

PLSC 503: “Multivariate Analysis for Political Research”

Exercise Two

February 7, 2025

Exercise

This exercise is a bit of a departure from our usual PLSC 503 homeworks. Rather than having you run simulations, analyze data, etc. I’m going to ask you to write a critique of an existing piece of empirical work. The specific paper you’ll be asked to critique will be emailed to you, and will be available in the “Exercise Two Readings” subfolder in the “Exercises” folder on the course Github repository.

Your assignment is to read and write a short (500-800 word) critique of the regression analysis conducted in the article assigned to you.¹ In the case where I want you to focus on a single analysis (out of several presented in the published work), that will be indicated in the email. In your critique, focus on the issues raised in the readings for the February 3, 2025 class session; those might include:

1. the authors’ substantive interpretation of their regression results,
2. their choices regarding hypothesis testing, and the manner in which they discuss inference in general,
3. the authors’ discussion of “null” or minimal effects,
4. their willingness to ascribe causal relationships to findings from a regression model,
5. the author’s substantive interpretation of “control” variables, and/or
6. any other issues relating to their discussion of their regression results that you feel warrant attention.

Note that this means you should *not* critique the paper more generally, either substantively or in terms of its empirics (data, etc.). In addition, your critique need not be unrelentingly negative; if the authors do or say something that you think is good, say so!

This assignment is due no later than Saturday, February 15, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. EDT. You can submit your homework by emailing copies **both** to Dr. Zorn (zorn@psu.edu) and Ms. Herlihy (nam@psu.edu). This assignment is worth 50 possible points.

¹If the article assigned has multiple OLS regression models, discuss them, but limit yourself to OLS; you can ignore any regressions that use other models (logit, Poisson, etc.).