

# Feeling Out of Place: Who are the Non-Rural Rural Identifiers, and Are They Unique Politically?

Kristin Lunz Trujillo<sup>1,2</sup>

Previous work suggests rural identity stems from direct experience living in a rural area, and that this subsequently impacts political behavior. Similarly, social psychology literature implies that one must first be a categorical member of a group (e.g., a rural resident) before social identification occurs (e.g., rural identity). Puzzlingly, however, non-trivial numbers of U.S. survey takers are not living in, or have not grown up in, a rural area while also indicating that being rural is part of their identity. How do these non-rural rural identifiers differ, demographically and politically, from rural identifiers who are rural residents? Using an original three-wave YouGov survey panel of American adults (N = 2,615), as well as ANES data from 2020 (N = 8,280) and 2019 (N = 3,165), I find that just under one in five people who do not live or did not grow up in a rural area identify as rural. These non-rural rural identifiers are similar to rural identifiers in rural areas in terms of group-based affect and values, and are more right-leaning and populist than people who do not identify as rural (regardless of their location). Further, few consistent demographic differences between rural and non-rural rural identifiers exist, though religious importance and lower education level predict higher levels of rural identification over time only for non-rural residents. I conclude that: 1) rural identification has similar political, attitudinal, and demographic tendencies regardless of respondent location, and 2) non-rural rural identifiers have either been socialized in a rural area but moved away, or they personally affiliate with values and norms of rural areas despite not categorically being part of the group. In other words, for some rural identity may not be informed by direct lived experience; rather, it presents as a group affinity or a desire for group belonging.

Keywords: *rural, rural identity, urban-rural, social identity*

<sup>1</sup> Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Shorenstein Center for Media, Politics, and Public Policy, Harvard University.

<sup>2</sup> Postdoctoral Researcher, Network Science Institute, Northeastern University.

Various explanations exist to explain the presence of the urban-rural political divide, which has been widening for decades in the United States (Gimpel et al. 2020; McKee 2008; Rodden 2019). One prominent explanation involves identity-centered considerations, including rural identity and its relationship with place-based grievances (Cramer 2016; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022; Lyons and Utych 2021; Munis 2020). Recent work in political science has found rural identity to be politically relevant in various ways and is predictive of anti-urban sentiment (Lyons and Utych 2022), environmental attitudes (Diamond 2012), Trump vote (Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022), support for anti-establishment candidates (Cramer 2016), anti-intellectualism (Lunz Trujillo 2022), and more.

However, in many of these survey-based studies, a nontrivial number of people indicate that being rural is part of their identity – that is, they say being rural is where they feel they belong or is important to their self-image – yet they are not actually from a rural area (e.g., Lunz Trujillo 2022; Nemerever and Rogers 2020). This poses a theoretical puzzle. First, work in political science literature argues that place-based identity stems directly from lived experience of that place (Cramer 2016), e.g., rural identity comes from having lived and experienced rural life. Second, and relatedly, Social Identity Theory posits that one must be a member of a group (e.g., a rural resident) before they can socially identify with the group (e.g., adopt a rural social identification with a psychological attachment to being rural) (Huddy 2003; Sheepers and Ellemers 2019; Tajfel 1970). People who identify as rural but are not rural residents – the “non-rural rural identifiers” - also pose an issue in accounting for the urban-rural divide: if a significant number of non-rural people hold rural identities, then how *rural* is this identity really?

In other words, here I investigate why some people indicate they are rural identifiers – strong ones even – but also say they do not live or have not grown up in a rural area. This

question is related to, but still distinct from, recent work investigating a similar puzzle: why do some non-rural individuals score high on rural resentment measures? (Nemerever et al. n.d.). In the case of rural resentment, the survey questions used to measure rural resentment are conducive to “rural empathy” while not necessarily capturing the group identification aspect. For instance, one could think that rural areas do not get their fair share of resources in society while not indicating that rurality is important or central to their self image. Here, I investigate why people adopt a rural social identity, which goes beyond simply empathizing with rural-based grievances into stating that being a rural person (despite not actually living in a rural area) is part of their psychological identity.

I argue that rural identifiers, regardless of where they live, psychologically affiliate with the group’s perceived values and intergroup affect. This forms the basis for identification even if group membership is not achieved. Second, because non-rural rural identifiers have a shared set of norms and affect, rural identity’s political correlates are similar regardless of current location. Third, I argue that rural identity is mostly found among those who have either grown up in a rural area (e.g., socialized as rural) or currently live in a rural area.

Using original national survey data of American adults (YouGov, N = 2,615) and ANES data from 2019 and 2020, I find evidence for these arguments. First, most rural identifiers do live in a rural area or grew up in a rural area, though a significant proportion of non-rural residents – a little less than one in five at minimum – see rurality as part of their identity. Next, across the board, rural-specific affect measures and values-based measures are on average higher among rural identifiers versus non-rural identifiers - *including* rural residents who do not identify as rural. I find a similar pattern with a range of political variables. Further, using regression results, I find that rural identity does not significantly interact with rural residency to predict these

different affective, values-based, or political measures. These results all demonstrate that rural identity has similar tendencies regardless of respondent location.

I also investigate demographic differences between rural identifiers who live in a rural area versus those who do not using original panel survey data conducted in Fall 2020, as well as cross-sectional survey data. I find that there are no consistent demographic differences between rural identifiers who are rural versus non-rural across the different data sets. That said, I find that stronger racial identity and being female predict an increase in rural identification over time among rural residents. But for non-rural residents, not having a college degree, religious importance, stronger racial identity, and growing up in a rural area predict an increase in rural identification over time. Notably, changes in political affiliation do not predict changes in rural identity over time, or vice versa. Finally, I find that the link between racial identity and rural identity often holds for non-whites.

This paper provides several contributions to the relevant literature. First, it explains the theoretical puzzles described above: non-rural rural identifiers were either socialized as rural – hence becoming group members ‘for life’ if they so choose – or they feel a rural way of life represents who they are as a person. Such individuals indeed adopt the group-based affect and norms of the group, as would be predicted by SIT with any social identification, and have similar political tendencies to rural identifiers who are rural. For this reason, the second contribution of this paper is that, under many circumstances, rural identifiers who are rural versus non-rural have similar underlying attitudinal tendencies (relating to politics, policy, and more). However, it is also worth researchers being aware of this distinction between rural and non-rural individuals holding rural social identity, as they are definitionally and potentially normatively distinct. In

other words, it is appropriate to consider rural identity by rurality in survey research, but it may be justifiable to use only rural identity without breaking it out into rural residency.

### Theory and Relevant Literature

Social Identity Theory (SIT) argues that group identity (social identity) is predicated on first being a member of that group or being categorized within that group (Huddy 2003; Sheepers and Ellemers 2019). For instance, racial identity stems from being a member of a particular race, gender identity comes from first being that gender, etc. However, whether someone is a member of a group can be complex. For instance, definitions of rurality and who lives in a rural area (e.g., who is rural categorically) vary. There are various ways to measure rural residency (Onega et al. 2020; Nemerever and Rogers 2020), many of which use official designations (say, from the Census) of rural-urban classifications by county, zip code, or Census tract. These measures typically hinge on various combinations of population density and commuter distance from urban centers. While this is definitively one way to measure rural residency, it is not always a useful or even accurate way to measure rural membership from a political psychology perspective.

Why is this the case? Someone could be assigned to rural membership objectively speaking, but not believe they live in a rural area. Or, conversely (and central to this study), someone might feel that they live in a rural area but an official designation says they are not. These mismatches may actually be accurate to some extent; official designations have to rely on geographic units that often span multiple levels of urban-rural in reality, but necessarily one designation must be assigned to the whole unit. One great example of this is Dane County, Wisconsin. It is home to the metropolitan center of Madison (population of over 500,000), as

well as its suburbs. However, past the outskirts of the city center are small towns like Blue Mounds (population 855) and Deerfield (population 2,319). In between these small towns are farms and others living in townships that are decidedly rural. Yet, official urban-rural designations firmly place all these places in Dane County as metropolitan. For this reason, subjective self-placement (i.e., simply asking people if where they live is rural, urban, suburban, etc.) is often theoretically a better indicator of rural membership.

Further, to psychologically affiliate with a group, one must mentally feel that they are in that group in the first place. This is in line with early work on the minimal group paradigm from SIT; people will psychologically attach with groups, and assign positive in-group characteristics, even if the group affiliation is minimal or arbitrary and even if they have never interacted with other group members (Sheepers and Ellemers 2019; Tajfel 1970). This provides another reason why using a subjective self-categorization measure of urban-rural residency is often more relevant in determining rural-specific attitudes.

Once an individual is a member of a group, they can become psychologically attached to being in that group to gain psychological (and sometimes material) benefits (Huddy 2003; Tajfel 1970). In other words, categorical group memberships can become a part of how we view ourselves, e.g., they become social identities. Key components of social identification include strength of group affiliation, as well as its importance to one's self-image (Huddy 2003; Tajfel 1970).

Further, because group identity should impact self-esteem positively, it is important for group identifiers to distinguish the group positively from other groups (Huddy 2003; Sheepers and Ellemers 2019); the psychological benefits of group identification necessitate that the group itself is a source of pride. One way this is achieved is to hold certain morals and values in high

regard. Rural identity should be no different, as evinced by several studies suggesting that rural areas, including rural identifiers, have their own perceived set of values that set them apart from others (Diamond 2021; Lyons and Utych 2021; Parker et al. 2018).

Another way group identifiers try to make their group have more positive connotations – and correspondingly increase self-esteem – is to highlight how out-groups are inferior or hold negative traits. Alongside this strategy, in-group members tend to develop negative affect toward the out-group. This may be an especially prevalent strategy when in-group members are perceived to be threatened by, or are actually threatened by, the out-group (Sheepers and Ellemers 2019). Existing work on rural identity suggests the presence of a strong negative out-group affect against urban areas and centers of power, expressed as either rural (anti-urban) resentment or place-based resentment (Cramer 2016; Huijmans 2022; Lyons and Utych 2021; Lucas and Borwein *n.d.*; Munis 2020) as well as distrust of or resentment toward urban-affiliated groups (Lunz Trujillo 2022; Nelsen and Petsko 2021). For this reason, rural resentment – a feeling of resentment by rural individuals against cities and loci of power - is proposed as a defining feature of rural identity.

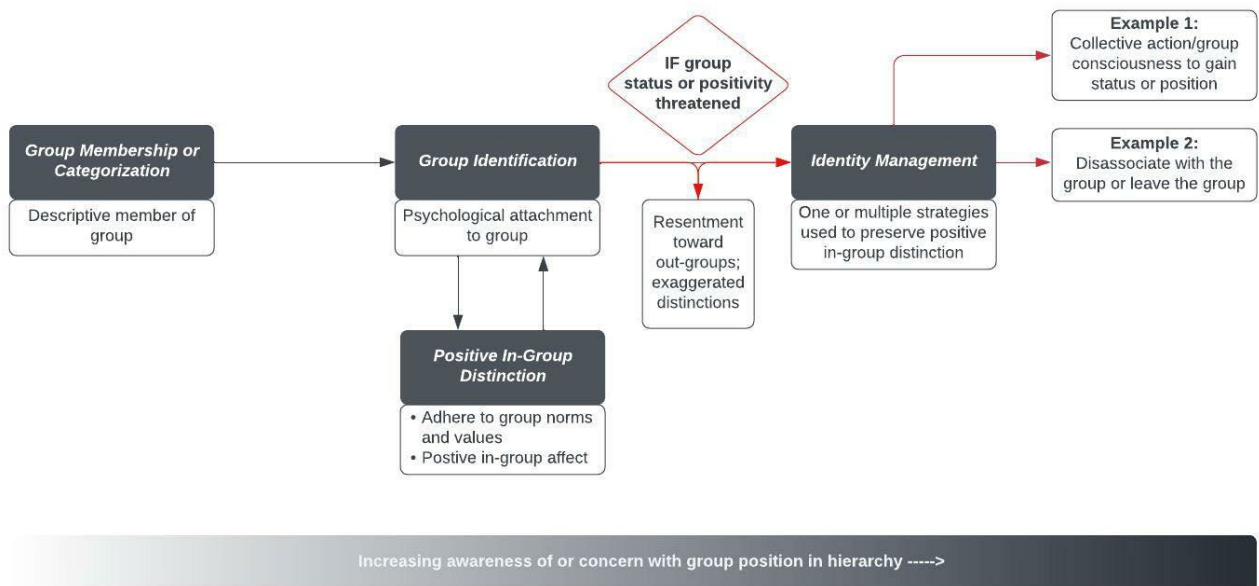
Group identity can become politicized and rural identity theoretically should be no different. When group identifiers are aware of their group's position in the status hierarchy, as well as support collective action and/or policies to improve the group's status, this is group consciousness (Jardina 2019). Rural consciousness would thus entail rural identifiers understanding where rural areas fall, status-wise, compared to other groups in society. Armed with this knowledge, those with rural consciousness should support policies specifically aimed at improving the lot of rural areas while also engaging in – or supporting engagement in – collective action on behalf of rural residents. A strong example of rural consciousness would be

the rise of the People's Party in the U.S. during the late 1800s. Primarily an agricultural movement, it supported economic rights for farmers and rural areas, with individuals from those groups engaging in collective action on behalf of the group (Slez 2020). More recently, Cramer (2016) argues that rural consciousness exists still in recent decades, at least in the Upper Midwest, because rural interviewees held a rural identity, were resentful of out-groups because they were aware of their position relative to these out-groups, and supported actions to change this position. It is unclear how much these individuals engaged in collective action on behalf of rural areas – they were not formally creating a movement at least – but one could argue that the trappings of rural consciousness were present. Nationally, rural consciousness may be present, but some individuals support rural socio-cultural representation in policymaking, while others are more concerned about resources and economic benefit (Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022).

Thus far, I have defined rural group membership, rural identity, and rural consciousness (with the likelihood that consciousness is driven largely by negative out-group affect). I outline this process in Figure 1 (see Sheepers and Ellemers [2019] for a more detailed description of this progression). First, people who are descriptively part of a group are deemed group members. Then, as they become aware of the group's positive distinction in society, they begin identifying with the group and form a psychological attachment to it. This positive distinction is reinforced by adhering to group norms and values, as well as maintaining positive in-group affect. However, if group positivity or status is threatened, resentment toward out-groups and/or exaggerated distinction from other groups occur. Group identifiers also need to engage in identity management; they use one of multiple possible strategies to deal with this perceived negative association with the group. One of these is group consciousness and engaging in collective action. Another one, if it is possible, is to disassociate with or leave the group.



