

Analysis of geographical patterns in weather-related flight delays

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Data Information

- Airline on time data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics for all US States
- Weather-related flight delays data from June 2003 to December 2013

Question of Interest

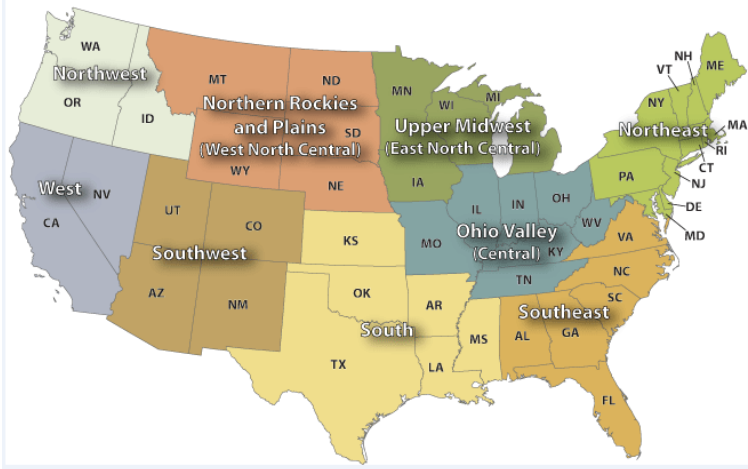
Are there geographical patterns in weather-related flight delays, and do these change over time?

Assumptions

- NA \rightarrow No Delay
- For Proportion
 - Weather delay value greater than 0 \rightarrow 'Delayed' regardless of severity
 - Denominator \rightarrow count of all flights including NA
- Weather within a month is 'reasonably consistent'
- Defined regions using NOAA
 - Added Alaska and Hawaii as their own region
 - Lumped unlinked airport into an 'Other' region
- Weather is similar in climate regions

NOAA Map of Regions

U.S. Climate Regions



Population-based Results

- Aggregate to monthly basis
- Higher percentages of delayed flights are in winter
- Highest winter proportions are in Central region
 - Chicago: Major hub plus cold winters
- No month/region exceeds 4% in the proportion of delayed flights
- Bump in Jun, Jul and August for the South, Southeast, Northeast and Upper Midwest
 - Tornado season?
- South is consistently above 1% across all months

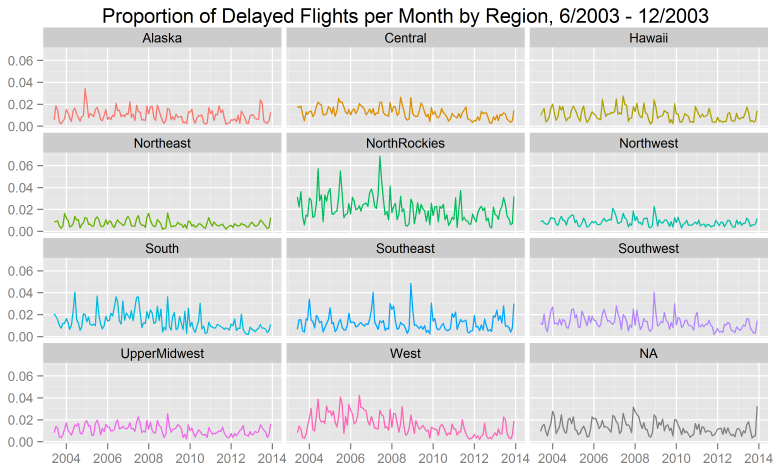
Proportion of Weather Delayed Flights, by Month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alaska	1.832%	1.353%	1.175%	0.517%	0.347%	0.319%	0.455%	0.661%	0.698%	0.865%	1.529%	1.768%
Central	3.155%	2.849%	1.740%	1.349%	1.614%	1.957%	1.733%	1.450%	0.809%	0.802%	1.129%	3.385%
Hawaii	0.108%	0.114%	0.113%	0.029%	0.056%	0.021%	0.030%	0.116%	0.013%	0.051%	0.091%	0.344%
Northeast	2.007%	1.853%	1.422%	1.038%	1.185%	1.992%	2.011%	1.710%	0.872%	0.963%	0.971%	2.409%
NorthRockies	1.641%	1.321%	1.000%	0.725%	0.708%	0.830%	0.739%	0.707%	0.523%	0.636%	0.830%	2.071%
Northwest	1.367%	0.505%	0.422%	0.179%	0.151%	0.210%	0.202%	0.230%	0.182%	0.293%	0.667%	1.513%
Other	0.368%	0.270%	0.218%	0.275%	0.421%	0.514%	0.762%	0.612%	0.393%	0.510%	0.328%	0.329%
South	1.808%	1.939%	1.988%	1.938%	2.472%	3.236%	2.877%	2.173%	1.232%	1.494%	1.285%	2.356%
Southeast	1.177%	1.220%	1.133%	1.028%	1.252%	2.464%	2.475%	1.981%	1.065%	0.867%	0.783%	1.217%
Southwest	1.117%	0.741%	0.617%	0.540%	0.589%	0.961%	1.079%	0.904%	0.446%	0.519%	0.457%	1.378%
UpperMidwest	1.653%	1.913%	1.349%	1.045%	1.489%	1.965%	1.728%	1.262%	0.977%	0.914%	1.069%	2.266%
West	0.651%	0.497%	0.412%	0.303%	0.276%	0.319%	0.403%	0.383%	0.277%	0.430%	0.433%	0.729%

