Resegregated Schools, Racial Attitudes, and Long-Run Partisanship: Evidence for White Backlash

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Abstract

Brown v. Board (1954) catalyzed a nationwide effort by the federal judiciary to desegregate public schools by court order, representing a major achievement for the U.S. civil rights movement. Four decades later, courts began dismissing schools from desegregation decrees in a staggered fashion, causing their racial homogeneity to rise. I leverage this exogenous source of variation in the racial mix of schools released from court orders between 1990 and 2014 to explore two key aspects of how whites react to attending schools with students of color. First, contemporaneous survey data indicate that as schools re-segregated, white students in these schools expressed more favorable attitudes towards black and Latino students. Second, present-day voter records from six Southern states of white students in schools that re-segregated show that they are significantly more likely to identify with the more racially liberal party – the Democrats – today. The findings are consistent with white students experiencing resegregation as a reduction in social threat, and indicate that school desegregation efforts may have caused life-long shifts among white students toward racial and political conservatism.

The U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 landmark ruling *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* declared separate schools for black and white students to be unconstitutional, catalyzing battles nationwide over integrating schools along racial and ethnic lines. *Brown v. Board* instigated a series of subsequent decrees ordered by lower courts that integrated schools and subjected them to continuous court monitoring. Current evidence suggests that school desegregation efforts have led to a reduction in high school dropout rates, increases in occupational attainment and adult earnings, and higher test scores for black students (Guryan, 2004; Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin, 2009; Johnson, 2011). Public opinion data also indicate that a majority of parents of all races want their children to attend racially diverse schools (Frankenberg and Jacobsen, 2011).

Although the positive long-term consequences of school desegregation among black students are well studied, there are few studies on the long-term consequences of changing the racial makeup of schools among white students. A substantial body of work examines the effects of racial diversity in adulthood on whites, but we know less about how white Americans' exposure to different racial environments in school affects their long-term political behavior, especially their partisanship. Addressing this gap in our knowledge can deepen our understanding of the full consequences of school segregation and desegregation, as well as help us better understand underpinnings of contemporary partisan identification.

There are reasons to think the effects of school racial diversity on white partisanship later in life might be significant: evidence suggests that experiences in adolescence shape how whites feel about racial minorities (Bigler, Jones and Lobliner, 1997), and we know that racial attitudes are strongly associated with partisanship (Tesler, 2012*a*; Kinder and Dale-Riddle, 2012). However, the direction of the relationship between exposure to racial diversity

and partisanship is unclear. On the one hand, proximity to people of color has been linked to increased prejudice among non-Hispanic white Americans (Goldman and Hopkins, 2016). Previous work has also found that when ethnic majority group members are in close proximity to ethnic minorities the former experience proximity as a signal of cultural distance from the latter, triggering exclusionary preferences from ethnic majority group members (Brader, Valentino and Suhay, 2008; Hainmueller, Hangartner and Pietrantuono, 2017). With heightened perceptions of difference, the expectation is that whites are more likely to identify as Republicans to distance themselves from the more racially diverse electoral base of the Democratic Party and because of their attraction to the Republican Party's more racially conservative policies (Tesler and Sears, 2010; Craig and Richeson, 2014; Abrajano and Hajnal, 2017). On the other hand, contact theories purport that as exposure to racial out-groups increases, in-group members have more opportunities to correct out-group stereotypes, particularly under conditions fostering inter-group collaboration towards meeting common goals (Allport, 1954). As positive out-group attitudes are sustained throughout adolescence into adulthood, the contact hypothesis leads to the expectation that whites exposed to racial diversity in adolscence should be instead more likely to identify as Democrats, a party that has become increasingly racially diverse and taken racially liberal policy positions over time (Gerring, 2001; Black, 2004; Lewis-Beck, Tien and Nadeau, 2010; Kam and Kinder, 2012).

Contact and cultural threat theories of intergroup relations have each found empirical support in higher educational settings. Studies in which white college students are randomly assigned either a white or other-race roommate, for example, have produced conflicting results. Interracial roommates have been shown to experience less positive emotion, have fewer feelings of closeness, and have less satisfaction with each other compared to same-race

roommates (Towles-Schwen and Fazio, 2006; Shook and Fazio, 2008; Trail, Shelton and West, 2009). But other research finds that students paired with an interracial roommate exhibit more positive affect toward outgroups and less automatic activation of stereotypes (Van Laar et al., 2005; West et al., 2009; Shook and Clay, 2012).

Here I take a step further back in the life-cycle and examine what kind of effect racial diversity in high schools has on whites' partisanship later in life. In order to identify a causal effect, I leverage a pair of Supreme Court cases in the early 1990s that concluded courts should stop monitoring the racial integration efforts of school districts.[1] As of 1990, about 470 school districts across 30 states were still under a court ordered desegregation plan. Between 1990 and 2014 some districts were dismissed from their desegregation plans by the courts (i.e. the courts stopped monitoring their integration efforts) while others were not. These dismissals are a plausibly exogenous source of variation in white students' exposure to non-white students because, as others have shown and I confirm here, the dismissals and their timing were idiosyncratic in nature and plausibly unrelated to student racial attitudes. The non-dismissed districts are the appropriate counterfactual because they petitioned for dismissal but had not yet been dismissed as of 2014. Recent work has found gradual within-district increases in racial and ethnic segregation over time following dismissal from these plans relative to districts that remained under court order (Reardon et al., 2012). This paper is the first to causally identify whether increased racial segregation within school districts over time has long-term effects on the political behavior of whites.

To assess whether dismissal from court order leads to changes in attitudes towards people of color among non-Hispanic white students, I first link data on dismissal decisions with a

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[1] *Freeman v. Pitts (503 US 467, 1992); Missouri v. Jenkins (515 US 70, 1995)*

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nationally representative survey of twelfth-graders conducted annually from 1990 through 2014. I show that dismissal from court order and the subsequent increase in racial segregation in these schools led white students to be more likely to hold favorable attitudes towards students of other races and ethnicities, and that this effect became stronger over time.

To link adolescent schooling with adult partisanship, I used web-scraping techniques to extract first names, surnames, and graduation years for individuals registered on Classmates, a social networking site reconnecting adults who attended high school together. I obtained this information for individuals who attended high schools in districts in the six states, all located in the South, where courts were monitoring school districts in 1990 and whose voter records provide information on registered voters' present-day race and partisanship: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. I then matched this information with the national voter file using fastLink, a procedure to merge large data sets by name that accounts for uncertainty inherent in merging procedures (Enamorado, Fifield and Imai, 2019).

I find that attending school in a re-segregated district shifts whites' partisanship later in life toward the Democratic Party by about 3.5 percentage points, an effect that is stronger for students who attended schools with a higher proportion of white students. The results corroborate the predictions from cultural threat theories emphasizing the negative consequences of exposure to out-groups, which hold that whites' proximity to people of color should lead to a threat-like response to whites' identity. Resegregation, causing increased distance between white students and students of color, can be characterized as a reduction of this threat.

Taken in conjunction with the documented positive effects of desegregation on the ma-

terial well-being of students of color, these results are troubling. They are consistent with previous work examining the effect of proximity to out-groups on the political behavior of whites (Enos, 2016). These results also suggest that there are long-term political consequences of policies - such as market-based school choice and curriculum tracking - that contribute to the *de facto* segregation of public schools in the United States (Roda and Wells, 2013; Tyson, 2013).

These findings also imply that without careful intervention and purposeful policy, integration efforts that expose white students to students of color without meaningful chances to interact depress the probability that the beneficial outcomes predicted by contact theory will come to pass. In the context of educational settings, exposure alone may generate backlash. Opportunities for repeated and meaningful contact, such as participation on athletic teams between white students and students of color, more closely mirror conditions Allport (1954) identifies as necessary for contact to translate to positive out-group attitudes and behaviors. In the context of desegregation, educators may need to create explicit opportunities for the kind of contact that leads to learning and to the reduction of negative affect against outgroups (Pettigrew, 1998).

Whites' Adolescent Racial Attitudes & Adult Party ID

Previous work in political psychology and American political behavior provides a strong basis for the expectation that exposure to racial minority groups in adolescence leads to differences in partisan identification among whites, driven by changes in whites' racial attitudes. Yet, how exposure to racial minorities affects whites' racial attitudes, and ultimately party iden-

tification, is unclear. Blalock (1967) theorized that as minority groups increase in size and visibility, whites as a group perceive a threat to their majority. In turn, they respond to this threat by developing more negative attitudes towards racial minority groups. Development of negative out-group attitudes within educational settings aligns most closely with symbolic threat, or threats based on "perceived group differences in values, norms, and beliefs" (Velasco González et al., 2008). Evidence from American politics strongly suggests that this leads to whites' affiliating at higher rates with the Republican Party. In contrast, Allport (1954) held that as racial minority groups increase in size, providing more opportunities for intergroup contact, out-group prejudice is reduced under conditions of equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities. This framework has been applied widely to studies of school desegregation and leads to the expectation that more exposure to racial minority groups in an academic setting leads to less prejudice among white students and a higher likelihood of identifying as a Democrat (Pettigrew, 1998).

For decades, political psychologists have noted the importance of adolescent experiences in the formation of racial attitudes (Sears and Funk, 1999; Henry and Sears, 2002). Cognitive development during adolescence enables individuals to think about the meaning of race from a systematic, societal-level perspective and to consider the perspectives of diverse segments of society on race-related policies (Quintana, 1998; Sears and Levy, 2003). For whites, racial attitudes formed during adolescence should persist into adulthood because they are among the most stable of all political attitudes (Markus and Converse, 1979; Alwin and Krosnick, 1991). In fact, recent evidence demonstrates that the best predictor of whites' racial attitudes today is the amount of exposure they had to people of color in high school such that proximity to black folks during adolescence is associated with higher levels of prejudice among whites

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(Goldman and Hopkins, 2016).

Although there is consensus that adolescence is an important period for the development of racial attitudes, conflicting theoretical explanations have been offered for how racial diversity at the school-level affects whites' racial attitudes. On the one hand, evidence within schools has demonstrated that children exposed to racially diverse peers exhibit reduced adherence to racial stereotypes and reduced racial prejudice (Schofield and Sagar, 1983; Wood and Sonleitner, 1996; Hallinan, 1998; Schofield, 2001). On the other hand, others have demonstrated that exposure to racially diverse peers can also lead to increased adherence to racial stereotypes among white students (Perry, 2002). Educational scholars have also noted that whether racial heterogeneity at the school-level leads to cross-racial friendships is conditional on the degree of residential racial segregation within a district (Mouw and Entwisle, 2006). Therefore, it is remains an open question how changes in the level of racial heterogeneity at the school level and distribution of racial minorities among schools within a district would affect the extent to which white students feel positively or negatively towards non-white students.

In the context of a two-party system in which racial minorities are sorting into the Democratic Party and in which the parties have taken divergent positions on policies regarding race and ethnicity, evidence strongly suggests that whites' attitudes towards people of color should affect their partisanship. It has been argued that major shifts in partisanship occur over time as the social groups associated with each party change (Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2004; Goren, 2005; Mason, 2016; Mason and Wronski, 2018). After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the rise of black influence within the Democratic Party led to the decline of that party's fortune among white voters

(Carmines and Stimson, 1990). More recently, Hajnal and Rivera (2014) have argued that the growing Latino population has dramatically altered the group membership and imagery of the Democratic Party and that whites' views on Latinos and immigration relate both to partisanship and vote choice. Therefore, a white American's decision about what party to align with has been driven at least partially by her attitudes toward people of color.

Exposure to racial minorities has also been purported to affect the policy preferences and vote choice of non-Hispanic white Americans. Enos (2016) found that the demolition of a public housing project in Chicago, and subsequent removal of a large number of African American residents, led to a lower likelihood of voting for ideologically conservative candidates among whites who lived close to the public housing project. Similarly, recent work has shown that the Second Great Migration of African Americans to California in the 1940s and 1950s led to higher support for a racially charged ballot measures among whites (Reny and Newman, 2018). The findings of Enos (2016) and Reny and Newman (2018) support the hypothesis that exposure to black people leads to a higher likelihood of whites identifying with the Republican Party and fit with larger patterns in the United States noting how racial attitudes have spilled over to whites' other domestic policy preferences (Gilens, 1999; Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002; Tesler, 2012b; Chudy, 2021).

Consequently, this paper helps to tease out whether contact theory or symbolic threat theory is better supported in the context of racial and ethnic segregation in adolescence among non-Hispanic whites. To do so, I estimate the causal effect of increased segregation along racial and ethnic lines within school districts over time on long-term partisan attachments. More racial segregation implies that a larger proportion of white students are attending more predominantly white schools. On average, this results in less exposure

to members of non-white racial groups. Under a symbolic threat framework, less exposure to people of color, and hence reduced threat, translates into decreased adherence to racial stereotypes and less racial prejudice among whites. Based on the literature in American politics linking racial attitudes and racial group membership to partisanship, this would result in a higher likelihood of identifying with the Democratic Party. By contrast, under contact theory, less exposure to students of color and fewer opportunities for intergroup collaboration would lead to more racially prejudicial attitudes among whites and a higher likelihood of identifying with the Republican Party.

