Creating Citizen-Subjects: Reconstruction and the Political Invention of Black Sovereignty

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Abstract

I reframe the establishment of public education in the South by Black politicians after the Civil War as a successful attempt to create a new citizen-subject in the United States. Black politicians established the right to education for Black citizens and the mechanism for its institutional and fiscal sustainability. This created a new class of citizens who were explicitly rights bearers and also had claims on resources from the state in a way that defied antebellum American norms of racialized citizenship. Moreover, once established, this right was not abolished. The expansion of the citizen-subject was further institutionalized and twentieth century expansion of civil rights was predicted on Reconstruction's expansion of the citizen-subject.

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT

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"When we consider the facts, certain chapters of American history will have to be reopened."

- Arthur A. Schomburg, "The Negro Digs Up His Past" (1925)

1 Introduction

Social science historians have noted the exceptional nature of public education in the United States. By the middle of the nineteenth century, primary school enrollment in the United States surpassed other leading economies in Europe (Easterlin, 1981), and in the next century American would expand secondary education at an unprecedented level (Goldin, 1998). The regional distinctions in these expansions are similarly noteworthy. The role of race in Southern schooling is widely acknowledged to be one reason for the South's slow progress (Margo, 1990). The inherent inefficiencies of racial segregation and the low levels of public support for schooling are well known. While average levels of school completion and years of education increased in the century between 1850 and 1950, the South remained a laggard in education (Goldin, 1998) and in returns to education (Kaboski and Logan, 2011). In short, American exceptionalism in education featured a markedly negative Southern exceptionalism as well. As a result, Southern education has been seen as a drag on America's educational trajectory, a part of the nation that was institutionally and politically committed to racial norms that resulted in markedly lower educational progress.

In this paper, I turn attention to the political foundation of public education in the South, which took place during Reconstruction (Du Bois, 1935; Foner, 2014). I disrupt the narrative of a backward Southern educational system by calling attention to the racial political economy of Southern education's establishment and its denigration thereafter. Rather than viewing Southern education as a backwater, I argue that Black policymakers made fundamental changes in the political economy of the South during the brief Reconstruction period by altering the very definition of the citizen and changing the terms of the relationship between citizens and the state. Black policymakers were critical in redefining what a *citizen-subject* would be in the postbellum period. In particular, they changed the notion of the citizen to expand to all persons without respect to gender or race, and they further obligated the state to provide a public good, education, that they saw as the right of all citizens. This expansion of who the state was obligated to and what the state was to provide to citizens was

revolutionary when considering the limited range of obligations the state had in the antebellum era.

Moreover, education itself is the practice of acculturating citizens as people both served by and subjected to the state. The fierce resistance that many White Southerners showed for the expansion of public education reflected the antebellum norms of an in-egalitarian society where rights-bearers were defined by race, gender, and wealth (Merritt, 2017). Black political activity during Reconstruction created citizen-subjects in the South in egalitarian ways that altered what the state was obligated to provide to citizens on the simple fact of them being citizens, as opposed to landowners, voters, or some other class that was a subset of nominal-citizens. Black political leaders created the class of citizen-subjects in the *United States* by obligating the state to provide a service to citizens based on their present residence and no other condition. It fundamentally altered the relationship between the citizen and the state in the South and throughout the US by codifying these relationships at the state level in a multiracial society and political federalism in a nation that only a few years earlier had declared *all* Black people non-citizens. Leveraging the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause allowed the creation of public education at the *state* level to be subject to federal purview long after Black political participation had been thwarted at the state level. Aligning with the framework that race is a political construction (Roberts, 2011), the expansion of schools as a place of Black equality was the textbook definition of the expansion of the citizen-subject.

The accepted history argues that the end of Reconstruction and the start of Southern Redemption undid the promise and progress achieved during the short Reconstruction period and its expansion of the franchise (Logan, 2020; Foner, 2014; Du Bois, 1935). While in general the South turned away from full participatory democracy once it could dismiss Black people as political participants, denying them citizenship in most respects and limiting the rights of Black Americans, it could not undo all of the obligations begun under Reconstruction. In particular, they could not undue to obligation the state had to educate all of its citizens, even if meagerly relative to other areas of the country and to White citizens within the South. The inability to eliminate public provision entirely shows that Black political leadership in Reconstruction placed at least one persistent bound on the degree to which the new citizen-subjects could be restricted. Indeed, the legal strategies that undid legal segregation began in education and were initially successful in arguing for teacher pay equalization, which had

been established in the Reconstruction era (Cascio and Lewis, 2022).

Following the conceptual outlines of Du Bois (1935); Schomburg (1925); Hartman (1997, 2007) and others, I trace out the Reconstruction histories of education in the narrative record in light of the way that Black political leaders defined and created Black people as citizen-subjects in the postbellum South. In particular, the inherent tension of the citizen-subject as a person with rights and obligations, was constantly contested with respect to Black people and to education. I argue here that Black politicians uniquely understood the role of education as establishing the basis of the citizen-subject by obligating the state to provide resources for a constituency that was not in an antebellum class of politically active constituencies. While education did not bring about a class conscious integrated political system, it did expand the duties of the state and the obligation of the state to citizens, fundamental to redefining those formerly held in bondage. In fact, the mechanisms with which the South fulfilled their obligations after Reconstruction's end were a tacit admission of the success of Black politicians in redefining the state's obligations to an expanded set of constituents.

While previous literature has long acknowledged the role of Black politicians and the Black electorate in the establishment of education in the South (Du Bois, 1935; Foner, 2014; Logan, 2020), the related change in the definition of the citizen-subject has received less attention. Indeed, Hartman (1997) argues that the subjection of the postbellum period enhanced and worsened the livelihoods of the formerly enslaved in many ways. My goal is to add nuance to this perspective by noting specifically how the educational institutions created differed from the goals of former enslavers and planted the seed to which the legal arguments which ended legal segregation in education and public accommodations would be based.

As a means of assessing the immediate effects of Black politicians on education, I follow the framework in Logan (2020) and use two empirical approaches to detect the effect of exposure to Black politicians on literacy. While current research focuses on the declines in Black education after Reconstruction's end (Jones and Schmick, 2023), I focus on the gains made while Black politicians redefined the state's obligations to citizens. While the argument here is the expansionary role Black politicians played in the notion of the citizen, the empirical approach highlights the added material gains that Black citizen-subjects received as a result of Black political representation. The first

approach uses Black politicians as an instrument for local public finance, which was the key variation in local support for public education. The second is a difference-in-differences strategy that leverages differences in exposure to Black politicians during school age during Reconstruction. Both results show that exposure to Black politicians was strongly correlated with gains in Black literacy and declines in racial gaps in literacy.

