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Abstract

Ideology can be influenced by various factors, making it challenging to assess the impact of these ideological differences across different government scales. Nevertheless, measuring ideology is crucial, as the findings can be utilized to determine the influence of ideas on government structure and policy development. Since the U.S. operates as a representative government, it is equally essential to gauge and comprehend ideological impact to enhance people's understanding of representation within the government. This emphasizes the need for an analysis comparing the Senate and the House, using replication data from "How Can We Estimate the Ideology of Citizens and Political Elites on the Same Scale?" by Stephen Jessee. This analysis aims to ascertain who best represents the will of the people. Through the utilization of R Studio, the data will be manipulated and analyzed to gain insights into which institution, whether the House or the Senate, exhibits greater ideological similarities.

Introduction

In the article "(How) Can We Estimate the Ideology of Citizens and Political Elites on the Same Scale?" Stephen Jessee presented a compelling argument for comprehending ideological data. The data provided, along with the replication and

guidance from the article, assists in understanding ideology and the measurements that can be employed to determine it.

Measuring ideology can be complicated and often involves a constructed amount of data. Due to the various factors affecting the way people feel about certain issues, the data can frequently be filled with many different variables. Having a large dataset can help reveal robust findings and assist in measuring statistical significance. However, it does require data cleaning to ensure that the data fits the needs of the research.

It is important to try to understand the ideology of the people in comparison to that of the House and Senate. To better comprehend the relationship of members of the House and Senate to their constituents is important and could offer valuable information for understanding politics. If political offices and candidates could better align with their constituents, it would result in a better representative government. This is why the use of Jessee's article and data helps establish the connection needed to better grasp how closely aligned the ideology is.

Literature Review and Theory

Jessee intended for his data to be used to help understand the problems with different measuring techniques of ideology. He suggests possible fixes for the miscalculations. He begins by examining various graphical techniques used by other scientists in attempting to determine different levels of ideology. Jessee primarily

focuses on people in politics and their differences from constituents. With the data included in his replication, he could determine the validity of the data when he ran the analysis through other researchers. His paper includes numerous graphs and tables examining the data from different perspectives of other researchers. For each method of measuring ideology, he provides insight into the exact validity of the data. While each of the different methodologies he examined showed almost similar results, he concluded that accurately gauging ideology as set data is challenging. Ultimately, he states that the best way to measure ideology is to carefully consider the data scale and keep assumptions of the model within reason.

For this paper, there will be careful consideration of the data, and within the bounds offered by Jessee, it will assess whether the House better represents the population on three different key issues. By examining House members, a better idea of how closely political elites align with respondents can be obtained. The reason for choosing House members (representatives) is that they are elected most often and by districts of people rather than states as a whole. In theory, this suggests that they would have closer ideological alignment. To test the validity of the hypothesis, the use of the replicated dataset will demonstrate that the Senate does not hold similar ideological views.

Research Design

In order to demonstrate that House representatives better share the values of the population, an understanding of the datasets is required. The data collected from the replication yielded different findings. For testing the hypothesis, a dataset of Senate roll-call votes on policy issues voted on from 2004 to 2005 will be used. This data includes two separate datasets analyzing two different Senators from each state, also detailing how they voted on different policy issues. The second dataset analyzes House roll-call votes on the same policy issues voted on from 2004 to 2005. Unlike the Senate, all the House members are combined into the same dataset. The third dataset contains survey response data on public respondents feelings on the issues and whether they would have voted in agreement or disagreement. The final dataset used is the approval rating given by respondents to the Senate and House members.

Due to the hypothesis asserting that the House better represents the population on three different key issues, the data needed to be streamlined. Firstly, the Senate data needed to be combined, considering the original data had it separated into two different datasets. As for the House data and respondents' survey results, they only required the deletion and renaming of the data.

