

Demographics of Democratic Underperformance in 2016

Michael Minn

Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois

RESEARCH QUESTION

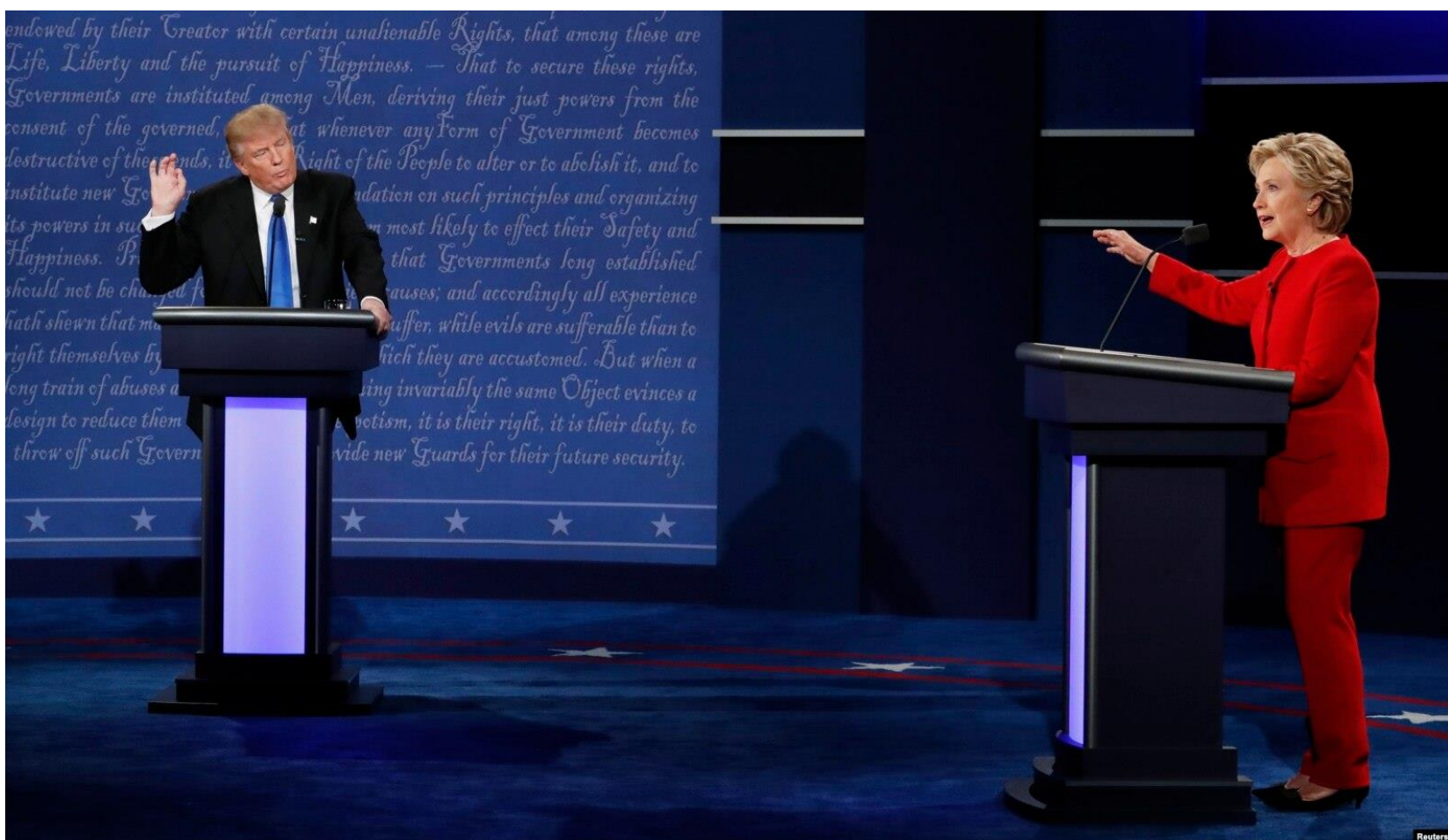
- What demographic factors were associated with areas where Hillary Clinton underperformed in 2016 compared to Barack Obama in 2012

LITERATURE REVIEW

- In the 2016 US presidential election, Hillary Clinton underperformed compared to Barak 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.