In highlighting the role that Black politicians played in redefining the citizen-subject, we can see how tensions in political economy with respect to race and citizenship played out in the century that followed. While there was no federal constitutional right to an education, the creation of these obligations in the state and the mechanisms for funding and regulating them established a new citizen-subject in Southern states that altered the political calculus of the South even as it reverted to single-party politics and disenfranchisement. The legacy of the role of creating citizen-subjects, therefore, deserves renewed focus in political and economic history.

2 Creating the Citizen-Subject in Reconstruction

Defining the citizen-subject requires us to think carefully about the prospects of citizenship as they existed immediately after Emancipation. Below, I review the history of Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction as in Logan (2020) and then use that history to operationalize the concept of the citizen-subject.

2.1 Presidential Reconstruction

Even before the American Civil War ended in May of 1865, politicians and Union officials had given serious thought to how they would rebuild the nation and incorporate the eleven states that had succeeded from the Union between December of 1860 to June of 1861.[1] Lincoln had several different thoughts on Reconstruction, and it does not appear that he had a fully drawn strategy for the process. Lincoln's proposed policies would have allowed Congress to rule on the legality of Southern elections and choose whether or not to seat elected Southern Congressmen, giving some federal role

[1]For well known histories of Reconstruction see Franklin (1961); Du Bois (1935); Foner (2014); Dunning (1907).

and Congressional oversight to the process. It was not clear how much of a role Congress was to play beyond the decision to seat representatives. Lincoln had implemented his so-called "10-Percent Plan" in late 1863, which allowed for recognition by the federal government any Southern state in which 10% of the white population swore allegiance to the United States. Specifically, if 10% of 1860 voters from each Southern state pledged allegiance to the Union, abolished slavery, and prohibited Confederate leaders and military officers from voting and officeholding they would be readmitted to the Union.[2] In his last public address, Lincoln stated that he would like to see the franchise extended to at least the educated class of Blacks and Black Union soldiers in Louisiana, which was relatively far progressed in its reconstruction in early 1865. Beyond that, Lincoln's exact goals for Black political participation were unclear.

After Lincoln's assassination, President Johnson continued with a relatively lenient Reconstruction policy and was prepared to admit former Confederate states to the union with little regard for civil rights or political participation by Blacks.[3] Republicans originally confused Johnson's antipathy for the Southern planter aristocracy with a progressive outlook on Reconstruction.[4] When President Johnson assumed office, four Confederate states had functioning local civil governments (Louisiana, Arkansas, Virginia, and Tennessee) due to war-time reconstruction measures implemented by Lincoln. In May of 1865 Johnson extended Lincoln's amnesty provisions, with restrictions on high-ranking Confederate officers and those with wealth exceeding $20,000. The next month, Johnson allowed for the calling conventions to amend state constitutions to meet his three conditions for acceptance back into the Union: the abolishing of slavery, the repudiation of Confederate debt, and the repealing of

[2]Lincoln's belief stemmed, in part, from a belief that succession was null and void. Since Blacks (free or slave) could not vote the requirement of 10% of 1860 voters was a *de facto* continuation of the white votes policy of 1863.

[3]Similar to Lincoln, Johnson believed that states had not left the Union, and therefore that states should resume normalized relations in the Union quickly. To stipulate extensive conditions on their readmission would be unnecessary as they had always remained states in the union. Radical Republicans in Congress and prominent abolitionists argued that such plans were unsatisfactory for several reasons. First, requiring only 10% of support from Southern states represented a tenuous basis for the new Southern governments. Second, the policy on Confederate amnesty was relatively lenient. Third, states did not have to guarantee freed slaves nor free Blacks any civil or political rights beyond abolition. Congressional Republicans submitted their own outline for Reconstruction which required a majority of male white voters to take the loyalty oath before a state was readmitted and with more stringent amnesty requirements for former Confederates. At the time, this was only an outline, as the President retained authority over the Reconstruction process.

[4]Charles Sumner, a noted radical Republican senator, considered he and the President to be on the same page in advocating for Black suffrage, which had become the defining issue for Radicals in the spring 1865.This was based on private conversations with Johnson in the spring of 1865 along with an oft-quoted speech of Johnson's from October 1864 in which he promised to "be their Moses" to a group of African Americans in Nashville, TN.

ordinances of secession. Beyond the restrictions on Confederate officers and wealthy Southerners (who were able to apply for individual Presidential pardons), each state was left to decide for itself who was eligible to vote and hold office in elections. Radical Republicans were surprised at Johnson's policy and were outraged at the lack of provisions for Black voting rights, which were not a stipulation for readmission under Presidential Reconstruction.[5]

In February 1866, only nine months after Johnson had issued his amnesty provision, 14,000 leading Confederates had received pardons from the President, making them eligible to hold office. Before Congress had resumed session, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida had all held elections for delegates to constitutional conventions with few restrictions on either former Confederate voting or officeholding and none with significant voting rights for Blacks. The governments that these conventions produced, along with subsequent elections held by the newly constituted states, maintained a strong pro-Confederate character. For example, these states elected to the United States Congress the Vice-President of the Confederacy, four Confederate generals, five Confederate colonels, six Confederate cabinet members, and fifty-eight members of the Confederate congress. These results were mirrored and even amplified at the state and local levels in the South, and some elected officials continued to wear their Confederate uniforms while in office. Presidential Reconstruction offered little room for Black political concerns to be addressed.

While the states did abolish slavery as directed, the reconstituted states worked to implement a post-bellum racial policy referred to as Black codes. While some of these laws did allow for Blacks to own property and initiate litigation, their chief design was to legally reinforce and re-systematize labor control in the absence of chattel slavery.[6] The codes differed from state to state, but common provisions included requirements for Black laborers to have verification of employment every year, prohibitive taxes on Black land-ownership, apprenticeship laws which allowed white employers to take over custody of Black children if their parents were deemed unfit, bans on Blacks owning firearms, and making intermarriage between a Black citizen and white citizen a felony for the Black individual.[7]

[5]The President nominally argued that Black voting rights could be given after Southern states had been re-admitted rather than as a condition for re-admittance, but by October of the same year he was openly advocating against Black suffrage claiming it would lead to extensive racial strife.

[6]See Smith (2013) for an example of Mississippi's codes from 1865.

[7]These codes, enforced upon both newly freed slaves and formerly free Blacks with no distinction between the two, ironically encouraged the development of a unified Black polity in the South which would not have necessarily formed

Johnson rejected and suppressed reports of the enforcement of Black codes and appeared to do little to stop widespread racial violence occurring in Southern states. Many Republicans disagreed with the policies but were reluctant to oppose them for fear of a split within the party.