Figure 1: *Group identification process, according to Social Identity Theory.*



However, as noted above, recent work on rural identity presents a puzzle: some people hold a group identity without group membership (e.g., Lunz Trujillo 2022; Nemerever and Rogers 2020). In other words, a person may hold a rural identity but not currently live in a rural area. Why is this the case? A similar puzzle has been identified regarding rural resentment. Recent work examines individuals who hold rural resentment but do not identify as a rural resident (Nemerever et al. *n.d.*); however, this could be explained largely as an artifact of the questions used to measure rural resentment, such that non-rural individuals scoring high on these measures are expressing empathy or agreement with the resentment of rural residents (“rural empathy”). These rural resentment questions evaluate feelings and opinions about the condition of rural residents relative to urban ones, without necessarily asking whether respondents have a personal identification with being rural. Conversely, rural identity questions ask about the respondents’ personal psychological affiliation with rurality – which would move a step further

from empathy into seeing oneself as part of the in-group. Thus, the question of non-rural rural identifiers is a separate one from non-rural individuals who express rural resentment.

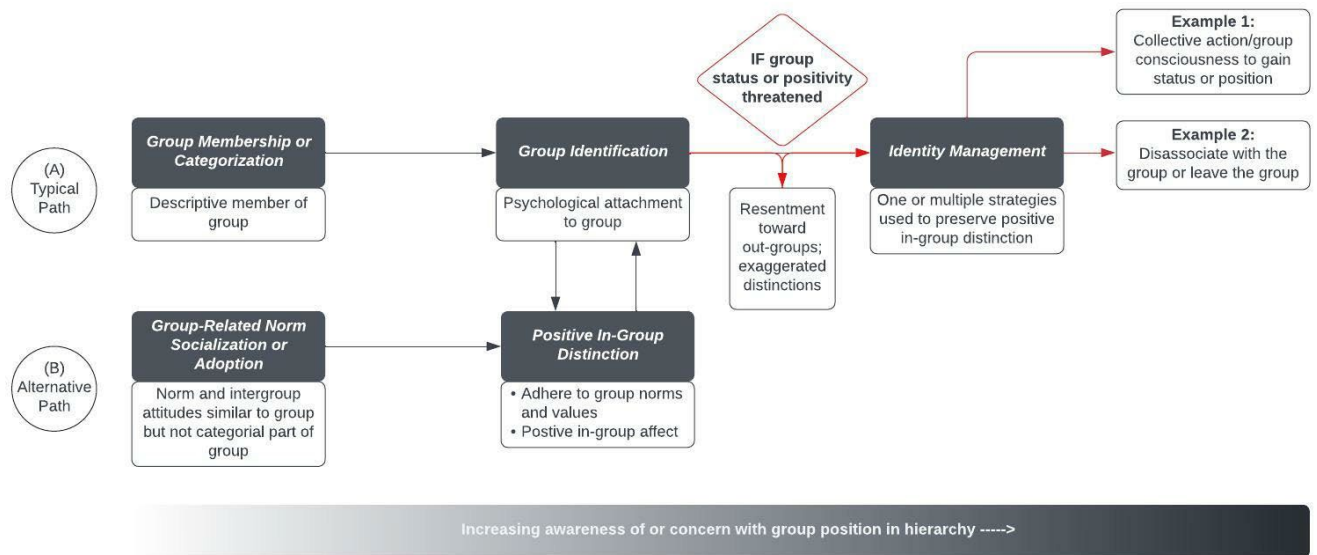
There are a few possible explanations regarding non-rural rural identifiers. First, they may have been *socialized* as rural and it legitimately became part of their identity; in other words, they grew up in a rural area or lived in a rural area for a time, but later left. In this scenario, one may have the group values and norms, and certain lifestyles and preferences, while given “honorary” group categorization. This means that rural membership does not entirely hinge on current rural residency as group membership; rural membership can also come from *previously having lived* in a rural area, especially if one grew up there. But the reasoning why – the socialization aspect – presents another potential avenue for rural group membership: former rural residents are still rural because they were socialized into a rural way of life, and they therefore remain “rural.”

What, then, if someone was socialized on a set of norms or values that *resemble* these rural norms or values, or are strongly affiliated with indicators of rural lifestyle, yet never lived in a rural area? This could also motivate them to adopt a rural identity because they *psychologically affiliate with the group norms and intergroup affect*. In other words, they psychologically attach to the group and derive self-esteem from it because of their perceived adoption of the group’s norms and way of life.

I contribute to this line of literature by arguing that rural group membership stems from 1) current or previous residency in a rural area (self-described), or, 2) a feeling that one is linked to perceived rural values, norms, and lifestyles. Just one of these is necessary and sufficient for internally perceived (i.e., subjective) rural group membership, thus allowing for rural social identification. Here, rural identity is defined as a *psychological affiliation with rural areas or*

*small towns that is affective, group-based, and values-based.* This means that an alternative path to rural identity can be added to our understanding of identity formation (Alternative Path B in Figure 2) as opposed to the typical path (A in Figure 2).

Figure 2: *Group identification process, revised.*



For example, consider an individual who grew up and has lived in an urban setting. This individual was socialized to be a Protestant Evangelical, and from a young age adopted moral traditionalism. Previous work has linked moral traditionalism as a rural-affiliated value (Gimpel et al. 2020; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022). This hypothetical individual learns that rural areas tend more toward this moral system, so they feel that rural norms and identity “fit” them; this is particularly the case since their current environment (a city) is less congruent with their values. They consequently adopt a rural identity.

Further, if correct, this schema of identity formation is potentially applicable to identity formation for other types of group identity in general. One might, for instance, socially identify with being a New Yorker without ever having lived or socialized there – i.e., without ever having bona fide group membership – because they adore the perceived norms and lifestyle of the place.

They are New Yorkers at heart, so to speak; social identification largely exists *subjectively* (Tajfel 1970). It is also worth mentioning here that these strictly non-group members who adopt the identity of the group may be *negatively viewed* by other group members, or even by society at large. For instance, it may be socially unacceptable in the United States for a White person to socially identify with being Black; the person is not categorically a member and therefore does not have the lived experience of being a Black American. This, in effect, disrespects the lived experiences of Black Americans and trivializes the difficulties faced by members of this group in the United States. Internally the person may feel identified with the group despite being taboo, or even disrespectful to other group members.

### Hypotheses

Given this argument, I propose a set of hypotheses. First, as noted above, group identity typically occurs when one is a categorical member of the group. Therefore, we would expect the majority of rural identifiers to be current rural residents *or* to have grown up in a rural area. In the case of the latter, previously having lived in a rural area – particularly during formative years – could also instill a feeling of “being rural”. For this reason, I expect that:

**Hypothesis 1:** *Rural identity should be more prevalent among those who currently live in a rural area, or who grew up in a rural area, compared to those who have not.*

Second, rural identity should be affective and group-based in nature. These components should reflect positive feelings toward rural areas or residents most prominently. Identities may also hold negative feelings toward perceived outgroups; though this is not a necessary condition for group identity, previous literature suggests out-group dislike is prominent for rural identifiers in the contemporary United States (Cramer 2016; Lyons and Utych 2021; Wuthnow 2019). Most

prominently, rural outgroups consist of urban or non-rural areas most obviously (Cramer 2016; Lyons and Utych 2021). However, other work has emphasized component groups of urban areas being seen as outgroups of rural identifiers. This includes non-whites for rural whites – at least for rural consciousness – measured using racial resentment (Nelsen and Petsko 2021; Nemerever et al. *n.d.*), as well as elites and experts (Cramer 2016; Lunz Trujillo 2021).

Second, identity groups form in-group norms and values that solidify the group and raise in-group member self-esteem. Rural and urban residents generally see one another's values to be different (Parker et al. 2018). Other work suggests “rural” values are varied but may include moral traditionalism (Gimpel et al. 2020; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022) and anti-cosmopolitanism/anti-multiculturalism (Huijsmans et al. 2021; Maxwell 2020), including lowered support for more permissive immigration policies (Huijsmans 2022; Lunz Trujillo 2021; 2022). Further, research has found rural resentment and rural consciousness to positively correlate with racial resentment – particularly among whites (Nelsen and Petsko 2021; Nemerever et al. *n.d.*). Racial resentment encapsulates not just resentment against Black Americans, but also “American moral traditionalism” encompassing support for the Protestant work ethic (Carmines et al. 2011; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Kinder and Sears 1981).<sup>1</sup> This latter element – an emphasis on the importance of hard work and individualism – has been linked with rurality (Cramer 2016; Diamond 2021). Given this, I would expect the following:

---

<sup>1</sup> There is an ongoing debate in the literature regarding racial resentment and whether it is primarily capturing anti-Black attitudes (e.g., Kinder and Sanders 1996), or whether they more closely capture American moral traditionalism (e.g., Carmines et al. 2011); or, whether different groups interpret the racial resentment questions differently (e.g., Feldman and Huddy 2005). My aim here is not to contribute or “take a side” on this debate; rather, I use racial resentment as a proxy for a value that has been racialized.

**Hypotheses 2:** *Measures of rural group-based affect and rural-affiliated values should be significantly higher among rural and non-rural individuals who identify as rural, compared to rural and non-rural residents who do not identify as rural.*

Since I am arguing that these affective, psychological, and group-based factors are shared between rural identifiers who live in rural areas and those who do not – e.g., the psychological and attitudinal drivers of political attitudes - then the political tendencies should be the same between them. In general, rural identifiers should have more right-leaning and populist tendencies compared to those who do not identify as rural (Cramer 2016; Lunz Trujillo 2021; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley 2022; Nelsen and Petsko 2021). This should be the case compared to both non-rural and rural residents who are not rural identifiers:

**Hypotheses 3:** *Measures of various right-leaning political attitudes and affiliations should be significantly higher among rural and non-rural individuals who identify as rural, compared to rural and non-rural residents who do not identify as rural.*

**Hypothesis 3a:** *The effect of rural identity on measures of various right-leaning political attitudes and affiliations should not significantly differ by rural residency in regression models.*

Finally, it is unclear whether rural identifiers in rural versus non-rural areas should have similar demographic characteristics with one another, or relative to non-rural identifiers. For this reason, I pose an open research question:

**Research Question:** *Do demographic tendencies of rural identifiers who are rural versus non-rural significantly differ, and if so, how?*

## **Data and Measures**

I rely on three separate surveys collected in December 2019 and Fall 2020 to closely examine rural identity in the United States; see Table 1 below for an overview of these sources. Two are from the American National Election Studies, or ANES (American National Election Studies 2019; 2021) and one is part of an original panel survey. This panel survey was a three-wave multi-investigator panel survey conducted via YouGov between October and November 2020. Detailed information on each of these studies can be found in the Supplement, including demographic breakdowns of each sample. In addition, each of these data sources uses survey weights to approximate national population benchmarks.

Table 1: *Data Sources*<sup>2</sup>

<b>Data Set Name</b>	<b>Approx. Date(s) Conducted</b>	<b>Respondent Source</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Rural Identity Measure</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Study 1	December 2019	ANES pilot - YouGov	Used as cross-sectional survey	Binary Rural Identity/Rural Identity Importance (2-item)	<i>N</i> =3,165
Study 2	Fall 2020	ANES	Used as cross-sectional survey	Binary Rural Identity/Rural Identity Importance (2-item)	<i>N</i> = 8,280
Study 3	Wave 1: Oct. 6-4 2020; Wave 2: Oct. 23-Nov. 3 2020; Wave 3: Nov. 9-16 2020	YouGov, via the University of Minnesota's Center for the Study of Political Psychology, or CSPP	Panel survey (original)	Rural Identity Self-View/Importance Scale (2-item)	Wave 1: <i>N</i> =2,615; Wave 2: <i>N</i> =1,865; Wave 3: <i>N</i> =1,471; <i>Black oversample</i>

<sup>2</sup> Funding for original studies was generously provided to me by the Center for the Study of Political Psychology at the University of Minnesota. All original studies were approved exempt by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Across these different data sources, rural identity is measured in one of two ways. In the original panel survey, rural identity is based on a combination of questions measuring the degree of rural identity self-view and importance. These are based on Huddy and colleague's measures of partisan identity strength, as well as other work measuring social identity in surveys (Huddy 2003; Huddy and Khalib 2007; Huddy et al. 2015):

1. *To what extent do you think of yourself as being a small town or rural resident?*<sup>3</sup>
2. *How important is being a small town or rural resident to you?*<sup>4</sup>

I refer to this combined measure as the *Rural Identity Self-View/Importance Scale* ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ). This scale was recoded to run from zero to one.

The rural identity questions in the ANES are based on Munis's (2020) measurement of place identity. First, survey takers are asked:

1. *Regardless of where you currently live, do you usually think of yourself as a city person, a suburb person, a small-town person, a country or rural person, or something else?*<sup>5</sup>

Respondents select one of these items; if they say small-town or rural, they are considered rural identifiers. I refer to this question as *Binary Rural Identity*. Then, once respondents select an option from the Binary Rural Identity question, they rate how important this identity is to them. I refer to this as the *Rural Identity Importance* question:

2. *How important is being a [city person/suburb person/small-town person/country or rural person] to your identity?*<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Response options include: Extremely important, very important, moderately important, slightly important, and not at all important.

<sup>4</sup> Response options include: A great deal, quite a bit, somewhat, very little, not at all.

<sup>5</sup> Half of respondents in the 2019 ANES received a different version of the question: *Regardless of where you currently live, where do you feel you belong or fit in the best: cities, suburbs, small towns, or the countryside (rural areas)?*



All studies except for the 2020 ANES ask respondents where they grew up, and all studies ask respondents where they currently live. More specifically, in the 2019 ANES data, respondents were asked, “Do you currently live in a rural area, small town, suburb, or a city?” and then “Growing up, did you mostly live in a rural area, small town, suburb, or a city?”. In the 2020 ANES, respondents only received the first of these two questions. Finally, in the original panel data respondents were first asked whether they grew up in a small town or rural area (response options: yes or no) and then whether they currently live in a small town or rural area (response options: yes or no). Wording details for the rural residency questions can be found in the Supplement.

To investigate *H2*, I also look at rural resentment scores and scores for a rural Americans feeling thermometer from the 2020 ANES. The rural resentment index was averaged using three separate measures of respondent perceptions of urban-rural disparities in government resource allocation, influence in government, and respect (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.68$ ); see appendix for rural resentment item and rural American feeling thermometer wording details. I also use measures of support for multiculturalism, moral traditionalism, and racial resentment (as described above). The multiculturalism scale comes from the 2019 ANES and is based on two measures consisting of support for racial/ethnic diversity and comfort hearing a foreign language (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.97$ ). The moral traditionalism index comes from the 2020 ANES and was based on two items with a Cronbach’s of 0.50. Details of question wordings can be found in the Supplement. Racial resentment is the standard four-item measure (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.89$ ); see Supplement for details.

To test *H3*, I examine several political variables, including the standard seven-point branching partisanship scale, the standard symbolic ideology scale, a Donald Trump feeling thermometer, an anti-intellectualism index and an anti-elitism index (both based on Oliver and

Rahn 2016), and political interest. I also look at responses to questions asking about issue positions on general government spending, preferred levels of immigration in the US, agreement on whether climate change is affecting weather, agreement on whether COVID-19 limitations have been too much, abortion support, and a Black Lives Matter feeling thermometer. These different issue attitudes are meant to encompass a range of salient concerns over the past couple years. See the Supplement for details of question wordings. Finally, as control variables and to answer the research question, I also examine a range of demographic variables including, gender, age, race/ethnicity, income level, college degree attainment, born-again Christian, religious importance, and Census region.

