

# Deep Roots: The Political Legacy of Southern Slavery



Avi Acharya



Matt Blackwell



Maya Sen

MAP  
SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION  
OF THE  
SLAVE POPULATION  
OF THE  
SOUTHERN STATES  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES

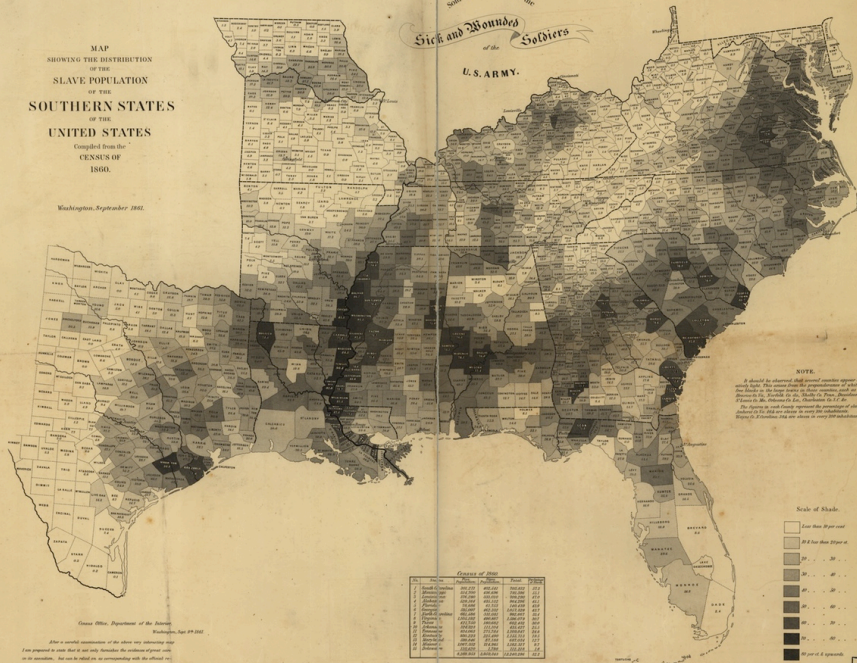
Compiled from the  
CENSUS OF  
1860.

Washington, September 1861.

Sold for the benefit of the

Sick and Wounded  
of the  
Soldiers

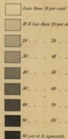
U. S. ARMY.



NOTE.

It should be observed that several counties appear comparatively light. This arises from the population of white and free blacks in the large cities in those counties, such as —  
Baltimore in Md., Richmond in Va., Charleston in S.C., &c.  
The figures in each county represent the percentage of slaves etc.  
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Scale of Shade.



GROSS OF 1860		Total	
State	Population	Population	Total
Alabama	500,000	500,000	500,000
Arkansas	250,000	250,000	250,000
California	100,000	100,000	100,000
Colorado	50,000	50,000	50,000
Connecticut	25,000	25,000	25,000
Delaware	12,500	12,500	12,500
District of Columbia	6,250	6,250	6,250
Florida	3,125	3,125	3,125
Georgia	1,562	1,562	1,562
Idaho	781	781	781
Illinois	390	390	390
Indiana	195	195	195
Iowa	97	97	97
Kansas	48	48	48
Kentucky	24	24	24
Louisiana	12	12	12
Maine	6	6	6
Maryland	3	3	3
Massachusetts	1	1	1
Michigan	1	1	1
Minnesota	1	1	1
Mississippi	1	1	1
Missouri	1	1	1
Montana	1	1	1
Nebraska	1	1	1
Nevada	1	1	1
New Hampshire	1	1	1
New Jersey	1	1	1
New Mexico	1	1	1
New York	1	1	1
North Carolina	1	1	1
North Dakota	1	1	1
Ohio	1	1	1
Oklahoma	1	1	1
Oregon	1	1	1
Pennsylvania	1	1	1
Rhode Island	1	1	1
South Carolina	1	1	1
South Dakota	1	1	1
Tennessee	1	1	1
Texas	1	1	1
Vermont	1	1	1
Virginia	1	1	1
Washington	1	1	1
West Virginia	1	1	1
Wisconsin	1	1	1
Wyoming	1	1	1

Geographical Department of the Interior

Washington, Sept 29 1861.

After a careful examination of the above very interesting map  
I am prepared to state that it not only furnishes the evidence of great value  
in its execution, but can be relied on as corresponding with the official re-  
turns of the 1860 Census.

L. A. H. H. H. H.

See also  
Aug 30

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A colored population of slaves appears to be more numerous in the Southern States than in the Northern States. The colored population of the Southern States is estimated to be 3,000,000, or about 15 per cent of the total population of the United States. The colored population of the Northern States is estimated to be 1,000,000, or about 2 per cent of the total population of the United States. The colored population of the Western States is estimated to be 500,000, or about 1 per cent of the total population of the United States. The colored population of the Eastern States is estimated to be 1,500,000, or about 3 per cent of the total population of the United States.

Census Office, Department of the Interior,  
Washington, Sept. 29, 1851.

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J. A. H. H. H. H. H.

Census of 1850

State	Population	Population	Population	Population
South Carolina	302,215	302,215	302,215	27.7
Georgia	258,290	258,290	258,290	27.1
Alabama	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Florida	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Mississippi	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Louisiana	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Arkansas	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Texas	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Indian Territory	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Nebraska	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Kansas	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Oklahoma	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Idaho	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Montana	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Wyoming	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Utah	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Nevada	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Arizona	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
New Mexico	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Colorado	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
Wyoming	124,290	124,290	124,290	27.1
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It is "the whites of the black belts who have the deepest and most immediate concern about the maintenance of white supremacy...if the politics of the South revolves around any single theme, it is that of the role of the black belts."

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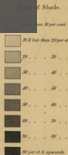
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Summary of the Census of 1850

State	Population	Free	Slave	Total
South Carolina	502,215	200,000	302,215	502,215
Georgia	528,000	200,000	328,000	528,000
Alabama	274,000	100,000	174,000	274,000
Florida	120,000	50,000	70,000	120,000
Mississippi	170,000	70,000	100,000	170,000
Arkansas	110,000	50,000	60,000	110,000
Louisiana	250,000	100,000	150,000	250,000
Texas	100,000	50,000	50,000	100,000
Indian Territory	10,000	5,000	5,000	10,000
Other	10,000	5,000	5,000	10,000
Total	1,800,000	700,000	1,100,000	1,800,000

of equalities appear compared  
with the population of the  
United States, as shown in the  
Census of 1850, the following  
table will give the percentage of slaves in  
each of the Southern States, and  
every 100 individuals of the



See Map  
2-1850

# Why southern exceptionalism?

Why did the South resist the New Deal?

Why did the South resist desegregation?

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- But these institutions have been gone for a while...
- Points to the role of local political culture.

# Local political culture

Local political culture is the set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape the way local government operates and interacts with the community.

It is shaped by a variety of factors, including history, geography, and the local economy.

Local political culture can have a significant impact on the quality of local government and the lives of the people who live in the community.

Understanding local political culture is essential for anyone who wants to make a difference in their community.

There are many ways to study local political culture, and this presentation will explore some of the most common methods.

By the end of this presentation, you will have a better understanding of what local political culture is and how it can be studied.

Thank you for your attention. I hope you found this presentation informative and helpful.

Local political culture is a complex and fascinating topic, and I encourage you to continue to explore it further.



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- Beliefs/attitudes/values passed on by intergenerational socialization (Jennings and Niemi, 1974).
- Theoretical model (in another paper) formalizes some of the logic using imitation heuristics and cognitive dissonance.

