

# Where are the values voters? Ideological constraint and stability among rural, suburban, and urban populations in the United States

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## ABSTRACT

There has been recent attention to the political divide between urban and rural voters in the United States. It is possible that as rural and urban voting behavior has diverged, this has been driven by increasing social conservatism among rural voters. However, given that the average American is not ideologically constrained nor stable, this may not be the case. Using data from the 2010–2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study Panel Study, this analysis compares the ideological constraint and stability of rural, suburban, and urban Americans. The results show that there has not been a divergence in rural, suburban, and urban ideologies or issue opinions in recent years. Rural and suburban respondents are more conservative than urban respondents on average, but they are not consistent conservatives, and their presidential votes are not primarily driven by a consistent set of conservative issue opinions.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, national elections in the United States have been characterized by increasing support for Republican candidates in rural areas, increasing support for Democratic candidates in urban areas, and increasing competitiveness in the suburbs (Johnson et al., 2018; Montgomery and Florida, 2018). After the 2016 presidential election, much attention – from scholars and pundits alike – was given to this topic, but past studies show that the rural-urban divide in American national elections has been present for decades, though it has certainly become more pronounced since 2016 (Ansolabehere et al. 2006; Bishop 2008; Frank 2004; Francia and Baumgartner 2005; Gainsborough 2005; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Hopkins 2017; McKee and Shaw 2006; McKee 2007, 2008). What exactly drives this political wedge between rural and urban Americans – and how does this compare to what is happening in the various suburbs in between?

It is possible that the views of rural and urban voters have been growing further apart, with rural areas becoming increasingly conservative while urban areas are becoming increasingly liberal. However, there is substantial debate concerning the extent of ideological polarization in the American electorate more generally and its connection to polarized election outcomes (Abramowitz 2010; Abrams and Fiorina 2012; Bishop 2008; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Hill and Tausanovitch, 2017; Jewitt and Goren 2015). It is, therefore, also possible that rural and urban Americans' viewpoints on the issues have not drastically

diverged in recent years despite diverging rural and urban national election outcomes. If rural and urban Americans are not diverging ideologically, the implication would be that this geographic divide in national election outcomes is not driven primarily by some sort of increasingly conservative ideological behavior among rural voters, but instead by some other factor. In this analysis, I examine evidence from a panel study conducted from 2010 to 2014 to determine the extent to which rural Americans' political attitudes can be characterized as consistently conservative in comparison to suburban and urban Americans' attitudes and the role that these attitudes play in presidential election outcomes.

Why focus on ideology as a key factor in forming the rural-urban divide? A substantial body of research asks why rural voters support the Republican party and its candidates when this choice may be at odds with their economic circumstances. Some argue that rural voters' behavior can be explained by their ideological conservatism, and specifically their social conservatism (Frank 2004; Francia and Baumgartner 2005; McKee 2007, 2008). In short, they are values voters, whose political behavior is driven by “culture war” issues. These definition of culture war issues vary, but typically includes gun control, abortion, and same-sex marriage. Hopkins (2017) shows evidence that culture war issues are increasingly associated with one's voting behavior, and that this trend has fueled geographic polarization. His analysis, however, is regional in nature. Therefore, it does not demonstrate evidence that rural voters, *per se*, are more likely to hold socially conservative attitudes

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and vote on their basis.

Most people do not hold ideologically consistent views and tend to vote on the basis of their party identification and social identities (Campbell et al., 1960; Converse 1964; Green et al. 2002). Why, then, would rural Americans' behavior be uniquely driven by a set of consistently conservative political attitudes? Perhaps other explanations of their behavior are better candidates. Alternatives include those who argue that rural voters' economic circumstances are not at odds with the choice to vote for Republicans, or that other factors, such as a perception that government is not working for them, explain this choice (Cramer 2016; Gimpel and Karnes 2006). In the present analysis, I focus primarily on the question of whether the evidence supports the assumption that they are consistently conservative values voters but do also consider the role of each alternative explanation in an analysis of the presidential vote in the 2012 election.

To address this question, I use data from the 2010–2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) Panel Study. I first examine the distribution of ideology and issue opinions among rural, suburban, and urban Americans in each year. Note that while I use the terms rural, suburban, and urban throughout for convenience, I do use a measure that reflects some of the diversity within these categories. It is a non-linear scale which begins with the largest core metropolitan areas, ends with the most isolated rural areas, and includes areas adjacent to urban cores or surrounding, but non-adjacent to urban cores, in between. The urban cores are best understood as urban, the adjacent areas as suburban, and non-adjacent or isolated areas as rural, although there may still be some variation not captured within this measure. For example, residents living at the outlying edges of core metropolitan areas may consider themselves "rural" but not be defined as such by this measure (Lichter et al. 2020). In analyzing this data, I find that rural residents are more conservative, and urban residents are more liberal. However, suburban attitudes appear to be quite similar to rural attitudes, and there is not a clear pattern of ideological divergence between rural and urban America. In fact, the average respondent does not hold many consistent issue opinions, and the average respondent, regardless of where they lived, became slightly more liberal over time.

I then move on to examine the ideological constraint and stability within each group. This part of the analysis takes advantage of the panel data to ask not whether people who live in certain geographic areas are more liberal or conservative than each other, but instead if *individuals* who live within these areas hold issue opinions consistent with their ideological identification (i.e., conservatives hold conservative viewpoints on each issue and liberals hold liberal viewpoints on each issue) and maintain those viewpoints throughout the time period under examination. The goal of this analysis is not to establish that rural, suburban, and urban residents have the same ideology – there is sufficient evidence to the contrary – but rather to establish that rural Americans do not have some exceptionally constrained and stable set of ideological viewpoints that fuel the rural-urban divide.

I find that the level of ideological constraint and stability is similar among all respondents. Rural respondents have high constraint and stability on some issues, such as abortion, same-sex marriage, climate change, the environment, affirmative action, and gun control, but this is also true of suburban and urban respondents. Urban respondents hold relatively more liberal views on these issues, while suburban and rural respondents hold relatively conservative views on these issues. In short, if rural Americans are values voters, so are those who live in the suburbs. Furthermore, this is not necessarily a unique characteristic of rural and suburban respondents, as urban respondents have similarly consistent and stable (liberal rather than conservative) views. Finally, the views of rural and urban respondents have not been growing apart. It is, therefore, unlikely that rural ideological exceptionalism – in other words, rural Americans drifting away from the rest of the country towards social conservatism – has caused the geographical divide in American national elections.

Finally, I perform multivariate analyses to examine the factors that

influence whether a respondent holds consistent issue opinions and the role that the consistency of their issue opinions plays in shaping their presidential vote choice. First, I examine whether "being rural" – that is, having particular identities or experiences associated with life in a rural area – is associated with a more ideologically consistent set of issue opinions. In this analysis, I do control for other factors known to influence ideological consistency, such as interest and participation in politics. The results show that there was no clear pattern suggesting that being rural, suburban, or urban was associated with holding consistent issue opinions.

Next, I examine the role that "being rural" and holding consistently conservative issue opinions plays in shaping one's presidential vote while also considering factors such as government performance assessments and economic circumstances. Specifically, I examine whether holding these issue opinions shapes one's vote in the 2012 presidential election differently if they live in a rural, suburban, or urban area. If rural voters are values voters, I should find that residents of rural areas who hold consistently conservative issue opinions were less likely to vote for Obama, but the same result should not apply among voters from other areas. However, this result was observed among rural, suburban, and urban respondents. Rural respondents may be more likely to vote for Republicans in part because they are more conservative, but the evidence does not suggest they hold an ideologically consistent set of issue opinions that uniquely drive their voting behavior as compared to other voters.

