

# Populist Revolts: Economics, Culture, Race, and Gender

Shannon M. Monnat

Lerner Chair of Public Health Promotion and Associate Professor of Sociology  
Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Research  
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs  
Syracuse University

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# Common Themes across Papers

- Factors driving revolts are inherently economic
  - Education, historical dependence on manufacturing, low income, high unemployment main drivers of Brexit vote in both Britain and France (Becker, Fetzer, Novy)
  - Extreme right parties increased in regions facing more import competition and labor market turmoil (Dippel, Gold, Heblich, and Pinto)
- We didn't get here all of a sudden. Long-term drivers at play
- The role of racial resentment
  - Played a role in US Republican primary election, but has for a long time (Ferguson)

# A Rural Revolt?



## US election 2016: America's front-porch revolt

By Rod Dreher  
Senior editor, The American Conservative

AGRICULTURE

## Revenge of the rural voter

Rural voters turned out in a big way this presidential cycle — and they voted overwhelmingly for Donald Trump.

By HELENA BOTTEMILLER EVICH | 11/13/2016 07:08 AM EST

# “Low-output” as a proxy for rural

THE AVENUE

## Another Clinton-Trump divide: High-output America vs low-output America

Mark Muro and Sifan Liu · Tuesday, November 29, 2016

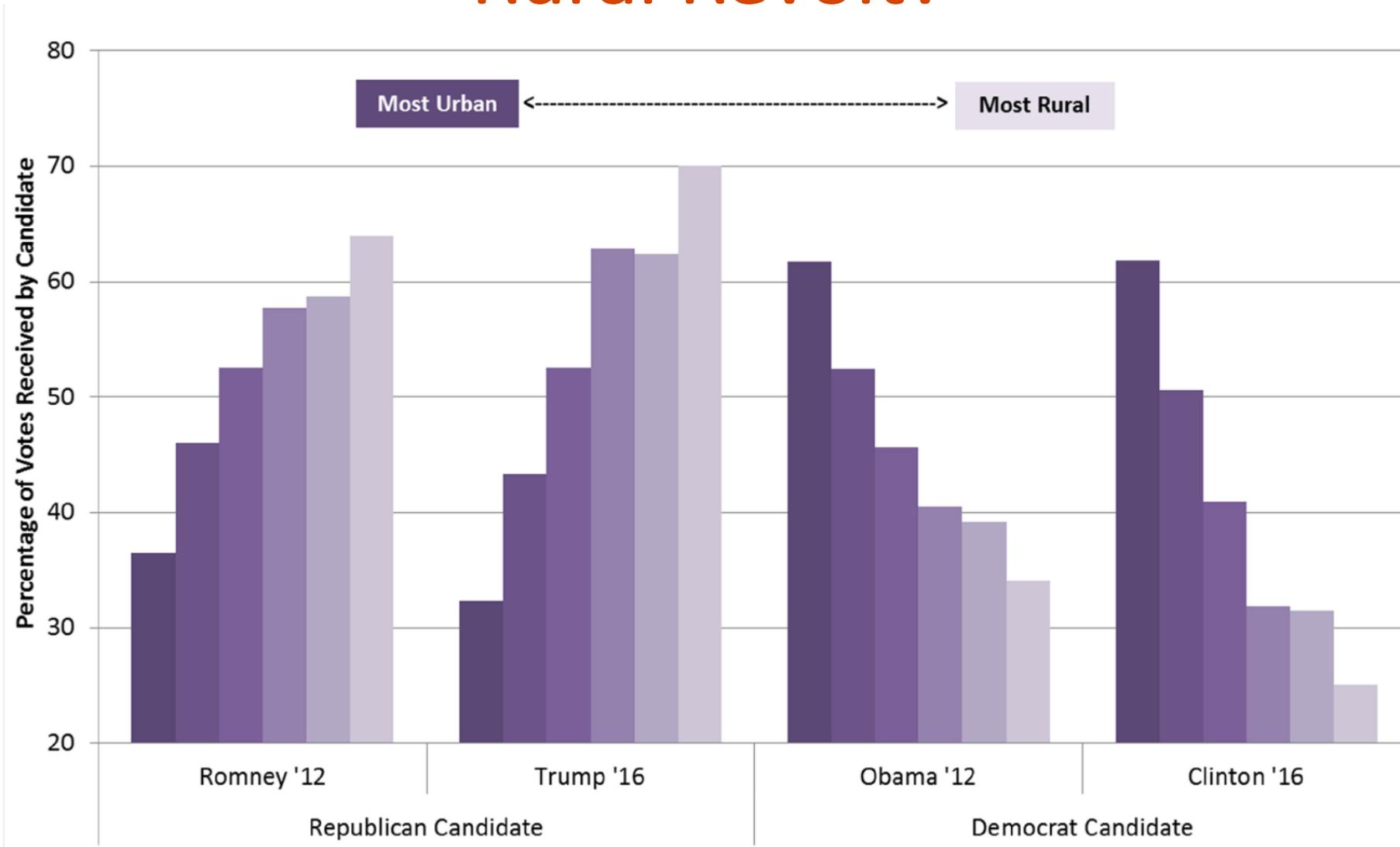
Candidates' counties won and share of GDP in 2000 and 2016

Year	Candidates	# of Counties won	Aggregate share of GDP
2000	Al Gore	659	54%
	George W. Bush	2397	46%
2016	Hillary Clinton	472	64%
	Donald Trump	2584	36%

