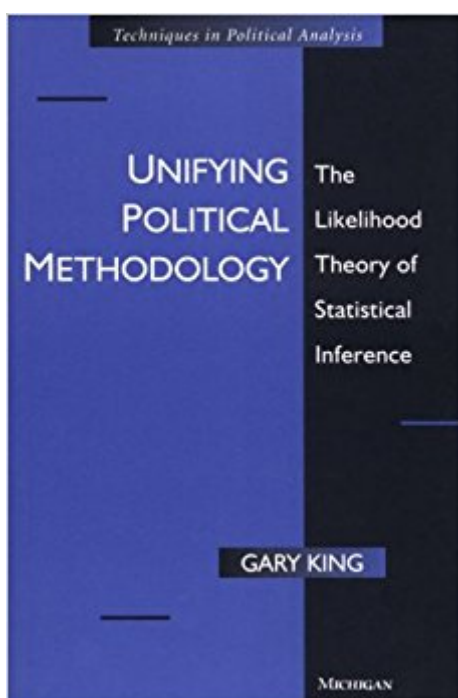


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Unifying Political Methodology: The Likelihood Theory Of Statistical Inference



Synopsis

One of the hallmarks of the development of political science as a discipline has been the creation of new methodologies by scholars within the discipline--methodologies that are well-suited to the analysis of political data. Gary King has been a leader in the development of these new approaches to the analysis of political data. In his book, *Unifying Political Methodology*, King shows how the likelihood theory of inference offers a unified approach to statistical modeling for political research and thus enables us to better analyze the enormous amount of data political scientists have collected over the years. Newly reissued, this book is a landmark in the development of political methodology and continues to challenge scholars and spark controversy. "Gary King's *Unifying Political Methodology* is at once an introduction to the likelihood theory of statistical inference and an evangelist's call for us to change our ways of doing political methodology. One need not accept the altar call to benefit enormously from the book, but the intellectual debate over the call for reformation is likely to be the enduring contribution of the work."--Charles Franklin, *American Political Science Review* "King's book is one of the only existing books which deal with political methodology in a clear and consistent framework. The material in it is now and will continue to be essential reading for all serious students and researchers in political methodology." --R. Michael Alvarez, *California Institute of Technology* Gary King is Professor of Government, Harvard University. One of the leading thinkers in political methodology, he is the author of *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behavior from Aggregate Data* and other books and articles.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

..".the presentation is quite readable and does not demand more than is reasonable....this is a superb book for learning about likelihood methods and their applications. King balances theory with application and keeps his audience clearly in mind. The book could be read by students with only a single course in probability theory and statistical inference as background." Charles H. Franklin, *American Political Science Review* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this book the author demonstrates the utility of the likelihood theory of statistical inference as a basic, unifying approach to statistical modelling for political research. This approach encourages the tailoring of models to particular phenomena studied. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I was really excited to read this book. However, even though I have a PhD in the social sciences and a fair bit of statistical experience, I couldn't read it. You need advanced math and stat training to read this book. I love Gary King's work, and I assume this is a great book, but it is only for readers who already have a sophisticated understanding of mathematics and statistics.

As someone that has both interest in and fear of political methodology, I find *Unifying Political Methodology* an accessible reference work for graduate students. A methodology text by this author can be a little intimidating, but King shows he is more than the foremost methodologist in the discipline, but a great teacher as well. *Unifying Political Methodology* offers a progressive step in advancing the way political scientists communicate with each other. Ignore it at your peril.

King's book is a very nicely written book on maximum likelihood estimation and inference in a political science context. I'm not sure it "unifies" political methodology (a term I feel is either overbroad or too limiting, depending on what one thinks about nonregression-like methods), though. It has a lot of nice, clearly written chapters showing examples of how to use different statistical models, all from a likelihood approach, but that doesn't answer a lot of serious questions of method at all. If it had a different title and intro chapter, that is, truth in advertising, I'd give it an 8.

Great books on how to undertake research in an academic discipline come along only rarely, and without a doubt this is one of the best books concerning political methodology in recent years. Every researcher using quantitative data to study any type of social phenomena --- not just politics --- needs to read this book (note that it has been reprinted by the University of Michigan Press).

A classic...but be sure to get the errata - a variety of his proofs are jacked up.

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