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BYSTANDERS OR PEDAGOGUES? VOTER PREFERENCES
AND SENATOR VOTING BEHAVIOR

Steven M Richardson

41 Pages

The recent political atmosphere in America has reflected a perceived lack of constituent representation in the political process leading to a volatile 2016 Presidential race. This paper examines voter preferences and their effect on senator voting behavior and finds that depending on the party, voter preferences have different levels of effect on senators. Republicans struggle between meeting the demands of their more numerous moderate statewide constituency and their smaller yet more extreme core supporters which reflect contemporary attitudes expressed by conservative constituents and Republican candidates. Democrats do not suffer this problem, being mindful of their statewide constituency while being able to vote their own preferences. These findings help explain the temperament and approaches behind Republican candidates in the 2016 election cycle.

KEYWORDS: Senator Voting Behavior, Voter Preference

BYSTANDERS OR PEDAGOGUES? VOTER PREFERENCES
AND SENATOR VOTING BEHAVIOR

STEVEN M RICHARDSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
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BYSTANDERS OR PEDAGOGUES? VOTER PREFERENCES
AND SENATOR VOTING BEHAVIOR

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S. M. R.

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CHAPTER I

WATCHING FROM THE SIDELINES

What Are We Seeing?

The democratic political system is based on the premise that the sovereignty of the state rests in the hands of that states' citizens. Within the United States one simply need look to the first words of its' Constitution: "We the People". As a direct democracy, where every citizen makes their voice heard and cast votes on issues, would be both too chaotic and hectic to manage properly democracies instead vote for representatives to stand in for their representative citizens or constituents. While this is a logical approach to best represent the ideas of millions, the relationship between constituents and legislators have both been a puzzle to scholars eager to understand it's nature and a talking point among politicians, commentators and citizens.

The US political climate within the last decade has seen a rising tension over this arrangement democracies have adopted. The ideal that ones' opinion matters in government is not felt among the American public. The Harvard Public Opinion Project conducted a poll in 2013 among 2,089 participants where they found that 51 to 52 percent of 18-29 year olds would replace every member of Congress if given the chance. However, of those individuals who would replace everyone in Congress only half said they would actually vote and worse only seventy-five percent claimed they were not even politically

active (Kohnle, 2013). Political apathy has struck a chord across voters everywhere, the feeling that attempting to influence change in the political realm is futile and that ultimately ones' opinion does not matter (Rosenburg, 1954). This frustration has become vocalized in the political climate often discussed by commentators, legislators and political comedians and has been a cause for decreasing voter turnouts in US elections since the 1960s resulting in only 36.4 percent of eligible voters voting in 2014 (DeIReal, 2014).

Frustration over lacking representation or even a voice in chambers has led to a near-hostile 2016 presidential election process. Lines in the sand have been drawn between seasoned Republican politicians who are seen as only paying lip-service to American conservative values and thus part of the problem and their electoral opponents who have championed themselves political outsiders able to truly represent citizen interests (Bradner, 2015). Democrats are faced with a seasoned politician from an established political family against a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, historically an Independent in Congress, who calls for a political revolution (McCain-Nelson, 2016). The theme is the same on both sides: outsiders not part of the system against established politicians who inspire neither faith nor support among American constituents. With the political climate focused on the frustration of a perceived lack of representation in government a fresh take on the constituent-legislator relationship is required. Has our understanding of the constituent-legislator relationship changed as the 21st century passed its first decade or has a fundamental shift occurred that requires new understanding?

Stating the Question

The title of this paper is ‘Bystanders or Pedagogues?’ and the choice of title was not merely to be creative. The US political climate sings the same tune every time someone listens in: That citizens are bystanders forced to watch helplessly as legislators act counter to their desires. Instead they observe how other forces, such as corporations or even party pressure gain an unprecedented foothold that shadows over citizens’ personal preferences. Are citizens merely bystanders to the political process or are citizens pedagogical and influencing their legislator’s actions from afar?

Outline of Thesis

This thesis is split into several chapters. Chapter II, *How American Democracy Does/Doesn’t Work* will provide a comprehensive literature review in areas applicable to studying the question: Voter preferences and behavior as well as legislator motivation and their behavior. Following this explanation the thesis will introduce a theoretical model that will be used to present the thesis’s hypotheses as well as build the research design explained in Chapter III, *How to Watch the Senate in Action*. Chapter III will outline the model used, the variables included in the model and how they are collected and measured. It will also assess possible difficulties based on the model going forward in order to better provide interpretive results from the findings. Chapter IV, *To β or Not to β* , will be where the models are presented and interpreted. Finally this thesis will conclude with Chapter V, *Old Questions, New Ideas*, which will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the model, formally discuss the findings with those strengths and weaknesses in mind and

address what the implications of the study bring to our understanding of the constituent-legislator relationship.

CHAPTER II

HOW AMERICAN DEMOCRACY DOES/DOESN'T WORK

The Cogs in the (Possibly Broken) Machine

A useful model when describing any representative democracy is via the principal-agent model. This model suggests that a principal, in this case constituents, empowers an agent, legislators, to fulfill certain obligations, tasks or actions (McGuire & Ohsfelt, 1989). The obligations, tasks or actions for legislators is to represent their constituencies in Congress. Superficially the options legislators have are stark: Cast a vote to fulfill their constituencies' demands or not to (Matthews, 1960; Miller & Stokes, 1963). While the model is a useful guide in explaining how it works it fails to reflect that the agent in this case has multiple principals demanding him to act. Advocacy groups, business interests, political parties, fellow legislators or even other political branches of government could be demanding certain legislative action (Kingdon, 1989). This is not to say that the legislators themselves do not have an agenda. They desire to be re-elected (Mayhew, 1974). Legislators will always seek to fulfill the demands that maximize their chances of retaining their position or in some cases elevating them to higher political positions (DeBacker, 2010). This is one reason many presidential candidates are either former or current representatives, senators or other political office holders as they are trying to ascend the political ladder over the course of their political career.