Identification Strategy

In the decades following *Brown v. Board*, many integration efforts were conducted under court order and monitored by federal judges. For school districts, monitoring by federal judges led to "restricting the use of so-called 'freedom of choice' students assignment plans, mandating strict racial balance quotas, and approving busing to achieve balance (see *Green v. County School Board of New Kent, 1968; Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, 1971)*" (Reardon et al., 2012, 877). But in a series of decisions in the early 1990s, the Supreme Court ruled that courts should stop monitoring the racial integration efforts of school districts and allowed them to return to neighborhood-based schooling plans.[2] In the majority opinion for the *Freeman v. Pitts (503 US 467, 1992)*, the Court "accepted segregation as a natural consequence of private American behavior" (Parker, 1999, 1171). Legal scholars have characterized these decisions as the Supreme Court's "we've done enough

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[2]*Freeman v. Pitts (503 US 467, 1992); Missouri v. Jenkins (515 US 70, 1995)*

theory" (Tushnet, 1995). In practice, dismissal from court monitoring has led to the gradual resegregation of many public schools (Lutz, 2011).

The identification strategy in this paper follows the staggered difference-in-differences design first proposed by Lutz (2011), comparing within-district levels of segregation over time. As of 1990, the dismissal process had been initiated in the courts for all 470 school districts across 30 states in the sample. However, between 1990 and 2014 some districts were dismissed from their desegregation plans by the courts while others were not. Data on court-ordered dismissals come from Reardon et al. (2012) through 2010 and was extended by an analysis done by ProPublica through 2014.[3]

The as-if-random assignment and source of exogenous variation is two-fold: a) whether a district was dismissed at all during this time period and b) conditional on dismissal, the exact year a school district was dismissed. Recently, Athey and Imbens (2018) show that under random-assignment of adoption dates, the standard difference-in-difference estimator is an unbiased estimator of a weighted average causal effect. In this framework, districts that were not dismissed at all would be considered "never adopters," while districts that were dismissed could be characterized as "early," "medium," or "late" adopters conditional on the exact year they were dismissed. The element of randomness in the exact year of dismissal comes from the fact that once dismissal was initiated in the courts, the ultimate decision to dismiss the case could take up to several years (Lutz, 2011). In some cases, district judges chose to clear their dockets of desegregation cases at their own initiative (Parker, 1999). Additionally, decisions were often appealed, adding additional randomness to the date of dismissal (Lutz, 2011). Balance tests have shown that the timing of dismissal is unrelated to observable district

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[3]https://www.propublica.org/datastore/dataset/school-desegregation-orders-data

covariates such as white/black segregation levels, white/Latino segregation levels, percentage of the district that is black, white, or eligible for free lunch, per pupil expenditures, and total enrollment in the school district (Reardon et al., 2012, p. 887-88).

As such, my causal estimand of interest compares the racial attitudes and partisanship of non-Hispanic white students who entered high school right after their school district was dismissed from its court-ordered desegregation plan to students who graduated from dismissed districts pre-dismissal and to students in districts that remained under such a plan between 1990 and 2014. "Treated" individuals are those who graduated from school district d after it was dismissed from its court-ordered desegregation plan in year t. "Control" individuals are those who either (a) attended a school district that remained under court-order between 1990 and 2014 or (b) attended a school district before it was dismissed from its court-ordered desegregation plan in year t.

Resegregation and Attitudes Towards People of Color

I propose that changes in whites' racial attitudes are the primary mechanism driving the relationship between non-Hispanic whites' local racial context during childhood and partisan identification in adulthood. If increased levels of racial segregation are leading non-Hispanic whites to identify with the Democratic Party at higher rates, then we would also expect increased segregation levels to lead to more positive attitudes towards people of other races. Moreover, this effect should be most pronounced for those who attended more predominantly white high schools in dismissed school districts. To test this claim, I link the data on court decisions with an annual nationally representative survey of twelfth graders called Monitoring

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the Future (MTF), for which a randomly selected subset of respondents are asked a battery of questions pertaining to race relations. For these results, I include all 470 school districts across 30 states that are included in the court-ordered dismissal data from 1989-2014.

In order for dismissal to lead to meaningful changes in the racial attitudes of non-Hispanic white students, changes to the racial compositions of schools must be noticeable. Each year, MTF asks a random subset of students questions pertaining to the race of students present in their school. Specifically, the question is "What race are the students in your present school (if you are in school)?" The responses, along with their numeric labels, are: 'All Mine' (1), 'Almost All Mine' (2), 'Mostly Mine' (3), 'Half Mine' (4), 'Mostly Others' (5), 'Almost All Others' (6). I estimated the following specification to assess whether dismissal (and re-segregation) is associated with non-Hispanic white twelfth grade students, on average, saying that they are attending schools with fewer students of other races:

$$RS_{idst} = \rho D_{idst} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + \delta_i + \omega_s + \tau_{dt} + \epsilon_{idst} \tag{1}$$

In Equation 1, s indexes states, t indexes survey-years, d refers to school-districts, and i refers to a particular individual. RS_{idst} is student i's response to the question above coded using the corresponding numeric values. D_{idst} is the treatment of interest and equals 1 if an individual i graduated from a school in district d in state s after it was dismissal from its court-ordered desegregation plan in year t, and 0 otherwise. The model includes state, school-district, and year fixed effects, and a district-year trend. δ_i is an individual covariate vector for student i, which includes all available pre-treatment covariates: gender and education level of the student's primary caregiver(s). Standard errors are clustered at

the school-district level. As shown in Table 1(a), dismissal is associated with a statistically significant decrease in the scale by 0.72 units. This conforms with what we would expect based on the "treatment": dismissal, resulting in increased levels of segregation, is leading more students to report that their school contains fewer students of different races.

Effect of Dismissal on White Students' Racial Attitudes

Next, I assess whether dismissal is having a meaningful effect on non-Hispanic white students' racial attitudes. Responses to the racial attitudinal battery were combined into an index using inverse covariance weighting.[4] The index ranges in value from -1.5 to 1.5, with higher values indicating more favorable attitudes towards people of other races and ethnicities. The first set of empirical models employs a difference-in-differences design to estimate the effect of dismissal on the racial attitudes of non-Hispanic white twelfth grade students:

$$A_{idst} = \rho D_{idst} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + \delta_i + \omega_s + \tau_{dt} + \epsilon_{idst} \tag{2}$$

Similarly to Equation 1, s indexes states, t indexes survey-years, d refers to school-districts, and i refers to a particular individual. A_{idst} refers to student i's racial attitudes. Higher values of A_{idst} indicate more favorable attitudes towards people of color among white students. D_{idst}, θ_t, γ_d, δ_i, ω_s, and τ_{dt} follow from Equation 1. The results from Table 1(b) show that dismissal is leading to non-Hispanic white students to hold more favorable attitudes towards people of different races and ethnicities by about 0.18 units on the racial attitude index. This represents a modest increase of less than $\frac{1}{10}$ of the scale, but an increase

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[4]See Appendix A1 for details of how the index was constructed.

of about 51% from the baseline of 0.35. This is consistent with the proposition that the increase of Democratic partisanship among non-Hispanic whites, due to a district's dismissal from its court-mandated desegregation plan, is driven by changes in racial attitudes.[5]

Table 1: Effect of Dismissal on Perceived School Diversity & Whites' Racial Attitudes

Dep. Variable:	Perceived School Racial Diversity	Racial Attitudes Index
	(a)	(b)
Dismissal (0/1)	-0.722***	0.176**
	(0.243)	(0.068)
Constant	3.403***	0.35***
	(0.268)	(0.083)
Equation	1	2
Individual Covariates	✓	✓
State FE	✓	✓
District FE	✓	✓
Time FE	✓	✓
District/Time Trend	✓	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS.
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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[5]The effect of dismissal on non-Hispanic whites' racial attitudes also increases over time. See Appendix A2 for corresponding figures.

Heterogeneous Effects by Pre-Dismissal School Diversity

Next, I test whether there are heterogeneous effects of dismissal on the racial attitudes of non-Hispanic white students by pre-treatment school diversity using the specification outlined in Equation 3.

$$A_{idst} = \rho D_{idst} + \sum_{y=1}^{y=3} \beta_y PC_{si} + \alpha D_{idt} * \sum_{y=1}^{y=3} PC_{si} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + X_{dt} + \delta_i + \omega_s + \epsilon_{idst} \qquad (3)$$

A_{idst}, δ_i, and D_{idst} follow from Equation 2. PC_{si} refers to the categories 1 to 3 of the percentage of students of color at the school level in 1989 before any dismissals occurred. Each level of this category is interacted with the dismissal indicator. The primary quantity of interest is the difference in attitudes towards students of color between non-Hispanic white students in dismissed and non-dismissed districts at each level of percentage of students of color at the school level. I employ three categories for PC_{si}: 0 - 33.2% (1), 33.3 - 66.5% (2), and 66.6-100% (3). Equation 3 also includes school-district, state, and survey year fixed-effects, and a district-linear time trend, γ_d, κ_s, θ_t, and X_{dt} respectfully. Standard errors are clustered at the school district level. The results, displayed in Figure 1, indicate that dismissal only improved racial attitudes for non-Hispanic white students who attended schools in Category 1 (0 - 33.2% students of color).

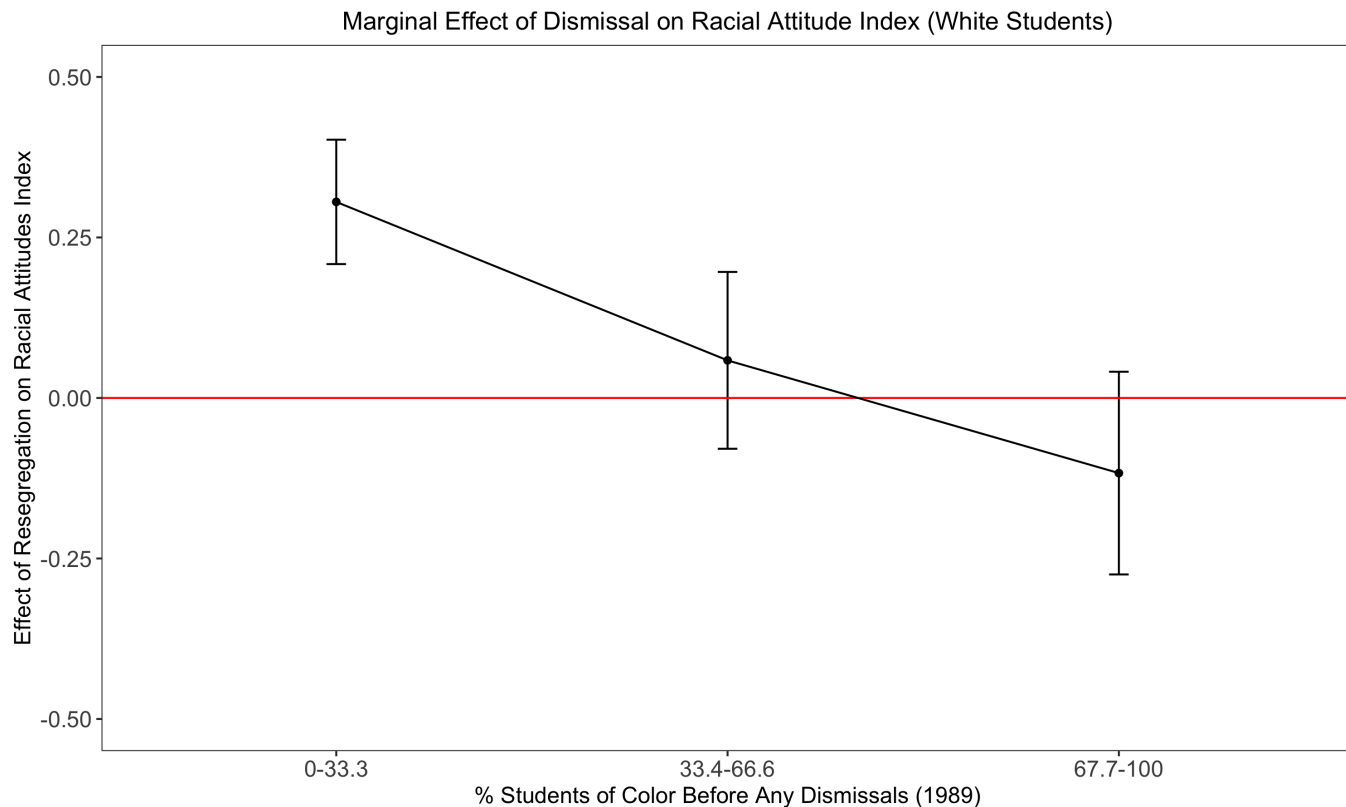Marginal Effect of Dismissal on Racial Attitude Index (White Students)

Figure 1: **Marginal Effect of School District Resegregation on Racial Attitudes by Pre-Treatment Categories of Non-White Share at the School Level** Compared to students in districts that remained under court order, non-Hispanic white students in districts that were dismissed from their court-mandated desegregation plan and who attended predominantly white schools held more favorable attitudes towards students of color by about 0.25 units on the constructed racial attitude index.