### **Rural Identity Distribution by Rural Residency**

In this section, I examine the breakdown and prevalence of non-rural rural identifiers. Table 2 shows rural identification by rural residency (current or grew up) and binary rural identification for the 2019 and 2020 ANES. As expected, rural identifiers are much more common among people who currently live and grew up in a rural area or small town; 80% of this group identifies as rural in the 2019 data. Respondents who live in a rural area or small town but did not grow up in one are also more likely than not to identify as rural (60% of this group). For people who grew up in a rural area or small town but moved into a different type of community, about half identify as rural while half do not. In the 2019 data, 16% of people who do not live in, or did not grow up in, a rural area or small town identify as rural. Turning to the 2020 ANES in Table 2, a similar pattern emerges: 75% of rural residents identify as rural, versus only 18% of

non-rural residents. A full quarter of rural residents do not identify as rural, while most (82%) of non-rural residents do not identify as rural.<sup>6</sup>

Table 2: *Number of ANES 2019 respondents who identify as rural, by current and former residency.*

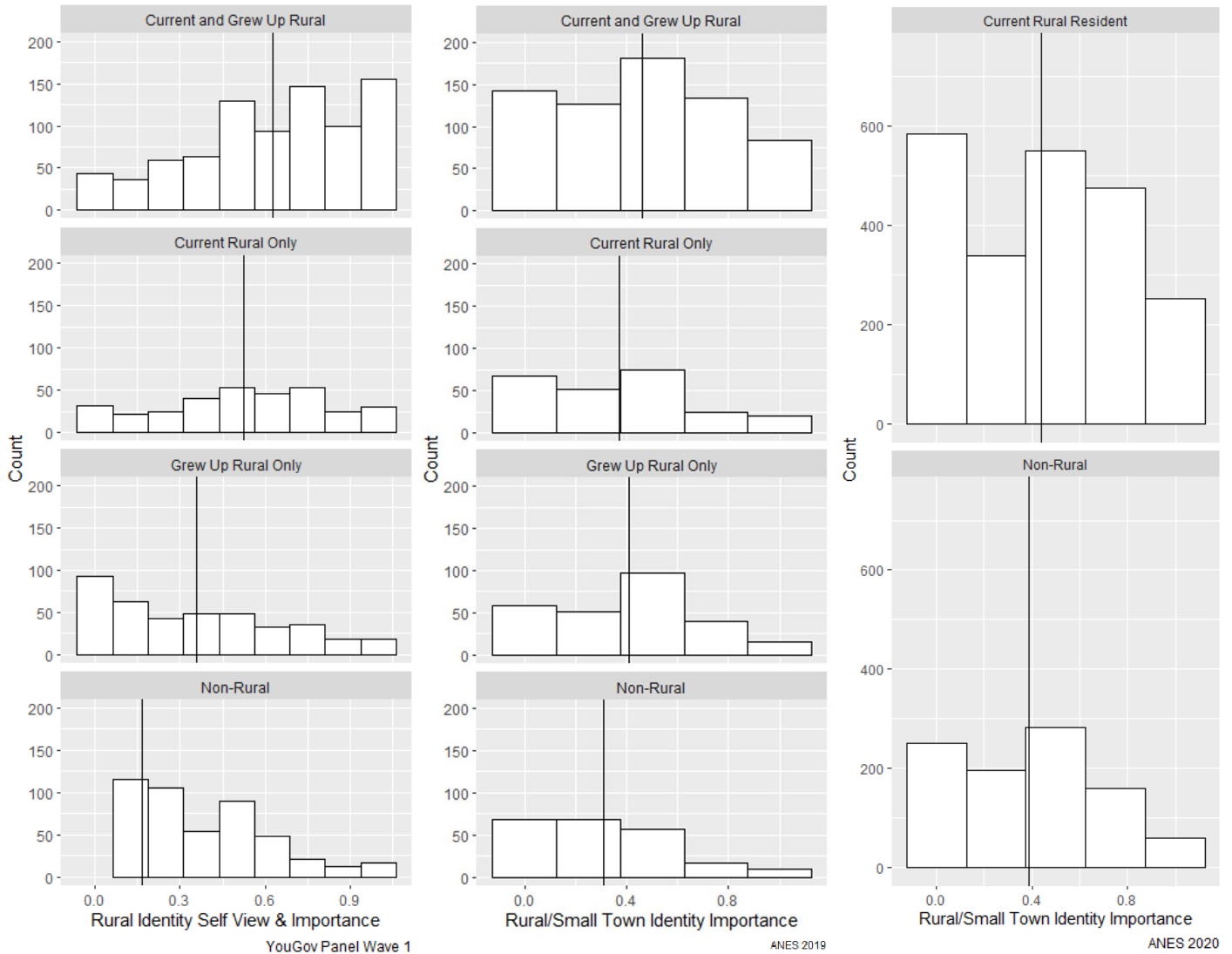
<b>ANES 2019</b>			
	Non-Rural Identifier	Rural Identifier	Total
Both Rural	20% (167)	80% (666)	100% (833)
Current Rural Resident Only	40% (161)	60% (238)	100% (399)
Grew Up Rural Only	52% (281)	48% (262)	100% (543)
Non-Rural	84% (1171)	16% (219)	100% (1390)
<b>ANES 2020</b>			
	Non-Rural Identifier	Rural Identifier	Total
Current Rural Resident	25% (750)	75% (2,207)	100% (2,957)
Not a Current Rural Resident	82% (4,376)	18% (947)	100% (5,323)

Recall that the ANES data sets allow respondents who identify as rural to choose how important being a rural or small-town person is to them. In addition, the original panel data does not have a binary rural identity question, instead asking rural identity importance and self-view to all respondents. The combined set of graphs in Figure 3 show the distributions of these different measures by study. Further, these are also shown by 1) those who currently live in, and who grew up in, a rural area (“Current and Grew Up Rural”), 2) those who are current rural residents only (“Currently Rural Only”), 3) those who grew up in a rural area only (“Grew Up Rural Only”), and 4) neither of these (“Non-Rural”).

---

<sup>6</sup> Note that the non-rural rural identifiers in the 2019 and 2020 ANES are not majority Republicans: 47-49% of the non-rural rural identifiers in these samples identify as Republican.

Figure 3: Rural identity distribution by study.



*Note: Means for the graphs on the right (Original Panel Survey) from top to bottom: 0.63, 0.53, 0.36, 0.17. Means for the graphs on the left (ANES 2019) from top to bottom: 0.46, 0.37, 0.41, 0.31. Means for the graphs on the left (ANES 2020) from top to bottom: 0.44, 0.39. Responses from the ANES (2019, 2020) are only among those who identify as rural according to the binary measure; responses from the panel survey data include all respondents*

The clearest trend in Figure 3 – and one that is expected – is that people who currently live in a rural area and who grew up in a rural area both are more likely to express stronger levels rural identification, relative to the other groups. In other words, rural identity tends to be higher

among people who are rural residents, compared to those who are not, providing support for *H1*. Second, many people who grew up as rural but left still identify as a rural person. If we were to combine the “Non-Rural” and “Grew Up Rural Only” categories in Table 2, the people who grew up as rural but then left would account for *over half* (54%) of the non-rural rural identifiers. This very likely accounts for some of the non-rural rural identifiers in, say, the 2020 ANES.

However, there is still a nontrivial minority of individuals – a little less than one in five people who do not live or did not grow up in a rural area – that identify as rural. In the next section, I identify whether there are demographic, political, or attitudinal variations between these rural versus non-rural individuals who identify as rural.

## **Rural Identity Affect, Values, and Political Tendencies**

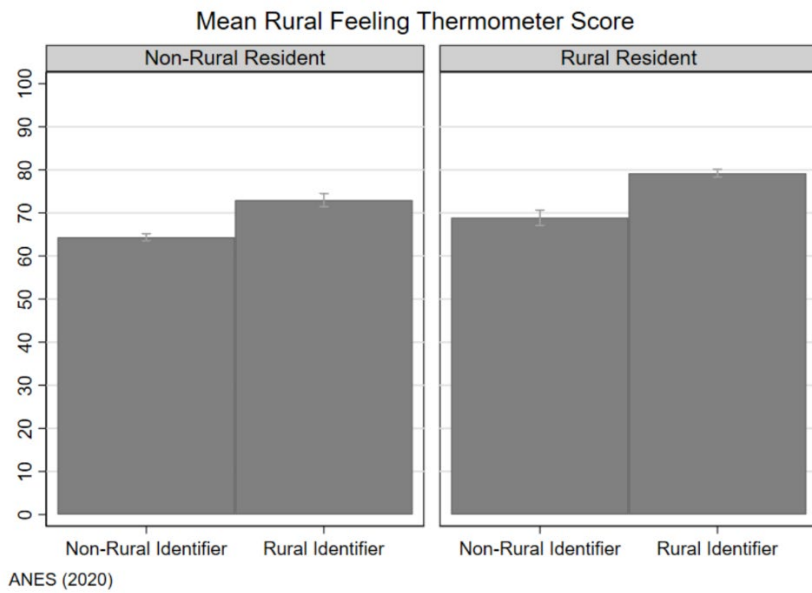
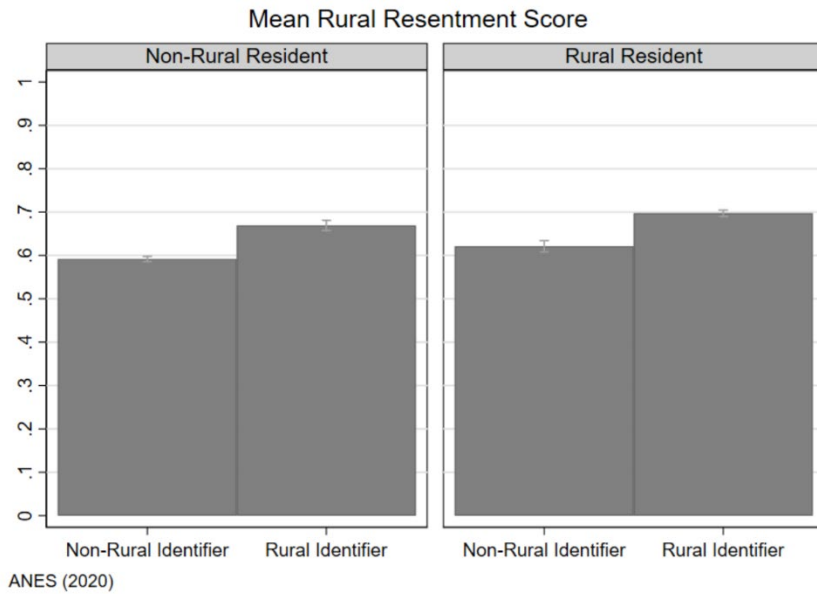
### *Group Affect and Values*

To test *H2*, I evaluate whether there is positive in-group affect among rural identifiers; as noted above, the entire purpose of identifying with a group is to feel better about oneself for associating with the group, so feelings toward group members should be more positive compared to those who do not identify with the group. I expect that rural identity and rural feeling thermometers should positively correlate. In addition, as previously discussed, rural identifiers should feel out-group resentment – rural resentment – more than people who do not identify as rural. These proposed relationships should be similar for rural and non-rural respondents, according to the second hypothesis.

Figure 4 shows these results using 2020 ANES data. As expected, rural identifiers on average feel more positively toward rural areas regardless of their current location, compared to

people who do not identify as rural. Further, rural identifiers who do not live in rural areas feel significantly more warmly toward rural areas than rural residents who do not identify as rural. Again, this follows expectations from SIT, as social identification hinges on positive in-group affect.

Figure 4: *Mean rural resentment and feelings toward rural Americans scores, by rural identity and rural residency.*



Similarly, Figure 4 also shows the same pattern using the rural resentment scale instead of the rural feeling thermometer. Rural identifiers overall hold more rural resentment, compared to people who do not identify as rural, regardless of current respondent location. Once again, non-rural rural identifiers also express more rural resentment on average than rural residents who do not identify as rural. These results provide support for *H2*.

Next, I turn to rural values. I expect that rural-associated values undergird not only rural identity, but also form the basis for rural categorization for some non-rural rural identifiers: one either perceives that they live (or grew up) in a rural area, *or*, they feel they have underlying group values and sentiments. If true, we would expect rural identifiers to have heightened levels of certain values regardless of whether they think of themselves as rural or not (categorically speaking).

Figure 5 below shows the mean multiculturalism score using the 2019 ANES data for rural versus non-rural identifiers, by whether the respondent is a current rural resident and/or grew up in a rural area. Again, a similar pattern emerges to the one found with rural resentment and rural feeling thermometers: in each category, rural identifiers are less supportive of multiculturalism compared to non-rural identifiers. Likewise, moral traditionalism is higher among rural identifiers and lower among people who do not identify as rural; this tendency holds for rural residents and for non-rural residents (Figure 6). Finally, racial resentment again follows this same pattern, as seen in Figure 6. These results all provide additional support for *H2*.

Figure 5: Mean multiculturalism scores, by rural identity and rural residency.