Source: Brookings analysis of Moody's Analytics estimate

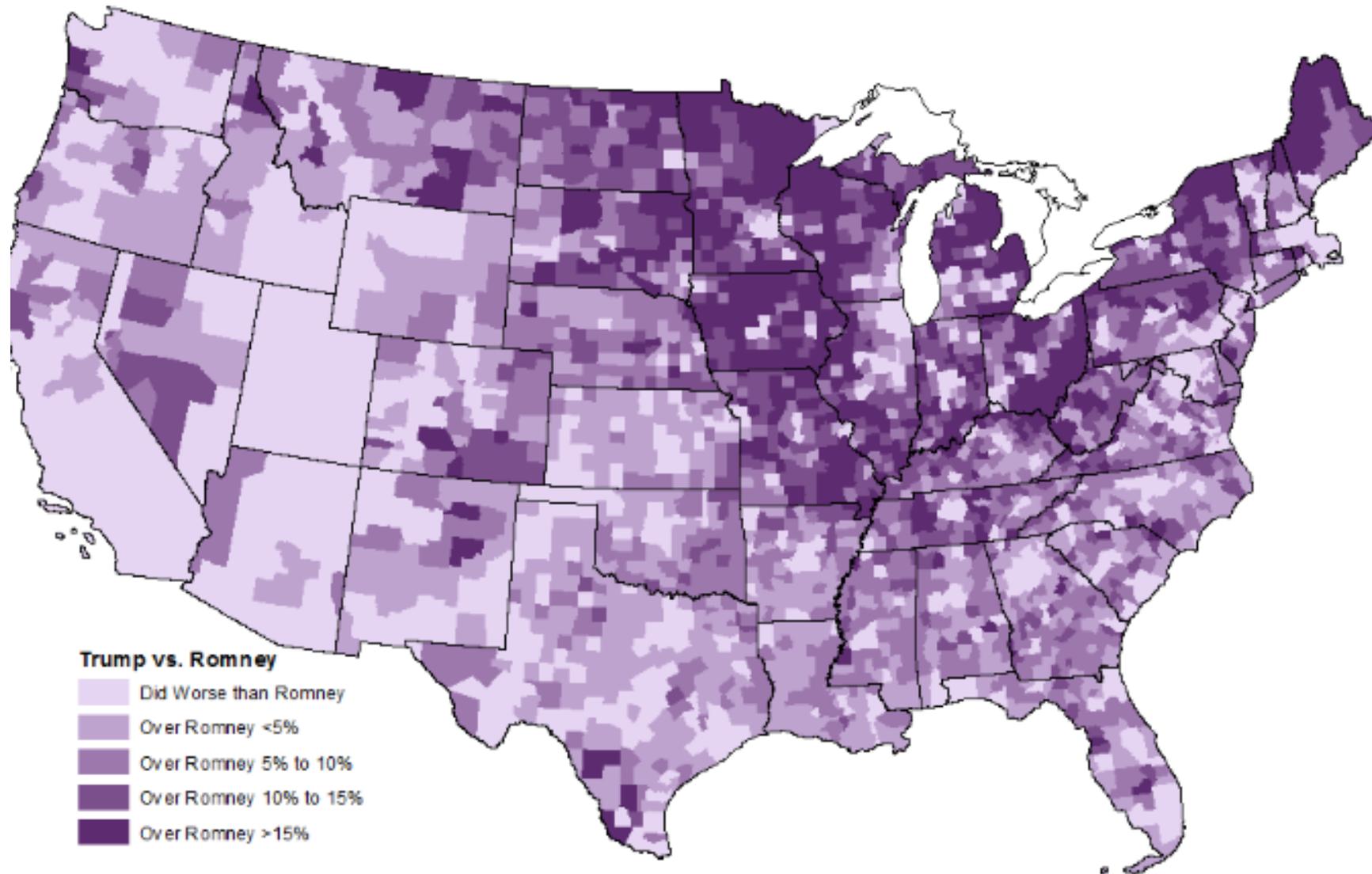
- “Output” based on GDP
- Undervalues raw materials that go into food, energy; military personnel; natural amenity recreation; retirement destinations – things “high output” America depends on.

# Rural Revolt?



Source: Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Elections.

