

ECON 4640
Spring 2012
Seminar 4

Problem I: Voter behavior

1. What does the “standard model” say about the relationship between income and preferences for redistribution (or tax levels)? To what extent is this different for the different models we have studied in class (such as median voter, probabilistic voting, and citizen candidates)?
2. What are the problems with just regressing stated preferences on income to study this relationship?
3. Are some or all of these problems solved by using voting behaviour as the outcome variable instead of stated preferences? Suggest an approach that overcomes the major difficulties you found for question 2
4. If incomes is measured with error, why does this pose a challenge for using fixed effects estimators?
5. If permanent income and not current income is the true driving force behind voting behaviour, how does this affect the appropriate method of investigation? Do you think permanent or current income should be the major determinant of voting behaviour?

Problem II: Turnout

1. Present a simple general model for when it is rational to participate in elections.
2. Discuss factors that affect each of the components of your model.
3. To what extent is this a “good” model?

Problem III: Women in politics (based on Exam 2006)

1. Explain why there would not be any difference between male and female politicians in a median voter model and why there may be such differences in a model with citizen candidates.
2. Explain why simply comparing districts with male and female leaders is insufficient to isolate the effect of the politician’s gender on politics.

3. Consider Chattopadhyay and Duflo's (2004) study of policymaking at the local level in India. Recall that they use the fact that in a third of local assemblies, drawn at random, the position as head of the assembly (Pradhan) is reserved for a woman. Explain how Chattopadhyay and Duflo can use this to identify the effect of the politician's gender on politics.
4. What are the observed differences between male and female politicians? To answer this, you may use the attached Table V from Chattopadhyay and Duflo's paper.
5. How could you study the effect of politician gender using a regression discontinuity design?