How Backlash in Schools Shaped the Political Evolution of People and Places: Evidence from All-White Private Schools

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Abstract

Institutionalized backlash may mediate social progress by preserving cultural norms among a younger generation. We study the impact of exposure to all-White private schools, which were established to circumvent school integration, on party affiliation and racial attitudes in adulthood. We link a newly-digitized, state-wide data set of yearbooks to voter registration records and find exposure to a segregation academy significantly increases the likelihood of that a White male will register as a Republican (conditional on registering to vote). Using survey data, we find no accompanying shift in conservative racial attitudes, but an increase in racism. Turning to the impact of segregation academies on places, we use difference-in-differences designs around the openings of segregation academies, we find a suggestive contemporaneous shift away from the Democratic party in treated counties emerging in the medium-run. We conclude that segregation academies entrenched a culture of racial division in places that otherwise would have made steps toward integration.

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1 Introduction

Across the long arc of the 20th century, it is generally thought that U.S. society has become more tolerant and less prejudiced. However, this is a highly non-linear process, and nominal progress is often met with considerable backlash. These movements often prioritize transmitting the status quo ideology to children (Wheaton, 2022); accordingly, activists direct considerable attention to schools (Brückman, 2021; Carvalho et al., 2024; Nickerson, 2014). How do these movements shape the beliefs and political preferences of younger generations?

We study these questions within the context of backlash to one of the most important social movements to shape education: school integration. It is well documented that increases in inter-group contact in non adversarial settings in childhood reduces prejudice in adulthood (Chin, 2021; Brown et al., 2021; Kaplan et al., 2025). However, anti-integration activists fervently resisted the dismantling of the segregated status quo ordered by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board* (1954): upwards of two decades passed between *Brown v. Board* and meaningful integration.

As has been widely studied in the economics literature (Cascio et al., 2008; Anstreicher et al., 2022; Welch and Light, 1987), in many cases it took individual legal action against school districts to force *de facto* integration of public schools. However, these rulings on integration applied only to *public* schools, not private. In the same period, and less widely studied in the economics literature, White-only private schools—since dubbed "segregation academies"—were established throughout the U.S. South. These private schools were an explicit substitute for public education established in response to, or anticipation of, the integration of public schools. Previous work confirms that segregation academies led to substantial White enrollment losses and declines in funding per pupil, ultimately decreasing the integration of affected school districts (Williamson and Withrow, 2025).

We find exposure to segregation academies in childhood has a persistent impact on party affiliation and racial attitudes of White individuals into adulthood. To identify this effect, we use an adapted two-way-fixed-effects style estimator that leverages variation in the locations

of and timing of openings of academies. To study our outcomes of interest and disentangle mechanisms, we combine data sources on historical elections, modern survey data, administrative voter registration data and a newly digitized data set of over 500 mid to late century yearbooks from South Carolina.

Segregation academies may have effects on individuals' attitudes and voting behavior for a number of reasons. First, as documented in Williamson and Withrow, 2025, they decreased inter-group contact between Black and White children. This decrease in contact likely contributed to exposed Black individuals living in more segregated tracts in adulthood (Bleemer, 2021). If a "contact hypothesis" of forming more tolerant racial attitudes is correct (Allport, 1954), this decreased integration would cause more racially conservative attitudes than the counterfactual of faster and more complete integration. Second, segregation academies negatively impacted the long term educational attainment and employment outcomes of White children, likely because of the poor quality of schooling offered in the segregation academies (Williamson and Withrow, 2025). Relatedly, segregation academies could influence attitudes through curriculum (Cantoni et al., 2017; Adukia et al., 2023; Harrison, 2024).

Segregation academies—as legal and often state-supported entities—could also impact the communities that housed them and have effects on adults as well as children by upholding a culture of segregation and White supremacy and entrenching segregation (Sunstein, 1996; Chyn et al., 2025). The physical footprint of these academies could, and did, facilitate coordination among segregationists: a former student described an assembly where a man encouraged students to register to vote "because we didn't want the black mayoral candidate winning the election...the registrations, through some slight-of-hand, were to be fast-tracked in order to get bodies to the polls" (Langston, 2019).

Our first set of results focus on the impact of segregation academies on individual attitudes and political affiliation. To study political affiliation, we link over 500 newly-digitized yearbooks in South Carolina to administrative voter registration data. Our empirical strategy, an adapted version of the estimator described in Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2022, com-

pares the voter registration behavior of students who graduated prior to the establishment of a segregation academy with students attending school in the same county before a segregation academy was established. This approach also incorporates inverse propensity matching on childhood county characteristics. Our results are robust to using never treated or not yet treated as control counties. We find a positive impact on the likelihood of registering as a Republican among White males registered to vote in 2024, and a larger impact on students where a higher share of White children attended segregation academies.

We find suggestive evidence that segregation academies increased racial animus among White individuals, but had no effect on racially conservative policy preferences. To study the impact of segregation academies on racial animus, we require data on individuals' childhood counties as well as racial attitudes. To make progress on this, we use restricted data from the General Social Survey (GSS), which records respondents' counties of residence, geographic mobility since age 16, and state of residence at age 16. Using these data, we can infer childhood county of residence for non-movers, i.e. those who remain in their childhood county until the time of the survey. Because this is a selected sample, we show how characteristics of non-movers differ from those who move within state and out of state. While imperfect, this sample provides some insight into racial attitudes of White residents exposed in childhood to a segregation academy. We use a cohort difference-in-differences design with variation in the timing of openings of segregation academies and create an index that captures racial attitudes based on survey responses. We control for baseline county characteristics interacted with time trends. We find increases in anti-Black racism but no increases in conservative racial attitudes. Because these survey measures are imperfect, we employ a similar design to measure changes in racial attitudes as expressed in the Cooperative Election Study (CCES). We recover effects of a similar magnitude in the CCES, though the presence of pre-trends complicate the interpretation.

Our second set of results measures the impact of segregation academies on the political trajectory of places. First, we study the impact on the Democratic vote share in U.S.

House of Representatives elections and find that places shift away from the Democratic party after the opening of a segregation academy. We combine historical county-level elections returns with a difference-in-differences design comparing counties before and after an academy opening to those without an academy. To account for non-parallel trends induced by differential county characteristics in treated places, such as the community's underlying preferences and resources to establish a segregation academy, we again control for baseline county characteristics interacted with a time trend. In the short to medium run, we find only small and statistically insignificant negative impacts on county-level vote share for the Democratic party after the establishment of a segregation academy. The strongest effects at the end of the period. This is consistent with racially conservative White voters driving the realignment of Southern conservatives from the Democratic to the Republican party (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018). Effects are likely delayed due to incumbency effects and the persistence of voting behavior.

1.1 Related Literature

We contribute to the literature in political economy and the history of U.S. education by investigating how segregation academies shape racial attitudes and political preferences. We expect segregation academies to operate on these outcomes via three channels: the decrease in interracial contact, the institutionalization of White supremacy, and the classroom.

In Allport (1954), the author hypothesizes that inter-group contact can reduce prejudice between groups, which some subsequent literature has found evidence to support. For example, Boisjoly et al. (2006) and Carrell et al. (2019), respectively, find that White students randomly assigned to a Black roommate are more likely to value diversity on campus and interact with Black peers in subsequent years. The positive impact of inter-group contact in childhood can persist to adulthood (Brown et al., 2021). Indeed, school integration, which fostered both interracial and inter-socioeconomic status interactions, has long term positive impacts on attitudes (Johnson, 2011; Chin, 2024; Kaplan et al., 2025). On the other

hand, increased contact, especially within an adversarial setting, can aggravate exclusionary attitudes towards the out-group (Enos, 2014; Lowe, 2021). Thus, it remains an empirical question whether the decrease in inter-group contact brought about by segregation academies would have an effect on racial attitudes.

Downstream, these racial attitudes may impact policy preferences. Boisjoly et al., 2006 provides a direct example: previously mentioned students assigned Black roommates were also more likely to support the policy of affirmative action. Exposure to diversity can also impact tangentially-related policies, such as preferences for redistribution (Alesina et al., 1999) or general party affiliation (Chin, 2024; Billings et al., 2021). Calderon et al. (2023) show that areas that received larger influxes of migrants during the Second Great Migration (1940-1970) increased support among both Black and White residents for the Democratic party and pro-civil rights activism, but analogous areas decreased spending on public goods and increased spending on policing during the First (1915-1930) and Second Great Migration, respectively (Tabellini, 2020; Derenoncourt, 2022).

During our time period of interest, racial attitudes can be directly tied to party affiliation. Kuziemko and Washington, 2018 show that the decline of the Democratic party in the U.S. South from 1958 to 1980 was driven entirely by racially conservative Whites, and that "racial attitudes also predict Whites' earlier partisan shifts." Furthermore, Chin, 2024 shows these outcomes move together in response to school desegregation: racial animus and White political conservatism both decrease. We test to see if political conservatism and racial animus relatively increase in response to White families actively choosing to preserve segregated schooling by establishing segregation academies. Unlike previous work, we are studying a bundled treatment: there is both a relative decrease in interracial contact (compared to places without segregation academies, which saw higher increases in integration) and an institutionalization of White supremacy.

These segregation academies could have also decreased the quality of schooling (Williamson and Withrow, 2025). A large body of literature has established that integration led to im-

proved outcomes for Black students, such as decreases in dropout rates and improvement in labor market outcomes (Johnson, 2011; Reber, 2005; Anstreicher et al., 2022). If the establishment of segregation academies decreased the quality of public schooling or prevented Black students from benefiting from integration, this could have downstream effects on the labor market or economic climate of a community that could impact racial animus and political preferences. Further, to the extent to which education correlates with racial attitudes (Hyman and Wright, 1979), there could be a more direct link between educational quality and attitudes, though some evidence suggests this relationship might be purely correlational and reflect only superficial attitudes (Wodtke, 2018).

2 Setting

> "Just at the same time when our public schools are required by law to exercise courageous and imaginative compliance, there are mushrooming across the state institutions . . . with the real, if not avowed, purpose of evading the [desegregation] compliance requirement."[1]
>
> — Rev. William W. Finlator, quoted in "Parents Call Goal 'Quality Education'" (1969) *The Charlotte Observer*

2.1 Historical Background

The political and social climate of the South during the mid-20th century was, by some accounts, dominated by issues of race, civil rights, and segregation (Bartley, 1995).[2] In the beginning of the century, buttressed by generations of justification for Black oppression, White supremacist worldviews were essentially unchallenged in the popular sphere (Kendi, 2016). In fact, in a 1948 poll covering civil rights issues of the day, 84% of Southerners sup-

[1] This section borrows from Williamson and Withrow, 2025. For a fuller discussion of the legal and institutional background and segregation academies data set construction, we refer interested readers to that paper.