## 2. The rural-urban political divide

It is well-documented that in comparison to their suburban and urban counterparts, rural Americans are more conservative and more likely to identify as Republicans and support their candidates (Ansola-behere et al. 2006; Gainsborough 2005; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Gimpel et al., 2020; McKee and Shaw 2006, 2007, 2008; Scala et al. 2015; Scala and Johnson 2017). One possible explanation of this pattern is that rural Americans are values voters whose attitudes and behaviors are primarily driven by Christian values and social conservatism (Francia and Baumgartner 2005; Frank 2004; Hopkins 2017; McKee 2007). This explanation is plausible, as in comparison to their suburban and urban counterparts, rural Americans are more religious, more likely to attend church, and more likely to be born again (Dillon and Savage 2006). Many of those making the values voters argument assume these attitudes and behaviors are at odds with rural economic circumstances. Others, however, examine these circumstances and find that they are not necessarily at odds, and that both economic and cultural attitudes influence their voting behavior (Ansola-behere et al. 2006; Bartels 2006; Gelman et al., 2008; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Montenegro de Wit et al., 2019). Additionally, there are others who argue that voters who feel alienated from government and left behind politically, culturally, and economically – such as rural voters – may prefer small government and conservative candidates (Cramer 2016; Edelman 2019; Gest 2016; Hochschild 2016; Wuthnow 2018; Ulrich-Schad and Duncan 2018). Based on these past results, I expect to find that residents of rural areas are more consistently more conservative on average.

Furthermore, this geographic polarization is increasing, with election results between rural and urban areas growing further apart over each election cycle (Bishop 2008; Gimpel et al., 2020; Hopkins 2017). Why is this occurring? One possibility is that people tend to move to areas with others like them or adopt the views of others in the surrounding area, thereby increasing the concentration of politically like-minded individuals in each geographic area over time (Bishop 2008; Martin and Webster 2018; Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Hui 2013). Abrams and Fiorina (2012) argue that this view is incorrect, however, as there are limitations to the influence that our neighbors may have on our political views. The present analysis cannot speak directly to this debate, as it does not examine migration patterns or the influence of others' views on one's politics, but it does explore the connection between

ideology, place, and election results. Specifically, I examine whether rural Americans are values voters and that it is these values are driving them to vote differently than their suburban and urban counterparts. Hopkins (2017) argues that social issues are a driving force behind geographic polarization but does not focus specifically on the rural-urban divide, focusing instead on the divergence between regions or states. If social issues are driving rural voters to increasingly support Republican candidates, I would expect to find that relative to urban and suburban residents, they hold a set of constrained and stable viewpoints concerning social issues and that these values have a stronger influence on their presidential vote choice.

### 3. Ideological constraint and stability

An assumption underlying the value voters line of reasoning is that rural voters hold relatively conservative views on issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage. There is evidence that they do hold more conservative views on these issues (Scala and Johnson 2017; McKee 2007, 2008). A major challenge to this assumption, however, would be the relative lack of ideological consistency in the American public (Converse 1964; Converse and Markus 1979; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017). Although there are critics of this viewpoint (see Kinder and Kalmoe 2017 for a summary of Converse's critics), there is strong evidence that most voters do not hold issue opinions consistent with an ideological viewpoint, nor do their issue opinions remain stable over time. Why would rural Americans be any different?

One possibility is that rural Americans are specifically conservative on these issues and prioritize them above others. They may vary in their viewpoints on other issues, but for those central to their conservative Christian values, they are steadfast. For example, Mullinix (2016) shows that for issues of personal importance, voters are less likely to be swayed by their party's position. Therefore, it is theoretically possible that when I am observing rural respondents who ideologically identify as liberals and hold mostly liberal issue positions, they are actually values voters on these few key issues of personal importance. This is the reason why individual-level analysis of panel data to study respondent stability is so important to the analysis. If this is the case - that rural voters are values voters on these key issues - I should still observe that rural Americans have higher levels of ideological stability than their suburban and urban counterparts on the issues of same-sex marriage and abortion. It is likely that their levels of constraint and stability will be relatively high, as moral issues of high salience such as these are among the types of issues where voters generally exhibit more consistency (Converse 1964; Converse and Markus 1979). However, they would need to be exceptionally consistent in holding these conservative views for the values voter explanation to be the primary explanation of rural, suburban, and urban differences in voting behavior.

Another possibility is the increasing ideological polarization in the American public overall. Perhaps it is no longer the case that Americans hold unstable views inconsistent with their ideology and the studies establishing this argument are out of date. If this is the case, I would see rural Americans becoming more consistently conservative over time and becoming more constrained and stable in their views, especially on these issues (same-sex marriage and abortion). Suburban and urban views would have to remain unchanged or move in the opposite direction (become more liberal), for rural voters' uniquely consistent conservatism on these issues to be the driving force behind divergence in their voting behavior. This is possible, as the suburbs have become increasingly politically competitive, but many suburban residents, especially those in the more rural, outlying suburbs, remain conservatives or Republicans (Johnson et al., 2018; McKee and Shaw 2006; Martin and Webster 2018; Montgomery and Florida, 2018; Scala and Johnson 2017).

A limitation of the present analysis is that the data used goes only one election cycle beyond Kinder and Kalmoe (2017) data. However, if rural Americans have become increasingly conservative in the leadup to the

2016 and 2018 election cycles, one should be able to observe change in their ideological self-placement or in the consistency of their issue opinions over the time period examined. Based on the evidence showing that most voters have not become consistently liberal or consistently conservative, I expect that that rural, suburban, and urban Americans ideological leanings remained similar over time, and that they did not become more constrained or stable in their issue opinions. Other factors, such as feeling that rural Americans have been left behind politically, culturally, and economically, may instead explain diverging national election outcomes.

Another limitation of this portion of the analysis is that a lack of ideological constraint and stability among rural Americans does not necessarily mean that rural voters are less likely to take their values into account at the ballot box. Perhaps they do not appear to be becoming extreme conservatives in comparison to their suburban and urban counterparts, but some aspect of rural identity leads them to consider these values when casting a vote. If this is the case, I would observe that among rural voters, holding consistently conservative issue opinions is significantly related to one's presidential vote, while among suburban and urban voters, it is not. To consider this possibility, I examine the effect of the interaction between place of residence and holding consistently conservative issue opinions on the presidential vote in 2012.

### 4. Data and methods

To examine the ideological constraint and stability of rural, suburban, and urban political attitudes over time, I will use data from the 2010–2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (Schaffner and Ansolabehere, 2015) Panel Study. In 2010, CCES conducted pre-and-post-election interviews of over 55,400 adults (Schaffner and Ansolabehere, 2015). Of these, a subset of 9500 respondents were again interviewed during the 2012 and 2014 election cycles using the same questionnaire. The surveys were conducted online by YouGov with a matched random sampling methodology. Use of this panel data will allow me to examine not only the viewpoints held by rural, suburban, and urban Americans, but also the constraint and stability – or lack thereof – in individual-level views year-to-year. Although this represents only three years of data (2010, 2012, and 2014), the analysis is consistent with the methodological approach of past research into the question of ideological constraint and stability (Converse 1964; Converse and Markus 1979; Kinder and Kalmoe 2017).

