



Crazy Train: Politics of High-Speed Rail

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What is HSR?

Trains travelling over 125 mph

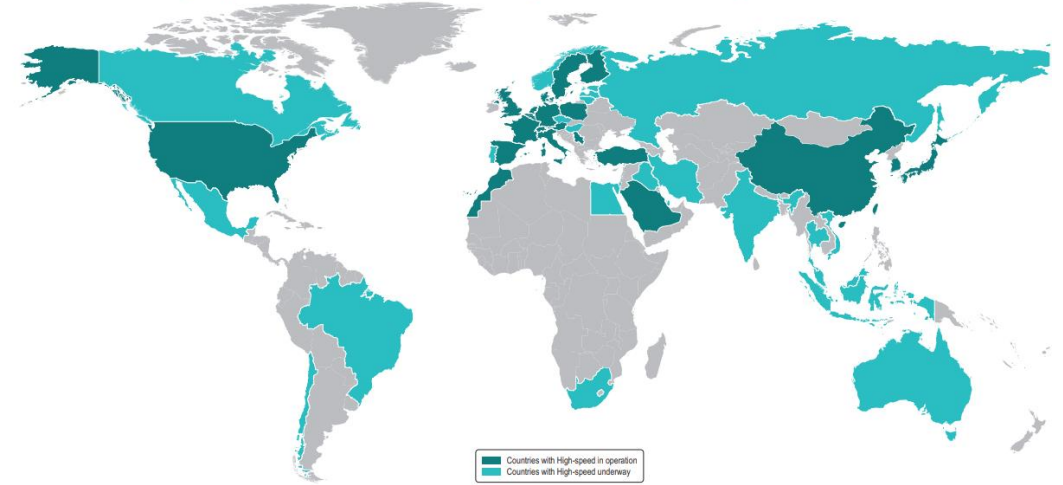
Competitive with driving and flying between 100 & 500 miles

Cleaner than either

Prevalent in the rest of the world

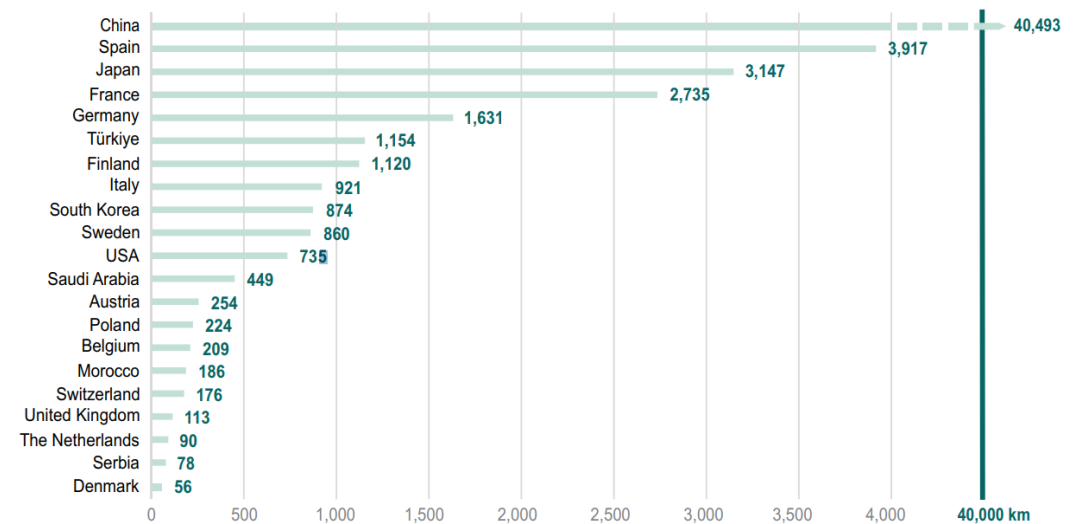
Not a lot in the US

Countries with a high-speed rail network in commercial operation and underway



Note: Vast island territories in extreme latitudes are not considered for this map.
Source: compiled by authors based on International Union of Railways, 2023

