

The Geography of American Patriotism¹

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ABSTRACT

Geographical political polarization combined with increasingly widespread appeals to a “real America” raise the question: are parts of the United States more patriotic than others? Can we validate claims to greater patriotic fervor with concrete measures of patriotism? Employing a political definition of patriotism as practices that sustain collective action by the state, we map and analyze the geographical distribution of four behaviors critical for reproducing the nation-state: responding to the census, voting, paying taxes, and serving in the military. Three major patterns emerge: 1) when taken together, no single region stands out in terms of nationalist behavior, and 2) there is no single, all-encompassing form of behavioral patriotism. 3) However, we do find that while the South is not exceptional in terms of census-taking, voting, tax-paying, or military service, it does exhibit specific ethnic identities and political preferences. We suggest that the possible disjuncture between two different understandings of patriotism may be a significant threat to political consensus in the United States. More broadly, we hope to motivate sub-national analyses of measures and attitudes that for too long have been assumed to be uniform within national territories.

BACKGROUND & MOTIVATION

This paper has two principal motivations; one stems from substantive political concerns, the other from theoretical and methodological questions.

On the first, challenging the patriotism of political rivals is as old as Greek democracy. Questioning whether opponents have the same affect for a community, understand its real needs, and are willing to make the appropriate sacrifices in order to achieve collective goals has long been a standard rhetorical tactic. US history contains many examples of political rivals challenging one another's devotion to the nation. Recently, such assaults have been leveled primarily by members of the Republican Party. Certainly since the start of the Cold War, representatives of the GOP have consistently questioned their opponents' commitment to 'national security' and, in fact, the United States as a nation. Joe McCarthy remains the quintessential example of this trope, but it has been a standard part of GOP repertoire since the 1968 election. We are concerned that this polemical strategy has become more central to contemporary Republican rhetoric. The 2008 presidential election featured enough references to 'real Americans' living in a 'real America' to merit considerable concern about the consensual base of US politics.¹ The trend has continued in 2012 with explicit charges of national betrayal and slogans that claim, 'We want our country back!' It is important to attempt to establish some empirical basis for validating claims and counterclaims related to levels of patriotism and its regional distribution.

Additionally, this paper attempts to move beyond a study of nationalism that focuses on nations as they have been conceived and institutionalized. Instead, we look within the geopolitical boundaries of the United States in order to understand regional variation in individual contributions to the nation-state. We analyze the geographical distribution of patriotic

behaviors within the United States. In so doing, we also address frequent pleas to dethrone nation-states as the principal unit of analysis in the study of nationalism. Brubaker is among the most vocal critics of the ‘substantialist, realist cast of mind that attributes real, enduring existence to nations as these nations are conceived [and institutionalized]’ (1994: 6). ‘The analytical task at hand,’ he contends, ‘is to think about nationalism without nations’ (10). But what would such sociology of nationalism look like? Certainly, it would involve studying nationhood both across and within geopolitical boundaries. We believe that this approach may be useful in understanding other forms of patriotism or nationalist sentiments in many cases beyond the US.

Addressing these theoretical and substantive concerns has become especially pressing as the claim that the United States is composed of a plurality of ethno-culturally distinct, self-aware *nations* garners widespread appeal (Chinni and Gimpel 2010; Woodard 2011).² The most recent line of political polarization research has found support for this claim by moving beyond broad-based surveys of social attitudes³ and examining the geographical distribution of these attitudes across the United States. Although there is little evidence to suggest that individual attitudes have polarized, communities have become increasingly segregated along social and political lines (Bishop 2008; Evans and Nunn Evans 2005).⁴ The geographical sorting of Americans has important electoral implications above and beyond secular trends in individual attitudes (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2009). Identifying the regional varieties of American patriotism could shed further light on the nature of the ‘big sort.’ More importantly, and perhaps idealistically, an empirical analysis of the regional distribution of patriotism could enlighten political rhetoric and help bridge some of the divisions it has produced.

What do we mean when we refer to American patriotism or nationalism? The answer to this question is complicated by the wide variety of understandings present in previous scholarship – from the political project of an ethnic group to the subjective attachments of individuals. According to Calhoun, the various understandings of nationalism can be classified as evaluative, discursive, or political (1997). In the first instance, nationalism takes the form of an ethical imperative: geopolitical boundaries *should* coincide with subjectively experienced communities. Scholars who subscribe to a discursive, or cultural, understanding treat nationalism ‘as cognition’ — to borrow a term from Brubaker and his colleagues (2004) — or a framework for understanding the world that helps to interpret and orient action. Finally, a political understanding of nationalism highlights its role as a basis for collective action.

In this paper, we adopt a political understanding of nationalism as those ‘social movements and state policies by which people attempt to advance the interests of collectivities they understand as nations’ (Calhoun 1997: 6). Whether nationalist political projects take the form of social movements or state policies depends on whether the subjectively experienced nation coincides with state boundaries. Here, it is useful to distinguish between two dimensions of nationalism usually obscured by the catchall term: loyalty to the national community and loyalty to the state. Walker Connor terms the first ‘ethno-nationalism’ to draw attention to the ties of ancestral kinship to which nationalists usually lay claim. To the second he gives the term ‘patriotism’ (Connor 1992). Our aim in this paper is to test whether the political project of patriotism⁵ coincides with nationalist — and possibly ethno-nationalist — claims in contemporary America.

In the case of true nation-states, ethno-nationalism and patriotism reinforce one another. When the nation and state are competing foci of loyalty, however, ethno-nationalism

'customarily proves itself the more potent allegiance' (Connor 1978; 1992: 387). Restated in the terms of political nationalism, when the subjectively experienced nation coincides with state boundaries, the primary aim of nationalist political projects is to 'increase participation in [the] existing state' (Calhoun 1997: 6). When the nation and the state do not coincide, however, nationalists may refuse to cooperate with the state, thereby undermining its ability to pursue collective goals. In its most benign form, nationalist resistance takes the form of passive non-participation. A central contention of this paper is the congruence between these two forms of political loyalty is increasingly threatened in the United States.

By focusing on patriotism as a political project dedicated to supporting collective action by the nation-state, we depart from much of the literature on nationalism: we focus on well-documented behaviors instead of on sentiments and psychological attachments. If patriotism is to have any analytical import, it must be associated with a set of possible behaviors that predict concrete outcomes. We are interested in the extent to which citizens behave with respect the national state and contend that this may be much more salient than more cultural expressions of sentiment. We then compare the distribution of these behaviors to some indications of an ethno-nationalist revival in parts of the United States.

Among contributions to the nation-state, census taking, voting, tax paying, and military service stand out as sites for study. These practices help to reproduce the nation-state in the most literal sense — by defending it against military threats, by funding state projects, and by expressing democratic preferences (Posen 1993). When nation and state coincide, moreover, these behaviors also indicate subjective attachment to the nation. Responding to the census, voting, paying taxes, and serving in the military in fact express not simply love of country, but a sense of obligation toward it. Although more recent discussions of citizenship have centered on

the rights of citizens, historically, the discourse of inclusion has just as decisively stressed duty (Janowitz 1983). Outlining the constitution of the state – the highest realm of rights – Hegel wrote, ‘Man (sic) has rights so far as he has duties and duties so far as he has rights’ (1991 [1820]). Even T.H. Marshall, best known for his work on civil, political and social rights, acknowledged the intimate connection between the rights and duties of citizenship: ‘citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to rights and duties with which the status is endorsed’ (1992 [1949]).

Our decision to study the United States requires further justification given an intellectual climate that favors understandings of nationalism as either ethnic tension/conflict or the preferred tool of state-builders in ‘foreign’ countries. Bonikowski gives a comprehensive overview of the reasons for studying nationalism in the American context (2008; see also Huddy and Khatib 2007, Schildkraut 2007, and Parker 2009). By far the most compelling, and the most relevant for our project, is the opportunity to study ‘nationalism in its unremarkable, everyday form – the kind that is largely missed by studies of sub-national ethnic conflict’ (Bonikowski 2008). By exploring census compliance, tax-paying, military service, and voting in the United States, our project sheds light on those quotidian practices through which the nation-state is reproduced, both literally and in the collective imagination of its citizens. Given that ‘patriotism’ has become a rhetorical weapon, establishing an empirical basis for such contentions is especially important.

In accordance with Brubaker’s assertion that nationness is a variable property *not of individuals* but of groups and relational settings, we examine data at the county level. We believe that political attitudes become social facts as a function of their context, including their geography (Abascal 2012). We are focusing on regional divisions within the country rather than the distribution of ideas by individuals. It is important to stress that because we are looking at

counties and not individuals, we cannot make causal claims. We are all too aware that the results we present are descriptive associations that tell us what kinds of characteristics tend to go together among counties, *not* individuals. Nor do our results predict individual behavior. Nevertheless, in the face of polemical assertions regarding the geography of a ‘real America’, we believe that our descriptive analysis may help shed light on the validity of such claims.

DATA & METHODS

To examine American nationalism and patriotism, we deploy a diverse array of measures — both attitudinal and behavioral — culled from several data sources. Our measures fall into two camps: those that capture patriotism in the form of tangible contributions to the state, and those that capture nationalist sentiments. Specifically, we compare regional patterns of American self-identification (sentiment) with regional patterns of census-taking, voting, tax-paying, and military service (behaviors). Next we review the source and operationalization of each measure.

We contend that measures of patriotism that rely on expressions of sentiments or self-identification are inherently unreliable. First, these require that individuals make judgments about their own feelings and implicitly compare these to what they believe others feel. We would certainly not feel comfortable asking, ‘How much do you love your spouse?’ or ‘Do you love your spouse more than the average person’ in order to measure marital stability. Yet we do precisely that when assigning patriotic sentiments to parts of the population. This measure is particularly fraught as the very terms ‘patriot’ and ‘love of country’ have come to be perceived as talismans of particular worldviews. Just as measures of divorce or out-of-wedlock births may give a better indication of the regional distribution of the relative strength of family life, we privilege behavioral indicators of patriotic obligations.

Census-taking

The decision to complete and return a census questionnaire by mail is characterized by private costs that aggregate to substantial collective outcomes (Vigdor 2004). The failure to comply, moreover, poses a direct cost to the state. In 2010 — as in other years — US counties showed considerable variation in census response rates: from 37 percent in rural Georgia and Mississippi to 86 percent in suburban Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Our measure of census participation is from the US Census Bureau. It represents the percentage of households in each county that completed and returned a 2010 census questionnaire within three weeks of receiving it; after three weeks, follow-up efforts began.

Voting

In the American context, voting stands out as both a right and duty of citizens, an idea rooted in an ideological tradition of civic republicanism (Bonikowski 2008; Janowitz 1983). Most Americans in fact regard electoral participation as an ideal of good citizenship (Theiss-Morse 1993). Beyond expressing constituent preferences to state officials, moreover, electoral participation broadly legitimates the political system (Przeworski 1985).

To capture participation we construct a measure of mean voter turnout among the voting-age population⁶ in the 2000, 2004, and 2008 presidential elections. Data for this measure comes from the Congressional Quarterly Press (Sage Publications) and the US Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP).

Taxes

Both Hegel and Marshall identified tax paying — along with military service — as a foremost obligation of citizens (1991[1820]; 1992[1949]). In the United States, taxes are both involuntary and highly correlated with income. To claim that the tax dollars an individual pays represent his/her subjective commitment to the nation would be both false and dangerous. It

would also be a serious misreading of our greater goal. By defining patriotism as those practices that sustain and reproduce the state, we are not interested in these practices because they are ‘better’ indicators of nationalism, but because we want to know to what extent nationalist sentiments coincide with tangible contributions to the nation-state.

