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Real or Imagined? American Urban-Rural Differences in Political Values

Kristin Lunz Trujillo[1] and **Jennifer Lin**[2]

Abstract

Differences in values theoretically underlie urban-rural political division. However, it is unclear whether this division is real or perceived. This distinction matters because politically discordant groups can more easily reconcile if they share common goals and values, whereas highly divergent value systems can make compromise more difficult. Using data from original surveys of US adults, we examine whether urban versus rural residents vary in how important they rate seven core political values. We find no consistent differences between metropolitan and rural/small-town residents, suggesting urban-rural value differences may be more perceived. However, we do find distinct and substantial political value differences for rural identity versus urban identity for freedom, individualism, social order, and morality. These results suggest that Americans largely share political values across the urban-rural spectrum, which provides an avenue for common ground in this split. However, place-based identities may have somewhat disparate value systems that could impact the durability of their political division.

Keywords

values, urban-rural, place identity, political geography, political behavior

A primary feature of the contemporary American political climate is division. Although division is not inherently bad in politics—in fact, it is unavoidable and can be a good thing—it can become problematic in some cases. Specifically, if political division is emotionally deep-seated and so wide that one side's morality, perceptions of reality, and values cannot be understood by the other side, the health of democracy and its ability to function is jeopardized (Greene 2014; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Mason 2018). Common underlying goals, identities, and values are therefore necessary, at least to some extent, in a functioning democratic society.

One such major contemporary political division is urban versus rural America. The US has experienced an increase over the past few decades in urban-rural division across various political behaviors such as vote choice, partisanship, political participation, federal government attitudes, and populist support (Cramer 2016; Gimpel et al., 2020; Lin and Lunz Trujillo 2023; McKee 2008; Rodden 2019; Scala and Johnson 2017; Shepherd 2025). Such work has found urban-rural division to be present above and beyond other major determinants of political behavior, including partisanship, race, college degree attainment, and more. Furthermore, extant work has found that urban Americans *perceive* rural Americans to have a different values system, and that rural Americans hold some degree of animosity towards urban Americans (Lyons and Utych 2023; Parker et al., 2018).

Given the importance of political values for a variety of political outcomes (Goren 2005; Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, 2009; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione, 2010), and of finding common ground for the health of our democracy in an era of heightened "us-versus-them" divisions, we investigate whether rural and urban Americans do indeed hold differences in political values. We do this by examining original survey data collected from American adults, where we ask participants how important seven political values are to them. From these analyses, we find that most political values do not on average differ between metropolitan and rural/small town Americans. In addition, we look at values across urban

[1]Department of Political Science, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA, USA
[2]Department of Political Science, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, USA

Corresponding Author:
Kristin Lunz Trujillo, Department of Political Science, Boston College, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, USA.
Email: krissylunz@gmail.com

and rural place identity and not just urban and rural residence. Notably, we find that people who identify as rural place particular importance on Morality and Freedom compared to people who identify as an urban person, controlling for other factors. Further, people who identify more strongly with urban areas place more importance on Social Order and Individualism, compared to people who more strongly identify with rural areas. Other values, such as Patriotism and Equality, are shared by both urban and rural identifiers.

In other words, this study suggests that differences in urban versus rural political values are more perceived. Such findings align with previous work suggesting that urban-rural political division may be a more *partisan* division in our relatively nationalized political climate (Lin and Lunz Trujillo 2024). However, there are some substantial political value differences across the urban-rural *identity* spectrum, also aligning with previous work finding that rural identity is more predictive of political attitudes than residence alone (Lunz Trujillo 2024; Nemerever and Rogers 2021; Thompson 2023). The relevance of identity versus physical location suggests a few things. First, according to accepted social psychology theories on the formation of group identity, people who are more strongly attached to a group are more likely to adopt the perceived values of that group, compared to people who may be a part of a group but do not feel particularly close to it (Huddy 2003; Tajfel 1970). Second, place-based identity encompasses not only people who currently live in a certain physical context, but also those who may have grown up or socialized in this context and then left (Lunz Trujillo 2024). This is not a trivial number, given the movement of people to suburban and urban areas over the course of the 20th Century in the United States. Such experiences would have the potential to impact worldview and values; for example, someone who grew up in a rural area, and left to live in a city for economic reasons, may still feel that they are more of a 'rural' person and hold 'rural' values despite their current location. Accordingly, in some cases using only current residence alone would not sufficiently capture such an effect. With that said, we strongly stress that this does not mean place-based identity is *always* a better predictor of politically relevant attitudes than residence alone. Researchers should consider various ways of measuring urban-rural depending on their specific goals and research.