To determine whether a respondent is rural or not, I make use of the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service's (USDA ERS) 2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes. These designate counties as metro or non-metro based on degree of urbanization and adjacency to a metropolitan area (USDA ERS 2019). These designations can then be matched the respondent's county in the CCES data – in this case, the county of residence during the 2010 pre-election survey. A similar approach has previously been used by Scala and Johnson (2017). Nemerever and Rogers (2021) recommend that the Rural-Urban Community Area codes be matched to the respondent's zip codes that are typically available in CCES data. However, this is not possible in the panel data used because the zip code for most respondents is not included in this particular data set. They recommend use of the RUCC in the case that zip code is not available.

One limitation of this approach is that it relies on an external, objective measure of place, rather than one's self-identification, which could impact the results in the case that it is one's rural identity, rather than one's location in a rural area, that matters in shaping political attitudes (Cramer 2016; Munis 2020; Limeberry and Fox 2020; Nemerever and Rogers, 2021). Furthermore, it obscures the fact that as rural areas lose population and the country urbanizes, rural places are increasingly located at the fringes of metropolitan areas (Lichter et al. 2020). This means that some of the respondents classified as urban may be suburban or rural and vice versa. However, this is the most granular level at which

I can classify respondents using this data.

Another possible limitation of this data is that it precedes the 2016 presidential election, an event which brought heightened attention to the attitudes and behaviors of voters in rural America. However, panel data is required to examine individual-level attitudinal constraint and stability, and these are the most recent years of CCEs panel data available. One potential benefit of this analysis preceding the 2016 election cycle is that it may provide insight into what rural attitudes were in comparison to urban prior to that election cycle. Much of the work that has been crucial in understanding rural behavior during the 2016 election cycle is based on data from an earlier time period (for example, Cramer (2016) interviews took place between 2007 and 2012).

Furthermore, there is already existing research that documents the rural attitudes and presidential vote patterns during the 2016 election cycle (Scala and Johnson 2017). Their research, along with my own analyses of CCEs data during that time frame, leads to conclusions consistent with the present analysis. Although there are geographic differences in political attitudes, the ideological landscape is not one of consistent liberals in some areas with consistent conservatives in the others, and many views are substantively similar. For example, Scala and Johnson (2017) find that metropolitan residents were more likely to support affirmative action than those living elsewhere, but that support is only 48 percent in metropolitan areas and ranges from 26 to 37 percent elsewhere, with similar levels of support being observed in the large suburbs as well as the most remote areas. The data examined here, then, provide additional evidence in support of these conclusions by demonstrating not only that rural, suburban, and urban Americans may hold substantively similar views in the aggregate, but also that rural individuals, like their suburban and urban counterparts, lack ideological consistency and constraint.

To examine the political attitudes that rural, suburban, and urban Americans hold and how these have changed over time, I first I document the distribution ideological self-placement and liberal or conservative views held by respondents in each area in 2010, 2012, and 2014. To examine ideological constraint, I next examine how the views of each group of residents correlate to their ideological self-placement within each year. I also examine how stable their individual views are over time (i.e., how strongly does an attitude in 2010 correlate to the same attitude in 2012 and then 2014). I then perform regression analyses to examine whether factors such as increased interest and participation in politics, which past evidence points to as an explanation, can explain more ideologically constrained views within each group, or whether some aspect of “being rural” (or suburban or urban) plays a role. Finally, I consider the role that holding consistently conservative issue opinions plays in shaping presidential votes, to examine whether rural voters seem to be more ideologically driven than their suburban or rural counterparts.

#### 4.1. Variable measurement

Detail regarding the measurement of each variable is provided in Table 1. The key dependent variables in this analysis are the respondents’ political ideology, their positions on several issues, and the correlation between these both within years (constraint) and over time (stability). Political ideology is measured as by the respondent’s self-placement from “very liberal” to “very conservative” on a five-point scale. Their issue opinions are in some instances measured as an index ranging from consistently liberal opinions to consistently conservative opinions. To construct this index, I assigned a value of –1 to each liberal position, a value of 0 to each moderate position (where available), and a value of 1 to each conservative position on a particular issue. I then computed the sum of the respondent’s positions on each of these, resulting in an index ranging from –9 (nine liberal positions) to 9 (nine conservative positions). In the regression analyses, all values are recorded as positive. In other words, the measurement is of the number of consistent opinions one holds in either direction, rather than how liberal

**Table 1**  
Variable measurement.

Variable	Measurement
Ideological constraint (# of consistent issue opinions)	0. No consistent opinions – 9. All consistent opinions –9. All liberal opinions – 9. All conservative opinions
Place of residence	1. Metro area >1 million urban pop (urban) 2. Metro area <1 million urban pop (urban) 3. Metro area <250,000 urban pop (urban) 4. Adjacent >20,000 urban pop (suburban) 5. Non-adjacent > 20,000 urban pop (rural) 6. Adjacent <20,000 urban pop (suburban) 7. Non-adjacent <20,000 urban pop (rural) 8. Completely rural (combined adjacent and non-adjacent rural categories)
Age	Respondent’s year of birth (1992 or prior)
Gender	0. Female, 1. Male
Education	1. No high school – 6. Post grad
Race	0. Other race, 1. Non-Hispanic white
Protestant	0. Other religion, 1. Protestant
Catholic	0. Other religion, 1. Catholic
Income (family income)	1. Less than \$10,000–16. \$500,000 +
Party identification	1. Strong Democrat – 7. Strong Republican
Partisan strength	1. Independent – 4. Strong Republican/Democrat
Ideological self-placement	1. Very liberal – 3. Very conservative
Ideological strength	1. Moderate – 3. Very liberal/conservative
Interest in politics	1. Most of the time – 4. Hardly at all
Political participation (activities include: attended political meetings, put up political sign, worked for candidate/campaign, and donated money to candidate/campaign/organization)	0. No participation – 4. Participation in all activities
Presidential vote in 2012	0. Other candidate, 1. Barack Obama
Presidential approval	1. Strongly approve – 5. Strongly disapprove
National economy over past year	1. Gotten much better – 5. Gotten much worse

or how conservative one is. Refer to the Appendix for the wording of each of the questions used in constructing this index.

The key independent variable in this analysis is the respondent’s place of residence. As previously discussed, this is measured using the USDA ERS RUCC for the respondent’s county of residence during the 2010 pre-election survey. The counties are classified into nine codes, with “1” being the most urban and “9” being the most rural (see Table 1). Due to a small number of cases in the most rural counties, I have combined the last two codes and labeled these as “rural” respondents. This choice could, unfortunately, obscure some differences between the most sparsely populated and isolated areas and rural areas in closer proximity to metropolitan areas (Le Tourneau 2020). It is important to note, however, that this scale is not necessarily linear and there are other relatively rural respondents as well. For example, those who live in the counties adjacent to a metropolitan area are for the purposes of this analysis considered suburban, while those living in counties with a similarly sized urban population but non-adjacent to a metropolitan area are considered rural.

One limitation of this measurement not yet discussed is that a respondent could have moved during the study, meaning that a “rural” respondent from 2010 is now urban (or vice versa). However, while respondents may have moved, very few respondents had a change in



their rural or urban status. As can be seen in Table 2, the vast majority of respondents remained in a county with an identical designation. Furthermore, most who did move remained in a generally urban, suburban, or rural county, and only a handful of respondents moved to the opposite end of the continuum.

