Is the urban-rural divide affectively polarised? Comparative evidence from nine European countries*

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Abstract

Recent studies in the United States and Europe have documented a growing divergence in voting behaviour and political attitudes between cities and the countryside. However, we still lack systematic evidence on the extent to which this urban-rural divide is also affectively polarised. To shed light on this, we advance the concept of place-based affective polarisation, which we define as the difference between in-group and out-group affect in relation to place-based groups. Drawing on original survey data from nine European countries, we show that place-based affective polarisation is substantial along the urban-rural divide and driven by strong feelings of place-based resentment and identity. Furthermore, we find that higher levels of place-based affective polarisation increase support for GAL parties (green, alternative, libertarian) among urbanites and support for TAN parties (traditional, authoritarian, nationalist) among ruralites. Overall, our findings point to a strong political cleavage between urban and rural areas in several European countries.

Keywords: urban-rural divide; affective polarisation; transnational cleavage; place-based resentment; place-based identity

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Introduction

The urban-rural divide has woken up from its dormancy. In the United States, the countryside has become a stronghold of the Republican party, while people living in cities are voting overwhelmingly for the Democrats (e.g., Gimpel et al., 2020; Rodden, 2019; Scala and Johnson, 2017; Taylor et al., 2024). Similarly, in Europe, support for radical right and new left parties increasingly clusters in rural and urban areas (Huijsmans and Rodden, 2024). Furthermore, comparable patterns can be found in connection to different political attitudes and support for the political system. In general, ruralites tend to hold more nationalistic attitudes than urbanites, especially concerning immigration and European integration (e.g., Huijsmans et al., 2021; Jennings and Stoker, 2016; Maxwell, 2019, 2020). Besides this, rural residents also tend to exhibit lower levels of trust in political institutions and are less satisfied with how democracy works (e.g., Hegewald, 2024b; Lago, 2022; McKay et al., 2021; Mitsch et al., 2021; Stein et al., 2021; Zumbrunn, 2024b).

While these empirical patterns are well documented by now, their explanations remain considerably debated in the literature. One branch of studies typically focuses on place-based grievances, arguing that territorial political divisions are rooted in a backlash against political elites in places left behind by globalisation (e.g., Broz et al., 2021; Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b; Dijkstra et al., 2020; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Schraff and Pontusson, 2024). By contrast, other studies revert to people's place-based identities to explain regional differences in political behaviour (e.g., Bolet, 2021; Bornschier et al., 2021; Fitzgerald, 2018; Zollinger, 2024b). In turn, works on the political effects of place-based resentment then bring both of these approaches together, arguing that the intersection of place-based grievances and place-based identities explains people's political choices and attitudes along the urban-rural divide (e.g., Cramer, 2016; Huijsmans, 2023a,b; Jacobs and Munis, 2023; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley, 2022; Munis, 2022).

Nevertheless, there is little systematic evidence on the extent to which the urban-rural divide is also *affectively* polarised (but see Lyons and Utych, 2023; Zumbrunn, 2024a). A strong affective basis is critical for the development of a fully-fledged cleavage (e.g., Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Borbáth et al., 2023), and thus, crucial to detect whether the urban-rural divide is a

relevant line of political conflict to begin with. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the literature on affective partisan polarisation, partisanship as a social identity fuels political conflict when a strong attachment to co-partisans coincides with an aversion directed at partisans from the other side of the aisle (Iyengar et al., 2012, for an overview, see Iyengar et al., 2019). In light of this, investigating affective polarisation between urbanites and ruralites promises to considerably deepen our understanding of how place gives rise to political divisions.

To this end, we advance the concept of place-based affective polarisation. Inspired by the literature on affective partisan polarisation, we define place-based affective polarisation as a pronounced bias of individuals to like people from their own place more than others living in different places. We thus conceive place-based affective polarisation as the difference in affect towards place-based in-groups and out-groups. Applying this concept to the urban-rural divide, we focus on the tendency of urbanites (ruralites) to like members from their urban (rural) in-group more than members of their rural (urban) out-group. Building on insights from social psychology, in particular, social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), realistic group conflict (Sherif et al., 1961), and integrated threat theory (Stephan and Stephan, 2000), we propose that feelings of place-based resentment and identity drive place-based affective polarisation. Furthermore, taking a group-based approach to partisanship (e.g., Achen and Bartels, 2016; Green et al., 2004; Huddy et al., 2015), we argue that place-based affective polarisation profoundly influences voting for GAL (green, alternative, libertarian) and TAN parties (traditional, authoritarian, nationalist), which occupy opposing positions on the transnational cleavage in European politics (e.g., Dassonneville et al., 2024; Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Hooghe et al., 2002; 2024b; for an overview, see Marks et al., 2021).

We test our arguments by drawing on original survey data from nine European countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Spain). We find that place-based affective polarisation is substantial along the urban-rural divide. Analogue to affective partisan polarisation, many individuals in our data tend to like their place-based in-groups over their place-based out-groups. Although this phenomenon is more pronounced for ruralites than urbanites, both groups exhibit place-based affective polarisation in all countries under investigation. Moreover, as expected, place-based resentment and identity positively cor-

relate with place-based affective polarisation. Again, these associations are generally stronger for ruralites than urbanites. Finally, we document that urbanites who like their own kind over ruralites, exhibit higher levels of support for GAL parties. Conversely, among ruralites, increasing levels of place-based affective polarisation tend to bolster support for TAN parties.

Our study makes four central contributions. First, we extend the literature on place-based identity, which predominately concentrates on people's attachments to place-based in-groups. However, only when looking at sentiments directed at place-based in-groups and out-groups in conjunction, we get a complete picture of how place-based antagonisms fuel political divisions. We are able to show this empirically. Even when controlling for in-group affect (out-group affect), out-group affect (in-group affect) is a significant explanatory variable for voting behaviour. Furthermore, the importance of in-group affect outweighs that of out-group affect among urban residents, while the opposite is true for rural residents. We would have missed these nuances if we had focused on in-group attachments only.

Second, we take a first shot at disentangling the complex relationships between place-based resentment, identity, and affective polarisation. While place-based resentment is a powerful concept that captures the intensity of place-based political divides, it tends to conflate the causes and consequences of place-based antagonisms. We shed light on this complicated web of interrelated concepts by making a theoretical argument on why place-based resentment and identity should drive place-based affective polarisation. In a nutshell, we locate place-based affective polarisation between place-based resentment and identity, on the one hand, and voting behaviour, on the other. Relying on causal mediation analysis (Imai et al., 2011), we then highlight that place-based affective polarisation significantly mediates the effects of place-based resentment and identity on voting behaviour. We hope this will advance the literature on territorial political divisions and offer greater conceptual clarity.

Third, we provide some much-needed comparative evidence to a literature that tends to be dominated by single-country studies. Many works focus either on the United States (e.g., Cramer, 2016; Jacobs and Munis, 2023; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley, 2022; Lyons and Utych, 2023; Munis, 2022), Switzerland (e.g., Bornschier et al., 2021; Zollinger, 2024b; Zumbrunn, 2024a,b,c), or the Netherlands (e.g., Huijsmans, 2023a,b). By contrast, we show that many of

our hypotheses hold across a diverse range of contexts. However, we can only speculate why we find some diverging patterns, especially in Southern European countries such as Greece and Spain. Nevertheless, our study lays out a comparative agenda which should investigate these differences more thoroughly.

Fourth, we contribute to an emerging literature showing that affective polarisation can transcend partisan identities. Similar to studies extending the concept to opinion- (Hobolt et al., 2021) and education-based groupings (Van Noord et al., 2024), we show that place-based groups can also give rise to affective polarisation. In this regard, we relate to recent studies in the United States (Lyons and Utych, 2023) and Switzerland (Zumbrunn, 2024a), already providing first evidence of affective polarisation along the urban-rural divide.

The remainder of this study proceeds as follows. After reviewing the literature on the return of the urban-rural divide, we take stock of the existing explanations of territorial political divisions. We then present our theoretical arguments, data, and results. We conclude by summarising our main findings and highlighting some areas for future research.

The return of the urban-rural divide

In Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) original conceptualisation, the urban-rural cleavage was related to a conflict between a landed elite and an urban entrepreneurial class that came to rise during the Industrial Revolution. Although its roots can be traced back to medieval times, in most European countries, divisions between urbanites and ruralites have not resulted in a persistent line of political conflict (Gallagher et al., 2020). Consequently, following its heyday, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the urban-rural divide became largely dormant, which meant that it only played a minor role in the analysis of political attitudes and behaviour.

However, more recently, a rapidly growing body of literature has reinstated an interest in studying political divisions between cities and the countryside. In the United States, various studies show that rural areas tend to vote overwhelmingly Republican, while cities have largely become strongholds of the Democratic party (e.g., Gimpel et al., 2020; Rodden, 2019; Scala and Johnson, 2017; Taylor et al., 2024). In Europe, comparative evidence also indicates a re-emergence of the urban-rural divide, which seems to be mostly driven by increasing support for

radical right and new left parties in rural and urban areas, respectively (Huijsmans and Rodden, 2024).

A similar tendency can be detected in citizens' political attitudes. In England, for example, Jennings and Stoker (2016) show a growing divergence between urban centres with a more global, pluralist outlook and more provincial areas becoming increasingly pessimistic about issues concerning European integration and multiculturalism. Likewise, focusing specifically on immigration attitudes, Maxwell (2019; 2020) documents that individuals from major European cities have much more favourable views about immigration than rural residents. Similarly, Huijsmans et al. (2021) find a pronounced divide in various cultural attitudes between urban and rural areas in the Netherlands, owing to a dynamic where public opinion of people living in urban places has become more cosmopolitan than the rest of the country.

Besides this, an urban-rural divide is also visible in various measures of political support. Studies commonly find that political trust is higher among urban residents compared to rural residents, with this divergence having intensified over time in several European countries (e.g., Hegewald, 2024b; Kenny and Luca, 2021; McKay et al., 2021; Mitsch et al., 2021; Stein et al., 2021; Zumbrunn, 2024b). Beyond political trust, recent research also highlights lower levels of satisfaction with democracy and political efficacy in rural places, suggesting that rural residents might feel especially alienated from democratic processes (e.g., del Horno et al., 2023; Lago, 2022; Rowland et al., 2024). This general sentiment is further underlined by Zumbrunn and Freitag (2023), who show that individuals living in rural areas tend to be more supportive of authoritarian forms of government.

In sum, all of these studies document a puzzling awakening of the urban-rural divide. Cities and the countryside seem to gradually drift apart in their voting behaviour, political attitudes, and support for the political system more generally. While these empirical trends are becoming increasingly clear by the day, what explains these divisions remains a matter of considerable debate.

Existing explanations of territorial political divisions

Within the broader literature on geographic divides, at least three main arguments explaining territorial political divisions can be distinguished.[1] The first argument typically revolves around place-based grievances, usually rooted in economic considerations. Studies in this strand of the literature often propose that globalisation has triggered a backlash against political elites in regions suffering from the adverse effects of a globalised economy (e.g., Broz et al., 2021; Colantone and Stanig, 2018a,b; Dijkstra et al., 2020; Iversen and Soskice, 2019; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Schraff and Pontusson, 2024). Perhaps most prominently, Rodríguez-Pose (2018) outlines how persistent economic decline in many areas around the world has led voters living in these places to support radical right political candidates such as Donald Trump in the United States or Marine Le Pen in France. Connected to this, Broz et al. (2021) show that a significant increase in regional inequalities underpins the emergence of radical right strongholds in left-behind places. Furthermore, Colantone and Stanig (2018a) demonstrate that the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom was strongly driven by citizens' sociotropic concerns about the economic state of their area, with those living in regions hit hardest by globalisation exhibiting a higher propensity to have voted to leave the European Union. Overall, what this first branch of studies has in common is a focus on individuals from economically left-behind areas finding themselves on the losing end of globalisation, leading them to cast their ballots for radical right political parties and candidates.

By contrast, the second argument presented in the literature draws on insights from social and environmental psychology, conceiving people's place of living as the basis for a social identity (e.g., Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky et al., 1983; Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). According to Tajfel's (1981) influential definition, a "social identity" relates to "that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p.255, emphasis in original). While individuals can belong to and identify with various social

[1] One important debate not reviewed here relates to the effects of context versus composition. While studies on context, akin to the studies reviewed below, tend to argue that it is something about the places themselves that gives rise to territorial political divisions, works on composition stress the importance of cultural and socio-demographic sorting dynamics (for an overview, see Maxwell, 2019).

groups, studies in this area of the literature tend to emphasise place of residence as a significant marker of group membership, giving rise to pronounced place-based identities that structure political behaviour. For instance, Fitzgerald (2018) proposes that voting for the radical right is strongly related to citizens' emotional ties to their local community. In particular, individuals with a strong attachment to their place of residence are found to be likely supporters of radical right parties, viewing them as potential defenders of their home locality. Related to this, Bolet (2021) suggests that local pub closures foster the degradation of place-based identity, which strongly correlates with support for the radical right in the United Kingdom. Moreover, studying voting behaviour in Switzerland, Bornschier et al. (2021) and Zollinger (2024b) underscore the centrality of place-based identities in explaining political divisions along the urban-rural divide. They demonstrate that individuals with strong attachments to urban places are more likely to vote for new left parties, whereas those who feel a strong sense of belonging to rural areas tend to be more supportive of the radical right. In this sense, to explain territorial political divisions, studies in this second stream of the literature highlight people's emotional connections to their place of living rather than place-based economic grievances relating to globalisation.

Lastly, the third explanation in the literature relates to a feeling of place-based resentment, which can be viewed as an approach that brings together place-based grievances and place-based identity. According to Cramer's (2016) groundbreaking ethnographic work conducted in rural Wisconsin, place-based resentment describes a feeling where "an identity rooted in place ... is infused with a sense of distributive injustice" (p.12). In this regard, place-based resentment is located at the intersection of place-based identities and place-based grievances, both of which come causally prior to place-based resentment (Munis, 2022). Commonly, place-based resentment is conceptualised in relation to three different sources of place-based grievances: a) the perception that one's place is getting fewer resources than it deserves, b) the belief that policymakers do not pay enough attention to the interests of residents from one's place, and c) the feeling that the unique lifestyles of people living in one's place are disrespected by people from other places (Cramer, 2016; Huijsmans, 2023a,b; Munis, 2022). In particular, studies in the United States document pronounced political effects of place-based resentment. Lunz Trujillo and Crowley (2022), for example, show that rural residents who regard their place as

underrepresented and disrespected are more prone to support Donald Trump. Likewise, Jacobs and Munis (2023) find that place-based resentment strongly predicted voting for the Republican party in recent elections. Beyond the context of the United States, Huijsmans (2023a) provides evidence that place-based resentment mediates the relationship between people's place of living and their attitudes concerning populism and immigration in the Netherlands. In this sense, to understand place-based divisions in politics, the place-based resentment approach draws attention to an interplay between attachment to place and a feeling that one's place is treated unfairly.

Correlates of place-based affective polarisation

We are extending these existing approaches by asking to what extent the urban-rural divide is also affectively polarised. To this end, we advance the concept of place-based affective polarisation, which, inspired by the literature on affective partisan polarisation (e.g., Iyengar et al., 2012, 2019), we formally define as *an individual's propensity to like people from their own place more than people from a respective geographic out-group*. We thus conceive place-based affective polarisation as denoting the difference between in-group and out-group affect in relation to place-based groups. We are keeping this definition intentionally broad so it can be applied to all kinds of different territorial divides. However, in this study, we focus on the urban-rural divide as a geographic fault line that has gained increasing prominence in recent years, as evidenced by the numerous studies reviewed in the previous sections. Therefore, we concentrate on the tendency of urbanites (ruralites) to like members from their urban (rural) in-group more than members of their rural (urban) out-group.

Similar to affective partisan polarisation, place-based affective polarisation draws heavily on classic works in social psychology. According to social identity theory, the development of a social identity boils down to three interconnected processes (e.g., Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; for an overview, see Brewer, 2019). The first is social categorisation, where individuals classify themselves into in-groups and others into out-groups. The second is social identification, which relates to the incorporation of group membership into one's concept of self. The third and final process is social comparison, involving a positive evaluation of one's

in-group against a given out-group. As such, a major function of a social identity is to provide individuals with a sense of self-esteem (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

The place-based identity approach discussed in the previous section focuses on the first and second processes involved in the development of social identities (Zumbrunn, 2024c). While these works demonstrate the important consequences of place-based identities for political attitudes and behaviour, they generally pay less attention to the aspect of social comparisons by predominately concentrating on attachments to people's place-based in-groups. Crucially, this limits our understanding of how place-based identities can become politically divisive. As forcefully illustrated by the literature on affective partisan polarisation, partisanship as a social identity underpins political conflict when strong emotional bonds towards co-partisans coincide with a deep-seated aversion directed at partisans from the other side of the aisle (e.g., Iyengar et al., 2012, 2019). Over time, this can lead to a situation in which citizens are increasingly divided along partisan lines, substantially undermining the functioning of democratic political systems (e.g., Hetherington and Rudolph, 2015; Kingzette et al., 2021). In light of these insights, it thus appears central to consider both sentiments directed at place-based in-groups and place-based out-groups if we want to explain why place gives rise to political divides.

