The Long Civil War:

Battle Exposure and Anti-Black Racism in the US South *

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Abstract

This paper studies the effect of the Civil War on the geography of racism in the US South. We construct a new dataset on the universe of soldiers enlisted in the Confederate army, their town of residence before the war, and their battle experience. We show that towns whose soldiers had a more intense combat experience increased support for racially conservative parties, discriminatory laws, and engaged more in violence against Black Americans. The effect is similar in size to and independent from the prevalence of slavery and the slave-holding elite. Evidence indicates that communities more heavily exposed to bloody battles were more likely to develop a deeper cultural attachment to the war heritage, gather in memorial organizations, and build monuments to celebrate Confederate memory. The war legacy persists over time, shaping hate crimes, white supremacist rallies, and police officer killings of Black Americans still today.

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> The dead continued to mingle among the living—in small stone monuments, symbolic bloody shirts, terrorists' white hoods, patriotic songs and speeches, veterans' fraternal bonds, women's Memorial Day committees, and, ultimately, in the tangible form of election ballots.
>
> David Blight, Race and Reunion (2009)

1 Introduction

A key question in political economy seeks to understand the salience of group identities in cultural and political conflicts. In the United States, race has been paramount in shaping past cultural and political struggles and continues to exert a profound influence on the ongoing contemporary debate.[1] While the existing literature has sought to explain the geography of racial conflict focusing on the role of slavery (Acharya et al., 2016b), and migration (Calderon et al., 2019; Giuliano and Tabellini, 2020; Bazzi et al., 2023a,b), the Civil War—one of the most defining moment of race relations in the US—has received less attention.[2]

During the Civil War, more than three million Americans fought over the abolition of slavery. Northern victory led to the Emancipation Proclamation and the ratification of civil rights for Black Americans, redefining the racial landscape of the United States. In their defeat, White Southerners in ex-Confederate states developed a strong identity centered around the war's heritage (Blight, 2001; Cox, 2019). Over the next generations, fighting continued in defense of segregationist policies and hierarchical racial social norms. Confederate imagery often accompanies these fights, suggesting a role for the war's collective memory in sustaining and legitimizing hierarchical racial norms (Forman, 1991; Domby, 2020; Cox, 2021).[3]

In this paper, we study the impact of the Civil War on racially conservative preferences and anti-Black violence in the US South. We focus on one fundamental aspect of the war: the overwhelming human cost. Over 600,000 people died and a similar

[1] For example, Gennaioli and Tabellini (2019) documents the role of race in the contemporary political conflicts in the US.

[2] Economists and political scientists have mostly focused on the legacy of slavery (Nunn, 2008; Bertocchi and Dimico, 2014; Acharya et al., 2016b; Jung, 2023), the role of the KKK (Fryer Jr and Levitt, 2012), and the Southern diaspora (Bazzi et al. (2023a,b)). Historians, instead, have produced important qualitative analyses on the role of the Civil War (Blight, 2001; Cox, 2019).

[3] One of the most emblematic examples is the 1948 Democratic convention when the Confederate flag emerged as the symbol of the Dixiecract revolt against President Truman's push for civil rights.

number were injured. The mass of fallen soldiers and the intensity of the battle experience left communities traumatized and wounded (Faust, 2009). We argue that these traumatic events played a key role in determining the geography of racially conservative preferences for generations to come. In the aftermath of the war, Southern communities blamed Northerners and newly emancipated Black Americans for White Southerners' deaths and injuries. Many veterans bonded over their shared traumatic experiences and continued fighting for the maintenance of racial hierarchies both in the ballots and through terrorist groups like the Ku-Klux Klan (KKK). The families of the fallen gathered in cemeteries to celebrate their relatives and portray them as honorable men fighting for a just cause. Subsequent generations fueled this myth and reinforced the connection between Confederate heritage and racial segregation by funding memorial groups and erecting monuments of Confederate heroes (Blight, 2001).

Even though the Civil War represented one of the key events in US history, the lack of a comprehensive dataset of the Confederate army has prevented the quantitative study of its effects. We overcome this limitation by constructing a new dataset on the universe of soldiers enlisted in the Confederate army, their town of residence before the war, and the battles they fought in. Using this information, we build a town-level measure of exposure to bloody battles. This measure is a weighted average of the share of soldiers from a given town that participated in each battle, where the weights are the share of Confederate casualties in that battle. For brevity, throughout the paper, we will call this measure *battle exposure*. To guarantee that our measure of battle exposure only captures the randomness of war and not towns' characteristics that could be related to racially conservative preferences, we take several steps.

First, we only consider large battles (over 10,000 Confederate soldiers), where the risk-taking behavior of soldiers from a few towns is unlikely to drive the overall number of casualties. Furthermore, we restrict attention to battles that occurred after conscription was instituted and eliminate the possibility that military leadership relocates soldiers to different regiments based on their performance in war by only using information on the soldiers' first enlistment.

Second, we leverage the key factors determining military regiments' battle participation to eliminate sources of bias reflecting local characteristics that might determine military strategic considerations and lead to higher casualty rates while affecting the outcomes. To this purpose, our main specification exploits residual variation in battle exposure after conditioning on the share of volunteers, state, and war theater fixed effects. Finally, because deadly battles might be concentrated in strategic locations

that could affect the outcomes of interest, we condition on proximity to deadly battle locations and the Sherman march.[4]

After conditioning on these covariates, our measure of EBB is normally distributed and independent both in levels and changes with a large set of observables measured before the war, reflecting economic, political, and demographic conditions. These results strongly indicate that EBB only captures random variation in war casualties coming from battle exposure. Our empirical strategy is a generalized DiD where we compare towns with different battle exposure before and after the Civil War, conditional on the above-described covariates.

We start by presenting results on presidential elections focusing on the vote share of the Democratic party between 1840 and 1944 when Black Americans were disenfranchised and the Democratic party supported racially discriminatory policies (slavery, segregation, disenfranchisement, etc.). We find that a one standard deviation increase in EBB leads to 4.2 additional percentage points in favor of the Democratic party during the whole period. Importantly, the effect of battle exposure does not change when controlling for the share of enslaved in 1860, a key determinant of white political preferences throughout the twentieth century (Acharya et al., 2016b). This result indicates that the effect of battle exposure operates through mechanisms not captured by the local importance of slavery and the share of Black Americans. When inspecting the dynamic effect, we see no differences in trends before the war, an immediate and large jump in 1868 that persists throughout the whole period. Moreover, we analyze the period characterized by the opening of the Democratic Party towards the Civil Rights movement starting in 1948 and concluding with the Civil Rights Act in 1964. In line with the racially conservative white defection from the Democratic party (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018), we find a decline in the magnitude of the effect reaching zero by the 1960 election.

To provide additional evidence that the war exposure boosted support for racially conservative policies, we show that battle exposure affected two additional political outcomes. First, the vote share in favor of the Dixiecrat Party, a segregationist political party that arose during the 1948 Philadelphia nomination convention of the Democratic Party in response to Truman's initiative to desegregate the Armed Forces in the same year (Lemmon, 1951).[5] Second, Congress members' roll-call vote on laws concerning segregation until 1964. These estimates provide a consistent picture

[4]Union Army General Sherman marched through Georgia in 1864 directly targeting local capital stock.

[5]July 26, 1948, the Democratic president Harry Truman issued the Executive Order 9981 ordering the desegregation of the armed forces.

indicating a strong effect of battle exposure on political support for segregation among communities affected by the Civil War.

We then turn to the analysis of one of the most dreadful aspects of racism in the United States: anti-Black violence. We build a new dataset on lynchings from 1865 to 1965. We integrate newly collected information from historical newspapers with existing data from (Tolnay and Beck, 1995) and Bailey and Tolnay (2015).[6] We find that lynchings are about 20 percent more likely in local communities with an additional standard deviation of battle exposure. Again, we find that controlling for the share of the enslaved population before the war does not offset our estimates.

We interpret these results as indicating that communities with greater war exposure developed a heightened commitment to interpreting the actions of the Confederate army as just and noble and embracing the celebration of white supremacy and resistance to Reconstruction. The memorialization of the War maintained these ideas alive through generations shaping political attitudes and behaviors. Our analysis shows that battle exposure increased the presence of organizations whose goal is the preservation and diffusion of Confederate memory, such as the Daughters of the Confederacy (Cox, 2019) and white supremacist terrorist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan. Furthermore, we find an increase in Confederate soldiers' memorials and in the prevalence of Confederate leaders' names among cohorts of White southern males born after the War. These results show a strong cultural attachment to the Confederacy and indicate the importance of both community-wide and within-family transmission channels.

