

Milestone Six and a Half

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Abstract

This is an extension of Campbell et al. (2019) which details two separate experiments which suggest that individuals think of politicians with local roots and that exhibit behavioral localism more highly. I was able to replicate the entire article with the exceptions of table 1 and figure 2 because they visuals relating to methodology and not the results themselves. I will be conducting an extension which includes the use of `stan_glm` instead of `lm` as well as look at certain subgroups based upon location and party identification. I hope to find cool things:)

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1 Introduction

Campbell et al. (2019) aims to answer the driving question of, “Why do politicians with strong local roots receive more electoral support?” by running and analyzing two separate studies. The first study uses a “paired profiles factorial vignette design” by asking subjects to rate hypothetical members of Parliament. The hypothetical members have varying levels of local roots as well as varying levels of “behavioral localism”—their track record of constituency service and if they act more so as a trustee or delegate. In the second study, subjects again considered hypothetical members of Parliament with varying levels of local roots. How, the subjects also received information on their political preferences and partisan loyalties. The first study depicted that the additional information swayed rankings, but local roots still seemed to have an association. The second study agreed with these results stating that, “even if voters are provided with a rich array of information about politicians’ behavior and ideological positioning, the effect of local roots remained positive and notable.” The remainder of the article discusses the nuances of these results within the frame of the driving question.

Using R, I replicated Campbell et al. (2019). The original code can be found in the *The Journal of Politics* Dataverse.¹ All of my code for this paper including the extension is available in my Github repository.²

¹<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/C15VOD>

²https://github.com/SamuelLowry/why_friends_and_neighbors_replication_paper.git

2 Literature Review

Due to Campbell et al. (2019) being a very recent article, published May 6, 2019, there has not been any follow-up scholarly work on the topic even from the authors themselves. Nevertheless, Campbell et al. (2019) builds off of a rich history of the “friends and neighbors” effect which was first coined by Key (1949). Other notable works include Bowler, Donovan, and Snipp. (1993) and Garand (1988) which highlight the United States and Arzheimer and Evans (2012) as well as Arzheimer and Evans (2014) which highlight Britain. These two articles are particularly important due to Campbell et al. (2019) dealing with the “friends and neighbors” effect in the United Kingdom. These are just a couple of the notable works. Of course, more in way of an actual review is to come.

3 Possible Extensions

I have already been able to replicate all of the results from *Why Friends and Neighbors? Explaining the Electoral Appeal of Local Roots* Campbell et al. (2019) by Rosie Campbell, Philip Cowley, Nick Vivyan, and Markus Wagner in the *The Journal of Politics*. The next step is to improve upon their methods and make suggests as to what to do next. My thoughts are below:

1. The first step is to suggest using `stan_glm` from the `rstanarm` package instead of the simple `lm`. This allows for the use of generalized linear modeling instead of linear modeling with optional prior distributions for the coefficients—a Bayesian function.
2. Both studies examine how the attributes of the Members of Parliament influence views on behavioral localism and local roots. Nevertheless, the data does not look within many demographic categories which are collected about the subjects. How do these views change based upon individual political views, gender, education level etc. I aim therefore to also use priors to maybe weight for these separate groups to create a better picture of the UK electorate.
3. Study 2 uses F-tests to see if there is interactions between Members of Parliaments’ local ties and each remaining attribute. Page 140 in the textbook cautions against the use of such tests, for noisy data can give rise to insignificance with hypothesis testing even if there is some. Therefore it would be better to scrap this point or revise it. I am still in the process of determining a better alternative.
4. In order to maybe make this study more reliable to extrapolate upon, we could delete all vignettes within the analysis where the Member of Parliament lives outside of the district which simply cannot occur with other legislators such as Congressmen in the United States which are required to live within their district.

These extensions will hopefully better the article as a whole and clarify its implications.

All analysis for this paper is available in my Github repository for this milestone is in the footnote below.³

³https://github.com/SamuelLowry/why_friends_and_neighbors_replication_paper.git

4 References

- Arzheimer, Kai, and Jocelyn Evans. 2012. "Geolocation and Voting: Candidate-Voter Distance Effects on Party Choice in the 2010 UK General Election in England." *Political Geography*. 31 (5): 301–10.
- . 2014. "Candidate Geolocation and Voter Choice in the 2013 English County Council Elections." *Research; Politics*. 1 (2): 1–9.
- Bowler, Shaun, Todd Donovan, and Joseph Snipp. 1993. "Local Sources of Information and Voter Choice in State Elections." *American Politics Quarterly*. 21 (4): 473–89.
- Campbell, Rosie, Philip Cowley, Nick Vivyan, and Markus Wagner. 2019. "Why Friends and Neighbors? Explaining the Electoral Appeal of Local Roots." *The Journal of Politics*. 81(3), 937-951.
- Garand, James. 1988. "Localism and Regionalism in Presidential Elections: Is There a Home State or Regional Advantage." *Western Political Quarterly*. 41 (1): 85–103.
- Key, Valdimer. 1949. "Southern Politics." New York: Knopf.

