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How Religion and Age Are Correlated with Partisan Geographical Sorting in the United States

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HOW RELIGION AND AGE ARE CORRELATED WITH PARTISAN GEOGRAPHICAL SORTING IN THE UNITED STATES

By
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Abstract

This study explores the intersection of two main demographic variables, religion and age, and the ongoing phenomenon of partisan geographical sorting in the United States. Americans have been migrating to areas composed of politically like-minded individuals for the past few decades, resulting in the existence of Republican and Democratic clusters throughout the country. Republicans are sorting into rural areas, while Democrats are sorting into urban areas. Republicans and rural residents as a whole are more religious than are Democrats and urban residents. In addition, on average, Republicans and rural residents are older than Democrats and urban residents. Moreover, religion and age are correlated with each other, as older Americans are, on average, more religious than younger Americans. This research expands upon previous studies by further evaluating the importance of the correlations between religion and age and partisan geographical sorting in the United States.

Keywords: partisan geographical sorting, religion, age, urban, rural, Democratic, Republican

Table of Contents

Figures and Tables

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore the ongoing phenomenon of partisan geographical sorting in the United States. Partisan geographical sorting is the observed tendency for similar political partisans to cluster in particular geographical areas. The United States has grown increasingly more geographically polarized over time with a noticeable divide occurring between rural and urban areas. This divide has grown, and continues to grow, wider. For the purposes of this research, the terms "Democratic" and "liberal" will be used interchangeably, as will "Republican" and "conservative."

Urban areas are more densely populated than are rural areas and tend to be more diverse. Therefore, because Democrats value diversity, it is unsurprising that Democrats tend to cluster in more densely populated, urban areas (Hui, 2013). Rural areas, on the other hand, are more traditional and homogenous than their urban counterparts. Therefore, because Republicans value tradition, it is also unsurprising that Republicans tend to cluster in less densely populated, rural areas (Savat, 2020).

Americans are sorting in places based on a number of lifestyle choices, which, in turn has grown to reflect politics (Aisch, Pearce, and Yourish, 2016). For instance, Republicans tend to prefer "open space, larger houses, better school districts, smaller local government, and lower taxes," values that are widely available in rural and suburban areas, while Democrats tend to prefer "vibrant city life" and "cultural diversity," values that are widely available in urban areas (Hui, 2013, p. 2). Moreover, there are various demographic variables that are correlated with partisan geographical

sorting. One such variable is educational attainment. On average, counties that are overwhelmingly Democratic have more college-educated residents than counties that are overwhelmingly Republican (Hawley, 2012; Lütjen and Matschoβ, 2015). This discrepancy is likely due to variables such as lower socioeconomic status, lower parental expectations, and poorer high school preparation in rural areas (Schmitt-Wilson, Downey, and Beck, 2018). In addition, rural areas tend to be poorer and less diverse than urban areas (Parker et. al., 2018). Minority populations such as African Americans and Latinos, both of which tend to vote Democratic, are increasing in urban areas (USDA, 2019, web). In contrast, rural areas are, on average, white and lower to lower-middle class, a population which tends to vote Republican.

This thesis, however, will focus primarily on two of the demographic variables correlated with partisan geographical sorting: religion and age. Religious affiliation, and a lack of religious affiliation, is an important component of political partisanship on both sides. As a whole, Republicans are more religious than Democrats, and rural areas are more religious than urban areas. Traditional values are upheld more passionately and are sustained for longer periods of time in rural areas than in urban areas, which helps to explain why rural areas are more religious than their urban counterparts.

Like religion, age also shows an important correlation with political partisanship on both sides. On average, residents of urban areas are younger than residents of rural areas (Day et. al., 2016). Similarly, younger Americans are more likely to vote Democratic than are older Americans (Olsen and Green, 2009). Many younger Americans prefer more densely populated areas due to a larger pool of opportunities for growth and due to a more diverse culture, in addition to several other reasons. As

individuals grow older, however, they begin to prefer the quieter lifestyle offered in less densely populated rural areas.

As well as each being associated with partisanship, and thus with partisan geographical sorting, as independent variables, age and religion are also associated with each other. In addition to being more likely to identify as Democratic, younger Americans also are more likely to identify as religiously unaffiliated (PRRI, 2021). In contrast, in addition to being more likely to identify as Republican, older Americans also are more likely to be more religious (Lyons, 2003).

In the following chapters, these topics will be discussed in further detail. In Chapter 2, the phenomenon of partisan geographical sorting will be explored in more depth, focusing primarily on rural and urban areas in addition to a brief discussion of suburban areas. This chapter also includes a discussion of the history and origin of partisan geographical sorting in the United States and how it has evolved over time. In order to illustrate how partisan geographical sorting is displayed in the United States today, the case of partisan geographical sorting in Atlanta, Sandy Springs, Milton, and Blue Ridge, Georgia will be presented and explored. In Chapter 3, various existing theories which attempt to explain why partisan geographical sorting is occurring will be examined and compared. In addition, a number of demographic variables which appear to be associated with this sorting will be analyzed. Chapter 4 will explore the notable correlation between religion and the sorting phenomenon, including differentiation between and analyses of various particular religions in relation to partisanship as well as a discussion of the history of religion's association with partisanship in the United States. Chapter 6 will explore how age, the other prominent variable in terms of this research, is

correlated with partisan geographical sorting. This chapter includes differentiation between and analyses of the five existing generations in relation to partisanship as well as a discussion of five existing theories which focus attempt to explain the correlation of age and political party affiliation. The history of age association with partisanship as well as future projections will also be explored in this chapter. Chapter 7 will evaluate how religion and age are associated with each other in relation to partisan geographical sorting.

Chapter 2 – Partisan Geographical Sorting

Partisan geographical sorting is occurring and has created the rural/urban divide.

Partisan geographical sorting is the clustering of politically like-minded individuals throughout the United States, and over time, the United States has grown increasingly more "clustered," or what is called, geographically polarized (Martin, 2018). Regions, states, and congressional districts have grown—and are continuing to grow—more dissimilar in their political party affiliations and beliefs in federal elections (Hopkins, 2010). This geographic sorting along partisan lines has resulted in a political divide between rural and urban areas. Individuals who identify as liberal are congregating in diverse, densely populated cities, while those who identify as conservative are congregating in places that are primarily white, working-class, and sparse (The Economist, 2020). The continual increase in geographic sorting along partisan lines is resulting in a continual decrease in the odds of American citizens encountering and interacting with individuals with opposing political views, which, in turn, is strongly correlated with the rise in extreme political views on both sides and party polarization in the United States.

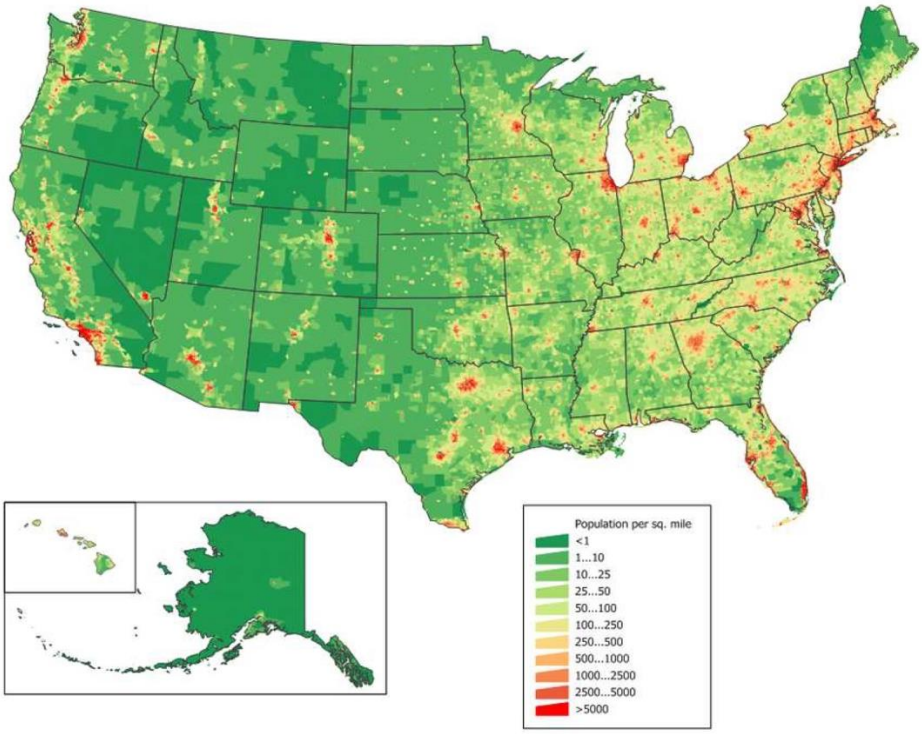
Proximity to metropolitan areas and population density are closely correlated with the political divide between urban and rural areas. Population density can be defined as the

number of people within a certain habitable space. Urban areas are more densely populated than are rural areas (Figure 2.1). Thus, urban areas tend to offer more opportunities for interaction with a larger and more diverse amount of people, which breeds tolerance and openness to new ideas, while rural areas tend to offer primarily opportunities for interaction within a relatively homogenous group of people, which breeds intimate, interpersonal relationships between people with similar values, which reinforces rural residents' traditional values and their resistance to new ideas (Gimpel, et. al., 2020, p. 1349; Savat, 2020).

Democrats are clustering in urban areas.

The United States Census Bureau (2010) defines an urban area:
An urban area is a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses as well as territory with low population density included to link outlying densely settled territory with the densely settled core (web).

Furthermore, "urban census tracts have less than three square miles in area and population density at least 1,000 per square mile, with a minimum population of 2,500



People per square mile	Typically this type of area	2016	2020
<50	Rural	25.4%	25.1%
50-500	Mostly rural with some small towns	28.4%	28.6%
500-2,000	Small cities and deep suburbs	35.5%	36.9%
2,000-5,000	Mid-sized city or suburb of big city	51.1%	53.0%
5,000+	Big city	68.9%	68.4%

Figure 2.1 Population density map of the United States (Kopf, 2020).

people" (United States Census Bureau, 2010, web). The Census Bureau also defines a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as an area consisting of one or more counties that consist of at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more inhabitants in addition to neighboring counties having a "high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties" (2021,web).

