Codebook for "Characterizing Agencies' Political Environments: Partisan Agreement and Disagreement in the U.S. Executive Branch" by Richardson

Bayesian model

I fit the Bayesian model in R using RStan version 2.21.3. I ran 4 chains for 4,000 iterations, using the first 1,000 iterations as warmup, leaving 12,000 iterations (3,000 per chain) for inference. Diagnostics indicate the models converged. Specifically, there were no divergences, the maximum $\hat{R}$ is less than 1.003, the minimum bulk effective sample size (ESS) is 2,113.54, and the minimum tail ESS is 3,312.86. Bulk and tail ESS are above 400, which is the threshold for valid inference and for $\hat{R}$ to be useful suggested by Vehtari et al. (2021).[1]

Date file: `01_dis_data`

Variable descriptions

Variable	
`mission`	Mission category for the agency; Categories are based on Budget Functions used by OMB. See footnote 5 of the appendix for details.
`dept`	The executive department that contains the agency if applicable. Takes a value of "Executive Office of the President" for agencies in the EOP. Otherwise, takes a value of `NA`.
`agency`	The name of the agency.
`agency_index`	A number that maps the agency to the corresponding `theta` parameter in the `03_dis_draws.RData` file.
`pty_dis`	The posterior mean of estimated partisan disagreement.
`pty_dis_sd`	The posterior standard deviation of estimated partisan disagreement.
`pty_dis_lb_95`	The lower bound of the 95% Bayesian credible interval for estimated partisan disagreement.
`pty_dis_ub_95`	The upper bound of the 95% Bayesian credible interval for estimated partisan disagreement.

Date file: `02_mis_data`

Variable descriptions

Variable	
`mission`	Mission category for the agency; Categories are based on Budget Functions used by OMB. See footnote 5 of the appendix for details.
`mission_index`	A number that maps the mission to the corresponding `mu` parameter in the `04_mis_draws.RData` file.
`pty_dis`	The posterior mean of estimated partisan disagreement.
`pty_dis_sd`	The posterior standard deviation of estimated partisan disagreement.

[1] Aki Vehtari, Andrew Gelman, Daniel Simpson, Bob Carpenter, and Paul-Christian Bürkner. 2021. "Rank-Normalization, Folding, and Localization: An Improved $\hat{R}$ for Assessing Convergence of MCMC (with Discussion)." *Bayesian Analysis* 16(2): 667-718. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1214/20-BA1221

Variable	
`pty_dis_lb_95`	The lower bound of the 95% Bayesian credible interval for estimated partisan disagreement.
`pty_dis_ub_95`	The upper bound of the 95% Bayesian credible interval for estimated partisan disagreement.

Data file: `03_dis_draws`

This file includes the posterior draws for the `theta` parameters (i.e., agency-level latent partisan disagreement) for the 93 agencies presented in the paper. Each column is a vector of draws for the agency with the corresponding index. For example, the `agency_index` for the Office of Justice Programs is 11 which corresponds to `theta[11]` in this data set.

Data file: `04_mis_draws`

This file includes the posterior draws for the `mu` parameters (i.e., mission-level latent partisan disagreement) for the 15 mission areas presented in the appendix. Each column is vector of draws for the mission with the corresponding index. For example, the `mission_index` for Administration of Justice is 1 which corresponds to `mu[1]` in this data set.

Data file: `05_dis_data_wt`

This file includes the contents of `01_dis_data` plus the estimates of agency ideology and workforce skill from Richardson, Clinton, and Lewis (2018). The codebook for agency ideology is available here and the codebook for workforce skill is available here. The `dept_acr` variable gives acronyms for executive departments if applicable.

Data file: `06_confirmation_votes`

This file contains information on confirmation votes held for nominees during to the 93 agencies for which an estimate of partisan disagreement exists. The data cover the 117th Congress (i.e., 2021-2022). The file includes the variables from the `01_dis_data` file and the agency ideology estimates from Richardson, Clinton, and Lewis (2018) plus the variables in the table below. This is a nominee-level data set. If a nominee was confirmed after a previous nomination within this Congress was withdrawn or returned, the data only include the second nomination.

I began with a dataset of all civilian presidential appointments requiring Senate confirmation (PAS positions) as of January 20, 2021.[2] This list was created using the 2020 U.S. Government publication *Policy and Supporting Positions* (i.e., the Plum Book) supplemented with a Congressional Research Service (CRS) publication that lists all positions by the Senate committee responsible for confirmation[3] and the Partnership for Public Service's Political Appointee Tracker.[4] I matched the PAS positions to the 93 agencies for which I have a partisan disagreement estimate, excluding any positions within an executive department that oversees multiple agencies in addition to the relevant agency. In other words, I retained only positions that had oversight solely over the relevant agency. For example, the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs in the Department of Agriculture oversees the Agricultural Marketing

[2] I thank David Lewis for sharing this list with me.

[3] Davis, Christopher M., and Michael Greene. 2017. Presidential Appointee Positions Requiring Senate Confirmation and Committees Handling Nominations. CRS Report RL30959, May 3, 2017.

