Black-White Income Inequality During Jim Crow: Evidence from "Passing" for White*

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Abstract

This paper documents several new facts about racial discrimination from 1910-1940 in the United States. Exposure to racial discrimination was positively associated with some Black men taking on White identities, resulting in large income gains and economic mobility. However, this imposed high social costs; beyond the loss of one's Black identity, passing for White was associated with higher separation rates from a person's community and family. Using the income gains from passing, we estimate that removing contemporaneous labor market discrimination would have increased the Black-to-White income ratio by at least 16 percentage points.

Keywords: Identity, Discrimination, Income Inequality.
JEL: J15, N3

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"If passing for white will get a fellow better accommodations on the train, better seats in the theatre, immunity from insults in public places, and may even save his life from a mob, only idiots would fail to seize the advantage of passing, at least occasionally if not permanently."

-William Pickens, NAACP Field Secretary, in his 1927 article "Racial Segregation"

1 Introduction

In the historical United States, race was one of the most important determinants of opportunities and outcomes. Most studies in economics treat race as entirely exogenous and fixed over an individual's lifetime. In contrast, other social science disciplines provide a large body of evidence that individuals have some discretion over their racial identity.[1] Akerlof and Kranton (2000) famously points out that "the choice of identity may be the most important 'economic' decision people make [...] economic analyses of, for example, poverty, labor supply, and schooling have not considered these possibilities".

Our paper contributes to this agenda by providing novel empirical evidence from the pre-Civil Rights period in the United States. We ask two main questions. First, did Black men systematically change their racial identities in response to political-economic incentives, and what were the costs of doing so? Second, what were the income gains from taking on a White identity, and what do these gains tell us about Black-White income inequality and the economic costs of discrimination?

In our context, discrimination against the Black population was severe, and the "one-drop rule" dictated that an individual was "Black" if they had one or more Black ancestors. At the same time, extensive (often nonconsensual) racial mixing during previous generations caused many African Americans to have the physical traits of Europeans. Historical accounts describe some of these people leaving behind their Black identities to live as White, often at great personal and emotional cost. "Passing [choosing to change one's racial identity from Black to White] came into existence during slavery and increased in frequency during the Jim Crow period. Individual African Americans chose to pass to escape discrimination and in-

[1] For example, see the classic sociology studies by Eckard (1947) and Hart (1921) on racial classification change during the early 1900s. More recent studies in sociology, such as Alba, Lindeman, and Insolera (2016) and Saperstein and Penner (2012), examine changes in self-reported racial identity in modern U.S. data.

crease employment opportunities. However, the costs of passing were high, including emotional stress from cutting ties to one's family, condemnation from some segments of the Black community, and the constant fear of "being 'discovered' by whites" (Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2007). Yet despite numerous anecdotal accounts and historical narratives suggesting that passing was an open secret with potentially important implications for our understanding of discrimination and inequality, there is no systematic empirical evidence on this phenomenon.[2]

The main difficulty has been the lack of reliable data to follow an individual over time. We address this using the linked 1900-1940 Census data from Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez (2021). Since the most important information for identifying an individual in the census is their name and women change their names after marriage, we focus on men. The linked sample allows us to observe whether an individual changes their racial classification over time, as well as a large number of other attributes, such as marital status, household composition, occupation, and location of residence.

Using this linked data, we provide a rich descriptive analysis of the factors associated with choosing to pass for White, and the costs and benefits of this choice. To address concerns about non-random selection into being linked, we also provide weighted estimates for all of our results (Ward, 2021; Ager, Boustan, and Eriksson, 2021; Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez, 2021). To address concerns about false links, we discuss and implement a series of alternative linking algorithms and provide estimated bounds of our main regression estimates under different possible false link rates.

We begin by examining the political, social, and economic incentives for passing. We find that passing from Black to White is positively associated with living in a state where lynchings were more common and vote shares for the pro-segregation Democratic party were higher, consistent with the conventional wisdom that racial

[2]For just a few examples demonstrating that passing was an open secret during this period, *Imitation of Life*, a novel by Fannie Hurst published in 1933, explores the costs of passing (Hurst, 1933). The book was made into a movie in 1934 and nominated for multiple Academy of Awards. The movie "Lost Boundaries" in 1949 was based on the life of Dr. Johnston, a graduate of the University of Chicago Medical School. Dr. Johnson, his wife, and his children passed for White so that he could obtain a job as a radiologist after discrimination ruled out most jobs for him as a Black man. The cover of Ebony Magazine in March 1948 claiming that there were "five million White Negros" who had passed from Black to White (this number was also cited in Time Magazine in February 1948) and speculated on the reasons for these decisions and the lives of the people who chose it (Sollors, 1999, p. 508). *Passing* by Nella Larsen and published in 1929 also explored this topic (Larsen, 1929).

discrimination made life very difficult for the Black population and passing was a way to escape severe discrimination for some. Further strengthening this finding, we estimate a difference-in-differences framework and find that just after the Tulsa massacre, an infamous two-day attack on the Black community within the Greenwood district, passing for White increased among Black men living in Oklahoma.

In the second set of results, we analyze the costs associated with changing one's racial identity, beyond losing one's Black identity. Since it was generally illegal for Black individuals to take on a White identity, or to live with White individuals except in hierarchical situations, passing for White required a Black man's family to pass with him, or be left behind. We document that being married and the number of children are negatively associated with passing, consistent with the potential costs of losing one's family acting as an important deterrent to passing. Moreover, we find that Black men who passed for White were nearly all married to White women or single after they passed. However, Black men who had previously been married are less likely to be married after taking on a White identity. These results suggest that the loss of family discussed in the historical accounts is a pervasive feature of passing. We observe similar patterns for children.

Since passing was illegal, Black men who passed also needed to relocate to a new community where their past was unknown. We find that men who pass move further away from their home, and are more than twice as likely to relocate to a different county or state. They are also more likely to leave the South. Black men who pass move to counties with more White residents.

In the third set of results, we investigate the belief that passing for White allowed Black men to obtain better economic opportunities. We find that passing was associated with a very large increase in income. Those who pass for White experienced on average a 22% increase in their annual incomes when using traditional occupational income measures, and a 68% increase in their incomes when occupational income scores are disaggregated by race and region (Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu, 2025). This increase in income was larger for Black men who previously had lower incomes. These results suggest that passing for White was a mechanism for reducing income inequality between White and Black men, and also among Black men. Interestingly, we find that the positive association between passing for White and income after passing is steeper for those who move. This is consistent with the evidence that migration was a means through which Black men improved their economic cir-

cumstances during this period (Margo, 1989; Collins and Wanamaker, 2014), and suggests that the economic gains for Black migrants who passed for White exceeds those of Black men who continued to live as Black.[3]

We close by using the estimated income gains from passing to examine the aggregate implications for our understanding of Black-White income inequality during this period. Re-classifying men who passed for White as Black, but retaining their White incomes, increases the Black-to-White income ratio from 72% to 74%. This result underscores the large gains from taking on a White identity, and also indicates that discrimination induced a "brain drain" from the Black community. This effect is also similar in size to the 3 percentage point reduction in the wage differential between Black and White men from improvements in Black schools from 1915 to 1966 documented in Card and Krueger (1992). Since most Black men did not pass this difference is a lower bound effect of discrimination on Black-White inequality.

To generalize these results to the population of Black incomes, we use the gains from passing to approximate what Black men in general (and not just those who did in fact pass) would make if they were paid as if they were White, i.e. if all Black men had taken on a White identity. Using this approach, we find that the Black-to-White income ratio is on average 16 percentage points higher (72% to 88%), indicating that Black incomes are much closer to White incomes when Black men are compensated similarly to White men. This still understates the impact of discrimination during this period on Black incomes, as it keeps adult skills fixed. Discrimination and segregation during this period also resulted in separate and unequal schooling, which inhibited human capital; and separate and unequal housing and healthcare in childhood, which likely also depressed Black men's incomes in adulthood. However, this analysis provides a sense of how severely discrimination curtailed Black men's incomes and upward mobility during this period.

Our paper is the first to provide empirical evidence that while passing was costly, it was systematically associated with political, social, and economic incentives. The empirical results show that historical narratives hold true in the data. Discrimination and the lack of opportunities increased the likelihood that Black men passed for White. Those who passed had better economic opportunities. But this was achieved at great personal cost – the dislocation from the man's Black identity, his commu-

[3] A more recent literature shows that the large amounts of migration during this period was also not without costs, such as increased mortality (Black, Sanders, Taylor, and Taylor, 2015) and backlash in the North that eventually curtailed the gains from migration (Derenoncourt, 2022; Tabellini, 2020).

nity, and often his family. The estimates are specific to the context of our study. However, the insight that identity can be a choice that responds to incentives and has important economic implications, even along dimensions as rigidly defined as race in pre-Civil Rights United States, is generalizable.

We add to two literatures in economics. Most closely related is a small set of empirical studies examining the importance of identity for economic and other outcomes. Existing studies document the correlation between identity and social and economic incentives in the context of caste in India (Cassan, Keniston, and Kleineberg, 2020; Cassan, 2015; Cassan and Vandewalle, 2017); religious identity for Jewish people in medieval Europe (Botticini and Eckstein, 2012); racial identity for Native Americans in the the contemporary United States (Antman and Duncan, 2022); and racial identity in contemporary Brazil (Cornwell, Rivera, and Schmutte, 2017). In documenting the costs of changing identity, we complement Atkin, Colson-Sihra, and Shayo (2021) and Jia and Persson (2021), which provide indirect evidence for caste identity in India and ethnic identity in contemporary China. Also related is the recent paper by Fouka, Mazumder, and Tabellini (2022), which finds that the Great Migration of African Americans increased the strength of identity for White Europeans in the Northeastern United States.[4]

Our findings are most closely related to two innovative recent studies. First, Abramitzky, Conway, Mill, and Stein (2023) find no significant income differences between brothers from the same family coded as "Black" or "Mulatto".[5] Combined with our results, this suggests that it is crossing the color line fully, i.e. moving from "Black" to "White", that matters in terms of income gains in the labor market. This is consistent with a stark divide in American culture between how one is treated if one is perceived as White versus Black, with less difference in treatment across different skin tones within these categories. Second, Noghanibehambari and Fletcher (2025) link Census records to Social Security Administration death records to show that Black men who pass for white live 9.4 months longer, suggesting that the economic gains from passing we document also lead to long-term health gains. Together, these

[4]This literature has traditionally comprised of theoretical studies (e.g., Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bénabou and Tirole, 2011). We do not present a formal model in the paper, but our results are compatible with the model by Bénabou and Tirole (2011). Also see Austen-Smith and Fryer (2005) and Ruebeck, Averett, and Bodenhorn (2009) for studies of the contemporary U.S. context, Bodenhorn and Ruebeck (2003) for a discussion of the historical U.S. context, and Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier, and Zenou (2016) for a study of the context of immigrants in Europe today.

[5]Abramitzky, Conway, Mill, and Stein (2023) subsumes the previous paper Mill and Stein (2016).

results are consistent with the notion that race is a social construct that is malleable, depends on context, and is endogenously determined. This, in turn, has important implications for the empirical literature on discrimination (Rose, 2022).

Second, we contribute to a small number of papers that describe inequality between Black and White Americans, the relative mobility of the Black population, and intergenerational persistence in incomes for Black and White Americans during this period. Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025) document an increase in intergenerational mobility from 1910-1940 driven in part by convergence in racial income gaps. Ward (2021) shows that Black Americans consistently experience lower income mobility than White Americans, and ignoring the Black population when calculating historical mobility leads to a mistaken view that mobility was much higher in the past.[6] Black-White differences in earnings have been stubbornly persistent in more recent periods (Bayer and Charles, 2018).

We provide novel evidence that in the face of severe discrimination, passing for White was an effective mechanism to achieve upward income mobility.The notion that discrimination severely decreased the opportunities and incomes of Black men in the United States during this period (and more recently) has been extensively documented (Margo, 1991; Charles and Guryan, 2008; Hornbeck and Naidu, 2014; Kreisman and Rangel, 2015; Massey and Denton, 2019; Lang and Kahn-Lang Spitzer, 2020). Our results show that simply taking on a White identity allowed Black men to achieve much higher incomes, and this choice to change identity, while costly, was motivated by political-economic incentives. Our results suggest that there would have been much greater convergence in historic Black to White incomes absent discrimination.

2 Background

2.1 Post-Reconstruction and Jim Crow

The years 1910-1940 followed Reconstruction and were characterized by the Jim Crow laws that preceded the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This was a period when formal and informal discrimination towards the Black population severely limited their political, economic, and social opportunities relative to the White population.

[6]Collins and Wanamaker (2022) and Mazumder (2014) also find much lower income mobility for Black American men historically compared with White American men.

Southern states passed laws intended to disenfranchise the Black population (Woodward, 2002, p. 83). These changes significantly reduced the number of Black voters.[7]

The Black population faced restrictions such as the complete segregation of Whites and non-Whites in all facilities (e.g., restaurants, schools, water fountains, buses), where the facilities provided to non-Whites were of lower quality than those provided to Whites. Many regions practiced strict neighborhood segregation, where public services such as sewers and electricity ended at the boundaries of predominantly White neighborhoods. In other places, particularly urban areas, there could be segregation within buildings (e.g., across floors) (Packard, 2003, p. 102-103). Interracial marriages and sometimes even non-marital sexual relationships were also made illegal (Packard, 2003, p. 99). Discrimination was also "enforced" informally by organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan. Non-Whites seen as violating White supremacy were often harassed, and sometimes murdered. Between 1882 and 1968, approximately 3,446 Black Americans were lynched (Tuskegee Institute, 2010).

Black people in the United States earned much less than White people.[8] Black men and women were shut out of most non-menial jobs (Sharfstein, 2011, p. 255). Sundstrom (1994) shows that the large differences in Black and White occupational choices were driven in part by social norms that rejected Black workers as supervisors over White workers.

Severe racial discrimination was not isolated to the South. For example, the Ku Klux Klan was based in Indiana during the early 20th Century and had large memberships in Maine and Oregon (Packard, 2003, p. 127). California, which had introduced laws to restrict property ownership of Asians during the 19th Century, extended them to include other non-White races such as Black men and women (Packard, 2003, p. 100). When Woodrow Wilson became president, he segregated the District of Columbia's federal agencies, which had been integrated for the previous fifty years (Packard, 2003, p. 123). This increased the Black-White earnings

[7]For example, in Mississippi, less than 9,000 out of 147,000 voting age Blacks were registered to vote. In Louisiana, the number of Black registered voters decreased from approximately 130,000 in 1896 to 1,342 by 1904. In Georgia, only four percent of all Black males were registered to vote (Keyssar, 2000, loc. 2695).

[8]Margo (1990) discusses the striking stability of the Black-to-White earnings ratio from 1900 to 1940 and the potential causes of these gaps, with Black American men earning between 45%-48% the income of White American men over this entire period. See also Carruthers and Wanamaker (2017), Collins and Margo (2011) and Card and Krueger (1992). Wright (2013) discusses how the Civil Rights movement removed some of the barriers to Black economic success, leading to large economic gains for Black men.

gap by 3.4-6.9 percentage points (Aneja and Xu, 2022). Many schools in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey were completely segregated, even though it was *de jure* illegal. Between 1913 and 1948, 30 out of the then 48 states enforced anti-miscegenation (mixed-race marriage) laws (Vile, 2003). Derenoncourt (2022) shows that the Great Migration resulted in negative reactions by White receiving communities, with the influx of Black migrants to the north causing White flight and changing government spending.

2.2 The Color Gradient

According to the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, a total of 305,326 Africans were brought to North America to be enslaved. Almost 70% were adult men.[9] By the eve of the Civil War in 1860, there were a total of 4,427,294 individuals classified as Black, over 3.9 million of whom were enslaved. To understand the importance of passing during the period we study, it is important to note the large number of mixed-race individuals. "By the time that slavery ended, a majority of American Negroes bore in their genetic make-up some degree of White, which is to say European, ancestry" (Packard, 2003, p. 95).[10][11] To demonstrate the wide gradient of color for former slaves, emancipated "White and Colored Slaves" engaged in a propaganda tour of the North in 1863 to raise funds for schools.[12] Similar images were also used before the Civil War in abolitionist novels to advocate for freedom. Past studies have argued that those who had Caucasian features may have had stronger economic incentives to pass for White because they had the most to lose from Jim Crow laws, given they often had higher educational attainment, worked in higher-skilled jobs, and owned property (Bodenhorn, 2002).

The best available genetics evidence shows substantial racial mixing in previous generations. Individuals today who identify as African American are 24% European and 73.2% African on average. Moreover, a significant proportion of indi-

[9] See https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates.

[10] Rockquemore and Brunsma (2007) notes that "the vast majority of interracial sex consisted of exploitative unions between White male slave owners and their Black female slaves" (Rockquemore and Brunsma, 2007, Chap. 1).

[11] Children inherited the status of the mother under slavery. Thus a high degree of non-consensual mixing between White men and enslaved Black women could have contributed to the large increase in the slave population.

