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THE URBAN-RURAL VOTING DIVIDE IN SWEDEN:

A Quantitative Analysis

Jack Andersson Stridh

Uppsats/Examensarbete:	15 hp
Program:	Statsvetarprogrammet
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Handledare:	Elena Leuschner

Abstract

This essay seeks to analyze urban-rural differences in voting behavior in Sweden by measuring urban-rural differences in social attitudes around gender and immigration, and urban-rural differences in party choice. Previous studies have found that demographic and economic differences between regions explain a large part of the urban-rural voting gap, but a significant part still remains unexplained. I argue that some part of the remaining voting gap is caused by differences in social attitudes, such as attitudes around gender and immigration.

I find that, after controlling for differences in wealth and demographic composition, urban residents tend to hold more socially liberal attitudes, and express greater levels of support for socially liberal parties than rural residents. I conclude that the urbanization level of a person's area of residence has an effect on their social attitudes and political preferences, and that urban-rural voting differences are thus not simply an effect of economic or demographic differences.

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Introduction

The growing political divide between urban and rural areas has been an issue of increasing importance throughout the democratic world during the 21st century. The general trend has seen progressive left-wing parties growing stronger in urban areas and conservative right-wing parties gaining political influence in the countryside. This has caused the differences between urban and rural areas to become increasingly politicized, fostering polarization and division in ways that some observers fear may ultimately be harmful for democracy (see Mettler & Brown, 2022).

Sweden, however, stands out as an exception to this trend. Despite the meteoric rise of the conservative Sweden Democrats, who perform better in rural areas than in the cities, Sweden remains a country with low overall levels of geographic polarization (Erlingsson, Oscarsson & Öhrvall, 2020). Differences in voting behavior can, of course, be observed between areas with differing levels of urbanization, but even here the Swedish case defies the trend, with the center-left Social Democrats performing better in the countryside and the center-right Moderates having disproportionate influence in the major cities.

Despite, or perhaps because of, these extraordinary circumstances, Swedish geographic polarization has remained a relatively unexplored topic in the literature. This study aims to rectify that by analyzing the relationship between urbanization and voting behavior in Sweden, in order to better understand how the Swedish political landscape is affected by varying levels of urbanization throughout the country.

Research problem

With the urban-rural political divide only having emerged as a major issue during the past few decades, the phenomenon remains relatively under-theorized. In the popular discourse, it is often assumed to simply be a consequence of regional differences in demographics. Urban areas, it is argued, tend to be younger, wealthier, more highly educated, more culturally diverse and so on, and this causes them to vote in slightly different ways than rural residents who tend to be older, less wealthy etc.

This no doubt has significant explanatory power, but research from Gimpel et al. (2020b) has shown that a substantial urban-rural gap in voting behavior remains even after all meaningful

demographic differences have been adjusted for. This indicates that demographic differences, while very important, are not sufficient to explain the urban-rural voting gap.

The other most popular explanation of the urban-rural divide is based on economics, with a whole host of literature being written around the theme of rural "forgotten places" or "places that don't matter" lagging behind urban areas in terms of economic development (see Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). Michael Lind (2020), for instance argues that the chief dividing line between cities and rural areas is their differing interests in regard to economic globalization, especially around the policies of trade and immigration.

And at a glance this seems to hold up, with Karakas et al. (2021) showing that residents of urban areas tend to be much more enthusiastic about free trade and large-scale immigration than rural residents. However, Karakas et al. also show that any and all differences in trade policy preference disappear after adjusting for differences in income, along with other demographic variables. This indicates that any differences in economic policy preferences that may exist between urban and rural areas are mainly a question of differences in income, rather than the kind of qualitative differences in economic interests that proponents of the "forgotten places"-narrative tend to propose.

This, then, is the crux of the issue: after considering the two most commonly cited explanations for the urban-rural political divide, a significant part of the voting gap still remains unexplained.

In this paper, I argue that this remaining urban-rural voting gap, or at least some significant part of it, can be explained by differences in social attitudes, such as attitudes around gender and immigration, that don't directly correspond to differences in either economic interests or demographic composition. The existence of such an attitude gap has long been observed by sociologists, but its' causes are not entirely clear, and it has not been adequately integrated into the models used to predict voting behavior.

The central contribution of this essay, then, will be an attempt to analyze and explain the Swedish urban-rural divide in voting behavior through the lens of differences in social attitudes. This will be done using data from the 2019 national SOM-survey, which features individual-level data about the place of residence, social attitudes, and party choice of a representative sample of the Swedish population.

Using this dataset, I perform a series of regression analyses using the urbanization level of survey respondents as my independent variable, and their views on social issues as well as their choice of political party as my dependent variables. I also introduce control variables to account for regional differences in wealth and demographic composition.

My analysis finds that urban residents tend to be significantly more socially liberal than rural residents on each of the measured social issues, both before and after the application of control variables. Correspondingly, I also find that urban voters tend to express higher levels of support for political parties considered to be socially liberal, and lower levels of support for parties considered to be socially conservative. The one notable exception to this is the conservative Moderate Party, which remains far more popular among urban voters than rural voters, even after accounting for economic and demographic differences.

This seems to imply, as I predicted, that the urbanization level of a person's area of residence has an effect on their social attitudes and political preferences, and that urban-rural voting differences are thus not simply an effect of economic or demographic differences. The unexpected result for the conservative Moderate Party also suggests that urbanization may affect other ideological dimensions that I fail to capture.

Disposition

This paper proceeds as follows: First, I review the previous literature around urban-rural political polarization and urban-rural differences in social values and present my argument as to why differences in social attitudes are relevant for understanding urban-rural polarization in terms of party choice. I then describe my research design, explaining and operationalizing my choice of variables. After that, I present some descriptive statistics and show my results, followed by a few robustness tests. Finally, I discuss the implications of my findings in the Discussion section, followed by a short conclusion.

Literature Review & Argument

Demographics

Most of the current literature around voting behavior uses models developed in the rational choice tradition. This framework assumes voters to be rational, utility-maximizing actors who base their choice of party on a calculation of which election outcome might benefit them the most. Obviously, the number of factors that goes into the calculation of any given voter is incalculably large, but by grouping voters into categories according to their individual characteristics it is possible to make predictions about the voting behavior of any given individual (Kim & Zilinsky, 2022).

This also allows for predictions about voting behavior of groups (such as "rural residents" and "urban residents"), given that you have knowledge of the demographic composition of those groups. This approach is used by many observers to explain the urban-rural voting gap (Gimpel et al., 2020a). Urban areas, it is argued, are on average younger, more highly educated, wealthier and more multicultural than rural areas, and these group-level differences in demographics explain their diverging voting patterns.

This is undoubtedly true to a certain extent, and definitely explains some part of the urban-rural voting gap. However, the research of Gimpel et al. (2020b) shows that a significant gap in voting behavior still remains between urban and rural voters in the United States after all relevant demographic variables have been controlled for. If these findings translate to the Swedish context, it indicates that something more than differences in demographic composition will be necessary to explain Swedish urban-rural voting dynamics.

Economic interests

Another school of thought, advocated for by scholars such as Michael Lind (2020), holds that the primary relevant dividing line between urban and rural areas is one of differing economic interests. Urban economies tend to revolve around information-heavy and human capital-intensive service industries, whereas rural economies tend to revolve around small businesses and lower-skill industries, such as manufacturing. This, it is argued, leads to a significant divergence in economic interests, especially around issues related to globalization such as trade and immigration. Since free trade primarily implies greater competition with low-wage

economies such as China, and since high levels of immigration tends to increase the pool of low-skill labor, free trade and immigration both expose rural economies to significant levels of competition, while driving down prices for urban economies by complementing their inputs in the production process.

This analysis tracks with the Heckscher-Ohlin model of international trade, which predicts that those in possession of a country's most abundant factor of production (which in the Swedish case would be high-skill service industries) stand to benefit more from international competition than those in possession of the country's scarce factors (in the Swedish case: low-skill manufacturing) (Karakas et al, 2021). While economists generally agree that both of the discussed policies are beneficial for the economy as a whole over the long term, the inequality in the distribution of those benefits over the short term could plausibly contribute to urban-rural political polarization.

However, this approach does not seem to stand up particularly well to empirical scrutiny. Trujillo & Crowley (2022) find that "materialistic concerns" around resources and wealth don't actually predict any changes in voting behavior among rural residents, whereas what they call "symbolic concerns" concerning values and ways of life, does.

Similarly, Karakas et al. (2021) find that, while urban residents do tend to favor both free trade and free immigration to a higher degree than rural residents, all policy preferences around trade become statistically insignificant after controlling for differences in wealth and demographics. Although notably, preferences around immigration remain significant. The authors conclude that:

"*This suggests that immigration attitudes affect voting behavior through channels involving identity-driven factors that are different from the channels through which more traditional electoral issues, such as trade barriers, work"* (Karakas et al, 2021).

