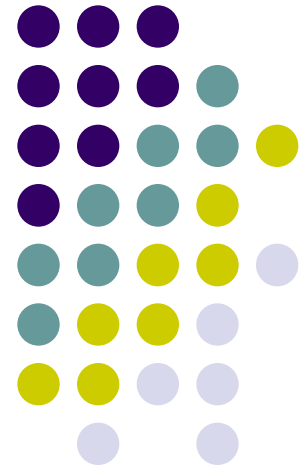
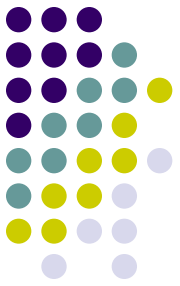


# Polimetrics

Mass & Expert Surveys



# Three things I know about measurement



**Everything is measurable\***

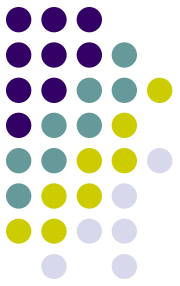


**Measuring = making a mistake  
(\*“true” value is intangible and  
unknowable)**



**Any measurement is better than none**

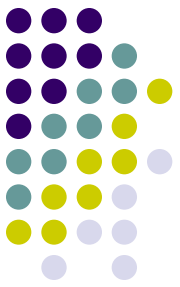
# Measuring the position of political actors



Several ways to measure them

- We (mainly) focus on parties but same/similar techniques can be applied to other political actors.
- Which ones?
  - Individual politicians
  - Prime ministers
  - Party factions
  - Head of States
  - Trade unions and interest groups
  - Courts
  - ...

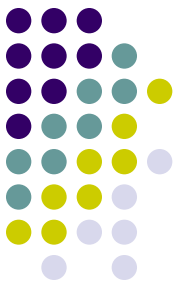
# Measuring the position of political actors



Several ways to measure them

- We (mainly) focus on parties
- Which techniques?
  - **Surveys data**
    - (Mass/Elite/Experts)
  - Analysis of political texts
    - (manifestos/pledges/press releases/tweets/others written documents/speeches/...)
  - Analysis of parliamentary behavior
    - (roll call votes, cosponsorships, data on funding...)

# Measuring the position of political actors



**Precision:** discrete/continuous/how precise (1-10; 1-100;...)

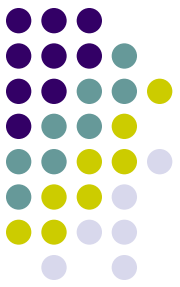
**Accuracy:** how measure is close to the “true” \* position

**Reliability:** repeated measurement same results? replication

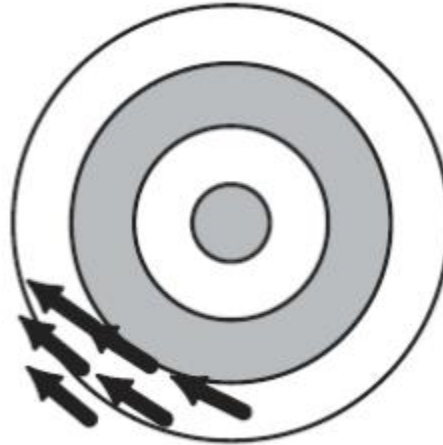
**Uncertainty:** how confident in the estimate? Interval rather than single point?

\*what is a true party position?

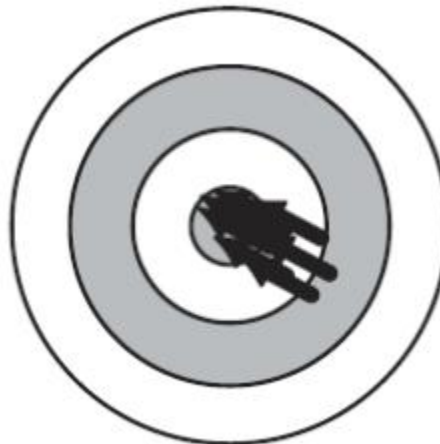
# Measuring the position of political actors



**Low Accuracy, Medium Reliability**



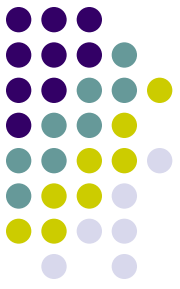
**High Accuracy, High Reliability**



# From surveys to preferences



# Mass, Elite & Expert surveys



3 types of surveys available to recover information on political actors policy positions

**Mass surveys:** ask to citizens!

**Elite surveys:** ask to politicians/candidate!

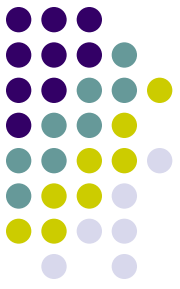
**Expert surveys:** ask to experts!

