The Influence of Community Demographics on New Public Library Facilities

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Overview

- New public library facilities tend to close and open in areas with increased poor and ethnic communities.
  - Most library outlets open, and most library outlets close, in large metropolitan areas.
- However, this pattern does not hold for rural libraries.
  - New rural libraries go into areas of less diversity.

Theories of Access

- The concept of "access" is focused on potential – "the ability to benefit" (Ribot & Peluso, 2003).
  - Access is controlled by an agency other than the one being affected.
- Components of information access (Burnett, Jaeger, & Thompson, 2008)
  - Physical access
  - Intellectual access
  - Social access
- Library location directly impacts who has access and who does not (Koontz, 1997)

Tools

- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Access
- ArcGIS 10.2.2

Data Sets

- IMLS Public Library Survey Data Files, FY2010 and FY2000
- Demographic, economic, and social data from 2000 and 2010 decennial census, Economic Census, and American Community Survey
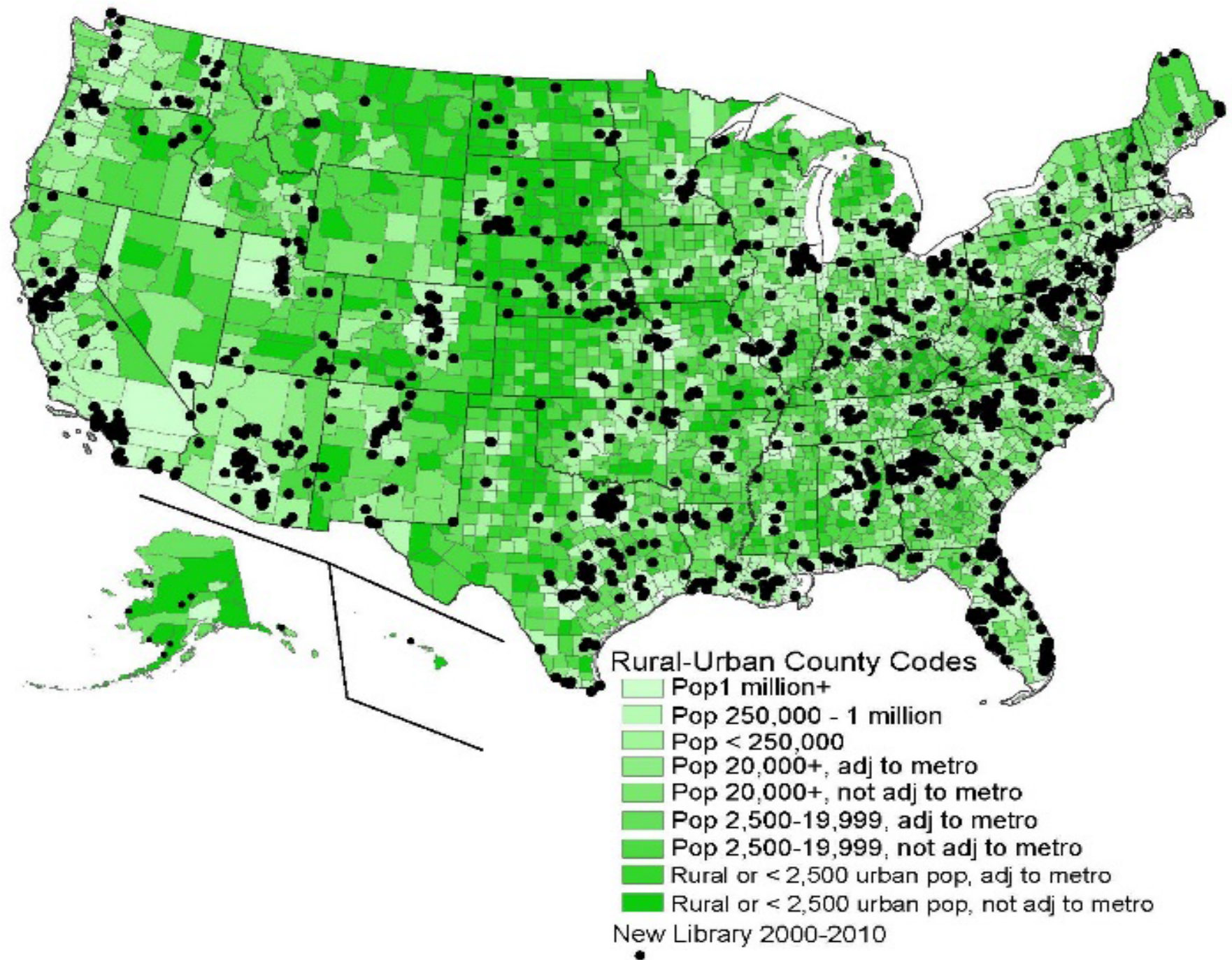
Method (Library Data)