Urban areas have consisted predominantly of Democrats, and this trend continues to increase. In 1998, 55% of urban county residents identified as Democrats. In 2017, 62% identified as Democrats (Parker, et. al., 2018, web). The median distance from a large metropolitan city for Democrats is 12 miles, and the average population density for Democrats is 1,197 people per square mile (Savat, 2020, web). Moreover, urban voters are, on average, more racially diverse, less religious, younger, more educated, and more affluent than are rural voters. They also "own fewer guns, are more likely to support abortion rights, and hew to less traditional family arrangements than rural voters" (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006, p. 467). Unsurprisingly, all of these characteristics are consistent with those associated with the Democratic party. Data show that Democrats are, on average, more educated and more racially heterogenous than Republicans (Hanson and Chen, 2020, web). Also, the average Democrat is wealthier than the average Republican; according to IRS statistics, about 65% of the Americans with yearly incomes of $500,000 are Democrats, and 74% of Americans with yearly incomes of less than $100,000 are Republicans (Hanson, 2021, web). Additionally, 83% of Democrats now support same-sex marriage, compared with 55% of Republicans (Diaz, 2021, web). Also, Democrats on average own significantly fewer guns than do Republicans: in 2021, only 21% of Democrats owned at least one gun, while 50% of Republicans owned at least one gun (Statista Research Department, 2021, web).

Republicans are clustering in rural areas.

The United States Census Bureau defines rural areas simply as all nonurban locations (2010, web). In other words, a rural area is an area with a population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile. Rural areas are increasingly being dominated by Republicans. In 1998, 44% of rural county residents identified as Republicans. In 2017, 54% identified as Republicans (Parker, et. al., 2018, web). The median distance from a large metropolitan city for Republicans is 20 miles, and the average population density for Republicans is 585 people per square mile (Savat, 2020, web). In comparison with urban voters, rural voters "own more guns, are more likely to oppose abortion rights, and hew to more traditional family arrangements" (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006, p. 467). Moreover, on average, rural voters are "more white, Christian, evangelical, religiously devout, elderly, less educated, and less affluent than urban and suburban populations" (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006, p. 467). All of these characteristics are also associated with the Republican party.

Suburban areas vote depending on their population density.

While the main focus of this paper involves urban and rural areas, it is necessary to briefly describe the nature of suburban areas as well. The more densely populated an area is, the more Democratic its inhabitants vote. The less densely populated an area is, the more Republican its inhabitants vote. Thus, the voting patterns of suburban areas depend on the type of suburb, which depends on the population density of the area. Suburbs are

located within metropolitan areas and are outside of the area's central or principal cities (urban areas). Furthermore, suburban areas are primarily residential and low-density (Forsyth, 2012, p. 5). U.S. suburbs are not homogenous and are becoming increasingly diverse.

There are three main different types of suburbs. First, suburbs that are closest in proximity to the principle city within a metropolitan area and were developed as post-World War II communities between 1945 and 1969 are referred to as inner-ring suburbs (Hanlon, 2010, p. 5; Leigh and Lee, 2004, p. 15). Second, newer suburbs that were developed during or after 1970 and are located further away from the principle city than are the inner-ring suburbs are referred to as outer-ring suburbs (Steuteville, 2019, web). Third, low-density suburbs that are located "on the periphery of metropolitan areas" or, in some cases, within rural areas are referred to as exurbs (Airgood-Obrycki and Rieger, 2019, p. 3).

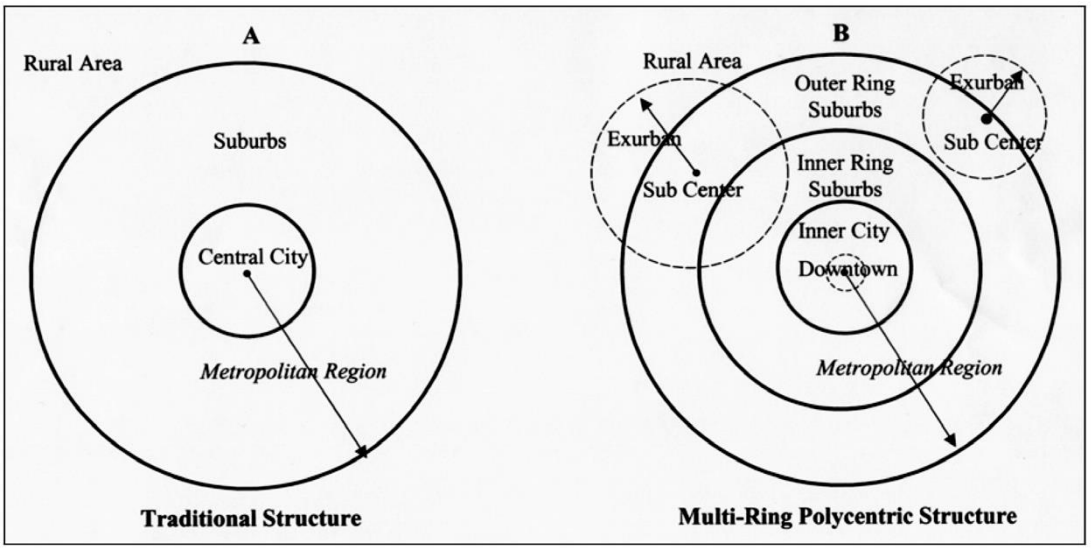


Figure 2.2. Types of suburbs (Leigh and Lee, 2004, p. 16).

In general, population density lessens the farther away an area is from the core urban area. Extensive research suggests a recent trend of suburban sprawl, or the spreading of urbanized areas into the lower-density areas. Sprawl could be correlated with the increasing heterogeneity of suburban areas. Suburbs attract people from differing socioeconomic statuses and backgrounds, making them more diverse. American suburbia, as a whole, is experiencing an influx of international migrants, lower income groups, homosexual households, and other diverse populations (Airgood-Obrycki and Rieger, 2019, p. 15). Some suburbs, however, consist primarily of white, upper and upper-middle class families and have experienced less growth in terms of diversity. Because of the dynamic, complex nature of suburban America, trends of partisan geographical sorting along suburban lines are difficult to identify. As asserted by Teaford (2008), American suburbia "comprises slums as well as mansions, main streets as well as malls, skyscrapers as well as schools. Some suburbs are particularly gay-friendly; others are planned for senior citizens. Some are known for their fine schools; others are examples of educational failure" (Airgood-Obrycki and Rieger, 2019, p. 15).

History and Origin of Partisan Geographical Sorting in the United States

Existing studies suggest that partisan geographical sorting is correlated with, and, perhaps, partially caused by the rise of urbanization in the United States. Urbanization began with the Industrial Revolution, when the demand for agricultural jobs consisting of manual labor and the simultaneous increase in factory jobs "rapidly drew millions of workers from the farm to the city" (Wilkinson, 2018, p. 16). Accordingly, with the

decrease in agricultural employment came an increase in the percentage of the U.S. population living in urbanized areas (Wilkinson, 2018, p. 16).

Research suggests that the urban and rural divide, however, did not begin to develop into a political divide until the early twentieth century (Gimpel et. al., 2020, p. 1346). During this time, Democrats began forming alliances with labor unions, which were mainly concentrated in cities, resulting in urban populations becoming more Democratic (Niskanen Center, 2019, web). By 1950, there were 150 MSAs containing at least 100,000 residents, making up 62 percent of the United States population. As the urban population increased, differences between urban areas and rural areas became more prominent. By 2017, there were 352 MSAs of at least 100,000 residents, making up 85% of the total population of the United States (Wilkinson, 2018, p. 17). Thus, as more people moved into urban areas, "their common economic interests drove class consciousness and created political unity within urban and rural populations respectively" resulting in partisan geographical sorting (Gimpel et. al., 2020, p. 1346).

As shown in Figure 2.3 below, population density and party identification were not substantially interrelated until 1960, and they have only grown more interrelated since then. Bishop and Cushing (2008) attribute the growth of this relationship to the increase in landslide counties, that is, counties that voted for the Republican or Democratic presidential candidate by a high percentage (at least 20%) (Aisch, Pearce, and Yourish, 2016). In accordance with their theory, since the 1970s, voters have been increasingly basing their residential decisions on lifestyle criteria, which includes politics. The percentage of Americans living in landslide counties has been consistently increasing since the 1976 presidential election politics (Bishop and Cushing, 2008). In 1976,

approximately 26% of voters lived in landslide counties. In 1992, this number climbed to 37%. In 2016, 62% of voters lived in landslide counties (Bishop, 2020, web).

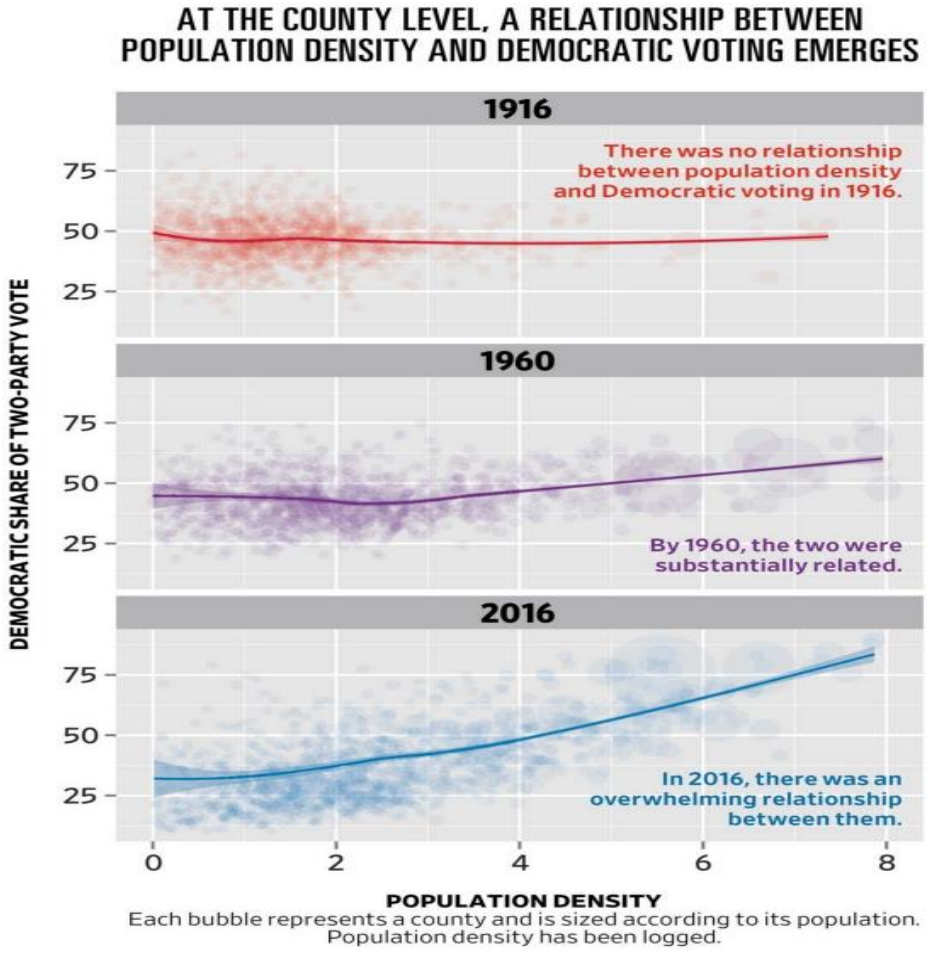


Figure 2.3. The relationship between population density and voting pattern over time (Rodden, 2018).