Effect of Dismissal on Whites' Adult Partisanship

The previous section provides evidence that dismissal from court-order, and the subsequent rise in segregation along racial and ethnic lines within school districts, is leading non-Hispanic white students to have more favorable attitudes towards people of color. If dismissal is affecting partisanship through changes in racial attitudes, then we would also expect dismissal to lead to higher identification among non-Hispanic whites with the Democratic Party as adults. To test this empirically, I focus on public schools in six Southern states: Florida,

Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

These six states were chosen because they met three crucial criteria. First, these states have school districts that were under a court-ordered desegregation plan as of 1990. Second, these states allow registered voters to self-identify with a racial group either voluntarily or because they are legally required to do so under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, the voter registration files from these states contain reliable information about partisan identification based on either self-identification or participation in a partisan primary. Substantively, these states are important to consider because following the enforcement of Supreme Court rulings in the 1950s and 1960s, school districts in the South were more integrated than anywhere else in the country (Orfield and Yun, 1999; Cascio et al., 2008). Such districts therefore present a good opportunity to test whether changes in racial segregation levels led to changes in the political behavior of whites because their integration efforts were considered moderately successful.

Within these states, 86 districts were released from court monitoring and 111 were still being monitored by the courts as of 2014.[6] Figure 2 displays a map of school districts in the six states mentioned above indicating their dismissal status at the end of this period. It shows that school districts under court-ordered desegregation plans as of 1990 were not geographically clustered within states.[7] Lastly, others have already demonstrated that dismissal

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[6]See Appendix A3 for the distribution of dismissed and non-dismissed districts over time in these six states between 1990 and 2014.

[7]There are three primarily reasons why not all school districts are in the sample. Firstly, it is important to note that not all school districts were put under court-ordered desegregation plans after *Alexander v. Holmes* (1969) because they did not contain a sizable enough proportion of racial minority groups to warrant an integration plan. Secondly, there were a handful of districts that were put under a court-enforced desegregation plan after 1969 but were dismissed before 1990. These were districts that the court ruled

from court-order has led to the resegregation of public schools across all grades and all 470 school districts. I have replicated this finding among public high schools within these six states to alleviate concerns that dismissal only had a meaningful impact on the segregation levels of elementary and middle schools.[8]
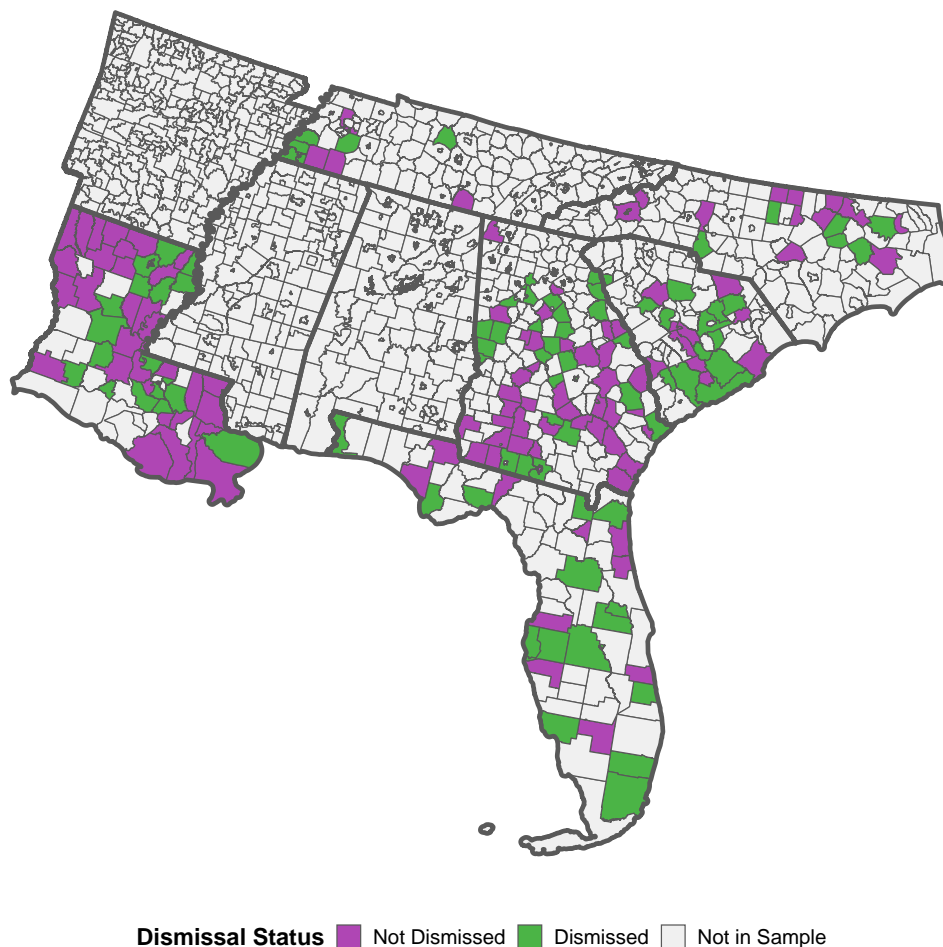

Figure 2: School districts by dismissal status, 1990-2014

[8]See Appendix A4 for more information.

Data Collection and Summary Statistics

I collected individual-level data for students attending public high school in the previously identified six states between 1990 and 2014. To do so, I first identified the names of high schools operating in the states' corresponding districts from the Department of Education's Common Core of Data. Among the 194 school districts, 510 high schools were identified. I then found the corresponding high school's page on Classmates, the largest social networking site geared towards reconnecting students who attended school together. I scraped each school's Classmates page and obtained data on the first name, surname, and graduation year for all individuals graduating from the school between 1970 and 2014.[9]

This process resulted in 4,152,246 unique observations for which I have data on first name, last name, birth year, school of attendance, and school district of attendance. I then matched this information with the national voter file maintained by L2 to obtain each individual's racial identification and present-day party affiliation, using fastLink, a procedure to merge large data sets by name that accounts for uncertainty inherent in merging procedures (Enamorado, Fifield and Imai, 2019). Using a posterior probability for matching of 85%, 437,804 matches were identified (10.5% match rate). Among those matched, the procedure yielded about 117,708 matches for non-Hispanic white American registered voters who graduated from a public high school in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, or Tennessee between 1990 and 2014 and resided in one of these six states as of 2020.[10] Importantly, the gender and partisan make-up of matched individuals closely mirrors

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[9]Approved by New York University's Institutional Review Board under protocol IRB-FY2020-3872.

[10]This captures individuals who lived in one of these six states even if they did not attend high school there. For example, if someone graduated from a school in Florida but lived in Georgia in 2020, they are included in the data. However, someone who graduated from a school in Florida but resided in Texas in

the overall gender and partisan demographics of non-Hispanic whites within the same age range from these six states on average.[11] Other matched respondents either self-identified with a different racial group or lived within one of these states and declined to self-identify. Therefore, the results presented might be limited in scope to those who felt comfortable disclosing their racial identification on voter registration documents.

Difference-in-Differences Specification

Using the set of non-Hispanic white individuals that were successfully matched from Classmates to the national voter file, I estimate a set of empirical models that employ a staggered difference-in-differences design:

$$Y_{idst} = \rho D_{idst} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + X_{dt} + \tau_s + \delta_i + \epsilon_{idt} \tag{4}$$

Y_{idst} refers to the partisanship of individual i in 2020 who attended high school in district d in state s and graduated in year t. It is coded as 1 if i is a registered Democrat, and 0 if i is registered as a Republican. Independents were dropped from the sample because it is unclear ex-ante whether to classify them as Democrats or Republicans. Results are robust, albeit weaker, to including Independents as either Republicans or Democrats.[12] D_{idst} is the treatment of interest and equals 1 if an individual i graduated from a school in district d in state s after it was dismissed from its court-ordered desegregation plan in year t, and

2020 are not included, nor are people who graduated from a high school outside of these six states but reside in one as of 2020.

[11]See Appendix A5 for more information.

[12]See Appendix A6 for regression tables.

0 otherwise. The coefficient ρ is the primary parameter of interest and captures the effect of increasing levels of racial segregation in individual i's school district in adolescence on their likelihood of identifying as a Democrat as an adult. Graduation year fixed effects, θ_t, are included to absorb year-specific shocks unrelated to dismissal. School district and state fixed effects, γ_d and τ_s respectively, address fixed differences in graduates' partisanship across districts and states. District-specific linear time trends, X_{dt}, control for trends in outcomes unrelated to dismissal, and δ_i refers to respondent i's gender.

I am also interested in how individuals in schools with different degrees of racial heterogeneity respond to resegregation as it pertains to partisanship. Therefore, I also estimate a modified version of Equation 4 that accounts for pre-treatment levels of racial diversity at the school level. I operationalize racial diversity as the pre-treatment percentage of students of color at the school level, which is defined as the percentage of students who identify as black, Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Native American.[13]

To account for potential non-linearity in the interaction between the dismissal indicator and pre-treatment levels of racial diversity at the school level, the latter is deconstructed into a variable with three bins: 0-32.3%, 33-66.6%, and 66.6-100% students of color:

$$Y_{idt} = \rho D_{idt} + \sum_{y=1}^{y=3} \beta_y PC_{si} + \alpha D_{idt} * \sum_{y=1}^{y=3} PC_{si} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + X_{dt} + \delta_i + \omega_s + \epsilon_{idt} \qquad (5)$$

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[13]See Appendix A7 for the distribution of pre-treatment levels of racial diversity at the school level for non-Hispanic white individuals successfully linked from Classmates to the national voter file.

All variable definitions follow from Equation 4. PC_{si} refers to the categories 1 to 3 of the pre-treatment percentage of students of color at the school level s for individual i in 1989, or the year before any districts were dismissed from their court-mandated desegregation plan. Each level of this category is interacted with the dismissal indicator. The primary quantity of interest is the difference in Democratic partisanship between students in dismissed and non-dismissed districts at each level of percentage of students of color at the school level. Standard errors are clustered at the school-level. District, year, and state fixed effects are included, as well as a district-time trend.

Parallel Trends Assumption

The use of a difference-in-differences estimator in this case assumes that students in control and treated school districts would have had similar partisan attachments had treated districts not been dismissed from their court-ordered desegregation plans. Due to the staggered nature of dismissal, I assess whether this is the case by estimating the following event study model:

$$Dem_{idst} = \sum_{\substack{y=-20 \\ y \neq -1}}^{y=0} \beta_y I(t - t_m^* = y) + \boldsymbol{\beta_t} + \boldsymbol{\beta_d} + \boldsymbol{\beta_s} + \epsilon_{idst} \tag{6}$$

In Equation 6, Dem_{idts} is a binary indicator for whether individual i in school district d who graduated high school in year t in state s identifies with the Democratic Party (1) or the Republican Party (0). Indicator variables $I(t - t_m^* = y)$ denote pre- and post-treatment years relative to the year of dismissal t_m^*. The omitted category is $y = -1$, the year immediately prior to dismissal. Individuals in districts that were never dismissed take on a value of 0. $\boldsymbol{\beta_t}$ are calendar year fixed effects, $\boldsymbol{\beta_d}$ are school district fixed effects, and $\boldsymbol{\beta_s}$ are

school district fixed effects. I estimate Equation 6 with a linear probability model, and report heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors that are clustered at the school-district level. Figure 3 displays the estimated β_y from Equation 6, demonstrating no significant pre-trend differences in partisan identification among non-Hispanic white individuals in the run up to dismissal. It is also not the case that school districts in areas with higher support for the Republican Party were dismissed earlier or at higher rates.[14]
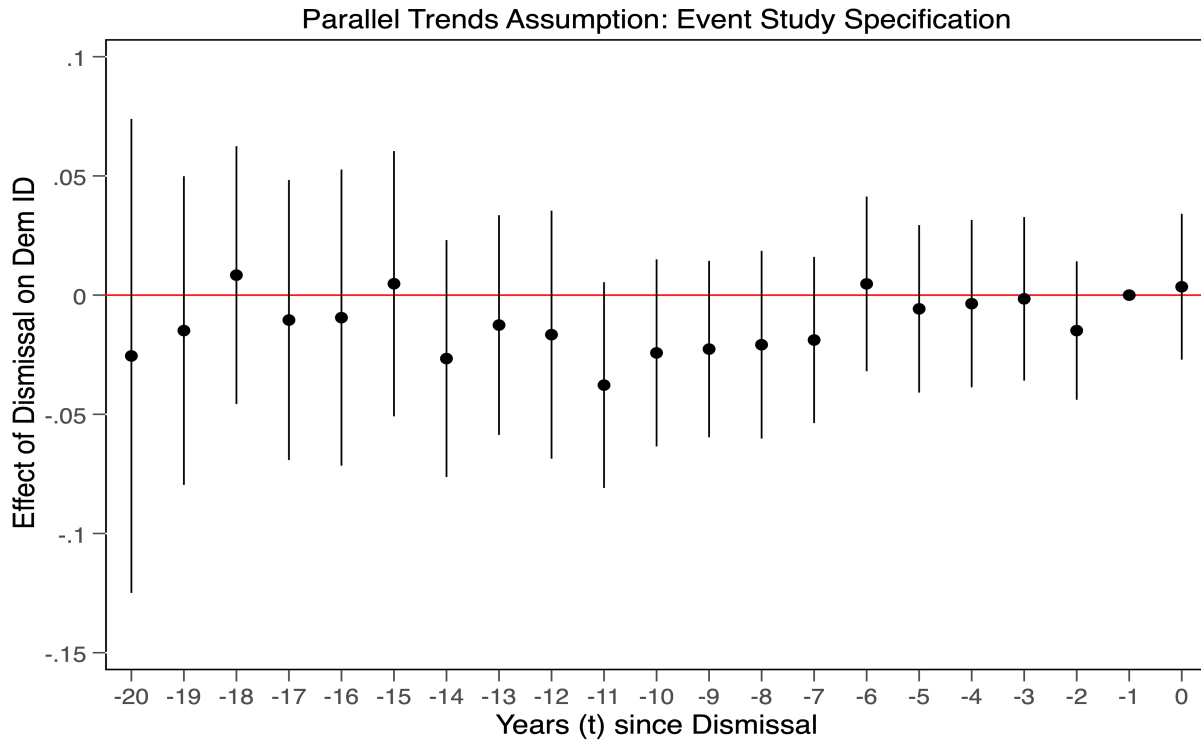

Figure 3: Results from the event study model showing that the probability of identifying with the Democratic Party does not exhibit significant pre-treatment trends among non-Hispanic white individuals in the run-up to dismissal relative to districts that remained under court order between 1990 and 2014.