# Our main results

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2. Differences not due to contemporary factors such as demographics or inequality
3. Differences not entirely due to antebellum attitudes or migration
4. Partial answer in a theory of the historical persistence of attitudes → Specifically, postbellum political/economic incentives drove differences, then attitudes passed down over time

# Key data sources

• **Publicly available data**

• **Private data**

• **Proprietary data**

• **Open data**

• **Big data**

• **Cloud data**

• **Mobile data**

• **Social media data**

# Key data sources

- Share of population enslaved in a county in 1860 (Census)



# Key data sources

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# Key explanatory variable

• **Age** (in years)

• **Gender** (Male/Female)

• **Marital status** (Married/Single/Divorced)

• **Education level** (High school/Graduate)

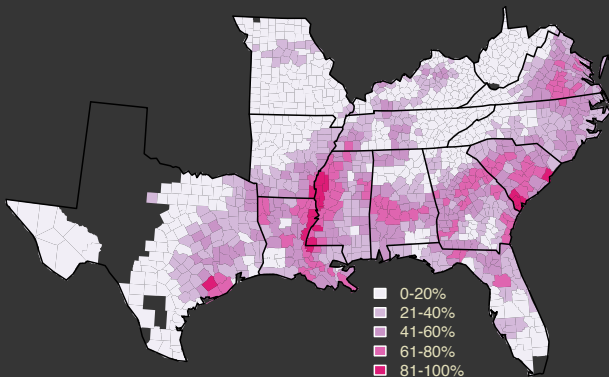
• **Income level** (Low/Medium/High)

• **Health status** (Good/Fair/Poor)

• **Location** (Urban/Rural)



# Key explanatory variable



# Key outcome variables

• **Healthcare utilization**

• **Healthcare costs**

• **Healthcare quality**

• **Healthcare access**

• **Healthcare equity**

• **Healthcare sustainability**

• **Healthcare innovation**

• **Healthcare workforce**

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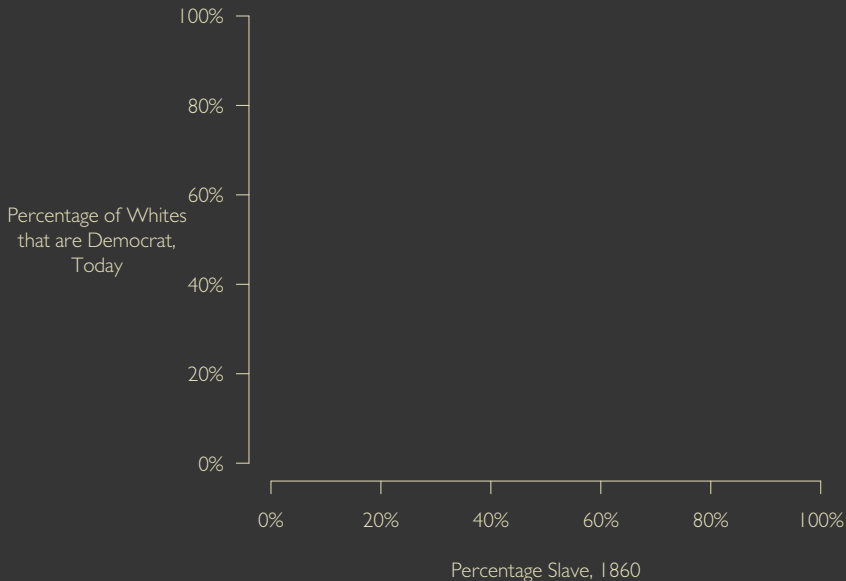
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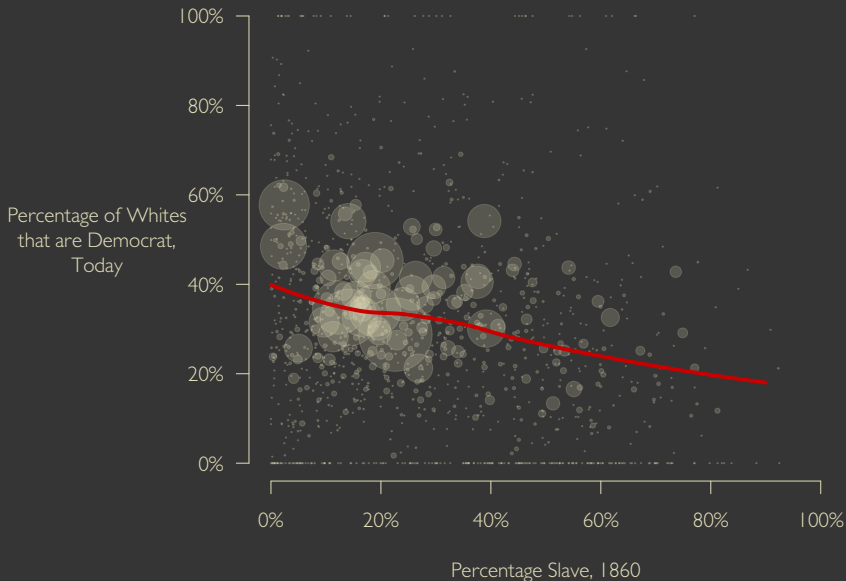
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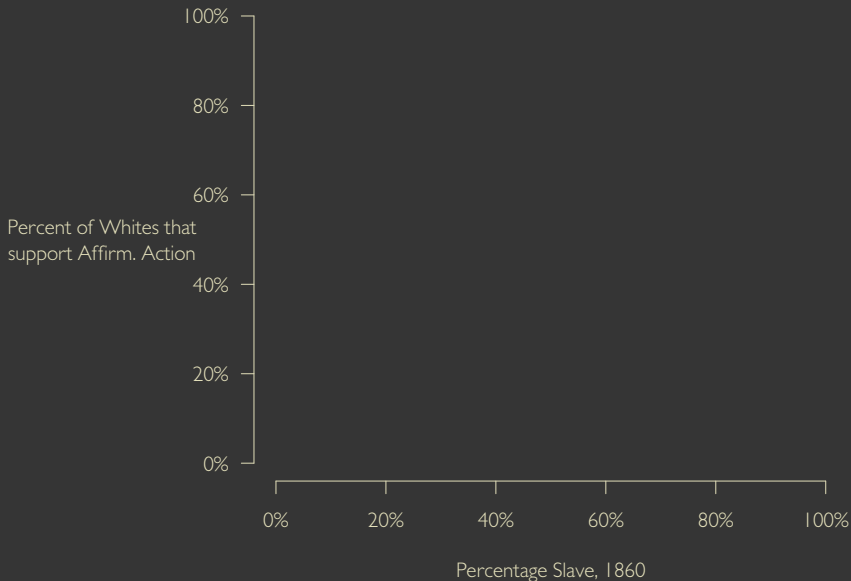