One approach to integrating sentiments directed at place-based in-groups and out-groups can be found in the literature on place-based resentment. On the one hand, as discussed above, place-based resentment encompasses a strong sense of place-based identity, while, on the other hand, it also involves place-based grievances, which essentially originate from a comparison between place-based in-groups and out-groups (Zumbrunn, 2024c). Although we regard this combination of the different processes involved in the development of social identities as a strength of place-based resentment, we also think that it presents significant challenges. Fundamentally, the concept conflates the elements of social categorisation, social identification, and social comparisons with perceptions of different distributive injustices. These place-based grievances, in turn, have the potential to influence each of the three processes involved in the formation of social identities. In this sense, place-based resentment blends together potential causes and consequences of place-based antagonisms. Even though this might be a desirable property in some situations, this intersection makes it difficult to disentangle the precise mech-

anisms of how place relates to political attitudes and behaviour. Against this backdrop, we suggest that the concept of place-based affective polarisation is helpful here, as it allows us to shed light on this complicated web of interrelated concepts and makes it possible to hypothesise what should drive what explicitly.

Before we do so, however, our first expectation is that place-based affective polarisation is asymmetric between urban and rural residents. We argue that rural residents should exhibit a particular tendency to distinguish their rural in-group positively by attributing negative characteristics to urbanites. Although this is only one way to derive self-esteem from a social identity, it is an especially attractive option for members of low-status groups such as rural residents (Huddy, 2003). Regarding subjective social status, Vigna (2023), for instance, finds that ruralites often view themselves as occupying the bottom of the social ladder, while urban residents tend to gravitate towards the top. These differences should make it more likely for ruralites to harbour stronger feelings of place-based affective polarisation.

H_1 Place-based affective polarisation is more pronounced among rural residents than urban residents.

Place-based resentment, we contend, is an important driver of place-based affective polarisation (Zumbrunn, 2024a). Perceptions of threat and conflict over scarce resources have been linked to out-group negativity as well as in-group bias (for overviews, see Riek et al., 2006; Brewer, 2019). Early works in the tradition of realistic group conflict theory (Campbell, 1965) have documented pronounced in-group favouritism and out-group hostility in situations where groups have to compete (Sherif et al., 1961; Sherif and Sherif, 1969). Expanding this theoretical approach, Stephan and Stephan's (2000) integrated threat theory posits that out-group derogation is particularly strong when an in-group perceives a threat from an out-group to its position of power, material well-being, or the norms and values for which it stands.[2] With this in mind, we conceive the triad of place-based grievances that are central to place-based resentment, as perceptions of threat. Essentially, we propose that place-based resentment encompasses the perception of a place-based in-group being threatened by a place-based out-group with regard

[2]Besides these, Stephan and Stephan (2000) also highlight intergroup anxiety and negative stereotyping as potential sources of perceived threat.

to its resources, representation in politics, and respect (Cramer, 2016). Following from this, strong feelings of place-based resentment should increase place-based affective polarisation. However, since urbanites tend to harbour lower levels of place-based resentment than ruralites (e.g., Borwein and Lucas, 2023; Munis, 2022; Zumbrunn, 2024c), we expect that the effects of place-based resentment on place-based affective polarisation are more pronounced among individuals living in rural areas.

H_{2a} The stronger individuals' place-based resentment, the higher their level of place-based affective polarisation.

H_{2b} The relationship between place-based resentment and place-based affective polarisation is more pronounced among rural residents than urban residents.

Besides place-based resentment, place-based affective polarisation might also be rooted in individuals' place-based identities (Zumbrunn, 2024a). Following the minimal group paradigm, simply being a member of a place-based in-group might already be sufficient to induce place-based affective polarisation. Pioneering experiments in social psychology have shown that even when individuals are assigned to explicitly arbitrary social groups, they still tend to favour their in-group over their out-group when asked to allocate resources between the two (e.g., Billig and Tajfel, 1973; Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel et al., 1971; for an overview, see Diehl, 1990). Following from this, urbanites and ruralites might already be biased towards their respective in-group by their mere group membership alone. However, this dynamic is not inevitable and generally heightened under certain conditions (Brewer, 1999). Most importantly, the effect of group membership tends to be mediated by the degree of identification with the in-group (Grieve and Hogg, 1999). In particular, research in political psychology highlights that in-group bias, as well as negative sentiment towards an out-group, crucially depend on the strength of in-group attachments (for an overview, see Huddy, 2001). Therefore, the stronger urbanites (ruralites) feel attached to their urban (rural) in-group, the more they might favour this group over a rural (urban) out-group. Nevertheless, this tendency should again be more pronounced for ruralites as they tend to exhibit stronger place-based identities than urbanites (e.g., Haffert et al., 2024).

H_{3a} The stronger individuals' place-based identity, the higher their level of place-based affective polarisation.

H_{3b} The relationship between place-based identity and place-based affective polarisation is more pronounced among rural residents than urban residents.

Tentative evidence from the United States and Switzerland already lends credence to some of our arguments. Among American voters, Lyons and Utych (2023) document a tendency of urban and rural residents to discriminate against their place-based out-group. They find these biases in political and apolitical settings when respondents are asked to distribute resources between places or decide whom to hire among a set of hypothetical job applicants. In addition to that, Zumbrunn (2024a) finds that Swiss citizens living in rural areas tend to be affectively polarised against urbanites, while urbanites do not seem to reciprocate this feeling. Furthermore, place-based identity and resentment tend to correlate with place-based affective polarisation in the Swiss context, increasing our confidence in the overall plausibility of our hypotheses. Yet, what both studies leave unexplored is the relationship between place-based affective polarisation and voting behaviour.

Against this backdrop, we suggest that place-based affective polarisation particularly influences voting for GAL and TAN parties. These parties take opposing positions along a transnational cleavage, which has developed over the last couple of decades in European politics (for an overview, see Marks et al., 2021). At its core, this divide concerns "the defense of national political, social and economic ways of life against external actors who penetrate the state by migrating, exchanging goods or exerting rule" (Hooghe and Marks, 2018, p.110). Thereby, it comprises a fundamental opposition between GAL parties, who embrace open borders and international governance, and TAN parties, who stand for an outright rejection of these developments (e.g., Dassonneville et al., 2024; Hooghe and Marks, 2018; Hooghe et al., 2002; 2024b).[3]

Crucially, there is first evidence suggesting clear associations between the GAL pole and urban voters on the one hand and the TAN pole and rural voters on the other. Based on compar-

[3] A multitude of alternative labels, such as "integration-demarcation" (Kriesi et al., 2006), "cosmopolitan-communitarian" (Teney et al., 2013), "cosmopolitan-parochial" (De Vries, 2018), or "universalist-particularist" (Häusermann and Kriesi, 2015), have been proposed to also describe this conflict.

ative survey data from France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland, Bornschier et al. (2022) find that urban residents are often regarded as new left voters, while rural residents tend to be seen as voting for either radical right or mainstream right parties. Using open-ended survey questions, Zollinger (2024a) further demonstrates that radical right voters in Switzerland often characterise their political in-groups as rural and out-groups as urban. In addition, Sczepanski (2024) finds that Austrians and Italians perceive rural individuals as more likely to support leaving the European Union, whereas urbanites are viewed as likely voters in favour of remaining. Similarly, in a conjoint experiment conducted in nine European countries, Hegewald (2024a) shows that urban and rural residents are perceived as fundamentally antagonistic social groups that take opposing positions on a multitude of politically charged dimensions. While typical ruralites are often viewed as Eurosceptic, anti-immigrant, working class, lower educated, and older, typical urbanites are perceived as Europhile, pro-immigrant, upper middle class, university educated, and younger.

From a group-based approach to partisanship, these perceptions of group alignments are key in connecting voters' group memberships to their political choices. In short, group-based approaches to partisanship argue that voters compare the typical supporters of each party with their own group memberships and then choose the party whose typical supporters they believe most closely resemble themselves (e.g., Achen and Bartels, 2016; Green et al., 2004; Huddy et al., 2015; Kane et al., 2021; Miller and Wlezien, 1993; Miller et al., 1991; Wlezien and Miller, 1997). Thus, urban residents who like their urban in-group over their rural out-group should be more likely to vote for GAL parties as these are perceived as typically supported by urbanites. By contrast, following the same logic, ruralites who prefer their rural in-group over their urban out-group should be more supportive of TAN parties.

H_{4a} The stronger place-based affective polarisation among urban residents, the more likely they are to vote for GAL parties.

H_{4b} The stronger place-based affective polarisation among rural residents, the more likely they are to vote for TAN parties.

Data and methods

We test our hypotheses by drawing on original survey data from nine European countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Spain). Our data were collected between February and April 2023 via open-access panels administered by the survey company Bilendi. Nationally representative quotas for age, gender, education, and NUTS-2 region were applied. About 1,000 respondents were sampled in each country, resulting in a total sample size of 9,114 respondents. For descriptive statistics and operationalisations of all variables employed in the analysis, see Tables A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix. For data collection periods per country, see Table A.3 in the Appendix.

Our main measure of place-based affective polarisation relies on two thermometer ratings asking respondents to indicate how warm or cold they feel towards their respective place-based in-groups and out-groups. We code respondents' in-groups and out-groups by preceding the thermometer questions with a self-classification item asking respondents whether they live in a "very rural", "rather rural", "rather urban" or "very urban" place.[4] Respondents are coded as rural when they have indicated that they live in a "very rural" or "rather rural" place and urban when they have indicated otherwise. Using these two thermometer scores, we then follow the literature on affective partisan polarisation (e.g., Iyengar et al., 2012, 2019) by forming a thermometer differential, where we subtract respondents' out-group ratings from their in-group ratings. On this differential, positive values indicate higher place-based affective polarisation, where in-group affect exceeds out-group affect, while negative values mean the opposite.[5]

Place-based resentment is measured using a scale we adapted from Munis (2022). The scale consists of five items, asking urban (rural) respondents to indicate how much they agree

[4]We thereby follow recent advice by Nemerever and Rogers (2021), to rely on respondents' self-classifications when measuring concepts relating to place as a social identity.

[5]Our main findings are robust to an alternative operationalisation of place-based affective polarisation that relies on trait ratings instead (for examples in the literature on affective partisan polarisation, see Garrett et al. 2014; Iyengar et al. 2012; Levendusky 2018; Levendusky and Malhotra 2018). The items we use are shown in Table A.4 in the Appendix, asking respondents to rate their respective placed-based in-groups and out-groups according to three positive characteristics (intelligent, open-minded and honest) and two negative characteristics (selfish and hypocritical). Each item was answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". After reverse coding the negative items (selfish and hypocritical), we calculate average scales for in-group affect (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.74$) and out-group affect (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.66$). We then form a trait-rating differential by subtracting respondents' out-group affect from their in-group affect. For distributions of the trait-rating differential per country, see Figure A.1 in the Appendix. For a replication of our main results, see Figures A.2 and A.3, and Tables A.5 and A.6 in the Appendix. Our substantive findings remain the same.

with different statements about ruralites (urbanites) shortchanging their area for its fair share of resources, attention from policy-makers, and respect.[6] Respondents answered each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". From these answers, we then calculate an average scale (Cronbach's α = 0.83).

Our measure of place-based identity taps self-reported closeness to urban people for respondents who have indicated that they live in an urban place and closeness to rural people for respondents who have said that they live in a rural area. By way of that, this variable measures urban or rural in-group attachment depending on the stated group membership respondents have indicated on the self-classification item. Both items we use were adapted from Bornschier et al. (2021) and answered by respondents on a scale from 1 ("not close at all") to 10 ("very close").[7]

We operationalise voting for GAL and TAN parties by relying on a question asking respondents which party they would vote for if there were an election for the country's national parliament tomorrow. Taking this variable as a basis, we classify respondents' vote choices with the help of expert survey data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). We rely on the most recent edition from the 2023 SPEED CHES wave (Hooghe et al., 2024a). Specifically, we use the GAL-TAN item that ranks parties on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 ("libertarian/postmaterialist") to 10 ("traditional/authoritarian"). We then code respondents' vote intentions according to these party scores. More specifically, this means that if a person would vote, for instance, for the German Greens, in our data, we code this individual with the value the party receives on the CHES GAL-TAN item. Therefore, higher values on this variable represent a higher propensity for respondents to vote for TAN parties. By comparison, lower values stand for a higher propensity to vote for GAL parties.[8] We opt for this coding of voting behaviour

[6]For distributions of place-based resentment per country, and the items we use, see Figure A.4 and Table A.7 in the Appendix.

[7]For distributions of place-based identity per country, see Figure A.5 in the Appendix. We assess the robustness of our findings by replicating our main results with a variable measuring respondents' attachment to their place of residence instead. For distributions of attachment to place of residence per country, see Figure A.6 in the Appendix. For the replication of our results, see Figure A.7 and Table A.8 in the Appendix. While the results in the rural sample are robust to this alternative operationalisation of place-based identity, the significance level of the coefficient in the urban sample seems to depend on the control variables included in the model.

[8]For distributions of the GAL-TAN voting variable per country, see Figure A.8 in the Appendix. We replicate our main results by estimating additional models focusing on vote intention for radical right and green parties as two alternative dependent variables. These dummy variables are coded as 1 if respondents indicated they would vote for a green/radical right party and 0 if respondents indicated that they would vote for any other party (except

as this is a particularly suitable strategy to make individual electoral preferences comparable across our diverse set of countries.

To test H_1, we show the distributions of place-based affective polarisation per country by self-classified urban-rural residence. We then run a series of simple unpaired t-tests to discern if the means between both groups are significantly different. We test H_{2a} to H_{3b} by splitting the sample into urban and rural sub-samples, again by relying on respondents' self-classifications. After this, we run two separate ordinary least square (OLS) regressions with fixed effects at the country level, where we regress the thermometer differential on our measures of place-based resentment and identity. Lastly, we test H_{4a} and H_{4b} by regressing the GAL-TAN voting variable on an interaction term between the thermometer differential and a dummy variable indicating rural or urban residence according to respondents' self-classifications.[9] All models control for a range of potential confounders, including gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement.

Results

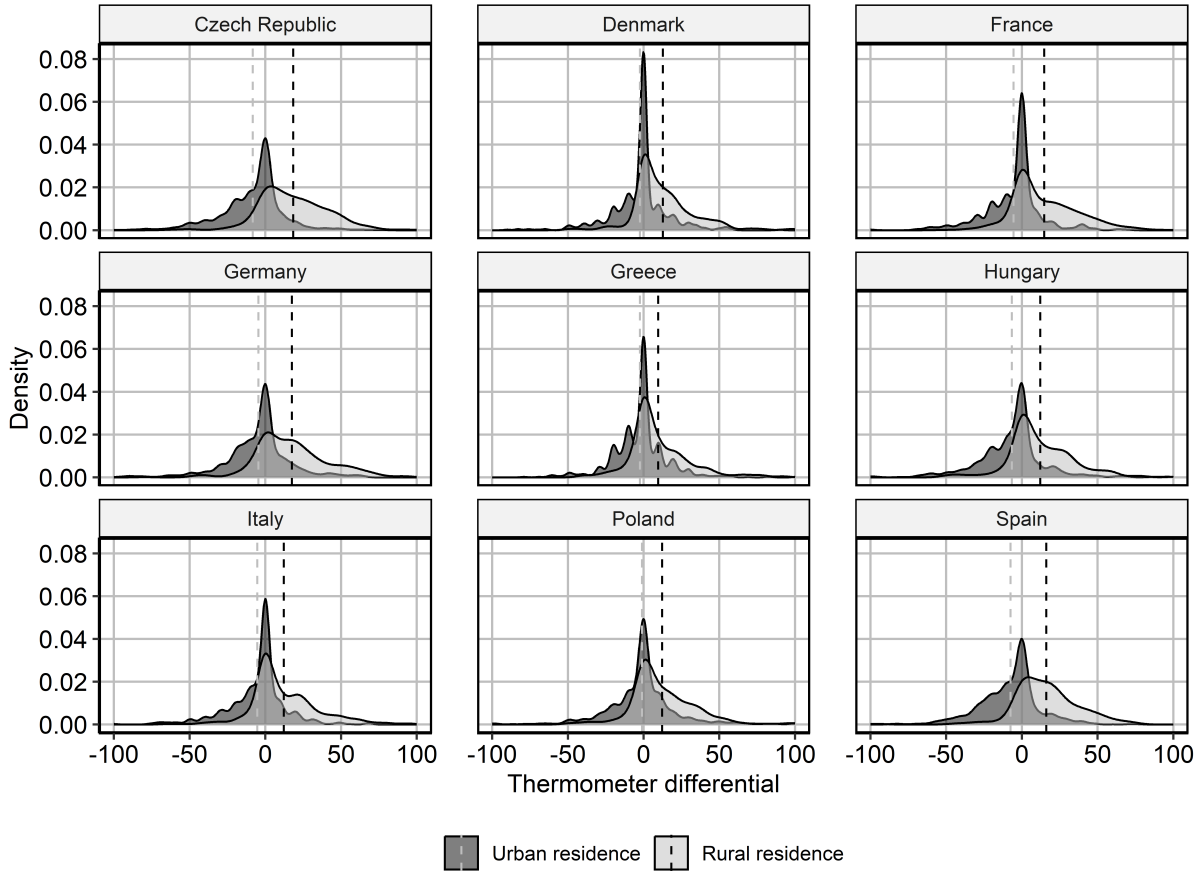
Asymmetries in place-based affective polarisation

We start by describing the distribution of place-based affective polarisation for all nine countries surveyed in our study. To this end, Figure 1 plots the distributions of the thermometer differential per country by self-classified urban-rural residence. Clearly, place-based affective polarisation exists in all countries under investigation, albeit to different degrees. A significant number of respondents in each country exhibit a bias towards their respective urban or rural in-group, as indicated by the positive values of the differential. Overall, about 38.65% of respondents have a positive differential. This proportion is lowest in Hungary with 33.72% and highest in Germany with 46.79%. For many respondents in our data, we find a pronounced difference in the evaluations of place-based in-groups and out-groups, where the former is preferred over the latter. However, it is important to note that, on average, place-based affective

the "other" category). We code green and radical right parties according to the party family variable in the CHES. For a replication of our results, see Figure A.9, and Tables A.9 and A.10 in the Appendix. Our substantive findings remain the same.