- Defining what is a new, open or closed library
- Obtained library data from the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#)
- Compare the 2000 and 2010 datasets to form a list of new and closed libraries
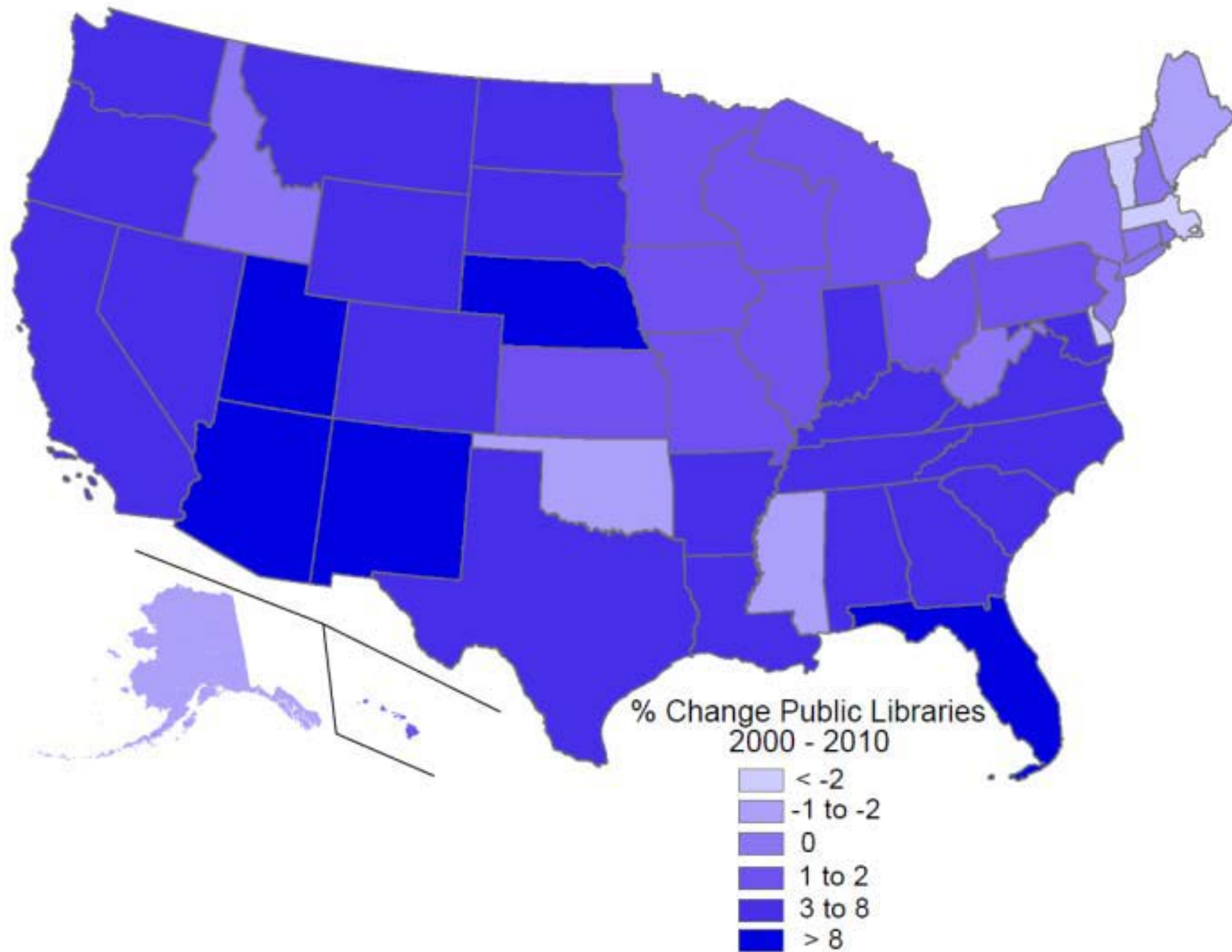- Obtain coordinates in order to map the libraries using ArcMap

