HISTORICAL LYNCHINGS AND THE CONTEMPORARY VOTING BEHAVIOR OF BLACKS

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Abstract

Cultural beliefs of a group, shaped by historical events, can impact a variety of behaviors of future generations with economic implications ranging from labor force participation to political activity. I analyze the extent to which the political participation of blacks can be traced to historical lynchings that took place between 1882 and 1930 in the same counties. Using county-level voter registration data, I show that blacks who reside in southern counties that experienced a relatively higher number of historical lynchings have lower voter registration rates today. This relationship holds after accounting for a variety of historical and contemporary characteristics of counties. Examining individual-level data shows that blacks who reside in counties with more historical lynchings are less likely to vote compared to their white counterparts. Lynchings have no impact on voting differences between other minority groups and whites. (*JEL* J15, Z10)

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"A lynching is much more than just a murder. A murder may occur in private. A lynching is a public spectacle; it demands an audience...A lynching is a majority's way of telling a minority population that the law cannot protect it."

- Aatish Taseer, *Anatomy of a Lynching* (2017)

I Introduction

Voting is one of the most fundamental ways in which citizens participate in the democratic process. While the rational-choice theory of voting posits that individuals have little incentive to vote in large elections given that their vote is unlikely to be pivotal in the outcome (Downs 1957), high turnout of like-minded individuals allows for greater political representation of citizens' interests (Akee, Copeland, Costello, Holbein & Simeonova 2018, Atkinson & Fowler 2014). Despite this fact, the United States has had a long history of low voter turnout that ranks in the bottom third of worldwide turnout (Akee et al. 2018).

Examining voter turnout by race reveals that low voter turnout among blacks is commonplace in many elections in the United States. Considering that blacks are underrepresented in voting, thereby causing their interests to be underrepresented in American public policy, many researchers have sought to understand explanations for low voting activity among blacks. For example, it has been argued that high incarceration rates of blacks is one factor that lowers black voting activity (Hirsch, Dietrich, Landau, Schneider, Ackelsberg, Bernstein-Baker & Hohenstein 2002, Pettit & Western 2004, Uggen & Manza 2002). Similarly, it has also been argued that blacks have lower voter propensities because of lack of interest in politics for a variety of reasons. I build on the lack of interest school of thought by exploring the persistence of cultural voting norms in a setting which experienced violent events in the past - the American South.

In this paper, I examine whether historical racial animus continues to influence the behavior of blacks. Using historical lynchings, the most extreme indicator of racial violence, to proxy racial animus I test whether there exists a link between historical lynchings and a proxy for the degree to which blacks feels connected to society - the contemporary political participation of blacks.[1] Considering that historical lynch-

[1]Recent findings have argued that violence in political settings can create mistrust in the government which may cause individuals to avoid the political process (Blanco 2013, Jones, Troesken & Walsh 2017). Jones et al. (2017) also states that lynchings can be viewed as a general indicator of the extent to which a county is able to inflict violence of blacks in various setting including politics. When viewed as a general indicator of violence, Jones et al. (2017) proposes that lynchings would have a "*persistent and lasting effect on voter turnout*".

ings were mechanisms for social control that discouraged a variety of activities among blacks including voting (Cook, Logan & Parman 2017, Dickerson 2003) and recent findings of habit-formation and norm-based voting (DellaVigna, List, Malmendier & Rao 2016, Gerber, Green & Shachar 2003, Fujiwara, Meng & Vogl 2016) the emergence of cultural norms about the "right" thing to do to avert racial animus may have caused blacks to avoid voting.[2] These norms may have persisted by being transmitted to subsequent generations.

To investigate whether a proxy for historical racial animus continues to influence the political participation of blacks, I combine county-level lynching data with contemporary voter registration data. After accounting for a variety of historical and contemporary characteristics of counties, the results show that blacks who reside in counties that were exposed to a relatively higher number of lynchings from 1882 to 1930 have lower voter registration rates today. Motivated by the possibility that this negative relationship may be due to Republican party dominance in southern states, high incarceration rates of blacks, the paucity of polling places in counties, and institutional structures that remained after slavery, the analysis includes an additional specification that accounts for these potential mechanisms. The results remain virtually unchanged after the inclusion of these potential confounders.

An alternative explanation for the relationship between historical lynchings and the voting behavior of blacks is that geographic sorting during the Great Migration may have caused blacks with higher voting propensities to migrate away from violent southern areas while blacks who were less likely to participate in voting remained. Using data from the 1940 100% IPUMS-USA, I examine whether black migrants out of (and into) southern counties with higher lynching rates differ from individuals who did not migrate from these counties. I find no evidence of geographic sorting as a function of lynching rates which suggests that the relationship between lynchings and voting behavior of blacks is not explained by sorting.

Alternatively, counties with a relatively higher number of historical lynchings may have contemporary barriers that suppress the voting of blacks. For example, if counties that experienced more historical lynchings also have fewer polling places in areas where blacks live today, then the results may be an artifact of this phenomenon. To understand whether the paucity of polling places in black areas explains the relationship

[2]DellaVigna et al. (2016) find that individuals are motivated to vote due to the social image received from family and friends. Gerber et al. (2003) and Fujiwara et al. (2016) show that voting is a habitual act based on previous voting conditions and experiences.

between lynchings and the voting behavior of blacks, I use data on polling locations.[3] I find no evidence that counties with a relatively higher number of historical lynchings have fewer polling places in areas where blacks reside.

Considering that lynchings can be viewed as a proxy of historical racial animus and are a general indicator of the violence used to maintain social order in various activities (Jones et al. 2017), I examine whether these violent acts predict additional outcomes of blacks, outside of political participation. For example, if lynchings were a by-product of a distaste for blacks that were used to discourage participation in activities (i.e. education, labor force) that might change the social structure that existed antebellum then one might expect for lynchings to predict these contemporary outcomes.[4] Specifically, I examine whether lynchings predict contemporary earnings, education levels, and execution rates of blacks. The results show that blacks who reside in counties with a relatively higher number of lynchings have lower earnings, a smaller proportion of individuals who report attending college, and higher execution rates.

After establishing there exists a link between historical lynchings and the contemporary outcomes of blacks I turn to perform a number of falsification exercises. First, I estimate the relationship between lynchings and the contemporary political participation of whites. Given that blacks were disproportionately lynched and lynchings were the result of racial animus, lynchings should not predict the contemporary voting behavior of whites. The estimate obtained from this exercise is close to zero and statistically insignificant. Second, I examine whether historical state executions of blacks predict the contemporary political participation of blacks. Considering that historical state executions were performed under civil authority whereas lynchings were publicly displayed extrajudicial killings that served to reinforce social control outside of the courts, one might expect historical state executions to have a different association with the contemporary political participation of blacks. The results for this exercise show that there does not exist a significant relationship between historical state executions and the contemporary voting registration of blacks. In addition, the estimates from this exercise are close to zero. Finally, I conduct a placebo exercise by randomly distributing lynching rates across counties. The cumulative distribution of 500 replication estimates shows that the estimate obtained from the "true" data is uniquely different from the estimates obtained

[3]Polling locations are obtained from the Secretary of State Offices in 2017 and reflect polling place locations in the 2016 Presidential Election.

[4]Tolnay, Deane & Beck (1996) and Price, Darity Jr & Headen Jr (2008) state that lynchings were used to preserve white hegemony and the caste system that existed between blacks and whites and to prevent blacks from competing for jobs with whites.

from this placebo exercise.

Next, I examine whether the relationship between lynchings and black political participation can be mitigated. For example, Tate (1991) found that blacks with higher income, more education, and stronger social ties to the black community were more likely to participate in voting. To investigate this, I interact lynching rates with county-level measures of earnings, education, and the black church member rate.[5] The results show that earnings and the black church member rate do not change the relationship between lynchings and voting. However, the relationship between lynchings and voting behavior of blacks is mitigated by higher levels of education of blacks.

The final exercise of this paper examines the individual-level voting behavior of blacks and whites. The individual-level voting data are obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration Supplement. Using county and state identifiers of respondents, I assign each respondent a historical lynching rate based on his or her current residence. After accounting for individual-level characteristics and contemporary county-level controls, the results show that blacks who currently reside in counties that were exposed to a relatively higher number of lynchings are less likely to vote in an election compared to their white counterparts who live in the same county.[6] To test whether similar differences in voting behavior exist in groups that were not directly affected by lynchings, I examine the impact of historical lynchings on voting differences between other minority groups and whites.[7] The minority groups included are foreign-born blacks, Native Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. The estimates obtained from this exercise show that there does not exist a significant difference in voting between individuals belonging to minority groups and whites for higher rates of lynchings. This indicates that historical lynchings negatively affect voting differences between blacks and whites but does not affect voting differences between other minorities and whites.

There are two main contributions of this paper. First, it adds to recent findings in economics by helping us understand how an initial shock that alters behavior can have a persistent impact (Acemoglu, Johnson & Robinson 2012, Acharya, Blackwell & Sen 2016, Nunn & Wantchekon 2011, Voigtländer & Voth 2012). Specifically, this paper extends Acharya et al. (2016) findings that the prevalence of slavery can be connected

[5]The black church member rate is the number of members that attend churches with predominate black congregations per black 10,000 population in 2010.

[6]The analysis compares blacks eligible to vote in US elections with whites eligible to vote in US elections. The analysis does not use historical county-level data due to the decrease in sample size.

[7]Blacks were disproportionately lynched compared to other groups. Nearly 90% of the victims of lynchings were black.

to the political behavior of whites today by examining how blacks continue to respond politically to racists acts in the past. Second, the paper increases our understanding of the determinants of voting by measuring the extent to which violent acts can deter the target group from voting in the future.