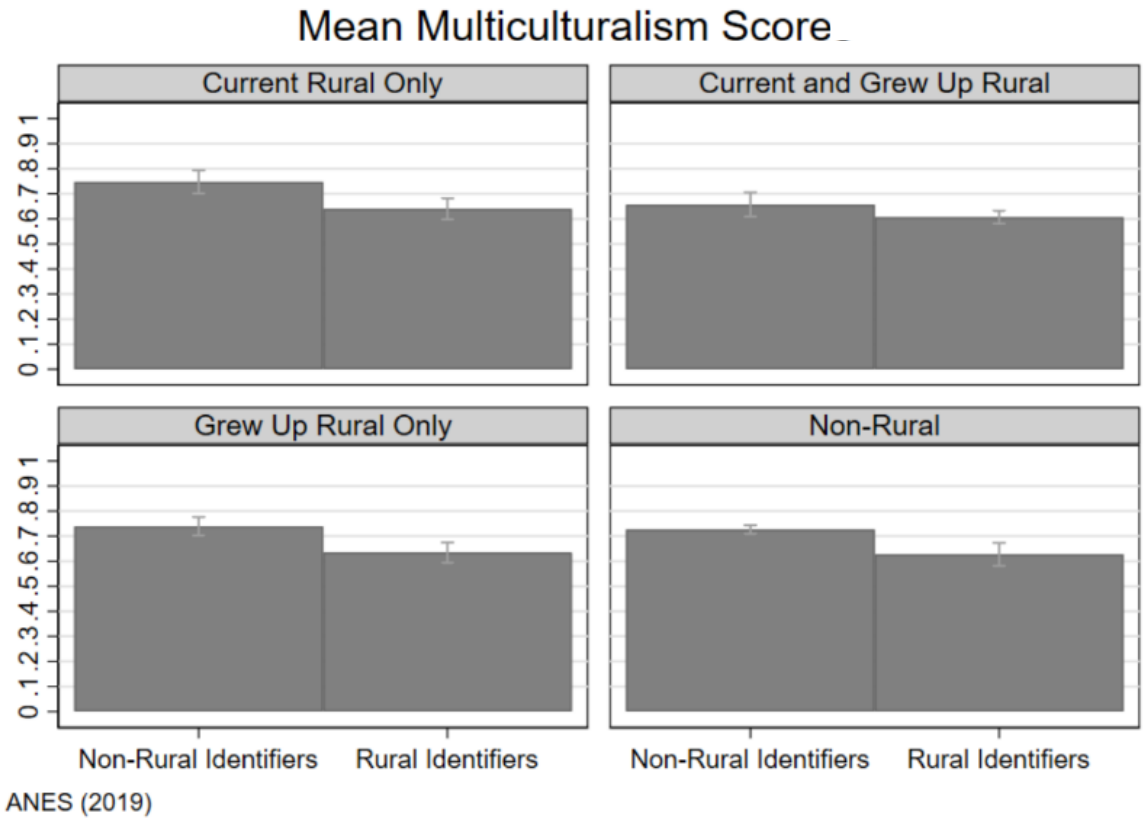
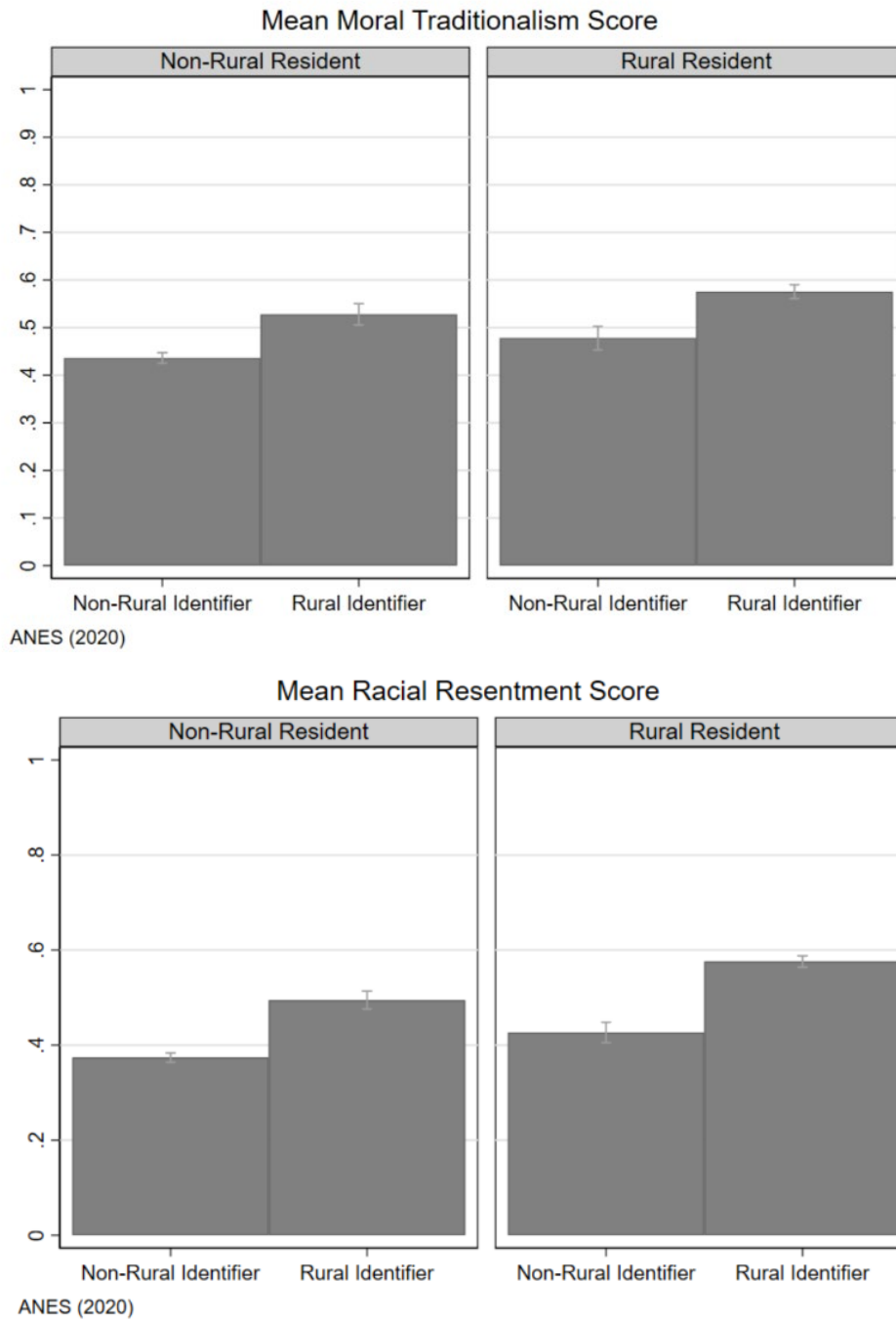




Figure 6: Mean moral traditionalism and racial resentment scores, by rural identity and rural residency.



In addition, the results from Figures 5 and 6 hold when controlling for other demographic factors when predicting rural identity in logistic regression models (see Table 3; odds ratios shown). For both rural and non-rural residents, moving from the lowest to the highest moral

traditionalism score is significantly associated with a 1.8 times greater chance of rural identification for current rural residents (versus 1.6 times greater for non-rural residents). Similarly, moving from the lowest to highest racial resentment score is significantly associated with a four times greater chance of identifying as rural for rural residents, versus a 2.33 times greater chance for non-rural residents. Notably, a similar set of models with multiculturalism as the key independent variable (using 2019 ANES data) shows that multiculturalism does not significantly predict rural identity. However, this tendency is true of both non-rural and rural individuals; see Supplement for details.

Table 3: *Odds ratios predicting rural identity, by rural versus non-rural residency (2020 ANES).*

	(1) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current rural residents</i>	(2) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current non- rural residents</i>	(3) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current rural residents</i>	(4) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current non- rural residents</i>
Income Level	1.00 (0.26)	0.78 (0.16)	0.97 (0.26)	0.81 (0.18)
College Degree	0.58*** (0.09)	0.67** (0.08)	0.55*** (0.08)	0.61*** (0.08)
Black	0.68 (0.25)	0.84 (0.25)	0.68 (0.28)	0.68 (0.22)
Hispanic	0.51* (0.17)	0.75 (0.20)	0.69 (0.26)	0.71 (0.21)
White	1.14 (0.27)	1.46 (0.31)	1.24 (0.31)	1.35 (0.32)
Female	0.81 (0.11)	0.91 (0.10)	0.80 (0.11)	0.82 (0.10)
Age	1.40 (0.34)	0.54** (0.12)	1.08 (0.28)	0.63 (0.15)
Born-again Christian	0.95 (0.17)	1.26 (0.19)	0.89 (0.17)	1.35 (0.21)
Religious Importance	1.72** (0.36)	1.37 (0.27)	2.12*** (0.47)	1.68* (0.34)
Midwest	0.99	1.46	0.91	1.40

	(0.20)	(0.29)	(0.20)	(0.30)
South	0.76	2.19***	0.74	1.86**
	(0.15)	(0.41)	(0.15)	(0.39)
West	0.90	1.68**	0.74	1.67*
	(0.21)	(0.33)	(0.18)	(0.36)
Racial Resentment	3.99***	2.33***	-	-
	(1.05)	(0.46)		
Moral Traditionalism	1.79**	1.60**	-	-
	(0.38)	(0.29)		
Rural Feeling Therm.	-	-	6.47***	2.90***
			(2.27)	(0.84)
Rural Resentment	-	-	6.94***	4.80***
			(2.82)	(1.70)
N	2655.00	4060.00	2308.00	3558.00

*Logit models; odds ratios shown for ease of interpretation. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data.*

Turning to the affective measures (Table 3, Models 3 and 4), a similar pattern emerges using regression analyses with control variables: the rural feeling thermometer and the rural resentment scale are both significantly and strongly predictive of rural identity for both rural and non-rural residents. Although these point estimates differ between rural and non-rural residents – with rural residents showing stronger relationships between rural identity and various affective and values-based tendencies - the associational tendencies are similar, providing support for *H2*.

Finally, Table 3 also provides insight into the research question. The predictive demographic tendencies of rural identity are fairly consistent across rural and non-rural residents, including income level, college degree attainment, race, gender, and religious importance. Notably, however, directional differences in effects occur for age and region. Non-rural rural identifiers appear to be younger and to be from regions other than the Northeast; in other words,

non-rural people may also equate “rural” with “not the urban regions” (see Figure S1 in the appendix for the predicted probability of rural identification by region).

In the 2019 ANES data and the YouGov data, however, these demographic differences are not consistent. A replication of the Models in Table 3 for the 2019 ANES data find that there is little demographic difference, except for age and income level, as well as living in the West (though this regional difference is not statistically significant). Income level negatively and significantly predicts rural identity for non-rural residents, but not for rural residents. Age is statistically significant and negative for rural residents but is not statistically significant for non-rural residents. Otherwise, demographic tendencies between rural and non-rural residents are similar. Finally, in wave 1 of the YouGov data, income level is negative and statistically significant for non-rural residents but not for rural residents. Age is positively and significantly correlated for non-rural residents (counter to the ANES findings) and is negatively and significantly correlated for rural residents. Women are significantly less likely to identify as rural among non-rural residents only. See Supplement results for full model details.

Therefore, demographically speaking, there is little consistent demographic difference. Income level comes close – income is negatively associated with rural identity for non-rural residents, but not for rural residents – though income level is not a statistically significant predictor in the 2020 ANES data.

### *Political Attitudes and Affiliations*

Next, I test *H3*, e.g., that various political attitudes and affiliations correlate with rural identity similarly for rural and non-rural respondents. The mean scores of these various political measures, by rural residency and rural identification, can be found in Figures 7 and 8. Yet again, Figure 7 shows that rural identity significantly and more strongly predicts conservative ideology,

Republican partisanship, positive feelings toward Trump, anti-intellectualism, and anti-elitism compared to people who do not identify as rural. Not only this, but non-rural rural identifiers also significantly score higher on these measures, on average, than rural people who do not identify as rural.

Figure 7: Mean political affiliations and attitudes, by rural residency and rural identity.

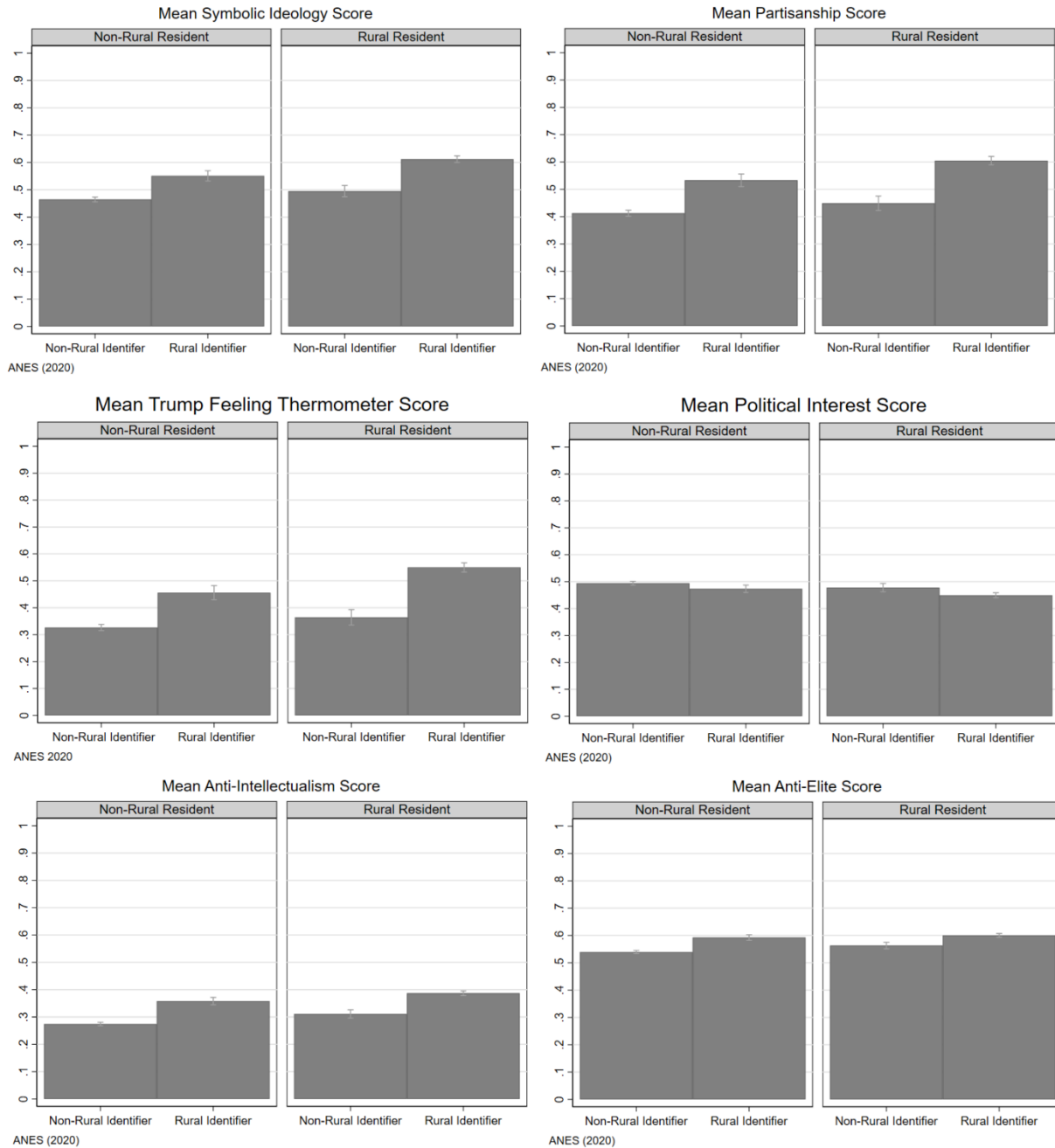
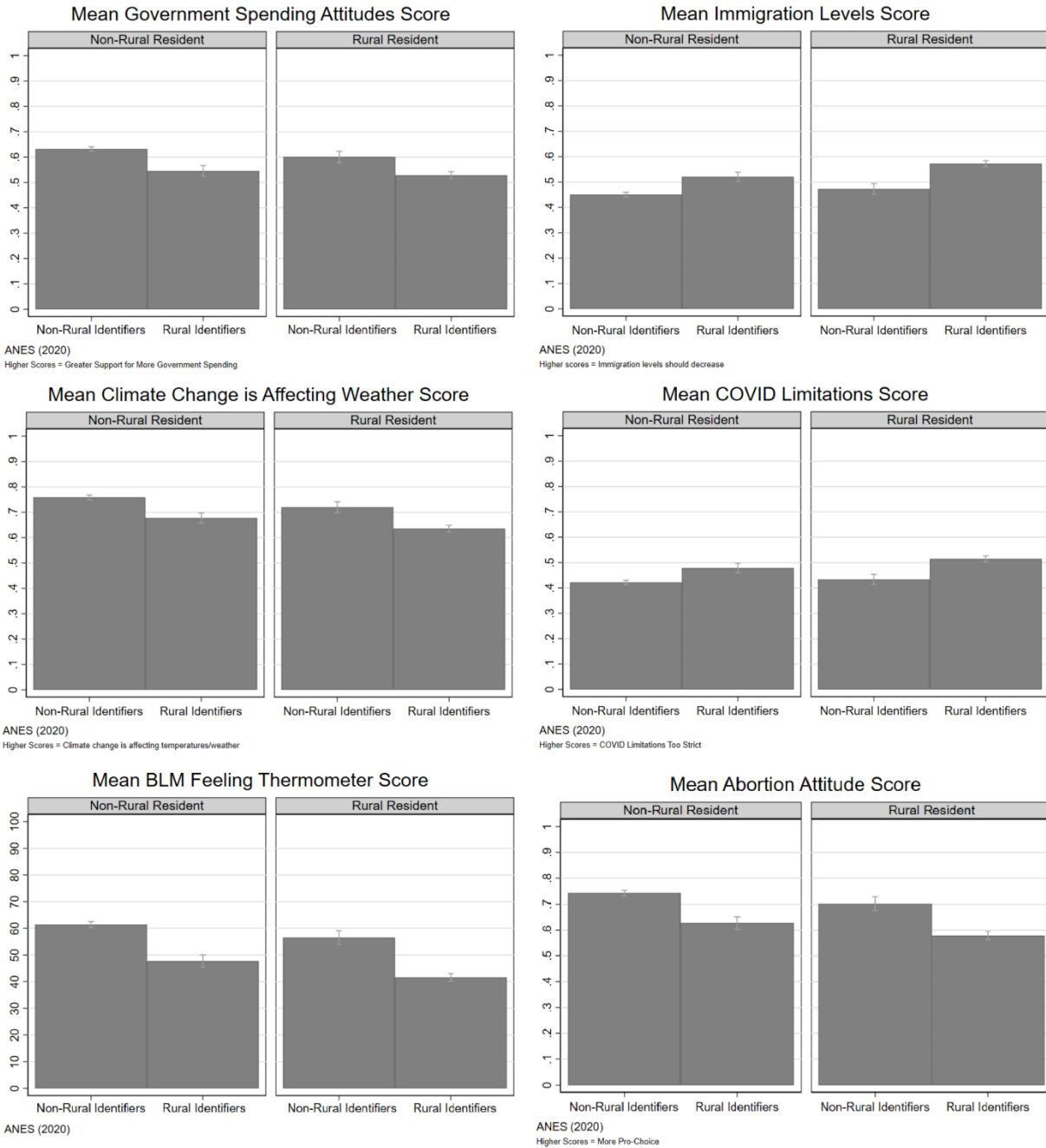