[12] See Appendix Figure A.2, which was taken from the article entitled, "White and Colored Slaves" by C. C. Leigh (*Harper's Weekly*, January 30, 1864, p. 71).

viduals who self-report as European Americans have African ancestry: 3.5% have at least 1% (at least one ancestor in the past eleven generations). In Louisiana and South Carolina, 12% of self-identified European Americans have at least 1% African Ancestry (Bryc, Durand, Macpherson, Reich, and Mountain, 2015).[13] Since European-Americans are approximately 72.4% and African-Americans are approximately 12.6% of the U.S. population today, taking literally the possibility that 3.5% of the European-American population are Black under the "one-drop rule" implies that approximately 20% of Black Americans passed for White. Hammer, Chamberlain, Kearney, Stover, Zhang, Karafet, Walsh, and Redd (2006) conducts a similar exercise with an independent sample. This study does not report national average statistics, and instead compares genetic compositions across regions. They find that for White Americans, the lowest amount of African ancestry is in the Southwest (0.8%) and the highest in the Northeast (10%). Doing a similar calculation as before, these genetic results translate to rates of passing of 57.4% in the Northeast and 4.6% in the Southwest, which could reflect a higher rate of passing in the Northeast or that those who passed migrated to the North. Neither of the genetic studies discussed here use random samples and therefore they may not be representative of the populations they study (the United States, the Southwest, or the Northeast). Meigs, Grant, Piccolo, López, Florez, Porneala, Marceau, and McKinlay (2014) obtained a random sample of the population in Boston. They find that 8.63% of the ancestry of European Americans is African, which translates to a rate of passing of 49.6% of the Black population.

2.3 Defining Race and Historical Narratives About Passing

The legal definition of "Black" in the United States has varied across states and over time. During the Jim Crow era, most states used the "one drop rule", which meant that a person was considered Black if she had only one drop of African blood (Packard, 2003, p. 98). Explicitly racist beliefs led Whites to believe that they could infer the degree of a person's African ancestry from their appearance and demeanor, even if such ancestry was fractional.[14]

[13]Note that genetic studies such as the ones discussed here face numerous caveats from difficulties such as non-random sampling of the population. See Bryc, Durand, Macpherson, Reich, and Mountain (2015) for a detailed discussion.

[14]See Gross (2009, Ch. 7).

In practice, for many mixed race individuals, race was determined by association because this "degree-of-blood rule did not in fact make it impossible for people to cross racial lines" (Gross, 2009, loc. 4123). In his well-known study, Davis (2010, p. 14) points out that "The concept of 'passing' rests on the one-drop rule and on folk beliefs about race and miscegenation, not on biological or historical fact".[15] In describing the successful suit for White identity by a mixed race woman named Alexina Morrison, Gross (2009, p. 55) points out that ".. race was not obvious. Nor did the rule about 'negro' identity... decide the question. More persuasive to the [white] witnesses and jurors at the trial were stories about the hidden marks of race as interpreted by experts, and stories about Alexina's behavior dancing at white balls, her mingling with white families, her love affairs with white men... separation became the key to whiteness. People who had associated with whites must be whites themselves, just as people who had associated with blacks had to be black... In other words, race by association ... trumped any other sort of physical or documentary evidence" (Gross, 2009, loc. 1083, 1356).[16] As historian Carol Wilson noted when discussing her book on the successful lawsuit of Sally Miller, an enslaved woman who claimed a White identity (and freedom), "Southern whites want desperately to believe that they can tell the difference between white people and black people. And so the fact that white people accept her as a white person, they consider that factual evidence. Well, she must be white, because we think she's white." (Wilson, 2016).[17] In the context of our study, changing one's race or "passing" required a person to have physical features that are commonly shared by Whites, to behave and dress like a White person, and to associate with White people.

Passing was known to have occurred for individuals of all ages. Children sometimes passed from Black to White because their parents passed or because parents sent their children to live with White families to allow the children to pass.[18] The

[15] Also, see Smith (2006) for a detailed discussion of the difficulties and "methods" that White individuals developed to distinguish between Black and White, given the difficulty of distinguishing based on sight alone when there were many mixed-race individuals.

[16] There are several examples of racial classification by association from lawsuits. See the review by legal historian Ariela Gross (Gross, 2009). In each successful case, the person seeking to be legally identified as White would demonstrate that she or he has been accepted by White friends and attended all White functions (e.g., assemblies, balls). In each case, the judge appealed to the jury to use their "common sense".

[17] In the modern U.S. context, sociologists demonstrate that the perception of whether an individual is Black is positively correlated with socioeconomic status (Penner and Saperstein, 2008; Freeman, Penner, Saperstein, Scheutz, and Ambady, 2011).

[18] See Williams (1996) and Dawkins (2012).

historical anecdotes that exist suggest a number of reasons why individuals passed. Some passed as young adults to attend school, obtain a job, or to marry a White person (or a Black person who had passed for White) (Sharfstein, 2011; Williams, 1996). Others passed simply because of the overwhelming discrimination they faced or to provide a better life for their children (Sharfstein, 2011). We will closely examine both explicit and more subtle forms of discrimination as potential drivers of passing in our first set of results.

Passing most often required a person to move to a White community where the individual was not previously known by others as a Black person since "...Caucasian appearance was irrelevant if public knowledge existed of one's black ancestry" (Packard, 2003, p. 96). The exceptionally high rates of internal U.S. migration presumably made it easier for mixed-race individuals to move and adopt a White identity. Anecdotal historical accounts of individuals passing for White document not only this geographic dislocation, but also the often near-permanent separation from a person's family.[19] Spouses and children who could not pass for White would presumably have been systematically left behind. These geographic and family costs that characterize the historical narratives motivate our systematic analysis of the costs of passing in our second set of results.

Our study takes place when the incentives to pass were arguably at their highest since the end of slavery. Jim Crow severely eroded the economic opportunities and civil liberties of anyone identified as Black, even as the number of educated and skilled African Americans grew rapidly in the post-Civil War era. "The harder whites made it for blacks to earn a living, educate their children, and just make it through a single day without threat or insult, the greater the incentives grew for light-skinned blacks to leave their communities and establish themselves as white... the drumbeat for racial purity, the insistence that any African ancestry – a single

[19] A large body of anecdotal evidence shows that those wishing to pass often completely disassociated themselves with their past lives. For example, historian Allyson Hobbs recalls the experience of her relative who passed for White after high school. Her grandmother said to the relative, "you're going to graduate, you're going to leave Chicago, you're going to go to California, and you're going to become a White woman. And this is the best thing for you". The young girl protested, she didn't want to leave her friends, her family, the only life she'd ever known. And her grandmother said, "no, this is the best thing for you. You'll have the best life chances if you do this" (Sloan, 2013). In his biography, Williams (1996) recounts how his mixed race father passed for White by moving from Indiana to Washington D.C., and married a White woman. In his recount of the experience of the Wall family, Sharfstein (2011) discussed how the children who moved away from their home in Washington D.C. passed for White, and the one son who remained behind and his daughter were classified as Black.

drop of blood – tainted a person's very existence, accelerated the migration to new identities and lives" (Sharfstein, 2011, p. 235-236). William Pickens of the NAACP stated in his 1927 article discussing racial identity that these individuals "are often accused of 'wanting to be white,' when a better analysis would show that what they really want is the freedom and privileges of white persons" (Pickens, 1927). Based on these narratives, our third set of results explicitly examines the income gains from passing to see if this goal of better outcomes was systematically realized, and what this tells us about discrimination and Black-White inequality during this period.

In Appendix A we present a selection of individuals who passed for White during our period of analysis. Their stories exemplify the types of costs and benefits individuals faced when passing, and these rich historical accounts from the lived experiences of individuals during this period drive the analysis in this paper.

3 Data

We use individual-level data from the U.S. historical censuses for the years 1910-1940.[20] These were digitized and made available to researchers by Ancestry through the NBER. For each individual, we observe variables such as the first name, last name, age, county of residence, state of residence, state or country of birth, race, gender, occupation, relationship to the household head, and marital status. Father's and mother's birth states and countries are available for the years 1910-1930.

Prior to 1940, the Census did not record incomes. To proxy for income, IPUMS created a crosswalk from occupation to income using later years of data where detailed income (and not just occupation) data are available. We use these occupational income scores as our main measures of income in the analysis, but additionally present estimates based on the recent work by Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025) and find that our results are robust to using alternative specifications to predict incomes.

Our results use the linked full population provided by Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez (2021), a two-sided linked sample, and one of the most rigorous automated linking algorithms that minimizes errors (Ward, 2021; Ager, Boustan, and Eriksson, 2021; Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum,

[20] We exclude other years for data availability reasons. The 1890 census data was lost to a fire. We exclude 1900 because some of the variables we use in the analysis, such as school quality inputs, are only available for Southern States from 1910 onward.

and Pérez, 2021). Our study focuses on males because of the difficulties in linking women, who usually change their names after marriage. We restrict our attention to those under age 55 in the base year.

We focus on individuals in two racial categories: "White" and "Black". Census categories for "Black" changed over time. To be consistent, "Black" in our study includes "Mulatto" individuals, which are separate census categories for some census years. *Passing* in our context refers to a change in census identification from "Black" (including "Mulatto" individuals) to "White" from one census to the next. We discuss "Mulatto" individuals in more detail later in the paper when relevant.

The enumerator determined racial classification. Enumerator instructions were vague (see Appendix B for more details). In practice, enumerators inferred the race of respondents based on physical appearance, behavior, and association. The requirements for a person to be classified as White in the census were presumably similar to the requirements for the legal cases discussed by Gross (2009) in Section 2. The individual historical census data were not used for other purposes such as employment or taxes and there was no reason for an individual to pass for White for the Census *per se*.[21] Being identified as White by the enumerator requires that a man has the appearance and surroundings of a White person.

Thus, our *prima facie* interpretation is that any passing for White observed in the historical Censuses reflects an active choice. However, it is possible that enumerator error results in passive passing in the data by miscoding the race of a light-skinned individual who had no intention of passing. This will introduce measurement error into our estimates, but is unlikely to drive the patterns that we document in the data. We discuss this in the presentation of the results when relevant.

There are two main limitations to the historically linked U.S. Census data. First, not everyone can be uniquely linked, and those who are do not constitute a randomly selected sample from the full population. To address selection into the linked sample, we present estimates using weighted regressions in the Appendix, consistent with Ward (2021) and Ager, Boustan, and Eriksson (2021). We use propensity weighting and re-weigh using age, literacy status, urban status, marital status, whether the person has a distinctively Black name, whether the respondent is

[21]The main purpose of the U.S. census is to determine the number of representatives per state in the house and the number of electoral votes. It is also used to compute aggregate statistics. By law, information that can be used to identify individuals is not released until 72 years after the date of collection.

the household head, state of residence, whether the respondent lives in their place of birth, number of people in the household, number of people in the household squared, and year. All results are very similar to our main estimates. Thus, the discussion in the main text focuses on the unweighted estimates, and we refer the interested reader to the re-weighted robustness tables in Appendix D.

Second, linked data may contain false links. We employ the most conservative linking method recommended by Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez (2021) to minimize this possibility (see Appendix C for details). In addition, we provide three extra robustness checks to be certain our results are unlikely to be driven by false links. We provide additional details and summarize the results from these exercises in Section 4.4.

4 Main Results

4.1 Racial Discrimination and Passing for White

In this section, we investigate the relationship between discrimination and passing for White. We examine county-level variables that measure discrimination, which have emerged in the economic history literature. Table 1 presents the estimates. The dependent variable is a dummy variable that equals one if a linked man who is Black in year t has passed to White in year $t + 10$. The explanatory variables proxy for discrimination and are all measured in the base year t. All estimates control for age and age squared, base year fixed effects, and region fixed effects.[22] Standard errors are clustered at the level of variation of the dependent variable, which we note at the bottom of the table.

Table 1 columns (1) and (2) explore whether the number of lynchings or KKK membership at the county level is associated with passing. Columns (3) and (4) use the Democratic vote share for Congress and President (respectively) in a given county as a proxy for political discrimination in that county.[23] These explanatory variables vary at the county and year level. Thus, the regressions in columns (1)-(4) control for county fixed effects. The estimates in columns (1), (3), and (4) are positive and statistically significant, indicating that passing for White is positively associated with the number of lynchings and the democratic vote share for presidential and

[22]The results are unchanged if we use linear and quadratic age controls.
[23]See https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/8611.

congressional races. Together, these results show that discrimination is associated with a greater degree of passing, even conditional on region and year fixed effects.

A Simple Natural Experiment – The Tulsa Massacre In column (5), we exploit time and spatially varying exposure to discrimination by examining the impact of the Tulsa massacre on passing. The massacre took place on May 31 and June 1, 1921. Mobs of White residents, some of whom had been deputized and given weapons by city officials, attacked Black residents. Many consider this event as "the single worst incident[s] of racial violence in American history" (Messer, Beamon, and Bell, 2013) Estimates for the number killed range from 75 to 300 dead (State of Oklahoma, 2001). The economically vibrant and predominantly Black parts of Greenwood were destroyed, losing most businesses, a junior high school, several churches, and the only hospital in the district. Around 1,500 houses were burned and/or looted (Willows, 1921). The event left an indelible mark on Tulsa and Oklahoma (Albright, Cook, Feigenbaum, Kincaide, Long, and Nunn, 2021), and may have motivated Black men who were exposed to pass for White.

We proxy for exposure with the state of residence. The explanatory variable is a dummy that equals one if the individual lives in Oklahoma in the base decade, interacted with a dummy variable that equals one if the base decade is 1920 or later. The interaction estimate is positive and statistically significant at the 1% level. Thus, exposure to the massacre increased the probability of passing for White.

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Black Men Who Pass for White Next, we examine the socioeconomic correlates of passing, some of which capture more subtle forms of discrimination. Table 2 column (1) examines the relationship between being classified as "Mulatto" and passing. According to conventional wisdom, Mulatto individuals were lighter skinned and more educated (e.g., Bodenhorn, 2002), making it easier for these individuals to pass for White. Indeed, Abramitzky, Conway, Mill, and Stein (2023); **?** documents that among Mulatto males in 1910, more educated individuals were more likely to pass for White in 1940. Column (1) shows that the correlation is positive and statistically significant. However, in columns (3)-(4), we show that the coefficient for mulatto becomes smaller when we control for proxies for educational opportunities. This may reflect that census enumerators infer race not just from the physical appearance of individuals, but also their

surroundings and characteristics (Penner and Saperstein, 2008). In fact, the Census dropped the mulatto category in 1920, stating that "the principal reason for giving up the attempt to separate Blacks and Mulattoes was the fact that results of the attempt in past censuses had been very imperfect" and "not even approximately accurate" (Hochschild and Powell, 2008, p. 79). "After 1920, the U.S. Census Bureau dropped the 'Mulatto' category, the government having concluded that at least three-quarters of all American Negroes bore White genes and thus officially specifying people as Mulattoes no longer made much sense" (Packard, 2003, p. 98).

In columns (2)-(4), we focus on other variables that reflect economic and educational opportunities for Black men. Column (2) reports a positive and significant coefficient for an individual's own occupational income score, suggesting that Black men were more likely to pass for White when they were higher earners, and a potential "brain drain" from the Black community. Column (2) also examines the White-to-Black occupational income score ratio, with higher values indicative of fewer economic opportunities for Black men. We find that passing is negatively associated with White-to-Black occupational income scores. This is consistent with the possibility that when Black and White men work in similar occupations, it is easier for Black men to take advantage of passing. For example, Dr. Johnston who famously passed for White, see Appendix A, was able to switch from being a doctor practicing primarily on Black patients to one practicing on White patients and enjoy the income boost associated with that change. In locations where Black men are prevented from working in White-dominated occupations, the gains from passing might be more muted.

The explanatory variables in column (1) vary at the individual level. Thus, the regressions control for county fixed effects and standard errors are clustered at the county level. They also control for year fixed effects, age, and age squared. The controls have two motivations. The first is that these variables are likely to be correlated to both the socio-economic explanatory variables (e.g., education) and the decision to pass for White. The second is to facilitate easy comparison with the estimates of the relationship between passing and income that we present later in the paper.

In column (3), we examine a variable that reflects educational economic opportunities for Black men: the principal component of Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio, Black-to-White term lengths, and the number

of Black universities.[24] A higher value reflects better educational opportunities for the Black population. We include the other variables from column (2) in this regression. In column (4), we further add the White-to-Black occupational income score. The sample size is smaller for these estimates because the schooling measures are only available for ten southern states. We follow the recommendation of Carruthers and Wanamaker (2017), which developed these measures, to control for state fixed effects in these columns rather than county fixed effects, thereby avoiding over-controlling. The standard errors are clustered at the state level, and we report p-values for wild bootstrapped standard errors in columns (3) and (4).

The results show that passing is positively associated with educational opportunities and individual occupational income scores. These estimates are consistent with historical accounts of passing, which mostly focus on educated and skilled individuals who had the most to gain from passing for White in a society where Black men of all skill levels were pushed towards menial jobs.

4.2 Costs of Passing for White

Losing Family One of the most prominent costs of passing for White that emerges in historical narratives is the loss of family and community. A Black man who passed needed to relocate, and his family needed to move with him and pass for White or be left behind. Motivated by these accounts, this section examines the correlates of the household structure and migration patterns with passing for White.