In addition, these results suggest that appealing to certain political values may not be widening the urban-rural division in the US per se, or that urban versus rural residents use different values when making sense of the political world. This suggests that presenting political values as unified American values may be effective in reducing polarization across the geographic density divide. However, the identity-based spectrum shows some difference in how people weigh values, and people in different areas holding these identities might be more prone to values-based conflict.

Political Values

For a society to sustain itself, members in the group or tribe must have a set of social, political and moral norms that will govern how people behave and interact with one another (Greene 2014; Turiel 2002). The foundational beliefs behind this common set of norms that people have become the underlying value system for how a society should be governed. There are many universal values that people deem important, such as freedom from harm, loyalty to one's tribe, respect for authority, and equality under the law (Haidt 2012), and societies around the world have adopted these values, to varying degrees, in their governing principles.

Using the US as an example, the framers of the Constitution envisioned a country where all interests and factions can be equally represented under the law (Madison 1787), and that the public would enjoy freedom from tyrannical government (Madison 1788). These were the motivating principles behind creating a legislative body representing the people and the states, and a system of checks and balances. As De Tocqueville (1835) observed, the American political culture is a reflection of these principles in government. Americans have valued their individualism, freedom, and equality before the law. They valued social order and would engage in public forums and community events to make their voices heard and protect their communities. Hartz (1955) elucidated these principles even further in *The Liberal Tradition in America*, citing that the American form of liberalism was born out of a lack of a feudal tradition. People, regardless of their political leanings, shared a general sense of how things should work, as encapsulated in the Lockean form of liberalism where people believe in equality under the law, individualism, and freedom.

While there may be a universal set of values that people find important, societies, as seen in governing systems, might not apply these values equally when determining how the state should be governed. This was the concern that motivated scholars like Hartz (1955), and Inglehart and Welzel (2005) as democracies worldwide seemed to value common things like individualism and freedom, they did not manifest equally when put into practice. Haidt (2012) observed this too, among the moral values that different groups and cultures held, and the Moral Foundations Theory was designed to encapsulate the different values people have, and to describe cultural differences between societies who emphasized some values more than others. We see these differences perhaps the most between collectivist and individualistic countries (Triandis 1988), where the former is most centered around loyalty to the

family and other core social groups, whereas the latter is more connected to individual development, curiosity and personal freedom. Such differences are also conceptualized as the strict father or nurturing parent framework (Lakoff 2010), where the former is rooted in obedience and the latter in individualism.

In other words, people vary in their core political values, which in turn shape their core assumptions and interactions with the democratic system and attitudes for how the country should be governed (McCann 1997). Values serve as focusing points for making sense of political complexity (Converse 1964). As such, different values help predict different policy stances, candidate choices, ideological orientation, and voting (Goren 2005; Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, 2009; Jacoby 2014; Lamont 2009; Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione, 2010).

Due to increasing polarization (Abramowitz 2010; Mason 2018; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2016), liberals and conservatives in the United States have become divided on the values that are previously observed to divide countries based on a collectivist or individualistic orientation (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, 2009). Liberals tend to value the nurturing parent framework (Lakoff 2010) and be more likely to value freedom from harm and equality under the law. Conservatives, on the other hand, are more aligned with the strict father framework and tend to adopt the values central to collectivist countries, like respect for authority and loyalty to one's group. Similarly, Goren (2005) finds that partisanship drives support for certain political values, such as equal opportunity and limited government. Jacoby (2014) in particular demonstrates that variations in policy preferences across political parties, especially for "culture war" issues, are driven by differences in political values.

As the urban-rural divide in the United States becomes more prominently correlated with the liberal and conservative wings of American politics, we ask whether this creates differences in the emphasis on the values that have been central to American political culture since its founding—namely, patriotism, freedom, individualism, equality, among others—or if urban-rural differences in values exist independently of partisanship and demographics.

Urban-Rural Division and the Role of Values

Before examining potential values differences across the urban-rural spectrum in the US, it is worth considering where urban-rural division comes from in the first place. Extant research puts forth various explanations for why urban-rural division exists. While we discuss these factors separately, they likely interact with one another to create geographically concentrated political tendencies.

The first area of this literature prioritizes the role of geographic sorting, or the idea that people move to areas that are homophilous along demographic and potentially even political lines (Bishop 2008; Motyl et al., 2014, 2020). Indeed, this has occurred to some extent: urban centers have increasingly become areas disproportionately higher in college educated, non-white, and younger populations (all of which lean Democrat), while rural areas have a greater proportion of non-college educated, white, older, and Christian individuals (Gimpel et al. 2020; Rodden 2010, 2019). Some of this geographic sorting may also be along values, that is, people want to move to areas congruent with their own values systems (Motyl et al., 2014).

