may be generated by the following process:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1 X_1 + e \qquad (3)$$

where e is distributed normally with mean zero and some variance σ^2. Unlike Equation (1), Equation (3) does provide enough information to be statistically tested in a variety of ways. But it is important to note that if we draw data from this model, we can by varying the value of σ^2 make the R^2 take any value between 0 and 1. Regardless of the value of σ^2, the functional form which maps X to Y would be linear, but the spread around the regression line defined by B_0 and B_1 would vary with the value of σ^2 (Achen 1982: 59). Moreover, without the assumption of normality (asymptotic or finite sample) there would be many questions about which loss function one should use to draw the regression line—i.e., the loss function one should use to choose the unknown parameters. For example, should one minimize the sum of squared residuals— $\sum_i (Y_i - \widehat{Y}_i)^2$ — which results in the usual least squares estimator? Or should one minimize the median of squares, which results in a robust estimator (Mebane and Sekhon 2004; Western 1995) that is useful if the distribution of E may be contaminated? There are many other alternatives, such as a regression assuming a t distribution. We cannot choose among the many alternatives in a principled fashion unless we make some distributional assumptions hopefully based on some knowledge about how the data were generated or collected.

Admittedly, too many quantitative analysts fail to justify the distributional assumptions made by the estimators they use. It is common to make vague gestures toward some central limit theorem and then quickly move on to the normality assumption. Although this behavior is predictable it is ironic given the great care which early users of regression took when defending their distributional assumptions (e.g., Yule 1899).

In any case, quantitative analysts usually either explicitly or implicitly rely on limit theorems when justifying distributional choices. But it is unclear what one is to do with Equation (2). Given that the hypothesis is about necessary causation, why are three deviant observations not sufficient to reject the hypothesis? Is it because of measurement error or is it because the process is inherently stochastic? And what precise distributions are in play? Different distributions lead to different solutions and estimators. In other words, something specific needs to be said about the form of measurement error being proposed or the stochastic processes being considered. Of course, the same could be said about Equation (1) if it is not augmented in some fashion to incorporate some distribution.

It is interesting and potentially important that Goertz and others are trying to interpret necessary condition hypotheses in a probabilistic fashion. However, much work remains to be done in this fruitful area of research.

Notes

[1] I thank Jonathan Wand for comments. All errors are my responsibility.

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Announcements

2006 Award for Conceptual Innovation in Democratic Studies

The Committee on Concepts and Methods (C&M) of the International Political Science Association and the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in Mexico City invite submissions to the 2006 Award for Conceptual Innovation in Democratic Studies. The award is given every three years at the World Congress of the International Political Science Association (IPSA). The first was awarded at the 2003 IPSA World Congress in Durban, South Africa, to Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen for their 2002 article "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices" (*Comparative Political Studies* 35: 5–34). The second award, jointly sponsored by C&M and CIDE, will be given at the 2006 IPSA World Congress in Fukuoka, Japan.

The 2006 award will be given to a scholarly work published any time before December 31, 2005. Any category of formal publication may be submitted, whether it is a book, book chapter, or journal article. The idea of "conceptual innovation" is to be understood broadly; it is intended to cover concept analysis and concept formation as well as operationalization and measurement. The notion of "democratic studies" is to be comprehended widely, too; it includes research on authoritarian rule, democratization, and democratic quality. We seek to reward conceptual innovations that bear strong implications for empirical research.

Submissions are open to authors, journal editors, and book publishers. We encourage self-nominations. When submitting the work of others, please make sure you have obtained the express consent of the author. Board members of the Committee on Concepts and Methods are banned from participation.

Submissions must include: *four copies* of the work you submit, mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail of the author, and mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail of the person who submits. All submissions must reach us *before January 31, 2006.*

Please submit nominations by mail to:

    Andreas Schedler, C&M Chair
    CIDE Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas
    Division de Estudios Politicos
    Carretera Mexico-Toluca 3655
    Col. Lomas de Santa Fe, CP 01210 Mexico City, Mexico

The members of the 2006 jury are Robert E. Goodin (Australian National University, Canberra), Gerardo L. Munck (University of Southern California, Los Angeles) Chairperson; and Cindy Skach (Harvard University).

Fifth Annual Training Institute on Qualitative Research Methods, Arizona State University, January 3-14, 2006

The Consortium on Qualitative Research Methods (CQRM) is pleased to announce its fifth annual training institute on qualitative methods for graduate students and junior faculty.

