Meetup Summary: Building a Political Census with Placekey

As part of my curriculum through Springboard, I participated in the data science meet up given by Data Umbrella company. I found this meeting by going to the recommended meetup.com site and looking for meetups related to data science happening in the upcoming week. I am curious about using geo spatial data in model so this meetup about on using PlaceKey, and SafeGraph patterns to estimate political affiliations at a more granular geo data caught my eye. I wanted to go since I figure I would meet up with other people in the data science field who were looking at new tools in the space including geo location tools.

The meeting turned out to mostly be a lecture from Ryan Kruse, was a young political data scientist from Minnesota State. The first half was a slideshow on Placekey a “free and open universal standard identifier for any physical place”. Two main boons he emphasized was how it enabled easier merging of data location sets as well as comparing the proximity of two different locations. In the second half he then went over the code he used incorporating PlaceKey, Safegraph, and local polling data to derive census block groups (CBG) level estimates for political affiliation in the state of Georgia. Afterwards he provided 5 minutes for Q&A.

I walked out of the meet up with mixed feelings. On one level my understanding of using ge location data increased significantly. His lecture was well done, the code provided a great technical demonstration and it even pointed out easy to make coding errors. The case was contemporary and interesting. However a *meetup* it was rather lacking. There was no time to meetup and besides the lecturer I only knew the zoom id of other participants which makes it hard to even follow up later.

Looking ahead, I plan to find meetups that mention that there will be networking opportunities in their description.