Pop Songs and Political Science

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Sheena Easton and Game Theory

Sheena Easton describes the following scenario for her baby:

1. Takes the morning train
2. Works from nine ’til five
3. Takes another train home again
4. Finds Sheena Easton waiting for him
Sheena Easton and her baby are playing a **zero-sum (total conflict)** game.

- Akin to Holmes-Moriarty game (see: von Neumann and Morgenstern)
- Solution: **mixed strategy**
Rick Astley’s Re-election Platform

Rick Astley’s campaign promises:

▶ Never gonna give you up.
▶ Never gonna let you down.
▶ Never gonna run around and desert you.
▶ Never gonna make you cry.
▶ Never gonna say goodbye.
▶ Never gonna tell a lie and hurt you.

Are these promises (if credible) sufficient to secure re-election?
Whereas these pledges conform to the preferences of the median voter, we expect Congressman Astley to secure re-election.
Caribbean Queen and Operation Urgent Fury


- Emphasized sharing the same dream
- Hearts beating as one

“Caribbean Queen” is about the poor execution of Operation Urgent Fury.

- Echoed JCS chairman David Jones’ frustrations with military establishment.

Billy Ocean is advocating for what became the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

- Wanted to take advantage of **economies of scale**, resolve **coordination problems** in U.S. military.
The Good Day Hypothesis

We know the following about Ice Cube’s day.

1. The Lakers beat the Supersonics.
2. No helicopter looked for a murder.
3. Consumed Fatburger at 2 a.m.
4. Goodyear blimp: “Ice Cube’s a pimp.”
The Good Day Hypothesis

This leads to two different hypotheses:

- $H_0$: Ice Cube’s day is statistically indistinguishable from a typical day.
- $H_1$: Ice Cube is having a good (i.e. greater than average) day.

These hypotheses are tested using archival data of Ice Cube’s life.