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THE OTHER GREAT MIGRATION:
SOUTHERN WHITES AND THE NEW RIGHT

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The Other Great Migration: Southern Whites and the New Right
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ABSTRACT

This paper shows how the migration of millions of Southern whites in the 20th century transformed the cultural and political landscape across America. Racially and religiously conservative, Southern white migrants created new electoral possibilities for a broad-based coalition with economic conservatives. With considerable geographic scope, these migrants hastened partisan realignment through the 1960s, helping to catalyze and sustain a New Right movement with national influence. More than just a novel voting bloc outside the South, they shaped institutions that reinforced racial sorting across space, shared ideology through religious organizations and popular media, and transmitted cultural norms to non-Southern populations. Together, our findings suggest that this other Great Migration may have forever changed the trajectory of American politics.

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1 Introduction

The 20th century witnessed a transformation in American politics. The New Right movement brought together, for the first time, racial, religious, and economic conservatives into a powerful coalition that mobilized behind the Republican Party after the 1960s. We link this political upheaval to a mass migration of whites out of Southern states. While much has been written about the Great Migration of around six million Southern Blacks, the even larger migration of Southern whites has received far less attention.¹ We show that this other Great Migration played a critical role in building a strong conservative movement with enduring national influence.

The Southern white diaspora helped catalyze and shape the New Right. These migrants brought with them a set of preferences and beliefs, characterized by, on average, more conservative attitudes on race and religion than whites living outside the South. As Southern white migrants put down roots across America, they transmitted cultural values to their non-Southern neighbors and, in turn, influenced politics in their new communities. These changes blurred cultural divides that had long existed between the South and the rest of the country, creating new opportunities for conservative coalition-building at the national level. The Great Migration of Southern whites, given its wide geographic scope, was perhaps instrumental in the “Southernization” of America—a process of long-standing popular interest (see [Applebome, 1997](#); [Cox Richardson, 2020](#); [Egerton, 1974](#); [Gaillard and Tucker, 2022](#)).

We study this long-run influence of the Southern white diaspora, using county-level variation in exposure to these migrants through 1940. The complete-count Census in that year provides a credible population-level measure that predates the partisan realignment of the postwar era. In order to identify the distinct impact of Southern whites on local culture and politics outside the South, we take several steps to address key confounders associated with economic and ideological sorting. This includes a shift-share instrumental variables (IV) approach that combines preexisting migration networks as of 1900 with push factors out of the South from 1900 to 1940.

We find large effects of the Southern white diaspora on right-wing political support outside the South over the long run. A one percentage point (p.p.) increase in the share of Southern-born whites in the population in 1940 is associated with around a 0.7 p.p. increase in the vote share for Donald Trump in 2016. Estimates increase to more than one p.p. when excluding border states—just outside the former Confederacy plus Oklahoma, our baseline definition of the South—where Southern white migrants are less distinct from locals. These findings are robust to a host of estimation and inference diagnostics for shift-share IVs ([Adao et al., 2019](#); [Borusyak et al., 2018](#); [Goldsmith-Pinkham et al., 2020](#)). We find similar results using alternative shift-share IVs based on exogenous push factors across Southern origins, ranging from natural disasters to crop failures to New Deal aid (following [Boustan, 2010](#); [Derenoncourt, 2022](#)). Our results also hold when extending the migration window back to 1870 and looking at the long-run shift through 1940. This is important given the foundational role of the postbellum diaspora in catalyzing the chain migration through the 20th century. Together, these results clarify the persistent effects of early Southern white migration on the long-run trajectory of the conservative movement.

Next, we go back to the postwar period to understand the formation of the New Right and the role of the Southern white diaspora therein.² Although unique in some ways, the 2016 election was the

¹Among the exceptions, [Berry \(2000\)](#) terms this movement the “Great White Migration” while [Gregory \(2005\)](#) refers to the “Southern white diaspora.” [Collins and Wanamaker \(2015\)](#) meanwhile refer to the joint “Great Migration in Black and White.”

²“New Right” here refers to a movement that emerged in the second half of the 20th century, embracing more conservative

latest stage in the evolution of a right-wing coalition that effectively bundled racial, religious, and economic conservatism. These three groups found common cause in the 1960s and 1970s, unified in their opposition to federal government intervention and advocacy for states' rights. Racially conservative politicians exhibited reduced support for federal redistribution programs, which increasingly benefited lower-income Black populations; this aligned them with economic conservatives, in a process that brought together Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans (Black and Black, 2003; Lowndes, 2009; Schickler, 2016). At the same time, religious conservatives decried federal overreach in various domains, such as education and abortion, and more generally saw traditional family values as inconsistent with an interventionist, secular state. To identify these historic coalition changes quantitatively, we rely on congressional activity, using common indices of economic and racial ideology (Bateman et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2021) and a novel measure of religious speech. While economic conservatism was long a mainstay of the Republican Party outside the South, we document its increasing coalescence with racial and religious conservatism in congressional politics over the second half of the 20th century.

We show that Southern white migrants were vital to this New Right coalition, as they hastened the process of partisan realignment in the second half of the 20th century. The congressional representatives of these communities consistently voted in a racially conservative manner and, later, employed religious rhetoric. Beginning in the 1950s, they displayed increasingly fiscally conservative tendencies, too, as counties home to large Southern white populations began to swing away from the Democratic Party in congressional and presidential elections. Southern white migrants left an especially large imprint on the 1968 election, when they amplified support outside the South for the hard-line segregationist George Wallace. The strong performance of this third-party candidate in diaspora communities foreshadowed the consolidation of racial conservatives under the Republican Party in 1972. This was also a turning point in partisan realignment among whites within the South, which, as Kuziemko and Washington (2018) show, was motivated by racial conservatism. Taken together, our results show that the Democrats increasingly lost white voters across not only the South but also diaspora communities outside the South. In the lineage of the New Right, Southern white migrants were an early harbinger of change, illuminating a viable path for the Southern strategy to reshape national politics.

Racial politics were central to the realignment, and we offer new insights into how Southern white migrants influenced such politics. These migrants contributed to new forms of racial exclusion and changed the geography of race through the mid-20th century. We link the Southern white diaspora to the rise of the second KKK and the spread of lynching beyond the South. Such racial terror often went hand-in-hand with the establishment of “sundown towns,” which, by restricting residence after dark, would make many areas previously home to Blacks, and other minorities, increasingly inhospitable (Loewen, 2005). Implemented through various means, including outright violence, sundown towns proliferated in the early 20th century, and over time, Black populations could be found in fewer localities outside the South (e.g., the share of counties with zero Blacks grew from 4% to 15% between 1910 and 1940). Here and in Bazzi et al. (2022b), we show that the Southern white diaspora helped facilitate sundown towns, contributing to the “Great Retreat” of Black populations from locations across America.

Ultimately, this process sharpened the geographic sorting of Blacks and whites, and, in turn, furthered partisan differentiation along racial lines. While Southern whites dispersed across the country,

positions on segregation and later on moral issues such as abortion, in addition to fiscal conservatism and anti-communism, which had characterized earlier conservative coalitions (Dochuk, 2010; Lowndes, 2009).

from the rural West to Northern cities, Southern Blacks were more likely to settle in the densest urban areas and increasingly so over time. Using a combined shift-share strategy, we show that just as Southern white migrants hastened Republican Party gains, Southern Black migrants hastened Democratic Party gains (Calderon et al., 2021). As Democrats embraced a more racially-inclusive pro-redistribution platform, fueled in part by large Black constituencies in Northern cities (Schickler, 2016), disaffected whites not only in the South but also in diaspora communities across America increasingly mobilized behind the Republican Party. The latter movement was plausibly large enough to flip several newly important Western states. More than just a mirror-image, these results together reflect the combined influence of the Great Migrations and the Great Retreat. Put differently, if Southern Blacks had instead dispersed across counties in the way Southern whites had, it is unclear that such coalition changes would have occurred nationally along the racial dimension.

Overall, the “Great White Migration” may have made the American electorate as a whole more ideologically conservative. According to survey data through the 1970s, Southern white migrants were less conservative than whites who stayed behind in the South but more conservative than their white neighbors born outside the South. Thus, in leaving the South, white migrants plausibly made the average white voter more conservative both inside *and* outside the South. Given America’s electoral system, this compositional effect could have major political implications. As it turns out, the transformative effects of the Southern white diaspora also went beyond this purely compositional channel, as these migrants fostered broader cultural and ideological changes conducive to conservative politics.

We explore several of these transmission mechanisms through which Southern white migrants impacted political change. First, we connect the diaspora to enormous growth of evangelical Christianity outside the South. Compared to other groups, Southern white migrants were over-represented in religious leadership positions. More generally, Southern white migrants retained their evangelical traditions and founded new Protestant churches across America. This includes, most prominently, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which had defended slavery and split from the national Baptist church over the issue in the 1850s. When the SBC began allowing congregations outside the South in the 1940s, the Southern white diaspora was central to its diffusion. These migrants helped the church, along with other denominations (e.g., Pentecostal), become a key force in mobilizing religious conservatives behind the Republican Party later in the 20th century (see Butler, 2021; Jones, 2018).

Second, Southern whites exerted an early and persistent influence on the right-wing media landscape. In counties with a large diaspora, radio stations were more likely to host conservative programs such as the *Twentieth Century Reformation Hour*, which aired from 1955 through the early 1970s and featured Carl McIntire’s diatribes against left-wing causes across a range of political, economic, and cultural domains. This differential media landscape would persist over subsequent generations as Rush Limbaugh rose to prominence in many of the same localities across the U.S. While these conservative cultural broadcasts resonated with the Southern white electorate, they may also have contributed to the diffusion of right-wing values to non-Southern audiences in diaspora communities outside the South.

Finally, we find direct evidence of cultural spillovers from Southern to non-Southern populations. In counties with a larger Southern white diaspora, non-Southern-born parents were more likely to give their children Biblical names. Using a mover-based identification strategy, we show that this transmission is due, in part, to causal exposure effects rather than solely due to selection of more religious non-Southern families into diaspora communities. These contact-based mechanisms of cultural change are consistent

with broader Southern influence as seen, for example, through the diffusion of country music, barbecue, and fried chicken, all of which originated in the South and were distinctive features of life in the diaspora. As these elements of Southern heritage spread outside the South, it may have become easier for right-wing movement leaders to forge new political coalitions across the North–South cultural divide.

This paper makes several contributions to our understanding of migration, cultural change, and the conservative movement in America. We advance knowledge on the Great Migrations out of the South during the 20th century. Economists have largely focused on Southern Black migration (Boustan, 2010, 2016; Derenoncourt, 2022; Fouka et al., forthcoming), while a small subset has characterized the collective migration of Blacks and whites (Collins and Wanamaker, 2015; Stuart and Taylor, 2019). Calderon et al. (2021) show that Southern Black migrants increased support for civil rights legislation among Northern whites. We show that Southern white migrants also left a major historical imprint as they bolstered a new conservative movement with far-reaching political consequences.³ Moreover, we connect Black and white settlement patterns and argue that the two together offer a more complete characterization of how the Great Migration transformed American politics.

We offer some of the first quantitative evidence connecting the insights of historians on the Southern white diaspora (Dippel, 2005; Dochuk, 2010; Gregory, 2005) with the insights of political scientists on the realignment (Schickler, 2016) and emergence of the New Right (Lowndes, 2009) as well as sociologists on the geography of racial animus (Loewen, 2005). Our empirical approach identifies critical junctures in the New Right trajectory and uses congressional votes and speech as a vivid window into the bundling of economic, racial, and religious conservatism that coalesced within the Republican Party after the 1960s. Our evidence on the transmission of religious ideology and shifts in racial politics illuminates a key role for this historical migration episode in shaping the landscape of political ideology across America today.

Our findings offer a new perspective on the origins and consequences of partisan realignment. The realignment of racially conservative white voters within the South is well understood (Black and Black, 2003; Kuziemko and Washington, 2018). We show that a similar realignment took hold in white diaspora communities outside the South. The geographic dispersion of these communities, and their pervasiveness in large swathes of the West, made it electorally feasible for the Republican Party to court the racially conservative vote nationally. These partisan dynamics also substantiate the longstanding view that racial animus is central to understanding opposition to redistribution in the United States (Alesina et al., 2001). By bundling racial and religious conservatism with traditional economic conservatism, the Republican Party assembled a broad and durable electoral coalition. Political scientists Maxwell and Shields (2019) call this novel configuration the “Long Southern Strategy,” riffing on Nixon’s original Southern Strategy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. We show just how important the Southern white diaspora was in building this effective right-wing movement for political change.

We also contribute to a growing literature on the role of migrants in fostering cultural change throughout American history. Recent work explores the influence of European immigrants on redis-

³Since first distributing our working paper in June 2021, we have learned of two concurrent studies also showing how waves of Southern white migrants strengthened conservative politics outside the South. Ramey (2021) shows this for white Plains migrants settling in California during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, and Reisinger (2021) shows this for Southern white migrants as of 1970 across the non-South. Our study is distinct in four ways: (i) our analysis of realignment, the critical 1968 election, and the bundling of racial, religious, and economic conservatism, (ii) our evidence on racial sorting and coalition change, (iii) our exploration of multiple cultural and ideological channels of transmission, and (iv) our evidence of causal exposure effects and cultural change among non-Southern whites.

tributive preferences (Giuliano and Tabellini, 2020), honor culture (Grosjean, 2014), and gender norms (Haddad, 2021), as well as the influence of frontier settlers on a culture of rugged individualism (Bazzi et al., 2020). We explore another mass migration episode and trace out its long-run implications for the geography of culture and politics. Historically, the North–South divide dominated. Today, however, vast differences exist *within* regions. Our findings suggest that the Southern white diaspora may have been an early driver of geographic polarization. Their influence cut across many domains of public life and may have contributed to a blurring of the longstanding North–South divide and its translation into new geographies of political division across America.

Before turning to background, we offer a note on interpretation. While identifying an important role for Southern white migrants in right-wing politics outside the South, including racial politics, we are by no means ruling out a large influence of non-Southerners in driving those same outcomes. Nor are we arguing that all Southern white migrants had the same attachments to Southern culture or had the same impacts on their destination communities. Rather, our findings identify average effects of Southern white migration on culture outside the South. Finally, we are not equating all right-wing politics with racial animus. The New Right coalition brought together an emerging collection of shared interests across racial, religious, and economic conservatives. This does not mean that all of its political expressions or all members of its voting bloc are equally attached to each of its defining attributes.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides historical background on Southern white migrants. Section 3 presents core results on long-run electoral outcomes and partisan realignment. Section 4 characterizes the New Right and the role of Southern white migrants in shaping the movement. Section 5 links the Southern white diaspora to major changes in the geography of race and racial politics. Section 6 identifies channels of cultural and ideological transmission from Southern white migrants. Section 7 concludes with a discussion of future research.

2 Background on the Southern White Diaspora

This section provides background on white migration out of the South. We first describe key historical episodes and then characterize migrant selection and sorting. We conclude with an in-depth look at distinctive features of Southern culture that would prove influential in shaping the New Right.

2.1 From the Postbellum Era to the Great Migration(s)

Small waves of migration out of the South ensued after the Civil War. Many Southern whites followed Gold Rush routes westward, seeking land on which to rebuild estates lost during the war and in the economic fallout thereafter. Famous California berry farmer Walter Knott, the son of one such migrant, would later remark that “the carpetbaggers [a derogatory term for Northerners] came down South and disenfranchised every Southerner that had been in the war” (Dochuk, 2010, p. 7).⁴ Historically, Southern whites had long been mobile, following the search for cheaper land, cattle, and crops from the East Coast and Appalachia, to the Ozarks and the Great Plains, and finally to the West. Agricultural opportunities as well as oil, mining, and timber industries all created novel pathways out of the South, which future Southern-born migrants would follow (Gregory, 2005).

⁴Incidentally, the Knott family would go on to play an important role in funding and nurturing conservative movement growth in California and the United States more broadly.

Recent work by historians suggests that many of those moving West in the postbellum era were also motivated by ideological grievance. Cox Richardson (2020, p. XXII) notes that Southerners “who hated that racial equality could be enforced by the government, saw the West as the only free place left in America.” Waite (2021, p. 212) argues that “[t]he West’s relative lack of African Americans made it a natural escape for the thousands of former Confederates fleeing the fallout of emancipation.” And Dippel (2005, p. 3) claims that “a major attraction of the West lay in its racial exclusivity: slaves and free blacks had not moved to this region in large numbers. . . . In the open spaces of the West, these pioneers could create enclaves that would safeguard and preserve their racial identity and unity.” These early movers, motivated by both economic and ideological factors, laid the foundation for future chain migration out of the South.

While early postbellum outflows of Southern whites were important in initiating novel migration pathways, those flows were dwarfed by the large-scale migration to the North and West after 1900. Figure 1 shows this “Great White Migration” beginning at a time when World War I and immigration restrictions led to increased demand for labor. By 1940, nearly 10.9% of Southern-born whites lived outside the South, compared to roughly 15.6% of Southern-born Blacks. These migration outflows persisted into the postwar era as sustained industrial growth across the country spurred a more general exodus of Southern workers during the 1940s, which continued for several decades. By 1970, nearly 20% of Southern-born whites lived outside the South. Meanwhile, 35% of Southern-born Blacks lived outside the South by 1970, though many returned to the South in the ensuing decades.

2.2 Migrant Destinations, Origins, and Socioeconomic Backgrounds

After the Civil War, Southern whites migrated towards many parts of the westward-moving country. By 1940, there were large Southern white populations in the West Census Region, the Ohio River Valley, and lower Plains (see Figure 2, and Appendix Figure A.1 for 1870 and 1900). While border states just outside the former Confederacy were popular destinations, large diaspora communities could be found in faraway regions of central California, eastern Washington, Oregon, and much of Wyoming. Southern whites were less prevalent in former Union states, especially in the Northeast and upper Midwest, where, instead, Southern Black migrants were more likely to settle (see Figure 2).⁵ Southern whites were also more likely to settle across the entire density distribution, ranging from rural area to small town to large city, whereas Southern Blacks concentrated in the densest urban areas (see Appendix Figure A.2).⁶

Just as their destination choices differed, Black and white migrants also came from different regions of the South. While Black migrants came primarily from the Cotton Belt, whites migrated from a vast stretch that also included the more northern “outer South,” which includes the Great Plains of Oklahoma and northern Texas as well as the Appalachian hills of Tennessee and northern Alabama (Gregory, 2005). Push factors were important here: in the Plains, the Dust Bowl caused pervasive drought and farm failure in the 1930s (see Arthi, 2018; Hornbeck, 2012), and in Appalachia, the Depression severely contracted its industrial sector. In general, declining white farm ownership or tenantry, declining farm

⁵Southern whites largely avoided Utah, perhaps due to religious and other cultural differences with the Mormons.

⁶Collins and Wanamaker (2015) characterize racial differences in sorting across regions from 1910 to 1930. We explore these differences from 1850 to 1940, highlighting the importance not only of traditional forces like distance and networks but also ideological and economic differences. For example, conditional on distance and networks, Southern whites sorted towards counties outside the South that (i) were more suitable for plantation crops and extractive commodities, and (ii) had a higher vote share for the pro-slavery Southern Democrat candidate, John C. Breckinridge, in the 1860 election.

acreage, and shrinking manufacturing sectors were important push factors (Fligstein, 1981). Yet, despite popular media stereotypes about poor, welfare-seeking Southern migrants—disparagingly called “Okies,” “hillbillies,” and “rednecks”—many of these migrants integrated into destination labor markets. In fact, they spanned the socioeconomic spectrum, and in some periods, white outmigrants were positively selected along socioeconomic status and literacy (see Appendix C for evidence from a linked sample of migrants from 1930-1940 and Collins and Wanamaker, 2014, for evidence from before 1930).⁷

2.3 Characterizing Southern White Culture

Southern and non-Southern whites exhibited significant cultural differences historically. Southern whites are often associated with evangelical Protestantism, racial conservatism, and populist ideals rooted in localism and dislike of elites (Dochuk, 2010; Gregory, 2005). Prevalence of racial animus among Southern whites has been linked to the history of slavery and Jim Crow (see, e.g., Green, n.d., on the Williams thesis), while the importance of evangelicalism traces back to the formation of the “Bible Belt” in the South, driven by Baptists and Methodists (Boles, 1996; Heyrman, 2013). This paper does not attempt to explain the origins of these salient characteristics. Rather, we take them as given, provide empirical evidence of their prevalence among whites in the South, and show that these same distinctive attitudes can be seen among Southern whites in the diaspora.

Using data from the American National Election Survey (ANES) waves through 1970, Table 1 compares Southern- and non-Southern-born whites living in the same non-Southern county. Southern white migrants are substantially more likely to be evangelical Protestant (column 1) and to hold conservative religious beliefs (column 2). They are also more supportive of racial segregation in various domains (columns 3-5). While Southern whites are no more opposed in general to government intervention in the economy (column 6), they are significantly more likely to oppose interventions designed to help support Blacks (column 7).⁸ These patterns highlight a well-established intersection between racial and economic conservatism that became especially important during the Civil Rights era.

The conservative attitudes among Southern white migrants have roots in the South. Appendix Figure A.3 displays a continuum of conservatism across whites in America: across all outcomes, responses in the Southern white diaspora fall squarely between those of Southerners in the South and non-Southerners outside the South. In other words, while conservative culture is pervasive across white America, there is a clear gap between those with and those without Southern heritage, and Southern migrants maintain some of that cultural distinction when living outside the South.

Evangelical Protestantism is an especially salient feature of Southern white culture and remained so in the diaspora. In the early 20th century, evangelical presence was limited outside the South; the Southern Baptist Convention would not build churches in Northern Baptist territory until the 1940s. As Southern white migrants spread such denominations to other regions, they helped “to shape some of the values and politics circulating in those settings” (Gregory, 2005, p. 227). By the 1960s, evangelical leaders had begun to engage more formally in politics, becoming outspoken on moral issues, such as

⁷Gregory (2005, p. 24) argues that wealthy and educated Southern whites were overrepresented, with “Northern economic opportunities” spurring their migration more so than “Southern distress.” Dochuk (2010), meanwhile, describes the mass migration of “Okies,” predominantly agricultural settlers from not only Oklahoma but also Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. These settlers, he argues, were not destitute but rather working-class laborers, upended by the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, who followed Route 66 in search of industrial work in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and the Pacific Northwest.

⁸These results hold using a fixed respondent sample from 1964 and 1968: -0.010 (0.051) and 0.117 (0.058)** in columns 6-7.

sex education in schools (Woodberry and Smith, 1998). The Southern white diaspora in California established enclaves with Southern-style schools and churches, advancing conservative Christian causes and anti-Communist politics (Dochuk, 2010). Southern evangelical leaders such as J. Frank Norris, Carl McIntire, and Billy Graham also appealed to non-Southerners and non-evangelicals, helping to forge a right-wing coalition that would become integral to the Republican Party (Wilcox and Robinson, 2011).

3 Southern White Migrants and Right-Wing Politics

This section establishes our core results on the political impact of the “Great White Migration.” We start by looking at support for Donald Trump in the 2016 election, and then go back to explore all presidential elections since 1900. Our analysis shows how the Southern white diaspora influenced partisan realignment and the long-run consolidation of the conservative movement behind the Republican Party.

3.1 Empirical Strategy

We relate the historical Southern white migrant population to voting outcomes in county c :

$$\text{vote}_c = \alpha_s + \beta \% \text{ Southern Whites}_{c,1940} + \mathbf{X}'_c \boldsymbol{\gamma} + \varepsilon_c, \quad (1)$$

where vote_c is the vote share for the Republican or other conservative presidential candidate in a given election, α_s are state fixed effects, \mathbf{X} is a varying set of controls, and the regressor of interest is the share of Southern-born whites residing in county c in 1940, the last year for which the full-count U.S. Census of Population is available. As a baseline, we report heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors and show in Appendix Table A.1 that inference is robust to a state-level wild cluster bootstrap procedure (Cameron et al., 2008), a spatial autocorrelation adjustment with varying bandwidths (Conley, 1999), and other adjustments for IV (Adao et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2022). Our core analysis sample includes 1,888 counties located outside of the South, which comprises the former Confederate states and Oklahoma.

Endogenous location choices imply that OLS estimates of β could be biased. The historical record, discussed in Section 2.2, points to two countervailing forces. Ideological sorting implies upward bias as Southern whites move towards locations with higher levels of conservatism due to preexisting residents and/or place-based features conducive to such attitudes. Economic sorting implies downward bias as Southern whites—like most migrants throughout history—move towards economically vibrant locations that tend to be more welcoming of outsiders and capable of hosting large, diverse populations in search of opportunity. Such place-based confounders would create a downward bias even if Southern migrants made these destinations more conservative over time.

We address these biases in two ways. First, we include an array of potential confounders in \mathbf{X} . These include population density, manufacturing employment, labor force participation, unemployment, the share of people from different foreign origins, the share of land in farms and log average farm value, all measured in 1940, and separately in 1900 in robustness specifications (Haines, 2010; Manson et al., 2020). We also control for Union Army enlistment and mortality rates from the U.S. Civil War (Dupraz and Ferrara, 2021). In additional checks, we control for extractive commodity and plantation crop potential as well as electoral support in 1860 for the pro-slavery Southern Democrat, Breckinridge, which was an important correlate of Southern white sorting in the early postbellum era (Eli et al., 2018).

The notes to Table 2 provide a full elaboration of the different control variable sets.

Second, we develop an instrumental variable (IV) for the Southern white migrant population in 1940. The IV, based on the standard shift-share approach in the migration literature, uses two sources of variation. The first is the cross-sectional *share* of whites born in Southern state j living in non-Southern county c in 1900, which we denote as $\pi_{jc,1900}$.⁹ The second is the change, or *shift*, in the number of whites from Southern state j living outside the South from 1900 to 1940, $M_{j,1900-40}$. We then predict the stock of Southern whites in a given county in 1940 as

$$Z_{c,1940} = \sum_{j=1}^J \pi_{jc,1900} M_{j,1900-40}. \quad (2)$$

We then scale $Z_{c,1940}$ by the 1900 county population, and use this as an instrument for the actual share of Southern white migrants in 1940. The identifying assumption is that, conditional on controls, the unobserved factors that influence modern-day political outcomes must not be jointly correlated with the 1900 share of whites from Southern states residing in a given non-Southern county and overall migration patterns from Southern states to non-Southern counties from 1900 to 1940. We follow recent literature and validate this shift-share design using a number of diagnostic checks described below (Adao et al., 2019; Borusyak et al., 2018; Goldsmith-Pinkham et al., 2020; Jaeger et al., 2018).

The rationale for this instrument lies in the empirical regularity that migrants tend to settle where other migrants from their own group had settled previously, a process commonly referred to as *chain migration*. $\pi_{jc,1900}$ reflects such historical, pre-1900 migrations from Southern states to non-Southern counties. We choose 1900 as the base year because it captures many of the important migration networks established in the early postbellum years, while predating the onset of mass migration out of the South (see Figure 1). In some specifications, we control for demographic and geographic factors in 1900 that may be confounded with particularly influential origin-state shares in county c . We also show robustness to an earlier base year of 1870 and to dropping individual sending and receiving states.

3.2 The Southern White Diaspora and the 2016 Election

Table 2 reports estimates of β in equation (1) for the Trump vote share in 2016. Column 1, which includes only state fixed effects, shows that a 1 p.p. increase in the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 is associated with a statistically significant 0.4 p.p. increase in the Trump vote share. Column 2 includes the aforementioned \mathbf{X} baseline controls from 1940, which add substantial explanatory power (the R^2 increases from 0.42 to 0.67) while leaving a sizable 0.6 p.p. association between the Southern white population and the Trump vote share.