This all seems to suggest that any meaningful differences in economic policy preference that might exist between urban and rural areas can be explained by differences in income and demographics rather than some sort of qualitative divergence of economic interests.

The fact that both immigration and "symbolic concerns" remain polarizing between urban and rural areas even after apllying control variables, whereas material concerns around economic policy seemingly do not, seems to suggest that a significant part of the contemporary urban-

rural divide has to be explained by "identity-driven" differences in social attitudes that don't directly correspond to differences in either economic interests or group composition.

Social attitudes

The observation that identity-based differences seem to explain some part of the divergence in voting behavior between urban and rural voters implies that there is something about the experience of urban life that is qualitatively different from rural life in such a way that causes the emergence of meaningful differences in social attitudes. Sociologists have long agreed that such a gap in values exists, but its' cause is not entirely clear (Fischer, 1982).

Gimpel et al. (2020) point to the so-called "urban alienation theory", which posits that the population density of urban areas causes a breakdown of social ties, leading to individuals becoming socially isolated. This sense of isolation, it is argued, weakens the impact of moral norms, and creates a condition of *anomie* in which traditional values and ways of life are uprooted. All of this then causes urban residents to reject traditional morality and become more socially liberal (Fischer, 1982).

In this form, this theory is not widely believed among sociologists, as empirical studies have demonstrated that urban residents do not, in fact, have fewer social contacts than residents of rural areas (Lee, 1984), nor do they report stronger subjective feelings of isolation or alienation (Fischer, 1982). However, there is some reason to believe that a modified version of this framework might have significant explanatory power.

Because although urban residents on the individual level are no more socially isolated than their rural equivalents, there is reason to believe that communal life, on the macro level, does in fact weaken as population density increases. Studies have repeatedly found that social trust is lower in cities than in rural ares (see Pew, 2007. Eriksson, Hochwälder & Sällström, 2011. Sørensen, 2012). Residents of urban areas are also less willing to interact with strangers (Fischer, 1982) and less likely to know, and trust, their neighbors (Pew, 2018).

Interestingly, studies have also found that trust in government institutions tends to be higher in urban areas (see Mitsch, Lee & Morrow, 2021. Stein, Buck & Bjørnå, 2019), perhaps implying that trust in other individuals is gradually replaced by trust in large-scale impersonal institutions as the degree of urbanization increases.

In rural areas, on the other hand, community life is generally viewed to be stronger, with a more distinct communal "character" (Buttel & Flinn, 1975). Traditional beliefs and ways of

life that accentuate communal living are also more likely to be upheld over long periods of time (Fischer, 1982). As Gimpel et al. (2020b) conclude: “Urban sociologists have consistently observed that group life is uniquely robust at the smaller scales found in rural settings”.

It would seem, then, that urbanization does not cause subjective alienation or isolation of individuals, but rather a shift to a qualitatively different kind of community in which communal values and trust in others are considered less important.

One explanation of this phenomenon can be found in the theory of social change presented by Patricia Greenfield (2018), who uses empirical insights from the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology to explain how social values change as societies become more urban.

Drawing upon the tradition of Ferdinand Tönnies (1887/1957) and the work of Robert Redfield (1941) she proposes a model of social change in which urbanization transforms societies from small-scale, traditional “gemeinschaft” societies into large-scale, impersonal “gesellschaft” societies. The terms “gemeinschaft” and “gesellschaft” are taken from Tönnies (1887/1957) and are intended as ideal types in the Weberian sense (Bell, 1998).

In a rural “gemeinschaft” society, the small scale and high level of homogeneity make it possible to govern communal relations primarily through interpersonal relationships, face-to-face interaction and familial and neighborly ties. In such an environment communitarian, family- and community-centered values emerge in order to keep the community together and generate social trust (Greenfield, 2016).

In an urban “gesellschaft” society, on the other hand, the sheer scale, density and diversity of the population makes these interpersonal mechanisms unworkable. Instead, communal life is organized through impersonal institutions such as governments or the market, causing societies to become increasingly impersonal in nature, and causing voluntary relationships to grow in importance relative to familial ones. Under these conditions, communitarian values decrease in importance, and societies instead tend toward individualism and self-expression (Greenfield, 2018).

Although the industrial revolution and the advent of the modern state shifted all parts of society in a *gesellschaft* direction, Greenfield (2018) argues that gemeinschaft and gesellschaft environments can and do coexist within modern societies, with individualistic

gesellschaft tendencies becoming stronger in urban areas and communitarian gemeinschaft values remaining stronger in the countryside. This is supported by the anthropological work of Robert Redfield (1941) whose ethnographic study of the Yucatan peninsula found that notable differences in values and community life could be observed between settlements of varying size even within the same proximate geographic area.

Here one can easily draw parallels to Modernization theory, which holds that political development and economic growth causes societies to increasingly prioritize "emancipatory values" such as equality, individual autonomy, and self-actualization over traditional, communitarian values. To quote Ingelhart and Welzel (2005): "[modernization] brings cultural changes that make individual autonomy, gender equality, and democracy increasingly likely, giving rise to a new type of society that promotes human emancipation on many fronts".

Modernization theory is generally applied on the scale of whole societies rather than individual parts of it, but Luca et al. (2022) theorize that the modernization process unfolds more rapidly in urban areas. From within the framework of Greenfield (2018), this can be understood as being facilitated by the gesellschaft-like nature of these cities, where the impersonal nature of communal relations and weaker attachments to traditional ways of life allows for more economic dynamism and a more rapid spread of ideas.

Argument & hypothesis

This all leads me to the conclusion that many of the trends noted by the "urban alienation"-theorists can in fact be explained by this process of social change, which also seems like a likely candidate for explaining the urban-rural gap in values, and thus also the urban-rural gap in voting behavior.

To summarize, the sheer scale of the population in urban areas makes it more difficult to govern social relations through the communitarian values associated with traditional morality, causing these values and expectations to break down. Instead, they are replaced with an ethic of individual autonomy and emancipation through the modernization process, causing a rise of values such as gender equality and multiculturalism.

In rural areas, this process takes place either slower or not at all, eventually causing a notable urban-rural divergence in values around issues such as immigration, national identity and

gender. In a democratic society, this demographic divergence in values inevitably becomes politicized as political factions adopt these values to differing extents in their attempts to appeal to various demographic groups. Through this process, the divide in values eventually becomes a partisan divide, setting the stage for the urban-rural political divide seen throughout the democratic world today.

My hypothesis is thus as follows: As the degree of urbanization increases, voters will become more socially liberal and thus show greater levels of support for socially liberal parties.

Research design

In order to test my hypothesis, I will perform a series of multivariate regression analyses using data from the 2019 National SOM-survey. The data was gathered from a randomized sample of 10 068 Swedish residents between the ages of 16-85 through six parallel surveys conducted between September-December 2019 (SOM, 2020). I choose to use data from the year 2019 because it was the last year where data is available that was not affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The use of this individual-level data makes it possible to analyze relationships between variables with a lower risk of spurious correlations as compared to, say municipal- or district-level data.

Independent variable

My independent variable will be the urbanization-level of survey respondents. This will be operationalized using question 156 from the SOM dataset, which asks respondents to rank their current place of residence on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most urban and 7 being the most rural. For the purposes of this study this scale will be reversed, so that a higher number means a higher degree of urbanization. I will also change the starting point to 0 rather than 1. The scale used in this analysis thus looks as follows:

0. Pure Countryside
1. Smaller settlement (Swedish: “tätort”)
2. Larger settlement (Swedish: “tätort”)
3. City: outer area/suburb
4. City: center
5. Major city: outer area/Suburb
6. Major City: center

Dependent variables

Since my hypothesis predicts that urbanization affects both social attitudes and party choice, both of these variables will need to be measured. This analysis will thus utilize two separate dependent variables.

Social attitudes

Social attitudes will be operationalized using the level of support shown by survey respondents for three of the proposals from question 49 in the SOM dataset, where respondents were asked to rate a number of political proposals on a scale from 1 to 5, with a 1 meaning "very good proposal" a 5 meaning "very bad proposal". For the purposes of this analysis this scale will be reversed, so that a higher number means greater levels of support for the proposal. I have chosen the following three proposals to be used in this analysis:

1. **Proposal 49k – *"Accept more refugees in Sweden*"**

   Proposal 49k measures support for accepting more refugees into Sweden, which I use as a proxy for measuring the cosmopolitanism/nationalism of respondents, which is repeatedly mentioned in the literature as an important dividing line between social liberalism and social conservatism.

2. ***2.*** **Proposal 49ab – *"Implement a third legal gender"***

   This refers to a proposed law that would allow Swedish residents to be legally recognized as non-binary rather than as men or women. This is quite a specific policy proposal, but I use it as a proxy to measure the liberalism/conservatism of respondents on issues around gender and the gender binary, which I judge to be an important dividing line between social liberals and social conservatives in the contemporary discourse.

3. ***3.*** **Proposal 49an – "*Invest in a society with greater gender equality"***

   This proposal straightforwardly measures support for gender equality, which I deem to be a strong indicator of social liberalism/conservatism.

