

Place of Residence and Political Attitudes in Democracies Worldwide

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Abstract

After the 2016 election, many major new pundits pointed at Rural America as the major source of Donald Trump's victory for the presidency. This is because, as prior research by [Walsh \(2012\)](#) for the United States and [Walks \(2005\)](#) for Canada suggests, residents in rural parts of democratic countries tend to be more religious and less exposed to diversity as their urban counterparts. As a result, they are more conservative in their social views even if they may be more liberal on their fiscal ones. President Trump took advantage of this and won the hearts and minds of many voters in the Midwest and Rural South, which allowed him to secure an electoral college victory despite falling short on the popular vote. For this research project, I was interested to see if this trend extends to other developing and consolidated democracies in the world. Using the CSES Module IV data (2011-2016), I conducted regressions to test place of residence on a self-defined ideological scale and an objective ideology scale constructed using respondent opinions on various issues. By controlling for regime factors such as age and level of democracy, I find statistical significance to suggest that place matters. The data provides sufficient evidence to suggest that if one lives in an urban place compared to a rural one, they are more likely to self-identify as more liberal and hold those values when voicing their opinions on social issues.

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1 Introduction

After the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States, news pundits speculate that the reason for his election was through the support that he won from rural voters in the South and Midwest. These Republican strongholds located in the rural and suburban parts of the country have been researched by political scientists ([Walsh, 2012](#)) and the results suggest that there is an urban-rural divide that is growing in the United States. Additionally, it is noticeable that the mindset of individuals who live in different parts of the country do not conceptualize politics in a similar fashion ([Holloway, 2007](#)). These differences in interests leads to differences in ideologies and attitudes, as seen in the United States back in 2016.

However, the United States does not operate in isolation and the people are not necessarily idiosyncratic compared to others around the world. Therefore, in this paper, I am interested in understanding if the urban-rural divide that is present in the US is also present and noticeable in other places around the globe. Additionally, I will discuss how living in a different environment leads people to favor different interests and hold distinct political beliefs in the context of key regime factors such as the level of democracy, age of regime and the type of electoral formula that a regime employs in their system of government.

Through the analysis of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module IV data, I find that place of residence does matter in influencing one's political beliefs and ideologies. More specifically, the results will allow us to draw two conclusions. First, the place of residence matters in influencing political attitudes, but this is heavily influenced on the regime's electoral formula such that if a respondent lives in a first past the post system, there is a greater pronounced difference between place of residence and ideology, but this effect is not significant in proportional representation systems. Second, the influ-

ence of place of residence on political ideology is more pronounced in more established and longstanding democracies than developing ones such that the divide between urban, suburban, small town, and rural residents are more pronounced when the regime has a system of democracy that has been instituted for a longer period of time.

2 Theoretical Review of Literature

Past research in this topical area considered the influence of place in specific case studies. These results will be analyzed in this section of the paper, followed by an analysis of general conclusions that these cases suggest. I will also briefly introduce the countries that are being included in this paper and conclude the section with a word of caution before moving to the data analysis.

2.1 Trends of Urban-Rural Divide in Seen in Previous Case Studies

The most popular places where literature exists for understanding the urban-rural divide in political attitudes lies mostly in the developed world. Namely, the United States, and Canada are the top countries where this trend has been analyzed most frequently. As we will see later, these are also the two countries that do not have the full supply of data in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems data to be included in this paper. Therefore, I will consider the lessons learned from these two places, along with some others, as a way to gain some insight on the extent of rural-urban influence on political attitude development in a developed democracy in hopes of understanding how other polities differ in their own unique ways to the conditions of the polity.

2.1.1 The United States

2.1.2 Canada

2.1.3 Other Countries

In the general light, residents in one area often view a neighboring, unfamiliar region by the stereotypes that define it. In France, this is quite the case ([Clout and Demossier, 2003](#)). Urban residents see the rural plains as undeveloped lands that are waiting for their entrepreneurial talents. Yet, rural interests often go unnoticed unless a party that would speak for them is in power. Yet, the people of France, on all sides of the picture, are not alone. In this section, I will consider other countries where signs of an urban-rural divide is visible and emerging. This perspective can serve as an interesting starting point for the analysis to follow in this paper.

The Liberal and Labor parties of Great Britain serve different interests with the former most favored to serve the desires of farmers. The Countryside Alliance was formed in the UK in 1997 as a means for farmers to take back their status after the domination of the Labor Party in UK politics ([Benton, 2007](#)). The people of the UK are not necessarily divided by their political ideologies; rather, they are divided by interests, which leads to different party supports for urban and rural residents. As urban residents outnumber rural residents, their interests often dominate, placing Labor in power more often than what rural farmers would agree on.

A person's place of residence is the most important gateway to the possibilities of social network formation and interaction across the globe, but this is emphasized in research done in the Netherlands. As [van Gent et al. \(2014\)](#) suggests, social networks are often tied to geography such that political socialization and attitude formation is a possible outcome of differences in electoral geography. The neighbourhood is fertile ground for the clustering of social classes, leading to divisions between places of residence. While there

is a clear divide between urban and rural residents for their partisan support in the 2010 elections in the Netherlands, the underpinnings of this divide are interesting to consider when conceptualizing how people vote by place.

2.2 Connections between Place and Political Ideology

Previous authors analyzed in this paper have considered the presence of underlying factors that influence the apparent urban-rural divide in electoral behavior. However, what are these possible connections and how do they matter?

In general, the possibilities of social interactions between people in a specific vicinity matters in how they will form their political attitudes. In a study using 2000 Census data in the United States, the research suggests that diversity is a great factor influencing liberal views, or lack thereof ([Williamson, 2008](#)). When people are in places where diversity is vibrant, they are more likely to be open to newer experiences. Yet, this is most likely, in modern times, an occurrence of the urban centers and less so once one moves to the margins of geographic space in society. Therefore, space matters in the opportunities for attitude development because it facilitates one's exposure to diversity and opens the door to possibilities.

2.3 Polities in this Study

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) database was launched in 1996 and is a center for data collection of different polities worldwide. Thousands of respondents are interviewed per election cycle in each of the countries and their responses are aggregated to form the dataset that is used for this experiment. This section is a brief overview of the elections that are considered in the Module IV dataset.