Table 3 column (1) regresses a dummy variable for passing on marital status and the number of children in the base year. Since we identify the number of children using the relationship to the household head variable, we restrict this sample to household heads. While we only observe children living at home, adult children who no longer live at home are presumably less affected by their father's decision to pass for White than children still living with him. The regression controls for county fixed effects, base year fixed effects, age and age squared. We present Huber-White standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity. We find that passing for White

[24] We use three measures of the quality of secondary schools for Blacks relative to Whites taken from Carruthers and Wanamaker (2017): Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio and Black-to-White term lengths. These variables are available at the county and year level for ten southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. We also add a variable that we construct ourselves: the number of Black universities in a given state and year.

is negatively associated with being married and the number of children a man has in the base year. The coefficients are statistically significant at the 1% level. These results are consistent with the narrative that it was costlier to pass for White if one had a family, such that these men were less likely to make that choice. Column (2) shows that those who live in urban areas in the base year are more likely to pass, consistent with it being easier to pass for White in larger and more diverse urban areas.

Columns (3) and (4) examine the relationship between passing and having a distinctively Black name and a distinctively White name.[25] A distinctively Black name increases the difficulty of passing. Thus, an individual with such a name would be less likely to pass or more likely to change his name to pass for White. In the latter case, he will be excluded from the linked sample. By a similar logic, an individual with a distinctively White name should find it easier to pass for White. Having a distinctively White name may also be correlated with other characteristics, such as more European physical features, which reduce the cost of passing. Estimates demonstrate that having a distinctively Black name is negatively associated with passing for White, while having a distinctively White name is positively associated with passing. The estimates are statistically significant at the 1% level. Column (5) combines all variables together into a single regression. All coefficients are similar.

Next, we delve further into the personal costs of passing for White – particularly how passing breaks up families. Table 4 columns (1)-(3) investigate what happens to marriages when Black men pass for White. Column (1) examines whether a man is married in year $t + 10$ as the dependent variable. The explanatory variables of interest are whether he has passed for White and its interaction with being married in year t. The previous section demonstrated that married men were less likely to pass. Thus, these regressions should be interpreted as purely descriptive decompositions. We also control for base year county of residence fixed effects and base year

[25]Distinctively Black names are are Abe, Abraham, Alonzo, Ambrose, Booker, Elijah, Freeman, Isaac, Isaiah, Israel, King, Master, Moses, Pearlie, Percy, Perlie, Purlie, Presley, Presly, Prince, Titus. These names are identified using random samples of Black men from the census years 1900 and 1920. See Cook, Logan, and Parman (2014) for more details. To identify distinctively White names, we adapt the Cook, Logan, and Parman's method for White males. There are two steps: 1) select names that have a count above the median of the distribution of names within a race and have a within-name race frequency larger than its frequency within the same race; 2) select the top twenty most frequent names within each race in this restricted set. Distinctively White names using this approach are Albert, Arthur, Carl, Charles, Clarence, David, Edward, Frank, Fred, George, Harry, Jacob, John, Joseph, Louis, Paul, Peter, Thomas, Walter, William.

fixed effects, as well as individual base year characteristics: occupational income score, whether he lives in an urban area, his marital status, whether he is literate, and age and age squared. The coefficient for passing for White implies that Black men who are single in the base year and pass for White are 7.2 percentage points more likely to be married than Black men who are single in the base year and do not pass for White. Since we control for age, this does not just reflect the fact that older men are more likely to be married. Instead, it could be due to men who pass for White earning higher income (which we will show later), and marriage is a normal good (Bloome and Ang, 2020).

The estimates for the uninteracted married variable and its interaction with passing for White are 0.212 and -0.034, and statistically significant at the 1% level. The former reflects the persistence of marriages over time. Amongst Black men who do not pass for White, those who were married in the base year are 21.2 percentage points more likely to be married ten years later. The latter interaction effect implies that among Black men who were married in the base year, those who pass for White are 3.4 percentage points less likely to be married ten years later. This estimate supports the narrative evidence that passing for White often led to family breakup.

Next, we examine the race of the spouse. The sample sizes for columns (2) and (3) are smaller than for column (1) because we can only identify the race of the spouse for household heads. The dependent variable in column (2) is a dummy variable if the spouse is White in year $t + 10$. For interpretation, note that White spouses in our data include Black women who passed for White as well as White women who married a Black man after or just before passing for White. We find that Black men who are single in the base year and pass for White are 98 percentage points more likely to have a White spouse than single Black men who do not pass and are single in year t+10. The coefficient is statistically significant at the 1% level. The dependent variable in column (3) is a dummy variable if the spouse is Black in year *t+10*. The results are a mirror image of those in column (2). Together, the estimates in columns (2) and (3) reflect the widespread anti-miscegenation laws during this period, which made mixed marriages extremely difficult. Thus, Black men who passed for White had White wives (White women or Black women who passed) or were single.

Columns (4)-(6) examine the children of Black men who pass. Since the number of children is a count variable, we estimate Poisson regressions for this outcome. The specification is similar to the one for marriage except that we additionally include

the interaction for passing for White and the number of kids at the base year, and the uninteracted number of kids at the base year. As with marital status, the decision to pass for White is influenced by the number of children in the base year. Thus, these regressions should also be interpreted as purely descriptive decompositions.

Column (4) examines the number of children in year $t + 10$ as the dependent variable. We find that the coefficient for passing for White is 0.049, statistically significant at the 1% level. Similar to the estimates for marriage, these estimates indicate that among Black men who are childless and single in the base year, those who pass for White are more likely to have children ten years later than those who do not pass, consistent with children being normal goods during this time period.

The interaction of the number of children at base year and passing for White is -0.064 and the uninteracted coefficient for the number of kids at base year is 0.221. Both are statistically significant at the 1% level. These are sizable effects since the sample mean number of children is 2.48. The uninteracted coefficient means that among Black men who did not pass for White, those with children in the base year were more likely to have children ten years later. The interaction coefficient implies that among Black men with children in the base year, those who passed for White have fewer children ten years later. This is consistent with children who cannot pass with the parent being left behind. Interestingly, the sum of the interaction term and the uninteracted number of children is positive. This implies that compared to Black men who were childless (and single) in the base year and who did not pass, Black men who had children (and were married) and who passed for White have more children ten years later. This is consistent with anecdotal accounts of some Black men who passed with their children.

In columns (5) and (6), we directly examine the race of the children. In column (5), the dependent variable is the number of White children in the household. The coefficient for the uninteracted White variable unsurprisingly shows that (among those who were childless and single in the base year) Black men who pass for White have more White children than those who do not pass for White. Column (6) is again the mirror image of column (5), showing that those who pass for White have much fewer Black children compared with those who were single in the base year and do not pass for White. Two caveats should be kept in mind when interpreting these results for children. First, we cannot distinguish between a child who has always been classified as White and a child who has passed from Black to White.

For example, consider Dr. Albert Johnston who passed along with his entire family (wife and children) in order to practice medicine (see Appendix A for more details). Thus, White children of men who have passed for White may be former Black children who passed together with their father, or children from new marriages since the previous census interval. Second, we cannot observe older children who have moved out of the household. None of these caveats undermines the main takeaway of these results, that men who pass for White could not live with Black children and were often forced to leave their children and wives behind, an enormous personal cost of passing.

Migration and Dislocation from Community This section investigates the migration and residential patterns of Black men who passed for White. The need to avoid detection meant that Black men who passed for White needed to move. Residential segregation meant that they needed to move to White communities. Our study takes place during a time of high rates of economically motivated internal migration (e.g., Collins and Wanamaker, 2015; Ferrie, Sutch, Carter, and Bard, 2003). Black men who could pass for White may have faced higher returns to migration than Black men who could not pass because they could choose from opportunities offered to White men as well as those offered to Black men. To shed light on these possibilities, we examine migration and residential patterns in this section.

We begin by summarizing the raw means presented at the bottom of Table 5 for Black men who pass and those who do not. In column (1) we find that 38% of those who passed for White moved counties within the same state, compared to 18% for Black men who did not pass for White. Column (2) shows that 4% of those who passed for White moved states, compared to 19% of those who did not pass for White. Column (3) examines a dummy variable that equals one if a man moves counties within a state or across states. The means are the sum of those in columns (1) and (2). We find that 85% of men who passed for White moved counties within or across states, compared to 37% of men who did not. The latter 37% is a bit smaller than the 47% rate of migration across counties during 1850 to 1860 for White males estimated by Ferrie, Sutch, Carter, and Bard (2003). The much higher rates of mobility for Black men who passed for White is consistent with the necessity of moving to avoid detection. Note that in principle, if we were able to observe residential location at the neighborhood level, we would expect almost 100% of those who pass

for White to move.[26]

Columns (4)-(6) examine dummy variables that take the value of one if a person moved to an urban area, to the North or away from the South.[27] We find that among Black men who passed, 34% moved to urban areas, 7% moved to the North and 9.5% moved away from the South. As with the earlier migration measures, the rates were lower for all three variables for Black men who did not pass: 20% moved to urban areas, 6% moved to the North and 7% moved out of the South.

In column (7), we examine the White population share of the county of residence. The historical evidence suggests that we should see an increase in the share of White residents in counties for individuals who pass relative to those who do not pass.[28] Indeed, we observe that those who pass for White live in communities that are 8 percentage points more White.

To assess the precision of the differences in migration rates between those who pass and those who do not, and to control for observable individual characteristics to isolate the correlation between passing and migration, next we regress the migration variables on passing and other variables. For comparability to the wage regressions we will present later, we control for base year occupational income, an urban residential dummy, marital status, literacy, age, age squared, county of residence and year fixed effects. Again, since the decision to pass is an outcome, these estimates should be interpreted as descriptive. We estimate Huber-White standard errors for heteroskedasticity.

The coefficients in columns (1)-(3) show that all else equal, passing for White is positively associated with moving across counties within states, across states and across either county or state, even after controlling for observable characteristics. The magnitudes are similar to those implied by the raw means discussed above and the estimates are statistically significant at the 1% level. Column (4)-(6) also show that those who pass for White are more like to move North, move out of the South,

[26]The historical census also reports enumeration districts. However, district boundaries change across censuses, while county boundaries are relatively stable. Moreover, we would be concerned that enumeration district boundaries were changing in response to changes in the racial composition, as discussed in Card, Mas, and Rothstein (2008). Thus, we choose to use counties as the level of comparison.

[27]The South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, and Virginia.

[28]Note that because there are many communities within a county and most counties have mixed populations, we would not expect those who pass for White to move to 100% White counties even if segregation is fully enforced at the community level.

and move to urban communities even after controlling for observables, with similar magnitudes to the raw means.

Turning to column (7) and migration to Whiter communities, the coefficient for White is 0.07 and statistically significant at the 1% level. It implies that amongst Black men who do not move, those who pass for White are living in counties with 7 percentage points higher White population share than Black men who do not pass. Moving on to column (8), we add in the uninteracted move variable and the interaction between moving and passing. The coefficient for White is 0.03 and statistically significant at the 1% level, suggesting that Black men who pass and do not move live in communities that are 3 percentage points more White compared with Black men who do not pass and do not move. This most likely reflects the fact that it is easier for Black men who pass for White to find a White neighborhood in such counties. Recall that we have county-level data. Residential segregation, together with the need to pass for White undetected, means that if we had neighborhood-level data, we would expect Black men who pass for White to move to neighborhoods that are predominantly White. In the county-level data, Black men who pass and move should, on average, move to counties with higher White populations, but some can also relocate to communities with higher White population shares in the same county.

The interaction of passing for White and the dummy variable for having moved is 0.017 and statistically significant at the 1% level. Thus, among Black men who pass, those who move chose counties with a 1.7 percentage points higher White population share as their new homes. The uninteracted move variable is 0.047 and statistically significant at the 1% level. This implies that Black men who do not pass and move also choose counties with a higher White population. This likely reflects the greater economic opportunities in such counties. Together with the interaction coefficient of 0.017 that is significant at the 1% level, this shows that there is a general migration of Black men towards counties with higher White population shares, but the migration rate is even higher for Black men who pass.

Taken together, the descriptive patterns of migration consistently demonstrate that Black men who passed were more likely to move away from their homes, and they moved away from Black communities. During a period of high internal migration, Black men who passed for White were more likely to move than other Black men. Part of the reason was surely because passing for White required them to

move. Another reason could be that the opportunities in these other places induced some Black men to pass and to move. These are not mutually exclusive.

4.3 Income Gains After Passing for White

Last, we examine the relationship between passing for White and income after passing. The historical censuses do not report income data, so we follow the existing economic history literature and proxy for income with occupational income scores. Occupational income scores are reported by IPUMS and constructed using the relationship between occupation and income in the 1950s to predict income with occupation data in earlier censuses.[29]

Table 6 presents estimates where we regress income in year $t+10$ on whether the Black man passed to White, controlling for base year (year t) characteristics: income, a dummy variable that equals 1 if he lived in an urban area, a dummy variable for being married, a dummy variable for being literate. and his age and age squared. We also control for base year fixed effects and base-year state of residence fixed effects. These regressions are at the individual level, and each observation is a linked man. We present Huber-White standard errors that account for heteroskedasticity.

Column (1) shows that passing for White is associated with a $415 increase in income. The coefficient for passing is statistically significant at the 1% level. This result is consistent with the hypothesis that individuals passed to take advantage of better economic opportunities that were not available to the Black population. The sample mean is $1,844, meaning that passing increased income by 22.5%.

In column (2), we add the interactions of passing for White with age and age squared. We find that those who passed at older ages experienced higher income gains, but at a diminishing rate. Column (3) examines the interaction of passing for White and occupational income score, literacy, urban status and being classified as Mulatto. These variables can influence future income even for Black men who do not pass. Income is highly persistent over time, and historical narratives suggest that many Black men who passed were often at the higher end of the distribution for earnings and education. For this reason, we also control for literacy rate, our proxy for education, and whether a man is classified as Mulatto in the base year.

[29]Occupational income scores are constructed by using the relationship between occupation and income based on Table 19 published by the 1956 Census Bureau Special Report on occupational characteristics.

As we discussed earlier, lighter-skinned Black men often had better opportunities, and the official classification often reflected the census enumerator's perception of a Black man's socioeconomic status. We find that the uninteracted coefficient for passing for White is large, positive, and statistically significant at the 1% level. The interactions of passing and lagged income is negative and statistically significant at the 1% level, although the sum of the uninteracted passing dummy, 4.623, and the negative interaction coefficient of -0.049, is still positive. This suggests that Black men with higher incomes experienced lower income gains after passing for White.

In columns (4) and (5), we examine whether Black men who passed for White experienced a higher increase in income when they moved. As we discussed in the previous section, location choice can depend on extrinsic (better economic opportunities) or intrinsic (live in a place with less racial discrimination) reasons. Thus, it is ambiguous ex ante whether the increase in income is higher for those who move. In Table 6 column (4), we regress the occupational income score in year $t + 10$ on the interactions of passing for White and the dummy variables for whether the man moved counties within the same state, moved states, and moved from a rural area to an urban area. Column (5) additionally examines whether he moved from the South to the North. We also control for the four uninteracted move variables as well as the controls from column (1). The uninteracted dummy variable for passing is 3.282 and statistically significant at the 1% level. The interaction coefficients are positive and statistically significant at the 1% levels in all cases, except for moving to the North, which is negative. These results imply that all Black men who passed experienced an increase in income after passing, but the increases were higher for those who also moved, with the exception of those who moved to the North, perhaps consistent with switching to a White identity being less lucrative in the North than in the South. Note that Black men who did not move counties are likely to have moved communities within counties (although the sum of coefficients is still positive). This was necessary to avoid detection but is unobservable in our data.

Together, these results suggest substantial income gains from passing, and even larger gains if one passed and moved. One limitation of this analysis is that the standard occupational income score measure does not capture income differences within occupations by race. This is because the traditional construction of occupational income scores pools men of all races together and calculates incomes using the median income by occupation. Within-occupation differences are likely to be large

given the severity of racial discrimination during this period (Collins and Wanamaker, 2022; Saavedra and Twinam, 2020; Abramitzky, Boustan, Jácome, and Pérez, 2021; Ward, 2021; Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu, 2025). For our study, this is an important concern because it will cause us to underestimate the income increase after a Black man passes for White – we will overestimate income when he is Black and underestimate it for after he passes for White. To address this, we adopt the innovative measures proposed by Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025), separately constructing the score for Black and White men in each occupation.[30]

We report the estimated impacts of passing on incomes using these alternative measures in Table 7. The sample for which we can construct the disaggregated occupational income scores is slightly smaller than the main sample in column (1) of Table 6, repeated in column (1) of Table 7. However, this makes little difference to our estimates. The coefficient for passing for White for the smaller sample using traditional occupational income score measures, which we present in column (2) is 3.79 and very similar to the estimate of 4.15 in column (1). In column (4), we examine the new occupational income score, which is disaggregated by race (column (3) reports regionally disaggregated estimates). As expected, we find a much larger coefficient, 9.86. Compared to the sample mean of 11.92, this estimate suggests that Black men who pass for White increase their incomes by 82.7%. Column (5) disaggregates the occupational income score by both race and region (South versus North) and again finds very large income effects from passing. All estimates of the impact of passing on income are statistically significant at the 1% level. These results demonstrate that Black men who pass for White experienced tremendous income gains, most of which was driven by gains within occupations.