[2] Even in nationwide polls, nearly half of respondents named civil rights as the most important problem facing the country at various points in the early-to-mid-1960s (Smith, 1980).

ported segregation in interstate transportation; 68% thought the federal government should not take action against job discrimination; and 60% opposed federal government intervention in lynchings (Gallup, 1972). Democratic politicians overwhelmingly represented the South in national offices (Black and Black, 2002, Ch. 1).[3] Southern Democrats, or "Dixiecrats," held racially conservative positions—supporting racial segregation and opposing early national civil rights advancements like desegregating the military and fair employment practices—and increasingly framed their local segregationist policies as "states' rights" issues (Black and Black, 1992, Ch. 6).[4] Effective disenfranchisement of Black and poor White voters through poll taxes, literacy tests, and violence and intimidation consolidated this monopoly on power (Bartley, 1995, Ch. 5).

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ended *de jure* racial segregation in public schools. A year later, *"Brown II"* (1955) instructed states to begin desegregation "with all deliberate speed." The federal government did not have sufficient power to enforce the court's ruling, however, due to the fractured and highly local nature of U.S. educational administration. Far from resolving this uncertainty, the vague phrase "deliberate speed" left ambiguity in the timeline under which states would be expected to actually integrate their public schools.

Southern policymakers took advantage of this ambiguity to circumvent school integration. In 1956, Senator Harry Bird of Virginia led a group of Southern politicians in signing the "Southern Manifesto," which vowed to organize "Massive Resistance" against school integration. Three years later, public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia closed their doors, a shut-down that remained in effect through 1964 (Nevin and Bills, 1976). White students began attending Prince Edward Academy, a new all-White private school founded by the same parents who voted to defund the public system. Prince Edward Academy served as a blueprint for other parents' associations establishing segregation academies across the

[3]In 1950, no senators and only 2 out of 105 House representatives from the South were Republican.

[4]This created tensions with Republicans and northern Democrats, who were more likely to support racial equality. This wedge manifested in Strom Thurmond's independent 1948 presidential campaign to put pressure on Truman to soften his stances on racial equality ((Black and Black, 1992, Ch. 6)

South, spreading the message that *Brown* did not apply to private schools.

Though White public opinion shifted tepidly toward more racial tolerance during this period, progress was unhurried and halting. On issues like interracial marriage and school and neighborhood integration, the South often lagged far behind other regions and supported reforms in theory more than in practice (Schuman et al., 1997). White backlash against civil rights advancements was staunch and vocal; in a June 1961 poll, 52% of Southern respondents thought integration should happen only "gradually," while 22% thought it should never happen. By September 1963, 75% of White Southerners thought the federal government was "pushing integration too fast" (Erskine, 1968). These attitudes, in turn, shifted the policy winds of the time.

Public school integration proceeded slowly. School districts were sued individually, often by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, for violating the integration mandate. These cases established increasingly stricter precedents for the definition of compliance with school integration. Total segregation was replaced with token integration via "freedom of choice" plans, which put the onus of desegregating on parents. Busing, rezoning, and other more comprehensive plans, drawn up by district courts and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, eventually brought more comprehensive integration in the mid to late 1960s and early 1970s. At the same time, the role of the federal government in funding education increased significantly after the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965, which allowed the federal government to penalize districts that remained segregated (in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act). The vast majority of school districts in the South had desegregated by 1966, and, for the average southern school district, almost all desegregation was complete by 1970 (Cascio et al., 2008).

The dissatisfaction of Southern White conservatives continued to grow over the 1950s and 1960s as civil rights gains mounted and demands for racial equality became more visible in the form of mass demonstrations (Carmines and Stimson, 1989, Ch. 2). In response, throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Republican "Southern strategy" capitalized on White voters'

heightened anxieties and backlash to the civil rights movement to shift them away from the Democratic party. At first, this strategy was primarily limited to presidential elections, crystallizing in Richard Nixon's election in 1968 (Aistrup, 1996, Ch. 2). In congressional elections, Southerners still mostly elected Democrats, likely in part due to incumbency effects (Black and Black, 2002, Ch. 2).[5]

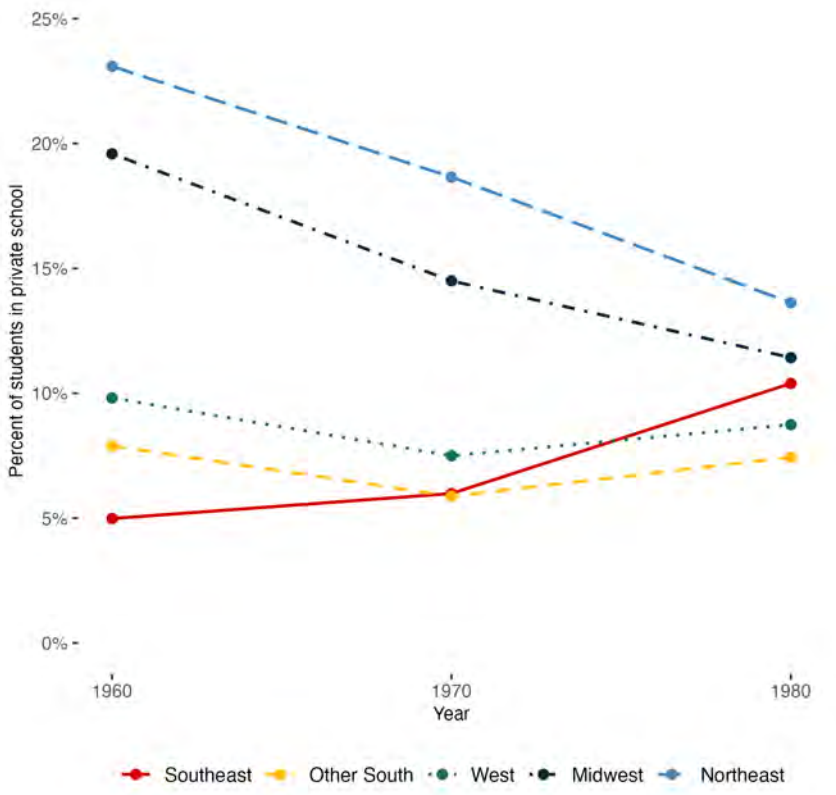
Concurrently, the private school movement in the Southeast grew.[6] Nationwide, private school enrollment fell, driven in part by a movement away from Catholic schools. But, as shown in Figure 1, the percentage of students attending private elementary school in the Southeast doubled from 1960 to 1980. Prior to school integration, children in this region attended private school at the lowest rates in the nation. With the exception of the culturally Spanish and French Gulf Coast, few Catholic schools had been established. Additionally, parents had less money with which to pay for private education: incomes per capita were low in these states (FRED, 1960).

While the financial situation of White parents did not change meaningfully during this time period, their motivations did. As we document in a data collection effort described in the next sub-section, hundreds of segregation academies opened between 1950 and 1980. The movement continued, unimpeded, until the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) began cracking down on explicitly segregated private schools by rescinding their tax exempt status in the 1970s, after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Runyon v. McCrary (1976)*. Enforcement proved difficult, however, and only the most egregiously segregated schools lost their tax exempt status: approximately 50 schools in the South, and 110 nationwide (Kurlander, n.d.; Hooks, 1971). Schools that admitted one or two Black students, or claimed that their admissions were not based on race, often escaped unscathed. For example, the founder of all-White Carrbarus Academy in North Carolina claimed "I will accept anybody of any color who can pass the entrance exams." When prompted to explain why the school was nonetheless

[5]In fact, House representation was roughly evenly split between the two parties into the 1990s.

[6]For our purposes, the Southeast is defined as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Figure 1: Private School Attendance, by Region



Note: The Southeast is our set of sample states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Other South includes all other states in the South (as defined by the Census): Arkansas, DC, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Remaining regions follow the Census definition. Data source: Ruggles et al. IPUMS USA: Version 14.0 [data set]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023.

all-White, he answered "none applied." A local public school teacher, using the language of the time, expressed skepticism at this justification: "Everyone around here knows that no Negro child is going to get in there" (Warren, 1969).

The historical record supports our conceptualization of segregation academies as educational and cultural institutions preserving racism. For attendees, segregation academies often explicitly upheld the legitimacy of segregationist and White supremacist beliefs, both in their mere existence and in their curricula.[7] The academies were often hastily opened

[7]Accelerated Christian Education (A.C.E.), created for all-White Christian schools in the 1970s, has been described as "racist" and "White-oriented" (Dent, 1993).

and subject to lax accreditation standards, raising the possibility of sub-standard education. For adults as well as children, academies likely upheld a culture of segregation and White supremacy. For example, schools often served as meeting places for groups of "concerned parents" and hosted public speeches by segregationists such as Georgia Governor Lester Maddox (Harwell, 1976).

2.2 Defining Segregation Academies

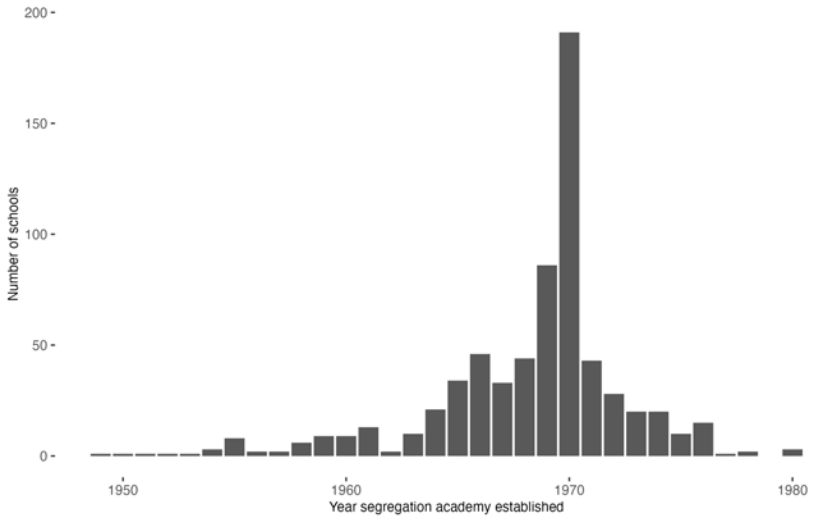
We expand on previous work assembling a data set of segregation academies,which we define as schools founded with the purpose of avoiding integration. We label private schools as segregation academies and compile information on their locations, opening years, and motivation for opening. We include both "likely" and "confirmed" segregation academies in our analyses.