We bolster this interpretation by studying the potential role of alternative mechanisms. First, we show that the effects we find are not due to changes in the relative size of the black population induced by the War—one of the key findings of the literature on the racial threat (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967)—and it is not complementary with the size of the slave population before the War (Acharya et al., 2016a). This analysis also discards the possibility that demographic change might lead to an increase in the perceived political threat (Soule, 1992; Testa and Williams, 2023) and explain our results. Additionally, we show that White or Black migration is not driving our results, indicating that family transmission and local socialization are the key channels of transmission rather than selective migration. Second, we analyze the direct effect of the War on economic outcomes. Our findings indicate an increase in income per capita for the white population and suggest that the War's effect is not due to

[6]We collect new information between 1865 and 1882, combining automated search and manual verification from local newspapers in Chronicling America and Newspapers.com.

an increase in economic competition between Black and White (Raper, 2017; Tolnay and Beck, 1992; Christian, 2017). Third, we analyze the role of the slave-owning elite. We find that the effect of battle exposure is independent of the size of the ex-slave owning community and the presence of large planters, one of the key factors that shaped support for slavery in the antebellum period (Masera and Rosenberg, 2021).

Finally, we investigate the long-run legacy of the war. We find that communities more exposed to battles during the Civil War have today a larger number of hate crimes against Black Americans, are more likely to host white supremacist rallies, and register more cases of police officers mortally wounding Black Americans. These results indicate that the War heritage is still entrenched in local communities, shaping identity politics and racial conflict to these days.

This paper contributes to several strands of the literature. First, our analysis elucidates new aspects of the origins and geography of Anti-Black attitudes and behavior in the US South. A large literature has sought to explain variation in support for segregation and violence against Black Americans.[7] Classic works have emphasized different aspects of the theory of racial threat (Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967), including labor market competition (Raper, 2017; Beck and Tolnay, 1992; Tolnay et al., 1992), group size (Acharya et al., 2016a), and political threat (Soule, 1992; Hagen et al., 2013; Testa and Williams, 2023), and propaganda (Ang, 2023; Esposito et al., 2023; Ottinger and Winkler, 2022). We contribute to this literature by showing the role of the war experience in the support for segregation and lynchings. Moreover, the long-term effects of the war experience on hate crimes, police killings, and white supremacist political engagement also connect us to the literature seeking to understand the contemporary rise of identity politics (Noury and Roland, 2020; Gennaioli and Tabellini, 2023).

Second, our results connect to a growing literature studying the cultural and political consequences of war experience (Dell and Querubin, 2018; Acemoglu et al., 2022; Koenig, 2023; Carozzi et al., 2023; Cagé et al., 2023). We show that communities more heavily exposed to the war experience developed more memorial organizations likely fostering social ties and ingroup identity shaping extreme political behavior. These results also connect us to the literature analyzing the long-term legacy of historical events and the persistence of cultural traits and discrimination (Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011; Voigtländer and Voth, 2012; Becker and Pascali, 2019). While recent contributions have provided evidence of horizontal and vertical transmission through interpersonal socialization and migration (Miho et al., 2023; Bazzi et al.,

[7] Cook et al. (2018) shows that lynchings occurred in locations with higher levels of segregation.

2023a), our analysis highlights the role of symbols and grassroots organizations in shaping the dynamic of cultural transmission and connects us to a growing interdisciplinary literature on norm dynamics and collective memory (Fouka and Voth, 2023; Zubrzycki and Woźny, 2020; Gelfand et al., 2024).

2 Historical Background

2.1 The Civil War

In 1860, On the eve of the Civil War, 15 of the 33 States of the Union still relied on the enslavement of Black Americans for the fulfillment of labor needs. After protracted tensions during the 1850s, the election of the Republican presidential nominee, Abraham Lincoln, precipitated the last sectional crisis leading 11 Southern states to secede. The move was motivated by the perceived threat among the Southern planter elite that the Lincoln administration posed to the future of slavery and its ability to expand in the territories. The Georgia Secession Convention's concluding remarks clarify this point: "The people of Georgia [. . .] refuse to commit their own to the rulers whom the North offers us. Why? Because by their declared principles and policy they have outlawed $3,000,000,000 of our property." (Smith, 1861).

Between December 1860 and February 1861, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America. On April 12th, 1861 the Battle of Fort Sumter marked the starting point of the Civil War and induced Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina to join the Confederacy. In the aftermath of Fort Sumter, Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, called for an army of 500,000 volunteers to serve for one to three years. Unable to meet these needs, the Confederate Congress passed the First Conscription Act in April 1862, enlisting white men aged 18 to 35 for the duration of the hostilities and extending all previous one-year terms of service to three years. The Act was amended again in September of the same year, raising the maximum age to 45 years.

While all white men were expected to serve, exemptions were made for strategic sectors, including railroad and river workers, civil officials, telegraph operators, miners, pharmacists, teachers, ministers, textile factory workers, and hospital attendants. In a move that reflected the deep class divisions of the antebellum South, the Confederate Congress passed the Twenty Negro Law in October 1862, exempting anyone owning 20 or more slaves from service, an act that stirred deep resentment among

poorer conscripts. In addition, until December 1863, wealthy men could hire a substitute to fight for them. After sustained losses, low morale, and widespread desertion, the conscription acts were amended again in 1864 to extend the age limits from 17 to 50. By March 1865, the Confederate Congress authorized the conscription of up to 300,000 Black men, but the plan was never implemented due to the surrender of Confederate forces at Appomattox in April 1865.[8]

Confederate military units were organized at a highly localized level, where the smallest unit, a company, consisted of 100 men recruited from the same community. A regiment comprised 10 companies, and four regiments usually formed a brigade. Two to four brigades formed a division, and two to four divisions formed a corps. An army comprised two to four corps and was named after its primary area of operation (e.g., Army of Northern Virginia). The assignment of armies to areas of operation was based purely on military strategy and independent of the geographic origins of the companies that comprised the various units. The vast majority of Civil War battles occurred on the northern border between Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, leaving most local communities in the deep South with limited physical damages and few civilian casualties. Notable exceptions include Sherman's March through Georgia in 1864, which directly targeted local capital stock, but did not affect the local population (Feigenbaum et al., 2018). Overall, historians suggest that over 300,000 white Southern men died due to the war (Hacker, 2011). These numbers imply that about 18 percent of white Southern males perished in the war.

2.2 Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the Jim Crow Laws

The Civil War led to the emancipation of Black Americans in 1863. Lincoln's executive act was ratified by Congress through the 13^{th} Amendment in 1865 and complemented by the 14^{th} and 15^{th} amendments establishing, respectively, citizenship to all Black Americans and the right to vote for Black men. During the first years after the war, a period called *Reconstruction*, Congress sought to actively enforce Black rights through local branches of the Freedmen's Bureau and legislative action imposed by the occupying Union troops. Violence against the freedmen inspired the Enforcement Acts of 1870-71, criminal codes that protected African Americans' right to vote, hold office, serve on juries, and receive equal protection of laws. Among these, the Ku Klux Klan Act of April 1871 made private acts of violence and offenses against individuals' political rights punishable under federal law and enforceable by federal troops.

[8]Nearly 200,000 Black men served in the Union Army.

However, the success of the Liberal Republican party, a third-party running on a conciliatory platform during the 1872 presidential campaign, undermined Republicans' commitment to Reconstruction. In 1872, Republicans passed an amnesty bill returning citizenship and the franchise to twenty-thousand ex-Confederates, which had been stripped in the immediate aftermath of the war. Eventually, the highly disputed election of 1876 led to Reconstruction's demise.

The political impasse was resolved with a deal between Democrats and Republicans and sealed in the 1877 Compromise between the Southern and Northern factions of Congress. The agreement featured the removal of the Union troops from the South in 1877 and led to the unraveling of the civil liberties granted to Black Americans during Reconstruction. By the mid-1890s, most Southern States had introduced *Jim Crow* laws enforcing racial segregation in most aspects of society. These laws were upheld by the 1896 ruling on *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in which the Supreme Court laid out its "separate but equal" legal doctrine on segregation. The Jim Crow era institutionalized economic, social, and political discrimination toward Black Americans until *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 and eventually the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

2.3 Civil War Heritage and Confederate Culture

The Civil War's memory and its mythization played a crucial role in the political symbology that sustained racial segregation as a national doctrine since the end of Reconstruction. In the aftermath of the war, a uniquely Confederate version of the war's meaning, rooted in resistance to Reconstruction and white supremacy developed in the South. Confederate soldiers were portrayed as honorable men fighting for their independence. A tradition that came to be known as the Lost Cause (Blight, 2001).