Table 1 shows the types of elections that are held within each of the polities that are

Table 1: Types of Election by Polity

Country	Year	Legislative	Both	Presidential
Argentina	2015	-	X	-
Australia	2013	X	-	-
Austria	2013	X	-	-
Bulgaria	2014	X	-	-
Czech Republic	2013	X	-	-
Finland	2015	X	-	-
France	2012	-	-	X
Germany	2013	X	-	-
Great Britain	2015	X	-	-
Greece	2012/2015	X	-	-
Iceland	2013	X	-	-
Ireland	2011	X	-	-
Israel	2013	X	-	-
Japan	2013	X	-	-
Kenya	2013	-	X	-
Latvia	2011/2014	X	-	-
Mexico	2012	-	X	-
Mexico	2015	X	-	-
Montenegro	2012	X	-	-
Norway	2013	X	-	-
New Zealand	2011/2014	X	-	-
Peru	2016	-	X	-
Philippines	2016	-	X	-
Poland	2011	X	-	-
Portugal	2015	X	-	-
Romania	2012	X	-	-
Romania	2014	-	-	X
Serbia	2012	-	X	-
Slovakia	2016	X	-	-
Slovenia	2011	X	-	-
South Africa	2014	X	-	-
South Korea	2012	X	-	-
Sweden	2014	X	-	-
Switzerland	2011	X	-	-
Turkey	2015	X	-	-

Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module IV

represented in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module IV data. From this table, we see that many of the countries are holding legislative, or parliamentary elections to some extent during the period between 2011 and 2016. This table provides some background for the context in each of the polities that will be included in the analysis.

Table 2 shows the percentage of people in each polity that lives in each of the four different places of residence. This table provides context for the specifications in each country that should be factored into account when we conduct the analyses. Based on geographic factors and economic trends, residents of some countries may find it more beneficial to flock to a certain regions of the country for personal political or economic gains. Additionally, factors relating to a country's level of development may influence the distribution of where people live such that it plays to influence their political stance.

Figure 1 provides a general overview of the place of residence of the respondents for the data used in this study. At an instant glance, it may appear that the urban residents are oversampled, but considering that, as Table 2 suggests, more people live in urban centers than suburban areas, it balances out to represent the world's populations on a general trend.

Now that we've analyzed the distribution of respondents by polity and the elections that the country is having in the studied election cycle, it is also beneficial to note some of the macro trends that are present which can help categorize the countries and take their variations into account in the analysis. Figure 2 shows a graphical display of the countries represented in Module IV of the CSES sorted by their level of democracy and regime age. As the graph suggests, most of the countries represented in this study are very free. Yet, when it comes to the time that the electoral democracy has been around, most reside under the 50 year mark but it largely centers around and below 25 years. For a better breakdown of the exact values of each country's regime age and level of democracy, Table 16 in Appendix A shows this data broken down more specifically, adding the considera-

Table 2: Percentage of People in Each Place of Residence by Polity

Country	Rural	Small Town	Suburban	Urban
Worldwide	26.98	22.95	13.37	36.70
Argentina	-	13.30	-	86.70
Australia	10.92	18.73	16.98	53.37
Austria	41.67	27.54	18.19	12.60
Bulgaria	26.33	20.82	36.14	16.72
Czech Republic	26.68	39.87	5.01	29.24
Germany	28.80	42.56	9.53	19.11
Finland	25.16	23.39	42.50	8.95
France	35.10	37.34	11.72	15.84
Great Britain	17.68	52.84	-	29.48
Greece (2012)	40.77	10.62	11.51	31.10
Greece (2015)	5.86	21.48	13.99	58.68
Iceland	9.06	28.87	26.17	35.90
Ireland	-	40.91	-	59.09
Israel	20.50	54.40	25.10	-
Japan	12.80	25.86	17.86	43.47
Kenya	66.67	-	-	33.33
Latvia (2011)	36.75	18.13	-	45.12
Latvia (2014)	34.46	25.29	10.42	29.83
Mexico (2012)	18.33	11.67	-	70.00
Mexico (2015)	18.38	11.28	-	70.34
Montenegro	37.47	36.72	12.85	12.96
Norway	26.43	25.54	13.69	34.35
New Zealand (2011)	16.32	38.12	-	45.56
New Zealand (2014)	13.36	21.04	-	65.61
Peru	20.99	-	-	79.01
Philippines	45.00	14.58	3.33	37.88
Poland	35.85	42.57	9.64	11.93
Portugal	28.75	25.48	16.81	28.95
Romania (2012)	44.63	22.83	2.37	30.97
Romania (2015)	41.82	29.95	11.78	16.46
Serbia	49.62	24.04	9.44	16.90
Slovakia	42.38	39.16	1.48	16.97
Slovenia	22.88	12.65	49.66	14.61
South Africa	30.77	-	-	69.23
South Korea	17.00	28.40	6.00	48.60
Sweden	17.55	22.12	21.15	39.18
Switzerland	26.67	0.66	47.30	25.37
Turkey	19.06	21.64	17.96	41.34

Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module IV

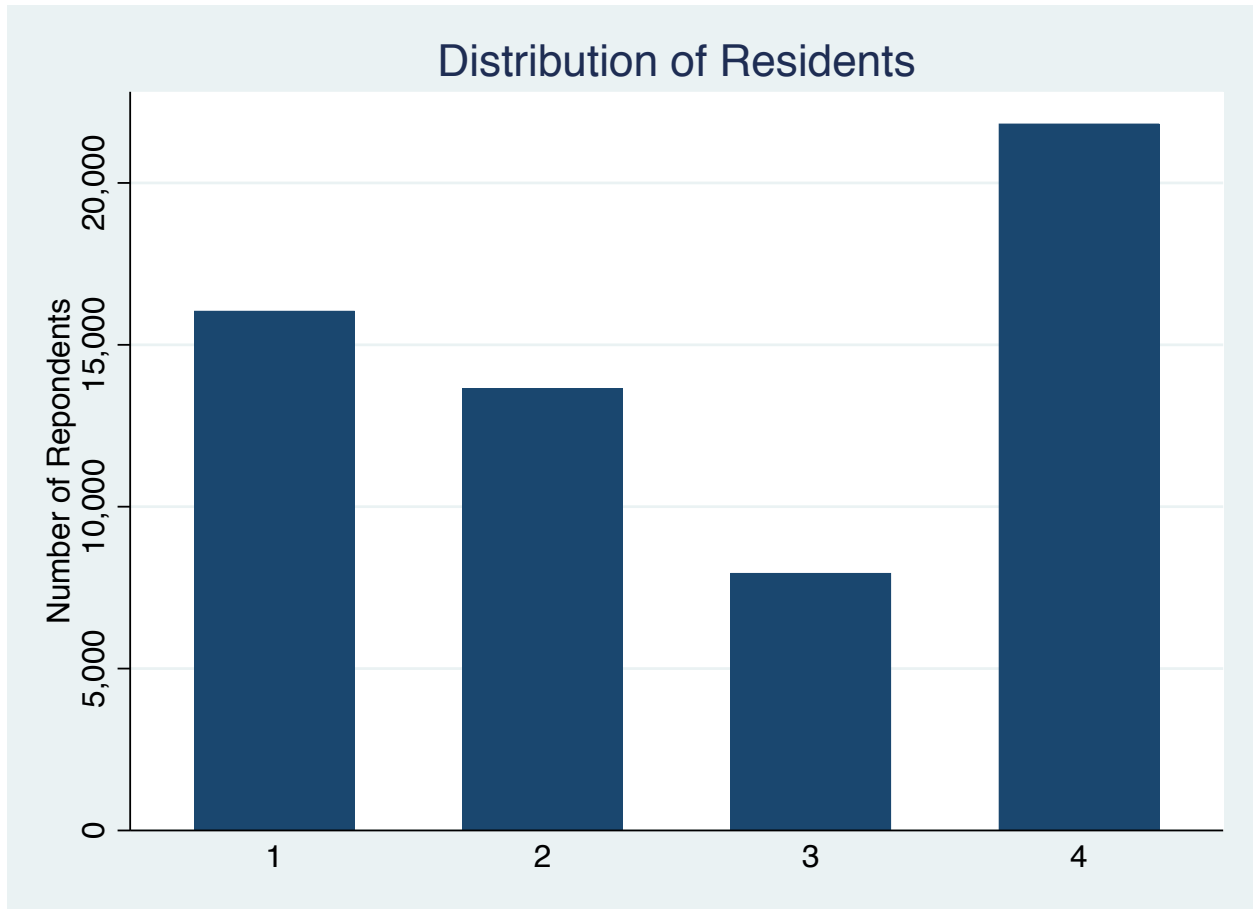


Figure 1: **Distribution of Responses By Place of Residence**

tion of the regime's electoral formula. From what this figure can show us, it is important to note some extreme values on both variables. Turkey's 2015 election stands out on Figure 2 because it is the least democratic of the group. Additionally, it is also interesting to note the longest standing democracies such as the United States, Switzerland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. These countries are those where there are most prior research given the country's openness to gathering of data from its citizens and the people's abilities to express their desires freely. The countries that center around eight and nine on the democracy scale that have democracies that are younger than 50 years will be the most interesting to consider given limitations in the existing literature that is available for these

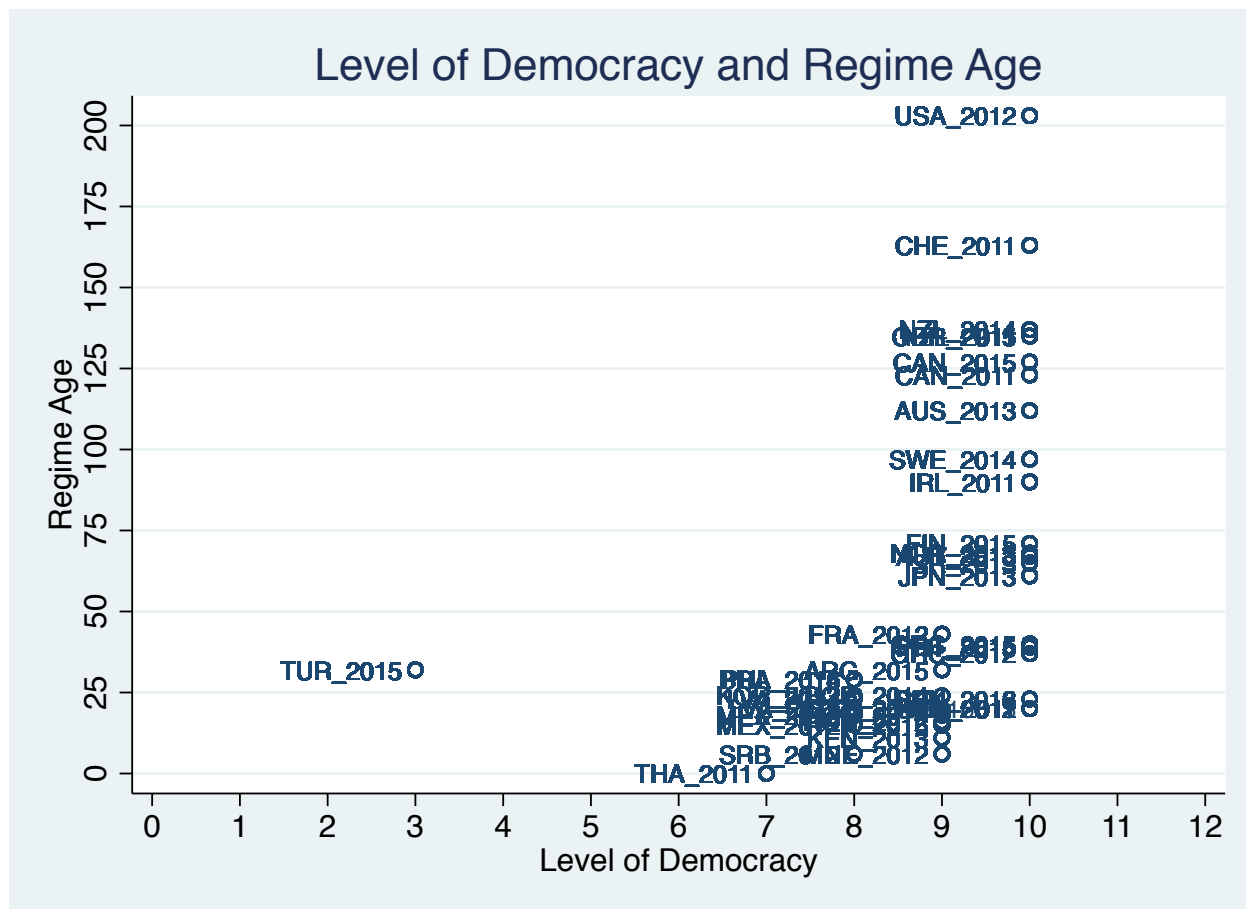


Figure 2: Level of Democracy and Regime Age

places.