In September of 1865, Congress denied to seat representatives from the Tennessee government which had been reconstructed under Lincoln's war-time program. By October, many Republicans began to express their concerns publicly when former rebel leaders were elected to office and the inflexibility with which Johnson supported his Reconstruction program. The rapid removal of federal troops from the South was disconcerting to Republicans as well, and this was one Johnson policy that Republicans felt left the South vulnerable to Confederate interests.[8] This growing discontent culminated in the political maneuvering by Radicals before the December 1865 session of Congress which persuaded the Clerk of the House of Representatives to refuse to include members from the former rebel states on the roll call, effectively denying these states representation and re-admittance to the Union. It was unclear what the next stage for readmission would be since neither Lincoln nor Johnson had a policy if Congress refused to seat representatives.

After refusing to seat the elected Southern representatives, Congress established the Joint Committee of Fifteen to investigate the current conditions in former rebel states. Among the Committee's principal findings were its assertion for the continuing need of a significant federal military presence in the Southern states as well as the necessity of the Freedmen's Bureau. Following the advice of the Joint Committee, the Senate passed a bill which expanded the Bureau's lifespan indefinitely.[9] Johnson somewhat shockingly vetoed the Bureau bill, calling it unconstitutional as it gave judicial power to the Bureau and terming its cost prohibitive. While Congress could not unify to defeat this Presidential veto, only a few months later Johnson again surprised nearly everyone when he vetoed a Civil Rights Bill for Freedmen. Johnson's obstinacy disturbed even Congressional moderates and his veto was quickly overturned, one of the first in American history.

Black political equality quickly became a defining issue for Presidential Reconstruction. Johnson's

otherwise (Foner, 2014).

[8]By June 1866, hardly a year after the war had ended, there remained only 3,000 troops in North and South Carolina combined.

[9]This also and validated land deeds given through the Bureau or Military Field Orders such as Sherman's Field Order 15, which had reserved a strip of land running down the Charleston to Jacksonville coastline for Freedmen homesteads.

vetoing of these bills was the first third of a triad of 1866-1867 legislation which reset the Reconstruction process. In April 1866, the same Joint Committee of Fifteen proposed a set of resolutions that would become the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The resolutions included a definition of citizenship and the disallowing of states to abridge or violate these civil rights, a clause for a reduction in the representation in Congress of any states proportional to the number of male residents it denied the franchise to and the exclusion from Congress, the Electoral Congress, and other federal offices of people who had left federal government, oath-sworn positions to aid the rebellion. Southern states re-admission was to be contingent on the ratification of the 14th amendment. The necessity of more stringent policy was reinforced by widespread Southern violence in the summer of 1866.[10] Johnson went on an ill-conceived press junket in the fall of 1866 to campaign for his Reconstruction policies while denouncing the Civil Rights Bill and the 14th Amendment. By the end of 1866 seven Southern states had already rejected the 14th Amendment, all but assuring the implementation of a more radical program and more rigorous conditions for re-admission which would include Black suffrage. Furthermore, the results of the 1866 elections gave significant strength to Radical Republicans– they now had the necessary two-thirds majority to override a presidential veto. A new, wholesale Reconstruction program was passed which placed a priority on Black suffrage. It was vetoed by Johnson and quickly passed over the President's veto. By early 1867, Congressional Reconstruction had officially begun.

2.2 Congressional Reconstruction

The Congressional Reconstruction Act passed in the spring of 1867 divided the eleven former Confederate states, except Tennessee, into five military districts: 1) Virginia, 2) North Carolina and South Carolina, 3) Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, 4) Mississippi and Arkansas, 5) Louisiana and Texas. The Act placed the former rebel states under martial law as the army commander in charge of each district was allowed to use military commissions rather than civilian courts to enforce laws. The program also specified the more stringent requirements for readmission into the Union: (1) the

[10]Most notable of these murderous instances was the bloody New Orleans Riot in June where 44 Blacks and 4 whites were killed attempting to attend a constitutional convention and the massacre in Memphis of 45 Blacks and 2 whites over two days in May.

ratification of the 14th Amendment, (2) new state constitutions which allowed for manhood suffrage irrespective of race, color, or religion, (3) approval of these new constitutions by a majority of a state's eligible voters, and (4) the establishment of governments under the new constitutions to replace the governments established under Presidential Reconstruction. Subsequent Reconstruction Acts were passed strengthening the original legislation. In March of 1867, voters were required to take a loyalty oath. In July, federal voting registrars were authorized to disenfranchise those thought to be taking the oath dishonestly. A fourth act passed in March 1868 which changed the requirement for passage of state constitutions from a majority of a state's registered voters to merely a majority of the voters who voted in the election, as many white Southerners had registered and then did not vote in hopes of preventing the ratification of the new constitutions.

The passage of the Reconstruction Act, effectively enfranchising more than one million Southern Black males, instantly stimulated Black political activity in the South. Indeed, the potential of Blacks to be active in politics was one the largest areas on conflict during Reconstruction. Black institutions and leaders, particularly churches and ministers, quickly became politicized channels of Republican organization in the South. The Union League, previously a Northern middle-class organization, became a conduit of Black political activity in the South through political education initiatives and the building of churches and schools, aimed primarily at Freedmen(Hahn, 2005; Foner, 2014). While Black support for the Republican Party was extensive to point of being unanimous, in only three Southern states (South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana) did Blacks hold an outright majority, and even with this influx of newly eligible voters there was extensive local political competition. This meant that attracting the support of whites living in the South would be critical in founding a foundation for the Republican Party in the region.[11]

In many areas of the South, Black turnout for constitutional ratification and subsequent elections exceeded 90%, even under the consistent threat of losing employment or physical violence in retaliation for voting (Du Bois, 1935; Foner, 2014). Disenfranchisement of former Confederates varied, as some states disenfranchised only those barred from office by the 14th Amendment while others had more far-reaching proscriptive measures. The resulting constitutions drafted and passed by these Southern

[11]Republicans originally hoped to attract former Whigs to the party, as the Democrats had a firm base among the Southern elite.

state conventions are notable for their progressiveness. Public responsibilities were greatly increased as provisions were made for the establishing of public school systems, orphan asylums, and homes for the mentally ill. The constitutions also abolished the extremely high poll-taxes which existed in most Southern states and also rewrote the antebellum tax codes so that tax revenues now came from assessed land values as opposed to high poll and licensing fees.