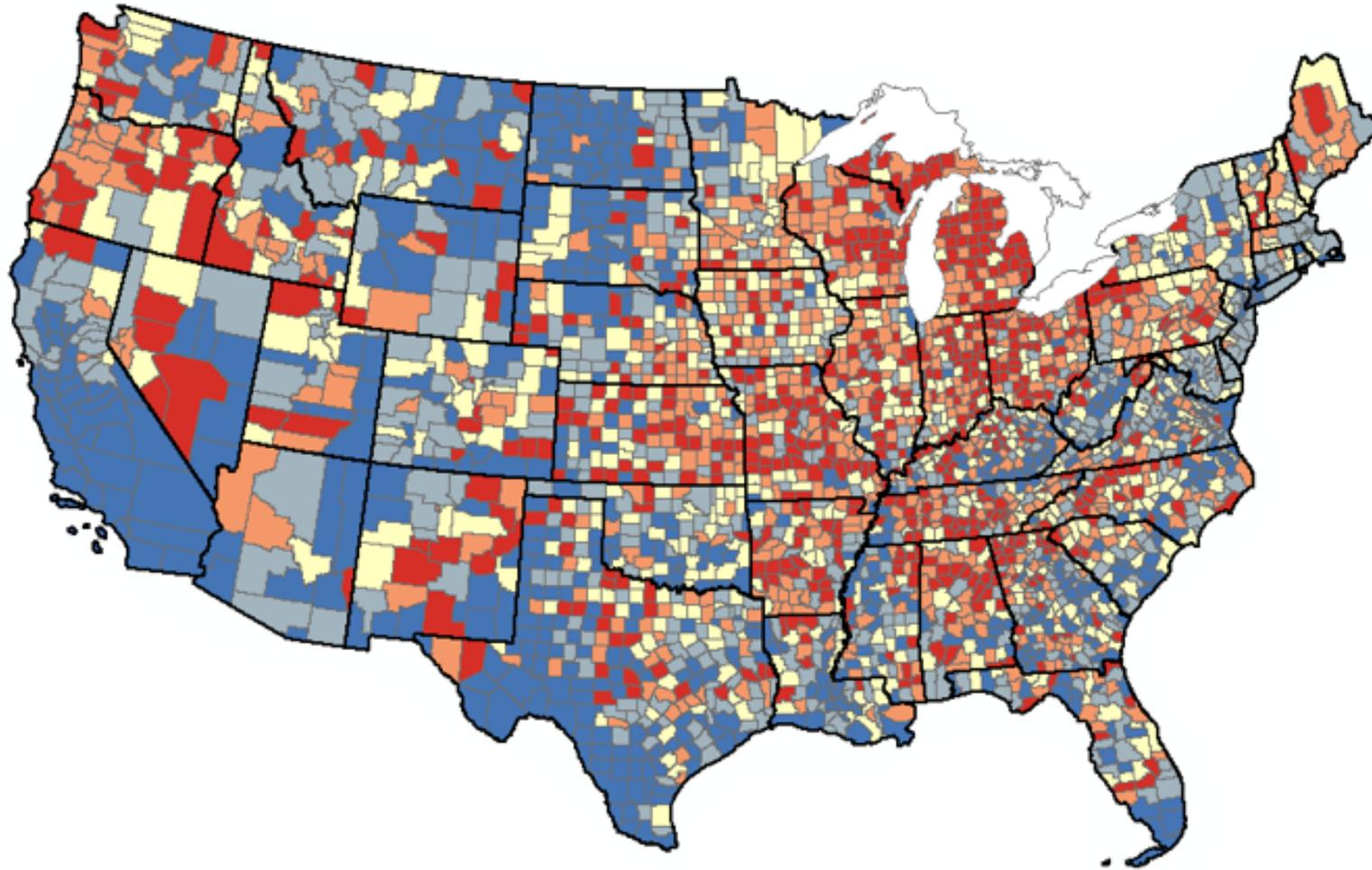
# Trump Overperformance



Trump (16) vs. Romney (12) county vote share

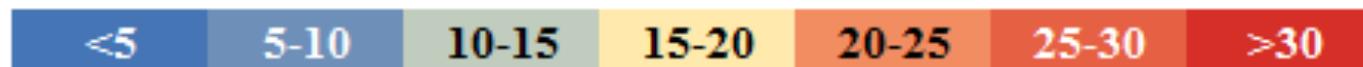
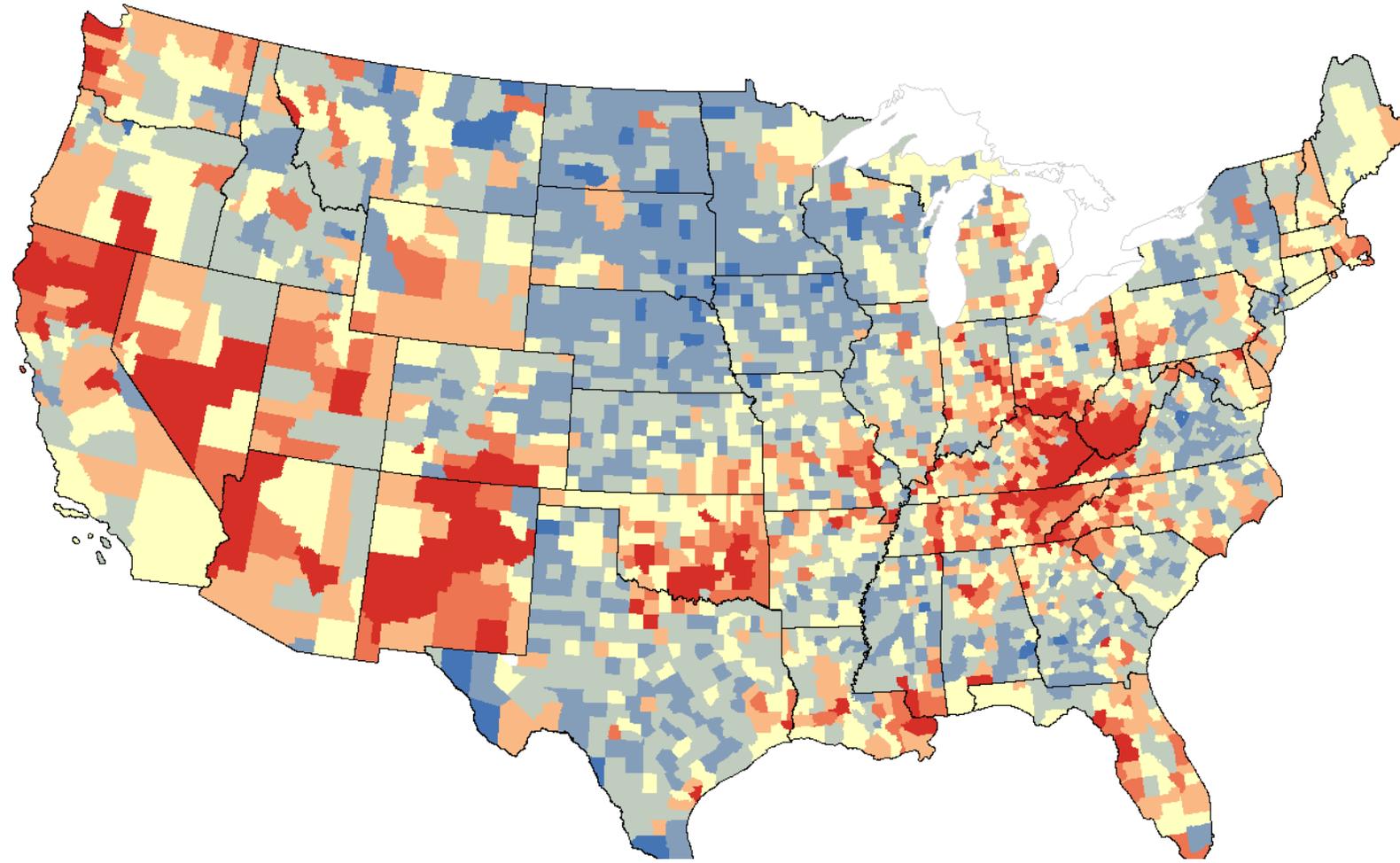
# Change in Economic Distress, 2000 to 2011-15

