

The Ideology of Federal Executives and their Agencies

In this paper, we propose a method for measuring administrative agency ideology that will yield estimates that are directly comparable with those of legislative branch. These estimates will provide analytical traction on a host of questions of interest to scholars of American politics. We review existing strategies for measuring agency ideology and propose a new method that builds upon existing work. Specifically, we use the stated preference of federal executives about key votes in Congress to estimate ideal points for these executives on the same space as legislators. We obtain opinions on key votes through a large survey of federal executives to be fielded in the Fall of 2007. We describe the survey, the method, and conduct several preliminary analyses of the selected votes to ensure that they adequately partition the space and provide enough information to distinguish between members.

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Recent revelations about the Bush Administration's staffing activities in the Department of Justice (DOJ) have caught the attention not only of Congress but also political scientists. The administration removed and replaced U.S. Attorneys on the basis of ideology and selected career attorneys in the department on the basis of ideology in violation of merit system rules and principles.¹ The administration particularly targeted parts of the department like the Civil Rights Division and certain US attorneys because their views about policy were inconsistent with those of the president. These recent episodes in the DOJ raise the more general issue of whether presidents particularly target agencies with divergent policy views for particular administrative attention. Under conservative (liberal) presidents do the most liberal (conservative) agencies get politicized, reorganized, and monitored more? Are they more likely to have their budgets cut, their proposed rules rejected, and their management ratings lowered? What about Congress? Does Congress exercise more vigilant oversight of agencies with policy views that differ from those of the median member, the party median, or committee median? It is difficult to answer these questions systematically without an effective means of measuring agency ideology within and across agencies. To understand control strategies across the government a means of measuring ideology across the departments and agencies is necessary (Lewis 2008).

In this paper, we propose a method for measuring agency ideology that will yield estimates that are directly comparable with those of legislative branch. Directly comparable estimates will provide analytical traction on a host of questions – including those sketched above. The proposal is tentative in the sense that the actual method we propose—which includes the execution of a large survey of federal executives—has not been implemented yet. The study

¹ Eggen, Dan, "6 of 7 Dismissed U.S. Attorneys Had Positive Job Evaluations," *Washington Post*, February 18, 2007, A11; Eggen, Dan, and Paul Kane, "Justice Department Would Have Kept 'Loyal' Prosecutors," *Washington Post*, March 16, 2007, A2; Eggen, Dan, "Justice Department Expands Probe to Include Hiring Practices," *Washington Post*, May 31, 2007, A4.

is scheduled to go into the field in the Fall of 2007. As such, this paper describes the study we will use to measure the preferences of bureaucrats and presents the basic analytic strategy for measuring bureaucratic preferences.

Section one reviews existing methods for measuring agency ideology. Section two describes *The Survey on the Future of the Government Service*, a survey of 7,456 government executives we are going to conduct in Fall of 2007 that will enable us to assess the self-reported preferences of these government executives. Section three provides a brief description of the mean by which we will relate the preferences of government executives to Congress and section 4 concludes.

1. Measuring Agency Ideology

Despite the obvious appeal of measuring agency preferences, a definition question immediately arises: what does it mean to speak of agency preferences? In the social choice and game-theoretic context, preferences are defined in terms of an individual, not an institution. Institutions such as executive agencies serve to aggregate individual preferences to yield a social preference ordering, but the preferences of the institution are entirely a function of the aggregation rule applied to individual preferences. For example, the policy preferences of the House of Representatives are typically defined explicitly in terms of the chamber median's policy preferences because the assent of the median legislator is needed on any policy change. Similarly, when we discuss the preferences the Supreme Court or independent regulatory commissions, we often focus on the preferences of the median justice or commissioner in inter-institutional contexts.

In administrative agencies it is not clear where preferences reside or how we might aggregate relevant individual preferences. Assuming that agency preferences are determined by

the preferences of a single political appointee is not entirely satisfying given what we know about bureaucratic autonomy and resistance to both presidential and congressional leadership (see, e.g., Carpenter 2001; Carpenter and Whittington 2003; Huber 2007; Moe 2006; Rourke 1969). Agency policy preferences are influenced by a number of factors including long term agency characteristics and the policy preferences of permanent employees, particularly career managers. Inherent agency policy preferences may be embedded in the statutes or decrees that created the agency.

Together the statutes administered by the agency, the career personnel, and the political appointees determine agency policy views along with factors like unique agency history, culture, and processes. These multiple sources together generate variation across agencies in their policy preferences and politicians rightly recognize some agencies as more liberal or conservative than other agencies.

Recognizing these difficulties, there have been two main approaches to measuring the ideology of agencies, each advancing along different tracks. The first relies on expert judgments about agency ideology based upon objective information and subjective judgment. The second relies on observed behavior such as statements of agency officials to estimate the ideal points of agency officials. Information about ideal points is then aggregated and used as a measure of agency preferences.

1.1 Using Expert Judgments

At the simplest level some scholars have sought to classify agencies as liberal or conservative on the basis of the mission of the agency (e.g., regulation, defense) or politics at the time the agency was created (Gilmour and Lewis 2006a,b). When agencies have missions closer to the policy commitments of one party or when they are created under unified partisan control

they are coded as liberal or conservative. The difficulty with these approaches is that they are imprecise and often subjective. Clinton and Lewis (2007) try to systematize these subjective assessments of agency preferences. They conduct an expert survey on agency preferences and use a multirater item response model to measure latent agency preferences in a way that accounts for rater heterogeneity.² They also incorporate information about agency mission and the politics at the time they were created into the estimates.

