

Computational Social Science

Agent-based Modeling / Tabular data and visualization

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Plan

- ▶ Recap
- ▶ Part I
 - ▶ Agent-based modeling
- ▶ Part II
 - ▶ Working with tabular data in R

Recap

Programming fundamentals

- ▶ Boolean logic
- ▶ If-else statements
- ▶ Loops
- ▶ Functions

Part I

Agent-based modeling

What is agent-based modeling?

Agent-based modeling and quantitative social science

- ▶ Most quantitative social science is *variable-centered*. We study the associations and interactions between variables using statistical techniques.
- ▶ For example, what is the association between college attendance and income for adults?
 - ▶ *Dependent variable*: Income
 - ▶ *Independent variable*: College attendance
 - ▶ *Controls*: Test scores, parental education, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.

What is agent-based modeling?

Agent-based modeling and quantitative social science

- ▶ Agent-based modeling is the study of “social life as interactions among adaptive agents who influence one another in response to the influence they receive.” (Macy and Willer 2002)
 - ▶ Rather than interactions between variables, we consider *interactions between interdependent individuals*

What is agent-based modeling?

Agent-based modeling and quantitative social science

- ▶ Often we are interested in the *emergent* properties of local interactions between agents and how they aggregate into system-level processes such as diffusion, polarization, and segregation
 - ▶ How do cultural tastes spread through social networks?
 - ▶ Why do people become polarized about politics?
 - ▶ What explains patterns of residential segregation?

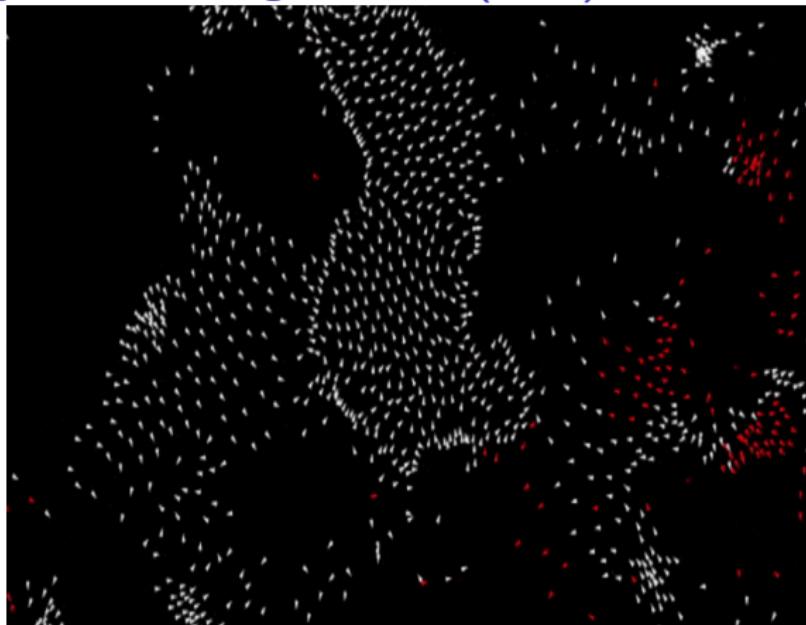
What is agent-based modeling?

Key assumptions

- ▶ Macy and Willer 2002 outline four key assumptions that underpin many sociological agent-based models
 - ▶ Agents are *autonomous*
 - ▶ There is no system-wide coordination
 - ▶ Agents are *interdependent*
 - ▶ Agents respond to each other and to their environment
 - ▶ Agents follow *simple rules*
 - ▶ Simple local rules can generate global complexity
 - ▶ Agents are *adaptive* and *backwards looking*
 - ▶ Agents can alter their behavior through processes such as imitation and learning

What is agent-based modeling?

Craig Reynolds *Flocking behavior* (1987)



Reynolds, Craig W. 1987. "Flocks, Herds and Schools: A Distributed Behavioral Model." In *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Conference on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques*, 25–34.

NetLogo and NetLogoWeb

Flocking behavior in NetLogo

[http://www.netlogoweb.org/launch#http://www.netlogoweb.org
/assets/modelslib/Sample%20Models/Biology/Flocking.nlogox](http://www.netlogoweb.org/launch#http://www.netlogoweb.org/assets/modelslib/Sample%20Models/Biology/Flocking.nlogox)

What is agent-based modeling?

Thomas Schelling *Homophily and segregation*

DYNAMIC MODELS OF SEGREGATION

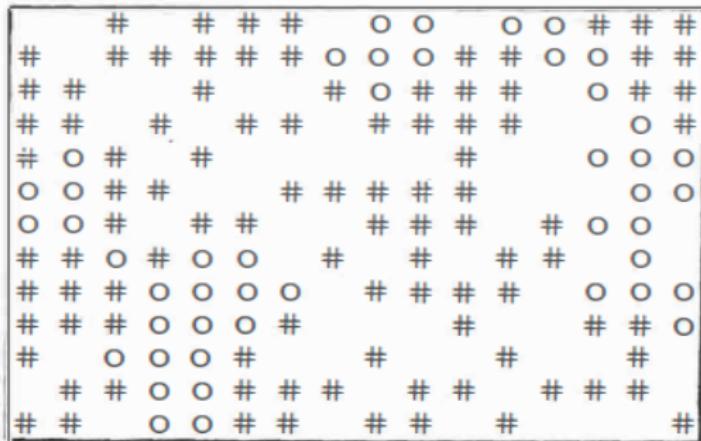


Fig. 13

Schelling, Thomas C. 1971. "Dynamic Models of Segregation." *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 1: 143–86.

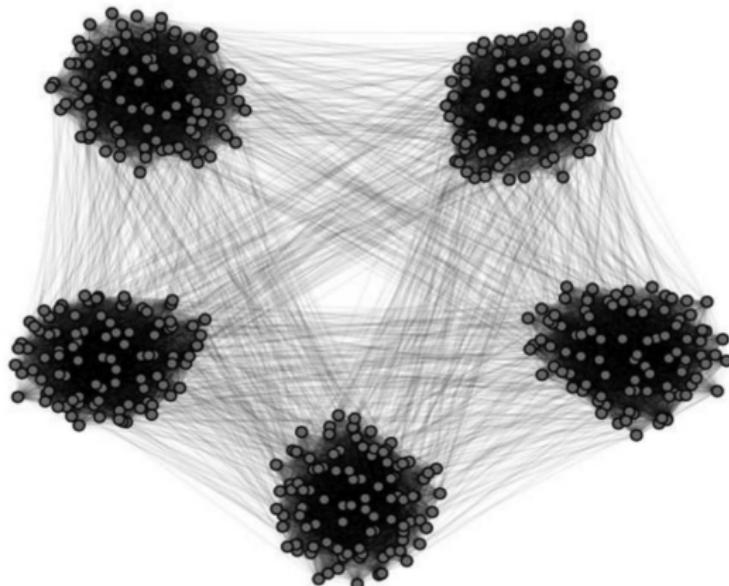
NetLogo

Schelling's segregation model in NetLogo

<http://www.netlogoweb.org/launch#http://www.netlogoweb.org/assets/modelslib/Sample%20Models/Social%20Science/Segregation.nlogox>

What is agent-based modeling?