2.4 Proceeding with Caution

As seen in previous works in American and Canadian politics, political parties are useful tools to predict votes since they are relatively useful heuristics that can assist in the formation of voting blocs. However, as [Holloway \(2007\)](#) notes, place of residence is not uniform throughout the world and it's people should not be treated as such. Rural voters are not voting blocs even if they can be seen to have similar voting patterns that span across a period of time. Yet, while some conceptualize a group under one light, it is not

entirely the most accurate description of the way this group operates. Therefore, in answering the question of how place of residence influences political attitude formation, I aim to understand the general trends that happen in the world as a whole, but also within the boundaries of each country. I wish to tap into underlying mechanisms that can provide insight to why these trends exist and its repercussions in the hearts and minds of fellow citizens. I do not aim to make voting predictions about a country's next election; rather, I seek to understand if living in a place, on average, influences vote choice based on availability of social resources and activation of personal interests. With each of the conclusions I draw, the literature suggests that there are variations and other noise factors that should be considered before seeking to make generalizations about the rural or urban place of residence as a whole.

3 Hypotheses

From the review of literature, we see that there seems to be an ideological divide between people living in rural and urban areas of their respective countries. From case studies, most notably in the United States and Canada, there is a pattern such that the individuals living in rural areas tend to err towards conservatism and residents of urban centers tend to veer towards liberalism. However, given that these are relatively established democracies, I wonder how differences in levels of democratic development, regime age and other idiosyncratic factors that shape a regime influence the divide of political ideologies between urban and rural residents. Therefore, the present research will test three hypotheses relating to the relationship between the place of residence of an individual and their political ideology. For each of the following hypotheses, I address them as they speak to the average trends but also specific trends for each country analyzed.

Hypothesis 1 – Place Matters: An individual's place of residence influences their

political ideology such that the more distant the characteristics of one's vicinity gets from an urban city, the more conservative one will become.

The *Place Matters* hypothesis suggests that there is a direct relationship between place of residence and political ideology no matter where an individual lives in this world. Therefore, this hypothesis assumes that, broadly speaking, individuals who live in a rural area will be more conservative than those who live in a small town or urban center. In this case, political ideology, as we will also see later, is operationalized by the respondent's self-placement on the ideology spectrum. Therefore, this is based on their own views on how liberal or conservative they are. While this is helpful to understand how place of residence influences political ideology, it would be even more helpful to introduce a second hypothesis that looks at objective support for policies which can show where a person lies on the political spectrum.

Hypothesis 2 – Issue Stances: An individual's place of residence influences the way they conceptualize pressing issues and their stances towards these issues.

In the *Issue Stances* hypothesis, I predict that people will understand the meaning of issues differently based on where they live and hold different opinions about them as a result of their place of residence. In other words, if the *place Matters* hypothesis holds true, people who live in rural areas will see issues differently than those who live in urban areas and apply their political ideologies when deciding on the issues.

Both the *Place Matters* and *Issue Stances* hypotheses assumes that countries are the same across the board and that one's conceptualization of place of residence is uniform. Therefore, in the last hypothesis, I will integrate some polity defining factors into the model to understand how certain aspects of each regime such as their level of democ-

racy, regime age and electoral formula influence the relationships that are observed in the preceding hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3A – Level of Democracy: A regime's level of democracy will influence the political ideologies of citizens based on their place of residence such that the influence of place on political ideology will increase as a regime becomes more democratic.

Hypothesis 3B – Regime Age: A regime's age will influence the political ideologies of citizens based on their place of residence such that the relationship between place of residence and political ideology will be more pronounced when the regime is older

Hypothesis 3C – Electoral Formula: A regime's method of elections will influence the political ideologies of citizens based on their place of residence such that pluralistic, first past the post systems will increase the influence of place of residence on political ideologies.

Hypothesis 3D – Polity Differences The regime's level of democracy, age and electoral formula will cooperate to determine the extent to which place of residence can influence political ideology in a given polity.

Each of the components embedded in Hypothesis 3 analyzes key differences in how each polity functions and the stability of democracy such that a more stable democracy can mean more room for an individual to consider their true self-interests rather than being forced to believe something as a means of survival. In each of the sections of Hypothesis 3, we analyze how the successful consolidation of democracy, or lack thereof, influences how other social factors, such as place of residence, can influence a person's political views. I include the age of the regime to identify if a longer lasting polity can

solidify the patterns of influence that place of residence has on an individual's political outlook and stance on issues.

Finally, I include the electoral formula as a means of understanding how the system of representation influences the relationship between the core variables used in this paper. A regime's electoral formula is the way in which citizens select their representatives and the mechanisms in which votes are tallied. It is unclear whether the electoral formula influences political discourse and attitude formation. However, past research suggests that this factor does not matter in the ways that place of residence will influence a person's political preference [Barkan et al. \(2006\)](#). For the *Electoral Formula* hypothesis, I hypothesize that if individuals had to fight for representation in a winner take all system, personal factors such as place of residence will be more salient than if all interests were more fairly represented in a proportional system. Each of these components are then tied together to understand how idiosyncrasies of a polity lead to the difference between place of residence and political ideology as explored in the *Place Matters* and the *Issue Stances* hypotheses.

Through the research, we will be able to see whether there is a relationship across the globe surrounding place of residence and political ideology. In the following sections, I explain the models that will be used to understand the relationships between the variables. We will revisit the hypotheses in the discussion to see if the data supports them along with possible limitations that may be present.

4 Research Design

4.1 Data

To understand the divide between rural and urban residents in different countries of the world, I will consider cases analyzed in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module IV dataset for the analysis of these trends. In this specific module, the CSES considers elections that occurred between 2011 and 2016 in various democracies around the world. In the following sections, I will describe the variables used in this project in more detail. Each of the variable names and descriptions are also located in Appendix B, which contains the variable code referenced in the CSES dataset.

4.2 Key Independent Variables

In this data analysis, the key independent variables that are considered include the respondent's country and place of residence. For this analysis, place of residence is considered to be based on the categories that are established by the survey such that individuals either live in a rural village, small town, suburbs of a large city or within the large city itself. In the regression model, this variable is characterized as a category even though there are places that may be in between two of the categories that characterize place of residence.