Confirmed segregation academies are those that have been discussed as such in the historic record, either in secondary or primary sources. For example, Governor George Wallace, an avowed segregationist, encouraged White parents to send their children to Lowndes Academy ("Lowndes Private School Sets $500,000 Goal" 1966). This school, established in 1966, was a member of a private school association (the Alabama Private School Association) that explicitly sought to organize the new all-White schools (Press, 1973). The IRS stripped this school of its tax-exempt status in 1982 for being explicitly segregated ("Schools That Lost Tax Exemptions" n.d.). Other examples include Council Schools, a system of schools in Mississippi established by the White Citizens Council, a segregationist organization ("Founded 14 Years Ago" 1968). Likely segregation academies share many traits with confirmed segregation academies, but are those for which we cannot confirm explicit segregationist intent. Examples of these traits include shared membership in private school associations, football schedules (many all-White private schools teams refused to play integrated teams), founding date, and language associated with socially conservative ideologies (Orfield, 1969; Blaiklock, 2022; Perlstein, 2020). For full details and discussion of the nuances of the data collection

and classification processes, see Williamson and Withrow, 2025.

In total, we document 288 confirmed segregation academies founded between 1950 and 1980. This number is 665 when likely segregation academies are included, which may be a lower bound due to the parsimonious approach we take in labeling schools. A timeline of segregation academy openings is shown in Figure 2, and a map of academy locations as compared to other private schools is shown in Figure A1. The timeline shows that the movement crested around 1970, though establishments are otherwise somewhat even from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. As seen in the map of locations, segregation academies were generally more evenly geographically distributed than other private schools, which clustered in centers of population and wealth. Segregation academies, by contrast, opened in many rural areas in which there was no existing private school system. This is an important dimension of the treatment, and Williamson and Withrow, 2025 finds that enrollment declines were most concentrated in rural areas. We return to this fact when discussing our results.

Figure 2: Segregation Academy Openings, by Year



Note: This graph presents the count of segregation academies opened each year in the set of southeastern states. The labeling of segregation academies and collection of opening years is described in Section 2.2.

3 Political Affiliation

> "Anderson, saying that he was pleased to address a group of 'dedicated, involved patriots' said 'we will either get involved or we will be enslaved. I know no better way to get involved than in education' . . . (he) charged that schools today are not telling youth the truth about capitalism and Christianity . . . the way to 'change this' is to replace government schools with private schools."
> *"Columnist Blasts Liberals at Private School Meeting." The Clarion Ledger, Jackson, MS. (Skelton, 1970)*

Schools have been both praised and critiqued as places where the ideals and norms of one generation are passed on to the next. In this section, we identify the effect of exposure to segregation academies on political affiliation, as recorded in 2024 voter registration records, by linking these records to a new data set of students appearing in South Carolina yearbooks from 1950 to 1980.

We are primarily interested in the effect of segregation academy attendance on political affiliation. We thus leverage variation in age at segregation academy opening to compare prospective attendees (White students who are school age when a segregation academy opens in their county) to White students who were either older than 18 when a segregation academy opened or did not attend school in a county with a segregation academy.

3.1 Data

We digitize over 500 yearbooks from South Carolina and link them to administrative voter registration records. To do this, we first collect images from the universe of yearbooks available in an online repository using a list of names of schools open during our time period that appear in South Carolina Department of Education reports and in our data set of segregation academies. Research assistants were instructed to only download images that contained individual portraits of students and faculty. We then contracted a professional with prior experience digitizing historic documents using LLMs, who used Gemini AI Studio to digitize the documents. Portions of the output were inspected by both the contractor and authors for quality control. This yielded a data set of 399,000 person-years, which includes

288,000 uniquely identified students.[8]

We then link this data to the L2 voter registration data set using first name, last name, birth year, and gender when available. We are able to link approximately unique 51,000 individuals. These data were last updated in March and April of 2024.[9] For a full description of this data set, see Kaplan et al., 2025. For a full description of the linking process, see Appendix C.

3.2 Estimating Equation

We measure differences in voting registration among students appearing in public school yearbooks *prior to* the opening of a segregation academy (our treated group) to those who would have graduated (across birth cohorts, within the same county). A county is defined as treated if 30% of its population in 1950 lives within 15 miles of an eventual segregation academy.[10] We measure the change in the trend of the outcome after treatment. Our empirical strategy follows the logic of a difference-in-differences design, where we compare counties with and without academies before and after the first academy opening. However, as the staggered timing of school openings is an important feature of our context, we modify the standard model to account for staggered treatment timing.

Recent literature in econometrics shows that estimates from a standard TWFE model can be biased by treatment effects from other periods when treatment timing is staggered (Roth and Sant'Anna, 2023). Additionally, the standard event study model assumes that the time path of effects is the same for all treated units, regardless of the initial year of treatment. This assumption does not hold in our context: for example, schools established in the early 1970s, when integration plans were held to stricter standards, may have drawn more students and thus have had a larger effect on students than schools established in the early 1960s. We

[8]Students are identified by first, middle, and last name, suffix (such as junior or III), and birth year. Duplicates are dropped.

[9]The file for West Virginia was updated in January of 2024.

[10]Population estimates on the 1km x 1km grid cell level are taken from the M5 model described in Fang and Jawitz, 2018, which distributes population based off of urbanicity, inhability, topographic suitability, and socio-economic desirability. We use 1950 population to rule out sorting due to academy openings.

adopt two approaches to address this concern. First, we allow treatment effects to vary based off of the time of treatment by employing the strategy outlined in Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2021. Second, in a future version of this paper, we will control for the integration status of the local high school using hand-coded data on the racial composition of yearbooks.

Our estimating equation is

$$Y_k = \alpha_{c(k)} + \lambda_{t(k)} + \sum_{e} \sum_{\ell \neq -1} \delta_{e,\ell}(\mathbf{1}\{E_{c(k)} = e\} \cdot D^{\ell}_{c(k),t(k)}) + \epsilon_{c(k),t(k)} \tag{1}$$

Where Y_k denotes the outcome, which is 1 if an individual is registered as a Republican and 0 otherwise; $\alpha_{c(k)}$ denotes county fixed effects; and $\lambda_{t(k)}$ denotes birth cohort fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the county level. We calculate ℓ, interpreted as years of exposure, as 18 - age at academy opening (defined as year of treatment e - birth year t). For example, a person born in 1951 who attended school in a county where a segregation academy opened in 1960 would have $18-(1960-1951) = 9$ years of exposure ℓ. We interpret $\delta_{e,\ell}$ as the average intent to treat effect for individuals with ℓ years of exposure who attended school in a county that was treated at time e. We can aggregate this treatment effect to the relative time dimension ℓ by calculating an average of $\delta_{e,\ell}$ weighted by the share of each group e in each relative time period ℓ. We can perform a similar calculation to recover the average intent to treat effect, ITT.

We estimate the ITT on the full sample of students appearing in yearbooks in counties with segregation academies, rather than on the sample of students appearing in segregation academy yearbooks, to avoid issues of selection into attendance at the academies. Our within county strategy also minimizes concerns about selection into the county. However, this approach assumes that, in the absence of the opening of a segregation academy, the political attitudes of younger cohorts in treated counties would have evolved similarly to those in control counties relative to the baseline of those aged 18 when a segregation academy opened. This assumption may be violated if attitudes and political affiliation evolve differently along birth year in places with a segregation academy because of unrelated differences in the

counties. To address this, we combine the approach in Equation 1 with inverse propensity weighting using 1950 median family income and percentage of the population that is Black.

3.3 Results

Conditional on being registered to vote, we find prospective attendees of segregation academies are more likely to register as Republican. These effects are stronger in areas where the opening of a segregation academy caused marginal public enrollment declines, suggesting that segregation academy attendance is the mechanism driving our results, rather than unrelated events.

Table 1: Impact on Likelihood to Register as a Republican

	Base	High	Low
Panel A: Non-Black Males			
Estimate	0.0763***	0.1568***	0.0621***
(Std. Error)	(0.0169)	(0.0391)	(0.0179)
N	25581	8770	21979
Panel B: Black Males			
Estimate	0.0158	-0.0176	0.0268
(Std. Error)	(0.0309)	(0.0245)	(0.0371)
N	4664	1655	3804

Notes: Estimates come from Equation 1. Regressions are weighted using inverse propensity weighting on county-level median family income and percentage of the population that is Black in 1950. The control group are never treated counties. Results are robust to using not yet treated counties as the control group (Appendix Table A1). "Base" includes all individuals appearing in our sample of South Carolina yearbooks that we are able to link to the South Carolina voter registration file (in future versions, we will include links to other states). "High" includes observations that attended school in counties for which we estimate segregation academies had a negative effect on public school enrollment and excludes those that attended school in counties where segregation academies did not have a negative marginal impact on enrollment. "Low" includes the converse. We have fewer observations in "High" areas because they are more likely to be rural. Standard errors are clustered at the level of treatment (county). Race is determined using ethnicity codings in the L2 voter file. The vast majority of non-Black individuals in our sample are White. We limit our sample to males because we do not observe maiden name for married adult women in the L2 file. Because we observe our sample at ages 50-80 in 2024, this precludes accurately linking women.

Prospective attendees are 7.6% more likely to be registered as a Republican (Panel A, "Base" column of Table 1). However, the percentage of students attending segregation

academies varied widely from county to county. In Williamson and Withrow, 2025, the authors estimate the marginal effect on public school enrollment by subtracting predicted enrollment from observed enrollment. Predicted enrollment is estimated using a fixed-effects model fit on untreated and not yet treated observations. That paper finds that public enrollment declined the most in rural areas, where White parents wishing to avoid integration had few to no outside options from the public schools before a segregation academy opened in a town. Segregation academies played a more limited role in urban areas, where White parents avoiding integration could enroll their children in nearby predominantly white suburban public schools or preexisting private schools. "High" areas are those where the opening of a segregation academy caused public enrollment to decline. "High" areas can be interpreted as areas where a higher share of White students attended segregation academies.

We exploit this variation, depicted in Appendix Figure A3, to make our treatment definition more precise. Consistent with segregation academy attendance causing changes in political affiliation, we find the treatment effect is twice as large as the baseline for Non-Black males in "High" areas. In "Low" areas, segregation academies still operated and enrolled students, but public enrollment declines may have occurred irrespective of the opening of a segregation academy. We find a smaller, but significant effect, intent-to-treat effect in "Low" areas. We find no effect on Black males (Panel B).

To test our parallel trends assumption, we estimate the effect for each relative period in Appendix Figure A2. Treatment is most cleanly defined and identified for "High" areas. In "Low" areas, there exists a negative coefficient for those aged 22 when a segregation academy opened (-4 years of exposure). We posit this is because, in urban areas, there may have been integration activity that preceded the opening of a segregation academy (Chin, 2021 finds attending integrated schools increases likelihood of identifying as a Democrat in adulthood). To test this, we will, in future versions of this paper, provide estimates broken out by integration status of high schools in the year prior to the establishment of a segregation academy. We will also employ a sibling design and estimate within-last-name

effects to control for unobserved parental preferences and sorting.