[9]Following Hainmueller et al. (2019), we test the linearity assumption of the interaction by using a simple binning estimator (see Figure A.10 in the Appendix).

Figure 1: Distributions of place-based affective polarisation per country, by self-classified urban-rural residence.



Note: Kernel density plot. The thermometer differential indicates the difference between respondents' in-group and out-group thermometer ratings. Positive values indicate higher place-based affective polarisation, where in-group ratings exceed out-group ratings, while negative values mean the opposite. The dashed lines indicate the mean values of the thermometer differential for urban and rural respondents respectively.

polarisation tends to be lower than affective partisan polarisation, as shown in Figure A.11 in the Appendix.

We now turn to our first hypothesis on the asymmetry of place-based affective polarisation between urbanites and ruralites. As expected, place-based affective polarisation is more pronounced among rural residents. Within the rural sub-sample, 66.34% have a positive differential, while only 26.89% in the urban sub-sample have the same. Looking further at the dashed lines in Figure 1, which indicate the mean values of the thermometer differential for urban and rural residents, reveals that average place-based affective polarisation among ruralites considerably exceeds that among urbanites in all nine countries studied. The gap between both groups is largest in the Czech Republic, with a difference of 26.72 points, and smallest in Greece, with

a difference of 12.08 points. A series of unpaired t-tests show that all of these differences are statistically significant at a $p < 0.001$ level (see Table A.11 in the Appendix). This supports our expectation of asymmetric levels of place-based affective polarisation between urban and rural residents (H_1).

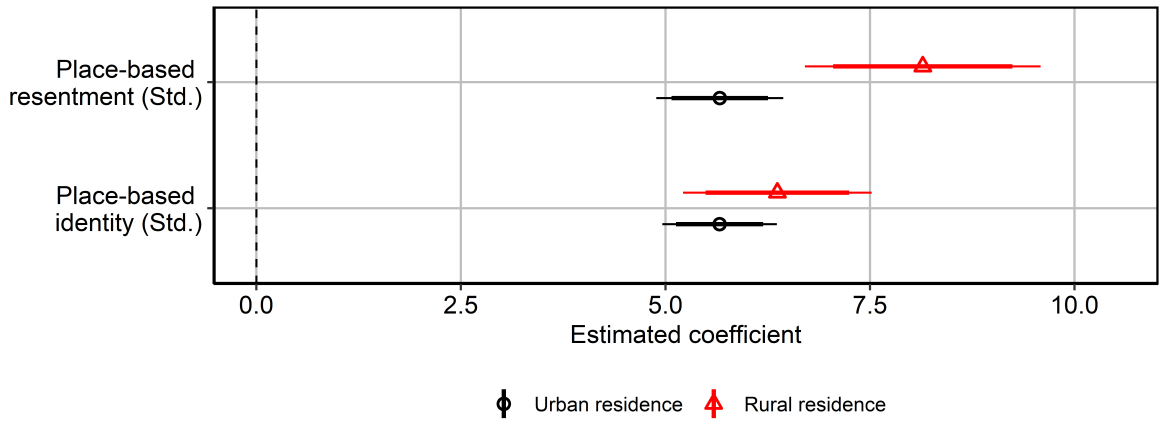
Drivers of place-based affective polarisation

We now investigate our hypotheses on the effects of place-based resentment and identity on place-based affective polarisation. Figure 2 presents the results of two OLS regressions, examining the drivers of place-based affective polarisation. We split our sample with regard to respondents' self-classifications of urban and rural residence, regressing the thermometer differential on our measures of place-based resentment and identity within each sub-sample. Full model results can be found in Table A.12 in the Appendix. Increased feelings of place-based resentment are associated with a stronger preference for one's place-based in-group among both urbanites and ruralites. With each standard deviation increase in place-based resentment, the mean level of the thermometer differential grows by 5.66 points among urbanites and 8.15 points among ruralites. This change corresponds to approximately a quarter of a standard deviation in the thermometer differential for urban residents and just over a third of a standard deviation for rural residents.

Results for the relationship between place-based identity and affective polarisation are similar. Respondents with a stronger attachment to their urban or rural in-group tend to favour their in-group over their out-group. Among urban residents, the increase in place-based affective polarisation associated with a one standard deviation increase in place-based identity is about the same as that associated with a one standard deviation increase in place-based resentment. For rural residents, each standard deviation increase in place-based identity corresponds to a 6.37-point increase in the mean level of the thermometer differential. This is slightly more than a quarter of a standard deviation in place-based affective polarisation.

The coefficients for both place-based resentment and identity are marginally larger in the rural sub-sample. In Table A.13 in the Appendix, we estimate additional OLS regressions, where we interact place-based resentment and identity with respondents' urban-rural self-

Figure 2: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence.

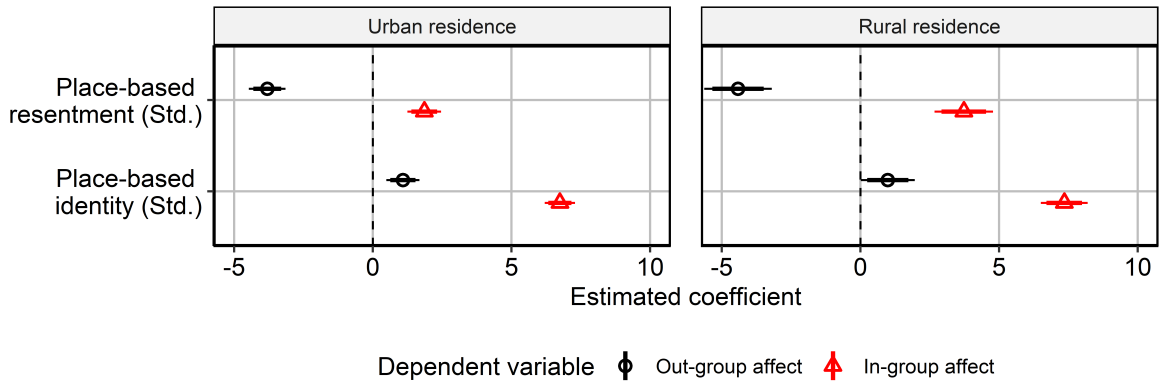


Note: OLS regression coefficients with country fixed effects. Thick and thin lines are 95% and 99% confidence intervals, respectively. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results see Table A.12 in the Appendix.

classifications. These models show a more pronounced positive association between place-based resentment and identity with place-based affective polarisation among rural residents compared to urban residents. This result squares well with other studies documenting higher levels of place-based resentment and identity among ruralites (e.g., Borwein and Lucas, 2023; Haffert et al., 2024; Munis, 2022; Zumbrunn, 2024c).

Our findings on the drivers of place-based affective polarisation tend to hold across the different country contexts investigated. Table A.14 in the Appendix presents OLS regressions per country, regressing the thermometer differential on place-based resentment and identity. For reasons of low statistical power, we only show results without control variables, whenever we look at the individual country samples. In all nine countries, place-based resentment and identity are strongly associated with an increase in place-based affective polarisation among both ruralites and urbanites. However, when it comes to differences in effect sizes between the urban and rural sub-samples, there seems to be some heterogeneity between countries. As shown in Table A.15 in the Appendix, the interactions between place-based identity and urban-rural self-classifications only reach conventional levels of statistical significance in Italy. Conversely, the interactions between urban-rural self-classifications and place-based resentment are statistically significant in all countries except for Hungary, Poland, and Spain.

Figure 3: OLS regression results: in-group affect and out-group affect on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence.



Note: OLS regression coefficients with country fixed effects. Thick and thin lines are 95% and 99% confidence intervals, respectively. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results see Table A.16 in the Appendix.

We delve deeper into the underlying mechanisms of our findings by examining the associations of place-based resentment and place-based identity with the constituent parts of the thermometer differential. Our theoretical arguments somewhat imply that we should see higher levels of place-based identity and resentment to decrease out-group affect, but to increase in-group affect. To test for this, Figure 3 summarises the results from four OLS regressions, where we regress either in-group or out-group affect on place-based resentment and place-based identity. We again split the sample by urban and rural residence following respondents self-classifications. Full model results can be found in Table A.16 in the Appendix. As we would expect, among urban and rural residents, higher levels of place-based resentment increase in-group affect and decrease out-group affect. Therefore, place-based resentment appears to simultaneously induce out-group negativity as well as in-group like.

By contrast, the positive coefficients for place-based identity in Figure 3 show that stronger attachment to one's place-based in-group increases both in-group and out-group affect. This finding holds for both urbanites as well as ruralites and somewhat contradicts our theoretical arguments. However, that being said, the associations between place-based identity and in-group affect tend to be weaker than those with out-group affect. While a one standard deviation increase in place-based identity among urbanites (ruralites) is associated with a 6.75 (7.35) points increase in in-group affect, it only marginally increases out-group affect by 1.08 (0.99)

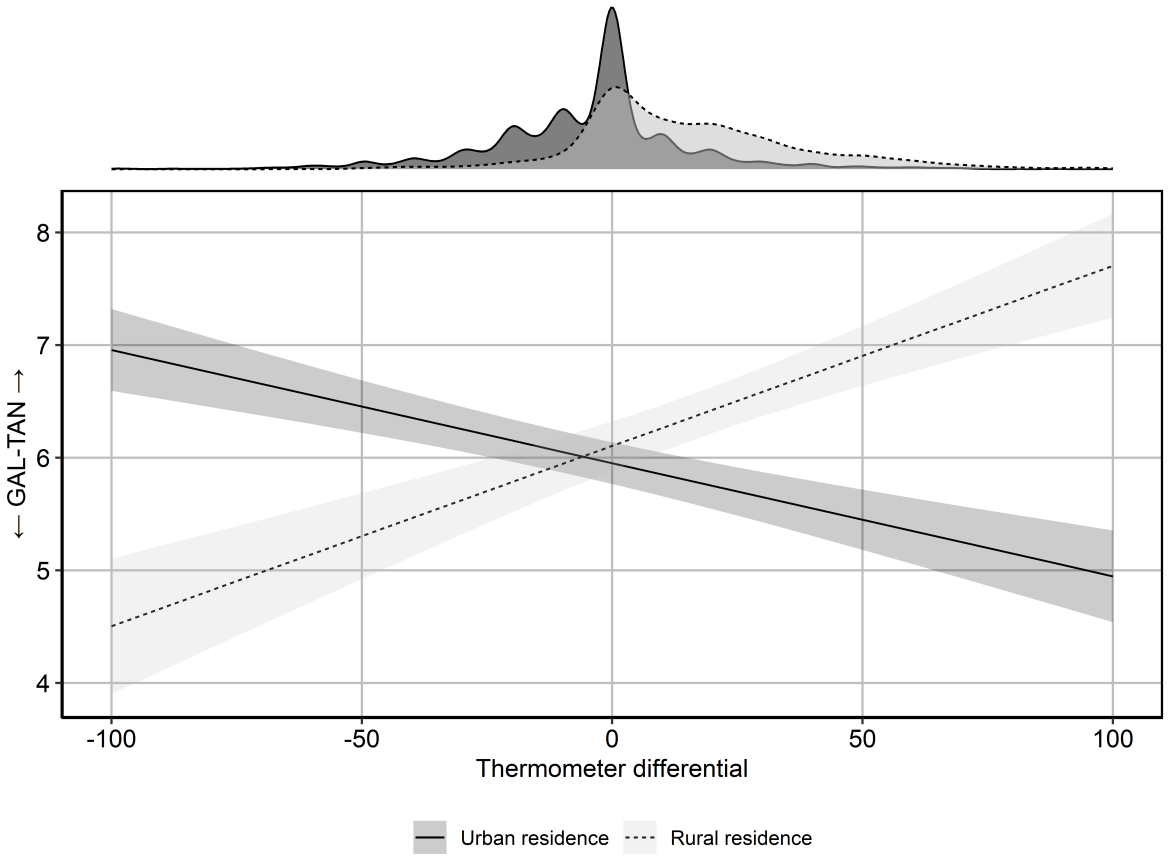
points. In this regard, the association between place-based identity and place-based affective polarisation appears to be driven by considerable differences in the magnitude of effects on in-group and out-group affect.

Overall, our findings provide clear evidence supporting our expectation that stronger place-based resentment underpins higher levels of place-based affective polarisation (H_{2a}). This relationship, in turn, tends to be more pronounced among rural residents (H_{2b}). By contrast, our analysis of the relationship between place-based identity and place-based affective polarisation yields somewhat mixed results. Although we find a strong, positive association between place-based identity and the thermometer differential, we cannot conclude that this association is driven by a negative relationship with out-group affect, and a positive relationship with in-group affect. We, therefore, only count our findings as partial evidence for our expectation that strong place-based identity coincides with higher levels of place-based affective polarisation (H_{3a}). Strong place-based identity polarises place-based affect but does not fuel out-group dislike. This makes sense in light of the place-based resentment literature, as it might require place-based grievances to put urbanites and ruralites into an antagonistic conflict that generates out-group dislike. Furthermore, while we can show that this positive association is more pronounced among ruralites (H_{3b}), this interaction does not consistently hold across the different country contexts under investigation.

The electoral consequences of place-based affective polarisation

After we have examined the drivers of place-based affective polarisation, we will now focus on its electoral consequences. Figure 4 plots the predicted values of respondents' vote intentions for GAL and TAN parties over different values of the thermometer differential, splitting the estimates by respondents' urban-rural self-classifications. Full model results with a standardised version of the thermometer differential can be found in Table A.17 in the Appendix. The interaction term is statistically significant at a $p < 0.001$ level. Among urbanites, place-based affective polarisation increases voting for GAL parties. The more urban residents prefer their in-group over their out-group, the more they tend to vote for parties embracing transnationalism. By contrast, higher levels of place-based affective polarisation increase support for TAN

Figure 4: Predicted values of GAL-TAN voting variable by place-based affective polarisation, conditional on urban-rural self-classifications.

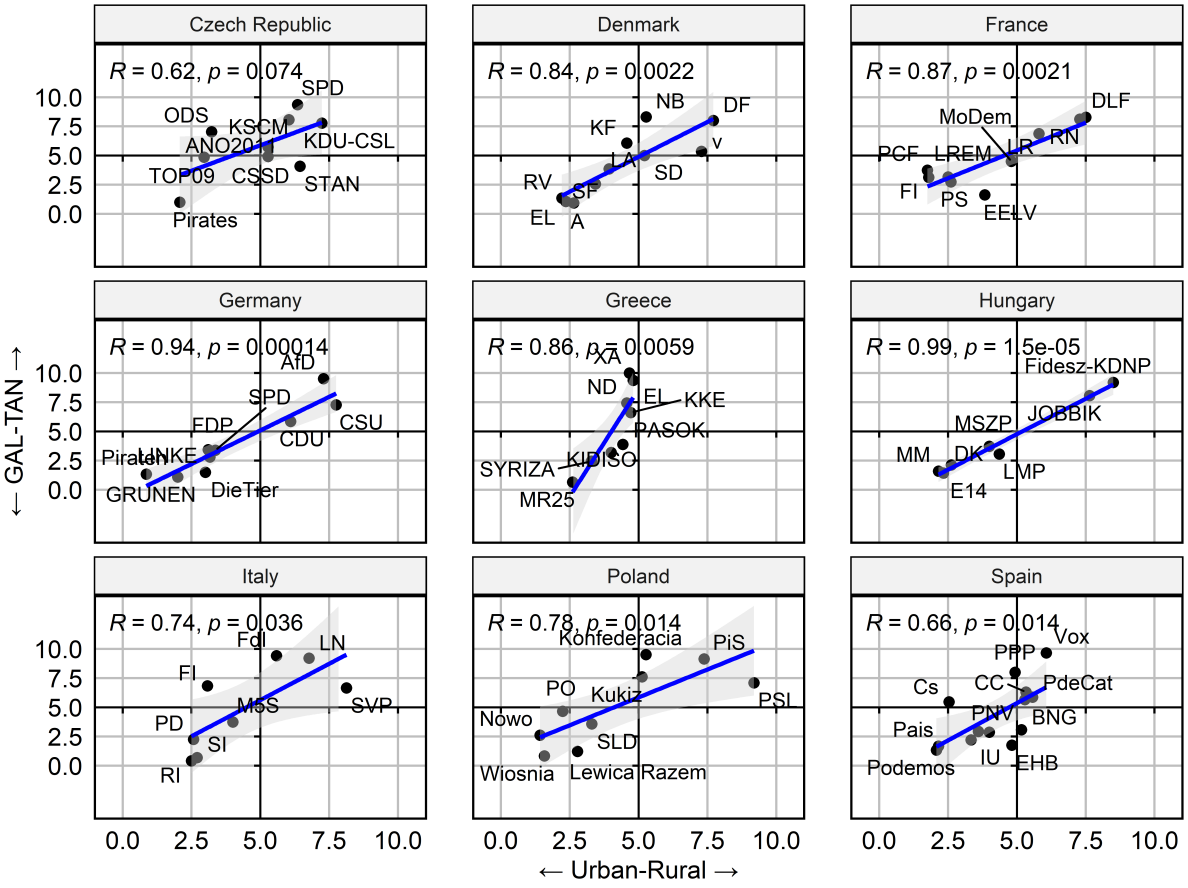


Note: Predicted values of GAL-TAN voting based on OLS regression with country fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals displayed. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results with a standardised version of the thermometer differential, see Table A.17 in the Appendix.

parties among ruralites. As in-group bias among rural residents grows, so does their propensity to vote for TAN parties.