Along with the progressive nature of the newly adopted state constitutions, the Reconstruction-era Southern governments also boast many noteworthy accomplishments. One of the major and first actions of these governments was the repealing of the Black codes implemented under Presidential Reconstruction. With these discriminatory laws gone, Freedmen were finally able to move somewhat freely throughout the South and engage in labor contracts that were much more equitable than before.[12] In addition, the institutional infrastructure to provide a higher level of public goods was established. With expanded civil rights, Blacks began to assert themselves more fully by, for example, seeking legal redress for disputes. The expanded social responsibilities of government as well as the accompanying costs are best demonstrated in South Carolina. In the six years between 1870 and 1876 the enrollment in the state's public schools increased from 30,000 to 123,000 while the state budget more than doubled between 1860 and the end of Reconstruction. The period of Congressional Reconstruction represents a dramatic change in the political and social organization of the American South.

2.3 Defining Citizen-Subjects

The concept of the citizen-subject is most closely associated with the philosophical work of Étienne Balibar. His original analysis delved into the ways that inegalitarian constructions of citizenship were promoted as egalitarian. As political organizations and institutions became democratic in the eighteenth century and beyond, citizenship changed in the personal relationship that one had with the state. While still subject to the rules of the kingdom (which had merged into a nation-state), they were now in unique position to make clear demands of the state as citizens with rights that had

[12]See Litwack (1979), Foner (2014), and Higgs (1977), for white responses to Black labor's new ability to negotiate contacts. Many white planters responded by suggesting that landowners collude to set low wages, while others argued that such strategies were against free labor ideals.

to be respected. At the same time, the equality of the law can be used to further oppress subordinate groups under the guise of equal treatment. While these responsibilities of being subject to a sovereign nation were not always proportional to the rights granted by citizenship, the constraints on the state form the distinction between the citizen and non-citizen. For example, Somers (2008) discusses how contractual notions of citizenship, which create obligations and responsibilities (making one a subject), are undermined by institutions which deny recognition as citizens, which create rights that the state must secure. This leads to some having no "right to have rights" but having the obligations and responsibilities of citizenship. A citizen-subject is both responsible to and is granted rights by the state.

Following the passage of the 13th and 14th Amendments, the formerly enslaved went from being subjects of their enslavers to the class of people with citizenship. However, given that America was founded on the notion that the citizen-subject was exclusively the domain of White men with some material advantage, this citizenship was contested as soon as it was legalized (Hartman, 1997; Du Bois, 1935; Foner, 2014). In this manner, the contested citizenship is consistent with parts of Mills (1997)'s critique of the social contract as not being race neutral, but actually critical in establishing racial hierarchies under a veil of legal/contractual equality.

It is clear from the history of Reconstruction that the responsibilities of the newly emancipated were well articulated (Williamson, 1965). The freedmen were expected to be industrious, well mannered, respectable, and to adhere to social customs established during the antebellum period (Litwack, 1979). Indeed, this created a situation of *complete freedom*, as noted by Hartman (1997), in that freedmen were free from bondage but also had no resources which would enable them to fulfill the obligations required of their citizenship. The charge to be industrious, so as not to be a *burden on the state* created a situation which left Black people particularly vulnerable to their former enslavers. The terms of labor supply, the largest area of conflict, immediately presented an opportunity for Black people to assert their control over the terms of their labor, although access to legal remedies was still at their disadvantage given high levels of illiteracy and social institutions which prevented freedmen from learning more about equitable contracts (Litwack, 1979; Jones, 1985).

I delineate the citizen-subject as being the point where the state is explicitly obligated to provide

a good or service to someone that is beyond the public sphere of protection. For example, military protection would have applied to the enslaved and every other person within the sovereign state, and as such is a public provision that would not meet this definition. In the antebellum era, Jones (2018) describes how Black people articulated their citizenship in terms of rights to seek legal redress in court (a provision that the state makes to an individual citizen) as an area that was heavily contested and which varied by state. Ultimately, the *Dred Scott* decision would be used to deny citizenship to all Black people, irrespective of enslaved status. As noted in the decision, there were no rights which any Black person had that required respect (acknowledgment) by a White person. Clearly this extended to the state as well, and the very existence of its variation showed the precarity of any notion of Black citizenship in the antebellum era.

Requiring the state to provide a *consumable* pubic good was in direct conflict with the notion that freedmen could be citizen-nots in American society. The creation of any obligation by the state to provide services is a key part of the making of the citizen in democratic society. Importantly, these obligations from the state are a function of citizenship, not of political participation. For example, requiring the state to provide services for those who are ineligible to vote due to age or gender is an extension of the notion of citizenship insofar as it obviates any reciprocity via political participation. The votes of those ineligible for office cannot be bought nor bartered, and therefore the offering of services is not a means to secure their support, but rather a requirement given their citizenship. The notion of birthright citizenship is an important nuance to this implementation of the idea of a citizen-subject, in that obligations are created on the state to persons by nature of their being citizens, which occurs at the time of birth itself.

3 Creating Citizen-Subjects

Amidst the political changes brought by Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction, the enfranchisement of Black men brought a new class of political leaders who sought to define new priorities for government. I argue that Black politicians articulated a new and novel idea of a citizen-subject. Given the similarity in racial relations between Jim Crow and the antebellum era and the relative lack

of labor mobility until the Great Migration, many scholars have not studied the effects of Reconstruction as an event which could have led to substantial changes in local institutions. Reconstruction, as noted by Foner (2014); Du Bois (1935); Franklin (1961); Williamson (1965) was not a brief aberration from antebellum institutions, but a dramatic change in political, economic, and social relations in the South. Although relatively brief, the political activity of Blacks during this time was one of the most momentous changes of the nineteenth century. Empirically, isolating these effects has been challenging as politicians, voting, and political competition changed simultaneously during Reconstruction.

3.1 Clarifying the Role of the State

In establishing the provision of public education, Black political leaders were clearly at the vanguard of the movement. Before that time, attempts to establish public education in the South were limited and largely unsuccessful (Du Bois, 1935). For example, Bond (1939) notes that: "It was not until 1853-1854 that the General Assembly [of Alabama] attempted to set up a state-wide public school system" (p. 74). While a fund designed to equalize the sum of state and local support for schools was enacted, "In 1857 total expenditures of $564,210 were reported; more than one-half of the cost of the schools was paid by the parents of the pupils attending the schools" (p. 75). Du Bois (1935) further establishes that: "Public education for all at public expense, was, in the South, a Negro idea...for the most part, no adequate provision was made for the education even of the poorer whites" (p. 638). More recent histories of Southern Whites, such as Merritt (2017), confirm DuBois' suggestion that public education was considered pauper relief in the antebellum South. In 1860, for example, less than 5% of Black children in the United States aged 5 to 14 went to school and only slightly more than 11% were in school in 1870 (for white children, 63% were in school 1860).