All of them somehow related to the concept of “Wisdom of Crowd”

Though the nature of these 3 is quite different



# Mass, Elite & Expert surveys



3 types of surveys available to recover information on political actors policy positions

**Mass surveys:** ask to citizens!

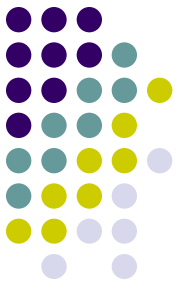
**Elite surveys:** ask to politicians/candidate!

**Expert surveys:** ask to experts!

Mass or expert surveys: they both share an **a-priori approach**, i.e., they identify ex-ante the potentially salient policy dimension(s) along which the survey will recover information

Let's start with Elite surveys

# Elite surveys



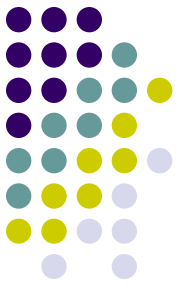
**Main trouble:** politicians have incentive to express instrumental non-sincere answers

Locate others on the extreme; differentiations as an artifact; lie intentionally (felt controlled)!

**No answers at all:** busy, or strategic  
(e.g. Labor UK; Salvi DS)

High non-response rates (10%?)

# Mass surveys



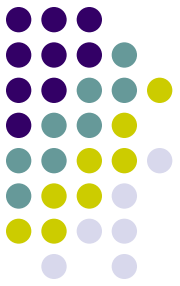
Another source of survey data to recover party positions come from mass surveys (such as the Eurobarometer or the World Values Survey or CSES)

Pro: same as expert surveys but...no experts! Usually just the left-right scale (with all the discussed problems...)

Cons: same as expert surveys

However, Mass surveys may record **perceptions** rather than actual positions

# Mass vs. Expert surveys



If you want to **study electoral competition and electoral behaviour**, then it could be a good idea to focus on mass surveys, given that you study the relationship between voters and parties

This avoids a “differential item functioning problem” (Alvarez and Nagler 2004) : that is, experts and voters may not see the issue space in the same way

On the other side, if you want to study the relationship between parties, than possibly expert surveys are better...or party manifestoes!