As a result of the large number of responses, it is important to note the variables present. The different variables in the data include the various policy

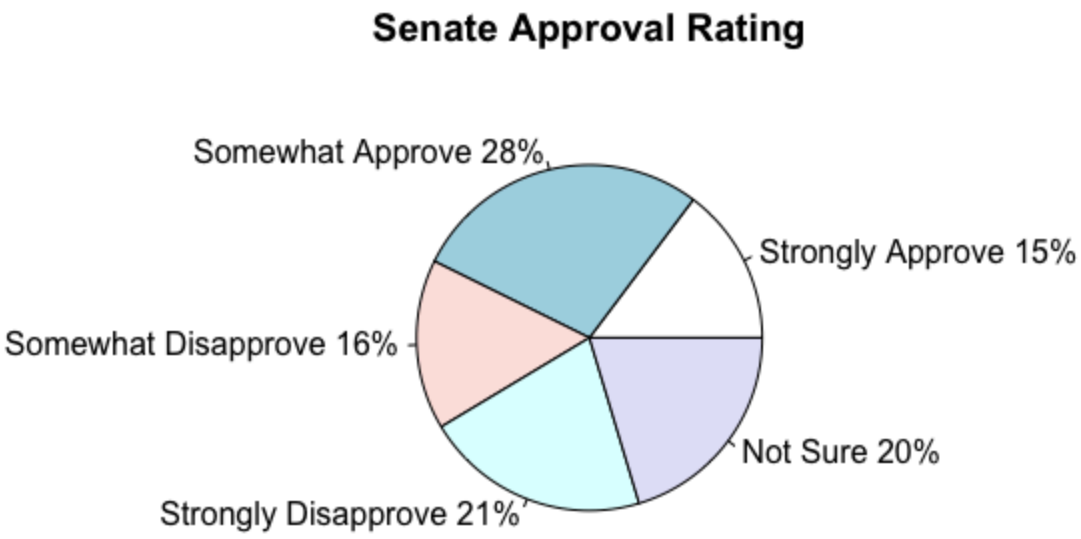
issues being voted on, the stance of the Senate, House, and respondents on these different issues, as well as the feelings respondents have towards House members. Two units of observation are used for the research. The primary unit of observation is the stance on key policy issues. The secondary unit of observation is the feelings respondents have towards House members.

The scope of this research aims to investigate whether or not House members hold views closest to the population. To prove this, datasets containing Senate and House voting records and respondents' votes on the issues were utilized. If a comparison could be drawn from the alignment of positions on the issues, a conclusion could be reached regarding how similar the ideologies are. It could also be reasonable to consider that examining the approval rating of respondents towards members of the House and Senate would further help understand which of the groups share similar views.

Empirical Results

To analyze if the hypothesis is correct, it would be best to examine the models produced by manipulating the data and draw conclusions. The first figure analyzed is a pie chart of the respondents approval ratings compared to those of the Senate.

Figure 1.



The above graph presents the data for the approval rating of Senate members in five different categories: Strongly Approve, Somewhat Approve, Not Sure, Somewhat Disapprove, and Strongly Disapprove. As shown in the pie chart, there are varying attitudes towards Senate members. The positive approval ratings towards Senate members is higher (43%) than negative feelings (37%). However, the percentage differences do not exhibit a large gap, and the "Not Sure" category is also at a fairly high percentage (20%). The data shows while people are more likely to approve of Senate members, it is not by extraordinary amounts. This is understandable considering each Senator is elected by the state as a whole rather than by districts.

Figure 2.