DellaPosta, Shi, and Macy *Why Do Liberals Drink Lattes?*
(2015)



DellaPosta, Daniel, Yongren Shi, and Michael Macy. 2015. "Why Do Liberals Drink Lattes?" *American Journal of Sociology* 120(5): 1473–1511.

What is agent-based modeling?

Why use it?

- ▶ Benefits
 - ▶ Test theories that are hard to evaluate using data
 - ▶ Dynamic and flexible
- ▶ Drawbacks
 - ▶ Works best with simple models, intractable with more complex simulations
 - ▶ Difficult to evaluate or benchmark

Example: Schelling's segregation model

Copy the code at this link and try to run it as an R script in RStudio: <http://tinyurl.com/schellingR>

Part II

Tabular data and data visualization

Tabular data

- ▶ Often we will be using intermediate objects like lists, vectors, and matrices in conjunction with these different programming techniques to produce tabular data

Tabular data

Data frames

A data frame is a tabular representation that has a similar structure to a list but allows us to organize the data more neatly.

```
data(iris) # The `data` function loads a built in dataset
head(iris)

##   Sepal.Length Sepal.Width Petal.Length Petal.Width Species
## 1          5.1         3.5          1.4         0.2  setosa
## 2          4.9         3.0          1.4         0.2  setosa
## 3          4.7         3.2          1.3         0.2  setosa
## 4          4.6         3.1          1.5         0.2  setosa
## 5          5.0         3.6          1.4         0.2  setosa
## 6          5.4         3.9          1.7         0.4  setosa

iris$Sepal.Length[1] # explicitly call column name
## [1] 5.1

iris[[1]][1] # reference column using index
## [1] 5.1
```

Tabular data

The tidyverse

- ▶ The tidyverse is an R package that contains an entire suite of functions designed for such tasks including
 - ▶ dplyr contains functions for basic manipulation and merges and joins
 - ▶ tidyr implements functions for data cleaning and shape transformations
 - ▶ purr contains methods to easily map functions to lists and data frames.
- ▶ RStudio cheatsheets is an excellent resource.

Tabular data

The tidyverse

```
library(tidyverse)
tidyverse::tidyverse_packages()

## [1] "broom"          "conflicted"      "cli"            "dbplyr"
## [5] "dplyr"          "dtplyr"         "forcats"        "ggplot2"
## [9] "googledrive"    "googlesheets4"  "haven"          "hms"
## [13] "httr"           "jsonlite"       "lubridate"      "magrittr"
## [17] "modelr"         "pillar"         "purrr"          "ragg"
## [21] "readr"          "readxl"         "reprex"         "rlang"
## [25] "rstudioapi"     "rvest"          "stringr"        "tibble"
## [29] "tidyverse"       "xml2"           "tidyverse"
```

Visit the tidyverse website for more information on the different packages website

Tabular data

Tibbles

A tibble is the tidyverse take on a data.frame. We can easily convert any data.frame into a tibble.

```
iris.t <- as_tibble(iris) # convert to tibble  
class(iris.t)  
  
## [1] "tbl_df"     "tbl"        "data.frame"
```

Tabular data

Tibbles

Tibbles only show the first ten rows when printing (both look the same in RMarkdown, so we have to use the console to compare.)
Tibbles also provide information on the type of each variable.

```
print(iris.t)
```

```
## # A tibble: 150 x 5
##   Sepal.Length Sepal.Width Petal.Length Petal.Width Species
##       <dbl>      <dbl>      <dbl>      <dbl> <fct>
## 1         5.1        3.5        1.4        0.2 setosa
## 2         4.9        3.0        1.4        0.2 setosa
## 3         4.7        3.2        1.3        0.2 setosa
## 4         4.6        3.1        1.5        0.2 setosa
## 5         5.0        3.6        1.4        0.2 setosa
## 6         5.4        3.9        1.7        0.4 setosa
## 7         4.6        3.4        1.4        0.3 setosa
## 8         5.0        3.4        1.5        0.2 setosa
## 9         4.4        2.9        1.4        0.2 setosa
## 10        4.9        3.1        1.5        0.1 setosa
```

Tabular data

Tibbles

Tibbles also tend to provide more warnings when potential issues arise, so they should be less prone to errors than data frames.

```
iris$year # data.frame shows null  
## NULL  
  
iris.t$year # tibble provides a warning  
  
## Warning: Unknown or uninitialized column: `year`.  
## NULL
```

Tabular data

Reading data

We can read data from files or directly from the web using `readr`. Here we're reading in data from the *New York Times* state-level COVID-19 tracker. The `glimpse` command shows us a preview of the table. We can use `View` to open up the data in a new window.

Tabular data

Selecting columns

We can use the select command to select subsets of columns in the dataset.

```
c19 |>
  select(date, state, cases) # Select these columns

## # A tibble: 61,942 x 3
##   date      state    cases
##   <date>    <chr>     <dbl>
## 1 2020-01-21 Washington     1
## 2 2020-01-22 Washington     1
## 3 2020-01-23 Washington     1
## 4 2020-01-24 Illinois       1
## 5 2020-01-24 Washington     1
## 6 2020-01-25 California      1
## 7 2020-01-25 Illinois       1
## 8 2020-01-25 Washington     1
## 9 2020-01-26 Arizona        1
## 10 2020-01-26 California      2
```

Tabular data

Filtering

The filter command allows us to subset rows that meet one or more conditions.

```
c19 |>
  filter(cases > 1000) # conditional filtering

## # A tibble: 58,936 x 4
##   date       state     cases  deaths
##   <date>     <chr>    <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1 2020-03-17 New York     1375     18
## 2 2020-03-18 New York     2387     32
## 3 2020-03-18 Washington   1026     68
## 4 2020-03-19 California   1067     19
## 5 2020-03-19 New York     4161     39
## 6 2020-03-19 Washington   1228     75
## 7 2020-03-20 California   1283     24
## 8 2020-03-20 New York     7113     68
## 9 2020-03-20 Washington   1404     83
## 10 2020-03-21 California  1544     28
```