Length of the high-speed network in commercial operation by country



Source: compiled by authors based on International Union of Railways, 2022

Geographic Polarization

Political Polarization: Separation of beliefs

Geographic Polarization: Physical separation

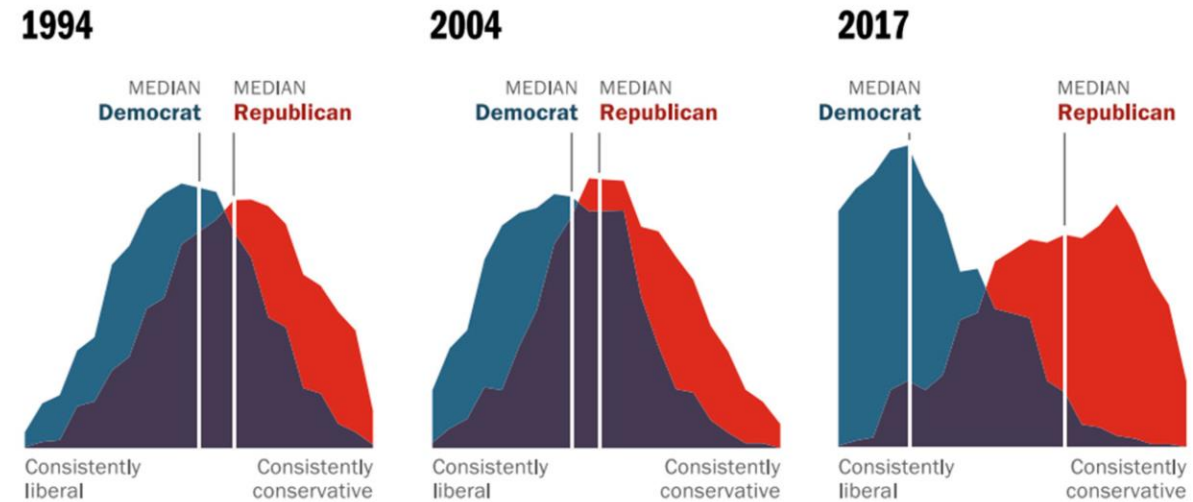
Post-WWII Suburbanization

Dems = Cities, Reps = Suburbs

Redlining, covenants, zoning

Democrats and Republicans more ideologically divided than in the past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values



Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see methodology). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents; the red area of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple.

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

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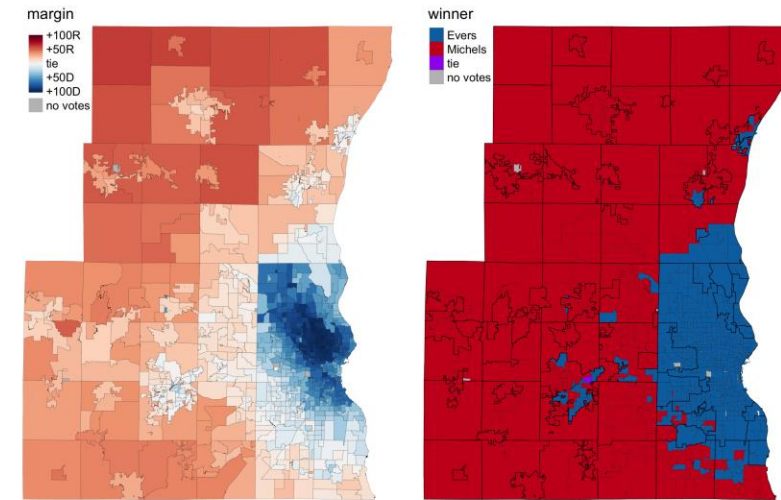
Geographic Polarization (cont.)