A Appendix of Replicated Graphics

I was able to replicate table 2, figure 1, and figure 3. I was unable to replicate table 1 and figure 2 because they were not data related. They were merely visualizations displaying content about methods and experimental design. Table 1 depicts written descriptions of the hypothetical Members of Parliament present to subject. Figure 2 depicts a screenshot of the survey.

Table 2

% Table created by stargazer v.5.2.2 by Marek Hlavac, Harvard University. E-mail: hlavac at fas.harvard.edu
 % Date and time: Tue, Apr 14, 2020 - 23:38:34

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Intercept | −0.412*** (0.057) | −0.661*** (0.128) | −0.412*** (0.057) | −0.664*** (0.125) |
| Local roots | 0.755*** (0.080) | 0.759*** (0.080) | 0.755*** (0.080) | 0.758*** (0.080) |
| Behavioral localism information | 0.683*** (0.078) | 0.691*** (0.079) | | |
| Behavioral localism: High (vs. no info) | | | 1.395*** (0.098) | 1.402*** (0.098) |
| Behavioral localism: Low (vs. no info) | | | −0.007 (0.085) | −0.0002 (0.086) |
| Local roots X Behavioral info. | −0.253** (0.110) | −0.257** (0.110) | | |
| Local roots X High behavioral localism | | | −0.311** (0.140) | −0.311** (0.139) |
| Local roots X Low behavioral localism | | | −0.233* (0.119) | −0.238** (0.119) |
| Controls for voter characteristics? | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Observations | 5,203 | 5,203 | 5,203 | 5,203 |
| R ² | 0.036 | 0.046 | 0.107 | 0.116 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.036 | 0.044 | 0.106 | 0.114 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 1

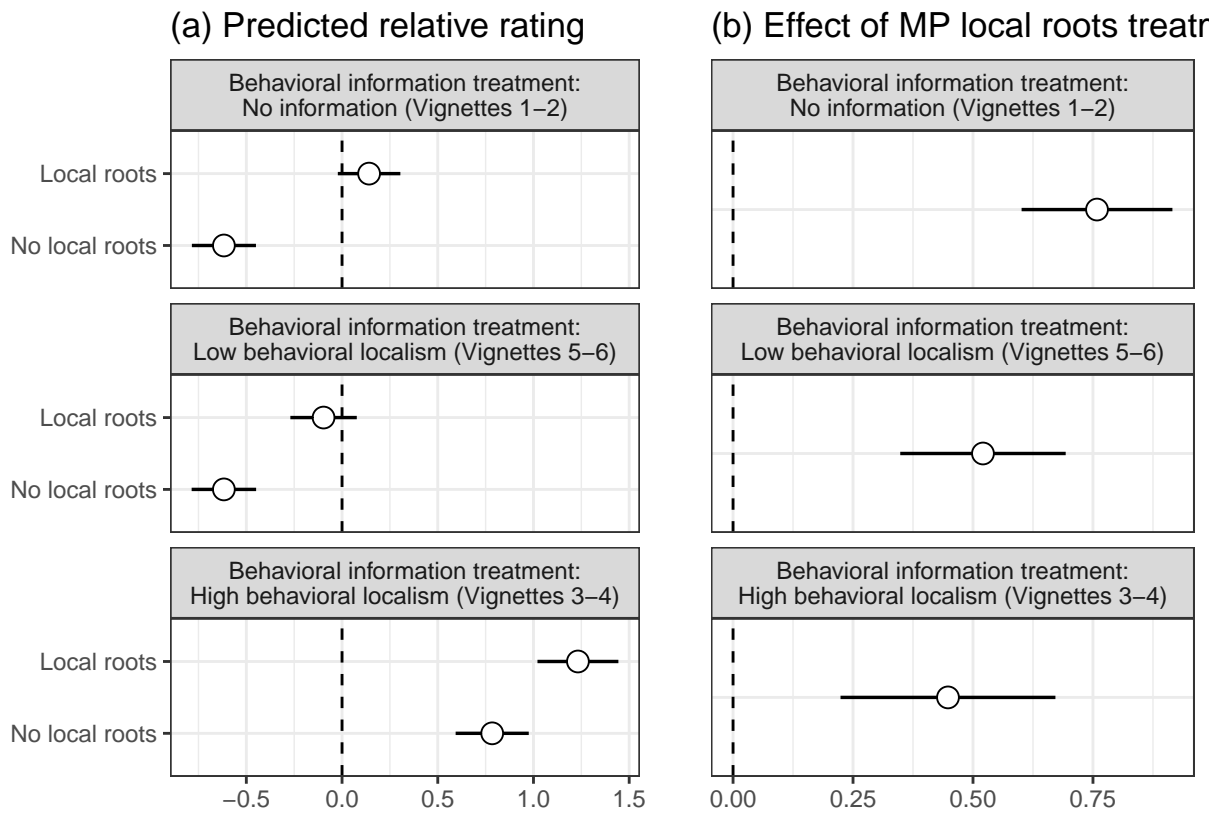


Figure 3

