

# Was Freedom Road a Dead End? Political and Socio-economic effects of Reconstruction

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NP7233 \* 95c \* A BANTAM BOOK



# Freedom Road

Howard Fast

THE WORLD-FAMOUS NOVEL  
OF AN  
EX-SLAVE IN  
THE HATE-  
SEARED POST-  
CIVIL-WAR  
SOUTH

THE MOST WIDELY-  
PUBLISHED  
BOOK OF THE  
20TH CENTURY

Bama

MUHAMMAD ALI

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING NOVEL BY HOWARD FAST

# FREEDOM ROAD



An epic chronicle of the power  
of a freed slave's dream, and the  
triumph of the human spirit.

# Research questions

- What was the impact of Reconstruction on Black political engagement and socio-economic achievement?
- Did this impact persist after the reversal of Reconstruction and the (re)imposition of white supremacy (Jim Crow)?

# Preview of findings

- More Federal presence (troops, Freedmen's Bureau) associated w/more Black voter registration, Black (Republican) voting, Black officeholders
- More Black political engagement, and greater Federal presence, associated with higher level of social and economic achievements
- Effects persist into early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Impact of Black political power and Federal presence on taxation and education appears particularly significant (mechanism)
- We're aware of threats to identification

# Roadmap

- Brief overview of Reconstruction
- Theory and expectations
- Empirical strategy
  - Data
  - Descriptions
  - Analysis
- Objections, extensions, and implications

# The Reconstruction Era

1865: Freedmen's Bureau established; Thirteenth Amendment ratified.

1866: Civil Rights Act passed over Johnson's veto.

1867: First Reconstruction Act passed.

1868: Fourth Reconstruction Act passed. Fourteenth Amendment ratified. Ku Klux Klan begins.

1870: Fifteenth Amendment ratified; first Force Act passed.

1875: Civil Rights Act passed.

1877: President Hayes limits role of Federal troops.

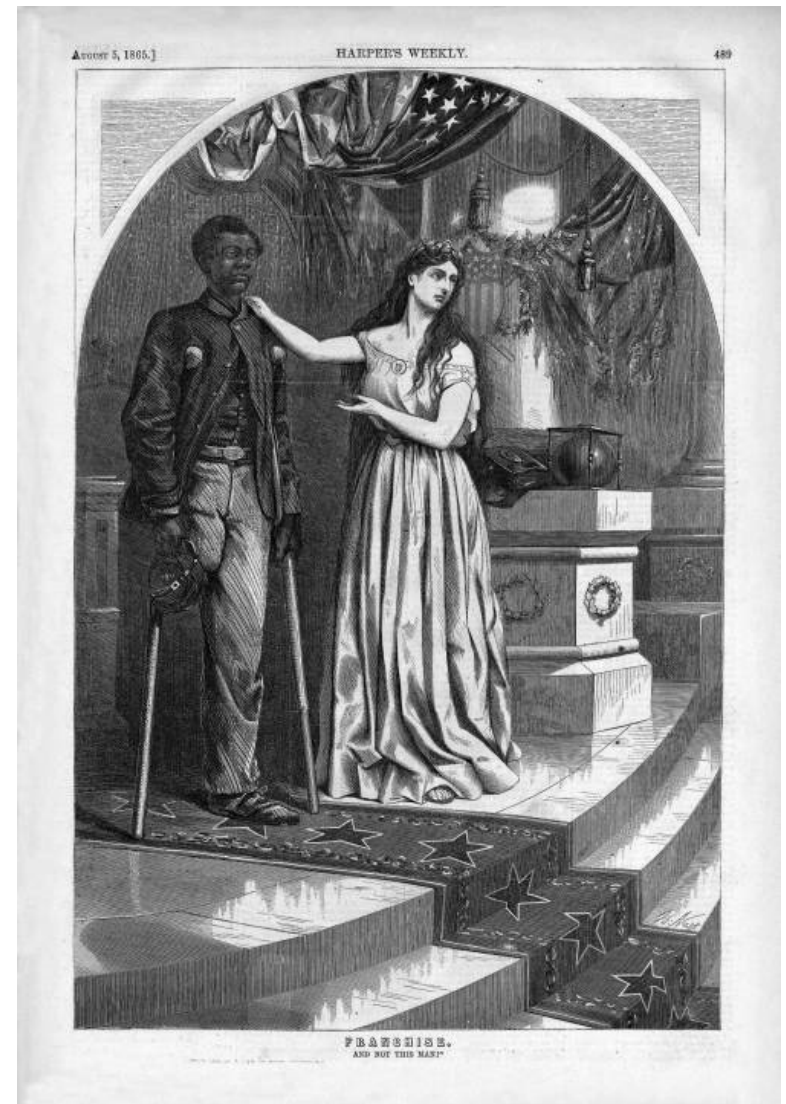
1890-1905: Blacks are deprived of the vote in the South.

