Also, the Churchill question represents another way to produce a single dimensional measure without engaging in a scaling exercise.

While I appreciate the attempt to better introduce the reasons why unidimensional measures and multidimensional measures do not correlate, the writing has, in some ways, gotten worse. The new introduction introduces new terms without defining them and does not clearly define what is meant by “unidimensional measures” — it could either be a single dimension extracted from a scaling model using a series of different indicators, or a single answer to a broad question (e.g., the Churchill-style question). The authors, I believe, mean the former — a single dimension estimated from multiple indicators —, but a reader who approaches this paper for the first time would have a hard time figuring that out.

Overall, the setup needs to be cleaner. It needs to be clear that unidimensional measure is from a scaling model that uses certain types of indicator variables (those that talk about general democracy and a democratic option against an undemocratic one), and that this measure is correlated with other indicators of liberal democracy. These issues need to be sorted out for the paper to be publishable.

Reviewer: 2

#### Comments to the Author

I went through both the response memo and the manuscript. In my view, the authors have made an excellent job responding to my comments. Therefore, I recommend that the manuscript be published. I believe it will make an important contribution to the literature.

Associate Editor(s)' Comments to Author:

#### Associate Editor

##### Comments to the Author:

While I am generally hesitant to grant a second round of revise and resubmit, the authors will note that R1 still has a number of concerns regarding the presentation of the edits. My own reading tends to confirm this. The authors could improve the presentation and, by doing this, increase the impact of this paper. I would urge the authors to take seriously these concerns and make sure that their paper is presented in a clean, effective and accessible manner.