Pro-civil liberties but anti-suffrage: Why would MPs support some aspects of democracy but not others?* 

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Abstract

Studies of democratization tend to fall into one of two categories: cross-national, cross-temporal analyses, or in-depth case studies of reform. This paper attempts to bridge this divide by approaching democratization from the perspective of the contemporary actors involved in it, considering a variety of different democracy-related bills within their parliamentary context. It proposes a multidimensional approach based on understanding democracy the way it emerged historically. I use Bayesian ideal point estimation to measure legislators’ spatial preferences on 124 democratization-related roll calls in the 1865-8 British Parliament, showing that a multidimensional model fits the data better than a simpler unidimensional one. Further, I try to uncover what made MPs vote differently on one dimension in particular - civil liberties - than the others, suggesting that voting on democratization in the British parliament in the 1860s was confounded by legislators’ attitudes towards the Irish question.

1 Introduction

There is no agreement within the scholarly community regarding how democracy ought to be treated empirically by studies of its emergence, which is based in part on a more fundamental disagreement regarding how it ought to be conceptualized (Adcock and Collier, 2001: 532-3). Most of the empirical literature examines democratization by testing correlates of various different unidimensional measures of democracy, from dichotomies to composite indices. On the other hand, approaching aggregation more critically results in difficulties when trying to come to terms with the depth of empirical data, and historical studies have sometimes limited themselves to examining the establishment of individual key institutions at critical junctures (Capoccia and Ziblatt, 2010).

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This paper proposes a multidimensional approach based on understanding democracy the way it emerged historically, using the 1865-8 British Parliament, which considered a wide variety of democracy-related legislation, as a case study. By examining all the different democracy-related bills in the House of Commons, I compare legislator incentives across four dimensions, tracing the way legislative conflicts impacted the process of democratization during this crucial time in British history. This multidimensional approach allows for the possibility that the dimensions, such as suffrage expansions or civil liberties protections, may have been supported by different coalitions or driven by different causes, or even that changes along one dimension may have affected another dimension, either positively or negatively.

Part I of this paper focuses on establishing the dimensionality of democracy in this parliament. Section 2 outlines previous approaches to studying the emergence of democracy, including both unidimensional, existing multidimensional and case study conceptualizations, and how the approach used in this paper differs. Section 3 presents the data and methods used in this paper. Results follow in section 4. Part II tries to delve deeper into the reasons behind this multidimensionality, suggesting that the Irish question may have confounded legislators’ votes on democratization in this period.

Part I
Examining the dimensionality of democracy

2 Background

2.1 Unidimensional approaches

The vast majority of cross-national empirical studies on democratization use pre-existing measures of democracy as the dependent variable. They tend to fall into three categories: the first use dichotomous measures (e.g. Alvarez et al., 1999; Collier, 1999; Boix, 2003; Houle, 2009); the second use existing composite indices, such as Polity IV and Freedom House (e.g. Shugart, 1999; Persson and Tabellini, 2001; Van de Walle, 2002; Kitschelt, 2011); and the third use three- or four-fold typologies which take one or two hybrid regime types into account, though these often build upon existing indices for cut-offs (e.g. Levitsky and Way, 2010; Schedler, 2002; Carothers, 2002; Howard and Roessler, 2006). However, almost all of these studies treat democracy as an inherently unidimensional concept; countries are pictured as moving along a hypothetical continuum from autocracy to democracy, in which all of the rules or conventions that are variously classifying as affecting democracy work vaguely to reinforce one another. Both dichotomous and most composite index approaches thus share difficulties stemming from the task of aggregating this rich empirical variation into one unidimensional measure. Most

1Some studies, such as Ansell and Samuels (2010), use both dichotomous and ordinal measures.
2Dichotomous approaches also have other issues, chief among them the necessarily arbitrary nature of deciding on a single threshold for when a country democratises (see Collier, 1999: 27-9 for the difficulties
indices strive for maximum parsimony by aggregating their components up to a single democracy score, even when this may not necessarily be appropriate given the conceptual framework of the components.\(^3\) This focus on aggregation assumes that democracy is a unidimensional latent variable underlying all relevant indicators (Penstein, Meserve and Melton, 2010: 6); it does not take into account the potential multidimensionality of the different component concepts, and forcing them into a common metric renders the resulting score somewhat weak conceptually.\(^4\) As Munck and Verkuilen (2002: 23) argue, unidimensionality (and thus straightforward aggregatability) of the components of democracy is a hypothesis rather than a fact. Indeed, studies which have attempted to test the dimensionality of existing democracy indicators have concluded that one dimension is not sufficient; rather, they have found two (Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado, 2008) or even three dimensions to be more appropriate when characterizing the observed empirical variation (Coppedge and Gerring, 2014).\(^5\)