This paper is organized as follows. Section II provides the historical background and conceptual framework. Section III describes voting trends in the United States. The empirical framework, presented in Section IV, is used to motivate the empirical analysis to follow. The data description is given in Section V. Section VI presents the results and Section VII concludes.

II Historical Background and Conceptual Framework

Historical Background

The Reconstruction Act of 1867 forever changed the voting population in the South. Congress required Southern conventions to met and adopt new constitutions that included manhood suffrage (DuBois 1935, Foner 1988). With this enactment, more than one million blacks and more than 300,000 illiterate, poor whites were given the right vote while nearly 200,000 leading whites in the South were disfranchised (DuBois 1935). Given the encouraged resistance to manhood suffrage by Northern Democrats, Union army commanders sought to protect any devices that would keep blacks from the polls (DuBois 1935). In addition, officials from the Freedmen's Bureau "*advised Negros about registration and voting and disabused their minds of fears of taxation or military service or reenslavement*" (DuBois 1935). These measures of protection resulted in voter turnout among black men that ranged between 70% and 90% (Kent 2003). This election restructured the South with blacks voting for white Republican politicians who filled seats once held by Democrats as well as black men holding political office for the first time. For example, blacks were 61%, 50%, and 40% of state delegates in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida respectively (DuBois 1935).

While these elections were the most democratic ever seen in the South (DuBois 1935), some individuals were not pleased by this restructuring. Violent intimidation from the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the form of beatings, burnings, and lynchings was used to discourage blacks from voting (DeFina & Hannon 2011).[8] During the Presidential campaign season of 1868, KKK members rode around on horses wearing white

[8]The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) categorizes an incident as a lynching if a) there is evidence that someone was killed b) the killing occurred illegally c) three or more persons took place in the killing and d) the killers must have claimed to be serving justice or tradition.

hoods and robes threatening blacks that if they did not vote for the Democratic ticket, they would be lynched (Dickerson 2003). In 1868, the KKK killed more than 2,000 blacks in Louisiana, two South Carolina legislators, and the President of the Union League, causing black voter turnout to be reduced by 20 percent between the 1867 and the 1868 election (Dickerson 2003).[9] These KKK terrorists' acts helped the south regain Democratic control in the statehouse in 1870 (Dickerson 2003).

While lynchings continued after the 1868 election, lynchings were not restricted to political intimidation. In fact, there exist three theories to explain lynching behavior. The first theory hypothesizes that blacks were lynched because they were seen as an economic threat (Beck & Tolnay 1992, Cook et al. 2017). By lynching blacks, whites vented economic frustration due to inflation or decreases in cotton prices (DeFina & Hannon 2011) and instilled fear in blacks who could compete for jobs (Cook et al. 2017). The second theory hypothesizes that blacks were lynched because they were viewed as a social threat (Price et al. 2008, Cook et al. 2017). Cook et al. (2017) state that whites feared losing their social status to blacks and used lynching as a way of maintaining social order. The third theory, Blalock (1967) power threat hypothesis, proposed that violence arouse when the dominant group perceived the subordinate group contested their political authority (Price et al. 2008).

Considering these three theories, lynchings can be seen as a proxy of racial animus in that lynchings indicated the extent to which a county was able to inflict violence on blacks in various setting, including politics (Jones et al. 2017). Given the public display of lynchings, these violent acts could be used as powerful messages to blacks that controlled their behavior. According to Allen, Als, Lewis & Litwack (2000), blacks were aware of lynchings that took place by the depiction of lynchings in newspapers and on postcards. Figure 1a presents a county-level mapping of the total number of lynchings between 1882 and 1930 and shows that some counties experienced as many as 35 lynchings during this time period with variation across counties and states.[10] Figure 1b presents the total number of lynchings normalized by black population in 1900.

[9]The Union League was an organization that helped blacks register to vote and was headed by northern Republicans.

[10]A map of lynchings is presented for county state pairs that have voting data separated by race namely Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Conceptual Framework

The foundational model of voting was developed by Downs (1957) where individuals vote when the benefit of voting exceeds the cost. Benefit is the probability that an individual's vote will make a difference in the outcome of an election times the utility received from the individual's favorite candidate winning the election; and the payoff an individual receives from exercising his social duty. Recent models have expanded Downs (1957) framework of voting costs to include logistical cost and information cost (Ashworth 2007, Charles & Stephens Jr 2013, Matsusaka 1995). The logistical cost of voting is the cost associated with the act of voting (i.e. traveling to the poll, waiting in line, etc.) and the information cost of voting is the cost associated with having limited information regarding a candidate or an election (Charles & Stephens Jr 2013).

Within this framework, the historical lynching environment raised the cost of voting for blacks because gathering information on elections as well as traveling to election polls could lead to death for many blacks. Figure 2 demonstrates that lynchings were powerful messages sent to thousands of blacks that exercising their right to vote would be met with death (Fryer Jr & Levitt 2012).

Considering that cultural beliefs are viewed as decision-making heuristics or "rules-of-thumb" which are optimal when information acquisition is either costly or imperfect (Alesina, Giuliano & Nunn 2013, Nunn & Wantchekon 2011), general beliefs about the "right" action caused blacks to refrain from voting - thus allowing blacks to save on the cost associated with voting. Within this environment, cultural beliefs about voting were beneficial to blacks and lowered their voting behavior patterns. Additionally, this behavior may have persisted by lynchings creating mistrust in local officials resulting in blacks avoiding the political process altogether (Jones et al. 2017). I hypothesize that these cultural voting norms persisted and were transmitted to subsequent generations.

A natural question is why would one expect lower voter participation among blacks to persist more than 100 years after the historical lynching time period. One explanation can be found in the cultural economics literature, which demonstrates that historic events have long-run impacts by permanently affecting culture or norms of behavior.[11]. For example, Nunn & Wantchekon (2011) showed that a culture of mistrust persisted in individuals whose ancestors were heavily targeted during the slave trade in Africa which continues to affect economic development in Africa over 400 years later. Mocan & Raschke (2016) analyzed whether

[11]For a more detailed discussion, see Nunn (2009)

a culture of racist and xenophobic feelings persisted in Germany following World War II, and found that people who live in states that provided above-median support for the Nazi Party in the 1928 elections have stronger anti-Semitic feelings today. Similarly, Voigtländer & Voth (2012) reported a strong positive relationship between violent attacks on Jews during the Black Death in 1348 and support for the Nazi Party in 1928, demonstrating a culture of anti-Semitic views that have persisted more than 500 years. Furthermore, Acharya et al. (2016) showed that political attitudes could be traced to slavery's prevalence over 150 years ago. Specifically, these authors report that white southerners who currently reside in counties that have a higher share of slaves in 1860 were also less likely to identify as Democrats, less likely to support Affirmative Action and have higher levels of racial resentment towards blacks. Taken together, research in cultural economics has shown that cultural beliefs are sticky and are transmitted across generations (Alesina et al. 2013).

A second explanation for persistence can be found in the voting literature. Research has shown that voting is habit forming in that voting in one election increases an individual's propensity to vote in future elections. Gerber et al. (2003) used a randomized field experiment that randomly assigned individuals to treatment and control groups to isolate the causal role in voting. Individuals in the treatment group were encouraged to vote via mail or via face to face campaigning whereas individuals in the control group were not encouraged to vote. These authors found that this randomized change produced an increase in voting in the upcoming election and increased the likelihood of voting in the future. Fujiwara et al. (2016) also showed that voting is habit-forming by empirically disentangling habit formation in voting from other channels of voter persistence. These authors model rainfall, an unexpected and transitory shock, into the cost of voting and find that rainfall on election day decreases voter turnout in the current and future elections.

III Voting Trends

Figure 3 displays self-reported voter turnout in U.S. elections for blacks and whites from the CPS.[12] While there exists a large and persistent voting gap between races in Presidential Elections in the earlier half of the sample period, turnout among blacks begins an upward trend in the 1992 election and becomes nearly

[12]Voter turnout is defined as the percentage of individuals who reported having voted in an election per voting age population. Voting data by race are available in 1964 onward from the CPS. In 1978, the CPS began separating white into two categories: white and white non-Hispanic. Since the analysis to follow will compare voting measures of blacks and whites of European descent, Figure 3 begins in 1978 rather than 1964.

equal to the turnout of whites in the 2012 election. In Midterm Elections, blacks have lower turnout when compared to whites throughout the entire sample period.

Similarly, Figure 4 depicts self-reported registration rates for blacks and whites as obtained from the CPS. In both Presidential and Midterm Elections, the gap between black and white registration rates is persistent and stable across years.[13] Taken together, Figures 3 and 4 show that blacks have lower self-reported turnout and registration rates when compared to whites although, with the exception of the 2016 election, turnout rates of blacks was nearly equal to that of whites after 2008.

Turning the focus to voting behavior of blacks based on area of residence, Figure 5 displays turnout and registration rates in Presidential Elections for blacks who reside in the south compared to blacks who reside elsewhere in the country as obtained from the CPS.[14] This figure shows lower voter turnout among blacks who reside in the south compared to blacks who reside elsewhere throughout the 1980's with rates that are roughly the same beginning in the early 1990's. Yet Figure 5 displays similar registration rates between both groups throughout the 1980's with registration rates of southern blacks surpassing rates of blacks who reside elsewhere 1990 onward.