Tabular data

Sampling

We can also filter our dataset by taking a sample. This can be very useful for testing purposes.

```
c19 |>
  sample_n(2)  # Randomly pick n rows

## # A tibble: 2 x 4
##   date      state    cases  deaths
##   <date>    <chr>    <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1 2023-01-25 New Jersey     2991113  35794
## 2 2021-06-03 South Carolina 593628    9739

c19 |>
  sample_frac(1e-04)  # Randomly a tiny proportion of rows

## # A tibble: 6 x 4
##   date      state    cases  deaths
##   <date>    <chr>    <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1 2022-05-04 Nebraska    480586   4215
## 2 2021-06-01 Montana     111949   1613
```

Tabular data

Slicing

The slice commands can be used to select ordered subsets of rows. Note how we can add the dataset as an argument rather than using a pipe.

```
slice_max(c19, order_by = cases, n = 10) # Get the top n rows by a spe
```

```
## # A tibble: 10 x 4
##   date       state     cases deaths
##   <date>     <chr>    <dbl>  <dbl>
## 1 2023-03-23 California 12169158 104277
## 2 2023-03-22 California 12155467 104196
## 3 2023-03-21 California 12154941 104185
## 4 2023-03-20 California 12154293 104165
## 5 2023-03-19 California 12153083 104130
## 6 2023-03-17 California 12153079 104130
## 7 2023-03-18 California 12153079 104130
## 8 2023-03-16 California 12152129 104114
## 9 2023-03-15 California 12136243 104047
## 10 2023-03-14 California 12135588 104038
```

Tabular data

Making new columns using mutate

The `mutate` function allows us to generate new columns.

```
c19 <- c19 |>
  mutate(deaths_per_case = deaths/cases)
colnames(c19)

## [1] "date"           "state"          "cases"         "deaths"
## [5] "deaths_per_case"
```

Tabular data

Mutate

Although these data are cumulative, we can recover the new cases and deaths each day by using the `lag` operator.

```
c19 <- c19 |>
  group_by(state) |>
  mutate(new_cases = cases - lag(cases), new_deaths = deaths - lag(deaths))
  ungroup()
tail(c19 |>
  filter(state == "Oregon"))

## # A tibble: 6 x 7
##   date      state    cases  deaths deaths_per_case new_cases new_deat...
##   <date>    <chr>    <dbl>   <dbl>        <dbl>       <dbl>     <dbl> ...
## 1 2023-03-18 Oregon  965286   9432        0.00977      0
## 2 2023-03-19 Oregon  965286   9432        0.00977      0
## 3 2023-03-20 Oregon  965286   9432        0.00977      0
## 4 2023-03-21 Oregon  965286   9432        0.00977      0
## 5 2023-03-22 Oregon  967156   9451        0.00977    1870
## 6 2023-03-23 Oregon  967156   9451        0.00977      0
```

Tabular data

Summarizing

We can use `summarize` to create statistical summaries of the data. Like `mutate`, we define a new variable within `summarize` to capture a defined summary.

```
# Summarize specific variables
c19 |>
  summarise(mean_deaths = mean(deaths), median_deaths = median(deaths))

## # A tibble: 1 x 3
##   mean_deaths median_deaths max_deaths
##       <dbl>        <dbl>      <dbl>
## 1     11779.        5035     104277
```

Tabular data

Summarizing

The `summarize_all` command takes a summary function (e.g. `mean`, `min`, `max`) and applies it to all columns. This can be useful if there are lots of variables. See documentation for other variants of `summarize`. Note that the `mean` is undefined for non-numeric columns AND columns with missing data.

```
c19 |>
  summarize_all(mean) |>
  select(state, cases, new_cases) # Map a summary function to all va
## # A tibble: 1 x 3
##   state    cases new_cases
##   <dbl>    <dbl>      <dbl>
## 1 NA     889830.       NA
```

Tabular data

Summarizing

We can *impute* missing data to get an estimate of the mean. In this case, values are missing for early rows where the lag operator was not defined. Missing new_cases or new_deaths will be set to zero using replace_na.

```
c19 <- c19 |>
  replace_na(list(new_cases = 0, new_deaths = 0))
c19 |>
  summarize_all(mean) |>
  select(state, cases, new_cases) # Map a summary function to all va
## # A tibble: 1 x 3
##   state    cases new_cases
##   <dbl>    <dbl>     <dbl>
## 1 NA     889830.    1678.
```

Tabular data

Grouping

Often we want to group our data before summarizing. What does this example tell us?

```
c19 |>
  group_by(state) |>
  summarise(mean(deaths_per_case)) |>
  ungroup()

## # A tibble: 56 x 2
##   state           `mean(deaths_per_case)`
##   <chr>              <dbl>
## 1 Alabama            0.0175
## 2 Alaska             0.00598
## 3 American Samoa    0.00267
## 4 Arizona            0.0182
## 5 Arkansas           0.0147
## 6 California          0.0143
## 7 Colorado            0.0165
## 8 Connecticut         0.0316
```

Tabular data

Grouping

Sometimes we might want to create a group-level variable then revert back to the original dataset. We can do this using the `ungroup` command. What does this new column represent?

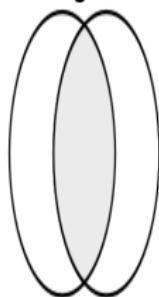
```
c19 |>
  group_by(date) |>
  mutate(daily_mean = mean(new_cases)) |>
  ungroup() |>
  select(date, state, daily_mean) |>
  tail()
```

```
## # A tibble: 6 x 3
##   date       state     daily_mean
##   <date>     <chr>      <dbl>
## 1 2023-03-23 Virgin Islands    806.
## 2 2023-03-23 Virginia        806.
## 3 2023-03-23 Washington      806.
## 4 2023-03-23 West Virginia    806.
## 5 2023-03-23 Wisconsin       806.
```

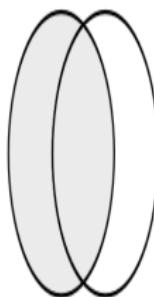
Tabular data

Joins

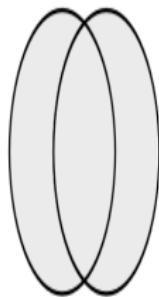
We often want to join together different datasets. There are four main types of joins:



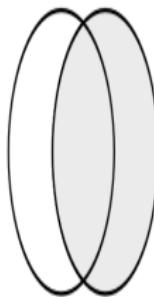
`inner_join(x, y)`



`left_join(x, y)`



`full_join(x, y)`



`right_join(x, y)`

Tabular data

Joins

The `left_join` is the most commonly used type of join. We keep all rows in our left dataset and the rows on the right dataset with valid matches. Here we're download a dataset about state governors and joining it on state. The `by` argument defines the columns we should join on.

```
gov <- read_csv("https://raw.githubusercontent.com/OpenGovDataMirror/F_...
gov <- gov |>
  select(state_name, party) # just select two columns

c19 <- c19 |>
  left_join(gov, by = c(state = "state_name")) # We can pipe c19 int...
```

Tabular data

Joining

Let's consider another example to get state-level population data. In this case, we're reading an Excel file from the Census bureau so we have to do a little more processing to load the file.

```
library(readxl)
census <- "https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/tables/2010-
# read_excel function from readxl does not currently handle files from
# so we need to tell R to store as a temporary file
tmp <- tempfile(fileext = ".xlsx")
httr::GET(url = census, httr::write_disk(tmp))

## Response [https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/tables/201
##   Date: 2025-09-16 12:59
##   Status: 200
##   Content-Type: application/vnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.spread
##   Size: 18.1 kB
## <ON DISK>  /var/folders/by/t5qdf0996h12f6ngxhxqrpf40000gs/T//Rtmp9Tw
pop <- read_excel(tmp)
```

Tabular data

Joining

These data are a little messier. We need to do a bit of cleaning up.

```
pop.states <- pop[9:61, c(1,13)] # Selecting relevant rows and columns
colnames(pop.states) <- c("state", "pop") # Renaming
pop.states <- pop.states |> # Standardizing
  mutate(state = str_replace(state, ".", ""))
  drop_na()
```

Tabular data

Joining

Now we can join our new column to the dataset. Finally, we drop rows that do not have a governor (party column is missing).

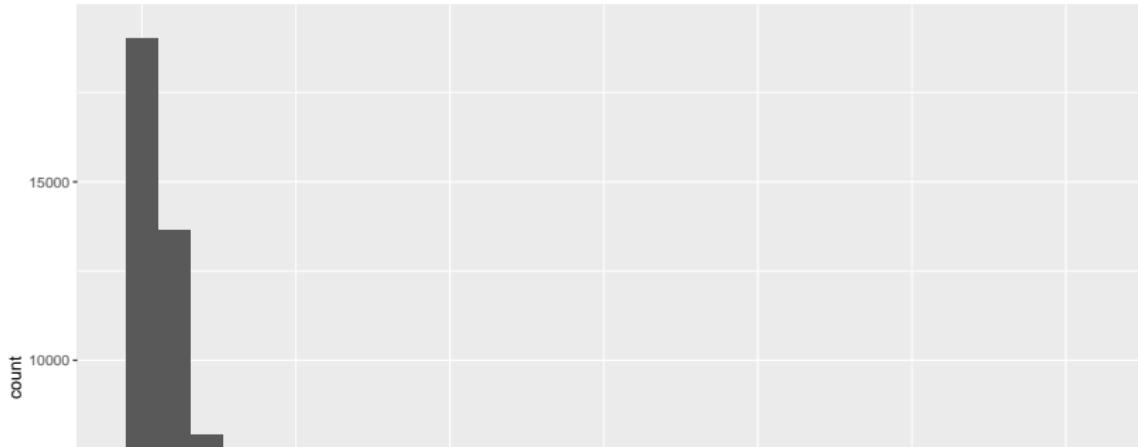
```
c19 <- c19 |>
  left_join(pop.states, by = "state")
c19 <- c19 |>
  drop_na(party) # Dropping any row not considered a state
length(unique(c19$state)) # Verifying the correct number of states
## [1] 50
```

Data visualization

ggplot2

The ggplot2 library is loaded as part of the tidyverse. It can produce many different styles of plots with a simple, tidy syntax. Let's consider a basic example.

```
ggplot(c19, # data  
       aes(x = cases)) + # aesthetic mapping  
       geom_histogram() # plot type
```

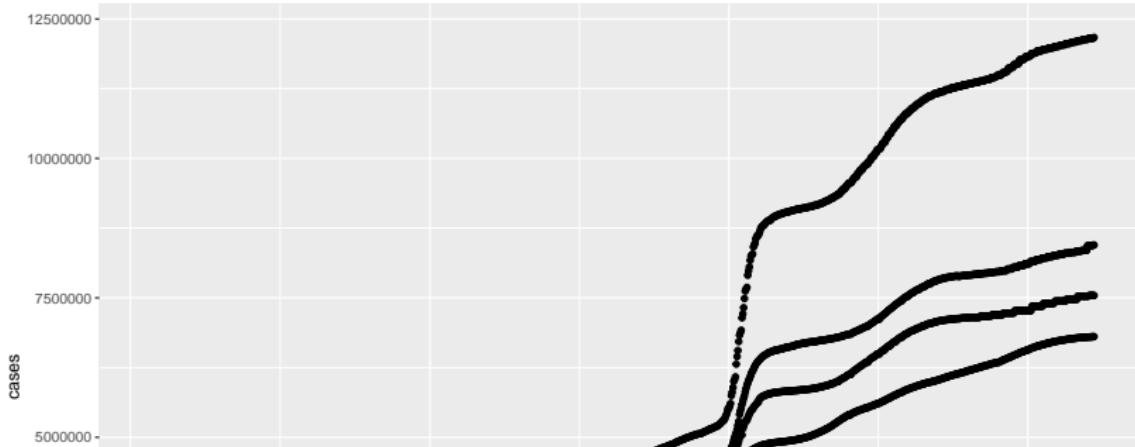


Data visualization

ggplot2

The previous histogram wasn't very informative because it doesn't show the trends over time. A better option would be to plot the cases over time.

```
ggplot(c19, # data  
       aes(x = date, y= cases)) + # aesthetic mapping  
       geom_point() # plot type
```



Data visualization

ggplot2

We can see that the points above are lines, since we have daily measures for each state. Let's examine the linear trend by plotting the line of best fit to the data points.

```
ggplot(c19, # data  
       aes(x = date, y= cases)) + # aesthetic mapping  
       geom_point() +  
       geom_smooth(method='lm', se = F) # plot type
```