One difficulty with their estimates is that they are not estimated on the same space as other political actors such as the president or legislators. The quality of the estimates also depends upon the knowledge of the experts. If experts are limited in their knowledge of lesser known agencies or make similar mistakes in categorizing agencies as liberal or conservative (e.g., Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board), this can be problematic. Experts are also rarely able to make informative distinctions among bureaus within larger departments. For example, there are few experts that can rate the ideological predisposition of all of the agencies within the Department of Agriculture or Department of Commerce, limiting the applicability of this approach. In addition, scholars have also raised a number of concerns about the validity of the expert judgments (Tetlock 2005).

1.2 Using Observed Behavior

Several works, looking at specific commissions, try to use the partisan identification of commissioners (Cohen 1986) or scale the votes of commissioners to develop measures of ideology (Moe 1985; Snyder and Weingast 2000). Originally, these techniques were applied only to commissions and were not comparable to ideal point estimates for other political actors. Nixon

² Specifically, they estimate agency ideal points and standard errors for 82 executive agencies in existence between 1988 and 2005 allowing the experts to vary in their degree of discrimination and their implicit thresholds for what constitutes a liberal or conservative agency and we compare our estimates of agency policy preferences to existing measures.

(2004) helps solve these problems by using persons who served both in agencies and in Congress as “bridging” observations to estimate the ideal points of members of Congress and agency commissioners on the same space (McCarty and Poole 1995; Poole 1998). There is no reason why this technique could not be applied to other agencies except that the number of persons who have served in both agencies and Congress is limited. Officials in administrations (as opposed to commissions) also do not vote in the same way that commissioners do, limiting the data points for estimating ideal points. Bertelli and Grose (2007), however, use the public positions of cabinet secretaries on votes in Congress to estimate executive preferences across time and institutions. This provides a means of increasing the number and type of bridging observations.

While the Nixon (2004) and Bertelli and Grose (2007) approaches to estimating the ideal points of commissioners and secretaries is promising, its usefulness for measuring agency ideal points is limited by the fact that it does not take into account the policy views of other relevant bureaucratic officials and only provides information at the highest level of aggregation. For example, we can make arguably make inferences about the Department of Justice based upon Attorney General Alberto Gonzales’ ideal point but would have very little to say about the ideal points of the Civil Rights Division, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the Drug Enforcement Agency. The Bertelli and Grose method could be extended to other agency officials but it is difficult to collect information on the opinions of lower level appointees, less visible agency officials, or key careerists about votes in Congress.

Bafumi and Herron (2007), however, suggest a means of remedying this problem. They survey voters about their opinions on key votes in Congress. They use this information to estimate the ideal points of voters on the same space as members of Congress. This idea is easily transportable to the bureaucratic context by surveying agency officials to obtain data on the

“votes” of policy making bureaucratic officials. This data can be used to estimate ideal points for agency officials on the same space as legislators and the president.

The ideal points of agency officials can then be aggregated in different ways to get estimates of agency policy views both for smaller offices and bureaus within agencies and larger agencies. Whether scholars use information from only a select set of agency officials such as the set of appointees, the set of career professionals, or some combination of these two to estimate agency ideal points is up to the individual scholar.

Given the difficulty of defining, let alone measuring, agency ideology, it is not surprising that existing efforts offer a partial solution to the problem. Although concerns about the validity of both objective and subjective measures can be raised, this does not alleviate the need to measure such concepts given their centrality to many questions in political science. The remainder of our paper explains our strategy for estimating the ideology of agencies in a way that produces estimates that are directly comparable with the U.S. Congress.

2. Estimating Agency Ideology Using Federal Executives’ Opinions

Whereas prior attempts at measuring agency ideology have used expert assessments or the behavior of agencies, we instead survey federal executives – both appointees and careerists -- directly. The benefit of surveying government managers in this context is that it will be possible to assess their individual positions on issues of importance to both the Congress and the federal bureaucracy.

Our analytical strategy therefore entails two components: first, survey individual federal executives within the departments and agencies in such a way so as to relate federal executive opinions to the opinions of legislators, and second, to aggregate the opinions of the political appointees and careerists so as to produce a measure of an agency’s ideology. In this section we

outline the analytical strategy we intend to implement. We describe the specific data of interest in the subsequent section.

To measure the opinions of federal executives, we follow recent developments in the study of congressional representation – which confronts a similar problem in relating constituency and legislator opinion. Whereas earlier work assesses constituency opinion using questions about the general ideological orientation of constituents (e.g., Clinton 2006), more recent work has asked constituents about their opinion on specific issues before Congress (e.g., Bafumi and Herron 2007).

The benefit of asking about specific issues is obvious; whereas the former can only identify rough correlations between a general self-assessment of political orientations and the behavior of legislators on a set of specific topics, by asking constituents directly about the exact issues being studied exact issues it is possible to assess the relationship without the ambiguity (error) that results from using two different measures. This is particularly important given the dominance of spatial theories in political science and the desirability of being able to assess the proximity of constituents and representatives in the political space.

The same arguments regarding the desirability of surveying constituents on specific issues before Congress also apply to the measurement of the opinions of federal agency officials. By asking federal executives how they would have voted on issues before Congress, it is possible to use the resulting answers to relate the preferences of the career executives to congressmen. That is, because our survey respondents can be thought of as “voting” on the same issues that members of Congress vote on, it is possible to use the set of common issues to measure the opinions of respondents and congressmen in a manner that is directly comparable.³

³ This is identical to the logic McCarty and Poole (1985) use to relate the preferences of the President and Congress. If anything, our situation is slightly better because whereas we may be concerned that the decision of the President

Given a set of opinions by individual bureaucrats on issues before Congress, it is straightforward to estimate directly comparable ideal points using any one of the available methods. We simply treat each federal executive as a legislator that votes on only those issues we survey them about. Estimating the roll call matrix augmented to include the opinions of the surveyed agency officials will produce directly comparable ideal point estimates of both congressmen and the surveyed federal executives.