## “Landscapes of Despair”



Based on prime-age poverty, not working (unemployed/nif), public assistance receipt, disability, single-parent families; county-to-state median HH income ratio, county-to-state median owner-occupied home value ratio

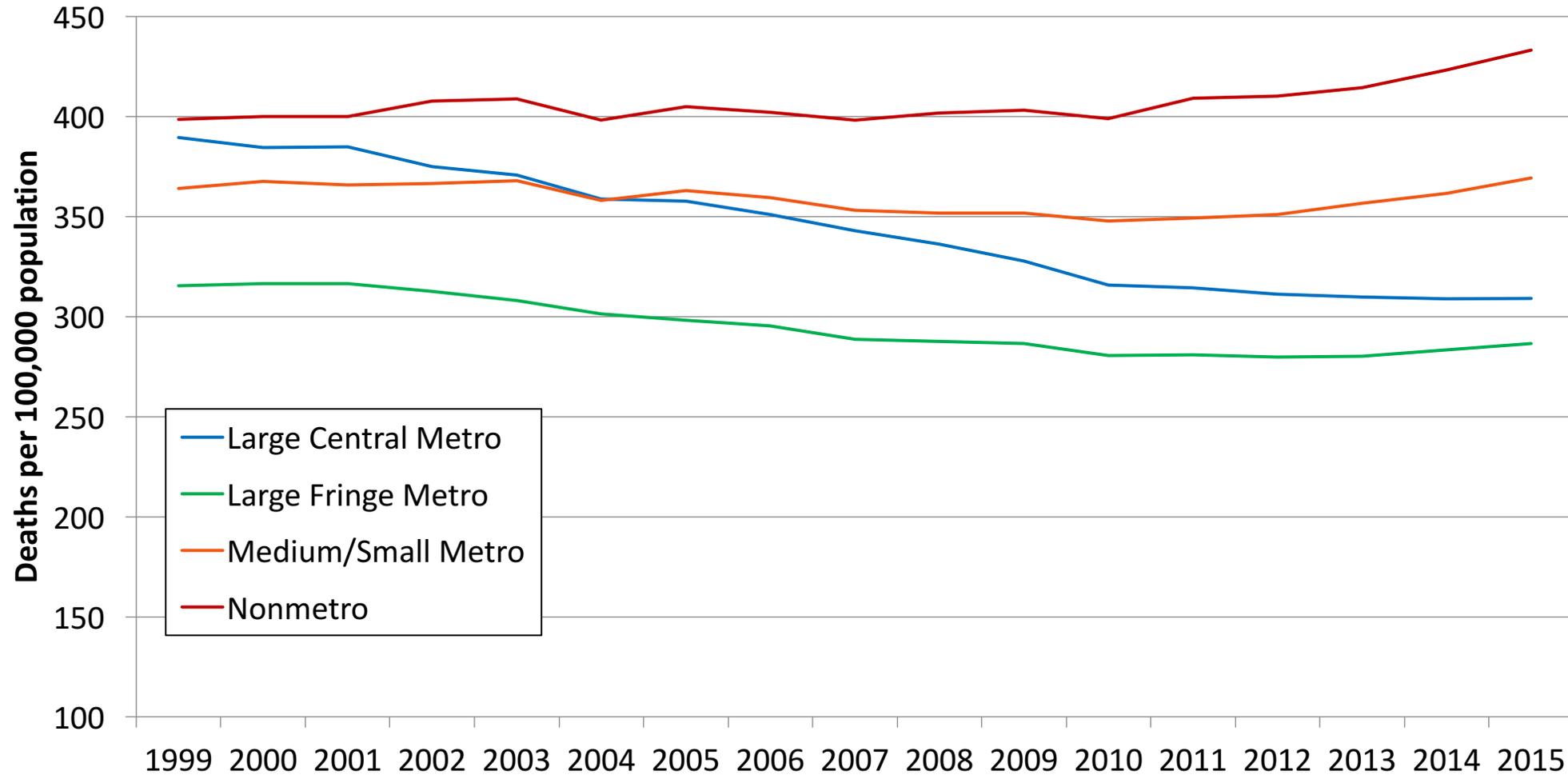
# Drug-Related Mortality, 2006-15



Deaths per 100,000 Population

Data Source: CDC WONDER, Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2015