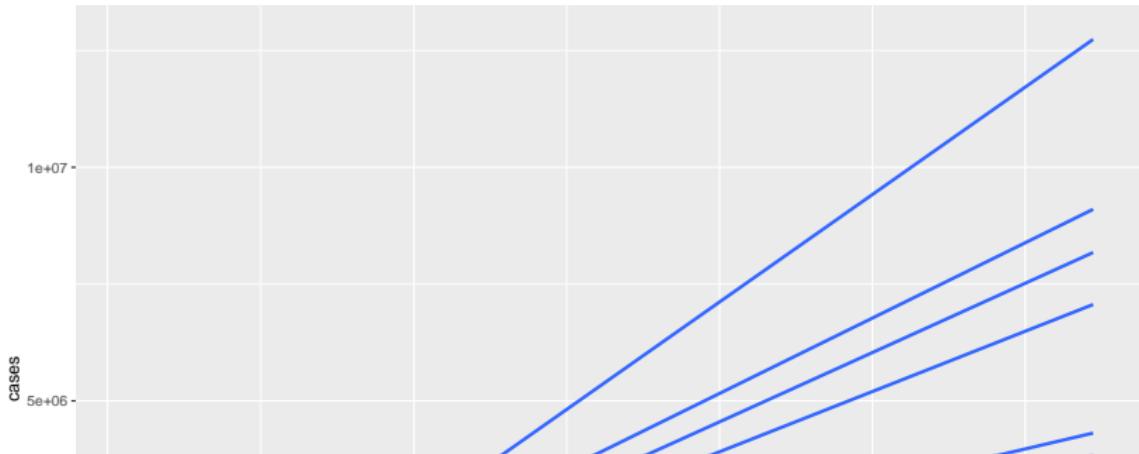


Data visualization

ggplot2

The previous line is not too informative due to variation among states. We can easily break it out by state by adding a group parameter. Now each state has a separate line fitted.

```
ggplot(c19, # data  
       aes(x = date, y= cases, group=state)) + # aesthetic mapping  
       geom_smooth(method='lm', se = F) # plot type
```

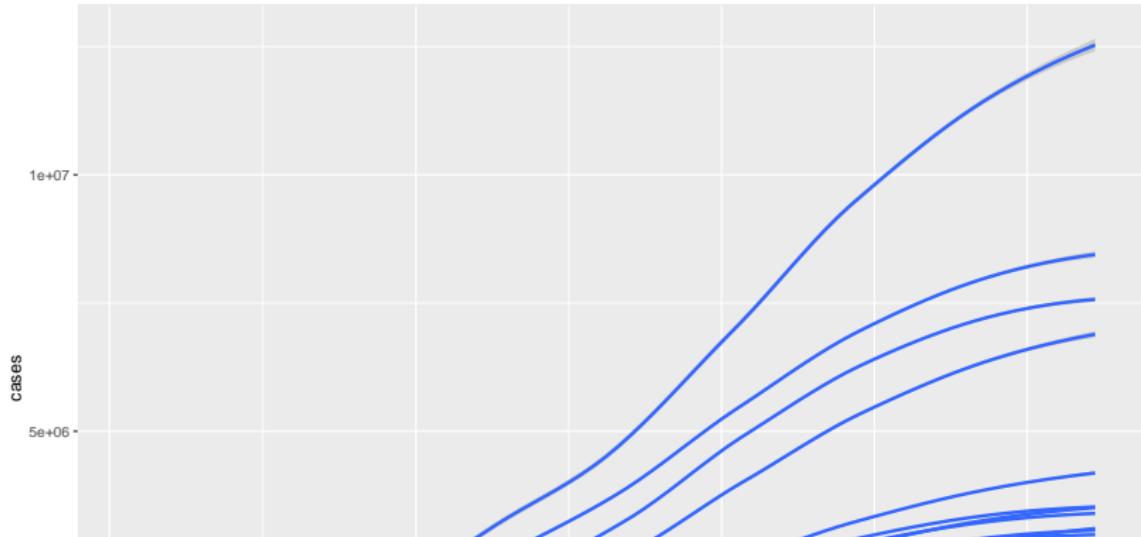


Data visualization

ggplot2

We can also fit a smoothed line to better capture the trends.

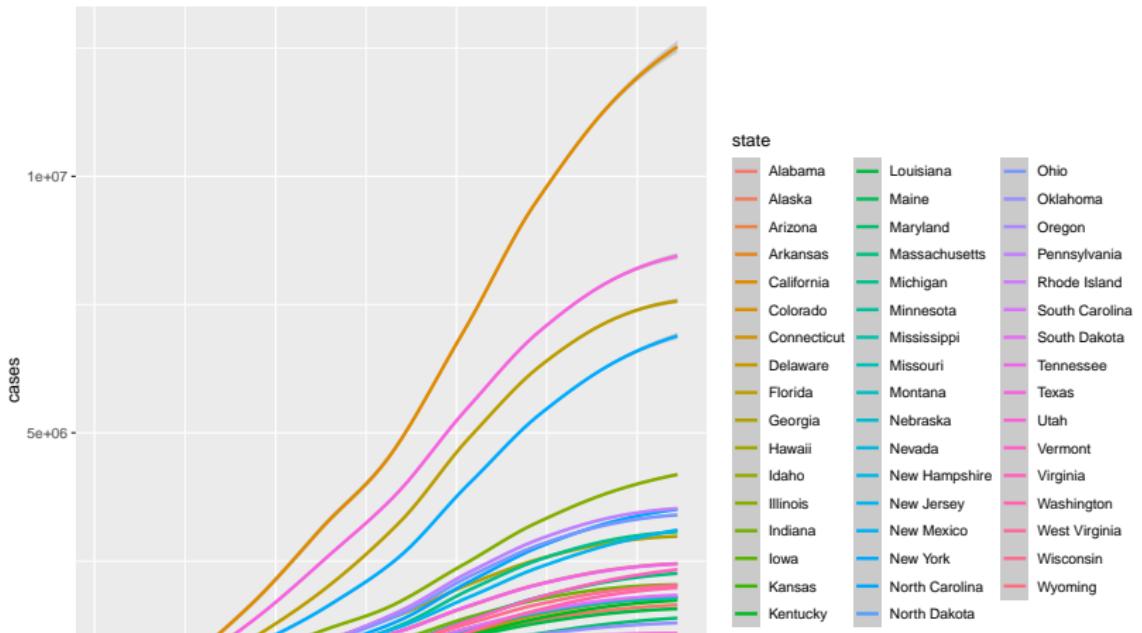
```
ggplot(c19, # data  
       aes(x = date, y= cases, group=state)) + # aesthetic mapping  
       geom_smooth(method='loess') # plot type
```



