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# The Confederate Diaspora

Samuel Bazzi
*UC San Diego, School of Global Policy and Strategy and Department of Economics, CEPR, and NBER, USA*
Andreas Ferrara
*Department of Economics, University of Pittsburgh, and NBER, USA*
Martin Fiszbein
*Department of Economics, Boston University, and NBER, USA*
Thomas Pearson
*Department of Economics, Syracuse University, USA*
and
Patrick A. Testa
*Department of Economics and the Murphy Institute, Tulane University, and NBER, USA*

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This paper develops a new framework for understanding when and how migrants shape culture, applying it to the Confederate diaspora—a small migrant group that left a large cultural imprint. Southern Whites that migrated after the Civil War played a pivotal role in spreading Confederate symbols and racial norms across the U.S. by the early 20th century. Their far-reaching influence stemmed from two key conditions: (i) an ideological intensity rooted in their experiences of slavery, secession, and military defeat and (ii) access to malleable power structures during westward expansion and post-war reconciliation. These conditions enabled them to transmit Confederate culture to both kin and non-Southern neighbours and to expand their reach by mobilising civil society organisation and leveraging positions of authority. They shaped policies and institutions that helped entrench racial norms and inequalities in labour markets, housing, and the criminal justice system. Our findings provide empirical foundations for understanding how migrants can transform local culture, rather than merely assimilate.

*Key words*: Migration, Culture, Institutions, Ideology, Racial attitudes

*JEL codes*: N31, N32, P16, D72, J15, J18

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Migrants carry their culture with them. While they often assimilate into local norms and practices—a process extensively studied in the social sciences (see, *e.g.* Abramitzky and Boustan, 2024)—migrants sometimes preserve cultural traditions across generations and influence their new communities. Debates about immigration, past and present, often hinge on the balance

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between cultural assimilation and influence. This paper introduces a new approach to understanding when and how migrants transmit culture and reshape the social equilibrium of their destination, which we use to study a particularly consequential wave of migration in early U.S. history.

We develop a generalisable framework and provide systematic evidence on the *conditions* under which migrants can shape local culture, as well as the *channels* through which influence occurs. We identify two key conditions: the ideological intensity of migrants and the destination power structure. We then highlight three channels: cultural spill-overs, organisational mobilisation, and institutional leverage. Although the framework is broadly applicable, we can illustrate all its elements through the case of the Confederate diaspora. This group of Southern Whites who left the South after the Civil War played a central role in spreading and entrenching Confederate culture across the U.S. during the critical juncture of post-war reconciliation and nation building. Using linked census records and archival data, we exploit fine-grained variation in migrant presence, backgrounds, and destination characteristics to show how, when conditions are favourable and multiple channels are activated, migrants can exert outsized influence.

The influence of Confederate migrants plays a key role in explaining the enduring and widespread monuments and symbols honouring the Confederacy across the U.S. In the wake of the Confederacy's defeat, the cultural configuration associated with slavery did not vanish; rather, it was reconstituted through a new "Lost Cause" ideology. This revisionist narrative, which was propagated by organisations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), downplayed the centrality of slavery and reframed the Confederacy's actions as noble, focusing on states' rights and Northern aggression (Cox, 2003, 2021; Domby, 2020; Waite, 2020). At the heart of this myth were White supremacist ideas that portrayed enslaved people as content, justifying slavery through claims of Black inferiority (Blight, 2001; Cowan, 2013). These ideological efforts—coupled with the violent resurgence of groups like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK)—helped solidify a "Confederate culture" that not only reshaped the South but also spread nationwide, transforming collective memory of the Confederacy well into the 20th century.[1]

A relatively small group of migrants fuelled this country-wide process of cultural diffusion. Using linked records from the Census Tree (CT) Project (Buckles *et al.*, 2023), we estimate that half a million White individuals, including over 100,000 former slaveholders and their families, migrated from the former Confederate states to other parts of the U.S. in the three decades following the war. While some settled in the Midwest and Northeast, many moved west, joining nascent communities across the expanding frontier (see Figure 1). Tracking both migrants and stayers, we find that Confederate migrants were positively selected, coming from higher-status occupations and public authority roles in their home counties. This contrasts with the later and much larger migration of Southern Whites in the mid-20th century, which involved more neutral or negative selection, a distinction we revisit below. We also show that economic upheaval, wartime destruction, and grievances with Union-led Reconstruction efforts drove many of these initial migrants to seek new opportunities outside the South.

We identify a causal impact of these migrants on both symbolic and material expressions of Confederate culture outside the South by the early 20th century. We focus on four outcomes: (i) Confederate memorialisation (*e.g.* monuments, place names), (ii) UDC chapters, (iii) KKK chapters, and (iv) lynchings of Black people. These measures capture a process, described by

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[1] Historian Karen L. Cox (2003, p. 1) defines "Confederate culture" as "those ideas and symbols that Lost Cause devotees associated with the former Confederacy". Historian Kevin Waite (2020), meanwhile, uses "Confederate culture" to describe an affinity for Confederate memorialisation in many places outside of the South during the 20th century.

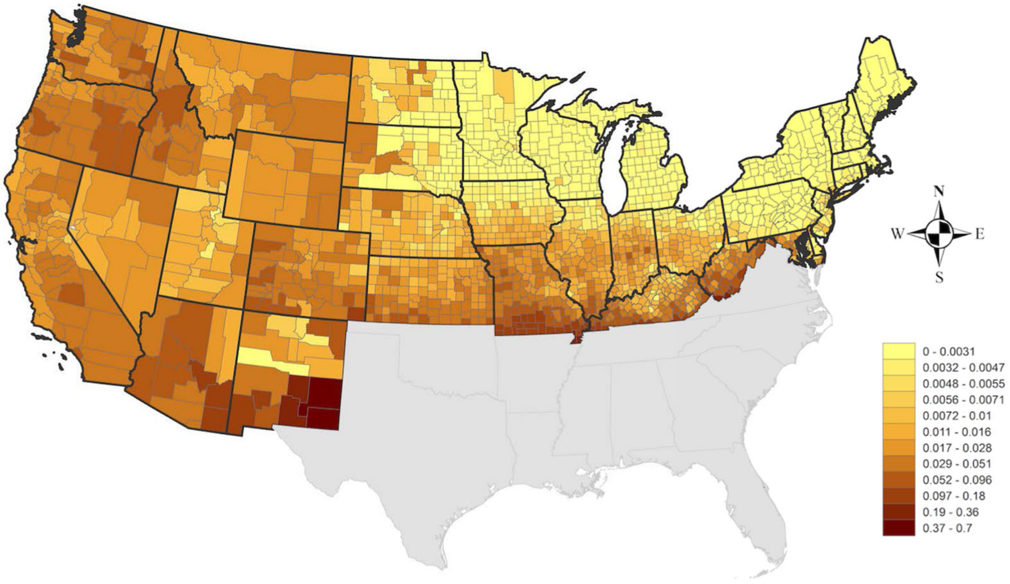

FIGURE 1

Mapping Southern-born Whites outside the South in 1900

*Notes:* This map shows the county-level population share of White individuals born in the South and residing outside the South in 1900 according to the complete-count census (see also Appendix Figure G.2 in Bazzi *et al.*, 2023). See Appendix Figure A.2, Supplementary Material, for counts.

historians of the postbellum U.S., in which White populations mobilised grievances and engaged in racial terror to recreate antebellum socioeconomic hierarchies. To isolate the diaspora's unique role in this process, we develop a shift-share instrumental variable (SSIV) framework, combining historical migrant networks across counties outside the South in 1870 (shares), at the dawn of the postbellum period, with predicted migration flows from 1870 to 1900 (shifts). Conditional on the 1870 population share of Southern-born Whites, our SSIV identifies the distinct influence of the Confederate diaspora forged between 1870 and 1900.

Although Confederate migrants made up, on average, just 2.2% of the population in destination counties by 1900, our IV estimates show they had a disproportionate impact. They built organisations (*e.g.* UDC) and infrastructure (*e.g.* memorials) to transmit Confederate ideology in public life and accelerated the spread of the KKK and Black lynchings, entrenching racial inequity. This influence appears greater than expected from a purely compositional effect: IV magnitudes are consistent with migrants fostering acquiescence, endorsement, and even participation by the non-migrant majority. A 1 percentage point (p.p.) increase in the Confederate diaspora share raises the likelihood of UDC activity by 3.9 p.p., memorialisation by 3.1 p.p., KKK activity by 3.5 p.p., and lynching by 1.7 p.p. These results hold across the non-South, including newly incorporated counties with little or no population in 1860, and, together with other robustness checks, suggest minimal bias from migrant sorting into ideologically aligned regions. In all cases, moving from no migrant presence to the mean diaspora size leads to a significant increase relative to the average prevalence of these outcomes outside the South.

This outsized cultural impact stemmed from two favourable conditions for migrant influence: strong ideological intensity and receptive local power structures. Consistent with the role of ideology, we uncover significant heterogeneity within the diaspora depending on backgrounds. Migrants from the Deep South, the epicentre of slavery and secessionist mobilisation, were more influential than those from the Upper South or border states. Likewise, migrants with deeper exposure to slavery, Civil War violence, and post-war Union Army occupation and Reconstruction played a more prominent role in entrenching Confederate culture. Former slaveholders, while a small minority of the diaspora, were especially pivotal in this process.

Consistent with the role of power structures, we identify greater migrant influence in malleable places: counties with lower population density, weaker Union presence, fewer transport connections, more extractive industry, and less cohesive local populations. These factors created amenable conditions for the diffusion of Confederate culture through public institutions and civil society. Indeed, Confederate migrants, especially former slaveholders, disproportionately held positions of authority in their new communities, such as law enforcement, the judiciary, religion, education, and media. Reflecting both a taste for and comparative advantage in public authority, this sorting went beyond a mere continuation of prior occupations in the South and was disproportionate even compared to other out-of-state migrants.

Migrants may encounter favuorable conditions for influence, but achieving it requires activating several channels for cultural transmission. We examine the three channels in the conceptual framework: organisational mobilisation, cultural spill-overs between individuals, and institutional leverage. Using newly digitised data on KKK membership, we illustrate how Confederate culture spread through organisations. The second KKK, established in 1915, played a central role in mainstreaming Confederate culture. We show that in Denver, Colorado—a major hub for Klan activity in the 1920s—White men born in the South were significantly more likely to join the KKK than those born elsewhere, even after accounting for labour market competition from minorities or immigrants. We find even stronger KKK representation among migrants from areas with deeper grievances tied to the war and the end of slavery. Thus, Klan membership was likely driven by culture and ideology, not simply economic grievance.

Confederate migrants not only joined the KKK in disproportionate numbers but also passed on this cultural affinity to their descendants and non-Southern neighbours. Second-generation migrants born in the diaspora had similarly high KKK membership rates, indicating that vertical cultural transmission within families helped sustain Confederate influence over time. Additionally, White men living next door to first- or second-generation Southern migrants were more likely to join the Klan, consistent with cultural spill-overs from the diaspora. We find similar Klan activity in Indiana and Arizona, based on newly digitised membership records. These results highlight the crucial role of civil society organisations like the KKK in perpetuating migrant culture beyond the first generation.

Migrants can also grow their influence through institutions. Drawing on Bisin and Verdier (2024), who theorise that elites shape outcomes through the interaction of culture and institutions, we show empirically that Confederate migrants used public authority to amplify Confederate culture. Their outsized presence in law enforcement, the legal system, and public administration facilitated greater memorialisation of the Confederacy and the spread of racial terror in public life. Our findings suggest that individuals in positions of power can facilitate cultural change. These positions also played a key role in sustaining the diaspora’s influence across generations: like their parents, second-generation migrants were more likely to occupy leadership roles in governance, civil society, local politics, and media, thus plausibly helping to perpetuate Confederate norms.

We conclude by demonstrating the consequences of diaspora influence for the socioeconomic standing of Black populations. Using our SSIV strategy, we show that the Confederate diaspora increased racial wage gaps, residential segregation, and Black incarceration in the early 1900s. While racial inequity has complex, multidimensional roots, our findings highlight the connection between the entrenchment of Confederate culture and limited opportunities for minorities. Discrimination restricted access, and more extreme tools, such as “sundown towns”, furthered exclusion. Distinct from de jure exclusionary practices in the Confederacy and later under Jim

Crow, sundown towns emerged and proliferated outside the South beginning in the late 1800s as a means of forcible exclusion from all-White towns (Loewen, 2005). We link the prevalence of sundown towns to Confederate migrants and show that a 1 p.p. increase in the size of the Confederate diaspora in 1900 led to a 2.4 p.p. increase in the likelihood of complete Black depopulation. This racial cleansing reshaped Black settlement patterns and likely reinforced the persistence of Confederate culture by limiting interracial contact.

This paper contributes a new framework for understanding when and how migrants reshape the cultural landscape of their destinations. While much of the literature focuses on assimilation, some migrants actively transform prevailing norms and institutions. Our framework identifies the conditions and channels through which such influence occurs, offering a tool for both historical and contemporary research on migration and cultural change. Findings from other studies on influential migrants (*e.g.* Grosjean, 2014; Bazzi *et al.*, 2020; Giuliano and Tabellini, 2020; Ochsner and Roesel, 2020; Dippel and Heblich, 2021; Calderon *et al.*, 2023) can be interpreted through this lens, revealing different combinations of relevant conditions and channels. The Confederate diaspora most closely resembles other ideologically intense migrants that activated multiple channels, such as spill-overs and organisations,[2] with the added element of elite status in malleable destinations, producing a "perfect storm" for cultural influence.

We advance a growing body of work on the interaction between culture and institutions. A large literature explores the origins and consequences of institutions (*e.g.* Acemoglu *et al.*, 2005; North *et al.*, 2009) and culture (*e.g.* Tabellini, 2010), and while theory offers rich insights into their interactions, empirical evidence is more limited (Tabellini, 2008; Alesina and Giuliano, 2015; Bisin and Verdier, 2024). Using fine-grained data, we show how Confederate migrants shaped local culture and social organisation by sorting into positions of power and activating institutional levers to expand their influence.

Our analysis offers new insight into the mechanisms by which elites secure and maintain power (see Papaioannou, 2025, for a review). Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, 2008a, 2008b) argue that elites can offset institutional changes that erode their de jure power by investing in de facto political power, pointing to the postbellum South as a salient example. This view aligns with evidence on the recovery of slaveholder power within the South, from the undermining of racial progress during Reconstruction (Foner, 2002) to the rapid intergenerational mobility of former slaveholding families (Ager *et al.*, 2021). We extend this perspective by showing that white Southerners—especially, though not exclusively, former slaveholders—leveraged de facto power to entrench racial norms and disparities beyond the South. We highlight ideological intensity and destination malleability as key conditions for influence despite low migrant population shares in most non-Southern counties.

By documenting the nationwide diffusion of Confederate culture, we shed light on an understudied facet of early 20th-century nation building. While historians have emphasised reconciliation between North and South (Blight, 2001), we show that the Confederate diaspora played a critical—yet often overlooked—role. These elite migrants imported a slaveholding heritage and reshaped civic culture where they settled, laying the groundwork for racial chauvinism that later resurfaced with the 1915 film The Birth of a Nation and the spread of the KKK (Ang, 2023; Esposito *et al.*, 2023).

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[2] Two examples illustrate how migrants reshape culture: Dippel and Heblich (2021) show that a small group of German immigrants used civic organisations to mobilise support for the Union Army, while Ochsner and Roesel (2020) show that Nazi elites settling in Upper Austria after World War II reshaped the right-wing movement by capturing local party branches.

We also provide new evidence on the cultural foundations of institutionalised animus.[3] A large literature identifies racial bias and discrimination in labour markets (*e.g.* Bayer and Charles, 2018), media (*e.g.* Moreno-Medina *et al.*, 2022), credit (*e.g.* Bayer *et al.*, 2018), education (*e.g.* Billings *et al.*, 2014), housing (*e.g.* Logan and Parman, 2017), public accommodations (*e.g.* Cook *et al.*, 2022), policing (*e.g.* Knox *et al.*, 2020), and criminal justice (*e.g.* Arnold *et al.*, 2022). We trace part of this legacy to the postbellum migration of Southern Whites, especially elites, who helped entrench racial hierarchies beyond the South. This diffusion of slavery's cultural residue may help explain persistence: anti-discrimination laws may be less effective where racial animus is embedded in local institutions.[4]

Finally, we contribute to the historical study of internal migration and its role in political and cultural change. In a complementary study, we show how mass Southern White migration in the 20th century shifted partisan politics by fostering a national coalition of religious, racial, and economic conservatives (Bazzi *et al.*, 2023). Here, we focus on a smaller, elite wave of Confederate migrants in the 19th century, examining how they spread Lost Cause ideology and reshaped local norms. These early migrants mobilised post-war grievances, captured local institutions, and built networks that later influenced the Great Migration. While later migrants' influence stemmed from their scale and role in reconfiguring national electoral coalitions, the Confederate diaspora's impact derived from elite, aggrieved backgrounds that propelled them into public power. Together, these studies offer a new conceptual and empirical foundation for understanding the history and legacy of Southern migration (Berry, 2000; Dippel, 2005; Gregory, 2005; Dochuk, 2010; Waite, 2021). They also show how small migrant groups can wield outsized influence on cultural trajectories at early stages of development—a fundamental theme in U.S. historiography (Zelinsky, 1973; Fischer, 1989; Turner, 1893).

The paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, we first develop a framework for understanding migrant cultural influence and then describe the historical context of the Confederate diaspora as a testing ground. Section 3 provides new evidence on the selection and sorting of Confederate migrants. Section 4 establishes the average cultural impacts of the diaspora. We then explore mechanisms guided by the conceptual framework, offering evidence on the conditions (Section 5) and channels (Section 6) through which these migrants shape destination culture. Section 7 then traces out the consequences for racial inequity and exclusion. Section 8 concludes with a discussion of broader lessons.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This section provides the conceptual and historical foundations for our empirical analysis. We begin by developing a general framework for understanding the *conditions* under which migrants influence the culture of destination communities, as well as the *channels* through which such influence operates. We then describe the history of the Confederate diaspora through the lens of this framework, underscoring the ripe conditions and broad scope for activating channels of influence in the postbellum U.S.