4 Racial Attitudes

4.1 Data

To measure racial attitudes, we use restricted data from the General Social Survey (Davern et al., 2024) and the 2006 to 2019 Cooperative Election Study (CCES). For consistency, we restrict attention to White respondents; some historical questions regarding race were asked only to White respondents or worded to indicate the respondent should think about the "opposite race." Restricting to White respondents ensures comparability across survey questions. For both the CCES and GSS, we match respondents to their childhood counties using GSS information on current county of residence and geographic mobility. Importantly, we only can only match respondents to childhood county for those who have not moved since childhood, a limitation of the data. In particular, this creates a concern about selection if exposure to a segregation academy causes differential out-migration split by racial animus. To assess this selection, in Table A3 we present descriptive statistics on racial attitudes and other characteristics of non-movers, within-state movers, and out-of-state movers in relevant birth cohorts in our set of states. Non-movers are slightly younger, more male, less educated, and more likely to be employed.[11] Interestingly, non-movers do not rate themselves differently on a Liberal-Conservative scale, but do express more conservative racial attitudes based on our indices described in the next paragraph. Importantly for our purposes, these differences disappear when we compare non-movers in treated and control counties, with the exception of slightly higher education in treated counties. However, this does not rule out the possibility of differential out-migration caused by the presence of a segregation academy, which remains a limitation of our data.

[11] However, we avoid controlling for these individual characteristics in later event studies since dimensions like education and employment could be outcomes of the segregation academy treatment.

We construct three indices based on answers to survey questions in the GSS: a Policy index, a Racism Index, and a Combined Index that combines the previous two as well as own reported inter-group contact.[12] The Policy Index captures dimensions such as (lack of) support for affirmative action or tolerance for racially exclusionary laws, practices, and ideas. The Racism Index captures a more personal dimension of distaste by measuring, for example, attitudes toward inviting a Black person into the home or a family member marrying a Black person, or aversion to living in Black neighborhoods or one's own children attending integrated schools. We conceptualize racism as different from conservative racial attitudes, as the latter measures support for general policies and takes a more arms-length framing, whereas racism invokes more of one's preferences for *own* personal contact.

All indices are re-ordered so that higher values indicate more conservative or racist attitudes, and questions are re-scaled to be binary. We then standardize responses by subtracting the mean and dividing by the standard deviation for each variable, calculated using respondents outside our sample states but in similar birth cohorts. Indices are calculated as the simple mean of these standardized variables. We include the full list of survey questions for each index in Appendix B. To account for changing question wordings and availability, we control for survey year fixed effects in analyses to follow.

We also construct a Combined Index based on analogous questions in the CCES. Because the CCES has fewer questions related to racial animus, we are not able to break out racially related policy preferences from racial animus. We include the full list of survey questions in Appendix B.4.

4.2 Covariates

Though our empirical strategy, described in more detail in the next section, relies on the differential timing of segregation academy openings, it is important to note that their placements were not random. The establishment of segregation academies is likely some function

[12] We remove questions for which it is unclear whether anti-Black attitudes specifically are measured, e.g. those about "racial or ethnic minorities" in general.

of a community's preferences, demographics, resources, and legal environment. This would be a threat to our empirical strategy if openings were selected on post-treatment differential trends, e.g. if places where an academy opened were already poised to become more racially conservative. To help address this parallel trends concern, we include the following pre-treatment controls interacted with a linear time trend in our main specifications. Figure A4 shows how each of these factors predicts treatment status.

To proxy for relative demand for schooling, we include percent families in 1950. This is defined as the number of families divided by the number of households in the 1950 census, as collected in Haines, 2005. We also include 1950 median family income, 1950 population density, and 1940 to 1950 population growth from the 1950 county data book to proxy for population- or income-related increases in demand for private schooling (Census, 1984).

We proxy for pre-existing racial animus among the White population via three measures. First, we use 1948 county level vote shares for Strom Thurmond, presidential candidate for the States' Rights Party, or "Dixiecrats" (Clubb et al., 2006).[13] Second, a predictor of racial animus among the White population is the share of the population that is Black in 1950. High values of this measure typically indicate a history of reliance on slavery, and relatedly, correlates positively with White backlash to the Civil Rights movement (Washington, 1901; Jeffries, 2010). Third, we use total number of lynchings from 1877 to 1950 as measured by the Equal Justice Intiative, 2017, scaled by 1950 population.

We also account for the co-evolving legal context by including an indicator for the presence of a public school desegregation court order. To measure this, we build on the data set of school district level court orders assembled and described in Williamson and Withrow, 2025. Each district is searched individually in Civil Rights, 2007 and Minarik et al., 2007. For several districts, the report lists the year as "Unknown." In these cases, we search newspaper reports for contemporaneous accounts of court activity. We then convert this data set to

[13]The Dixiecrats organized as a breakaway faction of the Democratic party after President Harry Truman ordered the integration of the military in 1948. Chief among their concerns was the preservation of racial segregation in Southern states (Frederickson, 2001).

the county level by taking the court year from the largest (as defined by population) school district. 431 of the 586 counties in our data set have a court year defined.

4.3 Estimating Equation

To analyze the impact of exposure to a segregation academy on racial attitudes, we compare differences in survey answers of individuals who were school aged when a segregation academy was established to those in the same county who were either older than high school aged or lived in an area without a segregation academy. An individual k is defined as treated if they attended school in a treated county and were younger than 19 (i.e., of school age) when a segregation academy opened. Because we pool cross-sectional data from multiple survey years at the individual level, rather than panel data at the county level, we modify the strategy described in Sun and Abraham, 2021 to estimate coefficients for each combination of age at treatment and initial treatment year. Standard two-way fixed effects (TWFE) estimates are reported in Appendix Section A.2 for completeness.

$$Y_k = \alpha_{c(k)} + \lambda_{t(k)} + \zeta_t + t * X_{c(k)} + desegPost_{c(k),t(k)} + \sum_e \sum_{\ell \neq -1} \delta_{e,\ell}(\mathbf{1}\{E_{c(k)} = e\} \cdot D^{\ell}_{c(k),t(k)}) + \epsilon_{c(k),t(k)} \tag{2}$$

Where Y_k denotes the outcome, the racial attitude index of individual k in birth cohort t who attended school in county i; $\alpha_{c(k)}$ denotes county fixed effects; $\lambda_{t(k)}$ denotes birth cohort fixed effects; and ζ_s denotes survey year s fixed effects, which we include to account for changing question wordings and availability. Standard errors are clustered at the county level. $desegPost_{i(k),t(k)}$ is as in equation 3. $t * X_i k$ are 1950 county characteristics interacted with a linear time trend of year of birth t. We calculate ℓ, interpreted as years of exposure, as 19 - age at academy opening (defined as year of treatment e - birth year t). For example, a person born in 1951 who attended school in a county where a segregation academy opened in 1960 would have $18 - (1960 - 1951) = 10$ years of exposure ℓ. We interpret $\delta_{e,\ell}$ as the

average treatment effect for individuals with ℓ years of exposure who attended school in a county that was treated at time e.

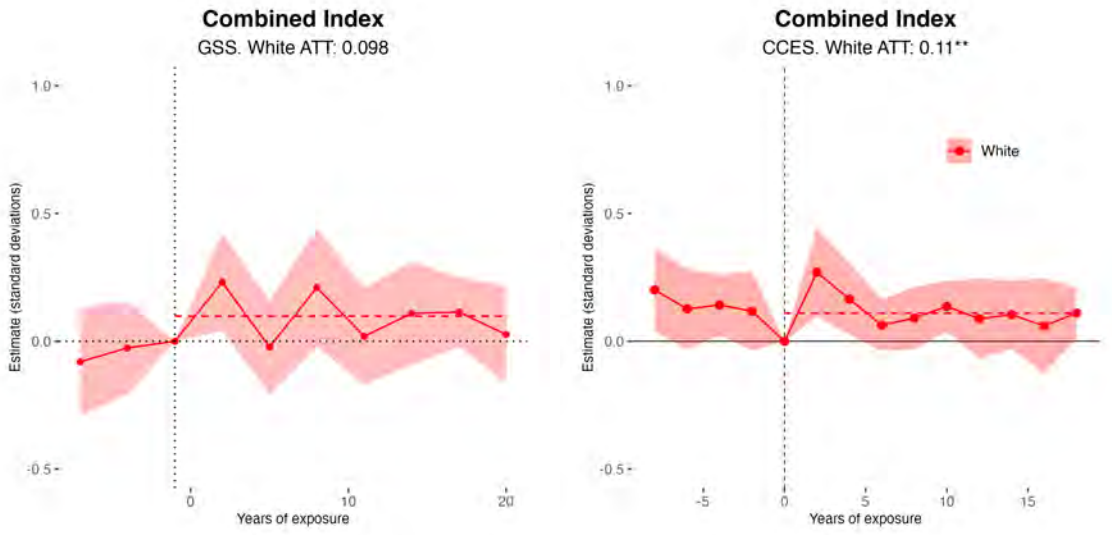
After limiting to individuals who never moved from their childhood county in our sample states, we have only 1,374 observations. This makes the estimation of birth year fixed effects $\lambda_{t(k)}$ and $GATT$ via $\delta_{e,\ell}$ subject to measurement error: for 149 group treatment time cells, we have 1 observation. To mitigate this, we bin both birth year t and years of exposure ℓ into 3 year bins. We bin birth year into 3 year increments from 1946 to 1994 and years of exposure into 3 year increments from -7 to 20. After binning, a person born in 1951 who attended school in a county where a segregation academy opened in 1960 would have a binned birth year of 1952 and a binned year of exposure of 11: $t_{bin} = 1952$ for $t \in \{1950, 1952\}$ and $\ell_{bin} = 11$ for $\ell \in \{9, 11\}$. We estimate $GATT$ for $\ell_{bin} \in \{-7, 20\}$, or individuals with -9 to 20 years of exposure. Our estimates are relative to individuals who were just above school age when a segregation academy opened, or ages 19 to 21 ($\ell_{bin} = -1$).

4.4 Results

Figure 3 shows results from estimating equation 2 for the Combined Index. We see slight but mostly insignificant increases in our combined measure of racial intolerance.[14] However, when focusing on the racism sub-index, we do find a significant increase. We report the aggregated ATT for the Combined Index and each sub-index in table 2. Interpreting the final column with full controls, we find an increase in racism of 0.237 standard deviations following the opening of a segregation academy. However, we observe no statistically significant or practically meaningful change for Conservative Racial Attitudes or the Combined Index. The addition of our controls does not meaningfully alter the results.

[14] In figure A5 and figure A6 we show results for the Racism and Conservative Racial Attitudes sub-indices, respectively.