The data for our tax measures come from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the US Consolidated Federal Funds Report (CFFR) (accessed through Proquest Statistical Insight).

Federal income tax liability⁷ as a fraction of gross income was calculated using IRS zip-code data compiled from individual tax returns for fiscal year 2008. Zip code areas do not align perfectly with US counties; to deal with this, we used the University of Missouri’s Geographic Correspondence Engine (MABLE) to convert zip codes into FIPS codes using weights for 2000 population.⁸

Federal expenditure per capita is drawn from the CFFR for fiscal year 2008. The figure covers aggregate federal expenditures or obligations for grants, salaries and wages, procurement contracts, direct payments for individuals, loans and loan assistance, and insurance. It does *not* include Social Security payments to individuals.

Subtracting income tax liability from expenditures, we arrive at our measure of net receipts from the federal government to the county. A positive value indicates a net inflow *from* the federal government *to* the county.

Military Service

No contribution to the state is as great as risking life and limb in its service. Accordingly, the expansion of military service has coincided historically with demands for greater participation in state processes (Kier and Krebs 2010; Krebs 2006). For example, the recent

decline of the citizen army and the return to the privatization of the military is generally regarded as an ill omen for democracy (Avant 2010; Burk 2002).⁹

In order to capture this final dimension of nationalist behavior, we employ three measures: veterans per 1,000 residents, annual Army recruitment per 10,000 18-45 year-olds, and fatalities in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars per 10,000 18-45 year-olds.

The data for veterans per 1,000 residents comes from five-year ACS estimates (2005-2009) divided by county population at the mid-point in 2007 (PEP).

The US Army Accessions Command provided our measure of Army recruitment by county for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011. To net out random noise for a single year, we take the average of all three years.¹⁰ Finally, in order to deal with variations in age structure by county, we divide this figure by the number of service age individuals in the county.

Finally, our measure of fatalities in Iraq and Afghanistan comes from iCasualties.org, formally the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, an independent website that tracks casualties in the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. As with recruitment, we divide this figure by the number of service age individuals in each county.

American Identification

To gauge regional variations in nationalist sentiment, we examine American self-identification. On the census ancestry question, most Americans report the nationality of their immigrant ancestors; however, some Americans simply answer 'American.' This decision likely reflects claims to being a member of a 'real America' rather than confusion about the question or Native-American heritage.

Our measure of American identification is based on five-year estimates from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS 2005-2009). The ACS asks respondents

'What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?' and provides them with two blank spaces on which to record their responses. Our measure represents the number of residents whose first response was 'American' as a proportion of each county's white population.¹¹

Republican Gains (2004-'08)

This measure is based on Congressional Quarterly Press data (Sage Publications) from the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. In 2004, the average county's electoral margin for the Republican presidential candidate (George W. Bush) was 21.5 percent. In 2008, the average county's electoral margin for the Republican presidential candidate (John McCain) had dropped to 15.2 percent.¹² On average, the Republican candidate's margin dropped by 6.3 percentage points between the 2004 and 2008 elections. In the context of this unprecedented drop, some counties did in fact swing more Republican. To capture this pattern, we subtract the observed decline for each county from the average Republican decline to construct our measure of Republican Party gains above average. For example, Chilton, Alabama's Republican margin rose from 54.2 to 57.8 percent between 2004-2008. The 3.6-point increase means that Chilton's Republican margin grew 9.9 percentage points above the national average (-6.3 percent). We believe that given the ideological lines of the 2008 election, those counties where the GOP gained support may be characterized as more attuned to an explicitly 'patriotic' political preference.¹³

Nationalist Sentiments

We supplement our claims about the regional character of nationalist sentiments with data from an online survey of 798 voting-age Americans conducted by JZ Analytics in August-September 2012. In particular, we analyzed responses to the following question: 'Which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion? (A) The United States is the world's

indispensable nation. American values are what most people in the world want and the US acts legitimately as the world's true superpower, (B) The United States has reached its limits as superpower and needs to coordinate foreign policy and protect its interests more in concert with other major regional powers like China, Russia, Brazil, and India as well as with allies and groups like the United Nations and NATO, or (C) Not sure.' Survey responses were weighted to represent the demographic profile of the US population in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity, political party, educational attainment, and religious affiliation. Although detailed geographic data was not collected for respondents, cross-tabulations of attitudes by party identification, age, gender, race, and US region are publicly available.

Controls

In our regression models, we include additional controls for county characteristics. Median household income and the proportion of county residents who are Black, Hispanic, or 65-years-and-older are five-year estimates from the ACS (2005-2009). Additionally we control for urbanization using 2003 rural/urban classification codes from the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture. We also control for US region using a Southern dummy that captures former member states of the Confederacy. Finally, we include a dummy variable indicating the presence of a military base in the county or an adjacent county, a measure we constructed using data from the National Park Service.

Descriptive Statistics and Analytic Strategies

Basic descriptive statistics for counties – categorized by US region and degree of urbanization – are presented in Table 1, below.

[Table 1 About Here]

We present our analysis in four stages. First, we review patriotic behaviors, mapping census-taking, voter turnout, tax-paying, and military service. Combining these measures in a summary measure of ‘patriotic type,’ we then present data on the geographic distribution of behavioral patriotism. We further test our findings using multilevel regression analysis to examine county-level associations between these measures. All models include a varying intercept for states in order to control for time-invariant characteristics specific to each state. We then analyze regional patterns of American self-identification as well as the very red/blue electoral maps that continue to raise the specter of a polarized America. We find that regional patterns of Republican Party electoral gains (2004-’08) map neatly onto patterns of American self-identification, indicating an ideological divide between those regions that lay claim to the ‘real America’ and everyone else. We present evidence from a recent attitudinal survey of Americans to bolster this claim. Finally, we find that the same regions that lay claim to the ‘real America’ do not score relatively high in our patriotic behavioral measures. Statistical regression models confirm these results.

RESULTS

We emphasize that the measures we have selected do not necessarily reflect value claims or judgments regarding individuals’ relationship to their country. Rather, our measures merely reflect the geographical distribution of four forms of support for the collective actions of the state. Again, *if* patriotism is expressed as support for collective action by the state, and *if* it is regionally distributed, then what does a map of a ‘real America’ defined this way look like?

Census-taking

Population counts based on the census directly affect the allocation of federal monies and the drawing of congressional districts. Moreover, the failure to respond by mail poses a direct cost to the state through repeated attempts to follow up.

[Figure 1 About Here]

Of all our behavioral maps, Figure 1 shows the starkest regional distribution. Parts of the two coasts and the traditional Midwest are characterized by very high census response rates. The South and the West, however appear to have extremely low rates of mail return.

Voting

We contend that the proclivity to vote is a reasonable measure of patriotic commitment. Since voting involves some costs and is not compulsory, going to the polls represents a (perhaps minimal) expression of support for a democracy's institutions and the willingness to be (literally) counted among its citizens. The data we have obtained from the 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections show that this form of patriotism is not evenly distributed throughout the country (Figure 2).

[Figure 2 About Here]

The two most conspicuous geographic trends are located on the one hand in the Upper-Midwest and New England and on the other in the Middle South. Citizens in the first region are much more likely to vote than the rest of the country. This fits with observed variation across states: Minnesota and Maine, for example, regularly have over 70 percent turnout for presidential elections, while turnout in Georgia, Mississippi, and West Virginia is often 20 percent lower. Between-county variation is even more extreme and ranges from the low 30s to the mid 90s.

To be sure, regional variation is in large part due to demographic differences. It is well established that Whites vote more than Non-Whites (though this may not have been the case in

2008), that the well-off vote are more likely to vote than the poor, and that the old vote more than the young (again, 2008 may have been an exception) (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

Taxes

We argue that net fiscal support for the actions of the state should also count as a form of patriotism. Obviously, paying taxes is not a voluntary act (or at least in the United States the costs to avoiding them are relatively high). We certainly do not argue that those who pay most (the rich) are more patriotic. We do believe, however, that in times when devotion to the country has become a salient issue, the geographical distribution of net fiscal benefits is a critical component of any political debate.

[Figure 3a About Here]

Figure 3a shows, as expected, that the flow of tax receipts (income taxes excluding payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare) is highly correlated with regional wealth. Payment of federal taxes is highest for urban centers and lowest in those parts of the country with the highest levels of poverty and unemployment. Note that large parts of the South are on the low end of tax receipts per capita (again, largely a function of income). The pattern for federal government expenditures per capita (Figure 3b) reverses this pattern with rural areas — and particularly Appalachia and the farm belt of the Great Plains — being the main beneficiaries of federal largesse (along with other pockets of federal activity, for example, around DC). We note that despite the relative poverty of parts of the Middle South, it does *not* receive significant federal support compared to other regions.

[Figure 3b About Here]

Combining federal payments and receipts we arrive at a more accurate representation of ‘who pays’ for maintaining the national government (Figure 3c). What is again most striking

about this distribution is the extent to which there is no clear regional ‘winner’. There are significant pockets of net federal receipts and some areas that clearly pay more than they receive, but the distribution of fiscal obligation is relatively even. If any patterns emerge, they go against any notion of rural areas supporting urban ones or of the South as a net contributor to federal wealth.

[Figure 3c About Here]

Military Service

Our last measures of national obligation capture service in the military. Some would argue that in a volunteer army, service in the military is more a function of economic necessity than patriotic sentiment. In a time of war, we have to disagree. Whatever functional pull factors may exist for military enlistment, we cannot imagine there not being a strong sense of what we might call patriotic obligation involved. We also disagree with those who offer purely psychological reasons for enlistment. The history of military service and its links with nationalist sentiment going back to (at least) Revolutionary France are too deep to be discounted. Additionally, military service is the most obvious symbolic representation of nationalist sentiment in political rhetoric and has been used as an indicator of such since the Vietnam War.

We use three measures to examine the regional distribution of military service. In the first (Figure 4a) we analyze the distribution of veterans, as a function of county population size. There are obvious problems with this measure, as it does not take into account the varying age structures of counties. Note, for example, the overrepresentation of veterans in Florida, a popular destination for retirees. Nevertheless, the results disconfirm the often-cited ‘Southern effect’ in military service: the regional distribution of veterans is relatively even.

[Figure 4a About Here]

We also obtained recruitment data for fiscal years 2009-'11 from the US Army (Figure 4b). It is important to note that because we only have data from one branch of the military, the regional distribution might be skewed. For example, the well-known overrepresentation of African-Americans in the Army (much lower in other services) may produce local pockets of higher enlistment. Similarly, educational attainment and employment opportunities also vary regionally, as do the relative size of the relevant age cohorts. Most importantly, we note a very strong military base effect. It is now well known that the likelihood of military service increases dramatically among families with members already in the military. One effect of this is an overrepresentation of recruits living in or near 'base counties.'

With these caveats in mind, we do not observe strong regional patterns. The upper-Midwest is under-represented, but this probably has more to do with demographics than with any proclivity to serve. There appears to be a significant 'military belt' running from southern North Carolina through southern Alabama, but other parts of the South are underrepresented. Another belt stretches from northern Texas through Ohio. What we do find is a 'rural' effect, with higher representation in non-urban counties. What regional concentrations may be observed are in large part due to the concentration of military bases in those areas and thus a higher proportion of those from military families, precisely the most significant demographic for recruitment.