While groups may offer incentives for legislators to enact policies in their favor

constituent votes are the only way legislators can hope to retain their incumbency suggesting, logically, that citizens would be the most important principal to satisfy. Legislators therefore seek to gain the trust of their constituents so that even if they deviate from their constituents preferences, voters will believe that the legislator has their interests at heart and always vote for them in future elections (Fenno, 1978). Building trust forms what is called the incumbency advantage in political discourse. Incumbents have time to build reputations and voting records to endear themselves to both the constituents who voted for them as well as attract new voters for the purpose of making it difficult to be defeated by unknown challengers, up to and including challengers presented by their own party (Ibid, 1978). The 2010 Alaska federal election provide a useful example of the benefits of gaining constituent trust. Senator Lisa Murkowski lost the Republican primary to a Republican-supported candidate yet went on to defeat them as a write-in candidate (Bohrer, 2010). Murkowski's victory was due to her holding constituent trust, something the challenger did not have. This level of trust allows legislators to fulfill other demands besides constituents because their constituency will believe, on some level, that their legislator will not betray them. It also helps one to understand why so many American citizens like their elected legislators while despising Congress (see Molla, 2014).

At this point it is important to bring up the other side of the relationship, that of the constituent. Legislators seek to earn their trust in order to garner their votes but what ideology must a legislator follow in order to show they have their interests at heart? Scholars have historically claimed that the majority of Americans have no real political interest to represent. As a matter of fact they are politically uninformed and do not even

think ideologically meaning they have no knowledge to even formulate preferences (Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1992). Instead they simply use labels and informational short-cuts so that they can make a decision as if they are informed; party labels being one such short-cut (Campbell et al. 1960; Lupia, 1994; Boudreau, 2013; Aldrich, 2011) and another being messages by political elites to inform them of important issues they should be aware of (Parry, 2005).

As short-cuts are a general summary rather than a specific profile these methods of obtaining information can be heavily biased through the use of priming and framing effects to make constituents react in a prescribed way to events. One example of priming and framing effects can be seen in how political parties attempt to present themselves as an ideological stable: Republicans promote conservatism, Democrats liberalism (Aldrich, 2011). This is not unlike how advertisers entice consumers through on the reliability of their product: Constituents will get conservatives/liberals if they vote Republican/Democrat respectively. More subtle methods of priming and framing are reflected in how legislators describe the nature of high-profile bills to their constituents using a frame of reference guaranteed to illicit a specific response (see Nelson & Oxley, 1999).

Another faction of constituents however do not share these traits. Neither do they need to rely overly on short-cuts to make decisions and are politically informed. Found on the ideological extremes, these 'active partisans' are the constituents who volunteer for election campaigns, donate money and engage in political activism (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). Due in part to their usefulness both as a campaign resource and dedicated

voters who will come out on Election Day it has been suggested that legislators only seek to represent these small, core supporting constituencies (see Fiorina, 1974 and Shapiro, et al, 1990) rather than the sum of their general electorate.

Another suggestion put forward entails legislators attempting to capture both active partisans and the average citizen in campaigns. Known as the median voter theorem, it claims that candidates in an election will gravitate to the extremes when elections are farther away to capture core supporters. As the election comes closer the legislator will in fact start to reflect a more moderate position in order to attract the rest of their constituency (Hotelling, 1929). This further suggests that the general electorate is not represented at all and only the extremes are ever really represented in Congress. Ousting of incumbents for challengers simply replaces one set of extremes for another, either from the same or opposite political party (Bafumi & Herron, 2010).

Political parties are not uniform institutions. Instead they are best seen as coalitions who have joined under a commonly shared theme. These blocs range from the business-centric “entrepreneurs” and the devoutly religious “evangelicals” that litter the Republican Party to the “green” and “liberal” factions of Democrats (Koger, et al. 2010). Whether or not these factions work together depends on which party you speak of. Koger, et al. found that Democratic factions both frequently work with and exchange information and resources far more than Republican factions. This requires active advertising from parties as they desire to present a clear and defined party brand which alludes to the discussion of priming and framing discussed earlier. They need legislators to vote in ways to ensure the brand is well represented and will offer incentives such as party positions, committee

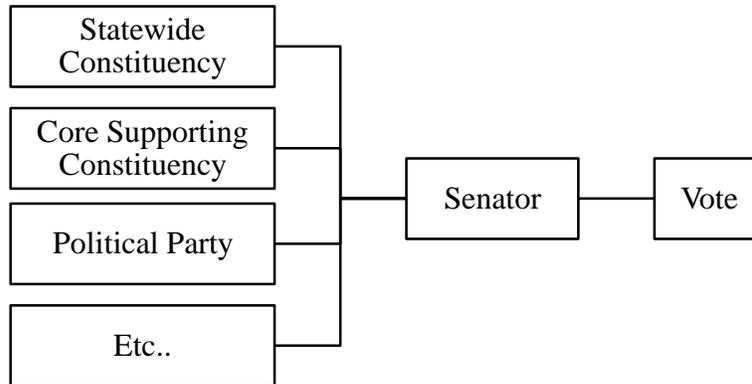
appointments and election support in exchange for voting party preferences (DeBacker, 2010). This further relates to the power of party label as a useful short-cut for constituents to digest political information about electoral candidates quickly. Parties therefore act much like legislators do toward constituents: gain their trust so they will always vote (Bolstad et al, 2013; Campbell, et al, 1960).

Based on this discussion the word election is spoken often and it should be. Elections are the time where constituents have a direct impact on political outcomes by either voting for their current legislator or voting for a challenger. It also serves as a time where legislators will be most pressured on all sides because of the increased exposure the campaign puts on his behavior. Their party will demand a certain vote while their constituency may demand the opposite and their supporting constituency meanwhile demands a more extreme position than all others along with other interested parties.

