

Demographics of Democratic Underperformance in 2016

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LITERATURE REVIEW

- In the 2016 US presidential election, Hillary Clinton underperformed compared to Barack Obama in 2012 (Ball 2016).
- Lewis-Black and Quinlin (2019) examine evidence of a broad range of factors that have spatio-demographic components.
- However McCall and Orloff (2017) note the significance of identity politics in the outcome, which may not appear in spatio-demographic patterns.
- Goldman et al. (2019) associate deaths of despair as a proxy for a broader range of social challenges that may have been manifest in the results.

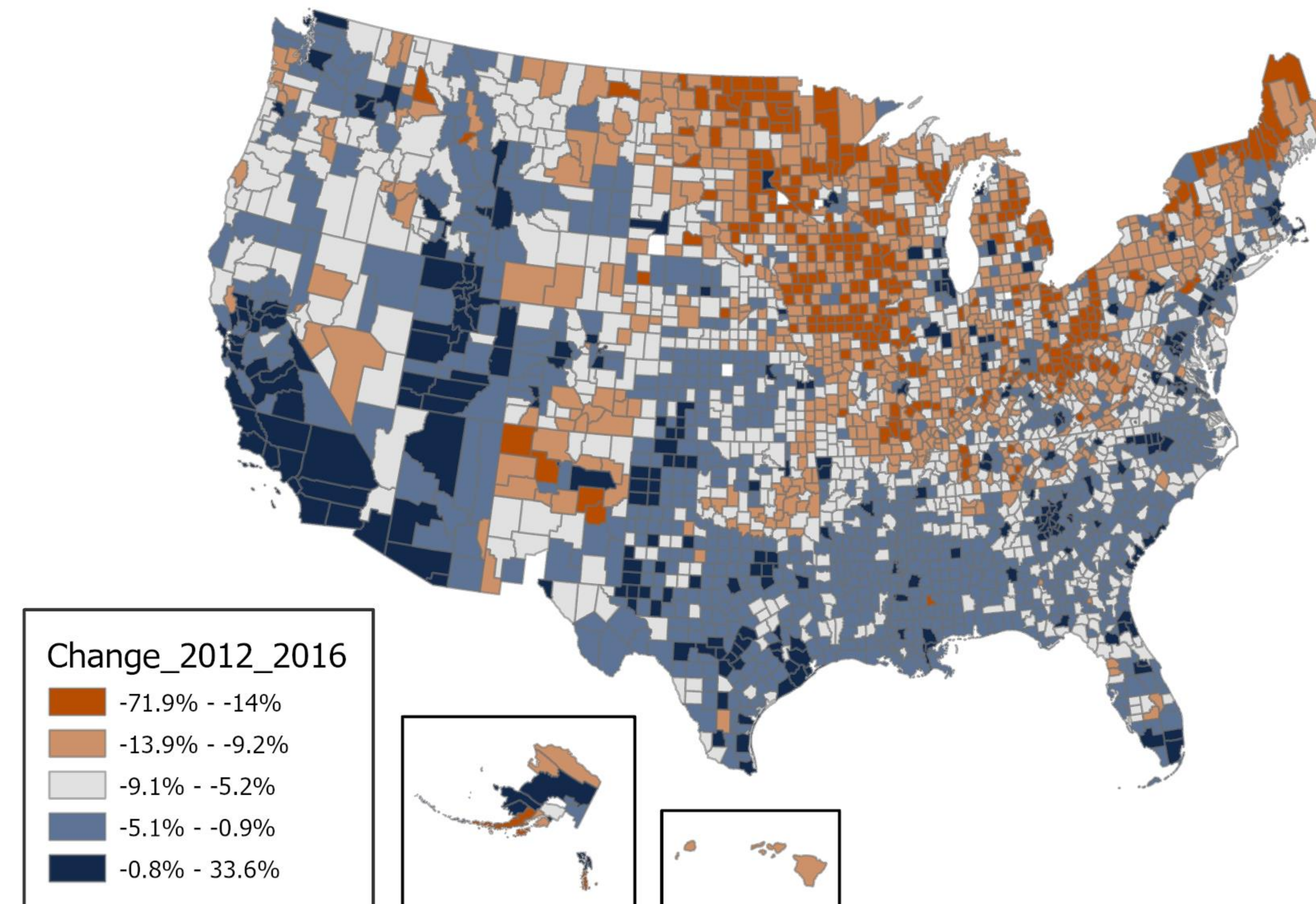
RESEARCH QUESTION

- What demographic factors were associated with areas where Hillary Clinton underperformed in 2016 compared to Barack Obama in 2012

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

- ArcGIS Pro 3.3.1
- OLS, spatial lag, and spatial regression
- Global Moran's I
- County level electoral results from state secretaries of state offices
- Demographic data from the US Census Bureau's 2015-2019 American Community Survey five-year estimates (median age, percent bachelor's degree, percent single mothers)

