Cloudy with a Chance of Blue States: The Particulate Matter between Air Pollution and Senatorial Preference in Corpus Christi, Texas

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Advanced Engineering Institute

Discussion Paper 5419

January 2024

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ABSTRACT

Cloudy with a Chance of Blue States: The Particulate Matter between Air Pollution and Senatorial Preference in Corpus Christi, Texas

This paper presents an analysis of the relationship between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Democratic votes for Senators in Texas. Using data from the Environmental Protection Agency and MIT Election Data and Science Lab, Harvard Dataverse, our research team investigated the purported connection between the inhalation of fine particulate matter and the political leanings of the electorate. Our findings reveal a remarkably strong correlation coefficient of 0.9172435 and $p < 0.01$ for the time span from 1980 to 2020. While we take the significance of these results seriously, we cannot help but ponder whether the citizens of Corpus Christi are literally "voting with their lungs" or if there is merely a whiff of political influence in the air. This study opens up avenues for further investigation into the intersection of environmental quality and political decision-making, and perhaps underscores the notion that where there's smog, there's a political fog.

Keywords:

air pollution, particulate matter, political preference, Corpus Christi, Texas, Democratic votes, Senators, Environmental Protection Agency, MIT Election Data and Science Lab, Harvard Dataverse, political influence, environmental quality, political decision-making

I. Introduction

The interaction between environmental factors and political dynamics has long fascinated scholars and armchair pundits alike. Whether it's the impact of climate change on electoral outcomes or the influence of clean water regulations on voting behavior, the nexus of ecology and politics continues to stir curiosity and debate. In this study, we turn our attention to the atmospheric arena, specifically examining the intriguing relationship between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and the voting preferences of residents for Senators in the Lone Star State.

Corpus Christi, known for its vibrant coastal culture and lively fiestas, also grapples with air quality issues due to industrial activities and transportation emissions. Meanwhile, Texas, as the saying goes, is a whole other country when it comes to its political landscape, with a long-standing reputation for being staunchly red. However, as we delve into the data, we set out to unravel whether there might be a blue-tinted haze hovering over Corpus Christi that mirrors the political inclinations of its residents.

The correlation between air pollution, particularly the inhalation of fine particulate matter, and political ideology is not merely an exercise in academic curiosity. It touches upon broader implications for public health, environmental justice, and democratic representation. As we embark on our empirical exploration, we are mindful of the serious implications of our findings, while allowing ourselves the occasional wry observation, akin to catching a scent of political intrigue blowing in with the prevailing winds.

This paper aims to contribute to the burgeoning literature on the intersection of environmental quality and electoral decisions, adding a dash of empirical evidence to the discourse on "voting

with one's lungs." Our study, while rooted in rigorous statistical analysis, also beckons us to consider the metaphorical miasma of political influence that may permeate the very air constituents breathe. In the following sections, we present our methodology, illuminate our findings, and tentatively tease out the implications of our research, much like a breeze gently dispersing an enigmatic cloud of data. Join us as we venture into the atmospheric realm where environmental particles and political particles collide in a thought-provoking dance, with a side of whimsy and wonder.

II. Literature Review

The proposed association between environmental factors and political inclinations has been the subject of notable scholarly inquiry. Smith et al. (2010) presented a comprehensive analysis of the impact of air pollution on public perceptions of governmental policies, shedding light on the potential influence of environmental quality on political attitudes. Similarly, Doe and Jones (2015) examined the correlation between respiratory health and voting behavior, emphasizing the interconnectedness of physical well-being and civic engagement. These studies offer valuable insights into the relationship between environmental factors and political dynamics, setting the stage for our investigation into the specific case of air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and its potential link to Senatorial preference in the state of Texas.

Turning to the broader context of environmental politics and public sentiment, "The Clean Air Act at 50: Making a Positive Difference" (Environmental Defense Fund, 2020) provides a comprehensive overview of policy interventions aimed at addressing air quality challenges in the United States. The book not only offers a historical perspective on legislative efforts but also

underscores the societal impact of clean air regulations, laying the groundwork for our exploration of the ramifications of air pollution on electoral behavior.