1896: Plessy vs. Ferguson upholds Jim Crow

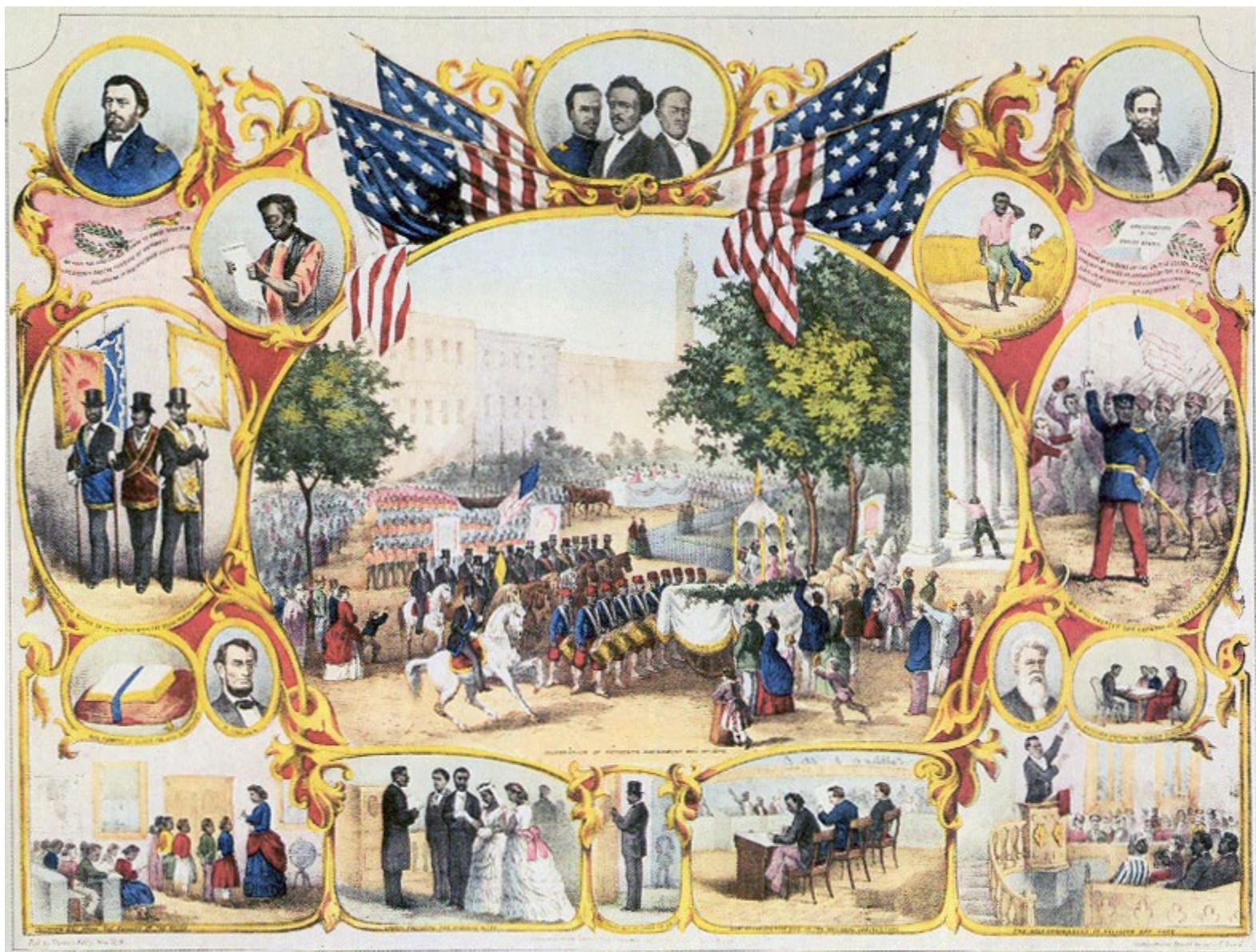
**Pardon: "Shall I trust these men?"**



**Franchise: "And not this Man?"**

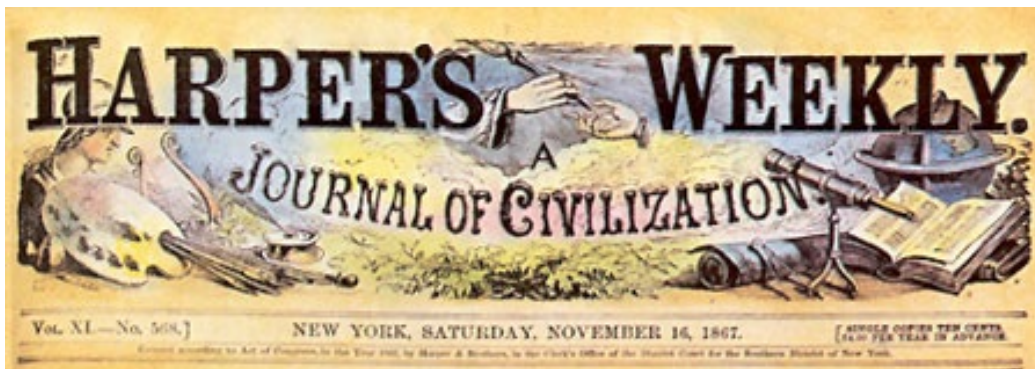


Harper's Weekly, August 5, 1865

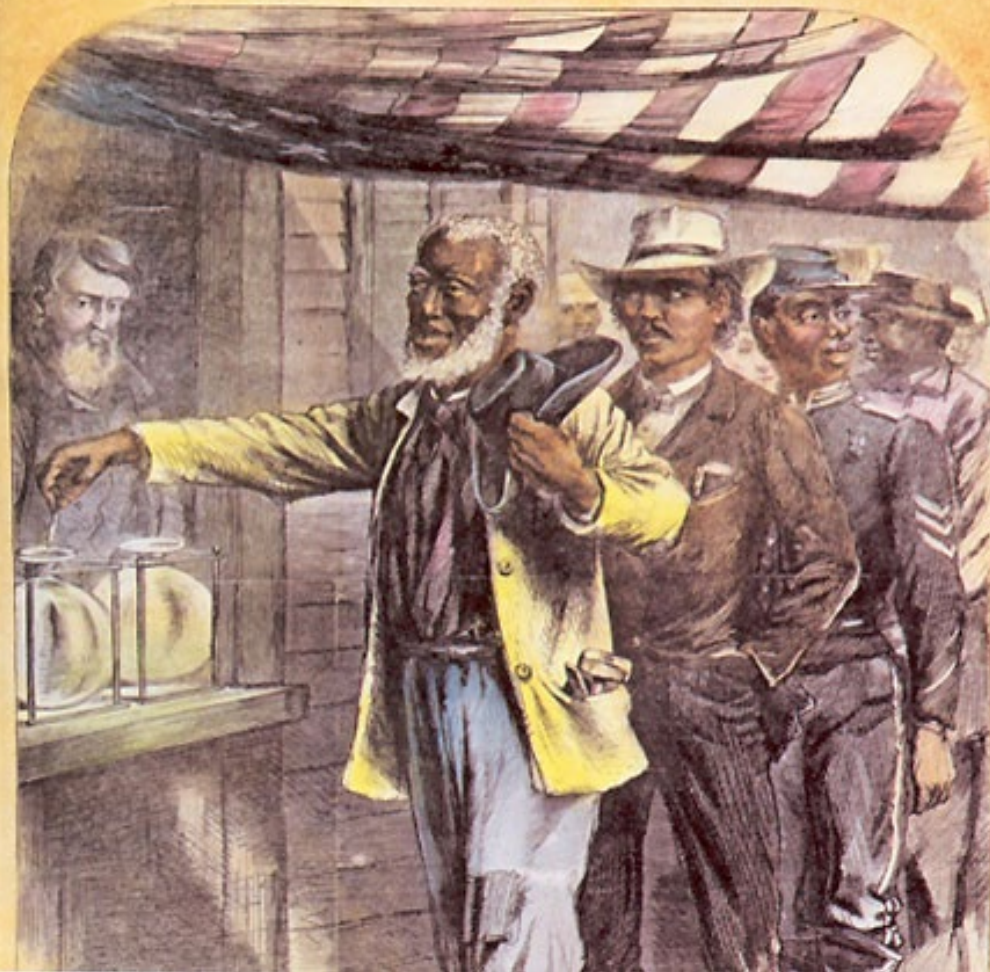


THE FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT.





# The First Vote





"Electioneering at the South," Harper's Weekly, July 25, 1868.

# EXTRACT from the Reconstructed Constitution OF THE



STATE OF LOUISIANA.  
WITH PORTRAITS  
of the Distinguished Members of the Convention & Assembly.  
A. D. 1868.

In the Senate, Thursday, September third, Floorbook given to a question of privilege, and read. I want to see your name in some. I want to tell them they have nearly reached the end of their string. The next evening of the kind which they resemble will be the signal for the issue of subscription - a contribution of which they have not thought; a signal that will come too frequent notice to be applied to this city. For persons who have consented to be a victim, and the city will be subject to them.

# From the Civil Rights Act of 1866

Citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude...shall have the same right...to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens...any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom, to the contrary notwithstanding.

# Context and policies

- Expansion of Black political engagement
- Organized Southern hostility/opposition (“planter elite”)
- Garrisoning of Federal troops
  - Originally 20,000; Gradually reduced but sizable
- Freedmen’s Bureau offices
- Principal targets:
  - Effective franchise (registration, voting)
  - Justice, military and civil
  - Education
    - Primary and secondary
    - Higher, including teachers’ colleges

# Theory

- Institutions: In context of Black mobilization and organization, Federal (military) power helps enforce and enable Black political participation, policy, economic advance
- Franchise expansion → better Black social and economic outcomes (A/R)
- Factor endowments: However, plantation society and entrenched planter elite could block or limit threatening political and social change (E/S)

# Huge literature

- DuBois, Foner, Hahn debunk apologists for white supremacy
- Modern historical school (Gates, others)
- More recent quantitative analyses
  - Logan, IV w/free Blacks → more officeholders, higher taxation, literacy, landholding (also Suryanarayan and White)
  - Jensen et al. more troops, FB → more taxation
  - Many related studies on aftermath of slavery, Jim Crow, etc.