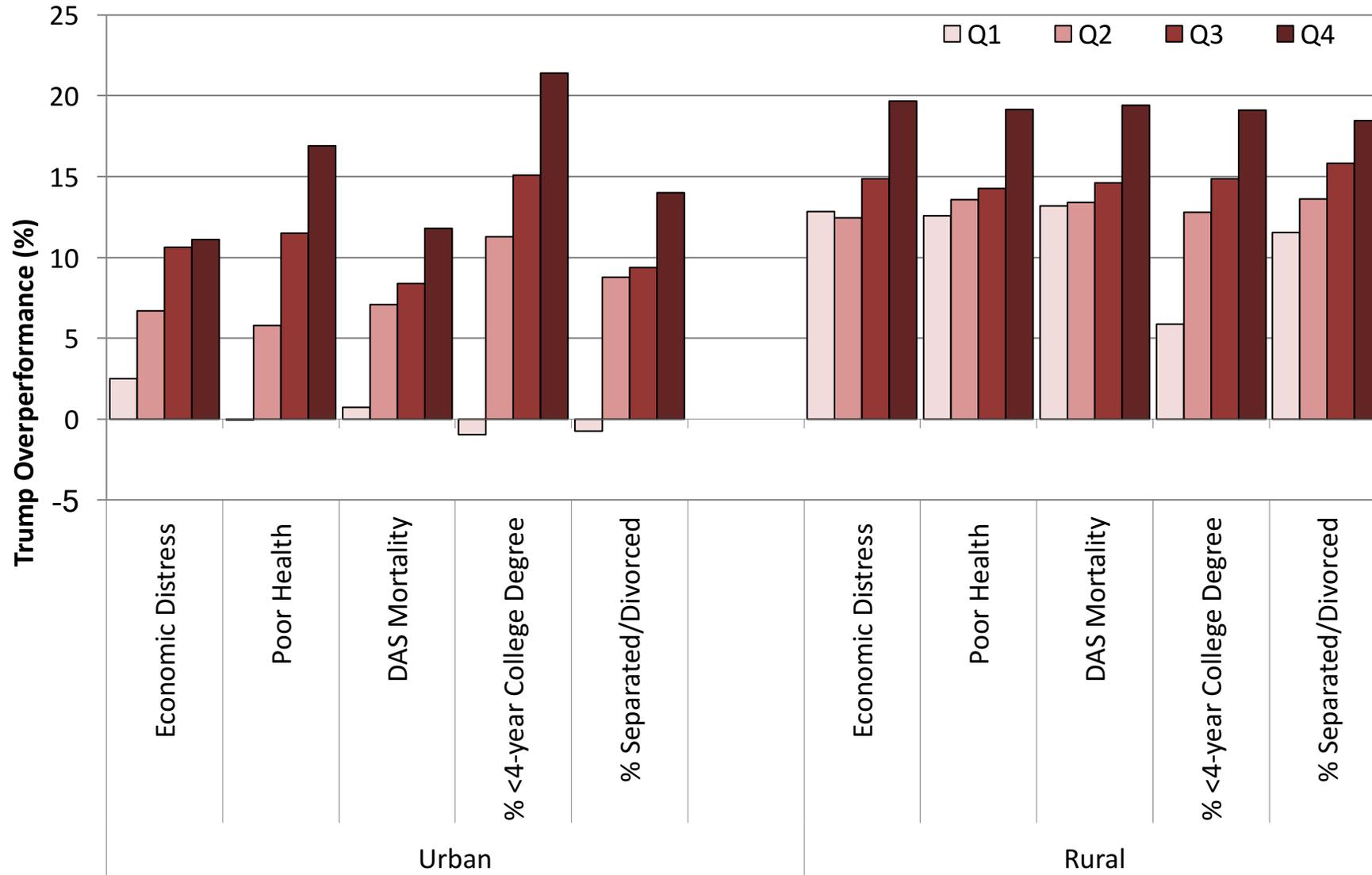
## All-Cause Mortality (ages 25-64) by Metro Status, 1999-2015



Data Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Wonder. Multiple Cause of Death Files.

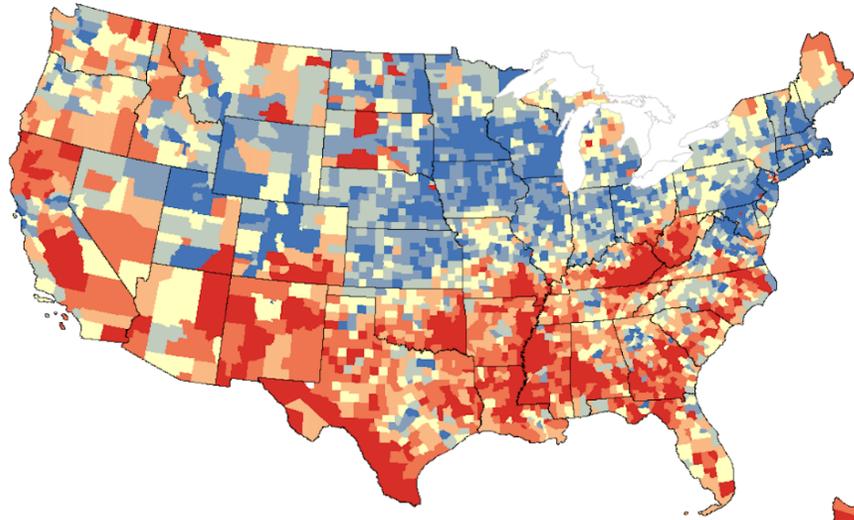
Note: Rates are age-adjusted.