It is important to stress that racial inequality in public education, even in parts of the country where it had been well established, was endemic. Gillette (1979) notes: "The evidence suggests that the custom of maintaining racial segregation in the schools was more prevalent in 1874 than the laws indicated (notably in New Jersey and Illinois, but in other states as well), that strict and explicit racial separation tended to be more widespread in states controlled by Democrats, and that separate schools existed virtually everywhere the blacks were numerous, including the lower northern states of

New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas" (p. 194). In this way, the establishment of segregated schools in the South was not, in fact, different from the patterns seen in Northern states. In the South specifically, the notion of education Black citizens was seen as wasteful, at best, and dangerous, at worst. That such a principle could be advanced and codified has not been sufficiently acknowledged in the history of Reconstruction.

Education, to Black policymakers, was a right that the state was to both provide and protect. As Cruden (1969) argues: "the first real commitment of the South to unrestricted public education supported by general taxation came with the Reconstruction governments....blacks themselves, who held education to be a matter of right and perceived its role in their future progress" (p. 64). Education was not only something that would enhance citizenship, it was also something that the state was responsible for providing to citizens.

3.2 The Mechanisms of State Support

Crafting an edict for education would be meaningless without a system to support it. Unfortunately, Southern states did not have an extensive tax base nor many institutional primitives necessary to finance and oversee a public education system. The provision of education also created a unique problem of political economy insofar as education represents an intergenerational transfer. Indeed, Becker (1991) has noted that the establishment of schooling as a sign of modernity and citizenship. Removing the training of children from the home the home is a tacit admission that parental training would be insufficient for proper human capital development of children. The expectation from such a system is that children would provide old-age support via the state as the completing of the circular transfer.[13] This, in fact, is consistent with the creation of citizenship for Black adults as they are seen as being obligated to the state, but this was consistent with other obligations required of Freedmen (Hartman, 1997). The specific obligation to Black children, however, alters the traditional parameters usually applied to postbellum obligations placed upon Freedmen (Litwack, 1979; Hahn, 2005).

That each state would ultimately decide on an educational system funded by a combination of

[13]The development of Social Security during the Depression is seen as being consistent with this claim. The exclusion of Black Americans from many aspects of the federally provided benefits is well known, limiting the fulfillment of the transfer. Even the pensions for Black Union Army troops, the earliest form of old age pensions for a large group in US history, featured extensive racial discrimination at the extensive and intensive margins (Eli et al., 2023).

local and state taxes devoted to education was not a given at the time (Smith, 1974). As Lynch (1913) described, legislators faced the issue of funding with options: "either the rate of taxation must be materially increased or interest bearing bonds must be issued and placed upon the market, thus increasing the bonded debt of the State" (p. 49). The merits of having a system with bonds may have appeared efficient at the time, especially considering that states were issuing bonds for railroad construction. Placing bonds on the market would also avoid contentions that taxpayers were paying for the education of children who should not be provided with public education. At the same time, taxation created a direct obligation of the state via its citizens in a compact, and the general nature of the tax system meant that both Black and White citizens would be responsible for the system. For these reasons, Lynch (1913) strategic factors related to a sustainable system and one that would involve the financial support of Freedmen settled on "the plan agreed upon was to materially increase the rate of taxation" (p. 49). In South Carolina the funding "was not wholly funded by property owners, as legislators recognized that those without property would also have children in the system. The poll tax of one dollar was approved on every male above the age of 21" (Williamson (1965), p. 225).

Black legislators recognized the citizen-subject dimensions of the enterprise, even if they did not have the language to express it. Williamson (1965) describes how in South Carolina "a Negro delegate declared to the convention during the discussion on the school system, 'but to lay a foundation that will be for the general welfare of the people in all future time'" (p. 225). (Cruden, 1969) describes in Alabama "Negroes pointed out training for citizenship, emphasizing that, 'In a Republic, education is especially necessary, as the ignorant are always liable to be led astray by the arts of the demagogue" and further that "education was a public responsibility and that in many areas, both North and South, Negroes were taxed to support public schools from which their children were excluded" (p. 58). Bond (1939) cites Buckley's legislative efforts in Alabama as "especially directed to the work of framing into the Constitution that outline of a free public school system which, in its subsequent development, has brought opportunities of a good common school education within reach of every child in the State, without distinction of race, color, or previous condition" (p. 89).

Black legislators recognized the potential problems with a school system that was explicitly segre-

gated. Bond (1939) describes the issues in Alabama: "In the debate that followed, the Negro members stated that they wished the issue of separate schools left out of the Constitution because, while they did not want to send their children to school with white children, the threat of mixed schools would remove the temptation from future officials to maintain inferior schools for Negroes" (p. 93). That schooling would be ensured took precedent over the segregation of those schools. In deferring this matter, Black politicians established the toe-hold not only on the right of Black children to a publicly provided education, but an institutional means to secure its delivery into the future.

3.3 Binds on the End of Reconstruction

The contested issue of public school financing reflected the divide over public schools generally, which split traditional Redemption Democrats and Independents in the 1870s. White literacy declined precipitously from 1880-1900 as overall funding declined and Black-white disparities in funding grew (Foner, 2014; Smith, 1974). In Mississippi and Alabama, state taxes for education were ended, placing the burden of school financing at the local level after Blacks had been removed from office, and in Mississippi Democrats called for the abolition of the entire public education system. Holt (1977); Prince (2014); Bellesiles (2010); Williamson (1965) argue that strong Democrat opposition to tax policy and Black policy makers towards fiscal policy were turned into an argument about Black political officials being corrupt. The problems involved in starting and funding a functioning public school system, which included paying for construction of school buildings, paying teachers, and organizing the administration of public education were all viewed as fraught with fraud that was attributed to the racially egalitarian provision of public education.

Local and grassroots White resistance to Reconstruction-era public finance was common during Redemption. The Charleston Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution in 1871 to encourage local businesses to simply stop paying all taxes, and withholding of taxes became a means to overthrow local Black political leaders (Current, 1988; Bellesiles, 2010). Duncan (1986) outlines the general restrictions on local public finance during Redemption, and Rabinowitz (1982) shows how Whites systematically removed Black politicians from offices that controlled public finance during Redemption. For example, Foner (2014) documents the abolition of several state boards of education during Redemption. In

1875 there was a tax limit for public schools placed into the Alabama state constitution by landowners (Bond, 1938). In Vicksburg, criticism of taxes was used as a justification for racial violence (Gillette, 1982).[14] In Texas, Governor Roberts vetoed appropriations for public schools as a matter of fiscal conservatism (Woodward, 1971).