These relatively large OLS estimates also hold in the shift-share IV specification. Columns 3 and 4 estimate IV analogues of columns 1 and 2, respectively, while columns 5 and 6 add additional controls from 1900 and predetermined migratory sorting correlates, respectively. In all cases, the first stage F statistic is over 115, pointing to the strength of chain migration in this context. The IV estimates are larger than the corresponding OLS ones, but these differences are not statistically significant. Nevertheless, larger IV estimates are consistent with two possibilities: (i) economic sorting (and related confounds) is more pervasive than ideological sorting, and/or (ii) a local average treatment effect (LATE)

⁹To be clear, the denominator is the total number of j -born residents living outside the South in 1900, and the numerator is the number of those j -born residents living in c .

whereby counties with the strongest chain migration are those where the initial migrants and those that followed retained the strongest attachment to Southern conservatism. The LATE interpretation is admissible given that the estimated “Rotemberg weights”, which reflect the contribution of each origin state to identifying variation in the instrument, are all positive (Goldsmith-Pinkham et al., 2020).

Taking the baseline IV estimate in column 4 implies a quantitatively meaningful effect size. In 1940, first-generation Southern whites comprised about 3% of the population in the average county (standard deviation of 5%). Going from zero Southern-born whites to the average is therefore associated with a 2.4 p.p. increase in the Trump vote share. In the American voting system where small margins in a few states determine election outcomes, shifts like this could prove pivotal.

The quantitative significance becomes more evident in Table 3, which shows even larger estimates when excluding the conservative-leaning border states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware (panel a) and when additionally treating them as Southern sending states (panel b). Here, the IV estimates are approximately 1, which implies that for every 1 p.p. increase in the Southern white population share in 1940, Trump gained an additional 1 p.p. of the vote. Together, these findings point to an enduring influence of the Southern white diaspora.

Identification Checks. Our findings are robust to key identification threats when using shift-share IVs. The recent applied econometrics literature emphasizes two pathways to instrument validity, either coming from exogenous shifts or exogenous shares.

While plausibly more exogenous than the shares, the shifts—aggregate outflows from each Southern state—may still be endogenous to local conditions in destination counties.¹⁰ Moreover, there are relatively few states contributing to the shift component, and Borusyak et al. (2018) show that a large number of exogenous shifts are necessary for the exclusion restriction to hold. We address these concerns by constructing a modified shift component based on exogenous migratory push factors in Southern origin counties, following a now-standard approach in the literature on the Black Great Migration (Boustan, 2010; Derenoncourt, 2022; Fouka et al., forthcoming). If IV estimates are relatively unchanged, this suggests that the identifying variation in the shift component of the instrument is uncorrelated with confounders in destination counties.

For this exercise, we rely on a sub-period of Southern white migration flows for which we can identify origin counties. The 1940 Population Census asks about prior residence and allows us to measure county-level migration flows from 1935 to 1940. While this five-year flow is only a subset of the total shift from 1900 to 1940, it substantially increases the number of origin units (from 12 states to 1,205 counties) with which we can better isolate exogenous components of total outmigration. We estimate outmigration from each Southern county as a function of natural disasters and other county-level characteristics (from Boustan et al., 2020) selected either by hand or using the Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator (LASSO). Variables such as crop failure, high unemployment, and more racially-inclusive land ownership are among the important factors driving white outmigration (see Appendix Table B.2). We then aggregate predicted county-level outmigration to the state level for use as the shift in equation (2). The instrument remains highly relevant (F statistics > 50) and yields IV estimates that are statistically indistinguishable from our baseline (see Appendix Tables B.3 and B.4).

¹⁰For example, suppose that a group of counties in California experienced a large labor demand shock that induced significant outmigration from Texas during a particular period. If that labor demand shock were correlated with prevailing forces associated with right-wing politics, this could create bias.

While one might still be concerned about the small number of states in the instrument, Appendix Figure A.5 shows that no particular origin state drives the results. Nor does the combination of the two states with the largest Rotemberg weights: Texas and Oklahoma. This is reassuring inasmuch as these states have some important historical differences with the rest of the South and also constituted a large part of the Southern outmigration in the 1930s as a result of the Dust Bowl. Together with Table 3, the stable results in Appendix Figure A.5 point to an electoral imprint that is common across Southern white migrants (even though they may vary in their attachments to Southern culture).

The second concern involves the “share” portion of the instrument. These shares, based on migration prior to 1900, may reflect endogenous sorting towards places conducive to the rise of the conservative movement over the long run. First, recall that our baseline results are robust to factors that may have simultaneously shaped Southern white sorting and downstream politics in the destination, e.g., population density and manufacturing presence, and Union Army enlistment and mortality rates from the Civil War. We account for other place-based confounders of ideology in Table 2 by controlling for likely sorting correlates such as cotton potential, mining and extractive activities, and the Breckinridge vote share in 1860. Appendix Table A.2 furthermore controls for contemporary shocks related to immigration and the “China Shock”. While these factors add substantial explanatory power to the regressions, they do not significantly change the estimated effects. Nor do controls for incorporated status and population density at the time of the Civil War prior to large waves of Southern white outmigration.

Going further, Appendix Table A.3 reports similar results when defining the Southern white migrant regressor and the instrument over alternative time horizons going back to 1870. These results reaffirm the important role of chain migration—catalyzed in the early years after the Civil War—in shaping the long-run effects of the Southern white diaspora.

In Appendix Table A.4, we report results from another exercise that can help mitigate identification concerns. Here, we restrict to counties not yet fully settled in 1860 (i.e., on the frontier according to the Census Bureau cutoff of < 2 persons per square mile), using an instrument based on shares from 1870 and shifts from 1870 to 1940. Similar estimates hold in this subsample where the migrant shares—and hence the chain migration underlying the IV—are based on the initial U.S. settlers in each county.

Finally, the precision of our IV estimates is not an artifact of correlated unobservables across destination counties with similar fundamentals. We corroborate this using a randomization-inference-type procedure developed by Adao et al. (2019), which shows that random shifts, M_j^{rand} in the IV equation (2), do not yield statistically significant estimates.¹¹ Together, these checks suggest that the identifying variation comes from a combination of plausibly exogenous shares *and* shifts.

A Distinctive Southern White Influence. Two additional results corroborate a distinctive influence of Southern white migrants. First, Appendix Table A.5 shows that Southern white migrants retain a large electoral imprint in 2016 even after accounting for the legacy of *Northern* white migrants from Union states and territories. We restrict this analysis to a set of Western states to which both Southern and Northern whites migrated in large numbers by 1940.¹² The estimated coefficients imply that conditional

¹¹ Concretely, we replace the shift-share instrument by interacting migration shares from 1900 with shift shocks drawn from a random normal distribution with a mean of 0 and a variance of 5 and then repeat the baseline analysis with controls 1,000 times. Out of 1,000 trials, 11.7% of coefficients are statistically significant—positive or negative—at the 5% level, compared to 16.1% in Deroncourt (2022) and 55% in Adao et al. (2019). See Appendix Figure B.1 for a coefficient plot from this exercise. Additionally, the Adao et al. (2019) standard error correction can be found in Appendix Table A.1.

¹² In the average Western county, Southern whites comprised 4.4% of the population and Northern whites 12.4%, making the

on migrating, an additional Southerner in 1940 is associated with a somewhat larger effect on the Trump vote than an additional Northerner. On the other hand, the significance of both effects suggests that each of these groups helped shape the New Right coalition that supported the long-run conservative mobilization behind the Republican Party. We provide evidence consistent with this interpretation in Appendix Table A.6, which augments Table 1 to identify Northern white migrants and shows that, relative to other groups within the same Western county, Southern whites tend to be more racially and religiously conservative, whereas Northern whites tend to be more economically conservative. As discussed below, it is the combination of these distinct but complementary strands of conservatism that gave such strength to the growing right-wing political movement beginning in the 1960s.

Second, Appendix Table A.7 shows that the effect of the Southern white diaspora is distinct from the effect of the Southern Black diaspora. Calderon et al. (2021) show that the Great Migration of Southern Blacks worked against the Republican Party historically. Our estimates, based on an analogous shift-share IV, suggest that this relationship persisted through 2016. Even though these two groups settled in different places, their respective political impacts were intimately connected. We revisit these connections in Section 5.3, showing how the Southern white diaspora impacted Black settlement patterns outside the South and, in turn, the scope for race-based coalition building by the two political parties.

3.3 Right-wing Politics and Partisan Realignment in the 20th Century

While the 2016 election brought deep cultural cleavages into clear focus, the Southern white diaspora had influenced right-wing politics for many decades, with a critical turning point in the 1960s. As we show here, these migrants hastened partisan realignment and proved important to the emergence of a modern New Right coalition made up of racial, religious, and economic conservatives. In the words of Gregory (2005, pp. 302-3), Southern white migrants “helped shape a new form of conservatism that changed the balance of power in American politics ... providing not the motive for the surge of white working-class conservatism but ideas, symbols, and leaders that would give it particular shape.”

We assess these long-run electoral dynamics by estimating a panel regression from 1900 to 2020:

$$\% \text{ Republican}_{ct} = \sum_{t \neq 1900}^{2020} \beta_t [\% \text{ Southern Whites}_{c,1940} \times I(\text{election} = t)] + \alpha_c + \phi_{st} + \epsilon_{ct} \quad (3)$$

where α_c and ϕ_{st} are county and state \times election-year fixed effects (FE), respectively, and the share of Southern whites in 1940 is interacted with election-year FE. The omitted, reference year for this term is 1900. We report OLS and IV estimates and cluster standard errors at the county level.¹³ As with the results for the 2016 election, the IV estimates of β_t are often larger than the OLS ones, especially for elections during and after the realignment period. This is again consistent with the two possibilities described above: downward bias in the OLS due to economic sorting and a LATE-based mechanism whereby counties with stronger chain migration (the “compliers” in the shift-share) are those with pop-

relative proportions comparable to the white Southern- and Northern-born populations *in* those regions as of 1900 (11.0 mn in the South and 31.6 mn in the North).

¹³Note that the β_t coefficients prior to 1940 should not be interpreted as a pre-period in the difference-in-differences sense given that the stock of Southern white migrants in 1940 reflects many years of prior migration flows, which may have dynamically changed the voting outcomes from 1900 to 1940. See Appendix Figure A.6 for comparable estimates in pre-1940 elections based on contemporaneous variation in Southern white shares, and Appendix Figure A.7 for estimates without county FE, which effectively scales down the β_t by an amount equal to β_{1900} .

ulations more deeply attached to Southern culture.

The β_t coefficients in Figure 3 reveal a strong positive relationship beginning in the 1960s. Prior to that, Southern whites are instead associated with *lower* Republican vote shares relative to 1900.¹⁴ This negative relationship arose after 1910, as Southern white emigration gained momentum (see Figure 1). These electoral dynamics are not driven by patterns of voter turnout, which vary little with Southern white migrant shares after 1940 (see Appendix Figure A.8).

The 1960s were a turning point for right-wing politics in the U.S., and the influence of Southern white migrants during this period may have been a harbinger of change to come. The diaspora, like their brethren in the South, played an important role in the emerging New Right conservative coalition, characterized by a strong evangelical Protestant movement and opposition to civil rights.¹⁵

What is not immediately obvious in Figure 3 is the critical third-party showing of George Wallace in 1968. Disillusioned with the Democrat's leftward turn on civil rights, the governor from Alabama ran on a hard-line platform of racial segregation that led to his split with the Democratic Party after running in their 1964 primary. His politics resonated with whites across the South, where he won five states, and in diaspora communities across the country; he won nearly 10% of votes in the average county outside the South (see Appendix Figure A.4 for county-level vote shares).

Table 4 bears out this significant diaspora imprint in what remains one of the strongest third-party performances in American history. In the IV specification in column 2, moving from zero to the mean Southern white share increases the Wallace vote by 1.1 p.p. relative to a mean of 9.4 p.p. Wallace had ostensibly captured some of the Southern white votes that would have otherwise gone to the Republican candidate Nixon in 1968 (note in Figure 3 the drop in β_t from 1964 to 1968). While Barry Goldwater, the Republican candidate in 1964, also ran a racially conservative campaign, he lacked the folksy, blue collar appeal of Wallace. In some ways, the strong Wallace performance foreshadowed the looming consolidation of racially-motivated voters under the Republican Party in 1972.¹⁶

Just as whites in the South increasingly switched from Democrat to Republican, so too did Southern whites in the diaspora. The remainder of Table 4 (columns 3-8) shows just how integral Southern white migrants were in the realignment process. Moving from zero to the mean Southern white share is associated with a 2.3 p.p. swing from Democrat to Republican between 1948 and 1972 (columns 3 and 4) and a 0.6 p.p. swing from 1964-1972 (columns 6 and 7). The magnitude of these swings is roughly equivalent to that predicted by the Wallace vote share in 1968 (columns 5 and 8). In other words, the Southern white diaspora may have been among the bellwether demographics leading the shift of conservative whites towards the Republican Party by 1972. If Wallace had been the political "weathervane in the America of the 1960s and 1970s" (Carter, 1995, p. 12), the Southern white diaspora

¹⁴The 1928 election of Herbert Hoover was an important exception for which there are a few candidate explanations. First, the Democratic candidate, Al Smith, faced stiff opposition in the party's then-stronghold of the South due to his Catholicism and anti-prohibition stance, which may have also been anathema to the Protestants that dominated the Southern white diaspora. Second, Hoover advocated small-government that might have resonated with the culture of rugged individualism pervasive in Western states where many Southern whites had increasingly settled in the early 20th century.

¹⁵The elections of 1976 and 1980 break this trend somewhat, which is plausibly due to the Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter's Southern origin and, especially, his evangelical, Southern Baptist religious affiliation.

¹⁶In his biography of Wallace, Carter (1995, p. 12) notes that "The genius of George Wallace lay in his ability to link traditional conservatism to an earthy language that voiced powerful cultural beliefs and symbols with a much broader appeal to millions of Americans: the sanctity of the traditional family, the centrality of overt religious beliefs, the importance of hard work and self-restraint, the celebration of the autonomy of the local community." In chapter 12 of the book, Carter describes the impact that Wallace had on the Nixon campaign in 1968 and its reelection strategy in 1972. There was a concerted effort by Republican strategists to identify and capture Wallace voters through deliberate messaging.

was a key constituency driving the winds of change across the North–South divide.

In translating these local effects into national political changes, it is natural to focus on the West, where Southern whites comprised double-digit population shares in many states. Their pervasiveness may have proven influential in a region of growing importance for national politics around the mid-20th century. The partisan swing among Southern whites in Western states can help explain the movement of that region from solidly Democratic in the 1940s to solidly Republican by the 1970s. Southern white migrants are sufficient to explain the flip from Democrat in 1948 to Republican in 1972 across the states of Arizona, New Mexico, California, Nevada, and Idaho in the West and Ohio and Illinois in the Midwest—together worth a total of 113 electoral votes by 1972, nearly as much as the South itself.¹⁷

Together with the analysis in [Kuziemko and Washington \(2018\)](#), the above results offer a new perspective on the scope of partisan realignment beginning in the 1960s. Just as Democrats lost the South, they also lost communities home to Southern-born whites *outside* the South. In Appendix Table [A.8](#), we provide individual-level evidence of this “dealignment” from the Democratic Party among Southern whites in the diaspora (using ANES data analogous to Table 3 in [Kuziemko and Washington, 2018](#)). Ultimately, these Southern white migrants helped to solidify a new conservative white voting bloc that cut across large swathes of the country and reshaped partisan politics over the long run.

4 Southern White Migrants and the Emergence of the New Right

The Southern white diaspora played an important role in the consolidation of the conservative movement in the middle of the 20th century. Had they been less numerous and less dispersed outside the South, it is unlikely that the Republican Party would have found the all-encompassing rightward turn to be such an effective electoral strategy. By forging a new alliance of *economic* conservatives—long a mainstay of the Republican constituency—with *racial* and *religious* conservatives, Republicans unleashed new pathways to power.

This New Right “bundle” came together not all at once but coalesced over time, first as racially conservative voters defected from the Democratic Party beginning in the 1950s, and later as evangelical Protestants mobilized around religious issues taken up by the Republican Party in the 1970s ([Dochuk, 2010](#); [Lowndes, 2009](#); [Wilcox and Robinson, 2011](#)). Both racial and religious conservatives found common cause with economic conservatives keen to curtail the welfare state. These three strands of conservatism united against federal government infringement on “states’ rights”—to keep taxes low and redistribution limited, to maintain segregation, to allow for religious influence in public schools, and to limit abortion, among other policies. Southern white migrants—with their right-wing attitudes on race and religion and limited support for broad-based federal intervention—helped cement this united front.

This is also why the Southern white diaspora influence on the 1968 election was particularly important. George Wallace foresaw this novel alliance and was, in the words of biographer [Carter \(1995, p. 13\)](#), “the alchemist of the new social conservatism as he compounded [i.e., bundled] racial fear, anticommunism, cultural nostalgia, and traditional right-wing economics into a movement that laid the foundation for the conservative counterrevolution that reshaped American politics in the 1970s and 1980s.” Wallace’s strong showing outside the South was likely influential in signaling the viability, on a national

¹⁷In 1948, these Democratic vote margins were 0.24 p.p. in Ohio, 0.44 in California, 0.84 in Illinois, 2.73 in Idaho, 3.11 in Nevada, 9.97 in Arizona, and 13.45 in New Mexico. Using the coefficient of 0.75 from column 4 in Table 4, Southern white shares in 1940 explain swings in those respective states of 0.88, 7.2, 1.58, 2.79, 3.99, 12.19, and 17 points.

scale, of Nixon’s Southern Strategy campaign for the racial conservative vote and Reagan’s subsequent Moral Majority campaign for the religious conservative vote.

In this section, we show how Southern white migrants shaped this *reconfiguration* of right-wing politics via bundling different strands of conservatism. We begin by characterizing this New Right policy bundle and its coalescence within the Republican Party in the U.S. House of Representatives. We then show that the Southern white diaspora became a bellwether for such movements nationally and contributed to the growing partisan divide at the heart of American politics since the 1970s.

4.1 Characterizing the New Right Bundle

Congressional votes and speech offer a unique window into the bundling of economic, racial, and religious conservatism over time. For the first two dimensions, we rely on House representatives’ “ideal points” according to their voting record. The economic component comes from the first dimension of DW-Nominate by [Lewis et al. \(2021\)](#) and the racial component from an index developed by [Bateman et al. \(2017\)](#).¹⁸ Both measures capture ideology on a left–right spectrum centered on 0, with higher scores indicating more right-wing voting patterns. To measure religious conservatism, we construct an original index based on the relative frequency of religious language in congressional speeches. For a given legislator, we total words with obvious Biblical roots—God, Christ, lord, almighty, amen—and divide the sum by the total words spoken. We call this an index of relative rhetorical religiosity (RRI) with higher values being consistent with (but not necessarily dispositive of) greater religiosity.¹⁹ We trace the partisan evolution of this conservative bundle over time using the three, appropriately standardized indices as well as a composite average index.

Appendix Figure [A.9](#) shows elements of the New Right bundle intensified and coalesced among Republican legislators. Using congressional-district-level regressions, we plot the evolution of the average difference between Republican and Democratic legislators in levels (panels a and b) and with respect to a base year of 1940 (panels c and d). The estimates confirm the long-standing economic conservatism of the Republican Party; this differential persists from 1940 to 1990. However, they also show an increase in relative conservatism among Republicans since 1940, as measured by our composite index (panels e and f). Over the same period, religious and, especially, racial conservatism increasingly concentrated among Republican legislators. Prior to the 1960s, Democrats were slightly more likely to employ religious rhetoric,²⁰ while racial conservatives were split between parties, with Democrats having shifted left on race after the 1930s in diverse, urban areas while maintaining pro-segregation platforms in rural areas and the Solid South ([Feinstein and Schickler, 2008](#); [Schickler, 2016](#)).

In the 1960s, as the Democratic Party expanded its national, pro-redistribution platform to be more racially inclusive, the Republican Party began to court disaffected racial conservatives.²¹ Nixon’s Southern Strategy introduced rhetoric on crime and welfare that increased Republican appeal among conser-

¹⁸Unlike the second, social dimension of DW-Nominate, which is a residual category varying over time in topical coverage, the [Bateman et al. \(2017\)](#) index fixes the voting agenda such that only racial and civil rights legislation are considered.

¹⁹Religious ideology is not well suited to ideal point analysis given the dearth of clear religious-related votes in Congress. See Appendix [D](#) for further discussion of the RRI.

²⁰Religion had been more dominant in national politics among the left until the 1960s. Abortion, for instance, was most vocally opposed prior to the 1970s by urban Catholics, who tended to favor liberal Democrats ([Williams, 2015](#)). In 1971, President Nixon prominently staked a position to the right of Democrats on abortion by declaring it “an unacceptable form of population control” that should be regulated by “the states, not the federal government” ([Williams, 2011](#)).

²¹While the New Deal coalition had previously included many Southern Democrats, welfare programs prior to 1940 often discriminated against Blacks, especially in agriculture ([Derenoncourt and Montialoux, 2021](#); [Johnson, 2011](#)).

vative whites across America (Carter, 1999; Maxwell and Shields, 2019). By 1990, the average House Republican was nearly two standard deviations more racially conservative than the average Democrat, both in and outside the South.

Religious rhetoric follows a similar albeit smaller shift, with a half standard deviation swing in RRI from Democrats to Republicans over the period of study. From the mid-1980s, Republicans were consistently associated with more religious rhetoric in the House, reflecting the political mobilization of evangelicalism during the Reagan era. Together, the patterns in Figure A.9 are consistent with the view among historians and political scientists that racial ideology was a driving force behind the emergence of the New Right as part of the realignment process.

It is important to note that the bundling of different strands of conservative ideology was a core part of the pathway to polarization. Appendix Figure A.10 demonstrates this connection by plotting the distribution of our composite index across representatives in the U.S. House in 1940 and again in 1990. The shift from a single peaked distribution in 1940 to a bimodal one in 1990 reflects the increased coincidence of the three dimensions within members, on both the left and right of the ideological spectrum.

The same dynamic bundling patterns can also be found on the *demand* side, among individual voters in the ANES. Appendix Table A.9 illustrates how, after 1964, identification with the Republican Party is increasingly associated with evangelical religion and opposition to civil rights. Meanwhile, Republican voters' greater opposition to government intervention in the economy is more stable across time. However, the reasons for such opposition broadened with the mass entry of racial conservatives into the party. The Wallace-to-Nixon voters in Appendix Table A.10 provide a clear window into this race-based transformation of anti-redistribution ideology on the right. Among Nixon voters in 1972, those who voted for Wallace in 1968 express stronger opposition to advancing civil rights but no less opposition to government intervention unless that intervention supports Blacks. These voters are emblematic of those alienated by the Democratic Party as it shifted towards more racially-inclusive approaches to redistribution. Wallace's rebellious and wildly successful campaign of 1968 showed the Republican Party how to capture these alienated voters and drive a wedge between class- and race-based identity.

4.2 Southern White Migrants and Congressional Ideology

Having established the emergence and consolidation of a New Right bundle under the Republican Party umbrella, we now show how Southern white migrants influenced this trajectory of conservative politics throughout the 20th century. Figure 4 establishes a sizable imprint of Southern white voters on congressional ideology outside the South, using a congressional-district-level specification analogous to equation (3) but with state and congress-year FE.²²

Figure 4 further corroborates the influence of Southern whites on partisan realignment and the corresponding evolution of the New Right bundle. First, Southern white migrants are associated with greater Democratic representation in the 1940s only to shift towards the Republican Party over time (panel a). The latter becomes positive and significant starting in 1970, mirroring the post-Wallace shift toward the GOP. Although Democrats were already shifting to the left on racial issues in the 1940s, the specific representatives with which Southern white migrants associated tended to be racially conservative even in that early period (panel b). This association between Southern white migrants and racially conservative

²²We do not use congressional district FE given that districts frequently change within states, in both area and number, and thus do not constitute meaningful units of analysis over time (see Appendix D for details).

legislators is persistent and seems to have grown after the 1960s.

At the same time, estimates for the first dimension of DW-Nominate, shown in panel (c), suggest a growing rightward turn on economic issues in communities home to a large Southern white diaspora. These populations thus preferred economically moderate Democrats in the 1940s only to shift towards more fiscally conservative Republicans in the 1990s, to the extent they were similarly racially conservative in their times.²³ This process is consistent with the “Southern Strategy” that equated welfare policy with racial redistribution, and, in so doing, helped create a marriage of convenience between racial and economic conservatives. While such partisan shifts have been documented in prior work looking within the South (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018; Maxwell and Shields, 2019), our results suggest that these same shifts also took place in communities outside with large Southern white populations.

Finally, we see in panel (d) a related imprint of the Southern white diaspora on legislators’ religious rhetoric. Their influence on representatives seems to align closely with the growing politicization of the evangelical movement and appeals to religion among the political right after the 1960s (Chen and Lind, 2020; Williams, 2015). The basic trends across these dimensions hold in more demanding specifications, as shown in Appendix Figure A.11.

To better understand the ideological shifts among legislators, Appendix Figure A.12 relates the Southern white diaspora to 13 landmark votes in the House of Representatives, spanning economic, racial, and religious issues since the late 1940s.²⁴ Votes are coded such that a “right-wing vote,” by contemporaneous standards, takes a value of one and zero otherwise. The estimates are positive and significant across all votes. To benchmark one salient example, moving from zero to the mean Southern-white migrant share is associated with a 5 p.p. increase in the likelihood that the legislator votes against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (relative to a mean of 10% outside the South). We find a similar effect size in 2021 when many Republican legislators objected to the certification of President Biden’s victory.

These congressional responses to the local Southern white diaspora are also consistent with voter preferences in these areas. Using the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) since 2007, Appendix Table A.11 shows that residents of counties with a larger Southern white migrant share in 1940 exhibit more conservative attitudes along dimensions of the New Right bundle, including, among others, views about the size of government, systemic racism, and abortion. These results are restricted to the white population and, like the CD-level analysis, hold across counties within state.

5 Racial Animus, Sorting, and Coalition Change

The results thus far suggest that Southern white migrants played an important role in the forging of a new right-wing coalition after the 1960s that bundled racial conservatism, Christian traditionalism,

²³Note that congressional ideal points here are defined as relative to the average representative in a given year. For instance, while favoring segregation was a racially conservative albeit mainstream position in the 1960s, such a view would be considered extreme today. In contrast, a racially conservative politician today is moderate by 1960s standards.

²⁴These include (by year) the Taft-Hartley Union Ban Act (1947); Refugee Relief Act (1953); Civil Rights Act (1964); Social Security Amendments (1965), which created Medicare and Medicaid; Voting Rights Act (1965); Equal Rights Amendment vote (1971); Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1972); Economic Recovery Tax Act (1981), i.e., the Reagan tax cuts; Deficit Control Act (1985), which formally constrained the federal budget; the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of (1993), which established background checks and waiting periods for firearms sales; Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act (2003); Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Act (2010); and the 2021 Electoral College vote count, which saw widespread objections to states’ certifications of the 2020 election by allies of President Trump, in an effort to overturn the majority vote in those states. Roll calls before 1990 come from Swift et al. (2009) and after 1990 from the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives (2021). For the Electoral College vote, a representative voted “yea” if they objected to no state count.

and opposition to redistribution. The considerable geographic scope of the Southern white diaspora, especially in the newly important states of the West, made these migrants a pivotal bloc of voters across large swathes of the country. In this section, we explore several channels through which Southern white migrants influenced the racial dimension of this reconfiguration. We show that the Southern white diaspora amplified racial animus in the local cultures and institutions of their new communities. This, in turn, led to racial sorting dynamics that galvanized coalition change and partisan realignment.

We start by linking early waves of Southern white migrants to heightened expressions of racial animus in the early 20th century: the spread of the KKK, lynchings, and sundown towns. While Southern white migrants did not necessarily introduce such forms of racial violence and exclusion in every community where they settled, our results suggest that they helped operationalize these racial norms in public life outside the South. With time, these expressions of racial animus—transmitted between white populations and across generations—hastened Black population flight from many towns across the country. We show that Southern white migrants influenced Black settlement patterns outside the South and then trace out the electoral ramifications of these spatial sorting patterns, which ultimately drove the divergence in Democratic and Republican Party politics along racial lines.