The results of the 2000 presidential election drew a great deal of attention to the partisan geographical sorting that was occurring in the United States. These election results, as displayed on the electoral map on various media platforms, clearly demonstrated the geographic divide between the Democratic and Republican parties. Following this election, people became increasingly aware and critical of the divide that

was occurring between parties along geographic lines. In 2004, Farhi uniquely epitomized this phenomenon:

> A red state bespeaks not just a Republican majority but an entire geography (rectangular borders in the country's midsection), an iconography (Bush in a cowboy hat), and a series of cultural clichés (churches and NASCAR). Blue states suggest something on, and of, the coastal extremes, urban and latte-drinking. Red states—to reduce the stereotypes to an even more vulgar level—are a little bit country, blues are a little more rock-and-roll. (Hopkins, 2012, p. 14)

In the 2016 presidential election, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton gained 17.8 million votes in urban areas, while Republican nominee Donald Trump only gained 6.1 million votes in these cities. In rural areas, on the other hand, Trump obtained 16.8 million votes, while Clinton only obtained 7.5 million (Tavernise & Gebeloff, 2019). Furthermore, in the 2020 presidential election, the least urbanized counties (the bottom 20% of counties based on population density) voted for Donald Trump by a margin of 35 points, a 4-point increase from the 2016 election. The most urbanized counties (the top 20% of counties based on population density), on the other hand, voted for Joe Biden by a margin of 29 points, also a 4-point increase from Hillary Clinton's margin in the 2016 election (The Economist, 2020, web). Moreover, the average Biden metropolitan area consists of nearly 1.3 million people, over four times the size of the average Trump metropolitan area, which consists of approximately 300,000 people (Florida, 2020, web).

Example: Atlanta, Sandy Springs, Milton, and Blue Ridge, Georgia

An example of partisan geographical sorting in a region containing an urban area, a suburb, and a rural area is in Georgia, the areas of Atlanta, Sandy Springs, Milton, and Blue Ridge. Atlanta is an urban area, Sandy Springs is an inner-ring suburb of Atlanta,

Milton is an outer-ring suburb, and Blue Ridge is a rural area nearby. The demographics, population densities, and partisan makeup of these four areas exemplify the urban and rural divide and the resulting partisan geographical sorting that is occurring in America today.

Atlanta, Georgia is located in Fulton County and is the principal city of the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, Georgia MSA. The city of Atlanta has a population of 524,067 and a population density of 3,861 people per square mile. Atlanta has an average household income of $59,948 per year and an employment rate of 91.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019, web; World Population Review, 2021, web). Additionally, the city is the second largest majority black metropolitan area, and it also contains "one of the highest LGBT populations per capita" (World Population Review, 2021, web). The median age in Atlanta is 33.3 years, and 48.4% of its residents identify as religious (World Population Review, 2021, web; Sperling, 2021, web). Atlanta, Georgia is comprised of a strong Democratic majority; "Fulton County has voted Democratic in every presidential election since 2000" (Sperling, 2021, web). The 2020 election was no different: 72.6% of Fulton County residents voted for Joe Biden and only 26.2% voted for Donald Trump (Sperling, 2021, web). In the 2016 presidential election, 626,686 of the Atlanta metropolitan area's votes went to Hillary Clinton, with only 181,710 going to Donald Trump. In the 2020 election, 784,847 votes went to Joe Biden, with only 211,426 going to Trump (Wiegel, 2020, web).

In contrast to Atlanta, Blue Ridge, Georgia is a rural area located in Fannin County approximately 1.5 hours outside of Atlanta (Google, n.d.). Blue Ridge has a population of 1,473 and a population density of 550 people per square mile. The median household

income is $26,944 per year, and the employment rate is 80.8% (HomeArea, 2021, web). The population is overwhelmingly white (84%) and 40.5% of the population is married. The median age of Blue Ridge is 48.5, and 64.0% of the population identifies as religious. Blue Ridge is moderately conservative, and Fannin County is extremely conservative, with 82.0% of the county's population voting Republican in the 2020 presidential election (Sperling, 2021, web).

Sandy Springs, Georgia is an inner-ring suburb of Atlanta located in Fulton County with a population of 110,664 and a population density of 2,939 people per square mile. Sandy Springs has a median household income of $78,613 per year and an employment rate of 92.3% (Data USA, 2019, web; Naples Daily News, 2018, web). The population is primarily white (56.5%), and 48.7% of the population is married. The median age in Sandy Springs is 36.1, and 68.3% of its population identify as religious (Sperling, 2021, web). Sandy Springs votes primarily Democratic with 60.8% of the vote going to Biden and only 37.5% of the vote going to Trump in the 2020 presidential election (Ruch, 2020, web).

Milton, Georgia is an outer-ring suburb of Atlanta also located in Fulton County with a population of 40,327 and a population density of 1,046 people per square mile (World Population Review, 2021, web). Milton has a median household income of $110,891 per year and an employment rate of 97.4%. The population is overwhelmingly white (73.23%), and 60.6% of the population is white (Sperling, 2021, web). The median age in Milton is 38.9, and 68.3% of its population identify as religious (World Population Review, 2021, web; Sperling, 2021, web). Milton, Georgia is strongly Republican, with 72% of the vote in the 2016 presidential election going to Trump (Bluestein, 2017, web).

Chapter 3 – Theories & Demographic Associations Related to Partisan Geographical Sorting

As stated in his 2008 book which identified the sorting phenomenon, Bill Bishop asserts that Americans are increasingly "self-segregating by lifestyle, which has grown to reflect politics" (Aisch, Pearce, and Yourish, 2016, web). Clearly, residential segregation is occurring. Some scholars claim that increasing partisan geographical sorting is occurring primarily because people are increasingly basing their residential preferences upon criteria that correlate highly with political preferences. On this view, partisan geographical sorting occurs and increases because of gradual replacement, in which "voters from the 1970s to the present have increasingly used partisan or lifestyle criteria as part of their decision about where to live" (Lang, 2014, p. 2). Thus, the process of gradual replacement involves the migration of people who gradually sort to produce homogenous communities because only a small percentage of the population moves between each election (Lang, 2014). This argument also relies on the mechanism of homophily, which can be defined as the desire to live near individuals who share the same tastes and values. People are attracted to particular areas because they think they will fit in with the residents there better than they would elsewhere (Tam Cho, Gimpel,

and Hui, 2013). This is especially important because there is in increased probability of contact with people who are near us than with those who are distant (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). Data on presidential elections by county from 1974 and 2000 as well as those occurring between 1948 and 2000 suggest that people are migrating to more politically homogenous areas "in search for social homophily" (Bishop, 2008; Lang, 2014, p. 4).

The concept of homophily is exhibited in existing theories regarding why partisan geographical sorting is occurring and increasing. These theories fall into one of two categories: intentional sorting and inadvertent sorting. Advocates of intentional sorting argue that voters in the United States move to new locations in search of more political homophily; in other words, Americans choose where to live based on the political composition of the area and whether or not it reflects their own political views. According to results from 2013 opinion surveys, voters claim that they take living among co-partisans into consideration when choosing where to live (Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Hui, 2013). Moreover, a 2014 study found that a relationship exists "between a community's political attributes and a partisan's willingness to move there" (Hawley, p. 8). Additionally, voters demonstrate less satisfaction with their residential areas when they are in the political minority, and they eagerly articulate a desire to move away from those neighborhoods (Hui, 2013; Gimpel and Hui, 2015).

The more widely supported, and perhaps more plausible theory, though, is that of inadvertent sorting, which holds that people decide where to live based on various lifestyle preferences, which, in turn, are correlated with political preferences. Within the context of the theory, 'inadvertent' can be defined as "choice criteria that accompany but

are not a direct component of a motivation, leading to a result not achieved through deliberate planning" (Gimpel and Hui, 2015, p. 442). The argument for inadvertent sorting asserts that, in contrast with that for intentional sorting, partisan geographical sorting is not directly consequential of political considerations, meaning that individuals do not necessarily decide where to live solely based on the partisan composition of the place; rather, people consider a variety of other factors that help them to find a place that fits their particular lifestyle preferences, which is not directly related to politics, but is largely correlated with one's political ideologies (Lütjen and Matschoβ, 2015).

Thus, it seems that the primary dispute regarding the reasons for why partisan geographical sorting is occurring (and increasing) lies in voters' motives for choosing a particular place to live. The intentional sorting argument suggests that people consider the partisan composition of a neighborhood when deciding where to live, and they prefer to move to neighborhoods that match their partisan preference, producing partisan sorting. The inadvertent sorting argument, on the other hand, states that the association of residential choice with partisan preference is not deliberate; rather, it is incidental and consequential of other shared values such as "a shared preference for open space, larger houses, better school districts, smaller local government, lower taxes that brings Republican voters to suburbs" and rural areas or "the shared love for vibrant city life or cultural diversity that brings Democrats to cities" (Hui, 2013, p. 2). It seems, however, that partisan geographical sorting is a result, at least in part, of both political preferences and lifestyle preferences. It is reasonable to infer that, while most people would prefer to live in close proximity to others who share similar political beliefs, that preference alone does not determine their residential choice (Gimpel and Hui, 2015). It is more likely that,

as stated by the inadvertent sorting argument, partisan geographical sorting is a result of people migrating to places where residents inadvertently share similar lifestyle preferences, which subsequently leads to similarities in political preferences, causing a clustering of politically like-minded individuals, otherwise known as partisan geographical sorting.

