

ORIGINAL PAPER: PHILLIPS (2012)

Main Questions

1. ...
2. ...
- ...

Findings

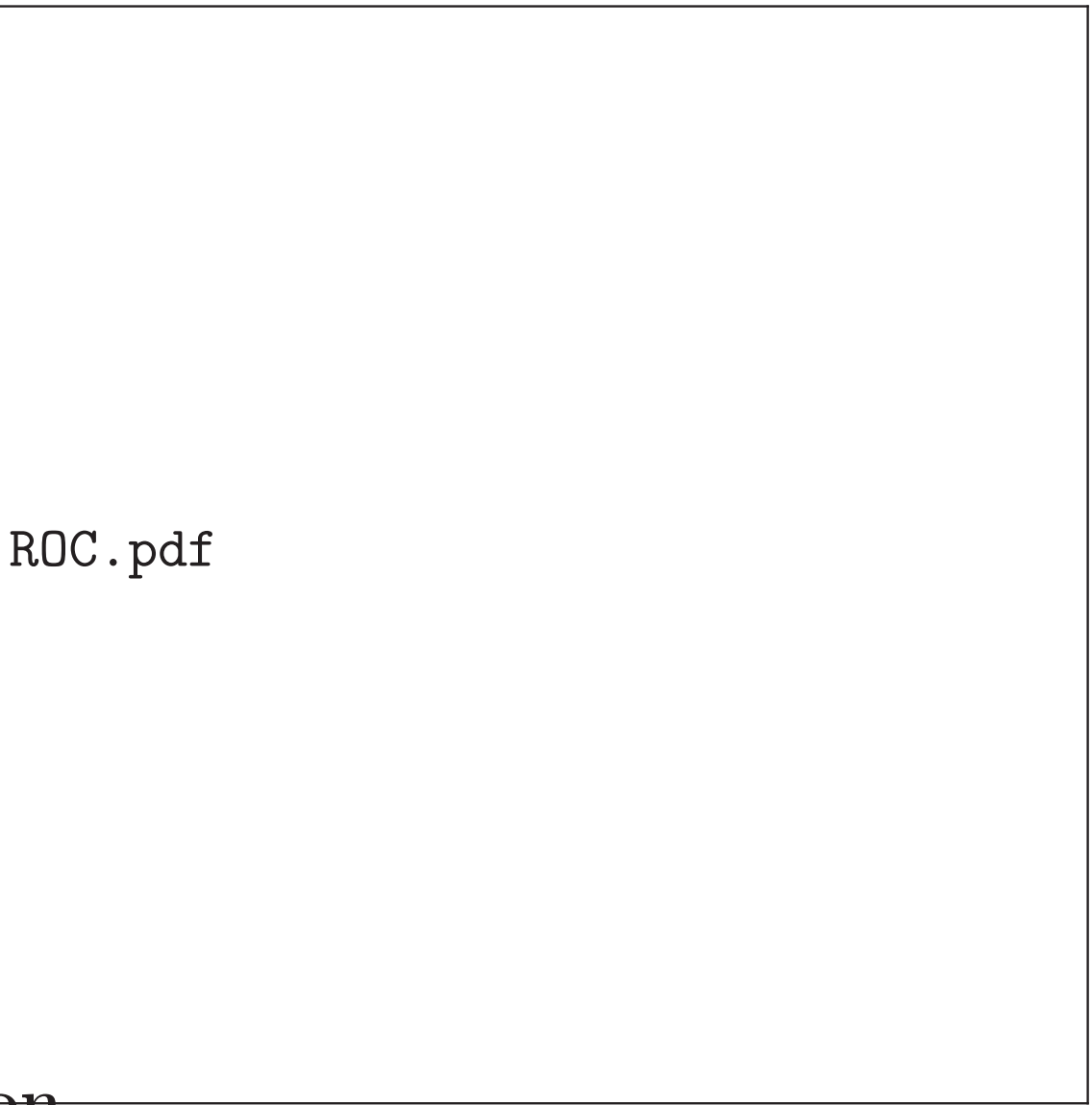
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ALTERNATE MODEL SPECIFICATION

