Amici Space Codebook
Organized Interests Data Set

Methodology

We use the positions advocated in amicus curiae ("friend of the Court") briefs filed in the 1953 through 2013 Supreme Court Terms to estimate the ideal points of organized interests in the Supreme Court's legal policy space. We treat these amicus brief-based "votes" on cases as analogous to the votes cast by the justices in these cases, which lets us estimate the locations of these actors and the justices in the same policy space. Using these "votes" by organized interests and justices, we estimate item response theory (IRT) models that treat the ideal points of these actors as a latent, unobservable trait to be estimated via Bayesian Markov chain Monte Carlo methods.

Because organized interests can choose the cases in which to "vote" (i.e., file amicus briefs) it is not safe to assume that abstentions can be treated as missing-at-random (MAR). The logic of the spatial voting model underlying ideal point estimation models typical approach implies that these abstentions should be a function of the location of the actors, which suggests that these abstentions are not random. We therefore employ a recent extension of the IRT ideal point estimation model designed to account for nonresponses or abstentions (developed by Rosas, Shomer, and Haptonstahl).* This abstention-allowing IRT model also allows actors to have different baseline rates of voting that are unrelated to spatial considerations.

We use Martin and Quinn's (2002) informative priors for a handful of the justices, which orient our ideal point estimates so that smaller values (often negative) correspond with what might be viewed as liberal positions and larger values correspond with what might be viewed as conservative positions.**

For more details on the methodology, see our working papers.

* Rosas, Guillermo, Yael Shomer, and Stephen R. Haptonstahl. 2015. "No News is News: Non-Ignorable Non-Response in Roll-Call Data Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2):511-528. The specific version of the model we use is presented in the Supplemental Information for this article.

** Martin, Andrew D., and Kevin M. Quinn. 2002. "Dynamic Ideal Point Estimation via Markov Chain Monte Carlo for the U.S. Supreme Court, 1953–1999." *Political Analysis* 10:134-53.

Collecting the "Votes"

The organized interests included in this dataset are listed under their current name (as of 2014) but might have filed amicus briefs under previous names. For example, the American Association of Retired Persons formally changed its name to AARP in the late 1990s, and the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund became Legal Momentum in 2004. On the searchable part of the website (available on the "Organized Interests" page) you can search using former names and the current name of the organized interest and its ideal point will appear.

When gathering the "votes" to produce the ideal point estimates, groups that changed names were treated as a single interest. We take a more conservative route when two or more groups merged to create a new group. We treat the initial two groups and the third, newly-formed group each as separate entities in these scenarios.

Variables:

Variable Name	Label
voterID	Unique numeric ID
idealPoint	Ideal Point Estimate
idealPointL95	Lower End of 95% Credible Interval of Ideal Point
idealPointU95	Upper End of 95% Credible Interval of Ideal Point
name	Name of organized interest or justice
justice	1 = justice, 0 = organized interest
interest	1 = organized interest, 0 = justice