Black Empowerment and Whites' Backlash: The Effect of the Voting Rights Act*

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Abstract

The 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) dismantled the institutional barriers that had suppressed political participation of African Americans in the U.S. South since the end of Reconstruction. Did it also win hearts and minds in the racially conservative South? In this paper, we study this question using newly collected data on county-level voter registration rates by race and exploiting variation induced by a special provision of the VRA ("coverage"). We find that covered counties with higher shares of African Americans experienced a larger increase in Black *and* white registration rates. White counter-mobilization was concentrated in counties where Black empowerment was more likely to represent a political threat to the white majority, and was accompanied by higher hostility against African Americans, as observed in local newspapers. Additional analysis using survey data and racially motivated hate crimes shows that the negative effects of the VRA on whites' racial attitudes persisted over time, and are still evident today.

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It's so important to get Negroes registered in large numbers in the South. It would be this coalition of the Negro vote and the moderate white vote that will really make the new South.

— Martin Luther King Jr., on the phone with President Johnson on January 15, 1965

As a man whose roots go deeply into Southern soil I know how agonizing racial feelings are. I know how difficult it is to reshape the attitudes and the structure of our society.

— Lyndon B. Johnson, *We Shall Overcome*, 1965

1 Introduction

From the end of Reconstruction until the the early 1960s, African Americans in the U.S. South have endured suppression of their constitutional rights to vote by violence, intimidation, and institutionalized disenfranchisement (Kousser, 1992; Wright, 2013). In 1965, at the height of the civil rights movement, and one week after the outrage of Selma's Bloody Sunday, President Johnson announced his decision to initiate legislation that "will strike down restrictions to voting in all elections, federal, state and local, which have been used to deny Negroes the right to vote."[1] Five months later, on August 6, 1965, the VRA was signed into law. The federal legislation caused an immediate and sharp increase in turnout (Wright, 2013; Cascio and Washington, 2014), leading to Black representation gains and other tangible improvements for African American communities.[2] Did the VRA also win hearts and minds in the racially conservative South?

Although the hope was that Black enfranchisement would "brighten the lives of every American," talking to the Nation in 1965, President Johnson was well aware of the obstacles ahead.[3] The shift of the Democratic party on civil rights led to the massive exodus of racially conservative southern whites (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018). Yet, little is known about how Black progress, which first and foremost took place locally, affected race relations in the U.S. South. Also, the impact of the VRA on race relations is *ex-ante* ambiguous. More generally, whether policy interventions improving minority status lead to more empathy or hostility among members of the majority group is an important question, which remains open to debate (Beaman et al., 2009).

[1] Lyndon B. Johnson: "We Shall Overcome" March 15, 1965 Washington, D.C.

[2] Southern counties covered by the VRA experienced an increase in Black representation in county offices (Bernini et al., 2022), in spending on education and infrastructure (Cascio and Washington, 2014; Bernini et al., 2022) as well as improvements in labor market outcomes (Aneja and Avenancio-Leon, 2019) and in policing practices (Facchini et al., 2020).

[3] While President Johnson asserted that "[t]he time of justice has now come. I tell you that I believe sincerely that no force can hold it back," he also noted that "[a]s a man whose roots go deeply into Southern soil... I know how difficult it is to reshape the attitudes and the structure of our society" (Johnson, 1965).

On the one hand, many of the gains experienced by Black Americans also spilled over to segments of the white society (Wright, 2013).[4] In addition, the VRA might have fostered inter-group contact, thereby lowering racial prejudice and stereotypes (Allport, 1954; Hajnal, 2001; Bursztyn et al., 2021) and reducing whites' initial opposition to racial equality. On the other hand, racially conservative whites saw Black advancement as a threat to the 'old way of life'. Fears of "Black takeover" were common among southern whites, and might have been amplified by the nature of the VRA, which was perceived as a strong form of federal intervention imposing a new social order. Since mandated departures from existing social norms can generate strong reactions to preserve the status quo (Rudman and Fairchild, 2004), the success of the VRA in increasing Black representation may have triggered persistent backlash among the dominant white group.

In this paper, we make progress on this issue, providing causal evidence on whether and how the VRA affected race relations in the U.S. South at the local level. We assemble a unique dataset on county-level voter registration rates by race, which we combine with data on local Black elected officials, to examine the effects of the VRA on political participation by race. Voter registration records are collected and maintained by county offices. They are not routinely collated in official publications and, to the best of our knowledge, registration by county *and* race has never been systematically gathered for the entire U.S. South over the period considered in this study. For our analysis, we digitized new information from official records sourced from the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project archives, spanning 10 states of the former confederacy over the period 1956-1980.

As shown in previous work, pre-determined variation in the Black population share is related to changes in overall turnout (Cascio and Washington, 2014) and Black representation (Bernini et al., 2022) induced by the VRA. We expect racial patterns of mobilization to also be related to the pre-existing share of African Americans. A key concern when studying the effects of the VRA is that the pre-determined county racial composition might have had direct effects on changes in registration rates and political preferences even in the absence of coverage. For this reason, following Cascio and Washington (2014) and Bernini et al. (2022), we use non-covered counties in the former Confederacy to form a suitable comparison group. In other words, we compare the evolution of Black and white registration rates, before and after the VRA, between covered and non-covered counties with different 1960 African American population shares. The identifying assumption is

[4] As pointed out by Wright, "Among white leaders of Panola county there was generally a sense that voting changes had benefited not merely [B]lacks but also whites," see (Wright, 2013), page 207.

that, absent federal intervention, registration rates by race would have evolved along parallel trends in the two groups of counties. The absence of pre-trends in the years leading up to the VRA, documented in the literature (Cascio and Washington, 2014; Bernini et al., 2022) and confirmed in our setting below, lends support to our identification strategy.

Using our triple difference-in-differences (DDD) research design, we find that covered counties with larger 1960 shares of African Americans experience a faster growth in Black and white registration rates. The increase in Black political participation occurs immediately after the passage of the VRA, whereas whites start to register more only in the early 1970s. By 1980, a 10 percentage point increase in the share of African Americans in the population leads respectively to a 3.5 and a 2.1 percentage point increase in the growth of Black and white registration rates. These results are robust to estimating long-difference regressions and implementing a Geographic Regression Discontinuity (GRD) design that focuses on counties located at the border between covered and non-covered states. We discuss additional robustness checks, including evidence for the lack of pre-trends, below, when presenting our results.

We interpret the rise in whites' political engagement as evidence of counter-mobilization, or backlash, in response to Black empowerment. We explore the drivers of whites' behavior using different, complementary strategies. First, we focus on the most immediate and visible mark of Black progress: the election of African American officials. We exploit differences in pre-existing electoral rules, which were crucial for minority representation (Trebbi et al., 2008; Bernini et al., 2022). As a preliminary, important step, we document that the VRA leads to gains in Black office holding only in counties electing commissioners by single member districts.[5] Interestingly, these counties do not experience a faster increase in Black registration, but they witness an immediate and persistent increase in *white* registration in the aftermath of the VRA. This is consistent with whites perceiving Black office holding as a threat to the status quo, and reacting by registering and voting more.

We obtain similar results relying on a different source of variation. Specifically, we estimate event-studies to track the evolution of white registration rates before and after the election of the first African American in the county. We find that, while covered counties do not experience any differential change in white political participation before

[5]The effect of electoral rules on minority representation depends on the size of the group. At-large elections penalize minority groups more when the latter represent a small share of the total population, because their vote gets diluted. As the share of minority voters increases, majority-minority districts reduce their ability to gain representation, making elections at-large preferable. See also Davidson and Grofman (1994) and Trebbi et al. (2008).

the election of the first African American officer, white registration rates spike right after the election of the first Black official and continue to rise up to ten year later. This effect is not confined to covered counties experiencing the first episode of Black office holding, but also spreads to neighboring counties that have not yet elected an African American. However, consistent with our (threat-based) interpretation, the impact of the first election of a Black American becomes weaker as we consider more distant counties.

Next, we document that both Black and white registration rates increase more in counties where African Americans are more educated. One explanation, in line with our previous results, is that the VRA increased Black political mobilization more in places where Black Americans were more educated. In response to the higher Black registration rates, whites also registered more. This trend is not evident along other margins that might be correlated with the level of education of African Americans. In particular, more urban counties experience an increase in African American, but not in white, registration. These results are consistent with the notion of a biracial coalition for economic growth that emerged in southern urban areas (Wright, 2013). They also suggest that, in these (more urban) counties, whites did not perceive the growth in Black registration rates as a threat.

We have so far interpreted whites' political behavior as evidence of backlash. To more directly examine the effects of the VRA on whites' racial attitudes, we use the local press. Estimating our DDD design, we show that local newspapers in covered counties with a higher Black population share not only mention the words "Black" and "Negro" more frequently after the VRA, but also become more likely to talk about Black Americans using stereotypical and disparaging terms. We also show that the worsening of racial attitudes induced by the VRA is highly persistent over time. Using nationally representative survey data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Studies (CCES) between 2008 and 2018, we document that white respondents living in counties that were covered and had a higher 1960 Black population share are less supportive of affirmative action and hold higher levels of racial resentment. The effects of the VRA are not confined to racial attitudes, but have important implications for the actions taken by whites: we find that the number of hate crimes committed by white perpetrators against African Americans between 2000 and 2018 is significantly higher in covered counties with higher Black population shares in 1960.

Our paper contributes to the growing literature on the effects of the VRA, which has documented that the legislation increased turnout and public goods provision (Cascio and Washington, 2014), fostered African American representation in county offices (Bernini

et al., 2022), and ameliorated conditions for African Americans in different domains, such as labor markets (Aneja and Avenancio-Leon, 2019) and policing practices (Facchini et al., 2020). We complement these papers by leveraging novel data on race-specific registration rates at the county-level. Existing studies that have analyzed changes in whites' racial attitudes and behavior at the state level provide evidence of white resistance to civil rights. Kuziemko and Washington (2018) show that racially conservative whites leave the Democratic Party after it embraces the civil right agenda. Focusing on the broadening of federal intervention in 1975 to tackle discrimination against language minority groups, Ang (2019) finds that the expansion of pre-clearence provisions leads to whites' backlash. Eubank and Fresh (2021) document an increase in Black prison admissions in states covered by Section 5 of the VRA, which the authors interpret as evidence of racially motivated felons' disenfranchisement. On the other hand, focusing on whites' attitudes towards Black officials across cities between 1984 and 1992, Hajnal (2001) uncovers a positive change in the white vote and in the racial sentiments toward Black mayors. To the best of our knowledge, we are the first to systematically analyze the political behavior of both Black and white voters at the county-level, providing causal evidence on how local gains brought about by the VRA changed the political behavior along racial lines in the U.S. South.

Our findings also speak to the broader literature on race relations in the United States. Ang (2020) documents that the blockbuster movie *The Birth of a Nation*, which provided a revisionist account of the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Ku Klux Klan and was rife with disparaging racial stereotypes, led to a significant increase in lynchings and race riots, and worsened whites' racial attitudes in the long run. Derenoncourt and Montialoux (2021) evaluate the effects of the 1966 Fair Labor Standards Act, and show that the expansion of the minimum wage was key to reduce racial wage inequality between 1960 and 1970. Derenoncourt et al. (2022) and Bayer and Charles (2018) document the persistence of the racial gap in, respectively, wealth and earnings over time. Chetty et al. (2020) examine the sources of racial disparities in the U.S., concluding that, in order to reduce the income gap between Black and white Americans a substantial relocation of Black individuals across both neighborhood and class lines would be needed.[6] We complement this literature by analyzing the effects of the VRA, which is viewed as "one of the most effective pieces of civil rights legislation in U.S. history" (Cascio and Washington, 2014). Our findings indicate that laws aimed at ameliorating the conditions of minority groups

[6]See also Smith and Welch (1989) and Neal and Johnson (1996) for earlier important contributions, and Altonji and Blank (1999) for a review of the literature.

may trigger backlash among majority group members and lead to a persistent worsening of inter-group relations.[7]

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides background information on the VRA and its enforcement. Section 3 introduces the dataset used in the analysis, and Section 4 presents our main results. Section 5 studies the link between Black office holding and political participation, whereas section 6 provides further evidence on whites' backlash. Section 7 concludes.