# Trump over-performance by distress quartile

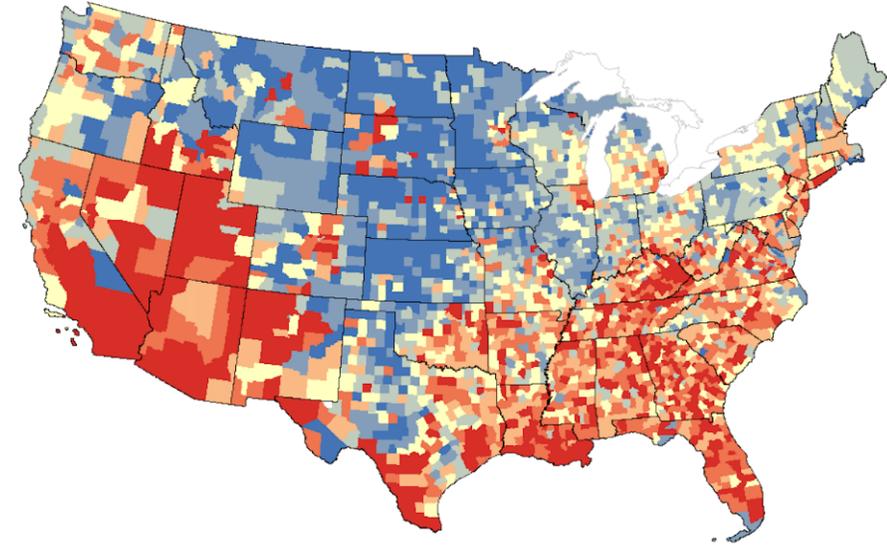


DAS = drug, alcohol, suicide

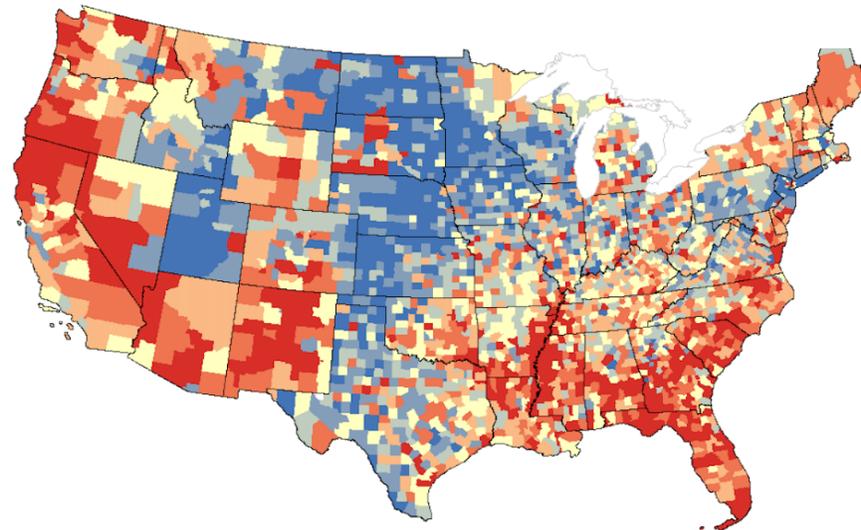
# Landscapes of Despair



Economic  
Distress



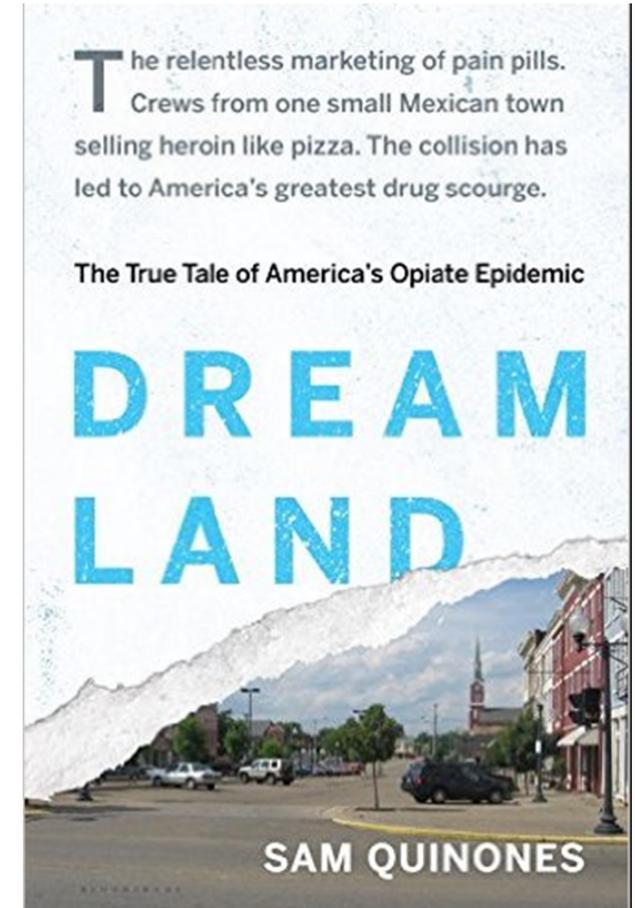
Social Capital  
Shortage



Family Distress

## Long-term drivers at play

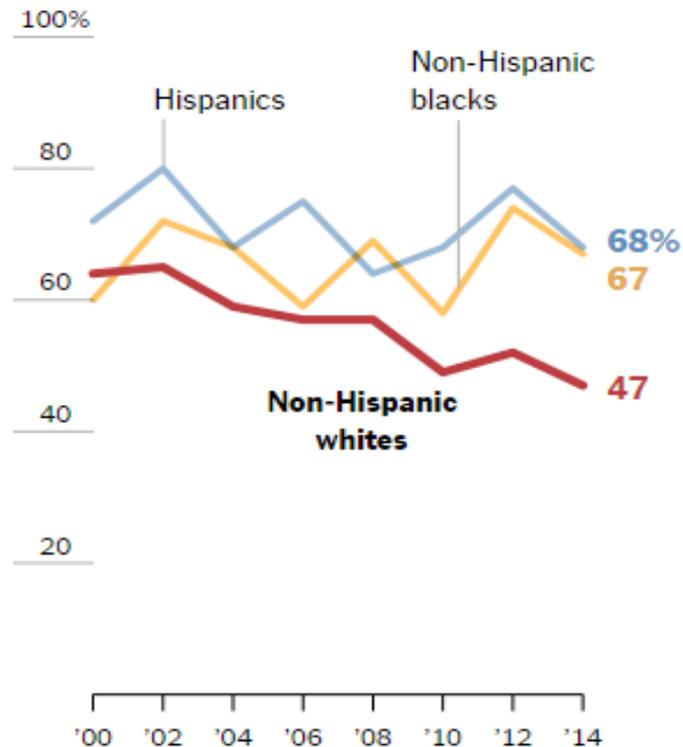
“This was not new; it had been happening for fifteen years. And there was more to it than drugs. This scourge was...connected to the conflation of big forces: **economics and marketing, poverty and prosperity**. Forgotten places of America acted like the canaries in those now-shuttered