I also conduct an analysis of the presidential vote in the 2012 election to examine whether consistently conservative issue opinions are a stronger driver of voting behavior among rural voters. This analysis not only considers the role of place of residence in shaping one’s presidential vote, but also whether people who live in certain places are more likely to take their conservative values into consideration in the ballot box. In short, I am examining whether it is likely that rural voting behavior differs from suburban and urban behavior primarily because rural Americans are values voters, while their suburban and urban counterparts are not, rather than some other explanation. In this analysis, the dependent variable is whether the respondent voted for Barack Obama in 2012 or another candidate (Mitt Romney or minor party/independent candidates). Logistic regression analysis is used and average conditional effects are reported for the interaction between place of residence and consistent conservatism.

Other independent variables in the analyses control for explanations of ideological constraint and consistency and vote choice. These include demographics, strength of party identification and ideology, religion (whether the respondent is a Protestant or Catholic or not, as these could be associated with holding conservative Christian values), and interest in and participation in politics. Additionally, the analysis of the presidential vote in 2012 includes the respondents’ retrospective government performance assessment (measured by presidential approval) and economic evaluations which are important factors in presidential vote choice (Fiorina 1981). Additionally, these provide some measure of whether they feel the government is working for them or leaving them behind, politically and economically.

5. Results

The first question I address is how ideology and issue positions generally vary among rural, suburban, and urban respondents. Fig. 1 shows the ideological self-placement of respondents by year and place of residence. The modal respondent in each place of residence identified themselves as moderate or conservative, with relatively few identifying as extreme liberals or conservatives. In 2010, the modal respondent in the most rural areas identified as moderate, but in 2012 the modal respondent identified as conservative. Then, by 2014 the majority of

these rural respondents identified as conservatives. Those living in areas with an urban population under 20,000 non-adjacent to a metropolitan showed a similar pattern, with moderate being the modal ideology in 2010 and 2012, but conservative being the mode by 2014. This provides some evidence rural respondents became increasingly conservative, but they were not particularly likely to identify as extremely conservative. Additionally, a similar pattern was not observed among those living in areas with an urban population of more than 20,000 non-adjacent to a metropolitan area, where the modal respondent remained moderate.

Fig. 2 shows the distribution of issue opinions for respondents by place of residence in each year. The numbers on the x-axis indicate the net number of conservative issue positions held, meaning that negative numbers represent respondents who hold predominantly liberal issue positions and positive numbers indicate respondents who hold predominantly conservative issue positions. A score of zero would indicate that the respondent held a middle position on the issues or that they held an equal number of liberal and conservative issues position. Again, the pattern is clearly that rural respondents are more conservative than urban respondents, although it is not clear that their issue opinions became more conservative over time. Furthermore, suburban respondents also appear to hold relatively conservative issue positions.

Table 3 displays the mean number of consistently liberal or conservative issue opinions in each year for each place of residence on the nine-point RUCC, along with the results of a one-way ANOVA. The most urban respondents are slightly liberal, with the most rural respondents being slightly conservative, but the average respondent holds less than two consistent issue opinions in each year, out of the nine total issues considered in either direction. Overall, there are significant differences such that one is more liberal or more conservative depending on place of residence, but the number of consistent opinions does not appear to be extremely high among any particular group, nor does it seem to be increasing per year. If anything, all respondents, regardless of their place of residence, became more liberal in the issue positions they held over time, including in areas where respondents increasingly self-identified as conservatives. These results may at first seem to be at odds with one another, but keep in mind that I am not expecting to find high levels of ideological constraint. This result would be consistent with the argument that individuals often hold issue opinions at odds with their ideological identification.

Another method of examining the ideological nature of rural, suburban, and urban respondents is to compare their ideological constraint and stability during this time period. Table 4 – 6 show the extent of the respondents’ ideological constraint (correlation of issue opinions to

Table 2  
CCES respondents’ county of residence by USDA ERS rural-urban continuum code, 2010–2014.

Rural-Urban Code, 2010	Rural-Urban Code, 2014									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	4706	104	55	18	2	5	8	1	4	4903
	96%	2.1%	1.1%	0.4%	0%	0.1%	0.2%	0%	0.1%	100%
2	104	1927	33	5	0	18	4	0	0	2091
	5%	92.2%	1.6%	0.2%	0%	0.9%	0.2%	0%	0%	100%
3	69	28	932	10	1	15	8	0	1	1064
	6.5%	2.6%	87.6%	0.9%	0.1%	1.4%	0.8%	0%	0.1%	100%
4	22	36	2	418	1	1	1	3	0	484
	4.5%	7.4%	0.4%	86.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%	0%	100%
5	2	3	5	0	113	0	2	0	0	125
	1.6%	2.4%	4%	0%	90.4%	0%	1.6%	0%	0%	100%
6	13	13	17	2	2	387	3	0	0	437
	3%	3%	3.9%	0.5%	0.5%	88.6%	0.7%	0%	0%	100%
7	2	7	6	0	1	0	248	0	1	265
	0.8%	2.6%	2.3%	0%	0.4%	0%	93.6%	0%	0.4%	100%
8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	65	0	68
	4.4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	95.6%	0%	100%
9	1	0	1	1	1	4	0	0	54	62
	1.6%	0%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	6.5%	0%	0%	87.1%	100%
<b>Total</b>	4922	2118	1051	454	121	430	274	69	60	9499
	51.8%	22.3%	11.1%	4.8%	1.3%	4.5%	2.9%	0.7%	0.6%	100%

