

Weighing Economic Ideology

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Overview of research project

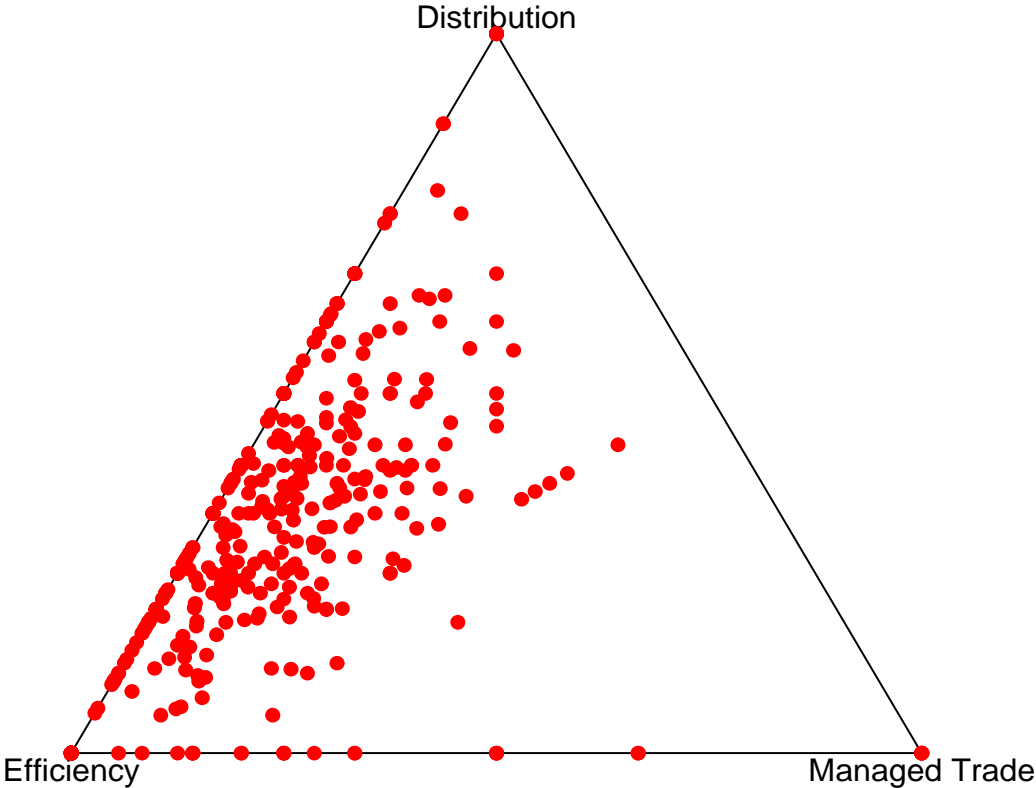
- Fundamental interest is in how elected officials balance the interests of constituents with their beliefs about the virtues of particular economic policies
- Using multiple strategies to approach this question
- Here we are looking at text analysis of speeches.
 - We organize the rational used in a speech or statement into cause-effect categories.
 - Seek to explain use of theoretical models by characteristics of the speaker.
 - This paper looks at party, region, votes, constituent characteristics and chamber.