Technically, by augmenting the roll call matrix in this fashion we are effectively assuming that the item parameters of issues before Congress and the opinion items being asked are identical and that the federal executives' opinions are directly comparable to legislators' roll calls. Put differently, we assume that survey respondents base their opinions on a relative comparison of the same yea and nay outcomes associated with the outcome of the congressional roll call vote. This is a strong assumption, but it is arguably weaker than other assumptions that are routinely made in order to "bridge" different institutions (e.g., members serving in different institutions have identical ideal points). A second assumption we impose is that the policy space is unidimensional. This is consistent with most existing theoretical and empirical work (see, for example, Nixon and Hurst 2005).⁴

We estimate the ideal points for the augmented data matrix using the statistical model described by Clinton, Jackman and Rivers (2004), and as is implemented in *ideal* (Jackman

to take a public position on a given issue is endogenous, because we provide the careerists with the set of issues of interest there is not an analogous self-selection problem – the career executives are not choosing which issues to take a position on. One difference is that whereas congressional votes are available for public inspection, the results of our survey are confidential and there is no way for federal executives to be held responsible for their expressed opinions. Although we mention this for the purposes of completeness, it is unclear whether there is a difference between privately expression opinions and those that would be publicly expressed opinions by federal executives, and whether this difference is consequential for substantive questions of interest.

⁴ While we might like to estimate a model that allows for more than one dimension, the limited number of votes makes this infeasible. We draw some comfort from the fact that previous efforts to estimate ideal points find that one dimension overwhelmingly predominates (see , for example, Poole and Rosenthal 2007).

2007). There is no reason to suspect that alternative measurement models would produce divergent results.

Analyzing the augmented data matrix will yield the first component of our measure – an ideal point estimate for every legislator and every federal executive in the same policy space. The ideal points for agency officials will clearly be more imprecisely estimated because they are based on (many) fewer votes, but subsequent analysis can account for the increased imprecision because the magnitude of the estimation uncertainty can be quantified.

The second task involves aggregating the individual level estimates to produce a measure of agency ideology. This second task raises several questions of substantive import: how do the preferences of careerists compare to political appointee? And how should the preferences of careerists and appointees be aggregated to produce a measure of agency ideology?

The first question is purely descriptive, but it involves central issues both about the nature of the federal bureaucracy and also presumably about attempts by the president to control its direction through the use of political appointees (see, for example, Lewis 2008). Comparing the ideal points of appointees and careerists within each agency will reveal not only how heterogeneous the preferences of agency officials are within and across agencies (which has important consequences for many aspects of bureaucratic functioning), but also the extent to which preferences between appointees and careerists diverge. This highlights not only the potential for intra-bureaucratic friction, but also the possibility that the president may be trying to exert control over the bureaucracy differentially depending upon differences in preferences.

The second question involves the correct measurement of agency ideology through the aggregation of federal executive ideal point estimates. Should all opinions count equally and agency ideology be defined as the mean ideal point of the executives? Alternatively, should the

impact of an agency official's ideal point on agency ideology depend on their location in the bureaucratic hierarchy, and, if so, what should the weights be? We cannot claim to have resolved these measurement questions yet. In part we are waiting for the estimates to determine how consequential these measurement choices are and how sensitive the estimates of agency ideology are to alternative measures.

Having described the general measurement strategy, we now outline the specific data we will use to assess the preferences of federal executives.

3. New Data: *The Survey on the Future of the Government Service*

In the fall of 2007 the *Survey of the Future of the Government Service* will be put into the field. The survey includes a variety of questions on the backgrounds, experiences, and political views of government executives. Appendix A contains the current version of the questionnaire. The survey will be sent to all federal administrators and program managers in the various departments and agencies. In total, the survey will be sent to approximately 7,456 government executives. Of these, about 3,491 are careerists. The remainder is appointees of different types (i.e., Senate-confirmed appointees, noncareer Senior Executive Service, Schedule C). The large sample will be drawn with the goal of allowing us to make inferences across agencies and bureaus.

The survey is going to be a web-based and will be conducted with the help of the Princeton Survey Research Center. We will first send a letter on Princeton letterhead inviting potential respondents to participate and giving them lots of options about how to do so. Those for whom we have email addresses (77%) will be told that they will be getting an email of the survey in one week. They can also go to a website and login immediately with a login and password included in the invitation letter. Those that we do not have email addresses for will be

asked to provide us an email or go to the website directly. We then have scheduled a series of follow up emails, a postcard, another letter, and ultimately, telephone calls.

Asking Federal Executives about Votes

For the purposes of assessing the ideology of agencies, the critical part of the survey will be a series of questions on votes taken by the House or Senate in 2006. To identify salient votes, we draw upon the list of the *National Journal*'s 187 key votes dealing with either economic, social policy or foreign policy.⁵ We selected votes on a mix of economic and social issues that were easy to read and interpret – i.e., no votes on procedural issues or votes with unclear substantive implications. Because we ultimately want to relate the estimates of agency ideology that we will construct using the opinions of federal executives to the preferences of both the House and the Senate, we identify seven key votes in each chamber.⁶

Specifically, we ask respondents: “In addition to the general political background of executive officials, we are also interested to know your personal opinion about several key votes in Congress in the last few years. Specifically, would you have supported the following measures? [Yes, No, Don’t Know].” The fourteen votes, as well as the chamber (H or S), roll call number and bill number follow below:

1. [H] A bill to permanently reduce estate taxes (315/HR5638).
2. [S] Confirmation of Samuel Alito as an associate justice on the Supreme Court (2/).
3. [S] A bill to establish English as the national language and require immigrants to pass proficiency tests (131/S2611)
4. [S] Efforts to amend the Constitution to prohibit desecration of the U.S. flag.
(189/SJRes12)

⁵ Source: <http://nationaljournal.com/voteratings/house.htm>; <http://nationaljournal.com/voteratings/senate.htm>.