Data visualization

ggplot2

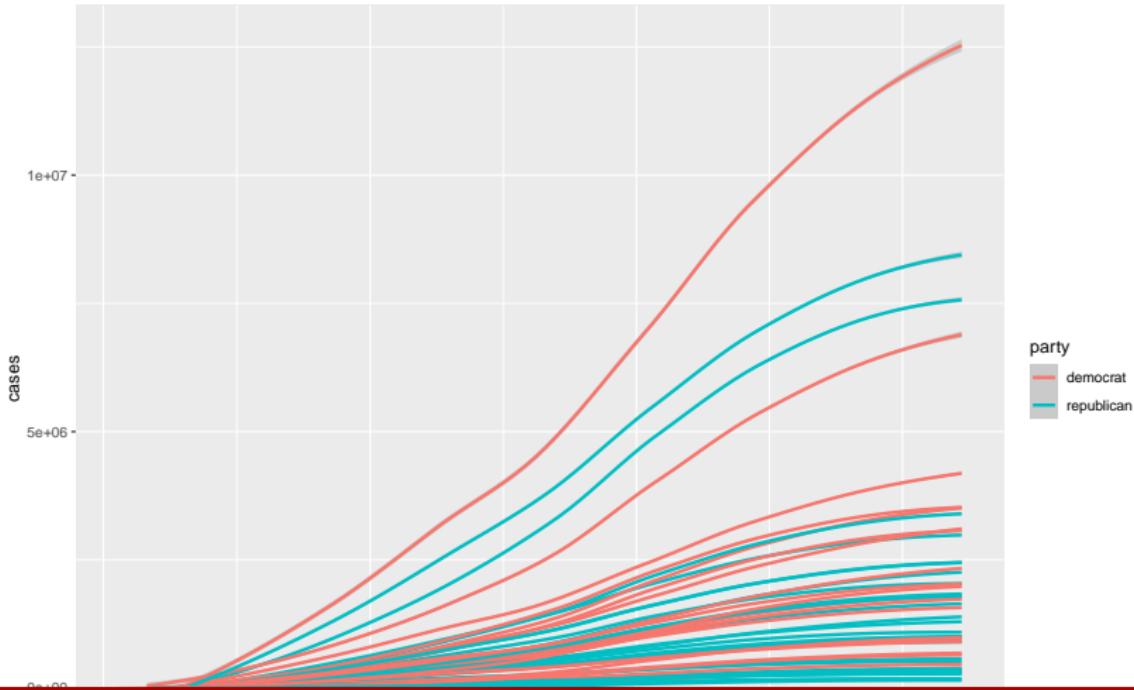
The color parameter allows us to assign a different color to each line.
Note how things get a little difficult to read now.



Data visualization

ggplot2

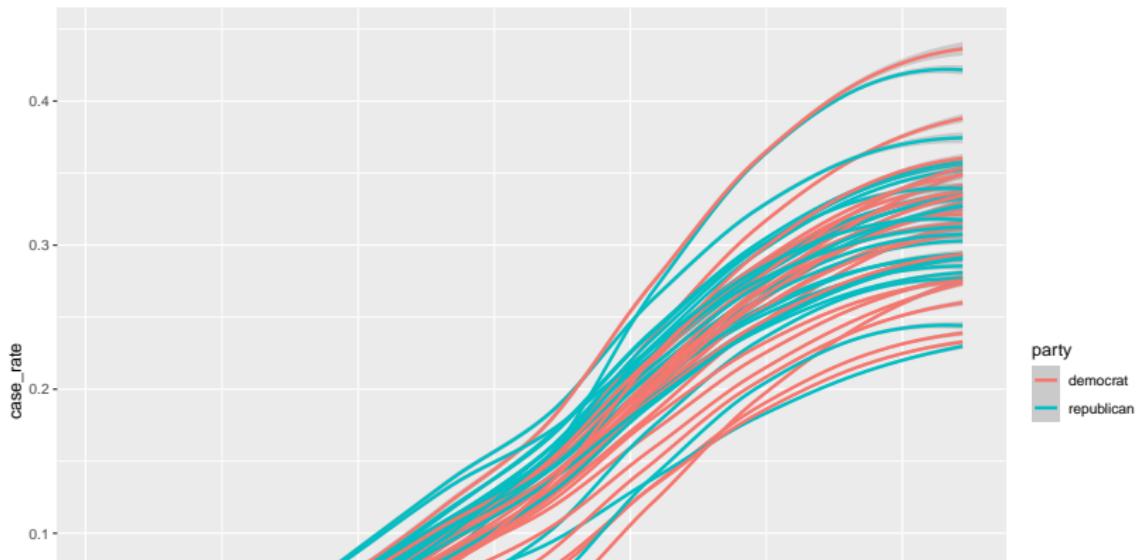
We can easily group by other variables.



Data visualization

ggplot2

Why might the previous plot be misleading? Is there a better way to look at how cases vary by partisanship of the governor? Note: The plot is now stored as an object `p` before plotting. This allows us to modify it later on.