Figure 3: Segregation Academy Openings & Racial Attitudes: Combined Index



Note: Estimates of the effect by years of exposure from estimating equation 2. Years of exposure (cohorts since academy opening) are binned into increments of three years. Estimates are relative to individuals who were 19-21 years of age when their childhood county was treated. Childhood county is only observed for never movers. Standard errors are clustered at the county level. Construction of the Combined Index is described in section 4.1. Y-axis units are standard deviations.

Table 2: Effects on Racial Attitudes

	Combined Index			Conservative Racial Attitudes			Racism		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
ATT	0.104	0.097	0.098	-0.002	-0.001	0.006	0.260**	0.238**	0.237**
	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.077)	(0.091)	(0.087)	(0.088)
N	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,165	1,165	1,165
Cohort × 1950 Controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Post-deseg.	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: The ATT from estimating equation 2. Estimates are relative to individuals who were 19-21 years of age when their childhood county was treated. Childhood county is only observed for never movers. Controls are added sequentially as indicated. Post-deseg is an indicator variable that is 1 if the individual's childhood county was under a court order when the individual was of school age (younger than 19). Standard errors are clustered at the county level. Construction of the Conservative Racial Attitudes Index is described in section 4.1. Y-axis units are standard deviations.

5 Places

We shift our focus in this section to the contemporaneous impact of segregation academies on places. This set of results conceptualizes segregation academies as *community institutions*, and speaks to the literature on how the institutionalization of community beliefs can reinforce and perpetuate those beliefs (Wheaton, 2022; Bazzi et al., 2020; Bazzi et al., 2023; Althoff and Reichardt, 2024; McVeigh et al., 2014). We look at two outcomes: Democratic vote share in house elections and White registration rates. Previous literature finds that Democratic party losses during this time period were driven by individuals with conservative racial attitudes (Kuziemko and Washington, 2018), and that White voter registration increased as a backlash to the Voting Rights Act (Bernini et al., 2025a).

5.1 Data

We measure voting behavior with county-level election returns for the U.S. House of Representatives elections from 1950-1990 (ICPSR, 2013). The underlying data are sourced from state governments' official election returns. We construct the outcome Democratic Share as the share of total votes in each election going to the Democratic candidate. We focus on House elections for their higher frequency as well as their more geographically local nature. Table A2 provides summary statistics on Democratic Share and turnout by decade for our sample of states. As discussed in Section 2, this was a period of persistently high Democratic representation in the South. In fact, it wasn't until well into the 1990s that a majority of all congressional seats in the South were held by Republicans (Lamis, 1999). Data on voter registration rates by race come from Bernini et al., 2025b, which compiled archival data from county offices spanning 1956-1980.

5.2 Estimating Equation

To measure impacts on voting, we estimate an adapted event study model. In our prior set of results, we focus the impacts of academies on students who may have attended them. Accordingly, our empirical strategy has thus far focuses on discontinuities in trends of outcomes around high school graduation age. In this section, we shift strategies to measure discontinuities in trends of county-level outcomes that occur after the opening of a segregation academy.

We estimate a modified version of the model proposed in Sun and Abraham, 2021 to recover the effects of segregation academies on Democratic vote share in U.S. House of Representatives elections:

$$Y_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \lambda_t + t * X_i + desegPost_{i,t} + \sum_{e} \sum_{\ell \neq -2} \delta_{e,\ell}(\mathbf{1}\{E_i = e\} \cdot D^{\ell}_{i,t}) + \epsilon_{i,t} \tag{3}$$

where $Y_{i,t}$ denotes the Democratic vote share in county i at time t; α_i denotes county fixed effects; and λ_t denotes year fixed effects. The year of treatment E_i is the first year that county i is treated by a segregation academy. ℓ is the relative period since treatment, defined as $t - e$, or year of observation minus year of treatment.[15] $D^{\ell}_{i,t}$ is an indicator variable for the relative period ℓ of county i in time t. Relative period $\ell = -2$ is our baseline period and is the omitted category for $D^{\ell}_{i,t}$. We observe our outcome every two years, as this is the cadence of elections in the U.S. House of Representatives. Accordingly, we bin treatment year to every two years.[16] Standard errors are clustered at the county level, the unit of treatment in our setting (Abadie et al., 2023).

We follow Sun and Abraham, 2021 by interacting our relative period indicator $D^{\ell}_{i,t}$ with an indicator for treatment year $\mathbf{1}\{E_i = e\}$. This allows us to estimate the coefficients $\delta_{e,\ell}$ for each combination of treatment year e and relative period ℓ. These are our coefficients of

[15] We restrict attention to $\ell \in \{-20, 20\}$.

[16] We do this by adding 1 to all odd treatment years e. If we did not do this, $\delta_{e,\ell}$ for all odd ℓ would only be estimated for odd treatment years and vice versa for even ℓ.

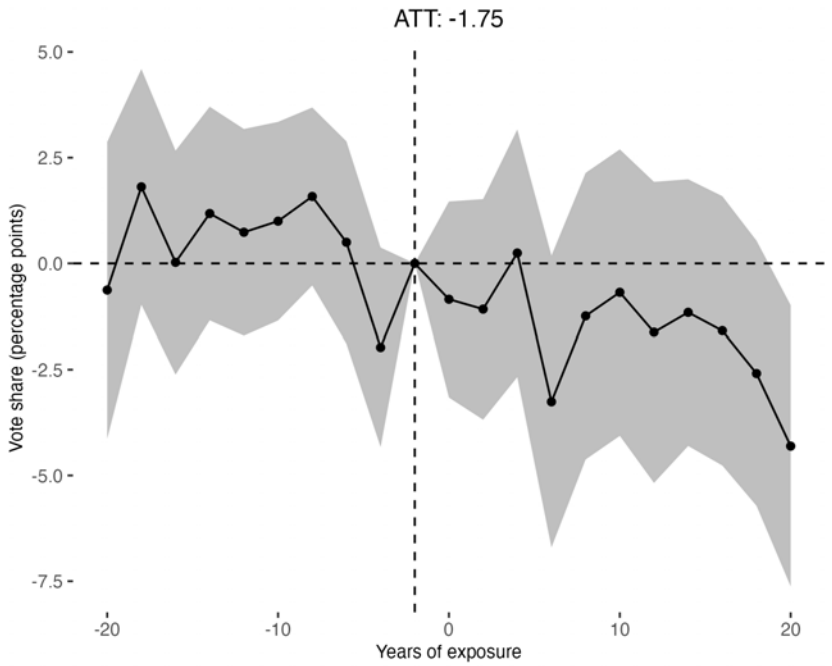
interest, and we aggregate them to recover the the treatment effect in each relative period ℓ by taking the average of $\delta_{e,\ell}$ weighted by the share of counties treated in year e. Finally, to obtain the Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT), we take the simple average of the relative-period effects over the post period $\ell > -2$.

We add to this specification a set of controls to account for the fact that treatment status is not randomly assigned. As shown in Figure A4, population density and Black population share are positively correlated with treatment. Because these baseline differences may cause a violation of the parallel trends assumption, we interact each of the covariates measured in 1950 with linear time trends: $t \times X_i$. Importantly for the voting outcome, controlling for baseline Black population share in this way also accounts for the enfranchisement effects of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (Filer et al., 1991; Schuit and Rogowski, 2017).[17] Finally, we control for the effect of court-ordered desegregation on political preferences through the inclusion of $desegPost_{i,t}$, which is equal to one once a county has been placed under a court order.

Table 3 shows that Democratic vote share declines in counties with a segregation academy relative to areas without one, though the ATT estimates are not statistically significant. The inclusion of our main controls does not meaningfully affect the magnitude or significance of the estimates. As shown in Figure 4, effects are more stark 15-20 years from the establishment of the first segregation academy in the county. We might expect voting patterns to change slowly for several reasons. First, children attending segregation academies would have to age into voting. Second, the institutionalization of White supremacy would likely not affect voting outcomes among adults immediately. The status quo of the Southeast during this time period was *de jure* segregration. The founders of segregation academies aimed to *preserve* the existing Jim Crow institutionalization of White supremacy: segregration academies offset gains from court-ordered integration by, on average, 60% (Williamson and Withrow, 2025). Finally, as described in section 2, the shift of conservative White voters to the Republican

[17] Black population shares in 1950 and 1960 are almost perfectly correlated ($\rho = 0.98$).

Figure 4: Effect on Democratic Vote Share



Note: This graph plots estimates of the effects of segregation academy openings on the Democratic vote share in U.S. House of Representatives elections. The x-axis denotes relative year since treatment. We plot the treatment effect in each relative period obtained by aggregating the estimates of $\delta_{e,\ell}$ in equation 3.

Party was not complete until the late 1990s in congressional House elections.

Table 3: Overall Effect, Democratic Vote Share

	(1)	(2)	(3)
ATT	-1.708	-1.831	-1.745
	(1.184)	(1.158)	(1.167)
N	11,868	11,868	11,868
Year × 1950 Controls	No	Yes	Yes
Post-deseg.	No	No	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: Average treatment effect on the treated on Democratic Vote Share. The ATT is the simple average of the relative-period treatment effects in the post-period, as shown in figure 4, which come from equation 3. Standard errors are clustered at the level of treatment (county). Controls are added sequentially across columns as indicated. Post-deseg is an indicator variable that takes the value of 1 if the largest school district in the county is under court order. House elections occur every two years. Treatment year is binned into even years by adding 1 to odd treatment years.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

We find segregation academies increase likelihood of registering as a Republican in adulthood. Using survey data, we find a suggestive increase in racism, but no effects on conservative racial attitudes measured directly using survey responses in the GSS, we find no effects. Similarly, we find that 15-20 years after the establishment of a segregation academy, counties with such schools shifted away from the Democratic party somewhat more so than those without.

We interpret these results with caution. Voter registration data is limited to politically active individuals — only 73% of voting age individuals in South Carolina are registered to vote (though this number is higher among the older cohorts). The GSS is limited to a comparatively small sample of survey respondents. The survey is only representative on the national level, and accordingly it draws more respondents from population-dense areas and few respondents from rural areas. These rural areas are precisely the ones for which we would expect to see the largest impacts on racial attitudes for several reasons. Cities were more likely to have preexisting private schools or nearby predominantly White school districts. Segregation academies represented one avenue among many from which urban White parents could choose to avoid integration. In rural areas, the segregation academy may have been a more significant local institution; these communities may have been more tight-knit, and they experienced the largest resulting public school enrollment declines (Williamson and Withrow, 2025).