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[3] Research on the roots of animus spans economics (*e.g.* Fryer Jr and Levitt, 2012; Shertzer and Walsh, 2019; Aaronson *et al.*, 2021), history (*e.g.* Campney, 2019), political science (*e.g.* Acharya *et al.*, 2016), and sociology (*e.g.* O'Connell, 2019).

[4] Our study complements and extends research linking post-Confederate institutions to enduring harms for Black Americans *within* the South, for example, O'Connell (2020) and Williams (2021) on memorialisation and wage inequality, Henderson *et al.* (2021) on memorialisation and lynching, Rahnama (2025) on de-memorialisation and attitude change, Jones *et al.* (2017) and Williams (2022) on lynching and voting, and Cook (2014) on lynching and patenting.

## 2.1. *Conceptual framework*

Migrant influence on culture depends on the characteristics of migrants and their destinations. When people move, they bring elements of their culture with them. Over time, migrants often assimilate, adopting local norms and shedding their distinctive traits. Yet, culture can also persist, and sometimes, rather than assimilating, migrants shape culture in their new communities. We propose that such influence arises under certain *conditions* and through the activation of various transmission *channels*.

We consider two core conditions for migrant influence. The first is *ideological intensity*, which captures how strongly migrants hold and express their cultural identities and norms. Individuals differ in the extent to which they identify with social categories (*e.g.* based on race, ethnicity, and gender) and uphold social norms prescribing group-specific behaviours, differential access to resources, and out-group discrimination (see Darity Jr *et al.*, 2006; Akerlof and Kranton, 2010). Intensity may be related to the level of group cohesion (*i.e.* strong norms and low tolerance for deviation; Gelfand *et al.*, 2006) and strength of intergenerational cultural transmission (Bisin and Verdier, 2001). Meanwhile, cultural entrepreneurs can bolster ideological intensity by introducing ideas or cultural narratives that resonate within their communities (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2025).

The second condition is the local *power structure*. A group's ability to influence culture is both a driver and a by-product of its economic, social, and political power (see, *e.g.* Mann, 2012; Acemoglu and Johnson, 2023). This power structure depends on the characteristics of a migrant group's destination (*e.g.* fundamentals and native characteristics) and the group's interactions between those group- and place-level factors. Migrants' socioeconomic and political status, in turn, is shaped by the compatibility of their skills and cultural traits with the local environment. Such status confers cultural power, which may be further amplified by prestige bias (Henrich and Gil-White, 2001) and through coordination in social networks (Acemoglu and Jackson, 2015).

While group size can be an important foundation of cultural power, small groups can have outsized effects under certain conditions. One key factor is the malleability of the destination environment, which depends on the size, cohesiveness, and status of the native population, its openness to influence, and the strength of local norms and institutions shaped by history. In areas with few entrenched norms, particularly those remote from other influences, migrants can shape long-term cultural trajectories through early dominance, echoing Zelinsky's (1973) "doctrine of first effective settlement".

These conditions for influence are partly a result of the forces driving migration, which impact the size, composition, and traits of migrant groups. Selection on cultural traits affects ideological intensity, while sorting across destinations affects relative power. Migrants may be negatively selected from origin cultures (*e.g.* individualists leaving collectivist societies or religious minorities fleeing persecution). Although those most attached to the dominant culture at home are less likely to migrate, economic shocks can "push out" culturally representative migrants, consistent with the epidemiological approach in cultural economics (Fernández, 2007; Giuliano, 2007). Migrants often sort into destinations that match their skills (Steckel, 1983; Hornung, 2014; Bazzi *et al.*, 2016; Obolensky *et al.*, 2024), which enables income gains and, in turn, increased power and prestige. Sorting also reflects preferences: migrants may have greater influence where cultural proximity fosters affinity, though this limits the scope for cultural change. Ideologically intense migrants may seek malleable destinations with minimal cultural resistance, such as frontier areas with few residents or formal institutions.

Under the favourable conditions outlined above, migrants can exert cultural influence through three key channels. The first channel is cultural spill-overs, which occur through vertical, horizontal, and oblique transmission at the *individual-to-individual* level. Migrants influence the social norms of their offspring, their neighbours, and others' children through direct interactions (Bisin and Verdier, 2001). These spill-overs create pathways for cultural traits to diffuse across generations and social networks.

The second channel involves civil society organisations as an infrastructure for cultural transmission. By building and operationalising organisations like churches, schools, and community groups, migrants can shape social norms (Carvalho, 2016). This *group-to-individual* channel complements and amplifies individual-level cultural spill-overs, that is, through horizontal and oblique transmission.

The third channel emerges when migrants hold positions of public authority within favourable power structures. In such cases, they can influence institutions and policies to entrench their ideological positions (Acemoglu *et al.*, 2005). This can shape both formal rules and informal norms, creating a multiplier effect: groups with political power can amplify their cultural influence through policies that reinforce their initial impact. As Bisin and Verdier (2024) illustrate in a formal theoretical model, an "institutional multiplier" can emerge when political dominance aligns policies with cultural traits, intensifying their spread across society (see also Acemoglu and Robinson, 2025).

### 2.2. *Historical background*

Confederate culture emerged as a powerful and galvanising ideological force for those who lived through the Confederacy, its military defeat, and postbellum Union occupation during the 1860s. This firsthand experience set Confederate migrants apart from both their antebellum pre-decessors and those of the Great Migration in the 1900s. Their experiences with slavery, nostalgia for the antebellum South, and strong resentment of federal intervention were central to the Confederate diaspora as it spread across America, at the critical juncture of post-war reconciliation and nation building.

Grievances ran especially deep among Southern slaveholding families, who were overrepresented in the Confederate Army (Hall *et al.*, 2019) and suffered relatively larger losses in wealth and status after the war (Ager *et al.*, 2021). Former slaveholders, in particular, embodied an intense ideology tied to their elite backgrounds and ambitions for power. This intensity likely compelled them to seek out malleable destinations, in which they could ascend to positions of authority and prestige. From such positions, migrants would be well-placed to entrench their ideology in public life.

Confederate migrants often moved westward, settling in frontier areas or newly established regions within states. In these malleable settings, they could readily access positions of power to further transmit Confederate culture, leveraging prestige bias to influence upwardly mobile populations in a rapidly growing post-war economy. This sorting pattern highlights the complementarity between the two key conditions for migrant influence. Together, their ideological intensity and the malleability of their destinations served as a catalyst for their influence, with elite migrants leading the way.

*Ideological intensity: a budding "Confederate Culture"*. Since America's early history, a cultural divide has separated the North and South. The South's agroclimatic advantage in crops suited to large-scale plantations, reliant on slave labour, fostered distinct economic and political institutions (Engerman and Sokoloff, 2002). Settlement patterns also played a role, with Scots-Irish migrants bringing a "culture of honour" to the South, contributing to higher levels of violence (Grosjean, 2014). Unlike the North, the South did not experience a large influx of ethnically diverse European immigrants in the 19th century, allowing "whiteness" as an identity to solidify earlier (Roediger, 2006).

The fault lines deepened around the Civil War (1861–65). After the South's military defeat, many Southern Whites sought to redeem the South's image and rationalise their loss, coalescing racial identity norms into a new ideological configuration. The "Lost Cause of the Confederacy" combined narratives, symbols, and myths that glorified Confederate leaders, defended secession, and reframed the war as a struggle for "states' rights" rather than slavery. This ideology merged racist tropes of Black inferiority and White supremacy (*e.g.* romanticising slaveholders as benevolent paternalists; Blight, 2001; Cox, 2003; Cowan, 2013) with other cultural and political elements that reinforced Southern White identity and values. First articulated by Edward Pollard (Pollard, 1866), a staunch Confederate and newspaper editor from Virginia, the Lost Cause emerged as a significant example of cultural entrepreneurship.

Civil society organisations, particularly the UDC, played a central role in spreading Lost Cause ideology. The UDC spearheaded Confederate memorialisation, erecting monuments and renaming places to honour Confederate heroes. They often targeted younger generations, placing Confederate flags and portraits of military leaders in schools (Cox, 2003, p. 2).

The spread of Lost Cause narratives also precipitated violent manifestations of racial animus, such as public lynchings (Nolan, 2000). This violence was often propagated by the KKK, a White supremacist insurgent group founded after the Civil War. Although initially suppressed during Reconstruction, the Klan was revived in Georgia in 1915 and quickly spread nationwide, peaking in membership during the early 1920s (McVeigh, 2009).

The national diffusion of Confederate symbols and Lost Cause myths in the early 20th century contributed to White reconciliation across the North–South divide (Nolan, 2000; Cox, 2003; Richardson, 2004). Shared battles against external enemies—the Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, and World War I—further united Whites, as did racial backlash in the North during the first Black Great Migration (Fouka *et al.*, 2022). Popular culture bolstered these narratives, with films like *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), and *Song of the South* (1946) embedding Confederate mythology into the national consciousness (Esposito *et al.*, 2023).

Figure 2 illustrates the ideological intensity of Confederate migrants by tracking the frequency of children named after Confederate leaders across birth cohorts from 1850 to 1940.[5] Using complete-count Census data, we examine three White population groups: (i) Southerners in the South, (ii) Southerners outside the South, and (iii) non-Southerners outside the South. Names are conservatively defined to include full distinctive components, such as "Robert Lee", or unique identifiers like "Stonewall" and "Beauregard", which together provide a rare but clear signal of Confederate cultural attachment.

During the Civil War, these names surged among Southern-heritage Whites both inside and outside the South. We see an even stronger uptick among children of slaveholders (Appendix Figure C.1, Supplementary Material). In contrast, they were less common among Whites without Southern heritage, reflecting broader opposition to the Confederacy outside the South. After the war, Confederate leader names declined universally but rose again in the early 20th century among both Southern and non-Southern Whites. Notably, the resurgence extended to non-Southerners without second-generation Southern heritage (Appendix Figure D.2, Supplementary Material), consistent with cultural spill-overs beyond the diaspora.

*Power structure: the South settles the West.* Confederate migrants often settled in malleable areas where they could access positions of power and prestige, leveraging their ambition for and comparative advantage in authority. As public administrators, lawyers, judges, police, religious leaders, politicians, and newspaper owners, they gained control of local institutions, shaping policies, promoting Confederate memorialisation, and embedding racial inequity in destination communities.

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[5] Confederate leaders are defined as those linked to multiple monuments by the Southern Poverty Law Center (see Section 4.1).

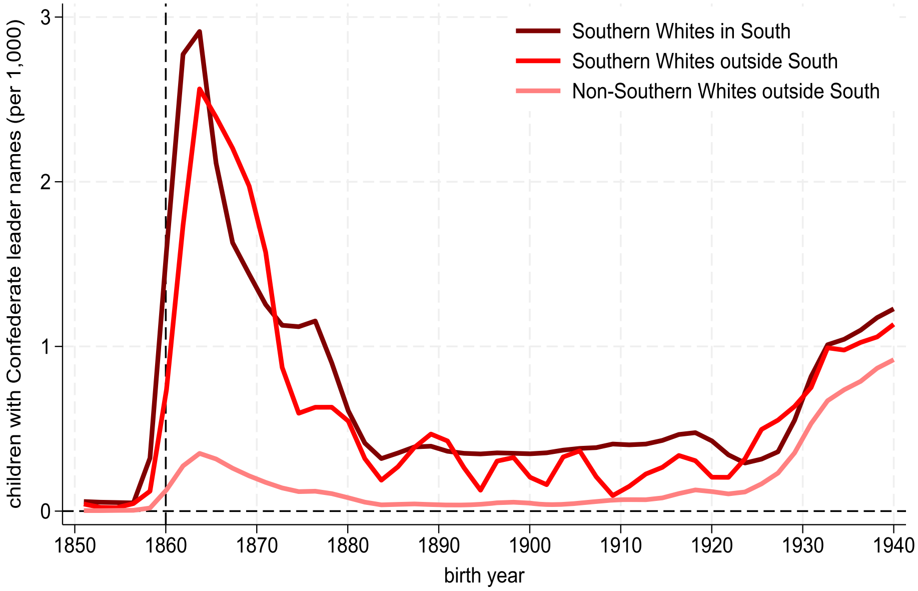

FIGURE 2

Confederate leader names among children born 1850–1940

*Notes:* Three-year moving average in Confederate leader name frequencies across birth cohorts among different subsets of Southern and non-Southern White populations (ages 0–9) in the U.S. Census: those born in the South living in the South (dark red), those born in the South living outside the South (bright red), and those born outside the South living outside the South (light red). An individual's name match equals one if their given, first name is highly likely to have been given in reference to a Confederate leader. This includes individuals whose first name includes a leader's full name (*e.g.* "Robert Lee"), as well as distinctive nicknames like Stonewall and last names like Beauregard. The list of Confederate leader names includes those with multiple public symbols in the Confederacy in the Southern Poverty Law Center's "Whose Heritage?" Project.

The first wave of Southern White outmigration occurred during the mid-19th century Gold Rush. Poor Southerners moved westward in search of cheap land, particularly in areas where slavery had not yet been established. Meanwhile, wealthy slaveholders sought to expand plantation agriculture and bring slavery to the fertile lands of the West (Waite, 2021). Despite their economic differences, both poor and rich Southern migrants shared a common interest in preserving racial hierarchies (Dippel, 2005).

After the Civil War, the collapse of plantation agriculture, along with wartime destruction and the loss of labour, capital, and credit, devastated the South's economy, including the slaveholding elite (Aldrich, 1973; Dochuk, 2010; Baker and Hahn, 2016). The emancipation and enfranchisement of Black Americans threatened the White monopoly on economic and political power (Acharya *et al*., 2016). Frustration with Union occupation and Reconstruction further fuelled outmigration. Of the 5 million Whites born and living in the South as of 1870, nearly 10% had moved out by 1900 (see Appendix C, Supplementary Material).

Migrants often settled where they could recreate Old South hierarchies. Some chose all-White destinations with little Black competition, while others formed racially homogeneous enclaves in the sparsely populated West (Dippel, 2005). For former-slaveholding elites, the West provided a chance to replicate the "oligarchic principles" of the Confederacy, re-establishing antebellum hierarchies in new locations and industries (Richardson, 2020, p. 85). Many sought regions with political and climatic similarities to the South, as noted in Section 3. By the late 19th century, the West—dominated by large-scale farming—was ideologically closer to the South than to the industrial North (Richardson, 2020).

In the post-Reconstruction South (*i.e.* after 1877), political power was critical to re-establishing and institutionalising racial hierarchies. This was achieved through both de jure mechanisms, such as Jim Crow laws, and de facto control of political and economic institutions. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) characterise the Southern post-emancipation regime as “one of the best examples of the persistence of economic institutions as a consequence of persistent de facto power” (see also Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008a, 2008b). Beyond the South, racial segregation in the “Jim Crow North” operated largely through de facto systems, partly supported by the elite capture of local institutions by Confederate migrants. For example, Northern school boards implemented segregation despite state laws prohibiting it (Douglas, 2005), while judges, police, real estate developers, and urban policymakers upheld broader racial discrimination (Woodard and Theoharis, 2019).

The story of Cameron E. Thom, retold by Waite (2021), illustrates the reach of elite Confederate migrants. Born in Virginia, Thom moved to California during the Gold Rush, bringing slaves with him, and soon became a lawyer. During the Civil War, he returned to the South and was a Confederate captain, before returning to California. As district attorney in Los Angeles, he oversaw a sham trial that freed White perpetrators of the 1871 Chinatown massacre, and in 1882 became mayor. In 1889, he co-founded the town of Glendale, which became a hub of White supremacy. Glendale, one of the nation’s first “sundown towns”, hosted an early chapter of the UDC (co-founded by Thom’s wife, Belle), and later incubated a significant KKK presence with regional leadership roles.

Thom’s life highlights how the Confederate diaspora activated multiple channels of influence. Though especially prominent, he was not unique: many former Confederate soldiers entered public administration after the war (Hood, 2020). The diaspora even reached the highest office: Woodrow Wilson, born in Virginia in 1856 and later a New England transplant, became president of the U.S. in 1913. Wilson’s tenure advanced Lost Cause narratives, including a White House screening of *The Birth of a Nation* and the segregation of the federal bureaucracy (Ambrosius, 2007; Aneja and Xu, 2022).

The influence of the diaspora spread with its second generation. One striking example is Benjamin Stapleton, mayor of Denver from 1923–31 and 1935–47. A second-generation Southern migrant and grandson of a Confederate soldier, Stapleton relied on decisive support from the KKK to secure his position in the then young and malleable city. Once in office, he granted the Klan control over the local police force (Goldberg, 1981). Stapleton’s case and numerous others—both prominent and less well-known—illustrate mechanisms of influence that we explore empirically in Sections 5 and 6.

## 3. THE CONFEDERATE DIASPORA: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

This section uses Census micro-data to characterise the systematic push and pull factors that shaped Confederate migrant selection and sorting. Our descriptive analysis here substantiates the accounts by historians detailed in Section 2.2 and also sets the stage for developing our core empirical strategy.

We track Confederate migrants using the U.S. Censuses of Population from 1870 to 1900 and make extensive use of linked records. As a baseline, we define Confederate migrants as Whites born in the eleven former Confederate states plus Oklahoma who lived outside the South in the decades following the Civil War.[6] In addition to the complete-count Census data, we also use linked records from the CT Project (Price *et al.*, 2021; Buckles *et al.*, 2023) to track individuals over time. The CT puts together the largest available set of linked Census records by combining links from the Census Linking Project (Abramitzky *et al.*, 2020) and the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Multigenerational Longitudinal Panel alongside 317 million links created by users of the online genealogy platform `FamilySearch.org`.

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[6] Most of Indian Territory (later Oklahoma) aligned with the Confederacy through formal “treaties of friendship and alliance”.