The fact that the 2019 National SOM survey only asks about concrete policy proposals rather than directly asking about social attitudes is a limitation in my approach. These three chosen proposals are certainly imperfect measurements of what I am aiming to study, but given the limitations of the used dataset, they will have to do. It is also worth mentioning that the used dataset lacks any variables measuring attitudes around issues such as the rights of sexual

minorities or the value of the family unit, or many other issues that are important to the liberal/conservative divide.

Party choice

Party choice will be operationalized using question 37a from the 2019 SOM dataset, in which respondents were asked "Which party do you like the best today?", with the eight parties represented in the Swedish Riksdag given as possible options, as well as a blank ninth option where respondents could write the name of any party not currently represented in the Riksdag. For the purposes of this analysis, any respondents who chose this latter option will be excluded from the dataset, as none of these extraparliamentary parties have enough supporters to allow for statistically significant trends to be identified. Respondents who are not Swedish citizens were also excluded from the dataset, as only citizens are allowed to vote in parliamentary elections.

Since each respondent only picks one party, each party will necessarily be operationalized as a dummy variable. Each party will be made into a separate variable, where those respondents who picked the party as their favorite are assigned the value 1, and those who did not are assigned the value 0. Eight separate regression analyses will then be performed, one for each party, to see how the level of support for each of the parties correlates with urbanization.

As a consequence of this approach, the sample size varies quite drastically between the parties, due to differing levels of support. For example, the number of respondents who picked the Social Democrats as their favorite party (N = 2363) is more than five times larger than the number who picked the Liberal Party (N = 424).

If my hypothesis holds, urban respondents should show greater levels of support for socially liberal parties and lower levels of support for socially conservative parties as compared with rural respondents. To make these predictions more precise, the social liberalism/conservatism of the various Swedish political parties can be quantified using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al, 2019), in which experts were asked to quantify the positions held by Swedish political parties on a number of issues on a scale from 1 to 10. By combining the scores given to the various parties on support for multiculturalism as well as progressivism on questions of "social lifestyle" (with the examples given being gender roles and rights for

sexual minorities), we can derive a "social liberalism score" that can be used to make concrete predictions.

The table below features all of the parties in the Swedish Riksdag ranked from most to least socially liberal using this method (lower score = more socially liberal). If my hypothesis proves to be correct, urbanization should correlate with support for the parties in something approximating this order, with urbanization having the strongest positive correlation with support for the Green Party (MP) and the strongest negative correlation with support for the Sweden Democrats (SD)

Party:	**Multiculturalism**	**Social Lifestyle**	**Total**
Green Party (MP)	0,882353	0,411765	1,294118
Left Party (V)	1,05882	0,411765	1,470585
Center Party (C)	2,47059	0,764706	3,235296
Liberal Party (L)	4,47059	1	5,47059
Social Democrats (S)	5,05882	1,70588	6,7647
Moderate Party (M)	6,82353	2,8125	9,63603
Christian Democrats (KD)	7,17647	5,11765	12,29412
Sweden Democrats (SD)	9,76471	7,125	16,88971

Table 1. Swedish parties scored according to a social liberalism score using data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019).

Control variables

In order to control for differences in group composition between different regions, the following control variables will be introduced into my regression models:

Gender: Previous studies have consistently shown a gender gap in voting behavior in Swedish elections, with women tending to support left-wing parties to a greater extent than men (Ahlbom, Oskarson & Wägnerud, 2022). In the 2019 SOM dataset, respondents who report living in urban areas are slightly disproportionately female, which could cause spurious correlations if not accounted for.

Age: Studies show that age affects voters' choice of party to a significant extent, with elderly voters consistently showing outsized support for the Social Democrats (S) and disproportionally low levels of support for the Moderate party (M), amongst other trends (Lindskog & Solevid, 2022). Urban areas tend to have a younger demographic profile than rural areas, necessitating the use of age as a control variable.

Household income: Higher levels of income not only directly changes voters' individual economic interests but also their perceived social status, both of which are known to affect party choice. In Sweden, this manifests as a tendency of high-income individuals to show greater support for center-right parties (Statistics Sweden, 2020). Since cities tend to be wealthier than rural areas, household income will need to be adjusted for.

Education level: Education levels have consistently been shown to correlate with party choice in the Swedish context (Oscarsson et al, 2021) and is an especially strong predictor of views on social issues (Kenny & Luca, 2020). Urban residents tend to be more highly educated than rural residents, making education level a key control variable for the purposes of this study.

Dual citizenship: First-generation immigrants in Sweden have repeatedly been shown to differ from native-born swedes in their voting behavior (Cederholm Lager et al., 2022). Urban areas tend to have a higher share of foreign-born residents than rural areas, making this a potentially valuable control variable. Although data about national origin is not available in the SOM dataset, the share of the population who maintain foreign citizenships in addition to their Swedish citizenship can be used as a proxy.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics

Before applying my control variables, I will first perform a series of simple linear regressions between my independent variable (respondent urbanization) and my two dependent variables (social attitudes and party choice) to establish what the relationships between the variables look like.

Social attitudes

As regards social attitudes, I would predict positive correlations between urbanization and support for all three chosen proposals, since they were chosen to measure different aspects of social liberalism.

And the initial regression analyses confirm these predictions, with support for the proposal about taking in more refugees correlating with urbanization with a coefficient of approximately 0,083 (see Figure 1 & Table 2) This indicates that every one-step increase in urbanization on my seven-point scale leads to an increase in support for taking more refugees of 0,083 points on a five-point scale. This means that, on average, the most urban respondents rate the proposal approximately 0,58 points higher on a five-point scale than the most rural respondents.

This is remarkably similar to the proposal about implementing a third gender, which correlates with urbanization with a coefficient of approximately 0,076 (see Figure 2 & Table 2). This indicates that the most urban respondents on average rate this proposal approximately 0,53 points higher than the most rural respondents. The correlation with the proposal about investing in greater gender equality is slightly weaker at approximately 0,04, indicating that this belief is more widely spread in the population and thus less dependent on urbanization levels (see Figure 3 & Table 2). The most urban respondents only rate this proposal around 0,28 points higher than the most rural respondents.

It is worth noting that these results don't necessarily prove anything, since demographic differences have yet to be controlled for. Urban residents are on average younger and more highly educated than rural residents, and both of these variables are known to correlate with social liberalism. To measure the effects of urbanization in and of itself it will be necessary to introduce control variables, which will be done later on.

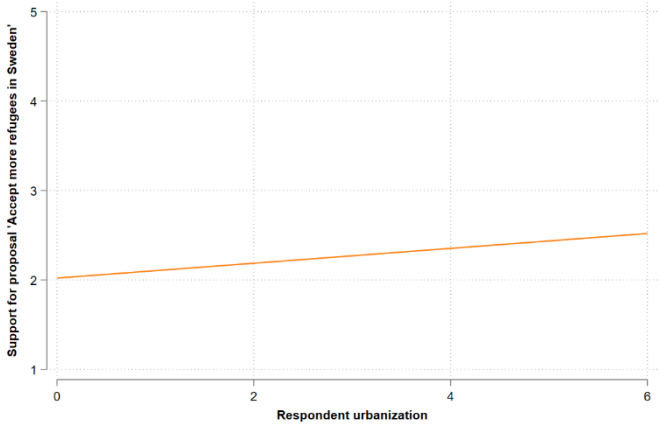

Figure 1a. Correlation between respondent urbanization (x-axis) and support for the proposal "Accept more refugees in Sweden" from the 2019 SOM survey dataset (y-axis)

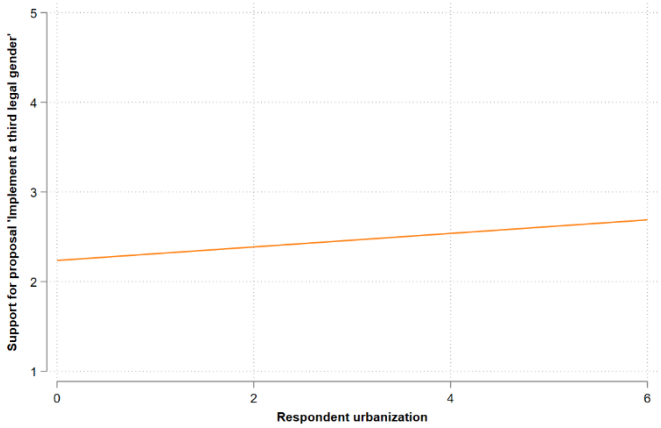

Figure 2. Correlation between respondent urbanization (x-axis) and support for the proposal "Implement a third legal gender" from the 2019 SOM survey dataset (y-axis)