Data

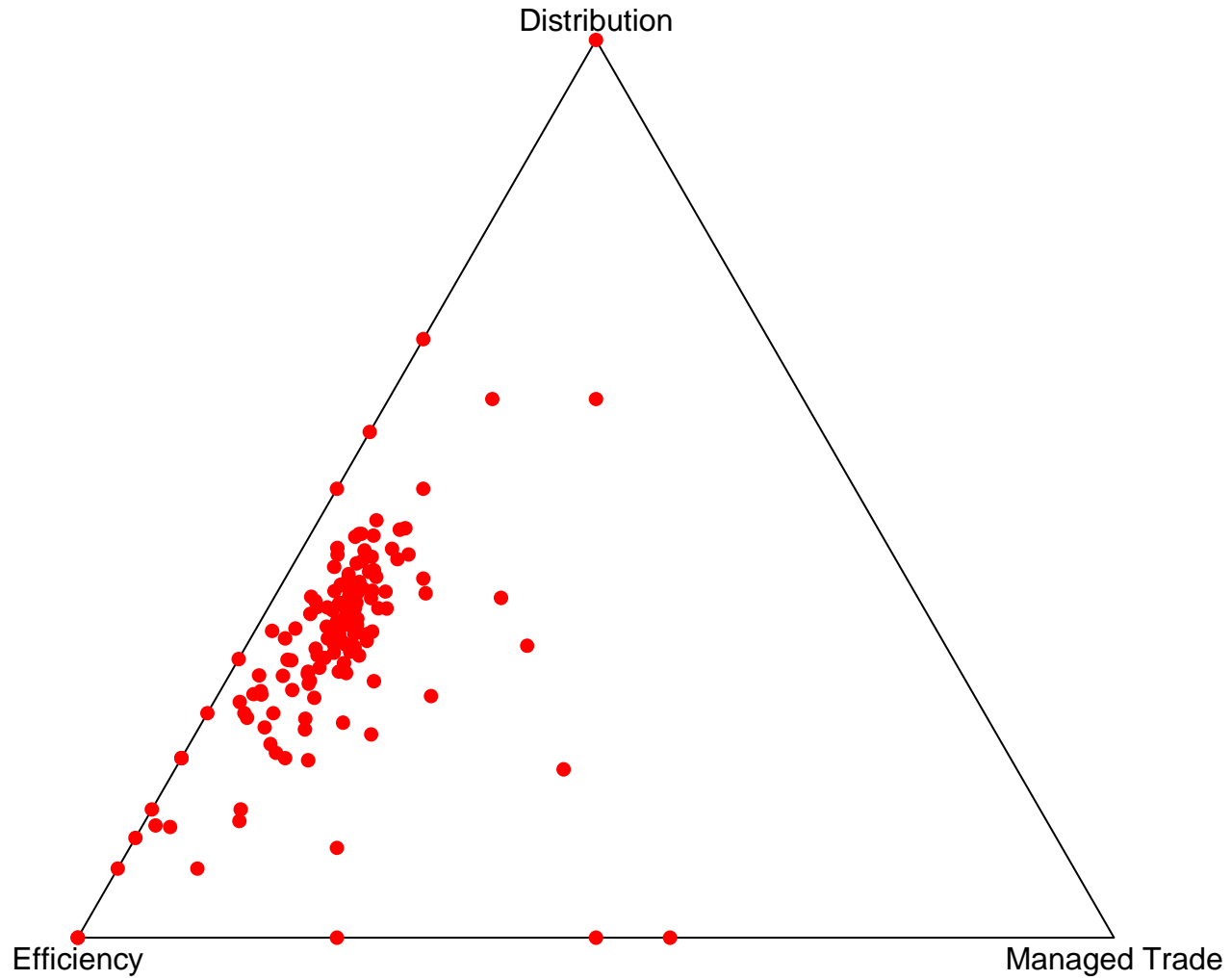
- Look at tariff debate, for two-30 year periods, one each in the 19th and 20th century
 - Why tariff policy? Able to identify different and long standing causal models on the effects of tariffs
 - Why these time periods? Variation in party voting
- Data set for the 19th century is 518,000 speeches or statements in the Senate and 67,000 in the House
- Data set for the 20th century is 35,000 speeches in the Senate and 10,000 speeches in the House
- How did we code these speeches?
 - From 1820 debate on the tariff we selected three arguments on the implications of high or low tariffs
 - Selected words that could be associated with each argument from party platforms
 - Computer assisted mapping of speech into our categories

How does the data look when
organized around three different
economic arguments?

House Positions 19th Century



Senate Positions 19th Century



Distribution of 19th Century House Speeches in Categories of Interest

	Efficiency	Managed trade	Redistribution
Democrats	1599	248	1318
Republicans	1183	248	873
South	786	133	560
West	316	31	301
Midwest	1101	212	940
North	634	125	416
Farms	1348	241	1067
No Farms	1489	260	1150
Manufacturing	1332	247	1010
No Manufacturing	1505	254	1207
Railroads	1332	247	1010
No Railroads	1505	254	1207