2.2 Multidimensional approaches

Some recent scholarship has developed strategies to address the difficulties inherent in trying to measure democracy at such an aggregate level. A completely different approach is taken by the Varieties of Democracy project, a huge ongoing effort by many major political scientists to come up with a new way of conceptualizing democracy. This is an attempt to create a more transparent, ‘customizable’ index consisting of components which can be analysed separately. Indeed, this effort is extremely laudable, above all for its transparency and inherently disaggregated approach: the project reports scores on all selected empirical indicators, which allows for much more replicability in the reconstruction of their more aggregated scores. The emphasis of the project (and the principle guiding the dimensions they choose to aggregate their component of settling on a cut-off for the UK); especially in the past, institutions were rarely adopted simultaneously (Ziblatt, 2006; Bermeo, 2010).

\(^3\)Freedom House is the only exception, but even here concepts are aggregated up to form two composite scales, with similar problems. Moreover, as Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado (2008: 2, 24) have shown, it is unclear that the separation between political rights and civil liberties is a productive one, as the two scales always correlate at over 0.9 and both correspond to what the authors call Dahl’s ‘contestation’ dimension.

\(^4\)See also Ravaillon (2010) for a similar discussion regarding development indices.

\(^5\)Moreover, the methods of aggregation can also be problematic; most indices use either addition, multiplication or some combination of the two. In fact, the choice of aggregation method ought to be theoretically driven; thus, addition would be indicated if two components are theorized to carry the same weight, while multiplication would be indicated if both components are necessary (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002: 24). However, most existing indices, including the additive Freedom House and Polity IV, do not theoretically justify their choice of aggregation rule (Munck and Verkuilen, 2002: 26). These problems are compounded by indices such as the CID, which in turn aggregate Freedom House and Polity with yet more measures (Lauth and Kauff, 2012). Though ideally aggregation would be based on a theory of how the different dimensions of democracy relate to one another, it is hard to theoretically disentangle different components’ relationships to democracy as a composite concept. Moreover, the weighting of components breeds further complexity; some components might become more important in interaction with others, but remain fairly trivial by themselves (such as an inclusive franchise if the elected body is subordinate to unelected institutions, as in Imperial Germany).
indicators into) is to quantify and empirically trace different theoretical types - varieties - of democracy, or the extent to which countries conform to ‘ideal types’ such as liberal democracy, egalitarian democracy, deliberative democracy, and so on (V-Dem, 2014: 4-5). To this end, for each of these principles they compile several relevant indicators - both democracy indicators, such as enfranchisement, and indicators of how power is exercised, such as the number of parties in the legislature or whether a system is presidential.

Another approach which focuses thus on the empirical co-occurrence of institutions has been used by Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado (2008). Here, confirmatory factor analysis is used to test the components of many different existing indices; the authors find that two components explain the majority of the variance among the indicators, which they identify as being Dahl’s (1971) theoretical dimensions, inclusiveness and contestation (Coppedge, Alvarez and Maldonado, 2008: 636).

2.3 Case studies and the ‘historical turn’

On the other hand, other scholars have responded to the impossibility of aggregating components by doubling down on detail in historically informed case studies. This ‘historical turn’ in democratization studies has turned away from large-scale studies in order to analyse the establishment of democratic institutions at key critical junctures (Capoccia and Ziblatt, 2010; Bermeo, 2010; Ahmed and Capoccia, 2014). Scholarship in this field focuses on the importance of ‘reading history forward’ by examining the motivations and incentives of key actors - particularly, but not exclusively, political parties - while avoiding the assumptions of causal homogeneity and full information (Capoccia and Ziblatt, 2010).