Substantially, our findings suggest that a one standard deviation increase in the thermometer differential results in a decrease in our GAL-TAN voting variable of -0.23 points among urban residents, and an increase of 0.36 points among rural residents. This shows that the effect of place-based affective polarisation is slightly more pronounced among ruralites, but also plays an important role for urbanites. Overall, the size of these effects is small, given a standard deviation of 2.82 in our dependent variable. However, an increase by one standard deviation in place-based affective polarisation would, for example, still resemble a shift from the liberal FDP (GAL-TAN $=$ 2.45) to the radial left party Die Linke (GAL-TAN $=$ 2.73) within the

Figure 5: Correlations between urban-rural and GAL-TAN party positions, 2019.



Note: Pearson's *R* correlation coefficients between urban-rural and GAL-TAN party positions in 2019. Data stem from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey trend file (Jolly et al., 2022). The GAL-TAN variable ranges from 0 ("libertarian/postmaterialist") to 10 ("traditional/authoritarian"), and the urban-rural variable from 0 ("strongly supports urban interests") to 10 ("strongly supports rural interests"). The solid line indicates a linear fit. The shaded area denotes a 95% confidence interval.

German context. Furthermore, these marginal effects are calculated based on a statistical model with a set of demanding control variables, such as left-right self-placement. We therefore consider these results as lower-bound estimates.

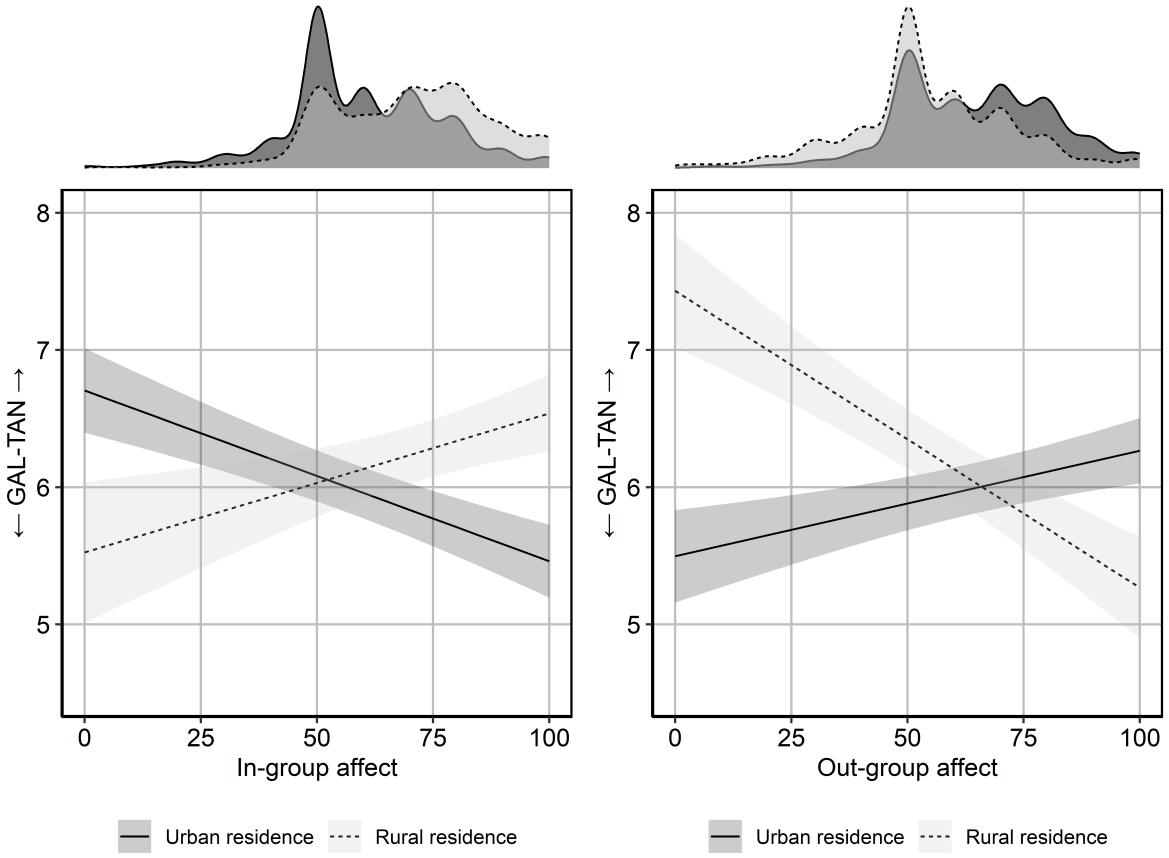
Our findings are robust across the different country contexts under investigation. As shown in Table A.18 in the Appendix, we observe a positive, statistically significant interaction term between the thermometer differential and respondents' urban-rural self-classifications in all countries except Spain. We can only speculate why this is the case. To this end, Figure 5 plots the correlations between urban-rural and GAL-TAN party positions in all nine countries. The GAL-TAN party position variable is the same as before, and the urban-rural variable ranges from 0 ("strongly supports urban interests") to 10 ("strongly supports rural interests"). Since

urban-rural party positions are not available in the 2023 CHES wave, we have to rely on CHES data from 2019 for this analysis (Jolly et al., 2022). The bivariate correlations between urban-rural and GAL-TAN party positions are statistically significant at a $p < 0.05$ level, positive, and strong in all countries except for the Czech Republic. This illustrates well a pronounced overlap of parties' orientations on the transnational cleavage and their positions regarding urban-rural interests. Parties at the GAL pole of the transnational divide tend to embrace urban issues, while parties more closely located to the TAN side are stronger proponents of rural interests.

Moreover, all countries seem to have at least one GAL party that is also a strong advocate of urban interests, as represented by each of the lower left quadrants in Figure 5. A similar picture emerges in the upper right quadrants, where most countries have at least one TAN party that strongly caters to ruralites. However, the party systems in Greece and Spain appear to lack a strong TAN proponent for rural interests. Whereas TAN parties in most of the countries under investigation marry a platform opposed to transnationalism with a pro-rural stance, this seems not to be the case in Greece and Spain. Crucially, when we replicate our analysis using the GAL-TAN item from the 2019 CHES wave as the basis for our dependent variable, we can observe that the interaction term between the thermometer differential and respondents' urban-rural self-classifications also loses its statistical significance in Greece, dropping to a $p < 0.1$ level (see Table A.19 in the Appendix). Taken together, this might explain why we do not find a strong relationship between the thermometer differential and GAL-TAN voting in these countries.

Again, we dive deeper into our theoretical mechanism by investigating the effects of in-group and out-group like separately. Figure 6 plots the predicted values of respondents' vote intentions for GAL and TAN parties over different values of in-group affect (left panel) and out-group affect (right panel), conditional on respondents' urban-rural self-classifications. It illustrates why it is important to look at sentiments directed at place-based in-groups and out-groups in conjunction. Full model results with standardised versions of the in-group and out-group affect variables can be found in Table A.20 in the Appendix. Both interactions are included in the same model and are statistically significant at a $p < 0.001$ level. This already shows that even when controlling for in-group affect (out-group affect), out-group affect (in-

Figure 6: Predicted values of GAL-TAN voting variable by in-group affect and out-group affect, conditional on urban-rural self-classifications.



Note: Predicted values of GAL-TAN voting based on OLS regression with country fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals displayed. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results with standardised versions of in-group and out-group affect, see Table A.20 in the Appendix.

group affect) retains its explanatory relevance for GAL-TAN voting. Furthermore, in-group and out-group affect are of different importance for structuring urbanites' and ruralites' respective voting intentions. Notably, the importance of in-group affect outweighs that of out-group affect among urban residents. A one standard deviation increase in in-group affect results in a -0.21 points decrease on the GAL-TAN voting variable, while the same change for out-group affect results in an increase of only 0.13 points. For rural residents, in turn, we see the opposite pattern. A one standard deviation increase in out-group affect corresponds to a -0.37 points decrease on the GAL-TAN variable, whereas a one standard deviation change in in-group affect only results in an increase of 0.17 points. Therefore, while both in-group and out-group affect seem to matter for GAL-TAN voting, the former tends to be more important for urbanites,

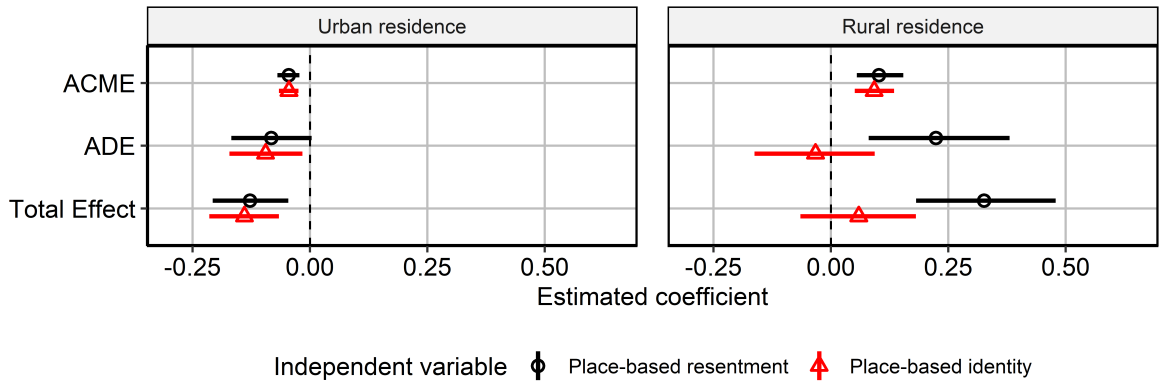
while the latter appears to make a larger difference for ruralites. Crucially, we would miss these nuances, if we would concentrate on in-group sentiments only.

Place-based affective polarisation as a mediator

Lastly, our theoretical arguments locate place-based affective polarisation between place-based resentment as well as place-based identity on the one hand, and GAL-TAN voting, on the other hand. After all, we argue that both place-based resentment and identity are drivers of place-based affective polarisation, which, we suggest, should in turn influence vote choice for GAL and TAN parties. In this sense, we implicitly conceptualise place-based affective polarisation as a mediator that potentially translates the effects of place-based resentment and identity into voting behaviour. We test for this possibility by relying on causal mediation analysis (Imai et al., 2011). This framework allows us to identify the average causal mediation effects (ACMEs) of place-based affective polarisation and the average direct effects (ADEs) of place-based resentment and identity on voting behaviour. We first fit an OLS model estimating the effects of place-based resentment and identity on place-based affective polarisation. After this, in a second model, we estimate the effects of place-based affective polarisation, resentment, and identity on GAL-TAN voting. These two models then allow us to assess to what extent, place-based affective polarisation mediates the effects of place-based resentment and identity. Both models include country fixed effects and the same set of control variables as before. We again split the sample by respondents' urban-rural self-classifications, performing a mediation analysis in each sub-sample.

Figure 7 presents the results of the causal mediation analysis. Both among urbanites and ruralites, place-based affective polarisation mediates the effects of place-based resentment and identity on the GAL-TAN voting variable. In the urban sub-sample, the ACMEs for both resentment and identity are statistically significant and negative, indicating that both variables have a negative effect on GAL-TAN voting via increasing levels of place-based affective polarisation. The ADEs also show that place-based identity still retains a negative direct effect on GAL-TAN voting, while the ADE for place-based resentment just misses statistical significance. By contrast, among ruralites, the ACMEs are statistically significant and positive, meaning that both

Figure 7: Causal mediation analysis: how place-based affective polarisation mediates the relationship between place-based resentment/place-based identity and GAL-TAN voting.



Note: Causal mediation analysis implemented using the R package `mediation` (Imai et al., 2011). 95% quasi-Bayesian confidence intervals displayed. Models include country fixed effects and control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. The ACMEs denote the average causal mediation effects of place-based affective polarisation. The ADEs relate to the average direct effects of place-based resentment and place-based identity.

place-based resentment and identity have a positive effect on the GAL-TAN voting variable via place-based affective polarisation. Furthermore, while place-based resentment has a direct effect on voting behaviour in this sample, there seems to be no direct effect of place-based identity.

In conclusion, our analysis of the electoral consequences of place-based affective polarisation provides strong evidence for our expectations that higher levels of place-based affective polarisation are associated with voting for GAL parties among urbanites (H_{4a}), and support for TAN parties among ruralites (H_{4b}). The more urbanites like their in-group over their out-group, the more they tend to vote for GAL parties. Conversely, as rural residents increasingly prefer their in-group over their out-group, the more they vote for TAN parties. We have also shown that the constituent parts of place-based affective polarisation, in-group affect and out-group affect, both matter for respondents' vote choice. However, while in-group affect tends to make a larger difference for urbanites, out-group affect appears to be more important for ruralites. Finally, our results suggests that place-based affective polarisation might represent a crucial mediator translating the effects of place-based resentment and identity into voting behaviour.

Conclusion

After decades of absence, the urban-rural divide has woken up. Urbanites and ruralites appear to continuously drift apart in the way they vote, the attitudes they hold, and the extent to which they support the political system more generally (e.g., Hegewald, 2024b; Huijsmans and Rodden, 2024; Jennings and Stoker, 2016; Lago, 2022; Maxwell, 2019, 2020; McKay et al., 2021; Mitsch et al., 2021; Rodden, 2019; Scala and Johnson, 2017; Stein et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2024; Zumbrunn, 2024b). Existing explanations have highlighted the importance of place-based grievances, identities and resentment (e.g., Bornschier et al., 2021; Cramer, 2016; Huijsmans, 2023a,b; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley, 2022; Munis, 2022; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018) However, the extent to which the urban-rural cleavage also developed into an affective divide remained unclear.

In this study, we have, therefore, advanced the concept of place-based affective polarisation, which we defined as the difference in affect between place-based in-groups and out-groups. Our analysis documents a substantive bias of respondents to prefer people from their own place over people from other places. These results fit nicely with other studies finding that affective polarisation can also emerge around other social groups beyond partisanship (e.g., Hobolt et al., 2021; Van Noord et al., 2024). While place-based affective polarisation is present among urbanites and ruralites, it tends to be more pronounced among the latter. Furthermore, we find that it is underpinned by a sense of place-based resentment, which simultaneously lowers out-group affect and increases in-group affect. Conversely, we uncover a different pattern when it comes to place-based identity. Although place-based identity and place-based affective polarisation correlate strongly, stronger attachment to one's place-based in-group does not result in more negative feelings towards one's out-group. Nevertheless, we show that place-based resentment and identity are more strongly linked to place-based affective polarisation among rural residents.

Our analysis also reveals significant consequences of place-based affective polarisation for GAL-TAN voting. The more urban residents like urbanites over ruralites, the higher their support for GAL parties. Contrarily, increasing levels of place-based affective polarisation among ruralites coincide with voting for TAN parties. Both sentiments directed at place-based

in-groups and out-groups are central here. Crucially, out-group affect retains its explanatory power when controlling for in-group affect. Moreover, we show that out-group affect is more important for vote choice among ruralites, while in-group affect matters more for urbanites. This nuances the literature on place-based identity, which predominately focuses on individuals' attachments to place-based in-groups (e.g., Bolet, 2021; Bornschier et al., 2021; Fitzgerald, 2018; Zollinger, 2024b).

Besides this, our study is a first attempt to untangle an intricate web of interrelated concepts. Our theoretical arguments have located place-based affective polarisation between place-based resentment and identity, on the one hand, and voting behaviour, on the other hand. Using causal mediation analysis (Imai et al., 2011), our results indicate that place-based affective polarisation acts as a crucial mediator that translates the effects of place-based resentment and identity into vote choice for GAL and TAN parties.

Relying on comparative data has further allowed us to test the viability of our hypotheses in a diverse set of nine European countries. Given that many studies focus on single countries such as the United States (e.g., Cramer, 2016; Jacobs and Munis, 2023; Lunz Trujillo and Crowley, 2022; Lyons and Utych, 2023; Munis, 2022), Switzerland (e.g., Bornschier et al., 2021; Zollinger, 2024b; Zumbrunn, 2024a,b,c), or the Netherlands (e.g., Huijsmans, 2023a,b), our study is among the first to provide a more comparative picture. Although we show that most of our hypotheses hold in all nine countries under investigation, we also uncover some diverging patterns, particularly in Greece and Spain. Due to the relatively small number of countries, we could only speculate why this heterogeneity occurs. Clearly, more comparative research is necessary here to explain these differences more systematically.

Further research should also investigate other drivers of place-based affective polarisation that were not discussed here. For example, according to Mason (2015; 2016; 2018), one crucial explanation for affective partisan polarisation in the United States can be found in the increasing alignment of partisanship with other salient social identities, specifically ideology, race and religion. In this sense, when urbanites and ruralites perceive each other as very different social groups occupying opposing ends on various political cleavages, these perceptions of group alignment might also drive place-based affective polarisation.