A Theory Regarding the Senate

Dual constituency theory serves to bring together several assertions made by scholars and helps prepare for studying the Senate. Fiorina posits that senators only represent small, supporting constituencies who are the same ‘active partisans’ described by Abramowitz & Sanders (2004). These are the core supporters who are ideologically extreme and both politically active and informed which provide benefits for legislators in securing future elections. Further core supporters may (or may not) be further tied to an inner-party faction depending on their disposition. Meanwhile the rest of a senator’s constituency are uninformed, short-cut using voters. Legislators will therefore vote in ways

that best reflects the interests of those who will maximize his chances to win upcoming elections. This is summarized in the diagram below:



The diagram shows those who attempt to have the senator reflect their interests¹. While senators may be primarily interested in representing his core supporters his party will continue to pressure him to observe the ‘party line’; that ideological agreement among the many groups found in the party. The only principal-agent relationship left is the statewide constituency, the ones who are uninformed and act based on heuristic cues more than an ideological preference. While constituents may not have informed opinions on many bills presented in Congress they do have preferences that are founded on rational interest. While they may not be as politically aware or observant as an active partisan might be, a farmer will hate having more agricultural laws put over top of him just as much as a businessman will hate having to deal with more business regulations. Their interest makes them vote for legislators who have the best chance of seeing their interests fulfilled

¹ Etc... in the diagram reflects possible additions to those seeking to have the senator represent their interests such as business interests and other legislators.

(Downs, 1957). Heuristic cues are simply the tools constituents use to make the judgement of who will get what they want done in the best (and most numerous) ways possible.

Hypotheses

It was discussed in the review of the literature that many Americans often vote simply by party label due to not having the necessary information to make a fully informed decision. Republicans are found in varying conservative ideological stances and Democrats are found in varying liberal ideological stances. Legislators desire more votes and the more votes he gets out of the electorate and the more trust they place in him or her, the more secure the legislator's seat is. Therefore legislators will vote in ways that complement what he sees as the preferences of his constituency. This thesis suggests that *a senator's statewide constituency will positively influence their legislator's voting behavior (H1)*. Conservative constituencies will cause senators to vote more conservatively and vice versa for liberal Senators. This would be reflected in legislators voting more liberal for liberal constituencies or more conservative for conservative constituents.

Due to the importance of senators' core supporters this thesis also proposes that *a senator's core supporting constituency positively influence their legislator's voting behavior but have more influence than the statewide constituency (H2)*. So long as the support constituency is satisfied, a senator does not have to be very afraid of next election; they will be re-elected by their main voting base (Fiorina, 1974) and not have to rely on the uninformed supermajority to win them the election. Thus we can expect a trend similarly discussed in the first hypothesis: senators will vote more conservative for conservative core supporters and vice versa for liberal supporters. The variance, we expect,

will be greater in senator's conservative voting with regard to core supporters than the rest of the statewide constituency. This would suggest that core supporters have a greater influence on legislators than the general electorate. The next chapter will utilize the theory discussed and its hypothesis to construct a methodology to test this thesis's prediction.

CHAPTER III
HOW TO OBSERVE THE SENATE IN ACTION

Construction of Variables

The dependent variable is the senator's vote on bills² since the study is wishing to examine what influences their vote. Since this will make the dependent variable binary and preferences are most often gauged along a conservative-liberal ideological spectrum, the dependent variable will be constructed to measure when a senator casts a conservative vote making the dependent variable name simple: *Conservative Vote*. Bills were ideologically labelled to allow the vote to be ideologically observed as described below.

The bills used in the study were based on interest group scoring data in the year 2014. Interest groups were selected for their observable ideological positions and the ones used are the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA, liberal), the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO, liberal) and the American Conservative Union (ACU, conservative). Each of these interest groups periodically publish legislator scorecards where they rank legislators based on how they voted on high-profile bills. These bills will be the bills used in the analysis. As interest groups acknowledge their support or non-support of these bills they can be ideologically labelled. A conservative interest group, logically, would support conservative bills and not support

² Abstentions and/or instances of not voting were not used.

liberal bills, vice versa were the interest group liberal. The study then ideologically labelled votes based on this logic. A Senator voting for a conservative bill was coded to have cast a conservative vote, vice versa for a liberal bill. Should a legislator vote against a bill, they're vote was coded as being its opposite. A vote against a conservative bill was coded as a liberal vote as an example.

Some bills used by interest groups are not substantial votes. The Senate has many procedural votes like the motion to invoke cloture which they use to stop filibusters. The problem with using procedural votes is because it is hard to differentiate legislator motivations for these votes because they only serve to orchestrate events in chambers, not so much implementing policy. After all, the motion to invoke cloture is made for minority party vs majority party tactics which suggests it's more of a party tool making constituent interest hard to tease out from party tactics. Due to these circumstances procedural votes were not used in this analysis. A list of bills used, a brief description along with their ideological label and which interest group was used is supplied in the Appendix. With that in mind the following is an example of how the dependent variable was coded.

Senate Bill 2280 was a bill that authorized construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. The ACU, a conservative interest group, supported this bill and used it to score legislators. Since a conservative interest group supported S. 2280 the bill was considered a conservative bill. All votes to pass the bill were coded as conservative, all votes against the bill were coded as liberal.

The main independent variable is voter preferences. There are two groups needing to be observed in terms of voter preferences, the preferences of the statewide constituency

And the preferences of core supporters which are the active partisans discussed by Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) and observed by Morris Fiorina (1974) among others. To observe both, the study measures two independent variables; *statewide constituency ideology* which represents the average ideological score of citizens in a state and *support ideology* which represents the average ideological score of a senator's core supporters. The statewide constituency variable used data collected by Berry, Fording, Hanson and Ringquist (BFHR). This scoring system places citizen ideology on a 0 to 100 scale with 0 being extremely conservative and 100 being extremely liberal (Berry et al, 1998). The data is collected using all U.S. House congressional districts in a state and providing an average state score. This method provides a robust and thorough representation if scholars seek a statewide average³.

The core supporting constituency was calculated using the average ADA scores, whose scale is the same as that used in the BFHR scoring system, of all same-party House representatives (see Levitt, 1996 for an example of this proxy). One complication that may emerge is that the BFHR score uses all votes in elections to calculate district ideology scores. Since a senators' core supporters will always vote this means that support ideology might be counted twice which may cause inaccurate coefficients in the model. An option available that this thesis will use is to observe a senator's core supporters and his statewide constituency separately in two separate models.

³ Some works that have utilized the BFHR indicator to measure citizen ideology can be found in the works of Fiorina (1999), Meinke & Hasecke (2003), Nicholson-Crotty (2004) and Kassow & Finnochiaro (2011).