For instance, some analyse individual instances of democratic reform, such as suffrage expansions or secret ballot legislation, without linking this to a wider conceptualization of democracy in that country (e.g. Ziblatt, 2008; Leemann and Mares, 2011; Bronner, 2014). However, such case studies have several drawbacks. They focus only on particularly noteworthy bills (mostly successful ones, though some, such as Ziblatt (2008), deal with the failure of electoral reform to pass), leaving out many of the bills that affected the functioning of democracy in less spectacular (or just less reported) ways. Moreover, though they target a wider debate on democratization, their empirical focus is on the development of only one institution, usually electoral reform, implicitly neglecting the possibility that other institutions may have other causes. Finally, their focus on one institution also means that they do not address how different institutions may co-vary or affect one another.

2.4 The dimensionality of legislative conflict

Rather than focusing on the reform of a single institution, or on trying to isolate commonalities from a huge cross-national, cross-temporal dataset, this paper takes an intermediate approach, focusing on one country - the UK - over a comparatively short period of time, the 1865-8 Parliament. Though brief and turbulent - it saw the fall of the Liberal government as a result of the failure of Gladstone’s attempts at franchise
reform, after which a Conservative minority government passed an even more radical bill, leading to dissolution after only three years to allow for a fresh election according to the newly passed electoral laws - it considered quite a variety of democracy-related bills. Limiting our focus to this one parliament allows us to consider how legislators, the key actors in Britain’s amble towards democracy, interacted with each other on different types of bills - including franchise expansion, but also the regulation of corruption and civil liberties (see section 3.1 for details on the types of bills considered).

This approach has several advantages. For one, it broadens our scope beyond the passage of a single landmark piece of legislation, which is necessarily suffused with selection bias, to consider all kinds of democracy-related amendments in the parliament - both those that passed and those that failed, on bills ranging from the vastly over-studied to the shamefully neglected. Importantly, examining the different dimensions of democracy considered in one parliament also allows us to compare how legislative conflict differed across dimensions; it is entirely conceivable that the coalitions that developed in support of universal suffrage would differ from those that developed to combat corruption or to strengthen parliament vis-à-vis the executive (Ziblatt, 2006: 336-7). As the results below show, considering the dimensions separately, and predicting the differences between them, allows us to draw inferences about the diverging preferences of certain MPs.

3 Data and method

3.1 Data

Despite its brevity, the 1865-8 House of Commons saw a total of 124 roll calls on amendments to democracy-related bills (data from Eggers and Spirling, 2014). These roll calls were manually divided into different dimensions; four distinct dimensions, inclusivity, electoral integrity, civil liberties and equality, were identified by the author (Table 1 presents these, including an example of a pro-democratic roll call in each of the dimensions).

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6 The Second Reform Act is obviously an instance of the former, while in the latter category, the author is unaware of any work by political scientists specifically on the Habeas Corpus Suspension (Ireland) acts passed by this parliament, for example.

7 These 124 roll calls were manually selected from the 410 roll calls the House voted on in total during this Parliament.

8 See section 3.2 for a brief discussion of data-driven vs. researcher-assigned dimensions in roll call analysis.

9 Several other roll calls were on issues related to democratization, but did not fall into any of the four dimensions identified here. Four roll calls were effectively in dimensions of their own which were not large enough to include - one procedural roll call on the Representation of the People Bill (4th June 1866), one amendment which proposed stalling progress on the franchise bill until more information was obtained (27th April 1866), one proposal to increase the accountability of County Financial Boards (9th April 1868) and one proposal to vote on the Diplomatic Service’s expenditures annually in Parliament (26th May 1868). A further 18 roll calls dealt with the issue of moving constituency boundaries (which in some cases entailed the creation or eradication of full constituencies) and were somewhat complicated with regard to democratization. For instance, eradicating particularly small boroughs (as was proposed
Table 1: Dimensions of democracy in the 1865-68 Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Roll calls</th>
<th>Example roll call</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>To reject the personal payment principle - so that all occupiers could vote</td>
<td>12 April 1867</td>
<td>289 : 310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Integrity</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>To instate a secret ballot</td>
<td>17 July 1866</td>
<td>110 : 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>To open viceregal offices in Ireland to Catholics</td>
<td>9 April 1867</td>
<td>140 : 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>To reduce representation of boroughs under 10,000 people to one MP</td>
<td>31 May 1867</td>
<td>306 : 179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the inclusivity dimension, which broadly covers all issues regarding the breadth of the franchise, legislators considered four suffrage bills, three of which, the Second Reform Act in 1867 and the oft-neglected Scottish and Irish Reform Acts in 1868, they passed, roughly doubling the voting population (Himmelfarb, 1966). On the civil liberties dimension, the House considered various different kinds of bills, regarding issues such as habeas corpus suspension in Ireland, religiously restrictive oaths for political and legal offices, gatherings in public parks, and libel. On the electoral integrity dimension, legislators considered various ways of reducing electoral clientelism, including ballot bills, banning campaign meetings in pubs and disenfranchising certain corrupt constituencies, and passed the 1868 Parliamentary Elections Act, which shifted MP corruption trials from peer tribunals to the courts, moving institutions in a pro-democratic direction by involving a higher, more impartial authority in the adjudication process. Finally, on the equality dimension, which deals with the extent to which votes are equally counted, the Representation of the People Act of 1867 also reduced malapportionment by increasing the parliamentary representation of growing industrial areas and reducing the representation of shrinking boroughs.