5.1 The Early Southern White Diaspora and Racial Animus

We begin by exploring the role of early migrants in exacerbating racial animus outside the South. Many migrants hailed from Southern communities with deeply-entrenched Confederate culture and associated expressions of racism. Our findings below suggest that this culture moved with the migrants, as they helped to spread the Second Ku Klux Klan (KKK), to amplify racial violence, and to foster exclusionary institutions. These early manifestations of racism may have influenced migration choices of whites and Blacks, and, in turn, shaped the cultural foundations of racially conservative politics in later generations.

Table 5 shows a significant positive relationship between Southern-born whites in the early 20th century—when the larger waves of Southern migration to the rest of the country were just beginning—and various public expressions of racial animus. We report OLS and IV estimates using a shift-share instrument based on equation (2), with the share from 1870 and the shift from 1870 to 1900. The slightly smaller sample size, from 1,888 to 1,701 counties, reflects the exclusion of counties that had not yet been incorporated into the United States by 1870.

Inflows of Southern white migrants are associated with an increase in racial terror. A three p.p. increase in the share of Southern-born whites is associated with a 16% increase in the probability of a KKK chapter being established from 1920 to 1940 (column 2). The KKK played a central role in campaigns of racial violence across America in the early 20th century. We see Southern whites influencing such violence in column 4: a three p.p. increase in their population share is associated with a 5.5 p.p. increase in the likelihood of any lynchings of Blacks from 1900 to 1940. This is a large effect given that only 3.6% of counties outside the South saw any reported lynchings of Blacks over the period.

Together, these results suggest that Southern white migrants contributed to racial violence outside the South in the postbellum era. As Gregory (2005) notes, “the 1920s Klan had not been dominated by diaspora southerners, but it had depended upon them for early expansion and some of its leadership.” With this expansion came profound shifts in the geography of race and racism in the early 20th century.

5.2 Southern Whites, Blacks, and Racial Sorting

Early waves of Southern whites were particularly drawn to the Western United States, an area that was largely unsettled by non-native peoples in the early postbellum era. This implied considerable scope for this early diaspora to shape initial institutions and cultural norms. Relative to Southern Black migrants, whites were much more likely to settle in rural areas and small towns outside the South (see Appendix Figure A.2). While Blacks concentrated in large urban areas, even in the earliest postbellum years, Southern whites dispersed across high- and low-density counties.

Geographic sorting also followed the initial migrations of both Southern whites and Blacks. The spread of “sundown towns” was central to this process. Through a combination of violence, media propagation, and formal regulation, local white populations precluded Blacks from residing in localities across America. As Loewen (2005) documents, these sundown towns proliferated in the early 20th century, and through the 1940s, Black populations could be found in fewer and fewer counties outside the South.²⁵ As Southern white migrants put down roots, they may have helped forge these exclusionary norms that made areas previously home to Blacks increasingly inhospitable.

The remainder of Table 5 shows how Southern white migrants contributed to this process of racial exclusion. The IV estimate in column 6 shows that Southern whites hastened the formation of sundown towns within the counties in which they settled. A three p.p. increase in the Southern white share in 1900 led to an 18% increase in the likelihood of any sundown towns, which could be found in around 25% of counties outside the South. These sundown towns went hand-in-hand with the rise of the KKK and the use of racial violence. Loewen (2005) describes this process in many areas with horrific detail, and in Bazzi et al. (2022b), we show that counties with a larger Southern white diaspora were significantly more likely to see the joint occurrence of KKK chapters, lynching, and sundown towns.

These sundown towns hastened a “Great Retreat” of Black populations from counties across America. Among non-Southern towns with 25 or more Blacks in 1900, the share with zero Blacks increased 15 p.p. by 1940 (see Appendix Figure A.13). Southern white migrants contributed to this racial cleansing. In Appendix Table A.12, we find, using a town-level analysis, that a three p.p. increase in the Southern white share in 1900 is associated with an 11-18% increase in the likelihood that a town lost its entire Black population after 1900. While Loewen (2005) does not call particular attention to Southern white migrants in the history of sundown towns, our findings suggest that Southerners played a role in the white population’s efforts to push Blacks out of many communities across the country.

Together, these results suggest that the Southern white diaspora may have further accentuated the spatial sorting of Blacks, out of the country’s rural interior and into dense urban areas, especially in the industrial heartland of the (upper) Midwest and Northeast. Over the long run, this limited the scope for local interracial contact, which, in turn, may have cemented ideological differences across space. In what follows, we connect these dots and show how the Southern white diaspora, in the words of Gregory (2005, p. 294), “rearranged the politics of race.”

5.3 Racial Coalition Change

The spatial sorting of Southern whites and Blacks during the Great Migration led to dynamic shifts in partisan coalition building. We identify these coalition changes in this section. Together with the

²⁵In other work, Crowe (2012) and O’Connell (2019) relate sundown towns to economic underdevelopment and black–white inequality outcomes at the county level, respectively.

findings in [Calderon et al. \(2021\)](#), our results provide a more complete picture of how the two Southern diasporas transformed partisan politics in the second half of the 20th century.

Extending equation (3) to include Southern Blacks, we find a strong, consistently negative relationship between Southern Black migrants and Republican Party support after the New Deal (see Figure 5). Note that the Southern Black diaspora hastened the shift towards the Democratic Party nearly two decades *before* communities home to Southern white migrants begin turning away from the Democratic Party.²⁶ The absolute coefficient for Southern Black migrants is roughly 2–3 times larger than for Southern whites in the post-realignment period. This is due in part to the relatively lower mean share of Southern Black migrants across counties (0.4% compared to 2.9% for Southern whites). However, it is also plausible that one additional Southern Black migrant induced a more-than-proportional reduction in support for conservative Republican candidates both by changing the views of more liberally-inclined whites that remained in the largely urban communities settled by Black migrants (as shown by [Calderon et al., 2021](#)) and by leading more conservative whites to leave those communities as part of white-flight suburbanization (see [Boustan, 2010](#)).

The confluence of racial and ideological sorting during the Great Migrations helped to foster the New Right. The dense urban areas (e.g., Baltimore, Chicago, and Detroit) that attracted and retained Southern Black migrants tended toward left-wing politics and increasing Democratic Party support in subsequent decades. Meanwhile, less dense areas disproportionately attracted Southern whites and may have alienated Blacks through sundown towns and the like. As Democrats moved left in places where Blacks had concentrated, the New Deal coalition that tied Southern and Northern Democrats began to fracture. Republicans capitalized on this fragmentation, seeing new possibilities in moving right to capture disaffected whites. The geographic dispersion of Southern whites—both in and outside the South—made such a shift, rooted in racial and later religious conservatism, electorally viable. From the perspective of U.S. national politics, Southern whites were pervasive across the West, and their influence cut across several states, which together could prove influential in the electoral college.

Importantly, the partisan effects of Southern Black and white migrants are not simply mirror images but rather occur in sequence. To better understand the racial dynamics of partisan coalition change, we examine how the partisan association of the Southern white diaspora varies with (i) the presence of Blacks and (ii) local population density, both measured in 1940.²⁷ In Appendix Figure A.14, we estimate these heterogeneous relationships on the partisan identity of House Representatives. Party platforms vary across CDs because, at this level, they tend to be responsive to changes in the composition of local voters and their preferences. Prior to 1950, Southern whites exhibit similar partisan leanings across CDs with above- versus below-median Black shares as of 1940. Then, during the 1950s and 1960s, these districts *diverge*. In CDs with above-median Black shares, Southern whites are increasingly associated with greater Republican representation, while in CDs with few Blacks, Southern whites have limited influence and, if anything, push towards Democrats. Then, by the 1970s, these districts begin to

²⁶Comparing the estimated effects of Southern whites in Figure 5, which controls for Southern Blacks, with the baseline estimates in Figure 3, which does not control for Southern Blacks, we see little difference in the magnitude, significance or time path of coefficients. This is reassuring inasmuch as Black migrants largely hailed from different Southern origins than white migrants and settled in different locations outside the South. Moreover, the shift-share instrument is meant to isolate exogenous variation in group-specific migration flows, and the similar IV estimates for whites with and without the instrumented Southern Black share suggests that indeed the two instruments are capturing orthogonal variation.

²⁷These results should be seen as descriptive and as associations rather than causal, inasmuch as the sorting of Blacks and whites, described in the previous section, may complicate interpretation of these heterogeneous effects.

converge again, consistent with the realignment having largely played out nationally and party platforms coinciding across local and national levels. The same pattern is also present, if not slightly earlier, in a comparison of high versus low density CDs, which aligns with the patterns of racial sorting described earlier. This suggests that the process of racial bifurcation outside the South resulting from two Great Migrations likely contributed to the ideological bifurcation across high and low density areas today.

Putting these results together and indulging a modicum of speculation, we conjecture that absent the Great Migration of Southern Blacks and widespread forces driving Blacks to urban destinations, the coalition of racial and economic conservatives that emerged in the late 1960s might not have occurred as it did. Southern whites may well have continued to transmit and amplify racial conservatism in diaspora communities across America, but without a large Black presence outside the South, Democrats might have retained a more racially exclusive stance toward redistribution, and Southern white destinations might not have shifted towards fiscally conservative politics. Indeed, a coalition of economic and racial conservatives was not a foregone conclusion, given Southern whites' longstanding ambivalence toward big government. This coalition followed a careful reconfiguration and reframing of fiscal issues by some right-wring political strategists to appeal to racial conservatives, which [Maxwell and Shields \(2019\)](#) dub the "Long Southern Strategy."

6 Cultural and Ideological Transmission

In this final section, we explore several channels through which Southern white migrants fostered cultural and ideological change outside the South. Section 5 provided evidence of racial exclusion and sorting as one such channel. Here, we explore other ways (though admittedly not all) in which Southern white migrants influenced politics beyond their direct role as members of a new voting bloc outside the South. Through these channels, the Southern white diaspora would shape the cultural and political attitudes of their neighbors as well as those of future generations—implying a wider and more persistent effect than their direct, compositional effect.

First, the Southern white diaspora established evangelical Protestant institutions, which outlived initial migrants and played a central role in mobilizing the religious vote behind the Republican Party in the late 20th century. Second, diaspora communities contributed to the rise of right-wing media, including talk radio, where conservative cultural leaders spoke directly to the Southern white electorate and diffused values to new audiences outside the South. Third, more general forms of cultural diffusion, namely music and cuisine, accompanied the Southern white diaspora and may have been useful vehicles for right-wing movement leaders to bridge the North-South cultural divide.

We conclude by providing direct evidence of cultural spillovers from Southern to non-Southern populations living outside the South. These individual-level results, based on children's naming patterns, point to an exposure channel whereby contact with the Southern white diaspora induced cultural change among non-Southern populations.

6.1 Religious Institutions

Religious conservatism was an important feature of culture and politics in the diaspora. According to historians, Southern whites were instrumental in diffusing evangelical Protestantism outside the South ([Gregory, 2005](#); [Woodberry and Smith, 1998](#)). Evangelical churches belonging to Southern Baptist

and Pentecostal denominations were pervasive in diaspora communities across America in the mid-20th century (Dochuk, 2010). Evangelical congregants and leaders later became active in politics, motivated by moral issues such as sex education as well as perceived government overreach in various domains, including civil rights. This activism appealed to non-Southerners as well and ultimately led to the formation of a “Christian Right” electoral coalition, which became influential in the 1970s and quickly came to be associated with the Republican Party (Wilcox and Robinson, 2011).

In this section, we show that Southern whites provided the leadership and congregant foundations of evangelical expansion and innovation outside the South. Evangelical churches, like so many others, are a focal point of social life and key vehicles for cultural transmission outside the household. Our findings below suggest that, through these churches, Southern white migrants may have helped solidify the evangelical base of the Republican Party through the early 21st century.

We begin by connecting Southern white migrants to evangelicalism over the long run. *The Association of Religious Data Archives* (2021) provides a census of churches, and we follow Steensland et al. (2000) in defining evangelical ones, most prominent among which are the Southern Baptists.²⁸ Columns 1 and 2 of Table 6 show that evangelical adherence in 2010 is higher in counties with a larger Southern white population share in 1940. A one p.p. increase in the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 is associated with 0.5 p.p. (or 10%) greater evangelical affiliation.

Many of these adherents belong to churches founded during the Great Migration. As early as 1952, we find a sizable Southern white influence on evangelical church presence (columns 3–4). The IV estimate appears larger than the OLS estimate, and although statistically indistinguishable, this pattern is consistent with a LATE interpretation discussed in Section 3: those counties with the strongest chain migration, identified by the shift share, are places that attracted migrants most attached to Southern (religious) values and to the diaspora networks that sustain and uphold those values.

Table 7 provides further, individual-level evidence consistent with Southern whites playing a leadership role in building this novel religious infrastructure outside the South. In both 1900 and 1940, Southern white migrants were significantly more likely to work in religious occupations (e.g., clergy) than were other residents within the same county (columns 1–2). These estimates, based on complete-count Census data, suggest scope for disproportionate Southern influence on religious institutions.

The expansion of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was especially noteworthy. The Baptist church split on the issue of slavery in 1845, and the SBC did not allow its members to establish churches outside the South until the 1940s. As a result, it is difficult to measure evangelicalism outside the South before this time. Those in the diaspora either remained independent or became part of smaller, sometimes informal Baptist denominations. This all changed in the 1940s as SBC churches began to flourish outside the South. Indeed, the occupational sorting of Southern white migrants into religious leadership resonates with Gregory’s (2005) account of SBC leadership in California beckoning, in 1942, for Southern Baptist preachers to head west to tend to the growing flock of “Southern Baptists . . . sheep scattered abroad not having a shepherd.”

The early diaspora imprint on evangelical church formation persists through 1971 and 2010 (columns 5–8 of Table 6). To put these estimates in perspective, every 800 Southern white migrants per 10,000 residents in 1940 is associated with approximately one evangelical church per 10,000 residents in a given

²⁸Other evangelical churches include Wisconsin Evangelical Lutherans, Missouri Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists, Nazarenes, Church of God Tennessee, Church of God Indiana, Christ Reformed Church, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Church of the Brethren, Evangelical Congregational Church, Free Methodists, and Mennonites.

year. The stability of coefficients from 1952 to 2010 suggests that these institutions spread through the Southern white diaspora in the first half of the 20th century and survived in those communities long after the initial migrants had passed.

A large literature on American religion suggests that evangelical churches are important vehicles for ideological transmission.²⁹ Churches are useful for disseminating not only religious values but also broader moral and political ones (Wald et al., 1988). Indeed, evangelicals became increasingly political on the right in the second half of the 20th century, espousing conservative stances on moral issues (e.g., abortion, gay marriage) as well as the role of government, such as in aiding the poor or promoting racial equity (McKenzie and Rouse, 2013; Williams, 2015). Today, evangelical voters are more likely to vote for right-wing candidates.³⁰ Together, our results suggest a central role of Southern white migrants in the evolution of religious politics across America.

6.2 Conservative Media

Another related channel through which Southern white migrants transmitted their political preferences, and culture more broadly, is via their media consumption. To the extent that Southern whites preferred to read newspapers or listen to radio programs prone to right-wing politics or religious sermonizing, diaspora communities would have increased demand for such media outside the South. With time, this could result in greater exposure to novel, conservative media among non-Southerners.

We explore this mechanism by linking the Southern white diaspora to the geography of right-wing talk radio programs. Talk radio has arguably been an important factor supporting the growth of the New Right in American politics since the 1990s. However, the advent of right-wing talk radio in its modern form goes back nearly a century, to religious leaders such as Charles Coughlin and Carl McIntire (Matzko, 2020; Wang, 2021). Their conservative stances attracted audiences in the tens of millions.

Our analysis, shown in Table 8, relates a county's share of Southern white migrants in 1940 to the presence of a radio station broadcasting (i) Carl McIntire's *Twentieth Century Reformation Hour* talk radio show during its run from the late 1950s through the early 1970s, and (ii) the *Rush Limbaugh Show* as of 2020. Both shows were broadcast from over 600 stations at their peak with McIntire directly broadcasting in 12% of counties and Limbaugh in 17%. The relationship with the Southern white diaspora is strikingly similar across both commentators. In the IV specifications, a 1 p.p. increase in the share of Southern white migrants implies a nearly 1.5 p.p. increase in the probability that a county had a radio station carrying McIntire's show half a century ago and Limbaugh's show in 2020. This suggests a plausible connection between Southern white migrants and local media consumption outside the South. We find such a connection not only in radio but also in television over the long run: a one p.p. increase in the Southern white share as of 1940 is associated with a 0.7 p.p. increase in the share of CCES respondents stating that Fox News is the fairest and most balanced news channel (columns 5–6).

²⁹A theoretical literature in economics on religion can help explain the persistence of evangelical attitudes within churches across generations and their transmission within broader communities. By limiting members' exposure to the "mainstream" (e.g., public education, secular media), churches regulate cultural transmission as well as cultivate investment by members in the production of religious services (Carvalho, 2016, 2019; Iannaccone, 1992, 1994). For evangelicals, these include "evangelizing," i.e., efforts to preach the Christian gospel *beyond* the church.

³⁰Polling data confirms the link between evangelicalism and right-wing political participation. For instance, white evangelicals favored Trump by a 4 to 1 ratio in 2016 (Pew Research Center, 2016). Trump support similarly increased with church attendance, and among white evangelicals, support for Trump's presidency increased with church attendance (Pew Research Center, 2017). See Wilcox and Robinson (2011) for more on right-wing political participation among evangelicals.

We also uncover individual-level evidence of Southern whites shaping media production through occupational choices. Table 7 shows that Southern white migrants sorted into radio and other media occupations in the early 20th century. Like McIntire and other prominent right-wing media evangelists of Southern origin, such as Billy James Hargis and Pat Robertson, Southern white migrants selected into the media sector. Early migrants were significantly more likely to work at newspapers than other residents within the same county (column 3). By 1940, radio and TV had become more attractive to Southern whites as they differentially sorted into occupations such as radio broadcasting (columns 5–6). Together, these results are consistent with Southern whites playing an important role, both as consumers and producers, in developing a novel media infrastructure in communities outside the South.

6.3 Cultural Spillovers in Music and Cuisine

Another potential pathway for cultural transmission from Southern to non-Southern whites was the diffusion of Southern food and music. Southern cuisine prominently features barbecue and meat-heavy meals. These traveled with Southern white migrants outside the South. Appendix Table A.13 (columns 1–4) documents higher visits to barbecue and steak restaurants as a share of total visits, relative to traditionally non-Southern staples, such as pizza and other Italian foods. We find analogous results for fried chicken—another Southern-origin cuisine—looking at the prevalence of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) fast-food restaurants (columns 5–6). The popularity of country music follows a similar pattern. Holding urban density fixed, historical Southern white concentrations correlate strongly with country music radio station locations outside the South, as illustrated in Appendix Figure A.15.

Southern white migrants plausibly help explain how so much of the non-South (outside the biggest cities) came to embrace Southern culture, giving rise to the so-called Southernization noted as early as the 1970s (Egerton, 1974). Southernization of culture, in turn, increased the scope for Southernization of politics. As Southern culture gained traction outside the South and traditional North–South cultural divides faded, it was easier for right-wing movement leaders to forge new political coalitions. For instance, many of country music’s “biggest stars signed up to help [George] Wallace in 1968 performing with the governor as he crisscrossed the country.” Nixon followed suit in the next election as he repeatedly espoused “fondness for country music” and “courted musicians and Nashville executives, knowing that these entertainers would help secure the new voting blocs that Republicans counted on” both inside and outside the South (Gregory, 2005, p. 313). Another example was George Wallace floating Colonel Sanders of KFC as a possible vice presidential running mate in the 1968 election.

6.4 Exposure to Southern Whites and Cultural Change

The cultural imprint of the Southern white diaspora persisted over time in part through chain migration and intergenerational transmission within the diaspora. Yet as the results in this section suggest, Southern white migrants also shaped the cultural and political attitudes of their *non-Southern* neighbors, through the diffusion of churches, media, Southern music and cuisine. In this way, the effects we estimate in this paper—in which non-Southern places became more like the South culturally and politically—are not purely compositional or mechanical but rather characterize a process in which non-Southern *individuals* also became more like Southern whites culturally and politically.

In this final section, we provide direct, individual-level evidence of cultural change induced by exposure to Southern white migrants. Our empirical strategy relies on variation in exposure to Southern

white populations within and across mover households. We show that parents are more likely to give their children Biblical names after moving to counties with larger Southern white shares. Biblical name choices reveal cultural affinities: to the extent that Southern whites tended to embody evangelical, traditional, and religiously conservative ideals, greater diffusion of Biblical names among non-Southerners in places with more Southern whites would be consistent with cultural transmission.³¹ As a validation check on the religious signal in Biblical names, we show in Appendix Table A.14 that white, U.S.-born children with fathers working in religious occupations (see Table 7) are 6–9 p.p. more likely to have a Biblical name relative to a mean of around 15 percent for children with fathers in other occupations living within the same county.

We examine how non-Southern white parents name their children before and after moving, as a function of the share of Southern whites at destination. Our approach follows the mover-based strategy in Bazzi et al. (2020). We pool children born to white non-Southern parents across Census periods $\tau = \{1910, \dots, 1940\}$ (i.e., cohorts 1901–40). We then consider households with at least two children: one born in the household’s state of residence as of time τ and one born in a different state earlier in the same Census period. To avoid double counting, we restrict to children aged 0–9. We then estimate the time of household move, $\tilde{\tau}$, as the midpoint between the birth years of the children born in different states, where child year of birth is defined as $\tilde{\tau} + j$ for possible $j = -9, \dots, 9$.³² The final sample includes 2,491,898 white children of non-Southern parents in 846,073 households.

We estimate the following equation, which relates the given name of child i to whether their household h had yet moved to non-Southern county c at their time of birth $\tilde{\tau} + j$, interacted with c ’s Southern white share in the previous (pre-move) Census period, $\tau - 1$:

$$\text{Biblical name}_{ihc\tau} = \theta_h + \beta \% \text{ Southern Whites}_{c,\tau-1} \times \text{Born After Move}_i + \mathbf{X}'_{i\tau} \boldsymbol{\gamma} + \varepsilon_{ihc\tau}, \quad (4)$$

where household fixed effects, θ_h , absorb origin Southern white shares and other characteristics of h ’s destination county, as well as all time-invariant characteristics of h , including its cultural attitudes, its place of origin, and factors affecting destination choice.³³ The $\mathbf{X}_{i\tau}$ vector includes the child’s sex, birth order, birth period, and dummies for child birth year relative to the time of the move, j . Standard errors are clustered by the contemporaneous destination county.

The baseline estimate in column 1 of Table 9 reveals that a 1 p.p. increase in Southern white migrant shares is associated with a 0.13 p.p. increase in the probability that parents give their children a Biblical name, relative to a child born prior to the move. Going from zero to the mean Southern white share (3 percent) thus implies a nearly 0.4 p.p. increase in the likelihood of religious name choices, relative

³¹We extract from behindthename.com a comprehensive list of names featured in the Bible. These names span common and uncommon names in the population. In 1940, for example, popular Biblical names included John and Mary, while popular non-Biblical names included William and Charles. Among less popular names, Biblical ones included Sarah and Ruth, while non-Biblical ones included Lillian and Frances (see Table 2 in Ferrara and Testa, 2022).

³²Consider, for example, a household on the Oregon coast in 1910 with four children: Lawrence born in 1901, Henrietta in 1903, John in 1907, and Marie in 1910. We see Lawrence and Henrietta are born in Minnesota and John and Marie in Oregon. Hence, we impute $\tilde{\tau} = 1905$ and $j = -4$ for Lawrence, -2 for Henrietta, $+2$ for John and $+5$ for Marie. While one can also use linked samples of households to track movers, the approach we use here, based on differences in children’s states of birth, yields a much larger sample (roughly 2.5 million compared to 723 thousand).

³³In contrast to Bazzi et al. (2020), in which all pre-move (post-move) children were born in non-frontier (frontier) counties, here there may be a positive correlation between origin and destination county Southern white shares. Household fixed effects, which absorb origin Southern white shares, are thus important to avoid some of the bias arising from such correlation. For robustness, we address remaining biases by taking the difference between origin and destination Southern white shares.

to a mean of 15. Put differently, this effect explains 7 percent of the gap between children named by fathers working in religious occupations and those working non-religious occupations. This core result is robust to a subsample of households moving from Northern, Union territory to Western states (column 2), further accounting for correlation in the share of Southern whites between origin state and destination county (column 3), addressing confounding effects on individualistic name choices (column 4), and including more granular fixed effects for birth period (column 5). Although the magnitudes change, the estimates remain statistically significant and quantitatively meaningful across these specifications.

A causal interpretation of $\hat{\beta}$ implies that greater exposure to Southern white migrants at destination induced a shift towards more religious names among whites without Southern heritage. The key identifying assumption is that, within households, the likelihood of Biblical name-giving would have followed parallel trends had the household not moved to a county with a high Southern white population share. One important concern lies in the possibility of confounding, time-varying shocks to household h that cause it to move to counties with a high Southern white share and increase the parent’s propensity to give their later-born children Biblical names.

Using the following event-study specification, we not only elucidate the dynamics of religious names among movers but also provide evidence in support of the identifying assumptions:

$$\text{Biblical name}_{iht\tau} = \theta_h + \sum_{j=-9}^9 \beta_j [\% \text{ Southern Whites}_{c,\tau-1} \times 1(\text{born in } \tilde{\tau} + j)] + \mathbf{X}'_{it\tau} \gamma + \varepsilon_{iht\tau}, \quad (5)$$

which allows the β in equation (4) to vary with the child birth year relative to the household move, $j = -9, \dots, 9$. Figure 6 reports estimates of β_j for relatively balanced event years, $j = -5, \dots, 5$.

There are three key takeaways that are consistent with a causal, exposure-based interpretation of the results. First, we find limited evidence of pre-trends in Biblical naming patterns based on eventual destination county Southern white shares. In other words, while more religious non-Southern households may be drawn to counties with a large Southern white diaspora, such selection does not significantly vary across the period leading up to the move. Second, we see significant growth in Biblical names within non-Southern households after moving to counties with more Southern whites. Third, that growth did not happen instantaneously but rather increased dynamically over time as opportunities for contact and interactions with Southern white neighbors increased. These patterns go against concerns about a confounding shock at the time of moving, which would imply an immediate jump in the Biblical name choices rather than the gradual increase more consistent with an exposure-based channel.

Together, these results suggest that Southern white migrants transmitted religious cultural norms to non-Southern populations outside the South. This individual-level evidence resonates with the diffusion of evangelical Christianity across diaspora communities. Having documented exposure effects in one of the important domains of Southern white culture, it seems plausible that other domains beyond religion could also have causally changed as a result of greater contact with the Southern white diaspora.

7 Conclusion

Millions migrated out of the American South in the 20th century. Scholars have written extensively about the Great Migration of Southern Blacks. Much less is known about the Great Migration of Southern whites. This paper provides a systematic empirical account of how Southern white migrants transformed

politics and culture across the United States. We provide descriptive and causal evidence on the role of the Southern white diaspora in facilitating cultural changes that would redefine and reinvigorate the conservative movement. These migrants, dispersed and influential as they were, paved the way for a successful racially conservative politics on the right. Media and evangelical religion provided important later vehicles for Southern white influence, which, in turn, hastened partisan realignment and reshaped the political landscape along a pathway running through George Wallace to Donald Trump.