Although it is unclear what the drivers may be, it is clear that correlations exist between demographic variables and partisan geographical sorting. The first such variable is educational attainment. College-educated Americans are quite mobile, in comparison to non-college-educated Americans; college-educated young people who grew up in rural areas tend to migrate to a major metropolitan area instead of return to their hometowns (Hawley, 2014). In fact, college graduates from rural areas are "three times more likely" to move to a metropolitan area than are rural residents without a college education (Domina, 2006, p. 396). This helps to explain why landslide Republican counties have fewer college-educated residents than landslide Democratic counties (Hawley, 2012; Lütjen and Matschoβ, 2015). Additionally, students living in rural areas have been found to be less likely than students living in nonrural areas to attain a bachelor's degree because of variables like lower socioeconomic status, lower parental expectations, and poorer high school preparation (Schmitt-Wilson, Downey, and Beck, 2018).

A second demographic variable that is correlated with partisan geographical sorting is income disparities between those who identify as Democrat and those who identify as Republican as well as between rural residents and urban residents. Residential segregation based on income has been steadily increasing for the past two decades (Gimpel and Hui, 2017). Rural areas have an overall lower labor force participation than

urban areas. Also, rural workers have lower median earnings in nearly every age group in comparison with urban workers (Day et. al., 2016). The average per capita income of people moving into Republican landslide counties from out of state was $22,939, while that of people moving into Democratic landslide counties from out of state was $30,492 (Bishop and Cushing, 2008). Low-income rural residents tend to vote strongly Republican because of their moral convictions, which align with those of Republicans. At the same time, high-income residents of urban areas vote overwhelmingly Democratic because of their moral issues which align with those of Democrats, such as abortion and gay marriage (Ansolabehere et. al., 2006).

Diversity is a third variable that is highly correlated with partisan geographical sorting. Urban counties are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse at a much faster pace than rural counties (Parker et. al., 2018). Many immigrants accumulate in smaller urban counties, further increasing the diversity of densely populated areas. However, some rural areas are also increasing in racial diversity due to an increase in Latino immigrants who find work at meatpacking plants or corporate farms (Tieken, 2017). The 2020 census showed a significant increase in African American and Latino populations in metropolitan areas (Frey, 2021). This may account in part for the tendency for urban residents to vote Democratic, because African American populations, Latino populations, and immigrants tend to vote Democratic. In 2017, approximately 80 percent of the rural population was white, compared to 58 percent in urban areas (USDA, 2019, web). This may account in part for the overwhelming majority of rural voters voting Republican in the 2016 election because whiteness, along with a decrease in educational attainment, are two key characteristics connected to voting for Trump (Kurtzleben, 2016).

The fourth variable that is reflected in the political divide in the United States most remarkably is religious affiliation (or lack thereof). A substantive amount of research suggests that individuals who identify as Republican are more likely to be religious, while those who identify as Democrat are less likely to be religious. Values in communities which are less dense in population are more interdependent and distinct. Traditional values are typically upheld within these areas, including regular church attendance and charitable support for religious organizations (Gimpel, 2020). Less-densely populated areas are often rural areas, and they "encourage religious adherence and traditional views of morality because it accentuates group life among those with common beliefs over acting as an individual" (Gimpel, 2020, p. 1349). Thus, rural life is associated with religiosity, which, in turn, predisposes residents of rural areas to favor conservative social outcomes (Gimpel, 2020).

In addition to religion, age is fifth variable that is reflected in the political divide in the United States. In the 2008 presidential election, Obama defeated McCain by a remarkable 66 percent to 32 percent among voters under the age of 30. The partisan age gap can be explained by period effects and life-cycle effects. Period effects means that a generation's notable shared experiences during their years of early adulthood will shape its voting patterns for the rest of that age-cohort's movement through the life cycle. Life-cycle effects means that individuals have a tendency to become more conservative as they get older because, with age, people tend to become more economically secure, making this a very complex concept. In addition, young people become more likely to get married and have children as they grow older (Hawley, 2012). Thus, people under the age of 30 are more likely to identify as Democratic. People under the age of 30 are also more

likely to live in densely populated areas, suggesting a correlation between age and partisan geographical sorting.

For the purpose of this research, I have chosen to focus primarily on the demographic variables of religion and age because they seem to be the most highly correlated variables with geographical partisan sorting. In many ways, the evolution of religious identity and the role religion and spirituality plays in the lives of Americans parallels the evolution of political parties and the corresponding demographic variables which accompany them. In addition, there is substantial research regarding the voting tendencies of young and elder Americans as well as data demonstrating their lifestyle and residential preferences that suggests a high correlation between age and partisan geographical sorting. There also exists a positive correlation between these two variables. Many studies demonstrate that as American adults grow older, they are, on average, more likely to be religious, while younger Americans are becoming less religious. The argument for inadvertent sorting suggests that religion and age are two variables contributing to the lifestyle preferences that influence people's living decisions. Thus, partisan geographical sorting is occurring, at least in part, as a result of a notable amount of younger people and unreligious people choosing to live in urban, more populous areas and a notable amount of older people and religious people choosing to live in rural, less populous areas.

Chapter 4 – Religion

Introduction

There is a notable correlation between religious affiliation, or lack thereof, and political party preference, and those preferences have a spatial impact between higher density and lower density areas. Differences in lifestyle preferences have a substantial effect on the increase in polarization in the United States, which, in turn, causes division in major demographics, especially with respect to religious affiliation (Ansolabehere et. al., 2006). Democrats' tendency to live in more densely populated areas is associated with their views on religion and diversity. Urban residents tend to be more secular and pro-choice, while rural residents tend to be more religious and anti-abortion (Kopf, 2020). Moreover, those who attend a religious service at least once a week have a high probability of voting Republican, whereas those who never attend a worship service have a high probability of voting Democratic (Olson and Green, 2009). Republicans are also twice as likely as Democrats to find it difficult to get along with someone who does not believe in God (43% vs. 21%) (Pew Research Center, 2016, web). While there are numerous types of religious identities associated with both parties, this research will

focus primarily on the Protestants, Catholics, and Jews because these three religions each form their own distinctive religious and political communities within American society.

Protestantism is mainly divided into Mainline Protestants and Evangelicals. Mainline Protestants form a large group of American Protestants who tend to be theologically liberal and perceive the Bible as primarily a historical document, although it contains the word of God. They believe in a gradual spiritual transformation. Mainline Protestants tend to be split between the Democratic and Republican party (Lipka, 2016). Evangelicals are a branch of Protestants who are more theologically conservative and believe that the Bible is the absolute truth and who emphasize the importance of converting others through active evangelization. Evangelicals, according to David Bebbington's definition, are activist Protestant Christians who "(1) focus on the importance of conversion; (2) support activism, particularly in missionary efforts to spread the gospel; (3) display a high regard for biblical authority; and (4) stress the centrality of the cross, with an emphasis on Jesus' work of substitutionary atonement" (Dowland, 2018, web). Of primary political concern of Evangelicals is prohibiting abortion and curbing homosexuality, both of which are primary concerns of the Republican party.

Catholicism differs from Protestantism in that Catholics interpret the Bible less literally and base their faith not solely on the literal language of the Bible, but importantly on Church tradition (Fairchild, 2018, web). Catholics, in comparison to Protestants, have not passed as many new abortion restrictions since 2010 (Gjelton, 2018, web). However, the Catholic faith remains strongly opposed to abortion. The Catholic faith does not perfectly align with the beliefs of either the Republican party or the Democratic party,

and it is said that “in order to be totally in line with the bishops and the pope, you would have to be a pro-life liberal Democrat” (Reese, 2020, web). In recent elections, Catholic voters have tended to be evenly divided between the Republican and Democratic candidates. In the 2008 presidential election, Catholic voters supported Democratic candidate Barack Obama over Republican candidate John McCain “by a nine-point margin, 54 to 45 percent” (Robles, 2020, web). In the 2016 election, Catholics supported Republican Donald Trump over Democrat Hillary Clinton by an eight-point margin, 52 to 44 percent (Robles, 2020, web). Catholic Democrats support candidates who embrace the majority of Catholic social teaching, even if they advocate for legal access to abortion and homosexual liberty to marriage. Catholic Republicans support candidates who advocate against legal access to abortion and homosexual liberty to marriage, even though they may reject the majority of Catholic social teaching (Reese, 2020, web).

In contrast with Protestantism and Catholicism, Jewish Americans overwhelmingly support abortion rights. 83% of Jews believe that abortion should be legal (Pew Research Center, 2014, web). Judaism is based on the Torah and believes that Jews are God’s chosen people, and they are responsible for setting an example of holiness and morality for everyone else in the world (Posner, n.d., web). American Judaism is focused on enhancing the welfare of society, and this aligns with politically liberal values. It is unsurprising then that in the 2020 presidential election, 67% of Jews voted Democratic, compared to only 30% who voted Republican (Windmueller, 2020, web).

The difference in religious composition is reflected in the divide between the urban and the rural areas. Generally, urban areas have a higher percentage of Catholics

and a much lower percentage of white evangelicals as do rural areas (Scala and Johnson, 2017, pp. 174-175). In the 2016 presidential election, 81% of voters who identify as white evangelicals voted for Trump, and many of them are in rural areas. This compares with only 52% of those who identify as Catholics who voted for Trump, and many of them are in urban areas (Dowland, 2018, web; Robles, 2020, web). Moreover, half (49%) of Jews live in urban areas and nearly half (47%) live in suburban areas, but only 4% of Jews live in rural areas (Pew Research center, 2013, web). Only 24% of Jews voted for Trump (Nathan-Kazis, 2016, web).

It is important to make a distinction between conservative and liberal in the theological sense and conservative and liberal in the political sense. Theologically conservative Christians are those who believe that all of the historical claims made in the Bible are true, while theologically liberal Christians are those who challenge the truthfulness of the historical claims made in the Bible. Broadly speaking, a political conservative refers to an individual who agrees with a large amount of the beliefs held on the right wing of the Republican party, while a political liberal refers to an individual who agrees with a large amount of the beliefs held on the left wing of the Democratic party (Berding, 2019, web).

Although they have different meanings, theologically conservative Christians have, in recent years, grown more likely to also identify as political conservatives, and, in turn, as Republicans. The two most evident reasons for this increase in alignment are the growing support for abortion and same-sex marriage by political liberals (Berding, 2019, web). In addition, rural Americans are more likely than urban and suburban Americans to oppose abortion and same-sex marriage (Dillon and Savage, 2004, p. 1).

History of Religion's Association with Partisanship in the U.S.

