

Introduction

Modern cities are collecting unsurpassed amounts of data. Of which, one of the largest sources is non-emergency service requests. Similar to the 311 systems of many other cities, the City of St. Louis operates the Citizen’s Service Bureau (CSB). Over one million requests have been made in the last ten years.

Little is known about whether these data accurately reflect problems in the community, or if they are influenced by similar phenomena as the most well studied form of civic participation: voting.

Data & Methods

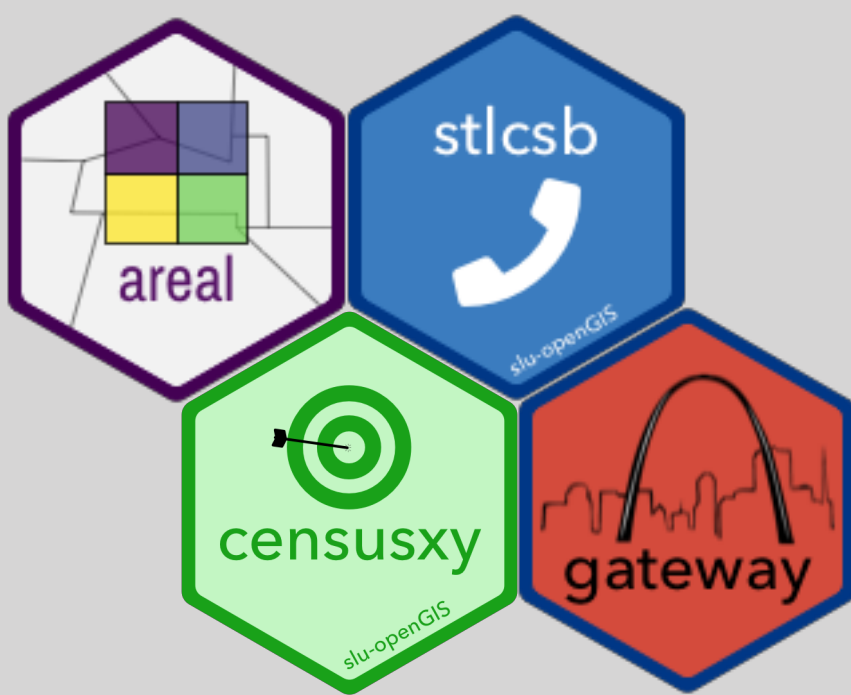
A voter file indicating voting history and registered address was obtained from a 3rd party company and geocoded. Multiple elections were chosen to account for the difference in types of elections (General, Primary and Non-Presidential Primary)

CSB calls in the 6 months surrounding (3 before, 3 after) the election date were obtained from the City of St. Louis.

Demographic data were obtained from the American Community Survey 5-Year estimates ending in the year of the election.

Data were aggregated to grid squares and appropriate OLS and spatial lag models were fit for each election.

Software



This work is supported by the development of several R packages.

- areal** - Provides methods for areal weighted interpolation of incongruent polygons
- censusxy** - Provides the ability to geocode R data.frames using the Census Bureau geocoder
- stlcsb** - Provides access to and methods for working with Citizens’ Service Bureau request data
- gateway** - Provides access to geospatial assets for mapping in the City of St. Louis

These packages may serve as a framework for similar research in other cities.

Results

2014 General Election

Variables	Main Effect (OLS)	Full Model (OLS)	Full Model (Spatial Lag)
Voter Turnout	4.071 (0.447)***	4.479 (0.466)***	4.336 (0.458)***
Total Population	-	-0.006 (0.006)	-0.012 (0.007)
Non-White	-	0.637 (0.386)	0.355 (0.403)
Rate of Poverty	-	-0.293 (0.806)	-0.180 (0.783)
High-school	-	1.957 (0.976)*	1.938 (0.946)*
Spatial Lag Term	-	-	0.040 (0.022)
Constant	51.549 (11.421)***	-31.223 (31.072)	-38.814 (30.388)
F-statistic	82.976***	23.066***	-
Adjusted R ²	0.286	0.350	0.387
Spatial Pseudo R ²	-	-	0.373
Breusch-Pagan	208.778***	308.167***	-
Diagnostic for Spatial Dependence	6.876**	4.786*	-