[Figure 4b About Here]

A final source of data is a map of Iraq and Afghanistan campaign fatalities since 2001 (Figure 4c). These numbers may be the most difficult to interpret as the N is (thankfully) relatively small. We find again, no clear regional pattern except some over-representation in states such as Pennsylvania that may have to do with activation of National Guard units and their

place of service in the war zone. Note that in this case, urban centers appear to be paying a higher ‘blood price’ than other parts of the country.

[Figure 4c About Here]

Geography of Service

Combining all four measures, we create one master measure of ‘patriotism,’ which categorizes counties according to five types (Figure 5).

- 0 = no behaviors above median
- 1 = exactly one behavior above median
- 2 = exactly two behaviors above median
- 3 = exactly three behaviors above median
- 4 = all behaviors above median¹⁴

[Figure 5 About Here]

In general, counties with the highest composite score are located in the traditional Midwest. In particular, Ohio seems to deserve its nickname as ‘the Heartland’. There is also a clear rural effect, but in general we find no evidence for a distinct regional distribution of patriotism. A surprising finding is the relatively low performance of the American South in our measures given its political reputation and the often-cited over-representation of Southerners in the military.

Even if we do not find any obvious regional patterns of service through the maps, we also set out to explore the relationships between our measures through more rigorous statistical techniques. In Table 2, we present the results of four multilevel, linear regressions predicting each measure of patriotism using our other measures as well as statistical controls. Our measures of patriotism are not predictably or consistently correlated with each other: there is no single encompassing form of behavioral patriotism.

[Table 2 About Here]

We find positive relationships between having a large black population and voter turnout (this is partly driven by the inclusion of the 2008 election) and with military recruitment. Counties with large Black and Hispanic populations are less likely to return mail census forms and Latino areas are less likely to vote or join the military (but note that we cannot control for citizenship status and this is probably picking up the effect of undocumented immigrants). There does not appear to be any significant relationship between minority population in a county and the receipt of federal funds. Counties with high incomes and older populations tend to be more cooperative with state efforts. Urban regions seem to do better with our measures than do suburban or rural ones. Holding other variables constant, our findings regarding the non-exceptionality of the South are confirmed. Perhaps the outcome of greatest interest is the final regression predicting annual recruitment for each county. The Southern effect appears to disappear once we control for a military base. It would appear that recruitment is not necessarily a regional phenomenon, but one driven by family traditions (thus coming from a county near a military base).

Red Country, Blue Country: The Politics of Patriotic Claims

Many will no doubt disagree with our definition of patriotism. It is explicitly connected to the state, while many Americans have come to believe that opposition to government is the most patriotic action one can take. We believe that those sentiments might be best called 'ethno-nationalist' as they seem to involve loyalty to an ethnic tradition and a specific cultural legacy rather than faith in political institutions. Given problems in measuring such sentiments and the absence of data on the county level, we have used self-identification information from the census to further explore this possibility.

In the last decade, conservative media personalities led a so-called ‘census-form movement’ encouraging readers and listeners to write ‘American’ on the census’s race and ancestry questions (Krikorian 2010; Limbaugh 2010; Malkin 2010). Their discussions combined claims to being ‘real Americans’ with a rejection of state actions and ‘half-baked, liberal social policies’ (Von Spakovsky 2010). Today, ‘American’ is the most rapidly growing ancestry in the United States.

So who identifies as an American? We analyzed responses to the ACS ancestry question and found what could be a potential challenge to the consensual basis of American politics. Counties where a sizeable share of the population identifies as American tend to be poorer, whiter, and more Republican. They also tend to be located in the South. In fact, counties in the South are, on average, 6.46 percentage points more ‘American’ than similar counties outside the South, an effect which is compounded in rural areas. American-identification is positively associated with census response rates, controlling for other county characteristics. It is, however, unassociated with turnout and tax paying, and slightly negatively associated with recruitment.

[Figure 6 About Here]

The concentration of American self-identification in the South – a region characterized by a uniquely antagonistic historical relationship to the US state and currently associated with a particular party and a specific bundle of political opinions – is of great concern. It is precisely in this region where we find the strongest rejection of the direction of the country and a sense of not being represented by national policies. Moreover, this same region has a particularly intense concentration of anti-immigrant sentiment (Abascal 2012). We are especially concerned with the finding that this same region scores relatively low in our patriotic service measures. We

believe that this may reflect the creation (or continuation?) of a regional, ethnic based form of nationalism in general opposition to many of the institutional foundations of the United States.

American self-identification is of course only a proxy for nationalist sentiment. We cannot directly analyze county-level variation in such sentiments, however, because attitudinal surveys are not representative at the county level due to their relatively small sample sizes. We nevertheless find suggestive evidence for our conclusions in a recent attitudinal survey of voting-age Americans. According to a survey by JZ Analytics, Southerners are more likely to agree with the statement 'the US acts legitimately as the world's true superpower' and disagree with the statement 'the US has reached its limits as superpower' than respondents from any other region. In fact, while respondents in the East, Central/Great Lakes, and West were 18 percent *less* likely to agree with the first — or 'nationalist' — statement than the second, respondents in the South were 18 percent *more* likely to agree that the United States is the world's true superpower. A similar pattern was present among respondents in rural areas, who were 24 percent more likely to agree with the nationalist statement, compared with respondents in urban and suburban areas (17 percent *less* likely to agree with the statement, on average).

Why should we care whether claims to an American identity are concentrated in one region and do not coincide with behaviors that support the nation-state? The claim regarding the existence of a 'real America' has special political salience because of the apparent geographical distribution of support for the two major political parties and the implicit (and at times, explicit) regional associations with such claims. Increasingly since the 2000 election, politicians and pundits have agonized over the growing ideological segregation of the country. The use of color-coded maps in TV coverage of the elections, combined with the intensity of partisan divisions, has inspired increasingly urgent discussions of 'Red and Blue Americas.'¹⁵ Color-

coded maps became a standard part of political analysis: the fairly consistent distribution of colors, with the Democratic Blue concentrated along the coasts, the Mississippi littoral, and the Great Lakes, while Republican Red dominates the South and significant parts of the Great Plains and the West, have inevitably led to the conclusion that there are ‘two Americas’.

This rhetoric appears to have peaked with the 2008 and 2010 elections. Sarah Palin is most strongly associated with comments about ‘real Americans’, but explicit and implicit references to a ‘real America’ became a significant part of the opposition to President Barack Obama from the start of his presidential campaign. During the 2011-’12 Republican presidential primaries, statements by candidates and participants indicated that the idea of a fundamental division of the country remained salient.

We turn to the geographical distribution of political ideologies in order to understand the relationship between partisanship and nationalist rhetoric. Unfortunately, in the absence of attitudinal survey data with significant geographical representation, we rely on precisely those electoral maps that spawned the debate in the first place. Looking at the 2008 election, we categorized counties by the degree of change in the Republican vote from 2004. That is, we identified counties that voted more or less Republican in the 2008 election, relative to the rest of the country. We would argue that given the rhetoric of the election, such a map might also present a reasonable approximation of the part of the country that feels more ‘really American.’

[Figure 7 About Here]

Once again, we find that the country appears to be divided in part by the legacy of a ‘Mason-Dixon’ line and its extension westward with its center in a broad ‘Appalachian’ region (nearly 450 counties in the South voted more heavily Republican in 2008 than in 2004) (Figure

7). Such a political geography appears to parallel broad understandings of regional ideologies as measured by anti-abortion sentiment or membership in the Tea Party.

Turning once more to attitudinal data on nationalist sentiments, we find that Republicans are 88 percent *more* likely to agree with the statement 'the US acts legitimately as the world's true superpower' than with the statement 'the US has reached its limits as superpower.' The pattern for Democrats is reversed: they are 71 percent *less* likely to agree that the United States is the world's true superpower. The trend is even more striking among Tea Party sympathizers, who are 195 percent more likely to agree that the United States acts legitimately as the world's true superpower!

Ideological divisions along geographic lines are not new to the United States and precisely these lines defined political conflict for much of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the Dixiecrat movement of 1948 and culminating in Richard Nixon's 'Southern Strategy,' it has become fairly common to think of the traditional South as a very different political country from New England and the West Coast. We should be more concerned, however, when such political divisions begin to mirror identity claims.

We put these intuitions to more rigorous statistical testing in a multilevel linear regression that predicts the size of Republican gains between 2004 and 2008 using multiple county characteristics (Table 3). As we had suspected from the visual maps, counties in the South, and particularly the rural South voted more Republican in the 2008 election, even after holding other variables constant. Specifically, the Republican margin in Southern counties grew, on average, about 9.2 percentage points between the 2004 and 2008 elections. In the rural South, the gain was nearly 13 percentage points! These gains took place in a context of unprecedented Democratic gains among the vast majority of American counties. We do not find, however, any

association between the relative performance of the Republican candidate and other measures of patriotic behavior.

[Table 3 About Here]

Why is this in turn significant? Because it is precisely the Republican Party and the South that have consistently made claims to greater patriotism over the last electoral cycles. We believe that the regionalization of the Republican Party, combined with claims of greater — or more ‘real’ — nationalist ardor, are extremely dangerous for the American body politic. The fact that they are empirically unjustifiable, at least by our measures, should hopefully reduce the degree to which these divisive claims are made.

CONCLUSION

Our findings indicate possibly significant regional division not just along well-know partisan lines, but also around vastly different notions of the nation and how to serve or honor it. The relatively low levels of patriotic service in the South and the parallel strength of American identification, sentiment, and support for one political party suggest that the United States is fighting a civil war 150 years after Appomattox. Whatever the merits of one view of the nation or the other, we suggest that exploiting such a division may be especially threatening to American political consensus.

Of more general significance, we do not find that any single measure fully captures the whole spectrum of national obligation. Citizens serve their country in different ways. In future work we hope to compare our findings to more detailed data on nationalist and political sentiments, but we expect that we will also fail to find any significant relationship. Certainly parts of the United States behave in different ways and may even believe in different things, but none has a monopoly on claims to earned citizenship.

Beyond the United States, we hope this paper will generate similar geographical analyses of those cases where adequate data is available. Historic divisions (e.g. Vichy or Vendee in France, North and South Italy, Catholic and Protestant Germany, Castilian vs. other in Spain) certainly parallel those of the Mason-Dixon line and may still be politically and ideologically salient. While the issue of 'patriotism' is more salient in the United States, other issues may serve to distinguish the sub-nationalisms of other countries.

NOTES

¹ A brief search on LexisNexis reveals that media references to a ‘real America’ and ‘real Americans’ spiked in 2004, in the lead-up to George W. Bush’s reelection. It was just prior to Barack Obama’s election, however, that references reached unprecedented levels, increasing by

² ‘There are many different Americas within the borders of the United States’ (Chinni and Gimpel 2010); ‘Calls for unity overlook a glaring historical fact: Americans have been deeply divided since the days of Jamestown and Plymouth.... There isn’t and never has been one America, but rather several Americas’ (Woodard 2011).

³ For examples, see Baldassarri & Gelman (2008) and DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson (1996).

⁴ ‘People [are] reordering their lives around their values, their tastes, and their beliefs. They [are] clustering in communities of like-mindedness’ (Bishop 2008: 12).

⁵ In deference to Connor’s astute distinction between loyalty to the state or the (ethno)nation, we use the term ‘patriotism’ from this point forward to refer to the orientations and practices that help sustain collective action by the state.

⁶ Although this is the most widely used measure of voter turnout, it is important to note that it overestimates turnout in areas with high concentrations of non-citizens. The size and nature of the US undocumented population makes it difficult to accurately estimate the voting-age non-citizen population in each county.