In section 5.1, I use individual MP- and constituency-level covariates to predict differences between ideal points on different dimensions, notably party, party faction, and whether their constituency was in Ireland, Scotland or Wales. These data were compiled from a variety of historical sources as detailed in Bronner (2014).

3.2 Method

Bayesian ideal point estimation was used to estimate legislators’ ideal points on the set of 124 roll calls. Ideal point estimation is based on the idea that if both policies and legislators can be represented as lying on points in Euclidean space, legislators’ preferred policies are those which minimize the distance between the policy point and their own

on 3rd June 1867) allows for more proportionate parliamentary representation, but also disenfranchises some of their inhabitants by rendering them subject to the more restrictive county franchise. As the true effect for democratization was hard to parse in these cases, they were not included.
position (Poole and Rosenthal, 1985). Legislators’ positions, or ideal points, are unknown, and can be estimated on the basis of their voting behavior on a set of roll calls in the legislature. Traditional ideal point estimation estimates legislators’ ideal points over as many roll calls as possible, covering all policy areas. Authors have subsequently tested the dimensionality of the entire policy space and most have found that almost all votes can be captured with one or, at most, two dimensions, which are largely so heterogeneous as to reveal very little about the content of each roll call (Poole and Rosenthal, 1985; Poole and Rosenthal, 2001; Jackman, 2001).\footnote{Because of the limitations of binary roll call data, when using inductive models one or two dimensions are usually enough to predict voting behavior ‘well enough’ such that further dimensions do not add substantial fit improvements (Lauderdale and Clark, 2014: 755).} However, more recent work has shown that if roll calls are classified according to multiple exogenously derived dimensions, a multidimensional model fits the data better and results in substantively interesting dimensions (Lauderdale and Clark, 2014).\footnote{While Lauderdale and Clark (2014: 759) allow for roll calls to belong to more than one dimension, depending on how their texts were classified by a LDA model; in contrast, I assign the dimension to each roll call manually, and each roll call belongs to only one dimension.} My approach to ideal point estimation is somewhat different; rather than taking the universe of roll calls in a given parliament, I use only those I manually determined to relate to democratization, in order to be able to test the dimensionality of this democratization-related subset.\footnote{For more information on the specifics of the method used here, see the Appendix.}

3.3 Hypothesis

Quite simply, the hypothesis states that

\[ H_1: \text{A four-dimensional model fits the data better than a one-dimensional one.} \]

4 Results

4.1 Model fit

Comparing the two models reveals that the hypothesis is empirically supported: as Table 2 shows, the four-dimensional model fits the data better than a unidimensional model, as its Deviance Information Criterion (DIC) is lower. The difference between the two models is not vast, but the penalty added for the extra parameters is more than made up for by the improvement in fit.\footnote{While there is some discussion regarding what sizeable difference in DIC is - particularly as the value can only be interpreted relatively to another model, not in absolute terms - a difference of more than 10 is generally held to be significant. The difference observed here, of 296, can thus safely be said to rule out the unidimensional model as appropriate.} This suggests that it is indeed worthwhile to consider democratization as a potentially multidimensional issue, even within the confines of a single parliament.