The impulse towards this interpretation started in the cemeteries that remained during the Reconstruction years, the public site of memorialization; obelisks and stone pyramids appeared as markers of the recent past and a celebration of its heroes. Veterans' organizations materialized around the ritual of Memorial Day which, in several Southern states, converged on June 3, Jefferson Davis's birthday. By the early 1870s, a group of ex-Confederate officers in Virginia had forged a coalition of memorial groups that quickly took over the creation of the Lost Cause tradition.

One of the key myths propagated by this tradition is summed up by former Confederate general Bradley T. Johnson, a popular Confederate memorial speaker: "The

great crime of the century," he concluded, "was the emancipation of the Negroes."[9] Since the early days of memorial activities, these groups were committed to writing and controlling the history of the war and its aftermath and to using this narrative to uphold white supremacy policies in the ballot. Since the fall of Reconstruction, this narrative no longer merely explained the war's defeat but celebrated their victory against emancipation. Pollard, the white supremacist newspaper editor who gave the name to the Lost Cause tradition, wrote that "To the extent of securing the supremacy of the white man and the traditional liberties of the country . . . she [the South] really triumphs in the true cause of the war."[10]

Confederacy symbols remained throughout US history charged with political meanings winking to a "better" past of racial purity and white supremacy. The Confederate flag was used as a party symbol by the white supremacist Dixiecrats, founded in 1948. Consistently exhibited by the Ku Klux Klan, it is today used in white supremacist rallies. Continuous display of the Confederate Flag on the grounds of the South Carolina State Capitol led the NAACP to call for a boycott of the State of South Carolina from the year 2000 until July 10, 2015, when the flag was permanently removed from the Capitol grounds.[11] Today, it is considered a white supremacist and hate symbol by associations monitoring hate groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League.[12]

2.3.1 Mechanisms of Diffusion and Transmission

This cultural and political tradition was diffused through the activities of veterans groups, organizations of sons and daughters of dead soldiers, and historical societies that perpetuated the Civil War interpretation and symbology across generations.

Memorial Organizations. During the first decades after the war, veterans' organizations were mainly local, but by the late 1880s, regional Confederate veterans' associations started to emerge. In 1889, a national organization, the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), was founded. At its height, the association had about 80,000 members in 1903 (Hattaway, 1975). A complementary organization, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), a hereditary association for female descendants of Confed-

[9] From In Memoriam Sempiternam, a commemorative book produced by the Confederate Memorial Literary Society (Richmond: Confederate Museum, 1896), cited in Blight (2001) p. 258.

[10] Cited in Blight (2001) p. 260, originally in Pollard, The Lost Cause Regained, 1868.

[11] https://naacp.org/resources/naacp-ends-its-boycott-state-south-carolina

[12] https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/confederate-flag and https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/neo-confederate.

erate soldiers, was founded in 1894. Last was the creation of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) in 1896. These associations advocated for the integration of the Lost Cause into the official historical narrative (Cox, 2019) by advocating for the adoption of pro-Southern history textbooks, lobbying legislatures and Congress for the reburial of Confederate dead, raising money for college scholarships awarded to descendants of Confederate veterans, and organizing and financing Confederate monuments.

Confederate Monuments. Between 1865 and 2020, over 1,500 Confederate monuments and memorials were erected in the US South, with a peak in 1910. These include dedications of roads, schools, courthouses, buildings, holidays, and most commonly, public statues (Henderson et al., 2021). These monuments and memorials were erected mainly as the result of the efforts of local branches of memorial organizations, the most active of which was the UDC (Chamberlain and Yanus, 2021). The event of monument unveiling took on a significance equal to, if not greater than, Memorial Day (Blight (2001)). The first of these monuments was a standing statue of Stonewall Jackson, which was unveiled in Richmond, Virginia, on October 26, 1875, in front of nearly fifty thousand people gathered for the celebration. The realization of these monuments required large investments and political leverage, capturing the bottom-up strategies that characterized the organizational effort of local memorial organizations. A telling example is the story of the Robert E. Lee Monument on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia. After Lee's death in 1870, memorial organizations in the Richmond area began fundraising and organizing efforts. A Lee Monument Association was founded to raise money for the monument. It took twenty years of activities to eventually cover the $77,500 cost of the massive monument that was finally erected in 1890 (Owley and Phelps, 2020). The symbolic meaning of the celebration of white supremacist figures remains to this day a powerful mechanism of transmission of the Lost Cause narrative and a reminder of the racist attitudes embodied in some Southern public institutions.

3 Data

This section describes the data sources for our primary source of variation, the main outcomes, and mechanisms of interest. In Appendix A.3, we discuss the rest of the variables included in the analysis and present summary statistics.

3.1 Civil War Soldiers, Regiments and Battles

We obtain information on the universe of Confederate soldiers (1.1 million soldiers) from the Fold3 Civil War Collection. Together with Ancestry and American Battlefield Trust, Fold3 have digitized information from enlistment records (see Figure A.1 for an example), muster rolls, payrolls, hospital registers, letters of correspondence, and in some cases, census records, to create the most comprehensive source of Civil War information to date. For each Confederate soldier, we collect their name, regiment, residence, and/or place of enlistment. For some soldiers, we can also observe the place and date of birth, day of death, day and type of injury, and date and reason for discharge.

Next, we geolocate soldiers based on their residence at the time of enlistment. When residence is unavailable we use the place of first enlistment. Of the 1.1 million records we collected, we are able to geolocate the residence of 175,957 soldiers and the place of enlistment for 387,730 soldiers. The locations of 218,658 soldiers are only identifiable at the county level. In these cases, we allocate soldiers to places in proportion to the eligible population (i.e., white males of military age) in 1860 using geolocated census information from Berkes et al. (2023). We identify 3,757 places (towns, hereafter) in the former Confederate states from which soldiers enlisted.

From Fold3, we also record the details of each Confederate regiment, including the date of organization and battle history. We supplement this with battle information from the American Battlefield Trust, which estimates the number of Union and Confederate soldiers killed, wounded, and missing or captured for each major battle of the Civil War.

3.2 Political Support for Racial Discrimination

Presidential Electoral Returns. We obtain data on presidential elections returns from ICPSR (1999) for 1840 to 1968. The data is reported at the county level, which we assign to our sample of towns in each presidential election year using historical county maps, .[13] We concentrate on the vote share in favor of the Democratic Party to capture the white population's support for racial discrimination. When an explicitly white segregationist third-party candidate emerges (e.g. the Dixiecrats), we also examine support for these parties.

Our focus on the Democratic Party vote share and period of our study is justified

[13]Town-level information is often available for independent cities in Virginia. In that case, we match the data to the appropriate town.

by the party's position on race relations during this time. Before the Civil War, the Democratic Party championed the defense of slavery and led the secessionist movement. Following the war, the party platform centered on racial segregation through the enforcement of the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws.[14] However, beginning with the 1948 Presidential election, the Democratic Party famously started to lose the support of Southern racially conservative whites over their change in position on various racial issues (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018).[15]

We stop our analysis at the election of 1964. Before this election, Black voters were disenfranchised, either through the institution of slavery in the antebellum period, or through *de facto* discrimination during the Jim Crow era. After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, federal protections guaranteed Black voters some level of enfranchisement.[16] Therefore, the Democratic Party vote share between 1840 and 1944 reflects white voters' racially conservative attitudes. Elections between 1948 and 1964 still provide some information on racial conservatism but should be interpreted with more caution.

Congressmen's Support for Segregation. For the years prior to the Civil War (i.e. pre-1861), we incorporate information on voting in the House of Representatives on issues related to slavery (Masera and Rosenberg, 2021). The data report representatives' voting behavior in favor or against slavery for each of the 159 votes held on slavery between 1839 and 1860. After the Civil War (i.e., post-1865), we measure support for segregation using the Congressional Roll-Call Votes Database (Lewis et al., 2019). We match our sample of towns to congressional districts in each year and code a total of 278 votes regarding racial discrimination between 1867 and 1964. The variable is equal to one if the vote favors slavery/segregation or opposes

[14]Several papers show the association between racial attitudes and the Democratic Party in the South. Masera and Rosenberg (2021) shows that Southern Democratic congressmen were more likely to vote in support of slavery than their Whig counterparts between the 1830s and 1860s. Fryer and Levitt (2012) shows the correlation between the Ku Klux Klan membership and the Democratic Party among whites in the South in the 1920s. Kuziemko and Washington (2018) shows the association between racially conservative attitudes and support for the Democratic Party in the post-WWII period.

[15]The beginning of this period is marked by the 1948 Democratic National Convention in which a dispute over civil rights prompted a faction of southern delegates to stage a walkout. The States' Rights Democratic Party ("Dixiecrats") was formed soon thereafter, led by Strom Thurmond.

