

Remarks by David K. Levine on:

***The Performance of the Pivotal-Voter Model in Small-Scale Elections: Evidence from Texas Liquor Referenda***

by Stephen Coate, Michael Conlin, and Andrea Moro

AEA Meetings, Chicago

January 5, 2007

Eligible voters $n$	N. of obs.	Data	Pivotal-voter model
$n < 247$	48	0.62	0.65
$247 < n < 434$	48	0.55	0.51
$434 < n < 900$	48	0.43	0.40
All within-sample ( $n < 900$ )	144	0.54	0.52

**Table 4: Average turnout as a percentage of eligible voters: model vs. data**

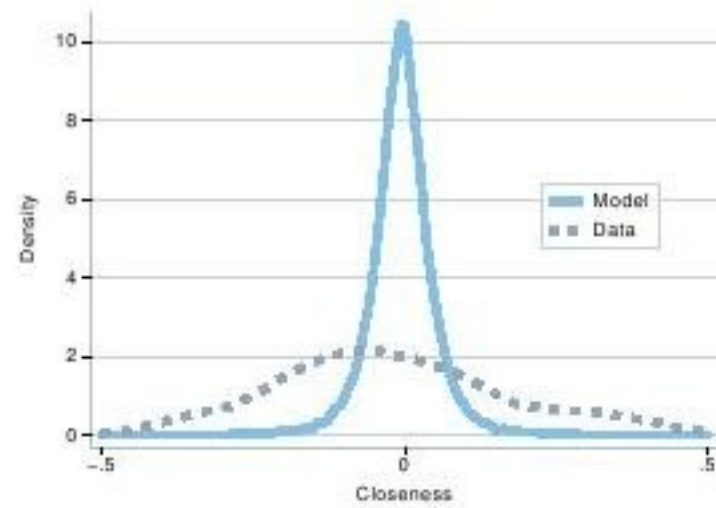


Figure 3: Distributions over closeness, model vs. data (within-sample)

## ***What is the Issue:***

the calculation of the closeness of the election from data on participation has nothing to do with the *motivation* of voters to vote

that is: given the assumption that voters from each group are drawn i.i.d. with a common probability of participation that alone determines the distribution of election closeness

so we can conclude that voters are not drawn i.i.d. with a common participation probability

## ***What is wrong with the intensity model?***

The authors introduce a model with a different motivation for voting – a desire to express preferences independent of the size of the electorate

this model gets voter participation wrong, since it predicts that participation won't fall off with the size of the electorate

but it does better predicting the closeness of the election

it also assumes i.i.d draws with a common probability of participation

so we already know: under the i.i.d. common probability assumption we can't fit both the participation rate and the closeness – if we choose a model that better fits the closeness, it must fit the participation less well

again: this has nothing to do with voter motivation