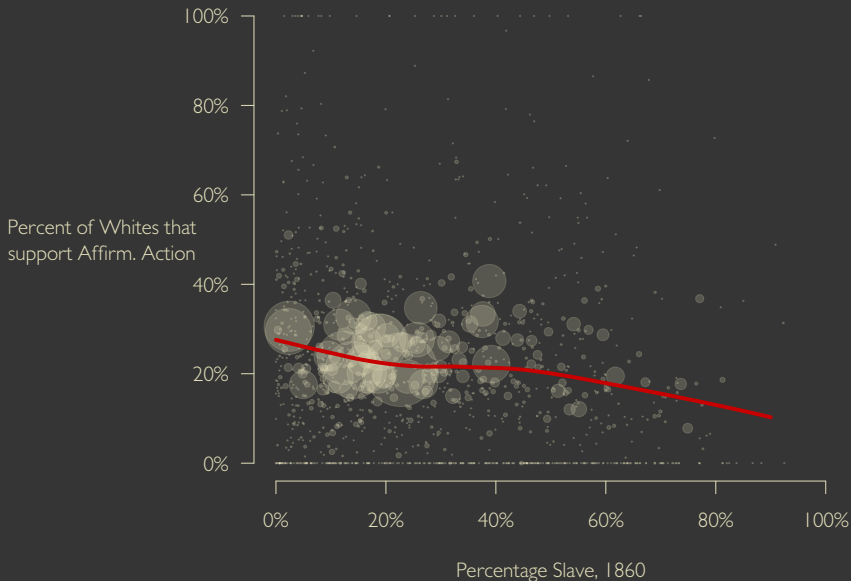
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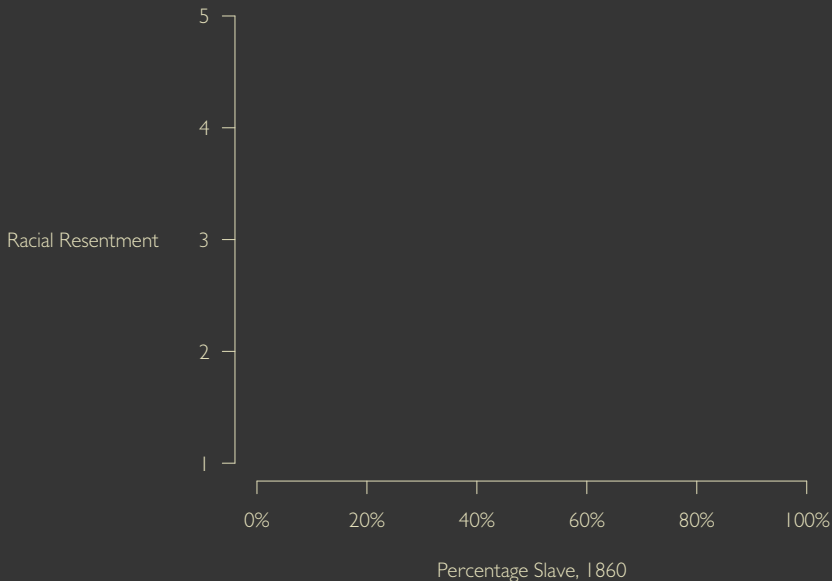
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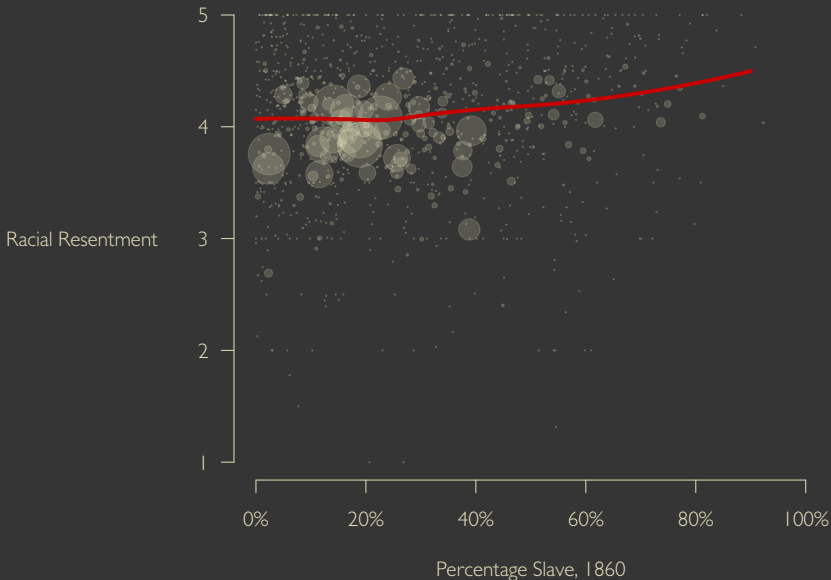
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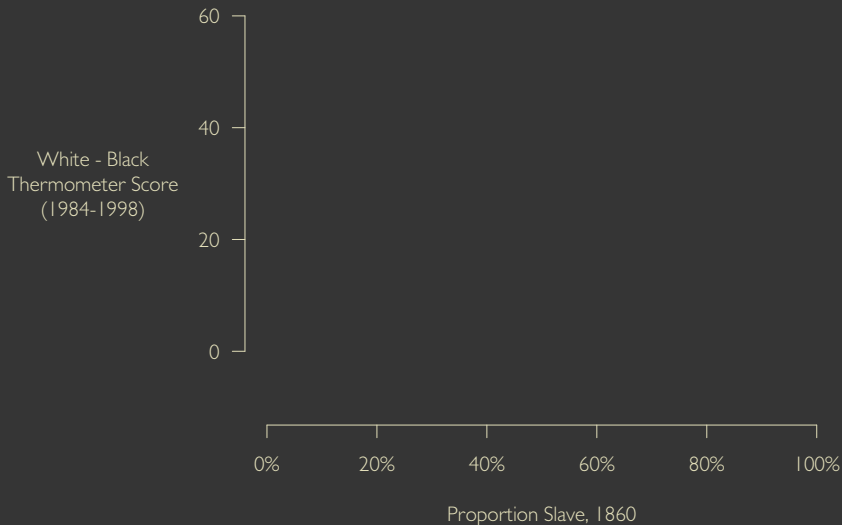
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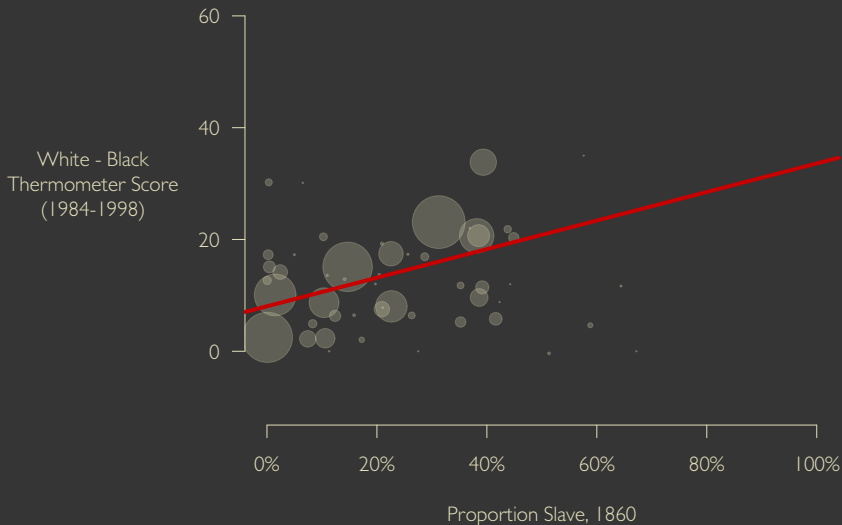
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# Results robust to various checks

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- Only using neighboring counties

# Instrumental variables

• **Instrumental variables** are used to estimate the causal effect of a treatment on an outcome when there is unobserved confounding.

• They are typically used in situations where the treatment is assigned randomly, but the outcome is not.

• The instrumental variable is a variable that is correlated with the treatment, but not with the outcome.