*Selection of confederate migrants.* To describe migrant selection, we stack the linked records from 1870 to 1880 and 1880 to 1900 and estimate the following for individuals in the South in the initial period[7]:

$$y_{i\tau} = \theta_{o\tau(i)} + \beta \cdot \text{migrant}_{i,\tau+1} + \mathbf{x}'_{i\tau}\boldsymbol{\delta} + \varepsilon_{i\tau}, \tag{3.1}$$

where $y_{i\tau}$ is a characteristic of individual $i$ in the initial period $\tau$, and $\text{migrant}_{i,\tau+1}$ is an indicator equal to one if the individual was living outside the South in the post-period. With initial origin county×period fixed effects, $\theta_{o\tau(i)}$, $\beta$ identifies the average migrant-versus-stayer differential in $y$. Panel (a) of Table 1 explores demographics and shows that migrants were slightly younger, more likely to be men, more literate, slightly less likely to be married, and had fewer children on average relative to stayers.

Panel (b) shows selection patterns across initial labour market outcomes, after controlling, in $\mathbf{x}_{i\tau}$, for a cubic in age, marital status, and number of children. While migrants were no more likely to be employed in the initial period, they were less likely to work in agriculture and much more likely to work in public-facing authority occupations, which include lawyers and judges, law enforcement, public administrators, religious workers, and educators. Overall, they worked in higher-earning and -status positions, proxied by the occupational income score and socioeconomic index. Together, these results suggest that Confederate migrants were positively selected and more likely to have had public influence in the South through positions in governance and civil society.

*Origin push factors.* Using the intercensal linked records, we track migrants from each Southern-origin county $o$ to any incorporated county in the conterminous non-Southern states. For each origin county $o$, we total the number of White outmigrants in a given census period through $\tau \in \{1880, 1900\}$.[8] We then estimate the following equation to characterise county-level push factors:

$$\text{Southern White migrants}_{o\tau} = \theta_\tau + \mathbf{push}'_{o,\tau-1}\boldsymbol{\beta_\tau} + \phi_\tau \text{population}_{o,\tau-1} + \varepsilon_{o\tau}, \tag{3.2}$$

where $\mathbf{push}_{o,\tau-1}$ is a vector of pre-determined economic and ideological factors. The former include measures of manufacturing wages and output from the census as well as cotton, tobacco, and overall agricultural potential from the Global Agro-Ecological Zones database. The latter include the enslaved population share, slaveholding population share, Confederate Army enlistment rate, Civil War battle locations, and the vote share for John C. Breckinridge, the pro-slavery Southern Democratic candidate for president in 1860 (see Appendix Table A.1, Supplementary

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[7] Note that 1890 Census micro-data were lost in a fire.

[8] Concretely, we use the linked census records together with the complete-count census to estimate: $\text{Southern White migrants}_{o\tau} = \sum_{d=1}^{D} \left( \frac{\#\text{Whites in } o \text{ in } \tau-1 \text{ linked to } d \text{ in } \tau}{\#\text{Whites in } o \text{ in } \tau-1 \text{ linked to census } \tau} \right) \times \text{Southern Whites}_{o,\tau-1}$, using individuals linked to the South in 1860, where $o$ indicates Southern-origin counties, $d$ indicates non-Southern destination counties, and $\text{Southern Whites}_{o,\tau-1}$ is based on the complete-count census in the previous period. This allows us to approximate, for each census period, total Southern White outmigration from $o$ to all non-Southern counties, which we then put on the left-hand-side of equation (3.2). See Appendix Figure B.1, Supplementary Material, for validating evidence that the approximation works well.

TABLE 1
*Individual characteristics of migrants versus stayers*

| | (a) Demographics | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | Age (1) | Man (2) | Literate (3) | Married (4) | # Children (5) |
| Migrant | $-0.868^{***}$ | $0.095^{***}$ | $0.029^{***}$ | $-0.064^{***}$ | $-0.438^{***}$ |
| | (0.167) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.011) |
| Ori. county-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Controls | – | – | – | – | – |
| Observations | 2,840,167 | 2,840,167 | 2,840,167 | 2,840,167 | 2,840,167 |
| Non-migrant mean | 30.276 | 0.559 | 0.752 | 0.575 | 2.056 |

| | (b) Labour market outcomes | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | Employed | Working in agriculture (×100) | Working in position of authority (×100) | Occupational income score | Occupational socioeconomic index |
| Migrant | 0.002 | $-6.454^{***}$ | $0.671^{***}$ | $1.234^{***}$ | $2.122^{***}$ |
| | (0.002) | (0.285) | (0.050) | (0.091) | (0.192) |
| Ori. county-year FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 2,840,167 | 2,840,167 | 2,840,167 | 1,433,683 | 1,445,787 |
| Non-migrant mean | 0.506 | 37.698 | 1.078 | 16.938 | 18.734 |

*Notes:* Regressions of selection equation (3.1) for various individual characteristics among White men and women living in the South in 1860 or whether they subsequently migrated to the non-South between 1870 and 1880 or 1880 and 1900. We use linked census records to track which migrants moved from Southern to non-Southern counties across census periods for decades following the Civil War from 1870 to 1900. For comparability, all individuals in the sample must be able to be matched to the 1860 census. All regressions include origin-county × year fixed effects. The employment outcome in column 1 of panel (b) is a binary indicator. The agriculture and authority occupation outcomes in columns 2 and 3 are binary indicators multiplied by 100. The authority occupations in column 3 of panel (b) include lawyers and judges, law enforcement, public administrators, religious workers, and educators. The occupational income score (*occscore*) and the occupational socioeconomic index in columns 4 and 5 of panel (b) measure the socioeconomic status of occupations based on factors like income, education, and prestige. These indices rank occupations to reflect their relative standing in society, with higher scores indicating greater social and economic status. Individual controls in the bottom panel include a cubic in age, marital status, gender, and number of children. Standard errors are clustered at the origin-county × year level. Significance levels are denoted by $*p < 0.10$, $**p < 0.05$, $***p < 0.01$.

Material, for summary statistics). Note that the $\tau$ index on the parameters allows the push factors to differ across periods.

Appendix Table A.2, Supplementary Material, highlights key economic and ideological drivers of postbellum migration. Outmigration was lower in counties with stronger pre-war support for slavery and secession, and in agriculturally suitable areas with more slaveholders and larger Black populations, where emancipated labour often remained at low wages, sustaining White-owned farms (Prince, 2000). Freedman's Bureaus, also linked to less outmigration, may have reinforced this by aiding both freed Black workers and destitute Whites.[9] In contrast, outmigration was greater from urban manufacturing centres, consistent with the positive selection in Table 1, and from tobacco-suitable areas in the Carolinas and Virginia, long-standing origins of poorer White migrants (Dippel, 2005). Economic devastation from the war and agricultural downturn pushed out Whites with limited prospects but enough means to leave. Outmigration was also higher from counties with more Confederate veterans and wartime battles, with grievance-based push factors reinforced by Union Army occupation.

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[9] This aligns with evidence that the dismantling of reconstruction secured White supremacy in the post-war South, thus reducing outmigration pressure (see Chyn *et al.*, 2024 on the backlash to Freedman's Bureaus).

*Destination pull factors.* To characterise migrant sorting, we measure, for each non-Southern county, the Southern-born White population share in 1900 using the complete-count census (see Figure 1). This is our primary regressor in county-level analyses in later sections. We then estimate the following:

$$\%\text{Southern Whites}_{c,1900} = \alpha_s + \mathbf{pull}_c'\boldsymbol{\gamma} + \varepsilon_{c,1900}, \tag{3.3}$$

where $\mathbf{pull}_c$ is a vector of standardised time-invariant or pre-determined pull factors, and $\alpha_s$ are state fixed effects, which account for broad spatial confounders of Confederate migration and culture.

Appendix Figure A.1, Supplementary Material, shows mixed evidence of sorting. Confederate migrants generally moved westward (see Figure 1), and they further gravitated towards lower-density counties within states as well as those with a larger initial Confederate migrant population in 1870. While diaspora size in 1900 does not vary with overall agricultural potential, it is larger in counties with greater cotton suitability, consistent with skill- or preference-based sorting. Ideological forces appear more muted: some are positively (*e.g.* Breckinridge vote, Union Army enlistment) and others negatively associated (*e.g.* Union Army mortality rate), but most coefficients are small and none statistically significant.

## 4. TRANSMITTING AND ENTRENCHING CONFEDERATE CULTURE

This section establishes the baseline effect of postbellum migrants in diffusing Confederate memory and norms outside the South. First, we describe key outcomes measuring Confederate culture. Second, we develop the identification strategy. Third, we present core results and robustness.

### 4.1. *Measuring Confederate culture*

We view Confederate culture as a bundle of norms and actions with ideological roots in the antebellum and early postbellum South. We consider four measures of Confederate cultural expressions in non-Southern county $c$ in the early 1900s: Confederate memorials, UDC chapters, 2nd KKK chapters, and lynchings of Blacks. We also create a composite Confederate Culture Index (CCI), summing these indicators. Figure 3 shows CCI scores (from 0 to 4) by county, and Appendix Figure D.1, Supplementary Material, shows maps for each outcome. These measures capture how women in the UDC advanced symbolic expressions of Confederate ideology, while men in the KKK enacted racial terror. Meanwhile, memorials and lynchings served as key mechanisms for transmitting Confederate memory and racial norms.

We draw on several primary and secondary sources to track Confederate culture across time and space. First, we build an omnibus measure of memorialisation, which starts with monuments from the Southern Poverty Law Center (2023) "Whose Heritage?" database.[10] We also identify prominent Confederate leaders from these monuments and search for their names in (i) places in the U.S. Geographic Names Information System from U.S. Board on Geographic Names (2023), (ii) streets in the U.S. Census Bureau's TIGER/Line Shapefiles from U.S. Census Bureau (2010), and (iii) schools in the National Center for Education Statistics Public School Universe Survey Data from Keaton (2012). Second, we geolocate UDC chapters from 1900 to 1920 based on

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[10] We limit to monuments standing after 1900, and the majority, especially outside the South, were built in the early 1900s.

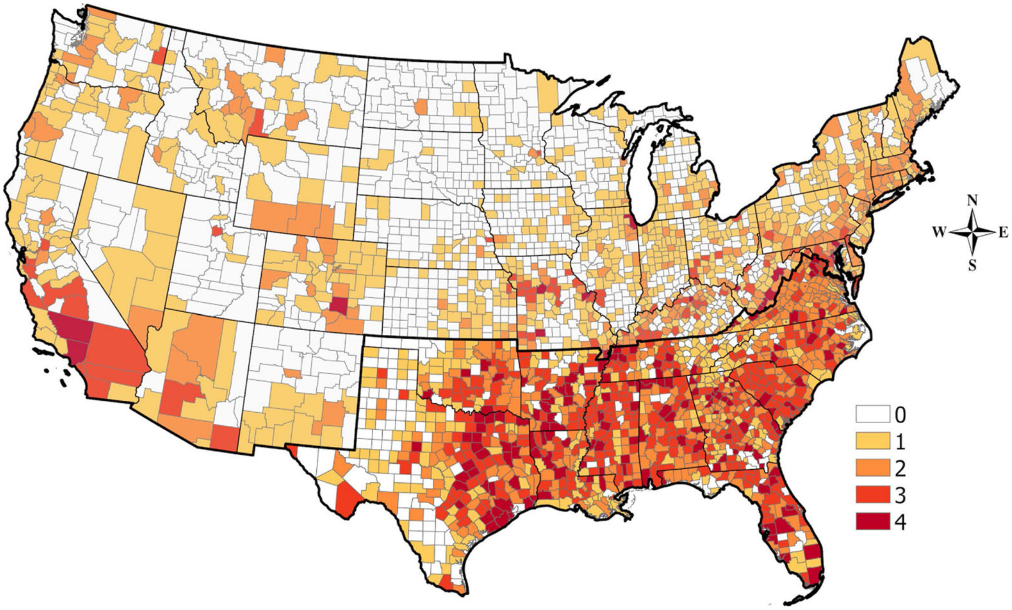

FIGURE 3
CCI, post-1900

*Notes:* Map shows CCI scores for counties across the conterminous U.S. This score is based on the sum of county-level indicators for (i) any matched Confederate memorials (*i.e.* monuments, location names), (ii) any UDC chapters, (iii) any 2nd KKK chapters, and (iv) any recorded lynchings of Black people. With the exception of memorials, for which data feature limited information on the time dimension, we restrict outcomes to those observed after 1900, thus following the migratory period of study. Our sample of formerly Confederate-controlled states and territories is outlined in black.

a novel digitisation of the group's "Minutes of the Annual Meeting" (United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1901–1920). Third, we use second KKK chapter data (1915–40) from the Virginia Commonwealth Library's Klan Map Project (Kneebone *et al.*, 2023). Fourth, we track lynchings (1882–1941) using data from Seguin and Rigby (2019) and the Historic American Lynching Project (Hines and Steelwater, 2023).

## 4.2. *Identification strategy*

We develop a SSIV framework for identifying causal effects of the Confederate diaspora. Our primary second-stage estimating equation is given by

$$y_c = \alpha_s + \beta \cdot \%\text{Southern Whites}_{c,1900} + \mathbf{x}_c' \boldsymbol{\gamma} + \varepsilon_c \tag{4.1}$$

where $y_c$ is a measure of Confederate culture. The key regressor, % Southern Whites$_{c,1900}$, captures the postbellum Confederate diaspora.[11] Later, in Section 5.1, we distinguish slaveholder and non-slaveholder migrants. We cluster standard errors across counties within 60 × 60 mile grid cells following Bester *et al.* (2011) and show robustness to other spatial structures (Conley, 1999; Adao *et al.*, 2019).

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[11] This time horizon focuses our analysis on the group of interest: those who experienced slavery, the Confederacy, and its loss and then moved in the years after the war.

There are two interrelated threats to causal identification of $\beta$ in equation (4.1). First, place-specific factors, such as factor endowments conducive to plantation labour, may confound interpretation. Second, endogenous location choices based on previous settlement patterns may bias ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates. Depending on the relative importance of ideological and economic sorting, which we discussed in Section 3, the bias could go either way. Economic sorting could downward-bias OLS if economically vibrant areas attracted diverse, tolerant migrants who would otherwise dilute Confederate culture. In contrast, ideological sorting would favour culturally similar destinations, implying an upward bias.

We address these concerns in three ways. First, equation (4.1) includes state fixed effects (FE), $\alpha_s$, and many controls, $\mathbf{x}_c$, to absorb sorting confounders. Our baseline includes log population in 1870 and log county area, and we include all pull factors in equation (3.3) above, as well as additional ones in robustness checks. Continuous controls enter quadratically, and with additional, interactive nonlinearities for robustness.

Second, we adopt a SSIV strategy that combines two sources of variation. The shares are based on the cross-sectional distribution of White migrants from Southern-origin state $j$ living in non-Southern county $c$ in 1870, which we denote $\pi_{jc,1870}$. The shifts are based on the change in the number of Whites from Southern state $j$ living outside the South between 1870 and 1900, which we denote $\Delta M_{j,1870-1900}$. Following prior work on Southern migration (Boustan, 2010; Derenoncourt, 2022), we use predicted shifts, $\widehat{\Delta M}_{j,1870-1900}$, based on origin-county push factors over the 1870–1900 period. Together, these predict the stock of Southern White migrants in 1900 as

$$Z_{c,1900} = \sum_{j=1}^{J} \pi_{jc,1870} \widehat{\Delta M}_{j,1870-1900}. \tag{4.2}$$

Scaling $Z_{c,1900}$ by the 1870 county population yields our SSIV for % Southern Whites$_{c,1900}$ in equation (4.1). This IV isolates the effects of the Confederate diaspora due to changes in Southern White inflows during the postbellum period from 1870 to 1900. The SSIV is relevant to the extent that postbellum Whites tended to follow the migratory pathways introduced by their antebellum predecessors. The shares, $\pi_{jc,1870}$, reflect these historical networks in the nascent postbellum era for all counties $c$ incorporated in the U.S. by 1870. We use 1870 as the base year because many Western counties were not yet incorporated in 1860; 9.9% of counties lack data in 1870, which doubles to 19.8% in 1860. For robustness, we consider an 1860 base year with the restricted sample of incorporated counties.

Because the shares alone may be endogenous, our SSIV combines them with predicted shifts, based on origin-county push factors. This "push factor" version of the standard SSIV can satisfy the exclusion restriction even when the share component is endogenous, to the extent that the shift is based on exogenous shocks (see Borusyak *et al.*, 2022). We construct our predicted shift, $\widehat{\Delta M}_{j,1870-1900}$, by summing predicted outmigration, $\widehat{\text{Southern White migrants}}_{o\tau}$, for each origin county $o$ for Census periods 1870–80 and 1880–1900 based on equation (3.2). Specifically, we use a flexible LASSO (least absolute shrinkage and selection operator) algorithm, which shrinks the set of origin-county predictors as well as their square and cross-term interactions into an optimal subset, to predict Southern outflows for each origin-county-period. These are then aggregated to the sending state $j$ level to produce $\widehat{\Delta M}_{j,1870-1900}$ in equation (4.2):

$$\widehat{\Delta M}_{j,1870-1900} = \sum_{o \in j} \sum_{\tau \in \{1880,1900\}} \widehat{\text{Southern White migrants}}_{o\tau}, \tag{4.3}$$

Later, we adapt equation (3.2) to predict distinct shifts for former slaveholders and non-slaveholders.

Finally, several additional checks address residual concerns. We control for the Southern White population share in 1870, $\%\ \text{Southern Whites}_{c,1870}$, in equation (4.1) to render the IV specification equivalent to one with the *change* in Southern White shares between 1870 and 1900 as the key regressor, thus absorbing time-invariant heterogeneity. Alongside this control, we also implement the Adao *et al.* (2019) random-shifts placebo exercise to validate the shift-based identifying variation in the SSIV. Together, these checks help ensure that early migrant shares are not confounding our causal interpretation.

### 4.3. *Results*

Table 2 presents our baseline county-level findings on the cultural influence of the Confederate diaspora. We report OLS estimates of equation (4.1) in panel (a) and SSIV in panel (b). Appendix Table B.1, Supplementary Material, reports the strong first-stage estimates corresponding to panel (b). All specifications include state FE, the 1870 Southern White migrant share, and flexible controls for county area and population in 1870. Even-numbered columns further control for the sorting correlates elaborated above.