⁷ Form/line: 1040:56 / 1040A:28 / 1040EZ:10. NOTE: This excludes Social Security tax.

⁸ For example, in 2000 roughly 13 percent of the population in the 01050 zip code area lived in Hampden County, Massachusetts, and 87 percent lived in Hampshire County, Massachusetts. Accordingly, of this zip code’s 6,241,000-dollar total income tax liability, 13 percent, or 811,330

dollars, were allotted to Hampden County and 87 percent, or 5,429,670 dollars, were allotted to Hampshire County.

⁹ 'The citizen army as a recruitment practice both reflects democratic principles and supports democratic practices' (Avant 2010: 235); 'Democratic revolutions depended on the transformation of subjects into citizens, a transformation effected by mobilizing citizens to fight as soldiers in defense of their new republic' (Burk 2002: 18).

¹⁰ The correlation between county recruitment for all years was very high ($r > 0.98$ in all cases).

¹¹ As reported on the ACS (2005-2009) race question, which reads: 'What is Person 1's race?' 'White' is the first option.

¹² This, despite the Obama victory, indicates that a larger number of counties (often with low populations) favored the GOP.

¹³ We are currently working on finding other behavioral measures to validate this claim.

¹⁴ Median(census-taking)=74%; median(average turnout)=58.5%; median(net fed \$ per capita)=\$5,118; median(recruitment per 10,000 18-45 yr-olds)=8.44.

¹⁵ A ProQuest electronic search on May 4, 2012 on the terms, 'red state', 'blue state' or 'red and blue America' produced 24,416 results with the major increase in 2004 and a fairly consistent use after that by year and a peak in 2008.

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TABLES

Table 1. County Means and Standard Deviations

| | Not South | | | South | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Urban | Suburban | Rural | Urban | Suburban | Rural |
| 2010 Census response rate | 76.56 | 73.10 | 65.44 | 73.04 | 68.40 | 63.39 |
| | 0.26 | 0.44 | 0.47 | 0.36 | 0.48 | 0.70 |
| Mean turnout (2000, 2004, 2008) | 60.93 | 58.41 | 63.76 | 55.23 | 51.47 | 56.36 |
| | (0.30) | (0.32) | (0.32) | (0.37) | (0.33) | (0.47) |
| Net Fed. \$ per capita | 4253.11 | 5487.24 | 5022.70 | 6653.71 | 6636.91 | 11884.07 |
| | 164.85 | 289.31 | 542.84 | 620.41 | 358.01 | 6210.05 |
| Recruitment per 10,000 18-45 yrs-old | 7.85 | 9.54 | 7.83 | 10.71 | 10.90 | 10.21 |
| | (0.13) | (0.19) | (0.21) | (0.25) | (0.28) | (0.37) |
| % American | 7.85 | 9.54 | 7.83 | 10.71 | 10.90 | 10.21 |
| | (0.21) | (0.29) | (0.30) | (0.33) | (0.40) | (0.54) |
| Republican gains ('04-'08) | -10.19 | -9.30 | -7.28 | -4.93 | -0.78 | 1.19 |
| | (0.29) | (0.36) | (0.31) | (0.50) | (0.55) | (0.63) |
| Median household income | 54344.01 | 43882.56 | 40516.92 | 48447.55 | 37234.42 | 35387.09 |
| | (499.38) | (324.07) | (286.02) | (590.02) | (310.47) | (408.95) |
| % White | 85.71 | 90.56 | 90.65 | 75.03 | 72.99 | 75.11 |
| | (0.59) | (0.49) | (0.52) | (0.72) | (0.92) | (1.12) |
| N | 458 | 379 | 306 | 632 | 551 | 784 |

Table 2. Predicting Patriotic Behaviors by County Characteristics

| | Census Rate | Turnout | Net Fed \$ | Recruitment |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | B/SE | B/SE | B/SE | B/SE |
| <i>Nationalist Measures</i> | | | | |
| 2010 Census mail-in response rate | ---- | -0.121*** | -30.300 | -0.006 |
| | ---- | (0.012) | (71.299) | (0.011) |
| Mean Turnout (2000, 2004, 2008) | -0.266*** | ---- | -24.514 | -0.042* |
| | (0.027) | ---- | (102.684) | (0.016) |
| Net federal receipts per capita (\$) | -0.000 | 0.000 | ---- | -0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) | ---- | (0.000) |
| Recruitment per 10000 18-45 yr-olds | -0.006 | -0.061** | -52.662 | ---- |
| | (0.030) | (0.020) | (128.842) | ---- |
| <i>Demographic Controls</i> | | | | |
| Blacks (%) | -0.087*** | 0.046*** | -41.843 | 0.049*** |
| | (0.019) | (0.013) | (72.395) | (0.012) |
| Hispanics (%) | -0.079*** | -0.065*** | 60.674 | -0.045*** |
| | (0.018) | (0.012) | (60.608) | (0.011) |
| Mean household income (1000s of \$) | 0.310*** | 0.442*** | -6.894 | -0.020 |
| | (0.022) | (0.013) | (87.817) | (0.014) |
| Democrat's Margin (2008) | -0.010 | 0.001 | 44.161 | -0.018*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.006) | (30.609) | (0.005) |
| Population 65 yrs and older (%) | 0.001* | 0.008*** | 2.353 | 0.002*** |
| | (0.001) | (0.000) | (2.240) | (0.000) |
| <i>Region and Urbanization</i> | | | | |
| Military base nearby | ---- | ---- | ---- | 1.891*** |
| | ---- | ---- | ---- | (0.326) |
| Suburban | -2.445*** | -1.360*** | 873.940 | 0.873** |
| | (0.519) | (0.347) | (2302.096) | (0.317) |
| Rural | -7.642*** | 0.902* | 494.561 | -0.952** |
| | (0.578) | (0.398) | (2514.390) | (0.360) |
| South | -0.040 | -3.521* | 3559.130 | 0.819 |
| | (1.948) | (1.555) | (2595.079) | (0.652) |
| Suburban x South | 1.287+ | 0.056 | -1600.628 | -1.331** |
| | (0.745) | (0.497) | (3321.689) | (0.455) |
| Rural x South | 3.255*** | 1.641** | 3719.501 | -0.145 |
| | (0.789) | (0.528) | (3367.491) | (0.480) |
| Constant | 73.305*** | 36.141*** | 5523.975 | 9.517*** |
| | (1.974) | (1.512) | (8569.229) | (1.349) |
| Rho, % variance from states | 0.315 | 0.408 | 0.000 | 0.088 |
| N | 2915 | 2915 | 2915 | 2915 |

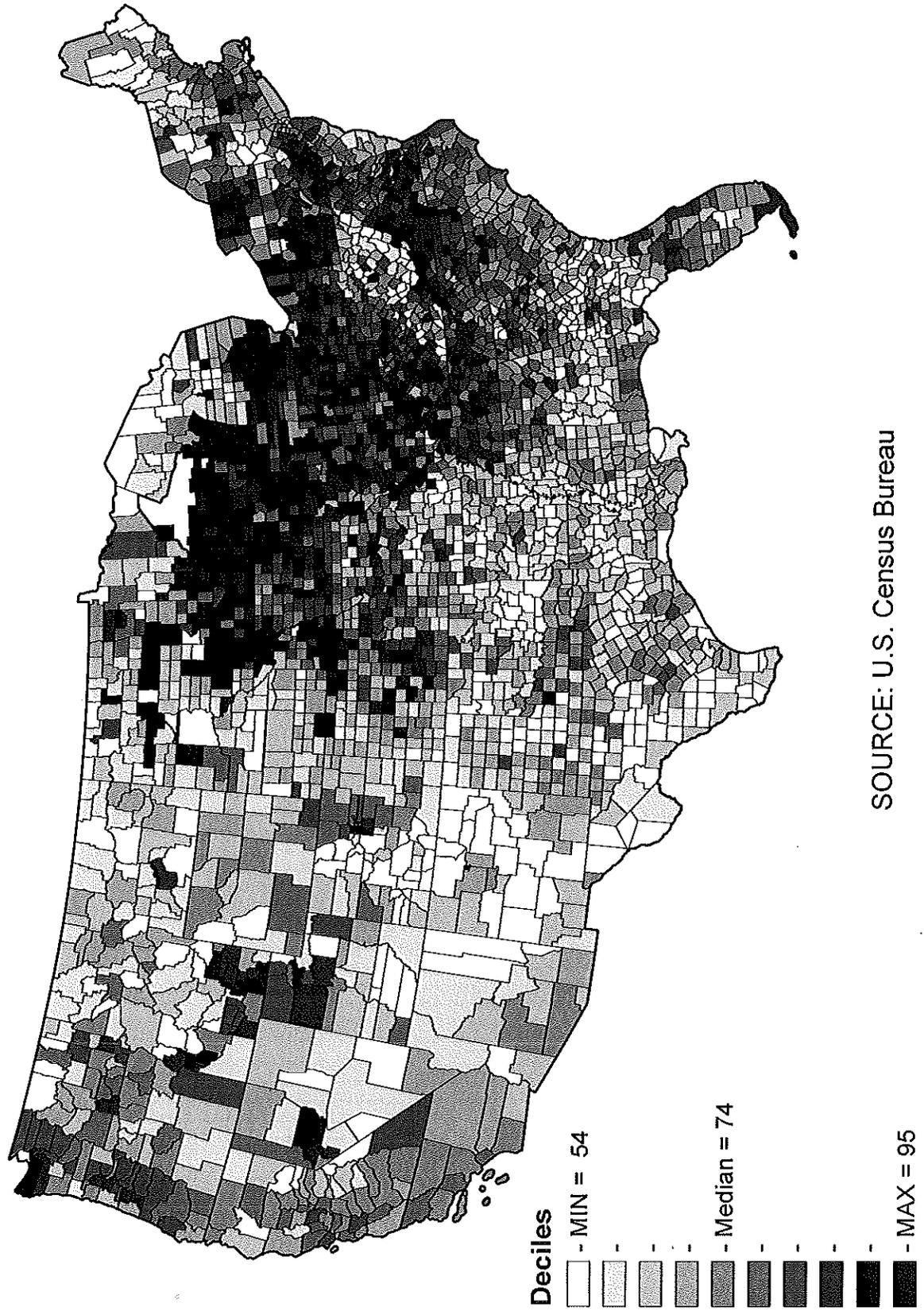
+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 3. Predicting Republican Gains by County Characteristics