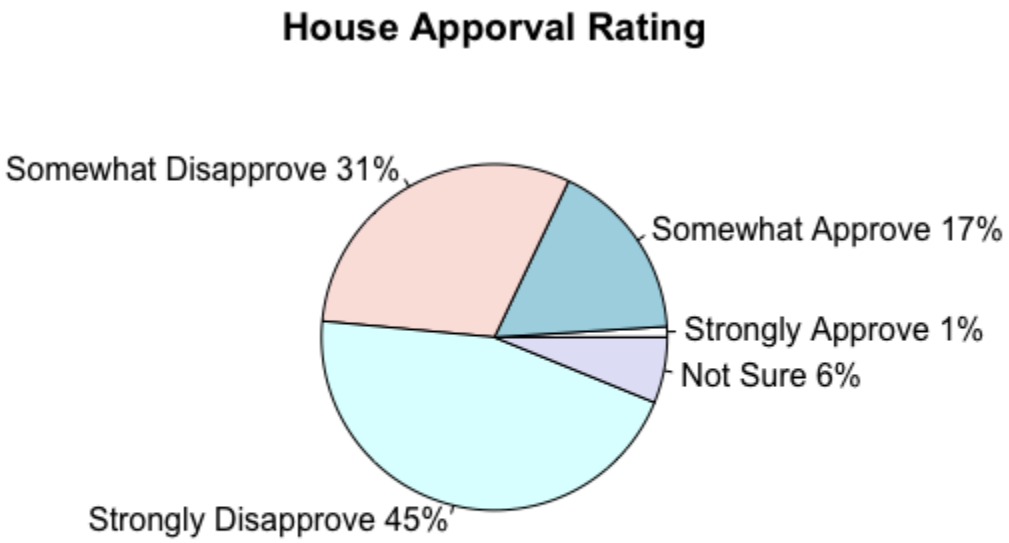


Figure 2 is a pie chart of House members' approval ratings, which depicts surprising results in light of the hypothesis being tested. Compared to the Senate results, there are much higher differences in House members' disapproval than that seen in the Senate. Respondents feel very negatively (76%) towards the House members with little approval (18%). This could be attributed to the House not putting the needs of the people first, as they are supposed to. It could also stand to reason that because fewer of the issues of the House are discussed publicly, respondents don't know if the House is representing them well.

The next figure analyzed is how the House, Senate, and respondents line up concerning positions on policy issues. This data is represented as bar plots to better illustrate the differences in positions.

Figure 3.

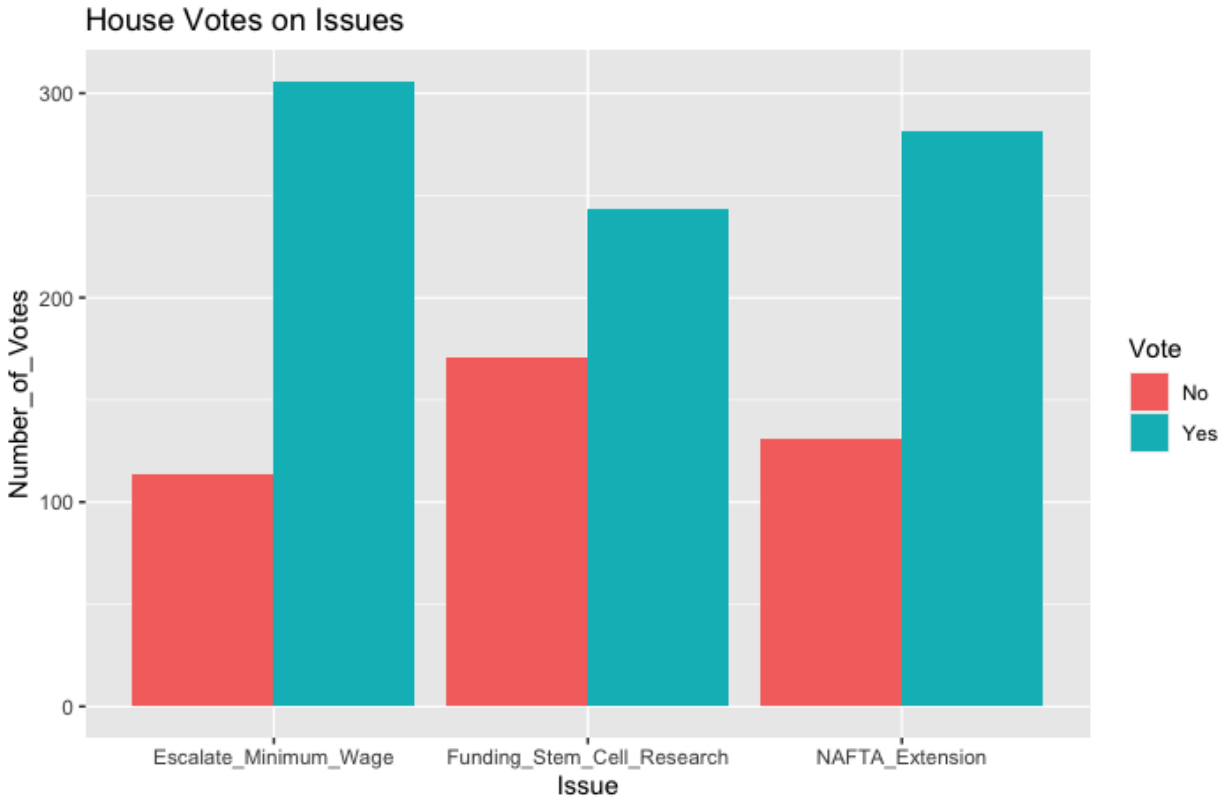


Figure 4.