Religion has been linked with partisanship in the United States for a substantial amount of time. However, the association of particular religions with the major parties shifted dramatically during the second half of the twentieth century (Margolis, 2018, p. 28). "Beginning in the 1960s, America saw a dramatic shift in societal values, the emergence of new political issues, the entry of religious elites into politics, and the adoption of new religious strategies by politicians" (Margolis, 2018, p. 28). During this time, many Americans abandoned traditional values and institutions and instead developed more radical, unconventional lifestyles. Such new lifestyles were "no longer compatible with churches' conservative outlooks on sex, marriage, and family roles" (Margolis, 2018, p. 28). Religious associations with politics underwent further change later on in the 1960s and into the 1970s when new policy issues surfaced, namely gender equality, access to abortion, and legal protections for homosexuals (Margolis, 2018, p. 29). These issues resulted in a notable increase in political polarization in the United States.

Beginning in the early 1970s, political leaders and political parties began to separate themselves along cultural and religious lines. Surprisingly, the Democratic party was the first party to associate with religion, appealing to conservative religious values by proposing a ban on abortion in 1972. The Republican party did not align itself with religious issues until the 1980 election, in which Ronald Reagan appealed to evangelical

Christians by strongly advocating against abortion and gay rights and for prayer in public school and subsidizing private religious education (Margolis, 2018, pp. 29-32). The Democratic party shifted their strategy in the 1980s, when the 1988 Democratic presidential nominee "took a secular approach in his rhetoric and strongly supported a strict separation of church and state" (Margolis, 2018, p. 33). Republican politicians today "routinely support policies that directly bring religion and morality into the political sphere" (Margolis, 2018, p. 33). While the Democratic party remains at least partially aligned with some religions and religious values, the Republican party is visibly aligned more closely with religion and religious values (Margolis, 2018, p. 33).

At one time, Catholics were closely aligned with the Democratic party. In the 1930s, Catholics were more likely to vote Democratic. This tendency continued through the 1960s, when the Democratic party's presidential nominee was a Catholic candidate. In the 2012 presidential election, a slim majority of Catholics voted Democratic (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 36). Today, however, the majority of citizens who identify as Catholic vote consistently in favor of Republican candidates (Campbell et. al., 2011, p. 44). Furthermore, in accordance with the findings of Green, Palmquist, and Shickler (2002, as cited in Campbell et. al., 2011), "the mobilization of Christian fundamentalist leaders on behalf of a conservative social agenda altered…how Republicans as a social group were perceived." Today, candidates who identify as Evangelist or fundamentalist Christians are linked by voters to the Republican party and to strong conservativism (Campbell et. al., 2011, pp. 43-44).

Political leaders who identify as Evangelical Protestants have shifted almost entirely into the Republican caucus. Jewish leaders, on the other hand, are increasing

within the Democratic party (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 3). African American Protestants have also historically voted Democratic. White Protestants, the majority of whom are theologically conservative, have historically tended to be politically conservative, and, thus, are associated with the Republican party. Moreover, the religiously unaffiliated, in addition to both African American Protestants and Jews "tend to be young, mobile, well-educated, and affluent and tend to live in urban or metropolitan areas," all characteristics which we have found to be reflected in the makeup of the Democratic party (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 33).

In the 2012 presidential election, Democrat Barack Obama received overwhelming support from Jews, African Americans, and the religiously unaffiliated. Overall, the 2012 election voting patterns of the main religious groups are similar to their current voting patterns. "Jews and African American Protestants have been disproportionately Democratic for decades and evangelical Protestants overwhelmingly Republican since the late 1980s" (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 36). Those who do not identify as religious have become increasingly Democratic since 2000 (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 36).

Religious 'nones'

Religious 'nones,' or Americans who claim they have "no religion, no particular religion, no religious preference or the like," play a substantial role in the association of religion with partisan geographical sorting (Pew Research Center, 2012, p. 7) (Table 4.1). Over the past few decades, there has been a steady rise of religious 'nones.' In fact, in

2012, one-fifth of Americans were religiously unaffiliated (Pew Research Center, 2012). This increase in 'nones' is caused, in large part, by generational replacement— "the gradual supplanting of older generations by newer ones" (Pew Research Center, 2012, p. 10). According to Pew's 2012 survey data, one-third (32%) of adults under 30 are religiously unaffiliated, while only 9% of those 65 and older were religiously unaffiliated.

	1990	2001	2008
Total Number of Nones	**14,331,000**	**29,481,000**	**34,169,000**
Total U.S. Adult Population	**175,440,000**	**207,983,000**	**228,182,000**
Increase in Total Number of Nones	N/A	15,150,000	4,688,000
Increase in Total U.S. Adult Population	N/A	32,543,000	20,199,000
Nones as a Percenage of U.S. Adult Population	**8.1**	**14.1**	**15**
Growth of None Population	N/A	106%	16%
Growth of U.S. Adult Population	N/A	18.5%	9.7%
Nones' Share of the Growth of U.S. Adult Population	N/A	46.6%	23.2%

Table 4.1 The Growth of the Adult Religious Nones Population 1990-2008 (Kosmin et. al., 2009, p. 20).

In 1994, nearly half (52%) of voters who identify as religious nones "leaned toward of identified with the Democratic party" (Pew Research Center, 2018, web). In 2018, nearly seven in ten (68%) religious nones leaned toward or identified with the Democratic party (Pew Research Center, 2018). Furthermore, the 'nones' are about twice as likely to describe themselves as liberals than as conservatives, with 72% supporting abortion and 73% supporting same-sex marriage (Pew Research Center, 2018). In the

2008 presidential election, the 'nones' voted "as heavily for Barack Obama as white evangelical Protestants did for John McCain" (Pew Research Center, 2018, web). In addition, according to the 2020 census, "nearly four in ten (39%) religiously unaffiliated Americans live in urban areas, 44% live in suburban areas, and only 17% live in rural areas" (PRRI, 2021, web).

Traditional Marriage and Same-Sex Marriage

Homosexuality and its role in the redefining of marriage has been problematic for many religious groups throughout history, but its strongest and most consistent opposition has been from theologically conservative Protestants (Hill et. al., 2004, p. 59). Their disapproval and condemnation of homosexuality stems from their perspective of biblical literalism. Furthermore, "Conservative Protestants attend church more frequently than others, and frequent exposure to sermons and other church activities serves to promote and reinforce conservative religious beliefs" (Roof and McKinney, 1987; Sherkat and Ellison, 1997, as cited in Hill, 2004). Unsurprisingly, theologically conservative Protestants are often also political conservatives. Political conservatives, and Republican party members, are less likely than political liberals, and Democratic party members, to support homosexuality and gay marriage. Political conservatives tend to be strong advocates for a traditional family structure. Thus, because homosexuality is not in line with traditional family structure, many political conservatives perceive homosexuality as a threat to social order (Hill et. al., 2004, p. 61).

Traditional family structure is not a matter of great importance to political liberals, on the other hand. An issue that is of importance to them, however, is ensuring that oppressed and minority groups have civil rights. Although same-sex marriage is now legal throughout the United States, not long ago, homosexual individuals were legally prohibited from engaging in sexual intimacy and civil marriage (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, pp. 61-62). Also, there are no federal laws in place which "prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation in employment or residency" (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014, p. 62). Therefore, it can easily be argued that homosexuals, at least to some degree and in some places, face considerable social pressures in the United States, which explains why political liberals are generally supportive of homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

Marriage and family values and religion have been associated with each other throughout the history of the United States (Christiano, 2000 as cited in Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2007, p. 1). Religious beliefs and church attendance are "positively associated with marriage, marital childbearing, marital quality, and marital stability in the U.S. as a whole" (Call and Heaton 1997; Christiano 2000; Lehrer 2000, 2004; Wilcox 2004, as cited in Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2007, p. 1). Marriage continues to play a dominant role in childbearing and adult life in suburban and rural areas, which helps to explain the association of large populations of religious people in these areas in comparison with the smaller, diminishing religious populations in urban areas (Wilcox and Wolfinger, 2007, p. 1).

Religion in Rural and Urban Areas

More religious people tend to reside in less densely populated areas, in large part because, in these areas, traditional beliefs and ways of life are typically maintained and upheld over long periods of time. Moreover, traditional lifestyles and beliefs are reflected in political conservativism. Some such traditional practices include “regular church attendance and charitable support for religious organizations” (Gimpel et. al., 2020, p. 1349). Rural, sparsely populated environments encourage “religious adherence and traditional views of morality” because these areas rely more heavily on group life among individuals sharing similar beliefs as opposed to acting as an individual (Gimpel et. al., 2020, p. 1349). Although there is a generally higher percentage of religious people in rural areas, religion has not disappeared entirely from the urban landscape.

Summary

As demonstrated in this chapter, religion has been linked with partisanship in the United States throughout history and at present. Rural areas have been found to, on average, be more religious and more Republican than are urban areas which tend to be less religious and more Democratic. White Evangelical Protestants are found in greater numbers in rural areas and they vote overwhelmingly in support of Republican candidates. Jews tend to live in urban areas and vote overwhelmingly in support of

Democratic candidates. Catholics reside in both urban and rural areas, with a slight majority in urban areas, and they do not align well with either party.

Chapter 5 – Age

Age is another important variable in the partisan geographical sorting phenomenon. Residents of rural areas are, on average, older than those of urban areas. Older people tend to vote Republican, while younger people tend to vote Democratic. Consequently, rural areas tend to be more Republican, and urban areas tend to be more Democratic. The median age of all individuals living in rural areas is 43 years, while the median age of those living in urban areas is 36 years (Day et. al., 2016). More than 1 in 5 older Americans live in rural areas, many of which are concentrated in states where over half of their older populations are in rural areas (Smith and Trevelyan, 2019). Currently, there are nearly 10 million older Americans, aged 65 and older, living in rural America. Younger Americans who grew up in rural communities tend to move to urban and suburban areas to seek better career opportunities, and younger Americans who grew up in urban communities tend to stay (Skoufalos, 2017). This phenomenon has been coined ‘youthification’ in recent years and is essentially the influx of young adults into higher density cities and communities (Moos, 2016). “The higher density areas remain young

over time as new young adults move into neighborhoods where there are already young people living, and they move out if their household size increase" (Moos, 2016, p. 2903). The vast majority of urban residences are small housing units not typically inhabited by households with children.

Furthermore, children living in rural areas are more likely to live in a family household with both of their parents than are children living in urban areas (O'Hare et. al., 2009). Thus, the difference in household types in urban and rural areas suggests that differences in lifestyle preferences also exist between older Americans and rural residents and younger Americans and urban residents.

