

THE SCHARTZ–METTERCLUME METHOD

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ABSTRACT

This article describes a parsimonious statistical method for deducing everything that can be known about the unknown by analysing anything that happens to be known about the known. Schartz Metterclume (SM) is a revolutionary new breakthrough in the social sciences that builds upon the synergies of higher mathematics, discourse analysis, rational choice and neo-postdistancianalist theory. Exhaustive testing of the method shows that it unfailingly produces correct estimates of the causal effects of unknown variables. Indeed the less that is known about the phenomenon under investigation in the first place, the more precise and robust the statistical results of SM are.

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A brief layman's account of a parsimonious statistical method of deducing everything that can be known about the unknown by analysing anything that happens to be known about the known.

SUMMARY

$SM = BS^2$

KEY WORDS • BS • omniscience • rice pudding • Schartz–Metterclume

Introduction

This article is a short, layman's account of what is quite probably the most brilliant breakthrough in social science methodology since Pearson invented the correlation coefficient in 1888. Known as the Schartz–Metterclume Method (SM) it is a highly effective but parsimonious statistical method of deducing everything that can be known about the unknown by analysing anything that happens to be known about the known (Carlotta, 1995). For a critical appraisal of SM, see Quabarl (1996). That is, SM analyses whatever

Sadly, Otto I.Q. Besser-Wisser passed away shortly after finishing this article. For an appreciation of the great man, and the great intellectual debt we all owe him, see Manteltasche (1999).

data are readily to hand and uses it as the foundation for a method that uncovers causal relationships among variables about which nothing is known. The great beauty of the method is that the less that is known, the more powerful SM is and the more precise and robust the statistical results it produces. It is not necessary even to have particularly reliable factual information to start with, although it is true that wholly inaccurate information presents some tricky statistical problems for the method.

Given its remarkable capacities, it can be confidently predicted that within a few years the great majority of leading political scientists will have abandoned their current theories, methods and approaches in favour of SM. Indeed, by using the SM method itself we can predict with absolute certainty that within the next ten years all leading political scientists will have abandoned all other theories and methods in favour of SM.

It should be noted that the method is based on the most advanced statistics and mathematics; and that it draws upon the synergies of rational choice, discourse analysis and neo-postdistancionalist theory to provide its epistemological and ontological foundations.¹ Consequently, it takes exceptional intellectual ability and many years of advanced training to be able to understand the logic of the method and many years of experience to use it satisfactorily. This article is merely a taster to prepare you for your future.

Background

Information about the world is sometimes incomplete. For example, most data sets are inadequate: they lack crucial variables; miss a battery of vital questions; cover the wrong years; are not compatible with each other; are cross-sectional not time-series, or time-series not cross-sectional; not refined enough; have large amounts of missing data; are based upon samples that are too small or poor to sustain any generalizations; suffer from interviewer bias, bad questionnaire wording, or question-order contamination; ask the wrong questions; aggregate data in the wrong way; were never pilot-tested properly; are poorly coded; classify and categorize incorrectly; were not adequately cleaned; or have incomprehensible code-books, if they have codebooks at all. Probably the single most important complaint of social scientists is that information is inadequate for the task in hand. This is a source of agony to all empirical researchers. SM is specially designed to satisfy their every desire.

1. For a useful account of neo-postdistancionalist theory see Clavicle and Pattella (1995).

The Method in Outline

At the start, SM requires only one bit of information about one variable at a single point in time – known as a Data Singularity (DS). More information makes the job easier (while making the results less precise and reliable), but one piece of information is entirely sufficient. The DS is first subjected to dodecaphonic log–log–linear orthogonal factor analysis (DLLOFA) to establish its deep sedimented structure. This process is repeated on the deep sedimented structure, but in the reverse order, to establish the second, even deeper tessellated, fractal structure of the first layer of the deep sedimented structure. Only in this way can we probe beyond the superficial and apparent nature of the world to get to its real, underlying core. Then, by means of many trillions of binary-digital permutations a Complete Known Data Matrix (CKDM) is calculated – that is, a complete data matrix of all known information about a given phenomenon at any point in time.

From this simple and straightforward procedure it is only a short step to create a matrix for the Coefficient of Relations for all Known Variables (CRKV), which maps the causal relations between all known data at all points in time. So far the method uses conventional statistical techniques to understand the known world, but the real challenge, of course, is how to extrapolate from the CRKV to an exact and precise calculation of the Coefficient of Influence of the Unknown Variables (CIUV).²

There are several steps in this process:

- First, all exogenous variables are endogenized, and all endogenous variables exogenized. Though easier said than done, this transformation works by a series of logico-inductive and empirical-deductive steps that triangulate on what is termed the Coefficient of Potential of Unknown Variables (CPUV). That is to say, knowing everything about the DS and hence everything about the Complete Known Data Matrix and the Coefficient of Relations for all Known Variables, it is possible to

2. We are happy to acknowledge a great debt to Sokal (1996) whose brilliant exegesis of transformative hermeneutics prompted a breakthrough in our own thinking about the conceptualization and measurement of the unknown. At the same time, however, we disagree entirely with his account of Derrida's discussion of non-linear space-time diffeomorphisms. For reasons that will be obvious to the intelligent reader by the end of this article, the crucial feature of Newton's *G* is not its variance (as Sokal seems to suggest) but the *invariance* of the variance around its variance. At the risk of pointing out the obvious, the same is not true of Einsteinian theory, where variance around the invariance of the variance approximates infinity. If this were not the case, then obviously Shartz-Metterclume could, in principle, merely approximate measurement of the unknown, rather than producing exact and precise measurement. In all modesty, however, we can only claim to have developed Shartz-Metterclume to a Newtonian level of approximation: the field awaits its Einstein.

For the most advanced mathematicians this may be reduced to

$$SM = BS^2$$

Some political scientists trapped in pre-postmodern and linear modes of thinking, and unskilled in advanced rational-choice, discourse analysis, neo-postdistanciationalist theory, and statistical methods have frankly doubted the capacity of SM to move from a small amount of known information to the vast world of the totally unknown (however, see, Abramson [1997] for a qualitative approach similar in many respects to SM). It is, of course, perfectly understandable that members of the older generation should want to stick to the straight and narrow-minded. Nevertheless, they must acknowledge that the SM method has been subject to the most rigorous and exhaustive analysis. Indeed, it has been tried and tested against the best of the exciting range of new approaches to political science currently being developed in the laboratories of the Central Institute for Questions and Answers – including mess and simple survey research, focused gropes, astro-illogical studies, double-bind experiments, qualitative guesswork, scuzzy-set analysis, bald assertion, post-hoc theorizing, self-contented analysis, fashionable choice theory, algorithms and reggae rhythms, multi-dimensional failing, macro-dynamic contingency modelling, and Wuffle's post-rational analysis. Even New Labour and Genetically Modified Foods (to say nothing of British Nuclear Fools) have not tested their products as thoroughly. We are pleased to report that on every occasion it has been tested, SM has produced better results than any of these new approaches, even on Monday mornings before the first cup of coffee and on wet Friday afternoons.

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OTTO BESSER-WISSER (1906–1999) was Med Bit Sokker Distinguished Professor at the Central Institute for Questions and Answers. As the pioneer of neo-postdistancianalist politometrics he was probably the most influential political scientist of the 20th century. An appreciation of him and his work appears in the December 1999 issue of *Political Science and Politics*, the newsletter of the APSA.

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