Overall, our findings point to a pronounced affective basis that buttresses the urban-rural divide in a number of European countries. Given that this is central to the development of a pronounced cleavage (e.g., Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Borbáth et al., 2023), our study provides critical evidence suggesting that the urban-rural divide is indeed a relevant line of political conflict in Europe. However, only time will tell if divisions between cities and the countryside are also here to stay.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Summary statistics of all variables.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	9,114	48.53	15.88	18	93
Age (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−1.92	2.80
Gender	9,114	0.52	0.50	0	1
Education	9,114	0.30	0.46	0	1
Income (Deciles)	7,412	5.50	2.87	1	10
GAL-TAN vote	6,430	5.49	2.82	0.57	10.00
Radical right vote	6,430	0.29	0.46	0	1
Green vote	6,430	0.08	0.27	0	1
Thermometer differential	9,114	0.89	22.51	−100	100
Thermometer differential (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−4.48	4.40
Thermometer ratings in-group	9,114	61.49	17.19	0	100
Thermometer ratings in-group (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−3.58	2.24
Thermometer ratings out-group	9,114	60.60	17.17	0	100
Thermometer ratings out-group (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−3.53	2.29
Trait-rating differential	9,114	−0.12	0.90	−4.00	4.00
Trait-rating differential (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−4.29	4.57
Trait ratings in-group	9,114	3.10	0.65	1.00	5.00
Trait ratings out-group	9,114	3.22	0.58	1.00	5.00
Intelligence rating (in-group)	9,114	3.36	0.77	1	5
Open-mindedness rating (in-group)	9,114	3.43	0.94	1	5
Honesty rating (in-group)	9,114	3.10	0.97	1	5
Selfishness rating (in-group; reversed)	9,114	2.74	0.98	1	5
Hypocrisy rating (in-group; reversed)	9,114	2.87	0.98	1	5
Intelligence rating (out-group)	9,114	3.35	0.75	1	5
Open-mindedness rating (out-group)	9,114	3.21	0.98	1	5
Honesty rating (out-group)	9,114	3.41	0.88	1	5
Selfishness rating (out-group; reversed)	9,114	3.05	0.91	1	5
Hypocrisy rating (out-group; reversed)	9,114	3.10	0.89	1	5
Place-based resentment	9,114	2.92	0.85	1.00	5.00
Place-based resentment (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−2.26	2.45
Economic	9,114	2.95	0.98	1	5
Representation (A)	9,114	2.95	1.11	1	5
Representation (B)	9,114	2.86	1.18	1	5
Culture (A)	9,114	3.02	1.09	1	5
Culture (B)	9,114	2.83	1.15	1	5
Place-based identity	9,114	7.06	2.04	1	10
Place-based identity (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−2.97	1.44
Urban identity (urban sample only)	6,396	6.95	2.04	1	10
Rural identity (rural sample only)	2,718	7.32	2.02	1	10
Attachment to place of residence	9,114	7.77	2.43	0	10
Attachment to place of residence (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−3.19	0.92
Left-right	9,114	5.10	2.40	0	10
Left-right (Std.)	9,114	0.00	1.00	−2.13	2.05
Urban-rural (full variable)	9,114	1.02	1.00	0	3
Urban-rural (binary)	9,114	0.30	0.46	0	1

Table A.2: Details on measurement of variables.

Variable	Description
Age (Std.)	Self-reported age in years. Standardised.
Gender	Self-reported gender of respondent. 0 ("Male"), 1 ("Female"). 11 respondents who indicated "Non-binary" were dropped from the sample.
Education	"Have you completed a degree of higher education at a university or a similar institution (e.g., a Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD degree)?" Answer categories 0 ("No") = Low, 1 ("Yes") = High.
Income (Deciles)	Monthly net income of respondent's household in local currency. Measured in deciles for each country. In case of a tie respondents were randomly assigned to either the lower or the higher bin.
GAL-TAN vote	"If there was an election for [country's national parliament] tomorrow, for which party would you vote?" Country specific answer categories as well as an "Other" and "No answer" option. Classified according to GAL-TAN variable from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey using the 2023 SPEED CHES - Ukraine wave (Hooghe et al., 2024a). Respondents receive the GAL-TAN score of the party they would vote for. 848 respondents who indicated "Other" and 1,800 respondents who chose "No answer" were dropped from the sample. We also dropped 36 respondents who would vote for a party that was not included in the CHES.
Radical right vote	"If there was an election for [country's national parliament] tomorrow, for which party would you vote?" Country specific answer categories as well as an "Other" and "No answer" option. Classified according to the party family variable from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey using the 2023 SPEED CHES - Ukraine wave (Hooghe et al., 2024a). Respondents who would vote for a "TAN/Radical Right" party are coded as 1, all other respondents are coded as 0. 848 respondents who indicated "Other" and 1,800 respondents who chose "No answer" were dropped from the sample. We also dropped 36 respondents who would vote for a party that was not included in the CHES.

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Green vote	"If there was an election for [country's national parliament] tomorrow, for which party would you vote?" Country specific answer categories as well as an "Other" and "No answer" option. Classified according to the party family variable from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey using the 2023 SPEED CHES - Ukraine wave (Hooghe et al., 2024a). Respondents who would vote for a "Green" party are coded as 1, all other respondents are coded as 0. 848 respondents who indicated "Other" and 1,800 respondents who chose "No answer" were dropped from the sample. We also dropped 36 respondents who would vote for a party that was not included in the CHES.
Thermometer differential (Std.)	Difference between in-group thermometer ratings and out-group thermometer ratings. Positive values indicate higher place-based affective polarisation, where in-group affect exceeds out-group affect, while negative values mean the opposite. Standardised.
Thermometer ratings in-group (Std.)	"Previously, we have asked you about your place of residence. We now want you to judge people from other areas on a so-called 'feeling thermometer'. Scores between 50 and 100 mean that you have positive and warm feelings towards people from a certain area. Scores between 0 and 50 mean you feel cold and negative about the group. A score of 50 means you feel neither warm nor cold about people from the area. How do you feel about…?" - ..."people from [in]". If respondents see themselves as living in a very rural/rather rural place: [in] = rural areas; If respondents see themselves as living in a very urban/rather urban place: [in] = urban areas. Standardised.

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Thermometer ratings out-group (Std.)	"Previously, we have asked you about your place of residence. We now want you to judge people from other areas on a so-called 'feeling thermometer'. Scores between 50 and 100 mean that you have positive and warm feelings towards people from a certain area. Scores between 0 and 50 mean you feel cold and negative about the group. A score of 50 means you feel neither warm nor cold about people from the area. How do you feel about... ?" - ..."people from [out]". If respondents see themselves as living in a very rural/rather rural place: [out] = urban areas; If respondents see themselves as living in a very urban/rather urban place: [out] = rural areas. Standardised.
Trait-rating differential (Std.)	Difference between in-group trait ratings and out-group trait ratings. Positive values indicate higher place-based affective polarisation, where in-group affect exceeds out-group affect, while negative values mean the opposite. Standardised.
Trait ratings in-group	Average scale from in-group trait ratings. For items see Table A.4. Selfishness and hypocrisy ratings are reverse coded.
Trait ratings out-group	Average scale from out-group trait ratings. For items see Table A.4. Selfishness and hypocrisy ratings are reverse coded.
Place-based resentment (Std.)	Average scale from place-based resentment items. For items see Table A.7 (adapted from Munis, 2022). Standardised.
Place-based identity (Std.)	"Of the following groups, how close do you feel towards them? By 'close' we mean people who are most like you in terms of their ideas, interests, and feelings." - "People in urban areas" / "People in rural areas". Answer categories range from 1 ("Not close at all") to 10 ("Very close"). Adapted from Bornschier (2021). If respondents see themselves as living in a very rural/rather rural place, respondents receive their score on the rural closeness item. If respondents see themselves as living in a very urban/rather urban place, respondents receive their score on the urban closeness item. Standardised.

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Attachment to place of residence (Std.)	"On a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 means 'not attached at all', and 10 means 'strongly attached'), how attached do you feel with respect to . . . ?" – "Your place of residence"; Answer categories from 0 ("Not attached at all") to 10 ("Strongly attached"). Standardised.
Left-right (Std.)	"Many people talk of 'left' and 'right' when describing different political views. Below we present you a scale from left (0) to right (10). Thinking about your own political views, where would you place yourself on this scale?" Answer categories range from 0 ("Left") to 10 ("Right"). Standardised.
Urban-rural (full variable)	"Do you live in an urban or rural area?" Answer categories 0 ("Very rural"), 1 ("Rather rural"), 2 ("Rather urban"), 3 ("Very urban"). Reverse coded so it ranges from 0 ("Very urban") to 3 ("Very rural").
Urban-rural (binary variable)	Based on urban-rural (full variable). 0 ("Rather urban" and "Very urban") = Urban residence, 1 ("Rather rural" and "Very rural") = Rural residence.

Table A.3: Data collection periods per country.

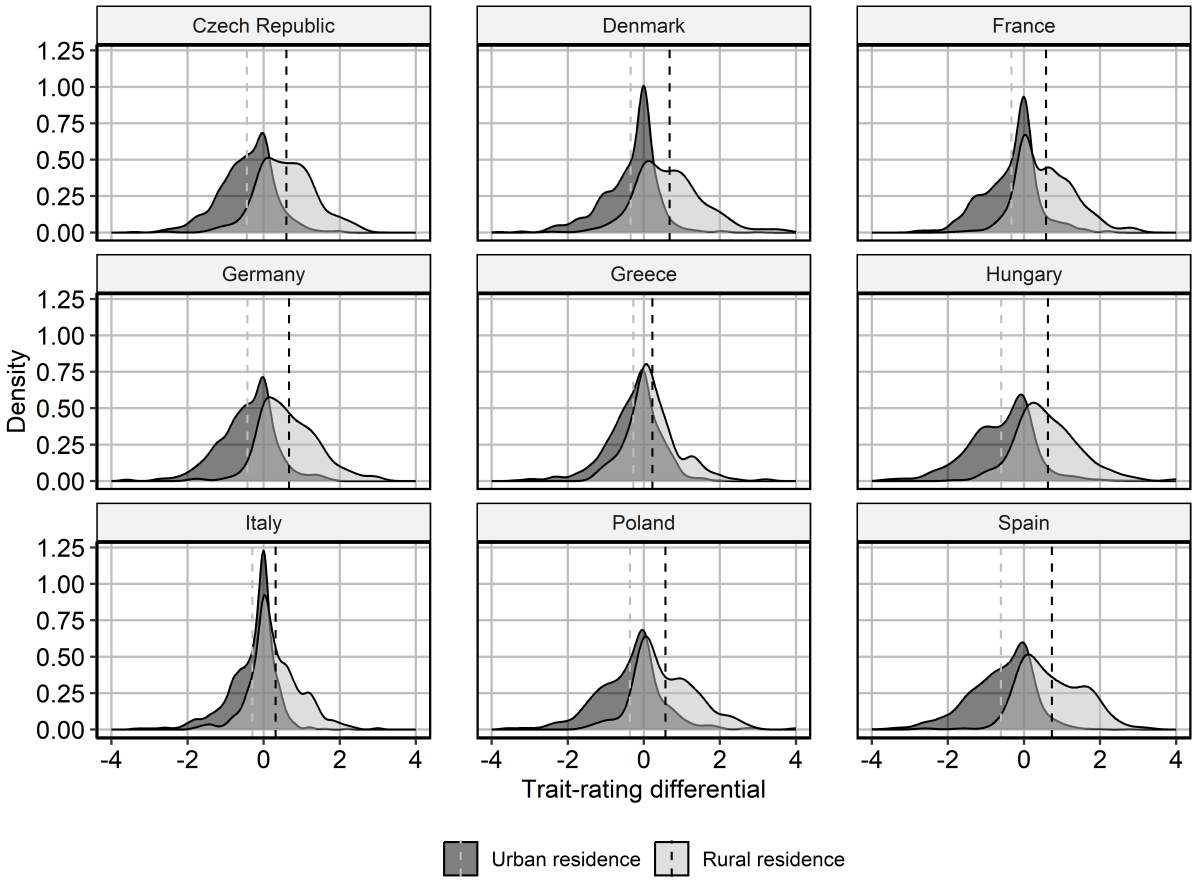
Czech Republic	07 February 2023 – 13 April 2023
Denmark	07 February 2023 – 19 March 2023
France	08 February 2023 – 14 March 2023
Germany	08 February 2023 – 13 March 2023
Greece	23 February 2023 – 01 April 2023
Hungary	09 February 2023 – 23 March 2023
Italy	24 February 2023 – 22 March 2023
Poland	09 February 2023 – 27 March 2023
Spain	17 February 2023 – 23 March 2023

Table A.4: Place-based affective polarisation trait ratings.

People from [in] are...	People from [out] are...
a. Intelligent	a. Intelligent
b. Open minded	b. Open minded
c. Honest	c. Honest
d. Selfish	d. Selfish
e. Hypocritical	e. Hypocritical

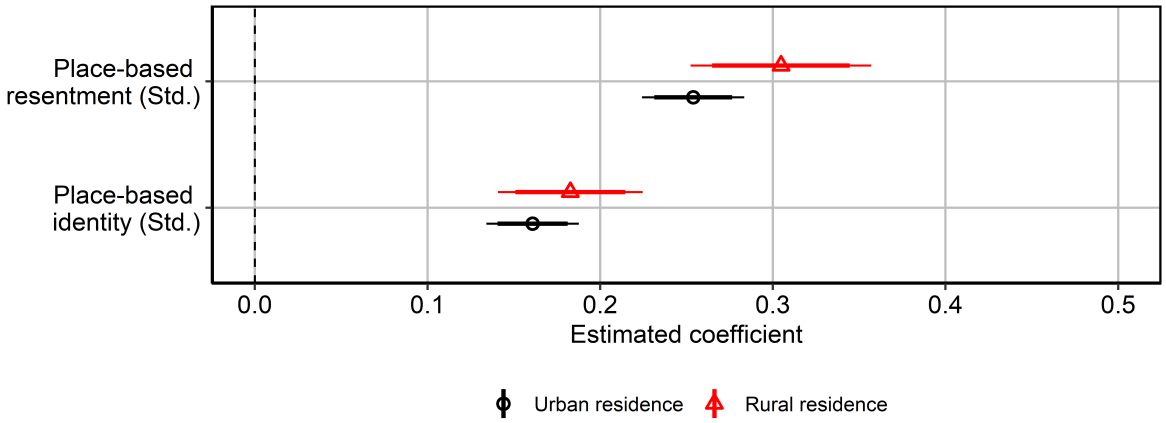
Note: If respondents see themselves as living in a very rural/rural place: [in] = rural areas; [out] = urban areas. If respondents see themselves as living in a very urban/urban place: [in] = urban areas; [out] = rural areas.

Figure A.1: Distributions of place-based affective polarisation per country, by self-classified urban-rural residence (trait-rating differential).



Note: Kernel density plot. The trait-rating differential indicates the difference between respondents' in-group and out-group trait ratings. Positive values indicate higher place-based affective polarisation, where in-group ratings exceed out-group ratings, while negative values mean the opposite. The dashed lines indicate the mean values of the trait-rating differential for urban and rural respondents respectively.

Figure A.2: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence (trait-rating differential).



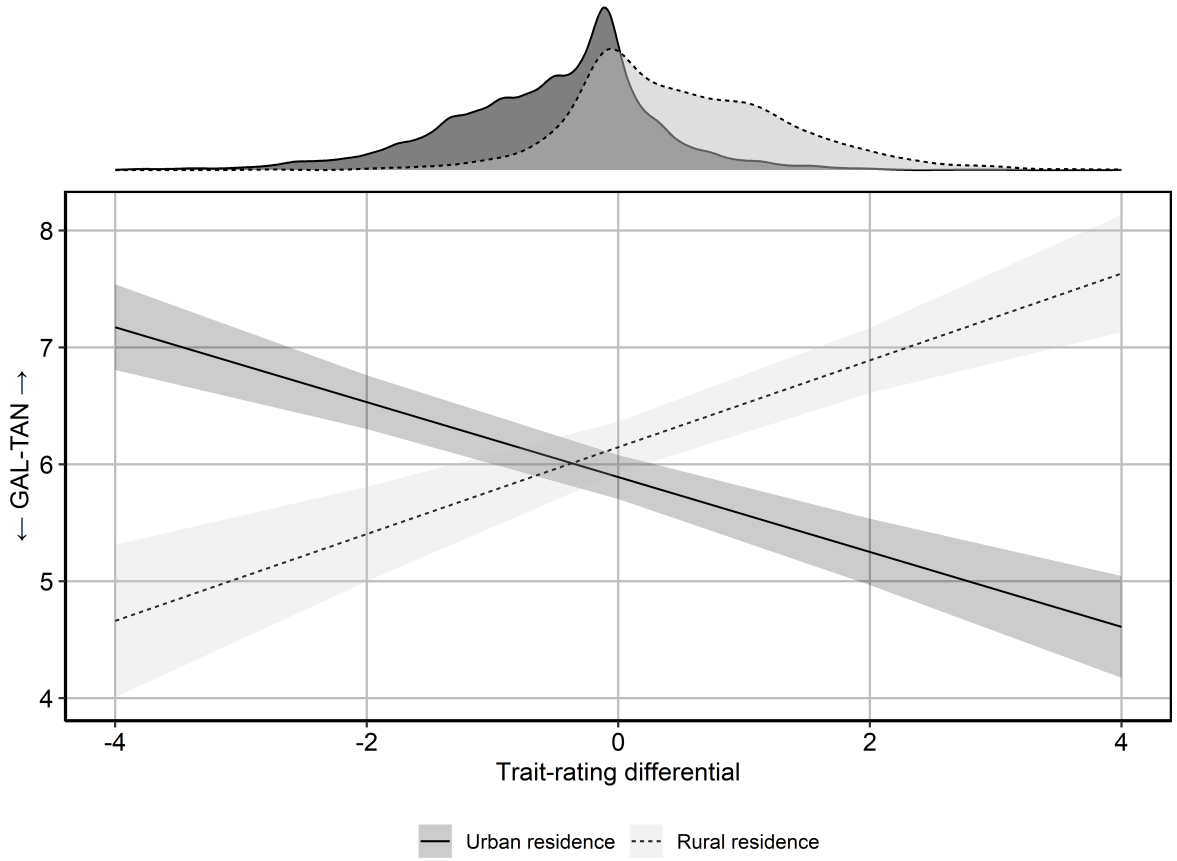
Note: OLS regression coefficients with country fixed effects. Thick and thin lines are 95% and 99% confidence intervals, respectively. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results see Table A.5 in Appendix B.

