

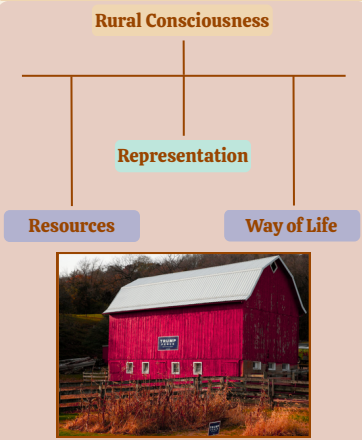
What Is Rural Consciousness?

A place-based group identity where a person expresses affinity for rural communities and their values without necessarily residing in a rural place (Cramer 2012, Munis 2022, Trujilo 2022).

Three components of rural consciousness:

- Representation:** Resentment at urban politicians for excluding rural communities in policymaking
- Way of Life:** Perception that urban politicians look down on rural residents’ individualist values
- Resources:** Belief that urban politicians fail to allocate equitable resources to rural communities

Model of Rural Consciousness



Online Partisan Media, Rural Consciousness, and Nativism

Online partisan media allows individuals to “socialize” (learn and internalize) political beliefs.

- Online partisan media influences individuals’ views towards groups (Johnson & Kaye 2014)
- Online conservative media spreads rurally conscious and nativist messages; urban liberals prioritize immigrants over native-born citizens (Walsh 2021)
- One study (Shaughnessy 2025) measures conservative media’s correlation with viewers’ increased sentiments of rural consciousness and nativism. However, it’s focus was television shows.



Conservative commentator Tucker Carlson donning aesthetically rural clothing on his show, *Tucker Carlson Today*, July 2021



Conservative commentator Ben Shapiro wearing a cowboy hat during a livestream of his eponymous show, October 2021

Proposed Experiment

To understand how online media shapes rurally conscious and nativist sentiments, I propose an experimental design.

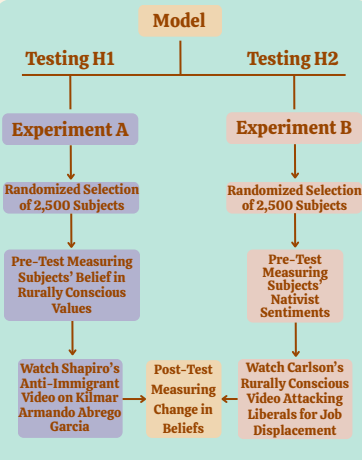
Research questions:

- Does online conservative media consumption induce greater belief in rurally conscious values?
- Does online conservative media consumption induce greater expression of nativist attitudes?

Hypotheses:

- H1:** Exposure to nativist media will increase subjects’ belief in rurally conscious values
- H2:** Exposure to rurally conscious media will increase subjects’ expression of nativist sentiments

Experimental Design



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The Politics of American Ethnicity and Identity
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