Young voters have voted more Democratic than older voters in presidential elections for several decades (Olsen and Green, 2009). In the 2008 presidential election, voters within the 18 to 29 age range provided Obama a strong majority of their votes; in fact, according to exit polls, Obama beat McCain by a remarkable 66 percent to 32 percent among voters under 30 (Fisher, 2010; Hawley, 2012). In the 2016 presidential election, only 37% of voters aged 18 to 29 voted for Republican Donald Trump, compared to 43% of voters aged 30 to 44 and 53% of voters over the age of 45 (Peterson et. al., 2020). In the 2020 presidential election, 65% of voters aged 18 to 24 voted for Democrat Joe Biden, "11% more than any other age group" (Hess, 2020, web).

Ideological and political differences between age groups can be attributed to a phenomenon known as generational replacement, which occurs when new, young citizens become part of the eligible electorate and older voters die off (Fisher, 2020). The generations discussed in this paper are the (1) Greatest Generation, (2) The Silent Generation, (3) The Baby Boomer Generation, (4) Generation X, and (5) The Millennial

Generation. People in the Greatest Generation were born between 1901 and 1927. The Greatest Generation placed more value in personal responsibility, integrity, humility, work ethic, service, and commitment than do other generations (Pew Research Center, 2018; Trecosta, 2020). The Silent Generation refers to those born between 1928 and 1945. The Silent Generation has been found to be "substantially more engaged in community affairs and substantially more trusting than those younger than they" (Putnam, 200; as cited in Fisher, 2020, p. 44). This generation also holds very traditional family values, strives for financial security, and values simplicity (University of Missouri Extension, n.d.). The Baby Boomer Generation refers to those born between 1946 and 1964. Baby Boomers are said to have redefined traditional values and are less disciplined than earlier generations. Moreover, Baby Boomers "see America in a more positive light than younger generations" and view military strength as the most effective way of ensuring peace, as opposed to good diplomacy which is favored by the Millennial Generation (Sizelove, 2020, web). Generation X refers to those born between 1965 and 1980. "Generation X has an extremely personal and individualistic view of politics" (Putnam, 2000; as cited in Fisher, 2020, p. 45). The Millennial Generation refers to those born between 1981 and 1996. Relative to other generations, Millennials are less attached to organized politics and religion and are more burdened by debt (Fisher, 2020).

The characteristics of each generation are reflected in how that generation tends to vote (see Appendix A). Based on the most recently available data, the Greatest Generation is largely conservative as a whole (Love, 2004). In addition, about one-third of people belonging to the Greatest Generation claim that "they have become more conservative on economic, social, foreign policy, moral, and legal issues as they have

aged" (Love, 2004, p. 5). In particular, work ethic, personal responsibility, and commitment are highly valued by political conservatives, which helps to explain why the vast majority of the Greatest Generation is politically conservative.

The Silent Generation is also largely conservative as whole, which aligns with their values of tradition and simplicity (Freymann and Ferguson, 2019). The Baby Boomer Generation is also mostly conservative and is substantially more conservative than younger generations but less conservative than earlier generations (Sizelove, 2020). This also is reflected in their values and characteristics, particularly their views about the military. Generation X's values of independence and self-reliance are reflected in their more liberal political views. Generation Xers are more liberal than Baby Boomers and other earlier generations but are less liberal than Millennials (Pew Research Center, 2015). Lastly, Millennials are the most liberal generation. This is also unsurprising because it is characteristic of liberals to be less attached to organized politics and religion. Thus, as illustrated by the information above and by Figure 5.1, people tend to be liberal when they are young and conservative when they are old.

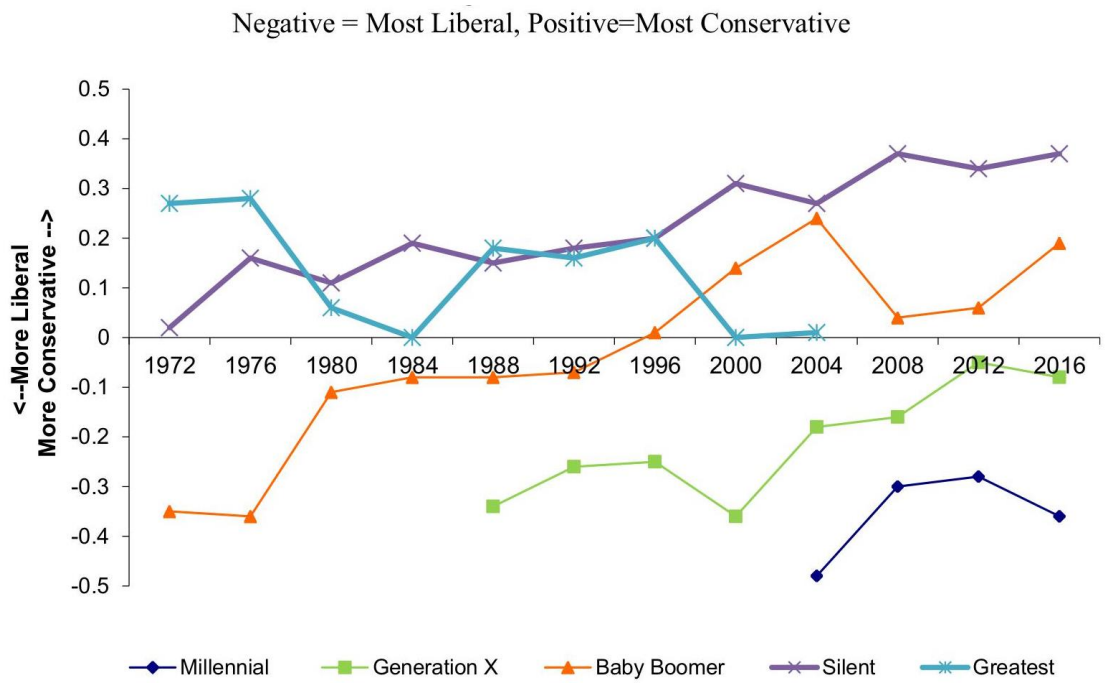


Figure 5.1 Ideological Self-Identification by Generation Relative to Adult Population 1972-2016 (Fisher, 2020, p. 25).

Although some people form their political beliefs early in life (as suggested by Margolis) and hold these same beliefs throughout their adulthood and old age, it is more common for one's political beliefs to gradually become more conservative with age, regardless of one's generation or the time period during which one grew up. Research suggests that the average American is more likely to identify as politically liberal at age 25 but more likely to identify as politically conservative 20 years later at age 45. According to 2019 research on political ideologies of Americans at age 25, 45, and 75 conducted by Peltzman over the course of the year 1974 to the year 2018, 33.7% of 25-year-olds identified as liberal, compared with only 25.8% who identified as conservative. Only 24.9% of 45-year-olds identified as liberal, compared with 35.8% conservatives.

Finally, only 19.8% of 75-year-olds identified as liberal while 41% identified as conservative (Kuta, 2020). Thus, the data demonstrate the pattern of growing more conservative with age.

There are several possible explanations for this pattern. Some scholars attribute the association of aging with conservativism to psychological and physiological age-related changes such as "increasing self-discipline, preference for order, uncertainty avoidance, the capacity to remember emotionally laden stimuli, and alterations in neural structures" (Dennis et al., 2008; Jost et al., 2007; St. Jacques, Dolcos, and Cabeza, 2009, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020, p. 600). Such psychological and physiological changes are frequently correlated with personality characteristics, such as a heightened consciousness, a reduced openness to new experiences, and increased support of more authoritarian and traditional values, all of which are characteristics that are often linked with conservativism (Gerber et al., 2010; Mondak, 2010; Soto et al., 2011; Srivastava et al., 2003, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020).

Another potential explanation for this phenomenon is social aging. Social aging refers to shifts in social interaction patterns throughout the course of one's life. Typically, one's social patterns from one's twenties to one's fifties primarily consist of increasing familial connections. In one's sixties, however, with retirement from the workforce, it is common for individuals to experience a rapid decline in all social interactions (Peterson et. al., 2020). These changes in "social opportunities and obligations could affect values and approaches to life that are related to politics" (Peterson et. al., 2020, p. 601).

A third possible—and very complex—explanation for this pattern is changes in economic status. Generally, the more time one spends in the workforce, the more

financially stable and resourceful one becomes. As one enters middle age and potentially experiences an increase in financial resources and stability, it is likely that one will, in turn, develop "a greater appreciation for a stable, predictable, secure society and also to embrace laissez-faire stances on taxation and redistribution" (Angel and Settersten, 2012, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020, p. 601).

Existing Theories

It is necessary for the purposes of this paper to identify the five most prevalent existing theories regarding the associations of age and party affiliation. Rather than focusing on generations, these theories focus on individuals in an effort to explain how age and party affiliation are associated with each other. First, the lifelong persistence model theorizes that political attitudes are developed as a result of socialization occurring early on in life and such attitudes remain constant throughout the rest of one's life regardless of the influx of new political information (Campbell et. al., 1960, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020). Second, the impressionable years model suggests that, between the ages of 18 and 26, individuals are vulnerable to changes in political attitudes, but after age 26, attitudes remain stable (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb, 1991; Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Jennings and Markus, 1984; Jennings and Niemi, 1981; Markus, 1979; Newcomb, 1943; Newcomb et al., 1967; Niemi and Jennings, 1991; Sears and Funk, 1999; Stoker and Jennings, 2008, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020). Third, the party loyalty model suggests that individuals' political beliefs depend solely on the beliefs of the political party with which they are affiliated (Achen and Bartels, 2016; Page and

Shapiro, 1992; Zaller, 1992, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020). Fourth, the lifelong openness model argues that political attitudes remain susceptible to new political information and events throughout the course of one's life (Franklin and Jackson, 1983; Franklin, 1984, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020). Lastly, like the lifelong openness model, the running tally model allows for attitudes to change throughout the course of one's life. The running tally model, however, emphasizes the importance of prior political beliefs, which are predicted to be factored into constantly accumulating tallies (Fiorina, 1981; Achen, 2002; Gerber and Green, 1998; as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020).

Each of these theories is concerned with whether political attitudes can change over the course of one's life and the extent to which political attitudes change or whether they remain stable and unaffected by life changes throughout one's lifespan. All of these theories have been used for various purposes in various contexts, and no single theory is more correct than another. It can be reasonably inferred that none of the theories is sufficient to apply to every single American individual. However, all of them can be applied to some individuals in particular instances.