1968 Election

Party matters more than location

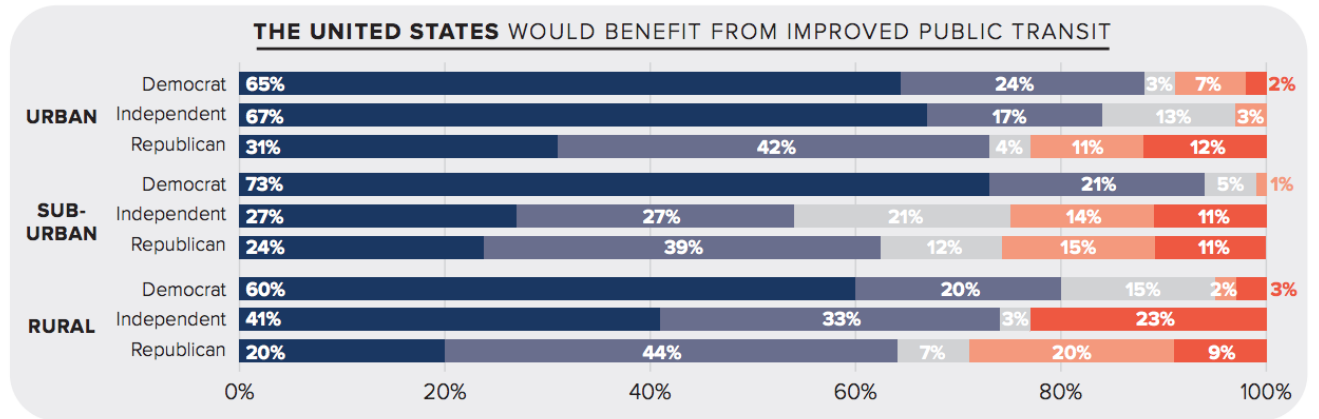
Opposition to Urban investments

WI gubernatorial vote split, 2022



IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSIT by party ID and urban/suburban/rural status

STRONGLY SUPPORT SOMEWHAT SUPPORT NOT SURE SOMEWHAT OPPOSE STRONGLY OPPOSE



HSR under Obama and Trump

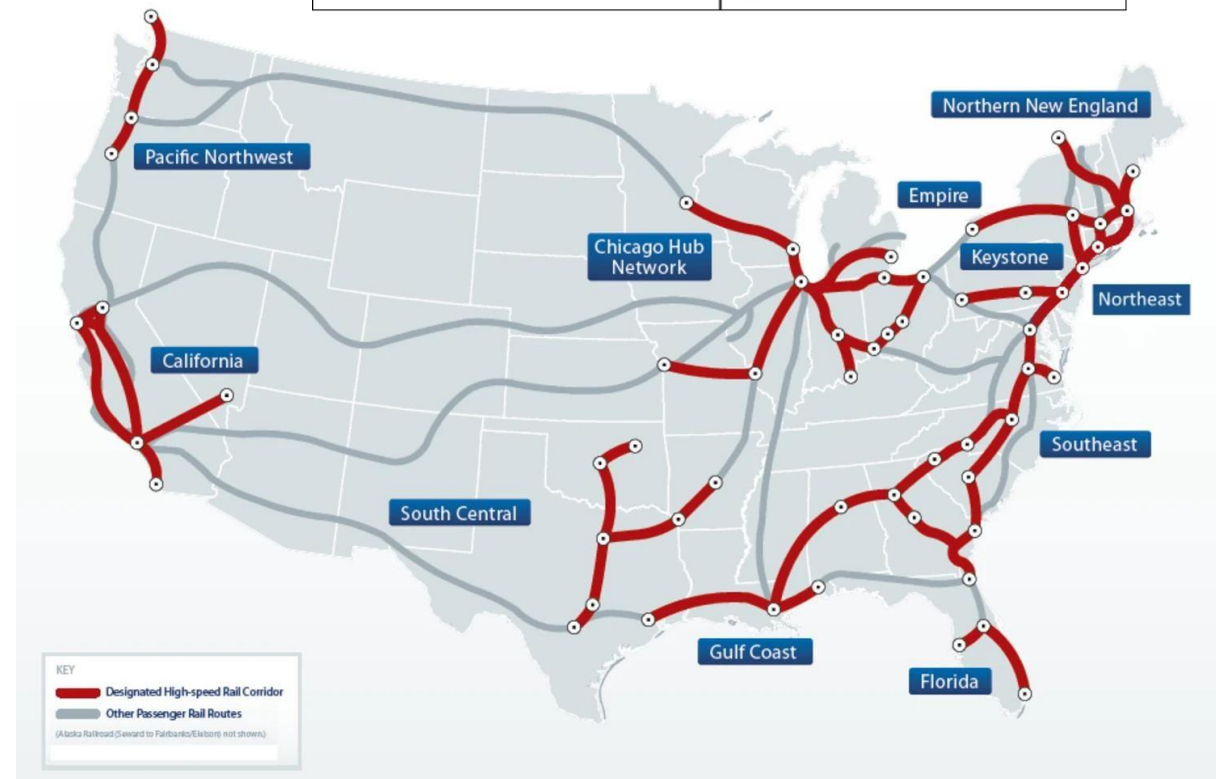
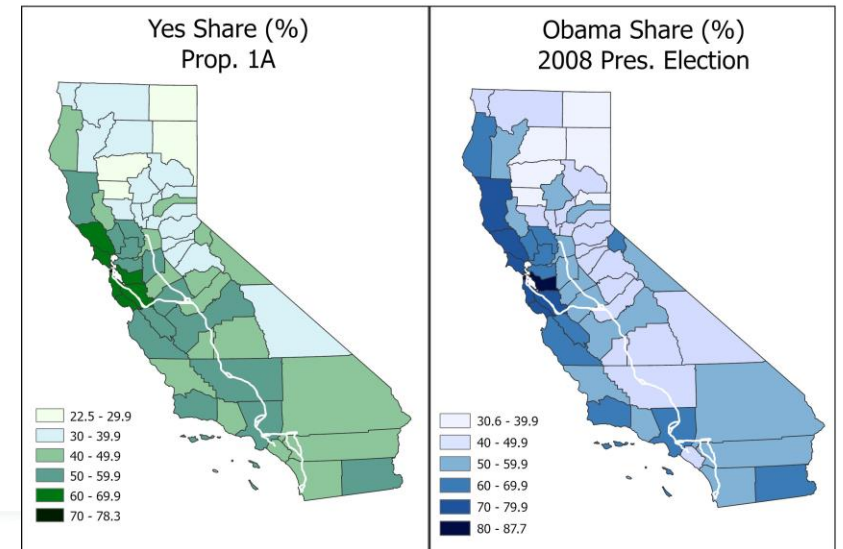
2008 California Prop 1A