Our study suggests that some of America's deep cultural divides and growing polarization may have roots in the Great Migration. In ongoing work, we explore the microfoundations of Southern white influence on the geography of race and racism across America (Bazzi et al., 2022a). In that work, we also consider the role of former slaveowners in shaping the institutional and cultural foundations of racism outside the South. This new research, combined with the present study, offers a new empirical take on the long-run process of Southernization noted by historians and popular observers. While Southern migrants were not necessarily the instigators of cultural change everywhere they settled, they undoubtedly shaped its evolution locally and perhaps even nationally. Our research agenda aims to elucidate this historical process and ultimately help inform public debate across an ever-widening cultural divide in America.

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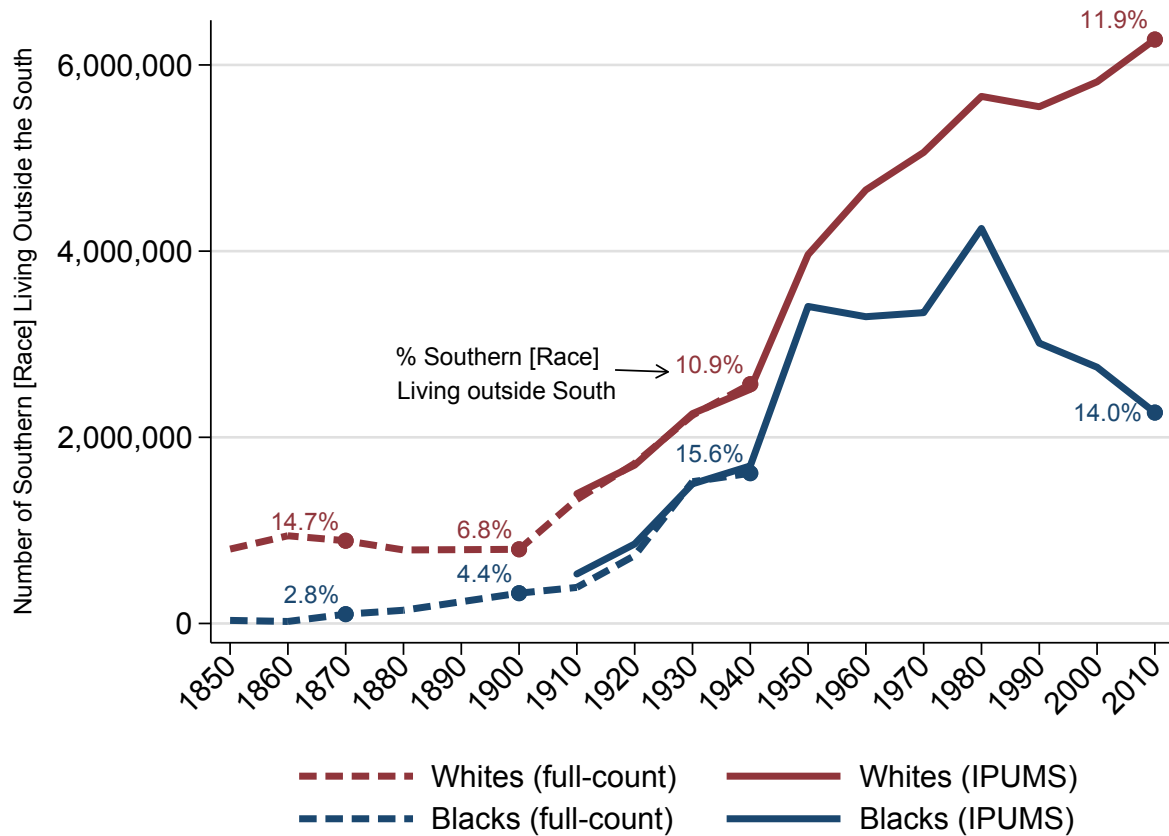
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Figures

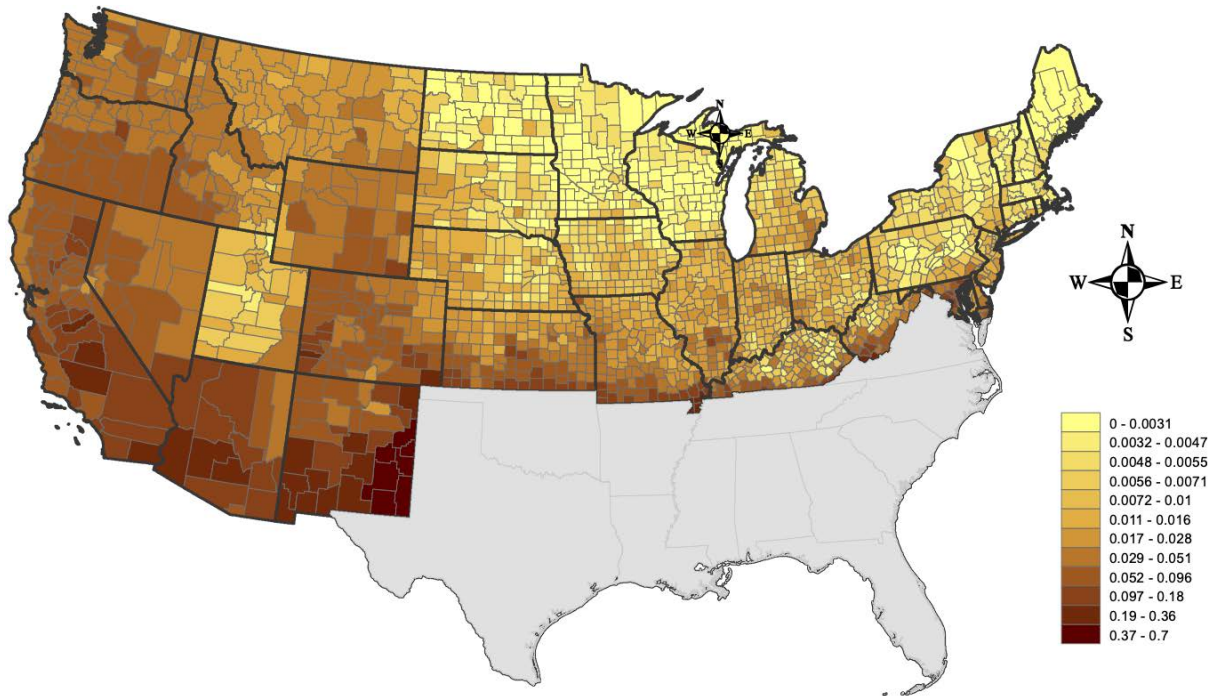
Figure 1: Southern-born Whites and Blacks Living Outside the South, 1850-2010



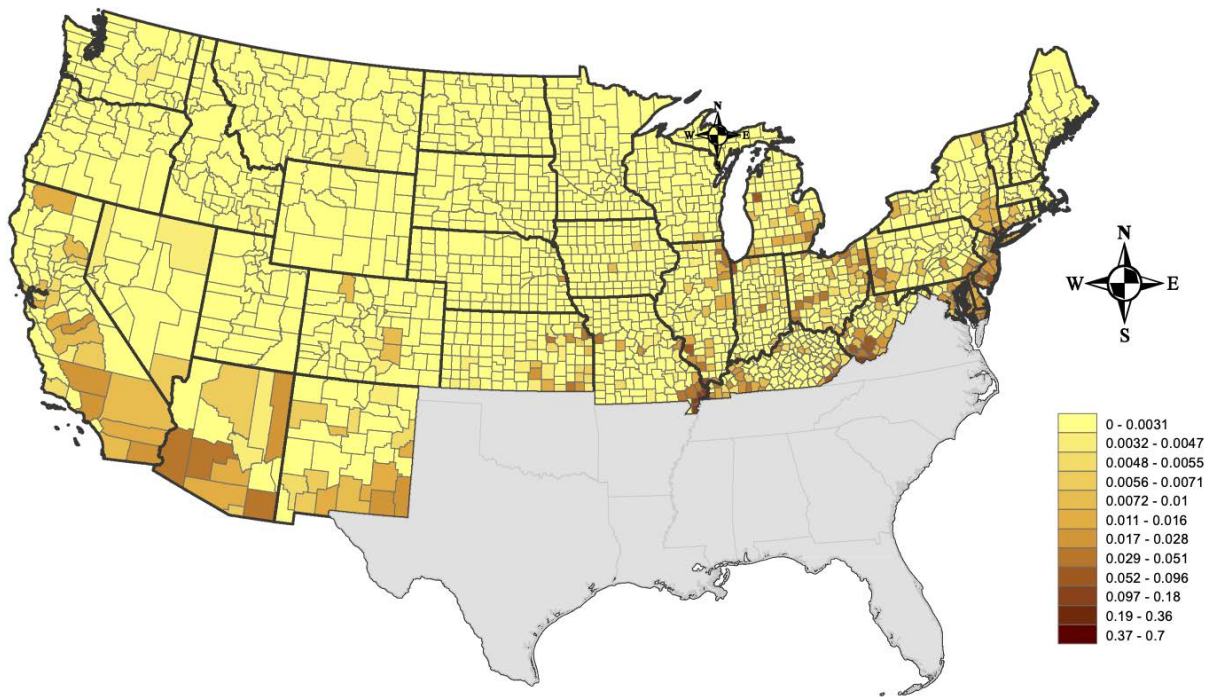
Notes: The graph plots the number of Black and white individuals born in the South who reside outside the South in a given Census year between 1850 and 2010. Percentages for select years that are central to our analyses are expressed relative to the total white and Black Southern population to show the magnitudes of the Southern outmigration over time by group. We define Southern states as those belonging to the former Confederacy plus Oklahoma. The data for the graph was taken from [Ruggles et al. \(2020\)](#). For Southern-born individuals, the dashed lines were produced using the full-count Census files and the solid lines were produced using the 1% samples (1910-70 and 2000-10) multiplied by 100 and the 5% samples (1980, 1990) multiplied by 20. The period of overlap between the full-count and 1% samples from 1910 to 1940 was chosen to show that the scaled IPUMS samples match the full-count data.

Figure 2: Mapping Southern-born Whites and Blacks Outside the South in 1940

(a) Southern Whites



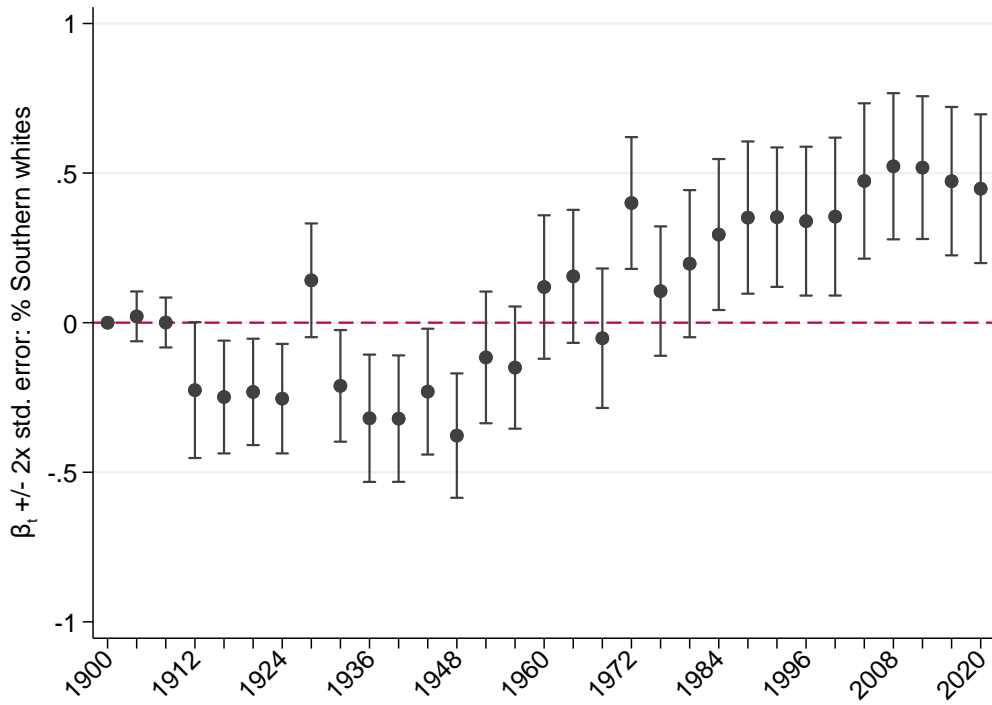
(b) Southern Blacks



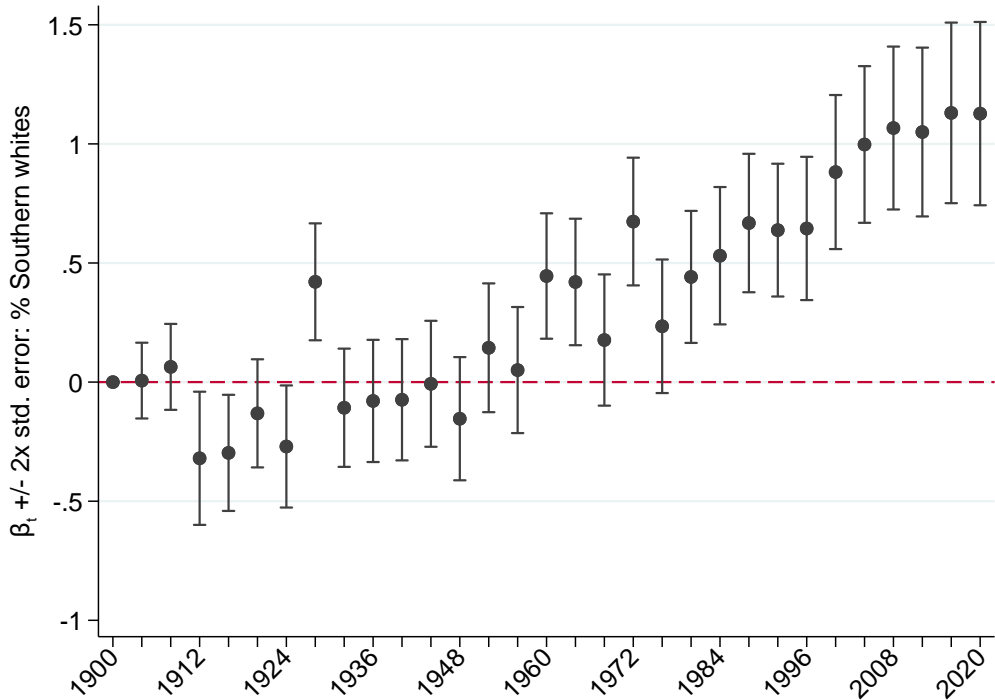
Notes: This figure maps the county-level population share of (a) white and (b) Black individuals born in the South and residing outside the South in 1940 according to the full-count 1940 Census. The legend shows the identical intervals considered for each split.

Figure 3: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Republican Presidential Vote Share, 1900–2020

(a) Panel OLS estimates

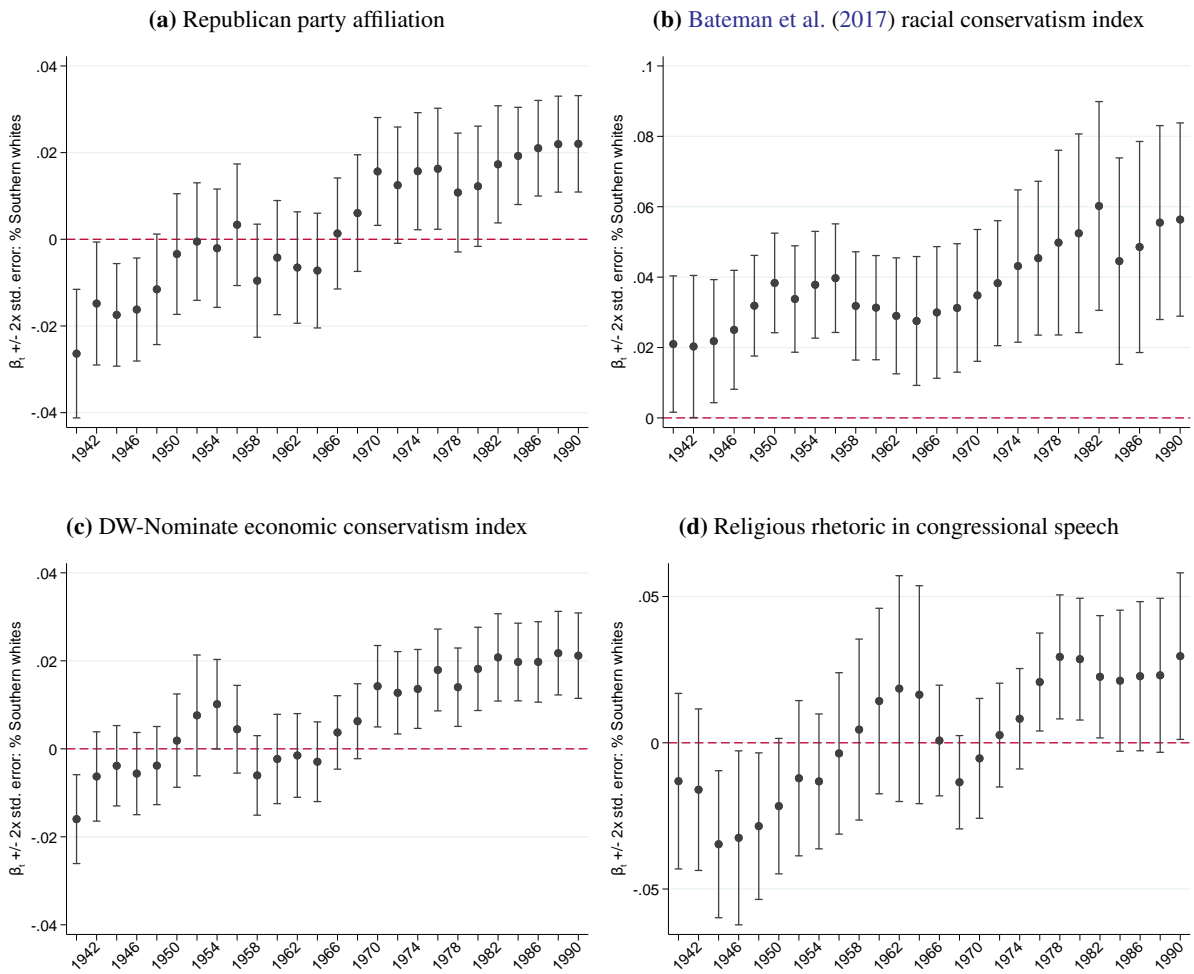


(b) Panel IV estimates



Notes: Coefficients from panel OLS and IV regressions of vote share for the Republican candidate in 31 U.S. presidential elections between 1900 and 2020 on the share of Southern white migrants in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. Data on presidential election outcomes come from [MIT Election Data and Science Lab \(2018\)](#), the presidential election atlas for years after 1912 ([Leip, 2021](#)), and the election dataset compiled by [Clubb et al. \(2006\)](#) for 1912 and prior. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Regression includes county and state \times election year fixed effects, based on equation (3). The coefficients from these share effects are expressed relative to the base year 1900. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered at the county level, which is harmonized from an election year's nearest census year to modern county borders. For estimates based on contemporaneous variation in Southern white shares for pre-1940 elections and with no omitted year, see Appendix Figures [A.6](#) and [A.7](#), respectively.

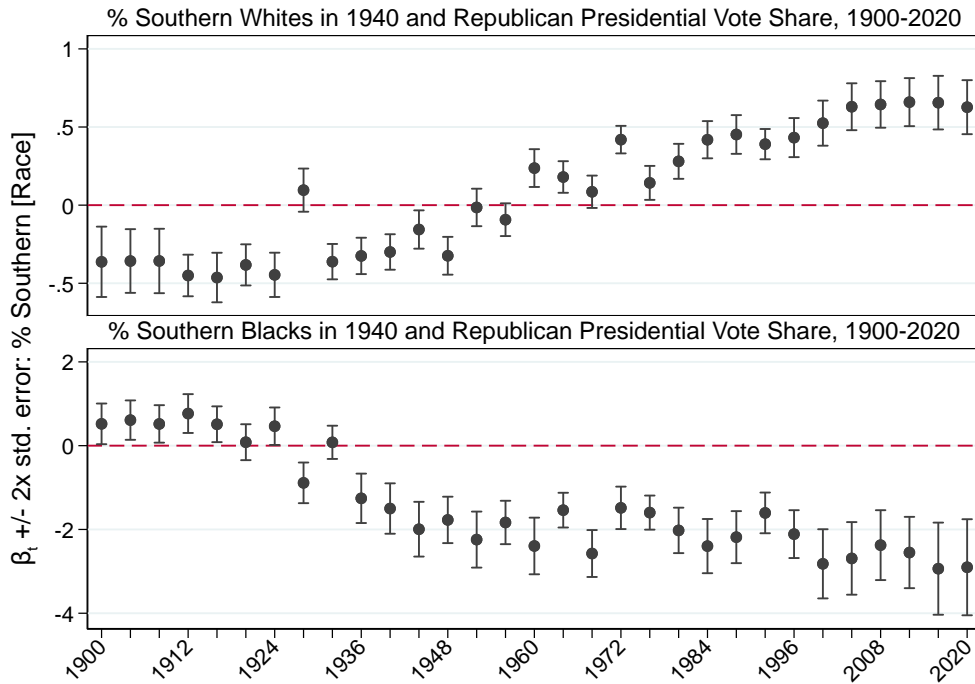
Figure 4: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Congressional Ideology, 1940–1990



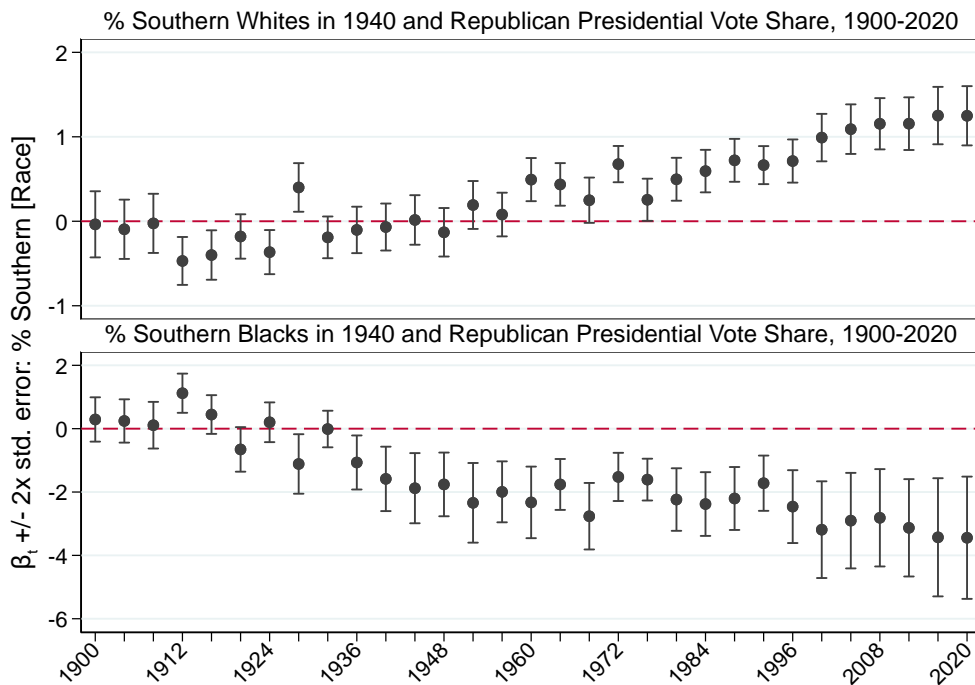
Notes: Coefficients from pooled regressions of (a) an indicator for legislator party affiliation (Republican = 1) in the U.S. House, (b) congressional ideal points from [Bateman et al. \(2017\)](#), based on racial and civil rights voting patterns, (c) congressional ideal points from the time-varying DW-Nominate score (dimension 1) by [Lewis et al. \(2021\)](#), covering economic issues, and (d) our relative religious rhetoric (RRI) scores on the share of Southern white migrants in 1940. RRI scores are calculated by totaling a legislator’s words with Biblical roots—God, Christ, lord, almighty, amen—and dividing the sum by the total words spoken. All regressions include Congress and state fixed effects. The Southern white migrant share in 1940 is interacted with the Congress fixed effect. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are robust to heteroscedasticity. See Appendix Figure [A.11](#) for estimates using our standard shift-share IV and baseline controls, as described under Table 2.

Figure 5: Southern Blacks and Whites and Republican Presidential Vote Share

(a) Panel OLS estimates

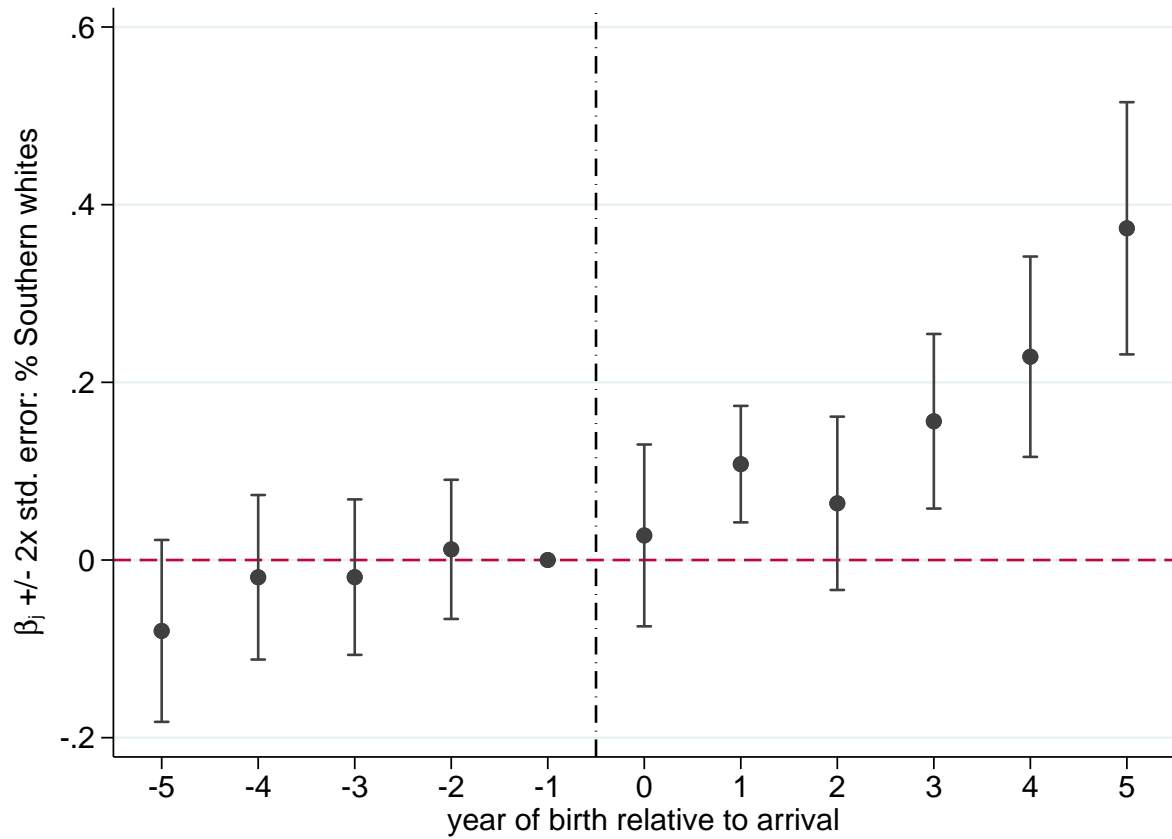


(b) Panel IV estimates



Notes: Coefficients from pooled OLS and IV regressions of vote share for the Republican candidate in 31 U.S. presidential elections between 1900 and 2020 on the shares of Southern white migrants and Southern Black migrants in all non-Southern counties. All regressions include state×election year fixed effects. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Figure 6: Exposure to Southern Whites and Biblical Child Names



Notes: This figure isolates within-household, cross-child variation in parental exposure to the Southern whites. Each graph reports estimates of β_j and 95% confidence intervals in equation (4) for $j = -5, \dots, 5$. Each β_j can be interpreted as the differential likelihood of a biblical name given to a child born j years before/after their parents moved to the county, relative to a child born one year prior to moving. The sample includes 2,491,898 white, U.S.-born children of non-Southern parents in 846,073 households with at least one child born before the move and at least one born after the move. Estimates control for household fixed effects as well as child sex, birth order, and birth decade fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by contemporaneous destination county.