The extent to which the geographic sorting argument holds is potentially limited, however, especially for sorting along partisan lines specifically (Darmofal and Strickler 2016; Gimpel et al., 2020; Mummolo and Nall 2017). Martin and Webster (2020) find that only a minority of geographic political tendencies are accounted for by demographic sorting. In other words, contextual effects of place seem to matter. These contextual effects, according to relevant literature, include local economic factors and social pressures.

In terms of local economic factors, a body of literature points to the role of the declining white working class—which disproportionately makes up rural America compared to nonrural America—through the loss of blue-collar jobs and the increased demand for workers to hold a college degree (Rodden 2019). Indeed, in terms of economic growth, US non-metro areas in the 2010s did not recover from the Great Recession, on average, while metro areas did (Pender et al. 2019). Further compounding these issues is population loss in rural areas, leading to a decline in quality of community as well as economic power. Such broader economic conditions have led to feelings of relative economic deprivation as well as increases in "deaths of despair" and had also led to increased support for Donald Trump's presidential bids—particularly in areas most affected by rural working-class decline (Gest 2016; Mettler and Brown 2022; Monnat and Brown 2017; Scala and Johnson 2017). Furthermore, working-class America has its own set of values distinct from white collar America (Lamont 2009).

Existing literature also finds that contextual social and cultural pressures exert influence on people's political behavior. For instance, neighbors and friends can impact political and cultural attitudes such as partisanship and voter turnout (Condon, Larimer, and Panagopoulos 2016; Lyons 2011, 2014). Accordingly, geographic sorting may work in tandem with the social pressures based in existing contextual norms to encourage certain political attitudes and behaviors.

Still other work has emphasized the role of group identification. People naturally form into groups and

begin identifying with those groups to gain positive benefits, including heightened self-esteem and feelings of belonging (Abrams and Hogg 1988; Huddy 2003; Tajfel and Turner 1979). People will do this even if the groups are invented, minimal, and arbitrary (Tajfel 1970). In doing so, group identifiers aim to create both shared group norms and values, as well as positive distinctions between group members compared to non-group members, regardless of whether these differences are real or perceived (Huddy 2003; Tajfel 1970; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Included under this umbrella is social or group identity relating to place. Previous work has found that place-based identity—including rural identity—impacts political behavior in the US and elsewhere (Borwein and Lucas 2021; Cramer 2016; Lunz Trujillo 2022, 2024; Lyons and Utych 2023; Thompson 2023). In this work, however, it is important to clarify that such place-based identities are measured in a national, "pan-rural" or "pan-urban" American sense. People who are rural identifiers, for instance, might feel a shared sense of grievance against centers of power in the US (which typically align with urban areas) even regardless of where they currently live (Cramer 2016; Jacobs and Munis 2023; Lunz Trujillo 2024).

Many of the above-discussed factors point to norms and values differing across the urban-rural spectrum, and frame them either as a cause of socio-cultural division or an outcome. It is unclear whether this difference relates more to geographic sorting (e.g., perhaps greater levels of religiosity in rural areas foment more conservative values) versus being a contextual effect inherent to place (e.g., perhaps the nature of cities as hubs of change makes people more open to new ideas, fostering values like multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism). In either case, previous work has pointed to specific lifestyle differences and values being a significant factor in urban-rural division. For instance, cosmopolitanism in Europe has been found to explain urban-rural division (Maxwell 2019). Measures based on the Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values (Schwartz 2012) were found to have urban-rural splits in the European context, though this study does not control for political factors (Weckroth and Kemppainen 2023). Further, other work suggests that rural residents in Canada are more likely than urban residents to think that new rural residents will adopt rural-specific values (Borwein, Lucas, and Anderson 2024). In the US context, moral traditionalism has been theorized to account for urban-rural division and may be a better explanation for political attitudes in some cases compared to rural consciousness or resentment (Gimpel et al. 2020; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022; Rodden 2019). Further, rural Americans perceive rural areas to be hardworking and to value first-hand knowledge (Cramer 2016; Diamond 2023; Lunz Trujillo 2022). In-progress work also points to collectivism potentially being higher among rural identifiers (but not among rural residents) in the US (Lunz Trujillo et al. 2023).

Other work has found that urban residents versus rural residents at least *perceive* themselves to have different values (Lyons and Utych 2023; Parker et al. 2018). A perceived difference in values may in fact reflect an actual difference in values, but if so, it's also unclear whether such a difference is driven by rurality per se, or if it is an artefact of different demographic groups clustered spatially. Conversely, a perceived difference may just be that—perceived. Urban-rural division, as noted above, can be thought of as a groups-based or identity-based division. The in-group might therefore try to distinguish themselves from the out-group through various means, including an effort to think of themselves as morally better than the out-group (Huddy 2003; Scheepers and Ellemers 2019)—but whether this is an actual difference grounded in reality is unclear.