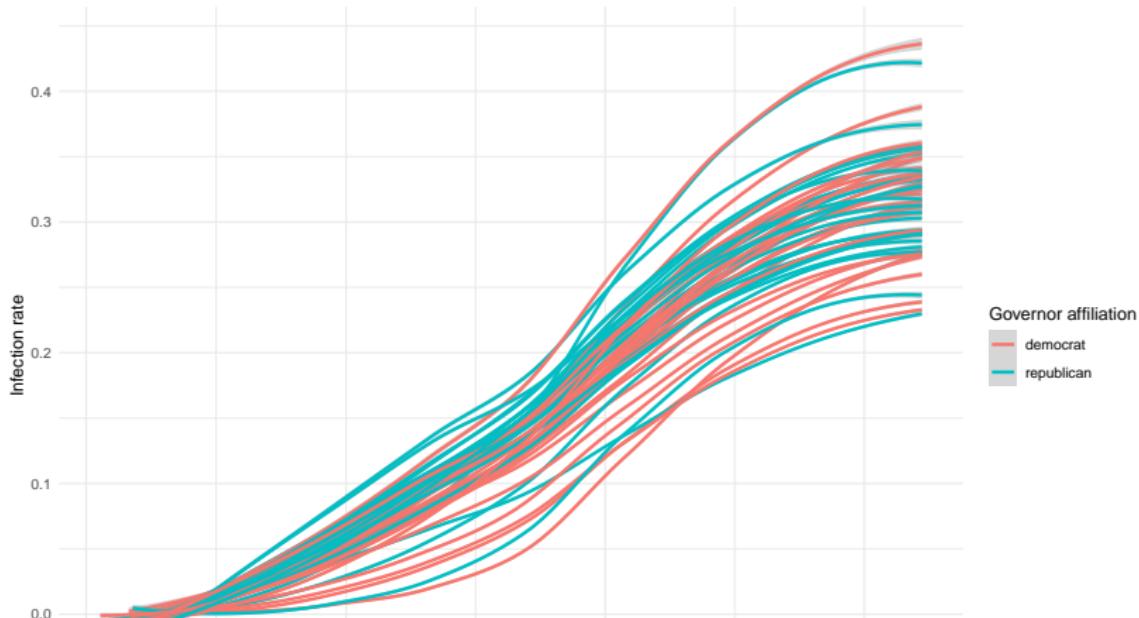


Data visualization

ggplot2

Now we have a plot, let's make it look a bit nicer. We can easily add labels and modify the axes.

Cumulative COVID-19 cases per capita by governor type, 2020–2023

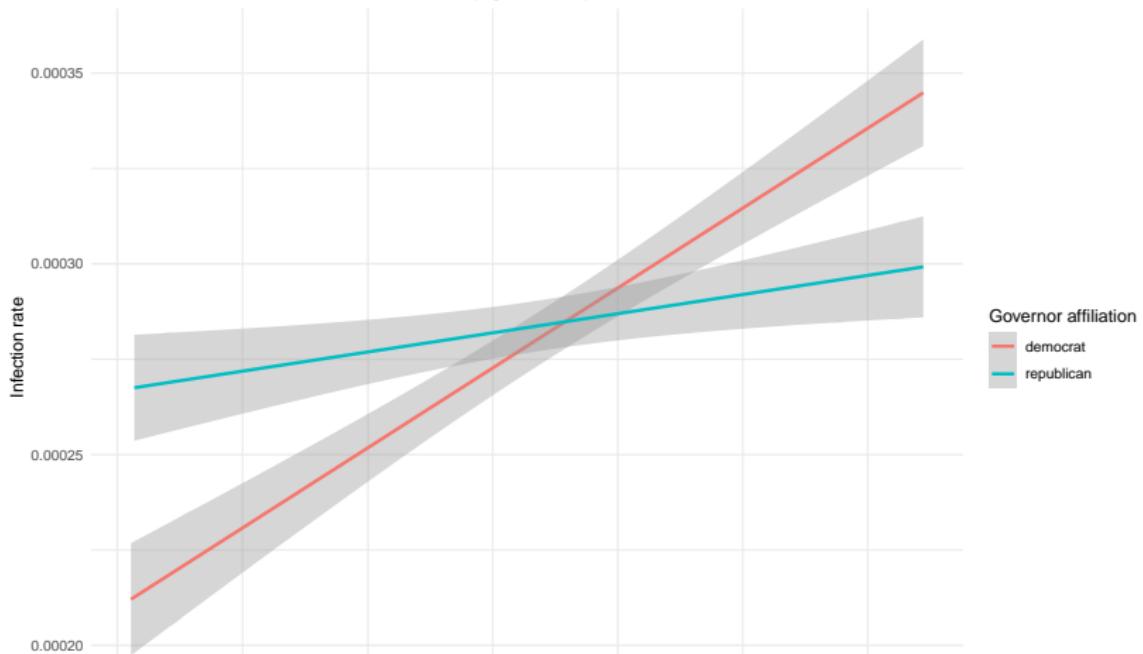


Data visualization

ggplot2

We can easily modify this code to look at the data in a different way.

Cumulative COVID-19 cases per capita by governor type, 2020–2023

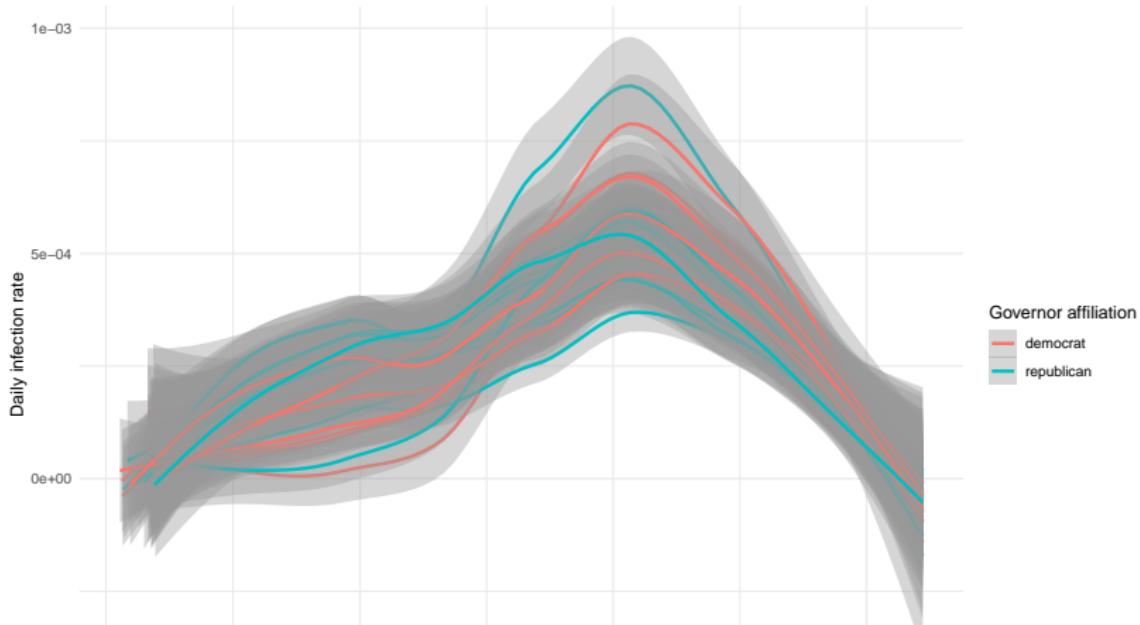


Data visualization

ggplot2

Based on these results, we might want to go back to a non-linear fit and allow each state to have its own line to better see the trends.