4.4 Robustness

This paper uses the most rigorous automated linking method in the literature that minimizes incorrect links (Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez, 2021). To further reduce concerns that false links bias the regression estimates, we

[30]We thank the authors for generously sharing their code and data with us. Our approach differs slightly from theirs in that we use individual incomes, do not restrict to fathers, do not use coarsened occupation categories, and we restrict the sample to men aged 15-54. As in their study, we use the 1960 census data to estimate mean incomes by occupation. Our results are similar if we instead use the 1950 data. We estimate mean income within occupation and race. Results are qualitatively similar if we use the median.

provide three robustness checks. First, we show that our results are robust to using three other linking algorithms from the literature (see Appendix Section C.2).

Second, we examine characteristics not used for linking that we would not expect to change more across decades for passers than for non-passers, except in the case of false links. These exercises support the assumption that false links are not pervasive among those whom we identify as passing (see Appendix Section C.3).

Third, we implement a bounding exercise for the main results by dropping the most influential observations under a range of assumptions for the rate of false links and checking that our estimates still hold. Specifically, after estimating a specific regression coefficient of interest, for each observation in the regression sample we compute the difference between the coefficient of the main regression and the coefficient that would be obtained in the same regression if the observation were excluded from the sample.[31] This allows us to identify which observations contribute the most to the coefficient of interest. We then remove from our estimation sample the 1%, 2%, or 3% of observations that are most influential, as measured by the removal having the highest impact on the estimates.

The rationale for this approach is that if false links are driving our estimates, then removing the most influential observations and assuming they are false links should attenuate our results. We choose 3% as our cutoff based on Gross and Mueller-Smith (2020) who use modern data where they are able to perfectly externally verify links. They demonstrate that linking methods like the one we use in this paper yield approximately a 3% false positive link rate among Black men.

We find that our main estimates remain the same sign and are still significant under this (conservative) approach, as reported in Appendix C.4. Together, these three different robustness checks suggest that incorrect links are not substantially biasing our regression estimates.

5 Implications for Inequality

We close by leveraging our estimates to shed light on how Black-White income inequality would have changed under different counterfactual levels of discrimination during this period. We first present the amount of traditionally measured Black-White income inequality for this period. Columns (1), (4), and (5) of Table 8 report

[31] We implement this using the dfbeta post estimation command in Stata.

the Black mean income, White mean income, and the Black-White ratio reported in the raw data. The first row reports these values using the traditional IPUMS occupational income score while the second row disaggregates occupational income scores by race (Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu, 2025). The annual income of Black men using traditional measures is $1,805 on average. This includes those with zero income. White men earn 72% more at $2,506 per year.

To motivate the counterfactuals we estimate, consider first an alternative of complete income equality where Black and White men receive identical pay, i.e. Black incomes are 100% identical to White income. This complete equality counterfactual does not actually reveal what would happen if labor market discrimination were suddenly and completely removed. Such a policy change would not remove the impact of historical discrimination – e.g., Black men received worse education and nutrition than White men as children. It also would not allow for any differences between Black and White men unrelated to discrimination, such as different preferences over jobs. Instead, our estimates focus on what would happen to inequality with more modest formal and informal changes to discrimination.

First, we ask what inequality would have been if discrimination during this period had been lessened just enough that Black men who passed could have earned the same amount had they remained identifying as Black men. Counterfactual 1 addresses this question by returning Black men who passed back into the Black income category, but retaining the income they earned after passing. For Black men who passed for White, this counterfactual allows for some labor market discrimination if there is a penalty for passing.

Under Counterfactual 1, Black mean income would have increased slightly to $1,871 per year as shown in column (2) and Black income would be 74% of White income as shown in column (6). Compared to the raw data, column (8) reports that inequality declines by 2.23 percentage points. Note that for the sake of brevity, we do not recalculate White income by removing the Black men who pass for White because the latter are such a small share of the total White population that the difference is negligible. If we further disaggregate occupational income scores by race, this counterfactual leads to a 6.11 percentage point decline in Black/White inequality (see Column (8) second row).

Next we consider a larger change – the immediate removal of all contemporaneous labor market discrimination such that all Black men receive the same incomes

as Black men who pass with similar characteristics. In other words, Counterfactual 2 examines what inequality would be if all Black men were able to take on a white identity, but keeps the impact of discrimination on earlier human capital investment the same as it is in the raw data. To estimate the returns to taking on a White identity for all Black men we regress occupational income score on base-year urban status, marital status, literacy, age, age squared, county of residence and base year fixed effects (the same controls as in Table 6 columns (1) and (6)) for the population of Black men who pass for White. Then we use the estimates to predict income for all Black men. Mean Black income rises to $2,227 as shown in column (3) and Black income is 88% of White income as reported in column (7), and inequality declines by 16.31 percentage points relative to the raw data as reported in column (9), or 43.39 percentage points if we further disaggregate occupational income scores by race (second row of column (9)).

These counterfactuals should be interpreted cautiously since they are crude and do not take into account factors such as general equilibrium forces. Nevertheless, they highlight the tremendous influence of racial discrimination on Black-White income differences at the beginning of the 20th century. For our study of passing, Counterfactual 1 is particularly interesting since it illustrates how much discrimination induced a brain drained of human capital from the Black community. The loss of these men resulted in a loss of economic and social resources. In other words, discrimination not only reduced the earnings of Black men, but also limited spillovers from successful Black men because some passed for White.

6 Conclusion

While extensive anecdotal accounts exist describing the historical phenomenon of passing from "Black" to "White" in pre-Civil rights United States, there has been no systematic evidence due to the lack of data. In this paper, we show that the patterns of passing are consistent with historical narratives. Passing for White was more likely to occur among Black men living in places with greater discrimination and was positively associated with higher income. In order to pass for White, individuals needed to relocate to Whiter communities. Because miscegenation was illegal, passing required the spouse to pass or be left behind. Similarly, children needed to pass with their parents or be left behind. Our results indicate that passing was

accompanied by large income gains but deep personal costs.

These results suggest that racial identity is partly a choice that is endogenous to many of the variables that the economics literature has traditionally examined as outcomes of race. As such, the relationship between race, ethnicity, and economic and political outcomes is likely to be much more complex than typically conceived.

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Table 1: The Correlation between Discrimination and Passing for White

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Black Lynchings	0.00175**				
	(0.00075)				
KKK presence		-0.00493*			
		(0.00294)			
Congress Democratic Vote Share			0.00051***		
			(0.00017)		
President Democratic Vote Share				0.00052***	
				(0.00011)	
Oklahoma x Post 1920					0.03010***
					(0.00644)
Observations	742,932	742,932	682,353	713,705	742,932
Region FE	County	County	County	County	State
Dep. Var. Mean	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.149

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects, and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Standard errors clustered two-way at the level of treatment as indicated, and additionally clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 2: Socioeconomic Status and Passing for White

	Passed_{t+10}			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Black Educational Opportunity PCA			0.01248***	0.01170***
			(0.00141)	(0.00145)
Standardized Coef.			0.03187	0.02988
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
WTB Occupational Income Score		-0.00976***		-0.01213**
		(0.00315)		(0.00494)
Standardized Coef.		-0.00434		-0.00558
Wild Bootstrap p-value				0.0180
Occupational income score		0.00119***	0.00168***	0.00167***
		(0.00007)	(0.00012)	(0.00012)
Standardized Coef.		0.02565	0.03499	0.03481
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Literate_t		-0.02655***	-0.02505***	-0.02510***
		(0.00123)	(0.00172)	(0.00172)
Standardized Coef.		-0.02932	-0.03269	-0.03275
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Mulatto_t	0.01522***	0.01917***	0.00842***	0.00844***
	(0.00139)	(0.00153)	(0.00252)	(0.00252)
Standardized Coef.	0.01393	0.01752	0.00755	0.00756
Wild Bootstrap p-value			0.00200	0.00100
Observations	742,932	607,544	219,446	219,446
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	State	State	State
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.149	0.147	0.132	0.132

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. The Black education opportunity PCA in columns (3)-(4) is the first principal component of 4 variables: the # of Black universities in a state and year; Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio and Black-to-White term lengths in a county and year and is restricted to Southern states based on availability of education data driving the lower number of observations in columns (3)-(4). All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 3: Demographic Factors and Passing for White

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Married_t	-0.04316***				-0.04280***
	(0.00241)				(0.00240)
Number of kids_t	-0.00689***				-0.00665***
	(0.00024)				(0.00024)
Distinctively Black Name (Cook et al. 2014)			-0.06342***	-0.06340***	-0.05727***
			(0.00198)	(0.00198)	(0.00256)
Distinctively White Name (Adapted Cook et al. 2014)			0.07104***	0.07091***	0.07094***
			(0.00111)	(0.00111)	(0.00143)
Urban_t		0.01252***		0.01095***	0.00526***
		(0.00145)		(0.00144)	(0.00191)
Observations	422,074	742,932	742,932	742,932	422,074
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.140	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.140

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (1) and (5) restrict to household heads for whom we can observe number of children. All regressions control for year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 4: The Personal Costs of Passing

	Married_{t+10}	White Wife_{t+10}	Black Wife_{t+10}	N. Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. White Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. Black Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed_{t+10}	0.00727***	0.98316***	-0.98336***	0.04980***	6.17983***	-3.67158***
	(0.00180)	(0.00052)	(0.00051)	(0.00676)	(0.10765)	(0.04571)
Married_t	0.21238***	-0.00155***	0.00160***	0.12181***	-0.39113***	0.23951***
	(0.00151)	(0.00026)	(0.00028)	(0.00929)	(0.12733)	(0.01064)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times \text{Married}_t$	-0.03470***	0.00006	-0.00029	0.19835***	0.39844***	0.03000***
	(0.00163)	(0.00039)	(0.00040)	(0.00698)	(0.12743)	(0.00850)
N. Kids_t				0.22186***	0.10467***	0.22883***
				(0.00075)	(0.01866)	(0.00079)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times$ N. Kids_t				-0.06466***	-0.04898***	-0.00544***
				(0.00140)	(0.01873)	(0.00182)
Occ. Score_t	0.00020**	0.00003	-0.00002	-0.00241***	-0.00137*	-0.00250***
	(0.00008)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00029)	(0.00073)	(0.00031)
Urban_t	-0.01693***	0.00025	-0.00022	-0.12462***	0.01299	-0.15454***
	(0.00173)	(0.00036)	(0.00037)	(0.00597)	(0.01559)	(0.00645)
Literate_t	0.01329***	-0.00077***	0.00060***	0.03101***	-0.01171	0.03391***
	(0.00128)	(0.00021)	(0.00021)	(0.00394)	(0.01129)	(0.00418)
Observations	607,681	439,652	439,652	334,236	332,370	333,934
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.821	0.146	0.853	2.488	0.298	2.193

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (2)-(6) restricts to household heads for whom we can observe the race of the spouse and the number of children. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 5: Dislocation from Community

	Moved County (Within State)$_{t+10}$ (1)	Moved State$_{t+10}$ (2)	Moved County or State$_{t+10}$ (3)	Moved to Urban$_{t+10}$ (4)	Moved to North$_{t+10}$ (5)	Moved Out of South$_{t+10}$ (6)	Share White in County$_{t+10}$ (7)	Share White in County$_{t+10}$ (8)
Passed$_{t+10}$	0.20577***	0.26927***	0.47504***	0.14101***	0.00865***	0.02986***	0.06728***	0.03015***
	(0.00165)	(0.00173)	(0.00136)	(0.00170)	(0.00092)	(0.00103)	(0.00066)	(0.00092)
Occ. Score$_t$	-0.00012	0.00033***	0.00021**	0.00112***	0.00044***	0.00059***	0.00030***	0.00030***
	(0.00008)	(0.00009)	(0.00010)	(0.00009)	(0.00005)	(0.00005)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)
Urban$_t$	-0.01344***	0.06084***	0.04740***	0.06862***	0.02954***	0.03095***	0.01307***	0.01030***
	(0.00181)	(0.00193)	(0.00210)	(0.00195)	(0.00121)	(0.00127)	(0.00066)	(0.00066)
Married$_t$	-0.01891***	-0.04566***	-0.06457***	-0.03749***	-0.01035***	-0.01233***	-0.00064	0.00267***
	(0.00134)	(0.00144)	(0.00156)	(0.00144)	(0.00086)	(0.00087)	(0.00051)	(0.00051)
Literate$_t$	-0.03701***	-0.00462***	-0.04163***	0.00854***	0.01289***	0.01243***	0.00688***	0.00882***
	(0.00148)	(0.00137)	(0.00159)	(0.00136)	(0.00082)	(0.00092)	(0.00056)	(0.00055)
Moved$_{t+10}$								0.04789***
								(0.00052)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved$_{t+10}$								0.01788***
								(0.00107)
Observations	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean Passers	0.379	0.471	0.850	0.341	0.0712	0.0951	0.785	0.785
Dep. Var. Mean Non-Passers	0.183	0.191	0.373	0.196	0.0632	0.0689	0.691	0.691

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year in the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Regressions also control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 6: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - IPUMS Occupational Income Scores

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed$_{t+10}$	4.15633***	3.69461***	4.62301***	4.57414***	3.28261***	3.29112***
	(0.04172)	(0.05089)	(0.07153)	(0.07191)	(0.05098)	(0.05147)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age$_t$		0.04173***				
		(0.00348)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age Sq.$_t$		-0.00071***				
		(0.00009)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Occ. Score$_t$			-0.04956***	-0.02536***		
			(0.00534)	(0.00604)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Urban$_t$				-1.04141***		
				(0.07258)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Literate$_t$			0.37255***	0.47911***		
			(0.07188)	(0.07048)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Mulatto$_t$			0.12794	0.01304		
			(0.09873)	(0.09979)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved County$_{t+10}$					0.29871***	0.27258***
					(0.06297)	(0.06296)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved State$_{t+10}$					0.44847***	0.71290***
					(0.06694)	(0.07414)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Rural to Urban$_{t+10}$					3.09633***	3.19974***
					(0.08402)	(0.08577)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved to North$_{t+10}$						-0.89510***
						(0.12764)
Occupational Income Score$_t$	0.35285***	0.35250***	0.36632***	0.35950***	0.33931***	0.33934***
	(0.00368)	(0.00368)	(0.00382)	(0.00389)	(0.00369)	(0.00369)
Urban$_t$	1.07310***	1.06555***	1.06555***	1.33873***	2.99748***	2.94799***
	(0.04044)	(0.04043)	(0.04042)	(0.04130)	(0.04096)	(0.04106)
Married$_t$	-0.31862***	-0.31575***	-0.32433***	-0.32711***	-0.19688***	-0.20224***
	(0.02798)	(0.02797)	(0.02796)	(0.02796)	(0.02702)	(0.02701)
Literate$_t$	0.45212***	0.43450***	0.35282***	0.32856***	0.34985***	0.33899***
	(0.02441)	(0.02443)	(0.02472)	(0.02445)	(0.02273)	(0.02273)
Mulatto t			0.52099***	0.54515***		
			(0.07569)	(0.07568)		
Observations	542,134	542,134	542,134	542,134	542,134	542,134
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.44	18.44	18.44	18.44	18.44	18.44

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. Regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Columns (5) and (6) also control for uninteracted move variables. Income scores are the traditional occupational income scores generated by IPUMS, see text for more details. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 7: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - Disaggregated Occupational Income Scores

	Occ. Score_{t+10} (IPUMS)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (Agg.)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (South)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (Race)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (Race and South)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Passed_{t+10}	4.15633***	3.79697***	3.80060***	9.86769***	8.05583***
	(0.04172)	(0.02888)	(0.03133)	(0.02848)	(0.03058)
Occ. Score_t (IPUMS)	0.35285***				
	(0.00368)				
Occ. Score_t (Agg.)		0.25354***			
		(0.00242)			
Occ. Score_t (South)			0.31257***		
			(0.00281)		
Occ. Score_t (Race)				0.37504***	
				(0.00312)	
Occ. Score_t (Race and South)					0.41179***
					(0.00532)
Urban_t	1.07310***	0.76384***	0.91638***	0.89961***	0.72036***
	(0.04044)	(0.02613)	(0.02799)	(0.02606)	(0.02896)
Married_t	-0.31862***	-0.22811***	-0.24714***	-0.13982***	-0.15558***
	(0.02798)	(0.02000)	(0.02091)	(0.01738)	(0.01851)
Literate_t	0.45212***	0.39306***	0.42916***	0.29382***	0.31868***
	(0.02441)	(0.01718)	(0.01835)	(0.01651)	(0.01664)
Observations	542,134	541,913	541,611	539,497	538,159
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.44	16.65	14.57	11.92	11.70

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. The regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Column (1) uses the IPUMS Occupational Income Score for reference, while in the remaining columns, income scores have been constructed following Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025). Specifically, column (2) uses the computed score aggregated for race and region, column (3) and (4) use the computed score disaggregated by region and race, respectively, and column (5) presents the results for the computed score disaggregated by race and region. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 8: Black-White Income Inequality

	Black Mean Occ. Income Score			White	Black/White Ratio			Counterfactual Change	
	Raw Data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Raw data	Raw data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Move Black men who pass for White from the White to the Black sample	Assume all Black men "pass" for White)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Traditional Income Measure	18.15	18.71	22.27	25.30	71.72	73.95	88.03	2.23	16.31
Income Disaggregated by Race	10.82	12.21	20.65	22.66	47.76	53.87	91.15	6.11	43.39

Notes: Columns (1) and (4) are mean occupational income scores for linked sample of males identified as Black and White, respectively, where White in column (4) excludes those who passed. Column (2) moves Black men who are linked and pass to Black in the subsequent decade. Column (3) uses those who pass to predict what all Black men would earn if they had passed. Column (5) reports the mean Black-to-White occupational income score for the linked sample. Column (6) reports the Black-to-White mean occupational score where we include those who pass for White in the Black occupational income distribution. Column (7) reports the ratio if we assign all Black men the incomes they would receive had they passed. Column (8) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (6). Column (9) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (7).