[16]In the sample of our analysis, the only elections with some level of enfranchisement of Black voters are the 1872 and 1876 elections. Black voters in these elections were enfranchised to some degree through the enforcement of newly passed voting rights granted by the federal policies of Radical Reconstruction. These where quickly dismantled after the 1876 election and the start of the Jim Crow era.

abolition/integration, and is zero otherwise. We drop abstentions. More details on the coding are reported in Appendix **??**.

3.3 Violence Against Black Americans

Lynchings. We measure historical violence against Black Americans using information on lynchings from various sources. First, we incorporate data from the Tolnay-Beck inventory of lynchings (Tolnay and Beck, 1995), which has been updated by Bailey and Tolnay (2015) and actively maintained by the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (CSDE). We refer to this data as the Bailey-Tolney-Beck (BTB) dataset. These data are considered to be the most extensively verified, publicly available data on lynchings to date. One caveat, however, is that lynching episodes are only identifiable at the county level. We supplement this information with spatially disaggregated data from the Monroe Work Today Dataset Compilation, which has created a geocoded database of lynchings from the Tuskeegee Institute, (Tolnay and Beck, 1995) inventory, and 70 additional scholarly sources. We match the geolocation of these lynchings to our sample of towns that enlisted a Confederate soldier. We refer to these data as the Monroe Work Today (MWT) dataset.

Many of the sources used to construct the BTB and MWT datasets only contain comprehensive information beginning in 1882.[17] We, therefore, supplement these data with a novel set of information on lynching from 1865-1881, which we construct through keyword searches of newspapers during the time. Using the *Chronicling America* and Newspapers.com databases, we conducted keyword searches for lynchings, throughout the entire country, and hand-coded all lynching events, including their geolocation. In total, the integrated database comprises 3,961 unique cases of lynchings of Black men from 1865 to 1964.

Appendix Figure A.3 plots the time variation in the total lynchings of Black men per 10,000 people from 1865 to 1965. Lynchings spike immediately following the end of the war and remain high through the 1890s, with some annual variation. After the 1890s, per capita lynchings decline slowly until tapering off in the 1930s.

[17] Both datasets record lynching episodes prior to 1882, but some states have more comprehensive coverage than others.

3.4 Long-Term Measures

To measure contemporary violence against Black Americans, we use the prevalence of anti-Black hate crimes, police killings of Black people, and the occurrence of white supremacist rallies.

Hate Crimes. This information has been gathered by the F.B.I. through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data Series since 1990. Hate crimes are defined as crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. We focus on crimes motivated by racial considerations and measure the number of Black hate crimes per 100,000 residents in each county from 1992 to 2018.[18]

Police Killings. Police killings are recorded by the Mapping Police Violence Database (MPVD- 2000-2018). We use the information on the victims' race and event location to measure the number of police killings of a Black person within a 25 km radius of each town in our sample. In total there are 1,510 killings of a Black person in our sample. Each year, 8 percent of towns are within 25 km of a police killing, on average.

White Supremacist Rallies. We construct data on white supremacist rallies using information from the armed conflict location and event dataset (ACLED) (Raleigh et al., 2010). Since 2020 ACLED has collected information on political protests and violent events in the United States. We combine this information with a list of U.S.-based white supremacist groups provided yearly by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a non-profit organization monitoring extreme-right activists in the United States. We code a white supremacist rally as any event involving a white supremacist group identified by the SPLC and measure the likelihood that a white supremacist rally occurred between 2020 and 2023 within a 25km radius of each town in our sample. In total, there have been 121 white supremacist rallies in this period and approximately 10 percent of towns are within 25 km of a white supremacist rally.

3.5 Confederate Organizations and Memorialization

We measure the development of Confederate organizations and the inter-generational transmission of Confederate memory in several ways.

United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). We geocode the location of

[18]The smallest identifiable geographic unit in this data is the county.

chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) from 1897 to 1925 by digitizing the organization's "Minutes of the Annual Meeting". For each town in our sample, we identify whether there is a UDC chapter and measure the average number of members over all years for which we can observe membership information.

Confederate Monuments. We rely on a comprehensive list, compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)'s "Whose Heritage?" database of Confederate monuments, schools, and other public symbols, which were often funded and instituted by local chapters of the UDC. For each town in our sample, we identify whether there is a Confederate monument.

Confederate Names. We measure cultural attachments to Confederate symbolism by estimating the prevalence of Confederate leaders' names among cohorts of White southern males using the complete-count Census records. At the county level, we measure the share of White southern males, born in each year from 1830 to 1930, whose names contain a reference to famous Confederate generals and leaders. The full list of names is provided in Table A.4.

KKK Chapters. We obtain information on the location of the second Ku Klux Klan (KKK) chapters from 1915–40 from the Virginia Commonwealth Library's Klan Map Project. For each town in our sample, we identify whether there is a KKK chapter.

4 Empirical Specification

Assessing the effect of Civil War casualties on anti-Black political preferences and attitudes presents several empirical challenges. For example, a simple regression that compares towns with different casualty rates might be biased if soldiers who are more ideologically committed to the war are more likely to take risks and become wounded or die in battle. To address these and other potential sources of selection resulting from omitted variables, our strategy exploits variation in battle exposure together with controls that capture the geographic patterns of conscription and war strategies. The following sections present the measure of battle exposure and the empirical specification.

4.1 Battle exposure

We construct our measure of battle exposure in several steps. First, we define the town-level exposure to each battle as the share of soldiers from a given town i who fought in battle b. We call the town-level exposure to battle i, $E_{i,b}$.

Next, using information on the total number of Confederate dead and wounded in each battle, we measure the share of Confederate soldiers who died or were wounded in each battle (C_b). We then compute each town's battle exposure (EBB_i) by multiplying the town's exposure to battle b by the share of Confederate dead or wounded in the battle, and sum over all battles:

$$EBB_i = \sum_{b=1}^{B} C_b * E_{i,b} \tag{1}$$

To mitigate the possibility that characteristics of a few towns might determine the battle's bloodiness, we focus on large battles where the behavior of a few soldiers is unlikely to drive the overall number of casualties (C_b). We define a large battle as any battle with more than 10,000 Confederate soldiers. Furthermore, to avoid the possibility that individuals may self-select in certain battles we, limit our attention to battles that occurred after conscription was instituted (April 16, 1862). After imposing these restrictions, we obtain a measure of EBB based on 65 battles listed in Table A.1.

This measure captures the number of dead and wounded soldiers over the number of conscripts in town i, determined by the participation in large battles. Because we measure exposure among the conscripted, changes in EBB are not driven by changes in the exemption rates at the local level. Panel (a) of Figure 1 plots the raw spatial variation in EBB_i. Panel (b) of Figure 1 shows the distribution of EBB_i.

4.2 Identification Strategy

Our main specification has the following form:

$$y_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \delta_t + \beta EBB_i \times Period_t + \theta_t \mathbf{X}_i + \epsilon_{i,t} \tag{2}$$

where $y_{i,t}$ are outcomes capturing preferences for segregation and other anti-Black attitudes and behaviors in town i and year t. We control for town and year fixed effects, respectively (α_i and δ_t) and time-varying covariates ($\theta_t \mathbf{X}_i$). The main variable of interest, $EBB_i \times Period_t$, represents battle exposure in town i interacted with an

indicator function taking value one in period t ($Period_t$). We normalize EBB_i to mean zero, standard deviation one, such that the coefficient β captures the change in outcome y in town i induced by a one standard deviation increase in battle exposure between period t and the period before the Civil War. Finally, $\epsilon_{i,t}$ is a random error term, capturing all omitted factors, which we allow to be heteroskedastic and correlated across time (clustered at the town level).

When the outcomes of interest are not observable before the Civil War, we estimate the following specification:

$$y_{i,t} = \delta_t + \gamma_t EBB_i \times \xi_t + \theta_t \mathbf{X}_i + \epsilon_{i,t} \tag{3}$$

where $y_{i,t}$ represents post-war variables and γ_t captures the difference in the outcomes in year t between towns that differ by one standard deviation of EBB_i. We include year fixed effects (δ_t) and time-varying covariates ($\theta_t \mathbf{X}_i$).

While our measure of EBB_i is arguably independent of differences in casualty rates due to individual soldiers' abilities to select themselves into bloodier battles, it is still possible that local characteristics determine military strategic considerations that correlate both with higher casualty rates and our outcomes of interest. Panel (a) of Figure 1 substantiates this concern by depicting the raw geographic variation in battle exposure, which exhibits clear patterns across locations. For example, towns with easier access to the Eastern Theater of War, with battles mainly concentrated in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, experienced much higher EBB. This is in line with the Eastern theater having several bloody battles. Additionally, there appear to be clear state-level differences. This is not surprising, given that regiments and other military decisions were organized at the state level.