Tables

Table 1: Relative Attitudes of Southern Whites Outside the South

Dependent Variable:	Religious		Racial			Economic	
	Identify as Evangelical (1)	Believe Bible is literal word of God (2)	Favor any segregation (3)	Oppose residential integration (4)	Oppose school integration (5)	Oppose gov't intervention for any (6)	Oppose gov't intervention for Blacks (7)
Southern White	0.199*** (0.037)	0.095** (0.039)	0.094** (0.039)	0.089** (0.035)	0.106*** (0.037)	-0.034 (0.034)	0.120*** (0.045)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey waves	1960-70	1964-68	1964-70	1964-70	1964-70	1956-68	1964-68
Observations	4,603	1,924	2,458	2,908	2,680	4,087	1,630
Counties	118	95	96	97	97	116	92
Control outcome mean	0.15	0.47	0.47	0.26	0.45	0.46	0.53
Adjusted R ²	0.20	0.11	0.08	0.14	0.07	0.14	0.03

Notes: Regressions of survey questions from the American National Election Survey (ANES), applicable waves through 1970, on a dummy for whether a white respondent is from any of the twelve excluded Southern sending states. Each dependent variable is a binary outcome equal to one if the respondent answered affirmatively to the given question. The control outcome mean is the mean of the dependent variable for non-Southern whites. Southern sending states include states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Our definition of Southern whites includes those respondents that were born and/or grew up in the South. Sample excludes respondents living in the South as well as non-whites. All regressions control for respondent age, age squared, and sex. All regressions include county and survey wave fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Trump Vote Share in 2016

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.395*** (0.077)	0.632*** (0.062)	0.903*** (0.184)	0.812*** (0.151)	0.701*** (0.164)	0.728*** (0.159)
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
1900 controls					Yes	Yes
Sorting controls						Yes
Observations	1,888	1,886	1,888	1,886	1,886	1,883
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.7
Adjusted R ²	0.42	0.67				
First Stage F statistic			124.8	135.2	131.4	116.8

Notes: Regressions of the vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties (mean of 2.9%). Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Column 3–6 instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. Baseline controls include log population per square mile, percent employed in manufacturing, percent participating in the labor force, percent unemployed, percent of land in farms, log average farm value, percent Black, and percent born in Mexico, Germany, Ireland, Canada, and Italy, all in 1940, as well as the vote share for Woodrow Wilson in 1912, the Union Army enlistment rate during the Civil War, and the corresponding mortality rate. Historical controls for 1900 include log population density (per square mile), percent employed in manufacturing, percent of land in farms, log average farm value, percent Black, and percent born in Mexico, Germany, Ireland, Canada, and Italy. Additional sorting controls include vote shares for Breckinridge in 1860 and Jennings Bryan in 1896, dummies for whether a county was unincorporated and “unsettled,” (i.e., < 2 persons per square mile) as of 1860, dummies for any major oil fields (as of 1900 and 1940) and for any mines, measures of cotton and overall agricultural potential, and a set of geographic controls (for elevation, ruggedness, distance to coast, and distance to nearest river). All regressions include state fixed effects. See Table A.2 for additional regression control specifications. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3: Varying Treatment of Border States, Extending Table 2

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(a) Excluding Border States from Non-South						
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.552*** (0.083)	0.684*** (0.078)	1.303*** (0.298)	1.158*** (0.273)	1.098*** (0.301)	1.130*** (0.306)
Observations	1,571	1,569	1,571	1,569	1,569	1,566
Outcome mean	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	61.0
Adjusted R ²	0.39	0.65				
First Stage <i>F</i> statistic			108.3	103.6	84.5	76.7
(b) ... and Including Border States in Defining Southern White Migrants						
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.343*** (0.073)	0.522*** (0.057)	1.050*** (0.166)	0.980*** (0.137)	0.927*** (0.143)	0.982*** (0.169)
Observations	1,571	1,569	1,571	1,569	1,569	1,566
Outcome mean	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	60.9	61.0
Adjusted R ²	0.39	0.65				
First Stage <i>F</i> statistic			117.7	109.0	97.2	80.7
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
1900 controls					Yes	Yes
Sorting controls						Yes

Notes: This table re-estimates Table 2 excluding all counties in the former border states during the Civil War (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and West Virginia) (panel a), and then additionally treating those border states as additional Southern sending states in defining the population of Southern Whites in 1940 (panel b). The mean Southern white share is 2.7% in panel (a) and 5.8% in panel (b). Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Southern White Migrants in 1940, Wallace in 1968, and Partisan Realignment

Dependent Variable:	Third-party vote for George Wallace in 1968		Change in vote share from D to R, 1948-72			Change in vote share from D to R, 1964-72		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.257*** (0.034)	0.372*** (0.046)	0.723*** (0.049)	0.749*** (0.094)		0.205*** (0.039)	0.178** (0.078)	
% Wallace Voters, 1968					0.759*** (0.056)			0.220*** (0.038)
Estimator	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	OLS	IV	OLS
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,881	1,881	1,883	1,883	1,881	1,883	1,883	1,881
Outcome mean	9.4	9.4	11.2	11.2	11.3	22.2	22.2	22.3
Adjusted R ²	0.66		0.59		0.64	0.46		0.60
First Stage <i>F</i> statistics		135.3		135.2			135.2	

Notes: Regressions of the third-party vote share for George Wallace of the American Independent Party in the 1968 presidential election (columns 1–2), of the change in vote share in from Democrat to Republican between 1948 and 1972 (columns 3–5), and of the change in the vote share from Democrat to Republican between 1964 and 1972 (columns 6–8) on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 (columns 1–4 and 6–7) or on the share of votes to George Wallace in 1968 (columns 5 and 8) in non-Southern counties. Columns 2, 4, and 7 instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. See the notes to Table 2 for the list of baseline controls. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: The Early Southern White Diaspora and Racial Exclusion in the 20th Century

Dependent Variable:	Any KKK chapters		Any lynchings of Blacks		Any sundown towns	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1900	0.008** (0.003)	0.020** (0.010)	0.006** (0.002)	0.016** (0.006)	0.006** (0.003)	0.015* (0.009)
Estimator	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,701	1,701	1,701	1,701	1,701	1,701
Outcome mean	0.37	0.37	0.04	0.04	0.25	0.25
Adjusted R ²	0.13		0.03		0.01	
First Stage <i>F</i> statistic		54.3		54.3		54.3

Notes: Regressions of a dummy for whether a county had (1–2) any Ku Klux Klan chapters from 1910–40, (3–4) any lynchings of Blacks from 1900–40, (5–6) any sundown towns on the share of Southern-born whites in 1900 in all non-Southern counties. Klan chapters are from the 2nd KKK, sourced from the Virginia Commonwealth Library (2021). Non-Southern lynchings data come from Seguin and Rigby (2019). Sundown towns data is originally from Loewen (2005) and taken from Taylor (2020) via its complementary GIS resource. The IV columns instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1870 to 1900. Given the earlier explanatory variable, the baseline controls here include log population per square mile, percent employed in manufacturing, percent of land in farms, log average farm value, percent Black, and percent born in Mexico, Germany, Ireland, Canada, and Italy, all in 1900, as well as the vote share for John C. Breckinridge in 1860, the Union Army enlistment rate during the Civil War, and the corresponding mortality rate. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 6: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Evangelical Communities, 1952–2010

Dependent Variable:	% Evangelical		Evangelical Churches (per 10,000 pop.)					
	2010		1952		1971		2010	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.405*** (0.051)	0.465*** (0.108)	0.141*** (0.021)	0.223*** (0.055)	0.143*** (0.022)	0.227*** (0.053)	0.130*** (0.025)	0.117** (0.052)
Estimator	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,886	1,886	1,878	1,878	1,879	1,879	1,886	1,886
Outcome mean	8.4	8.4	4.4	4.4	4.8	4.8	4.5	4.5
Adjusted R ²	0.56		0.52		0.50		0.43	
First Stage <i>F</i> statistic		124.1		134.8		134.9		124.1

Notes: Regressions of the number of evangelical Protestant Christian churches per 10,000 residents in 1952, 1971, and 2010 or of the share of the county population adhering to those evangelical denominations in 2010 on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. Evangelical denominations consist of those as defined in Steensland et al. (2000) and featured across all religious censuses from The Association of Religious Data Archives (2021). Even columns instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. See the notes to Table 2 for the list of baseline controls. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7: Southern White Migrants and Occupational Sorting at the Individual Level

	Dependent Variable: Individual Works in a . . . Occupation					
	Religious		Newspaper		Radio and TV	
	1900 (1)	1940 (2)	1900 (3)	1940 (4)	1900 (5)	1940 (6)
Southern White	0.393*** (0.039)	0.154*** (0.031)	0.067*** (0.022)	-0.004 (0.018)	–	0.041*** (0.011)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	Yes
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	Yes
Observations	16,187,176	30,054,255	16,187,176	30,054,255	–	30,054,255
Outcome mean	0.37	0.31	0.11	0.12	–	0.07

Notes: Regressions of a binary indicator for whether the individual worked in the respective occupation (multiplied by 100). Religion includes the following occupations from the full-count Census: religious workers (occ1950=78) and clergymen (occ1950=9). Newspaper includes the editors and reporters occupation (occ1950=36). Radio and TV includes the radio operators occupation (occ1950=75) and the radio broadcasting and television industry (ind1950=856). The sample, based on the complete-count Population Census data in 1900 (odd-numbered columns) and 1940 (even-numbered columns), includes all white men between the ages of 18 and 64 living outside of the South in 1900 and 1940, respectively. Column 5 is empty as radio and TV were not yet available. Excluded Southern areas are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Regressions include controls for a cubic in age and county fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level shown in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 8: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Right-wing Media

Dependent Variable:	County has a Radio Station Airing				Respondent Believes	
	Carl McIntire Program		Rush Limbaugh Program		Fox News is the fairest Media	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.005** (0.002)	0.014*** (0.005)	0.006** (0.003)	0.013** (0.006)	0.007* (0.004)	0.007 (0.008)
Estimator	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Respondent controls					Yes	Yes
Observations	1,884	1,884	1,884	1,884	3,510	3,478
Outcome mean	0.12	0.12	0.17	0.17	0.35	0.35
Adjusted R ²	0.14		0.20		0.03	
First Stage F statistic		134.3		134.3		35.2

Notes: Columns 1–4 are based on regressions of a dummy for whether a county has had a radio station that aired Carl McIntire’s 20th Century Reformation Hour (in the 1950s-70s) or the Rush Limbaugh Show (in 2020) on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940. Columns 5–6 are based on a regression of a binary indicator for whether Fox News provides, among all television news channels, the most fair and balanced reporting. We take this question from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) in 2007 and restrict the analysis to whites living outside the South. Even columns instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. See the notes to Table 2 for the list of baseline controls. In columns 1–4, additional controls for elevation and ruggedness are also included as important predictors of radio signal supply. Respondent controls in columns 5–6 include respondent age, age squared, and sex. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 9: Exposure Effects: Religious Names

Specification:	Dependent Variable: Child has Biblical Name				
	Base	North Origin to West Dest.	Δ Orig.-Dest. % Southern Whites	Control for Name Freq.	Birth 5-Year FE
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
% Southern Whites $_{\tau-1} \times$ Born After Move	0.128*** (0.022)	0.081** (0.034)	0.042** (0.017)	0.079*** (0.019)	0.107*** (0.020)
Household FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Year - Move Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Order FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birth Period FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,491,898	416,341	2,455,696	2,491,898	2,491,898
Outcome mean	15.4	14.0	15.4	15.4	15.4

Notes: Regressions of an indicator for whether the child has a Biblical name ($\times 100$) on a dummy for whether that child in mover household h was born in its post-move county $c \times$ the share of Southern-born whites in c in the pre-move Census period $\tau - 1$. The full sample includes 2,491,898 white, U.S.-born children of non-Southern parents in 846,073 households with at least one child born before the move and at least one born after the move. The full sample includes movers from all non-Southern origin states. All regressions include fixed effects for child sex, birth order, birth period (decade or 5-year), and birth year minus household year of move. In columns 1, 3, 4, and 5, the sample includes those leaving all non-Southern states and settling in non-Southern destinations. In column 2, movers are restricted to those leaving all Northern states and settling in non-Southern and non-Northern destinations; we define the “North” as the territories of the Union during the Civil War, excluding the western parts (California, Oregon, Nevada). The latter is the same restriction used in Appendix Table A.5 to define Northern migrants. In column 3, the Southern white share captures the difference between origin state and destination county in Census period $\tau - 1$. The standard deviation of the Southern white share measure is 2.7 in columns 1, 4, and 5, 3.6 in column 2, and 3.0 in column 3. Column 4 includes 10 dummies for the decile of given name frequency. In columns 1–4, the birth period FE are decadal and in column 5 five-yearly. Standard errors are clustered by contemporaneous destination county. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

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A Additional Empirical Results

Tables

Table A.1: Alternative Approaches to Inference in Table 2

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.395*** (0.077)	0.632*** (0.062)	0.903*** (0.184)	0.812*** (0.151)	0.701*** (0.164)	0.728*** (0.159)
Conley s.e. (50km)	0.078	0.063	0.188	0.155	0.168	0.161
Conley s.e. (100km)	0.091	0.067	0.212	0.168	0.180	0.172
Conley s.e. (150km)	0.105	0.072	0.236	0.184	0.193	0.184
Wild cluster bootstrap s.e.	0.187	0.090	0.305	0.273	0.265	0.234
Adao et al (2019) s.e.			0.813	0.059	0.080	0.089
Lee et al (2022) s.e.			0.207	0.167	0.182	0.178
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
1900 controls					Yes	Yes
Sorting controls						Yes
Observations	1,888	1,886	1,888	1,886	1,886	1,883
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.7

Notes: This table re-estimates Table 2 with different approaches to inference besides the baseline robust standard errors in parentheses. We provide Conley (1999) standard errors with distance cut-offs at 50, 100, and 150km, standard errors clustered at the level of the 36 non-Southern states for which we correct the potential bias from the small number of clusters using the wild-cluster bootstrap by Cameron et al. (2008) implemented via the Stata routine provided by Roodman et al. (2019), as well as the standard errors for shift-share designs proposed by Adao et al. (2019), and corrected IV standard errors by Lee et al. (2022). Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.2: Full Regression Control Analysis, Extending Table 2

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.547*** (0.139)	0.903*** (0.184)	0.812*** (0.151)	0.590*** (0.174)	0.811*** (0.178)	0.728*** (0.159)	0.447*** (0.132)
Estimator	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls			Yes			Yes	Yes
1900 controls				Yes		Yes	Yes
Sorting controls					Yes	Yes	Yes
Modern confounders							Yes
Observations	1,889	1,888	1,886	1,888	1,885	1,883	1,883
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.7	62.7
First Stage F statistic	241.9	124.8	135.2	117.9	110.6	116.8	109.1

Notes: Regressions of the vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. We instrument the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. Contemporary controls measured in 2010 include log population density (per square mile), percent employed in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, wholesale, retail, transport, information, finance, professional occupations, education, public administration, self-employment, and home production, percent unemployed for men and women, percent white, Hispanic, Black, European-born, Asian-born, South American-born, and African-born, log per capita incomes of whites, Blacks, and Hispanics, log median rent and log median house value, percent households on food stamps, percent households receiving public assistance, percent men and women of voting age, percent adults aged 65+ by gender, the “China shock” measure from Autor et al. (2020), and years of total frontier experience from Bazzi et al. (2020). See the notes to Table 2 for all other controls. All regressions include state fixed effects except for column 1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.3: Alternative Time Horizons in the Shift-Share IV, Extending Table 2

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, t	0.466*** (0.068)	0.349*** (0.072)	0.174*** (0.040)	0.681*** (0.151)	0.726*** (0.204)	0.624** (0.291)
year t	1940	1900	1870	1940	1940	1900
IV base year				1900	1870	1870
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,888	1,888	1,701	1,888	1,701	1,701
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	61.4	62.6	61.4	61.4
Adjusted R ²	0.61	0.57	0.50			
First Stage F statistic				127.7	55.5	26.6

Notes: This table probes the baseline Trump vote share results allowing the Southern white share and corresponding shift-share instrument to be defined over different time horizons. Columns 4–6 instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the previous cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South between the base year and the year t . Controls are limited to log population density contemporaneous with the treatment, the Union Army enlistment rate during the Civil War, and the corresponding mortality rate in the interest of comparability across specifications. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.4: Restricting to “Unsettled” Counties as of 1860, Extending Table 2

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.551*** (0.091)	0.690*** (0.090)	0.644 (0.406)	0.978** (0.406)	0.992** (0.392)	1.004* (0.544)
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
1900 controls					Yes	Yes
Sorting controls						Yes
Observations	626	625	626	625	625	624
Outcome mean	61.9	61.9	61.9	61.9	61.9	61.9
Adjusted R ²	0.34	0.56				
First Stage F statistic			18.2	16.9	21.4	13.4

Notes: This table re-estimates parts of Table 2 using only counties that were classified by the Census Bureau as “unsettled” by non-natives as of 1860 (i.e., using the Census definition of < 2 persons per square mile) and a version of the shift-share instrument based on 1870 shares and the 1870-1940 shifts. The mean Southern white share in this sample is 7.9%. See the notes to that table for other details on the specification. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.5: Comparing the Migration of Northern and Southern Whites, Extending Table 2

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.490*** (0.081)	0.616*** (0.066)	1.216*** (0.218)	0.837*** (0.153)	0.756*** (0.166)	0.818*** (0.180)
% Northern Whites, 1940	-0.059 (0.106)	0.287*** (0.084)	0.382*** (0.175)	0.647*** (0.181)	0.410*** (0.157)	0.335** (0.166)
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
1900 controls					Yes	Yes
Sorting controls						Yes
Observations	951	950	951	950	950	949
Outcome mean	64.8	64.9	64.9	64.9	64.9	64.9
Adjusted R ²	0.42	0.66				
First Stage <i>F</i> statistic			115.1	107.0	105.1	92.9
Coeff. equality p-value	< 0.001	0.002	0.005	0.470	0.154	0.051

Notes: This table re-estimates Table 2 augmented with the share of Northern-born whites in 1940. We define the “North” as the territories of the Union during the Civil War, excluding the western parts (California, Oregon, Nevada). The analysis is restricted to counties in outside the Union and Southern states plus Oklahoma. Columns 3–6 instrument the share of Southern-born (Northern-born) white residents using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born (Northern-born) white individuals and the aggregate change in Southern (Northern) white population living outside the South (North) from 1900 to 1940. The coefficient equality test is an *F* test for whether the coefficient on the share of Southern-born whites is statistically indistinguishable from the coefficient on the share of Northern-born whites. The associated p-value is reported in the bottom row. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.6: Relative Attitudes of Southern and Northern White Migrants, Extending Table 1

Dependent Variable:	Religious		Racial			Economic	
	Identify as Evangelical (1)	Believe Bible is literal word of God (2)	Favor any segregation (3)	Oppose residential integration (4)	Oppose school integration (5)	Oppose gov't intervention for any (6)	Oppose gov't intervention for Blacks (7)
Southern White	0.182*** (0.043)	0.102* (0.053)	0.092* (0.054)	0.125*** (0.035)	0.080* (0.046)	-0.001 (0.049)	0.088 (0.068)
Northern White	0.015 (0.024)	-0.031 (0.050)	-0.077* (0.038)	-0.011 (0.027)	-0.036 (0.043)	0.079*** (0.026)	-0.035 (0.052)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey waves	1960-70	1964-68	1964-70	1964-70	1964-70	1956-68	1964-68
Observations	1,766	764	976	1,131	1,055	1,477	665
Counties	43	34	35	35	35	42	34
Outcome mean	0.25	0.47	0.47	0.31	0.49	0.47	0.54
Adjusted R ²	0.25	0.16	0.09	0.19	0.10	0.12	0.03

Notes: Regressions of various survey questions from the American National Election Survey (ANES), applicable waves through 1970, on a dummy for whether a white respondent is from any of the twelve excluded Southern sending states as well as dummy for whether a white respondent is from any of the “Northern” territories of the Union during the Civil War, excluding the western parts (California, Oregon, Nevada). Our definition of Southern (Northern) whites includes those respondents that were born and/or grew up in the South (North). Sample excludes respondents living in the South and the North as well as non-whites. All regressions control for respondent age, age squared, and sex. All regressions include county and survey wave fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.7: Comparing the Black and White Great Migrations, Extending Table 2

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share, 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.734*** (0.089)	0.654*** (0.066)	1.218*** (0.217)	0.864*** (0.167)	0.788*** (0.177)	0.846*** (0.172)
% Southern Blacks, 1940	-3.140*** (0.581)	-0.677*** (0.185)	-3.415*** (0.941)	-1.006*** (0.366)	-1.144*** (0.389)	-1.258*** (0.402)
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
1900 controls					Yes	Yes
Sorting controls						Yes
Observations	1,888	1,886	1,888	1,886	1,886	1,883
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.7
Adjusted R ²	0.47	0.67				
First Stage <i>F</i> statistic			281.1	274.2	258.9	234.8
Coeff. equality p-value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

Notes: This table re-estimates Table 2 augmented with the Southern Black share in 1940. Columns 3–6 instrument the share of Southern-born white and Black residents using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born individuals in each group and the aggregate change in Southern white and Black population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. The controls are as in Table 2 but exclude the Black population shares from the baseline and 1900 control sets. The coefficient equality test is an *F* test for whether the coefficient on the share of Southern-born whites is statistically indistinguishable from the coefficient on the share of Southern-born Blacks. The associated p-value is reported in the bottom row. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.8: Southern White “Dealignment” Outside the South

	Dep. Var.: Respondent Identifies as a Democrat					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Southern White	0.112*** (0.035)	0.142** (0.060)	0.079 (0.073)	5.925** (2.687)	5.433** (2.717)	4.691* (2.757)
Southern White × After	-0.085** (0.038)	-0.081** (0.038)	-0.075* (0.038)			
Southern White × (Year/100)				-0.298** (0.136)	-0.271** (0.137)	-0.237* (0.139)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Income fixed effects		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
City-size fixed effects			Yes			Yes
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	21,180	19,804	19,804	21,180	19,804	19,804
Counties	205	205	205	205	205	205
Control outcome mean (pre-64)	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49
Adjusted R ²	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06

Notes: Regressions of various survey questions from the American National Election Survey (ANES), all applicable waves, on a dummy for whether a white respondent is from any of the twelve excluded Southern sending states. These include states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Our definition of Southerners includes those respondents that were born and/or grew up in the South. Sample excludes respondents living in the South as well as non-whites. “After” is a pre-/post-1964 survey wave indicator variable; “Year” is a linear time trend from 0. All regressions control for respondent age, age squared, and sex. Additional controls include income (five categories) and city-type (three categories) fixed effects. As in Kuziemko and Washington (2018), where applicable, income and city-type fixed effects have each been interacted with “Southern White” (separately) and with “After” (when “Southern White × After” is the explanatory variable of interest) or “Year” (when Southern White × Year is the explanatory variable of interest). The control outcome mean is the mean of the dependent variable among non-Southern whites in the years prior to 1964. All regressions include county and survey wave fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.9: Changing Characteristics of Republicans and the New Right “Bundle”

Dependent Variable:	Identify as Evangelical		Oppose civil rights		Oppose gov’t intervention	
	Pre-1964	Post-1964	Pre-1964	Post-1964	Pre-1964	Post-1964
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Republican	0.012 (0.014)	0.032*** (0.007)	0.012 (0.008)	0.036*** (0.007)	0.177*** (0.022)	0.145*** (0.010)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,822	15,048	4,059	15,146	3,291	10,503
Counties	108	180	109	180	106	178
Control outcome mean	0.15	0.15	0.32	0.32	0.60	0.60
Adjusted R ²	0.18	0.15	0.70	0.46	0.16	0.06

Notes: Regressions of various survey questions from the American National Election Survey (ANES), applicable waves through 1990, on a dummy for whether a respondent identifies as a Republican. Regressions are further split into “1964 and prior” and “post-1964” election cycles. “Opposes civil rights” is a composite of the racial variables from Table 1, which equals 1 if any of those outcomes equal 1. Sample excludes respondents living in the South as well as non-whites. All regressions control for respondent age, age squared, and sex. The control outcome mean is the mean of the dependent variable for those not identifying as Republican. All regressions include county and survey wave fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.10: Wallace-to-Nixon Voters and the New Right “Bundle”

Dependent Variable:	Nixon voters only				
	Voted Nixon in 1972	Identifies as Evangelical	Opposes civil rights	Opposes gov’t intervention for any	Opposes gov’t intervention for Blacks
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Wallace Support/100	0.359*** (0.059)	0.016 (0.061)	0.181*** (0.063)	-0.041 (0.066)	0.175* (0.088)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,085	717	719	640	545
Counties	84	79	79	79	78
Outcome mean	0.56	0.16	0.31	0.67	0.51
Adjusted R ²	0.08	0.13	0.06	0.04	0.04

Notes: Regressions of various survey questions from the American National Election Survey (ANES) in the 1972 wave on a respondent’s thermometer support, ranging from 0 to 100, for George Wallace. “Oppose civil rights” is a composite of the racial variables from Table 1, which equals 1 if any of those outcomes equal 1. Sample excludes respondents living in the South as well as non-whites. Sample in columns 2–5 include only Nixon voters. All regressions control for respondent age, age squared, and sex. All regressions include county fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.11: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Modern-day Attitudes

Dependent Variable:	Opposes legal abortion (1)	Opposes gay marriage (2)	Believes No systemic racism (3)	Opposes assault rifle ban (4)	Opposes CO2 regulation (5)	Favors ACA repeal (6)
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.008** (0.003)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.002)
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey wave FE	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Respondent controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey waves	2007	2009-16	2010-14	2014	2014	2014
Observations	5,739	82,094	83,446	29,202	29,022	29,239
Counties	1,017	1,732	1,750	1,533	1,528	1,534
Outcome mean	0.52	0.41	0.50	0.36	0.32	0.53
Adjusted R ²	0.05	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.07	0.02

Notes: OLS regressions of reported attitudes of white individuals living outside the South on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Outcomes are responses to binary-coded questions from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). Respondent controls include their reported age, age squared, and sex. All regressions include state and survey wave fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.12: The Early Southern White Diaspora and the “Great Retreat” of Blacks

	Dependent Variable: No Blacks in Town After 1900					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites, 1900	0.019*** (0.002)		0.039*** (0.013)		0.022** (0.009)	
% Southern Whites, 1900 \times < 25 Blacks in 1900		0.021*** (0.002)		0.039*** (0.014)		0.022** (0.009)
% Southern Whites, 1900 \times \geq 25 Blacks in 1900		0.009*** (0.002)		0.025* (0.014)		0.025* (0.014)
Explanatory variable unit	Town	Town	Town	Town	County	County
Estimator	OLS	OLS	IV	IV	IV	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Town controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	33,904	33,904	33,904	33,904	33,904	33,904
Outcome mean	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
Adjusted R ²	0.15	0.15				
First Stage F statistic			18.4	9.0	13.4	6.8

Notes: Regressions of whether a given non-Southern town had no Black residents at some point after 1900 (through 1940) on the share of Southern-born whites in 1900 in all non-Southern towns (columns 1–4) or counties (5–6). Even columns include an interaction for whether a town had over 25 Blacks in 1900 and report the coefficient estimates for those two subsamples. The IV columns instrument the share of Southern-born whites (and their interactions in even columns) using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution across counties of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1870 to 1900. Sample of towns based on [Berkes et al. \(2022\)](#). All regressions control for town longitude, latitude, a dummy for whether it had over 25 Blacks in 1900, and a dummy for whether it had over 1,000 residents in 1900. See the notes to Table 5 for the list of baseline controls. All regressions include state fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.13: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and Modern-day Cuisine