When we examine the substantive implications of the findings, we see that on the whole, the partisan division was the same for all democratic roll calls, across dimensions.
Figure 1 shows legislators’ ideal points in the one-dimensional model, while Figure 2 shows the same graphic for each of the four dimensions in the four-dimensional model. In all cases, Liberals (yellow) were largely much more democratic than Conservatives (blue); the Conservatives did not take the pro-democratic side on any of the dimensions.\textsuperscript{14} However, as the following sections show, despite this overarching partisan difference the multidimensional model still helps us unpack and understand democratization in the 1860s House of Commons.

\textsuperscript{14}A few MPs are classified as being neither Liberals nor Conservatives (red), though this may be due to data limitations.

Table 2: Model fit statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1D Model</th>
<th>4D Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean deviance</td>
<td>17275</td>
<td>16354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalty</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>1685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC</td>
<td>18335</td>
<td>18039</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2: Legislators’ dimension-specific ideal points, 4D Model
Liberals (yellow); Conservatives (blue)
Part II
Digging deeper: what underlies multidimensionality? Democracy and Ireland

5 Why are civil liberties different? Exploring the covariates of multidimensionality

The previous section has established that a multidimensional conception of democracy fits the voting behavior of legislators better than a unidimensional one. But what does this tell us, substantively, about attitudes about democracy in this parliament?

Figure 3: Correlations across the four dimensions of democracy

Figure 3 displays the correlations across all four dimensions estimated here. As can be seen clearly from the plots, while the overall correlations between the dimensions are very high, almost 1 particularly in the case of inclusivity and electoral integrity, civil liberties is relatively less correlated with the other dimensions (particularly with equality).

What it means, on the individual level, for dimensions to be more or less correlated is illustrated by two legislators, the Conservative Charles Newdigate Newdegate and the
Liberal Lord Arthur Pelham Clinton. As Figure 4 shows, in both cases, their ideal points were very similar across all dimensions - except for their ideal points on civil liberties, which are significantly different in each case. While Newdegate’s ideal point on civil liberties was significantly less democratic than his ideal points on the other dimensions, the opposite is true for Clinton. The fact that Newdegate and Clinton were not the only MPs in the Parliament whose ideal points on civil liberties were so different is what underlies the lower correlation between civil liberties and the three other dimensions. The next section attempts to uncover what might have caused this lower correlation.

5.1 Comparing predictors of democratic attitudes with those of multidimensionality

As established above, in this period bills on civil liberties were often related to Ireland; both with regard to rights for Catholics, and with regard to the treatment of Irish separatists. There is thus substantive reason to believe that bills on civil liberties might introduce a separate issue, the Ireland question, into voting on democratization. Though Ireland was part of the United Kingdom as of the Acts of Union 1800, attempts to repeal this union or obtain greater legislative decentralization (as in the form of Home Rule or similar arrangements) were ongoing throughout the 19th century, particularly after the 1830s (Lustick, 1993). The Irish question came to the fore once again in the 1860s due to a resurgence of Fenian activity in 1867, both in Ireland and in England (Jenkins, 2008). In order to investigate this relationship further, I test the effects of various MP covariates from an extensive dataset of individual- and constituency-level variables (Bronner, 2014).

First, the covariates are used to test what predicts a more democratic ideal point on each of the four dimensions. As seen from the graphs in Figure 2, Liberals are expected to be more democratic than Conservatives overall, across all dimensions. Further, I also test the effect of the MP’s constituency being in Ireland, to examine whether this affects MPs’ ideal points.

The other dependent variables of interest are the differences between civil liberties
and each of the other dimensions. As the examples of Newdegate and Clinton show, MPs’ ideal points on civil liberties could be either more democratic or more autocratic than their ideal points on the other dimensions; predicting this difference allows for an attempt to explain both of these scenarios. Figure 5 shows how these differentials varied across legislators - higher values here mean that the MP was more democratic on civil liberties than on representation; if the MP’s ideal points on both were similar, the value is around 0. In other words, while Clinton is on the positive side of the distribution for each of these differences, Newdegate is on the negative side.