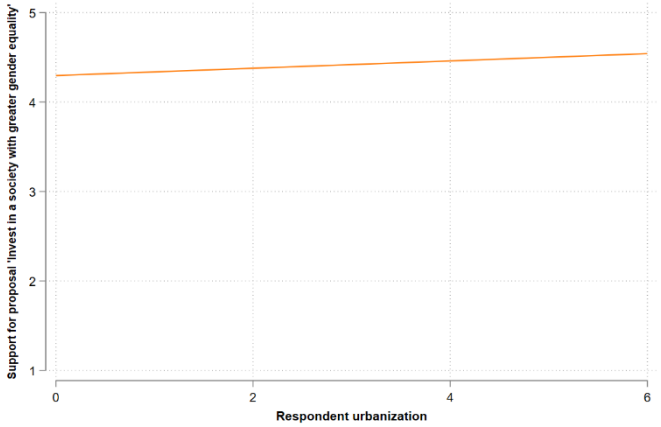

Figure 3. Correlation between respondent urbanization (x-axis) and support for the proposal "Invest in a society with greater gender equality" from the 2019 SOM survey dataset (y-axis)

	(1) More Refugees	(2) Third Gender	(3) Gender Equality
Urbanization	0.0831***	0.0755***	0.0409***
	(0.0116)	(0.0181)	(0.0112)
cons	2.021***	2.236***	4.296***
	(0.0421)	(0.0656)	(0.0403)
N	2594	1204	1296
R^2	0.019	0.014	0.010
adj. R^2	0.019	0.013	0.009

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 2. Regression table showing correlations between respondent urbanization and support for proposals about taking more refugees, implementing a third legal gender, and investing in greater gender equality.

Party choice

When performing the same linear regression analysis on support for each of the eight political parties it is more difficult to make predictions, since the effect of confounding variables such as differences in wealth and education are likely to be very strong. However, my theoretical framework still leads me to predict positive correlations for the most socially liberal parties, such as the Green Party and the Left Party, and negative correlations for the most socially conservative parties, such as the Sweden Democrats and the Christian Democrats.

Differences in wealth, age and education levels are also likely to cause a positive correlation with support for the center-right parties, such as the Moderate Party, who are more popular with the wealthy and the young, and a negative correlation for the Social Democrats, who are more popular with the elderly (Lindskog & Solevid, 2022) and those further down in the income distribution (Statistics Sweden, 2020).

The results of these regressions (shown in Figure 4 and Table 3 below) show clear positive correlations between urbanization and support for the Green Party, the Left Party, and the Liberal Party, all of whom are ranked among the most socially liberal parties, and for the Moderate Party, which is considered the third most socially conservative. The coefficients and other relevant numbers for all of these correlations can be seen in Table 3 below.

Significant negative correlations can be seen for the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats and especially the Sweden Democrats, all of whom are ranked as among the most socially conservative. Once again, the beta coefficients for all of these correlations can be seen in Table 2. Support for the socially liberal Center Party appears to correlate slightly negatively with urbanization, but this result is not statistically significant, as can be seen in Table 3.

The implications of these results for my hypothesis are not entirely clear. The results for the two most socially liberal parties and the two most socially conservative parties correspond perfectly to my hypothesis, but the socially liberal Center Party shows no statistically significant results whatsoever, and the socially conservative Moderate Party shows the strongest positive correlation out of all parties. Although, as mentioned previously, support for the Moderate party is known to correlate with factors such as wealth and age, so I expect this relationship to weaken significantly once control variables are introduced.

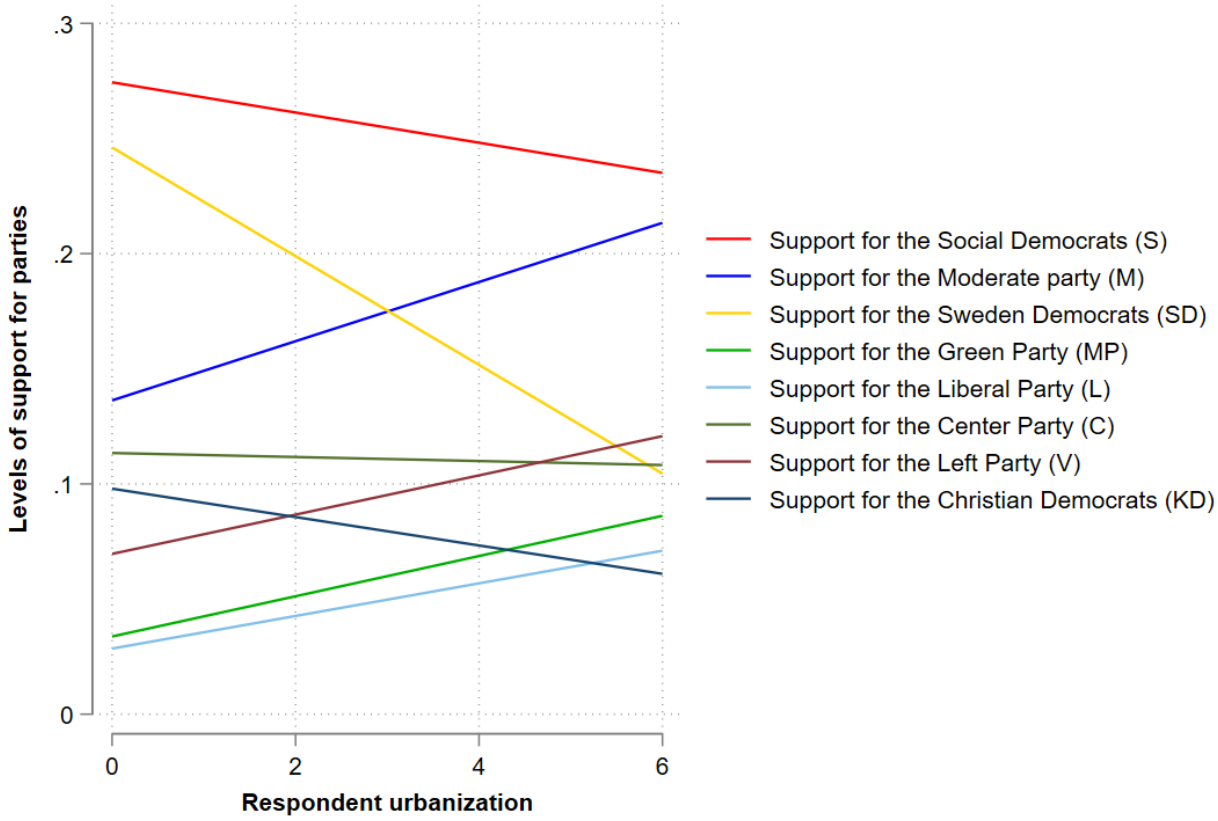

Figure 4. Correlations between respondent urbanization (x-axis) and levels of support for each of the eight Swedish political parties (y-axis) using data from the 2019 SOM survey dataset

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

	(1) Green Party	(2) Left Party	(3) Center Party	(4) Liberal Party	(5) Social Democrats	(6) Moderate Party	(7) Christian Democrats	(8) Sweden Democrats
Urbanization	0.00874***	0.00852***	-0.000870	0.00709***	-0.00656**	0.0129***	-0.00616***	-0.0236***
	(0.00134)	(0.00166)	(0.00178)	(0.00123)	(0.00246)	(0.00214)	(0.00153)	(0.00213)
_cons	0.0337***	0.0696***	0.113***	0.0285***	0.274***	0.136***	0.0979***	0.246***
	(0.00484)	(0.00598)	(0.00641)	(0.00443)	(0.00889)	(0.00774)	(0.00551)	(0.00770)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833
R^2	0.005	0.003	0.000	0.004	0.001	0.005	0.002	0.015
adj. R^2	0.005	0.003	-0.000	0.004	0.001	0.004	0.002	0.015

Table 3. Regression table showing correlations between respondent urbanization and support for each of the eight Swedish political parties ranked from left to right in order of social liberalism using data from the 2019 SOM survey dataset

Results

Social attitudes

In this section, I perform three multivariate regression analyses with respondent urbanization as my independent variable and the three proposals used to measure social liberalism as my dependent variables. I also apply all of the control variables discussed above into the regression models, in order to account for any confounding factors.

Once again, the results show strong and statistically significant correlations between respondent urbanization and all three proposals (see Figure 5). This is entirely in line with my hypothesis, and seems to indicate that the urbanization levels of an individual's area of residence has an effect on their social attitudes, as I predicted.

It is noteworthy that the coefficients for all three proposals are so similar, ranging from 0,0452 for investing in gender equality to 0,0482 for taking in more refugees. This seems to indicate that urbanization causes residents to become more socially liberal across the board, rather than having different effects on different issues. More detailed breakdowns of each regression analysis can be found in the Appendix (see tables 15 to 17).