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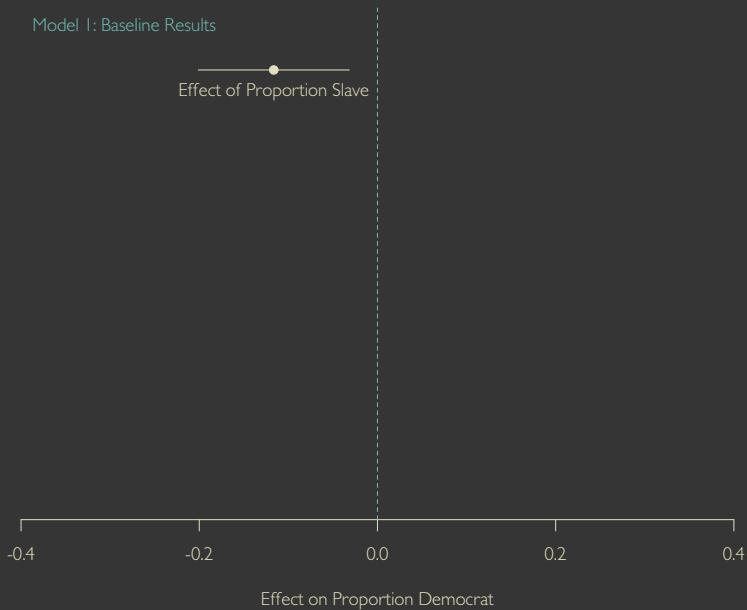


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- Unmeasured confounding between location of slavery and attitudes today always possible
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- 2SLS models only include geographic controls and state fixed effects
- We check the exclusion restriction with a falsification test in the Non-South.

# IV results

Model 1: Baseline Results



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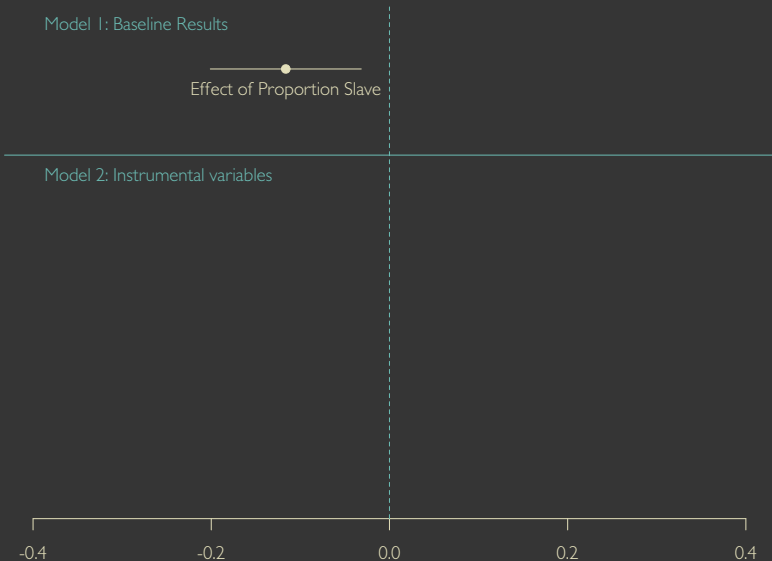
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Effect of Proportion Slave

Model 2: Instrumental variables

-0.4      -0.2      0.0      0.2      0.4

Effect on Proportion Democrat



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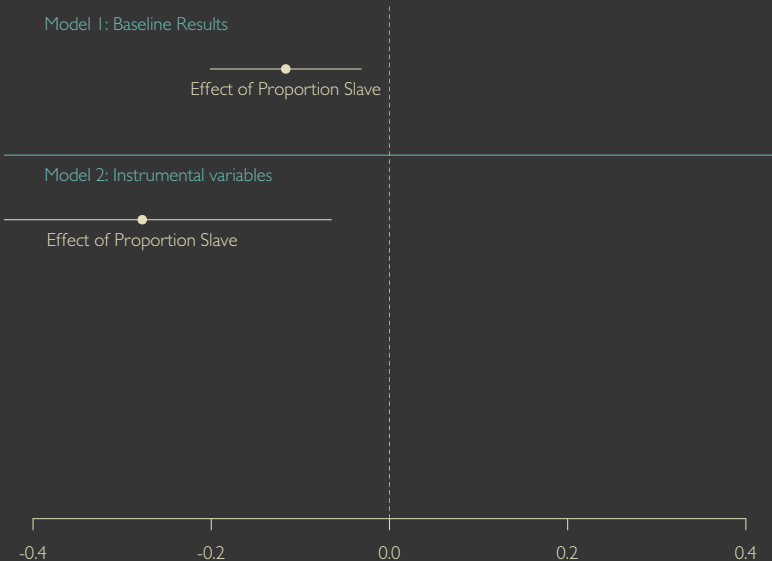
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Results point to none of these completely explaining the results.

# Slavery and its collapse as causal force

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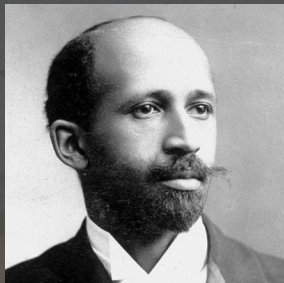
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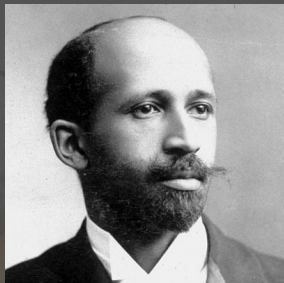
- Slavery and its collapse were critical junctures
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- Posed severe problems for cotton economy, which relied heavily on cheap labor (Ransom and Sutch)





W.E.B. DuBois





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"If all labor, black as well as white, became free – were given schools and the right to vote – how would property and privileged be protected?"

**Whites replaced slavery w/other institutions**



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  - ▶ Laws nominally race blind, but lawmakers were explicitly racist in their intentions

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- White elite in the black belt subjugated blacks to maintain their status

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- Transmission most important in areas where the economic/political repression was most needed.

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# Violence and transmission

WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT



# Violence and transmission



# Implication of economic incentive argument

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  - ▶ Exactly what we see empirically.

# Mechanization weakens slavery's impact

Model 1: Baseline Results

Effect of Proportion Slave

Model 2: Interaction with growth in tractors per acre, 1930-1940

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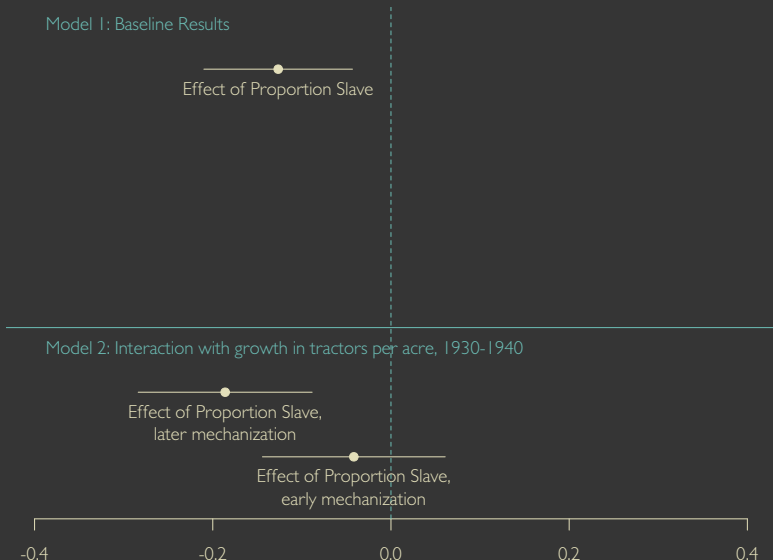
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# Empirical conclusions

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  - ▶ Show attenuation in institutional relationships, not behavioral ones.