In order to incorporate the uncertainty surrounding the ideal points calculated for each MP, for each of the three quantities of interest (civil liberties - inclusivity, civil liberties - electoral integrity, and civil liberties - equality) I calculated 4000 differences of the type shown in Figure 5, one for each set of simulated ideal points, and regressed each of these 4000 differences on both their party and whether their constituency was in Ireland.
Figure 6: Predictors of MP ideal points on each of the four dimensions

Figure 6 shows the predictors of MPs’ ideal points on each of the four dimensions. We can see that in general, the predictors of having pro-democratic ideal points on both representation and civil liberties are as expected and consistent with previous literature (e.g. Bronner, 2014). Liberals are much more democratic than Conservatives, as indicated by the plots of ideal points. Figure 6 also shows that whether an MP’s constituency was in Ireland is not a significant predictor of democratic ideal points on either dimension; MPs from Irish constituencies were not more or less democratic than those from English, Scottish or Welsh constituencies.

Turning to Figure 7, however, shows that when predicting the differences between the dimensions, the Irish question comes into play. Figure 7 shows the distribution of coefficients and p-values for whether their constituency was in Ireland for each of the three quantities of interest. In all cases, the effect of representing an Irish constituency is unambiguously positive; moreover, in all three cases, the distribution of p-values shows that it is unlikely that this relationship is due to chance. (For the differences between civil liberties and inclusivity, electoral integrity and equality, 66.75%, 48.2% and 53.55% of p-values are below 0.05, respectively.) In other words, MPs from Irish constituencies were more likely to support civil liberties while not supporting democratizing bills on
Figure 7: Predictors of the difference between civil liberties and each of the other dimensions
Thus, we can see that while representing Irish constituencies is not associated with having a more or less democratic ideal point on any of the four dimensions, including civil liberties, it is linked to the civil liberties differentials - the differences between civil liberties and each of the other three. Regardless of how democratic legislators are along the spectrum, it seems that those from Irish constituencies support civil liberties to a greater extent than the other dimensions.

5.2 How did this affect individual legislators?

Returning to Charles Newdegate and Lord Arthur Clinton allows us to illustrate these links between civil liberties and the Irish question in a little more detail. Newdegate was one of the legislators with a particularly negative civil liberties differential, and his biography reveals some clues as to why this may have been; he was firmly committed to both protectionism and, more importantly, Protestantism, and in fact he turned down several illustrious political positions in order to be able to avoid partisan pressures and stay true to his staunchly anti-Catholic views, including the presidency of the Board of Health in 1858 (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography).

Lord Clinton, on the other hand, while not Irish or representing an Irish constituency, was a strong advocate of Irish rights. His one key speech in the House of Commons is notable for containing the following passage:

“Ireland was our weakness and our discredit all over the world; and when an Irish Minister had proposed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act for the third successive year, it was time for us seriously to think whether we could go on for ever governing that country by force. ... We wished to do good to that country; but he must say that this disposition was greatly spoiled by the fact that we insisted on doing it in our own way, and not in theirs. We treated Ireland as we thought Ireland ought to be, and not as the Irish chose that it should be. Many of us thought that Ireland ought to be Protestant, and that therefore we did good to Ireland when we forced on it a Protestant Church. We thought that Irish parents ought to wish for an education for their children free from priestly control, so we forced on them what we call mixed education. Upon these and many other subjects it was very possible that our notions were right. But for application to Ireland they had one fatal defect—the Irish people differed with us.”

*Lord Arthur Pelham Clinton, HC Deb 10 March 1868, vol. 190, col. 1332*

Both Newdegate, who represents a negative civil liberties differential, and Clinton, who represents the opposite case, seem to illustrate that views on civil liberties - a facet

15This variable captures whether an MPs’ constituency was in Ireland, but this probably isn’t the variable of particular interest; rather, it would probably be more informative to know whether the MP was actually Irish (and/or Catholic), as some MPs representing Irish constituencies were not actually Irish themselves.
of democratization - were affected by stances on Ireland and Catholicism, a divisive issue throughout 19th (and indeed early 20th) century British politics. While the evidence in section 5.1 is correlational rather than causal, it suggests that the interplay between Ireland and democracy is well worth further exploration.