Appalachian coal mines. Just no one in the country listened much until more respectable types sounded the same alarm.” – Sam Quinones, *Dreamland*



# Non-College Educated Whites are Far Less Positive about their Relative Standard of Living than are Blacks and Hispanics

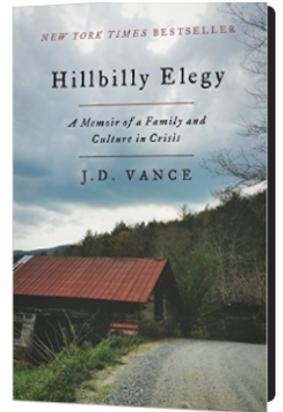
## The Least Optimistic

Percent responding that their standard of living is “much better” or “somewhat better” than their parents among those ages 25-54 without four-year college degrees.

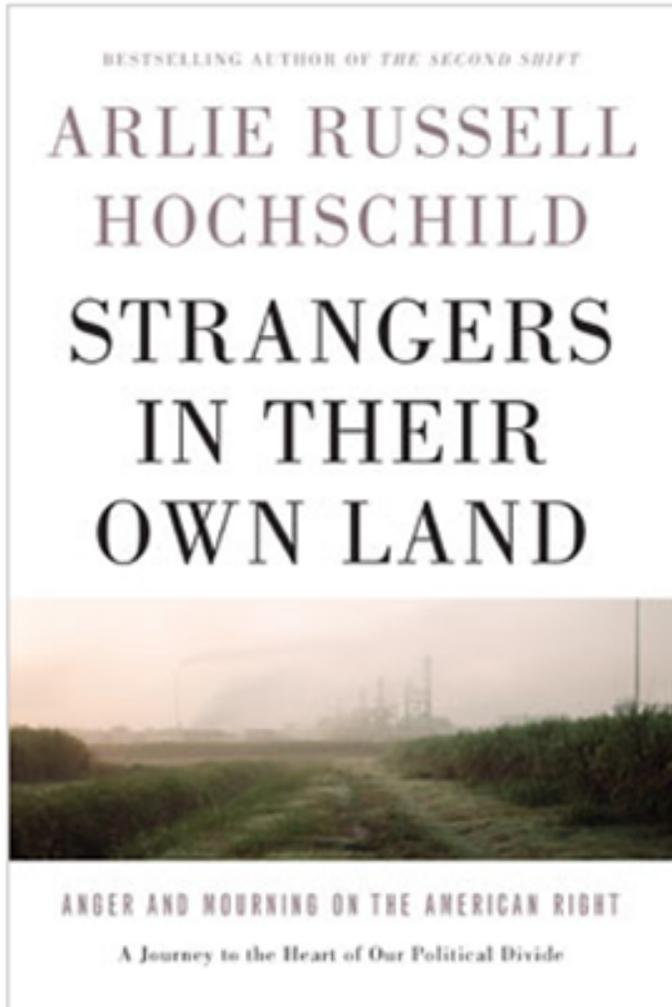


Source: Cherlin, Andrew. “Why are White Death Rates Rising? *The New York Times*. Feb 22, 2016.