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[14]See Appendix A8 for a more detailed discussion and supporting information.

Results

Figure 4 shows the coefficient plots for $\hat{\rho}$ from Equation 4, which estimates the effect of increasing levels of racial segregation in individual i's school district in adolescence on their likelihood of identifying as a Democrat as an adult, for a number of specifications. The reported coefficients were estimated with OLS with robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.[15] In the full model, dismissal of a school district from a court-order desegregation plan leads to a 3.8 percentage point increase in identification with the Democratic Party as an adult among non-Hispanic whites.[16][17] Contrastingly, dismissal has no effect on the adult partisanship of black and Latino students.[18]

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[15]Results are robust to using a mixed-effects model to account for school-district specific related factors that might affect how the partisanship of non-Hispanic whites' responds to dismissal from court-order. See Appendix A9 for regression tables.

[16]See Appendix A10 for regression tables

[17]Results are also robust to controlling for pre-treatment measures of % of students eligible to receive free lunch, total number of students, number of black students, per pupil spending, and number of high school graduates at the school-district level, as well as Republican presidential vote share at the county level in the 1988 Presidential election. See Appendix A11 for regression tables.

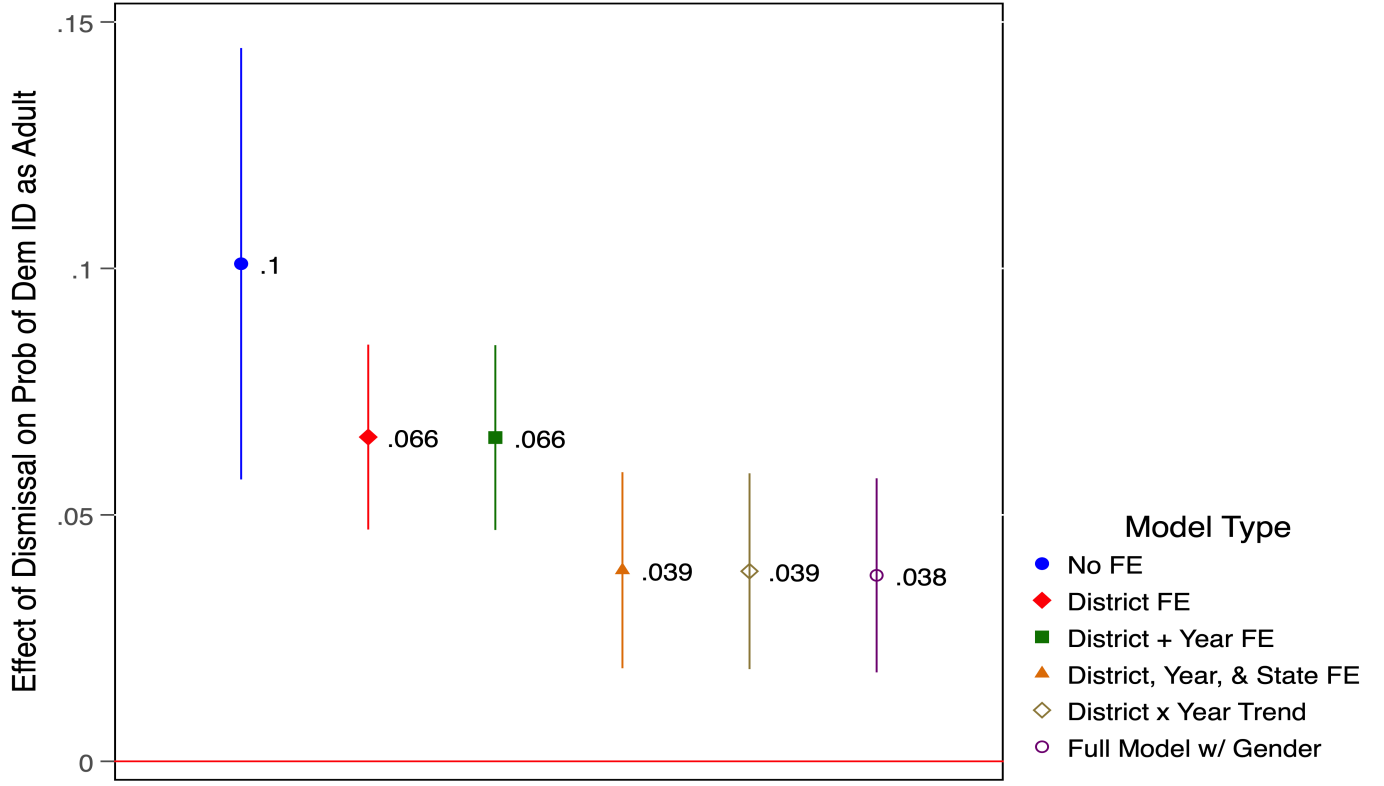[18]See Appendix A12 for regression tables.

Figure 4: **Effect of Resegregation on Probability of Identifying as Democrat Later in Life.** In the full model, white students who graduated from high school districts that were resegregated along racial and ethnic lines were about 3.8 percentage points more likely to be registered as Democrats in 2020.

While this indicates an average positive effect of resegregation in adolescence on the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat as an adult, the process of increased segregation along racial and ethnic lines was a gradual process. Therefore, we should see a higher likelihood of identification with the Democratic Party as the number of years since a school-district was dismissed from its court-ordered desegregation plan increases. Equation 7 is a modified version of Equation 4 where D_{idst} now equals the number of years t since the district d individual i attended school in state s was dismissed from its court ordered desegregation plan. Equation 7 was run separately for those that graduated up to $t \in \{1, 2, ..., 20\}$ years

post-dismissal. The associated $\hat{\Omega}$, or the estimated coefficient for the binary difference-in-differences indicator, is plotted in Figure 5 for each value of t. Results are similar if an event-study specification is used, such that dismissal is associated with an increase in identification with the Democratic Party relative to the year before dismissal. See Appendix A13 for corresponding figures.

$$Y_{idst} = \Omega D_{idst} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + X_{dt} + \tau_s + \delta_i + \epsilon_{idst} \tag{7}$$
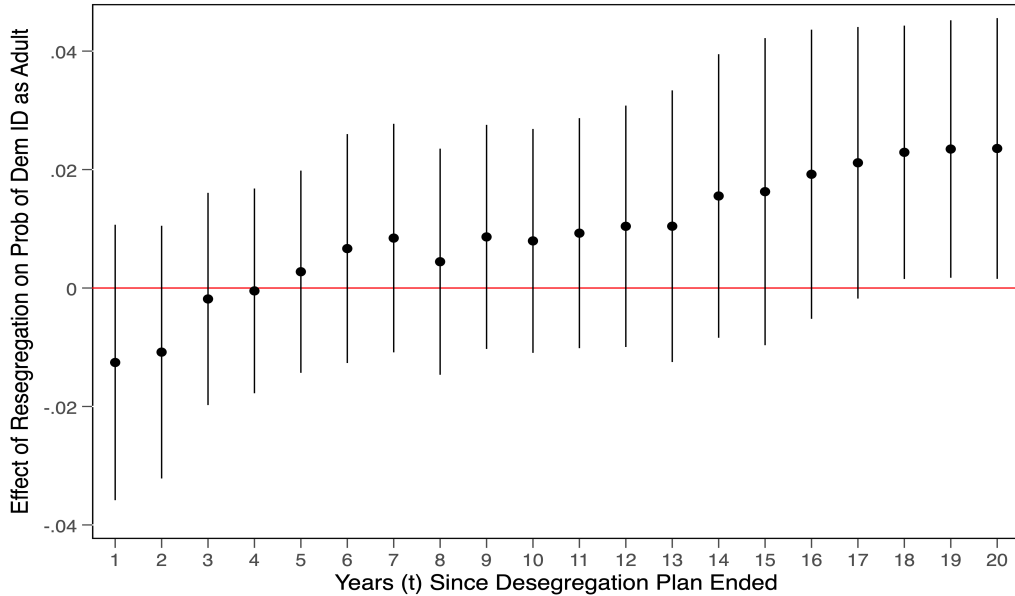

Figure 5: The effect of resegregation on the probability of identifying as a Democrat later in life, showing that the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat increases as the number of years after the court stops monitoring the integration efforts of schools increases.

Additionally, while the results indicate that resegregation of school-districts leads to a higher identification with the Democratic Party on average, the educational literature about the interaction between racial diversity at the school-level and racial segregation at the school-district level posits that there could be heterogeneous effects based on pre-treatment levels of the share of students of color at the school-level. Figure 6 displays the marginal

effect of dismissal on identification with the Democratic Party for each category of the pre-treatment percentage of students of color for the full model specification from Equation 5 with standard errors clustered at the school level.
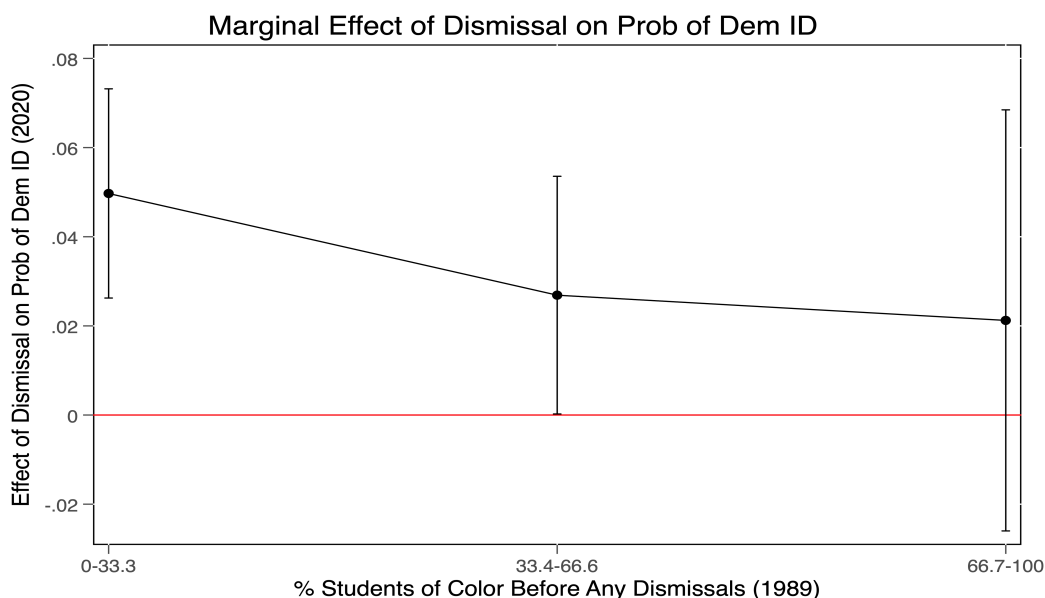

Figure 6: **Marginal Effect of School District Resegregation on Democratic ID by Pre-Treatment Non-White Share at the School Level** Resegregation is leading to a higher identification with the Democratic Party among non-Hispanic whites who attended schools that were predominantly white pre-treatment compared to students that attended predominantly white schools in districts that remained under a court-mandated desegregation plan.

The effect of dismissal on the partisan identification of non-Hispanic white individuals is highest for students who attended schools that were already predominantly white pre-dismissal. Thus, the results are most consistent with outstanding theories of symbolic threat since cases of non-Hispanic white students in a majority white school in a more racially segregated school district are the most isolated white students could be from students of different races and ethnicites in a district with sizeable populations of people of color. These are also the types of schools where a reduction in the number of students of color would

indicate a larger relative loss compared to schools within the same school district that were more racially diverse pre-treatment. Thus, increased levels of segregation imply fewer opportunities for repeated interactions between white students and students of color within the same school, relative to white students in districts that remained under court-order. Given that a large majority of the Democratic Party's base is made up of racial minority groups, this translates into a higher likelihood of identifying with the Democratic Party.