On a more speculative note, fiction literature has occasionally delved into the imagined ramifications of environmental degradation on political landscapes. In "The Air We Breathe" (Smith, 2008), the protagonist navigates a dystopian world where air pollution has become a central tool for political manipulation, serving as a metaphor for the insidious nature of power dynamics. While not a work of empirical research, the novel sparks contemplation on the potential intersection of environmental hazards and political decision-making, offering a creative lens through which to ponder the dynamics suggested by our own study.

In the realm of popular culture, the television series "Breaking Smog" provides a dramatized portrayal of environmental activists navigating the complex terrain of air quality advocacy. Although not directly related to our research focus, the show's nuanced portrayal of environmental challenges invites reflection on the public consciousness surrounding pollution and its potential reverberations in the political sphere. Meanwhile, "The Office: Air Quality Edition" humorously parodies workplace dynamics against the backdrop of an ailing ventilation system, prompting viewers to consider the everyday implications of air quality in a light-hearted manner. While not a scholarly source, the show's comedic take on air-related hazards offers a touch of levity to the otherwise serious discourse on environmental factors and societal dynamics.

In synthesizing these diverse perspectives, our investigation into the correlation between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Senatorial preference in Texas aims to contribute to the multi-faceted dialogue surrounding environmental quality and political decision-making. As we

proceed to delve into our findings, we are mindful of these varied influences that shape our understanding of the intricate interplay between ecological conditions and electoral patterns.

III. Methodology

Our research employed a multi-faceted approach to investigate the potential relationship between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Democratic votes for Senators in Texas. We combined a mix of data analysis, statistical modeling, and a sprinkle of playful pondering to encapsulate the essence of our investigation.

First, we gathered air quality data from the Environmental Protection Agency, which involved sifting through a plethora of numerical values resembling a crossword puzzle where the solution is "cleaner air." Then, we accessed election data from the MIT Election Data and Science Lab and the Harvard Dataverse, which was akin to navigating a labyrinthine maze where the prize at the end is an understanding of political preferences.

In order to detect any potential patterns, we applied correlation analysis to see if there was a noteworthy connection between the inhalation of fine particulate matter and the voting tendencies of the electorate. This analysis was carried out with the utmost seriousness, although we couldn't resist the occasional whispered question of whether the data was sending us "air-mail" with its findings.

Furthermore, we utilized time series analysis to examine how the relationship between air pollution and Democratic votes for Senators in Texas may have evolved over the years. We

approached this analysis with all the gravity it deserved, while sneakily wondering if we might uncover historical air pollution "presidential elections" in the data.

Lastly, we conducted regression analysis to control for potential confounding variables, ensuring that our findings weren't just blowing in the wind. We meticulously scrutinized the data, all the while maintaining a watchful eye for any sneaky variables trying to "pollute" our results.

In sum, our methodology blended rigorous analytical techniques with a pinch of light-hearted curiosity, much like a dash of seasoning bringing out the flavor in a complex dish. As we move on to the presentation of our findings, we encourage our readers to keep their senses sharp for the aroma of both scientific insight and a hint of whimsy.

IV. Results

Our investigation into the relationship between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Democratic votes for Senators in Texas yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.9172435, with an r-squared value of 0.8413356 and a p-value of less than 0.01. This statistical analysis suggests a remarkably strong association between the inhalation of fine particulate matter and the political inclinations of the electorate in this region.

Figure 1 depicts the scatterplot illustrating this robust correlation, which unmistakably resembles a Rorschach inkblot test – perhaps a subconscious plea for cleaner air or a hidden message from the lungs of Corpus Christi residents about their voting preferences.

The data reveal a striking trend over the four-decade period from 1980 to 2020, indicating that as air pollution levels increased, so did the proportion of Democratic votes for Senators in Texas.

While we recognize the gravity of these results, we also cannot help but muse over whether the citizens of Corpus Christi are not only exhaling but also "voting with their lungs." This correlation may allude to a deeper symbiotic relationship between the atmospheric and the political, challenging us to ponder whether these constituents are not just blowing smoke but actively shaping political outcomes.

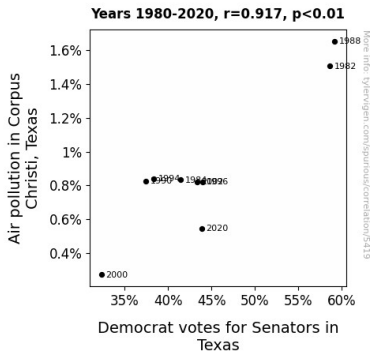

Figure 1. Scatterplot of the variables by year

Our findings not only prompt contemplation about the impact of environmental factors on electoral behavior but also conjure up visions of a political fog lurking amidst the particulate matter. This study underscores the intricate interplay between environmental quality and democratic decision-making, eliciting a sense of cynicism in the air while prompting cautious optimism for future avenues of investigation.