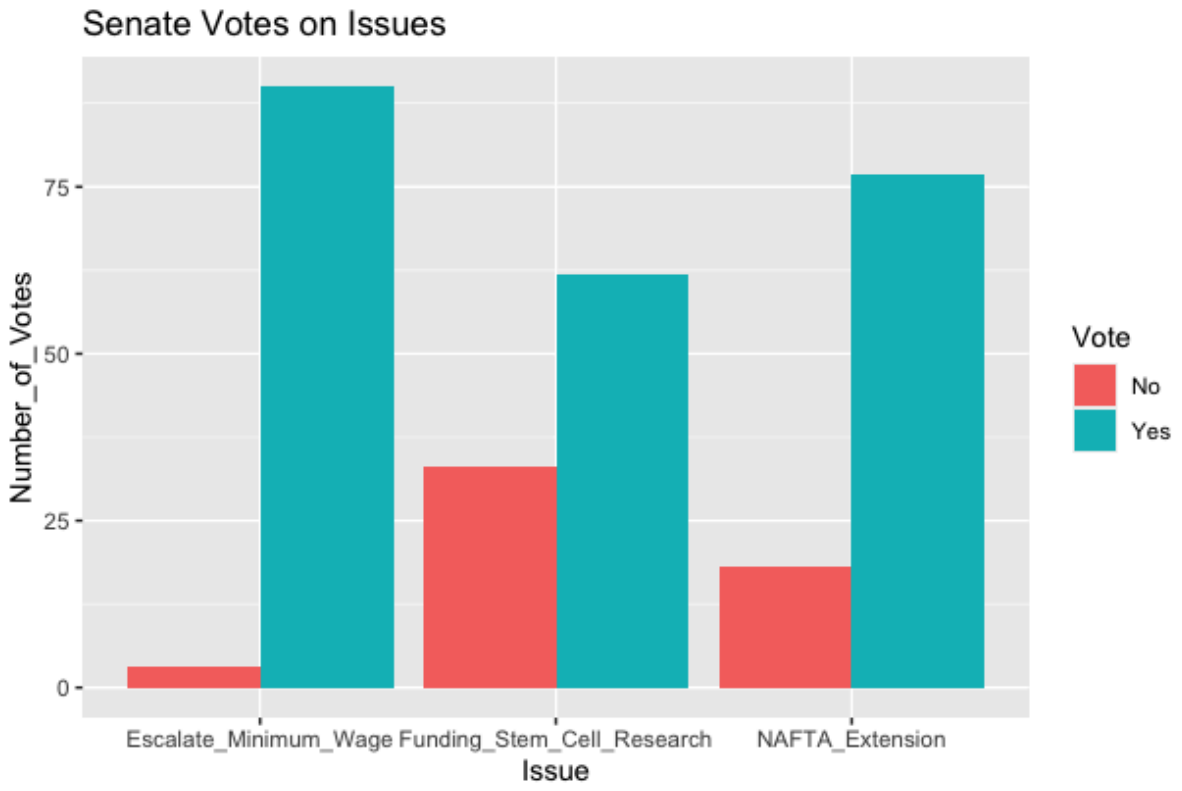
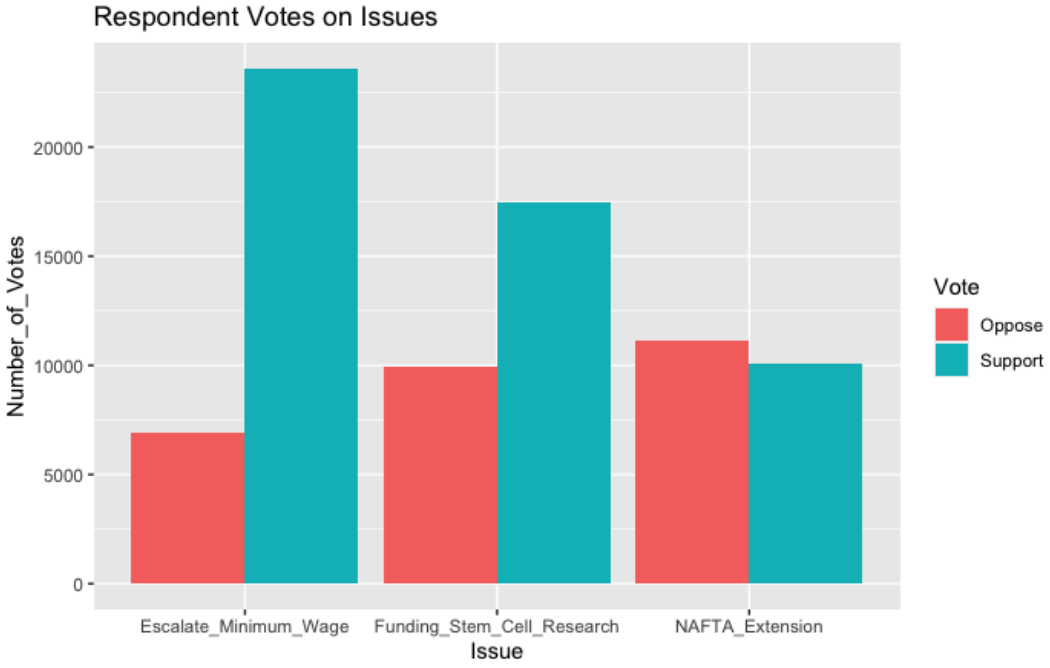