Robustness Checks

One potential concern with the results presented could be that dismissal of a school-district from its court-ordered desegregation plan might lead to more white parents moving into more racially segregated school districts. Therefore, instead of resegregation leading to changes in partisanship, differences in partisanship are being caused by white families with more racially prejudicial attitudes moving into resegregated districts. In this way, the differences we see are attributed to migration and not resegregation. Using migration data from the Internal Revenue Service, I rule out this explanation by showing that dismissal from court-order is not meaningfully associated with migration into school districts post-dismissal.[19]

One could also be concerned that the results are being driven by using partisanship data from only six states. If resegregation is correlated with migration from these six states to other states within the U.S and those that migrated were more likely to be Republicans on average, then the effects are a byproduct of out-migration and not resegregation. I find that those that remained were in fact *more* likely to be Republican than those that left by

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[19]See Appendix A14 for supporting details.

about 19 percentage points. This correlation is present if I examine individuals within both dismissed and non-dismissed districts separately. Therefore, while partisanship is related to out-migration, these differences are consistent between individuals who attended districts that were both dismissed and not-dismissed from court ordered desegregation plans.[20]

Lastly, the use of Classmates to obtain a sample of students is potentially a threat to inference if registration for the site is correlated with treatment, or dismissal of a school district from its court-ordered desegregation plan. Given the empirical research documenting how the formation of friendship networks within schools change as a function of racial diversity (Moody, 2001), it is possible that as school districts become more racially segregated, causing changes in racial diversity at the school-level, graduates would have a different propensity to connect with their fellow classmates post-graduation. I find that dismissal has no effect on the propensity of non-Hispanic white individuals who were successfully matched to the national voter file to register for the site relative to the number of students who graduated from that district in a given year. Dismissal also does not produce a statistically significant difference in the number of people who register for Classmates across districts in a given year, regardless of race and whether users were matched to the voter file.[21]

Discussion

Do differences in racial exposure in adolescence affect white Americans' political behavior well into adulthood? Leveraging a series of U.S. Supreme Court cases that caused some school districts, but not others, to experience exogenous increases in segregation along racial and

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[20]See Appendix A15 for supporting details.
[21]See Appendix A16 for supporting details.

ethnic lines over time, I provide evidence that more segregation between white students and students of color in high school caused white students to identify more with the Democratic Party up to 20 years later, and that this relationship is driven by more favorable attitudes towards people of color among non-Hispanic whites. I also find that these results are stronger among non-Hispanic white students who attended more predominantly white schools.

These findings as potentially troubling. They imply a higher likelihood of identification with the Democratic Party among whites due to increased social distance between whites and students of color. Consequently, the results more closely align with the empirical predictions of symbolic threat theories of intergroup relations, given that racial minorities are overwhelmingly self-selecting into the Democratic Party and that the parties have taken divergent positions on policies regarding race and ethnicity. These findings also echo recent work which has found that exogenous increases in the size of racial minority groups has led to a threat-like response among non-Hispanic white adults (Enos, 2016; Reny and Newman, 2018). However, these findings do not have to outweigh the positive effects of integration for black students; instead, they provide a fuller understanding of the consequences of segregation. Consequently, it is important to consider both how to reinforce positive long-term outcomes for black students and to decrease symbolic threat for white students.

This paper thus has a number of important implications for the study of intergroup relations in educational contexts. First, it highlights that the unit of analysis is crucial for understanding why less exposure to racial minorities might lead to better attitudes towards students of color and a higher identification with the Democratic Party among non-Hispanic whites. In this context, the unit of analysis is the school district. It has been shown that at larger geographic units of analysis, like the metropolitan level, there are higher feelings of

racial resentment in areas with higher minority populations (Oliver, 2010). However, studies at smaller units of analysis, like the classroom, might better simulate conditions under which exposure to racial diversity would lead to more positive attitudes and behaviors towards outgroup members among non-Hispanic white students. This paper examines exposure, which is a subset of contact, but future work focusing on contact in smaller group settings within schools might help shed light on the conditions under which intergroup contact leads to more positive outcomes.

From a normative perspective, these findings suggest that when schools districts take on the effort to racially integrate schools, it is not safe to assume that numeric demographic diversity will necessarily translate into positive feelings towards out-group members. Extra efforts, by actors within school districts, must be taken to create, promote, and retain, opportunities for close, meaningful, and cooperative contact among students of different backgrounds. For example, in classroom settings, it has been shown that teachers can play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between intergroup contact and outgroup attitudes, even in racially segregated environments (Thijs and Verkuyten, 2012). Previous work also demonstrates that contact with high friendship potential makes meeting the other conditions for successful contact (a common goal, cooperation, and status) more likely (Feddes, Noack and Rutland, 2009; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2013). Without structured opportunities for contact with friendship potential, schools that are nominally integrated may still be segregated due to the propensity of students to form friendships with others similar to themselves on a number of dimensions, including race and ethnicity (Moody, 2001). The tendency for students to form friendships with others who belong to the same racial group has many potential determinants, but developmental psychologists note that it is more likely to occur

during adolescence than in earlier childhood phases (Tatum, 2017). Focusing on adolescent racial environments, as I do here, might therefore represent a hard test for contact theory as it represents a time where forming groups based on common identities is more likely. Moreover, while the focus of this paper is the behavior of white Americans, these findings also demonstrate the need to study how features of adolescent schooling environments affect the political behavior of students of color. Particularly, with respect to Latino and Asian Americans, do increasing levels of segregation similarly lead to a threat like response towards black and white Americans?

While a great deal of research has explored how whites' exposure to people of color in adulthood affects their policy preferences, ideology, and partisanship, political scientists have yet to consider have yet to consider how expousre to racial minority groups in adolescence affects whites' political behavior as adults. This is important given two demographic trends occurring simultaneously in the U.S.: growing racial diversity and increasing amounts of segregation among individuals of different racial groups. Understanding the intersection of these two trends, particularly with respect to younger cohorts, will serve to enrich theories of partisanship in the context of multiethnic democracies in which political parties hold favor with different racial and ethnic groups within the electorate. More broadly, future research should consider how opportunities for contact between students of different backgrounds are structured, the size of the unit that contact is taking place, the age at which this contact is occurring, and whether these findings extend to other dimensions of difference such as class and gender. Doing so will lead to a better understanding of the conditions under which contact between members of different groups yields positive outcomes, which is a question of extreme importance for both educational and non-educational scholarship.

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Appendix A1 - Constructing the Racial Attitude Index

The Monitoring the Future survey asks the same set of questions pertaining to racial attitudes to a randomly selected subset of students every year between 1990 and 2014. The questions are the following:

- How would you feel having close personal friends of another race?

- How would you feel about having a job with a supervisor of another race?

- How would you feel having a family of a different race (but same level of education and income) move next door to you?

- How would you feel about having some of your (future) children's friends be of other races?

- How would you feel having a job where some employees are of a different race?

- How would you feel living in an area where some of the neighbors are of other races?

- How would you feel about having your (future) children go to schools where some of the children are of other races?

For each question, the answer options were "not acceptable, somewhat acceptable, acceptable, or desirable." Before constructing the index, each response was converted to capture the difference between finding diversity acceptable and expressing that diversity is a facet of their local environment they will actively select into. Therefore, if a respondent answered "not acceptable, somewhat acceptable, or acceptable", their response was re-coded as 0. If a respondent answered "desirable", their response was re-coded as 1.

Distribution of Racial Attitude Index Among Non–Hispanic White Students (1989 – 2014)
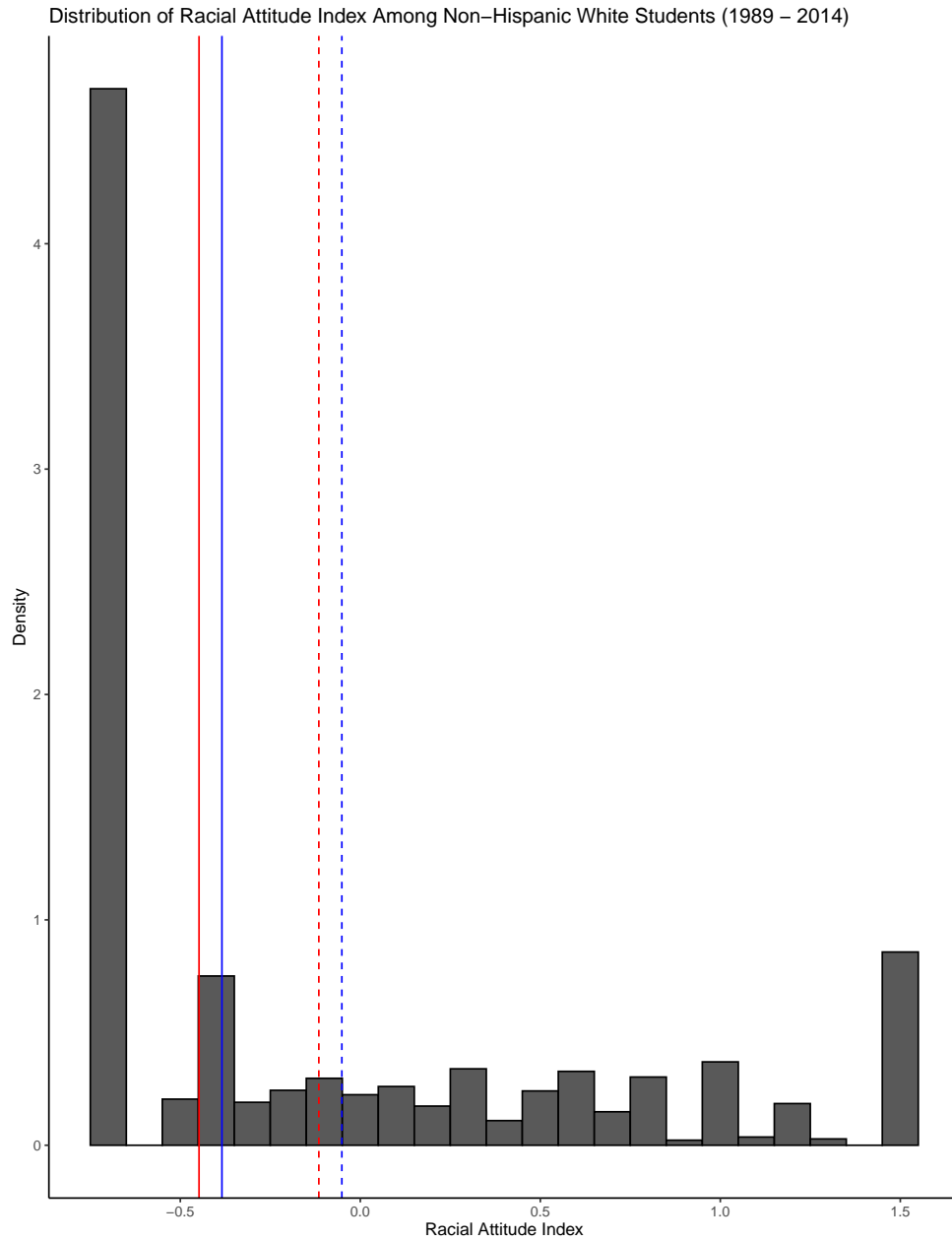
Figure 7: **Distribution of Racial Attitudes Index Among Non-Hispanic White Students in School Districts Under A Court-Mandated Desegregation Plan as of 1990** The mean value of the racial attitudes index for students in dismissed and non-dismissed districts are plotted in dashed blue and red lines respectively. Median values for dismissed and non-dismissed districts are plotted in solid blue and red lines respectively. On average, white students in dismissed districts respond hold more favorable attitudes towards students of color compared to white students in non-dismissed districts.