# Thanks!

For more information:

- Maya → <http://scholar.harvard.edu/msen>
- Avi → <http://stanford.edu/~avidit/>
- Matt → <http://mattblackwell.org>

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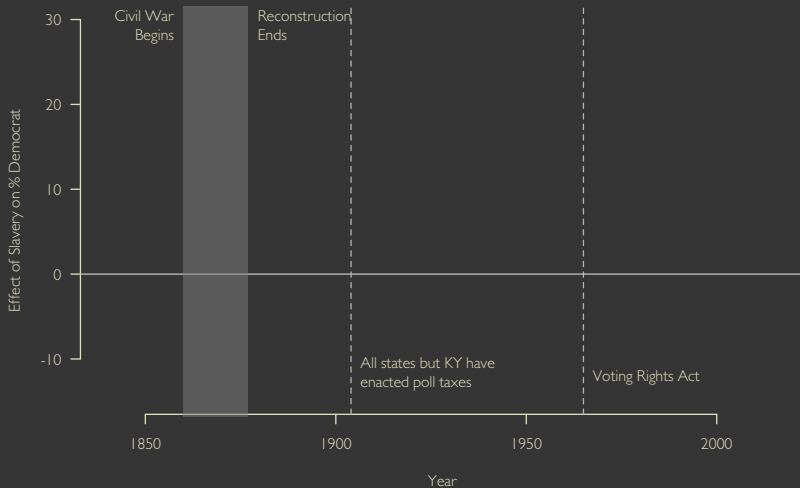
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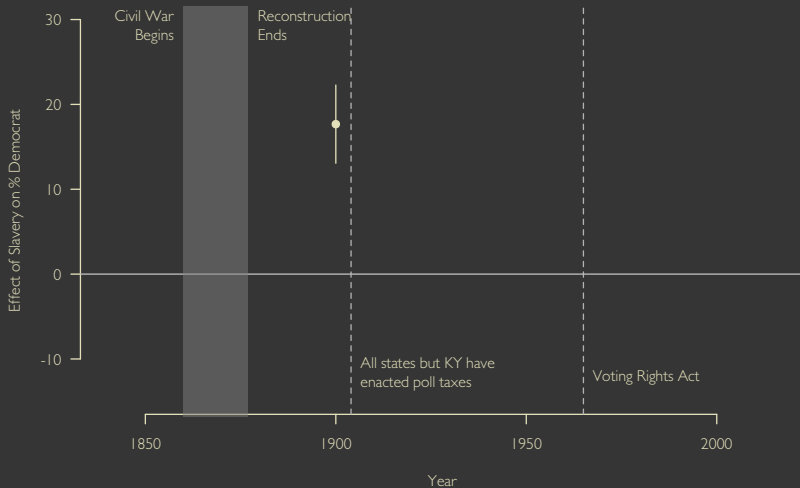
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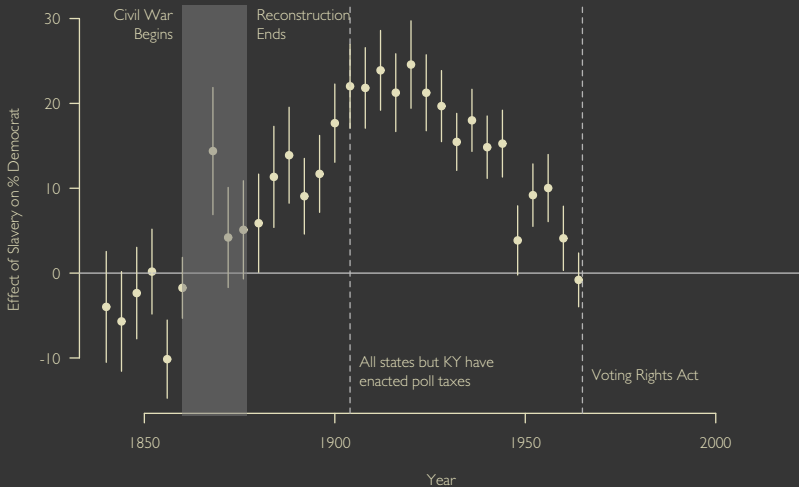
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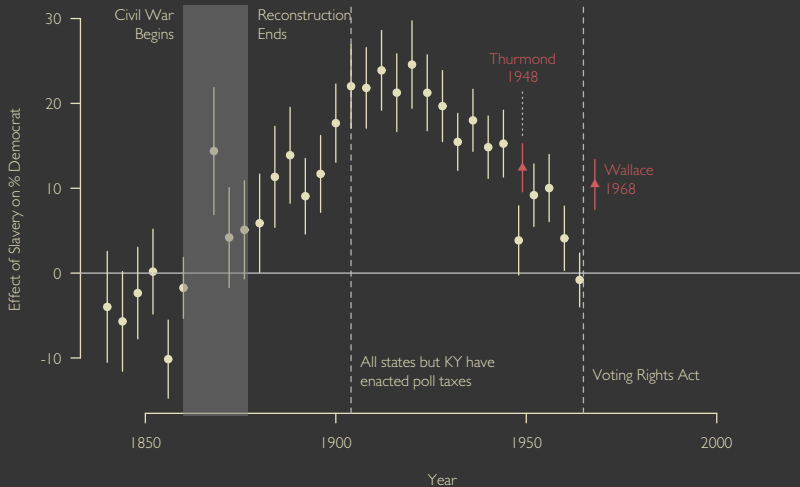
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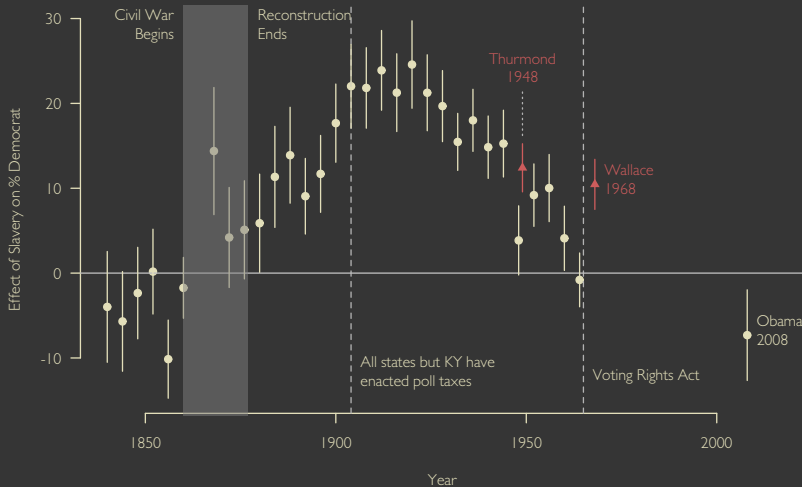
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# Geographic sorting?