Online Appendix

A Case Studies of Racial Passing: Anita Hemmings, Harry Murphy, and the Johnston Family

There are many cases of racial passing that are discussed in detail by historians and biographers. To help illustrate the environment and fix ideas, we provide three cases here: Anita Hemmings, Harry Murphy, and Dr. Johnston and his family.

Anita Hemmings, shown in Figure A.1 panel A, had parents who were both identified as "Black". She attended Vassar College as a "White" student, was discovered to be Black in 1897, but still graduated. She later married a Black man. Both passed for White and raised their children as White. Her daughter, Ellen Love, also attended Vassar as a White woman (Mancini, 2002).

Harry Murphy is an example of an individual who started passing for White due to enumerator error, then decided to actively pass, and then reverse-passed to Black. His photo is in Figure A.1 Panel B. When he entered the Navy, an official checked the box for "White" for his race. This allowed him to participate in the Navy's V-12 program for training officers and take classes at Ole Miss in 1945 as a White student, where no one questioned his identity. When the V-12 program ended, he transferred to Morehouse College in his hometown of Atlanta, where he returned to living as a Black man. He later moved to New York City, where he may have lived as a White man again (Hobbs, 2014).

Dr. Johnston and his wife Thyra Johnston were both born Black. Dr. Johnston attended the University of Chicago Medical School as one of two Black students. Upon graduation, Dr. Johnston failed to secure a radiology position in the few hospitals that would hire Black interns. However, when his race was not mentioned, he was able to obtain a position in a Maine hospital. He and his family moved there and passed for White for a number of years. In 1940, the Navy began to recruit Dr. Johnston but then ended the process upon hearing reports that Dr. Johnston might be Black, which led Dr. Johnston to reveal to his children their background (Thomas, 1995). A photo of Dr. Johnston and his family is shown in Figure A.1 Panel C.

Figure A.1: Illustrative Examples of Individuals who Passed from Black to White

(a) Anita Hemmings

(b) Harry S Murphy

(c) Dr. Johnston and Family

Notes: A: Anita Hemmings passed in order to attend Vassar which she graduated from in 1897 (Perkins, 1998). B: Harry S. Murphy attended the University of Mississippi from 1945-1946 as a White man. He later returned to life as a Black man. When Ole Miss violently resisted James Meredith's integration of the campus in 1962, Murphy stated "they're fighting a battle they don't know they lost years ago" (Hobbs, 2014). C: Dr. Johnston passed for White along with his family in the 1920s and 1930s to practice medicine (Hobbs, 2014).

Figure A.2: Emancipated Slaves in 1863

Source: "White and Colored Slaves" by C. C. Leigh (*Harper's Weekly*, January 30, 1864, p. 71).

B Race Categories in the U.S. Historical Censuses

Racial categories used in each Census (1910-1940) are reported in Appendix Table B.1. “Black” and “Negro” are synonymous and interchangeably used by the Censuses. For the years that “mulatto” is reported as a separate category, our study defines “Black” to be any individual in either the Black or mulatto census categories. Below, we report the enumerator instructions for the relevant racial categories for this paper - Black, White, and mulatto - for each decade.

- **1910:** “Write "w" for white; "B" for black; "Mu" for mulatto; "Ch" for Chinese; "JP" for Japanese; "In" for Indian. For all persons not falling within one of these classes, write "Ot" (for other), and write on the left-hand margin of the schedule the race of the person so indicated. For census purposes, the term ’black’ (B) includes all persons who are evidently full-blooded negroes, while the term ’mulatto’ (Mu) includes all other persons having some proportion or perceptible trace of negro blood.”

- **1920:** “Write "w" for white; "B" for black; "Mu" for mulatto; "In" for Indian; "Ch" for Chinese; "Jp" for Japanese; "Fil" for Filipino; "Hin" for Hindu; "Kor" for Korean. For all persons not falling within one of these classes, write "Ot" (for other), and write on the left-hand margin of the schedule the race of the person so indicated. For census purposes the term ’black’ (B) includes all Negroes of full blood, while the term ’mulatto’ (Mu) includes all Negroes having some proportion of white blood.”

- **1930:** Write "W" for white; "Neg" for Negro; "Mex" for Mexican; "In" for Indian; “Ch" for Chinese; "Jp" for Japanese; "Fil" for Filipino; "Hin" for Hindu; and "Kor" for Korean. For a person of any other race, write the race in full.” Additional instructions are given for “Negro” and “Indian”: “A person of mixed White and Negro blood should be returned as a Negro, no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood. Both black and mulatto persons are to be returned as Negroes, without distinction. A person of mixed Indian and Negro blood should be returned a Negro, unless the Indian blood predominates and the status as an Indian is generally accepted in the community. A person of mixed White and Indian blood should be returned as Indian, except where the percentage of Indian blood is very small, or where he is regarded as a white

person by those in the community where he lives."

- **1940:** "A person of mixed white and Negro blood should be returned as a Negro, no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood. Both black and mulatto persons are to be returned as Negroes, without distinction. A person of mixed Indian and Negro blood should be returned as a Negro, unless the Indian blood very definitely predominates and he is universally accepted in the community as an Indian. A person of mixed white and Indian blood should be returned as Indian, if enrolled on an Indian Agency or Reservation roll; or if not so enrolled, if the proportion of Indian blood is one-fourth or more, or if the person is regarded as an Indian in the community where he lives."

Table B.1: Racial Categories in the U.S. Censuses, 1910-1940

	1910	1920	1930	1940
White	x	x	x	x
Black	x	x	x	x
Mulatto	x	x		
Indian	x	x	x	x
Chinese	x	x	x	x
Japanese	x	x	x	x
Korean		x	x	x
Filipino		x	x	x
Mexican			x	x
Hindu			x	x
Other	x	x	x	x

Notes: This Table reports what racial categories existed in each U.S. Census between 1910 and 1940.

C Linking Description and Robustness

C.1 Details on Linking

The literature employing linking of historical Census started with (Ferrie, 1996) and evolved to modern standards with automated linking at scale. All our main results are based on the ABE linked samples, created and made available by (Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez, 2021) in the Census Linking Project.[32] The project provides links between each pair of complete-count Censuses using a wide variety of linking algorithms.

Among the different sample options, we pick the conservative sample of links called "ABE Exact Conservative" for all of our main estimates. This method is conservative by requiring strong conditions for linking. Two individuals are linked across Censuses if they share the same birthplace, if there is an exact name match, and if they are a unique pair within a 5-year age band. This ensures a lower rate of false positive links, at the cost of a lower link rate as well (see (Abramitzky, Boustan, Eriksson, Feigenbaum, and Pérez, 2021) for more details).

C.2 Replicating Results with Alternative Linking Algorithms

In this section, we present alternative estimates using several other linking algorithms. We re-estimate every main table using three different linking algorithms, as specified in the titles of the tables below. We find that all of our estimates are consistent using these alternative linking algorithms.

[32] See `https://censuslinkingproject.org/`.

Table C.1: The Correlation between Discrimination and Passing for White, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Black Lynchings	0.00140**				
	(0.00067)				
KKK presence		-0.01098***			
		(0.00293)			
Congress Democratic Vote Share			0.00066***		
			(0.00017)		
President Democratic Vote Share				0.00061***	
				(0.00010)	
Oklahoma x Post 1920					0.03101***
					(0.00352)
Observations	1,563,304	1,563,304	1,431,235	1,504,653	1,563,304
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	County	County	County	State
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects, and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Standard errors clustered two-way at the level of treatment as indicated, and additionally clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.2: Socioeconomic Status and Passing for White, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Black Educational Opportunity PCA			0.01110***	0.01106***
			(0.00113)	(0.00116)
Standardized Coef.			0.02281	0.02274
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
WTB Occupational Income Score		-0.00068		-0.00058
		(0.00262)		(0.00412)
Standardized Coef.		-0.00024		-0.00022
Wild Bootstrap p-value				0.894
Occupational income score		0.00144***	0.00222***	0.00222***
		(0.00006)	(0.00010)	(0.00010)
Standardized Coef.		0.02462	0.03696	0.03695
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Literate_t		-0.03185***	-0.03077***	-0.03077***
		(0.00099)	(0.00139)	(0.00139)
Standardized Coef.		-0.02961	-0.03298	-0.03298
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Mulatto_t	-0.00038	0.00330**	-0.00107	-0.00107
	(0.00117)	(0.00129)	(0.00212)	(0.00212)
Standardized Coef.	-0.00027	0.00239	-0.00076	-0.00076
Wild Bootstrap p-value			0.595	0.608
Observations	1,563,304	1,279,652	480,917	480,917
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	State	State	State
Dep. Var. Mean	0.257	0.254	0.229	0.229

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. The Black education opportunity PCA in columns (3)-(4) is the first principal component of 4 variables: the # of Black universities in a state and year; Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio and Black-to-White term lengths in a county and year and is restricted to Southern states based on availability of education data driving the lower number of observations in columns (3)-(4). All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.3: Demographic Factors and Passing for White, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	$Passed_{t+10}$				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
$Married_t$	-0.04963***				-0.04953***
	(0.00190)				(0.00188)
Number of $kids_t$	-0.01003***				-0.00941***
	(0.00021)				(0.00021)
Distinctively Black Name (Cook et al. 2014)			-0.11935***	-0.11933***	-0.10851***
			(0.00180)	(0.00180)	(0.00239)
Distinctively White Name (Adapted Cook et al. 2014)			0.11061***	0.11030***	0.11432***
			(0.00086)	(0.00086)	(0.00114)
$Urban_t$		0.02579***		0.02261***	0.01558***
		(0.00119)		(0.00118)	(0.00159)
Observations	868,688	1,563,304	1,563,304	1,563,304	868,688
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.246	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.246

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (1) and (5) restrict to household heads for whom we can observe number of children. All regressions control for year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.4: The Personal Costs of Passing,ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Married_{t+10}	White Wife_{t+10}	Black Wife_{t+10}	N. Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. White Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. Black Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed_{t+10}	0.01634***	0.99001***	-0.99017***	0.05933***	6.10467***	-4.44970***
	(0.00110)	(0.00023)	(0.00023)	(0.00457)	(0.08191)	(0.03555)
Married_t	0.15771***	-0.00127***	0.00137***	-0.00388	-0.43189***	0.15184***
	(0.00106)	(0.00017)	(0.00018)	(0.00613)	(0.09575)	(0.00777)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times \text{Married}_t$	-0.04580***	0.00028	-0.00045*	0.25316***	0.44321***	0.04754***
	(0.00115)	(0.00023)	(0.00023)	(0.00501)	(0.09576)	(0.00669)
N. Kids_t				0.19250***	0.10849***	0.20288***
				(0.00056)	(0.01358)	(0.00060)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times \text{N. Kids}_t$				-0.09557***	-0.08367***	-0.00965***
				(0.00095)	(0.01362)	(0.00143)
Occ. Score_t	0.00027***	0.00000	-0.00000	-0.00175***	-0.00026	-0.00210***
	(0.00006)	(0.00001)	(0.00001)	(0.00022)	(0.00040)	(0.00026)
Urban_t	-0.01427***	0.00041*	-0.00045*	-0.09100***	0.00679	-0.13294***
	(0.00121)	(0.00023)	(0.00023)	(0.00440)	(0.00804)	(0.00523)
Literate_t	0.00990***	-0.00060***	0.00053***	0.02553***	-0.02223***	0.03738***
	(0.00088)	(0.00015)	(0.00015)	(0.00286)	(0.00567)	(0.00327)
Observations	1,279,861	916,060	916,060	672,584	671,913	672,076
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.814	0.258	0.742	2.412	0.533	1.880

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (2)-(6) restricts to household heads for whom we can observe the race of the spouse and the number of children. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.5: Dislocation from Community, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Moved County (Within State)$_{t+10}$ (1)	Moved State$_{t+10}$ (2)	Moved County or State$_{t+10}$ (3)	Moved to Urban$_{t+10}$ (4)	Moved to North$_{t+10}$ (5)	Moved Out of South$_{t+10}$ (6)	Share White in County$_{t+10}$ (7)	Share White in County$_{t+10}$ (8)
Passed$_{t+10}$	0.20398***	0.24178***	0.44576***	0.13260***	-0.00076	0.01997***	0.07904***	0.04831***
	(0.00092)	(0.00096)	(0.00069)	(0.00096)	(0.00053)	(0.00059)	(0.00036)	(0.00067)
Occ. Score$_t$	-0.00023***	0.00037***	0.00014**	0.00082***	0.00045***	0.00057***	0.00036***	0.00036***
	(0.00006)	(0.00007)	(0.00007)	(0.00007)	(0.00004)	(0.00004)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)
Urban$_t$	-0.00960***	0.05824***	0.04864***	0.05894***	0.02412***	0.02610***	0.00827***	0.00609***
	(0.00135)	(0.00142)	(0.00136)	(0.00142)	(0.00088)	(0.00094)	(0.00051)	(0.00051)
Married$_t$	-0.01779***	-0.04577***	-0.06356***	-0.03687***	-0.01171***	-0.01299***	-0.00040	0.00210***
	(0.00097)	(0.00104)	(0.00099)	(0.00104)	(0.00062)	(0.00065)	(0.00039)	(0.00039)
Literate$_t$	-0.03430***	-0.01592***	-0.05023***	-0.00195*	0.00643***	0.00581***	0.00460***	0.00636***
	(0.00105)	(0.00101)	(0.00100)	(0.00100)	(0.00061)	(0.00069)	(0.00041)	(0.00041)
Moved$_{t+10}$								0.03644***
								(0.00037)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved$_{t+10}$								0.01670***
								(0.00075)
Observations	1,279,644	1,279,644	1,279,644	1,279,644	1,279,644	1,279,644	1,279,644	1,279,644
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean Passers	0.417	0.510	0.927	0.377	0.0766	0.102	0.783	0.783
Dep. Var. Mean Non-Passers	0.232	0.251	0.483	0.241	0.0776	0.0882	0.677	0.677

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year in the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Regressions also control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.6: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - IPUMS Occupational Income Scores, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed$_{t+10}$	4.79065***	4.26989***	5.60553***	5.53131***	4.14446***	4.16665***
	(0.02253)	(0.03156)	(0.04431)	(0.04475)	(0.03378)	(0.03403)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age$_t$		0.04420***				
		(0.00238)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age Sq.$_t$		-0.00073***				
		(0.00006)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Occ. Score$_t$			-0.08933***	-0.06229***		
			(0.00324)	(0.00367)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Urban$_t$				-1.12834***		
				(0.04584)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Literate$_t$			0.71038***	0.82854***		
			(0.04400)	(0.04348)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Mulatto$_t$			0.09574	-0.03853		
			(0.07418)	(0.07469)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved County$_{t+10}$					-0.14863***	-0.19551***
					(0.03912)	(0.03913)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved State$_{t+10}$					0.08964**	0.32622***
					(0.04156)	(0.04465)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Rural to Urban$_{t+10}$					3.60432***	3.74825***
					(0.04846)	(0.04960)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved to North$_{t+10}$						-0.87233***
						(0.07554)
Occ. Score$_t$	0.25096***	0.25064***	0.28333***	0.27294***	0.23833***	0.23829***
	(0.00255)	(0.00255)	(0.00274)	(0.00281)	(0.00253)	(0.00253)
Urban$_t$	0.76445***	0.75681***	0.75217***	1.15798***	3.16253***	3.09910***
	(0.02938)	(0.02938)	(0.02934)	(0.03027)	(0.02936)	(0.02943)
Married$_t$	-0.21308***	-0.20971***	-0.22649***	-0.22937***	-0.10663***	-0.11023***
	(0.02039)	(0.02038)	(0.02037)	(0.02036)	(0.01955)	(0.01953)
Literate$_t$	0.27693***	0.26023***	0.04073**	0.00450	0.20906***	0.19923***
	(0.01847)	(0.01849)	(0.01843)	(0.01825)	(0.01708)	(0.01707)
Mulatto$_t$			0.64988***	0.68429***		
			(0.06249)	(0.06247)		
Observations	1,134,769	1,134,769	1,134,769	1,134,769	1,134,769	1,134,769
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.92	18.92	18.92	18.92	18.92	18.92

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. Regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Columns (5) and (6) also control for uninteracted move variables. Income scores are the traditional occupational income scores generated by IPUMS, see text for more details. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.7: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - Disaggregated Occupational Income Scores, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Occ. Score_{t+10} (IPUMS)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (Agg.)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (South)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (Race)	Occ. Score_{t+10} (Race and South)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Passed_{t+10}	4.79065***	4.29161***	4.32816***	10.34956***	8.56008***
	(0.02253)	(0.01565)	(0.01701)	(0.01524)	(0.01641)
Occ. Score_t (IPUMS)	0.25096***				
	(0.00255)				
Occ. Score_t (Agg.)		0.18036***			
		(0.00166)			
Occ. Score_t (South)			0.22614***		
			(0.00199)		
Occ. Score_t (Race)				0.27374***	
				(0.00221)	
Occ. Score_t (Race and South)					0.30106***
					(0.00380)
Urban_t	0.76445***	0.53010***	0.65116***	0.62697***	0.51542***
	(0.02938)	(0.01901)	(0.02068)	(0.01961)	(0.02172)
Married_t	-0.21308***	-0.14722***	-0.17376***	-0.08403***	-0.09909***
	(0.02039)	(0.01439)	(0.01536)	(0.01312)	(0.01404)
Literate_t	0.27693***	0.26745***	0.28679***	0.16022***	0.18146***
	(0.01847)	(0.01281)	(0.01393)	(0.01254)	(0.01300)
Observations	1,134,769	1,134,323	1,133,583	1,129,502	1,126,768
Dep. Var. Mean	18.92	17.08	14.91	13.02	12.53

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. The regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Column (1) uses the IPUMS Occupational Income Score for reference, while in the remaining columns, income scores have been constructed following Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025). Specifically, column (2) uses the computed score aggregated for race and region, column (3) and (4) use the computed score disaggregated by region and race, respectively, and column (5) presents the results for the computed score disaggregated by race and region. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.8: Black-White Income Inequality, ABE NYSIIS Standard Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Black Mean Occ. Income Score			White	Black/White Ratio			Counterfactual Change	
	Raw Data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Raw data	Raw data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Move Black men who pass for White from the White to the Black sample	Assume all Black men "pass" for White)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Traditional Income Measure	17.99	19.12	22.74	25.04	71.83	76.36	90.80	4.53	18.98
Income Disaggregated by Race	10.75	13.25	21.02	22.38	48.02	59.19	93.90	11.17	45.88

Notes: Columns (1) and (4) are mean occupational income scores for linked sample of males identified as Black and White, respectively, where White in column (4) excludes those who passed. Column (2) moves Black men who are linked and pass to Black in the subsequent decade. Column (3) uses those who pass to predict what all Black men would earn if they had passed. Column (5) reports the mean Black-to-White occupational income score for the linked sample. Column (6) reports the Black-to-White mean occupational score where we include those who pass for White in the Black occupational income distribution. Column (7) reports the ratio if we assign all Black men the incomes they would receive had they passed. Column (8) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (6). Column (9) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (7).

