ACE 592 Lit Review

There is a substantial amount of academic literature concerning the economics of alcohol consumption in the United States. Having a good understanding of the intricacies of alcohol markets is necessary for studying impacts that alcohol has on public health. Many economists and researchers have explored this topic specifically within the United States, conducting research on the many factors that can influence alcohol consumption. There are several papers that are particularly relevant to our research project concerning alcohol consumption in Iowa during United States’ presidential election cycle.

There are several published academic papers concerning general alcohol consumption patterns in the United States. Hart’s 2019 paper *Evolving Consumption Patterns in the U.S. Alcohol Market: Disaggregated Spatial Analysis* used alcohol consumption data across a forty-year timespan which included the 2016 presidential election. The paper found evidence that individuals who voted for Donald Trump tended to demand more beer but less of all other liquor products (wine, spirits), and also found that ancestral demographics had an influence on the type and quantity of alcohol consumed. Geographic areas that had more Trump voters were found to have high demand for macro beer (large beer manufacturers) but less demand for craft and imported beer. However, the paper found that alcohol consumption patterns across time are not consistent and greatly vary across geographic areas, time, and demographics. Hart concludes that there is strong evidence that ancestral alcohol consumption, urbanization, and political affiliation influence alcohol type preference but does not make any causality claims.

Moore’s 2005 paper *Longitudinal Patterns and Predictors of Alcohol Consumption in the United States* used a mixed effects model to analyze alcohol consumption data across the United States in relation to age (birth year) and other demographic factors. Using data collected in several periods between 1971 and 1992, the paper found that after early adulthood, older ages are associated with less alcohol use. It also found that several demographic variables were associated with high levels of alcohol use, including being male, white, unmarried, smoking, higher education, and higher income.

Yakolev’s 2013 paper *Alcohol Consumption and Political Ideology: What’s Party Got to Do with It?* estimates the impact of political ideology on demand levels for beer, wine, and spirits using alcohol consumption panel data from 1952-2010 and a citizen ideology index. The paper found that as state populations become more politically liberal, they increase their use of beer and spirits at a per capita level while decreasing their use of wine. The paper posits that this is an expected outcome given other economic literature’s findings that people with socialist ideology are involved with more unhealthy behaviors.

Musse’s 2020 paper *The Effect of Presidential Election Outcomes on Alcohol Drinking* found that support for a losing presidential candidate is associated with an alcohol consumption increase. Using alcohol consumption data from 2004 to 2017 and election data from the 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 United States presidential elections, the paper establishes a link between alcohol use and support for losing presidential candidates, but only for the 2016 election. It posits that this is due to the emotional charge, inaccurate predictions and involvement of social media in that particular election. It also associates risky health behaviors (alcohol use) with stress-inducing events. It found that high stress levels within four weeks of the election were associated with increased alcohol use.

These four papers establish some trends to look for in our own data concerning Iowa alcohol consumption during the 2016 presidential election. From Hart’s 2019 paper, we should look for higher rates of macro beer consumption among Iowa counties that voted for Donald Trump in the election. We can also expect areas of Iowa with concentrations of certain ethnicities to influence the type of alcohol consumed in that area. From Moore’s 2005 paper, we should look at the age distribution of Iowa counties and examine the effect that might have on alcohol consumption during the election cycle. Yakolev’s 2013 paper indicates that we might see increased alcohol consumption in Iowa counties that voted Democrat in the election. And finally, Musse’s 2020 paper indicates that we might expect higher levels of alcohol consumption in the weeks close to the election as stress levels are higher, but that the relationship between alcohol consumption and the 2016 presidential election might be very different than historical precedent.

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