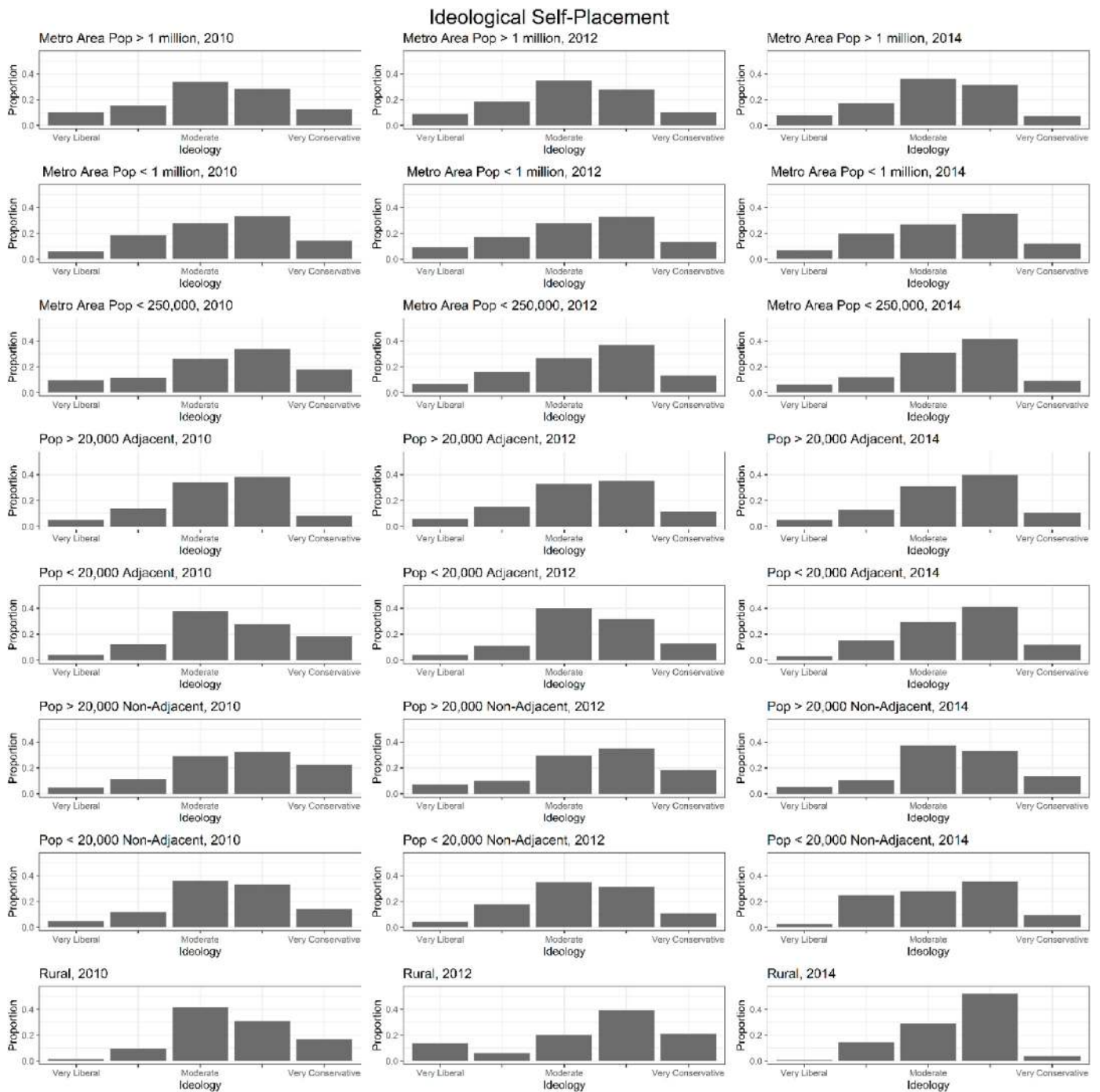


Fig. 1. Ideological self-placement by place of residence.

ideology) in each year. Table 4 displays the results for areas that are rural or not adjacent to metropolitan areas (“rural”), Table 5 displays the results for areas that are adjacent to metropolitan areas (“suburban”) and Table 6 displays the results for metropolitan areas (“urban”). This table does not show which respondents are more liberal or more conservative. Instead, the results show the correlation between respondents’ issue opinions and their self-placed ideology within each geographic area within each year. Overall, one can observe that there are very few differences in ideological constraint by place of residence, with residents of all areas showing similarly (moderate) levels of constraint regarding each issue. Generally, opinions concerning the issue of climate change were the most ideologically constrained regardless of place of residence. Other opinions concerning the

environment, abortion, and gun control also exhibited relatively high levels of constraint. Rural respondents did not exhibit especially high levels of constraint concerning social issues like same-sex marriage or abortion relative to other respondents. In fact, suburban respondents – who are also, on average, slightly conservative – generally held more constrained opinions concerning abortion.

Tables 7–9 show the results concerning the stability of these issue opinions. Table 7 displays the results for areas that are rural or not adjacent to metropolitan areas (“rural”), Table 8 displays the results for areas that are adjacent to metropolitan areas (“suburban”) and Table 9 displays the results for metropolitan areas (“urban”). The results show the correlation between respondents’ opinions on the same issues within each geographic area within each set of years. In basic terms, a higher

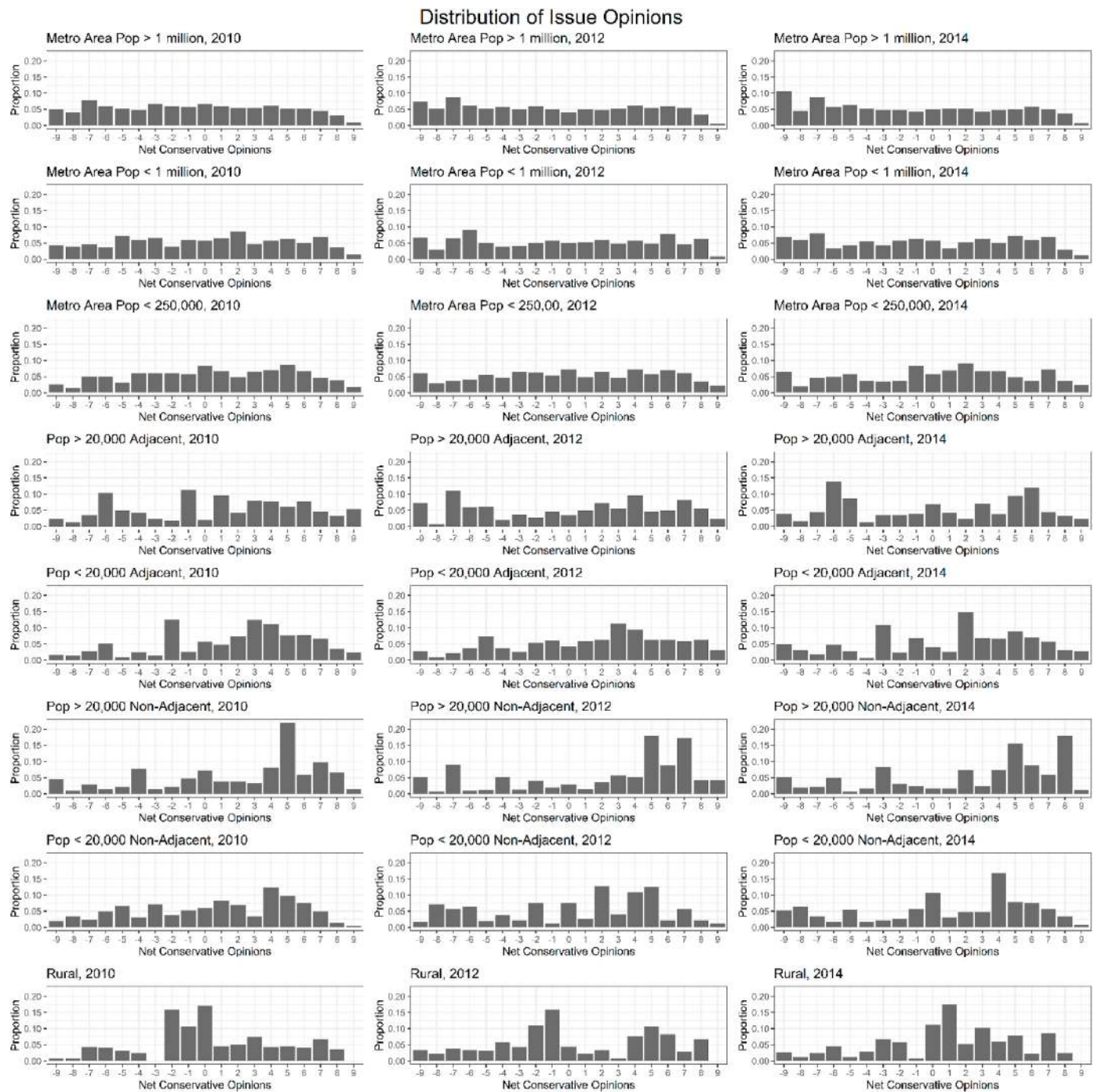


Fig. 2. Consistency of issue positions by place of residence.

correlation coefficient means that the respondent was not “flip-flopping” their issue positions from year to year. All respondents, regardless of place of residence, generally had relatively high levels of stability concerning the issues of gun control, same-sex marriage, abortion, climate change, the environment, and affirmative action, with attitudes concerning climate change having among the highest constraint across all respondents. Attitudes concerning abortion were also quite highly constrained among suburban respondents relative to the others. Rural respondents were not more constrained in their views on these issues than suburban or urban respondents overall.