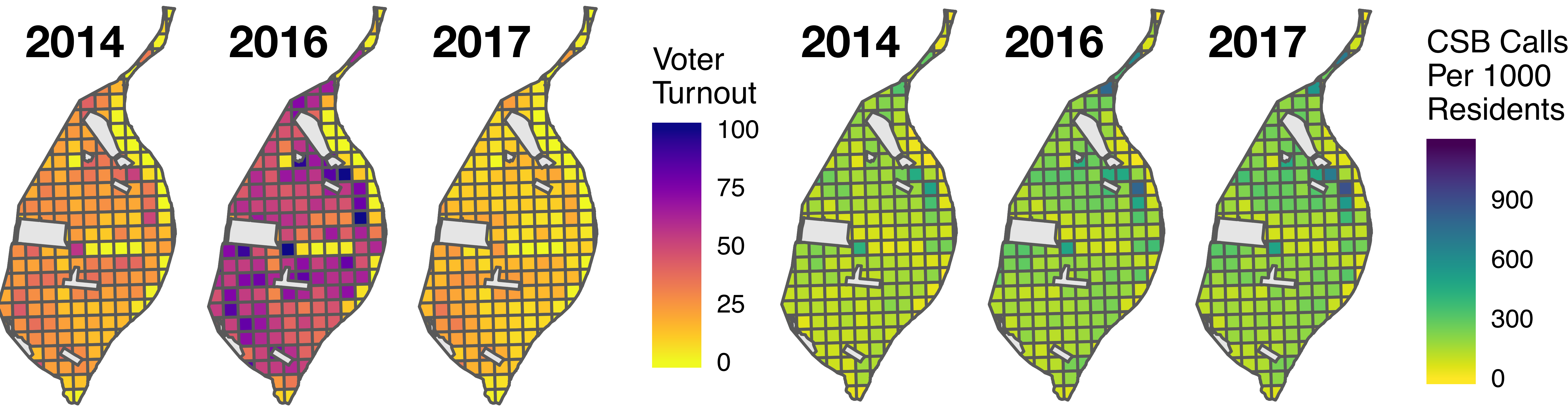
* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

2016 Primary Election

Variables	Main Effect (OLS)	Full Model (OLS)	Full Model (Spatial Lag)
Voter Turnout	2.138 (0.328)***	2.806 (0.347)***	2.578 (0.345)***
Total Population	-	-0.018 (0.008)*	-0.026 (0.008)**
Non-White	-	0.917 (0.479)	0.558 (0.483)
Rate of Poverty	-	-0.598 (1.042)	-0.638 (0.994)
High-school	-	2.643 (1.237)*	2.394 (1.185)*
Spatial Lag Term	-	-	0.050 (0.022)*
Constant	89.116 (16.868)***	-20.038 (39.634)	-28.823 (38.002)
F-statistic	42.498***	16.427***	-
Adjusted R ²	0.168	0.273	0.336
Spatial Pseudo R ²	-	-	0.300
Breusch-Pagan	0.260	127.669***	-
Diagnostic for Spatial Dependence	12.782***	9.792**	-

2017 Primary Election

Variables	Main Effect (OLS)	Full Model (OLS)	Full Model (Spatial Lag)
Voter Turnout	4.947 (0.848)***	6.631 (0.861)***	6.013 (0.816)***
Total Population	-	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.019 (0.008)*
Non-White	-	1.345 (0.461)**	0.711 (0.452)
Rate of Poverty	-	0.111 (1.101)	-0.395 (1.033)
High-school	-	1.454 (1.218)	1.399 (1.137)
Spatial Lag Term	-	-	0.088 (0.019)***
Constant	130.052 (13.021)***	-11.169 (36.539)	-29.886 (34.356)
F-statistic	34.044***	14.912	-
Adjusted R ²	0.139	0.253	0.346
Spatial Pseudo R ²	-	-	0.313
Breusch-Pagan	3.160	105.100***	-
Diagnostic for Spatial Dependence	26.331***	17.514***	-



Discussion

Increasingly, crowdsourced data is being used to allocate resources in Cities like St. Louis. It will become imperative that we understand how closely these data relate to the actual incidence of problems in the community, or we risk allocating resources in an unfair manner.