# Empirical strategy

- Maintained hypothesis: Black political engagement and socio-economic advance facilitated by more intense Reconstruction implementation; greater impact and longer-lasting impact
- Indicators
  - Federal troops
  - Freedmen's Bureau offices
  - Counteracted by cotton suitability
- Many possible ways to measure; our preferred (for now)
- Outcome variables primarily from census (now possible)
- Endogeneity! More intense Reconstruction/our indicators probably correlate with many things. So suggestive, for now



# Objections

- Threats to identification
  - Fort and garrison placement
  - Freedmen's Bureau placement
  - Generally speaking, endogeneity
- Omitted variables
- Mechanism is inferred

# Vicinity to Federal troops

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

K.—Position and distribution of troops in the department of the south, 2d mil R. S. Canby, U. S. A., headquarters Charleston, South Carolina.

Post.	Situation.	Commanding officers.	Garrisons.	
			Regiments.	Present.
			Number of companies.	
			Dep't staff.	1 2 1 1 1 1 1
Raleigh		Colonel J. V. Bonford, 8th infantry.	1 8th inf. and headqs.	
Payetteville		Major and Bvt. Col. M. Cogswell, 8th inf.	1 8th infantry.	
Salisbury		Lieut. Col. and Bvt. Col. J. R. Edie, 8th inf.	1 do	
Wilmington		Capt. & Bvt. Lieut. Col. R. T. Frank, 8th inf.	2 do	
Newbern		Capt. and Bvt. Maj. J. J. Van Buren, 8th inf.	1 do	
Charlotte		Capt. and Bvt. Major H. M. Lazelie, 6th inf.	1 do	
Morganston		Maj. and Bvt. Col. W. R. Royall, 5th cavalry.	2 5th cavalry.	
Fort Macon	On Beaufort island, Beaufort harbr.	Capt. & Bvt. Lieut. Col. C. R. Gaskill, 40th inf.	1 40th infantry.	
Goldstons		Maj. C. E. Doughton, 40th inf.	3 do	
Plymouth		Capt. & Bvt. Lieut. Col. C. Houston, 40th inf.	1 do	
Greensboro		Capt. and Bvt. Maj. W. S. Worth, 8th inf.	1 8th infantry.	
SO. CAROLINA.				
Charleston		Lt. Col. & Bvt. Brig. Gen. H. B. Child, 8th inf.	5 6th and 40th infantry.	1 2
Hilton Head		Capt. & Bvt. Lieut. Col. A. C. Widrick, 3d art.	2 3d art. and 40th inf.	
Columbia		Col. and Bvt. Brig. Gen. J. S. Burton, 5th art.	2 5th art. and ready re.	
Chester		Capt. and Bvt. Major D. D. Lyon, 8th inf.	1 6th infantry.	
Anderson		Capt. & Bvt. Lieut. Col. A. T. Smith, 8th inf.	1 8th infantry.	
Unionville		Capt. & Bvt. Lieut. Col. J. N. Andrews, 8th inf.	1 do	
Georgetown		Capt. and Bvt. Major E. W. H. Road, 8th inf.	1 do	
Darlington		Captain H. S. Hawkins, 6th infantry.	2 6th and 29th infantry.	
Aiken		Capt. and Bvt. Major E. Walker, 5th cav.	2 5th cavalry.	
Newberry		Capt. and Bvt. Major J. McTeary, 6th inf.	1 6th infantry.	
Sumter		Major S. Howell, 29th infantry.	1 29th infantry.	
Orangeburg		Capt. J. W. French, 40th infantry.	1 40th infantry.	
Total.			35	1 2 1 2 1 1 1 1

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, Washington, D. C., October 20, 1867.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

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itary district.) commanded by Brigadier General and Brevet Major General E. taken from the latest returns on file in the Adjutant General's office.

Post, chaplain, military storekeeper, military officers, Cavalry, Lieutenants, Majors, Captains, Regimental adjutants, Regimental quartermasters, Regimental commissaries of subsistence, Subalterns, Enlisted men, Total commissioned, Aggregate, Field and regimental staff officers, Captains, Subalterns, Enlisted men, Total commissioned, Aggregate, Commissioned officers, Enlisted men, Aggregate.	Present.	Absent.	Present and absent.	Remarks.						
					7	7	7	7	Taken from return of Sept. 30, 1867.	
68	72	1	12	4	80	88				
70	72	1	7	1	8	4	77	81	do	
41	46	1	9	2	11	4	53	57	do	
133	138	7	7	5	140	145				
66	67	2	8	2	10	3	74	77	do	
69	72	1	5	3	74	77				
139	146	49	49	7	198	195				
91	94	8	8	3	99	102				
166	173	1	63	2	65	9	229	238	do	
82	85	3	3	3	85	88				
51	54	1	1	3	56	55				
254	370	2	54	2	16	408	426	do		
172	184	1	12	12	9	190	199	do		
189	193	2	3	24	8	32	213	225	do	
77	80	3	3	3	80	83				
53	57	1	6	7	3	61	64			
74	76	1	1	2	3	75	78			
52	54	1	1	1	3	52	55			
130	134	2	12	2	14	6	142	148	do	
154	158	1	21	1	22	5	173	180	do	
61	62	1	3	1	4	3	64	67	do	
66	68	1	1	1	4	66	70	do		
68	70	1	13	1	14	3	81	84	do	
2,437	2,535	1	4	9	32	33	354	131	2,758	2,990

