

Minority Incumbents' Reelection

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Abstract

This paper examines minority incumbents of the House of Representatives seeking reelection in 2010 and the factors that influenced the election outcome. As you can remember, this election was remarkably noted for the surge of Republican and Tea Party candidates replacing numerous Democratic incumbents in the House of Representatives. The analysis looks at variables such as gender, race, poverty, labor force, education, and location. The statistics in the analysis show that the percentage of men, women, whites, population living under the poverty line, population in the labor force, and region of the United States affect the support for a minority incumbent when they are running for reelection.

Research Question

What Are the Factors That Influenced A Minority Incumbent's Reelection in the House of Representatives in 2010?

Literature Review

Until recent elections, the number of men and women voting the United States has been on the decline (Dokoupil 2008). In 1964, 72 percent of voting-age men participated in the general election (Dokoupil 2008). This record amount slowly declined and by 2004 had reach 56 percent (Dokoupil 2008). This decrease in active male voters can be from a number of causes: men are less likely to trust authority, receive a higher education, and more likely to participate in crime related activities than women (Dokoupil 2008).

One of the biggest identifiers of voting behavior, aside from political identification, is race. In 2004, about 36 percent of the voting population was white (White 2008). Most white citizens tend to vote on conservative Republican issues such as abortion, gun rights, and gay marriage, even though it would probably be in their best economic interest to vote Democrat (White 2008).

Even for those who are not experiencing it, it is widely known that unemployment can be a very life-changing event. In January 2010, the United States unemployment rate was 9.7 percent (Burnett 2010, 26). Therefore, it is likely that we can assume that an individual's employment status will affect that person's voting behavior. However, studies show that there is a general disagreement about the impact an individual's unemployment plays on their voting habits (Grafstein 2005, 804). This disagreement comes in the idea that American's tend to view unemployment on a large scale lever, for example: national unemployment (Grafstein 2005, 804).

Data & Methods

Unit of Analysis: House of Representatives Minority Incumbents

Dependent Variable: Percentage Vote for Minority Incumbent

Independent Variables: Percentage of Men
Percentage of Women
Percentage of Whites
Percentage of Population Living Under the Poverty Line
Percentage of Population in the Labor Force
Region of the United States

Hypotheses

- H1: As the percentage of men in a district rises, the support for a minority incumbent will decrease.
H2: As the percentage of women in a district rises, the support for a minority incumbent will also rise.
H3: As the percentage of whites in a district rises, the support for a minority incumbent will decrease.
H4: As the percentage of individuals under the poverty line rises, the support for a minority incumbent will also rise.
H5: As the percentage of the population in the labor force rises, the support for a minority incumbent will decrease.
H6: As the percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree rises, so will the support for a minority incumbent.
H7: Support for a minority reelection varies by region.

Findings

Table 2
Correlation Analysis of Voter Support For a Minority Candidate

Independent Variable	Support for a Minority Incumbent (%)
Men	-0.410**
Women	0.410**
White	-0.665**
Poverty	0.337**
Labor	-0.224**
Education	0.012