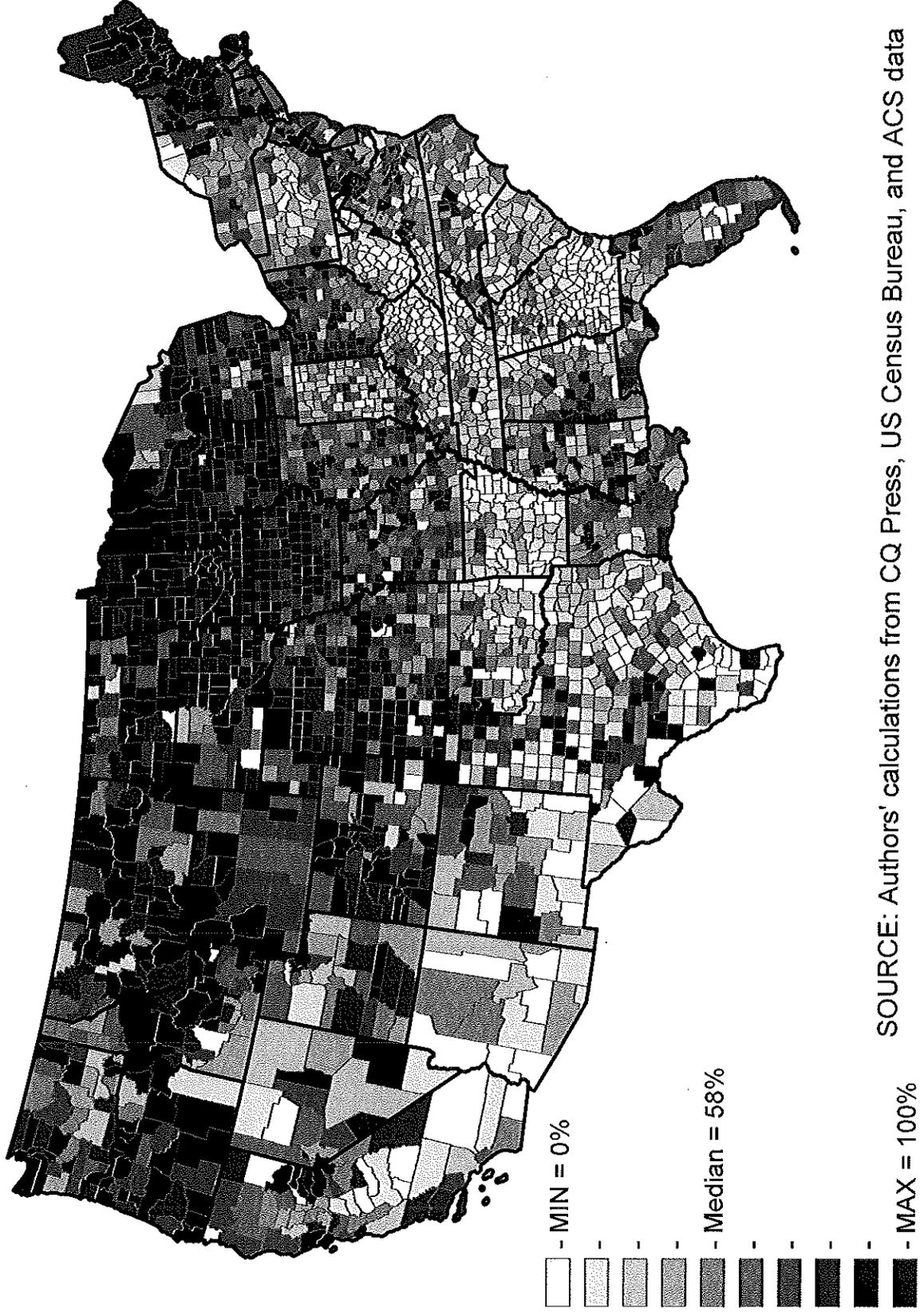
| | % American | | Republican Gains | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | B | SE | B | SE |
| <i>Nationalist Measures</i> | | | | |
| Americans (%) | ---- | ---- | 0.052* | 0.020 |
| 2010 Census mail-in response rate | 0.040** | 0.012 | -0.058*** | 0.014 |
| Mean Turnout (2000, 2004, 2008) | -0.030 | 0.019 | -0.022 | 0.021 |
| Net federal receipts per capita (\$) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Recruitment per 10000 18-45 yr-olds | -0.036+ | 0.021 | -0.095*** | 0.022 |
| <i>Demographic Controls</i> | | | | |
| Blacks (%) | -0.124*** | 0.013 | -0.218*** | 0.012 |
| Hispanics (%) | -0.107*** | 0.012 | -0.306*** | 0.013 |
| Median household income (1000s of \$) | -0.138*** | 0.015 | -0.141*** | 0.017 |
| Democrat's Margin (2008) | -0.043*** | 0.006 | ---- | ---- |
| Population 65 yrs and older (%) | -0.001+ | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| <i>Region and Urbanization</i> | | | | |
| Suburban | -0.154 | 0.353 | -1.685*** | 0.383 |
| Rural | -0.275 | 0.402 | -0.354 | 0.433 |
| South | 6.462*** | 0.966 | 9.252*** | 2.110 |
| Suburban x South | 0.962+ | 0.505 | 3.892*** | 0.548 |
| Rural x South | 1.564** | 0.535 | 3.579*** | 0.583 |
| Constant | 15.122*** | 1.558 | 6.379** | 1.940 |
| Rho, % variance from states | 0.178 | | 0.520 | |
| N | 2915 | | 2915 | |

+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

2010 Census Mail-in Response Rate

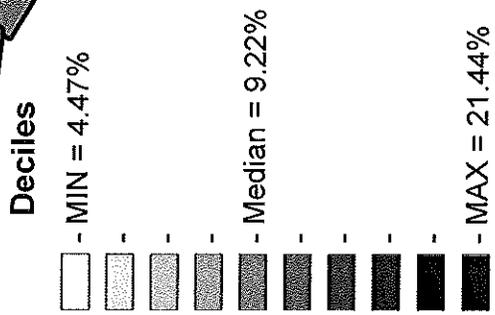
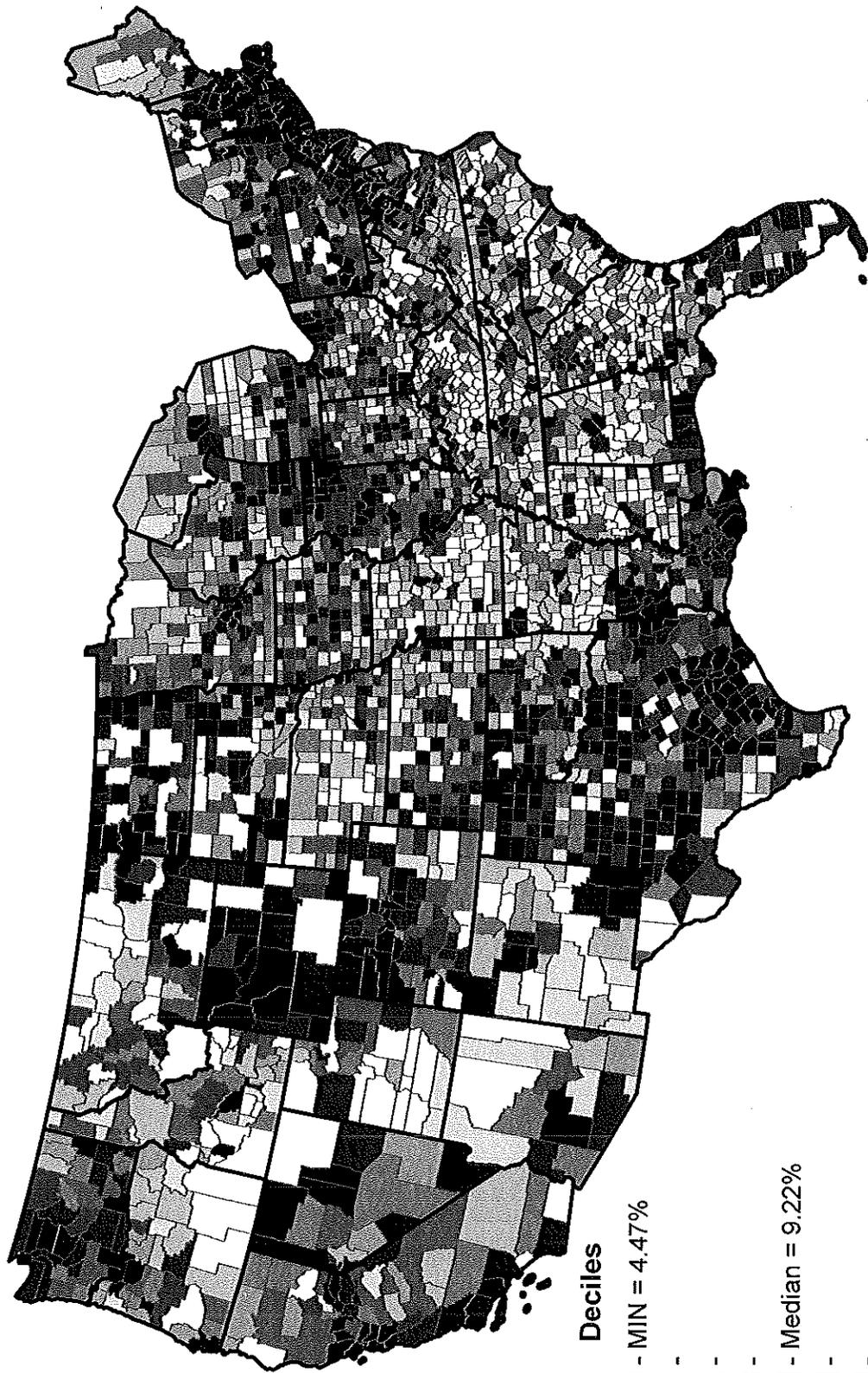


Average Turnout in Presidential Elections (2000, 2004, 2008)



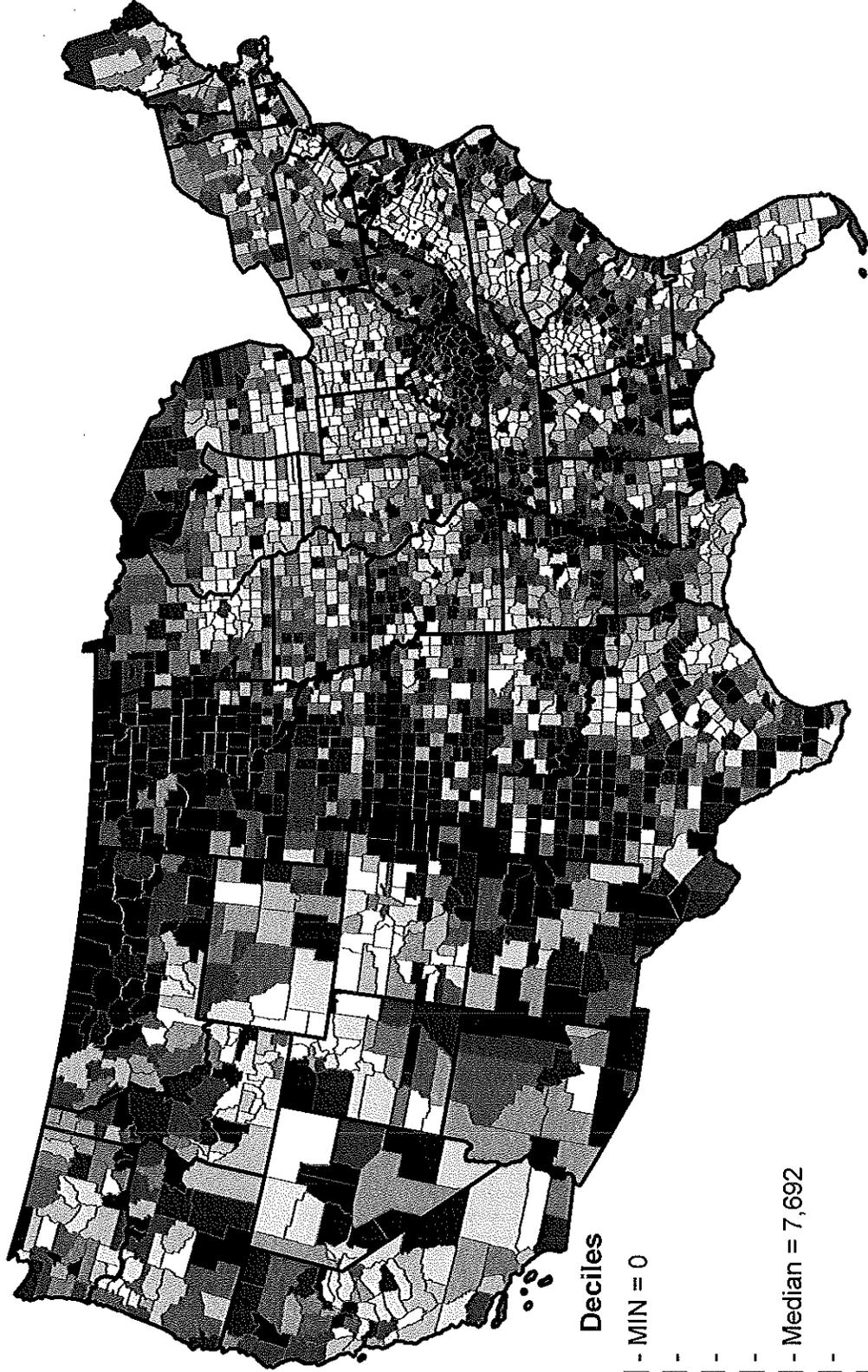
SOURCE: Authors' calculations from CQ Press, US Census Bureau, and ACS data