Table C.9: The Correlation between Discrimination and Passing for White, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Black Lynchings	0.00187***				
	(0.00071)				
KKK presence		-0.00557*			
		(0.00294)			
Congress Democratic Vote Share			0.00051***		
			(0.00018)		
President Democratic Vote Share				0.00057***	
				(0.00011)	
Oklahoma x Post 1920					0.02994***
					(0.00598)
Observations	819,461	819,461	753,189	788,632	819,461
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	County	County	County	State
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.152

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects, and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Standard errors clustered two-way at the level of treatment as indicated, and additionally clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.10: Socioeconomic Status and Passing for White, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Black Educational Opportunity PCA			0.01156***	0.01094***
			(0.00133)	(0.00136)
Standardized Coef.			0.02921	0.02764
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
WTB Occupational Income Score		-0.00575*		-0.00977**
		(0.00303)		(0.00465)
Standardized Coef.		-0.00254		-0.00446
Wild Bootstrap p-value				0.0440
Occupational income score		0.00133***	0.00195***	0.00194***
		(0.00007)	(0.00012)	(0.00012)
Standardized Coef.		0.02793	0.03975	0.03957
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Literate_t		-0.02680***	-0.02557***	-0.02561***
		(0.00116)	(0.00161)	(0.00161)
Standardized Coef.		-0.02977	-0.03322	-0.03326
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Mulatto_t	0.01308***	0.01656***	0.00477**	0.00480**
	(0.00133)	(0.00146)	(0.00236)	(0.00236)
Standardized Coef.	0.01174	0.01486	0.00421	0.00423
Wild Bootstrap p-value			0.0420	0.0350
Observations	819,461	671,841	250,630	250,630
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	State	State	State
Dep. Var. Mean	0.152	0.149	0.135	0.135

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. The Black education opportunity PCA in columns (3)-(4) is the first principal component of 4 variables: the # of Black universities in a state and year; Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio and Black-to-White term lengths in a county and year and is restricted to Southern states based on availability of education data driving the lower number of observations in columns (3)-(4). All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.11: Demographic Factors and Passing for White, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Married_t	-0.04669***				-0.04661***
	(0.00232)				(0.00231)
Number of kids_t	-0.00740***				-0.00712***
	(0.00022)				(0.00023)
Distinctively Black Name (Cook et al. 2014)			-0.06367***	-0.06366***	-0.05728***
			(0.00191)	(0.00191)	(0.00247)
Distinctively White Name (Adapted Cook et al. 2014)			0.07462***	0.07441***	0.07489***
			(0.00119)	(0.00119)	(0.00153)
Urban_t		0.01714***		0.01553***	0.00914***
		(0.00140)		(0.00140)	(0.00184)
Observations	466,073	819,461	819,461	819,461	466,073
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.143	0.152	0.152	0.152	0.143

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (1) and (5) restrict to household heads for whom we can observe number of children. All regressions control for year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.12: The Personal Costs of Passing, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Married_{t+10}	White Wife_{t+10}	Black Wife_{t+10}	N. Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. White Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. Black Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed_{t+10}	0.00386**	0.98333***	-0.98351***	0.04655***	6.06312***	-3.68832***
	(0.00172)	(0.00049)	(0.00048)	(0.00642)	(0.09858)	(0.04402)
Married_t	0.21169***	-0.00178***	0.00188***	0.11989***	-0.48201***	0.23898***
	(0.00144)	(0.00025)	(0.00026)	(0.00875)	(0.11473)	(0.01005)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times \text{Married}_t$	-0.03508***	0.00012	-0.00030	0.20633***	0.49484***	0.03665***
	(0.00156)	(0.00037)	(0.00038)	(0.00662)	(0.11465)	(0.00820)
N. Kids_t				0.22199***	0.11482***	0.22920***
				(0.00070)	(0.01661)	(0.00074)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times$ N. Kids_t				-0.06700***	-0.06020***	-0.00733***
				(0.00133)	(0.01670)	(0.00180)
Occ. Score_t	0.00027***	0.00002	-0.00002	-0.00212***	-0.00069	-0.00229***
	(0.00008)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)	(0.00028)	(0.00069)	(0.00031)
Urban_t	-0.01978***	0.00027	-0.00035	-0.12805***	0.02749*	-0.16129***
	(0.00167)	(0.00036)	(0.00036)	(0.00575)	(0.01477)	(0.00624)
Literate_t	0.01163***	-0.00092***	0.00075***	0.02928***	-0.01758*	0.03556***
	(0.00120)	(0.00020)	(0.00021)	(0.00365)	(0.01050)	(0.00388)
Observations	671,972	486,757	486,757	370,081	368,355	369,710
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.822	0.148	0.852	2.512	0.301	2.214

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (2)-(6) restricts to household heads for whom we can observe the race of the spouse and the number of children. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.13: Dislocation from Community, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Moved County (Within State)$_{t+10}$	Moved State$_{t+10}$	Moved County or State$_{t+10}$	Moved to Urban$_{t+10}$	Moved to North$_{t+10}$	Moved Out of South$_{t+10}$	Share White in County$_{t+10}$	Share White in County$_{t+10}$
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Passed$_{t+10}$	0.20987***	0.27599***	0.48586***	0.15092***	0.01213***	0.03378***	0.07231***	0.03264***
	(0.00156)	(0.00163)	(0.00126)	(0.00161)	(0.00088)	(0.00098)	(0.00063)	(0.00090)
Occ. Score$_t$	-0.00004	0.00049***	0.00044***	0.00114***	0.00051***	0.00059***	0.00031***	0.00029***
	(0.00008)	(0.00008)	(0.00009)	(0.00009)	(0.00005)	(0.00005)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)
Urban$_t$	-0.01683***	0.05946***	0.04262***	0.06838***	0.02916***	0.03125***	0.01298***	0.01037***
	(0.00174)	(0.00184)	(0.00200)	(0.00186)	(0.00117)	(0.00123)	(0.00064)	(0.00064)
Married$_t$	-0.01733***	-0.04482***	-0.06215***	-0.03599***	-0.01102***	-0.01296***	-0.00165***	0.00165***
	(0.00129)	(0.00136)	(0.00148)	(0.00137)	(0.00081)	(0.00084)	(0.00049)	(0.00049)
Literate$_t$	-0.03579***	-0.00457***	-0.04036***	0.00957***	0.01236***	0.01312***	0.00712***	0.00906***
	(0.00139)	(0.00128)	(0.00148)	(0.00126)	(0.00076)	(0.00086)	(0.00052)	(0.00051)
Moved$_{t+10}$								0.04951***
								(0.00050)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved$_{t+10}$								0.01917***
								(0.00104)
Observations	671,743	671,743	671,743	671,743	671,743	671,743	671,743	671,743
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean Passers	0.384	0.474	0.859	0.346	0.0735	0.0981	0.783	0.783
Dep. Var. Mean Non-Passers	0.185	0.187	0.372	0.191	0.0621	0.0687	0.683	0.683

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year in the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Regressions also control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.14: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - IPUMS Occupational Income Scores, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed$_{t+10}$	4.23557***	3.79114***	4.76333***	4.70713***	3.36565***	3.38147***
	(0.03901)	(0.04783)	(0.06795)	(0.06829)	(0.04844)	(0.04891)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age$_t$		0.04040***				
		(0.00328)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age Sq.$_t$		-0.00070***				
		(0.00008)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Occ. Score$_t$			-0.05377***	-0.02719***		
			(0.00501)	(0.00565)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Urban$_t$				-1.14516***		
				(0.06891)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Literate$_t$			0.37116***	0.48074***		
			(0.06670)	(0.06553)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Mulatto$_t$			0.19821**	0.06512		
			(0.09337)	(0.09441)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved County$_{t+10}$					0.23170***	0.20145***
					(0.05905)	(0.05903)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved State$_{t+10}$					0.35485***	0.60326***
					(0.06356)	(0.07012)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Rural to Urban$_{t+10}$					3.14160***	3.24053***
					(0.07915)	(0.08084)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved to North$_{t+10}$						-0.82402***
						(0.12098)
Occ. Score$_t$	0.34184***	0.34151***	0.35661***	0.34904***	0.32759***	0.32759***
	(0.00350)	(0.00350)	(0.00364)	(0.00371)	(0.00351)	(0.00351)
Urban$_t$	1.12931***	1.12180***	1.12059***	1.42412***	3.03327***	2.98082***
	(0.03861)	(0.03861)	(0.03859)	(0.03946)	(0.03898)	(0.03906)
Married$_t$	-0.35716***	-0.35394***	-0.36403***	-0.36597***	-0.23189***	-0.23699***
	(0.02644)	(0.02643)	(0.02642)	(0.02641)	(0.02550)	(0.02548)
Literate$_t$	0.46056***	0.44408***	0.36436***	0.33965***	0.35746***	0.34630***
	(0.02268)	(0.02270)	(0.02278)	(0.02256)	(0.02109)	(0.02109)
Mulatto$_t$			0.46838***	0.49634***		
			(0.07169)	(0.07167)		
Observations	600,829	600,829	600,829	600,829	600,829	600,829
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.30	18.30	18.30	18.30	18.30	18.30

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. Regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Columns (5) and (6) also control for uninteracted move variables. Income scores are the traditional occupational income scores generated by IPUMS, see text for more details. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.15: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - Disaggregated Occupational Income Scores, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (IPUMS)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Agg.)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (South)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Race)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Race and South)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Passed$_{t+10}$	4.23557***	3.82440***	3.85469***	9.92342***	8.12642***
	(0.03901)	(0.02705)	(0.02941)	(0.02671)	(0.02869)
Occ. Score$_t$ (IPUMS)	0.34184***				
	(0.00350)				
Occ. Score$_t$ (Agg.)		0.24376***			
		(0.00229)			
Occ. Score$_t$ (South)			0.30350***		
			(0.00269)		
Occ. Score$_t$ (Race)				0.36897***	
				(0.00293)	
Occ. Score$_t$ (Race and South)					0.40437***
					(0.00505)
Urban$_t$	1.12931***	0.78723***	0.94455***	0.92344***	0.73016***
	(0.03861)	(0.02498)	(0.02681)	(0.02491)	(0.02747)
Married$_t$	-0.35716***	-0.25103***	-0.28159***	-0.16928***	-0.19010***
	(0.02644)	(0.01892)	(0.01979)	(0.01650)	(0.01752)
Literate$_t$	0.46056***	0.40760***	0.44630***	0.29798***	0.31526***
	(0.02268)	(0.01598)	(0.01704)	(0.01539)	(0.01551)
Observations	600,829	600,582	600,226	597,898	596,455
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.30	16.59	14.41	11.81	11.54

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. The regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Column (1) uses the IPUMS Occupational Income Score for reference, while in the remaining columns, income scores have been constructed following Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025). Specifically, column (2) uses the computed score aggregated for race and region, column (3) and (4) use the computed score disaggregated by region and race, respectively, and column (5) presents the results for the computed score disaggregated by race and region. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.16: Black-White Income Inequality, ABE NYSIIS Conservative Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Black Mean Occ. Income Score			White	Black/White Ratio			Counterfactual Change	
	Raw Data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Raw data	Raw data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Move Black men who pass for White from the White to the Black sample	Assume all Black men "pass" for White)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Traditional Income Measure	17.98	18.57	22.23	25.08	71.70	74.04	88.61	2.35	16.92
Income Disaggregated by Race	10.69	12.10	20.61	22.50	47.50	53.79	91.61	6.29	44.11

Notes: Columns (1) and (4) are mean occupational income scores for linked sample of males identified as Black and White, respectively, where White in column (4) excludes those who passed. Column (2) moves Black men who are linked and pass to Black in the subsequent decade. Column (3) uses those who pass to predict what all Black men would earn if they had passed. Column (5) reports the mean Black-to-White occupational income score for the linked sample. Column (6) reports the Black-to-White mean occupational score where we include those who pass for White in the Black occupational income distribution. Column (7) reports the ratio if we assign all Black men the incomes they would receive had they passed. Column (8) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (6). Column (9) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (7).

Table C.17: The Correlation between Discrimination and Passing for White, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Black Lynchings	0.00102				
	(0.00069)				
KKK presence		-0.00953***			
		(0.00290)			
Congress Democratic Vote Share			0.00067***		
			(0.00015)		
President Democratic Vote Share				0.00050***	
				(0.00010)	
Oklahoma x Post 1920					0.02788***
					(0.00377)
Observations	1,348,708	1,348,708	1,232,591	1,295,654	1,348,708
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	County	County	County	State
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.243

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects, and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Standard errors clustered two-way at the level of treatment as indicated, and additionally clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.18: Socioeconomic Status and Passing for White, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Black Educational Opportunity PCA			0.01228***	0.01199***
			(0.00122)	(0.00125)
Standardized Coef.			0.02576	0.02514
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
WTB Occupational Income Score		-0.00537*		-0.00473
		(0.00278)		(0.00442)
Standardized Coef.		-0.00197		-0.00179
Wild Bootstrap p-value				0.290
Occupational income score		0.00122***	0.00185***	0.00184***
		(0.00006)	(0.00010)	(0.00010)
Standardized Coef.		0.02128	0.03162	0.03154
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Literate_t		-0.02880***	-0.02823***	-0.02825***
		(0.00106)	(0.00149)	(0.00149)
Standardized Coef.		-0.02695	-0.03074	-0.03076
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Mulatto_t	0.00257**	0.00558***	0.00095	0.00096
	(0.00123)	(0.00136)	(0.00227)	(0.00227)
Standardized Coef.	0.00191	0.00414	0.00069	0.00069
Wild Bootstrap p-value			0.678	0.683
Observations	1,348,708	1,102,807	403,492	403,492
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	State	State	State
Dep. Var. Mean	0.243	0.241	0.217	0.217

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. The Black education opportunity PCA in columns (3)-(4) is the first principal component of 4 variables: the # of Black universities in a state and year; Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio and Black-to-White term lengths in a county and year and is restricted to Southern states based on availability of education data driving the lower number of observations in columns (3)-(4). All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.19: Demographic Factors and Passing for White, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Married_t	-0.04646***				-0.04616***
	(0.00202)				(0.00201)
Number of kids_t	-0.00941***				-0.00891***
	(0.00022)				(0.00022)
Distinctively Black Name (Cook et al. 2014)			-0.11439***	-0.11435***	-0.10593***
			(0.00191)	(0.00191)	(0.00251)
Distinctively White Name (Adapted Cook et al. 2014)			0.09685***	0.09663***	0.10048***
			(0.00086)	(0.00086)	(0.00114)
Urban_t		0.02049***		0.01783***	0.01091***
		(0.00125)		(0.00124)	(0.00168)
Observations	750,685	1,348,708	1,348,708	1,348,708	750,685
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.234	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.234