Appendix A2 - Effect of Dismissal on Racial Attitudes Over Time

I run a modified version of Equation 7 below to assess the effect of dismissal over time on non-Hispanic whites' attitudes towards students of color.

$$A_{idts} = \Omega D_{idst} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + \tau_s + \delta_i + \epsilon_{idst} \tag{8}$$

All definitions follow from Equation 2, except D_{idst} which equals the number of years t since the district d in state s individual i attended was dismissed from its court ordered desegregation plan. It is run separately for those that graduated up to $t \in \{1, 2, ..., 20\}$ years post-dismissal and the associated $\hat{\Omega}$ are plotted in Figure 8 for each value of $t \in \{1, 2, ..., 20\}$. The results show that over time, dismissal is leading non-Hispanic white students to hold more favorable attitudes towards student of color.
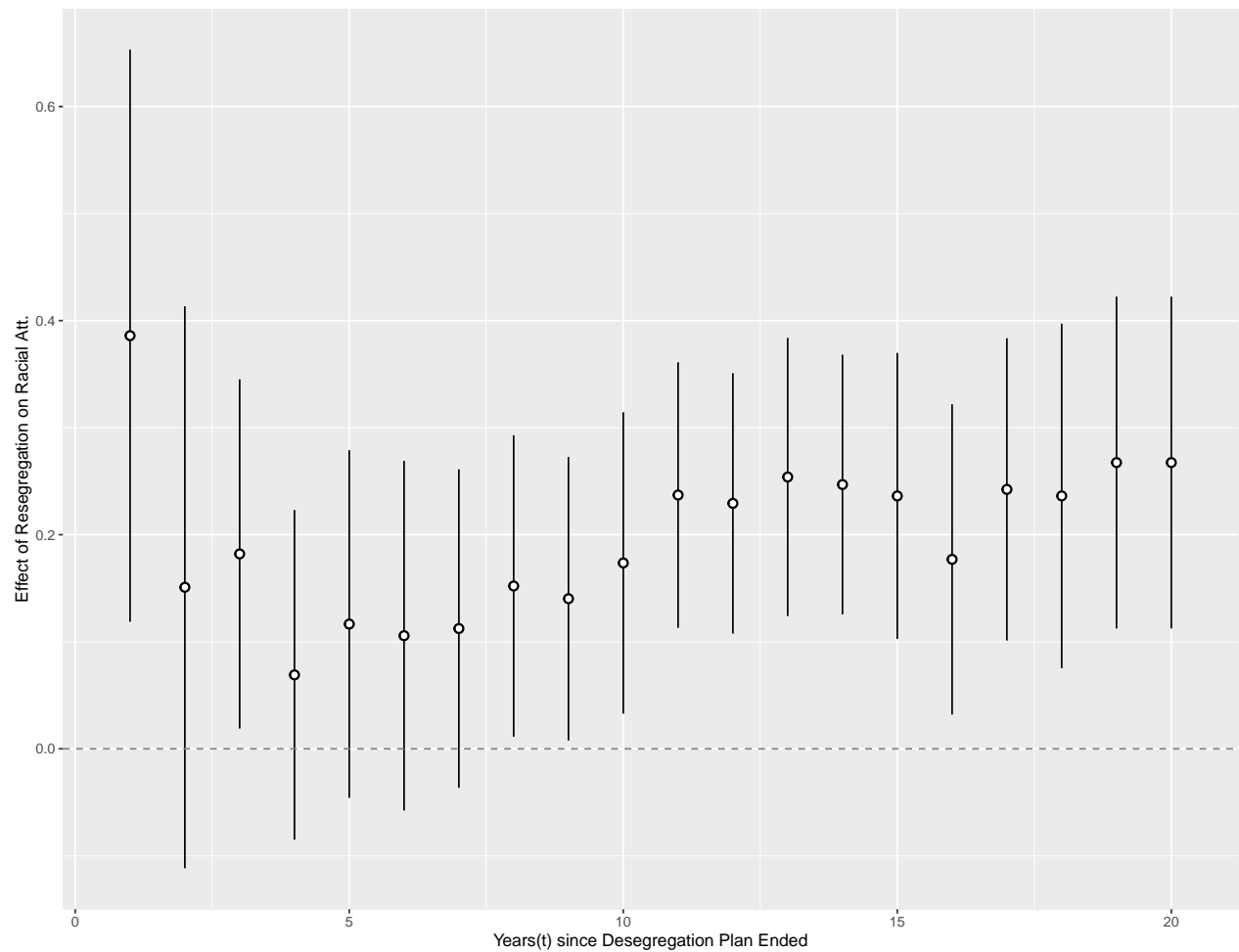
Figure 8: The effect of resegregation on the racial attitudes index, showing that likelihood of non-Hispanic white students holding more favorable attitudes towards out-groups increases as the number of years after the court stops monitoring the integration efforts of schools increases

Appendix A3 - Distribution of Dismissed v. Non-Dismissed Districts

Figure 9: Distribution of dismissed and non-dismissed districts in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee between 1990 and 2014, noting a gradual increase in the number of dismissed districts over time.

Appendix A4 - First Stage - Effect of Dismissal on Within-District Segregation Levels

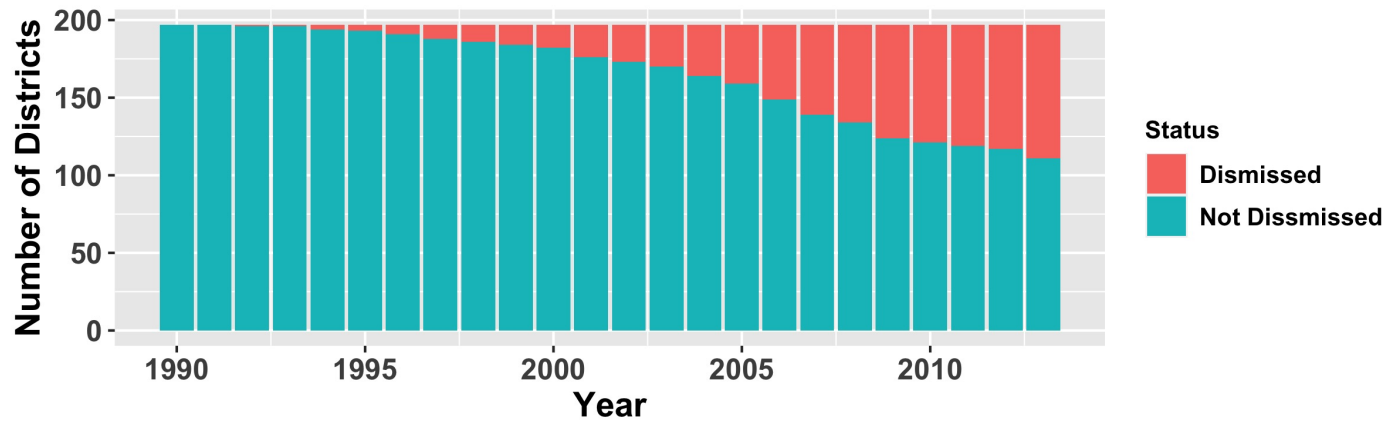A number of papers have already demonstrated the causal effect of dismissal on within-district segregation levels (Clotfelter, Vigdor and Ladd, 2006; Lutz, 2011; Reardon et al., 2012). Here I confirm that was the case within my sample of high schools from Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. For these purposes, I estimate changes to segregation levels following release from court-order using a set of event-study models following those used by Lutz (2011) and Reardon et al. (2012).

$$Y_{isgy} = \sum_{t=-21, t \neq 0}^{+17} \gamma_t D_{iy}^t + \Gamma_i + \Delta_{sgy} + \epsilon_{isgy} \tag{9}$$

Here, i indexes districts, s indexes states, g indexes grades, and y indexes school years, and D_{iy}^t is equal to 1 if district i was last subject to court order in year $y - t$ ($t = 1$ is the first year a district is no longer subject to court-order) and 0 otherwise. The reference year is $t = 0$, or the last year the district was under court-order. The model includes district fixed effects (Γ_i) and state-by-grade-by-year fixed effects (Δ_{sgy}). The vector of coefficients (γ_t) indicates the average difference in the outcome variable Y in a given year y and grade g between districts in the same state that were under a court order but not released by 2010, net any fixed differences between dismissed and not-dismissed districts. If dismissal of a desegregation order causes an increase in segregation, we expect that $\gamma_t > 0$ for all $t > 0$.

I fit this model for all grades 9 to 12, to capture the specific effect of dismissal on segregation levels within the states of interest; however, the results are similar if I include all grades

beginning from kindergarten through twelfth grade. There are many ways in which segregation is measured by educational scholars. For these purposes, I will use the dissimilarity index, but results are robust to using other measures such as the exposure or information indices. Specifically, I use the white/non-white dissimilarity index to measure segregation between two groups, reflecting their relative distributions across schools within the same district. The index varies from 0 (complete integration) and 100 (complete separation) and measures the percentage that one group would have to move across schools to be distributed the same way as the other group.
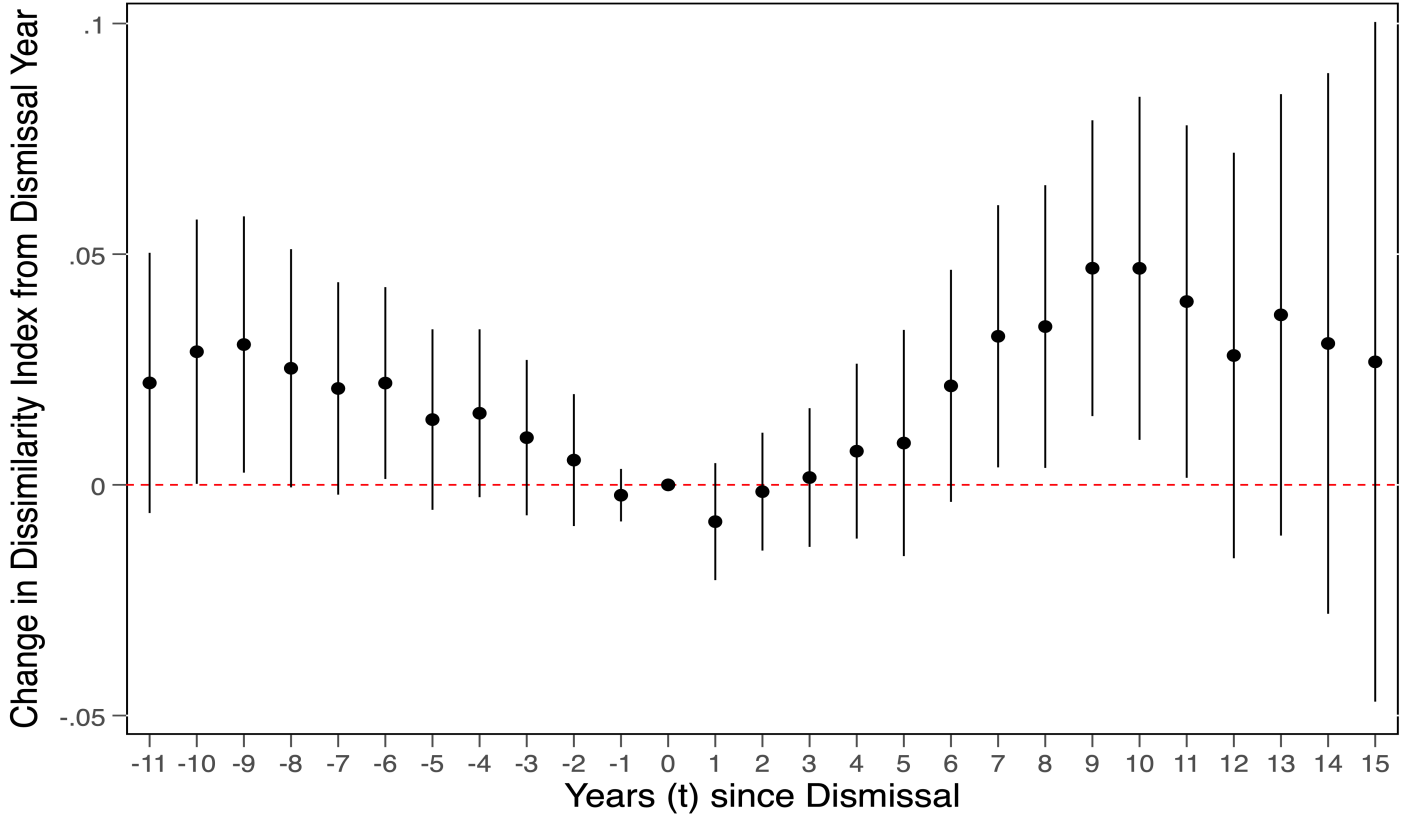
Figure 10: **Effect of Ending Court Desegregation Plan on Segregation.** After the court stops monitoring the integration efforts of school districts, segregation levels along racial and ethnic lines increase over time.

Figure 10 displays the results from Equation 9 by plotting the vector of coefficients $\hat{\gamma}_t$, or the effect of dismissal of a desegregation order on within-district levels of segregation among public high schools in the six states of interest. After release ($t > 0$), we see a gradual increase in the level of within district segregation levels over time ($\hat{\gamma}_t > 0$), reaching a peak around 10 years after release, consistent with the findings of Reardon et al. (2012).

Appendix A5 - Matched Classmates Sample v. State Totals

Below are counts by party and gender among unique matched non-Hispanic white individuals in the sample (with a posterior probability of 0.85 or higher), compared with non-Hispanic white voters within the same age distribution for all six states (Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee). Because the data scraped from Classmates and matched with the voter file encompassed students who graduated between 1990 and 2014, those individuals were between 24 and 48 in 2020. Therefore, I compare the matched sample of Classmates individuals with the entire sample of voters from each state who were between 24 and 48 years of age in 2020.