⁶ This “bridges” the preferences of the federal executives to each chamber using seven votes each and bridges the House and Senate using both the federal executives and the votes common to both institutions in the roll call record.

5. [S] A bill to permit federal funds for embryonic-stem-cell research (206/HR810)
6. [S] A bill to create federal grants to support sex education programs (214/S403)
7. [S] A bill to make it a federal crime to take a minor across state lines to obtain an abortion without parental notification or consent. (216/S403)
8. [S] A bill to increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour in two years (179/S2766)
9. [H] A bill to halt deployment of space-based missile defense systems ([142/HR5122](#)).
10. [H] A bill to authorize electronic surveillance of suspected terrorists without obtaining court approval ([502/HR5825](#)).
11. [H] A bill to require photo identification and proof of citizenship for voters in a federal election. ([459/HR4844](#)).
12. [H] A measure to amend the Constitution to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman (378/HJRes88)
13. [H] A bill to prohibit funds for contracts with companies that incorporate offshore to avoid U.S. taxes (275/HR5576).
14. [H] A bill to ensure access to federal courts for individuals who challenge government use of eminent domain to take their property (511/HR4772).

To verify the adequacy of the selected votes we conduct several preliminary analyses. To ensure that the selected votes adequately partition the space and provide enough information so as to distinguish between members we estimate four sets of ideal points. We estimate ideal points for: House members using all 95 *National Journal* key votes, House members using the seven *National Journal* key votes listed above, all Senators using the 82 *National Journal* key votes, and all Senators using the seven *National Journal* key votes listed above.⁷

⁷ In practice, we estimate ideal points for members who cast at least two votes. This leads to: 437, 432, 102 and 102 members respectively.

Figure 1 plots the relationship between the ideal point estimates that result from using all key votes (x-axis) and the seven votes listed above (y-axis) in the House (left) and Senate (right).⁸

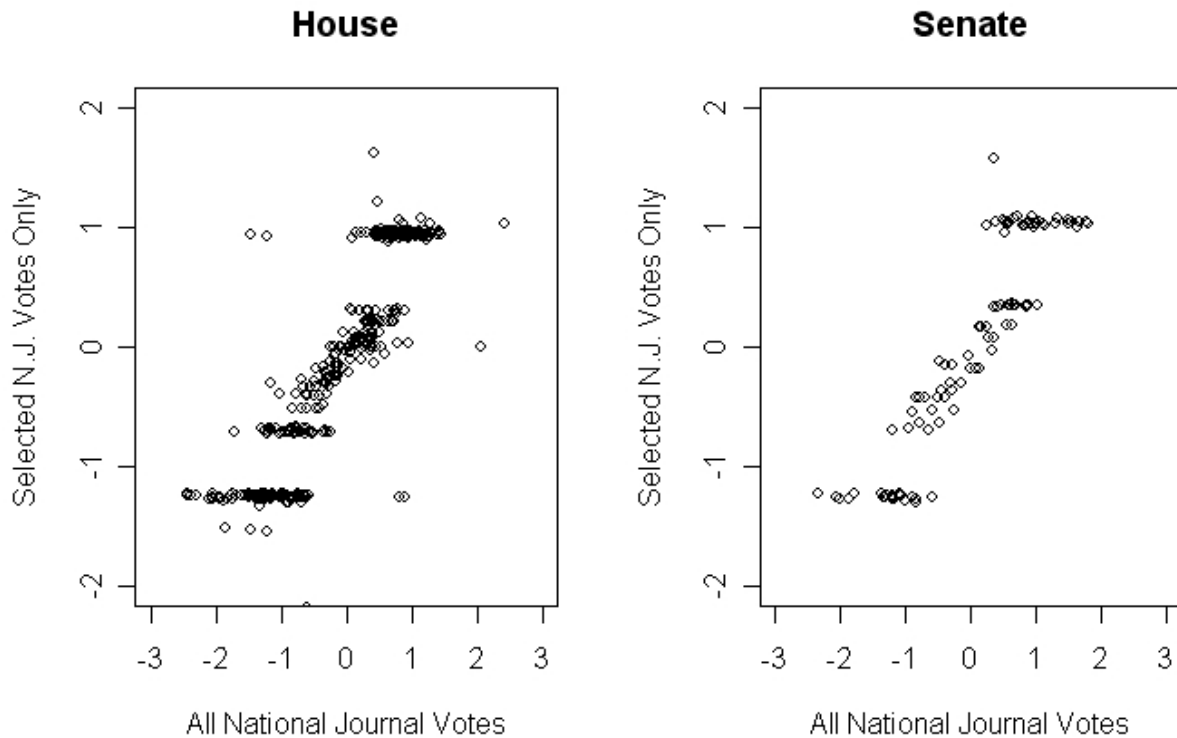


Figure 1: Comparison of *National Journal* Ideal Point Estimates

As the figure makes clear, the estimated ideal points using all *National Journal* key votes and those that result from using just the seven votes listed above (in each Chamber) are very closely related. The Senate ideal points are correlated at .919 and the House ideal points correlate at .865. In addition, as the distribution along the y-axis makes clear, the seven selected votes are able to distinguish liberal members (with ideal points < 0) from conservative members, although

⁸ The estimates were computed using ideal. In each case, the space was identified using the $N(0,1)$ normalization for \mathbf{x} . 250,000 iterations, thinned by 100 were estimated and the first 20000 were used as “burn-in”

there is some clustering at the ideological extremes due to the lack of any votes distinguishing among the most liberal and most conservative members.