Given the importance of values when it comes to political attitudes and behavior, as well as its apparent role in American socio-political urban-rural division, we investigate whether political values actually vary across the urban-rural spectrum in the US, or whether this is just a perceived difference. We propose a set of competing hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis: The mean scores of different political values do not vary between urban and rural residents, without controlling for demographic and political factors.

Alternative Hypothesis A: The mean scores of different political values do not vary between urban and rural residents, once demographic and political factors are controlled for.

Alternative Hypothesis B: The mean scores of different political values vary between urban and rural residents, regardless of whether demographic and political factors are controlled for.

Support for the *Null Hypothesis* implies that urban-rural differences are perceived. If we find support for *Alternative Hypothesis A*, this suggests that urban-rural differences are real but largely an artifact of the demographic and political differences that vary across the urban-rural spectrum, rather than being something context specific or something else. Finally, support for *Alternative Hypothesis B* suggests that urban-rural differences in values are real, and that there may be something either context specific or unaccounted for that drives these differences.

We also have an additional, non-competing hypothesis: that value differences will be more pronounced among people who *identify* as a rural or urban person. Given that people who identify with a group tend to adopt the norms

and values of that group (Huddy 2003; Tajfel and Turner 1979), such group identifiers will likely adopt these values even if there are not actual value differences between groups otherwise. This is because people who identify with groups aim to create positive distinction between members of their own group and non-members, even if these groups are minimal and arbitrary (Tajfel 1970). Therefore:

> **Hypothesis 1**: The mean scores of different political values will vary more between urban identifiers and rural identifiers, compared to the difference in mean scores on political values between urban and rural residents.

Finally, we also perform exploratory analyses to see *which* (if any) values vary across the urban-rural spectrum, and by rural versus urban identity, over others.

Data, Measures, and Methods

To test the expectations outlined above, we fielded surveys of American adults in August 2023 using Lucid Theorem (N = 2,799) and Mechanical Turk (N = 487), totaling 3,286 responses. Though we use online opt-in samples, previous research suggests platforms such as Lucid are able to deliver samples that closely align with US demographic benchmarks, and are able to produce results similar to other comparable outcomes (Coppock and McClellan 2019). That said, given the constraints of online non-probability survey samples, we also opted to create and use post-stratification weights for our analyses. Please see the Supplemental Material for more information on sample and weight characteristics. We also note that the survey responses collected via MTurk were from an initial pilot. We made the decision to pool participants from both MTurk and Lucid for two main reasons. First, previous research suggests that studies and experiments using Lucid replicates findings from MTurk (Coppock and McClellan 2019). Second, Lucid already recruits participants from a wide range of respondent pools and vendors, rather than having its own singular pool like MTurk.[6] Therefore, the participants from Lucid are not Lucid-specific and are instead already a combination of several different participant pools already. Further, the small sample size using MTurk alone does not yield sufficient power to determine a moderate effect size, let alone the subsample analyses necessary for the present study. Similar strategies have been implemented in recent published work (Lin and Lunz Trujillo 2025).

To measure political values, we begin with a preamble[1] and then ask respondents about seven political values, in a randomized order: freedom, equality, economic security, morality, individualism, social order, and patriotism. Participants then indicate how important the value is on a scale from one to five. These questions are based on Jacoby (2014).[2] Full question wording can be found in the Supplemental Material.

Here, we use Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes to measure residency across the urban-rural spectrum.[3] We use this designation due to its ability to merge with zip codes, which our survey data set has available, rather than relying on measures dependent on county or Census tract. We classify participants' RUCA codes into three main categories: Metropolitan (codes 1–3), Micropolitan (codes 4–6), and Rural/Small Town (codes 7–10).

The distribution of these categories includes 2,546 respondents in the Metropolitan category (80 percent of the sample), 370 in the Micropolitan category (10 percent), and 314 in the Rural/Small Town category (10 percent). These distributions are roughly the same with and without applying survey weights and roughly match national benchmarks (which are 78 percent Metropolitan, 11 percent Micropolitan, and 11 percent Rural/Small Town).[4]

We also look at the relationship between political values and place identity along the urban-rural spectrum. In previous and ongoing literature (and as indicated above), rural identity in particular often more strongly predicts rural-specific attitudes than rural residency alone (Cramer 2016; Lunz Trujillo 2024; Lunz Trujillo et al. 2023; Thompson 2023). Therefore, we include both urban identity and rural identity in this study's models, based on previous questions measuring social identification along identity strength and importance (Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe 2015; Lunz Trujillo 2024). Respondents were asked two questions about rural identity (which includes self-view and importance of identifying with rural areas and small towns): "How much is being from a **small town or rural area** part of your identity?" (None at all/A little bit/Somewhat/A fair amount/a great deal), and (2) "How important is being a **small town or rural** resident to you?" (Not at all important/A little important/Somewhat important/Very important/Extremely important).

