Placing Lobbyists in Legislative Ideological Space

Kevin M. Esterling, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of California, Riverside

Abstract:
I propose a new method to place lobbyists into legislative common space measures for liberal-conservative (left-right) ideology scores. The method treats lobbyists' scores in legislative ideological space as missing data and leverages survey responses from former members of the U.S. Congress along with a flexible Bayesian statistical model to impute the missing scores. The statistical model incorporates estimation uncertainty into the imputed lobbyist ideology measures and propagates that uncertainty to structural parameters within substantive outcome equations. I demonstrate the methods with an application to test whether members of Congress condition their questioning of lobbyists in committee hearings on the ideological preference similarity within the legislator-lobbyist dyad.

Biography:
Prof. Esterling’s research focuses on deliberative democracy in American national politics. His current work identifies the conditions that lead citizens to engage constructively in public discourse. He is the author of The Political Economy of Expertise: Information and Efficiency in American National Politics (University of Michigan Press, 2004). He has published in a number of journals, including The American Political Science Review, Political Analysis, The Journal of Politics, Rationality and Society, Political Communication, and the Journal of Theoretical Politics. His work has been funded by the National Science Foundation and by the MacArthur Foundation. Esterling was previously a Robert Wood Johnson Scholar in Health Policy Research at the University of California, Berkeley and a postdoctoral research fellow at the A. Alfred Taubman Center for Public Policy and American Institutions at Brown University. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago in 1999.