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (1) and (5) restrict to household heads for whom we can observe number of children. All regressions control for year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.20: The Personal Costs of Passing, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Married_{t+10}	White Wife_{t+10}	Black Wife_{t+10}	N. Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. White Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. Black Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed_{t+10}	0.01860***	0.98973***	-0.98992***	0.06862***	6.18167***	-4.38192***
	(0.00119)	(0.00025)	(0.00025)	(0.00492)	(0.08978)	(0.03775)
Married_t	0.15999***	-0.00113***	0.00124***	-0.00051	-0.31488***	0.14881***
	(0.00113)	(0.00019)	(0.00019)	(0.00666)	(0.10328)	(0.00833)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times \text{Married}_t$	-0.04416***	0.00020	-0.00037	0.24853***	0.32738***	0.03860***
	(0.00124)	(0.00025)	(0.00025)	(0.00538)	(0.10335)	(0.00712)
N. Kids_t				0.19399***	0.09183***	0.20371***
				(0.00060)	(0.01466)	(0.00065)
$\text{Passed}_{t+10} \times$ N. Kids_t				-0.09297***	-0.06569***	-0.00692***
				(0.00103)	(0.01469)	(0.00151)
Occ. Score_t	0.00027***	0.00000	-0.00000	-0.00191***	-0.00048	-0.00222***
	(0.00006)	(0.00001)	(0.00001)	(0.00023)	(0.00044)	(0.00027)
Urban_t	-0.01275***	0.00011	-0.00007	-0.08867***	0.00819	-0.12817***
	(0.00130)	(0.00025)	(0.00025)	(0.00471)	(0.00885)	(0.00553)
Literate_t	0.01085***	-0.00052***	0.00047***	0.02853***	-0.01420**	0.03659***
	(0.00095)	(0.00015)	(0.00016)	(0.00314)	(0.00632)	(0.00358)
Observations	1,102,999	789,382	789,382	580,802	579,954	580,344
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.814	0.246	0.753	2.396	0.510	1.888

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (2)-(6) restricts to household heads for whom we can observe the race of the spouse and the number of children. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.21: Dislocation from Community, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Moved County (Within State)$_{t+10}$	Moved State$_{t+10}$	Moved County or State$_{t+10}$	Moved to Urban$_{t+10}$	Moved to North$_{t+10}$	Moved Out of South$_{t+10}$	Share White in County$_{t+10}$	Share White in County$_{t+10}$
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Passed$_{t+10}$	0.19926***	0.24148***	0.44074***	0.12281***	-0.00317***	0.01707***	0.07561***	0.04525***
	(0.00100)	(0.00105)	(0.00076)	(0.00106)	(0.00058)	(0.00064)	(0.00039)	(0.00071)
Occ. Score$_t$	-0.00034***	0.00027***	-0.00007	0.00079***	0.00038***	0.00055***	0.00034***	0.00034***
	(0.00006)	(0.00007)	(0.00007)	(0.00007)	(0.00004)	(0.00004)	(0.00002)	(0.00002)
Urban$_t$	-0.00740***	0.05939***	0.05199***	0.05894***	0.02487***	0.02566***	0.00797***	0.00569***
	(0.00144)	(0.00152)	(0.00148)	(0.00152)	(0.00094)	(0.00100)	(0.00054)	(0.00054)
Married$_t$	-0.01926***	-0.04576***	-0.06502***	-0.03757***	-0.01123***	-0.01317***	0.00016	0.00265***
	(0.00104)	(0.00112)	(0.00108)	(0.00113)	(0.00067)	(0.00069)	(0.00042)	(0.00042)
Literate$_t$	-0.03402***	-0.01743***	-0.05144***	-0.00235**	0.00657***	0.00471***	0.00475***	0.00649***
	(0.00114)	(0.00110)	(0.00110)	(0.00109)	(0.00067)	(0.00075)	(0.00045)	(0.00044)
Moved$_{t+10}$								0.03535***
								(0.00039)
Passed × Moved$_{t+10}$								0.01720***
								(0.00079)
Observations	1,102,801	1,102,801	1,102,801	1,102,801	1,102,801	1,102,801	1,102,801	1,102,801
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean Passers	0.410	0.511	0.921	0.371	0.0749	0.100	0.785	0.785
Dep. Var. Mean Non-Passers	0.228	0.254	0.482	0.245	0.0784	0.0884	0.684	0.684

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year in the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Regressions also control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.22: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - IPUMS Occupational Income Scores, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed$_{t+10}$	4.64651***	4.13533***	5.39091***	5.32729***	4.05457***	4.08307***
	(0.02490)	(0.03444)	(0.04832)	(0.04876)	(0.03659)	(0.03689)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age$_t$		0.04845***				
		(0.00257)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age Sq.$_t$		-0.00085***				
		(0.00006)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Occ. Score$_t$			-0.08671***	-0.06138***		
			(0.00357)	(0.00404)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Urban$_t$				-1.05777***		
				(0.04972)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Literate$_t$			0.76096***	0.87522***		
			(0.04865)	(0.04798)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Mulatto$_t$			0.03800	-0.08188		
			(0.08040)	(0.08093)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved County$_{t+10}$					-0.13277***	-0.18214***
					(0.04274)	(0.04275)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved State$_{t+10}$					0.14123***	0.35693***
					(0.04496)	(0.04844)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Rural to Urban$_{t+10}$					3.54560***	3.67306***
					(0.05337)	(0.05458)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved to North$_{t+10}$						-0.76143***
						(0.08225)
Occ. Score$_t$	0.26551***	0.26517***	0.29594***	0.28654***	0.25275***	0.25273***
	(0.00276)	(0.00276)	(0.00295)	(0.00303)	(0.00274)	(0.00274)
Urban$_t$	0.69289***	0.68538***	0.68154***	1.04880***	3.08255***	3.01800***
	(0.03137)	(0.03136)	(0.03132)	(0.03233)	(0.03147)	(0.03154)
Married$_t$	-0.20386***	-0.20095***	-0.21564***	-0.21934***	-0.10409***	-0.10797***
	(0.02196)	(0.02195)	(0.02193)	(0.02193)	(0.02109)	(0.02108)
Literate$_t$	0.29128***	0.27369***	0.04294**	0.00838	0.21904***	0.20829***
	(0.02002)	(0.02004)	(0.02020)	(0.01998)	(0.01854)	(0.01853)
Mulatto$_t$			0.69100***	0.72236***		
			(0.06749)	(0.06747)		
Observations	976,608	976,608	976,608	976,608	976,608	976,608
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.95	18.95	18.95	18.95	18.95	18.95

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. Regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Columns (5) and (6) also control for uninteracted move variables. Income scores are the traditional occupational income scores generated by IPUMS, see text for more details. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.23: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - Disaggregated Occupational Income Scores, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (IPUMS)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Agg.)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (South)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Race)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Race and South)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Passed$_{t+10}$	4.64651***	4.21682***	4.22267***	10.24426***	8.43996***
	(0.02490)	(0.01726)	(0.01876)	(0.01681)	(0.01811)
Occ. Score$_t$ (IPUMS)	0.26551***				
	(0.00276)				
Occ. Score$_t$ (Agg.)		0.19074***			
		(0.00180)			
Occ. Score$_t$ (South)			0.23764***		
			(0.00214)		
Occ. Score$_t$ (Race)				0.28533***	
				(0.00240)	
Occ. Score$_t$ (Race and South)					0.31553***
					(0.00409)
Urban$_t$	0.69289***	0.50467***	0.60816***	0.57989***	0.46502***
	(0.03137)	(0.02026)	(0.02202)	(0.02088)	(0.02322)
Married$_t$	-0.20386***	-0.15258***	-0.17371***	-0.06996***	-0.09013***
	(0.02196)	(0.01549)	(0.01653)	(0.01406)	(0.01509)
Literate$_t$	0.29128***	0.27476***	0.29477***	0.17665***	0.20262***
	(0.02002)	(0.01387)	(0.01511)	(0.01356)	(0.01406)
Observations	976,608	976,233	975,602	972,070	969,685
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	18.95	17.07	14.96	12.98	12.55

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. The regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Column (1) uses the IPUMS Occupational Income Score for reference, while in the remaining columns, income scores have been constructed following Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025). Specifically, column (2) uses the computed score aggregated for race and region, column (3) and (4) use the computed score disaggregated by region and race, respectively, and column (5) presents the results for the computed score disaggregated by race and region. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table C.24: Black-White Income Inequality, ABE Exact Standard Matching Alternative Linking Algorithm

	Black Mean Occ. Income Score			White	Black/White Ratio			Counterfactual Change	
	Raw Data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Raw data	Raw data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Move Black men who pass for White from the White to the Black sample	Assume all Black men "pass" for White)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Traditional Income Measure	18.11	19.16	22.70	25.23	71.78	75.92	89.97	4.13	18.19
Income Disaggregated by Race	10.85	13.20	21.01	22.45	48.13	58.57	93.17	10.43	45.04

Notes: Columns (1) and (4) are mean occupational income scores for linked sample of males identified as Black and White, respectively, where White in column (4) excludes those who passed. Column (2) moves Black men who are linked and pass to Black in the subsequent decade. Column (3) uses those who pass to predict what all Black men would earn if they had passed. Column (5) reports the mean Black-to-White occupational income score for the linked sample. Column (6) reports the Black-to-White mean occupational score where we include those who pass for White in the Black occupational income distribution. Column (7) reports the ratio if we assign all Black men the incomes they would receive had they passed. Column (8) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (6). Column (9) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (7).

C.3 Falsification Tests

One way to investigate the concerns of enumerator error or false links is by conducting falsification tests. We focus on literacy. Individuals can only become more literate over time. Changing from literate to illiterate must therefore reflect a mistaken link (or enumerator error). Thus, if we find that the latter change occurs more in the sample of those who pass than those who do not pass, we might be concerned that those who change their racial identities to White are not correctly linked, possibly leading to bias in our regressions.

Table C.25 column (1) shows that among those who passed from Black to White, 3.51% changed from literate to illiterate. This is about half the size of the 6.69% for those who did not pass in column (2), although both are small and indicative of low false links. In contrast, the share of the linked sample who become literate overall, and for those who pass for White: 17.02% versus 7.26% for those who do not pass. This is unsurprising. First, it is possible to become literate over time. Second, this is probably more likely if one passes for white for two reasons. First, with greater resources and access to education those who pass may have more opportunities to gain literacy. Second, enumerators may be more likely to assume individuals passing for white are literate (i.e., this could be driven by enumerator error). These results do not support the concern that mistaken links are common in our setting (and particularly so for those who we identify as passing). We conclude that false links are not likely to cause bias in our regression results.

Table C.25: Falsification exercise

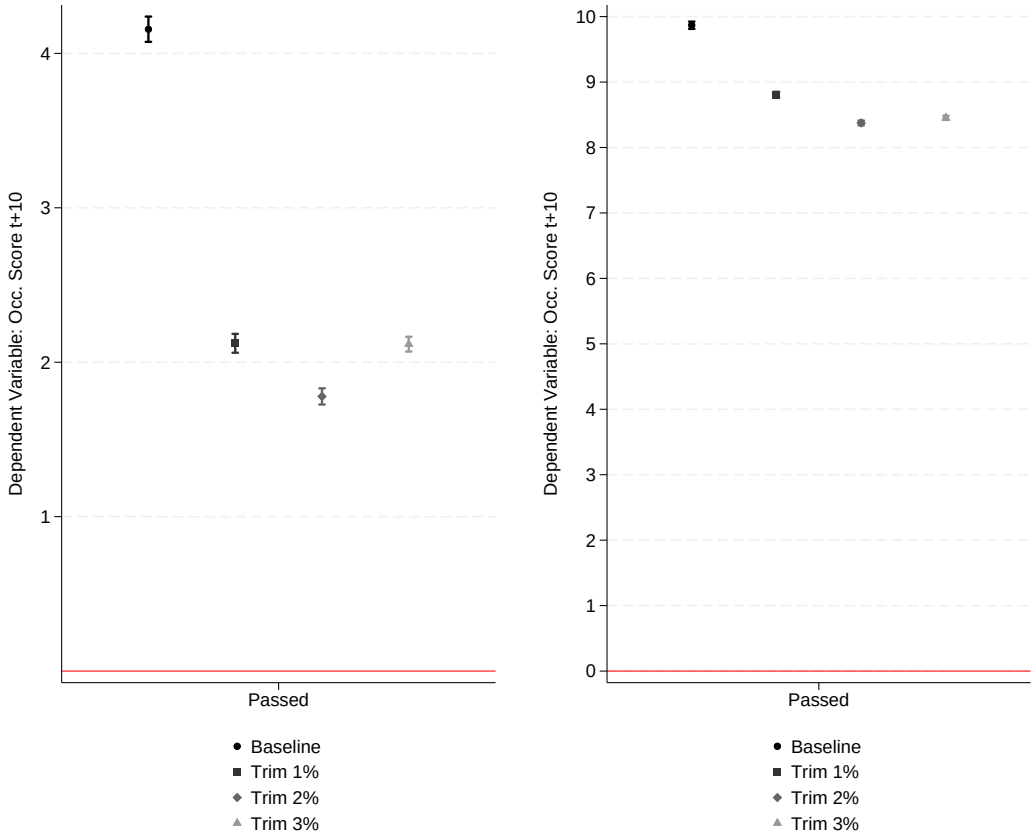
	Individuals Who Pass (1)	Individuals Who Do Not Pass (2)
A. Literate to Illiterate	3.51%	6.69%
B. Illiterate to Literate	17.02%	7.26%

Notes: The first row reports the share of people who switch form literate at time t to illiterate at time t+10. The second row reports the share of people who move from illiterate in time t to literate in time $t + 10$. Column (1) reports these statistics among the sample of Black men who pass for white in $t + 10$, while column (2) reports the statistics for Black men who do not pass.

C.4 Bounded Estimates

In this subsection, we report results from the bounding exercise described in Section 4.4 where we assume the most influential observations are false links and remove them. By construction, this approach will generally (but not always) result in smaller estimates, so this is a particularly conservative approach. We focus on the most important coefficients from the paper. Starting with the most important result, Figure C.1 shows that the impact of changing racial identity on income remains large, positive, and significant even when we remove the 1%, 2%, and 3% of most influential observations.

Figure C.1: False Linking Bounding Exercise - Passing and Income

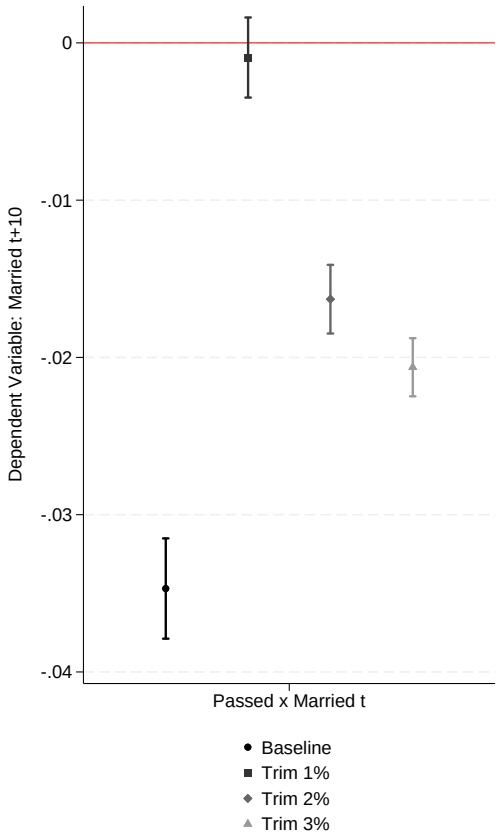


(a) Traditional Income Score (b) Income Score Disaggregated by Race

Notes: The figure reports estimates from Table 7 Column (1) in the left-hand figure and Table 7 Column (4) in the right-hand figure. Estimates from the main tables are replicated in the "baseline" estimates in the black dots on the left, with trimmed estimates where we remove the most influential 1%, 2%, and 3% reported alongside main estimates as designated in the figure legends. 95% confidence intervals are depicted in whiskers around the estimates.

Next, we explore the costs of passing, specifically the loss of family. Figure C.2 shows that with the exception of the 1% trim, those who pass and were married in the base year are less likely to be married after passing. This is consistent with our baseline result in the paper, that (at least some) men who pass have to leave their partners behind.

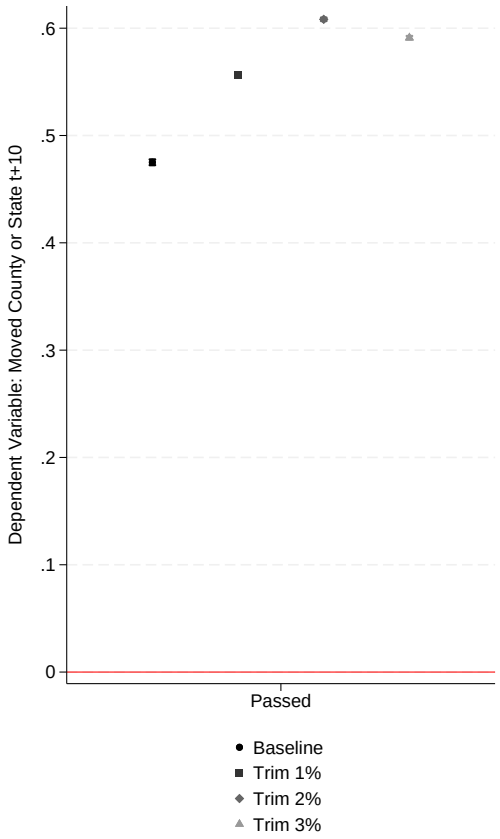
Figure C.2: False Linking Bounding Exercise - Passing and Marriage



Notes: The figure reports estimates from Table 4 Column (1), the interaction between marriage and passing impact on married in the next census decade. Estimates from the main tables are replicated in the "baseline" estimates in the black dots on the left, with trimmed estimates where we remove the most influential 1%, 2%, and 3% reported alongside main estimates as designated in the figure legends. 95% confidence intervals are depicted in whiskers around the estimates.

