SURF Research Project
The Effects of Priming and Framing on the Minimum Wage
Samuel Nicosia, University of New Haven

Definitions

- Priming (Cuing) – Influencing individual’s evaluations by presenting thematic areas of issues (Scheufele 2009)
- Framing - Manipulating the presentation of an issue in order to receive a specific reaction from an audience (Druckman 2001)

Previous Research

- Source Cues attributed to credible sources significantly affected individual’s overall opinions (Druckman 2001)
- Individuals tended to support policy issues backed by their political party as opposed to those backed by an opposing party. (Slothuus and Vreese 2010)

Framing
- Individuals are more likely to support immigrant legalization as the number of years in which they resided in the US increases (Druckman 2001)
- Individuals exposed to specific issue frames were more likely to change their policy preference compared to general issue frames (Jacoby 2000)

Research Questions

- How does elite priming/cuing affect public support for the minimum wage?
- How does issue framing affect public support the minimum wage?
  - Different minimum wage levels
  - Generic vs. Specific policy description

Hypotheses

Source Cues
- H1) The Obama cue will garner less policy support than the generic cue.
- H2) Partisan cues will not affect support for an increase in the minimum wage.

Framing
- H3) As the minimum wage rate presented increases, support will decrease.
- H4) Specific issue frames will garner more support than general issue frames.

Method & Analysis

- Qualtric’s survey software to create survey
- Streamed through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk
- 4 x 4 Experiment Design
  - 4 priming cues
  - 4 issue frames
- Sample Size = 2,071
- Analyzed using SPSS
  - Difference of means T-Test
  - Balance Checks - Multiple Regression

Graphs

Definitions

Findings

- H1) No difference in support for generic vs. Obama cue
- H2) No difference in support for generic vs. partisan cues
- H3) $8.25 & $10.10 garnered more support than $7.25
  - $8.25 garnered same support as $10.10
- H4) Specific issue frames did not garner more support than general issue frames

Implications

- Media, policy makers, influential figures can use these findings to shape the public’s preferences on the minimum wage
- Research has not been previously done on the effects of priming and framing on minimum wage
- Rising importance of minimum wage
  - Partisanship unimportant
  - Broad public desire for increase in the minimum wage

Complications

- Analytical challenges
  - Learning to use SPSS
  - Learning statistical regression analysis
- Data collection methodology
  - Complexity of survey program
  - Learning Mechanical Turk
- Recoding issues
  - Need for more attention to detail
  - Tedious nature

Acknowledgments

- I would like to thank the generous donors who funded the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship for this wonderful opportunity.
- I would also like to thank my advisor Dr. Chris Haynes, Carol Withers, and Janice Sanderson for their assistance on this project.