2 Background

The passage of the VRA marked a dramatic change in the balance of power between state and federal governments in the U.S. Under Section 4 of the Act, jurisdictions that imposed a test or device restricting the right to vote and experienced a turnout rate below 50% in the 1964 Presidential election were placed under strict federal monitoring. As a result, six of the eleven states of the former Confederacy – Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia – were fully covered by the Act's special provisions, and one state – North Carolina – was partially covered. Under Section 5 of the Act, covered jurisdictions had to seek pre-clearance by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia or by the Attorney General of any change in legislation affecting voting. Furthermore, federal examiners could be dispatched to monitor activities in these jurisdictions' polling places, and all covered jurisdictions were forced to eliminate literacy test provisions.

How did southern jurisdictions covered by Act react to federal intervention? The VRA was met with open defiance by the white ruling political class. The constitutionality of the VRA was immediately challenged (*South Carolina vs Katzenbach 1966*). As its special measures stood the scrutiny of the court, numerous attempts to circumvent the Act with vote dilution tactics followed (Trebbi et al., 2008). Such tactics proved, however, to be short-lived as courts promptly redressed violations of the VRA, preventing a remake of the institutional disenfranchisement that took place at the end of Reconstruction. In particular, thanks to the enforcement of pre-clearance provisions, pre-existing electoral rules more favourable to the election of minority candidates, e.g. election by single member districts (SMD), were safeguarded (Bernini et al., 2022). As the legal apparatus put in place by the Act withstood the attacks of the racially conservative whites, African Amer-

[7]In this respect, our results are also related to recent work by Wheaton (2020), who shows that all major U.S. social policy laws introduced since the 1960s were followed by significant opposition.

icans scored significant wins in county-level elective offices and experienced considerable gains in several other domains, e.g public spending, labour markets, policing. As pointed out by (Wright, 2013), "for most part, these gains have not been realized at the expense of white residents" (page 208) and, in fact, in many urban areas "[B]lack representation did not threaten economic progress but fostered instead a biracial coalition for economics growth" (page 209). Hence, the very success of the VRA could have brought a positive change in racial relations in the U.S. South. Yet, those "shared economic gains" came into place against the backdrop of a racial social order deeply rooted in the Jim Crow laws that had shaped the Southern society since the end of Reconstruction. President Johnson himself, while announcing the introduction of federal legislation to tackle Black disenfranchisement, stressed how difficult it would be "to reshape the attitudes and the structure of our society." Indeed, racial attitudes, rather than economic factors, have been shown to be the driving force behind the fall of the fortunes of the Democratic party in the U.S. South (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018).

The ruling white political class was not ready to relinquish or share power with African Americans. Fear of Black takeover was widespread. In 1973, as the victory of the first Black Mayor of Atlanta was imminent, his white opponent's billboards proclaimed "Atlanta's too young to die... One can almost see them singing and dancing in the street in anticipation of a [B]lack takeover" (McDonald, 2003, pp. 95–96). Fear and mistrust of Black leadership could wane once Blacks had the opportunity to prove that their election did not harm white interests. But, cultural stereotypes involving social groups can be incredibly persistent (Bordalo et al., 2016), and the change in social norms mandated through legislation could just as well stoke racial resentment leading to backlash by those groups feeling threatened by the new social order. Hence, whether the increase in Black representation brought about by the VRA improved attitudes of whites toward minority elected officials or led to whites' backlash remains an open empirical question. In this paper, we fill this gap to provide causal evidence on whether and how the Black progress brought about by the VRA affected racial patterns of attitudes and political behaviour in the U.S. South.

3 Data

The main goal of our analysis is to study the link between Black empowerment and racial patterns of political participation in the U.S. South. To carry out our analysis, we have built a rich dataset, which is described below.

Since the end of the XIX century the vast majority of U.S. states have adopted registration laws as a means of keeping track of voters and preventing electoral fraud (Keyssar, 2009). Voter registration takes place at either the county or the municipal level. In all the eleven states of the former Confederacy county offices are in charge of maintaining voter registration records. Individual states have ample leeway on the administration of federal, state and local elections. In particular, even if the 15th amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from restricting voting rights on the basis of race, in the pre-VRA era, an array of state specific registration procedures was put in place to disenfranchise African Americans. Furthermore, as argued by James (1987), states "allow local registrars wide latitude. As a result of this discretion, registration practices of some states vary widely from county to county."

Given that voter registration records are collected and maintained by county offices, and not routinely collated in official publications, data by race at this level are difficult to obtain Cascio and Washington (2014). To the best of our knowledge, this information has never been systematically gathered for the entire U.S. South over the period considered in this study.

To fill this gap, we have assembled a novel dataset using several sources. From the archive of the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project (VEP) in Atlanta, we have located official records on voter registrations for all states of the former confederacy, with the exception of Texas. Most of the records originate from Secretary of State reports, while some have been obtained from the U.S. Justice Department and surveys of local governments carried out by the VEP. In addition to the VEP records, we have located further information in United States Commission on Civil Rights (1959) and United States Commission on Civil Rights (1961). We have then digitized all these records, and combined them with supplementary information from Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (1992) to obtain a panel dataset on the number of registered voters by race at the county-level for 584 counties spanning the period 1956-1980. Using county-level data on the voting age population by race, we have then built race-specific voters registration rates. More details on the data collection are reported in the Appendix.

The geographic span of our data is illustrated in Figure 1. As shown in Appendix Table A1 in 1960 Blacks were significantly less likely to register to vote both in covered and non-covered counties, compared to whites. In particular, only 31% of voting age Blacks registered in covered counties, whereas the corresponding figure was 50% in non-covered counties. This compares with a registration rate of 83 and 86% respectively for white voters. By 1980, political participation among African Americans increased,

but while it doubled in covered counties, the increase in non-covered counties is much more modest. As for white registration we see an overall decline, more pronounced in non-covered counties.

As for the control variables that we will be use throughout the analysis, in 1960, covered counties had a significantly higher share of African Americans in the population compared to non-covered counties (37% v. 20%). They were also smaller, poorer, slightly more urban and more unskilled. The two groups were instead similar when it comes the unemployment rate. Finally, covered counties experienced more episodes of both pro- and anti- Black protest in the period leading up to the VRA.

Since as shown in Figure 1 registration data are not available for all counties in the U.S. South, we are concerned about possible selection patterns. The data on county characteristics for the overall South, summarized in panel B of Appendix Table A1, indicate that our sample is broadly comparable to the entire South, although the share of African Americans tends to be larger. We will address the issue of selection more formally when we discuss our identification strategy.

4 The VRA and political participation

We are now ready to analyze the effect of the VRA on racial patterns of political participation captured by voter registrations by race. We start by outlining our identification strategy and then turn to the presentation of our main findings.

4.1 Estimation strategy

The VRA, together with the removal of restrictions to the franchise, brought in special measures – known as coverage – to protect African Americans from the infringement of their political rights. Jurisdictions that imposed a test or device restricting the right to vote and experienced a turnout rate below 50% in the 1964 Presidential election were placed under strict federal monitoring. As a result, six of the eleven states of the former Confederacy – Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia – were fully covered by the Act's special provisions, and one state – North Carolina – was partially covered.

As shown by Cascio and Washington (2014), after the VRA the increase in turnout was positively related to the pre-existing share of African Americans in the county population. Hence, we expect to observe a similar pattern in voter registration. In particular, coverage

should lead to a grater increase in Black registration rates within counties with a larger share of Blacks. Moreover, if the federal intervention triggers white counter-mobilization, we should observe a similar pattern for white registration rates.

Hence, a straightforward way to estimate the effect of the VRA on voter registration would be to investigate how the relationship between the pre-existing share of African Americans in the county population and registration rates changed over time within counties covered by the Act. However, since these counties might have experienced changes in these outcomes even in the absence of the specific provisions included in the VRA, we combine the strategy discussed above with the introduction of a suitable comparison group, including the remaining counties of the former Confederacy that, although not covered by the VRA, had a similar history of African American discrimination.

We thus estimate whether covered counties with larger pre-existing African American population shares experienced a differential change in Black and white registration rates – from before to after the VRA – when compared to the other southern counties that were not covered. Our identifying assumption is that, in the absence of the VRA, the two groups would have experienced similar trends in voter registration. Given that our data do not cover the universe of southern counties, one concern could be that reporting counties systematically differ by treatment status. To rule out the possibility that selection might bias our results, we examine the likelihood to report by treatment status. Our results in column (1) of Table 1 show that while reporting is positively correlated with the share of African Americans in the population, there is no difference by coverage status. Next, to corroborate our identifying assumption, we inspect pre-trends using an event study approach where we examine the relationship between political participation and the share of African Americans in 1960 over time, separately by treatment status. Formally, we estimate the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} PoliticalParticipation_{c,s,t} &= \sum_{n>1956} \gamma_n D_n^t Black_{1960} + \\ &+ \sum_{n>1956} \theta_n D_n^t \, Black_{1960} \times VRA_{c,s} + \\ &+ \mathbf{X}'_{c,s}\beta + I_{s,t} + I_c + \epsilon_{c,s} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where $PoliticalParticipation_{c,s,t}$ is the natural log of our measure of political participation, observed for each county c, state s, and year t, while $Black_{1960}$ is the share of African Americans in the county population in 1960. $VRA_{c,s}$ is an indicator taking a value of one for counties covered in 1965 and zero otherwise. D_n^t is an indicator taking a value of one

if $n = t$, and $\mathbf{X'}_{c,s}$ is a vector of pre-VRA controls. $I_{s,t}$ and I_c are state-year interactions and county fixed effects, respectively, while $\epsilon_{c,s}$ is the idiosyncratic error term.[8] As our specification includes county fixed effects, we omit 1960 to identify the model.

In Figure 3 we plot our main coefficient of interest θ_n, which captures the difference in the gradient between the treatment and the control groups, focusing on presidential election years. Panel (a) shows the pattern of total registration rates, whereas (b) and (c) focus respectively on Black and white registrations. Before the VRA's passage, we do not see any statistically significant patterns by treatment status. The absence of pre-trends thus lends support to our identifying assumption. On the other hand, in the post-VRA period, the treatment-control difference is strongly positive, statistically significant, and broadly increasing over time. The findings of panel (a) mirror earlier results for overall political participation documented by Cascio and Washington (2014). Panels (b) and (c) show that this aggregate effect is driven by both Black and white registrations. Interestingly, coverage affects Black registration rates soon after its introduction: as early as 1968, a 10 percentage points rise in the 1960 share of African Americans (for example from 20% to 30%) in the county population leads to a 11% increase in the growth of Black registration rates. This effect grows over time and by 1980 the estimated corresponding effect reaches 13%.

On the other hand, white voters seem to react with a significant lag since we do not observe a significant differential increase in white registration rates until the presidential election of 1972 – seven years after the enactment of the VRA. Yet, the large jump observed in 1972, and the positive and stable coefficients observed until the end of the sample period, imply that covered counties with larger shares of Blacks experience a large and sustained increase in white voters registration rates.

4.2 Long difference analysis

Our analysis so far shows that federal intervention led to a substantial change in political participation in covered counties of the former Confederacy. In particular, racial patterns of voters registration show that coverage led to an immediate increase in Black political participation and, subsequently, also to an increase in white voter registration. These patterns are consistent with anecdotal evidence of white counter-mobilization in response to Black political empowerment.