“Years of **decline in the blue-collar economy** manifested themselves in the material prospects of Middletown’s residents. The **Great Recession**, and the not-great recovery that followed, has hastened Middletown’s **downward trajectory**. But there was something almost spiritual about the **cynicism of the community at large**, something that went **much deeper than a short-term recession...** **There is no group of Americans more pessimistic than working-class whites.**” – J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elogy*



# Long-term Drivers at Play



“Looking back at my previous research, I see that the scene had been set for Trump’s rise, like kindling before a match is lit. Since 1980, virtually all those I talked with felt on shaky economic ground. It was a story of unfairness and anxiety, stagnation and slippage—a story in which shame was the companion to need.” – Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in their Own Land*



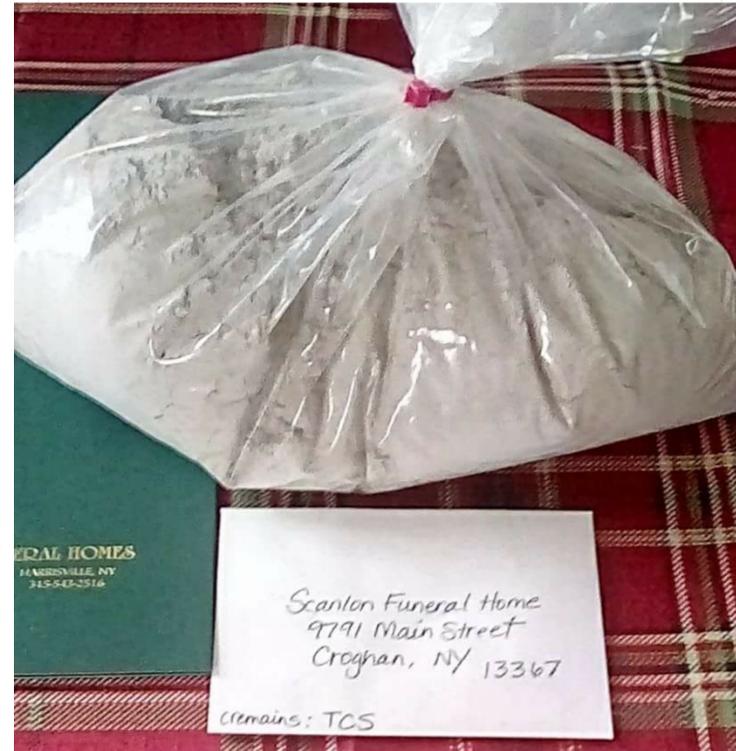
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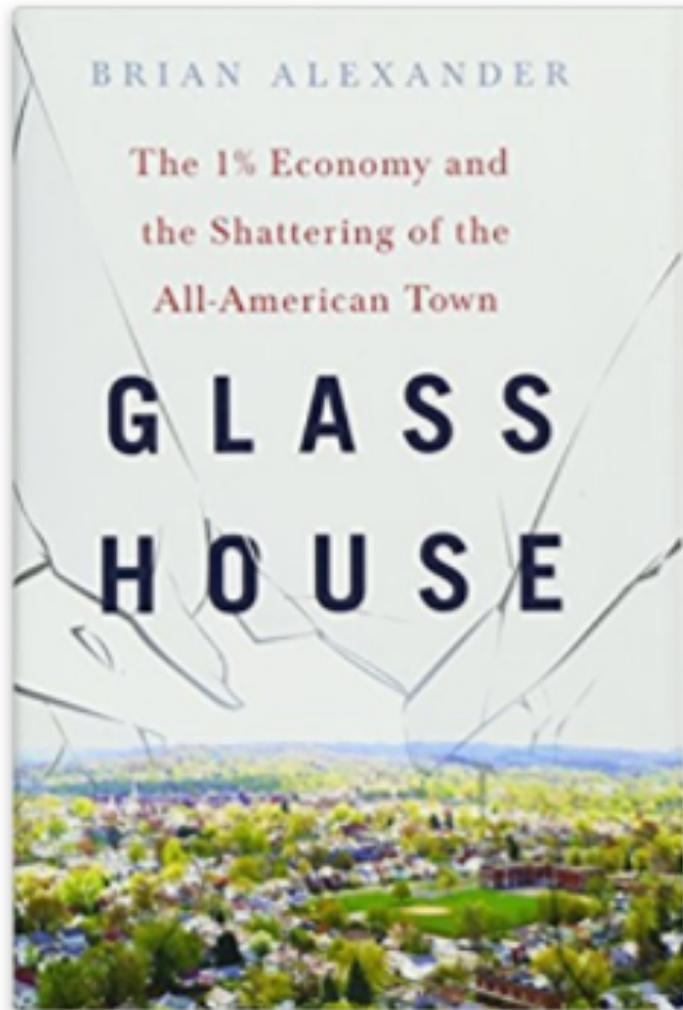
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 **Mona Peebles**   
Mar 14 at 1:31pm • 🌐

I watched as my husband carefully and gently carried him out of the funeral home. This is my son. And this is what HEROIN did!



# Social Capital is also Important



*The quest for community will not be denied, for it springs from some of the powerful needs of human nature—needs for a clear sense of cultural purpose, membership, status, and continuity. Without these, no amount of mere material welfare will serve to arrest the developing sense of alienation in our society, and the mounting preoccupation with the imperatives of community.<sup>[2]</sup>*

– Robert Nisbet

# Going Forward

- Consider spatial heterogeneity in the strength of “populist revolt”
- Race/ethnicity and social class are inherently intersectional (very difficult to disentangle)
- It’s not just the economy – family and social relationships are wrapped up in it.