Respondents were also asked two questions about urban identity; these two questions are very similar to the rural identity questions. These questions are as follows: (1) "How much is being from an **urban area** part of your identity?" (None at all/A little bit/Somewhat/A fair amount/a great deal), and (2) "How important is being from an **urban area** to you?" (Not at all important/A little important/Somewhat important/Very important/Extremely important).

Note that the urban and rural identity questions were asked to all participants, given previous research finding that rural identifiers tend to hold similar attitudes regardless of current place of residence (Lunz Trujillo 2024).

The primary analyses used in this paper are OLS regressions with the different values as outcome variables. The main independent variables in these regressions

include place of residence and degree of identification with either urban or rural. Since all participants answered the rural identity and urban identity questions, we also created a measure of the difference in urban-rural identity preference by subtracting the urban identity score from the rural identity score. Positive values indicate greater rural identity preference, while negative values indicate greater urban identity preference.

The analyses in this study also include control variables for respondent partisanship (7-point), race/ethnicity (African American, Asian American, Hispanic, White, Other/2+ races), gender (non-female, female), education level (6-point), income level (16-point), age category (18–24, 25–44, 45–64, 65+), religious attendance (6-point), and Census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West). Please see the Supplemental Materials for full question wording.

Results

First, we consider descriptive results of the mean value scores by place of residence (Figure 1).[5] Overall, there are no statistically significant differences across the three residence categories. That said, the confidence intervals are fairly wide given the relatively small number of non-metropolitan participants. The widest difference in averages across Metropolitan and Rural/Small Town residents are for Freedom and Social Order. However, in addition to the lack of statistical significance, this is a substantively small 0.13 point difference for both values, as the values variables have response scales that go from one to five. Using a different, binary coding scheme of RUCA codes, we find that there are no significant differences between mean scores by Metropolitan versus rural. See Supplement Part F for details.

Next, we turn to weighted regressions that use urban and rural identity variables to predict values with control variables included. Note that there are no small town or suburb identity options because the identity questions asked only cover urban and rural identities. The urban and rural identity questions were asked to all participants, given previous research finding that rural identifiers tend to hold similar attitudes regardless of current place of