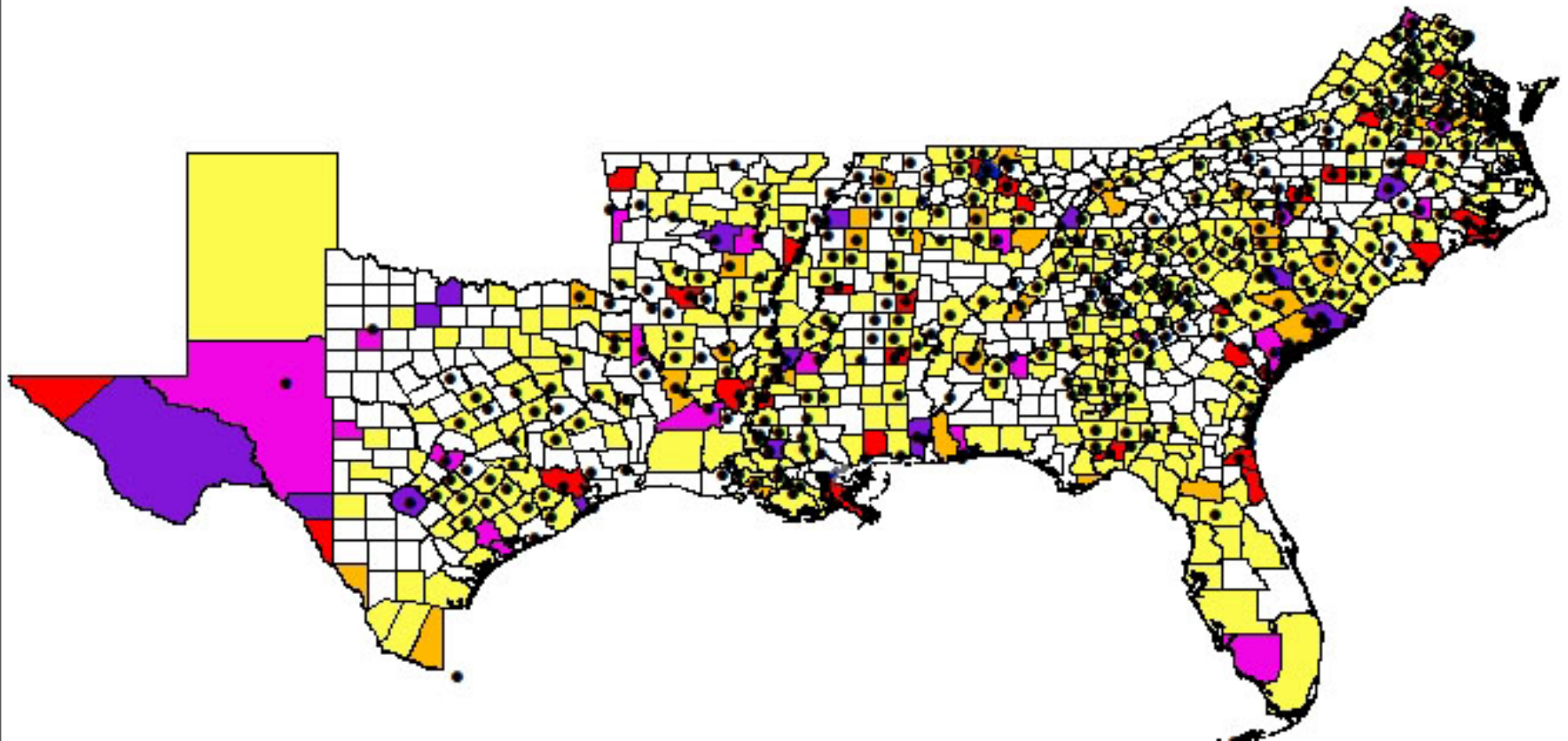
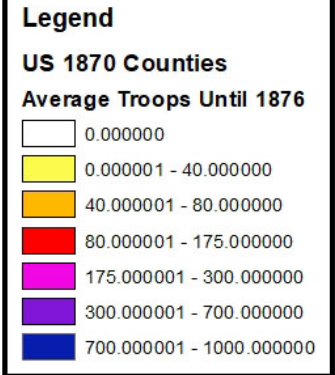
# Freedmen's Bureau office, Beaufort NC



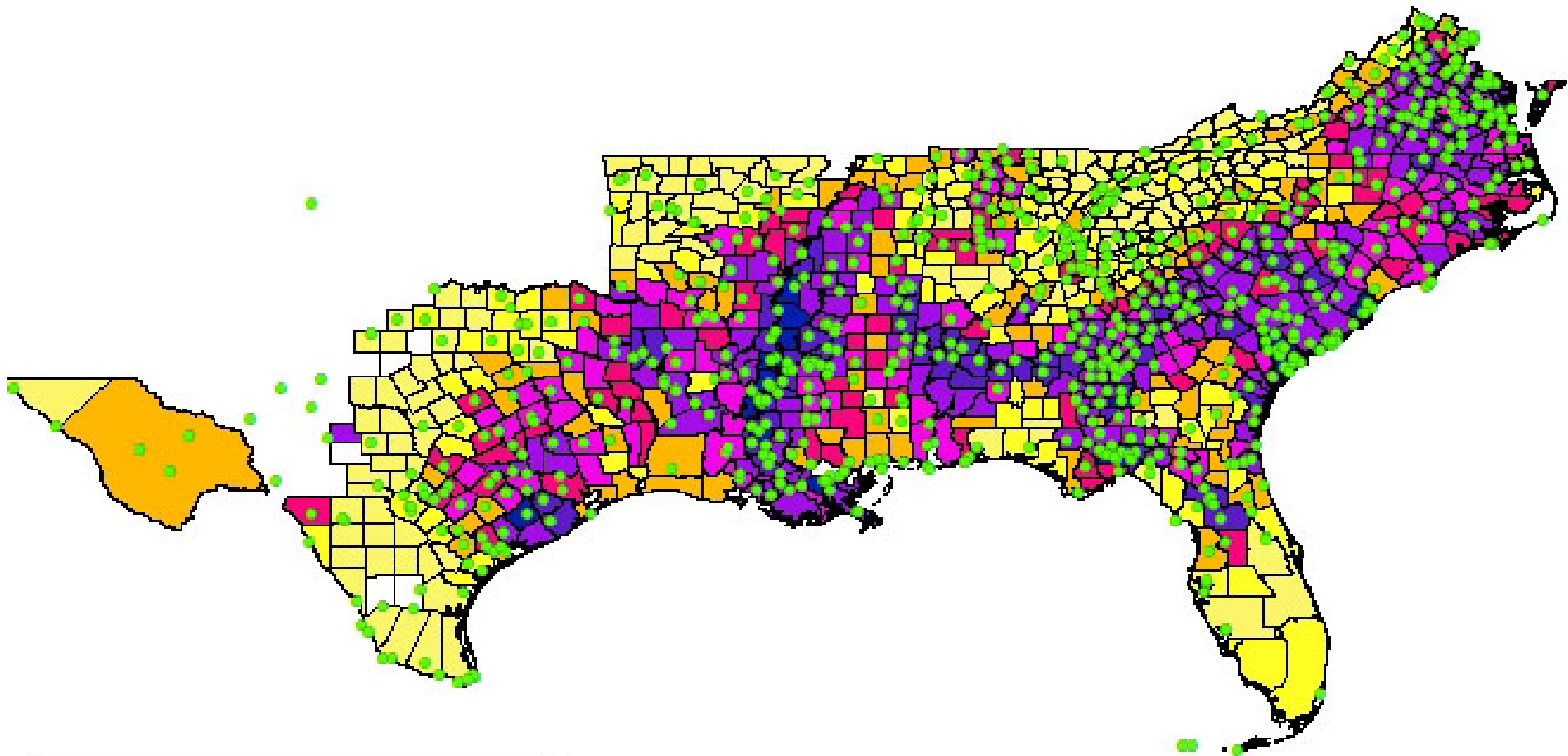
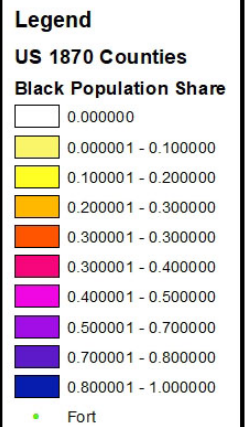
# A Freedmen's Bureau school, St. Helena SC