Are there geographical differences in ideological constraint that persist once controlling for other factors? After all, it is not being rural, suburban, or urban *per se* that would drive ideological constraint and

consistency, but some factor related to living in one of those areas (such as being Christian, or rural consciousness). Table 10 shows the OLS regression results concerning ideological constraint (in this case measured as the number of consistent issue positions held within a year, ranging from net of zero to nine) among respondents in 2010, 2012, and 2014. There are a few consistent results across all three models. One is that the most rural respondents, as well as respondents who lived in metropolitan areas of less than 250,000, hold fewer consistent issue opinions than those who live in the largest metropolitan areas. The other is that respondents who live in counties with an urban population of less than 20,000 non-adjacent to metropolitan areas (also rural) hold more consistent issue opinions than those who live in the largest metropolitan areas. The results, therefore, indicate that living in a rural area is not

**Table 3**  
Mean number of consistent issue opinions by place of residence and year.

Rural-Urban Code, 2010	Mean in 2010 (n)	Mean in 2012 (n)	Mean in 2014 (n)
Metro >1 million	-.76	-1.08	-1.32
Metro <1 million	-.14	-.44	-.61
Metro <250,000	.36	-.05	-.13
Adjacent >20,000	.43	.06	.11
Non-adjacent > 20,000	1.34	1.37	1.02
Adjacent <20,000	1.37	1.06	.93
Non-adjacent <20,000	.33	.24	.21
Rural	1.51	1.20	1.11
F Statistic	136.20***	110.2***	159.3***

\*\*\*p<.01

necessarily associated with increased or decreased ideological constraint (as measured by holding consistent issue opinions) when controlling for other factors.

Another question that may arise is what role ideological constraint plays in shaping one’s vote choice and the implications of this for the value voters argument. Perhaps rural residents are not, on average, more constrained, but among those who are, their ideology plays a relatively strong role in shaping their voting behavior. To examine this question, I consider the interaction between the respondent’s place of residence and holding consistently conservative issue positions in the 2012 presidential election (measured as the number of conservative issue positions held within a year ranging from net of zero to nine). I control for the respondent’s retrospective evaluation of the national economy, presidential approval, party identification, ideology, and other demographic indicators such as education, income, age, race, religion, and gender.

Table 11 shows the logistic regression results. The results indicate that party identification, presidential approval, and other demographic factors affect one’s presidential vote as expected. Fig. 3 illustrates the interaction effect between place of residence and holding consistently conservative issue opinions in a meaningful fashion (Brambor et al. 2006; Hanmer and Kalkan 2013). There is a significant interaction effect, but it does not show that rural voters are the values voters. In this figure, I show the average conditional effect of holding consistently conservative issue opinions on voting for Obama for respondents in each place of residence, with the coefficient for respondents living in metropolitan areas of over 1 million population for comparison. A negative coefficient shows that among respondents living in that area, holding more consistently conservative issue opinions was associated with a lower probability of voting for Obama – even when controlling for

**Table 4**  
Correlation of ideological self-placement to issue opinions, rural respondents (constraint).

	Rural			Non-adjacent < 20,000			Non-adjacent > 20,000		
	2010	2012	2014	2010	2012	2014	2010	2012	2014
<b>Culture war issues</b>									
Gun control less strict	.56	.53	.52	.54	.61	.62	.52	.59	.60
Against same-sex marriage ban	.43	.54	.47	.55	.55	.55	.46	.60	.56
Abortion personal choice	.45	.55	.52	.52	.65	.60	.57	.55	.49
<b>Immigration and race</b>									
Immigration:	.54	.55	.47	.42	.44	.42	.57	.57	.53
Grant Legal Status									
Immigration:	.26	.35	.51	.40	.45	.46	.44	.45	.55
Increase Border Patrol									
Immigration:	.45	.44	.40	.41	.51	.46	.60	.48	.49
Allow Police to Question									
Opposes affirmative action	.38	.64	.48	.52	.54	.53	.59	.55	.57
<b>Environment</b>									
No action on climate change	.66	.61	.66	.67	.65	.64	.65	.72	.70
Protect jobs over environment	.62	.63	.56	.53	.50	.52	.68	.65	.67

\*All relationships significant, p < .01.

factors such as party identification and ideology. This result applies for those respondents living in metropolitan areas with less than 250,000 people as well as those respondents living in areas with an urban population less than 20,000, whether adjacent or non-adjacent to a metropolitan area. The results, therefore, indicate that some rural Americans may be values voters, but not all, and that some suburban and urban voters are as well.

**6. Discussion and conclusions**

The results of this analysis lead to three main conclusions. The first is that rural respondents are not more ideologically constrained nor stable than their suburban or urban counterparts. This is not to say that the findings concerning the general nature of rural ideology are in question – they do appear to be more conservative – but instead to say that studies of the rural-urban political divide need to acknowledge that the average American is not particularly ideological regardless of place of residence.

Furthermore, rural voters were not the only ones influenced by their conservative values at the ballot box, as some groups of urban and suburban respondents were as well. The focus of these studies needs to shift away from an assumption that rural voters “cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren’t like them” as President Obama once stated (Fowler 2008), and towards asking why a relatively small ideological divide generates such a large electoral divide. Perhaps voters

**Table 5**  
Correlation of ideological self-placement to issue opinions, suburban respondents (constraint).

	Adjacent <20,000			Adjacent >20,000		
	2010	2012	2014	2010	2012	2014
<b>Culture war issues</b>						
Gun control less strict	.56	.57	.60	.55	.59	.61
Against same-sex marriage ban	.48	.51	.50	.58	.53	.55
Abortion personal choice	.60	.62	.64	.61	.66	.65
<b>Immigration and race</b>						
Immigration:	.44	.45	.44	.52	.51	.57
Grant Legal Status						
Immigration:	.36	.49	.45	.39	.48	.52
Increase Border Patrol						
Immigration:	.50	.57	.44	.51	.58	.49
Allow Police to Question						
Opposes affirmative action	.51	.57	.51	.52	.57	.52
<b>Environment</b>						
No action on climate change	.62	.64	.67	.67	.62	.65
Protect jobs over environment	.55	.60	.61	.61	.60	.62

\*All relationships significant, p < .01.



**Table 6**  
Correlation of ideological self-placement to issue opinions, urban respondents (constraint).

	Metro <250,000			Metro <1 million			Metro >1 million		
	2010	2012	2014	2010	2012	2014	2010	2012	2014
<b>Culture war issues</b>									
Gun control less strict	.54	.61	.61	.56	.60	.63	.57	.60	.63
Against same-sex marriage ban	.59	.56	.57	.55	.56	.52	.55	.54	.50
Abortion personal choice	.59	.64	.60	.57	.58	.59	.58	.61	.60
<b>Immigration and race</b>									
Immigration:	.51	.55	.50	.52	.52	.57	.51	.50	.54
Grant Legal Status									
Immigration:	.41	.47	.51	.44	.53	.55	.42	.50	.53
Increase Border Patrol									
Immigration:	.55	.58	.54	.54	.55	.52	.56	.57	.52
Allow Police to Question									
Opposes affirmative action	.51	.60	.59	.55	.60	.59	.57	.59	.60
<b>Environment</b>									
No action on climate change	.67	.68	.67	.67	.67	.68	.69	.68	.68
Protect jobs over environment	.55	.63	.60	.59	.62	.63	.58	.61	.61

\*All relationships significant,  $p < .01$ .