To highlight the fact that the seven votes provide analytical leverage and the ability to partition the issue space, Figure 2 plots the location of the seven estimated cutpoints relative to the density of ideal points estimated using all *National Journal* key votes for each chamber. The estimates are from the models which use all *National Journal* votes.

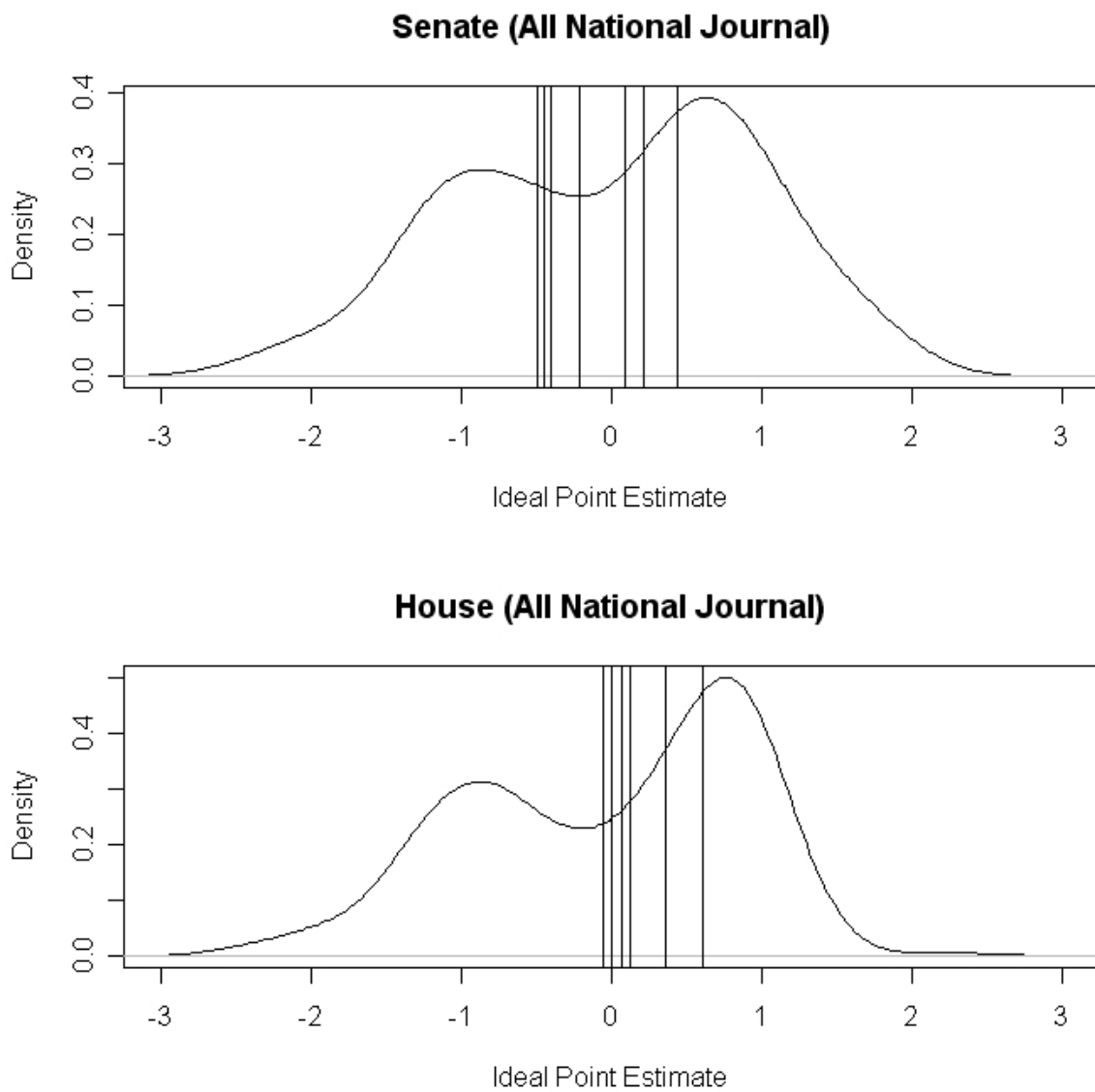


Figure 2: Cutpoints of Selected Votes Relative to *National Journal* Ideal Points

The cutpoints from the Senate are moderate—ranging from -.488 to .443 --- and distinguish between moderately liberal positions, and the cutpoints for the seven House which range from -.052 to .609 occupy moderate and conservative positions.

Table 1 presents the posterior mean and standard deviations for the item difficulty parameters and item discrimination parameters. The item difficulty parameter describes the extent to which the vote is unrelated to the ideal points of the legislators, and the item discrimination parameter describes how responsive the probability of voting “yea” is to legislators’ ideal points. More precisely, the statistical model used to estimate ideal points assumes that the probability of observing a yea vote on issue t by individual i is given by: $\Pr(y_{it}=1) = \Phi(\beta_t x_i - \alpha_t)$ with α_t denoting the item difficulty and β_t denoting the item discrimination parameter (see, Clinton, Jackman and Rivers 2004 for more detail).