To keep the tool of measurement the same, ADA scores were also used to measure *Legislator Ideology*. Complications may arise in using ADA scores for senators since the bills used to score senators are the same bills used to provide the value of the dependent variable. To avoid possible double-measurement as well as ensure all variables stay on the same spectrum, all applicable independent and control variables are lagged one year which means they will use values obtained from 2013.

Control variables will include party effects and a senator's age, gender and ethnicity. Observing party effects through established methods such as using party identification or using the average ideological score of the party leadership (see Levitt, 1996) is problematic due to the binary nature of constructing party effect variables: Republicans will always have one value while Democrats have the other.

Multicollinearity issues could exist between our constituency variables due to conservatives always aligning with Republicans and liberals always aligning with Democrats due to perception of party labels (Campbell, et al, 1960, Aldrich 2012). A variable observing party effects must therefore be both continuous and serve as a gauge to senators' coherence to party demands. Further it was noted that political parties are not unified institutions but coalitions of loosely like-minded factions so legislators may not always maintain the party line due to their connections to a particular faction, especially if their faction is not in control of the chamber.

One such collection of data that can do this is a senator's party unity score which comes from data collected by Poole and Rosenthal that calculates the percentage of how many times a senator votes with his party in situations where over fifty percent of their

party vote against over fifty percent of the opposing party on a bill. This provides a rough score, as a percentage, of a senator siding with his party on policy along partisan lines. While it may not directly observe party effects it does reflect senators' reliance and/or dedication to the party line with the assumption that the party is always applying pressure.

Table 1 - Variable Summary

| Variable Name | Variable Type | Description | Variable Construction |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| <i>Conservative Vote (DV)</i> | Binary | When a Senator casted a conservative vote. | 0=Liberal Vote. 1= Conservative Vote in 2014 |
| <i>Support Ideology (IV)</i> | Cont. | Proxy variable of average ADA scores of all same-party House representatives at. | Range: 0, Conservative to 100, Liberal in 2013 |
| <i>Citizen Ideology (IV)</i> | Cont. | Citizen ideology of Senator's state measured by BFHR scores. | Range: 0, Conservative to 100, Liberal in 2013 |
| <i>Legislator Ideology (IV)</i> | Cont. | Legislator ADA score. | Range: 0, Conservative to 100, Liberal in 2013 |
| <i>Party Loyalty (CV)</i> | Cont. | PU scores measuring legislator loyalty to party. | Range: 0, Disloyal to 100, Loyal in 2013 |
| <i>Ethnicity (CV)</i> | Binary | Is the legislator white or non-white? | 0=White, 1=Non-White |
| <i>Gender (CV)</i> | Binary | Is the legislator male or female? | 0=Male, 1=Female |
| <i>Age (CV)</i> | Cont. | Age of legislator. | Age of Senator in 2013 |

A senator's *age* is a continuous variable, his age from date of birth to the year his ideology is being scored. Age is used on the assumption that were the theoretical framework assumed to be true, the older the legislator the more crystallized his ideology becomes through the re-enforcement mechanism of constituent and legislator ideology. As such age requires to be controlled. Gender is included as a control because it is suggested that females tend to vote more liberal than men (Frederick, 2011). Lastly, as the Senate is not a diverse body, allocating values for every observable race in the Senate would not yield any satisfying results and thus race is calculated based on whether or not the senator

is white, coded 1, or non-white, coded 0, which is how the *ethnicity* variable is constructed. A summary of all variables are provided in table 1⁴.

Methodology

As the dependent variable will be a binary variable the model used will be a binary logistic regression. The formula is shown below:

$$\ln\Omega(\mathbf{x}) = \ln \frac{\Pr(y = 1|\mathbf{x})}{\Pr(y = 0|\mathbf{x})} = \mathbf{x}\boldsymbol{\beta}$$

$\ln\Omega(\mathbf{x})$ is the natural logarithm of the odds of casting a conservative vote relative to casting a liberal vote. $\boldsymbol{\beta}$ represents the coefficients of the independent variables, \mathbf{x} , from the regression. The contribution this methodology provides in studying the question is that the model can provide the odds of legislators voting conservatively given the variables in the dataset and can therefore denote which independent variables have strong predicting power which can reflect their impact over legislator voting behavior.

Two models will be provided for statistical analysis and broken into two groups. As the influence of political parties are not observed and only a senator's loyalty to his party reflecting party leverage over his vote, the models will be separated between Democratic and Republican senators. This will give more explanatory power to a senator's loyalty to party and giving the additional benefit of observing how each party interacts with their constituent base. Additionally due to the political climate of the past few years and the varying levels of friction found in both parties it may also help explain what is

⁴ Observing re-elections will not be observed in this model. While this is an important event to observe the model cannot observe it in a way that properly captures its effects. This is discussed further in addressing the weaknesses of the study in Chapter V.

causing the tension in contemporary American politics. Therefore the model will be presented by party, with two models reflecting citizen ideology and support constituent ideology as discussed earlier in the chapter. While Independents do exist in the Senate they are too small a group to capture behavior from to justify making a third group. Therefore Independents are coded either Republican or Democrat based on who that senator caucused with in 2014, all of whom caucused with Democrats. This same type of coding is used to determine party unity scores among Independents.

CHAPTER IV

TO β OR NOT TO β

This chapter will introduce the dataset for analysis and interpretation based on the discussion of the parameters set out in Chapter 3. The first section will introduce the dataset and briefly discuss notable elements in the dataset such as distributions of constituencies, legislator ideologies and conservative and liberal votes relative to political parties. The second section will provide the data analysis with separate sections being devoted to observing the effects by party. Finally a summary that revisits the findings will be provided at the end of the chapter.

The Lay of the Land

1,078 observations were collected from 12 bills that were voted on in 2014. 497 of these observations were Republicans and 581 observations were Democrats. Among the Senate there were fifteen women, five non-white senators and the mean age of the chamber was 62. A breakdown of the other variables are shown on Table 2 with summary statistics provided on Table 3.