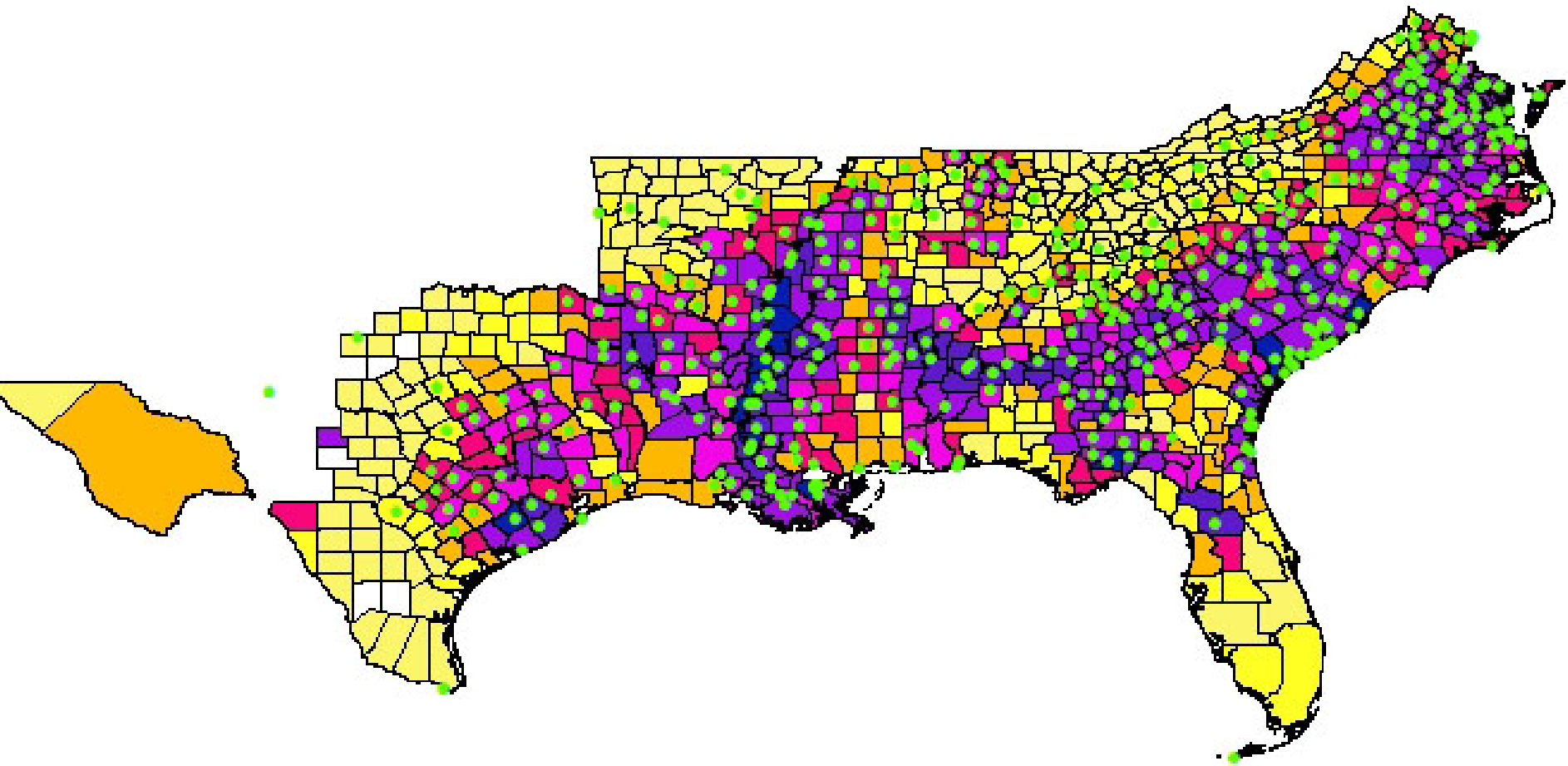
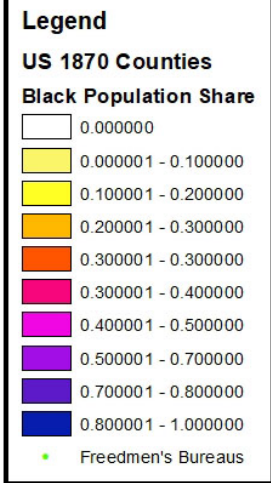
# Federal troops through 1876 and Freedmen's Bureau offices



# Share of population Black in 1870 and Federal garrisons



# Share of population Black 1870 and Freedmen's Bureau offices



# First step

- Was Black political engagement and success facilitated by Reconstruction intensity?



## Federal presence and Black share of registered voters, 1867-69

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### VARIABLES

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Percent population Black	0.974*** (0.0132)
Freedmen's Bureau office	0.0205*** (0.00698)
Average troops until 1869 (1000)	0.0477*** (0.00942)
Constant	0.0379*** (0.00423)
Observations	739
R-squared	0.911

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Robust standard errors in parentheses

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

## Federal presence and Republican presidential vote share, 1872

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VARIABLES	(4)
Percent population Black	0.569*** (0.0328)
Average troops until 1872 (1000)	0.0857** (0.0342)
Freedmen's Bureau office	0.0509*** (0.0127)
Cotton suitability	-0.00317*** (0.000479)
Constant	0.372*** (0.0226)
Observations	839
R-squared	0.382

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Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

# First step

- Was Black political engagement and success facilitated by Reconstruction intensity?
- Yes. Closeness to troops, numbers of troops, and Freedmen's Bureau offices generally associated with higher levels of Black voter registration, Republican voting, Black officeholders

# Second step

- Was Black socio-economic achievement facilitated by Reconstruction intensity?

VARIABLES	Share of Black boys (6-16) attending school 1880	Percent of Black men in higher occupations 1880	Percent of Black men farm laborers 1880
Republican Presidential votes 1876	0.120*** (0.0326)	0.0315** (0.0158)	-0.152*** (0.0334)
Average occupying troops through 1876 (thousands)	0.0741* (0.0392)	0.0310 (0.0271)	-0.0496 (0.0793)
Freedmen's Bureau office	0.0175** (0.00840)	0.0137** (0.00546)	-0.0217* (0.0113)
Percent population Black 1880	-0.0804*** (0.0293)	-0.0398*** (0.0122)	0.133*** (0.0314)
Percent Black population urban 1880	0.0762 (0.0493)	0.192*** (0.0336)	-0.379*** (0.0277)
Total population 1880	1.43e-06*** (3.71e-07)	3.20e-07 (2.48e-07)	1.19e-06*** (3.87e-07)
Cotton suitability	-0.000861*** (0.000306)	-0.000465** (0.000184)	-0.000137 (0.000389)
Constant	0.198*** (0.0158)	0.0687*** (0.0103)	0.359*** (0.0193)
Observations	848	848	848
R-squared	0.095	0.176	0.133

VARIABLES (all outcomes as of 1880)	% Black boys (6-16) in school	% Black men in higher occupations	% Black men farm laborers
Rep Pres. vote 1876	0.120*** (0.0326)	0.0315** (0.0158)	-0.152*** (0.0334)
Avg troops thru 1876	0.0741* (0.0392)	0.0310 (0.0271)	-0.0496 (0.0793)
Freedmen's Bur ofc	0.0175** (0.00840)	0.0137** (0.00546)	-0.0217* (0.0113)
Cotton suitability	-0.00086*** (0.000306)	-0.000465** (0.000184)	-0.000137 (0.000389)

## A sense of the substantive impact: 1880

VARIABLES	Share Black boys 6-16 attending school	Share Black males higher occupations	Share Black males farm laborers
Mean of DV	20%	6.1%	35%
Republican vote 1876	+2.4%	+0.6%	-3.3%
Avg troops thru 1876	+0.8%		
Freedmens' Bureau	+1.8%	+1.4%	-2.2%
Cotton suitability	-1.3%	-0.7%	