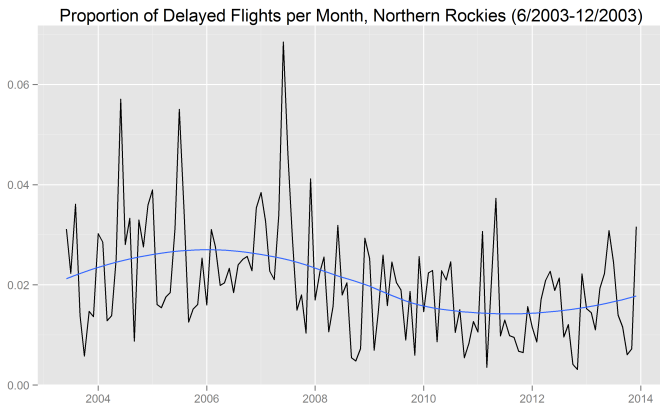
Population-based Results

- Across all years
- Northern Rockies show greatest fluctuation over the years
- Consistently low percentage of delayed flights in northeastern area
- Northern Rockies alone:
 - No obvious seasonal patterns
 - Gradual change of mean level over the years

All Regions



Northern Rockies



Assumptions

Same as that of Population Based Analysis

Sampling Technique

- Strata → Single region for single month
- Number of flights per month ranging from an average of 3,000 in Alaska to an average of 115,000 in the Southwest
- Proportional sampling → sampled approximately 2.5% of the flights in each stratum

Sample-based Results

- Very similar to the population results
- Heat map of monthly proportions show the same pattern
 - Nothing over 4%
 - Same bump in the summer in the south
- Zero proportion in some strata, with very low population proportions
- Standard errors all below 0.5%, and generally below 0.25%

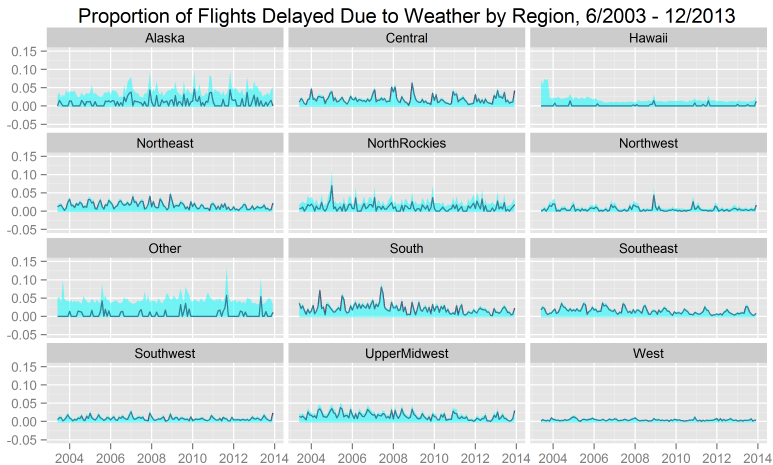
Proportion of Weather Delayed Flights, by Month