Table 2 shows the variable distribution whether one is looking at Republicans or Democrats, split into five even categories for sake of interpretation save the dependent variable which is dichotomous. The majority of conservative and liberal votes by party are as one might expect; 70 percent of Republicans casted conservative votes and 86 percent

Table 2 - Descriptive Statistics of Dataset, Sorted by Political Party

| | Republicans | Democrats |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| <i>Conservative Vote</i> | | |
| Conservative | 348 (70%) | 83 (14%) |
| Liberal | 149 (30%) | 498 (86%) |
| <i>Statewide Constituency</i> | | |
| Ex. Conservative (0 – 20) | 0 | 0 |
| Conservative (20 – 40) | 214 (43%) | 0 |
| Centrist (40 – 60) | 271 (55%) | 381 (66%) |
| Liberal (60 – 80) | 12 (2%) | 153 (26%) |
| Ex. Liberal (80 - 100) | 0 | 47 (8%) |
| <i>Core Supporters</i> | | |
| Ex. Conservative (0-20) | 497 (100%) | 0 |
| Conservative (20 – 40) | 0 | 0 |
| Centrist (40 – 60) | 0 | 22 (4%) |
| Liberal (60 – 80) | 0 | 322 (55%) |
| Ex. Liberal (80 – 100) | 0 | 227 (39%) |
| <i>Legislator Ideology</i> | | |
| Ex. Conservative (0 – 20) | 473 (95%) | 0 |
| Conservative (20 – 40) | 23 (5%) | 0 |
| Centrist (40 – 60) | 0 | 36 (6%) |
| Liberal (60 – 80) | 0 | 61 (11%) |
| Ex. Liberal (80 – 100) | 0 | 459 (83%) |
| <i>Party Loyalty</i> | | |
| Ex. Disloyal (0 – 20) | 0 | 0 |
| Disloyal (20 – 40) | 0 | 0 |
| Uncommitted (40 – 60) | 12 (2%) | 12 (2%) |
| Loyal (60 – 80) | 12 (2%) | 0 |
| Ex. Loyal (80 – 100) | 473 (95%) | 524 (98%) |

of Democrats casted liberal votes. What is interesting is that Republicans casted more liberal votes than Democrats who casted conservative votes which contests what is commonly depicted of Republicans, which are depicted as “uncompromising”.

The ideology of a senator’s statewide constituency is concentrated toward the middle of the ideological spectrum. There are more centrist constituencies among

Democrats than there are Republicans who are more evenly split between the centrist and conservative ranges. Core supporters meanwhile are more partisan which is anticipated but only on the conservative side. Republican senators have core supporters who are all extremely conservative⁵, contrary to Democrats who have a more varied distribution of their core supporters⁶. This shows that conservative core supporters are clustered at the extremes whereas liberal core supporters are more varied along the liberal spectrum.

Republican senators themselves have distributions similar to their core supporters. The supermajority of senators are found along the extremes on both the left and the right save for a scant few who are found lingering near and in the center of the spectrum. Comparing senators with their core supports, the argument being that core supporters are often more ideologically extreme than their senators (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2004), Democrats do not reflect this. Core supporters have less reason to fear their legislator being drawn away from them by the moderates toward the center of the spectrum and instead would need to be wary of what extreme ideologues do exist.

Senators' loyalty to their party are similar on both sides of the aisle with their largest groupings found in the 80 to 100 percent range, noted on the table as extremely loyal with some senators falling along the loyal (60 to 80 percent) and uncommitted (40 to 60) range. This suggests that the supermajority of senators, more often than not, vote the party line when the time comes for parties to close ranks. Keep in mind however that there were more

⁵ The values with the highest frequencies among Republican core supporter ideology are 5 (148 observations), 2.5 (59 observations) and 0 (59 observations).

⁶ The values with the highest frequencies among Democratic core supporters are 75 (66 observations), 80 (49 observations) and 74 (36 observations).

liberal votes cast by Republicans than conservative votes cast by Democrats which may indicate signs of the factionalism discussed in Chapter II.

Table 3 - Summary Statistics

| Variable Name | Obs | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Conservative Vote</i> | 1,078 | 0.4 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Support Constituency Ideology</i> | 1,078 | 43.68 | 37.35 | 0 | 95 |
| <i>State Citizen Ideology</i> | 1,078 | 49.99 | 15.68 | 20.98 | 91.85 |
| <i>Legislator Ideology</i> | 1,052 | 49.93 | 41.68 | 0 | 100 |
| <i>Party Loyalty</i> | 1,078 | 93.68 | 9.20 | 43.4 | 100 |
| <i>Ethnicity</i> | 1,078 | 0.07 | 0.25 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Gender</i> | 1,078 | 0.17 | 0.37 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Age</i> | 1,078 | 62.13 | 9.94 | 40 | 87 |

Analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the logistic regression between Democrat and Republican senators⁷. As hypothesized, a senator’s statewide constituency and their core supporters are both statistically significant and more importantly for this thesis the direction a Senator’s statewide constituency influences senator voting behavior reflects their ideological position. The more conservative or liberal a statewide constituency becomes the more likely their senator will cast conservative or liberal votes respectively. Core supporters however are only significant for Republican senators. Party loyalty is also significant suggesting that a senator’s adherence to the party line is an important factor in their behavior. Oddly, neither core supporters nor party loyalty are significant for Democrats.

⁷ Legislator Ideology was multicollinear with constituency variables when put through a Valence Inflation Factor test (VIF). Since constituency variables are more important in answering the question this thesis proposes, legislator ideology was left unobserved.