Table A.5: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence (trait-rating differential).

	Urban sample			Rural sample		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	0.251***	0.252***	0.254***	0.288***	0.304***	0.305***
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Place-based identity (Std.)	0.155***	0.157***	0.161***	0.176***	0.188***	0.183***
	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Gender (b.=male)		0.042*	0.029		–0.138***	–0.136***
		(0.021)	(0.020)		(0.031)	(0.031)
Age (Std.)		0.010	0.010		–0.038*	–0.037*
		(0.010)	(0.010)		(0.017)	(0.017)
Education (b.=low)		0.061**	0.053*		0.027	0.030
		(0.022)	(0.022)		(0.038)	(0.038)
Income (Deciles)		–0.002	0.000		0.004	0.004
		(0.004)	(0.004)		(0.005)	(0.005)
Left-right (Std.)			–0.097***			0.035*
			(0.010)			(0.015)
Constant	–0.282***	–0.298***	–0.288***	0.297***	0.325***	0.328***
	(0.027)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,396	5,209	5,209	2,718	2,203	2,203
R2	0.149	0.157	0.172	0.187	0.203	0.205
R2 Adj.	0.148	0.155	0.170	0.184	0.198	0.200

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A.3: Predicted values of GAL-TAN voting variable by place-based affective polarisation, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence (trait-rating differential).



Note: Predicted values of GAL-TAN voting based on OLS regression with country fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals displayed. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results with a standardised version of the trait-rating differential, see Table A.6 in Appendix B.

Table A.6: OLS regression results: GAL-TAN voting on place-based affective polarisation, conditional on urban-rural self-classifications (trait-rating differential).

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Trait-rating differential (Std.)	–0.486***	–0.489***	–0.289***
	(0.046)	(0.049)	(0.041)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	0.254**	0.219*	0.170*
	(0.095)	(0.103)	(0.086)
Gender (b.=male)		–0.202**	–0.045
		(0.074)	(0.062)
Age (Std.)		0.096*	0.109***
		(0.038)	(0.031)
Education (b.=low)		–0.451***	–0.331***
		(0.083)	(0.069)
Income (Deciles)		0.003	–0.024*
		(0.013)	(0.011)
Left-right (Std.)			1.390***
			(0.028)
Trait-rating differential (Std.) X Rural residence	1.007***	0.948***	0.625***
	(0.084)	(0.090)	(0.075)
Constant	5.776***	5.974***	6.035***
	(0.101)	(0.136)	(0.113)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,430	5,481	5,481
R2	0.067	0.078	0.364
R2 Adj.	0.065	0.076	0.362

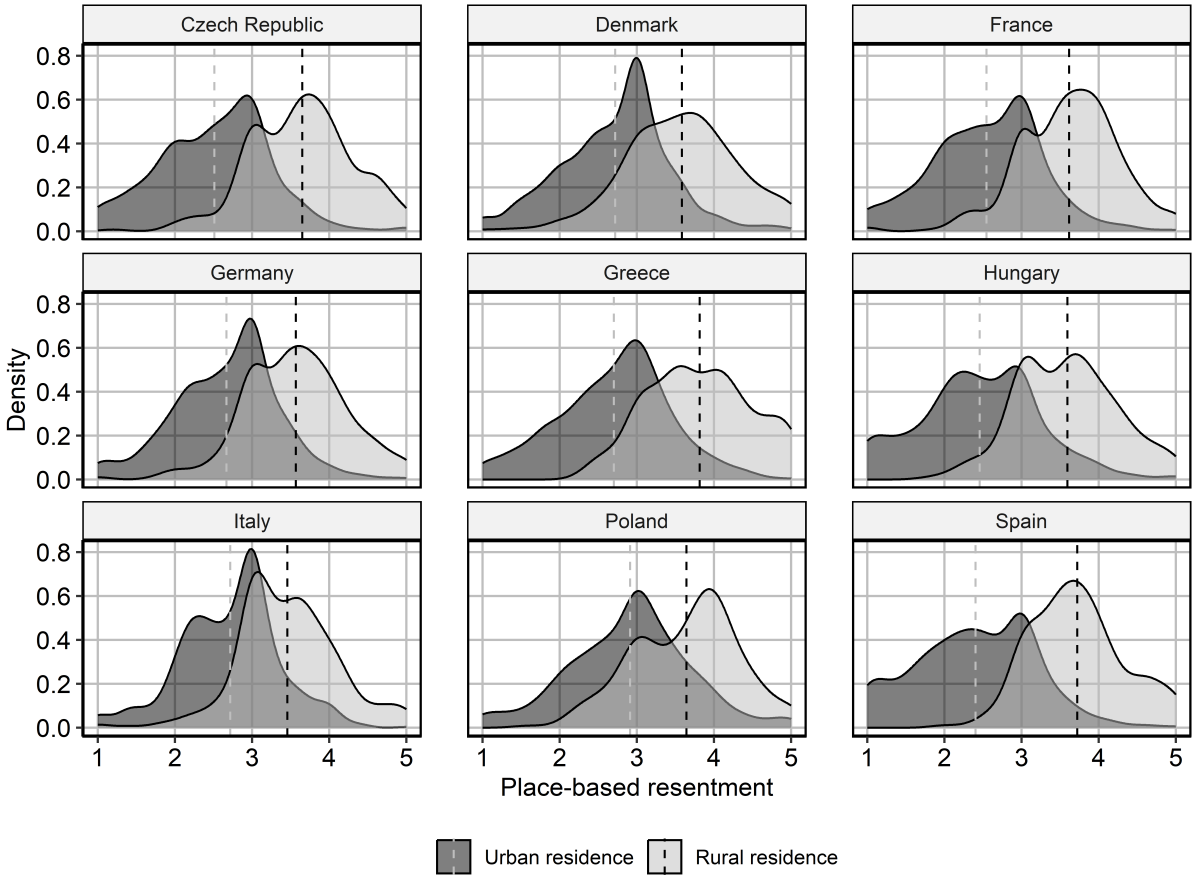
+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.7: Place-based resentment items.

Economic	Our [in] give more taxes to the state than they get back, because the money goes to [out].
Representation (A)	In recent years, political parties have paid too much attention to the concerns of people living in [out] and too little attention to the concerns of people living in [in].
Representation (B)	[Out] have too much to say in politics, while [in] are often overheard.
Culture (A)	People in [out] don't understand or respect the culture and lifestyle of people living in [in].
Culture (B)	People in [in] work harder than people in [out], because in [in] it is harder to make ends meet.

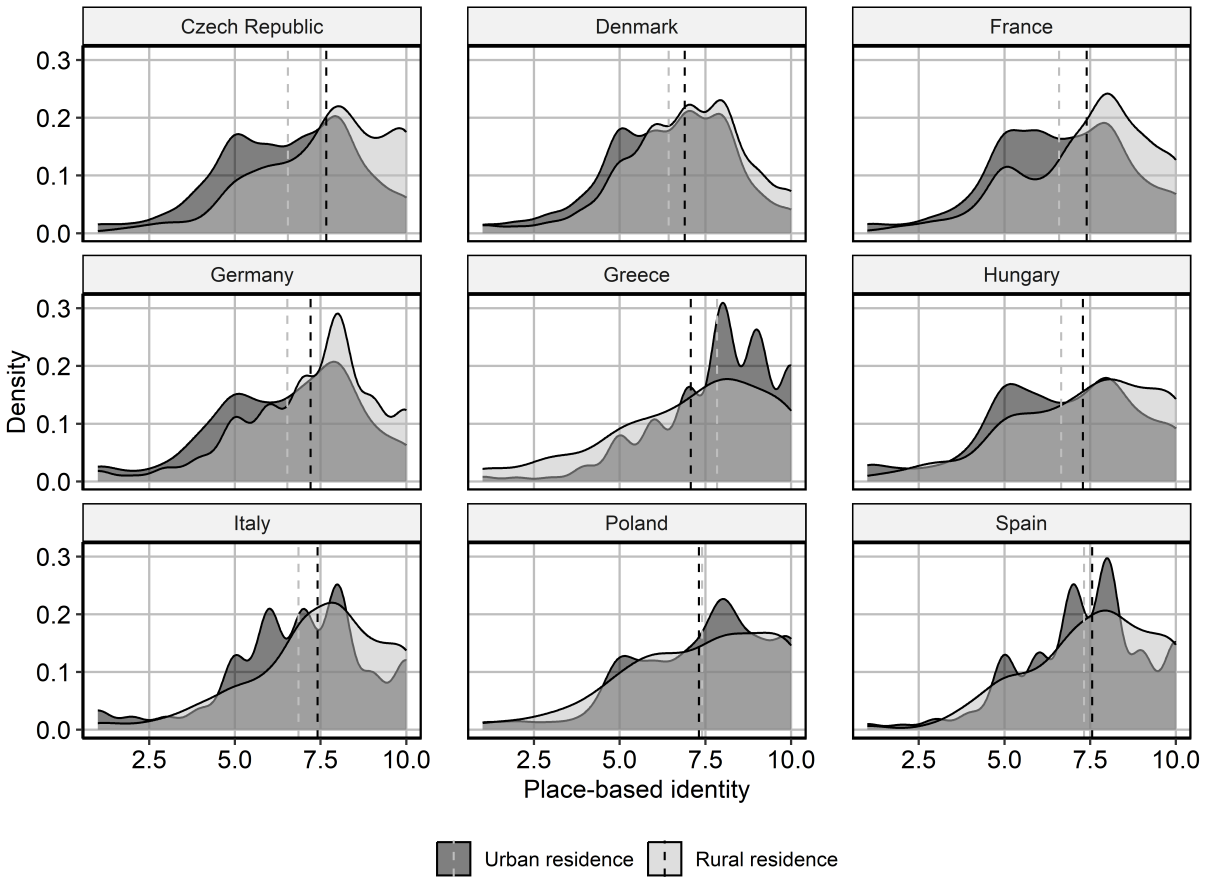
Note: Adapted from Munis (2022). If respondents see themselves as living in a very rural/rather rural place: [in] = rural areas; [out] = urban areas; If respondents see themselves as living in a very urban/rather urban place: [in] = urban areas; [out] = rural areas.

Figure A.4: Distributions of place-based resentment per country, by self-classified urban-rural residence.



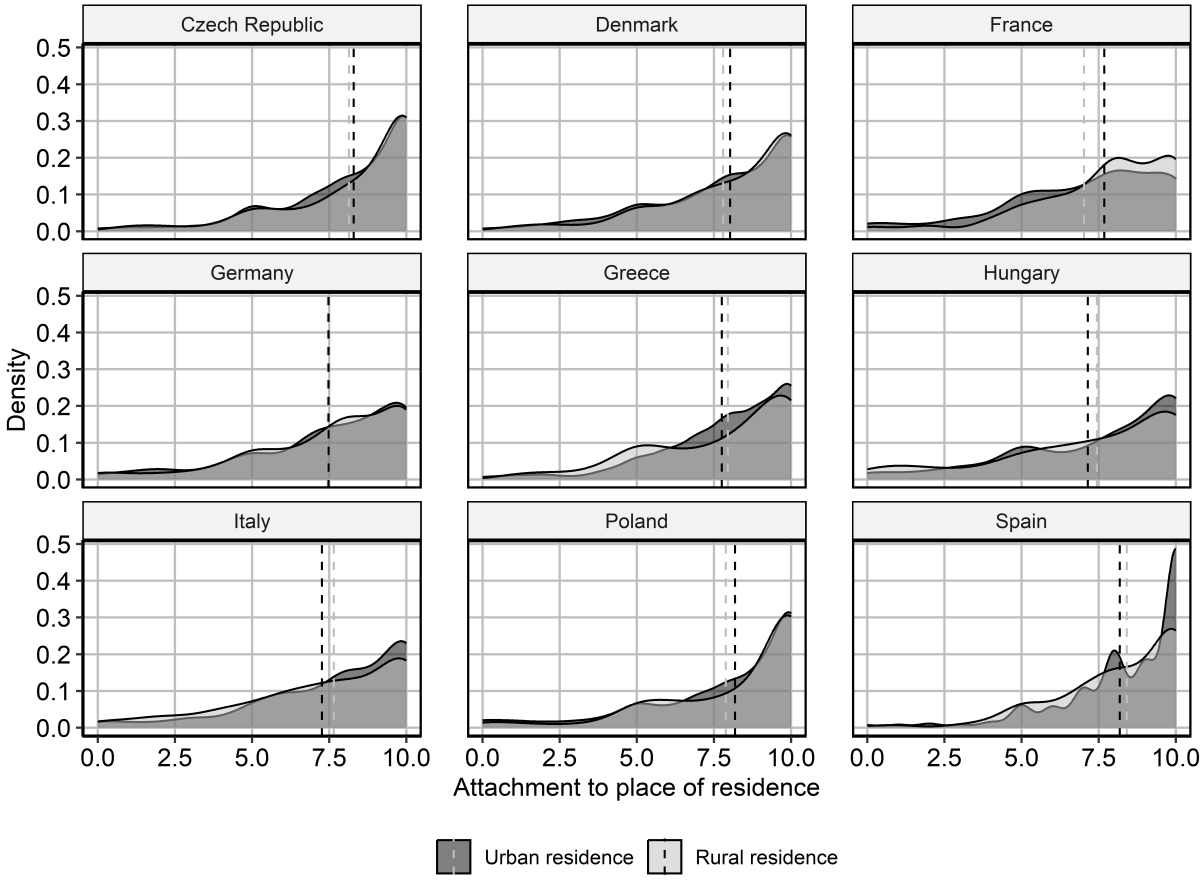
Note: Kernel density plot. The dashed lines indicate the mean values of place-based resentment for urban and rural respondents respectively.

Figure A.5: Distributions of place-based identity per country, by self-classified urban-rural residence.



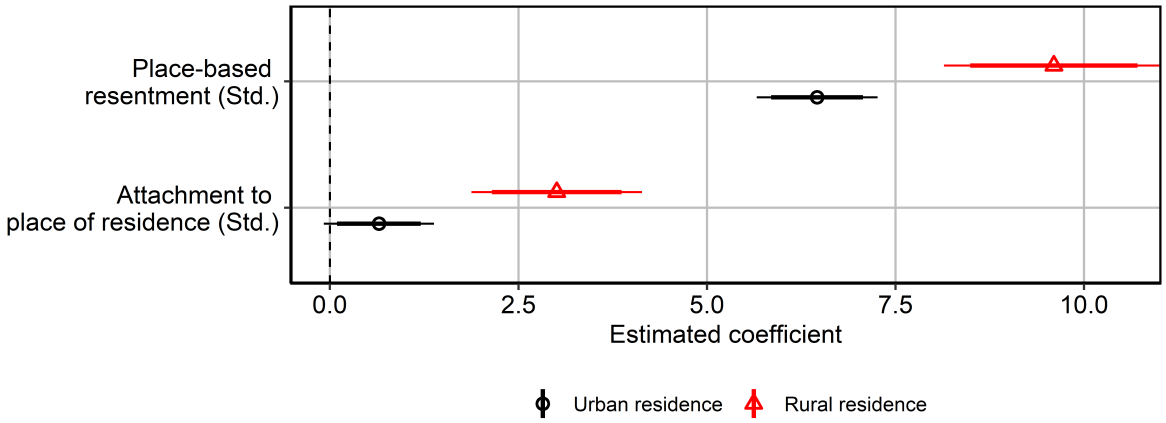
Note: Kernel density plot. Shows attachment to rural people for the rural residents, and attachment to urban people for urban residents. The dashed lines indicate the mean values of place-based identity for urban and rural respondents respectively.

Figure A.6: Distributions of attachment to place of residence per country, by self-classified urban-rural residence.



Note: Kernel density plot. The dashed lines indicate the mean values of attachment to place of residence for urban and rural respondents respectively.

Figure A.7: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and attachment to place of residence, by self-classified urban-rural residence.