Violence was also a tool used against Black public education. In Mississippi in 1871 there was "a rampage of arson and murder in eight counties, burning school houses and torturing and killing teachers. As a result, by the summer of 1871 some counties had no schools in operation...Elsewhere in the Southern states the violence was more restrained: teachers were threatened and beaten; in many instances school houses were burned. Most of the violence ws directed, of course, against black schools and the teachers in black schools, and it was sporadic rather than systematic" (Cruden (1969), p. 66).

Even with the changes in school financing, particularly the end of local fiscal mechanisms, Southern Democrats could not end the system of public education entirely. They faced two issues. First, Whites of all socioeconomic statuses came to value public education, and ending the entire system threatened the political support that White Democrats required to govern. While they were successful in lowering funding for the schools, they could not eliminate it. Second, and most important here, the right of education for Black children was now established as law, and the requirements of the state to support them had become accepted *practice* in every Southern state. That is, while states moved to rework state constitutions to their liking during Redemption, which included the creation of disenfranchisement schemes that limited citizenship (Hahn, 2005), they could not alter the citizenship status of Black children and the obligation of the state to provide education to them. Nevertheless, Woodward (1971) and Valelly (2004) describe how the average length of the school term declined by 20% and expenditures per pupil declined by 60% from 1871 to 1880. Du Bois (1935) notes the decrease in school enrollment from 1874-1876 when Democrats seized control of the Arkansas legislature. Smith (1974) describes the general pattern of not only declining support for Black schools, but increases in the interracial transfer of resources from Black taxpayers to White schools. By 1900, Black families in the South were paying for all of the expenses related to Black education and a part of the cost of

[14]Conservatives also hoped that the Supreme Court would invalidate the provisions of the Civil Rights Bills that provided for equal access to public education (Gillette, 1982).

White education as well. The bind at the extensive margin, however, has been underappreciated in the contrasting the antebellum and post-Reconstruction periods. The citizen-subject, in this instance, Black children, had been successfully created and entrenched into political economy. Even with divestment and derision, the establishment of the educational system was firm and continued in its established segregation long after Black citizens were disenfranchised.

Part of the reason for the persistence was the fact that the pauper system of education that had been nascent in the antebellum era proved unworkable after Reconstruction. The institutional features of Southern education had provided for the basic capital and labor of a relatively comprehensive system of primary education. Wharton (1947) finds that in Mississippi: "The legislature made no effort to change the fundamental principles of the educational system. Their attack on expenditures, however, was immediate and drastic" (p. 247). There was a 25% reduction in expenditures for education, and a disproportionate decline in Black teacher pay. By 1890, the average salary of Black teachers was $23.20 and white teachers was $33.37. Du Bois (1935) concedes that the segregated system, and particularly the control that Black people had over Black public education, may have been critical for seeing the system survive in any form after Redemption: "The counterrevolution of 1876 drove most of these, save the teachers, away. But already, through establishing public schools and private colleges, and by organizing the Negro church, the Negro had acquired enough leadership and knowledge to thwart the worst designs of the new slave drivers..they built and inner culture which the world recognizes in spite of the fact that it is still half-strangled and inarticulate" (p. 667).

Not only was the creation of a citizen-subject via the right to a public education itself an act which defied racial norms of the time, the durability of this right is all the more remarkable given the deep retrenchment on other issues. What has not been sufficiently appreciated is the fact that Black policymakers created and established a right that would endure past extensive Black political participation. By crafting education as a state right, the guarantees of the Fourteenth Amendment, even in the shadow of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) allowed for the continuation of public education for Black citizens. In some ways, this durability in spite of an environment where other public goods and accommodations were restricted only enhances the proposition that the creation of the citizen-subject was novel in ways that could not have been known at the time.

4 Education Effects of Black Political Leaders

4.1 Effects via Local Tax Policy

While the argument here has been institutional, there are more granular ways to asses and quantify the effectiveness of the creation of citizen-subjects by Black politicians. Beyond their general advocacy of public education, as political leaders they had the administrative means to improve material outcomes for Black children. Quantifying this effect of Black political prerogatives on granular outcomes follows a recent literature which has attempted to directly assess the effects of Reconstruction-era political leadership on Black citizen. The strategy to analyze the effect of Black politicians on educational outcomes here is inspired by the methodology of Logan (2020). Logan (2020) analyzed the effect of Black politicians on local taxes and used Free Blacks as an instrumental variable for Black politicians. Here, the results come from a two-stage regression where the first stage is county taxes, the within-state variation in education funding, as a function of Black officials (or free Blacks) as identified in Foner (1996). This allows for an intuitive interpretation of the marginal effect of increases in tax revenue on educational outcomes by focusing on the within-state variation in taxes driven by Black politicians. What is leveraged here is that during Reconstruction, significant local taxation revenues were used in support of schools as discussed earlier.

The effect is estimated in a standard two-stage least squares framework where Black politicians are used as an instrument for local tax revenue:

$$\tau_{i,s} = \phi + \eta BlackPoliticians_{i,s} + \Lambda X_{i,s} + \rho_s + \epsilon_{i,s} \tag{1}$$

$$EducationalOutcome_{i,s} = \alpha + \beta_{IV}\hat{\tau}_{i,s} + \Gamma X_{i,s} + \theta_s + \epsilon_{i,s} \tag{2}$$

To motivate the interpretation of the IV estimates it is useful to think of the experimental analog. Locations with few Black politicians serve as a control group and those with more Black politicians serve as a treatment group. If Black politicians influence local tax revenues, we would expect to see larger per capita revenues in counties with more Black politicians. If the exclusion restriction

holds, this identifies the causal effect of tax revenues on educational outcomes since Black politicians, conditional on the controls, have no direct effect on educational outcomes.

Table 1 shows the results for the tax revenue effect on educational outcomes, where Black officials (Panel A) and free Blacks (Panel B) are used in a first stage to predict 1870 county taxes. The effect of tax revenue on Black and White school enrollment is economically and statistically significant. Similarly, the effect on child illiteracy for Blacks is large. Moving forward in time, the literacy effects measured at the county level in 1900 show that larger tax revenues are correlated with higher levels of Black and White adult literacy in 1900. In proportional terms, the effect of taxes is much larger for Blacks than Whites, which is consistent with the predicted taxes (via Black officials) having a larger proportional effect on Black educational outcomes. The strength of this relationship is significantly muted when using Free Blacks, however, suggesting that the effect through political representation was much stronger than one that would operate socially in areas with more free Blacks. Moreover, the results for the effect of taxes, predicted by the number of Black officials, are substantially greater than the OLS estimates. Overall, these results, while suggestive, support the central argument that Black political leadership resulted in fundamental extensions of public goods to Black people as citizens.