To assess the robustness of these findings and then explore channels through which

[8]Standard errors are clustered at the county-level and all specifications are weighted by the county population in 1960.

Black empowerment led to white counter-mobilization, we now focus on long run growth in registration rates by estimating the following long difference model:

$$\Delta PoliticalParticipation_{c,s} = \gamma Black_{1960} + \theta Black_{1960} \times VRA_{c,s} + \mathbf{X'}_{c,s} + I_s + \epsilon_{c,s} \quad (2)$$

where $\Delta PoliticalParticipation_{c,s}$ measures the change in the natural log of registration rates between 1960 and 1980, $Black_{1960}$ is the 1960 share of African Americans in the county population and VRA_c is an indicator variable equal to 1 for counties covered by the VRA in 1965 and zero otherwise. $\mathbf{X'}_{c,s}$ is a vector of pre-VRA controls and I_s are state fixed effects, capturing state trends in this specification.

The estimation results in Table 2, columns (1) and (2), confirm that between 1960 and 1980, Black and white registration rates in covered counties with larger shares of African Americans grow faster than in comparable counties not covered by the VRA. In particular a 10 percentage point increase in the Black share in the population leads respectively to a 15% and 2% increase in the growth of Black and white registration rates.

The lack of pre-trends in the pre-VRA period corroborates our assumption that in the absence of coverage, the two groups would have experienced the same patterns of political participation. Yet, as the federal legislation targeted jurisdictions with the worst record of discrimination, the two groups are likely to differ on other important dimensions. In particular, the Outer South was more acquiescent than the Deep South towards the Civil Rights agenda that started to emerge in the post WWII period. It is therefore possible that covered and non-covered counties began to experience different trends in factors, which could later affect political participation, biasing our results (Bernini et al., 2022). To rule out this possibility, in Table 1, we analyze pre-trends in variables capturing the evolution of the so called Southern Enclave of authoritarian rule (Mickey, 2015).

Panel A focuses on pre-VRA trends for the overall sample. In columns (1)-(4), we consider proxies of white racial conservativism (KKK – column 1 – and lynching – column 2), Black labor coercion (share of land devoted to cotton production, column 3) and Black political activism (presence of NAACP chapters, column 4). In columns (5)-(9) we consider several electoral outcomes. We start by comparing support for the 1964 Republican presidential candidate Goldwater – who ran on a largely anti-civil rights platform – to that of Eisenhower in 1952 (column 5), and then, more generally, we consider long-run changes in Republican presidential support between 1940 and 1960 (column 6). In column (7) we examine patterns in the competitiveness of gubernatorial races as captured by the vote share received by the lead candidate in the Democratic primary. In columns (8) and (9), we analyze presidential and gubernatorial turnout. In column (10) and (11) we consider

malapportionment of the State House and Senate, potentially associated with disproportionate power of racially conservative rural areas. Finally in columns (12) and (13) we study demographic trends, considering both overall population (column 12) and the share of African Americans (column 13). We find no evidence of pre-trends, except for our proxy of Black labor coercion. Our results indicate that covered counties with larger shares of African Americans remained more reliant on cotton production, historically related to the coercion of Black workers. This result points to the fact that if anything, there could be negative selection into treatment. Thus, in the absence of federal intervention, covered counties would have experienced a smaller increase in Black political participation.

The lack of pre-trends in Black registration rates and other measures of political participation is reassuring. However, covered and non-covered counties display substantial differences on a number of economics and demographic characteristics that could raise further concerns, since heterogeneity on observables may increase the sensitivity to potential bias on unobservables systematically correlated with coverage. For this reason, we additionally implement a Geographic Regression Discontinuity (GRD) design, comparing more homogeneous counties straddling the border between covered and non-covered states. Figure 2 shows that while covered counties in the overall sample display significant differences along several characteristics compared to those not covered, county-pairs on the border do not display statistically significant differences in covariates levels and trends. Thus, as in Bernini et al. (2022), we focus on those contiguous counties to combine our triple-diff estimation strategy with a GDR design by estimating the following model:

$$\Delta PoliticalParticipation_{c,p,s} = \gamma Black_{1960} + \theta Black_{1960} \times VRA_{c,s} + \mathbf{X}'_{c,s} + I_{c,p} + \epsilon_{c,p,s} \quad (3)$$

where $\Delta PoliticalParticipation_{c,p,s}$ indicates that county c can be repeated for all pairs p it belongs to, straddling a common state boundary. We include in our specification county pair fixed effects $I_{c,p}$, (county-pair specific trends in our long-run specification) and standard errors are clustered by judicial division and corresponding border segment.

The estimation results reported in columns (3)-(4) of Table 2 confirm that covered counties with larger shares of African Americans experience faster growth in both Black and white registration rates, and if anything the effects are slightly larger in the border sample.[9]

[9]Since some pre-existing institutional characteristics might vary discontinuously at the border, the GRD design cannot completely rule out the issue of negative selection into treatment we have already discussed. To address this concern, in panel B of Table 1 we repeat the pre-trend analysis focusing on the border sample. Our results indicate the absence of significant pre-trends by coverage status, with the only possible exception being presidential turnout, which is however only significant at the 10 percent

4.3 Political mobilization and counter-mobilization

Our results provide robust evidence of an increase in political participation of whites and African Americans in counties that are both covered and have large Black populations. The increase in Black registration rates is not surprising as it confirms previous findings indicating that the federal legislation was successful in achieving its primary goal, e.g. the enfranchisement of African Americans (Cascio and Washington, 2014). At the same time, the pattern in white registration rates indicates that areas that experienced more progress in the advancement of minority rights also recorded a larger increase in political participation of the white majority. This is consistent with anecdotal evidence of white counter-mobilization in response to Black empowerment, or whites' backlash. Yet, Black communities covered by the VRA were far from being an homogeneous block. For example, covered jurisdictions historically had different electoral rules more or less favourable to the election of minorities. White attitudes toward Black progress also varied substantially in the region. For white entrepreneurs in urban areas, Black empowerment represented in fact an opportunity to "overturn the old powers and the planters who had blocked racial and economic change" Wirt (1997). As a result, the reaction of whites to Black political empowerment is unlikely to be homogeneous.

In this section we further explore patterns of white mobilization, focusing on two issues. First, we ask whether Black registration is always perceived as a threat by white voters, examining whether whites are always more likely to register when African Americans do and vice versa. Second, as Black political participation eventually led to tangible gains for Black communities, we ask how white voters reacted to them, considering the most immediate and visible mark of Black progress, namely the election of Black officials.

To shed light on the first issue, we need additional sources of variation potentially leading to different patterns of Black registration in areas that are both covered and have larger shares of African Americans. To this end, we focus on individual, sociological and political factors such as Black education and employment status, political organization – proxied by the presence of NAACP chapters and KKK Klaverns – and the degree of urbanization, which could matter both because of proximity to registration facilities and because of greater Black economic independence from the old white agrarian powers. Using these variables, we augment our baseline long difference specification deploying a quadruple-difference model where we allow our main effects to vary with the variable of interest. In Figure 4 we plot our main coefficient of interest, the triple interaction between the 1960 share of African Americans, coverage and the variable of interest.

level.

Starting with Black education and employment status, we find that covered counties with larger shares of African Americans experience a larger increase in Black registration when African Americans are more educated, whereas employment status does not play a role. Thus, if white voters counter-mobilize in response to Black voters' mobilization, we should observe that a more educated African American population would lead to a further increase in white registration rates in covered counties with larger shares of African Americans. At the same time, Black employment status should not have a similar effect.

As shown in Figure 4, whites in covered areas with larger shares of African Americans are indeed more likely to mobilize if Blacks those areas are more educated. On the other hand, an increase in the likelihood of Black employment leads to a relative decrease in white political participation, indicating that African Americans who are more likely to be employed but not more likely to register to vote are in fact less likely to be perceived as a threat. Since white education and employment status may act as a confounder, we also examine their effect, and we find no impact neither on white nor on Black registration. Turning to urbanization, we find that covered counties that are both more Black and more urban experience a faster growth in Black registration, but interestingly we do not uncover a corresponding additional growth in white registration. This implies that whites in covered counties that are both more Black and more urban do not perceive African American mobilization as a threat, a pattern consistent with the so called biracial coalition for economic growth, which as argued by Wright (2013), emerged in southern urban areas. Last, we analyze pre-existing political organization, proxied by the presence of NAAPC chapters and KKK klaverns, and we find that is does not play any role.

Now we turn to the analysis of the impact of one of the most visible signs of Black empowerment, namely the election of Black officials. How did whites react to Black electoral gains? Anecdotal evidence suggests that white Southerners looked at the prospect of Black office holding with fear, and accounts of a possible "Black takeover" became widespread (McDonald, 2003). At the same time, this type of reaction may have been short-lived once African Americans had the opportunity to show that their election would not harm white interests (Wright, 2013). The sustained increase in Black and white registration in covered counties with larger Black shares does not indicate that backlash was a temporary phenomenon. Yet, the triple difference estimation strategy of our main analysis does not allow us to distinguish between Black office holding and other factors affecting mobilization. To tackle this issue, we exploit an additional source of variation, namely differences in pre-existing electoral rules, which turned out to be crucial to the election of Black officials in the aftermath of the VRA. In particular, we distinguish between counties

belonging to states that – before the passage of the VRA – elected their county governing bodies by single member districts (SMD) as opposed to those that used elections at large or mixed systems (Bernini et al., 2022). The enforcement of the VRA's pre-clearance provisions in covered counties safeguarded SMD arrangements more favorable to the election of minorities (Trebbi et al., 2008).

We start by showing how pre-existing electoral rules affect the election of Black officials and then turn to the analysis of their effect on Black and white registration rates. Column (1) of Table 3, confirms that the increase in Black office holding is concentrated in covered SMD counties with larger Black population shares. Turning to mobilization, we find that, although African Americans in covered counties with larger shares of Blacks are not more likely to register in the presence of SMD elections, whites do in fact register more. In other words, even if African Americans do not mobilize more, the presence of electoral rules increasing their odds of winning office leads to an increase in white counter-mobilization. In Figure 5, we further explore registration patterns in SMD counties over time, using an event study approach. Interestingly, and differently from the aggregate pattern where counter-mobilization efforts only started in 1972, we find that in the presence of SMD, the whites' backlash is observable already in 1968. This indicates that whites perceived Black office holding as a threat earlier on and immediately responded to it.

5 Black office holding and political participation

Our analysis so far shows that white voters generally perceive Black empowerment as a threat. White counter-mobilization is particularly striking within covered counties with electoral rules more favourable to the election of African Americans. Since we also find that the same counties do in fact elect more Black officials, we interpret this result as whites' backlash against Black office holding. However, since electoral rules may also potentially affect white registration for other reasons, in this section we provide further evidence on the direct link between coverage, Black office holding and whites' backlash.

In particular, we explore patterns in registration rates by race over time exploiting a different event study approach whereby we look for changes after the first African American is elected into office, separately by coverage status. In other words, the election of the first Black official in any given county becomes our event of interest. If this event generates whites' backlash, we would expect that white registration rates should increase soon after it, whereas we should not observe any significant patterns before. Moreover, if white voters are opposed to the federal intervention that led to the event, the increase in

white registration should be higher when the event takes place in covered as opposed to non-covered counties.

In Figure 6 we report the difference in racial patterns of registration between covered and non-covered counties, using a ten-year window before and after the first election of an African American into office. As we can see, Black voter registration rates do not display any differential pattern over time. On the other hand, while we do not find a significant increase in white registration in the ten years leading up to the first election of an African American, white registration rates increase soon after the election of the first Black and then continue to rise. Thus, the election of the first Black into office leads to faster growth in white registration in covered counties compared to those that are not covered. This increase, which is immediate and persistent, provides evidence of whites' backlash against the federal legislation when the latter brings electoral gains for African Americans.