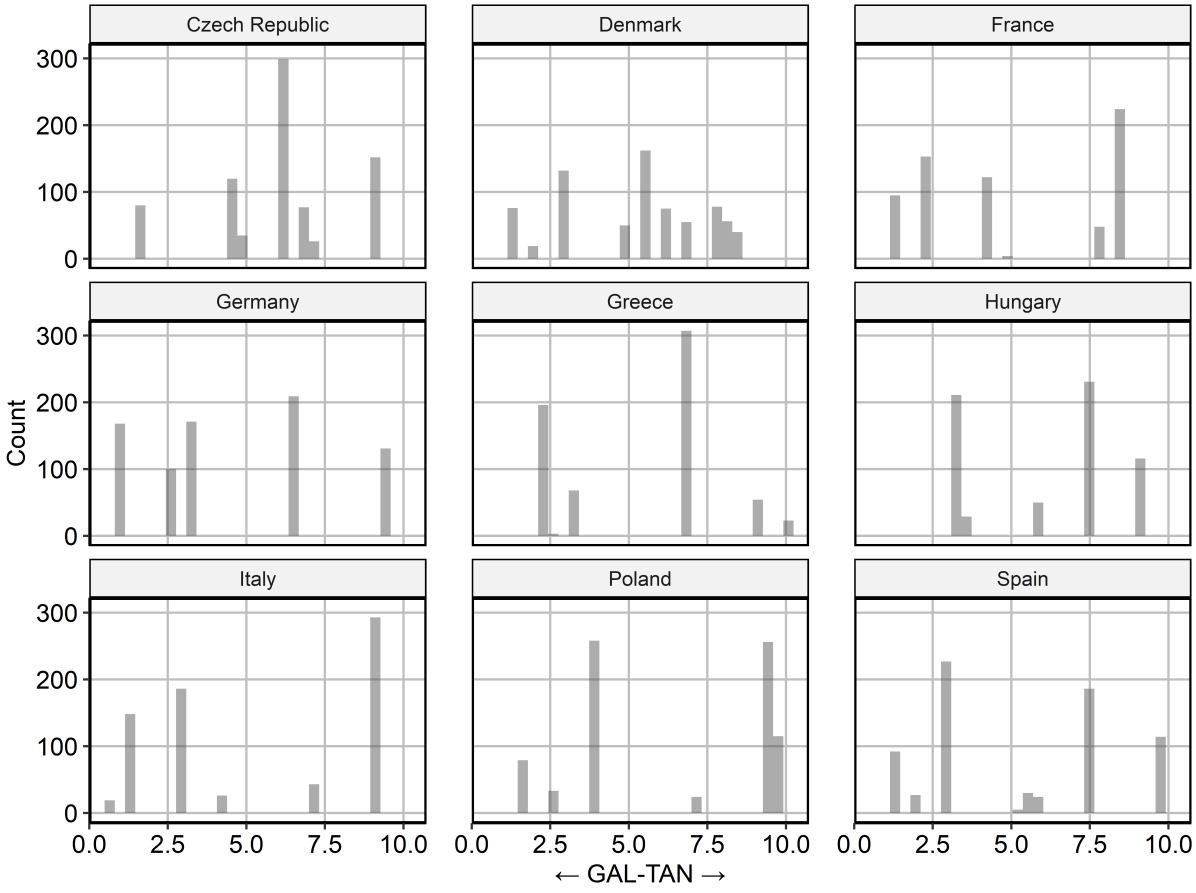
Note: OLS regression coefficients with country fixed effects. Thick and thin lines are 95% and 99% confidence intervals, respectively. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results see Table A.8 in Appendix B.

Table A.8: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and attachment to place of residence, by self-classified urban-rural residence.

	Urban sample			Rural sample		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	6.335***	6.420***	6.460***	8.827***	9.597***	9.599***
	(0.282)	(0.312)	(0.311)	(0.506)	(0.567)	(0.566)
Attachment to place of residence (Std.)	0.349	0.501+	0.650*	3.244***	3.122***	3.007***
	(0.247)	(0.284)	(0.284)	(0.389)	(0.438)	(0.439)
Gender (b.=male)		0.255	0.038		−1.114	−1.052
		(0.557)	(0.557)		(0.888)	(0.887)
Age (Std.)		−0.443	−0.460		−1.632***	−1.576***
		(0.285)	(0.285)		(0.475)	(0.475)
Education (b.=low)		1.603**	1.479*		−0.427	−0.325
		(0.600)	(0.598)		(1.090)	(1.089)
Income (Deciles)		0.087	0.120		0.028	0.023
		(0.097)	(0.097)		(0.157)	(0.156)
Left-right (Std.)			−1.576***			1.303**
			(0.268)			(0.434)
Constant	−5.351***	−6.075***	−5.939***	10.088***	9.294***	9.433***
	(0.738)	(1.017)	(1.014)	(1.254)	(1.727)	(1.724)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,396	5,209	5,209	2,718	2,203	2,203
R2	0.087	0.095	0.101	0.143	0.154	0.158
R2 Adj.	0.085	0.092	0.098	0.140	0.149	0.152

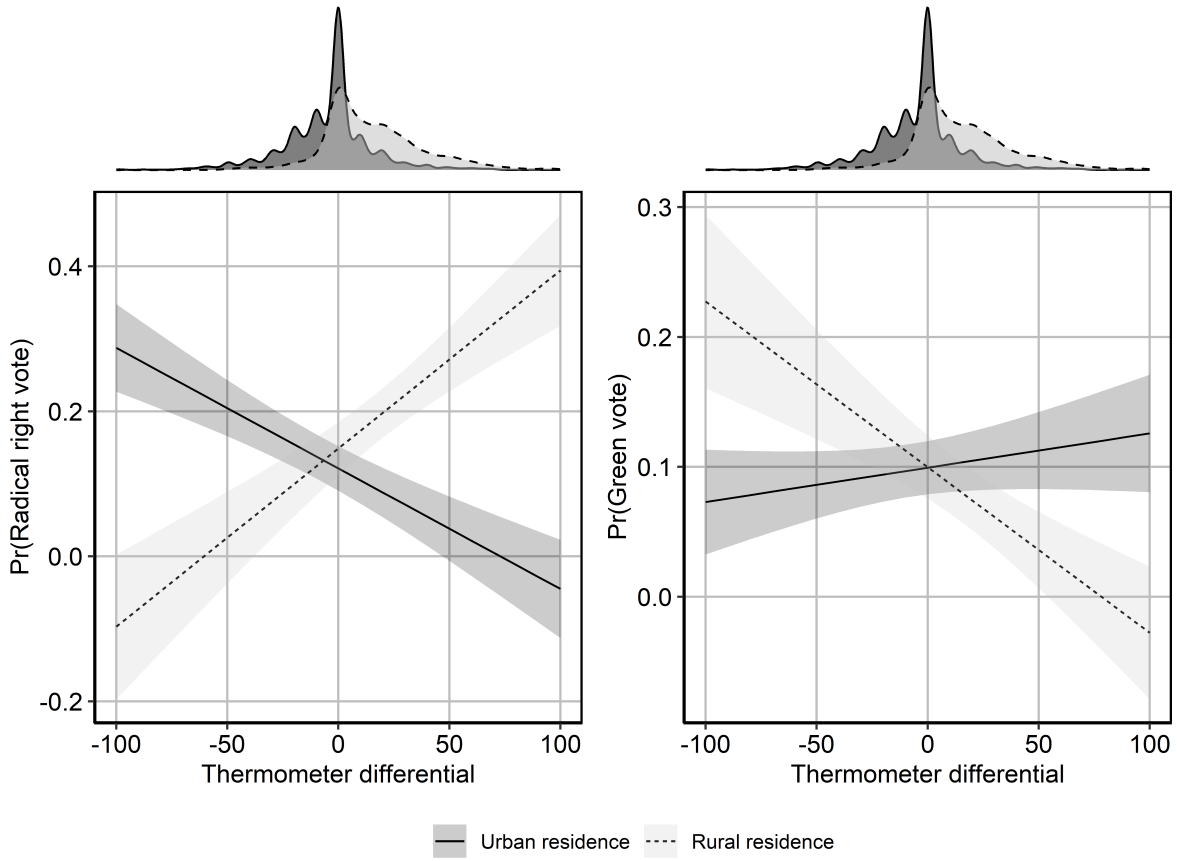
+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A.8: Distributions of GAL-TAN voting per country.



Note: Based on 2023 CHES data (Hooghe et al., 2024a), using the GAL-TAN item that ranks parties from 0 ("libertarian/postmaterialist") to 10 ("traditional/authoritarian").

Figure A.9: Predicted probabilities of radical right and green voting by place-based affective polarisation, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence.



Note: Predicted probabilities of radical right and green voting based on OLS regression with country fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals displayed. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement. For full model results with a standardised version of the thermometer differential, see Table A.9 in Appendix B.

Table A.9: OLS regression results: radical right and green voting on place-based affective polarisation.

	Radical right			Green		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	−0.054***	−0.052***	−0.037***	0.010*	0.008+	0.006
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	0.043**	0.038**	0.031*	−0.004	−0.002	−0.001
	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Gender (b.=male)		−0.034**	−0.014		0.016*	0.013+
		(0.011)	(0.010)		(0.007)	(0.007)
Age (Std.)		−0.025***	−0.023***		−0.018***	−0.019***
		(0.006)	(0.005)		(0.004)	(0.003)
Education (b.=low)		−0.077***	−0.061***		0.026***	0.023**
		(0.013)	(0.011)		(0.008)	(0.008)
Income (Deciles)		−0.003	−0.006***		0.001	0.002
		(0.002)	(0.002)		(0.001)	(0.001)
Left-right (Std.)			0.170***			−0.029***
			(0.005)			(0.003)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	0.123***	0.119***	0.093***	−0.043***	−0.039***	−0.035***
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Constant	0.103***	0.150***	0.155***	0.112***	0.093***	0.092***
	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,430	5,481	5,481	6,430	5,481	5,481
R2	0.149	0.165	0.329	0.104	0.114	0.128
R2 Adj.	0.148	0.163	0.327	0.103	0.111	0.125

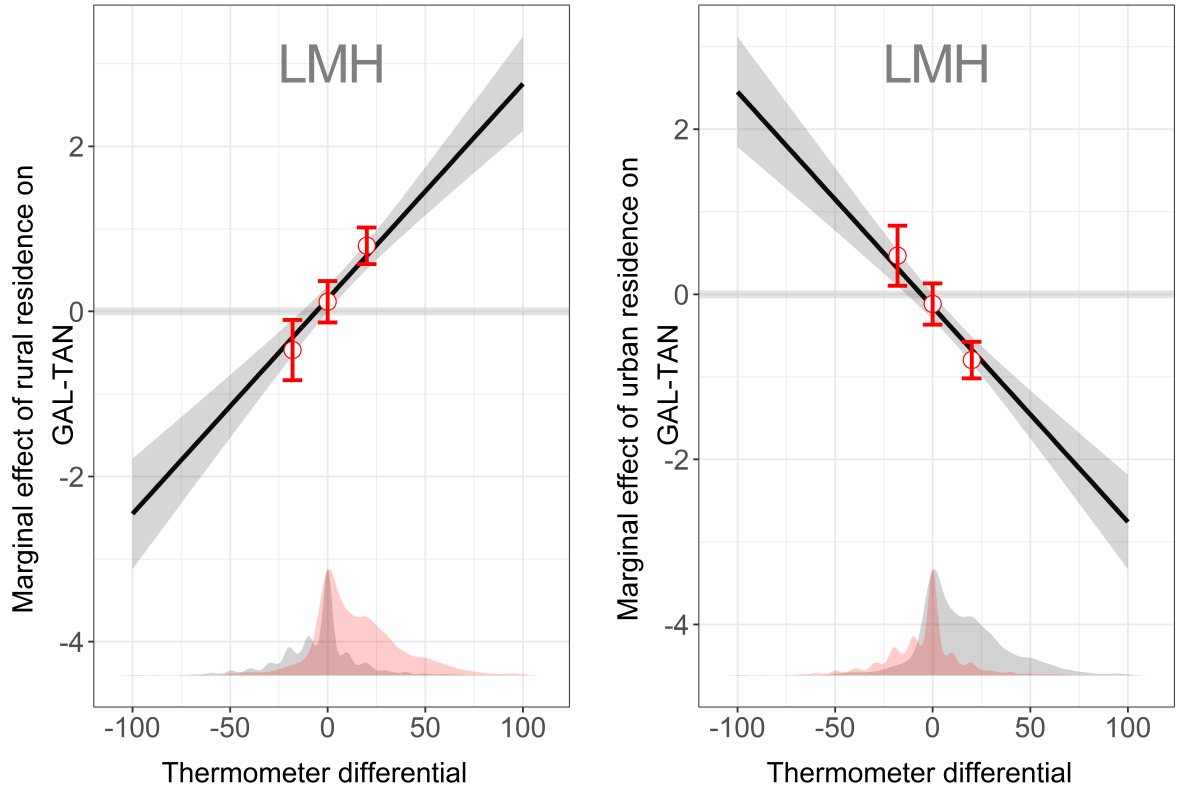
+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.10: Logistic regression results: radical right and green voting on place-based affective polarisation.

	Radical right			Green		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	–0.310***	–0.308***	–0.281***	0.162*	0.132+	0.079
	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.048)	(0.067)	(0.072)	(0.074)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	0.251***	0.230**	0.220*	–0.083	–0.019	–0.001
	(0.076)	(0.084)	(0.095)	(0.115)	(0.127)	(0.131)
Gender (b.=male)		–0.203**	–0.104		0.259*	0.213+
		(0.067)	(0.076)		(0.112)	(0.114)
Age (Std.)		–0.136***	–0.153***		–0.231***	–0.231***
		(0.034)	(0.039)		(0.055)	(0.056)
Education (b.=low)		–0.463***	–0.467***		0.307*	0.304*
		(0.077)	(0.087)		(0.119)	(0.122)
Income (Deciles)		–0.017	–0.041**		0.016	0.036+
		(0.012)	(0.013)		(0.019)	(0.020)
Left-right (Std.)			1.175***			–0.580***
			(0.041)			(0.059)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	0.664***	0.654***	0.630***	–0.659***	–0.581***	–0.491***
	(0.067)	(0.072)	(0.082)	(0.119)	(0.128)	(0.131)
Constant	–2.051***	–1.811***	–2.092***	–2.046***	–2.386***	–2.537***
	(0.106)	(0.137)	(0.151)	(0.122)	(0.186)	(0.189)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,430	5,481	5,481	6,430	5,481	5,481

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure A.10: Marginal effects of self-classified rural residence/urban residence on GAL-TAN voting, conditional on place-based affective polarisation.

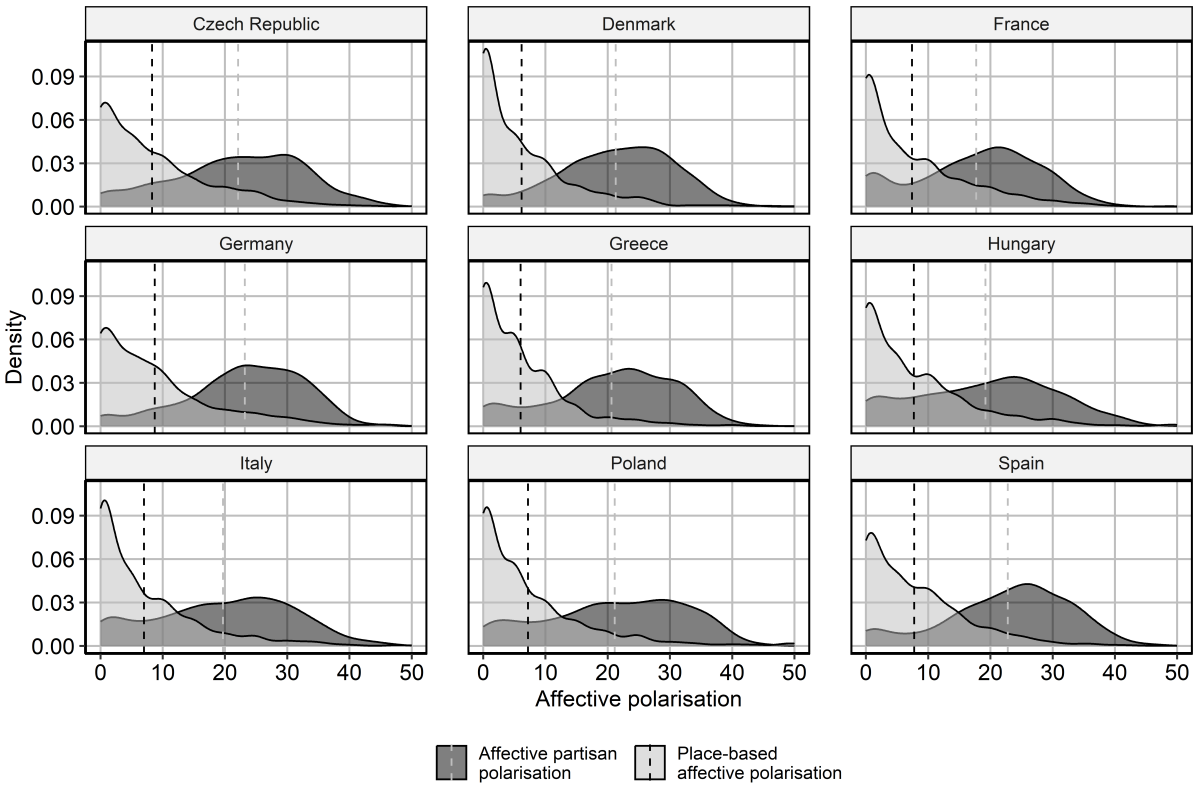


Note: Binning estimator with country fixed effects implemented using the R package `interflex` (Hainmueller et al., 2019). 95% confidence intervals displayed. Models control for gender, age, education, income, and left-right self-placement.

Table A.11: Results of unpaired t-tests comparing thermometer differential scores between self-classified rural and urban residents per country (one-tailed).

Country	Estimate	t-statistic	Degrees of freedom	p-value
Czech Republic	26.722	-17.868	522.983	2.161e-56
Denmark	15.141	-11.056	461.827	1.141e-25
France	20.242	-15.828	941.872	1.624e-50
Germany	22.156	-15.439	924.071	2.577e-48
Greece	12.080	-7.440	239.046	9.034e-13
Hungary	18.757	-12.472	539.535	7.543e-32
Italy	17.455	-12.452	625.592	2.951e-32
Poland	13.269	-7.966	338.368	1.265e-14
Spain	23.652	-14.328	289.542	7.323e-36

Figure A.11: Distributions of place-based affective polarisation and affective partisan polarisation per country.