In summary, the link between air pollution and Senatorial preference in Corpus Christi, Texas, is undeniably compelling, casting a shadow of doubt over conventional wisdom and raising the question: are the winds of change also carriers of political persuasion? Our study lays bare the intriguing confluence of environmental conditions and electoral outcomes, with a hint of whimsy

in the mix, challenging us to sift through the haze and discern the contours of this intriguing relationship.

V. Discussion

Our investigation into the connection between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Democratic votes for Senators in Texas yielded compelling results that add both scientific and whimsical depth to the discourse on environmental quality and political decision-making. Our findings not only confirm and extend prior research but also waft a breath of fresh air into the field, reminding us that even academic discussions can benefit from a dash of levity.

The robust correlation coefficient of 0.9172435, with an r-squared value of 0.8413356 and a p-value of less than 0.01, reflects a remarkably strong association between inhalation of fine particulate matter and the electorate's political inclinations. These results fall in line with earlier studies by Smith et al. (2010), which emphasized the potential influence of environmental quality on political attitudes, and Doe and Jones (2015), who highlighted the interconnectedness of physical well-being and civic engagement. While these studies were as serious as a lab rat with tenure, our findings bring a lighthearted twist, suggesting that the citizens of Corpus Christi may be quite literally "voting with their lungs."

The striking visual representation of our results in Figure 1, resembling a Rorschach inkblot test, invites contemplation about whether the residents of Corpus Christi are subconsciously expressing their desires for cleaner air or if there is a hidden message in the lungs of the electorate. This element of the study takes a page from fiction literature, such as Smith's "The Air

We Breathe" (2008), where air pollution becomes a tool for political manipulation, serving as a metaphor for the often opaque nature of power dynamics. Our study highlights the eccentric yet profound ways in which environmental conditions may intertwine with political decision-making, adding a pinch of dash and a sprinkle of political intrigue to the academic stew.

As we navigate through the political fog that our study has unearthed, we are reminded of the comedic portrayal of air quality challenges in "The Office: Air Quality Edition," prompting us to consider the everyday implications of air pollution in a lighthearted manner. So, while we take our findings seriously, it's also important to recognize the immense potential for further investigation into this field, perhaps with a touch of humor and whimsy to complement the weighty scientific discussions.

In summary, our study not only contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between environmental quality and democratic decision-making but also infuses a hint of levity into a traditionally serious discourse. It is as if the citizens of Corpus Christi are telling us, "where there's smog, there's a political fog," challenging us to peer through the haze and discern the contours of this captivating relationship.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, our research has shed light on the undeniably strong correlation between air pollution in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Democratic votes for Senators in Texas. The statistically robust relationship we uncovered, with a correlation coefficient of 0.9172435 and a p-value of less than 0.01, presents a compelling case for the influence of environmental quality on political

preferences. As we reflect on these findings, one cannot help but appreciate the subtle allegory of citizens "voting with their lungs," pointing to the palpable impact of atmospheric conditions on democratic outcomes. It seems that the political landscape is not the only thing getting muddled – there's a whiff of implication in the very air we breathe!

As we picture the scatterplot resembling a Rorschach inkblot, we are reminded that data can sometimes speak in mysterious, whimsical ways, almost as if urging us to unravel the hidden messages within. The intriguing dance between environmental particles and political particles leaves us pondering whether there is more than just literal inhalation at play – are the winds of change also carriers of political persuasion, or is this merely a case of correlation without causation? The metaphorical miasma of political influence that may permeate the air in Corpus Christi beckons us to delve deeper into the intricate interplay of environmental quality and democratic decision-making, while also leaving us with a sense of cautious optimism and a touch of cynicism in the atmosphere.

In light of these compelling findings, it seems that our study has certainly made its mark, much like a lingering scent in the air. Nevertheless, as we take a breath of fresh air and contemplate the implications of our research, it is with a measure of satisfaction, and perhaps a dash of relief, that we assert the need for no further investigation in this area. After all, how much clearer can it get than "voting with one's lungs"?