Next we explore if this type of backlash is limited to constituencies electing African Americans or whether the fear of Black office-holding also affects areas in close proximity. To this end, we focus on counties that have not elected a Black official, but that share a border with those that elected an African American for the first time. Figure 7 summarizes our results. Once again, we do not find any pattern for Black registration rates, whereas whites in covered counties register significantly more after the occurrence of the Black office holding event in a neighbouring county. The increase is slightly less pronounced than in counties directly experiencing the event, but it is still sizeable and persistent.

The counter-mobilization of whites as soon as African Americans are first elected into office is consistent with anecdotal accounts of whites' backlash. This backlash is persistent, implying that whites do not become more tolerant towards minorities as they become more accustomed with Black office holding. To the contrary, the fear of "Black takeover" also spreads to neighboring areas.

6 Additional Evidence on Whites' Backlash

Our results so far provide robust evidence that the VRA led to a sharp rise in Black and white political mobilization. We find that whites mobilize in response to Black political empowerment, particularly when the latter leads to Black office holding. We interpret the surge in white registration rates in covered counties with larger shares of African Americans as whites' backlash. However, since we cannot directly measure racial attitudes behind the pattern we have uncovered, in this section we provide further evidence on how the VRA affected racial sentiment in the U.S. South.

6.1 Evidence from Local Newspapers

Starting from the mid to late 1950s, both the American National Election Studies (ANES) and Gallup began to elicit whites' racial attitudes. However, due to limitations in both geographic coverage and sample size, neither survey can be used for a systematic analysis of the effects of the VRA at the county-level.[10] For this reason, we turn to local newspapers, whose language largely responds to readers' demands (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2010), and can thus be used to measure, albeit imperfectly, the attitudes of the white electorate towards Black people and the "race issue" more broadly. We compile a list of articles from Newspapers.com, using local newspapers covering around 200 counties in the U.S. South, to measure the frequency of selected terms in each county and year from 1960 to 1980.[11] Then, we implement our main DDD design to test whether local newspapers in covered counties with a larger Black population share display different patterns in race-related content.[12]

In Figure 8, Panel A, the dependent variable is the frequency of the word "Black" in a county-year, scaled by the frequency of the word "and" to account for differential newspapers' circulation, as in Fouka et al. (2022). To ease interpretation, the dependent variable is standardized by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation. Reassuringly, there is no evidence of "pre-trends." That is, local newspapers in covered and non-covered counties with a different Black population share mention the word "Black" to a similar extent before 1965. However, after the VRA, the frequency of the term "Black" increases steadily in covered counties with a higher Black population share, remaining substantially higher for almost ten years. This is consistent with the VRA raising the salience of the race issue more where the Black population may have represented a higher (economic, political, or social) threat to the white majority.

In Panel B of Figure 8, we consider the joint frequency of the word "Black" and a series of disparaging terms to measure *how* the local press talked about the race issue.[13] Again,

[10]The most detailed geographic identifier in Gallup is the state of residence. Even though the ANES includes the county of residence of respondents, the sample size and the number of counties covered are both very small.

[11]Note that our sample includes only 6 Black newspapers (relative to a total of 400 southern newspapers). The availability of southern counties with newspaper data varies over time: from 242 counties in 1960, to 177 counties in 1970 and 131 counties in 1980. The average number of counties over the period 1960-1980 is 193.

[12]Data on local newspapers is not available for all counties in our sample. Reassuringly, in unreported analyses, we verified that our main findings remain unchanged when restricting attention to the subset of counties for which newspapers data exists.

[13]In this analysis, we consider four disparaging terms associated with violence and crime. Further adding additional disparaging terms related to more extreme forms of violence only lead to minor changes in the estimated trends.

there is no evidence of pre-trends. After the VRA, newspapers in treatment counties become more likely to use racially charged terms when mentioning the word "Black." Relative to the patterns in Panel A, the effects of the VRA appear sooner, even though the coefficient becomes statistically significant at the 5% level only in 1968.

In Panels C and D, we replicate the previous analysis by replacing the word "Black" with the term "Negro." Qualitatively, the trends look the same. However, the effects already depicted in Panels A and B are larger in magnitude. This is consistent with the idea, convincingly argued by (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967) that the term "Negro" implied Black inferiority. The term become thus racially charged, and was quickly abandoned by mainstream newsagencies like the *Associated Press* and outlets like the *New York Times*.

Finally, in Appendix Figure A1, we consider the evolution of the frequency of the term "Wallace" (Panel A) and its joint occurrence with the term "Negro" (Panel B). George Wallace was a staunch opponent of racial integration, and a key figure within the southern white supremacist movement. We conjecture that, if the VRA triggered whites' backlash, as suggested by our previous results, mentions of George Wallace should increase more in covered counties with a higher Black population share, especially when considering them jointly with the word "Negro." Figure A1 confirms this prediction. Interestingly, coefficients on the triple interaction term peak in 1968, when Wallace ran for presidency as the candidate of the American Independent Party; they gradually decline since then, but, in Panel B, they remain statistically significant and positive.

6.2 Persistence of the Change in Whites' Racial Attitudes

Previous sections documented a strong effect of the VRA in the short- and medium-run. A related, important question is whether the patterns described above persisted, resulting in a permanent shift in whites' racial attitudes. On the one hand, whites' backlash may have disappeared, as the salience of the VRA faded away and as whites came to realize that Black Americans did not represent a threat to the pre-existing (political, economic, or social) order. Moreover, if the VRA favored inter-group interactions, whites' negative stereotypes against Black Americans might have gradually declined, as shown in other contexts (Allport, 1954; Bursztyn et al., 2021; Calderon et al., 2022). On the other hand, the VRA may have permanently increased whites' hostility. For instance, whites might have viewed the political and economic gains accruing to Black Americans as a direct threat to the racial hierarchy prevailing in the U.S. South for centuries. Hatred and grievances for the (actual or perceived) loss of "status" might have reinforced negative

racial attitudes among whites.

Evidence from the CCES. We begin by examining whites' attitudes reported in the Cooperative Congressional Election Studies (CCES) since the mid-2000s.[14] Since the outcomes are observed only after the implementation of the VRA, we can no longer estimate our preferred DDD regression. Instead, restricting the sample to white respondents living in the U.S. South, we estimate individual-level regressions that include survey year and state fixed effects, individual characteristics, our standard set of pre-VRA county controls (see equation 2), and the interaction between the 1960 Black population share and the coverage dummy.[15]

In columns (1) and (2) of Table 4, the dependent variable is support for affirmative action (specifically favoring Black Americans) and a measure of racial resentment, respectively.[16] To save space, we only report the coefficient, multiplied by 10 for readability, on the interaction between the covered dummy and the 1960 Black population share. The negative and statistically significant point estimate in column (1) indicates that white respondents living in covered counties with a higher Black population share in 1960 are less supportive of affirmative action. According to our estimates, a 10 percentage points increase in the 1960 Black population share (in a covered county) reduces whites' support for affirmative action by about 5.5 percent. Consistent with white respondents having higher degrees of racial resentment, the coefficient in column (3) is positive, even though it is not statistically significant at conventional levels.[17] Columns (2) and (4) replicate the analysis restricting the sample to counties for which data on registration rates is available. Results become slightly less precise for support for affirmative action and racial resentment, but the overall message is unchanged: white respondents living in covered counties that had a higher Black population share in 1960 display stronger racial hostility after 2008.

[14]The CCES is a large, nationally representative sample that was run for the first time in 2006, and has been widely used in the political economy and political science literature (Acharya et al., 2016; Giuliano and Tabellini, 2020; Hopkins et al., 2019). More details about the CCES sampling methodology and data can be found at `https://cces.gov.harvard.edu/`.

[15]Standard errors are clustered at the county-level. Individual controls include: age, age squared, education, marital and employment status, and dummies for gender and for deciles of household income. Since we cannot estimate DDD regressions, which exploit pre-post VRA variation and include county fixed effects, we interpret results obtained in this section as suggestive evidence on the (long-run) effects of the VRA on whites' racial attitudes.

[16]See Table A2 for the exact wording of questions, the range of answers, and the date in which questions were available.

[17]The p-value is 0.130.

The VRA and Hate Crimes. We complement the survey analysis above by examining the relationship between the VRA and racially motivated hate crimes in the long run. Following Calderon et al. (2022), we restrict attention to racially motivated hate crimes committed between 2000 and 2018 (included), and estimate the county-level counterpart of the individual regressions presented for the CCES in the previous paragraph.[18] As before, the main regressor of interest is the interaction between the coverage indicator and the 1960 Black population share. We control for state fixed effects and for the usual set of historical controls.[19]

We present results in Table 5. Panel A considers all the southern counties for which hate crime data is available, while Panel B restricts attention to the counties included in our main analysis. In column (1), the dependent variable is the number of hate crimes against Black victims committed by any perpetrator between 2000 and 2018, per 100,000 Black people.[20] Coefficients in both panels are positive and statistically significant, implying that, between 2000 and 2018, more hate crimes against Black Americans were committed in counties that were covered by the VRA and had a higher Black population share in 1960.

In columns (2) and (3), we consider hate crimes committed against non-Black minority and white victims, respectively.[21] Although positive, the point estimate in column (2) is an order of magnitude smaller than that in column (1), and it only reaches statistical significance in the restricted sample.[22] When focusing on white victims, instead, the relationship between the VRA and hate crimes disappears both in the sample of all southern counties, as well as in the restricted sample. The lack of association between the VRA and hate crimes against majority group members is further corroborated in Table A3. Here, we show that the VRA has no effect on hate crimes against individuals who belong to the majority group defined along ethnic (column 1), religious (column 2),

[18]Data on hate crimes is compiled by the FBI as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, and distributed by the Inter-University Consortium for Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan. The data is available since 1991, but the number of reporting agencies is initially very low, stabilizing only in the late 1990s. For this reason, and in order to keep the time window of the long-run analysis comparable to that used in the CCES, we focus on post-2000 period. For more details on hate crime data, see Calderon et al. (2022), Appendix C.2.

[19]As in the main analysis, regressions are weighed by 1960 population.

[20]Specifically, we scale the number of hate crimes by the Black population in 2000. Results are unchanged when using other years to define the hate crime rate.

[21]Hate crimes are scaled by the 2000 non-Black minority and white population, respectively.

[22]The partial spillover of violence against other minority groups is in line with the evidence presented in McConnell and Rasul (2021), who show that, after 9/11, whites' animosity against Arab Muslims resulted in higher hostility also against Hispanics.

or any other (column 3) dimension.[23]

Finally, in column (4) of Table 5, we replicate column (1) by restricting attention to hate crimes against Black Americans committed by white perpetrators only. Note that this likely represents a lower bound to the overall effect of the VRA on hate crimes committed by white offenders against African Americans, since for only about 65% of the cases, the race of the perpetrator is reported (and, in column 4, we exclude all hate crimes in which the perpetrator's race is not reported).[24] The coefficient is slightly more than half compared to the value in column (1), and remains positive and statistically significant in both samples. To gauge the magnitude of these effects, note that a 10 percentage point increase in the 1960 Black population share (in covered counties) is associated with 115 more hate crimes committed by white offenders against Black Americans per 100,000 people – or, about 8% relative to the sample mean in the southern sample.

Discussion. Taken together, results in this section indicate that the VRA triggered a persistent deterioration of whites' racial attitudes, which remain evident more than 40 years after the Act was passed. For one, white individuals living in counties where the VRA was more binding are less supportive of racial equality, are less likely to identify with the Democratic Party, and have lower preferences for redistribution. Also, and importantly, the effects of the VRA were not confined to attitudes, but also influenced *actions* of whites in the long run: counties that were covered by the VRA and had a higher Black population share have, still today, a higher number of hate crimes against Black Americans.