Figure 8: Mean political issue attitudes, by rural residency and rural identity.



Note: Higher government spending values = preference for greater government spending; higher immigration levels values = greater support for limiting the number of immigrants; higher climate change attitudes = greater belief that climate change is affecting weather patterns; greater COVID variable values = stronger belief that COVID limitations were too much; greater abortion values = increasingly pro-choice stances.

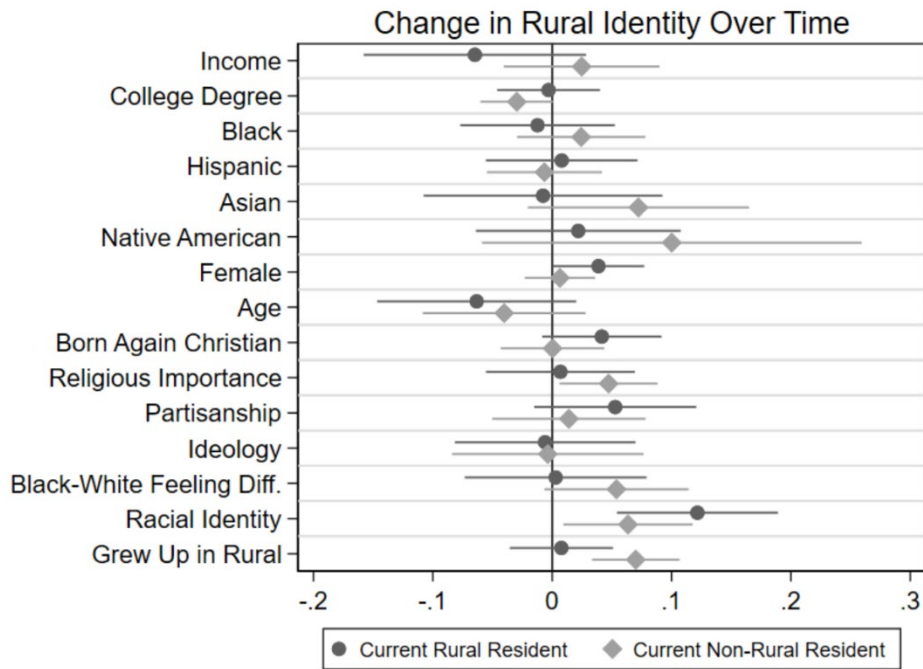
Figure 7 also includes political interest. This is the one case where non-rural residents who are rural identifiers have a similar score to rural residents who are non-rural identifiers. That said, political interest on average is lower among people who identify as rural versus people who do not among non-rural residents. This one result only partially follows the expectations of *H3*.

When considering issue positions rather than political affiliations or identification, a very similar trend occurs once again (Figure 8). Rural identifiers are consistently and significantly more conservative on issue positions than people who do not identify as rural, and non-rural rural identifiers are more conservative on these issues than rural residents who do not identify as rural. It is also worth noting that, using OLS and ordered logit regressions, I also test whether rural identity and rural residency significantly interact with one another to predict the 12 political variables examined in Figures 7 and 8, controlling for political affiliation and demographic variables. In every single model, the interaction term does not reach statistical significance; see Supplement for details.

### *Over-Time Analysis*

Finally, I evaluate what predicts changes over time in rural identification (Figure 9) by rural residency. This analysis helps answer the research question above: are the tendencies of who identifies as rural different across rural and non-rural locations? To do so, I run regressions predicting the change in rural identity self-view/importance between wave 1 and wave 3 of the YouGov data, using demographic variables at wave 1 as predictors. Further, I run these models for rural individuals only (e.g., currently live in a rural area or grew up in a rural area) versus those who are not rural. A plot of these results can be found in Figure 9 below; full regression model results can be found in the Supplement.

Figure 9: *Change in rural identity self-view/importance over time, by rurality.*



*Note: Regression tables in Supplement.*

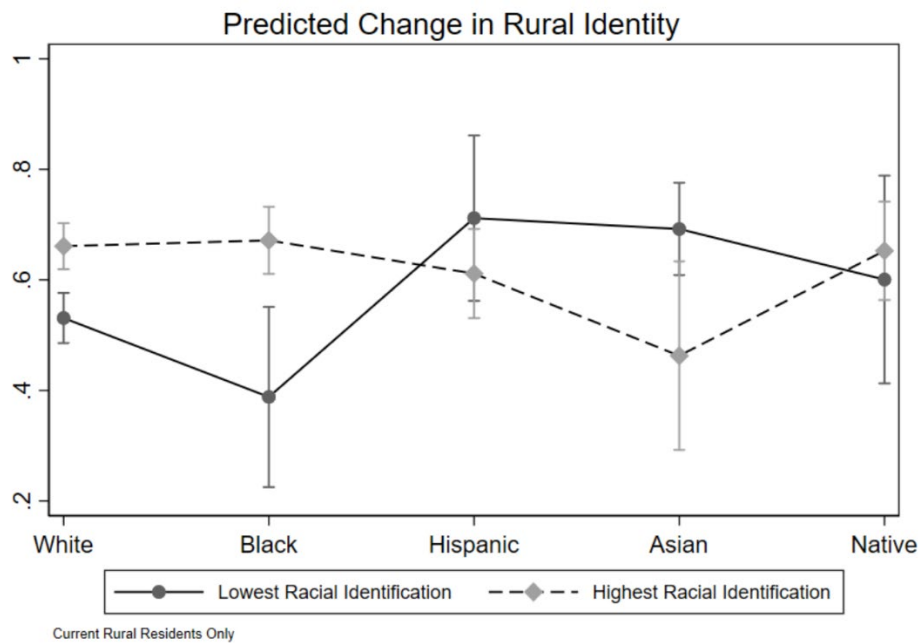
Here, I find that racial identity and being female predict an increase in rural identification over time among rural residents. For non-rural residents, not having a college degree, religious importance, racial identity, and growing up in a rural area predict an increase in rural identification over time. Notably, partisanship and ideology do not predict changes in rural identification, which is evidence going against the trend of other politically relevant identities being heightened by an increase in partisan identification (e.g., Egan 2020).

Given that racial identity appears to be a statistically significant predictor of a change in rural identification over time, I investigated this result further. Recent work finds that white identity among rural residents is significantly correlated with rural resentment (Nemerever et al. n.d.), while rural residents tend to be higher in white identity (Jardina 2019). However, no existing work examines whether non-white racial identity corresponds with rural identity, except



a brief discussion in Lunz Trujillo (2021). For these reasons, I interact racial identity self-view/importance with respondent-reported race/ethnicity (controlling for other variables) to predict a change in rural identity over time. A predicted effects plot of this interaction for rural residents can be found in Figure 10: notably, higher racial identification among Black and White rural individuals. For Hispanic, Asian, and Native American rural residents this interaction is not statistically significant. Further, for non-rural residents, none of these interactions are statistically significant; see Supplement for details. This implies that racial identity’s association with rural identity change does not significantly differ across racial groups. That said, some of these racial groups have relatively small sample sizes; future work should verify these relationships using larger samples of non-whites.

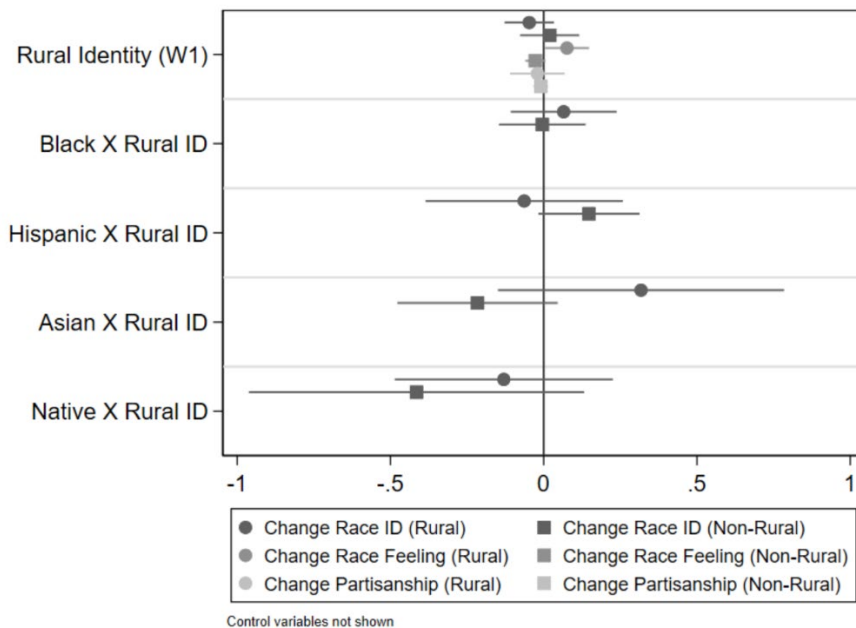
Figure 10: *Interaction results between respondent race and racial identity self-view/importance to predict a change over time in rural identity (rural respondents only).*



*Note: Regression table in Supplement.*

Conversely, rural identity does not significantly predict a change in racial identity over time (for any racial group examined), nor does it significantly predict a change in partisanship over time (Figure 11). However, rural identity does predict an increased gap in feelings toward Black and white individuals over time for rural residents only.

Figure 11: *Interaction results between respondent race and rural identity self-view/importance, or just rural identity, to predict a change over time racial identity, Black-white feeling difference, or partisanship over time.*



Note: Regression tables in Supplement.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

As a result of these analyses, I find evidence for *H1*, *H2* and *H3*, and for my overall argument: that rural identifiers, regardless of location, hold similar psychological and political correlates compared to people who do not identify as rural. These results are robust to different data sources and different measures of political, psychological, and values-based concepts.

Further, I also find that a good chunk of non-rural rural identifiers have been socialized as rural

(e.g., grew up in a rural area), but have since moved; in other words, rural group categorization should also include those who grew up as rural, or who lived in a rural area but have since moved.

The findings regarding demographic differences imply a few things. First, in regression analyses of cross-sectional data sets, there are no consistent differences in the demographic tendencies of rural identifiers in rural versus non-rural areas (compared to people in those areas who do not identify as rural). The one possible exception is income level, where income is negatively correlated with rural identity for non-rural residents, but not for rural residents. Second, non-rural rural identifiers are not simply Republicans who associate rural identity with conservative the right. Third, non-rural residents who are more religious and less college educated tend to identify as rural over time, which is not the case for rural residents. This implies that similarities along demographic tendencies of rural areas heighten rural identification, and, that these demographic groups tend to have certain cultural or norm-based characteristics – such as moral traditionalism (De Koster and Van Der Waal 2007; Egge Langsæther 2019; Prasad et al. 2016) – that I argue undergird rural identity.

This study also sheds light on the role of racial attitudes and rural identity. As expected, racial resentment is positively and significantly correlated with rural identity for both non-rural and rural residents. However, racial identification predicts increased rural identification over time, especially for White and Black rural residents. Future work should delve into the nature of rural identity and similar concepts for non-white individuals, particularly as they relate to racial attitudes and social identification with other groups. Further, Black-White feeling thermometer difference scores do not significantly predict rural identification, though rural identification does

significantly predict wider Black-white attitudes for rural residents. This suggests that racial attitudes may stem from rural group identification rather than vice versa.

As with any study, this one contains some limitations. First, not all values-based differences identified between urban and rural areas in the U.S. were tested, due to limitations of the data used. Future studies should aim to expand upon this. Second, much of the evidence here was correlational. Although the purpose of this paper was not to identify the causal mechanisms, some aspects of my argument that imply causality. For instance, it is implied that some people would first adopt certain values or norms, and then identify as rural. I was unable to test this proposition here given the limitations of the items on the panel data. However, analyses from the panel data suggest ruling out certain alternative explanations, e.g., that political affiliation drives non-rural people to identify as rural, or that racial attitudes drive non-rural people to identify as rural. Third, I investigate some aspects of rural identity via subgroup analysis, such as by respondent race or ethnicity, that have small sample sizes. In some cases, caution should be exercised with the external validity of the subgroup analysis results.

Despite these limitations, the present study provides a definition of what rural identity is and helps solve the puzzle of why some people say they hold a rural social identity without actually living in a rural area. The results here also imply that researchers should be highly conscious of what “rural” means when they want to measure relevant social, psychological, and political correlates; rurality can be a social identity that includes a broad group categorization, even including people who do not currently live in a rural area.