p (se(p))	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alaska	1.711% (0.46%)	0.939% (0.38%)	0.941% (0.35%)	0.650% (0.29%)	0.720% (0.29%)	0.334% (0.16%)	0.718% (0.24%)	0.649% (0.23%)	0.933% (0.31%)	0.728% (0.27%)	1.312% (0.41%)	1.820% (0.46%)
Central	3.147% (0.12%)	2.795% (0.12%)	1.762% (0.09%)	1.349% (0.08%)	1.634% (0.08%)	1.963% (0.09%)	1.660% (0.08%)	1.468% (0.08%)	0.811% (0.06%)	0.870% (0.06%)	1.200% (0.07%)	3.323% (0.12%)
Hawaii	0.047% (0.05%)	0.103% (0.07%)	0.048% (0.05%)	0.000% (0.00%)	0.045% (0.04%)	0.000% (0.00%)	0.039% (0.04%)	0.127% (0.07%)	0.000% (0.00%)	0.047% (0.05%)	0.137% (0.08%)	0.373% (0.12%)
Northeast	2.029% (0.10%)	1.881% (0.10%)	1.382% (0.08%)	1.104% (0.07%)	1.065% (0.07%)	1.930% (0.09%)	2.159% (0.10%)	1.631% (0.08%)	0.799% (0.06%)	0.935% (0.07%)	0.982% (0.07%)	2.546% (0.11%)
NorthRockies	1.519% (0.31%)	1.527% (0.32%)	0.758% (0.22%)	0.604% (0.20%)	0.799% (0.22%)	0.862% (0.21%)	0.763% (0.19%)	0.798% (0.19%)	0.474% (0.17%)	0.637% (0.19%)	1.372% (0.29%)	2.015% (0.33%)
Northwest	1.079% (0.16%)	0.735% (0.14%)	0.519% (0.11%)	0.187% (0.07%)	0.086% (0.04%)	0.262% (0.07%)	0.219% (0.06%)	0.291% (0.07%)	0.179% (0.06%)	0.426% (0.09%)	0.885% (0.14%)	1.343% (0.16%)
Other	0.135% (0.13%)	0.141% (0.14%)	0.000% (0.00%)	0.265% (0.18%)	0.878% (0.35%)	0.617% (0.27%)	0.711% (0.29%)	1.167% (0.36%)	0.864% (0.38%)	0.160% (0.16%)	0.146% (0.14%)	0.360% (0.21%)
South	1.797% (0.09%)	1.948% (0.10%)	1.919% (0.10%)	1.979% (0.10%)	2.568% (0.11%)	3.235% (0.12%)	2.767% (0.11%)	2.229% (0.10%)	1.321% (0.08%)	1.387% (0.08%)	1.214% (0.08%)	2.477% (0.11%)
Southeast	1.232% (0.06%)	1.114% (0.06%)	1.122% (0.06%)	1.038% (0.06%)	1.227% (0.06%)	2.568% (0.09%)	2.484% (0.08%)	1.944% (0.08%)	1.043% (0.06%)	0.845% (0.05%)	0.921% (0.05%)	1.235% (0.06%)
Southwest	1.107% (0.09%)	0.695% (0.07%)	0.645% (0.07%)	0.560% (0.06%)	0.594% (0.07%)	0.852% (0.07%)	0.942% (0.08%)	0.939% (0.08%)	0.442% (0.06%)	0.354% (0.05%)	0.561% (0.06%)	1.569% (0.10%)
UpperMidwest	1.645% (0.14%)	1.800% (0.15%)	1.190% (0.12%)	0.893% (0.10%)	1.765% (0.14%)	2.008% (0.14%)	1.795% (0.13%)	1.080% (0.11%)	0.877% (0.10%)	1.008% (0.10%)	1.155% (0.11%)	2.436% (0.16%)
West	0.656% (0.06%)	0.475% (0.05%)	0.435% (0.05%)	0.214% (0.03%)	0.288% (0.04%)	0.276% (0.03%)	0.385% (0.04%)	0.351% (0.04%)	0.327% (0.04%)	0.388% (0.04%)	0.396% (0.04%)	0.716% (0.06%)