**Table 7**  
Correlation of issue opinions across years, rural respondents (stability).

	Rural			Non-adjacent < 20,000			Non-adjacent > 20,000		
	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014
<b>Culture war issues</b>									
Gun control less strict	.74	.66	.74	.75	.81	.70	.75	.83	.78
Against same-sex marriage ban	.78	.67	.74	.73	.82	.70	.64	.78	.62
Abortion personal choice	.75	.79	.70	.80	.82	.77	.83	.84	.84
<b>Immigration and race</b>									
Immigration:	.68	.74	.61	.60	.59	.56	.66	.61	.63
Grant Legal Status									
Immigration:	.32	.45	.42	.48	.59	.41	.46	.59	.45
Increase Border Patrol									
Immigration:	.48	.47	.37	.68	.57	.49	.48	.56	.58
Allow Police to Question									
Opposes affirmative action	.70	.77	.78	.63	.75	.69	.67	.63	.58
<b>Environment</b>									
No action on climate change	.82	.87	.83	.83	.86	.80	.86	.85	.80
Protect jobs over environment	.68	.78	.71	.63	.69	.59	.70	.75	.73

\*All relationships significant,  $p < .01$ .

**Table 8**  
Correlation of issue opinions across years, suburban respondents (stability).

	Adjacent <20,000			Adjacent >20,000		
	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014
<b>Culture war issues</b>						
Gun control less strict	.77	.77	.69	.77	.79	.73
Against same-sex marriage ban	.72	.74	.72	.72	.78	.68
Abortion personal choice	.87	.85	.82	.82	.85	.82
<b>Immigration and race</b>						
Immigration:	.61	.57	.57	.60	.67	.66
Grant Legal Status						
Immigration:	.45	.55	.42	.55	.60	.56
Increase Border Patrol						
Immigration:	.66	.62	.56	.66	.61	.62
Allow Police to Question						
Opposes affirmative action	.64	.68	.65	.70	.77	.74
<b>Environment</b>						
No action on climate change	.85	.86	.78	.85	.86	.84
Protect jobs over environment	.72	.72	.71	.72	.73	.68

\*All relationships significant,  $p < .01$ .

are reacting to forces such as depopulation, economic decline, and a general perception that they are being left behind? Several authors document these feelings in rural areas, but others produce similar findings in urban or varied contexts, suggesting these feelings may not be limited to rural voters (Cramer 2016; Edelman 2019; Gest 2016;

Hochschild 2016; Wuthnow 2018; Ulrich-Schad and Duncan 2018). Another possibility is affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2019; Mason 2018; Munis 2020). It is possible that dislike of “the other side” is correlated with place of residence and drives differences in voting behavior.

**Table 9**  
Correlation of issue opinions across years, urban respondents (stability).

	Metro <250,000			Metro <1 million			Metro >1 million		
	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014	2010–2012	2012–2014	2010–2014
<b>Culture war issues</b>									
Gun control less strict	.74	.76	.69	.77	.78	.73	.78	.79	.73
Against same-sex marriage ban	.74	.72	.69	.76	.72	.70	.75	.73	.68
Abortion personal choice	.80	.84	.81	.80	.83	.78	.81	.82	.78
<b>Immigration and race</b>									
Immigration: Grant Legal Status	.64	.64	.61	.61	.66	.64	.62	.65	.60
Immigration: Increase Border Patrol	.51	.61	.54	.54	.61	.49	.51	.63	.50
Immigration: Allow Police to Question	.64	.65	.58	.63	.64	.57	.63	.64	.60
Opposes affirmative action	.73	.77	.69	.73	.78	.72	.76	.80	.76
<b>Environment</b>									
No action on climate change	.85	.84	.82	.85	.84	.83	.86	.87	.85
Protect jobs over environment	.72	.75	.72	.73	.76	.73	.73	.75	.73

\*All relationships significant,  $p < .01$ .

**Table 10**  
Regression results, ideological constraint by year.

Dependent variable: Consistency of Issue Opinions			
	2010	2012	2014
	Coeff. (s.e.)	Coeff. (s.e.)	Coeff. (s.e.)
Metro <1 million	0.042 (0.068)	-0.088 (0.069)	-0.211*** (0.073)
Metro <250,000	-0.274*** (0.089)	-0.439*** (0.089)	-0.610*** (0.094)
Adjacent >20,000	0.266** (0.125)	0.464*** (0.127)	0.189 (0.132)
Non-adjacent >20,000	0.471** (0.224)	0.838*** (0.230)	0.908*** (0.229)
Adjacent <20,000	0.006 (0.133)	-0.036 (0.137)	-0.262* (0.143)
Non-adjacent <20,000	-0.051 (0.160)	-0.216 (0.159)	-0.484*** (0.183)
Rural	-0.451* (0.242)	-0.720*** (0.245)	-1.263*** (0.265)
Age	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.0002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Male	-0.146*** (0.056)	-0.123** (0.057)	-0.160*** (0.060)
Education	0.111*** (0.020)	0.120*** (0.020)	0.186*** (0.021)
White	-0.194*** (0.064)	-0.031 (0.066)	-0.377*** (0.071)
Protestant	-0.524*** (0.062)	-0.598*** (0.063)	-0.683*** (0.066)
Catholic	-0.494*** (0.077)	-0.376*** (0.078)	-0.642*** (0.082)
Income	-0.014* (0.009)	-0.045*** (0.010)	-0.030*** (0.010)
Partisan Strength	0.228*** (0.027)	0.320*** (0.027)	0.288*** (0.028)
Ideological Strength	0.816*** (0.039)	0.709*** (0.041)	0.862*** (0.044)
Interest in Politics	-0.532*** (0.038)	-0.622*** (0.039)	-0.457*** (0.038)
Political Participation	0.314*** (0.028)	0.303*** (0.027)	0.351*** (0.033)
Constant	7.739** (3.511)	3.751 (3.645)	6.989* (3.817)
Observations	8007	7768	7629
R2	0.169	0.183	0.170
Adjusted R2	0.167	0.181	0.168
Residual Std. Error	2.337 (df = 7988)	2.286 (df = 7749)	2.387 (df = 7610)
F Statistic	90.399*** (df = 18; 7988)	96.290*** (df = 18; 7749)	86.806*** (df = 18; 7610)

Note: \* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

**Table 11**  
Logit regression results, vote for Obama in 2012.

Dependent variable: Vote for Obama, 2012	
	Coeff. (s.e.)
Consistent Conservative Opinions	0.143 (0.154)
Metro <1 million	0.998 (0.787)
Metro <250,000	1.950 (1.417)
Adjacent >20,000	2.692** (1.192)
Non-adjacent >20,000	-1.049 (1.923)
Adjacent <20,000	3.631** (1.779)
Non-adjacent <20,000	2.487* (1.445)
Rural	1.811 (5.774)
National Economy Worse	0.031 (0.265)
Disapprove of Obama	-3.928*** (0.392)
Age	-0.027* (0.015)
Male	0.152 (0.434)
Education	0.153 (0.157)
White	-0.100 (0.471)
Protestant	-1.502*** (0.523)
Catholic	-1.462** (0.634)
Income	-0.283*** (0.087)
Ideology (Lib. - Con.)	-0.690** (0.329)
Party ID (Dem. - Rep.)	-1.056*** (0.136)
Metro <1 million x consistency	-0.371 (0.276)
Metro <250,000 x consistency	-0.941* (0.483)
Adjacent >20,000 x consistency	-0.189 (0.307)
Non-adjacent >20,000 x consistency	-0.260 (0.742)
Adjacent <20,000 x consistency	-1.165** (0.524)
Non-adjacent <20,000 x consistency	-1.139** (0.465)
Rural	-0.374 (1.271)
Constant	70.887** (30.588)
Observations	3681
Log Likelihood	-85.409
Akaike Inf. Crit.	224.819