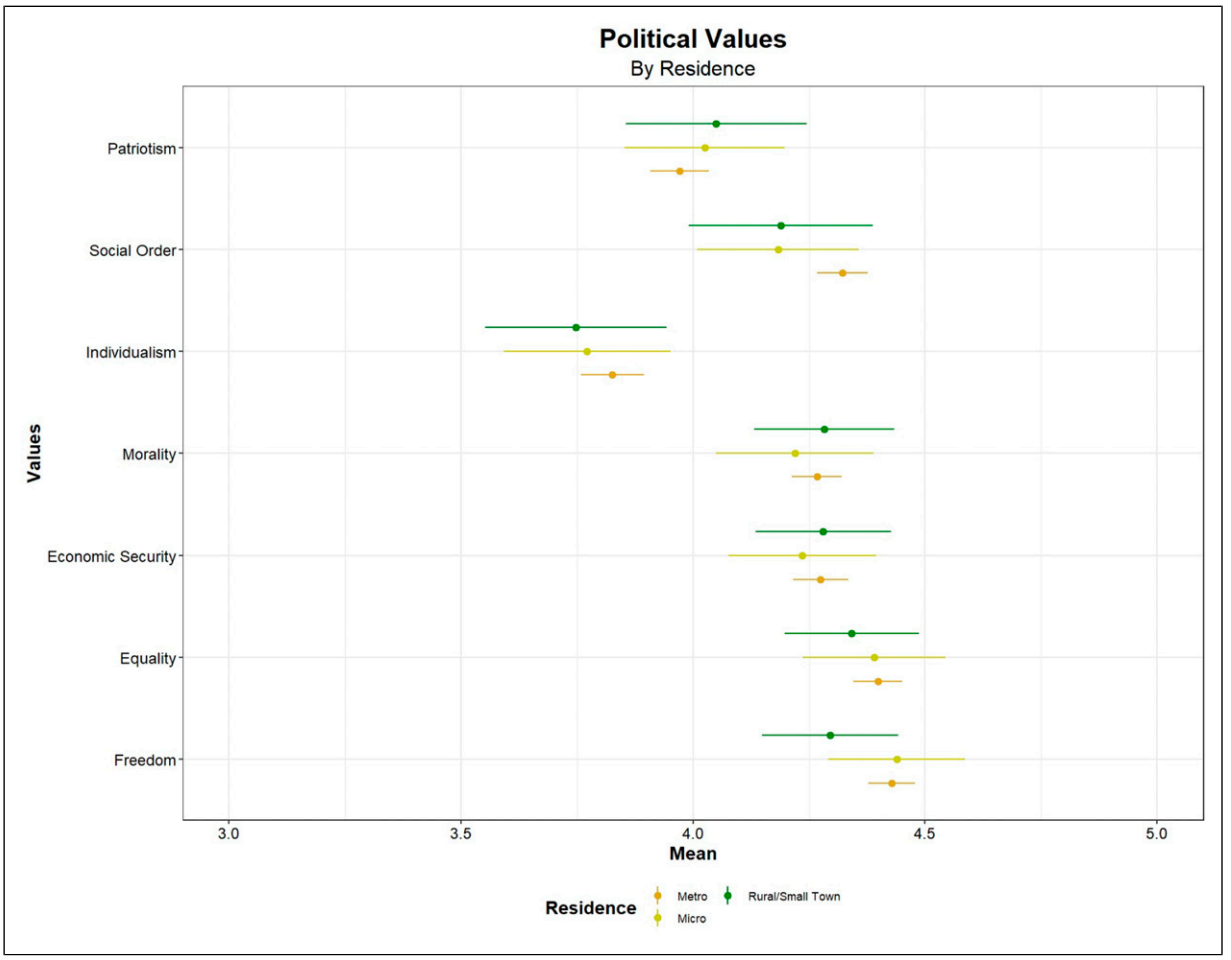

Figure 1. Mean political values by place of residence.

residence (Lunz Trujillo 2024). All relationships between the values for urban identity and for rural identity are positive or not statistically significant, controlling for other factors (Figure 2). Rural identity significantly (at $p < 0.05$) predicts Morality ($\beta = 0.446$), Economic Security ($\beta = 0.582$), and Freedom ($\beta = 0.816$), while urban identity does not. Conversely, urban identity significantly (at $p < 0.05$) predicts Patriotism ($\beta = 0.295$), Social Order ($\beta = 0.451$), and Individualism ($\beta = 0.423$). However, the coefficients for Freedom between rural identity and urban identity are not statistically significant from one another. Equality is valued at similar levels across rural identity ($\beta = 0.374$) and urban identity ($\beta = 0.301$). Full model results can be found in the Supplement Part E.

In addition, we verify that there are indeed significant differences in these values across urban versus rural identity, which can be found in Figure 3. Full results can be found in the Supplemental Material part D. Here, we confirm that Social Order and Individualism are more associated with urban identity, while rural identity is more associated with Freedom and Morality. Economic Security is not significantly different between rural identity and urban identity (in contrast to the finding in the previous paragraph), and neither is Equality or Patriotism (in line with the findings in the previous paragraph).

To summarize (e.g., testing *Hypothesis 1*), rural identity is more associated with Morality and Freedom values, while urban identity is associated with Social Order and Individualism. Patriotism and Equality are values shared across both identity groups, as is Economic Security (though with a slight rural identity bias). In other words, rural identity significantly predicts a set of values that are distinct from the set of values significantly predicted by urban identity. This suggests values differences exist to some degree across the urban-rural *identity* spectrum.

Discussion

Given the above results, two main takeaways emerge. First, urban and rural residents are generally more likely to rate the examined values as important at similar levels. The findings for urban versus rural residence therefore mostly support the *Null Hypothesis*. Second, there do appear to be some significant values-based differences across the urban-rural *identity* spectrum in support of *Hypothesis 1*. The individuals who more strongly identify as rural are more likely to rate some of the values examined—that is, Morality and Freedom—as more important than those who do not. Conversely, those who more strongly identify with being from a city place more importance on Social Order and Individualism. In other words, place-based identity across the urban-rural