## **References**

- American National Election Studies. 2019. ANES 2019 Pilot Study [dataset and documentation]. [www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org)
- American National Election Studies. 2021. ANES 2020 Time Series Study Full Release [dataset and documentation]. July 19, 2021 version. [www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org)
- Borwein, Sophie, and Jack Lucas. *N.d.* "Asymmetries in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Place-Based Resentment." *Presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*. Montreal, Canada.
- Carmines, Edward G., Paul M. Sniderman, and Beth C. Easter. 2011. "On the Meaning, Measurement, and Implications of Racial Resentment." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 634(1): 98–116.
- Cramer, Katherine. 2016. *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- De Koster, Willem, and Jeroen Van der Waal. 2007. "Cultural value orientations and Christian religiosity: On moral traditionalism, authoritarianism, and their implications for voting behavior." *International Political Science Review* 28(4): 451-467.
- Diamond, Emily P. 2021. "Understanding Rural Identities and Environmental Policy Attitudes in America." *Perspectives on Politics*, 1-17.
- Egan, Patrick J. 2020. "Identity as dependent variable: How Americans shift their identities to align with their politics." *American Journal of Political Science* 64(3): 699-716.
- EGGE LANGSÆTHER, Peter. 2019 "Religious voting and moral traditionalism: The moderating role of party characteristics." *Electoral Studies* 62: 102095.
- Feldman, Stanley, Huddy, Leonie. 2005. "Racial Resentment and White Opposition to Race-Conscious Programs: Principles or Prejudice?" *American Journal of Political Science* 49:168–83.
- Gimpel, James, Nathan, Lovin, Bryant, Moy, Reeves, Andrew. 2020. "The Urban–Rural Gulf in American Political Behavior." *Political Behavior* 42 (4): 1343–1368.
- Huddy, Leonie. 2003. "Group Identity and Political Cohesion." In Sears, David O., Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis, eds, *Oxford handbook of political psychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Huddy, Leonie, and Nadia Khatib. 2007. "American patriotism, national identity, and political involvement." *American journal of political science*, 51(1): 63-77.
- Huddy, Leonie, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe. 2015. "Expressive partisanship: Campaign involvement, political emotion, and partisan identity." *American Political Science Review*, 109(1): 1-17.

- Huijsmans, Twan. 2022. "Place resentment in 'the places that don't matter': explaining the geographic divide in populist and anti-immigration attitudes." *Acta Politica*: 1-21.
- Huijsmans, Twan, Eelco Harteveld, Wouter van der Brug, and Bram Lancee. 2021. "Are cities ever more cosmopolitan? Studying trends in urban-rural divergence of cultural attitudes." *Political Geography* 86: 102353.
- Jardina, Ashley . 2019. *White Identity Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kinder, Donald, and Lynn Sanders. 1996. *Divided by color: Racial politics and democratic ideals*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kinder, Donald, and David Sears. 1981. "Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40:414–31.
- Lunz Trujillo, Kristin. 2021. *A Case of Misunderstood Identity: The Role of Rural Identity in Contemporary American Mass Politics*. PhD thesis, Order No. 28718499. University of Minnesota.
- Lunz Trujillo, Kristin. 2022. "Rural Identity as a Contributing Factor to Anti-Intellectualism in the U.S." *Political Behavior*: 1–24.
- Lunz Trujillo, Kristin, Crowley, Zack. 2022. "Symbolic Versus Material Concerns of Rural Consciousness in the United States." *Political Geography* 96: 102658.
- Lyons, Jeffrey, Utych, Stephen M.. 2021. "You're Not From Here!: The Consequences of Urban and Rural Identities." *Political Behavior*: 1–27.
- Maxwell, Rahsaan. 2020. "Geographic Divides and Cosmopolitanism: Evidence from Switzerland." *Comparative Political Studies* 53: 2061–2090.
- McKee, Seth. 2008. "Rural voters and the polarization of American presidential elections." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41, no. 1 (2008): 101-108.
- Munis, B. Kal . 2020. "Us over Here Versus Them Over There Literally: Measuring Place Resentment in American Politics." *Political Behavior*.
- Nemerever, Zoe, Ryan Dawkins, B. Kal Munis, and Francesca Verville. N.d. "Place, Race, and the Politics of White Grievance." *Presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association (MPSA)*. Chicago, IL.
- Nemerever, Zoe, Rogers, Melissa. 2021. "Measuring the Rural Continuum in Political Science." *Political Analysis* 29 (3): 267–286.
- Onega, Tracy, Weiss, Julie, Alford-Teaster, Jennifer, Goodrich, Marth, Eliassen, Scottie, Jung Kim, Sunny. 2020. "Concordance of Rural-Urban Self-Identity and zip Code-Derived Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) Designation." *Journal of Rural Health* 36 (2): 274–280.
- Parker, Kim, Horowitz, Juliana, Brown, Anna, Fry, Richard, Cohn, D'Vera, Ruth, Igielnik. 2018. "What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities." *Pew Research Center*.

Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/05/Pew-Research-Center-Community-Type-Full-Report-FINAL.pdf> (accessed February 4, 2022).

Prasad, Monica, Steve G. Hoffman, and Kieran Bezila. 2016. "Walking the line: The White working class and the economic consequences of morality." *Politics & Society* 44(2): 281-304.

Rodden, Jonathan. 2019. *Why cities lose: The deep roots of the urban-rural political divide*. Basic Books.

Scheepers, Daan, and Naomi Ellemers. 2019. "Social identity theory." In *Social psychology in action*: 129-143. Springer.

Slez, A. 2020. "Introduction." In *The Making of the Populist Movement: State, Market, and Party on the Western Frontier*: 1-30. Oxford University Press.

Tajfel, Henri. 1970. "Experiments in intergroup discrimination." *Scientific American*, 223(5), 96-103.

Wuthnow, Robert. 2018. *The Left Behind: Decline and Rage in Rural America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Supplemental Materials for  
**“Feeling Out of Place: Who are the Non-Rural Rural Identifiers, and Are  
They Unique Politically?”**

**Table of Contents**

QUESTION WORDINGS.....	2
DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS.....	11
EXTRA RESULTS – PREDICTING RURAL IDENTITY .....	15
EXTRA RESULTS – POLITICAL OUTCOME VARIABLES .....	19
EXTRA RESULTS – OVER TIME CSPP .....	24



## **QUESTION WORDINGS**

*See manuscript for rural identity question wordings.*

### **Rural Residency**

Do you currently live in a rural area, small town, suburb, or a city? [ANES 2019; 2020]

- I currently live in a rural area
- I currently live in a small town
- I currently live in a suburb
- I currently live in a city

Growing up, did you mostly live in a rural area, small town, suburb, or a city? [ANES 2020]

- I grew up in a rural area
- I grew up in a small town
- I grew up in a suburb
- I grew up in a city

Growing up, did you mostly live in a rural area, small town, suburb, or a city? [YouGov]

- Yes
- No

Growing up, did you mostly live in a rural area, small town, suburb, or a city? [YouGov]

- Yes
- No

### **Rural Resentment [ANES 2020]**

Question 1: Compared to people living in cities, do people living in small towns and rural areas get more, the same, or less than they deserve from the government?

- More
- Less
- The Same

> *If “More” is selected:* Do they get [a great deal more, moderately more, or a little more / a little more, moderately more, or a great deal more] than they deserve from the government?

> *If “Less” is selected:* Do they get [a great deal less, moderately less, or a little less / a little less, moderately less, or a great deal less] than they deserve from the government?

Question 2: Compared to people living in cities, do people living in small towns and rural areas have too much influence, too little influence, or about the right amount of influence on government?

- Too much
- Too little
- About the right amount

> *If “Too much” is selected:* Do they have [much too much, somewhat too much, or a bit too much / a bit too much, somewhat too much, or much too much] influence on government?

> *If “Too little” is selected:* Do they have [much too little, somewhat too little, or a bit too little / a bit too little, somewhat too little, or much too little] influence on government?

Question 3: Do people living in small towns and rural areas get too much respect, too little respect, or about the right amount of respect from people living in cities?

- Too much
- Too little
- About the right amount

> *If “Too much” is selected:* Do they get [much too much, somewhat too much, or a bit too much / a bit too much, somewhat too much, or much too much] respect from people living in cities?

> *If “Too little” is selected:* Do they get [much too little, somewhat too little, or a bit too little / a bit too little, somewhat too little, or much too little] respect from people living in cities?

### **Feeling Thermometers [ANES 2020]**

*Preamble: I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.*

*How would you rate?:*

- Rural Americans
- Donald Trump
- Black Lives Matter

### **Feeling Thermometers [YouGov]**

*Preamble: Next, we'd like to get your feelings toward some groups in the news these days. We'll give you the name of a group, and we'd like you to rate that group using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable toward the group. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the group and that you don't care too much for that group. You would rate the group at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly favorable or unfavorable toward the group. Please note that you must move the slider in order to record a response.*

- Blacks
- Whites

### **Moral Traditionalism [ANES 2020]**

*Preamble: I am going to read several more statements. After each one, I would like you to tell me how strongly you agree or disagree*

The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.  
*[Reversed]*

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

### **Multiculturalism [ANES 2019]**

Question 1: How much, if at all, would it bother you to hear people speak a language other than English in a public place?

- Not at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot

- A great deal

Question 2: Does the increasing number of people of many different races and ethnic groups in the United States make this country a better place to live, a worse place to live, or does it make no difference?

- A lot better
- Moderately better [*Only shown to 50% of respondents*]
- A little better
- No difference
- A little worse
- Moderately worse [*Only shown to 50% of respondents*]
- A lot worse

### **Racial Resentment [ANES 2019, 2020]**

Preamble for 2020: *Now I'm going to read several more statements. After each one, I would like you to tell me how strongly you agree or disagree.*

Question 1: Irish, Italian, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

Question 2: Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

*Variable recoded in reverse direction.*

Question 3: Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

*Variable recoded in reverse direction.*

Question 4: It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

### **Anti-Elitism [ANES 2020]**

Preamble: *How well does the following statement describe your view?*

Question 1: Our political system only works for the insiders with money and power.

- Not at all well
- Not very well
- Somewhat well
- Very well
- Extremely well

Question 2: Because of the rich and powerful, it becomes difficult for the rest of us to get ahead.

- Not at all well
- Not very well
- Somewhat well
- Very well
- Extremely well

### **Anti-Intellectualism/Anti-Expertise [ANES 2020]**

Question 1: When it comes to public policy decisions, whom do you tend to trust more: ordinary people, experts, or trust both the same?

- Trust ordinary people more
- Trust experts more
- Trust both the same

> If “Trust ordinary people more” is selected: Do you trust ordinary people [much more or somewhat more / somewhat more or much more]?

> If “Trust experts more” is selected: Do you trust experts [much more or somewhat more / somewhat more or much more]?

*Variable recoded so higher values indicate trusting ordinary people more.*

Question 2: How much do ordinary people need the help of experts to understand complicated things like science and health?

- Not at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

*Variable recoded in reverse direction.*

### **Political Variables [ANES 2020]**

Political Interest Question: How interested would you say you are in politics?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested

*Variable recoded in reverse direction.*

Government Spending Question: Preamble: Some people think the government should provide fewer services even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.

Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Government should provide many fewer services
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

7. Government should provide many more services

Immigration Question: Do you think the number of immigrants from foreign countries who are permitted to come to the United States to live should be: [increased a lot, increased a little, left the same as it is now, decreased a little, or decreased a lot / decreased a lot, decreased a little, left the same as it is now, increased a little, or increased a lot]?

*Variable coded to higher levels indicate greater support for decreased numbers.*

Climate Change Question: How much, if at all, do you think climate change is currently affecting severe weather events or temperature patterns in the United States?

- Not at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

COVID Limitations Question: Do you think the limits your state placed on public activity because of the COVID-19 pandemic were [far too strict, somewhat too strict, about right, not quite strict enough, or not nearly strict enough / not nearly strict enough, not quite strict enough, about right, somewhat too strict, or far too strict]?

*Variable coded to higher levels indicate greater agreement with policies being too strict.*

Abortion Question: There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view?

1. By law, abortion should never be permitted.
2. The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger.
3. The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established.
4. By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.
5. Other {SPECIFY}

*"Other" option omitted from analysis*

## **Other Political Variables [ANES 2019, 2020; YouGov]**

Political Ideology Question: Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Extremely liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly liberal
4. Moderate; middle of the road
5. Slightly conservative
6. Conservative
7. Extremely conservative

Partisanship: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as [a Democrat, a Republican / a Republican, a Democrat], an independent, or what?

- No Preference
- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Other party

*If "Democrat" is selected:* Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong

*If "Republican" is selected:* Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

1. Strong
2. Not very strong

*If "Independent" or "Other party" is selected:* Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

- Closer to Republican
- Neither
- Closer to Democrat

## **Racial Identity [YouGov]**

*First, respondents were asked their race/ethnicity:* Which racial or ethnic group best describes you? Please select all that apply.

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American
- White



- Other

*For each race/ethnicity selected by the respondent, except “Other”, they received two racial identity questions:*

Question 1: How important is being [*race/ethnicity*] to you?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

Question 2: To what extent do you think of yourself as being [*race/ethnicity*]?

- A great deal
- Quite a bit
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all

*For each race/ethnicity option except “Other,” these two questions were reverse-coded and averaged together.*

## DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Table S1: Percent/mean in each of the four categories for different demographic, political, and racial variables, plus demographic and key variable statistics for all respondents (2020 ANES).

	Non-Rural Identifier, Non-Rural	Non-Rural Identifier, Rural	<b>Rural Identifier, Non-Rural</b>	Rural Identifier, Rural	All respondents
Income Level (Mean)	0.62	0.55	<b>0.58</b>	0.55	0.59
College Degree Attainment (%)	43%	35%	<b>32%</b>	23%	35%
White (%)	56%	65%	<b>65%</b>	80%	65%
Black (%)	14%	11%	<b>11%</b>	6%	11%
Hispanic (%)	17%	14%	<b>13%</b>	6%	13%
Gender = Female (Mean)	52%	56%	<b>50%</b>	51%	52%
Age (Mean)	0.46	0.44	<b>0.45</b>	0.52	0.47
Born Again/ Evangelical (%)	25%	30%	<b>35%</b>	38%	31%
Religious Importance (Mean )	0.50	0.50	<b>0.59</b>	0.60	0.54
Region = Northeast (%)	19%	17%	<b>11%</b>	17%	17%
Region = Midwest (%)	32%	20%	<b>19%</b>	25%	22%
Region = South (%)	20%	45%	<b>44%</b>	43%	38%
Region = West (%)	28%	18%	<b>26%</b>	14%	23%
Partisanship (Mean)	0.40	0.43	<b>0.54</b>	0.62	0.49
Ideology (Mean)	0.46	0.50	<b>0.57</b>	0.63	0.52
Political Interest (Mean)	2.86	2.80	<b>2.76</b>	2.72	2.80
Trump Feeling Thermometer (Mean)	0.32	0.36	<b>0.46</b>	0.57	0.41

Racial Resentment (Mean) ( <i>Whites/Blacks/Hispanics</i> )	0.42/0.23/0.43	0.46/0.37/0.37	<b>0.55/0.25/0.48</b>	0.62/0.28/0.52	0.52/0.26/0.45
Populism: Anti-Expert (Mean)	0.29	0.32	<b>0.38</b>	0.40	0.33
Populism: Anti-Elite (Mean)	0.56	0.58	<b>0.60</b>	0.61	0.58
Moral Traditionalism	0.42	0.42	<b>0.51</b>	0.56	0.48

Note: “Rural” = current rural or small town resident only.