The institute seeks to enable students to create and critique methodologically sophisticated qualitative research designs, including case studies, tests of necessity or sufficiency, and narrative or interpretive work. It will explore the techniques, uses, strengths, and limitations of these methods, while emphasizing their relationships with alternative approaches. Topics include research design, concept formation, methods of structured and focused comparisons of cases, typological theory, case selection, process tracing, comparative-historical analysis, congruence testing, path dependency, interpretivism, counterfactual analysis, interview and field research (including archival) techniques, necessary and sufficient conditions, fuzzy set methods, and philosophy of science issues relevant to qualitative research. Attendees will receive constructive feedback on their own qualitative research designs, and the course will also include master class discussions led by the authors of well-known works which employ qualitative methods. Examples will be drawn from exemplary research in international relations, comparative politics, and American politics. The syllabus from the fourth annual institute indicates the range of the issues to be covered. Please note, however, that this syllabus will be revised for the fifth institute, and should be viewed with this in mind.

CQRM member institutions will use their own meritocratic criteria to select students or junior faculty to attend the institute, and must notify CQRM of their choices by October 20, 2005. Students, fellows and junior faculty not so selected, or who attend non-member organizations, may apply directly to CQRM (see application form below). Applications must be received by October 20, 2005, and should consist of a curriculum vitae; a list of any courses taken in qualitative or other methodology; a short (300-word) personal statement briefly summarizing the applicant's main current research project and reasons for applying to the institute; and the name and contact information for a referee who is familiar with the applicant's training and research. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by November 11, 2005.

CQRM will cover the costs of tuition, lodging, and meals for successful applicants. Attendees will be responsible for their own transportation costs to and from Arizona State University. Participants for the institute will arrive on Monday, January 2, and depart late Saturday, January 14, or any time on Sunday, January 15. The seminar will meet daily, beginning on Tuesday, January 3. The final meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 14.

Application form for the 2006 Institute on Qualitative Research Methods, offered by the Consortium on Qualitative Research Methods

Name_____

Institutional Affiliation_____

Address _____

    _____

    _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Discipline and Sub-field(s)_____

WHAT DO I HAVE TO SEND? (1) This form, completed, or an email with the information requested above, (2) a curriculum vitae; (3) a list of any courses taken in qualitative or other methodology; (4) a brief (300-words) personal statement summarizing your main ongoing research project and indicating why you wish to attend the institute; and (5) the names and contact information for a referee who is familiar with your training and research. As noted below, all this information can be sent in hard copy or emailed.

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THIS FORM? CQRM member organizations for the 2005-2006 academic year will have spaces reserved at the institute. Members will choose their nominees using their own selection procedures. Students and/or faculty who are nominated for those slots should not use this form. Interested applicants who are (a) from these institutions but are not so nominated or (b) who are from non-member institutions should use this form.

WHERE SHOULD I SEND THIS FORM? Please send application materials by October 20, 2005, to Colin Elman, Executive Director CQRM, c/o Political Science Department, Box 873902, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-3902. Alternatively, you can email your application to consortium@asu.edu, and you can direct any questions about the institute to this same email address

European Consortium for Political Research

Call for Papers: The 3rd European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference will be held in Budapest September 8-10, 2005. A full section, "Methodological Innovations and Dilemmas in Contemporary Political Research," (Section 20) is dedicated to methodological debates.

Panel headings (tentative):

20-1: Causality and Big, Slow-Moving, and Invisible Processes
20-2: Methodology in Political Science: Standards? What Standards?
20-3: Solving small-N problems by focusing on sub-national units
20-4: Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM) of Democratic Institutions
20-5: Looking at Methodological Questions Normatively
20-6: Innovations in (MV)QCA and Fuzzy-Set Applications
20-7: Beyond Regression? Predictive vs. Postdictive Models
20-8: Mixed Methods Designs: Advanced Issues
20-9: Outliers: Concepts, Treatments, and Uses in Different Methodological Approaches
20-10: Enlarging Our Toolbox: Modeling Strategies in Political Science

See more details, including panel abstracts, at:
http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events_generalconference/budapest/section_list.aspx.

World Congress of the International Political Science Association

The Committee on Concepts and Methods is seeking paper proposals for the 20th World Congress of the International Political Science Association to be held in Fukuoka, Japan, on July 9-14, 2006. The committee is an open and plural platform of discussion on basic conceptual and methodological issues in political science. It strives to promote methodological discussion that takes seriously both concept analysis and qualitative methods. Proposals on any relevant topic are welcome. If you are interested in being a discussant or panel chair, let us know. Please email proposals and inquiries to Fred Schaffer (schaffer@mit.edu) by June 10, 2005. Information about the conference can be found at: http://www.fukuoka2006.com/en.

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