Each individual's country of residence is also classified based on the year of the election, level of democracy during the election year, age of the current governing regime in the country at the time of the election, and the type of electoral formula employed by the governing body to determine winners of seats in government. The level of democracy is characterized by how free the polity is at the time of the election. This measure was gathered from the generators of the Polity IV project and reflects freedom from a -10 to

10 scale with -10 being the most autocratic and 10 being the most democratic. The age of the current governing regime suggests how long the current system has been in power. The larger value suggests that the current system in government has been established for a longer period of time and is therefore more stable. Finally, the type of electoral formula describes how government officials win office based on their total vote share. Contestants may win via majoritarian, proportional or mixed system.

4.3 Key Dependent Variables and Measures

To understand where individuals see their own political values, the dependent variable reflects their self-identified ideology, a variable coded by the CSES that ranges from 0 to 10 with 0 being the most left leaning and 10 as the most right leaning ideological stance.. Since this can be rather subjective, I also created a liberalism scale that reflects individual values on government spending with a more liberal vision being those who value spending for social benefits and a more conservative view for those who do not wish for such spending or for those who wish to spend more to boost defence as a means to secure their country's identity and values. (See Appendix C for a more detailed description of this scale creation) This 9-point scale was generated from questions relating to public expenditure used in the survey. Topics for these questions include health, education, unemployment benefits, defense, old age pensions, business and industry investments, police and law enforcement and welfare benefits. Additionally, I add a value of economic equality to the measure as a means of understanding how each person values equality as part of their ideological outlook. This scale ranges from 0 to 9, with 0 being the most conservative and 9 being the most liberal. In the broadest context, respondents who score at the extreme ends of the scale are seen to be most conservative or liberal in terms of their outlook on spending, which can speak to their views on social values given their willingness to allocate government money to these groups.

4.4 Models for Analysis

In this study, I will utilize five different regression analyses for each of the two dependent measures to uncover patterns in the data and help answer the guiding questions posed in the introduction. I will utilize the variables discussed in the previous sections to find connections between place of residence and political ideologies.

The first regression will consider the core of the *Place Matters* hypothesis. I will regress the place of residence variable on the respondent's self-placement on the political ideology scale. The second, third and fourth regressions will factor in the effects of a country's level of democracy, regime age, and electoral formula at the time of the election into the picture to observe their influences on the relationship in the *Place Matters* hypothesis. A fifth regression will be employed to understand how the inclusion of all the variables influences the first hypothesis. These subsequent hypotheses are aimed at testing the components of Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 2, or the *Issue Stances* hypothesis, is constructed as an objective measure and check to the subjective ratings. The Liberalism scale will be a dependent measure on another series of regressions that mirror the first set. The major difference with this set of regressions from the preceding set is the differences in dependent measure such that the former is based on how individuals think they are placed on the political ideology spectrum based on self-judgment, the latter is the measure of ideology based on the individual's actual policy stances.

In the following section, I discuss the results for the regressions and comment on the observations that these regressions can suggest for the relationship between place of residence and political ideology across a sample of countries across the world.

5 Results

5.1 Self-Placement Ideology as a Dependent Measure

5.1.1 *Place Matters on the Worldwide Scale*

For the first model, a regression was conducted to see if there is a general trend between place and self-placement on a 10-point ideology scale. Furthermore, the regression was conducted separately for each election that was represented in this dataset. Table 3 shows the results for this regression on the global scale. This general trend suggests that, without considerations of any polity-specific factors, there is a difference between the global rural residents, small town and suburban residents in terms of their political ideologies. The trends described in this table suggests that, on a general level, there lies a difference between where people live and their political attitudes. However, several caveats are present in this analysis. From here, we are assuming that individuals conceptualize the places of residence in a similar fashion across geographic boundaries. Additionally, this analysis does not take into account country-specific measures such as the presence of the different possibilities of residence for the people. As I noted in Table 2, not all the countries have respondents from each place of residence as categorized in the CSES. Therefore, it would help to break down the analysis by country.

Table 3: **Self-Placement Ideology - Worldwide**

Place of Residence	Worldwide
Small Town	-.1338*** (.0336)
Suburban	-.2591*** (.0358)
Urban	-.0482 (.0300)
Constant	5.597*** (.0234)
N	47,821
R ²	0.0011
Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01	

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

5.1.2 Place Matters By Geographic Region

When the analysis is broken down by the countries themselves, we see a clearer patterns between place of residence and political attitudes of the respondents to the CSES survey. Each country is displayed and analyzed with their regional neighbors. Additionally, these trends are discussed in context of some key macro variables present for each polity that is displayed in Figure 2 and Appendix A.

Table 4 discusses the patterns seen by place of residence for countries in Central America and Latin America. From the results of the regression, we see that urban residents in Argentina are, on average, more liberal than their rural counterparts. This is slightly the case for Mexico at the time of their 2015 elections, but we do not see these trends else-

where. When considering the levels of democracy, electoral formula and regime age for these countries, the notable difference between the regimes is the age of the system. Residents of Argentina have been living in a democracy for a longer period of time than the other countries represented in this region.

Table 4: **Self-Placement Ideology - Central/Latin America**

Place of Residence	Argentina	Mexico (2012)	Mexico (2015)	Peru
Small Town	-	.6408***	-.4734	-
	-	(.2394)	(.3113)	-
Suburban	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Urban	-.9521***	-.1417	-.4084*	.0883
	(.2150)	(.1678)	(.2210)	(.1743)
Constant	6.495***	6.6516***	6.1690***	6.646***
	(.2046)	(.1493)	(.1998)	(.1564)
N	1,241	1,812	910	1,438
R ²	0.0156	0.0082	0.0041	0.0002

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

In Western Europe, as Table 5 shows, there is a clearer divide between place of residence and political ideologies, such that, for all of the counties displayed in the table, urban residents are significantly more likely to be more left-leaning than their rural counterparts. Additionally, suburban residents in Switzerland and Portugal are also more likely to be more left-leaning than their rural counterparts. Small town residents can be slightly more left-leaning than rural residents in Portugal, Great Britain and Germany.

The countries in this region are some of the free-est and oldest democracies in the world. Therefore, individuals here have had a longer time to socialize and develop their opinions based on factors relating to self-interest.