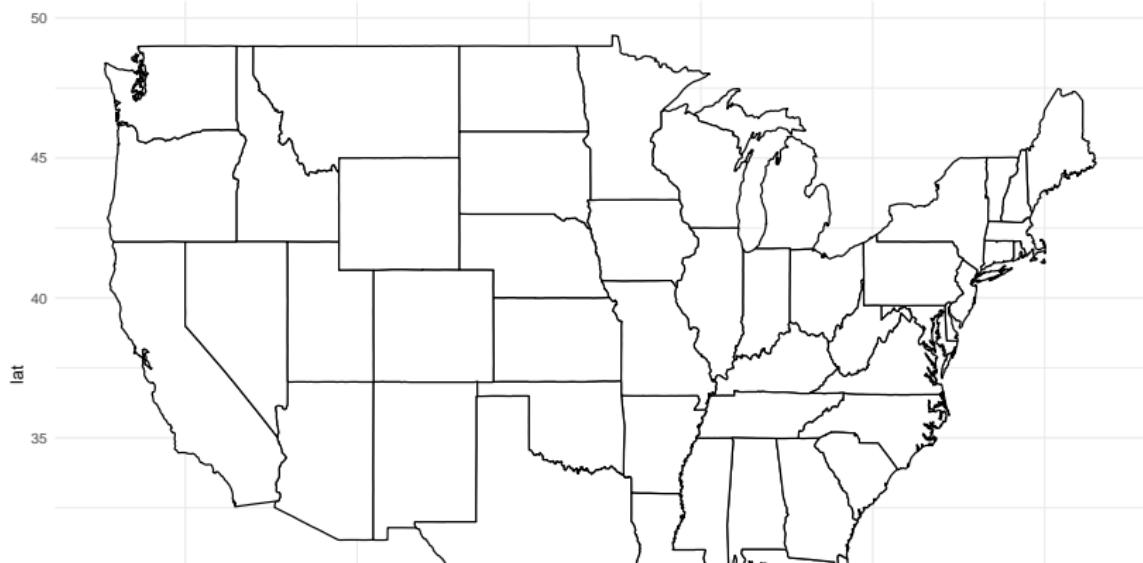
Daily COVID-19 cases per capita by governor type, 2020–2023



Data visualization

ggplot2 maps

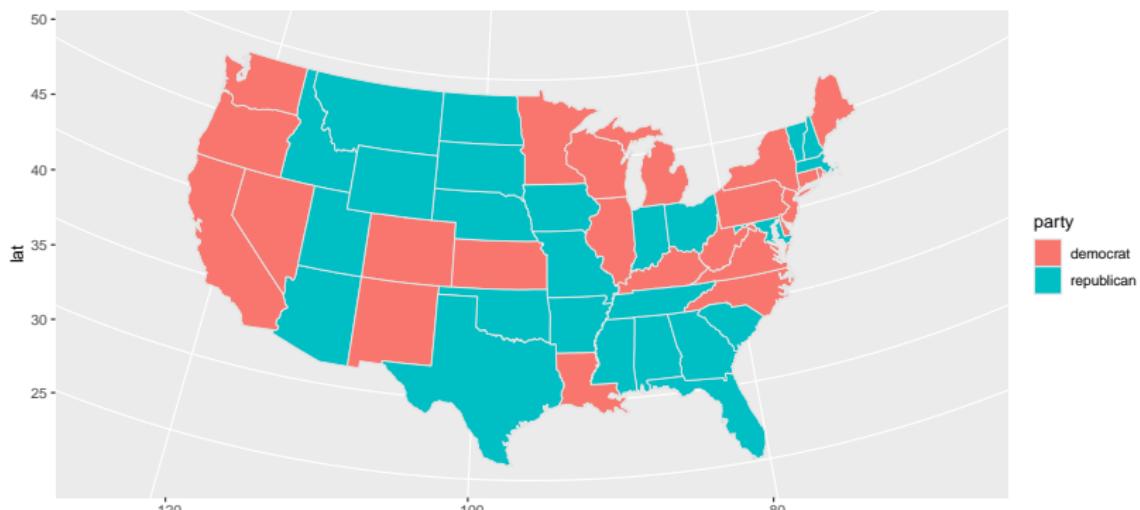
The ggplot package can be used to produce many different types of visualizations. For example, we can use it to produce maps. Here we load the package maps to get the shapefile for each state. The example



Data visualization

ggplot2

We have to merge our data with the shapefile in order to plot it on the map.

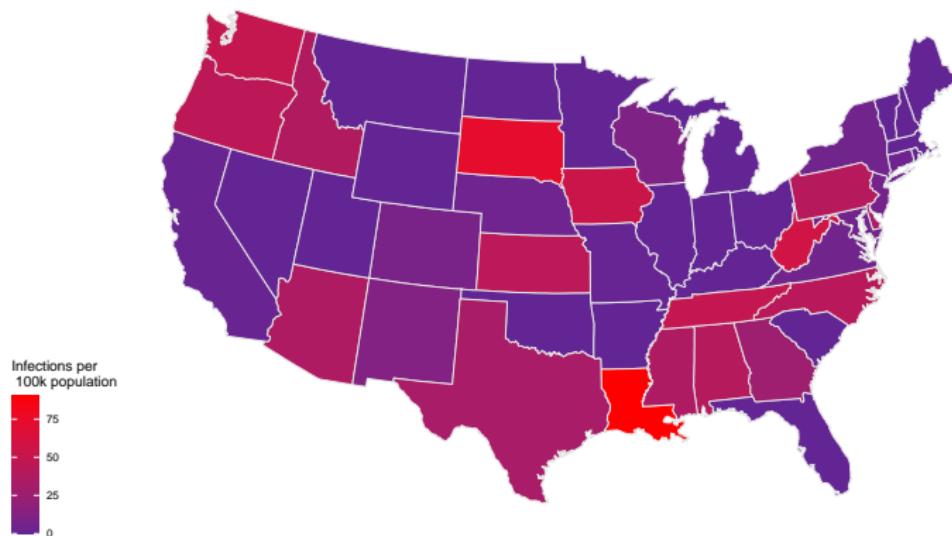


Data visualization

ggplot2

Let's try to do something more interesting.

COVID-19 new infection rate, March 23 2023



Mini homework (due before next class)

Follow the instructions on the course website to set up Github with RStudio <https://github.com/t-davidson/SOC360-CSS/> (click `github_setup.md`)

1. Register for a Github account
2. Install Git
3. Sync your Github account with RStudio

Next lecture

- ▶ File management
- ▶ Github