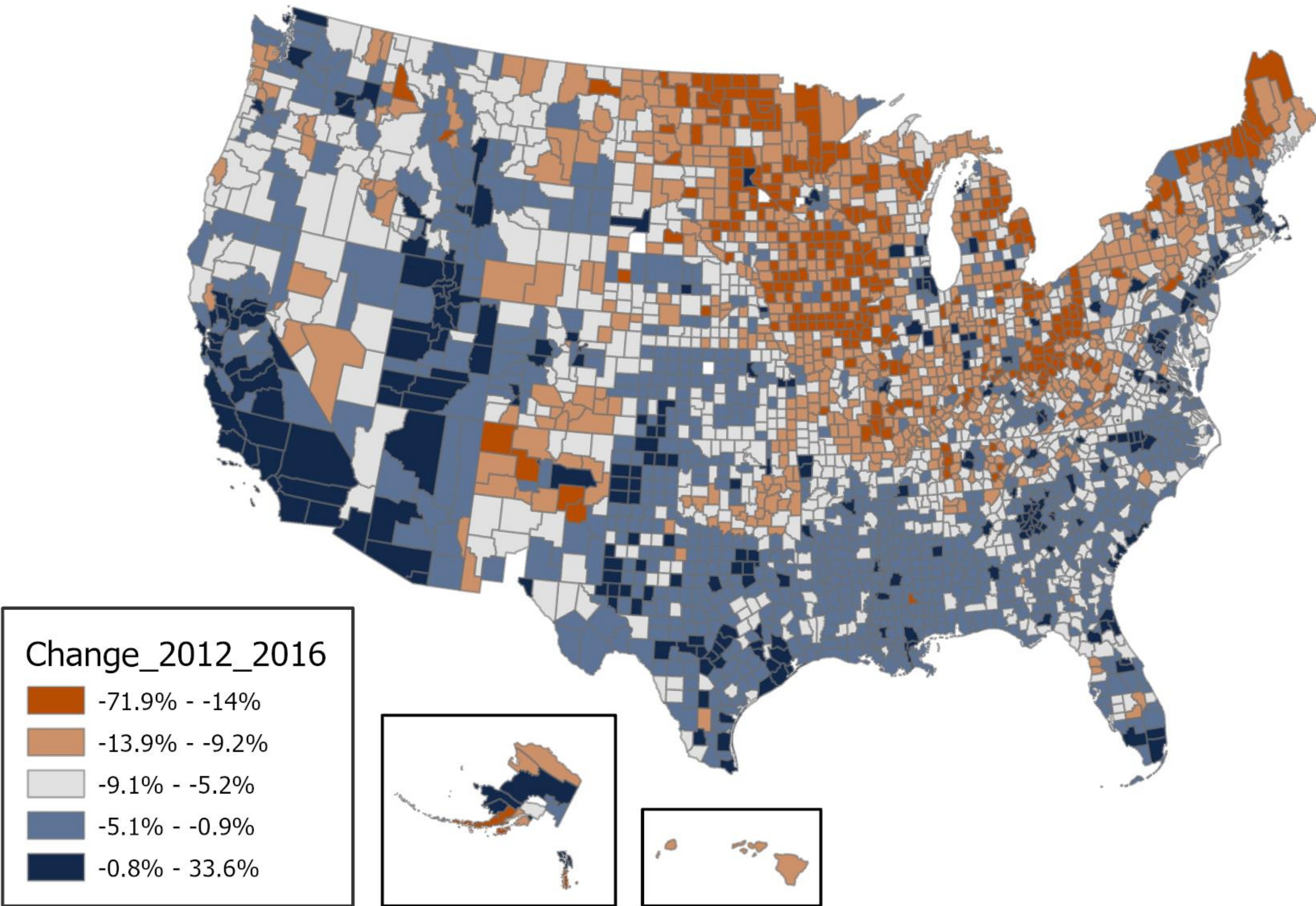
METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

- 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)



Clinton/Trump debate 9/26/16 (Reuters via VOA 2016)

