Gov 1006 Final Project - Milestone 5

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1 Introduction

The paper *Policy Preferences and Policy Change: Dynamic Responsiveness in the American States, 1936-2014* (Caughey and Warshaw 2018) discusses the predictors of state policy change and pinpoints what factors have the strongest impact on a state's liberalism. In particular, the authors focus on mass political consensus and state policy response to changes in this consensus. They have acquired measures of mass policy preferences through an accumulation of multiple poll responses over time and of state policy liberalism using some defined estimates.[1] Responsiveness is then measured as a relationship between the liberalism of the masses and the liberalism of the policies at each given moment in time. All code can be found in my Github repository.[2]

Ultimately, the authors of the paper run different types of regressions using mass liberalism (from opinion data) and policy liberalism (using measures as described in Caughey and Warshaw (2016)) as independent variables in addition to other explanatory factors such as whether a state is in the "South" or not, whether it was an election year, and a number of other features in order to determine how mass liberalism impacts policy liberalism. They find that state policies tend to respond to mass opinion in terms of liberalism, both for economic and social issues. They also find that state policies respond more strongly in the social case than in the economic one.

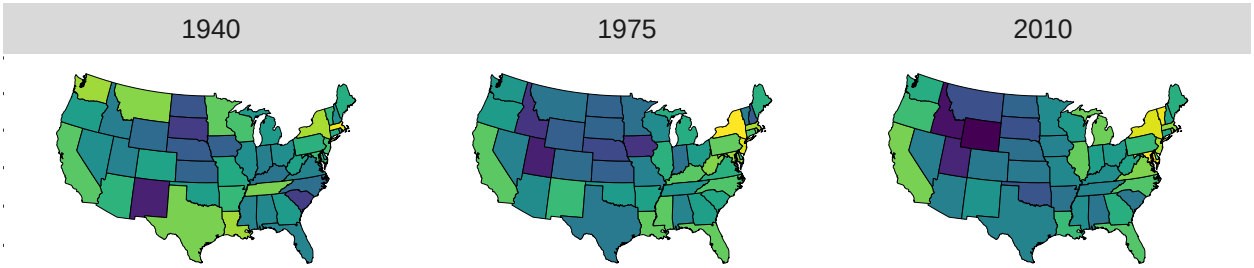
Interestingly, these correlations may have become more pronounced since the Carter presidency due to an increase in partisan politics shifting towards hyperpartisanism, as individual identify more strongly with a party's views on both social and economic issues and thus will reflect policy changes that align with these views (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 2006). Some scholars, like Achen and Bartels (2017), have claimed that mass liberalism has little to no effect on policy liberalism, but the results of this paper indicate the true effect is possibly otherwise.

[1] These quantified liberalism estimates are estimated following a procedure defined by Caughey and Warshaw (2016)

[2] All analysis for this paper is available in the Github repository at https://github.com/sardination/gov1006-final-project

2 Replication

The following graphic is a replication of Figure 1 from the original paper by Caughey and Warshaw (Caughey and Warshaw 2018). All code for the replication is pulled from the code provided by Caughey and Warshaw (Caughey and Warshaw 2017) for replication and modified for the purposes of this assignment.



This figure is the bottom half of Figure 1 in Caughey and Warshaw (2018) and shows the liberalism by state in terms of opinions about economic topics (mass economic liberalism). Darker states are more conservative while lighter states are more liberal. The colors are relative among states within the same year but are not standardized from year to year.

3 Appendix

Below is a replication of Table 1 in Caughey and Warshaw (2018) that details the linear regression analysis done on explaining policy liberalism in year t given the variables of mass liberalism in the year $t-1$, whether a state is in the "South" or not, and policy liberalism in the year $t-1$.

	DV: Domain-Specific Policy Liberalism (t)							
	Social				Economic			
	XS	FE	LDV	DP	XS	FE	LDV	DP
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Mass Liberalism$_{t-1}$	**.873**	**.292**	**.044**	**.037**	**.640**	**.259**	**.023**	**.014**
	(.118)	(.083)	(.008)	(.009)	(.099)	(.063)	(.006)	(.007)
Mass Lib$_{t-1}$ × South	**−.432**	**.273**	−.027	−.013	**−.690**	**−.284**	−.016	−.008
	(.203)	(.159)	(.017)	(.023)	(.136)	(.086)	(.013)	(.015)
Policy Liberalism$_{t-1}$			**.971**	**.933**			**.976**	**.931**
			(.007)	(.014)			(.005)	(.012)
Year × South FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854
Adjusted R^2	.543	.801	.973	.973	.543	.794	.971	.971

The original table has been screenshotted from the paper and pasted below.

TABLE 1. Cross-sectional and dynamic responsiveness, by issue domain and region. XS = pooled cross-sectional regression; FE = two-way fixed effects; LDV = lagged dependent variable; DP = dynamic panel. In all specifications, year intercepts are allowed to vary by region. Standard errors are clustered by state and are robust to autocorrelation. Variables are scaled to have a standard deviation of 1. Estimates are corrected for measurement error. Bold coefficients are statistically significant at the 10% level.

	DV: Domain-Specific Policy Liberalism (t)							
	Social				Economic			
	XS (1)	FE (2)	LDV (3)	DP (4)	XS (5)	FE (6)	LDV (7)	DP (8)
Mass Liberalism$_{t-1}$	**.867**	**.306**	**.043**	**.037**	**.637**	**.261**	**.023**	**.014**
	(.116)	(.081)	(.008)	(.009)	(.099)	(.068)	(.006)	(.008)
Mass Lib$_{t-1}$ × South	−**.431**	.269	−**.025**	−.011	−**.688**	−**.287**	−.017	−.006
	(.203)	(.168)	(.015)	(.023)	(.138)	(.091)	(.013)	(.015)
Policy Liberalism$_{t-1}$			**.971**	**.934**			**.976**	**.931**
			(.007)	(.016)			(.005)	(.011)
Year × South FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854	3,854
Adjusted R^2	.541	.801	.973	.973	.541	.793	.971	.971

References

Achen, Christopher H, and Larry M Bartels. 2017. *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Vol. 4. Princeton University Press.

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Erikson, Robert S, Gerald C Wright, and John P McIver. 2006. "Public Opinion in the States: A Quarter Century of Change and Stability." *Public Opinion in State Politics* 229: 238.