Dependent Variable:	Share of Visits to ... Restaurant				Any Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurants	
	BBQ and steak		Italian and pizza		(5)	(6)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		
% Southern Whites, 1940	0.002*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)	-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.001)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.006* (0.003)
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	1,888	1,886	1,888	1,886	1,888	1,886
Outcome mean	0.06	0.06	0.40	0.40	0.41	0.41
Adj. R ²	0.02	0.03	0.24	0.26	0.20	0.37

Notes: OLS regressions of county-level restaurant visit shares for various cuisines (1-4) and a dummy for any Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants in a county as of 2022 on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. Restaurant visit data from Google News Lab (2021). Counties with insufficient visit data for a particular cuisine are considered zeroes for coding purposes. See the notes to Table 2 for the list of baseline controls. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.14: Validating the Religious Content of Biblical Names

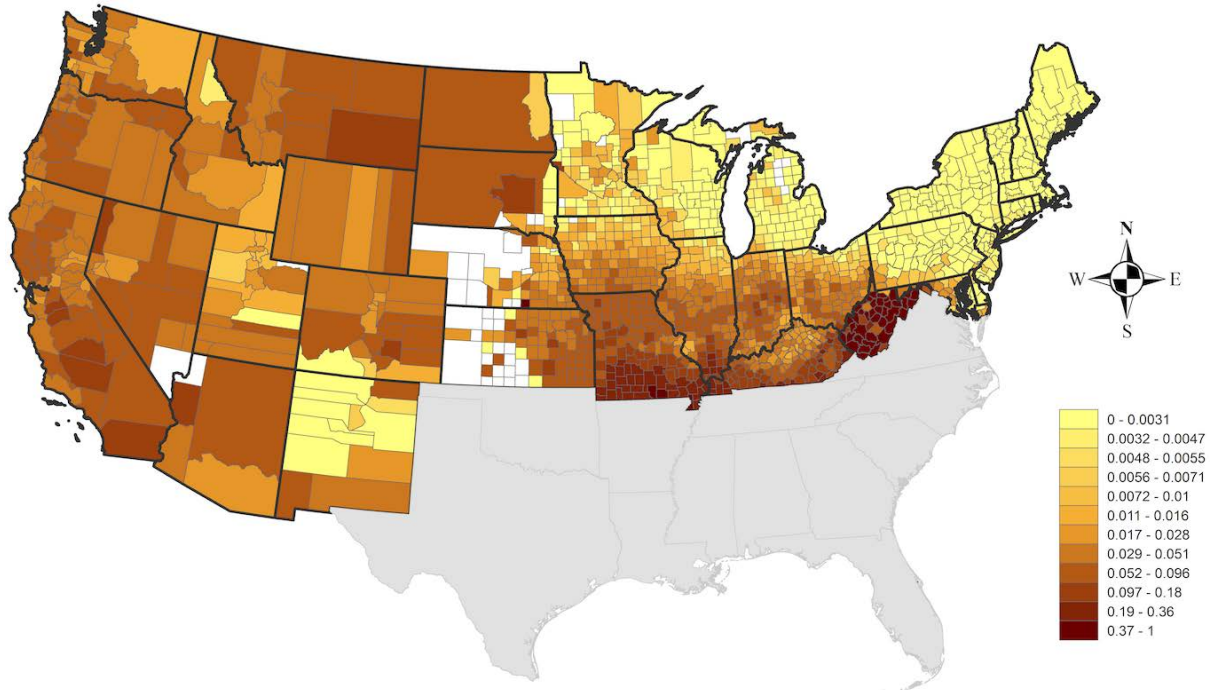
Census Year	Dependent Variable: Child has Biblical Name			
	1910 (1)	1920 (2)	1930 (3)	1940 (4)
father has religious occupation	5.986*** (0.214)	6.228*** (0.231)	7.729*** (0.226)	8.832*** (0.201)
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Child controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outcome mean	14.7	15.5	15.3	15.0
Observations	16,223,562	18,930,606	19,327,349	17,132,508

Notes: OLS regressions of an indicator for whether a child has a Biblical name on an indicator ($\times 100$) for whether the child's father has a religious occupation (see the notes to Table 7). The sample is restricted to all white, U.S. born-children. Each column is a separate regression for the given Census year listed at the top of the column. All regressions include county fixed effects as well as a set of child controls: fixed effects for child gender, birth year, and birth decade. Standard errors are clustered by county. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

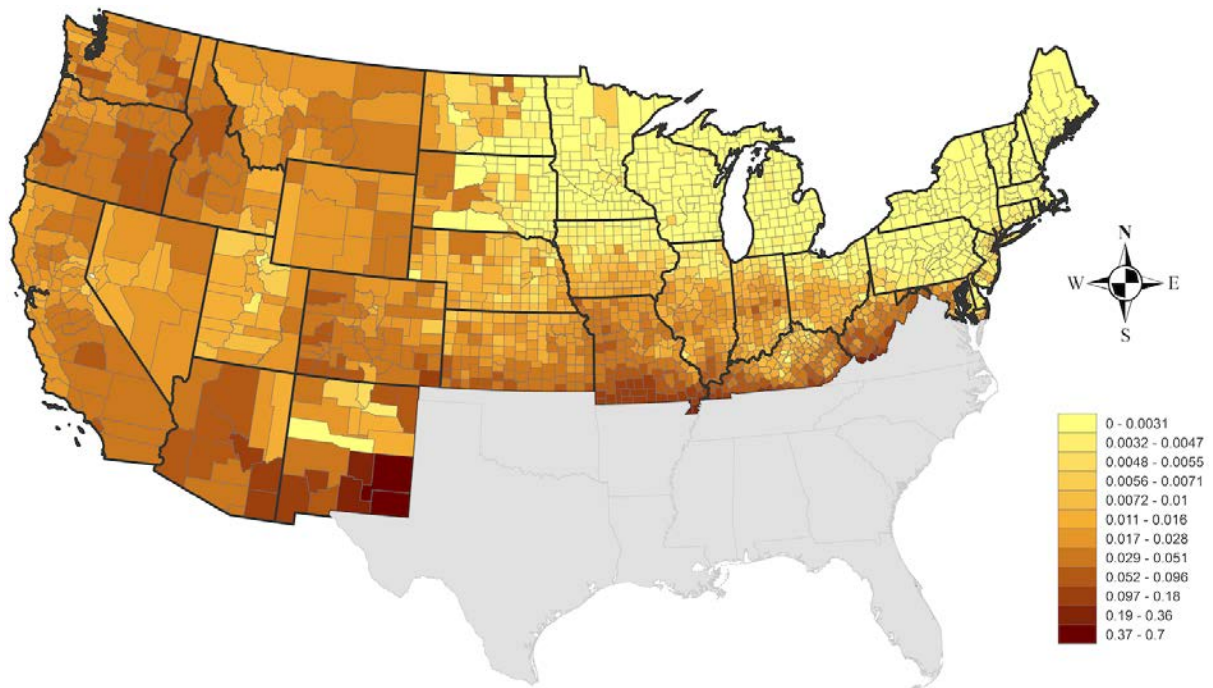
Figures

Figure A.1: Mapping Southern-born Whites Outside the South in 1870 and 1900

(a) 1870

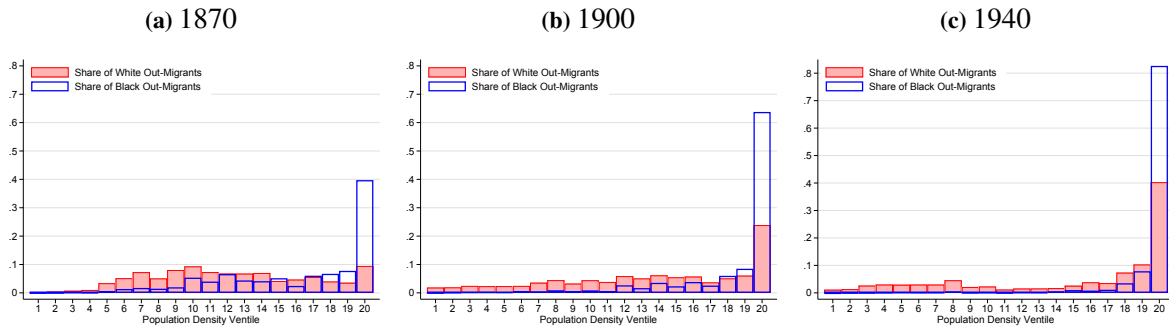


(b) 1900



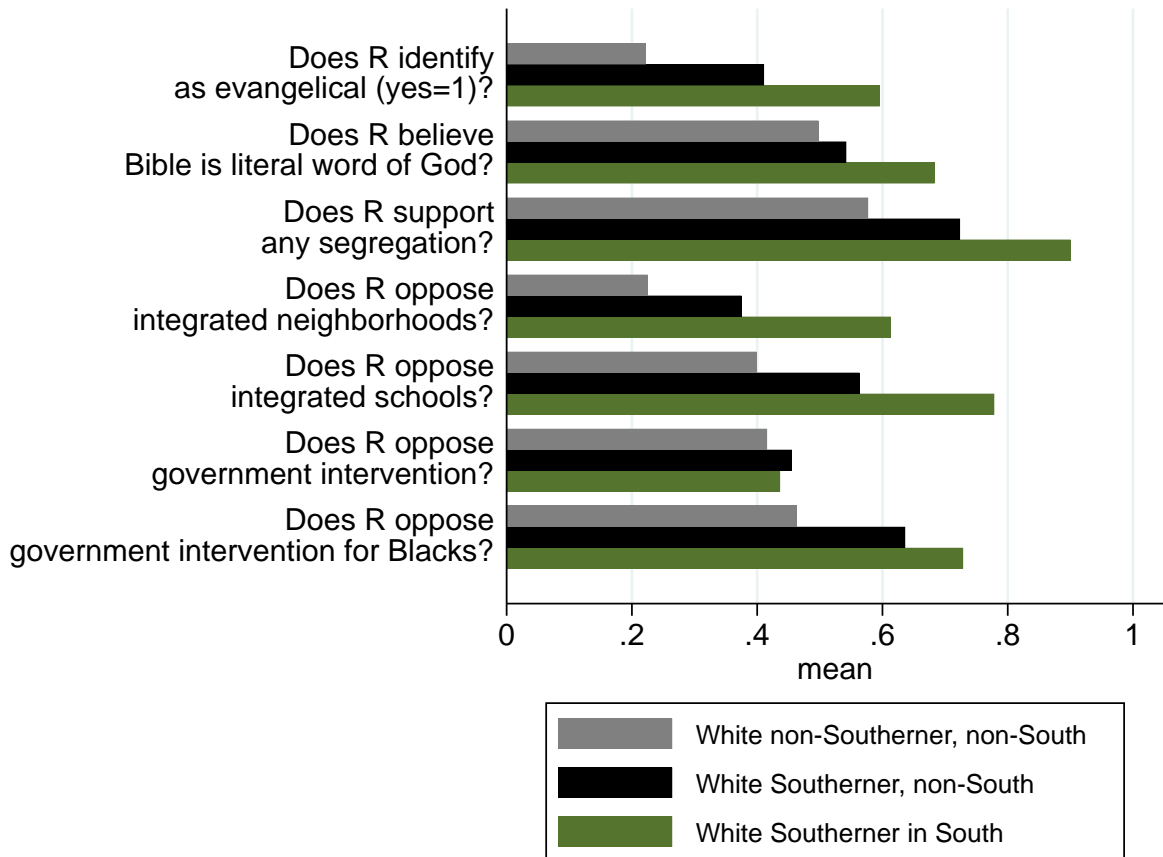
Notes: This figure maps the shares of white individuals born in the South and residing outside the South in 1870 and 1900 according to the full-count Census. The legend shows the intervals considered for each split. Note that some “Southern-born” living in West Virginia in 1870 were actually born in parts of West Virginia that had officially been Virginia prior to West Virginian statehood in 1863.

Figure A.2: Geographic Sorting of Black and Southern Whites By Location Population Density



Notes: These figures report the share of all Black and white Southern-born living outside the South across ventiles of the destination county population in (a) 1870, (b) 1900, and (c) 1940.

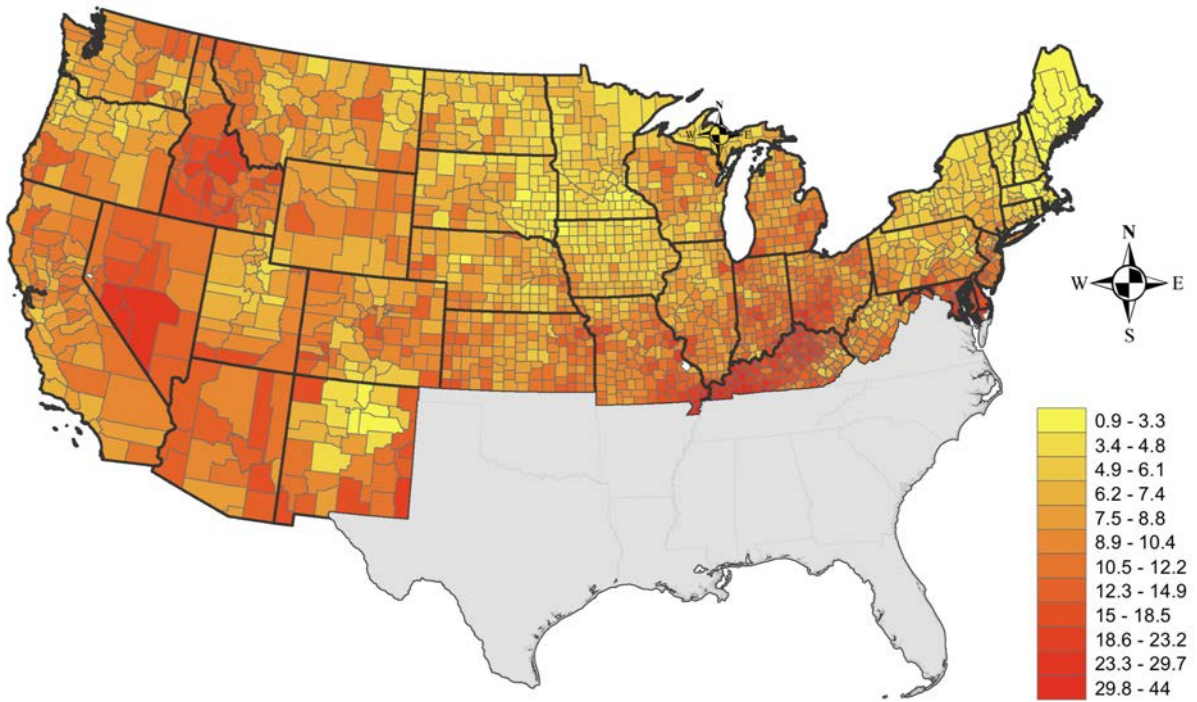
Figure A.3: Attitudes and Beliefs of Southern White Migrants



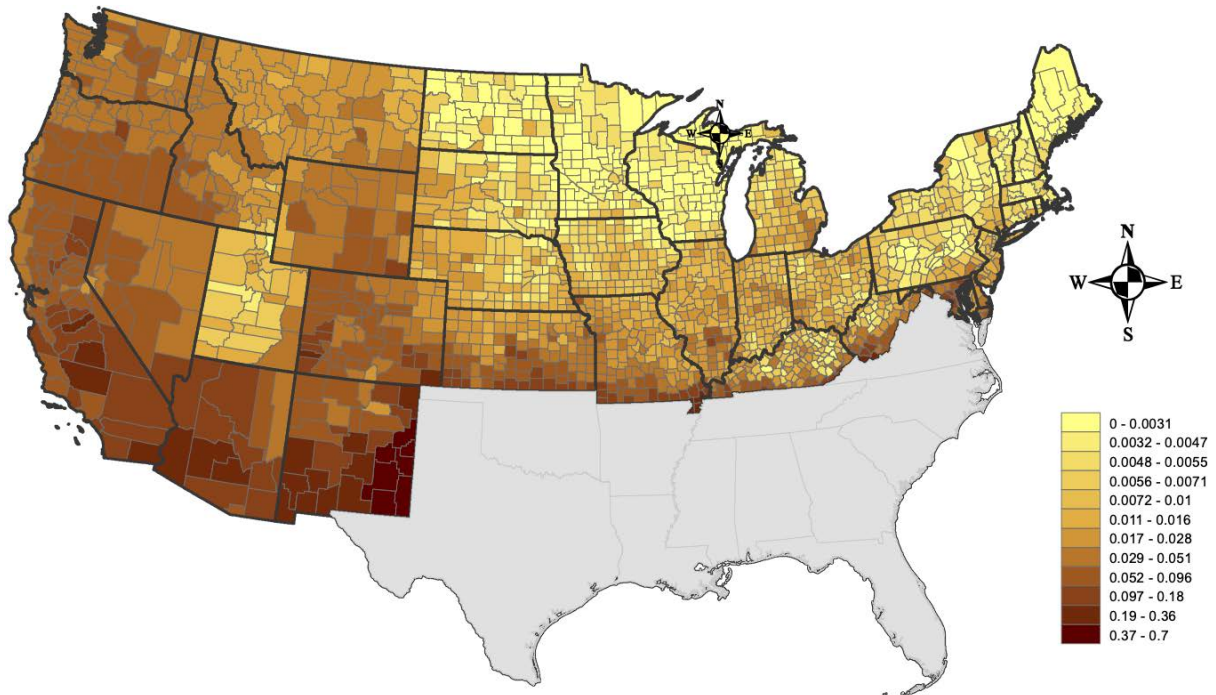
Notes: Average responses to binary-coded questions on relevant issues for white individuals from the American National Election Survey (ANES), waves through 1970. Respondents (R) are considered Southern if they were born or raised in the states of the former Confederacy as well as Oklahoma. South and non-South samples include and exclude those states, respectively.

Figure A.4: Third-party Vote for George Wallace in 1968 and Southern Whites in 1940

(a) % Wallace Votes, 1968



(b) Share of Southern-born Whites by County, 1940

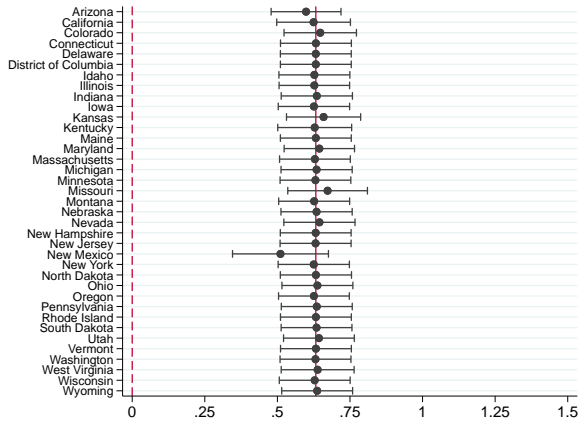


Notes: This figure maps the percent of votes for the third-party candidate, George Wallace, in 1968, as well as the share of whites born in the South and residing outside the South in 1940 according to the full-count Census. The legend shows the intervals considered for each split.

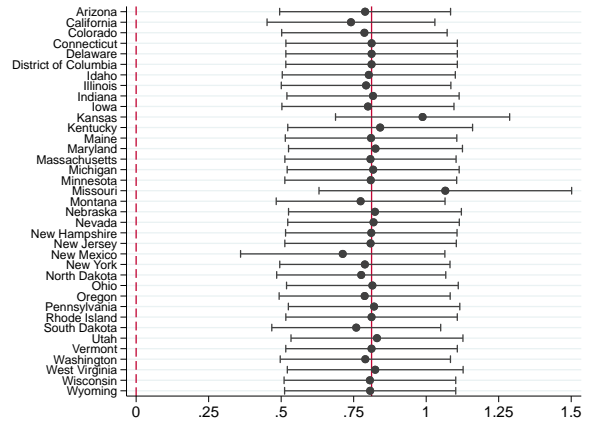
Figure A.5: Sensitivity to Sample Changes in Table 2

(i) Dropping individual receiving states in 2016

(a) OLS

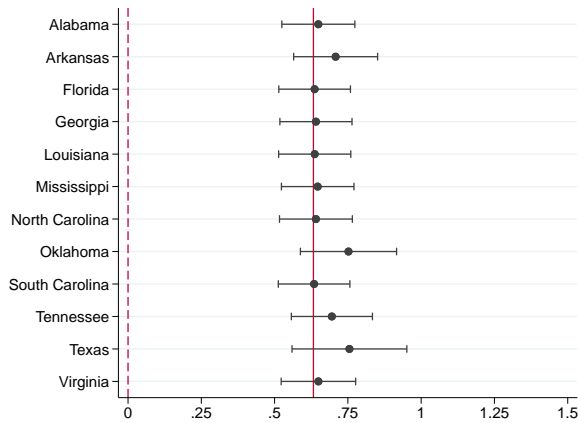


(b) IV

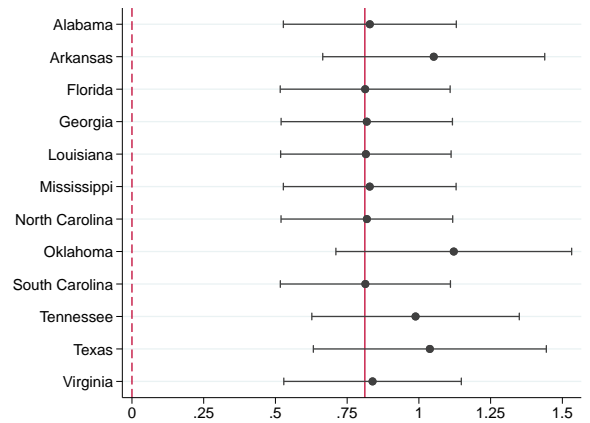


(ii) Dropping individual sending states in 1940

(c) OLS

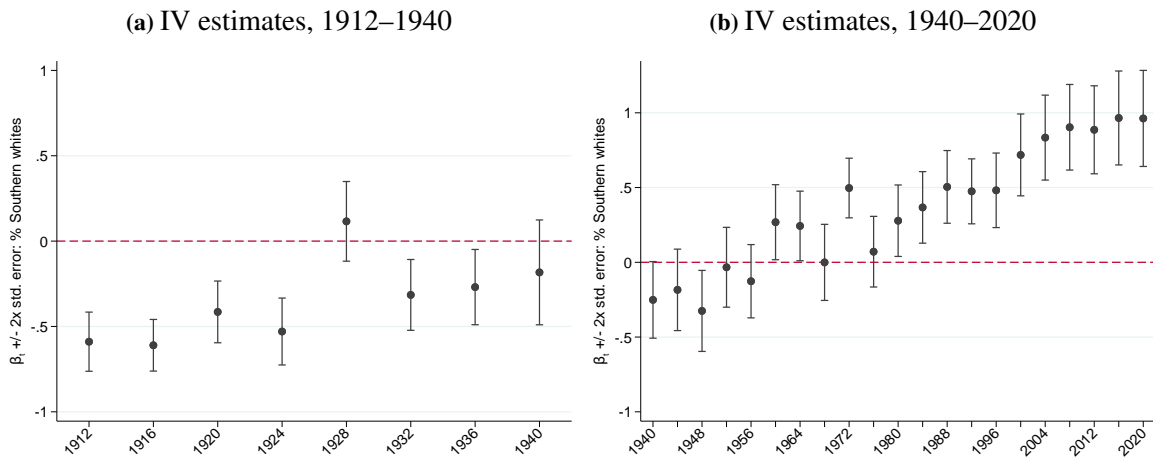


(d) IV



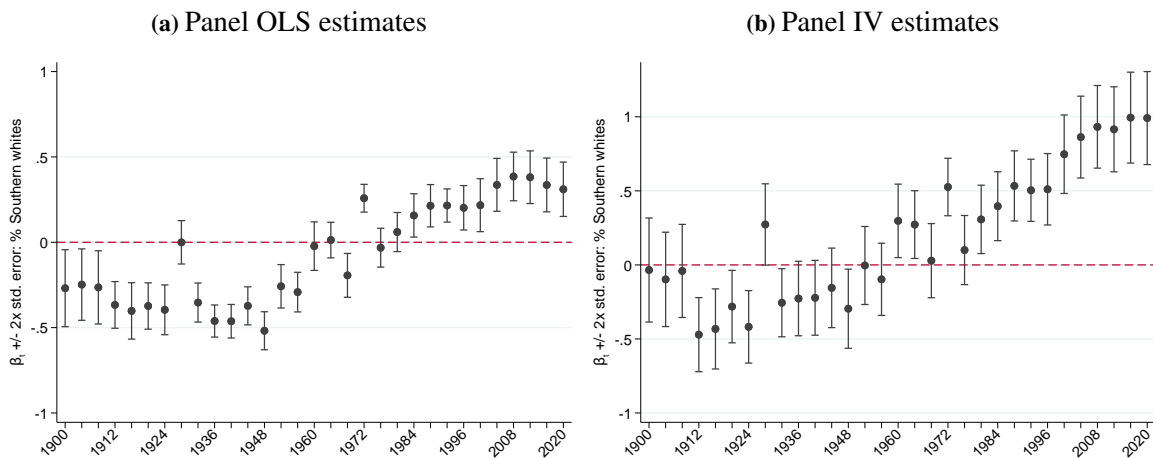
Notes: Coefficients from regressions of the vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in non-Southern counties, based on the OLS specification in column 2 of Table 2 and the IV specification in column 4 of Table 2, each of which are reported in the solid vertical red line in the respective graphs. Panel (i) excludes receiving states one-by-one where the excluded state is reported on the vertical axis. Panel (ii) excludes Southern sending states one-by-one when constructing the 1940 share of Southern-born whites living outside the South in a given non-Southern county c , with the excluded sending state reported on the vertical axis. The instrumental variables regressions instrument the share of Southern-born whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. The dashed red line marks zero. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are robust to heteroscedasticity.