Variables

- Geographic
  - County type
- Demographic
  - Percent population changes
  - Race/ethnicity
- Political
  - Percent of county voting Democrat or Republican in 2004 and 2008 elections

- Socioeconomic
  - Median household income
  - High school graduation rate
  - College graduation
- Dependent
  - Public library facility openings and closures

New Library Openings in Rural and Urban Counties

Rural-Urban County Codes
- Pop 1 million+
- Pop 250,000 - 1 million
- Pop < 250,000
- Pop 20,000+, adj to metro
- Pop 20,000+, not adj to metro
- Pop 2,500-19,999, adj to metro
- Pop 2,500-19,999, not adj to metro
- Rural or < 2,500 urban pop, adj to metro
- Rural or < 2,500 urban pop, not adj to metro

New Library 2000-2010

2000-2010 Net Change in Public Libraries by State

% Change Public Libraries
2000 - 2010

- < -2
- -1 to -2
- 0
- 1 to 2
- 3 to 8
- > 8

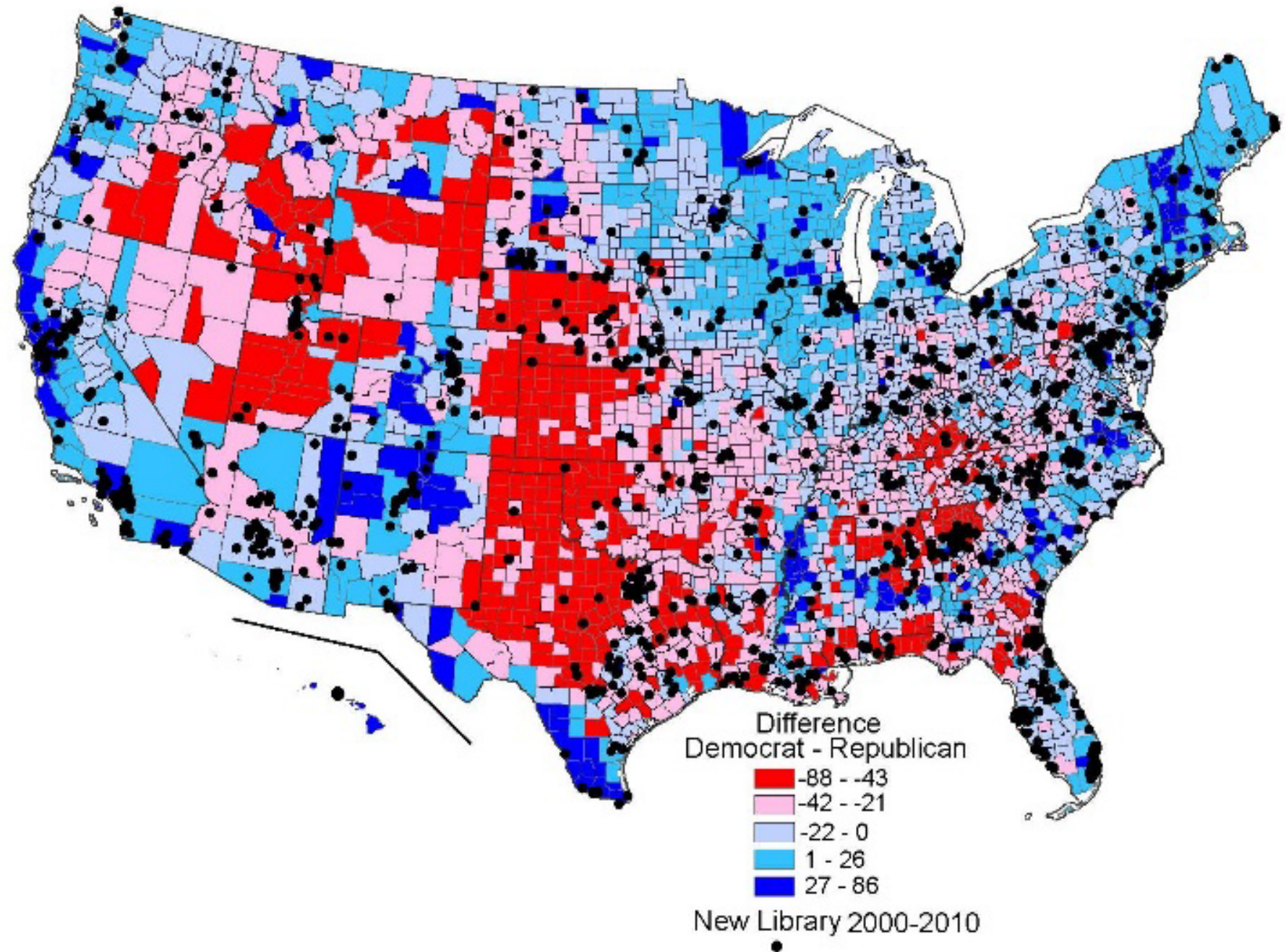| County Type	Counties with New Libraries (n=616)	Counties without New Libraries (n=2522)
Metro, pop >1,000,000+	28%	10%
Metro, pop 250,000-1,000,000	22%	10%
Metro, pop <250,000	14%	11%
Nonmetro urban, pop >20,000, adjacent to metro area	6%	7%
Nonmetro urban, pop >20,000, not adjacent to metro area	3%	3%
Nonmetro urban, pop 2,500-19,999, adjacent to metro area	10%	21%
Nonmetro urban, pop, 2,500-19,999, not adjacent to metro area	7%	15%
Nonmetro, pop <2,500, adjacent to metro area	4%	8%
Nonmetro, pop <2,500, not adjacent to metro area	6%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%