To eliminate these sources of bias, we leverage key factors determining military regiments' battle participation. First, we control for the share of soldiers in each town sent to each war theater multiplied by year fixed effects. Second, we exploit only within-state variation by controlling for state times year fixed effects. Third, because differences in volunteering rates across towns might determine military decisions that lead to higher casualty rates and correlate with anti-Black sentiments, we control for the share of volunteers times year fixed effects. These variables constrain the comparison to towns with the same share of volunteers, within the same state and the same war theater, significantly reducing the worry that war leaders' ability to determine the over-representation of specific places in specific battles could bias our results.

Additionally, we account for the fact that some towns were directly affected by

the war and that local soldiers may have been part of the defense efforts. This may be problematic if battles occurred in strategic locations whose characteristics might correlate with our outcomes. To account for this issue, we include an indicator function equal to one if the distance between the town and the closest battle is less than 10 km. For the same reasons, we include an indicator function if the town is within 10 km from Sherman's March path.[19]

Panel (b) of Figure 1 shows the distribution of EBB_i before and after including these controls, clearly indicating that accounting for these patterns substantially reduces geographic clustering and allows us to restrict attention to the component of the casualty rate that is normally distributed.

Under the assumption of parallel trends in outcomes in the absence of the Civil War across towns differently exposed to bloody battles (EBB_i), and conditional on controls $\mathbf{X}_i$, the parameter β identifies the causal effect of the Civil War battles exposure on the outcome y. In support of the parallel trends assumption in Table 1, we show that after conditioning on $\mathbf{X}_i$, EBB_i is independent, in trends and in levels, of a large set of pre-war variables potentially correlated with changes in the outcomes of interests. In addition to standard political, socio-economic, and geographic variables, we show that EBB_i is independent of the share of the enslaved population in 1860, the share of the free Black population in 1860, voting behavior in support of the Democratic Party, and Congressional votes in support of slavery in the years before the Civil War. Table 1 shows the economically and statistically negligible relationship between key local socio-economic characteristics and our treatment, suggesting that the identification assumption is met. Additionally, in Figure 2, we report coefficients β_t from the following event-study specification:

$$y_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \delta_t + \sum_{t=1839, t\neq 1860}^{1968} \beta_t \mathbf{1}_{\text{Year = t}} \ EBB_i + \theta_t \mathbf{X}_i + \epsilon_{i,t} \tag{4}$$

where $y_{i,t}$ is the vote share in favor of the Democratic party. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the absence of pre-trends in our main outcome of interest.

Finally, to validate our measure we show that EBB_i determines changes in demographic characteristics after the war. For this purpose, we estimate Equation 3 between 1850 and 1870 and report results in Table A.3. The findings show a strong and significant effect of battle exposure on changes in white male demographics. Our estimates indicate that with each standard deviation increase in EBB_i there is a 4 percent decline in young white males (between 15 and 44 years) with respect to the

[19] General Sherman marched through Georgia in 1864 directly targeting local capital stock.

total population. Estimates are robust when we look at changes in the ratio of young white males to young white females and young white males to the overall white male population.

5 Main Results

5.1 Political Support for Segregation

We study the impact of battle exposure on the politics of segregation. We first analyze popular support for segregation by looking at the results of presidential elections. We then look at the behavior of politicians once elected by analyzing how House representatives voted on race-related issues.

5.1.1 Presidential Elections

Results in Table 2 show the estimates of equation 2, where the outcome of interest is the Democratic vote share in presidential elections. Column (1) shows our baseline specification using only elections between 1840 and 1944. As described in Section 3.2, this specification represents white preferences for racial segregation for two main reasons. First, Black voters were largely disenfranchised during this period, either by law or because of Jim Crow restrictions. Second, the Democratic party was the most racially conservative during this time.

The results show a large, positive and significant effect of EBB. A one standard deviation increase in EBB increased the post-war democratic vote share by 4.2 percentage points. In a town with an average EBB compared to a counterfactual town that is not exposed to war, the Democratic party vote share is, on average, 8.9 percentage points higher. To understand the size of the effect, we focus on the last election in the estimating sample, the 1944 presidential election, which happened almost 80 years after the end of the Civil War. In this election, 3.2 million voters from towns in our sample participated. Compared to a counterfactual scenario where there was no war, our estimates in column (1) imply an extra 300,000 voters for the Democratic party.

In column (2) we expand the elections in our sample to include those between 1948 and 1964. As described in Section 3.2, during this period, the Democratic party started to "lose the South" because of their change in position over race issues. As expected, the effects are smaller but still significant. In columns (3) and (4), we show that our results are robust to changes in how we measure EBB. First, in column (3),

to measure the bloodiness of the battles, we use only the death rate of Confederate soldiers. We do this because deaths are measured with more precision and deaths when compared to injuries may have a larger impact on the towns affected. One important caveat is that deaths and injuries in battles are highly correlated, so it is empirically difficult to disentangle the role that each of these events has on the formation of racially conservative preferences. In column (4), we only include defensive battles. This restriction is based on the assumption that the ability of generals to select who participates in defensive battles is much smaller than for offensive ones, and therefore, in this specification, we are minimizing the possibility that general decisions could bias our results. When comparing this result with the baseline specification, it is important to remember that defensive battles may differ from offensive ones also on other dimensions. The main results are confirmed using these alternative measures.

Finally, in column (5), we control for the well-studied effects that dependence on slave labor has on post-war racially conservative preferences. As expected, given that EBB and the use of slave labor are uncorrelated, the estimate of the effects of EBB on voting remains unchanged. We also confirm the results found in previous research, which shows that in places historically dependent on slave labor, support for the Democratic Party is higher after the Civil War and the emancipation of enslaved people. The results show that a one-standard deviation increase in EBB leads to an additional 3.9 percentage points in the Democratic vote share and that a one standard deviation increase in percent enslaved corresponds to an additional 5.8 percentage points in the Democratic party vote share. Overall, these results highlight the importance of both the legacy of slavery and the Civil War in understanding the geographic distribution of racially conservative preferences in the Jim Crow era. Places dependent on slave labor and affected by the Civil War are distinct, even though they had similar effects on the fortunes of the Democratic party.

In Figure 2 we explore the dynamic effects of EBB on the Democratic vote share by estimating the event study in equation 4. The results show no pre-existing trends before the start of the war when comparing towns with different EBB. This is reassuring evidence that the parallel trends assumption, which requires that conditional on controls, trends in vote shares would have been similar between towns with different EBB in a counterfactual world without the war, is satisfied. The event study shows an immediate increase in the vote share for the Democratic party in towns with higher EBB. In the 1868 elections, held just 3 years after the end of the war, one additional standard deviation in EBB increased the vote share for the Democratic party by 4

percentage points.[20] In the two subsequent elections (1872 and 1876), we still observe a significant effect of EBB on support for the Democratic party, but the point estimates are smaller. This is an expected result given that in these elections most Black men were enfranchised, as the elections were held under Reconstruction policies. These estimates should be interpreted as some weighted average of the political preferences of the White and Black men.

For the elections during the first part of the Jim Crow era (1880-1944) we see a large, stable, and statistically significant effect of EBB on the Democratic vote share. We interpret support for the Democratic party during this period as a proxy for the preferences of white voters over racial segregation because Black voters were de facto disenfranchised and party differences on racial policy were distinct. Point estimates become much smaller and statistically insignificant starting with the 1948 elections and remain this way for the rest of the Jim Crow era. This trend can be explained by an opening of the Democratic party's stance on racial equality, led by President Truman and Northern Democrats during the 1948 Democratic National Convention. In response to this change many pro-segregation Southern Democrats decided to participate in the 1948 election under a third party, the Dixiecrats. Figure 2 shows that a standard deviation rise in EBB increases the vote share for the Dixiecrats by 5 percentage points. This effect is particularly large given that, in our sample, the Dixiecrats received 20 percent of the vote. These results also highlight the fact that high EBB towns are not Democratic party loyalists, but rather voted for the party's position on racial issues. As soon as the position changed, voters shifted their support to the new pro-segregation party.

5.1.2 House Representatives Support for Segregation

To further establish that battle exposure affected white preferences for segregation, we study roll-call votes in the House of Representatives from 1839 to 1964. We focus on laws related to racial issues like slavery, segregation, and civil rights. Table 3 shows the results of estimating equation 2, where the outcome is a binary variable equal to 1 if the representative voted in support of a racially conservative proposal.