Considering that historical lynching were aimed at preventing blacks from voting in the past and a vast majority of lynchings took place in the south, Figure 6 examines the voting and registration behavior of blacks who reside in the south as a function of lynching rates. It is worth noting that the registration data used in the right panel of Figure 6 come from the Secretary of State Offices which were obtained from 2000 onward. For comparison purposes, the left panel of Figure 6 depicts voter turnout among blacks in southern counties from the CPS from 2000 onward. Figure 6 shows that current voting and registration of blacks is lower in counties that had historically high lynching rates when compared to counties that had historically low lynching rates.[15] This gap in voting is large and persistent in the 2000 to 2012 Presidential Elections. Figure 6 suggests that voting behavior is lower for blacks who reside in counties that were exposed to a relatively higher number of lynchings and motivates the empirical analysis to follow.

[13] Due to the stable nature of registration rates as seen in Figure 4, registration rates will be the preferred measure of voting in the analysis to follow.

[14] Southern states include Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Washington DC, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia.

[15] Lynching rates are the number of black lynchings per black population in 1900.

IV Empirical Framework

To estimate the relationship between historical lynchings and the contemporary voting behavior of blacks, the baseline equation uses county-level voting registration data from the Secretary of State Offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina.[16] I estimate the following equation:

$$voter\ registration\ rate_{cst} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 lynching\ rate_{cs} + \beta_2 X_{cs}^{H} + \beta_3 X_{cs}^{C} + \beta_4 X_{cst}^{C} + \delta_s + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{cst} \quad (1)$$

where c indexes counties, s indexes states, and t indexes years; $voter\ registration\ rate_{cst}$ is the percentage of black registered voters per black voting-age population; $lynching\ rate_{cs}$ is the number of lynchings of blacks between 1882 and 1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900.[17] X_{cs}^{H} represents the vector of observed historical county characteristics that vary across counties, namely the average number of newspapers per total population in 1840, the year in which a county was formed, the average farm value in 1860, the proportion of small farms in 1860, land inequality in 1860, and the proportion of free blacks in 1860.[18] X_{cst}^{C} represents the vector of observed contemporary county characteristics that vary across county and time, such as the monthly earnings of blacks. X_{cs}^{C} represents the vector of observed contemporary county characteristics that vary across counties which are the proportion of blacks with at least some college experience, the median age of blacks, and the proportion of married individuals.[19] δ_s is the set of state fixed effects, γ_t is the set of year fixed effects, and ϵ_{ct} is the error term. Standard errors in Equation (1) are clustered at the county level. The main coefficient of interest, β_1, estimates the impact of one additional lynching per 10,000 black population in 1900 on the percentage of black registered voters per black voting-age population. County-level measures for four potential mechanisms, namely Republican party dominance, incarceration rates of blacks, the number of polling places, and the proportion of slaves, are included in an additional specification

[16] These are the only states in the former Confederacy where individuals indicate their race when they register to vote.

[17] This measures excludes lynchings performed by black mobs against blacks.

[18] Newspaper circulation and the year in which a county was formed have been shown to be a proxy for institutional quality (Grosjean 2014). Historical economic indicators are farm value, the proportion of small farms and land inequality (Acharya et al. 2016). The proportion of free blacks is used to proxy norms about race (Acharya et al. 2016).

[19] The proportion of blacks with at least some college experience, the median age of blacks, and the proportion married are available for each Decennial Census. I choose the 2000 Census, rather than the 2010 Census, since the voter registration data come from before 2010, with the exception of the 2012 election.

to Equation (1).[20] See Data Description for discussion of Republican party dominance, incarceration rates of blacks, polling places, and the proportion of slaves.

Given that the lynching rate in Equation (1) and some of the county-level characteristics do not vary across time, I estimate Equation (1) using pooled ordinary least squares by averaging variables that vary across time. See Appendix A for results.

V Data Sources and Description

Lynching Measure

The lynching data are obtained from the Historical American Lynching Data Collection Project (Project HAL) and include all lynching victims' records in southern counties from 1882 to 1930.[21] The Project HAL data includes lynchings which meet the NAACP definition for lynching.[22] For each lynching record, the information includes the victim's name, race, gender, and alleged offense. The dataset also includes the county, state, month, day, and year that the lynching occurred. To construct the lynching measure, the data are restricted to black victims and excludes lynchings carried out by black mobs to create a lynching measure that represents the number of lynchings of black victims that occurred in a county from 1882 to 1930.

I link the aggregated lynching data with population data from the 1900 Census.[23] The 1900 Census

[20]Party dominance has been shown to impact voter participation (Kent 2003). Given that many of the states in my sample are Republican states, yet many blacks vote Democratic, blacks may choose to refrain from voting in these states since they believe that their vote will not be pivotal in the election. Because blacks have higher incarceration rates when compared to other racial groups and individuals cannot vote when they are incarcerated, not accounting for incarceration rates may bias the estimates. In Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina ex-offenders can register to vote after completion of their full sentence. In Alabama, ex-offenders can register to vote after completing their full sentence except those convicted of murder, rape, incest, sexual crimes against children, and treason. In Florida, ex-offenders can register to vote 5 years after completing their sentence except those convicted of murder, assault, child abuse, drug trafficking, and arson. Ex-offenders convicted of these crimes can register to vote 7 years after completing their full sentence. The number of polling places is included to serve as a proxy for accessibility to voting which has been shown to positively affect voter participation. Considering Acharya, Blackwell & Sen (2015) found that slavery left behind formal and cultural institutions (i.e. black codes, racial violence, Jim Crow, etc.) that made it difficult for blacks to vote which continue to affect voter turnout of blacks today, I include the proportion of slaves in 1860 to serve as a proxy for these institutional structures.

[21]Southern counties include counties in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

[22]To be included in the lynching inventory, an incident must meet the following criteria: a) There must be evidence that someone was killed b) The killing must have occurred illegally c) Three or more persons must have taken part in the killing; and d) The killers must have claimed to be serving justice or tradition.

[23]Considering that the lynching data spans from 1882 to 1930, the year 1900 is nearly the midpoint of the time span and is used to normalize the number of lynchings. The results remain if the black population in 1910 or 1920 is used

population data are obtained from the National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS) and contain county-level measures for the black, white, and total population. The lynching and population data are used to construct the main explanatory variable, lynching rate, which is the total lynchings per 10,000 black population in 1900. A lynching rate is constructed as the main explanatory variable as opposed to the number of lynchings because it is a better measure of the intensity of lynchings or "threat of violence" by accounting for the number of blacks in an area.

County-Level Voting Measure

The voter registration data are obtained from the Secretary of State Offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina.[24] Ideally, the sample would include all counties in the former Confederate States, however, these are the only states in the former Confederacy, and in the lynching data, in which individuals are asked to identify their race when they register to vote.

The Alabama Secretary of State Office reports the number of black (white) registered voters at the county-level for active and inactive voters separately on its website in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012.[25] The number of black (white) registered voters in Florida in 2016 were obtained from voter statistics files provided by the Florida Secretary of State Office.[26] The Georgia Secretary of State Office reports the number of black (white) registered voters at the county-level for females and males separately on its website in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012.[27] The Louisiana Secretary of State Office reports the number of black (white) registered voters at the parish (county) on its website in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012.[28] The number of black (white)

to normalize the number of lynchings. See Appendix for results.

[24]The data for Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina are obtained for the years 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012. Voter registration data in North Carolina are obtained in 2004, 2008, and 2012 since North Carolina does not report race until 2002. The voter registration data in Florida are obtained from its Secretary of State Office in 2016. The method used for extracting voter registration for the years 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012 is explained in detail below.

[25]The Alabama Secretary of State Office website is http://www.alabamavotes.gov/Voterreg.aspx?m=voters. Inactive voters are voters who have not voted in four years in their county whereas active voters are voters who are not on the inactive voters list. I use the number of active black voters as the measure of registered black voters and define the measure of registered white voters similarly.

[26]These files contain individual records that include the registration date, race, birth date and county of residence of registered voters in 2016. The Florida Secretary of State Office removes individuals who have passed away from its voter files. To compute the number of registered voters in 2000, I aggregate the number of registered voters with a registration date on or before 2000 at the county-level. Similarly, the number of registered voters in 2004, 2008, and 2012 is computed.

[27]The Georgia Secretary of State Office website is http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections. I compute the total number of black registered voters at the county-level by summing the number of black (white) female and black (white) male registered voters.

[28]The Louisiana Secretary of State Office website is http://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVotings.

registered voters from North Carolina are obtained from voter statistics files provided by the North Carolina Secretary of State Office in 2004, 2008, and 2012.[29] The South Carolina Secretary of State Office reports the number of white and nonwhite registered voters at the count-level on its website in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012.[30]

The voter registration data are merged with population data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program (SEER) of the National Cancer Institute for the years 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012. The SEER data contain county-level population counts by age and race. To focus on individuals who are of voting age, the data is restricted to population counts for individuals who are 18 or older. The registration and SEER data are used to construct the outcome measure, voter registration rate, as the county-level percentage of black registered voters per black voting age population. Similarly, voter registration rate among whites is measured as the percentage of white registered voters per white voting age population.[31]

Historical County Attributes

The primary source for historical measures in this study is the NHGIS which provides Census data from 1790 to the present. Information on the number of daily, weekly, and triweekly newspapers in each county is obtained from the 1840 Census and the newspaper rate is defined as the average number of daily, weekly, and weekly newspapers per total population in 1840. The year in which a county was formed is obtained from Grosjean (2014) as originally obtained from the National Association of Counties. The proportion of slaves is obtained from the 1860 Census and is defined as the number of slaves per total population in 1860. The average farm value in 1860, the proportion of small farms in 1860, land inequality in 1860, and the proportion of free blacks in 1860 are obtained from Acharya et al. (2016) as originally obtained from the 1860 Census with the exception of land inequality which was originally obtained from Nunn (2008).