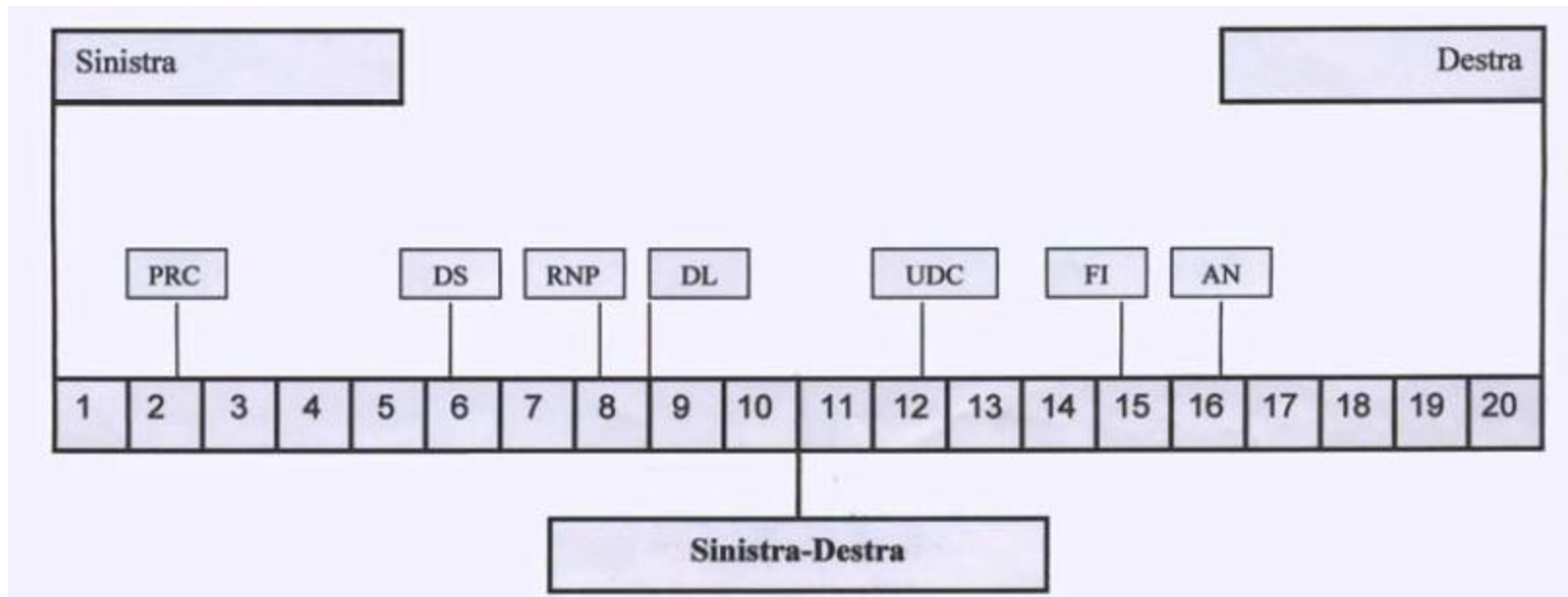
# Mass/Expert surveys



How do you make an evaluation? Based on what? What's the meaning of the scale? What is left? How extreme is left?

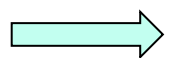
➡ Now, locate yourselves

# Mass/Expert surveys



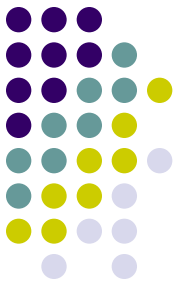
With clearer reference points things can change.

Locate yourselves now.



Does anyone change location? How many of you?

# Mass/Expert surveys



| Left-Right Scale |           | Sinistra Democratica | Partito Democratico |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Clean</b>     | media     | 4,10                 | 11,46               |
|                  | std. dev. | 1,74                 | 3,68                |
| <b>Labeled</b>   | media     | 3,92                 | 9,88                |
|                  | std. dev. | 1,37                 | 1,82                |
| <b>Total</b>     | media     | 3,99                 | 10,45               |
|                  | std. dev. | 1,51                 | 2,74                |

Std. Deviation much higher when...

# Expert surveys: Pros



**Main one:** they reflect the judgements of experts => weight and legitimacy (*better & updated(?) knowledge; less biased(?)*)

That is, expert surveys are a systematic way to summarize the judgments of the **consensus** of experts on the matters at issue...

(**wisdom** of many experts better than “1”)

...experts are asked to locate party policy positions, in the party systems of which they have expert knowledge on a set of predefined policy dimensions

...beyond this...

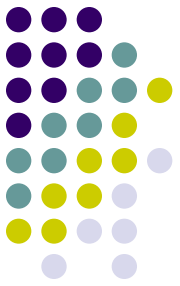


# Expert surveys: Pros



- It provides information on party policy positions in a **common and standardised format**
- It can be **administered at any time**, unlike manifestoes tied to electoral calendars; good in **fluid party systems**
  - E.g. splits of PDL (NCD-Alfano, CR-Fitto, ALA-Verdini)
- As long as experts are willing to respond to surveys, the expert survey methodology may probe topics that do not surface in manifestos or other data sources e.g. **internal dissent within a party**
- **Quick and easy** compared to other methods (content analysis of party electoral programs or legislative behavioural studies)

# Expert surveys: Pros



- You have also a **measure of uncertainty** associated to any point estimation, so you know how much you can be confident about it!
- Example, in the German case, we have 96 answers by experts with respect to the left-right position of SPD

