

IAN CHARLES SULAM

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EDUCATION

University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

Ph.D. Political Science, expected 2014

M.A. Political Science, 2010

Fields: American Politics, Comparative Politics, Methods

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA

B.A. Political Science, 2005

DISSERTATION

“Precedent Affirmed? The Gap Between Ideology and Opinions” Committee: Lawrence Rothenberg (Chair), Stuart Jordan, Gretchen Helmke

While characterizing the relationship between ideology and precedent is one of the central questions of judicial politics, attempts to understand precedent have been confounded by viewing the Supreme Court in isolation from the rest of the judicial system and the difficulty in characterizing the nature of legal reasoning. Since precedent has both a horizontal and a vertical component, in the first essay I generate case-based measures of the ideology and policy outputs of judges on the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals in a common space with Supreme Court judges and cases, and uses these measures to characterize the appointment, behavior, and retirement of circuit court judges. In the second essay, I generate a model of judicial review that endogenizes preferential voting as a mechanism of precedent-driven uncertainty resolution. I then characterize the relationship between this form of legal uncertainty, hierarchical review, and the observed ideological behavior of judges. The final paper seeks to disentangle the effects of indeterminate judicial dockets and lack of oversight on courts of final appeal by exploiting institutional variation within countries and over time.

1. Treating the Law: Using treatments to estimate judicial opinions, ideology, and precedent on the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal
2. Bridging the Gap: a Model of Legal Indeterminacy and Preferences in a Judicial Hierarchy
3. Precedent not Principals: the Limited Role of Hierarchy in Common Law Judicial Systems

WORKING PAPERS

“Precedent, Policy, Indeterminacy: Using Doctrine Space to Bridge Across Circuits”

- Presented at American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Seattle 2012
- Presented at Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2011
- Presented at American Politics Working Group, University of Rochester 2011

“Warping Space: Strategic Manipulation of Issue Folding in Congress”

with Jeff Arnold, University of Rochester, NY

“Putting Civics to the Test: The Impact of State-Level Civics Assessments”

with Richard Niemi and David Campbell

“Editor In Chief: Opinion Authorship and Clerk Influence on the Supreme Court”

· Presented at University of Rochester as Second Year Paper fulfillment, 2009

· Presented at Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2010

“Do Agencies Really Have a Preference?”

with Lawrence Rothenberg, University of Rochester, NY

· Presented at Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2012

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Graduate Student Stipend and Tuition Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2007-2012

Charles E. Lanni Summer Research Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2011

Charles E. Lanni Summer Research Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2010

Charles E. Lanni Summer Research Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2009

Program in Empirical Policy Research Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2009

Charles E. Lanni Summer Research Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2008 (x2)

Program in Empirical Policy Research Fellowship, University of Rochester, 2008

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Spencer Fellow in Educational Policy (2012-present) Richard Niemi

- Gathered comprehensive data on policies, implementation, and performance of civic education in all 50 states
- Coordinated with multiple stakeholders and officials to generate civics teaching and testing requirements index
- Conducted analysis of relationship between policy and student performance on sensitive / restricted sources

Database Consultant (2008-present) Lynda Powell

- Coordinated with legislative officials and experts to implement large-scale data collection and standardization program for legislative procedures and activity in all 99 state legislative chambers
- Created applications for automated database interface to multiple APIs enabling real-time data update and reporting
- Developed web mining and text parsing tools to categorize state legislative rules and their influence on legislative policymaking
- Developed name resolution software to match corporate and employee campaign contributors and examine effect of contributions on leadership

Undergraduate Methods Advisor (2009-2013) University of Rochester Political Science

- Instructed hands-on data analysis in R, SPSS, SAS and related statistics packages, ranging from advanced research methods to data visualization
- Implemented data-mining applications to gather project-specific data for student research, including web scraping and API interface

- Translated student goals into clear and actionable research programs

Research Assistant (2012-13) Hein Goemanns

- Collected, cleansed, geo-coded, and standardized historical African border conflict database
- Led research from basic analysis of data to robust spacial models of conflict, including geographic data visualization

Research Assistant (2012-13) Bonnie Meguid

- Coordinated with legislative offices and specialists in over 30 countries to generate database of sub-national historical and contemporaneous legislative activity
- Cleansed existing administrative/academic datasets and coordinated with relevant groups to update/correct existing sources

GPU Administrator (2010-2011) University of Rochester Political Science

- Designed and developed server architecture to handle GPU-based computation of bayesian latent trait and multilevel models
- Developed computational simulations to benchmark server and database performance

Graduate Methods Advisor (2008-2010) University of Rochester Political Science

- Designed curriculum to introduce graduate students to research methods, advanced topics in statistics, and formal theory
- Instructed graduate students in database design, data management plans, data preparation, and data archiving

Research Assistant (2008-2010) Stu Jordan

- Created web-scraping application to generate dataset of EPA administrative procedures in response to Notice and Comment filings
- Coded applications to standardize and parse administrative procedures and rulings
- Developed sentiment analysis software to examine the influence of notice and comment filings on bureaucratic policymaking and justification

Financial and Program Analyst (2005-2006) Department of the Treasury, CDFI Fund

- Drafted program evaluation reports and presentations for Treasury officials, community stakeholders, and members of Congress
- Identified and drafted policies to prevent inconsistencies with Treasury databases
- Coded automated data-miner and data cleanser capable of standardizing disparate user-generated data sources

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Undergraduate Methods Advisor (Professor Richard Niemi), University of Rochester, Fall 2011 - Spring 2013

Teaching Assistant, Undergraduate Research Seminar (Professor Richard Niemi), University of Rochester, Spring 2011 - 2012

Instructor, Math Prefresher, University of Rochester, Summer 2009, Summer 2010

Teaching Assistant, Introduction to American Politics (Professor Valeria Sinclair-Chapman), University of Rochester, Spring 2009, Spring 2011

Teaching Assistant, American Elections (Professor Lynda Powell), University of Rochester, Fall 2010

Teaching Assistant, Undergraduate Game Theory (Professor Tasos Kalandrakis), University of Rochester, Spring 2010

Teaching Assistant, Graduate Probability and Inference (Professor Kevin Clark), University of Rochester, Fall 2009

Teaching Assistant, Graduate Mathematical Modeling (Professor Mark Fey), University of Rochester, Fall 2009

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2010, 2011, 2012
American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2011

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Midwest Political Science Association, 2009 - present
American Political Science Association, 2009 - present
Watson Center for International Conflict, 2007 - present
Wallis Institute for Political Economy, 2007 - present
Comparative Politics Working Group, University of Rochester, 2007 - present
American Politics Working Group, University of Rochester, 2007 - present

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

American Politics

Judicial Politics, Institutional Design, Constitutional Law
Elite Preference Formation and Expression
Interbranch Delegation and Oversight

Methodology

Text Analysis and Natural Language Processing
Parallelization and Big Data
Latent Trait Analysis

TECHNICAL SKILLS

R, Stata, SPSS, C/C++, CUDA, Javascript, Hadoop, WinBUGS, ArcGIS, Perl, Python, L^AT_EX, Access, Excel

REFERENCES

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