Beginning with the composite CCI, OLS estimates in column 2 suggest that a 1 percentage point (p.p.) increase in the Southern White population share in 1900 (relative to a mean of 2.2% and std. dev. of 3.7%) is associated with an increase in the CCI of 0.04. The corresponding IV estimate is nearly three times as large, implying a 15.8% increase relative to the mean CCI across non-Southern counties. Subsequent columns unbundle the CCI to understand how the diaspora propagated Confederate memory in public life and helped spread racial animus and White supremacy.

*Confederate memory and lost cause advocacy.* After the Civil War, memorialisation efforts spread across the former Confederacy and, before long, into the former border states and large swathes of the “Old West”, too. Columns 3–6 of Table 2 show that the postbellum diaspora hastened the diffusion of such nostalgia throughout the country. In columns 3–4, the IV estimates suggest that a 1 p.p. increase in the migrant share is followed by a 3 p.p. increase in the likelihood of memorialisation (relative to a mean of 25%).[12] Estimates for UDC chapters, in columns 5–6, are similar, with larger effect sizes given the more limited organisational presence outside the South (only 10% of counties). These results corroborate the insights of historians who note an “outsized cultural influence” of migrants from the South, particularly in the West, amplified through organisations like the UDC (Waite, 2020, p. 34).

*Expressions of White supremacy.* The late 19th and early 20th centuries also saw the spread of more overt expressions of racial animus that had historically been associated with the South. Most prominently, the KKK re-emerged in 1915, following *The Birth of a Nation*’s commercial success in propagating Lost Cause narratives and a rosy image of the original KKK. Lynchings of Black people also spread after the war, often taking on a symbolic role in public life, signalling the locality’s commitment to White supremacy (Henderson *et al.*, 2021).

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[12] We identify likely Confederate location names (*i.e.* place, street, school) using the more restrictive set of “distinguishing names” as in panel (b) of Figure 2, so as to minimise the potential for false positives in our county-level analysis. In Appendix Table B.2, Supplementary Material, we go even further by restricting to those names with at least two (columns 1–3) and at least three (columns 4–6) words. These reduce outcome variation but produce similar estimates. In Appendix Table B.3, Supplementary Material, we show that the IV estimates hold across distinct memorial types in (i) monuments, (ii) place names, and (iii) street names.

TABLE 2

*Cultural influence of the Confederate diaspora in the early 20th century*

| | CCI score (from 0–4) | | Any confederate memorials | | Any UDC chapters | | Any KKK chapters | | Any lynchings of blacks | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| | (a) OLS | | | | | | | | | |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | $0.045^{***}$<br>(0.012) | $0.044^{***}$<br>(0.012) | $0.009^{*}$<br>(0.005) | $0.008^{*}$<br>(0.005) | $0.018^{***}$<br>(0.003) | $0.018^{***}$<br>(0.003) | $0.010^{***}$<br>(0.004) | $0.012^{***}$<br>(0.004) | $0.008^{**}$<br>(0.004) | $0.007^{**}$<br>(0.003) |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.32 | 0.38 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.31 | 0.42 | 0.23 | 0.25 | 0.09 | 0.15 |
| | (b) SSIV | | | | | | | | | |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | $0.119^{***}$<br>(0.034) | $0.123^{***}$<br>(0.031) | $0.031^{***}$<br>(0.009) | $0.032^{***}$<br>(0.008) | $0.039^{***}$<br>(0.011) | $0.039^{***}$<br>(0.010) | $0.032^{**}$<br>(0.015) | $0.035^{**}$<br>(0.014) | $0.017^{**}$<br>(0.008) | $0.017^{**}$<br>(0.008) |
| $F$-statistic | 18.0 | 21.2 | 18.0 | 21.2 | 18.0 | 21.2 | 18.0 | 21.2 | 18.0 | 21.2 |
| Anderson-Rubin, $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| KP Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Hausman, $p$-val | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.22 | 0.18 |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes | | Yes |
| % Southern Whites, 1870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 |
| Outcome mean | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.37 | 0.37 | 0.05 | 0.05 |

*Notes:* Regressions of CCI scores ranging 0–4 (columns 1–2), based on the county-level sum of indicators for any (i) Confederate memorials (coded as any Confederacy leader-inspired monuments as well as matched place names, street names, or school names) in county after 1900 (columns 3–4), (ii) any UDC chapters recorded during 1900–20 (columns 4–6), (iii) any second KKK chapters recorded during 1915–40 (columns 7–8), and (iv) any recorded lynchings of Black people after 1900 (columns 9–10), on the share of Southern Whites in 1900 in non-Southern counties (sample mean of 2.2%). Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. Panel (b) instruments the share of Southern Whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution of Southern Whites and the predicted change in the Southern White population living outside the South from 1870 to 1900. The latter is generated via a set of flexible LASSO regressions (see equation (3.2)). All regressions control for the share of Southern Whites in 1870 and state fixed effects (FE). County size controls include log county population in 1860 and log county area (in square miles). Additional sorting controls include cotton, tobacco, and overall agricultural potential; foreign-born, Black, and Chinese shares in 1860; slave shares in 1860; Union Army enlistment and mortality rates; Breckinridge vote shares in 1860; and dummies for on the frontier in 1860 and never on the frontier, based on Bazzi *et al.* (2020). All continuous controls are entered flexibly using quadratic terms. The Anderson-Rubin $p$-value corresponds to the null hypothesis that the coefficient on % Southern Whites, 1900 is zero and that the overidentifying restrictions are valid. The Kleibergen-Paap (KP) Underidentification test $p$-value corresponds to the Kleibergen and Paap (2006) Lagrange multiplier (LM) test whose null hypothesis is that the equation is underidentified. The null of the Hausman test is that the regressor, % Southern Whites 1900, is exogenous (*i.e.* that the OLS and the IV are statistically indistinguishable). Standard errors are clustered at the 60×60 square-mile grid cell level, following the approach of Bester *et al.* (2011). Significance levels are denoted by $^{*}p < 0.10$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$.

Columns 7–10 of Table 2 show that the Confederate diaspora hastened the spread of KKK chapters and lynchings after 1900. IV estimates suggest that a 1 p.p. increase in the migrant share is followed by a 3.5 p.p. increase in the likelihood of KKK presence, a 10 percent increase relative to the mean (column 8). IV estimates for lynching are also positive and significant, with a very large effect relative to the mean: 1.7 p.p. compared to only 5% of counties outside the South (column 10). Lynching patterns are distinctive for Blacks: we find a smaller, insignificant effect on lynchings of non-Black minorities and no effect on White lynching (see Appendix Table B.4, Supplementary Material). This helps distinguish racially targeted attacks from generalised violence associated with Southern honour culture (Grosjean, 2014).

*Identification and robustness checks.* In Appendix B.3, Supplementary Material, we conduct a wide array of additional exercises to support a causal interpretation, including (i) alternative standard errors, (ii) varying control sets, (iii) alternative specifications to address possible sorting biases, and (iv) different definitions of Southern origins and non-Southern destinations.

*Discussion: interpreting magnitudes.* The IV estimates in Table 2 are larger, and in most cases significantly different, than the OLS. Measurement error in historical data could attenuate OLS but is unlikely to explain the differences. Two additional factors are relevant. First, economic sorting: Confederate migrants may have settled in more productive locales that attracted other culturally diverse migrants, thus diluting their impact and biasing OLS downward. Section 3 highlights economic as well as ideological sorting, which implies upward bias. Our SSIV accounts for both types of endogeneity.

Second, our SSIV identifies a particular local average treatment effect (LATE) in which counties with the strongest chain migration from the South, which underpin the SSIV, may have outmigrants most strongly attached to Confederate culture. As we saw in Appendix Table A.2, Supplementary Material, counties most exposed to the war and federal occupation thereafter experienced greater outmigration from 1870 to 1900. These flows play an important role in the shift component of the SSIV and may further contribute to a distinctive, and especially aggrieved, complier population. Following Goldsmith-Pinkham *et al.* (2020), this sort of LATE interpretation for SSIVs rests on positive "Rotemberg weights", which capture the relative contribution of different origin states to the second-stage identifying variation. In our case, the vast majority (90%) are positive; negative weights are driven by Virginia. To ensure that the latter is not driving our effects nor undermining a LATE-based interpretation, Appendix Figure B.3, Supplementary Material, drops sending and receiving states one-by-one. While effect sizes for the summary CCI outcome vary in sensible ways (*e.g.* California is an important destination), all remain significant at the 95% level.

*Discussion: More-than-compositional effects.* The IV estimates indicate that a 1 p.p. increase in the local presence of Confederate migrants raised the probability of each CCI outcome by 1.7–3.9 p.p.—more than proportional to their numbers. These magnitudes are difficult to reconcile with a purely mechanical, composition effect, that is, outcomes shifting only because migrants behaved differently from locals absent influence. Rather, they suggest that Confederate migrants shaped the behaviour and attitudes of native residents. Although our county-level models cannot isolate the relative roles of cultural spill-overs, organisational mobilisation, and institutional leverage, the effects are large enough to suggest changes in the actions or acceptance of the local majority, who were overwhelmingly non-Southern whites. In the remainder of the paper, and especially in Section 6, we present additional evidence consistent with such more-than-compositional influence.

Ultimately, each CCI component functioned as a vehicle for transmitting Confederate norms to the wider community, not simply as a nostalgic artefact for diaspora consumption. UDC activities deliberately targeted public institutions: organising school programmes, shaping local commemorations, and staging civic events that enlisted non-Southern participation. Monuments altered the physical and symbolic landscape, embedding Confederate memory into spaces used and seen by all residents.[13] KKK activity depended on recruiting locals and securing tacit community protection, thereby fusing migrant and native networks in the service of white supremacist mobilisation. Lynching likewise relied on broad complicity or acquiescence, transforming violence into a shared instrument of racial control. In each case, the outcome was not a self-contained expression of migrant culture, but a mechanism for embedding Confederate culture into the local social fabric, amplifying its reach and durability over time.

## 5. CONDITIONS FOR MIGRANT INFLUENCE

This section begins to examine why the Confederate diaspora exerted considerable influence despite their small numbers. Guided by the framework in Section 2.1, we focus on two conditions that imply greater influence than assimilation: (i) migrants' *ideological intensity* and (ii) the malleability of destination *power structures*. The migration wave varied across both origins and destinations, providing a fertile setting to study these conditions. Using variation in migrant backgrounds, we show that the diaspora was distinctive relative to other migrants and most influential where members carried deeper ideological commitments. Their impact was also greater in destinations with more malleable power structures, further underscoring that influence extended beyond compositional effects of migrant numbers.

### 5.1. *Ideological intensity of migrants*

To examine the role of ideological intensity, we consider variation in migrants' attachment to Confederate culture and post-war grievances. Recall, from Figure 2, that Confederate leader names were pervasive in the diaspora in the early years after the war. Here, we rely on other, pre-determined measures of Confederate ideology among migrants to explain heterogeneity in the effects of the diaspora.

*Heterogeneity by migrants' origins.* In Table 3, we compare the effects of migrants from regions with varying ideologies, distinguishing Confederate states from *border states* (Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia). While border states, where slavery was legal, had ties to the Confederacy, their ideological commitments and postbellum grievances were plausibly weaker. We also differentiate between Confederate migrants from the *upper South* (Arkansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia, Tennessee, and Texas) and the *deep South* (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina), where slavery was more central. Appendix Figure D.3, Supplementary Material, shows a gradient in ideological intensity across these regions: Confederate leader names were more common among children from the deep South, less common in the upper South, and rarest in border states. For each region, we construct an SSIV following the same procedure as for the overall Southern migrant share (see Section 4.2).[14]

Panel (a) of Table 3 shows greater transmission of Confederate culture by migrants from deeper Southern states. The sample includes 1,384 non-Southern, non-border-state counties. IV estimates indicate large positive effects of Confederate migrants on the CCI, while border-state migrants had small, insignificant effects (column 2). Deep South migrants had especially large

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[13] As Cox (2003) describes, the UDC "rewrote history by transforming the Confederates from traitors into patriots [. . . ] erected monuments to the Confederate dead at courthouses and town squares [. . . ] [and] distributed Confederate flags and library books to public schools [. . . ]".

[14] This demanding multiple-SSIV specification generally provides sufficient identifying variation for strong individual first stages even if they are not always collectively strong (see the Sanderson and Windmeijer, 2016 diagnostics in Table 3).

TABLE 3

*Group influence by region of migrant origin*

|  | CCI score (from 0–4) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  | Any Confederate memorials | Any UDC chapters | Any KKK chapters | Any lynchings of blacks |
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|  | (a) Border states, the upper South, and the deep South |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | 0.019$^{***}$ | 0.154$^{**}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | (0.006) | (0.061) |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Whites from border states, 1900 | 0.032$^{**}$ | 0.056 | 0.090 | −0.006 | 0.029 | 0.046 | 0.020 |
|  | (0.014) | (0.049) | (0.070) | (0.025) | (0.018) | (0.032) | (0.015) |
| % Whites from upper South, 1900 |  |  | −0.198 | −0.069 | −0.066$^{*}$ | −0.035 | −0.028 |
|  |  |  | (0.149) | (0.057) | (0.037) | (0.069) | (0.029) |
| % Whites from deep South, 1900 |  |  | 3.053$^{**}$ | 0.991$^{*}$ | 0.915$^{***}$ | 0.764 | 0.383 |
|  |  |  | (1.360) | (0.503) | (0.327) | (0.606) | (0.315) |
| Observations | 1,384 | 1,384 | 1,384 | 1,384 | 1,384 | 1,384 | 1,384 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.65 | 0.65 | 0.65 | 0.20 | 0.04 | 0.39 | 0.02 |
| KP joint $F$-statistic |  | 9.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 |
| KP Underident., $p$-valuel |  | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Southern White SW $F$-statistic |  | 19.9 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Southern White Underident., $p$-val |  | 0.00 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Upper South SW $F$-statistic |  |  | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 |
| Upper South Underident., $p$-val |  |  | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Deep South SW $F$-statistic |  |  | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 |
| Deep South Underident., $p$-val |  |  | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Border-State SW $F$-statistic |  | 19.2 | 31.8 | 31.8 | 31.8 | 31.8 | 31.8 |
| Border-State Underident., $p$-val |  | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
|  | (b) Southern whites and whites from the Union North |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | 0.040$^{***}$ | 0.110$^{***}$ | 0.106$^{***}$ | 0.029$^{***}$ | 0.033$^{***}$ | 0.024$^{*}$ | 0.020$^{**}$ |
|  | (0.013) | (0.030) | (0.031) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.013) | (0.009) |
| % Northern Whites, 1900 | 0.026$^{***}$ | 0.038$^{***}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | (0.005) | (0.013) |  |  |  |  |  |
| % Whites from “Slave North”, 1900 |  |  | 0.050$^{*}$ | 0.008 | 0.012 | 0.021 | 0.007 |
|  |  |  | (0.027) | (0.011) | (0.008) | (0.014) | (0.006) |
| % Whites from “Free North”, 1900 |  |  | −0.003 | −0.013 | 0.001 | 0.028 | −0.018$^{*}$ |
|  |  |  | (0.058) | (0.021) | (0.020) | (0.029) | (0.011) |
| Observations | 815 | 815 | 815 | 815 | 815 | 815 | 815 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.29 | 0.20 | 0.30 | 0.08 |
| KP Joint $F$-statistic |  | 11.5 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.3 |
| KP Underident., p−value |  | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

(continued)

TABLE 3
*Continued*

| | CCI score (from 0–4) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | Any Confederate memorials (4) | Any UDC chapters (5) | Any KKK chapters (6) | Any lynchings of blacks (7) |
| Southern White SW *F*-statistic | | 28.2 | 19.8 | 19.8 | 19.8 | 19.8 | 19.8 |
| Southern White Underident., *p*-value | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Northern White SW *F*-statistic | | 22.4 | | | | | |
| Northern White Underident., *p*-value | | 0.00 | | | | | |
| Slave North SW *F*-statistic | | | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 |
| Slave North Underident., *p*-value | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Free North SW *F*-statistic | | | 17.9 | 17.9 | 17.9 | 17.9 | 17.9 |
| Free North Underident., *p*-value | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Estimator | OLS | IV | IV | IV | IV | IV | IV |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 1870 shares | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

*Notes:* This table makes two changes to the specification in column 2 from Table 2: (i) it adds the share of White migrants from the five border states of West Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Delaware, and Missouri (panel a) or Northern White migrants (panel b) as an additional endogenous variable, and (ii) it restricts the sample to states outside the border states and the South (panel a) or the North and South (panel b) where we define the "North" as the territories of the Union during the Civil War, excluding border and Western states (California, Oregon, Nevada). Column 3 of panel (a) further splits Southern Whites into those from the "deep South" states with more slavery prior to emancipation (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina) and the remaining "upper South" states. Column 3 of panel (b) further splits Northern Whites into those from "free North" states with $<1\%$ Blacks recorded as enslaved by the Census after 1800 (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Ohio) and the remaining "slave North" states with larger slave shares. Migrant shares are each instrumented using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution of Whites of each group and the predicted change in the given migrant population from 1870 to 1900. The shift part is generated via a set of flexible LASSO regressions (see equation (3.2)). The bottom part of the table reports the KP underidentification test *p*-value (Kleibergen and Paap, 2006), as well as the Sanderson-Windmeijer (SW) first-stage *F*-statistics and underidentification LM test *p*-values (Sanderson and Windmeijer, 2016) for the endogenous regressors. Standard errors are clustered at the 60×60 square-mile grid cell level based on Bester *et al.* (2011). Significance levels are denoted by $^{*}p < 0.10$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$.

effects compared to those from the upper South and border states (column 3). Similar, though somewhat noisier, patterns are observed across CCI components (columns 4–7). These results suggest heterogeneity within the diaspora, with more ideologically committed migrants driving greater diffusion of Confederate culture.