Beyond the loss of family, the other major cost of passing we examined in our main analysis was the dislocation from one's community. We focus on one of the main estimates from Table 5, namely the correlation between passing for White and moving state or county. In every specification, we find that the impact is positive, significant, and large. Somewhat surprisingly, the most influential observations actually make the estimates smaller, not larger, so the trimming results in even larger effects, with approximately 60% of those who pass moving county or state in the 2% and 3% trimmed estimates.

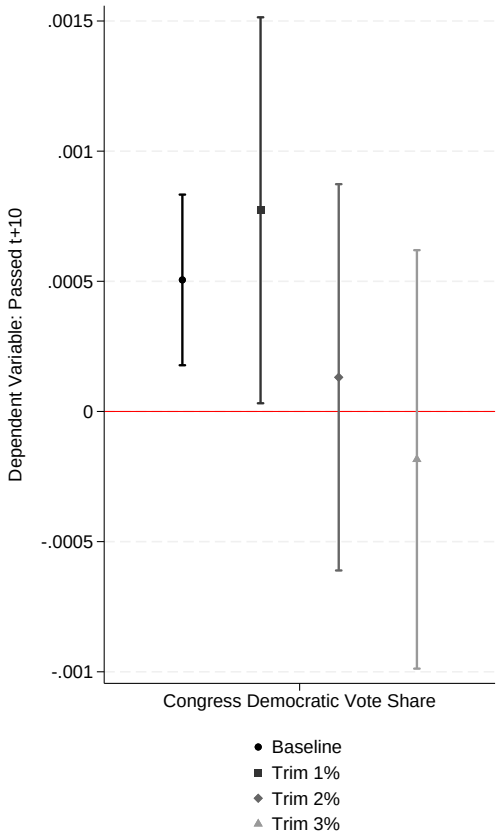
Figure C.3: False Linking Bounding Exercise - Passing and Moving



Notes: The figure reports estimates from Table 5 Column (3), i.e., the impacts of passing on moving county or state. Estimates from the main tables are replicated in the "baseline" estimates in the black dots on the left, with trimmed estimates where we remove the most influential 1%, 2%, and 3% reported alongside main estimates as designated in the figure legends. 95% confidence intervals are depicted in whiskers around the estimates.

Last, we estimate the correlation between the congress democratic vote share and passing from Table 1 Column (3), reporting bounded estimates in Figure C.4. Here we find the greatest sensitivity. While the 1% trim remains significant and positive, the 2%, and 3% trimmed estimates are close to zero and not significant. This is perhaps unsurprising given the small initial estimates, and suggests that our results from Table 1 should be interpreted with some caution.

Figure C.4: False Linking Bounding Exercise - Congress Democratic Vote Share and Passing



Notes: The figure reports estimates from Table 1 Column (3), i.e., the correlation between Congress Democratic vote share and passing. Estimates from the main tables are replicated in the "baseline" estimates in the black dots on the left, with trimmed estimates where we remove the most influential 1%, 2%, and 3% reported alongside main estimates as designated in the figure legends. 95% confidence intervals are depicted in whiskers around the estimates.

D Balance Table and Weighted Regressions

Table D.1: Balance Statistics for the Linked versus Unlinked Sample

	Linked			Not Linked			Linked - Not Linked
	Mean	SD	Obs.	Mean	SD	Obs.	Difference in Means
Age	30.63	10.87	744,870	31.23	11.08	8,402,007	-0.60
Literacy	0.82	0.38	744,870	0.77	0.42	8,402,007	0.05
Occupational Score (IPUMS)	16.40	7.59	609,150	16.29	7.24	6,877,493	0.11
Head of Household	0.57	0.50	744,870	0.54	0.50	8,402,007	0.03
Single	0.36	0.48	744,870	0.38	0.48	8,402,007	-0.01
Married	0.60	0.49	744,870	0.57	0.49	8,402,007	0.03
North (Union States)	0.19	0.40	744,870	0.16	0.37	8,402,007	0.03
Distinctively Black Name	0.02	0.15	744,723	0.01	0.11	8,397,618	0.01

Notes: Observations are Black men between the age of 15 and 55 in the 1910-1930 Census. Additional restrictions are stated in the column headings.

Table D.2: The Correlation between Discrimination and Passing for White

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Black Lynchings	0.00236**				
	(0.00111)				
KKK presence		-0.00383			
		(0.00378)			
Congress Democratic Vote Share			0.00070***		
			(0.00020)		
President Democratic Vote Share				0.00063***	
				(0.00015)	
Oklahoma x Post 1920					0.03542***
					(0.00433)
Observations	742,932	742,932	682,353	713,705	742,932
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	County	County	County	State
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.203	0.202

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects, and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Standard errors clustered two-way at the level of treatment as indicated, and additionally clustered by year. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.3: Socioeconomic Status and Passing for White

	Passed_{t+10}			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Black Educational Opportunity PCA			0.01304***	0.01183***
			(0.00292)	(0.00300)
Standardized Coef.			0.03331	0.03022
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
WTB Occupational Income Score		-0.03046***		-0.01888*
		(0.00616)		(0.01056)
Standardized Coef.		-0.01356		-0.00868
Wild Bootstrap p-value				0.0931
Occupational income score		0.00119***	0.00158***	0.00156***
		(0.00014)	(0.00024)	(0.00025)
Standardized Coef.		0.02564	0.03284	0.03248
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Literate_t		-0.02264***	-0.01522***	-0.01526***
		(0.00259)	(0.00370)	(0.00370)
Standardized Coef.		-0.02500	-0.01986	-0.01992
Wild Bootstrap p-value			< 0.01	< 0.01
Mulatto_t	0.02099***	0.02612***	0.01898***	0.01899***
	(0.00295)	(0.00338)	(0.00608)	(0.00608)
Standardized Coef.	0.01922	0.02388	0.01701	0.01703
Wild Bootstrap p-value			0.00500	0.00200
Observations	742,932	607,544	219,446	219,446
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	County	State	State	State
Dep. Var. Mean	0.202	0.201	0.189	0.189

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. The Black education opportunity PCA in columns (3)-(4) is the first principal component of 4 variables: the # of Black universities in a state and year; Black-to-White teacher salary, White-to-Black pupil-teacher ratio and Black-to-White term lengths in a county and year and is restricted to Southern states based on availability of education data driving the lower number of observations in columns (3)-(4). All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and region fixed effects as stated in the table. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.4: Demographic Factors and Passing for White

	Passed_{t+10}				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Married_t	-0.03607***				-0.03512***
	(0.00461)				(0.00453)
Number of kids_t	-0.00842***				-0.00819***
	(0.00052)				(0.00052)
Distinctively Black Name (Cook et al. 2014)			-0.02948***	-0.02948***	-0.02681***
			(0.00643)	(0.00643)	(0.00849)
Distinctively White Name (Adapted Cook et al. 2014)			0.10840***	0.10838***	0.11428***
			(0.00217)	(0.00217)	(0.00292)
Urban_t		0.00389		0.00181	-0.00244
		(0.00280)		(0.00275)	(0.00376)
Observations	422,074	742,932	742,932	742,932	422,074
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.204	0.202	0.202	0.202	0.204

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (1) and (5) restrict to household heads for whom we can observe number of children. All regressions control for year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.5: The Personal Costs of Passing

	Married_{t+10}	White Wife_{t+10}	Black Wife_{t+10}	N. Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. White Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)	N. Black Kids_{t+10} (Poisson)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed_{t+10}	0.02584***	0.97967***	-0.97993***	0.12405***	6.27219***	-3.45360***
	(0.00337)	(0.00108)	(0.00107)	(0.00991)	(0.11032)	(0.07318)
Married_t	0.25751***	-0.00164***	0.00161***	0.10337***	-0.37723***	0.26086***
	(0.00220)	(0.00044)	(0.00045)	(0.01191)	(0.13925)	(0.01178)
Passed $\times$ Married_t	-0.06945***	-0.00012	-0.00012	0.22385***	0.40966***	0.03094***
	(0.00315)	(0.00076)	(0.00076)	(0.00942)	(0.13890)	(0.01086)
N. Kids_t				0.21808***	0.10715***	0.22897***
				(0.00087)	(0.02031)	(0.00088)
Passed $\times$ N. Kids_t				-0.08560***	-0.05765***	-0.00562**
				(0.00218)	(0.02049)	(0.00255)
Occ. Score_t	0.00084***	0.00005	-0.00004	-0.00254***	-0.00079	-0.00287***
	(0.00014)	(0.00003)	(0.00003)	(0.00046)	(0.00127)	(0.00037)
Urban_t	-0.02490***	0.00035	-0.00027	-0.12209***	0.03845	-0.17132***
	(0.00299)	(0.00073)	(0.00073)	(0.00833)	(0.02392)	(0.00730)
Literate_t	0.02535***	0.00042	-0.00055	0.02811***	-0.01293	0.03295***
	(0.00229)	(0.00058)	(0.00057)	(0.00508)	(0.01719)	(0.00469)
Observations	607,681	439,652	439,652	334,236	332,370	333,934
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	0.736	0.202	0.798	2.507	0.452	2.058

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year of the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Columns (2)-(6) restricts to household heads for whom we can observe the race of the spouse and the number of children. All regressions control for age and age squared, year fixed effects and county fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.6: Dislocation from Community

	Moved County (Within State)$_{t+10}$ (1)	Moved State$_{t+10}$ (2)	Moved County or State$_{t+10}$ (3)	Moved to Urban$_{t+10}$ (4)	Moved to North$_{t+10}$ (5)	Moved Out of South$_{t+10}$ (6)	Share White in County$_{t+10}$ (7)	Share White in County$_{t+10}$ (8)
Passed$_{t+10}$	0.21937***	0.23958***	0.45894***	0.10422***	-0.00526***	0.01550***	0.07001***	0.03605***
	(0.00270)	(0.00262)	(0.00206)	(0.00247)	(0.00096)	(0.00124)	(0.00108)	(0.00118)
Occ. Score$_t$	0.00001	0.00091***	0.00092***	0.00157***	0.00052***	0.00067***	0.00035***	0.00031***
	(0.00012)	(0.00012)	(0.00012)	(0.00012)	(0.00006)	(0.00006)	(0.00005)	(0.00005)
Urban$_t$	-0.02133***	0.05124***	0.02990***	0.05249***	0.02174***	0.02273***	0.00984***	0.00813***
	(0.00272)	(0.00266)	(0.00260)	(0.00258)	(0.00125)	(0.00144)	(0.00096)	(0.00096)
Married$_t$	-0.00812***	-0.02609***	-0.03421***	-0.02120***	-0.00557***	-0.00706***	0.00026	0.00170**
	(0.00195)	(0.00191)	(0.00195)	(0.00189)	(0.00087)	(0.00098)	(0.00074)	(0.00073)
Literate$_t$	-0.02003***	0.01065***	-0.00939***	0.02090***	0.01681***	0.01655***	0.00911***	0.00918***
	(0.00214)	(0.00190)	(0.00206)	(0.00187)	(0.00081)	(0.00099)	(0.00077)	(0.00076)
Moved$_{t+10}$								0.03909***
								(0.00062)
Passed × Moved$_{t+10}$								0.01984***
								(0.00126)
Observations	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462	607,462
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean Passers	0.409	0.444	0.853	0.307	0.0498	0.0725	0.767	0.767
Dep. Var. Mean Non-Passers	0.208	0.196	0.404	0.207	0.0578	0.0621	0.672	0.672

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in the base year in the 1910-1930 censuses linked in two consecutive censuses. Regressions also control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Huber-White robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.7: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - IPUMS Occupational Income Scores

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Passed$_{t+10}$	2.71238***	2.27038***	3.25893***	3.18378***	1.96500***	1.99191***
	(0.05125)	(0.06155)	(0.07961)	(0.08026)	(0.06336)	(0.06388)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age$_t$		0.05991***				
		(0.00415)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Age Sq.$_t$		-0.00125***				
		(0.00011)				
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Occ. Score$_t$			-0.06896***	-0.04532***		
			(0.00509)	(0.00575)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Urban$_t$				-0.98867***		
				(0.09129)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Literate$_t$			0.67590***	0.78209***		
			(0.08449)	(0.08449)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Mulatto$_t$			0.07646	-0.03814		
			(0.11760)	(0.11852)		
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved County$_{t+10}$					0.38790***	0.35028***
					(0.07902)	(0.07903)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved State$_{t+10}$					0.43266***	0.65934***
					(0.08302)	(0.09133)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Rural to Urban$_{t+10}$					3.41459***	3.48658***
					(0.10199)	(0.10318)
Passed$_{t+10}$ × Moved to North$_{t+10}$						-0.72777***
						(0.14440)
Occ. Score$_t$	0.28721***	0.28683***	0.30873***	0.30099***	0.27089***	0.27094***
	(0.00330)	(0.00330)	(0.00325)	(0.00327)	(0.00323)	(0.00323)
Urban$_t$	1.18818***	1.18163***	1.17826***	1.47887***	3.23897***	3.18649***
	(0.05009)	(0.05005)	(0.04983)	(0.04778)	(0.05000)	(0.05006)
Married$_t$	-0.00049	0.00446	-0.01029	-0.01081	0.09425***	0.09037***
	(0.03531)	(0.03529)	(0.03519)	(0.03519)	(0.03310)	(0.03305)
Literate$_t$	0.62096***	0.60386***	0.42515***	0.39508***	0.48646***	0.47247***
	(0.03323)	(0.03326)	(0.02989)	(0.02972)	(0.03082)	(0.03080)
Mulatto$_t$			0.57571***	0.59949***		
			(0.08505)	(0.08498)		
Observations	542,134	542,134	542,134	542,134	542,134	542,134
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	17.73	17.73	17.73	17.73	17.73	17.73

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. Regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Columns (5) and (6) also control for uninteracted move variables. Income scores are the traditional occupational income scores generated by IPUMS, see text for more details. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.8: The Correlation between Passing for White and Income Afterwards - Disaggregated Occupational Income Scores

	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (IPUMS)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Agg.)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (South)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Race)	Occ. Score$_{t+10}$ (Race and South)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Passed$_{t+10}$	2.71238***	2.70641***	2.55136***	8.63648***	6.77402***
	(0.05125)	(0.03913)	(0.04084)	(0.03878)	(0.04065)
Occ. Score$_t$ (IPUMS)	0.28721***				
	(0.00330)				
Occ. Score$_t$ (Agg.)		0.21741***			
		(0.00254)			
Occ. Score$_t$ (South)			0.26753***		
			(0.00303)		
Occ. Score$_t$ (Race)				0.31544***	
				(0.00325)	
Occ. Score$_t$ (Race and South)					0.34295***
					(0.00523)
Urban$_t$	1.18818***	0.81660***	0.93091***	0.94449***	0.76222***
	(0.05009)	(0.03507)	(0.03687)	(0.03545)	(0.03715)
Married$_t$	-0.00049	0.03617	-0.04332	-0.00845	-0.02931
	(0.03531)	(0.02681)	(0.02736)	(0.02438)	(0.02517)
Literate$_t$	0.62096***	0.53455***	0.57467***	0.42632***	0.45149***
	(0.03323)	(0.02560)	(0.02558)	(0.02387)	(0.02376)
Observations	542,134	541,913	541,611	539,497	538,159
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
County FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Years	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940	1910-1940
Dep. Var. Mean	17.73	16.07	13.79	11.92	11.36

Notes: Observations are males identified as Black and aged 15-54 in 1910-1930 censuses linked to the next census. The regressions control for age, age squared, year, and base-year county of residence fixed effects. Column (1) uses the IPUMS Occupational Income Score for reference, while in the remaining columns, income scores have been constructed following Jácome, Kuziemko, and Naidu (2025). Specifically, column (2) uses the computed score aggregated for race and region, column (3) and (4) use the computed score disaggregated by region and race, respectively, and column (5) presents the results for the computed score disaggregated by race and region. Huber-White robust standard errors in the parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table D.9: Black-White Income Inequality

	Black Mean Occ. Income Score			White	Black/White Ratio			Counterfactual Change	
	Raw Data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Raw data	Raw data	Move Black men who pass for white from the white to the Black sample	Assume all Black men earn the same as those who pass for white with similar attributes	Move Black men who pass for White from the White to the Black sample	Assume all Black men "pass" for White)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Traditional Income Measure	17.46	17.96	20.16	24.24	72.05	74.09	83.16	2.04	11.11
Income Disaggregated by Race	10.52	12.16	19.06	21.81	48.26	55.76	87.39	7.50	39.13

Notes: Columns (1) and (4) are mean occupational income scores for linked sample of males identified as Black and White, respectively, where White in column (4) excludes those who passed. Column (2) moves Black men who are linked and pass to Black in the subsequent decade. Column (3) uses those who pass to predict what all Black men would earn if they had passed. Column (5) reports the mean Black-to-White occupational income score for the linked sample. Column (6) reports the Black-to-White mean occupational score where we include those who pass for White in the Black occupational income distribution. Column (7) reports the ratio if we assign all Black men the incomes they would receive had they passed. Column (8) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (6). Column (9) reports the percentage difference when comparing columns (5) and (7).