Furthermore, survey instruments in general may provide imperfect measures of the racial attitudes of interest. For one, respondents may modify their answers to conform to a perceived expectation of society or the interviewer, introducing social desirability bias (Paulhus, 1991).[18] Additionally, conservative racial attitudes such as lack of support for affirmative action or government assistance to Black people, though interesting to study in their own

[18]The majority of GSS interviews are face-to-face, although telephone interviews are used in some circumstances.

right, may not represent the kinds of racist attitudes that might be affected by the presence of segregation academies. When we do measure more direct distaste for contact with Black people with the Racism Index, we find significant increases. However, this measure remains imperfect and suffers from lesser sample sizes and availability of questions. Ideally, one would be able to measure un-biased underlying racism. Finally, and importantly, given the cohort nature of our design, we are not measuring racial attitudes instantaneously, but rather retrospectively with the delay of time. Intervening events, in life and in the public sphere, may wash away effects from experiencing a segregation academy in one's youth.

As a broader point, backlash may be an ill-fitting framework to describe the social changes of this period. One theory is that there is an underlying level of latent racial conservatism within individuals, inherited through generations, that is either challenged or unchallenged. Only when challenged by external events, like school desegregation or the demands of Black people for equal rights and treatment, are these racially conservative attitudes activated. Segregation academies may uphold institutional White supremacy, and thus this worldview is not given a grain against which to expose itself. Individuals may not express racially conservative attitudes in voting or survey responses unless prompted by the historical events from which segregation academies were designed to insulate them.

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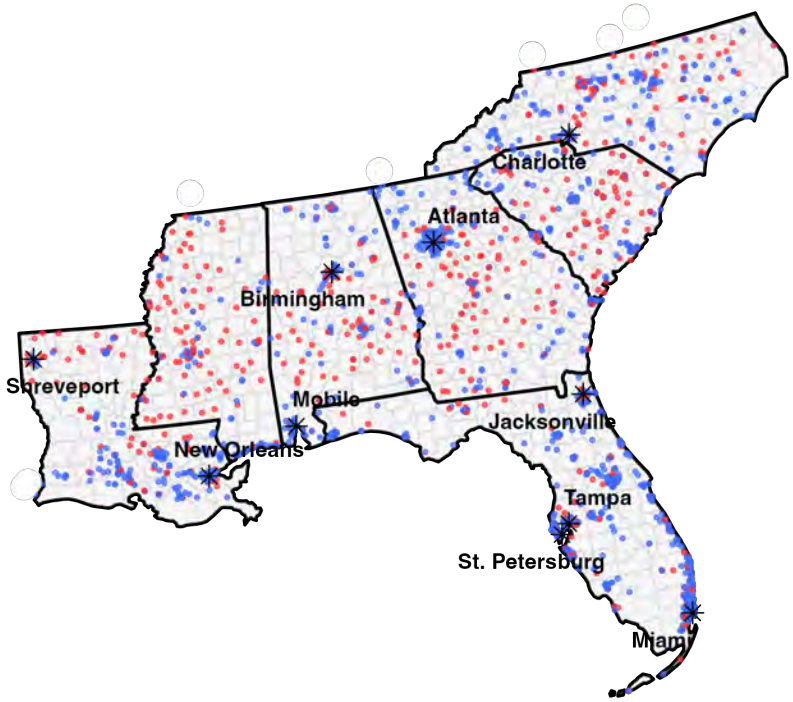
A Additional Results

A.1 Supplementary Tables and Figures

Figure A1: Locations of Segregation Academies and Other Private Schools



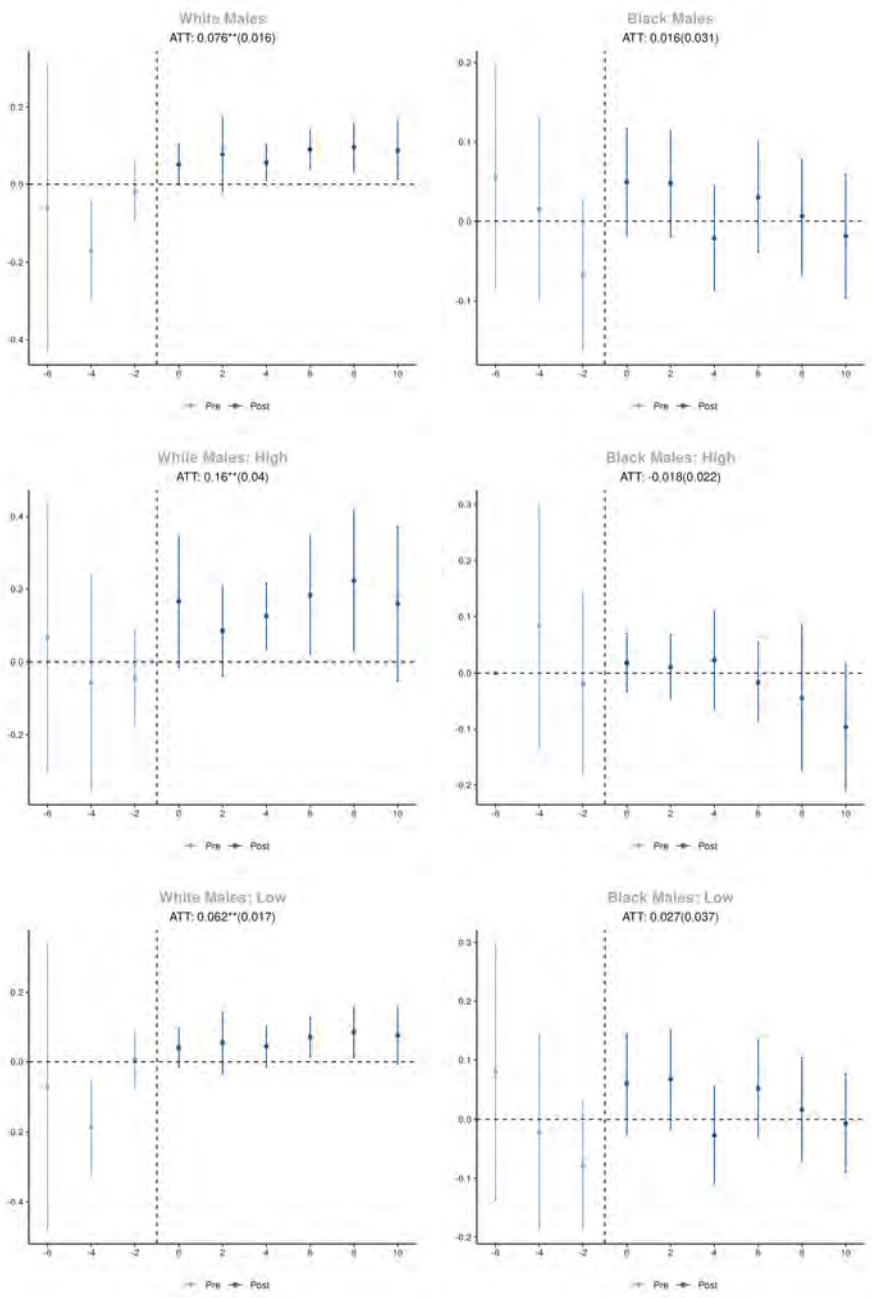
This graph presents the locations of segregation academies and other private schools in the Southeast that appear in the 1976-1980 Universe of Private Schools. The ten largest cities by 1960 population are labeled. Compared to other private schools, segregation academies appear more in rural areas, particularly in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. The labeling of segregation academies is described in Section 2.2.

Table A1: Impact on Likelihood to Register as a Republican

	Base	High	Low
Panel A: Non-Black Males			
Estimate	0.0763***	0.1660***	0.0622***
(Std. Error)	(0.0173)	(0.0438)	(0.0165)
N	25581	8770	21979
Panel B: Black Males			
Estimate	0.0158	-0.0173	0.0194
(Std. Error)	(0.0305)	(0.0234)	(0.0317)
N	4664	1655	3804

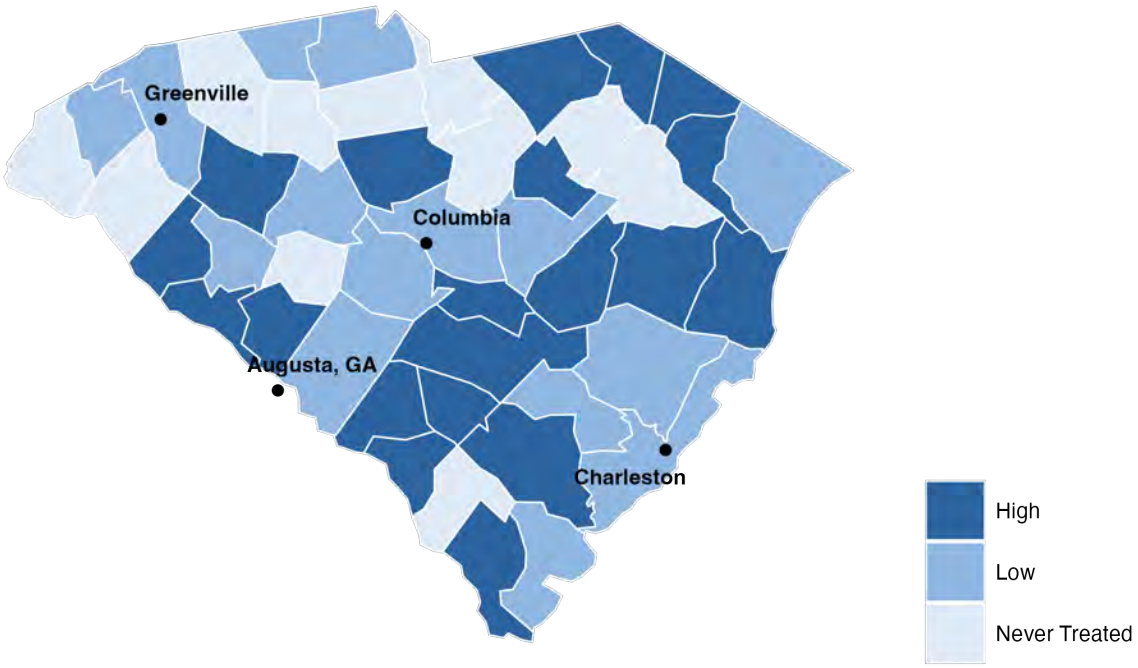
Notes: Estimates come from Equation 1. Regressions are weighted using inverse propensity weighting on county-level median family income and percentage of the population that is Black in 1950. The control group is not yet treated counties. "Base" includes all individuals appearing in our sample of South Carolina yearbooks that we are able to link to the South Carolina voter registration file (in future versions, we will include links to other states). "High" includes observations that attended school in counties for which we estimate segregation academies had a negative effect on public school enrollment and excludes those that attended school in counties where segregation academies did not have a negative marginal impact on enrollment. "Low" includes the converse. Standard errors are clustered at the level of treatment (county). Race is determined using ethnicity codings in the L2 voter file. The vast majority of non-Black individuals in our sample are White. We limit our sample to males because we do not observe maiden name for married adult women in the L2 file. Because we observe our sample at ages 50-80 in 2024, this precludes accurately linking women.