	(1) More Refugees	(2) Third Gender	(3) Gender Equality
Urbanization	0.0481***	0.0465**	0.0452***
	(0.0117)	(0.0178)	(0.0113)
Gender	0.273***	0.486***	0.318***
	(0.0457)	(0.0689)	(0.0442)
Age	-0.00495***	-0.0118***	0.00401**
	(0.00128)	(0.00196)	(0.00123)
Education Level	0.134***	0.0986***	-0.00126
	(0.0135)	(0.0210)	(0.0131)
Household Income	-0.0211**	-0.0290*	-0.00492
	(0.00778)	(0.0120)	(0.00754)
Citizenship	0.0183	-0.277	-0.226
	(0.126)	(0.167)	(0.132)
_cons	1.731***	2.420***	3.948***
	(0.117)	(0.182)	(0.112)
N	2594	1204	1296
R^2	0.086	0.108	0.060
adj. R^2	0.084	0.104	0.056

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 5. Regression table showing correlations between respondent urbanization and support for the proposals around gender equality, taking in more refugees and implementing a third gender from the 2019 SOM survey dataset, with control variables added.

Party choice

Applying the same regression model to the party choice variable allows us to see with greater clarity how urbanization affects the level of support for each of the Swedish political parties. Once again the regressions reveal statistically significant positive correlations between respondent urbanization and support for the two most socially liberal parties in the Green Party and the Left Party, and equally significant negative correlations for the two most socially conservative parties in the Christian Democrats and the Sweden Democrats (see Table 4 below). These observations fully support my hypothesis.

But beyond these extremes the picture breaks down slightly, with the socially liberal Center Party now showing a significant negative correlation, and the socially conservative Moderate Party still showing a very strong positive correlation. In fact, the Moderate Party retains the strongest positive coefficient out of any party at 0,00922, indicating that support for the Moderate Party increases by 0,922 percentage points for each one-step increase in my seven-point urbanization scale.

In the section above, I predicted that the relative strength of the Moderate Party's correlation would decrease after the introduction of control variables, but this has not been the case. Before the control variables, the coefficient for the Moderate Party was roughly 32% stronger than the Green Party, which had the second highest positive coefficient. After the introduction of control variables, this gap has increased to a difference of roughly 49% with the Green Party, and to a difference of approximately 36% with the Left Party, which has now overtaken the Green Party in having the second strongest positive correlation.

The Social Democrats now also stand out as the only party which shows no statistically significant relationship to urbanization whatsoever, indicating that the urbanization level of a particular voter's place of residence cannot be used to predict their likelihood of supporting the Social Democrats. All of the regressions can be seen in Table 4 below. The regressions for each party separately can be found in the appendix, see Tables 7-14.

	(1) Green Party	(2) Left Party	(3) Center Party	(4) Liberal Party	(5) Social Democrats	(6) Moderate Party	(7) Christian Democrats	(8) Sweden Democrats
Urbanization	0.00471***	0.00585***	-0.00579**	0.00437***	0.00212	0.00922***	-0.00672***	-0.0138***
	(0.00137)	(0.00170)	(0.00182)	(0.00126)	(0.00250)	(0.00219)	(0.00158)	(0.00214)
Gender	0.0273***	0.0114	0.0396***	-0.00516	0.0623***	-0.0357***	0.000892	-0.101***
	(0.00538)	(0.00665)	(0.00713)	(0.00495)	(0.00980)	(0.00858)	(0.00619)	(0.00839)
Age	-0.000822**	-0.00146***	-0.000976**	0.000262	0.00258***	-0.000452	0.000486**	0.000381
	(0.000151)	(0.000187)	(0.000201)	(0.000139)	(0.000276)	(0.000241)	(0.000174)	(0.000236)
Education Level	0.0132***	0.0124***	0.0137***	0.0114***	-0.0197***	0.00292	0.00324	-0.0371***
	(0.00159)	(0.00197)	(0.00211)	(0.00146)	(0.00290)	(0.00254)	(0.00183)	(0.00248)
Household Income	-0.000386	-0.0113***	0.00331**	0.00357***	-0.0105***	0.0170***	0.00243*	-0.00421**
	(0.000917)	(0.00113)	(0.00122)	(0.000843)	(0.00167)	(0.00146)	(0.00106)	(0.00143)
Citizenship	0.00122	-0.00123	-0.000366	0.000462	0.00138	-0.00168	0.00111	-0.000895
	(0.000714)	(0.000884)	(0.000947)	(0.000657)	(0.00130)	(0.00114)	(0.000822)	(0.00111)
_cons	0.0142	0.162***	0.0738***	-0.0548***	0.236***	0.0701**	0.0403*	0.458***
	(0.0139)	(0.0172)	(0.0184)	(0.0128)	(0.0253)	(0.0222)	(0.0160)	(0.0216)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833
R^2	0.026	0.024	0.020	0.018	0.039	0.030	0.004	0.076
adj. R^2	0.026	0.024	0.019	0.017	0.038	0.030	0.004	0.075

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4. Regression table showing correlations between respondent urbanization and choice of party with control variables added. Parties ranked from left to right in order of social liberalism.

Robustness tests

Alternative explanations

In my analysis, I perform a large number of separate regressions, making it unlikely that my results are an artifact of some statistical quirk rather than actual trends in the data. However, a large part of my hypothesis rests on the theoretical assumption that urbanization does not affect economic policy preferences in the same way that it affects social attitudes. Since differences in economic policy preference are an obvious alternative explanation to the results seen above, this presents a potential threat to my proposed explanation.

For this reason, I would like to test this assumption by applying my regression model to another one of the proposals from question 49 in the 2019 National SOM survey, namely proposal 49af, which is simply “Raise taxes”. Just like before, respondents were asked to rate this proposal on a scale from 1 to 5.

If my assumption is true, this regression will reveal no statistically significant correlation between urbanization and support for the proposal, but if such a correlation is discovered it would weaken my proposed explanation and strengthen the alternative hypothesis that the urban-rural voting gap is partially caused by differences in economic policy preference.

After performing the regression, no statistically significant correlation is discovered, neither before nor after the introduction of control variables. This strengthens my assumption that urbanization has no effect on economic policy preference.

	(1) Raise Taxes	(2) Raise Taxes	(3) Raise Taxes	(4) Raise Taxes	(5) Raise Taxes	(6) Raise Taxes
Urbanization	-0.00532	-0.000672	-0.00968	-0.00297	-0.00210	-0.00147
	(0.0191)	(0.0190)	(0.0191)	(0.0194)	(0.0198)	(0.0198)
Gender		-0.359***	-0.344***	-0.327***	-0.324***	-0.326***
		(0.0761)	(0.0760)	(0.0763)	(0.0775)	(0.0775)
Yearly Income			0.0396**	0.0463***	0.0471***	0.0453***
			(0.0122)	(0.0125)	(0.0131)	(0.0131)
Age				0.00480*	0.00477*	0.00432*
				(0.00216)	(0.00217)	(0.00219)
Education Level					-0.00476	-0.00174
					(0.0226)	(0.0227)
Citizenship						-0.313
						(0.199)
_cons	3.226***	3.397***	3.170***	2.833***	2.849***	2.882***
	(0.0696)	(0.0779)	(0.104)	(0.184)	(0.200)	(0.201)
N	1298	1298	1298	1298	1298	1298
R^2	0.000	0.017	0.025	0.029	0.029	0.031
adj. R^2	-0.001	0.015	0.023	0.026	0.025	0.026

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and the proposal "Raise taxes" from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

GAL-TAN rankings

Another potential weakness in my model is my ranking of the parties by level of social liberalism. This ranking was not designed to be particularly precise, only to give a rough indication of the relative levels of social liberalism of the various parties. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to compare it to other such rankings, in order to reduce the risk that I draw spurious conclusions.

Another common measurement that roughly measures social liberalism is the GAL-TAN scale. I originally chose not to use this scale due to the inclusion of factors such as environmental policy, which are not relevant for my hypothesis. The 2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey also features rankings of the eight Swedish parties on a GAL-TAN scale. As can be seen in Table 6 below, the relative position of the parties remains exactly the same when using this measurement, indicating that my ranking is in line with the expert consensus.

Party:	**CHES GAL-TAN ranking**	**"Social liberalism score"**
Green Party (MP)	1.58824	1,294118
Left Party (V)	1,94118	1,470585
Center Party (C)	2,23529	3,235296
Liberal Party (L)	3,23529	5,47059
Social Democrats (S)	4,41176	6,7647
Moderate Party (M)	5,9118	9,63603
Christian Democrats (KD)	7,05882	12,29412
Sweden Democrats (SD)	8,76471	16,88971

Table 6. Swedish parties scored on a GAL-TAN scale using data from Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al., 2019), compared to my social liberalism rankings using data from the same source.

Discussion

The regression analyses have given somewhat mixed results, but broadly I would argue that they support my hypothesis.

On the question of social attitudes, my hypothesis seems to be more or less unambiguously confirmed. On all three variables used as indicators of social liberalism, the correlation with urbanization is strong and statistically significant. This seemingly disproves the idea that urban-rural differences in values are simply a consequence of differences in wealth and group composition and supports the idea that the urbanization level of an individual's area of residence has an effect on their social attitudes. This provides further empirical support to Greenfield's (2015) model of social change and reinforces the findings of Luca et al. (2022).