# Second step

- Was Black socio-economic achievement facilitated by Reconstruction intensity?
- Yes.
- Schooling, occupational status, and agricultural position were all better in counties where Blacks voted in larger numbers *and* with Federal troops and/or Freedmen's Bureau offices
- Both Black political engagement and Federal presence mattered



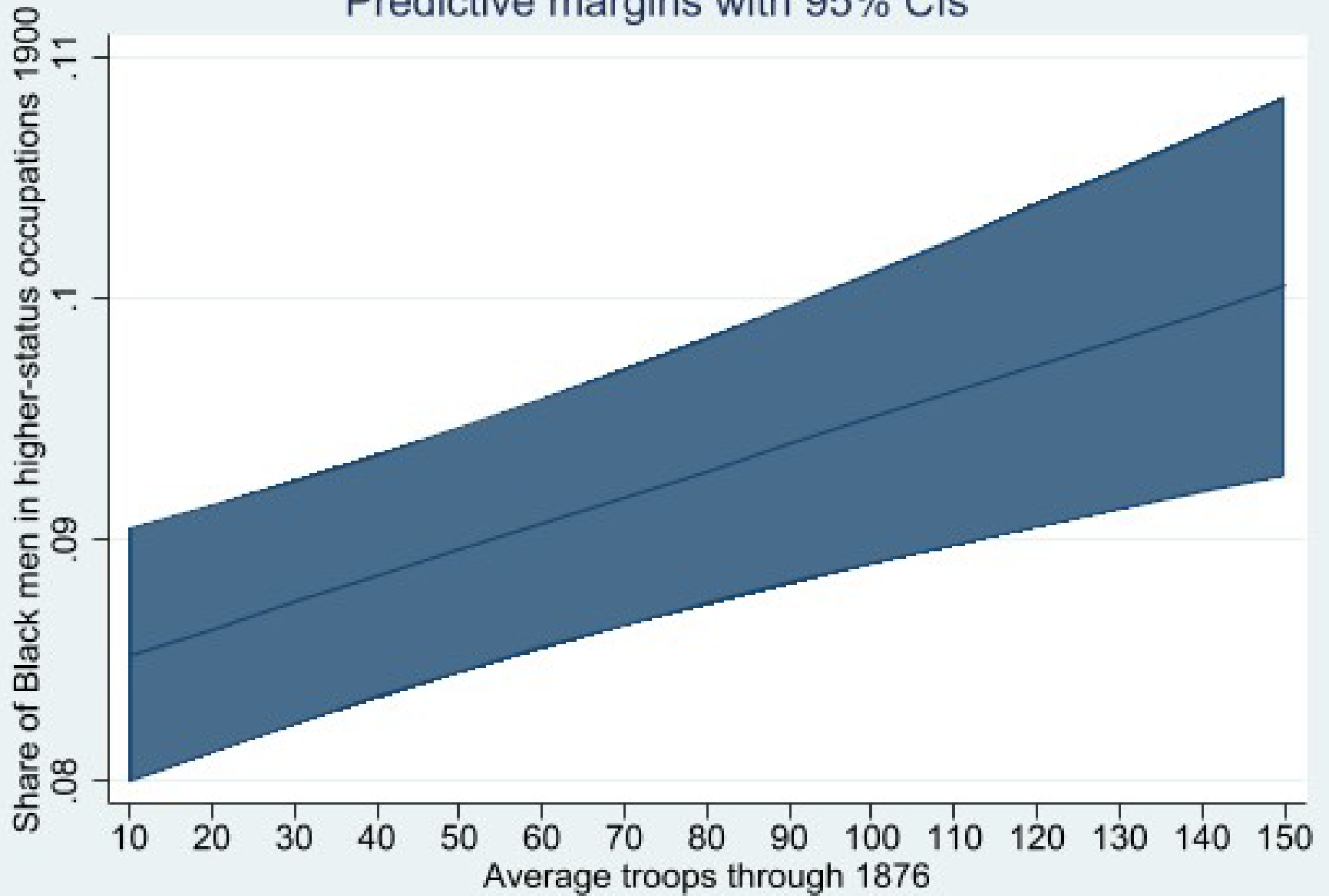
# Third step

- Persistence: Was subsequent Black socio-economic achievement affected by the Reconstruction-era experience?

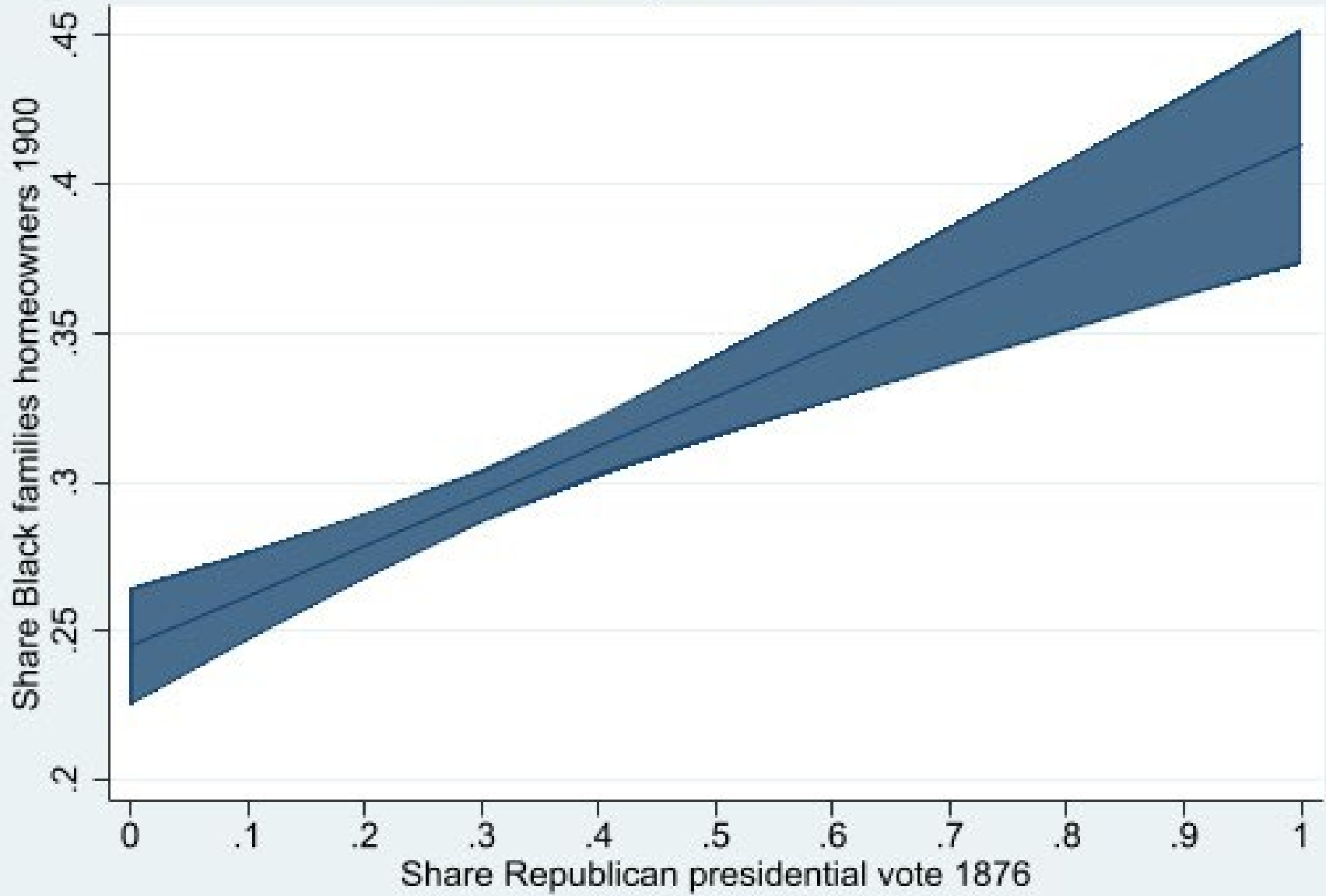
VARIABLES (all outcomes for 1900)	Percent of Black farmers who own	Percent of Black farmers share tenants	Percent of Black men hi occupations	Percent of Blacks homeowners
Republican Presidential votes 1876	0.183*** (0.0418)	-0.178*** (0.0411)	0.0337* (0.0173)	0.166*** (0.0295)
Average occupying troops thru 1876 (thousands)	0.325*** (0.123)	-0.423*** (0.0892)	0.0565*** (0.0214)	0.0976 (0.102)
Freedmen's Bureau office	0.0163 (0.0157)	0.0105 (0.0158)	-0.00506 (0.00464)	0.0448*** (0.0106)
Percent population Black 1900	-0.353*** (0.0374)	-0.221*** (0.0389)	-0.0673*** (0.0138)	-0.338*** (0.0269)
Percent Black population urban 1900	0.171** (0.0666)	-0.185*** (0.0509)	0.208*** (0.0239)	0.0102 (0.0290)
Total population 1900	-3.56e-06*** (1.03e-06)	2.08e-06** (9.29e-07)	5.07e-07* (2.62e-07)	-2.09e-06*** (4.00e-07)
Cotton suitability	-0.00222*** (0.000569)	0.00239*** (0.000575)	-0.000774*** (0.000217)	-0.000717* (0.000373)
Constant	0.537*** (0.0299)	0.405*** (0.0290)	0.107*** (0.0110)	0.415*** (0.0186)
Observations	839	839	847	844
R-squared	0.223	0.134	0.261	0.245