Figure A.6: Republican Vote Share with Contemporaneous Migrant Shares, Extending Figure 3



Notes: Coefficients from IV regressions of vote share for the Republican candidate in 28 U.S. presidential elections between 1912 and 2020 on the shares of Southern white migrants in all non-Southern counties (a) in the nearest Census year to election year t and (b) as of 1940. The shift-share instrument in panel (a) uses 1900 as the base year, with shifts using the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 and the nearest Census of election year t . The shift-share instrument in panel (b) uses our standard shift-share for each election year t , using the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. All regressions include state \times election year fixed effects. The Southern white migrant share in 1940 and shift-share instrument are interacted with the election year fixed effect. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

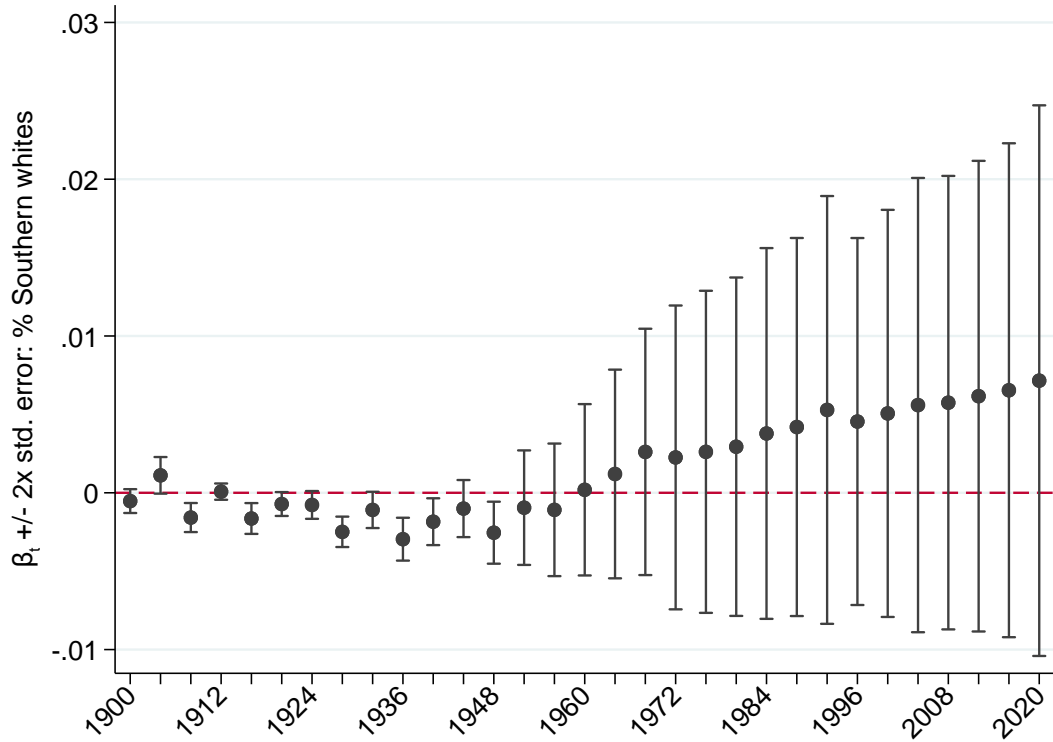
Figure A.7: Republican Vote Share without Omitted Year as in Figure 3



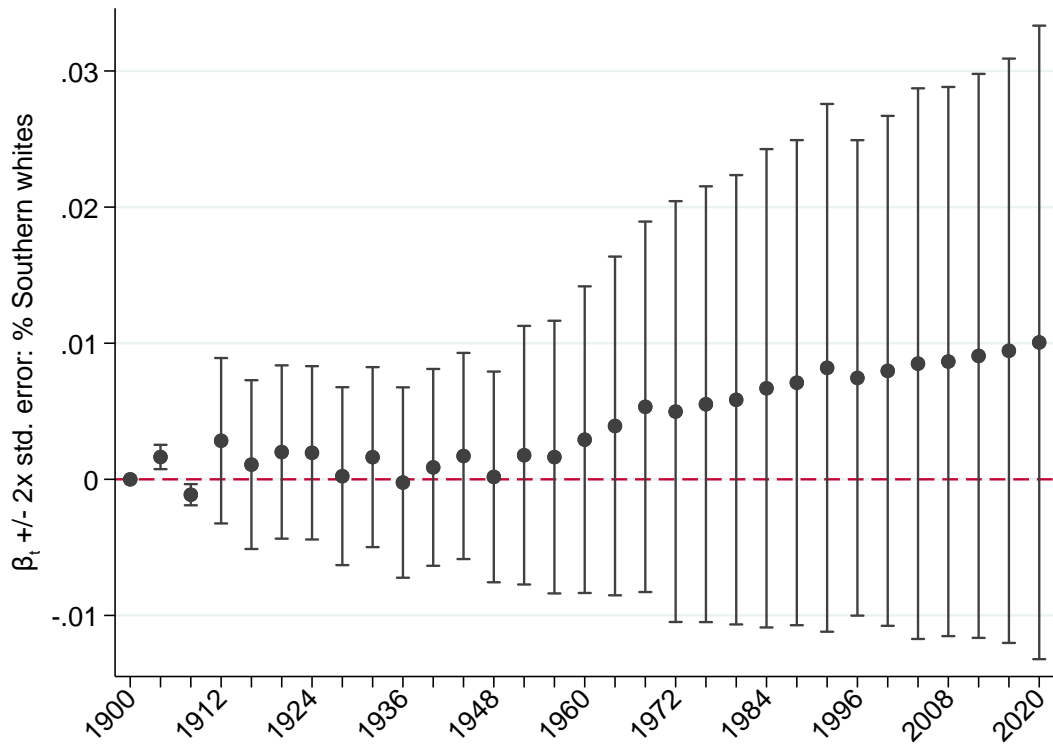
Notes: Coefficients from OLS and IV regression of vote share for the Republican candidate in 31 U.S. presidential elections between 1900 and 2020 on the shares of Southern white migrants in all non-Southern counties as of 1940. The shift-share instrument uses 1900 as the base year, with shifts using the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1900 to 1940. All regressions include state \times election year fixed effects but not county fixed effects as in Figure 3. The Southern white migrant share in 1940 and shift-share instrument are interacted with the election year fixed effect. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Figure A.8: Southern White Migrants and Voter Turnout, 1900–2020

(a) Cross-sectional estimates

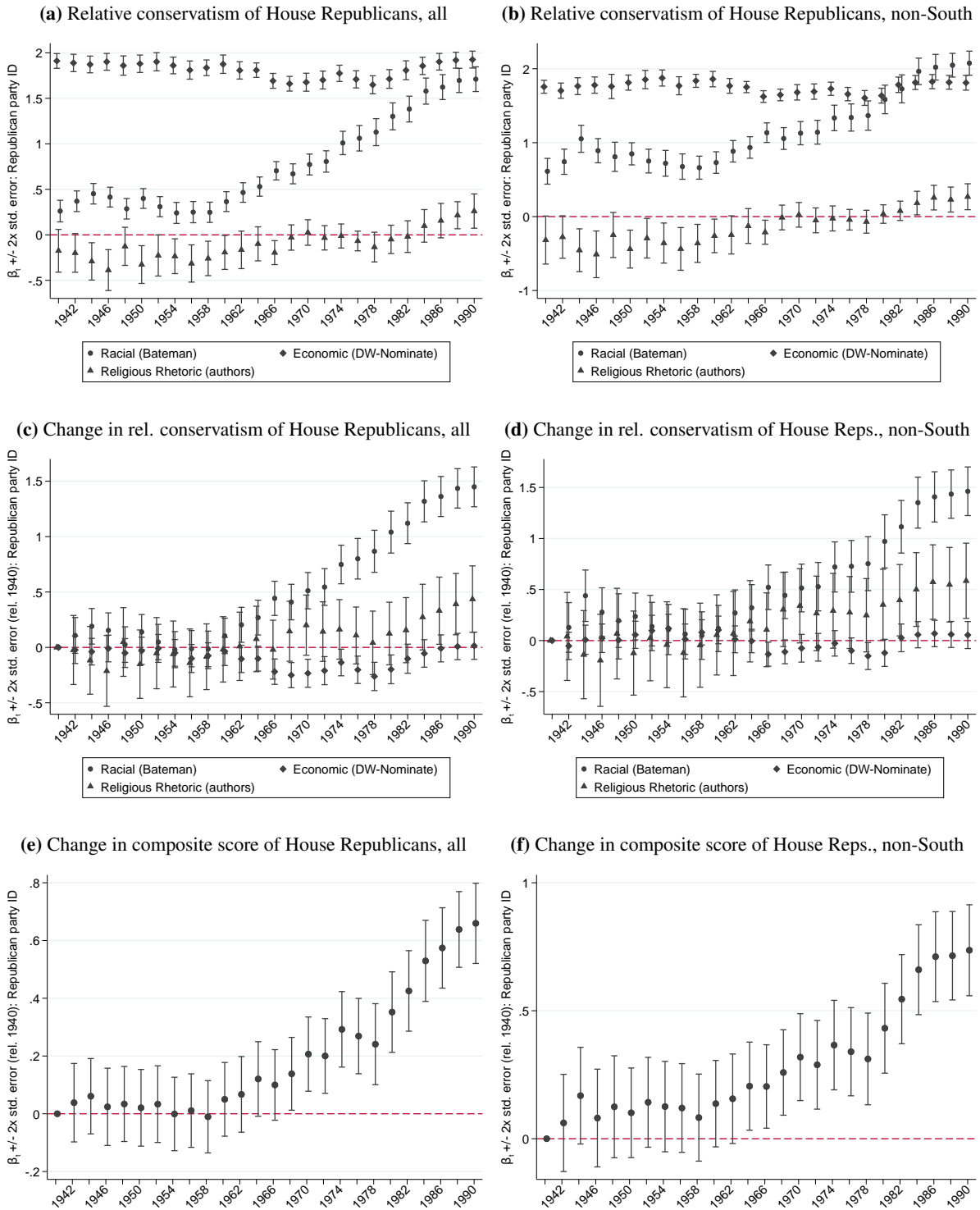


(b) Relative to 1900



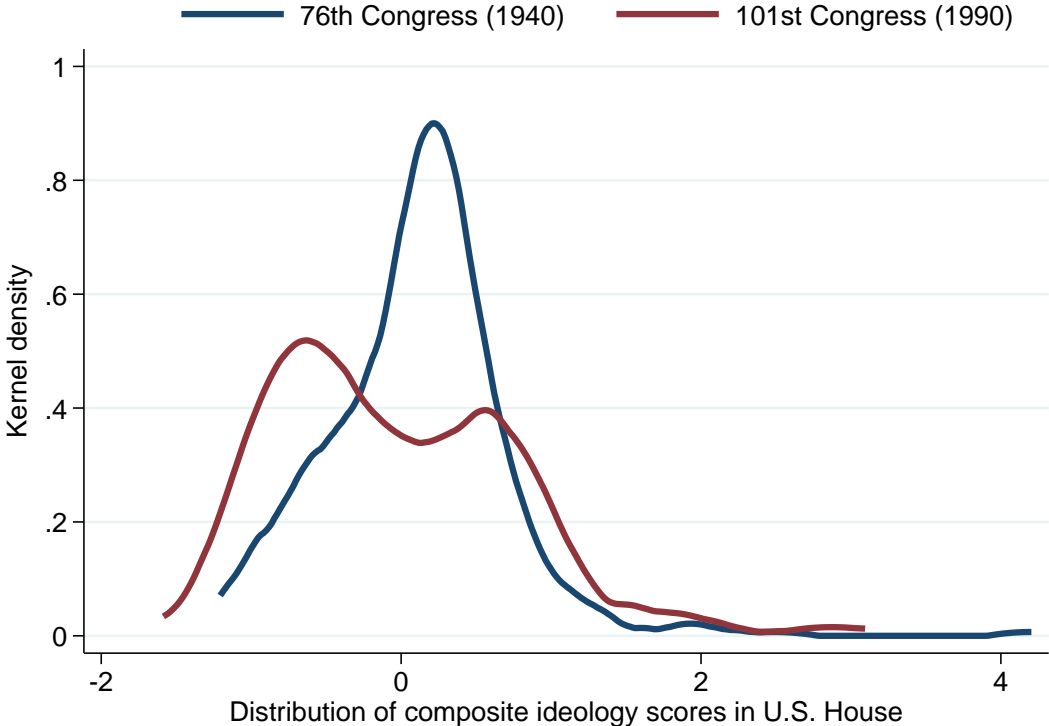
Notes: Coefficients from regressions of voter turnout between 1900 and 2020 on the share of Southern white migrants in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. Regressions include state-by-election year fixed effects and, in panel (b), county fixed effects. In panel (b), coefficients are expressed relative to the base year 1900. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Figure A.9: Emergence of the New Right “Bundle”, 1940–1990



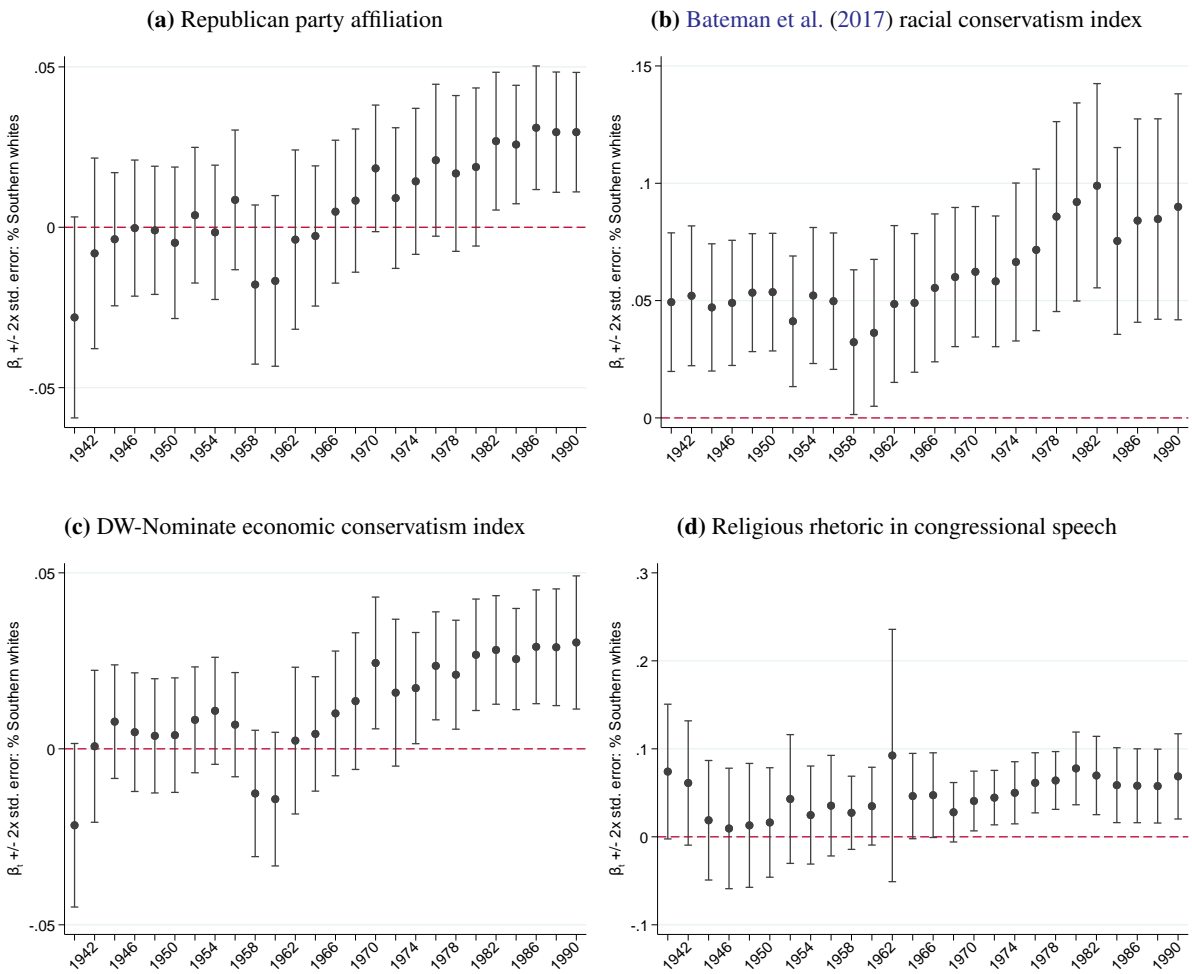
Notes: Coefficients in panels (a-d) are from pooled regressions of (i) congressional ideal points from [Bateman et al. \(2017\)](#), based on race and civil rights voting patterns, (ii) congressional ideal points from the time-varying DW-Nominate score (dimension 1) by [Lewis et al. \(2021\)](#), covering economic issues, and (iii) our relative religious rhetoric (RRI) scores on an indicator for legislator party affiliation (Republican = 1) in the U.S. House from 1940 to 1990. Coefficients represent the average difference between Republican and Democratic legislators in levels (panels a and b) and relative to differences in a base year of 1940 (panels c and d). Coefficients in panels (e-f) are from regressions of a composite score that averages the three indexes on an indicator for legislator party affiliation in the U.S. House and are relative to differences in a base year of 1940. All regressions include Congress and state fixed effects. The explanatory variable is interacted with the Congress fixed effect. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are robust to heteroscedasticity.

Figure A.10: The New Right “Bundle” and Polarization: The Changing Distribution of Ideology



Notes: Curves show the distribution of our composite scores, as featured in Figure A.9, across members of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1940 and in 1990.

Figure A.11: Southern White Migrants and Congressional Ideology, 1940–1990, Extending Figure 4



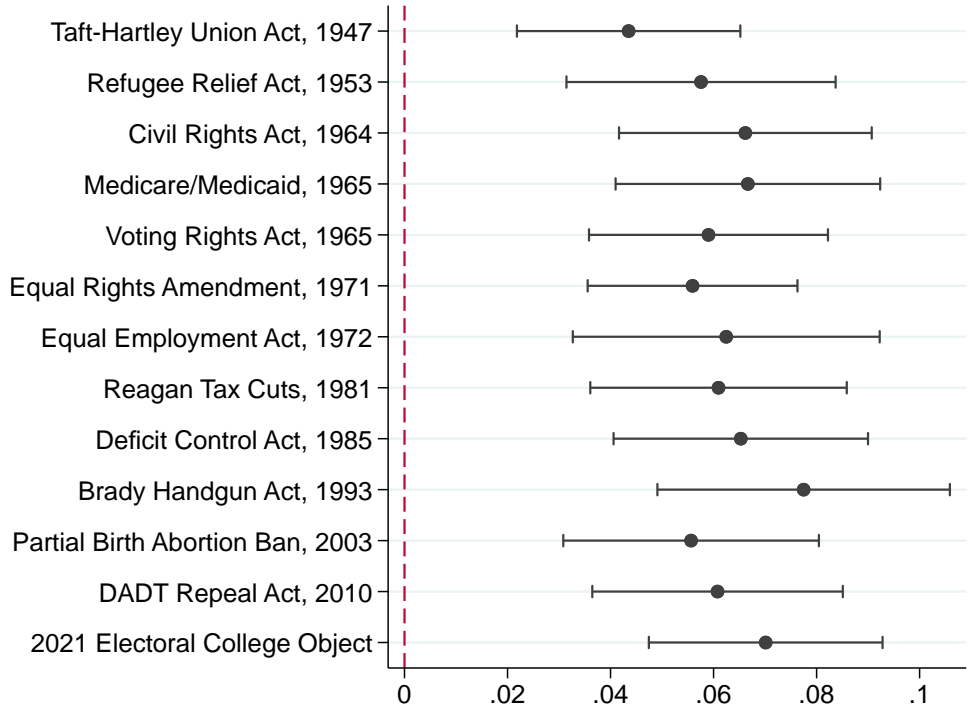
Notes: Coefficients from pooled IV regressions of an indicator for legislator party affiliation (Republican = 1) in the U.S. House from 1940 to 1990 on the share of Southern white migrants in 1940 in all non-Southern congressional districts (CDs). All regressions include Congress and state fixed effects. The Southern white migrant share in 1940 and shift-share instrument are interacted with the Congress fixed effect. Baseline controls include log population per square mile, percent employed in manufacturing, percent participating in the labor force, percent unemployed, percent of land in farms, log average farm value, percent Black, and percent born in Mexico, Germany, Ireland, Canada, and Italy, all in 1940, as well as the vote share for Woodrow Wilson in 1912, the Union Army enlistment rate during the Civil War, and the corresponding mortality rate. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are robust to heteroscedasticity.

Figure A.12: Southern White Migrants and Congressional Vote Patterns, 1947–2021

(a) Pooled IV estimates

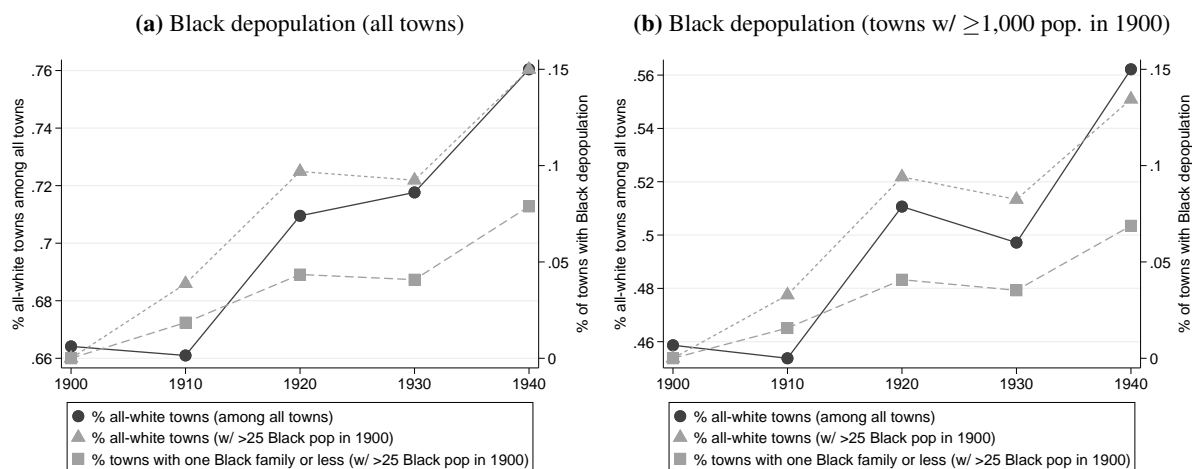


(b) Pooled IV estimates with controls



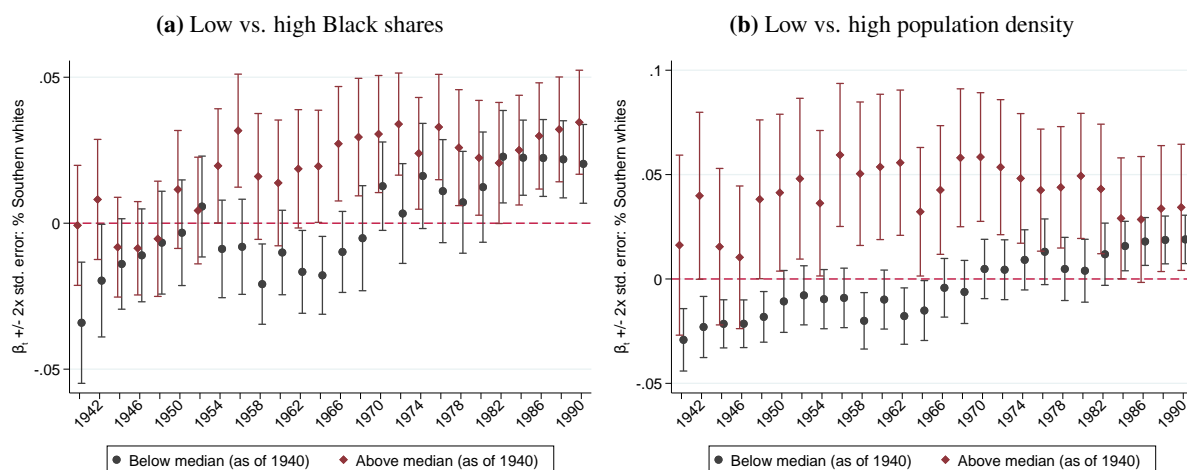
Notes: Coefficients from pooled IV regressions of an indicator for right-wing votes in roll calls for thirteen key pieces of legislation by U.S. House Representatives on the share of Southern white migrants in 1940 in all non-Southern congressional districts (CDs). The acronym DADT stands for “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell.” All regressions include bill and state fixed effects. The Southern white migrant share in 1940 and shift-share instrument are interacted with the bill fixed effect. Baseline controls include log population per square mile, percent employed in manufacturing, percent participating in the labor force, percent unemployed, percent of land in farms, log average farm value, percent Black, and percent born in Mexico, Germany, Ireland, Canada, and Italy, all in 1940, as well as the vote share for Woodrow Wilson in 1912, the Union Army enlistment rate during the Civil War, and the corresponding mortality rate. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are robust to heteroscedasticity.

Figure A.13: Visualizing the “Great Retreat”



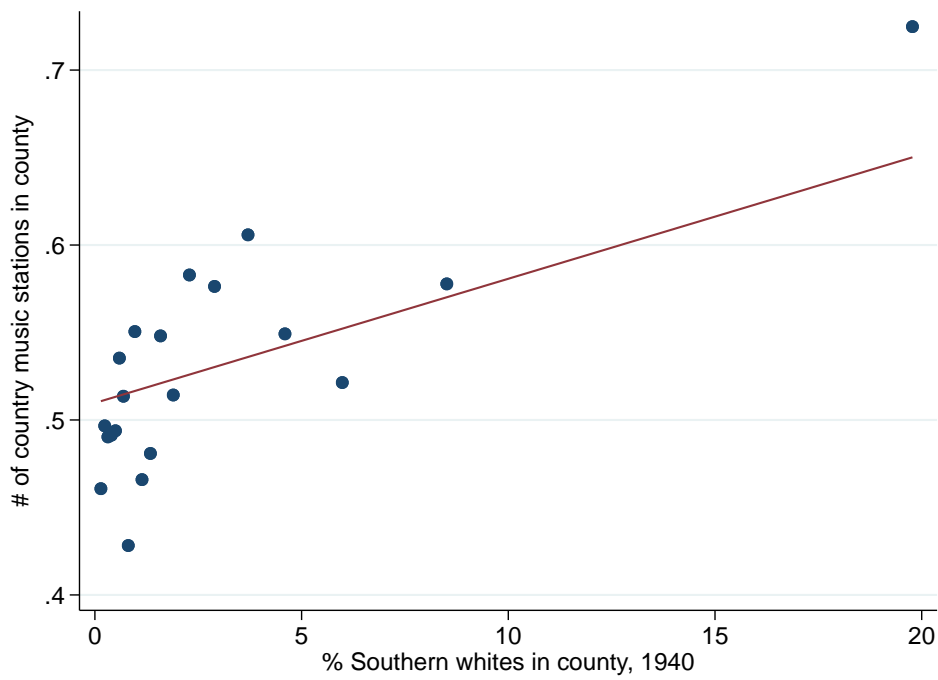
Notes: This figure shows the share of non-Southern towns with all-white populations (left y-axis), and shares of non-Southern towns that had more than 25 Black residents as of 1900 with (i) no Blacks or (ii) with one Black family or less (right y-axis). The sample in (a) consists of all towns outside the former Confederacy and Oklahoma and in (b) is limited to towns with populations of over 1,000 in 1900. For a version exploring years prior to 1900, see [Bazzi et al. \(2022b\)](#).

Figure A.14: Southern White Migrants, Blacks, and Congressional Party, 1940–1990



Notes: Coefficients from pooled regressions of an indicator for legislator party affiliation (Republican = 1) in the U.S. House from 1940 to 1990 on the share of Southern white migrants in 1940 in all non-Southern congressional districts (CDs). Regressions include Congress and state fixed effects. The Southern white migrant share in 1940 and shift-share instrument are interacted with the Congress fixed effect, which are in turn interacted with (a) above-median Black shares in 1940 and (b) above-median population density in 1940. Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. Standard errors are robust to heteroscedasticity.

Figure A.15: Southern White Migrants and Country Music Radio Stations



Notes: Binned scatter plots of the number of country music stations in a county in 2021 over the average county-level share of Southern white migrants in 1940. The sample consists of 1,888 counties outside the South, which excludes states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma, plus the District of Columbia. Southern Whites are defined as individuals who were classified as white in the U.S. Census in 1940 and who were born in a Southern state. Radio station estimates are generated from partialling out log population density in 1940. County music data comes from the websites of iHeartRadio, Cumulus, and Audacy, the top three radio companies in the United States.

B Shift-Share Identification Checks

The identifying assumption underlying our shift-share instrument is that, conditional on controls, long-run political outcomes and factors driving them must not be simultaneously correlated with the *shift* from 1900 to 1940 in the white population from Southern states to non-Southern counties (i.e., the migration shock) and with the 1900 *share* of whites from Southern states residing in each non-Southern county (i.e., predicted local shock exposure) (Borusyak et al., 2018; Goldsmith-Pinkham et al., 2020). In this section, we address this assumption at length.

Predicting Exogenous Shifts

As stated in the text, the identifying assumption underlying our instrument may be violated if shocks to non-Southern counties affected the long-run political outcomes in those counties and also triggered greater migration from Southern states that had already sent a disproportionate number of white migrants to those counties as of 1900 (see Borusyak et al., 2018). To rule out such a correlation, we construct alternative versions of the shift-share instrument where the shift part relies only on push factors in Southern sending counties. We consider two types of factors that generate outmigration in Southern counties: natural disasters and local socioeconomic characteristics.