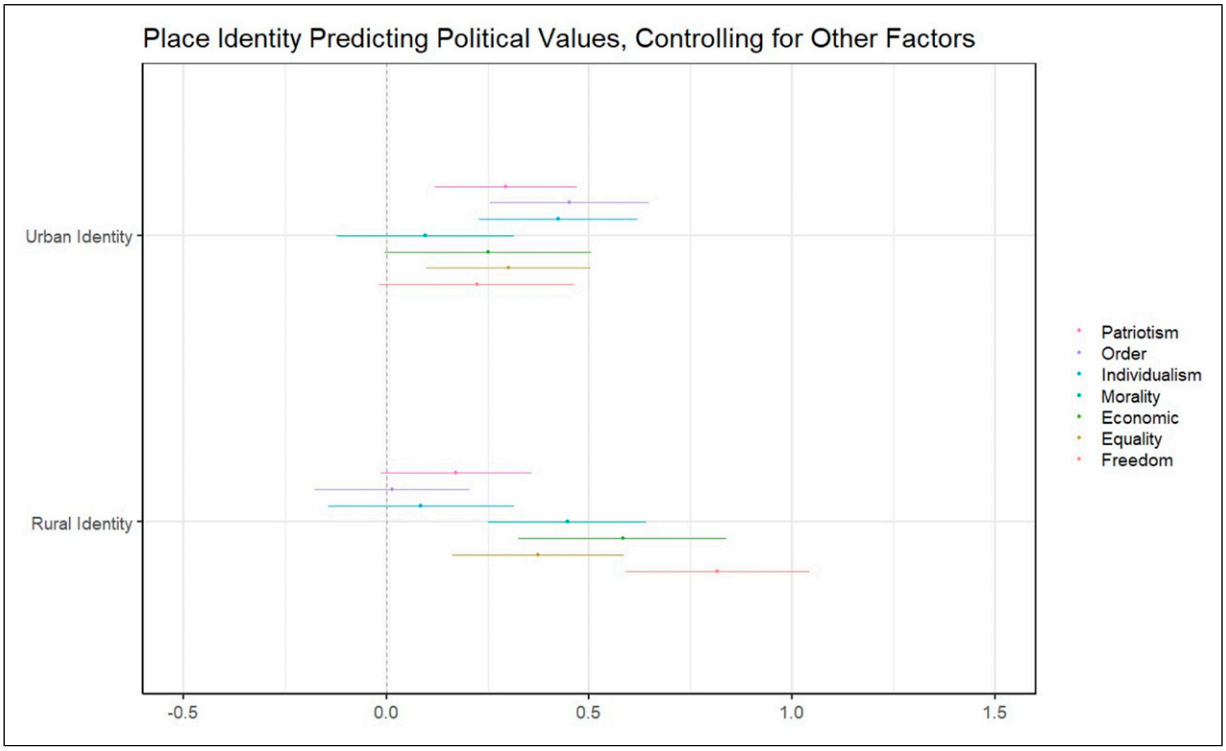

Figure 2. Predicting political values by place identity, with controls (not shown).

