

YOUR TITLE

— Project Report —

Advanced Bayesian Data Analysis

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1 Introduction

Every two years the United States elects 435 officials to the House of Representatives. The 435 House seats are allocated roughly proportional to population with additional constraint that each state must have at least one seat in the House of Representatives. However, despite being roughly equivalent in population size, the characteristics of voters living in each district varies greatly by district. Although technically a multiparty system, the U.S. is often called a two party system due to the domination of Democrats and Republicans at all levels of government (cite). These parties dominate because political candidates are only required to get a plurality of votes, of which the two largest parties often reach. Additionally would be third-party voters, will often vote for one of the two major parties so ensure their voice is heard, rather than using thier vote on a candidate who will likely not win (cite). Within our dataset, there are no districts represented by a third-party candidate and as such we often refer to the U.S. as being a two party system. The association between a voters demographics (gender, age, education etc.) and their propensity to vote for either a democratic or republican candidates is a topic of extensive study. However, little is known about the relationship between voting outcomes and the voters environment. In a very general sense, conventional wisdom says that cities tend to be more “blue”, meaning voters in large cities tend to vote for democrats. Our project is focused on characterizing this relationship more concretely. To answer our question about the nature of the relationship between urbanizaiton and partisan voting outcomes, we choose to investigate the 2022 House Election. This election takes places during a non-presidential year, which may cause additonal effects, this election also takes place most recently after the 2020 Census, allowing us to use the most recently available demographic data. Within this report we combine demographic data and urbanization data into a logistic regression model to predict the district voting outcomes of the 2022 House Election. The parameters

2 Dataset

Our dataset was made by combining three independent datasets related to the 2022 House election. The first dataset is the publically available urbanization dataset published by fivethirty eight from which we incorporate the variables urbanization index and (urban) grouping into our final dataset Holly Fuong, 2022. From the description of the dataset: “The urbanization index is calculated as the natural logarithm of the average number of people living within a five-mile radius of every census tract in a given district, based on a weighted average of the population of each census tract. The population of a census tract is according to 2020 census data. This provides a numerical value for how urban or rural a district is. ” Holly Fuong, 2022. The urbanization dataset was put together by FiveThirtyEight as part of their analysis *The Republican Path To a House Majority Goes Through The Suburbs* which gave election predictions leading up to the 2022 U.S. Congressional Eleciton Skelly, n.d.

The second dataset used in our analysis the Election Results Dataset from FiveThir-

tyEight Mehta, n.d. It is a continuously updated repository of United States Governor, Congressional and Presidential elections. As this dataset includes all elections going back to 1998, we only used a subset of the data relevant to the 2022 House Election. From this dataset we used the party, state, and winner variables.

The third data used in our analysis is a subset of the 2022 American Community Survey Data. The American Community Survey is a yearly survey collecting information about the occupations, education attainment, income and other demographic information carried out by the United States Census Bureau. The United States Census Bureau provides an online tool to access its extensive survey database, which can then be filtered and refined for further analysis. For our analysis we used the following variables for each House district;

2.1 Data Cleaning

In the initial cleaning we wanted all the variable to be on roughly the same scale to aid in convergence times. In order to do that we roughly scaled median income and total population by dividing total population by one million and dividing median income by one hundred thousand. This brought each of these to roughly the same scale as the other variables that are in the range of zero to one as they are percentages.

3 Models

To describe our approach we wanted to test different models that incorporate the geographical hierarchy into the model. We made several common assumptions for the the four models that we compared with additional more specific assumptions for each model. The first common assumption we made was that district voting outcomes can be modeled via logistic regression. This assumption gets at the basic logic of our models. As we said previously the outcomes of any particular district electoral race is binary (democrat/republic) so it is most appropriate to choose a modeling technique that can model binary outcomes. *Why did we choose logisitic regression?* We then moved on to our assumptions about the parameters of the linear regression model within the logistic regression model. We also assume that geography is a characteristic of each district that can be modeled hierarchical. For that reason we assume that each district is exchangeable within each state and that each state is exchangeable within each region. We assume this because for complicated historical reasons certain regions of the united states are more similar to eachother than others. For example the Southern United states tends to be more religious and religous people tend to vote more conservatively, as a result the parameter associated with region would likely be smaller or more negative as compared to other regions. We also are assuming that in some regions the value of urban index is more informative than others, the logic being that a city in a rural area will likely have stronger signal than an city among a bunch of other cities.

We also

4 Priors

5 Limitations and Improvements

References

- Holly Fuong, G. S. (2022). District urbanization index 2022. <https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/data/tree/master/district-urbanization-index-2022>
- Mehta, D. (n.d.). Election results. <https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/election-results/blob/main/README.md>
- Skelly, G. (n.d.). *The republican path to a house majority goes through the suburbs*. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-republican-path-to-a-house-majority-goes-through-the-suburbs/>