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- Evidence on these points difficult to come by

## Evidence from 1940 Census

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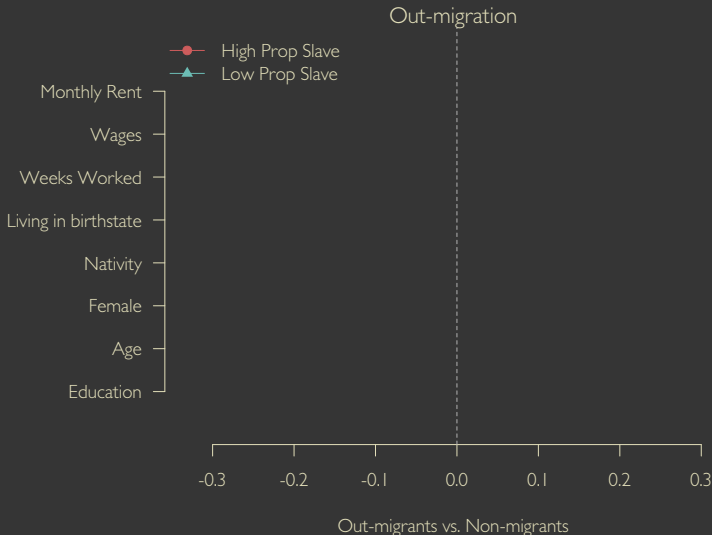
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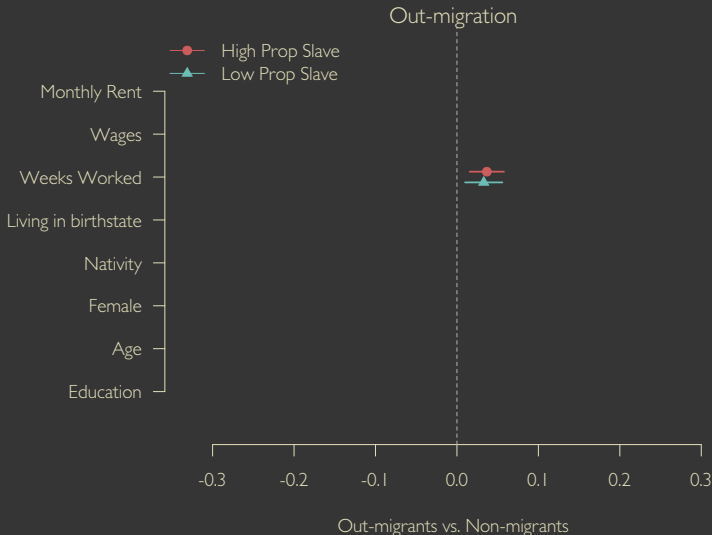
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  - ▶ Are out-migrants different than those they left behind?
  - ▶ Are in-migrants different than those they joined?
  - ▶ Do these patterns differ by prop. slave in the county left or joined?

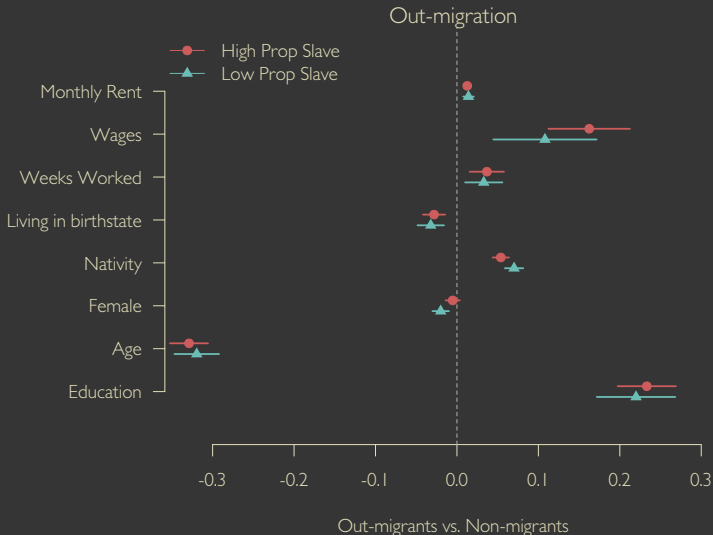
# 1935-1940 Migration Patterns



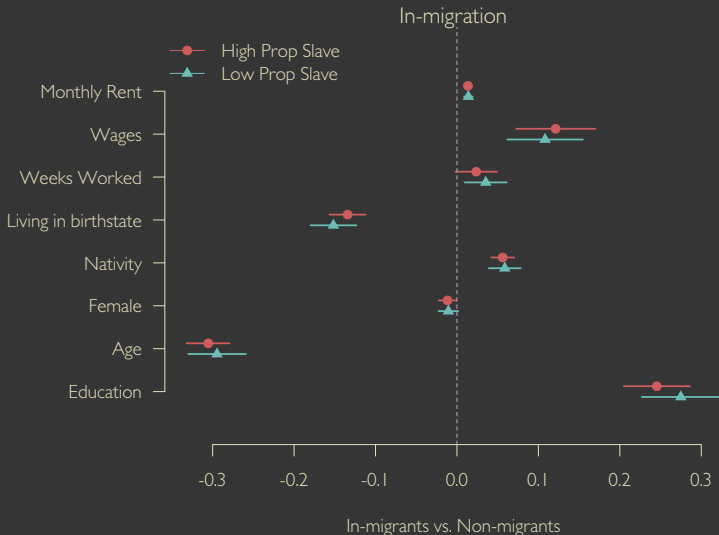
# 1935-1940 Migration Patterns



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# 1935-1940 Migration Patterns





# Evidence from 1940 Census

1940 Census of the United States  
U.S. Census Bureau

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U.S. Census Bureau

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- → Sorting hard to dismiss, but if anything causing classical measurement error

# (1) Slavery → Electoral Challenges

→ How did the issue of slavery become a political issue?

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# (1) Slavery → Electoral Challenges

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	Electoral Challenges per 100k Residents	
	(1)	(2)
Prop. Slave, 1860	3.152*** (0.512)	3.158*** (1.053)
1860 Covariates		✓
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Model	OLS	OLS
N	772	434
R <sup>2</sup>	0.128	0.149

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\*p < .1; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01

## **(2) Slavery → Lower Black Voter Turnout**

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## (2) Slavery → Lower Black Voter Turnout

	Turnout	
	Blacks	Whites
Prop. Slave, 1860	−2.901*** (1.121)	−0.064 (0.353)
1860 Covariates	✓	✓
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓
N	521	4,255
AIC	518.353	4,297.104

\* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

# **(3) Slavery → Higher Racial Polarization**

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Slavery → Higher Racial Polarization → Higher Racial Inequality

# (3) Slavery → Higher Racial Polarization

	Democratic Identification	
	Blacks	Whites
Prop. Slave, 1860	0.619 (0.396)	—0.698*** (0.207)
1860 Covariates	✓	✓
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓
N	5,030	23,714
AIC	4,962.651	29,586.690

\* $p < .1$ ; \*\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .01$

# Baseline specification

	Prop. Democrat		Affirm. Action	Racial Resent.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Prop. Slave, 1860	−0.187** (0.024)	−0.159** (0.044)	−0.137** (0.038)	0.554** (0.196)
State Fixed Effects		✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates		✓	✓	✓
N	1, 214	748	748	643
R <sup>2</sup>	0.046	0.188	0.134	0.114

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

# Baseline specification (individual level)

	Prop Democrat logistic		Affirm. Action logistic		Racial Resentment OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Prop. Slave, 1860	-0.698** (0.207)	-0.672** (0.205)	-0.627** (0.202)	-0.572** (0.205)	0.559** (0.175)	0.510** (0.163)
Constant	19.583 (15.941)	18.586 (16.043)	25.138 (16.871)	23.763 (16.726)	-21.289 (15.641)	-18.042 (15.312)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cluster-Robust SEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual Covariates		✓		✓		✓
N	23,714	22,686	23,673	22,645	6,945	6,931
R <sup>2</sup>					0.018	0.052

†p < .1; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

# Results on Slaveholders

	Prop Democrat		Affirm. Action		Racial Resentment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Prop. Slave, 1860	-0.163*	-0.175**	-0.104†	-0.150*	0.749**	0.688**
	(0.067)	(0.052)	(0.060)	(0.045)	(0.267)	(0.230)
Prop Slave, 1830	0.041		-0.083		0.032	
	(0.059)		(0.053)		(0.234)	
Prop Slaveholder, 1860		0.991†		0.280		-3.596
		(0.591)		(0.509)		(2.586)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	456	769	456	769	398	663
R <sup>2</sup>	0.236	0.181	0.159	0.125	0.191	0.118

Note: †p < .1; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01. All models are WLS with within-county sample size as weights. Proportion slaveholder is the total slaveholders in a county divided by the total county population.