N=112
*p<.05
**p<.01

Figure 3

Support for Minority Incumbent with Percentage Men in a District

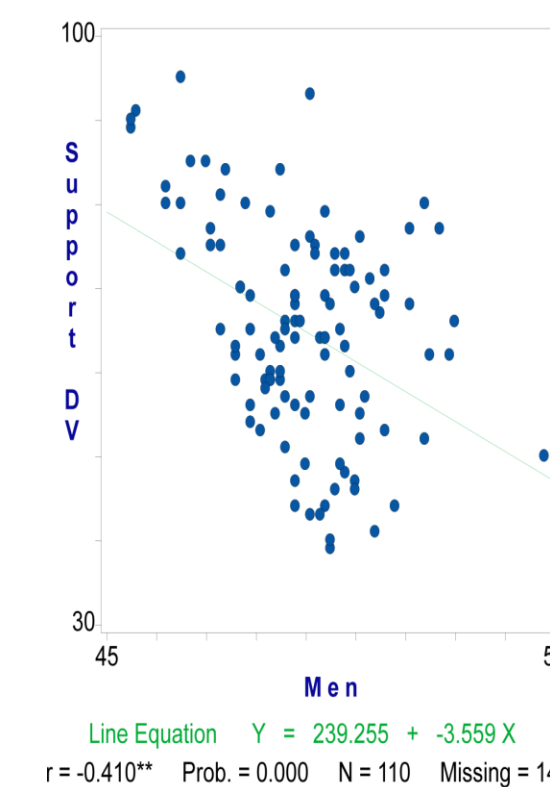


Figure 5

Support for a Minority Incumbent with Percentage of Whites in a District

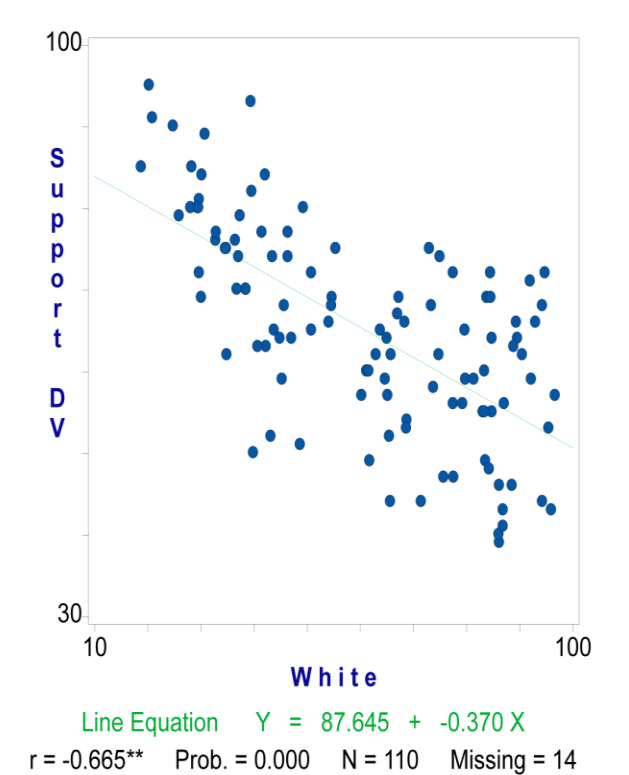


Figure 1

Pie Chart of Minority Incumbents and Their Party Identification

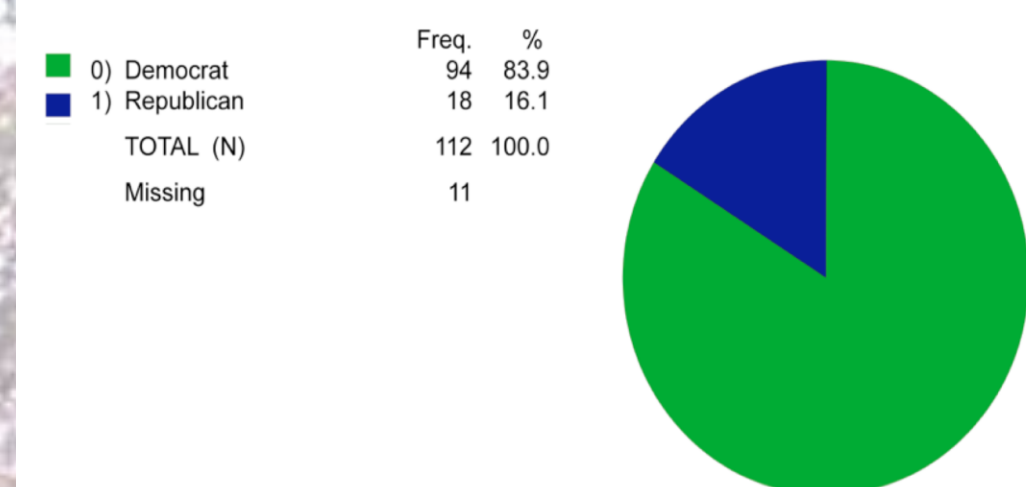
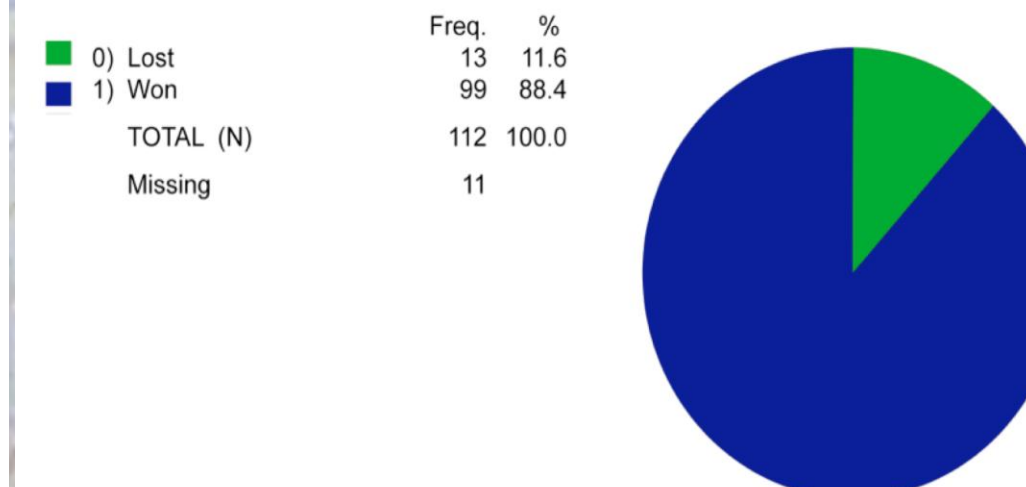


Figure 2

Pie Chart of Minority Incumbent Election Results



Conclusion

Results showed that the percentage of men, women, whites, population living under the poverty line, population in the labor force, and region of the United States affect the support for a minority incumbent when they are running for reelection. Electoral support for minority incumbents was highest in the northeast and lowest in the west. It is important to mention, however, that the research showed the percentage of population with a bachelor's degree did not have an effect on the support for a minority incumbent's reelection.