Table 4 – Citizen Effects on Senator Voting Behavior

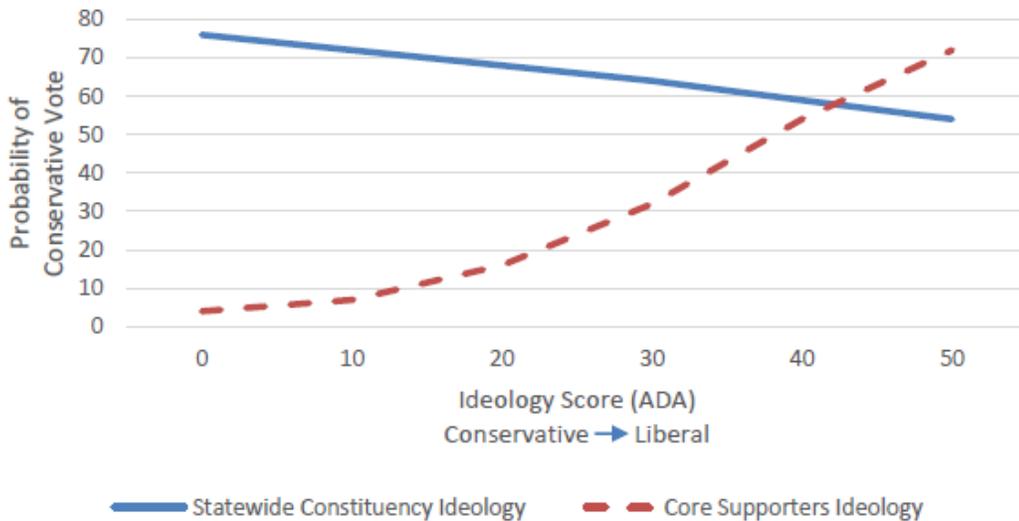
| | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------|---------------------------------|--------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------|------|
| | Coeff. [O.R.] | 95% CI | Coeff. [O.R.] | 95% CI | Coeff. [O.R.] | 95% CI | Coeff. [O.R.] | 95% CI | Coeff. [O.R.] | 95% CI | Coeff. [O.R.] | 95% CI | |
| <i>DV: Conservative Vote</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>State Citizen Ideology</i> | -0.03* [0.97] | -0.06 -0.004 | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.02* [0.98] | -0.04 | --- | -0.001 | --- | --- | |
| <i>Support Constituent Ideology</i> | --- | --- | 0.12** | 0.04 | 0.2 | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.02 | -0.04 | 0.01 | |
| <i>Party Loyalty</i> | 0.01 [1.01] | -0.01 | 0.04 | 0.06*** | 0.03 | 0.09 | -0.02 [0.98] | -0.04 | 0.01 | 0.01 | -0.01 | -0.04 | 0.01 |
| <i>Ethnicity</i> | 1.06 [2.89] | -0.07 | 2.19 | 0.92 | 2.06 | 2.06 | 0.32 [1.38] | -0.62 | 1.3 | 0.14 | -0.78 | 1.06 | |
| <i>Gender</i> | -0.16 [0.85] | -1.18 | 0.85 | -0.45 | 0.54 | 0.54 | 0.07 [1.07] | -0.48 | 0.61 | 0.07 | -0.47 | 0.62 | |
| <i>Age</i> | -0.01 [0.99] | -0.04 | 0.007 | -0.003 | 0.02 | 0.02 | -0.01 [0.99] | -0.04 | 0.02 | -0.01 | -0.04 | 0.01 | |
| | R ² : 0.0364, N: 497 | | | R ² : 0.0408, N: 497 | | | R ² : 0.0128, N: 581 | | | R ² : 0.0058, N: 581 | | | |

Significance of the Republicans' core supporters deserves special mention here. Recalling the dual constituency theory posited by Fiorina, a senator does not represent the entirety of his state but a small group of core supporters within his state (Fiorina, 1974). Were this the case then we would expect to see very high levels of probability for voting conservative among all Republicans considering their core supporters are all extremely conservative. Instead Republicans' core supporters influence senators' voting behavior

Dysfunctional Republicans

Graph 4.1 shows the probability of senators voting conservative as their statewide constituency and core supporters move along the conservative spectrum. As stated in the

Figure 1 - Constituency Effects on Republican Voting Probabilities⁸



⁸ The graph is measured along the conservative half of the ideological spectrum from 0 (extremely conservative) to 50 (centrist).

initial analysis, Republicans' statewide constituency do influence senators' votes in ways we might expect. As the average ideology of citizens in their state grow more conservative the likelihood of senators voting conservative increases. The profile of core supporters proposes that as their core supporters grow more liberal the more likely they will vote conservative. Should the ideology of core supporters be at 0 the likelihood of a Republican voting conservative is only four percent and at its highest observable point of 20 the likelihood of a conservative vote is only sixteen percent. While the rest of the profile goes beyond observable values it is included to reflect the trend the variable would have given the findings in the model. The rate of increase in probability of conservative votes vis a vie an increasingly liberal core supporter base is contrary to scholarly expectation given that were the trend to be true, Republican core supporters would be casting votes for in-all-but-name Democrats. What is evident from the findings is that core supporters are not as influential as their statewide constituency and become more influential as they move toward the center of the conservative spectrum but not by much.

One of the main points noted among the Republican Party in the last few years has been the fractionalization of the party along 'establishment' and 'anti-establishment' lines and can provide an explanation for the lack of core supporter representation. The Republican establishment is often linked with yielding to the left on critical issues for conservatives like Planned Parenthood or limited government which defies the preferences of core supporters (Bozell, 2016). Other examples of this schism can be found in the situation surrounding the retirement of Rep. John Boehner, former Speaker of the House as well as the circumstances leading to the election of his replacement, Paul Ryan (see CSPAN, 2015; DeBonis, 2015 and Fitzpatrick, 2015)

The friction between these two groups comes from core supporters claiming that the current Republican Party does not represent them. These constituents are the anti-establishment bloc who are against the moderate, non-representing establishment. The data would appear to reflect the arguments made by anti-establishment constituents. Only when core supporters become more moderate do they begin to influence senators; in other words moving more in line with the establishment.

While it would seem obvious that the more politically informed, politically active re-election base would be a major threat to legislators when angered many Americans view their own representative favorably and pit blame on either party leaders or other legislators in Congress (Mendes, 2013). This recalls the discussion of earning constituent trust described by Fenno (1978) which Mendes's Gallup Poll provides further evidence and further explains why the target of the establishment/anti-establishment debate is not individual legislators but for others in the party and why the party is the true villain needing to be ousted.

On the legislative side, legislators must be sure to delicately nurture the trust required to maintain their core supporters while still catering more to their moderate or mainstream conservative bases. Party loyalty's significance becomes important here. While the Republican Party may be a coalition of a variety of factions the party line has, perhaps until recently, served as a voting trend that could satisfy both sides simultaneously. Voting the party line would satisfy their statewide constituency who will view their actions based on party label (Campbell et al. 1960). It also cajoles core supporters by hiding motivations under the aegis of party label. That aegis, based on this interpretation, is clearly under attack on the Republican side.