All estimates in Table 3 show a positive, robust, and significant effect of EBB on the probability that a representative votes in support of racially conservative legislation after the war. The point estimate in column (1) implies that an additional standard deviation increase in EBB raises the probability of a racially conservative vote by 3.1

[20] Mississippi, Texas and Virginia only rejoined the Union after the election of 1868, so their citizens did not vote in this election.

percentage points. Column (4) shows that historical dependence on slave labor does not predict any change in representative voting behavior.

5.2 Violence against Black Americans

In this section, we study lynchings, the most violent expression of racist behavior. Given the lack of comprehensive lynching data before the Civil War, we do not estimate a DiD but instead estimate equation 3. All results are displayed in Table 4. In the first 4 columns, we focus only on lynchings where we can identify the town where the lynching was committed. The outcome is a binary variable equal to 100 if, in that year and town, a Black person was lynched. Overall we observe large effects of EBB on lynching. A one standard deviation increase in EBB raises the probability of a lynching in a given town and year by 0.23 percentage points. This is a substantial effect given that each year 1 percent of towns have a lynching. The results are similar in magnitude but less precise when using other measures of EBB. Column (4) shows that the effects of a historical reliance on slave labor are larger and more precisely estimated, but that the main effect of EBB on lynchings remains stable.

In columns (5) to (8) we examine lynchings that are only identifiable at the county level. With this data we can construct per capita lynching rates because we have population information at the county level in each decade. Overall, these results confirm that EBB is positively correlated with lynchings. An additional standard deviation rise in EBB increases lynching rates by 0.026 per 100,000 people.

6 Investigating Mechanisms

Our interpretation of the relationship between Civil War casualties and anti-Black attitudes and violence revolves around the development of a Confederate culture that sustained segregationist racial norms and violence against Black Americans. Communities more heavily exposed to battles were more likely to develop a stronger commitment to the interpretation of the war as just and noble, to celebrate white supremacy, and to resist Reconstruction. The memorialization of the war and the celebration of its heroes through memorial organizations, public sites naming, and monuments maintained these ideas through generations, shaping political attitudes and behaviors. This section provides evidence consistent with this interpretation and against several alternative hypotheses.

6.1 Confederate Culture

In Table 5, we show that battle exposure had a positive effect on the formation and diffusion of the Confederate culture. We start by investigating whether naming patterns differ across towns that were more or less exposed to the Civil War. By focusing on distinctively Confederate names, we capture individuals' attachment to a Confederate identity and their willingness to transmit it. Results in columns (1)-(2) indicate a 9-16% increase in the number of distinctively Confederate names for each additional standard deviation in battle exposure.

We then investigate the strength of organizations explicitly devoted to the diffusion and transmission of Confederate culture, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC)(Cox, 2019). Column (3) shows that towns with one standard deviation greater battle exposure had 13 additional members of the UDC on average between 1897 and 1920 in their local chapters, corresponding to 28% of the mean. Differences in the size of the UDC's local branches should be reflected in different abilities to lobby local governments and mobilize the population to build Confederate memorials. In column (4) we find evidence consistent with this idea. One additional standard deviation in battle exposure increases the probability of having a Confederate monument by 12.2 percentage points. Finally, column (5) reports the effect of battle exposure on the probability of observing a KKK chapter in a given town between 1915 and 1940. We find that a standard deviation increase in battle exposure raises the likelihood that a town has a KKK chapter by 5.6 percentage points. The magnitude of the effect is 80% of the average probability of having a KKK chapter per town (7 percent).

Overall, Table 5 shows that battle exposure had a strong and lasting effect on the formation and transmission across generations of a culture that celebrates Confederate soldiers as war heroes fighting for a just cause, effectively sustaining a culture of discrimination against Black Americans and promoting physical and political violence through lynchings and segregation. We explore alternative explanations in the next sections. The main alternative explanation of our results is that casualty rates caused a change in the socio-economic environment that was in itself responsible for the increase in anti-Black and pro-segregation sentiments among the war survivors. We distinguish between three direct consequences of the War that might drive our results: demographic changes, economic changes, and military and policy changes. We examine these changes in both the short (1870-1880) and long run (1890-1940).

6.2 Direct Effects of The War on Racial Composition

Because battle exposure determined a large reduction in white males, these changes shifted the gender, age, and racial composition of towns (as shown in Table A.3). As a consequence, changes in the racial composition might have increased concerns among white southerners about losing economic and political control over the Black minority. In Table B.5 column (5), we find that a one standard deviation increase in battle exposure led to a 1.6 (1.8) percentage point rise in the short (long) run Black population share.

While it is plausible that a relative increase in the Black population affected pro-segregationist sentiments, this seems to play a marginal role in explaining the main effect. First, we find that when controlling for changes in the Black population share, the effect of battle exposure on vote share for the Democratic party is not distinguishable from the unconditional parameter (see column (5) Table B.6). This is consistent with results in Table 2, where column (5) shows that the relationship between battle exposure and the Democratic vote share changes only mildly when the share of slaves in 1860 is included in the regression.

Moreover, to further ascertain the role of the Black population in explaining our results, we estimate the heterogeneous effect of battle exposure by quartile of the Black population share in 1860. Figure B.6 shows that the effect of battle exposure on the Democratic vote share is stable up to the 75^{th} percentile of the enslaved population share, while close to zero in the upper quartile. These results suggest that the effect of battle exposure on Democratic vote share operates through channels other than racial composition.

Another potential effect of battle exposure on the demographic composition of each town is migration.[21] We find no effect in the short-run and an increase in the in-migration only of white males in the long-run (columns (6) and (7) of B.5). As shown in columns (6) and (7) of Table B.6, the main results are unchanged after controlling for migration patterns.

[21] We estimate in-migration of white men using linked Census samples from 1850 to 1940. We classify a person as an in-migrant if their county in the previous census decade is different from the current census decade. Linked census samples are not accurate for Black males, especially in 1850 and 1860, which would only capture free Black men. Therefore, we measure Black male in-migration using full-count census data from 1870 to 1940. We classify a person as an in-migrant if they were born in a different state than the state in which they were enumerated in the current census decade.

6.3 Effects of the War on Economic and Military Outcomes

Economic outcomes in Table B.5 indicate an increase in manufacturing, an increase in the white occupational score, a slight increase in the relative occupational score between Black and White men, and a reduction in farm values. Each of these results is in line with the expected effects of a large casualty shock, which would make labor relatively scarce. Overall, however, this suggests an increase in living standards for the white population and casts doubts over an interpretation that the main effect is driven by economic competition. Moreover, Table B.6 shows that controlling for these outcomes only mildly affects the coefficient of interest.

Finally, we consider two military-political war outcomes that could have affected racial resentment. First, we examine the location of refugee camps for the formerly enslaved, which comprised communities of people escaping slavery within Union lines (Cooper (2017)). Second, we explore federal military camps established by the Union army during the Reconstruction period, which were meant to enforce federal Reconstruction policies. In both cases, the main effect does not change with these controls (columns (8) and (9) of Table B.6).

7 Long-term effects: The Legacy of the Civil War

Finally, we explore whether the war heritage still affects racial conflict, white supremacist prevalence, and violence against Black Americans today. First, we look at the relationship between public institutions and the Black population. We focus on the police, an institution that has been at the center of the debate on institutional racism during the last decade. Because public institutions carry inertia, we may still observe a racial bias within these institutions today. To explore this, we study police killings of Black people, a topic that has come under great scrutiny in the last decade and has, in certain instances, shown to be the direct result of institutional racial bias (Hoekstra and Sloan (2022)).

We match data on police killings from 2000 to 2018 to our sample of towns by constructing a variable equal to 1 if, in a given year, a police killing occurred within 25 km. In columns (1) and (2) of Table 6, we estimate a large and precisely estimated relationship between battle exposure and the probability that a police killing occurred within 25 km. An additional standard deviation in battle exposure increases the probability that a town has a police killing by 6.5 percentage points. This is substantial

given that, on average, each year, 16 percent of towns had a police killing within 25 km. An important caveat to interpreting these results as evidence of institutional discrimination is that police killing of Black people may also be driven by differences in crime rates and police resources.

Next, we study the long-run persistence of white supremacist organizations by looking at white supremacist rallies that were held between 2020-2023. As we showed in Table 5 towns with larger battle exposure had substantially more KKK chapters during the second wave of the KKK between 1915 and 1940. After that, the KKK and other white supremacist organizations lost their widespread support, but in more recent years, they have reemerged. We explore whether there is a continuation of contemporary support for white supremacist organizations in columns (5) and (6) of 5. The results show that an additional standard deviation in battle exposure increases the probability that a town had a white supremacist rally within 25 km by 6.8 percentage points. An important caveat when interpreting these estimates is that many white supremacist rallies may happen far away from where their members live.

