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## The Urban/Rural Divide

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# The Urban/Rural Divide

## Research Question

*Why do urban constituencies lean more Democratic and rural constituencies lean more Republican?*

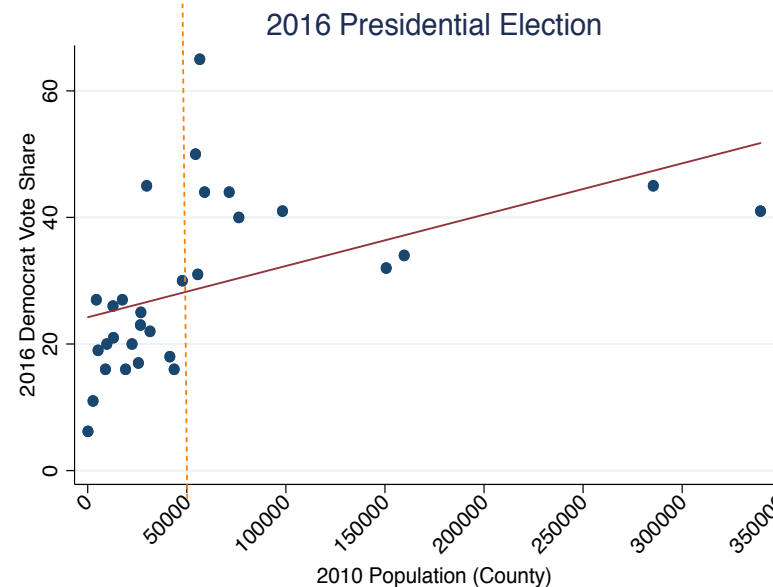
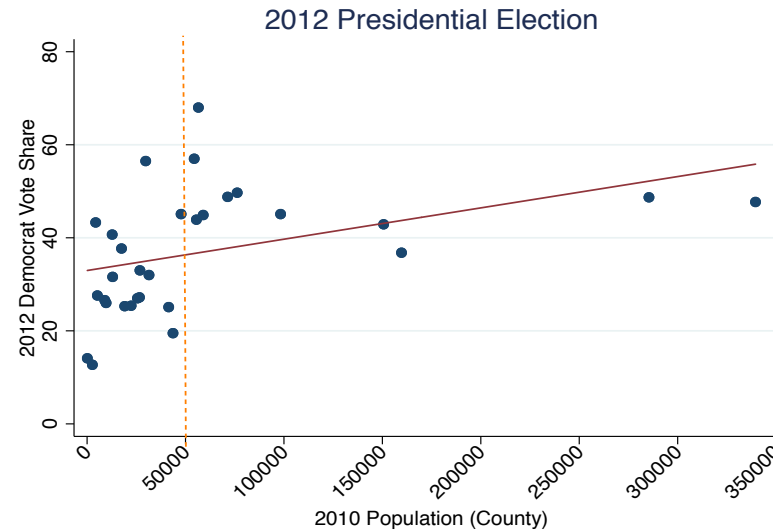
## Theory and Hypothesis

Over the past few decades in the U.S., the Democratic vote share has been concentrating in highly populated, urban areas while the Republican vote share has been concentrating in rural areas. From research by Charles Murray (2012) and Bill Bishop (2008) my theory is derived which attempts to explain this phenomenon urban/rural division.

**Globalization Theory:** Globalization typically increases the number of economic, political, and cultural institutions in urban settings. As a result, urban citizens may be more accepting of multiculturalism and a less traditional platform of values as they experience greater levels of global exposure. This may cause them to align more with the Democratic Party. On the contrary, a lack of global exposure may cause the opposite to occur for rural citizens.

H1: The greater the population level of a county, the greater the Democratic vote share.

H0: There is no association between population level and percent Democratic vote share.



## Methodology and Data

**Proposed Method:** Empirically analyze all U.S. counties (n=3,007) comparing population level and the most recent presidential election results per county.

**Initial Data:** The preliminary data consists of a random selection of U.S. counties (n=30). The dependent variable is the percentage of Democratic votes and the independent variable is the population level of each county.

## Findings & Limitations

This sample data found that as counties became more urban and population size increased, the Democratic vote share also increased. For every 1,000 people, the Democratic vote share was found to increase by 1%.

Future research should use a larger random sample of all U.S. counties and gather data on job type, education level, and income level per county. These variables would act as a measurement for globalization. Population data should also be gathered from the 2020 census for updated results. These changes would make up for the limitations of this study: small sample size and age of data.

### Selected References

- Bishop, Bill. 2008. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.
- Murray, Charles. 2012. *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*. New York: Crown Forum.