Note: \* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

The second is that although rural and urban respondents appear to hold different views, they do not appear to have been diverging more in their viewpoints over time. Their ideological viewpoints and issue positions in 2014 are similar to those in 2010, suggesting they did not become more polarized over these three election cycles. In fact, the analysis of the mean number of consistent issue positions held by respondents in each area suggests that, if anything, respondents became more liberal over this time period. Perhaps viewpoints are diverging slightly, and a more robust examination or an examination over a longer period of time would yield clearer results. Regardless, by the end of the time period under examination, the view of the average rural or urban respondent would be characterized as moderate. Along with the result that rural respondents are not ideologically stable nor constrained, and

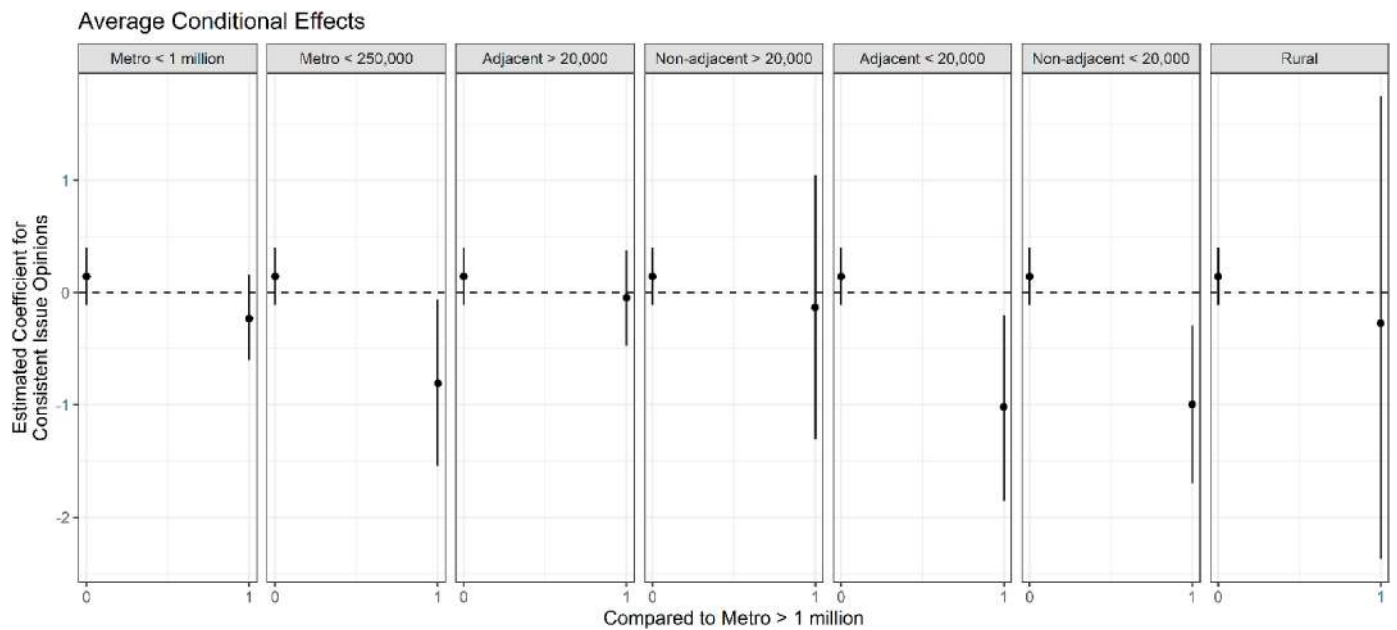


Fig. 3. Average effect of conservative ideological constraint on vote for Obama, conditioned by place of residence.

that they are also not more likely to consider these views at the ballot box, this result provides further support for the conclusion that rural respondents are not uniquely conservative values voters who have been driven to increasingly support the Republican party primarily due to their ideological viewpoints in recent years.

A final point of interest is the similarity in the findings of rural and suburban respondents. Election analysts now point to suburbs as electoral battlegrounds while rural and urban areas have become increasingly uncompetitive (Johnson et al., 2018; Montgomery and Florida, 2018). What can explain the differing voting behaviors among these populations that appear to be so ideologically similar? One possibility is that the consistent issue opinions held by suburban and rural voters differ, thus resulting in different choices. For example, considering Mullinix (2016) findings concerning the alignment of one's views with one's party, perhaps rural voters are out of step with their party on the basis of one personal issue, while suburban voters are out of step with their party on some other personal issue. Another is that other factors that shape voting behavior interact with one's context. Perhaps respondents living in certain areas place more importance on retrospective economic evaluations, for example. This explanation would be consistent with the previously discussed feelings of being "left behind" that have been observed in rural, suburban, and urban contexts, but are more common in rural areas (Cramer 2016; Edelman 2019; Gest 2016; Hochschild 2016; Wuthnow 2018; Ulrich-Schad and Duncan 2018). Furthermore, rural and agrarian areas in the United States have historical populist roots which could lend rural support to authoritarian populist candidates who appeal to these feelings of being left behind despite ideological similarities across the geographical divide (Kaufman, 2016; Limeberry and Fox 2020; Montenegro de Wit et al., 2019).

One can also consider more recent research into the question of how rural, suburban, and urban voters differ to explain this result. In suburbs closer to large cities, one is more likely to find liberals who vote for Democrats; further out, one is more likely to find conservatives that vote Republican (Gimpel et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2018; Scala and Johnson 2017; Scala et al. 2015). Furthermore, the lines between where urban and suburban areas end and rural areas begin are blurred (Lichter et al. 2020). The similarities in ideologies and issue opinions between suburban and rural residents observed in this analysis may be in part because some of the respondents classified as suburban are, in fact, rural, if it was possible to examine their place of residence at a more

granular level than a nine-point scale classifying their county. Further examination of which views are held by respondents in each area – measured at the most detailed level possible – and how these translate into voting behaviors as well as whether other factors predominantly drive their voting behaviors is needed to understand the different outcomes observed among voters who are otherwise so ideologically similar.

Research concerning the rural-urban divide implies that in the future, one might expect to observe continued geographic polarization in election outcomes absent some new development that would change this trajectory. The results in the present analysis imply, however, that should this polarization continue to occur, it will not be primarily driven by exceptionally conservative rural political attitudes. As previously discussed, residents of rural areas do not appear to be more ideologically constrained nor stable in their views than their suburban and urban counterparts, and the views of those living in these different areas have not been diverging over time. Although the years analyzed here are limited to 2010–2014, they represent the period immediately preceding the 2016 election, which brought much attention to the rural-urban divide. If rural voters increasingly acting as values voters were a key factor driving the wedge observed between rural and urban America in that election, then it should have been possible to observe some evidence that rural and urban views diverged in tandem with their votes during this time period.

Furthermore, the results from post-2016 research support this argument. Although this body of research does not directly examine the question of whether rural voters possess constrained and stable attitudes on these issues, it also does not provide evidence that rural voters have been becoming increasingly conservative on these issues relative to other voters. The lack of ideological divergence between the geographic areas suggests it is not this factor driving the divide in national election outcomes, but instead that those outcomes are caused by some other factor(s), such as the idea that residents of rural areas may feel as though they have been left behind (Cramer 2016; Edelman 2019; Gest 2016; Hochschild 2016; Wuthnow 2018; Ulrich-Schad and Duncan 2018). The conclusions here imply that it is these explanations that should be the focus of continued research on this question.

## Declaration of competing interest

None.

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.10.019>.

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