Hypotheses

- H1. Rhetoric is distinct from positions on the tariff.
 - Look at voting patterns and expect that rhetoric is a different dimension.
- H2: Partisanship and region predicts how a legislator explains his position on the tariff.
 - Try to predict position based on party and region
- H3: Debates in each chamber will focus on different causal models. The House will be more interested in distribution; the Senate interested in managed trade. This difference will be greater in the 20th than the 19th century.
 - Separate our models by chamber and evaluate overall speech
- H4a: Efficiency rhetoric is higher in districts and regions connected to international markets by railroads.
 - Use RRs as a proxy for ability to get products to market
- 4b: Congressional speech should focus on redistributive concerns less often in sectors characterized by farming, reflecting the efficiency of American agriculture.
 - Look at number of farms and manufacturing measures as predictors of rhetoric models.
 - Focus in the 19th century

Findings on 19th century (Focus on the House)

Rhetoric, Votes, Party and Region, 19th Century House

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
	(1)	(2)	(3)

Free Trade Votes	0.099	0.009	-0.068
	(0.044)	(0.019)	(0.034)
Democrats	-0.034	-0.024	0.039
	(0.031)	(0.014)	(0.024)
Total Speech	-0.008	0.003	0.013
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Northeast	0.011	0.014	-0.019
	(0.030)	(0.013)	(0.024)
West	0.050	-0.031	0.036
	(0.054)	(0.024)	(0.042)
South	-0.016	0.022	0.001
	(0.032)	(0.014)	(0.025)
Constant	0.668	0.051	0.193
	(0.025)	(0.011)	(0.020)

Observations	586	586	586
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Trade and Railroads, 19th Century House

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
	(1)	(2)	(3)

ln(Railroads 1880)	0.053	-0.009	-0.028
	(0.019)	(0.008)	(0.015)
Total Speech	-0.008	0.003	0.012
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Northeast	0.009	0.011	-0.016
	(0.030)	(0.013)	(0.023)
West	0.113	-0.044	0.004
	(0.059)	(0.027)	(0.047)
South	0.037	0.001	-0.018
	(0.036)	(0.016)	(0.028)
Constant	0.238	0.124	0.420
	(0.158)	(0.071)	(0.124)

Observations	586	586	586

Interest and Rhetoric, 19th Century House

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3
ln(Railroads 1880)	0.064	0.005	-0.085
	(0.036)	(0.016)	(0.029)
ln(Farms)	-0.0003	-0.0001	0.001
	(0.0004)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)
Manufacturing	0.013	-0.005	-0.005
	(0.027)	(0.012)	(0.021)
Total Speech	-0.008	0.003	0.012
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Northeast	0.0001	0.007	0.009
	(0.032)	(0.014)	(0.025)
West	0.102	-0.051	0.039
	(0.062)	(0.028)	(0.048)
South	0.052	0.004	-0.046
	(0.041)	(0.019)	(0.033)
Constant	0.196	0.027	0.755
	(0.266)	(0.119)	(0.209)
Observations	586	586	586

What can we say based on our data?

- Votes and explanations for votes are not consistent. Elected officials who cast the same vote appear to offer different explanations to constituents for that vote. Free traders were somewhat more likely to speak about the benefits of market efficiency when talking about a tariff in the House, but we see much less of this in the Senate and this varies over time.
- Party is a weak predictor of rhetoric. Democrats, however, whatever their preferred trade policy, more often referred to classic models of trade to explain their vote.
- The House and Senate employed different rhetorical models. This may reflect institutional context, because it is strongest in the 20th century after delegation.
- Connectivity to markets divided representatives, even in the same party; in the 19 century, what you produced was important.

Extensions

- Ideal point analysis by congress shows that the 20th century debate on tariffs became increasingly less explicable by party. In fact, the two parties look very alike, not in that they agree, but that you see about as much use of one model as the other over time
- We do further analysis of railroads to see if the RR effect remains in the 20th century. While RR intensity in the 19th C. increased the likelihood that a representatives would more likely argue that trade was efficient and less likely to talk about negative distributional issues of an open market, this flips in the mid-20th C. 20th C trade was less about RR access. The old RR geography was an overlay on non-competitive and anti-trade parts of the country.
- Is the study of rhetoric fruitful?
 - For trade, votes are too blunt a tool for analytic purposes
 - For trade, enables us to begin to derive a model of how representatives interpret changing district interests, esp. if we know there is a mismatch