DEMOCRATIC UNDERPERFORMANCE IN THE 2016 vs. 2012 ELECTION

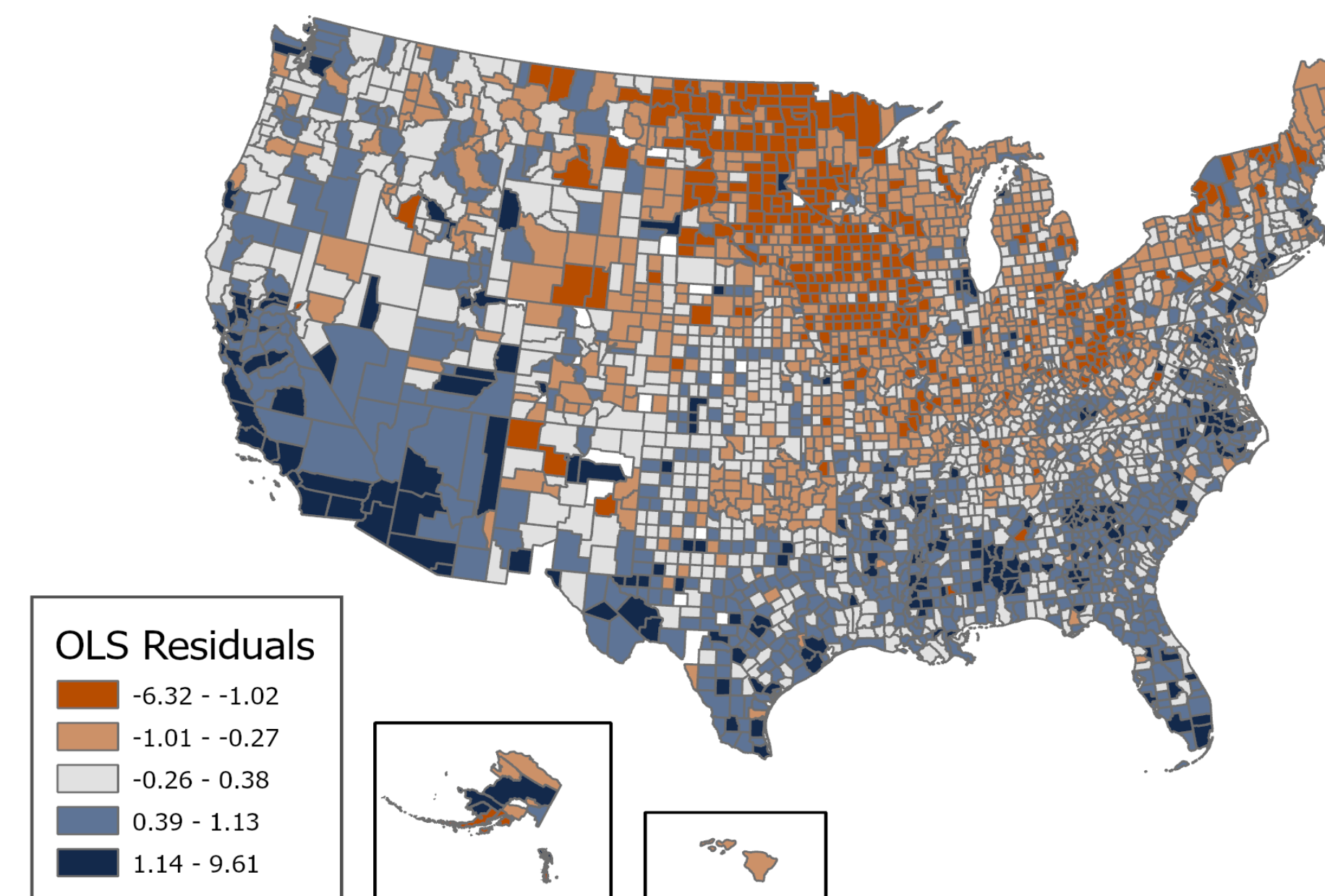


REGRESSION

==== Spatial Error =====

	coef	std err	t	P> t
Intercept	0.001	0.010	0.128	0.8984
Percent_Dem_2012	-0.225	0.011	-20.022	0.0000
Median_Age	-0.205	0.011	-19.239	0.0000
Percent_Bachelors_Degree	0.370	0.011	32.726	0.0000
Percent_Single_Mothers	0.032	0.012	2.781	0.0055

AIC: 5435.413
Lambda: 0.967
OLS Adj R-squared: 0.248



CONCLUSIONS

- The OLS regression model had an R-squared of 0.34, indicating about one third of the variation in the change variable was explained by the model.
- A spatial error model was used because the global Moran's I z-score of 170 indicated strong autocorrelation in the residuals.
- Heavily Democratic and older counties were most strongly associated with negative change in the 2016 percentage.
- The model also highlighted the increasing polarization between college-educated and non-college-educated voters.
- Percent single mothers as a proxy for social disorder had little association with change.
- These results highlight the probable importance of missing non-demographic factors, like campaign strategy and tactics, the influence of media, structural biases, and the unique strengths and weaknesses of the candidates.

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