[29] These files contain the number of registered voters by county, race, and age. Summing across age groups in each county for blacks and whites separately gives the number of black and white registered voters.

[30] The South Carolina Secretary of State Office website is https://www.scvotes.org/data/voter-history.html. The number of nonwhite registered voters is used to represent the number of black registered voters.

[31] Voter registration rate is more than 100% in some counties. The results to follow use voter registration as is. Appendix A shows the results when voter registration rates are top-coded to 100 and when counties with voter registration rates that exceeds 100 are removed from the sample.

Contemporary County Attributes

The county-level proportion of blacks (whites) with at least some college education, the median age of blacks (whites), and the proportion of individuals who are married are obtained from the 2000 Census. The county-level monthly earnings for blacks (whites) for the years 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012 are obtained from the Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI). County-level lagged Republican party dominance data are obtained from David Leip's Atlas of US Presidential Elections.[32] Party dominance is defined as the percentage of votes awarded to the Republican Presidential Nominee minus the percentage of votes awarded to the Democratic Presidential Nominee for the years 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008.[33] For example, in DeKalb County, if the Republican Presidential Nominee was awarded 58% of the votes and if the Democratic Presidential Nominee was awarded 42% of the votes in 2000, then the party dominance in DeKalb County in 2000 is 16%. The incarceration rate of blacks is obtained from the 2010 Vera Institute of Justice which reports the number of black individuals in jail per 10,000 county residents. The number of black church members is obtained from the 2010 U.S. Religion Census.[34] The U.S. Religion Census classifies black churches as churches with the largest historically black denominations.[35]. The black church member rate is defined as the number of members who attend black churches per 10,000 black population in 2010. The number of polling places is obtained from the Secretary of State Offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina.[36]

Table 1 presents the Descriptive Statistics. Although Table 1 shows that the voter registration rate of blacks is close to that of whites with rates of 74.44% and 75.87% respectively, this phenomenon is a result of high voter registration rates and voter turnout among blacks in the 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections.[37] While voter registration rates among blacks (whites) exceed 100% in some counties, the result remains when these counties are excluded from the sample or when they are top-coded at 100%.[38]

[32]Lagged party dominance is used so that party dominance will not be correlated with the outcome variable.

[33]Kent (2003) finds that voter turnout is lower when one party is dominant since the outcome appears to be certain argues that party dominance accounts for declines in voter turnout more than race, election laws, or economic class.

[34]Tate (1991) finds that voting propensity is higher for blacks who attend church.

[35]The list of blacks churches include the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church of God in Christ, the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., the National Missionary Baptist Convention, Inc., and the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

[36]This data are from 2017.

[37]The 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections included the first African American Presidential Nominee, Barack Obama.

[38]See Appendix A for results.

VI Results

OLS Estimates

Estimates of Equation (1) are reported in Table 2. The dependent variable, voter registration rate of blacks, defined as the percentage of black registered voters per black voting-age population. Column (1) reports the baseline results which account for state and year fixed effects as well as historical and contemporary controls. The baseline results show that for one additional lynching per 10,000 black population in 1900, the percentage of black registered voters per black voting-age population decreases by 0.415 percentage points and this result is significant at the 5% level. This suggests that blacks who reside in counties that were exposed to a relatively higher number of historical lynchings are less likely to register to vote today.

Motivated by the possibility that this relationship may be explained by additional characteristics of counties, I examine four potential confounders - Republican party dominance, incarceration rates of blacks, the number of polling places per 100,000 total population in 2010, and the proportion of slaves in 1860. Column (2) of Table 2 includes a 4-year lag of Republican party dominance.[39] Republican party dominance is negatively and significantly associated with voter registration rates of blacks indicating that fewer blacks register to vote in areas where a larger proportion of residents voted for the Republican nominee in the previous Presidential Election. Column (3) includes the incarceration rate of blacks into the baseline specification and shows that the incarceration rate is negatively associated with voter registration rates yet this association is insignificant. Column (4) includes the number of polling places into the baseline specification. The results show that the number of polling places is positively and significantly associated with voter registration rates of blacks indicating that registration rates of blacks are higher in areas with more polling places. Column (5) accounts for the proportion of slaves in 1860. The proportion of slaves is positively associated with voter registration rates of blacks and this association is significant at the 1% level.[40] With each specification in columns (2)-(5), the main coefficient of interest remains significant and stable. The final column of Table 2 presents the preferred specification which includes potential confounders, historical and contemporary controls, year and state fixed effects. The results show that for one additional lynching per 10,000 black

[39] A 4-year lag is included since current measures of Republican party dominance will include current shares of voters.

[40] It is worth noting that the proportion of slaves in 1860 is positively associated with the contemporary share of blacks thus suggesting that this positive association may be due to high concentrations of blacks currently living in areas with high slaveholding.

population in 1900, the voter registration rate of blacks decreases by 0.404 percentage points and this result is significant at the 5% level. In summary, Table 2 shows that there exists a link between historical lynchings and the contemporary voting behavior of blacks.

Considering that the lynching rate and some characteristics of counties do not vary over time, the estimates from pooled ordinary least squares are presented in Appendix A. Similar to the estimates obtained in Table 2, the cross-section estimates show a negative and significant relationship between lynching rates and black voter registration rates. Specifically, the results show for one additional lynching per 10,000 black population in 1900, voter registration rates of blacks decrease by 0.413 percentage points.

Migration Results

Next, I examine whether these results can be explained by geographic migration. For example, during the Great Migration, which lasted from 1916 to 1970, millions of blacks migrated away from southern states to northern and western states in search of better economic and social conditions. If blacks who were more likely to participate in voting were also more likely to migrate away from violent southern counties, blacks with lower voting propensities remained.

Following Acharya et al. (2016), I use the 1940 100% sample obtained from the IPUMS-USA. This sample is unique in that it provides a respondent's current county of residence as well as the county of residence five years prior (Acharya et al. 2016) allowing for individuals who migrated from (to) southern counties to be identified. Once identified, I can test whether migrants' individual attributes differ from individuals who remained in southern counties. In order for geographic sorting to explain the results, patterns of mobility out of (and into) southern counties would need to differ as a function of lynchings.

To examine whether geographic sorting explains the results, I restrict the data to blacks and estimate:

$$\begin{aligned} attributes_i =& \gamma_1 out{-}migration_i + \gamma_2 lynching\ rate_{1935i} \\ &+ \gamma_3 (out{-}migration_i * lynching\ rate_{1935i}) \\ &+ \gamma_4 X^H_{1935c} + \gamma_5 X^C_{1935c} + \delta_{1935s} + \epsilon_{ict}, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where $attributes_i$ represents a respondent's wage, age, gender, education level, weeks worked, and rent; $out{-}migration_i$ represents whether an individual migrated out of a southern county.[41] This regression also includes historical and contemporary controls based on a respondent's 1935 county of residence and his or her 1935 state fixed effects. The main coefficient of interest, γ_3, estimates differences between out-migrants' individual attributes and those who did not migrate as a function of the lynching rate. Table 3 Panel A shows the results from Equation (2). We see that out-migrants have higher wages, are younger, are more likely to be female, are less likely to have some college experience, are less likely to be full-time, and have lower rent compared to individuals who "stayed" in southern counties with higher lynching rates. However, these estimates are close to zero and are statistically insignificant.[42]

Table 3 Panel B shows the results for individuals who migrated into southern counties which are obtained by replacing a respondent's 1935 county of residence with his or her 1940 county of residence in Equation (2). The results show that individuals who migrated to southern counties earn 2% less than stayers as the lynching rate increases and in-migrants are more likely to be full-time as the lynching rate increases. Taken together, Panels A and B of Table 3 show that for most of the selected attributes of migrants', out-migrants do not significantly differ from stayers for higher lynchings rates. Additionally, the estimates in Panels A and B of Table 3 are close to zero in most cases. This finding suggests that sorting does not explain the relationship between lynching and the voting behavior of blacks.

Polling Locations

To examine whether counties that experienced a relatively higher number of lynchings have contemporary barriers that suppress voting, I examine one potential barrier - the paucity of polling places in black areas. That is, I estimate the extent to which counties with more historical lynchings have fewer polling places in areas where blacks live. If the number of polling places varies as a function of lynching rates and the proportion of blacks in an area, then my results may be a result of this phenomenon. However, if no relationship exists, then this exercise will strengthen the claim that historical lynchings, a proxy for historical racial animus, have had a long-run impact on the voting behavior of blacks.

To examine this relationship, I obtain the GIS boundary census-tract map along with census-tract popu-

[41] Southern counties include counties in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

[42] Females are more likely to be out-migrants compared to stayers in southern counties with higher lynchings rates and this relationship is statistically significant.

lation data from the 2010 Census. Polling place data come from the Secretary of State Offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina and includes the name of each polling place, each polling place address, and county and state identifiers. Using an address locator from ArcGIS, each polling place address is geocoded into its equivalent latitude and longitude coordinate. As shown in Figure 7a, pairs of coordinates are overlaid onto the 2010 United States census-tract boundary map. Figure 7b shows an enlarged mapping of geocoded addresses in Louisiana and shows that the number of polling places varies across census-tracts.