Table 5: Self-Placement Ideology - Western Europe

Place of Residence	Switzerland	Germany	France	Great Britain	Ireland	Portugal
Small Town	-.4973 (.4333)	-.3295*** (.1087)	-.1148 (.1321)	-.3773*** (.1392)	-	-.3717* (.2157)
Suburban	-.2663*** (.0852)	.0912 (.1693)	-.0246 (.1886)	-	-	-1.1139*** (.2421)
Urban	-.8650*** (.0976)	-.6361*** (.1311)	-.7254*** (.1706)	-.8310*** (.1538)	-.2494** (.0986)	-.8348*** (.2121)
Constant	5.462*** (.0681)	4.630*** (0.0845)	4.8086*** (.0943)	5.3992*** (.1197)	6.1491*** (.0772)	5.4661*** (.1483)
N	4,728	1,697	1,916	1,386	1,594	1,224
R ²	0.0191	0.0176	0.0102	0.0217	0.0040	0.0218

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

Countries in Northern Europe are also relatively free in terms of their level of democracy and time that such democracy is established. Like their Western European counterparts, Scandinavian countries hold similar governing systems but do not experience similar trends in terms of place of residence and political attitudes. As Table 6 suggests, Finland is the only country with a sharp urban-rural divide. Iceland's place divide comes with the suburban-rural split between the residents. While there are subtle levels of significance elsewhere, it is clear that there is a regional difference when it comes to how democracy influences individual's political attitudes based on place. In the light of countries of Western Europe, Northern European countries do not see the same patterns for residence divides even with similar freedoms and levels of democracy. This suggests that there are other differences in these regions that are worth considering.

Table 6: **Self-Placement Ideology - Scandinavia**

Place of Residence	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Small Town	.1418 (.1646)	.5194** (.2279)	.0568 (.1534)	-.1030 (.2644)
Suburban	-.0612 (.1452)	.7355*** (.2290)	-.0277 (.1847)	.0794 (.2690)
Urban	-.7128*** (.2202)	.3840* (.2220)	.0888 (.1429)	-.1723 (.2368)
Constant	5.6503*** (.1169)	4.990*** (.2006)	5.5985*** (.1080)	5.2230*** (.1973)
N	1,387	1,266	1,618	792
R ²	0.0111	0.0096	0.0004	0.0018

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

Turning to Central Europe, Table 7 suggests that there is a significant difference between place of residence and political attitudes in Slovenia and Slovakia. When we consider factors such as level of democracy and regime age as we did previously, freedom by democracy and stability of the regime are not necessarily trends that help shape the influence of place of residence and political ideologies here. As we previously established, it seems that the oldest regimes in each region lead to more pronounced differences between rural and urban residents, but this trend is not necessarily the case here. Austria is the oldest regime in the region, but urban residents are only slightly more left-leaning than their rural counterparts.

Table 7: Self-Placement Ideology - Central Europe

Place of Residence	Austria	Czech Republic	Poland	Slovakia	Slovenia
Small Town	-.2108 (.1540)	-.0223 (.1687)	.0829 (.1421)	.4318*** (.2000)	.0229 (.3262)
Suburban	-.1433 (.1570)	-.6091* (.3281)	-.1414 (.2210)	1.059 (.6711)	.1549** (.2491)
Urban	-.3005** (.1335)	.2860 (.1773)	-.2002 (.2042)	.8061*** (.2437)	-1.3416*** (.3169)
Constant	5.3726*** (.1219)	4.9135*** (.1300)	6.015*** (.1050)	4.7527*** (.1370)	4.6780 *** (.2060)
N	3,363	1,412	1,634	879	666
R ²	0.0018	0.0065	0.0016	0.0148	0.0629

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

In Southwestern Europe, the countries, especially those represented by two separate

elections, suggest that trends in the influence of place of residence vary by election. This pattern is perhaps the clearest to discern in this region given that there are more countries here with multiple elections represented in the present module of the dataset. In Greece and Romania, we see that the urban-rural divide was present in the former but not the latter of the elections. This can be attributed to other factors such as candidates who are running in that particular race or the policies that are the most salient in the region at the time. Table 8 shows these trends and also suggests that Bulgaria and Montenegro see trends of rural-urban division.

Table 8: Self-Placement Ideology - Southwestern Europe

Residence	Bulgaria	Greece ('12)	Greece ('15)	Montenegro	Serbia	Romania ('12)	Romania ('14)
Small Town	.5324 (.3313)	-.7220*** (.2656)	-.1458 (.3484)	-1.3499*** (.3282)	.2226 (.2098)	.1211 (.2304)	.2699 (.3097)
Suburban	.7821*** (.2914)	-1.058*** (.2557)	-.0685 (.3667)	-.9444** (.4876)	.1046 (.2900)	-.1422 (.5737)	.1463 (.4000)
Urban	.8838** (.3590)	-1.1088*** (.1797)	-.1737 (.3236)	-1.4676*** (.4987)	-.1549 (.2437)	.7782*** (.2105)	-.3691 (.3712)
Constant	4.739*** (.2267)	5.5410*** (.1271)	4.5961*** (.3089)	6.7329*** (.2409)	5.4643*** (.1239)	4.7229*** (.1438)	6.4406*** (.1890)
N	750	928	905	450	1,094	1,192	714
R ²	0.0118	0.0441	0.0005	0.0419	0.0020	0.130	0.0037

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

Yet, not all countries experience patterns of changing urban-rural division between elections. In Eastern Europe, as represented by Latvia in Table 9, the country did not see a shift in attitudes for respondents based on a change in election.

Table 9: Self-Placement Ideology - Eastern Europe

Place of Residence	Latvia (2011)	Latvia (2014)
Small Town	.1635 (.2433)	.0560 (.2224)
Suburban	- -	-.1285 (.2893)
Urban	-.2292 (.1850)	.0221 (.1996)
Constant	6.2775*** (.1360)	6.3285*** (.1396)
N	787	815
R ²	0.0041	0.0005

*Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01*

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

For the data that is available to the Middle East, Africa and Asia, there are simply not enough cases here to make general arguments about the region as a whole. Nonetheless, they are still useful in helping us to understand which countries have a sharper urban-rural divide.

To start, Table 10 highlights Israel as a country in the Middle East with sharp urban and suburban divides to the rural areas of the country in terms of its political ideology. This is not an effect that is seen in Turkey. A reason for this trend is the freedoms that

the people in these countries experience. While it is hard to tell if this pattern is true for all countries in the region, it is worth noting that the differences in the level of democracy here may have a great influence in individual political attitudes. Like the actors in Western Europe and much of the western, democratized world, Israel stands as one of the freest nations in the region. Their democracy has been established for 60 years at the time of this election. Meanwhile, Turkey is the least free of all of the countries that are surveyed in this Module. This limit in freedom of speech at the ballot box may also lay to limit freedom of association and expression for the people in the country, limiting the influence of one's vicinity and social group influence on one's political attitudes.

