Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models

Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models is a comprehensive manual for the applied researcher who wants to perform data analysis using linear and nonlinear regression and multilevel models. The book introduces and demonstrates a wide variety of models, at the same time instructing the reader in how to fit these models using freely available software packages. The book illustrates the concepts by working through scores of real data examples that have arisen in the authors' own applied research, with programming code provided for each one. Topics covered include causal inference, including regression, poststratification, matching, regression discontinuity, and instrumental variables, as well as multilevel logistic regression and missing-data imputation. Practical tips regarding building, fitting, and understanding are provided throughout.

Andrew Gelman is Professor of Statistics and Professor of Political Science at Columbia University. He has published more than 150 articles in statistical theory, methods, and computation and in applications areas including decision analysis, survey sampling, political science, public health, and policy. His other books are *Bayesian Data Analysis* (1995, second edition 2003) and *Teaching Statistics: A Bag of Tricks* (2002).

Jennifer Hill is Assistant Professor of Public Affairs in the Department of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. She has coauthored articles that have appeared in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Developmental Psychology*, the *Economic Journal*, and the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, among others.

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ANDREW GELMAN
Columbia University

JENNIFER HILL
Columbia University

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For Zacky and for Audrey

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Preface

Aim of this book

This book originated as lecture notes for a course in regression and multilevel modeling, offered by the statistics department at Columbia University and attended by graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in social sciences (political science, economics, psychology, education, business, social work, and public health) and statistics. The prerequisite is statistics up to and including an introduction to multiple regression.

Advanced mathematics is not assumed—it is important to understand the linear model in regression, but it is not necessary to follow the matrix algebra in the derivation of least squares computations. It is useful to be familiar with exponents and logarithms, especially when working with generalized linear models.

After completing Part 1 of this book, you should be able to fit classical linear and generalized linear regression models—and do more with these models than simply look at their coefficients and their statistical significance. Applied goals include causal inference, prediction, comparison, and data description. After completing Part 2, you should be able to fit regression models for multilevel data. Part 3 takes you from data collection, through model understanding (looking at a table of estimated coefficients is usually not enough), to model checking and missing data. The appendixes include some reference materials on key tips, statistical graphics, and software for model fitting.

What you should be able to do after reading this book and working through the examples

This text is structured through models and examples, with the intention that after each chapter you should have certain skills in fitting, understanding, and displaying models:

- *Part 1A:* Fit, understand, and graph classical regressions and generalized linear models.
  - *Chapter 3:* Fit linear regressions and be able to interpret and display estimated coefficients.
  - *Chapter 4:* Build linear regression models by transforming and combining variables.
  - *Chapter 5:* Fit, understand, and display logistic regression models for binary data.
  - *Chapter 6:* Fit, understand, and display generalized linear models, including Poisson regression with overdispersion and ordered logit and probit models.
- *Part 1B:* Use regression to learn about quantities of substantive interest (not just regression coefficients).
  - *Chapter 7:* Simulate probability models and uncertainty about inferences and predictions.

  - *Chapter 8:* Check model fits using fake-data simulation and predictive simulation.
  - *Chapter 9:* Understand assumptions underlying causal inference. Set up regressions for causal inference and understand the challenges that arise.
  - *Chapter 10:* Understand the assumptions underlying propensity score matching, instrumental variables, and other techniques to perform causal inference when simple regression is not enough. Be able to use these when appropriate.

- *Part 2A:* Understand and graph multilevel models.
  - *Chapter 11:* Understand multilevel data structures and models as generalizations of classical regression.
  - *Chapter 12:* Understand and graph simple varying-intercept regressions and interpret as partial-pooling estimates.
  - *Chapter 13:* Understand and graph multilevel linear models with varying intercepts and slopes, non-nested structures, and other complications.
  - *Chapter 14:* Understand and graph multilevel logistic models.
  - *Chapter 15:* Understand and graph multilevel overdispersed Poisson, ordered logit and probit, and other generalized linear models.

- *Part 2B:* Fit multilevel models using the software packages R and Bugs.
  - *Chapter 16:* Fit varying-intercept regressions and understand the basics of Bugs. Check your programming using fake-data simulation.
  - *Chapter 17:* Use Bugs to fit various models from Part 2A.
  - *Chapter 18:* Understand Bayesian inference as a generalization of least squares and maximum likelihood. Use the Gibbs sampler to fit multilevel models.
  - *Chapter 19:* Use redundant parameterizations to speed the convergence of the Gibbs sampler.

- *Part 3:*
  - *Chapter 20:* Perform sample size and power calculations for classical and hierarchical models: standard-error formulas for basic calculations and fake-data simulation for harder problems.
  - *Chapter 21:* Calculate and understand contrasts, explained variance, partial pooling coefficients, and other summaries of fitted multilevel models.
  - *Chapter 22:* Use the ideas of analysis of variance to summarize fitted multilevel models; use multilevel models to perform analysis of variance.
  - *Chapter 23:* Use multilevel models in causal inference.
  - *Chapter 24:* Check the fit of models using predictive simulation.
  - *Chapter 25:* Use regression to impute missing data in multivariate datasets.

In summary, you should be able to fit, graph, and understand classical and multilevel linear and generalized linear models and to use these model fits to make predictions and inferences about quantities of interest, including causal treatment effects.

Data and Teaching Using This Book

The website `www.stat.columbia.edu/∼gelman/arm/` contains datasets used in the examples and homework problems of the book, as well as sample computer code. The website also includes some tips for teaching regression and multilevel modeling through class participation rather than lecturing. We plan to update these tips based on feedback from instructors and students; please send your comments and suggestions to `gelman@stat.columbia.edu`.

Online Interface

When teaching a course based on this book, we recommend starting with a self-contained review of linear regression, logistic regression, and generalized linear models, focusing not on the mathematics but on understanding these methods and implementing them in a reasonable way. This is also a convenient way to introduce the statistical language R, which we use throughout for modeling, computation, and graphics. One thing that will probably be new to the reader is the use of random simulations to summarize inferences and predictions.

We then introduce multilevel models in the simplest case of nested linear models, fitting in the Bayesian modeling language Bugs and examining the results in R. Key concepts covered at this point are partial pooling, variance components, prior distributions, identifiability, and the interpretation of regression coefficients at different levels of the hierarchy. We follow with non-nested models, multilevel logistic regression, and other multilevel generalized linear models.

Next we detail the steps of fitting models in Bugs and give practical tips for reparameterizing a model to make it converge faster and additional tips on debugging. We also present a brief review of Bayesian inference and computation. Once the student is able to fit multilevel models, we move in the final weeks of the class to the final part of the book, which covers more advanced issues in data collection, model understanding, and model checking.

As we show throughout, multilevel modeling fits into a view of statistics that unifies substantive modeling with accurate data fitting, and graphical methods are crucial both for seeing unanticipated features in the data and for understanding the implications of fitted models.

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