7 Conclusions

On August 6, 1965, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law, striking down the legal barriers that had disenfranchised Black Americans since 1890. Soon after, Black political participation soared, leading to tangible political and economic improvements for African American communities. While a large literature has documented that the VRA succeeded in promoting African American progress along several dimensions, it is less clear whether the Act also won the hearts and minds of racially conservative southern whites. More

[23]These three categories are all constructed as ratios using as denominator the white population in the county in 2000. The numerator considers hate crimes against individuals that belong to the ethnic majority of the county, to the religious majority of the county, or to any type of county-level majority (either ethnic or religious).

[24]Note, also, that almost 90% of the hate crimes against Black Americans for which the race of the perpetrator is reported have a white offender.

broadly, the extent to which policy interventions aimed at ameliorating the conditions of minority groups are successful in generating empathy among majority group members or, instead, trigger backlash remains an open, important question.

In this paper, we use a novel dataset on county-level voter registration rates by race, which we combine with data on local Black elected officials, to examine the effects of the VRA on political participation by race. We exploit a key provision of the VRA, coverage, and implement a triple difference-in-differences (DDD) design. We find that covered counties with a larger 1960 Black population share experience a faster growth in African American registration rates, which occurs immediately after the passage of the VRA. At the same time, however, the VRA also triggers a steep increase in white registration rates, which we interpret as counter-mobilization, or backlash. We argue and provide evidence that whites' response is driven by (actual or perceived) threat posed by heightened Black political representation.

We also show that the worsening of racial attitudes induced by the VRA is highly persistent over time. Using opinion survey data, we document that white respondents living in counties that were covered and had a higher 1960 Black population share are less supportive of affirmative action and hold higher levels of racial resentment, even fifty years after the enactment of the VRA. These effects are not confined to racial attitudes since we also find that, in the same counties, the number of hate crimes committed by white perpetrators against African Americans is persistently higher.

Findings in this paper paint a nuanced picture of the VRA. While the Act improved the conditions of Black Americans along multiple dimensions, it also triggered significant and long-lasting opposition among the white majority. Our results open the door to several, important questions. Can governments introduce legislation to ameliorate the conditions of minority groups without generating backlash among majority group members? Specifically for the U.S. context, how can laws improve whites' racial attitudes towards African Americans? More generally, under what conditions do formal policies change individuals' beliefs and social norms in the society? We leave these questions to future research.

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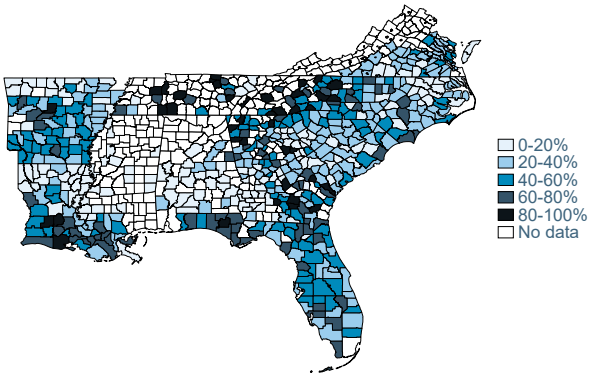
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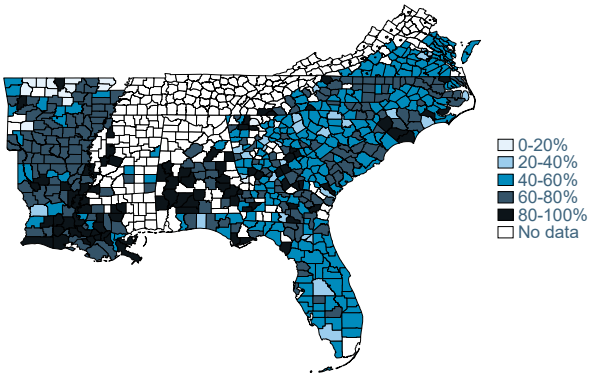
Wright, G. (2013). *Sharing the Prize: The Economics of the Civil Rights Revolution in the American South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Figure 1. Registration rates by race, 1960-1980

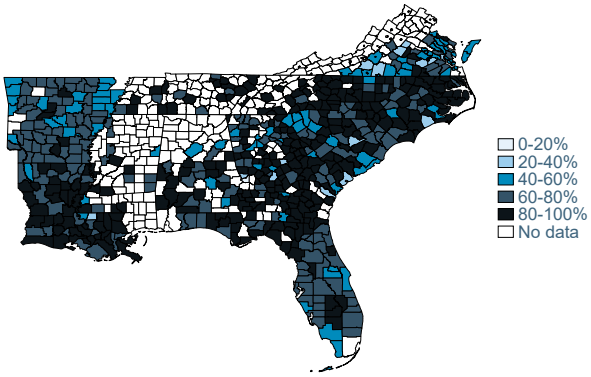
(a) Black voter registration rates, 1960



(b) Black voter registration rates, 1980



(c) White voter registration rates, 1960



(d) White voter registration rates, 1980

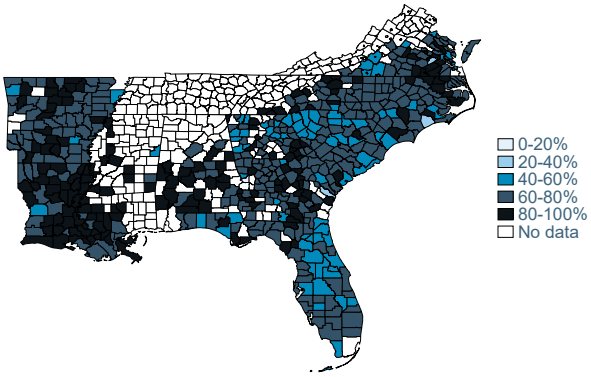
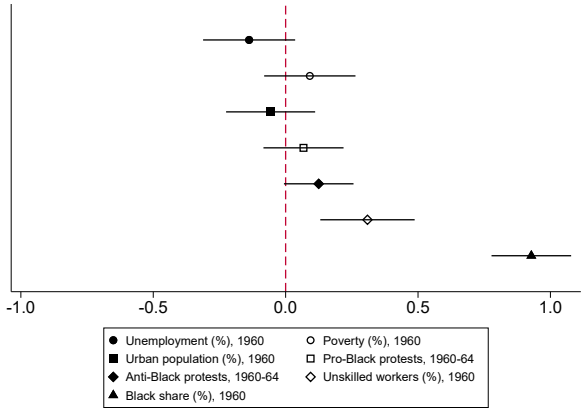
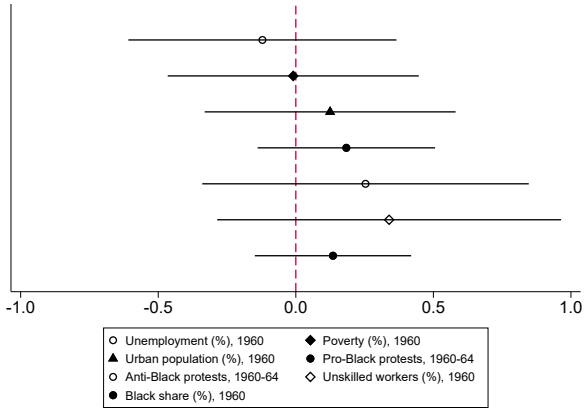


Figure 2. Balancing tests: levels and trends

(a) Overall sample

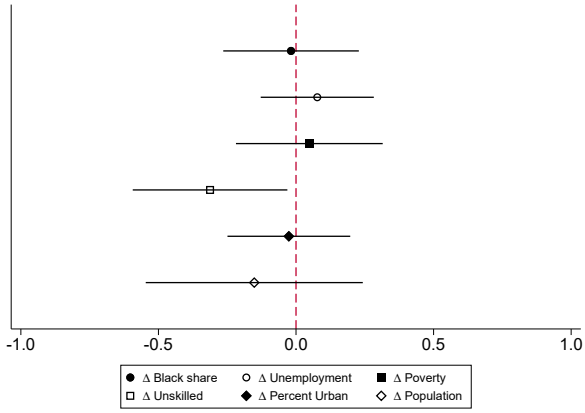


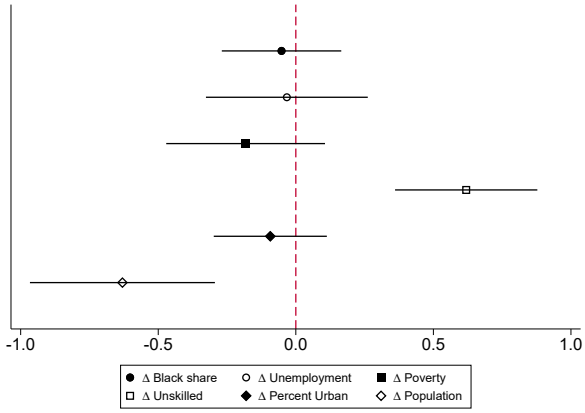
(b) Border sample



(c) Pre-VRA: Overall sample

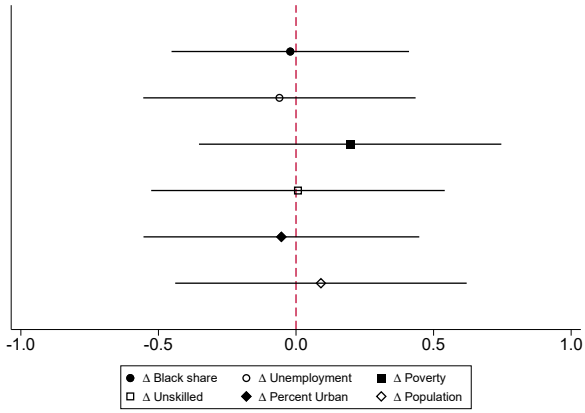
(d) Post-VRA: Overall sample

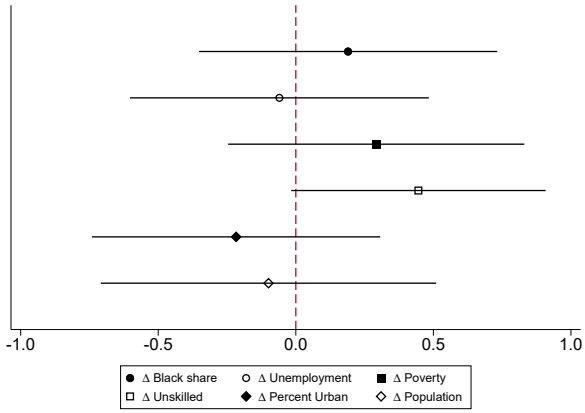




(e) Pre-VRA: Border sample

(f) Post-VRA: Border sample

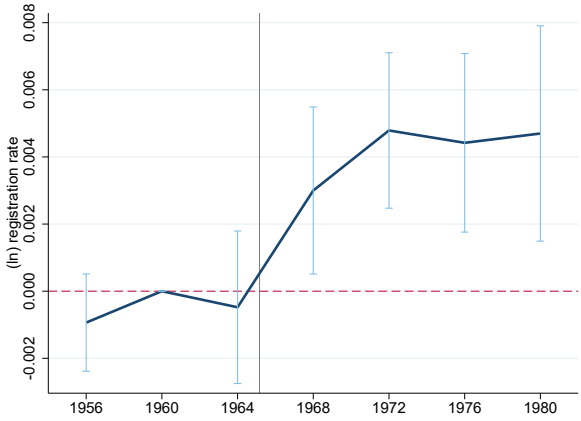




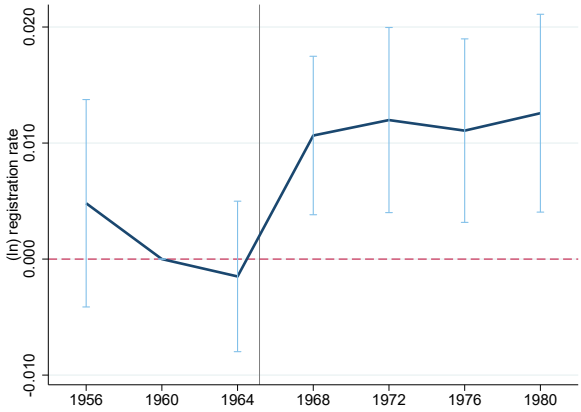
Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Estimated coefficients obtained regressing each variable on the coverage indicator. County-pair fixed effects included in the border specifications. Robust standard errors in parenthesis clustered by judicial divisions in the overall sample and by judicial divisions and border segments in the border sample.