History of Age's Association with Partisanship in the U.S.

In recent years, the United States has experienced substantial technological, demographic, and social changes. These transformations have resulted in modern-day American politics being "marked by an unusually substantial generation gap" (Fisher, 2020, p. 40). One of such transformations is the major change in racial and ethnic composition. "In 1965, the U.S. population was 84 percent white" (Fisher, 2020, p. 40).

By 2050, it is projected to only be 46 percent white (Taylor, 2015, p. 105, as cited in Fisher, 2020, p. 40). Older generations are less accepting of these new changes in comparison to younger generations. These changes in the racial and ethnic makeup of the United States can be attributed to the large increase in immigration. In addition, over time, generations have become far less trusting of the government, other people, and other institutions including the military, religious leaders, police officers, and business leaders (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Future Projections and Generation Z

Individuals who belong to the newest generation, Generation Z, are currently between the ages of 8 and 23 (Hess, n.d.). Thus, because Generation Z has only just recently entered the voting population and has only been eligible to vote in one presidential election, there is currently not enough data to accurately predict voting patterns for Gen Z. However, exit polls from the 2020 presidential election show that 65% of voters aged 18 to 24 voted for Joe Biden, "11% more than any other age group" (NBC, 2020, as cited in Hess, n.d., web). Generation Z has replaced the Millennial Generation as "the most diverse generation in the history of the United States" (Hess, n.d., web). Furthermore, they are projected to be majority nonwhite by the year 2026 (Fry and Park, 2018, as cited in Nichols, 2020). It is therefore unsurprising that one of this generation's most important values is racial equity (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021). Data show that 88% of Gen Zers "believe Black Americans are treated differently than others," and 90% expressed support for Black Lives Matter, "an organization fighting against both systemic racism

and police brutality involving Black Americans" (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021, web). Thus, based on existing research regarding values important to Generation Z as well as how they voted in the 2020 election, it can be reasonably inferred that Generation Z will continue to lean Democratic in the future.

Age in Rural and Urban Areas

Residents of rural areas are, on average, older than those of urban areas. Older people tend to vote Republican, while younger people tend to vote Democratic. Therefore, rural areas tend to be more Republican, and urban areas tend to be more Democratic. Younger Americans have been moving to higher density areas for decades and are predicted to continue to do so in the future (Moos, 2016). More than 1 in 5 older Americans live in rural areas, many of which are concentrated in states where over half of their older populations are in rural areas (Smith and Trevelyan, 2019). The median age of all individuals living in rural areas is 43 years, while the median age of those living in urban areas is 36 years (Day et. al., 2016).

Summary

People under the age of 30 are more likely to identify as Democratic. People under the age of 30 are also more likely to live in densely populated areas, suggesting a correlation between age and partisan geographical sorting. Millennials are more ideologically liberal than previous generations were at the same age (Rouse and Ross,

2018, p. 202; as cited in Fisher, 2020, p. 47). The liberal ideology of the Millennial generation is likely correlated with its racially and ethnically diverse composition. "Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation in the nation's history" (Fisher, 2020, p. 54). The Greatest and Silent Generations, on the other hand, are overwhelming white and conservative (Fisher, 2020). There are many existing theories which attempt to explain the generational replacement phenomenon, which is when new, young citizens become part of the eligible electorate and older voters die off (Fisher, 2020). In addition, there are also various theories which attempt to explain how an individual's political attitudes can change over time, if at all.

Chapter 6 – Religion and Age as Associated with Each Other

As Americans grow older, they grow dramatically more likely to adopt religious attitudes and behaviors (Lyons, 2003). George Gallup Jr. offers a potential explanation for this observation, claiming "as people grow into their middle years, they begin to experience the loss of parents and increasingly face the inevitable changes of life, which may deepen their religious beliefs" (Gallup, 2002, as cited in Lyons, 2003, p. 1). Moreover, Gallup's research shows that 78% percent of people aged 65 and older are members of a church, compared to 65% of the overall population, 55% percent of people aged 65 and older attended church in the last week, compared to only 43% of the overall population, 74% of people aged 65 and older feel that religion is 'very important' in their lives, compared to 60% of the overall population, and 58% of people aged 65 and older have a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in organized religion, compared to only 45% of the overall population (Lyons, 2003, p. 2).

While earlier generations grow more religious with age, it seems that millennials tend to grow more spiritual with age. According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2015, "millennials are less attached to organized religion than their parents or grandparents were at the same age, with only about 40 percent saying religion is very important in their lives" (Newman, 2015, web). However, this is not to say that

millennials do not believe in God; in fact, “the same survey revealed that about 80 percent of millennials believe in God and increasing numbers identify with statements like “I feel a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being” or “I experience a deep sense of wonder about the universe” (Newman, 2015, web). The primary difference between religion and spirituality is that religion involves organized doctrines, dogmas, and ritual practices, while spirituality involves inner feelings and experience (Hollywood, 2010). Furthermore, “the spiritual person has an immediate and spontaneous experience of the divine or of some higher power” (Hollywood, 2010, web).

Gen Z, whose oldest members are still in their mid-twenties, is less religious and more spiritual than the Millennial Generation. Research shows that only about 6 in 10 teens and young adults are affiliated with organized religion, and, of those that are still affiliated, over half say they have little or no trust in organized religion. However, 60% of teens and young adults who are not affiliated with any organized religion described themselves as spiritual (Riess, 2020). It is not yet known whether Millennials or Gen Zers will continue to grow more spiritual as they grow older or will instead grow more religious as did earlier generations.

The religious composition of Democrats bears a similar resemblance to that of younger Americans aged 18 to 29, “who are 27% white Christian, 26% Christian of color, 7% another religion, and 36% unaffiliated,” and to Americans aged 30 to 49, “who are 40% white Christian, 32% Christian of color, 4% another religion, and 23% unaffiliated” (PRRI, 2021, p. 6). The religious composition of Republicans, on the other hand, more closely resembles that of older Americans over 65, “who are 59% white

Christian, 20% Christian of color, 4% another religion, and 14% unaffiliated" (PRRI, 2021, p. 6).

Younger Americans Are More Religiously Diverse

"Americans ages 18 to 29 are the most religiously diverse age group" (PRRI, 2021, p. 3). A majority (54%) of Americans aged 18 to 29 are Christian but "only 28% are white Christians (including 12% who are white mainline Protestants, 8% who are white Catholics, and 7% who are white evangelical Protestants)" (PRRI, 2021, p. 3). "26% are Christians of color (including 9% who are Hispanic Catholics, 5% who are Hispanic Protestants, 5% who are Black Protestants, 2% who are multiracial Christians, 2% who are AAPI Christians, and 1% who are Native American Christians)" (PRRI, 2021, p. 3). In addition, over one-third of young Americans (36%) are religiously unaffiliated, and the rest are "Jewish (2%), Muslim (2%), Buddhist (1%), Hindu (1%), or another religion (1%)" (PRRI, 2021, p. 3).

Moreover, the proportion of white Christians consistently increases as age increases. Among Americans of ages 30 to 49, 41% are white Christian, as are 50% of those ages 50 to 64 and 59% of those 65 and older. While 36% of Americans under the age of 30 are religiously unaffiliated, only 25% of those between the ages of 30 and 49, 18% of those aged 50 to 64, and only 14% of those ages 65 and older are religiously unaffiliated (PRRI, 2021).

Age and Religious 'Nones'

Over the past few decades, there has been a steady rise of religious nones. "Nearly one in four Americans (23%) are religiously unaffiliated" (PRRI, 2021, p. 1). This increase in 'nones' is caused, in large part, by generational replacement— "the gradual supplanting of older generations by newer ones" (Pew Research Center, 2012, p. 10). The majority of religious nones are young Americans aged 18 to 29, and the proportion of nones within this age group continues to rise. "In 1986, only 10% of those ages 18 to 29 identified as religiously unaffiliated" (PRRI, 2021, p. 2). In 2016, this number rose to 38% (PRRI, 2021). According to Pew's 2012 survey data, one-third (32%) of adults under 30 are religiously unaffiliated, while only 9% of those 65 and older were religiously unaffiliated.

The Median Ages of Religious Groups Continue to Rise.

"White Evangelical Protestants are the oldest religious group in the United States, with a median age of 56 compared to the median age in the country of 47" (PRRI, 2021, p. 4). The median age for the majority of religious groups in the United States has increased since 2013. The group with the largest increase is Black Protestants, rising from 45 years old in 2013 to 50 years old in 2020 (PRRI, 2021). The median ages of various other religious groups also increased significantly, including "Hispanic Protestants (from 35 to 39), white evangelical Protestants (from 53 to 56), Latter-day Saints (from 44 to 47), Hispanic Catholics (from 39 to 42), and Hindu Americans (from

33 to 36)" (PRRI, 2021, p. 4). "Other groups have remained steady or increased in median age at a similar level to the country as a whole (from 46 to 48)" (PRRI, 2021, p. 4).

Summary

As Americans grew older, they grow more likely to be religious. This is demonstrated by the significantly larger number of older Americans, particularly those aged 65 and older, who identify as religious as well as by the large number of younger Americans, particularly those aged 18 to 29, who identify as religious unaffiliated, or as religious nones. These statistics are consistent with the generational replacement phenomenon, which refers to the tendency for adults to grow more conservative with age, because conservatives are, on average, more religious than are liberals.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ongoing phenomenon of partisan geographical sorting, or the clustering of politically like-minded individuals, in the United States and to emphasize the importance of the roles played by demographic variables of age and religion in this phenomenon (Martin, 2018). Partisan geographical sorting has created a political divide between rural areas and urban areas, which has grown, and continues to grow, wider. Democrats are clustering in densely populated urban areas, and Republicans are clustering in more sparsely populated rural areas. On average, the urban voters are more racially diverse, less religious, younger, more educated, and more affluent than are rural voters. They also own fewer guns, are more likely to support abortion rights, and hew to less traditional family arrangements than rural voters (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006, p. 467). On the other hand, in comparison with urban voters, rural voters, "own more guns, are more likely to oppose abortion rights, and hew to more traditional family arrangements" (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006, p. 467). Moreover, rural voters are "more white, Christian, evangelical, religiously devout, elderly, less educated, and less affluent than urban and suburban populations" (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006, p. 467).