Note: Kernel density plot. Affective partisan polarisation is measured with the help of thermometer ratings asking respondents to indicate how warm or cold they feel towards different parties in their country. We rely on the unweighted spread-of-scores measure presented in Wagner (2021). Formally, we calculate the level of affective partisan polarisation as: $\text{Spread}_i = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{p=1}^{P}(thermometer_{ip} - \overline{thermometer_i})^2}{n_p}}$, where p is the party, i is the individual respondent, and $thermometer_ip$ is the thermometer score assigned to each party p by individual i (Wagner, 2021, p.4). We use the same measure for place-based affective polarisation, calculating it as: $\text{Spread}_i = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{g=1}^{G}(thermometer_{ig} - \overline{thermometer_i})^2}{n_g}}$, where g is the place-based group, i is the individual respondent, and $thermometer_ig$ is the thermometer score assigned to each place-based group g by individual i. The dashed lines indicate the mean values of place-based affective polarisation and affective partisan polarisation respectively. For both measures, higher values mean higher levels of affective polarisation.

Table A.12: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence.

	Urban sample			Rural sample		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	5.622***	5.630***	5.664***	7.479***	8.120***	8.145***
	(0.274)	(0.303)	(0.301)	(0.499)	(0.559)	(0.559)
Place-based identity (Std.)	5.353***	5.585***	5.661***	6.337***	6.474***	6.367***
	(0.242)	(0.273)	(0.272)	(0.392)	(0.443)	(0.448)
Gender (b.=male)		−0.288	−0.524		−1.662+	−1.618+
		(0.537)	(0.536)		(0.859)	(0.859)
Age (Std.)		−0.608*	−0.603*		−1.457**	−1.430**
		(0.271)	(0.270)		(0.455)	(0.455)
Education (b.=low)		1.219*	1.071+		−0.268	−0.213
		(0.577)	(0.575)		(1.053)	(1.053)
Income (Deciles)		−0.015	0.022		0.017	0.014
		(0.094)	(0.094)		(0.151)	(0.151)
Left-right (Std.)			−1.743***			0.734+
			(0.257)			(0.422)
Constant	−4.288***	−4.078***	−3.888***	10.076***	9.532***	9.606***
	(0.712)	(0.983)	(0.979)	(1.213)	(1.667)	(1.667)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,396	5,209	5,209	2,718	2,203	2,203
R2	0.152	0.162	0.169	0.199	0.211	0.212
R2 Adj.	0.150	0.159	0.167	0.196	0.206	0.207

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.13: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	5.656***	5.640***	5.653***	6.114***	6.216***	6.218***
	(0.276)	(0.304)	(0.304)	(0.240)	(0.265)	(0.264)
Place-based identity (Std.)	5.741***	5.953***	6.028***	5.375***	5.617***	5.667***
	(0.205)	(0.231)	(0.232)	(0.244)	(0.274)	(0.274)
Gender (b.=male)		−0.623	−0.745		−0.596	−0.722
		(0.456)	(0.456)		(0.456)	(0.456)
Age (Std.)		−0.794***	−0.803***		−0.732**	−0.742**
		(0.233)	(0.233)		(0.233)	(0.232)
Education (b.=low)		0.844+	0.753		0.797	0.708
		(0.508)	(0.507)		(0.508)	(0.507)
Income (Deciles)		0.002	0.019		0.002	0.020
		(0.080)	(0.080)		(0.080)	(0.080)
Left-right (Std.)			−1.053***			−1.086***
			(0.220)			(0.220)
Place-based resentment (Std.) X Rural residence	1.929***	2.419***	2.383***			
	(0.545)	(0.607)	(0.606)			
Place-based identity (Std.) X Rural residence				1.338**	1.269*	1.362**
				(0.442)	(0.500)	(0.500)
Constant	−2.803***	−2.908***	−2.858***	−2.707***	−2.748**	−2.714**
	(0.623)	(0.858)	(0.856)	(0.622)	(0.857)	(0.855)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	9,114	7,412	7,412	9,114	7,412	7,412
R2	0.290	0.301	0.303	0.289	0.300	0.303
R2 Adj.	0.289	0.300	0.302	0.289	0.299	0.301

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.14: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence (per country).

	Czech Republic		Denmark		France		Germany		Greece	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	5.693***	10.583***	4.502***	6.853***	5.069***	7.223***	3.872***	8.802***	3.754***	8.321***
	(0.816)	(1.546)	(0.785)	(1.371)	(0.888)	(1.231)	(1.050)	(1.295)	(0.691)	(1.689)
Place-based identity (Std.)	7.921***	4.234***	3.525***	3.643**	6.483***	7.029***	7.762***	8.199***	4.439***	5.604***
	(0.706)	(1.269)	(0.709)	(1.284)	(0.762)	(0.984)	(0.804)	(1.028)	(0.691)	(1.158)
Constant	−3.605***	8.025***	−0.310	7.616***	−1.759*	7.685***	−1.489+	10.192***	−3.184***	0.821
	(0.799)	(1.707)	(0.707)	(1.565)	(0.833)	(1.317)	(0.899)	(1.375)	(0.678)	(2.212)
Num.Obs.	715	296	734	276	543	472	561	452	836	177
R2	0.218	0.211	0.078	0.141	0.187	0.202	0.175	0.236	0.088	0.242
R2 Adj.	0.216	0.205	0.075	0.135	0.184	0.199	0.172	0.233	0.086	0.233

	Hungary		Italy		Poland		Spain	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	7.548***	4.620**	4.600***	6.801***	8.586***	6.470***	5.028***	8.104***
	(0.813)	(1.544)	(0.940)	(1.422)	(0.781)	(1.769)	(0.730)	(1.971)
Place-based identity (Std.)	4.919***	6.799***	4.812***	8.049***	4.939***	4.385**	3.595***	5.831***
	(0.688)	(1.113)	(0.694)	(1.102)	(0.725)	(1.319)	(0.738)	(1.508)
Constant	−1.487+	7.748***	−3.761***	6.412***	−1.844*	6.142**	−4.972***	7.023**
	(0.871)	(1.677)	(0.744)	(1.383)	(0.722)	(2.009)	(0.805)	(2.302)
Num.Obs.	727	287	663	349	806	208	811	201
R2	0.174	0.158	0.104	0.207	0.197	0.137	0.090	0.159
R2 Adj.	0.172	0.152	0.101	0.203	0.195	0.128	0.088	0.150

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.15: OLS regression results: place-based affective polarisation on place-based resentment and place-based identity, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence (per country).

	Czech Republic		Denmark		France		Germany		Greece	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	6.911***		4.757***		6.303***		5.234***		4.279***	
	(0.877)		(0.806)		(0.987)		(1.145)		(0.711)	
Place-based identity (Std.)		8.575***		3.791***		7.193***		8.160***		4.883***
		(0.747)		(0.737)		(0.826)		(0.840)		(0.707)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	12.990***	22.556***	7.800***	14.405***	9.503***	17.163***	12.257***	19.320***	1.013	13.898***
	(1.934)	(1.414)	(1.637)	(1.317)	(1.599)	(1.200)	(1.727)	(1.327)	(2.310)	(1.479)
Place-based resentment (Std.) X Rural residence	5.187**		3.207*		3.416*		5.731**		5.183**	
	(1.739)		(1.521)		(1.531)		(1.748)		(1.833)	
Place-based identity (Std.) X Rural residence		−1.789		1.687		1.474		1.502		1.517
		(1.424)		(1.428)		(1.232)		(1.310)		(1.351)
Constant	−5.020***	−6.178***	−1.348+	−1.293+	−2.710**	−3.844***	−3.121**	−2.534**	−1.359*	−4.316***
	(0.856)	(0.757)	(0.694)	(0.714)	(0.931)	(0.824)	(0.972)	(0.900)	(0.638)	(0.665)
Num.Obs.	1,011	1,011	1,010	1,010	1,015	1,015	1,013	1,013	1,013	1,013
R2	0.333	0.354	0.175	0.154	0.280	0.314	0.260	0.320	0.119	0.128
R2 Adj.	0.331	0.352	0.173	0.152	0.277	0.312	0.258	0.318	0.116	0.125

	Hungary		Italy		Poland		Spain	
	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	8.148***		4.986***		9.461***		5.439***	
	(0.837)		(1.015)		(0.788)		(0.745)	
Place-based identity (Std.)		5.580***		5.014***		6.248***		4.183***
		(0.711)		(0.731)		(0.757)		(0.763)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	9.493***	16.834***	10.847***	15.408***	6.436**	13.641***	11.641***	22.556***
	(1.985)	(1.468)	(1.592)	(1.284)	(2.212)	(1.675)	(2.397)	(1.577)
Place-based resentment (Std.) X Rural residence	−2.080		3.565*		−1.527		3.783+	
	(1.817)		(1.725)		(1.958)		(2.051)	
Place-based identity (Std.) X Rural residence		1.731		3.923**		−0.662		2.557
		(1.366)		(1.282)		(1.578)		(1.665)
Constant	−2.154*	−5.488***	−4.154***	−4.846***	−1.007	−2.149**	−4.268***	−8.114***
	(0.898)	(0.788)	(0.803)	(0.749)	(0.727)	(0.763)	(0.814)	(0.690)
Num.Obs.	1,014	1,014	1,012	1,012	1,014	1,014	1,012	1,012
R2	0.215	0.209	0.193	0.234	0.187	0.128	0.241	0.223
R2 Adj.	0.212	0.207	0.191	0.232	0.184	0.125	0.239	0.220

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.16: OLS regression results: in-group affect and out-group affect on place-based resentment and place-based identity, by self-classified urban-rural residence.

	Urban sample						Rural sample					
	In-group affect			Out-group affect			In-group affect			Out-group affect		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Place-based resentment (Std.)	1.831***	1.854***	1.854***	−3.790***	−3.775***	−3.810***	3.465***	3.723***	3.731***	−4.013***	−4.397***	−4.413***
	(0.216)	(0.236)	(0.236)	(0.235)	(0.258)	(0.257)	(0.371)	(0.410)	(0.410)	(0.422)	(0.472)	(0.472)
Place-based identity (Std.)	6.575***	6.746***	6.746***	1.222***	1.161***	1.084***	7.524***	7.391***	7.354***	1.187***	0.917*	0.988**
	(0.191)	(0.213)	(0.213)	(0.208)	(0.233)	(0.232)	(0.291)	(0.325)	(0.328)	(0.331)	(0.374)	(0.378)
Gender (b.=male)		0.423	0.424		0.710	0.948*		1.620*	1.635**		3.282***	3.253***
		(0.419)	(0.420)		(0.459)	(0.457)		(0.629)	(0.629)		(0.725)	(0.725)
Age (Std.)		−0.377+	−0.377+		0.232	0.226		−0.536	−0.527		0.921*	0.904*
		(0.212)	(0.212)		(0.232)	(0.230)		(0.334)	(0.334)		(0.384)	(0.385)
Education (b.=low)		0.357	0.358		−0.862+	−0.713		0.401	0.420		0.669	0.633
		(0.450)	(0.451)		(0.493)	(0.491)		(0.771)	(0.772)		(0.889)	(0.889)
Income (Deciles)		0.186*	0.185*		0.200*	0.163*		0.080	0.079		0.063	0.065
		(0.073)	(0.073)		(0.080)	(0.080)		(0.111)	(0.111)		(0.128)	(0.128)
Left-right (Std.)			0.007			1.750***			0.252			−0.482
			(0.202)			(0.219)			(0.310)			(0.357)
Constant	58.422***	57.706***	57.706***	62.710***	61.785***	61.594***	67.450***	65.873***	65.898***	57.373***	56.341***	56.292***
	(0.562)	(0.767)	(0.768)	(0.612)	(0.840)	(0.836)	(0.900)	(1.221)	(1.222)	(1.026)	(1.408)	(1.408)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,396	5,209	5,209	6,396	5,209	5,209	2,718	2,203	2,203	2,718	2,203	2,203
R2	0.195	0.207	0.207	0.056	0.058	0.070	0.268	0.270	0.271	0.051	0.068	0.069
R2 Adj.	0.193	0.205	0.205	0.055	0.056	0.067	0.265	0.266	0.266	0.047	0.062	0.062

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.17: OLS regression results: GAL-TAN voting on place-based affective polarisation, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	–0.357***	–0.350***	–0.226***
	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.039)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	0.301***	0.232*	0.176*
	(0.087)	(0.094)	(0.078)
Gender (b.=male)		–0.224**	–0.057
		(0.075)	(0.062)
Age (Std.)		0.085*	0.103**
		(0.038)	(0.031)
Education (b.=low)		–0.466***	–0.336***
		(0.083)	(0.069)
Income (Deciles)		0.005	–0.023*
		(0.013)	(0.011)
Left-right (Std.)			1.399***
			(0.028)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	0.829***	0.803***	0.586***
	(0.078)	(0.083)	(0.069)
Constant	5.794***	6.004***	6.040***
	(0.101)	(0.137)	(0.113)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,430	5,481	5,481
R2	0.060	0.072	0.363
R2 Adj.	0.058	0.070	0.361

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.18: OLS regression results: GAL-TAN voting on place-based affective polarisation, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence (per country).

	Czech Republic	Denmark	France	Germany	Greece
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	−0.233*	−0.496***	−0.439*	−0.495***	−0.283*
	(0.092)	(0.113)	(0.186)	(0.137)	(0.137)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	−0.028	0.339+	0.707**	0.351	−0.137
	(0.202)	(0.194)	(0.258)	(0.234)	(0.283)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	0.545**	1.219***	1.044***	1.193***	0.684*
	(0.171)	(0.197)	(0.250)	(0.198)	(0.305)
Constant	5.958***	5.021***	4.488***	4.182***	5.302***
	(0.096)	(0.093)	(0.166)	(0.137)	(0.111)
Num.Obs.	789	743	646	779	651
R2	0.015	0.067	0.055	0.063	0.010
R2 Adj.	0.011	0.063	0.051	0.059	0.005

	Hungary	Italy	Poland	Spain
	(6)	(7)	(8)	(8)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	−0.373***	−0.343+	−0.335**	−0.242+
	(0.106)	(0.179)	(0.120)	(0.146)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	0.249	0.426	0.665*	0.129
	(0.225)	(0.302)	(0.320)	(0.348)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	0.910***	0.717*	0.624*	−0.096
	(0.201)	(0.282)	(0.296)	(0.311)
Constant	5.760***	5.080***	6.213***	5.201***
	(0.110)	(0.162)	(0.125)	(0.136)
Num.Obs.	637	715	765	705
R2	0.041	0.015	0.022	0.007
R2 Adj.	0.037	0.011	0.018	0.002

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.19: OLS regression results: GAL-TAN voting on place-based affective polarisation, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence (CHES 2019 data; per country).

	Czech Republic	Denmark	France	Germany	Greece
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	−0.222*	−0.545***	−0.381*	−0.478***	−0.255+
	(0.099)	(0.124)	(0.164)	(0.137)	(0.148)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	−0.094	0.348	0.639**	0.340	−0.090
	(0.216)	(0.218)	(0.229)	(0.234)	(0.304)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	0.519**	1.291***	0.933***	1.169***	0.642+
	(0.183)	(0.230)	(0.221)	(0.197)	(0.327)
Constant	5.737***	4.276***	4.386***	4.301***	5.581***
	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.147)	(0.137)	(0.119)
Num.Obs.	789	615	642	779	651
R2	0.011	0.066	0.058	0.061	0.007
R2 Adj.	0.007	0.062	0.054	0.057	0.003

	Hungary	Italy	Poland	Spain
	(6)	(7)	(8)	(8)
Thermometer differential (Std.)	−0.538**	−0.271	−0.267**	−0.248+
	(0.171)	(0.172)	(0.096)	(0.147)
Rural residence (b.=urban residence)	−0.087	0.299	0.500+	0.113
	(0.382)	(0.291)	(0.257)	(0.348)
Thermometer differential (Std.) X Rural residence	1.786***	0.644*	0.537*	−0.071
	(0.342)	(0.275)	(0.238)	(0.312)
Constant	5.547***	5.799***	6.633***	5.319***
	(0.179)	(0.156)	(0.101)	(0.137)
Num.Obs.	521	670	765	705
R2	0.054	0.012	0.022	0.007
R2 Adj.	0.049	0.008	0.018	0.002

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A.20: OLS regression results: GAL-TAN voting on in-group affect and out-group affect, conditional on self-classified urban-rural residence.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
In-group affect (Std.)	−0.231***	−0.218***	−0.214***
	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.038)
Out-group affect (Std.)	0.312***	0.314***	0.132***
	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.038)
Gender (b.=male)		−0.221**	−0.044
		(0.075)	(0.062)
Age (Std.)		0.086*	0.104***
		(0.038)	(0.031)
Education (b.=low)		−0.465***	−0.337***
		(0.083)	(0.069)
Income (Deciles)		0.004	−0.022*
		(0.013)	(0.011)
Left-right (Std.)			1.404***
			(0.028)
In-group affect (Std.) X Rural residence	0.511***	0.498***	0.388***
	(0.078)	(0.084)	(0.069)
Out-group affect (Std.) X Rural residence	−0.751***	−0.724***	−0.504***
	(0.077)	(0.082)	(0.068)
Constant	5.801***	6.009***	6.034***
	(0.101)	(0.137)	(0.113)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num.Obs.	6,430	5,481	5,481
R2	0.061	0.073	0.364
R2 Adj.	0.059	0.070	0.362

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$