Table S2: Percent/mean in each of the four categories for different demographic, political, and racial variables, plus demographic and key variable statistics for all respondents (2019 ANES).

	Non-Rural Identifier, Non-Rural	Non-Rural Identifier, Rural	<b>Rural Identifier, Non-Rural</b>	Rural Identifier, Rural	All respondents
Income Level (Mean)	0.41	0.37	<b>0.36</b>	0.35	0.38
College Degree Attainment (%)	34%	32%	<b>25%</b>	24%	30%
White (%)	58%	69%	<b>72%</b>	77%	68%
Black (%)	17%	12%	<b>10%</b>	9%	12%
Hispanic (%)	16%	13%	<b>11%</b>	9%	12%
Gender = Female (Mean)	50%	53%	<b>47%</b>	54%	52%
Age (Mean)	48	48	<b>48</b>	54	50
Born Again/Evangelical (%)	24%	27%	<b>24%</b>	36%	29%
Religious Importance (Mean)	0.54	0.55	<b>0.54</b>	0.64	0.58
Region = Northeast (%)	20%	15%	<b>16%</b>	17%	18%
Region = Midwest (%)	19%	19%	<b>20%</b>	20%	19%
Region = South (%)	36%	43%	<b>35%</b>	41%	39%

Region = West (%)	26%	23%	<b>29%</b>	22%	24%
Partisanship (Mean)	0.39	0.45	<b>0.52</b>	0.55	0.47
Ideology (Mean)	0.47	0.49	<b>0.57</b>	0.61	0.53
Political Interest (Mean)	0.75	0.77	<b>0.70</b>	0.74	0.75
Trump Feeling Thermometer (Mean)	34	38	<b>48</b>	53	43
Racial Resentment (Mean) ( <i>Whites/Blacks/Hispanics</i> )	0.48/0.30/0.51	0.47/0.36/0.49	<b>0.63/0.40/0.48</b>	0.64/0.35/0.55	0.55/0.33/0.51
Multiculturalism (5-point)	0.68	0.68	<b>0.56</b>	0.57	0.63
Multiculturalism (7-point)	0.66	0.69	<b>0.51</b>	0.57	0.62
Comfort with Foreign Languages	0.74	0.72	<b>0.62</b>	0.64	0.69

Note: "Rural" = current rural/small town resident or grew up rural/small town only. Weighted data.

Table S3: Percent/mean in each of the four categories for different demographic, political, and racial variables, plus demographic and key variable statistics for all respondents (Panel Wave 1).

	Non-Rural Identifier, Non-Rural	Non-Rural Identifier, Rural	<b>Rural Identifier, Non-Rural</b>	Rural Identifier, Rural	All respondents
Income Level (Mean)	0.39	0.35	<b>0.28</b>	0.31	0.34
College Degree Attainment (%)	37%	30%	<b>24%</b>	26%	30%
White (%)	64%	80%	<b>58%</b>	76%	72%
Black (%)	19%	8%	<b>21%</b>	11%	13%
Hispanic (%)	17%	11%	<b>20%</b>	11%	14%
Gender = Female (Mean)	50%	51%	<b>39%</b>	54%	51%
Age (Mean)	46	49	<b>42</b>	53	48
Born Again/Evangelical (%)	19%	24%	<b>36%</b>	40%	30%

Religious Importance (Mean)	0.52	0.47	<b>0.69</b>	0.70	0.59
Partisanship (Mean)	0.37	0.41	<b>0.47</b>	0.56	0.46
Ideology (Mean)	0.43	0.45	<b>0.53</b>	0.59	0.50
Political Interest (Mean)	0.79	0.79	<b>0.75</b>	0.76	0.78
White Feeling Thermometer (Mean) ( <i>Whites/Blacks/Non-Whites</i> )	69/59	70/60	<b>68/55</b>	75/68	72/61/62
Black Feeling Thermometer (Mean) ( <i>Whites/Blacks/Non-Whites</i> )	72/77	72/71	<b>57/61</b>	69/78	70/84/75
White Identity Self View/Importance (Mean) ( <i>Whites</i> )	0.44	0.39	<b>0.63</b>	0.52	0.47
Black Identity Self View/Importance (Mean) ( <i>Blacks</i> )	0.82	0.79	<b>0.78</b>	0.85	0.82
Hispanic Identity Self View/Importance (Mean) ( <i>Hispanics</i> )	0.70	0.65	<b>0.71</b>	0.74	0.71
Asian Identity Self View/Importance (Mean) ( <i>Asians</i> )	0.67	0.55	<b>0.62</b>	0.46	0.60
Native American Identity Self View/Importance (Mean) ( <i>Native Americans</i> )	0.59	0.49	<b>0.81</b>	0.67	0.63

Note: YouGov Panel Wave 1, Rural identity scale used with > .49 coded as a rural identifier. “Rural” = current rural/small town resident or grew up rural/small town only. Weighted data.

**EXTRA RESULTS – PREDICTING RURAL IDENTITY**

Figure S1: Predicted probabilities of rural identity by region, and by rural/non-rural resident, 2020 ANES data.

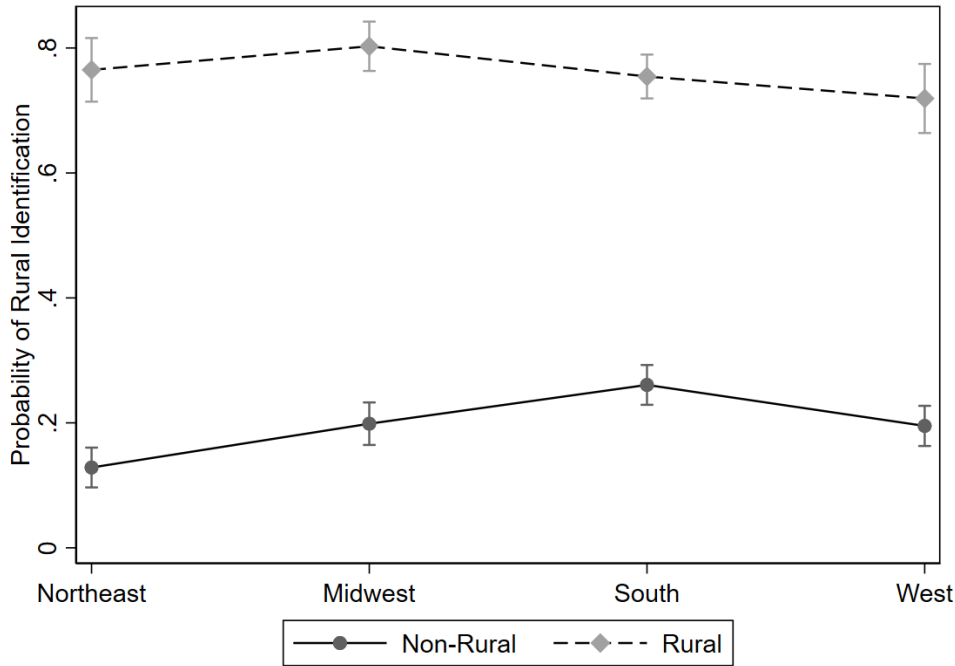


Table S4: Predicting Rural Identity, 2019 ANES data.

	(1) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current rural residents</i>	(2) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current non-rural residents</i>	(3) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current rural residents</i>	(4) Rural Identity (binary) <i>Current non-rural residents</i>
Income	1.04 (0.37)	0.53* (0.15)	1.20 (0.43)	0.55* (0.16)
College Degree	0.73 (0.13)	0.84 (0.13)	0.70 (0.13)	0.80 (0.13)
Black	1.23 (0.50)	0.92 (0.32)	1.03 (0.43)	1.01 (0.37)
Hispanic	0.75 (0.34)	1.00 (0.31)	0.65 (0.31)	0.96 (0.31)
White	1.63 (0.52)	1.44 (0.39)	1.42 (0.47)	1.26 (0.36)

Female	1.07 (0.18)	0.83 (0.11)	1.10 (0.19)	0.88 (0.13)
Age	0.18*** (0.07)	0.84 (0.26)	0.13*** (0.06)	1.11 (0.38)
Born Again Christian	1.27 (0.28)	1.10 (0.19)	1.12 (0.25)	0.98 (0.18)
Religious Importance	0.93 (0.22)	1.05 (0.23)	0.92 (0.23)	1.00 (0.22)
Midwest	1.05 (0.29)	1.03 (0.23)	1.02 (0.29)	0.93 (0.23)
South	0.94 (0.21)	1.06 (0.20)	0.98 (0.22)	0.90 (0.19)
West	0.93 (0.23)	1.21 (0.25)	0.98 (0.25)	1.18 (0.26)
Racial Resentment	3.27*** (1.01)	3.40*** (0.91)	3.42*** (1.04)	3.62*** (1.04)
Anti- Multiculturalis m	1.39 (0.41)	0.65 (0.16)	1.56 (0.48)	0.57 (0.17)
Grew Up Rural	-	-	2.78*** (0.49)	4.37*** (0.67)
N	1028.00	1562.00	1028.00	1562.00

*Logit models; odds ratios shown for ease of interpretation. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data.*

Table S5: Predicting Rural Identity, YouGov data.

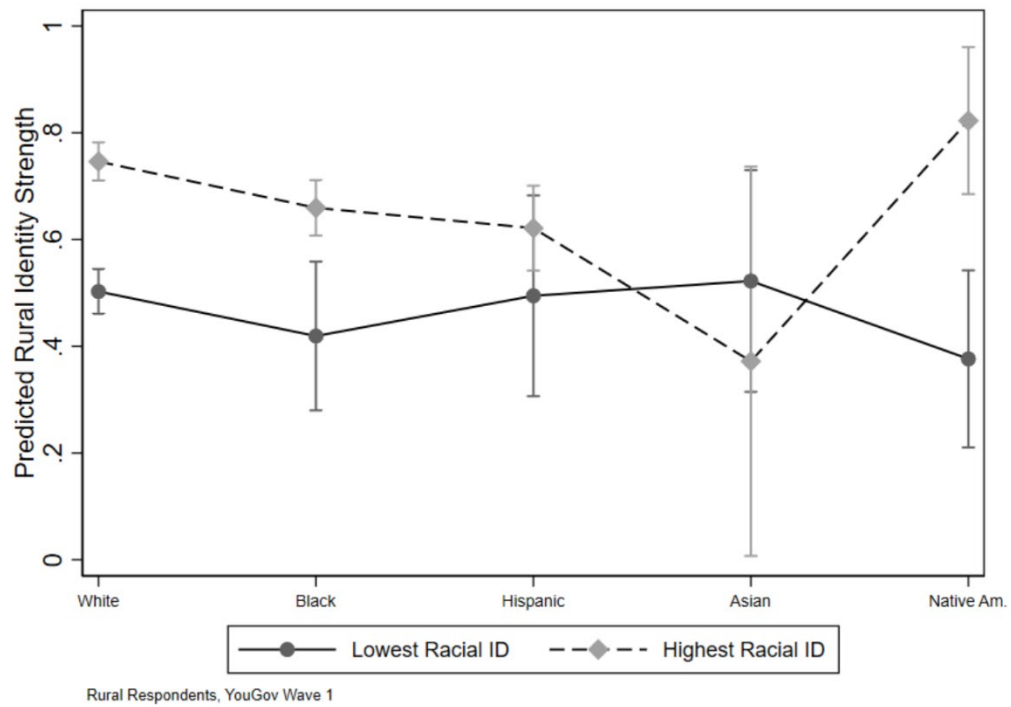
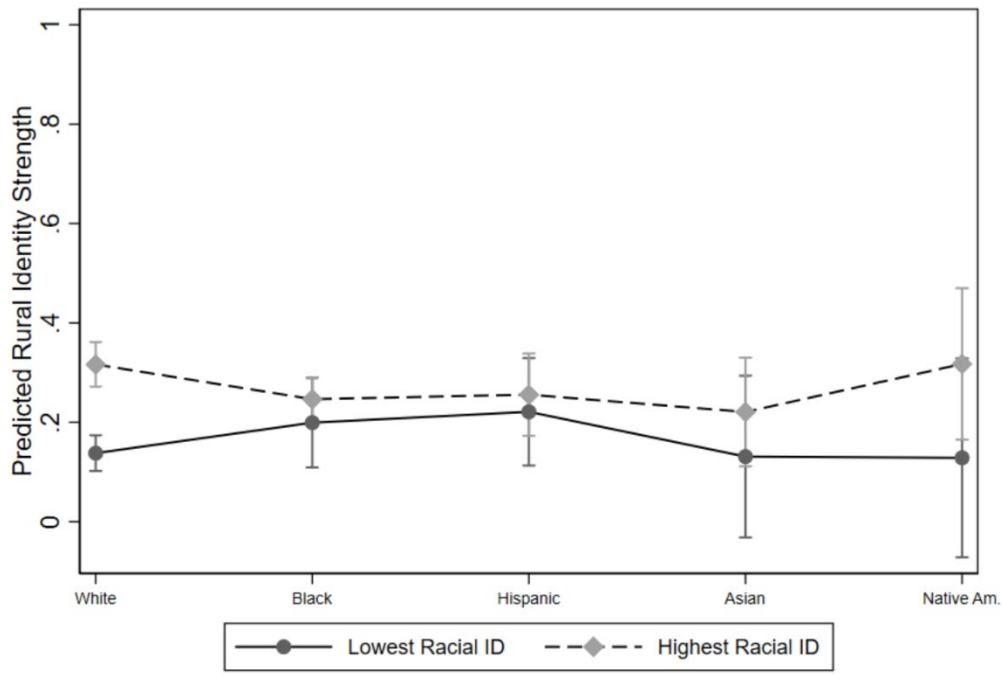
	(1) Rural Identity <i>Current rural residents</i>	(2) Rural Identity <i>Current non-rural residents</i>	(3) Rural Identity <i>Current rural residents</i>	(4) Rural Identity <i>Current non-rural residents</i>	(5) Rural Identity <i>Current rural residents</i>	(6) Rural Identity <i>Current non-rural residents</i>
Income	0.01 (0.05)	-0.15*** (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)	-0.14*** (0.04)	0.04 (0.05)	-0.13*** (0.04)
College Degree	-0.03 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Black	0.06 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)	-	-
Hispanic	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.03	-	-

White	(0.04) 0.05	(0.04) 0.03	(0.04) 0.06	(0.03) 0.00	-	-
Female	(0.04) 0.01	(0.03) -0.04*	(0.03) 0.01	(0.03) -0.04**	0.01	-0.05**
Age	(0.02) -0.07	(0.02) 0.12**	(0.02) -0.09*	(0.02) 0.17***	(0.02) -0.09*	(0.02) 0.17***
Born Again Christian	(0.04) 0.05*	(0.04) 0.05	(0.04) 0.04	(0.04) 0.02	(0.04) 0.04	(0.04) 0.02
Religious Importance	(0.02) 0.17***	(0.02) 0.14***	(0.02) 0.17***	(0.02) 0.15***	(0.02) 0.16***	(0.02) 0.15***
Black-White Feeling Difference	(0.03) 0.26***	(0.03) 0.23***	(0.03) 0.26***	(0.02) 0.24***	(0.03) 0.12	(0.02) 0.17*
Grew Up Rural	(0.07) -	(0.07) -	(0.07) 0.08***	(0.06) 0.20***	(0.08) 0.07**	(0.07) 0.20***
Race Identity	-	-	-	-	0.21***	0.13***
Black	-	-	-	-	(0.04) -0.15	(0.04) 0.08
Hispanic	-	-	-	-	(0.08) 0.06	(0.05) 0.11
Asian	-	-	-	-	(0.09) 0.03	(0.07) 0.04
Native American	-	-	-	-	(0.13) -0.17*	(0.11) 0.00
Black X Race ID	-	-	-	-	(0.07) 0.09	(0.07) -0.13
Hispanic X Race ID	-	-	-	-	(0.10) -0.18	(0.07) -0.15
Asian X Race ID	-	-	-	-	(0.12) -0.32	(0.10) -0.10
Native American X Race ID	-	-	-	-	(0.26) 0.28*	(0.16) -0.02
Constant	0.35*** (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)	0.29*** (0.06)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.32*** (0.05)	-0.10 (0.05)
r2	0.12	0.11	0.13	0.21	0.18	0.22
N	1025.00	1262.00	1025.00	1262.00	1010.00	1251.00

*Logit models; odds ratios shown for ease of interpretation. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data.*



Figure S2: Predicted marginal effects of race interacted with racial identity to predict rural identity, by rural residency.



