

Modeling Voting Behavior in the Eurovision Song Contest

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Abstract

Modeling voting behavior or determinants of voting in a popular music competition such as Queen Elizabeth Piano Contest and Eurovision Song Contest have been growing tremendously after 2000s. (See [1], [4], [5], [9]). The aim of this study is also to model v_{ij} , voting behavior of juries and public opinion (via televoting system) of country $i \in L$ in evaluating the singer of country $j \in L$ ($i \neq j$) where L is the total number of participants in the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). We modeled voting behavior taking into consideration the individual characteristic of performer and voter, as well as quality of song. Characteristic properties x_{ik} , $k = 1, 2, 3, \dots, K$ of performer j and characteristics y_{jm} , $m = 1, 2, 3, \dots, M$ of voter i together affect votes given to a performer, as well as exchange of votes between two countries. Voting equation can be improved with these factors as below:

$$v_{ij} = \beta_{ij}v_{ji} + \sum_{k=1}^K \alpha_k x_{ik} + \sum_{m=1}^M \varphi_m y_{jm} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

Where α_k and φ_m are parameters to be estimated. The last two parameters of right-hand side of the equation (1) are affinity and objective quality of song. These two parameters together indicate some individual characteristics of singer and voter such as gender (male, female and duet), the “language” in which song is performed (English, English +national language, French, National language), the order of “appearance” in the contest, whether the song is performed “alone” or in a “group”, a dummy for “host” country (if singer represents the host country, the variable takes 1 and 0 for other), and a dummy variable to capture “cultural block” ties’ effect on voting (Western, Scandinavia, Former Yugoslavia, Former Socialist and Independents). Geographic effect (neighbor_{ij}) and quality of a song are computed as below

$$\text{neighbor}_{ij} = \frac{1}{l} \sum_{j=1}^l v_{ij}, \quad i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, L \quad (2)$$

$$\text{quality}_{ij}^g = \frac{1}{L-l-1} \sum_{j=1}^{L-l-1} v_{ij}, \quad i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, L \quad (3)$$

Estimation result of the linear voting equation 4 (including neighborhood and quality variable) shows that not only quality of the song is an important part of voting but also affinity variables are very crucial determinants of voting equation. Estimation result also indicates that order of appearance in the contest, the language of the song and the gender of the performing artist turn out to be quite important parameters in explaining voting behavior.

$$v_{ij} = \beta_{ij1}v_{ji-1} + \sum_{k=1}^K \alpha_{k1}x_{ik} + \sum_{m=1}^M \varphi_{m1}y_{jm} + \gamma_1 \text{quality}_{ij}^g + \varepsilon_{ij1} \quad (4)$$

References

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