\$8 billion in the Stimulus Package

2010 Midterms

GOP govs refuse \$ in OH, WI, and FL

Trump cuts CA funding



Amtrak Joe and the Future

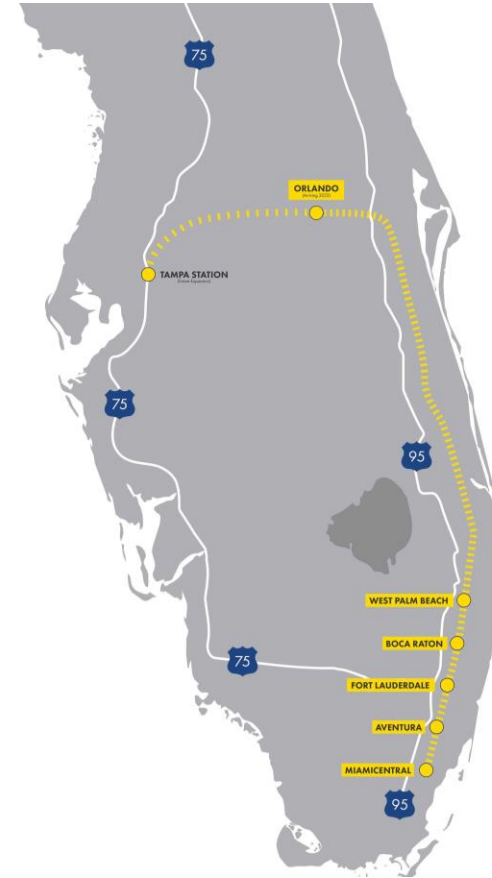
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Billions for rail

Brightline, first private rail carrier in decades

Realignment

2024 Election



Brightline West