# Expert surveys: Pros



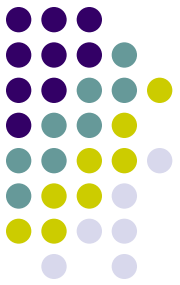
Point estimation

Standard error

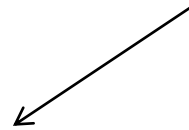
## GERMANY

| POLICY DIMENSION          | Importance | DKP  | PDS  | GRÜ  | SPD  | FDP  | CDU/CSU | Schil | Rep  | DVU  | NPD  |
|---------------------------|------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|-------|------|------|------|
| <i>Vote Share 2002</i>    |            | 0.0  | 4.3  | 8.6  | 38.5 | 7.4  | 38.5    | 0.3   | 0.1  | 0.0  | 0.4  |
| <b>Left-Right</b>         | .          | 2.0  | 3.6  | 7.1  | 8.4  | 13.4 | 13.6    | 17.5  | 18.8 | 19.4 | 19.7 |
|                           | .          | 0.23 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.18 | 0.20 | 0.17    | 0.17  | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.07 |
| <b>Taxes v. Spending</b>  | 15.9       | 1.7  | 3.0  | 11.0 | 9.3  | 18.7 | 14.4    | 14.1  | 10.8 | .6   | 9.0  |
|                           | 0.47       | 0.16 | 0.19 | 0.35 | 0.37 | 0.14 | 0.26    | 0.69  | 0.80 | 0.85 | 0.72 |
| <b>Immigration</b>        | 14.1       | 5.7  | 5.1  | 2.7  | 7.7  | 7.9  | 14.6    | 18.2  | 19.4 | 19.5 | 19.8 |
|                           | 0.54       | 0.67 | 0.36 | 0.25 | 0.29 | 0.39 | 0.33    | 0.24  | 0.13 | 0.12 | 0.06 |
| <b>Social</b>             | 13.6       | 6.1  | 4.9  | 2.4  | 7.3  | 5.3  | 15.9    | 17.3  | 18.8 | 19.0 | 18.9 |
|                           | 0.64       | 0.71 | 0.33 | 0.15 | 0.26 | 0.30 | 0.25    | 0.34  | 0.17 | 0.21 | 0.29 |
| <b>Environment</b>        | 12.8       | 9.8  | 9.1  | 3.2  | 10.9 | 16.8 | 14.5    | 15.8  | 14.4 | 14.6 | 14.7 |
|                           | 0.65       | 0.71 | 0.42 | 0.21 | 0.37 | 0.24 | 0.28    | 0.45  | 0.48 | 0.51 | 0.67 |
| <b>EU: Peacekeeping</b>   | 12.7       | 15.4 | 14.2 | 6.6  | 5.5  | 6.7  | 6.6     | 14.6  | 16.7 | 17.1 | 17.3 |
|                           | 0.15       | 1.17 | 0.62 | 0.43 | 0.26 | 0.37 | 0.36    | 0.94  | 0.58 | 0.55 | 0.58 |
| <b>EU: Accountability</b> | 11.3       | 5.4  | 5.0  | 4.0  | 7.8  | 7.9  | 10.6    | 12.2  | 13.8 | 13.8 | 14.8 |
|                           | 0.29       | 1.15 | 0.39 | 0.34 | 0.39 | 0.44 | 0.48    | 1.06  | 1.05 | 1.10 | 1.19 |
| <b>EU: Authority</b>      | 11.3       | 13.8 | 10.7 | 6.9  | 8.0  | 10.0 | 10.8    | 16.5  | 17.9 | 18.2 | 18.5 |
|                           | 0.29       | 0.72 | 0.48 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.45 | 0.42    | 0.35  | 0.27 | 0.28 | 0.31 |
| <b>Decentralization</b>   | 10.4       | 15.4 | 13.6 | 5.4  | 11.7 | 5.9  | 8.5     | 10.5  | 14.3 | 14.9 | 15.4 |
|                           | 0.28       | 0.84 | 0.49 | 0.32 | 0.40 | 0.46 | 0.40    | 0.85  | 0.79 | 0.82 | 0.89 |
| <b>Sympathy</b>           | .          | 17.9 | 13.7 | 6.6  | 8.0  | 12.0 | 11.3    | 18.4  | 19.6 | 19.7 | 19.9 |
|                           | .          | 0.41 | 0.53 | 0.42 | 0.41 | 0.50 | 0.42    | 0.31  | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.07 |

# Expert surveys: Pros



- Example, in the German case, we have 96 answers by experts with respect to the left-right position of SPD
- Average position SPD: 8.36 (st. dev. = 1.80; s.e. = .18)
- 95% confidence interval: 8.00-8.72



$$95\% \text{ CI} = \text{mean} \pm \text{s.e.} * 1.96$$