One alternative explanation could be found in the bills themselves. Interest groups such as the ADA tend to use bills that are high profile (Levitt, 1996) and by extension have more degrees of salience among constituents. This can place the legislators' goal of gaining constituent trust at risk since his vote will be seen by the 'public eye' and he would therefore concede more to general constituent opinion over either his core supporters or his party. More directly fulfilling the views of his statewide constituency would explain the large difference between the effects of statewide constituencies and core supporters on the Republican side and also might explain the lack of significance of core supporters with significance of the statewide constituency on the Democrat side.

Freeriding Democrats

Democrats however do not suffer this problem. The only influence the model suggests occurs from the statewide constituency. Further, the statewide constituency has less explanatory power in terms of likelihood of conservative votes as conservatives. Graph 4.4 shows the probability of conservative votes when observing statewide citizen ideology values.

Statewide constituency scores appear to have less variance than they do with Republicans. The graph shows that there is a 17 percent swing between the values of 50, the middle of the ideological spectrum, and 100, the maximum score for liberals. Conservatives had a 22 percent swing between the maximum conservative value of 0 and the middle at 50. The lack of variation in predicting the probability of conservative votes for Democrats suggests that Democrats are influenced less by their constituents than Republicans. This thesis suggested that both classes of constituents have a vexing effect on

Republican senators but for Democrats the constituencies are not as volatile.

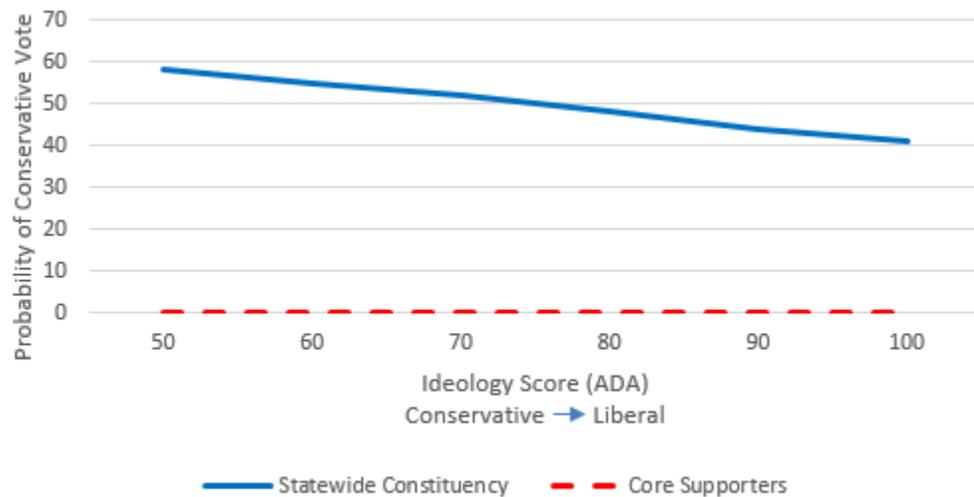
Recalling Table 2 which showed the distribution of the constituencies in the dataset, constituencies on the Democratic side are less polarized than they are on the Republican side both among core supporters as well as statewide constituencies. This would suggest that Democrats do not have to suffer the tug-of-war their counterparts have to and are able to do what legislators desire to do: vote their own preferences. The distribution also makes it easier for Democrats to endear themselves to both core and statewide constituents. A Democrat need not change his voting record very much to capture more votes in comparison to Republicans who, again referring to Table 4.1, have a gulf to traverse before meeting the demands of their statewide constituents. The ease of attracting core supporters can explain why core supporters are statistically insignificant among Democrats. Legislators need not compromise or change their position. Their position already reflects the demands of their core supporters⁹.

Party loyalty also does not seem to influence democrats. As it was suggested that the party line may serve as a buffer between contesting constituencies, Democrats do not have this problem and therefore party loyalty might not be as valuable as it might be to Republicans. This does not suggest that the party does not provide pressure or its own influence on senators. Rather, in the case of Republicans, it suggests a powerful incentive the party can use to apply more pressure on their senators than the Democratic Party can

⁹ A second test for democrats was performed exchanging support constituency with legislator ideology. Legislator ideology was significant at the 0.001 level with an O.R of 0.9633, S.E of 0.009 with confidence intervals of -0.0548 and -0.0200. This suggests that democrats suffer more of a direct implication of the agency dilemma, choosing their constituents or their own preferences, than Republicans who must struggle with the tug of war of their moderate and extreme constituents all the while desiring to vote their own preferences.

simply due to the protection it can provide. Should the party be exerting influence on Democrats or Republicans, something this model does not catch, it is not related to voter preferences.

Figure 2 - Constituency Effects on Democrat Voting Probabilities¹⁰



Summary

This chapter began looking at the dataset with descriptive statistics and moved onto an interpretive analysis of the data. The analysis highlighted the partisanship of support constituents on the Republican side while being more diverse along the spectrum for Democratic supporters. Statewide constituencies, representing the preferences of the

¹⁰ The table shows the variation statewide constituents have on Democratic Senators voting conservative along with core supporters to compare with Graph 1. Core supporters were placed at value 0 due to the

thesis's claim that 0 percent probability suggests that the variable has no influence on Senators voting conservative from its discussion regarding Graph 1.

average citizen were loosely clustered around the median and conservative and liberal categories.

Analysis of the data to find support for its proposed hypotheses found that H1, whether or not voter preferences influence senators positively, found support in statistical significance with different variations between the two parties. H2, the support constituency both positively influences and matters more to senators than the statewide constituency, was not supported by the data but instead revealed findings that were not expected. Support constituents, on the Republican side, are underrepresented by Republican legislators which can explain the rhetoric, frustration and the rise of anti-establishment candidates this election cycle which qualitative data reveals. Rather than go after individual candidates in Congress it would seem, core supporters have wized to legislators voting the party line to evade condemnation by their constituents and the result is the rise in factional warfare among the Republican Party. Democrats do not seem to have this difficulty as the legislator is more able to make his own decision without support constituent backlash. Who influences whom becomes an important question to dissect the Democratic side but the model cannot explain this.