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Problem

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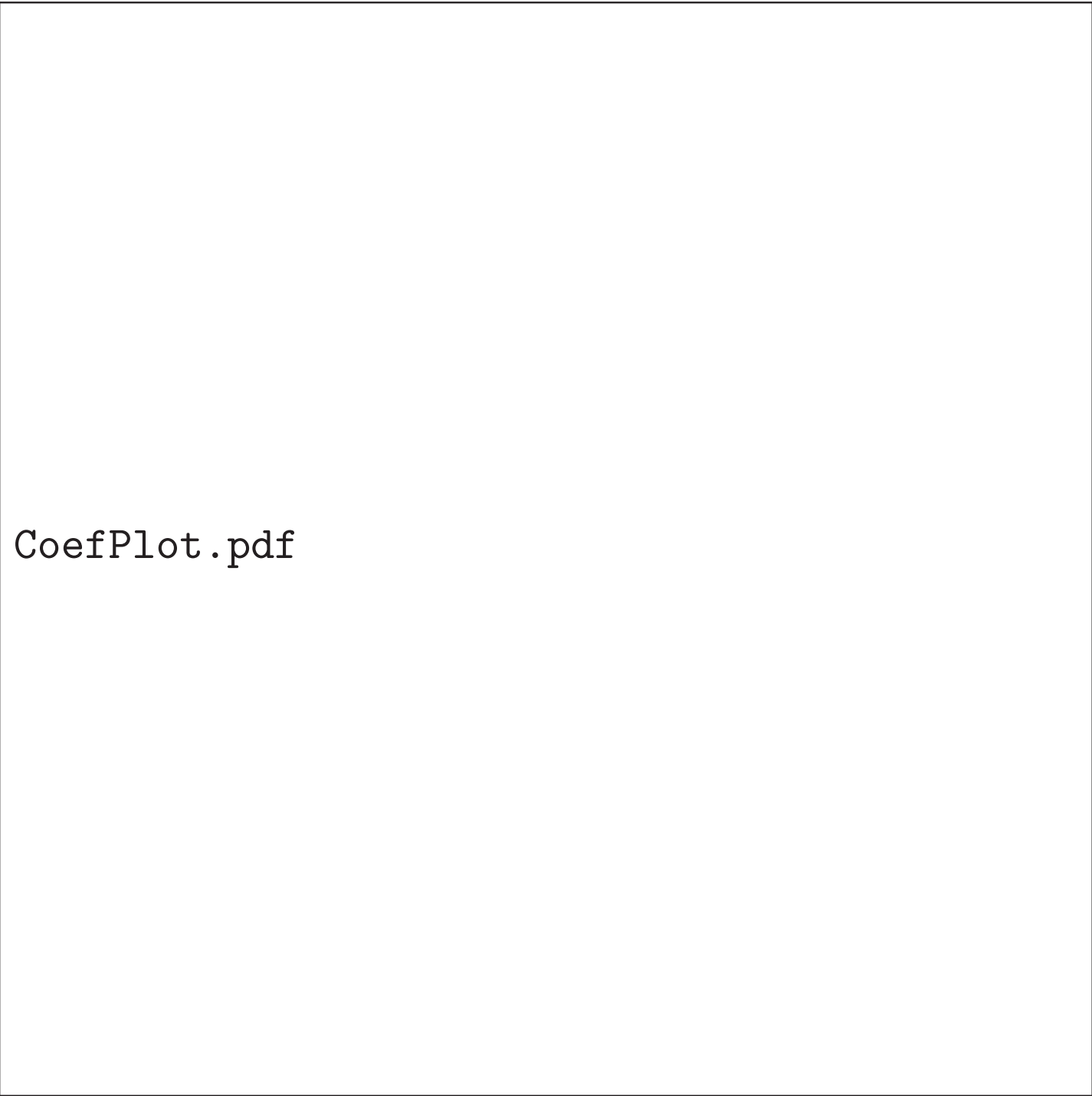


Solution

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REVISED POINT ESTIMATES

As this coefficient plot shows, introducing an alternative selection equation for MIDs does not greatly alter the point estimates for the religion/state dyad types for the outcome of interest, Severe Dispute.



However, with fewer variables in the selection model, we can be *more confident* in the robustness of the results of the outcome equation.