Using this mapping, I tally the number of polling places that lie within the GIS census-tract and merge this dataset with the 2010 population data and the lynching data to be used in Equation (3).[43]

To examine whether the polling place rate varies as a function of the proportion of blacks and the lynching rate, I consider:

$$\begin{aligned} polling_t = &\kappa_0 + \kappa_1 share\ black_t + \kappa_2 lynching\ rate_c + \\ &\kappa_3(share\ black_t * lynching\ rate_c) + \epsilon_t \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

where $polling_t$ is the number of polling places per 10,000 population which varies across census tracts, $share\ \ black_t$ is the proportion of blacks which varies across census tracts, and $lynching\ \ rate_c$ is the number of lynchings between 1882 and 1930 per black population in 1900 which varies across counties. The coefficient of interest, κ_3, measures the relationship between lynchings and the number of polling places as a function of the proportion black. Table 4 shows there is no significant difference in the number of polling places as the proportion of blacks and lynching rate vary. In fact, the magnitude of the main coefficient of interest, κ_3, is close to zero. In summary, Table 4 suggests that there does not exist evidence that counties that experienced a relatively higher number of lynchings have fewer polling places in areas where blacks reside.

Additional Outcomes

Thus far, the results have shown that contemporary voting behavior of blacks can be traced to historical lynchings. Given that historical lynchings can be viewed as a proxy for historical racial animus and

[43]To merge the geocoded address (point) layer with the NHGIS census-tract boundary layer, I use the intersect tool in ArcGIS. The intersect tool takes two layers as input and returns the features that belong to both layers as output. Census-tract boundaries that do not contain any points from the point layer are assumed to have no polling places. The merged point and boundary layer file is aggregated to the census-tract level which yields the total number of polling places in each census tract.

lynchings were used to discourage blacks from participating in many societal activities, lynchings may be associated with additional contemporary outcomes of blacks. For example, the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights reports that voter turnout among black men began to decline in the 1870s due to intimidation, fraud, and violence (Bertocchi & Dimico 2017). The U.S. Commission of Civil Rights stated:

> "In the election of 1875 local Democratic clubs announced that no Negro who voted for a Republican could hope for any form of employment. Checkers were stationed at the polls, and groups of armed men intercepted Negroes on their way to register. Negro Political leaders were threatened that continued activity would result in deaths. As a result of these tactics, Negro voting diminished throughout the state and Democrats returned to power." (Bertocchi & Dimico 2017)

Given that blacks were threatened that they would not receive employment if they voted and lynchings can be viewed as an index of violence aimed at preventing blacks from participating and various activities, it is plausible that historical lynchings may predict contemporary outcomes of blacks such as education levels and earnings.

Table 5 shows the association between historical lynchings and additional contemporary outcomes. Specifically, column (1) shows that blacks who reside in counties with a relatively higher number of lynchings have a lower percentage of blacks with some college experience. The result is statistically significant at the 5% level and indicates that lynching rates are negatively associated with educational attainment of blacks. Column (2) examines the relationship between lynching rates and earnings of blacks conditional on being employed. The results show that blacks who reside in counties with a relatively higher number of lynchings have lower earnings compared to their white counterparts. The results are marginally significant with a p-value of 0.107. The final column of Table 5 examines the relationship between historical lynching rates and contemporary execution rates of blacks.[44] The results show that lynching rates are positively associated with contemporary execution rates of blacks and this result is marginally significant with a p-value of 0.11. Although one could argue that execution rates are a proxy for criminal activity or an unequal justice system, the specification seen in column (3) cannot distinguish between either plausible idea. Thus, that only information that can be taken away from this analysis is that blacks who reside in counties with higher

[44]Execution data come from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data contains individual-level executions from 1608 to 2002 by race. I define contemporary executions as the number of executions that took place in 1965 and later within a county. The execution rate is defined as the number of blacks executed between 1965 and 2002 per 10,000 black population.

lynching rates are more likely to executed in the contemporary. In summary, Table 5 shows that lynching rates predict additional contemporary outcomes of blacks. Given that historical lynchings are proxies for an area's racial animus, this suggests that the persistence of racial animus has continued to affect blacks in voting, education, earnings, and state executions.

Falsification Exercises

Next, I perform a number of falsification exercises. First, I consider whether there exists a relationship between lynchings and the contemporary voting behavior of whites. Considering that blacks were disproportionately lynched compared to whites following the American Civil War (Price et al. 2008) and lynchings are a proxy for historical racial animus towards blacks, there should not exist a significant relationship between lynchings and the voting behavior of whites. Table 6 shows the results. Column (1) shows the baseline estimates and column (2) shows the preferred specification. In both columns, the estimates are close to zero and statistically insignificant indicating that historical lynching cannot be linked to the contemporary voting behavior of whites.

Second, I consider the relationship between historical execution rates and the contemporary voting behavior of blacks. One difference between historical executions and historical lynchings is due process.[45] Historical executions were carried out under civil authority in that an individual was found guilty by his or her peers and sentenced to death. Historical lynchings, on the other hand, were carried out by mobs illegally. Additionally, lynchings could be viewed as an extra method of control outside the legal and standard institutions that were in place following the Civil War (i.e. black codes, Jim Crow laws) and were publicly displayed (Allen et al. 2000). Given this difference in due process, it is plausible that historical execution rates have a different effect on the contemporary voting behavior of blacks. The results from this exercise are shown in Table 7. Column (1) shows the baseline estimates and column (2) shows the estimates from the preferred specification. The baseline estimates show a negative yet statistically insignificant relationship between execution rates and the voting behavior of blacks. The preferred specification shows that there does not exist a statistically significant relationship between execution rates and contemporary voter registration of blacks. In addition, the estimates are close to zero. Taken together, Table 7 suggests that the persistence

[45] Historical execution rates are defined as the county-level number of executions of blacks between 1882 and 1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900.

of cultural norms stemming from racist attitudes differ based on the method in which blacks were killed historically. Given that lynchings were extra enforcement, the persistence of these events tends to linger in the black community in regards to voting whereas executions do not.

The final exercise randomly distributes lynching rates across counties. It is worth noting that the outcome and control variables are not randomly distributed. The cumulative distribution is shown in Figure 8. The figure shows two noteworthy points. First, the cumulative probability is highest around zero which indicates that the estimates for this placebo exercise are mainly zeros. Second, the true estimate, indicated by the red vertical line, is uniquely different from the estimates obtained from this placebo exercise. In summary, this exercise shows that this relationship between lynchings and contemporary voting of blacks does not exist when lynching rates are randomly distributed across counties.

Heterogeneity

The analysis thus far has established that historical lynchings adversely affect the voting behavior of blacks. This section examines whether this relationship can be mitigated. For example, Tate (1991) found that blacks who had more education, higher incomes, and were more engaged in social activities that create strong social bonds between blacks (i.e. church attendance) were more likely to participate in voting.

I investigate whether the relationship between historical lynchings and the voting behavior of blacks varies as a function of education, earnings, and the black church member rate. Table 8 presents the results. Column (1) reports the estimates when the lynching rate is interacted with the proportion of blacks with some college experience. The results show that the relationship between lynchings and voter registration increases with higher levels of education among blacks indicating that a higher proportion of blacks with some college experience mitigates the relationship between lynchings and voting of blacks. Column (2) and column (3) presents the results when earnings and the black church member rate are interacted with the lynching rate respectively. However, both variables do not change the relationship between lynchings and voter registration. In conclusion, Table 8 shows that the relationship between lynchings and black voter registration rates is mitigated by higher levels of education of blacks. One possible explanation that explains this relationship can be found in the voting literature. Akee et al. (2018) and Wolfinger & Rosenstone (1980) state that income can create norms of voting since "*income determines ones neighborhood and perhaps, avocational companions and thus exposure to a variety of norms of pressures.*" In this same context,

education exposes individuals to a broader group of individuals with varying norms in voting. This exposure, due to schooling, may help to mitigate the relationship between lynchings and voting in that individuals with higher education attainment may adapt to voting norms of their peers or individuals in their workplace. Additionally, blacks with higher levels of education may be more aware of this history of violent voter intimidation and may feel obligated to vote as a result.

Individual-Level Results

The last exercise of this paper uses individual-level data to examine whether cultural voting norms linked to lynchings exist for other minorities when compared to whites. I use individual-level voting data from the CPS Voting and Registration Supplement to examine differences in voting as a function of lynching rates. Participants in the CPS Voting and Registration Supplement are surveyed two weeks following a November Midterm or Presidential Election and indicate whether or not they voted in the most recent election. Additionally, participants provide their race, income, education, age, sex, marital status, county, and state of residence. I use Midterm and Presidential Elections from 2000 to 2014 which results in eight waves of CPS data. Individuals are assigned historical lynching rates along with contemporary county-level controls based on their county and state of residence.[46]

The estimates are reported in Table 9. Column (1) shows voting differences between blacks and whites as a function of lynching rates. The results show that blacks who reside in counties with higher lynching rates are less likely to indicate voting in a recent election compared to their white counterparts. This result is significant at the 5% level. Column (2) shows voting differences for other minority groups and whites. Minority groups include Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and foreign-born blacks. The result shows that minorities who live in counties that were exposed to a relatively higher number of lynchings do not have voting behavior that is significantly different from that of whites who live in the same county. Taken together columns (1) and (2) of Table 9 show that while lynchings negatively impact voting differences between blacks and whites, this relationship does not exist for minorities in general and whites. This suggests that lynchings, a index for historical violence as a result of racial animus, successfully deterred the target group from voting in the future.

[46]The analysis does not use historical county-level data due to the decrease in sample size.