While partisan geographical sorting is thought to be at least partially a result of the rise of urbanization, the urban and rural divide did not transform into a political divide until the early twentieth century, when Democrats moved to cities to form alliances with labor unions (Wilkinson, 2018, p. 16; Gimpel et. al., 2020, p. 1346; Niskanen Center, 2019, web). It was not until 1960, however, that population density and party identification became substantially interrelated as a result of an increase in landslide counties (Aisch, Pearce, and Yourish, 2016).

Numerous theories exist which attempt to explain the sorting phenomenon. These theories rely on the concept of homophily, or the desire to live near individuals with similar values. Each existing theory falls into one of two categories: intentional sorting and inadvertent sorting. The intentional sorting argument states that people choose to live in areas in which the political composition reflects their own political views. The inadvertent sorting argument seems more reasonable and states that people choose where to live based on various lifestyle preferences, which are, in turn, correlated with political preferences.

One of such lifestyle preferences is religious affiliation. There is a substantial correlation between religious affiliation, or lack thereof, and political party preference, and those preferences have a spatial impact between urban, higher density and rural, lower density areas. Rural voters are more likely to be religious than are urban voters, and since Republicans who are dominant in rural areas, are more likely to be religious than are Democrats. Protestants, particularly white Evangelicals, are more populous in rural areas and vote overwhelmingly Republican. Jews, on the other hand, are more populous in urban areas and vote overwhelmingly Democratic. Catholics, however,

reside in both urban and rural areas, with a slight majority in urban areas, and do not align well with either Republicans nor Democrats. Furthermore, there has recently been a steady increase of religious nones, or individuals who do not identify with any religion. This increase is largely a result of generational replacement, as the vast majority of religious nones belong to younger generations (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Age is another important variable in the sorting phenomenon. Residents of rural areas are, on average, older than those of urban areas. Older people tend to vote Republican, while younger people tend to vote Democratic. Consequently, rural areas tend to be more Republican, and urban areas tend to be more Democratic. The Millennial Generation, consisting of individuals aged 25 to 40, is, as expected, the most liberal generation. Similarly, although there is currently little research regarding its voting patterns, the newest generation, Generation Z, is projected to continue to lean Democratic in the future. On the contrary, the Silent Generation, aged 75 to 95, is, as expected, overwhelmingly conservative. Research suggests that people become more conservative with age. There are several possible explanations for this pattern. Some theories associate the changes in political views with various psychological and physiological changes that come with age, while others associate them with the decline in social interactions that comes with age or changes in economic status (Dennis et al., 2008; Jost et al., 2007; St. Jacques, Dolcos, and Cabeza, 2009, as cited in Peterson et. al., 2020, p. 600; Peterson et. al., 2020).

Several theories exist that attempt to explain how age and partisanship are associated with each other, each of which evaluate the extent to which political attitudes change or whether they remain stable and unaffected by life changes throughout one's lifespan. No

one of these theories is more accurate than any other, and all can be applied to specific instances.

Religion and age are also associated with one another. As Americans grow older, they grow dramatically more likely to adopt religious attitudes and behaviors (Lyons, 2003). While earlier generations grow more religious with age, however, millennials tend to grow more spiritual with age. The primary difference between religion and spirituality is that religion involves organized doctrines, dogmas, and ritual practices, while spirituality involves inner feelings and experience (Hollywood, 2010). Moreover, many younger Americans aged 18 to 29 identify as religious nones.

The religious composition of Democrats bears a similar resemblance to that of younger Americans aged 18 to 29, "who are 27% white Christian, 26% Christian of color, 7% another religion, and 36% unaffiliated," and to Americans aged 30 to 49, "who are 40% white Christian, 32% Christian of color, 4% another religion, and 23% unaffiliated" (PRRI, 2021, p. 6). The religious composition of Republicans, on the other hand, more closely resembles that of older Americans over 65, "who are 59% white Christian, 20% Christian of color, 4% another religion, and 14% unaffiliated" (PRRI, 2021, p. 6). Furthermore, the median ages of religious groups continue to increase. These statistics are consistent with the generational replacement phenomenon, which refers to the tendency for adults to grow more conservative with age, because conservatives are, on average, more religious than are liberals.

It is clear that partisan geographical sorting is not only occurring but increasing. Research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic could be partially reponsible for this increase. During the pandemic, conservatives throughout the country relocated from areas

with strict COVID-19 restrictions to more lenient areas with conservative-majority political compositions. People have been leaving states like California due to the "high taxes, expensive real estate, and school mask mandates" and relocating to conservative areas like Idaho, Tennessee, and Texas (Burnett, 2022, web). Therefore, it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic created more lifestyle preferences that drive Americans to migrate and sort themselves among people that share such preferences.

The pandemic that forever changed American politics and culture appears to have accelerated the partisan geographical sorting phenomenon and seems to have caused political polarization to deepen. As more mask mandates are lifted and America begins to shift back to some version of normalcy, it would be interesting to determine the extent to which COVID-19 affected geographical sorting along partisan lines. Another possibility for future research regarding the sorting phenomenon is to identify and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this sorting in order to determine whether it has been detrimental to American politics and society as whole—and, if so, to what degree—or whether it has strengthened both parties in a way that could be beneficial.

This research is important because partisan geographical sorting is a trending development that has resulted in a continual increase in political polarization over time that has transformed American politics in a monumental way. The clustering of politically like-minded individuals has caused, and continues to cause, Americans to be less likely to be exposed to different perspectives, which has the potential to result in an increase in rigidity in political beliefs on both sides of the political spectrum.

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Appendix A

Characteristics of the Generations

Silent Generation / Traditionalists (born before 1946)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
• Grew up during the Great Depression and WWII • Either fought in WWII or were children • Behaviors are based on experiences during the Depression and WWII • Wealthiest generation • Men typically worked while women stayed home to raise children • Has largest lobbyist group, AARP	• 55 million • Majority are retirees • Largest voting population	• Behaviors are based on experiences from the Depression • Want to feel needed • Strive for financial security • "Waste not want not" attitude • Conformity • Conservatism • Traditional family values • Strive for comfort • Demand quality • Simplicity • Understands the nobility of sacrifice for the common good • Patriotic • Patience • Team players	• Loyal to employers and expect the same in return • Possess superb interpersonal skills • Enjoy flexible arrangements so they can work on their own schedule • Believe promotions, raises, and recognition should come from job tenure • Measure work ethic on timeliness, productivity, and not drawing attention	• Great Depression • WWII • The Cold War • McCarthyism • Started the Civil Rights Movement • Children were "seen, but not heard"

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
• Grew up during the Civil Rights Movement and the Cold War • Born during a spike in child births after WWII • Created the term "workaholic" • The largest generation • Single largest economic group • Sometimes referred to today as "Empty Nesters"	• 76 million • Makes up 28% of Americans	• Run local, state, and national governments • Largest workforce • Believe rules should be obeyed unless they are contrary to what they want; then they're to be broken • Experimental • Individualism • Social cause oriented • Free spirited • Can be less optimistic, cynical, and distrust government • Want products and services that show their success	• Work ethic is measured in hours worked • Less importance placed on productivity • Teamwork is critical to success • Relationship building is important • Expect loyalty from those they work with	• Assassinations of JFK, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. • Cold War • Walk on the Moon • Vietnam War • Protests and Sit-Ins • Civil Rights, Women's, and Environmental Movements • Watergate • Nixon Resignation • Self-discovery

Generation X / Busters (1965-1980)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
• Defined as "slackers" • They have the "carpe diem" attitude • First generation to develop ease and comfort with technology • "X" described the lack of identity that members of Generation X felt, not sure where they belonged • Experienced more divorces than any other generation • Had to learn to fend for themselves	• 50 million • Single parent families	• Quest for emotional security • Independent • Very self-reliant • Informality • Entrepreneurial • Expect immediate and ongoing feedback and is comfortable giving feedback to others • Reject rules • Mistrust institutions • Believe friends do not equal family • "Latchkey" kids • Multi-taskers • Suspicious of Boomer values • Value family time	• Casual, friendly work environment • Involvement • Flexibility and freedom • A place to learn • Work smarter, not harder • Want open communication regardless of position, title, or tenure • Value control of their time • Look for a person to whom they can invest loyalty, not a company	• AIDS • End of Cold War • Vietnam • Watergate • Nixon resignation • Computers • Grunge/Hip-Hop • Vietnam • MTV • Challenger explosion • Fall of Berlin Wall • Reaganomics

Generation Y / Millennials (born 1981-1994)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
• Grew up with technology- computers, cell phones, internet, etc. • Also known as the "Entitlement" generation • Boomer and late X'er parents raised them to be sheltered and to constantly build Millennials' self-esteem • Plagued with high levels of student debt • Second largest generation to be entering the workforce under the Boomers	• 80 million • More ethnically and racially diverse than older generations	• Ambitious yet clueless • Optimistic • Patriotic • Impatient • Entrepreneurial • Individualistic yet group-oriented • Want to be like peers but with a unique twist • Very informal • Busy • Short attention span • Acknowledge and admire some authorities • More culturally and racially tolerant • Acceptant of change • Un-trusting of "the man" • Achievement-oriented • Financially savvy • Want instant gratification • "Everybody wins!"	• Searches for the individual who will help them achieve their goals • Want open, constant communication and positive reinforcement from their boss • Search for job that provides great, personal fulfillment • Want to be close to their peers • Want leadership from bosses and supervisors • Look for opportunities to learn • Work to live, rather than living to work	• Oklahoma City bombing • Rise of the Internet • O.J. Simpson trial • Death of Princess Diana • CDs/DVDs • Columbine shootings • Y2K • Terrorism • Swine flu- 1988

Generation Z / Digital Natives (born after 1994)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
• Also known as Generation M, Net Generation, Internet Generation • Grown up with world, wide, web. (Became available after 1991) • Born during minor fertility boom around US Global Financial Crisis • The children of Generation X	• 23 million and growing	• Highly connected to the use of communications • Like Instant Gratification • Thrive on acceleration and next, next, next • Independent people, lacking a community- oriented nature due to social media • Are very open book with little concern to privacy and personal information. Except for when it comes to money • Thrive on small bits of information. Think in terms of status's and Twitter language • Under a lot of pressure to succeed	• Very collaborative and creative • Will have to solve the worst environmental, social and economic problems in history • Will not be team players • Will be more self-directed • Will process information at lightning speed • Will be smarter	• 9/11 attacks - 2011 • Great Recession - 2008 to present • Terrorism - these individuals do not remember a time without war • Swine Flu outbreak - 2009 • Hurricane Katrina - 2005 • iPod - 2001 • Facebook – 2004

(University of Missouri Extension, n.d.).