Figure 3. Difference in the gradient of (ln) registration rates

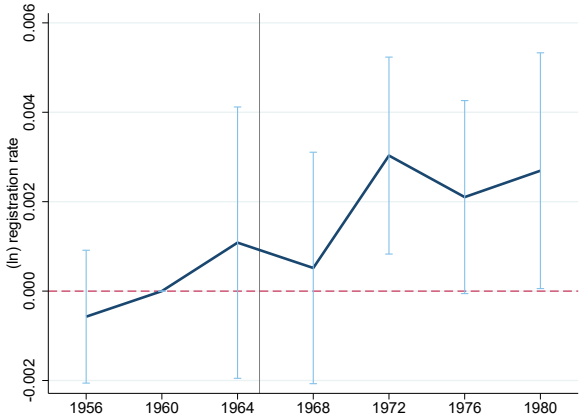
(a) Total voter registration



(b) Black voter registration

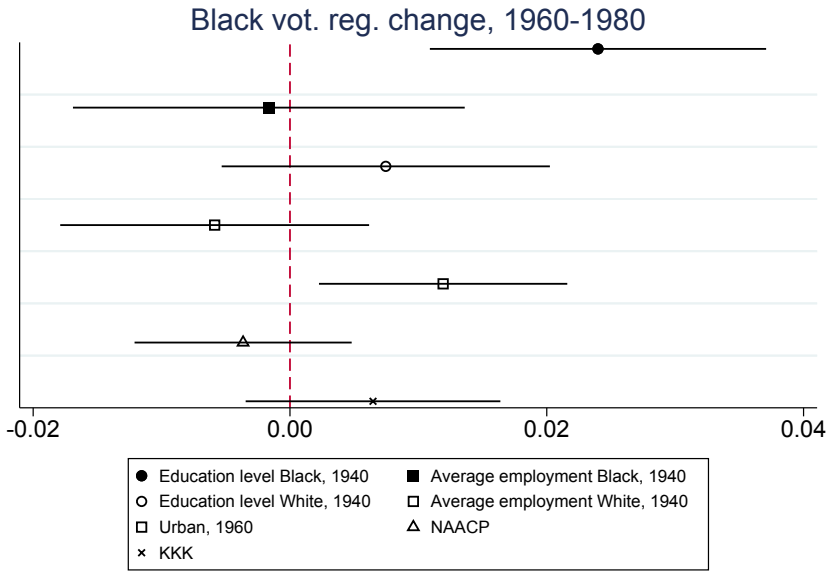


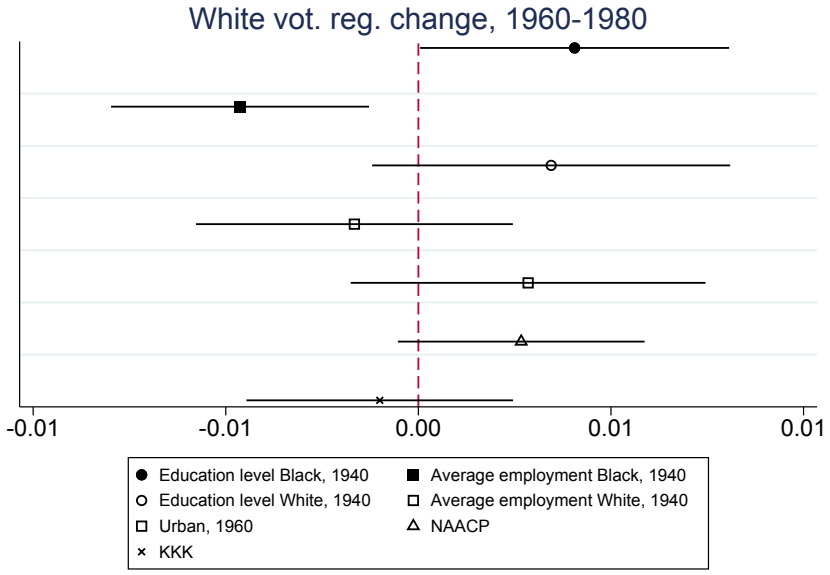
(c) White voter registration



Note: Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors in parenthesis clustered by county. State trends and county fixed effects are included. Controls: Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Low-skilled (%), 1960; Population, 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64. Omitted interaction: 1960.

Figure 4. Quadruple difference models. Dep. variable: Change in (ln) registration rates

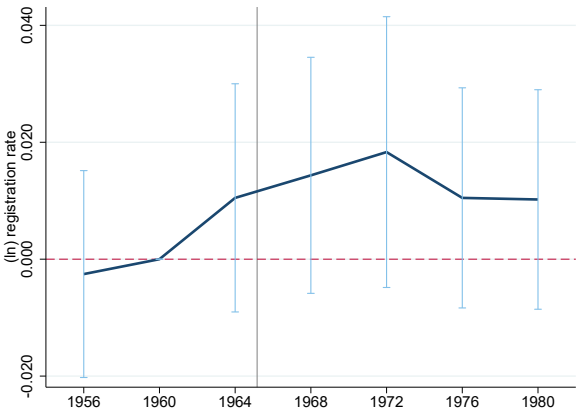




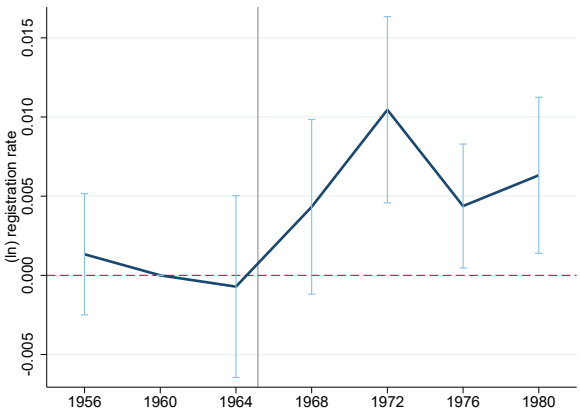
Note: The figure plots triple interaction coefficients. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors in parenthesis clustered by county. State trends are included. Controls: Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Low-skilled (%), 1960; Population, 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64.

Figure 5. Difference in the gradient of (ln) registration rates: electoral rules

(a) Black voter reg. - SMD



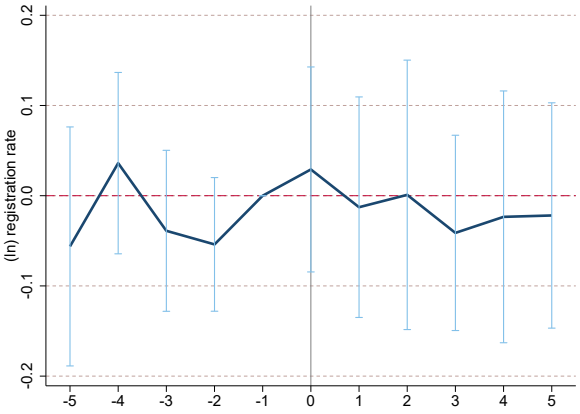
(b) White voter reg. - SMD



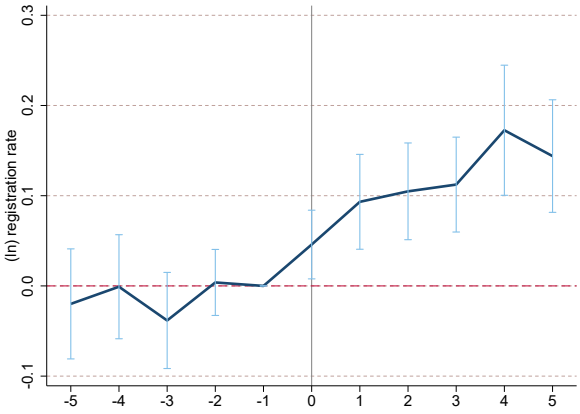
Note: The figure plots triple interaction coefficient. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Robust standard errors in parenthesis clustered by county. State trends are included. Controls: Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Low-skilled (%), 1960; Population, 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64.

Figure 6. First Black elected official

(a) Black (ln) voter registration



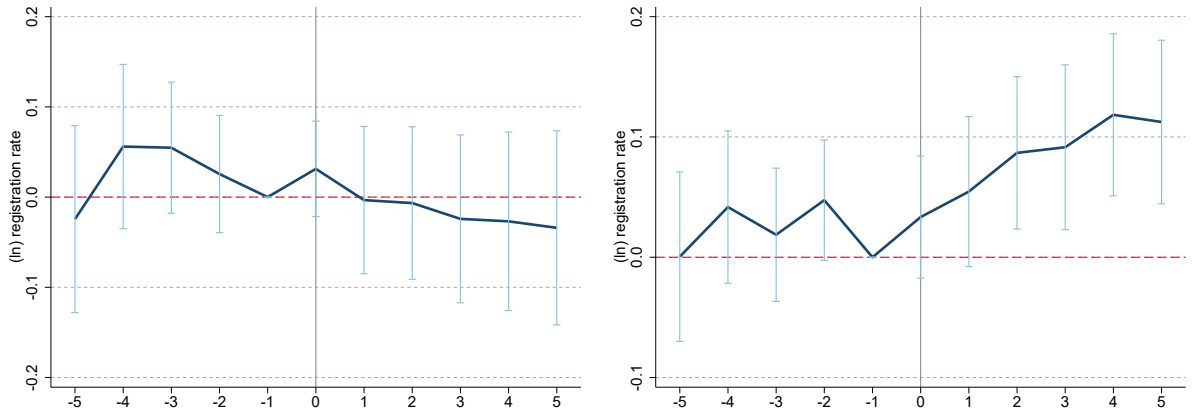
(b) White (ln) voter registration



These figures plot the differential trends between covered and non-covered counties in the U.S. South. Every period spans 2 years. Period 0 indicates when the first African American is elected to office in the county.

Figure 7. First Black elected official in neighboring counties

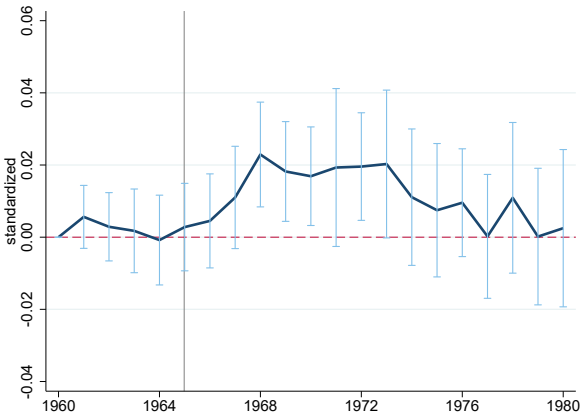
(a) Black (ln) voter registration (b) White (ln) voter registration



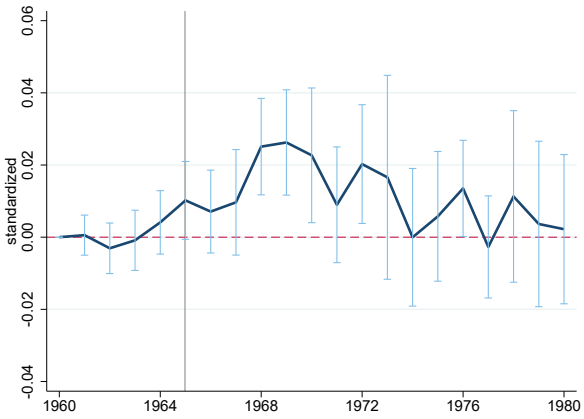
These figures plot the differential trends between covered and non-covered counties in the U.S. South. Every period spans 2 years. Period 0 indicates when the first African American is elected to office in a neighbouring county.