[4] Partnership for Public Service, Biden Political Appointee Tracker. URL: https://ourpublicservice.org/political-appointee-tracker/, accessed August 19, 2021.

Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and a partisan disagreement estimate exists for both agencies. However, I excluded this position from the data because it is unclear which agency Senators have in mind when considering nominees to this position. This decision rule limits ambiguity in how partisanship in confirmation votes maps to agencies and their corresponding estimates of partisan disagreement. I then manually collected information on nominations to the positions mapped to the 93 agencies from the Nominations search available at https://www.congress.gov/ for the 117th Congress.

Variable descriptions

Variable	
`title`	Title of the position.
`nomination_number`	The PN Number assigned to the nomination.
`name`	Name of the nominee.
`roll_call_no`	Roll call number for the confirmation vote if a vote was held.
`yea`	Total yea votes.
`nay`	Total nay votes.
`yea_dem`	Total yea votes by Democrats (including independent senators who caucus with Democrats).
`yea_rep`	Total yea votes by Republicans.
`nay_dem`	Total nay votes by Democrats (including independent senators who caucus with Democrats).
`nay_rep`	Total nay votes by Republicans.
`not_voting`	Count of senators not voting.
`not_voting_rep`	Count of Republicans not voting.
`not_voting_dem`	Count of Democrats (including independent senators who caucus with Democrats) not voting.
`pty_line`	Takes a value of 1 if all voting Democrats take the opposite position of all voting Republicans and 0 otherwise. In short, this is an indicator variable for party line votes. In this data, this occurs when all voting Democrats vote yea and all voting Republicans vote nay.
`withdrawn`	Takes a value of 1 if the nomination was withdrawn by the President and 0 otherwise.
`returned`	Takes a value of 1 if the nomination was returned to the President by the Senate and 0 otherwise.
`voice_vote`	Takes a value of 1 if the nominee was confirmed by voice vote and 0 otherwise. This variable is `NA` if the nomination was withdrawn or returned.
`renom`	Takes a value of 1 if the nominee was renominated after an earlier nomination within this Congress and is `NA` otherwise.
`vp_vote`	Takes a value of 1 if the Vice President cast a tie-breaking vote and 0 otherwise. The value is `NA` if there is no Roll Call Number.
`pty_dif`	Proportion of voting Democrats who votes yea less the proportion of voting Republicans who voted year. `(yea_dem / (yea_dem + nay_dem)) - (yea_rep / (yea_rep + nay_rep))` This variable takes a minimum value of 0 when Democrat support equals Republican support and a maximum value of 1 when all Democrats votes yea and all Republicans vote nay. Note that because these are confirmation votes on nominees by a Democratic president, all Democrats never vote nay.
`pty_unity`	Takes a value of 1 if at least 50% of Democrats vote against at least 50% of Republicans, which in these data occur when at least 50% of Democrats vote yea and at least 50% of Republicans vote nay.

Variable	
`_vv`	The `_vv` suffixes indicates the variable was calculated treating voice votes as unanimous support for the nominee, which is operationalized as `yea` = 100, `nay` = 0, `yea_dem` = 50, `yea_rep` = 50, `nay_rep` = 0, and `nay_rep` = 0.
`ideo_cat`	Agencies with an agency ideology point estimate less than zero and an upper bound on the 95% Bayesian credible interval that does not include zero are coded as liberal, agencies with a point estimate greater than zero and a lower bound on the 95% Bayesian credible interval that does not include zero are coded as conservative, and all other agencies are coded as moderate. Agencies for which no agency ideology estimate exists are coded "No measure".

Data file: `07_agenda_ch_means`

The agency means in these data are jittered to prevent means with no variance from revealing individual responses. This dataset is used to plot Figure A.5 in the appendix. See section A.6.1 of the appendix for complete question text.

Variable	
`agency`	Name of the agency.
`agency_index`	A number that maps the agency to the corresponding `theta` parameter in the `03_dis_draws.RData` file.
`ch_agenda_jitter`	Agency-level mean of perceived agenda change. Response options are on a 1 to 4 scale with higher responses indicating greater agenda change. Responses of "Don't know" and "I did not experience the change in administration" are omitted.

Data file: `fig_a_1_dis_means`

The agency means in these data are jittered to prevent means with no variance from revealing individual responses. Full question text and response options are in the Measuring Partisan Disagreement section of the paper. These data are used to create Figure A.1.

Variable descriptions

Variable	
`agency`	Name of the agency.
`pty_dis_freq_jitter`	Agency-level mean of the question about the frequency of disagreement. Response options are placed on a 1 to 4 scale with higher values indicating more frequent disagreement. Note that the "Rarely" and "Never" response categories are collapsed into a single category as described in the main text. Don't know responses are excluded.
`pty_dis_strg_jitter`	Agency-level mean of the question about the strength of disagreement. Response options are placed on a 1 to 4 scale with higher values indicating more intense disagreement. Don't know responses are excluded.

Data file: `table_a_1.csv`

This file contains the proportions for create Table A.1. The individual-level survey responses are not provided in accordance with IRB protocol desinged to protect the anonymity of respondents.