A selection effect cannot be entirely ruled out, however. It may be the case that socially liberal individuals, for some reason or another, value the benefits of urban living more than social conservatives do and are therefore more likely to move into an urban area. Longitudinal studies tracking individuals' values over time may be useful in resolving this issue going forward.

As for the question of party choice, the image is slightly more complex. Overall, the results definitively show that urbanization affects the levels of support for seven out of the eight Swedish political parties, supporting my claim that urbanization is relevant for understanding voting behavior. This reinforces the findings of Gimpel et al (2020b), and indicates that the patterns that they observe are not limited to the United States.

My more specific claim that urbanization would lead to higher levels of support for socially liberal parties seems to be generally, but not universally, true. Support for three of the four parties ranked as most socially liberal in my index, the Green Party, the Left Party, and the Liberal Party, are shown to have statistically significant positive correlations with urbanization. The two parties ranked as least socially liberal, the Christian Democrats and the Sweden Democrats, are shown to have strong and statistically significant negative correlations with urbanization.

Two parties stand out as notable exceptions that contradict my hypothesis: the Center Party and the Moderate party. Support for the Center Party correlates negatively with urbanization despite it being ranked as the third most socially liberal party in my index. This fact contradicts my hypothesis, but the unique history of the Center Party as a historically

conservative party representing rural interests makes it difficult to draw any particularly strong conclusions about this. More in-depth research about the composition of the Center Party's voter base over time will be needed to conclude how this observation relates to my hypothesis.

This caveat cannot be applied to the Moderate Party, however, whose results in this analysis goes directly against anything that my theoretical framework would predict. The Moderate party is ranked as the third most conservative in my index and describes its own ideology as "liberal-conservatism". Despite this, support for this party not only correlates positively with urbanization, it correlates noticeably stronger than any other party.

While this contradicts hypothesis, it seems to offer an explanation to the conundrum of Swedish geographic polarization that I presented in the introduction to this essay. The reason that urban-rural polarization looks different in Sweden compared to most other Western democracies seems to be the unique strength of the Moderate Party in urban areas, with practically every other party matching the global pattern of urban voters preferring socially liberal parties.

This poses another question for future research to answer, namely why the Moderate Party has managed to maintain its strong position in urban areas whereas most other center-right parties throughout Europe have failed to do so. One possible explanation is that urbanization also affects other ideological dimensions beyond the liberal/conservative divide that I have measured in this study. An obvious starting point for this approach would be economic policy, which has traditionally been the most important issue associated with the Moderate Party. Perhaps economic policy preferences are affected by urbanization in ways that I failed to grasp, which might cause urban voters to gravitate towards the free market-policies of the Moderates. Although this would require an explanation for why this leads to greater support for the Moderate Party than the Center Party or the Liberal Party, both of whom broadly share the free market-ideology of the Moderates but with a greater degree of social liberalism.

Another possible explanation could be that the Moderate brand of liberal conservatism is, for whatever reason, more appealing to urban conservatives than the religious-tinted conservatism of the Christian Democrats or the national conservatism of the Sweden Democrats. The Moderate Party could thus be getting a greater share of the "conservative vote" in urban areas, whereas conservative voters in rural areas are split between three different parties.

Support for the Social Democrats is uniquely shown to have no statistically significant correlation with urbanization. I would argue that this further reinforces my hypothesis, since this party was ranked fifth in my social liberalism index, and can thus be viewed as being neither particularly liberal nor particularly conservative. It therefore seems plausible that their level of social liberalism is neither a benefit in urban areas nor a detriment in rural areas, thus explaining their lack of a significant correlation.

The fact that my study only analyzes a single country in a single year using a single dataset limits its generalizability, meaning that any statements made in this discussion are far from definitive. Future research could test the strength of my claims by applying similar methods to different countries, or to the same country at different points in time.

Conclusion

Throughout this work I have argued that a significant part of the urban-rural gap in voting behavior in Sweden has to be explained by differences in social attitudes that arise due to differences between urban and rural communities. More specifically, my argument is that the population density and scale of urban communities causes urban residents to become more socially liberal, as the traditional communitarian values that govern rural communities cease to function as effectively in high-density environments.

Through a quantitative analysis, I have demonstrated that urban residents in Sweden tend to hold more socially liberal attitudes, and to express higher levels of support for socially liberal parties as compared to rural residents, even after controlling for differences in wealth and demographics. Likewise, rural residents are shown to hold less socially liberal attitudes and show higher levels of support for conservative parties. This supports my argument and shows that urban-rural political differences are caused by more than simply differing demographics or economic interests.

The pattern is not universal however, as the liberal Center Party and the conservative Moderate Party defy my expectations, with the Moderate party especially showing remarkably high levels of support among urban residents. These observations seem to imply that urbanization also affects other ideological dimensions than the one I have studied, which could be an avenue for future research.

Overall, the empirical support my argument seems to be fairly strong, but its generalizability is somewhat limited by the fact that I only analyze a single country in a single year. Future research could test my claims by performing similar studies on other comparable countries, or on the same country at different points in time. Future research could also measure the potential impact of selection effects by performing longitudinal studies that track the attitudes and party preferences of individual voters over time.

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Summary statistics table

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Urbanization	7,731	3.00595	1.99928	0	6
Gender	7,731	.5040745	.5000157	0	1
YearlyIncome	7,731	6.257793	3.137785	1	12
Age	7,731	55.86289	18.22761	19	88
EducationL~l	7,731	5.014099	1.836438	1	8
Citizenship	7,731	.0421679	.200985	0	1
MoreRefugees	2,594	2.271781	1.1925	1	5
ThirdGender	1,204	2.465116	1.25592	1	5
GenderEqua~y	1,296	4.418981	.8051442	1	5
SocialDemo~s	7,731	.2537835	.4352033	0	1
Moderates	7,731	.1757858	.3806624	0	1
SwedenDemo~s	7,731	.1742336	.3793348	0	1
LeftParty	7,731	.0954598	.293868	0	1
CenterParty	7,731	.1113698	.3146099	0	1
ChristianD~s	7,731	.0792912	.2702101	0	1
GreenParty	7,731	.0601475	.2377752	0	1
LiberalParty	7,731	.0499289	.2178121	0	1
RaiseTaxes	1,298	3.210324	1.379881	1	5

Appendix

	(1) GreenParty	(2) GreenParty	(3) GreenParty	(4) GreenParty	(5) GreenParty	(6) GreenParty
Urbanization	0.00874***	0.00852***	0.00729***	0.00476***	0.00476***	0.00471***
	(6.52)	(6.37)	(5.42)	(3.47)	(3.48)	(3.44)
Gender		0.0351***	0.0334***	0.0276***	0.0274***	0.0273***
		(6.57)	(6.27)	(5.16)	(5.09)	(5.08)
Age			-0.00102***	-0.000814***	-0.000827***	-0.000822***
			(-6.89)	(-5.48)	(-5.47)	(-5.43)
EducationL~l				0.0130***	0.0132***	0.0132***
				(8.56)	(8.28)	(8.28)
YearlyIncome					-0.000411	-0.000386
					(-0.45)	(-0.42)
Citizenship						0.00122
						(1.71)
_cons	0.0337***	0.0166**	0.0780***	0.0125	0.0147	0.0142
	(6.98)	(3.04)	(7.47)	(0.96)	(1.06)	(1.02)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 7. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Green Party (MP) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added

	(1) LeftParty	(2) LeftParty	(3) LeftParty	(4) LeftParty	(5) LeftParty	(6) LeftParty
Urbanization	0.00852***	0.00838***	0.00691***	0.00568***	0.00580***	0.00585***
	(5.14)	(5.06)	(4.15)	(3.33)	(3.42)	(3.45)
Gender		0.0231***	0.0211**	0.0182**	0.0114	0.0114
		(3.49)	(3.19)	(2.74)	(1.71)	(1.71)
Age			-0.00121***	-0.00111***	-0.00146***	-0.00146***
			(-6.63)	(-6.02)	(-7.80)	(-7.83)
EducationL~l				0.00633***	0.0124***	0.0124***
				(3.36)	(6.28)	(6.28)
YearlyIncome					-0.0112***	-0.0113***
					(-9.90)	(-9.92)
Citizenship						-0.00123
						(-1.39)
_cons	0.0696***	0.0584***	0.132***	0.0996***	0.162***	0.162***
	(11.64)	(8.59)	(10.16)	(6.19)	(9.43)	(9.46)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 8. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Left Party (V) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added

