

Local Jurisdiction Website Coding: Does Rurality Matter?

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Abstract

In this poster we plan to present preliminary results from a local jurisdictional website coding process that will eventually cover all fifty states plus the District of Columbia. We code each website, if the jurisdiction has one, for a range of election administration outcomes. The process is similar to that for the EPI at the state level. It includes many more indicators and begins the process of allowing for a systematic examination of whether rurality affects the quality of services offered on the website. The poster will present the coding design, initial findings, and additional details for researchers who may intend to use the data once the project is complete.

Motivation

Our goal is to both collect data for all election jurisdictions and determine to what degree rurality impacts online accessibility. The data are all avaiable on the project Github, and we plan to expand the coding in the future.

Progress

So far we have fully coded 34 states, which amounts to about 2,102 counties. Coding continues and will resume in earnest once the summer term begins.

Defining Rural

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Consider an experiment conducted by to examine the effects of the racial and religious identity of terrorism victims on public perceptions of terrorism. A group of 309 voting age U.S. MTurk workers were randomized into one of four conditions where they read about an identical terrorist attack that occurred in Romania, Albania, Zambia, or Guinea. predicted that the modal respondent would express more concern for victims they viewed as demographically similar to themselves (personal proximity) based on the imputed characteristics intuited from the location of the attack. That is, the white Christians in the sample would care more about attacks against white victims (Romania and Albania) and Christian victims (Romania and Zambia) causing the means of perceived threat (measured 0 to 10) to be higher in the proximate conditions. Their results are presented in Figure. They find a null effect for religion and a positive, but modest, effect for race.

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Most rural election jurisdictions offer far less to voters in terms on online lookup tools. We should priortize helping them provide more access and information.



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