VARIABLES	Percent of Black farmers who own 1900	Percent of Black farmers who are share tenants 1900	Percent of Black men in higher occupations 1900	Percent of Blacks who are homeowners 1900
Rep Pres votes 1876	0.183***	-0.178***	0.0337*	0.166***
	(0.0418)	(0.0411)	(0.0173)	(0.0295)
Avg troops thru 1876	0.325***	-0.423***	0.0565***	0.0976
	(0.123)	(0.0892)	(0.0214)	(0.102)
Freedmen's Bureau ofc	0.0163	0.0105	-0.00506	0.0448***
	(0.0157)	(0.0158)	(0.00464)	(0.0106)
Cotton suitability	-0.00222***	0.00239***	-0.000774***	-0.000717*
	(0.000569)	(0.000575)	(0.000217)	(0.000373)

Predictive margins with 95% CIs



Predictive margins with 95% CIs



## A sense of the substantive impact: 1900

VARIABLES	Share Black farmers who own farm	Share Black farmers share tenants	Share Black males in higher occupations	Share Black households who are homeowners
Mean of variable	33%	39%	9.1%	30%
Republican vote 1876	+5.1%	-4.1%		+3.4%
Avg troops thru 1876	+4.4%	-3.6%	+1.2%	
Cotton suitability	-4.7%	+3.6%	-1.5%	-1.1%

# Third step

- Persistence: Was subsequent Black socio-economic achievement affected by the Reconstruction-era experience?
- Yes.
- Literacy, occupational status, homeownership, and agricultural position were all better in “more Reconstructed” counties
- Effects last through 1910 (fading after)

# A mechanism

- Education the principal immediate goal
- Local property taxes the principal instrument
  - Paid by wealthy whites
  - Used primarily for public schools
- Republican control led to higher local property taxes
- Higher local property taxes allowed higher Black school attendance
- Enduring impact of education



VARIABLES	Republican House vote 1870	Local tax rate 1870	Local tax rate 1870
Troops 1870 (1000)	.095046***		
	.0036015		
Freedmen's Bur ofc	0.0261*		
	(0.0150)		
Cotton suitability	-0.00201***		
	(0.000572)		
Repub HoR vote 1870		0.00514***	
		(0.00148)	
Repub HoR plurality 1870			0.00250***
			(0.000577)

	(1)	(3)
VARIABLES	Local Black officeholders 1870	Local tax rate 1870
Republican HoR vote 1870	0.206*** (0.0751)	
Freedmen's Bureau office	0.124*** (0.0370)	0.000477 (0.000514)
Republican HoR plurality 1870		0.00219*** (0.000573)
Local Black officeholders 1870		0.00162*** (0.000546)

VARIABLES	Black boys 6-16 attending school 1870
Local tax rate, 1870	1.314**
	(0.627)
Freedmen's Bur. Office	0.0253***
	(0.00752)
Cotton suitability	-0.000483**
	(0.000220)

VARIABLES	Adult black Male literacy 1910	Black males Higher occupations 1910	Black farmowners % of total 1910	Black tenant farmers % of total 1910
Cotton suitability	0.00110*** (0.000276)	-0.00125*** (0.000276)	-0.00366*** (0.000615)	0.00365*** (0.000623)
Black boys in school 1870	0.142*** (0.0548)	0.101*** (0.0370)	0.512*** (0.0868)	-0.525*** (0.0888)

# A mechanism

- Federal presence associated with more Republican voting, more Black officeholders
- Republican local control and local Black officeholders associated with substantially higher local property taxes
- Higher local property taxes associated with higher Black school attendance
- Enduring impact of education