Panel (b) of Table 3 further illustrates the distinctive impact of Confederate migrants, focusing on Western destinations, where we distinguish among White migrants from the South and the "Union North"—defined here as non-Western, non-border former Union states. Using data from 815 counties in Western states, we construct separate SSIVs for Confederate and Union-origin migrants. Despite opposing the Confederacy, the Union North had varying histories of slavery in the antebellum era, and we thus categorise the latter migrants into those from states with and without substantial slavery. We find that Southern White migrants had a significant impact, while migrants from Union states had more limited influence with some amplification of Confederate culture by those from states with a history of slavery. IV estimates in column 2 suggest that a 1 p.p. increase in the Southern White population share raised the CCI by 0.11, while the same increase in the Northern White share only raised the CCI by 0.038. Column 3 shows that this effect is driven by migrants from Union states with a deeper antebellum history of slavery, mirroring the heterogeneity observed within the Southern diaspora in panel (a).

To further validate the role of ideology and grievances in shaping Confederate migrant influence, we unbundle the deep versus upper South comparison in Table 3 using several continuous measures of average origin-county characteristics: (1) slaves per capita in 1860, (2) pro-secession in 1860–61 referendums, (3) Civil War battles per capita from 1861 to 1865, (4) any federal occupation from 1865 to 18-77, (5) any Freedmen's Bureaus from 1865 to 1872, (6) Confederate Army veterans in 1870, and (7) former slaveholders in 1870. For each, we construct an origin-county $o$-specific measure, $het_{os}$, aggregate to the origin state $s$, and weight by the 1870 migrant population from each state to destination-county-$c$: $het_c = \sum_s \frac{N_{cs}}{N_c}(\frac{1}{\mathcal{N}_s}\sum_{o\in s} het_{os})$, where $het_{os}$ is normalised by a measure $\mathcal{N}_s$ of total counties (for binary $het_{os}$) or persons (continuous) in origin state $s$, $N_{cs}$ is the number of migrants in destination-county-$c$ from $s$, and $N_c$ is the number of migrants in $c$. We then augment equation (4.1) with %Southern White $\times$ $het_c$, instrumented by $\text{SSIV}_c \times het_c$, with $het_c$ standardised and included in both stages.

Table 4 suggests that Confederate migrants' ideological affinity and war-related grievances amplified their impact on memorialisation and White supremacist activities outside the South. Across all seven measures, the general diaspora effect on the CCI is significantly larger when migrants came from areas more deeply invested in the Confederate cause (more slaves, slaveholders, veterans, pro-secession sentiment) or more damaged by its defeat (more battles, federal occupation, reconstruction programmes). For example, the increase in the CCI is over 1.5-times larger in counties with a one-standard deviation greater share of migrants from states with unanimous support for secession (*e.g.* South Carolina) than in the average case (column 2), and nearly twice as large for counties drawing more migrants from states with pervasive federal occupation. Other measures show comparably large magnitudes.

Tables 3 and 4 show a strong link between migrants' ideological origins and their influence in destination communities. Southern Whites had the greatest overall impact, but they did not act alone in spreading Confederate culture in the West, and their influence varied by place of origin. Part of this variation likely reflects greater outmigration of public-facing elites from regions hardest hit by the war, migrants well positioned to shape local norms. Appendix Table D.2, Supplementary Material, combines this origin-county heterogeneity from Table 4 with the individual-level selection framework in Table 1, offering suggestive evidence that selective outmigration amplified influence. We later present direct evidence on how migrants' occupational choices *at destination* reinforced such influence.

*Former slaveholder migrants.* Ideological intensity varied not only by place of origin but also across individuals from the same origin. A key source of individual-level variation is former-slaveholding experience. Of the half-million Whites who left the South after the Civil War, 5.3% had been enslavers in 1860, and a further 15.7% came from slaveholding households. Such migrants were more invested in Confederate ideology, as shown by greater transmission of Confederate leader names to children born during and after the war (see Appendix Figure C.1, Supplementary Material). Using a county-level regression framework, we demonstrate that slaveholding elite had a distinctive and outsized influence in destination communities.

TABLE 4

*Heterogeneous effects by origin: Confederate experience and grievance*

| | All Confederate cultural activity (CCI score, from 0 to 4) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | $0.189^{***}$ | $0.115^{***}$ | $0.384^{***}$ | $0.162^{***}$ | $0.230^{***}$ | $0.115^{***}$ | $0.272^{***}$ |
| | (0.049) | (0.026) | (0.114) | (0.041) | (0.062) | (0.028) | (0.069) |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 × Average migrant-origin state [. . . ] | | | | | | | |
| Slaves per capita (× 100), 1860 | $0.203^{***}$ | | | | | | |
| | (0.071) | | | | | | |
| Exposure to pro-secession county, 1860–61 | | $0.086^{*}$ | | | | | |
| | | (0.046) | | | | | |
| Civil war battles (per 10,000), 1861–65 | | | $0.163^{***}$ | | | | |
| | | | (0.056) | | | | |
| Exposure to federal occupation, 1865–77 | | | | $0.085^{**}$ | | | |
| | | | | (0.034) | | | |
| Exposure to Freedmen’s Bureau, 1865–72 | | | | | $0.100^{***}$ | | |
| | | | | | (0.034) | | |
| % Confederate Veterans, 1870 | | | | | | $0.117^{**}$ | |
| | | | | | | (0.047) | |
| % Former slaveholders, 1870 | | | | | | | $0.202^{***}$ |
| | | | | | | | (0.065) |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Southern Whites, 1870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 |
| KP Joint $F$-statistic | 8.3 | 7.4 | 5.3 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 3.5 | 6.6 |
| KP Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| Southern White SW $F$-statistic | 21.5 | 39.0 | 11.4 | 26.4 | 19.1 | 26.5 | 15.9 |
| Southern White Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Interaction SW $F$-statistic | 17.0 | 29.8 | 10.6 | 18.5 | 15.3 | 11.5 | 13.6 |
| Interaction Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

*Notes:* This table augments the specification in column 2 of Table 2, interacting the Southern White share in non-Southern counties with various characteristics of the cross-county average origin state of a given non-Southern county’s Southern Whites, as weighted by the share of Southern Whites from each origin state as of 1870. The own-term in the interaction is also included as an additional regressor in both stages (omitted from table). See Appendix Table A.1, Supplementary Material, for the original data sources used to construct interaction variables. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. All columns instrument the share of Southern Whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution of Southern Whites and the predicted change in the Southern White population living outside the South from 1870 to 1900. The latter is generated via a set of flexible LASSO regressions (see equation (3.2)). The interaction terms are instrumented separately by the interaction of the SSIV and the given variable. See the notes of Table 2 for all details on controls. The KP Underidentification test $p$-value corresponds to the Kleibergen and Paap (2006) LM test whose null hypothesis is that the equation is underidentified. The SW $F$-statistics and Underidentification test $p$-values are based on Sanderson and Windmeijer (2016) first-stage $F$ statistics and LM tests, respectively, for the individual endogenous regressors. Standard errors are clustered at the 60 × 60 square-mile grid cell level, following the approach of Bester *et al.* (2011). Significance levels are denoted by $*p < 0.10$, $**p < 0.05$, $***p < 0.01$.

To distinguish the effects of slaveholders and non-slaveholders, we construct separate migrant shares from linked samples and develop corresponding SSIVs (see Appendix B.4, Supplementary Material, for full details). We first link White male slaveholders in the 1860

Slave Schedule (United States Bureau of the Census, 1860) to the 1860 Population Census.[15] We then onward-link them to later Censuses using CT links. We estimate the number of former-slaveholder migrants from each origin county $o$ and Census period $\tau$ as:

$$\sum_{d=1}^{D}\left(\frac{\#\text{slaveholders in } o\text{in } \tau-1 \text{ linked to } d \text{ in } \tau}{\#\text{slaveholders in } o \text{ in } \tau-1 \text{ linked to}\tau}\right) \times \left(\frac{\#\text{slaveholders in}o\text{ in } \tau-1 \text{ linked to } 1860}{\#\text{Whitesin } o \text{ in } \tau-1 \text{ linked to}1860}\right) \cdot \text{Southern Whites}_{o,\tau-1},$$

where $d$ denotes non-Southern destination counties, and Southern $\text{Whites}_{o,\tau-1}$ is based on the complete-count Census. We follow the same procedure for non-slaveholder migrants.

We then build distinct SSIVs for each subgroup. Unlike origin-level SSIVs in Table 3, this requires distinguishing individuals from the same origins, which are subject to correlated shocks. These shared origins result in high correlation between the two SSIVs, even when using distinct predicted shifts based on 1870–1900 push factors (see Appendix Table B.8, Supplementary Material).[16] To reduce this correlation, we also predict 1870 shares using a flexible gravity model incorporating distance and agricultural similarity to each destination. Combining predicted shifts and shares reduces the SSIV correlation to 0.66, compared to 0.98 when using predicted shifts alone.

In Table 5, we re-estimate equation (4.1) with separate shares for former-slaveholder (mean 0.2%, s.d. 0.3%) and non-slaveholder migrants (mean 3.6%, s.d. 5.1%) in 1900. OLS estimates show larger effects for former slaveholders (columns 1–2), and IV estimates reveal an even stronger differential (columns 3–5). All models control for sorting and revealed-preference proxies, including Southern former-slaveholder migrants from 1860 to 1870, and column 5 also includes non-Southern former slaveholders in 1870. In that column, increasing the slaveholder share from zero to the mean raises the CCI by 0.65 points (relative to a mean of 0.78), while the non-slaveholder effect is near zero. This pattern holds across all four CCI components (columns 6–9).

The estimates suggest not only a significantly larger effect of slaveholder migrants ($p$-value $<0.01$) but also a large difference between their OLS and IV estimates (Hausman test $p$-value = 0.01, column 5). Neither is due to weak instruments: the SSIVs have strong, distinct first stages (see Table 5 diagnostics and Appendix Table B.9, Supplementary Material). Rather, it likely reflects both a LATE mechanism *and* measurement error. On the LATE, former slaveholders induced to migrate may have been especially aggrieved and keen to strike off "in search of land on which to begin rebuilding family estates lost during the Civil War" (Dochuk, 2010). Micro evidence in later sections shows they leveraged their elite backgrounds to exert disproportionate influence in destination communities. However, linked samples of slaveholder and non-slaveholder migrants also contain significantly more measurement error than the complete-count Southern migrant share in the baseline. Tracking slaveholder also requires linking to the 1860 Slave Schedule, compounding errors. We show in Appendix B.5, Supplementary

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[15] Matching on first and last names plus county, using the Abramitzky-Boustan-Eriksson (ABE) algorithm (Abramitzky *et al.*, 2021) with New York State Identification and Intelligence System (NYSIIS)-standardised names, we link nearly 64% of name–county combinations, yielding over 250,000 slaveholders, which is comparable to linking rates in Ager *et al.* (2021) and Hall *et al.* (2019).

[16] We see similarly signed push factors across slaveholders and non-slaveholders, consistent with the political economy facing all Whites in the postbellum South. Note, however, the varying relative importance of factors across the two groups.

TABLE 5

*Heterogeneous effects by migrant type: slaveholders and non-slaveholders*

| | All Confederate cultural activity (CCI score, from 0 to 4) | | | | | Any Confederate memorials | Any UDC chapters | Any KKK chapters | Any lynchings of Blacks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| % Former slaveholder | 0.310$^{**}$ | 0.136 | 2.681$^{***}$ | 3.156$^{***}$ | 3.127$^{***}$ | 0.952$^{***}$ | 0.824$^{***}$ | 1.205$^{***}$ | 0.146 |
| migrants, 1870–1900 | (0.150) | (0.126) | (0.746) | (0.928) | (0.859) | (0.362) | (0.271) | (0.402) | (0.152) |
| % Non-slaveholder | 0.012 | 0.018$^{**}$ | −0.063 | −0.022 | −0.021 | 0.015 | −0.019 | −0.030 | 0.013 |
| migrants, 1870–1900 | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.053) | (0.072) | (0.073) | (0.036) | (0.016) | (0.026) | (0.012) |
| Estimator | OLS | OLS | IV | IV | IV | IV | IV | IV | IV |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % All Southern Whites, 1870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Slaveholder migrants, 1860–70 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Non-Southern slaveholders, 1870 | | Yes | | | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 | 1,680 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.25 | 0.11 | 0.38 | 0.05 |
| KP joint $F$-statistic | | | 5.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| KP Underident., $p$-value | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Slaveholder SW $F$-statistic | | | 21.3 | 19.2 | 21.6 | 21.6 | 21.6 | 21.6 | 21.6 |
| Slaveholder Underident., $p$-value | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Non-slaveholder SW $F$-statistic | | | 14.6 | 10.3 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 |
| Non-slaveholder Underident., $p$-value | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

*Notes:* This table re-estimates Table 2 using alternative explanatory variation, based on former slaveholding and non-slaveholding Southern White migrant shares as of 1900, using a sample of individuals linked to the 1860 complete-count Census based on whether they (i) resided in the South and (ii) were linked to the 1860 slave schedule. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. All columns instrument the shares of former slaveholding and non-slaveholding Southern Whites using shift-share instruments based on their predicted 1870 cross-sectional distributions and the predicted changes in their populations living outside the South from 1870 to 1900, as elaborated in detail in Appendix B.4, Supplementary Material. All columns control for overall Southern White shares of 1870, while columns 5–10 separately account for the level of baseline slaveholder migration to a non-Southern county since the 1860 slave schedule. Column 6 also controls for the share of non-Southern former slaveholders in a county, defined as a share of all individual linked to non-Southern states as of the 1860 slave schedule. See the notes of Table 2 for other details on controls. The KP underidentification test $p$-value corresponds to the Kleibergen and Paap (2006) LM test whose null hypothesis is that the equation is underidentified. The SW $F$-statistics and underidentification test $p$-values are based on Sanderson and Windmeijer (2016) first-stage $F$ statistics and LM tests, respectively, for the individual endogenous regressors. Standard errors are clustered at the 60×60 square-mile grid cell level, following the approach of Bester *et al.* (2011). Significance levels are denoted by $^{*}p < 0.10$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$.

Material, that this measurement error helps explain some of the large gap between the OLS and IV estimates for slaveholder migrants.

Overall, former slaveholders played an instrumental leadership role in diffusing Confederate culture, shaping institutions and racial norms that persisted. While non-slaveholders also contributed , elite leadership may have created conditions for the broader diaspora's influence. This aligns with historical accounts: as Dippel (2005, p. 218) notes, although "they were a small minority, large slaveholders invariably came to control the political and economic systems" in their new communities. We next examine how such elite influence materialised, and later in Section 6.2 we show that non-slaveholder elites may have reinforced these patterns.

### 5.2. *Power structure in destination communities*

Building on the role of ideological intensity in the diaspora, we now explore how power structures in destination communities enabled migrants to channel intensity into influence. Guided by the framework in Section 2.1, we examine place-, group-, and individual-level factors underlying these structures.

*Early settlement in malleable places.* We first examine how incumbent residents and institutions shaped diaspora influence. Migrants likely found it easier to instigate cultural change in counties with weaker institutions or residents sympathetic to Confederate ideology. In contrast, they probably faced more resistance in counties with strong, entrenched institutions and norms, especially those forged by individuals opposed to the Confederacy. To test this, we augment equation (4.1) by including pre-determined destination-county-$c$ characteristics ($het_c$) and their interaction with % Southern Whites$_{c,1900}$, instrumented by SSIV$_c$ $\times$ $het_c$, with $het_c$ standardised and included in both stages.[17]

Table 6 explores these heterogeneous effects on the composite CCI outcome. First, the diaspora had greater influence in counties with less *established* cultural and institutional foundations, as proxied by population density and frontier history measured by years since exiting the frontier as of 1850 (columns 1–2). Negative interaction terms suggest stronger transmission in areas with less entrenched norms. However, influence was still strong in more established communities, becoming negligible only in counties that exited the frontier before 1820. Second, diaspora influence was stronger in counties with weaker *oppositional* forces to the Confederacy, proxied by 48ers (exiled German leaders who mobilised opposition to slavery; Dippel and Heblich, 2021), Union Army enlistees, and proximity to Washington, D.C. (capturing federal oversight) (columns 3–5). Negative interaction terms suggest that these forces constrained Confederate cultural transmission.

Furthermore, the diaspora exerted greater influence in areas marked by isolation, economic extraction, and social fragmentation. *Remoteness*, measured by distance to railroads and rivers, limited exposure to countervailing norms from other areas, with negative interaction terms suggesting that isolation enhanced cultural transmission (columns 6–7). Similarly, the diaspora found fertile ground in counties with *extractive* economies, such as those with active mines in 1860, where coercive labour norms aligned with Confederate migrants' preferences and skills, which perhaps amplified their influence (column 8). Finally, less *cohesive* incumbent populations, proxied by the inverse of ethnic fractionalisation in 1850, may have allowed greater diaspora influence, given less coordinated resistance (column 9).

Overall, the findings in Table 6 suggest that the Confederate diaspora left a deeper cultural imprint in regions still in the early stages of nation- and state-building, where social institutions were more contestable and cultural leaders had unique opportunities for influence on public life.

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[17] While some $het_c$ measures are not included in our baseline controls in Table 2, Appendix Table B.7, Supplementary Material, shows that their collective inclusion yields similar estimates as the more parsimonious baseline. This coefficient stability alleviates concerns that the findings in Table 6 are an artefact of residual endogenous sorting not accounted for in the baseline SSIV.