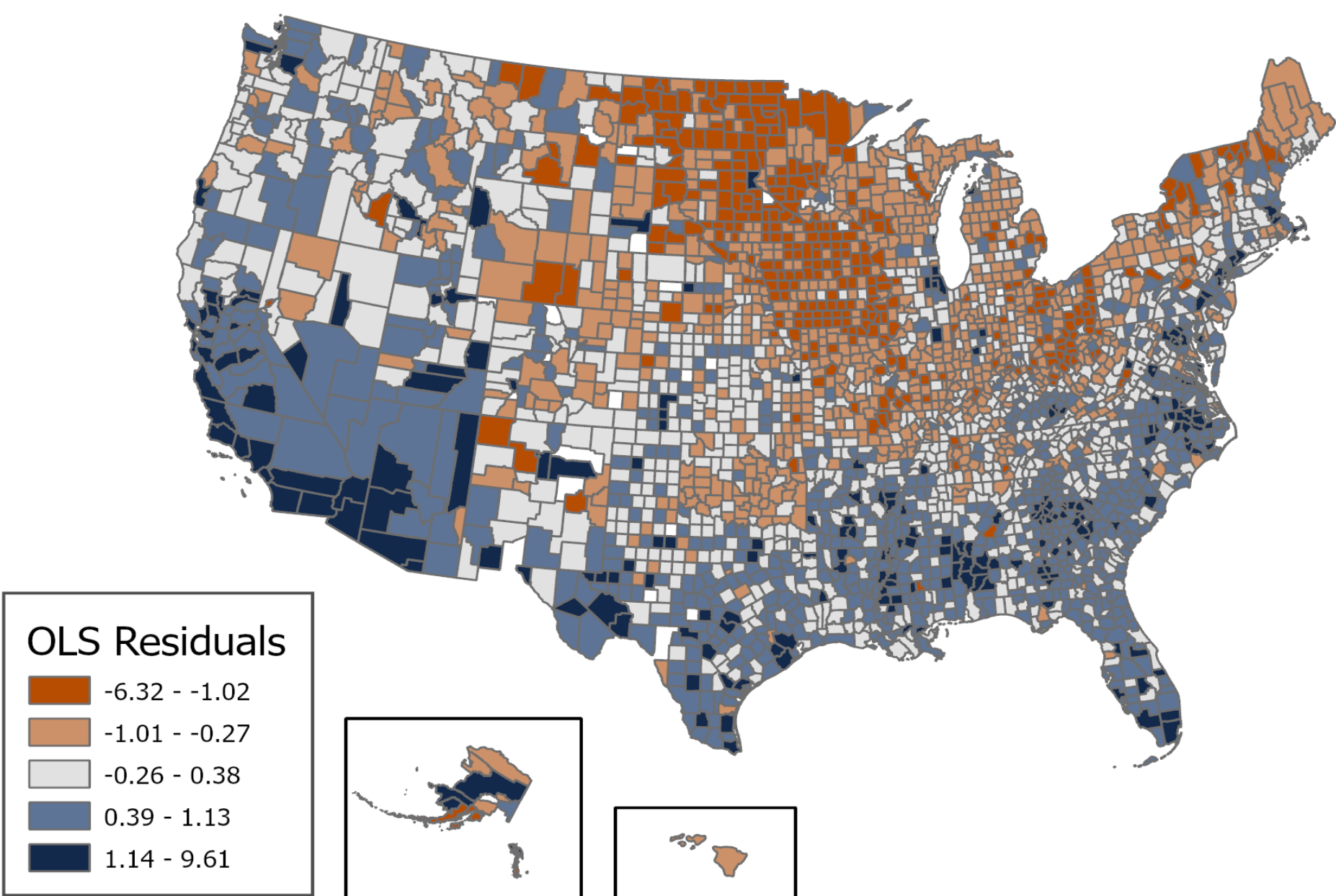
DEMOCRATIC UNDERPERFORMANCE IN THE 2016 vs. 2012 ELECTION



SPATIAL ERROR REGRESSION

	coef	std err	t	P> t
Intercept	0.001	0.010	0.140	0.8888
Percent_Dem_2012	-0.400	0.013	-29.904	0.0000
Median_Age	-0.053	0.012	-4.415	0.0000
Percent_Bachelors_Degree	0.381	0.012	31.462	0.0000
Percent_Married	-0.245	0.015	-16.385	0.0000
Population_Density	0.175	0.012	14.256	0.0000

AIC: 5405.809
Lambda: 0.9726
OLS Adj R-squared: 0.355



CONCLUSIONS

- The OLS regression model had an R-squared of 0.34, indicating the model predicted about one third of the variation in the change variable.
- Spatial error regression was used to address spatial autocorrelation in the data.
- Heavily Democratic counties and counties which high percentages of married adults were most strongly associated with negative change in 2016 percentage.
- The model also highlighted the polarization between college-educated urban voters and non-college-educated rural voters.
- These results highlight the probable importance of missing non-demographic factors, like campaign strategy and tactics, the influence of media, structural biases, and the candidate-specific characteristics.



Voting booths in Wisconsin (WisPolitics.com 2010)

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