	(1) CenterParty	(2) CenterParty	(3) CenterParty	(4) CenterParty	(5) CenterParty	(6) CenterParty
Urbanization	-0.000870	-0.00116	-0.00275	-0.00577**	-0.00581**	-0.00579**
	(-0.49)	(-0.66)	(-1.55)	(-3.18)	(-3.20)	(-3.19)
Gender		0.0467***	0.0445***	0.0376***	0.0396***	0.0396***
		(6.60)	(6.30)	(5.29)	(5.55)	(5.55)
Age			-0.00132***	-0.00108***	-0.000975***	-0.000976***
			(-6.75)	(-5.46)	(-4.86)	(-4.87)
EducationL~l				0.0155***	0.0137***	0.0137***
				(7.70)	(6.48)	(6.48)
YearlyIncome					0.00332**	0.00331**
					(2.73)	(2.72)
Citizenship						-0.000366
						(-0.39)
_cons	0.113***	0.0907***	0.170***	0.0921***	0.0736***	0.0738***
	(17.70)	(12.49)	(12.30)	(5.37)	(4.00)	(4.01)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 9. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Center Party (C) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added

	(1) LiberalParty	(2) LiberalParty	(3) LiberalParty	(4) LiberalParty	(5) LiberalParty	(6) LiberalParty
Urbanization	0.00709***	0.00710***	0.00703***	0.00443***	0.00439***	0.00437***
	(5.77)	(5.78)	(5.67)	(3.51)	(3.48)	(3.47)
Gender		-0.00130	-0.00139	-0.00734	-0.00516	-0.00516
		(-0.26)	(-0.28)	(-1.49)	(-1.04)	(-1.04)
Age			-0.0000564	0.000151	0.000260	0.000262
			(-0.42)	(1.10)	(1.87)	(1.89)
EducationL~l				0.0133***	0.0114***	0.0114***
				(9.55)	(7.78)	(7.79)
YearlyIncome					0.00356***	0.00357***
					(4.23)	(4.24)
Citizenship						0.000462
						(0.70)
_cons	0.0285***	0.0291***	0.0325***	-0.0348**	-0.0546***	-0.0548***
	(6.43)	(5.78)	(3.38)	(-2.93)	(-4.28)	(-4.29)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 10. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Liberal Party (L) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) Moderates	(2) Moderates	(3) Moderates	(4) Moderates	(5) Moderates	(6) Moderates
Urbanization	0.0129***	0.0131***	0.0117***	0.00933***	0.00915***	0.00922***
	(5.99)	(6.11)	(5.42)	(4.23)	(4.18)	(4.21)
Gender		-0.0389***	-0.0408***	-0.0462***	-0.0358***	-0.0357***
		(-4.54)	(-4.77)	(-5.37)	(-4.17)	(-4.16)
Age			-0.00116***	-0.000969***	-0.000444	-0.000452
			(-4.89)	(-4.05)	(-1.84)	(-1.87)
EducationL~l				0.0121***	0.00293	0.00292
				(4.96)	(1.15)	(1.15)
YearlyIncome					0.0170***	0.0170***
					(11.65)	(11.63)
Citizenship						-0.00168
						(-1.47)
_cons	0.136***	0.155***	0.225***	0.164***	0.0693**	0.0701**
	(17.61)	(17.68)	(13.43)	(7.88)	(3.13)	(3.16)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 11. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Moderate Party (M) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) SocialDemo~s	(2) SocialDemo~s	(3) SocialDemo~s	(4) SocialDemo~s	(5) SocialDemo~s	(6) SocialDemo~s
Urbanization	-0.00656**	-0.00688**	-0.00289	0.00207	0.00218	0.00212
	(-2.66)	(-2.80)	(-1.18)	(0.82)	(0.87)	(0.85)
Gender		0.0520***	0.0575***	0.0688***	0.0624***	0.0623***
		(5.29)	(5.90)	(7.04)	(6.36)	(6.36)
Age			0.00330***	0.00290***	0.00258***	0.00258***
			(12.23)	(10.69)	(9.36)	(9.37)
EducationL~l				-0.0254***	-0.0197***	-0.0197***
				(-9.17)	(-6.80)	(-6.79)
YearlyIncome					-0.0105***	-0.0105***
					(-6.29)	(-6.27)
Citizenship						0.00138
						(1.06)
_cons	0.274***	0.249***	0.0499**	0.178***	0.237***	0.236***
	(30.86)	(24.70)	(2.61)	(7.55)	(9.35)	(9.32)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 12. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Social Democrats (S) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) ChristianD~s	(2) ChristianD~s	(3) ChristianD~s	(4) ChristianD~s	(5) ChristianD~s	(6) ChristianD~s
Urbanization	-0.00616***	-0.00617***	-0.00576***	-0.00665***	-0.00667***	-0.00672***
	(-4.04)	(-4.04)	(-3.74)	(-4.21)	(-4.23)	(-4.26)
Gender		0.000891	0.00145	-0.000568	0.000912	0.000892
		(0.15)	(0.24)	(-0.09)	(0.15)	(0.14)
Age			0.000337*	0.000407*	0.000481**	0.000486**
			(1.99)	(2.38)	(2.77)	(2.79)
EducationL~l				0.00452**	0.00323	0.00324
				(2.60)	(1.76)	(1.77)
YearlyIncome					0.00241*	0.00243*
					(2.29)	(2.31)
Citizenship						0.00111
						(1.35)
_cons	0.0979***	0.0975***	0.0771***	0.0542***	0.0409*	0.0403*
	(17.76)	(15.56)	(6.44)	(3.65)	(2.56)	(2.52)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 13. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Christian Democrats (KD) using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) SwedenDemo~s	(2) SwedenDemo~s	(3) SwedenDemo~s	(4) SwedenDemo~s	(5) SwedenDemo~s	(6) SwedenDemo~s
Urbanization	-0.0236***	-0.0229***	-0.0215***	-0.0138***	-0.0138***	-0.0138***
	(-11.07)	(-10.85)	(-10.13)	(-6.47)	(-6.46)	(-6.44)
Gender		-0.118***	-0.116***	-0.0981***	-0.101***	-0.101***
		(-13.96)	(-13.74)	(-11.76)	(-12.01)	(-12.01)
Age			0.00113***	0.000514*	0.000385	0.000381
			(4.84)	(2.22)	(1.63)	(1.62)
EducationL~l				-0.0393***	-0.0370***	-0.0371***
				(-16.65)	(-14.93)	(-14.94)
YearlyIncome					-0.00419**	-0.00421**
					(-2.93)	(-2.95)
Citizenship						-0.000895
						(-0.80)
_cons	0.246***	0.303***	0.235***	0.434***	0.458***	0.458***
	(31.97)	(35.11)	(14.26)	(21.56)	(21.15)	(21.16)
N	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833	7833

Table 14. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and support for the Sweden Democrats using data from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) ThirdGender	(2) ThirdGender	(3) ThirdGender	(4) ThirdGender	(5) ThirdGender	(6) ThirdGender
Urbanization	0.0755***	0.0726***	0.0576**	0.0435*	0.0441*	0.0465**
	(4.18)	(4.11)	(3.28)	(2.45)	(2.48)	(2.61)
Gender		0.532***	0.515***	0.488***	0.485***	0.486***
		(7.57)	(7.43)	(7.07)	(7.03)	(7.05)
Age			-0.0120***	-0.0108***	-0.0116***	-0.0118***
			(-6.29)	(-5.59)	(-5.95)	(-6.03)
EducationL~l				0.0819***	0.0975***	0.0986***
				(4.08)	(4.64)	(4.69)
YearlyIncome					-0.0290*	-0.0290*
					(-2.41)	(-2.41)
Citizenship						-0.277
						(-1.66)
_cons	2.236***	1.979***	2.702***	2.264***	2.411***	2.420***
	(34.06)	(27.25)	(19.96)	(13.17)	(13.24)	(13.30)
N	1204	1204	1204	1204	1204	1204

Table 15. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and the proposal "Implement a third legal gender" from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) GenderEqua~y	(2) GenderEqua~y	(3) GenderEqua~y	(4) GenderEqua~y	(5) GenderEqua~y	(6) GenderEqua~y
Urbanization	0.0409***	0.0391***	0.0425***	0.0435***	0.0436***	0.0452***
	(3.65)	(3.56)	(3.87)	(3.87)	(3.88)	(4.01)
Gender		0.314***	0.318***	0.320***	0.317***	0.318***
		(7.18)	(7.31)	(7.30)	(7.17)	(7.20)
Age			0.00435***	0.00427***	0.00414***	0.00401**
			(3.66)	(3.54)	(3.38)	(3.27)
EducationL~l				-0.00501	-0.00259	-0.00126
				(-0.40)	(-0.20)	(-0.10)
YearlyIncome					-0.00444	-0.00492
					(-0.59)	(-0.65)
Citizenship						-0.226
						(-1.71)
_cons	4.296***	4.147***	3.893***	3.918***	3.943***	3.948***
	(106.54)	(92.82)	(47.22)	(37.85)	(35.31)	(35.36)
N	1296	1296	1296	1296	1296	1296

Table 16. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and the proposal "Invest in a society with greater gender equality" from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

	(1) MoreRefugees	(2) MoreRefugees	(3) MoreRefugees	(4) MoreRefugees	(5) MoreRefugees	(6) MoreRefugees
Urbanization	0.0835***	0.0802***	0.0724***	0.0475***	0.0483***	0.0482***
	(7.18)	(6.98)	(6.27)	(4.08)	(4.16)	(4.14)
Gender		0.359***	0.347***	0.288***	0.273***	0.273***
		(7.84)	(7.60)	(6.35)	(5.98)	(5.98)
Age			-0.00615***	-0.00428***	-0.00492***	-0.00490***
			(-4.90)	(-3.43)	(-3.88)	(-3.84)
EducationL~l				0.125***	0.135***	0.135***
				(9.73)	(10.07)	(10.03)
YearlyIncome					-0.0201**	-0.0200**
					(-2.60)	(-2.58)
Citizenship						0.0229
						(0.18)
_cons	2.021***	1.850***	2.222***	1.606***	1.721***	1.719***
	(48.03)	(39.39)	(24.95)	(14.87)	(14.76)	(14.72)
N	2599	2599	2599	2599	2599	2599

Table 17. Regression table showing correlation between respondent urbanization and the proposal "Take more refugees in Sweden" from the 2019 SOM dataset, with control variables added.

