

The Spatial (Geometric) Model of Voting and Party Competition: Theory

1. Assumptions:

- a. Legislators/Voters have **Symmetric Single-Peaked Utility functions** centered on their **ideal points** in the Policy Space.
- b. Legislators/Voters vote for the Policy Outcome Closest to them

2. The number of Policy Dimensions needed to account for (roll call voting) (a set of issues) in a Legislature is usually only 1 or 2 because of **Constraint**.

Philip E. Converse, "**The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics**," 1964.

- "A term like "ideology" has been thoroughly muddled by diverse uses. We shall depend instead upon the term "belief systems" ... We define a *belief system* as a **configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence.**" (p.207)

From an observer's point of view, **constraint** means that certain **issue positions are bundled together**, and the knowledge of one or two issue positions makes the remaining positions very predictable.

Constraint Does Not Have to be Strictly Logical - "...few belief systems of any range at all depend for their constraint upon [strict] logic in this classical sense. ... **What is important is that the elites familiar with the total shapes of these belief systems have experienced them as logically constrained clusters of ideas**, within which one part necessarily follows from another." (p.210-211)