TABLE 6

*Heterogeneous effects by destination: power structure and malleability of local culture and institutions*

| | All Confederate cultural activity (CCI score, from 0 to 4) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | 0.098$^{***}$<br>(0.025) | 0.088$^{***}$<br>(0.028) | 0.122$^{***}$<br>(0.032) | 0.111$^{***}$<br>(0.031) | 0.051<br>(0.035) | 0.073$^{*}$<br>(0.039) | 0.122$^{***}$<br>(0.032) | 0.205$^{***}$<br>(0.064) | 0.200$^{***}$<br>(0.050) |
| *County culture and institutions were [. . . ]* | *Established* | | *Oppositional* | | | *Remote* | | *Extractive* | *Cohesive* |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | | | | | | | | | |
| × Log population density, 1850 | −0.059$^{*}$<br>(0.034) | | | | | | | | |
| × Years since exited frontier, 1850 | | −0.065$^{***}$<br>(0.017) | | | | | | | |
| × Historical 48er presence | | | −0.050<br>(0.076) | | | | | | |
| × % Union enlistment in county | | | | −0.038$^{***}$<br>(0.011) | | | | | |
| × Proximity to D.C. | | | | | −0.149$^{***}$<br>(0.047) | | | | |
| × Proximity to railways, 1850 | | | | | | −0.146$^{***}$<br>(0.047) | | | |
| × Proximity to rivers | | | | | | | −0.079$^{***}$<br>(0.028) | | |
| × No mines in county, 1860 | | | | | | | | −0.099$^{*}$<br>(0.057) | |
| × Ancestral homogeneity, 1850 | | | | | | | | | −0.175$^{**}$<br>(0.068) |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Southern Whites, 1870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

(continued)

TABLE 6
*Continued*

| Dependent variable | All Confederate cultural activity (CCI score, from 0 to 4) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
| Observations | 1,701 | 1,537 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 1,701 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.78 | 0.70 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.78 |
| KP joint $F$-statistic | 6.5 | 11.9 | 10.7 | 22.6 | 9.6 | 7.4 | 10.5 | 9.5 | 1.8 |
| KP Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.02 |
| Southern White SW $F$-statistic | 69.6 | 60.1 | 22.7 | 33.7 | 60.7 | 31.0 | 21.1 | 22.5 | 23.1 |
| Southern White Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Interaction SW $F$-statistic | 73.1 | 60.6 | 69.8 | 51.8 | 34.7 | 32.8 | 18.6 | 14.0 | 25.1 |
| Interaction Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

*Notes:* This table augments the specification in column 2 of Table 2, interaction the Southern White share with pre-migration characteristics of the destination counties. The own-term in the interaction is also included as an additional regressor in both stages. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. All columns instrument the share of Southern Whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution of Southern Whites and the predicted change in the Southern White population living outside the South from 1870 to 1900. The latter is generated via a set of flexible LASSO regressions (see equation (3.2)). The interaction terms are instrumented separately by the interaction of the SSIV and the given variable. Railway data are from Thomas (2017), Union enlistment data from Dupraz and Ferrara (2025), frontier data from Bazzi *et al*. (2020), and mines data from Mason and Arndt (1996). See the notes of Table 2 for all other details on controls. The KP Underidentification test $p$-value corresponds to the Kleibergen and Paap (2006) LM test whose null hypothesis is that the equation is underidentified. The SW $F$-statistics and Underidentification test $p$-values are based on Sanderson and Windmeijer (2016) first-stage $F$ statistics and LM tests, respectively, for the individual endogenous regressors. Standard errors are clustered at the 60 × 60 square-mile grid cell level, following the approach of Bester *et al*. (2011). Significance levels are denoted by $^{*}p < 0.10$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$.

*Power(ful) occupations.* We now turn to micro evidence on a key pathway through which small migrant populations could wield outsized cultural influence: holding positions of public-facing authority. We draw on three sources to identify occupations with significant sway over civic life. First, we observe the following occupations in the complete-count Census: lawyers and judges, law enforcement, public administrators, religious leaders, and educators. Second, we identify political leaders in the Political Graveyard online database, which includes biographical information on over 300,000 officeholders. Third, we identify media leaders in the U.S. Newspaper Panel, which names the editors and publishers of daily newspapers from 1869 to 2000 (Gentzkow *et al*., 2014). We match these non-Census data to men in the complete-count Census using the Abramitzky *et al*. (2021) algorithm.

To identify migrant over-representation in these positions, we estimate an occupational choice regression for all working-age, White men in destination counties $c$ outside the South in 1900:

$$\text{position}_{ic} = \alpha_c + \beta \cdot \text{Southern migrant}_i + \mathbf{x}_i' \boldsymbol{\gamma} + \varepsilon_{ic}, \tag{5.1}$$

where $\text{position}_{ic}$ is an indicator equal to one if the individual held a given position, $\alpha_c$ are county FE, $\text{Southern migrant}_i$ is an indicator equal to one if the individual was born in the South, $\mathbf{x}_i$ is a vector of additional controls included in some specifications, and $\beta$ identifies the differential sorting of Southern migrants relative to other White men in the same county. We cluster standard errors at the county level.

Figure 4 illustrates the outsized presence of the diaspora in powerful, public-facing positions. We report 95% confidence intervals on $\beta$, normalised by the mean outcome in the non-Southern migrant comparison group. The black bars (●) correspond to the full sample, and the red bars (♦) restrict the comparison to other out-of-state migrants from non-Southern origins, which helps disentangle a general occupational sorting tendency among migrants from one specific to Southern migrants. Confederate migrants are nearly 40% more likely to work in the *authority* occupations reported in the Census data. This sorting is stronger in *governance* (lawyers and judges, law enforcement, and public administrators) than in *civil society* (religion and education positions), with differentials of 46% and 34%, respectively.[18] The sorting differentials for *politician* and newspaper *editor or publisher* occupations are also meaningful albeit smaller in magnitude, 4% and 20%, respectively. Together, these patterns are consistent with the salient anecdotes in Section 2.2 as well as others in the historical record.[19]

Diaspora over-representation in authority cannot simply be explained by differential selection of migrants versus non-migrants or by general sorting of elites into high-paying occupations. First, the red bars in Figure 4 show that Confederate migrants were even more likely than other out-of-state migrants to sort into these public-facing occupations. Second, the estimates are mostly robust to demographic controls for age (cubic), marital status, and number of children (see Appendix Table C.3, Supplementary Material, which also reports the full estimates underlying Figure 4). Third, the patterns hold conditional on the earnings potential of a given Census occupation (see Appendix Table C.3, Supplementary Material, column 3, which includes fixed effects for the decile of occupational income score (*occscore*). Among occupations with a similar

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[18] Throughout, we group occupations into four major categories for clarity and to increase power, as these elite occupations are relatively rare. Appendix Figure D.4, Supplementary Material, provides a detailed breakdown, showing stronger sorting into (i) religion over education, (ii) justice over public administration, (iii) local over non-local politics, and (iv) newspaper publishing over editing.

[19] Prominent Southern-origin Whites who owned, edited, or published newspapers outside of the South in the postbellum era include Henry Watterson (*Courier-Journal*), John Temple Graves (*New York American*), and Walter Neale (*Neale's Monthly*).

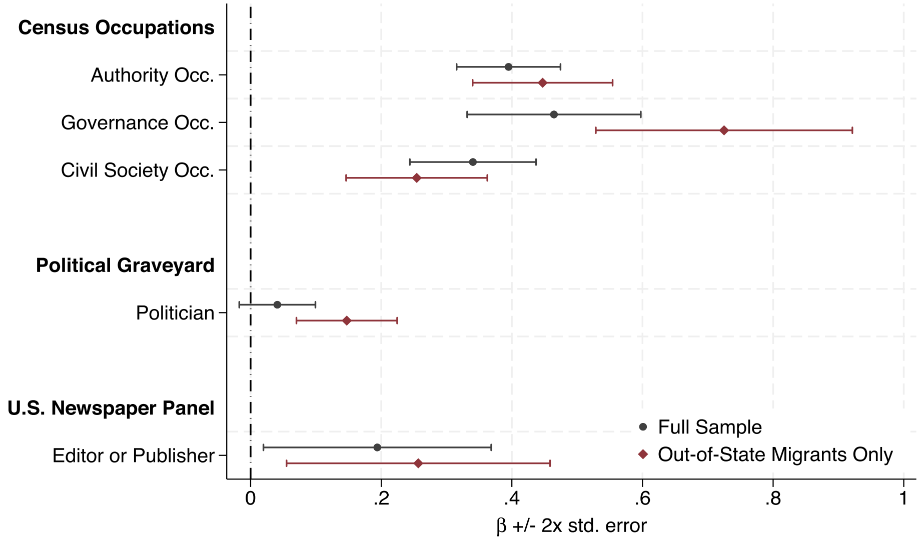

FIGURE 4

Occupational sorting by southern white migrants complete-count: Southern-Born versus non-Southern-Born differential

*Notes:* This figure shows estimates of the occupational choice differential across Southern-born and non-Southern-born men. We show the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals of $\beta$ in equation (5.1) normalised by the mean outcome in the respective comparison groups of (i) all non-Southern-born White mean (black), and (ii) all non-Southern-born, out-of-state migrant men (marooon). The *census occupations* come from the complete-count population Census in 1900 and include a "governance" occupation indicator equal to one if the individual works as lawyers/judges, law enforcement, or public administrators and zero otherwise, and a "civil society" occupation indicator equal to one for religious officials or educators and zero otherwise. The "authority" occupation is a composite binary indicator across all five occupation groupings. The *Political Graveyard* outcome is based on an online database of U.S. officeholders at every level of government (https://politicalgraveyard.com/). Each officeholder is matched to the next census following their first year in office (*e.g.* someone serving in 1896 is matched to the 1900 census) based on their standardised first and last name and county of residence. The "politician" indicator equals one if the individual appears in the matched Political Graveyard data and zero otherwise. The *U.S. Newspaper Panel* (Gentzkow *et al.*, 2014) includes information on daily newspapers in operation between 1869 and 2000. Editors and publishers of newspapers in each year are matched to the next census (*e.g.* an editor of a newspaper in 1886 is matched to the 1900 census) based on the initial of their first name, their last name, and the newspaper county. The "editor or publisher" indicator equals one if the individual is in the matched U.S. Newspaper Panel data and zero otherwise. The regressions include county fixed effects, and standard errors are clustered at the county level. See Appendix Table C.3, Supplementary Material, for the full estimation results, including dependent variable means.

*occscore*, Southern migrants are overrepresented in ones with public authority; for example, they are more likely to be lawyers/judges (*occscore* = 62) than doctors (*occscore* = 80), and more likely to be religious officials (*occscore* = 24) than weavers or machinists (*occscore*s = 23–24).

Such pronounced sorting into public authority roles, alongside their intense ideological commitment, distinguishes the Confederate diaspora from typical migrant groups. This contrasts with the much larger wave of Southern White migration during the 20th-century Great Migration, which reshaped electoral politics through sheer scale but did not capture local institutions. As Appendix Figure D.6, Supplementary Material, shows, Southern migrants were overrepresented in authority roles through 1900, with this advantage disappearing by 1930 and reversing by 1940, the period analysed in Bazzi *et al.* (2023). These trends mirror sharp changes in selection: Confederate migrants from 1870 to 1900 were positively selected on authority and status, while later flows show far weaker or neutral selection (Appendix Figure D.7, Supplementary Material).[20]

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[20] The weakening of selection in the 20th century likely reflects two dynamics. First, elite networks forged by early Confederate migrants may have lowered migration costs for lower-status Southerners in later waves (Carrington *et al.*, 1996; Munshi, 2003; McKenzie and Rapoport, 2010). Second, declining selection on authority resonates with the post-war history: while White elites faced uncertainty about their status in the 1870s, this subsided after 1877 with the collapse of Reconstruction and the reassertion of White dominance across the South.

Together, these occupational sorting results suggest that Confederate migrants may have had a comparative advantage in or taste for authority. Regardless of the microfoundation, the diaspora's outsized presence in leadership roles likely helped facilitate wider diaspora influence over public life. In Section 6, we explore some of the channels through which migrants used these positions to shape local culture and institutions, often with adverse consequences for Black populations. Before proceeding, though, we illustrate the distinctive entry of former slaveholders into such positions of power.

*Former-slaveholder migrants in power.* For slaveholders, ideology and economics were deeply entwined; they had benefited the most from slavery and thus lost the most from emancipation. The West presented opportunities for former slaveholders to replicate the antebellum power structures of the South in a new region rife with extractive potential. Many of these migrants likely fit the stereotype of the aggrieved Southern White "who hated that racial equality could be enforced by the government [and] saw the West as the only free place left in America" (Richardson, 2020, p. 9). We show here that indeed, relative to the broader Confederate diaspora, former slaveholders chose a distinctive set of destinations and occupations consistent with their quest to gain hold of these malleable spaces. Our analysis relies on the CT-linked-sample micr-odata described in Section 5.1, and we restrict attention to men living in the South in 1860 and outside the South in the decades thereafter (of which there are 241,925).

Former slaveholders tended to migrate to destinations with more favourable power structures. Appendix Table C.1, Supplementary Material, shows differential sorting by slaveholders and non-slaveholders from the same Southern county during the same period. Former slaveholders were more likely to settle in the West (column 1), in counties with low population density (column 2), cotton suitability (column 3), strong Breckinridge support in 1860 (column 4), lower Union Army enlistment (column 5), and greater antebellum slavery (column 6). These patterns hold in both panel (a) for the original slaveholder and panel (b) for a broader group, including other members of slaveholding households (typically children of slaveholders).

At destination, former slaveholders also tended to enter public-facing leadership positions, further shaping local power structures. Figure 5 shows that, within the same destination county, former slaveholders were significantly more likely than non-slaveholders to work in authority occupations, serve as politicians, and become newspaper editors or publishers, particularly in the West. These patterns are not solely explained by demographic differences or earnings potential, nor by continuing pre-war occupations.[21] Although former slaveholders were less likely to leave the South than non-slaveholders, those who did leave were often working in authority occupations before migrating. And even after accounting for these prior authority roles in the South, former slaveholders often found new pathways to power in their destinations, and at higher rates than non-slaveholders.

In sum, former slaveholders were overrepresented in underdeveloped counties and leadership positions outside the South. Given the small number of authority positions, our occupational sorting estimates imply considerable scope for former slaveholders and their kin to shape public life.[22] Together with the findings in Table 5, it is clear that these erstwhile Southern elites played

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[21] Appendix Tables C.4, Supplementary Material, reports the full estimation results underlying Figure 5 as well as specifications with additional controls, including an indicator for holding the given occupation in the South before moving (column 4).

[22] For example, we estimate that, as of 1900, former slaveholders and their kin comprised 8.9% of governance occupations and 5.2% of civil society occupations in the Pacific or Mountain West Census divisions compared to 0.9% and 0.3%, respectively, in the New England or Middle Atlantic divisions. See Appendix Figure C.2, Supplementary Material, for maps with these estimates by county.

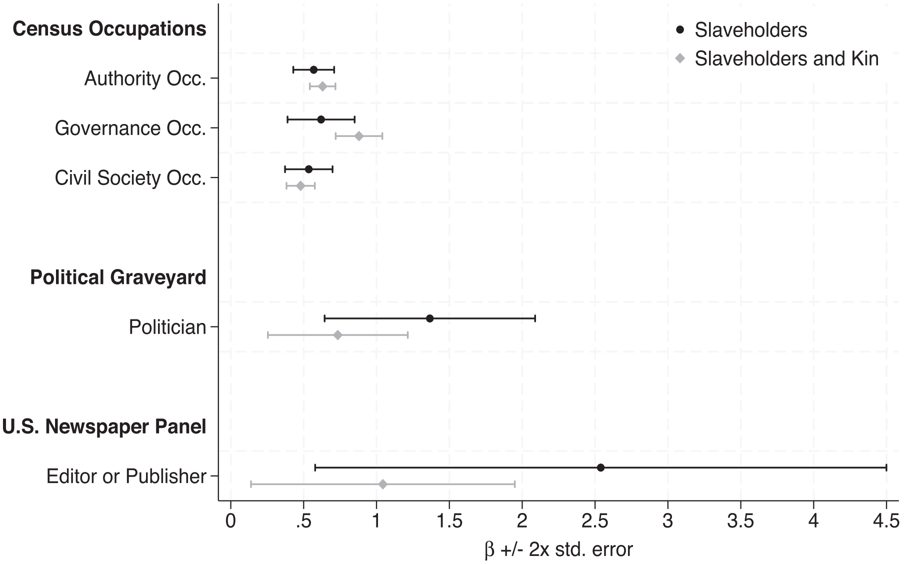

FIGURE 5

Occupational sorting by former slaveholder migrants linked sample: slaveholder versus non-slaveholder differential|Southerners

*Notes:* This figure shows estimates from occupational choice regressions analogous to those in Figure 4, but here restricting the sample to Southern White men living outside the South between 1870 and 1900 and isolating the slaveholder versus non-slaveholder differential. The sample is constructed by linking individuals observed in non-Southern counties in the 1870, 1880, or 1900 Censuses back to their records in the 1860 Census and Slave Schedules in the South. Specifically, we create three sets of links—1860–1870, 1860–1880, and 1860–1900—and stack them to form a sample of men who left the South between 1860 and 1900. We show the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals of $\beta$ for slaveholders (black) and slaveholders plus their kin (grey), normalised by the mean outcome for non-slaveholders. The regressions include destination county × year fixed effects, and standard errors are clustered at the destination county × year level. See the notes to Figure 4 for additional details and Appendix Table C.4, Supplementary Material, for the full estimation results, including dependent variable means.

a critical role in maintaining and propagating Confederate culture. We turn now to investigating the channels through which migrants achieved such influence far beyond the South.

## 6. CHANNELS FOR MIGRANT INFLUENCE

This section digs deeper into how the relatively small Confederate diaspora entrenched Lost Cause ideology outside the South, reshaping postbellum reconciliation narratives and nation building. Guided by the framework in Section 2.1, we present evidence for three channels through which migrants exploited the favourable conditions in Section 5 to wield outsized cultural influence in destination communities. First, we analyse *cultural spill-overs*, tracing vertical transmission within the diaspora as well as horizontal or oblique transmission to non-migrant neighbours. Using novel micro-data linking KKK memberships to the Census, we provide direct evidence of migrant influence on locals. This also illustrates the second channel, *organisational mobilisation*, as migrants built social infrastructure for cultural transmission. Third, we examine *institutional leverage*, showing how migrants shaped formal and informal policies that advanced Confederate culture, reinforcing the importance of local power structures.

### 6.1. *Cultural spill-overs and organisational mobilisation*

Drawing on their ideological intensity, Confederate migrants transmitted their culture both to their offspring and to non-migrant neighbours. These individual-level spill-overs scaled up through the mobilisation of civic organisations such as the UDC and the KKK.