New Library Openings and 2010 African American County Population

% Black Population
- 0 - 6
- 7 - 20
- 21 - 30
- 31 - 50
- 51 - 86

New Library 2000-2010
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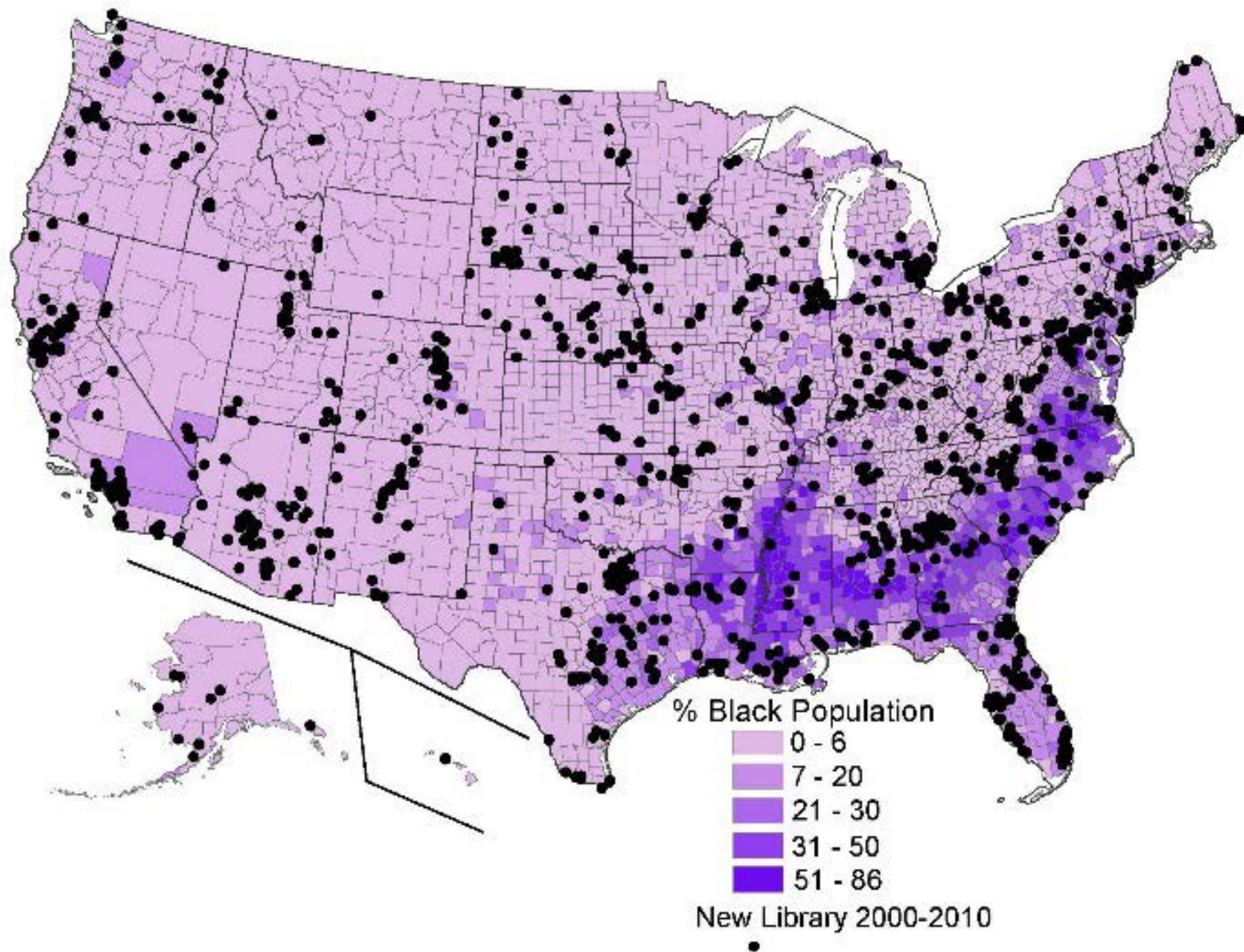
New Library Openings and 2010 Latino County Population