Table 10: **Self-Placement Ideology - Middle East**

Place of Residence	Israel	Turkey
Small Town	1.2822*** (.2427)	.0228 (.3120)
Suburban	1.5019*** (.2767)	.5457 (.3326)
Urban	- -	.2337 (.2764)
Constant	4.9193*** (.2067)	5.7434*** (.2268)
N	912	965
R ²	0.0371	0.0037

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

In the wake of the decolonization movement, countries in Africa are rather young

in terms of the length of time that their democracy has been in place. In both of the cases displayed in Table 11, it does not seem that the age of the democracy is the reason that place is likely to influence political ideology like other regions in the world. Kenya, a younger regime than South Africa, has a greater difference between urban and rural residents such that urban residents are more likely to be left-leaning at a larger factor (1.269 points on average to the left) than in other places in the world.

Table 11: **Self-Placement Ideology - Africa**

Place of Residence	Kenya	South Africa
Small Town	-	-
	-	-
Suburban	-	-
	-	-
Urban	-1.2690***	-.06719
	(.3701)	(.1664)
Constant	6.7690***	6.4965***
	(.1932)	(.1392)
N	506	967
R ²	0.0228	0.0002

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

In this sample of countries from Asia, the data in Table 12, suggests that neither Japan nor South Korea exhibit a significant trends towards having place influence a person's placement on the left-right scale. This is also visible in countries in the Pacific Island, and Australia. But in the cases of the countries displayed in table 13, the more democratic a

place is does not necessarily suggest that there is a greater division between urban and rural residents in terms of their political ideologies. The Philippines, for instance, is less free than Australia and New Zealand, but demonstrate a greater place divide in terms of political ideology.

Table 12: **Self-Placement Ideology - Asia**

Place of Residence	Japan	South Korea
Small Town	.1898 (.1463)	-.0347 (.2738)
Suburban	.1717 (.1574)	-.1176 (.4343)
Urban	.2429* (.1365)	.3140 (.2518)
Constant	5.4179*** (.1210)	5.264*** (.2158)
N	1,563	717
R^2	0.0020	0.0052

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

Table 13: Self-Placement Ideology - Pacific Islands

Place of Residence	Australia	New Zealand (2011)	New Zealand (2014)	Philippines
Small Town	-.2108 (.1540)	-.2283 (.2213)	-.1436 (.2864)	.6419*** (.2060)
Suburban	-.1433 (.1570)	- (.1570)	- (.1570)	-.1095 (.3871)
Urban	-.3005** (.1335)	-.2653 (.2114)	-.2151 (.2406)	.3048** (.1526)
Constant	5.372*** (.1219)	5.754*** (.1826)	5.9674*** (.2207)	7.009*** (.1030)
N	3,363	1,039	957	1,179
R ²	0.0018	0.0016	0.0035	0.0097

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

5.1.3 Summary: Place Matters?

In our analysis for the influence of place of residence on the political attitudes of individuals in certain countries of the world, we generate rather mixed conclusions based on the data. When we consider the differences between neighboring countries in terms of differences in regime age and level of democracy, these factors, nonetheless produce mixed results as an answer to the question about whether place matters in influencing political ideology. From the overall trends, we have evidence to suggest that place of residence does matter, but it depends on contextual factors that extend beyond the information that a country's regime stability, as determined by age, and the freedoms people enjoy, as determined by level of democracy, can tell us about the underpinnings of these observations.

5.2 Objective Issue Stances as a Dependent Measure

In the previous section, I looked at specific countries to try to discern the extent to which place matters in a person's self placement on the political ideology spectrum. From the results of that model, we can see that place matters, but the country to which the place is embedded in also matters to determine and influence the relationship between the variables. In this section, I aim to explore a more objective variable on liberalism to see the extent to which place really matters in influencing individual political attitudes towards economic and social inequality. As previous research suggests (notably, [Walsh \(2012\)](#)), residents of rural environments tend to be more conservative when it comes to social spending, even if the results will work in their favor.

The analysis employed in this section will look at general trends to see if there is indeed an influence between place and positions on spending. A variable was created for this analysis which aggregates the views that people have for spending government

money on various social services in the country (see Appendix C for more information on variable coding).

Table 14: Issue Stances - General Trends

Place of Residence	Worldwide
Small Town	-.1005*** (.0136)
Suburban	-.1737*** (.0162)
Urban	-.1306*** (.0123)
Constant	5.7164*** (.0093)
N	42,500
R ²	0.0037
Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01	

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

From the results that reflects general trends in the world based on the new liberalism variable, we see that there are some differences between place of residence and issue stances. Looking at Table 14 alongside the earlier Table 3, we see that there urban-rural divide is more pronounced than it was before. (Both Tables are reproduced in Appendix D for simplicity in comparison)

5.3 Considerations of Regime Age,, Level of Democracy, and Electoral Formula

In the analysis of results for self-placement ideology, we considered if a country's macro variables has any influence on the relationship between place of residence and political ideology.

To test the core of Hypothesis 3, we will turn next to how these macro variables influence the context where each respondent casts their ballot. I will analyze the big picture before diving into the specifics regarding each factor. Therefore, we will look at the *Polity Difference* hypothesis before diving into *Level of Democracy*, *Regime Age*, and *Electoral Formula* hypotheses.

Table 15 shows the influence of each of the macro variables, when taken together, on the relationship between place of residence and individual placement on political ideology and on the objective measures seen in the liberalism measure.

Table 15: All Macro Variables - General Trends

Variable	Self-Placement	Liberalism
<i>Place of Residence</i>		
Small Town	-.1000*** (.0339)	-.0018 (.0130)
Suburban	-.1517*** (.0401)	.0147 (.0157)
Urban	-.0517* (.0304)	-.0420*** (.0117)
<i>Democracy</i>	-.1995*** (.0110)	-.0421*** (.0040)
<i>Regime Age</i>	-.0014*** (.0002)	-.0075*** (.0001)
<i>Electoral Formula</i>	.0778*** (.0189)	-.0440*** (.0070)
Constant	7.3627*** (.1067)	6.5149*** (.0391)
N	46,555	41,373
R ²	0.0135	0.1273

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

For the purposes of simplicity in the forthcoming discussion, I will analyze the influence of both dependent variables, but primarily focusing on the self-placement of individuals on the ideology spectrum. From the previous discussion in this section, we can see that the major difference between the different places lie primarily in the self-placement

score rather than the liberalism variable. While the objective score is interesting in its own ways, and it will be considered, the weight will be placed on how people see themselves and their place on the political spectrum.