Senate Votes on Issues
Number_of_Votes
75
50
25
0
Escalate_Minimum_Wage
Funding_Stem_Cell_Research
NAFTA_Extension
Issue
Vote
No
Yes

Figure 5.


Respondent Votes on Issues
Number_of_Votes
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
Escalate_Minimum_Wage
Funding_Stem_Cell_Research
NAFTA_Extension
Issue
Vote
Oppose
Support

The three different issues are listed as follows: increasing the minimum wage, funding stem cell research, and extending NAFTA. While these are three very drastically different policies, it will help to see a diverse ideology dataset among the people. Figure 3 shows the House voted yes on all three issues with relatively large differences between the no and yes votes. As for Figure 4, it looks at how the Senate voted on the three issues. The Senate votes are more of a positive consensus and have much larger differences in the yes and no votes, with the larger majority being yes. However, Figure 5 shows how the respondents would have voted, and the results are a little more skewed. The respondents disagreed with both the House and Senate on the expansion of NAFTA, albeit at a close margin. As for their position on the other two issues, the results are more similar to that of the House.

It can be concluded that the Senate and House share similar ideology during this time regarding increasing the minimum wage, funding stem cell research, and extending NAFTA. However, respondent voters hold a different opinion on the NAFTA extension. The differences in respondent voters' yes and no votes for increasing the minimum wage and funding stem cell research closely mirror those of the House, with the margins reflecting similar ideological standings.

Finally, the last analysis will be a regression model examining the differences in state residence and education level to see how these factors affect the results of the House approval ratings.

Table 1. OLS Model of Education and State Residence on House Approval Ratings

	CONGAPPR
STATE	-0.000
	(.007)
educ	.168
	(.086)
Constant	3.646***
	(.387)
Observations	5,846
Log Likelihood	-429.332
Akaike Inf. Crit.	864.663
Notes:	*P < .05
	**P < .01
	***P < .001

Table 1 displays a regression model of education and state residence and their impact on House Approval Ratings. It should be noted that the observation count of 5,846 constitutes a large sample size to consider. Although it appears that the state has no substantial effect on approval ratings, the education level of the respondents does exhibit some influence. While the effect may not be statistically significant, it still indicates an impact on the ratings.

All in all, the data does present an argument for whether the House has similar views to the respondents. Figures 1 and 2 show compelling percentages for the Senate having more approval by the people. However, the bar plot figures 3-5 show that when faced with the hard polices, the respondents vote more similar to the House. It also stands to reason that education of the respondents can impact the effects of the approval rating.

Nevertheless, it should be considered that there could be missing data from respondents not wanting to vote on certain issues, as well as potential survey bias that can occur during surveys. Overall, it can be rationalized that the House does have a similar ideology to the people, especially in the cases of the two policy issues discussed. However, surprisingly, House representatives do not hold the overwhelming populace similarity as hypothesized.

Data and Work Cited

Jessee, Stephen, 2016, "Replication Data for: (How) Can We Estimate the Ideology of Citizens and Political Elites on the Same Scale?", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/IIYGGX, Harvard Dataverse, V1, UNF:6:QVvqJMwu6mTC4e/iSEFT7A== [fileUNF]