% Hispanic Population
- 0 – 7
- 8 – 19
- 20 – 37
- 38 – 63
- 64 – 98

New Library 2000-2010
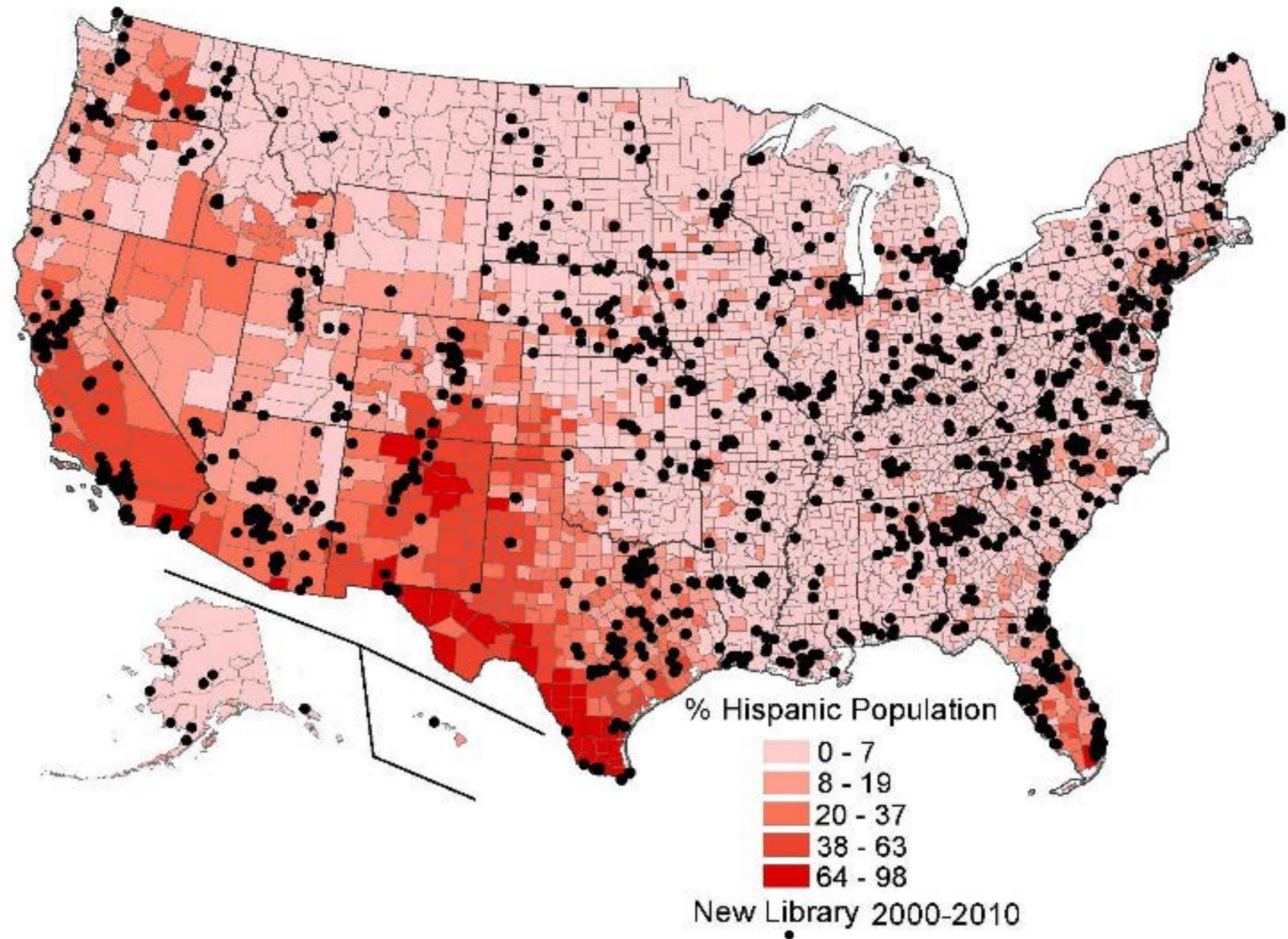
New Libraries Openings and 2008 Presidential Election Voting Trends

Difference
Democrat - Republican

- -88 - -43
- -42 - -21
- -22 - 0
- 1 - 26
- 27 - 86

● New Library 2000-2010

Variable	Counties with New Libraries (n=616)	Counties without New Libraries (n=2522)
Percent White, 2010	78.6%	84.0%
Percent Nonwhite, 2010	21.4%	14.7%
Percent Black	9.8%	8.7%
Percent Latino, 2010	10.8%	7.7%
High School Education, 2006-2010	85.1%	82.6%
Bachelor's Degree, 2010	23.7%	17.9%
Percent Poverty	15.9%	17.0%
Median Household Income, 2010	$47,648	$42,024
Presidential Election Results, 2008	45% D, 53% R	41% D, 58% R
Presidential Election Results, 2004	41% D, 58% R	38% D, 61% R

When we include both rural and urban counties in the same measures, are we comparing apples to oranges?

Variable	Rural Counties with Library Closures (n=71)	Rural Counties with Library Openings (n=139)
Percent White, 2010	83.8%	85.5%
Percent Nonwhite, 2010	16.7%	15.7%
Percent Black, 2010	8.7%	5.2%
Percent Latino, 2010	7.8%	8.2%
High School Education, 2006-2010	82.3%	83.9%
Bachelor's Degree, 2010	18.5%	18.1%
Percent Poverty, 2010	18.3%	17.8%

When a rural public library closes....

- **physical** access to books, computers, and broadband access is reduced.

- **intellectual** access to materials carefully chosen to serve users' needs is eliminated.

- **social** access to spaces where information-seeking and information use are normative is eliminated.

Are digital resources the answer?

- For urban libraries, probably yes.
  - Increased options for computer use and Internet connectivity.
  - Increased access to "smart" devices.
  - Larger library systems with increased resources for digital materials.

- For rural libraries, probably no.
  - Rural poor residents are less likely to have computer and Internet access.
  - When a rural library closes, a population may lose access to any library.