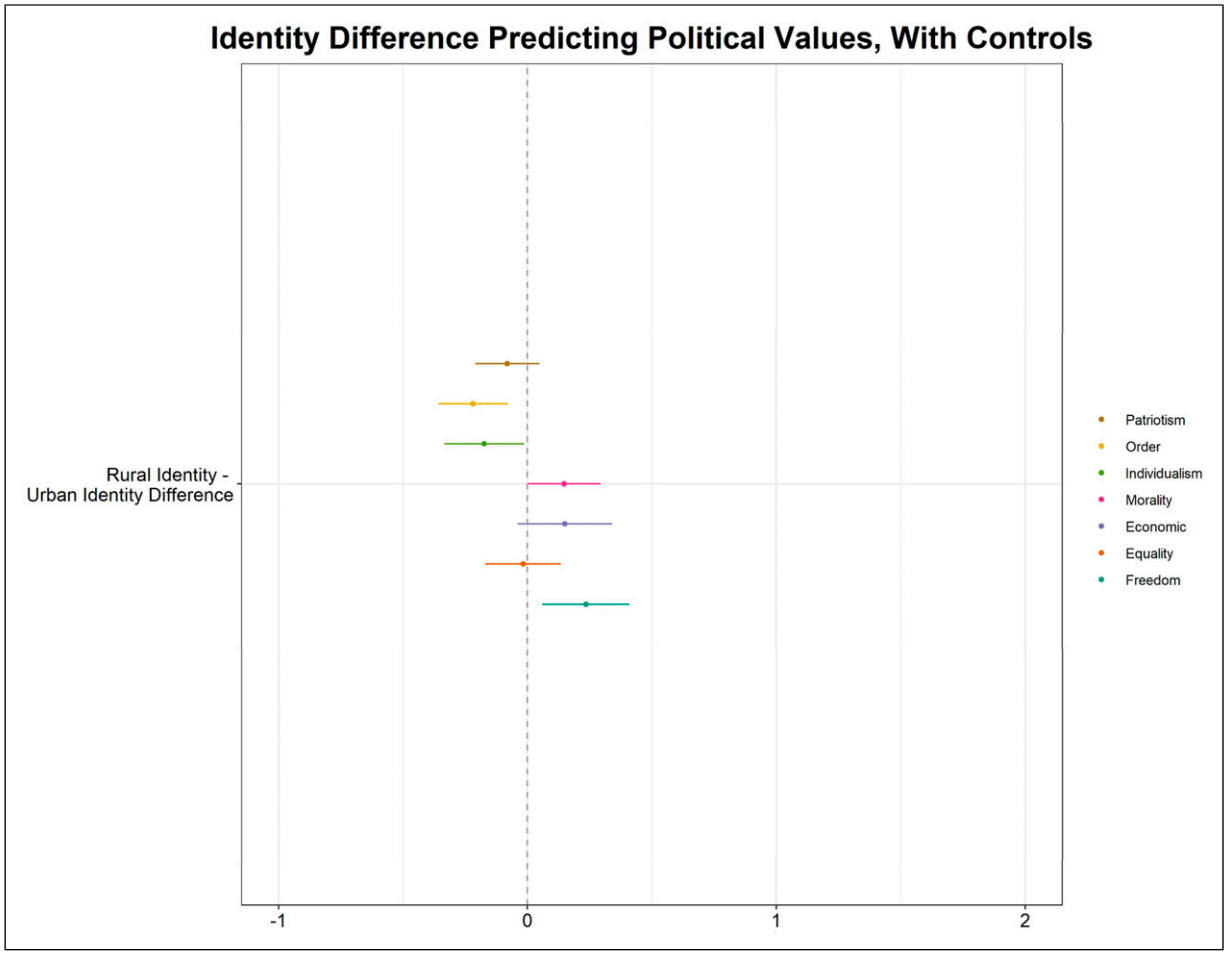

Figure 3. Predicting political values by place identity difference, with controls (not shown).

spectrum promotes varied importance given to certain political values.

We note that, like any study of this nature, ours does suffer from some potential weaknesses. First, this study is cross-sectional and uses a non-probability sample. Although we use survey weights to try to counteract any demographic differences between the sample and the larger population, and although vendors such as Lucid have been found to closely hit population benchmarks using quotas (Coppock and McClellan 2019), the ability for our results to apply to the broader population may still be limited. In addition, future studies looking at urban-rural differences in political values (or lack thereof) should aim to replicate our findings using probability-based sampling.

Furthermore, we have by no means exhausted the list of potential political values that could vary by population density. Additional work should delve into other values besides the ones evaluated here. Finally, we did not look at value congruence or incongruence across subgroups in urban areas or rural areas. As just one possibility of many, it could be that rural areas in the Midwest might hold distinct values from urban areas in the Midwest, but that the South does not have a similar urban-rural values difference. Though we control for factors like Census region, future work should delve into such subgroup analyses.

That said, we believe the results presented here provide important context for the study of urban-rural division, and of American political behavior more broadly. First, these results suggest that urban-rural values division may not necessarily exist, and that *political* values differences may be just a perceived difference. In line with the limitation listed above, it could be that other values do actually differ across the urban-rural spectrum. Second, this work aligns with previous work finding that place-based or rural identity is more predictive of political attitudes than residence alone (Lunz Trujillo 2024; Nemerever and Rogers 2021; Thompson 2023). This distinction matters, as adopting a social identity (rather than simply being a part of a group without identifying with it) makes someone more likely to adopt the perceived

values of that group (Huddy 2003; Tajfel 1970). In addition, existing research suggests that place-based identity encompasses people who may have previously lived somewhere and left, but who socialized in this place and took some of the values or worldview with them (Lunz Trujillo 2024). However, we caution that this does not mean place-based identity is *always* a better predictor of politically relevant attitudes than residence alone. Researchers should consider various ways of measuring urban-rural depending on their specific goals and research.

Third, because significant proportions of Americans share these values regardless of location, highlighting some of these shared values may help bridge geographic and geographic identity-based divides. For example, highlighting Patriotism may be appealing to metropolitan *and* small town or rural residents, as well as among rural and urban identifiers (in alignment with previous work by Levendusky (2018) finding that polarization is reduced when highlighting an American identity). That said, some of these values may be more divisive along partisan lines, though previous work suggests partisanship determines values and not vice versa (Goren 2005). As noted above, finding core common goals and values is of utmost importance for functioning democratic society; future steps from this work should aim to find ways that urban-rural identity division could find shared goals and values. In sum, we hope the results here can shed some light on a division that may not be so inherently different as it seems, values-wise.

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ORCID iDs

Kristin Lunz Trujillo https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5240-518X
Jennifer Lin https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0661-6995

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. "For the next 7 questions, we will show you a few values, such as freedom, equality, and so on, along with their definitions. On a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important), please tell us how important you consider each of these values to be."
2. This battery was modified to reflect how much each person values each item, rather than having the participants rank each value in the Jacoby (2014) study.
3. Information about RUCA codes, including data and category descriptions, can be found on the USDA website: https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes/.
4. We also divide the codes into two categories and re-run the analyses. These are Metropolitan (codes 1–4; 88 percent of the sample) and Micropolitan or rural (codes 5–10; 12 percent of the sample).
5. See Supplemental Material part C for a table of these results.
6. https://support.lucidhq.com/s/article/Sample-Sourcing-FAQs

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