# Instrumental variable results

	Prop Slave (1)	Prop Democrat (2)	Affirm. Action (3)	Racial Resentment (4)
Cotton Suitability	0.381** (0.027)			
Prop. Slave, 1860		-0.198** (0.075)	-0.168** (0.063)	0.512 (0.360)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Latitude/Longitude	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	1, 206	1, 206	1, 206	1, 016
R <sup>2</sup>	0.447	0.174	0.077	0.045
Model	2SLS 1st Stage	2SLS 2nd Stage	2SLS 2nd Stage	2SLS 2nd Stage

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

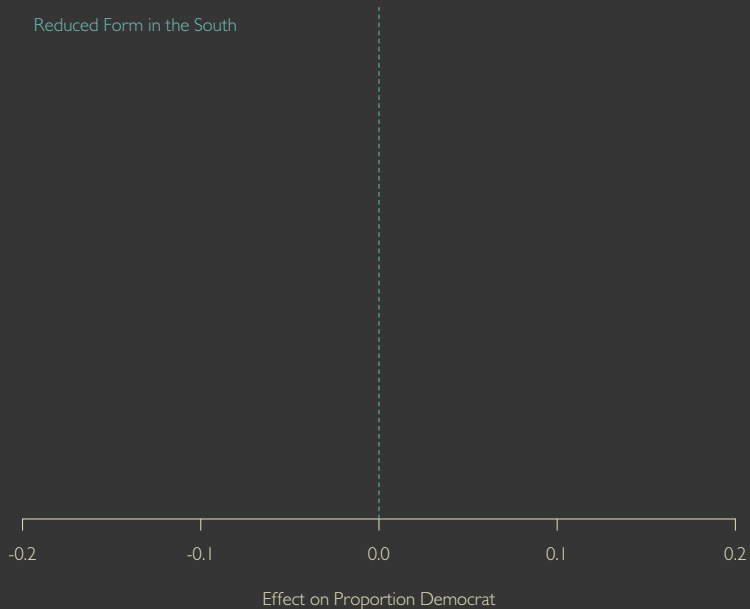
Column (1) is 1st stage relationship, Columns (2)-(4) 2nd stage

# Does exclusion restriction hold?

- Cotton suitability could affect political beliefs via other mechanisms
- Falsification test (Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011): Exclusion violated if evidence of cotton-attitudes relationship in areas w/no legal slavery
- → Examine if effect of IV on attitudes **outside South**

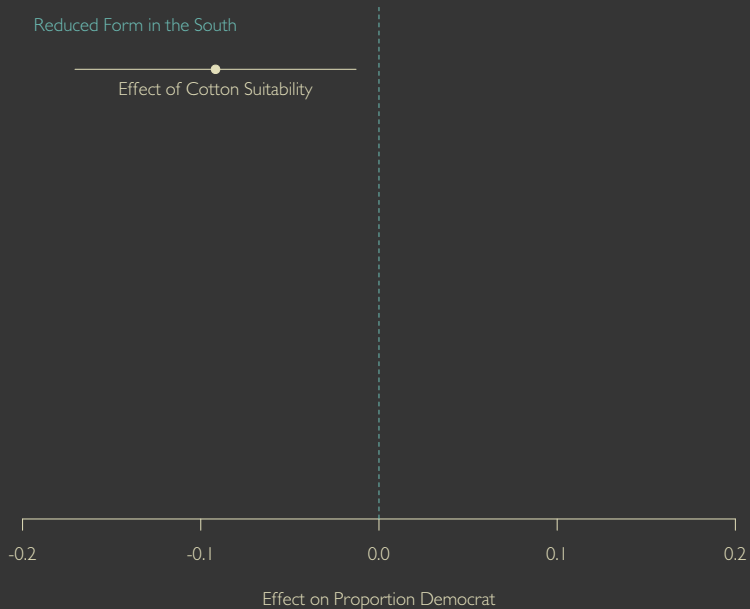
# Falsification test

Reduced Form in the South



# Falsification test

Reduced Form in the South



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Effect of Cotton Suitability

Reduced Form in the North



Effect on Proportion Democrat

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Reduced Form in the South



Effect of Cotton Suitability

Reduced Form in the North



Effect of Cotton Suitability

-0.2

-0.1

0.0

0.1

0.2

Effect on Proportion Democrat

# North-South counterfactual analysis

- Is fact that slavery legal driving effect? Or is localized high/low prevalence driving effect?
- Test to compare:
- Northern counties (slavery illegal by 1860)
- Southern counties w/ very low % enslaved

# North-South counterfactual analysis

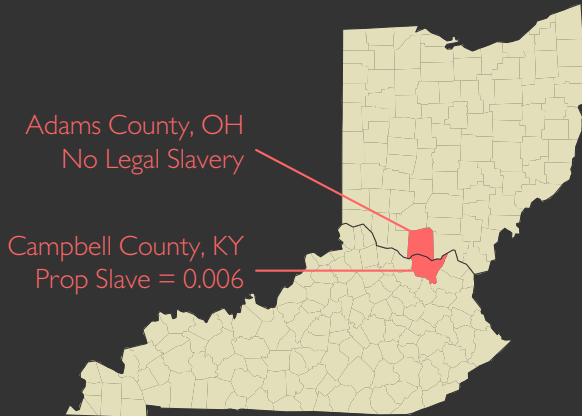




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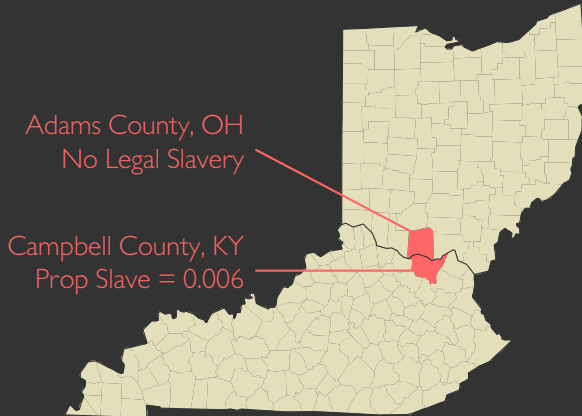


# North-South counterfactual analysis



# North-South counterfactual analysis

if different, then legality of institution driving the difference



# North-South counterfactual analysis

- Match Southern counties w/ few slaves ( $< 3\%$  of the pop) to Northern counties w/ no slaves on
  - ▶ geography (latitude/longitude/area)
  - ▶ farm value per capita, and
  - ▶ total county population
- Use coarsened exact matching w/ default cut-points
- 181 matched counties left
- Regress each outcome measure on North-South dummy