6 General Discussion and Conclusion

From the results of the data analyses, we can see that...

6.1 Summary of Findings

6.2 Limitations and Future Directions

Appendix A Regimes Broken Down by Macro Variables

Table 16: Regimes by Level of Democracy, Regime Age, and Electoral Formula

Country	Level of Democracy	Age of Regime	Electoral Formula
Argentina	9	32	Proportional
Australia	10	112	Majoritarian
Austria	9	24	Proportional
Bulgaria	8	24	Proportional
Czech Republic	9	20	Proportional
Finland	10	71	Proportional
France	9	43	Majoritarian
Germany	10	23	Mixed
Great Britain	10	135	Majoritarian
Greece (2015)	10	40	Proportional
Ireland	10	90	Proportional
Israel	10	60	Proportional
Japan	10	61	Mixed
Kenya	9	11	Majoritarian
Latvia (2014)	8	23	Proportional
Mexico (2015)	8	18	Mixed
Montenegro	9	6	Proportional
Norway	10	68	Proportional
New Zealand (2014)	10	137	Mixed
Peru	9	15	Proportional
Philippines	8	26	Majoritarian
Poland	10	20	Proportional
Portugal	10	39	Proportional
Romania (2014)	9	18	Mixed
Serbia	8	6	Proportional
Slovakia	10	23	Proportional
Slovenia	10	20	Proportional
South Africa	9	20	Proportional
South Korea	8	24	Mixed
Sweden	10	97	Proportional
Switzerland	10	163	Proportional
Turkey	3	32	Proportional
United States	10	203	Majoritarian

Source: Polity IV Project and CSES Macro Report

Appendix B Descriptions of Variables

Table 17: Variables Used in Analyses

Variable Name	Variable Number	Description	Outside Source
Election ID Variable	D1004	Polity and Election Year	-
Place of Residence	D2031	Rural or Urban Residence	-
Left-Right Self	D3014	Self-rate ideology	-
Level of Democracy	D5051.1	Democracy-Autocracy at Election	Polity IV Project
Age of Current Regime	D5052	Age of Regime in Years	Polity IV Project
Electoral Formula	D5058	Method of Election	CSES Macro Report

Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module IV Codebook available at http://www.cses.org/datacenter/module4/data/cses4_codebook_part2_variables.txt

Table 18: Issue Stances/Liberalism Scale Variables

Variable Name	Variable Number	Description
Health	D3001_1	More or Less Public Expenditure on Health
Education	D3001_2	More or Less Public Expenditure on Education
Unemployment Benefits	D3001_3	More or Less Public Expenditure on Unemployment
Defense	D3001_4	More or Less Public Expenditure on Defense
Old-Age Pensions	D3001_5	More or Less Public Expenditure on Pensions
Business and Industry	D3001_6	More or Less Public Expenditure on Businesses
Police	D3001_7	More or Less Public Expenditure on Law-Enforcement
Welfare Benefits	D3001_8	More or Less Public Expenditure on Welfare
Income Inequality	D3004	Should Government do more for Income Inequality?

Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Module IV Codebook available at http://www.cses.org/datacenter/module4/data/cses4_codebook_part2_variables.txt

Appendix C Creation of the Issue Stances/Liberalism Scale

C.1 Variable Selection

The CSES provides several issue stance items that reflect how individuals feel toward political parties and policies. The variables described in Table 18 show the variables that were selected as part of the liberalism scale because it reflects rather universal issues that are at the core of what citizens in each country would have to decide on in terms of the way they see their government spending their tax dollars. Additionally, each of these variables are focused on identifying how individuals feel about certain social issues based on their level of comfort in allocating money to the particular cause. As a results, we can see ther interaction of economic and social policy attitudes at work and see how they interact with place to build a person's ideology.

C.2 Variable Coding

The CSES codes the public expenditure variables (D3001) as follows:

1. Much more than now
2. Somewhat more than now
3. The same as now
4. Somewhat less than now
5. Much less than now
7. Volunteered: Refused
8. Volunteered: Don't Know
9. Missing

For each of the variables, the response corresponding to the intention that an individual would be very willing to see the government spend more money on a particular issue

(such as better health care), would be coded as 1 for most liberal. This scale places the most conservative at 0, meaning that the individual does not want government to step in to influence the particular matter. Some of the variables are reverse coded to reflect conservatives' typical greater favoritism towards increased defense spending or other factors that would make one's country look stronger in reference to others. Each of the answers in the middle are scaled accordingly between 0 and 1. Any refusals to answer the question, don't knows and missing answers are all treated as missing data and excluded from the research analysis.

Additionally, the CSES codes the variable on income inequality (D3004) as follows:

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree 3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
7. Volunteered: Refused
8. Volunteered: Don't Know
9. Missing

This income inequality follows the same recoding logic as the public expenditure items that preceded it. In these cases, an individual who would be most willing to see the government do something to curtail income inequality would be coded as 1 for most liberal, and someone who would not want the government to step in to fix the issue at all would be coded as 0, for most conservative. Like the previous variables, the answers in the middle are scaled accordingly and all refusals in answer, don't knows, and missing responses are treated as missing data.

Additionally, it is important to note that not all respondents of all countries were asked each of the questions. Therefore, if applicable, the countries that are missing one of the

nine variables are also omitted from the analysis

C.3 Liberalism - Variable Generation

The liberalism variable was generate by an aggregation of the 9 questions. Each of the variables were recoded and summed. The final score yielded a 0-9 scale where a person who scored a 9 is evaluated as the most liberal in terms of their view on economic and social policy, whereas someone with a score of 0 would be the most opposite.

Appendix D *Place Matters* - General Trends

The tables depicting general trends are reproduced below for an easier side-by-side comparison.

Table 19: **General Trends of Ideology**

Place of Residence	Self-Placement	Liberalism
Small Town	-.1338*** (.0336)	-.1005*** (.0136)
Suburban	-.2591*** (.0358)	-.1737 *** (.0162)
Urban	-.0482 (.0300)	-.1309*** (.123)
Constant	5.597*** (.0234)	5.7164*** (.0093)
N	47,821	42,500
R^2	0.0011	0.0037

Notes: *p<.1, **p<.05. ***p<.01

Reference: A rural place of residence serves as the baseline for comparison

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