6 Conclusion

This paper has approached the issue of democratization from the perspective of the contemporary actors involved in it, considering democracy-related bills within their parliamentary context. Within this context, Part I has argued that a multidimensional approach, which separates different types of institutional reform but allows legislators’ positions on the different dimensions to correlate, is an illuminating way of considering reform. Not only does the four-dimensional model fit the data better than the unidimensional model, it also points towards one potentially promising avenue of research, which is exploring whether and how the Irish question confounded voting on democratization in Britain.

Looking further afield, the approach advanced in this paper allows us to examine the relationships and interaction between the different dimensions of democratization, which composite indices or dichotomous measures entirely neglect. While different democratic institutions are fairly highly correlated with one another globally in the post-war era, this is not the case for earlier periods, and examining the patterns of correlation between them may lead to interesting conclusions about the long-term development of democracy. Indeed, in some cases, democratic institutions on one dimension come at the cost of anti-democratic institutions on another - ‘safeguards’ for the existing elites (Ahmed and Capoccia, 2014: 11). This approach allows for a way to examine, for example, how differential levels of enfranchisement shape elites’ incentives to establish other democratic (or authoritarian) institutions: in Imperial Germany, the existence of universal male suffrage likely increased elites’ demand for civil liberties infringements in the form of the 1878 anti-Socialist legislation (Ziblatt, 2006: 333); conversely, in Britain, the passage of suffrage expansion may have increased the salience of anti-votebuying legislation by increasing the number of voters to bribe (Stokes, 2011: 8-9).

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A Method

**Bayesian inference.** Bayesian estimation incorporates uncertainty about the values of the parameters by treating the parameters as random variables (Clinton, Jackman and Rivers, 2004). Within Bayesian analysis, the prior distribution, which summarizes our prior beliefs about the parameters, is updated based on information from observations to form the posterior distribution according to Bayes’ rule:

\[
\text{posterior} \propto \text{likelihood} \times \text{prior}
\]  

The information from the data is, in turn, summarized by the likelihood function which treats the joint distribution of the observations as a function of the parameter values. As the amount of observed data increases, the importance of the prior in forming the posterior distribution shrinks; with very large amounts of data, thus, a Bayesian estimator does not substantially differ from a frequentist one (Lunn et al., 2013: 53).

Roll call analysis always has a large number of parameters relative to the data, as the number of parameters is given by \(ik + j(k+1)\) (Clinton, Jackman and Rivers, 2004: 357); in my case, since \(i = 724, j = 124\) and \(k = 4\), I have 3516 parameters and only 124 roll calls. However, to the relatively small amount of data I use, my estimates incorporate a substantial amount of the uncertainty incorporated in my priors; this is one reason frequentist estimation, which requires a very large sample size, would not have been as appropriate.

**MCMC.** Rather than attempting to arrive at the posterior distribution of legislators’ ideal points analytically, which is very challenging with a large number of parameters that have to be estimated simultaneously, this paper uses Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) simulation. MCMC creates the distribution from the specified priors and the roll call voting data, which is then repeatedly sampled in order to arrive at estimated ideal points and confidence intervals (Clinton, Jackman and Rivers, 2004: 357). In particular, the Gibbs sampler, the sampling method I use,\(^{16}\) creates a Markov chain of parameter estimates, where at each step of the chain, new parameter estimates are sampled from an approximation of the posterior distribution; the approximation is then updated using the new parameter estimates. Within each step of the chain, a new estimate for each parameter is drawn from a distribution which conditions on the most

\(^{16}\)I use JAGS (Just Another Gibbs Sampler) with the package rjags in R.
recent estimates of all the other parameters in the model. It thus breaks down the problem of estimating the joint posterior distribution of the parameters into a series of samples from less complex conditional distributions (Lunn et al., 2013: 64). Under regularity conditions, the Markov chain converges to a stationary distribution which is the joint posterior distribution of the parameters (Lunn et al., 2013: 63).

**Model comparison.** Rather than simply letting the model determine the number of dimensions in the data, I can modify the priors to test my hypothesis that a four-dimensional model is better suited to this dataset than a one-dimensional one (Jackman, 2001). This method is uniquely suited to determining the dimensionality of the set of roll calls, as it allows for the comparison between a simpler one-dimensional and a more complex, hierarchical four-dimensional model; I can then evaluate which model fits the data better, while penalizing the more complicated model for its extra parameters.