CHAPTER V

OLD QUESTIONS, NEW IDEAS

Summary of Research Problem, Methods and Findings

This thesis began by asking a very old question among political scientists: Do citizens influence their legislator in Congress? It presented a contemporary political climate where constituents have grown increasingly frustrated at their lack of representation as the grounds for the increasing relevance of this old question. It reviewed the literature, both old and new, about legislative behavior, voter preferences, heuristic cues that voters use when making political decisions as well as other interested principals pressuring legislators. Based on the literature it declared two predictions, that the average citizen influences senators to vote in line with their preferences but a senator's support constituency influences them more than the average citizen would. It brought in a new way of looking at legislative behavior, looking at individual votes per bill rather than a percentage of votes one way.

It used the ideological labelling of bills to provide a base for predicting voting outcomes; whether or not a vote would be conservative or liberal. By doing so a logistic analysis brought back the likelihood of conservative and liberal votes based on the ideological positions of a senator's statewide constituency, their supporting constituency, their loyalty to their party as well as observing socio-demographics such as gender, ethnicity and age.

The prediction on average American constituents found support in the analysis. Citizens do matter to senators when they cast votes. With a wider variance found in Republicans meaning that Republican constituents have an increased influence on Republican senators, they do influence their senators to vote more in line with their preferences. The second prediction however is not supported. Core supporters play an important role in Republican legislator's decision making but their interests are not being represented in action and further, core supporters are not even important among Democrats.

The reasons for the lack of importance are not easily obtained. The interpretation provided in this thesis is that core supporters are too extreme to be represented as enacting their preferences would alienate Republicans too much from their general electorate. To save face with their core supporters Republicans vote the party line which lets them at least satisfy both constituencies. Alternate explanations are also possible such as the bills having a degree of salience among the general electorate which makes legislators more inclined to cater to their statewide constituencies rather than core supporters. More research should be done by scholars to better understand the complex situation happening within the Republican Party.

Weaknesses and Strengths of Data Model

The model used of course is not perfect. It carries with it significant weaknesses that other models might be able to address better. One such weakness lies in its inability to observe election effects. Observing election effects causes multicollinearity that cannot be easily rectified even through the usual method of removing offending variables. It is a debilitating weakness as scholars have noted election season is a time where citizens can

influence legislators the most in order to get their vote. Indeed, much of reviewing the literature up to and including the prime motivation of legislators revolved around elections. While it does not lessen this thesis' findings it does leave out vital pieces of the puzzle.

The model's explanatory power with regards to time, similarly, is a weakness that must be addressed. The model only investigates one year of votes which restricts the amount of observations able to be collected. The fact that the same chamber is being observed multiple times may be inflating the findings in a way that cannot be seen or checked.

The relationship between core supporters and senators, while a pivotal finding in the thesis, also exposes an explanatory weakness. The model provides outcomes but cannot clearly provide explanations for the causes of those outcomes. The thesis provided explanation regarding Republican core supporters as a reflection of the contemporary political atmosphere seen within the Republican Party but is not the only one. The bills may be skewed due to their salience or the lack of observing elections may be causing constituent variables to be inflated/undervalued are equally possible. Without being able to determine causation the model half-fulfills the desire of scholars wishing to understand the constituent-legislator relationship and is a weakness that must be improved in future research.

Implications and New Inquiries for Future Research

This thesis provides several opportunities for researchers in terms of new questions and ideas regarding senator voting behavior and much of it is derived from its quizzical findings. Are support constituencies only vehicles of re-election and not representation, as

this thesis suggests, or is there more at work here? Further how does the role of political factions within Republicans help in observing the relationship core supporters have with their legislators? The same questions could be asked of Democrats but for different reasons. Since the support constituency can easily be satisfied among liberal Senators, who influences whom to make it that way? Does the supporting constituency drag legislators to their views because they are not as extreme as conservatives? Do legislators influence the supporting constituency while in office or perhaps even a third way, they influence each other? Does fractionalization play a more subtle role in the Democratic Party than this model is catching that may explain the lack of significance of both legislators' loyalty and their core supporters?

Additional approaches that are possible from these findings is to include a wider range of bills to examine. The inclusion of bills not used by interest groups, which would have a lower level of salience among the public, would be a useful addition to the model as it provides a more rigorous sample and more accurate findings. Expansion beyond observing one year, given the discussion on the lack of observing time could provide a litany of new bills to the model in addition to observing trends in the constituent-senator relationship with regards to their constituencies.

This thesis asked a contemporary and relevant question of the decade: Are citizens' bystanders or pedagogues? They are certainly pedagogical, influencing their Senator from their home. This question will be asked time and again, long after this thesis has been written but it will always remain a vital question in a democracy. When citizens' lose their significance is a time when deeper questions must be asked about the institution that

sponsors it and for many they believe that this is so. This thesis assuages that worry but in exchange for its' discovery it was presented with more questions than it can properly answer. Therefore scholars should investigate further the seemingly complicated relationship occurring between legislators and constituents that has been evolving the past decade.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF BILLS USED IN DATASET

| Roll Call | Bill Number | Description | Group Used | Bill Type |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 13 | HR 3547 | House Amendment (Appropriations) | ACU | Liberal |
| 16 | S. Amdt. 2707 | Adjust flood insurance increases | ACU | Conservative |
| 17 | S. Amdt. 2697 | State opt-ins to the NARAB | ADA | Conservative |
| 34 | S. 540 | Temporarily extend the debt limit | ADA | Liberal |
| 212 | S.Amdt. 3379 | Make local boards permissible | ACU | Conservative |
| 244 | S.Amdt 3582 | Modify revenue provisions | ADA | Liberal |
| 245 | S.Amdt. 3583 | Modify revenue provisions | AFL-CIO | Liberal |
| 246 | S.Amdt 3584 | State controls fed. highway funding | AFL-CIO | Conservative |
| 248 | HR 5021 | Extension of transportation funding | ACU | Liberal |
| 280 | S 2280 | Authorizing the Keystone Pipeline | ACU | Conservative |
| 354 | HR 83 | House Amendment (Appropriations) | ACU | Liberal |
| 364 | HR 5771 | Amending the Internal Revenue Code | ADA | Conservative |