Vote	Item Difficulty Parameter	Item Discrimination Parameter
S 1	-.989 (.466)	4.71 (1.34)
S 2	-1.06 (.300)	2.60 (.511)
S 3	-.673 (.183)	1.40 (.243)
S 4	-.899 (.261)	-2.03 (.409)
S 5	-.573 (.473)	-6.12 (1.91)
S 6	-.882 (.241)	2.00 (.372)
S 7	-1.24 (.567)	-5.78 (1.62)
H 1	.887 (.139)	2.51 (.298)
H 2	-1.10 (.123)	-1.82 (.221)
H 3	.018 (.136)	3.45 (.432)
H 4	-.328 (.229)	6.31 (1.07)

H 5	.144 (.099)	2.26 (.257)
H 6	-.104 (.082)	-1.54 (.169)
H 7	.259 (.100)	2.15 (.243)

Table 1: Item Parameter Estimates

As Table 1 makes clear, every selected vote has a non-zero item discrimination parameter – indicating that an individual’s voting decisions on the selected votes are related to their ideal point. In combination with the distribution of cutpoints in Figure 2 and the clear relationship between ideal points estimated using every key vote and just the seven we select for each chamber in Figure 1, the evidence suggests that the fourteen votes we have selected to ask career executives about will be able to informatively characterize career executive preferences over a relevant part of the political space.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This is a very preliminary project in that the actual data has not yet been collected and the methods have consequently not been applied. Nonetheless, we think the research design we describe offers a unique opportunity to not only characterize the nature of the federal bureaucracy, but also to provide measures of great import to many questions in political science.

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Appendix A: Current Survey Instrument

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the 2007 Princeton Survey on the Future of Government Service! The purpose of this survey is to find out more about the backgrounds, career paths, political views, and job experiences of our nation's federal executives. Your input will help us get a better understanding of the current and future state of the public service in the United States. The survey should take you about 20-30 minutes to complete. We would like to remind you that your answers are completely confidential. Once your survey has been completed all identifying information about you will be removed so that only your anonymous responses remain. You should feel free to express your views openly and honestly. Of course, you are also free to refuse to answer any questions along the way. If you have any questions, please contact sfsgs@princeton.edu.

Background, career paths, and job details:

1) Below we have listed information about you that we have from the *Federal Yellow Book*. Is this information correct?

- Yes
- No

[In "No"]

1a) Please specify the correct information: _____

2) Are you currently a:

- Senate-confirmed appointee (PAS)
- Noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service (NA)
- Career member of the Senior Executive Service (CA)
- Career member of the Senior Foreign Service (FSO)
- Schedule C appointee (Sch C)
- Career civil servant (not a member of the Senior Executive Service)
- Other (please specify): _____

3) What is your pay level/system?

- Executive Schedule I
- Executive Schedule II
- Executive Schedule III
- Executive Schedule IV
- Executive Schedule V
- Senior Executive (ES)
- Senior Foreign Service (SFS)
- Senior Level or Scientific and Professional (SL/ST)
- General Schedule (GS) 15

General Schedule (GS) 14
Other (please specify): _____

4) What is your sex?

Male
Female

5) What is your age? _____

6) Are you or will you become eligible to retire in the next 12 months?

Yes
No
Don't Know

7) What is the highest level of education you completed in school?

High school degree or less
Some college
College graduate
Some post-graduate work
Graduate degree

[If college graduate]

7a) Which college or university did you attend for your undergraduate degree? _____

[If graduate degree completed]

8) What degrees have you completed (mark all that apply)?

Juris Doctor (JD)
Doctor of Medicine (MD)
Master of Public Policy (MPP)
Master of Public Affairs/Public Administration (MPA)
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Master of Public Health (MPH)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Doctor of Education (EdD)
Other Masters (please specify): _____
Other (please specify): _____

8a) Where did you do your graduate work? _____

8b) After your degree was your first job in the

Private sector
Nonprofit sector
Public sector

9) What is your race (mark all that apply)?

Hispanic or Latino
Black/African American
Asian
White
American Indian/Alaskan Native
Other (please specify): _____

10) What state are you originally from? [Pull down menu including all U.S. states and territories and an option for not born in U.S.]

11) In what state have you lived more than any other? [Pull down menu including all U.S. states and territories]

12) About how many years, in total, have you been employed in the following? Please include all positions and all time periods even if it has not been continuous (round to the nearest year).

Current department or agency _____
Federal government _____
Private sector _____
Not-for-profit sector _____

13) How many transitions have you made between the private or not-for-profit sector and the federal government? (If you started in public sector and stayed your answer would be 0. If you left the private sector for the federal government and stayed your answer would be 1. If you started in the public sector, left the federal government, and came back, your answer would be 2, etc.). _____

14) Have you worked in any other departments or agencies?

Yes
No

[If “Yes”]

14a) What other departments or agencies have you worked in (please list)? _____

15) Does your job deal directly with decisions about procurement or the content of contracts with private firms?

Yes
No

16) Does your job deal directly with decisions about licenses or loans granted to private firms or citizens?

Yes
No

17) Does your job deal directly with decisions about grants to state or local governments, other organizations, or individuals?

Yes
No

18) About how many federal civilian employees are under your supervision? _____

19) About how many contract employees are under your supervision? _____

20) Do you work at your agency's headquarters office (typically in Washington, DC) or in a field location?