Federal Income Tax Liability as % of Gross Income (FY 2008)

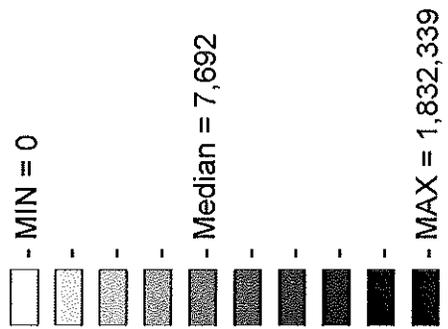


SOURCE: IRS data (2008)

Federal Government Expenditures per capita (FY 2008)

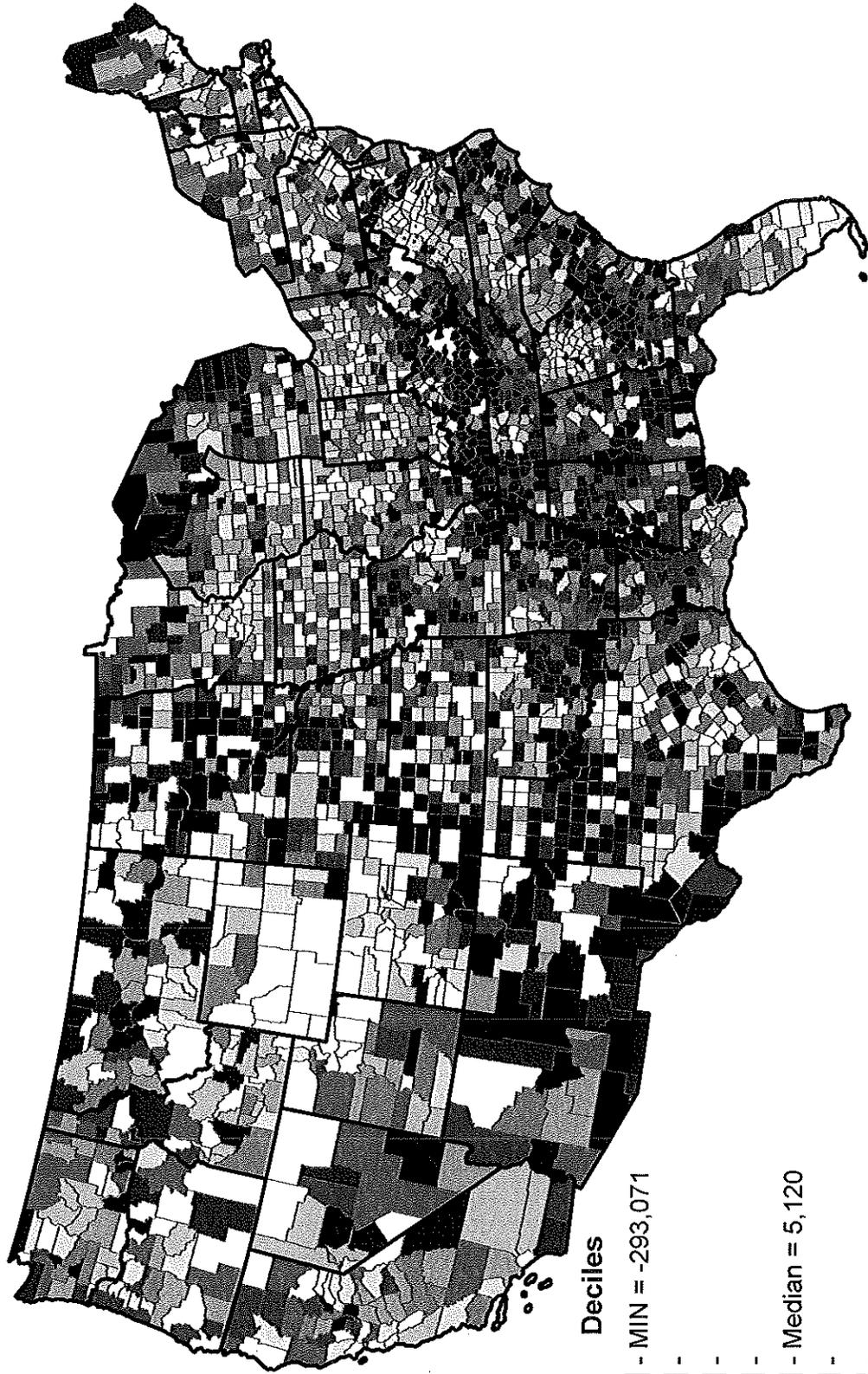


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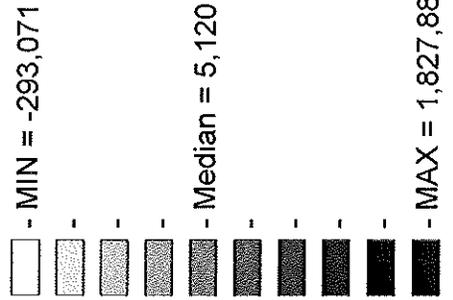


SOURCE: Authors' calculations from CFFR and US Census Bureau data (2008)

Net Federal Dollars per capita (FY 2008)

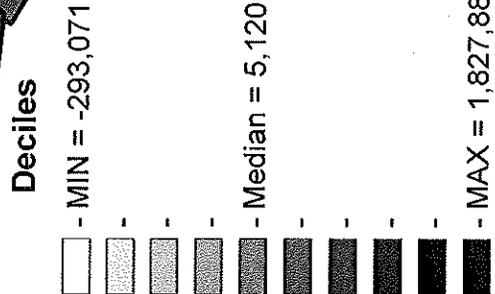
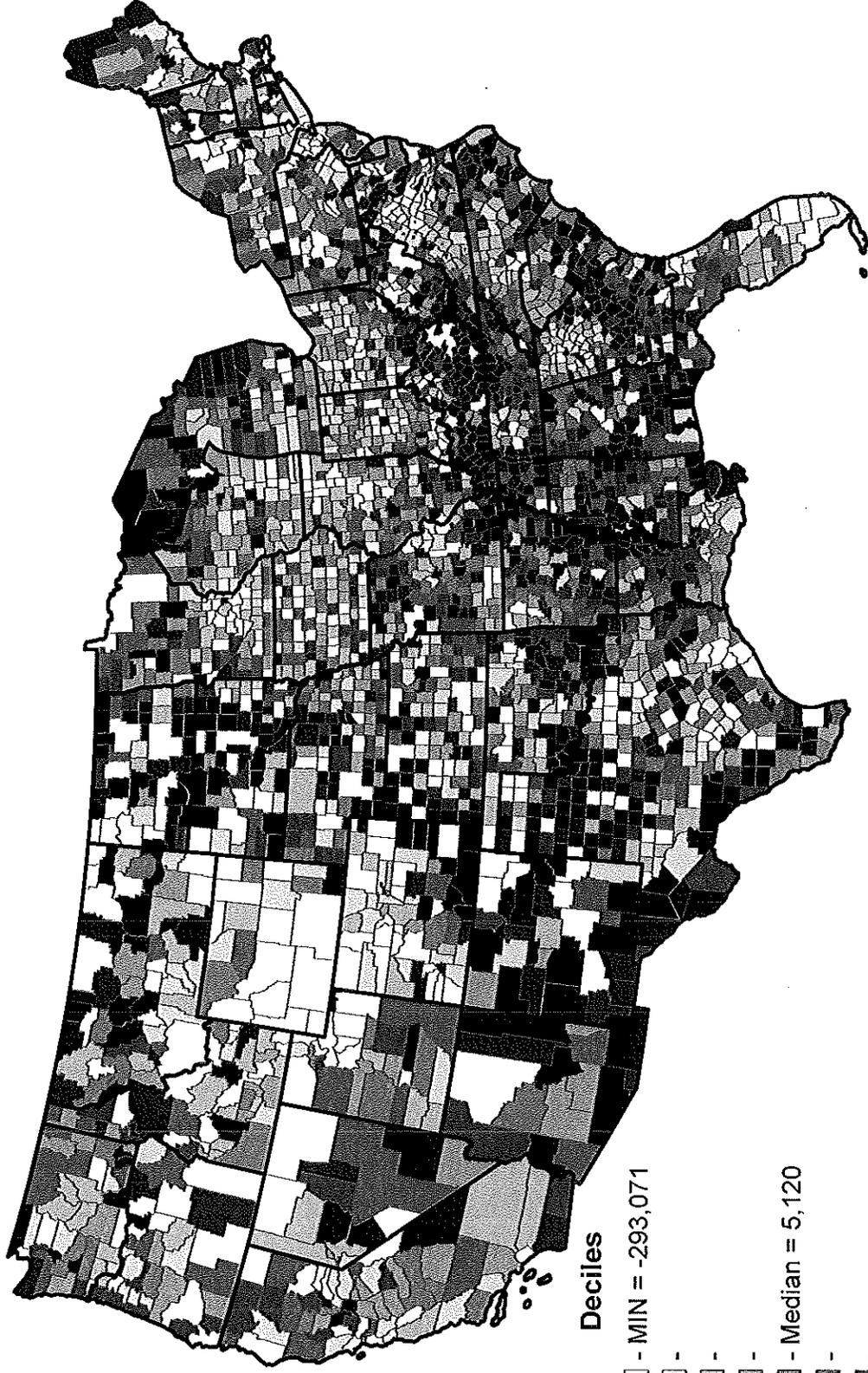