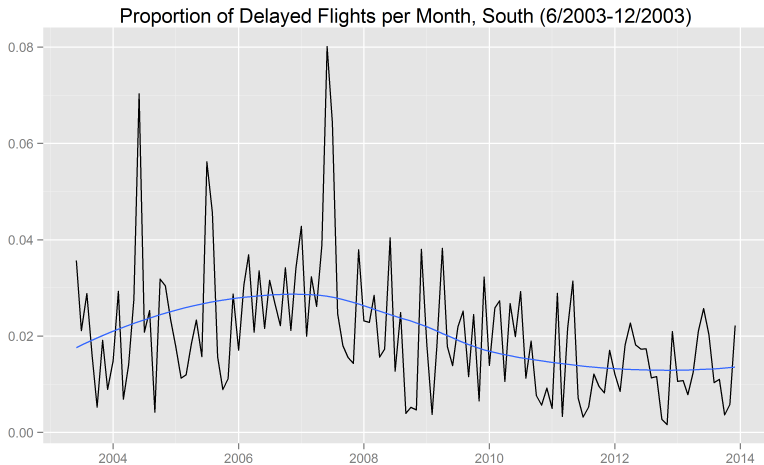
Sample-based Analysis

- Proportions with point-wise confidence intervals
- Regions Alaska, Hawaii and Other have greater margins of error
 - Small sample sizes
- No apparent trend over the years for most regions, except for the South
- South alone:
 - No obvious seasonal patterns
 - Bump at the end of 2006/beginning of 2007

All Regions



Southern Area



Discussion

- **Expecting:** seasonal differences
- **Not expecting:** large amount of summer delays, especially in South and Southeast
- Observed regional differences in amount of delays
- No significant shift in regional differences over time

Population and Sample Monthly Proportions

Population Data: Monthly Proportion of Delayed Flights by Region (6/2003 - 12/2013)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Alaska	1.832%	1.353%	1.175%	0.517%	0.347%	0.319%	0.455%	0.661%	0.698%	0.865%	1.529%	1.768%
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Data was grouped by Month & Region, (n delay flights)/(n flights) for each of the 144 combinations.

Sample Data: Monthly Proportion of Delayed Flights by Region (6/2003 - 12/2013)

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Other	0.135%	0.141%	0.000%	0.265%	0.878%	0.617%	0.711%	1.167%	0.864%	0.160%	0.146%	0.360%
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Southeast	1.232%	1.114%	1.122%	1.038%	1.227%	2.568%	2.484%	1.944%	1.043%	0.845%	0.921%	1.235%
Southwest	1.107%	0.655%	0.645%	0.560%	0.594%	0.852%	0.942%	0.939%	0.442%	0.354%	0.561%	1.569%
UpperMidwest	1.645%	1.800%	1.190%	0.893%	1.765%	2.008%	1.795%	1.080%	0.877%	1.008%	1.155%	2.436%
West	0.656%	0.475%	0.435%	0.214%	0.288%	0.276%	0.385%	0.351%	0.327%	0.388%	0.396%	0.716%

Obstacles and Solutions

- Figuring out how to sample by our strata (region/month/year)
- Defining regions & assigning regions to flights
 - `left_join` of DPLYR was very helpful
 - Saved the IATA, State and Region for all airports separately for future use
- Five IATA codes in the data not documented in the Data Expo .csv file
 - Googled it!

Obstacles and Solutions

- Confidence intervals for zero proportions
 - Rule of Three: $3/n_h$ gives upper bound of 95% CI
- "Other" region: military bases and protectorates, not geographically consistent
 - Included in analysis but no conclusions drawn from it