Figure 8. Newspapers in the U.S. South

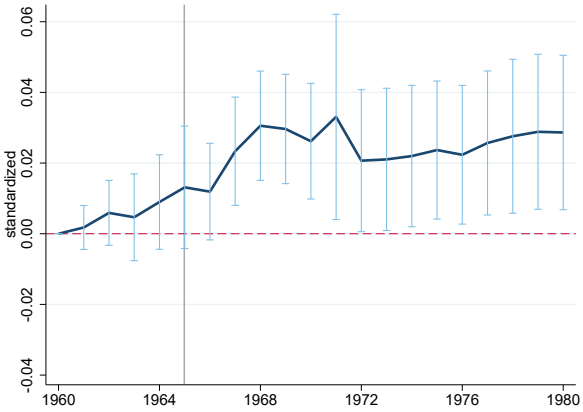
(a) Word "Black"



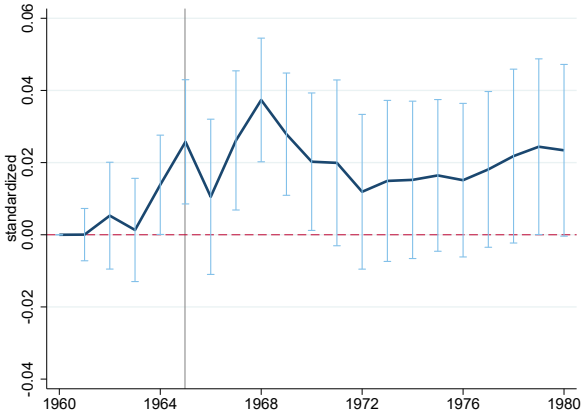
(b) Word "Black" and negative words



(c) Word "Negro"



(d) Word "Negro" and negative words



These figures plot the differential trends between covered and non-covered counties in the U.S. South, interacted with Black share 1960. We consider four disparaging terms associated with violence and crime. Further adding additional disparaging terms related to more extreme forms of violence only lead to minor changes in the estimated trends.

Table 1. Sample selection and pre-trends

Dep. variable:	In sample	KKK	Lynching	Cotton	NAACP	Goldwater	Republican	Governor win	President turnout	Governor turnout	State House	State Senate	Population	Percent Black
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Panel A: Full sample														
Black share (%), 1960 X VRA	0.0036	–0.0009	0.0018	0.0216**	–0.0002	–0.0051	0.0004	–0.0019	–0.0017	–0.0011	–0.0001	0.0007	0.0188	–0.0166
	(0.0031)	(0.0007)	(0.0039)	(0.0098)	(0.0008)	(0.0049)	(0.0037)	(0.0023)	(0.0018)	(0.0018)	(0.0012)	(0.0011)	(0.1115)	(0.0148)
Black share (%), 1960	0.0056**	0.0014***	–0.0008	–0.0212***	0.0006	0.0238***	0.0152***	–0.0004	0.0051***	0.0061***	0.0001	–0.0007	–0.0119	–0.0254**
	(0.0028)	(0.0005)	(0.0023)	(0.0057)	(0.0007)	(0.0025)	(0.0022)	(0.0019)	(0.0018)	(0.0009)	(0.0010)	(0.0009)	(0.0992)	(0.0111)
Adj. R-Square	0.7263	0.1426	0.0074	0.2009	0.0577	0.7991	0.7483	0.3672	0.7899	0.8739	0.6506	0.4583	0.6352	0.2204
N	1138	584	584	572	584	575	573	578	582	582	584	584	584	584
Panel B: Border sample														
Black share (%), 1960 X VRA		–0.0004	0.0021	0.0180	–0.0025	–0.0022	–0.0000	–0.0214	–0.0134*	–0.0122	0.0087	0.0108	0.0397	–0.0265
		(0.0009)	(0.0068)	(0.0362)	(0.0066)	(0.0202)	(0.0165)	(0.0169)	(0.0075)	(0.0171)	(0.0079)	(0.0092)	(0.2225)	(0.0335)
Black share (%), 1960		0.0003	0.0006	–0.1114**	0.0031	0.0313*	0.0259	0.0117	0.0143	0.0417*	0.0122*	0.0129*	–0.9253*	0.1314*
		(0.0028)	(0.0269)	(0.0450)	(0.0043)	(0.0170)	(0.0155)	(0.0199)	(0.0093)	(0.0229)	(0.0063)	(0.0071)	(0.4612)	(0.0763)
Adj. R-Square		0.2156	0.5523	0.5526	–0.3631	0.5620	0.5517	0.3319	0.1104	–0.0494	0.1948	0.1116	0.2916	–0.0609
N		153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153	153

The sample of the table is based on the availability of voter registration data. Robust standard errors in parenthesis clustered by judicial divisions in Panel A, and by judicial divisions and border segments in Panel B. State trends are included in Panel A, and county-pair and coverage trends are included in Panel B. *County-level controls* in Panel A are: Low-skilled (%), 1960; Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Urban population (%), 1960. ***, ** and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels respectively.

Table 2. Change in (ln) registration rates, 1960-1980

Dep. variable:	(ln) Registration Rates			
	Black	White	Black	White
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960 X VRA	0.016***	0.003**	0.026**	0.003**
	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.010)	(0.001)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960	0.008**	–0.001	0.013	–0.001
	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.002)
Controls	Yes	Yes	No	No
State FE	Yes	Yes	No	No
County Pair FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sample	Full	Full	Border	Border
Adj. R-Square	0.72	0.52	0.47	0.26
N	561	583	152	152

Robust standard errors in parenthesis are adjusted for clustering at the county level in columns (1) and (2), and by judicial divisions and border segments in columns (3) and (4). State trends are included in columns (1) and (2), and county-pair and coverage trends are included in columns (3) and (4). *County-level controls* are: Low-skilled (%), 1960; Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively.

Table 3. Electoral rules, electoral outcomes and (ln) registration rates, 1960-1980

Dep. variable:	Elections	(ln) Registration Rates	
	Commissioners	Black	White
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960 X VRA X SMD	0.184***	0.011	0.009***
	(0.061)	(0.011)	(0.003)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960 X VRA	0.040	0.010	–0.002
	(0.037)	(0.007)	(0.002)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960 X SMD	–0.016	–0.011	–0.001
	(0.034)	(0.009)	(0.002)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960	0.074***	0.014**	0.000
	(0.027)	(0.007)	(0.002)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sample	Full	Full	Full
Adj. R-Square	0.48	0.74	0.56
N	566	562	584

Robust standard errors in parenthesis are adjusted for clustering by judicial divisions in column (1), and at the county level in columns (2) and (3). State trends are included in columns (1)-(3). *County-level controls* are: Low-skilled (%), 1960; Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively.

Table 4. CES: affirmative action and racial resentment

Dep. variable:	Racial attitudes			
	Affirmative action		Racial resentment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960 X VRA	-0.048***	-0.041*	0.019	0.026
	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.013)	(0.018)
Summary statistics:				
Dep. variable	18.111	18.130	2.339	2.412
	(9.162)	(9.158)	(8.774)	(8.701)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960	18.339	21.335	18.263	21.409
	(12.208)	(12.165)	(12.107)	(12.028)
Sample	U.S. South	Full	U.S. South	Full
Adj. R-Square	0.80	0.80	0.17	0.17
N	45960	27151	53891	31708

Columns (1) and (3) report coefficients estimated in the full sample of U.S. South counties, while columns (2) and (4) report coefficients estimated in the sample restricted by the availability of voter registration data. *County-level controls* are: Low-skilled (%), 1960; Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64. *Individual-level controls* are: Age; Age squared; Education; Marital status; Employment status; Gender; Family income. *Affirmative action* measures support for affirmative action on a 4-points scale where higher values represent stronger support. *Racial resentment* is the standardized average of variables measuring racial resentment ad is coded such that higher values are associated to stronger resentment. Robust standard errors in parenthesis are adjusted for clustering at the county level. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively.

Table 5. Hate Crimes

Dep. variable:	Hate Crimes			
Perpetrator:	Any			White
Victim:	Black	Oth. min.	White	Black
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: U.S. South				
Percent Afr.Am., 1960 X VRA	19.866***	1.620	–0.037	11.384***
	(6.032)	(1.379)	(0.112)	(4.306)
Summary statistics:				
Dep. variable	308.103	106.685	6.199	144.786
	(1794.676)	(337.373)	(22.953)	(968.067)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960	23.551	23.551	23.551	23.551
	(19.848)	(19.848)	(19.848)	(19.848)
Adj. R-Square	0.11	0.35	0.33	0.07
N	1138	1138	1138	1138
Panel B: Full sample				
Percent Afr.Am., 1960 X VRA	19.110*	2.840**	–0.236	13.271
	(10.685)	(1.182)	(0.160)	(8.063)
Summary statistics:				
Dep. variable	209.229	95.703	7.047	127.380
	(1475.285)	(248.683)	(19.926)	(1083.098)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960	31.602	31.602	31.602	31.602
	(18.993)	(18.993)	(18.993)	(18.993)
Adj. R-Square	0.07	0.40	0.46	0.05
N	584	584	584	584

Panel A reports coefficients estimated in the full sample of US South while Panel B reports coefficients estimated in the sample restricted by voter registration availability. *County-level controls* are: Low-skilled (%), 1960; Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64. Robust standard errors in parenthesis are adjusted for clustering at the county level. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively.

A Appendix

Figure A1. Newspapers in the U.S. South: Wallace

(a) Word "Wallace" (b) Word "Wallace" and word "Negro"



These figures plot the differential trends between covered and non-covered counties in the U.S. South, interacted with the share of the Black population in 1960.

Table A1. Summary statistics

	Covered				Not covered			
	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Panel A: Voter registration sample								
Political participation in 1960								
Black voter registration rates (%)	31.1	24.9	0.0	100.0	50.1	26.0	0.0	100.0
White voter registration rates (%)	82.8	18.1	5.5	100.0	86.4	14.9	52.2	100.0
Total voter registration rates (%)	65.2	19.9	4.6	100.0	79.9	16.7	30.6	100.0
Gap Black-white (%)	-51.7	28.4	-100.0	30.1	-36.3	26.2	-95.2	44.7
Political participation in 1980								
Black voter registration rates (%)	60.8	19.5	0.0	100.0	56.0	15.4	18.5	100.0
White voter registration rates (%)	74.6	13.9	8.7	100.0	69.4	12.0	45.7	100.0
Total voter registration rates (%)	70.3	14.8	7.1	100.0	66.0	11.9	40.1	98.9
Gap Black-white (%)	-13.8	13.9	-93.3	30.5	-13.4	11.1	-51.5	9.2
County characteristics								
Black share (%), 1960	37.3	17.4	0.1	83.4	19.6	13.9	0.0	68.9
Population (thousands), 1960	40.9	70.9	1.9	634.9	60.5	116.1	2.9	935.0
Unskilled workers (%), 1960	75.0	7.2	42.6	91.0	69.9	9.6	45.6	89.8
Unemployment (%), 1960	5.2	1.7	1.3	11.9	4.9	1.7	1.8	11.1
Families below poverty line (%), 1960	49.0	13.0	12.5	77.8	42.2	13.7	17.6	75.4
Urban population (%), 1960	29.1	23.8	0.0	100.0	31.2	27.1	0.0	96.6
Pro-Black protests, 1960-64	1.3	6.0	0.0	63.0	1.1	4.1	0.0	34.0
Anti-Black protests, 1960-64	0.4	2.7	0.0	37.0	0.1	0.9	0.0	9.0
Panel B: Full U.S. South sample								
County characteristics								
Black share (%), 1960	32.7	19.9	0.0	83.4	13.2	14.1	0.0	68.9
Population (thousands), 1960	34.9	57.8	0.0	634.9	40.9	101.8	0.2	1243.2
Unskilled workers (%), 1960	73.9	8.7	26.6	93.5	70.7	9.6	31.9	89.8
Unemployment (%), 1960	5.0	1.9	0.0	11.9	4.9	2.2	0.0	15.9
Families below poverty line (%), 1960	46.4	15.9	0.0	77.8	43.7	14.9	0.0	78.0
Urban population (%), 1960	28.3	29.0	0.0	100.0	33.0	28.1	0.0	97.7
Pro-Black protests, 1960-64	1.1	5.7	0.0	74.0	0.5	3.2	0.0	46.0
Anti-Black protests, 1960-64	0.3	2.0	0.0	37.0	0.1	0.5	0.0	9.0

Table A2. CES: description and wording of variables

Name	*Wording*	*Answers*	*Years*
Affirmative Action	Some people think that if a company has a history of discriminating against Blacks when making hiring decisions, then they should be required to have an affirmative action program that gives Blacks preference in hiring. What do you think? Should companies that have discriminated against Blacks have to have an affirmative action program?	Values in [1,4] range: higher values stand for stronger support for affirmative action	2008-2014
Racial Resentment	Individual-level average of three survey items: (i) The Irish, Italians, Jews and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Black should do the same without any special favors; (ii) Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it di cult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class; and (iii) It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough, if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.	The resulting index is standardized and increasing in racial resentment	2010-2014, 2018, 2020

All questions are coded such that higher values stand for more support for redistribution.