Historical migration information is only available starting in the 1940 Census, which asked individuals about their state and county of residence five years ago. We therefore must consider a shorter shift relative to the overall migratory period spanning 1900 to 1940. However, this will not bias the results in the case of truly exogenous shifts. The backward-looking migration question is also superior to the conventionally used net-migration measure because the latter cannot distinguish between migration within the South and migration to outside the South.¹ We therefore only consider individuals who lived in a Southern county in 1935 and non-Southern county in 1940.

Data on natural disasters, including the number of tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, and other disasters (such as fires, droughts, etc.) come from Boustan et al. (2020), and data on Southern counties' socioeconomic characteristics come from the 1930 county-level Census data (Haines, 2010), as well as from the New Deal spending data compiled by Fishback and Kantor (2018). Summary statistics for the variables we consider in the prediction exercise are reported in Table B.1. We then predict the number of people who lived in a Southern county c in 1935 and who lived outside the South in 1940:

$$\text{migrants}_{c,1935-40} = \alpha + \mathbf{D}'_c \boldsymbol{\beta} + \mathbf{X}'_c \boldsymbol{\gamma} + \phi \text{population}_{1930} + \epsilon_{c,1935-40} \quad (\text{B.1})$$

where \mathbf{D}_c is the vector of natural disasters that occurred between 1930-40, and \mathbf{X}_c are the socioeconomic county characteristics measured in 1930. We predict this shift variable in five different ways: (i) OLS using natural disasters; (ii) OLS using socioeconomic characteristics; (iii) OLS using both natural disaster and socioeconomic characteristics; (iv) LASSO selecting from both sets of predictors; and (v) LASSO selecting from a flexible set of predictors where we include the squares and cross-term interactions of each predictor.

The Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator (LASSO) selects predictors based on the

¹Net migration measures are typically constructed by taking the county-level population differences between t and $t - 1$ while adding births and subtracting deaths. In the absence of measurement error, the remaining variation must be positive or negative migration to or from the county, though the destination of people who left is not known.

following minimization problem,

$$\min \sum_{c=1}^N \left(\text{migrants}_{c,1935-40} - \sum_j \pi_j K_{c,j} \right)^2 + \lambda \sum_{j=1}^p |\pi_j| \quad (\text{B.2})$$

where $K_{c,j} = \{\mathbf{D}_c, \mathbf{X}_c\}$, c indexes counties, and j indexes individual predictors. The penalty term λ has been selected by 10-fold cross validation. The penalty shrinks the coefficients of unimportant predictors to zero while keeping the significant predictors that were the most useful in predicting the outcome.² We follow [Derenoncourt \(2022\)](#) using this approach. To potentially improve the prediction by considering nonlinear transformations of the predictors and alternative functional forms, we also expand the set of predictors by including the square and cross-term interaction of each predictor with all other predictors (see [Belloni et al., 2014](#)).

Once we predicted the number of migrants from each Southern county between 1935–40, we aggregate this to the level of each Southern sending state. This state-level shift then replaces the $M_{j,1900-40}$ term in equation (2). Since we now have a shift from 1935–40, we use the initial shares measured in 1900 and, separately, use the shares measured in 1930 instead with results reported in [Tables B.3 and B.4](#), respectively. Results remain indistinguishable from those in the main specification. They tend to be slightly smaller when using the 1930 shares with a much higher first stage F-statistic, which is to be expected due to the proximity between the initial shares and the endogenous migrant stock is measured. In both tables we use the same set of controls as in the main specification.

²In our prediction exercise, the LASSO selected the number of floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters, as well as the share of Blacks in the population, the share of large farms, land in farms, and farm land with crop failures, the unemployment rate, the share of manufacturing employment, and the HOLC, CWA, AAA, and FSA grants per capita, as well as 1930 population size.

Table B.1: Summary Statistics of Predictors of Southern Outmigration from 1935-40

	Obs.	Mean	St. dev.	Min.	Max.
Migrants and Natural Disasters					
Whites who left the South, 1935-40	1,205	360.66	812.68	1	14,506
Population size in sending counties, 1930	1,205	25,782.30	34,740.93	195	458,762
Flood count	1,205	0.37	0.77	0	7
Hurricane count	1,205	0.20	0.75	0	7
Tornado count	1,205	0.73	1.08	0	6
Other disasters count	1,205	0.00	0.06	0	1
Socio-Economic County Characteristics 1930					
% Black population	1,205	25.82	21.90	0	85.83
% rural population	1,205	83.47	23.61	0	100
% of farms with 5,000+ acres (land inequality)	1,205	1.11	6.64	0	86.54
% of land in farms	1,205	58.99	24.23	0	100
% of farmland in Black farms	1,205	14.80	16.40	0	85.53
% of acres with crop failures	1,205	1.27	1.69	0	21.96
Log mean land value	1,205	7.78	0.88	0	11.25
% unemployed	1,205	2.07	1.92	0	11.32
% manufacturing employment	1,205	7.59	10.26	0	100
Home Owners Loan Corporation loans per capita	1,205	6.55	8.76	0	79.77
Works Progress Admin. grants per capita	1,205	21.16	31.38	0	917.52
Fed. Emergency Relief Admin. grants per capita	1,205	12.52	14.31	0	347.96
Civil Works Admin. grants per capita	1,205	5.06	3.08	0	23.39
Agric. Adjust. Admin. grants per capita	1,205	33.43	58.76	0	852.11
Farm Security Admin. grants per capita	1,205	0.62	1.04	0	10.46
Total relief grants per capita	1,205	41.52	39.47	0	949.11
Total grants per capita	1,205	102.17	91.41	0	1,235.74

Notes: Summary statistics for the migration, natural disaster, and socio-economic characteristics of Southern sending counties from which individuals left between 1935-40 as measured by the backward-looking migration question in the 1940 Census. These individuals, who lived outside the South in 1940, were summed to the level of their respective Southern sending county.

Table B.2: Using Natural Disasters and Sending County Characteristics to Predict Southern Outmigration to Non-Southern Counties from 1935-40

	No. Southern white migrants who left Southern county for non-South, 1935-40			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Flood count	204.612*** (54.194)		139.462*** (39.054)	143.918*** (21.163)
Hurricane count	-82.275*** (19.730)		-156.247*** (29.032)	-150.271*** (23.725)
Tornado count	70.309** (30.476)		60.458** (26.042)	64.677*** (14.891)
Other disasters count	608.361 (533.418)		406.650 (592.773)	379.961 (240.425)
Population size in sending counties, 1930	0.013*** (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.001)
% Black population		-10.465*** (1.750)	-7.413*** (1.597)	-7.707*** (0.775)
% rural population		0.469 (1.108)	0.252 (0.966)	
% of farms with 5,000+ acres (land inequality)		-5.883*** (1.578)	-4.383*** (1.514)	-4.316* (2.379)
% of land in farms		2.129*** (0.706)	0.871 (0.729)	1.176 (0.776)
% of farmland in Black farms		4.559** (2.155)	0.120 (2.133)	
% of acres with crop failures		37.854*** (9.873)	26.863*** (8.293)	31.320*** (9.625)
Log mean land value		-54.738** (21.732)	-16.676 (17.728)	
% unemployed		24.601 (15.609)	36.380*** (13.458)	39.696*** (9.855)
% manufacturing employment		-7.764*** (1.463)	-7.929*** (1.500)	-8.232*** (1.647)
Home Owners Loan Corporation loans per capita		18.945** (8.470)	18.086** (7.430)	17.198*** (2.462)
Works Progress Admin. grants per capita		-21.682*** (8.080)	-23.630*** (7.228)	
Fed. Emergency Relief Admin. grants per capita		-21.921*** (8.291)	-23.074*** (7.405)	
Civil Works Admin. grants per capita		-13.975 (11.189)	-14.120 (10.105)	13.107** (5.726)
Agric. Adjust. Admin. grants per capita		-1.228*** (0.349)	-1.041*** (0.344)	-1.378*** (0.320)
Farm Security Admin. grants per capita		84.592*** (20.237)	59.139*** (19.515)	85.553*** (18.226)
Total relief grants per capita		21.602*** (7.996)	23.317*** (7.154)	
Total grants per capita		-0.307 (0.241)	-0.175 (0.225)	
Estimator	OLS	OLS	OLS	LASSO
Natural disasters	Yes		Yes	Yes
1930 county characteristics		Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,205	1,205	1,205	1,205
Outcome mean	360.7	360.7	360.7	360.7
Adjusted R ²	0.45	0.55	0.59	0.59

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B.3: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and the 2016 Trump Vote Share, IV Based on 1900 Shares and Plausibly Exogenous Predicted Shifts from 1935-40

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share in 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites 1940	0.714*** (0.094)	0.708*** (0.089)	0.728*** (0.097)	0.726*** (0.096)	0.725*** (0.095)	0.723*** (0.096)
Estimator	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
Shift	Actual	Predicted	Predicted	Predicted	Predicted	Predicted
Predictors	–	Nat. Disast.	Econ.	Disast. + Econ.	LASSO	LASSO + Sq.
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6
First Stage F statistic	88.5	79.1	69.4	73.0	73.2	77.0

Notes: Instrumental variables regressions of the vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. The share of Southern-born whites in 1940 is instrumented using a shift-share instrument based on the **1900 cross-sectional distribution** of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1935 to 1940 using the backward looking migration question from the 1940 full-count Census. This aggregate change (shift) is constructed as follows: column 1 uses the raw shift computed from the backward looking migration question in 1940. Column 2 predicts the shift using data on **natural disasters** in the sending county between 1930-40. Column 3 predicts the shift using **economic characteristics** of the sending county in 1930. Column 4 uses both natural disasters and socio-economic county characteristics (these are described in Tables B.1 and B.2). Column 5 uses the Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator (**LASSO**) to select predictors from the natural disasters and county variables to predict the shift. Column 6 also uses the LASSO but includes the squared terms and cross-term interactions for all predictors from the natural disasters and county variables for a more flexible prediction. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Baseline controls are the same as those described under Table 2. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B.4: Southern White Migrants in 1940 and the 2016 Trump Vote Share, IV Based on 1930 Shares and Plausibly Exogenous Predicted Shifts from 1935-40

	Dependent Variable: Trump Vote Share in 2016					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
% Southern Whites 1940	0.677*** (0.073)	0.671*** (0.069)	0.685*** (0.075)	0.684*** (0.074)	0.683*** (0.073)	0.683*** (0.074)
Estimator	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
Shift	Actual	Predicted	Predicted	Predicted	Predicted	Predicted
Predictors	–	Nat. Disast.	Econ.	Disast. + Econ.	LASSO	LASSO + Sq.
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886	1,886
Outcome mean	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6	62.6
First Stage F statistic	860.3	750.1	389.5	485.7	471.9	615.1

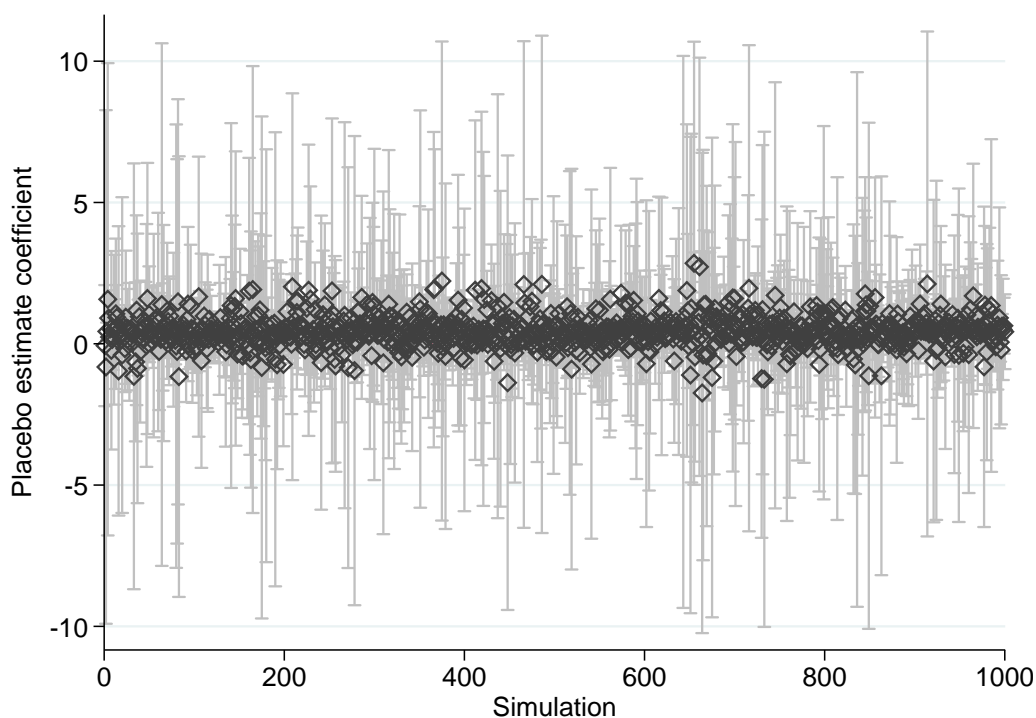
Notes: Instrumental variables regressions of the vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. The share of Southern-born whites in 1940 is instrumented using a shift-share instrument based on the **1930 cross-sectional distribution** of Southern-born whites and the aggregate change in Southern white population living outside the South from 1935 to 1940 using the backward looking migration question from the 1940 full-count Census. This aggregate change (shift) is constructed as follows: column 1 uses the raw shift computed from the backward looking migration question in 1940. Column 2 predicts the shift using data on **natural disasters** in the sending county between 1930-40. Column 3 predicts the shift using **economic characteristics** of the sending county in 1930. Column 4 uses both natural disasters and socio-economic county characteristics (these are described in Tables B.1 and B.2). Column 5 uses the Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator (**LASSO**) to select predictors from the natural disasters and county variables to predict the shift. Column 6 also uses the LASSO but includes the squared terms and cross-term interactions for all predictors from the natural disasters and county variables for a more flexible prediction. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Baseline controls are the same as those described under Table 2. All regressions include state fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Random Shifts and Inference

This finding naturally raises another question: are the results driven by the shares only? Perhaps exposure to the shift shocks is highly correlated across destination counties? To test this, we simulate 1,000 normally distributed random shifts with mean zero and variance five as in [Adao et al. \(2019\)](#). In each trial, we construct the instrument using this random shift, which replaces the $M_{j,1900-40}$ term in equation (2). If the shifts do not matter and the results are purely driven by the 1900 shares, for instance due to persistent spatial autocorrelation, then we would expect to find similar but slightly attenuated results compared to the baseline. The estimates resulting from these placebo instruments are statistically significant (positive or negative) at the 5 percent level 11.7% of the time (compared to 16.1% in [Derenoncourt \(2022\)](#) and 55% in [Adao et al. \(2019\)](#)). Significance at the 1 percent level is achieved just 4.7% of the time. If we include our full set of controls from [Table A.2](#), this drops further to 7.8% significant at the 5 percent level and to 2% significant at the 1 percent level. Overall, this suggests that the baseline shares do require meaningful shifts and that effects are not merely driven by spatial noise. A coefficient plot of 1,000 placebo shift-share IV regressions is shown in [Figure B.1](#).

We also apply the standard error correction for shift-share designs proposed by [Adao et al. \(2019\)](#). Estimates remain statistically significant at the 1% level across our baseline specifications. This can be found in [Table A.1](#).

Figure B.1: SSIV Using Random Placebo Shifts



Notes: Instrumental variables regressions of the vote share for Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election on the share of Southern-born whites in 1940 in all non-Southern counties. The share of Southern-born whites in 1940 is instrumented using a shift-share instrument based on the 1900 cross-sectional distribution of Southern-born whites and a **randomly generated shift**. The random shift was generated based on a normal distribution with mean zero and variance five as in [Adao et al. \(2019\)](#). The figure shows the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals from instrumental variables regressions where the instrument was generated with 1,000 random shifts. Regressions include the set of controls from [Table 2](#) and assume robust standard errors.

C Characteristics of Southern White Migrants

What characterizes Southern white migrants? To shed light on this question, we compare the characteristics of a linked sample of Southern white migrants between 1930 to 1940. We use the 1930 and 1940 full-count Census files together with the crosswalks provided by [Abramitzky et al. \(2020\)](#). Using information on individuals' migration status in the 1940 Census, we then compare the characteristics of individuals who stayed in the South in both years. This allows us to see whether (i) the baseline characteristics of later movers and stayers were different in 1930, and (ii) movers realized greater economic status after moving relative to those who remained in the South.

Table [C.1](#) reports the 1930 mean differences for the Southerners who would later migrate or stay in the South. In 1930, those who would become migrants in the next ten years tended to be single, younger, more urban, and more literate. They were also more likely to have had a radio in their household in 1930, a potential information transmission device to learn about opportunities outside the South. They tended to be employed at a lesser rate with lower occupational income scores, although this to some extent reflects the 3 year age difference on average. Despite the many reasons for which Southern white migrants migrated at the time, these baseline characteristics are similar to the ones described by [Gregory \(2005\)](#) and [Collins and Wanamaker \(2015\)](#).

When we look at the same individuals again in 1940, comparing movers to stayers, movers tended to fare better in terms of their economic outcomes. Again, they are more likely to live in an urban area, have higher house values, and this time they also have a higher employment probability as well as increased occupational income scores compared to those who remained in the South.

We then regress the migrant dummy on 1930 individual characteristics to see how strong their conditional explanatory power is in the determination of the migration outcome. The regressions are reported in Table [C.2](#). Despite their statistical significance, all coefficients are relatively small with the 2.8 to 3 p.p. coefficient on literacy being the largest predictor. In terms of explanatory power, individual characteristics appear to explain little of the migration decision. The adjusted R^2 of 0.01 in column 1 compares to the values of 0.03 and 0.04 in columns 2 and 3, where we included state and county fixed effects, respectively. Overall, this resonates with [Collins and Wanamaker \(2015, p. 950\)](#), who find that “differences between migrants and non-migrants were small within race categories.”

Table C.1: Comparing Southern White Migrants and Stayers Using Linked Census Data, 1930-40

	(a) Southern Movers and Stayers Pre-Migration (1930)					
	Mean(Migrants)	No. migrants	Mean(Stayers)	No. stayers	Diff.	Std. Error
Urban = 1	0.330	76,356	0.310	2,579,869	0.020***	0.002
Farm = 1	0.438	76,356	0.470	2,579,869	-0.032***	0.002
Value of home	1033.529	74,457	1100.162	2,531,653	-66.633**	33.379
Owens radio	0.196	76,356	0.181	2,579,869	0.015***	0.001
Family size	5.406	76,356	5.436	2,579,869	-0.030***	0.009
No. of children	0.521	76,356	0.804	2,579,869	-0.282***	0.005
Age	19.242	76,356	22.504	2,579,869	-3.262***	0.048
Single = 1	0.715	76,356	0.619	2,579,869	0.097***	0.002
Literate = 1	0.767	76,356	0.681	2,579,869	0.086***	0.002
Employed = 1	0.431	76,356	0.498	2,579,869	-0.068***	0.002
Occ. income score	7.752	76,356	9.407	2,579,869	-1.654***	0.044

	(b) Southern Movers and Stayers Post-Migration (1940)					
	Mean(Migrants)	No. migrants	Mean(Stayers)	No. stayers	Diff.	Std. Error
Urban = 1	0.498	77,329	0.337	2,586,984	0.161***	0.002
Farm = 1	0.190	77,329	0.428	2,586,984	-0.237***	0.001
Value of home	2601.318	13,314	2197.865	1,235,007	403.454***	42.914
Family size	3.603	77,329	4.700	2,586,984	-1.097***	0.009
No. of children	0.756	77,329	0.956	2,586,984	-0.200***	0.005
Age	29.253	77,329	32.480	2,586,984	-3.227***	0.048
Single = 1	0.444	77,329	0.437	2,586,984	0.007***	0.002
Literate = 1	0.763	77,329	0.676	2,586,984	0.087***	0.002
Employed = 1	0.687	77,329	0.662	2,586,984	0.026***	0.002
Occ. income score	17.234	77,329	15.497	2,586,984	1.737***	0.048

Notes: Summary statistics for Southern migrants and stayers in 1930 and 1940 using linked individual data from the 1930 and 1940 full-count Census files. A stayer is someone who lived in the South in 1930 and still lived there in 1940, whereas a migrant here is characterized as someone who lived in the South in 1930 but who lived outside the South in 1940. For each variable, we report the mean value and number of observations by group as well as the result from a univariate *t*-test across the two groups for which we adjusted standard errors for the unequal group sizes. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table C.2: Regressing Migration Status on 1930 Observables using Linked Census Data

	Pr(Migrated to Outside the South between 1930-40) = 1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Urban = 1	-0.0002 (0.0003)	0.0001 (0.0003)	0.0011*** (0.0003)
Farm = 1	-0.0018*** (0.0003)	-0.0053*** (0.0003)	-0.0045*** (0.0003)
Home owner = 1	-0.0097*** (0.0003)	-0.0067*** (0.0003)	-0.0075*** (0.0003)
Log house value	0.0000 (0.0001)	-0.0003*** (0.0001)	-0.0002*** (0.0001)
Owns radio	0.0038*** (0.0003)	0.0001 (0.0003)	-0.0003 (0.0003)
Family size	-0.0006*** (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)	0.0000 (0.0001)
No. of children	0.0000 (0.0001)	-0.0000 (0.0001)	-0.0001 (0.0001)
Age	-0.0005*** (0.0000)	-0.0004*** (0.0000)	-0.0004*** (0.0000)
Single = 1	0.0055*** (0.0004)	0.0069*** (0.0004)	0.0074*** (0.0004)
Literate = 1	0.0304*** (0.0003)	0.0284*** (0.0003)	0.0281*** (0.0003)
Employed = 1	-0.0076*** (0.0003)	-0.0044*** (0.0003)	-0.0033*** (0.0003)
Occ. income score	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)
State FE		Yes	
County FE			Yes
Observations	2,606,110	2,606,110	2,606,110
Outcome mean	0.03	0.03	0.03
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.03	0.04

Notes: Cross-sectional regression of a dummy for future outmigration from the South on individual characteristics in 1930. A stayer is someone who lived in the South in 1930 and still lived there in 1940, whereas a migrant here is characterized as someone who lived in the South in 1930 but who lived outside the South in 1940. The information on later non-Southern residency was obtained by linking the 1930 to the 1940 Census. Significance levels are denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

D Data Appendix

Table D.1: Summary Statistics for County-level Controls, Historical

	Obs.	Mean	St. dev.	Min.	Max.
Baseline controls					
Log population density (1940)	1,889	3.27	1.55	-1.62	11.31
% manufacturing employment (1940)	1,889	2.95	3.97	0	44.36
% unemployment (1940)	1,889	3.09	1.46	0.16	12.39
% labor force participation (1940)	1,889	37.12	3.70	25.41	54.22
% Black residents (1940)	1,889	1.67	4.15	0	46.55
% Mexican-born (1940)	1,889	0.18	0.86	0	18.50
% German-born (1940)	1,889	0.79	0.83	0	6.03
% Canadian-born (1940)	1,889	0.64	1.34	0	15.19
% Irish-born (1940)	1,889	0.17	0.34	0	4.51
% Italian-born (1940)	1,889	0.42	0.94	0	6.81
% acres of land in farms (1940)	1,889	67.72	28.74	0	100
Log mean farm value (1940)	1,887	8.74	0.68	6.54	11.42
% vote share for Wilson (1912)	1,889	39.04	11.06	0	80.20
% Union Army enlistment (1861-65)	1,889	22.56	27.55	0	100
% Civil War deaths (1861-65)	1,889	2.84	4.73	0	87.50
1900 controls					
Log population density (1900)	1,889	2.93	1.62	0	10.35
% manufacturing empl. (1900)	1,889	3.23	4.35	0	34.51
% Black residents (1900)	1,889	2.19	5.57	0	54.63
% Mexican-born (1900)	1,889	0.19	1.84	0	42.27
% German-born (1900)	1,889	3.10	3.26	0	21.86
% Canadian-born (1900)	1,889	1.83	3.51	0	37.29
% Irish-born (1900)	1,889	1.15	1.40	0	12.01
% Italian-born (1900)	1,889	0.34	0.86	0	8.61
% acres of land in farms (1900)	1,889	62.27	35.49	0	100
Log mean farm value (1900)	1,889	7.74	0.99	0	10.56
Sorting controls					
% vote share for Breckinridge (1860)	1,889	7.69	15.02	0	79.81
% vote share for Jennings Bryan (1896)	1,889	44.87	20.11	0	98.10
Dummy for missing Breckinridge vote	1,889	0.41	0.49	0	1
Dummy for missing Jennings Bryan vote	1,889	0.04	0.20	0	1
County unincorporated in 1860	1,889	0.17	0.38	0	1
Unsettled in 1860 (<2 pop per sq. mile)	1,889	0.33	0.47	0	1
Any major oil fields, 1900	1,888	0.09	0.28	0	1
Any major oil fields, 1940	1,888	0.23	0.42	0	1
Any mines	1,888	0.26	0.44	0	1
Cotton potential	1,887	0.19	0.26	0	0.74
Agricultural potential	1,889	0.41	0.18	0	0.63
Distance to nearest coast (log)	1,889	13.16	1.28	4.76	14.29
Distance to nearest river (log)	1,889	10.23	1.14	0.24	12.55
Mean elevation	1,887	563.80	587.17	-1259.14	3502
Mean ruggedness	1,889	0.07	0.09	0	0.57

Boundary Harmonization

For county-level data, all boundaries are standardized in GIS software to 2010 boundaries, following the procedure introduced in [Hornbeck \(2010\)](#) and expanded upon in [Perlman \(2021\)](#) and [Ferrara et al. \(2021\)](#) in order to consistently match them with census data and to avoid issues of the merging or splitting of counties over time.

This process involves creating unique units (henceforth county parts), based on where historical and 2010 counties intersect. Areas in square miles are calculated for each county part. A share of each historical count variable being interpolated is assigned to each county based on the county part's share of the total area of the historical county in which it lies. These approximated counts are then summed by 2010 county.

For the 1952 and 1971 religious censuses from [The Association of Religious Data Archives \(2021\)](#), county boundaries are first determined using the Atlas of Historical County Boundaries to modify the Tiger/Line county boundaries from the U.S. Census Bureau.¹

For congressional district (CD) level data, county-level data are harmonized to the boundaries of the particular CD-year. However, in contrast to our county-level analyses, we do not harmonize CD boundaries to any particular CD boundary standard, given the numerous and complex changes in CD boundaries and to the number of CDs within states over time. For instance, over a third of sample states have at-large (i.e., statewide) CDs at some point during the sample period, often for only a few years. As an example, only 14 of the CDs in the 1960s (i.e., around 5%) have time-invariant boundaries over those five congresses, excluding at-large CDs. As such, we eschew within-district analysis for our CD-level results. We instead opt to use state-level fixed effects to capture time-invariant unobservables.

Constructing the Religious Rhetoric Index (RRI)

To construct our religious rhetoric index, we analyze the universe of congressional speech data and identify words with inarguable Biblical roots: God, Christ, lord, almighty, amen. For the period of study of our CD analysis (1940–90), we count the total number of instances in which a given legislator (identified using their ICPSR code) used any of these words and divide it by their total word count. This produces a time-invariant religious rhetoric measure for each legislator. We opt not to construct a time-varying measure, as there are often too few religious words being spoken in any given Congress year. This nonetheless lets us examine how the composition of Congress changes, with respect to the rhetorical religiosity of legislators, as legislator replacement occurs, similar to [Bateman et al. \(2017\)](#). In our analysis, we adopt a standard normal redistribution of this measure as our primary religious rhetoric index (RRI).

¹See <https://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/> (last accessed on Dec. 1, 2020).