Figure A2: Years of Exposure Estimates: Likelihood to Register as a Republican



Notes: Estimates come from Equation 1. Regressions are weighted using inverse propensity weighting on county-level median family income and percentage of the population that is Black in 1950. The control group are never treated counties. Results are robust to using not yet treated counties as the control group (Appendix Table A1). "Base" includes all individuals appearing in our sample of South Carolina yearbooks that we are able to link to the South Carolina voter registration file (in future versions, we will include links to other states). "High" includes observations that attended school in counties for which we estimate segregation academies had a negative effect on public school enrollment and excludes those that attended school in counties where segregation academies did not have a negative marginal impact on enrollment. "Low" includes the converse. Standard errors are clustered at the level of treatment (county). Race is determined using ethnicity codings in the L2 voter file. The vast majority of non-Black individuals in our sample are White. We limit our sample to males because we do not observe maiden name for married adult women in the L2 file. Because we observe our sample at ages 50-80 in 2024, this precludes accurately linking women.

Figure A3: Marginal Enrollment Declines: South Carolina



Notes: Map of variation in marginal public enrollment declines after the opening of a segregation academy, as calculated in Williamson and Withrow, 2025. "High" counties are those with a segregation academy where observed enrollment is lower than enrollment predicted using a fixed effect model fit to not yet treated and never treated observations. "Low" counties are those with a segregation academy where observed enrollment is higher than predicted enrollment. Public enrollment declined the most in rural areas, where White parents wishing to avoid integration had few to no outside options from the public schools before a segregation academy opened in a town. Cities with 50,000 to 100,000 people are labeled with black dots.

Table A2: Summary Statistics, Voting

	(1) 1950-1958	(2) 1960-1968	(3) 1970-1978	(4) 1980-1990
Democratic Share	0.941	0.829	0.766	0.686
	(0.137)	(0.211)	(0.241)	(0.247)
Turnout	0.209	0.318	0.314	0.370
	(0.150)	(0.148)	(0.129)	(0.126)
Observations	2,924	2,925	2,687	3,333

Note: This table presents means and standard deviations of Democratic vote share and turnout in U.S. House elections by decade. The unit of observation is the county. Democratic Share is defined as the proportion of votes going to the Democratic candidate. Turnout is defined as total votes in the election divided by county population. The underlying sources of data are state election returns compiled by ICPSR.

Table A3: GSS Summary Statistics, Stayers and Movers

Panel A: Stayers and Movers, In-State and Out-of State

	(1) Stayers	(2) Movers In-State	(3) Movers Out-of-State	(4) Diff (1) - (2 & 3)
Age	45.104	46.935	46.080	-1.413**
	(15.232)	(15.152)	(14.500)	
Yrs School	12.628	13.145	13.888	-0.881***
	(2.688)	(2.931)	(3.079)	
Employed	0.707	0.680	0.669	0.032*
	(0.455)	(0.467)	(0.471)	
Male	0.470	0.445	0.408	0.042*
	(0.499)	(0.497)	(0.492)	
Lib-Cons. Scale	4.495	4.556	4.404	0.013
	(1.390)	(1.376)	(1.427)	
Cons. Rac. Att.	0.204	0.168	0.079	0.079***
	(0.588)	(0.580)	(0.567)	
Racism	0.305	0.247	0.066	0.147***
	(1.017)	(0.981)	(0.910)	
Combined Index	0.164	0.114	-0.012	0.111***
	(0.604)	(0.603)	(0.574)	
N	1,667	990	948	3,605

Note: continued on next page.

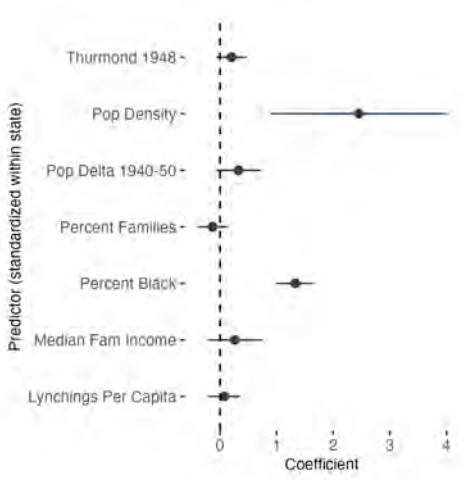
Table A2, continued: GSS Summary Statistics, Stayers and Movers

Panel B: Stayers, Treated and Control

	(1) Stayers, Treated	(2) Stayers, Control	(3) Diff (1) - (2)
Age	47.228	46.014	1.214
	(17.714)	(17.035)	
Yrs School	12.901	12.317	0.584**
	(2.737)	(2.658)	
Employed	0.647	0.622	0.025
	(0.478)	(0.486)	
Male	0.459	0.414	0.045
	(0.499)	(0.494)	
Lib-Cons. Scale	4.532	4.562	-0.030
	(1.438)	(1.283)	
Cons. Rac. Att.	0.112	0.067	0.045
	(0.612)	(0.544)	
Racism	0.095	0.136	-0.041
	(0.849)	(0.928)	
Combined Index	0.003	0.015	-0.013
	(0.594)	(0.541)	
N	1,204	222	1,426

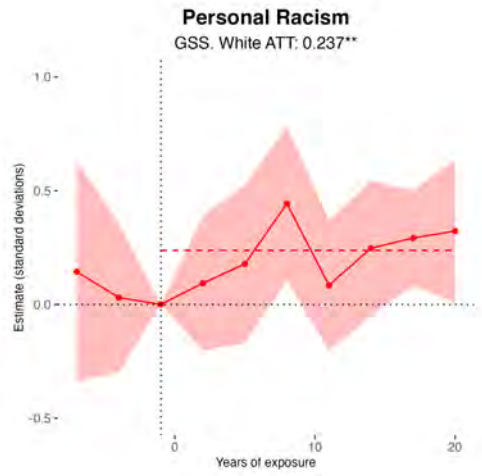
Note: This table presents means and standard deviations of key demographic and social attitude variables in the GSS sample, split by geographic mobility. Panel A compares stayers to in-state and out-of-state movers. Stayers are defined as individuals who report living in the same town since age 16. Movers in-state report living in the same state but different town as age 16, and movers out-of-state report having moved out of state since age 16. Panel B presents summary statistics for stayers only, split by segregation academy treatment status (ever-treated). Employed is defined as working in the past week. The Liberal-Conservative scale asks respondents to rate themselves on a 7-point scale from Extremely Liberal to Extremely Conservative. The final three racial attitudes indices are computed by the authors as described in Section 4.1.

Figure A4: Pre-Treatment Correlates of Treatment Status



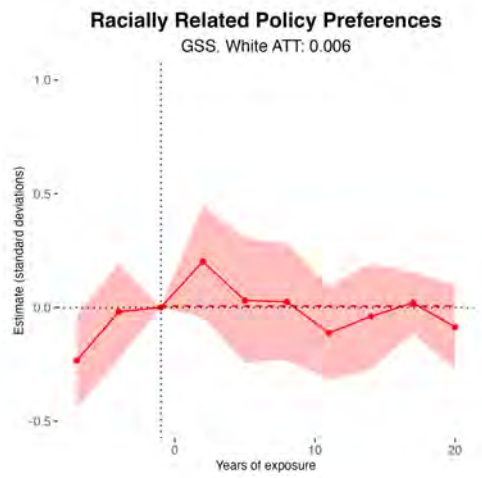
This graph presents the coefficients from a generalized linear multivariate regression with treatment status as the dependent variable. Because treatment status is binary, we assume the error terms follow a binomial distribution. Treatment is defined as 30% of a county's population residing within 15 miles of a segregation academy. Each predictor was standardized within a state to ensure that state-wide legal policies do not drive correlations. Population density, percent families, percent Black and median family income refer to 1950 measures. The number of lynchings is the total count from 1877 to 1950 and is scaled by the county population in 1950. For every within-state standard deviation increase in percentage of the population that is Black, the log odds of having a segregation academy increase by 1.33.

Figure A5: Segregation Academy Openings & Racial Attitudes: Racism



Note: Estimates of the effect by years of exposure from estimating equation 2. Years of exposure (cohorts since academy opening) are binned into increments of three years. Estimates are relative to individuals who were 19-21 years of age when their childhood county was treated. Childhood county is only observed for never movers. Standard errors are clustered at the county level. Construction of the Racism is described in section 4.1. Y-axis units are standard deviations.

Figure A6: Segregation Academy Openings & Racial Attitudes: Conservative Racial Attitudes



Note: Estimates of the effect by years of exposure from estimating equation 2. Years of exposure (cohorts since academy opening) are binned into increments of three years. Estimates are relative to individuals who were 19-21 years of age when their childhood county was treated. Childhood county is only observed for never movers. Standard errors are clustered at the county level. Construction of the Conservative Racial Attitudes Index is described in section 4.1. Y-axis units are standard deviations.

A.2 TWFE Results

In this appendix, we present results from a canonical two-way fixed effects (TWFE) model comparing counties before and after an academy opening to those without an academy. Based on recent concerns in the econometrics literature surrounding the potential for negative weights with heterogeneous treatment effects in TWFE designs in settings with staggered treatment timing, our preferred specification implements the cohort event-study design proposed by Sun and Abraham, 2021. However, for completeness we report results from estimating the following model for voting outcomes:

$$Y_{i,t} = \beta SegregationAcademy_{i,t} + \alpha_i + \lambda_t + t * BlackShare1960_i + \epsilon_i \tag{4}$$

where $Y_{i,t}$ denotes the outcome, Democratic vote share in county i's congressional House election in year t; $SegregationAcademy_{i,t}$ indicates the treatment of the first segregation academy opening in a county; α_i denotes county fixed effects; and λ_t denotes year fixed effects. We control for year trends interacted with 1960 Black share to account for effects of enfranchisement. The TWFE coefficient of interest is β; standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Results from estimating Equation 4 are presented in Table A4. We again see an insignificant decline in Democratic vote share in congressional House elections in counties after a segregation academy opens.

Table A4: TWFE Results, Democratic Vote Share

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Segregation Academy	-2.151	-1.324	-1.295
	(1.107)	(1.041)	(1.047)
Year × 1950 Controls	No	Yes	Yes
Post-deseg.	No	No	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	11,868	11,868	11,868
R^2	0.515	0.536	0.536

Note: This table presents results from estimating the standard TWFE model presented in Equation 4. The outcome is Democratic vote share in U.S. House elections. The treatment is the first year of opening of a segregation academy in a county. The specification includes time trends interacted with 1960 Black population share as well as county and year fixed effects. Robust standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

We estimate a similar model for racial attitudes outcomes:

$$Y_{k,i,t} = \beta SegregationAcademy_{i,t} + \alpha_i + \eta_t + \epsilon_{i,t} \tag{5}$$

where $Y_{i,t}$ denotes the outcome, the racial attitude index of individual k in county i in graduation cohort t; $SegregationAcademy_{i,t}$ indicates the treatment of the first segregation academy opening in a county; α_i denotes county fixed effects; and η_t denotes graduation cohort fixed effects. The TWFE coefficient of interest is β; standard errors are clustered at the county level.