The primary statistic I use to compare the models is the DIC, or deviance information criterion (Lauderdale and Clark, 2014: 759), a generalized form of Akaike’s information criterion (AIC) which is well-suited to comparing hierarchical models (Lunn et al., 2013: 165-6). This is based on the deviance between the data and the posterior distribution, which is given by

\[ D(\theta) = -2\log(p(y|\theta)) + C \]  

or, in expectation over the posterior distribution,

\[ \bar{D} = E[\theta][D(\theta)] \]  

The DIC not only compares the deviance of different models, it also takes into account their complexity by penalizing them for extra parameters. It thus adds the deviance to the effective number of parameters:

\[ DIC = pD + \bar{D} \]  

**Model set-up.** Both models share several elements. In both models, legislators \( i = 1, 2, ..., 724 \) vote on roll calls \( j = 1, 2, ..., 124 \); in both models, legislator \( i \)'s probability of voting Aye on roll call \( j \) is denoted by

\[ Y_{ij} \sim Bernoulli(\pi_{ij}) \]  

In the one-dimensional model, \(^{17}\) that probability

\[ \pi_{ij} = \Phi(\alpha_j + \beta_j \theta_i) \]  

where

\(^{17}\)See Lauderdale and Clark (2014: 759)
\[ \alpha_j \sim \text{Normal}(0, 4) \]  
(7)

\[ \beta_j \sim \text{Normal}(0, 4) \]  
(8)

and each legislator’s ideal point \( \theta_i \) is given by

\[ \theta_i \sim \text{Normal}(0, 1) \]  
(9)

In the four-dimensional model, the different dimensions have a flexible covariance structure.

In the one-dimensional model, in order to identify the polarity of the roll calls, one roll call is identified as pro-democratic - the one on 12th April 1867 in Table 1. Its \( \beta \) is constrained to be positive by truncating the normal distribution at 0. In the four-dimensional model, each roll call is assigned a dimension, and the same constraining process is repeated with a representative and reasonably balanced roll call from every dimension (listed in Table 1). Legislators are not constrained, allowing a single legislator to potentially support one dimension of democracy while opposing another.\(^{18}\) However, as their ideal points on each dimension \( (\gamma_{ik}) \) are drawn from a normal distribution around their general ideal point \( (\theta_i) \), the range their dimension-specific ideal points will have is limited; the model is thus quite conservative in its estimate of multidimensionality.

**Model diagnostics.** Inference via MCMC is based on the idea that after sufficient iterations, the model will have converged at a fairly stationary posterior distribution of values, which are then sampled (Lunn et al., 2013: 71). However, MCMC does not explicitly show when it has converged; this must be tested, either by formal diagnostics or by eye (Lunn et al., 2013: 72-3). The model here is aided by the fact that it runs two parallel chains, which can be compared to each other to ensure that they have both arrived at a similar posterior distribution. Both types of tests appear to support the idea that the model used in this paper has converged; the Heidelberg and Welch diagnostic suggests that both Markov chains’ sampled values are drawn from stationary distributions, and Gelman and Rubin’s convergence diagnostic, which compares within-chain and between-chain variance, also implies that most variables have converged fairly well. Visual tests also point in the same direction.\(^{19}\)

**B Robustness checks**

The ideal points for each legislator are predicted with some uncertainty. For this reason, the differences between ideal points (between their ideal points on civil liberties and each of the other dimensions) are also somewhat uncertain. In the models used in

\(^{18}\)In one version of the model, partisan differences were used as initial values for the generation of samples from the posterior distribution, while in another no initial values were supplied (Lunn et al., 2013: 70); this did not substantially affect the results in the hierarchical model.

\(^{19}\)Data, code and diagnostic output are available on request.
Figure 8, this civil liberties differential is predicted only for those legislators for whom the difference is statistically significant.

As the results show, while the standard errors are much larger (owing to the greatly reduced sample size - between 27 and 41), representing an Irish constituency still has a positive and (in two of the three cases) statistically significant effect on MPs’ civil liberties differentials.

Figure 8: Predictors of the difference between civil liberties and each of the other dimensions

(a) Civil liberties - inclusivity
(b) Civil liberties - electoral integrity
(c) Civil liberties - equality