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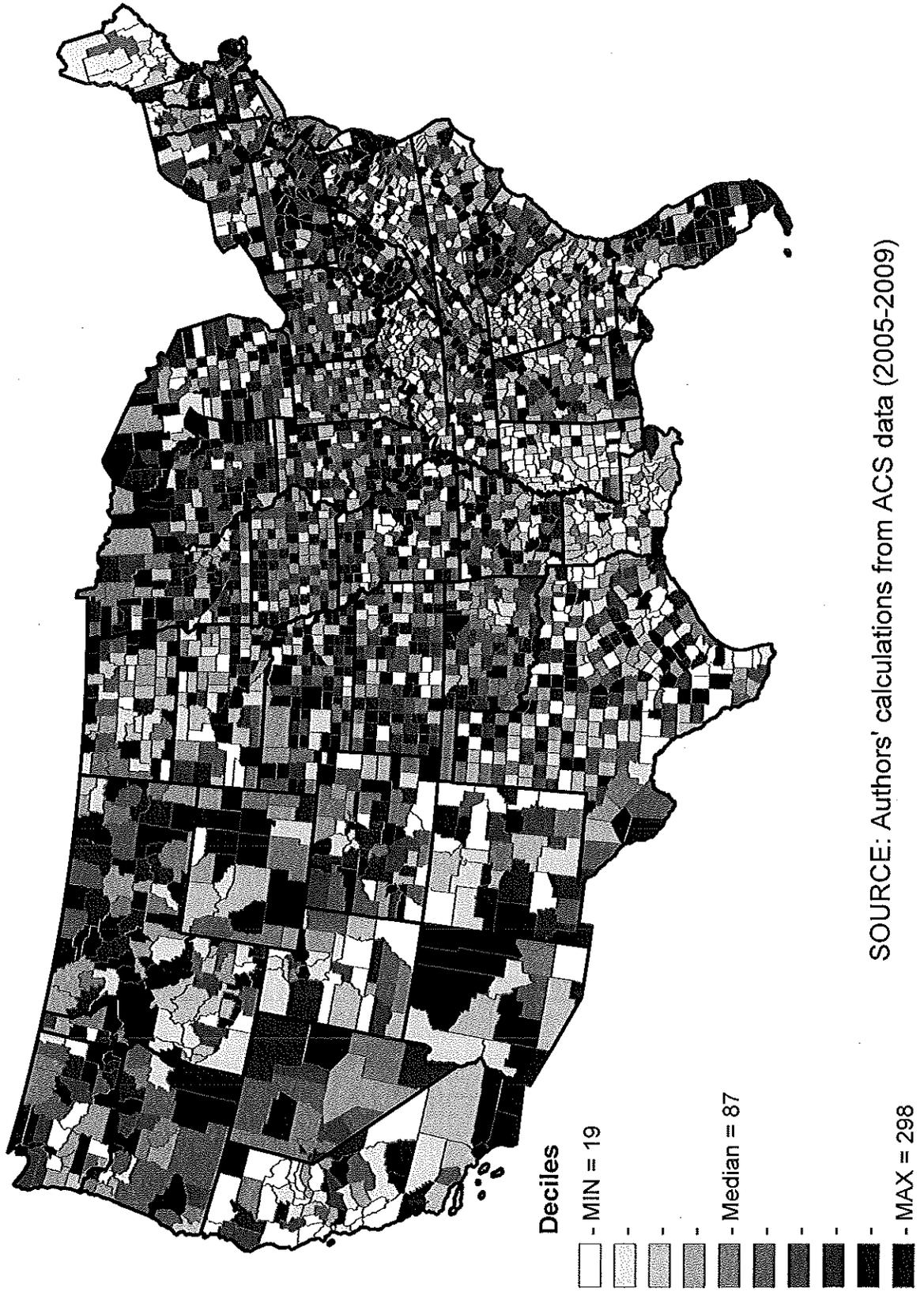
SOURCE: IRS and CFFR data (2008)

Net Federal Dollars per capita (FY 2008)



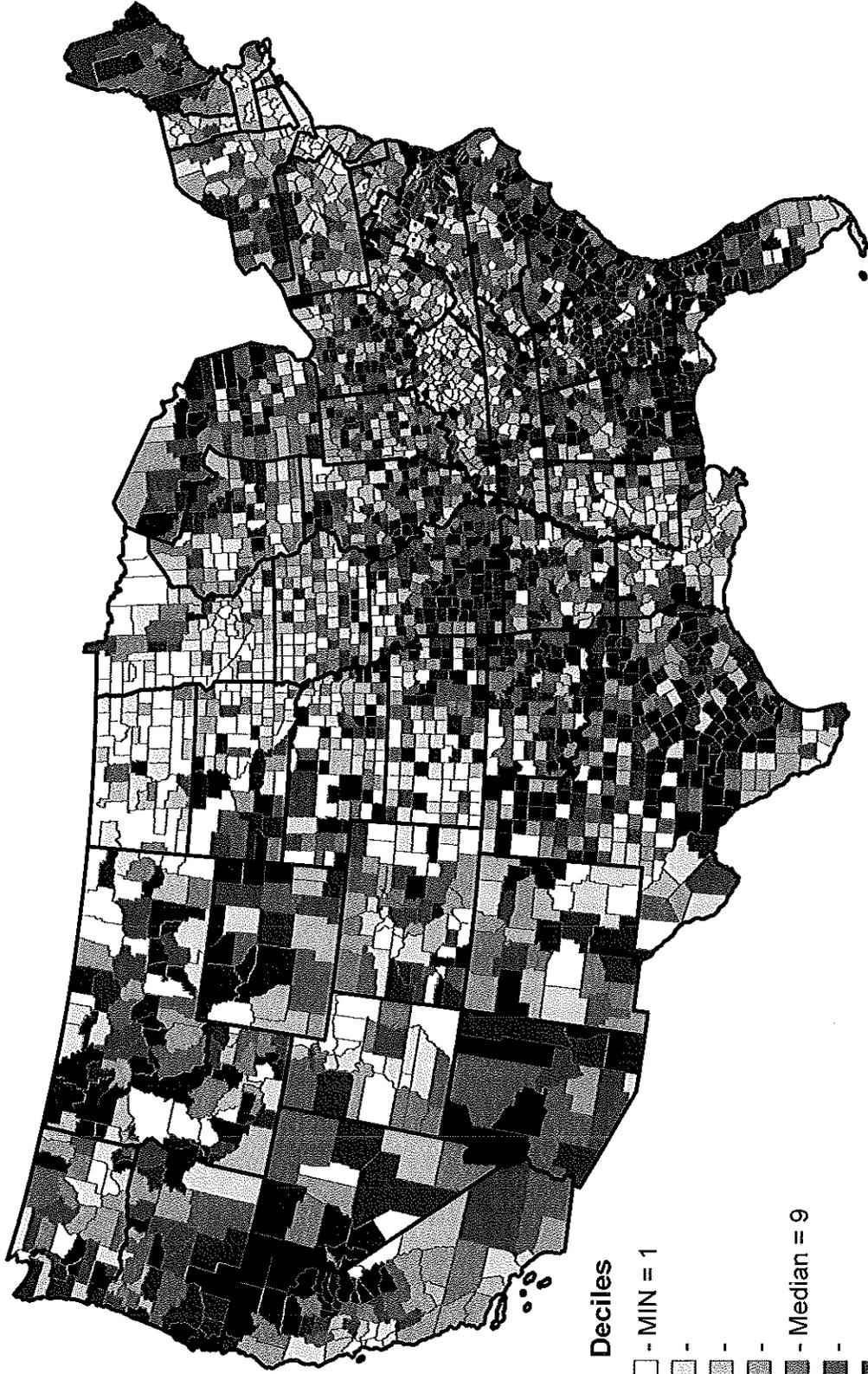
SOURCE: IRS and CFFR data (2008)

Veterans per 1,000 Residents



SOURCE: Authors' calculations from ACS data (2005-2009)