These results suggest a strong statistical relationship between voter turnout and CSB call density. This is especially true in elections with lower overall turnout.

Future Directions

A manuscript of this research is being prepared. Other covariates such as crime and vacancy are being investigated as well.

Given the paucity of information about these new and increasing data, this work will need to be replicated in other cities.

Replication materials are available on Open Science Framework.



Find replication materials at:
<https://osf.io/6ycrq/>

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There is interest among social scientists as to the motivations and barriers for reporting problems using these systems. As many systems become more automated and technology dependent, it will become important to determine if these systems are an accurate reflection of problems in the community, or whether these data act as a proxy for something else.

Results

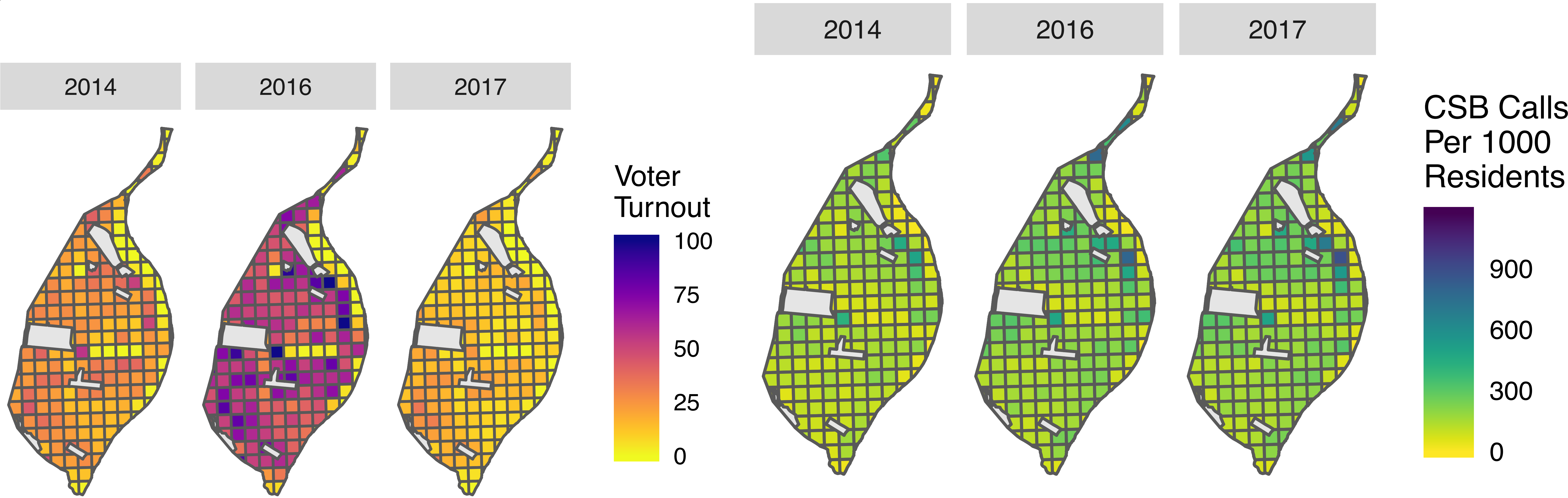
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We observe several different types of elections.



Discussion

Future Directions

Little is known empirically about the large quantities of data that modern cities collect.

Although this research is limited to the City of Saint Louis, we hope that providing reproducible methods will encourage others to do similar with their city’s data. The repository of R code for this project can be found below.



A manuscript is in progress.

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Software

While stlcsb and gateway are specific to the St. Louis region...