Table A3. Hate Crimes

Dep. variable:	Hate Crimes					
Perpetrator:	White					
Victim:	Ethnic majority		Religious majority		Any majority	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Percent Afr.Am., 1960 X VRA	-0.020	-0.068	0.004	0.005	-0.016	-0.063
	(0.048)	(0.070)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.048)	(0.070)
Summary statistics:						
Dep. variable	2.483	2.390	0.205	0.265	2.688	2.655
	(14.776)	(10.771)	(1.403)	(1.694)	(14.868)	(10.952)
Share of Afr. Am. in 1960	23.551	31.602	23.551	31.602	23.551	31.602
	(19.848)	(18.993)	(19.848)	(18.993)	(19.848)	(18.993)
Sample	U.S. South	Full	U.S. South	Full	U.S. South	Full
Adj. R-Square	0.09	0.11	0.10	0.14	0.10	0.13
N	1138	584	1138	584	1138	584

Columns (1), (3) and (5) report coefficients estimated in the full sample of U.S. South counties, while columns (2), (4) and (6) report coefficients estimated in the sample restricted by the availability of voter registration data. *County-level controls* are: Low-skilled (%), 1960; Unemployment rate (%), 1960; Families below poverty line (%), 1960; Urban population (%), 1960; Pro-Black protest, 1960-64; Anti-Black protest, 1960-64. Robust standard errors in parenthesis are adjusted for clustering at the county level. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5%, and 10% levels, respectively.

A.1 Variable definitions and sources

Voter registration rates.

Number of registered voters divided by voting age population. Data on voting age population by race are from from Manson et al. (2019), is considered.Due to changes in the legal requirements to vote, age 21+ are used for 1970 and prior years, and age 18+ for 1980 and later years.[25]

Black elected officials.

Number of Black elected officials in county governments, as reported by the National Roster of Black Elected Officials (NRBEO), divided by the total number of elected officials for the corresponding offices at the county-level, as reported by the Census of Governments. When the numerator is zero and the denominator is missing, the share is zero. The total number of Black elected officials in each local office in the U.S. South has been obtained by counting the Black elected officials by office reported in the NRBEO in 1969, 1971, and for the period 1973-1980. These officials have been matched to the counties using the address provided by the Roster. For the denominator, we use data from the Census of Governments for 1957, 1967 and 1977 reporting the total number of elected officials for county governments (commission, judiciary and enforcement, and other offices). For the period 1962-1964 we use the number of elective officials reported by the Census of Governments, Volume 2, Compendium of Public Employment, Number 2, Governmental Employment, 1957; for the period 1965-1972, the total number of elective officials by type of office are taken from the Census of Governments, Volume 1, Governmental Organization, Number 2, Popularly Elected Officials, 1967. For the period 1973-1982, elected officials by type of office are taken from the Census of Governments, Volume 1, Governmental Organization, Number 2, Popularly Elected Officials, 1977. For more on these data, see Bernini et al. (2022).

Coverage.

Dummy variable equal to one for the counties that were covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and zero otherwise. All counties of six states (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia) were covered, whereas only 39 of the 100 counties of North Carolina were covered. Arkansas, Florida, Tennessee and Texas were instead not covered. The North Carolina counties covered in 1965 are

[25] On June 22, 1970, President Nixon signed into law *H.R. 4249*, lowering the voting age requirement to 18 starting on January 1, 1971. Official information on voting age population is available every 10 years. Then, in order to obtain information on each intercensal year, a linear interpolation is considered between 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990.

the following: Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Camden, Caswell, Chowan, Cleveland, Craven, Cumberland, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gaston, Gates, Granville, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Jackson, Lee, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Robeson, Rockingham, Scotland, Union, Vance, Washington, Wayne, Wilson. Source: https://www.justice.gov/crt.

County characteristics.

Percent Black, 1960: percent Black in the 1960 county population is from the County and City Data Book Consolidated File, County Data 1947-1977 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978).

Population, 1960: the county population is from the County and City Data Book Consolidated File, County Data 1947-1977 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978).

Unemployment rate, 1960: county unemployment rate is from the County and City Data Book Consolidated File, County Data 1947-1977 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978).

Percent of families below poverty line, 1960: percentage of families with income less than 3,000 U.S. dollars in 1960 is from the County and City Data Book Consolidated File, County Data 1947-1977 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978).

Percent unskilled, 1960: county percentage of 25 years old or more without a high school diploma in 1960 is from the County and City Data Book Consolidated File, County Data 1947-1977 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978).

Percent urban, 1960: county percentage of urban population in 1960 is from the County and City Data Book Consolidated File, County Data 1947-1977 (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978).

Pro-Black protest, 1960-64: counts of pro-Black events occurred between 1960 and 1964 as reported by the Dynamics of Collective Action Dataset by states and cities, matched to counties by the authors. Source: web.stanford.edu/group/collectiveaction/cgi-bin/drupal.

Anti-Black protest, 1960-64: counts of anti-Black events occurred between 1960 and 1964 as reported by the Dynamics of Collective Action Dataset by states and cities, matched to counties by the authors. Source: web.stanford.edu/group/collectiveaction/cgi-bin/drupal.

NAACP: change in the counts of local branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) standardized by Black population between 1942 and 1964. The information on the location of local branches of the NAACP has been obtained from the University of Washington's project 'Mapping American Social Movements Through the 20th Century', which reports the municipality of each branch. These locations have been mapped to the corresponding counties by the authors.

KKK: change in the counts of Ku Klux Klan organizations (known as Klaverns) stan-

dardized by white population. Information on the location of Klan organizations has been obtained from two sources. For the initial period, the information on the location of each Klavern has been obtained from the Virginia Commonwealth University's project 'Mapping the Second Ku Klux Klan', which lists the exact location of each headquarter (in a latitude and longitude format) between 1915-1940, mapped to the counties by the authors. For the later period, the location by county has been obtained from 'The Present-Day Ku Klux Klan Movement: Report by the Committee on Un-American Activities. House of Representatives. Ninetieth Congress, First Session, 1967 (pp. 145-163), which reports information on active Klaverns between 1964 and 1966.

Lynching: Change in the number of Black lynching standardized by Black population. The number of lynching for the initial period (1930-1940) and final period (1950-1964) have been hand digitized from Ramey, RJ (Ed.) Monroe Work Today Dataset Compilation (version 1), 23 Oct 2017: http://archive.tuskegee.edu (Archives, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL).

Presidential turnout: difference in the natural log of presidential turnout, where the latter is given by the votes cast in presidential elections divided by population of voting age. The data on votes cast in the presidential election are from the General Election Data for the United States, 1950-1990, ICPSR00013-v2. The data on population of voting age are from the Minnesota Population Center, National Historical Geographic Information System.

Governor turnout: difference in the natural log of governor turnout defined as the ratio between votes cast in gubernatorial elections taking place in 1960 (or first date of off-cycle election after 1960) and 1940 (or first date of off-cycle election after 1960) and voting age population. The data on votes cast in the gubernatorial elections are from the United States Historical Election Returns, 1824-1968 (ICPSR 1). The data on population of voting age are from the Minnesota Population Center, National Historical Geographic Information System.

Goldwater: difference in the natural log of vote shares for the Republican candidates in the 1952 and 1964 presidential elections. The shares of votes for the Republican candidates are from the General Election Data for the United States, 1950-1990, ICPSR00013-v2.

Percent Republican: difference in the natural log of vote shares for the Republican candidates in the 1964 and 1940 presidential elections. Sources: General Election Data for the United States, 1950-1990, ICPSR00013 and Electoral Data for Counties in the United States: Presidential and Congressional Races, 1840-1972, ICPSR 8611.

State House: change in number of seats per person in the county, divided by that same

figure for the state overall, between 1960 and 1950. The data on legislative seats per capita have been digitized from David and Eisenberg (1961).
State Senate: change in number of seats per person in the county, divided by that same figure for the state overall, between 1960 and 1950. The data on legislative seats per capita have been digitized from David and Eisenberg (1961).
Cotton share: share of farmland devoted to cotton production in 1964 and 1945 is from the United States Agriculture Data, 1840-2012, ICPSR 35206.
Agricultural productivity: maximum potential cotton yield by county (i.e., cotton suitability index). Source: Hornbeck and Naidu (2014).

Electoral rules.
The information on the system of elections of members of county governing bodies comes from the Census of Governments, Elective Offices of State and Local Governments (1957) and from NRBEO (1980). In Louisiana, the county governing body is called Police Jury. In Mississippi and in Virginia, members of the county governing body are called Supervisors. In Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, members of county governing bodies are called Commissioners. We have used the summary information reported by the Census of Governments (1957) and the NRBEO (1980) at the state level to construct indicators for the system of elections of county governing bodies as detailed below.
Single member districts (SMD): indicator equal to one for covered states where members of county governing bodies are elected by single member districts (Louisiana, Mississippi and Virginia) and zero otherwise.
Mixed: indicator equal to one for covered states where members of county governing bodies are elected with a combination of single member districts and at-large systems (Alabama, North Carolina and South Carolina) and zero otherwise.
At-large: indicator equal to one for covered states where members of county governing bodies are elected at-large (Georgia) and zero otherwise.

Judicial divisions.
The information on judicial districts and their corresponding divisions has been obtained from the official sources reported below, and mapped to counties by the authors. Sources: Alabama: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Northern District and Middle District) and the U.S. District Court (Southern District). Arkansas: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Eastern District) and the U.S. District Court (Western District). Florida: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Northern District and Middle District) and the U.S. District Court (Southern Dis-

trict). Georgia: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Southern District) and the U.S. District Court (Northern District and Middle District). Louisiana: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Western District) and the U.S. District Court (Middle District and Eastern District). Mississippi: the U.S. District Court (Northern District and Southern District). North Carolina: the U.S. District Court (Western District, Middle District, and Eastern District). South Carolina: the U.S. District Court. Tennessee: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Middle District) and the U.S. District Court (Western District and Eastern District). Texas: the U.S. Attorney's Office (Western District, Northern District, and Eastern District) and the U.S. District Court (Southern District). Virginia: the U.S. District Court (Western District and Eastern District).