Average Annual Army Recruitment per 10,000 Residents, ages 18-45



Deciles

- MIN = 1

-

-

-

-

- Median = 9

-

-

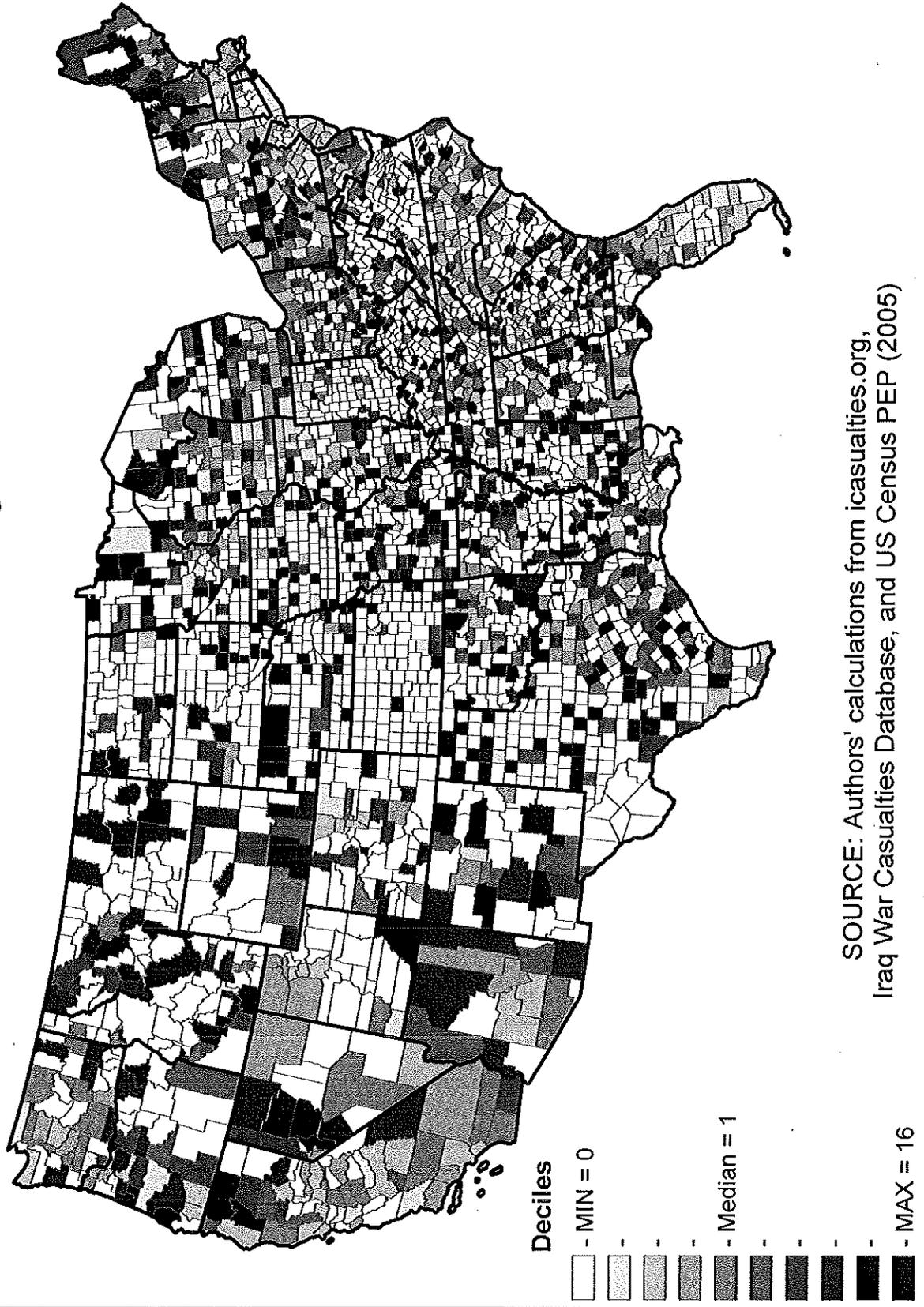
-

-

- Max = 48

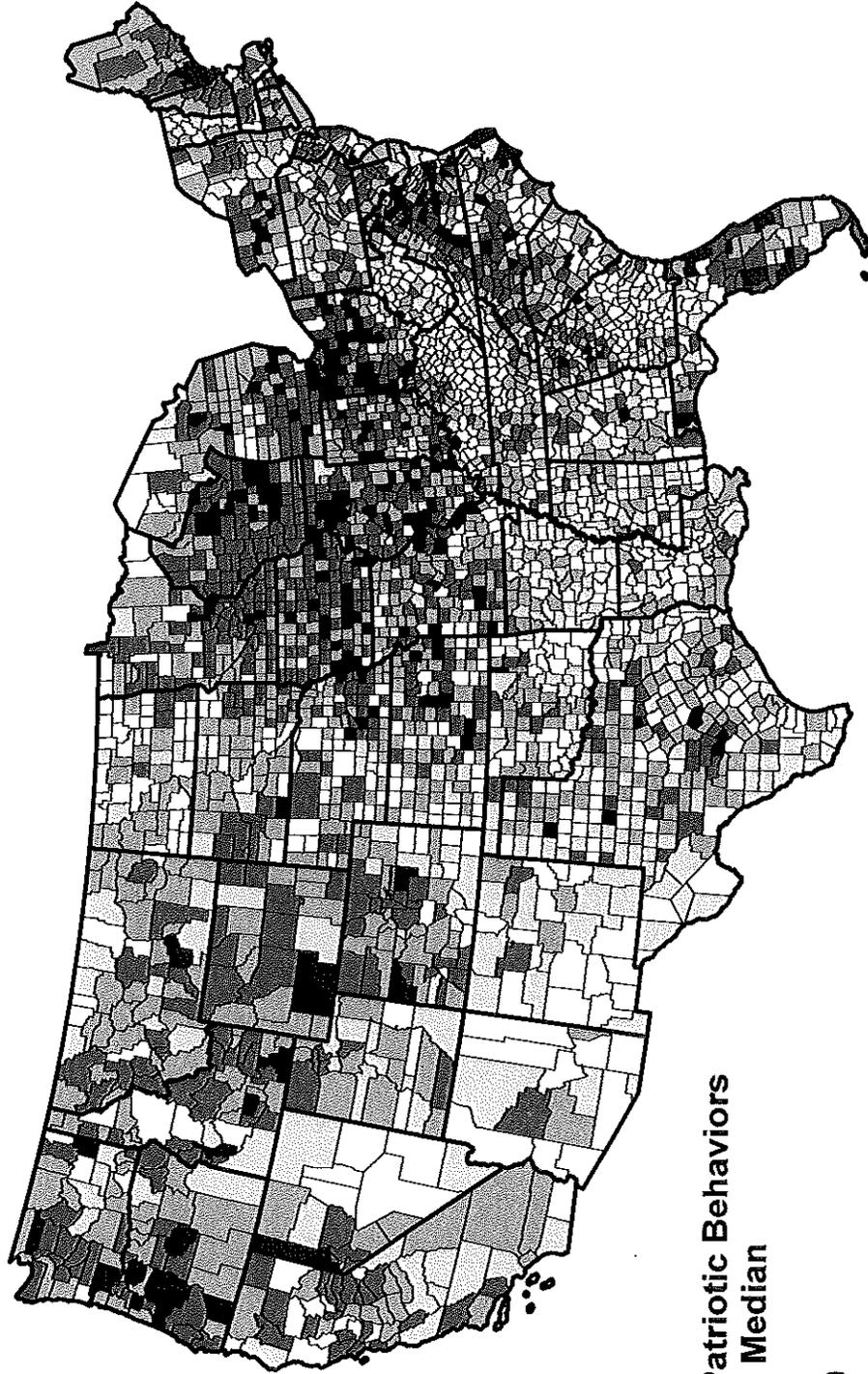
SOURCE: Authors' calculations from US Army Accessions
Command data (2009-'11) and US Census (2010)

Fatalities in Iraq and Afghanistan per 10,000 Residents, ages 18-45



SOURCE: Authors' calculations from icasualties.org,
Iraq War Casualties Database, and US Census PEP (2005)

Countries by Nationalist Type

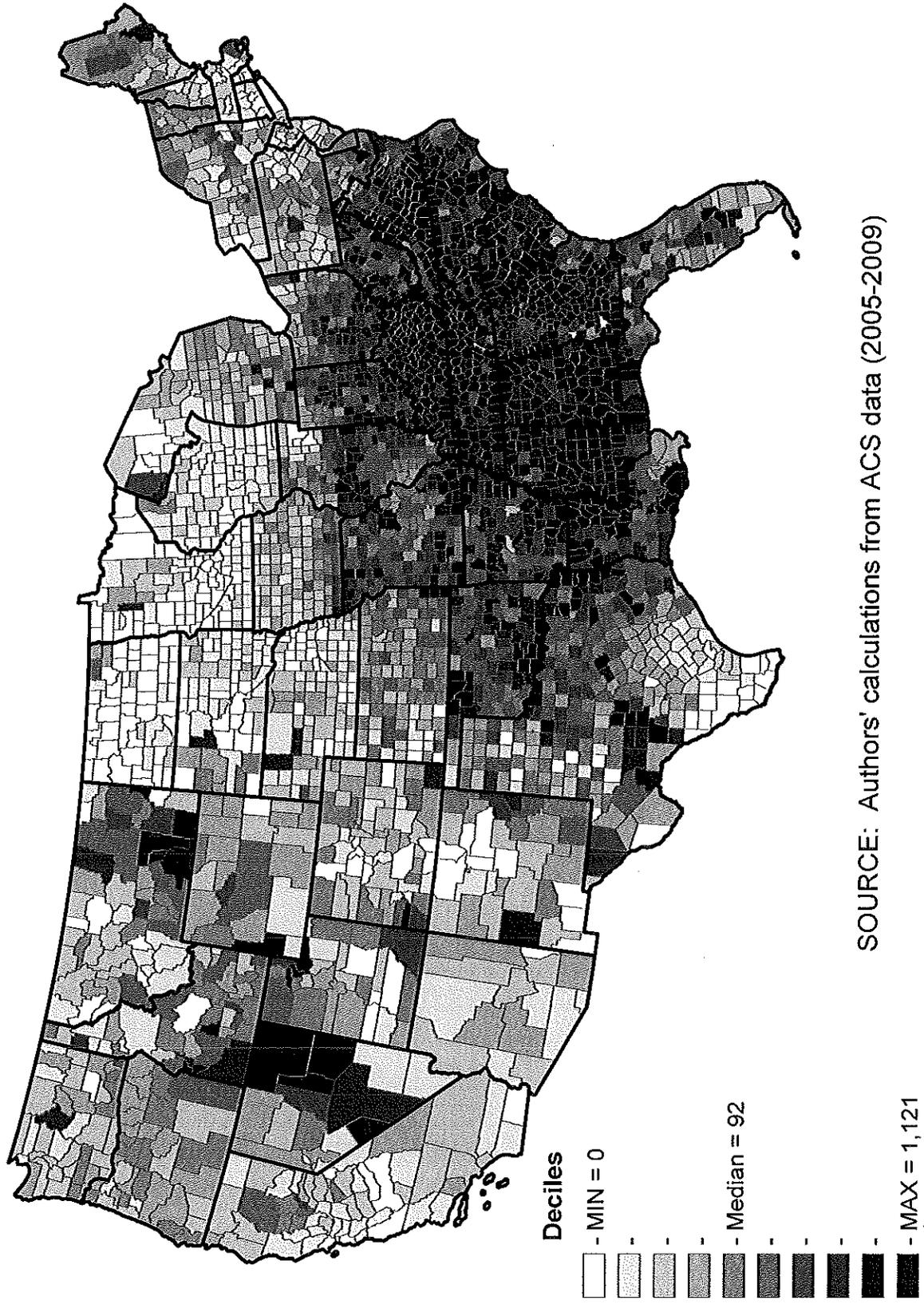


Total Patriotic Behaviors
above Median

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

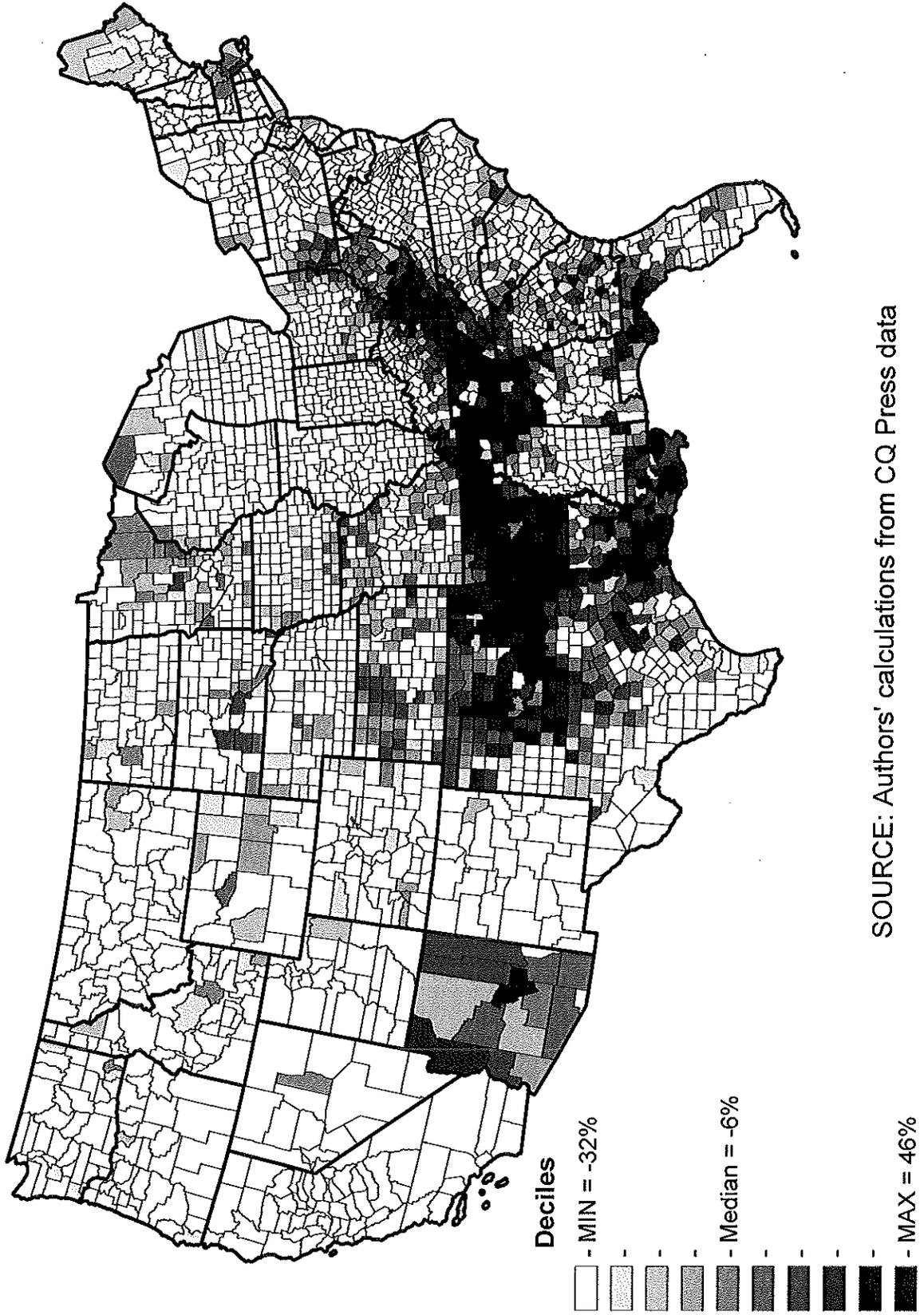
SOURCE: Authors' calculations

Americans per 1,000 White Residents



SOURCE: Authors' calculations from ACS data (2005-2009)

Relative Performance of Republican Presidential Candidate (2004 - 2008)



SOURCE: Authors' calculations from CQ Press data