Florida: Counts for Matched Classmates Sample and State Voter Files (non-Hispanic white residents ages 24-48)

	FL Matched	FL State	Percentage Point Difference
Republican	10,270 (41.9%)	964,691 (41.7%)	0.2
	(n = 24,934)	(n = 2,312,279)	
Democrat	6,596 (26.5%)	599,177 (25.9%)	0.6
Independent	8,068 (31.6%)	599,177 (32.3%)	-0.7
Women	12,386 (49.7%)	1,192,545 (50.4%)	-0.7
Men	12,545 (50.3%)	1,170,424 (49.5%)	0.8

Georgia: Counts for Matched Classmates Sample and State Voter Files (non-Hispanic white residents ages 24-48)

	GA Matched	GA State	Percentage Point Difference
Republican	7,115 (40.3%)	361,543 (30.8%)	
	(n = 17,650)	(n = 1,172,432)	9.5
Democrat	2,292 (13.0%)	187,109 (16.0%)	-3.0
Independent	8,243 (46.7%)	623,780 (53.2%)	-6.5
Women	9,696 (54.9%)	594,471 (50.7%)	4.2
Men	7,954 (45.1%)	577,906(49.3%)	-4.2

Louisiana: Counts for Matched Classmates Sample and State Voter Files (non-Hispanic white residents ages 24-48)

	LA Matched	LA State	Percentage Point Difference
Republican	12,111 (45.2%)	243,897 (47.3%)	-2.1
	(n = 26,777)	(n = 515,165)	
Democrat	4,259 (15.9%)	79,791 (15.5%)	0.4
Independent	10,407 (38.9%)	191,477 (37.2%)	1.7
Women	14,547 (54.3%)	271,449 (51.9%)	2.4
Men	12,230 (45.7%)	251,197 (48.1%)	-2.4

North Carolina: Counts for Matched Classmates Sample and State Voter Files (non-Hispanic white residents ages 24-48)

	NC Matched	NC State	Percentage Point Difference
Republican	4,240 (41.0%)	437842 (35.9%)	5.1
	(n = 10,341)	(n = 1,218,236)	
Democrat	2,022 (19.5%)	231,786(19.0%)	0.5
Independent	4,079 (39.4%)	548,608 (45.0%)	-5.6
Women	5,762 (55.7%)	639,285 (51.8%)	3.9
Men	4,579 (44.2%)	595,837 (48.2%)	-4

South Carolina: Counts for Matched Classmates Sample and State Voter Files (non-Hispanic white residents ages 24-48)

	SC Matched	SC State	Percentage Point Difference
Republican	4,045 (58.4%)	305,995 (49.8%)	8.6
	(n = 6,926)	(n = 614,972)	
Democrat	1,570 (22.7%)	194,804 (31.7%)	-9
Independent	1,311 (18.9%)	114,173 (18.6%)	0.3
Women	3,894 (56.2%)	323,130 (52.5%)	3.7
Men	3,032 (43.8%)	291,838 (47.5%)	-3.7

Tennessee: Counts for Matched Classmates Sample and State Voter Files (non-Hispanic white residents ages 24-48)

	TN Matched	TN State	Percentage Point Difference
Republican	1,471 (42.6%)	325,747 (28.3%)	14.3
	(n = 3,455)	(n = 1,148,147)	
Democrat	556 (16.1%)	187,598 (16.3%)	-0.2
Independent	1,428 (41.3%)	632,802 (55.3%)	-14
Women	2,019 (58.4%)	608,300 (53.0%)	5.4
Men	1,436 (41.6%)	539,775 (47.0%)	-5.4

The two largest states in terms of number of matched respondents, Florida and Louisiana, have samples that most closely mirror the distribution of non-Hispanic white voters in their state within the same age range. Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee had the largest absolute differences between the matched Classmates sample and state-wide registrants among non-Hispanic whites within the same age range. On average among all six states, there are differences worth noting. Using a weighted average of percentage point differences, the matched Classmates sample was more Republican by 2.4 percentage points, had fewer Democrats by 0.75 percentage points, and had fewer Independents by 0.69 percentage points, compared to the full sample in these six states. It is difficult to assess whether these two samples are comparable because the full sample includes both areas with school districts that were not under a court-mandated desegregation plan as of 1990 and individuals who were educated in different states, or potentially even different countries in the case of naturalized citizens. Nevertheless, it is still important to note how the Classmates matched sample compares to the population of registered voters in these six states as a whole. With respect to gender, women were more likely to be represented in the Classmates sample by about 1.02 percentage points using a weighted average compared to the full sample of non-Hispanic white registered voters in these six states who were between the ages of 24 and 48 in 2020, alleviating some concerns that the matching procedure is systematically less likely to match female respondents with the voter file. The main results from Figure 4 are robust to dropping each state individually. See Table 2 for the corresponding regression tables.

Table 2: Robustness Check: Dropping Each State from Sample

	Dependent variable: Democratic ID					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dismissed (0/1)	0.037***	0.034***	0.023**	0.040***	0.045***	0.040***
	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Constant	0.261***	0.234**	0.193*	0.221**	0.235***	0.214***
	(0.096)	(0.090)	(0.103)	(0.092)	(0.089)	(0.067)
State Dropped	FL	GA	LA	NC	SC	TN
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
District/Time Trend	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS

Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix A6 - Including Independents

Table 3: Robustness Check: Including Independents as Republicans

	Dependent variable: REP & INDEP (0) v. DEM (1)
Dismissed (0/1)	0.020***
	(0.006)
Constant	0.221***
	(0.052)
District FE	✓
State FE	✓
Year FE	✓
District/Time Trend	✓
Gender	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4: Robustness Check: Including Independents as Democrats

	Dependent variable: DEM & INDEP (0) v. REPUB (1)
Dismissed (0/1)	-0.021**
	(0.010)
Constant	0.661***
	(0.074)
District FE	✓
State FE	✓
Year FE	✓
District/Time Trend	✓
Gender	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

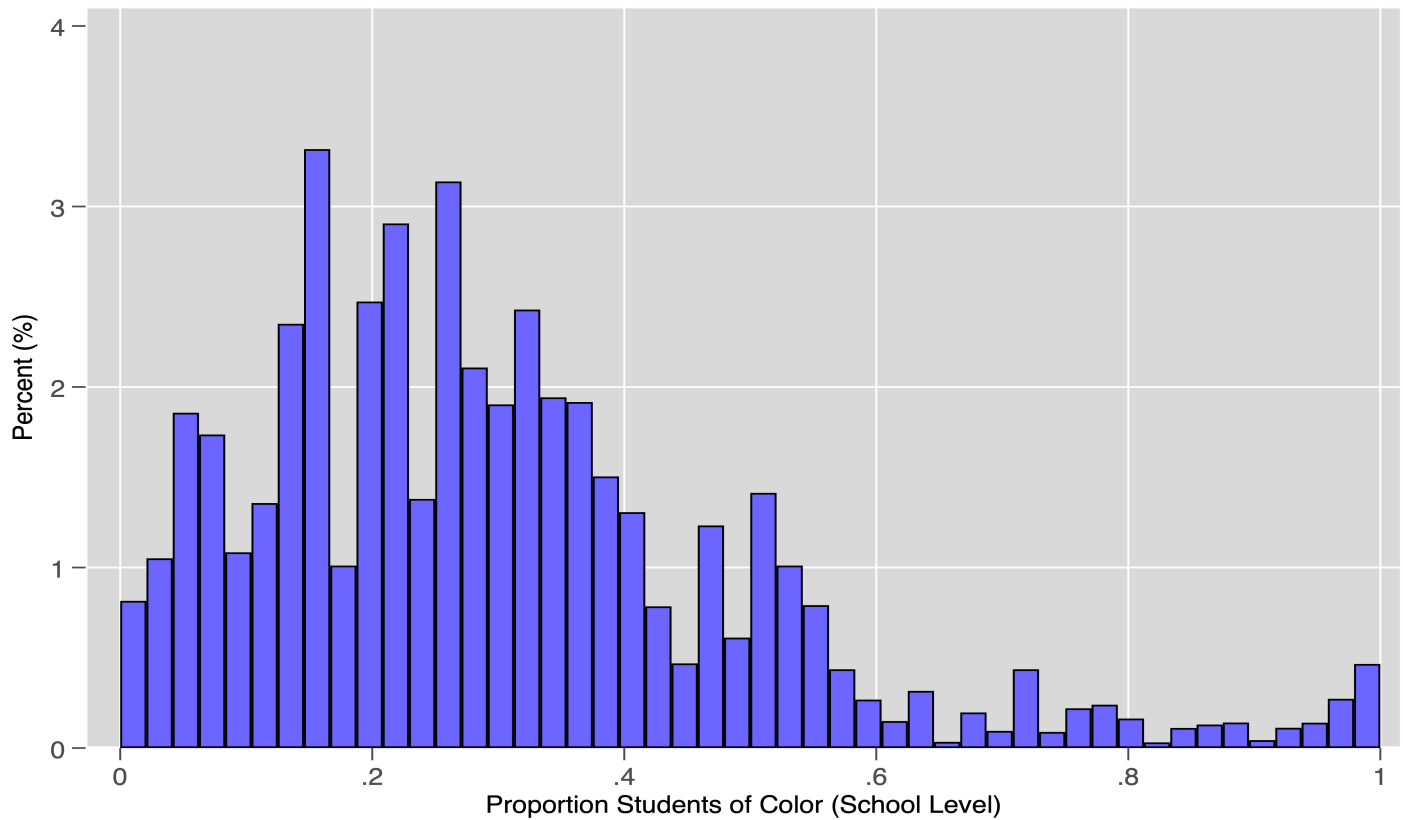# Appendix A7 - Distribution of Racial Diversity for Matched Respondents

Figure 11: **Density Histogram of the Pre-Treatment Percentage of Students of Color at the School-Level for Respondents in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee**

Appendix A8 - Robustness Check - Selection Threat

One potential concern with the results presented might be that a school district's ability to successfully get their desegregation plan dismissed might be endogenous to partisanship. For example, if a school district has a high Republican share, parents in that district might be more likely to spend more time and effort in ensuring that their school district is dismissed from its court-ordered desegregation plans because they want their children to attend school in a more racially segregated district. This would call into question my assumption that the exact year a district is released from its court-ordered desegregation plan is exogenous. To assess whether this is the case, I estimate a discrete-time hazard model in the form of:

$$\eta_{it} = ln(\frac{h_{it}}{1 - h_{it}}) = \beta_1 X_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \tag{10}$$

where h_{it} is the probability that district i was released from court order in year t given that it was still under court-order in year $t-1$. X_{it} includes the percentage of the county the school district is located within that voted for Republican presidential candidates in 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012. The unit of observation is the district-year, and the model is fit using all observations of a district from 1990 through 2014 or the year in which the district was released, whichever comes first.

Figure 12 illustrates that county Republican vote share does not consistently predict the probability that a school-district will be released from its court-ordered desegregation plan in subsequent years. Coefficient estimates above 1 for a given year indicate that a higher Republican share in that election decreases the likelihood of dismissal for a given district, whereas values below 1 indicate that higher Republican share is associated with a higher
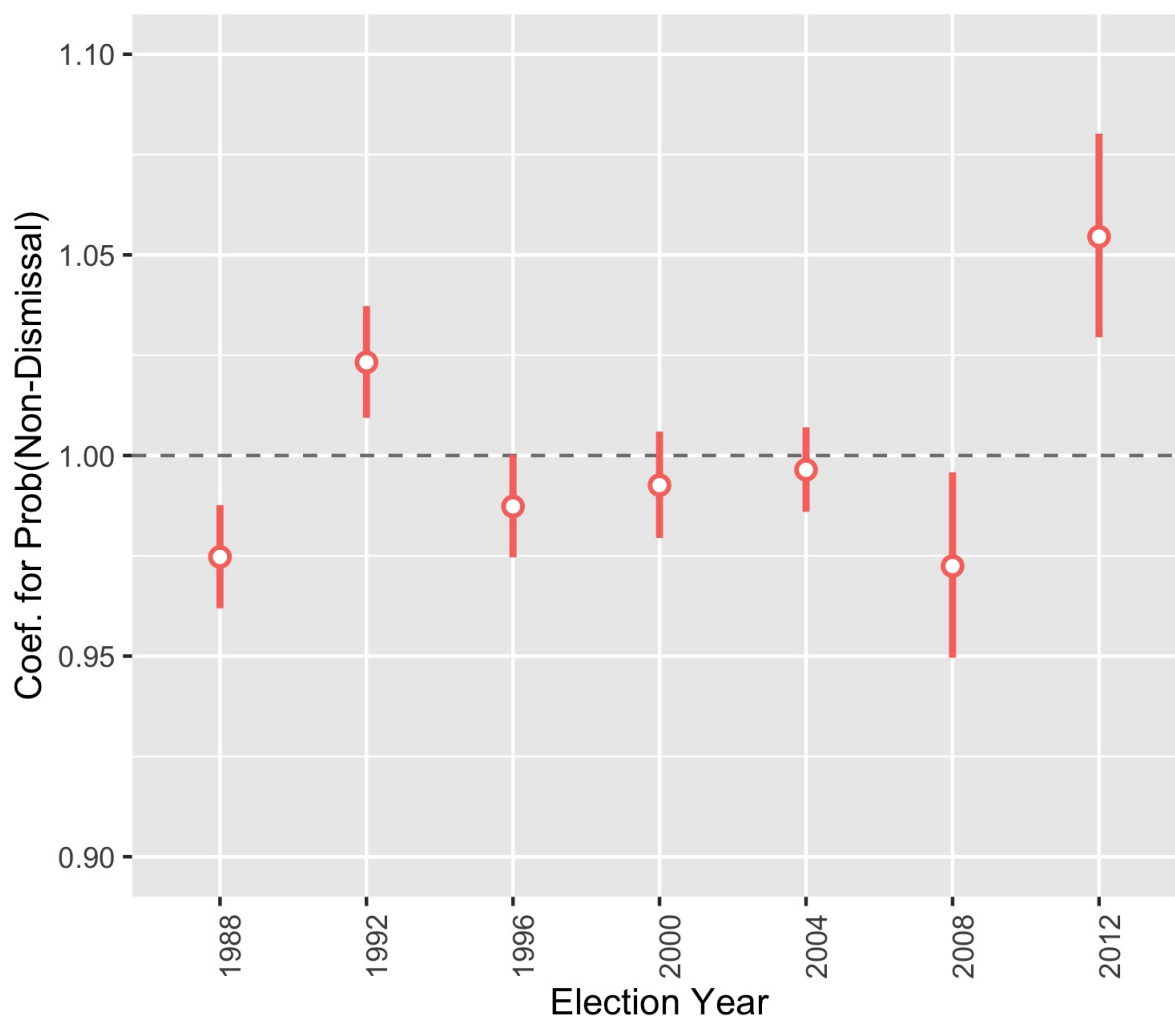
Figure 12: **Effect of Republican Presidential Returns on Probability of Release**
According to the results of the hazard model, Republican share of the school district in the most recent presidential election does not consistently predict the probability that a school district will have their desegregation plan dismissed by the courts.

likelihood of dismissal. The coefficient estimates vary both in their direction and magnitude across presidential election years and are close to 1 in almost every election year, reducing concerns that districts with a higher Republican share in a given year were better able to secure the financial and legal resources needed to move their cases to dismissal in the future.