Finally, we study extreme actions by private citizens by looking at hate crimes towards Black people. For this outcome, we only have county-level information. Also in this case we find large and significant effects of battle exposure on hate crimes. An additional standard deviation increase in battle exposure raises the hate crime rate against Black people per 100,00 by 0.058.

8 Conclusion

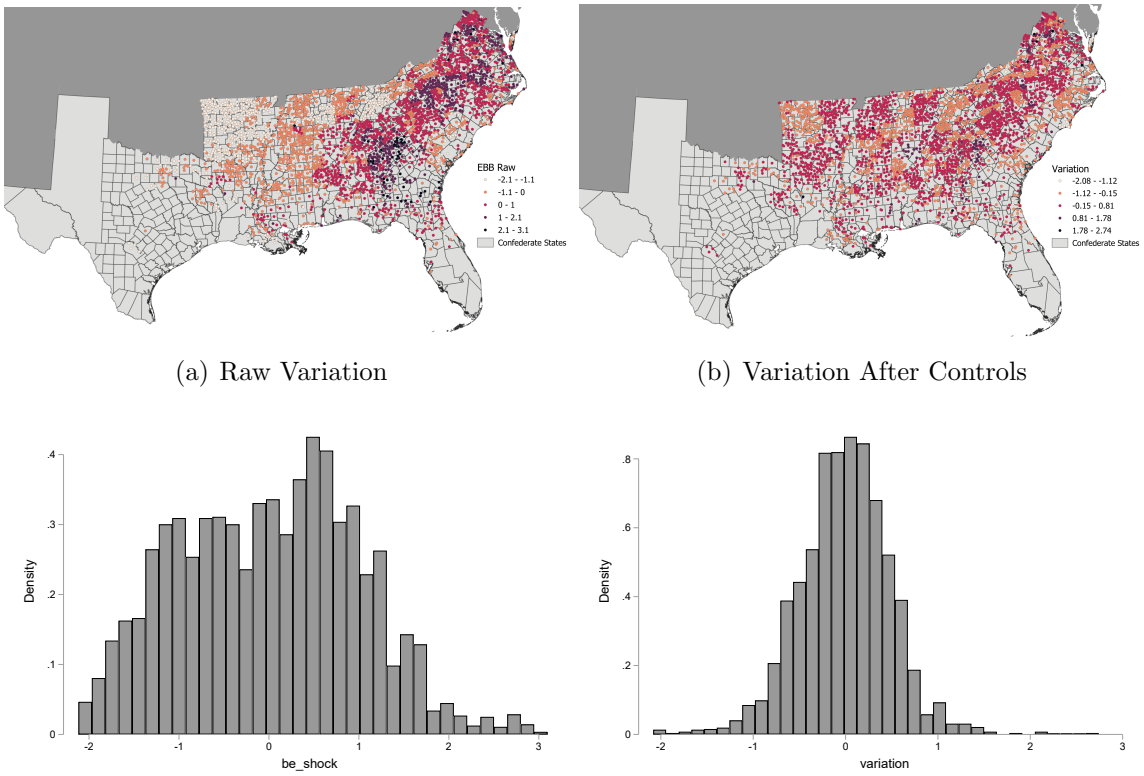
In this paper we show how the Civil War affected the distribution of racially conservative preferences in the South, shaping racial conflict throughout generations. We find that the severity of battle exposure had an immediate effect on voting patterns and violence toward the Black population. The effects persisted for generations to come. Results suggest that persistence is due to the creation of memorial organizations and symbols that acted as drivers of socialization through generations. The presence of Confederate statues, KKK and UDC chapters, and the naming of kids after Confederate heroes indicate the importance of both within-family and community-wide transmission.

While both the Civil War and the use of slave labor had long-term consequences in shaping the political landscape of the US South, the effects differ in their location and nature. The long-term effects of slavery are concentrated in the Deep South, communities that, before the war, were characterized by the plantation economy and

controlled by large cotton producers. Instead, the largest effects of the Civil War are concentrated in areas where slavery was not prevalent, where the land was owned by small farmers and the slaveholding planter elite exercised small influence. Our results indicate that the Civil War has shaped racial conflict and politics throughout the twentieth century and that its heritage is still entrenched in local communities, shaping identity politics and racial conflict to these days.

9 Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Battle Exposure



(a) Raw Variation

(b) Variation After Controls

(c) Raw Variation

(d) Variation After Controls

Figure in panel (a) displays the raw variation in each town's battle exposure. Figure (b) displays the variation in battle exposure after controlling for share of volunteers, state fixed effects, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, whether the town is within 10km of a large battle, and whether the town is within 10km of the Sherman March. Darker colors indicate higher battle exposure. Panel (c) and (d) show the histogram of the unconditional and conditional variations, respectively.

Table 1: Baseline Characteristics by Battle Exposure

		Battle Exposure	
Variable	Mean (1860)	Pre-Level	Pre-Trend
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Percent Enslaved	35.82	-0.00	0.40
Slave Crops Suitability	0.77	0.04	.
Share Free Black	1.55	-0.29	0.08*
Democrat Vote Share	57.75	-2.25	-0.38
Pro-Slavery Vote	75.82	3.47	1.92
Distance to Railroads	0.57	0.04	.
Latitude	34.53	0.10	.
Longitude	-84.36	-0.36	.
White Sex-Ratio	95.24	0.14	0.20
Ln of Population	9.58	0.09	0.02
Literacy Rate White	23.86	1.34	-0.60
Share Born Abroad	2.78	0.42	0.07
Occupational Score White	8.31	-0.03	-0.38***
Ln White Skilled Laborers	7.25	0.16*	-0.02
Ln Black Skilled Laborers	3.05	-0.08	-0.02
Value of Real Estate	508.99	-19.31	-15.66

* p< 0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p < 0.01. Unit of observation is a town in the period prior to the Civil War (1860 in column (2) and 1850-60 in column (3)). Sample restricted to states in the former Confederacy. Each number in columns (2) and (3) represents the coefficient from a regression of the variable on exposure to bloody battles (normalized to mean zero, standard deviation one). All estimates are weighted by the number of enlisted solidiers from a given town and include state fixed effects, whether the town is within 10km of a battle, whether the town is within 10km of the Sherman March, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, and the share of volunteers. In column (3) these controls are interacted with a decade fixed effect. Column (3) also includes a town fixed effect. Column (2) standard errors are corrected for spatial autocorrelation with a 100km bandwidth. Column (3) clusters standard errors by town.

Table 2: Effect on Presidential Elections

	Democratic Party Vote Share				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Post Civil War × EBB	4.217***	3.474***	3.772***	3.402**	3.928***
	(1.176)	(1.163)	(1.145)	(1.368)	(1.120)
Post Civil War × % Enslaved (1860)					5.824***
					(0.693)
Observations	92484	111229	92484	92484	92484
Sample	1840-1944	1840-1964	1840-1944	1840-1944	1840-1944
EBB Measure	Baseline	Baseline	Death	Defensive	Baseline
Outcome Average	65.42	63.57	65.42	65.42	65.42
Y($\overline{EBB}$) - Y(0)	8.889	7.323	8.282	6.830	7.886

* p< 0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p < 0.01. OLS estimates. Unit of observation is a town-election year. Post Civil War is a dummy equal to one for years after 1865. *EBB* and *% Enslaved (1860)* are normalized to mean zero, standard deviation one. Outcome is the vote share for the Democratic presidential candidate. Sample restricted to states in the former Confederacy. All estimates control for year fixed effects, state x year fixed effects, and whether the town is within 10km of a battle, within 10km of the Sherman March, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, and the share of volunteers, each interacted with year fixed effects. All estimates are weighted by the number of enlisted solidiers from each town. Standard errors clustered at the town level in parentheses.

Table 3: Effect on Racially Conservative Votes in the House of Representatives

	Vote in Favor of Segregation			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Post Civil War × EBB	0.031***	0.031***	0.026**	0.031***
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.011)
Post Civil War × % Enslaved (1860)				-0.003
				(0.006)
Observations	164401	164401	164401	164401
EBB Measure	Baseline	Death	Defensive	Baseline
Outcome Average	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.510
Y($\overline{EBB}$) - Y(0)	0.065	0.069	0.052	0.065

* p< 0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p < 0.01. OLS estimates. Unit of observation is a town-roll call vote for years 1839 to 1964. Post Civil War is a dummy equal to one for years after 1865. *EBB* and *% Enslaved (1860)* are normalized to mean zero, standard deviation one. Outcome is a binary variable equal to one if the representative voted in support of slavery / racial segregation. Sample restricted to states in the former Confederacy. All estimates control for year fixed effects, state x year fixed effects, and whether the town is within 10km of a battle, within 10km of the Sherman March, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, and the share of volunteers, each interacted with year fixed effects. All estimates are weighted by the number of enlisted solidiers from each town. Standard errors clustered at the town level in parentheses.