4.2 Difference-in-Differences Estimates

The first method considered group-level estimates of Black politician effects on schooling-related outcomes. Here, we turn to more granular estimates of education effects. The direct strategy I take here is to consider exposure to Black politicians during school age and to see if such exposure altered the time-trend of Black literacy. Taking the complete census returns in 1920, I estimate birth cohort literacy by race.[15] This is in contrast to measures which look at state-level changes due to Redemption. For example, variation at the state level, combined with estimates of Reconstruction-era teacher counts, was used in Jones and Schmick (2023) to estimate the impact of education reforms on Black human capital progress. This is in line with a general framework which looks at education production function inputs. Thinking of education as the result of political prerogatives of Black policymakers, however, requires a different approach. Table 2 shows estimates from a difference-in-

[15]The use of 1920 is to ensure that schooling for the men was completed.

differences specification for cohorts of Black men. The parallel trends assumption is straightforward to address– as noted earlier, there was no discussion of expanded Black educational opportunities nor political participation, before the end of the Civil War. Using adult literacy as the outcome, I exploit the variation of Black politicians over space as shown in Figure 1. Specifically, I estimate:

$$BlackLiteracy_{i,j,s} = \alpha + \beta_1 PostReconstruction_{j,s} + \beta_2 BlackPolitician_{i,s}$$

$$+ \beta_3 PostReconstruction * BlackPolitician_{i,j,s}$$

$$+ \phi_j + \gamma_s + \epsilon_{i,j,s} (3)$$

For cohort j in county i in state s. The parameter β_3 estimates the difference-in-differences of literacy rates for Black cohorts exposed to Black politicians during Reconstruction. This effect is estimated net of state fixed effects (γ) and non-linear time trends in cohort literacy rates (ϕ). Using all Black men born from 1820 to 1870, who would have come of age before and after exposure to Reconstruction schooling, Table 2 shows that Black men exposed to politicians indeed have higher literacy rates.[16] Given the overall literacy rates of 53.7% for Black men exposed to Reconstruction schooling, the estimate of 0.033 implies a 6.1% increase in literacy due to exposure to Black politicians.

Equally important, exposure to Black political leaders could have altered the gap in literacy between Blacks and Whites. The difference in literacy (White - Black) rates overall was 46.7%. For those exposed to schooling in Reconstruction the gap narrowed to 35.2%. To see if exposure to politicians narrowed the gap in racial literacy differences I estimate a similar regression where the dependent variable is the cohort-specific racial difference in literacy rates. Using all men born between 1820 and 1870, Table 2 shows that the gap in literacy between Black and White men was lower for those exposed to Black politicians. Given a baseline difference in literacy of 35.2% for those exposed to Reconstruction schooling, Table 2 shows that the literacy gap closed by 7.6% for those exposed to Black politicians.[17] As with the results in the previous section, here we see that direct exposure

[16] While one concern in using the 1920 census is that the oldest cohorts would experience education-correlated mortality (where literate men would be more likely to survive), this would influence the results only to the extent that this varied significantly by race and residency in a county which has Black officeholders.

[17] Results for both specifications (DD and DDD) are similar when using only men born from 1840-1870.

to Black political leaders while school-aged is related to an increased level of the average educational outcome for those exposed, and a lessening of the racial literacy gap itself.

5 Conclusion

Creating commitments from the state to citizens is a fundamental part of the process by which the sovereign binds constituents to the state and each other. Reconstruction presented an unprecedented opportunity to expand citizenship, but also presented a challenge of making that establishment meaningful and directly tied to some material outcome. Confronting with the antebellum establishment of racial citizenship, where Black people were deemed to be non-citizens regardless of enslaved status, adding even more urgency to the need to bring about some definition of citizenship that would be tangible. While Black politicians also considered wealth transfers and tax policy, I argue here that the establishment of public education in the South was central to the creation of a Black citizen-subject in the United States after the Civil War.

Public education worked to create citizen-subjects in several ways. First, it explicitly obligated the state to provide a tangible benefit to a group of citizens who were not defined by their political participation. Citizenship as a matter of birth and residence reorients the meaning of citizenship in the postbellum era. Second, the mechanism of providing that support called for taxation at various levels, including the state. This placed a requirement of provision at multiple levels of government, requiring cooperation to provide services. Specifically for the matter of citizenship, Black taxpayer contributions were noted as being a critical fiscal component– the idea being that Black adults (as citizens themselves) must provide a means of support for this service to other citizens. Third, the education provided was under the control of Black people themselves. Although initially started with extensive support from missionary societies and private gifts, Black public education became a public good provided by the government for its citizens. While this did not remove White influence from Black education, it did establish a sphere of Black agency in a public good.

As Du Bois (1935) noted, despite the racial inequality of education after Redemption, in only a few years Black educational outcomes would "surpasses Spain and Italy, the Balkans and South America;

and this is due to the Negro college, which despite determined effort to curtail the efficiency of the Negro public school, and despite a sustained and violent attack upon higher education for black folk, nevertheless, through white Northern philanthropy and black Southern contributions, survived and furnished teachers and leaders for the Negro race at the time of its greatest crisis" (p. 637). Noting that the control of Black education was left in the hands of Black people raises another curious question about the role of Black education in citizenship. The fear that White control of the schools would impact internal workings was not fully realized. While underfunded, they were not principally governed by others.

Moreover, the education of Black children in the exclusive hands of Black people served a variety of roles in future expansion of citizenship. As noted by Kelly (2010), the education of Black teachers for Black students in the segregated schools provided culturally competent instruction. Indeed, Edmonds (2022) finds that teachers trained by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) today continue to have better outcomes for their Black students, irrespective of their own race. He posits that the teacher training provided by HBCUs is explicitly focused on their historical role in educating Black teacher for Black students. This is also consistent with the narrative of Givens (2021), who documents the implicit and explicit acts of resistance to racial oppression embodied in Black teachers and their independently taught and practiced pedagogical practices.

At the policy level, Cascio and Lewis (2024) quantifies the role of legal challenges to the unequal pay for Black teachers in Southern states. In places that equalized pay in response to the legal challenges, they find that Black education outcomes improved, including grade progression. The success of these challenges laid the groundwork to challenge segregated education, which would eventually be achieved in the mid 1950s.[18] The end of legal segregation in public education came a decade before the end to segregation in public accommodations, and the distinction between rights of citizens with respect to education versus commerce played a role in that delay. That distinction was articulated during Reconstruction for Black citizens.