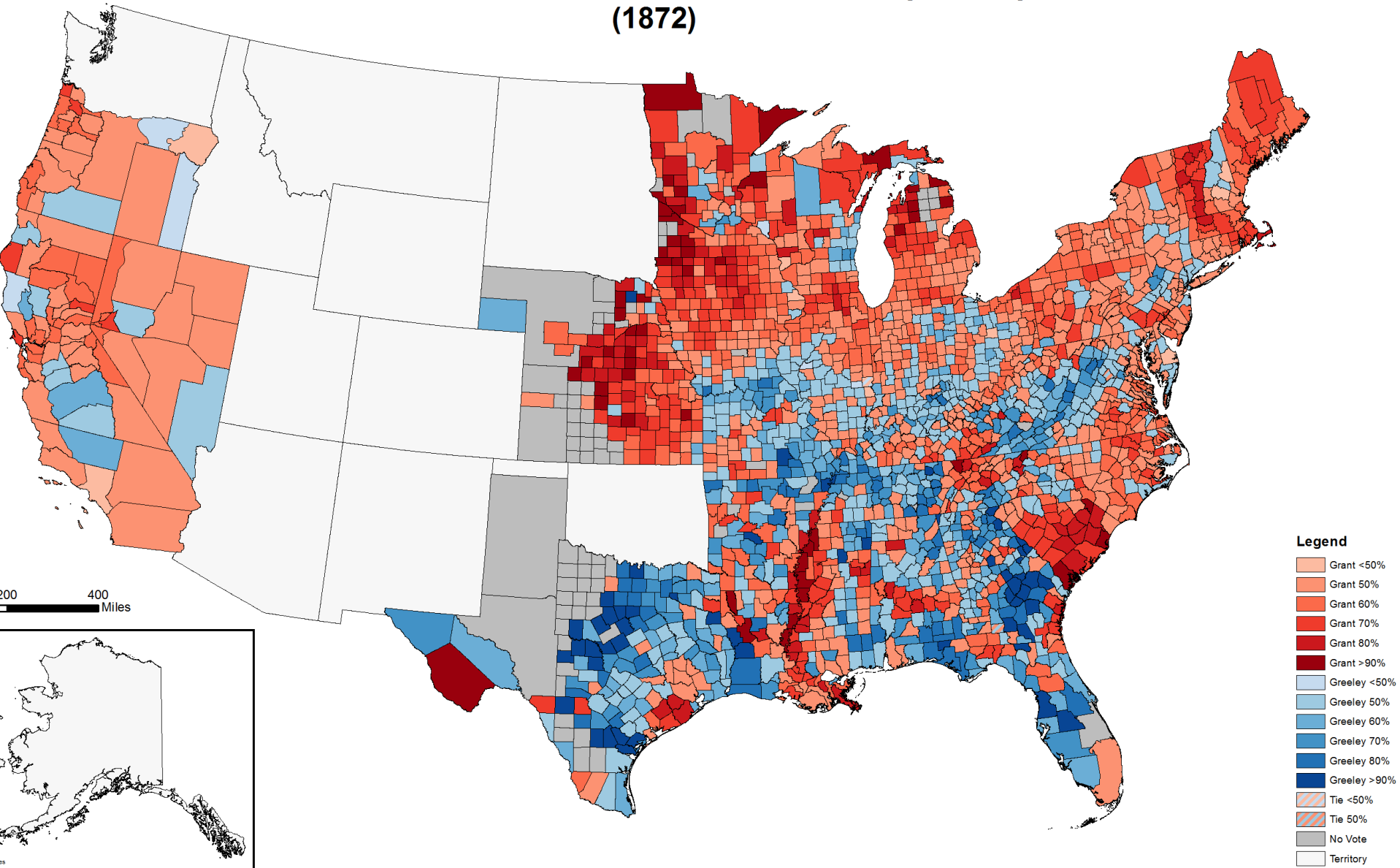
# Implications

- Political institutional change – franchise expansion and others – associated with Black political participation, socio-economic achievement
- Institutional change required state power – military and otherwise to be enforced
- Underlying economic structure limited or blocked impact of institutional change

# Conclusions

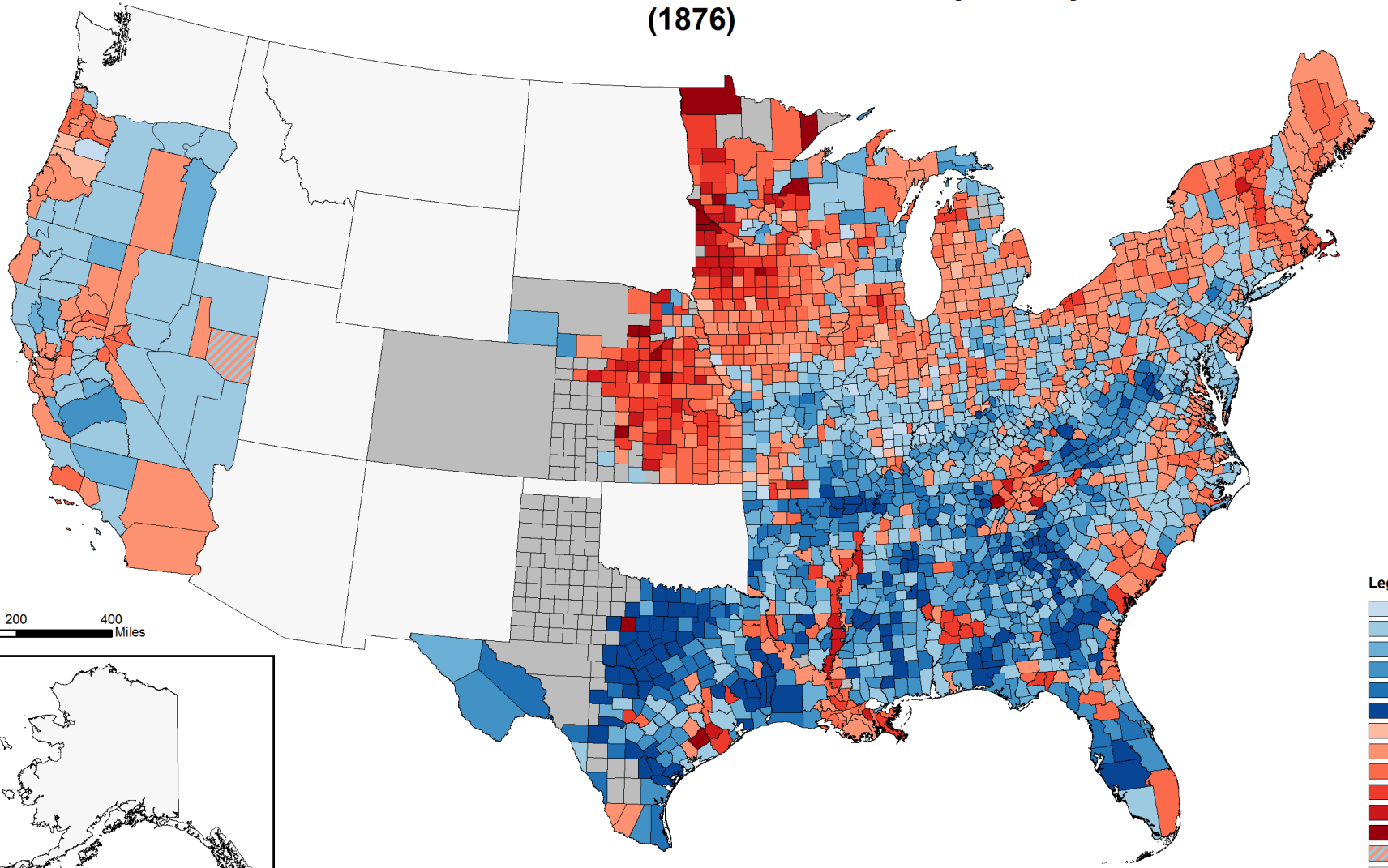
- Reconstruction a dramatic period in American history – reversal a tragedy of lasting import
- Major institutional changes → high levels of political participation/success → economic achievements by freed people. Impact persisted for decades.
- Crucially backed by military and other state power – and receded when state receded
- Lessons both for history, and US, and theory
- Worthy of far more research

# United States Presidential Election Results by County (1872)

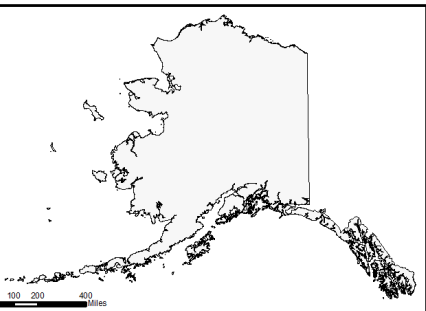




# United States Presidential Election Results by County (1876)



100 200 400 Miles



## Legend

- Tilden <50%
- Tilden 50%
- Tilden 60%
- Tilden 70%
- Tilden 80%
- Tilden >90%
- Hayes <50%
- Hayes 50%
- Hayes 60%
- Hayes 70%
- Hayes 80%
- Hayes >90%
- Tie 50%
- No Vote
- Territory