# North-South counterfactual analysis

Model 1: Baseline Results

Effect of Proportion Slave

Model 2: Instrumental variables

Effect of Proportion Slave

Model 3: North-South Matching

-0.4

-0.2

0.0

0.2

0.4

Effect on Affirmative Action Support

# North-South counterfactual analysis

Model 1: Baseline Results

Effect of Proportion Slave

Model 2: Instrumental variables

Effect of Proportion Slave

Model 3: North-South Matching

South-North Difference

-0.4

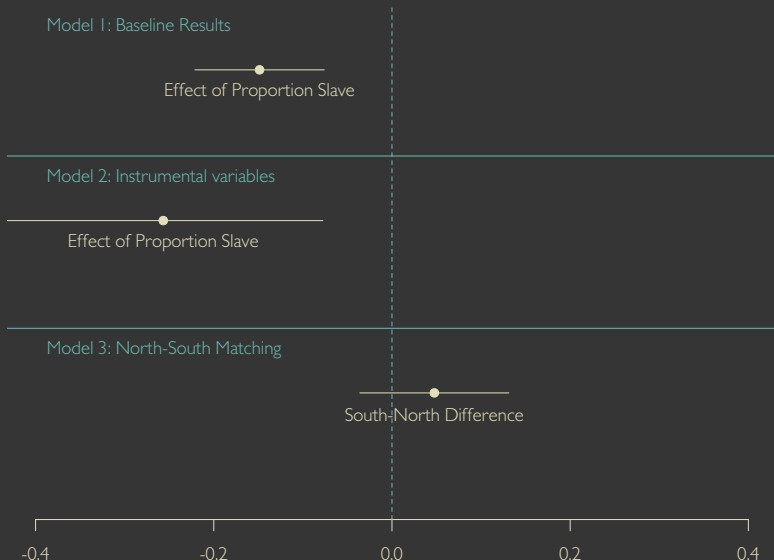
-0.2

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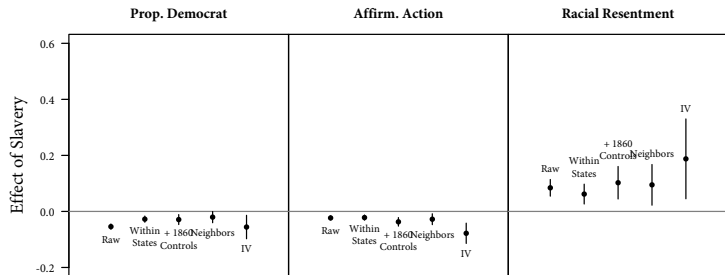
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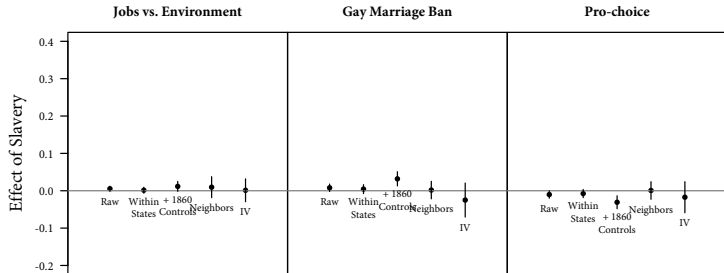
Effect on Affirmative Action Support



# Other political attitudes



# Other political attitudes





# Test of racial threat

- Sequential g-estimation procedure (Vansteelandt, 2009):
  1. Regress attitudes on % black today, % slave 1860, and any confounders for % black today

$$Y_c = \alpha_s + \beta_1 PB_{c,2000} + \beta_2 PS_{c,1860} + X_c \beta_3 + \varepsilon_c$$

2. Adjust outcome by subtracting estimated effect of % black

$$\tilde{Y}_c = Y_c - \hat{\beta}_1 PB_{c,2000}$$

3. Regress adjusted outcome on % slave without any post-treatment variables

$$\tilde{Y}_c = \alpha_s + \gamma_1 PS_{c,1860} + X_{c,1860} \gamma_2 + \nu_c$$

- Under no omitted variables at each stage (and homogeneous effects),  $\gamma_2$  is controlled direct effect of slavery.

# Racial threat results

	Prop. Democrat		Affirm. Action		Racial Resentment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Prop. Slave, Direct Effect	<b>-0.175**</b> (0.044)	<b>-0.159**</b> (0.044)	<b>-0.143**</b> (0.038)	<b>-0.129**</b> (0.038)	<b>0.571**</b> (0.196)	<b>0.541**</b> (0.196)
Prop. Black, 2000	<b>0.167**</b> (0.049)		<b>0.054</b> (0.043)		<b>-0.241</b> (0.214)	
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	748	748	748	748	643	643
R <sup>2</sup>	0.200	0.187	0.136	0.118	0.116	0.111
Model	WLS	Seq. g-est.	WLS	Seq. g-est.	WLS	Seq. g-est.

\*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01

Columns (1), (3), and (5) include % black 2000 as an additional control to the baseline specification. Columns (2), (4), and (6) use sequential g-estimation of Vansteelandt (2009).

# Antebellum attitudes

	Prop Democrat		Affirm. Action		Racial Resentment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Prop. Slave, 1860	-0.198 <sup>†</sup> (0.116)	-0.186** (0.052)	-0.096 (0.102)	-0.152** (0.045)	1.916** (0.481)	0.753** (0.229)
Prop. Slave, 1850	0.024 (0.115)		-0.163 (0.101)		-0.118 (0.452)	
Prop Slave 1840	0.048 (0.113)		0.100 (0.099)		-0.985* (0.455)	
Prop Slaveholder, 1860		0.557 (0.576)		0.307 (0.495)		-4.253 <sup>†</sup> (2.545)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	566	748	566	748	489	643
R <sup>2</sup>	0.213	0.189	0.148	0.135	0.162	0.118

<sup>†</sup>p < .1; \*p < .05; \*\*p < .01

# Children of immigrants

	Prop Democrat		Affirm. Action		Racial Resentment	
	logistic		logistic		OLS	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Prop. Slave, 1860	0.619 (0.396)	−0.714 (0.533)	−0.630 (0.462)	−0.646 (0.502)	−0.092 (0.411)	0.694 (0.581)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cluster-Robust SEs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sample	Blacks	2nd Gen. Immigrants	Blacks	2nd Gen. Immigrants	Blacks	2nd Gen. Immigrants
N	5,030	1,886	5,025	1,881	1,634	580

\*p < .1; \*\*p < .05

Effect of slavery on African Americans (Columns 1, 3, and 5) and children of immigrants (Columns 2, 4, 6) in South

# Urban-Rural/Civil War Destruction

	Prop Democrat		Affirm. Action		Racial Resentment	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Prop. Slave, 1860	-0.196** (0.057)	-0.165** (0.044)	-0.157** (0.049)	-0.143** (0.038)	0.487† (0.251)	0.571*** (0.196)
Civil War Destruction		-0.005 (0.008)		-0.005 (0.007)		0.056 (0.050)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rural Counties Only	✓		✓		✓	
N	565	747	565	747	471	642
R <sup>2</sup>	0.168	0.191	0.156	0.140	0.125	0.121

† p < .1; \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01

Effect of slavery after eliminating large urban centers (Columns 1, 3, 5) and controlling for Civil War destruction (Columns 2, 4, 6), which are % decrease in farm value in county between 1860 and 1870)

# Postbellum patterns

	Lynchings (1)	Prop Democrat (2)	Affirm. Action (3)	Racial Resentment (4)
Prop. Slave, 1860	16.618** (4.537)	-0.235** (0.053)	-0.213** (0.045)	0.829** (0.235)
Tractors Change, 1930-1940		-0.483† (0.289)	-0.616† (0.248)	2.198† (1.264)
Tractors, 1930		-0.197 (0.179)	-0.112 (0.154)	0.191 (0.777)
Prop Slave × Tractors Change		2.303* (0.942)	2.179** (0.809)	-9.094* (4.229)
State Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
1860 Covariates	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	748	748	748	643
R <sup>2</sup>	0.371	0.197	0.145	0.121
Specification	WLS-county area	WLS-sample size	WLS-sample size	WLS-sample size

† p < .1; \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01

Black lynchings per 100,000 blacks 1882–1930, number of tractors per 100,000 acres of land in 1940. Column 1 is WLS w/ log of total county area as weights.

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