The UDC was explicitly designed to promote the transmission of Confederate culture. While membership outside the South was limited to Southern-born women with direct Confederate ties, its prestige sometimes prompted Northern women to seek such ties (Cox, 2003, p. 29). The UDC's influence extended well beyond its small membership through memorialisation efforts and the deliberate diffusion of Lost Cause ideology into schools and public spaces shared by the wider non-migrant community.

We zoom into the process of cultural influence by leveraging rich micro-data for the KKK, a much larger organisation that promoted racial norms through violent practices. The 2nd KKK emerged in Georgia in 1915 and gained popularity across the Midwest and West, where "as many as six million Americans heeded its call to resist Catholics, Jews, lawbreakers, Blacks, and immigrants" at its peak in the 1920s (Goldberg, 1981, p. 8). It relied heavily on "rituals and symbols designed to memorialise the Confederacy, Southern-style chivalry, and White Protestant supremacy", helping to bring those ideals to new venues across the country (Gregory, 2005, p. 294). Table 2 reported a causal effect of the diaspora on KKK chapter formation at the county level. Here, we use individual-level data to show how the diaspora mobilised their kin and non-Southern neighbours to join the organisation.

We explore this mobilisation process using KKK membership data from the 1920s. We focus on Denver, Colorado, an organisational epicentre with tens of thousands of members—including the mayor, city attorney, and chief of police (Goldberg, 1981)—for which comprehensive data are available. We then extend to Indiana and Arizona, with additional micro-data covering parts of each state.[23] The latter, which have lower membership rates, help generalise beyond Colorado, where supremacist activities targeted Catholic and Asian immigrants more than Blacks. We identify diaspora connections by matching all White men in the 1920 Census to the KKK membership records from the mid-1920s for each state.[24] Using matched-KKK-membership as an outcome, we then explore *vertical* transmission of KKK affinity within diaspora families as well as *horizontal* and *oblique* transmission to non-Southerners.

*Vertical transmission.* Table 7 illustrates the over-representation of the Confederate diaspora in the Colorado KKK. In Denver county, 24% of White men without Southern heritage belong to the KKK. By contrast, Southern-born men are 3.2 p.p. more likely to be members, and second-generation men (*i.e.* with at least one Southern-born parent) are 3.7 p.p. more likely (column 1). This pattern holds across the entire metro area, including 14 county or 527 enumeration district fixed effects (columns 3 and 5). It also generalises to Arizona and Indiana, with even larger diaspora differentials given the lower membership among non-Southerners (Appendix Table D.3, Supplementary Material). Moreover, it is robust to (i) alternative approaches to non-unique

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[23] Data on KKK members from Colorado and Indiana was previously used by Fryer Jr and Levitt (2012). We use the KKK ledgers of Denver made publicly available by History Colorado (n/d), and data from Indiana collected and digitised (and generously shared with us) by Ang and Chinoy (2025). The Arizona data, new to the literature, primarily consist of rosters from the Tempe chapter shared through direct outreach by a family archivist. In addition to these rosters from Tempe, we include a registry of KKK members from Yuma County collected and shared with us by Ang and Chinoy (2025), originally provided by the Yuma County Library.

[24] Using the ABE algorithm from Abramitzky *et al.* (2021) with NYSIIS standardised names, we find 21.3% of all White men (about 52,000 individuals) in these records, dropping to 4.2% when accounting for non-unique names matched to KKK records. Several robustness checks show that the results remain stable after reweighting for many-to-one matches.

TABLE 7

*The Confederate diaspora and klan membership in the early 20th century*

| | Matched to KKK member records | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (a) First and second generation, discrete origin region heterogeneity | | | | | |
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Southern-born | $0.032^{***}$<br>(0.007) | | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | | $0.024^{***}$<br>(0.004) | |
| Non-Southern-born w/ Southern parent | $0.037^{***}$<br>(0.007) | | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | | $0.026^{***}$<br>(0.004) | |
| Deep South | | $0.043^{***}$<br>(0.012) | | $0.048^{***}$<br>(0.010) | | $0.042^{***}$<br>(0.010) |
| Upper South | | $0.028^{***}$<br>(0.007) | | $0.024^{***}$<br>(0.005) | | $0.019^{***}$<br>(0.005) |
| Non-Southern-born w/ deep Southern parent | | $0.024^{*}$<br>(0.014) | | $0.037^{***}$<br>(0.010) | | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.010) |
| Non-Southern-born w/ upper Southern parent | | $0.040^{***}$<br>(0.008) | | $0.033^{***}$<br>(0.005) | | $0.025^{***}$<br>(0.005) |
| Sample counties | Denver only | | All metro area | | All metro area | |
| Fixed effects | — | | County | | Enumeration district | |
| Observations | 129,248 | 129,248 | 241,298 | 241,298 | 241,297 | 241,297 |
| Dep. Var. mean (non-Southern heritage) | 0.238 | 0.238 | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 |

| | (b) First and second generation, continuous origin state heterogeneity | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| Southern-born | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.029^{***}$<br>(0.005) |
| Non-Southern-born w/ Southern parent | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) | $0.035^{***}$<br>(0.005) |
| Southern-born × *average origin state [. . . ]* | | | | | | | |
| Slaves per capita (x 100), 1860 | $0.023^{***}$<br>(0.004) | | | | | | |
| Exposure to pro-secession county, 1860-61 | | $0.021^{***}$<br>(0.004) | | | | | |
| Civil war battles (per 10,000), 1861–65 | | | $0.016^{***}$<br>(0.004) | | | | |
| Exposure to federal occupation, 1865–77 | | | | $0.025^{***}$<br>(0.004) | | | |
| Exposure to Freedmen's Bureau, 1865–72 | | | | | $0.021^{***}$<br>(0.004) | | |
| % Confederate Veterans, 1870 | | | | | | $0.024^{***}$<br>(0.004) | |
| % Former slaveholders, 1870 | | | | | | | $0.028^{***}$<br>(0.004) |
| Sample counties | All metro | All metro | All metro | All metro | All metro | All metro | All metro |
| Fixed effects | County | County | County | County | County | County | County |
| Observations | 241,298 | 241,298 | 241,298 | 241,298 | 241,298 | 241,298 | 241,298 |
| Dep. Var. mean (non-Southern heritage) | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 | 0.213 |

*Notes:* The dependent variable is a binary indicator for whether a White male in the Denver, Colorado metropolitan area as of the 1920 U.S. Census can be found in Denver KKK membership records from the 1920s. Linking based on first and last names, using the ABE algorithm from Abramitzky *et al.* (2021) with NYSIIS standardised names. In the odd-numbered columns in panel (a), the regressors include indicators for whether men were born in the South and whether they were born outside the South but their parents were born in the South. In the even-numbered columns, the regressors include indicators for whether men were born in the deep or upper South and whether they were born outside the South but their parents were born in the deep or upper South. In panel (b), the regressors include indicators for whether they were born in the South and whether they were born outside the South but their parents were born in the South along with interactions between the Southern-born indicator and various measures of origin state Confederate experience and grievance. There are 313 enumeration districts in Denver county and 527 in the greater metro area, which spans 14 counties. Standard errors are clustered by enumeration district. Significance levels are denoted by $^{*}p < 0.10$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$.

matches (Appendix Table D.4, Supplementary Material), (ii) restricting to U.S.-born Whites (Appendix Table D.5, Supplementary Material),[25] and (iii) including occupation FEs (Appendix Table D.5, Supplementary Material). The latter, which accounts for factors such as labour-market competition from minorities, suggests that the differential KKK membership among Southern Whites may not be fully explained by economic motivations or racial resentment shared among Whites in general.[26] Overall, these results suggest that first-generation migrants not only transplanted Confederate affinity for the KKK but also transmitted that affinity to the next generation.

To better understand this ideological persistence, we turn to a micro-level heterogeneity analysis, looking across migrants from different origins and slaveholding backgrounds within the South. Even-numbered columns in panel (a) of Table 7 consider heterogeneity across the upper and deep South (akin to Table 3). The latter importantly includes Georgia, the birthplace of the 2nd KKK. In panel (b), we consider a continuous measures of birth-state heterogeneity in experience before, during, and shortly after the Civil War (akin to Table 4). Across both panels, we see consistent evidence of even greater KKK membership among migrants hailing from origins with deeper ideological roots in the Confederacy. First- and second-generation migrants from the deep South are more likely to join the KKK than those from the upper South (panel a), and the same holds for first-generation migrants from states with deeper ties to slavery, greater wartime destruction, and more intense Reconstruction efforts by the federal government (panel b). For the second generation, Appendix Table D.7, Supplementary Material, further uncovers disproportionate KKK activity among former-slaveholding families in the diaspora (akin to Table 5). These findings illustrate how Confederate norms became entrenched within the diaspora, particularly among ideologically intense migrants.

*Transmission beyond the diaspora.* Confederate migrants not only disproportionately joined the KKK but also likely influenced non-Southerners to join. This influence may have spread both indirectly, through Lost Cause narratives in public life, and directly, through intergroup contact in community spaces. We focus next on evidence for this contact-based channel within hyper-local neighbourhoods.

We identify next-door neighbours in the Census by exploiting the fact that enumerators typically recorded physically contiguous households as consecutive entries in census manuscripts. This method, pioneered by Logan and Parman’s (2017) to measure racial segregation and later applied to study social network effects and contact-based spill-overs in sociopolitical behaviour (Brown *et al.*, 2021; Tan, 2022), helps overcome common aggregation problems in these literatures. Using this approach, we exploit fine-grained, within-county variation in exposure to Confederate migrants to provide direct evidence consistent with spill-overs to non-Southerners.

Table 8 offers suggestive evidence of hyper-local exposure effects underlying diaspora influence. We restrict the analysis to White men born outside the South and whose parents were also born outside the South. We then regress these men’s KKK membership indicator on measures of physical proximity to the Confederate diaspora. Non-Southern Whites with next-door neighbours from the diaspora are nearly 2 p.p., or 8%, more likely to be KKK members than those whose next-door neighbours have no Southern heritage (columns 1 and 3). We find similar estimates for Denver county and the broader metro area (columns 1–2 and 3–4, respectively), and for neighbours from the first- and second generation (columns 2 and 4). Finally, we see,

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[25] Nearly 16% of foreign-born White men in Denver county belonged to the KKK compared to 26% native-born.

[26] Economic grievances could still be important in shaping decisions to join the KKK. Appendix Table D.6, Supplementary Material, shows that U.S.-born White men working in the most popular (top 10) occupations for non-White and foreign-born men are significantly more likely to be KKK members. This differential is slightly larger for Southern than non-Southern-born Whites.

TABLE 8

*The Confederate diaspora and klan mobilisation in the early 20th century*

| | Matched to KKK member records<br>White men with no Southern heritage | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent variable Sample | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| First or second Gen. Southern White neighbour | 0.019*** | | 0.017*** | | 0.007** | |
| | (0.006) | | (0.004) | | (0.003) | |
| First Gen. Southern White neighbour | | 0.018** | | 0.014*** | | 0.005 |
| | | (0.007) | | (0.005) | | (0.004) |
| 2nd Gen. Southern White neighbour | | 0.021*** | | 0.021*** | | 0.010** |
| | | (0.008) | | (0.005) | | (0.004) |
| % 1st Gen. Southern Whites in district | | | | | 0.005*** | 0.005*** |
| | | | | | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| % 2nd Gen. Southern Whites in district | | | | | 0.008*** | 0.008*** |
| | | | | | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Sample counties | Denver only | | All metro area | | All metro area | |
| Fixed effects | — | | County | | Enumeration district | |
| Observations | 92,222 | 92,222 | 185,608 | 185,608 | 185,608 | 185,608 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.245 | 0.245 | 0.214 | 0.214 | 0.214 | 0.214 |

*Notes:* The dependent variable is a binary indicator for whether a White male in the Denver, Colorado metropolitan area as of the 1920 U.S. Census can be found in Denver KKK membership records from the 1920s. Linking based on first and last names, using the ABE algorithm from Abramitzky *et al.* (2021) with NYSIIS standardised names. The sample includes White men not residing in households headed by first- or second-generation White Southerners and who, along with their parents, were born outside the South. The regressors include an indicator for whether next-door neighbours are first- or second-generation Southern White migrants and the share of such migrants in the enumeration district. There are 527 enumeration districts in the greater metro area, which spans 14 counties. Standard errors are clustered by enumeration district. Significance levels are denoted by *$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

in columns 5–6, that the transmission of KKK affinity extends to the broader neighbourhood: a 1 p.p. increase in the diaspora size in the enumeration district is associated with a 0.5–0.8 p.p. increase in KKK membership among non-Southern-heritage Whites.[27] In short, even Whites with no Southern heritage were more likely to join the Klan if they lived next to Southern migrants.

Although the estimates in Table 8 are consistent with cultural transmission from the diaspora to their non-Southern neighbours, they are not dispositive of one-way transmission. It is possible that the two groups simultaneously joined the KKK for correlated reasons unrelated to cultural spill-overs. It is also possible that transmission flowed from non-Southern to Southern Whites. The results in Table 7 perhaps go against the latter: diaspora Whites, and especially those with greater ideological intensity, are significantly more likely to be KKK members, implying that they may be the ones leading the early mobilisation and diffusion efforts in their communities.[28]

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[27] These positive associations also generalise to Indiana and Arizona but are somewhat weaker there (Appendix Table D.8, Supplementary Material).

[28] Under the assumption that the estimates in Table 8 are causal, our findings imply that the Confederate diaspora explains as much as 30% of KKK membership identified in the 1920 Census for the Denver metro area. This goes well beyond the 9.2% share of the White male population comprised of first- and second-generation Southern migrants as of 1920 and is consistent with their overrepresentation in the KKK as well as sizable spill-over effects on non-Southerners. The 30% estimate is based on the coefficients in column 5 of Tables 7 and 8, and it remains large at around 22% when using the coefficients in Appendix Table D.4, Supplementary Material, based on the alternative reweighting approach to dealing with multiple matches.

Together with the county-level SSIV estimates in Table 2, these results suggest that migrants transmitted Confederate culture to non-Southern populations during a period of resurgent Lost Cause revisionism in the early 20th century. Our findings across three different states resonate with Gregory (2005, p. 294): "[t]he 1920s Klan had not been dominated by diaspora Southerners, but it had depended upon them for early expansion and some of its leadership". More broadly, our analysis above provides a granular perspective on the sort of localised, contact-based transmission of culture underlying our county-level findings. Such transmission was essential to the persistence of Confederate memory and norms. We turn now to other, institutional pathways to influence.

### 6.2. *Institutional leverage*

This section explores how migrants use positions of authority to shape formal institutions and informal norms. Section 5.2 established the over-representation of the diaspora, including former slaveholders, in public-facing occupations. We show here that first-generation migrants' entry into power helped diffuse and entrench Confederate culture through early institutions. Two findings support this channel of influence. First, second-generation migrants, like their predecessors, disproportionately entered positions of power, ensuring sustained diaspora influence in local governance and civil society. Second, diaspora over-representation in powerful occupations is linked to increased transmission of Confederate culture.

*Intergenerational persistence in authority.* One pathway to sustained institutional leverage lies in the perpetuation of one's group in the halls of power. To illustrate such persistence for the Confederate diaspora, we revisit the occupational choice framework developed in Section 5.2, augmenting equation (5.1) to distinguish second-generation migrants, also observed in 1900.

Much like their parents who left the South, those born in the diaspora are overrepresented in public authority (Figure 6). Compared to those without Southern heritage, second-generation migrants are 47% more likely to be working in governance (versus 54% for the first generation), 17% in civil society (versus 37%), 7% in political office (versus 5%), and 20% in newspaper leadership (versus 22%). And like the first-generation, second-generation over-representation is not merely explained by selection-on-demographics or by sorting into higher-earnings occupations.[29] This points to intergenerational persistence in the hypothesised taste for or comparative advantage in authority.

Through these positions of power, the diaspora could sustain and expand its influence over time. As first-generation migrants aged out of the workforce, their children stepped into some of their key roles in public life. With this institutional leverage, they could shape subsequent generations, ensuring that Confederate ideology remained deeply entrenched in many communities. We now turn to evidence consistent with such an occupational pathway to influence.

*Building confederate culture with occupational authority.* Table 9 examines heterogeneity in diaspora influence based on their representation in public-facing authority occupations. In particular, we augment the baseline SSIV specification with an interaction of % Southern Whites, 1900 and the standardised *odds ratio* of Southern White employment in authority over non-Southern White employment in authority. This ratio effectively captures the occupational sorting differential reported in Figure 4 and discussed in Section 5.2. We instrument the interaction term with the interaction of the SSIV times the standardised ratio. We also

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[29] See Appendix Table C.5, Supplementary Material, which also reports full estimation results underlying Figure 6.