VII Summary and Conclusion

Economists have shown that historical events can have long-run impacts by permanently changing culture or norms of behavior. This paper contributes to the literature in economics by understanding the extent to which historical racial animus can have a persistent impact on the behavior of blacks. The results show that counties that were exposed to a relatively higher number of lynchings have lower voter registration rates of blacks today. Specifically for one additional lynching per 10,000 black population in 1900, voter registration rates of blacks today decrease by 0.4 percentage points. Additional analyses suggest that this effect is unlikely to be driven by Republican party dominance, incarceration rates of blacks, institutions that remained after slavery, geographic sorting, or contemporary barriers to voting. Examining individual-level variation in voting shows that blacks who reside in counties with a relatively higher number of lynchings are less likely to turnout to vote compared to their white counterparts. However, this relationship does not exist between other minority groups, which were not heavily targeted with lynchings, and whites.

In addition to understanding the determinants of voting, this research has important policy implications. In 2013, a key provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was overturned. This provision required areas with a history of racial discrimination in voting to receive pre-clearance from a federal court to change election laws. Given that this paper documents the persistence of cultural voting norms linked to historical lynchings, these findings can be used to inform policies and laws that protect the voting rights of minorities such as the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 which seeks to reinstate the key provision of the 1965 Act as well as expand election law violations. Additionally, this paper documents that blacks who reside in counties with a relatively higher number of lynchings are underrepresented in voting which suggests that their interests are also underrepresented in American policies. Increasing voter participation among blacks may lead to more policies that address income, occupation, and health disparities between blacks and whites.

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Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Panel A: Outcome Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	N
Black registered voters	74.448	18.813	17.222	324.740	957
White registered voters	75.870	12.167	17.444	112.493	957
Panel B: Historical Controls					
Black lynchings	3.210	3.466	0.000	18.000	957
Black lynching rate	3.793	4.780	0.000	33.482	957
Black population in 1900	11531.433	9252.469	432.000	60312.000	957
Average farm value in 1860	9.345	8.801	1.000	65.000	957
Proportion of small farms in 1860	0.381	0.198	0.023	1.000	957
Inequality of farmland in 1860	0.490	0.077	0.160	0.737	957
Proportion of free blacks in 1860	0.012	0.020	0.000	0.169	957
Average newspapers rate	1.193	4.068	0.000	48.544	957
County formation	1780.514	50.694	1664.000	1836.000	957
Proportion of Slaves in 1860	0.450	0.192	0.049	0.909	957
Panel C: Contemporary Controls					
Proportion of blacks w/ at least some college experience	0.277	0.109	0.101	0.696	957
Proportion of whites w/ at least some college experience	0.432	0.107	0.246	0.770	957
Median age of blacks	31.350	3.076	22.500	41.500	957
Total share married	0.581	0.054	0.420	0.718	957
Median age of whites	38.603	3.272	26.200	47.700	957
Monthly earnings of blacks	2066.599	399.834	1151.000	5025.000	957
Monthly earnings of whites	3032.217	646.320	1692.000	6037.000	957
Black church member rate	1889.263	1264.054	0.000	9422.492	957
Republican party dominance (4-year lag)	11.132	24.286	-77.000	72.000	957
Incarceration rate of blacks	129.773	182.351	0.000	1816.800	957
Polling place per 100k population	50.301	32.964	7.977	257.069	957

Data Sources: Registered voters data and polling location data come from the Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina Secretary of State Offices. The lynching data come from the Historical American Lynching Project. The National Historical Geographic Information System contains the black population in 1900, the total population in 1840, the average number of newspapers in 1840, and the share of slaves in 1860. Grosjean (2014) provides the year of county formation. The average farm value, proportion of small farms, inequality of farmland and the proportion of free blacks in 1860 come from Acharya et al. (2016). Contemporary measures of population are obtained from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program. The 2000 Census provides the share of blacks (whites) with at least some college experience, the median age of blacks (whites), and the share married. The monthly earnings of blacks (whites) are obtained from the 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators. Republican party dominance is obtained from David Leip's Atlas in 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008. The incarceration rate come from Vera Institute of Justice in 2010. The black church member rate is obtained from the 2010 U.S. Religion Census. The black (white) registered voter rate is the percentage of black registered voter per black (white) voting age population. The lynching rate is the total number of lynchings per 10,000 black population in 1900. The average newspaper rate is the average number of newspapers per 100,000 total population in 1840.

Table 2
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Black Voter Registration Rates
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Black lynching rate	-0.415**	-0.365*	-0.423**	-0.479***	-0.333**	-0.404**
	(0.173)	(0.188)	(0.176)	(0.158)	(0.167)	(0.169)
Republican party dominance (4-year lag)		-0.225***				-0.124**
		(0.052)				(0.050)
Incarceration rate of blacks			-0.004			-0.005
			(0.004)			(0.003)
Polling place per 100k population				0.170***		0.147***
				(0.021)		(0.022)
Proportion of Slaves in 1860					21.963***	13.554**
					(6.071)	(5.595)
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957	957	957	957	957
R-Squared	0.446	0.473	0.447	0.502	0.464	0.522

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table 3
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Differences in Attributes between Migrants and Stayers

Panel A: Out-Migrants vs. Stayers	Dependent Variable: Log(wage)	Age	Female	Some-College	Full-time	Rent
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Out-Migrant × Black lynching rate	0.002	-0.033	0.001***	-0.000	-0.001	-0.328
	(0.005)	(0.020)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.253)
Out-Migrant	-0.163	0.752**	-0.006**	0.002	0.050***	-1.814
	(0.088)	(0.289)	(0.002)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(1.039)
Black lynching rate	0.005	0.016	-0.001	-0.000	0.001	-0.318
	(0.004)	(0.017)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.218)
Number of observations	72,287	184,098	184,098	153,609	184,098	140,903
R-Squared	0.015	0.006	0.001	0.011	0.007	0.002
Panel B: In-Migrants vs. Stayers	**Dependent Variable: Log(wage)**	**Age**	**Female**	**Some-College**	**Full-time**	**Rent**
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
In-Migrant × Black lynching rate	-0.020***	-0.016	0.000	-0.000	-0.005***	-0.112
	(0.006)	(0.042)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.401)
In-Migrant	0.073	2.419***	-0.031*	0.006	0.003	5.300
	(0.093)	(0.499)	(0.018)	(0.007)	(0.014)	(6.353)
Black lynching rate	0.004	0.018	-0.000	0.000	0.001	-0.338
	(0.004)	(0.029)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.327)
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	686,052	2,434,470	2,434,470	1,799,933	2,434,470	1,734,703
R-Squared	0.053	0.008	0.000	0.003	0.007	0.004

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. Data on the dependent variable come from the 1940 IPUMS-USA.

Table 4
The Impact of Lynchings Rates on the Number of Polling Locations

Dependent Variable: Polling Location per 10k population	(1)
Proportion of Blacks	0.489**
	(0.245)
Black lynching rate	-0.002
	(0.003)
Proportion of Blacks × Black lynching rate	-0.002
	(0.016)
Constant	4.622***
	(0.505)
State Fixed Effects	Yes
Number of observations	11,712
R-Squared	0.068

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, number of polling locations, come from the Secretary of State Offices in AL, FL, GA, LA, NC, and SC. The proportion black and population density come from the 2010 Census.

Table 5
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Additional Outcomes
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable:		
	Education	ln(Earnings)	Execution
Black lynching rate	-0.003**	-0.225+	0.003+
	(0.001)	(0.142)	(0.002)
Republican Party Dominance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incarceration Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Polling Locations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Share of Slaves in 1860	Yes	Yes	Yes
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957	957
R-Squared	0.462	0.291	0.075

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table 6
The Impact of Lynching Rates on White Voter Registration
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: White Voter Registration Rate	
	(1)	(2)
Black lynching rate	-0.041	-0.048
	(0.094)	(0.071)
Republican party dominance	No	Yes
Incarceration rate	No	Yes
Polling place per 100k population	No	Yes
Proportion of slaves in 1860	No	Yes
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957
R-Squared	0.562	0.613

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, white registered voters rate, is the percentage of white registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per white voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table 7
The Impact of Executions Rates on Black Voter Registration Rates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate	
	(1)	(2)
Black execution rate	-0.239	0.005
	(0.224)	(0.202)
Republican Party Dominance	No	Yes
Incarceration Rate	No	Yes
Polling Locations	No	Yes
Share of Slaves in 1860	No	Yes
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957
R-Squared	0.439	0.514

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black execution rate is the number of black executions in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table 8
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Black Voter Registration Rates
Heterogeneity Analysis

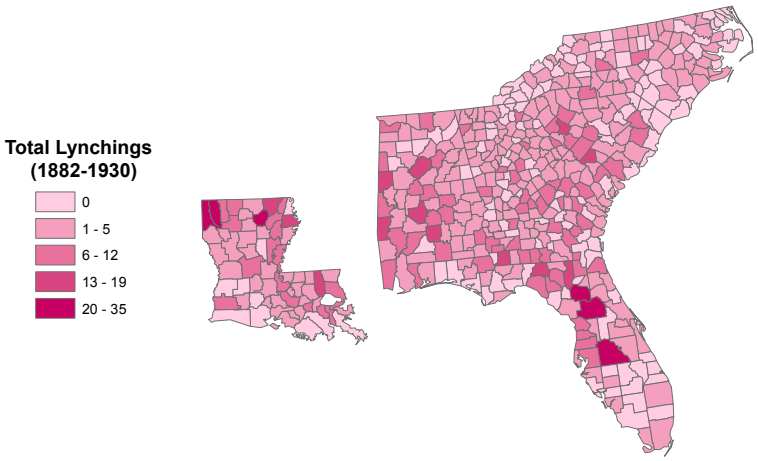
	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Black lynching rate	-1.333***	0.249	-0.532**
	(0.446)	(0.602)	(0.249)
Proportion of blacks w/ at least some college experience	7.404	18.663***	20.144***
	(6.770)	(5.561)	(5.667)
Black lynching rate*Proportion of blacks w/ at least some college experience	3.720**		
	(1.565)		
Monthly earnings of blacks	0.003	0.004*	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Black lynching rate*Monthly earnings of blacks		-0.000	
		(0.000)	
Black member rate			0.001*
			(0.001)
Black lynching rate*Black member rate in 2010			0.000
			(0.000)
Republican Party Dominance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incarceration Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Polling Locations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Share of Slaves in 1860	Yes	Yes	Yes
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957	957
R-Squared	0.526	0.522	0.528