Headquarters
Field

[If field location]

20a) Which field location (city, state)? _____

21) How often do the following groups in your agency accept jobs with firms the agency does business with or are regulated by your agency? [Regularly, Occasionally, Sometimes, Rarely, Never, Don't Know]

Political appointees
Senior civil servants
Low or mid-level civil servants

[For PAS, NA, Sch C in Q1 only]

22) Prior to your current position, have you ever been (check all that apply):

Senate-confirmed appointee in a previous administration
Senate-confirmed appointee in this administration (in a different position)
Noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service in a previous administration
Noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service in this administration (in a different position)

- Schedule C appointee in a previous administration
- Schedule C appointee in this administration (in a different position)
- Career member of the Senior Executive Service (CA)
- Career member of the Senior Foreign Service (FSO)
- Career civil servant (not a member of the Senior Executive Service)
- Active duty military

23) Prior to your current position, have you ever worked in or for (check all that apply):

- White House
- Congress as a staff member to a Representative or Senator (please identify): _____
- Congress as a staff member of a congressional committee
- National political party (for example, Republican National Committee, Democratic National Committee)
- State or local political party
- 2000 presidential campaign organization
- 2004 presidential campaign organization
- Other year presidential campaign organization
- Professional association (for example, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Governors Association, etc.)
- Labor Union (for example, United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO, etc.)
- A business, organization, or group that was regulated by your agency

[For CA, FSO, career civil servant, other in Q1 only]

24) How important were each of the following considerations in your decision to originally work in your current agency? [Very important, important, neither important nor unimportant, unimportant, very unimportant]

- Salary and benefits
- Desire to make a difference
- Opportunity to make use of your skills and abilities
- Opportunities for advancement
- Personal request by higher level agency official
- Geographic location
- Opportunity to influence policy
- Support for the agency's mission and work
- Other (please specify): _____

25) Now thinking about your original decision to enter government service, how important were each of the following in your decision? [Very important, important, neither important nor unimportant, unimportant, very unimportant]

- Salary and benefits
- Desire to make a difference
- Opportunity to make use of your skills and abilities

Opportunities for advancement
Personal request by higher level agency official
Geographic location
Opportunity to influence policy
Support for the agency's mission and work
Other (please specify):_____

26) Have you ever been a political appointee in the federal government?

Yes
No

[If "Yes"]

26a) What type (mark all that apply)?

Senate-confirmed appointee
Noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service
Schedule C appointee
Other type of appointee (please specify)_____

27) Did you convert directly from an appointee job to a career position?

Yes
No

28) How likely is it that you will leave your agency in the next 12 months?

Very likely
Somewhat likely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Somewhat unlikely
Very unlikely

29) If you plan to leave your present agency, would you be:

Retiring
Resigning from federal government for a job in the private sector
Moving to another job within the federal government
Other (please specify)_____

30) If you left the agency in the near future, how important would each of the following have been in your decision? [Very important, important, neither important nor unimportant, unimportant, very unimportant]

Desire to make more of a difference

Problems with political appointees
Problems with White House
Problems with Congress
Opportunity to make better use of your skills and abilities
Increased opportunities for advancement
Opportunity to earn more money
Opportunity for recognition for performance
Opportunity to change to a different type of work
Opportunity for greater organizational stability
Policy disagreement with current administration
Poor treatment under pay-for-performance
Loss of meaningful influence over agency policy

Political Views:

[All respondents]

We are also interested in learning about the political views of executive branch officials like you. Remember, answers to these questions are completely confidential. [Randomize this last part of the prompt so ½ get reminder and ½ do not]

1) In politics today, do you consider yourself to be a:

Republican
Democrat
Independent
Other (please specify): _____
Don't Know

[For those answer “Independent” or “Don't Know”]

1a) As of today do you lean more to the

Republican Party
Democratic Party
Don't Know

2) In general, would you describe your political views as:

Very conservative
Conservative
Somewhat conservative
Moderate
Somewhat liberal
Liberal
Very liberal

Don't Know

3) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I generally approve of the changes the current administration's political appointees and noncareer executives have made in my agency

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

4) In addition to the general political background of executive officials, we are also interested to know your personal opinion about several key votes in Congress in the last few years. Specifically, would you have supported the following measures? [Yes, No, Don't Know]

A bill to permanently reduce estate taxes (**315/HR5638**)

Confirmation of Samuel Alito as an associate justice on the Supreme Court (**1/**)

A bill to establish English as the national language and require immigrants to pass proficiency tests (**131/S2611**)

Efforts to amend the Constitution to prohibit desecration of the U.S. flag. (**189/SJRes12**)

A bill to permit federal funds for embryonic-stem-cell research (**206/HR810**)

A bill to create federal grants to support sex education programs (**214/S403**)

A bill to make it a federal crime to take a minor across state lines to obtain an abortion without parental notification or consent. (**216/S403**)

A bill to increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour in two years (**179/S2766**)

A bill to halt deployment of space-based missile defense systems (**142/HR5122**).

A bill to authorize electronic surveillance of suspected terrorists without obtaining court approval (**502/HR5825**).

A bill to require photo identification and proof of citizenship for voters in a federal election. (**459/HR4844**).

A measure to amend the Constitution to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman (**378/HJRes88**)

A bill to prohibit funds for contracts with companies that incorporate offshore to avoid U.S. taxes (**275/HR5576**).

A bill to ensure access to federal courts for individuals who challenge government use of eminent domain to take their property (**511/HR4772**).

Political Environment

1) We're interested in how often you have contact with certain groups or individuals. For each, please tell us how often you have contact with them: [daily, weekly, monthly, rarely, never, don't know].