Appendix A9 - Robustness Check: Random Effects Model

Table 5: Robustness Check: Random-Effects Model

	Dependent variable: DEM ID
Dismissed (0/1)	0.040***
	(0.007)
Graduation Year FE	✓
State FE	✓
Gender	✓

Coefficients estimated via a mixed-effects linear model.
Random effects used for each school-district.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix A10 - Difference-in-Difference Regression Tables

Table 6: Figure 4 Estimates

	Dependent variable: Democratic ID					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dismissed (0/1)	0.101***	0.066***	0.066***	0.039***	0.039***	0.038***
	(0.022)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Constant	0.287***	0.293***	0.334***	0.301***	0.281***	0.231**
	(0.008)	(0.002)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.091)	(0.089)
District FE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State FE			✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE				✓	✓	✓
District/Time Trend					✓	✓
Gender						✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS

Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix A11 - Robustness Check: Pre-Treatment Covariates

Table 7: Robustness Check: Pre-Treatment Covariates

	Dependent variable: DEM ID
Dismissed (0/1)	0.038**
	(0.010)
Graduation Year FE	✓
State FE	✓
Gender	✓
% Free Lunch Eligible (1989)	✓
# black Students (1989)	✓
# Students (1989)	✓
# HS Diplomas Received (1989)	✓
Per-Pupil Spending (1989)	✓
% Repub (1988)	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS

Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix A12 - Placebo for People of Color

Table 8: Effect of Dismissal on Partisanship of Matched black and Latino Voters

	Dependent variable: DEM ID	
Dismissed (0/1)	-0.001	-0.011
	(0.003)	(0.020)
Constant	0.886***	0.481***
	(0.016)	(0.038)
Racial Group	Black	Latino
District FE	✓	✓
Graduation Year FE	✓	✓
State FE	✓	✓
District/Time Trend	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix A13 - Robustness Check: Event-Study

I estimate the effect of dismissal on the partisanship of non-Hispanic whites over time in an event-study framework using a modified version of Equation 6. School-district, year, and state fixed effects are included, and standard errors are clustered at the school-district level.

$$Dem_{idst} = \sum_{\substack{y=-23 \\ y \neq -1}}^{y=22} \beta_y I(t - t_m^* = y) + \boldsymbol{\beta_t} + \boldsymbol{\beta_d} + \boldsymbol{\beta_s} + \epsilon_{idst} \tag{11}$$

Figure 13 below displays the corresponding $\hat{\beta}_y$ from Equation 11 for $-10 \leq t \leq 15$ relative to the year before dismissal ($t = -1$). After release, we see a gradual increase in the likelihood that non-Hispanic whites identify with the Democratic Party ($\hat{\beta}y > 0$), reaching a peak around 13 years after dismissal.
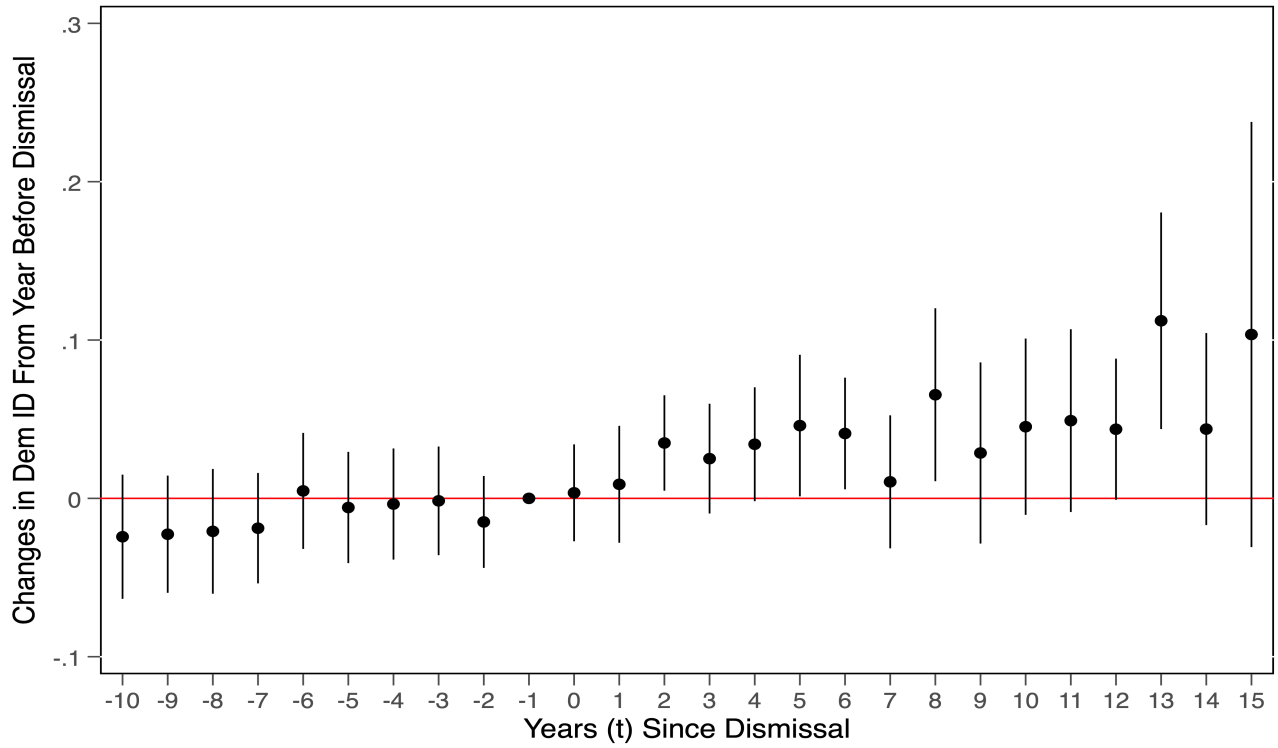
Figure 13: **Effect of Ending Court Desegregation Plan on Partisanship of Non-Hispanic Whites** After the court stops monitoring the integration efforts of school districts, identification with the Democratic Party increases over time for non-Hispanic whites.

Appendix A14 - Robustness check: Selection into Districts Post-Dismissal

One potential concern with the results presented could be that dismissal of a school-district from its court-ordered desegregation plan might lead to more white parents moving into more racially segregated school districts. Therefore, instead of resegregation leading to changes in partisanship, differences in partisanship are being caused by white families with more racially prejudicial attitudes moving into resegregated districts. In this way, the differences we see are attributed to migration and not resegregation.

To assess whether this is the case, I test whether dismissal from a court-ordered desegregation plan causes migration to a school district. I can do this for the state of Florida, where all school districts are also counties. Results are limited to county-wide school districts because yearly migration data in the United States for this time period is only available from the Internal Revenue Service, which has documented the number of people from each racial group who have moved from one county to another every year from 1992 - 2010 based on tax returns. I do so based on the following model specification:

$$M_{dt} = \beta_1 D_{dt} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + X_{dt} + \epsilon_{dt} \tag{12}$$

where M_{dt} is the number of people who migrated to school district d in year t for $t \in$ {1992, 1993, ... , 2010}, D_{dt} equals 1 if district d was dismissed from its integration plan after year t and 0 otherwise, θ_t are year fixed-effects, γ_d are district fixed-effects, and X_{dt} is a linear-district trend. If release from court-order is leading to more migration to district

d after it is released in year t, we would expect $\hat{\beta}_1 > 0$ Based on the results in Table 9, while $\hat{\beta}_1 > 0$, the estimates are not statistically significant, alleviating some concerns that the results are driven by migration into school districts post-release.

Table 9: Robustness Check: Migration

	Dependent variable: # Migrants
Dismissal (0/1)	1,238.207
	(1,676.362)
District FE	✓
Time FE	✓
District/Time Trend	✓

Coefficients estimated via OLS
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix A15 - Robustness Check: Out-Migration

One could also be concerned that the results are being driven by using partisanship data from only six states, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. If resegregation is correlated with migration from these six states to other states within the U.S and those that migrated were more likely to be Republicans on average, then the effects are a byproduct of out-migration and not resegregation. While self-identified race is only available for these six states, L2 provides an estimate of an individual's likely race for the remaining 44. Therefore, to alleviate this concern, I consider the effect of dismissal on the partisanship on non-Hispanic whites who both remained within these six states and those who migrated to other states, conditional on graduating from high school in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, or Tennessee. One important caveat worth restating is that those who were educated and remained in one of these six states self-identified as a non-Hispanic white individual, while those who were educated in one of these six states and left are identified as a non-Hispanic white individual based on L2's estimates. Examining the correlation between remaining in one of the six states and partisan identification among non-Hispanic whites that were matched from Classmates to the voter file indicates that those that remained were in fact *more* likely to be Republican than those that left by about 19 percentage points. This correlation is present if I examine individuals within both dismissed and non-dismissed districts separately. Therefore, while partisanship is related to out-migration, these differences are consistent between individuals who attended school districts that did not experience reseegregaion (non-dismissed) and those that attended school districts that did experience resegregation (dismissed). Moreover, because Republicans were

more likely to remain, I am potentially estimating a floor effect by looking at the effect of dismissal on partisanship of only those individuals.

Appendix A16 - Robustness Check: Self-Selection Into Classmates

Additionally, the use of Classmates to obtain a sample of students is potentially a threat to inference if registration for the site is correlated with treatment, or dismissal of a school district from its court-ordered desegregation plan. Given the empirical research documenting how the formation of friendship networks within schools changes as a function of racial diversity (Moody, 2001), it is possible that as school districts become more racially re-segregated, causing changes in racial diversity at the school-level, graduates would have a different propensity to connect with their fellow classmates post-graduation. For example, non-Hispanic white students attending more predominantly white schools may form more numerous and closer ties with their classmates between 9th and 12th grade. Therefore, their need to register for a website to connect them with former classmates might be lower because they have maintained closer, more interpersonal relationships with people they graduated with years after high school ended.

To alleviate concerns of self-selection into the site, I group the sample of matched non-Hispanic white users by school-district and graduation year because treatment is assigned at this unit of analysis. I aggregate the number of scraped users in "treated" (dismissed) and "control"(non-dismissed) districts in a given year. Then, I divide this value by the number of high school graduates in each school district in a given year to test whether the percentage of matched students non-Hispanic white users varies significantly between dismissed and non-dismissed units of observation.[22] As such, I run the following OLS specification:

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[22]Data on the number of high school graduates for each district-year observation comes from the Depart-

$$C_{dt} = \rho D_{dt} + \theta_t + \gamma_d + \epsilon_{dt} \qquad (13)$$

C_{dt} represents the number of matched non-Hispanic white users as a percentage of the total number of graduates in district d in year t for those that graduated between 1990 and 2010. I cannot extend this analysis past 2010 because the Department of Education does not have data on high school graduates at the school district level for later years. D_{dt} is the treatment status at the district level d in a given year t. District and graduation year fixed effects are included, and standard errors are clustered at the school-district level.

I find that dismissal has no effect on the propensity of non-Hispanic white individuals to register for the site relative to the number of students who graduated from that district in a given year as seen in Table 10. Results are robust to examining the effect of dismissal on the number of all scraped users in a given school district in a given year for all 470 districts that were under a court-mandated desegregation plan as of 1990. In addition to scraping users who attended schools in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, I also scraped users who registered for any school in all of the districts covered by Reardon et al. (2012), about 11 million users in total. Dismissal does not produce a statistically significant difference in the number of people who register for Classmates between 1990 and 2010 across all districts in a given year, regardless of race and whether users were matched to the voter file, as seen Table 11

ment of Education's Common Core of Data (CCD).

Table 10: Classmates Self-Selection: Matched Non-Hispanic White Classmates Users

	Dependent variable: $\frac{\#WhiteClassmatesUsers}{\#Graduates}$
Dismissal (0/1)	0.0002
	(0.001)
Year FE	✓
District FE	✓
Observations	6,077

Coefficients estimated via OLS
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 11: Classmates Self-Selection: All Registered Users

	Dependent variable: Total # Users (District/Year)
Dismissal(0/1)	−13.861
	(37.574)
Year FE	✓
District FE	✓
Observations	9,744

Coefficients estimated via OLS
Robust standard errors clustered at the school-district level.
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01