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

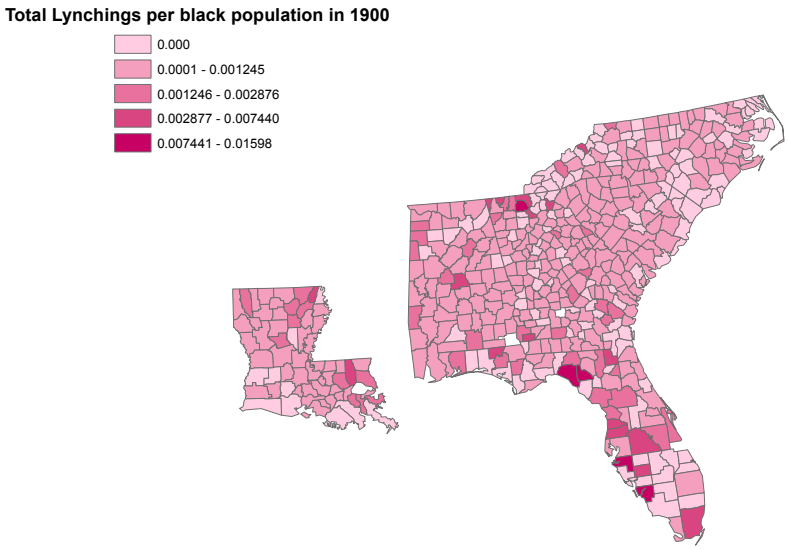
Table 9
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Voting Propensity

	Dependent Variable: Voting Indicator	
	Blacks	All Minorities (except Blacks)
Race*Black lynching rate	-0.003**	-0.006
	(0.001)	(0.004)
Race	0.142***	-0.034
	(0.012)	(0.030)
Black lynching rate	0.001***	0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Republican party dominance	Yes	Yes
Incarceration rate	Yes	Yes
Polling place per 100k population	Yes	Yes
Proportion of slaves in 1860	Yes	Yes
Individual-Level Controls	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	14,538	11,396
R-Squared	0.183	0.183

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable is a voting indicator of whether or not an individual voted in an election. The dependent variable and individual controls come from CPS. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.