**EXTRA RESULTS – POLITICAL OUTCOME VARIABLES**

Table S6: Regression results predicting political outcome variables (partisanship, ideology, and Trump feeling thermometer), with and without rural identity X rural residency interactions.

	(1) Partisanship	(2) Partisanship	(3) Ideology	(4) Ideology	(5) Trump FT	(6) Trump FT
Rural Identity (Binary)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Income	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
College Degree	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	- (0.01)	- (0.01)
Black	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.03)	0.06** (0.02)	0.06*** (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Hispanic	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
White	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Female	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	- (0.01)	- (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Age	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Born Again Christian	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Religious Importance	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Partisanship	-	-	0.39*** (0.01)	0.39*** (0.01)	0.51*** (0.02)	0.51*** (0.02)
Ideology	0.78*** (0.02)	0.78*** (0.02)	-	-	0.30*** (0.03)	0.30*** (0.03)
Midwest	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
South	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
West	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
Racial Resentment	0.27*** (0.02)	0.27*** (0.02)	0.21*** (0.01)	0.21*** (0.01)	0.32*** (0.02)	0.31*** (0.02)
Rural Residency	-	-0.02 (0.02)	-	0.03* (0.01)	-	-0.01 (0.01)
Rural Identity X Rural Residency	-	0.01	-	-0.01	-	0.03

Constant	-0.06**	(0.02) -0.05*	0.13***	(0.02) 0.13***	-	(0.02) -
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	0.14***	0.14***
r2	0.62	0.62	0.64	0.64	0.72	0.73
N	5791.00	5791.00	5791.00	5791.00	5667.00	5667.00

Note: OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data from ANES 2020.

Table S7: Regression results predicting political outcome variables (political interest, anti-intellectualism, anti-elitism), with and without rural identity X rural residency interactions.

	(1) Political Interest	(2) Political Interest	(3) Anti- Intellectualism	(4) Anti- Intellectualism	(5) Anti- Elitism	(6) Anti- Elitism
Rural Identity (Binary)	-0.01	-0.01	0.03***	0.04***	0.02**	0.02*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Income	0.04**	0.04**	-0.05***	-0.05***	-	-
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	0.04***	0.04***
College Degree	0.03***	0.03***	-0.03***	-0.03***	-	-
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	0.05***	0.05***
Black	-0.05*	-0.05*	0.05**	0.05**	0.03*	0.03*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Hispanic	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
White	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03**	-0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	-	-	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00
	0.04***	0.04***				
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age	0.16***	0.16***	-0.04**	-0.04**	-	-
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	0.07***	0.07***
Born Again Christian	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Religious Importance	0.03*	0.03*	0.02	0.02	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Partisanship	-0.04*	-0.04*	0.08***	0.08***	0.04**	0.04**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)

Ideology	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Midwest	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
South	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
West	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Racial Resentment	- 0.06***	- 0.06***	0.18*** (0.02)	0.18*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.01)	0.11*** (0.01)
Rural Residency	-	-0.01 (0.01)	-	0.01 (0.01)	-	0.02 (0.01)
Rural Identity X Rural Residency	-	-0.01 (0.02)	-	-0.02 (0.02)	-	-0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.42*** (0.02)	0.42*** (0.02)	0.18*** (0.02)	0.18*** (0.02)	0.59*** (0.02)	0.59*** (0.02)
r2	0.09	0.09	0.33	0.33	0.14	0.14
N	5779.00	5779.00	5789.00	5789.00	5779.00	5779.00

Note: OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data from ANES 2020.

Table S8: Regression results predicting political outcome variables (government spending, immigration levels, and climate change), with and without rural identity X rural residency interactions.

	(1) Governmen t Spending	(2) Governmen t Spending	(3) Immigratio n Levels	(4) Immigratio n Levels	(5) Recogniz e Climate Change	(6) Recogniz e Climate Change
Rural Identity (Binary)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
Income	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
College Degree	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Black	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)	-0.07** (0.02)	-0.07** (0.02)
Hispanic	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)

White	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.00	-0.00	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Female	0.03**	0.03**	0.02*	0.02*	0.02	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age	-0.04*	-0.04*	0.05*	0.05**	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Born Again Christian	-0.01	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Religious Importance	0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Partisanship	-0.17***	-0.17***	0.07**	0.06**	-0.20***	-0.20***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Ideology	-0.30***	-0.30***	0.23***	0.23***	-0.25***	-0.25***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Midwest	-0.00	-0.00	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
South	0.01	0.02	-0.03*	-0.03*	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
West	0.00	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Racial Resentment	-0.18***	-0.18***	0.28***	0.28***	-0.19***	-0.19***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Rural Residency	-	-0.02	-	-0.01	-	-0.03
		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.02)
Rural Identity X Rural Residency	-	0.03	-	-0.00	-	0.02
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.02)
Constant	1.01***	1.02***	0.22***	0.23***	0.99***	0.99***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
r2	0.42	0.42	0.32	0.32	0.38	0.38
N	5265.00	5265.00	5771.00	5771.00	5233.00	5233.00

*Note: OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data from ANES 2020. Higher government spending values = preference for greater government spending; higher immigration levels values = greater support for limiting the number of immigrants; higher climate change attitudes = greater belief that climate change is affecting weather patterns.*

Table S9: Regression results predicting political outcome variables (COVID policies, BLM feeling thermometer and abortion), with and without rural identity X rural residency interactions.

	(1) COVID Limits	(2) COVID Limits	(3) BLM FT	(4) BLM FT	(5) Abortion Attitudes	(6) Abortion Attitudes
Rural Identity (Binary)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	-2.02* (0.93)	-2.37 (1.31)	-0.35*** (0.09)	-0.44*** (0.13)
Income	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	-7.28*** (1.55)	-7.28*** (1.56)	0.45** (0.15)	0.44** (0.15)
College Degree	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-2.59** (0.88)	-2.58** (0.88)	0.14 (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)
Black	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	3.91 (2.47)	3.92 (2.46)	0.15 (0.22)	0.14 (0.22)
Hispanic	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	2.13 (1.96)	2.14 (1.96)	-0.37 (0.21)	-0.37 (0.21)
White	0.05** (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)	-3.17* (1.39)	-3.16* (1.40)	-0.06 (0.14)	-0.05 (0.14)
Female	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	4.04*** (0.87)	4.04*** (0.87)	0.05 (0.08)	0.06 (0.09)
Age	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.05** (0.02)	-3.80* (1.59)	-3.83* (1.59)	0.36* (0.16)	0.36* (0.16)
Born Again Christian	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	-1.37 (1.18)	-1.36 (1.19)	-0.73*** (0.10)	-0.72*** (0.10)
Religious Importance	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	1.65 (1.50)	1.65 (1.50)	-2.00*** (0.15)	-2.02*** (0.15)
Partisanship	0.14*** (0.02)	0.14*** (0.02)	-22.32*** (2.11)	-22.32*** (2.11)	-0.82*** (0.19)	-0.83*** (0.19)
Ideology	0.18*** (0.03)	0.18*** (0.03)	-25.91*** (2.92)	-25.92*** (2.91)	-2.76*** (0.26)	-2.75*** (0.26)
Midwest	- 0.09*** (0.01)	- 0.09*** (0.01)	1.13 (1.46)	1.14 (1.46)	-0.41** (0.14)	-0.40** (0.14)
South	- 0.14*** (0.01)	- 0.14*** (0.01)	2.47 (1.50)	2.49 (1.50)	-0.25 (0.13)	-0.24 (0.13)
West	- 0.06*** (0.01)	- 0.06*** (0.01)	0.70 (1.48)	0.73 (1.48)	0.01 (0.14)	0.01 (0.14)
Racial Resentment	0.16*** (0.02)	0.16*** (0.02)	-49.01*** (2.13)	-49.03*** (2.13)	-0.73*** (0.19)	-0.73*** (0.19)
Rural Residency	-	0.00 (0.02)	-	-0.25 (1.40)	-	-0.34* (0.17)
Rural Identity X Rural Residency	-	0.00 (0.02)	-	0.72 (1.97)	-	0.39 (0.21)

Constant	0.26*** (0.02)	0.26*** (0.02)	105.06*** (2.19)	105.10*** (2.22)	-	-
/						
cut1	-	-	-	-	-6.64*** (0.25)	-6.69*** (0.25)
cut2	-	-	-	-	-4.33*** (0.23)	-4.38*** (0.23)
cut3	-	-	-	-	-3.39*** (0.22)	-3.44*** (0.22)
r2	0.27	0.27	0.63	0.63		
N	5790.00	5790.00	5745.00	5745.00	5571.00	5571.00

Note: OLS regression results for Models 1-4; Ordered logit regression results for Models 5-6. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data from ANES 2020. Greater COVID variable values = stronger belief that COVID limitations were too much; greater abortion values = increasingly pro-choice stance.

### **EXTRA RESULTS – OVER TIME CSPP**

Table S10: CSPP Waves 1-3, predicting changes in rural identity.

	(1) Rural Identity (W3) <i>Rural residents</i>	(2) Rural Identity (W3) <i>Non-Rural residents</i>	(3) Rural Identity (W3) <i>Rural residents</i>	(4) Rural Identity (W3) <i>Non-rural residents</i>
Rural Identity	0.61*** (0.04)	0.54*** (0.03)	0.60*** (0.04)	0.55*** (0.03)
Income Level	-0.06 (0.05)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.02 (0.03)
College Degree	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)
Black	-0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	-0.14 (0.09)	0.02 (0.07)
Hispanic	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.18* (0.08)	-0.07 (0.06)
Asian	-0.01 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	0.16*** (0.05)	-0.19 (0.12)
Native American	0.02 (0.04)	0.10 (0.08)	0.07 (0.10)	0.25** (0.08)
Female	0.04* (0.04)	0.01 (0.08)	0.03 (0.10)	0.01 (0.08)

	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age	-0.06	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Born Again Christian	0.04	0.00	0.05	-0.00
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Religious Importance	0.01	0.05*	0.00	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Partisanship	0.05	0.01	0.05	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Symbolic Ideology	-0.01	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Black-White Feeling Difference	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Racial Identity	0.12***	0.06*	0.13***	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Grew Up Rural	0.01	0.07***	0.01	0.07***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Black X Race Identity	-	-	0.15	0.01
			(0.10)	(0.07)
Hispanic X Race Identity	-	-	-0.23*	0.10
			(0.11)	(0.08)
Asian X Race Identity	-	-	-0.36**	0.37
			(0.11)	(0.21)
Native X Race Identity	-	-	-0.08	-0.27
			(0.11)	(0.16)
Constant	0.16***	0.01	0.15**	0.01
	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)
r2	0.56	0.54	0.56	0.55
N	550.00	700.00	550.00	700.00

*Note: All independent variables are from survey wave 1. OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data.*



Table S11: Rural identity predicting changes in key variables (racial identity, Black-white feeling thermometer difference, and partisanship) over time.

	(1) Race ID (W3) <i>Rural Residents</i>	(2) Race ID (W3) <i>Non-Rural Residents</i>	(3) Racial Feeling (W3) <i>Rural Residents</i>	(4) Racial Feeling (W3) <i>Non-Rural Residents</i>	(5) Partisanship (W3) <i>Rural Residents</i>	(6) Partisanship (W3) <i>Non-Rural Residents</i>
Rural Identity	-0.05 (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)	0.08* (0.04)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Black	0.02 (0.08)	0.12*** (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Hispanic	0.01 (0.11)	0.10* (0.04)	-0.00 (0.06)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Asian	-0.15 (0.08)	0.10* (0.05)	0.05 (0.03)	-0.08* (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
Native American	0.08 (0.11)	0.47*** (0.10)	-0.16* (0.08)	-0.04 (0.04)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Black X Rural ID	0.07 (0.09)	-0.00 (0.07)	- (0.08)	- (0.04)	- (0.03)	- (0.03)
Hispanic X Rural ID	-0.06 (0.16)	0.15 (0.08)	- (0.08)	- (0.04)	- (0.03)	- (0.03)
Asian X Rural ID	0.32 (0.24)	-0.22 (0.13)	- (0.08)	- (0.04)	- (0.03)	- (0.03)
Native X Rural ID	-0.13 (0.18)	-0.42 (0.28)	- (0.08)	- (0.04)	- (0.03)	- (0.03)
Income	-0.00 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)
College	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Female	0.04 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Age	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.09 (0.05)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Born Again Christian	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Religious Importance	0.06 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)

Partisanship	0.06 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.12* (0.05)	-0.05 (0.04)	0.93*** (0.02)	0.93*** (0.02)
Ideology	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.06)	0.19*** (0.04)	0.06* (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)
Black-White Feeling Diff.	-0.05 (0.05)	0.07* (0.03)	0.53*** (0.05)	0.73*** (0.05)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Racial Identity	0.78*** (0.04)	0.69*** (0.04)	0.08** (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Grew Up Rural	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Constant	0.12* (0.05)	0.18*** (0.04)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.09* (0.04)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
r2	0.64	0.65	0.51	0.66	0.95	0.95
N	550.00	700.00	548.00	700.00	697.00	697.00

*Note: All independent variables are from survey wave 1. OLS regression results. Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Weighted data.*