Clustered standard errors

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 1,296
F(6, 233)	= 16.40
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0604
Root MSE	= .78227

(Std. err. adjusted for 234 clusters in kommun)

GenderEquality	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.0451987	.0105878	4.27	0.000	.0243385	.0660588
Gender	.3178672	.0435494	7.30	0.000	.2320663	.4036682
YearlyIncome	-.0049159	.0086244	-0.57	0.569	-.0219077	.0120759
Age	.0040148	.001311	3.06	0.002	.0014319	.0065977
EducationLevel	-.0012574	.0139126	-0.09	0.928	-.028668	.0261533
Citizenship	-.2258108	.1486326	-1.52	0.130	-.5186465	.0670248
_cons	3.947629	.1202596	32.83	0.000	3.710694	4.184565

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 1,204
F(6, 236)	= 21.70
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.1081
Root MSE	= 1.1891

(Std. err. adjusted for 237 clusters in kommun)

ThirdGender	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.0464679	.0170793	2.72	0.007	.0128206	.0801152
Gender	.4860531	.0755673	6.43	0.000	.3371804	.6349258
YearlyIncome	-.0289655	.0141573	-2.05	0.042	-.0568563	-.0010747
Age	-.0118085	.0019638	-6.01	0.000	-.0156773	-.0079397
EducationLevel	.0985661	.0187345	5.26	0.000	.0616578	.1354743
Citizenship	-.2770184	.1617007	-1.71	0.088	-.5955795	.0415427
_cons	2.419648	.1975306	12.25	0.000	2.0305	2.808797

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 2,599
F(6, 265)	= 44.06
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0868
Root MSE	= 1.1415

(Std. err. adjusted for 266 clusters in kommun)

MoreRefugees	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.0482015	.0111662	4.32	0.000	.0262157	.0701873
Gender	.2729431	.0413718	6.60	0.000	.1914838	.3544024
YearlyIncome	-.0200485	.0089438	-2.24	0.026	-.0376584	-.0024386
Age	-.0049022	.0013895	-3.53	0.000	-.0076381	-.0021662
EducationLevel	.1350526	.0142913	9.45	0.000	.1069136	.1631916
Citizenship	.0228857	.1409538	0.16	0.871	-.2546461	.3004176
_cons	1.7195	.1125259	15.28	0.000	1.497941	1.941058

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 35.61
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0263
Root MSE	= 23.445

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

GreenParty	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.47135	.1156069	4.08	0.000	.2438084	.6988916
Gender	2.734358	.5350183	5.11	0.000	1.681316	3.787399
Age	-.082159	.0126879	-6.48	0.000	-.1071317	-.0571862
EducationLevel	1.318199	.1657806	7.95	0.000	.9919039	1.644494
YearlyIncome	-.0385965	.0896008	-0.43	0.667	-.214952	.137759
Citizenship	.1219617	.1485536	0.82	0.412	-.1704267	.4143502
_cons	1.417491	1.237446	1.15	0.253	-1.018093	3.853075

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 23.11
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0244
Root MSE	= 29.007

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

LeftParty	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.5846658	.2718314	2.15	0.032	.0496377	1.119694
Gender	1.137335	.6674294	1.70	0.089	-.1763227	2.450994
Age	-.1464126	.026997	-5.42	0.000	-.1995491	-.0932761
EducationLevel	1.235509	.1940545	6.37	0.000	.8535641	1.617454
YearlyIncome	-1.125472	.117558	-9.57	0.000	-1.356854	-.8940906
Citizenship	-.1225602	.0161124	-7.61	0.000	-.1542732	-.0908472
_cons	16.24456	2.290084	7.09	0.000	11.73714	20.75198

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 20.86
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0197
Root MSE	= 31.094

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

CenterParty	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	-.5794719	.1973192	-2.94	0.004	-.9678425	-.1911013
Gender	3.961311	.7923258	5.00	0.000	2.401828	5.520795
Age	-.0976318	.0204785	-4.77	0.000	-.1379382	-.0573253
EducationLevel	1.366968	.1893273	7.22	0.000	.9943274	1.739609
YearlyIncome	.3308116	.1732278	1.91	0.057	-.0101415	.6717647
Citizenship	-.036568	.0823758	-0.44	0.657	-.198703	.1255669
_cons	7.38175	2.079877	3.55	0.000	3.288062	11.47544

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 39.10
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0180
Root MSE	= 21.563

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

LiberalParty	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.4371693	.1015166	4.31	0.000	.2373608	.6369779
Gender	-.5163259	.603884	-0.86	0.393	-1.704912	.6722597
Age	.0262164	.012589	2.08	0.038	.0014383	.0509945
EducationLevel	1.139541	.1257621	9.06	0.000	.8920117	1.387071
YearlyIncome	.3571497	.1099842	3.25	0.001	.140675	.5736243
Citizenship	.0462033	.0891132	0.52	0.605	-.1291925	.2215991
_cons	-5.483104	1.257065	-4.36	0.000	-7.957303	-3.008904

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 51.06
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0385
Root MSE	= 42.741

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

SocialDemocr~s	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.2120527	.263427	0.80	0.421	-.3064335	.730539
Gender	6.234665	1.189269	5.24	0.000	3.893903	8.575426
Age	.2584223	.0290697	8.89	0.000	.2012062	.3156383
EducationLevel	-1.970185	.3137592	-6.28	0.000	-2.587737	-1.352633
YearlyIncome	-1.047401	.1398024	-7.49	0.000	-1.322565	-.7722373
Citizenship	.1377402	.1554367	0.89	0.376	-.1681957	.4436761
_cons	23.59629	2.448185	9.64	0.000	18.77769	28.4149

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 38.77
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0304
Root MSE	= 37.423

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

Moderates	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	.9215733	.2294459	4.02	0.000	.4699698	1.373177
Gender	-3.574164	.717809	-4.98	0.000	-4.98698	-2.161347
Age	-.0451659	.0263252	-1.72	0.087	-.0969802	.0066483
EducationLevel	.2918115	.2327351	1.25	0.211	-.166266	.749889
YearlyIncome	1.701204	.1628349	10.45	0.000	1.380706	2.021701
Citizenship	-.1680682	.0194217	-8.65	0.000	-.2062947	-.1298416
_cons	7.00573	2.488447	2.82	0.005	2.107881	11.90358

Linear regression

Number of obs	= 7,833
F(6, 288)	= 5.94
Prob > F	= 0.0000
R-squared	= 0.0043
Root MSE	= 26.991

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

ChristianDem~s	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	-.6717411	.163664	-4.10	0.000	-.9938704	-.3496118
Gender	.0892215	.5329263	0.17	0.867	-.9597027	1.138146
Age	.0486219	.0173054	2.81	0.005	.0145607	.082683
EducationLevel	.3238115	.1864817	1.74	0.084	-.0432285	.6908514
YearlyIncome	.2434329	.0988317	2.46	0.014	.0489089	.437957
Citizenship	.110775	.1181085	0.94	0.349	-.1216902	.3432403
_cons	4.034075	1.456663	2.77	0.006	1.167019	6.90113

Linear regression

Number of obs	=	7,833
F(6, 288)	=	112.70
Prob > F	=	0.0000
R-squared	=	0.0760
Root MSE	=	36.553

(Std. err. adjusted for 289 clusters in kommun)

SwedenDemocr~s	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	t	P>|t|	[95% conf.	interval]
Urbanization	-1.375598	.2426896	-5.67	0.000	-1.853268	-.8979279
Gender	-10.0664	.8742198	-11.51	0.000	-11.78707	-8.345731
Age	.0381087	.0246681	1.54	0.123	-.010444	.0866614
EducationLevel	-3.705656	.2471553	-14.99	0.000	-4.192116	-3.219196
YearlyIncome	-.4211277	.1310891	-3.21	0.001	-.6791417	-.1631136
Citizenship	-.0894839	.080769	-1.11	0.269	-.2484562	.0694885
_cons	45.80321	2.420456	18.92	0.000	41.03918	50.56723