Table A5 presents results from estimating Equation 5. Here, we see practically and statistically insignificant effects on racial attitudes after a segregation academy opening. The contrast with our findings on racism suggests the importance of accounting for differential timing of treatments in our setting.

Table A5: TWFE Results, Racial Attitudes

	Combined Index			Conservative Racial Attitudes			Racism		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Segregation Academy	-0.061	-0.069	-0.073	0.066	0.079	0.058	-0.107	-0.110	-0.114
	(0.076)	(0.069)	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.115)	(0.112)	(0.117)
Cohort × 1950 Controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Post-deseg.	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,374	1,165	1,165	1,165
R^2	0.268	0.273	0.273	0.225	0.231	0.234	0.220	0.231	0.231

Note: This table presents results from estimating the standard TWFE model presented in Equation 5. The outcomes are the indices of racial attitudes; the construction of these indices is described in Section 4.1. The treatment is the first year of opening of a segregation academy in a county. The specification includes county, cohort, and survey-year fixed effects. Robust standard errors clustered at the county level in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

B GSS Questions Used for Indices

This appendix lists the survey questions used to construct each index, along with the sample size of non-mover respondents in our sample states and cohorts, and the years for which each question is available. All responses are binarized and reordered so that a value of 1 corresponds to the more racially conservative attitude.

B.1 Policy Index

Table A6: Conservative Racial Attitudes

Question	N	Years Available
"Consider a person who believes that Blacks are genetically inferior. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community claiming that Blacks are inferior, should he be allowed to speak, or not?"	649	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"... If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote which said Blacks are inferior should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?"	636	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"... Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?"	634	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount... Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on: Improving the conditions of Blacks?"	515	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021

Continued on next page

Table A6: Conservative Racial Attitudes (Continued)

Question	N	Years Available
"... Assistance to Blacks?"	482	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"Some people say that because of past discrimination, Blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of Blacks is wrong because it discriminates against Whites. What about your opinion – are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of Blacks?"	592	Even years 1994-2018, 2021
"Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statement: Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without special favors."	608	Even years 1994-2018, 2021
"On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than White people. Do you think these differences are... Because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have less in-born ability to learn?"	635	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"...Because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) just don't have the motivation or will power to pull themselves up out of poverty?"	625	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"In general, do you favor or oppose the busing of (Negro/Black/African-American) and White school children from one school district to another?"	123	1993, 1994, 1996
"Do you think there should be laws against marriages between (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) and Whites?"	284	1993, even years 1994-2002

Continued on next page

Table A6: Conservative Racial Attitudes (Continued)

Question	N	Years Available
"Here are some opinions other people have expressed in connection with (Negro/Black)-White relations. Which statement [Agree strongly to Disagree strongly] comes closest to how you, yourself, feel?... (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted."	243	Even years 1994-2002
"...White people have a right to keep (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) out of their neighborhoods if they want to, and (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) should respect that right."	125	1993, 1994, 1996
"Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself whom to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans). The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color. Which law would you vote for?"	434	1993, 1994, 1996, even years 2004-2018
"Do you think that blacks get more attention from government than they deserve?"	49	1994
"Some people think that (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans) have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans). Where would you place yourself on this scale?"	657	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021

B.2 Racism Index

Table A7: Racism

Question	N	Years Available
"Now, I would like to ask whether you have ever felt the following ways about Blacks and their families... How often have you felt sympathy for Blacks?"	50	1994
"... How often have you felt admiration for Blacks?"	48	1994
"Now I'm going to ask you about different types of contact with various groups of people. In each situation would you please tell me whether you would be very much in favor of it happening, [... etc.]... Living in a neighborhood where half of your neighbors were Blacks?"	535	Even years 1996-2018, 2021
"... How about having a close relative or family member marry a black person?"	534	Even years 1996-2018, 2021
"Would you yourself have any objection to sending your children to a school where a few of the children are (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans)?"	126	1993, 1994, 1996
"...Where half of the children are (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans)?"	115	1993, 1994, 1996
"...Where more than half of the children are (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans)?"	91	1993, 1994, 1996
"In general, how close do you feel to Blacks?" [Answer on thermometer from 1-9]	467	Even years, 1996-2016

Continued on next page

Table A7: Racism (Continued)

Question	N	Years Available
"If you and your friends belonged to a social club that would not let (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) join, would you try to change the rules so that (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) could join?"	34	1993, 1994

B.3 Combined Index: GSS

The Combined Index averages the previous two indices along with responses to the following questions on reported inter-group contact:

Table A8: Reported Contact

Question	N	Years Available
"Do (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans) attend the church that you, yourself, attend most often, or not?"	36	1993, 1994
"During the last few years, has anyone in your family brought a friend who was a (Negro/Black/African-American) home for dinner?"	128	1993, 1994, 1996
"Are the people who work where you work all White, mostly White, about half and half, mostly black, or all black?"	342	Even years 1996-2018, 2021
"Are there any Blacks living in this neighborhood now?"	973	1993, even years 1994-2018, 2021
"Are there any (Negro/Black/African-American) families living close to you?"	35	1993, 1994

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Table A8: Reported Contact (Continued)

Question	N	Years Available
"Was the high school/last school you attended all White, mostly White, about half White and half other races, mostly other races, or all other races?"	32	2000

B.4 Combined Index: CCES

The Combined Index is analogous to the GSS version described above.

Table A9: Racism and Policy

Question	N	Years Available
"White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin. (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)"	TK	2016-2019
"Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations. (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)"	TK	2016-2019
"I am angry that racism exists (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)"	TK	2016-2017
"I often find myself fearful of people of other races (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)"	TK	2016-2017
"Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors. (1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree)"	TK	2015, 2018

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Table A9: Racism and Policy (Continued)

Question	N	Years Available
"Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. (1 = Agree, 2 = Disagree)"	TK	2015, 2018
"Support for affirmative action (1 = yes, 0 = no or neutral)"	TK	2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015

C Linking

We link over 350 thousand persons, observed in our yearbook sample, to the L2 voter registration data file. For each person, we are able to observe name, birth year, gender, race, and state of voter registration, as described in Table A10.

Table A10: **Variable definitions for child and adult datasets used in linking**

Field	**Type**	**Range**	**Source**	**Used in linking**	**Uncertainty**
Child variables					
First name	str		Yearbooks, digitized via LLM and RA	Y	Y
Middle name	str			Y	Y
Last name	str			Y	Y
Suffix	str			Ties only	Y
Grade	integer			Y	
School year	integer		Yearbooks, as recorded by RA		N
Age	integer			Y	
Year of birth	integer	1939–1970		Y	Y
Gender	categorical	[F, M]	Yearbooks, digitized by LLM and RA	Ties only	Y
State	str	SC		Y	N
Black likelihood	continuous	[0,1]		Ties only	Y
Adult variables					
First name	str		L2	Y	N
Middle name	str			Y	N
Last name	str			Y	N
Year of birth	integer	1939–1970		Y	N
Suffix	str			Ties only	N
Gender	str	[F, M]		Ties only	N
Ethnicity	str			Y	
Black indicator	integer	[0,1]		Ties only	Y
State of registration	str		Iteratively	N	

Notes: School year refers to the spring year (e.g., 2014 for the 2013–2014 school year). Age is defined as Grade + 6 (e.g., grade 12 corresponds to age 18). Year of birth is derived as School year − age or − age −1 (e.g., class of 2014 born in 1995 or 1996). Adult variables use voter file fields: `Voters_FirstName`, `Voters_MiddleName`, `Voters_LastName`, `Voters_BirthDate`, `Voters_NameSuffix`, `Voters_Gender`, and `Ethnic_Description`. The "Black" indicator equals 1 if `Ethnic_Description` = "African or Af-Am Self Reported," and 0 otherwise.

First name, middle name, last name, grade, and gender were all processed using an LLM (the Gemini API). Output was cleaned using a Python script, then randomly audited by research assistant. The research assistant corrected any discovered discrepancies. Relevant prompts are called out below:

- **Race:** This is a continuous value from 0 to 1 that represents the likelihood that a person is Black. It is defined by the racial composition of the school a person attended. For public schools, the racial composition was coded manually by a research assistant who looked at each image in each yearbook.

  Person appears in:

Table A11: Value of `Black` Based on School Coding

School Coding	`Black`
Segregation academy	0.01
All White	0
Predominantly White	0.20
Token integration (less than 5 Black students)	0.01
All Black	1
Predominantly Black	0.20
Integrated	0.50

- **Gender:** This is a discrete value of "F" or "M". Gender was classified using an LLM. Specifically, the prompt had the instructions:

```
For each name, determine gender based on:
 1.  NAME ANALYSIS: Traditional gender associations of first names
2.  TITLE/PREFIX ANALYSIS: Mr.  = Male (0), Mrs./Miss/Ms.  = Female (1)
3.  CONTEXTUAL CLUES: Look at associated photos if available
```

We adapt the ABE method, as described in (Abramitzky et al., 2021), to our available data fields. We match each individual in the child data set to an individual in the voter registration data set using the following algorithm:

1. Create a list of students unique on first, middle, and last name, suffix, date of birth, county, and school ID (`student_list`).
2. *State*: Beginning with the voter registration file for South Carolina:
   (a) *Birth year*: Drop any adult with a different birth year than the two possible birth years for the child.
   (b) *Name*: Match on exact NYSIIS standardized first name and last name.

(c) For children matched to more than one adult, we break ties first using the `aux score`. This is calculated as follows:

$$\texttt{Aux score} = \texttt{score\_gender} + 0.25 \times \texttt{score\_suffix} + \texttt{score\_race} + \texttt{score\_middle}.$$

Where:

$$\texttt{score\_gender} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \texttt{gender\_child} = \texttt{gender\_adult}, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise}, \end{cases}$$

$$\texttt{score\_race} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \texttt{black\_child} = \texttt{black\_adult}, \\ 1 - |\texttt{black\_child} - \texttt{black\_adult}| & \text{otherwise}, \end{cases}$$

$$\texttt{score\_middle} = \begin{cases} -\text{JW}(\texttt{middle\_adult}, \texttt{middle\_child}) & \text{adult male}[19], \\ 0 & \text{otherwise}, \end{cases}$$

$$\texttt{score\_suffix} = 1 - \text{JW}(\texttt{suffix\_adult}, \texttt{suffix\_child}).$$

(d) This yields a data set of unique matches for each student.