PREDICTED PROBABILITIES BY DYAD TYPE

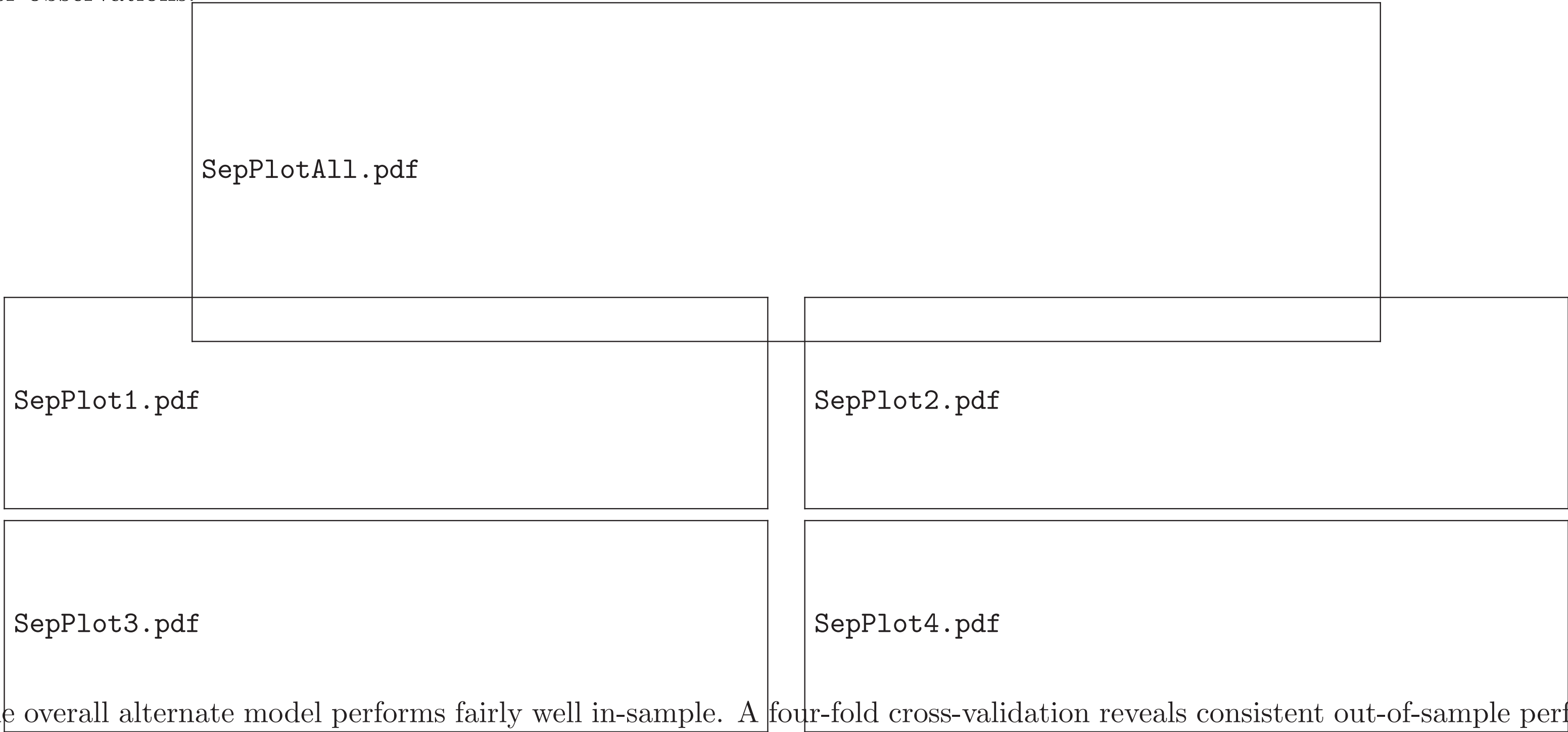
The plots below show the predicted probability of a severe dispute as time since a previous MID increases. Religion/state dyad types are plotted individually, holding all other variables at their mean, median, or at zero (dummies for other dyad types).



Dyads with religious and non-religious pairings (high ideological distance) start with higher probabilities of severity and do not decrease as much over time as ideologically-similar pairings. However, there is high uncertainty.

PREDICTIVE ACCURACY OF THE MODEL

In the separation plots below, predicted probabilities of severe disputes are ordered from low (far left) to high (far right), with actual severe disputes (1) represented in dark blue and non-events (0) represented in light brown. Ideally, all blue lines should be clustered on the right, *separated* from non-events on the left. A trace line corresponds to the predicted probability values over observations.



The overall alternate model performs fairly well in-sample. A four-fold cross-validation reveals consistent out-of-sample performance. The plots also show, though, that the model tends to over-predict the outcome.

CONCLUSIONS

Henne's work does pick up on an **apparent effect of religion-state relations on dispute severity**, but the finding is **overshadowed by issues of uncertainty**. Within the coefficient plot, a 95 percent confidence interval includes zero for five out of six religion/state dyad types. The predicted probabilities of severe disputes plotted for the different dyad types show that coefficients within a reasonable range could yield wildly different results. As evidenced by separation plots, the model can predict severe disputes relatively well, but it consistently overestimates.

Bottom Line

Any theoretical or practical claims based on these results should be made with caution, but religion could be a viable variable of interest in international relations.

Moving Forward

- Develop a theoretically robust and structurally-distinct selection equation to truly avoid correlated errors and misuse of selection methods.
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- Expand to other interstate interactions (trade, treaties, etc.) and religion's salience at different levels (beyond institutionalization, such as within public opinion, media, etc.) of national society.