Citizenship continues to be a contested issue along racial lines. The beginnings of that process

[18]Whites would respond by creating their own private schools in areas that had segregated schooling previously, particularly rural areas. To this day, more than 10% of private school students in the United States attends one of these "segregation academies," and their existence served to blunt the effects of desegregation in the rural South (Graves, 2024).

started in Reconstruction, and Black policymakers designed the first steps toward the creation of some semblance of a citizen-subject among Black people. Being able to define an obligation of the states to its citizens as well as a mechanism to support it through public policy, grafted Black people into citizenship in a unique way that has not been appreciated before. That such an achievement was realized in a federalist system of autonomous states is a remarkable achievement of Black political history. Not only did Black lawmakers create citizen-subjects, their policy unknowingly paved the way for future expansion of Black citizenship and agency.

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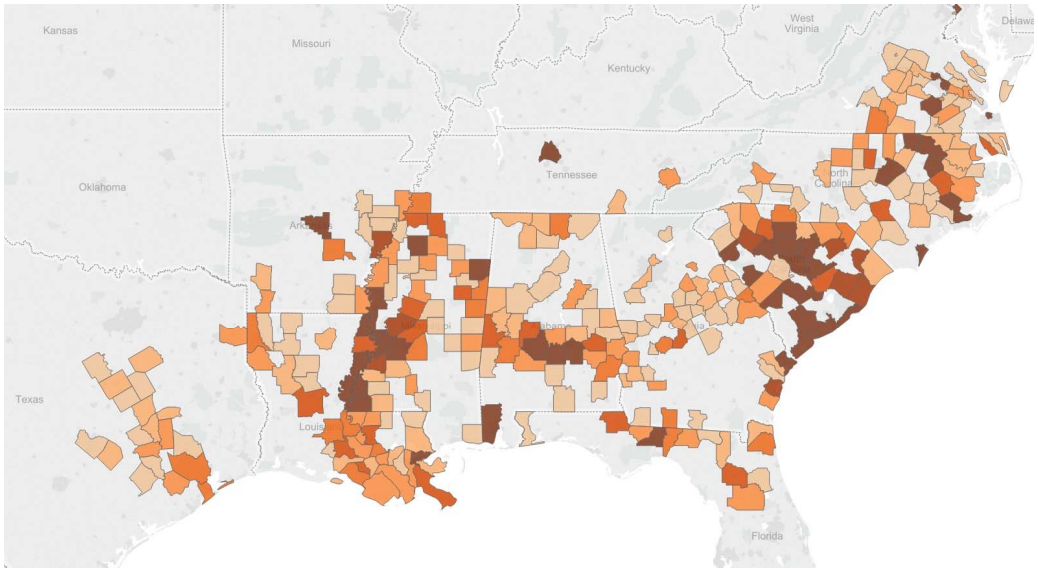

Figure 1: Spatial Distribution of Black Officials During Reconstruction. Source: Foner (1996)

Table 1: Two-Stage Estimates of Educational Outcomes as a Function of County Taxes

Panel A: Black Officials as First Stage Predictor of Taxes	Black				White			
	Enrollment	Cannot Write Age > 10	Cannot Write Age >15	1900 Age >20 Literacy	Enrollment	Cannot Write Age > 10	Cannot Write Age >15	1900 Age >20 Literacy
1870 County Per Capita Taxes	365.59***	-138.79***	15.55	0.0932***	391.18***	-175.25***	-127.74***	0.0351**
	(50.766)	(24.887)	(18.300)	(0.0205)	(92.837)	(35.575)	(25.822)	(0.0133)
F Statistic on Excluded Predictor					56.0			
Coefiicient on Black Officials (First Stage)					0.09886***			
					(0.0132)			

Panel B: Free Blacks as First Stage Predictor of Taxes	Black				White			
	Enrollment	Cannot Write Age > 10	Cannot Write Age >15	1900 Age >20 Literacy	Enrollment	Cannot Write Age > 10	Cannot Write Age >15	1900 Age >20 Literacy
1870 County Per Capita Taxes	320.16**	-112.97*	-127.79*	-0.044	461.53*	-176.935*	-87.387	-0.0352
	(126.28)	(64.294)	(63.852)	(0.0553)	(267.815)	(99.106)	(62.365)	(0.0368)
F Statistic on Excluded Predictor					6.859			
Coefficient on Free Blacks (First Stagte)					0.000244**			
					(0.0000931)			

Panel C: OLS Estimates								
1870 County Per Capita Taxes	42.20***	-39.66***	-19.22***	0.0201***	156.6***	-2.854	0.428	-8.68e-05
	(6.603)	(5.454)	(4.618)	(0.00470)	(22.69)	(6.983)	(4.985)	(0.00322)

Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

N= 974. Regressions include total value of farms in 1870, the Logan-Parman segregation measure, percent black, total population, manufacturing wages, value of manufacturing output, number illiterate, rail access, water access, urban county, county wealth, and state fixed effects

Table 2: Exposure to Black Officials and Education

Panel A:				
	Black Literacy Rate			
Black Officials in County	-0.0221***	-0.0217***	-0.0193***	-0.0198***
	(0.00388)	(0.00413)	(0.00365)	(0.00383)
Exposed to Schooling	0.183***	0.184***	0.396***	0.388***
	(0.0169)	(0.0170)	(0.00270)	(0.00274)
Black Officials * Exposed to Schooling	0.0368***	0.0361***	0.0340***	0.0334***
	(0.00649)	(0.00640)	(0.00636)	(0.00629)
Observations	48,376	48,376	48,376	48,376
R-squared	0.099	0.116	0.177	0.194
State Effects		X		X
Birth Cohort Effects			X	X
Percent Effect on Black Literacy Rate	6.85	6.72	6.33	6.22

Panel B :				
	Racial Difference in Literacy Rate			
Black Officials in County	0.0380***	0.0388***	0.0387***	0.0397***
	(0.00376)	(0.00403)	(0.00363)	(0.00399)
Exposed to Schooling	-0.144***	-0.145***	0.297***	0.293***
	(0.0150)	(0.0151)	(0.00259)	(0.00259)
Black Officials * Exposed to Schooling	-0.0269***	-0.0271***	-0.0276***	-0.0279***
	(0.00709)	(0.00710)	(0.00702)	(0.00703)
Observations	46,130	46,130	46,130	46,130
R-squared	0.050	0.064	0.091	0.105
State Effects		X		X
Birth Cohort Effects			X	X
Percent Effect on Literacy Rate Difference	7.66	7.72	7.86	7.95

Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustrered at birth cohort level.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Regressions use 1920 complet count census. Literacy is calculated by county-birth cohort for men born 1820-1870 in US South. Black Politicians in County is dichotimous indicator for whether there were any black policymakers serving during Reconstruction. Exposed to schooling is an indicator for all who would be aged 6-15 duirng the Reconstruction era (1865-1877). Literacy rate difference is calculated as white - black.