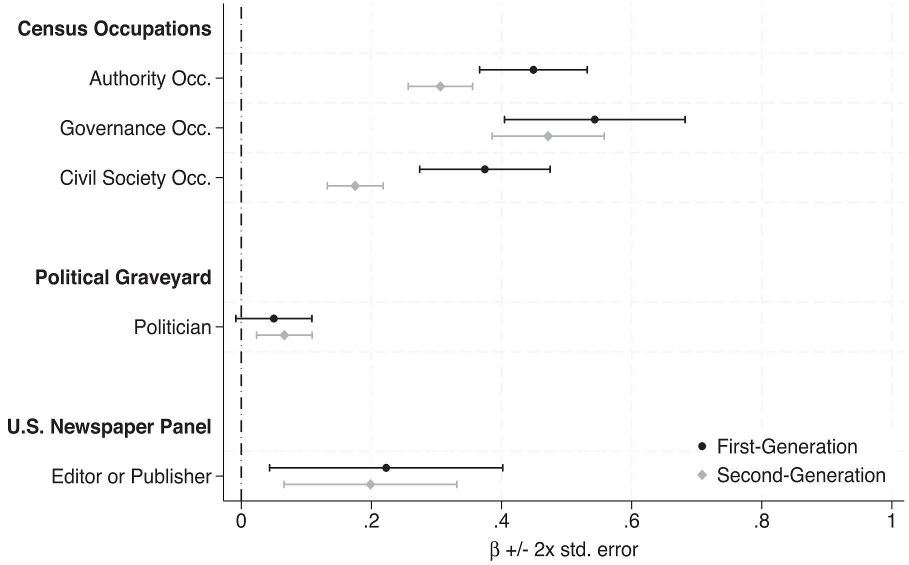

FIGURE 6

Occupational sorting by 1st and 2nd generation southern white migrants

*Notes:* This figure shows estimates from extending the specification in Figure 4 to include an additional indicator for second-generation Southern Whites identified in the 1900 complete-count Census based on information about their parent's birthplace (regardless of whether they live with their parents or not). We show the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals from a single augmented regression (5.1) including indicators for both first-generation (black) and second-generation (grey) Southern White men, normalised by the mean outcome for non-those without any first- or second-generation Southern heritage. The regressions include county fixed effects, and standard errors are clustered at the county level. See the notes to Figure 4 for additional details and Appendix Table C.5, Supplementary Material, for the full estimation results, including dependent variable means.

include the ratio own term in both stages but otherwise use the same specifications as in Table 2 with the CCI outcome.[30]

Table 9 shows that diaspora over-representation in public-facing occupations is associated with greater expression of Confederate culture. In counties with no Confederate migrants working in authority, a 1 p.p. increase in the diaspora share leads to a 0.14-point increase in the CCI (relative to a mean of 0.83). This magnitude jumps to 0.20 points in counties where Confederate migrants have a one-s.d. higher odds of working in authority relative to other county residents (column 1).[31] This amplification of Confederate culture is driven by those working in governance more than those in civil society (columns 3 and 5, respectively). Moreover, this occupational pathway to influence appears to be specific to public-facing positions. We consider sorting ratios for placebo occupations with similar employment levels and comparable pecuniary returns but more private-facing activities and limited leverage over public institutions (*e.g.* physicians for lawyers/judges, and weavers and machinists for religious officials; see the table notes). None of

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[30] We further restrict the analysis to counties with more than 5 workers in authority occupations ($N = 1{,}557$ versus 1,701 in our baseline). Appendix Table D.9, Supplementary Material, shows robustness to alternative cutoffs of 2, 4, 6, and 8. We do not consider the newspaper and politician workers in this analysis as those are very rare and hence not feasible to explore in the ratio design here.

[31] To understand this effect size, note that the sorting ratio mean is 1.69 and s.d. is 1.97, which implies that the 0.2-point increase in the CCI holds in counties where Confederate migrants have a 1.97 higher odds of working in authority.

TABLE 9

*Institutional leverage through occupational authority*

| | Confederate cultural activity (CCI score, from 0 to 4) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | $0.142^{***}$<br>(0.030) | $0.122^{***}$<br>(0.031) | $0.135^{***}$<br>(0.031) | $0.124^{***}$<br>(0.031) | $0.133^{***}$<br>(0.029) | $0.124^{***}$<br>(0.030) |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 × *sorting ratio among [. . . ]* | | | | | | |
| Authority occupations | $0.063^{**}$<br>(0.032) | | | | | |
| Authority occupations, placebo | | −0.021<br>(0.026) | | | | |
| Governance occupations | | | $0.077^{***}$<br>(0.029) | | | |
| Governance occupations, placebo | | | | −0.010<br>(0.028) | | |
| Civil society occupations | | | | | 0.027<br>(0.024) | |
| Civil society occupations, placebo | | | | | | −0.009<br>(0.009) |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 (SSIV) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Southern Whites, 1870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 1,557 | 1,557 | 1,557 | 1,557 | 1,557 | 1,557 |
| Dep. Var. mean | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.83 |
| KP joint $F$-statistic | 13.3 | 15.3 | 12.4 | 15.2 | 13.5 | 12.5 |
| KP Underident., $p$-value | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| Southern White SW $F$-statistic | 40.1 | 37.3 | 29.1 | 37.2 | 42.4 | 31.9 |
| Southern White Underident., $p$-value | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Interaction SW $F$-statistic | 48.2 | 30.2 | 45.5 | 33.9 | 35.6 | 145.2 |
| Interaction Underident., $p$-value | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

*Notes:* This table revisits the baseline regression in column 2 of Table 2 and augments the specification with an interaction of % Southern Whites, 1900 and the standardised *odds ratio* of Southern White employment in a given occupation $o$ category over non-Southern White employment in that category in county $c$: $\left(\frac{\text{Southern employment in } o}{\text{total Southern employment}}\right) / \left(\frac{\text{non-Southern employment in } o}{\text{total non-Southern employment}}\right)$. We instrument the interaction term with the interaction of the SSIV × the ratio. We also include the ratio own term in both stages but otherwise use the same specifications as in Table 2. We further restrict the analysis to counties with more than 5 workers in authority occupations ($N = 1,557$ versus 1,701 in our baseline). See Appendix Table D.9, Supplementary Material, for robustness to alternative cutoffs. We construct placebo occupations for each category meant to be of similar size and comparable occupational score (*occscore*) to their comparison category, while lacking the public-facing authority aspect of the job. For governance occupations, these include (i) mechanics and repairmen, (ii) funeral directors and embalmers, (iii) sports instructors and officials, (iv) physicians and surgeons, (v) railroad switchmen, and (vi) advertising agents and salesmen. For civil society occupations, these include (i) textile weavers, (ii) apprentice machinists and toolmakers, (iii) metalworking trades apprentices, (iv) metal moulders, (v) glaziers, (vi) surveyors, and (vii) photographers.

these placebo occupations prove to be important, with heterogeneous associations that are small and insignificant across specifications (columns 2, 4, and 6).

The results in Table 9 provide suggestive—though not conclusive—evidence that individuals in authority occupations used institutional leverage to transmit ideology in public domains. While the overall diaspora effect can be interpreted causally as in Table 2, the occupational representation patterns cannot, as they are confounded by migrants' destination choices and other unobservable, potentially endogenous factors. Even so, the findings align with historical accounts of institutional support for Confederate culture and racial norms: local administrators and civil society leaders facilitated memorialisation, while police and other public officials often tacitly or overtly backed KKK mobilisation.[32]

## 7. A LEGACY OF INEQUITY AND EXCLUSION

Throughout the paper, we examine how Confederate migrants shaped culture in destination communities. In this brief and final section, we show that their cultural influence also impacted the economic and social structure, reinforcing inequity and exclusion across key areas of public life. Beyond directly affecting the well-being of Black Americans, these socioeconomic effects likely reinforced norms prescribing group-specific behaviours, unequal access to resources, and other forms of discrimination. Using our main SSIV framework (Section 4.3), we explore the causal impacts of the local Confederate migrant population in 1900 on core dimensions of racial inequity and exclusion emphasised in the literature: racial wage gaps, residential segregation and exclusion, and incarceration rates.

Table 10 begins with the diaspora impact on county-level wage gaps. We then examine the spatial dimension of inequity as measured by residential segregation, which confined Black families to under-resourced neighbourhoods, restricting access to quality schools, public services, and intergenerational wealth accumulation. A 1 p.p. increase in the diaspora share is associated with a 2.6% decrease in relative Black earnings (column 1) and a 5% increase in Black segregation in 1940 (column 2).[33]

Next, we consider a more extreme form of spatial control, which rendered entire geographies racially homogeneous by force: “sundown towns”. Named after bans on Black and other minority populations’ presence within town limits after sunset, this informal institution diffused widely from 1890 to 1960 (Loewen, 2005; Crowe, 2012; O’Connell, 2019). Distinct from the de jure exclusionary institutions associated with the antebellum South and later Jim Crow era, sundown towns’ use of formal ordinances and informal violence to exclude Black residents proliferated mainly *outside* the South. Prior to the Civil War, states like Ohio and Oregon tried to preclude Blacks from settling there, but the federal government blocked such large-scale exclusion efforts. Sundown towns could be seen as a postbellum innovation that facilitated exclusion at a scale small enough to evade federal attention or control.

Columns 3–6 of Table 10 explore the influence of the Confederate diaspora on sundown towns using two proxies.[34] The first, from Loewen (2005) (via Taylor, 2020), is based on the centroids of documented sundown towns, aggregated to the county level. The second is based on town-level data from the Census Place Project (Berkes *et al.*, 2023), with which we build a more localised measure of Black depopulation that captures sundown town creation as well as other forces. Together, these two measures provide a rich and more complete picture of what Loewen (2005) calls the “Great Retreat” of Blacks from localities across America (see Appendix Figure D.5, Supplementary Material, on the pervasive Black depopulation in the early 1900s).

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[32] We find suggestive evidence along these lines for some specific elements of the CCI: (i) over-representation in governance and civil society is associated with larger diaspora effects on Confederate memorials, with interaction term estimates of 0.043*** (0.012) and 0.031*** (0.011), respectively in the columns 3 and 5 specification of Table 9; and (ii) 0.022* (0.013) for governance over-representation and the formation of KKK chapters.

[33] Black–White wage ratios are from the complete-count Census and the segregation index from Logan and Parman (2017). Wages are missing or zero-valued in a subset of counties in 1940, which explains the smaller sample size in column 1.

[34] These results build upon and extend initial findings in our *AEA Papers & Proceedings* article (Bazzi *et al.*, 2022).

TABLE 10

*Consequences of Confederate culture: racial discrimination and exclusion across multiple domains*

| | Economic | Residential | Municipal | | | | Carceral |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Black to Non-Black earnings ratio, 1940 | Black residential segregation, 1940 | Number of sundown towns in county | | No Blacks in town limits after 1900 = 1 | | incarceration rate, 1920 |
| Dependent variable | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| % Southern Whites, 1900 | $-0.020^{*}$<br>(0.011) | $0.004^{*}$<br>(0.002) | $0.095^{*}$<br>(0.049) | $0.079^{*}$<br>(0.047) | | | $0.249^{*}$<br>(0.138) |
| $\beta_{<25}$: % Southern Whites, 1900 $\times < 25$ Blacks, 1870 | | | | | 1.059<br>(1.593) | 0.619<br>(0.964) | |
| $\beta_{\geq 25}$: % Southern Whites, 1900 $\times \geq 25$ Blacks, 1870 | | | | | $2.549^{**}$<br>(1.023) | $2.272^{**}$<br>(0.974) | |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| County size | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sorting confounds | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| % Southern Whites, 1870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Town controls | | | | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Unit of analysis | County | County | County | County | Town | Town | County |
| Diaspora regressor at . . . level | County | County | County | County | Town | County | County |
| Observations | 1,045 | 1,695 | 1,701 | 1,701 | 33,904 | 33,904 | 1,615 |
| Outcome mean | 0.77 | 0.08 | 0.47 | 0.47 | 65.57 | 65.57 | 0.55 |
| $F$-statistic | 18.3 | 22.5 | 21.2 | 17.7 | 8.8 | 9.6 | 19.8 |
| KP Underident., $p$-val | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| $\beta_{<25}$, SW $F$-statistic | | | | | 17.6 | 20.4 | |
| $\beta_{<25}$, Underid. p -val | | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | |
| $\beta_{\geq 25}$, SW F-statistic | | | | | 63.9 | 78.7 | |
| $\beta_{\geq 25}$, Underid. p -val | | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | |

*Notes:* SSIV regressions of various race-related socioeconomic outcomes between 1900 and 1940 on the share of Southern Whites in 1900 in non-Southern counties. Columns 5–6 further show SSIV regressions of an indicator ($\times$100) of whether a given non-Southern town had no Black residents at some point after 1900 (through 1940) on the share of Southern Whites in 1900 in all non-Southern towns (columns 5) or counties (columns 6). Columns 5–6 also include an interaction term for whether a town had over 25 Blacks in 1870 and report the coefficient estimates for those two subsamples. Excluded Southern counties are those belonging to states of the former Confederacy and Oklahoma. All columns instrument the share of Southern Whites using a shift-share instrument based on the 1870 cross-sectional distribution of Southern Whites and the predicted change in the Southern White population living outside the South from 1870 to 1900. The latter is generated via a set of flexible LASSO regressions (see equation (3.2)). Columns 5–6 control for town longitude, latitude, a dummy for whether it had over 25 Blacks in 1870, and a dummy for whether it had over 1,000 residents in 1870, while column 4 controls for the county-level aggregates for these factors. See the notes of Table 2 for other details on controls. The sample of confirmed sundown towns used to construct the numerator in columns 3–4 is originally from Loewen (2005) (who coined the term "Great Retreat" to capture the Black exodus from towns across America in the early 1900s) and taken from Taylor (2020) via its complementary geographic information system (GIS) resource. The sample of towns used for columns 4–6 is based on Berkes *et al.* (2023). The KP Underidentification test $p$-value corresponds to the Kleibergen and Paap (2006) LM test whose null hypothesis is that the equation is underidentified. The SW $F$-statistics and Underidentification test $p$-values are based on Sanderson and Windmeijer (2016) first-stage F statistics and LM tests, respectively, for the individual endogenous regressors. Standard errors are clustered at the 60 × 60 square-mile grid cell level, following the approach of Bester *et al.* (2011). Significance levels are denoted by $*p < 0.10$, $**p < 0.05$, $***p < 0.01$.

We identify a significant diaspora imprint on the geography of sundown towns. A 1 p.p. increase in the diaspora share is associated with a 20% increase in the number of sundown towns in the county (column 3). This estimate is robust to additional controls for the number of towns in the county with more than 25 Blacks in 1870 and over 1,000 residents in 1870, respectively (column 4). We find similar results using our second, town-level regression. Relative to the sample mean, a 1 p.p. increase in the town-level diaspora in 1900 leads to a 2.6 p.p. increase in the likelihood that a non-Southern town with $\geq$ 25 Black residents as of 1870 had *zero* Black residents after 1900 (outcome mean 66%, column 5). Effects are smaller and insignificant among towns that already had few Black people as of 1870. These findings are robust to using a county-level measure of Confederate migrant shares, which captures potentially wider diaspora influence across towns (column 6). While some depopulation may have been voluntary rather than forced, these findings align with earlier evidence on KKK and lynching activity (Table 2), which were often used to establish sundown towns, as vividly documented by Loewen (2005).

Finally, we examine another extreme form of exclusion: incarceration. Bias in policing and judicial decisions may have been used to remove non-Whites from public life and maintain social control. Using county-level incarceration data from Derenoncourt (2022), we find that a 1 p.p. increase in the diaspora share is associated with a 45% increase in the Black incarceration rate in 1920 (column 7).

These findings reveal the Confederate diaspora's deep and lasting impact on racial inequity and exclusion. Its effects on labour market outcomes, residential segregation, incarceration, and the spread of sundown towns reinforced structural inequalities by limiting Black Americans' access to resources and public life. In doing so, the diaspora helped entrench both cultural norms and institutional systems that perpetuated racial discrimination.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Questions about the nature and extent of migrant influence are increasingly central to debates about the future of migration. This paper develops a new framework for understanding how migrants influence the destinations they settle. Migrants often assimilate, embracing native norms. Sometimes, however, they shape culture and institutions in their new communities. We elaborate key conditions under which migrant-to-native transmission could occur, along with a set of complementary channels for influence. While our framework can be applied widely across space and time, we focus on the important and understudied case of the Confederate diaspora in U.S. history, which provides a rich testing ground for systematically understanding trajectories of migrant influence.

Nearly half a million White individuals left the U.S. South in the few decades after the Civil War and transmitted Confederate culture within non-Southern communities and through local institutions. We trace their outsized influence to favourable conditions that allowed an ideologically intense diaspora to embed its norms. Migrants from origins more deeply affected by the fallout from the war exerted greater influence, as did those from more elite, slaveholding backgrounds. Such influence took hold in communities with more malleable power structures, where migrants could play a role in shaping early institutions. Under these favourable conditions, Confederate migrants transmitted culture to their children and to their neighbours without Southern heritage. From positions of power, more elite migrants exerted even greater cultural influence. These impacts had adverse consequences for Black populations.

Our study highlights the role of culture in shaping economic and social structures, offering new insights into how a small diaspora helped ensure that "national reconciliation had been achieved on the South's terms", as noted by historians of the Confederate legacy (Cox, 2003).

While the Civil War ended slavery and the 1960s civil rights movement dismantled most legal racial discrimination, significant disparities persist in education, housing, labour markets, and policing, with Confederate monuments still widespread. Our findings suggest a feedback loop between cultural, organisational, and institutional mechanisms. As Confederate norms deepened and migrants gained control of key institutions, Black populations fled or avoided many towns across the U.S. KKK mobilisation, differential incarceration, and sundown towns reshaped the geography of race, limiting interracial contact that might have otherwise ameliorated biases and animus among White Americans over time.

The Confederate diaspora explored in this paper not only shaped cultural outcomes but also planted the "seeds" for the geographic patterns of the Great Migration, which evolved separately in response to later historical dynamics such as the New Deal, the civil rights movement, and other major migration waves. As Bazzi *et al.* (2023) show, that later, mass migration reshaped the trajectory of mainstream conservative politics in America. The framework developed here can be extended to understand other migrations, including the later wave of Southern white migrants. While these two migrant groups share some background and identity, they differ significantly in their paths of influence, the conditions and channels through which they impacted culture, and their underlying patterns of selection and sorting.

To fully understand how migration shaped cultural and political change in the U.S., it is crucial to examine the distinct and combined effects of the various interconnected migratory waves throughout the country's history. These include not only the postbellum Confederate migration in this paper but also the later Great Migrations of Whites and Blacks in the 20th century (Fouka *et al.*, 2022; Bazzi *et al.*, 2023; Calderon *et al.*, 2023), as well as the earlier Scots-Irish migration that shaped the South (Grosjean, 2014), the waves of frontier settlement during the 19th century (Bazzi *et al.*, 2020), and European migration across Northern states in the Age of Mass Migration (Giuliano and Tabellini, 2020). This grand story of migration has profoundly shaped and reshaped the country's cultural and political geography. Understanding these interlinked trajectories of migrant influence in the U.S. and generalising that understanding to other settings are important tasks for future research.

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## Supplementary Data

Supplementary data are available at *Review of Economic Studies* online.

## Data Availability

The replication package available on Zenodo at https://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17361408 provides the code and the publicly available data underlying this research, as well as details on the data that are not publicly available.

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