(a)
Total Lynchings



(b)
Total Lynchings per Black Pop. in 1900

Figure 1
Map of Lynchings

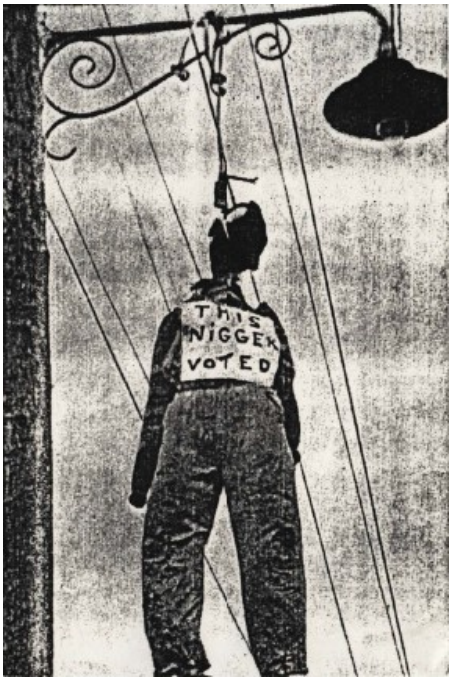


Figure 2
Lynching Message

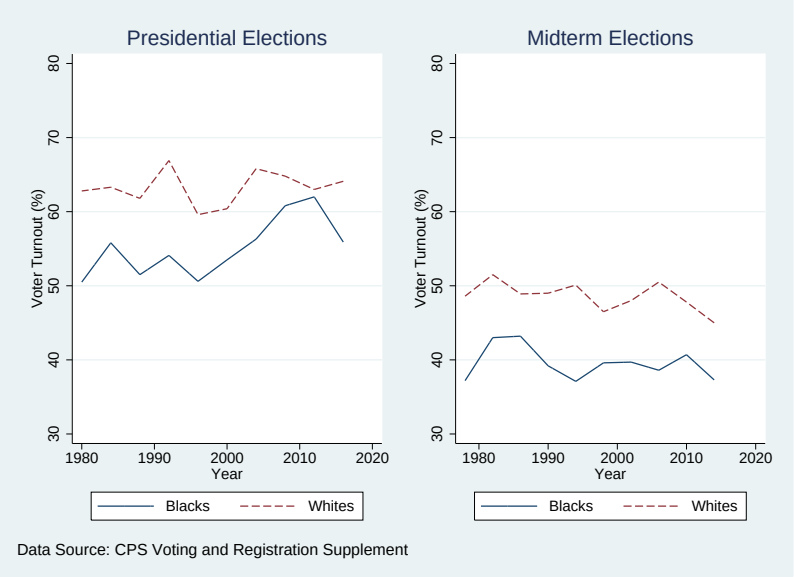


Figure 3
Voter Turnout by Race

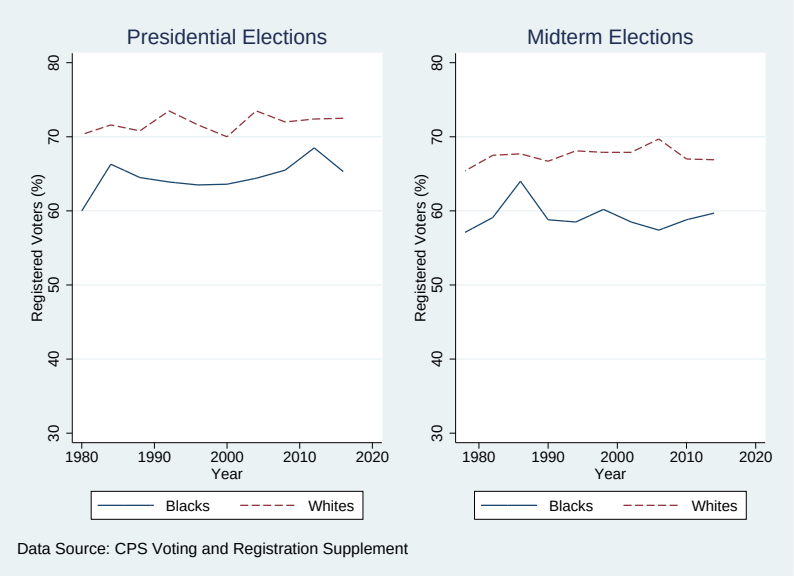


Figure 4
Registered Voters by Race

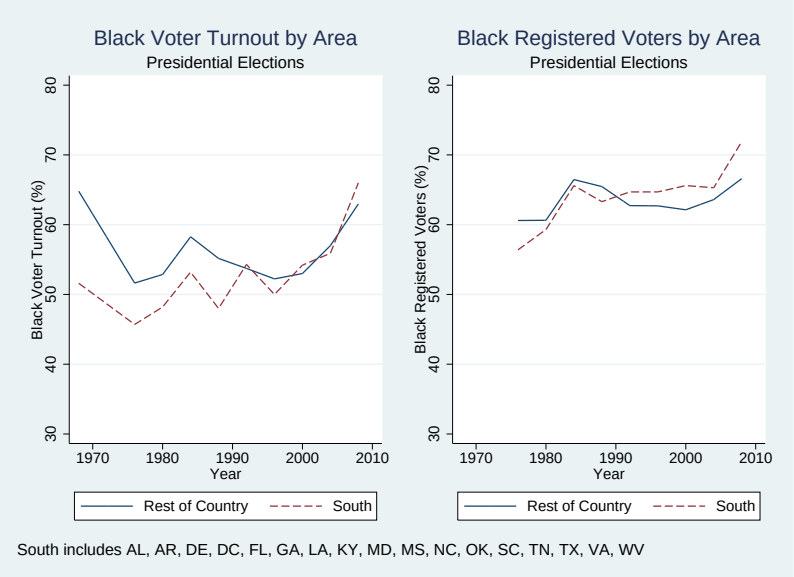


Figure 5
Voting Measures for Blacks by Area

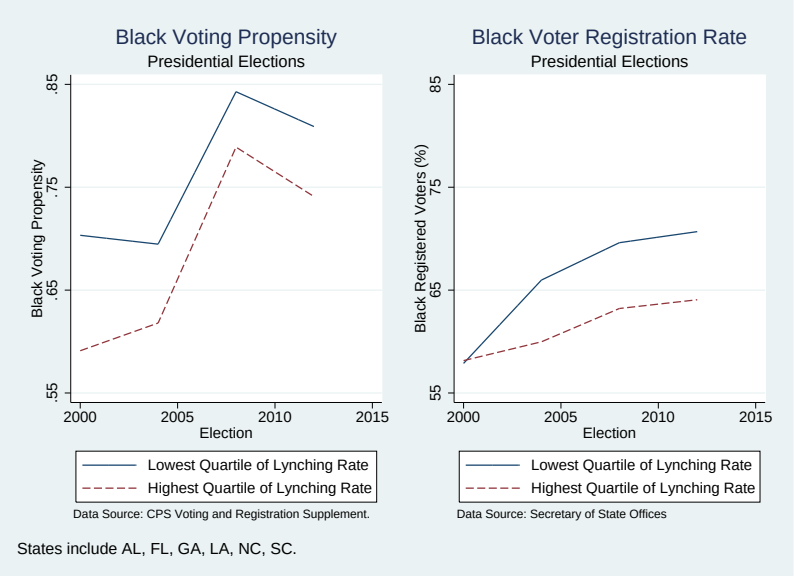
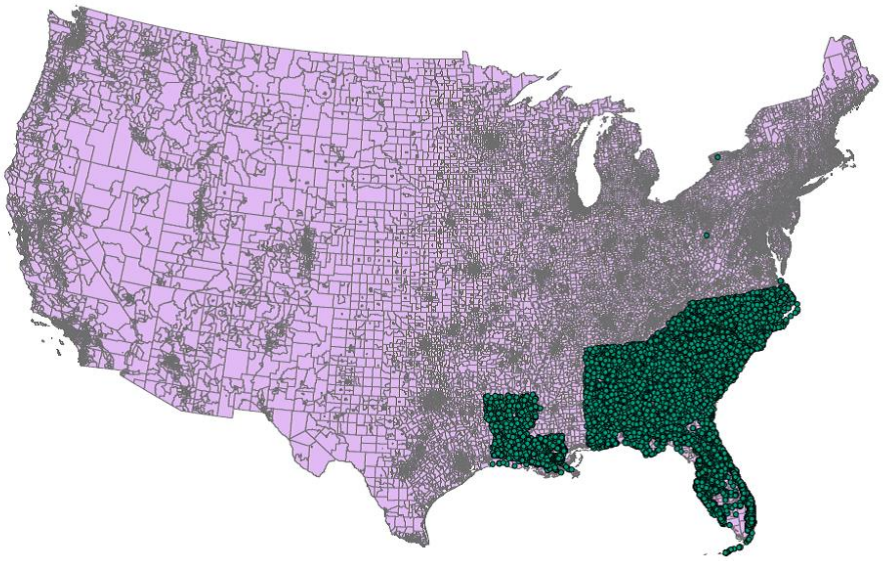
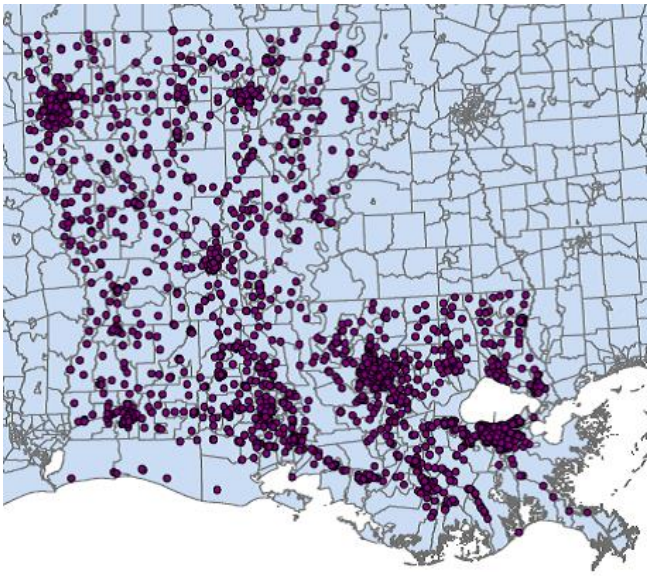


Figure 6
Contemporary Voting Measures for Blacks by Lynching Rate in Southern Counties



(a)
Polling Place Locations Geocoded



(b)
Louisiana Sample Enlarged

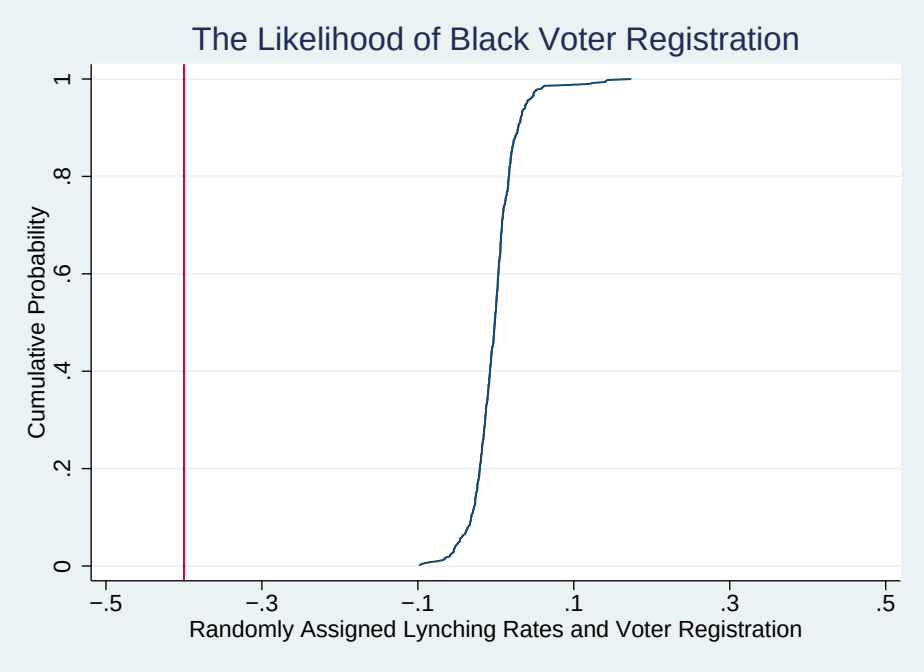


Figure 8
Cumulative Distribution

Appendix A: Supplemental Material

Table A1
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Black Voter Registration Rates (Rates Coverted to 100)
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Black lynching rate	-0.416**	-0.372**	-0.422**	-0.475***	-0.336**	-0.400**
	(0.172)	(0.186)	(0.174)	(0.157)	(0.167)	(0.167)
Republican party dominance (4-year lag)		-0.199***				-0.104**
		(0.048)				(0.046)
Incarceration rate of blacks			-0.003			-0.004
			(0.005)			(0.004)
Polling place per 100k population				0.155***		0.134***
				(0.021)		(0.023)
Proportion of Slaves in 1860					21.532***	14.181***
					(5.777)	(5.423)
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957	957	957	957	957
R-Squared	0.553	0.580	0.553	0.614	0.575	0.636

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table A2
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Black Voter Registration Rates (Rates Less than 100)
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Black lynching rate	-0.390**	-0.354*	-0.393**	-0.470***	-0.314*	-0.394**
	(0.179)	(0.191)	(0.181)	(0.163)	(0.175)	(0.170)
Republican party dominance (4-year lag)		-0.172***				-0.079
		(0.049)				(0.048)
Incarceration rate of blacks			-0.001			-0.003
			(0.005)			(0.004)
Polling place per 100k population				0.161***		0.148***
				(0.024)		(0.026)
Proportion of Slaves in 1860					20.401***	16.321***
					(5.759)	(5.273)
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	912	912	912	912	912	912
R-Squared	0.534	0.556	0.534	0.591	0.556	0.614

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table A3
The Impact of Lynching Rates on Black Voter Registration Rates (Pooled Data)
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Black lynching rate	-0.416**	-0.376*	-0.427**	-0.474***	-0.331*	-0.413**
	(0.177)	(0.192)	(0.180)	(0.162)	(0.171)	(0.168)
Republican party dominance (4-year lag)		-0.218***				-0.069
		(0.069)				(0.068)
Incarceration rate of blacks			-0.004			-0.006
			(0.005)			(0.004)
Polling place per 100k population				0.168***		0.153***
				(0.021)		(0.024)
Proportion of slaves in 1860					21.913***	14.819***
					(6.190)	(5.632)
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	255	255	255	255	255	255
R-Squared	0.565	0.591	0.567	0.638	0.589	0.658

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1900. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters averaged across the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table A4
The Impact of Lynching Rates (using 1910 Population) on Black Voter Registration Rates
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate	
	(1)	(2)
Black lynchings per 10,000 black population in 1910	-0.383***	-0.396***
	(0.074)	(0.060)
Republican Party Dominance	No	Yes
Incarceration Rate	No	Yes
Polling Locations	No	Yes
Share of Slaves in 1860	No	Yes
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957
R-Squared	0.452	0.529

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1910. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.

Table A5
The Impact of Lynching Rates (using 1920 Population) on Black Voter Registration Rates
OLS Estimates

	Dependent Variable: Black Voter Registration Rate	
	(1)	(2)
Black lynchings per 10,000 black population in 1920	-0.067**	-0.070**
	(0.032)	(0.032)
Republican Party Dominance	No	Yes
Incarceration Rate	No	Yes
Polling Locations	No	Yes
Share of Slaves in 1860	No	Yes
Historical Controls	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Controls	Yes	Yes
State Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	957	957
R-Squared	0.443	0.520

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses and are clustered at the county level. *p<0.10,**p<0.05,*** p<0.01. The black lynching rate is the number of black lynchings in a county between 1882-1930 per 10,000 black population in 1920. The dependent variable, black registered voters rate, is the percentage of black registered voters in the 2000, 2004, 2008 or the 2012 Presidential Election per black voting age population. See Table 1 for a complete list of data sources.