Figure 2: Effect on Presidential Elections, Relative to 1860

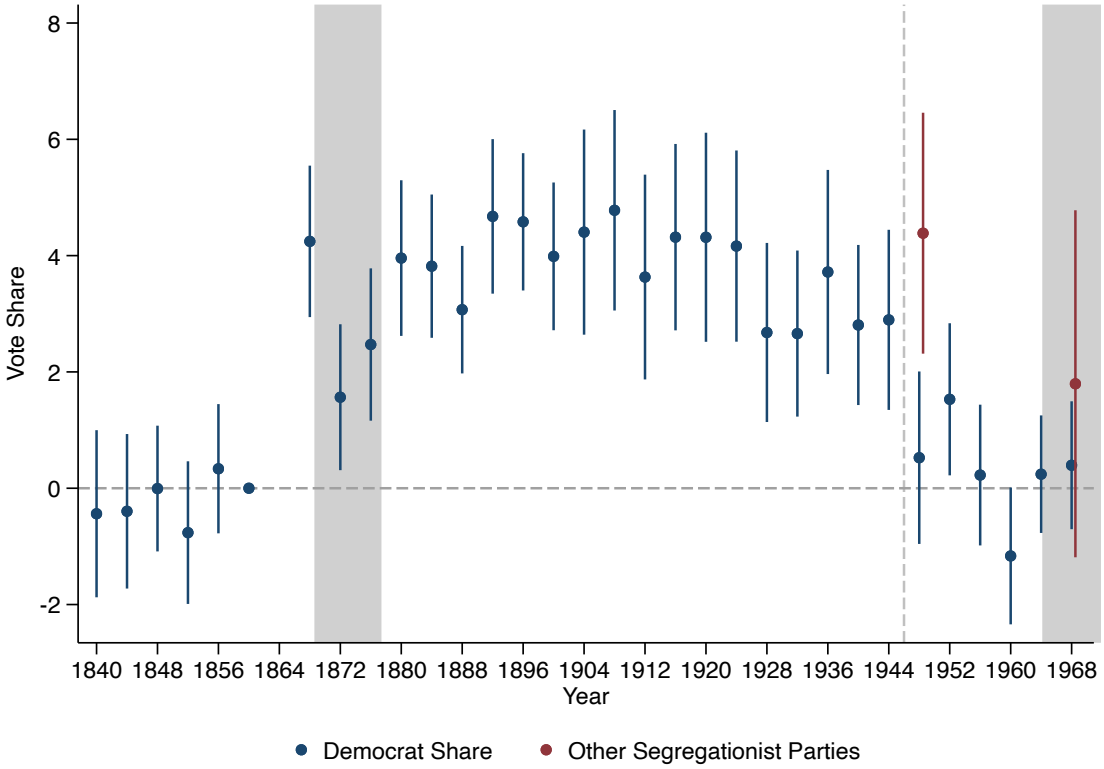


Figure displays coefficients from an event study where 1860 is the excluded year. Coefficients correspond to the effect of a one standard deviation increase in battle exposure on the Democratic vote share in Presidential elections from 1840 to 1968. Other segregationist parties include the Dixiecrats in 1948 and the American Independent Party in 1968. The gray bars indicate elections in which most Black voters were enfranchised – the elections of 1872 and 1876, and elections after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Elections to the right of the vertical gray line occurred after the political realignment of the Democratic Party along racial lines.

Table 4: Effect of Battle Exposure on Lynchings (1865-1964)

	Town Level Outcome				County Level Outcome			
	100*1(Lynching)				Per capita Lynching			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
EBB	0.230**	0.202*	0.170	0.230*	0.026**	0.026**	0.015	0.026*
	(0.111)	(0.108)	(0.105)	(0.119)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
% Enslaved (1860)				0.445***				0.077***
				(0.075)				(0.010)
Observations	375690	375690	375690	375690	375670	375670	375670	375670
EBB Measure	Baseline	Death	Defensive	Baseline	Baseline	Death	Defensive	Baseline
Outcome Average	0.997	0.997	0.997	0.997	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235
Y($\overline{EBB}$) - Y(0)	0.487	0.444	0.343	0.487	0.055	0.058	0.031	0.055

* p< 0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p < 0.01. OLS estimates. Unit of observation is a town in each year from 1865 to 1964. Sample restricted to states in the former Confederacy. In columns (1)-(4) the outcome is measured at the town level using a combination of self-collected data and information from the Monroe Work Today (MWT) collection, which takes value 100 when a lynching occurred in that in that town-year and zero otherwise. In columns (5)-(8) the outcome is the number of lynchings per 100,000 people, measured at the county level using a combination of self-collected data and the Bailey-Tolnay-Beck (BTB) inventory. All estimates control for year fixed effects, state x year fixed effects, and whether the town is within 10km of a battle, within 10km of the Sherman March, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, and the share of volunteers, each interacted with year fixed effects. All estimates are weighted by the number of soliders enlisted from each town. Standard errors clustered by town in parentheses. *EBB* and *% Enslaved (1860)* are normalized to mean zero, standard deviation one.

Table 5: Effect of Battle Exposure on Confederate Names, UDC Membership, Monuments, and KKK Chapters

	Confederate Names		Members UDC	1(Monument)	1(KKK Chapter)
	All Names	Rare Names			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
EBB × Year > 1865	0.347**	0.222**			
	(0.149)	(0.092)			
EBB			12.930**	0.122***	0.056**
			(6.182)	(0.028)	(0.027)
Observations	346156	346156	3757	3757	3756
Outcome Geography	County	County	Town	Town	Town
Outcome Average	3.630	1.360	45.700	0.400	0.070
Y($\overline{EBB}$) - Y(0)	0.732	0.468	27.371	0.258	0.118

* p< 0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p < 0.01. OLS estimates. In columns (1) and (2), unit of observation is a town in each year from 1830 to 1929 and the outcome is measured at the county level. In columns (3)-(5), unit of observation is a town and the outcomes are measured at the town level. In column (3), the outcome is the average yearly number of members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy from 1897 to 1925 in each town. In column (4) the outcome is a binary variable equal to one if a town has a confederate monument. In column (5) the outcome is a binary variable equal to one if the town ever had a KKK chapter. *EBB* is normalized to mean zero, standard deviation one. Sample restricted to states in the former Confederacy. All estimates control for whether the town is within 10km of a battle, within 10km of the Sherman March, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, and the share of volunteers. Columns (1)-(2) interact these controls with year fixed effects and include town fixed effects. In columns (1)-(2) standard errors clustered at the town level in parentheses. In columns (3)-(5) standard errors are corrected for spatial autocorrelation with a 100km bandwidth in parentheses. All estimates are weighted by the number of enlisted solidiers from each town.

Table 6: Long-Run Effect of Battle Exposure on Anti-Black Violence Today

	1(Police Killing)		1(White Supremacy Rally)		Per capita Hate Crimes	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
EBB	0.065***	0.065***	0.068*	0.068*	0.058**	0.058**
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.028)	(0.028)
% Enslaved (1860)		-0.016		-0.033		0.042***
		(0.013)		(0.020)		(0.015)
Observations	71383	71383	3757	3757	101331	101331
Years	2000-2018	2000-2018	2020-2023	2020-2023	1992-2018	1992-2018
Outcome Geography	Town	Town	Town	Town	County	County
Outcome Average	0.160	0.160	0.180	0.180	0.260	0.260
Y($\overline{EBB}$) - Y(0)	0.137	0.137	0.144	0.144	0.124	0.124

* p< 0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p < 0.01. OLS estimates. In columns (1) and (2), unit of observation is a town in each year from 2000 to 2018. The outcome is a binary variable eqaual to one if a Black person was killed by police within a 25 km buffer of the town in each year. In columns (3)-(4) the unit of observation is a cross-section of towns. In columns (5)-(6), unit of observation is a town in each year from 1992 to 2018. The outcome is the number of hate crimes against Black people per 100,000 people, measured at the county level. The outcome is a binary variable equal to one if a white supremacist rally occurred within a 25 km buffer of the town during the period 2020 to June 2023. *EBB* and *% Enslaved (1860)* normalized to mean zero, standard deviation one. The sample is restricted to states in the former Confederacy. All estimates control for whether the town is within 10km of a battle, within 10km of the Sherman March, the share of soldiers who fought in the eastern theater, and the share of volunteers. Columns (1)-(2)-(5)-(6) interact these controls with year fixed effects and cluster standard errors at the town level. In columns (3)-(4) standard errors are corrected for spatial autocorrelation with a 100km bandwidth in parentheses. All estimates are weighted by the number of enlisted solidiers from each town.

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