- White House
- Members or staff of congressional committees
- Members or staff from your region's congressional delegation [for regional offices]
- Republicans in Congress
- Democrats in Congress
- Interest group representatives
- Political appointees in your department or agency

2) In general, how much influence do you think the following groups have over policy decisions in your agency? [A great deal, a good bit, some, little, none, don't know]

- Republicans in Congress
- Democrats in Congress
- Congressional committees
- White House and Executive Office Officials
- Political appointees
- Senior civil servants
- Interest group representatives
- Public opinion
- Courts

3) How many congressional committees would you estimate exercise active oversight of your agency?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7+

3a) Of all the House committees what committee's jurisdiction overlaps most with the work of your agency or program? _____

3b) Of all the Senate committees what committee's jurisdiction overlaps most with the work of your agency or program? _____

4) Has the number of political appointees or noncareer executives in your department or agency:

Increased significantly
Increased
Neither increased nor decreased
Decreased
Decreased significantly
Don't know

5) Thinking about the personnel in your agency, in general how responsive are these different groups to the policy decisions or pronouncements of the President and his political appointees? [5=Very responsive; 3=Somewhat responsive; 1=Not responsive at all; Don't Know]

Political appointees
Senior career civil servants
Low to mid-level civil servants
Contract employees

6) Thinking about the personnel in your agency, in general how responsive are these different groups to the policy decisions or pronouncements of Congress? [5=Very responsive; 3=Somewhat responsive; 1=Not responsive at all; Don't Know]

Political appointees
Senior career civil servants
Low to mid-level civil servants
Contract employees

7) Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about your job and work setting: [Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable]

7a) The political appointees in my agency tend to be selected more for campaign or political experience/connections than relevant policy expertise or management competence.

7b) Among the career managers in my agency I have a pretty good idea of who is a Democrat and who is a Republican.

7c) Policy decisions concerning my agency are based upon evidence rather than ideological beliefs.

7d) The extent of congressional involvement in agency decisions has increased in the last few years.

7e) The extent of White House involvement in agency decisions has increased in the last few years.

7f) Politics and ideology has become more important in my agency in the past few years.

7g) In my agency the policy or political views of career professionals at the GS-12 to GS-15 level influences their chances for promotion or attractive assignments.

8) There has been some discussion recently about political appointees “burrowing” into the civil service, either by taking jobs in the civil service or having their positions converted to civil service positions. Are you personally aware of cases in your own agency where this has occurred?

Yes

No

[If “Yes”]

8a) How many different instances are you aware of in your agency the last 1-2 years? _____

8b) How many different instances are you aware of in your agency during the Bush Administration? _____

8c) How many different instances are you aware of in your agency during the Clinton Administration? _____

Government Performance

1) Now thinking about the people, apart from yourself, who work in your agency, in general, how competent are the following? [7=Extremely Competent; 4=Mixed Competence; 1=Not at all Competent; Don't Know]

Political appointees

Senior civil servants

Low and mid-level civil servants

Contract employees

Interns

Presidential management fellows

2) Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements about your job and work setting: [Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, Don't Know]

Necessary expertise for my job can only be gained through experience working in my agency

In my agency hard work is rewarded.

My agency does a good job of identifying and cultivating leadership within the workforce.
Risk taking behavior is rewarded.
Career personnel in my agency are diligent to carry out policy decisions they disagree with.
People at my level are regularly approached about higher paying jobs in the private or nonprofit sector.

- 3) In your experience, which agencies have a reputation as places where **low competence or patronage appointees** tend to get placed (please list)? _____
- 4) In your experience, which agencies have a reputation as places where **low competence civil servants** tend to get transferred (please list)? _____
- 5) In your experience, which agencies have a reputation as places where political appointees transfer **civil servants with whom they have conflicts** (please list)? _____

Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)

6) Did any programs in your agency get reviewed as part of the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

[If yes]

6a) How much time effort did your agency put into the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process (5=tremendous amount; 3=moderate amount; 1=not much at all; Don't Know)? _____

6b) To what extent did the PART pick up real differences in program performance among programs in your agency (5=PART scores consistently reflected real differences; 1=PART scores uncorrelated with real performance; don't know)? _____

6c) To what extent did PART scores influence the president's budget request for the program (5=tremendous amount; 3=moderate amount; 1=not much at all; Don't Know)? _____

6d) To what extent did PART scores influence the programs eventual appropriation (5=tremendous amount; 3=moderate amount; 1=not much at all; Don't Know)? _____

Views on the Future of Public Service

1) Would you recommend that a young person to work in the public service today?

Definitely yes
Yes
Maybe
No
Definitely no
Don't Know

2) If you were to give advice to college graduates who aspire to work in public service about graduate education, would you advise them to get an advanced degree?

Yes
No
Don't Know

3) If so, what type of degree would you recommend? [Randomize order]

Juris Doctor (JD)
Doctor of Medicine (MD)
Master of Public Policy (MPP)
Master of Public Affairs (MPA)
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Master of Public Health (MPH)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Doctor of Education (EdD)
Other Master's (please specify): _____

[Randomize 4a, 4b]

4a) There has recently been a growth in public policy and public affairs programs nationwide. When you encounter job candidates with such degrees, what skills do you assume they have (please list)? _____

4b) There has recently been a growth in public policy and public affairs programs nationwide. When you encounter job candidates with such degrees, what skills/training do you assume they have (mark all that apply)?

Microeconomics
Macroeconomics
Statistics/Econometrics
Program evaluation
Negotiation
Public speaking
Cost-benefit analysis
Survey research methods
Knowledge of policy process

Public Management
Organizational behavior
Leadership
Ethics
Other (please specify): _____
Don't Know

5) There has been some discussion lately about the creation of a U.S. Public Service Academy to train civil servants. Do you support the creation of such an academy?

Yes
No

6) In your view, would such an academy help meet the ongoing human capital needs of your agency?

Yes
No

7) Why or why not? _____

8) Is there anything else you would like to tell us? _____

9) Would you be willing to answer a short follow up web survey in the future, say one year from now, to get your updated views about the political views, health, and future of the public service?

Yes
No

[If "Yes"]

9a) Which email address should we use?

The email used to contact me about this survey
A different email address (please specify): _____

Thank You! Please check back on the Survey of the Future of Government Service website in the Spring, 2008 for results from the survey (sfgs.princeton.edu).